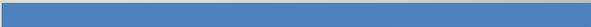




Proceedings of the International Conference on Music Semiotics

In memory of Raymond Monelle

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Edited by: Nearchos Panos
Vangelis Lympouridis
George Athanasopoulos
Peter Nelson

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PREFACE

Together with a group of students and the kind help of faculty and staff of the Reid School of Music of the University of Edinburgh, we organised the *International Conference on Music Semiotics in Memory of Raymond Monelle* at the University of Edinburgh in 2012. The late Professor Raymond Monelle was a key figure at the Music School and a leading academic in the semiotics of music. The purpose of this event was to honour his life and work, and to enable an extended academic debate on the theory of musical topics and its application to the modern repertoire and popular music. During the conference, three keynote speeches and more than fifty presentations organised in three sessions covered the evolution of already known topical worlds, from the Baroque and Classical periods to the Romantic, Post Romantic and Modern eras. Presentations examined how musical expression and cultural ground of known topics have been modified in order to reflect new social, cultural, political and historical conditions.

A particular focus of the conference was to reveal and discuss new musical topics in Western European art and popular culture and to identify the core elements that define them. In addition, we have also addressed formal functions that musical topics exhibit as passages in larger works of music, how these form a network of musical meanings, and their contribution to the study of the musical narrative and other musical semiotic perspectives.

Following the success of the conference, members of the organising committee, who were given the initial assignment to publish this e-book, founded the *International Project on Music and Dance Semiotics* (IPMDS). I am very pleased to present here the proceedings of the *International Conference on Music Semiotics in Memory of Raymond Monelle*. Next to names of already prominent scholars in the field of semiotics of music, you will find promising young scholars as well as composers that contribute their own perspective regarding the birth and establishment of conventional musical patterns in contemporary music.

The e-book begins with a recently recovered essay of Professor Monelle with the title “*Musica Speculativa* and the Nexus of Music and Nature” which was submitted for an interdisciplinary conference on music and engineering in Wien in 2006, but remained unpublished since unfortunately the conference did not take place. I am grateful to Emil Simeonov and Robert Weiß for bringing this to my attention and enabling the whole community to access one of Professor Monelle’s last works.

In his essay Monelle follows his original context of presentation as “a broad historical overview of the relation [of] music [to] mathematics” with an additional perspective on ethics. His hero, Boethius, is a medieval theorist who is influenced by the writings of Plato and Aristotle and reinterprets the Pythagorean mathematical approach to the nature of music by reinforcing its metaphysical perspective; seeing music as the reflection of the universe’s order, the “music of the spheres”, and assigning an ethical meaning to it. Music reflects nature and as such it has the capacity to affect human morals. Monelle is urging us to follow Boethius’s ideas and reconceive *musica speculativa*. Shaping the modern theoretical mind to regain its visionary character may help music to reclaim its ethical power and comfort modern society, which is detached from natural life.

Monelle builds his case skillfully as he interweaves the musical theoretical ideas expressed over the course of more than twenty centuries in just a few pages. From the ancient Greek theoretical views of Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle, he reaches for their medieval interpretation by Boethius to help defend his doctrines against the music practitioners of the Renaissance and Baroque periods.

He initially argues against Coclico, “the Renaissance’s fool”, who limits music’s nature to the senses and humans’ emotional response and then against Mattheson, a late Baroque composer and theorist, whose simplified approach to the rhetoric abilities of music was later dismissed by theorists for its lack of a mathematical/metaphysical basis.

Romantic theorists revisited Pythagorean numerical proportions to explain music’s power but failed because they were unable to recognise the close links between music/mathematics and metaphysic/ethics, which contributed to modern music’s decadence described by Adorno as the reflection of a corrupted social reality.

Monelle holds his last arguments against “Cartesian episteme” and the empirical approach which dominates today’s theoretical mind and alienates musical representation and ethics. Cartesian theory, when applied to music, promotes a positivistic approach to music analysis and assigns a dominant role to psychology and cognitive science for the examination of aesthetics. The only solution to the alienation that positivism brings to today’s artistic conception is the “unthinkable”, the return to “the art of resemblance”, a blend of semiotics, mathematics, metaphysics and ethics belonging to another era’s theoretical mind.

The second essay is by a prominent scholar in musicology and one of our keynote speakers, Professor Mario Baroni. In his presentation and essay “The Sense of Music: Raymond’s Monelle Legacy”, Baroni appears more reconciled than Monelle to a prospect of harmonious coexistence between the semiotics of music and the new “systematic” musicology.

Baroni divides his paper into three main sections. In the first section he describes the development of Monelle’s theoretical ideas through a critical overview of his published books. In the second section he argues that interdisciplinary cooperation is necessary for a scientifically viable elucidation of the sense of music. Baroni eloquently depicts the development of systematic musicology in recent years and its contribution to musical interpretation and discusses the progress made in four major musicological approaches: a) the study of “music emotions”, b) the study of “body reaction to music and music performance”, c) the study of “music and the sociology of culture”, and d) the study of the “origins of music”. This examination is implemented around three main different disciplines: cognitive research, music analysis, and anthropological research.

In the third and final section Baroni focuses on the analogies between a positivistic approach and semiotics. He examines the beneficial contribution of Monelle’s semiotic ideas to the new systematic musicology, and he brilliantly links the two main methodological approaches, despite all the doubts and disbelief that one could have for the other, to their same objective that is the clarification of musical sense.

The main body of the proceedings is divided into three sections according to the historical and cultural contexts of repertoire and popular music. The first and the second sections focus on the repertoire music and are presented in chronological order from the early eighteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century in the first section, and from the nineteenth century to today in the second.

The papers in these first two sections correspond to different aspects of Monelle's theories and reflect either critical studies on his writings, such as Yonatan Bar-Yoshafat's essay, or his musical topic theory, such as the papers by Andrew Haringer, Lauri Suurpää, Grace Yu, Taylor Greer, Jory Debenham, Jane Hammond, Paulo de Castro, Clive McClelland and Edward Venn, which examine the background, evolution, transformation and treatment within repertoire music of known topics like the *hunting*, *military*, *pastoral*, *syrinx*, *ombra*, and *pianto*. Beyond established topics some authors introduce and discuss the formation of new stylized patterns in contemporary music such as the musical icons of *bird song*, *echo*, and *oscillation* by Füsün Köksal, the topic of *play* by Naomi Waltham-Smith, and topical perspectives on *Zwölftonspiel* by Robert Michael Weiß.

In addition, some papers examine the union of two different topical worlds (*troping*) that define a specific work, for instance Lucy Liu's paper on the *funeral march* and Joan Grimalt's on the *pastoral march*. Tamara Balter examines the concept of *irony* in music, Nicholas McKay discusses the alienation of musical topics' semantic character, and Olga Sánchez-Kisielewska explores the syntactical aspects of them. Bogusław Raba offers *existential* semiotic perspectives on structural analysis and Bogumila Mika theorises about an analogy between *succession style* in fine arts and in music.

Many authors in this book examine the concept of *intertextuality*, such as Yayoi Uno Everett, Isis de Oliveira, and Cibele Palopoli while others explore intertextuality and synaesthesia in the audio-visual and modern music contexts, such as Rodolfo Coelho de Souza, Sean Atkinson, and Ambrose Field.

Finally, some authors focus on how musical topics signification network contributes to the study of a narrative; for instance the papers by Joshua Groffman, Danielle Hood, Bienvenido Arana Rodríguez, Panu Heimonen, Dániel Nagy, and Marjo Suominen while Alessandro Milia examines the influences of contemporary composers on the formation of their musical style.

The last part of the proceedings concerns the interrelations between art and popular music as well as the examination of mainstream popular music. The papers presented there fall in to two main subsections: *The Musical Topics as Signs of an Ethnic Identity* and *Topic Formation in Popular Culture*. The first four papers by Judah Matras, Melanie Plesch, Paulo de Tarso Salles, and Acacio Piedade, belong to the first subsection and therefore represent musical topics as signs of an Ethnic identity. The papers that were included in the panel *Audiovisual Topoi in the Italian Cinema of the 1960s*, curated by Alessandro Checchi and presented by Matteo Giuggioli, Alessandro Bratus, Maurizio Corbella, and Alessandro Cecchi, belong to the same subsection.

Papers by Juan Chattah and Ben Curry are also related to film music and examine the application of *troping* theory as a narrative resource to film music and the nature of musical topics as signs of social classes. The essays by Byron Almén and James Buhler, Su Yin Mak, and Jingdi Li examine topic formation in popular culture by popular means such as radio, television and festival. The closing six essays of the proceedings examine topic formation in popular music, including Mark Yeary's paper on the use of *bolero* rhythm in rock music of the late sixties, the description of a network of meanings in Frank Zappa's music by Paul Carr, the deployment of the *pianto* topic and the formation of the *devil's* topic in heavy metal music by Sarha Moore and Paolo Ribaldini, the codification of *psychedelia* in modern popular music by William Echard and the stylizing of *acid* topic in techno music by Botond Vitos.

This first publication by the IPMDS includes the visions of two great scholars of our time, Raymond Monelle and Mario Baroni, and it is a great honour for us to publish such a large number of essays relating to diverse musical contexts by so many affirmed scholars, as well as to publish several young and talented musicologists.

These proceedings represent an important contribution to the field of the semiotics of music and I am grateful to all who contributed to their publication.

Nearchos Panos
Chair of the IPMDS

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I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Monelle's family who have unconditionally supported me in this project and all the key note speakers and honoured guests who willfully accepted to participate to this event: Kofi Agawu, Mario Baroni, John Kitchen, Michael Spitzer, Gino Stefani, Philip Tagg, and Eero Tarasti.

I would like to specially thank Emil Simeonov and Robert Weiß for their initiative to make "*Musica Speculativa* and the Nexus of Music and Nature", an unpublished paper of Professor Monelle, available to all of us. I am particularly grateful to all the members of the Scientific Committee for their tireless work: Martin Dixon, Simon Frith, Dario Martinelli, Peter Nelson, Michael Spitzer and Will Straw.

This conference would not have been possible without the participation of the paper authors, who travelled to join us from twenty different countries and five different continents and contributed to this publication. I would also like to thank the members of the organising committee, the staff of the University of Edinburgh and the volunteers for their continuous work.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my co-editors Vangelis Lympouridis, George Athanasopoulos and Peter Nelson for their work on this e-book publication and for co-organising the conference. In addition, I would like to thank the following for their great support and advice: Ryan Somerville, Mariza Dima, Anastasia Karandinou, Valentina Guerrieri, Alexandro Makridi, Thomas Vantsis, Barbara McLean and Hellen McNeil.

Finally, I would like to thank the Reid School of Music at the University of Edinburgh for supporting this conference and providing hospitality as well as for producing and distributing the conference's proceedings together with IPMDS.

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EDITORIAL NOTE

The references in the essays by Raymond Monelle and Mario Baroni have been adjusted according to the specific referencing system that this edition follows.

The original Abstract-Index submitted in 2006 by Raymond Monelle has been added in the beginning of his essay with no other adjustments.

Double quotation marks have been used for quotes and titles of works. Single quotation marks have been used for quotes within quotes, and to convey emphasis and metaphor. Italic type has been used for technical terms, titles of works, foreign words and to convey emphasis.

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PART I:

ESSAYS BY PROFESSORS RAYMOND
MONELLE AND MARIO BARONI

Musica Speculativa and the Nexus of Music and Nature

Professor Raymond Monelle: Edinburgh, UK

ABSTRACT-INDEX

The attack on Musica Speculativa

For the music theorists of ancient times, music was founded on a mathematical metaphysics. Boethius placed music in the quadrivium of universal studies, and attributed to it moral force. Musical sound was merely derivative, and thus the musical performer was despised.

A Renaissance fool

Adrian Petit Coclico subjected music only to the judgment of sense. A practical musician, he saw no force in the Musica Speculativa, but argued for the primacy of the performer. His views are still popular today.

A learned critic

Johann Mattheson turned to Locke's empirical rationalism: music was only a system of relations, and had no metaphysical status. Musica Speculativa was ridiculed; music was entirely distinct from ethics. Related to rhetoric, it ought to have been placed in the trivium of human studies.

Pythagoras and Plato

The authority of the ancients persisted; the links metaphysics/ethics and music/mathematics continued, in Leibniz, Rameau, Kant and the Romantics, Wackenroder, Friedrich Schlegel and E.T.A. Hoffmann.

Nature, cognition, responsibility

The Boethian tradition characterized music as "concept-free knowledge". Music was evidence of nature; but this was re-interpreted by Adorno in terms of Lukacs's "second nature", the social facts of inherited materials. Adorno's two-fold idealism: idea as structure, immanent form as articulation of socio-historical tendencies. Music's predicament in a decadent society.

Boethius and Adorno

Music as index of nature, either nature rationalized as divine numbers, or nature as historical material.

The unthinkable

Foucault invoked the episteme, sign of an intellectual era. Music is ill-at-ease in the Cartesian episteme, which has dominated the modern world. The episteme of resemblance, however, is related to the origins of mathematics: plurality and unity, on which number systems are based, depend on principles of sameness and otherness. Such an epistemic basis has become unthinkable. We may need to return to it, however, if Musica Speculativa is to regain its authority, as it clearly must if music is to be saved in an age of moral shipwreck.

THE ATTACK ON MUSICA SPECULATIVA

Throughout its history in the Western world, discourse about music has been articulated in terms of mathematics. In ancient times and throughout the middle ages, the Pythagorean tradition was the only serious way of discussing music. There was a brief interruption during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when theories of rhetoric, imitation and expression supplanted the belief in the numerical origin of music's power, but they proved unsatisfactory. During the past century, mathematical theories, as well as other theories of a natural basis for music, have again come to dominate, though they have changed focus.

The ancients wrote many things about music, but they explained its power in terms of one particular aspect. Musical intervals and rhythms were governed by numerical relations. It is true that the system of arithmetical proportions invoked by Pythagoras was not quite self-consistent, and that some writers, like Aristoxenus, therefore conceded to it only limited authority. In the first century, Ptolemy invented an immensely complex system in an attempt to resolve the imperfections. However, Pythagoreanism reached the middle ages and Renaissance through the work of one particular author, Boethius, the first to write in Latin (rather than Greek), whose *De institutione musica* was written in the early sixth century. He was an exemplary advocate of the Pythagorean/Platonic view; the problems of non-commensurability, and the protests of practical musicians, meant nothing to him. For him, music was beyond sound; the universe was constructed musically, and music was therefore accessible chiefly to intellectual reflection rather than the listening ear. His famous three musics were largely reflective rather than aesthetic: *musica mundana*, the 'music of the spheres' or the principle of the whole of nature, *musica humana*, the reflection of universal arithmetic in the nature of man, and *musica instrumentalis*, the kind of music you can hear. Heard music moves the soul because it is an earthly reflection of heavenly mathematics. This view, lofty and speculative though it was, at least explained the power of music in a way that no subsequent theory has achieved. We are moved by music because it resonates with our central humanity, which itself reflects the structure of nature. Our perception of pleasure and pain - in music, of consonance and dissonance - arise from the relative simplicity and complexity of numerical proportions. Music was not an emotional stimulant or a sensual caress, but a kind of non-conceptual source of knowledge. This was called *musica speculativa*, which was opposed to *musica practica*, the métier of music making. For Boethius, speculative music was clearly the more important kind.

In classifying human studies, therefore, Boethius placed music among the mathematical discourses, alongside geometry, arithmetic and astronomy in the *quadrivium*. The *trivium* of liberal pursuits - rhetoric, grammar and logic - was not associated with pure knowledge. It was *trivial*, in fact.

However, music had a privileged place even among the high studies of the quadrivium. As well as reflecting the natural order, it could influence human behaviour. It had *moral* force, in fact. Thus, a study of music could lead to a knowledge of moral truth.

Since there happen to be four mathematical disciplines, the other three share with music the task of searching for truth; but music is associated not only with speculation but with morality as well (Boethius) [1].

Music, indeed, may affect the emotions, but this faculty is chiefly important not for the giving of pleasure or arousing admiration, but because through the feelings the moral person may be inspired or corrupted.

For nothing is more characteristic of human nature than to be soothed by pleasant modes or disturbed by their opposites [...] For when we hear what is properly and harmoniously united in sound in conjunction with that which is harmoniously coupled and joined together within us and are attracted to it, then we recognize that we ourselves are put together in its likeness [2].

Consequently, the corruption of music must lead to the corruption of souls, since even virtuous people will be eventually affected by it.

[Plato] states that there is no greater ruin of morals in a republic than the gradual perversion of chaste and temperate music, for the minds of those listening at first acquiesce. Then they gradually submit, preserving no trace of honesty or justice [...] Indeed, no path to the mind is as open for instruction as the sense of hearing. Thus, when rhythms and modes reach an intellect through the ears, they doubtless affect and reshape that mind according to their particular character (Boethius referring to Plato's Republic) [3].

It is clearly important that we should study theoretical music, for music is a powerful and dangerous force that must be mastered.

From all these accounts it appears beyond doubt that music is so naturally united with us that we cannot be free from it even if we so desired. For this reason, the power of the intellect ought to be summoned, so that this art, innate through nature, may also be mastered, comprehended through knowledge [4].

As for the ancient controversy with the Aristoxeneans - who considered that certain mathematical distinctions could not be heard, and were therefore unrealistic - Boethius is firmly on the side of strict Pythagoreanism.

We propose [...] that we should not grant all judgment to the sense—although the whole origin of this discipline is taken from the sense of hearing, for if nothing were heard, no argument whatsoever concerning pitches would exist. Yet the sense of hearing holds the origin in a particular way, and, as it were, serves as an exhortation; the ultimate perfection and the faculty of recognition consists of reason, which, holding itself to fixed rules, does not falter by any error [5].

The dangers of comprehending music purely with the ears may be compared with the basing of universal metaphysics and morality on experience and sensation.

Although basic elements of almost every discipline—and of life itself—are introduced through the impression of the senses, nevertheless there is no certain judgment, no comprehension of truth, in these if the arbitration of reason is lacking [6].

Since music has moral power, it needs guardians, Boethius thought if it is to remain both rational and benign. Without the wisdom of theorists, it can easily become, with its

persuasive charm and emotional potency, a degenerate influence in society. This view seems impeccable.

For this reason, the author restricts real musical knowledge to the reflective theorist. The practical musician must be controlled. Boethius was perfectly aware of the skill of performers and their popularity with the masses. Naturally, he saw it as a terrible temptation and danger. He writes with great passion, and some exaggeration, about the subordinate position of the performer; the performer is a journeyman, a paid labourer, not really a musician in the true sense at all.

Now one should bear in mind that every art and also every discipline considers reason inherently more honorable than a skill which is practiced by the hand and the labor of an artisan. For it is much better and nobler to know about what someone else fashions than to execute that about which someone else knows; in fact, physical skill serves as a slave, while reason rules like a mistress. Unless the hand acts according to the will of reason, it acts in vain. How much nobler, then, is the study of music as a rational discipline than as composition and performance! It is as much nobler as the mind is superior to the body; for devoid of reason, one remains in servitude [...] A musician is one who has gained knowledge of making music by weighing with the reason, not through the servitude of work, but through the sovereignty of speculation [7].

This author distinguishes three classes of musician: performers, composers and "those who judge instrumental performance and song". The first type of musician is "excluded from comprehension of musical knowledge, since... they act as slaves. None of them makes use of reason; rather, they are totally lacking in thought". The composers are "led to song not so much by thought and reason as by a certain natural instinct. For this reason this class, too, is separated from music".

The third class is that which acquires an ability for judging, so that it can carefully weigh rhythms and melodies and the composition as a whole. This class, since it is totally grounded in reason and thought, will rightly be esteemed as musical. That person is a musician who exhibits the faculty of forming judgments according to speculation or reason relative and appropriate to music [8].

Thus, Boethius exhibits certain contempt for all kinds of practical music, the composer just as much as the performer; the reflective musician, for him, is not so much the critic or theorist as the metaphysician, the philosopher who seeks universal mathematics within the relations of pitches and rhythms. It would seem that the true musicians of Europe are not to be found in the conservatoires and practical academies, but are assembled in this room.¹ Yet this writer is equally interested in the moral force of music. Such a powerful force as music cannot be submitted to the arbitration of a mere sense organ.

¹ Editorial note: Monelle is addressing here the participants of the 2006 conference on music and engineering that was cancelled.

A RENAISSANCE FOOL

This is an unfashionable view. Today, the wider public does not acknowledge any musicians other than performers, and perhaps composers. These practical musicians have become proud, therefore. It is instructive to invoke an early version of this attitude: a writer who cared neither for mathematical truth nor for morality, but thought that musical *savoir-faire* was all that mattered.

Adrian Petit Coclico was the Renaissance's fool, a ridiculous figure who claimed to be a pupil of Josquin (the claim was probably false) as well as Bishop of Ducatum (a place which does not exist). His compositions are childish, being remembered chiefly for the term *musica reservata*, which is still the subject of much debate. He must have had some success as a choir-trainer, and like many successful practical musicians he had a contempt of theory. His book, the *Compendium musices*, published in 1552, reads like a blow-by-blow attack on Boethius. But he entirely misses Boethius's point; he vulgarly assumes that the Roman theorist was merely out of touch with practical music.

Those who have previously exposed this art to youth have been, for the most part, only theorists [...] not practical musicians [...] They teach nothing or teach obscurely on the manner of singing elegantly, on counterpoint or on composition... I would say that whoever keeps his students too long on precepts and theory lacks judgement and evidently is ignorant of the goal of music [...]

He who wishes first to explore all the reasoning of speculative music turns himself to this rather than to singing; he will, in my opinion, only arrive at the hoped for and preset goal much later on [9].

The singer is not guided by truth or reason, but studies "how to please the ears of men and how to inspire pleasure in them, as well as admiration and favour for himself".

The chief *raison d'être* of speculative music—the perception that much of music cannot be heard—is specifically trashed by Coclico. The musician is "continually guided by the judgement of his ears. The ears easily understand what is done correctly or badly and are truly the masters of the art of singing".

Since music is an art of persuasion and communication, it ought properly to be placed in the *trivium*: "Music has not been placed outside the number of liberal arts, for it is taught in the same way as either Rhetoric or any other art, as an art, certainly, by practice and by imitation" [10].

Coclico, like Boethius, categorizes musicians. For him there are four types: the first two seem to embrace Boethius's highest caste, first of all "those who first discovered music and in various things observe a particular harmony of sounds", of whom Coclico comments that they are "only theorists".

The second type is of those who are mathematicians; there is no one who does not speak of their compositions [treatises]. But these men did not pursue the goal of music [...] What is worse, when they hope to spread their invented art widely and make it more outstanding, they rather defile and obscure it. In teaching precepts and speculation they have specialized excessively and, in accumulating a multitude of symbols and other things, they have introduced many difficulties [11].

This writer gives a number of examples of musicians in each class, but I omit these because they seem almost random. The distinction of class three and class four is somewhat obscure—both seem to include contemporary or near-contemporary composers—but the stress seems to be on composition and performance respectively.

In the third type, there are the most outstanding musicians and almost as kings of the others, men who do not specialize in teaching the art, but join together theory with practice in the best and learned way, men who [...] truly know how to embellish melodies, to express in them all the emotions of all kinds...

The fourth type is that of poets [presumably ποιητης, maker] [...] They [...] employ all the precepts and all their skill in singing for this, so that they sing smoothly, ornately and artfully for the delight of men. These singers are far ahead of any others in sweetness of voice and they have pursued the true goal of this art; they are held in greater admiration and favor than all the others [...]

From these remarks, it appears, I think, that music is undoubtedly at its best in that part which is pleasing to men's ears; it rests more upon the practical than the theoretical [12].

Coclico's views flow from a common and vulgar prejudice: music theory is an impractical affair, despised by skilled performers who know how to charm the public without the aid of theory. It is an odour one can still smell strongly in modern music colleges.

In the modern world "musician" means "performer". The "Young Musician of the Year", in a competition on BBC television, is always a performer, never a theorist. Thousands of dollars and pounds and euros have been endowed for the training of performers, none for the training of theorists. Yet performers have colluded in the destruction of music's contemporaneity in favour of the routine of posthumous revival, and have permitted the other evils which inhabit the contemporary world of music. They have concentrated on "inspiring pleasure, as well as admiration and favor for themselves", and have given little time for reflection. We have paid dearly for joining hands with the fool Coclico.

By very definition, Boethius would tell us, performers cannot know fully about music because they are chiefly concerned with its sounding surface. As public persons, they are also involved in the rhetoric and persuasive appeal of music. Yet neither the sound nor rhetoric of a musical piece, nor its score, reveals the substance, which is accessible only to reflection. The ear, therefore, is only an interim arbiter of musical content. Rational contemplation is necessary for the definition of music and its functions—not contemplation of "musical form" or of the *Ursatz*, but a consideration of music in its metaphysical and moral nature. All of this is at the heart of the *musica speculativa*.

A LEARNED CRITIC

In spite of Coclico's rantings, the Pythagorean view remained the basis of music theory until the eighteenth century. With the rise of the science of aesthetics, the *musica speculativa* was rejected by many in favour of theories of rhetoric, affection, imitation and

expression. Actually, almost all of the new points of view may be found also in ancient writers. But speculative music was the favourite butt of the moderns.

The violent diatribe in the opening pages of Mattheson's *Neu-eröffnetes Orchestre* (1713) is typical of this. The erudite German writer, impressed by John Locke's rejection of the notion of innate ideas, visualized old theorists who believed that knowledge came from reflection, and that the senses were not to be trusted. For Locke, all ideas have their origin in experience; mathematics is merely a matter of *relations* among ideas, and has thus no metaphysical status. The Pythagoreans heard music as an imperfect reflection of a universal order. But such views are mere vanity, he thought; on the contrary, sensual experience is the basis of knowledge, while reason is fallible.

Applying this philosophy to music, Mattheson refers to a beginner who tries to inform himself about music by reading Kircher's *Musurgia* of 1650, a conservative work which characterizes music as cosmic numbers. The reader is confronted with "a respected musical pedant [*Musicaſter*]" who demands to be regarded as "Apollo himself, because he keeps a monochord in his house, and knows that 1, 2, 3, 4 make 10, that the ratio of 1/2 gives the octave, that of 2/3 the fifth; that music is *scientia mathematica ſubalterna, numerum habens ex arithmetica, et magnitudinem meſurabilem in monochordo ex geometria, illaque ad rem phyſicam (ſc. ſonum) applicans* [a subsidiary field of mathematics, taking numbers from arithmetic, the measured distances on the monochord from geometry, and applying them to a physical material, i.e. sound]; yet such a devout sinner—when it comes to it—cannot play two measures correctly, and thus demonstrates his egregious bungling" [13].

The only measure of music, therefore, is the ear. The musician's purpose is not to uncover truth, but to please the ear and move the sentiments. The nature of music is entirely distinct from that of ethics; the latter is subject to rational reflection, which is foreign to music.

Thus I am wholly opposed to the view that music muſt, or can, be ſubjected to a pontifical diſcipline *more philoſophorum* [in the manner of the philoſophers], as was done in logic, ethics etc., becauſe this is entirely againſt its nature; it demands to be treated freely and without preconceptions. The whole ſyſtem of rules in music, juſt as in the other arts, can merely *point* one towards the attainment of perfect knowledge; one ſhould not let oneſelf be always led, eyes blinkered, by ſuch a guide, much leſs achieve anything important, for the guide himſelf often goes aſtray; but one ſhould rather harneſs all one's powers... to attain the goal through practice, developing a healthy idea of music, cleaſed of all unneceſſary duſty prejudice [14].

In fact, the rules themſelves muſt be modified and adapted to match the manyſided faſhions of contemporary music, becauſe the ſenſes are "the true origin of all ſcience, *nam nihil eſt in intellectu, quod non prius fuit in ſenſu* [for there is nothing in the understanding that was not firſt of all in the ſenſes]".

Mattheson was alſo reſponsible for bringing together music and rhetoric, the latter being at that time a ſubject ſtudied by all educated people. If music was an influencer and perſuader—if it could arouſe emotions, give courage on the battlefield, ſoothe the paſſionate—then it clearly had rhetorical powers. Actually, this view was almoſt as old as ſpeculative music (it may be traced in Quintilian and Iſidore of Seville, and indeed in Kircher), but it became, according to George Buelow, "one of the moſt diſtinctive

characteristics of Baroque musical rationalism" [15]. Like Coclico, Mattheson placed music in the *trivium* of liberal studies, with grammar and logic.

Mattheson was bitterly attacked for his provocative book, and he retrenched somewhat in *Das beschützte Orchestre* (1717) and *Das forschende Orchestre* (1721). But even in its modified forms his book contained one of the most outspoken rejections of the older tradition.

A musical science which respects fine ratios of intervals that were impossible to hear, which attributes to the planets an inaudible music that reveals their participation in the universal order, which despises musical performers as mere journeymen, such a tradition seems very distant from people today. Mattheson's attack still finds sympathetic readers.

PYTHAGORAS AND PLATO

When Boethius argues that music affects the soul because of partaking in the soul's nature, and that this consubstantiality of music with nature is endorsed by the common mathematical structure of music and the universe, he is echoing Plato's *Republic* and *Timaeus*. Plato combines Pythagoras's insight—that "attributes of numbers exist in musical notes and in the heavens and in many other things", as Aristotle puts it in the *Metaphysics*—with his own conviction that music must be regulated for the common good. It is easy for us to grasp at the moral and social component of this view in our need to redeem music from corruption, while at the same time rejecting the mathematical component as falsified by recent experience.

However, as John Neubauer shows, the Pythagorean view has been continually revived throughout history. Leibniz's view of music as "unconscious counting", Rameau's *Traité de l'harmonie*, Kant's reinterpretation of Pythagorean cosmic harmony as "mental play", all referred to this vital tradition [16]. One may find Pythagorean influence even in Romantic sources, in Schiller, Körner, Wackenroder and Novalis. In an extraordinary work of Wackenroder and Tieck, the *Herzensgiessungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders* [Outpourings of an art-loving friar] of 1797, the two authors puzzle over the origins of music's power to affect the soul.

From what kind of magic preparation does the scent of this splendid spectral world arise now?—I observe and find nothing but a wretched texture of numerical proportions, palpably represented in drilled wood and on frames of gut and brass wire.—This is almost more miraculous, and I am inclined to believe that God's unseen harp chimes in with our sounds and endows the human texture of numbers with heavenly force [...]

All sonorous affects are ruled and guided by the dry, scientific number system, as if by the odd, magic-conjuring formulas of an old, fearsome magician (quoted by Neubauer) [17].

These Romantic writers reflect that the music theory of the immediate past, founded on ideas of representation, although it seems more colourful than number theory, nevertheless cannot explain the miracle of musical communication. The theories of imitation and expression, and aesthetic ideas of beauty, are not enough to account for music's power; the "sounds which art has miraculously discovered and pursues along the

greatest variety of paths [...] do not imitate and do not beautify; rather, they constitute a separate world for themselves" (Neubauer) [18]. The Romantics, far from being preoccupied with expression theory, characterized music as "not merely a vehicle of passion... but a higher and richer language, which expresses inwardness but also intimates, by means of mathematics, a higher order".

Writers of this period returned to *musica speculativa*, not because they wished to rediscover a mathematical order in music, but because they were puzzled by the eloquence of musical form in the absence of concepts. How could a language that lacked concepts nevertheless relate so powerfully to the world? Friedrich Schlegel likens instrumental music, not to expressive language but to unconscious philosophy.

Whoever has a sense for the wondrous affinities between all the arts and sciences will at least not look upon the matter from the shallow perspective of so-called naturalness, according to which music is supposed to be just the language of sentiment, and such persons will not find it impossible that all pure instrumental music should have a tendency to philosophy. Must pure instrumental music not create a text for itself? And is the theme in it not developed, confirmed, varied, and contrasted as the object of meditation in a philosophical sequence of ideas? (Neubauer) [19].

Music, then, created a world of its own which was homomorphous with the outer world, unmediated by concepts. In this respect music was quite distinct from the other arts; E.T.A. Hoffmann, in a famous review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, praises instrumental music because it "scorns every help, every admixture of another art such as poetry". Numerical proportions are the secret of music, not because they form the rationale of intervals, but because they ground the structure of many-voiced harmony. Proportions are "dead, stiff examples of calculation for grammarians without genius"; applied to harmony they become "magic preparations from which they release an enchanted world". The association of number theory with harmony, as opposed to mere intervals, has its roots in Rameau's *Traité de l'Harmonie*, of course. It was never formulated in the kind of detail that characterized the old *musica speculativa*. Rather, it served as a kind of interim explanation of music's communicativeness, which, these writers apprehended, could not be explained by theories of imitation, expression and beauty.

NATURE, COGNITION, RESPONSIBILITY

In the Boethian tradition, music was a direct means of knowledge, unmediated by concepts; in fact, a *begriffslose Erkenntnis*, which was Adorno's term for the art process in general (Paddison) [20]. Thus, music was classed with the mathematical disciplines, arithmetic, geometry and astronomy. Some even saw music as a natural science: Thomas Hobbes, classifying the human studies in his majestic compendium *Leviathan*, describes music as the field of "consequences from sounds", alongside optics, which was a description of "consequences from sights" [21]. This is going rather too far.

However, the Greeks, summarized by Boethius, did not apply this analysis to the "fine" arts or to drama. These other arts possessed a semiotic or rhetorical relation to nature. It was music alone which offered a direct revelation of the rational structure of nature, available to cognition. This has usually been understood as merely a globalizing of the Pythagorean insight; but as we have seen, Boethius was equally interested in the moral

aspects of music. The contemplation of music could lead one to transcendent truth, both rational and moral.

Adorno, also, though his roots are less in Greek rationalism than in Hegelian idealism, conceives music as a revelation of truth, available to cognition; and he finds within it a kind of nature—not now the acoustic nature of proportioned intervals or the order embodied in chordal harmony, but historical nature, the social facts of inherited materials, what Lukács called "second nature" [22]. The facts of acoustics he would have considered unduly fixed, unhistorical, undialectical.

The material of music, music's "second nature", is rooted in the social origins and associations of musical gestures: the background of dance, song, soldiering, *Tafelmusik*, though these have been assimilated and hidden in the absolute music of the bourgeois era. It is rooted also in "the sense of culturally shared understandings of socially and historically mediated aesthetic norms and conventions" (Paddison) [23]; that is, in the inherent tendencies of musical gestures, both within the canon of applied forms (rondo form, sonata form and so on) and in relation to syntactic implications and tendencies. Through these, the musical work enters into dialogue with society and history. Thus "material" is distinct from "content"; the *content* of a work is constituted by its dialogue with history, realized therein in the form of *material*.

It is clear to Adorno that musical material is not physical or psychological in nature, but social. Traditionally, he says, material was defined by physics or psychology as "the sum of all sounds at the disposal of the composer". But this is an error.

The actual compositional material [...] is as different from this sum as is language from its total supply of sounds. It is not simply a matter of the increase and decrease of this supply in the course of history. All its specific characteristics are indications of the historical process [...] In that very moment when the historical expression of a chord can no longer be aurally perceived, it demands that the sounds which surround it give a conclusive account of its historical implications. These implications have determined the nature of this expression (Adorno) [24].

Within the very behaviour of notes, chords, phrases, cadences, can be found the facts of history and ideology. For example, the belief that music must respect the overtone series (that "the triad is the necessary and universally valid condition of all possible comprehension"), the basis of *musica speculativa*, is "nothing but a superstructure for reactionary compositional tendencies". Composers like Hindemith who wish to compromise with the commodified world preach reactionary views of this kind. Their music is therefore a lie based on "calculated feeble-mindedness".

Consequently, music is related to truth in two senses. First, truth is inner consistency, the coherency of the work in itself; "The identity of the 'idea' of the work with its structure", considering the work to be "a force-field of tensions rendered articulate and meaningful through consistency of form" (Paddison) [25]. This idealistic notion is also the foundation, for example, of Schenkerian theory; it lies at the heart of the traditional view of music as organic unity. But there is another level of musical truth: "The consistency of [...] immanent form in relation to the divergent socio-historical tendencies of its pre-formed material". Both levels of truth-content are available to cognition, but the second is the more obviously semantic.

If music can be *untrue* to social fact, it can on the other hand also be *truthful*—"objective", Adorno says in the *Philosophy of modern music* [26]. The composer is not

responsible to nature in the sense of physical realities, the numerical proportions of intervals, but she is nevertheless responsible to another kind of nature, that of historical dialectics. Her position vis-à-vis society is characterized by moral as well as cognitive responsibility.

Here lies the theorist's greatest paradox. Music must arise out of its own social conditions. Its material, its subjectivity, its conditions of production, are all socially mediated. How, then, can it achieve truth in a wholly decadent society? Adorno replies that the modern composer, though delineating the repressiveness of her society, nevertheless dissents from its ideology. Modern art remains functionless, but in its very functionlessness it preserves the true function of art.

As long as an art, which is constituted according to the categories of mass production, contributes to this ideology, and as long as artistic technique is a technique of repression, that other, functionless art has its own function. This art alone—in its most recent and most consequent works—designs a picture of total repression but, by no means, the ideology thereof. By presenting the unreconciled picture of reality, it becomes incommensurable with this reality. In this way it expresses opposition to the injustice of the just verdict. The technical procedures of composition, which objectively make music into a picture of repressive society, are more advanced than the procedures of mass production which march beyond modern music in the fashion of the times, willfully serving repressive society [27].

Adorno considers that contemporary society places artistic creation in crisis, because art has been reified and social relations commodified, subjected to exchange value rather than use value. The artist, seeking a truthful response to her own history, is driven into the absolute monadism of expressionism and finally the loneliness of radical technique. At last, the only communication is the uncommunicativeness of the avant garde; the hypersubjectivity of expressionism gives way to the extinction of the subject. The musical work, now an "organized vacuity", is alienated from society, and within that alienation lays its truth.

The repressiveness of society is thus found in modern music, where it is reflected and rejected. There is also another kind of contemporary music which fails to reject repression, and this Adorno calls "kitsch". This music colludes infamously with the terrors of social repression, producing not merely the bland uniformities of popular music, which is, at least, frank and open about its "subordination to the process of exchange", but the collaborationist styles of irresponsible composers. Adorno mentions Elgar and Sibelius in this connection. We may find less to reproach in these masters; but we nevertheless find ourselves subject to the swindle of "classical music", a category which embraces, apparently, the *Chichester psalms*, the *Concierto de Aranjuez* and the theme from *Star wars*.

BOETHIUS AND ADORNO

In many ways Adorno is the prophet of *Modernism*, a cultural and aesthetic movement which is now rejected as "terrorist" (Eagleton) [28]. It is true that his attitudes are often authoritative and Mandarin. Nevertheless his criticisms of the contemporary musical world are still full of importance. Only the most radical new music escapes the stigma of collusion with a divided and unjust society. Much of our music is feeble and

tasteless. Concert halls and opera houses are full of the music of the dead. Most people see music as a sign of inequality; they reject it out of hand, except for the aesthetically tiny enclave of popular music. The redemptive and reconciliatory power of music is overlooked. We ourselves, the music theorists and analysts, avert our eyes from the moral purposes of music to concentrate on mere morphology.

In fact, we may envisage another narrative of music history, in this case the story of Pythagoreanism. The ancients, summarized by Boethius, considered that the essence of music was available only to reflection, since the ear perceived only the surface of music. It is true that music affects the emotions, they acknowledged; but this aspect of music cannot be explained in psychological terms alone. It must bear witness to an indexical link between music and nature; the soul of the universe, and that of man, are structured musically, and for this reason music is a field primarily of cognitive engagement rather than emotional response. In addition, audible music can affect us morally. Music, therefore, can improve or corrupt. The common structure of nature and music is shown principally in numerical proportions.

The dismissal of Pythagoreanism by the baroque writers led only to imitative and expressive theories. These were satisfactory for a while, but the most intelligent critics soon noticed that the power of music could not be explained in expressive terms. Sure, music affects the soul; but *how* does it do this? The early Romantics, Wackenroder, Tieck, Friedrich Schlegel, Novalis, returned to Pythagoreanism in order to account for the power of music, but they were ill at ease with the attribution of such vast emotional power to "dry numbers".

Adorno freely accepts the cognitive nature of musical engagement, the immanent meaning of music, and he sees that in some cases music can relinquish its responsibilities, lapsing into mere kitsch. Music is an index of nature. But for him, the physical nature of numerical proportions is replaced by the "second nature" of historical material. He has no need to feel ill at ease about "dry numbers", for the numerical aspect of Pythagoreanism has been rejected. In Adorno's socially oriented system, it is even more potently the case that music may either collude with a corrupt society, or may reject repression in a drive to reconstruct the social order. In other words, music can be corrupt and corrupting, or can promote virtue.

The chief difference between Boethius and Adorno does not lie in the acceptance or rejection of classical Pythagoreanism. It lies rather in the confidence in their tone of voice. Boethius assumes that the world will understand and attend to his warnings. Adorno, however, thinks that the case is lost. Music has colluded irrevocably with a corrupt world. The world can no longer even hear his message. It is a "message of despair from the shipwrecked".

THE UNTHINKABLE

In examining music, we often encounter the unthinkable. For example, it is evident and natural that music is essentially *sound*, essentially performance. Yet if we examine Ives's music, we find that the performance includes features which are not true to the music, features which betray the text, in order to drive the attention away from sound towards "substance". The composer demands, "What has sound got to do with music?" It

is very hard for the modern musician to grasp the idea of a score which does not represent a performance, or a performance which is independent of the music it performs.

Thinking the unthinkable: it was this challenge which first gave rise, we are told, to Foucault's *Les mots et les choses*. If something seems unthinkable, Foucault proposes, it is probably framed in another *episteme*, a different structure of thought which characterizes a different intellectual era. The appearance of the "science" of aesthetics in the eighteenth century (it dates, perhaps, from Baumgarten's *Aesthetica* of 1750-58, though Gilbert & Kuhn [29] consider that the concepts there embodied come from other, greater thinkers, notably from Leibniz) was a symptom, not of the birth of reflection in this field after a long night of ignorance, but of the loss of a style of thought that made aesthetics easy. For the post-Cartesian age, the theory of art became a deeply puzzling matter. The array of aesthetic notions which writers plucked from the ancients—imitation, representation, expression—constitutes an attempt to overcome the irrationality of art.

Representational theory was not more difficult, but infinitely easier, for earlier styles of thought. Unfortunately, certain aspects of these styles are nowadays "unthinkable". The modern style of thought (the modern *episteme*) began with Descartes, according to Foucault. We may call it "rationality", "science" or "empiricism". It has proved exceptionally fruitful in the field of natural studies. But it has problematized artistic representation, and above all music.

The Cartesian *episteme*, dominant in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, invoked two kinds of comparison. The first of these was based on *measurement*: things may be given sizes or numbers, and these may then be compared, combined, assessed. The second is a matter of *order*: complex things may be analyzed into things that are progressively simpler, until the simplest elements are reached. At each stage of measurement and analysis, there is an aspect of imbrication or comparison which connects this stage to the next higher or lower.

Clearly, modern physics is Cartesian in this sense. Physics, and its empirical/inductive offspring in the fields of science and technology, are dependent on measurement and simplification. So successful has the Cartesian *episteme* been that alien fields, like artistic representation or ethics, have been subjected to it. If an ethical or aesthetic question cannot be answered by measurement or classification, then perhaps it can be converted to a question of psychology (or indeed of cognitive studies, brain physiology or "neuroscience"). In these fields, some kind of analysis of ethics or aesthetics may be found. But the questions of ethics and aesthetics remain unanswered, because they are not framed within this *episteme*. For this reason, Enlightenment civilization turned out to be cruel and exploitative; also, perhaps, the arts floated off from nature and morality and collaborated in the class war.

Before Descartes, according to Foucault, the dominant *episteme* was that of *resemblance* [30]. Everything is linked to something that it is like; likenesses are signs of the natural order. Thus an attack of apoplexy is a kind of human thunderstorm (Crollius, quoted by Foucault) [31]; the human face is united to the sky, its two eyes the sun and moon (Aldrovandi). Resemblance may affect the feelings, as when the scent of funeral flowers makes one sad. Resemblance lies behind astrology and sympathetic magic.

To us such ideas are unthinkable. But we may need to think them in comprehending the thoughts of our ancestors, including Boethius. And unexpectedly, ideas of resemblance may be necessary to explain mathematics. Mathematical theory is grounded, ultimately, in the concepts of "many" and "one", which together constitute the

principle of nature. Both are dependent on the concept of likeness, resemblance. All these ideas are a priori, not founded on observation.

Boethius gives a two-fold demonstration of numerical order in *De Arithmetica* I.32 and II.1, where he argues that all inequality (that is, plurality) can be reduced back to its source, equality (that is, unity). Unity is the constitutive element of plurality just as letters of the alphabet, sounds and the four elements (fire, air, water and earth) are the elements of words, music and the created world (White) [32].

The opposition of plurality and unity can be found, analogically represented, in odd and even numbers, in the sun and moon, the two sexes, soul and body and in many other places.

In terms of Pythagorean mathematics, "same" is something with constant properties and is "limited" in the sense that it has a defined and stable nature. Numerically it derives from unity, and it is found in odd numbers... "Different" is unstable and unlimited, derived from two (= "otherness") and is found in fissile, even numbers... Though Boethius does not mention it, these two types of number were traditionally characterised as male (odd) and female (even). In a wider, cosmological sense, Boethius notes briefly, this division distinguishes God, the soul, the mind and anything of an incorporeal nature (which all partake of an immutable "same" substance) from bodies, which have a changeable and varied nature (White) [33].

Since music is an especially perfect example of plurality-in-unity, making audible the most sophisticated relations of numbers, it exerts, by means of sympathy, an exceptional power over the soul and the universe. Thus the emotions, and the planets, are controlled by music. This music is not, however, necessarily audible. Since Boethius is interested in music only insofar as it presents an analogy to the metaphysical order of the universe, the music he discusses is really a kind of proto-music or arche-music. He would not expect to find it in the scores of musical works, or in performances of these works, even if he could have imagined an adequate musical notation (which was not the case, according to John Caldwell) [34].

Such a view of music seems absurd and unthinkable. The Cartesian episteme leads us to seek a positive trace of music—the score or the performance—and is much more sympathetic to behavioral and cognitive psychology, and to neuroscience. For this reason, music's power became a mystery to the Enlightenment. Music could not be simplified or quantified. Instead of being subject to mathematics, it shared by analogy the theoretical basis of mathematics.

By Mattheson's time, relations by resemblance are confined to superstition. Consequently, the power of music is often called "magical". The representation and stimulation of emotions, the moral control of behaviour, the presentation of ideal beauty, these faculties of music seem inexplicable to eighteenth-century thinkers.

For us, it is not just a question of the difficulties of determining the nature of music, as Aristotle put it. The fragmentation of our musical world has thrown music into the hands of the irresponsible. It is no longer a mere theoretical problem; the problem is moral, social and political. We must learn to think the unthinkable.

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The Sense of Music: Raymond Monelle's Legacy

Professor Mario Baroni, Bologna, IT: Keynote Speaker

ABSTRACT

My speech is divided in three parts: in the first part Raymond Monelle's theories from structuralism to deconstructionism will be described. The three volumes published in 1992, 2000, and 2006 will be analysed and discussed. A second part will be devoted to recent research on "systematic" musicology: cognitive research (particularly on musical emotions), anthropological research (particularly on phylogenetic and ontogenetic developments of human musicality) and music analysis (particularly of musical listening and musical performance) will be taken into account. I think that an exhaustive discussion on the relationships of these kinds of studies and semiotic tradition should be not only opportune, but even necessary. The final part of the speech will be devoted to the possible positive contributions of semiotics, and particularly of Monelle's thinking, to new systematic musicology. Special attention will be given to the use of verbal meanings to "translate" into words the sense of music: Monelle's ideas on this specific topic could be of particular help to recent cognitive research on musical meaning.

MONELLE'S RESEARCH

Raymond Monelle is well known as a musicologist, but his activity was not only based on theoretical thinking. When I personally met him I had the opportunity to listen to him as an excellent piano performer and a very pleasant improviser, and recently I also learned that he published several compositions. This practical activity helped to shed light on two important aspects of his musicological interests: on the one hand his passion for musical listening and musical criticism and his vast and deep knowledge of many kinds of music, and on the other his specific interest for what he named in a famous book, "the sense of music". I think that as a musician he made music and as a musicologist he needed to know intellectually what he was making, to give sense to his musical activity.

He started his research in the 1960s, when the new cultural trends in music were dominated by structural tendencies and scientific thinking. The knowledge of musical structures and the practice of music analysis were obviously one of his preferred fields of activity: he felt a strong fascination towards these aspects, even though this was not enough to satisfy his exigencies and curiosities. He understood that the sense of music could not be identified only in musical structures: his adhesion to structural hypotheses was critical, and a new discipline, semiotics, offered him a possible solution to his strongest interests. A musical sign had, in fact, to do with communication, was a sign of something else, outside musical structures. In the following two decades he therefore devoted himself to the study of linguistics and the philosophical bases of semiotics.

Linguistics and semiotics in music, Harwood Academic Publishers, 1992

The result of this systematic study was the first of his three important books, where it is possible to find an almost complete and detailed summary of all the principal theories concerning the semiotics of music: linguistic theories of the 20th century from the epoch of Sapir and De Saussure to that of Chomsky and post Chomskyan research. Philosophical theories from the epoch of Pierce to that of Derrida and post-modernism. The anthropological theories of Levi Strauss, three-dimensional hypotheses by Molino and Nattiez, and a number of other more or less important proposals of many well known researchers. In other words I believe that the book is still a sort of useful manual on the initial phase of research into the semiotics of music. Generally speaking Monelle describes with great correctness the ideas of many researchers often with interesting comparisons and clarifications, but the most fascinating aspect of this brilliant book is its tendency to reveal the hidden aspects of Monelle's personal thinking, his uncertainties, his refusals, his enthusiasms, his unease. At the end of the book however it is possible to find a more evident sympathetic attitude, if not an explicit adhesion, towards the tendencies of deconstructionist critical thinking.

The sense of music, Princeton University Press, 2000

In his second book, published after eight years, the core of his deepest interests is reached: the chosen title speaks very clearly. In this book the relationship between his way of thinking and the cultural tendencies of the epoch are substantially modified: now he speaks as a protagonist and quotes the existing theories as useful means to give more precision to his ideas. Three theoretical concepts acquire, in this context, a particular emphasis: the first is the musical topic, an idea that will have important consequences in Monelle's subsequent activity. He speaks critically of the book by Ratner [1] and makes astute remarks on the books by Allanbrook [2], Agawu [3] and others. In this respect we can observe that Monelle's ideas are always in search of a balance between the use of deconstructional tools and the aim of obtaining solid results. The second important discussion concerns the study of temporality in music, both from an anthropological point of view (the philosophy of time changes from culture to culture) and from a formal point of view, (listening to music implies continuous changes and time gives it aspects of pseudo-narration). The third important point is the search for an intertextual definition of a musical text. Intertext is not only conceived as the presence of traces of other musical texts, but also of other non musical contributions. And this is one of the most original and fruitful results of his theoretical thinking. For example an analysis of literary and philosophical texts implicitly present in Mahler's mind, memory and creativity, evidences a decisive influence toward some of his choices. On this occasion Monelle writes that the network of significations is infinite. But this does not mean that no precise things can be said about music.

The musical topic, Indiana University Press, 2006

The third book can be considered the most complete and mature version of Monelle's thinking, because of the exemplary clarity of its exposition, and a new more complex conception of topic, which is theoretically developed and practically exemplified.

This revised conception is also a synthesis of the ideas on musical sense exposed in the two previous volumes. Particularly important are the chapters on the nature and function of the verbal interpretation of musical meaning, with new reflexions on the theories of Pierce. On this point the main assertion is that the linguistic interpretation of a musical topic is not the “signified” of a musical figure, according to linguistic terminology, but (in Piercian terms) the “interpretant” of it. This means that the sense of music is not to be conceived as its “meaning”, but as a cultural object in connection with other cultural objects. Such a relationship is not simple and not conclusive, it is rather an infinite process: infinite, but not arbitrary. It can indeed be considered a scientific activity, not different from other similar activities, for example historical research.

In this book, however, a problem remains without any precise solution: the sense of music, in more general terms, cannot be reduced to the simple presence of topical images. Is it possible to extend the idea of musical sense outside the limits of the topics? Undoubtedly it may be possible, and sometimes hints at this problem are found in the book, but without a systematic approach. I think this is a problem that Monelle would have solved in the future, had his life allowed him this possibility.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES

To speak of the sense of music is not the aim of a unique and specific discipline. Even ordinary listeners, when they go to a concert speak of the sense of what they have listened to and discuss this with other music lovers, not to speak of the points of view of critics, of teachers and of students. In other words to understand the sense of music coincides with the motivation itself of music listening and is, we might say, the primary purpose of whoever has to do with music, and not only with listening to it. To understand music, however, is not the same thing as to speak of it: moreover some validity criteria must be applied to our verbal discourse, in order to avoid that every point of view can be considered equivalent to any other. This is the specific tool of the experts in musicological writings on music interpretation. Unfortunately, due to the great complexity of this tool, the musicological research on this topic is extremely large and not always consistent. Both the traditional philosophical theories and the more recent studies on the so called systematic musicology are problematic domains.

Now, my first question is: what is the place of semiotics and of Monelle's theories in the broad scenario of today's systematic musicology? In the last years the problem of musical sense has become central also for other not semiotic disciplines, partly linked to cognitive psychology and partly to technological innovations. It is difficult, however, that the problem of musical sense (or meaning as it is often called in Anglo-American literature) can be explained on the basis of only one single discipline. In recent years Richard Parncutt has written articles, organized conferences, edited a journal to spread the idea that the discipline traditionally named “systematic musicology” has to be gradually transformed into a system of interrelated disciplines [4] [5]. I agree with him, and I am convinced that the problem of understanding and scientifically explaining the sense of music can be obtained only in a multidisciplinary context of inter-connected studies. I think that this orientation is already existent, even though in a still implicit form: for example it is to be noticed that nowadays historians, analysts, psychologists and sociologists often discuss, in the same conference or in an issue of the same journal, similar

problems from different points of view; and some books on musical performance accept very different articles of anthropologists, computer scientists, and experts in the psychology of emotions. Crossings of disciplines like these have always been present in our field, but in the last years they have been much more frequent. In the next part of my article I shall give examples of this phenomenon.

Music emotions

One of the most widespread topics of recent years in musicological research is the study of music emotion. The two big volumes of Oxford University Press edited by Patrick Juslin and John Sloboda [6] [7], the triple issue of *Music Analysis* (Spitzer) [8], the two Special Issues of *Musicae Scientiae* (Juslin and Zentner) [9] and (Lamont and Eerola) [10], a striking number of articles published in many journals and the titles of other books, can testify to the universal interest in this topic. It would be significant to know the cultural-historical motivations behind such interest, but so far we have no study on this subject.

In this kind of literature the idea that understanding music principally coincides with its emotional message is normally given as a primary assumption. In this respect Raymond Monelle [11] was right when he refused to exclusively locate musical meaning in the area of emotions. The emotional responses to music, however, cannot be ignored, even though many problems can arise and actually arose from emotional theories applied to the matter of musical meaning. Here I shall limit myself to mentioning just a few examples.

Let us start from the distinction between “categorical” and “dimensional” approaches to emotion (Juslin and Sloboda) [12]. In the former case the convention is to accept the different categories of emotion formalized by psychologists (and principally “basic” emotions such as happiness, fear, anger, sadness, and so on, considered as the most important in the course of human evolution) and to apply them to music. In the latter, human affects are considered according to two concurring “dimensions”: the amount of excitement/stillness (arousal) and that of pleasure/displeasure (valence) organized, from a minimum to a maximum, according to two crossed locations (horizontal and vertical) in a circle. This theory that Russell [13] called the “circumplex model of affect”, had the advantage of avoiding too rigid boundaries among emotions. This could better fit the nature of music emotions, but in some cases it is not able to distinguish different affects belonging to the same area. For example, “if feelings of gratitude, compassion, tenderness and contentment were to occupy the same location in the circumplex, they would be treated as affectively equivalent”, hence, little can be learned about their specific nature (Zentner) [14].

The categorical model of emotions is by far the most commonly shared of the two theoretical systems. The main promoter of this way of thinking has been Patrick Juslin, who on different occasions carefully exposed not only the connections between music and basic emotions, but also detailed lists of musical features typically used for each of them (such as happiness, fear, anger, sadness, tenderness) [15] [16] [17]. Juslin had mainly psychological and anthropological interests, and the word “music” in his articles was rarely linked to specific epochs or styles, but normally to “music” in itself. His theories, however, have been adopted also in historically specific instances: Michael Spitzer, for example, who comes from totally different cultural origins, applied them to the analysis of pieces by Schubert [18], not to mention many other authors that share the same point of view.

Particular aspects of categorical theory applied to music have often been discussed: for example doubts have been raised about the idea that musical emotions ought to be reduced to a few basic emotions (Zbikovsky) [19], and also the list of structural factors indicated as causes of emotional expression has been discussed, for example, by Gabrielsson and Lindström [20].

In this respect we must not forget that more than thirty years ago Michel Imberty [21] proposed a theory of music emotions based on interesting musical premises: it was based on “real” pieces of music (the piano *Preludes* by Claude Debussy) and the semantic “factors” indicated by the composer’s subjects, placed in a round space not very different from Russell’s “circumplex model”, had verbal connotations more strictly corresponding just to Debussy’s pieces (terms like “freshness, grace, deepness, nostalgia, passion, violence, dance, movement” were appropriately used), and finally, structural features (dynamics, texture, rhythm, tempo, contrasts) were strictly calculated and reciprocally dosed according to the presence of groups of verbal expressions.

Other themes are taken into consideration in this vast collection of stimulating questions concerning emotions and music: one of the most important, discussed by many researchers, is the difference between felt and perceived emotions, where “felt” has its accent placed on the subject (the listener), and “perceived” on the object (the music), with obvious possible interferences between them and associated aesthetic problems.

Other sophisticated models, different from those just described, have been proposed by other authors: for example Scherer and Zentner [22] propose a table of affective states that include not only emotions, but also judgements (like or dislike), moods, interpersonal relationships (cordiality or detachment), typical behaviours of individuals. And the musical structures are often considered in correspondence to aspects of verbal prosody. On another occasion, Scherer and Zentner [23], proposed to distinguish “utilitarian” from aesthetic emotions, where the former have biological aims (such as those of primary emotions) linked to survival problems or to aims present in common daily situations, and the latter have aims linked to ideal aspects of life (for example sublimity, vitality, tension) experienced as cultural values.

In the universe of music emotions, however, one problem more than others seems to be particularly close to the semiotic approaches: it is the question of the verbal lexicon necessary to define musical emotions. Two crucial problems are connected with this matter: to know what are the emotions that can be properly called “musical” and what are the most proper words to be used to name them. Zentner, Grandjean and Scherer [24] tried to tackle problems like these starting from a compilation of 515 affect terms (terms derived from the affective lexicon of several languages and a review of emotion terms used in the literature on music and emotion). Subsequently they presented a sample of 252 listeners with these affect labels. The listeners were asked to rate the frequency with which they felt any of the affect states in response to their preferred music. In this research the lexicon is not made up of the simple terms of basic emotion. In responses to the same music, some listeners used melancholy, others dreaming, others sentimental, but they did not deal with three different emotions but rather with three words that in affect theories can be considered members of the same “nostalgia complex”. One can add, at this point, that the three authors speak of reactions to music that are subtle, but in any case present in verbal lexicon, that is well known also in daily life and not musically specific.

There are however theories that go against this approach: for example Paddison [25], while critically discussing the traditional, ancient aesthetic of “mimesis”, proposes

the idea of an “intransitive” sense (a sense that does not “pass”, does not have any “transition”, from music to lexicon):

By “mimesis” I do not mean only, or even primarily, the “transitive” notions of imitation [...] where music is said “to imitate something” (this is what I shall call the “imitation of” theory), just as I do not, by expression, mean primarily transitive notions of expression where music is said “to express something” (this could be called the “expression of” theory). [...] I also go on to make the claim, following Walter Benjamin, that mimesis can be seen as an *impulse*, a mode of “identifying with” rather than necessarily as “imitation of” or “representation of” something external to itself.

Musical expressivity, he concludes, oscillates between its “transitive” mimetic moments and an “intransitive” internal “force-field”: that is to say, the sense of music can be found not only in its power to evoke something, but also in its internal “forceful” structures.

From examples like these it is easy to deduce how problematic the study of emotions in music can still be, but also how necessary it can be in order to better understand the still mysterious connections between music and its possible meanings, which is one of the main aims of semiotics.

Body reactions to music and music performance

One of the more interesting aspects of musical emotion is the presence of body reactions both in making music and in listening to it. A well known phenomenon is arousal, more or less present in different reactions to music depending on the structure of the music itself and the strength of the emotion: some aspects of this area have been discussed in the previous section. But the presence of physiological responses to music is also a well known and traditional field of research: for example pulse rate, skin conductivity, blood pressure, respiration, muscular tension, and so on, have been observed and measured by German researches ever since the end of the 19th century (Hodges) [26]. However, the presence of body reactions still remains a problematic topic. Marc Leman [27] points out that music, far from being a mere intellectual event, requires strong interests and emotional involvement, and poses the question of what «being involved in music» actually means. His answer is that music implies «physical energy [...] corporeal immersion in sound». His recent book studies and measures such forms of energy. Obviously the sense of music cannot be reduced only to physical responses like these, but their presence can be considered an important component of musical meaning, even if this presence is difficult to translate into verbal definitions. Manfred Clynes, too, experimentally studied other relevant aspects of the presence of body in the processes of understanding and producing music: in particular he studied forms of muscular and tactile reactions to musical listening that he named “sentic forms” [28].

The presence of premises like these easily explains why in recent years the topic of musical gesture has met with ever increasing interest, starting from the First International Conference on Music and Gesture held in Norwich UK, in 2003. An important book resumed some of the main contributions of that Conference (Gritten and King 2006) [29], also including a number of articles written by eminent semiologists among which Robert Hatten, David Lidov and Raymond Monelle. In the same year Altenmüller, Wiesendanger and Kesselring [30] published another volume on musical motions mainly based on

neurological research. Another collection of essays has been edited by Rolf Inge Godøy and Marc Leman [31].

One of the most interesting theories which connect the idea of motion to that of musical meaning is the “mimetical hypothesis” by Arnie Cox [32] published in the collection edited by Gritten and King. While in other contexts musical meanings tend to be identified with emotions, in this case they tend to be related to gestures. Three kinds of gestures are always subconsciously present in musical listening according to this theory: a sort of “imitation” of the gestures of the performers (observed, but also imagined or remembered), a sub-vocal “imitation” of sounds produced by a voice (but also by particular melodic instruments); the third is an “a-modal imitation”, empathic corporeal resonance of visceral exertion connected with sound production. Probably the sense of music is not only connected with images or concepts, but also with implicit sub-conscious gestures like these. Music is bodily, not only mentally, understandable.

This kind of embodied meaning is also an excellent introduction to the study of music performance. In the European classic tradition there are substantial differences between a score and its execution: more than seventy years ago H.G. Seashore (1937) [33] noticed that no performance faithfully followed the indications of the written notes of the score. Observations like these gave rise to the idea of “expression” in music, normally used in this field: since the initial articles on the subject (Gabrielsson 1987) [34] the term “expression” has come to imply a deviation from the score prescriptions. If we think of the idea of embodied meaning we can understand the origins of such deviations: the human body, when performing music, has its specific needs. A number of experiments clearly showed, for example, that human performers cannot reach the absolute precision of an automatic computer performance of a score, and that in order to obtain a “human like” performance a computer must simulate the “errors” that human bodies and human minds normally introduces in the rendering of a score. The annual competition proposed by a group of Japanese researchers, named “rendering contest” (*Rencon*), contains an interesting repertoire of such systematic errors (2011) [35]. Unfortunately, though, the concept of “expression” in performance neither coincides with that of emotion nor with that of musical sense. Its dimension is different and its definition is particularly problematic. A good example of problems like these is given for example by Nicholas Cook [36] in his analysis of different performances of Chopin’s mazurkas.

Independently from gestures and embodied meaning, the main aspect in this respect is that listening to music needs performance and duration in time. Music is not a static phenomenon, and for this reason it cannot be simply compared to language and verbal meanings, but also to other uses of language: for example to narrative [37]. Properties such as the presence of different temporal phases (beginnings, developments and endings), in other words of changing time, are of primary importance in musical listening. The theories of musical time developed by Michel Imberty in all his principal works, and now synthesized in his last book [38], provide an excellent analysis of the problem. In different ways Leonard B. Meyer [39] posed similar questions with his theory of musical expectation (the so called “implication- realization” process) and several followers of this theory added further research to his initial formulation (Huron) [40].

The just mentioned concepts and problems, and principally the idea that music composition is a deeply different activity from music performance and musical listening, clearly shows that musical sense cannot be reduced to unique and individual dimensions. Semiotic theories, and not only cognitive or emotional or biological theories, deal with

the same problem: for example Nattiez and Molino pose this premise at the basis of their tri-partition theory [41] where poietic activity has a relative independence from the aesthetic one. Moreover one can mention that music, like all forms of human exchanges and relationships (for example between composers, performers and listeners) is a collective and social phenomenon, and its sense is strongly dependent on different points of view and above all on cultural points of view. In the field of music execution itself a particular problem arises: not only are there expressive differences among players but there are also cultural transformations in the styles of performance. Expression is not a stable entity, because it is strongly influenced by collective trends: the sociology of culture has the specific aim of studying problems just like these. Only on this basis, for example, we can avoid the fallacious idea that understanding the sense of music is a subjective fact and that each listener is allowed to give legitimate interpretations of his/her listening.

Music and the sociology of culture

Tia DeNora [42] [43] says that the universally spread ideologies and beliefs regarding classical music (for example, rapt listening, a hierarchy of musical tastes and the presence of a canon of works) have a relatively short history: they were born in Vienna in the years of Beethoven and were confirmed by the German aesthetic tradition of the Nineteenth century, and in the 20th century by musicologists and philosophers like Adorno and Dahlhaus. Ideologies on music are obviously spread because they are necessary to give orientations to human choices (and not only in music), but I agree with DeNora that their nature and socio-cultural origins must be known and clarified. For this reason I think that a discipline such as the sociology and the history of culture is of primary interest even in the field of semiotics and of the reconstruction of the sense of music. Understanding music and discussing its sense cannot produce a unique and unquestionable meaning as could be the meaning of a word to be described in a dictionary. It inevitably means a profound knowledge of the socio-cultural conditions of its production and of the personal ways used by each composer to dose and filter the collective conditions of his/her epoch, and means also the knowledge of the transformations that the sense of music acquires in different epochs and cultural conditions: the intertextual analyses presented by Monelle in his books are, in this respect, absolutely convincing in their complexity.

I also believe, however, that in the current versions of the history of music the problem is normally underestimated and a correct reconstruction of a cultural history of musical styles in European music is still lacking, with the exception of a very few cases (e.g. Faure) [44]. In a book published some years ago [45] two colleagues and I developed a theory of musical grammar based on the idea that a musical style is a structural phenomenon made up of a complex construction of different structural layers, but that the existence of structures and layers like these does not necessarily possess an explanation in itself. Each singular musical structure (a duration, a pitch and so on) is “poietically” chosen by a composer who in his/her choices must take into account the “aesthetic” conditions posed by listeners, who must understand and accept the meanings intuitively included in such choices. The grammar of a style is a continuous negotiation between the composer’s intentions and the listeners’ agreements. Musical styles in their evolutions are collectively guided by social conditions: conditions given by time (for example we normally speak of a “baroque” style distinguished from “renaissance” or “classical” ones),

and conditions of geographical space (in the baroque epoch we speak for example of French, or Italian or German styles). Leonard B. Meyer in his book on style [46] made analogous assertion when he spoke of the connections between musical styles and social ideologies. In our study, however, we tried to give a more detailed example of a specific musical style (that of a book of chamber arias by Giovanni Legrenzi) which involved a complete reconstruction of all its grammatical choices and the production of a computer programme able to simulate arias in that style.

One of the more interesting applications of this discipline to a musical context is the analysis of youth movements in the Sixties of the past century in connection with youth music, and the explosion of rock styles. Young people, according to classic studies of Simon Frith, Philipp Tagg, and others, elaborated moral, social cultural values that had antagonistic valence toward the dominant traditional values, and music (and not only music, but also literature and other arts) closely reflected them in the structural and formal grammars of new popular musical styles [47] [48].

Ethnomusicologists and anthropologists have long known that each different culture has its own legitimate forms of belief and its traditional behaviours, and that their music must correspond to functions and expressions that are understood and appreciated by the members of such societies. On some occasions interchanges among cultures can create other aesthetic problems: for example when the music of a given culture is esteemed and accepted by another culture. The most well known example is that of black music and of the great variety of its contacts with Western music. In jazz music, mixtures and “contaminations” became accepted and normal in the context both for black and white society. In the already quoted article Tia DeNora gives the interesting example of the so called *bhangra beat*, a form of Asian dance music used by young Asians immigrated to the UK. The emergence of this use, “has offered young Asians a new resource for identity development and for articulating their relationship to [...] the UK” [49]. Other examples, however, have grown up in recent times due to the ever expanding power of the mass media and technological tools. I am thinking, for example, of what Peter Gabriel called “World music”.

The origins of music

The knowledge of so many different musical cultures, styles and functions, inevitably led researchers to the problem of the origins of music, and gave rise to a new musicological discipline endowed with its own methods, hypotheses and results. This discipline can also involve aspects of the research into the sense of music, for example by offering new perspectives on the relationships between music, verbal language, animal cries, or by giving suggestions about the primitive social functions of music and the traces of their survival in particular features of today’s music. Although from a methodological point of view it has nothing to do with semiotic traditions, it can be important for the research on the sense of music: I will try to indicate connections like these in the following pages. After the publication of a book on the “origins of music” (Wallin, Merker and Brown 2000) [50] many articles and books were in fact devoted to this topic, both from phylogenetic and ontogenetic points of view.

I shall start from phylogenesis and shall give a few examples that may have possible connections with the problem of giving sense to music. I shall take them initially from a special issue (*Music and evolution*) of *Musicae Scientiae*. Elvira Brattico and colleagues [51]

propose a hypothesis of primitive functions of music based on the “hedonic experience” of sound, with references to Darwin (e.g. bird calls) but also to recent neuro-biological inquiries. A quite similar proposal is advanced by Emery Schubert in the same issue [52]: after a discussion on the different possible functions of music and the exclusion of any communication function (communication implies assertion and response, but response is lacking in music), he proposes pleasure generation as the fundamental aim of music. Martindale, Hauser, Dermott, Miller, Pinker (quoted in the article) adopt a similar point of view. Steven Brown [53] develops a different idea: neurology and ethnomusicology show that the most shared forms of “chorus” or “vocal blending” is not homophony, but a “multi-layered polyphony” where short melodic motives are mixed with one another (as in the pygmy polyphonies studied by Simha Arom). It is not unconceivable to speculate that polyphony (or heterophony) actually preceded melody in the story of human musicality. Brown uses the term “contagious heterophony” to indicate a collective practice not only widespread among human beings but also among animals (he gives the example of wolves). A practice whose principal aim is that of confirming the sense of belonging to a group. Other examples could be cited, but the general context of the phylogenetic origins of music is highly problematic: Dermott and Hauser (2005) [54] for example say that the adaptive functions of music are so far a complete mystery: love, religion, war, have been evoked on several occasions, but the possibilities of any proof are extremely poor. Innate elements could be better examined taking into account ontogenetic clues (developmental evidence), comparative hypotheses (animal “music”) anthropological indications (cross-cultural events) or neurological analyses. In any case, we must say that at present we are in a starting phase of the discipline. Inquiries like these, however, have a powerful impact on the research into the sense of music: not, of course, regarding any specific kinds of music or a particular work of art, but music itself as a human phenomenon.

Another domain that is well studied, also because it can be experimentally observed, is that of the ontogenetic origins of music. Particularly important in this field is the study of mother-infant dialogues in the first periods of human life, which many authors connect with the first human musical experiences. Ellen Dissanayake [55] and Sandra Trehub [56] are present in the already quoted volume on the *Origins of Music* with two relevant articles. Dissanayake speaks of the “multimodal” activity of temporally patterned movements, able to control and coordinate, through vocalisations and gestures, the emotions of the two participants. Regular and repetitive forms of rhythmic proto-conversations and ritual gestures suggest that new-born babies possess an innate ability to recognize and produce “isomorphic” activities produced by different (multi-modal) perceptive sources: a mother uses her voice and the baby responds with analogous gestures, and vice-versa.

Primitive music and dance are inseparably interconnected. Trehub insists on the presence of such innate abilities by observing the problem from a cognitive point view: in several experiences she demonstrated that young babies (from six to nine months old) can recognise short melodies with the same intervals transposed in pitch. The same happens with rhythms that are recognized as the same pattern if it is slightly accelerated or retarded, but not if some duration is altered. Similarly, consonance and dissonance are easily distinguished with a particular preference for consonance and dislike for dissonance.

Colwin Trevarthen [57] uses the term “intrinsic motivic pulse” to refer to the tendency of babies (and then of adults) to express their “musicality” with expressive

gestures. Michel Imberty, on the basis of Trevarthen's results and the ideas of the psychoanalyst Daniel Stern [58], proposed an intriguing hypothesis on the genesis of the perception of musical time in infancy based on mother-infant dialogues: the first perceptions of time in the minds of babies are produced by regularities in repetition and expectation (the memory of past repetitions produces expectations of future repetitions: time is perceived on the basis of this principle). Moreover, time is not an abstract event: the exchanges between mother and infant imply vocal, tactile, motive, affective stimulations (principally the pleasure of "being with"): vitality affects, in Stern's terminology. This genesis is connected with the individual's future experience of music and the tensional aspects of musical temporality.

SOME FINAL REMARKS ON THE ROLE OF SEMIOTICS IN THE INQUIRIES ON THE SENSE OF MUSIC

In the last part of my paper I will deal with semiotic inquiries and Monelle's thinking in the field of musical sense. I shall start from the word itself I used in the title of my article. Why use "sense" and not "meaning" as we often find in literature? First of all I should observe that this is the word that Monelle adopted in one of his books, but there are also other motivations: in my opinion, the use of "meaning" (when applied to music) can have similar denotations to the use of "sense", from the point of view of its reference to musical facts, but it has different connotations when it is adopted outside music: while "sense" can serve to describe e.g. human behaviours or feelings, "meaning" is more often present when it indicates what is meant by a word. In other words it can evoke the notion of "semantic", and the idea of "musical semantics": an idea that was in use at the beginnings of semiotics when (as in the first book by Monelle) the comparison between music and verbal language was necessary in order to shed light systematically on analogies and differences between the two communication systems. Now the comparison is by no means exhausted, but the problem of verbal semantics applied to music has been clarified: musical meaning (or musical sense) is much more complex than initially thought and in any case is not to be considered as a "lexicon".

The practice of musical criticism or hermeneutic interpretations was well aware of complexities like these. It did not, however, have the purpose of discovering what was the sense of music, but simply tried to manifest in words the interpretation of a specific piece of music. Musical semiotics was a different phenomenon: when it came into being in the 1960s (the first International Conference, organized by Gino Stefani [59], was held in Beograd in 1973) its aim was not simply to interpret or to analyse pieces of music, but to study music in scientific terms as a means of communication. This was the reason why linguistics was so important in the early phases of the discipline. Another concurrent discipline did already exist in the field of music: music analysis, a solid tradition that had more than a century of experience. It, however, did not have the specific aim of discovering the sense of music, but only of describing its structural mechanisms. For reasons such as these, semiotics was a new discipline initially distinct from musical criticism and from music analysis.

Now, many disciplines interested in music, implicitly have aims that can coincide or can almost be compared to that indicated by Monelle in the title of his book: the sense of music. As we saw in the previous section on multidisciplinary research, a sort of

“Sensology” of music (obviously different from “semantics”) hovers around a wide area of scientific interests: many disciplines are becoming involved in the search. In my opinion the concurrence of different contributions can not only be useful, but in some cases risks to be essential for the future imaginary new discipline we are speaking about. But what could the function of semiotics be in this complex context? On this subject Monelle wrote words of exemplary clarity. In the introduction to his book on *Musical Topic* [60], he emphasizes the importance of the discipline and makes distinctions from other concurrent fields of research: the specific aim of musical semiotics, according to his conception, is to clarify the logic of musical sign, and for this purpose, other disciplines he calls “circumstantial interpretants” are not useful:

circumstantial interpretants – social and psychological considerations about manifested performances, or discussions of the “emotional” effects of the music – are a different matter, and are rather foreign to the world of semiotics. Semiotics is a logical study. The logic of signification demands that we examine the sign, not its manifestation.

The concept of sign, however, is differently described by different semiotic traditions and does not have a unique, shared identity: Monelle for example (*Linguistics and semiotics in music*) [61] points out that the semiotic tradition derived from Saussure uses a concept of sign not strictly comparable with that derived from Pierce. Eero Tarasti [62] makes use of signs taken from Piercian tradition such as icon, index, symbol, and so on; but in other cases he uses concepts taken from Greimas: isotopies, spatial temporal and actorial categories, or “modalities” such as “will”, “know”, “can” and so on. Each of such kinds of sign has a definition and shows precise relationships between the components of the sign process, but a systematically defined, and coherent notion of sign, useful for managing in efficient ways the sign functions present in a piece of music are so far difficult to find in the theory and in the practice of semiotics. One could also add that the same can be said in the field of cognitive sciences and in the whole interdisciplinary field I just described. This is absolutely true, but with the difference that sciences like these do not presuppose only “logical” relationships: their research always implies demonstrations based on empirical evidence. One might provocatively add that if semiotic descriptions in music were accompanied by empirical research they could be named “cognitive” instead of “logical”.

In the concluding pages of my paper, I will not emphasize the difference between semiotic and empirical research: I will try to follow the different path of emphasizing the analogies. In fact, it is true that the two kinds of research methods have nearly nothing in common from a methodological point of view, but it is also true that they have the common aim of explaining very similar events. I shall now try to develop this idea (or at least risk this bet) by means of some examples, principally (although not exclusively) taken from Monelle’s texts.

In the issue of the journal *Music Analysis* published in 2010 and devoted to emotional research there is an article by Tom Cochrane, whose title is: “Using the persona to express complex emotions in music” [63]. It is enriched by a number of references to philosophers such as Davies, Kivy, Levinson, Robinson and others. Its fundamental aim is to explain why a listener while perceiving music, automatically and unconsciously transforms his/her perceptions into the behaviours, attitudes or forms of thinking of an imaginary person. Who could such an imaginary person be? The composer? The music

itself, interpreted as a generically human event? Psychological research takes the problem into account, though it does not possess, so far, efficient theories able to exhaustively explain this mechanism. There is however a singular coincidence: Monelle in his deconstructive analysis of the composer's presence in a musical text (*The sense of music*) [64] takes into consideration the same problem but from another totally different point of view. He is interested in discussing the manifold subjectivities encountered within a literary novel (and possibly also within a piece of music): the narrator, the characters, the hero, different social voices and so on. He sets out to discuss them in relation to the presence of the author but above all to analyse the logical procedures present in such relationships and the possible "intentional fallacy" of their presence. Obviously these two presented examples are of a different nature: a psychological presence can be active in a listener's mind even if it is "fallacious", or not logically correct. But from a comparison like this, there clearly emerges, in my opinion, a partial coincidence between the aims of two such different disciplines. Once again I emphasize that both one and the other can be useful in trying to clarify the phenomenology of musical sense.

In another fragment Monelle (*Musical topic*) [65] discusses the conception of music as an abstract construct: he uses the word "abstract" to indicate the traditional idea of a music whose meaning is viewed in music itself (a problem we already mentioned in the previous pages of the present paper):

we may find heroes, riders, journeys, pomp, ceremony, weeping and dancing, [...] the church and the salon. The tradition of abstract analysis, focusing on development distribution, comparison, had obscured this obvious fact [...] Music [...] must always escape the constraints of meaning: it is [following Adorno] a "concept free discourse", and [according to Levi-Strauss] "a grammar without semantics".

I can add two remarks to this statement. From one point of view I only partially agree with Monelle's thinking: it is true that an absolute or "abstract" music analysis tends to obscure musical meanings that listeners actually perceive. It is also true, however, that musical meanings, in order to become music, have to be incorporated in structural features (chords, melodies, rhythms, timbres and so on) that are organized by structural constraints, endowed with conventional rules, governed by precise rules of style. From this point of view the abstract study of music can have an important function: that of allowing or facilitating the interpretation of possible connections between musical structures and musical sense. While it is true that analysis and the study of musical sense (mostly in critical and hermeneutic traditions) have evolved as two substantially different disciplines, endowed with different methods and aims, they are nevertheless at the borders of one another, and the great worth of semiotics has been that of proposing to study their relationships: a good example of a sort of interdisciplinary research.

The most interesting point of connection between semiotics and other fields of research, however, is to be found in the concept of "topic" (another of the key-words used by Monelle in one of his titles). Monelle's reflexions on the theories of Pierce and on the concept of "interpretant" lead to the idea that musical structures are to be conceived as a cultural objects in connection with other cultural objects. The analytical technique of topics provides the best demonstration of this principle: it is based on the association of complex but clearly defined sets of structural features with particular cultural objects such as affective phenomena, concepts, images, social values, collective behaviours and so on. This can be exemplified by the topics of the horse extensively studied in the third of

Monelle's three books; the image of the horse, in fact, is a cultural object widely present in the minds, in the affective reactions, in the social behaviours and conventions of European society, even if the "sense" of the horse can be different if we consider social classes, epochs and geographical locations. It can, though, have possible links with inquiries present in cognitive theory, in the theory of emotions and of gestures, in cultural studies, in ethnological and anthropological research. In other words, the study of cultural objects cannot be considered as a specific subject of semiotic research: the methods are different, but the contents can be the same.

In the practice of the study of "topics", the association between musical structures and their expressive contents is considered scientifically correct only if it is historically documented by a great (or simply a sufficient) number of musical pieces: the scientific results or the study of a given topic can be validated by demonstrating that in a well defined musical style, for a particular musical genre and in a precise local area, an agreement did exist between composers and listeners, according to which the complex set of musical features could be interpreted to mean something (for example the image of the horse) shared by all those concerned. In this context we can assert that we have a "neutral level" (according to Nattiez's terminology; "abstract" according to that of Monelle) and a coincidence between poetic and aesthetic intentions and reactions. These requirements can serve to distinguish the scientific validity of this approach from traditional musical hermeneutic and criticism, and also from other examples of so-called "semiotic" research that is often not so rigorous, when it is based on simple assertions and not on precise demonstrations.

A researcher coming from cognitive studies could raise some objections about this methodological procedure: for example that the method is not supported by empirical evidence, because it does not verify if the associated contents are actually perceived by listeners. This could be considered a good example of what I previously defined as the need for negotiations between disciplines. In this imaginary case a follower of semiotic topics could in turn raise his own objections: in all empirical sciences the need for evidence like this is limited to today's subjects, in this case the listeners, not to mention the difficulty to distinguish the competent from the less competent listeners (always open to infinite discussions and difficulties) while the aim of the topic is to describe the variants of the cultural object "horse" according to different epochs and kinds of society. Today's reactions to the topic of the horse could be considered no more than one of the many possible variants. Moreover it must take into account the fact that the place of horses in our society is strictly reduced and that our relationship with horses is largely mediated by films and television.

So, can negotiations like these obtain positive results? Can different research methods become so intellectually conscious as to compare results coming from different intentions and traditions? For the moment I have no reply to such questions. I leave them open, it depends on too many variables. I shall simply claim that the study of the sense of music is still in an initial phase of its development: our imaginary "Sensology" is only a dream for the future. I shall limit myself to two final considerations: that Raymond Monelle has given a substantial support to the concrete existence of this field, and that semiotics, even though methodologically different from other sciences, can be considered as one of the components of the multidisciplinary context I nowadays believe necessary to explore the mysterious world of the sense of music.

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PART II:

MUSICAL TOPIC THEORY,
NARRATIVITY, AND OTHER SEMIOTIC
PERSPECTIVES IN EIGHTEENTH AND
NINETEENTH CENTURY ART MUSIC

Ironizing “Allegory of Listening” – Deconstructing Monelle

Yonatan Bar-Yoshafat, PhD, The Open University, IL

ABSTRACT

In his thought-provoking book, *The Sense of Music*,¹ Monelle expanded our standard topical universe backwards and forwards in musical history. However, his target was not confined to establishing a wider lexicon of musical topics, but more radically: to reject the receptiveness for any “purely” musical signs (theoretically accepted by some semioticians) in favour of the apprehension of music as essentially a signifying medium. In his chapter, *Allegory and Deconstruction*, furthermore, he formulated an even more far-reaching assertion, stating that “the listener to music listens to music listening to itself”, with J. S. Bach's Fugue in A flat Major BWV 886 (WTC II No. 17) as a case in point.

The concept of allegory is closely related to the concept of irony, as was already noted by Schlegel (i.e., his famous fragment “all active wit is allegory = mythological irony”). This work shall delve into the correlation of the two concepts, and argue that while Monelle's interpretation is revealing in terms of methodology, it is also questionable on several levels. The most crucial amongst them are the semiotic significances of the fugue's main topics, the account on the alleged deconstructive tendency of the piece (or what Monelle, following Paul de Man, calls “allegory of listening”), and the claim that the Bach example could in principle be paralleled with other works.

As instrumental music covers a shorter span of history than vocal music or literature, its expressive tropes need to be scrutinized with further historical sensitivity. Comparing Monelle's analysis of Bach's fugue with my own analysis of the final movement of C. P. E. Bach's sonata Wq. 65/17 in G minor, I will show that the latter's work manifests self-reflexivity and ironic “semiotic strategy”, to use Umberto Eco's phrase, and draw attention to the significations of stylistic and cultural disparity of works from different historical contexts.

INTRODUCTION

At the outset of chapter 8 in *The Sense of Music*, entitled “Allegory and Deconstruction”, Raymond Monelle presents an intriguing reading of J. S. Bach's Fugue in A flat Major BWV 886 (WTC II No. 17) [1]. Monelle meticulously unveils the riches of complexities of this piece, concentrating on the topical tension that emerges from the juxtaposition of the fugue's main subject and countersubject, and on the peculiar relationship between the fugue and its ancestor version (The Fughetta in F Major BWV 901). However, scrutinizing the Bach fugue in fact serves as a springboard for a much more inclusive object than topical decoding and comparative analysis of textual revisions; the

¹ Monelle, R., 2000. *The Sense Of Music: Semiotic Essays*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

incentive of Monelle's reading is ultimately to convince us that music is inherently a signifying medium, irrevocably denied of the ability to convey "pure" signs (or what he calls "objective" musical figures), and is "bound to deconstruct itself" [3]. More specifically, Monelle makes conclusive assertions regarding (1) the semiotic significations of the fugue's key topics, (2) the fundamental deconstructive tendency of the fugue in relation to the fughetta, and (3) the immanent deconstructive nature of music in general, which he dubs "allegory of listening".

In what follows I shall examine each of these claims (concentrating on the first two), and, by delving into on the relation of the concept of allegory to that of irony, propose an alternative reading of what seems to be latent in Monelle's own text.

Allegories of Listening

Allegory is an act of invoking something by way of pointing at something else. In allegory, as Walter Benjamin argued, "Any person, any object, any relationship can mean absolutely anything else" [4]. For the post-structuralist critic Paul de Man, the discontinuity between signs and significances is not confined to the sphere of figural tropes but is implicit in our desire to understand the world through language. According to de Man all texts inevitably demonstrate their own narrative instability, which is why all texts are allegorical, and why for him "allegories are always ... allegories of the impossibility of reading" [5].

Following de Man's concept of "Allegories of Reading", Monelle asks whether it could be shown that music too is an "Allegory" in the deconstructive sense, i.e., that reading (or listening to) musical texts can reveal their inherent instability. He believes that the Bach fugue is a particular pertinent example, albeit not unique.²

Topical and intertextual significations in BWV 886

Monelle locates arrays of contrarities in the symbolic connotations of each of the two principle ideas in Bach's A flat major fugue.³ The fugue's subject, with its metric agility, diatonic progression and intervallic leaps, "comes from the world of the trio sonata", whereas the first countersubject, which consists of even note values in a descending chromatic fourth (the *passus duriusculus*), is a *Lamento* which belongs to the world of liturgical or theatrical music [6]. The two figures thus represent a set of binaries, which, according to Monelle, include easeful vs. painful, modern vs. ancient, rational vs. mystic, chamber vs. church, diatonic vs. chromatic, metric vs. a-metric, instrumental vs. vocal, string vs. organ and abstract vs. symbolic [7].

Such marked juxtapositions of clashing topics are labeled by Robert Hatten as musical "Tropes", which he define as "the bringing together of two otherwise incompatible style types in a single location to produce a unique expressive meaning from their collision or fusion" [8]. But Monelle wishes to differentiate the meanings of each of the musical topics in the Bach fugue, in order to put them in an allegorical relation; for this purpose he classifies the two "style types" applying Charles Sanders Peirce's typological classes of

² Monelle also mentions his own analysis of Peter Maxwell Davies's *Antechrist*, and point towards Haydn's "Representation of Chaos" from his *Schöpfung*. (Monelle, *The Sense of Music*, pp. 206-07). Monelle returned to Bach's fugue in order to reaffirm its allegorical significations in yet another article. See [2].

³ See appendix example no. 1 (the opening bars of BWB 886).

signs (icon-index-symbol), which play an important role throughout his book.⁴ Hence, the Corellian-trio-sonata subject is an indexical sign because of its suggestiveness of ... a Corelli sonata,⁵ whereas the *Lamento* countersubject is both indexical and symbolic, because it is not only connected with vocal, instrumental, sacred and secular genres, but is also associated with mournful sentiments [9].

Already here we face some interpretive difficulties. The juxtaposition of the trio sonata topic and the *Lamento* topic does not produce as vigorous a topological contrast as Monelle argues. On the one hand, as fugal movements are a salient sign of the *sonata da chiesa* repertoire,⁶ the fugal subject can be strongly connected to the same liturgical world of the *Lamento* countersubject. Its rising and descending diatonic tetrachords are obviously associated with more innocent and spirited sentiments than the chromatic *Lamento* tetrachord, but it is precisely their adjacency that can make it symbolise elevation, blissful or celestial feelings. On the other hand, the *Lamento* countersubject receives here too much symbolic weight. Monelle objects Peter Williams's assertion, according to which by Bach's day instances of instrumental chromatic fourths became traditional and acted grammatically or rhetorically rather than symbolically [10]. Monelle's concerns are of course that if we "objectify" the *Lamento* topic as a cliché we sterilize its meanings; but that is in fact what Bach does here. As David Ledbetter reaffirms: "Of all the triple counterpoints that include the *Lamento* bass which Bach used in his keyboard works, this is the most ordinary" [11].

Even if we leave aside the Peircean typological classes of signs, the fugue can be shown to produce a rather mild trope. First (and this is perhaps the most important reason for the decrease of markedness of this particular *Lamento* as a symbolic sign), Bach uses the *Lamento* in the major-mode context of the piece – a fact that went unmentioned in Monelle's analysis even though it bares major semiotic implications – which bleaches its painful/mournful stamp.⁷ Second, *Lamento* subjects are frequent visitors in the trio sonata world, especially in *da chiesa* sonatas, so their assemblage with more "abstract" (trio sonata) subjects is of no great surprise.⁸ Third, there is a second countersubject in this fugue, and even though Monelle mentions it, he neither classifies its typology nor

⁴ In a nutshell, Monelle maintains that a *musical icon* is based on figural resemblance (literal imitation of the signified), a *musical index* is based on figural causality (stylistic reference to the signified), and a *musical symbol* is based on figural contingency (agreed cultural code with no direct connection to the signified). As Monelle demonstrates throughout his book, topics are usually compounded of more than one sign type.

⁵ Monelle does not fully explain this classification otherwise than by saying that the trio sonata subject is "connected with court and drawing rooms, and thus with the tone of stringed instruments, with rationalism and enlightenment, with the spurious stability of hierarchic society, with sophisticated badinage." Monelle, R., 2000, pp. 199-200.

⁶ Monelle himself acknowledges the affiliation between trio sonata subjects and imitative procedures (Ibid., p. 200).

⁷ A similar case can be found in Bach's Violin Sonata in C Major BWV 1005. Here too Bach builds a fugue with a dance-like subject and a (major-mode) *Lamento* countersubject, written in "alla breve", to add an archaic, liturgical, flavour. But as in the A flat Major fugue, this lovely movement does not raise any sense of "allegory".

⁸ Some illuminating examples can be found in Corelli's (trio) sonatas *da chiesa* Op. 1 No. 2 in E minor (second movement, mm. 22-28) and Op. 3 No. 9 in F minor (first movement, mm. 1-4). In his trio Op. 1 No. 11 in D minor the second movement actually opens with a *Lamento* subject in imitation (mm. 1-8); but since descending chromatic fourths are so common in that era, one should not be surprised to find a glimpse of them even in *da camera* pieces – such as Corelli's Op. 4 No. 1 in C Major (second movement, mm. 48-49).

addresses its reconciling functionality.⁹ Fourth, as the convention of a fugue requires repetitions of simultaneous subjects and countersubjects, each repetition of the fugue's trope necessarily undermines its effect, as our mind quickly drifts along with the fugue's bewitching harmonic escalation.

This brings us to Monelle's more radical claim, according to which the conflicting topics of the work bring about a "special" listening to bars 24-50 (from the point where the original fughetta ended to the end of the fugue), where tonality becomes increasingly precarious until it almost falls apart [12].

No doubt, the newer part of the fugue is more adventurous in its chromatic and flattening tendencies than whatever happened in the fughetta. But that does not yet justify the analogy Monelle draws between Bach's fugue as a whole and Marcel Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu*, in which, as de Man maintained, two authorial levels (the auteur and the protagonist) converge and undermine each other's narrative (and thus represents a masterpiece of allegory of reading). The move from the older part of the fugue to the newer part is just as smooth as the juxtaposition of the two main topics, and none of these aspects produces a sense of authorial ambiguity;¹⁰ at best, we can maintain that listening to the fugue – bearing in mind the fughetta – adds an apparent intertextual fragrance to our experience. But intertextuality does not necessarily produce deconstructive allegories.¹¹ Furthermore, the "harmonic labyrinth", as Monelle names the supplementary part of the fugue, by no means harms the movement's organic emotional affect. Certainly there is a link between the affective cohesion of the fugue and its structural unity; but more importantly: the chain of contrasts indicated by Monelle is part of the Baroque hybrid "Langue", which in itself does not call for a reflexive interpretation. Not only that the second part of the fugue does not threaten to undermine the preceding part, but as the fugue progresses it fulfills the latent harmonic boldness that was cut short in the fughetta, and gradually relinquishes itself from its initial symbolic weight.

And why should we confine our interpretation of the fugue solely to its intertextual relations with the fughetta? As a matter of fact, the fugue's intertextuality could be traced back to Corelli's (da chiesa) violin sonata Op. 5 No. 3, the first two bars of which are quoted in Monelle's book (p. 200). Had he given us the bass part from Corelli's sonata, we would have easily recognized a descending (diatonic) tetrachord accompanying our "indexical" subject, which, a few bars later (at bars 12-13) appears in the parallel minor-mode, *Lamenting* chromatically.¹² A different interesting intertextual moment appears towards the end of the fugue, right after the climatic fermata (at bars 46-47), when we unexpectedly recognize the motive that ends the "ritornello" from the first movement of Bach's *Italian Concerto* in F Major (bars 24-26) – a work written in the same key as that of the fughetta.¹³

⁹ Note the abundant of descending diatonic tetrachords in the second countersubject, which take their dexterity from the trio sonata subject and their falling motion from the Lamenting first countersubject.

¹⁰ In this respect, the Bach example is much closer to, say, Wagner's bacchanale addition to the later version of his *Tannhäuser* overture.

¹¹ Of course, taking into account the habitual practices of parodying and rearranging musical works during the 18th century, one should be careful not to confuse intertextual relations that were generated by pragmatic considerations with works that produce intentional intertextual meanings. Indeed, intentional intertextuality occurred throughout the history of western music, and in this respect many mid-ages works – utilizing self parodies and emblematic allusions – are more allegorical than Bach's fugue.

¹² Another notable resemblance can be found in a short transitional motive which runs both at the first half of bar 3 in Corelli's work and at the first half of bar 5 in Bach's work.

¹³ N.B., both the final bars of the "ritornello" section and their equivalent passage in the fugue lead to a deceptive cadence before arriving at the anticipated PAC.

Taking into account such intertextual instances will necessarily alter our listening experience and interpretation, albeit not necessarily turn them into allegories of listening.

At one point in his chapter Monelle claims en passant that with the emergence of the later part of the fugue the music leads to “aporia” [13]. This word, which in ancient Greek stood for a state of conscious bewilderment, brings us closer to the more reflexive levels of music hermeneutics. In many of Plato's dialogues, Socrates interrogates his educated conversational partners to the point where they admit to arrive at a state of aporia. Socrates is of course known for pretending to be an ignorant, and this feign incompetence, which originated in Greek comedy, was named *eirōneía* – from which the modern word “irony” is derived.

Between Allegory and Irony

In daily use, allegory and irony are chiefly associated with rhetorical tropes that express a gap between what is being said and what is actually meant. But ever since Friedrich Schlegel's cardinal contribution to the romantic discourse of self-reflexivity, allegory and irony share a deeper meaning that transports them to the sphere of philosophy. For Schlegel, the lack of cohesion between signs and significances expresses the “disjointedness” condition of man, for whom not only is the “absolute” outside of reach, but also self-comprehensibility.¹⁴

Schlegel famously depicted irony as a “constant alteration of self-creation and self-destruction” and as a “permanent *parabasis*” [14]. *Parabasis*, another concept that originated in ancient Greek comedy, means an “interruption of a discourse by a shift in the rhetorical register” [15]. De Man explains that allegory's form is experienced as a diachronic narrative whereas irony's form is experienced as a synchronic moment; thus for him “irony is the permanent parabasis of the allegory of trope” [16] (the latter is the ideal narrative coherence of the text, which irony disrupts). Marshal Brown adds another angle to the relationship between allegory and irony, explaining that “irony is allegory freed of the melancholy inherent in the inability to express its meaning directly” [17]. The freedom from melancholy is what connects irony to wit (but not necessarily humour).^{15 16}

Romantic irony plays an important role in the sphere of art. “The ironization of form”, writes Benjamin, “is like the storm which lifts up [*aufheben*] the curtain of the transcendental order of art and reveals it for what it is, in this order as well as in the unmediated existence of the work” [21]. Gary Handwerk's analysis of the ironic in art can clarify Benjamin's metaphor. “As a technical device”, writes Handwerk, “Romantic irony has most typically been identified as the disruption within a text or performance of its aura of aesthetic illusion” [22]. Handwerk maintains that shattering the façade of aesthetic illusion in artworks can take shape in either a direct intrusion by the author, in self-reflexive actions of the protagonists, or in abruptly disjunctive transitions between narrative registers. Within the context of instrumental music, the last category is of special importance.

¹⁴ Schlegel followed Fichte's argument, according to which the mind is prevented from fully understanding itself, because self-reflexivity means that the subject has to split and reflect on itself as an object.

¹⁵ On irony as allegory and wit see: [18]

¹⁶ On the serious sides of irony and its relation to music see [19] [20].

Ironic fragmentations in Wq. 65/17

How can a fugue be ironically “deconstructed”? Hypothetically, Bach could have undercut the fugue's conventions by much extremer measures. For example: he could have had dilute the movement's polyphonic texture, or digress to another genre's convention, or maintain the fugue but add something completely different – all of which would sharply break (or break free, or break through) our expectations from a fugue. Needless to say, such options are further removed not only from the specific context of the WTC, but of J. S. Bach's world in general. But this is exactly what happens in the last movement of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach's G minor sonata Wq. 65/17 from 1746.¹⁷

The movement opens with rapid arpeggios in a quasi-toccatà style which in a flash lead to a distinctly fugal subject, consisting of a clear rhythmic sequence and descending chromatic steps (which, not incidentally, exceed the common interval of perfect fourth). The monophonic subject stimulates our expectation (and most certainly – 18th century listeners!) for a proper answer with a countersubject – but that expectation never comes to pass. Instead, a prelude-like hasty diatonic sequence takes over and leads into an abrupt, almost comical, cadence; immediately thereafter the music digresses to a completely different mood, with a cheerful theme accompanied homophonically, starting unexpectedly on the sixth degree but quickly modulating towards the relative major.

The ironic feature of this opening escaped even one of C. P. E. Bach's music experts, David Schulenberg, who argued that “If the [g minor] sonata [Wq. 65/17] gives any disappointment, it is because the monophonic statements of the chromatic subject of the last movement may suggest to some hearers the opening of a fugue, and of course the subject receives no imitative development (nor any development at all)” [23]. But this is listening to C. P. E. Bach's music through J. S. Bach's ears.

Emanuel Bach is deliberately frustrating us through a series of “parabases”. The music deceives us on several levels (grammatical and semiotic). The two “toccatà” opening bars, though written in double-meter, could be heard as beginning in triple-meter (3/8); the “fugal” subjects increase the metric ambiguity, sounding first in 3/4 (bar 3 and first beat of bar 4), then retroactively, with the added pair of eight notes at the beginning of bar 6, in 4/4. The mannerist cadence momentarily halts the music as if to restart correctly, and indeed – it manages to reassure the metric flow; but the moment of metric stabilizations overlaps with the moment of tonal destabilization (where it drifts away to the parallel major).

These rhetorical eccentricities, taken together with the topical digressions, do not allow an “automatic” (or “naïve”) mode of listening. And indeed, once we have come to recognize the irony of this opening, the rest of movement will be addressed with a more reflexive orientation. The movement is written in a seemingly simple binary form (it progresses from tonic to relative major, and, after the double line bar, returns to the tonic). The secondary tonal area recalls motives from the primary subject in a manner not uncommon in Baroque works, but reshuffles them in a somewhat disorienting way. Several ideas presented in the first part of the movement are reintroduced after the double line bar in a varied version (which is how Emanuel Bach usually “develops” his materials). Thereafter, at bar 62, we encounter an early instance of a false recapitulation, with the

¹⁷ See appendix example no. 2 (the opening bars of Wq. 65/15).

primary subject transposed to D Minor.¹⁸ At bar 88 we hear the short "toccata" in the tonic, but before a true sense of recapitulation can be achieved the music modulates without delay to the subdominant C minor, where the fugal theme is recapitulated. As a matter of fact, the "fugue" theme is only heard once again – at the very end of the movement – and its different key appearances throughout the movement recalls C. P. E. Bach's Rondo works. Additional materials from the first part of the movement reappear, though not in their expected order or key. The music skips through many of the secondary tonal area motives (which corresponded to the primary subject), right to the modulatory theme, at bar 98, now arriving at A flat major (the Neapolitan second degree). Only at bar 101, fifteen bars before the end of the movement, does the primary key begin to sneak back, albeit the tonic chord is put off to the very last bar (and even the final bar ends with an appoggiatura note, driving our expectation for a resolution to the very end of the piece).

This movement thus maintains a loose affiliation to several prominent conventions (Toccata, Fugue, Rondo, binary Suite and Sonata movements). Even though analysis can ascertain its sonata form, the continual suppression of our educated presumptions regarding music genres and grammar makes our listening experience "aporiatic": we begin by thinking that we are listening to a fugue; then a secondary tonal area leads us to hear a quasi-Baroque (suite? sonata?) movement; the appearance of a "development" section affirms the sense of a sonata movement; which is quickly lost again, for the lack of a clear (thematic and tonal) recapitulation;¹⁹ the later restatements of the fugue theme in non-tonal keys again confuses our formal orientation, for a rondo form now comes to mind; the final restatement of what was the second tonal area in the home key shifts us back to the sonata domain, but by now we are not sure anymore as to what we have been listening to. As the movement progresses, the attentive listener are bound to listen reflexively not only to the music – but also to the very act of his own listening.

The fragmentation of this movement – which, from a formalistic point of view, might raise doubts regarding its organic cohesion and thematic development – is in fact a typical sign of C. P. E. Bach's "permanent" semiotic witticism. What is so special in this example, however, and what sets it apart from anything J. S. Bach ever did in any of his boldest fugues, is how Emanuel Bach manages in setting an instantaneous ironic trope consisting of a referent and its nonexistent "negative referent"²⁰ – the fugal subject and the (never fulfilled) expectation for a countersubject!

Conclusions: The multivalent of (musical) texts and the plausibility of interpretational readings

Monelle succeeded in expanding our understanding of the mechanism and spirit of musical topics and how to assess their different levels. However, in his insistence that

¹⁸ See J. Hepokoski's and W. Darcy's seven leading criteria for a false-recapitulation effect, to which Emanuel Bach's movement mostly conform. See [24]. Most notable is probably the appearance of the secondary tonal area theme at bars 72-79, prior to the "genuine" recapitulation at bar 88.

¹⁹ Browsing on C. P. E. Bach's famous *Württembergische Sonaten* (Wq. 49/1-6) published in 1744 (two years prior to the G minor Sonata) reveals that all of the set's opening movements (and about half of its closing movements) already consist of "double" recapitulations. The formal digression found here should not be attributed to an alleged "transitory" stage in sonata form history, but to a deliberate choice of the composer.

²⁰ I suggest the term "negative reference" to distinguish between parodic phenomena – in which a certain object is grotesquely exaggerated or distorted, and ironic phenomena – in which a certain object is referred to by alluding to its opposite familiar qualities.

“there has never been a gesture that was ‘purely musical’” [25] he exchanged one extreme view (pure formalism, which he had rightly denounced) for another (an all-encompassing music symbolism). As Kofi Agawu has shown, “purely” musical signs can converge with topical signs in creating interpretational signification [26]. But what is at stake here is, of course, a more fundamental predicament which exceeds the frame of music semiotics. It is the unabridged gap between structural and post structural world views, for which I do not pretend to offer any resolution. I can only quote from Umberto Eco's important text on interpretation, which can direct us in what strikes me as a most productive path:

One could object that the only alternative to a radical reader-oriented theory of interpretation is the one extolled by those who say that the only valid interpretation aims at finding the original intention of the author. In some of my recent writings I have suggested that between the intention of the author (very difficult to find out and frequently irrelevant for the interpretation of a text) and the intention of the interpreter who (to quote Richard Rorty) simply 'beats the text into shape which will serve for his purpose', there is a third possibility. There is an intention of the text. [...] To recognize the *intention operis* [the intention of the text] is to recognize a semiotic strategy. Sometimes the semiotic strategy is detectable on the grounds of established stylistic conventions. [...] Naturally, I can witness a case of irony, and as a matter of fact the following text should be read in a more sophisticated way. [...] The internal textual coherence controls the otherwise uncontrollable drives of the reader [27].

But there is a historical context to consider too. To assume that every work inevitably deconstructs itself is to risk flattening the significations of stylistic and cultural disparity of works from different historical periods.²¹ As instrumental music covers a shorter span of history than vocal music or literature, its expressive tropes need to be scrutinized with further sensitivity. Thus, the irony found in C. P. E. Bach's music is not an indication of an immanent deconstruction tendency in music, but rather an idiosyncratic “parole” that emerged in a specific time and place, and which represents a “moment” of artistic self-reflexivity regarding music's “free” play of sounds and what they stand for.

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²¹ As John M. Ellis argues, we expect particular canonical artworks – from essentially different historic and cultural contexts – to generate different critical commentaries rather than repeated formularization of a certain theory. See [28].

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APPENDIX

Fugue XVII

Example 1. J. S. Bach, Fugue No. 17 in A \flat Major BWV 886, opening entries

Allegro assai

7

p

12

Example 2. C. P. E. Bach, Keyboard Sonata in G Minor Wq. 65/17, opening

How Rhetorical Signs Narrate by Tropes in Performing Handel's Giulio Cesare

Marjo Suominen, MA, *The University of Helsinki, FI*

ABSTRACT

Handel was a creator of skilfully set musical moods and ideas. He merged traditional German based harmonic of contrasts with Italianate-French musical rhetoric of affections, which he formulated into originally inventive expression of tonal palette. Giulio Cesare in Egitto, is one of his all-time most successful operas. I will examine Handel's rhetoric based musical applications of emotive methods occurring in his Giulio Cesare, which function as opera's alternatives, giving narrative clues by hunting, military and pastoral tropes for different performance views.

OUTLINES FOR A RESEARCH

Classical rhetorical applications were central to all artistic renditions during the 18th Century, and allegorical context via musical decoration reveals contemporary (didactic) messages. I apply the theory of affects in music appearing in the writings by Handel's colleague Johann Mattheson grounded on Classic Aristotelian and Cartesian ideals. These are seen against Ciceronian rhetoric thinking, which belonged to Handel's basic schooling in Halle, his town of birth. Also, this relates to so called Hippocratic-Galenic four elements, by which I will show the different representations of the opera's characters as cathartic (ethic) implication. Studying Handel's metaphors of love in Giulio Cesare in Egitto, I will introduce how they are depicted by the arias, through hunting, military and pastoral associations, as a prevailing message. The atmospheric tone paintings of the arias answer the following questions: how is love defined in Giulio Cesare in Egitto? What kind of musical signs and metaphors are found? What will these convey and how will they communicate through different interpretations? Love is an essential theme in Giulio Cesare as a result of that the arias' foci are interlocked by the affection tensions. I will provide some fairly recent audiovisual performance examples of "epoch"/pastoral (ENO, 1984), "satirical"/hunting (Sellars, 1990) and "colonialist"/military (Glyndebourne, 2005) perspectives of the work, adding those to different rhetoric ways of thinking, i.e. those of the Italian, French and German musical rhetoric.

Handel wrote Giulio Cesare based on Nicola Haym's libretto, which was inspired by a Venetian opera composed by Antonio Sartorio and libretto written for it by Francesco Bussani 47 years earlier. Bussani's version was based on some historical sources related to Caesar's biographies (by Suetonius, Plutarch and Hirtius). Instead of the political intrigue as the main theme, both Bussani and Haym chose to emphasize the romantic junctions of the storyline in their librettos. As a framework of the musical

analysis, I am applying the theory of affections in music appearing in the writings by Johann Mattheson (especially in his *Das Neu=Eröffnete Orchestre*, The Newly-Reopened Orchestra, 1713, also *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, The Flawless Conductor, 1739). Mattheson grounded his musical theoretical outlines on Classic Aristotelian and Cartesian ideals (established first in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and later in Descartes' *Les passions de l'âme*) which relate closely to performance practices of the work [1]. He connects affections to musical figures. Mattheson refers in *Capellmeister* that melody is to be directed for presenting affection [2]. To his mind the emphasis shifts from the composer to the performer [3]. Mattheson regards rhetorical figures as musical devices [4]. He considers musical figures identical and having such a natural status in the melody with rhetorical counterparts, and being so well related, as if the Greek orators had derived their speech figures from the art of the musical tones itself [5].

Method of affects is related to theories of emotion launched by classical philosophers on responses to events as triggering bodily changes and motivating characteristic behaviour. Different theories posit several ontologies of emotion and there has been dispute about what emotions really are. Also emotions have raised questions about their extent and contribution to rationality. In Handel's *Giulio* emotions are seen via enhancing self-knowledge by Cartesian view, in which there is as an assumption that one knows the best one's own emotions but at the same time they can cause many failures of self-knowledge by their misleading complexity. In *Giulio* emotions are also connected to morality, likewise they traditionally have been regarded as a threat to morality and rationality which is reflected in means of vices and virtues: envy, wrath and pride seen as common vices and love, compassion and sympathy as virtues. There were three basic Hellenistic standpoints the Stoic by which emotions were irrational beliefs, and one should get rid of all desires and attachments; Epicurean according to which one should avoid pain creating pleasures since one possesses a rudimentary desire to aspire pleasure, and Skeptic who viewed that beliefs itself were irrational and causing the pain. All three schools emphasized the value of the absence of the disturbance in the soul. Scottish philosopher David Hume suggested in the 18th century that emotions as partly constituted by desires, will help us to motivate decent behaviour and strengthen social life [6]. (See Appendix Table I: The four humours.)

ON ORIGINS OF MUSICAL RHETORIC

There are three ground models for musical rhetoric, which are the affections seen via pragmatic (French), semiotic (Italian) and rational (German) ideas and ideals. Affections seen as: 1) an effective discourse for persuasion, as pleasing through activating the listener's emotional intellectual response (the French way of musical rhetorical thinking); 2) a relation between content (signified) and expression (signifier for beautiful discourse) as ideal, perfection seeking by execution of skills of the performer (the Italian way of musical rhetorical thinking); and 3) a rational insight by means of influence aiming for moving / touching the soul, utilising the affections tools in music by intelligent ways (the German way of musical rhetorical thinking).

I will examine my above-mentioned three audiovisual performance recordings examples as instances of reoccurrence and remaking of Handel's opera *Giulio Cesare* in

Egitto. I have chosen these particular performance recordings, because they introduce the different rhetorical / affection aspects.

Defining Musical Rationalism

Traces of the historical background for the concept of theories for musical affections have occurred in oratory and rhetoric by Greek and Roman classic writers and philosophers, Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian [8]. In philosophical studies the human emotions were pondered by such writers as for instance Descartes, Hobbes, Locke and Shaftesbury [9]. Affection was seen as an idealized emotional state, which was called as *pathos* in Greek, *affectus* in Latin, *Affekt* in German, and *affect* or *affection* in English [10]. It appeared in music starting from the late 15th century mentioned in writings by Burmeister, Lippius, Mersenne, Kircher, Heinichen, Walther, Werchmeister, Scheibe, and Mattheson [10]. Mattheson applies musical figurative theories by Burmeister, which he uses as devices for constructing melodies relating them to affects [11].

The French philosopher René Descartes mentions musical affections relating them to movements of the soul aroused by the art of the spoken theatre, already in his *Abrégé de musique / Compendium Musicae* (1618): “[...] its [music’s] aim is to please and to arouse various emotions in us...for in the same way writers of elegies and tragedies please us most the more sorrow they awaken in us [12].” In the end of his treatise; he notes on methods of the cadencial voice leading as compared to discussion of a speech by oratorical system, also relating, finally, music to that of the poetry; that: “[...] a full cadence is necessary at the end of a composition. During the course of a composition the avoidance of such a cadence has a charming effect. This occurs when, so to speak, one voice seems to wish to rest while another voice proceeds further. This is a type of figure of speech in music, just as there are figures of speech in Rhetoric...poetry is supposed to arouse the emotions in the same manner as music [13].” Later Descartes published his famous treatise *Les passions de l’âme* (1649) on affections, in which love (and hatred of which, vengeance is a subspecies¹; as in Handel’s *Giulio Cesare*, love and vengeance are the basic affections), was among the main (original, i.e. primitive) affections [14]. According to Deliège, the French composer, music theorist Jean-Philippe Rameau talked also about affectional, conscious listening, in which emotional elements depend on intellectual parts of meaning communicated through interpretation [15].

In Italy, Gioseffo Zarlino called for the emotional unity of text, composition and musical performance in his *Institutioni harmoniche* (1558), and Nicola Vincentino sought for similarity between speech and music (1555). Furthermore, according to Carl Dahlhaus, the Italian doctrine on musical figures emphasizes “*Expressio textus*” (the expression), while the German one concentrates rather on “*Explicatio textus*” (the explanation) [16].

In Germany, during the 18th century, rational, sensible thinking was seen as cathartic, as an effect of purification. Johann Mattheson (1681-1764), was a Handel’s peer and colleague in Hamburg at the Gänsemarktoper, (which is now the Hamburg State Opera) when Handel apprenticed together with him there to Reinhard Keiser (1674 – 1739), an opera composer, and the director of the Hamburg’s opera, in the beginning of 18th century.

¹ See in Descartes’ letter to Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia on Sept 1st 1645, *The Philosophical Writings*, Vol. III, *The Correspondence*.

Mattheson's Affections Settings Compared to Handel's Giulio Cesare

Later, in his book *Orchestre I* (1713), Mattheson describes characteristic affections for the 17 most practical keys as corresponding his temperament (which I have compared to Handel's Giulio Cesare's protagonist arias, as follows):

1. C: *rude, bold also tender* (Handel: Cesare: "Quel torrente"; *brave, revengeful, victorious*)
2. c: *sweet, sad* (Handel: Cesare: "Empio", Act 1, scene 3; *indignant*)
3. D: *sharp, headstrong, for warlike and merry things* (Handel: Cesare: "Presti", Act 1, scene 1; *victorious*)
4. d: *devout, tranquil, also grand; devotion in church music, amusing, flowing*
5. Eb: *pathos, serious, sad, hostile to all sensuality*
6. E: *despair, fatal sadness, hopelessness of extreme love, piercing, painful* (Handel: Cleopatra: "Nondisperar", Act 1, scene 5; *ironic, scornful* & "Piangerò", Act 3, scene 3; *agony, lamenting, revengeful* & "Da tempeste", Act 3, scene 7; *fateful, affectionate, victorious*)
7. e: *pensive, profound, grieved, sad*
8. F: *most beautiful sentiments, generosity, constancy, love* (Handel: Cesare: "Vaticato", Act 1, scene 9; *revengeful, justifying* & "Aure", Act 3, scene 4; *longing for* & Cleopatra: "V'adoro", Act 2, scene 2; *constant, affectionate, seductive* /Parnasso)
9. f: *tender, calm, profound, weighty, a fatal mental anxiety, exceedingly moving*
10. f#: *languishing, amorous, unrestrained, strange, misanthropic* (Handel: Cleopatra: "Se pietà", Act 2, scene 8; *suffering, revengeful, doubtful*)
11. G: *suggestive and rhetorical, for serious as well as gay things* (Handel: Cesare: "Se fiorito", Act 2 scene 2; *allusive, happy, enamoured*)
12. g: *almost the most beautiful, graceful, agreeable, tender, yearning, diverting, for moderate complaints, tempered joyfulness*
13. A: *affecting and brilliant, inclined to complaining, sad passions* (Handel: Cleopatra: "Tutto", Act 1, scene 7; *potentialities, touching, impressive* & "Venere", Act 2, scene 7; *impressive, touching, invocation/requesting*)
14. a: *plaintive, decorous, resigned, inviting sleep*
15. Bb: *diverting, magnificent, but also dainty*
16. B: *offensive, harsh, unpleasant, desperate character* (Handel: Cesare: "Al lampo", Act 2, scene 8; *revengeful, confirming* & Cleopatra: "Tu la miastella", Act 1, scene 8; *grand, anticipating, requesting*)
17. b: *bizarre, morose, melancholic* [17].

I have also compared Mattheson's list of affections of the dance forms and agogic markings to equivalents in Handel's Giulio Cesare, as follows: the list by Mattheson:

- I. Minuet: *moderate gaiety*
- II. Gavotte: *exulting joy*
- III. Bourrée: *contentment & pleasantness; untroubled or calm*
- IV. Rigaudon: *trifling jocularly*
- V. March: *heroic & fearless*
- VI. Entrée: *noble & majestic*
- VII. Gigue: *passionate & volatile ardour* (Handel: Giulio Cesare: Cleopatra: "Tu la mia stella") Loure: *proud, arrogant natured* Canarie: *eagerness & swiftness*
- Giga: *greatest quickness* (Handel: Giulio Cesare: Final Duetto: "Caro! Bella!"; *folk like jig*)
- VIII. Polonaise: *frankness & free manner*
- IX. Angloise: *stubbornness*
- X. Passepiéd: *frivolity* (Handel: Giulio Ces: Cleopatra: "Venere bella")

XI. Rondeau: *firmness or a firm confidence*

XII. Sarabande: *ambition*_(Handel: *Giulio Cesare: Ouverture & Cleopatra: "V'adoro"*)

XIII. Courante: *sweet hopefulness (longing; Handel: Giulio Cesare: Cleopatra: "Tutto puo")*

XIV. Allemande: *contented, satisfied spirit (order and peace)* [18].

The double metre embodying in Giulio Cesare is "gavotte" (joyous / triumphant/ heroic / military) typed of an affect and triple metres being viewed as a "sarabande" (objective / aspiring/ ambitious/hunting) affect. The final duetto is set in a compound metre connecting the protagonists as a whole [19].

Those arias and affections with more emotional value by Handel in his Giulio Cesare tend to be written in triple or compound metre, with prolonged *la folia* typed of dotted time values in a sarabande style, representing the trope for hunting, i.e. aiming at something worthwhile and eligible. Those arias having with a heroic or triumphant character, are more likely to be appearing in a march typed of a military or heroic trope, gavotte like of a double metre. So, I suggest, that all other dance forms found from Giulio Cesare, subordinate to these two basic gavotte (military/heroic) and sarabande (hunting / aspiring) forms. In appendix table II, is my listing on Handel's protagonist arias' agogic and time signature markings with some suggestions for the dance forms.

ON A PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS OF GIULIO CESARE

According to Aristotelian cathartic (soul purifying) ideal,² in his Giulio Cesare, Handel puts forward, the quest for a virtuous rulership.³ The opera's characters have been defined by Platonian, Aristotelian, and Empedoclean atomistic proportions of opposite pairs [21]. The personages can be grouped along classic (geometrical) elements, which were furthered into a medical-psychological theory of humors by Hippocrates-Galen-Avicenna; and Aristotle's syllogistic square of opposition.⁴ This relates to the Aristotelian thesis of substantiating, and finding a way of narrating a story by allowing its listeners to participate of a "true" argument [29]. Handel applies the square of opposition in Giulio Cesare, and though being an opera seria, it contains ironical elements. Handel contradicts tragedy and irony, developing his own type of a Machiavellian "choice" for drama.⁵ Other

² Luther adopted this in his conception of the Greek ethos and the educational power of music by its effects [22].

³ Aristotle mentions in his Rhetoric as one of the aims of speeches the speakers in court for law, (as pairs of oppositions) for notions of right (justice) and wrong (injustice). Also, speakers for praise and blame: for honor and disgrace. These are referred to in Handel's Giulio Cesare for instance in following arias: by Caesar in act I, scene 6, "Non è sì vago e bello" (Not so fair and lovely; [23]) for praise, and in act I, scene 2, "Empio, diró, tu sei" (I will say, "You are pitiless..."; [24]) for blame; and by Sextus' aria in Act I, scene 4 "Svegliatevi nel core" (Wake within my breast, furies of a wounded soul...), [25] for right (vengeance for justice), by Cleopatra in her aria "Tutto può donna vezzosa" (Everything is possible to a lovely woman...), [26]; in which innocence justifies one's aims), and by Ptolemy in his aria in act II, scene 4 "Si, spietata, il tuo rigore" (You are so pitiless, your resistance rouses hatred...; [27]) for wrong (forcing for love by oppressive motives) [28].

⁴ See: Parsons, Terence (2006). "The Traditional Square of Opposition". Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (SEP). Retrieved May 3, 2011 from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/square/>.

⁵ Aquila, Rafael del 2001. "Machiavelli's Theory of Political Action: Tragedy, Irony and Choice". EUI Working Paper SPS No. 2001/3. European University Institute, Florence, Department of Political and Social Sciences. Retrieved May 30 2011 from <http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/316/sps20013.pdf?sequence=1>: "So Machiavelli would be guilty of having introduced in our tradition an idea of "choice" completely free from any linkage (with tradition, with humanitarian concerns, with a set of fixed values, with morals, etc.). Furthermore, this 'free choice' would be considered by Machiavelli as a proof of the deep relationship that exists between good and evil."

opposed elements in *Giulio Cesare* are the characters, the main themes: love and revenge. Both depicted here as positive and negative forces; as a positive and negative love, and as a positive and negative revenge, according to the status of each of the characters, depending on how affirmative they are compared to the ideals of the messages of the opera. Through love, Caesar and Cleopatra, will succeed in getting the power, to rule over Egypt and Rome together equitably and defeating the obvious tyrant, the rival Tolomeo, deemed unsuited to reign. Handel followed Cicero [30] by his allegorical and metaphorical creations, by having formed out highpoints of resemblances to natural phenomena in his metaphoric simile (or *Devisen*) arias.⁶

Credibility by creating resemblance [31] as a rhetorical device is sustained in the opera by metaphoric textual and musical handling. In the first act, scene 9, in Caesar's hunting aria "Va tacito e nascosto", the fair behavior and positive vengeance is allowed by sneakily repeating fragmentary melodic line accompanied and echoed by a solo French horn, alternating with the singing part as the text goes as follows: "Va tacito e nascosto, quand' avido è di preda, l' astuto cacciatore. E chi è mal far disposto, non brama che si veda l' inganno del suo cor [32]." (How silently, how slyly, when once the scent is taken, the huntsman tracks the spoor. A traitor shrewd and wily, never lets his prey awaken, unless the snare be sure).⁷ The ironic feature comes first from the side of Cleopatra, in her aria "Non disperar, chi sa?" in act I, scene 5, in which she is playfully scorning her brother as unfit to have a leader's position accentuated by laughter-like high registered strings in the accompaniment.

On the Recent Performance Instances of the Opera

I have chosen for my analysis here three performance versions, which to my mind will give some variable (opposing) views and choices on the musical affectual depictions found from the opera set by Handel. The ENO's traditional "epoch"/ pastoral styled perspective from 1984, gives a particular overview on the changes of the work.⁸ The other versions sung in their original language in Italian have various emphases based on their overall productions according to which I have titled them as "satirical"/ hunting (Peter Sellars' version, 1990) and "colonialist" / military (Glyndebourne, 2005).

⁶ In act I, scene 9, "Va tacito e nascosto", "When intent on his prey", on a task for a positive revenge for helping the *justice* to occur, which is here referred to that of an artful hunter prowling his vicious prey, depicted by a dialogue between the singer and the solo horn, and later in act II, scene 2, "Se fiorito ameno prato", "If in a pleasant flowery meadow", for awakening of *love*, which is a dialogue between a singer and the solo violin, representing a bird, which symbolizes his pure feeling of an *attraction*. (English translations of the arias from: Fesquet, D. & Salter, L., 2003. *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*. A CD booklet with a libretto, ed. by Danile Fesquet. Deutsche Grammophon GmbH, Hamburg, Archiv B0000314-02 AH3 2003, libretto translated into English by Lionel Salter 1970, pp. 53 & 63).

⁷ A VHS video booklet 1984 by Virgin Classics Opera, Eno's version in English libretto translated by Brian Trowell, on p. 18 on unnumbered pages.

⁸ As it is abbreviated and sang in English. Also in its creation, *Giulio Cesare* was revised many times by Handel, already right after its first performance for different singers; so there were arias added and omitted according to which performers were available for him for each performance at that time. The original cast consisted of the brilliant, and the best singers of the time, the famous castratos Senesino, Gaetano Berenstadt and Giuseppe Bigonzi (Caesar, Ptolemy and Nireus), the legendary sopranos Francesca Cuzzoni (Cleopatra), and Margherita Durastanti (Sextus), and then Anastasia Robinson (Cornelia), Giuseppe Boschi (Achillas) and John Lagarde or Laguerre (Curius) in the side roles. *Giulio Cesare* was revived for the King's Theatre by Handel in 1725, 1730 and 1732. Due to its popularity, it was also produced outside England, in Hamburg and Brunswick 1725-37, and as a concert version in Paris in 1724.

Caesar's state of mind starts from his victorious mood which will be introduced in his opening aria, towards more justified revenge (a positive act), via his longing for love to consolidation of alliance between the two states, Rome and Egypt and constancy of his love towards Cleopatra, set by him as the ruler of Egypt. Cleopatra begins by a joyful expectation wishing for good prospects (an act of innocence). By awaking love, she hopes to cast herself into power and as the sole holder of the throne. She will achieve her goal by dubious seduction (an act of a negative love), but her emotions and motives will be cleared and revealed by her true affects of despair, lamenting and victorious revengefulness (acts of catharsis) over Caesar's enemies, and finally by her fairness through her love (an act of positive love) towards Caesar and justice. Beauty is being celebrated here as a morally virtuous act (a realization of justice, righteousness).

The Protagonist Roles

Both the musical key relations and time signatures of Caesar's and Cleopatra's arias suggest that there is an antithesis of characters set by Handel. Cleopatra starts with the key of fate and love (in E major), and pilots the way for Caesar's emotional side which is hidden at first by his acts of bravery (in C major), which in the end prove to be also acts of true and righteous love. On the other hand, Cleopatra hides her real thirst-for-power motives under her disguise of love, and pastoral charm attempts, so nothing is foretold in the beginning of the opera although the ideals have already been introduced by Handel at the beginning of the work. In his aria "Presti omai" he is already being proudly self-assertive, inviting the people to receive and accept him as a victor. His musical affect is heroic, in an Allegro-duple meter, in D major key. Onwards moving harmony is connected with accentuated melodic line, which alternates between larger leaps, intervals and a stepwise progression containing with coloratura fragments.

Already in the third scene of the first act, Caesar performs his second aria, which depicts his second important character type: the warrior. Since the beginning, he is introduced as a high-ranking person within the hierarchy of the characters. He is a triumphant, victorious and militant character type, which status continues to be confirmed both by textual and musical means in the course of the opera. His flawlessness and masculinity are being emphasized directly and indirectly. In a monologue "Alma del gran Pompeo" he reflects a brave hero's fragile lifespan. Here the accompanied recitative instead of an aria stresses that this is a reflection, contemplation. The music functions as a support, clarifying the text as declamatory forth bringing force by heavily and dark accented strokes of the strings. The hero's noble position will be strengthened by the opening's majestic Largo, in which the French overture's tone is prevailing with the dotted sarabande figures. Modulating harmony attests his pondering and searching state of a mind. One can sense how the moods of the protagonists proceed from aspiring to certainty by Cleopatra and assuring reliability of Caesar's faculties to reign and to effect on Cleopatra [33].

SOME CONCLUDING NOTES

By Sellars` (1990) Cleopatra`s pastoral innocence is questioned right from the start, as she is depicted as a girl, who is used to luxury and both she and her brother Ptolemy show a shallow side of themselves by being fond of commodities offered by the superpower, which in turn is represented by Caesar, also parodied here, by his exaggerated need for protection and surveillance. ENO`s production gives wittier character to Cleopatra, to whom her brother does not give much of a competition, so it is obvious that she possesses those special abilities required from a ruler. Caesar`s role is also stabilized by ENO`s production as he seems to be mostly equal to his position. Glyndebourne`s version is shadowed by warlike efforts, the sets are decorated by fleets and zeppelins in the background, yet the overall mood is positive and mellow, almost musical-styled with athletic gestured dance scenes. Cleopatra is shown as a real queen with “Egyptionazed” choreographies including symbols of ancient Egyptian deities of the royal powers, which refer to her (historical) Greek (Ptolemaic) origins, and to her aims for having tried to please her subjects by maintaining the traditions despite of the new winds blowing from Caesar`s direction, Rome.

Sellars` view on baroque dance forms occurs as a satirical tool for his palette of sharp typed of ballet gestures in a French manner by which the overture of the opera is also written. Handel`s performance direction of “majestic” will be questioned, as are all actions into gaining exclusive power, opposing to that of an autocrat. ENO`s reply to that is choosing the legitimate alliance of two rulers. While Glyndebourne`s route is gaining sovereignty by agreeing on peace and by the importance of emphasizing signing the peace treaty. Which one of these might be Handel`s choice in the end, one could play with this thought for a fleeting moment, but then again he has left choices open for the performers to close, solve or unfold [34].

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APPENDIX

Characterisations in Giulio Cesare:	Elements:	Humours:	Disease:	Qualities:	Seasons:	Personalities / characteristics:	Four horsemen of Apocalypse & their representations:
Caesar & Cleopatra	Air	Sanguine	Blood	Hot & Moist	Spring	courageous, hopeful, amorous, (<i>happy</i>), cheerful	Red Horse – War (passion)
Ptolemy & Achilla	Fire	Choleric	Yellow bile	Hot & Dry	Summer	easily <i>angered</i> , bad tempered (violent, vengeful), enthusiastic	Pale Horse – Death (plotting)
Sextus & Cornelia	Earth	Melancholic	Black bile	Cold & Dry	Autumn	despondent, <i>sad</i> , irritable, sleepless, (saturnine), somber	Black Horse – Famine (compassion)
Curio, Nireno	Water	Phlegmatic	Phlegm	Cold & Moist	Winter	unemotional, <i>calm</i> , (dull; faithful)	White Horse – evilness/ righteousness; Pestilence

Table I: Aristotle, Hippocrates, Galen: The Four Humours (Types of personalities / temperaments / character types) and applying their personifications and representations in Handel's Giulio Cesare. [7].

Protag.	Aria	Time sign.	Agogic sign.	Affect (by the agogics)/ Dance form suggestion
C.	<i>Prestiomai</i>	C	Allegro	comfort / contentment
C.	<i>Empio</i>	C	Allegro	- " -
Cl.	<i>Non disperar</i>	C	Allegro (ma non troppo)	- " -
C.	<i>Non si è vago</i>	C	Allegro	- " -
Cl.	<i>Tutto può</i>	3/8	Allegro	- " -; courante
Cl.	<i>La miastella</i>	6/8	Allegro (ma non troppo)	- " -; gigue
C.	<i>Vatavito</i>	C	Andante (e piano)	hope/-ful
Cl.	<i>V' adoro</i>	3/4	Largo	relief (here like <i>lento</i> ?); sarabande
C.	<i>Se fiorito</i>	C	Allegro	comfort / contentment
Cl.	<i>Venere</i>	3/8	Allegro	- " -; passepied
C.	<i>Al lampo</i>	C	Allegro	- " -
Cl.	<i>Se pieta</i>	C	Largo	sorrow (here like <i>adagio</i> ?)
Cl.	<i>Piangerò</i>	3/8	Largo	- " -
C.	<i>Aure</i>	3/8	Andante	hope/-ful

Cl.	<i>Da tempeste</i>	C	Allegro	comfort /contentment
[C. & Cl. (Duetto)]	<i>Caro! / Bella! / Un belcontento</i>	12/8	Allegro	comfort /contentment]; giga

Table II: Time and agogic markings with some suggestions for dance forms by Handel in Giulio Cesare's protagonist arias [20].

Hunt, Military, and Pastoral Topics in the Writings of Eighteenth Century Music Theorists

Andrew Haringer, Williams College, Williamstown, MA, USA

ABSTRACT

*In this paper I seek to build upon Raymond Monelle's research in his 2006 book, *The Musical Topic: Hunt, Military, and Pastoral*. Monelle's work is a model of scholarship, blending a broad interdisciplinary approach with trenchant interpretations of pieces both familiar and obscure. For all its thoroughness, though, Monelle's study conspicuously avoids serious engagement with the writings of such important eighteenth century music theorists as Mattheson, Scheibe, Schubart, and the like. This omission doubtless stems from Monelle's assertion, put forth in *The Sense of Music*, that "if theoretical ideas have any real interpretative force, it is unlikely that they will have been proclaimed by contemporaries, for contemporaries are engaged in the justification of their music and thus in concealing vital features".¹ Indeed, eighteenth century music encyclopedias and treatises, insofar as they mention hunt, military, and pastoral topics at all, rarely do so in a way consistent with our modern understanding of topics.*

Nevertheless, much is to be gained by incorporating these sources into the current discourse. As I see it, the advantages are twofold. First, careful reading of these sources reveal important distinctions of great value to scholars and performers in distinguishing between such march subtopics as the French entrée and the Italian intrada, or between such pastoral subtopics as the French musette and the Italian siciliana. While one encounters some inconsistencies among the sources, these authors are often quite specific about specific stylistic nuances—rhythmic, harmonic, melodic—that allow one to make these subtle distinctions. Second, these sources further articulate the cultural mythmaking Monelle so brilliantly exposed in his work, allowing us to better understand the values of the era. The result is a deeper understanding of both the nuances of these topics, and the cultural meanings they embody.

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¹ See Monelle, R., 2000. *The Sense of Music: Semiotic Essays*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, p. 24.

“When Horror ombers o’er the Scene”: Shock and Awe in Eighteenth-Century Music

Clive McClelland, University of Leeds, UK

ABSTRACT

Raymond Monelle recently observed that “it is probably no longer OK to speak of a *Sturm und Drang* topic”.¹ The use of this term in music is certainly problematic. The original attempt to draw parallels between certain movements of Haydn’s middle-period symphonies and the trend in German Romantic literature (Wyzewa 1909) was misguided, despite subsequent attempts to validate it (Brook, Landon, Todd, Ratner). This realisation has become more apparent recently (Bonds, Buch, Chantler), and it must be recognised that the term is no longer fit for purpose in the discipline of topic theory.

My proposal to adopt the term *tempesta* acknowledges the origins of the style not in Haydn’s symphonies, but in early opera, since the musical language clearly derives from depictions of storms and other devastations in the theatre. Disorder in the elements in Classical mythology (and therefore in much of opera seria) is almost invariably instigated by irate deities, and is consequently associated with the supernatural. Scenes involving storms, floods, earthquakes and conflagrations had appropriately wild music, and the musical style is often reflected in scenes involving flight or pursuit, and even metaphorically in depicting rage and madness.

Tempesta is also to be regarded as the counterpart of *ombra*, the menacing style of music associated with the supernatural. Both will often be found juxtaposed in infernal scenes, and they clearly share discontinuous elements, such as minor keys, shifting tonalities, disjunct motion, chromaticism, *tremolandi*, syncopation, sudden dynamic contrasts and unusual instrumentation. Both appear in sacred music and as topics in instrumental music. The main difference between them involves tempo. The creeping terror of *ombra* at a slow or moderate pace elicits a quite different emotional response in the audience to the fast frenzy of *tempesta*.

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¹ Review of V. Kofi Agawu, “Music in Discourse”, *Music & Letters* 2010, 91/1, pp. 110-11.

Musical Latent-Structures as a Special Type of (Trans-)Signs

Bogusław Raba, University of Wrocław, PL

ABSTRACT

The term of musical latent structures¹ based on Gestaltpsychologie and implication-realisation theory,² in musical semiotic can be understood as type of manifested concealment (*przemilczenie postulatywne*). In dynamic sign-process of growing, acting and atrophy the latent structures present two-level structures (trans-signs): 1) intentional structure of the atrophic sign (post sign) in mind of recipient and 2) real musical structure as new creating (*nowopowstający*) sign. This process can be seen in perspective of existential semiotic as a manifestation of exosemiosis, transcending of Ich-Ton and at the same time the degeneration of parts of conventional structure understood as a *Umwelt*. In terms of formal-syntactical analysis this process indicates the break of rules, models, in terms of implication-realisation theory- intentional created disorder.

In the light of existential semiotics latent-structure are indications of special existential situation of transcendence of *moi* and degenerating of conventional structure as a manifestation of *soi*.

INTRODUCTION

The theme of this study is part of a broader problem of musical semiotics and musical style, which Eero Tarasti described as existential [1]. I, as the author of this work want to investigate the “existential moments” in the musical work, their specific character and relationship to the manifested structures. I do not hide my sympathy for existentialism. I am aware of a risks of analysing the subject, which inextricably dependent on the active imagination of the recipient. However, the awareness of the importance of these issues and the fascinating reality of the work, which closes in the creative imagination and reception of the listener, compensates for the risks involved.

The aim of this study is to capture and define the relationship between the structure manifested and implied (implicit) of a musical work. Then, to identify the ways and functions of these implied structures called musical latencies and finally interpret the latency from the point of view of musical semiotics. The thesis of this study, which will be explained in the course of the article, is following: these implied unresolved musical structures may represent a special case of signs, which are a manifestation of the extreme subjectivisation, triggering the so-called “existential moments”.

¹ See *Musikalische Latenzen* in Moraitis, A., 1994. *Zur Theorie der musikalischen Analyse*, Frankfurt am Main.

² See Meyer, L.B., 1956. *Emotion and Meaning in Music*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press; and 1973. *Explaining Music: Essays and explorations*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Although the definite shape of the implied structure depends on clarity and conventionality of explicit structures, the process of implications of latent structures leads first to the “openness” of the work and the principle of “becoming” in the music of romanticism and then the existential trends in contemporary music, where the level of conceptualization, “openness” and co-creativity of musical work reached its peak.

This process can be described as a gradual release of the orientation of the object to the orientation of the subject, breaking conventions and the teleological process, which is assessed by the linearity of the temporal and structural dimensionality. In philosophical terms, it is the way from the affects, feelings and consciousness - that is the essence of being.

Present state of study

According to the classical theory of knowledge (epistemology), latencies as elusive empirically entities are the subject of investigation only in sceptical realism or idealism. From the standpoint of strict realism such entities do not exist [2]. Thus, the method of analysis based on the strict realism, particularly interested in the study of music structuralism; do not have access to latencies, considering them as a kind of hypostasis.

Promoter of the concept of music latency, Andreas Moraitis, defines it as the phenomena that occurs only in the process of receiving (*die Wahrnehmung*) or presenting (*die Vorstellung*) in musical thinking (*das musikalische Denken*) [3]. Latencies, the unmanifested elements of the musical structure, require musical experience and competence of musical style of the recipient [4].

Maciej Golab suggests the understanding of musical latency in an epistemological point of view as all entities generated in the process of active reception of musical work (idealism, sceptical realism). Moraitis, following the idea of Hugo Riemanns *Tonvorstellungen* [5] and Gestalt-psychology suggests the existence of musical latency as strict specified entities.³ A very important perspective in the relationship of the music structure and emotion, music structure and meaning, music structure and style, is given by Leonard B. Meyer [7]. The last sentence of his book [8], on the “romantic openness” of his sketch, fits my intention to interpret his approach as a kind of bridge to the consideration of the problem of musical latency, as he called analogous phenomenon – “unresolved implicated structures”, a step forward on the basis of semiotics - trans-signs, signs opening the existential moments in music.



Figure 1. Riemanns exercises in *Tonvorstellungen*.

³ He distinguished 3 groups of musical latency. They arise by: 1) omission (ellipse), 2) interpolation, 3) spontaneous grouping effects (Gestalt). He also ponders the problem of enharmonic modulation, where the change in direction of leading tones results in a different way of resolving of chord than expected [6].

From “betrayal” to existential situation

The transformation process of so-called “betray cadence” reveals despite of a similar technical basis completely different aesthetic purposes. Betrückschluss (betrügen - betray), in its etymological sense is therefore based on deception of our consciousness, and thus the unexpected resolving causes a surprise. Such an unexpected resolving, although not in strict harmonic sense, uses J. Haydn in his famous “Surprise” Symphony.⁴ But regardless of the success of this work, such technical element remained a musical joke.

In improvising music, such as especially a fantasy genre, this unexpected turns of musical action were signs of pure imagination and invention. In some examples it became almost feature of individual musical style, as in the case of C.Ph.E. Bach.⁵ But even by him aspect of negativity – distortion of conventions and habits of hearing became primal.

The masterpiece, in which composer bind such web of unexpected turns of musical action as trans-signs with affection, not only local but in the total structure of the work, is the first part of the Funeral Ode BWV 198 by J.S. Bach, Double Betrückschluss (Und sieh, myh wieviel Thränen güssen umringen dein Ehrenmahl) and enharmonical turn/change (g-D-Fis) on words: und sieh.

Change of leading tones direction by enharmonicism is in another Bach’s masterpiece, Fantasia and fugue g-minor BWV 542, prepared by very strong directional voices determined in harmonical progression. It takes place in climax of Fantasia. Thatswhy it becomes a very suggestive sign. It breaks long uprising phrase, which in its dramatic character reveals some hope. In enharmonical turn however, outbursts despair and inevitability, which is underlined by repeated and transposed Neapolitan cadences.

Great suggestiveness is achieved by E. Grieg in his Death of Åsa because of the simplicity and repeatability of the harmonic-syntactical model. Such repeatability can be also an expression of a try to break this model, what happen in the next few bars. Dominant to dominant chord (double dominant) (D)) is not immediately resolved but is suspended. It strengthens a tension. The absence of a direct solution of dominant in the first phrase has caused only a relative tension due to the stabilization of such model as a convention in historical process. Next phrase with (D) create great tension and expression. This expression is a result of such trans-situation: our consciousness waits and demands a real audible solution, which doesn’t occur.

⁴ See Haydn, Symphony G-major “Surprise”, nr 94, II. Adagio, mm.9-16.

⁵ See C.Ph.E. Bach Sechs Clavier-Sonaten für Kenner und Liebhaber, VI Sonata G-major, Wq. 55, mm. 1-9.

Figure 2. E. Grieg, Suite nr 1, op. 46, *Death of Åse*, mm. 1-6.

It is quite obvious that almost all of these examples are linked both by similar technical features and also the sign-content, which one could call “existential situations”. It is ideal accordance between semiotical content of such musical situations and technical ones. In both cases it means an articulation of individualism, exceptional and groundbreaking attitude in opposition to convention identified with Umwelt.

THE THREE STAGES OF MUSICAL LATENCY

Latency in the service of confirming and strengthening of the convention

“A choice cannot be directed by cause, for the not would not be a choice” [9]. How do you reconcile this statement with the theory of musical latency offered by Moraitis, where the determined shape of unmanifested structure depends in causal relationship on implicated and manifested structure? According to the generally accepted definition of style,⁶ musical latencies provide a bridge between the old and new style. The principle of operation is based on of awareness, unmanifested presence of conventional solutions and at the same time the introduction of a new one. The moment of most conventional continuity of manifested structure is the most powerful for emerging of musical latencies, because only in such moments do latencies take on a concrete form in consciousness of the recipient and such conventional moments offer the most powerful effect by introducing of new musical content.⁷

⁶ “Style is a replication of patterning, whether in human behaviour or in the artifacts produced by human behaviour, which results from a series of choices made within some set of constraints [10].”

⁷ Because of its powerful effect such figures as elipsis or abruptio were beloved as rhetorical figures. The feature of generality however deprived its symbolic content.



Figure 3. Christoph Bernhard, *Tractatus compositionis augmentatus*, Abruption: rest in the middle of a phrase or elision of the final note in the solo voice in a cadence.

Deviation from the conventional structure as a symptom of individual expression is the first step towards subjectivity, even if such a bridge-situation becomes, because of its generality [11], a conventional feature of new style and loses its sign-content [12] and power. In this case, because of generality of this tool, it transmutes from trans-sign state to the conventional element of musical structure. From the point of view of existential-transcendental analysis *Ich-Ton* (individual tone as a representative of a new style) becomes transmuted and incorporated to *Umwelt-Ton* - conventional, manifested musical structure [13].

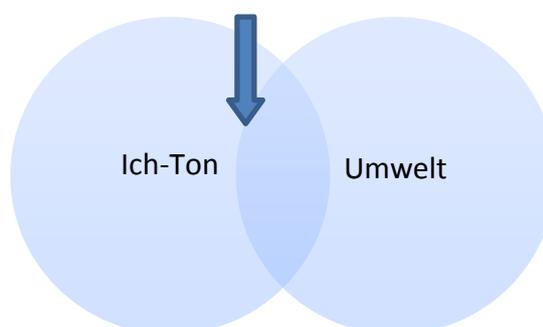


Figure 4. The latencies as trans-signs between decay/atrophy of the conventional structure and new (audible) structural parts of the implication-realization process.

Romantic stage: elite egalitarian symptom or sign of individuality?

Romantic music with the opening of the structure gave unprecedented importance and significance to implied structures. As noted by Meyer: “If silence ‘frames’ a composition or movement, then in Romantic music, the frame does not delimit the meaning of the work [...] This creates serious methodological problems for analysis and criticism. For unrealized implications are obviously more difficult to determine objectively than the realized implications of a script. Then this must be considered if justice is to be done to Romantic music” [14].

How do you reconcile these paradoxes, which emerge from this situation: the unity of musical work (organism ideology) with the openness and richness of unresolved implicated structures? Is that a sign of – as Meyer claims – elite egalitarian feature of Romantic music, which “involved the imaginative participation of individuals in the audience” [15] or manifestation of individuality, distance to petrified reality?

The balancing of Romantic music between classical norms of structure and new romantic content gave way to possibilities such as openness that allowed the existence of unresolved implicated structures. Wherein the following law can be observed: the level of

conventional order of manifested structure (laws, rules, strategies) corresponds with the level of using of unresolved implicated structures. One of the clearest examples is Chopin's cross-gender and cross-form style. The unresolved implications of his music often regard the sudden changes of texture identified with one of the classical conventional genre. Such shifting of expectations results in a highly individual approach, associated with extra-musical references. The case of Chopin is so special because he manages to keep the suggestiveness of unresolved implicated structures in both small and expanded musical forms.

Another solution of the problem of symbolic determined openness by musical latencies in Romantic music is the use of historical structures with romantic interpolations. Such a kind of petrified pluperfect structure contrasts extremely powerful with individual interpolations and creates highly concrete implications, which can be used by composer as an open door to individual-existential differentiation *Ich-Ton* from *Umwelt*. Extremely powerful examples of that manner are given by Franz Schubert in his *Fantasie f-minor* D. 940. The 'chain-effect' of the extension of the last cadence, the most conventional part of musical form, creates the most extraordinary symbol of tragedy of existence. On the level of structure, it gives hope of the ending, that is more and more delayed (the tragedy exaggerated). On the level of meaning – it gives hope at least of catharsis-like end in the form of traditional *tierce des Picardie* – in accordance with a stylization of French overture in this work), which doesn't occur either. Finally, the series of unresolved, extremely strong implications (the end of a much expanded work) gradually almost force to abandonment of implicative thinking, which occurs deceptive.

The New German School represents the opposite manner of relationship between order of form and unmanifested implications. The abandonment of conventional classical forms and simultaneously the maintaining of balance between idea of unity and openness and becoming (included-unresolved implicated structures) result in specific syntactical strategies. The openness as a sign for longing for transcendence, for infinity [16] becomes more and more undetermined and unspecific, what in categories of structure means - richness of undetermined- but with accordance with ideas of transcendence -unresolved implicated structures. On the higher level, such technique establishes a specific order, convention through which the process of individualisation and becoming can happen. Such perspective gives new interpretation (among many others) of repetitive musical syntax of composers of the new German school.⁸ The paradox of egalitarian access to intimate realm of composers' internal world leads to next step, next shift of function of latencies in existential style of contemporary music.

Contemporary music of existential style: latency as a transcendental way to self-consciousness

“I could compare my music to white light which contains all colours. Only a prism can divide the colours and make them appear; this prism could be the spirit of the listener”, (Arvo Pärt). In music of the late Renaissance and Baroque latencies had an almost causal nature and therefore were strong determined. They had a very distinct character as trans-signs and as such, were often used as rhetorical figures. Most of them in the classical period lose their semantical power and were incorporated as conventional petrified elements of the classical musical syntax. Romantic music rarely used strong

⁸ See e.g. *Tristan and Isolde*, Vorspiel.

determined latencies and developed the richness of unresolved implicated structures in functions of: breaking of conventions (idea of individuality), mystery, idea of historicism (sketches, ruins) and radical subjectivism.

If in Romantic music latencies indicated unresolved implicated structures that transcended both frames of the composition and interpolated musical structure, the existential style of contemporary music gives even more place to not only implicated but also almost undetermined play of musical imagination of the audience.

One could say, latencies gave place to gaps in manifested structure of music, which became more and more gates of subjectivism. Step by step these gaps became places of generating affects (baroque), then feelings (romanticism) and then unteleological focusing on consciousness itself. In this way latencies play a role of trans-signs: between conventional, manifested musical structure (Umwelt) and individual approaches of a new style (Ich-Ton). Double-function of latencies occurs in bridge-like shape: manifested and unmanifested one – conventional structure in atrophy (unmanifested) and new one in its rise.

Moreover, musical latencies in their historical expansion gave course to the process of gradually relinquishing of the teleological tension of musical structure. From this point of view time and object orientated music was excluding these dimensions gradually. This caused a general shift in preferences of modalities: weakness of modalities connected with mind and will (symbolic shift of will modality occurs in *Tristan and Isolde*): “will”, “know”, “can”, also the epistemic but object orientated modality of “do” (from this reason the existential style of contemporary music so often assimilates features of meditative music). Essential modality becomes the modality of “be”.

In this way latencies became a fundamental part of musical structure: unmanifested but reorienting the course of object-directed to subject-directed musical style, signs transcending the Umwelt of conventions towards individuality and then individuality orientated on mind -and feelings-objects towards core of being- therefore, consciousness itself.

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- [4] *Ibid.*, p. 167-168.
- [5] Riemann, H., 1914/1915. *Ideen zu einer 'Lehre von den Tonvorstellungen'*, Jahrbuch der Musikbibliothek Peters, Band 21/22.
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- [8] Meyer, L.B., 1989, p. 352.
- [9] Ibid, p. 144.
- [10] Riemann, H., 1914/1915, p. 3.
- [11] Meyer, L.B., 1989, p. 140.
- [12] Ibid, p. 296.
- [13] Tarasti, E., 2000.
- [14] Meyer, L.B., 1989, p. 325.
- [15] Ibid.
- [16] Ibid, p. 264.

Leonore as a Window into the Syntax of Spirituality in Beethoven

Olga Sánchez-Kisielewska, Northwestern University, Evanston, USA

ABSTRACT

*This paper investigates the interaction of musical topics and large-scale syntax of key relations in the articulation of musical meaning in Beethoven, by bringing into dialogue the sacred hymn with the Ab-C-E complex.¹ Analytical examples from *Fidelio* illustrate the creation of a tonal network that emphasizes the transformation of C major from tonic to flat submediant of E major. Drawing on topical associations and expressive use of keys, I suggest the interpretation of this syntactic relationship as a metaphor of the ephemerality of earthly existence that emphasizes the spiritual dimension of the drama. Finally I extend the argument to the late *String Quartets*, suggesting the use of chromatic major-third relations as a musical sign to represent the opposition between the realms of the material and the spiritual.*

CURTAIN RAISER

Ten years after having started to work on *Fidelio*, Beethoven made a final attempt to provide his opera with an adequate introduction. In a significant departure from the three *Leonore* overtures, the composer decided to implement a change of key from C major to E major. Commentators have described the last version of the overture as a more compact and less programmatic solution that fitted better the abbreviated version of the opera and did not overpower the light-hearted tone of the opening scenes [1]. Although less ambitious than its predecessors in terms of extension, modulatory audacity, and thematic development, the *Fidelio Overture* Op. 72 b raises tonal issues that are far from being trivial and anticipate crucial forthcoming events. I shall demonstrate how the choice of key and the establishment of a particular relationship between C major and E major can actually be interpreted as articulating a profound metaphysical meaning. This particular instance of chromatic major-third relationship also played a fundamental role in the tonal organization of other works that occupied Beethoven around that time, such as the “Waldstein” Sonata Op. 53 or, as Lodes has pointed out, the Mass in C Op.86 [2], and it deserves, I believe, more attention than it has received in previous analyses of the opera.

I shall argue that a particular way of articulating the opposition between these two keys, paired with topical associations with sacred music, suggests two differentiated ontological spheres that represent respectively the realm of the human and the divine, and that this contrast provides a tonal framework that plays a fundamental role in the syntax

¹ See Mckee, E., 2007. “The Topic of the Sacred Hymn in Beethoven’s Instrumental Music”, *College Music Symposium* 47, pp. 23-52; and Bribitzer-Stull, M., 2006. “The A-flat-C-E Complex: The Origin and Function of Chromatic Third Collections in Nineteenth-century Music”. *Music Theory Spectrum* 28(2), pp. 167-190.

of Beethoven's representations of spirituality and transcendence within and beyond *Fidelio*. In addition to the overture, a number of excerpts provide the basis for an interpretation that attempts to gain new insights into Beethoven's personal conception of Bouilly's drama as well as semiotic implications of some of his compositional choices. The approach of this paper is fundamentally analytical, and it is driven by the motivation to consider the subtle but essential interactions between music structure and musical signification.

In discussing the relationship of musical topics to analysis, Monelle pointed at the tension between the paradigmatic method of the former and the syntagmatic approach of the latter, and illustrated this dichotomy by setting in opposition his own work to that of Kofi Agawu:

In fact, Agawu is more interested in the contribution of topics to the dynamic structure of the work than in the question of signification. He gives his topics simple labels, but their more profound significance- their history in literature and culture, their reflections in contemporary social life- is not his main concern [...] His emphasis, therefore, is at a different pole from the present work; perhaps it could be said that Agawu's book is complimentary to this enterprise [3].

The area between these two poles provides a fertile ground to music-theoretical inquiries, and it is in this space where this paper is situated. My analyses focus on issues of large-scale tonal syntax, interactions between topic and key and historical conceptions of key characteristics [4]. More precisely, I will draw on two recent music-theoretical concepts developed by Matthew Bribitzer-Stull [5] and Eric Mckee [6] and bring them into dialogue.

FIDELIO, THE Ab-C-E COMPLEX AND THE TOPIC OF THE SACRED HYMN

The change of key for the final version of *Fidelio*'s overture represents a movement along one of the sides of the triangle that represents what Bribitzer-Stull has named the Ab-C-E complex. This tonal network was frequently explored by romantic composers and occupied a privileged position among the collections of chords related by major thirds. The origins of the complex date back to the eighteenth century, when A-flat and E major stood at the limits of the spectrum of keys with acceptable intonation on unequally tempered instruments [7]. Through a statistical overview, Bribitzer-Stull shows that eighteenth century composers hardly ever wrote works or movements in keys with more than four sharps or flats [8], thus revealing that the *lower* part of the circle of fifths exists as theoretical possibility that remains unexplored by compositional practice. Marked oppositions between the borders and the center of the complex render it semantically charged: whereas C major was the most frequently employed key and therefore more neutral in its expressive associations, key characteristics were partially governed by the *sharp-flat principle*: "The sharp keys become ever livelier and brighter, reaching the *piercing flames* of E major, while the flat keys sink down further and further into darkness ending up in the *Plutonian* realm of A-flat major" [9].

Among several Beethoven's works that feature the Ab-C-E complex [10], *Fidelio* is probably the most paradigmatic, inasmuch as it offers a clear illustration of the metaphorical implications of the keys involved in the prototype. Each of the elements of

the complex is used respectively in three of the most poignant moments of the drama: Ab major for Florestan's aria from the dungeon (*In des Lebens Frühlingstagen*, No. 11), E major for Leonore's prayer of hope (*Komm Hoffnung* No. 9) and C major in the triumphant finale (No. 16). Provided that the arias are the two only solo interventions of the main characters, and that they occupy opposite extremes of the universe of available keys, affective associations become all the more powerful. Although much has been written on key symbolism in *Fidelio*, the consideration of a triangular relationship suggested by the complex may throw new light into the configuration of a narratively significant musical trajectory.

The fact that the main key areas of all *Leonore/Fidelio* overtures can be mapped into the complex provides further support for the relevance of this constellation of keys in the conception of the opera. C major is the main key of the *Leonore* overtures, which also feature a prominent section in Ab in the slow introduction, with a quotation from Florestan's aria, and a secondary theme in E major. Although C major was substituted by E major as main key for the final version of the overture, it remained as a significant presence: opposition between these two keys is articulated at three moments of the overture, emphatically enough to become the main tonal issue anticipated in the prelude to the drama.

In the first of these three appearances, C major unexpectedly becomes the goal of the first cadence of the work with an unequivocal IV-V7-I in root position². The subsequent post-cadential move towards the subdominant seems to confirm the achievement of a point of tonal stability, although retrospectively this peaceful realm turns to be illusory: C does not represent a tonic on its own right but a mere flattened scale degree 6 that leads to a sixteen bar dominant prolongation that launches the *Allegro* in E major. The second manifestation of C major occurs within the frame of sonata form, at the point in which what is expected is no less than Hepokoski and Darcy's *essential structural closure*, considered "the tonal and cadential point toward which the trajectory of the whole movement had been driving" [11]. The passage that had conducted in the exposition to the cadence in the key of the dominant is restated in the recapitulation in the flat submediant instead of the normative tonic resolution.³ The change of key signature serves to cast doubt on whether the C major section is actually in the *wrong* key or the real tonal goal of the Overture. The tonic status of C is maintained through an extended passage, until a transformation of the C tonic chord into an augmented sixth that reintroduces E major. In a rotational coda that secures the cadence in the proper key after the misleading recapitulation, C makes one last and prominent utterance (mm. 238-246). This time C drops its key or chord entity altogether and appears as a non-harmonized tone, finally revealing unequivocally its subordinate role as an emphatic upper chromatic neighbour to the dominant of E major.

Through his decision to change the key of the overture, Beethoven was not only creating a proper harmonic transition into the first scene: he also composed an elaborate commentary on a particular relationship between C major and E major. Every C's appearance as a potential tonic must be retrospectively interpreted as a lowered submediant within large-scale harmonic syntax. C is only an illusory tonic, a transitory stage whose ultimate function is to lead towards E major, metaphorically upwards in the

² See Appendix image no. 1.

³ See Appendix image no. 2.

circle of fifths. Hermeneutic hypotheses about metaphysical consequences of this subordinate state are low hanging fruit, which I will pick later.

Celestial resonances populate historical descriptions of E major, which was characterized in terms such as *uplifting* (Junker, 1777) *heavenly* (Heinse, 1796), *dazzling* (Grétry, 1797), or “destined to reign in the realm of spirits” (Hoffman, 1814) [12]. Beethoven’s sensitivity to key characteristics is well known, and so is the fact that he made use of E major in depictions of both literal and symbolic heavens⁴. A fundamental contribution in this regard is Eric Mckee’s discussion of the significance of E major in relation to the *topic of the sacred hymn*, a musical sign with religious connotations that was established in eighteenth century opera, and whose main attributes are a I-V-VI opening, choral texture, *sotto voce* dynamics and duple meter [14]. Beethoven employed frequently this combination of musical features in both vocal and instrumental works, and chose E major in approximately half of the instantiations of the topic⁵. In his concluding remarks, Mckee opens an attractive path of inquiry into the expressive motivations lying behind Beethoven’s compositional strategies:

First, his preference for the key of E major in the depiction of spiritual states; second his expanded treatment of the submediant at both small and large scale levels of tonal organization; and third, Beethoven’s use of the hymn topic within an expressive interplay of other musical topics in which the topic of the sacred hymn is set in opposition to music depicting our earthly condition [16].

Fidelio provides not only an example but also further evidence for these statements. The articulation of an opposition between E major and C major is not restricted to the *Overture* and appears repeatedly throughout the opera⁶. Leonore’s only aria *Komm Hoffnung* is a prayer to hope in E major that displays all the characteristics of the topic of the sacred hymn. The previous recitative consists of two contrasting sections: an agitated introduction in which Leonore violently condemns Pizarro’s corruption, and a peaceful C major episode in which the heroine is soothed by peaceful images of nature.⁷ This recitative was completely recomposed in 1814, and Beethoven doubled its length: a significant move considering that most amendments since the original project had mainly consisted of cuts and reductions. The section in C major, absent in previous versions of the opera features 9/8 meter, harmonic stability, and parallel thirds in the woodwinds, constructing a bucolic escape from the tormented onset of the recitative. The key, introduced as a potential safe haven, finally becomes, one more time, an upper chromatic neighbour to the dominant that introduces E major, key of the aria. At the topical level, the pastoral gives way to the sacred hymn.

The relationship between both keys that had been articulated in the *Overture* in an abstract manner is fully realized at Leonore’s recitative and aria, with the incorporation of text and topical associations. In his theory of musical semiotics, Tarasti deals with key relations in terms of *inner spatiality*, a notion that allows the conception of musical

⁴ Examples include *Lieder von Gellert* Op. 48 no. 1, “Bitten”; “Elegischer Gesang” Op. 118; and “Abendlied unterm gestirntem Himmel” WoO 150, see Kinderman [13].

⁵ Although this may seem a *natural* association between key and topic, it is noteworthy that there is no such coincidence within Mckee’s list of instances of the hymn prior to Beethoven, which includes operatic excerpts by Gluck, Salieri and Mozart among others, see Mckee [15].

⁶ An instance that I do not discuss here can be found in the duet *Jetzt Schätzchen, jetzt sind wir allein*, mm.65-80.

⁷ See Appendix, image no. 3.

departure and return or movement from one space to another: “...enharmonic reinterpretations move us to a new musical inner space. All the rules of modulation can thus be given a semiotic reading” [17]. The particular ways in which different modulations and key relations are articulated provide a syntactic framework for the creation of musical meaning. In *Fidelio*, the metaphorical conception of musical spaces gives rise to a complex analogy in which C major and E major interact as the realms of the material and the spiritual (see Figure 1).

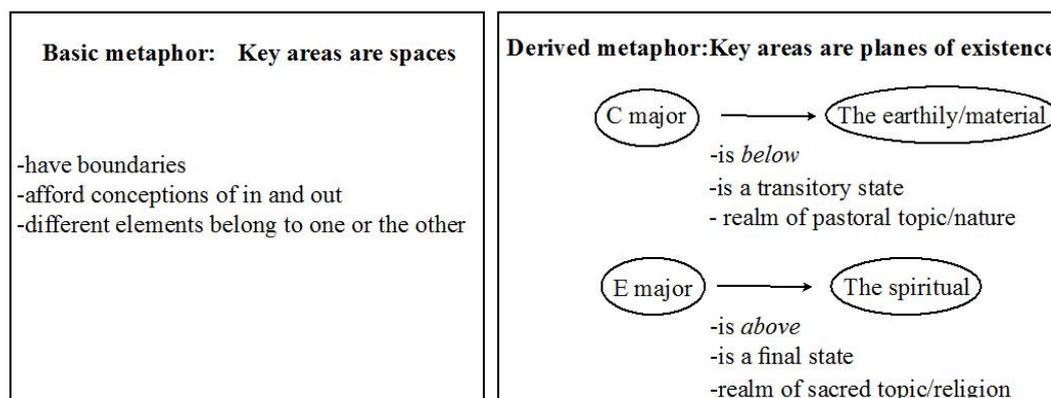


Figure 1: Cross domain mapping afforded by interaction of topic and tonal syntax

The articulation of such an analogy has consequences for the interpretation of the drama, tingeing Leonore’s character with religious overtones through topic and key. Additional spiritual connotations seem to turn the heroine into an allegory of faith instead of a woman of flesh and blood: her womanhood is de-emphasized, not only by her men’s clothes but also by the musical treatment that she receives. Had Beethoven’s interest been placed in the exaltation of marital love, he would have probably devoted more compositional efforts to the celebration of the reunion between husband and wife (*O Namenlose Freude*, No. 15) instead than recycling a theme from his abandoned operatic project *Vestas Feuer*. Furthermore, the scene in which wife and husband see each other for the first time after two years of separation (*Euch werde Lohn in besseren Welten*, No. 13) also problematizes the conjugal nature of love as the moving force of the drama. When Leonore, to whom the starving prisoner refers as sent from heaven, gives him a piece of bread, the act is imbued with an unmistakable tone of communion. Her utterance of the line “Da nimm das Brot”⁸ could be added to Mckee’s list of instances of the sacred hymn, although this time the topic does not appear in the heavenly key of E major, but in the earthly C major. The tonal context is analogous to that of the overture, as C major is about to lead to E major, which in this case is the dominant that leads to a recapitulation. The topic, associated in Leonore’s aria with E major, *descends* to C major in a suggestive analogy. The Ab-C-E complex provides a pre-established frame of tonal reference for Beethoven’s use of the sacred hymn topic and affords the generation of a complex musical metaphor of a quasi-Eucharistic moment. References of juxtaposition between this trio of tonics in a religious context were readily available to Beethoven: it can be found in Haydn’s *Seven Words* oratorio, a work that was repeatedly performed in Vienna during the years prior to the composition of *Fidelio*.⁹

⁸ See Appendix, image no. 4.

⁹ In 1796, 1798 and 1801, see Lodes [18].

Usage of key symbolism is a common place in the legion of hermeneutic readings that Beethoven's opera has elicited. The fact that the drama takes place in two contrasting physical spaces, surface and depths, renders key characteristics all the more apparent: flat keys are associated with the darkness of the prison and Pizarro's corruption, and C major with the brightness of sunlight, freedom and victory. It has also been noted that the narrative trajectory from imprisonment to freedom is paralleled by an ascent from the dungeons to the surface and by a tonal trajectory from F minor to C major [19]. Political interpretations of *Fidelio*, either as an enactment of the ideals of the French Revolution [20] or as a defence of enlightened absolutism [21], feature a strong goal orientation, as they emphasize the final triumph of freedom and justice over moral corruption. The addition of a third dimension to this binary opposition can enrich the interpretation of this journey from darkness to light, by considering E major as the apex that completes the Ab-C-E complex, imparting a spiritual dimension to the message conveyed by the opera.

Although an exalted C major-ness embodies the joy of the final chorus of prisoners, the victory it conveys can also be understood as an earthly and thus transitory achievement, deployed from a transcendence that is constrained to the realm of the spirit. The final chorus has been described as "bathed in brilliant sunlight" [22], or a "burst of light more glorious than any sunrise" [23], and C is indeed bright when opposed to F minor or Ab. But the repeated use of C major as a subordinate key to E major functions as a musical sign that alludes to the illusory nature of this tonally defined existential plane. The source where brightest light is to be found is actually E major, a differentiated ontological space in which faith and spirit reside, musically embodied in sacred signs. Teleological narratives oriented exclusively to the achievement of a final state fail to capture the relevance of this metaphysical realm as moving force and ultimate placeholder of positive moral values. No less important than the victorious resolution is the presence of a spiritual agency allegorically represented by Leonore. The Ab-C-E complex and the topic of the sacred hymn provide further analytical support to readings of the opera that emphasize its spiritual dimension, such as those of Mellers [24] or Singer, who considered *Fidelio* a sacred drama: "In being a dramatization of passion, of heroism and of that aggressive wilfulness without which there could be neither passion nor heroism, *Fidelio* takes the form of a religious mystery" [25].

MEDIANTS AND SUBMEDIANTS IN BEETHOVEN'S LATE STYLE

Whereas the choice of keys was already present in the first version of the opera, some of the revisions performed in 1814, particularly the new overture and Leonore's recitative¹⁰, seem to articulate the contrast between C major and E major in a new emphatic manner. In *Fidelio*, it is mainly due to Beethoven's final modifications that C major, the key of nature and of the triumphant celebration of freedom at the end of the opera, repeatedly turns out to be a transitory state that leads to E major, the key of Leonore, imbued with spiritual meanings. I have suggested that this opposition of keys functions represents the contrast between the human and the divine, and that the recurrent reinterpretation of C major as flat submediant of E major can be understood as a

¹⁰ The *Overture* and both Florestan and Leonore's recitatives and arias were the numbers that suffered major changes in the 1814 version.

metaphor of the ephemerality of the earthly existence and the achievement of a superior, transcendent state.

Due to the significant temporal gap that separates the first and second version of the opera from the third, it seems reasonable to venture a reading of the final set of alterations to *Fidelio* as an evolutionary link between Beethoven's heroic and late style. After all, the works composed between 1806 and 1814, including Op. 74 and Op. 95, have been labeled as *transitional* [26]. From the standpoint of the typically heroic *per aspera ad astra* archetype, or in Hatten's words, the *tragic-to-triumphant* expressive genre [27], C major shall be considered as the goal towards which the drama strives. However, to present C major repeatedly playing an auxiliary function to E major notably diffuses its status, and the emphasis on the religious aspects of the drama contributes to a certain relaxation of the teleological drive. The construction of the musical narrative is not entirely captured by a linear progression from F minor to C major; it rather emerges from the trifold opposition of keys related by major thirds. I find a suggestive analogy between this shift and a tendency from *goal orientation* to *goal diffusion* features that Michael Spitzer uses to characterize Beethoven's heroic and late periods respectively [28].

The use of major third relationships would become an essential feature in Beethoven's later work. An overview of the choice of key areas in the late string quartets proves to be striking: out of the eighteen movements in major mode, only three feature a section in the dominant.¹¹ By contrast, there is a tendency towards a symmetrical relationship of keys, with a tonic balanced between the mediant major and the flat submediant (Figure 2). Major-third related keys often appear in episodes differentiated not only by key but also by texture, register, and character (e.g. E major variation in Op. 127,ii; Gb episode in the *Grosse Fugue*), and seem to carry more expressive weight than all the action surrounding them, functioning as heavy middles that challenge the goal orientation of classical form.

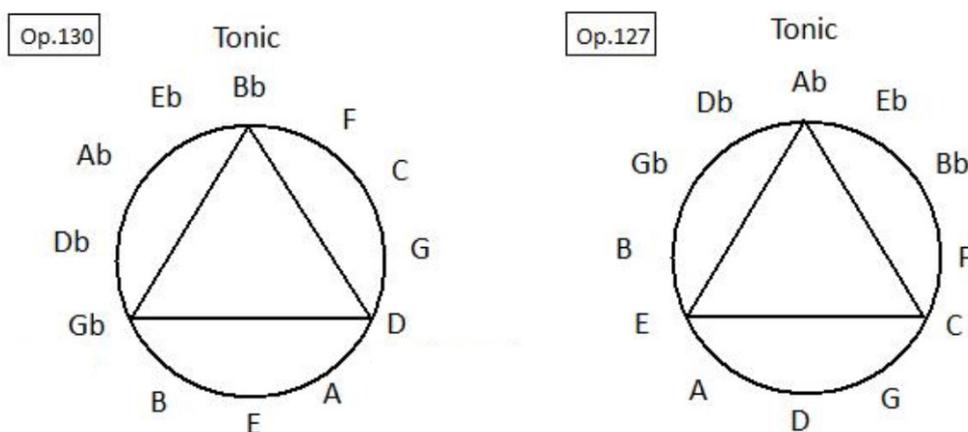


Figure 2: Key relationships in Op. 130 (i)¹² and Op. 127(ii and iv).

These aspects of tonal organization have not remained unnoticed, although a better understanding of their semiotic underpinnings is still to be gained. The opposition of keys related by major thirds in *Fidelio* displays a rich metaphorical capacity that can be

¹¹ Op. 127 (iv), Op. 130 (iii), Op. 135 (i). In the *Grosse Fugue*, original last movement of Op. 130 the dominant is absent as tonal center, although it does appear in the alternative *Finale*.

¹² Adapted from Chua [29].

also applied to instrumental works. Maynard Solomon encouraged “the inquiry into the connections-at least the analogies- between Beethoven’s thought and his later works” [30], an enterprise that has inspired notable contributions *avant la lettre* such as Hatten’s *tragic-to-transcendent* expressive genre [31], Kinderman’s *symbol for the Deity* [32] or Lodes’ discussion of the relationship between man and God in the *Missa solemnis* [33]. A deeper knowledge of the ways in which keys contribute to musical signification, either by themselves or in relation to each other, either specific to Beethoven or shared with his contemporaries, has the potential to open a new window into a repertoire that seems to encourage endless interpretations.

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APPENDIX

The image shows a musical score for the Overture of Fidelio, mm. 1-23 (reduction). The score is in G major and 2/4 time. It is divided into two systems. The first system starts with 'Allegro' and 'f' dynamics, followed by 'Adagio' with 'pp' dynamics. The second system starts with 'Allegro' and 'f' dynamics, followed by 'Adagio' with 'p' and 'pp' dynamics, and ends with two sixteenth-note patterns marked '6'.

Image 1: *Fidelio*, Overture, mm. 1-23 (reduction)

Image 2 shows a reduction of the Fidelio Overture, measures 104-110. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of three staves: Treble, Grand Staff (Violin and Bass), and Bass. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The music features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the Grand Staff and chords in the Treble and Bass staves. Dynamic markings include *sf* (sforzando) and *ff* (fortissimo).

Image 2: *Fidelio*, Overture, mm. 104-110 (reduction).

Image 3 shows a reduction of the Fidelio Overture, measures 206-212. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of three staves: Treble, Grand Staff (Violin and Bass), and Bass. The key signature is one flat (Bb). The music features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the Grand Staff and chords in the Treble and Bass staves. Dynamic markings include *sf* (sforzando) and *ff* (fortissimo).

Image 3: *Fidelio*, Overture, mm. 206-212 (reduction).

Image 4 shows the musical score for *Fidelio*, Act 1, No. 9, measures 21-32. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of multiple staves. The tempo is marked *Adagio. Colla parte* and *Poco sostenuto*, with a final section marked *a tempo*. The key signature is one flat (Bb). The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bs.), and Strings. The vocal line is in German, with lyrics: "so leuch-tet mir ein Far-ben-bo gen, der hell auf dun-ken Wol-ken ruht Der blickt so still, so fried-lich nie-der, der spie-gelt al-te Zei-ten wie-der, und neu be-sanf-tig wall mein Blut". The score features various musical notations, including triplets and dynamic markings like *p* (piano).

Image 4: *Fidelio*, Act 1, No. 9, No.9, mm. 21-32

Topical Interplay in Beethoven's *An die Ferne Geliebte*: Ambiguity as Narrative Principle

Panu Heimonen, University of Helsinki, FI

ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to formulate a novel way of analysing topical relations in interaction with pragmatic factors in the song cycle An die Ferne Geliebte. The psychological tension peculiar to the cycle arises from the manner in which topical relations (pastoral, heroic) interact with a network of minor mode inflections. These tragic minor inflections are interpreted as metalinguistic negations which are able to form a signifying network and to function as part of transcendental acts of affirmation and negation. Topics are embedded in a tonal framework which establishes pertinent tonal goals. The narrative trajectory is the result of interaction between these transcendental acts and relations that prevail between topics. The above psychological tension finds moreover an equivalent in the Moorean paradox.

INTRODUCTION

This paper examines how the topical path in the song cycle *An die Ferne Geliebte* develops from ambiguous to non-ambiguous with respect to evolving tonal relations. The change between the topics reflects a change in interlocutors' psychological states thus leading to the emergence of the Beloved. Methodologically the paper attempts to combine the analysis of tonal relations to an examination of relations between existential semiotic and pragmatic ways of analytical description. At the end of the cycle there is a strong sense of success and reconciliation: The distance has been overcome and the Beloved has gained her presence. Therefore conjectures are put forward concerning the way and possible moment when reconciliation is achieved.

A METHODOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

An Outline of Form

The cycle itself comprises six songs, the first and last of which form a framing sections (bs.1-54; 258-342), and the songs no. 2-5 (bs. 55-257) make up the central part of the cycle. Still in spite of seeming easiness of the character and traits of individual songs when the cycle is examined as a whole the resulting signifying relations turn out to be subtle and complicated by nature.

Song no.1, (Ziemlich langsam und mit Ausdruck, 1-54)	Song no. 2, (Poco Allegretto, 55-99)	Song no. 3, (Allegro Assai, 100-152)	Song no. 4 (Nicht zu Geschwinde, 153-189)	Song no. 5 (Vivace, 190-257)	Song no. 6 (Andante con moto, Cantabile258 -304) Coda, (305-342)
Pastoral	Pastoral	Heroic	Pastoral	Heroic	Pastoral and Heroic merged
Eb- major	G-major	Ab-major (Ab- minor)	Ab- major	C-major (C- minor)	Transformati on to Eb- major

Table I: Topics and Tonalities in *An die Ferne Geliebte*

Methodological Approaches

The framework consists of Greimassian narratology, existential semiotic theory and pragmatics. There is a highly extraordinary narrative trajectory to be found in the song cycle: A Debrayage (disengagement or “leaving the stage” of an actor [1]) which has happened before the beginning of the cycle and a multifaceted central section which prepares the way for the Embrayage [2], the re-emergence of the Beloved, the object of longing. The song cycle consists of elements that on the surface seem to be rather simple, but which are part of an embedded tonal structure (framing and central sections) and which form such signifying relations whose meanings can often only be reached through elaborated context-dependent referential relations. There seems to emerge both encoded, semantic relations that arise from topical entities and inferential, pragmatic meanings such as metalinguistic negations [3], [4], [5], which ultimately serve to bridge the central songs (nos. 2-5) to the framing sections. It is the Greimassian theory which provides the narrative outline of the cycle. Yet existential semiotic and pragmatic theories are still needed in order to illuminate the inner, conversational and dialogic aspects of the piece. The result of this methodological manifold is a new type of coherence based on pragmatic inferences in excess of tonal relations and also on the related topical signification of a semantic type. Ambiguity arises at several conjoined levels to such a measure that one may almost insist that there is a trajectory of ambiguity to be discerned (on the concept of ambiguity see [6]).

A methodologically vital development is that instead of speaking only about expectations at the tonal level we choose to speak about interlocutor’s communicative intentions [7] and the denial or fulfillment of these intentions. Speaking about intentions is highly relevant in a situation which at the outset can in a romantic manner be described as longing for the unattainable. It is a question of inner mental events and processes and the dialogic communication between them. In addition to expectations the concept of intention takes into account all the semantic and pragmatic indexical processes that are vital for a proper understanding of the identity of the interlocutors. This is relevant since the actors are well established through the accompanying text and the use of intentions in

order to analyze conversational interactions in pragmatic and semantic theory belongs to a venerable stream of research [8].

Ultimately the song cycle is about a dialogical interaction between two interlocutors, the narrator-protagonist and the Beloved one. It tells how the distance which separates them is overcome and describes the way in which the topical landscape tells this story. The former is conceptually realized through rapprochement of the interlocutors' communicative intentions, which as mediated via the interacting topics – especially the pastoral [9] and heroic topics - also forms the main content of the cycle.

The re-emergence or “entering the stage” of the Beloved, which we following Greimas (1987) shall call Embryage, functions as a presupposition for the entire cycle. It is the crucial event, the object of longing. This presupposition will then be denied or negated several times and in different manners in the course of the cycle. It is actually this sense of knowing something and simultaneously refusing to believe it which allows one to build up the kind of psychological tension that is characteristic to the cycle as a whole and which works as a central factor in the formation of the narrative trajectory of the cycle. This psychological tension is reflected in the paradox which arises in Moorean sentences: I know that p, but I do not believe p. The negation appearing in these sentences is most often a metalinguistic negation i.e. a negation which depends on the use of language, which functions in response to a previous utterance and which objects or denies some aspect(s) of how a proposition has been expressed. In a respective manner it is these very tensions that mold the topical trajectory of the cycle and finally result in the merging of the pastoral and heroic topic.

THE PIVOT POINT: WHICH ROLE FOR AB-MAJOR CHORD (M. 258)?

In terms of music analysis we start the quest for the functioning of the cycle from a musical moment that carries the major emotional and narrative weight in the cycle and then start to work backward and forward from there in order to explain the meaning of formal, narrative and pragmatic processes involved. This central event seems to be the appearance of the Ab-major chord at b. 258 at the beginning of song no. 6 (Example 1¹).

The cadential occurrences in the preceding songs and those in song no 6 are interpreted as transcendental acts of affirmation when directed towards the main tonality of the cycle and as negations when they attempt to move the music to a distant tonal goal. Especially when the music collapses to distant minor modes of various degrees the resulting negations are interpreted as metalinguistic negations which are able to refer to other previous occurrences of the minor mode. What specific reasons can be found in support of this central position of Ab-minor chord? There are several pertinent dimensions in the song cycle which influence the formation of the narrative trajectory. Because it is a question about a transformation that is happening within a dialogue between the interlocutors over a long distance it is advisable to see which dimensions change and which do possibly remain constant.

In this paper a conjecture is put forward that this is the moment where the Beloved emerges as a conversational companion in the dialogue. Since the beginning of the cycle is largely about remembrance one has now reached the now-moment (Temporal change).

¹ See Appendix image no. 1.

In addition due to the diminishing distance the interlocutors have at least in a fictive sense reached here the mutual location (Spatial change). The development of narrative in *An die Ferne Geliebte* can in fact be largely seen through this Ab-major chord and those tonal, semantic and pragmatic meanings which are attached to it. In quest of narrative trajectory as we are it can be shown that many narratively significant progressions have their origin in the corresponding handling of the Ab-major chord.

We shall start to unravel the narrative logic of the song cycle through the events which precede the Ab-major chord. Given the central position of Ab-major chord and the Ab-major tonality in the cycle as a whole its significance deserves to be examined from various perspectives.

Ab-chord and the respective tonality bear the elements of choice in many respects. It carries with it a choice between pastoral and heroic topics: The heroic topic in song no. 3, and the pastoral topic in song no. 4. Also the Ab-major chord carries with it the possibility of modal mixture, as is evident at the end of song no. 3. Here the sinister and fateful Ab-minor threatens to overcome when the last straws of sunshine fall beneath the horizon (“meine Seufzer, die vergehen wie der Sonne letzter Strahl”, Example 2²). A related event takes place at song no. 6 where C-minor is momentarily reached before the turn into the Bb-major (“und sein letzter Strahl verglüheth hinter jener Bergeshöh”, Example 1). Significant in view of the role of Ab-major chord is that it is in Ab-major that one finds both pastoral and heroic topics. In this sense it might be thought that both of the topics have an indexical relation to Ab-major. This can be seen to have a great impact later in the situation at m. 258 when piano takes up the Ab-chord and starts to seek the tonal direction. In a topical sense the chord can be indexed to either one of these chords based on the preceding topical trajectory.

The Shifting Schenkerian Interpretation

Ab-major seems to have a position of a watershed tonality/chord in the cycle. The intriguing position of the Ab-major chord can be further illustrated through the possible implied tonal goals which it may have (see Figure 1). If Ab-major chord is established in a subdominant function (IV), it will through dominant-chord (Bb7th, V) resolve into Eb-tonality. It may however also be interpreted as an upper neighbor to G and the latter functioning as a dominant resolve into C-minor, the parallel minor which has a tragic meaning. It is also possible that one reaches Ab-minor as the tonal goal through modal mixture. Having been almost entirely avoided in the song no. 1 it appears in an extremely marked vein as Ab-major tonality in the two consecutive songs (nos. 3 and 4) of the central section. The precarious position of the Ab-major chord is emphasized by the fact that it is surrounded by the somewhat distant G-major (song no. 2) and C-major tonalities (song no. 5). This foregrounds the coming role of the chord as the pivot point in the cycle where several major tonal and narrative tensions are centered. A complicated network of significations is thus foregrounded in the central section of the song cycle.

² See Appendix image no. 2.

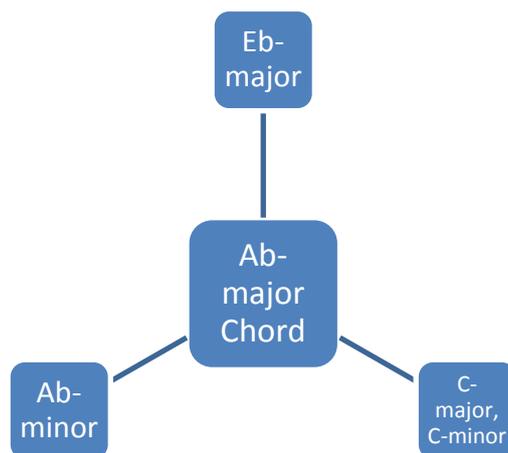


Figure 1. Implied Tonal Goals for the Ab-major Chord

It seems inevitable that in a situation between two interlocutors where uncertainty is one of the main characteristics there is a push and pull –type of mental activity concerning the kinds of voice leading interpretations just presented. These tonal goals also prescribe the way that the longing for the distant Beloved develops and that prescribe the possible moment of the re-encounter between the interlocutors. As will become clear in the course of the paper it is towards the painting of this kind of musical landscape that Beethoven is aiming at in the song cycle when he is describing and living through the longing for the distant Beloved.

NARRATIVE PRINCIPLES IN THE CYCLE

In the first song of the cycle a narrative lack [10] is established, which provides a starting point for the narrative trajectory of the piece. The first and the most general species of lack can be derived from an epistemological point of view. Since the Beloved is non-present, she has been disconnected from the events of the story (Debrayage) and thus obviously unreachable, one cannot possess infallible knowledge about her feelings, desires or intentions in the first place. In this sense there is an inevitable and wide ranging epistemic lack, a lack of knowledge, in the first song when seen from the perspective of the whole cycle³. From an actorial point of view the song cycle seems to start out from a situation where the Beloved is in such a location which is so far away that practically she can be considered absent and to form an object of yearning. In Greimassian narratological terms this is an example of a heterotopic space [11] i.e. an “elsewhere”, which is able to imply both kinds of lack, and therefore it may also serve as a starting point towards the development of an Embryage, the re-entry of an actor. This which will indeed eventually take place as will become evident later. The above narrative principles will form the background for the topical interplay which will take place in the song cycle. The trajectory of topics will punctuate the skeleton of narrative events and along with tonal

³ The epistemic perspective shall be dealt with in more detail in a presentation to be given at the conference The Communication of Certainty and Uncertainty, October 3rd-5th, University of Macerata, Italy. That presentation will examine the analysis of epistemic modality in more detail in constructing the narrative trajectory of the piece.

events it will participate in the build-up of that conjectured moment where the Beloved emerges and the process gets started where the dialogue between the two interlocutors begins.

From Metalinguistic Negation to Transcendental Tragic

One has now established a path through the piece which consists of negating and affirming transcendental acts and within this development a network which consists of negations or denials, which are here interpreted as metalinguistic in the sense that they are capable to object the previous negations in the network. Pastoral and heroic topics alternate in the course of the cycle as was describe above in the first chapter. There are however certain moments where the topic which usually covers the whole song in question is negated. These kinds of denials of the prevailing topic occur two times in the cycle. The first one takes place at the end of song no. 3 (Ab-minor, Example 2) and the second one at the end of song no. 5 (c-minor, Example 1). In terms of voice leading they are modal mixtures i.e. minor variants and they acquire a much more wide ranging meaning when they are set into a signifying context. Basically this comes down to the above mentioned relation of the central section of the song cycle to the outer, framing parts of the cycle and to the question about how a sense of suspension is built between the two.

Through an analogy in pragmatic linguistic theory a negation can be interpreted as specifically a metalinguistic negation. It is something which is not part of the semantic content of the topical layer of the piece, but it can pragmatically object some aspect of an expression. It can then be seen to intrude the semantic layer [12] and in this way its influence can reach over a longer period of time. In this sense it is reminiscent of signifying processes in existential semiotics.

Being established as a negation of the desired state the tragic fate is in practice represented as a modal mixture and appears in both songs no. 3 (Ab-minor) and 5 (c-minor). These minor mode passages may according to existential semiotics be interpreted also as transcendental acts of negation [13], usually coupled with the transcendental act of affirmation. In this sense the tragic topic, when encountered in a context such as the present one, acquires for itself the quality of transcendence. In doing so, they will attempt to keep active the constant awareness of the possibility of the tragic fate. This in turn causes the very awareness to be bound to loom over and above the individual songs. The thing which will provide the essential countervailing force for the metalinguistic negation is the tonal motion towards Bb-chord the dominant of Eb-major. This is the tonal force that has been avoided throughout the cycle until the moment when Bb in "Molto adagio"-passage enters (bar 283). Here it is introduced with doubled octaves along with a sensation as though the time was arrested as the Bb octaves sound out. Hence this appearance provides what may be termed affirmation in order to complement the previous negations. In fact it appears in a row since a second affirmation follows in b. 295, the first proper dominant seventh chord in the entire cycle. The appearance of this seventh chord and especially the effort that has been allotted to establishing it most effectively testifies that the distance has indeed now been moved aside.

Yet, as it appears the transcendental act of negation here works against the principle of Embrayage, which was introduced at the beginning. The result is an intriguing tension between these dimensions of the work. Left by itself the principle of negation

would suggest the negation of the domain of utterance [14], which would imply the impossibility of Embrayage, the re-entry of the Beloved into the domain of discourse. Accordingly the absence of the Beloved would endure and the tragic fate would persist (see Figure 2). However the negations are effectively resisted as the negated utterances are metalinguistic entities they are projected over the central section of the cycle all the way until the transformational passages starting from the beginning of the song no. 6⁴. The very moment where both tragic negations, the one in C-minor and the one in Ab-minor, confront each other in b. 283 (“molto Adagio”, Example 1) can be considered to form a *Grenzerfahrung* as described by Karl Jaspers [15] and Eero Tarasti [16].

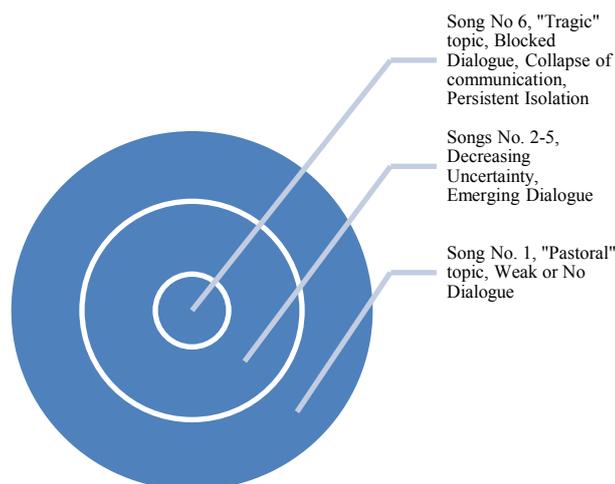


Figure 2. Alternative, Undesired Development Path

THE TOPICAL CONTRIBUTION: TOWARDS MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

What will the trajectory of topics now start to look like when it is put into interaction with the kind of narrative principles which were delineated above? In connection with landscape poetry topics on a general level participate in the description of the outer, natural world. On the other hand they are also capable to depict the inner, psychological states and processes of the human psyche. Therefore a change in topical content reflects a change in psychological states and a change in the topical relations may be a sign of a change in mutual interaction between such psychological states.

Songs in the central section (songs nos. 2-5) have been fairly simple by character, but yet illustrating the topical content in question. They almost tend to bear a resemblance to folk song. Their tonalities on the other hand form a most interesting tonal constellation: G-Ab-Ab (Ab-minor)-C (C-minor) – this tonal scheme being framed by songs in Eb-major on both sides (see Table: 1). There are, however, no strongly directed tonal tensions between the songs in the same sense that one finds in a thorough composed work. These tonal relations carry and contribute to the character of the topics that are

⁴ (Meta)pragmatic inference is a complicated and partly controversial topic since it is a question of rather recent theoretical work. Its musical applications will be examined more in detail in a presentation to be given at the conference *The Communication of Certainty and Uncertainty*, October 3rd-5th, University of Macerata, Italy.

present in the central section and later on they will be set into interaction in the course of the last song and the coda.

In terms of topics one arrives at the crucial moment when the piano enters at b. 258 signifying the newly discovered Beloved. Here a new element intrudes the preceding clearly separated landscape that has hitherto consisted of alternating pastoral and heroic topics. This is the moment of Embrayage of the Beloved that one has been preparing for all the way throughout the cycle. The topical merging which is about to take place is a central component in the psychological transformation which is taking place here between the interlocutors. Based on the above discussion the Ab-major chord can be considered to be related to both pastoral and heroic topics in an indexical manner. Therefore the overall signifying process seems to work in favor of drawing the two topics towards each other and then causing them to merge with one another.

Finally the merging of the topics is able to explain even the peculiar outlook of the piano theme at the beginning of song no. 6. With regard to motives it seems to be closely related to the theme at the beginning of the cycle, which indeed is the case. The underlying reason behind this however is that Beethoven deliberately combines the topical world of the beginning pastoral with the heroic undertones of songs no. 3 and 5. Therefore when $\frac{3}{4}$ time signature is changed into a $\frac{2}{4}$ time signature the motivic characteristics are bound to undergo a metamorphosis of a kind.

ON THE CONCEPT OF AMBIGUITY: A SYNTHESIS

What is required from a concept that is set to become the central aesthetic principle of the analysis at hand? Since pragmatic processes are context dependent they are usually subject to some kind of negotiation. This on the other hand may serve as a source of ambiguity since due to contextual factors indexical terms and pragmatically enriching processes may be interpreted in alternative ways.

Ambiguity can be born out of various sources. In this respect *An die Ferne Geliebte* may be considered almost an exemplary case where there is an ambiguity between the intended meaning and the recovered meaning or between the speaker's and addressee's meaning. It is partly a question of just not knowing how things stand, which is not ambiguous as such. Yet there are also genuinely ambiguous situations where a term or an utterance has multiple meanings. In this paper such cases are the problems concerning indexing and the ways to make pragmatic inferences. On the other hand the very position of the two songs in Ab-major tonality in the central section is ambiguous since they are in the middle of tonal degrees (G, C) that as such are not part of the framing Eb-major tonality and the song at the end of central section seems to directed to a C-based tonality instead of Eb.

In which ways does ambiguity then come up from this overall picture? It can be seen to emerge at several interlocking levels. As a result of text-music –interaction there arises epistemic uncertainty which is reflected as an ambiguity of the actorial identity of the Beloved and accordingly also an ambiguity concerning the relation between the interlocutors, which is the central feature of the song cycle. The trajectory in any case develops from ambiguous to non-ambiguous, from uncertainty to certainty. The resulting certainty is epitomized by the words at the notorious and affirmative moment (b. 283)

where the dominant of Eb-major is reached: “und du singst, und du singst was ich gesungen, was mir aus der vollen brust ohne Kunstgepräg erklungen” (Example 1).

CONCLUSION

The cycle is based on a delicate interaction between tonal, semantic-topical and pragmatic factors. As a justification for the inclusion of the pragmatic vocabulary to the analysis here it can be deemed that the song cycle does not seem to be based entirely on the idea of tonal coherence. Instead there appear several pragmatic inferences and the type of continuity that is to be derived from therein. It has been shown that the kinds of alternation between belief states (p , $\neg p$) which are peculiar to the cycle can be characterized through linguistic relations that appear in Moore's sentences and the related paradox.

In a psychological sense the overall effect is one of diminishing the uncertainty of actions starting from a description of an almost infinite space and distance in nature and ending in the innermost human sentiments. As a result of the inquiry it is suggested that interlocutors' identities are more fully represented in the form and through the mediation of the topical landscape – pastoral and heroic topics and their transformations - in the song cycle, not perhaps so much in certain kinds of theme actors or thematic characters as the case would customarily tend to be. This increasing degree of dialogue is represented in figure 3, where the sense of a dialogue reaches its highest level in the course of the song no. 6.

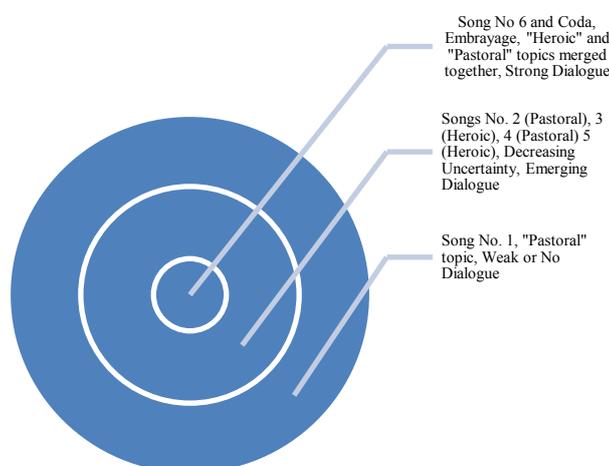


Figure 3. Topics and Degrees of Dialogue in Songs No. 1-6.

There is a rapprochement of interlocutors' communicative intentions and a corresponding merging of topics taking place in *An die Ferne Geliebte* at that moment when the *Geliebte* emerges. It however takes place in such a manner that includes bringing together strongly contradictory topical and dramatic gestures and a variety of tonal implications and their deferrals in the course of the song cycle. It may even be that no definite moment of the emergence of the Beloved after all needs to be pointed out. As a result the Embryage of the Beloved is being achieved in a piecemeal manner while the topical trajectory works its way towards the unification of communicative intentions.

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APPENDIX

161 *ritardando* - - - - - *Tempo I* 161
 mil-de, so lau, nur ich kann nicht zie-hen von hin - nen, wenn al - les, was lie-bet, der
 162 *ritardando*
 die ich dir, Ge - lieb - te, sang, sin - ge sie dann a - be-nds wieder zu der Lau - te sü - ßem Klang.
 163 *ritardando*
 Frühling vereint, nur un - se - rer Lie - be kein Frühling er-scheint, und Trä - nen sind all ihr Ge - win - nen, und
 164 *dim. ff p*
 Wenn das Dir-erungs-rot dann zie-het nach dem stil - len blau - en See, und sein
 165 *adagio*
 Trä - nen sind all ihr Ge - win - nen, ja, all ihr Ge - win - nen. *pp*
 166 *VI*
 167 *Andante con moto e cantabile*
 168 *molto adagio* *Tempo I*
 und du singst, und du singst, was ich ge - sun - gen, was mir aus der voll - len Brust
 169 *cresc.*
 Nimm sie hin denn, die - se Lie - der, oh - ne Kunst - ge - präng' - er - klun - gen, nur der Schmach- tich be - wußt, nur,

Musical example 1. Ambiguous Position of Ab-major Chord in *Beethoven: Sämtliche Lieder, Band II*, Pages 161-62, bars 253-285.

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156
134
läßt mein Bild vor ihr ent-steh-en in dem Luft-ge-n
135
Him-mels-saal
136
Wird sie an den Bü-schen ste-hen, die man herbet-lich fah und kahl, klagt ihr, wie mir
137
ist ge-sche-hen, klagt ihr, Vög-lein! mei-ne Qual.
138
Stil-le We-sie, bringt im We-hen hin zu mei-ner Her-zens-wahl

157
139
ritardando -
mei-ne Souf-zer, die ver-ge-hen wie der Son-ne letz-ter Strahl.
140
Flüster' ihr zu mein
141
Lie-bei-fle-hen, laß sie, Bich-lein, klein und schmal, tren in dei-nen
142
Wo-gen se-ben mei-ne Trä-nen oh-ne Zahl... oh-ne Zahl...
143
IV Nicht zu geschwinde, angenehm und mit viel Empfindung
Die-se Wol-ken in den Hö-hen, die-zer Vög-lein muust-er

Musical example 2. Modal Mixture in Song no. 3, *Beethoven: Sämtliche Lieder, Band II*, Pages 156-57, bars 134-152.

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Situational Irony in Beethoven's Late String Quartets

Tamara Balter, Tel Aviv, IL

ABSTRACT

Although the structures of verbal and of situational irony have been shown to be quite similar,¹ we cannot make a defensible argument about verbal irony in instrumental music, i.e., about verbal meanings being manipulated; rather, musical events are best explained as exemplifying situational irony—a type of irony that has been scarcely discussed in the music theory literature.

Several fundamental characteristics of music make it highly amenable to situational irony (also known as "irony of events"). Classical music raises expectations, and competent listeners anticipate situations that they consider right for the musical conditions at hand. Furthermore, listeners compare and contrast the expected musical event with the one that actually occurs in the work. But naturally, these traits are not sufficient conditions for musical irony because contrasting situations and frustrating expectations have many other uses as well. The main question is therefore: When does the presence of these features indicate situational irony?

As analyses of several of Beethoven's late string quartets show, situational irony can be used to account for a range of musical events that may be interpreted as ironic. Drawing on Lars Elleström's² discussion of situational irony in Magritte's painting *In Praise of Dialectics*, the present essay demonstrates how the closing-beginning contradiction in Beethoven's *String Quartet in F Major, Op. 135* exemplifies situational irony. The quartet's opening, which contains comic elements, makes a mockery of the projected normative beginning, undermining our stylistic expectations. Situational irony can also be expressed in music by frustrating a meticulously prepared expectation for harmonic resolution or key area. Indeed, in the *Scherzo* movement in Beethoven's *String Quartet in C-sharp Minor, Op. 131*, unexpected modulations may be interpreted retrospectively as portraying situational irony. In *Op. 131* such irony is related to the large-scale ironic conceit of the movement.

¹ Zemach, E. and Balter, T., 2007. "The Structure of Irony and How it Functions in Music," In *Philosophers on Music: Experience, Meaning, and Work*, ed. Kathleen Stock. Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 178–206.

² Elleström, L., 1996. "Some Notes on Irony in the Visual Arts and Music: The Examples of Magritte and Shostakovich," *Word & Image* 12, p. 202.

SITUATIONAL IRONY

Whereas in our daily life we often ascribe irony to situations, events, or certain behaviors, most studies of irony and related tropes (such as parody, humor, and the grotesque) attribute irony to literary works. An explanation of irony as modeled in literary works is also present in the primary definition of the term in the Oxford English Dictionary, which stresses the use of words. This approach has a long history that goes back to treatises on rhetoric, which considered irony as one of the rhetorical figures. The *second* definition in the OED presents other fields as well in which one can find irony: "a condition of affairs or events of a character opposite to what was, or might naturally be, expected; a contradictory outcome of events as if in mockery of the promise and fitness of things [1]." Douglas Muecke explains that this ordering in the OED (defining verbal irony first and situational irony later) "reflects the historical development of the concept of irony: Situational Irony was called irony because, and when, it seemed to resemble Verbal Irony, and this was not until the eighteenth century [2]."³

From around the time we find situational irony in music, in the second half of the eighteenth century, this type of irony was already recognized as resembling verbal irony. In music we seem to have a combination of verbal and situational irony: we can identify events but not speakers and their intentions. Yet, because we know that there is no chance or fate involved in a fine artwork (unlike events in real life), we tend to assume that it is the creator's voice that (intentionally) invents ironic situations in the work. Situational irony does not require an ironist, only an onlooker who discerns the irony exemplified in the situation or state of affairs. Although the structure of verbal and situational irony is fairly similar, one cannot explicitly speak of verbal meanings that are manipulated in music (as in verbal irony), but musical events may readily be explained as exemplifying situational irony in which the situation is constructed, and hence controlled, by the composer. Thus, although irony of events in life does not require intentionality or an ironist (Muecke explicitly states that only events and situations may be unintentionally ironic [4]), in music we similarly do not require any agential intention, but we must substantiate our interpretation of musical events as displaying situational irony if we were to attribute it to the work and its composer (or to its "implied author," to use Wayne Booth's term [5]).⁴

In situational irony, just as in verbal irony, the perceiver contrasts the situation at hand with an idealized projected situation [6].⁵ A situation in reality or a musical event is perceived as ironic if it leads us (the perceivers) to project (envision) a possible situation that may be considered a counterpart of the situation/event at hand. Irony typically involves criticism, a dramatic exposition of imperfection; as such it differs, for instance, from endearment or amicable understatement, which may have a similar structure. The contrast between the superior situation and the one at hand enhances the deformity of the

³ Knox [3] notes that "before the late eighteenth century little attempt was made to carry the explicit definition of irony beyond the type of the dictionary entry and the traditional rhetorical classification."

⁴ Despite the centrality of intentionality in theories of irony, Booth often employs his notion of an "implied author" as a means to escape the problematic reliance on intentions when interpreting texts or works of art, as previously explicated by Wimsatt and Beardsley's "intentional fallacy."

⁵ In the theory presented there, the structure of both verbal and situational irony is shown to be the same (unlike, for example, that of parody) in so far as a perceiver is led to project a possible situation that is understood to be superior to the actual situation. In situational irony our norms lead us to project an idealized, "apt" situation that is in sharp contrast to the actual situation.

target of irony. The essence of irony lies in the projection of a situation that makes reality (or in our case, aspects of the musical work) look deformed or imperfect.

In verbal irony, a speaker uses language to indicate an ideal situation (contrasted to the one mocked); in situational irony, the ideal situation is indicated by our norms. We have strong intuitions about how things should be: what is right, just, and fair in a particular case. For example, Joe is a clumsy and reckless driver but has never caused an accident. His wife, Jane, is an adept and scrupulous driver, yet she is killed in a traffic accident. The *real* situation here (the good driver is killed and the bad one comes to no harm) is ironic in that it is perceived against a just counterpart (where people get what they deserve), a possible world that puts it to shame. The projected situation makes us see the real situation as a grotesque and deformed version of it. Many of O. Henry's short stories are filled with ironic situations.

Although the following example of situational irony is taken from a literary work, it also exemplifies non-linguistic irony, demonstrating that it may occur in literature, too; it also serves as a "modulation" to our discussion of situational irony in music. The science fiction novel, *Camp Concentration* by Thomas Disch, is alleged to be a report of a poet ordered to describe the life of scientists and artists incarcerated by a totalitarian government in a concentration camp [7]. The inmates had been intentionally infected with an illness similar to syphilis, which made them more creative but killed them in less than a year. The beginning of the report (that is, the beginning of the novel itself) illustrates the mediocre and dull style of an uninspired poet. Gradually, the writing improves, until it becomes a superb work of art, written in a poetic, vivid language. A sensitive reader discerns the gradual improvement in the writing and understands, before the protagonist himself realizes it, that the latter had also been infected. The disease has caused him to become more creative, but will kill him very soon. Only at the end of the novel do we find a *literal* statement that the poet was indeed infected; until that point, that crucial plot element can only be inferred from the *quality* of the writing. This is non-linguistic, situational irony: the irony in that novel is revealed not by the *meaning* of the text but by its aesthetic properties.⁶

This example brings me to a significant distinction between linguistic and non-linguistic (or behavioral) irony. First, one may speak of irony as linguistic expression. For example, when I say ironically "That was a really smart thing to say," my intended meaning may be: "That was a really dumb thing to say." Irony operates here on the literal meaning of a linguistic expression. In its second, non-linguistic form, irony operates on the *properties* of ordinary objects rather than on the meanings of linguistic expressions. For example, a speaker behaves in a way that he believes to be noble, and his opponent mimics this behavior in an ironic way, making him appear ridiculous. Here the irony moves from one property (nobility) to its opposite (ridiculousness). This counter-meaning embedded in irony is therefore generally critical of the object of the irony. I believe that irony in instrumental music appears primarily in the second form.

⁶ Disch's novel presents not only an irony of events (situational irony) but also a dramatic irony, from the perspective of the reader, who is first to realize what the narrator does not yet suspect.

SITUATIONAL IRONY IN MUSIC

There is almost no discussion of situational irony in the music theory literature despite the fact that two central, commonly accepted characteristics of music make it highly amenable to situational irony. First, classical music raises expectations: competent listeners project situations they consider right for the (musical) conditions at hand. Second, listeners compare and contrast the anticipated situation (a musical event) with the one that occurs in the work. As Frank Samarotto notes in an essay addressing determinism and causality in music analysis, "the idea of a logical succession of events is as central to the presuppositions of music theory as we currently practice it that all else seems to fall outside its purview" [8]. Lastly, in situational irony it is not always necessary to assume an ironic agent (except the author). Note, however, that the above traits are not sufficient conditions for musical irony because contrasting situations and frustrating expectations have many other uses too: they create tension, drama, or simply add interest to the work. Therefore, the main question is: When does the presence of these features indicate situational irony?

A situation may challenge our assumptions about what is proper and right by frustrating our expectations about the proper location of musical material of a certain kind. Thus, a piece that begins with a *closing* gesture flies in the face of our expectations of a musical event that is appropriate for the beginning of a work (in the given style). Such "closing-beginnings" exist in the music of Haydn (notably in Op. 33) and of later composers, and may be found in any number of string quartets. Jonathan Kramer and Judy Lochhead discuss the contrast between these two states, the projected and the actual (Kramer names them "*clock-time*" and "*gestural-time*"), in Beethoven's String Quartet in F Major, Op. 135 [9]. The musical event at the beginning of that work, shown in Ex. 1 (mm. 1–10), suggests closing or cadencing, contradicting its actual (*clock-time*) place at the beginning of the piece. At that hallowed location we expect (hence project) normative tonic stability and clear periodicity, but instead we find a compound, ten-measure sentence that closes with a final cadence (in m. 10 all four parts have an F in four different registers). Two surprising Phrygian cadences open the piece, each followed by a sprightly three-note motive that mocks its serious mood and questioning gesture (mm. 1–4). A nonchalant sequence follows and further develops the mocking three-note gesture, integrating it as a motive. A terminal cadence occurs in m. 10 (note the atypical unison ending), and then a new, unrelated musical idea begins. Thus, the quartet's opening derides the projected normative beginning: it undermines our stylistic expectations and contains comic elements, hinting at irony.

Example 1. Beethoven: String Quartet in F Major, Op. 135, I, mm. 1–10.

One of the few who investigated situational irony in art is Lars Elleström, who used Magritte's painting *In Praise of Dialectics* as an example. The painting shows the inside of a room through an open window, but the room contains only the façade of another building [10] (Figure 1). Instead of the stylistically expected domestic scene we find an inferior situation: a forbidding externality. The frustration of our expectation by the exterior wall that stands where an inside scene should have been parallels the above closing-beginning contradiction in Beethoven's Op. 135. In Magritte's work we topologically understand the inside to be the outside; in parallel, Beethoven shows us that the beginning can be the end.⁷ The competent listener's tendency to project the norm leads to a paradox. Beethoven seems to resolve it at the end of the work, but that solution only intensifies the irony. The "closing" sentence that opened Op. 135 reappears at the end of the first movement, performing, so to speak, its "duty" of concluding the movement.⁸ Yet this ending redoubles the irony: after we consented to forgo our previous conceptions and have accepted a new musical idiom in which that musical event plays the role of a commencing gesture, the new norm is forfeited: we must abandon our newly acquired norm and go back

⁷ Following Muecke, Elleström writes that an ironic situation is one "that displays a striking incongruity between an expectation and an event" [11]. But that condition, although necessary, is not sufficient because it fails to distinguish an ironic situation from a merely surprising one. Elleström himself goes beyond it when he claims that in music, "when we feel that two contrasting moods are mutually exclusive, and yet in a way make sense when jumbled together, it is irony that tickles our ears" [12]. This is reminiscent of Lee Miller's notion of the overall appropriateness of the ironic situation, to be addressed below [13].

⁸ A somewhat similar stratagem is employed in the late bagatelle Op. 126, No. 6 in E-flat Major. The bagatelle begins with a short (6 bar) closing gesture: a fast, virtuoso passage marked "Presto," that has little to do with the main body of the piece, which is a lyrical Andante in 3/8. This closing gesture reappears in the end, "restoring" its normative function, where – to use Kramer's terminology – gestural time and clock time are aligned. Concluding the movement with the same closing gesture that opened it turns the structure into a circular one, but may also be understood as "framing" it, emphasizing its artificiality.

to the old one. The opening sentence concludes the very work that taught us not to expect it there. The destructive irony here is radical and most effective. Understanding the paradox in the opening movement helps us comprehend a similar paradox in the final movement.

Figure 1. Magritte, *In Praise of Dialectics*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne⁹

The "*Muss es sein?*" question in the finale is presented in unison (Ex. 2). Its implied harmony is dominant (seventh) to tonic; that is, from unstable to stable harmony, which seems more suitable for an answer than for a question. But the absence of a resolution of the leading tone and the leap to the tonic's third undermines the harmonic closure of the motive: its harmony suggests an answer, but its contour and voice-leading suggest a question. This "oxymoronic" feature disappears in the recapitulation, where the entire questioning motive is harmonized with a dominant harmony, hence sounding more like a question.¹⁰ This paradox, as well as several other resemblances between the finale and the beginning of the first movement, further hint at irony.¹¹

Another way of expressing situational irony is by frustrating a meticulously prepared expectation for harmonic resolution or a key area. The sudden dislocations of the apparent tonal stability in the finale (sonata-rondo) of Beethoven's Violin Sonata in G Major, Op. 30, no. 3 are ironic according to Longyear [14]. There are two tonally surprising shifts in that finale. First, after the second episode of the finale, there is a false reprise of the theme in the major mediant (mm. 133–36), which is carefully prepared but abruptly abandoned. The movement proceeds to prepare for a correct recapitulation (m. 141). Second, in the coda there is a surprising shift to the flat submediant (m. 177) after a prolonged dominant; this unexpected tonality is "stated in a 'vamp' accompaniment" and precedes another statement of the main theme in a wrong key [15]. Longyear maintains that these shifts display Romantic irony because they destroy an illusion. Leaving aside, for now, the question of Romantic irony, is this even situational irony? Even if the major mediant or the flat-submediant are not expected, their surprising appearance does not amount to contradiction, as required in situational irony. Listeners are led to project a more normative, perhaps a commonplace tonic area, which does not materialize; but the projected situation (tonic area) does not mock the realized situation (major mediant) and does not *diametrically* contradict it.

⁹ <http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/col/work/4157>

¹⁰ I thank Naphtali Wagner for pointing this out to me.

¹¹ Both movements begin with off-tonic harmony, in piano and low register. The mysterious opening gesture is played by the cello and viola, followed by a contrasting texture with close imitations between the three upper parts (compare mm. 3–5 in the opening movement with the close imitation in m. 2 of the finale). In the recapitulation of both movements the gesture appears in fuller texture over a prolonged harmony (D-flat [bVI] in the first movement and prolonged dominant in the finale). Finally, the coda of the finale dismisses both the question ("*Muss es sein?*" in minor, marked *Grave*) and the answer ("*Es muss sein!*" marked *Allegro*).

The image shows a musical score for the fourth movement of Beethoven's String Quartet in F Major, Op. 135, measures 1-4. At the top is a vocal line with the lyrics "Must es sein? Es muss sein! Es muss sein!". Below it are four staves for the string quartet: Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), and Cello (Vc.). The score includes dynamic markings such as *p* (piano) and *cresc.* (crescendo) across the different parts.

Example 2. Beethoven: String Quartet in F Major, Op. 135, IV, mm. 1-4.

There is, however, a late movement by Beethoven, the Scherzo in the String Quartet in C-sharp Minor, Op. 131, where unexpected modulations to the mediant may be retrospectively interpreted as portraying situational irony. In this movement, Beethoven modulates to the mediant very early in the scherzo section, then directly moves from the dominant seventh chord of the mediant (V7/iii, marked with a fermata) to the tonic, E major. This shift brings to mind the above-mentioned deceptive move in the coda of the Violin Sonata Op. 30, no. 3, from a dominant seventh chord with a fermata to the flat submediant. In Op. 131 the deception is double, because what may sound as the submediant in G# (an E major chord) is, in fact, a correct (tonic) reprise of the A section of the scherzo (Ex. 3).¹²

These early modulations to the key of the mediant are ironic because once it becomes clear that the E major chord (m. 45) is a correct beginning of the reprise, the modulation to G# minor sounds wrong. Beethoven makes it sound as if this (unconventional) modulation to the key of the mediant was a mistake by writing no modulation back to the home key. Instead, he makes the players slow down and appear utterly confused. They hesitate, as if they wonder how they arrived at this G# minor area and got stuck there, not knowing how to return to E major. Eventually they give up and start all over, without modulation. Note, however, that the dominant-seventh chord in m. 44 resolves in the right register to the tonic chord in m. 45, reinforcing the possibility of momentarily hearing the tonic in m. 45 as a deceptive resolution in G# minor. To clinch the matter, it *does* make sense to modulate to G# minor in bridging to the next movement (i.e., at the end of the presto), which is in that very key, and is linked to the present movement without a pause; but no such modulation occurs there: instead, the players state G#, the new tonality, in the last two bars in the wrong register (the cello plays in the register of the violin and the latter plays in the register of the cello. See Ex. 4).¹³ It thus

¹² A similar "deception" can be found in the preparation of the reprise in Haydn's "Kyrie" movement in the *Harmoniemesse* (1802), which refers back to the highly surprising first entrance of the choir on a diminished seventh chord.

¹³ In a quartet where all the movements follow upon each other as a continuous stream, one may expect a modulation to G# minor at the end of the Scherzo; the abrupt two-bar section that links the Scherzo with the next movement is therefore highly comical and brings to mind Beethoven's whimsical note to Schott (the publisher) that the quartet "was put together from pilferings."

appears as though things got mixed up: the operative modulation comes at the wrong time. The composer has intentionally made the actual situation look like an aberration, a deformation of another, more normative one.¹⁴

[Arranger]

The image displays three systems of musical notation for a string quartet. The first system is for the 'Molto poco adagio' section, featuring Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello staves. The second system is for the 'Tempo I' section, featuring Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello staves. The third system shows a 'ritard.' followed by 'in Tempo' section, also with Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello staves. Dynamics such as *pp*, *dim.*, *piu p*, and *f* are indicated throughout the score.

Example 3. Beethoven: String Quartet in C-sharp Minor, Op. 131, V, mm. 30-48

The image shows a single system of musical notation for a string quartet, consisting of four staves. The score includes the instruction 'da capo per l'ordinario' and two circled measure numbers, 485 and 490. Dynamics such as *cresc.*, *f*, and *ff* are present. The section concludes with the marking 'attaca'.

Example 4. Beethoven: String Quartet in C-sharp Minor, Op. 131, V, mm. 484-96.

¹⁴ Elsewhere I show that the situational irony in this movement is related to another, large-scale ironic conceit of the movement and to Romantic irony. Whereas in many cases of Romantic irony the presence of the author is very much felt, as a means of shattering the illusion of the artwork, in cases of situational irony, as in the irony of life events, intentionality is not implicit.

As these examples show, musical events, similarly to real-life situations may seem ironic even without the help of text. In one of the few philosophical articles devoted to situational irony, Lee Miller [16] requires an additional condition for an ironic situation: although ironic situations run contrary to the hopes and efforts of those involved, they display a particular propriety, a type of poetic justice, whether good or bad. He notes that "What turns out contrary to conventional wisdom and habitual belief is quite fitting when measured in some wider context" [17]. In music, where we never assume events to be an outcome of fate or chance, we explain ironic situations as carefully crafted by the composer; thus the overall poetic quality is even more prominent. The aptness of ironic events may be related to the old "paradox of art," as explained in Hepokoski and Darcy's discussion of deformations as compositional surprises: "the paradox of art is that the nature of the game at hand also and always includes the idea that we are to expect the unexpected ... What is 'non-normative' on one level of understanding becomes 'normative' under a wider span of consideration" [18]. In the movements discussed here, unexpected events become part of a poetic conceit that includes situational irony, functioning as such wider context.

Although in theory I construe dramatic irony as a kind of situational irony, I avoided any attempt to trace dramatic irony in Beethoven's instrumental music because of the more complex issue of agency involved. Dramatic irony presupposes the ignorance or unawareness of an agent in the text to the nature of the situation at hand. Theorists who deal with agency in music, however, may well apply the theory of situational irony presented here to reveal instances of dramatic irony in instrumental music.

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March and Pastoral in the Slow Movement of Mendelssohn's *Italian* Symphony: Longing, Frustration and Confirmation

Lauri Suurpää, Sibelius Academy, Helsinki, FI

ABSTRACT

The expressive course of the slow movement of Felix Mendelssohn's *Italian* Symphony consists of two clearly defined topics, march and pastoral. They both occur at specific formal locations, the pastoral occupying the secondary-theme area of both the exposition and the recapitulation, the march governing the rest of the movement. This outwardly simple and conventional framework becomes much more nuanced when the movement's formal and harmonic idiosyncrasies are taken into account. This paper concentrates on these idiosyncrasies and their consequences, examining three interrelated issues: 1) In the movement, march and pastoral both have expressive connotations that can be defined historically. Most importantly, pastoral is seen as representing longing, *Sehnsucht* characteristic of early nineteenth-century aesthetics. So pastoral is invested with a positive value and is therefore sought for. 2) Owing to their expressive connotations and struggle, the two topics assume a narrative function, to be elaborated in the paper through the "tragic archetype" as described by Byron Almén. March is seen as representing "order" and pastoral "transgression". The former will ultimately outweigh the latter. 3) The unfulfilled longing of the pastoral (its primary narrative function in this movement) is mainly conveyed by the work's harmonic structure, to be examined from the Schenkerian perspective. Neither the secondary key in the exposition nor the major-mode tonic in the recapitulation (the two locations where the pastoral governs) is fully established, as there is neither a structural tonic nor a confirming perfect authentic cadence. Thus the harmonic structure, like the pastoral topic, features unfulfilled longing. The paper concludes by arguing that in the movement the underlying topical opposition triggers a subtle interplay where expressive and formal as well as historical and analytical factors constitute one unified narrative trajectory.

OVERALL FORM AND JUXTAPOSITION OF MARCH AND PASTORAL TOPICS

Apart from the youthful First Symphony, Mendelssohn's symphonic output has often been seen to include programmatic features. Occasionally the programmatic allusions are quite direct, like the quotation from the Lutheran chorale "Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott" in the closing movement of the Fifth Symphony or the sonic imitation of a storm at the end of the opening movement of the Third Symphony. At other times the programmatic references are less direct, primarily suggesting evocation of moods. These two layers have been seen to intertwine in the slow movement of the Fourth Symphony,

the so-called *Italian*, which forms the topic of this presentation. As the movement has either no title or word painting or musical quotations, it may be seen primarily as an evocation of moods. Yet there are also more precise programmatic features and it has often been suggested that the movement refers to a sacred procession that Mendelssohn apparently saw while travelling in Italy.¹ One of the main musical factors supporting the view of the movement as a description of a religious procession is the march topic that dominates much of the movement. I will start by considering this musical factor.

The movement's opening clarifies the significance of the march. After the introductory fanfare, the primary theme begins in bar 3 and a steadily moving quaver motion in the bass characterizes this theme. This unbroken bass rhythm then dominates much of the work, and its direct allusions to walking establish march as the movement's primary topic. Expressively, this minor-mode march is tragic.

A more joyous major mode twice interrupts the minor. The first of these occurrences is in bars 45–56. The music has now modulated to a contrasting key, A major, and the bass gives up the steady quaver motion that has dominated so far. The major, the new texture and the joyous expression also suggest a topical change from the initial march to a contrasting pastoral. The alternation of march and pastoral interacts with the movement's form, as shown in Table 1. The work is in a modified sonata form without a development. (The formal idiosyncrasies will later be addressed in some detail.) The march and minor mode dominate the primary theme, transition and coda, while the pastoral and major occur in the secondary theme. As a result, the march and minor both begin and end the work, whereas the major and pastoral provide passing escapes from their gloom.

TOPICS AND TONAL STRUCTURE

In the movement, march and pastoral are not only topics whose expression and mode contrast with each other; rather, they are also underlain by very different kinds of tonal frameworks. Most importantly, while march and minor often occur in a solid tonal environment, the pastoral and major are never given firm tonal support. I will now elucidate this contrast in tonal stability from a Schenkerian perspective.

Example 1 is a middleground graph of the exposition's primary theme and transition. The primary theme consists of a small ternary form whose *a*-sections both close in a perfect authentic cadence in the tonic, a harmonic arrival that also closes a descending fifth-progression from the movement's *Kopft*on A. The primary theme therefore confirms the tonic very strongly. The ensuing transition shows a quite common tonal progression where the opening tonic is transformed, through a chromaticised voice exchange, to an augmented sixth chord. This dissonant sonority is then resolved to a half-cadential dominant of the secondary key; a "medial caesura", as such gestures are called in the recent formal theory of James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy [2].² As the half-cadential

¹ See, for example, [1].

² The addition of a seventh to the V of V might challenge its function as a half-cadential arrival. William Caplin, for example, has argued in his detailed study on Classical cadence that a seventh chord cannot function as a half cadence [3]. Janet Schmalfeldt, by contrast, has argued that in the nineteenth century seventh chords do constitute half cadences, and she has used the term "nineteenth-century half cadence" when referring to such cadences [4]. A clear instance, not discussed by Schmalfeldt, of a half cadence with a seventh chord can be found in bar 29 of Schubert's song "Der greise Kopf" (*Winterreise*).

dominant occurs in the key of A minor, the listener assumes the secondary theme will begin in this key. Indeed, dominant minor is a common option for the second theme in sonata expositions of minor-mode works, and here this option would retain the opening tragic expression. But as we have seen, Mendelssohn begins the secondary theme in A major, at the same time introducing the contrasting topic, pastoral. It is as if the movement refused to accept the course that has been predicted.

The major mode and pastoral topic prove unable to establish themselves securely, however. This impression is conveyed both by the voice-leading structure, which avoids a deep-level A-major tonic chord, and by the avoidance of a cadence securing A major as a key. In the cadential articulation, the movement omits a perfect authentic cadence that would confirm the secondary key, the gesture that Hepokoski and Darcy call the “essential expositional closure”. Such a cadence is normative in Classical sonata-form conventions, and its significance was already observed in the theoretical writings of the eighteenth century.³ In the voice-leading structure, in turn, the dominant of A major is prolonged throughout the secondary theme, as shown in Example 2, so there is no deep-level tonic of the secondary key. That is, it is notable that the secondary theme does not begin with the conventional structural tonic of the secondary key. The primary element carrying out the prolongation of the underlying dominant of A major is the neighbouring D-major chord, the subdominant of A major, which arrives in bar 49. As a predominant sonority, this chord is expected to initiate a harmonic motion aiming at a cadential closure. Indeed, in bar 51 the music seems to begin a cadential progression, reaching, at the beginning of bar 52, a sonority that first sounds like a cadential six-four chord. This is not the chord’s structural function, however. As the inner-voice A descends to G-natural, rather than to G-sharp as one assumes, the chord turns out to be a passing secondary dominant within a prolongation of a D-major chord (as is indicated in Example 2a). In other words, the music aims to reach both a cadential confirmation of A major and this key’s structural tonic, but both turn out to be unobtainable. Ultimately, in bar 56 the D-major harmony is transformed, through a chromaticised voice exchange, into a diminished seventh chord that is then resolved, at the outset of the recapitulation in bar 57, to the underlying E-major chord. The secondary theme is thus unable even at its end to securely reach the A-major tonic and confirm its key.

The key of A major therefore turns out to be an apparent key only, a key that is implied by its dominant but not confirmed by its tonic.⁴ This tonal instability greatly affects the dramatic role of the A major and pastoral. As they occur within a prolongation framed by the dominant of A minor (first reached in bar 43 and regained in bar 57), both the A major and the pastoral ultimately sound quite insubstantial, almost like a kind of parenthetical insertion, a side-thought that has no lasting effect. Yet one might argue that A major and the pastoral topic have clear, albeit indirect consequences. The march that returns at the beginning of the recapitulation might be interpreted as having been affected

³ In 1745, Johann Adolph Scheibe describes the first part of a symphony (= the exposition), observing that the section must end in a cadence in the secondary key, the only cadence in this section that he mentions [5]. Similarly, in 1793 Heinrich Christoph Koch writes that the symphony’s first main period (= the exposition) ends in a cadence in the secondary key, after which there may still be “a clarifying period” [6]. In the Classical era exceptions to the exposition’s cadential closure are extremely rare. Yet there are movements whose expositions do close without a perfect authentic cadence in the secondary key; see the opening movement of Haydn’s G-minor String Quartet, Op. 20, No. 3. In the nineteenth century, the avoidance of a perfect authentic cadence in the secondary key became more common.

⁴ Carl Schachter has clarified the notion of an “apparent key” [7].

by the previous pastoral; most importantly, the march lacks the stability with which it was associated at the movement's beginning. As Table 1 indicates, the recapitulation starts in the dominant minor; furthermore, there is no root-position chord at the beginning of this section. Moreover, the opening section of the recapitulation (bars 57–74) fuses the functions of the primary theme and the transition; in other words, the section begins as a primary theme but ends as a transition.⁵ When the section reaches its closure, the tonic key has returned and the half cadence of bar 71 functions as the recapitulation's "medial caesura".

The voice-leading structure supports the somewhat insubstantial quality of the primary theme that opens the recapitulation. This is shown in Example 3, a middleground graph of the entire movement. In addition to the return of the primary theme in the wrong key at the beginning of the recapitulation (the dominant rather than the tonic), the section fusing the functions of a primary theme and a transition avoids the structural tonic chord of both the initial key of the section (A minor) and of its closing key (D minor). Instead, the section starts on the regained dominant of the secondary key, which is, at last, resolved to an A-major chord in bar 65. (The A-major chord has already arrived in the first inversion in bar 62.) This chord no longer locally functions as the tonic of the secondary key, A major, however; this option was left behind with the end of the exposition. Rather, the chord now functions also in the foreground as the dominant of the main key, D minor. This dominant looks ahead to a resolution to the tonic, and it is the task of the remainder of the movement, the recapitulation's secondary theme, to bring the music to a cadentially confirmed tonic – the first such sonority since the end of the exposition's primary theme.

The ensuing secondary theme repeats the music heard in the second part of the exposition, now in the tonic major. The major mode here is significant; most importantly, now that the movement is approaching its conclusion, the major mode and the pastoral topic reign. As the primary-theme/transition fusion that opened the recapitulation was tonally rather insecure, it might seem that the major and the pastoral are now going to have the upper hand, their subsidiary role in the exposition notwithstanding. For the briefest of moments this seems to be the case. In bar 86 the recapitulation reaches its end in the perfect authentic cadence in D major, a harmonic progression that functions as the "essential structural closure", the movement's formal goal in the theory of Hepokoski and Darcy. In the voice-leading structure, in turn, bar 86 signifies, as shown in Example 3, the completion of the *Ursatz*. If the movement had ended on the first quaver of bar 86, it would have seemed quite clear that the music had moved from the opening D minor to a firmly established D major and thus also clearly established the pastoral. But the movement does not end here. Rather, the D-major tonic is a fleeting element that is immediately transformed into a minor sonority. The coda then follows in D minor and in the march topic. I would argue that in bar 86 the minor triad is the primary element, so the inner-voice F-sharp should be understood as an embellishing pitch, basically as a chromatic passing tone. (Therefore there is only the D-minor chord in the middleground graph of Example 3.) In other words, the fleeting major-mode resolution retrospectively turns out to be only an illusion; the reality of the music, so to speak, returns to the minor.

⁵ Such a fusion of functions, where the beginning of a formal section suggests one formal function while its end suggests another, has been discussed in detail by Janet Schmalfeldt, who uses the term "becoming" for referring to this phenomenon [8].

So the major and pastoral are also secondary and unstable in the recapitulation, the same way they were in the exposition.

TOPICS, STRUCTURE AND NARRATIVE

In the Mendelssohn movement, march and pastoral are more than just neutral topics that alternate with each other; they both have expressive connotations that make their dialogue nuanced.⁶ Pastoral, in particular, has a rather distinct content. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, pastoral was often associated with longing for a past that has now been lost for good, yearning for the time when people were still innocent and in a direct dialogue with nature. In the early nineteenth-century musical writings this view was shown, for example, in Heinrich Christoph Koch's comment on "pastorale" in his *Musikalisches Lexicon*, published in 1802 [10]. More generally, yearning for the past innocence that one may associate with the pastoral can be related to Romantic longing, the *Sehnsucht* characteristic of early German Romantic literature. This longing was not toward something concrete and clearly defined, but rather toward the ineffable and infinite. Owing to its unspecified nature, Romantic longing eternally remains unfulfilled, and the Romantics themselves referred to it with the expression "longing for the infinite" (*Sehnsucht nach dem Unendlichen*) [11]. Raymond Monelle has described this quality aptly: "Lyric time is the present, a present that is always in the present. And for the Romantic, the present is a void...All that could be felt in the present time was a longing for the absent life that lay outside it [12]."

Like pastoral, the "blue flower" that appears in Novalis's novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, arguably the best known single symbol of Romantic longing, also draws a connection between yearning and nature.

But I long to behold the blue flower...I never have heard of such a strange passion for a flower...I might think myself mad, were not my perceptions and reasonings so clear; and this state of mind appears to have brought with it superior knowledge of all subjects. I have heard, that in ancient times beasts, and trees, and rocks conversed with men. As I gaze up to them, they appear every moment about to speak to me; and I can almost tell by their looks what they would say. There must yet be many words unknown to me. If I knew more, I could comprehend better [13].

Thus, pastoral may, as a musical topic, be associated with the more general notion of Romantic longing (albeit the two are, of course, by no means identical). In the Mendelssohn movement, the object of longing in the pastoral topic clearly represents something positive, which, at the same time, is fundamentally unobtainable. In addition to the pastoral topic, the major mode conveys this positive expression.

At a general level, the expressive connotations of the march, the other of the movement's main topics, are less specific. In the Classical and early Romantic eras march had no fixed expressive content. Rather, its expression could extend from the tragic effect of a funeral march to the heroic quality of a military march. In the Mendelssohn movement, the minor mode and the slow tempo draw associations, indirect but clearly audible, to the funeral march. Thus the march here has a gloomy quality.

⁶ Raymond Monelle discusses the historical context and signification of march and pastoral in great detail [9].

The positive but unobtainable quality of the pastoral and the tragic nature of the march provide a foundation for elucidating the movement's narrative unfolding. Technically, this narrative can be described by applying Byron Almén's terminology [14] [15]. He makes a distinction between two types of musical elements: those that are securely established and conventional (he refers to these with the term "order") and those that depart from conventions and are less secure (these are denoted by the term "transgression"). Almén argues that the listener sympathises with one of these poles, so this chosen pole is considered positive. Narrative archetypes then consist of an initial tension between the two poles and of the final outcome in which one of the two ends up being primary. If the pole with which the listener sympathises turns out to be the primary, the narrative's outcome is positive, while the result is negative in cases where the pole not sympathised with dominates at the end.

The archetype that Almén calls "tragic" is valuable for our present purposes (Table 2a). Here the order is deemed negative while the transgression is positive. The right-hand side column indicates that this opposition provides a foundation for a narrative transformation. The tragic narrative archetype ends in a "defeat of transgression by order"; that is, the initial juxtaposition of order and transgression leads to a state in which only order remains. As the listener sympathises with transgression, this outcome is unwanted.

The tragic archetype provides a framework in which we can interpret the narrative quality of the harmonic-structural and topical features of the Mendelssohn movement that have been analysed above. Table 3 shows that the narrative course can be divided into five phases, each of which exhibits a definite structural and topical state as well as a formal section. The first phase covers the exposition's primary theme and transition, introducing the order. This phase's tonal clarity, perfect authentic cadences in D minor and the underlying top voice fifth-progression all convey the view that the minor and march represent the stable state of affairs, the order. Phase 2, the second theme of the exposition, challenges the order by introducing transgression, the major mode and the pastoral topic. These elements remain somewhat insubstantial, however. As A major is not cadentially confirmed, and as the middleground voice leading includes no structural tonic of this key, transgression remains a non-confirmed element. Yet it may be interpreted as having an effect on the movement's continuation. When order (that is, march and minor) returns in phase 3, in the recapitulation's opening section that merges primary theme with transition, the order no longer has the stability it initially had. The music avoids the structural tonic of both the section's opening A minor and of its closing D minor, so tonal solidity is evaded. Therefore we may argue that the previous transgression has removed the self-assuredness that the order initially had.

The middleground voice leading, shown in Example 3, indicates that the tonal events of phase 3 can be seen to grow directly out of the two preceding phases that introduce the juxtaposition of order and transgression. The first phase (order) closes in bar 43 on a dominant of A minor, a chord that is still prolonged when the third phase begins in bar 57. The same chord is also prolonged in the second phase (bars 45–56), but locally it is transformed from a dominant of A minor to a dominant of A major. Thus the expression, together with the pastoral topic, changes the extensively prolonged chord from the realm of order to that of transgression. When the resolution into an A triad finally arrives in bar 65, it is to a major triad, the type of chord one would have expected to arrive in the second phase. But this chord is no longer the tonic of A major, so it is reached in the tragic world of order.

After this conflict, phase 4 attempts to confirm transgression and give it primacy over order. Now we do have a cadence in what one assumes to be D major, a cadence whose significance is enhanced by the descent of the *Urlinie* here. But the D-major chord is only an embellishing element that is immediately transformed into a primary minor triad. Firm confirmation of the transgression thus turns out to be impossible, and the movement's final fifth phase conclusively seals the primacy of order; that is, of minor and march.

EPILOGUE

My analysis has indicated, I hope, that the slow movement of Mendelssohn's *Italian* Symphony has a strong dramatic quality, which has been analysed above from a number of perspectives: form, voice-leading structure, topics, Romantic aesthetics and narrativity. I argue that the power and subtlety of the movement's drama is not created by any one of these aspects alone, but is rather an outcome of their interaction. So a comprehensive elucidation of the movement's drama benefits from an application of a variety of analytical perspectives.

I started this paper by referring to the common view that the slow movement of the *Italian* Symphony has a programmatic quality, which grows out of its alleged references to a sacred procession that Mendelssohn saw in Italy. Yet, in the analysis above I have not spoken about this direct programmatic reference. As my analysis has addressed the Andante's musical elements alone, the movement's narration can be appreciated even without a direct extra-musical reference. In other words, the movement's topical opposition, form and voice-leading structure create its drama, and these factors suggest musical narration even in the absence of an unequivocally stated programmatic reference. The inference of allusions to a sacred procession may well deepen individual listeners' emotional reaction toward the piece, thus they may be valuable for that given listener's reception of the movement. But I argue that such direct programmatic references are not required for appreciating the deeply affective narrative of the movement, the drama that fundamentally consists of the music's intrinsic features.

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APPENDIX

Bars	bars 1–35	bars 35–45	bars 45–57
Sonata form	exposition		
Formal zones	primary theme (P)	transition (TR)	secondary theme (S)
Keys	d	d → a	A
Closing cadences	perfect authentic cadence (PAC) in D minor (bar 35)	half cadence (HC) in A minor (bars 43 and 45); = medial caesura (MC)	no cadences; essential expositional closure (EEC) avoided
Topics	march	march	pastoral

Bars	bars 57–74	bars 74–86	bars 86–103
Sonata form	recapitulation		coda
Formal zones	primary theme (P) becomes transition (TR)	secondary theme (S)	coda
Keys	a → d	D	d
Closing cadences	half cadence (HC) in D minor (bars 71 and 73); = medial caesura (MC)	perfect authentic cadence in D major (bar 86; the major tonic is immediately transformed into a minor sonority); = essential structural closure (ESC)	perfect authentic cadence in D minor (bar 102)
Topics	march	pastoral	march

Table 1. Mendelssohn, *Italian Symphony*, op. 90, II, overall organization

11 23 24 27 37 42 43
19 31 32 35

I II#

PAC PAC HC

a b a

P TR

Example 1. Mendelssohn, *Italian Symphony*, II, bars 1–43, middleground voice leading

43 48

a)

43 45 48

b)

A:V

49 52 56 57

a)

49 52 56 57

b)

IV cadential progression? NO! V

Example 2. Mendelssohn, *Italian* Symphony, II, bars 43–57, voice-leading sketch

35 37 42 43 45 48 49 56 57 59 62 65 75 78 79 85 86 88 92 102

Stufen: I II# V I#

Keys: d a A a d

Form: Exp. Recap. Coda

P TR MC S no EEC P ⇒ TR MC S ESC

Example 3. Mendelssohn, *Italian* Symphony, II, middleground voice leading

a)

underlying opposition	temporal, narrative transformation
order (negative) vs. transgression (positive)	defeat of transgression by order = order vs. transgression → order

b)

order	transgression
march minor	pastoral major

Table 2. Tragic narrative archetype after Byron Almén (Table 2a) and narrative function of 'march' and 'pastoral' in Mendelssohn's *Italian* Symphony, II (Table 2b)

phase 1 (bars 1–45)	phase 2 (bars 45–56)	phase 3 (bars 57–74)	phase 4 (bars 74–86)	phase 5 (bars 86–103)
exposition, P and TR	exposition, S	recapitulation, P \Rightarrow TR	recapitulation, S	coda
order established	transgression introduced but not secured	order returns but without strong confirmation	transgression attempts in vain to confirm itself	order established
D minor fully confirmed	A major as a key but no structural tonic or cadential confirmation	from a dominant of A minor to a dominant of D minor; no structural tonic	from the dominant of D major to a cadential confirmation; cadential arrival turns out to be in D minor, however, not in major	D minor fully confirmed
march	pastoral	march	pastoral	march

Table 3. Narrative phases in Mendelssohn's Italian Symphony, II

Dynamic Similarities between Liszt's *Au lac de Wallenstadt* and Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*

Grace Yu, Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, HK

ABSTRACT

*In this paper, I aim at explicating the nature of intermediality by illustrating the dynamic similarities between the musical signifiers of Liszt's *Au Lac de Wallenstadt* and its cultural source of inspiration, Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. The mapping of oppositional pairs across musical and cultural domains reflects the intrinsic importance of the notion of paradox in different art forms, which elaborates upon Monelle's¹ idea that the pastoral milieu "invokes an opposition of nature and art".*

*While *Au Lac de Wallenstadt* uses an abundance of pastoral topical markers (e.g. opening pentatonic melody, pedal point, regularly pulse repetition)², the other overtly non-pastoral musical features, e.g. transformation of the melody in the different A sections, the harmonic oscillations, the contrasts between A and B sections in terms of phrase structure and harmonic complexities, and the liquidation phenomenon likewise play fundamental role in establishing oppositions that are intrinsic to Romantic pastoral manifestations.*

*My paper offers a systematic intermedial explication of *Au Lac de Wallenstadt*: while the title of the piece points to physical properties of a lake, the contrasting pairs found in Liszt's deliberate quotation of Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* signal connection with the contrasting pairs in the culturally contextualized reading of Bryon's *Harold*, which signals further connection with the contrasting pairs of Liszt's own biographical states. Musical-stylistic contrasting pairs map readily onto these culturally and biographically contrasting pairs that are by their very nature tightly interconnected with one another. Such cultural and biographical facets also provide further cues for the interpretive paths leading to particular or enriched iconic and indexical associations of a multitude of musical stylistic constructs, e.g. melodic rhythmic gestures, voiceleading subtleties, formal manipulations, harmonic treatments, and temporal procedures. My analysis reveals an interconnecting system of cultural and biographical facets, in addition to the composer's sophisticated culturally mediated expression of complex states and emotions.*

¹ See Monelle, R., 2006. *The Musical Topic: Hunt, Military and Pastoral*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press.

² See Grabócz, M., 1996. *Morphologie des oeuvres pour piano de Liszt: Influence du programme sur l'évolution des formes instrumentals*, Paris, Éditions Kimé.

DYNAMIC SIMILARITIES ACROSS MUSICAL AND CULTURAL DOMAIN

Monelle identifies that pastoral milieu “invokes an opposition of nature and art [1].” In effort to further elaborate on the oppositional nature of pastoral topic in addition to explicating the nature of intermediality, I illustrate the dynamic similarities between the musical signifiers of Liszt’s *Au lac de Wallenstadt* and its cultural source of inspiration, Byron’s *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*. The mapping of oppositional pairs across musical and cultural domains reflects the intrinsic importance of the notion of paradox in different art forms.

Before my furthering on paradoxical notion, below is a formal overview of Liszt’s *Au lac de Wallenstadt* (Table 1).

Formal Section	Intro.	A	A'	B	A''	Tonic extension
Key	Ab	Ab	Ab	Db-E-V/Ab	Ab	Ab
mm.	1-4	5-20	21-36	37-62	63-78	79-112
Remarks	The opening consists of the markedly static “ripple-like” left-hand pattern.	The right hand commences at m. 5 as the <i>cantabile</i> single line melody while the introductory, static left-hand pattern undulates. The section closes on I in Ab.	The right hand melody of A' is the same as that of A, but in octaves. The section likewise closes on I in Ab.	At the beginning of this section, the melody is rather similar to that of A section but in the key of Db major. The section includes modal mixture and enharmonic modulation.	Rhythmic displacement is evident in the melody at mm. 63-64 and mm. 71-72. The melody is also varied through registral expansion.	The melody that begins this part is similar to that of the B section, but it is harmonized differently; there is a meter change from 3/8 to 2/4 at m. 103, which can be seen as the beginning of the coda.

Table 1 Form diagram of *Au lac de Wallenstadt*

PASTORAL FEATURES IN AU LAC DE WALLENSTADT

Liszt’s use of pastoral topical markers in the piece can be assigned by stylistic conventions, e.g. the pentatonic melody at mm. 5-12, the use of the pedal point, the use of a relatively simple theme, the use of calm rhythm, and the regularly pulsed repetition in the accompaniment [2] and the connection of these pastoral topical textures creates the pastoral isotopy used throughout the piece [3]. Grabócz’s accounts on the use of pastoral figures and motifs resemble Ratner’s parameters of topical categories. e.g. opening pentatonic melody, pedal point, regularly pulse repetition. The other overtly non-pastoral musical features as shown in the formal treatment of the piece (refer to the form diagram of Liszt’s *Au lac de Wallenstadt*), e.g. transformation of the melody in the different A

sections, the contrasts between A and B sections in terms of phrase structure, harmonic complexities notably in B section, and the liquidation phenomenon through retention of the drone-like pedal tones and the continuous diminution of the previously syncopated melody in A” section, in addition to the fundamental harmonic oscillations in the left hand part of the opening accompaniment figure likewise play fundamental role in establishing oppositions that are intrinsic to Romantic pastoral manifestations.

PHYSICAL VS. CULTURALIZED NATURE

Nonetheless, it is crucial to articulate the difference between physical and culturalized nature. For instance, the modification of the final title from the first publication of the piece *Le lac de Wallenstadt* (The Lake of Wallenstadt) to become *Au lac de Wallenstadt* (By the Lake of Wallenstadt) is a significant one. More than depicting the physical property of the lake, the piece also ties to emotions and thoughts triggered by contemplating the lake. The cultural perspective of a reflecting Romantic subject indeed intersects dynamically with both the literary and the biographical.

CONNECTION OF CONTRASTING PAIRS IN LITERATURE AND ITS CULTURAL CONTEXT

Au lac de Wallenstadt was written during Liszt’s elopement with Marie d’Agoult in Switzerland. Both the first and the second versions are likewise prefaced by a quotation extracted from Stanza 85 of Canto III in Lord Byron’s *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*:

... thy contrasted lake,
With the wild world I dwell in, is a thing
Which warns me, with its stillness, to forsake
Earth’s troubled waters for a purer spring [4].

Merely from reading Liszt’s quotation of Byron, the notion of “contrast” stands out: “wild world” is contrasted with “stillness,” just as “troubled waters” is contrasted with “purer spring.” Reading Byron’s own image of Harold in context, Calenza points out that “Byron blended the popular image of poet as rebel and as a bearer of freedom with that of the social outcast and solitary wanderer [5].” The dualistic culturally contextualized images of Byron’s Harold as “rebel” and “social outcast” are contrasted with “freedom bearer” and the nobler “solitary wanderer.” These two contrasting pairs connect dynamically with the contrasting pair of Liszt’s quotation of Byron of “wild world” vs. “purer spring.”

FURTHER CONNECTION OF CONTRASTING PAIRS WITH LISZT’S OWN BIOGRAPHICAL STATES

The above-mentioned interconnected contrasting pairs further intersect with Liszt’s own biographical states as he composed and revised the musical work. When Liszt composed the first version of the piece, his violation of the social norm of the time by eloping with Marie d’Agoult connect to the culturalized notion of “rebel,” and Liszt “the

lone pilgrim ... whose travels across Switzerland as the scenic prelude to a full artistic awakening in Italy” [6] intersects with the “solitary wanderer.” Later on as Liszt was revising the piece in Weimar for the second publication, the social disapproval of cohabiting with Princess Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein (who repeatedly failed to pursue an official annulment from Prince Nicholas) [7] connects also to Harold’s image of “social outcast,” and Liszt’s pursuit of artistic freedom by settling in Altenburg near Weimar where the city was deemed by Liszt as a “Mecca” for contemporary music [8] intersects with Harold’s image of “freedom bearer.” Please refer to following table (Table 2) that tabulates the above-mentioned dynamic connection of the contrasting pairs between Liszt’s quotation, cultural context of Byron’s Harold, and Liszt’s different biographical states as he was composing and later on revising the piece for publication.

	Contrasting pairs	
Liszt’s quotation from Byron’s <i>Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage</i>	Stillness	Wild world
	(Heaven’s) Purer spring	Earth’s troubled waters
Interpretive context of Byron’s Harold	Freedom bearer	Rebel
	(Noble) Solitary wanderer	Social outcast
Liszt’s own biographical state during the composition of the first version (<i>Le lac de Wallenstadt</i>)	“The lone pilgrim... whose travels across Switzerland as the scenic prelude to a full artistic awakening in Italy”	Violation of social norms by eloping with Marie d’Agoult
Liszt’s own biographical state during the revision of the second version (<i>Au lac de Wallenstadt</i>)	Settlement in Altenburg near Weimar where the city is a “Mecca” for contemporary music of Liszt	Unrest resulted from social disapproval of cohabiting with Princess Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein (who repeatedly failed to pursue an official annulment from Prince Nicholas)

Table 2 The Dynamic Connection of the Contrasting Pairs in Liszt’s Quotation, Cultural Context of *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, and Liszt’s Biographical State

NATURE OF INTERMEDIALITY AS REFLECTED BY LISZT’S *AU LAC DE WALLENSTADT*

In the course of derivation of the musical meaning of *Au lac de Wallenstadt*, the dynamic connection as explained explicates the nature of intermediality: the connection is found on the basis of traits of similarities across the different domains (the physical properties of the natural source, the literary references, cultural contexts of Byron, and Liszt’s own biography). One facet of the extramusical source of inspiration (e.g. imagery in Liszt’s quotation of Byron) triggers a representation of the similar trait in another domain (e.g. a culturally contextualized reading of Byron’s Harold) that leads to the tie with another representation in another domain (e.g. Liszt’s own biographical states). The

interconnectedness across the different domains consolidates the systematic basis of informed interpretive reading of the work.

MAPPINGS BETWEEN MUSICAL CONTRASTING PAIRS AND CULTURALLY-MEDIATED CONTRASTING PAIRS

Mappings occur between musical contrasting pairs onto culturally-mediated contrasting pairs as well. In addition to Byron's preface, d'Agoult's memoir indicates that the shore of Lake Wallenstadt was a place where she and Liszt spent some time:

The shores of the lake of Wallenstadt kept us for a long time. Franz wrote there for me a melancholy harmony, imitative of the sigh of the waves and the cadence of oars, which I have never been able to hear without weeping [9].

As mentioned previously, the contour of this accompanying figure iconically resembles the rise and fall of waves; here, Marie d'Agoult suggests another icon—that of the cadence of oars. The contrasting phenomenon, stillness of the lake in Byron's quote, is captured iconically by the endless rhythmic repetitions of the accompanying figures in the left hand throughout the piece.

THE MUSICAL MEANING OF LISZT'S *AU LAC DE WALLENSTADT*

Hence, the musical meaning of *Au lac de Wallenstadt* is something more than being a depiction of a calm pastoral lake. The contrasting stylistic phenomenon in music maps readily onto the contrasting pairs of the cultural lake in Byron's quotation, the cultural Harold, and Liszt's own biographical states. Such musical contrasting pairs discussed include textural contrast (static left hand and active vs. "leapy" right-hand melody), sectional contrast (harmonic static sections A vs. harmonically adventurous section B), and harmonic contrast (use of pedal tone vs. harmonic oscillations between tonic and dominant harmony) etc.

Byron's literary reference to the stillness of the lake, however, cannot be signified just by the music itself; rather, the iconic reference is culturally mediated and enriched by Byron's quote. Also, the icon is not established as an isolated short motive or musical figure, but as a process that unfolds across time throughout the piece. More than mere undulations, these waves are indexically ascribed with human emotions, evoking the "sigh of waves" mentioned by d'Agoult. Here, wave is not merely an agency³ of Nature, but at the same time, waves are heard as embodying human sighs. Newcomb adopts Donald Davidson's notion that "anything understood as an action must be understood as intentional [10]." Without knowing the intention of d'Agoult as shown in her memoir (just as the intention of Liszt to give us cues with Bryon's quotation), we would have only a general nineteenth-century stylistic association between gesture and sign—and little direct evidence to claim the emotional underpinning of sighing.

The embodiment of sighs is also reflected by the repeated use of E-flat octaves in the right hand at mm. 55-60. These E-flat octaves reiterate initially once a measure, and

³ Agency is the capacity, the condition, or state of acting or of exerting power.

they then wind down to once every two measures. The bass notes in the left hand and the grace-note octaves in the right hand present a chromatic descent coupled in 10ths. In addition, this motion of winding down and dying away appears with the expression *perdendosi*. This temporal indication can be indexically interpreted as an emotional utterance associated with a sigh.

ICONICITY, INDEXICALITY AND EMOTIVE EXPRESSIVENESS

To evaluate the contextual motivation between d'Agoult's biography and Liszt's music, the association of the left hand accompaniment figure with waves relies on an iconic resemblance between the rise and fall of melodic contour in the musical figuration, and the rise and fall of physical waves. Through indexicality, this wave is embodied with the human action of a sigh. While music narrates through actoriality,⁴ the association with the sigh of waves also relies on an intention, one that is established by means of the cultural associations of the quote from Marie d'Agoult's memoir. The interpretation of the human emotions as embodied in waves becomes a sign itself. Through further indexicality, it leads to an association with traumas in life, struggle in relationships, or emotional unrest, which is supported by biographical knowledge of Liszt's experiences. We may outline these motivations as shown in Figure 1.

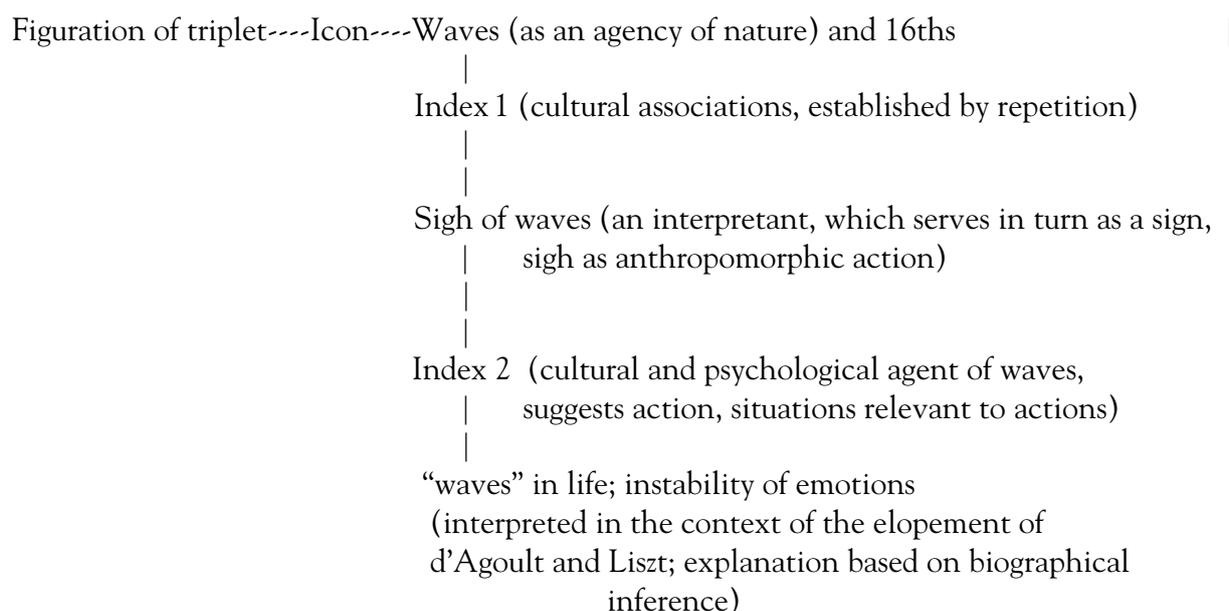


Figure 1 The path to emotive expressiveness from a musical figure in *Au lac de Wallenstadt*

Unlike accounts suggestive of the expressive qualities of a purely instrumental piece without an extramusical source of inspiration, this interpretation incorporates culturally mediated icons and indices that lead to contextually more specific meanings.

Based on this generalized process of signification, one may go still further; the repeated Eb octave in mm. 53-60 implies further potential interpretations through

⁴ For example, Tarasti's application of Greimas's actoriality concepts. See [11].

iconicity and indexicality (see Table 3, which includes interpretations of other stylistic types as well).

Figurations/stylistic phenomena	Iconic	Indexical	Index as sign – further indexicality
Figuration of triplet 16ths and four 16ths (accompaniment figure in the left hand through the entire piece except the coda)	Ripple of waves (culturally mediated)	Personified as “sigh” of waves (culturally mediated by d’Agoult’s memoir)—contemplating in empathy with motion	“Waves” in life; instability in human experience
Repeated Eb octaves (mm. 53-60) with <i>perdendosi</i> indication and chromatic inner line	Slowing down of motion	Personified as “melancholy” (culturally mediated by d’Agoult’s memoir)	Emotional utterance
The use of regular sectional rounded binary form	Simplicity in structure	Personified as pastoral simplicity (culturally mediated by topical conventions)	Overt simplicity as an overall expectation towards life
Oscillation between Db major and its parallel minor C# minor (Db minor)	Oscillations in life	Personified as dwelling in the wild world (mediated by Byron’s quote)	Instability in life
Liquidation of the initial melody at section A” and the change of meter from 3/8 to 2/4	Withdrawal	Personified as withdrawal on earth to reach transcendental serenity	Spiritual transcendence

Table 3 Musical Figurations in Au lac de Wallenstadt

The second column of Table 3 shows the signification of musical figures through iconicity. Knowledge of the cultural background already contributes to the iconic, but interpretation may go beyond iconicity by means of indexicality, when cultural associations are triggered by extramusical sources of inspiration. Further indexicality is analogous to Peirce’s chain of interpretants.⁵

FORM AND ITS EXPRESSIVE PATH

A further example of iconicity is suggested by the use of form. As shown previously in Table 1, the form of this piece is sectional rounded binary. The choice of a simple form may be interpreted iconically in terms of simplicity (see Table 3). The notion of simplicity may perhaps tie to the notion of “purer spring” found in Liszt’s quote of Byron, and hence interconnected to the mapping of the cultural Harold as well as facets of Liszt’s own biographical states mentioned in Table 2.

⁵ Hatten explains that “for Peirce, a sign (vehicle) is related to an object (designatum) in such a way that it brings forth an *interpretant* for a knowledgeable user (interpreter) of that sign; in turn, the interpretant is brought forth according to the ground of the relationship, its “rule of interpretation.” See [12].

HARMONIC MANIPULATION AND ITS CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

Other than reliance on iconicity and indexicality, the traditional parameter of harmony may also be strategically interpreted by taking cultural and historical backgrounds into account. For example, the piece is in the key of Ab major, but the middle section of the piece modulates to Db major and reaches E major. These large-scale harmonic motions inevitably suggest a change of emotion (mm. 37-50). The use of modal mixture harmonies that recall “Schubertian oscillations” can likewise be interpreted as emotional disturbances. At the end of this major and minor oscillation, Db minor is reinterpreted enharmonically as C# minor (=vi of E major) at mm. 43-44, but this is primarily a notational convenience. This C# minor then leads to E major diatonically. E major and Ab major (four sharps versus four flats in the key signature) are apparently distantly related on the surface, but they are linked by the fact that E major is enharmonically bVI of Ab major with a common tone of Ab (G#). This change in key relationship can be strategically interpreted as a “contrast” as observed in the lake, as indicated in Byron’s quote (“thy contrasted lake”). The subtle changes in harmony that represent the “contrasted” appearance of the lake can be mapped onto an emotional contrast—perhaps inferring the “wild world” in Byron’s quote.

The pensive dominant prolongation that accompanies the chromatic descent (mm. 53-59) and ascent (mm. 95-99) can be interpreted strategically as “melancholy” harmonies mediated by the memoir of d’Aguolt. Again in the above interpretations, the cultural and historical backgrounds provide the basis for reconstruction of meaning.

PASTORAL GESTURE AND ITS STRATEGIC INTERPRETATION

The arpeggiated patterns may be related to the pastoral topic according to classical conventions (following Ratner’s approach), but what is the implied significance of the pastoral in this piece? The incorporation of syncopations, in addition to the expansion of register and elaboration of texture in the repetition of the initial theme at section A” can be strategically interpreted as Liszt’s “forsak[ing] the earth’s troubled waters for a purer spring”; furthermore, the use of the tied-over notes in the bass line at mm. 102-103 and the subsequent diminution of the opening melody ascending in the right hand at m. 103 are icons of escape from reality that reinforce the notion of forsaking the earth. In addition, the halt of the ongoing accompaniment pattern, the change to the arpeggiated texture in the right hand, and the incorporation of the non-syncopated (quasi-diminished) return of the melody can be strategically interpreted as transcendental serenity. This strategic interpretation again has taken Byron’s quote into account. Without the quote, this relationship with the music would not be as clear.

DYNAMIC MAPPING OF OPPOSITIONS AND SIGNIFICATION IN DIFFERENT ART FORMS

My interpretive reading of *Au lac de Wallenstadt* explicates systematically the nature of intermediality: while the title of the piece *Au lac de Wallenstadt* points readily to physical properties of a lake, it is the contrasting pairs found in Liszt's deliberate quotation of Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* that signal connection with the contrasting pairs in the culturally contextualized reading of Byron's Harold. This signals further connection with the contrasting pairs of Liszt's own biographical states. Musical-stylistic contrasting pairs map readily onto these culturally and biographically contrasting pairs that are by their very nature tightly interconnected with one another. Such cultural and biographical facets also provide further cues for the interpretive paths leading to particular or enriched iconic and indexical associations of a multitude of musical stylistic constructs, e.g. melodic-rhythmic gestures, voice leading subtleties, formal manipulations, harmonic treatments, and temporal procedures. The dynamic mapping of oppositional pairs across musical and cultural domains goes beyond affirming the intrinsic significance of the notion of paradox across different art forms; my study elucidates the interconnectedness and dynamism across musical, cultural, and emotive domains.

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Problematization of Apotheosis in Liszt's Symphonic Poems – on the Example of *Hunnenschlacht*

Dániel Nagy, Loránd Eötvös University, Budapest, HU

ABSTRACT

It seems at first sight, that Liszt's works, especially the symphonic poems of the 1850s, usually end with an apotheosis. Examining the topoi of these works, after the general theory of musical and symphonic topoi by Constantin Floros, Raymond Monelle or Eero Tarasti among others, and the specific description of Lisztian intonations by Márta Grabócz – one can find that the final topos is that, what they would call the triumphant. Does this automatically mean an apotheosis? Analyzing the process of musical signification and the narrative content of one particular symphonic poem – Hunnenschlacht, and examining the possible readings in a broader cultural and historic context, it can be revealed as a result, that Lisztian apotheosis is far from being unambiguous.

INTRODUCTION

The examination of the musical intonations (or *topoi*) in 19th century music is a very interesting and edifying task, especially in case of the music of Liszt.¹ There are already some very important studies on this topic by Márta Grabócz, Eero Tarasti, Keith T. Jones among many others [1]. Examining the endings of Liszt's musical works – particularly the symphonic poems from his Weimar period such as Tasso, Mazeppa, Prometheus or Hunnenschlacht – one can find that the final musical *topos* of these works is the intonation, what we could call *triumphant* [2]. The explanation seems to be quite obvious: Liszt's profoundly religious view of the world and his belief in the advancement of humanity did not allow him other kinds of ending [3]. The apotheosis was the only possibility. In my paper I will attempt to prove, that this issue is much complicated than it seems at first sight. I chose one particular symphonic poem to show, that even the most unambiguous Lisztian apotheosis can be problematized through a detailed analysis of the process of musical signification.

I have decided to use Hunnenschlacht as an example, because in my opinion of all the narrative symphonic works by Liszt, Hunnenschlacht's "story" seems to be the less

¹ Intonation in this sense covers approximately the same meaning in French and Eastern-European terminology as musical topos for the English speaking scholars. See Grabócz M., 2003. *Zene és narrativitás*, [Music and Narrativity] Pécs, Ars Longa – Jelenkor, p. 8.

controversial, but after a detailed analysis it can easily become questionable, that the story, told us by the musical narration would perfectly match with the written programme. In my paper I would like to offer an alternative reading of this symphonic poem - based mainly on the analysis of musical topoi - which questions the unambiguity of the Lisztian apotheosis (which is often considered as an aesthetic problem in the music of Liszt by some analysts) [4].

HUNNENSCHLACHT – TRADITIONAL INTERPRETATION AND DETAILED ANALYSIS

The symphonic poem *Hunnenschlacht* (The battle of the Huns) was composed in 1856-1857 in Weimar, after the monumental fresco of the German painter Wilhelm von Kaulbach (1805-1874) depicting the sanguinary battle at Catalaunum 451 C. E. between the army of the legendary Hun king Attila and the Roman-Visigoth allied troops lead by the roman Aëtius and the gothic king Theoderich [5]. According to the written programme (originally in French, under the name of the composer himself) the story is quite simple: the Christian troops of the roman-gothic alliance, the defenders of civilization fighting under the protection of the Holy Cross, defeat the pagan, barbaric hordes of the dreadful Attila, and the piece ends with their triumph. From this point of view *Hunnenschlacht* could be considered as traditional battle-music. The origins of that tradition can be traced back as early as the 16th century, to the chanson entitled *La Guerre* by Clément Jannequin, and the instrumental genre called *battaglia* in the 17th century, based on the influence of Jannequin's piece [6]. I have no information about whether Liszt had known anything about that tradition or not, but the depiction of battle in instrumental music has other antecedents adjacent to Liszt, for example Beethoven's op. 91 *Wellingtons Sieg oder die Schlacht bei Vittoria*, in which the two sides are represented by different characteristic musical themes (the *Rule Britannia* and the *God save the King* for the English, and the melody of a taunting song from the War of Spanish Succession, *Marlborough s'en va-t-en guerre* for the French in that case) [7]. Another important antecedent of that kind is the ending of Meyerbeer's opera *Les Huguenots* (visualizing the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572) in which the Catholics are represented by their bloodthirsty march, and the Protestants by the well-known choral tune *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*. Liszt must have known this music by Meyerbeer very well, because he wrote one of his opera-paraphrases from *Les Huguenots* (in which he concentrates especially to the final scene) [8].

Eero Tarasti states that in Liszt's symphonic poems the mythic functions are closely connected to the musical themes, or in another way, themes equal heroes of the narrative (or narrative actors). [9] In case of *Hunnenschlacht* there are basically four or five of such themes. The great Hungarian Liszt scholar, Klára Hamburger distinguished four major themes – two for each side, one to depict both protagonists, and one for their "battle-cries" [10]. The "Hun-theme" (fig. 1) appears first at the very beginning of the piece in a deep register, it gains a certain Hungarian-colour by the so-called "gipsy-scale" with its characteristic augmented second (this particular scale is extremely frequent in Hungarian *verbunkos* music, which by the 19th century usually played by gipsy bands in Hungary, and was commonly considered as the Hungarian national musical style that time) [11].



Figure 1: Hun-theme (exposition)

This is followed by the introduction of the Hun “battle-cry” (m. 11 marked *feroce*, fig. 2) on horns, which is simply a seventh-chord based on A-flat. According to Raymond Monelle, the two main forms of the military topic in music are march and fanfare, [12] we can be sure about that this motif belongs to the second one. The most important characteristics of the fanfare are the use of brass instruments and the triadic melody [13]. The “Hun battle-cry motif” fulfills the second feature only partially, because although it is based on a chord actually not triadic, but a seventh chord, and just like the “Hun-theme” with its exotic augmented seconds and weird rhythm, this battle-cry also arouses a certain sense of amorphousness.



Figure 2: Hun “battle-cry” (exposition)

The “Christian-themes” are the complete opposite of the “Hun-themes” in this sense; they are well-shaped, diatonic, with unambiguous rhythmic figures. The main theme of the Christians is not composed by Liszt himself, it is the melody of a Gregorian plainchant antiphon *Crux fidelis inter omnes arbor una nobilis*, which was originally the refrain of the hymn *Pange lingua gloriosi lauream certaminis*, attributed to the bishop Venantius Fortunatus (6th century C.E.) [14]. The head of this motif, known as the *Cruxmotif*, has a huge importance in the music of Liszt. We can find it in many other major works of the composer, such as the *Gran Mass*, the *Dante-symphony* and the *Piano sonata in b minor* among others [15]. It is not seem to be a reckless assumption, that Liszt used this melody as the symbol of the Holy Cross, which was carried by the Christians in the battle, and which occupies a very important position on Kaulbach’s painting at the top left corner. According to the foreword in the score of the oratorio *St. Elizabeth* (in which the *cruxmotif* is also used):

Finally it must be noticed, that the intonation [so la do] is very frequent in gregorian plainchant; e.g. in Magnificat, or in the hymn *Crux fidelis*. The composer of this work uses this particular series of tones [...] as the acoustic symbol of the Cross [16].

In *Hunnenschlacht* this theme appears for the first time in m. 98, played by trombones, unharmonized (fig. 3).

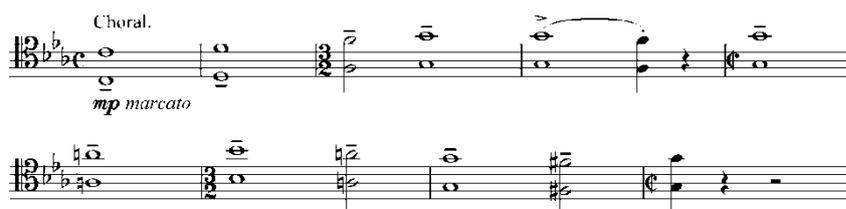
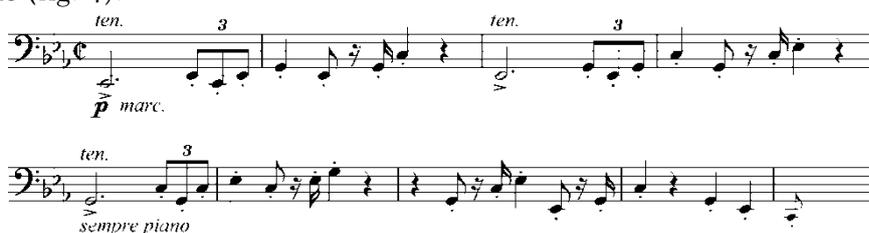


Figure 3: Choral (exposition)

The “war-cry” of the Christians appears earlier, in m. 77, with the epigraph *Schlachtruf* (or *Cri de Guerre*). It is apparently a fanfare-like motif for it’s certainly triadic, although it is in minor mode (clear c-minor) and played by violoncellos and bassoons for the first time (fig. 4).

Figure 4: Christian “battle-cry” (*Schlachtruf*) (exposition)

In his book about Liszt’s symphonic poems, Keith T. Jones calls our attention to an other important theme in the exposition, which could be marked as “secondary Hun-theme”. This theme comes up for the first time in m. 31, marked *violente* on the violins (fig. 5). It is undoubtedly belongs to the musical world of the Huns, with its elevating sequence-based melody and ferocious triplet-based rhythmic figures [17].



Figure 5: “Secondary Hun-theme” (exposition)

After the identification of the musical actors, the following task is to re-read the symphonic poem concentrating on these themes and their intonations. According to Eero Tarasti, Liszt’s symphonic poems usually depict some kind of a conflict – and in their narratives the certain themes are attached to certain mythic-narrative functions [18]. In the Lisztian narrative, the diverse appearances of the certain themes mark the mythic functions [19]. In case of Liszt, it is the process of thematic transformation, and the series of themes and intonations construct the chain of mythic functions after which the narrative meaning is constructed [20]. By Liszt, the musical structure is always parallel with the immanent mythic structure [21]. In my opinion, the two most important issues in the construction of meaning in Liszt’s music are the thematic transformation and the genetic relations between particular themes at the paradigmatic level, and the succession of various musical *topoi* at the syntagmatic level.

If we now examine *Hunnenschlacht* in this sense, we will certainly find the traditional reading of the story - given by the written programme itself - not completely satisfying. Tarasti states, that in the symphonic poems of Liszt the relation between programme and music is not “completely unambiguous” [22]. The programme is not the description of the musical structure, rather the verbalization of the mythic content, signified by the musical sign system [23], but what is exactly this mythic content? One could not find a better example than *Hunnenschlacht* to prove, that in some cases, a much more complex narrative reading can be adumbrated by the musical structure, than the verbalized meaning of the programme. In my opinion, meaning always comes into existence in some kind of a discourse. In case of musical works, such as *Hunnenschlacht*, this discourse takes place between a piece of music (the musical process) and the listener. Programme in this sense, plays a very important role in the process of generating musical meaning, since its main function is to guide the listener’s expectations, which can be affirmed or disaffirmed by the musical process. Programme therefore has a key role in meaning construction; however it is by no means the verbalized meaning itself. In *Hunnenschlacht*, the written programme states, that the battle ends with the glorious victory of the Christian troops. It is obvious then to examine the recapitulation carefully, because the depiction of the victory stage will surely give the key to the whole narrative. It is also an ambiguous feature of Liszt’s music that we can talk about recapitulation and victory at the same time. On the one hand, the musical form of the piece certainly refers to ternary form, or in some way even a kind of sonata form, for the third section (recapitulation) is obviously based on the themes introduced in the first section (exposition). On the other hand, however, the third section is far from being merely the recurrence of the main themes, on account of a very important device in Liszt’s music – thematic transformation. All important themes appear in the final section in a more or less transformed way, carrying a more or less different musical *topos*. Therefore Liszt’s musical structure can be described as *circular* (because of the use of ternary form) and *linear* (because of the series of transformed themes and musical *topoi*) at the same time [24]. Though the question of musical form is also a very interesting and important question, I am going to concentrate on the problems raised by an analysis of the narrative content of *Hunnenschlacht* in the rest of my paper [25].

In my opinion – as mentioned above – the key to this narrative content is the final (or recapitulation) section of the piece. In m. 271 the orchestra is silenced, the tempo mark changes to *Lento* and the *Crux fidelis* melody comes to the surface again, played by an organ (or harmonium) behind the scenes (according to the composer’s instruction), with a choral-like harmonization instead of the unisono by brass instruments on previous appearances (fig. 6). This section is marked *dolce religioso* and it has a really transcendental, religious character which clearly opposes the march like setting of the same theme in the earlier stages of the piece.



Figure 6: Choral (recapitulation)

The first line of the choral is followed by the exultant, major mode version of the Christian fanfare-motif, fortissimo, in an orchestral tutti, which is of course followed by the second choral-line. The alternation of these two themes ends at mark K, when a transitory material comes on the violins. This piano marked violin theme based on an elevating sequence, is undoubtedly the transformation of what I marked above as “secondary Hun-theme”, but its character is completely different – nothing left of its original ferocious, aggressive, violent nature. That time it is perfectly tamed, gaining an almost transcendental intonation (fig. 7).



Figure 7: “Tamed secondary Hun-theme” (recapitulation)

It is followed by another theme played by the strings – this theme is marked *espressivo pietoso*, and has a gentle, unquestionably religious character, although this theme can be considered as a transformation of the brutal “Hun-theme” (fig. 8). It is not self-evident then, why the Hun-themes appear again in the recapitulation, since – according to the traditional interpretation of the piece – they are defeated. Klára Hamburger states, that the Hun-themes are missing from the “victory” stage (the section starts at m. 271) [26]. I think it can be easily proved that this is not the case, but the most striking discovery is yet to come. The *espressivo pietoso* theme seems to be closely related also to the *Crux fidelis* theme, and that retrospectively reveals the genetic connection between the main themes of the two opposing sides. It looks like as the original Hun-theme would be a distortion, the wild, pagan, uncivilized version of the theme depicting the Holy Cross. Liszt often used this kind of treatment of his themes, characterizing the anti-hero as the corrupted counterpart of the hero (such as in Faust-symphony or in the b minor sonata).

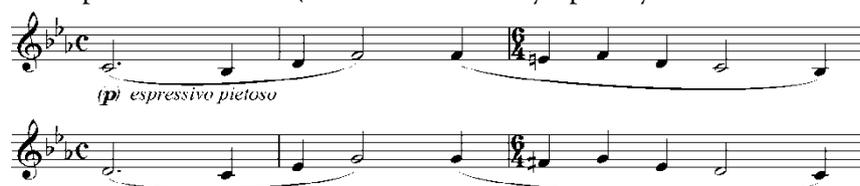


Figure 8: Espressivo pietoso theme (recapitulation)

Certainly the third Hun-theme is not missing from the recapitulation – it reappears in m. 375 on flutes, stripping off its original *feroce*, or *furioso* character (fig. 9).



Figure 9: “Tamed Hun battle-cry” (recapitulation)

There is one other transformation of a Hun-related theme in the final section of the piece, in m. 398 (at the *Stretto* mark) – the main Hun-theme, tamed to the gentle *espressivo pietoso* before, now shows a brand new face. This time it appears in a-minor, on strings and woodwinds, and it gains a restrained but proud, slightly ceremonial, almost march-like character.



Figure 10: ‘Stretto’ (recapitulation)

Finally the piece ends with an apotheosis of the choral in a splendid orchestral tutti.

Hunnenschlacht – Problematization

Persisting in the traditional interpretation of the musical narrative of *Hunnenschlacht* (also given by the written programme), one can be faced with some quite puzzling feature of the musical process. First of all, there is the problem of themes and thematic relations on the paradigmatic level, the strong connection between the Hun-theme and the *Crux fidelis*, and the presence of the Hun-themes – though in a radically changed form – in the final, victory section. The second problem arises on the syntagmatic level, with an analysis of the succession of the applied musical *topoi* – it must be noticed then, that not just the Hun-themes appear in the final stage of the piece in a transformed way, but even the Christian ones. The two occurrences of the plainchant based theme for example, have a perfectly different character, being combative and march-like in the exposition on the trombones, but religious and transcendental in the recapitulation on the organ. Like it would be no more a picture of the Christian troops, but the Holy Cross itself.

The arising doubts about the interpretation of the written programme – adopted by many former analysts of *Hunnenschlacht* – even invigorating, if we pay attention to extra-musical considerations, namely the question of Liszt’s Hungarian identity. According to the common view in the 19th century Hungary, Hungarians thought about themselves as the descendents of the Huns. That time, Attila, the Scourge of God, was considered in Hungary as the forefather of the medieval Hungarian monarchs. This historic myth of origin has of course no serious evidence, and today it is commonly rejected in Hungarian historiography, but it was widely accepted at the time, when Liszt’s symphonic poem was written. It is evident, that the ideal of Christianity had been the goal for human history according to Liszt, after his readings of the catholic-humanist authors such as François-René de Chateaubriand or Félicité de Lamennais [27]. But is it possible that this ideal of religion was so utterly important for Liszt, that he composed a symphonic poem about the

elimination of his own pagan ancestors? Is it possible that the composer of *Hunnenschlacht* opposed the two main identities he had, in such way in his composition? I think if we really want to get closer to the idea of this work, we have to change the basic oppositions according to which we interpret the musical narrative. Instead of Christians against Huns, the elementary semantic categories of *Hunnenschlacht* can be the idea of Christianity and Civilization against Heathendom and Barbarism, [28] and the principles of Love and Peace against Hatred and Destruction.

CONCLUSION

What is this piece about eventually? Victory – but who is victorious, and who is defeated? Conversion – but who is the converter, and who is converted? Redemption – but who is the redeemer, and who is redeemed? If the Huns are simply defeated, why are their themes appear again and again in the final section, and why is their main-theme initially connected with the choral? If the Huns are finally converted to Christianity, why is it needed that the Christian-themes are also going under serious transformation in character across the process of musical narration? If *Hunnenschlacht* is about redemption, whether the Huns are redeemed of their pagan brutality, or the corrupted, decadent Roman, “Western” culture needs redemption by the young, pure and vigorous “Eastern”. Is this an early example of the so called Eastern messianism reverberated later by important Eastern-European thinkers, such as Great Russian writers like Tolstoy and Dostoevsky? Or is it just a case of *Erlösung dem Erlöser* quarter of a century before Wagner’s *Parsifal*?

I do not think that one can answer these questions unequivocally, but I hope that I have successfully shown how many of these kind of questions can be raised about one single symphonic poem, which by the way seems to be completely unambiguous at first sight. My main goal has been to reveal, that although the vast majority of Liszt’s works has the so-called “triumphant-ending”, it does not automatically mean, that these works are simply didactic, and aesthetically problematic for this reason. I do not think – of course – that my interpretation would be the only *correct* reading of this piece. But I do think that this is one of the possible readings, which can be legalized by the musical structure. The possibility of this kind of an interpretation proves in itself, that the musical narratives of Liszt are much more complex than it is stated by their traditional interpretations. Maybe Liszt had not been able to deny his teleological conception of history and human existence in construction of the narratives of most of his musical pieces, but he would not have been a real artist if he had not been sensitive to this kind of reasoning.

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Mahler's *Wunderhorn* Music and its World of Meanings

Joan Grimalt, PhD, Universitat Internacional de Catalunya, SP

ABSTRACT

This paper presents the results of the author's PhD research, a new way to interpret and classify Gustav Mahler's orchestral songs on Des Knaben Wunderhorn. The song analyses, which constitute the basic material of the present study, follow methodologically Márta Grabócz's and Raymond Monelle's topical analysis. The latter supervised this thesis until his decease in March 2010.

The analyses' results are organized according to a Semiotic Square that Greimas redesigned, in the 1960s. The whole configures a structural map (an imago mundi) that represents the world evoked by Mahler's Wunderhorn music.

Among the topics not described before, the musical laughter and the pastoral march stand out.

AN INTERPRETER'S RESEARCH

The final version of my thesis started with a new analysis of a group of Mahler's orchestral songs based on *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. These songs are closely related to his first four symphonies, often called the *Wunderhorn* symphonies. He uses their meanings as if they were musical signs, flowing from the lyrical medium into the symphonic language with great naturalness. An example of a recurrent topic in the *Wunderhorn* songs is the soldier as a victim of the army. A new topic indeed. Up to the World Wars, the military topic had mostly positive, patriotic connotations. Mahler instead uses it as a critical metaphor of the relationship between the individual and society.¹

For the analysis of the *Wunderhorn* songs, one of the terms used by music semioticians remained central in my analyses: the musical topic. As there is no consensual definition among the experts, I had to find an operative one, adapted to the music I intended to analyse. A musical topic, in my thesis, is a recurrent musical motif, with a constant meaning, in a given context, be it historical or within the work of a composer. Mahler has his own characteristic topics: musical gestures that appear frequently in his music, and that can be interpreted depending on the contexts in which they appear. I soon realised that discovering these signs in Mahler's language was a first step towards a global representation of the world his music evokes. A second step would be to classify them.

¹ The voice of this "sacrificial soldier" is implicit in many passages of Mahler's instrumental output. Its often-grotesque character reminds the *Fateful Adventures of the Good Soldier Švejk During the World War*, contemporary of Mahler's work. They were written by Jaroslav Hašek (1883-1923) as a reaction to World War One, and published posthumously in 1923.

The two topics I consider the most significant had surprisingly not been described before. That is why they were studied more in depth, tracing them down not only in the songs, but also in the four *Wunderhorn* symphonies. They are the musical laughter and the pastoral march. The former has been presented and published in 2007, in a semiotic congress [1]. The latter, a subgenre typical of European late romantic music, is described next.

THE PASTORAL MARCH

This complex musical sign gathers together two different, apparently incompatible genres: the march and the pastoral. In Robert Hatten's terminology, it could be called a *trope* [2]. But the pastoral genre is a problematic one, in Mahler's music. It has been defined as the mediation between Nature and Man [3]. Arcadia represents fulfilment on earth, the most perfect adaptation possible to terrene life conditions. However, in Mahler's musical world, the pastoral tends to appear as in question, and nature as a threat to the individual, i.e. as an extension, or a metaphor, of the world's evil. Musically, the most frequent sign of that is the *perpetuum mobile* which animates most of his symphonic *Scherzi*. This constant, busy bustling finds its paradigm in the brutal song 'Earthly Life', *Das irdische Leben*.²

Whenever in Mahler's world the Arcadian idyll appears, often with Alpine and water motifs, a demolishing irony is near, as if the music would question itself. That is what happens in the songs *Rheinlegendchen*, *Fischpredigt*, and in most of the Fourth symphony.

Still there is a strip of pastoral meaning in Mahler's *Wunderhorn* music. It can be included into a broader category, that of Lyricism, one of the fundamental tones in Mahler's oeuvre. In my semiotic map (see *infra*, §3), it takes the opposite place to the evil world, the enemy of the aforementioned soldier. Lyricism conveys the subjective expression of all fulfilment that shall not be. It is thus a negative manifestation, just as irony means the contrary of what it states. Mahlerian lyricism appears under three main affective categories:

- Full of yearning, as if Fulfilment were attainable through effort, in a projection into an ideal future;
- Mourning in elegy, looking back on the past, or
- Pastoral, where the illusion of a present Fulfilment is at its closest.

The best features of the last one are what I have been calling the Pastoral march. It derives from the hiking song, itself a popular stylization of the military march. Mahler uses it as if he were conscious of its etymological meaning, i.e. of its derivation from the military to the civil, keeping its collective character, and taking on a political nuance. In Raymond Monelle's words:

There were, after all, whole categories of folksong connected with the national spirit: Soldatenlieder, Heimatslieder, Heldenlieder. This is the other side of the semantics of folksong. [...] Its origins lie in the same doctrine of the Volksseele that inspired the

² In its turn, this sign has a direct relationship with the Storm topic of the 18th century opera (and Beethoven's Pastoral symphony), with Monteverdi's *stile concitato*, and with the madrigalism of Fire.

pastoral side of the nineteenth-century topical signification, Herder's belief in the mysterious truths understood by the unlettered masses, and Arnim's applying of this to the spirit of the German nation [4].

The distinctive musical feature of the pastoral march is its accompaniment in descending fourths, typically on double basses, *pizzicato*:



Example 1: Typical accompaniment for a Pastoral March³

That is what brought me to look for its etymology in the German songs students and other merry makers would sing in the 19th century. In German, this repertoire is called *Studentenlieder* or *Wanderlieder*; thus *Wayfarer* songs. They were gathered in innumerable songbooks that were published up to the end of World War Two, with a patriotic background.

A good example of these songs is *Gelübde* ('Oaths'): Mahler adapts and uses it dramaturgically in his Third symphony, as if that melody were the main role of a narrative.

Ich hab' mich er - ge - ben mit Herz und mit Hand,
 Dir Land voll Lieb' und Le - ben, mein deut-sches Va - ter - land!

Example 2: *Gelübde*.

Johannes Brahms quoted the song too, in his *Academic Overture* (1880). Maybe it is the openly nationalistic tone of its text what prevented it, to my knowledge, to find its place in the Mahlerian bibliography. The first stanza goes:

1. <i>Ich hab mich ergeben</i>	<i>I have surrendered</i>
<i>Mit Herz und mit Hand,</i>	<i>With my heart and my hand</i>
<i>Dir Land voll Lieb' und Leben,</i>	<i>To you, country full of love and life,</i>
<i>Mein deutsches Vaterland!</i>	<i>My German fatherland!</i>

Besides its distinctive accompaniment, the pastoral march presents the following musical features:

³ All music examples are my own transcriptions.

- A stylized march metre, replacing its dotted, aggressive rhythms with some simple, peaceful ones, and in a slower tempo.
- Besides the regular F-major, the keys of C-major, G-major and E-major seem to ring Arcadic too in Mahler's ears.
- The major/minor seal, as Adorno [5] or Floros [6] call it, i.e. Mahler's emblematic shifting from major to minor, reinforces often the ambiguity of the pastoral march.
- The diastematic tends to the notes proper to the natural horn, the pentatonic scale or just pure diatony. The preferred melodic intervals are the fourth, the second and the quint. Often bird imitations or references to Alpine music (*Jodeln*) appear, especially in contexts of False Appearances.
- The instrumentation favours the typically pastoral instruments, i.e. oboe or cor anglais, flute and horn.
- Often the pace is stopped and resumed, suggesting a walker –or a singer– lost in her thoughts, or in their lyrical utterings.

Chronologically, the first example of the pastoral march is paradigmatic: in the second song of the *Wayfarer* cycle, *Ging heut' morgen*, the poetic self is euphoric about a beautiful, sunlit morning. Disenchantment arrives at the end of the song: in his world there is no hope of a flourishing such as nature presents him with. The typical wayfarer fourths form not only the head of the motif but also its accompaniment, as in a polyphonic imitative design:

The musical score for 'Ging heut' morgen' is presented in three systems. The first system shows the vocal line starting with 'Auch die' and the piano accompaniment. The second system shows the vocal line continuing with 'Glo-cken-blum' am Feld hat mir...' and the piano accompaniment. The third system shows the vocal line ending with 'lu-stig,' and the piano accompaniment. The score includes various dynamics such as *f*, *mf*, *p*, and *ppp*, and articulations like *pizz.* and accents. The instrumentation includes Muted Tr. + Ob., Fl. + Cl. + Hp., and Str. (strings).

Example 3: *Ging heut' morgen*, mm. 29-33.

Or, still in the same cycle, *Die zwei blauen Augen*, in the episode where, as it happens with the wanderer in Schubert's *Winterreise*, peace is found under a lime tree.

Leise bis zum Schluß
Piano sino alla fine

Auf der Stra - ße stand ein Lin - den-baum, da hab' ich zum er - sten Mal im Schlaf ge - ruht!

Hp. *ppp* Vls. *pp* Bcl. *p*

pizz.

Example 4: *Die zwei blauen Augen*, mm. 40-44.

The instrumental introduction to *Das himmlische Leben*, 'Heavenly Life', is another example of a pastoral march. The song complements the aforementioned 'Earthly Life': the starving child in the latter comes here to a heaven where cooking and eating are the main facilities.

Heiter behaglich

Cl. *p* Fl. *mf*

Harp, String pizz. Cb. *p*

Example 5: Beginning of *Das himmlische Leben*.

A last instance among the numerous pastoral marches in Mahler's symphonic vocabulary⁴, the *Adagio* of the Fourth symphony, where that seemingly vacillating pace can be observed:

Ruhevoll

pp *espress. sehr gesangsvoll*

pp *pizz.*

p

Example 6: Fourth symphony, *Adagio*, begin.

⁴ In other *Wunderhorn* songs: the central part of *Urlicht*, or the 3d section of *Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen*. In the First symphony, 3d mov., n° 10; Second symphony, 1st mov., n° 7-10, 15-16; Third symphony, 1st mov., n° 11-12, n° 39; 5th mov., 6th mov. (esp. mm. 250-252, 316-321); Fourth symphony, 1st mov., n° 1, n° 4-5, n° 10, etc.; 3d mov. (esp. n° 4, n° 12, etc.).

Summarizing: the march is a constant presence in Mahler's music. Military and funeral marches often signify a hostile world to the individual, but there is another kind of march that has received little attention, if any, in spite of its frequency. It is the pastoral march, derived from the wayfarer marching songs. Its meaning is often deceptive, but it depicts an oasis of an imagined fulfilment of the subject.

A TYPOLOGY OF THE MUSICAL SIGNS

As musical signs emerged along my analyses, they would tend to gather into some classification. These larger groups could offer a representative image of the musical world I was trying to study. I have called such groups of related meanings *Isotopies*, adapting Greimas's terminology. Four of them finally emerged. One of the most pleasant surprises during the investigation was to find that these four isotopies were confirmed *a posteriori* by two important references.

One of them is Greimas's semiotic square.

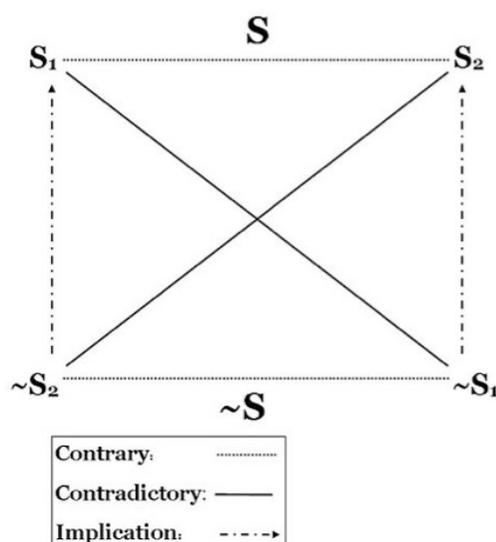


Figure 1: Greimas's semiotic square.

Algirdas Julien Greimas is the founder of the Paris semiotic school. His semiotic square, adapted from Aristotle, gathers in an outline the global results of my investigation [7]. The fact that I did not look for it corroborated the Greimasian filiation of my methodology. After all I had been oriented, above all, by Grabócz and Monelle.

The other reference is a quote by Mahler himself, dividing the world of musical meaning in a way very similar to my final diagram. I did not pay attention to these reports until after reaching them by deduction. Maybe because I tried to base my analyses on a hermeneutic tradition, thus not inventing, but interpreting.

The semiotic square representing Mahler's *Wunderhorn* world, according to my findings, is as follows:

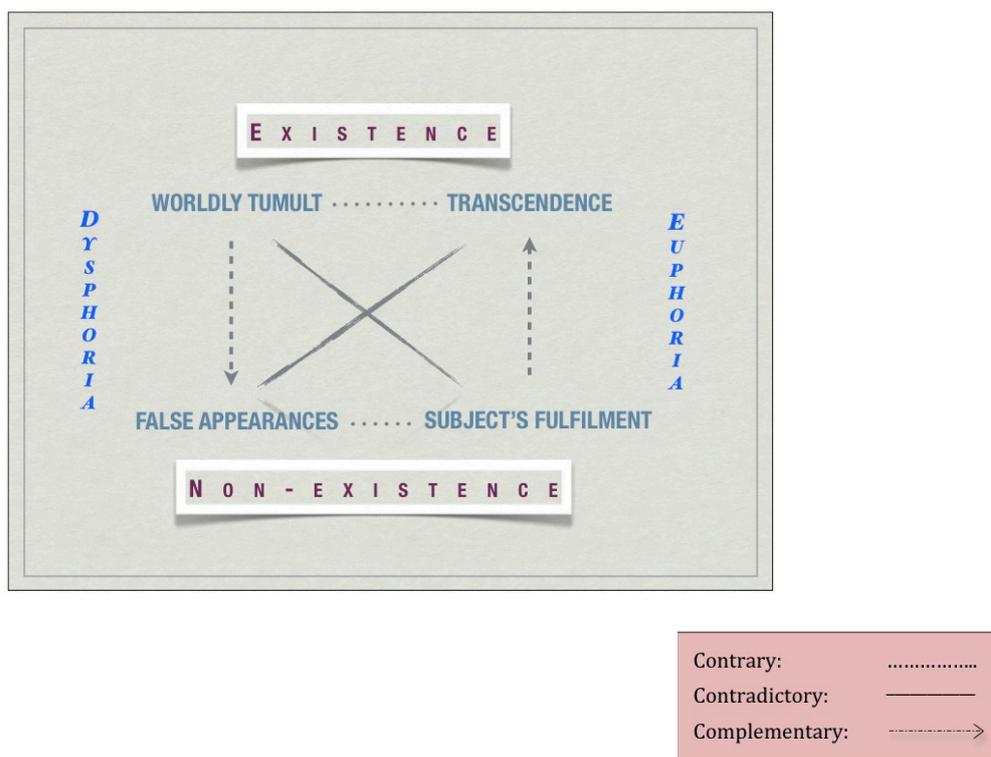


Figure 2: Semiotic square with the four isotopies of Mahler's *Wunderhorn* music.

The pastoral march figures within the isotopy of the *Subject's Fulfilment*, which in Mahler's music appears as basically impossible. On the other hand, the isotopy of *Transcendence* gathers the religious aspects that interest Mahler so lively, especially the eschatological ones.

Beside the opposition between Transcendence and Fulfilment on earth there is a connection between these two meaning fields. In psychological terms, it is euphoria; in musical terms, their signifier is harmony, consonance. Whenever the many tensions give way to a release, this moment takes place in one of these areas: on an ideal terrain, related to the old pastoral tradition, or in a religious beyond.

What distinguishes them is their degree of reality. Whereas in Mahler's music Transcendence appears as an affirming assertion, the possibility of a fulfilled life on earth takes on the realm of fantasy and dream. In this *Wunderhorn* world, the subject's fulfilment is yearned for, not experienced as real. This becomes transparent in the terrible words the composer pronounced on his deathbed: 'I lived a paper-based life!'⁵

Is there an opposite to that Subject's Fulfilment? According to Greimas, negation or contradiction are terms which exclude one another. What makes the subject's bliss impossible is what Adorno calls the *Worldly Tumult*, i.e. the musical image of a hostile, chaotic world. That is another fundamental isotopy in Mahler's music, including its whole repertoire of grotesque marches, blows, screaming, and violent contrasts.

There is still a last isotopy to complete this map: Irony and, more generally, *False Appearances*. Irony comes to unmask, once and again, beauty as a fallacy, and can thus be understood as contrary to a life in plenitude, a negation of Transcendence, and complementary to the *Worldly Tumult*.

⁵ Ich habe Papier gelebt! In *Alma Mahler Memories*: p. 56.

Correspondingly, the Worldly Tumult is contrary to Transcendence, just as heaven and hell. Finally, the vertical axe of our semiotic square asks for an opposite to Euphoria, i.e. Dysphoria. Its musical manifestations are dissonance and tension.

These could be the four cardinal points of a graphic representation of Mahler's *Wunderhorn* world, as a map to orient further explorations. It can be read thus: Mahler's *Wunderhorn* music asserts the existence of a hostile world to the subject – a stupid, vulgar, cruel world, as in the first movement of the Third symphony– and hence the impossibility of a fulfilled life. In this situation, two alternatives are offered: irony, to unmask False Appearances, and a Transcendent reality, albeit as a promise, e.g. in the Finale of the Second symphony.

CONCLUSIONS

In the first pages of the dissertation, reference indexes are meant to be useful for continuing analytical work, as well as a list with 44 different topics, including their location in the songs and symphonies, and their corresponding isotopy. Finally, all 25 referenced songs appear in chronological order, with their main isotopies and topics.

In a way, the results of the thesis are more, and in another way less than I expected, as I started the investigation. I then envisaged an exhaustive analysis of the *Wunderhorn* songs and the four symphonies, as belonging to one only land of meaning. Finally, I could thoroughly study just some of the topics that seemed most significant, searching out their presence in the songs and in the four *Wunderhorn* symphonies. On the other hand, it was a pleasant surprise to reach to a map with the four winds of the explored territory, in which later research could be integrated, and which constitutes an image of Mahler's musical world, at least up to 1901.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As a young interpreter, I remember my perplexity trying to find out the meanings of instrumental music. One day I got the irresistible offer to conduct Mahler's First symphony with the Spanish Youth Orchestra (*Jonde*): it was the spring of 1997. The intuition that the work was telling a musical story, irreducible to words, was overwhelming.

The close affinity between semiotics and language made a study on musical semiotics a propitious enterprise, due to my degree in Philology. Of all the experts of our time who have helped with my research, there are three I would like to mention and thank for founding my intuitions with semiotic tools: Constantin Floros, Márta Grabócz, and Raymond Monelle. The latter generously guided and inspired me in what we could not imagine would be his last years, not only supervising the thesis I present here, but in the way he was able to restore the art of sound to its proper field, humanities. I feel truly honoured to be part of this homage to the memory of this accomplished musician and humanist.

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Mahler, Secession style and his Symphony No 4. Musical Topics Read Anew in the Light of Semiotics

Bogumila Mika, PhD, University of Silesia, Katowice, PL

ABSTRACT

In the fine arts, the turn of 19th century saw the triumphant march of a new style, known in different countries under different names. In Austria, where, from 1897 to 1907, Mahler served as director of the Vienna Court Opera, the term Secession was given to this style. This nomenclature derives from the artists' society Secession, founded in 1897. Secession style wasn't a matter of indifference to Mahler. He was closely connected with the Vienna Secession movement from 1902. But do connections exist between the epoch influenced by Secession and Mahler's music? Can one find signs of Secession style in his works? I will suggest that Mahler's Fourth Symphony, written in 1900, is a good example of the Secession style in music. Three levels of consideration of this symphony make possible an analogy between Secession style in art and in music: 1) structure of elements of the work with musical topics used by the composer; 2) fundamental aspects of its form; 3) cultural context. In my paper I will analyze these levels, and also will examine the features of musical Secession style, comparing them with features of music from the Classical and Romantic epochs. This comparison will give a new insight into the analysis of Mahler's Symphony No 4 in a light of semiotics.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS: VIENNA SECESSION AND GUSTAV MAHLER

The turn of 19th century saw the triumphant march of a new style in the fine arts, known in different countries under different names. Its main name was "Art Nouveau" (French for "new art")¹, but this international philosophy and style of art was also known as "Jugendstil" (German for "youth style"), "Stile Liberty" (London)², "Modernisme" (in Spain: in Catalonia), "Stile Floreale" (in Italy means: floral style) and as "Sezessionstil" (in Austria).

Artists who resigned from the Association of Austrian Artists coined the term "Vienna Secession" for the movement founded on 3 April 1897 "in protest against the rigid academicism of the official Artists' Society and the cramped outmoded venues for exhibition" [1], housed in the Vienna Künstlerhaus³. The organization of "Vienna Secession" attracted such recognizable persons as Gustav and Ernst Klimt, Koloman Moser, Josef Hoffmann, Joseph Maria Olbrich, Alfred Roller and Otto Wagner, and

¹ In France Art Nouveau was also known as style Guimard, after the French designer Hector Guimard.

² After British Art Nouveau designer Arthur Lasenby Liberty.

³ Secession comes from the Latin "secessio plebis", meaning withdrawal of the common people.

followed the examples of its predecessors, the Munich and Berlin Secessions, by practicing “new art” (art nouveau).

The aims of the “Vienna Secession” were formulated in the Secession magazine “Ver Sacrum” (“Sacred Spring”) published from 1898 to 1903. The goals of the organization were summed up by the motto “Der Zeit Ihre Kunst, Der Kunst Ihre Freiheit” (“To the age its art, to art its freedom”), which was inscribed on the wall of Secession's Exposition Hall in Vienna (1897-98), designed by Joseph Maria Olbrich.

The “Secession” broke with the cult of forms of past epochs, with imitation of styles of the past, and with the historicism and eclecticism of the 19th century. It proclaimed the right of each epoch to its own art, understood to be an expression of the era's unique aims, aspirations and preferences. Secession tried to create a new art. Secession artists, seeking “Novelty at any price” - one of the movement's maxims - original and unconventional, and even if these aspirations led, at times, to a new eclecticism. Artists of the “Secessionist” movement admired the decorative and ornamental aspect of the rococo and incorporated it into their respective styles [2]. Klimt particularly stands out among Secession painters because ornamentation he employed served much more than a purely decorative function. It provided “a means of bringing together antithetical themes” [3] or “the profusion of surface beauty distracted from more ominous objects” [4] or “the nature of the association was with a cult of aesthetic beauty. This, by no means, precluded darker romantic images” [5]. Artists of the “Vienna Secession” formulated positive attitudes toward foreign art. And Secession's statement of purpose read [6]:

We desire an art not enslaved to foreigners, but at the same time without fear or hatred of the foreign. The art of abroad should act upon us as an incentive to reflect upon ourselves; we want to recognize it, admire it, if it deserve an admiration, all we do not want to do is to imitate it. We want to big foreign art to Vienna not just for the sake of artists, academics and collectors but in order to create a great mass of people receptive to art, to awaken the desire which lies dormant in the breast of every man for beauty and freedom of thought and feeling.

This might explain why fin de siècle Vienna was characterized by a unique cultural dynamic which brought separate areas of art, literature and intellectual developments into fertile and innovative contact.

Gustav Mahler lived in this cultural (artistic) climate in Vienna near the turn of 19th century, where he had served as director of the Vienna Court Opera since 1897 and was officially elected conductor of the Philharmonic a year later, on September 26, 1898.

Zoltan Roman [7] reminds us that,

while Mahler had never displayed much interest in the visual arts, it seems reasonable to assume that, sooner or later, he had to become aware of an artist like Klimt, either through his connections with the Vienna Secession or through Alma and her circle. While there is no evidence of a closer connection between them, it is well known that Mahler and Klimt (who appeared to have had a life-long infatuation with Alma) often met socially after 1901.

We also should remember that Mahler's close association with the Secessionists began in 1902 because of the Fourteenth Exhibition of the Viennese Secession (15th

April-27th June 1902), for which the central theme was Beethoven, and for which, Max Klinger's Beethoven freeze sculpture was the centerpiece. Twenty-one artists collaborated on the exhibition under the direction of Josef Hoffmann. Gustav Klimt – the first president of the “Vienna Secession” - created for the exhibition the famous Beethoven Frieze, which covered three upper walls of a main exhibition room, “presented an allegory of Beethoven as savior, not so much of all mankind as of the individual soul” [8]. And the wind-players from the Vienna Philharmonic, under Gustav Mahler's direction, welcomed Klinger as a guest of the Secession “with the strains of Mahler's own re-arrangement of part of the last movement of Beethoven's 'Choral' (Ninth) Symphony” [9].⁴

In 1903 Mahler hired Secession artist Alfred Roller to make radical changes to the concept of the Vienna Court Opera design, a final stage of the artistic reform he had done there. As I. K. Rogoff put it “The many set and costume designs [...] for productions in which Roller worked under Mahler trace a process by which a reflection of external reality and the crumbling of previous grandeur infiltrate the ideal of the illusionistic Gesamtkunstwerk” [10].

William Ritter (a French reviewer contemporary with Mahler, initially an opponent and later a devotee of his works) found similarities between Mahler's symphonies and Viennese Secession. He wrote: “Mahler's music kept with the century, which is it faithfully reflected in it. It is performed in Otto Wagner's architectonic space filled with works of Klimt and Moser. One day it will symbolize modern Vienna” [11].

But can we find in Mahler's music tokens of “secession style”? Is it at all possible to draw an analogy between “secession style” in fine arts and in music?

I suggest that when trying to draw parallels between “secession style” in fine arts and in music we must accept the following premises:

1) we must agree that music does, or should, partake in the artistic climate of its time in ways that are demonstrable and meaningful. “The years around 1900, which saw many sustained contacts and associations between artists working in different media, seem a logical place to look” [12].

2) we must – following the most common method in writings on music and Jugendstil - “isolate several aspects of the visual art, either of technique or of subject matter, and seek parallels in music of the fin de siècle” [13]. And, as Historians of art and design, we must “agree on at least three basic elements of Jugendstil: the primacy of the dynamic, flowing line; flatness or two dimensionality (Jugendstil has been called a *Flachkunst*); and the profuseness of ornament” [14].

Accepting these premises, let me refer also to the article of Polish scholar Rafal Augustyn, *The notion “secession” applied to music* [15], in which the author proposes to analyze “secession style” in music on three levels:

- 1) structure of elements of the work;
- 2) fundamental aspects of its form;
- 3) cultural context.

Following his suggestions I will examine these three levels in Mahler's *Fourth Symphony*. The work was written between 1899 and 1900, except for the song-finale *Das*

⁴ Music attendant the exhibition had its sources in the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven, and Mahler - conducting this work - transformed it slightly. He made some changes in cast and in orchestration, choosing a fragment from the final part of Ninth Symphony: “Ihr stürzt nieder, Millionen?, Ahnest du den Schöpfer, Welt? Such ihn übern Sternenzelt!, Über Sternen muss er wohnen”, resigning (I think you mean deleting the choir at this point] a choir and charging brass instruments with its fragment), see Blaukopf [13], p 176.

himmlische Leben, which was composed in 1892 but never used in a large-scale work until it was incorporated into the *Fourth Symphony*. “Mahler worked on the fair copy of the *Symphony* during the 1900-1901 conducting season, and finished it in spring 1901. The *Fourth Symphony* was given its premiere in Munich in November 1901” [16].

STRUCTURE OF ELEMENTS OF THE WORK

One of the main artistic means of Secession was line: curved, long, smooth, twisted, wavy, seeming to be in motion. This line generally is broken into two fragments of two different curvatures: smaller and larger. It also can change its thickness, and these changes remain in relation to the degree of curvature.

In an essay entitled *Das neue Ornament* (1901), Henry van de Velde [17], one of the most brilliant and influential theorists of art nouveau, observed that

it was the idea that lines are interrelated in the same logical and consistent way as numbers and as notes in music that led me to go in search of a purely abstract ornamental style, one which engenders beauty of its own accord and by means of the harmony of construction and the harmony of the regularity and equilibrium of forms which compose an ornament.

In his later study *Point and Line to Plane* (1926), Kandinsky seems to echo directly Endell's theories about line, asserting that

length is a durational concept [. . .] the time required to follow a straight line is different from the time required to follow a curved line even if the lengths are the same, and the more animated the curved line is, the more it stretches itself out in time. In line therefore, the possibilities of using up time are very manifold [18].

Let us assume that flowing and dynamic line in fine art can be transferred to music. Musical line is a coherent succession of tones (melody and rhythm), changeable in dynamic and tone-colour. We can give as example an irregularly curved line the first theme of the first movement of *Symphony No.4* (bars 3-6). Note that it is divided into two fragments, the first of greater and the second of smaller curvature.

Similar features also are characteristic of the first violin theme of second movement of the *Fourth Symphony* (bars 6-11), which begins with intervals of thirds and with longer rhythmic notes (crotchet with a dot), and which later is taken by fluent motion of seconds in semiquavers. This repeats regularly every four bars.

The second theme of the third movement of the *Symphony* (bars 57-70) is similar to scroll-work (like spirally twisted) curvature, developing from small intervals to larger and characterized by progressively increasing rhythmic diminution.

It is worth noting that “secession style” especially valued lines of helical shape, which spiralled upward. It may be seen in decorative art as runners of grape-vines, shoots of ferns, and arms of an octopus.

Secession's aim to connect with the same single line the background and the primary object, and sometimes also to incorporate an ornament - can be found most especially in the *Fourth Symphony* in the second and third movements. In the second movement (bars 81-87) the accompanying violin's part becomes the main theme, taking

the leading role from the winds. Similarly, in the third movement one and the same line unites the main melody, fading eventually into the “musical background”.

One finds a typical feature of secession art - many lines mutually interlaced, from time to time branched and sometimes in parallel - in the Trio of the second movement (bars 87-101). These lines should not be considered as isolated melodic lines; they are made of two equivalent instrumental passages.

Sharpness of outline, roundness and dynamic of frequently curved “secession” lines with large spans and with many changes of direction can be applied in music as large interval leaps, as smooth *portamento* passages between distant notes and as extreme changes in dynamic within a short time span. A good example of this in the *Fourth Symphony* is the second theme of the third movement (bars 62-70).

It was typical in Secession art to connect spaces of different colours without chromatic transition, and usually with merely a line of demarcation. We find these distinctively sharp contrasts of action in the *Fourth* in the domains of harmony and of tempo. The third segment of the development of the first movement: uses a juxtaposition of different keys without modulation or even chromatic passages. The keys are: C major, D-flat major, C major, F-sharp major, G major.

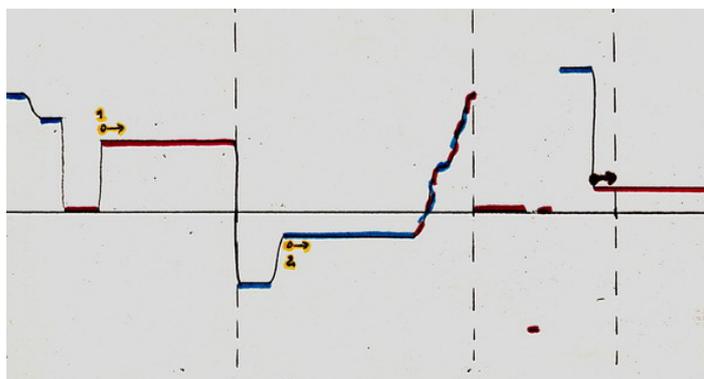


Figure 1. First movement – three segments of development (the first segment -53 bars, the second segment – 54 bars, the third segment – 30 bars).

In the third movement, Mahler uses in close proximity the tempi: Allegretto grazioso, Andante, Allegretto subito, Allegro subito, Allegro molto subito, Andante subito.

In the second movement of the Fourth the insistent motion of the first theme contrasts with the regular rhythmic sequence of the introduction and of the first bridge (bars 25-26). Within the introduction, a “laughter-like” sound of winds is contrasted with a horn motif (bars 1-12).

In many of Klimt's pictures and Beardsley's drawings, "empty places" or "empty spaces," containing only a few lines about richly ornamented areas with vivid actions and abundant details. In Mahler's Fourth Symphony, an example of a contrast between rich musical action and empty space set next to each other is found in the first theme of the second movement with its background and refrain based on the empty sounding fifths c-g (bars 34-45).

It is worth adding that this typical Secession predilection for huge empty spaces, called “amor vacui”, arises from the mutual appreciation of both values: that which is

“empty” and that which is “full, rich”. In consequence, it has a specific and meaningful power, a significance and an intensifying strength of expression.

Secession’s fancy for asymmetry and irregularity has frequently been listed as one of its main characteristics. When ideal symmetry is felt as something perfect but “lifeless”, a slight asymmetry is felt as something imperfect but alive. “Asymmetric work provokes the receiver’s imagination, helps him to make in his mind a perfect object of something that in reality is imperfect. Therefore asymmetry in works of art is more valuable than is symmetry.” –With these words Japanese aesthete Kakuzō [19] gives evidence of Secession’s applicability in the art of Far East.

A special kind of asymmetry also may be traced in Mahler’s Fourth Symphony, both in microstructure (particular themes) and in macrostructure (form). As an example of microstructure I propose the first theme of the first movement, which is organic in construction, fluent, asymmetric, and deprived of proportions conditioned by arithmetic or by mechanical repeatability.

On the level of macrostructure the whole symphony, with respect to form, can be perceived as incoherent. The song-finale instead of a more typical final movement, contributes to this incoherence. The song about the “Heavenly life” (from an ironic point of view) destroys symmetry and deforms the shape of the symphony – a shape that we have might expected, being familiar with the tradition of the evolution of symphonic form.

Carl Niekerk [20] writes:

Mahler’s instructions to use a childlike female voice raises the question of whether the utopian moment is intended seriously and whether the listeners were to consciously perceive it as a child’s fantasy, or both at once. The expression of two diametrically opposed but equally valid feelings-another stylistic marker of early Romantic irony- is clearly recognizable here in Mahler’s Fourth. A telling moment with regard to this irony is the passage in the song when the child sings of the lamb’s slaughter (Wir führen ein geduldigs, / Unschuldigs, geduldigs, / Ein liebliches Lämmlein zum Tod).

FUNDAMENTAL ASPECTS OF FORM OF THE FOURTH SYMPHONY

One of the features of “secession art” is evolution into linearity. In music this might be seen as the domination of a horizontal way of thinking, as the importance of melody or the coexistence of two or more equally important melodic lines. These features are found in each of the four movements of Mahler’s *Fourth*, most obviously in the second movement Trio and in the third movement, as already discussed.

Coexistence of geometric and organic elements [21] is typical of secession art and symbolizes the coexistence of two worlds: one of the “order of intellect” and a second of the “order of nature”. These two elements of two worlds are, in arts and architecture, placed close together, without intervening trim or transition. In Mahler’s *Fourth*, as an example, I propose the juxtaposition of the geometric *Scherzo* (second movement), with respect to its metro-rhythmic dimension, tonality and texture with the organic *Adagio* (third movement).

Secession art also invented a new type of interdependence between external shape of the work and its bearing structure. If in music we cite texture and harmony, respectively [22], then a multitude of voices was replaced by the variety of different musical plans

achieved by the juxtaposition of different themes, timbres, tone-colours, and orchestration (introduction, bars 1-12, and coda of the second movement, bars 358-64).

A multitude of dynamics (poli-dynamic) is noticeable in the constant alternation of dynamic of different musical lines, which occurs with simultaneously with the alternating thematic lines (second movement – *Trio* and third movement of the *Fourth Symphony*).

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Secession style is characterized by a fascination with the Orient. Following the Orient's example, both "empty spaces" and soft (gentle) shapes became important in fine arts. "Empty spaces" in Mahler's *Fourth* are easily heard as pedal-notes, passages of ostinato of fourth and fifths (in the second, third and fourth movements)⁵ and in passages based on (long-held intervals (passages between the variations of the third movement)).⁶

The influence of the East made an impact on artists' treatment of colour. In music those techniques which helped to support tonality lost importance while the values of sonority and of instrumental effects were enhanced. Mahler's interest in tone-colour was reflected, in my opinion, in the introductions to the first⁷ and second movements, where the orchestral strains resemble "glockenspiel" and "laughter", respectively.

These same sounds also revealed the tendency to use music in its illustrative or symbolic function. Using 'fiedel'-like sound (in the second movement) – and fiedel was a prototype of the violin and an original instrument hitherto played merely in the Far East – might serve also (though not necessarily) as evidence of the Oriental influence.

The simultaneous coexistence of "high" style and "common" (low) style was also typical for secession style in fine arts. This tendency to juxtapose vernacular and classic traditions was especially present in Josef Hoffmann's architectural designs [23]. Mahler also employed this hybrid style in his music. The best example usually is given as the *Third Symphony* (in the fourth and fifth movements, where Mahler's generative material included passages from both *Das trunkene Lied (Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Nietzsche)* and *Es sungen drei Engel (Des Knaben Wunderhorn)* [24].

But this tendency also may be found in Mahler's *Fourth Symphony*, where the first theme of Allegro (first movement) is dance-like, probably of folk provenance, or in the signal motif of the first bridge, contrasting with the "high style" of the whole of that section, especially of its development. Tina Marlowe-Storkovich goes so far as to claim that Mahler's music, generally, demonstrates that the composer "strove to elevate vernacular to its monumental dimension" [25].

⁵ See the *ostinato* of fourth-fifths in the third movement, bars 49-56.

⁶ See passages between the variations of the third movement ("empty spacer"), bars 283-86, and 311-14.

⁷ See the introduction to the first movement ("Glockenspiel"), bars 1-13.

FINAL REMARKS

Having located some essential features of "secession style" as typical in fine arts also in Mahler's *Fourth Symphony* we may ask: do these features contribute to the neo-classical character of the analyzed work or, quite the opposite, are they contradictory to it?

The answer seems to be positive for classicism. "Secession" threw away everything that was romantic, subjective, and exuberant and penetrated into deep emotionality. It was a style, or an icon of the movement, that was characterized by simplification, reduction of dynamic strength and reduction to classical values of art both in form and substance. Its desire was to become closer to common people, to create a universal art outside the confines of academic tradition that would convince everyman, would speak to everyone through its simplicity, clarity and beauty.

Secession and classical style both delighted in virtuosity. Both were characterized by cheerfulness, lightness and capricious charm. Classical artists preferred to suggest as much as possible by saying as little as possible. La Fontaine [26] said: "I think that it is a need to leave in the most beautiful themes something to think". And secession's artists used elements devoid of precise meaning as symbols in their multifarious levels. Mallarmé [27] said: "Instead of describing one should suggest! To name a subject means to destroy three-fourths of the satisfaction coming from the poem; coming from joy of progressive guessing: merely to suggest the subject – that is the dream".

The main rule of Classicism was: "to be attractive" and in 17th century this meant to appeal to an audience experienced in culture and difficult to please. The main trend in Secession can be dubbed "aesthetic-like", because their representative works should have incited aesthetic contemplation, were made to be enjoyed by human eyes.

The true motto of Secession reads [28]: "I believe in everything that is beautiful, pleasant and useful, as the need arises".

According to these assumptions, Secession's features found in the music of Mahler's *Fourth Symphony*, read in a light of semiotics, can supply additional proof of the "neo-classical" style of this composition.

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PART III:

MUSICAL TOPIC THEORY, NARRATIVITY, AND OTHER SEMIOTIC PERSPECTIVES IN TWENTIETH CENTURY AND MODERN ART MUSIC

The Jewish Florio: Eichendorffian Narratives in the First Movement of Mahler's Seventh Symphony

Danielle Hood, University of Leeds, UK

ABSTRACT

In 1900 Mahler exclaimed to his friends “Death to Programmes! [...] The language of music has communicated immeasurably more than the word is able to express.” With the advent of topic analysis, however, Monelle and others have begun to suggest narratives for his work [1]. La Grange proposes that Mahler had in mind two specific works by Eichendorff when he wrote the Seventh Symphony: the poem, “Das Ständchen”, and the novella “Das Marmorbild”. These works have, thus far, only been connected to the two Nachtmusiken (movements two and four). While the two Nachtmusiken are inspired by the poems within “Das Marmorbild”, a topical analysis of the first movement reveals it mirrors the literary narrative of the novella. The analysis demonstrates that while the correspondences between the two plots are not exact, they are close enough that the similarities seem unlikely to be wholly coincidental, not least given Alma Mahler’s testimony regarding the specific influence of Eichendorff, even if she seemed to think that this was restricted to other movements of the symphony. The musical narrative not only elucidates the correlation between music and literature but also highlights cultural themes prevalent within fin-de-siècle Vienna, for example the Jewish overtones and the conflict between the ethical rational life over instinctual, emotional life exemplified by the rivalry between the real love of Bianca and the magical seduction of Venus.

DAS MARMORBILD

Eichendorff’s *Das Marmorbild*, written in 1818, tells of the story of Florio, a young nobleman, freed from responsibility and travelling through Italy. On his approach to the city of Lucca he encounters stranger, the singer Fortunata, who leads him to a celebration of spring. There he meets a beautiful maiden, Bianca with whom he appears to fall in love at first sight, and she with him. At the feast he composes a song to her, declaring his love, and she allows him to kiss her. At the end of the feast, however, a dark stranger, the cavalier Donati, steps into the marquee and greets Florio as an old acquaintance but Fortunato immediately dislikes Donati. That night Florio is plagued by dreams of Bianca as a siren who attempts to sink his ship and waking he decides to go for a walk. In time he comes upon a garden next to the lakes edge where a marble statue of Venus stands. Florio stares, unable to avert his gaze as the statue appears to look back at him whereupon he started and ran in fright back to the inn.

The next morning Fortunato gently chides him for his moonlight wanderings, before leaving Florio. The young noble returns to the lake but cannot find the statue again; instead, he finds himself in a garden by a palace eavesdropping on a beautiful lady's song whose features closely resemble the marble statue. As he attempts to find the singer he instead stumbles upon Donati, lying asleep, appearing as if dead. Upon waking the cavalier he extracts a promise that he will be introduced to the lady the next day and leaves in a state of exultation. The next day Donati instead invites Florio to a hunt. The young noble is repulsed by the idea that he should hunt on the Sabbath and Donati leaves in disgust, whereupon Florio goes to church plagued by thoughts of love and lust.

The next evening Fortunato invites him to a masked ball with the intimation that there Florio will meet an old acquaintance. He dances with Bianca, who is disguised as a Greek girl, but the lady is also there dressed identically and Florio becomes confused as to who is who. After the lady takes off her mask and reveals herself to him she invites him to her house the next evening. When he then sees Bianca he becomes indifferent to her, as his mind wanders to the impending meeting. At this indifference Bianca becomes distraught, she had dreamed of marrying Florio the night she met him and now he has acted as if a stranger to her.

Eventually Florio finds himself at supper with Donati in the house of the mysterious lady. The lady herself leads Florio by the hand and begins to seduce him. Florio feels he has known her since childhood, as do all men, the enchantress herself remarks. At these words Florio descries paintings of her on the walls and remembers where he has seen her before, as he had seen paintings like these in his youthful fantasies of eroticism. The strain of a song filters through the window, sung by Fortunato, and seems to waken Florio, as he exclaims: "Lord God, do not let me lose my way in this world!" As a thunderstorm approached Florio saw the enchantress begin to turn back into the marble statue he had first seen and he runs from the room.

The next morning finds him leaving Lucca and meeting three other travellers on the way: Fortunato, Pietro (Bianca's uncle) and a young boy. As they leave the city Fortunato relates a myth of the ruined temple on the hill which Florio recognises as the palace of the Lady. The myth recounts the story of Venus, who haunts her ruined temple and tempts young men into losing their souls to her. At this story the young boy lifts his head to reveal that it is in fact Bianca. Florio sees her and falls in love with her anew, telling her: "I feel like a new man; I sense that everything will turn out aright, now that I have found you again."

FLORIO

If the musical narrative of the first movement of the Seventh Symphony maps on to that of *Das Marmorbild*, then the forty-nine bar introduction of the first movement introduces both the character, Florio, and the plot of the movement/novella: the conflict between the supernatural and the rational. In Eichendorff's novella Florio rides into town and is instantly distracted by the "delicate fragrance[s]" and the "colourful procession" of people walking along the avenue [2]. His poetic nature (the aspiration of which he shyly admits to the singer Fortunato) is expressed by an *arioso* melody in the tenor horn. The *arioso*, a style of opera singing between recitative and aria (theme A, example 1), humanises the instrumental solo and evokes its literary stylistic counterpart, poetry, as a

form of expression that lies between speech and song. The accompanying topic (example 1a) symbolises the supernatural sub-plot through the utilisation of the ombra topic. This topic is signified by the slow tempo instigating a creeping terror, the dotted rhythms symbolising heartbeats or footsteps (either the approach of impending menace or the procession of a funeral) and the tremolando in the strings and clarinets, which, when combined with *fp* markings at bar 6 create fear and agitation. The rational sub-plot is expressed by the noble march topic that begins at bar 19 (example 2); the stability of the march represents the solidity of the rational ideology, while the noble aspect refers more to the alleged morality of that ideology within this narrative than to just the social class of the character. As discussed above, while the ideology undoubtedly stems from a religious viewpoint, the religion now associated with the character is Jewish. This is suggested by the use of the trombone as a solo instrument at bars 27-31 and the flute cadenza at bar 39, which displays Jewish connotations from the placement of chords either side of the neighbour-note based flourishes and the accidentals providing a minor key [3].

THE HUNT TOPIC

The first subject begins at bar 50 with the hunt topic. The tempo marking is $2/2$ which could also indicate a cavalry march, however, with the use of the horns as the melodic instrument, combined with the driving ostinato signifying the galloping horse it seems more likely to signify the hunt. The hunt topic illustrates three different aspects of the novella. It not only suggests certain aspects of Florio's character, and at the same time the moral of the story, but also situates the action within a natural environment and, as it is associated with myth and adventure gives an overview of some of the themes of the storyline. This topic is associated with the ideal of hunting, rather than the brutal reality; it is hence correlated with nobility, courage, joy and being one with nature. Fitzpatrick suggests that "the hunt stood for all that was desirable in worldly virtue, representing a new embodiment of the older *ritterlich-höfisch* [chivalrous-courtly] ... ideals which were at the centre of aristocratic thought" [4]. The valiant associations of this topic connote two levels of signification here. They describe the character's aristocratic bearing, but also his personality traits, which lead to the happy ending of this cautionary tale as it is through his moral and pious nature that he escapes the clutches of Venus and narrowly avoids losing his soul to the enchantress. The hunt topic also symbolises nature, immediately placing the listener outside. The horn evokes the woodland, and thus also mystery, romance and the unknown, so once again two levels of signification are represented: the first level is the superficial pastoral setting of the novel [5]. It begins in a park with a celebration of spring, and throughout the novel most of the important moments of the plot happen in gardens. The second level is the evocation of mystery and romance suggested by the topic, which as discussed above are the primary sub-plots of the novel.

As the plot develops throughout the first movement, the reoccurrences of the hunt topic also change. When it returns for the second time at bar 145 it is beginning to develop. Theme B returns but in a semi-canonic manner so that between bars 148 and 154, the fanfare figure (from bars 53-54) enters five times in different instruments. At this point in the narrative, Florio has met Bianca (represented throughout the narrative by theme C, shown in example 4, and outlined fully below), but not yet Venus (contrastingly represented by the Sturm topic) and as such his character is confused by the emotions that

he is suddenly faced with, hence the development of the theme. It is also the point at which he wanders into the garden to clear his head, and therefore the introduction of the mythical aspect of the story.

The third time the hunt topic returns, at bar 373, it lasts only six bars before giving way to the noble march juxtaposed with the learned topic signified by the imitation in the strings and brass throughout the section. This embodies the rational/moral/religious victory, represented by the hunt and noble march, over the pagan deity's seduction, symbolised by the preceding ombra topic.

THE CENTRAL CONFLICT BETWEEN RATIONAL AND MAGICAL LOVE

The syntagmatic placement of the topics and their development through the movement represents the conflict between Florio's real innamorata and her magical rival. Notably the "real" beloved, Bianca, is denoted by theme C (example 4), while the topical narrative develops around her dependent on the action of the plot. This suggests an element of intransigence in her character such that she is signified by a physical presence: a specific motive, hence identifying her as the actual love interest. The supernatural love, Venus, is represented instead by the Fantasia and Sturm und Drang topics, both of which are of a transitory nature and neither of which have a specific motive associated with them. Venus therefore has no physical presence within the music, confirming not only the supernatural nature of the character but also the hallucinatory element to her relationship with Florio. The struggle is seen from Florio's view-point, it is an internal battle which is awakened within the nobleman from his first realisation of his love for Bianca. The previously unburdened young man is suddenly confronted with the concept of responsible love and its consequences. This leads to his dream of her manifestation as a siren sinking his ship, the trauma of which leaves him susceptible to the charms of Venus. His conflict is illustrated by the placement of the topics within the musical narrative and the way in which they interact with each other, through juxtaposition and integration to create the literary narrative of *Das Marmorbild*.

As Florio enters the city Fortunato directs him to a park where a spring celebration is underway. It is here he first glimpses Bianca as she plays badminton, and she notices him. A brief flirtation ensues signified by the salon music in the transition at bar 79 (example 3). The section's compound duple time and minim upbeat suggest a dance while the elegant Straussian melody (still based on fourths) and countermelody in the strings give this section a galant air retrospectively reflecting the romance topic which appears as the second subject at bar 118. The dance element is given a dream-like, almost drunken quality as the main theme in the violins begins on the weaker third beat of the bar, rather than the strong beat as is usual. The horns contribute to this effect with falling chromatic interjections thereby setting the scene of the feast.

Soon after he first catches sight of Bianca Florio has declared his love for her by composing a poem and persuading her to kiss him. This love is expressed by a lyrical romance topic complete with octave doubling in the strings, expressive pauses at the top of the arch-shaped melody and ascending pizzicato figures in the bass. The romance topic accompanies the introduction of the second subject: Theme C.

This dream of inner conflict is shown at bar 174 as a development of theme A, the arioso melody which represents Florio himself, is accompanied by the salon music from bar

79. Both keep their original signifiers, but now, in a B minor key, the effect approaches the Fantasia style, the 3 against 2 rhythms, chromatic horn lines and full texture making it harmonically and rhythmically ambiguous. It is the fantasia element that suggests this is a dream, the minor key, chromaticism and the rhythmic divergences creating an unstructured atmosphere, while the solitude of the arioso point to the internalisation of emotion that Florio experiences at the thought of Bianca, signified by the salon music.

At bar 196 there is a reiteration of theme C, but the topic is now the sensibility style, a musical aesthetic expressing intimate sensitivity. Hertz and Brown suggest *Empfindsamkeit* served as an early defence of sense over reason and rationalism and it is certainly used in this way here [6]. As Florio's senses overtake him he stumbles outside to take a walk ending eventually at a garden where he finds the statue of Venus. His panic over his dream and the events preceding it he begins to let his emotions overbear his reason; the fact that it is theme C, the theme which the romance topic initially accompanies, that is accompanied by the sensibility topic provides the evidence of what Florio is affected by, i.e. his love for Bianca.

The remainder of the development (bars 212-272) is concerned with the battle between rationalism and sensibility (between Bianca and Venus). At bar 212 theme B is accompanied by both the military and the *Sturm und Drang* topics: constant changes in rhythm, dynamics and texture signifying the latter topic, while the dotted rhythms and fanfare figures throughout signify the former. The *Sturm* topic has connotations of an earlier time, the term originally coined to refer to retrospective links with romanticism seen in the music of Haydn, and is therefore seen as a classical topic. The 'past' associations of this topic, in addition to the turbulence and instability also caused by its utterance clearly represent the mythological magic inherent to the mysterious lady to whom Florio becomes obsessed. The representation of Venus by the *Sturm* topic is ultimately confirmed by the way in which she is revealed to be the marble statue:

Meanwhile the thunderstorm seemed to be coming ever nearer; the wind, between whose gusts a solitary strain of the song would fly up and rend the heart all the while, swept whistling through all of the house, threatening to extinguish the wildly flickering candles. The next moment, a lengthy flash of lightning illuminated the duskening chamber. Then Florio suddenly started back a few steps, for it seemed to him that the lady was standing before him, rigid, eyes shut, with extremely white countenance and arms [7].

The military topic in contrast is epitomised by its stability, characterised by its steady rhythm and even phrases, and used in this context to symbolise the real and rational beloved. The conflict between the magical and real are therefore symbolised by the juxtaposition of the *Sturm* and the military topics as Florio is thrown between his beloved and her rival.

Just as Venus begins her seduction a pious song is heard through the open window, an old song familiar to Florio, but the song troubles Venus, unsurprisingly, as it is the catalyst which frees Florio from her grip. In the musical narrative this is illustrated by the appearance of a chorale at bars 259 to 261, punctuated by fanfares (example 5). This learned sub-topic is heralded by a complete change in sonority as the *Sturm* topic is banished by the topics which form the rational topical class (the chorale topic, learned style and the alla breve topic at bars 313-316). Here the chorale is an example of double-coding, a way in which we can perceive two different, and often opposed meanings of the

same sign. In this instance the chorale is associated not only with the Lutheran congregational hymn, but also with the rationalist “science” of music which is embodied within the learned topic. The chorale is the epitome of the rule-based logic which has driven composers for centuries, and therefore an essential part of the rational topic, while at the same time symbolises the very concepts that rationalists opposed: religion and faith in an un-provable power [8]. At the same time the Lutheran hymn is a religious song, so it symbolises that element of the narrative, even though it doesn't exhibit the Jewishness that is elsewhere required of it. Thus it expresses the Jewishness that is needed elsewhere, while not actually being a Jewish topic at all. It's coded, on the one hand, as the religious song the narrative requires, while simultaneously ‘being’ the learned topic.

The ancient song, which takes Florio back to his childhood, is replaced at bar 367 by a pastoral section with nationalist overtones, signified by the chromatic repeated notes in the violins, the solo violin and cor anglais. The national topic is often used to signify a longing or reminiscence of home, folk songs often expressing a wish to return to the green hills/land/fields of home. Here it coincides both with the familiar song and with Florio's realisation that he has indeed seen Venus before in pictures from his childhood: “Then the feeling suddenly flew through him, as if borne on the strains of the song outside, that at home, in the days of early childhood, he had oftentimes seen such a picture” [9].

The last section of the development, from bars 298, begins with what Florio calls “a religious vision”, while La Grange comments that it is “a moment of pure ecstasy” [10]. This moment is signified by the military chorale from bars 256, which returns as a series of fanfares from bar 299. The learned style is associated with an ecclesiastical locale, which gives this section the religious atmosphere and is also signified by the cadences affected from bars 304-307, the first an interrupted cadence before the perfect cadence at bar 307, and the alla-breve topic which emerges at bars 313-316. The power of Fortunato's song swells “with ever increasing power” causing the seductress to turn back to the statue and is symbolised by the religious fervour that proliferates this section. This spiritual understanding, as Florio sees her for what she is, leads to the lyricism of the major key romance topic, which includes the “light” figure and develops themes B and C together. His final rejection of the rival explains the disappearance, from bar 317 of theme A, the internal obstacle to the fulfilment of his love for Bianca which manifested within his dream. The light figure represents, as it does in *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* and *Kindertorenlieder*, the acknowledgement of God, and the hope that that this acceptance gives to those that may be on the wrong path.

This moment of rationality does not last, however. Themes B and C, joined by the funeral march and romance topics, bring to the fore once again Romanticism, the integration of which creates a slow, ombra topic, confirmed by the tremelo strings, woodwind and string drones, and solo trombone and tenor horn melodies. With Florio's understanding of the situation comes a “deadly horror” for as Venus begins to turn back into a statue other supernatural occurrences begin:

Tall flowers in planters had begun to hideously wind and intertwine like colourfully-spotted rearing snakes; every cavalier on the arras suddenly looked like him and gave him a malicious smile; both of the arms that held the candles strained and stretched themselves longer and longer, as if a giant were struggling to work his way out of the wall; the hall filled up more and more, the flames of lightning threw horrible lights among the forms, through which throng Florio saw the stone statues thrusting for him with such violence that his hair stood on end.

Florio then attempts to find the cavalier Donati, but finds only a “lowly hut, completely overgrown with vine leaves.” The funeral march and ombra topic symbolise Florio’s experiences and his comprehension of the supernatural nature of his adventure.

The recapitulation sees a return of the hunt topic, integrated with the noble march and the learned style to indicate rationalism’s victory and leads to a recapitulation of the salon music and the romance topic in their original forms, which is to say they are not integrated with any other topic and are again accompanying theme C. This is significant as when they appeared in the exposition they represented Florio’s relationship with Bianca, and in this position they represent the resurgence of this relationship as she joins him, her uncle and Fortunato on their travels.

The musical structure itself is also innovative within this first movement. The topics relationship with the conventional sonata form is different from the way in which they worked in earlier symphonies (for example the Fourth). In Mahler’s Fourth Symphony the motivic development is the central variant throughout the first movement. Each motive has its own topical correlation and as each returns, even with the development inherent to the sonata form, the topic returns with it. In this way the topical language is often layered depending on how many themes are being used at a time. In the Seventh Symphony, however, the relationship between theme and topic is reversed. Adorno describes the motivic process succinctly as an “always different yet identical figure”, indicating that the motives (although differing enough to be able to identify three recognisable “themes”) are all built on the interval of a fourth and all consist of a quaver-dotted quaver-semiquaver rhythm (although often temporally augmented or diminished) [11]. Without this clear motivic definition to signpost the structural sections (exposition, development etc.) the topics provide structural signification instead. This can be seen through the use of the hunt and the romance topic as subjects one and two. Theme B had already appeared in the introduction, but the hunt topic was not used until the exposition. It subsequently returned at the start of the development and the recapitulation effectively marking these structural points.

The topical narrative of this movement can therefore be seen to act in different ways. One topic, the hunt, can be seen to have three different levels of signification: representing the ethical personality of the main character, the plot of the story and to situate the story within the natural surroundings of parks and gardens. Other topics are used to represent only one aspect of the plot or character. For instance the salon music represents Florio’s first meeting with Bianca, the Sturm topic represents Venus and the rational topic symbolises one side of the conflict between magical and real love. These topics are then developed into a narrative through their interaction with each other, through integration, juxtaposition or their placement in respect of other topics.

In an ostensibly abstract symphonic first movement where one would not expect to find a narrative--where the composer, indeed, specifically claimed that there was no narrative--a topical approach enables the construction of a narrative analogous to that which appears in Eichendorff’s novella, emphasizing the ways in which music, specifically topics, index other cultural media. The historical specificity of such indexing is suggested by the presence of topics which appear to be particularly linked to fin-de-siècle Vienna, such as the Jewish and the Rational topics, which mirror contemporary social issues and interests: here, particularly potent appears to have been the political issues of anti-Semitism and the “failure of liberalism” that Schorske suggests was caused by the movement away from the rational life towards the ‘instinctual’ emotional existence. The

topical references and the narrativisation which is communicated through them suggests that, even if Mahler was right to claim that “the language of music has communicated immeasurably more than the word is able to express”, this ‘more’ is key: that music's referential frame is always already in excess of a linguistic one, it does not mean that it was not simultaneously capable of expressing, topically, narrativisations of and commentaries upon the world in which Mahler, for one, lived.



Example 1: Theme A



Example 1a: dotted funeral march rhythm.



Example 2: noble march theme, bars 19-23

Example 3: Salon music



Example 4: Theme C, bars 118-126

Example 5: The chorale and fanfare topics, bars 258-263

Example 6: The 'light' figure, bar 317

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Signification by Dying Away: Mahler's Allegorical Treatment of the Funeral March Topic in *Der Abschied*

Lucy Liu, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, USA

ABSTRACT

This paper offers a new reading of the funeral march topic found in the last movement of Mahler's Das Lied von der Erde ("Der Abschied"), drawing on Monelle's study of Mahler's use of musical topics. Traditional analyses naively view the funeral march as simply signifying the death of the protagonist, which then stands as the negative counterpart to his blissful transfiguration and union with the earth at the end of the piece. However, I argue that the negativity of the funeral march fundamentally stems from a linguistic anxiety and, as allegory, highlights the transience of all signification. Moreover, the piece's allegorical mode actually deconstructs the text's supposed binary opposition of eternal nature and human transience.

Monelle hears two conflicting impulses in Mahler's use of topics: both an "abdication of subjectivity" (nature expresses itself) and "rawness" (i.e., places of exaggerated construction, such as when Mahler overstresses topical features). Both tactics undercut authoriality, for either unshaped materials stand unassimilated (Monelle: "montage") or Mahler seems to work them too much. In the latter case, by forcing a clichéd topic to speak when it can no longer speak, the topic becomes self-referential, hence alienated from itself. I demonstrate that it is precisely through montage and alienation that the timeworn funeral march topic in "Der Abschied" acquires a second-order, allegorical expression. As described by Benjamin and Adorno, in allegory, reified musical objects are "lit up" momentarily and find expression again as the expression of convention: the conventions themselves become "opaque," their materiality made palpable.

Throughout, I discuss how allegory can be an extension of Monelle's theory of topics, namely, allegory—a large part of which hinges on self-referentiality—becomes crucial for a topic's expressive ability as that topic nears the end of its lifecycle.

THE DYING OF A TOPIC AND ALLEGORY

In both *The Musical Topic* and *The Sense of Music*, Raymond Monelle is concerned with the emergence—the birth—of musical topics, addressing such questions as what socio-cultural conditions need to be met for a topic to be born and what in fact constitutes a full-fledged topic, for, in Monelle's own words, "not all signifying items are topics" [1]. Monelle specifies two criteria for a signifying musical object to qualify as a new topic. First, a musical sign should already have passed from literal imitation (iconism; resemblance) or stylistic reference (indexicality; signification by contiguity or causality) into signification by association. That is, the immediate object of a musical figure itself has acquired a

broader range of meanings; Monelle terms this “indexicality of the object” or “indexicality of the content.” For instance, the *pianto* figure—a falling minor second—initially accompanied textual mentions of tears and weeping, but over time it also came to signify grief, pain, and regret, for these associations are contiguous with the original, more literal, meaning. Second, there ought to be a level of conventionality in the sign. In the initial stages of a topic’s formation, a musical figure is complex and particular; it is its own direct content (*ratio difficilis*). Through continuous exposure and habit, complex signs become “stylized” so that a body of learned rules and codes begin to govern how these signs are interpreted. Yet Monelle is also at pains to stress that even as musical topics form a code, they do not refer to the empirical world but derive their meaning from within the system of musical, literary, and cultural history. Thus the “musical horse,” for instance, conveys more cultural information than the semantic horse of everyday life, for the “noble horse” topic correlates to a cluster of imaginative attributes, such as maleness, adventure, and high status [2].

But what of the fate of a musical topic as it approaches the end of its “life cycle,” as it were? More specifically: After centuries of usage and possible expansion and adaptation, what happens to a topic as its signifying and expressive potentials are exhausted? A variety of outcomes are possible. A topic may fall into disuse or may be completely transformed in the hands of an idiosyncratic composer and emerge once again as new. Yet there is a third possibility which is the focus of my paper today – the allegorical “jolting” of a topic (allegory as defined by Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno), implicitly developed by Monelle in his analysis of Mahler’s use of topics. In this sense I am using Mahler as a case study to illustrate one category of possibility as a topic is decaying and reaching its limit.

According to Monelle, Mahler inherits one of the paradoxes of Romanticism, at once asserting “arbitrary subjective self-expression” and “renewing the impersonal, semi-anonymous conventions of the Volkslied” [3]. On the one hand, Monelle hears an “abdication of subjectivity”: the composer’s subjective will recede and musical nature (that is, musical materials) manifests or expresses itself, unassimilated. Thus Mahler “seemed to write in many styles” [4]. In Adorno’s words, “in [Mahler’s music], as in a theater, something objective is enacted, the identifiable face of which has been obliterated” [5]. On the other hand, Monelle detects certain “rawness” in Mahler’s topical references, for instance, a slight exaggeration or overstressing of topical features, or “a failure of technique” in the treatment of texture [6]. These are signs of a hyper-subjectivity which due to its self-consciousness actually alienates the listener. Again, to quote Adorno, “[Mahler’s] symphonies do not exist in a simple positive sense... whole complexes want to be taken negatively... Negativity for him has become a purely compositional category... through a hyperbolic expression in excess of the music’s actual meaning” [7].

In fact, the two seemingly opposed tendencies in Mahler’s music identified by Monelle can both be subsumed under Adorno’s and Benjamin’s concept of allegory. As defined by the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, allegory “is not the *conventional* representation of some expression... but an *expression* of convention. Allegorical expression includes as its object this very conventionality of the historical.” Another way of understanding allegory is through its opposite, the Romantic symbol: the latter stands for an immediately intuitable unity between the sensuous (concrete, particular) and the extra-sensuous (abstract, general), that is, the illusion of aesthetic essence. By contrast, allegory comes to pass when the symbol has become a stereotype and can no longer provide access to immediate, living meaning. Allegory, then, is the *foregrounding* of

convention, where reified, alienated objects—that which lie in ruins (“second nature”)—are “lit up” momentarily and find expression again precisely through this alienation. Hence, there is a moment of self-consciousness in allegory. In Michael Spitzer’s words, allegory designates the “becoming opaque” of conventions: that is, one gazes *at* the conventions themselves, and not merely *through* them [8].

In what follows, I take the last movement of *Das Lied von der Erde*, “Der Abschied,” as a case study.¹ First, I shall give a formal overview of the movement and analyze a few isolated passages that exemplify the two modes of allegory as identified by Monelle. Then, I offer an “against the grain” reading of the song’s two nodal, antithetical points – the central, “negative” march section and the “positive,” transcendent coda, arguing that Mahler’s allegorical mode of composing problematizes the text’s supposedly straightforward “death and transfiguration” narrative.

SUBJECTIVE ALLEGORY AND OBJECTIVE ALLEGORY

Broadly speaking, “Der Abschied” is in modified strophic form, comprised of an orchestral introduction, four rotations, and a lengthy coda. Each rotation begins with an accompanied recitative followed by two or more arias, into which a number of instrumental interludes are weaved. Collectively, the recitatives, arias, and orchestral passages function as “episodes.” Mahler’s treatment of the form is flexible, for the number of episodes and the length of each vary from rotation to rotation; that is, upon repetition, corresponding episodes can bear much resemblance to each other or be drastically altered. This is especially the case with the third and fourth rotations, the former being a purely instrumental march (the English horn takes the place of the alto voice in the recitative, and the first-person arias become a “klagende Lied” for orchestra) and the latter substantially reworked so as to be sung entirely in a manner that hovers between accompanied recitative and arioso, abolishing the earlier recitative-aria distinction.

The two contradictory impulses Monelle discerns in Mahler—a “subjectlessness” on the one hand and the deliberate overworking of materials on the other—constitute two different modes of allegory. In the first, expression emerges when convention reaches a limit, a saturation point. That is, the absence of a subject forces a conventionalized landscape to manifest itself *as convention*. I call this “objective allegory.” In the second case, where stock figures and overplayed expressions are exaggerated and hence made to sound “unnatural,” the figures do not so much correlate to cultural units (the typical way musical items signify, according to Monelle) as they become self-referential and point to their own inauthenticity. I call this “subjective allegory.”

Subjective allegory itself can be broken down into two varieties, most noticeably perceived in (1) Mahler’s idiosyncratic manner of melodic writing, especially in the purely orchestral passages, and (2) the intentional use of musical formulae from kitsch to set an equally sentimental line of text. The common idea that underlies both instances is extreme self-referentiality, where the “over-clarity” of these conventional figures and overwrought melodies points to their own taking place, as if they are saying “I” (the positing of oneself in speech).

Examples of orchestral passages where melodies seem over-determined—“command[ed]... against their wish,” as it were [9]—can be found at Fig. 11 (a “neurotic”

¹ Readers are encouraged to have a score at hand for the rest of the essay.

response from the orchestra to the protagonist's description of nature), Fig. 17 (an orchestral postlude marked *zart, leidenschaftlich*), and Fig. 24 (a gratuitous interlude inserted between the second recitative and its ensuing aria, marked *aber mit innigster Empfindung*). Specific techniques include: large leaps (6ths, 7ths, octaves, and 9ths) and, relatedly, the technique of "reaching over" where a line descends by step then suddenly is pulled back up again to its initial register, only to descend once more; strategically placed accents (usually three or more in a row); fragmentation and the repetition of fragments in an ever more urgent and compulsive manner. All these factors contribute to make the melodies sound contrived and hyperbolic; they acquire a yearning, "insatiable" quality because Mahler whips them on relentlessly. In extreme cases, overexertion and a desperate desire to "speak" lead to a forced tone and a melody's voice may "crack" (see, for instance, 1 bar before Fig. 26, where a high A simply cannot sustain itself or reach any higher, thus dwindles away, *pianissimo leggiero*). Adorno argues that, for Mahler, allegorical expression lies precisely in these imperfect, "broken" moments, because the state that musical language finds itself in is exhausted, unable to support untroubled expression.

Notable examples of kitsch in "Der Abschied" include the stylized "nature music" episodes (Figures 7-10, 13, 23) and an extended recitative in the fourth rotation that is not found in previous rotations, setting the text "Wohin ich geh'n? Ich geh', ich wand're in die Berge. Ich suche Ruhe, Ruhe für mein einsam Herz!" (Figure 53-54). It is this latter passage I wish to examine, for it openly displays its inability for genuine expression. To begin with, the text "Ich suche Ruhe, Ruhe für mein einsam Herz!" in the early-Romantic tradition (one thinks of Schubert) would have been authentic—in the sense of ringing true with the attitudes of a particular era—but by 1906 the idea of Weltschmerz was just a cliché in literature and music. Mahler's setting only adds to the unoriginal quality of the poem: note, for instance, the obligatory upward glissando in the voice at 6 measures after Fig. 53, the use of modal mixture (E and E^b, scale-degrees 3 and ^b3), and the utterly conventional cadence at Fig. 54 – a turn figure about E^b which then rises to a G, only to fall by a 6th to the leading tone, itself a substitute for scale-degree 2, before resolving onto the tonic. Immediately after the cadence (Fig. 54/m. 1), the strings section and the high winds swell up in response to the protagonist's intimation of death by restating the voice's melody twice, the first time a sixth higher, the second time by an octave, as if sympathizing with her. As a matter of fact, this may very well be the most explicitly "false" passage to be found in "Der Abschied," in the sense of Mahler knowingly cueing saccharine music—familiar to everyone from kitsch—to accompany the emotional core of a drama. Markers of banal sentimentality include the wide glissandos in the first and second violins (G to G, and C to a high E^b), the harmonization of the main melody exclusively by parallel thirds or sixths – which coupled with the high-strings timbre produces an ingratiating sweetness, and the manneristic treatment of dynamics – a gradual crescendo is followed by a sudden decrescendo to *pianissimo*, only to swell up once more. While Adorno may insist that,

Not despite the kitsch to which it is drawn is Mahler's music great, but because its construction unties the tongue of kitsch, unfetters the longing that is merely exploited by the commerce that the kitsch serves [...] [10].

I read this entire recitative and orchestral postlude as negative expression, that is, allegory, the allegorical moment deriving from the fact that the text's and the music's distancing artificiality (due to their having been overplayed and degraded countless times

by popular showpieces)—one could even say “deadness” or “staged-ness”—at once longs for expression yet simultaneously acknowledges the impossibility of authentic expression within an aged, exhausted idiom. Instead of attempting to wring expression out of these maudlin passages, Mahler draws attention to their material existence as such.

Contrastingly, a number of episodes in “Der Abschied” end by disintegrating, thereby laying bare their material and letting the listener “gaze” at them *as material*. The universal agent of disintegration in this movement is a chromatically descending scale, introduced early on in m. 14 (played by the oboe, starting at the *sforzando diminuendo* marking). Frequently, motivic fragmentation and prolonged pauses accompany this fast, chromatically sliding scale in passages of decay, lending them an air of uncertainty. Thus one hears a different type of allegory, objective allegory as opposed to subjective allegory; that is, now music “gapes open.” In place of construction and artistic semblance one hears a loosening of art’s spell.

An example will substantiate my position. It occurs near the close of the recitative of the purely instrumental third rotation, at 2 bars before Fig. 40. The recitative begins at Fig. 38 and, similar to previous rotations, is comprised of three textural layers – a low pedal, the Baroque gruppetto turn figure, and the rhythmically precise, sighing march theme, the latter two being thoroughly conventional. Yet at Fig. 39 an additional motivic element is introduced: the notes E^b-B-C, which are reminiscent of the opening melody of Orpheus’s lament, “Tu se’ morta,” from Monteverdi’s opera *L’Orfeo*. From Fig. 39 onward, the four distinct layers coalesce into a sentential structure, with the proportions “2+2+4,” but the continuation phrase does not complete itself (see the half rest followed by a fermata over a quarter rest at 2 bars before Fig. 40). Textural dissociation then begins to take hold, and two more pauses—both palpably longer than the first—only make the passage sound even more hesitant, as if the music is somehow constricted and gasping for air. Salient details to note from these six measures include the ubiquitous presence of chromatically descending scalar fragments, their seemingly haphazard—hence dissonant—juxtaposition with both the sighing march theme and the “Tu se’ morta” melody, and the doubling of lines by a tritone (see the first two bars of Fig. 40). Motivic and textural dissociation become the most pronounced at 3 bars before Fig. 41, for neither the “Tu se’ morta” melody nor the sighing march theme is heard in their entirety. Against these two fragments, the cellos play a chromatically rising line. In essence, three independent and dissonant lines coexist but are unrelated to each other. The rising cello melody reaches no conclusion; it ends like a question mark, uncertain about what the next formal section will bring.

I argue that this less structured, disintegrating section ending exemplifies a different type of allegory than the overtly constructed passages that seem to possess agency, to explicitly desire speech and vocality (but failing); instead, one hears what Adorno terms *Rauschen* – a murmuring, rustling nature. *Rauschen* becomes audible when the momentary semblance of something distinct wanes, and material is left as material, left forlorn. In the relinquishing of subjectivity, worn-out materials which have become musical “nature” are exposed as mere “second nature,” that is, as something historical, thus contingent and transient. Furthermore, these “dead” figures and motives can only appear by dying away, for that is the very condition of their expression, to always be in transition. In his explication of Adorno’s notion of allegory, Ulrich Plass notes that Adorno often substitutes the word *Abgebrochensein* for allegory, referring to “the broken-off quality of artworks, their damaged, truncated character” [11]. In the above two examples, damage and

brokenness are manifested in multiple parameters. Motives and lines either disintegrate (usually following a fast, descending chromatic run) or simply break off mid-stream. Harmony is either rendered ambiguous by the addition of non-resolving consonant suspensions or is extremely dissonant, the latter often accompanied by textural dissociation (that is, the loosening of counterpoint) as well. Finally, with the gradual exiting of instruments as a formal section comes to an end, and as the dynamic level decreases, each remaining instrument's timbre becomes distinct, which, in the context of an already dissonant counterpoint, causes the overall sound to lose its "roundness."

On the other side of the coin, *Rauschen* can also stand for mere "noise" – a disruption to, or loss of, meaningful language. In passages such as the two examples above, the not-quite-integrated lines, harmonies, and motivic fragments cause a breakdown of unitary signification (or at least the *appearance* of unequivocal signification), so much so that these bits of dead, "abandoned" material are at least somewhat purified of conventional meaning and "enriched with enigmatic confusion" [12]. In place of the quasi-rational "language character" of music, one hears musical language's asemantic, purely sonic, tendency, freed from the dictates of artistic expression – sensuous sound as a remainder of meaningful language. Simultaneously, one becomes aware of one's own attitude: that, all along, one has been trying to hear something significant in the murmuring, meaningless noise of *Rauschen*, "as if 'Rauschen' were meaningful language." Plass writes, "Allegory here means specifically: the *noticeable* semblance-character of meaning (rather than the *unnoticed* semblance-character of meaning in the symbolic mode of signification)" [13]. Mahler's relinquishing of construction renders visible the illusory claim to meaning, to significance that underlies all artistic activity, thereby achieving (at least in certain moments) a self-reflexivity that pushes "Der Abschied" outside of the symbolic realm: in place of aesthetic *absorption* one can understand these truncated, fractured passages as a *commentary* on the typical attitude one assumes when contemplating artworks.

THE GRAND MARCH

The two types of allegory I have discussed so far—one linked to a lyric, and often impassioned or even exaggerated, subjectivity; the other perceived in the rustling, decaying objectivity surrounding Mahler's "fallen," "abandoned" materials—come to a head in the central march section (the third rotation) of the song. It is my contention that the march induces uneasy reflection in the listener not simply because of its supposed "semantic content," the "what," but because of the two opposing categories of allegory it exhibits: the march is the most structured rotation of the entire piece (that is, the least free; the most determined and purposeful), yet it also betrays a certain heterogeneity and non-integration, where disparate materials collide and are swept along, as if traveling downstream in a river (to invoke Adorno's favorite metaphor, which he applies to both Eichendorff and Mahler). The naive programmatic reading of this march tells one that, beginning with a ritualistic stroke on the tam-tam at Fig. 38, a funeral march passes by, within which the wailing, lamenting voices of the masses are heard. Since the poetic text seems to take death and finding rest and transfiguration in death as its subject matter, it is apt that the song should include a central funeral march, which, in the blissful and lushly orchestrated coda, is then exorcised or transcended.

But if one would take a step back from this program, one immediately sees that the march is cobbled together from scraps of conventional, and mostly vocal, melodies and figures, including the sighing, scalar march theme in strict 8th-notes and rhythmically augmented versions of the same scalar idea functioning as upper-voice melodies, the “Tu se’ morta” motive (treated as a cantus firmus, appearing in all registers and assuming various mensural proportions), and a weakly functional bassline which mostly revolves around pre-dominant harmonies in the key of C minor. On a larger scale, there is also a blurring of genre, for the vocal origins of Mahler’s materials combined with his contrapuntal treatment of them undermine the march as such (the paradigmatic march being homophonic, and driven by strong harmonic progressions, not melodic writing). Thus what is nominally a march is also a “klagende Lied” for orchestra, carrying along but barely containing all of its reified musical expressions (or, alienated cipher-like objects); the latter mix and collide yet remain undissolved. Bits and pieces of music history sweep by, but they resist Mahler’s shaping hand.

On the other hand, the march is in many ways the most “strictly composed” part of the entire movement, as demonstrated in its clear phrasing and phrase types, its ability to achieve a perfect cadence in the home key of C minor (the *first* unambiguous cadence in any key), and the gradual emergence of mannered (that is, contorted and “unnatural”) melodic writing in especially the second half of the orchestral aria (Figures 44-47). The aria is comprised of two lengthy phrases – Figures 41-44, and 44-47. The first phrase initially states a compound-period-like structure made up of two mini-sentences (Fig. 41 to 1 bar before Fig. 43), then repeats the same structure with different melodic content, beginning at the up-beat to Fig. 43 and cadencing at Fig. 44. A quick counting of measures reveals the obvious fact that Mahler’s phrases do not follow balanced, Classical proportions, nor do they employ strong, functional basslines (again, the emphasis is on pre-dominant harmonies and evaded cadences); yet, the prototypes linger in the background and nevertheless offer the listener something familiar to rely on, if only as a distant reference point.

The perfect authentic cadence at Fig. 44 is crucial for my reading of the march. To begin, it is the *first* unambiguous cadence in the entire movement: the harmonic progression $i - {}^bII^6 - V^{6/4-5/3} - i$ supports a thoroughly conventional melodic descent to scale-degree 1. However, this cadence ought not to be taken at face value, as simply indicating the one extreme pole of music—namely its language-like, rational aspect—for its clichéd-ness is so blatant, so patent, that it appears to deliberately foreground the *concept* (that is, the philosophical category) of “construction” (or, meaning, “sense”) as such for the listener’s consideration. I shall return to this argument shortly but, first, the second phrase needs to be analyzed.

The second phrase (Figures 44-47) is indeed the most lyrical section of the march, but its lyricism is troubled: here Mahler’s idiosyncratic melodic writing draws attention to itself, more so than any of the other sections of the movement. Specifically, the melodies sound overwrought and over-determined, partly due to Mahler’s obsessive quoting and transposition to various keys (for instance, D minor) of the “Tu se’ morta” motive, and partly due to his “forcing the melodies against their wish” – for example, awkward (and sometimes dissonant) leaps of a diminished-4th, tritone, or 6th abound. Especially in the 11 measures leading up to the cadence at Fig. 46/m. 5, the upper-voice melodies sound less and less natural, stemming from Mahler’s pushing the technique of “substitution” to its extreme. That is, instead of having a scalar, melodically fluent line, he substitutes a

“foreign” note so as to make the melody disjunct. The “Tu se’ morta” motive already hints at substitution, for instead of scale-degrees 3-2-1, it sounds 3-♯7-1. Mahler goes one step further and incorporates larger leaps, frequently, 6^{ths} (see Fig. 46/mm. 3-4, D-C-E^b-A^b, C-B ♯-D-F). Through these tortured melodies, one hears an excess of compositional control and subjective will, which, paradoxically, lends a speaking quality to these passages, as if they desire significant speech, although forever denied it.

Overall, then, the march hovers halfway between the complete abandoning of subjectivity to reified materials (which Adorno also detects in Eichendorff) and the absolute, “forced” shaping of them. To amplify: the march as allegory is able to temporarily push back the sediment social meanings inherent within Mahler’s banal materials, thus achieving the expression of convention as (1) a disintegrating, objective *Rauschen* (pure sound) and, (2) paradoxically, a co-product stemming from extreme—hence self-conscious—rational construction. Thus, the wailing and lamenting orchestral march is not simply, or crudely, “about” death, but *musically* and as pure music puts into sharp focus a self-referential and inescapable anxiety surrounding the contingency of musical language as such.

THE CODA, PROBLEMATIZED

If the march, as the centerpiece of “Der Abschied,” constitutes the negative pole of the song, then one possible reading of the extensive coda sees the latter as balancing and ultimately redeeming that negativity; here, the protagonist is released from the inexorable march toward death and achieves an ecstatic, Tristan-esque merging with nature. While such a reading is certainly plausible—even encouraged by several musical indications within the coda—it is also too one-dimensional, for the coda does not and cannot stand outside of the time frame of the movement *absolutely*, and therefore still needs to be understood in context of the allegorical mood of the whole.

Indeed, there are a few persuasive reasons in support of the “transcendent” reading. Harmonically, both the ubiquitous presence of added-6^{ths} to triads and the weakened status of dominant harmony lend the coda a “floating,” static atmosphere, as if forward moving time is dissolved (see, for instance, Mahler’s reinvention of the standard German-augmented-6th to V⁷ progression at Fig. 61. Typically the strongest of discharges, here it is rendered almost non-functional by the addition of modally mixed tones and chromatic neighbor notes). In terms of orchestration, the “heavenly,” shimmering timbre of two harps, celesta, and finally mandolin is said to signify the protagonist’s blissful dissolution of self and transfiguration. Melodically, there is an emphasis on upwardly moving lines, forming an opposite contour compared to the earlier “reaching over” passages where lines would leap up but then descend stepwise. Lastly, Mahler’s style of text-setting for the coda contrasts with what came before. Instead of syllabic, clear text declamation, each word’s syllables are so drawn-out that semantic meaning becomes less important than each vowel’s phonic quality, ultimately leading to a dissolution of sense in sound (note especially the *ü* and *e* sounds of “allüberall” and “ewig”).

Yet, because allegorical expression spreads itself across the entire song, I argue that the ending ought not to be taken in a purely positive, unproblematic way. In addition to the two modalities of allegory I identified and analyzed above, the entire piece as a whole actually *deconstructs* the text’s supposed “meaning” and binary oppositions. On the surface,

the text holds an opposition between nature (eternity) and history (human transience); in a very literal—even mundane—sense; it also is “about” transitioning from life to death. However, Mahler’s allegorical mode performs a pun on the text: in “Der Abschied,” nature is not just commonplace, imitative “nature music” (such as birds and brooks) but also what has become “natural” through music history; that is, lifeless, conventional materials *seem like* nature but should more properly be termed “second nature.” Mahler is playing entirely within the realm of (music) history when he conjures up “dead,” second nature. From within the strictly “human” realm he exposes “second nature”—hackneyed and alienated musical objects—as artificial, as history. Thus “pure nature” is revealed as impossibility. Moreover, because allegory repeats momentarily, and ghost-like, a life that is no longer alive, it is a signifier of transience and transition, a process of transition that is forever taking place. Thus, although the coda seems to suggest an eternal union with the earth and the stilling of longing—a static and ecstatic mode of being—the entire piece as allegory prevents such a positive reading.

In conclusion, in this essay, I have theorized about one possible consequence of decaying topics which are reaching the limits of their lifespan, namely, that they become self-referential. To invoke an oft-cited Benjaminian metaphor—by incinerating itself, a timeworn topic again achieves expression, but one without “natural” immediacy, for the reverse side of self-referentiality is an awareness of the historicity of all cultural objects.

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Topic, Paratext and Intertext in the *Prelude à l'Après-midi d'un Faune* and other Works of Debussy

Paulo F. de Castro, PhD, CESEM, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, PT

ABSTRACT

According to Raymond Monelle, Debussy was a prolific inventor of topical signifiers, and one of these was an imitation of the ancient syrinx, which can be heard in the opening bars of the *Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un Faune*, among other works. This essay offers an outline of the pre- and subsequent history, the cultural grounds, and the main uses of this topic, which can be defined more generally as an invocation topic, taking into account its ritualistic function within Debussy's musical poetics. Special emphasis is placed on the paratextual and intertextual relations forming the background to Debussy's uses of the topic in the *Prélude*, at the intersection of various domains, such as the pastoral, the exotic, the erotic and the elegiac, as a contribution towards an understanding of musical topics as dynamic semantic networks.

THE RELEVANCE OF PARATEXT

Debussy's *Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un faune* (1894) has become such a firm repertoire staple that we hardly notice the work's originality any more. For one thing, the *Prélude* begins like no other piece in the 19th-century orchestral canon, with a strictly unaccompanied, amorphous, ambiguous flute solo sounding like nothing so much as a free improvisation, as distant from the symphonic ethos as could possibly be imagined in an age of post-Wagnerian overstatement. There is no orchestral introduction, not even the merest pair of chords that might help establish the basic coordinates of the musical space, such as pulse, meter, tempo or key. For a few seconds, with the full orchestra sitting still on the concert platform, the effect can be slightly baffling; the piece is clearly meant to open up an imaginary space in the listener's mind, and as such it is probably better served by an acousmatic performance.

If we let ourselves be guided by Debussy's title (and only the most unsympathetic of listeners would not), we enter into a kind of hermeneutic pact with the composer, being invited to identify the solo flute as an attribute of a mythological, Dionysian creature: more precisely, the protagonist of Stéphane Mallarmé's eclogue, which Debussy originally meant to set as a "Prélude, Interlude et Paraphrase finale pour l'Après-midi d'un faune", but ended up 'paraphrasing' within a single movement.¹ Drawing on terminology introduced by Gérard Genette, we could say that the title (together with the composer's

¹ Cf. Lesure [1].

signature) functions as a *paratext* with regard to the musical text (and by extension, to its performance), a crucial threshold in the transaction involved in the act of listening – the paratext being understood as “the privileged locus of a pragmatics and of a strategy, an action on the public with the aim, successfully or unsuccessfully understood or attained, of a better reception of the text and of a more pertinent reading – more pertinent, needless to say, in the eyes of the author and its allies” [2]. Genette defines the paratext (with regard to the literary work) as the repertoire of verbal or non-verbal features such as the author’s name, titles, dedications, epigraphs, chapter headings, prefaces, notes, illustrations, etc., which support and accompany the text and contribute to its presentation, in the ordinary, but also in the strong sense of making the text ‘present’ to the reader and facilitating the latter’s reception of it. Typically, the paratext occupies a blurred zone between the ‘inside’ and the ‘outside’ of the text proper, as a threshold (*seuil*) between the *texte* and the *hors-texte*.

For his part, Roland Barthes [3] drew attention to the anchoring function (*ancrage*) of titles, providing a measure of stability to the ‘flowing chain’ of the signifieds implicit in the polysemic image – and there seems to be no a priori reason why the principle should not apply to music as well as pictures. The programme for the premiere of the *Prélude*, moreover, added a further paratextual layer, in the form of a note, probably written by the composer himself, describing the music as “a very free illustration” of Mallarmé’s poem, through a sequence of moving *décors*, against which the faun’s desires and reveries unfold; weary of the chase after elusive, half-imaginary female creatures, the faun lets himself succumb to the noontide heat, eventually fulfilling his dreams of “total possession” in sleep [4]. Interestingly, in the case of the *Prélude à l’Après-midi d’un faune*, the paratext itself provides a window onto the intertext, for Debussy’s score is itself a kind of commentary on a pre-existing, independent work of art. Notice the striking economy of means involved in the paratextual framing: a title is often all it takes to activate an entire semantic ecology. To further complexify matters, it is worth recalling that the poem itself was originally destined for the stage; in a letter of June 1865, Mallarmé stated, in his typically paradoxical manner: “je le fais absolument scénique, non possible au théâtre, mais exigeant le théâtre” [“I am making it entirely with the stage in mind, not possible for the theatre, but demanding the theatre”],² thus reminding us of the inextricable confluence of the literary, the visual and the aural dimensions of that cluster of meanings we came to know as Debussy’s *Prélude à l’Après-midi d’un faune*.³ As in a number of works similarly conceived in the spirit of Symbolism, it might be helpful to think of Debussy’s early masterpiece as a latent *Gesamtkunstwerk* (call it a multimedia work if you will), in which the non-sonorous media simply inhabit the plane of the virtual; which really amounts to saying that the work will always remain incomplete without the staging provided by the listener’s imagination.

I have proposed my own interpretation of the manner in which Debussy’s music interacts with Mallarmé’s poem in a previous essay [6], and I shall not deal with this matter in detail here.⁴ For our present purpose, a brief summary may suffice: (a) Debussy’s work, no less than Mallarmé’s, bears witness to the *fin-de-siècle* fascination with the

² Letter to Cazalis, cit. in Mallarmé [5].

³ A cluster made more complex by the choreographic realizations of the *Prélude*, starting with Nijinsky’s 1912 ballet, which, in a sense, could be seen as a belated vindication of Mallarmé’s conception of *L’Après-midi d’un faune* as a stage work.

⁴ For a thorough investigation of Debussy’s musical appropriation of Mallarmé’s eclogue, cf. Code [7].

dissolution of ‘solid’ materiality into a play of forces, where, furthermore, the phenomenal realm is no longer conceived of in terms of a succession governed by the chain of causality, but rather as a *merging*, or *flowing*, of one experience into another; (b) The concomitant non-developmental logic tends to favour the fragmentary *motif* as against the more stable *sujet*, or theme; (c) Both the poem and the music are indebted ‘hypertextually’ (as Genette would say [8]) to the mythological story of the nymph Syrinx, who, in an attempt to resist Pan’s advances, was changed into a reed that made a plaintive sound when blown through by the wind, thus inspiring the god to invent the panpipes; (d) In accord with its distant Ovidian origins, Debussy’s *Prélude* offers an allegory of endless metamorphosis, doubled by endless frustration (as experienced by the protagonist, a projection of the desiring subject as well as the artist), to be redeemed, if at all, on the plane of the imaginary. The work as a whole projects the image of music as a kind of fluid, akin to water and air, an element of the universal flux, where breath becomes the symbol of artistic inspiration. It is against this background that I wish to focus on the initial bars of the *Prélude*, those very bars which, in Pierre Boulez’s oft-quoted phrase, represent the awakening of modern music. There is some irony in the fact that this icon of modernism should have deep and readily recognizable roots in a repertoire destined to be rendered obsolete by modernism itself.

A DEBUSSYAN MUSICAL TOPIC

According to Raymond Monelle [9], to whom we owe some of the most perceptive writing on the theory and practice of musical topics, Debussy was a prolific inventor of topical signifiers, and one of these was an imitation of the ancient syrinx – itself a variant of the more familiar shepherd’s pipe, to be heard, among many other examples, in Berlioz’s *Symphonie fantastique* (1830), Wagner’s *Tannhäuser*, Act I, scene 3 (1845), *Tristan and Isolde*, Act III, scene 1 (1865), and Tchaikovsky’s *Eugene Onegin*, Act I, scene 2 (1879).⁵ In its peculiar Debussyan form, the topic can be more or less readily detected in “La flûte de Pan” (*Chansons de Bilitis*, 1897-98); the cor anglais solo in “Nuages” (*Nocturnes*, 1897-99); “Le faune” (*Fêtes galantes*, 2nd series, 1904); the opening solos in “De l’aube à midi sur la mer” (cor anglais doubled by muted trumpet) and “Jeux de vagues” (cor anglais alone) (*La mer*, 1903-05); “Les parfums de la nuit” (*Iberia*, from the *Images* for orchestra, 1905-08); “Voiles” (*Préludes*, 1st book, 1909-10); the *Rapsodie pour orchestre et saxophone* (1901-11); “Canope” (*Préludes*, 2nd book, 1911-12); the transition before the 1st Dance in *Khamma*, scene 2 (1911-12); *Syrinx* for solo flute (1913; formerly known as *La flûte de Pan*); and several numbers from the *Six épigraphes antiques* (1914-15; based on the discarded incidental music for *Chansons de Bilitis*, 1900-01).⁶ Its characteristic musical gesture,⁷ as illustrated in exemplary fashion by the opening bars of the *Prélude* (a transposition of the faun’s “sonore, vaine et monotone ligne”), is thus described by Monelle: “Debussy imagined that the lips were applied to the pipe of highest pitch, then slid across the instrument, producing a rapid downward scale or arpeggio (or perhaps the

⁵ The ‘rustic’ panpipe had of course been used by Mozart in *Die Zauberflöte* (1791) as Papageno’s instrumental attribute.

⁶ More conventional pastoral variants of the topic include the pipe figures in “The Little Shepherd” (*Children’s Corner*, 1906-08), “Bruyères” (*Préludes*, 2nd book, 1911-12), *Gigues* (*Images*, 1912) and *La boîte à joujoux*, scene 3 (1913). For a discussion of *Syrinx* that takes into account the notion of paratext, see Cobussen [10].

⁷ My use of the concept of musical gesture is informed by Robert S. Hatten’s definition of the same as a “significant energetic shaping [of sound] through time” [11].

reverse)” [12].⁸ Incidentally, by mentioning “[les] deux tuyaux” (line 18) and “le jonc vaste et jumeau” (line 43), that is, the ‘twin pipes’ of the faun’s ‘flute’, Mallarmé betrays a curious confusion as to the precise nature of the instrument, which he probably mistook for an aulos; that confusion, however, seems to have been turned to good account by Debussy, as an invitation to create his own composite instrument by alternating, or combining, various members of the wind section as he deemed appropriate.

Debussy’s topic, however, has a complex physiognomy, for unlike the humble shepherd’s pipe, the faun’s syrinx is far from evoking the world of erotic innocence and serene ideality more commonly associated with the traditional sphere of the pastoral. In many (though not all) cases, the ‘syrinx’ topic illustrates a subcategory of the typically Debussyan ‘monophonic opening’, one of several structural patterns investigated by James A. Hepokoski.⁹ Hepokoski reminds us of how Debussy’s openings function ritualistically, as “thresholds linking secular and sacred/aesthetic space” [14], even when, as in the case with the *Prélude*, this sacralised aesthetic is carried out within a context of sensual pleasure. Since the exact nature of the instrument – syrinx, flute or any kind of reed pipe – may vary from one work (or part of work) to another, it seems apposite to define the musical typology in question in terms of its ritualistic character, rather than a definite organological category. For this reason, I will henceforth refer to the ‘syrinx’ topic as an *invocation* topic. Before Debussy, this kind of typology could be heard in such exotica as the “Mélodie hindoue” for the flute in the Act III Divertissement from Massenet’s *Le roi de Lahore* (1877), which, appropriately enough, is set in an Eastern Paradise; in a form more directly reminiscent of Debussy’s version, in the oboe solo from the Persian dance in the Act II ballet in Delibes’s *Lakmé* (1883); or, in a work roughly contemporary to Debussy’s, in the passage for the flute underscoring Thais’s invocation of Venus in Act II, scene 1 of Massenet’s eponymous opera (1894; revised version, 1898).¹⁰ Even more interesting, of course, is the post-Debussyan history of the topic, which can hardly be broached within the scope of the present essay: a catalogue of its many incarnations would have to include suitable examples from Ravel’s “La flûte enchantée” (*Shéhérazade*, 1903) and *Daphnis et Chloë* (1909-12), Nikolay Tchernepnin’s *Narcisse et Echo* (1911), Reynaldo Hahn’s *Le dieu bleu* (1912), Maurice Delage’s *Poèmes hindous* (1914), Szymanowski’s “Dryades et Pan” (*Mythes*, 1915), Charles Koechlin’s *Les heures persanes* (1913-19, orchestrated 1921), Carl Nielsen’s *Pan og Syrinx* (1917-18) as well as Roussel’s *Joueurs de flûte* (1924); whereas a piece such as Dukas’s *La plainte, au loin, du faune...* for piano (1920) bears a more immediate intertextual relation to Debussy’s *Prélude* as a tribute to its composer, by means

⁸ <http://petrucci.mus.auth.gr/imglnks/usimg/c/c3/IMSLP07757- une Faune trans. Borwick - piano .pdf>, p. 1.

⁹ According to Hepokoski, this structural pattern itself consists of three gestural phases, of which the second describes the faun’s monody well: “An unaccompanied melodic line breaking the silence. Typically, the melodic line begins with a relatively prolonged initial pitch, *piano* or *pianissimo*, and glides gracefully into more active rhythmic motion in a manner that is not emphatically metrical. The line is often undular, returning at points to its initial pitch in a supple curve, and it generally implies a rather weak tonic, because of the use of pentatonicism, chromaticism, modality, gapped scales, or other such devices” [13].

¹⁰ <http://javanese.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/1/12/IMSLP20429-PMLP28148-Delibes-LakmeVSheu.pdf>, p. 126;

<http://javanese.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/7/73/IMSLP20437-PMLP10664-Massenet-ThaisVSfe.pdf>, p. 93. There is a parallel Russian branch of the topic, for which Rimsky-Korsakov’s *Mlada*, Act III (1892) provides a veritable primer. For a classic example of the orientalist line in Russian music, cf. Rimsky’s symphonic suite *Sheherazade* (1888).

of explicit quotation.¹¹ Incidentally, a neo-primitivist variant of the same topic (an imitation of Slavonic spring pipes, or *dudki*) provides the opening idea of another mythical modernist landmark: no less than the Introduction to Stravinsky's *Le sacre du printemps* (1913).

Describing the invocation topic as a subcategory of the pastoral is, however, not entirely satisfying, for it is my contention that musical topics tend to operate by juxtaposing diverse semantic fields, thus multiplying the connections that allow those topics to function as dense networks of meaning rather than static signs with fixed significations, of the kind that lends itself to being neatly tabulated in lists of rhetorical figures. Accordingly, I should like to suggest an approach to musical meaning based on a genuinely differential view rather than one based on the oppositional properties of signs: a view in which meanings (much like the Debussyan experience of temporality itself) occasionally merge and flow into one another without much concern for fixed boundaries. The rhetoric of fluidity intrinsic to Debussy's music somehow seems to suggest a more fluid approach to musical rhetoric itself. Beyond the pastoral mode thoroughly scrutinized by Monelle, the *Prélude* opening gesture seems to call up no less than three further distinct, albeit overlapping, semantic fields, all of which, it seems to me, are essential to an interpretation of the work as a whole, namely the exotic, the erotic, and the elegiac. Let us briefly examine each of these in turn.

MAPPING OUT SEMANTIC FIELDS

Exoticism

The pastoral sources of the faun's music are clearly evident, not least thanks to the prominence of woodwinds and horns in the score, but the effect is more sylvan than merely bucolic. Crucially, the immediate impression is one of (pleasurable) strangeness: the flute monody (in the medium-low register, piano, marked "doux et expressif"), beginning on a sustained note (the return of which will signal the successive waves of the musical metamorphosis), gives only the vaguest hint of a tonic, breaking off after less than four bars.¹² From the initial pitch C#, the melody slides lazily downwards, first by a whole-step, then chromatically, to G – thus outlining a tritone – before moving back hesitantly, by whole-tones plus a semitone, to the initial pitch. Details are important here: the fact that the falling chromatic segment is preceded by a whole tone, and that the upward whole-tone segment accommodates a quasi-leading note (B#), shows that a simple chromatic vs. diatonic dualism is not necessarily the best framework within which to

¹¹ [http://imslp.us/php/linkhandler.php?path=/scores/Klingsor_Tristan_1966/Ravel_-_Sheherazade_\(voice_and_piano\).pdf](http://imslp.us/php/linkhandler.php?path=/scores/Klingsor_Tristan_1966/Ravel_-_Sheherazade_(voice_and_piano).pdf), p. 29;
<http://conquest.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/c/c7/IMSLP211854-SIBLEY1802.20308.fcccd-39087012874626score.pdf>, p. 12;
http://japanese.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/1/11/IMSLP26227-PMLP58402-Szymanowski_op30_Mythes_piano.pdf, p. 28;
http://imslp.eu/linkhandler.php?path=/imglnks/euimg/4/47/IMSLP17466-Roussel_-_Joueurs_de_Flute_Op.27.pdf, p. 1;
http://japanese.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/2/2d/IMSLP229141-PMLP06661-Dukas_-_La_plainte_p_Sibley.1802.21420.pdf, p. 2.

¹² http://petrucci.mus.auth.gr/imglnks/usimg/c/c3/IMSLP07757-une_Faune_trans.Borwick-piano.pdf, p. 1.

situate Debussy's musical gesture; moreover, the falling whole-tone interval will pervade the work as a whole, both melodically (as an *appoggiatura*) and harmonically (as an 'added sixth', suggestive of a double tonal focus). The process is repeated, after which the melody seems to gain a more affirmative drive, reaching upwards to E (notice the false relation G/G#) and settling for an instant on what would sound like an arpeggiated tonic triad if only the melody were not to swerve at once towards a new tritone, A#; the latter pitch in turn triggers the first harmonic event in the score, a verticalization of the prominent melodic pitches A#-C#-E-G#, in a sonorous ripple (a harp glissando) followed by an echo that accords well with the pastoral setting, and marks the transition from the phenomenal to the noumenal plane of the musical narrative, to borrow a distinction made by Carolyn Abbate in the domain of opera [15].¹³

Monelle's description of the musical figures from bar 4 onwards as pentatonic [16] seems less helpful here, because it unduly overstates the opposition between the horn calls and the flute solo – the former being a distorted echo of the latter (as if half-remembered in a dreamlike state). Not only does the description fail to account for the semitone E-F, but it leaves unexplained the presence of another prominent tritone between the notes D and A b – thus linking the flute and the horn motifs more intimately than the chromatic/pentatonic divide would suggest.¹⁴ Not only is the melody tonally ambiguous, it is not even possible to pin it down to a recognizable scale, for its constituent pitches, freely mixing the chromatic, the whole-tone and the diatonic genera, cannot be subsumed under any standard arrangement – and neither will it eventually allow any conclusive harmonization.¹⁵ The intended effect is that of a foreign musical object, in both spatial and temporal terms: the imaginary music of an archaic culture, freely 'synthesized' by Debussy from the accumulated resources of 19th-century orientalism. Owing to the undulating, rhythmically flexible and ornamental-melismatic quality of the musical figuration typified by the faun's improvisations, the image of the arabesque has become a standard metaphor in many descriptions of Debussy's music; the composer himself sanctioned the usage in a note addressed to Mallarmé a few days before the premiere,¹⁶ and the term could be used as a general designation for a whole array of topics, which often intersect with the invocation typology, thanks to the associations of the arabesque itself with magic.

Eroticism

In a time of colonial expansionism, the exotic almost inevitably carried connotations of voluptuousness and the desire for the other – or even the desire of the

¹³ The term 'phenomenal' is applied by Abbate to a musical event that declares itself openly or implicitly as a 'real' performance, as opposed to the 'noumenal' status of a musical passage assumed to emanate from an indeterminate locus.

¹⁴ Cf. also Monelle [17].

¹⁵ This ambiguity serves another important compositional purpose: by keeping the harmonic background to the recurring melody in constant mutation throughout the work, Debussy emphasizes the relative non-homogeneity of foreground and background, in keeping with his multiplanar, spatially-oriented conception of sonority (which, needless to say, cannot be captured in any kind of linear progression graph).

¹⁶ In this document, dated 20 December 1894, Debussy describes his work as "les arabesques qu'un peut-être coupable orgueil m'a fait croire être dictées par la Flûte de votre Faune" ["the arabesques which I have been led to believe, through a pride perhaps blameworthy, were inspired by the Flute of your Faun"] [18]. Among the classic literature on the subject, cf. Gervais [19] and Zenck-Maurer [20].

other – allied to sundry fantasies of possession, with wide-ranging cultural, political and psychological implications. Not surprisingly, the ‘Orient’ of the Symbolist and decadent (male) imagination frequently finds itself embodied in female figures (the temptress, the odalisque, the captive) combining seductiveness and submissiveness to varying degrees. This kind of imagery finds its way into Debussy’s *Prélude* by way of Mallarmé’s intertextual play with the Syrinx story: Pan’s sublimated libido seems to be echoed in the faun’s attempt to ‘recover’ his absent nymphs through art (to make them ‘permanent’, according to the opening line: “Ces nymphes, je les veux perpétuer” [21]) – in an ironic hint at the faun’s (or the artist’s) naive hopes for a reversal of metamorphosis: as if the music could grow back into a nymph (or preferably two – since there are two pipes in the aulos). The presence of the feminine in the opening sequence is essentially metonymic and indexical in nature, because the kind of material given by Debussy to his syrinx-playing faun derives from musical typologies centred on a ‘yielding’, descending kind of chromatic progression with connotations of erotic promise, notably in the world of French (or French-inspired) opera – usually set in faraway lands and widely suggestive of carnal indulgence. Among many representative examples with a strong family resemblance, one could cite Aida’s line (marked *dolcissimo*) in the *Andantino* section of her duet with Radamès in Verdi’s eponymous opera, Act III (1871), an evocation of erotic utopia par excellence (the accompaniment being provided by three flutes in their medium-low register, moving in parallel sixth chords); Dalila’s aria of seduction in Saint-Saëns’s *Samson et Dalila*, Act II, scene 3 (1877; first performance in France, 1890); and the figure signalling Hérode’s erotic obsession for Salomé in Massenet’s *Hérodiade*, Act II, scene 5 (1881, revised version 1884).¹⁷ An earlier prototype could even be found in the modulating passage introducing Susanna’s (false) acquiescence to the Count’s advances in the Duetto at the beginning of Act III of Mozart’s *Le nozze di Figaro* (1786), where a descending chromatic figure in the flute (doubled by the second violins at the lower octave) is immediately mirrored and amplified in the longer note values of the bass line.

Elegy

One of the common objections to the claims of music rhetoric is the apparent fact that codifications of music-rhetorical figures tend to be inconsistent and admit of too many counter-examples. Downward movement by semitones being associated in different contexts with the lament, one may wonder why Debussy’s invocation topic should conform to an intervallic pattern akin to the older theoreticians’ *passus duriusculus* and the *pathopoeia*, or more generally to musical figures evocative of pain or even death. One might of course argue that as contexts vary, so do significations, but there is in fact an important link between the faun’s re-enactment of Syrinx’s fate and the lament, for the mythic invention of the panpipes is itself predicated on the melancholy of irreversible loss, foreshadowing a vision of music in general as a sonorous memento for the irretrievable – a vision deeply ingrained in *fin-de-siècle* culture. More generally, this vision seems reinforced

¹⁷ <http://conquest.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/9/94/IMSLP30368-PMLP17351-AidaVSic.pdf>, p. 240;

<http://petrucci.mus.auth.gr/imglnks/usimg/4/43/IMSLP41636-PMLP48364-SaintSaens-SamsonDalilaVSf.pdf>, p. 163;

<http://petrucci.mus.auth.gr/imglnks/usimg/9/91/IMSLP70055-PMLP71734-Massenet - Herodiade VS.pdf>, p. 80.

by Vladimir Jankélévitch's observation that 'geotropism' is "the fundamental intention of the Debussyan melisma" [22], and as such, a token of Debussy's fascination for figures of decline. This aspect of Debussy's poetics in itself opens up a whole field of inquiry, which cannot be pursued within the scope of this essay.

ENVOI

To sum up: the invocation topic seems to be an important element in Debussy's musical language, but topics tend to be more polysemic in nature than the taxonomic impulse would lead us to believe; it would be a serious mistake, however, to equate polysemy with semantic indeterminacy *tout court*. Oppositions, on the other hand, may or may not play a primary role in the construction of meaning; if some 19th-century examples seem to fit binary schemes so well, this may be because binarism is itself part of the axiological framework of the period, rather than a universal precondition of signification. It would appear that musical semantics could be more productively approached from a hermeneutic, rather than a strictly sign-centred perspective (at least in the canonical, still current structuralist-derived sense). For, as the linguist Émile Benveniste observed long ago [23], a message cannot be reduced to a sequence of units, to be separately identified and described as such; it is not the sum of signs that produces meaning, but meaning, taken as a whole, that realizes itself in particular signs. It is my contention that a comprehensive theory of musical topics as dynamic and multi-dimensional semantic networks could profitably take such a premise as a starting point.

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Peacocks, Paradox, and Peripeteia: Charles Griffes's Transformation of the Pastoral

Taylor A. Greer, Penn State University, State College, PA, USA

ABSTRACT

The music of Charles Griffes represents a unique moment in the history of the pastoral. A visionary American composer at the turn of the century, Griffes was an artistic polyglot, drawing inspiration from a wide spectrum of sources, ranging from fin-de-siècle French harmony and Japanese exoticism to the Aestheticism movement in late-Victorian England. The thread linking these diverse sources is a new conception of the pastoral in which he transformed the siciliana-based tradition he had inherited into a multi-dimensional topical field that integrates elements of drama and irony. My paper introduces three types of pastorals in Griffes's work: (1) simple; (2) dramatic, which includes a prepared climax coinciding with motivic synthesis and a new religioso topic; and (3) ironic, which is defined by a modern-day peripeteia or reversal.

INTRODUCTION

Today I wish to begin with an anecdote about the city and the country. Charles Tomlinson Griffes, a neglected American composer at the turn of the century had a voracious appetite for literature. In his later years he found inspiration in a wide range of poems by Samuel Coleridge, W. B. Yeats, Edgar Allan Poe, and Oscar Wilde that depicted various scenes of nature such as gardens, sunrises, lakes, and night winds. By his own admission, he composed the opening phrase of his most famous work, "The White Peacock," while gazing at a sunset on his commute between a rural boarding school, where he worked, and New York City. Yet, when asked if he liked living in the country, he responded: "I long to be in the city. The country does not inspire me especially. I get much more inspiration from reading Oriental folk tales than I do from looking at a tree [1]." While composers' own statements about their music are often less than reliable, in Griffes's case the concept of paradox is inseparable from his treatment of the pastoral.

The music of Charles Griffes represents a unique moment in the history of the pastoral. A visionary American composer at the turn of the century, Griffes was an artistic polyglot, drawing inspiration from a wide spectrum of sources, ranging from fin-de-siècle French harmony, ancient Japanese poetry to the Aestheticism movement in late-Victorian England. The thread linking these diverse sources is a new conception of the pastoral in which he transformed the siciliana-based tradition he had inherited from his eighteenth- and nineteenth-century predecessors into a multi-dimensional topical field that integrated elements of drama and irony. In his magisterial work *The Musical Topic*, Raymond Monelle established a rich interpretive legacy for understanding the pastoral

tradition in literature and music [2]. In this paper I will enrich his legacy by exploring a geographical area and historical period he never considered: American art music during the early twentieth century.

This essay consists of three parts: a brief sketch of Griffes's mature style as well as a summary of the assumptions and methods used in the study; followed by an introduction to two types of pastorals found in Griffes's work—the dramatic pastoral, which includes a prepared climax, and the ironic pastoral, which is defined by a fundamental reversal or an adaptation of Aristotle's notion of *peripeteia*. Representative musical examples will be drawn from two piano works, "The White Peacock" and "The Vale of Dreams."

Historians have long considered early twentieth-century American composers like Griffes as marginal, occupying a stylistic oblivion, neither Romantic nor Modern. There are two principal reasons for this historical judgment. The first reason is the so-called "Emerson" problem, that is, the over-reliance by American artists on European traditions. Griffes grew to maturity at a time when American musical life was dominated by the aesthetic ideals of Europe, in particular, of Germany. Alex Ross argues, in his award-winning book, *The Rest is Noise*, that composers of this generation "failed to find a language that was singularly American or singularly their own [3]." When Ralph Waldo Emerson bemoaned in his 1837 essay "The American Scholar" that "too long have we listened to the courtly muses of Europe," little did he know that seventy years later the problem would still exist [4].

The other reason Griffes's music has been neglected is that during the so-called Roaring 'Twenties, especially in New York, "modernist" music began to roar. Whatever its merits, Griffes's music paled in comparison to the soaring sirens of Edgar Varèse or the well-armed tone clusters of Henry Cowell. In this view, Griffes fell into the cracks of history because he reached maturity when the embers of late Romanticism were burning out and the torches of the Modernist revolution were just being lit.

But to treat G's music as lost in a stylistic crevasse does it a serious injustice. Instead we should focus on what makes it "marginal." In some works he could be considered late-Romantic, content to speak the late nineteenth-century "lingua chromatica" of Wagner and Liszt. Yet at other times he was clearly an incipient Modernist, listening to twentieth-century French and Russian muses. In short, Griffes's mature style combined novelty with nostalgia and his revival of the pastoral tradition reflects this unique aesthetic blend.

The initial step in this interpretive study is to define my underlying assumptions. The pastoral is one of the oldest of all Western literary and cultural traditions, stretching from Theocritus's Idylls and Virgil's Eclogues in ancient Greece and Rome to the present. I will assume that the pastoral is a genre, style and/or orientation that has both musical and literary roots, though I will focus more on the former than the latter. Furthermore, considering the exhaustive studies of the pastoral by Monelle and by Robert Hatten in his 1994 study, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, there is no need to reenact an exegesis of the countless musical associations that this term has acquired [5]. For convenience, Example 1 includes a list that Hatten proposes of ten common pastoral characteristics.

- (1) Compound Meters
- (2) Pedal points or drone fifths in bass
- (3) Harmonic stasis (e.g. V7); diatonic harmonic texture; slow harmonic rhythm
- (4) Simple melodic contour

- (5) Contrary motion between outer voices
- (6) Rocking accompaniment
- (7) Texture of parallel thirds
- (8) Consonant appoggiatura
- (9) Elaborated Resolution of dissonance
- (10) Major modality

Example 1: Hatten's List of Common Characteristics of Musical Pastorals (1994).

Like the above-mentioned authors, in this paper I will focus exclusively on purely instrumental works, although Griffes composed both vocal and instrumental pastorals.

Regarding the theoretical approach demonstrated in this study, the simplest way of describing it would be a patchwork quilt, for I borrow in differing proportions from Hatten, Kofi Agawu, and Marta Grabocz. I will briefly summarize the influence each one has had on this project. In his first book, Hatten demonstrates a protean critical vision, fusing a collection of hermeneutic interpretations of individual works by Beethoven with a general theory of musical meaning based on markedness. The ultimate aim of these two complementary processes is the “reconstruction of a stylistic competency” [6]. While I am not as committed to his concept of markedness or to his virtuosic style of interpretation, I certainly share his fascination with opposition as an organizing principle. I, too share an ultimate critical goal of reenacting a “stylistic competency” for Griffes’s music, although the historical and cultural framework of that competency had shifted dramatically between the *Goethezeit* and the many competing principles, programs, and manifestos that populated the fin-de-siècle aesthetic landscape. Whereas for Hatten musical expression in the early nineteenth century was linked to concepts such as tragedy, transcendence, and abnegation, in the early twentieth century that framework was being called into question.

To Agawu, I am in even greater debt. In his *Music as Discourse* he argues that nineteenth-century music inherited the topical traditions of the eighteenth-century and then transformed them within new aesthetic approaches [7]. While new expressive styles and musical topics certainly emerged in the repertoire, as meticulously identified and classified by Janice Dickensheets [8] and Danuta Mirka [9], critics who wish to better understand romantic music should not be content simply to discover more and more topics and assemble longer and longer topical inventories. The challenge is to integrate new types of topics within some kind of broader formal and/or narrative model. I am also in strong sympathy with his frustration over some musicologists’ attempt to repudiate formalism and his clarion call to renew studying the “musical code” within a semiotic context. What might be called Agawu’s “menu” approach—employing between two and six analytical rubrics—is hardly a strict analytical method. However, his failure to construct a systematic analytical method, in my view, is a strength, not a weakness. As a whole, his book is a cross between a *Hermeneutiklehre*, a genuine theory of criticism, and a *Kritikscenen* or an anthology of insightful critical practice.

Finally, I must acknowledge the meticulous work of Marta Grabocz who has adapted the semiotic theories of Greimas and Courtés to explain the expressive world of Liszt’s instrumental music, assembling an elaborate hierarchy of seme/ classeme / semantic isotopie [10]. Elements of Griffes’s treatment of the pastoral are analogous to her concept of “pantheistic” seme, that is, a fusion of the pastoral and *religioso* semes.

DRAMATIC PASTORAL

There are two types of pastorals that appear in Griffes's music: dramatic and ironic. Dramatic pastorals are characterized by a prepared climax and ironic pastorals by a musical peripeteia at the close. In my conception of the dramatic pastoral in Griffes's works three elements coincide: (a) the introduction of a new *religioso* texture featuring a continuous rhythm; (b) a peak in register and dynamics; and (c) a motivic synthesis in which melodic, rhythmic, and/or harmonic ideas heard in the opening are transformed. It is important to stress that a section does not qualify as a "prepared climax" if it is simply a melodic apex at a loud dynamic; it must also possess some kind of developmental function in relation to previous motivic material as well as contain the *religioso* topic.

The modus operandus of this type of pastoral is a process of transformation between a conflicting mix of topics at the outset, and a triumphant, even ecstatic chorale texture at the moment of climax. Though the initial section often contains such markings as *languido*, *tranquillo* or *sognando*, it is usually characterized by multiple and highly contrasting musical topics either in succession or in simultaneity, only one of which is passive or tranquil. The result is an unstable affective landscape that is ripe for change.

To claim that turn-of-the-century instrumental music is organized around a climax is hardly news. What is new is that the "dramatic" category stretches to the limit the conventions of the pastoral tradition. Taken by itself, the concept of climax at the very least suggests extreme emotion, if not triumph and/or transcendence, emotions not normally associated with shepherds' Arcadian laments on the syrinx or its more recent counterpart, the musette. Instead Griffes envisioned the musical pastoral as a crucible of emotions, a dramatic framework that supports a transformation of affects, not an evocation of a one-dimensional affect.

If we were to imagine a history of the study of musical climax, it would have chapters devoted to William Newman [11], Ralph Kirkpatrick [12], Agawu [13], Hatten [14], and Zohar Eitan [15]. Since time is limited, I will mention only a few highlights from this history. The juncture Kirkpatrick identified in Scarlatti's sonatas, called the "crux," where the harmonic and formal dimensions converge, is highly analogous to the formal function of the climax in Griffes's pastorals. Regarding the other studies of climax, all differ significantly from mine. For example, Zohar focuses exclusively on the melodic dimension, whereas Hatten defines two independent concepts, the crux and the apex, which in practice could occur separately or coincide. In my approach the apex and climax coincide and, more important, are always distinct from the *peripeteia*.¹

A clear illustration of the "dramatic" pastoral can be found in "The White Peacock," one of four pieces in a set entitled *Roman Sketches*, Op. 7 (the set is named after *Sospiri de Roma*, a collection of poems William Sharp wrote in 1891). To appreciate fully the impact of this work's climax let us consider how Griffes sets the stage in the opening measures. Measures 1-6 contain a succession of three contrasting musical motives and topics the rhythms of which are displayed in Example 2 (see Appendix). The first motive

¹ In his study of Schumann, Agawu adopts the term "highpoint" rather than climax to denote a point of rhetorical significance at which a dramatic reversal occurs, which in the context of Heine's poetry is called *Stimmungsbrechung*. According to Agawu, a highpoint could manifest itself in any of a wide range of musical parameters such as a peak in register, dynamics, harmonic tension or textural culmination. The difference between his notion of highpoint and mine is that in Griffes's pastorals the climax is created by a convergence of intensity in multiple parameters.

is too fragmentary to express any genuine musical topic—arpeggios in both hands drawn from the whole-tone scale that lead to a sustained B9 chord. The short rhythmic values in this contrapuntal texture, 3 against 7, look more precise than they sound. The entire gesture is a conflict of opposites: motion followed by stasis, two-part melody followed by harmony. Since Griffes immediately repeats the entire gesture, this fragment becomes a kind of musical aphorism evoking languor. Next comes a descending chromatic melodic line in m. 2 with a repeating dotted figure on top of a steady quarter-note pulse that together suggests a march. But the 3/2 meter makes the pattern seem off-balance. Finally, a thick, chordal texture appears in a slower siciliano dotted rhythm. The combined effect of this topical panorama is an ambiance of indulgence and improvisation; more important, this languorous opening will later serve as the topical reservoir for the work's climax.

The climactic section, mm. 38-46, ushers in the recapitulation of the opening section and, in addition, synthesizes topics and motives heard in the opening bars. In mm. 38-41 the slow siciliano dotted figure appears as a rising octatonic melody in the left hand. Juxtaposed against it is the initial march-like rhythm, descending through the chromatic scale, as shown in Example 3 (see Appendix). The earlier succession of rhythmic motives is now telescoped into a rich contrapuntal texture. Other factors that intensify this section are a continuous rise in register through a span of three octaves and a gradual increase in dynamics.

When the climax finally arrives in m. 43, Griffes repeats several melodic and rhythmic features of the opening section and magnifies their proportions. First, the melody's expansive descent, F#7 – A4, employs two different exotic scales present in the opening section: the whole-tone collection in the right hand from m. 1 and the octatonic collection that derives from mm. 3-4. Second and more important, at m. 43 he introduces a new *religioso* topic: a continuous quarter-note pattern in the violins that is emphasized by tenuto articulations and that suggests a chorale (see Appendix, Example 4). This is the longest section of continuous quarter note texture in the entire piece. Note that the impact of this homorhythmic texture is greater in the orchestral transcription than in the original version for solo piano since in the former he substitutes quarter note values in place of the scintillating sixteenth-note accompaniment.

In Griffes's hands, the musical pastoral becomes the vehicle for introducing spiritual associations, specifically the chorale texture, without expressing any particular spiritual faith—in short, the *religioso* gesture without the religion. A process of change is at work in this piece whereby the initial conflict between traditional pastoral cues and other contrasting topics changes into spiritual elation, euphoria, even ecstasy.

IRONIC PASTORAL

Finally, we arrive at the second type: the ironic pastoral. All contemporary inquiries into irony ultimately fall under the shadow of Friederich Schlegel's writings at the turn of the nineteenth century. It could be argued that any definition of irony, whether epic or epigrammatic in length, is doomed to fail since the term being defined raises questions about objectivity, knowledge, and rationality. Nevertheless, in recent years a handful of scholars have applied the concept of irony to explain musical experience in new ways. Representative examples include the following: Esti Sheinberg who borrows Hatten's model of correlation to explore a wide range of ambiguity in

Shostakovich's music [16]; Yayoi Uno Everett who interprets Ligeti's music, blending Linda Hutcheon's social conception of parody with Sheinberg's concept of existential irony [17]; and finally Michael Klein who revives Northrup Frye's literary theory of narrative archetypes to reveal new dimensions of works by Chopin and Brahms [18].

As a point of departure for exploring Griffes's use of irony, let us assume that a signifier (or, for Peirce, a representamen) can possess an element of ambiguity whereby it presents two diametrically opposed meanings to a given interpretant. When translated into a musical context, the phenomenon of ambiguity usually takes the form of a contradiction. Scheinberg distinguishes between two different ways of approaching this contradiction: finite and infinite irony. If the irony is finite, then one of the two interpretations emerges as the preferred (or hidden) one and the other is rejected. In the case of infinite irony, both interpretations are equally valid (or invalid) which leads to an irreconcilable paradox—this type is also known as “romantic” irony. As we will see, Griffes's ironic pastorals are of the infinite variety.

Griffes's occasional use of the ironic epilogue revives the Aristotelian concept of *peripeteia* or turning point. In the *Poetics* Aristotle defines the concept as a “change of the kind described from one state of things within the play to its opposite” and should emerge from the “very structure and incidents of the play” [19]. Although Aristotle argues that *peripeteia* and *anagnorisis* (or the principal character's self-discovery) are both essential for the dramatic form of tragedy, the model of musical irony will include only the former. This model is defined by the principle of opposition: a climax or moment of emotional intensity is followed by a turning point that redefines “turning” and ultimately transforms the tonal drama of the work. The rhetoric of teleology—an introduction that culminates in a climax and is followed by a *dénouement*—is undermined and makes formal closure impossible. Griffes's epilogues reverse the overall rhetorical direction, as if mocking the previous moment of intensity. The final moment of reversal is the very embodiment of a musical paradox. More disruptive than a surprise ending, they are a twist not only in the musical “plot” but ultimately in the logic of tonality.²

One work that clearly illustrates the concept of a musical *peripeteia* is a slightly earlier piano work, “The Vale of Dreams,” the first of *Three Tone-Pictures*, Op. 5. The opening bars present a curious mixture of topics (see the Appendix, Example 5). To begin with, a single dissonant chord, Bb4/2, pulsates as a syncopated ostinato in the accompaniment from mm. 1-13. Juxtaposed against this bass ostinato is a rich amalgam of rhythmic styles, including eighth-note triplets, a traditional pastoral dotted pattern, as well as the more unusual reverse dotted pattern. The latter rhythm could be interpreted as a dance type known as the Scottish strathspey in which the fiddler mixes dotted and reverse dotted rhythms (or “Scottish snaps”) in endless combinations, always within a duple or quadruple meter. The overall effect in Griffes's work is rhythmic ambiguity about where the shorter rhythm falls—either on the beat or preceding the beat.

Griffes reserves a final touch of drama for the end in that he introduces a stunning reversal, a musical form of *peripeteia*, in the last chord: the first and only statement of the tonic in a weak 6/4 inversion. The gesture leading to this chord in mm. 57-60 is like a motivic mosaic in which different voices echo pitch motives from the opening section (see Appendix, Example 6). The half step in the bass, A – Bb, was first

² For an alternative adaptation of Aristotle's notion of *peripeteia*, see Jason T. Stell, “Rachmaninov's Expressive Strategies in Selected Piano Preludes: Highpoints, Dramatic Models, and Dynamic Curves,” Unpublished Master's Thesis, Pennsylvania State University, 1999.

heard in reverse order in the soprano, mm. 5-6, and again in the alto, mm. 9-10. Likewise, the descending parallel thirds in the inner voices repeat and extend the basic motivic shape in the upper voices throughout mm. 1-10. Finally the soprano's pitch, Eb5 is an incomplete statement of the descending half step in mm. 4-5 in the original register.

The ironic reading of the Coda depends on a contextual understanding of an age-old norm in tonal practice: the resolution of the V7. Throughout the initial and final sections of this work, the harmonic texture is static, intoning the same harmony either as a chord or arpeggio. Over the course of work the listener's perception of this sonority evolves so that its traditional harmonic function—instability—disappears and is gradually replaced by a coloristic function—the major-minor seventh chord serving as pure sound. However, when the Eb chord makes its first and only appearance at the end, it casts doubt retrospectively on the contextually based method of interpreting the Bb7 chord as purely coloristic. According to this view, the final chord's rhetorical twist appears to be one-dimensional, a restoration of eighteenth-century harmonic tradition and an utter rejection of the newly acquired contextual approach.

But there is more to the story behind this rhetorical "vare"! A deeper, double-edged irony is also at work here, leading us to reconsider the final cadence. By ending the work on an Eb 6/4 chord, Griffes could just as well be poking fun at the listener's expectation of a final concord. In this reading, the final chord inaugurates a critical process that questions one of the fundamental assumptions of tonal music: the distinction between consonance and dissonance. This "tone picture" neither celebrates the intrinsic pleasure of dissonance nor affirms the need for consonance, but instead ridicules them both. Perhaps it is the sense of closure itself that is being turned inside out. Questions abound. Does the final major triad restore the countenance of tonality or thumb its nose at it? Instead of preferring one alternative over the other, is the music suggesting both—a paradox that can be summarized as "neither either nor or"?

CONCLUSION

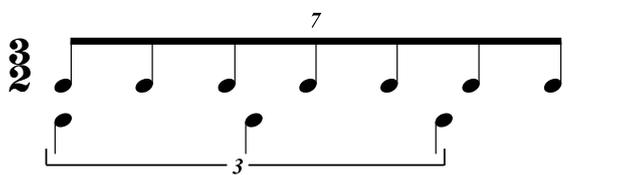
In these brief remarks, we have uncovered two forms of pastoral expression in American music during the early twentieth century: the dramatic and the ironic. But, ultimately, in the context of musical semiotics the significance of these observations is less the discovery of some new species of pastoral than the revelation of a new sensibility toward the pastoral tradition—one that fuses a fascination with and a distance from the past, that mixes critical commentary and creative renewal.

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APPENDIX

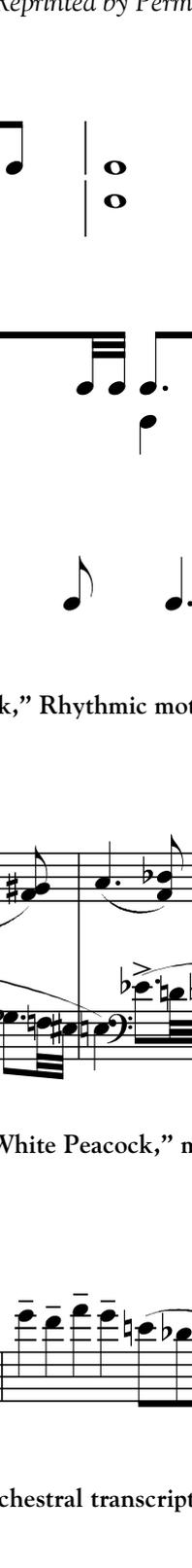
The White Peacock and Other Works for Solo Piano, by Charles Tomlinson Griffes. ©
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(a) 

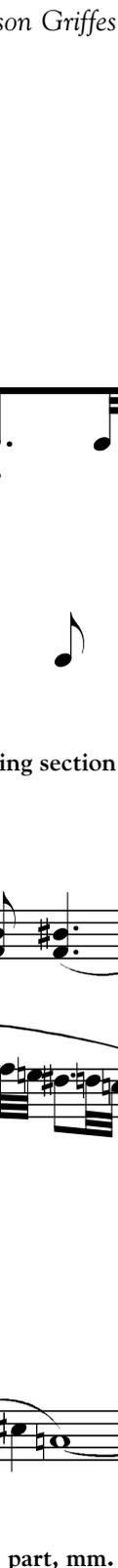
(b) 

(c) 

Example 2: “The White Peacock,” Rhythmic motives in opening section



Example 3: “The White Peacock,” mm. 38-39



Example 4: “The White Peacock,” Orchestral transcription, violin 1 part, mm. 43-47

Musical score for Example 5: "The Vale of Dreams," mm. 3-6. The score is in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major. It features a treble and bass staff. The treble staff has a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure, followed by a series of chords and eighth notes. The bass staff has a series of chords and eighth notes, with some notes beamed together. The piece concludes with a final chord in the bass staff.

Example 5: "The Vale of Dreams," mm. 3-6

Musical score for Example 6: "The Vale of Dreams," mm. 57-60. The score is in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major. It features a treble and bass staff. The treble staff has a series of chords and eighth notes, with a dynamic marking of *p dim.* and a final dynamic marking of *ppp*. The bass staff has a series of chords and eighth notes, with some notes beamed together. The piece concludes with a final chord in the bass staff.

Example 6: "The Vale of Dreams," mm. 57-60

Hidden Pastorals in Janáček's *The Makropulos Case*

Jory Debenham, Lancaster University, UK

ABSTRACT

*No opera of Janáček's has been considered less lyrical and more jagged in style than that of *The Makropulos Case*. With sets in a law office, backstage, and in a hotel room, there seems scant pretext for pastoral writing of the kind that fills the composer's two previous operas, *Káťa Kabanová* and *Cunning Little Vixen*. However, the score is riddled with hidden pastoral elements that both regulate the flow of the music and provide potent symbolic power as emblems of the conflict between time and timelessness that animates the drama. In *The Makropulos Case*, the protagonist of the story, Emilia Marty, has lived for more than 300 years and the longevity formula she had taken has started to wear off. The story focuses on her search to recover the lost formula, while offering a meditation on the concept of the eternal.*

Raymond Monelle argued that issues of both temporality and "topics" in music are central to a successful understanding of a musical work. His description of the dualistic nature of time is particularly apt in relation to Janáček's opera: "the extended present of lyric time becomes a space where the remembered or imagined past is reflected, while the mobility of progressive time is a forum for individual choice and action."¹ In this paper I explore the ways in which Janáček incorporates musical representations of chronological (progressive time) time that are central to the plot, yet juxtaposes them with pastoral elements, creating a counter-narrative of timelessness (lyric time). Janáček exploits this topic for its specific musical properties, allowing him to control the flow of time while expressing the transcendent and ethereal underlying philosophical arguments that are presented in the opera.

HIDDEN PASTORALS IN JANÁČEK'S *THE MAKROPULOS CASE*

No opera of Janáček's has been considered less lyrical and more jagged in style than that of *The Makropulos Case*. With sets in a law office, backstage, and in a hotel room, there seems scant pretext for pastoral writing of the kind that fills the composer's two previous operas, *Káťa Kabanová* and *Cunning Little Vixen*. However, the score is riddled with hidden pastoral elements that both regulate the flow of the music and provide potent symbolic power as emblems of the conflict between time and timelessness that animates the drama. In *The Makropulos Case*, the protagonist of the story, Emilia Marty, has lived for more than 300 years and the longevity formula she had taken has started to wear off. The story focuses on her search to recover the lost formula, while offering a meditation on the concept of the eternal.

¹ Monelle, R., 2000. *The Sense of Music: Semiotic Essays*. Princeton University Press, p. 115.

THE PASTORAL

The pastoral as a topic, or topos, has a long history in Western thought, and according to Raymond Monelle, “Pastoralism is one of the most ancient, and longest lived, of all literary and cultural genres” [1]. Pastoral qualities are broad in scope, extending from the rustic Burlesque of the Scherzo of Beethoven’s *Sixth Symphony* to the high pastoral evocation of classical shepherds, angels and idyllic landscapes of the Baroque cantatas and oratorios. As a general concept, the use of thirds and sixths, long harmonic pedals representing drones, repeated notes and figures that create harmonic stasis, lilting time signatures of 6/8 or 12/16, incorporation of folk melodies and dances, as well as combinations of wind instruments, especially flute and oboe, are understood to create a pastoral effect in music.

Janáček’s opera, *The Makropulos Case*, does not tend to conjure these images of an idyllic environment or angelic inspiration. In fact, the setting and text of the opera is quite the opposite. The work, based on a play by the Czech writer Karel Čapek, is a modernist tale set amidst a legal case involving a significant inheritance that has been disputed for more than a century. The main character, Emilia Marty, arrives on the scene with previously unknown information about the court case. As the story unfolds, the audience discovers that she has lived an artificially extended life as a highly acclaimed opera singer. Her unnaturally long existence has resulted in her becoming icy and unfeeling, seeing very little purpose to life and experiencing little joy. Her unfathomable beauty and amazing operatic talents wreak havoc and destruction on the men she encounters and elicit jealousy and insecurity from the women in her company. Her mighty persona embodies both an idealized and appalling caricature of the imagined potentiality of extended youth and longevity of life.

Janáček himself referred to his diva as “cold as ice” [2] and critics at the time focused on the prosaic, conversational quality of the music. Čapek is often quoted as commenting negatively on Janáček’s desire to set his prosaic work: “That old crank! Soon he’ll even be setting the local column in the newspaper [3].” And, ever since the opera’s premiere, critics and musicologists have expounded on the modernist elements, commenting regularly on how the opera differs from Janáček’s previous works. Why then, would it seem appropriate or logical to analyse the work from a traditionalist vantage point of the pastoral? I would argue that this perspective reveals a musical counter-narrative in the work that ultimately culminates in the subjective space of the final scene where Emilia Marty has a transcendent encounter with death that offers her a profound understanding of the meaning of life. This final scene is a major highlight of the opera and is the aspect of the work that provides a significantly alternative reading to Čapek’s philosophical inquiry.

In his discussion of the myth and meaning surrounding the pastoral, Monelle highlights the connection between this musical topic and the concept of time. The pastoral realm can be understood as a world in which “time is not experienced as a historical or developing process [4].” Instead, this world becomes to one of philosophical thought where the pastoral represents aspects of timelessness and eternity. Timelessness in music is often depicted by what theorists Lewis Rowell and Jonathan Kramer refer to as “stasis” or that in music which does not change sequentially [5]. The terms “pastoral” and “timeless” are often linked [6] and the language of the pastoral tangibly captures the

essence of the ephemeral, eternal and transcendental qualities that are central to Janáček's opera.

TIME AND TIMELESSNESS

In many writings about time, two distinctions are made; one of objective, or physical time that can be measured by a clock, and one of subjective time. The philosopher Edmond Husserl described the physical version as “worldly time” and the subjective, or experiential one as “phenomenological time”. In his view, the subjective version is privileged, with pure “consciousness” contained as a field of that subjective space. The essence or origin of objective or cosmic time, Husserl argued, can only be resolved by understanding it in relation to the phenomenological time and therefore the latter is of greater importance [7]. This temporal dualism is also of central importance to Monelle, resulting in a similar conclusion. Monelle's version of physical time is called “progressive time”, and is where the narrative action takes place. His rendering of experiential time is named “lyric time”, and serves as the place where the music “seems to present moral and emotional truth” [8].

Monelle also argued that issues of both temporality and “topics” in music are central to a successful understanding of a musical work. His description of the dualistic nature of time is particularly apt in relation to Janáček's opera: “the extended present of lyric time becomes a space where the remembered or imagined past is reflected, while the mobility of progressive time is a forum for individual choice and action [9].” Through this lens, Janáček's juxtaposition of chronological (progressive time) time with pastoral elements that create a counter-narrative of timelessness (lyric time) become central to understanding the deeper meaning of the work. Janáček exploits these musical properties, allowing him to control the flow of time while expressing the transcendent and ethereal underlying philosophical arguments that are presented in the opera.

Janacek's own views on the subject of time substantiate the relevance of these concepts to his own work. Throughout his career, Janáček wrote and thought a great deal about time and rhythm, and worked out complex theories and methods to incorporate these ideas into his compositions. His theories of speech-melody describe the spoken word as consisting of the *speed* of delivery and rhythm, in combination with *register* and *intonation*. He believed that speech embodies both the internal and external aspects of an individual, and that by consciously examining these elements, he could understand the “inner life” and underlying character of a given speaker [10]. He went to great lengths to develop this theory, fastidiously transcribing animal sounds and various speech utterances. He even used a chronoscope, a time-measuring device that could measure down to a tenth of a second, as a method of reaching exceptional precision in his transcriptions.

As an extension of his speech-melody theory, Janáček also developed another theory he called *Sčasování*, a term that is in part derived from the Czech word “čas”, which means “time” or “in time”. Through this lens, he theorized rhythmic activity as consisting of layers that the mind produces as it processes rhythmic information. Through the rhythm of spoken words, he believed it was possible to comprehend and feel the expression of the soul [11]. In many of his writings and theorizations, Janáček makes it clear that while time is central to his composition, it is the subjective aspects; the underlying qualities associated with it, that are of interest and importance to him. In

Makropulos in particular, it is evident that the composer incorporated multiple layers and complexities that control both the physical and symbolic, subjective illusions of time.

On a surface level in *The Makropulos Case*, Janáček highlights the tangibility of the forward movement of clock time in the narrative and uses a variety of typical techniques such as fast tempi, shorter note values, and driving rhythms over a prominent tympani line to literally represent the action. The opening of the prelude is a great example of this, starting the production off with energy and urgency. Much later in the opera, in the third act, another typical example surfaces when the diva Emilia Marty leaves the room and her accusers proceed to clandestinely search her belongings for incriminating evidence. At this point, the rhythmic figures and texture punctuate the scene, representing the characters' rapid, scurrying movements and suggesting their limited amount of time in which to complete the search. Examples like these, where Janáček offers a musical equivalent of chronological time, are easily found throughout the work, and generally, they are the figures and motifs that are easiest to notice, as they command our attention and offer a feeling of heightened intensity. However, this is not the version of time that is of the utmost importance to the opera, but instead, I would argue that the more veiled and subjective version or Monelle's "lyric time" holds that position.

In the context of *Makropulos*, this "lyric time" is directly related to the abstract, subjective concepts of the eternal, ageless, or immortal – all attributes that are associated with the main character Emilia Marty's longevity and her historical situation. Janáček evokes this sensibility through traditional musical techniques, particularly those associated with the pastoral, resulting in a sense of timelessness, directly juxtaposing the jagged and angular melodic lines and the modernist narrative and setting.

FANFARES & WALTZES

The first and most pronounced musical evocation of this timelessness occurs near the beginning of the work with an offstage fanfare that interrupts the energetic, forward-driven theme in the Overture, literally stopping the rhythmic flow and creating a contrasting suspension of time. Fanfares have been used for centuries, being incorporated into important events or to announce the appearance of a significant person. In the opera, this fanfare motive coincides throughout with textual references to Marty's distant past, to her father Hieronymus Makropulos, or to Emperor Rudolph II. Janáček's use of horns and its signification of a noble and distant past allow this theme to serve within the larger pastoral effect. Notably, the placing of the instruments offstage removes them from the time and place of the stage action, symbolic both physically and acoustically of the distance between the main character's early years and the present time witnessed in the opera. The fanfare thus takes on a more ethereal quality, highlighting its essence of timelessness.

In addition to the referential aspects of the fanfare, the evocation of nostalgia and memory is also a key feature of Janáček's musical representation of timelessness. The café-waltz explicitly associated with Marty's former lover Hauk-Šendorf is an example of this (see Figure 1).



Figure 1: Hauk-Šendorf Cafe Waltz (Act II, Reh. 40) ²

This theme serves, I think, not as a leitmotiv; simply a tune we can associate with Hauk's character and a more tender time in both Hauk's and Marty's lives, but rather as a musical symbol of an idealized past that is a powerful and sentimental reminder of the everlasting qualities of memory. While not explicitly associated with the pastoral, the waltz was at one time a popular dance and the effect Janáček creates with it in this passage places it well within the pastoral realm for our purposes.

A snippet of the Hauk waltz occurs later in the act when the young character Janek leaves the stage for the last time, foreshadowing his transformation from the physical into the realm of memory, where he becomes situated in the next act, having committed suicide. A different, grander waltz figure arises in the final act in the orchestra, offering a heightened energy and spaciousness, existing as if it had absorbed the essence of Hauk and Janek and was transformed into the grander ethereal space. Finally, the piece closes with a ten-bar majestic waltz in 3/2 time, combining with the fanfare gesture to offer a mighty finale. From a metaphorical standpoint, it's as if the slow café waltz evolves from Hauk's memory, maintaining a lineage connected to Marty that compounds tender, nostalgic moments, and finally arrives as a powerful and passionate theme that encompasses multiple memories and associations.

John Tyrell describes the waltz figure in the final scene as Janáček's "most haunting" of his slow waltzes, and suggests that it is a cathartic finale in which "the principal character becomes reconciled to [her] fate" [12]. This catharsis, he argues is not simply confined to the waltz, but is part of the overall interpretive message Janáček offers to the work, and is found particularly in the music associated with Marty. The notion of catharsis as Tyrell suggests, and the concept of Marty's timelessness discussed here, are interwoven and are deeply connected. The most powerful evocation of this occurs at the moment Marty's sentiment toward her situation is transformed and Janáček offers a complete musical suspension of time. In the final act, Marty confesses her true identity and collapses, feeling death's grip come upon her. At this point the driving cross-rhythms stop abruptly, a beautiful *Maestoso* and *espressivo* section begins, and the result is a profound expression of the eternal or sublime. Her brush with death is not a negative thing after all, and the alteration of her character is overwhelmingly positive, at least from a musical standpoint.

For the remainder of the work, there is a beautiful sense of freedom in the vocal lines, accompanied with very little rhythmic or harmonic activity. The strings move in repeated seconds over long pedal points, evoking a true suspension of time. Only the

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fanfare and the nostalgic waltz figures punctuate the temporal space, but do so with a sense of being background and of a distant time and place; related to the present but not of it.

THE PASTORAL AND TRANSCENDENCE

From the point of her collapse, the spiritual side of Marty's encounter with death is highlighted, and the music reflects her sense of transcendence. Her musical material is angelic and aria-like, and there's a suggestion of the timeless rituals associated with religion, leading to her exclamation of "Pater Hemon!" her final words before she dramatically succumbs to her fate of death. Throughout this entire passage, Janáček evokes a strong sense of the quality of personal reflection and tradition associated with the end of life. Interestingly, however, although it appears this simple timeless beauty and spaciousness is only achieved once Marty has a personal encounter with "death's grip", it is evident that Janáček set this moment up from the very beginning, using compositional techniques associated with the idea of the pastoral.

From the moment Marty is introduced to the audience, through the young singer Krista, allusions to Marty's timeless essence are made, foreshadowing the transcendence of the final scene. At the moment Krista arrives in Act I, our attention has been on the angular and repetitious conversation and dialogue of the legal clerk, Vitek and the plaintiff, Gregor. Krista's entry is a beautiful contrast to the parallel fourths and fifths and highly chromatic musical language of the first scene. Instead, we are treated to lilting chords featuring sonorous thirds and sixths swaying back and forth, evoking a sense of the pastoral as Krista explains how wonderful Marty is. The angularity and conversational style returns until the actual entry of Marty herself. As Marty physically enters and Krista exclaims "Good Heavens, it's Marty!" the orchestra appears with another pastoral motive: eighth notes flowing in long phrases over Gb and Db pedal points (see Figure 2).

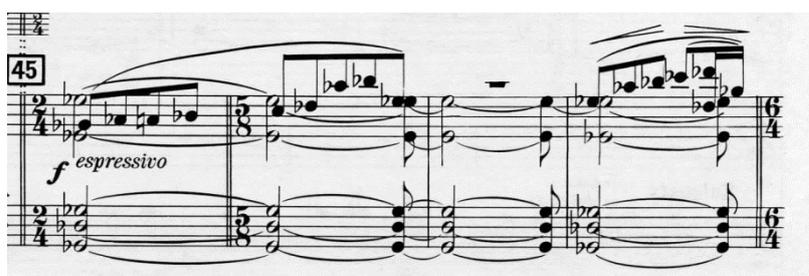


Figure 2: Marty's Arrival (Act I, Reh. 45)³

During Marty's conversation with the lawyer Kolenaty about the court case, there is an underlying tenderness evoked through a Dvořákian folk melody. And, as Marty pleads for the characters to understand Pepi Prus' true intentions with regards to his will and the lawyer expresses his doubts, this gentle cello theme moves in warm sixths over a held Eb, evoking Marty's tender feelings that may not necessarily be evident in the vocal line (see Figure 3).

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69 *Meno mosso* (♩ = 66)

ve své po-sled-ní ho-din-cě u-či-nil úst-ní pořázení ve prospěch o-so-by ji-né.
 ha-be vor sei-nem Ab-le-ben un-ser Ba-ron eine mündliche Verfügung ganz anders ge-trof-fen.

Cello *pp* *espress.*

C. B.

Figure 3: Folk Melody (Act I, Reh. 69)⁴

Other examples of pastoral tone can be found throughout the work: Marty's arrival in the second act occurs over a repeated note Bb pedal creating stasis; Marty's interaction with Gregor backstage consists of arpeggiated figures over a C pedal in the orchestral line; many of her parts throughout the second act, as harsh as they may be in the vocal line, are accompanied by repeated notes in the lower voice and long notes that move in thirds above, creating a background stasis and harmony amidst a seemingly disjunct and discordant environment.

JUXTAPOSITION AND INTEGRATION

While it seems obvious to look for pastoral aspects in Janáček's other works, such as *The Vixen*, where themes of nature and environment are central to the plot and staging, it is easy to overlook these elements in *Makropulos*, with its modern, urban setting and disjunct, non-melodic vocal lines. I would argue though, that this is where the main strength of the work lies. As Michael Beckerman offered in his writing on Janáček opera, "...the juxtaposition of opposing forces is Janáček's greatest strength as a dramatist [13]."

In the opera version of *The Makropulos Case*, Janáček's most profound juxtaposition can be found in his manipulation of the pastoral language to reflect the dual narratives relating to the temporal spaces surrounding time and timelessness. Whereas Čapek's version highlights physical time, focusing on philosophical ruminations on the number of years a person should live, Janáček offers a counter-narrative that explores and expresses the opposite. Instead, he highlights the ethereal, subjective and non-verbal aspects we can ascribe to so many of the themes and elements of the work; those of love, loss, longevity and spirituality. In this work, Janáček is the master illusionist; offering an impression of a "talky", non-melodic vocal line, while drawing on lyrical models, and foregrounding a modern, mechanical, urban setting against the ethereal timelessness evoked by the displaced fanfare, the nostalgic waltz, and the pastoral language throughout. With a dexterous sleight of hand, he cleverly integrates these concepts, manipulating our perceptions of the temporal space, adding depth and profundity to Čapek's already masterful dramatic work.

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Deracinated, Dysphoric and Dialogised: the Wild and Beguiled. Semiotics of Stravinsky's Topical Signifiers

Nicholas Peter McKay, PhD, The University of Sussex, UK

ABSTRACT

Stravinsky's "transposition" and use of established musical topoi offer an intriguing case study for the semiotician versed in Monelle's readings of musical topics and the sense of music. Dialogised from the outset by the composer's anti-expressive, formalist polemics, Stravinsky's use of extroversive semiosis brings to mind the lyrics of an Ella Fitzgerald's song: one is "bewitched, bothered and bewildered" at the simultaneously 'wild' and 'beguiled' play of his referential signs.

The convention-breeching and deceptive sense of Stravinsky's signifiers results primarily from three stylistic and rhetorical strategies common to most of his topical references. Stravinsky deploys topics: i) in deracinated contexts, displaced from their natural stylistic, geographic and semiotic homes; ii) in dysphoric states, confronting Monelle's assertion that topics are prototypically euphoric signifiers built on a culturally mediated separation of signifier and signified; and iii) through dialogised utterances akin to Hatten's notion of "the troping of topics".

Focussing on close readings of Stravinsky's music theatre and concert repertoire, this paper builds on Monelle's discussion of "apodeitic complicity" - evidenced here in the relationship elicited between Stravinsky's referential signs and listener responses to them - and highlights what (following Hatten) can be read as Stravinsky's "stylistically and strategically marked" deployment of genres as surrogate stylistic topics (e.g. chorale, quartet, concerto etc.). This latter rhetorical conceit comprises a twentieth-century analogue of the eighteenth-century use of dance forms (e.g. minuet, musette etc.) both as self-contained genres ("forms") and as fleeting referential topics ("styles") operating across a variety of genres; a distinction noted by Ratner and Agawu. In this respect, Stravinsky's music both presents and problematises "new", emergent musical topics in the Western European repertoire of the last two centuries. A Monellean semiotic reading of Stravinsky's musical topics thus offers vital hermeneutic and historicist keys to understanding their wild and beguiled natures, leaving us bewitched, bothered and bewildered no more.

TOPICS AND CONVENTION

Topics as familiar, intertextual, commonplaces of style

Ratner described musical topics as “commonplaces of style” [1]. Allenbrook referred to the inbuilt “intertextuality of the classical style” [2]. As such descriptions attest, “referential signs” [3] are prototypically grounded on conventional signifiers. They have an inbuilt tendency to behave themselves. Their musical life blood courses only when they evoke in collective listeners a sense of interconnected similarity: of hearing again in a musical moment an instance of something stylistically familiar enough to activate a ready-made, learned cultural response. The referential signs of musical topics thus present a kind of semi-automatic hermeneutic tool for comprehending what Monelle calls “the sense of music” [4].

Hearing the difference or uniqueness of any particular topical reference, though vital, is necessarily a secondary interpretative process, possible only when one's perceptual frame of reference has first been securely cued by the familiar gestures and syntactic parameters of the recognizable, governing topic. In this respect all topic readings participate to a degree in what Monelle terms acts of apodeitic complicity: [5] the drawing of a generalised inference (a topic or “type”) from a particular instance (a “token”) that displays the recognisable syntactic hallmarks of a stylistic-semantic idea we accept at face value. Topical references may subsequently be prototypical, stereotypical or even atypical [6] to varying degrees but it is rare for topical references to challenge the topos they invoke through defamiliarisation devices that bring into question the very commonalities and intertexts on which they are built.

Stravinsky's aesthetic defamiliarisation

Defamiliarisation (also known as alienation), however, is the default rhetorical gambit of Stravinsky's musical language [7]. Across his Russian, neoclassical and serial works, he has made a well-documented career calling card of aesthetic distancing devices in most of his musical output. Commentators have tended to focus largely on (“pure”) signs of defamiliarisation manifest in Stravinsky's musical syntax, highlighting moments of “ungrammatically” evident in techniques such as polyrhythm, [8] polychordality and ‘wrong-note’ neoclassic harmony; [9] even dialogised genres (e.g. the use of symphony and sonata forms that question the formal conventions they simultaneously evoke) [10]. Less well-documented, however, are discussions of the composer's (“referential”) signs of stylistic ungrammatically: the simultaneous evocation of, and distancing from, topical references [11].

This is perhaps to be expected given the composer's equally well-documented anti-expressive aesthetic ideology [12]. Why look for referential signs (behaving or misbehaving) in music constructed by one who advocated that music was “essentially powerless to express anything at all” [13]? Yet Stravinsky's music participates in rhetorical strategies of stylistic defamiliarisation just as much as it does syntactic. To allude to the lyrics of a famous 1940s Rodgers and Hart song, one can talk of the simultaneously “wild” (critiquing) and “beguiling” (evoking) nature of his topical references. Expressively evocative and enigmatic in equal measure, they “bewitch, bother and bewilder” when subjected to music semiotic readings. Building on Monelle's insights into musical topoi,

this paper thus considers three common rhetorical strategies through which Stravinsky's topical references characteristically encode elements of stylistic ungrammaticality. With a shamelessly contrived alliterative allusion to that same Rodgers and Hart song, these three strategies can be summarised as the “deracinated, dysphoric and dialogized” play of Stravinsky's wild and beguiling referential signs.

STRAVINSKY'S DERACINATED, DYSPHORIC AND DIALOGISED TOPICS

Deracinated topics

The deracinated topic, as the term suggests, is one that is somehow uprooted or displaced from its natural locale or geography. Here one recalls Ratner's historicising trichotomy of musical topoi as signifiers of different levels of nobility (from high to low style), specificity (from Turkish march to generic march style) and locale (from the battlefield to the ballroom) [14]. One also recalls Monelle's important de-historicising caveat (pace Ratner) of the separation of signifiers from signifieds: the pastoral musette of art music is an ideological evocation of an imagined bucolic repose bearing little or no resemblance to any practical sonic tools of shepherding ever heard in the countryside (just as the hunting and military musical topoi bare scant resemblance to anything ever sounded on horseback chase or in battlefield combat) [15]. While Ratner is right to suggest that many topics correlate to specific locales or geographies, Monelle's important historical work (aptly described by Spitzer as “out-historicising the historians” [16]) shows that all musical topoi are to a degree deracinated from the locales or geographies they evoke. Yet, while such is to be expected of any representation (be it in visual, literary or musical art) that is at heart a stylised ideological conceit, Stravinsky has a tendency to willfully deracinate his musical topics a degree further still.

Pastoralism in *Oedipus Rex*

Take for example his two relatively large scale operas, *Oedipus Rex* and *The Rake's Progress*. Master-classes both in syntactic and stylistic distancing devices, they are replete in examples of what we might term the “stylistic”, “temporal” and “geographic” deracination of topics. Staying with the example of the pastoral topic, the Shepherd's aria in Act 2 of *Oedipus Rex* presents a simple example of a geographically and temporally deracinated topic [17]. Among its other pastoral signifiers (the pseudo-Siciliano compound time signature and dotted-rhythm lilt) is heard a prototypical ostinato drone bass, not of anything endemic to Greece (Ancient or modern), befitting the narrative of Sophocles's tragedy, but of a *ranz des vaches* [18]: an Alpine horn drone characteristic of Swiss Herdsmen—doubtless something Stravinsky heard while exiled in Switzerland between 1914 and 1920; a few years before completing his opera-oratorio in 1926. Here, then, Stravinsky employs an off-the-peg musical topic willfully deracinated by time and place from contemporary Alpine Switzerland to Ancient Greece.

The *ranz des vaches* is not so deracinated by instrument, however. It is rendered by two bassoons acting as “surrogate stimuli” [19] for the more penetrative sound of the double-reed instrument (the aulós of ancient Greece) likely to have been used in shepherding. In this respect, Stravinsky's use of the pastoral topic is not only temporally

and geographically deracinated (while preserving a stylistic association with shepherding), but curiously breeches Monelle's caveat on the separation of signifiers and signifieds. Resisting the historically inaccurate (but more evocative of pastoral Arcadia) pan-pipe/syrinx-inspired 'soft and caressing' flutes (that Monelle reminds us Debussy and Mallarmé imagined in *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*) [20], Stravinsky opts instead for the more authentic double-reed sound; albeit one playing a drone from an altogether other time and place.

Pastoralism in *The Rake's Progress*

Stylistic deracination by time and place forms the very fabric—perhaps even the underlying metaphor—of Stravinsky's other major opera, *The Rake's Progress*. Its principle concern too is with the pastoral [21], less as an isolated, stylistic, referential topic in itself (the opening "The woods are green" duet and trio being the obvious exception), more as an allegory of "a lost pastoral", indicative of the "impossibility of return" to a state of bliss: be it the idyllic countryside after the shallow machinations of London city (as suggested in the diegesis of the opera) or, as Wiebe argues, to the very (meta-narrative) conventions of opera itself [22]. By the 1950s those conventions and that genre were "adjudged by all respected circles to be long since dead", leaving Stravinsky and Auden (themselves both deracinated from their cultural homelands in Los Angeles in the 1940s) to effectively (re)construct a set-piece opera, picking over the "detritus of some other time and place" to which no genuine return could be made.

The result is an entire opera teeming with allusive (topical/genre) and explicit (quotations) referential signs deracinated from their natural time and place; synthetic by their very nature. Stravinsky seems to employ explicit quotation from this operatic 'detritus' to draw dramatic parallels more than rely on general, allusive topical references. Tom and Anne's Act II, scene 2, "discovery duet" ("Anne! Here!"), for example, is voiced through a comparable "discovery duet" between Gilda and Rigoletto in Act II of Verdi's *Rigoletto* ("Signori in essa è tutta la mia famiglia"). Here Rigoletto discovers that Gilda was seduced by the Duke, while Anne discovers that Tom has been seduced by the attractions of London [23]. Continuing the theme, Tom's Act I, scene 2, "Love, too frequently betrayed" cavatina, complete with answering Prostitutes' chorus, is modeled closely on the Act I, scene 5 (quasi-pastoral) quintet, "Di scrivermi ogni giorno" of Mozart's *Così fan tutte*. Here both numbers are concerned with the topic of love's potential betrayal and, as Wiebe observes, both resonate a 'duplicity' which is not reflected in the beauty of the music [24].

Personified quotation and characteristic topic of lament in *Oedipus Rex*

This use of explicit quotation (what we might term tropes of *prosopopoeia* for their personification of another voice) over more characteristic, allusive musical topoi (what we might term tropes of *ethopoeia* for their more general evocation of stylistic traits) [25] is itself a hallmark of Stravinsky's aesthetic defamiliarisation. A more sharply attuned referential sign, quotation exhibits more stylistic precision than that typically found in conventional musical topoi; a precision that Stravinsky uses as much to dialogise his music as to draw dramatic parallels. Returning momentarily to *Oedipus Rex*, consider the example of the Act I aria, *Invidia fortunam odit*, in which Oedipus boastfully accuses Creon and Tiresias of envy and conspiracy explicitly set to the *pianto*-(topic of lament)-ridden

music [26] of the *Qui Mariam absolvisti* from the *Ingemisco* of the *Dies Iræ* of Verdi's *Messa da Requiem*: a stylistic and semantic cross-matching of Verdi's penitential guilt with Oedipus's egotistical, boastful, accusative reassertion of innocence [27]. Here, in contrast to the personified tropes of *The Rake's Progress*, Stravinsky appears to call on (the prosopopoeia of) explicit quotation—here infused with (the ethopoeia of the *pianto* topic of lament)—more to invoke a “dissonant”, dialogised referential sign than a resonant dramatic parallel. (As such, it constitutes an example of Stravinsky's third type of stylistic ungrammatically discussed below.) Regardless of their relative degrees of stylistic/semantic-dramatic resonance or dialogism, these “operatic” referential signs, however, remain deracinated in time and place. They are resonances or traces of what Stravinsky termed “disjecta membra” [28]; in this case from an “Italian” operatic tradition long since wrecked.

Dysphoric topics

If Stravinsky's use of deracinated topics and quotations generates wild and beguiling musical signs primarily from a temporal, geographic and sometimes stylistic displacement of referential signs, his second strategy, the use of referential signs in dysphoric states, comes more from the simple act of breaching the convention for topics to sound prototypically in euphoric states. Monelle states this convention clearly with examples from the noble horse topic (the euphoric male knight astride a galloping destrier vs. the dysphoric witch upon her goat or broomstick) [29] and the hunt (the euphoric heroic parforce hunt of the Middle Ages vs. the dysphoric *chasse aux toiles* with its ignoble, squalid encircled herding of a collective group hunted *en masse*)—even going so far as to assert that “the dysphoric aspects of the *chasse aux toiles* are nowhere present in the musical topic” [30]. I have elsewhere essayed how Stravinsky's *Jeu du Rapt* section of *The Rite of Spring* appears to contravene Monelle's assertion, paradoxically celebrating the dysphoric horn calls of the *cornet de chasse* (simple rhythmic horn calls spanning a fourth in imitation of the primarily rhythmic early hunting horns) depicting in both choreography and music the ritual abduction of multiple female quarry taken from a collective pool by encircling male hunters—whose threatening, thrusting, stamping gestures synchronise to the rhythm of the calls [31]. Neither in music nor balletic action does Stravinsky's hunt in any way resemble the imagined noble ideals of the parforce hunt with its evocative melodic horn calls. The dysphoria here is again in part, the result of Stravinsky's failure to follow the classical topic convention of separating signifiers from signifieds (recouring to stark rhythmic calls resembling those practical enough to have sounded during a hunt in place of the more imagined ideal of melodic calls possible only on instruments impractical for horseback hunting). Ultimately, however, it is the musico-choreographic celebration of the terror of the *chasse aux toiles* over the nobility of the heroic parforce hunt of a single quarry; a terror gendered here as threatening collective male power exerted on encircled, herded females as perhaps befits Stravinsky, Roerich and Nijinsky's portrayal of this ritualised pagan-time Khorovod game of abduction facilitating cross-tribal breeding [32].

Dialogised topics

The third common strategy of Stravinsky's use of referential signs, their dialogised deployment, has already been previewed above in the stylistic-semantic cross-matching of Oedipus's assertive *Invidia fortunam odit* aria with the *pianto*-lament of Verdi's *Qui Mariam absolvisti*. Here Stravinsky presents a classic example of what, in literary theory, Bakhtin terms "double-voicing" [33]: the simultaneous bifurcation of two opposed voices (e.g. Stravinsky-Verdi; neoclassic-melodramatic; modernist-Romantic; assertive-supplicating; egotistic-lamentation) in a single musical utterance. The concept is not at all dissimilar to Hatten's notion of the "troping of topics" [34] where two or more active topoi suffuse in a given musical moment. While Oedipus's aria draws on both *prosopopoeitic* (quotation) and *ethopoeitic* (topoi) for its referential signs, Hatten's concept is geared more towards the *ethopoeitic* double-voicing of musical topics.

For an example of this, one has only to return to the Shepherd's aria of that same opera-oratorio (discussed above as an example of a deracinated topic). As I have elsewhere noted, the pastoralism of that *ranz des vaches* bass drone and lilting *Siciliano* melody is in fact "suffused (troped) with the lament of the weeping *pianto*, amplified by its 'infinity of laments' figure, the *passus duriusculus* (descending minor seconds over a fourth)" all rendered in a relatively unambiguous Bb minor [35]. The Shepherd's aria is therefore not just deracinated but also dialogised as a pastoral-lament with referential signs pulling in both topical directions. In this regard the aria can also be seen as dysphoric, certainly in relation to the more euphoric pastoralism depicted in Beethoven's Sixth Symphony or indeed the opening pastoral duet and trio of *The Rake's Progress* discussed above. This simple aria thus reveals on closer hermeneutic probing all three of Stravinsky's strategies of stylistic "ungrammatically" at play. It presents a simultaneously deracinated, dysphoric and dialogised topical reference par excellence precisely because these "wild" elements of stylistic deviance that contravene the prototypical conventions of topical discourse remain so beguiling: they "amuse, charm and delight" as much as they "deceive, distract and divert".

INSTRUMENTAL GENRES AS TOPICS

By way of conclusion, I present one brief and final extension to this discussion of Stravinsky's tripartite strategies for deploying referential signs marked by their ungrammatically. In addition to the *ethopoeitic* evocation of general, stylistic topics and the *prosopopoeitic* personification of particular musical quotation, Stravinsky has one further prominent tool of extroversive semiosis: the tendency to employ genres as language styles within a given work; language styles which—as with his topical and quotational signs—carry with them associative expressive meanings and ideologies. The technique is by no means unique to Stravinsky. Agawu clearly articulates that many classical topoi exist both as language styles and as independent genres (Baroque and Classical dance forms such as the sarabande, gavotte, minuet etc. immediately spring to mind) [36]. Chorales are another Baroque genre that has migrated to the status of musical topoi—one replete with associations of religiosity and congregational univocality. They figure prominently in Stravinsky's music both as discrete genres (the Symphonies of Wind Instruments' isolated chorale in memoriam for Debussy, the final piece of the Three Pieces

for String Quartet etc.) and as passing stylistic topics (the curtain rise of *Petrushka* [Figures 7-11] etc.); both prone to elements of syntactic and stylistic ungrammaticality (e.g. parallel/conjunct motion, wide chordal spacing etc. in addition to the trademark deracinated, dysphoric and dialogised deployment).

The most common strategy employed by Stravinsky, however, is to dialogise one genre against its typical language style. While Cone, Straus and Cross have all commented on Stravinsky's dialogised use of sonata form genres, their observations are confined largely to matters of syntax (e.g. the tendency of a leading-note to act as a surrogate/synthetic tonic or the superimposition of an arch form over a sonata form) [37]. Stravinsky's dialogised use of genre as a language style in the Bakhtinian sense, however, is arguably more prominent as a rhetorical trope. This can occur in one of two prominent ways. As I have argued elsewhere, the middle piece of Stravinsky's *Three Pieces for String Quartet* relies on the use of absent or negated referential signifiers of prototypical string quartet textures, phrasing and gestures to such an over-coded degree that the work can be read as an allotropic quartet: existing simultaneously as both a quartet and anti-quartet (the lyrical, legato, teleologically-phrased quartet transformed into a repetitive, percussive machine of seemingly haphazard gestures expunging all traces of theme from the scene) [38].

While this Turanian period [39] use of genre codes as a referential sign relies largely on absent or negated signifiers, Stravinsky's hallmark neoclassic genre relies more heavily on dialogising present signifiers of two or more conflated ("troped") genres. The opening of the *Symphony of Psalms* is an excellent example of this rhetorical gambit [40]. Obliterating the penitential, supplicating language style one might expect to accompany Psalm 38, v. 13-14, the orchestra fires off with a virtuosic language style more befitting a piano etude replete with rapid passage work, fistfuls of chords and extreme registers. When the anticipated subdued lyrical language style finally appears, it is presented in a sequence of "compound utterances of dual styles" troped or double-voiced "in self-contradictory opposition with one another (medieval plainchant penitence vs. eighteenth/nineteenth-century piano etude virtuosity)".

Whether by topical reference, explicit quotation or genre styles, Stravinsky's use of referential signifiers thus bewitch, bother and bewilder in equal measure. They display a tendency to subvert or play with the conventional rules of topics and musical signification as outlined by Monelle's compelling semiotic work. By deploying these referential signs in deracinated, dysphoric and dialogised forms, Stravinsky compounds not only the syntax, but also the sense of music.

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Topics and Scripts as Imitation in Opera: *The Rake's Progress* (1947-1951) by Stravinsky, Auden, And Kallman

Bienvenido Arana Rodríguez, Université March-Bloch de Strasbourg, FR

ABSTRACT

This paper aims at introducing those lieux communs that can be easily identified by an opera spectator with a previous knowledge of other works. In order to explain this kind of correlation process, I will use the concept of “topic” and how it is applied to the Rake’s Progress. I will also extend the idea of “topic” to those lieux communs where the narrative action is a key element. In this case, I will adapt the notion of “script” so it can be applied to the stereotyped narrative sequences.

INTRODUCTION

Anyone who has ever attended the performance of *The Rake's Progress* will have notice lots of references bringing him back to the music of old times. This fundamental characteristic of the opera by Stravinsky, Auden and Kallman has led many scholars to think about the possibility of the use of certain compositions by other composers. To further this hypothesis, Stravinsky explained the sources that inspired him to articulate the work: *Così fan tutte* by Mozart, in addition of the engravings collection created by William Hogarth (1735) [1]. One of the most common analyses of *The Rake's Progress* has focused on revealing some hidden texts [2] – the hypotexts, as well as trying to find the “mystery” that provokes the familiarity of the work in the spectator. The question is: can a spectator identify the material of other specific works, or just certain commonplaces?

The Rake's has a very rich variety of elements that can be found through the opera tradition, particularly during the eighteenth-century. It is not just an opera, but an opera of operas [3]. This is, a great pastiche that offers a summary of the opera tradition that attempts to mimic all kinds of conventions and stereotyped formulae ranging from the use of old genres, types and musical styles to well-known scenes.

In *The Rake's* we can see general musical types such as the secco recitatives, the accompanied recitatives, the ariosos, the arias, the ensembles, the choruses and the overtures. We can also find more specific musical types such as the da capo aria (“The woods are green”, act 1, scene I), the cavatina (“Love, too frequently betrayed, act 1, scene II), the cabaletta (“I go, I go to him”, act 1, scene III), the lamento aria (“Vary the song, O London”, act 2, scene I) and the lamento chorus (“Mourn of Adonis”, act 3, scene III). All these musical types are treated from the perspective of imitation. In addition, the libretto is based on the Faust myth, a theme, that although it was not common during the

eighteenth-century it certainly was a recurrent theme in the nineteenth-century¹. All these elements together with others that I will explain below make of this work an opera that goes beyond the use of materials from other authors; it is rather a work that uses recurrent elements that are present throughout the operatic repertoire.

TOPICS

The first notion I will use for the analysis of this opera is the theory of topics, for which I will build mainly upon Wye Allanbrook's and Raymond Monelle's approaches [4]. Note the following table:

Introduction	Military
Act 1, scene I	Pastoral (march, horse, minuet, gigue, fanfare)
Act 1, scene II	Military (march, fanfare, pastoral, pianto, siciliana)
Act 1, scene III	Pastoral (gigue, horse)
Act 2, scene I	Pastoral (lamento, passus duriusculus, hunt, minuet, tarantella)
Act 2, scene II	Military (overture, march, sarabande)
Act 2, scene III	Pastoral / military (march, minuet, fanfare)
Act 3, scene I	(Minuet, march, fanfare)
Act 3, scene II	Funeral (French overture, march, pastoral, prélude pour clavecin, fanfare)
Act 3, scene III	(Pastoral, march, minuet, contredanse, siciliana, funeral, pianto)
Epilogue	Military

Table I: Global/specific topics

In the table above we can see the global and specific topics that appear in *The Rake's Progress*. The left column is divided by the opera scenes, beside the introduction and epilogue. The right column shows the topics that articulate every scene. The brackets indicate the topics that occupy either the whole of an opera number or a part of it. For example, the topic "pastoral" appears on almost every number of the first scene of the opera, while the topics "march", "horse" and "fanfare" as well as the types of dance "minuet" or "gigue" appear in a single number or at specific times of a single number. Due to the small size of this paper, I will only briefly treat "siciliana", "military march" and "sarabande" topics.

Siciliana topic

The "siciliana" or "siciliano" topic belongs to the "pastoral" genre [5]. The example taken for this paper is the latest number of the scene II of act 1. The scenic setting is a brothel, where the main character – Tom Rakewell, accompanied by Nick Shadow – is seduced by a prostitute. But to understand the use of this topic is necessary to advance some of the *libretto*. The first act of the opera happens in a country house. This is where Tom and his dear love, Anne, after declaring their eternal love for each other, are surprised by the arrival of Nick, who informs Tom that he has received an inheritance from an uncle who lived in the city. After saying goodbye to Anne and her father, Tom and Nick leave for the city to take over the inheritance. Before leaving, however, Tom

¹ E.g., *La Damnation de Faust* (1846) by Berlioz or *Faust* (1859) by Gounod.

asked Nick about his fees for helping him, to which the latter replied that he will be charged once a year has elapsed. In the scene II, set in a brothel, Nick tries to pervert Tom by leading him to the brothel, where Mother Goose persuades him. Finally, Tom and Mother Goose slept together.

In the example 1 we can see a prototypical “siciliana” topic that includes the most characteristic elements of this pastoral dance: the time signature of 6/8, starting with a pastoral instrumentation, the bagpipe drones in the horns and the bassoon II, as well as the rhythms and characteristic melodic contours. On the other hand, the chorus is a description of nature (“The sun is bright, the grass is green”) that describes the prostitute and Tom as two lovers (“The King is courting young historical Queen”). Indeed, here the use of the “siciliana” topic matches its common use². This is, the “siciliana” is associated with love and nature, but also with past times, the Golden Age, when Tom was happy in country house with Anne. Yet, it is somehow surprising the ironic treatment of the use of the “siciliana” since here it represents the love between a man and a prostitute: a false love. The irony and mockery are not only two of the most important features in this number, but in the opera as a whole, as we will see in other examples.

Military march and sarabande topics

The integration of dance as a writing material of certain arias is an important feature in the operas belonging to the second half of the eighteenth-century, and especially in Mozart’s operas. However, this assimilation is not a direct representation of dances steps, but it rather represents the stylized rhythms made to suit the singer’s motion [6]. But there are also other cases in which dance is used to represent the social life of certain characters. For example, in order to represent the noble status of Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Mozart uses a minuet in the finale of the act 2. Another classic example of this same opera takes place in “Se vuol ballare”, act 1, where Figaro imagine a moment he lived while in the court. For this, the Austrian author resorted to the classic model minuet-contredanse-minuet. There are numerous examples in the social use of the dance, especially in *Le Nozze* and in *Don Giovanni* [7].

In the opera that we are studying in this paper, this phenomenon also occurs. It is clear particularly in the scene II of Act 2. To understand what happens in this scene, it is necessary to go back to the *libretto* again. Under the Nick’s recommendation, Tom marries Baba the Turk, a woman who works showing his huge beard. Anne, Tom’s fiancée when he lived in the country, goes in search of her lover. When Anne arrives at the door of Tom’s house, she sees Tom and Baba arriving, the latter being inside a carriage that is pulled by several servants. At the time Baba is about to enter the house, Anne calls Tom. He rejects her and tells her that he is married to Baba. Then, Anne leaves crying while the Turk continues her procession to enter the house with Tom.

The procession is a scenic commonplace that appears in several operas³ and is associated with the ceremony, solemnity, or main occasions [8]. It also tends to occur with the entrance of a noble into the stage. In this case, the procession of Baba is divided into

² E.g., “Intendo amico mio” from *Il re pastore* (1775) and “Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen” from *Die Zauberflöte* (1791) by Mozart.

³ E.g., *Così fan tutte* (1789), *Die Zauberflöte* (1791) and *La clemenza di Tito* (1791) by Mozart; *L’elisir d’amore* (1832) by Donizetti; *La Damnation de Faust* (1846) by Berlioz; *Die Meistersinger* (1868) by Wagner; and *Carmen* (1875) by Bizet.

two parts. In the first, the music accompanying the procession is a military march (“Lights! ‘Tis he!”) and it uses all the typical elements of the march: the time signature of 2/4, allegro tempo, major-key, etc. However, the excessive repetition of the rhythms makes the spectator to perceive a certain irony. As a result, Baba the Turk is treated with derision. In the second part of the procession, after Tom has rejected Anne, Stravinsky uses a “sarabande” (“I have not run away”). We can see that this number corresponds to the main features of the “sarabande”: slow tempo, triple meter, the legato, the characteristic rhythms and the usual harmonic process I-IV-I of the beginning.

In short, both the “military march” and the “sarabande” topics are used as an association to show a character totally opposite to its real self. Baba the Turk has neither military nor noble origin, but quite the opposite. She is a character that belongs to the circus life. Contrary to the usual association with the heroic and nobility of these topics, the ironic treatment of the topics here contributes to an even more banal vision of the character.

SCRIPTS

The procession example serves us as a bridge between the “topic” and the “script” notions. The procession is an operatic topic or intertextual frame [9] that includes a single scenic action: the trip of Baba’s carriage while being pulled by the servants. But, what happens when there is an ensemble of actions? That is when the “script” comes into play [10]:

A script is a structure that describes an appropriate sequence of events in a particular context. A script is made up of slots and requirements about what can fill those slots. The structure is an interconnected whole, and what is in one slot subject to much change, nor do they provide the apparatus for handling totally novel situations. Thus, a script is a predetermined, stereotyped sequence of actions that defines a well-known situation [11].

The knowledge of the script allows for the definition of a universe of assumptions and it also allows the spectator to identify the opera and anticipate the actions of the story. In addition, a script is fixed and precise, even in the order of the elements that compose it, only permitting a few minor variations. Yet, the problem arises when the spectator does not know the script, because in that case, he will not understand what is represented in the different fragments [12].

A very usual example in opera is the {serenade} script⁴. The sequence of actions takes place in a very specific context – in front of a house in the evening – and it involves the boyfriend, who carries a guitar and who is in front of the house of the beloved one. The sequence of actions is as follows: 1) arrival of the suitor, 2) the suitor sings a love song accompanying him with the guitar, 3) the beloved one appears at the balcony to hear the music, 4) both speak, and 5) the suitor declares his love for her. The differences in the use of {serenade} script between several applications are minimal. Thus, in the other operas,

⁴ E.g., *Don Giovanni* (1775), *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1782) and *Così fan tutte* (1789) by Mozart; *Il barbero di Siviglia* (1816) by Rossini; *Don Pasquale* (1843) by Donizetti; *La Traviata* (1853) by Verdi; and *Faust* (1859) by Gounod.

the suitor is perhaps accompanied by musicians, or instead of playing a guitar he might play a mandolin. But despite these minor differences, a spectator can easily identify that it is a {serenade} script.

In the case of *The Rake's Progress*, we can easily identify some scripts. The scene II of act 1 is based on the {brothel} script. The framework is a brothel and the characters are the client (Tom) and the prostitutes (including Mother Goose). The beginning of the script, when 1) Tom enters the brothel, already anticipates the sequence of actions: 2) the client drinks something, 3) the prostitute seduces him, 4) they both go to bed 5) the client pays and 6) he leaves. These two last actions are omitted from the opera since they are not necessary to recognize the script. Here is another example. The first scene of act 3 is structured from {auction} script. Here the framework is not an auction house, but Tom's house. However, the items that appear in the scene as well as its distribution are as usual: an auctioneer standing on a porch, two guards in front of the auctioneer, buyers sitting in front of the auctioneer and a person charged with going to showing the objects to the public. The reader of this paper can easily predict the sequence of actions.

If the last two scripts presented above imply a common knowledge of non-opera works, in *The Rake's* there are also scripts that only an opera spectator can recognize. The first is the {vaudeville final} script⁵. This involves not only the frame and the characters of the narrative sequence, but also its type of music – military – and the theme – moralizing. The sequence of actions is as follows: 1) development of all the characters on stage, 2) the characters addresses the public, 3) the singers sing individually and in ensemble, 4) lowering of the curtain, and 5) the audience applauds. Indeed, in this script the spectator participates in the sequence of actions.

But not all scripts are so easily identifiable. The last example I want to point out is the {pantomime} script⁶ from the scene III of act 2. This is a sequence of actions that is typically located in a pastoral setting. This script is made up of two types of characters: a natural character and magical characters. The action sequence is as follows: 1) a person falls asleep, 2) a magical character appears,⁷ 3) the magical character makes some magic, 4) the magical character dances, 5) the sleeping character wakes up, and 6) the sleeping character is bewitched. It is a strictly musical and visual script with no use of words.

Yet in *The Rake's*, there is the substitution of some elements which makes it difficult to identify this script, although the sequence of actions is the same as the prototype described above. Tom Rakewell is the character who falls asleep and Nick Shadow, the magical one. But the fundamental difference is that Nick, instead of doing magic, he tricks Tom into thinking that he has invented a magic machine that multiplies the loaves of bread from a crumb, a machine Tom had dreamed about in his sleep. This is the strategy Nick uses to cause Tom's ruin. In addition, the sequence does not occur in a pastoral setting, but at Tom's. The scenic frame is substituted by the pastoral music. While the sequence differs from the prototype of pantomime, a spectator with great knowledge of opera can perfectly identify this sequence as a {pantomime} script.

⁵ E.g., *Rinaldo* (1711) by Händel; *Orfeo ed Euridice* (1762) by Glück; *Don Giovanni* (1775), *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1782), *Der Schauspieldirektor* (1786) and *Così fan tutte* (1789) by Mozart; *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (1816) by Rossini; *Don Pasquale* (1843) by Donizetti; *Falstaff* (1893) by Verdi; and *L'heure espagnole* (1911) by Ravel.

⁶ E.g., *Platée* (1745) by Rameau; *Orphée* (1762), *Alceste* (1767) and *Iphigénie en Tauride* (1779) by Glück; *La Damnation de Faust* (1846) and *Les Troyens* (1856-8) by Gounod; and *Der Rosenkavalier* (1910) by Strauss.

⁷ See pantomime "Fa la la" in [13].

CONCLUSIONS

In this brief paper, I have tried to apply two concepts that focus on the processes of recognition, significance and comprehension of an operatic spectator from a pragmatic point of view. The application of the theory of topics has allowed us to understand the processes of significance of Stravinsky's opera from the use of conventional formulae whose meaning can be found in the operatic repertoire. On the other hand, the use of the notion of script has helped us to detect those stereotyped sequences of action which can be recognizable by spectator with a previous knowledgeable of opera repertoire.

What is clear is that to mimic the music and the opera of the past – especially that belonging to the eighteenth-century – is essential the use of musical topics, theatrical topics and scripts in the same way of that time. In this sense, both the Russian composer and the American librettists had a very precise knowledge of the repertoire. This knowledge allowed them to use these elements in a way that contemporary literate spectator can perfectly identify them. As I tried to show in the present paper, their use may be the usual one, causing the typical meaning associations or going against this with the aim of causing the irony. From this point of view, we can consider the authors of *The Rake's* as true experts in semiotics.

Furthermore, I believe that using the scripts as a tool for the analysis of the opera can be very effective given the high level of stereotyping that has this genre. Unfortunately, there are very few studies that have been applied to music [14], and even less to opera in particular. What we suggest in this paper is a first step to understand the mechanisms that contribute to the comprehension of an opera spectator. We can also extend the script notion to other levels, as on the characters, due to the recurrence of many of them. Here is an example. As mentioned below, *The Rake's* is based on the Faust myth. Nick Shadow represents Mephistopheles. Consequently, he is a very stereotyped character that follows a sequence of actions: 1) he appears by surprise, 2) he tricks another character – in this case, Tom Rakell, 3) he corrupts that character, 4) he charges the debt of the character and 5) he provokes his death. But the difference with the libretto by Auden and Kallman is that Fausto's death is replaced by Tom Rakewell's madness. Nevertheless, we can identify this character as a {Mephistopheles} script and we can anticipate his actions.

Using the tools of analysis that I have proposed in this article on the opera and its further development can provide us a new vision of a genre that needs new approaches. In this sense, both, theory of topics and narrative scripts, can help us in this task.

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The End of the Topic, or Indexicality at its Limit

Naomi Waltham-Smith, PhD, University of Pennsylvania, USA

ABSTRACT

*Monelle discerned the emergence of a new topic in the passage from pure iconicity or indexicality to a second-order referentiality that he called the “indexicality of the object”. Drawing upon Benjamin’s interest in play and the way in which this notion has been taken up in the Italian post-workerist philosophical tradition, this paper explores the musical topic of play in modernity exemplified by the late eighteenth-century interest in mechanical instruments and toys, and Wes Anderson’s use of Britten’s music in *Moonrise Kingdom*. I argue that play insinuates itself into a theory of topics at two distinct levels, first, functioning as a musical topic or family of topics and second, constituting the limit-condition of the topic as it falls into disuse.*

AN INVENTORY OF TOPICS

In a brief, yet unmistakably affectionate lecture on the filmic practice of Guy Debord, the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben suggestively defines man as a “moviegoing animal”—an animal that “is interested in images [even] after he has recognized that they are not real [1].” It was in the late 1960s that Debord declared that “the whole of life...presents itself as an immense accumulation of *spectacles*,” that “all that once was directly lived has become mere representation [2].” Even if the full force and subtlety of Debord’s argument is lost or perhaps deliberately suppressed in the current sloganistic journalistic discourse on our media-saturated society, his analysis of the spectacle as the manifestation of social alienation in late capitalism continues to have resonance.

From this perspective, it is no surprise that we might expect to find not only a proliferation of new musical topics in more recent repertoires, but also, I shall go on to suggest, a situation in which musical topicality, as theorized by Raymond Monelle, extinguishes itself in this saturation. At the core of both Monelle and Debord’s conceptual apparatuses is the relation between sound or image and the real, and it is this connection that is tested and transformed by the increasing spectacularization of the world in modernity in which appearance threatens to obliterate reality. For Monelle, the topic at once grounds itself in and takes its leave from the real in the same way as does the dominant form of the image today: while the photograph has long been the paradigmatic example of the indexical sign, it is only with Monelle’s recourse to the semiotic theories of American pragmatist Charles Peirce that this form of relationality was recognized as an important component in the generation of musical meaning. Peirce’s theory famously identifies three signifying functions—namely icon, index, and symbol—each of which

play a part in Monelle’s account of musical topicality [3]. Somewhat simplifying Peirce’s later theoretical system, Monelle contrasts the index with the icon: whilst the later signifies by virtue of resemblance (chiefly through imitation), the index requires a causal connection with reality. Peirce’s own early example of the photograph is helpful here because it demonstrates both the difference and the potential interdependence between the two signifying functions [4]. Insofar as it resembles the object it represents, the photograph signifies iconically, but, at the same time, this iconic relation is both an effect and a condition of the photograph’s indexicality whereby the image is produced as a result of the physical process of capture. The photograph is indexical in character in both a causal and deitic manner in that the image results from the distribution of the different intensities of light of the object onto the sensor and also points performatively to the event of inscription—both to the production and to the taking place of reference.

Like the photograph, music exploits both iconic and indexical signifying functions in what Monelle analyses as a two-stage process [5]. In the first step, the sounding item refers—either iconically or indexically—to an object. In the first case, the musical item imitates its object such as a bird call or a drumroll by presenting common properties by which the object can be recognized. Monelle’s discusses throughout the book the example of the *pianto* which copies the physical gesture of weeping. Alternatively, the music can point to an object by means of a musical style or repertoire to which the object is connected, Monelle’s chief example being the sarabande topic which does not so much resemble the bodily gestures of the dance itself as present stylistic features of its musical manifestation (triple metre with an accented second beat, for example) by which the dance is recognizable.

Neither of these kinds of reference, however, is sufficient to constitute musical topicality. Instead, a genuine topic is defined by a second-order referentiality in which this first-stage reference (whether it be iconic or indexical) is in turn followed by a second-stage reference between the object and its ultimate signification which could be multiplied to form a chain of infinitely-deferred reference to ever more remote cultural associations (see Figure 1). The second reference may only signify through the second of Peirce’s categories and Monelle therefore calls this the “indexicality of the object [6].” Among the examples of this kind of indexicality that Monelle cites are the reference of weeping (the object of the *pianto*’s iconic reference) to grief, pain, loss or regret and the sarabande’s association with seriousness and decorum. The result is to define the topic as a reference that refers not simply to an object, but to an object itself referring to something else, so that the topic consists in *a reference to a reference*.

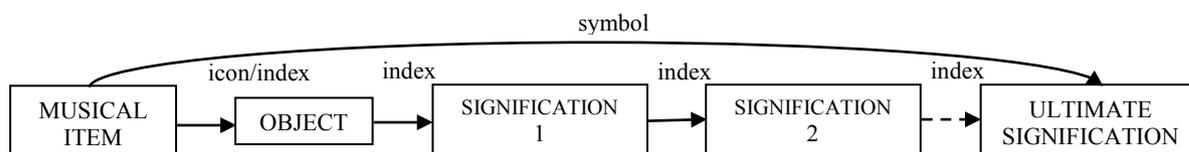


Figure 1

Monelle does not stop at this reduplication of referentiality, but instead encases it within a further higher-order reference that traverses the entirety of the recursive process. Rather than construe this higher-order referentiality as supplementary, it might be more appropriate, following Peirce rather than Derrida, to view it as an arbiter of meaning that

is able to stand as a final interpretant and bring the infinite play of *différence* to a halt. So, what kind of signifying function is able to fulfil this role? At a later point in the book at which Monelle pauses to consider the possibility of building an ever-expanding inventory of musical topics, the requirement for second-order referentiality is clearly stated as a part of a two-limb test for determining whether a new topic has been revealed. First, “has this musical sign passed from literal imitation (iconism) or stylistic reference (indexicality) into signification by association (the indexicality of the object)? And second, is there a level of conventionality in the sign? [7]”. While the first limb corresponds to the second component of Peirce’s triadic system, the second limb, with its threshold of conventionality, appeals to Peirce’s notion of symbolism whereby signs refer by virtue of habit or acquired law. For instance, as the symbolic function of the *pianto* became established through customary interpretation, the musical figure alone was able to signify loss or grief in the absence of the local textual idea of weeping. This means that, only if music’s reference to a particular indexicality is authorized by some culturally-contingent general law of interpretation, will it constitute a topic.

THE END OF THE TOPIC

While Monelle proposes this test as a means of identifying the *birth* of a new topic, in what follows I analyse this mix of indexicality and symbolism that constitutes the topic in order to speculate instead about the other end of the topic’s lifecycle when a topic would fall out of the inventory of living topics. What would it mean for the topic to reach its limit and come to an end?

Just as Peirce discerned a mutual constitution of icon and index in the photograph, my starting hypothesis will be that the living topic is animated by the interaction between symbolism and indexicality, or, that indexicality and symbolism constitute not independent modes of signification, but a single bipolar machine whose operation produces musical topicality. To better understand the relation between the two orders of reference in musical topicality, I shall begin by investigating those musical examples in which one limb of the test either ceases or is yet to be met. In other words, what becomes of the topic in the absence of either its habitual impulse or its connection to the real? This entails looking at the margins of the topic, at the zones of indiscernibility in which a musical entity is on the point of becoming a topic or on the brink of losing its topical function.

Of the two poles, Monelle privileges the symbolic, subordinating the physical materiality of the index to custom. In fact, he introduces the topic as a “symbol [whose] indexical or iconic features [are] governed by convention and thus by rule [8].” He goes on to give the example of the cuckoo’s call to argue that, in the presence of a pre-existent indexicality of the object, a topic only emerges with the establishment of a customary practice of interpretation. The two-stage process of referentiality is already present insofar as the musical figure first imitates and thereby refers iconically to the sound of a cuckoo’s call and the bird call then points indexically to the heralding of spring when the change in season determines the migratory pattern of the birds. For Monelle, such musical figures would not constitute a genuine topic until it were “culturally prescribed that the imitation of a cuckoo by an orchestral instrument *inevitably signifies the heralding of spring.*”

By contrast, the indexicality of the object is a feature that merely “seems universal.” Indeed, Monelle proposes that musical figures retain their topical function when the interpretative convention outlives the originary indexical signification. The military fanfare appears to work in this way for modern audiences who are aware of the figure’s bellicose character even though trumpets are no longer used in modern warfare, notwithstanding their presence in military paraphernalia [9]. One might comprehend this development as a short-circuiting of the double-referential motion: the particularity of the object drops out entirely in favour of a single relation prescribed only by an immediacy of conventional use without passage through material externality.

Whilst this reading would fit with a certain Debordian critique of the images of modernity as an eclipse of the real by the reign of appearance, another reading suggests itself which recognizes that the indexicality does not disappear but survives as a once-but-no-longer, as a signification that has been deactivated or fallen into disuse. This would mean that the persistence of a pure symbolism beyond the originary indexicality amounts to something like a *use of a use-less object*.

The inverse situation in which the object’s indexical grounding in the real survives the symbolic cultural resonances looks somewhat like the mirror-image of the cuckoo’s call prototopic. Lawrence Zbikowski argues that changing socio-political connotations of dancing rather than the absence of an active practice drove the decline of dance topics in the early nineteenth century [10]. Conversely, he speculates that the flourishing of a greater variety of dances among a wider spectrum of society saw the indexical relations to a shared activity eclipsing the (symbolic) utility of musical dances as topics. An excess of indexicality might actually lead to a falling away of symbolic association.

Given that topics hinge so decisively on their symbolic function, it is no surprise that the rise and fall of topics depends heavily upon the waxing and waning of culturally-contingent associations. An inventory of topics might thus include, in addition to living topics in current usage, historical (lapsed) or incipient (proto) topics that may currently be in a state of deactivation or potentiality. Conceiving of these various states of the topic along a spectrum of modality from potential to actual in two dimensions enables an analysis of the production of musical topicality as a bipolar machine. As the example of the military trumpet call demonstrates, indexical function obtains as a result of a relation that has at some point taken place in *actuality*. The domain of indexicality permits interpretation on the basis of a corpus of actual, particular relations. Symbolism, conversely, works through a generic rule that authorizes possible interpretative usages. While this may not be readily apparent, I suggest that symbols fall into the category of actualized potentialities that philosophers have analysed as existing possibilities-in-waiting rather than as genuine (im)potentialities that may or may not take shape. Monelle’s use of word “inevitably” to describe the way in which symbols refer to a signification supports this reading. Further, we can observe that iconicity is genuinely (im)potential potentiality. Occupying a privileged role in Peirce’s system, the icon is associated with Firstness: that quality of a sign that gives it a pure capacity to be interpreted before any given habitual interpretation. Hence, in an ambitious fusion of Peirce’s semiotics with Walter Benjamin’s notion of the dialectical image, Peter Osborne can argue that the icon is not primarily defined by its resemblance (which Peirce associates with Thirdness), but with recognizability and reproducibility [11].

Figure 2 shows an attempt to decide between topicality and non-topicality on the basis of each of the limbs, with symbolism indicating a usability of the reference and

indexicality an actual use of the signifying relation. This double cut cannot separate cleanly the sphere of topicality in the upper left quadrant, in which the combined presence of indexical and symbolic gives rise to an ongoing potential to make use of a relation already used in actuality, from the lower right quadrant in which both limbs of Monelle's test fail to be met. This division is not without remainder: the other two quadrants present situations in which musical referentiality tends, on the one hand, towards an absolute symbolism without indexicality in which the unused would be usable and, on the other, in the direction of an absolute indexicality with symbolism in which the used would be unusable. These two presentations cannot simply be designated as not-topical, but rather imply margins at the limits of topicality in which a musical signification is topical with respect to one limb but not to the other—a scenario that is arguably best encapsulated by the formula not-not-topic.

	<i>Symbolism</i>	<i>No symbolism</i>
<i>Indexicality</i>	Topic—Usable used: use of the useful	Not-not-topic—Unusable used: disuse of the useful
<i>No indexicality</i>	Not-not-topic—Usable unused: use of the useless	Not-topic—Unusable unused: disuse of the useless

Figure 2

These two quadrants represent two opposed tendencies that come into proximity at their limit. In both cases, whether the cultural association or the object's causal connection falls away, there remains a pure signifying without signification, in which signification can only signify itself. In the case of an absolute indexicality, what is left over is a pure pointing to the taking place of reference, a pure deixis. We might also construe this indexicality that has lost its connection to the cause that produces the object as something like an immanent cause that has no origin or end outside itself, or a pure praxis, which, unlike poesis, has no product outside its own productivity. Conversely, the absolutely symbolic marks a pure usage doubled-back on itself, a pure rule of interpretation in (general) force but without (particular) application, where meaning derives only from convention's relation to itself. Insofar as the topic is defined as a reference to a reference, this propensity to self-referentiality is immanent to its distinctive signifying character; the reference to a pure referring without referent simply marks the limit-condition of the topic at which it comes to its end.

PLAY

The foregoing analysis situates the end of the topic within a sphere of disused use and deactivated activity and as such aligns the fate of musical topicality with an interest in inoperosity in the Italian post-workerist philosophical tradition. Alongside a Marxian conception of a pure praxis, this thought also takes its cue from Walter Benjamin's observations on the new free use to which toys and disused objects might be put [12], as well as Benjamin's wider interest in a form of studious play that would survive the law. Two related trajectories within Italian thought advance the analysis of the end of the topic. The first is Agamben's various appropriations and extensions of a Benjaminian

conception of play throughout his career to date [13], and the other is Paolo Virno's discussion of performance and virtuosity; both lead back to a notion of potentiality [14].

Play's significance for topic theory is twofold. First, play can be argued to function, if not as a single musical topic, then as a family of topical references. At this level, the features of the music (repetition, instrumentation, rhythmic propulsion) iconically imitate the motions of, say, a clockwork toy or indexically point to a broader set of musical styles, including, for example, the music box. These objects in turn conjure up a variety of cultural associations of youth, innocence, regression, idleness, loss, and even the inanimate. Beyond this capacity to act as a reference of musical signification, however, play also names the condition to which the topic aspires at its limit.

The increasingly explicit interest in inoperosity in Agamben's recent work manifests itself in his early writings under the guise of play, where the concept emerges out of Claude Lévi-Strauss's analysis of the temporality of ritual. Whereas ritual acts synchronically to fix and structure the calendar, highlighting its cyclical, repetitive character, play transforms and destroys the calendar, dispersing each temporal instant. Agamben posits an inverse relationship between sacred ritual and profaning play, but one which, like the bipolar operation of symbolism and indexicality, arrives at indiscernibility when each pole is taken to its limit. An absolute synchrony—a completely ritualized practice—makes of every moment an always-already, collapsing them into the same, so that the historical passage between them is unrecognizable. The pure diachrony of play at its limit achieves the same end result—the oblivion of history—by instead irreparably separating one instant from the next to sever any historical connection. The possibility of relating rests upon a combination of familiarity (the always-already) that facilitates connection, and disjunction (the never-before) that forestalls an absolute coincidence in which there would be no relation. Absolute synchrony, like absolute symbolism, presents an absolute impossibility of relation to the extent that there is only ever an always-already. The opposite is true of pure diachrony and indexicality which can only point to the pure eventual taking-place of a particularity. Agamben extends his conception of play through a reading of toys that are frequently replicas of the objects that have fallen into disuse or are miniaturizations—hence deactivations—of objects that still maintain their use value. Whereas sacralization elevates and removes ordinary things to a separate domain (the sphere of the sacred, the law, economics, war), play tends to profane its objects, returning them to a new non-canonical use. While Agamben privileges the kind of play that transforms synchrony into diachrony, amounting to a disuse of the useful (pure indexicality), he also observes that there can be a certain ritual elements to games that might consist in something like a use of the useless (pure symbolism).

THE SACRALIZATION OF THE TOY

Late eighteenth-century repertoires attest to the difficulty of cleanly separating play from rite as much as they do the purely musical from the extra-musical or idea from material. The mode of listening that is both the condition and effect of the passage to absolute music can be traced back to the rich topical universe of music developed in preceding decades. By 1800, music in the European art tradition had arguably attained an unprecedented degree of stylistic conventionality. The idea of an absolute music exhibiting sufficiency in a purely musical, introversive signification nonetheless depended

upon the acquisition of ingrained listening habits to enable recognition of the music's formal process: the rarefied status of absolute music only obtained through a high degree of conventionality. The symbolic function of musical topicality played an important role not only in that it set a precedent for music offering an "invitation" for interpretation and explicitly declaring its recognizability, but also in that it assumed a quasi-pedagogical function due to the tight interactions between topicality and structure. At the risk of oversimplifying, the proliferation of topics in music of the later eighteenth century entrained some of the central components of that distinctive mode of turn-of-the-century listening without which the idea of absolute music is unimaginable. With early nineteenth-century repertoires frequently demonstrating a marked attenuation of the familiar topics of the recent past, a musical tradition rich in topics arguably paves the way for its own demise.

Within this context, the embracing of the sphere of play in late eighteenth-century music, especially in the form of mechanical instruments and the imitation and even use of toys, requires careful evaluation. Consider the example of *Toy Symphony*, likely assembled from a larger set of *divertimenti* by Tyrolean monk Edmund Angerer. The piece calls for a band of toy instruments—cuckoo, nightingale, rattles and Turkish crescent in addition to toy triangle, cymbals, trumpet and drums—alongside its modest string forces: the use of these miniature replicas succumbs readily to Agamben's critical insights, suggesting that, by virtue of their size and limited technical capacity, these instruments mark a retreat from the canonical use of their larger counterparts. At first blush this piece seems to effect a gesture of profanation, liberating the symphonic genre from its burgeoning status as the pinnacle of compositional prowess and relegating it to the domain of the childish and regressive. While the musical style is deliberately simple throughout, the comic potential of these unusual forces is curiously underplayed. While the seeming normalcy might itself evidence a dry sense of humour, the motivic and syntactic integration of the distinctive features of the toy instruments points more in the direction of rite and structure than it does towards the eventual taking-place of pure diachronous indexicality. Contrast the much noisier and riotous episodes of Turkish music in Mozart and Beethoven that are designed to highlight the material qualities of the external reference. Instead, what seemingly happens here is an attempt to restore the toy instruments to a canonical usage: a form of sacralization which finds a formal use for the useless.

A useful comparison may be made with Mozart's F-minor *Fantasie* K. 608, "an organ piece for a clock," where there is a much greater discrepancy between the medium and the seriousness of the music's stylistic references and contrapuntal bravura. As Annette Richards observes, most pieces for mechanical organ or musical clock conformed stylistically to the childish and frivolous connotations of the instruments, comprising mainly charming *galanteries* or kitsch [15]. K. 608, though, is at odds with both the conventions of the genre and the vulgar commercialism of its context. The contrapuntal excesses of the piece allow for the typical demonstration of the machine's seemingly infinite capacity for virtuosity and, to this extent, exhibit play as a ceaseless activity, serving to locate the piece's impact in the eventual character of its performance. In an assessment of the political potential of performance and virtuosity, Paolo Virno suggests that a pure productivity that has no finished product other than itself aligns virtuosity with political action or pure praxis, but also risks being condemned, following Marx, to the status of servile labour [16]. Rather than straightforwardly celebrate the alliance of

virtuosity with political action, Virno instead observes that this pure taking-place of activity without an external product—an activity that Virno likens to the pure faculty or capacity for reference that we find in the topic at its limit—is actually a characteristic of work in the post-Fordist era. In its lofty ambitions, K. 608 conforms to the trajectory of absolute music, passing through an extreme virtuosity or play simply in order to return to an elevated, serious usage. Indeed, play has served a similar function in Mozart reception more widely. The childlike qualities of both composer and music have long been emphasized by commentators in an attempt to safeguard the sanctity of absolute music: by emphasizing the effortless productivity of Mozart's superabundant imagination, his music was removed into an untarnished sphere freed from the grubbiness of work and money—and of material indexicality.

PLAYFUL PROFANATION

By contrast, Wes Anderson's recent revival in *Moonrise Kingdom* of many of these same topics (cuckoo, military drum and bugle) extends topicality to its limit in a bold gesture of playful profanation. The film's two main protagonists are Sam Shakusky and Suzy Bishop, two twelve-year olds who fall in love, become pen pals and resolve to run away together in September 1965, but this is no straightforward coming-of-age story. The setting is the quaint fictional New England island of New Penzance that seemingly embodies the small-town homely values of a country enjoying its last summer of innocence, but the film at once resists this narrative trope: for example, Anderson decided against a possible epilogue in which the master of Sam's scout troop would be sent off to Vietnam. Instead the film plays with the idea not of a loss, but a proliferation of innocence. Anderson aims his familiar rectilinear and top-down camerawork at sets resembling giant dolls' houses, so that it is not just Sam's miniature canoe or Suzy's dinky vintage Barrington portable record-player, but an entire miniaturized world built of sets—some manifestly models—that could have been borrowed from his earlier animation, *Fantastic Mr. Fox*. The films' soundscape, dominated by Britten's music for children, likewise evokes childlike innocence, not to mourn it as lost or to cherish it as a sacred domain set apart from the harsh realities of adult life, but to allow it colonize and profane this entire fictional world. The film opens with the Bishop children listening to a record of *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*, and two songs from *Friday Afternoons* are heard later. Further, Sam and Suzy first meet at a local church performance of *Noye's Fludde* in which she plays the raven: during this sequence with the backstage encounter at the performance and her initiating their correspondence, we hear the animals' Kyries as they enter the ark complete with B-flat bugle calls that echo the miniature instrument used at the scout camp. The animals' Alleluias from the end of the opera—again overlaid with bugle fanfares—underscore the climax of the film in which the entire community shelters in the church during a severe storm and flash flood.

Anderson inverts the adults' and children's worlds. The convictions and pragmatism of the young runaways, whose intelligent earnestness makes them unpopular, are portrayed with complete seriousness, whereas the adults appear faintly ridiculous and helpless. Bill Murray's Mr Bishop goes "out back" with an axe to escape from marital crisis into self-pity, while his wife (Frances McDormand) addresses her family with a megaphone and sneaks out like a naughty schoolgirl on a pedal bike to meet the lonely and

charmingly incompetent local police officer (Bruce Willis). The boy scouts' escape strategy and toy weaponry work more effectively than the official operations, while the grown-up world turns into mere theatre and the island a stage set as the film's act final begins to play out in real life the events of the supposedly cancelled performance of *Noye's Fludde*. Far from being propelled into premature adulthood through their first romance, the children retain their naivety (the clumsy directness of the pair's attempt at French kissing eschews any eroticization of early pubescence). Instead it is the adults who become childlike: Captain Sharp takes up a weapon fashioned from a walking stick and nails by one of the boy scouts, while Tilda Swinton's Social Services and Captain Sharp threaten to "write one another up" for misbehaviour.

Moreover, *Moonrise Kingdom* effects this overturning of the conventional relation between innocence and experience through a deactivation of two eighteenth-century musical topics via Britten. Listing the characters in an interview, Murray wryly observes: "Edward Norton, he does a lot of psycho work, he's playing against type; Bruce Willis, playing a policeman, typecast, I guess." Anderson empties the Bruce-Willis topic of its conventional association, deactivating the symbolic reference that connected the material relation between Willis and his office to connotations of toughness, insensitivity and violence. Not just the *Die Hard* star, but Britten's music and its topical universe are put to a new, non-canonical use. The music first brings with it a critical convention that discerns a loss of innocence, even of perversion within childhood, in Britten's obsession with the young. The "Cuckoo!" song first sounds when Scout Master Ward broaches the subject of Sam's status as an orphan after he has been apprehended for the first time. This might seem to suggest an association between spring and awakening into adulthood, but the significance of the cuckoo seems ambiguous when Ward appears more concerned with Sam's camp-building prowess, an activity that plays at being grown-up. In a similar way, the bugles and drums seem to be cut off from any premonitory reference to Vietnam, confined to the mock war games of the scouts so as to profane the sphere of war, just as the film profanes the sphere of law and order with its emasculation of Willis, ridicule of Social Services and comic illusion to a US Department of Inclement Weather. The "Cuckoo!" returns at the end when Sam climbs out of Suzy's window, imitating his new guardian in a child-size police uniform that captures perfectly the deactivation of the Willis topic's symbolic reference. The cuckoo topic, similarly cast against type, reaches its limit in its pure-taking place without (its customary) significance, conspiring with young love to profane authority.

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Tropoi vs. Topoi: Josef Matthias Hauer's *Zwölftonspiel* in the context of *Musica Speculativa* and Conceptual Art

Robert Michael Weiß, Josef Matthias Hauer Musikschule, AT

ABSTRACT

Can different features of a Zwölftonspiel be seen functioning as musical topics in such an abstract, self-referential type of music, thus relating the notion of the topos to the mathematical-algorithmical domain?

At least the Twelve-tone-cycles have been in this way examined and classified by Hauer himself in the System of the 44 Tropes. Hauer thereby established structural criteria for eventually trying to describe musical content and transcended mere graphs of musical structures into meaningful visualizations.

Due to its algorithmic nature the Zwölftonspiel can also be visualized in flow-charts, which in turn can be compared with similar visualizations of medieval concepts of musical realms, traditional composing, and even Conceptual Art: Knowing about John Cage's interest in "especially the late Hauer" I would position the Zwölftonspiel right between the latter and the well-tried Musica Speculativa.

JOSEF MATTHIAS HAUER'S ZWÖLFTONSPIEL

Historical Survey

Eventually conceived in its final manifestation in 1940¹, the *Zwölftonspiel* according to Hauer should no longer be seen and practiced as musical composition, but as a "game", accessible to anybody learning the rules. In fact Hauer even compared his new finding with the game of chess [1]. This notion was the result of a long development that had started with Hauer's first compositions around 1912 and culminated for the first time with his first twelve-tone composition (op.19, 1919): In this piece Hauer already implied abstraction up to the point of just playing sequences of 12 notes monophonically, which during the piece spread out into musical particles he would later call *Bausteine*. In the following years Hauer refined this fundamental finding, gaining experience that was condensed in several musical techniques, all of them more or less means of organizing the primordial musical structure of a sequence of 12 different pitches. (At this point we already find the conception of relating musical structure to musical content.) These organizational elements found by Hauer consisted of the "Tropes" (1921), the "Continuum" (1926) and the "Melic Design", which all turned out to be crucial

¹ Hauer's first piece explicitly titled *Zwölftonespiel* dates from 28. August 1940.

components of what he would later integrate as “sub-routines” (as I will show flow-chart-wise) in the general layout of his *Zwölftonspiel*.

No further radical development took place, however Hauer fine-tuned this practice and came up with a new *Spielform* every now and then. Only in 1947 we recognize a new breakthrough, another abstraction by (almost) abandoning the use of the retrograde twelve-tone-sequence, replacing it by a retrograde manifestation of the *Continuum*; maybe there is a chronological coincidence with the fact that Victor Sokolowski² became Hauer’s student. Hauer never formulated the rules of the game by himself; actually it was the merit of Sokolowski to develop didactic tools, especially a concise terminology to teach the game.

Seen from today the *Zwölftonspiel* is actually an anticipation of interactive algorithmic game-conceptions which should come into reality only decades after Hauer’s discovery.

Abridged Description and Visualization in Procedures³

Twelve-tone-cycle: Putting together a *Zwölftonspiel* we start with a sequence of 12 notes, guided by what Hauer called the *nomos* (*Zwölftongesetz*). No note may be repeated before all the others have been played. In fact this yields “more than a mere twelve-tone-row”, because the *nomos* in itself (recall the formula: “may be repeated”) and even more the following steps require a looping of the original sequence. We therefore call this fundamental structure the “Twelve-tone-cycle”.⁴ Just as the 12 notes are arranged and cycled in tightest chronological order, the tonal material is compressed and cycled in terms of space as well: The pitches are arranged within a major seventh (a process of cyclic abstraction based on the octave-wise repeated pitch classes, yielding a matrix of 12 pitches at 12 time-positions).

Continuum: As the second procedure the basic algorithm for a *Zwölftonspiel* will be applied now: The aforementioned matrix is transformed into a sequence of 12 4-part-chords.⁵

Spielplan: I did not attempt to translate this German Expression since it nicely implies all the qualities of the following procedure: We decide about the application of particular manifestations of the continuum, e.g. spatial rotations of the tetrads⁶ or whether we play the continuum forwards or backwards: As mentioned above Hauer eventually used pairings of progressive and regressive processings of the Continuum.

By evaluating how well these possibilities fit into the whole *Spiel* a feedback loop emerges, back to the Continuum procedure: Changes to the structure of the Continuum may be appropriate. Such a feedback is an important feature while designing musical structures. Here it marks the point of the first significant “user”-interaction beyond the sheer automatism of the algorithm as well.

² Victor Sokolowski (1911 – 1982), Austrian harpsichordist, teacher, student of Hauer since 1946, who first publicly performed Hauer’s *Zwölftonspiele* for harpsichord. I studied with Sokolowski from 1977 and continue to teach Hauer’s *Zwölftonspiel* at the Music School named after J. M. Hauer in the Austrian city of Wiener Neustadt (Hauer’s birthplace, about 50 km south to Vienna).

³ The flow-charts relating to this and the following chapters are shown in the Appendix.

⁴ Actually the essential difference between (Schoenberg’s) composing and Hauer’s playing or rather gaming with twelve notes is enrooted in this fact, as I pointed out in [2].

⁵ For a detailed explanation see Appendix, Figure 5.

⁶ formerly known as “inversions”, octavewise displacements of the lowest notes

Extraction:⁷ So far we have designed a compact flow of tetrads, achieved from the original dodecaphonic sequence, arranged in a layout delineating a “musical form”. Next the tetrads are split up in time and space into particular rhythmic and melodic patterns, either directly following an algorithmic automatism, or due to deliberate interventions of the *Zwölftonspieler*, the person playing the game.

Basically we discern three main types of extraction:

- **monophonic** ones (in different rhythmical genres)
- **complementary monophonic** ones, such as parallel or counter- or hocket-like movements of at least two parts
- **polyphonic** ones in two subtypes of movements of the parts from tetrad to tetrad or within the tetrads as well (yielding the most complex rhythmical structures)⁸

Here the chosen “Type of Extraction” may have a feedback-like influence on the *Spielplan*, just as the *Spielplan* might have had on the “Continuum”. In fact subjective, personal elements (decisions of the person playing) are introduced now, while up to that point a “machine” could have done the job as well.⁹

At this stage we have developed a variety of musical phenomena such as harmony (from the Continuum), melody and rhythm (from the Extractions),¹⁰ along with a layout of musical form (from the *Spielplan*) out of a single Twelve-tone-cycle. We truly followed algorithmical principles to generate the structures, at some points with the option of feeding subjective parameters into the “machine”. On the other hand we have outlined a sharply contoured picture of a compositional process.

Now we shall have to find possible governing influences beyond mere parameter input.

Procedural Properties of a *Zwölftonspiel*

Visualizing the compilation of a *Zwölftonspiel* as a flow-chart (according to its algorithmic nature) reveals a flow of “information”¹¹ from a greater level of abstractness and latency towards more and more elaborate musical manifestations. In this flow of information we can add lateral influences governing the outcome of the procedures and we notice feedback-loops at some points, thus we observe a “charging” of the procedure to which information is fed back.

One particular monophonic extraction yields a single melodic line, which is in fact identical with the original twelve-tone-sequence. From a mathematical point of view a composite function (as which we can see the chain of single procedures) has delivered an output identical to the input; in terms of the logistics of the flow-chart we can interpret

⁷ The German expression, according to Sokolowski, would be *Ausgliederung*.

⁸ For an example in Hauer’s Twelve-tone-notation see Appendix, Figure 6.

⁹ In the flow-chart this is represented by the vertical flow along the straight arrows from the cycle down to a particular type of monophonic extraction, which actually can be done “fully automated”. Indeed Hauer has written pieces along that procedural outline and I compared them with the results of a computerized implementation – with a 100% match. See Hauer’s *Zwölftonspiel* from 19. February 1953 [3].

¹⁰ Articulation and timbre can be derived as well.

¹¹ In this flow-chart-approach the term “information” is used in a broad and more common-sense understanding, not as the strictly calculable notion as proposed by C. E. Shannon [4]. However, especially the notion of “entropy” will play a role in an accurate modeling of the – here only outlined – procedures, e.g. in a software-implementation to simulate the decisions of the player.

this as a feedback-situation. But we cannot say that eventually nothing has happened, because harmonic (and latent rhythmical) context was generated en route! So we can say that the original “melic situation” of the cycle has been “charged” with context, thus probably also with meaning, significance.¹²

The most important, yet most abstract lateral influx takes place on top of the flow-chart: imagine a “pool of possibilities” at the left of the procedure “Twelve-tone-cycle”, serving as a gauge to properties of such a twelve-tone-sequence. Hauer was able to structure this “pool” in the shape of the “44 Tropes”.

The further we go down, the more subjectivity is added to the growing musical complexity, so we actually follow a path from latency to manifestation, that is why I dare to hold it as a visualization of a compositional process per se.

Mathematical Implications

We are dealing with mathematical principles when choosing the cycle (out of the permutations of 12 notes), adjusting a Continuum with its toroidal properties (using modulo-arithmetics) or setting up the *Spielplan* (symmetries have an impact). And it should be mentioned that the *Zwölftonspiel* deals with some of the most fundamental principles of musical structures as we are accustomed to use them. Even the number 12 is de-mystified: its high importance in music appears just as a matter of (especially coprime) factors. Besides that we encounter a link to some proto-musical speculation: Hauer himself related his *Zwölftonspiel* to the ancient Chinese book of divination and wisdom, the *I Ching*.¹³

Musica Speculativa (V.1)

Although not stemming from the Greek tradition, this particular relation to non-musical issues such as the divination aspect of the *I Ching* leads us to the Boëthian notion of discrete musical realms. Again a flow-chart can be drawn,¹⁴ and I would literally call this a “top-down-model”: we shall find a similar flow from latency towards manifestation as already observed in the *Zwölftonspiel*-chart. *Musica coelestis*, overshadowing the whole structure, definitely unhearable, is the foundation for all derived aspects.

In this sense the *Zwölftonspiel* has a strong relation to *musica speculativa*: If we – somewhat simplified – understand the latter as “never-to-be-heard” or at least “not-yet-to-be-heard” music, we will recognize the relation to those elements of a *Zwölftonspiel* which are engaged in preparing the structures for the “truly” musical results. Just as well the ancient comprehension of “musica” incorporated definitely more than just audible phenomena.

Looking at the flow-charts we also recognize that there is in fact more than downright musical “information” flowing, especially (lateral) information out of the mathematical domain.¹⁵

¹² Hauer also called the Continuum-procedure “in Harmonie bringen” of the twelve-tone-sequence.

¹³ ... which on the other hand served as an inspiration to G. W. Leibniz in designing his binary number system.

¹⁴ See Appendix, Figure 2.

¹⁵ While we have already placed the pool of the trope-structures aside the procedure for the cycle, Hauer placed something even more fundamental on top of this, namely the law of equal temperament – something definitely math-related!

Further contemplation, especially about the directions of the streams of information, suggests a search for what a good example of a bottom-up model would be: In complementary contrast to *musica speculativa*, the *musica reservata* of a certain Adrianus Petit Coclico¹⁶ comes to my mind, inspired by a paper by Raymond Monelle [5]. Coclico obviously propagates an outlook where the recipient plays an important role, feeding back his reactions to the maker(s) of music in different levels above, of course not too far into the domain of the unhearable. Interestingly, social aspects appear in the history of this feedback-stream, something I would like to cross-reference to the “anthropocentric decline” in music history, as proposed by Andreas Liess [6]. Since the top two procedures and of course the whole theoretical background cannot directly be heard, initially no feedback from an “audience” (the term understood literally) will occur, no charging with information. Only during further historical development such a feedback will reach up further and further.

TROPOI @ HAUER: THE SYSTEM OF THE 44 TROPES

Unlike older and newer applications of the term “trope”, Hauer used it in a very primordial way, literally derived from the Greek term for “phrase”, maybe even with a little “twist”: it would all be a *Wendung* in German, like *Redewendung* = turn of speech, phrase and *überraschende Wendung* = surprising development, change.¹⁷ Hauer might have had a Gregorian-Chant-Trope association in mind since he sometimes related to the tropes as “modes” within a dodecaphonic system. Anyway he found a catalog of “complementary pairs of hexachords” within a set of 12 pitches, 44 in number.¹⁸ They are discerned by the relations between the two halves and listed arbitrarily: Hauer over the years gave different orders and numberings and it is yet to be accomplished to standardize an “objective” numbering.¹⁹

Symmetries

There are four basic types of symmetry to be found in the pairings, listed here in a somewhat ascending order of symmetry:²⁰

- two different tropes with asymmetrical halves have one external symmetry axis (“exo-symmetrical” tropes; the mathematically most general situation)
- tropes share an internal symmetry axis between the two halves (“mono-symmetrical”)
- the halves have a (common) symmetry axis within themselves (“endo-symmetrical”)

¹⁶ Adrianus Petit Coclico (1499 – ~1562), Flemish singer and composer, published “Musica reservata” in 1552

¹⁷ One more reference to the I Ching, which is in fact a catalogue of structural pictures in situations of change similar to the structural visualizations of the tropes.

¹⁸ “pitch classes” and pitch class sets we would call them today, according to Allen Forte [7], also see Rahn, 1980 [8]; Hermann Pfrogner related to this kind of abstraction as “Ton-Orte” [9] [10].

¹⁹ My system of numbering “aggregates of pitches”, as suggested in [11], would be objective enough, yet it does not depict the network of trope-sequences which seems to be the background for Hauer’s numbering(s).

²⁰ Geometrical examples for the four types of symmetry are given in the Appendix, Figures 7 through 10.

- the two hexachords have central symmetry anyway as well as different multiple symmetrical properties (“poly-symmetrical”) which may either stem from highly symmetrical hexachords themselves (which then are transpositions of each other) or a combination of symmetries as listed above, which leads to the phenomenon that the groupings above actually are intersecting sets, thus the number 44 for all the different tropes is not quite easy to calculate.²¹

This catalog of tropes makes the vast abundance of 479 001 600 permutations of 12 notes accessible. The consequences of the symmetrical properties are a reduction of permutations per trope: the higher the symmetry, the lower the number of permutations (i.e. different readouts of pairs of 6-note-melodies).

Breaking News: A Short Note on “Breaking Symmetries”

With its essence as *musica coelestis* the system of the tropes should be capable of nurturing further speculations on fundamental musical principles. In fact I was able to benefit from their fundamentality in sketching a theory of “Information Difference” as a means of dynamically estimating musical content [12].

$6! = 720$ different “melodies” are possible within one hexachord, $720 \cdot 720 = 518\,400$ within one trope. Symmetries reduce these numbers, since certain patterns will be repeated and therefore do not count as new information: With higher symmetry we gain less information.

The setup of the tropes as two hexachords allows a lot of symmetries, something definitely impossible when we start from a prime number cardinality of a subset of pitches. In fact the latter is the case in such prominent tonal systems as the pentatonic or the heptatonic (which together form a complementary distribution as well), yielding dynamic varieties.

A single trope is a static snapshot of the interval-relation of a twelve-tone-row, telling nothing about the dynamic properties of a twelve-tone-cycle! In fact a *sequence* of 6 tropes is necessary to describe the properties of our fundamental element of musical substance: “Change” is a main issue again.

In a nutshell: “Breaking Symmetries”, working with prime number cardinalities, introducing feedback, even reversing²² a flow of information generates a “higher level of information”. Everything that is repeated, mirrored, transposed, etc. may be easier to recognize (i.e. to hear), but there is a smaller variety of (combinatorial) “possibilities”, thus a lower information potential.

²¹ Which has to do with the fact that factors of 12 can be factors of each other.

²² Reversing a continuum even generates a new cycle, since the functions of appearing and disappearing notes are not symmetrically reversed within the individual quadrants.

TOPOI @ MONELLE: A CATALOGUE OF THE LIBRARY OF MUSICAL CONTENT?

A Mapping and a Roadmap to Composing

One could put together a *Zwölftonspiel* without taking care about the tropes the same way as one could compose (or just lump together, if we want to see that critically) a piece of classical or romantic music without taking care of all proto- and meta-musical implications:

One could simply start with a generic musical idea, be it a chord progression, a rhythmical pattern, a melodic fragment, maybe just a mood, set in a certain timbre, however achieved.

One would scoop from an almost limitless pool, “motivators” need not necessarily be very specific: a faint reminiscence, a quotation, an interval or a well-trying already existing chord progression might do. No sophistication is needed at this point.

The flow-chart depicting this course of action²³ will seem familiar. Further elaboration of the musical idea requires craft, greater formal arrangements need some reasoning, the final musical result may literally demand some fine-tuning. In fact interpretation comes in where elaboration for whichever reason was left out. Just take incomplete notation like figured bass or jazz-chord-symbols as an example.

The realms of characteristic features for the respective procedure, taken from the “*musica universalis*”-chart can be put next to the corresponding procedures in both the *Zwölftonspiel*- and the “composition”-chart!

Musical Topics in Function

As the notion of “musical topics” [13] is usually applied to classical and romantic music (styles with less pretension to be such an abstract music as dodecaphony), I of course shall not dare trying to force this former guideline for interpretation and understanding into accordance with the needs of the latter. But, inspired by the visualization of the (lateral) influx of outer-musical²⁴ entities I shifted my attention from the flow path of “how-do-we-get-significance-out-of-music” to “how-does-the-composer-put-significance-into-music”.

So I found a proper location in the flow-chart: Where *musica coelestis* is effective under Boëthian terms and where the Tropes flourish according to Hauer, I would like to put musical topics in the guise of their influential importance for the traditional composer.²⁵

CONCEPTUAL ART: MUSICA SPECULATIVA V.2

In 1967, emerging from “minimal art”, which has strived for objectivity, logic, thus de-subjectification of the expressionist art forms, a new concept was formulated by Sol

²³ See Appendix, Figure 3.

²⁴ Music to be understood as plain audible music at this point!

²⁵ Another coincidence: Obviously no *musica coelestis*, but also neither tropes nor topics will be found directly in the score [14].

LeWitt²⁶, himself in the tradition of *De Stijl* and Bauhaus.²⁷ LeWitt coined the new term and formulated a sort of credo in his “paragraphs on conceptual art”: [15]

In conceptual art the idea or concept is the most important aspect of the work. When an artist uses a conceptual form of art, it means that all of the planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair.

Well, this sounds like *musica speculativa* (pun intended)! This attitude was uttered even stronger by Lawrence Weiner in his “declaration of intent”: [16]

1. The artist may construct the piece.
2. The piece may be fabricated.
3. The piece need not be built.

Each being equal and consistent with the intent of the artist the decision as to condition rests with the receiver upon the occasion of receivership.

Just apply these conditions to music and it may be inaudible. At the same time what is generally accredited to Heinz von Foerster²⁸ is important, namely that “the message is created at the receiver”. Having arrived in cybernetics, let’s carry on with Sol LeWitt:

The idea becomes a machine that makes the art. This kind of art is not theoretical or illustrative of theories; it is intuitive, it is involved with all types of mental processes and it is purposeless. It is usually free from the dependence on the skill of the artist as a craftsman.

This justifies my flow-chart-approach, relates to Hauer’s notion of *Spiel* as opposed to composing and eventually is pretty anti-Coclico in the last sentence. We might continue this game of interpolation (and feedback) with Mr. LeWitt, but we can already grasp the basic ideas: breaking flows, turning things (sometimes literally) upside down, reverting the streams of the traditional generation of (not only musical) art eventually produces the new variety.

Another Mapping, another Roadmap: a Flow-chart to *Fluxus*

And: another flow-chart²⁹ can be mapped to the previous ones and we will find the same realms and corresponding procedures, solely possible changes in the location and intensity of the – now sometimes inverted – flow of contextualization.

Fluxus – more or less *more* – or less *than the Score*

Richard Hoffmann, Arnold Schoenberg’s last student and secretary, has told me that John Cage once came to his office to find him preparing a lecture titled “An Hour With Hauer”. Cage made a remark that he very much appreciated Hauer, “especially the

²⁶ Sol LeWitt (1928 – 2007), US-American artist

²⁷ ... to both of which Hauer had some relations; he was even (unsuccessfully) invited to the Bauhaus by the painter Johannes Itten.

²⁸ Heinz von Foerster (1911 – 2002), member of the widespread Austrian Köchert-Family who also supported Josef Matthias Hauer, and who knew Hauer very well.

²⁹ See Appendix , Figure 4.

late Hauer". Well, this is the Hauer of the *Zwölftonspiel*, of purposeless playing, the Hauer casting his twelve-tone-sequences like *I Ching* hexagrams.³⁰ And it was Cage who pushed the handling of the musical score to an extreme: in the legendary piece "4'33" nothing is performed, nothing is actually notated, however not nothing is written there.³¹

Musica speculativa at its best.

RÉSUMÉ

If, in this limited space, I could have given a bit of an insight into the position of Hauer's *Zwölftonspiel* between the historical generic *musica speculativa* and its "V.2" in disguise of the *Conceptual Art*, it might be possible to see a conception of *topoi* as a roadmap to generation and (vice versa) understanding and interpretation of musical meaning related to conceptions like Hauer's "44 Tropes"; conceptions like the meaningful setup of structures in either the technical/mathematical/algorithmical domain of computer-generated music or the idealistic/ideologic realm of musical performances, where the notion of musical meaning may be reversed by the audience itself in anticipating the musical result from its effectuation.³²

I have nothing to say and I am saying it and that is poetry...
(John Cage, 1959)³³ [18]

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to express my thankfulness for the fact that I was provided by Raymond Monelle himself with a paper of him when I was involved in the preparation of a congress in Vienna in 2006, which eventually did not take place. This paper [5] inspired me to the line of thought from *musica speculativa* to conceptual art.

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³⁰ What Hauer practiced as well: his yarrow-stalks are still existing.

³¹ During a visit at Edition Peters in London I was actually given the score as a gift [17].

³² I.e. making it unnecessary in the best case.

³³ NB: In the same year 1959, J. M. Hauer died and Miles Davis recorded: "Kind Of Blue".

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APPENDIX

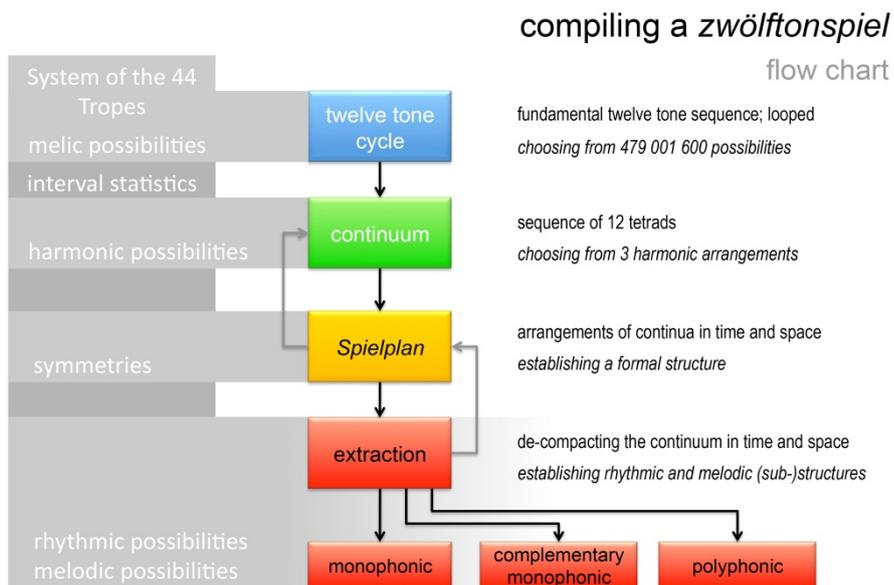


Figure 1. (simplified) Flow Chart of a Zwölftonspiel

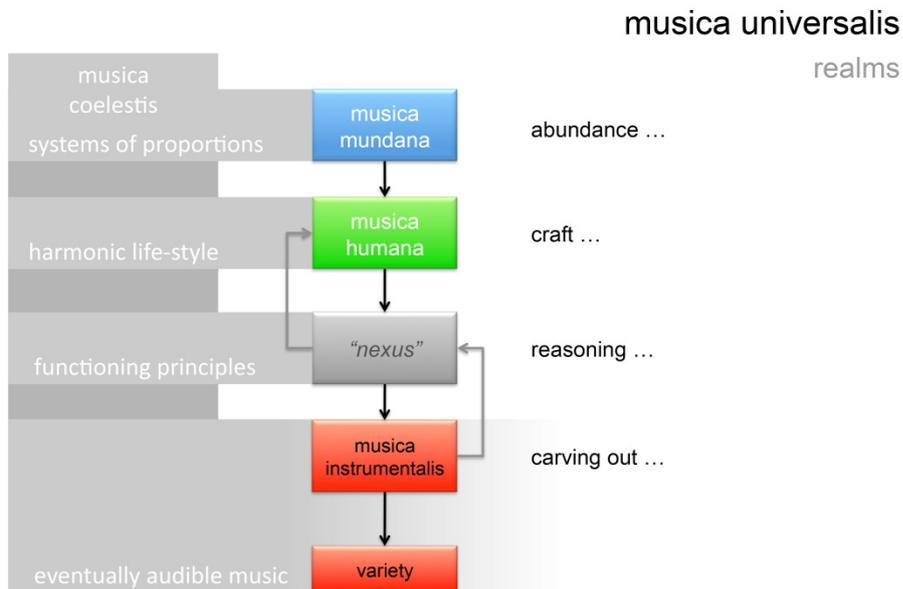


Figure 2. Mapping: another Flow Chart,³⁴ according to Jacob of Liège

³⁴ Freely redrawn after the *Speculum musicae* by Jacobus Leodiensis/Jacques de Liège (~1260 – after 1330), who revamped the Boëthian model a little bit by placing the *musica coelestis* atop the *musica mundane*.

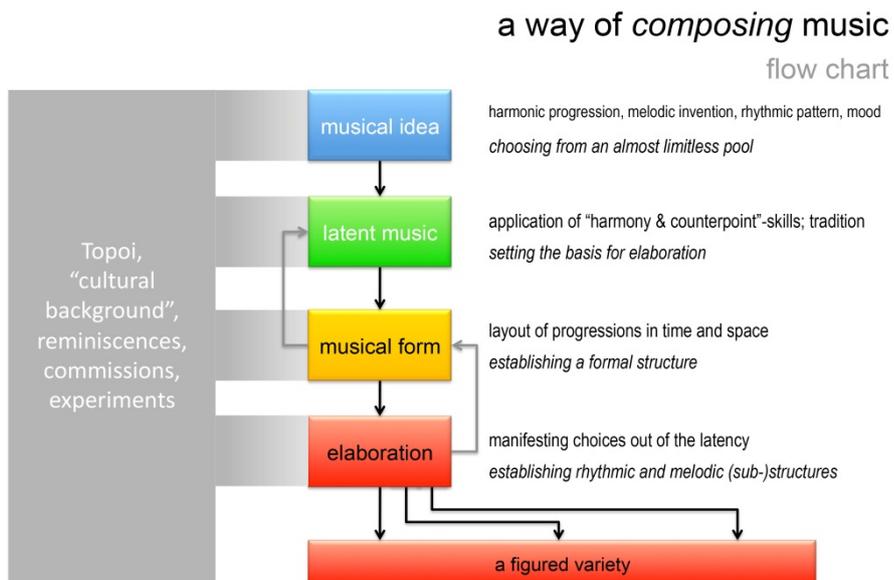


Figure 3. A way of composing music: Flow-chart of a hypothetical compositorial process

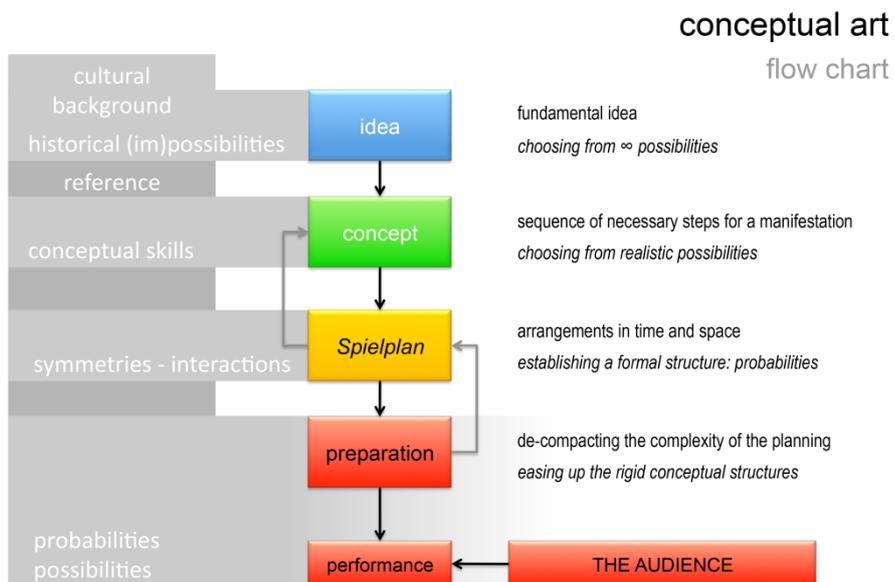
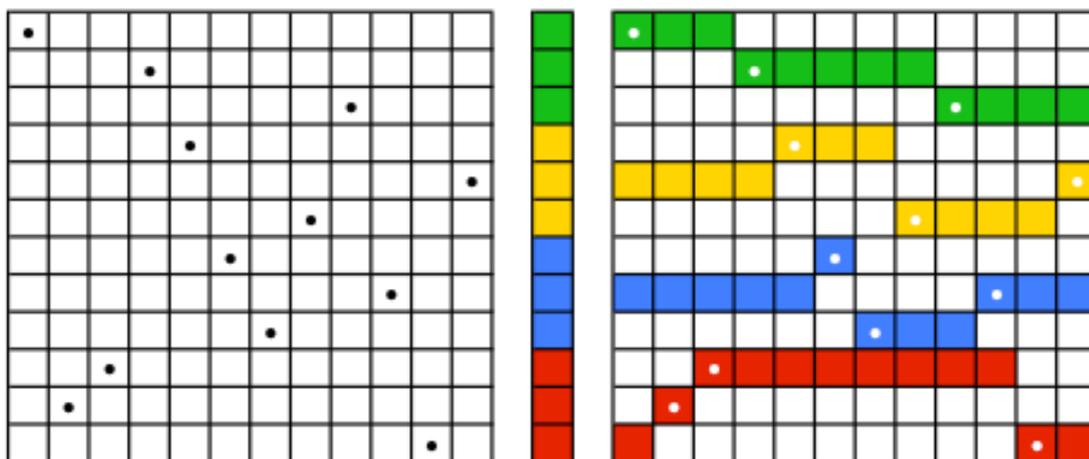


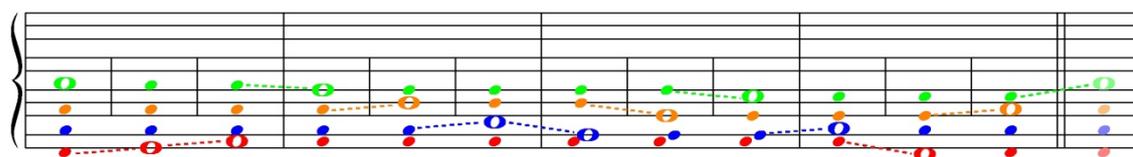
Figure 4. More Of The Same: structural similarities considering Conceptual Art

The original sequence of 12 pitch classes is treated as a cycle. The 12x12-matrix of sequential positions (on the x-axis) and pitches within the ambitus of a major seventh (on the y-axis) can be seen as the unfolded surface of a torus (which can be reconstructed when the left and right borders of the matrix are glued together for the time-loop and the top and bottom borders for the repeated chromatic arrangement of the pitch-classes). Since the unfolding of the surface can start at 12 different temporal positions and 12 different pitch positions respectively, we get 144 "lower left corners" of phase-shifted manifestations of this matrix.



- The tightly packed twelve pitches are grouped into 4 layers (quadrants; S [green], A [orange], T [blue], B [red]) with three notes each, interconnected by half-tone or whole-tone steps.
- In every quadrant each note shall sound as long as there is no other pitch of the same group appearing. In other words: pitches from the same layer will never sound together, but only subsequently replace each other. The principle is applied cyclically and yields a sequence of 12 tetrads. Since the grouping of pitches in tripartite layers can be done in three different ways (depending on the pitch upon which we start unfolding the vertical circularity of the matrix), at this point we (have to) make a decision within the so far strictly automatic procedure for the first time: Though the same underlying cycle is used, eventually (up to) three different harmonic sequences can be the result.

A continuum usually will have to be adjusted, i.e. rotated to a position where it ends with a particular type of tetrad (Major Seventh Chord).



Hauer's Twelve-tone-notation resembles the piano keyboard: black lines represent the black keys, white spaces the white keys with their two adjacent pairs, represented by the broader spaces.

Figure 5. The "Continuum" algorithm: generating tetrads

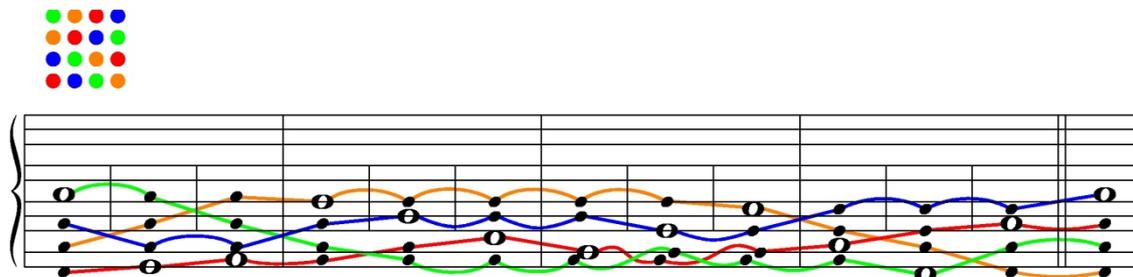


Figure 6. The 4-part braid of a Melic Design in Hauer's 12-tone notation; first sub-type of polyphony

The Structural Metaphors in *Amazonas* by Villa-Lobos and in *Kyrie* by Ligeti

Isis de Oliveira, University of Sao Paulo, BR

ABSTRACT

This work is an inter-textual interpretation between the seven introductory bars of Villa-Lobos's Amazonas piece and Ligeti's Kyrie, and it aims to demonstrate how two different generations from the XXth century deal with timbre pictorialism, in which musical structure and elements are a metaphor to the Brazilian symphonic poem of Villa and also to the liturgical text used by Ligeti. I will apply the concepts of "pictorialism", "word-painting" and "structural metaphor".¹

INTRODUCTION

This work intends to make an inter-textual analysis between the seven introductory bars of Villa-Lobos's symphonic poem *Amazonas* (1917) and Ligeti's *Kyrie* (1963-65).

In order to make these observations, we accept the notion of "structural metaphors" which "... allow us to do much more than just orient concepts, refer to them, quantify them etc., [...] they allow us, in addition, to use one highly structured and clearly delineated concept to structure another" [1]. Therefore, we will use the extra-musical experiences to get deeply close to the compositional process of the structure of this piece. Thus, by comprehending this poetic example, we will be able to understand the realities created by Villa-Lobos and Ligeti. "New metaphors are capable of creating new understandings and, therefore, new realities" [2].

But metaphor is not merely a matter of language. It is a matter of conceptual structure. And conceptual structure is not merely a matter of the intellect – it involves all the natural dimensions of our experience, including aspects of our sense experience: color, shape, texture, sound, etc. These dimensions structure not only mundane experience, but aesthetic experience as well. Each art medium picks out certain dimensions of our experiences and excludes others. Artworks provide new ways of structuring our experience in terms of these natural dimensions. Works of arts provide new experiential gestalts and, therefore, new coherences. From the experientialist point of view, art is, in general, a matter of imaginative rationality and a means of creating new realities [3].

¹ See Ratner, L., 1980. *Classic Music: expression, form, and style*. New York, Schirmer; and Lakoff, G. and Johnson, M., 2002. *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press.

Not only the structure of these pieces will be treating in this paper, we will also talk about the elements of the musical surface built by Villa-Lobos and Ligeti in their pieces that will be seen later on. Hatten understands the beginning of Ratner's book *Classic Music* as “historical classifications of musical topics”. The classification used by Hatten, based on Ratner's book, is organized in four categories. In the current study we opted to use only the last one (“pictorialism, word painting, and imitation of sounds in nature” [4]) that Ratner considers a “step forward related to the use of topics” [5].

Pictorialism, “generally associated with instrumental music, conveys some idea of an action or scene” [6]. In Villa-Lobos' work, the texture of melodies played by clarinets, a bass clarinet and bassoons in the first seven bars – which will reappear in the course of *Amazonas* is related to the waves of the river (“water mode” - “modo de água” [7]).

Referring to “word-painting”, which “is the matching of a word or phrase in a text to a musical figure” [8], we believe it is an important concept to support our observations of Ligeti's *Kyrie*. The composer proposes the choir of souls for mercy by placing symmetrical and individual cells. The musical result sounds like a non-symmetrical entanglement of these voices. The singularity of each voice cannot be heard and the “word-painting” enhances a blurred whispering of a crowd of souls.

Then we will see how Villa-Lobos' research for a new richness of sounds, like the work of his contemporaries in the first half of the XXth century, found solutions to construct textures from post-tonal material, establishing relations with extra-musical elements such as the forest soundscape and the program of the symphonic poem. Later, Ligeti, helped by the psychoacoustic researches from the second half of the XXth century, could create a work where the focus of the audition was the texture and its density changes, relegating the figurativism of the previous compositions to an inaudible base, giving place for the texture and the word-painting as he desired.

Finally, we will see how two very distinct poetics create sound constructions capable of structurally relating to the extra-musical material.

AMAZONAS BY HEITOR VILLA-LOBOS

Here we will analyze the section “Amazonas' Contemplation” (“Contemplação do Amazonas”), bar 1 to 7 of *Amazonas*, a symphonic poem by Heitor Villas-Lobos. We do not intend to offer a massive and exhausting observation of the piece. Our focus is on searching the possibilities found by the Brazilian composer regarding the use of timbre as a way to reach a non-tonal musical pictorialism in his first attempts at the beginning of the XXth century. Just like some Villas-Lobos's contemporary musicians did (Debussy with *La mer*, Stravinsky with *Le Sacre du Printemps*), some of his compositional processes are sound experimentations that helped to boost the artistic-theoretical researches that resulted, for example, in the “sound object” by Pierre Schaeffer.

This symphonic poem by Villa-Lobos is an artistic example of the generation that preceded Ligeti and his contemporaries. However we do not want to say that the Hungarian composer had been straightly affected by Villa-Lobos. We just suggest that the generation after the 1950's, and consequently Ligeti and his sound researches, suffered the influence of the effects and efforts of the composers from the beginning of the century. Theoretical and artistic researches could be improved, in the second half of the XXth

century, by the discoveries in the field of the audio manipulation technologies as well as the ones in psychoacoustic.

The *Amazonas* program begins with a “pretty virgin girl” that “used to greet the dawn, taking bath in the Amazonas's water, the Marajoara river” [9].

To musically paint these words, Villa opposes two musical elements: one static (the body of the young Indian girl) and another one in constant movement (the translucent waters of the river). A sustained note turns into a solid body, the girl's body. After the two introductory bars, where the motive (E-D-E-E-E²) is exposed by the horns and copied by the viola d'amore, the E is sustained with no pauses until the 7th bar. On the 3rd-4th and 5th bars, an embellishment, representing the swimming movements, places the sustained E in the flutes as well. With the first violins, producing harmonic sounds, the E note comes together with A, giving a rich sonority to the central tone.

Around the sustained E note some incidental sounds appear to remain the soundscape from a forest (the descendent chromaticism of the tuba in the 6th bar, suggesting a big creeping animal on the riverside, or the flute's ascendant figuration and the piccolo in the 7th bar, suggesting birds sounds, for example).

Figure 1: The seven introductory bars of *Amazonas*. The flute, piccolo, tube and bass parts are not represented.³

A parallelism neither tonal nor real (without the complete maintenance of the intervals) gives the "water mode" layer a changing and varied musical surface. The variety of intervals between the dissonant notes proposed by Villa's written, together with the waves produced by the beating of sound waves among the dissonant notes,⁴ produces a clear sound pictorialism of the changeable and fluid surface of the water of a river like the Amazonas.

But in which way is the "water-mode" built? Until the 5th measure, it seems that we are in face of calm waters, which are relatively more constant. Until this moment, the Ist

² In Portuguese, the sequence of notes of the theme (MI, RE, MI, MI, MI, MI) refers to the name of the Villa-Lobos' work *Myremis*. This original piece was modified in 1917 to create *Amazonas*.

³ *Processos Compositivos em Villa-Lobos*, by Paulo Tarso de Salles. © Copyright 2009 by Editora da Unicam. Reprinted by Permission.

⁴ Intervals like the Major 7th, the Major 9th and the triton are very common in this passage.

and IInd clarinets, the bass clarinet and the Ist and IInd bassoons make little waves each one upon four notes set. Although none of the voices repeat exactly the tetrachord of the other voice, they seem to have affinity with each other.

The Ist clarinet and the Ist bassoon make together a complete whole-tone scale. Similarly, the IInd clarinet and the bass clarinet together make the other whole-tone scale, as a complement to the previous one. Then these four instruments make together all the chromatic scale and go to the 4th bar moving in a parallel way, always maintaining the same chord (A, G \flat , C and F, from the low to the higher tones) only transposing it. The line that bothers this stability is the one played by the IInd bassoon, which makes a 3rd minor followed by a chromatic trichord (D, E \sharp , F \sharp , G). Therefore, the relation between the clarinets and the Ist bassoon chord works in a different way with the bass, played by the IInd bassoon (figure 2).

The image shows a musical score for measures 1-4. It consists of four staves for woodwinds and two staves for bassoons. The top two staves are for Clarinet I and II, both playing whole-tone scales. The third staff is for Bass Clarinet, also playing a whole-tone scale. The fourth staff is for Bassoon I, playing a whole-tone scale. The fifth and sixth staves are for Bassoon I and II respectively. The Bassoon II part features a chromatic trichord (D, E#, F#, G) in measures 2 and 3, with dynamics markings '5 J', '5 dim.', '5 J', and '5 aum.'.

Figure 2: Parts of clarinets, bass clarinet and bassoons between measures 1-4.⁵

Until the 4th bar, the pictorialism of the river's waters was built from an overlapping of a chromatic trichord and two whole-tone scales. The interval variety was just built by the IInd bassoon's line.

On the 5th-6th bars the standards of chromaticism and whole-tones are both influenced by one another and the five voices start to make octatonic sequences⁶. The melodic contour, which goes to a slightly higher zone before coming back to the initial point, shows the little agitation that the "water mode" suffers in these two measures. From the 7th bar, the score becomes smoother, changing between the two first chords of the 3rd bar and then maintaining this pattern, sometimes changing the color (piano and harp between the 10th-17th, woodwinds and strings on the 18th-26th bars, etc).

⁵ *Processos Compositivos em Villa-Lobos*, by Paulo Tarso de Salles. © Copyright 2009 by Editora da Unicam. Reprinted by Permission.

⁶ The overlapping of chromatic elements and whole tones was one of Villa-Lobos' compositional proposals, as it is presented by Maria Alice Volpi [10] in her work about the sketches of the composer in one of his manuscripts. The same interest places Villa Lobos next to contemporaries such as Béla Bartók [11] in the search for sonorities that downplayed the tonality, in this case using the octatonic scale.

THE KYRIE BY GYÖRGY LIGETI

The other work that we will investigate is the second movement of György Ligeti's Requiem. This funeral mass, composed between 1963 and 1965, is a fundamental mark [12] in the poetic of the composer, for intensifying the composition techniques employed in his previous works and also for proposing new paths for his poetic.

Although it is difficult to distinct each one of the voices of this *Kyrie*, the majority of the listeners know what a *Kyrie* means. The words *Kyrie eleison/ Christe eleison/ Kyrie eleison* are in the mind of the most part of those who have a conscious contact with this movement of the piece. The reaction is astonishing when we listen to the entanglement of voices and instruments where we are unable to pay attention to a single line. It is even more surprising when we know that it is a fugue.⁷

In the traditional counterpoint it is fundamental that each one of the melodic lines must be clearly separated, making them strongly independent from each other. So why choose the counterpoint to create an indistinguishably sound-mass?

With this compositional contradiction, Ligeti gives even more attention to the "word-painting" of this work. The undistinguished sound-mass takes us to get inside the mess of souls in order to reach the divine piety instead of focusing on the individual aspect of mercy. It is not just a voice that claims for *eleison*, but the whole humanity that watched the two World Wars and the politic-ideological fights of the Cold War.

Ligeti's personal and familiar life was affected by the tragic events from the beginning of the XXth century. Coming from a Jewish family, he survived a concentration camp, but lost his father and his brother during the IInd World War [14]. In the 1950's, Hungary was dominated by the Soviets and, during the Revolution of 1956, Ligeti was forced to flee with his wife from his homeland [15]. It was not just his personal experience that led him to compose a Requiem. As a post homage for the tragic dead of Anton Webern [16], the Requiem of the 1960's, third attempt of the composer in the genre, puts in evidence the Death as one of Ligeti's preoccupations.

There is all my own fear on it [specifically on the third movement, *Dies Irae*], my real life experiences, a lot of terrifying childhood fantasies, and yet the music resolves all this as well. As if to say, we do not have to live in fear; or you could put it like this, we are certainly going up to die, but so long as we are alive we believe that we shall live for ever (sic) [...] one dimension of my music bears the imprint of a long time spent in shadow of death as an individual and as a member of a group [17].

Arriving to Colony, in the end of the 50's, Ligeti finds the politic-ideological fights of the music field. There, the composer found the last remains of the extreme figuration in music. The authoritarianism and violence, with which the serial composers of the second half of the XXth century hold their ideas, were contested in the 60's by several compositional proposals. Ligeti, with the textural compositions, and Cage, with the aleatoric music, made part of the opposition.

What provocation could be greater for the figurativism of the XXth century than a fugue, in which the focus of the perception is dislocated to the density and texture instead of the line note-to-note? But how does Ligeti build a sound-mass from the counterpoint

⁷ "It is true that the fugue did not exist in Ockeghem's time and, structurally speaking, this movement is a strange twenty-part fugue" [13].

writing? The composer says: “I disrupted the intervals: that is to say, I inserted so many minor seconds that even the minor seconds, or the chromaticism, disappeared in the harmonic sense” [18]. This was a compositional concern not only for Ligeti, but also for a generation who had looked for new harmonic and compositional possibilities taking the music to an even more textural context.

All three [Ligeti, Penderecki and Xenakis] were involved with techniques that dealt directly with masses of sound, with aggregations that in one way or another deemphasized pitch as a sound quality, or at least as a privileged sound quality. When this deemphasis took place the form of packing pitches into confined spaces as densely as possible, definable intervals disappeared as well as their constituent pitches” [19].

The amount of seconds appears on the horizontal as well as on the vertical relationships. Beyond the harmonic manipulation, Ligeti reaches the dense sound-mass of his work using the rhythm manipulation of it.

The choral part of this Kyrie is formed by five canons (one of sopranos, one of mezzos, one of contraltos, one of tenors and one of bass) each one of them being composed by four voices. Each line of the canon sings exactly the same sequence of notes of the other lines. However, each one of the four lines of each canon makes a unique rhythmic figuration.⁸ We are facing the great contrast between the collective desire (“word-painting” of the unique text of a Kyrie) and the particular form of expression of each person (unique as the rhythm of each line). The distinct rhythmic patterns uncover the perception of the parts and emphasize the whole, in the same way that a mess is made from the irregular amount of several individual voices. In other words, Ligeti accumulates many rhythmic cells, including the simultaneity of many types of tuplets (of five, seven or nine notes) between the voices of the same group. The sound effect of this rhythmic manipulation is a constant change of a complex sound. The successive notes of this fugue are not listened as individual sounds, in linear succession of notes. We listen to a complex sound object sometimes higher, sometimes lower, and sometimes more or less dense.

But it was the studio work that gave me the technique. For instance, I had to read up psychoacoustic at that time, and I learned that if you have a sequence of sounds where the difference in time is less than fifth milliseconds then you don't hear them any more as individual sounds. This gave me the idea of creating a very close succession in instrumental music, and I did that in the second movement of *Apparitions* and in *Atmosphères* [21].

Observing the score, we can see a structure where two canonic parts are used more than once and put together in different ways. This was not the first time that a multi thematic fugue was seen in the history of music. An important example appeared on a work of Haydn. On the last movements in three of the String Quartets Op. 20 (numbers 2, 5 and 6), the composer made notes at the beginning of the score to indicate that these were fugues of 4, 2 and 3 subjects, respectively. We can see the first few bars of the String Quartet Op. 20/5 in F minor of Haydn.

⁸ “In this movement I wanted to combine Flemish polyphony with my own new micropolyphony. I took Ockeghem as my model, and adopted his ‘varietas’ principal, where the voices are similar without being identical. [...] The canonic parts are identical in their notes but their rhythmic articulations are always different and no rhythmic pattern is ever repeated in a canon” [20].



Figure 3: First few bars of String Quartet Op. 20 n. 5 in F minor (Hob.III:35). The rectangles show the two subjects. Both may appear as main musical figuration or as part of the background during the piece.⁹

The two subjects also show the liturgical text. We will call Subject 1 the canonic line related to the text *Kyrie eleison* and Subject 2 the one that musically comes with the words *Christie eleison*. Both themes without the pattern ABA as it is in the original text. None of the subjects appear separately. The prayers to the Father and to the Son always come together.

Subject 1, a notorious example of chromatic saturation in a horizontal line, is exclusively composed of seconds, been almost 90% of this subject being composed of second minors. This subject is completely based on two small interval cells (see figures 4 and 5).



Figure 4: Interval cell a which will make the interval figurations of the Subject 1.



Figure 5: Interval cell b which will make the interval figurations of Subject 1

⁹ *String Quartet, Op. 20 no 5*, by Joseph Haydn. © Copyright by Dover Publications, Inc. Reprinted by Permission.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Our work dealt with the use of metaphors in the organization of structural elements in two works of the XXth century, where extra-musical elements seem to have great relevance for their comprehension. The Symphonic Poems and also the vocal music have strong relations to images that go beyond the objects employed in the musical art craft. Not only the metaphors were fundamental to the appreciation of the structures in Villa-Lobos's *Amazonas* and Ligeti's *Kyrie*, but also the concepts of pictorialism and "word-painting" were of great relevance to the appreciation of the surface of the musical material observed in this work.

The intention of our approach was to deeply explore their poetics, showing possible meanings in their works and relations between the musical work and the poetic images of the program used by Villa-Lobos and the liturgical text used by Ligeti. Therefore, this paper intends to amplify the considerations about the György Ligeti's Requiem, using, in this essay, the concepts of the musical semiotic and the inter-textual appreciation applied to a work of the beginning of the XXth century.

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Startling Sounds Telling an Age-Old Story: a Narrative Analysis of Gérard Grisey's *Prologue* (1976) for Solo Viola

Joshua Groffman, Indiana University, IN, USA

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the creation of narrative in Gérard Grisey's Prologue (1976) for solo viola, the first piece of the instrumental cycle Les espaces acoustiques and one of the formative works of the spectral school of composition. Prologue presents a number of challenges to the listener and analyst, including a relative dearth of material (of the work's sixteen minutes, nearly twelve of them are taken up by the evolution of a simple arpeggio figure) and peculiar approach to form (which is entirely unidirectional, with no restatement of any material). Previous discussions of spectralist pieces have tended to stress a formalist angle, presenting analyses of pitch and time procedures without reference to narrative or musical meaning. In contrast, I argue that an approach which uses semiotics to identify a network of meaning within the piece will clarify the issues presented by Prologue in new ways, offering novel possibilities for meaningful readings of the spectral repertoire.

I proceed by identifying the multiple signifiers present in the piece: a "heartbeat motive," indexical of a human consciousness; an impersonal, constantly evolving process with which the heartbeat motive is often in conflict; and following a chaotic climax, a lament topic in reaction to the preceding catastrophe. These aid in the creation of a narrative spanning the entire piece. I trace the development of the interplay between the impersonal process which drives inexorably towards crisis and the heartbeat motive that resists it; in the post-climax music, it is the human consciousness that "sings" the lament music as it contemplates the catastrophe it has endured. After outlining the arc of the narrative, I conclude with several observations about Prologue's form and material, arguing that its narrative typifies the unique way in which spectral pieces often position themselves with regard to musical sound and the listener.

STARTLING SOUNDS TELLING AN AGE-OLD STORY

Introduction

G rard Grisey's *Prologue* for solo viola (1976) presents itself to the listener as being at once intuitively understandable and puzzlingly resistant to interpretation. On the one hand, the work's overall trajectory and shape will be familiar to anyone with a passing familiarity of 20th-century art music: material is presented and developed, growing to a climax around two-thirds of the way through the work, after which the music fades away quietly. On the other, the work poses a number of difficulties. There is a curious dearth of material; of the work's sixteen minutes, nearly twelve of them are taken up by the repetition and evolution of the initial, rather simple, arpeggio figure. More puzzling still is the work's unidirectional nature. As material evolves and disappears, it makes no reappearance; the work as a whole seems to fly in the face of art music conventions which demand thematic unity and cyclical or rotational organization as necessary to coherence.

In the following analysis, I will address these issues by approaching the piece via semiotic analysis. Previous discussions of pieces by composers from the spectralist school, of which Grisey was a founding member, have tended to stress a formalist angle, presenting analyses of pitch and time procedures without reference to narrative or musical meaning. Here, I argue that an approach which uses an analysis of signifiers and topics to identify a network of meaning within the piece will clarify the issues presented by *Prologue* in new ways, offering novel possibilities for fruitful readings of the spectral repertoire. I will give a narrative reading of the evolution and interaction of the various signifiers, maintaining that throughout there is a tension between impersonal process music and the "human element," heard as a drone motive mimicking a heartbeat. After tracing the arc of the narrative through this lens, I will argue that *Prologue*'s peculiar unidirectional form is an outgrowth of the way it – along with many other spectral pieces – positions itself with regard to musical sound and the listener. In doing so, I hope to illuminate the "cultural work" *Prologue* performs. Kofi Agawu writes of Raymond Monelle that his method was always sensitive to the ways aspects of an individual piece function as "elements in a larger, complex web of cultural association and affiliation [1]." That insight provides my starting point.

Spectralism and the material of *Prologue*

Prologue takes as its basic gesture an arpeggio figure that begins the piece and forms the thematic material for the first twelve minutes. The arpeggio gesture is interrupted at various intervals by another thematic element, two low Bs (made possible by tuning the low C string of the viola down a semitone) stated always in the same tempo in a short-long rhythmic pattern.¹ This short-long motive is the first and most obvious signifier in the work. It is marked at once as "other" from the arpeggio figure by several musical factors: the unique timbre of the open string and scordatura, its steady rhythmic profile against the flexible tempo of the arpeggios, and its resistance to change as the arpeggio grows and evolves. Most useful for our purposes is Grisey's score note indicating the rhythm should be played *comme un battement de coeur*, "like a heartbeat." Such a

¹ See basic gesture of *Prologue*, an arpeggio figure followed by "the heartbeat motive", two low Bs. In Ricordi, 2007, *Prologue: pour alto seul*, Milan, page 1, first system.

direction immediately suggests multiple interpretative possibilities; the heart is central not only to the literal functioning of human life but can serve as a potent metaphor for culturally-embedded meanings. Its specific role in the narrative of *Prologue* can be clarified by an examination of its interaction with the arpeggio material that surrounds it.

When first presented, the arpeggio consists of five notes, but successive iterations quickly add pitches and expand the register upward. Procedures of repetition with slow, incremental change are common to many spectral pieces and they are the organizing principle of the first twelve minutes of *Prologue*. No two iterations are identical and each successive statement plays a role in traversing a transition between multiple musical parameters: the dynamic grows from loud to soft; a tightly constricted register near the bottom of the instrument grows to encompass its entire range; rhythmic activity becomes increasingly frenetic; and *ordinario* bow position, pressure, and clearly articulated pitches transition to *sul tasto* and *sul ponticello* bow positions, while the introduction of *glissandi* that smear distinct pitches eventually result in a long passage for scratch tone in which normally pitched tones disappear altogether.

Prologue contains several examples of the well-known tendency of spectral composers to derive inspiration for harmonic and textural aspects of their compositions from acoustic phenomena. The first arpeggio of *Prologue* begins with an evocation of the harmonic series rooted on E; as the piece drives towards the chaotic climax, the series becomes increasingly inharmonic, a trajectory that matches and amplifies the use of noise elements and scratch tone to color the sound. In addition, an oscillating figure derived from the idea of sound echoing in a reverberant space is often appended at the end of the arpeggio gestures (first heard at 02:42² and increasingly prevalent later on). The use of acoustic phenomena forms part of the larger philosophical backdrop to spectral music; in explaining his music to general audiences, Grisey explained that his intention was to compose music that consisted of “sounds, not notes” [2]. By investigating the “organic, living acoustic nature of sound,” he hoped to create music in which sound itself has a generative force [3]. Implicit in this stance is a desire to avoid earlier methods of pitch and temporal organization, including tonal and serial procedures, and the trappings of specific cultural practices they carry with them. Instead, the idea of “sounds, not notes” as typified by the arpeggio music points toward a view in which the music takes on the aspect of a physical object that can be manipulated and shaped as such.

The procedures of change in this and other spectral pieces are not strictly linear or mechanistic but organic and flexible, and this too serves to dramatize the metaphor of sound-as-physical-object. A typical example is the treatment of the “echo” figure; first introduced at 02:42, it does not immediately become a fixture in the music and is not heard again until more than a minute later (04:01), during which time we have heard many more iterations of the original arpeggio gesture. The oscillating figure grows more prevalent gradually, but we become aware of its presence only once it has been fully assimilated into the texture. The effect of this varied repetition is to create a process in which the listener is aware of a gradually shifting aural landscape but often finds it impossible to pinpoint exactly when any one element has been introduced; it is akin, to take one example, to the way isolated bubbles of increasing size appear in a pot of water as it is heated to a boil. Spectral composers and analysts frequently refer to images drawn from nature in describing this music: one reviewer speaks of “stark visions of profound

² All timings refer to the recording of *Prologue* from the recording *Les espaces acoustiques* (Kairos, 2005), Garth Knox, viola.

canyons and gleaming stars,” and later of “the dream-like time of the cosmos” [4]. Listening to *Prologue*, the listener has the experience of traveling large sonic distances without ever quite being able to pinpoint the moment at which one thing becomes the other, a conception of time and form that has obvious parallels with the slow, ever-changing motion of natural processes.

Because the invocation of natural process is so central to *Prologue*, it is important to further unpack the way it positions itself with regard to the listener. The “sounds, not notes” dichotomy might be understood as an attempt to create absolute music: a piece free from semantic connotations or cultural groundings. This would be, I believe, a misreading of Grisey’s philosophy. Rather, spectralism’s use of the physical properties of sound should be understood largely as a conceit, a rhetorical position it adopts while staying within the fundamental cultural discourse of Western art music. As innovative as the sounds of *Prologue* are, they share enough genetic material to be read semiotically and in relation to sounds that have come before. The process of slow change in *Prologue* thus becomes a narrative object alongside multiple others embedded in the discourse of the piece. In context, I understand the process music to carry overtones of the inexorable, impersonal, and the not-human; the use of the overtone series provides not just the harmony, but signifies an organization beyond and apart from man-made systems.

That this is so will become clearer with an examination of the relationship between the process music and the heartbeat motive mentioned earlier. Having examined the two elements separately, we may now usefully juxtapose them together. At first, the relationship between the drone and the arpeggio music is unclear. Both motives are presented at first in an unmarked fashion – the restricted register and dynamic range and relative simplicity of the material resist interpretation and we are given no introductory gesture or other framing musical material that might allow us to situate this material in a narrative context.

As the piece progresses, however, it becomes clear that the arpeggio and heartbeat motives follow distinct paths throughout the piece. While the arpeggio immediately begins to grow and change from the very beginning of the piece, the heartbeat motive resists that change; although the number of times it is repeated varies, it is presented almost without exception with the same short-long rhythm, at the same tempo and at the same pitch. Surrounded by the constantly changing arpeggio figure with its evocations of impersonal, natural processes called up by its use of the overtone series and the “echo,” the heartbeat motive seems to observe and react to the arpeggio figure as it evolves. The dichotomy between the two types of material and Grisey’s designation that the motive should be played “like a heartbeat” allows us to clarify the meaning of this signifier. If the arpeggio music evokes natural process, the heartbeat represents the human element, a representation of living consciousness in the piece.

From an unmarked, unreadable beginning, a narrative shape starts to emerge. We begin to discern a conflict between the changing, increasingly chaotic arpeggio and the heartbeat that resists this change. As the arpeggio expands its register and pulls away from a harmonic series rooted on E (evident by 06:15), the heartbeat motive returns to the same B drone on which it began. Only late in the piece as *glissandi* and exaggerated bow colors begin to denature the pitch of the arpeggios does the heartbeat motive show evidence of variation through increased bow pressure and the use of the ricochet (09:38); it cannot successfully resist being affected by the increasingly chaotic material surrounding it.

As noted above, the growth and development of the arpeggio motive culminates in a climax (at approximately 10:00) in which glissandi and scratch tone obliterate pitch and rhythm. Following this cataclysm, which eventually loses energy and dies away, there is a postlude with a much calmer affect. The rhythmic activity of the earlier section is replaced with drawn out tones that are constantly varied and colored by shifts in bow position, vibrato, and use of left-hand pizzicato. The dynamic rises briefly but never regains the intensity of the climax. As with the arpeggio, the heartbeat motive disappears following the catastrophic climax. Indeed, its last statement occurs somewhat before the climax actually begins (09:42); resistant to the end, it is not changed so much as overwhelmed by the wave of scratch tone. Nevertheless, as we listen to the post-climax music, we discern the re-emergence of a human consciousness. Pre-climax, our sense of time was controlled by the continuous unfolding of the arpeggio in straight-forward, impersonal clock time; afterwards, human concerns predominate and we experience a flexible temporality. The clock slows, and perhaps stops altogether, as the human consciousness in the music contemplates the catastrophe it has endured.

The nature of this music and its positioning in the score suggest this passage should be understood to invoke a lament topic. In its drawn-out pitches, colored by fluctuations of vibrato and glissando, it recreates a wailing human voice broken by sobs; in this, it creates a link with the sighing *pianto* motive so typical of earlier lament musics analyzed by Raymond Monelle [5]. Its placement, too, directly following the storm of scratch tone, suggests that it is reacting mournfully to the cataclysm that precedes it. At the same time, it extends and updates the range of associations bound up with lament music. The intense quiet of the passage (Grisey designates that the passage should be “extremely calm”) is not peaceful but, given what has come before, eerie. This is a lament topic for the atomic age – the human consciousness in *Prologue* does not lament, as Arianna does, the absence of a lover, but its solitude in the post-apocalyptic landscape of the piece.³

Unidirectional form and its implications for a narrative reading

It has been noted that one of the most striking aspects of *Prologue* is the total lack of any effort on Grisey’s part to create a sense of recapitulation or reprise of any of his materials. Once we have moved away from the E-based harmonic series, we do not return to it; once the glissandi begin to infuse the arpeggio material, we hear no more clearly articulated pitches; and the “echo” motive is transformed into a violent trill and never resumes its previous incarnation. Again, this unidirectional treatment of the material is a common element in many spectral pieces, but also one of the most baffling to explain when set against the context of Western art music, which prizes coherence and an organic and unified structure as one of its chief aims. *Prologue* does not sound itsincoherent, but its failure to organize its material in the conventional way merits further discussion, and is the final step in constructing a narrative reading of the piece.

I have identified a narrative arc in the piece and suggested an interpretation that hears an interaction between a human consciousness and an impersonal process, typified by the arpeggio material. This reading does not necessarily explain, however, why Grisey resists a recapitulation or restatement of important motivic material, or why once the arpeggio and heartbeat material have been altered and warped by Grisey’s manipulations

³ See lament music, marked “extremely calm,” following the climatic scratch-tone passage. In Ricordi, 2007, *Prologue: pour alto seul*, Milan, page 4, first system (*Extrêmement calme*).

they do not return in their unaltered state. It is clear that the lament music is reacting to, “remembering,” the music and the cataclysm that has come before it; but it is easy to imagine a recomposition of the piece where a similar narrative is maintained but in which we do hear the arpeggio – perhaps only in fragmentary form, interspersed with the long tones restated of the lament music – as a way of evoking a sense of memory and reaction to previous music.

The difference between the imagined recomposition and the piece as it stands lies not in the details of what the narrative is, but rather in how the narrative is positioned with respect to the listener. Again we return to Grisey’s interest in “sounds, not notes.” I have discussed how, in this piece, musical material – in particular, the process music – is treated as itself a physically present object in the way that it grows, changes, and is destroyed. I have qualified this reading, noting that this is a rhetorical gesture; of course, the sounds themselves are not literally present in a tangible way.

Nevertheless, the use of processes of slow change are significant because they do recreate aspects of the physical world. In its dramatization of an sonic evolution, its playing out of each step, the process music is not so much *about* slow change as it is a *recreation* of it. The music is heavily mimetic – when we listen to the arpeggio music we are not listening to a piece about a process, we are listening to the process itself.

This insight enables us to return to the question of *Prologue*’s unidirectional form with new clarity. If the music seeks to recreate the workings of the physical world, it is, on some level, bound by the rules of the physical world. To return again to an analogy from the natural world, we might say that listening to *Prologue* is akin to observing a process – watching a fire consume fuel, for instance – in which physical matter is unalterably changed; for the arpeggios to return would create the sense of a log, burned up by fire, popping suddenly back into existence.

We have noted that there is more than impersonal, natural process in *Prologue*: interacting with the physical are the heartbeat and lament topics, which point to the idea of a human consciousness within the piece. Yet the human element within the music does not change our sense that this piece is entirely mimetic. Just as we observe the natural process of the arpeggio unfold, so too do we watch the consciousness resist that unfolding, become overwhelmed by it, and lament the cataclysm when it has passed. The heartbeat motive observes the process; we observe the heartbeat motive. The creation of a narrative in *Prologue* is a function not of the piece but of the listener, who follows the evolution and destruction of the arpeggio and the ensuing lament and understands the two to be related, understands the lament to be reacting to the preceding music.

This analysis has sought to engage with the semiotic issues at play in *Prologue*, providing a catalog not simply of the musical material from which the piece is constructed but an account of how the piece functions as a document embedded in a specific culture, what Agawu calls “the imagined historical and socio-cultural provenance of musical materials [6].” By proceeding in this way, we see the narrative take on new resonances. For all its trafficking in the impersonal, *Prologue* is obviously concerned with the human condition; the interplay of the human element and the surrounding music can take on the aspect of a parable on the ways we are buffeted by all the processes around us, naturally-occurring or man-made. Grisey’s genius is to tell an age-old story with startlingly innovative materials.

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Mahlerian Intertext and Allegory in Akira Kurosawa's *Ran* (1985)

Yayoi Uno Everett, Emory University, Atlanta, GA, USA

ABSTRACT

The film director Akira Kurosawa transports the narrative of Ran into a mythical realm through ritual, montage, and non-diegetic use of Mahlerian music. Based on Shakespeare's King Lear, the narrative of Ran emphasizes the importance of filial loyalty, while depicting life as an endless cycle of suffering caused by those who lust for power. Drawing on Andrew Goodwin's theory of intertextual cinema, this paper examines the extent to which Toru Takemitsu's film score reinforces the allegory of futility and nihilism in Ran. In accordance with Kurosawa's demand for a music that "moves beyond Mahler", Takemitsu composed a dirge-like orchestral music that conveys "the view from heaven" for the main battle scene. Expanding on Raymond Monelle's topic theory, my analysis examines how topics (funeral march, pianto) and other intertextual references to Mahler's Das Lied von der Erde and Symphony No.1 shape Takemitsu's film scores for the climactic battle scene, the protagonist's descent into madness, and reconciliation between the father and son. Combined with the filmic effects, the Mahlerian music elevates Kurosawa's vision of the apocalypse to a mythical realm.

BACKGROUND

Ran ("chaos") is a great epic film, a tragedy fed by Shakespeare, and a testament to Akira Kurosawa's legacy as a filmmaker. In contemplating his view of human history, Kurosawa remarked that he wished to explore dramatic situations in which the protagonist's failed ambitions do *not* yield tragic greatness, but stands as a reflection of the director's own pessimism [1]. The filmmaker explains in an interview that the subtext for the narrative of *Ran* is the threat of nuclear apocalypse: although cast in the medieval period of warring clans, its narrative is saturated with the anxiety of the post-Hiroshima age [2]. The apocalyptic image is best illustrated in the final scene of the film: after all of his loved ones are killed, the blind hermit, Tsurumaru, teeters on the edge of a cliff with the blood red sunset flaming behind him.

Working with other playwrights, it took Kurosawa seven years to complete the screenplay and another two years before he started shooting the film in 1984. Like Stanley Kubrick, Kurosawa was an unusual director who imparted to his crew very specific ideas about how he uses music in his films. In *Ran*, Kurosawa had symphonic music by Mahler in mind and used it before and during the shooting of certain scenes. For the rush (a quick print of a shooting of a film), Kurosawa used excerpts from Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* and told Toru Takemitsu to come up with Mahlerian music that "moves beyond Mahler!" [3]. Even for a seasoned film composer like Takemitsu, Kurosawa's demands were difficult

to meet. In spite of the masterpiece that resulted, the collaboration between the two was not at all smooth.¹

This paper examines how the combined effects of filmic shots and soundtrack, indeed, *move beyond* the dramatic (Shakespeare) and musical (Mahler) intertexts that inspired the work. Takemitsu's Mahler-inspired music, although used sparingly, provides profound commentary on the film's narrative and elevates Kurosawa's vision of the apocalypse to a mythical realm.

DRAMATIC INTERTEXT: SHAKESPEARE'S KING LEAR

Following Julia Kristeva, Michael Klein defines intertext as "the crossing of texts" where critics "often concern themselves both with the linguistic (musical) codes that bind texts together and with the tropes that transform these codes from text to text" [4]. Klein lists four different types of intertextuality that we are concerned with in music analysis: 1) *poietic* intertextuality that refers to those texts that an author brings to his/her writing; 2) *esthetic* intertextuality that refers to texts that a society brings to its reading; 3) *historical* intertextuality that confines the reading of the text to its own time; and 4) *transhistorical* intertextuality that may open the interpretation of the text from various historical framework [5]. Applied to the multimedial genre of film, primary intertexts that shaped Kurosawa's and Takemitsu's vision constitute the *poietic*, while the analyst/viewer's reading of the film constitute the *esthetic*. Semiotic analysis can be used as a tool for us to negotiate the extent to which *esthetic* intertexts are conditioned by the *poietic*. Let's begin by examining the dramatic intertexts that shaped the construction of the narrative and the filmic production.

James Goodwin explains how Kurosawa first drew inspiration from a medieval Japanese legend by Motonari Mori (1497-1571), which idealizes family loyalty: Mori's three sons are revered as those who exemplify traditional sense of loyalty and filial piety after their own father [6]. Kurosawa *inverts* this image in *Ran* by depicting Lord Hidetora as someone who builds his vast kingdom through violence and coercion of power. When he decides to step down and let his three sons (Taro, Jiro, and Saburo) inherit his throne, all hell breaks loose. Quick to disowning his third son (Saburo)—the only one who doesn't feign loyalty, Hidetora learns that his other sons will do anything to monopolize his kingdom; the armies of Taro and Jiro besiege the third castle where Hidetora takes refuge and expect him to commit *seppuku* (ritual suicide). In his subsequent journey through madness, Hidetora encounters the victims of his own ruthless past. After roaming in the wilderness as a mad man, he is reunited with Saburo and his trusted retainer Tango. The moment of reconciliation is, however, short-lived: his brothers' armies kill Saburo and Hidetora dies after him.

The other dramatic intertext for *Ran* comes from Shakespeare's *King Lear*; the constitution of characters and plot is derived from the tragic tale about an aging ruler deposed by his corrupted children: to Lear's three daughters, there are Hidetora's three sons; to Lear's loyal servant, the Earl of Kent, and the Fool, there is Hidetora's retainer, Tango, and Kyoami the Fool. Even Edmund, who tries to kill his half-brother, Edgar, and

¹ For Takemitsu, who had the privilege of working with other directors who gave him control over the editorial process, it was difficult to work with Kurosawa, who was unrelenting in having his own demands met.

his father, the Earl of Gloucester, can be compared to Lady Kaede (Taro's wife), who conspires to kill Jiro's first wife, Lady Sué, after she seduces Jiro following her husband's death. An important deviation from *King Lear* can be found in the absence of a tragic hero in *Ran*: while Lear is a victim of those who sin against him, Hidetora is an antihero, who achieves his political power by inflicting horrible sufferings upon others [7]. Lear goes mad because he can't cope with the corruption in others ("I am a man more sinned against than sinning"), while Hidetora goes mad because he is forced to confront the history of his own ruthless past. In *King Lear*, we hear the speech uttered by Gloucester soon after he is blinded by Cornwall: "As flies to wanton boys, so we are to the gods. They kill us for their sport." Shakespeare tells us that the ethos of character and society, in the end, may have no bearing on the outcome of human action. In *Ran*, there is a reference to this line, but the blame is squarely placed on humans. Just when Saburo's army had successfully defeated his brothers' armies at the end, they are faced with their leader's death. So when Kyoami cries out to the gods for their cruelty, Tango is quick to reprimand him:

Kyoami (the fool): Are there no gods, no buddhas? If you exist, hear my words: you're all cruel and fickle pranksters! You ease your boredom in the heavens by crush us like worms! Damn you! Is it such sport to see us weep and howl?

Tango (the retainer): Stop it! Do not curse the gods! It is they who weep. In every age they've watched us tread the path of evil, unable to live without killing each other. They can't save us from ourselves.

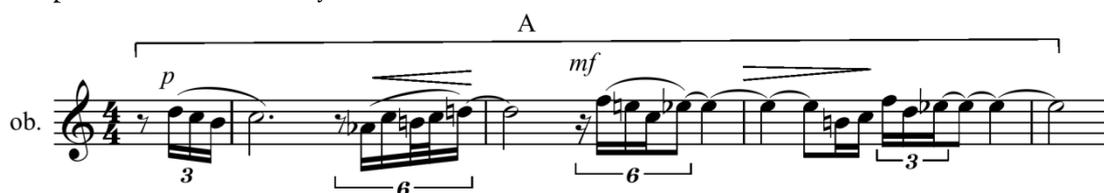
Tango's concluding speech conveys the tragic irony that lies at the heart of the narrative as envisioned by Kurosawa. The gods are inherently merciful, but humans are caught up in a vicious cycle of violence. In the concluding scene of *King Lear*, there is a hint of optimism when Edgar and Kent survive and Edgar is left to speak about the sad weight of the events, which everyone must now endure. There is a comparable ending in *Ran*, when the blind hermit, Tsurumaru teeters at the edge of cliff and is saved by the scroll of Buddha that falls before him. Kurosawa leaves the viewer hanging with the question: was that an act of divine intervention? Is there a god that watches over us after all?

MUSICAL INTERTEXT: MAHLER'S MUSIC TO WHAT END?

Takemitsu's film score for *Ran* alternates between musical fragments that make use of traditional Japanese music (taiko drums, shinobue, nokan) and western orchestral music composed in a range of styles. In fact, the Mahlerian music is a small subset of the latter and occupies at the most ten minutes of the entire film that lasts two hours and forty minutes. The dramatic import of this music is, however, critical to the film. For the major battle scene, this music is set into relief by the absence of diegetic sounds for the first and only time. Tomoko Deguchi makes a persuasive argument that the solo music for shinobue or nokan (transversal flute used in traditional Japanese ensembles) expresses the notion of history as cyclic, while the symphonic music conveys a sense of detachment and timelessness—"the vulnerable existence of humankind as a whole within history, as gazed

from above” [8].² While I agree with Deguchi’s argument that the Buddhist notion of impermanence provides an important context for understanding the film’s narrative, my reading of the Mahlerian music departs from hers; the gaze from above is neither detached nor indifferent, but comes from a place that transcends the film’s diegetic time and place. Considering Kurosawa’s attachment to Mahler, it could be understood as his own elegy (in the guise of a heavenly voice) and commentary directed at the human atrocities of violence. The *pianto* topic embedded in the battle music can be seen as an iconic representation of this heavenly cry. Let us first examine Takemitsu’s film score without the accompanying images.

The symphonic music Takemitsu composed for the main battle scene is cyclically configured around three motivic or thematic fragments. The oboe solo melody constitutes what I will refer to as motive A, as shown in Example 1. Unequivocally modeled on the oboe melody that opens “Der Abschied” from Mahler’s *Lied von der Erde*, the melody features an ascending minor third (C-D-Eb) as its basic shape. However, Takemitsu harmonizes it with a pentachord (C-Eb-F-F#-A) with an octatonic inflection, sustained by the strings over a D pedal in the bass. The chord is prolonged over four and a half measures within a rhythmically amorphous texture (strong beats are effaced), exuding a sense of mystery and stasis. In Mahler’s setting in *Das Lied von der Erde*, this motive appears in parallel major and undergoes continual transformation to comment on the text about the poet who bids farewell to his lover. It is filled with the romantic sentiment of abnegation and the poet’s ecstatic proclamation of the “world drunk with love and life!” Sorrow gives way to peace and contentment as the narrator bids farewell one last time and the piece closes in C major.



Example 1: oboe solo (A) motive³

In the context of *Ran*, the same melody is denied this agency for transformation; instead, it is woven into the cyclical chain of motives that are tossed back and forth between instruments, but it remains essentially unchanged in mood. The opening phrase that contains motive A functions as an antecedent phrase that leads to the main thematic motive (B) played *tutti* by the orchestra, as shown in Example 2. The principle melody is supported by the planning of chords based on minor-major 7th (B-D-F#-A# moves down to Bb-Db-F-A by a semitone). The dissonance of major seventh (outer voices of the accompanying chord) lends a bittersweet inflection to the melody in B minor. The *pianto* motive is embedded twice in the chromatic descent from A to F, as indicated by the circled notes in the upper register. The strong-weak rhythmic structure of the repeating

² Shinobue is the instrument Tsurumaru plays to express his sorrow and to remind Hidetora of his brutality in the past (he wiped out Tsurumaru’s family and blinded him). Deguchi illustrates in her analysis that the solo transversal flute’s music (shinobue or nokan) is organized by means of the traditional *jo-ha-kyu* structure found in Noh dramas, see Deguchi, p.56.

³ The transcriptions are based on Takemitsu’s sketches for the film score, made available by the Archives of Modern Japanese Music (Tokyo, Meiji Gakuin University).

two bars resembles a “sigh” at a broader gestural level. The timpani marks off the main beat in the tempo of a funeral march [9].⁴

Example 2: main thematic motive (B) [reduced score]

Each time A repeats and leads to B, the orchestral texture of the main theme thickens and the accompanying parts become more elaborate. Another prominent melody (C) in B minor is introduced by the horn and doubled by woodwinds, as shown in Example 3. Takemitsu explicitly writes “elegy” above the entry of this horn melody. Accompanied by delicate string and harp harmonics, the *pianto* motive is further accentuated by its placement at the melodic apex of the phrase (see bracketed notes).

Example 3: “elegy” (C) motive

Toward the end of the film, Takemitsu introduces another Mahlerian intertext: a funeral march for the scene when Saburo’s army departs with the bodies of Hidetora and Saburo. Against the beats of the funeral march in Bb minor, Takemitsu introduces a melody in the bassoon that is based on the third movement from Mahler’s Symphony No.1. It is, in effect, an intertext of an intertext since Mahler transforms the nursery tune “Frère Jacques” into a symphonic canon in D minor. Example 4 shows the first four bars of the bassoon melody. In the original sketch and recording, Takemitsu develops this theme further by embedding a thematic variation of motive B in the continuation of this phrase.

Example 4: “Funeral march” à la Mahler

⁴ Takemitsu admits in an interview that he had to conform to Kurosawa’s idea to include the timpani in this passage.

NARRATIVE CONTEXT: AUDIO-VISUAL SYNCHRONIZATION

Takemitsu's filmic score acquires specific narrative meaning when synchronized with Kurosawa's filmic shots in *Ran*. I would like to focus on three excerpts where the Mahlerian music is featured in the film and the audio-visual synchronization that takes place. The first scene is the climactic battle between the armies of the first and second sons (Taro and Jiro), where the two armies siege upon Hidetora, his army, and consorts in the middle of the night. As mentioned earlier, it is the only time when the diegetic sounds are erased and replaced by non-diegetic music in order to underscore the dramatic significance of this scene. It is as if the viewer is made to retreat inwardly in order to contemplate the atrocities of human violence.⁵ Influenced by Sergei Eisenstein's cinematography, Kurosawa distinguished the armies of the three sons by color: yellow banner, helmet, and pennants for Taro's army, red for Jiro's, and blue for Saburo's. By distinguishing each son by color, Deguchi comments that Kurosawa "reduces the individuality of the sons to mere generic icons, emphasizing the more universal notion of 'sons in a family system'..." [10].

Table 5 summarizes the audio-visual synchronization of this scene that lasts nearly seven minutes. In general, the oboe solo (A) is synchronized with the medium shots of human death, while the orchestral motive (B), played *tutti*, is synchronized with the long shots of the army as well as the "gaze from above" (the moon's ray piercing through the dark night).

DVD timing ⁶	Montage sequence	Film score
1'00"35	Hidetora awakens from the attack waged by Taro's and Jiro's armies	Diegetic sounds
1'01"56	Dead bodies of Hidetora's army; Taro's army (yellow banner) sieges the castle	Diegetic sounds erased; oboe solo (A)
1'02"44	Jiro's army (red banner) enters through the gate en masse	Orchestral motive (B)
1'03"08	Hidetora defends himself at the entrance of the castle as Jiro's army attacks	Oboe solo (A); orchestra repeats fragments of A; bridge
1'03"52	The shot of the moon from above; Hidetora's consorts commit suicide; some are shot down by Jiro's army	Orchestral motive (B) fragment, followed by the horn/woodwind melody (C)
1'04"42	Hidetora collapses in awe; the moon shines from above; the armies make full entry	Flute bridge; Orchestral motive (B)
1'05"13	Jiro's army (long shot)	Oboe solo (A); strings repeat the motive in antiphonal dialogue
1'05"44	Taro's and Jiro's armies fight one another (long shot); more arrows and gunshots go through the castle	Oboe bridge; dissonant chord sounded (x3); closing melody by bassoon and strings (C) interpolated by the oboe solo (A) fragment
1'06"52	Taro enters as the victor of the battle	Orchestral motive (B); oboe (A);

⁵ Deguchi comments on similar strategies used in other films such as *Apocalypse Now* (1979), *Platoon* (1986), and *Kingdom of Heaven* (2005), in which the diegetic sounds are muted and non-diegetic music is heard in its place. It creates an effect where actions seem to be controlled and viewed from a higher force, see Deguchi (61).

⁶ DVD timings are based on the 2005 Criterion Collection re-release of *Ran*, produced by Serge Silberman. 2'28"10 = 2 hours 28 minutes and 10 seconds.

		shinobue enters, punctuated by the gong
1'07"35	Taro is shot down by Jiro's army; as the castle burns down, Hidetora remains alive, but falls into a state of shock; his remaining soldiers are struck and die	Diegetic sounds resume: gunshots and soldiers' howling

Table 5: Audio-visual synchronization of the main battle scene

Kurosawa brings back some of the music from this battle scene in the tragic-ironic moment when Saburo is killed, while moments later his army proclaims victory over their enemies (Jiro's and Taro's armies). As outlined in Table 6, the scene begins with Hidetora and Saburo's reunification: the old man fondly tells Saburo how he wants to spend time with him as father and son. Out of nowhere, a gunshot is heard and Saburo falls off his horse. Hidetora, who managed to survive the siege of the castle, is now overcome with grief and dies after him. As Kyoami shouts out to the gods that they are "cruel and fickle pranksters" who "crush us like worms for pleasure," Tango scolds Kyoami and reminds him: "the gods are crying for us" for "not being able to save us from ourselves." At this precise moment, a brief recapitulation of the Mahlerian music is heard in counterpoint with Tango's utterance. He tells Kyoami to stop crying because "men live not for joy but for sorrow, not for peace, but for suffering." And this is precisely the moment when Kyoami's cry coincides with the *pianto* topic played by the strings in the background.

DVD timing	Montage sequence	Film score
2'28"10	Hidetora accompanies Saburo on horseback; medium-long shot of the two	Diegetic sounds (blowing wind, horses)
2'28"40	Saburo falls dead and Hidetora dies after him, asking for his son's forgiveness	Diegetic sounds (gunshot and neighing horse)
2'31"27	Saburo's army returns to proclaim victory (long shot); Tango collapses on the ground	Diegetic sounds (horses)
2'32"06	Kyoami cries out to the gods: "you crush us like worms for pleasure!" (long shot)	Diegetic sounds (e.g., wind blowing)
2'32" 30	Tango scolds Kyoami and reminds him that the gods cry for us (medium-long shot)	Motives A and B played in unison by the strings; A repeats (x3)

Table 6: Audio-visual synchronization of the death of Saburo

In the penultimate scene (2'36:11), where Saburo's army retreats from the battle scene with the bodies of Hidetora and Saburo, Takemitsu introduces the funeral march music, inspired by Mahler's Symphony No.1 (Example 4). Here, the function of music remains incidental: the slow beat of the funeral march matches the pace of the soldiers' march and marks their departure. The music is also muted and is blended into the diegetic sounds of the marching soldiers, rustling wind, and neighing horses. While Takemitsu created a longer film score that interweaves the variation of motive B, it was not incorporated into the final cut of this scene. Instead, the film concludes with the wild, chaotic sound of the shinobue, which accompanies the blind hermit, Tsurumaru, who barely escapes from death.

CONCLUSION: RAN AS AN APOCALYPTIC ODE

Just as Goodwin conceives Kurosawa's cinematography as a textual site in which discourses and cultural inflections become inscribed and interwoven, Takemitsu's film score for *Ran* can be conceived as an auditory site in which different cultural inflections merge; one hears the reference to Mahler, but filtered through Takemitsu's cyclical and harmonically static texture. Takemitsu's Mahlerian music in the film provides profound commentary on Kurosawa's allegory of nihilism through doubly negating the dramatic and musical intertexts. Gone is the victor/victim binary that drives the narrative of *King Lear*. The gods weep for us because all humans are corruptible. It is remarkable how well Takemitsu's music captures the philosophical essence of the film. Just as the narrative of *Ran* marks its difference from *King Lear* by owning up to the cruelty of fate as caused by humans, Takemitsu marks his distance from Mahler by denying the oboe melody its agency for transformation into a major key. The romantic abnegation and sense of closure that accompanies Mahler's "Das Abschied" is notably absent.

Moreover, while Takemitsu's music contains topical inflections (march, *pianto* motive) that are semiotically coded, the musical meaning ultimately remains provisional and incomplete. For some of us, the dirge-like music lingers long after the filmic images have receded from our consciousness. I refer to this phenomenon as an *indexical residue* because the musical sign becomes unmoored from the specific context of the film and becomes an intertext that signifies lament. But is it like any other lament from the history of western music? Clearly no. Raymond Monelle reminds us that "cultural temporalities" of music ground our consciousness to a specific historical time and place:

[T]opics are only the most obvious kinds of musical sign. Music also, in a profound way, signifies indexically the underlying rhythms of contemporary consciousness. In particular, cultural temporalities are perforce reflected in music. Musical structure, in fact, is largely a matter of the realization of temporality [11].

Monelle goes on to illustrate how the tendency for sequential structures to extend and embed realistic evocations is a nineteenth-century phenomenon. By the same token, I argue that the fragmented, cyclical, and non-developmental process that characterizes Takemitsu's music in the film transcends its nineteenth-century model; his music embodies the fragmentary view of history, social alienation, and nihilism that consumed Kurosawa and other filmmakers who came of age after World War II. The cultural specificity of this claim works in tandem with the allegorical and mythical dimension of the narrative: Kurosawa's lament that the human race will continue to destroy each other for the sake of power. Perhaps this is what leads Goodwin to comment that Kurosawa's dramaturgy and style are "less a means of fixed exposition and final resolution of habitual themes than a means of investigation and speculation into abiding paradoxes such as humanity's capacity for inhumanity" [12].

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Spectralism and Traditional Oral Music in the Style of Horatiu Radulescu

Alessandro Milia, University of Paris VIII, FR

ABSTRACT

My research mainly focuses on the relationships between compositional strategies evolved in recent times and those of traditional oral music. My aim is to shine a light on which new musical meanings and structures derive from a union between historical paradigms of the Twentieth century (such as Spectralism) and features of traditional oral music. In my previous research, I have analyzed several strategies for organizing compositional form in traditional oral music, focusing on those developed in Sardinia. I particularly highlighted the artistic potential of Sardinian traditional oral music given its characteristic use of open temporal form, open temporal compositional processes, and systems of micro-variations. Following that research, I analysed the musical language of the Italian composer Franco Oppo (1935), who developed a part of his style based upon compositional systems borrowed from Sardinian traditional oral music [1].

In this paper, I would like to address the relationship between traditional oral music and spectralism in Horatiu Radulescu's (1942-2008) work, [2] [3] [4]. Radulescu's approach to traditional oral music is comparable to that of Oppo. Born in Bucharest, Radulescu developed a very specific spectral language that was ahead of its time, which, after the late 1960's, he distinguished from French spectralism. Then, starting from the 1990s he developed a style that fused together musical aspects from traditional oral music (especially from Romania), spectral strategies, as well as from other elements of the ancient, Western savant musical tradition and of the classical and romantic epochs.

INTRODUCTION AND HYPOTHESIS

When we speak about oral tradition in relation to contemporary written music, many questions are generated. 1) How does a traditional oral music compositional strategy influence the musical language of an experimental composer such as Radulescu? 2) Which artistic innovations does it introduce to the style of the composer? 3) Which new musical structures and meanings are generated by this hybrid music? 4) Regarding a semiotic perspective, can the integration of several different systems (oral/savant) generate a new synthetic music language or new signs?¹

¹ Concerning the notion of musical sign, we can consider the work *La musique et les signes, Précis de sémiotique musicale* of Eero Tarasti, which contains numerous arguments on this subject [5]. For the purposes of this paper, a sign is a component of the music which generates a sense of meaning with which we can then establish a rapport with the original sign. When a new component shows itself in the music that we perceive, it becomes a recognizable sign with an attached meaning.

The use of oral traditional music in post-modernity has resulted in the production of less abstract works and a more narrative and discursive style. In writing this paper, my contribution to the subject will be an attempt to answer the question that emerges almost naturally by observing Radulescu's musical work: how can the introduction of traditional oral music strategies change a composer's compositional system, particularly concerning Radulescu's spectral music? Or rather, how does one perceive the musical work once the composer has incorporated the essential aspects of oral tradition into his craft?²

RADULESCU'S GLOBAL MUSICAL LANGUAGE

Radulescu's relationship with the oral music tradition doesn't concern his most recent period. His interest in the harmonic spectrum emerged – as stated by Radulescu himself – through the observation of Romanian traditional oral music during the period of his education in Romania [8]. Much of the music in the oral tradition is, in fact, based on the exploitation of the first natural harmonic, on scales formed by micro-intervals, natural or non-tempered intervals that rely on the physical nature of sound. Radulescu began his investigation on spectralism in the early 1960s. His first spectral composition – *Credo* (1962-1969) for nine cellos, *Opus 10* – was ahead of its time; it came a decade before the first spectral French works and was coeval with the most important of K. Stockhausen's spectral works: *Stimmung* (1968) for voices³.

Radulescu's musical language distinguishes itself by the organization of musical syntax through *microscopic structures*, while a compositional processing is done through *micro-variations*. The micro-structures and the formal aspects of micro-variations are essentials in a noticeable part of traditional oral musics. The construction of musical architecture through micro-elements is also used by other Eastern European composers such as G. Ligeti, who was likely inspired by Hungarian traditional oral music. In my previous research, I have already dealt with the technique of micro-variations through the study of Oppo's style, based on the structures of Sardinian traditional oral music. Oppo's style was often characterised by the use of harmonies based off of the first natural harmonics or non-tempered intervals from a series of natural harmonics, which are derived from the system of Sardinian oral music [11].

Radulescu's musical ideal of building the macro-form by the assembly of microscopic elements, did not prevent him from composing pieces of large proportions in which the entire sum of the tiny elements establishes the global overall form. These principles are present in his spectral pieces from the 1960s to the 1980s but they also appear in his later work. It is evident that the use of some schemas from classical culture, such as sonata form, in the 1990s, provides an essential basis on which he evolves the micro-elements and develops micro-variations typical of his style. The use of these two processes of generation of form, 1) the minimalist and directional elaboration through micro-variations and 2) the use in these works of stable teleological models strengthened

² I use the theory of analysis elaborated by Antonio Lai *Genèse et Révolutions des Langages Musicaux* [6], which is based on the principle of *Dérivation* of a model. This theory allows the identification of models in the style of the composer and to determine the derivations and hybridisations of these models. I also use several principles elaborated by Eero Tarasti in *La musique et les signes. Précis de sémiotique musicale* [7].

³ For a closer examination of Radulescu's spectral musical language see [9] and [10].

as *forma sonata*, can seem contradictory. These two processes however seem to coexist with no problem at all.

In several of Radulescu's compositions of the early 1990s – as in *practicing Eternity* (1992) VIth string quartet, *Opus 91, where and Beyond* (1992) for flute and strings, *Opus 55b* – the stylistic change towards the techniques discussed in the previous paragraph appears in his work. This shift becomes more evident in his *Piano Sonatas* and in *The Quest* (1996), Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, *Opus 90*. In all of the above mentioned works, the flux of continuous sound in his previous spectral style is replaced by the discontinuity of the musical discourse. This is accomplished through the fragmentation of the sonic syntax, the use of themes of popular and traditional oral origin, the renunciation of the sound mass's unity and the search to create a variety of contrasts between two or more musical elements within a given piece. The sizable lengths of his compositions -e.g., the Piano Concerto *The Quest* (1996), 47 min., and *Cinerum* (2005) for voices and ensemble, *Opus 108*, 90 min. - are a symptom of a formal organization through a premeditated strategy of the teleological compositional tradition.

As already mentioned, in Radulescu's recent works, he often borrows from music of oral Eastern Europe tradition, especially from Romania. The composer uses the form of *colinda*. In the first movement of his Piano Concerto, for example, the second theme is based off of a *colinda* and, in the third movement he uses 18 different *colinda* again, overlapped and processed by the technique of *canon in diffraction*. This technique involves the production of several melodies that start simultaneously but at different speeds causing a complex multiphony, (*Ibid.*). Another example of his use of Romanian oral music forms can be seen in his 3rd Piano Sonata: the third movement is titled *Doina*. In his cycle of *Piano Sonatas*, Radulescu uses a different theme of traditional oral origin for each movement of each sonata.

While Radulescu integrates traditional oral music into some of his recent musical pieces, he also tries to give a new life to the main features of *symphonic* style, such as 1) the *forma sonata* (where each sonata of his piano sonata cycle is comprised of 2 to 5 movements) 2) alternation of formal parts (e.g. ABAB), 3) the use of identifiable formal functions, 4) contrast among elements used into the work 5) the use of re-exposition (dynamic or not) for the entire duration of the piece. Thus, this hybrid of spectral principles, *symphonic* ideals and traditional oral musical creates a new musical aesthetic.

THE CYCLE LAO-TZU: "TAO TE CHING" PIANO SONATAS

Radulescu's *Piano Sonatas* composed between 1991 and 2007 form a cycle of works entitled *Lao-Tzu: Tao Te Ching Piano Sonatas*.⁴ During my doctoral studies, I will deal directly with this cycle of work. In this paper, I will just provide a few examples from this study. The *Piano Sonatas* are independent pieces and are each characterized by different materials. However, they are united by similar aesthetic principles. Summoning up Lao-

⁴ See: a) *being and non-being create each other* (Freiburg 1991), 2th piano Sonata, 13 min., *Opus 82*; b) *you will endure forever* (Paris 1992/Montreux 1999), 3th piano Sonata, 27 min., *Opus 86*; c) *like a well ... older than God* (Freiburg 1993), 4th piano Sonata, 15 min., *Opus 92*; d) *settle your dust, this is the primal identity* (Montreux 2003), 5th piano Sonata, 17 min., *Opus 106*; e) *return to the source of light* (Vevey 2007), 6th piano Sonata, 17 min., *Opus 110*. The first Piano Sonata has been composed in 1968 so we don't treat this work in this paper; see, *Cradle to Abysses* (Bucuresti 1968), 1st Piano Sonata, 11 min., *Opus 5*.

Tzu and his book *Tao Te Ching* should have a special meaning for Radulescu. This is the most important philosophical book of the Eastern philosopher Lao-tzu – whose actual existence is disputed – and it is obscure, ambiguous, and timeless. In all likelihood, the Taoist research of harmony between the nature of Being and universe reflects the author's ideal music. Radulescu's purpose was to create a musical language based on the nature of sound. He founded his approach on a scientific and naturalistic method, but musically, he tried mask the origins of his material (such as the musical spectrum) in letting only the finished result emerge [12]. Surely, the trade-off between Being and nature that is sought by Taoist philosophy stands at the core of Radulescu's musical thought concerning this cycle of piano works.

In the *Piano Sonatas*, Radulescu adopted a musical writing that contrasted with the principles that governed his works of the previous decade. In particular, this applies to the more abstract spectral works which push the possibilities of performance and perception to the limits of interpretation, trying to realize just intonation - e.g., *infinite to be cannot be infinite, infinite anti-be could be infinite* (1976-1987) for 9 strings quartet *Opus 33* and the cycle of works for viola as *Das Andere* (1984) *Opus 49*, *Agnus Dei* (1991) for two violas *Opus 84*. In his piano music, Radulescu had to give up just intonation and exploit the simplification of the piano's equal-tempered tuning. In spite of that, he exploited several spectral processing techniques in the Sonatas. The pitches are always organized as to refer to the series of natural harmonics [13]. As such, we often find that the tonal centres appear as low fundamental pulsating notes on the piano or remain only low pitches theoretically because they're too low to be played on the instrument.

We often observed that the process of development relates exclusively to the harmonic features of Radulescu's works [14]. The composer employs *metric-rhythmic ostinato* models, thus he emphasizes the importance of harmony and modulation from one spectrum to another (we can observe this phenomenon of metro-rhythmic *ostinato* patterns in his 3th Sonata, in the first and fourth movements [15] or in the Piano Concerto, *The Quest*, in the first movement. Several forms, being rather on a stable metric-rhythmic model, are built on the principle of a *metre ostinato variation*. These principles of variation derive from ancient composition techniques prior to tonality, such as variations on *basso* or *soprano ostinato*, and they also derive from his experience with traditional oral music, often based on a principle of variation.

In his piano pieces, the metric aspect is particularly refined. Radulescu uses composites and original models, evocative of dance music, most likely inspired by traditional metric models of oral music. He invents meters of *ostinato* in *unstable pulsation*, for example inside one measure we may find 2/16-3/16-4/16-5/16, or 5/16-3/16-4/16, [16]. The instability of the main pulsation is an innovative aspect that strongly characterizes all his pieces for piano solo. I suspect Radulescu borrowed this technique from the traditional oral music culture, as its opposite, a stable pulsation, is more characteristic of savant music. This feature also stands as a breaking point from earlier and more abstract works. In this new style of Radulescu, the traditional use of measures is truly justified, because the measure often contains the metric-rhythmic pattern that constitutes the main cell upon which the piece develops. As a matter of fact, these measures do not only include a part of the musical idea, but the whole primordial cell (e.g., in *The Quest* Piano Concerto, first movement, and in the 3th Sonata, first and fourth movements). During our study of Sardinian traditional oral music, we have already observed that fundamental structures – if

they are written in the most appropriate meter – can often be enclosed within a single measure [17].

The cycle *Lao-Tzu : "Tao Te Ching" Piano Sonatas* is an audacious and experimental work. Besides its harmonic features, its polyphonic aspects are also very elaborate. Through the technique of the *canon in diffraction* Radulescu managed different and independent voices that approach the limit of what can be performed on the piano. We can find an example in his Sonata V [18] and especially in his Sonata VI. This particular technique of polyphonic organization has been differently exploited in many works such as in the second movement of his Piano Concerto and in *Cinerum*. This contrapuntal practice is borrowed from the old vocal tradition, specifically concerning monodic songs of oral tradition.

In fact, in his cycle of *Piano Sonatas*, the harmonic aspects (through the spectral organization) and the polyphonic aspects (through the *canon in diffraction*) are both massively used and alternated in order to create variety and a technical-stylistic contrast. We often find the Byzantine hymns or *Colinda* overlapped with the *canon in diffraction*. This means that the traditional oral monodies assume a multi-phonic dimension. It's very interesting to see how Radulescu uses two dimensions – vertical and horizontal – creating a synthetic musical language in which all the dimensions of sound and its development are fully exploited. For the most part in spectral experimental musical language, only one dimension is exploited, whereas others aspects are put at the edges of the musical idea. In Radulescu's spectral language, the harmonic relationships between sounds, and therefore the timbre, are the most important aspects. In spectralism, the progressive and directional development of musical parameters totally rejects the discontinuity of traditional musical linear syntax (concerning polyphony and melody). In contrast, as of the 1990s, Radulescu made a stylistic synthesis, thus creating a composite musical language.

ALLOYS OF ORALITY AND EXPERIMENTAL COMPOSITION

At the centre of my research is the study of the mixture of orality and experimental composition. Music, like verbal language, is a system based on the differences between its fundamental elements. It is this degree of difference between two or more signs that allows for the production of communication and discourse. In addition, the widespread and repeated use of similar signs (e.g., several aspects of traditional oral music) produces long-distance relationships over time and allows the crystallization of a musical language.

This new musical language is the result of using principles borrowed from orality. The formal hybrid systems developed by Oppo and Radulescu add a new “sign” to the established aesthetic systems. Traditional Sardinian or Romanian oral music stands as a strange component in contemporary music; its exploitation in this new context generates a composite sign that is distinct from any pre-existing or recognizable sign. Therefore, the new sign causes instability in its interpretation yet it can still influence the expectations of the listener.

As such, the use of musical forms from traditional oral music influences many aspects of contemporary music: (1) rediscovery of formal models outside of the tonal system; (2) rediscovery of some variation and improvisational systems; (3) use of open form (*opera aperta*) and compositional temporal open process, typical of most traditional oral musics; (4) rediscovery of some formal organization systems based on rhetoric and

narration unusual in serial, stochastic and spectral music; (5) a new formal role of metric and rhythm; (6) the introduction of mythical, spiritual and mystical aspects, forgotten by the erudite tradition.

Using a semiotic perspective, we can argue that the style generated by Oppo's and Radulescu's works most likely produces a new musical language. These new "signs" created by the hybridization of orality and experimental paradigms or erudite musical tradition mark such a significant departure from previous signs as to be noticeably innovative. In contrast, the similarity of hybrid styles to art music strategies allow the former to still be recognized as deriving from the active language of the latter (such as with the use of sonata form and spectralism in Radulescu's style), and the similarity with some traditional oral music (such as colinda or micro-variation technique from traditional oral music). This familiarity allows this mixed musical language to remain a language recognized by and intelligible to the listener.

CONCLUSION

In my research, I try to answer the question that almost naturally emerges during one's observation of Oppo's and Radulescu's musical work: how can the introduction of traditional oral musical strategies change the experimental musical language? Namely, how does one perceive the musical work once it has incorporated the characteristic aspects of orality?

I am persuaded that the interbreeding between diverse musical paradigms, originating from various cultural spheres, can develop the musical language and make it more open, in amplifying both the communicative aspect of music as well as the potential of expression. Beyond this, the cultural hybridization also brings the specific aspects of the composer's musical identity to the foreground. In Oppo's and Radulescu's case, the use of traditional oral music from their respective countries of origin determines the specificity and the originality of their styles through giving unity and coherence to their music. In particular, the use of traditional oral aspects brings the composers' specific cultural identities to the foreground: Oppo's Mediterranean heritage and Radelescu's Eastern European heritage.

Through our study of these works as a re-introduction of orality into post-modern style, one can now perceive these musical works as being less abstract. One sees that there is a balanced integration of compositional principles (such as serialism, spectralism and cybernetics) based on more conceptual ideas, and narrative and discursive aspects related to the oral music tradition. This style moves away from and releases the radicalism and intellectual heaviness of compositional thought from the composers' previous periods. In other words, the components introduced by orality allow for a more immediate communication in music through a less conceptual, intellectual and theoretical musical language.

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A Topical Approach to Contemporary European Art Music

Füsun Köksal, *The University of Chicago, IL, USA*

ABSTRACT

As used in analysis by Leonard Ratner and taken further by theorists such as Kofi Agawu, Robert Hatten, and Raymond Monelle, the theory of topics has not been applied widely to music after the romantic period. In this study I show that today's music may fruitfully be analysed from a topical perspective. By examining the possibilities of applying such a theory to today's music, I explore the unconventional idea that there may be an emerging set of shared musical conventions in the music of our time. This paper presents selected topics in detail and provides relevant examples from the repertory.

INTRODUCTION

Since the 1920s, questions concerning the listener-composer relationship, the sociological function of music and the composer, and the relationship between complexity and comprehension have been discussed by different parties, including musicians, philosophers, sociologists, composers, artists and music theorists. In the 1950s, composers such as Milton Babbitt argued that because the relatedness of the work is autonomous, understanding music composed with indeterminacy—that is the music, that is not composed within stylistic familiarities and is thus not predictable—does not necessarily demand familiarity with “generalized assumptions [1].” On the other hand, in *Music, the Arts, and Ideas* Leonard B. Meyer argued that the adversity of perception that listeners experience when listening to “highly complex experimental music” depends upon “a set of strongly ingrained habits [2].” Years later, another music theorist and composer, Fred Lerdahl, argued in support of Meyer’s idea that such an intellectual, compositional processes engender a gap between the *compositional grammar* and *listening grammar*, and that music composed with serial procedures prevents the listener from forming a mental representation of music, which is necessary for its comprehension [3].

More recently, musicologist Arved Ashby’s edited collection *The Pleasure of Modernist Music* approaches modern music from the listener’s point of view, offering a variety of perspectives on non-structural listening, including an essay by Amy Bauer that surveys different theories on the comprehensibility of modern music.¹ Ashby himself

¹ Amy Bauer, “Tone Color, Movement, Changing Harmonic Planes: Cognition, Constraints and Conceptual Blends in Modernist Music,” in *The Pleasure of Modernist Music*, ed. Arved Ashby (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2004), pp. 121-152.

explores the psychosocial connotations of modernist musical gestures through their employment in film.²

In a spirit similar to *The Pleasure of Modern Music*, this paper seeks to contribute to scholarship on the comprehensibility of contemporary European concert music written in the last 25 years by exploring its associative qualities and considering the music from the listener's perspective. Regardless of what the composer himself explains about his/her music, are listeners able to form mental representations of the music in the course of their listening? Is it really the case that abstract music is unable to awake images in our minds? Would it be possible to offer a different understanding of contemporary music based on the associative qualities of music? How does today's music differ from music governed by the total serialism in terms of directionality, trajectory, linearity, and individuality?

This paper is an attempt to explore the answers to these questions, and I will argue that the music of the representatives of contemporary European modernism has the potential to stimulate the listener to form associative meanings. The paper will offer a *topic theoretical* perspective on the issue, which directly deals with signifier/signified relationships. While such an approach asserts that the associative qualities of this music extend beyond individual associations to a collective one, it also implies the existence of a stylistic commonality in the music of last 25 years.³

This study focuses on prominent composers of European art music, including Ivan Fedele (b. 1953), Michael Jarrell (b. 1958), Matthias Pintscher (b. 1971), Unsuk Chin (b. 1961), and Gérard Pesson (b. 1958), who follow modernist lines and whose music is informed by the music of composers of high modernity such as Boulez, Berio, Ligeti, and Stockhausen.

All topics presented in this study are in accordance two criteria introduced by Monelle at the end of the third chapter of *The Sense of Music*: 1) Possessing the capability of "signification by association"; and 2) Displaying a "level of conventionality in the sign." There are nevertheless questions regarding the applicability of topics theory to the music of today, at least as it was presented by Leonard G. Ratner. The first of these questions concerns the difficulty in defining today's cultural conventions because of their wide variety as compared to those in the 18th century; the second concerns the difficulty of defining today's cultural conventions from today's perspective. This being the case, I suggest the following: While it is possible to interpret the music from the sociological, historical, or artistic values of an artist as they are embodied in conventions, this process can be reversed by the use of a topical analysis of music to expose the relevant cultural conventions. Such an inquiry propounds a heuristic point of view towards different landscapes, which today's music offers.

Since this paper is a part of a longer study, in the following section I provide a brief overview of issues related to the categorization of today's topical universe. Following this overview I present three neoteric topics, analyze selected topics in detail, and provide relevant examples from the repertory.

² Arved Ashby, "Modernism Goes to the Movies," in *The Pleasure of Modernist Music*, ed. Arved Ashby (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2004), pp. 345-390.

³ In an interview composer Unsuk Chin refers to a similar idea: "Many composers nowadays have an 'extra-territorial' feeling about them. Whatever passport they may carry, their music sounds completely globalized; it borrows from everywhere and every era, and is rooted nowhere."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/music/classicalconcertreviews/8442547/Total-Immersion-Unsuk-Chin-Barbican-review.html>

LARGE-SCALE ORGANIZATION OF TOPICS

I suggest that the panoply of contemporary music topics can be understood either chronologically or conceptually. The two categories of topics may thus be represented as follows: 1) A chronological division of topics consisting of Classical topics and Neoteric topics; 2) A conceptual division of topics consisting of Nature, Culture, Time, and Space.

Chronological Division of topics

Classical topics

I am defining *classical topics* as the topics prevalent in the classical period as defined by Leonard Ratner [4]. To apply traditional topics in the context of contemporary music does not imply that they appear within the same musical parameters as they appeared in the 18th century. Rather, the connection of these topics with their counterparts from history involves their common expressive sense. Although a trumpet call of Witold *Lutosławski*, for example, sounds very different from a trumpet call of Haydn, both evoke the same type of music. During my research I identified the following traditional topics: *Brilliant style*, *Singing style*, *Fanfare*, and *Sigh*.

Neoteric topics

The neoteric topics are topics that seem to have emerged after the traditional canon, and that relate to cultural conventions of the 20th and 21st centuries. Among the neoteric topics, which are the main focus of this paper, I have identified Zero gravity, Bee buzz, Action, Hysteria, Bird song, Echo, Boundary play, Opening space, Frozen time, Oscillation, and Rocket and resonance.

Conceptual Division of Topics

The taxonomy of modern topics may also be guided by concepts. Four categories have emerged from my survey: Nature, Culture, Time, and Space. Although this categorization is informed by two binary oppositions (Nature/Culture and Time/Space) the opposition of these interdependent concepts is not important to this study. The distribution of topics according to their conceptual division is as follows: Topics of Nature: *Bee buzz*, *Bird song*, *Zero gravity*, and *Overtone*. Topics of Space: *Opening space*, *Boundary play*, and *Echo*. Topics of Time: *Oscillation*, *Frozen time*, and *Polymeric*. Topics of Culture: *Singing style*, *Fanfare*, *Hysteria*, *Brilliant style*, *Fanfare*, *Sigh*, and *Action*.

SELECTED TOPICS: ZERO GRAVITY, BOUNDARY PLAY, FROZEN TIME

Zero gravity

This topic is a general type, like the *Brilliant* and the *Singing* styles, and highlights slow motion in music. Although *Zero gravity* might be projected by a single melodic line it is usually a combination of a couple of melodic lines, constituting a textural unit. The melodic structure uses large intervallic skips and slowly oscillates between high and low

notes. In this case both the stylistic trait of the signifier (type of music) and the signified (topic) are new. We could not make such an association without seeing the human gesture in a zero gravity environment or slow-motion filmic technique. To be clear, the name I give to this topic, *Zero gravity*, reflects personal associations. It reminds me of the gestures and the mood in zero gravity—quiet and spacey—and gives the impression that the gesture is static and not completely predictable; as the steps of an astronaut are not wholly in his control, so the music unfolds unpredictably. Thus the signification process works here iconically. This signification process can be seen as similar to the suggested correlation of the rhythmic gesture to the human gesture as articulated by Wye Jamison Allanbrook [5].

A typical example of this topic appears as a background event in Unsuk Chin's (b. 1961) *Violin Concerto* (2001) in mm. 69–102 in the orchestra section [6]. As shown in example 1, the topic represents itself as separate entrances of dyads by different instruments. Here, both the extensive intervallic gap within the dyads, such as C#5-B6 on the oboe, and the intervallic gap between the successive dyad pairs contribute to the sense of spatiality, a sense of empty space. Almost all of the sounding simultaneities are underlined with a crescendo followed by decrescendo. The succession of those dynamic components creates the effect of an object gradually coming closer and then moving away.

The image shows a musical score for Example 1, starting at measure 86. The score is in 3/4 time and features five staves: Flute 1, 2; Oboe 1, 2; Clarinet in Bb 1, 2; Violin 1; and Violoncello. The music consists of dyads of notes with intervallic gaps, underlined with dynamic markings (crescendo and decrescendo). The notes are often marked with '5' and '5-7', indicating intervals. The score is written in a standard musical notation with clefs, notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Example 1: Unsuk Chin, *Violin Concerto* (2001), mm. 76-79.⁴

The second example of this topic is from Michael Jarrell's (b. 1958) *Sillages* (2005). While the previous example projects only long notes, this example displays a melodic presentation of the topic, which evokes the feeling of a number of objects sweeping to and fro in a zero-gravity environment. The melodic fragments are molded by a crescendo or decrescendo — or both — vaguely entering and disappearing (example 2) [7]. There is no sense of contrast or abrupt gesture disturbing the stagnancy of the stillness. Here we have another fundamental component of this topic, the *Echoing* effect, which becomes especially apparent in the solo parts. Although the solo lines do not imitate each other melodically, they touch on the same pitch in close proximity, such as the C# 5 in the flute (m. 72, 2nd beat), and the oboe on the next beat, and the D4 in the oboe in m. 72, which is reiterated by the clarinet right afterwards in m. 73. The effect is most efficient in m. 73 between the solo clarinet and the clarinet 1 in the orchestra, engendering an unfocused,

⁴ *Violin Concerto*, by Unsuk Chin. © Copyright 2002 by Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd. Reprinted by permission.

blurry effect created by an involuntary gesture, or the motion of an object in a frictionless environment which is trying to move forward but which cannot reach to its target.⁵

Example 2: Michael Jarrell, *Sillages* (2005), mm. 70-72.⁶

A similar echoing effect also appears in Ivan Fedele's (b. 1953) *Études Boréales*, No. 2, a piece based on the same topic from the beginning to the end (example 3) [8].

Example 3: Ivan Fedele, *Études Boréales*, No. 2, m. 9.⁷

Boundary Play

While many of the gestural behaviours of *Boundary play* may be found in G. Ligeti's (b. 1923) music as early as the 1960s, and in his later period in pieces such as the Cello Concerto (1966) or the Piano Etudes, Book I (1985), No. 1, *Desordre*, the topic's continued presence in the music of other composers motivates me to call it a topic.

Fedele's etude no. 2 from *Études Australes* exhibits a sophisticated and complex example of *Boundary play*, in which the composer presents the topic in multiple layers. Like Ligeti's Piano Etude No. 1, *Desordre*, the range of the piano becomes the boundary-defining element in Fedele's *Platea di Weddell*. As a whole the piece recalls a stretched-out

⁵ Although the nomenclature of the topics in this paper is personal, the idea of a body in motion appears in Jarrell's own writing about this work. Jarrell described his piece as: "The trace that a ship leaves behind it on the surface of waters," and "part of a fluid (liquid, air) left behind a body in motion - perturbations that occur therein." See <http://www.michaeljarrell.com/en/oeuvres-fiche.php?cotage=28330>. A further description of the same piece full of images such as "echoing," "aeroplane," and "motion in the sky" appears on a review written in 2009: "The orchestra is pulled in their wake, the echoes gradually dispersing like cloud trails in the sky, following an aeroplane that has flown out of sight." See <http://classical-iconoclast.blogspot.com/2009/08/michael-jarrell-sillages-prom-25-2009.html>.

⁶ *Sillages – Congruences II*, by Michael Jarrell. © Copyright 2005 by Editions Henry Lemoine. Reprinted by permission.

⁷ *Etudes boreales for piano – Etudes australes for piano*, by Ivan Fedele. © Copyright 2003 by Sugarmusic S.p.A. Milano (Italy) – Edizioni Suvini Zerboni. Reprinted by permission.

moment of the oscillation of a pendulum between the apex and the nadir of the keyboard, which finally stops on A0 because it cannot go further down. Due to limitations of space I will present an analysis of the first section only [9].

The topic presents itself in three layers. I will call each layer A, B, and C, respectively: Layer A is the upper layer, which defines the upper border of the right hand; Layer B, the middle layer, consists of trills and tremolos; finally Layer C is the lower level of the right hand, which imitates Layer A from a major seventh lower. In the first unit both A and C layers move chromatically.

Example 4: Ivan Fedele, *Etudes Australes*, No. 2, mm.1-4.⁸

While Layer A begins from F5 (m. 2) and moves up to D#7 (m. 12), a span of about two octaves, Layer C begins from Gb4 (m. 2) and moves up to E6 in m. 12, again in a 2-octave span. Layer B, however, moves a little differently, because it moves slower than the other two lines, which in turn causes it to function as a local pedal point. Additionally, while establishing the temporary pitch-space relationships in the inner voices and establishing the local orientation points between Layers A and C, it brings another layer into the mix by chromatically expanding its own pitch space via trills and tremolos. There is another aspect here that I believe adds to the topic's quality: the pedal notes for the left hand. By staying at one pitch throughout a particular section, the pedal tone functions as an orientation point, like the North Star, so that we perceive how far we are away from a fixed anchor point.

The topic appears in Chin's *Violin Concerto* in mm. 210-235 [10]. Here, the pitch space is extended in each appearance of the arpeggiated gesture. The gesture projects an oscillation between the lowest boundary pitch G3 (m. 210) and reaches to the highest pitch of B6 by the end of the tenth repetition in m. 223.

Example 5: Unsuk Chin, *Violin Concerto* (2001), mm. 210-223.⁹

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ *Violin Concerto*, by Unsuk Chin © Copyright 2002 by Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd. Reprinted by permission of Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

Frozen Time

Frozen time manifests itself in an unexpected repetition of a pitch or a gesture interrupting the natural course of music. This topic becomes one of the main components of Gérard Pesson's (b. 1958) *Wunderblock (Nebenstück II)* (2005) for accordion and orchestra. Although the piece itself has a repetitive quality, it is still clear when the music comes to a deadlock. Such passages are found in m. 24, mm. 77-81, and elsewhere. *Frozen time* is displayed in example 6 [11].

Example 6: Gérard Pesson, *Wunderblock (Nebenstück II)* (2005), m. 24.¹⁰

Matthias Pintscher (b. 1971) also uses the topic extensively in the second movement of *Reflections on Narcissus, mov. II* (2004-2005) for violoncello and orchestra. His use of the topic is, however, more integrated into the narration of the music. The topic can be heard in the flowing passages: mm. 228-230, 241-243, 250-254, and 255- 261 [12].¹¹

Example 7: Matthias Pintscher, *Reflections on Narcissus, Mov. II* (2004-2005), mm. 229-231.¹²

¹⁰ *Wunderblock (Nebenstück II)*, by Gérard Pesson. © Copyright 2005 by Editions Henry Lemoine. Reprinted by permission.

¹¹ In his liner notes in the recording of this piece, Thomas Schafer uses a definition similar to the idea of freezing time: “But the *Reflections on Narcissus* also overwhelm the listener repeatedly with astonishing ruptures, as when Pintscher, after an ambitiously constructed progression toward a climax, which flows into what is really the culmination of the piece, suddenly cuts into this upsurge and places in contrast to it the beautifully touching intimate dialogue of the solo cello and its counterpart in the orchestra, as if time stands still for a moment” (p. 14).

¹² *Reflections on Narcissus*, by Matthias Pintscher. © Copyright 2005 by Bärenreiter – Verlag Karl Vötterle GmbH & Co. KG, Kassel. Used by permission.

A subtype of *Frozen time* is *Oscillation*, which involves the gesture of quick movement between two or more pitches. The third movement of Philip Hurel's (b. 1955) *Flash-Back* (1998) exhibits an extended section based on this topic, which is based not only on two or more pitches but also multiple orchestral layers. In this passage we have two layers of the same topic, marking a static, resting point of a process that occurs earlier in the work. Example 8 displays a piano reduction of the first layer of the topic, which is easily audible when executed by tuba, trombone 2, contrabass, contrabassoon, horns, cello, and piano. It is essentially a repeated four-note succession from A1, which stabilizes the lowest pitch space to G3, as shown in the example. The second layer is an *Oscillation* between chords performed by high strings and high woodwinds. Although both topics move in a regular motion in themselves and return to the starting location every thirteen eighth notes, an additional 3/16 in every other cycle creates the illusion of a slight delay. Although this effect could be explained as the result of the processes related to spectral techniques, I believe the particular effect it creates and the employment of the effect by other composers classifies this gestural quality as a topic [13].

Example 8: Philippe Hurel, *Flash-Back* (1998), mm. 77-80.¹³

This paper may be understood as an attempt to show that the music written by contemporary composers of the last 25 years, those following the modernist lines of the avant-garde, are open to musical signification by examining the associative qualities of musical gestures, unlike most of the works written by their predecessors.

Both the associative qualities of gestural units and the fact that there are similar musical gestures employed by different composers, which recalls the common practice of the classical era, inspired me to approach this subject from a topical perspective. To be sure, today's cultural conventions are much wider than the cultural conventions of the 18th century. Nevertheless, different people, regardless of their education, cultural background, and geographical location, are likely to interpret many gestural qualities in a similar way. *Zero gravity* presents such an instance. Regardless of the listener's geographical placement, any person who audits a musical passage exhibiting this topic, while watching a documentary showing the motion of objects moving in a weightless environment, would be able to conjure up a mental picture of an astronaut trying to move in such an environment. I strongly believe if a musical passage is capable of creating such a specific mental picture at a collective level, the signified may very well be pointing out a cultural convention.

Understood as an intrinsic element of music, I suggest that the topics presented in this study should be understood differently than the filmic qualities found in modern music as discussed by Arved Ashby. Ashby argues extensively that "visual" qualities can be

¹³ *Flash-Back*, by Philippe Hurel. © Copyright 1998 by Editions Henry Lemoine. Reprinted by permission.

found in such works as Krzysztof Penderecki's (b. 1933) *Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima* (1961), and John Corigliano's (b. 1938) *Pied Piper Fantasy* for flute and orchestra (1979-82) and classifies the associative qualities of these works as phantasmagoric, a word which has been used by Adorno to define music that aspires to achieve an illusionary effect [14] [15]. Ashby's argument elicits the question of whether the topics I have presented in this paper could be understood as having such phantasmagoric qualities. I would reply in the negative: Even though phantasmagoric gestures display an inorganic relationship with the work itself by privileging secondary parameters, the topics considered in this paper exist within the organic structural continuity of the piece and they do not necessarily privilege the secondary parameters. The topics presented here belong to the abstract nature of the music and emerge as part of the vocabulary of the music of today. I suggest that this subject calls for more research. At first glance, it may be deepened by an examination of the roots of the exemplified topics; many of the gestural shapes of these topics can be found in the earlier examples of music composed after 1945, or perhaps even earlier. However, such coverage far exceeds the limits of this paper.

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An Overview of *Retrato I*, by Gilberto Mendes: Quotations and the Influence of Film Music of the 1930s and 40s

Cibele Palopoli, MD, Univeristy of Sao Paulo, BR

ABSTRACT

This paper examines complementary aspects between the film and post-tonal music in Retrato I (1974), for flute and clarinet, by Gilberto Mendes (b. 1922), which carries densely meaningful musical signs interacting and co-existing in a same piece. Film music of the 1930s and 40s can be viewed as an indexical sign and its effects as an emotional intepretant recall an important period of Gilberto Mendes's life, his childhood, and the tonal music present in his compositional course. Inspired by Charles Sanders Peirce's categories, this article is an attempt to approach his ideas to musical analysis, considering musical procedures developed during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, such as set theory.

INTRODUCTION

Born and raised by the sea, the Brazilian composer Gilberto Mendes (b. 1922) has been interacting with the 20th and 21st compositional trends since the beginning of his career, in order to reach a higher degree of freedom in form and metrics. His search for new timbres and his use of brief pitch collections as structural elements in his work show aspects of Modernism's aesthetic and political consequences.

When we analyze the course taken by the composer himself in his book *Uma odisséia musical: dos mares do sul à elegância pop/art déco* [a musical odyssey: from the southern seas to the pop/art deco elegance] (1994), we realize that his musical learning process was oriented towards a non-tonal universe. In his youth, he abandoned his compositional training as a tone-oriented teacher in favor of a more personal learning process, based on his own analyses of the work composed by Bach, Schumann, Schubert, Scarlatti, Chopin, Bartók, Schoenberg, Milhaud, Stravinsky, Debussy and Webern, his “foremost and truest music composition teachers” [1]. From 1945 to 1958—a period considered by the composer as his first compositional phase—he was attracted to Neoclassicism, the absence of directionality and a non-functional harmony, and this resulted in the construction of chords using seconds and fourths. In addition, he was strongly influenced by the tonal music prevalent in American films during the 1930s and 40s. The combination of the compositional techniques arising from these influences resulted in works whose characteristics led him to classify this phase as “tonal with a poly/atonal climate” [2].

It was a combination of events that led the composer to a brief nationalistic streak; the Jdanov doctrine ¹ in the early 1950s, the second open letter written by Camargo Guarnieri ², the subsequent breakup of Guerra-Peixe and Cláudio Santoro from dodecaphonism and his contact with Mário de Andrade's 1928 *Ensaio sobre a Música Brasileira* [essay on Brazilian music]. Consequently this inspired him to explore Brazilian folklore under Mário de Andrade's guidance. However, it did not take him long to return to the then-called "vanguard", which sought a greater contact with Western contemporary compositions. During his second compositional phase, called "experimental" (1960-1982), Gilberto Mendes went to the Darmstadt summer course, strengthening his contact with aleatorical, microtonal, neo-Dadaistic, concrete, gestural (musical theatre) music, as well as happenings, using new graphic symbols in scoring his works.³

American movie composers of the 1930s and 1940s, such as Cole Porter, George Gershwin and Frederick Hollander,⁴ are also part of Gilberto Mendes's musical identity, highlighting his nostalgic relationship with film music to his work as a whole:

Hollander, what a maritime, blue-sky, moving resonance his name evokes in me [...]. In Germany, he was Friederich Hollaender, the king of kabarett melodien, in the Berlin Friedrichstrasse of the 1920s. He also composed the songs Marlene Dietrich sings in *The Blue Angel*, directed by Sternberg, including the anthological *Ich bin von Kopf bis Fuss auf Liebe eingestellt*.⁵ In the United States, fleeing Nazism, he composes *Moonlight and Shadows*, which Dorothy Lamour sings in *Her Jungle Love*. And Eddy Duchin's orchestral arrangement and recording of this song became my Wellesian rosebud [...] [6].

Film music of the 1930s and 40s can be viewed as an indexical sign and its effects as an emotional interpretant recall an important period of Gilberto Mendes's life, his childhood, and the tonal music present in his compositional course. We can also verify on Mendes's works logical interpretants, as his most famous works *Beba Coca-Cola (Motet em Ré Menor)* (1967) and *Santos Football Music* (1969), and even energetic interpretants, as mentioned by Martinez [7], in *O Último Tango em Vila Parisi* (1987), *Ulysses em Copacabana Surfing with James Joyce e Dorothy Lamour* (1988) and *Il Samba Del Soldato* (1991).

Inspired by Charles Sanders Peirce's categories, this article is an attempt to approach his ideas to musical analysis, focusing on the intertextuality provided by Gilberto Mendes's *Retrato I*, which carries densely meaningful musical signs interacting and co-existing in a same piece.

¹ The Jdanov Manifest was written by Andrei Alexandrovitch Jdanov in the then USSR and delivered during a congress of the Composers' Union, in 1948, see Salles [3].

² The *Carta Aberta aos Músicos e Críticos do Brasil* [open letter to the musicians and critics of Brazil], that was written in December 1950, and published in the mainstream media of the time, was mainly targeted at Hans-Joachim Koellreutter. In his open letter, Guarnieri warned "the new generations of artists" about the "dangers" of modern art as a force capable of destroying the modernist nationalism. The author criticized the twelve-tone technique, considering it a degenerate art, an athematic and essentially cerebral music, both antipopular and antinational, see Contier [4].

³ To further references about Gilberto Mendes's importance, see Buckinx [5].

⁴ The son of German parents, composer Friedrich Hollaender was born in London in 1896 and died in Munich in 1976. During the 1930s, Hollaender settled in the USA and changed the spelling of his name to Frederick Hollander. Currently, we may find references to him in both spellings.

⁵ The title of this song in English is *Falling in Love Again*.

AN OVERVIEW OF *RETRATO I*

It was during his second compositional period that Gilberto Mendes, from his performance in the *Movimento Música Nova* [new music movement], came to be defined as a “composer freed from traditional techniques, oriented towards experimentalism, the exploration of electroacoustics, of randomness, of the concept of row with a structural basis, ultimately of the pluri-sensoriality of the work of art”, [8]. In this context, the composer wrote, in 1974, *Retrato I* [portrait I], for flute and clarinet in B flat, the first in a series of musical portraits dedicated to his wife Eliane. The title of the piece may be interpreted as a rheme, which allows for the concretization of imagined possibilities. It also can be indexed ⁶ in relation to 19th Century aesthetics, evoking Mussorgski’s *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

Retrato I has 161 bars organized into a single Section, which is subdivided into introduction and nine Parts (Table 1). At each Part, the irregular number of bars indicates the asymmetry present in the piece’s form and the diversity inherent in the dynamics and timbre procedures characterizes a stratified texture.

Sections Bar	Single section 1-161										
Part Bar	Part 1 1-4	Part 2 5-38	Part 3 39-49	Part 4 50-63	Part 5 64-69	Part 6 70-95	Part 7 96-108	Part 8 109-120 Repeats Part 2 material	Part 9 121-124 Repeats Part 3 material	Part 10 125-128 Repeats Part 4 material	Part 11 129-161
Center	A	A	D	F & C	Transition	A & D	Transition	A	D	F	A
Nr. Of bar	4	34	11	14	6	26	13	12	4	4	33

Table 1: *Retrato I*'s form.

Inside each Part, five varied sets are juxtaposed. This multiplicity of little varied sets has characteristics of Postmodernism. Set 1 is expanded (Figure 1) as of the first bars, starting from a sound, until it reaches the 3m interval above referred to by Gilberto Mendes (namely, in bar 13 and 36). The microtonal undulations proceeded by 2M intervals and tremolos can be interpreted as a rhematic-iconic-legisign, representing the maritime ebb and flow from Gilberto Mendes’s hometown, Santos.

⁶ We highlight that the utilization of the word *index* in this paper is directly related to Peirce’s Trichotomy, referring to “a sign that is related to its object through co-occurrence in actual experience”, see Turino [9].

1 $\text{♩} = 60$ *flatterz.* (B) C1.1
 A *pppp* \leftarrow *pp* \rightarrow *ppp* *pp*
 C1 *pp*

4 C1.2
quasi p

11 $\text{♩} = 88$ C1.4
pp C1.3 *p*

36 $\text{♩} = 88$ C1.5
p *espressivo* *rall.*

Major variations of set 1:

- Set 1 (C1): 1 sound (0)
- C1.1: a quarter tone
- C1.2: 2M (02)
- C1.3: 3M (04)
- C1.4: 3m + 2M (025) - 3-7
- C1.5: (0135) - 4-11

Figure 1: Set 1 and its major variations (bars 1-2, 4, 11-15 and 36-38).⁷

Sets 2 through 4 (Figure 2) and their variations are then introduced, interspersed by forms of set 1:

⁷ All musical examples are reproductions from the same edition: *Retrato I*, by Gilberto Mendes; copyright 1979, by Editoras Novas Metas Ltda. Used by permission.

Major variations of set 2:

C2: (0123) - 4-1
 C2.1: (01234568T) - 9-6
 C2.2: (0135679) - 7-28
 C2.3: (013478) - 6-z19

Major variations of set 3:

C3: (0123456789T)
 C3.1: (013568T) - 7-35

Major variations of set 4: C4: (0135) - 4-11
 C4.1: (0237) - 4-14
 C4.2: (0248) - 4-24
 C4.3: (0135) - 4-11

Figure 2: Sets 2 through 4 and their variations (respectively bars 5, 8-9 and 19-23; 6 and 63; 28-30 and 36-38).

When we consider the general pauses, the sonority of the wind and keys of the flute, as well as the gestures at the end of the piece as musical material, we expand our organization to five sets. This fifth set, composed basically of extended techniques, can also be associated with musical signs. The sonority of wind played on the flute by blowing in the headjoint completely cover is a rhematic-iconic-legisign, literally a metaphor for the beach wind sonority. On the other hand, the percussive effects produced by key clicks as well as the physical and expressive gestures (musical theatre) at the end of the piece represent an energetic interpretant to be developed by the performers.

In his memoirs, Gilberto Mendes refers to the elements that formed his musical composition:

["Retrato I"] has the shape of an often-interrupted melody, in order to give way to the re-elaboration of what was heard until the breakpoint. The re-elaborated parts add up at each interruption. On the first page, I present two very brief fragments of two songs—their beginnings—by Friedrich Hollaender, one of which was sung by Marlene Dietrich in *The Blue Angel*⁸ and the other by Dorothy Lamour in *Her Jungle Love*,⁹

⁸ The composer refers to the song *Falling in Love Again* (*Ich bin von Kopf bis Fuss auf Liebe eingestellt*).

both starting from the third minor interval, which is also the first interval of my own interrupted melody. Therefore, they are not mere quotations, but the composition of a process of identification among several musical elements around the third minor interval, which is the axis of the entire composition, until the end, in tremolos, with the interval opening up to a Schumann piece.¹⁰ It is as if my melody finds it difficult to move on. And, always stumbling, it does not reach the end, always in the midst of a nostalgic feel of musical recollections. Musicians pretend to repeat the last phrase (they play it mentally), in a theatrical manner, with the instruments in their mouths [10].

Frederick Hollander's quotations of film music of the 1930s and 40s (specifically, *Falling in Love Again* and *Moonlight and Shadows*) in *Retrato I* represent a notion of *formal iconism* [11]. Moreover, it constantly evokes an emotional interpretant, referred by the composer as "a nostalgic feel of musical recollections". A self-confessed lover of the American cinema of the 1930s and 1940s, Gilberto Mendes searches in American films new signs for his music, saying that not long before composing *Retrato I*, he found out that his two favorite songs (*Falling in Love Again* and *Moonlight and Shadows*) had been composed by the same person: "I could not help but get very thrilled with this discovery. The same composer had written the two popular songs that meant the most to me, (...), which I evoked in *Retrato I*" [12]. By inserting quotations into his work, he alluded to his own memory of these songs resulting in "references [that] are always cherished reminiscences, shamelessly distorted due to the fact they are gathered 'by ear,' confused by the simultaneous combination of more than one record of his recollections" [13].

[...] I, of all people, in love with cinema, an art which sometimes I think I like better than music. The movie theater is like a temple to me. There, when the lights grow dim and the movie starts, I find God. It is my religion [...] [14].

According to the composer, *Retrato I* presents quotations of avowedly tonal music (Figure 3). Nonetheless, the use of polytonality¹¹ in the passages where the aforementioned quotations are taken from, the absence of a harmonic hierarchy and the utilization of diverse pitch collections characterize a post-tonal work [16]:

⁹ Gilberto Mendes refers to *Moonlight and Shadows*.

¹⁰ The musical contour formed by the notes in the last bars of *Retrato I* is similar to the first bars of the Fabel piece, which integrates *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12, or the passages of the *Sonata*, Op. 22, or even the *Humoresque*, Op. 20, for piano. In personal contact with pianists Heloísa and Amílcar Zani, they said that the insertion of short similar passages in different works is a common practice adopted by Robert Schumann.

¹¹ We consider that polytonality "(...)" is the simultaneous use of two or more aurally distinguishable tonal centers. (...) As a general rule, each tonal layer in a polytonal passage will be basically diatonic to its own scale", see Kostka [15].

The figure displays three musical excerpts from Schumann's works. The first excerpt (bars 36-38) features a tempo of 88, marked 'espressivo' and 'p', with a 'rall.' instruction. The second excerpt (bars 39-44) has a tempo of 120, marked 'mf a tempo' and 'pp a tempo'. The third excerpt (bars 159-161) is marked 'a tempo' and 'rall.', with a circled 'K' above the first bar.

Figure 3: Examples of quotations in polytonal passages: *Falling in Love Again*, *Moonlight and Shadows* and Schumann's contour (bars 36-38, 39-44 and 159-161).

The use of the flute and clarinet in B flat facilitates the creation of a balanced sound and timbre during the piece. The graphical presentation of the piece (symbolic sign) includes a leaflet with technical and interpretative instructions associated with the score through circled letters, from A to K.¹² With the support of this expedient, Gilberto Mendes asks for effects like *frulatto*, microtonal undulations, wind sounds achieved by blowing directly into the flute headjoint (without a formed embouchure), notes played at the same time when the letters "T" and "K" are reproduced, key clicks, and notes both played and sang at an interval of second major or minor. These sonorities enlarge the sound diversity and contribute to textural stratification which in itself becomes an indexing of the Darmstadt's *Neue Musik* concepts.

The piece is characterized by a great rhythmic and metric diversity. Although there is no indication of time signature, the presence of mixed metrics in measurable bars, which extend from 2 quavers (last bar) to 42 quavers (first bar) (Figure 4), is striking.

¹² The leaflet contains the following instructions (in both Portuguese and English): "(A) Start without sound; (B) Wave the sound microtonally; (C) Cover completely the end [sic] of the flute and blow; (D) Like an exercise of technique; (E) Pronounce the letter 'T' when playing each note, as clear as possible; (F) A long note with periodic accents; (G) Click the keys of the flute with the fingers; (H) Play the notes and, at the same time, click the keys of the flute; (I) Pronounce the letter 'K' when playing each note, as clear as possible; (J) Sing while playing the notes, at an interval of second major or minor; (K) Not to be played. Perform this final part mentally, with all physical and expressive gestures", see Mendes [17].

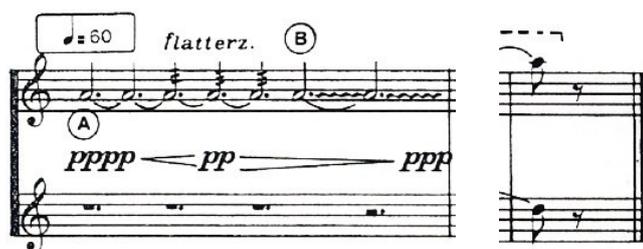


Figure 4: Metric diversity: From 42 quavers (bar 1) to 2 quavers (bar 161).

The first metronomic indication is a quarter note at 60bpm and, a little further ahead, the measurement by the quaver is valued in the indication that makes it equal to 120bpm (bar 5). However, after reaching bar 11, the quaver is associated with 88bpm and these tempos continue to be alternated until the end of the piece, being generally separated by at least one bar of silence in both voices or by a long musical figure in one of the voices. Our conjecture is that the composer based his indication on the options provided by mechanical metronomes. Gilberto Mendes then explores two distinct types of temporality: the objective one, represented by the metronomic indications, versus a subjective one, which calls into question the possibility of considering music purely iconic.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

We therefore conclude that the segmentation of sets associated with the determination of a referential locus, metric irregularity, and diverse dynamics, timbre, and articulation support the understanding of the stratified texture as well as the 11 part formation of the piece's formal organization—which represent ancillary aspects to both a timbristic treatment, and the conduction of the piece by its performers. *Retrato I* deals with the atmosphere of the film music of the 1930s and 40s concomitantly with the dryness of post-tonal music, provided by compositional procedures such as polymodality and music theatre. Finally, we verified in this preliminary investigation a co-existence of densely meaningful musical signs, in which interaction represents the post-modern essence in Gilberto Mendes's music.

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Recycling Musical Topoi by Electroacoustic Means in *What Happens Beneath the Bed While Janis Sleeps?*

Rodolfo Coelho de Souza, DMA, University of Sao Paulo, BR

ABSTRACT

Topical theory has been extended by Monelle and others to styles after the Classical period, the repertoire for which it was originally devised. This paper expands this analytical principle to works of electroacoustic music that avoid Schaffer's principle of reduced listening, allowing both intrinsic and extrinsic references to emerge. The work analysed displays programmatic content, a large array of topical references, metaphor and metonymy tropes, and narrative development, suggesting that this genre is able to achieve an artistic status that refutes the criticism of being mere sound effects. Topical meanings can be effective in substituting formal functions in a language that lacks traditional syntax, granting the composer a tool to deal with issues of formal design.

INTRODUCTION

Given that the theory of musical topics was initially devised by Ratner [1] to account for the juxtaposition of stylistic features within the Classical style, electroacoustic music might well seem the opposite of a *locus classicus* of discourse using musical *topoi*. Nevertheless some authors that followed Ratner's path expanded the theory to subsequent periods, like Agawu [2], who aimed to embrace the music of the Romantic period. Monelle was certainly among the most audacious who thought that topical theory might contribute to the understanding of many musical styles. In Monelle's seminal work of 2006 [3], which focuses mostly on Pastoral and March topics, he occasionally extrapolated the theory to the repertoire of twentieth-century music, examining works by Debussy, Prokofiev and even Ligeti.

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that topical theory can be expanded even to recent pieces of electroacoustic music, assuming that they do not comply with Schaeffer's concept of "reduced listening". To argue this hypothesis, I will analyse some passages from my *What Happens Beneath the Bed While Janis Sleeps?*, a piece of electroacoustic music composed in 1998 that uses, among other raw materials, voice samples of the deceased pop singer Janis Joplin¹. As corollary, I will show that the interpretation of topical meaning allows us to recognize the emergence of metaphorical and metonymic tropes that not only contribute to an underlying musical narrative but also justify the claim that this musical language has an artistic status.

¹ This piece was recorded in a CD of the Brazilian Society of Electroacoustic Music. It also received recognition as finalist for the ASCAP award at the SEAMUS Conference of 1999 in San Jose, California.

EXTRINSIC AND INTRINSIC REFERENCE IN ELECTROACOUSTIC MUSIC

As a point of departure, we may establish that *What Happens Beneath the Bed While Janis Sleeps?* deals with both extrinsic and intrinsic meanings. The title points to a certain Janis that the listener may or may not, at the beginning, associate with the singer Janis Joplin. The piece lasts eight minutes, and when it reaches its last part it is quite plausible to assume that whoever knows Janis Joplin's recordings will have enough clues to make the association. However this link is not necessary to justify the piece as a piece of music, or to provide an undisputed meaning to it, or even to allow the understanding of its implicit narrative. It would only add one more layer of reference to the world outside the musical discourse, allowing, for instance, the uncovering of the identity of the deceased singer, suggested by the musical material of the piece, to be interpreted narratively as a resurrection journey – actually another token of the archetypal legend of the suicidal queen Dido who returns from hell.

Another layer that makes this music programmatic is the information, sometimes provided by program notes, at other times by an image printed with the notes or projected on a screen, that the composition was inspired by the famous painting *Nightmare I* (1781) by the English/Swiss artist Henry Fuseli (1741-1825). That proto-Romantic picture portrays a young woman tormented, during her dream, by an Incubus and a mythical horse. This painting belongs nowadays to the Detroit Institute of Arts and we can see a reproduction at:

<http://www.dia.org/object-info/f222b80e-c3ba-4dd0-a705-4b14cb4f5ad6.aspx>

This visual extrinsic reference does not actually create a narrative by itself but helps to create associations, as we will see, between the topical meanings suggested by the music and the two main characters of Fuseli's painting, the woman and the Incubus, who are reinstated in the music as Janis and her nocturnally hounding monsters.

However, should not electroacoustic music be “*abstract music*”? Indeed, Pierre Schaeffer, the founder of concrete music, prescribes the principle of “*reduced listening*” as a necessary condition to make effective music that is created by the transformation of recorded sound materials. This principle requires that the samples should be distorted by electronic means to the point that we do not recognize the source that generated that sound. In this approach, the composer should strive to deal only with the abstract parameters of sound, avoiding any possible references to external meanings. Schaeffer recommended that the compositional process of shaping the sound materials deemphasize, as much as possible, interpretation at the index level of the sign, according to Peirce's icon/index/symbol trichotomy. For Schaeffer, the composer should endeavour at the intrinsic iconic level of the sign, following the tradition of pure abstract music, i.e. *absolute music*. Eliminating the index level, concrete music would avoid the danger of becoming episodic, like mere cartoon sound effects. Blocking the index level also implies the purge of symbolic meanings which would prevent concrete music from adhering to any aesthetics of programmatic music.

Diverging from Schaeffer, the following generation of composers linked to the GRM – the French *Groupe de Recherches Musicales* (including such figures as Michel Chion and François Bayle) – claimed that electroacoustic music could employ signs exhibiting all three levels of the Peircean sign: the icon, the index and the symbol.

Nevertheless, they did not theorize the achievement of a symbolic or narrative level according to any theory like that of musical *topoi*. Actually their studies focused on the parallels between the languages of electroacoustic music and cinema and radio-theatre.

One problem that challenges the analysis of electroacoustic music is that the music is seldom represented by a score. As its musical discourse is not as greatly dependent on pitches as previous repertoires, listening to the actual music, and paying attention to all its parameters, especially timbre and register, becomes key to the process of interpretation. Nevertheless some kind of representation is required in order to present the analysis to a reader. Therefore I choose to follow Chion's method of analysing audio-visual discourses. He recommends the assignment of words to each musical event as a means of representing it. Notice that he does not intend to reduce the musical meaning to verbal meaning. The only purpose of the substitution is representation. Notwithstanding, he emphasizes that "we must have confidence in words and, therefore, take them seriously" [4].

MUSICAL TOPOI RECYLED IN ELECTROACOUSTIC MUSIC

The recognition of musical topics in electroacoustic music, a musical style undeniably very remote from the Classical repertoire for which the concept was developed, implies some level of transformation in the way in which topics are presented. Hatten's concept of the topical field is useful for this purpose. He defines topical fields as "larger areas such as the tragic, the pastoral, the heroic, and the *buffa* that are supported by topical oppositions" [5]. We may enlarge the application of topical representation to assume that an electroacoustic musical sign can be interpreted to fit a certain topical field, even if it is presented in an unfamiliar way that does not conform to traditional means. Usually this assumption implies that some change of focus from one level to another of the Peircean sign must occur. As a disclaimer, we must state that we do not claim that all electroacoustic music is suitable for interpretation by topic theory, at least at this stage of our research. Nevertheless we defend that some instances are. The piece of music focused in this paper represents one of those cases.

The seed for most of the sounds that occurs in the piece is a short sample of Janis Joplin's voice. The sample that functions as the work's main motive is presented at the onset. It is a scream, a pungent shout, enigmatic inasmuch as it conveys as much pain as rejoicing. Therefore the sound material can be interpreted from the beginning as a trope that mixes struggle with redemption. The same content of this trope is projected over the long run of the musical narrative, as indicated earlier.

The scream motive, in conformity to Schaeffer's principle, is electronically transformed up to the point that its reference to the original recording is sufficiently disguised. It becomes an iconic sign of impetus or stress. Therefore the topical field to which it belongs can be immediately associated with the heroic. Moreover, the specific topic would be the *Sturm und Drang*, insofar as the German word *Drang* means impulse, stress and impetus. Nevertheless the topical meaning conveyed by the electroacoustic language uses a more elementary iconic representation than its symbolic counterparts in instances of the Classical style which usually depend on rhythmic and harmonic conventions.

The scream motive is the core of what we may call a first theme. After a short transition follows a second material placed as a direct opposition to the first. This second "theme" is also derived from the singer's recording. However, instead of the scream filtered

and twisted by electronic means, this theme features a *Sprechstimme* stretched in time and transposed to the low register. The effect is the transformation of the original sample into a grotesque song performed in a slow tempo by a monstrous character. The topic here conforms undoubtedly to that of a funeral march.

At this point the music has established the domains of two musical characters placed in opposition. This opposition is purely musical, although we may correlate them to external references. The programmatic title and the painting association provide for that: the dreaming (dead?) woman (Janis) is the first theme and the Incubus (Janis's nightmare phantoms) is the second theme. The set-up for an intrinsic musical narrative and a suitably correlated external symbolic narrative have both been established.

Notice that we touch here on an important point of the discussion: how topical meaning can contribute to the structure of an electroacoustic piece of music. Caplin [6] argues that a direct correlation between musical *topoi* and formal functions is difficult, or even possible to assert for the Classical repertoire. He argues that, in tonal music, formal functions depend mostly on tonal functions, like modulation and cadences, as opposed to topical meanings. What happens, on the other hand, with electroacoustic music, which does not rely on tonal functional relations to model its form? Our assumption is that topical meanings can substitute for tonal functions to providing formal structure for this kind of music. Form depends fundamentally on contrast. Contrast can be achieved by a variety of means. Tonal functions have granted structural contrast to most of the music of the common period. Topics have reinforced that contrast in certain styles, like the Classical and the Romantic. However, in the absence of the tonal syntax, the resource to topical contrast is a possibility available to the composer, in order to provide formal clarity to his music. Maybe this can explain why topical analysis has emerged with such a force in our contemporary theoretical concerns. I do not mean to suggest that electroacoustic music is the driving force in that direction. But it may well be that audio-visual languages (in which electroacoustic music is so often employed) assume this role because they constitute a forceful part of our daily experience. Therefore topical meanings, topical fields, genre types, paradigmatic expressive narratives, all of which contribute to the structure of audio-visual products, inevitably would have to surface in any media as part of the conceptual apparatus of our *Zeitgeist*.

Are there other topics in the piece of music we are analysing, besides *Sturm und Drang* and Funeral March? Finding them would help to corroborate our thesis that topical meaning can grant form to electroacoustic music. Indeed, we may recognize other passages that relate to singing and learned style (marking the Coda section), the noble horse topic (marking a turning point in the Development section), the water depiction topic (marking the Retransition section), horn call (an actual train whistle), and the scherzo topic (in many passages that imply grotesquerie, fantastic, bizarre and monstrous). All these contribute to the creation of a formal design. It would be also possible to claim that electroacoustic music creates its own idiomatic stylistic and topical interpretations, like machine depiction, nature depiction, bells of all kinds, etc. These topics might be grouped in sub-categories based on textures or gestures. Therefore topical analysis in electroacoustic seems to be an open-ended endeavour.

What follows is a summary of the main topics found in the piece:

- Sturm und Drang
- March (particularly Funeral march)
- Singing style
- Learned style
- Scherzo
- Horn call
- Landscape depiction
- Noble horse

Although we cannot dwell on each of the topics employed in the piece, there are two passages that deserve special consideration. The first occurs in the core of the development and employs sounds generated by electronic means that emulate wind gusts. At first sight this material has no relation with the thematic material of the work, be it the scream or the funeral march. We might perhaps recognize some spectro-morphological or gestural similarity between the scream and the wind gust, but this would be insufficient to justify its logical use in the piece.

A more effective principle that yields coherence for the piece emerges from topical association. What is perceived in this passage is an actual storm depiction (in fact an electronic simulation, not a recording) that correlates with the Sturm und Drang topic because the German word Sturm means storm in English. Therefore what is heard can be interpreted as a variation of the topic of first theme. At the iconic level, the links are not very strong, but they correlate expressively in the symbolic level of culturally codified meanings.

Other seemingly unconnected material, which also appears in the development, is a train sound. We can reasonably expect that in developmental sections, contrasting materials derived from far-reaching musical associations may emerge. However it is not obvious what association legitimates the sound of the train as belonging to this piece. Again, topical interpretation must be called upon to explain what makes the passage coherent. The aforementioned machine topic, which undoubtedly would encompass the train sound, has not been clearly expressed earlier in the piece. The pacing accompanimental strokes of the funeral march theme indeed have some similarity with machine sounds, but this seems to be too subtle to provide a justification for it. On the other hand, we may listen to the train as related to the noble horse topic. Hatten would call this a troping of topics. Trains have literally tremendous “horse power”, i.e., we may say that they express the modern equivalent of the noble horse. The train sound is preceded by a fragment that resembles the sound of marching horse hooves. The march topic is thus evoked in distinct ways: the funeral march as the second theme, the marching horses fragment in the development, and ultimately the train itself, which renders its own marching rhythm. In other words, we may interpret the train as a topical variation of the second theme in the symbolic realm, inasmuch as the storm was a variation of the first theme.

We may also point out some levels of intertextuality associated with these materials. The train certainly makes reference to Pierre Schaeffer’s *Étude aux Chemins de Fer* (1948) and the wind reminds us of Henri Pousser’s *Trois Visages de Liège* (1961), both seminal works in the repertoire of musique concrète. In fact, the marching horse topic echoes a long stream of visual and aural associations that range from the horse in Fuseli’s painting through the horse depiction in Schubert’s *Erkönig* and Wagner’s *Ride of the Valkires*.

THE RELATION OF SYNTAX WITH TROPES IN ELECTROACOUSTIC MUSIC

The syntax of electroacoustic music has been studied by so many authors that it would be impossible to acknowledge all of them here. Nevertheless this paper takes a particular approach unrelated to any of the previous contributions, seeking a functional model based on semiotic operations that might help to explain how different sound objects link coherently in a phrase of electroacoustic music.

The problem starts when we realize that most sound objects are simply juxtaposed without adhering to any discernible syntactical paradigm such as we find, for instance, in tonal music. The technique usually employed is the *montage technique* that has been studied for the cinema language. The juxtaposition procedure, or *parataxis* (in opposition to *syntax*), can also create meaning. The difference is that the logic of connection is not given by any syntactic element that belongs to the language. We may provide an example in verbal language. We say “John is a man because he has mind and body”. The words “is/because/has/and” allow logical connections for the names in the phrase. If we had stated “John man mind body” it would be harder to infer some meaning. However poetry uses expressions like “cold heat” and “giant dwarf”, or “the tale of terror tells” and “fluffy flowers flow”. Sometimes they also may seem illogical. Indeed, oxymoron and alliteration are figures of speech that take advantage of our surprise with the apparent lack of sense in the juxtaposition of words. They operate respectively in the significant and the signifier levels of the words. According to Peircean semiotics they favour symbolic and iconic interpretation respectively.

Sound objects in electroacoustic language can be linked in a similar fashion to figures of speech. Their juxtaposition creates meaningful relations based on iconic, indexical or symbolic interpretation. Moreover, each sound object can carry a topical meaning that is similar or contrasting to what is adjacent to it. Therefore a string of electroacoustic sound objects can become a very complex linguistic statement whose interpretation requires the deployment of our most subtle powers of intuition, as opposed to logical reasoning.

The analysis of an excerpt of *What Happens Beneath the Bed While Janis Sleeps?* can clarify this interpretation model. We will continue to use Chion’s method of representing sound objects with words, accepting that these words incorporate meanings (that are not apparent) at other Peircean levels than the symbolic. In previous stages of this paper we have already dealt with many of these sound objects in isolation. Now we must deal with the question of how they are linked together to form a musical phrase that somehow makes sense to our ears.

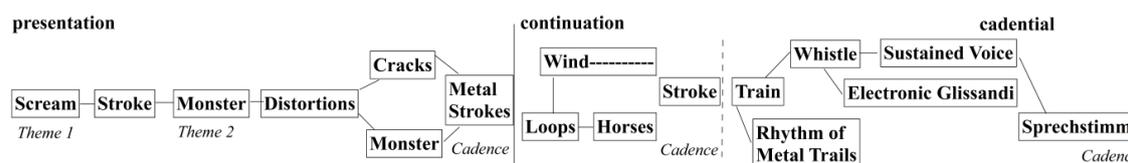


Figure 1. Symbolic representation of a sentence in the development section

Similarities in spectro-morphology at certain points account for intrinsic metaphorical relations between sound objects. For instance, in the iconic level of the sign,

the similarity between wind loops, marching horse hooves and the rhythm of the train metal trails builds a chain of musically related events that allows us to accept as logical the juxtaposition of these sound objects that depict wind, horses and train. In other words, internal iconic relations make acceptable the juxtaposition of sounds with unrelated external meanings. We might call this procedure an intrinsic musical metaphor.

The syntax of another part of this sentence depends on metonymical transference. Why do we accept that the rhythmic sound of train metal trails and the whistle belong together in the same soundscape? There is not anything similar between them to provide an iconic metaphoric justification, as postulated above. However in the real world we are used to hear together the rhythmic sounds of the train and the sound of his whistle. Their relation is a synecdoche (part for whole, which is a species of metonymy). at the level of symbolic representation and depends on an indexical contiguity (train → whistle). One can substitute one for the other in the representation of a train. When put together they seem to be complementary.

Just the opposite happens when the train whistle seems to merge (or become) a sustained singer's voice (a relation further enhanced by electronic glissandi sounds). Their relation is again metaphorical, based on intrinsic similarities between the sounds of the whistle, the voice, and the electronic glissandi. Indeed, the metaphor unfolds that "Janis's voice is like a whistle".

Another remarkable feature displayed by such electroacoustic "sentences" is that they create unrealistic or even surrealistic scenarios. There are no limits on how to assemble sounds in paradoxical situations. Where do we find in the real world a singer taming the powerful noise of a train with her voice?

Finally, the recognition of metaphorical and metonymical musical tropes, operating in this piece of electroacoustic music at intrinsic and extrinsic semiotic levels, grants to this language an artistic status that has been questioned by some critics. Their concern has been that electroacoustic music might be nothing but a collection of disparate sound effects. This evaluation can be dismissed when it becomes clear that electroacoustic music is capable of performing linguistic operations as sophisticated as the ones found in poetry, literary prose, visual arts, or any other form of art.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of this selected electroacoustic piece of music demonstrates that it is possible for this genre to convey topical meanings. Moreover, the contrast afforded by topical expression can be a fundamental tool for the composer to bestow formal design for his music even if the traditional syntactical means are not readily available in this genre.

The array of *topoi* that might be extrapolated from the tradition into this apparently more abstract genre seems to be very large. In this piece at least eight topics can be recognized, some of them presented in different fashions. We may surmise that some topics, like baroque or gallant style dance topics, are hardly expected to be found in electroacoustic music, while others may be used frequently. Nevertheless it is not expected that every piece of electroacoustic music will produce topical meaning. If the composer chooses to comply with the reduced listening principle postulated by Pierre Schaeffer, the music will tend to display singular abstract expression, erasing tendencies of topical interpretation. But this is also not uncommon for instrumental music that features only

one topic from beginning to end. There are musical poetics that strive for unity of sentiment while others rely on topical contrast to achieve formal design and diversity of expression.

It may be assumed that electroacoustic music can generate its own list of idiomatic topics. The analysis of a larger set of electroacoustic pieces encompassing authors of different schools, varied personal tendencies, and at different stages in the development of the language, is still necessary to demonstrate the reach of the topical theory for the understanding of this particular genre.

Further analysis should also pursue the recognition of tropes, both in Hatten's sense of a mixture of topics in a single configuration, and also in the sense devised in this paper that point to large-scale relations between separate sound objects portraying different topical meanings. All these analyses should also lead to the recognition of the narrative strategies that are more often used in electroacoustic music.

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A Lyrebird in Paris: the Pastoral Topos and the Ecocentric Viewpoint in Contemporary Music Composition

Jane Hammond, Monash University, Melbourne, AU

ABSTRACT

Today, writers within discourses such as ecocriticism and ecomusicology are engaging with environmental issues. These ecocentric discussions often intersect with the recurring themes of the “great topical world” of the pastoral. Raymond Monelle’s forensic detailing about the pastoral creates relevant insights for our understanding of musical meaning in contemporary contexts. His semiotic reading of music and culture offers a methodology relevant to composers seeking to understand how their music communicates within a particular culture or cultures. My composition A Lyrebird in Paris represents a contemporary musical exploration of the pastoral themes of nostalgia and birdsong. As a composer, my interest in Monelle relates to building on his understandings of the pastoral affect, in what is tentatively named here as eco-composition.

Here rest we; lo! cyperus decks the ground,
 Oaks lend their shade, and sweet bees murmur round
 Their honied hives; here two cool fountains spring;
 Here merrily the birds on branches sing;
 Here pines in clusters more umbrageous grow,
 Wave high their heads, and scatter cones below.

Theocritus, Idyllium V [1]

Birdsong has been part of the literary tradition of the pastoral topos since the Greek writer Theocritus penned his *Boukolika* (“ox-herding poems”) in the third century BC. Many of Theocritus’ poems are set in a lovely, idyllic place, where birds sing and bees murmur amongst sunlit trees, flowing water and verdant foliage. His great Roman admirer, the poet Publius Vergilius Maro, continued the tradition, incorporating this idealized world into his early *Eclogues*.¹ Ernst Robert Curtius, the celebrated writer on European literature and its rich history, observed that Virgil’s “constant epithet for ‘beautiful nature’ was the word *amoenus* (“pleasant, lovely”) and thus the *locus amoenus* or “pleasance” became the principal motif of all nature description from the Empire to the sixteenth

¹ Composed between 42 and 37 BC.

century [2]. Not surprisingly then, the imitation of birdsong has often been incorporated into music that is obviously pastoral in content and intent. As Raymond Monelle said,

Since the locus amoenus is part of the world of the pastoral, and since the mimicking of birdsong is such an obvious musical resource, we must probably identify this device as a subtopic of the pastoral genre [3].

As a composer I am interested in perceptions about the place of human beings within their environment and amongst the non-humans that inhabit it with us. Engagement with an ecocritical perspective leads to a recognition that while the soothing *locus amoenus* of our collective consciousness may continue to beguile our imaginations the real physical environment where birds live today cannot be taken for granted. Many literary theorists and now even musicologists are writing with an increasing sense of urgency about the role that culture and cultural studies have to play in understanding and responding to contemporary ecological concerns. As the philosopher and feminist Kate Soper observed “it is not language that has a hole in its ozone layer” [4].

Yet the complex and rich history of the pastoral can still provide relevant insights within this current anxiety and sense of urgency about climate change, environmental degradation and species destruction. The writer Terry Gifford suggests that the durability of the pastoral lies in its ability to “both contain and appear to evade tensions and contradictions – between country and city, art and nature, the human and the non-human, our social and our inner selves, our masculine and our feminine selves” [5]. This paper considers how aspects of the topos of the pastoral are relevant to contemporary music composition through my own recent work for clarinet, cello and piano, *A Lyrebird in Paris*. In its attention to the minutiae and small details of construction and poiesis, in taking an attitude of contemplation of sources and connections this approach itself suggests aspects of the pastoral mode.

Monelle proposed that a composition could be represented as “a generative genealogy of texts stretching infinitely in all directions” [6]. My own compositions are the result of my response to the many different “texts” that surround and connect to the ideas and stimulus for each of the works.² Just as Monelle describes, these texts themselves generate other texts in an infinite web of connections. In the process of developing my composition *A Lyrebird in Paris* for clarinet, cello and piano I engaged with, and explored materials in books and articles, in paintings, reproductions of paintings, musical scores, photographs, audio recordings, and films. These texts were all connected in my mind by their relationship to birds, in this particular case the lyrebird, and the philanthropist Louise Hanson-Dyer and her abiding connection with her place of birth, Melbourne. They also connected with my own relationship to memory and place as I spent many childhood vacations in the Kinglake National Park on the outskirts of Melbourne where I regularly heard lyrebirds calling from depths of the forest.³ The theme of connection to place often as nostalgia is, of course, an abiding trope of the pastoral topos.

As a commissioned work *A Lyrebird in Paris* has creative boundaries that are determined by the requirements of the commissioning body, in this case The British Music Society of Victoria which is now trading as Lyrebird Music Society Incorporated. In 2010

² My conception of a text is in the postmodern sense of anything that can be read. Many cultural products can be defined, and therefore read, as a text for example a novel, a film, a painting, or a musical score.

³ In February 2009, 98% of the 22,360 hectare Kinglake National Park was burnt in the Black Saturday Fires.

the society commissioned me to write a chamber work, as part of their 90th Anniversary celebrations and the work was premiered by the distinguished Australian trio *Ensemble Liaison* in 2011. The Melbourne branch of the British Music Society of Victoria was founded in 1921 by the Melbourne-born socialite, music-lover and philanthropist Louise Berta Mosson Hanson Dyer (1888-1962). Louise went on to found the music and record publishing company Éditions de L'Oiseau-Lyre in Paris in 1932 [7]. The first aim of the company was to produce a complete edition of the music of the French baroque composer François Couperin (le grand), and the complete twelve volume set appeared in 1933.

Amongst Couperin's many hundreds of pieces for harpsichord are a number whose titles refer to birds, providing me with some specific compositional materials. His *Troisième livre de pièces de clavecin* (1722) contains a set, as part of the *Quatorzième Ordre*, with the following titles: *Le Rossignol-en-amour* (The nightingale in love); *La Linote-effarouchée* (The startled linnnet); *Les Fauvètes plaintive* (The plaintive warblers) and *Le Rossignol-vainqueur* (The victorious nightingale). One of these is particular importance and relevance to the subject of musical topics—"Les Fauvètes Plaintives" or The Plaintive Warblers. Marked with the expression "Tres tendrement" (very tenderly) and written in the key of D minor, this short keyboard composition is set almost entirely in a tessitura above middle C, with the parts for the two hands close together in a highly ornamented texture. There are a number of birds known as warblers in Europe. Olivier Messiaen's large work for solo piano *La fauvette des jardins* (1970) is named for the species known in English as the Garden Warbler, *Sylvia borin*, whose call is complex and rapid. However, Couperin's piece, clearly presents a lament through its use of the minor mode, its expressive marking and through its persistent use of a falling minor 2nd, known as the *pianto*. Monelle has called this figure an iconic topic that signifies weeping and "has represented a lament since the 16th century"[8]. It is established as the principal motif of "Les Fauvètes Plaintives" from the first bars, shown below in Figure 1. The title leaves little doubt of the composer's intention to create a particular atmosphere—while not funereal or desperately mournful "Les Fauvètes Plaintives" signifies to the Western ear, just as the title suggests, a "plaintive" mood or emotion.

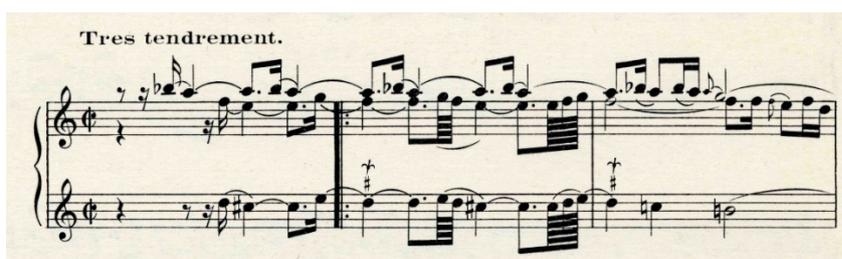


Figure 1: Opening bars of "Les Fauvètes Plaintives" by François Couperin [9].⁴

In exploring the nostalgia that has always been an abiding theme of the pastoral topos I have incorporated the sighs and laments of the *pianto* into the clarinet part from the very beginning of *A Lyrebird in Paris*. In the opening bars I sought to create the atmosphere of a quiet and mysterious place, a *locus amoenus* that is also tinged with a hint of melancholy and nostalgia suggested by the clarinet weaving its plaintive melody.

⁴ Reprinted from Couperin [9]. Reproduced with permission from the University of Melbourne Copyright Office on behalf of Éditions de L'Oiseau-Lyre.

The image shows the opening bars of the piece 'A Lyrebird in Paris'. It consists of three staves: Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano. The Clarinet part starts with a tempo of quarter note = 40, described as 'Mysterious and moody', and a dynamic of *pppp*. The Violoncello part starts with a tempo of quarter note = 40, described as 'Mysterious and moody', and a dynamic of *p*. The Piano part starts with a tempo of quarter note = 40, described as 'Mysterious and moody', and a dynamic of *pppp*. The score includes various performance instructions such as 'pizz.', 'let ring', 'una corda', and 'ad lib'. The tempo changes to quarter note = 108-120 in the later bars. The Piano part includes a section marked 'pizz.' and 'una corda' with a dynamic of *pppp*, and another section marked 'pizz.' and 'una corda' with a dynamic of *pp*. The Violoncello part includes a section marked 'pizz.' and 'let ring' with a dynamic of *p*, and another section marked 'pizz.' and 'let ring' with a dynamic of *p*. The Clarinet part includes a section marked 'pizz.' and 'let ring' with a dynamic of *pppp*, and another section marked 'pizz.' and 'let ring' with a dynamic of *ppp < p*.

Figure 2: Opening bars from *A Lyrebird in Paris* showing the use of the *pianto* in the clarinet part.⁵

As we approach the conclusion of *A Lyrebird in Paris* the clarinet presents the only complete statements of the four-note opening motif from “Les Fauvètes Plaintives” seen in Figure 1 above. These two falling semitones are set amongst the final quiet suggestions of the lyrebird’s rhythmic invitation-display call in the cello and piano shown in Figure 3 below.

The image shows bars 148-152 of the piece 'A Lyrebird in Paris'. It consists of three staves: Clarinet (Cl.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.). The Clarinet part starts with a dynamic of *p*. The Violoncello part starts with a dynamic of *pp*. The Piano part starts with a dynamic of *p*. The score includes various performance instructions such as 'pizz.', 'let ring', 'una corda', and 'ad lib'. The tempo changes to quarter note = 108-120 in the later bars. The Piano part includes a section marked 'pizz.' and 'una corda' with a dynamic of *pppp*, and another section marked 'pizz.' and 'una corda' with a dynamic of *pp*. The Violoncello part includes a section marked 'pizz.' and 'let ring' with a dynamic of *p*, and another section marked 'pizz.' and 'let ring' with a dynamic of *p*. The Clarinet part includes a section marked 'pizz.' and 'let ring' with a dynamic of *pppp*, and another section marked 'pizz.' and 'let ring' with a dynamic of *ppp < p*.

Figure 3: Bars 148–152 of *A Lyrebird in Paris*.⁶

By the end of the 1930s Éditions de L'Oiseau-Lyre was also releasing gramophone recordings and over time this became an increasingly important and influential part of their activity. Hanson-Dyer was always keen to embrace new technology and L'Oiseau-Lyre would go on to produce the first long play records in France [10]. Her association with Thurston Dart and her ongoing commitment to presenting early music led to L'Oiseau-Lyre releasing, in 1958, an important recording of François Couperin’s *Pièces de Violes* played by the early music specialist Desmond Dupré on viola da gamba. I was able to reference this aspect of Hanson-Dyer’s legacy in my composition in another gesture towards to the nostalgia of the pastoral.

⁵ *A Lyrebird in Paris*, by Jane Hammond ©2011. Reproduced with permission from the composer.

⁶ *Ibid.*

The “Passacaile ou Chaconne from his *Pièces de viole* Suite No. 1 in E minor provided me with material that is referenced in a distinct section of my composition. This section, featuring the cello with piano accompaniment, provides a contrast in texture and mood from its surroundings. Juxtaposed against the lively and complex rhythmic texture of the preceding section for the full ensemble, which features highly ornamented and vigorous clarinet writing, a new mood is quickly established. The cello begins, quoting loosely from the theme of the Couperin Passacaile, in a rather rhapsodic and espressivo fashion, with frequent pauses and portamenti. The piano interpolates this line with soft rolled chords and rapid sotto voce gestures that are initially polytonal. These interpolations then transform into short tonal cadential phrases in reference to cadences of Couperin’s period, before returning to more elaborate polytonal gestures. These interpolations are not strictly connected rhythmically to the cello part. Overall the intention is to create a nostalgic reference to Couperin and to a time and place long gone.

Louise Hanson-Dyer left a great legacy to the music world in print music and recordings, but was always committed to her connections with her original home, Melbourne. Although she established Éditions de L’Oiseau-Lyre in Paris and made her home in Europe from the age of 42 until her death in 1962, Louise chose to name her publishing and recording company after a bird that is native to areas close to Melbourne—the Superb Lyrebird. The lyrebird family *Menuridae* is from the Order Passeriformes and is endemic to eastern Australia. It comprises two living species—the Superb Lyrebird *Menura novaehollandiae* and the Albert’s Lyrebird *Menura alberti*, however, most popular references are to the Superb Lyrebird which “occurs in native forests in the south-east of the continent along both sides of the Great Dividing Range, from the New South Wales–Queensland border region to southern Victoria, with an introduced population in Tasmania” [11].

In the process of developing my composition for the Lyrebird Music Society commission I read about Louise Hanson-Dyer in books, newspapers, and articles, looked at photographic and painted portraits of her, listened to recordings made by L’Oiseau-Lyre, and handled some of the elaborately produced scores that she published and which can be accessed in some of Melbourne’s libraries.⁷ I also became fascinated by the extraordinary and beautiful lyrebird and by the particularly local history of human interactions with the lyrebirds of Sherbrooke Forest, an area of native rainforest 40km east of Melbourne that is now part of the Dandenong Ranges National Park. According to The Sherbrooke Lyrebird Study Group the Superb Lyrebird population of this area is currently stable “at around 160 birds” [12].

In 1933 a small book by the president of the Royal Zoological Society, Ambrose Pratt, was published called *The Lore of the Lyre Bird*. It became very popular, was certainly read by Hanson-Dyer, and remained in publication until 1955, reaching nine editions. In 2011 it was rereleased by the publisher Barnes and Noble. Written in a light and readable style, it tells the story of Mrs. Wilkinson and the special relationship she developed with a wild male lyrebird that she named James. The bird would visit her regularly at her small cottage in the midst of Sherbrooke Forest, sometimes tapping on her window and exchanging the greeting “Hullo, Boy!”. James would present performances of his own

⁷ The University of Melbourne houses the collection of 15th to 19th century music imprints, first editions and music manuscripts collected by Éditions de L’Oiseau-Lyre founder Louise Hanson-Dyer, 1884-1962 and donated to the University of Melbourne. Their music library, that of Monash University, and also the State Library of Victoria holds copies of many of the print and audio releases of Éditions de L’Oiseau-Lyre.

special lyrebird display on the balcony of her home. In Pratt's words: "It dances prettily and accompanies its steps with a strange elfin music, spaced with throbbing time-beats to which the dancing steps attune". In this book a distinctive silhouette photograph of James at dawn, displaying and singing near Mrs. Wilkinson's cottage is reproduced [13]. This image became the basis for the logo of L'Oiseau-Lyre's records, replacing the earlier logo that had appeared on their books that was an inaccurate representation of the lyrebird.

Books about the lyrebirds in this area continued to be published. *The Lyrebirds of Sherbrooke*, by Leonard Hart Smith, published in Melbourne in 1951, contains photographs, in nostalgic black and white, showing the home of the lyrebirds. Mist enshrouded eucalypts tower over secluded nooks amongst tangles of ferns—a *locus amoenus* full of mystery and beauty. Beneath the tree ferns and tall eucalypts (*Eucalyptus regnans*), amidst a jungle of undergrowth, ferns and bracken the male lyrebird prepares and maintains many mounds of "some four to five feet in diameter" by clearing shrubs, flattening bracken and scratching up earth [14]. On these raised mounds he performs spectacular visual and vocal courtship displays that incorporate the dazzling spreading and shuddering of the feathers of his extremely long and impressive tail.

Just as compelling as the photographic and descriptive records of the lyrebirds of Sherbrooke Forest are the audio recordings and their history. On 30 June 1931 a short article headed "Lyrebird Broadcast" appeared on page 6 of *The Argus*, Melbourne's principal newspaper at that time. The Australian Broadcasting Company, at great expense and with many weeks of preparation and planning, established an open-air temporary broadcasting "studio" in Sherbrooke Forest. Extensions from telephone lines were run half a mile into the dense forest where microphones were hidden close to the favourite singing places of two male lyrebirds [15]. Their song was broadcast direct from the forest every year from 1931 to 1934, reaching much of Australia and even America.

In June 1931 Herschells Pty. Ltd., Melbourne, released a 78 rpm gramophone record titled *The History and Song of the Lyre Bird*. In 1966 a 12-inch LP record was released by Folkways Records titled *The Lyrebird: A Documentary Study of Its Song*. It is now available for digital download from iTunes and in this form became the most significant text for me in the development of *A Lyrebird in Paris*. The record "was prepared from original tape recordings taken over a period of several years in Sherbrooke Forest" [16]. The fifteen tracks on this long play record incorporate selections of these original recordings with spoken commentary that introduces and explains the material. This commentary and detailed written sleeve notes are by the ornithologist Konstantin Halafoff. He describes how many birds in Sherbrooke had become familiar with humans and would "speak into the microphone like a T.V. announcer", sometimes sing "an ear-splitting serenade at three feet distance" [17]. The spoken commentary introduces the first recording—a mature male bird performing his "song on the mound" and names the bird as "Spotty, the best known bird in Sherbrooke Forest" [18]. This particular bird, named for the white flecks on his chest, is identified by this name in numerous books, photographs and newspaper articles over many years. Leonard Smith, a keen observer, photographer and writer of many publications about lyrebirds wrote that Spotty was one of "two birds which dominated the firebreak area in Sherbrooke Forest for more than thirty years" [19].

Lyrebirds typically live in the wild for around twenty years and being weak fliers, "tend not to disperse far", with a maximum recorded movement of only ten kilometres [20]. The adult male lyrebird is renowned as an exceptional mimic and vocal performer whose powerful voice can be heard up to a kilometre distant [21]. He takes no active part

in nesting or rearing the young but spends the winter breeding season, from June to August, defending his territory, mating with females, establishing and maintaining his mounds and displaying his magnificent plumage and vocal abilities. While the lyrebird is famous for its ability to imitate the calls of other birds and sounds from its environment, it also incorporates its own calls or “items” in its display repertoire. In my composition I have worked with two of these lyrebird-specific calls—the Territorial Song or call and the “invitation-display call” [22].

In order to fully appreciate the complexity and detail contained in the lyrebird’s vocalizations some of the tracks on the 1966 Folkways record provide slowed-down versions of the recordings. As the commentary points out, the human ear is not capable of hearing the individual notes that are produced at speeds often exceeding ten per second; nor is the human ear able to hear some of the higher frequencies produced by the lyrebird. Listening to this material at the original speed provides one sort of aural impression but as the playback speed is slowed down more and more individual notes can be heard. On side 2, band 3 is a recording of what Halafoff called a “Stanza Melody”, but which ornithologists now term a “territorial song” or call, a short but very distinctive lyrebird-specific component of the lyrebird’s repertoire. This loud song of 5-10 seconds duration varies considerably over the distribution range of the lyrebird but a particular bird will have a unique version that he repeats consistently. When slowed down I was provided with another way of examining and exploring the “stanza melody”. It revealed extremely high notes leaping swiftly down to low registers forming an elaborate but shapely melodic line. Through a process of “transcription, transformation and interpretation”, as Messiaen described it, I was able to develop one of the important melodic themes in my own composition.

This detail can also be observed visually in sonograms (or sonagrams), graphical representations of birdsong that show the distribution of sound frequencies as a function of time. They are in general use today by scientists as a means of identifying and analysing bird vocalisations. Sonograms were once produced by expensive machines, but it is now possible to generate different graphical representations of sound using digital means. The computer application *Sonic Visualiser* is an example of one such application that is designed “for viewing, analysing, and annotating music audio files” [23].⁸

The invitation-display call is given by males during the breeding season, when they are on or near the mound and displaying to females. As the researcher Vicki Powys has observed while “there is some confusion in the literature in the descriptions of all the sounds, and their exact behavioural meaning may be variable, ... if you hear these invitation-display calls you can be fairly sure that a female lyrebird is approaching, or on, a display mound of the male lyrebird, and that mating may soon take place” [24]. The invitation-display call usually contains three different types of sounds—a loud blick or plik, a twanging sound and a softer galloping sound— all melded together in a distinct pattern [25]. This pattern has strongly rhythmic features and is accompanied by distinctive movements of the bird “stepping around the mound and hopping up and down, in a rhythm that matches the display call” [26]. The invitation-display call varies regionally; so that, for example, in Sherbrooke Forest in Victoria the call typically contains a “loud double blick” while in parts of New South Wales the lyrebirds give only a single “blick” as part of the call.

⁸ Developed at the Centre for Digital Music at Queen Mary, University of London by Chris Cannam, Christian Landone, and Mark Sandler and available for downloading from the website <<http://www.sonicvisualiser.org>>.

Side one track four of the Folkways album is titled “Dance Music” and the spoken commentary refers to it as a “jumping dance”. This short recording has provided me with formal, rhythmic, gestural and motivic material for large sections of *A Lyrebird in Paris*. It is clearly recognizable as the invitation-display call described by Vicki Powys. The three elements that she has identified of blick, gallop and twang sounds are present along with a barely audible light click that is sometimes heard after a series of twangs. Blick, gallop, twang, and click are combined in distinctive patterns over a period of just over one and a half minutes at a regular and consistent tempo of quarter note equals 120. The combination of BBGGG is the predominant motif, repeated in that form twenty-six times along with variants. These are grouped together in six phrases, with each phrase defined by the interpolation of the rapidly repeated twanging sound. The entire presentation stays in the same tempo, can be represented rhythmically in musical notation as shown below in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Rhythmic notation of the “jumping dance” recorded on Folkways FX6116.⁹

The pattern ends with a final blick followed by soft sounds that are possibly what Powys describes as “a soft huffing call that is thought to indicate successful copulation” [27]. The regularity of this passage of material is very apparent. In my composition I have written a large section in 5/4 metre that follows the structural and rhythmic framework of the material presented by the Sherbrooke lyrebird. While it is not possible for instrumentalists to play as many notes as can be detected in the lyrebird’s vocalisations by adding many ornamental notes, particularly to the clarinet part, by employing abrupt and frequent registral and dynamic changes, portamenti, and thick chords all within a continuous, driving rhythm, I have aimed to create an impression of the intensity, energy and flamboyant extravagance that is my response to the lyrebird’s performance.

In his essay ‘On Imitation in Music’ Hector Berlioz discussed Beethoven’s renditions of birdsong in his Pastoral Symphony, observing that “the voice of the nightingale, sometimes plaintive, sometimes brilliant, and ever irregular, is not imitable” [28]. Even earlier the English naturalist Daines Barrington made many observations in his publication of 1773, *Experiments and Observations on the Singing of Birds*, about the difficulties of trying to notate or even conceive of birdsong using the musical notation and conception of his day. He observed that “the intervals used by birds are commonly so minute, that we cannot judge at all of them from the more gross intervals into which we

⁹ Musical example transcribed by the author.

divide our musical octave”[29]. His sentiments were echoed by Olivier Messiaen when he wrote in 1944 about his attitude to birdsong and his compositions in *The Technique of My Musical Language*:

Since they use untempered intervals smaller than the semitone, and as it is ridiculous servilely to copy nature, we are going to give some examples of melodies of the “bird” genre which will be transcription, transformation, and interpretation of the volleys and trills of our little servants of immaterial joy [30].

My musical text evokes a lyrebird, but it is a bird that I have constructed through my own interpretation of texts that refer to and document the bird. I have knowingly made reference in my composition to particular lyrebirds, like Spotty, whose vocalisations were recorded, selected, edited and reproduced on vinyl long play records and then digitally rendered. I do not aim to imitate Spotty as I believe that is an unachievable and pointless aim. All of the books, photographs, descriptions by scientists, analogue and digital recordings do not represent the real bird any more than my music does. As Monelle said in relation to the musical topics and the horse:

When a musical text evokes a horse, as in Schubert’s *Erlkönig*, there is never a question of referentiality or extension, but always of the acceptance and formulation of a cultural unit. Language can seem to represent a ‘real’ horse, but music is bound to invoke a textual horse, a *cheval écrit*. Of course, literary texts can no more speak of ‘real’ horses than can music.

In this paper I have traced connections between my compositional process and the themes and motifs of the great cultural world of the pastoral topos. I have reflected on how this composition came about and how it came to traverse the web of meanings within my conception of my natural and imagined environment, and my relationship to some of the age-old pastoral themes—the celebration of exploring the detail in the world around us; our connection to place; the contemplation of ourselves in nature and the nostalgic longing to connect with our wild selves. These themes are relevant to the artist motivated to engage with an ecocentric viewpoint and to explore the connections between the human and the non-human and our place in the world.

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The Ever More Specialized Topic: How Do We Know What It Means?

Sean Atkinson, PhD, The University of Texas at Arlington, TX, USA

ABSTRACT

In our post-modern society, the idea of a shared cultural experience differs greatly from our notion of it in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. We share not a common experience, but a common amalgamation of experiences; we hear not the individual topic, but instead hear a “hum” of varied, ever more specialized topics. How then are we to understand those topics when we hear them? Or even more fundamentally, how do we know we are hearing them at all? One way to focus the problem is to address the nature of cultural itself. When we say “shared cultural experience,” to who’s cultural are we referring? This article presents several ways in which topics present themselves to not necessarily the culture at large, but instead to some kind of subcultural unit.

*Through Reich’s music and Beryl Korot’s video art, *Three Tales* (2003) presents scenes, many of which include specialized musical topics and intertextual references that are based on three significant technological and/or ethical events from the past 100 years. A specific example is Wagner’s anvil chorus heard in association with the Hindenburg catastrophe. More generally, musical phasing is found in every part of *Three Tales*, but attains significant poignancy in association with machines. The phasing represents a first-order connotation, as minimalist compositional techniques have become closely associated with mechanical imagery, while the anvil chorus presents a second-order connotation that first references the forging of the ring of the Nibelung, but then connects the ring’s enormous, albeit corrupting, power to the Hindenburg and Nazi Germany. Therefore, part of the solution to the ever more specialized topic is a flexible definition of both topic itself and the meaning of shared culture.*

THE CULTURE OF TOPICS

Let me begin by stating what this paper is not. As topic theory blossoms into the new millennium, I do not engage topics the same way Kofi Agawu has treated them as they entered the Romantic era [1]. While those Classical-era topics took on new meaning in a new time, the signs of those topics were still easily recognizable. The hunt was still the hunt, in that its characteristic musical elements remained intact, however, the meaning was slightly altered to include a sense of the past; an historical marker in addition to its original meaning. I also do not engage topics as formal considerations, much like William Caplin has done [2]. Caplin’s approach is novel, as some topics do seem to have associated formal functions, and their use outside of those norms presents analytical interest. This can add subtle and yet profound nuance to readings of formal function. What these approaches share is a common set of topics, laid out first by Leonard Ratner [3], later expanded by Agawu [4], and ultimately codified and refined by Raymond Monelle [5] [6].

This paper, in contrast, seeks to find new and emerging topics; topics that are in their infancy and as such are limited in their cultural scope, yet are on their way to becoming more ingrained in a larger cultural context.

For a topic to engender meaning, it must have a connection to something in the culture, but what exactly is that cultural? For the Classical topics, we assume this to mean listeners, or as is more likely today, scholars of Western art music. Topics, therefore, only attain meaning once the majority of people in that culture understand the musical sign as a signal for something else. But is not this “culture,” as topics theorists have all tacitly agreed upon, itself just a subculture? Indeed, this group is but a small subset of the larger musical community when one considers the multitude of different musics in the world, and this is true more so today than at any time in human history. Many of these other musics have been explored in this way, the most prominent likely being Agawu’s recent work in African music [7]. Those musical signs are known to a specific subcultural group, which lies almost entirely outside the Western art music culture.

However, one does not need to look far beyond the Western music tradition to find subcultures with potential for topical analysis. Take for example punk rock from the early 1980’s. David Easely has identified several “riffs” in the punk rock genre that saw prominent use primarily because of the ease with which they could be played on the guitar [8]. The repetition of these riffs ingrained them into genre, and eventually became paired with certain themes and words in the lyrics. Some of these riff schemes even escaped punk and are found in other rock genres, but the vast majority act as a clear sign for punk, but only to those that understand the culture. Therefore, a subcultural topic emerges that not only signals “punk,” but is also evident in similar forms of rock, showing its potential for growth into the prevailing culture. While in this paper I am exploring a type of music closer to Western art music than punk, the relationships are quite similar. Minimalist music is a relatively new branch of Western musical culture and, as a result, is teeming with topics that are relevant to the avid fan and listener of the genre, yet might still escape the casual listener who is otherwise familiar with the Classical topics.

METHODOLOGY OF DISCOVERY

To aid in the discovery of topics in minimalist music, I begin with Monelle’s two-part axiom of topic identification:

The central questions of the topic theorist are: Has this musical sign passed from literal imitation (iconism) or stylistic reference (indexicality) into signification by association (the indexicality of the object)? And second, is there a level of conventionality in the sign? If the answers are positive, then a new topic has been revealed, whatever the period of the music studied [9].

Both of these questions require that the sign already possesses some larger connection to the culture at hand. But what if a musical sign is on its way to such a status? What if the topic works in a smaller, more specific cultural setting now, but could eventually become known to a wider audience? What if not enough time has passed for this to happen? Or what if, in a topic’s infancy, the shared cultural group is limited in scope, having not yet expanded into a greater cultural understanding? Indeed, any subculture will have its own set of topics, some of which may never become known to a

larger audience. In that case, we may be too early in our identification of topic. But what if that process is ongoing? What if the musical device is presently transitioning from icon or index into a more associative element? While only hindsight can tell for sure, there are ways to find these musical devices now. Intimate knowledge of a music's origin and cultural context is key. After all, the topic theorist is often more a student of history than of music. But more important to the present study, it is more of a question about the size of the culture under examination.

The present paper uses minimalism, a small subset of the Western musical tradition, as a case study for an exploration of the emerging topic.¹ The musical signs have yet to achieve a broad understanding as topics, yet manage to achieve some kind of topic-like association within the subculture, in this case within the realm of minimalist music. These emerging topics present themselves in one of two ways. The first is to simply follow the prescription of Monelle from above, connecting musical devices that have become somewhat ubiquitous in their use to some larger cultural understanding. In this case, the larger cultural understanding is often relegated to just the subcultural level. The second is to assume for the present moment that the cultural part of the equation has yet to manifest. Perhaps in time this connection will become more apparent, but for now we can seek out clues that may speak to an eventual ascension into the prevailing culture. These examples often present as what Michael Klein would call intertextual references, music in a culture (Western art music) that references other music from that same culture [10]. The connections are largely musical, but over time, the circumstances in which they are used could become consistent enough to warrant the label of topic. Recall, for example, the "riffs" which have found significant use in the identity of punk rock music. Through an examination of several moments in Steve Reich's *Three Tales* (2003), the following discussion highlights the various ways in which the emerging and ever more specialized topic can manifest.

EMERGING TOPICS IN *THREE TALES*

Minimalism and Technology

Three Tales is a self-described video opera with music by Steve Reich and video by Beryl Korot. Its subject matter pertains to three significant, technological events from the twentieth century. Act I, "Hindenburg," explores the crash of the infamous airship. Act II, "Bikini," describes and comments upon U.S. atomic bomb testing at the Bikini atoll in the 1950's. And Act III, "Dolly," contends with the very meaning of life as it relates to the cloning of Dolly the sheep in the late 1990's. The result is a narrative that paints a cautionary tale about the role technology has played and could potentially play in our lives. Reich himself is no stranger to technology, as his early experiments with minimalism relied on the use of tape machines and other audio technologies with which to compose.

On a larger level, however, when looking at minimalist music as a whole, it is easy to find a common thread concerning technology and machines. The *Qatsi* trilogy of films

¹ I assume a broad definition of minimalism, but the cultural unit referred to as minimalism primarily refers to the American minimalists; specifically the music of Philip Glass and Steve Reich. That is not to say, however, that the more general observations about the repetitive quality of the music would not apply to a broader group as well.

by Godfrey Reggio and Philip Glass each depict the use of technology, also in a less than flattering light. This trend is arguably the first topic to emerge into the prevailing culture; minimalist music as a signifier of machine. Such references can be found before minimalist music was even known as such. For example, the soundtrack to the classic science fiction film *Metropolis* features what contemporary listeners today would unquestionably describe as minimalist. Gottfried Huppertz's music, especially in scenes such as the arrival of Freder in the Worker's City, has the repetitive quality of recent minimalist music. And of course, it is not just the machinery that matches the constant rhythmic pulses of the music, but the workers themselves as part of the larger biomechanical machine that powers the city.²

The main source of melodic material in "Dolly" comes from a number of interviews Reich conducted with leading scientific and religious leaders. In fact, the inflection of their speech shapes the musical contours.³ Twice during these interviews, the word "machine" is uttered, and Reich begins to loop the word in an almost maniacal manner. Example 1 shows an excerpt of the first time this happens. Example 1a is the unaltered transcription (as heard by Reich), and 1b is a brief excerpt of the loop on the words "are machines." Looping is a common Reichian technique, and its use on the word "machine" is telling. Korot's video also loops to match Reich's musical looping, producing several afterimages of the interviewees as the loop continues.⁴ The resulting rhythmic groove takes on a mechanical quality of its own, so its coupling with the word "machine" not only enhances the already established minimalism/machine connection, but also highlights Reich's awareness of the topic. The only other word in "Dolly" that receives this same kind of treatment is "copies," and that word, too, implies a mechanical connection.

a. *We and all oth - er an - i - mals are ma - chi - nes*

b. *are ma - chin - es ma - chin - es are ma - chin - es ma - chin - es*

Example 1: (a) transcription of an interview with Richard Dawkins (as heard by Reich), and (b) the subsequent alteration and looping.⁵

² I thank Rebecca Doran Eaton [11] for introducing me to this early example of the minimalism/machine connection. A brief excerpt from *Metropolis* can be accessed online at http://www.uta.edu/faculty/seana/media/metropolis_clip.mov. A more recent cinematic example can be found in the 1994 movie *The Hudsucker Proxy*. The scene in question presents a montage of the fictional Hudsucker Industries as they create and bring to market the hula-hoop. A brief excerpt from this montage can be accessed online at http://www.uta.edu/faculty/seana/media/hudsucker_proxy_clip.mov.

³ Reich first used this idea in *Different Trains* (1988). Digital technology aids Reich in "Dolly" as he is able to not only exactly pitch-match the vocal inflections of the interviewees, but also sustain any one of the pitches they create for an indefinite period of time with very little distortion.

⁴ A short video example can be accessed online at <http://www.uta.edu/faculty/seana/media/dolly.mov>.

⁵ Three Tales by Steve Reich and Beryl Korot © Copyright 2002 by Hendon Music, Inc., a Boosey & Hawkes company. Reprinted with permission.

However, a minimalist/machine connection can occur without an explicit word association. In “Bikini,” the images on screen portray large numbers of sailors and other military individuals preparing for the nuclear bomb tests. The way in which Korot edits the video suggests the soldiers themselves are a tightly organized machine, each with a specialized task, yet working in unison with one another, much like the scene from *Metropolis*. Even without the music, one would be hard pressed to describe their motion as anything but mechanical and repetitive. The addition of Reich’s minimalist score, which in the present example includes the use of augmented musical canons, cements the machine topic for the audience.⁶ The augmented canons are another technique favored by Reich, in which a relatively short canon is later rhythmically stretched while leaving the overall contour of the musical line the same. Example 2 shows a brief example of an augmented canon from “Bikini.”

Example 2: (a) the unaltered, original melody, and (b) the augmented version, which is presented in canon with two additional voices.⁷

A deliberate play by Reich and Korot on the minimalist/machine topic comes from the beginning of *Three Tales*. The opening images of “Hindenburg” show the initial crash and ensuing chaos on the ground as it happened. Not yet present are the orderly, mechanized images seen later in the opera; instead, the viewer is presented with opposite. Workers and emergency personnel are shown to be frantically moving about, trying to all at once help and yet come to terms with what is happening. However, this chaotic destruction of technology is accompanied by Reich’s augmented canons. As a minimalist composer, Reich is likely to use common minimalist techniques throughout; however, there are several places in this post-minimalist opera where Reich does not write in an explicitly minimalist style, so his choice to do so here may be intentional.

Minimalism and History

While the preceding topic of minimalism as machine is both strong and deeply rooted in the culture, it is somewhat vague in the specific of its meaning. The breadth of its possible connections to any kind of mechanized motion allows it to all at once be flexible and wide-spread, yet of little interest to the topic theorist. I equate this topic with the *pianto*, a simple two-note motive mimicking a sigh and providing a musical sign for

⁶ See Atkinson [12] for more information on this specific technique, which is a common feature in vocal music by Reich. In the article, Video Example 1 shows a brief example of these mechanical movements.

⁷ *Three Tales* by Steve Reich and Beryl Korot © Copyright 2002 by Hendon Music, Inc., a Boosey & Hawkes company. Reprinted with permission.

sadness. A useful gesture, yes, yet it lacks specificity of meaning of, for example, the hunt topic. However, there are some emerging topics in *Three Tales* that are surprisingly specific in their cultural connection. During “Hindenburg,” the second scene (“Nibelung Zeppelin”) focuses on the construction of the airship. While explicit references to Nazi Germany are not made until the end of the scene (the complete tailfin is shown with the swastika), a more subtle musical reference is instead used. The scene begins musically with a chorus of anvils, echoing the anvil chorus from Wagner’s *Das Rheingold*; specifically, the anvils heard during the initial forging of the great ring. Example 3 compares the opening of “Nibelung Zeppelin” (3b) with the anvil chorus from the transition between scenes 2 and 3 of *Das Rheingold* (3a). The rhythmic similarity is unmistakable, but the playing of the rhythm on anvils firmly connects these two musical moments. Clearly, Reich is connecting the forging of the ring, whose enormous power ultimately corrupts its bearer, to the Hindenburg’s construction. Nazi Germany viewed the Hindenburg and their entire fleet of airships as a sign of their technological superiority, and Reich has musically sealed its tragic fate through association with the ring. While this first order connotation is illuminating, there is no larger cultural connection, so no possible new topic can be identified. This is more akin to an intertextual reference with Western music and music alone.⁸

Example 3 consists of two parts, (a) and (b), each showing musical notation for anvils. Part (a) is labeled 'a.' and shows three staves of music. The top staff has a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. It contains three measures of music, each starting with a triplet of eighth notes followed by a quarter rest. The middle and bottom staves also have treble clefs and 3/4 time signatures. The middle staff has a quarter rest followed by a triplet of eighth notes, and the bottom staff has a quarter rest followed by a triplet of eighth notes. Part (b) is labeled 'b.' and shows two staves of music. The top staff has a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. It contains four measures of music, each starting with a triplet of eighth notes. The bottom staff has a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. It contains two measures of music, each starting with a triplet of eighth notes. The first measure of the bottom staff is marked with a forte (f) dynamic, and the second measure is marked with a fortissimo (ff) dynamic.

Example 3: (a) the anvil chorus as presented in Wagner’s *Das Rheingold*, and (b) the opening measures of Reich’s “Nibelung Zeppelin” from *Three Tales*.⁹

However, the preceding reference can be further considered in terms of cultural context. Nazi Germany often used Wagner’s music as a tool for propaganda, highlighting anti-Semitic themes found within his operas. Reich’s use of this Wagnerian topic is therefore complicated by two separate, yet intertwined meanings. As described above, the

⁸ One should not confuse the compelling narrative of *Das Rheingold* as a substitute for a meaningful cultural connection. While the plot associated with the ring and its reference by Reich makes an intriguing story, it cannot, by itself, be the beginnings of a new topic.

⁹ *Three Tales* by Steve Reich and Beryl Korot © Copyright 2002 by Hendon Music, Inc., a Boosey & Hawkes company. Reprinted with Permission.

first is musical, in that the anvil motive accompanies both the forging of the ring and the building of the ship, thus linking their respective narratives. But the second is deeply rooted in the cultural history of Western Europe, thus allowing the anvil motive the opportunity to ascend to the level of topic. What this motive still lacks, however, is a sense of conventionality. But with continued and consistent use, the anvil topic could come to stand for the ultimate destruction of the self at one's own over-ambitious goals.

CONCLUSION

While this article does not pretend to fully address the issue of emerging topics in Western music, it does articulate ways in which topics imbedded in a subculture could come to be known to the larger cultural audience. In the case of minimalist music, we can already see that a broad notion of minimalism and machine has already made its way to become a topic, yet other, more specific references, such as the anvil motive, need more repetition in similar contexts in order to be widely considered a topic. Further research is needed, especially in other subcultural genres, in order to gain more insight into the early beginnings of topics in Western music.

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Thomas Adès and the *Pianto*

Edward Venn, Lancaster University, UK

ABSTRACT

Though Raymond Monelle ends his survey of the *pianto* with the music of Wagner, recent writings have illustrated the ongoing presence of the topic in the music of the twentieth century. This paper extends the historical narrative one step further to explore the role of the *pianto* in the music of Thomas Adès (b. 1971). Although a number of works will be surveyed, specific focus is given to the second movement of his orchestral work *Asyla* (1997) and his second opera, *The Tempest* (2004). In both of these works, the symbolic force of the *pianto* is exploited alongside other topical and intertextual references, demonstrating its development and continued signifying potential in the music of today.

INTRODUCTION

In a 2010 interview with Thomas Adès, the broadcaster Tom Service suggested that the composer's music manifested some sort of "Britishness":

Service: OK, do you have a sense of a responsibility to audiences or even the culture here because of your, you know, fame as a young British composer?

Adès: Well, I don't think they're sitting there as individuals saying, "I'm a Briton who's going to learn about my national identity by listening to Thomas Adès's Violin Concerto". I mean, you know, who thinks like that? (BBC Radio 3, May 15, 2010)

Adès's closed response was of little surprise. Though he was born and raised in London, his music connects with a wide range of international trends, some of which relate to his Eastern European¹ and Jewish heritage,² others to his love of Couperin³ and popular music [2]. Such cosmopolitanism might in itself be considered a British trait. But I would argue also that there is a strand of melancholy that occasionally comes to the fore in Adès's music that has a close connection to English traditions.⁴ All of these characteristics ultimately demonstrate, if not "a sense of responsibility to audiences or even the culture here", then at the very least an awareness of shared musical and cultural codes that facilitate communication. Indeed, the playful treatment of these codes and their significations, often with the intention of finding new compositional resources

¹ For instance, the final movement of *Asyla*. See Venn [1].

² Adès's 2007 orchestral work *Tevot* plays on the multiple connotations of the Hebrew title.

³ The *Sonata da Caccia* (1993) was conceived in part as a homage to Debussy and Couperin; Adès also made arrangements of Couperin in *Les Baricades Mistérieuses* (1994) and *Three Studies from Couperin* (2006).

⁴ Christopher Mark (University of Surrey) has been exploring for a number of years the melancholy in British music. See http://www.surrey.ac.uk/msr/people/christopher_mark/index.htm

within them, is one of Adès's compositional trademarks [3] [4]. Such is the case with his appropriation and reworking of the *pianto* topic.

Raymond Monelle's magisterial survey of the *pianto* ends with the music of Wagner [5]. Nevertheless, recent writings have illustrated its continued presence in the music of the twentieth century, in which the stylized weeping significations of the late Renaissance *pianto* has been replaced by those of particular lamenting and grieving practices in the modern era (see for instance Bauer [6], Cross [7], Metzger [8] and Whittall [9]). This development in the nature of the signified cultural units is reflected by a comparable transformation of the signifier: twentieth-century composers have demonstrated considerable resourcefulness in incorporating the *pianto* into new musical signs, which may or may not be troped with other topical references. Ligeti, for instance, in his so-called *lamento* motif, builds descending semitones into a characteristic and quasi-systematic formula that becomes increasingly common across his output [10].

Nevertheless, to paraphrase Michael Spitzer [11], the sidestepping of a semiotics of musical emotion in such accounts is problematic, not least because the *pianto* in this (and any) period is not only a topic in the cultural-critical sense understood by Monelle, but also a compositional resource that is *expressive* of sadness. Spitzer's argument, that topics signify cultural units extroversively and emotions introversively and that "topics modify emotions" [12], leads to the conclusion that one ought to account for these differing significations in any topical analysis.

This paper begins therefore with a survey of some of Adès's evocations of the *pianto*, focusing initially on the cultural units he signifies. This will be followed by analyses of his 1997 orchestral work *Asyla* and his 2004 operatic reworking of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* in order firstly to see how Adès *tropes* the topic in these works [13], and secondly to understand better how these tropes "modify emotions". Following recent music-analytical practice,⁵ I shall focus on the five basic emotions—in particular sadness—rather than more nuanced states such as "melancholy" or "grief". Ultimately, I will demonstrate how topic theory can help generate novel interpretations of Adès's music, as well as offering a contribution to the neglected field of emotion in contemporary music.

ADÈS'S PIANTO-FORMULA

As with Ligeti, Adès's appropriation of the *pianto* occurs as part of a melodic formula that has lamenting properties, as in the second movement of his 2005 Violin Concerto (Rehearsal Number (RN) 14; 1'25").⁶ The formula consists of a descending five-note idea (E5—D-sharp5—G-sharp4—G4—B3), repeated in sequence. At this stage, there is perhaps little to connect it to the *pianto*, or for that matter to broader British or Eastern European traditions of lamenting. Nevertheless, it is one of my central claims that this formula is Adès's most characteristic means of engaging with the *pianto* topic.⁷ To avoid confusion, I shall refer to it as Adès's "*pianto*-formula", distinct from, but related to,

⁵ See the adaptation of Patrik Juslin's "musical circumplex" in Spitzer [14] and [15].

⁶ Recordings of Adès's music are widely available. For of all the musical examples discussed in the text, reference is given to both the score and position on the CD (track number, timings). CD details are given in the discography.

⁷ Dominic Wells has described these semitones and perfect fifths as an "Adèsian signature" [16]. Whilst Adès's use of the *pianto* often incorporates this "signature", it is not bound to it.

the traditional two-note semitonal *pianto* motif discussed by Monelle. In order to demonstrate this relationship, and to tease out some of its extroversive significations, I shall situate it in the context of Adès's wider compositional concerns.

Adès describes his 1992 piano work *Darknesse Visible* as an “explosion of John Dowland’s lute song ‘In Darknesse Let Mee Dwell’”, in which he fragments the material of one of British music’s most celebrated evocations of the melancholy, in order to discover and explore “patterns latent in the original” [17]. Thus the opening E4—F4—E4 of Dowland’s melody (bb. 4-5, with the falling semitone on “darknesse”) is given a tremulous reworking by Adès at the outset of his own piece (bb. 1-3; 0’00” and again in the bass, bb. 8-10; 0’34”). This gesture can be considered a genuine acceptance of the potential of the falling minor second to be expressive of sadness as well as a reference to Elizabethan melancholic traditions. On the other hand, Adès radically reworks a decorated version of the *pianto* motif in bars 18-19 of Dowland’s original,⁸ inverting the rising steps of Dowland’s melody into racking, falling sevenths (A-flat4—B-double-flat3—C-flat2—D-flat2; bb. 35-6; 2’46”), the embodied weeping of the embellished *pianto* intensified by a plunge into the depths of more recent expressionistic idiolects.

Adès’s angular reworking of the decorated *pianto* points as much to more recent British musical and cultural traditions as it does European modernism. The *locus classicus* for its fallings sevenths is the ninth variation (“Nimrod”) from Elgar’s *Enigma Variations* Op. 36 (1899). Characteristically, in an ambivalent homage to be found in “O Albion”, the sixth movement of his string quartet *Arcadiana* (1994), Adès inverts these sevenths.⁹ Nevertheless, the intertextual connection enables Adès to co-opt the cultural unit of late-Edwardian British nostalgia into his evocation of idylls “vanishing, vanished or imaginary” [20]. Here the *pianto* is implied rather than stated, its presence felt in tender rising and falling seconds passed imitatively—and sequentially—around the string quartet (bb. 1-6; 0’00”, but especially from 0’34”). Whereas the reworked *pianto* motifs in *Darknesse Visible* served to align Renaissance representations of weeping and melancholy with more recent dysphoric expressionism, the extroversive significations of “O Albion” posit connections between early twentieth-century nostalgia and the “sighing” associations of the eighteenth-century *pianto* [21].

The sequences of “O Albion” also point towards Adès’s characteristically systematic treatment of the *pianto*. Another example is to be found in *The Fayrfax Carol* (1997). As with *Darknesse Visible*, the carol turns to the Renaissance, setting a poem that describes both the birth of Christ and Mary’s premonition of his crucifixion [22]. The opening bars embellish a three-voice harmonic framework, in which the upper voice (the *pianto*) falls by semitone against lower voices moving by descending whole tone (bb. 1-9; 0’00”). The intervallic cycles that structure these harmonies are mechanical, but give rise to a highly expressive musical surface that evokes the *pianto* and implies a static tonal background of E-flat minor. The overall effect is that of a single *pianto* gesture—a tear, a sigh—extended over some twenty seconds of time: a perpetual present, a frozen pose expressive of sadness. Despite the Renaissance text, the frigid emotional world afforded by the musical structures is redolent of late-twentieth-century characterizations of immobilized grief.¹⁰

⁸ Monelle drew attention to this variant of the *pianto* [18].

⁹ For a lengthier comparison of “O Albion” and “Nimrod”, see Whittall [19].

¹⁰ See Kübler-Ross [23].

Let us return, then, to the melodic fragment of the Violin Concerto and to the relationship between the *pianto*-as-motif and the personal *pianto*-as-formula. Adès's highly allusive music invokes (though frequently with a modicum of critical distance) a variety of historically situated cultural representations of sadness; it also refers to traditional techniques and contexts that are expressive of this emotion. One particularly relevant consequence of such invocations is that Adès's harmonic language, so often generated systematically rather than through tonal processes [24] [25], retains a sense of consonance and dissonance, of tension and release. Thus the falling semitones that permeate the Violin Concerto's melody share the expressive qualities of *appoggiaturas*. Similarly, the expanding intervals of its descending leaps gain from evocations of both the exaggerated rhetoric of expressionism as well as an English tone of voice, the latter finessing the extreme emotional duress of the former with a sense of melancholy. Finally, the propensity for system and indeed sequence offers a refraction—or in Adès's terms, an explosion—of more traditional patterns. In particular, although I shall not labour the point here, such systems seem to me to evoke the spirit though not the letter of that other conventional sign of the lament, the *passus duriusculus* [26]. Thus what we have with Adès's *pianto*-formula, I am arguing, is a musical pattern that, whilst not a literal *pianto*-motif, happens to enjoy some of its cultural significations as topic, and which in turn possesses the capacity to modify the basic emotional state that it is expressive of. In the cases considered so far, "sadness" has been nuanced by cultural practices of melancholy, nostalgia and grief. The examples that follow offer altogether more complex situations.

THE PIANTO-FORMULA IN ASYLA

The presence of a veiled quotation of the opening of *The Fayrfax Carol* in the middle of the second movement of *Asyla* (bb. 44-47; 2'30") has attracted the attention of critics who have variously likened it to human agency within an otherwise impersonal space [27] or noted the correspondences between the liturgical nature of the former with the suppressed title "Vatican" of the latter [28]. More generally, Richard Taruskin has connected the soundworld of this movement to Bach's Cantatas and Passions [29]. Yet I believe no-one has yet pointed out that the main theme of the movement—the first appearance of the *pianto*-formula in Adès's output—has close correspondences with Bach's Cantata *Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen* BWV 12. Specifically, Bach's opening Sinfonia, with obligato oboe, leads to a chorus in which successive imitative entries of sighing figures in the voices outline a progressively expanding intervallic series, all over a *passus duriusculus* in the bass. Adès, by contrast, disperses the *duriusculus* throughout the texture (in a similar manner to the treatment of the decorated *pianto*-motif in *Darknesse Visible*), creating a general background of sorrow, over which the bass oboe unfolds an extended compound melody that echoes the imitative entries of Bach's chorus (bb. 11-18; 0'32").

Given the nature of the reworkings observed in *Darknesse Visible* and 'O Albion', the suggestion that there exists an intentional intertextual link between *Asyla* and BWV 12 is plausible (and moreover, we do not require intentionality for the link to exist).¹¹ Indeed, such is the promiscuous potential of the movement for intertextual reference that the conductor Sir Simon Rattle, an early champion of *Asyla*, has likened it to *Parsifal* [31].

¹¹ Alexi Vellianits has suggested a similar relationship exists between the chaconne that underpins the *pianto*-formula in Adès's Violin Concerto and Bach's D minor Partita BWV 1004. See Vellianits [30].

Yet another associative link was made by Taruskin when he described the movement as surrealist, apparently in ignorance of the fact that Adès's mother is an expert on Dali [32]. Taruskin certainly has a point, especially in those passages in which the theme is enclosed in a halo of echoes that run at different speeds, in different registers, and often in inversion to the theme itself (bb. 19-42; 0'59"). Such intertexts act as "meeting points" in which the collision of meanings give rise to new and unexpected interpretations [33].

On the other hand, the initial presentation of the theme mirrors closely the musical attributes that Patrik Juslin suggests are expressive of sadness [34]: it is slow, legato, unvaried in articulation, has a low sound level, and so on. This maps on well to the interiority of the music (alluded to by the title of *Asyla* for the work as a whole and the suppressed subtitle of "Vatican" for the second movement). Yet as the movement progresses, the musical signifiers begin to proliferate: the twisted, introverted nature of the melody is given multiple echoes and refractions across the orchestra in different registers, timbres, tempi and inversions. The thematic saturation offers a negative, dysphoric instance of the style topic *plenitude* [35], which in effect tropes the *pianto* to afford new meanings. The increased negative emotional valency arises in part from the variable instrumental colours, timings and articulations: together with a general increase in musical activity, we might argue that sadness is turning to fear [36]. The suffocating, claustrophobic atmosphere is thus far removed from the dignified suffering of BWV 12 or the sensuous spirituality of *Parsifal*, and indeed a considerable expressive charge is generated from the growing distance between intertextual resonances and Adès's musical surface. Perhaps the psychological underpinnings of surrealism provide the best interpretative pointer here, for Adès transforms the healthy lamenting practices associated with the twentieth-century *pianto* into something obsessive, all-consuming.

Instead of trading on conventional cultural representations of grief, the troping of the *pianto*-formula in *Asyla* with dysphoric plenitude¹² modifies the way in which the formula is 'expressive' of an emotion, creating a compound of sadness and fear—a finessing, rather than construction, of an emotion [37]. Though the *pianto*-motif is historically not immune from such dysphoric states [38], I would argue that here Adès conjures up a pathological world of feeling that can only be a product of the post-Freudian world: its signified cultural units are the province of contemporary psychoanalysis and thus mark the latest development in the *pianto*'s evolving cultural history.

THE PIANTO-FORMULA IN *THE TEMPEST*

The dominant expressive genre¹³ for much of *The Tempest* is again pathological lamentation, but here anger counterpoints sadness. The *pianto*-formula that underpins the majority of Prospero's music is restricted to alternations of descending semitones and perfect fifths, suggesting, perhaps, an even more emotionally crippled state than that presented in *Asyla*.

Nevertheless, conventional extroversive and introversive codes retain a certain force in the opera: such codes are psychologically and dramatically necessary in order to set into sharp relief Prospero's emotions. For instance, observing the titular tempest from afar, Prospero's daughter Miranda "woe[s] the day" to a chromatically descending line,

¹² This is related too to Ligeti's complex contrapuntal practice.

¹³ The relationship between topic and expressive genre is discussed by Robert Hatten [39].

harmonized in a sort of D minor that invests the descent with quasi-tonal significations (Act 1 Scene 2, RN 17³; CD 1 Track 02, 0'41"). Shortly afterwards, to a torrent of furious versions of the *pianto*-formula—expressive of anger by virtue of volume, timbre, tempo and articulation—, Prospero tells Miranda of the treachery that led them to be cast away on the island. Blessed, as we shall see, with a 'natural' innocence (and thus according to dramatic convention a degree of psychological insight), Miranda sees Prospero's anger for what it really is. "Such grief", she sings (Act 1 Scene 2, RN 35; CD 1 Track 03 6'04"), whilst in the orchestra the *pianto*-formula continues hesitantly, subcutaneously reinstating sadness as the dominant emotion. Over on another part of the island, the King of Naples laments what he believes to be the loss of his son Ferdinand's life to an accompaniment of melting chromaticism (Act 2 Scene 2, RN 194; CD 1 Track 14, 1'09), corroborating—as if it were not already clear enough—that in musico-dramatic terms, those characters able to access genuine emotions do so by means of conventional musical codes.

But what of Prospero and the *pianto*-formula? The formula's network of significations include grieving—this is perhaps the dominant twentieth-century interpretation of it—but Prospero's grief is twisted, problematized. As depicted by the music, Prospero is fixated in the anger stage, psychologically unable to move on [40]. The underlying semiosis governing this interpretation is rather sophisticated. The bulk of Prospero's music, either in his vocal line or in the accompaniment (or both), consists of versions both direct and indirect of the *pianto*-formula. To choose but two examples from a host of possibilities, we find the same obsessional usage of this material early on in the opera when he sings of his brother (Act 1 Scene 2, RN 33; CD 1 Track 02, 5'03") as well as in the final act when he gloats of his eventual revenge (Act 3 Scene 2, RN 281; CD 2 Track 06, 3'22"). Extroversively, we know that some kind of dysphoric state, most likely grieving, is connoted topically. Introversively, however, the acoustic cues point to anger as a basic emotion. The two combine to imply an anger that results from grieving, but this is troped further by the dysphoric plenitude afforded by the mechanical alternation of intervals, the Escher-like tumbling sequences that characterize Adès's *pianto*-formula, and the multiple imitations in both voice and accompaniment. The resulting grief is both asphyxiating and splenetic, and supremely appropriate for the dramatic situation.

This mention of the mechanical, systematic nature of the *pianto*-formula is timely. Not all semitones, as Monelle rightly reminded us, need be expressions of sighing or weeping [41]. Indeed, just as healthy grief is conveyed by conventional means within *The Tempest*, so too are other dramatic states. Magic and sensuousness are both central themes in the opera, and Adès, drawing on the same conventions that Monelle finds in Wagner's music, clothes these in semitones. Examples of both can be found in Caliban's first scene: consider, for instance, the discussion of Prospero's art (Act 1 Scene 4, RN 61; CD 1 Track 06, 0'19") and Caliban's lust for Miranda (Act 1 Scene 4, RN 72; CD 1 Track 06, 2'31"). It is fundamental to my argument that Adès's *pianto*-formula is distinguished from passages such as these by virtue of his mechanical systems of extension. (One might also note the dramatic and intertextual contexts in which these systems appear, and how their obsessional properties reflect the particular emotional worlds that Adès seeks to depict.)

Yet *The Tempest* is ultimately a comedy of forgiveness, and thus Prospero's material has to reflect this. The impetus comes from Miranda's love for Ferdinand. Within Act 1, Miranda had already come to be associated with perfect fifths and *major* seconds, such as when she sings of the island ("headlands for climbing", Act 1 Scene 2, RN 38; CD 1 Track 04, 0'30") or as she wakes from a magical slumber (Act 1 Scene 6, RN 97²; CD 1

Track 09, 1'52"). Both of these examples invoke nature (and imply Miranda's close connection to it), either in its physical form, or in its opposition to the artificial, the magical. Strengthening such associations are the pentatonic leanings generated by the combination of perfect fifths and major seconds. These intervals (or their inversions) return in Miranda and Ferdinand's love duet (Act 2 Scene 4, RN 218; CD 1 Track 16, 1'49"), and Prospero's ultimate redemption is prefigured in the mutation of his characteristic semitones into tones at the end of Act 2 (Act 2 Scene 4, RN 227; CD 1 Track 09, 7'04"). In the third act, the "major second" version of the formula becomes increasingly prominent, beginning with the orchestral introduction, in which it appears in an ascending form (CD 2 Track 01, 0'00"), and again at the end of the opera once all but Ariel and Caliban have departed (Act 3 Scene 4, RN 329; CD 2 Track 12, 0'00").

The process thus described characterizes, in Robert Hatten's terms, an expressive trajectory from a furious pathological lament (governed by the *pianto*-formula) to the *pastoral* [42]. Nevertheless, I would argue that even this pastoral conclusion is ultimately governed by the lament by virtue of the relationship between the *pianto*- and *pastoral*-formulas that Adès employs. What emerges is an extroversive trope in which the pastoral is mediated by the lament, in what seems to be a return to the melancholic Arcady of "O Albion".¹⁴ Why else would Prospero's aria to the impermanence of the physical world ("with my art I've dimmed the sun") climax with a restatement of the *pianto*-formula (Act 3 Scene 2, RN 282; CD 2 Track 06, 3'58")? This in turn undercuts the otherwise tender (if not happy) close of the opera, affording such introversive emotions a tinge of sadness, as if it is only amidst the reconciliations that true grieving has finally become possible. Once again, and in complex and innovative ways, topics are found to modify emotions.

CONCLUSION

Common to the first group of works surveyed in this paper is the way in which Adès's usage of the *pianto* is, conventionally, expressive of sadness. In each case this basic emotion was modified by extroversively signified cultural units, leading in turn to melancholy (in the case of *Darknesse Visible*), nostalgia (in "O Albion"), and grief (in *The Fairyfax Carol*). Such an observation should guard against unwary claims that the emotional centre of the music is secured solely through cliché: the postmodern mobility of the historical references of the cultural signifieds give rise in turn to richly expressive tapestries, though in each case it is telling that Adès draws on indigenous cultural traditions: his music is perhaps more British than he cares to realize.

In the cases of *Asyla* and *The Tempest* the frame of reference changes: no longer historical, the cultural units signified by the *pianto*-formula are those of the asylum, of contemporary psychoanalysis. In Adès's hands, the island of *The Tempest* is no longer a site for Renaissance grieving, as it was in Shakespeare's time; its landscapes, physical and psychological, are equally far removed from the early-twentieth-century nostalgic lands-of-hope-and-glory portrayed by Elgar. Rather, Adès presents a modified form of sadness for the internationalist modern age, with all of its public pathological issues, and in so doing moves the cultural history of the *pianto* along one stage further. Here, the semitones and the patterns of the *pianto* no longer stylize weeping or sighing, instead echoing the traumas of a culture for which grief has proved all but inescapable.

¹⁴ For a different interpretation of *The Tempest*, see Gallon [43].

One of the most potent signs that topic theory is in rude health has been the rise of studies that have brought contemporary music and emotion into its purview—"O Brave New World", as Miranda might say. Yet we must be careful not to rest on our laurels, and there is much critical enterprise required in order to understand the ways in which topics have evolved over the course of the last century, in terms of the forms that they take, the cultural units that they signify, and the ways that they modify emotions. As Monelle suggested, "perhaps a new topical map needs to be drawn" [44]: I hope I've at least helped sketch out a small corner of it.

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Networks of Meaning in the Audiovisual Work of Ryoichi Kurokawa

Ambrose Field, The University of York, UK

ABSTRACT

Japanese digital artist Ryoichi Kurokawa questions relationships between reception and compositional design in new ways in his piece *Rheo:5 horizons* (2010). This paper explores methods by which the traditionally self-supporting domains of audio and image are rearranged by Kurokawa into a unique art-form where distinctions between media are of secondary importance to hierarchy-free structures of process and material. It is proposed that Kurokawa goes beyond accepted notions of synaesthesia, through the generation of an abstracted semiotic structure which unifies both extramusical meaning and the physical sounding materials themselves. It is argued that the result of this structure is a piece where the visual is audible and the audio is visual. Critically, this is not done through simplistic domain mapping. Instead, a web of signification is setup to assist viewers and listeners in perceiving precise connections between natural and synthetic forms, and real and non-real sound worlds. Juxtapositions of material and signifier emerge, but it is proposed that these do not operate according to postmodern principles of intertextuality. This paper shows that through the careful compositional preparation of semiotic relationships, Kurokawa's piece inhabits Bourriaud's definitions of the Altermodern [1], rather than postmodern cross-media aesthetics.

DEFINITIONS

In this paper, discussion relating to compositional material will refer to both visual and audio elements of the work unless explicitly stated. The word *perceiver* will be used in place of "listener" or "viewer". Finally, all time references relating to *Rheo: 5 horizons* refer the version as recorded in [2].

DEFINING AUDIO AND IMAGE RELATIONSHIPS IN CONTEMPORARY CROSS-MEDIA ARTWORKS

In *Rheo: 5 horizons*, compositional structures cross between visual and audio domains. As such, it fits within commonly accepted definitions [3] of new, cross-media work. This paper aims to demonstrate how *Rheo: 5 horizons* goes beyond these definitions by exhibiting highly integrated interactions between material, and the semiotic consequences of that material. In contemporary cross-media art work, one of three general modes of interaction can be observed between a medium and the materials themselves. These can be categorised as follows:

Mode i: cross-media with supporting relationships between domains.

This mode is encountered in commercial film [4], television or mass media where one domain takes on a role which serves only to magnify, add comment, subvert or straightforwardly support the other. In contemporary art making practice, *cross-media with supporting relationships between domains* can take the form of events such as music festival [V] performances, where the visual medium contributes highly to the audience's perception of the music as *an event*, yet provides few additional signifieds of its own to the structural discourse of the work. These relationships can emphasise the *spectacle* of an event in ways in which music cannot, primarily by providing a sense of physical scale. Recent projection-mapping performances, such as Amon Tobin's *Isam* [5], are exemplary of this process. Finally, cross-media works with supportive relationships between domains are often more mass-media oriented than works created modes ii or iii below. *Rheo: 5 horizons* is positioned outside of mode i both practically (it is not a mass-market piece), and aesthetically (the piece demands that we perceive it in an integrated way, due in part to the focus that results from the sparing and minimal application of its compositional material).

Mode ii: cross-media with interactive relationships between domains.

Kurokawa inhabits a world where the interactive and structurally inter-related generation of advanced audio and graphical material is commonplace. Contemporary modular composition software, such as Max/Msp [6] permits graphic and visual control from the same conceptual space as audio generation or sound processing. Composers have enjoyed these new opportunities to exploit cross-domain structural commonality. For example, in [7], Carsten Nicolai appears to be demonstrating the actual *means* by which his audio is created within the visual component of his work. This convergence of process and artistic result is entirely different to the domain mapping found in early cross-media - it is a design principle of the artwork, not a receptive consequence of the combination of similar poetic systems. Combining media across domains driven by precisely the same organisational systems has resulted in a new wave of reductionist aesthetics in cross-media art. The tighter the interaction between structures in each domain, the less room there appears to be for real-world, representational signification. This type of relationship typically rules out compositions using sounds and visual materials from the real-world, as these have their own set of semiotic networks. Pieces generated in this way can be highly aesthetically consistent between domains (such as [8]), and are also economically effective as they offer streamlined work-flow advantages for composers. *Rheo: 5 horizons* presents an intriguing paradox: the piece is clearly a product of reductionist aesthetics, yet it employs a significant amount of extrinsic referencing. This is explored further in section 3.

Mode iii: cross-media constructed with functionally independent audio and video domains.

This mode of presentation notably conflicts with contemporary cultural trends which favor clearly identifiable artistic products, clean branding and a single artistic concept. Recalling Barthes [9], this mode requires the audience to construct their own meaning from the simultaneous presentation of two unrelated streams. This mode of

interaction can be important to composers seeking to engage with their audiences' imagination, and results in the familiar post-modern compositional dynamics of layering and juxtaposition. This mode is exemplified in the contemporary collaborative work of Egbert Mittelstädt & Biosphere (Geir Jenssen) [10].

In *Rheo: 5 Horizons*, Kurokawa is careful to present events in such a way that they at least possess entry and exit timescale correspondences across domains, perhaps to avoid perceivers from having to favor one domain over another. Also, due to these correspondences, perceivers can avoid feeling any un-ease in having to author their own set of audio-visual relationships.

It is proposed that this synesthesia-like experience results from the consistent application of compositional structures between domains, rather than any neurological or biological notions of synesthesia. Thus, the perceiver is afforded guided opportunities to find his/her own structural interpretants by the composition itself. This 'guide' takes the form of clearly defined networks of meaning.

NETWORKS OF MEANING IN *RHEO: 5 HORIZONS*

The piece builds networks of meaning involving both extrinsic and cross-domain signification. It does so by establishing its own reference points from which the perceiver is encouraged to decode surrounding events. It is proposed that material and process operate independently, and that these concepts can be folded into discrete, non-hierarchical, unified structures which operate equally across all domains. Although Kurokawa does not give any detailed accounts of his compositional design for this work to date, he crucially speaks of the piece existing as a "diagram" of its composite elements [11], indicating that signification within the work is not dependent on the forwards progression of time.

Reference points: the "horizon"

The horizon in nature is a point of stasis - whilst events may change above and below the horizon on different timescales, the horizon point itself remains fixed. The "horizons" in this piece, real and abstract, and in both the audio and visual domains, function in the same way. In Kurokawa's composition, the horizon is visually placed in the same physical location across all five screens, and is present at all times during the piece. Even when there is no representational image of a real-world horizon on the screens, a substitute, in the form of a thin, barely perceivable graphic line, is present. In the audio, the horizon is present throughout in the piece (with one important exception discussed below). It takes the form of an unbroken and largely unchanging drone. The harmonics of this drone vary, providing both variety to the listening experience and references to the manner in which the synthetic visual images are observably modulated by simple waveforms to give them vertical movement.

The power of a reference point becomes magnified when it is removed. Kurokawa introduces such removals, lending a sense of large-scale sectionality to the piece. When they occur (see below), it is as if any connections which might be inferred by the perceiver across media domains have been perceptually "reset". This situation is enhanced as the

often oppositional pairings which book-end our cross-domain perception of the structure in this work (detailed in section 3) are temporarily abandoned:

Between 1m48s and 2m10s all moving visual images are removed and all that remains is the motionless thin, graphic horizon line. The composer has with-held all synthetic and representational visual imagery at this point. Time appears to stop, yet the audio track still provides the horizon drone, which continues to evolve through the subtle highlighting of selected harmonic resonances.

Between 4m20s and 4m36s all audio is temporarily removed. This action creates a startling link with the visuals, which have previously moved in close synchronisation with the audio. It is almost as if gravity has been removed from the visual world, permitting images of reality to fly past in speeded up, snap-shot fashion. Critically at this point, time itself flows in an entirely linear way: the rate of image change does not vary, or possess notions of acceleration or deceleration. The audio “horizon” is subsequently re-introduced gradually: it fades in as a pure sine tone, which then takes on the more complex harmonics of the drone.

A sense of composed “flow” is obtained in the piece precisely because of these interruptions, even though the surface of the work is constructed through a succession of potentially interchangeable gestural sub-units (described below).

Cross-domain structures to permit interchangeable signification between audio and video

The following discussion assumes that this idea is not one which is manifest linearly *in time*, instead being constructionally closer to Xenakis’ concept [12] of *out of time* structures. Such domain interoperability is also not a unidirectional process - concepts which are rendered in one media domain are freely transferred to the other at different points in time. Importantly, it is not the *media realisation* which is *mapped* between domains to produce a cross-domain result; it is the rendering of a set of domain and content-neutral structures. These structures can contain both what would normally be regarded as processes and materials. By folding processes, materials and organizational systems into structural objects, without any hierarchy other than that which the piece itself imposes, possibilities for interconnection are generated on a neutral-level¹ that would be difficult to realize creatively with a hierarchical view of musical structure in mind. Here, there is no narrative, no material correspondence between micro and macro (in a Schenkerian sense), and no large-scale goal directed motion. Critically, all of Kurokawa’s structural units appear to *require* cross domain application to achieve a sense of artistic consistency or balance. As different perceivers may map different structures onto their reading of the work, please be mindful that this discussion follows the author’s reading of the piece.

Structure: *horizon* - The horizon is manifest both as visual horizons and an audible drone. It is the measuring tool, and also connects with the structure controlling the deployment of abstraction and reality. The horizon line is sometimes real (coming from a representational image of the real-world), sometimes a simple horizontal graphic line, and also an audio entity.

Structure: *coastlines/sea*. Real-world sounds of the sea, sea-birds, and wind noise perceptually connect with the visual imagery of real-world sea panoramas and coastlines. When this structure intersects with the abstraction and reality continuum mentioned

¹ Following Nattiez’s original definition of the term in [13].

below, the visual representation of the sea becomes less “realistic” and more digital. Whilst in this case it appears in a form like a sophisticated wire-frame model of reality, there is a detectable trace of the real-world still present within the abstraction. To aid the detection of this trace, abstracted visuals are occasionally positioned to occur together with the articulation of real-world sounds, for example the passage at 6m51s combines this digital trace of reality with a clearly audible sea-gull sound. Importantly, the ‘coastline’ structure is rarely completely represented across the entire canvas as a single entity - there is only one moment in the work at 5m20s where all five visual panels present a contiguous image. This moment serves as a large-scale interruption of similar significance to the withholding of individual audio or visual components of the work.

Structure: *continuum between abstraction and reality*. This structure effects the extent to which known realities are perceivable in the artwork at any time. Abstraction in the visual domain is accomplished by the direct substitution of representational imagery for line-based computer graphics. Abstraction in the audio domain occurs in the form of synthetic sounds, rather than real-world sound recordings.

Structure: *time markers*. Time is clearly segregated in this piece. The division of the piece into cells which contrast against the continuity of the horizon drone is highly noticeable on first listening (the gestural signification of time is discussed in section 4). The passage of time is marked on a moment-to-moment level through the use of audio cues: percussive, drum like sounds herald the introduction of longer sustained sections of audio (for example, passages at 1m18s and 1m25s). Short, impulsive noise textures are used to mark small-scale (3m18s) changes in the visual images. On a micro-sonic level, granular, fracturing sounds, such as those found between 1m07s and 1m19s are used to mark visual acceleration and decelerations. If these sounds were smoother and more continuous, their semiotic implication (in sounding like “clock ticks”) would be less obvious.

Structure: *Physical space*. The physical space structure of the installation itself operates across the three-dimensional domain of sound, and the two dimensions of vision. Kurokawa however, has notably attempted to minimise the three-dimensional nature of the audio presentation by mounting the loudspeakers in a line in front of the perceiver, with one loudspeaker per screen. The movement of images between canvases results in a corresponding physical movement in the location of the audio. Kurokawa believes that this serves to re-enforce the idea of movement itself, stating in [14] [sic]:

By being synthesized with the move of image, the spatial cognition of the sound can be enhanced. [...] These resonances have an impact on sensory perception; which is developing a similar synesthetic experience. The sound adds to a width and a depth via an integration of auditory and visual sense; which builds spatial audiovisual construction and gives a renewed recognition of space.

Multichannel audio systems can provide the facility to enhance a connection with reality, through immersing the perceiver within an environment. Importantly, there is no attempt to create an audio “environment” here, or to provide immersion. Each loudspeaker acts as an independent entity, linked to the visual content of the panel over which it is positioned.² The result is a slice of sound from each loudspeaker, upon which

² According to the system diagram shown at the introduction in [15].

the only connection to a greater sense of “environment” comes directly from the structure of the piece and not from the physical presentation in the venue.

Reductionist aesthetics

Thus, a network of connections is exposed through folding process, form and material into structural units of equivalent compositional currency. It is this absence of traditional hierarchy in *Rheo: 5 horizons* which permits a high degree of external signification: previously, it was noted that reductionist aesthetics which concern interactive relationships between media domains rarely make use of complex, external networks of signification that might be encountered if the sounds or images of reality were introduced. Free from hierarchical structural relationships, and coupled with the compositional choice of deliberately generic real-world materials, listeners can exploit their own imagination in decoding personal meanings from the work. It is as if they have been deliberately placed in a semiotic confinement-zone outside of the piece by the composer. It simply does not matter if one imagines a *local beach* or an exotic, far away location. Whilst relevant to the individual perceiver, it does not matter precisely what the sea-gull sounds are, and it does not matter *how* the line-drawn digital abstractions of reality were produced. This is because the precise signification of all of these materials has been previously disconnected from pointing towards structural intention by the composer.

TIMESCALE IMPLICATIONS

Timescale in *Rheo: 5 horizons* requires some additional discussion, as it is both semiotically neutralised (through the use of a consistent “horizon” structure) and highly articulated. The articulation of time on a moment-to-moment level is effected through a packaged, gestural format where short pockets of time predominantly contain accelerations or decelerations.

Motion

The articulation of images and audio on a moment-to-moment timescale has resonance with the “cool” bullet-time motion techniques pioneered by John Gaeta in popular Hollywood films, as analysed in Purse [16]. Gaeta’s cinematic digital timescale manipulations give viewers an insider’s perspective on time, helping them perceive details of events which would not otherwise be possible to apprehend. This is not simply *slow-motion* as a perceivable connection with reality is made through the non-linear event trajectories themselves. We experience the act of *journeying* from real-time into a type of hyper-detailed, micro-level time. Kurokawa provides a similar experience – gestural forms are defined by articulated accelerations or decelerations of the same compositional material (i.e., the sonic or visual substance does not change its form within a gesture, it is *modulated by time*). Figure 1. depicts the time-shaping of one visual gesture, through the simple measurement of the height of the image above the horizon-line as a percentage of the remaining visual space over time.

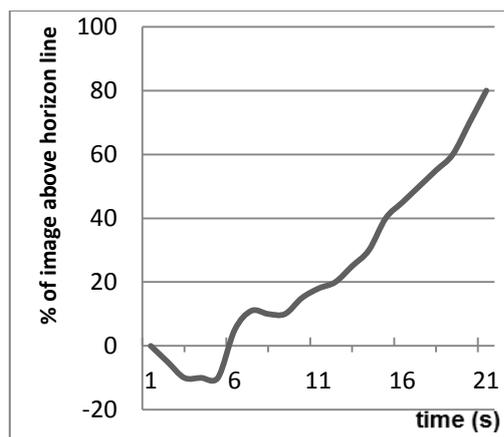


Figure 1: Visual gestural profile example, showing acceleration from 0m58s to 1m19s, in the leftmost canvas.

Kurokawa does not extend this technique of timestretching to audio content itself (although sounds *are* articulated with accelerations and decelerations as previously noted)

GENERIC REALITY

The lack of “sound processing” or “visual effects” is critical to the success of the networks of meaning described previously. Whilst the work clearly uses real-world images, it does not appear to be a presentation or representation of any particular environment. The landscape shown is a relatively featureless construction of sea and sky, with a horizon clearly visible. No visual processing appears to be done to these images other than to abstract their shapes and formal parameters into a wireframe “model” that is compositionally manipulated. The sea never “becomes” something else (such as land, for example). It is either present as is, or abstracted. Sonically, real-world sounds always retain their sonic identity and signifieds. This is important, as any sample-level manipulation of the sounds within this piece would have consequences in positioning the work itself outside of the interconnected and self-supporting networks meaning of previously described. For example, had this particular sample been time or spectrally manipulated through sound processing techniques, it would lose a connection to the reality/abstraction structure due to disconnection from the signifieds of the original audio reality. Through processing, the real-world audio would not become “abstracted” – merely “different” or “unrecognizable”.

Although reality itself is presented in a relatively generic way, there is plenty of visual detail in the work. This detail is centred upon the micro-level (we can clearly see the stratification of the textures in the rocks or the waves on the shore) and serves to provide the minimum of semiotic re-assurance that these images have indeed come from the real-world. Any more detail than this could encourage perceivers to leave this world of “generic reality” and start making connections between locative signifiers that would be an unhelpful barrier to achieving a “synesthetic” experience with the other structures in the work. Thus, there appear to be no details present on a larger formal level within the visual images: there are no identifying features of the coast line, rock-formations or other natural forms that could precisely locate these images.

TECHNOLOGICAL SIGNIFIEDS

Artistically, *Rheo: 5 horizons* leverages the semiotic language of “high technology” in its use of sophisticated image distribution and articulation techniques. However, the installation itself is made directly from commonly available “consumer” technologies. The composer has, through a series of simple interventions, changed the technological signifieds from “consumer” to “artwork”. High resolution, widescreen televisions show the visual component of the piece. For most people, televisions are viewed in a horizontal, 16:9 orientation. By rotating the screens through 90 degrees, in “portrait” mode, Kurokawa has removed all signifiers of domesticity from this method of delivery. Domestic television is not transmitted in “portrait” orientation, and computer monitors offering this orientation have specialist applications. Kurokawa however suggests that using this orientation links his work with “Japanese paintings” [17]. The vertical orientation of the television monitor also places the work within the artistic canon of the triptych, although here clearly in an expanded form. The piece also features a five channel audio system. However, rather than this being distributed in a standard 5.1 cinematic arrangement (also found domestically), each loudspeaker simply provides the audio content related to one visual panel.³

CONCLUSION: BEYOND POSTMODERN JUXTAPOSITION

Electronic media together with sophisticated visual and audio production tools have vastly enriched compositional processes by which media, form, genre and external signification can be combined in art works. In *Rheo: 5 horizons*, Kurokawa uses many different media types, combining electronic with the non-electronic, the natural with the synthetic and the representational with formal abstractions. Yet in this piece, there is no sense of a “postmodern” juxtaposition or assemblage. Whilst there is an observable hybridity of media, it is the processes described in section 3 that enable the network of signification to be manipulated across media domains by the composer. Perhaps *Rheo: 5 horizons* has more in common with Altermodern aesthetics [19] than it does with postmodern intertextuality. There is no ironic message present through the juxtaposition of different media, and we are not asked to “re-conexualise” anything by the artwork. *Rheo: 5 horizons* was winner of the Golden Nica for digital music at the 2010 Prix Ars Electronica Awards, Linz.

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PART IV:

MUSICAL TOPICS AS SIGNS OF AN
ETHNIC IDENTITY AND TOPIC
FORMATION IN POPULAR CULTURE

Topic Theory and the Rhetorical Efficacy of Musical Nationalisms: The Argentine Case

Melanie Plesch, *The University of Melbourne, AU*

ABSTRACT

This paper proposes that topic theory can elucidate the construction of meaning in nationalist idioms. Taking Argentine art music as a case study, I argue that topical analysis could be the musicological pillar in a constructivist theory of musical nationalism. Nationalist repertoires, however, present a number of challenges to the topical analyst, among them important ethical dilemmas. Monelle's model¹ (2000; 2006), situated at the intersection between musicology and cultural history, presents itself as an exemplary methodology.

Argentine musical nationalism emerged towards the end of the nineteenth century as the result of the larger process of nation building and cultural identity construction that took place in the country at the time. The prevailing preoccupation with defining a national ethos and producing symbolic representations of the nation saw Argentine composers embarking on the construction of a distinctive musical idiom that included references to folk songs and dances, rhythms, harmonic patterns, tonal systems, traditional musical instruments, and other evocations, all immersed in an otherwise European style. This idiom can be conceived of as a conceptual rhetorical system wherein the folk references constitute a topical network. Defining this network or "universe of topics" requires an initial instance of identification and description of the different topoi. However, nationalist topoi are not innocent: each of them evokes a world of meaning which is entangled within a larger, coherent, cultural system.

I argue that in order to understand the connection between musical topoi and identity construction it is imperative to move beyond topic labelling and investigate what sets of values, beliefs and rules they endorse, and what social, racial and gender hierarchies they help construe and propagate. In short, nationalist topoi call for "a full cultural study".²

¹ See Monelle, R. 2000. *The Sense of Music: Semiotic Essays*. Princeton, N.J, Princeton University Press; and 2006, *The Musical Topic: Hunt, Military and Pastoral*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press.

² See Monelle, R., 2000, p. 33.

INTRODUCTION

How do musical nationalisms work? “National” musics are integral to the shaping of collective identities and the expression of sentiments of belonging, and can even be instrumental in eliciting patriotic responses in people. Furthermore, musical nationalisms have become an integral part of Western representations of national identities in music, irrespective of their “authenticity”. While the rhetorical efficacy of national idioms is clear, we know very little about their mechanism of functioning. We do not have clear answers to important questions such as how “national” meaning is conveyed musically and why people recognise it and respond to it, nor do we know how political agendas are realized in the actual music. Another aspect that remains problematic is the relationship of musical nationalisms to traditional musics (folk and indigenous, real or imaginary), especially in the case of works that do not present easily recognisable references to specific folk songs or dances, and yet possess an unequivocal “national” character.

In this paper I propose that topical analysis can help answer some of these questions. Using the Argentine example as a case study, I will outline the main contributions that topic theory can make to the study and understanding of the rhetorical efficacy of musical nationalisms, and present a composite theoretical framework integrating a constructivist theory of nationalism, topical analysis and cultural history.

THE MUSICAL RHETORIC OF THE NATION

I have proposed elsewhere that musical nationalisms function as rhetorical systems in which allusions to traditional musics constitute a topical network [1]. These *topoi* refer the listener to worlds of meaning that have been historically sanctioned as representative of the national identity and subsequently incorporated into the national consciousness through the ideological state apparatus. I have applied topic theory to the study of what I call the “musical rhetoric of Argentineness”, an idiom construed towards the end of the 19th century by the early generation of Argentine nationalist composers and further expanded by subsequent generations, and whose main traits became naturalised to the point of being accepted as the true “Argentine voice” [2] [3].

The word rhetoric immediately brings to mind the image of a persuasive discourse that convinces through an artificially constructed eloquence. Indeed, Argentine musical nationalism persuades us of its own *argentinidad* or Argentineness through the deliberate use of a series of musical commonplaces or *loci topici* that, although immersed in an unequivocally European idiom, refer the listener to certain worlds of meaning historically sanctioned as representative of the national identity. The idea of *topoi*, as we know, proceeds from one of the five canons of classical rhetoric, the *inventio*. From the Latin *invenire*, to find, the *invention* is concerned with finding the appropriate things to say, the arguments to demonstrate one’s proposition. In order to find them one searches in places, more specifically “common” places, or *topoi* [4] [5]. A scrutiny of those *topoi*, therefore, can offer an insight into the original proposition of the rhetorician. I shall return to the broader implications of this point for the study of the musical rhetoric of the nation below.

What are the topics of Argentine nationalist music? Like those of Classical music, they include “types” and “styles”. Dance and song types present clear expressive associations and carry gender, racial and class connotations. Styles involve more complex

combinations of musical systems (such as pentatonicism), instruments (guitar, North Western flutes, drums) and textures.³ It is important to keep in mind, though, that a nationalist *topos* is not a literal quotation of a folk song and that it is not an isolated occurrence: it is a recurrent idea that runs through the entire corpus, at different levels of abstraction.⁴

As important as what these topics are is where they come from: they belong to the musical world of the gaucho, the legendary horseman of the Pampas who was promoted to the role of national character towards the end of the 19th century. The relationship between Argentine hegemonic culture and the gaucho is long, complex and contradictory. Initially considered by Argentine elites as the epitome of “barbarism”, his music was consistently described in derogatory terms. He was deemed racially inferior, the product of centuries of miscegenation, and his semi-nomadic way of life was seen as an obstacle to progress. This attitude was dramatically reversed around the 1880s when, as a reaction against the mass immigration that took place in the country at the time, he was pronounced the quintessence of all things Argentinean and his cultural universe was used as a source for the construction of a distinctive Argentine high culture including the visual arts, literature, and music. Thus, urban composers, usually belonging to the upper (or at least the middle) classes, incorporated isolated elements—our *topoi*—from the musical world of the gaucho (a world that was not their own and of which they had but superficial knowledge) into the fabric of their works, which are otherwise in a clear European idiom.

As we can see, issues of class, race and xenophobia are at the heart of the genesis of our topical universe. Nationalist *topoi* are entangled in dense webs of signification; their expressive connotations articulate musically a series of ideas about Argentineness pervasive in Argentine culture towards the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries.⁵ Unveiling the meaning of these *topoi* requires connecting them effectively to other areas of the national imagination such as historical documents, parliamentary debates, the visual arts and literature; topical identification cannot be our ultimate goal.⁶ This is why, in this theoretical model, we need cultural history; in this regard, Monelle’s interdisciplinary methodology, as presented in *The sense of music* [10] and developed in *The musical topic* [11] appears as an exemplary research program.⁷

TOPIC THEORY MEETS POLITICS

The study of musical nationalisms, particularly—but not exclusively—in the Latin American cases, presents the scholar with a number of challenges. They are summarised below, together with an outline of topic theory’s three main contributions towards surmounting them.

The Romantic view of musical nationalisms proposed the existence of the “spirit” of a people, an essence that would permeate all its cultural manifestations and, of course,

³ Some notable examples are *huella*, *malambo*, *vidalita* and *triste/estilo*. See [6].

⁴ It is also worth mentioning that not all folk dances and songs became topicalised. Topical analysts need to be careful to differentiate between a one-off reference and a “real” topic [7].

⁵ For an overview, see [8].

⁶ I first attempted such a study in [9], but it was not until the publication of Monelle’s *The musical topic* that I saw the possibilities of a combined methodology intersecting topic theory and cultural history.

⁷ An instance of my application of his methodology to Argentine musical nationalism can be found in [12].

be embodied in its music. This Herderian view has had an enduring presence in the treatment of musical nationalisms, Latin American as well as European. For instance, in the current entry “nationalism” in the *Oxford Dictionary of Music* we read that “Liszt expressed the Hungarian spirit in his works, and this spirit was later intensified by Bartók and Kodály”, (my emphasis) [13].

Aligned with this view, traditional research in the area of Argentine musical nationalism has tended to be essentialist, either focusing on the relative success of composers in portraying “the national spirit” or limiting itself to identifying “folk” elements that may be superficially evident in the music. These discussions have also displayed an inclination to fixate on the alleged authenticity of these folk elements.⁸

Overcoming essentialism, therefore, is one of the main challenges for a critical approach to Latin American musical nationalisms. Recent developments in the field of political science provide an invaluable aid in this regard. Indeed, the Herderian view has been challenged in the past three decades, particularly by authors such as Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson and Eric Hobsbawm, whose work constitutes a constructivist view of nationalisms [18] [19] [20]. This perspective proposes—as is known—that a nation is not a primordial essence but an invention or a construct, or even, to use Homi Bhabha’s memorable term, a “narration”, [21]. The idea of the nation-state is considered to be historically specific and closely related to the transition to industrial society and the emergence of modern territorial divisions. In fact, nations themselves are regarded as one of the outstanding discursive formations of Modernity and historians agree on their fictional, imaginary, and discursive nature. The implications of this theory for musicology are significant. If nations, nationalities and nationalisms are constructs, this means that its meaning has to be constituted through discourse, or, in Anderson’s terms, it has to be imagined.

A constructivist view

From a constructivist point of view, nationalist idioms in music are not “natural” but cultural constructions, historically and socially determined. A number of scholars have acknowledged this view in recent years, exploring the connection between nation-building efforts and the emergence of musical nationalisms.⁹ Little attention has been paid, however, to the musical aspect of these political operations. If we accept the constructivist view of nationalisms, finding the “spirit” of the people in the music is no longer a valid pursuit. This should not prevent us, however, from investigating how and by what means this particular variety of musical meaning has been constructed, or from attempting to explain the dynamics of its communicative efficacy. This is the first contribution that topic theory offers to the study of musical nationalisms: a more objective connection between music and the production of meaning, and a non-essentialist view that allows us to incorporate the constructedness of nationalist idioms. In this sense, it appears as the ideal musicological counterpart to a constructivist theory of nationalism.

⁸ See, for example [14] [15] [16] [17].

⁹ See, for instance, [22] and the individual collaborations in [23].

Beyond folk labelling

Musical nationalisms are notably characterised by the presence of elements from folk and indigenous songs, dances, instruments and rhythms. This association between traditional musics and art music has been at the centre of the musicological treatment of Latin American nationalisms and is responsible for a methodological eccentricity which could be described as the “folk rhythm spotting” syndrome. Indeed, discussions of Argentine nationalist works, especially those produced by non-Argentine scholars, have tended to focus on “discovering” (sometimes incorrectly) which folk songs and dances are present in a particular piece of music.¹⁰ While an awareness of the folk idiom alluded to by the composer might help performers produce a more convincing rendition of these works, the explanatory power of this type of analysis is limited. Topic theory, by incorporating the identification of elements from traditional musics into a more solid and objective conceptual framework, allows us to go beyond “spotting”.

Conceptualising the communicative efficacy

“Spotting” is a relatively simple exercise with works in which the folk element is used as thematic material clearly presented at the beginning of the composition and even alluded to in the title, as in Julián Aguirre’s *Hueya* op. 49, Alberto Ginastera’s *Malambo*, and Carlos Guastavino’s *Bailecito*. It becomes progressively more problematic when references are fragmentary, less literal, occur simultaneously, or are generally more abstract, i.e. when they behave like *topoi*. A large proportion of the output of Argentine nationalist composers operates within this framework.

Listeners encultured in Argentine music find that this repertoire has a strong evocative power. Works like Carlos López Buchardo’s *Campera* and Guastavino’s *Jeromita Linares*, for instance, are said to possess a clearly recognisable yet indefinable national atmosphere that appeals to some elusive yet accepted notions about the expression of *argentinidad* or Argentineness in music. Conservative historiography has interpreted this phenomenon as the ultimate triumph of the nationalist project: our composers at last distil the national spirit without referring explicitly to any folk dance or song [26].

Topical analysis allows us to objectivise this otherwise elusive “spirit”. Careful inspection of the repertoire from a topical point of view reveals a plethora of musical figures at different levels of abstraction whose meaningful and expressive associations competent listeners are able to recognise. Thus, topic theory offers a solid methodological ground on which to conceptualise the communicative efficacy of nationalist works.

UNVEILING THE ELUSIVE SPIRIT

Carlos López Buchardo’s *Campera* (1919) is often described as having “captured” the essence of Argentineness without making use of any specific folk dance or song. Topical scrutiny, however, reveals that two Argentine *topoi* are subtly embedded in the piece’s post-romantic idiom: *milonga* and *triste*.

Originally part of a suite titled *Escenas argentinas* for orchestra, *Campera* soon became an independent piece due to its popularity. The title could be loosely translated as

¹⁰ See, for instance, [24] [25].

“From the countryside” [27], immediately referring the listener to the rural landscape, where Argentine Romantic nationalists located the essence of the national spirit. The main melody, played alternately by the violin and the oboe, gives rise to a number of semantic associations with the pastoral world, and undoubtedly participates in this well-known Western topic. The first mark of Argentineness is the hint of a habanera rhythm in the accompaniment: a subtle appearance of the *topos* of the *milonga* that tells us that this is no ordinary rural world, but that of the Pampas. We need to wait until the melody’s closing cadence, however, for the deciding moment: a stepwise descent with double auxiliary note over a sustained dominant chord that eventually resolves to the tonic, which clearly alludes to the *topos* of the *triste*. (Example 1)¹¹

The image shows a piano reduction of the first 12 bars of Carlos López Buchardo's piece 'Campera'. The score is written for piano and violin I. The piano part features a 3-3-2 milonga pattern in the bass line and a stepwise descent with a double auxiliary note in the treble line. The violin part also features a stepwise descent with a double auxiliary note. The tempo is marked 'Con calma'.

Example 1. Carlos López Buchardo, *Campera* (piano reduction) bars 1-12.

This decentering of the *topos*, is a typical strategy used by Argentine nationalist composers since Alberto Williams’s foundational *El rancho abandonado*. Sometimes *topoi* are presented either at the end of a phrase or at the end of the piece, thus bestowing the “national” meaning retrospectively. The rhetorical effect of this strategy is significant, as works that might evolve in an otherwise unmarked European idiom suddenly acquire new meaning. Indeed, in *Campera*, the appearance of the *topos* of the *triste* is the piece’s *coup de grâce*: this is the touch that, if you are Argentinean, brings tears to your eyes.

In order to understand the meaning of this reference we would need to examine the history of this topic and ask what element of the external world it represents, what that element means within the culture, why it has been chosen to represent the nation, and explore if it can be related to other elements within the culture. A full discussion of the *triste topos* is beyond the scope of this paper; I shall outline its main issues here.

This particular turn of phrase is pervasive in Argentine nationalist music, its history as a *topos* going back to Julián Aguirre’s *Aires Nacionales Argentinos*, subtitled “*Cinco tristes*” (1898), regarded as one of the cornerstones of Argentine musical

¹¹ I would like to thank Hernán D. Ramallo for the typesetting of the musical examples and the creative solution found for the formatting of example 1; all musical examples are my own transcriptions.

nationalism.¹² Its characteristic desinence was soon adopted by other composers and became a signifier for Pampean melody; as such it appears in countless works [28].

The *triste* is a folk song dating back to colonial times. Of grave mood and improvisatory character, it is usually sung in a rhapsodic manner, with guitar chords punctuating the phrase endings in an almost recitative style [29]. The melodies feature a mostly descending profile with “weak” ending, often at a distance of a major second.¹³ The word *triste* means “sad” in Spanish and indeed melancholy is pervasive in the lyrics of this song, which usually deal with loneliness and the sorrows of unrequited love.

The *topos* clearly points to the melancholy pathos associated with the inhabitants of the Pampean region but is also related to a larger dysphoric trope in Argentine culture. Sadness pervades the nationalist movement and is embodied in representations of the gaucho in literature and the visual arts. The gaucho is afflicted by “*una pena extraordinaria*,” an extraordinary sorrow, as stated in the memorable initial lines of José Hernández’s *Martín Fierro*, one of the foundational texts of Argentine *gauchesca* literature.

5	Aquí me pongo a cantar al compás de la vihuela, que el hombre que lo desvela una pena extraordinaria, como la ave solitaria con el cantar se consuela [30].	Here I come to sing to the beat of my guitar: because the man who is kept from sleep by an uncommon sorrow comforts himself with singing like a solitary bird.
---	--	--

Nationalist paintings also display an unequivocal melancholy. Art historian Diana Wechsler describes them as “... set in a homogeneous and empty time, where nostalgia appears to be the only common trait, a perverse nostalgia of a past rendered mythical and a present that is no longer” [31]. This nostalgia articulates in the aesthetic sphere the modernist nostalgia triggered in Argentina by the unforeseen effects of mass immigration and the rapid modernisation that took place in the country towards the end of the 19th century. In the cultural production of the period there is a clear longing for a vanished past, an old order (associated with the image of the gaucho and the rural world) in which the lower classes knew their place and did not question their betters, and where ideals and spiritual achievements were more important than material gain. While this is sometimes expressed explicitly, it is mostly (and perhaps more successfully) articulated at an abstract level, through representations of landscape, situations, characters and emotions that convey an intense melancholic pathos. It is in this context that the *topos* of the *triste* makes full sense.

CONCLUSION

While topic theory has much to contribute to the study of musical nationalism, the repertoire posits a number of ethical challenges. I contend that these challenges can only

¹² See Appendix image No. 1.

¹³ See Appendix image No. 2.

be overcome by an interdisciplinary methodology combining topical analysis with an in-depth historical exegesis.

Accepting the constructedness of national idioms forces us to contend with the connection between poetics and politics. If nations are narrations, traditions are invented and communities are imagined, it is important to investigate who is doing the story-telling, the inventing, and the imagining. While topic theory allows us to successfully connect musicology with a constructivist theory of nationalism, our work cannot be exhausted by topical labelling. We need to ask what sort of story is being told and what type of “us” is being imagined through these *topoi*. Returning to the issue of the *invention* mentioned above, it is important to keep in mind that, within the world of rhetoric, *topoi* are more than just commonplaces: as collections of possible themes, they effectively establish the boundaries of what can be said about something. In this regard it is crucial to take into account that musical rhetorics of nationalisms are not inclusive systems but selective ones and that they exclude more than they include. When analysing nationalist musical *topoi* it is revealing to observe whose voices were incorporated into the fabric of the music of the nation and whose were excluded.

The provenance of the *topoi* marks the main difference between the original incarnation of topic theory and its application to nationalist repertoires. While most of the *topoi* of Classical music (with perhaps the exception of the Turkish *topos*) proceed from the same culture that forged them, the *topoi* of Argentine musical nationalism were taken, as we saw, from the musical world of the gaucho.¹⁴ They are, therefore, acts of cultural appropriation. The fact that power imbalance is at the heart of the construction of this topical universe needs to be constantly borne in mind.¹⁵ Nationalist *topoi*, therefore, are not innocent: we need to examine what set of values, beliefs and rules of conduct they support and what social, racial and gender hierarchies they help construct. In this regard, *topoi* are enmeshed in larger “worlds of meaning” that can be detected in other areas of the cultural imagination, such as literature and the visual arts, and it is in this context that their deepest signification within the culture is made evident. Nationalist *topoi* require, in Monelle’s words, “a full cultural study”, [32].

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- [6] See Plesch, M., 2008, p. 82 ff.

¹⁴ And, to a lesser extent, from some of the indigenous cultures from the Andean region.

¹⁵ While it could be argued that there is no ethnic difference between gauchos and urban dwellers, there is a significant class distinction between the intelligentsia and the peasant population.

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- [32] Monelle, R. 2000, p. 33.

APPENDIX

Allegretto

ad libitum *accel.* *ritenuto*

pp legato

Red. p

Image No. 1. Julián Aguirre, Triste No. 3, bars 1-2

Image No. 2: Characteristic cadential figure of the folk triste

Villa-Lobos and National Representation by Means of Pictorialism: Some Thoughts on *Amazonas*

Paulo de Tarso Salles, PhD, University of Sao Paulo, BR

ABSTRACT

One of the most intriguing aspects in Amazonas is the way that nationality and its signs are evoked, without any allusion to folkloric tunes. In this work, just the representation of nature is able to suggest a place, a jungle and the metaphorical connections with Brazilian culture that can be inferred from this sequence of images. The title is a powerful hint but the hearer has no other clues besides that one. In the 20th century, the absence of conventions well known by all people puts the hearers in front to a huge amount of possible meanings to correlate sounds with the scene or places suggested. Some of my references come from core studies by Leonard Ratner and Robert Hatten among others.¹

INTRODUCTION

The Symphonic poems *Amazonas* and *Uirapuru* were officially composed in 1917 according Villa-Lobos himself. However these dates are probably false: *Uirapuru* was premiered just in 1935 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. *Amazonas* was premiered earlier, in 1929 in Paris, and its piano version was finished in 1932. Both works are derived from earlier ones: *Uirapuru* is a new version to *Tedio de Alvorada*; *Amazonas* is the same to *Myremis*.

The gap between the “composition” and the premiere suggests an anticipation of the real date of composition of these works. This musicological problem is usual in some Villa-Lobos’s works, some people says that he liked to offer his first idea of a new composition as if it was the date of the finished piece of music. Others says that he did it to avoid any allusion of influence from Stravinsky, showing up works composed before his first visit to Europe in 1923 where he alleged had his first hearing of *Le sacre du printemps* [1].

Unfortunately, the score of *Myremis* (premiered in 1918 in Rio de Janeiro) is actually lost and there is no way to compare it with *Amazonas* [2], except for a few fragmentary motives noted down on a sheet music paper. One of these motives is the opening theme (fig. 1):

¹ See Leonard Ratner, 1980. *Classic Music: Expression, Form and Style*. London: Schirmer Books; and Hatten, R., 1994. *Musical meaning in Beethoven*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

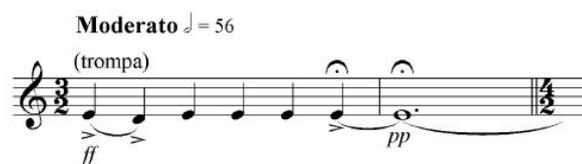


Figure 1: opening theme in *Myremis* and also in *Amazonas*.²

We can see in this theme a literal representation of the title, *Myremis*: Mi-Ré-Mi-Mi-Mi-Mi. The repeated note E can be wrote down in Portuguese as the plural form to Mi: “Mis”. This is all that can be inferred from the elder remaining manuscript. The argument of *Amazonas* is due to Raul Villa-Lobos, the composer's father:

A young Indian virgin, consecrated by the gods of the magic forests, had the custom of greeting the dawn and bathing in the waters of the Amazon. There she sported, calling on the sun and admiring her reflection in the waters of the river, proud in her primitive sensuality. Meanwhile the gods of the tropical winds breathed around her a gentle, perfumed breeze. Oblivious, she danced, surrendering herself to her pleasure like a simple child. Jealous and angered at this insult, the god of the winds carried the chaste perfume of the young girl to the profane region of the monsters. One of them picks up her scent from far and, anxious to possess her, destroys everything before him, as he advances, unheard, towards her, gazing at her in ecstasy and desire. His image, however, is reflected by the sun-light on the grey shadow of the girl. Seeing her own shadow transformed, she rushes away, horrified, pursued by the monster into the abyss of her own desire [3].

FRENCH INFLUENCES UPON VILLA-LOBOS

Following this script, Villa-Lobos started dealing with two characters and their representations: 1) the young Indian girl and 2) the waters of the Amazon. The first one was resolved in a straight way: the sustained E crosses several bars as if it was the very girl bathing on the water's surface. However, Villa-Lobos chose two different instruments to portray this call. First we hear this theme in the French horn and then immediately on viola d'amore. They both sustain the final E, stretching this pitch to bar 7. All this section, from bar 2 to bar 7 is labelled as *Contemplação do Amazonas* [Contemplating Amazonas]. Thus, the physical presence of the girl is associated with this pitch, since in bar 8, *Ciúmes do deus dos ventos* (Jealousy of wind's god), we are leaded to another place for a while, and in this meantime the E vanishes to return in the end of the bar 9 in harmonic sounds of viola d'amore, alto and cello.

The waters of the Amazon are the second character. They play a more complex role, offering ambiance and movement to the scene. At this point we can disguise another important influence on Villa-Lobos: the French music of Saint-Saëns, Franck and the modernists Debussy and Ravel. These musicians offered important models of water's representation with sounds and is very possible that Villa-Lobos was acquainted with the most of them.

Saint-Saëns's *Le Cygne* (*The Swan*), from *Carnival of Animals* for cello and piano (Fig. 2A), is one of these works that Villa-Lobos knew (he was a cello player and

² All musical examples are my own transcriptions.

performed this piece in recitals) and likely quoted in his *Canto do Cisne Negro* (Song of the Black Swan, Fig. 2B). In these cases, the piano part mimics the movement of the water provoked by the “swan” (the cello line) on the surface [4].

The image shows a musical score for Saint-Saëns's 'The Swan'. It consists of three systems of piano accompaniment. The first system is marked 'Adagio et legato' and features a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 6/8 time signature. The bass clef part starts with a piano dynamic (*pp*) and includes fingering numbers (2, 5, 4, 2, 5, 4, 2, 5, 4). The second system is marked 'legato' and continues the melodic line with various fingering patterns. The third system is marked 'p' and 'cresc.', showing a dynamic increase and more complex fingering, including a 'M.D.' (Mordent) marking.

Figure 2A: Saint-Saëns's *The Swan*

The image shows a musical score for Villa-Lobos's 'Song of the Black Swan'. It features three systems of music. The top system is for the cello, marked 'Adagio non troppo sempre ondulando' and 'molto espressivo'. The middle system is for the piano, also marked 'Adagio non troppo', and contains a complex, rhythmic accompaniment with many sixteenth notes and slurs. The bottom system is for the piano, marked 'sfz', and continues the complex accompaniment. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Figure 2B: Villa-Lobos's *Song of the Black Swan*.

WAGNER, DEBUSSY AND VILLA-LOBOS: INTERTEXTUALITY

In *Amazonas* we can find an intertextual relationship with Debussy's *La Mer* (1903-1905). The huge orchestra evokes the grandiosity of the ocean and we can hear different tone colours that seem to be analogous to the effect of the sunlight on the water, besides some sounds so much typical of the sea. Another important aspect is the movement of the waves, suggested by the titles of these three magnificent “symphonic sketches”.

Treize [5] notes that are “music in celebration of the sea and other watery phenomena” in works by Mozart (in *Così fan tutte*), Mendelssohn (*Hebrides* overture) and Wagner (*Das Rheingold*). Wagner's influence played an important role in Debussy's style:

The ‘bleeding’ chunks drawn from Wagner's operas, such as the Forest Murmurs and Magic Fire Music, so vital to the propagation of his music in France (where the operas waited many years for their first performances), constitute a genre in their own right, one that offers a fascinating precedent for the forms and style of Debussy, as for many of his contemporaries. The overture to *Der fliegende Holländer* is a fine example of the combination of sea imagery, storm, and the kind of narrative that was so often set against its backdrop. Here is a typical operatic sea drama in which the anger of the sea acts as an allegory for the turbulent destiny of the anti-hero. As in many such dramas, the feminine character is depicted in gentle woodwind tones with the archetypal Romantic motif of the descending third. However remote, the principal theme of *Dialogue du vent et de la mer* also has a ‘feminine’ character (in a specific Romantic sense) that is set against the stormy music of the sections that precede and follow it [6].

Wagner and Debussy were influences to Villa-Lobos’s music. In *Uirapuru* the Tristan’s chord is quoted and plays an important part in all the work [7]. One particular instance is the end of *Tristan’s Prelude* (Fig. 3), quoted in the coda of *Uirapuru* (Fig. 4). Villa-Lobos transformed this quotation in a sort of whole-tone variation (Fig. 5) that evokes Debussy’s music. This may be considered as a sort of musical *tropos*, since two different sources (Wagner and Debussy) are merged in a completely different meaning.

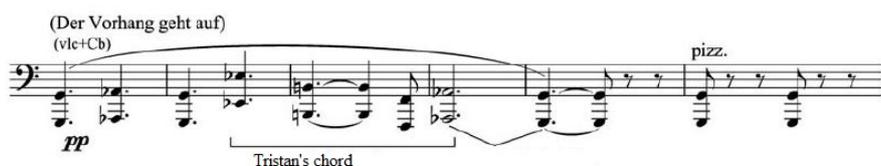


Figure 3: ending of *Tristan’s Prelude* by Wagner.

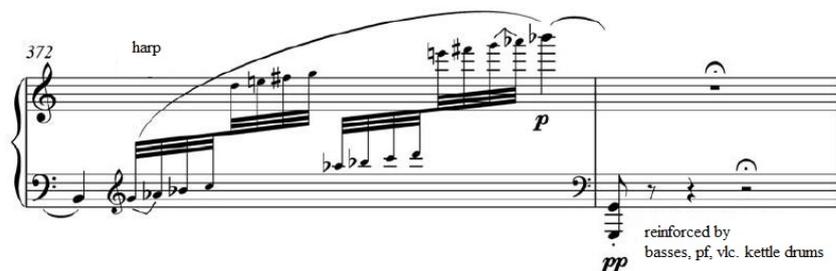


Figure 4: Ending of *Uirapuru* by Villa-Lobos.

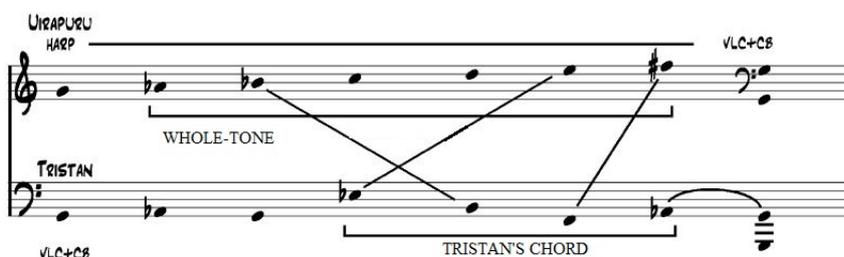


Figure 5: analysis of half tone displacements and the resulting whole-tone scale in *Uirapuru*.

In *Amazonas* the immediate suggestion of water could be associated with the waving sonority that Debussy created in *La Mer*. Trezise says that “Debussy made little use

of conventional water motifs or figures in *La mer*, yet he still finds a place for this genus [Treize refers to Wagner's music] at the beginning of the first principal section of *De l'aube a midi sur la mer* (bar 31)" [8].

In the figure above the waving movement is determinate by ascents and descents of 2nds, suggesting the Dorian mode with centre on B. The unprepared turn to B flat minor is reinforced by the acceleration of the up and down 2nds, now just in the part of Violins II. The effect is powered by the double basses and first violins in the extreme range that grows up and vanishes, in a kind of filtering that emphasizes the middle range of violins and altos in the new tonality. So, the swing of the intervals is amplified in a broader sense by the dynamics that crosses the sections and this is even more expanded by the waving tonalities around everything.

Amazonas: the “water mode”

The representation of water has another dimension in *Amazonas*. Villa-Lobos is not travelling in the open sea, but rather than this he is painting a luxuriant jungle with dark waters. The movement is softer than the powerful waves of the sea, so there are no such abroad orchestral tessiture, but the waving chords are confined to the clarinets and bassoons (Fig. 6). Differently from Debussy, Villa-Lobos is dealing with human and mythological characters, and they interfere and interact directly with the nature.

Figure 6: beginning of *Amazonas*.

The metaphoric associations are strong attached to the timbre: the dark waters of Amazon River are represented by the bass sounds of dark woodwinds. This is a sort of “structural metaphor”, to use a category coined by Lakoff and Johnson [9], thus to do that the waters of the river became sound, Villa-Lobos developed a “water mode”. This new mode may be also described according a definition of what the mode represents:

[...] scale and mode are two very different things: mode is living music; but the scale is only a dead abstraction, the material of the mode arranged according to pitch. [...] Whereas the scale is, as we know, as abstractions, the mode is something living, and therefore its meaning is hard to grasp – it can never be defined. One could define it as a sum of melodic or harmonic motive-impulses attached to certain tones and to a certain extent tending toward the principal tone or final [10].

The chords played by clarinets and bassoons in *Amazonas* presents two regular modes, between bars 3 and 5 (Fig. 7). If one puts together the parts of 1st clarinet and 1st bassoon, it will result in a whole-tone collection; the complementary whole-tone collection occurs between 2nd clarinet and bass-clarinet (all these resulting in tetrachords 4-21, according Forte notation). This contains all the twelve tones. There is another level of regularity in the intervals between these lines: a Perfect 4th between 1st and 2nd clarinets; a Tritone between 2nd clarinet and bass-clarinet; a diminished 7th between bass-clarinet and 1st bassoon. The part of 2nd bassoon breaks the balance with an asymmetrical tetrachord (4-4). However, this line is in balance with the 1st bassoon line, waving around a Perfect 5th axis, alternating diminished and augmented 5^{ths}.

The figure shows a musical score for woodwinds in the 'water mode'. It consists of five staves. The first three staves are for clarinets: (cl. I), (cl. II), and (cl. B.). The last two staves are for fagotes: (fag. I) and (fag. II). The first three staves show tetrachords labeled 'FN 4-21 (0,2,4,6)'. The last two staves show tetrachords labeled 'FN 4-4 (0,1,2,5)'. Below the staves, there are labels for intervals: '5 J', '5 dim.', '5 J', and '5 aum.'. A bracket connects the '5 dim.' and '5 J' labels, and another bracket connects the '5 J' and '5 aum.' labels.

Figure 7: woodwinds tetrachords and its relationships in the “water mode”.

This complex chain of events mingled in an exquisite texture is one of the most common features of Villa-Lobos’s music: use of symmetrical structures that at first sight seems asymmetrical, since there are many levels imbedded. Other astonishing feature is the transitory character of these delicate structures that the composer destroys with pleasure. A disturbance originated from the bottom, the brief attack by tuba, double-bassoon and double basses changes the surface intervals in the clarinets (Fig. 8). The last four notes of 1st clarinet in bar 6 suggest an octatonic scale.

The figure shows a musical score for woodwinds in the 'water mode'. It consists of three staves. The top staff is for clarinetas 1 e 2. The middle staff is for clarineta-baixo. The bottom staff is for fagotes 1 e 2. The score is marked with 'p' and 'fff'. There are markings for '3as.' and '3' (triplets). The bottom staff has a marking for '(tuba+c. fag.)' and '(Cb.)'. The score shows a transition from a steady state to a brief attack by tuba, double-bassoon and double basses, which changes the surface intervals in the clarinets.

Figure 8: the attack from the bottom and the reflection in the surface.

VILLA-LOBOS: TROPOS AND ANTROPOPHAGY

The Perfect 5th can be associated with the Nature, from its importance to the harmonic series. One can see this interval as the axis of the “water mode”. The Perfect 4^{ths} is also present in the harmonic series and is applied in the upper level of this layer. The waving of the water is represented by the melodic profile of 1st clarinet, imitated by all the other instruments. The waving is reinforced by swinging around the Perfect 5th axis with diminished and augmented 5^{ths}, analogous to what occurred in *La Mer*. This way Villa-Lobos assimilates the technique of Debussy to elaborate his own soundscape. The “neutral” structural elements can assume a quite different meaning in this context. This is very close of what Robert Hatten [11] assigns as tropos:

Troping in music may be defined as the bringing together of two otherwise incompatible style types in a single location to produce a unique expressive meaning from their collision or fusion. Troping constitutes one of the more spectacular ways that composer can create new meanings, and the thematic tropes may have consequences for the interpretations of an entire multimovement work. Topics are style types that possess strong correlations or associations with expressive meaning; thus, they are natural candidates for tropological treatment [12].

Although Villa-Lobos is well known through his alleged connections with folklore, a great number of his works does not present any direct allusion to popular culture. *Amazonas* is one of the most intriguing cases: in its around 12 minutes one cannot devise any particular melodic or rhythmic suggestion from Brazilian folk music; some techniques are derived from Villa-Lobos self-learning apprentice from scores by Wagner, Debussy, d’Indy among others composers. Even so, *Amazonas* displays an exquisite exoticism that has enough power to induce one to believe that is actually hearing an effective representation of the jungle and its mysteries.

Thus, the pictorialism inherent to the symphonic poem tradition [13] was maybe the first step to the compositional planning of *Amazonas*. In this work, if he probably was not a creator of new techniques certainly he was a skilful user of the disposable means to introduce the sound of tropical forests of Brazil in the concert hall. In this sense one could say that troping was an intuitive strategy of Brazilian modernists that called themselves as “anthropophagites”. Brazilian culture is full of hybridism, resulting from the symbolic act of “devouring” foreign cultures as a means of assimilation. In the music of Villa-Lobos that was the strategy used to develop your own sense of style and language.

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- [12] Ibid, p. 68.
- [13] Ratner, L., 1980. *Classic Music: Expression, Form and Style*. London: Schirmer Books, p. 25. Ratner defines "pictorialism" in music as "efforts to imitate or symbolize specific ideas from poetry or other types of literature [and] generally associated with instrumental music, conveys some idea of an action or scene".

Rhetoricity in the Music of Villa Lobos: Musical Topics in Brazilian Early XXth- Century Music

Acácio Piedade, PhD, State University of Santa Catarina, Florianópolis, BR

ABSTRACT

In this paper I propose an analysis of the music of Brazilian composer Heitor Villa Lobos under the perspective of musical Rhetoric and the theory of musical topics. I argue that this point of view makes it possible to understand a characteristic of his musical style that was not well discussed so far, which led some critics to claim that Villa Lobos' music is excessively chaotic or formally disoriented. In fact, I claim he is using topics of Brazilian music in a special way. The paper starts by addressing the theoretical adaptation of the theory of musical topics in the context of National musical styles. I discuss the pertinence of topics theory in this case, departing from several authors who wrote about topics, including Raymond Monelle, and I also use some concepts of the Group Mμ. I draw upon a concept of musical topics that is more interested in the forms of use of music figures than in their fixed structures itself, which can vary among several possibilities inside the universes of topics. Then I argue that Brazilian topics started to appear in the first decades of the XXth-century in parallel to the modernist movement in the Arts, also a time when key popular music styles were in consolidation and were especially important to the agenda of the intellectuals involved with the construction of Brazilian national music. After this I present the universes of Brazilian topics and discuss excerpts of works of Villa Lobos in order to show how they appear there and to argue that rhetoricity and density of topical meaning are important characteristics of his style.

INTRODUCTION

The music of composer Heitor Villa Lobos remains a difficult task to the analyst, maybe because of his historical independence and originality, since in the first decade of the XXth-century the composer was writing music in a direction that would be developed only from the 20s on, by composers of the Modernist movement, who sought a National language for concert music [1]. Or maybe because his music has been considered complicated in terms of structural-semiotic analysis, being deeply anchored in the production of sound images of Brazilian folklore. The composer himself declared that he painted impressions, landscapes, emotions, and therefore he described his own music as a vehicle for expressing extra-musical phenomena. Following this path, a rhetorical analysis of Villa Lobos' music can bring up interesting discussions about signification and I think that the concept of rhetoricity as well as the theory of topics are contributions in this direction. At first I will comment on the theory of topics and its application to Brazilian

music. Then I will present some universes of Brazilian topics I've been working with and I will discuss how these topics navigate the music of Villa Lobos. I shall conclude by claiming that topical density and high rhetoricity are important characteristics of his musical style.

BRIEF COMMENTS ON THE THEORY OF TOPICS

Many authors are constructing the theory of musical topics since its initial contribution by Ratner [2], followed by Agawu [3], Allanbrook [4], Hatten [5], Monelle [6] [7], Sisman [8] and many others [9]. This collective effort constitutes a new perspective to the investigation of meaning in music, which shall be experimented in the study of other musical universes than the European music of the common practice period. In this sense, I've been trying to adapt this rhetorical approach in order to apply it in a completely different case, the Brazilian music of the end of the XIXth and first decades of the XXth-century. The reason for that is that I think that the theory of topics is a powerful tool to investigate the diversity of musical repertoires inside a limited cultural universe such as a National music, and also because I think that during this period of Brazilian music history there was happening the consolidation of musical genres that are still stable and operative as pillars of what is considered to be Brazilian music. I take the risk of facing so many inconsistencies in the question of what is to be considered Brazilian or not, but yet I think this enterprise is worth because I've been verifying that the categories I've been working with somehow fit with what musicians and musicologists say. The case of the musical language of Villa Lobos is an example of this, and I will try to develop it in this paper.

A condition to engage an application of the theory of topics is a well-established and stable socio-historical context, as it is the case of the music of the Classical period. However, if one wants to approach topics in a National music, the problem starts with the idea of Nation itself. Apart from the geopolitical concept of Nation-state, many social scientists agree that Nation is something arbitrary and even imaginary [10]. Though it is purely a rational convention, a Nation is often taken as an objective thing in the world, and this essentialisation ends by posing theoretical problems and paradoxes. But the fact is that despite being a social construction, a Nation is real to the extent that it is something strongly experienced by people. In fact, it is a tacit consensus at least for the people that live in it, and it is also a very important notion in their lives and identities.

Considering this pragmatic dimension of Nation and the pertinence of the idea of historically and geographically located communities that share a musical world, I think that one can speak of musical repertoires considered to be originated from the Nation-state Brazil as being Brazilian music. This allows the construction of a context that is not a historical period such as the Classical one but instead a set of musicalities of a contemporary community living in its territory [11]. I shall remind that musicality, like identity, is a contrastive concept and therefore there can only exist a Brazilian musicality to the extent that there is also an Argentinean or a Scottish one. And this contrastive aspect continues to apply inside the category of National musicality, for it comprises several different regional idioms that can form individual musical languages, each one of them being also a particular musicality pertaining to the Nation. For example, there is a musicality for the tango and other genres of the region of the river de la Plata, South

America, and one can conceive that all of them fit inside a larger category of Argentinean musicality, which however may encompass this musicality but is not limited to it. The same process may be exercised to think any relation of National and regional music styles.

Insofar there is a musicality, one can think about the rhetorical dimension of it, which is an important effort for the construction and maintenance of its identity. And this allows one to think about the isotopic constitution of it, whereas topics and figures are active units. Isotopy, as I will comment below, is the characteristic that renders acceptability and stability of conventional meaning in a chain of musical ideas. The inner musicalities of a Nation constitute the different universes of topics I shall refer here. I employ the idea of universe of topics used by Agawu [3] as musical-symbolic sets that can be isolated from each other within a larger musicality, such as a National one. It is a generic term to put together some musical structures and cultural-literary ideas that it makes sense to separate from other universes. The elements of these groups of topics can be used to promote a greater rhetoricity in the musical text.

The idea of rhetoricity in music derives from the distinction between topic and figure, which can be drawn from the General Rhetoric of the Group M μ [12]. Briefly, the application of some ideas of this group of Belgian semioticians leads to think the musical *topoi* as constituents of an isotopic chain, and the figure as the surprising element that breaks up the semantic stability of this level. Musical topics are thus topological: they have a specific place in the narrative to correctly affect the audience. However, a musical topic can turn into a musical figure by means of making changes in its placement, form or disposition, and this transformation increases its rhetoricity, that is, the level of its rhetorical quality [13]. The idea that music can present different degrees of rhetoricity helps to understand how sometimes musical topics acquire a higher salience by breaking the expectation generated by isotopic conventionality, thereby becoming a figure, as I think it is the case in many works of Villa Lobos.

BRAZILIAN TOPICS IN THE MUSIC OF VILLA LOBOS

In Villa Lobos, as well in other Brazilian Nationalist composers such as Camargo Guarnieri, there is often the musical evocation of the later XIX-century Brazil, the time of the old waltzes and other genres such as Seresta and Modinha, a time when life was attributed with lyrism, simplicity, freshness and nostalgia. There are some depictions of Portugal in this symbolic set, for instance some evocations of Fado musicality, and also embellished flourishing melodies with many arabesques, as well as rhythmic patterns of old dances such as Maxixe and Polka. One can hear sound structures of old civil-military bands that many countryside little Brazilian cities used to have, like for example patterns of tuba-like bass lines. One can add here the Choro, a very important genre to all this symbolic-musical set of categories. All these elements can work together in a musical text to musically recreate a kind of deep Brazil, a land whose myth of origin tells that the real "authentic" and "pure" Brazilian musicality is lost in the ashes of the past but may be re-experienced by the enacting of these specific musical configurations. I call this universe of topics "Época de Ouro" ("golden age").

Golden age topics are abundantly found in the music of Nationalist compositions, such the *Valsas de Esquina* by Francisco Mignone, to mention only one. In Villa Lobos this universe often emerges by means of Choro's 7-stringed guitar bass-lines, for example,

which the composer uses in various transformed ways. In the example below, from the *Chôro Nr. 1* for guitar, there are some golden age topics:



Figure 1: from *Chôros Nr. 1*, cc. 9-12.³

The fermata in bar 9 and 11 are a kind of emulation of the *rubato* lyrism in the singing style of Seresta and other old genres, usually presenting a descending *glissando* after the retained note. Bars 10 and 12 present a Choro-bass line, here in the original guitar timbre. These lines, called by musicians "baixaria", appear in several forms in the music of Villa Lobos, mostly serving to connect parts of the melodic theme, and many times appearing in a pretty transformed way. In the following example, the octavated bass line points to the *topos*, the conventional space of these guitar typical phrases:

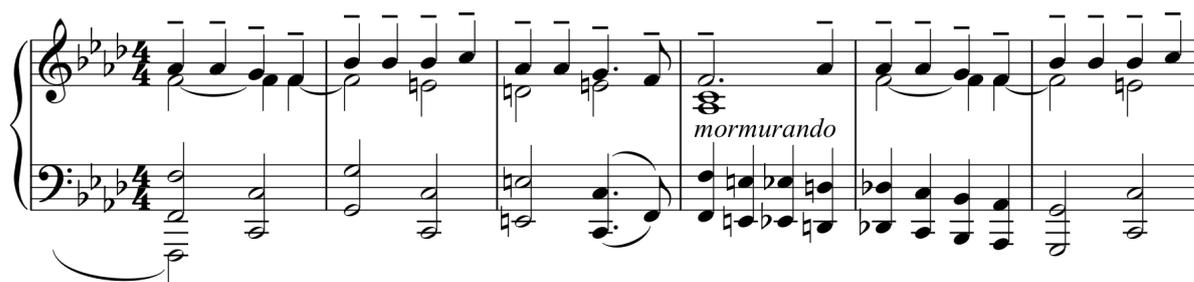


Figure 2: from *Bachianas Nr. 4, Ária*, cc. 7-12.

Besides this, the example above, an excerpt of the *Ária* of the *Bachianas Brasileiras N. 4*, brings up in the melody a clear reference to another universe of topics of Brazilian musicality: the "Nordestino" ("northeastern"). Being a great source of inspiration for Nationalist composers, the generalized musicality of northeastern regional culture generated many expressions that were recognized as deeply Brazilian, such as the musical genre Baião and the many melodies that employ the Mixolidian and Dorian modes in a very particular way. Therefore, the excerpt above shows this frankly Nordestino theme in dialog with Choro-like descending bass lines that evoke the Golden Age universe, a completely different symbolic-musical set. This polyphony is an example of the double remission to different topical universes that causes the matching of two diverse worlds of meaning, provoking a kind of excess that is important in Villa Lobos musical language.

The Prelude to the *Bachianas Brasileiras N. 2* (1933) begins with a dark atmosphere in the strings but soon the solo of tenor sax makes a timbristic allusion of the world of Choro, therefore a Golden Age topic. The sax in the Choro is a major contribution that saxophonist-composer Pixinguinha had just consolidated in that time. This remission is

³ All musical examples are my own transcriptions.

followed by a solo of trombone with many glissandi, what emulates the romantic Golden Age singing style and at the same time points to a specific use of this instrument in the so-called Gafieira ballroom dance music that was in progress at the time this composition was written. In this piece, the strings construct the melodic prominence together with the solo sax and the solo trombone. This is here the case of universe of Golden Age topics, but soon it comes a brief section with plenty of harmonic and rhythmic allusions to another universe of topics, the Caipira ("countryman") topics (see below), after what there is the recapitulation of the initial material. This succession of topical universes may cause an astonishing impression of expressive incongruence, due to the dark and lyrical density of the first and last sections and the innocent dancing simplicity of the second one. This certainly is part of the rhetorical intents of Villa Lobos, something that is curiously expressed in the title of this Prelude, "O Canto do Capadócio", that appear in the score translated into several languages (Ricordi Editions) as "the song of countryman". But in fact "capadócio" was a word also used to mean rogue, rascal, pointing to the figure of the "malandro", an important constituent of a different universe of topics, which I call "Brejeiro" [11].

The evocation of the Caipira universe, which evokes a crucial aspect of the inner side of Brazil, particularly the countryside of Southeastern region, where there is the figure of the Caipira and one recognizes and praises his way of life, sincerity and simplicity. Villa Lobos very directly evokes this universe in his *Trenzinho do Caipira* ("Countryman's little train"), as well in *Plantio do Caboclo*, a piece from the cycle for piano solo *Ciclo Brasileiro*:

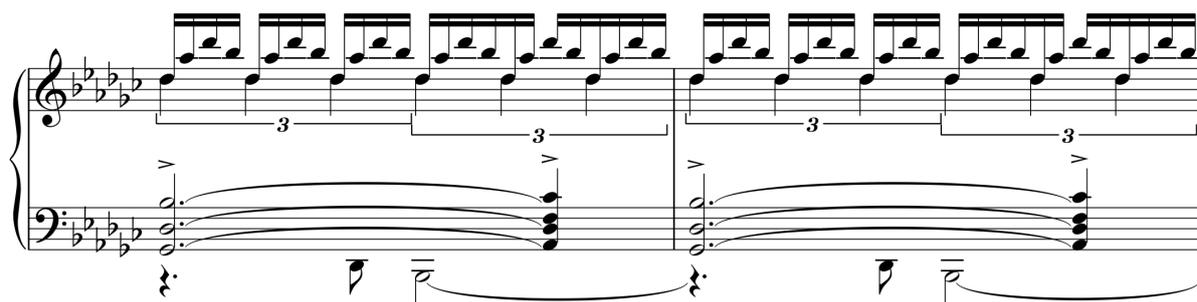


Figure 3: from *Ciclo Brasileiro*, *Plantio do Caboclo*, cc. 10-11.

Here the chords in the left hand remind the typical Caipira guitar called "viola caipira", also in the simplicity of the harmonic progression (I-V7) of this genre, which is called "toada caipira". There is at the same time the *ostinato* of the right hand, which seems to put a special brilliant light in the countryside landscape that is being painted here.

Caipira topics are also clear in the Prelude to the *Bachianas Brasileiras N. 7* (1942), entitled "Ponteio", which presents a typical melodic contour in parallel thirds and sixths. But there the Caipira elements are permeated with a learned style marked by the contrapuntal texture and the very Bachian melody. At the same time, one can notice those already mentioned bass lines of Choro, both from 7-stringed guitar and from band-like tuba patterns, as well as other elements that recall the Golden Age universe.

Villa Lobos inaugurated in the Brazilian musicality a universe of topics that may be called Indígena ("Indigenous"), in which the evocation goes to the Indigenous forest peoples and their surrounding world, especially the birds. Villa Lobos largely employed iconicity in his works to mean the chant of birds such as the "uirapurú". And also so-called

spirits of nature are present in these references to the Indígena universe, like in the *Suite Amazonas*. The example below is an excerpt of this work, the beginning of a section called "Dance of the enchanting of the forests":

9 - Dança ao encantamento das florestas
No mesmo mvto.

Figure 4: from *Amazonas: Bailado indígena brasileira*, for piano, Section 9.

The polyrhythmic texture and the rhythmic modulation in the right hand produce a sense of independence and great liberty of the melody in relation to the *ostinato*. Following the clues that Villa Lobos himself presents in the score of this programmatic piece, that freedom evokes the presence of a living being of the forest, be it the voice of a bird or the one of a spirit that freely flows over the stable current of arpeggios.

The Indígena in Villa Lobos is not like the romanticised Indigenous world of *Il Guarany*, an opera composed in 1870 by Carlos Gomes in which the idea of the noble savage is prominent. In Villa Lobos, the Indígena universe is one of the dense and remote forest, much more wild and savage and, at the same time, one that is coherent with the

ideal of the Modernist movement of 1922 [14]. The Indigenous here is much more free, it is the anarchic Indian of Mario de Andrade's roman *Macunaíma*. Villa Lobos himself was called a "white Indian", a wild composer to the eyes of Europe [15]. The fact is that the Indigenous universe of topics is very important in Villa Lobos general style, and particularly in some of his pieces he employs so-called Indigenous melodies taken as "authentic", like in the *Três Danças Características (africanas e indígenas)*, where he uses a song of the Caripuna Indians, which he supposedly collected himself in their village.

CONCLUSION

The complexity of the music of Villa Lobos has been commented by several musicologists [16] and re-discovered by contemporary researchers [17], but the apparent chaos of its semiotic density favoured the construction of his image as that of an artist with almost bursting and savage creativity. His colleague composer Francisco Mignone for instance said Villa Lobos was an "animal" with a volcanic talent, a magnificent force "from the caves of irrationality" [18]. What I find with the analysis of meaning in the music of Villa Lobos is a particular density of different topical references that may put some light on views like this one. Working as if it had layers of meaning, the "plot" (as Agawu called it) of Villa Lobos' music seems to be eventually constituted of sequences that mix of two or more universes of topics, successively or even simultaneously. This end by putting together distant worlds like for example Indigenous melodies and old Brazilian waltzes, or Brejeiro *scherzando* gestures and Choro bass lines, or European Modern Impressionist music sounds together with topics of Brazilian northeastern universe. The high rhetoricity of his music results from these transformations and dislocations, a feature that is responsible for dense evocations and a sense of excessiveness characteristic of Villa Lobos musical language.

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On Ethno-Existential Irony as Topic in Western Art Music

Judah Matras, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, IL

ABSTRACT

The 'case' for Jewish Existential Irony as "musical ethos" in works of Shostakovich has recently been impressively made by Prof. Esti Sheinberg [1]. In her paper Sheinberg reviews the concept of "existential irony," cites Jewish sources, themes, and motifs in Shostakovich's music, and identifies musical "correlatives" of existential ironies which are held to illustrate or represent Jewish ethos. Sheinberg's 'case' receives certain indirect support in accounts by other scholars of Shostakovich's Jewish friendships and incorporation of Jewish themes and "musical inflections" in his music ([2]; [3]; and especially [4]).

In this paper I show that ethnic sub-populations in the socio-demographic sense (where 'ethnic' may refer to sub-populations delineated on the basis of race, linguistic or socio-cultural or –geographic origin, religion, socio-economic status or class, gender, or age, etc. identification) more generally are characterized by existential ironies which illustrate or represent the ethnic-specific ethos; and music scholars have identified 'correlatives' which can illustrate and identify them in their musics. I cite analyses by music scholars as examples for several familiar subpopulations (and mention the issue of applicability of the argument for the arts and culture generally as hinted or asserted by Adorno, Benjamin, and Bakhtin); and I conclude that ethno-existential irony should be adopted as a "topic" in Western Art Music [5].

INTRODUCTION

In her book, *Irony, Satire, Parody and the Grotesque in the Music of Shostakovich. A Theory of Musical Incongruities* Esti Sheinberg [6] analyzes ambiguities in Shostakovich's musical output by exploring themes of irony, satire, parody, and grotesque in Russian culture generally, in Shostakovich's biography, in his musical idioms, and in their non-musical referents. In the book she introduces the concept of existential irony in music and closes the analysis with a passage asserting "existential irony as Shostakovich's meta-message." In a subsequent paper [7], Sheinberg develops the idea of "Shostakovich's 'Jewish Music' as an Existential Statement." It signifies both the existential, eternal ambiguity of music as an aesthetic and ethical ideal of Jewish tradition: "life in general is perceived and accepted as a mixture of dysphoric and the euphoric... Jewish music, by its 'laughing through tears', that is, by expressing dysphoric purport through euphoric devices,

is for Shostakovich indeed a ‘moral issue’, in that *it signifies existential ambiguity*¹ and reflects existential ambiguity as an *ethical* approach to life.”

In her book [8] Sheinberg mentions use of “musical topics” but she does not extend the discussion to “existential irony” in other musics, even as she mentions the idea of “artists as ‘eternal Jews’ – [...] restless souls with no real homeland [...]” and cites Mahler as akin to Shostakovich both in his “musical existentialism,” as expressing ‘heartbreaking, tragic irony,’ and as a composer for whom “music was inseparable from social and ethical issues”. In the rest of this paper, I make the ‘case’: i) for *generality* of ‘ethno-existential irony’ in musics of “minority,” or designated “other” or “outsider” (in the sense of sociologist Émile Durkheim) identity-population groups, and ii) I argue that ethno-existential irony is an “indexical topic,” in the sense of Monelle [9][10] and should be included in the recognized “topics” in Western Art Music listed by Monelle, Tarasti [11], and others.

ETHNO-EXISTENTIAL IRONY IN JEWISH MUSIC

The early 20th Century fieldwork, and publications of Abraham Z. Idelsohn on ancient and historical Hebrew and Jewish song and music in comparative contexts, and his analyses of connections between early Hebrew and Christian musics, are widely cited as ground-breaking on both historical and musicological grounds [12] [13]. Idelsohn’s project involved primarily collection of field recordings of music in Jewish communities of Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East and demonstration of a historically authentic system of Jewish music, encoding aspects of ethnic and national identity in the life of the synagogue and in the world of the diaspora. In his summary volume, *Jewish Music. Its Historical Development*, [14], Idelsohn’s concluding passage includes the lines:

As a result of our treatise, we see that the Jewish people has created a special type of music, an interpretation of the spiritual and social life, of its ideals and emotions. In this music we find the employment of particular scales, motives, modes, rhythms, and forms based on definite musical principles [...] Jewish song voices the spirit and history of a people who for three thousand years have been fighting bitterly but hopefully for its existence, scattered in thousands of small groups among the millions having diverse tongues, cultures, and creeds [...] a genuine echo of Jewish religion, ethics, history, of the inner life of the Jews and of their external vicissitudes.

In his book, Idelsohn mentions variously elements of existential irony, satire, grotesque, and humor in the evolvment of Jewish song, music, and performance. For example, in describing the “Mode of Esther,” he notes that in their reading of the Book of Esther, “German Jews [...] interpreted the *Megilla* of the story of Esther and Mordechai and the struggle of the Jews in Persia as the story of their own life. Their abuse of Haman was a disguised attack on their contemporary enemies, and an opportunity to mock them, at times even in a vulgar manner.” Elsewhere:

But family life was not ideal, and the young woman had to suffer most, from the proverbial mother-in-law as well as from her own mother. At times religious struggles caused the break-up of the family [...] All these bitter experiences of life struck the

¹ Author’s italics.

Jewish woman primarily and found utterance in her song. Thus, we find bridal songs, wedding songs, laments of the young disappointed wife [...] mother-songs, soldier songs, grass-widow songs, orphan-songs, [...] accusations against and curses upon the heretic husband [...] in a pathetic style and in a desperate sadness [...] there exists a considerable part of joyous songs. As soon as the subject matter is religious –the Torah, Messiah, Israel and its past, the festivals, etc.- the tone becomes brighter. Furthermore, we find a great number of humorous and witty jingles, at times of subtle satire and sarcasm against both Jew and gentile. At times, peculiar conditions of Jewish life find expression in biting irony in which tears mingle with laughter.

As Bohlman has noted, additional themes of “otherness” were taken up and accorded prominence, so that much of Idelsohn’s descriptions and analyses casts Jewish music as characterized by ethno-existential irony.

Unlike Idelsohn who explicitly denied the label “Jewish music” to the works of Jewish musicians who “created or performed European music,” the historian and musicologist Peter Gradenwitz [15] introduces his book, *The Music of Israel*, as treatise on the “rise and growth of Hebrew and Jewish music.” and explicitly accords the label “Jewish music” to the works of, say, Salomone Rossi, Felix Mendelssohn, Gustav Mahler, Ernest Bloch, and Arnold Schoenberg even as Idelsohn explicitly did not. Gradenwitz is not principally taken up with the “otherness” of Jewish song, prayer, or community or ethnic settings and relations but, rather, celebrates the achievements of Jewish liturgies, musicians, composers, performers, ideas, and aesthetics in the contexts of the musics of their respective times and locales. Nonetheless Gradenwitz, too, takes note of the “otherness” of Jewish music early in the book in analyzing cleavages between Occidental vs. Oriental music, instruments, and traditions, and the status of Jews and Jewish communities in medieval, Renaissance, and post-Renaissance European regions. Discussing Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer, Mahler, and Offenbach, Gradenwitz writes:

Each of these three great figures in nineteenth-century musical history [Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer, and Mahler] was a split personality in his own way and a foreign element in all spheres of activity. In the works of Offenbach, the ingenious critic of French society, there appeared still another trait characteristically Jewish: sarcasm, satire, and irony, which the Jews had developed as weapons of the weak and helpless against the powers of oppression. We can often find Jews as masters of caricature and satire — in literature, painting, and music — and the grotesque has always attracted them.

Thus Gradenwitz supplies another testimonial to the ethno-existential irony of Jewish music.

Philip Bohlman in his book, *Jewish Music and Modernity* [16], begins his discussion of “Jewish Music at the Borders of Modernity” with the assertion that “Jewish music begins with Salamone Rossi (ca.1570-ca.1628).” Bohlman holds that Jewish music was the product of crossing borders and negotiating identities. Rossi, according to Bohlman, was the transitional figure between myth and history: Rossi’s Jewishness determined the ways the composer and his music entered Jewish history as phenomena of early modern Europe. Bohlman writes further:

Rossi’s negotiation of the stylistic borders between the Renaissance and the Baroque was inseparable from the historical fact that he was a Jew working primarily in an Italian sphere that was Christian. Rossi’s forays into the *seconda pratica*, therefore,

paralleled his own entry into the public sphere of early modern Italy and the reconfiguration of the Mantuan Jewish community as ‘public’ itself, that is, as a culture that extended beyond the ghetto.

In the chapter entitled “Inventing Jewish Music” [17], Bohlman points to the Jewish “negotiation with otherness,” to the encounter, cultural engagement, and acquisition of “new presence in the public sphere outside the Jewish community,” and to the “reincorporation” of biblical past as transformations in the Jewish Community. These led to blurring of boundaries between “selfhood” and “otherhood” Jewish Music in liturgies, cantillation, folk music, songbook, cabaret, and art music. Later, following the Holocaust and the post-Holocaust events and migrations, Jewish identity and institutions of Jewish music shifted to Israel, to North America, and elsewhere in the diaspora. These have resulted in emergence of new Jewish art musics based on musical responses to the Holocaust, institutionalization of Israeli music life, revival and globalization of earlier Jewish musics, and penetration of “modern genres” of Jewish music” into the broader public sphere.

The description and analysis are largely driven by three central concepts: i) “selfness,” ii) “otherness,” and iii) “hybridity” which he imputes both to collectivities (socio-demographic groupings) and to their musics, are more desirable or less desirable, more problematic or less problematic, in accordance with the various historical, social, or aesthetic contexts in which they appear. There is an important affinity between the concept of “otherness” and the Durkheimian [18] concept of “other,” or of “non-us.” For sociologist Émile Durkheim, “otherness,” and especially the presence of designated “other” social categories: criminals, deviants, dissimilar classes, “negative cults,” are “functional,” indeed crucial, in promoting and fortifying social solidarity in societies. The presence and behaviours of deviants and of “others” proves our own morality and righteousness. We *need* others and their “otherness” to define our own “we-ness.” Bohlman –as Durkheim-- uses “otherness” as an “existential” label, and thus the processes, the outcomes, and their attributes bearing on musical “otherness,” e.g. parody, hybridity, irony can also be labelled “existential.” and hence provide additional evidence of ethno-existential irony in Jewish music.

GYPSY MUSIC, GYPSINESS, AND ETHNO-EXISTENTIAL IRONY

The European history of Roma, or Gypsy, migration and settlement, however incompletely documented, is clearly a history characterized by widespread and repeated episodes of prejudice and discrimination, exclusion, exploitation and want, and — in periods and places of Nazi rule — by racial — doctrine victimization, murder, and genocide. In his classic account, *The Gipsy in Music* [19] Franz Liszt appears as the mid-19th Century champion of Gypsy music and cites variously their suffering from persecution and wandering, the absence among Gypsies of nationalist tradition or rhetoric, the extreme contrasts with persecuted and wandering Jews, avoidance of work and simplicity of needs and ambitions, and cites especially their authentic role in the origins of Hungarian music and the rhapsody as “Bohemian/Gypsy epic.” He dwells also on affinity, symbiosis, and negotiation between Gypsies and Magyars [20], [21]. In his book, Liszt devotes a full chapter to speculation about possible origins (Indian, Greek) of “Gipsy” musical practice and of affinities to origins, style, and instrumentation of Hungarian music

and he devotes a chapter to musicological analysis [22] – including scales, intervals, rhythm, ornamentation, (asserting an absence of orchestration and of thorough-bass, prominence and dominance assigned to the first violin) – of Gypsy music.

Liszt was widely attacked (by musicians, nationalists, and self-styled “patriots” and, especially, by Hungarian composers and pioneer-ethnomusicologists, Bartók and Kodály) regarding his claims about Gypsy origins of Hungarian folk and art musics [23], and subsequently backtracked somewhat. But as it turned out, the *Verbunkos* (recruitment dance), the characteristic genre of the Gypsy musician in Hungary as came to be employed and recognized as dominant in Hungarian popular and art music alike in the rest of the 19th Century [24] [25] [26] [27]. The dance idioms in the Gypsy *Verbunkos* music examples cited by the respective scholars have some affinity to the dance idiom “musical correlatives” of existential irony (in the Jewish ethos) representing sometimes “courage,” sometimes “escapism, elation, and insanity,” sometimes “confidence” or ironically “too much confidence,” or alternatively of “devotion [...] aware of its ironic circumstance” and overcoming existential *angst* by sheer survival. In all events, Gypsy music as created and performed in Europe as late as the mid-20th Century seems to exemplify ethno-existential irony.

In the post-World War II era the Roma remained largely stigmatized as “nomadic” and anti-social, and excluded both in capitalist Western and Southern Europe and in socialist Central, Balkans, and Eastern Europe countries; but they have continued and often enhanced their professional music-making roles and status in their own and in the “host” communities. However the latter half of the 20th Century and beginning of the current century have also been witness to emergence: i) of professional and cultural *elites* among the Roma and ii) of organization and rise of *civil rights* movements in the Roma communities. Malvinni [28] notes two mutually conflicting avenues for addressing the Roma: 1) labelling Roma as constituents of the individual state; or 2) viewing the Roma as a cross-cultural entity, a transnational people spread across the world. Roma activists have been working for decades to solve problems at the local level, in terms of the first avenue. The idea of the second avenue, the Roma as transnational people, still exists mostly as a figure of the imagination, an unrealized project; and yet most of the legal assumptions of the European Union come out of it. As well, that idea prefigured the 19th Century’s version of a pan-national Gypsy music.

NATIONALISM IN MUSICS OF NON-NATION-STATE PEOPLES — THE CZECH EXAMPLE

Music scholars have described and analyzed “musical nationalism” as emerging during the 19th Century, generally viewing such national movements as offshoots of “romanticism.” In this section I review briefly the more-or-less “conventional” account of the emergence of Czech national music which, (unlike the example of emergence of Hungarian national music) has not been involved in controversy concerning the ‘authenticity’ of its origins or performance, and has been linked with the biographies of Bedřich Smetana (1824-1884), Antonin Dvořák (1841-1904), Leoš Janáček (1884-1928), Josef Suk (1874-1935), and Bohuslav Martinů (1890-1959). All were born in Czech lands (Bohemia, Moravia).

Bedřich Smetana is widely recognized as the founder of Czech national music, and his works are steeped in the folk songs, dances, and legends of his native Bohemia. But until 1862 Bohemia was under Austrian domination: German was the official language in Prague's schools and government bureaus and, in effect, was Smetana's own "first language." He was active in Czech liberation movements and participated in the revolutions of 1848. But the insurrection failed and. Smetana emigrated to Gothenburg, Sweden, in 1856 where he taught, conducted, and composed successfully. He returned to Prague only in 1862 after Austrian military defeats were followed by liberal concessions including establishment of Czech-language newspapers and Czech theatres for drama and opera.. He composed *The Bartered Bride*, his most famous opera, based on Bohemian legend and folk materials, for one of these theatres. And he remained in Prague, as a composer, pianist, teacher, conductor, and active advocate and promoter of Czech musical nationalism for the rest of his life [29].

Born in a village about 45 miles from Prague and viewed as following Smetana as the leading composer of Czech national music, Antonin Dvořák infused his music with Bohemian folk motifs and idioms. He left home at age 16 to study music in Prague, was able to earn a meager living for some years playing the viola in an opera orchestra under Smetana's direction, to pursue studies in an organ school, and to undertake some original compositions. Some of his works came to the attention of Brahms, who recommended Dvořák to his own publisher [30] and from this time his fame spread rapidly. He was invited several times to England where his works were successfully presented as Czech music even though he rarely quoted actual folk tunes. Beckerman raises important questions about the "Czechness" not only of Dvořák but of the rest of the composers of the Czech national music establishment as well: all were trained and steeped in the Austrian-German and the "New German School" traditions, in German mother-tongue or less-than-fully-fluent in the Czech language, all "cosmopolitan," most of their lives spent in urban, rather than in traditionally-Czech-speaking rural settings, with significant parts of their adult lives spent away from the Czech lands and territories. Only Josef Suk spent his entire adult life in Central Bohemia and Prague.

In a widely-cited paper, Michael Beckerman [31] inquires: what makes 19th Century Czech music "Czech?" He considers music composed from 1850 onward by Czech-born and Czech-speaking composers identifying themselves with the Western European musical mainstream and cites examples of the composers' own insistence on their *Czech* identities and traditions. Beckerman examines the proposition that "Czechness" is composed of musical traits which can be objectively discerned, and finds: "there is in fact no single musical detail that can be shown to occur in Czech music and nowhere else." But, he continues, it is feasible to combine characteristic musical details with considerations of context and contextual motifs, e.g. assertions and pronouncements of Czech composers, to reveal the model of "Czechness" developed by Smetana and largely adopted by the others. He goes on to illustrate the employment of combinations of heroic themes, melodies, folk materials, and musical details (e.g. rhythmic organization that is a pre-fixed musical reflection of the Czech language) by composers who followed Smetana, suggesting a "folk ethos" that Beckerman denotes "Czech sensibility." The emerging prominence of the "*sensibility*" term in Beckerman's characterization of "Czechness" generally, and with reference to bipolar alternative elements and contexts (sacred vs. secular, urban vs. rural or pastoral), implies both recognition of, and ongoing negotiation with, "otherness" (in the sense employed by Bohlman and Durkheim as well as an

“existential dimension” of Czech nationalism and “Czechness” in music. Though the concept of “irony” is not invoked explicitly it would seem that the “dissolution of the barriers” between, and “coexistence” of, the bipolar opposites among elements, approaches, and styles mentioned must imply substantial measures of irony in thought and expression of Czechness. Accordingly, Michael Beckerman’s analysis of emergence of Czech national music and the sketch of the elements and features of Czechness in music portrays another example of ethno-existential irony in Western Art Music, in this case representing pre-sovereignty Czech ethos.

BLUES, RAGTIME, JAZZ: AFRICAN-AMERICAN MUSIC AS ULTIMATE ETHNO-EXISTENTIAL IRONY

We learn from Finkelstein [32] and others that the first forms of jazz were *ragtime* and *blues*, dating from the 1890-1910 decades. Ragtime was the more “educated” music: its creators were pianists, many with rudimentary musical instruction. A special expressive content of ragtime was its *wit*: a kind of ironic, playful musical laughter, full of rhythmic stops and starts, of shocks and surprises.” Though the origin of the *blues* is still obscure, it is emphatically a Negro creation.

An integral part of the blues is the special wit and humor, rising out of the contrast between statement and answer, between the unflagging beat and the speech-inflected freedom of melodic accents [...] in ragtime the wit is uppermost, providing the sparkling surface; in the blues, it is the lamenting song that takes over, while the wit becomes a constant brake or check on the outpouring of feeling. It is as if the expression of misery had always to be wrapped up in a note of irony or defiant refusal to succumb.

The fact that blue singers are frequently called “blues shouters,” and blues are called “moans” reflects what the music itself confirms: the close connection of the blues to a cry of the human voice. Finkelstein describes the emergence of Negro jazz in New Orleans, its “migration” northward to Chicago, New York, and nationwide, the copying, imitation, entrance, and sometimes-competition/sometimes-collaboration of white jazz musicians and jazz bands; and he describes the appropriation and adoption of jazz idioms and jazz motifs (and ragtime and blues idioms and motifs) by American composers of “classical” and theater musics and in Western Art Music generally and by citation of new (then post-World War II and Cold-War era) developments, personalities, and performers and ensembles in jazz. He concludes and summarizes:

Jazz is a special product of the American Negro people...in a society in which they are denied basic freedoms...embodies a defiance of hostile and oppressive forces, with its growth, forms, and textures shaped by a pathos and bitterness wrapped in a protective clothing of wit [...] If the American people have not yet in sufficient numbers demanded the eradication of racism from American life, the influence of jazz has nevertheless been to make [...] people conscious of the corrosion in social and cultural life brought by this undemocracy and inhumanity [...] jazz adds the reiteration of other truths about music... that music is a democratic art, not art of an ‘elite’[...] there are vast creative powers latent among the masses of people [...] that music can flower [...]

from a handful of folk motifs, granted that the musician himself has something real and heartfelt to say in response to life.

Though himself a very controversial political, academic, and literary figure, LeRoi Jones's book *Blues People* [33] was favourably received and is still regarded as the first examination of African-American-initiated jazz and blues musics within the American socio-political historiography and the first book on blues and jazz authored by an African-American. Writing at the height of the 1960s Civil Rights struggle in the United States, Jones became a militant "Black Power" advocate, converted to Islam and changed his name to Amiri Imamu Baraka. And in the book he develops and gives forceful expression of the view that original African-American music in the US has been consistently and systematically raided, corrupted, appropriated, and exploited by whites and by the white corporate music business. It is Jones's/Baraka's analysis of the origins, characteristics, and socio-political settings and meanings of the African-American musical idioms which interest us at this point.

We learn from Amiri Imamu Baraka, a.k.a LeRoi Jones, that *blues* is the "parent of all legitimate jazz." And, though it is not possible to say exactly how old blues is, it is a *native American music*, the product of the black man in America. He cites closeness of the *blues* to imitation of the human voice, the "functionality" of the music, its personal and social reference groundings: love, sex, tragedy, interpersonal relationships, death, travel, loneliness, work, the personal nature of blues-singing as originating in the Negro's "American experience" as distinct from African songs. "Primitive blues" was an almost conscious expression of the Negro's *individuality* and of his *separateness*. Ragtime and jazz emerged from the blues and are dependent upon blues for their existence in any degree of authenticity. The blues scale and "blue tonality" of jazz, the "blueing" of the notes, are probably transplanted survivals of African (non-diatonic) scales; and improvisation, another major facet of African music. Baraka (a.k.a. LeRoi Jones) goes on to review the growth and expansion of jazz, both African-American and white, and in relation to one another, through the mid-20th Century.

The acknowledgement in his monograph, *Music in a New Found Land*, by the prominent English musicologist, Wilfrid Mellers [34] of blues, ragtime, and jazz as Western Art Music has energized the recognition of African-American music and of its origins, composers, performers, and audiences variously around the world. Of the blues, Mellers cites their being intensely personal insofar as each man sings alone, of his own sorrow, they are also –even more than most folk art – impersonal in so far as each man's sorrow is a common lot.

Though the blues singer may protest against destiny, he is not usually angry, and seldom looks to heaven for relief. He sings to get the blues off his mind; the mere statement becomes therapeutic, an emotional liberation [...] so: tragic passion is tempered by ironic detachment. When the blues singer advises us not to notice him [...] we recognize that the detachment is part of the blues' honesty. Though the spirit wants to sing, it is nagged by the wearisome burden of keeping alive [...] a gambling song, but with the realization that life is itself a gamble.

Of special interest in our own exploration here is Mellers's various characterizations of African-American jazz items as: "tragic-ironic blues are among the

supreme achievements of jazz [...] owing their ‘universality’ to topical and local circumstance.”

Thus Wilfrid Mellers’s portrayals and analyses, and many of the terms he uses to describe the features, of African-American blues, ragtime, and jazz music, performers, and audiences, alongside those of Finkelstein and of Baraka, are consistent with the view of this music as an example, perhaps the “ultimate” example, of ethno-existential irony as musical ethos. The late 19th and 20th Century emergence, recognition, performance, and wide acceptance of African-American-origin Jazz as the quintessential American Art Music both in the United States and abroad, and the adoption and incorporation of Jazz elements and motives more broadly in Western Art Musics composed by prominent American figures (e.g. from Edward McDowell, Henry Gilbert, Louis Gottschalk, Scott Joplin, and Howard Swanson through George Gershwin, Aaron Copland, Leonard Bernstein, Duke Ellington, Philip Glass, and Steve Reich, and Wynton Marsalis) as well as by canonized European composers (e.g. from Johannes Brahms and Antonin Dvořák to Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel, Francis Poulenc, Darius Milhaud, Frederick Delius, Igor Stravinsky, Nadia Boulanger, Dmitri Shostakovich, Bohuslav Martinu, Kurt Weill, Paul Hindemith, and Ernst Krenek) highlight the connection between ethno-existential irony and Western Art Music. The same decades were witness to an explosion in the numbers of African-American composers and performers directly trained, involved, and employed in Western Art Music, possibly also reflecting this connection.

CONCLUSION: ETHNO-EXISTENTIAL IRONY AS TOPIC IN WESTERN ART MUSIC

The Sheinberg concepts of “Jewish existential irony as musical ethos” are more general than is suggested by the author. I have found Sheinberg’s extensive references to Mikhail Bakhtin in her book [35] illuminating, and perhaps even understated, with reference to the bearing of “heterglossia” and “hybrid utterances” on issues of identity. She brings our attention to the centrality and generality of “otherness” and “outsider” concepts, connected to the “author and hero” and to the “transgression” themes in Bakhtin’s teachings [36]. On the other hand, Sheinberg mentions Theodor Adorno only with references to some of his observations on Gustav Mahler; but she makes no reference to more general musical issues raised in his writings. Adorno’s essays and books typically present bipolarities of art works, of musics [37], of composers, of audiences, but without serious attention to processes of interaction or negotiation between them. Generally Adorno strongly favors and advocates one pole, disfavors and derogates the other, with consideration of relationships between poles very restricted. By contrast, Adorno’s friend and intellectual correspondent, Walter Benjamin was famously taken up with otherness and its addressing and negotiation. These interests and tendencies appear prominently in, for example, portrayal of the *flâneur* in Benjamin’s *Paris Arcades Project* [38] and variously in his essays and especially, in “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” collected and posthumously published [39]. Benjamin’s theory of mass art argues for its liberating tendencies. Thus the questions, discussion, and speculation initially specific to “ethno-existential irony” in musics of “minority,” or “other” or “outsider” identity-population groups, extend to arts and culture more generally.

Though choosing their own approaches, scholars of respectively Jewish, Gypsy, Czech, and African-American “nationless peoples” musical idioms have found and identified textual and musical indexes and signifiers of “otherness” and “negotiation with otherness.” As I understand them, they show i) the generality of “ethno-existential irony” in musics of “minority,” or designated “other” or “outsider” identity-population groups, and ii) that ethno-existential irony is an “indexical topic,” in the sense of Prof. Monelle [40], and should be included in the list recognized of “topics” in Western Art Music. The latter seems likely to offer an important linkage to Prof. Tarasti’s emerging *Existential Semiotics* theory [41], itself energized in no small measure by concepts of “otherness,” “selfness,” “alterity,” and “hybridity,” of place and ethnicity, and, at least implicitly, by “ethno-existential irony.” The sociological challenge and — I think — the civic and moral challenges to address these issues in our increasingly-kaleidoscopic socio-demographic settings seem to me no less than those of, or even to go somewhat beyond those of, structural musicology or deconstructive critique.

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Musical Genre as Topos: Italian Opera in Italian Auteur Cinema of the 1960s

Matteo Giuggioli, *Université François Rabelais – Centre d'Études Supérieures de la Renaissance, FR*

ABSTRACT

*In the aftermath of the Second World War, opera and particularly nineteenth-century Italian opera, often referred to under the term “melodramma”, is frequently used in film. Even besides the genre of “opera film”, references to melodramma can be found both in popular genres and in auteur cinema. In this connection, almost all Italian directors, starting from Visconti, reveal a deep knowledge of opera, so that references to it permeate the syntactic and semantic structure of their films. The encounter between auteur cinema and Italian opera constitutes interpretative and representational horizons for dealing with central themes in Italian post-war culture, whether connected to the construction and transmission of the historical memory of the nation (Risorgimento, Fascism, the Resistance, the Reconstruction era, the “economic miracle”, and so on) or the evolution of taste and customs. As a cinematic topos, opera offers a critical tool that is highly effective for investigating existential/sentimental aspects as well as political implications. In this context my paper will take into consideration the references to Italian opera in Pietro Germi’s *Divorce, Italian Style* (1961) trying to highlight their deep impact on levels of meaning of the audiovisual discourse.*

INTRODUCTION: OPERA AS AUDIOVISUAL TOPOS

Italian culture is strongly linked to opera, in particular to 19th century opera. This artistic genre has accompanied the rise of modern Italy as a nation, being a sort of ideal soundtrack for the Risorgimento. During this historical period, characterized by the heroism of young patriots, by the personal appeal of political leaders and ideologists, by great military deeds, Italy from a mosaic of little States became a single unitary State. Composers of music, above all operatic composers – chiefly Giuseppe Verdi – contributed, probably more than other artists, or indeed great writers, for example Alessandro Manzoni or Ippolito Nievo, to building a national identity. They started to be considered soon, by the collective imagination, as fathers for the country.

Such assertions, apparently incontrovertible so deeply are they rooted in the common sense, are actually problematic. The historiographical debate has re-opened the problem of the Italian Risorgimento, to separate historical facts from anecdotes, legends and utopias and to highlight contradictions that characterize it as a historical and cultural process [1] [2]. Also on Risorgimental Verdi the discussion has been opened and different ideas have arisen. There are supporters of a strong involvement of Verdi in Risorgimental events. They consider the composer and the political references present in a lot of his

early operas as catalysts of dissent for Italian patriots [3]. On the other hand, the orientation is to limit the direct influence and involvement of Verdi and his operas in politics and in the rebellious acts [4] [5]. This interpretive line postulates that it is first of all in the framework of the history of their own genre that Verdian operas should be considered. Only later a connection between operas and socio-historical facts contemporary to their creation should be supposed and eventually demonstrated. Research conducted from this perspective have encouraged a redefinition of the matter of Risorgimental Verdi, concluding that bringing out of the patriotic element of his early operas started only around the Italian unification. At that time the process of establishing a mythology of the recent glorious historical events was only beginning [6].

The correspondence between opera and Italian Risorgimento history, as well as between opera and national Italian identity, has been widely acknowledged by cinema [7], not only by Italian cinema. However, Italian cinema made a substantial contribution to the adoption of these ideas in the cultural collective imagination of Italy. In a certain way it has continued the same line of myth-creating which started around the national unification.

In the aftermath of the Second World War these correspondences were still active in Italian cinema. They were soon radicalized, taking two opposite directions. On one hand popular and directly opera-linked genres like the film opera or the *musicarello* offer a simplified and highly stereotyped version. On the other hand the auteur cinema, like the *commedia all'italiana*, uses them as critical devices, useful for reflecting on Italian history, on contemporary politics, on Italian customs and behaviour, and on their origins.

This paper focuses on the contact between the latter kind of Italian cinema and opera of the 19th century, in order to show how still in cinematic output of the 1960s Italian opera worked as a deep generator of expressive forms and meanings on the affective, ethical and political planes. We are interested here in identifying the persistence of a widespread culture of opera in Italian cinema of that time. If this persistence surely strengthens both the correspondences between opera and Risorgimento history and opera and national Italian identity, it ultimately places them on the surface of the cinematic representation, establishing itself instead as a critical tool to interrogate them [8]. This persistence is able indeed to influence in depth both the structural and thematic levels of films. Operatic culture can have an effect on the creation of characters, on the dramaturgy and narrative profile of film. Obviously it can activate a web of meanings through the aural dimension of film.

The semiotic category of audiovisual *topos* seems appropriate to describe this phenomenon. Here we will refer to it in generative terms. Our goal is not the classification of operatic culture traces, considering the degree of closeness between films and operas or other reasons of historical continuity for forms or formulas of the representation between cinema and opera. Instead, analysing a case study we will examine the dialogue among “intermedial genres”¹ that these traces are able to activate within the films, paying attention to its various structural results and to their semantic projection. Analysis will follow all three research directions pointed out by Alessandro Cecchi in his paper included in this session:

¹ Artistic genres, like sound film and opera, characterized by what Werner Wolf calls an “overt intermediality”. See Wolf [9].

Investigating how pre-existing musical topoi are re-used in cinema and other audiovisual art-forms through “remediation”; exploring the practical uses of musical topoi in the composition and improvisation of film music; focusing the attention on “audiovisual topoi” viewed as recurring structures exhibiting the correlation to a semantic field through the moving images, where sound or music can play a significant role [10].

It will allow us to observe the intermediality between film and opera, not only in reference to functional aspects or in order to establish a categorization.² More crucially, intermediality will be considered as a process that enables the work of art in which the different media – or intermedial genres, as in this case – converge, to elaborate a critical discourse in testifying the real and in giving form to ethical, political, existential issues [12].

A CASE STUDY: DIVORCE, ITALIAN STYLE

The *commedia all'italiana* and the Italian Opera

The film we are going to analyse is *Divorce, Italian Style* (original title: *Divorzio all'italiana*), of 1961, directed by Pietro Germi, one of the masterpieces of the *commedia all'italiana*³. The film can be quite legitimately referred to the category of auteur cinema, both because Germi is a recognised protagonist of Italian cinema and on account of the high quality of the film⁴.

The questions of identifying the *commedia all'italiana* as a genre and whether it has more in common with auteur cinema or popular cinema are destined to remain unresolved in the history of the cinema, and are ultimately false problems. What really counts is to arrive at a full understanding of the importance of the *commedia all'italiana* as an artistic, cultural and social phenomenon:

The *commedia all'italiana* placed in the spotlight the character, the tics, the dilemmas and the idiosyncrasies of a whole nation; it made entertainment of their weaknesses, their concealed acts of cowardice, the local microculture. Everyday life became comic excess, the spectacle of dissembled indigence, an epic of denial and renunciation [17].

Divorce, Italian Style fits perfectly with this description given by Maurizio Grande. Based on the phenomenon of the honour crime, the film stands as a satirical denunciation of the legislation (enshrined in the infamous article 587 of the Italian penal code) which still in the early sixties exempted the honour crime, i.e. homicide committed to avenge a serious personal affront, from penal consequences in Italy. It usually involved the killing of the wife or husband, possibly together with her or his lover, for infidelity. Germi's film, set not surprisingly in Sicily, was also a denunciation of a society that not only tolerated but defended this law.

Merely from the film's subject it is not difficult to understand in just what a complex and tortuous process of signification the opera *topos* was to find itself. Nonetheless, the contact between opera and cinema does not have very different

² On intermediality between cinema and opera see Citron [11].

³ For an overview on the *commedia all'italiana* see D'Amico [13].

⁴ On Germi's biography and films see Sesti [14]. On *Divorce, Italian Style* see Giacobelli [15] and Grande [16].

outcomes even in films which the subject is less macabre. One can think of *My Friends* (*Amici miei*), 1975, directed by Mario Monicelli but also originally conceived by Germi, who died before he was able to start shooting. In this film there is an explicit and reiterated allusion to opera in the first bars of the Cantabile “Bella figlia dell'amore” from the third act Quartet in *Rigoletto*, which the group of friends who are the film's protagonists sing as their rallying cry every time they are setting off one of their new escapades.

At a first level of analysis we can readily recognise a dual identification: of the libertine, roguish but also aggressive attitude of the Duca di Mantova – the character who in the opera leads off the Cantabile making blatant advances to Maddalena – with the analogous spirit that animates the group of Tuscan adventurers, and thus with one of the typical traits of the Italian male. On closer inspection, however, the reference to opera touches on a more complex vein of meaning, paving the way for a deeper and more wide-ranging confrontation between the film and Verdi's celebrated opera. If the buccaneering, cynical but also passionate spirit of the protagonists is reflected in the words and musical motifs of the Duca di Mantova, the film's narrative and ultimate meaning, imbued with an absolute pessimism concerning the human condition, are reflected in the tragic aspect of *Rigoletto*. The bitter pessimism that emerges in the film when it becomes clear that the brazen attitude of the protagonists can never win out over the hardships of life and time's destructive force has a sinister and sublime echo in the lugubrious plot of Verdi's opera, dominated by moral abjection and the looming presence of death.

These considerations bring us back to the central issue we are confronting in the analysis of *Divorce, Italian Style*: in post-war Italian auteur cinema, as in the *commedia all'italiana*, references to opera are hardly ever presented as a prestigious hallmark of everything Italian, albeit neutralised, meaning a stereotype of how Italy tended to be represented in literature or the cinema. For Germi's generation of directors, and also for the next generation, who were operating in a culture that was still pervaded with the spirit of the *melodramma*, opera was raw material with which to investigate even the most obscure aspects of the immature, contradictory and elusive national identity.

Remediating “Una furtiva lagrima”

The plot of *Divorce, Italian Style* can be summarised as follows: in the imaginary Sicilian town of Agramonte Baron Ferdinando Cefalù, known as Fefè (Marcello Mastroianni), has been married for twelve years to the rather exasperating Rosalia, a woman who is no longer a beauty but is still very much in love with him. He, meanwhile, has fallen for a cousin of his, the sixteen-year-old Angela (Stefania Sandrelli). Since divorce did not exist, the only way open to Fefè to escape from the clutches of Rosalia is the honour crime. He desperately sets out about finding a lover for this wife so that he can surprise them together, kill them, and take advantage of the legal recognition of the honour motive and, once he has served a brief spell in prison, will finally be able to marry his beloved. He does not succeed in finding a lover, but fate gives him a hand. Following a row with her husband Rosalia, feeling abandoned, turns to Carmelo Patanè for consolation, an old flame of hers thought to have died during the war but who had returned home. On hearing of this old liaison Fefè favoured their meetings and spied on the potential adulterers. Although he did not seem able to pluck up the courage to carry out the murder, in the end he did so and married his cousin.

Opera figures in the film above all with the sequence set in the theatre of Agramonte [0:36:26-0:37:44]. Seated in a box at a performance of Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*, Fefè, who has just had the idea of the honour crime, is scrutinising the assembled townsfolk through his opera glasses, looking for the man who could become his wife's lover and set the plan in motion. Rosalia is in the box at her husband's side but pays no attention to what he is doing, being totally absorbed by the performance: on stage Nemorino is singing the celebrated *romanza* "Una furtiva lagrima".

It is at this point that the *topos* of opera emerges most patently in the film, producing a multiple effect. On the structural level Germi uses it to realise his own version of what had become a paradigmatic sequence in Italian post-war cinema: a scene set in the opera house during a performance. There are examples in a number of films, ranging from Luchino Visconti's *Senso* to *Before the Revolution (Prima della rivoluzione)* by Bernardo Bertolucci, just to name the two most significant examples [18]. While this narrative motif is introduced by particular circumstances, there is always one constant feature producing some standard sense elements, namely the appearance, in a circumscribed, shared space, of many of the characters already encountered in the film that the filmgoers are expected to recognise. Meeting up in a public space, far from their customary environments (work, family, institutional) and in a role, that of spectators, which differs from their usual functions, they engage in a social ritual, and the characters involved in this ritual are immediately perceived as a community.

The theatre is a container for this community in which the possibilities of movement and individual initiative are constrained. In the suffocating atmosphere of the crowded theatre the film finds an effective image for the moral and intellectual narrow-mindedness of a non-descript community in the Italian provinces, capable of crushing the will of the individual who refuses to conform. In *Divorce, Italian Style* Fefè must comply with the logic of the honour crime, on pain of being publicly discredited and derided. Although he is deeply troubled by the deed confronting him, he will remain true to his duty, and even take a certain pleasure in fixing the details of his plan. The theatre is seen as the proper setting for this ambiguity. The theatricality of the opera performance is reflected in the attitude of the characters in the film. This mirroring of the stage and reality is another constant in sequences of Italian films set in the theatre. The formal construction of the sequence usually highlights the contiguity between the place (and world) of the fiction and that of the reality, suggesting that the two domains are in fact indistinguishable. This is usually achieved by camera movements or reverse shots between the stage and the rest of the theatre. In Germi's film the audience is the main focus, but a brief reverse shot between the singer who takes the part of Nemorino and the spectators is all it takes to bring out the connection between the physical places and, symbolically, the characters' existential states.

The audience participation in the performance ties in with one of the correspondences we have identified from the outset between opera and Italian national identity: the 'theatricality' which carries over onto the characters from the stage brings out one of the central and most characteristic elements in this identity. In the particular circumstances of each film there can be more specific motives for this theatricality. In *Divorce, Italian Style* it is linked to the criminal machinations planned and put into effect by Fefè. In theatricality there is always the grave implication of the suspension of ethical judgment, subordinated as it is to the dynamics of social interaction. In drawing up his plan Fefè too turns the distinction between good and evil on its head.

Operatic music is an essential element of the paradigm of Italian cinema seen in the sequences set in the theatre. By establishing a contact with the actions and thoughts of the characters in the film, it leads to new semantic possibilities. In the theatre sequence in *Divorce, Italian Style*, the *romanza* sung by Nemorino clashes with Fefè's attitude: the solicitude shown by the latter to his wife is only a matter of appearances when we know that he has plotted to do away with her and is already putting this plan into action. The audiovisual construction gives a sarcastic emphasis to this clash, isolating the two elements – Fefè's thought process and Nemorino's lyricism – in the film's sound space, and sets up a paradoxical rhythmic and formal correspondence between the two. Just when, on stage, Nemorino bursts out with his exclamation "M'ama, lo vedo" [She loves me, I can see], finally making explicit what had up to this point only the timid sensation of Adina's love, revealed to him by that "furtive tear", Fefè's search seems to be over, since he believes he has found the right lover for Rosalia. In fact this choice immediately proves misguided; because the man in question is not interested, and may indeed be physically incapable of an amorous relationship with a woman (Germi's caustic irony merely betrays an allusion to impotence, if not indeed evisceration).

This kind of remediation of an operatic excerpt (both music and performance) from *L'Elisir d'amore* in *Divorce, Italian Style* conforms perfectly to Germi's poetical approach, maintaining a constant equilibrium among hard-bitten irony, cynicism and impassioned lyricism. If the relationship between the music and Fefè's thought process highlights the former aspect, the passionate involvement of Rosalia and the rest of the audience in the performance is a direct reflection of the latter. Besides, Fefè himself, as a member of Agramonte society, contained and metaphorically represented in the opera house, cannot altogether avoid being a participant in the collective sentiment. And the film, in showing him torn between authentic amorous passion, the false and grotesque theatrical transfiguration of that passion, and his obstinate pursuit of his criminal designs, highlights the character's oscillation between the affective and existential poles.

There is an analogously ambivalence in the encounter of the two genres film and opera. Whenever allusions to the world of opera occur in the film, whether in the theatre sequence or on other occasions, the operatic references have an effect on the overall expressive 'intonation'. Since *Divorce, Italian Style* is a comedy, it appears perfectly appropriate that the theatre sequence should feature an *opera buffa*. However, this is only the most superficial aspect of the dialogue between genres. *L'elisir d'amore* is indeed an *opera buffa*, but one which allows plenty of scope for the pathetic element, given its fullest rein in Nemorino's *romanza* "Una furtiva lagrima". This gives the opera more in common with the *semiserio* genre in which the comic, elegiac, sentimental and tragic elements confront one another without ruling each other out, forming an expressive model which is quite peculiar in the Italian operatic tradition.

Surely it is more appropriate to consider the contact between the genres of film and opera in the following terms: just as in an *opera semiseria*, in this film the comic, grotesque and tragic components (the film ends with a double murder, and death, whether violent or not, impinges at various moments in the film) coexist. Showing admirable authorial command, Germi insists repeatedly on this problematic coexistence of genre elements in order to evoke various levels of meaning, and in particular to make keen satirical comments on certain absurd conventions, such as the honour crime, which are upheld by Italian society, and also to highlight the problem of how the Italian national identity can be represented. At the same time, alongside these polemical intentions the director

engages in a no less tenacious expressive quest to give a convincing form to the supreme passions, and primarily love, through audiovisual resources, and the genre of opera proves to be instrumental and irreplaceable on both counts.

Operatic Echoes

As we have mentioned, there are other allusions to opera in the film, less direct than the excerpt of Donizetti but no less eloquent, and these bear out this impression. Accompanying the opening credits we hear, as in the typical *pot-pourri* overture to a 19th century opera, the film's two main musical themes. The sound track is the work of Carlo Rustichelli, a composer who was very active in Italian cinema in those years [19].

The first theme [0:00:15-0:00:56] comes from *Canto d'amore*, a popular song in Sicilian dialect which throughout the film accompanies above all the love story between Fefè and his cousin Angela. The song immediately calls to mind "O Lola ch'hai di latti la cammisa", the *Siciliana* heard in the first scene of Pietro Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana*. The latter operatic song is sung by Turiddu and speaks of his love for Lola. It is an adulterous love and thus full of danger, as we sense in Turiddu's words "e nun me mpuorta si ce muoru accisu..." [and it's nothing to me if I die a violent death...]. Turiddu does in fact perish in a duel with Compare Alfio, Lola's husband. Rustichelli's *Canto d'amore* recalls Mascagni's song both in the use of dialect and, in musical terms, in the melodic structure and instrumental timbre where plucked instruments predominate (mandolins in *Canto d'amore*, harp in the *Siciliana*). Even more significant is the structural analogy in the collocation of the two pieces in the film and the opera. The film begins with *Canto d'amore*, just as, after an instrumental prelude, the *Siciliana* marks the beginning of the action in *Cavalleria*. In both film and opera this collocation makes the piece of music the first element in establishing the setting: Sicily, with its spirit and dynamics of passion and society, is represented first and foremost through the musical filter. Music serves as the key to the expressive values and meanings of the representation. This status, which once again can be seen as paradigmatic, holds good in both the opera and the film.

The first reference for the second main theme [0:00:56-0:01:40] of *Divorce, Italian Style* was certainly the 'environmental' one to the Italian *banda*, and in particular to the ensembles of that kind from Southern Italy. However, the theme was also clearly inspired by the genre of opera. In this case we can look for the model in the operas of Verdi: the melodic structure is Verdian, and so is the orchestral colouring. The peremptory opening attack features dramatic *tutti* chords followed by a mournful cantabile phrase in the low woodwinds, with a characteristic accompaniment on brass instruments. These Verdian overtones in Rustichelli's melody seem to evoke an opening like that of the "Miserere" from Part Four of *Il Trovatore*. And there could hardly be a more fitting allusion for the melody in the film, entitled *Marcia funebre*, than this Part Four of *Il Trovatore* which Verdi himself entitled *Il supplizio* [The torment].

This second theme, which also appears in the opening credits, recurs several times during the film, as if to underline the painful aspects of the story or highlight, by contrast, certain grotesque developments that mirror the moments when the deviant conceptions of moral norms on the part of Italian, and particularly Sicilian, society come to the fore.

The use of this theme towards the end of the film in the sequence of the dual murder of Rosalia and her lover Carmelo Patanè [1:32:59-1:34:24] is extremely significant. As the two opening chords ring out we see a deranged Fefè arriving on the scene of the

assignment of the two lovers, indicated to him by the local Mafia boss Don Ciccio Matara. But while he is looking for the adulterous pair – and his state of agitation, like the suspense, is underlined by the tremolo in the strings which dilates the melody of the funeral march – the two lovers are surprised, as is Fefè himself and the filmgoer, by gun shots. Immacolata, Carmelo's cheated wife, was the first to arrive on the scene and has killed her husband. Fefè is even closer to taking leave of his senses but nonetheless he finally manages to kill Rosalia. Throughout the second part of the sequence, from the meeting of Fefè and Immacolata to the murder of Rosalia, the cantabile phrase of Rustichelli's *Marcia funebre* is reiterated repeatedly. This sequence in fact constitutes a compendium of all the film's expressive registers: comic – in the appearance and bizarre, alienated behaviour of Fefè; sentimental – the lovers' idyll; and tragic – in the figure and bearing of Immacolata, as well as in the murderous acts. Germi emphasises the contrast above all between the stunned, helpless attitude of Fefè and the tragic moral rigor of Immacolata. The director's aim seems to be to condemn the practice of the honour crime once and for all by ridiculing it in the attitudes, contrasting but equally insincere and theatrical, of Fefè and Immacolata.

It is the music that has to ensure that, in the grotesque *dénouement*, the plausibility of the representation in terms of the passions, ethics and the existential does not definitively break down. The under-stated and moderately solemn character of the theme gives a concrete expressiveness to a scenario of passions and thought processes which is more true to life than what is shown in the images or revealed in the dialogue, for it is not disfigured by the ruthless and absurd rules of an iniquitous social practice. In this character, clearly inspired by Verdi, there is room for the estranged intimacy and humanity of the characters in the drama. Beneath the apparent affinities, which are in fact deceptive, such as that between the music and a national or local Italian identity, the underlying culture of the opera genre provides, in *Divorce, Italian Style*; a structural framework for the representation and an essential, meaningful perspective. Just as in 19th century opera, in this film we are confronted with the impossibility of representing in a satisfactory manner the social and political dynamics of Italian society unless one is willing to go into the intimate contradictions of the individual situations. Operatic music, or music that is inspired by opera, makes a decisive contribution to the expression of this flawed intimacy in the film, which cannot lay claim to a single, all-redeeming solution to its condition but must confront the contrasts of its inherent passions.

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Many Ways of Being Young: The Topical Role of *Cantautori* in Italian Cinema of the 1960s

Alessandro Bratus, PhD, Università di Pavia, IT

ABSTRACT

As recent researches have shown, the phenomenon of *cantautori* marked a particular phase in the evolution of Italian popular music, as a collective label whose origin has been grounded in its opposition to both the 'old' melodic tradition epitomized by the Sanremo Festival and to the 'new', 'shouter' styles of the late 1950s derived from early Anglo-American rock'n'roll. Especially during the 1970s, *cantautori* gained an aesthetic primacy based on rhetorical, musical, and behavioral features centered on individual expression and authenticity. The paper explores how their image construction was first established in film featuring singer-songwriters on screen during the previous decade, forecasting some of the traits later recognized as typical of these artists. The audiovisual strategies by which their own, unique personality was visually depicted are highlighted, whether in auteur films such as *La cuccagna* (L. Salce, 1962) or *La vita agra* (C. Lizzani, 1964), or in popular productions, such as *Urlatori alla sbarra* (L. Fulci, 1960), *Questi pazzi, pazzi italiani* (T. Piacentini, 1965), or *Quando dico che ti amo* (G. Bianchi, 1967).

IMAGE CONSTRUCTION OF THE FIRST GENERATION OF CANTAUTORI

One of the few points in common between the many academic and journalistic contributions regarding the phenomenon of Italian *cantautori* (a term that could be loosely translated as singer-songwriter)¹ is their extremely flexible characterization in terms of musical choices and stylistic reference. Actually it is difficult to inscribe them in a 'genre' marked off by a well-defined group of normative issues (or rules, as Franco Fabbri would call them [1]), but their collective identification can be best understood as a "strategy of cultural classification [...] put forward by a network of cultural entrepreneurs, intellectuals, and artists who defined themselves in opposition to the traditional Italian song world epitomized by the Festival of Sanremo" [2]. On the one hand, the emphasis put on the development of different distinctive authorial voices in contrast with the contemporary Italian mainstream underlines the contradiction of artists who prize individuality and uniqueness, but marketed and distributed by the industrial record companies, thus forced

¹ Nevertheless, throughout this text I choose to use the Italian word to stress its local significance and specificity.

under a serial logic constraining their classification under some sort of collective ‘label’ [3]. On the other hand, moving from normative to a practice-based conception and thinking of genres as “socially constructed organizing principles” [4] with the capacity of connect many aspects of the musical life [5] would help in linking an heterogeneous set of practices and a group of artists whose only shared quality is defined by their double role as author of music and lyrics and as performers of their own songs.

Preceded by prototypical figures like those of Armando Gill, Odoardo Spadaro, Domenico Modugno, Gianni Meccia (who is the very author for whom the word *cantautore* was invented in the early 1960s) [6], *cantautori* achieved their maximum popularity during the 1970s, when a series of aesthetical, cultural, economic and industrial factors combined to maximize their impact on Italian record market at an unprecedented level [7] [8]. As Santoro has convincingly demonstrated, the huge success with a juvenile audience of *cantautori* was the consequence of what could be defined a ‘cultural trauma’ centered on the dramatic suicide of Luigi Tenco in 1967, before the final night of that year’s Sanremo Festival [9] [10].² This event led in the following years to a process of ‘consecration’, distinction and collective identification regarding the figure of *cantautore* in the public sphere in Italy [12] [13], culminating in the foundation in 1972 of a professional association - the Club Tenco - which organized its own annual award and festival, stressing above all the poetic quality of the lyrics and their commitment to realistic themes, even social and political.

On the one hand, the acknowledgment and promotion of this category as distinct from the rest of Italian popular music would result in the widespread success of a series of highly skilled exponents during the 1970s, such as Francesco Guccini, Lucio Dalla,³ Francesco De Gregori, and Antonello Venditti. On the other hand some specific aspects concerning the image-building through cinema of the first generation of *cantautori* tends to go completely unnoticed (in addition to Tenco, we can add the names of Umberto Bindi, Sergio Endrigo, Fabrizio De André, Gino Paoli, Enzo Jannacci), perhaps also due to a retrospective narration reflecting the increasing politicization within Italian society in the later decade.⁴ But the term itself and its origin betray its inter-medial connotation, for at least two reasons: because it was modeled on the expression *auteur cinema* [16], and because it was put into circulation following a carefully planned strategy of marketing placement, carried on not only in the world of recorded popular music but also through the press as well as on audiovisual media. The aim of my paper is to underline how their participation, as actors and performers, in popular and art films of the 1960s contributes to establish some of the overall features of the character of *cantautore*, as it would be later

² The definition of ‘cultural trauma’ is taken from the writings of Jeffrey C. Alexander as a socio-cultural process resulting from “[...] the acute discomfort entering into the collectivity’s sense of its own identity. Collectives actors ‘decide’ to represent social pain as a fundamental threat to their sense of who they are, where they came from, and where they want to go” [11].

³ Although both Francesco Guccini and Lucio Dalla were well active in the 1960s already, it was only in the 1970s that they gained recognition on a national scale. Guccini had his first success with the album *Radici* in 1972, although debuted as author and singer in 1967. Dalla who began his career as a jazz singer as early as in 1961, achieved some success only after his participation in 1971 Sanremo Festival with the song *4/3/1943*. Thanks to his unconventional image and explosive personality, between 1965 and 1969 he was also involved in at least nine films as a performer or as an actor, which made his career unique and deserve special consideration in future studies on this subject [14].

⁴ Even in a text allegedly devoted to the same topic, such as Bassetti’s *Sapore di sala*, these appearances are not considered at all, in a vision of the relationship between *cantautori* and cinema exclusively focused on their activity as composers for soundtrack or authors of title-theme songs [15].

understood, as well as to empower that “spiral of signification” [17] that would fix the meaning of the word in the following years. In this decade, when the definition was forming and the mainstream media system was still a viable option for promoting *cantautori* – a situation that was to end after 1968 [18] [19] – we can observe how these musicians struggled to give voice to a different way of expressing their condition as young people. As a case study, cinema offers a good point of view, although limited to only one media, because in the 1960s it retains its role to give expression to collective narrations about youth and generational gap, before television gradually replaced it in the course of the 1970s.

UMBERTO BINDI: THE MAN AT THE PIANO

Classically trained as a composer and pianist, Umberto Bindi debuted in the early 1960s with songs performed by himself and other singers (*Il nostro concerto*, *Arrivederci*, *Il mio mondo*), but soon his popularity declined, mainly as a consequence of his homosexuality which discomforted the Italian media. He made appearances in two films, *Urlatori alla sbarra* (L. Fulci, 1960) and *Rocco e le sorelle* (G. Simonelli, 1961), proposing a consistent image in both. In the first film he plays the role of Agonia (Agony), a sickly, hypochondriac character obsessed by medicines, who is part of the teddy-boys gang led by Mina and Adriano Celentano. His physical features and performative behavior make him stand out sharply from the rest of the group, looking like the definitive nerd: he is thin whereas the others are tall and well-set, he does not dance, he caresses and holds hands with his girl (the daughter of the Public Health Minister) instead of kissing her during an excursion in the woods (possibly alluding to his homosexuality), he wears thick horn-rimmed glasses, he plays the piano during the collective performances not in a Jerry Lee Lewis-esque manner (as Brunetta does accompanying Mina’s performance of *Vorrei sapere perchè*, starting at 32’) but remaining firmly seated on the stool. At 51’, when he sings the final part of *L’odio*, the image moves from Bindi repeating the word *l’odio* (hate) several times on dissonant piano chords to a detail of the saxophone player counterpointing the vocal line with an improvised melody. Zooming forward, the camera focuses on a couple in the background beginning to dance; then it cuts to a close-up on Agonia’s girlfriend immediately followed by a counter-shot on the singer’s face during his final highest note, while the words are saying *dopo l’amore c’è l’odio* (after love comes hate). In clear contrast to the other frenetic songs in the film, mainly devoted to dance, *L’odio* introduces a reflexive moment intended to frame the following dialogue between Joe il Rosso (Joe Sentieri) and Giulia (Elke Sommer), in which he complains about the future and his lacking perspectives of success. The musical features of the song, such as the slow tempo, complex harmony, instrumental composition of the group typical of jazz (piano, sax, double-bass, drums), and above all the strong reverb on the vocal track, putting the singer in the center of an ample, empty space, encourage introspection and self-analysis.

In Simonelli’s film *Rocco e le sorelle* Bindi sings one of his most popular songs, *Il nostro concerto*, playing the piano and wearing a formal black suit with bow tie. The audiovisual construction of this sequence alternates between lateral shooting of the group, close-up on the singer’s face, with his eyes constantly turned up staring metaphorically at the sky, and the reaction shots of the couple witnessing the performance. As in the previous example, this moment is a catalyst for the expression of deep feelings between the

two lovers, manifested first by both characters sighing while looking at the performance, and then by their decision to leave the club and go home. Again, the presence of the *cantautore* on screen with his ecstatic interpretation of a song – whose features are quite similar to those we have listed above – is the trigger for self-reflection and analysis of their existential situation. In doing this, the performance serves to push forward the plot and to accompany the moments when the most important decisions are taken, in a sort of dialogue between the song and the inner thoughts of different characters.

ENZO JANNACCI: MARGINALITY GAINS CENTER STAGE

The same role of a ‘conscience’ for other characters is played by Enzo Jannacci in *Quando dico che ti amo* (G. Bianchi, 1967), a *musicarello* (Italian musical comedy typical of the 1950s and the 1960s, usually titled after a song and starring its singer as the main character) featuring Tony Renis, one of the most famous teen idols of the 1960s. In this film the *cantautore* plays Ascanio, the protagonist’s best friend: they live together and he often covers up for the many mistakes Tony makes in his multiple love affairs. Jannacci’s image here parallels the overall traits we have seen in the previous paragraph, starting with the choice of formal dress with suit and tie, thick horn-rimmed glasses, his slightly built physical aspect, his shy and clumsy behavior with women. Also their musicianship is revealing, as well as their performative characterization: Ascanio’s instrument is the piano, in contrast with Tony, who is a guitarist and a singer. Besides making a few appearances as fake-percussionist with Tony in the club where he works – being himself an employee coming from the provincial city of Lodi, in the neighborhood of Milan –, awkwardly shaking a pair of maracas, Jannacci’s only performance is located in the private space of home and lasts for less than a minute. With his heavily accented voice he tries to sing a song about a homeless man (*El purtav i scarp del tennis*, he wore tennis shoes) intended as a love song for his would-be girlfriend Julia, abruptly interrupted by his friend making fun of him. This brief scene is obviously part of the comic characterization of Ascanio, but it is interesting to note how the two musicians are presented, opposing a “classic” instrument like the piano to the more “popular” guitar, provincial versus urban backgrounds, regular job versus artistic professional activity, platonic versus polygamous love.

The identification of the first term of these couples with the *cantautore* is consistent with what we see in another example regarding Jannacci, in *Questi pazzi, pazzi italiani* (T. Piacentini, 1965). The film is just a collection of proto-music videos with the intermission of comical sketches without any overall narrative thread, starring musicians as diverse as Lucio Dalla, Dino, Petula Clark, Luigi Tenco, Los Marcellos Ferial, Gianni Morandi, among others. Here Jannacci presents *L’Armando*, a comic ballad about the murder of a guy by his best friend; the lyrics are set in a police station, where the protagonist explains to an officer the harsh treatment he received from Armando from the beginning of their friendship and eventually half admits his guilt. Shot in an urban setting, the singer is at a table in the middle of a square with an older character and two policemen, drinking wine (his alibi is being at a tavern in the moment of murder) and singing them his story. His look and visual presentation, as well as his static behavior, recall the role of Ascanio in *Quando dico che ti amo*: he remains seated gesticulating all the time, in a frantic but repressed constant movement which, together with the heavy Lombard accent, contributes to the funny overtones of the sequence.

The themes of Jannacci's songs depict a marginal world of suburban areas, with ironic, paradoxical characters halfway between modernity and rural culture [20]. In his first appearance in a film, *La vita agra* (C. Lizzani, 1964) he already foreshadowed these features, as described by Borgna:

Esile, pallido, con scatti improvvisi da marionetta, la voce spezzata e la chitarra tenuta all'altezza del petto da sembrare un collarone alla Pierrot, interpretava una canzone assolutamente folle, quella che racconta la storia di uno che cerca un ombrello, "l'ombrello di suo fratello" [21].

Here he performs two songs accompanying him with the guitar, *L'ombrello di mio fratello* (36') and *Ti te se no* (54'): the first is a sort of nonsense rhyme based on puns and wordplay with satirical allusions to widespread Italian corruption, while the second, sung in Milanese dialect, recounts the daydreams of a proletarian when he is going downtown. The setting is Bar Jamaica, one of the favorite meeting points for left-wing intellectuals in the 1960s, located in the bohemian zone of the Brera Academy of Fine Arts in Milan. As in the previous examples, these are not formal staged performances: he appears singing in the center of a knot of people casually gathered around him. The audiovisual construction of these sequences, in which the main characters (Ugo Tognazzi, Anna Ralli) are often alternated with his performance, also tends to insert these songs as constituent parts of the discourse articulated by the broader narrative context of *La vita agra*, a bitter reflection on postwar Italian society [22]. With their mixture of apparent detachment and vernacular irony, Jannacci's performances seem to symbolise in sound the worst outcomes of the economic boom, when the fragility of the renewing affluence was unmistakable and the signs of a growing recession – which was to dog the mid- and late-1960s – were already foreseen.

LUIGI TENCO: IMAGE CONSTRUCTION BETWEEN REALITY AND LEGEND

The same ambivalent attitude towards the recent development of Italian society is a peculiar trademark of Luigi Tenco's production, if not the most gifted, perhaps the most influential figure in the latter definition of the *cantautore* in the cultural panorama of the late-1960s. As Pivato has written commenting on the relationship between his songs and contemporary historical events:

È, quella di Tenco, forse la più lucida testimonianza dell'incontro tra due mentalità opposte e distanti: quella del mondo rurale e quella della civiltà industriale, sullo sfondo di un'Italia che il boom economico sta proiettando sulla scena della modernità attraverso costi sociali e umani piuttosto elevati [23].

His stance is readily mirrored in the two films he collaborated on, and a brief analysis of his appearances can further deepen our understanding of his significance in Italian popular music not only as a songwriter, but also as a complex media personality. His participation in a short proto-music video in *Questo pazzo, pazzo mondo della canzone* (B. Corbucci - S. Grimaldi, 1965) shows some striking parallels with Jannacci's appearance discussed above. Even though the lyrics of *Io lo so già* are not comic at all,

dealing with the irreparable failure of communication between two lovers, all the other features of the visual presentation are quite similar, and even reiterate the same basic points, even though with different formal choices. The sequence is shot in a small town in inland Liguria, the region where Tenco was raised from the age of ten, emphasizing the closeness to his own biography. He looks neat and tidy, and the lyrics express distance from bourgeois conventions. Unlike in *L'Armando*, in which Jannacci seems unaware of the shooting and never looks directly at camera, here the cuts are determined by the macro-formal features and dramatic project of the song: during the verse the singer shows detachment, as if muttering the lyrics to himself, while in the chorus he gazes straight at the spectator and delivers the climactic part of the song with an intense expression intended to enhance the pathetic effect of the words and the musical structure, as to underline the sincerity of his feelings.

In *La cuccagna* (1962, L. Salce), Tenco's first cinematographic experience, he plays the role of Roberto, an 'angry young man' intolerant of any social restriction and disillusioned by the disappointments his girlfriend Rossella (Donatella Turri) encounters as she struggles to become an independent woman. Commenting on the film, Borgna wrote that he, Gino Paoli and his colleagues:⁵

[...] erano, in qualche modo, i "cantori" di una gioventù "amore e rabbia", provinciale e desolata in cui – forse – tutto era compiacimento: il dramma e il cinismo, la cultura e la disperazione; ma era comunque - in tutta la sua mediocrità e le sue contraddizioni - una generazione che voleva integrarsi. Una generazione che resisteva al boom economico e ai suoi modelli di consumo, di vita e di rapporti, costituendo una riserva di futuro che poi, negli anni del centro-sinistra e in quelli della crisi economica, avrebbe costituito la base dell'insubordinazione giovanile di massa. Di quella gioventù e di quella cultura Luigi Tenco costituiva un'immagine – anche fisica – esemplare [24].

When he received his call-up papers from the military authorities, Roberto resolves to commit suicide and indirectly explains his decision by performing a song by another *cantautore*, Fabrizio De André, the antiwar *La ballata dell'eroe*. Again, in this performative moment he is not formally singing in front of an audience, rather he is first at home alone and then with Rossella crying and moaning at him. Moreover, the choice of the song refers to another songwriter from Liguria and throughout the film his character shows only disillusion about the future and modernity. We can see how his off- and on-screen persona roughly coincide; his struggle to appear authentic despite the cinematographic mediation allows us to focus on Tenco's acute awareness of the media and of how they can be used for complex communicative purposes:

[...] his vision of contemporary culture and the role of canzone within that culture – and therefore his vision of his own role as a singer and songwriter – was completely bound up with an explicit program of cultural transformation that willingly accepted – both programmatically and realistically – the strategic exploitation of the tools of mass communication and mobilization, rather than scorning and combating them [25].⁶

⁵ Borgna here cited Paoli for his composition of the soundtrack for Bernardo Bertolucci's *Prima della rivoluzione*, thus the reference is also in this case to a work related to cinema and again stresses the close relationship between different media industries during this decade.

⁶ He pursued the same aspiration to an all-encompassing style in his compositional choices, through which he aspired to merge international influences coming from United States, United Kingdom and France with Italian popular and traditional (folk) music. Some of their biographers labeled this recurrent trend in his career an

THE CANTAUTORE AS A TOPICAL CONSTRUCTION

The recognition of a *topos* in audiovisual products differs radically from the same operation in instrumental music: here the connotative effect of the image connected with certain sounds establishes a complex of relationships that cannot be reduced to a series of semantic index, rather it has to be interpreted as a consistent system located in a particular historical and geographical context. If, as Monelle wrote, “The world is a [...] ‘semiosphere’, an interconnected universe of signs” [27] and the study of musical *topoi* is the reconstruction of the formation of meaning through sound within culture, history, and society, when it comes to contemporary phenomena like popular music and cinema the number of connections grows as a fractal, according to their composite nature of multimedia objects. Being “[...] commonplaces incorporated into musical discourses and recognizable by members of an interpretive community [...]” [28] *topoi* are also historically determined, and subjected to stratification over epochs and generations, thus accessible to large audiences and readable as thick aggregates of connotative instances around specific meanings [29].

This is particularly true in the case of *cantautori*, whose collective identification mostly relies on their position within Italian popular culture, as Santoro summarizes it “[...] the very meaning of *canzone d'autore* resides in its oppositional character: it casts apart a class of objects for their artistry - that is, their authenticity as symbolic expression of an artistic intention” [30].⁷ Although they contribute to a consistent image for the entire category, helping in the later definition of the genre as a whole, their differences as public personae played a crucial role in presenting the category of ‘youth’ as plural, not merely defined by polarization against the older generation.⁸ This deconstructed fixed clichés and meant young people were treated as individuals, rather than as a collective ‘monolithic’ age group uncritically aligned with lifestyles and trends coming from Anglo-American popular culture. This last image of youth as uncommitted, consumer-driven, indifferent and skeptical towards politics was in fact the subject of many popular films (such as the majority of the *musicarelli*) during the late-1950s and the mid-1960s [33], so it is very interesting that the *cantautori* made their appearance in this context and began to define their peculiar identity based on authenticity and self-reflection. At the same time, the very fact that they choose to develop themselves as complex media personae suggest that their oppositional character to both traditional and Anglo-American trends was more apparent than real. Instead, they seem to shape their collective identification using cinema as a sort of reagent to combine their fascination for the potential of intermedial marketing and the desire to differentiate themselves as plainly as possible from mainstream musicians and performers.

From what we have seen and discussed, I would like to end by drawing some partial and provisional conclusions that can also indicate the path for future research on the

operation of “expansion of consensus” in Gramscian terms, emphasizing his attempt to take advantage of the global assets of the cultural industry to spread progressive ideas and messages [26].

⁷ Also Jacopo Tomatis, in his historical reconstruction on the first formation and definition of the term *cantautore* in Italian popular press, recognizes authenticity as the key discriminating factor for an artist to be included within the genre [31].

⁸ From a purely musical point of view, also Franco Fabbri notes how one of the key innovation *cantautori* brought to Italian popular music was their ‘true voices’, even ‘out-of-tune’, but nevertheless very far from the pseudo-operatic voices of singers such as Claudio Villa, Luciano Tajoli, Arturo Testa [32].

audiovisual topical construction of this popular music genre, and lead to a slight revision of the historical position of *cantautori*:

1. The examples considered - as well as many others we passed over - demonstrate that cinema in the 1960s was still an 'acceptable' tool to extend the possibilities of success for an individual artist or for collective identification. The strategy employed by Bindi, Tenco, Jannacci - together with Gino Paoli, Sergio Endrigo, Giorgio Gaber - was to act as a sort of 'subterranean avant-garde' who played not against the hegemonic culture, but well within it [34];

2. These considerations redefine the significance of the *cantautori* not only as lyricists, musicians and performers, as the latter 'consecration' of the genre by institutions such as the Club Tenco would imply, but as overall media personae with a deep awareness of the mechanisms of image construction as a multi-layered process [35]. In this respect, they were an integral part of the overall project to build a renewed Italian popular culture following World War II, in which the elements coming from abroad were adapted to local conventions and cultural habits, in the attempt to bridge the gap with international trends and products;

3. The phenomenon of *cantautori* shows how meaning formation relies, above all in contemporary popular culture, on extensive negotiation constantly open to redefinition and stratification over time, as its stability and communicative effect are grounded in its steady expansion, rather than in the assignment of a definite referential value. In this case, beyond a plurality of individual features, the shared sense of authenticity at the core of the collective identification of *cantautori* can be summarized around three points, foreshadowing the tension between modernization and anti-modernization soon to explode in Italian society during the following decade [36]: the use of performance for the singer's intimate expression and to foster self-reflection in his audience, a non-conventional lifestyle, and the celebration of marginality against mainstream, periphery against center, folk music against rock and roll, local dialects against Italian, rural past against urban modernity.

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New Topoi Through Electroacoustic Sound: The Alienated Condition in Italian Auteur Cinema of the 1960s

Maurizio Corbella, PhD, University of Milan, IT

ABSTRACT

*We define “electroacoustic” a sound or set of sounds resulting from processes of electronic synthesis and/or manipulation. At the turn of 20th century such technological processes matched with certain “tropes” of western culture such as vibration, inscription and transmission that were subsequently developed in sonic arts. These tropes find a privileged field of application in the domain of audiovisual media, to the extent that some scholars place them at the origin of the theoretical and technical debate concerning the birth of American talkies. It is indeed the fictional cinema that since its beginnings contributed, through the means of electroacoustic sound, to the development of those tropes towards narrative configurations such as automation and perceptual alteration and eventually to the profound characterization of genres like science fiction and horror-thriller. In an ideal itinerary leading from Rouben Mamoulian’s *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1931) to Alfred Hitchcock’s *Spellbound* and Fred Wilcox’s *Forbidden Planet* (1956), the topical connotation of electroacoustic sound become well established in the American cinema. I argue that Italian auteur cinema of the 1960s rearticulated such topoi under new perspectives and through an approach to electroacoustic sound strongly mediated by the reception of contemporary avant-garde music. Drawing on two case studies—*The Red Desert* (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1964) and *The Seed of Man* (Marco Ferreri, 1969)—this paper analyzes how Italian auteur films used electroacoustic sound and music (in these cases pre-existent compositions) to give expression to the alienated condition of a generation facing dramatic disillusion after the post-war “economic miracle”. In such contexts, electronics are used not merely to produce uncanny effects but as processes of musical construction that challenge artistic creativity and expression, eventually representing tools of hermeneutical interpretations of the films themselves.*

NEW CONFIGURATION OF OLD TOPOI: ELECTROACOUSTIC SOUND AND ALIENATION

During an interview in 1963, Italian film director Gillo Pontecorvo gave a striking description of the profound cultural mutation that invested his generation in the period of the so-called Italian “economic miracle” (ca. 1958-1963).

We launch men into the cosmos, we discover the structure of DNA [. . .] and thus we come close to the possibility of transforming the human species, as well as animals and plants; cybernetics are about to develop machines which will be able to think as human beings. Hence science [. . .] starts to find itself in zones that until today have

been subjects of study and passion for magicians, mystics, alchemists and, of course, philosophers [1].¹

Italian auteur cinema of the 1960s mirrors the urgency of giving an account of those hybrid “zones” of intellectual reflection that polarize diverse fields of knowledge, namely the arts, science and technology. But cinema does not merely attempt to narrate this profound cultural change; rather it aims to redefine its own fundamentals through the new forces implied by this transformation. In this respect, Italian auteur cinema enjoyed a privileged relationship to contemporary artistic avant-gardes, for filmmakers could draw on them as tools to challenge established notions of narration, representation, montage, and so forth. In the arts, experimental music took on a crucial role for filmmakers in linking cinema to contemporary scientific speculation, as I will clarify later. For these reasons auteur cinema engages with music a problematic, yet fascinating, process of mediation and cross-fertilization.

If we had to choose a class of elements that constitutes the common ground on which cinema and musical avant-garde communicate, not necessarily pacifically, this would certainly be electroacoustic sound. By defining “electroacoustic” a sound or set of sounds resulting from processes of electronic synthesis, manipulation and/or montage, we can easily see that on one hand this milieu represents the main field of experimentation for musical avant-gardes worldwide in the period we are considering; and on the other hand, sound synthesis, manipulation and montage constitute the basic processes through which, since the 1920s, cinema has been questioning and creatively challenging ideas of realistic representation conveyed by recording. As James Lastra has shown, these notions are at the origin of the theoretical and technical debate concerning the birth of American talkies [2]; similarly, it is through new applications of these ideas, many coming from tape music and *music concrète*, that the notion of sound design was introduced into Hollywood practice during the 1970s [3].

At the same time, the discovery of electroacoustic sonorities matched “cultural units” (in Raymond Monelle’s terms [4]) that are profoundly characteristic of modernity and started to be rooted in the Western world in the late 18th century, and received a decisive enhancement in the late 19th century thanks to the introduction of recording technologies. Some would call them ‘archetypes’ of modernity, but since there is no room here to discuss such a complex issue, we can agree with the use of the more neutral tropes, among which Douglas Kahn identifies “vibration”, “inscription” and “transmission” [5].² Fictional (especially Hollywood) cinema crucially contributed to articulating these tropes within narrative structures, thus configuring a well-established set of audiovisual *topoi* that accumulated through long use. In an ideal itinerary stretching from Rouben Mamoulian’s *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1931) to Alfred Hitchcock’s *Spellbound* (1945) and Fred Wilcox’s *Forbidden Planet* (1956), electroacoustic sound shaped the *topoi* of automation, psychological instability, perceptual alteration and catastrophe, and characterised genres such as science-fiction, horror, and thrillers.

My paper aims to describe the rearticulation of these *topoi* in Italian auteur cinema as a means of interpreting the transitional socio-cultural scenario of the 1960s—which involved a dramatic switch from initial euphoria at the technological and industrial discoveries introduced in the still rural economy of post-war Italy, to an increasingly

¹ All translations from Italian are provided by the author, except when specified.

² Kahn refers to them also as “figures of sound” [6]; Lastra adds “simulation” to these tropes [7].

radical disillusion. The category of alienation, inherited from Marxian studies, was re-introduced into the European intellectual debate in the 1960s, acquiring new nuances from its application to consumerism theories. Among theoreticians we can cite Jean Baudrillard, whose *The System of Objects* (1966) [8] constitutes a major reference for my work. In Italy, beside important contributions by philosophers and semiotic scholars—notably Umberto Eco, whose mass culture studies were ground-breaking [9], and Theodor W. Adorno, who had a profound influence on the musical avant-garde—the topic of alienation was thoroughly discussed in film journals, which can be viewed in Rick Altman's terms as a crucial “pragmatic function” [10] in the cultural production of the 1960s. Different degrees of militancy and philosophical articulation notwithstanding, film critics were important filters between films and society, influencing both filmmakers and spectators; we get a glimpse of this in the character of the French critic in Fellini's *8 ½* (1963).

The reconfiguration of *topoi* conveyed by electroacoustic sound can partially be recognised in Italian cinema as a reaction to audiovisual clichés coming from abroad, especially from Hollywood. Such clichés were well acknowledged in Italy by the 1960s, as several critics and composers testified. “By now”, wrote musicologist Luigi Pestalozza in reviewing *On the Threshold of Space* by Robert D. Webb (1956), “we are aware of a musical sci-fi vocabulary: we would recognise with our eyes closed the presence on screen of a martian spaceship entering planet earth's orbit . . .” [11]. At the same time the homologation with clichés was interpreted as compliance with the American capitalist ideology:

When I hear that [experimentation with new sounds] is the new artistic and musical dimension of mankind, I wonder whether the alienation that can be so easily tracked within sci-fi movies and their music [. . .] does not consist in feeding the need of evasion, the anti-humanism, the mistrust in reality, the ‘titanic’ and irrational aspiration to cosmic dominion, or, worst, the amateurish enthusiasm for the discoveries of science [. . .] according to a cultural position that suffers from the dull aestheticisms of decadence [12].

The reaction can take on the form of irony, as is the case of filmmakers who work within the grids of film-genres. Mirroring the transition from American western to Italian spaghetti-western, horror filmmaker Mario Bava clearly had in mind Hollywood science-fiction productions of the 1950s when he directed his postmodern low-budgeted *Planet of the Vampires* (1965), which would eventually become a cult b-movie in the American VHS market during the 1980s. In terms of music, much like Louis and Bebe Barron's involvement in *Forbidden Planet*, Bava secured the collaboration of electronic music pioneer Gino Marinuzzi Jr., who had invented the first modular synthesiser in Rome [13]. Again, Marinuzzi collaborated with Alberto Lattuada for *The Mandrake* (1965), a film adaptation of Machiavelli's comedy, in which irony is deployed through the displacement of electronic music in a Renaissance setting— and Fellini's conception of “upside down science fiction” [14] for *Fellini-Satyricon* (1969) led in a similar direction. Furthermore, irony can be used in such a way as to question the borders of genres and approach topics that are more closely connected to sensitive issues of the economic miracle.³ In *Omicron*

³ At the same time, the proximity through which audiovisual *topoi* of technology are configured in science-fiction and industrial films—not necessarily involving irony—is another promising subject of research that is addressed in this panel by Alessandro Cecchi.

(1963), Ugo Gregoretti used the audiovisual clichés of science-fiction, relying on electronic sound effects composed by Piero Umiliani, to amusingly depict the alienated condition of the working class—Omicron being an alien from planet Ultra who takes over (in a ‘man-in-black’ way) the body of worker Trabucco and tries to learn his habits in order to overcome the human race. Irony can become a structural element of newborn audiovisual genres, as in the TV musical opera *La fantarca* (1966, directed by Vittorio Cottafavi). The score by Roman Vlad is a sort of *opera buffa* stuffed with electronic and concrete sounds as well as visual effects, to depict the space-immigration of southern Italians on board a peculiar coffe-machine spaceship [15].

However, the reaction to American clichés could mean the creation of alternative models of narration. This is the case of the examples I will explore in the next pages. For the sake of consistency I choose to concentrate on a characteristic common to several auteur films of this period, that is, the use of pre-existent music. Yet, although there is a massive literature analysing the use of the classic and romantic musical traditions in auteur cinema, the same cannot be said of the use of avant-garde and experimental music. I argue that in this respect Italian filmmakers deployed one of the most interesting features of their own experimentation, wherein ‘unusual’ pieces of music were used as processes rather than objects, making it possible to destructure the textual organization of the scenes they are applied to. As a result, what appears to be for instance a ‘conventional’ use of electroacoustic sound, turns out to be a tool of hermeneutical interpretation of the whole film.

ANTONIONI’S ELECTRONIC DESERT, AN EXPERIMENTAL LABORATORY

Michelangelo Antonioni identified the spark that engendered the inspiration for *The Red Desert* (*Il deserto rosso*, 1964) in an encounter he had with Silvio Ceccato (1914-1997) [16]. Scientist, philosopher and linguist with a diploma in composition and a background as music critic, Ceccato was responsible for the introduction of cybernetics in Italy, after working on models of simultaneous translation in a task-force financed by the United States. With his huge written production in several scientific disciplines and his special fondness for arts, music and cinema, he is undoubtedly a fascinating personality for intellectuals and artists.⁴ Antonioni told of seeing one of the latest projects developed by Ceccato, consisting of a “mechanic newsman” (*cronista meccanico*), a never finished automaton that was supposed to be able to produce short descriptions of elementary physical phenomena [18].

What struck the filmmaker was the speed with which scientific research overtook the imagination of his generation, causing at the same time a dramatic gap with the younger generation, growing up within the economic miracle: “a child who has played with robots from his earliest years would understand perfectly; such a child would have no problem going into space on a rocket, if he wanted to” [19]. As Norbert Wiener, the founder of cybernetics, had foreshadowed, the nexus human-machine finally became central in the 1960s [20]. Yet Giuliana, the main character in *The Red Desert*, is unable to

⁴ Ceccato founded the ‘third cybernetics’, or logonics, which particularly investigated the dynamics of artistic creation and reception, with a privileged focus on music [17].

understand and control the complex messages conveyed by the automated reality surrounding her.

The neurosis I sought to describe in *Red Desert* is above all a matter of adjusting. There are people who do adapt, and others who can't manage, perhaps because they are too tied to ways of life that are by now out-of-date. This is Giuliana's problem. What brought on her personal crisis was the irreconcilable divide, the gap between sensibility, intelligence, and psychology, and the way life is imposed on her [21].

At the same time Giuliana cannot ignore those messages: "She is led to think that things surrounding her do not exist unless she notices them. She feels thus morally compelled to stare at things as much as she can, for she feels subtly guilty for their potential loss of reality" [22]. This neurotic condition is consubstantial to the consumerist society relying on automatism, as explained in those very years by Baudrillard.

The evolution of imagery is indicated by the passage from an animistic structure to an energetic structure: traditional objects used to be witnesses of our *presence*, static symbols of the body's organs. Technical objects have a different fascination, for they refer to a virtual *energy*, therefore they are no longer witnesses of our presence, but rather supporters of our dynamical image [23].

With respect to this framing, the contribution of the electronic music composed by Vittorio Gelmetti must be investigated under the profile of *poiesis*. Gelmetti and Antonioni worked together for about a month [24] manipulating pre-existent electronic pieces by the composer. These compositions belong to the first phase of his production, when he was interested in borrowing formal procedures from scientific research. For this reason they can be assimilated to the contemporary artistic current of *arte programmata* ("programmed art") [25]. The aseptic contour, literally experimental, of Gelmetti's electronic treatment of sound can lead us to the core of the film's inspiration. Therein, electronic sound does not hold merely dramaturgical functions, but becomes an object of observation per se, the sonorous manifestation of an automated existential condition. Antonioni is not looking for audiovisual situations where music works empathically (or non-empathically) with images, representing the main character's struggles; rather he seeks for acoustic profiles that sound 'objective', as if they were sonic extensions of Giuliana's psyche. Musical syntax is denied in this film, to the extent that sound events are transformed into acoustical phenomena to be observed. The main character is a sort of 'guineapig' of the experiment, whereas the spectator is the observer who can critically (not emotionally) identify with Giuliana and realize the sum of the factors involved in her neurotic condition (massive industrialization, pollution, limits of familiar relations, impossibility of physically abandoning herself to emotions, etc.).

It is only on a deeper level that the dramaturgical functions of electronic sound as well as the related audiovisual *topoi* can be recognised. They confirm previous assumptions and link, as many scholars have noted, the industrial to the psychological dimension.⁵ Let us consider two sequences:

⁵ Antonioni himself was the first supporting this idea [26]; for other critical analysis of Gelmetti's music for *The Red Desert*, see also [27] [28] [29]; for a general framing of Gelmetti's figure, see [30].

1. [0:14:22-0:18:51]⁶ The sequence when Giuliana shows a neurotic behavior for the first time starts with a sound abruptly awakening her in the middle of the night. Its synchronization with a toy robot, which was left on in her kid's room, soon spoils the sinister aura of the sound. Giuliana turns the toy off, but when the 'menace' seems placated, another sound, electronic this time, appears in the high register. It is clear that it is a signal, but the spectator does not know what it stands for. If we framed this episode in the topical grids of genre films, this sound could prelude some 'thrilling' development—and Giuliana seems indeed frightened by something she sees in the dark—; such a high-pitched tensional drone would then prelude some sort of musical resolution. Yet it is soon evident that this sound profile is destined to remain fixed, flashing, and obstinate throughout the whole sequence. In fact it is not a mere sound effect but a manipulation of Gelmetti's *Modulazione per Michelangelo*, a pre-existent composition (1963) [31].⁷

2. [1:05:26-1:08:16] Once again, the toy robot is framed in close up. The camera moves over Ugo's (Giuliana's husband) hand holding a test tube, then revealing him playing with his son Valerio on a toy microscope. Valerio's room is a proper 'toy laboratory', and the kid moves about amid the equipment quite confidently. Valerio does not struggle to integrate technology into his world, for it has been part of it since he was born. In his 'laboratory' he carries out simple operations of knowledge, which he shows to his mom through a *confutatio* process: "How much is one and one?" he asks Giuliana; "Are you kidding? It's two", answers the mother. But then Valerio pours two drops of liquid on a napkin and proudly asks "How many are there?" while his father smiles smugly (he is the mentor-accomplice of his son, thus configuring an imbalance in the family triangle and leaving Giuliana in the minority). Giuliana kisses the kid's front, but when she tries to hug him the same sound signal that we heard in the previous sequence cuts in, thus sanctioning the impossibility of emotionally joining with Valerio. The kid's play, as will be clear in the unfolding of the plot, will become more and more cynical and Giuliana will inexorably become a victim of it.

⁶ Time codes refer to the DVD edition: Medusa Video, Italy, 2004.

⁷ Despite the title, this composition has originally nothing to do with Antonioni. The title refers to Michelangelo Buonarroti and was conceived as ambient music for the exhibition of his project for the Florence fortifications at the Palazzo dell'Esposizione in Rome (1964).

THE SOUND OF MAN. FERRERI, TEITELBAUM AND THE BIOFEEDBACK

In a crucial sequence of *The Seed of Man* (*Il seme dell'uomo*, 1969) by Marco Ferreri, Cino and Dora, a young couple who have escaped from a nuclear apocalypse, watch one of the last TV broadcasts documenting the extinction of the human species [0:21:20-0:26:06].⁸ Desperate images (actually taken from Second World War footage) unfold accompanied by the *Va' pensiero* chorus from Giuseppe Verdi's *Nabucco*, while the TV speaker comments: "We ask everyone to be calm and have trust. Today, the decisions and the final word are up to the electronic brains that don't have the doubts and hesitations of a human being". The invocation of the Jewish people of the *Nabucco*, suffering and yet united in an extreme surge of pride against the invader, soon gives way to the wasted post-atomic landscape, a seashore in which Cino and Dora live as new Adam and Eve with no God nor Eden; their existence is shaken by the arrival of external events, such as the stranding of a whale corpse (naturally named Moby Dick by Cino) or the mysterious woman who threatens the balance of the couple until Dora murders her and cooks her meat for Cino, without him knowing. After surviving the pestilence caused by the huge carcass, Cino realizes that he wants a descendant, so he drugs Dora and inseminates her while she is unconscious. When Dora feels the first symptoms of pregnancy, Cino triumphantly shouts in delirium "I sowed! The seed of man has sprouted!". But, as he madly runs around Dora, the two suddenly explode. Perhaps he triggered a mine hidden in the sand.

Apart from some rare musical cues composed by Teo Usuelli and the already mentioned chorus by Verdi, the paramount sound presence in the film is a composition by Richard Teitelbaum: *In Tune* (1967). Member of the improvisation ensemble Musica Elettronica Viva (MEV) and resident in Rome throughout the second half of the 1960s, the American composer was working on musical applications of biofeedback techniques. Biofeedback is a method introduced in psychotherapy designed to gain awareness of and ultimately manipulate certain physiological functions by using remote technological equipments. In the words of pianist and composer David Rosenboom, it can become "a system . . . for production of music and visual phenomena by precise electrical information extracted from subjects who have learned conscious control of associated psychophysical states" [32]. Biofeedback compositions essentially operate a conversion of signals coming from a living organism (brainwaves, heart-pulse, breath, etc.) into audible or visible signals, which the composer/performer controls thanks to a voltage control synthesizer and (nowadays) digital devices. In biofeedback music the audience may have an important role in influencing the performer/source of the signals; that is why musical performance becomes a happening that matches individuals with the collectivity. Human sound, submerging the audience through loudspeakers and being influenced by audience's feedback, seems to become a material expression of those concepts of inner harmony, time and rhythm developed in musical speculation under the influence of oriental philosophies.⁹

⁸ The time codes refer to the DVD edition: Koch Lorber Films, US, 2008.

⁹ Teitelbaum spent a period of research at the Department of Psychology of the Queens College. There, he collaborated with Lloyd Gilden, an eclectic scientist who was also influenced by Zen.

The resonance created by time-locking one's consciousness with the cortically synchronized neuronal activity that the alpha rhythm apparently represents seems to significantly reinforce and increase that synchronous activity, and in turn produces positive effects on the consciousness; a feeling of "at oneness", of being in unison with Time, in harmony with Self [33].

The premiere of *In Tune* took place in Rome in the cathedral of San Paolo on 4 December 1968: the human source was the actress Barbara Mayfield with contact microphones (applied to heart and throat) and an EEG matched with a differential amplifier to catch her low frequency alpha brainwaves. Pre-amplified heart pulse and breath were stereophonically mixed, whereas brainwaves were plugged into the Moog's voltage control, which was itself used as a sound source. At the top of the chain there was the composer/performer. An expanded version of the composition was later presented at the American Academy in Rome, with a second actress and two tapes reproducing orgasm sounds and Tibetan vocal music [34].

Through its sound 'rendering' of the sub-conscious, *In Tune* seems to stand for a 'deterministic' response to cinema's fictional constructions of psyche. Ferreri, a friend of Teitelbaum's and responsible for his encounter with Antonioni (which would lead to the involvement of MEV in *Zabriskie Point*),¹⁰ probably followed up this intuition in using a recording of the composition (we do not know which one of the two mentioned) for his new film.

In Tune occurs five times in *The Seed of Man*, underpinning particularly long sequences [0:00:00-0:02:27 (opening titles); 0:08:49-0:21:12; 0:52:00-0:56:59; 1:33:53-1:35:16; 1:38:14-1:44:35]. Its sound features and the apparent lack of narrative consistency of its use (for instance, there are no evident synch points), make it difficult to distinguish it from environmental sounds, to the extent that it can be interpreted as a sort of acoustic 'pleating' of the soundscape. Most impressive is the film's ability to fully catch the semantic outcomes of the music while turning upside down its ecumenical nature (i.e. connecting human beings in an inner unison). In a post-atomic waste land, those sounds become disturbing echoes of an already extinct mankind as well as of a second apocalyptic big bang, surfacing from time to time as a lament, a plea or a menace: an acoustic pestilence that will blow over only with the last explosion, leaving room for the indistinct murmur of the sea. Verdi's invocation "*va' pensiero sull' ali dorate*" ("go, thought, on golden wings") is antithetically mirrored by *In Tune*, whose sound substance is indeed 'flying thought', but whose 'wings' are instead tainted and unveil human self-destructive vocation, with no possibility of redemption.

CONCLUSIONS

In attempting to write a history of sound in the arts, Douglas Kahn develops an interesting thesis, according to which 20th century musical avant-gardes generally adopted a common strategy to encompass non-musical sounds (i.e. noises) within the sphere of musical organization. In order to do this, they tended to abstract sound from its "worldly" associations in favor of a "musicalization", wherein sound could "conform materially to ideas of sonicity, that is, ideas of a sound stripped of its associative attributes, a minimally

¹⁰ This is what Teitelbaum stated to me in a conversation.

coded sound existing in close proximity to ‘pure’ perception and distant from the contaminating effects of the world” [35]. Conversely, “cinema was more amenable and less defensive” [36] and encouraged, due to its audiovisual nature, visual associations of sound. In terms of topic theory, it remains still an open issue to determine how far audiovisual *topoi* can be matched with musical *topoi*. In the field of electroacoustic music this is even more complicated, for no attempts have been made, as far as I know, to apply topic theory to 20th century avant-garde. Cinema, on the other hand, has often encouraged categorizing music usage in terms of typologies according to its narrative uses. Despite the contempt avant-garde composers and musicologists generally showed until the 1980s towards the simplistic categorizations of film music—e.g. atonal = noise = tension etc.—recent attempts to apply anthropological perspectives to cinema are quite promising: see, for example, Ilario Meandri’s use of Murray Schafer’s category of anti-music to interpret mainstream Hollywood [37].

My exploration of Italian auteur cinema is an invitation to investigate the poietic level of audiovisual artefacts in order to grasp the construction of *topoi*. The authors’ intentions (whether filmmaker, composer, sound technician, etc.) can either be documented or inferred and take on extraordinary value as privileged points of view for interpreting cultural units, whose understanding is the necessary premise to the continuous reconfiguration of *topoi* cinema has accustomed us.

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Topoi of Technology in Italian Experimental Industrial Film (1959-1973)

Alessandro Cecchi, PhD, University of Torino, IT

ABSTRACT

After discussing some problematic premises of topic theory in relation to the study of cinema, the paper proposes to investigate audiovisual topoi by combining Rick Altman's "semantic/syntactic/pragmatic" approach to film genre with the structural perspective on audiovisual "textuality" developed by Gianmario Borio starting from the reflections of Michel Chion and Nicholas Cook. This methodological framework is applied to the case of Italian industrial cinema. An outline of the history of this non-fiction genre presents technology as a semantic field emerging in relation to the rapid industrialization process during the period of the so-called Italian "economic miracle" (1958-1963). Pragmatic aspects play a significant role. In those years the major industrial corporations and centres for scientific research (Enea, Eni, Fiat, Innocenti, Italsider, Olivetti) invested in cinematographic communication as a means to promote their image and popularize scientific-technological information, taking advantage of state subsidies. On this basis industrial cinema became a field of conscious audiovisual experimentation. Among the musical collaborators we find prominent avantgarde composers engaged in the field of both electroacoustic and instrumental music, such as Luciano Berio and Egisto Macchi. Their contribution produced a radical change in the soundscape of the genre, directly affecting the audiovisual representation of technology. Particularly electronic and concrete music were the fundamental component in the recurrence of audiovisual structures forming new topoi. Among these emerge both topical configurations aiming at producing simple communicational effects and elaborate constructions involving the use of rhetoric figures.

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL PREMISES

Topic Theory and Audiovisual Topoi

Judging from its widespread applications in the field of musicology, and in spite of the frequent theoretical attempts to overcome the dichotomy, topic theory appears to be implicitly based on a rigid demarcation between signifier and signified.¹ What casts doubts on such rigidity is the fact that a musical "structure" (in the broad sense) on which a *topos* relies can trigger the signification process and refer to a given context only if some aspects of that structure belong in some way to the context. Consequently, the structure itself is at the same time the signifier (it refers to the context) and a part of the signified, since it contributes to defining or at least to connoting the context. A *topos*, however, cannot be identified in the structure as such. Rather, it is a symbolic process of endowment with

¹ See Hatten [1], Monelle [2] [3] [4] [5].

meaning implying intentionality. In other words, the structure can refer to a context in the intention of the author and/or of the recipient of the communicative act. It is a task of historical research, not of theory, to clarify the basic characteristics of each recurrence of a *topos*, such as the author's intention and the audience's reception. From a theoretical point of view we can merely note the hermeneutic circle between the structure occurring in a musical text or performance, and the aspects of the structure occurring in the habitual context.

At the same time topic theory is characterized by the tendency to an essentialist conception of musical *topoi*. The discussion of *topoi* in terms of abstract essences may result either from the historical persistence of the *topoi* and of the semantic field to which they refer or from the fact that scholars have a preference for long-term *topoi* referring to contexts that are connoted through music over time immemorial and characterized by simple musical structures that resist change. Yet, since *topoi* are symbolic processes triggered by recurring structures related to defined semantic fields, the possibility of highlighting their historicity is at the disposal of whoever decides to problematize the "difference" rather than greet the "eternal recurrence of the identical". Each use of a *topos* is in fact a result of negotiation among different actors: the author, the public and various cultural institutions.

I have focused on these questionable premises of topic theory because the difficulties deriving from them become inescapable as soon as one shifts attention from the musical to the audiovisual field. For as far as the first premise is concerned, it has to be said that moving images have the ability to represent objects and contexts in full detail, leaving little space for imagination: they exhibit or expose the semantic field directly in the audiovisual structure, breaking down any theoretical demarcation between signifier and signified. And as for the second premise, it must be admitted that audiovisual products embrace a more radical historicity, preventing one from maintaining an essentialist position. We can recall that the first audiovisual medium in the strict sense – that is, based on the synchronization of images and sound – was sound film, and the advent of cinema marked the passage from craftsmanship, that was typical of the traditional artistic fields, to an industrial production method, based on the division of labour. This determined a remarkable increase in the number of products, eliciting the recurrence of audiovisual structures related to semantic fields as well as the re-use of *topoi* that were formed in other artistic fields (such as music, literature, painting, theatre) as well as the emergence of new *topoi*, whose rapid formation is much easier to observe. A commercial system of distribution determined at the same time an increase of the public, so that communication became all the more important, encouraging the use of *topoi* in all the components of filmmaking: script, shots, sound effects, music and so on.

Concerning the role of music, the study of *topoi* in the audiovisual field can successfully develop in three directions at least: investigating how pre-existing musical *topoi* are re-used in cinema and other audiovisual art-forms through "remediation"; exploring the practical uses of musical *topoi* in the composition and improvisation of film music; focusing the attention on "audiovisual *topoi*" viewed as recurring structures exhibiting the correlation to a semantic field through the moving images, where sound or music can play a significant role.

Methodological Approaches to Audiovisual Structures

In pursuing this third direction, I will adopt countermeasures aiming at protecting against the theoretical pitfalls discussed above. Such countermeasures are implicit in the theoretical and methodological premises on which my research is based, and I shall briefly discuss them.

In the absence of studies explicitly devoted to audiovisual *topoi* characterized by the significant role of sound or music, I take from Rick Altman an anti-essentialist proposal developed in relation to the cinematographic concept of genre, which shares with the concept of *topos* the idea of a recurrence of semantically connoted structures. In order to account for textual and contextual aspects of film genres equally, Altman proposes what he calls a “semantic/syntactic/pragmatic approach” [6]. The last adjective, an update of an approach previously taken by Altman [7], offers a useful specification in the field of cinema, where the “pragmatic” aspects – those making reference to the system of production, distribution and reception in a certain historical context – play an important role. This is valid for a film genre as well as for an audiovisual *topos*. Even the latter, in fact, must be situated in its historical context in order to be understood as symbolic processes, and each cinematographic context includes a particular production-distribution-reception circuit. In any case, pragmatic aspects actually go beyond such a circuit, to include all the historical and cultural premises endowing a genre or a *topos* with its characteristic semantic connotations.

The “semantic/syntactic” approach needs to be adapted in relation to the case study that I intend to present. Through such an approach, Altman gives accounts of recurring “textual” aspects at the basis of fiction film genres; for this purpose he understands textuality in narratologic terms. This is the reason for the difficulties which arise when one tries to transfer such an approach directly to the genres of so-called “non-fiction” – a term which defines antithetically typologies of audiovisual communication that do not conform to the criterion of a (tendentially) linear and coherent narration of a story. In attempting to overcome such difficulties, I propose to complement Altman’s approach with other theoretical perspectives designed to highlight structural aspects shared by all the audiovisual forms.

Michel Chion was probably the first to foreground the structural relationship between image and sound/music in cinema and other audiovisual forms [8]. Subsequently, this aspect has been highlighted by Nicholas Cook, who focused attention on audiovisual products characterized by the centrality of music, that he defined “musical multimedia” [9]. More recently, Gianmario Borio has developed this theoretical perspective proposing a definition of audiovisual “textuality” as structural articulation “in two dimensions, whose presence is tangible in the two levels of film recording in pre-digital sonorous film: images and sound” [10]. The film and the magnetic soundtrack remain in fact separate for the greater part of the process of film production.

This approach makes it possible to clearly identify the structures of the audiovisual text on which every individual semantic process is ultimately based: the different components (photography, shot, dialogues, noises, music) combined through the main constructive processes (editing and synchronization) and developing a relation with objects and contexts represented by the moving images. Such semantic processes are at the basis of further signification strategies, becoming increasingly complex. Some of these strategies conform to the criterion of narration, which characterizes fiction cinema.

However, being based on the recurrence of an audiovisual structure, an audiovisual *topos* can also develop independently from narrative strategies.

THE REPRESENTATION OF TECHNOLOGY IN ITALIAN INDUSTRIAL FILM

Historical and Pragmatic Aspects

My historical investigation concerns audiovisual *topoi* related to a semantic field that took on increasing social and historical relevance during the 20th century: “technology”. The perimeter of the investigation results from the intersection between historical context and film genre. I will focus, in fact, on Italian industrial film in a period of extraordinary development, coinciding – not by chance – with the central years of the so-called “economic miracle” (1958-1963), a label which designates the sustained economic growth relying on a rapid industrialization process destined to produce profound transformations in the Italian social and cultural texture as well as in the landscape. The diffused perception of discontinuity from the past, even an ongoing epochal change, burdened technology deriving from scientific research and serving industry with new connotations, strictly tying technology to ideas such as innovation, revolution, projection toward the future; a technology that now seemed to serve man and peace, not war, as the tragic experience of the Second World War had shown.

Even in this case an inescapable hermeneutic circle emerges. Those connotations are in fact on the one hand “recorded” but on the other hand conveyed, encouraged, instilled and diffused by the media system of the period (journals, radio, disc, cinema, television) which actively participated to the construction of the technological paradigm as a socio-cultural context. Among them, industrial film occupied a central and strategic position.

A genre cultivated in Italy since the very beginning of the 20th century, during the 1930s – shortly after the birth of sound film – industrial film experienced a period of extraordinary vitality. In 1933 *Acciaio* (*Steel*), one of the first films produced by Cines, entirely shot in the Terni steelworks, introduced a high standard of audiovisual experimentation, involving outstanding collaborators: the film’s director was Walter Ruttmann, who since the 1920s had been an indefatigable experimenter with abstract film particularly in the field of editing and synchronization; the music was composed by Gian Francesco Malipiero, whose score allowed the director to obtain solutions and effects of great emotive impact, particularly in the representation of steel work processes; the screenplay had been adapted by Mario Soldati (uncredited) from a novel of Luigi Pirandello, using a very thin plot woven into a film intended to document and glorify Italian industry.

After the tragic events at the end of the Second World War, the genre re-emerged from the rubble with very limited means. Nevertheless industrial film began to conform to the communicative standard – not of course the productive standard – of Hollywood cinema, whose diffusion had been initially encouraged by the American occupation of Italy. Such standards emerged in the intentions of the corporations that commissioned the films and in certain characteristics of such products. As far as the sound is concerned, we encounter the predominance of “film music” intended as a stereotyped stylistic category:

scores for large orchestra with large sections of percussion and brass instruments, using leitmotifs and thematic-motivic elaboration, enlarged tonality frequently recurring to chromaticism, and the sense of apotheosis; all the musical processes rely on Western classic, romantic, and late romantic to impressionist traditions, where the construction of meaning and communication relied on a system of diffused musical *topoi*, and resorting episodically to the languages of a more advanced modernity. Between the end of the 1940s and the end of the 1950s there were some scrupulous productions, such as a 1949 short by Michelangelo Antonioni for the viscose industry, *Sette canne, un vestito* (*Seven Reeds, One Suit*), with music by Giovanni Fusco, or the remarkable productions directed by Ermanno Olmi from 1953 onwards for Edison, characterized by the sporadic use of music and the construction of a peculiar soundscape. However, it was from the end of the 1950s, with the initiatives of other industrial corporations, directors and collaborators, that the technological paradigm began to directly involve industrial communication, profoundly changing some of the main features of industrial film.

The pragmatic aspects played a considerable role in this transformation. As a consequence of the sustained economic growth, the main Italian private industrial corporations, along with some strategic state corporations including national centres for scientific research, decided to invest as never before in cinematographic communication, seen not so much as a production of commercials focusing on the end product, but rather as the means to promote the “corporate image” through the proposal of information or scientific-technological divulgation, stressing the social and cultural meaning of the industrial and technological progress. In these films the documentation of the preliminary steps – the conception and planning stage – as well as the various phases of industrial production come to the fore. In directly producing or commissioning films, the industrial corporations had the possibility of making use, for a certain period, of state subventions and funding, enforcing their investment capabilities determined by the Italian economic growth. Among the consequences of this favourable context, the production of films in this specific sub-genre of documentary really took off, reaching a peak in 1964, just before a law was passed denying access to public funding for industrial film production, resulting in a decline of the genre in quantitative terms [11] [12].

In such a context the artistic aspirations of the leaders of corporations producing high technologies favoured the cooperation of film directors and artistic collaborators that were active in the artistic avantgardes. The result of these collaborations emerges in films characterized by a high degree of audiovisual experimentation. The number of such films during the 1960s led me to propose the idea of an ‘experimental’ sub-genre of Italian industrial film, emerging in 1959, developing in the first half of the 1960s, attaining new vitality around 1968, and going into a rapid decline, though rare productions can be detected until 1973 [13].

Audiovisual Experimentation and the “Technological Paradigm”

Among the “experimental” sub-genre of the Italian industrial film, sound and music were involved in a profound transformation. The first examples produced a deep impact on the subsequent cinematographic production considered as a whole. What is interesting is the fact that such a transformation represents at the same time the consolidation of a “technological paradigm” in film music. Cinema is in itself strongly based on technology. In order to meet the needs of the industrial documentary, a high

degree of technology is requested: the difficulties posed by extreme conditions of light need an accurate use of filters; the techniques of photography and shooting can involve a large range of possibilities, from aerial shooting to macro-photography; it is usual the resort to drawings and animations. Compared to such an extended use of devices for the images, the traditional orchestral scores might appear all the more anachronistic. This could be one of the reasons that encouraged – in general – sound and music to conform to technological innovation.

In 1959 both the National Centre for Nuclear Research (CNRN) – then National Centre for Nuclear Energy (CNEN), now National Agency for New Technology, Energy and the Environment (ENEA) – and Olivetti produced or commissioned industrial films whose music was assigned to Luciano Berio, who since 1955 had been experimenting with electronic sound in collaboration with Bruno Maderna and others at the Studio di Fonologia Rai in Milan. The CNRN film *Ispra 1* (Gian Luigi Lomazzi, 1959) was designed to inform about the Italian efforts concerning nuclear energy as they were developed in the new laboratories of nuclear research and fusion in Ispra, near Varese (it was the first Italian nuclear reactor, realized on American project). The two Olivetti productions directed in 1960 by Nelo Risi – *Elea classe 9000* (*Elea, series 9000*) and *La memoria del futuro* (*Memory of the Future*) – concerned the construction of the first computing machine completely based on transistors (computer was named Elea 9003), at the same time illustrating in full detail the history of computing systems and underlining their importance for human progress.

For *Ispra* Berio used almost exclusively electronic and concrete sound, that is, tape music. For *La memoria del futuro* he used almost exclusively avantgarde instrumental music. On the contrary for *Elea* he composed both electronic and instrumental music (accurately avoiding the usual stylistic canons of “film music”) in order to combine through overdubbing, in some passages, electronic modules and musical cues from the recorded instrumental score. Though not an isolated case, the combination of both typologies of sound production was unusual: until 1965, though present in the same film, electronic music and instrumental scores were generally used separately.

Beyond the specific compositional choices, the association between the representation of “new technologies” and electronic music became a practicable path, and other composers could follow the example, as happened in the 1960s. After 1959 Berio himself collaborated in very few film productions: in 1963 he collaborated with Bruno Munari in some short art and abstract films, where sequences shot in contemporary art exhibitions, as in *Arte programmata* (*Programmed Art*), or abstract coloured lights and forms, as in *I colori della luce* (*The Colours of Light*), were accompanied only by music, excluding comments, dialogues and any other sound. However, both the forementioned CNRN and Olivetti films had great resonance, to the extent that *Elea classe 9000* won the prize for the best industrial film in the competition regularly held in those years during the prestigious Venice Film Festival. In the field of industrial film, since 1959 electronic music became the sound of technological innovation and scientific research, and in particular the sound of nuclear energy, chemical analysis, electronic computing, automation, and was ready to pass into Italian auteur cinema – starting from Michelangelo Antonioni’s 1964 film *Deserto rosso* (*Red Desert*) – with these and other connotations [14].

The radical change emerges from the comparison between a scientific 1958 film produced by the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) as an integral part of the series *Atom for peace* and *Ispra 1* (1959), both illustrating the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The sound

design is completely different. In the first case the usual orchestral music dominates: the curves of the cathode rays of an oscilloscope is imitated by the music through a melodic oscillation of the thin sound of a flute [0:00:14-0:00:30]. In the second case, starting from the head titles, the sound design taken as a whole shares with the represented contexts precisely the “technological paradigm”: electronic and concrete sound, through the means of tape, were based on a technology introduced in Italy in 1955 – even if the Studio di Fonologia in Milan followed very high standards, to the extent that it was in competition with the most advanced centres in Europe: Paris and Cologne. The association relied on the objective similarity between the electronic devices used in the analysis of data and those used for the production of electronic sound. The similarity enforced the association, which shortly involved recurrence, developing *topoi* that were properly “new”, and this not only because they emerged directly as audiovisual *topoi*, but also because they relied on a technology which was pure avantgarde.

While the representation of heavy industry and particularly the most spectacular phases of steel work, from *Acciaio* onwards, made use of timbral homogeneity triggered by the use of percussion and brass instruments (a *topos* which is still extensively used today), the most advanced scientific and industrial technologies of those years (based on nuclear physics, informatics and electronics) could rely on homogeneity at different levels: not only timbral (I refer to the sounds that were generally produced by instruments of measure and analysis) but even material, structural and technological.

Recurrence and Consolidation of Audiovisual Topoi during the 1960s

During the 1960s the recurrence of such associations consolidated their relationship with particular connotations of the semantic field, producing shared audiovisual *topoi* as well as encouraging sophisticated artistic constructions.

One of these was the recurrent association between comments of the speaker concerning the dangers and risks for men’s health or safety (the risks of radioactivity, nuclear destruction, environmental pollution and so on), images exhibiting signals of danger (a very direct and meaningful communication instrument) and electronic sound. The last is often characterized by very high, even disturbing frequencies along with prolonged sound, sometimes characterized by a gradual or even a sudden increase in intensity. It is not by chance that such associations occur repeatedly in the films produced by CNEN or ENEA, whose communicative strategy was since the very beginning that of admitting the risks and the dangers connected to nuclear energy – these were, rather, at the centre of the discourse.

In the head titles of the film *Atomi puliti (Clean Atoms)*, directed by Enrico Franceschelli in 1965, with the musical collaboration of Franco Potenza – a neglected Roman composer, very active both in the field of popular music (he was the director of the choir at the Sanremo Festival from its introduction in 1960) and avantgarde composition as well as cinema – we hear piano music combined with a long continuous sound whose timbre is hard to identify; the music is synchronized with the shooting of a stream ending in a small waterfall. After the head titles the words in the comment of the speaker concerning the environmental damages produced by pollution – a consequence of industrialization – coincide with the emergence of electronic sound, that now, during a long pause in the piano, we realize was present from the beginning of the film. The tension of electronic sound increasingly grows when the shoots focus on the building of a factory, with a long

chimney against a grey sky, coloured by the smoke of industrial production [0:00:00-0:00:45]. Then the contemplation of disasters is stressed by electronic sound becoming a more and more scary presence, reaching a climax in the subsequent section, illustrating atomic power in its destructive values, as shown by the atomic bomb on Hiroshima.

The end of the film insists on the images of nuclear waste deposits: a number of blue and red nuclear drums exhibiting the well-known symbol of radioactivity: black three-leafed clover on a yellow field. In this sequence – after a section where electronic sound became a harmonic and pleasing background – the film gradually returns to a different sound, increasingly more disturbing and even threatening, until an electronic shiver of terror, synchronized with the black screen, concludes the film. Here sound transforms into a threat the risks that the words of the speaker tend to minimize [0:10:23-0:10:42].

At the end of the 1960s, after a ten-year development, we encounter experimental films showing a conscious and even sophisticated use of *topoi* involving electronic music, with results of great audiovisual impact. A noticeable example is the Innocenti film *Noi continuiamo* (*We Are Continuing*), directed in 1968 by Mario Damicelli, with the musical collaboration of Egisto Macchi, one of the founding members of Nuova Consonanza. This film capitalizes on the recurrence of audiovisual structures triggering signification processes that offer very simple and immediate effects. In a passage [0:13:28-0:13:50] the words “analisi chimiche” (“chemical analysis”), pronounced by the speaker while details of beakers, microscopes, X-ray devices and oscilloscopes appear, are strictly synchronized with the entrance of electronic sound, which up until that point had been quite marginal.

Yet a very complex *topos* emerges in the same film, showing how, even in the age of the audiovisual and of technology, the traditional rhetoric figures can play both a constructive and interpretative role. This is a composed *topos* inspired by the idea of “montage”. In the theory of *loci communi* we experience a figure resembling the old *locus notationis*, that is, triggered by the different meanings assumed by the term “montage” – or at least by the Italian term “montaggio”, characterized by the wide range of precise, even technical, connotations. At the same time this is an outstanding application of the figure that old theoreticians would have named *locus totius et partium*, and that I would re-define as structural correspondence between the represented object and the modalities of its representation. In order to understand the convergence of these two figures, it has to be said that electronic and concrete music share with pre-digital cinema the technology of recording, that is the magnetic tape and the technique of manipulating, through cut and montage, the recorded sound.

Many times, in this industrial film, the speaker gives way to pure audiovisual construction through extended montage sequences that are in effect abstract – to the extent that the workers, who in reality were always present in the assembly line, are basically suppressed, or at least become anonymous, in order to give the impression of prevalent if not complete automation. An outstanding experimental sequence is involved in the *topos* [0:18:30-0:21:20].

The previously mentioned rhetoric figures derive from the convergence of the following elements: the represented object is the assemblage (“montaggio” in Italian) of a car on an assembly line (“catena di montaggio”); the moving images are organized through montage sequences based on masterful video editing (“montaggio”); the sound corresponds to the same concept, given that it is the product of the cuts and montage (“montaggio”) of a magnetic tape, constructed for the purposes of an exact correspondence with the syntax of the

video editing, that is, using strict or punctual synchronization; the tape is at the same time a collage of instrumental music, electronic and recorded sound, becoming one and the same under the concept of concrete music – the noises of industrial production (recorded, transformed, manipulated and to some extent becoming abstract sounds) have been inserted in the soundtrack, which mainly contains synthetic sound. In other words, a highly technological and elaborate montage process is represented through a highly technological and elaborate montage process, combining two separate “horizontal” montages (in the moving images and in the soundtrack) in the “vertical” montage achieved through synchronization [15].

Not only, here, do signifier and signified converge, but the audiovisual structure refers to the same semantic field correlated to the *topos*. The technological paradigm, shared between represented object and modalities of representation, has been consciously highlighted in its constructive capabilities.

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From Topic to Troping Within Film Music

Juan Chattah, PhD, University of Miami, FL, USA

ABSTRACT

*Although the interpretation of musical topics and musical troping within film might seem analogous, topics reflect (primarily) a symbolic relationship between signifier and signified, whereas troping reflects an iconic relationship. This paper navigates from denotation and connotation, to topics, and subsequently to troping, thus framing this discussion within the Saussurean signifier-signified model, yet addressing the icon/index/symbol taxonomy proposed by Charles Sanders Peirce. The film-music repertoire analyzed includes soundtracks from *The Red Violin*, *Big Night*, and *Being There*.*

FROM DENOTATION/CONNOTATION TO TOPICS

Although meaning in music is derived from both connotative and denotative semiosis, the notion of musical topics clearly belongs to the realm of connotation. Louis Hjelmslev claimed that “a connotative semiotic is a semiotic that is not a language, and one whose expression plane is provided by the content plane and expression plane of a denotative semiotic [1].” Similarly, according to Umberto Eco, “there is a connotative semiotics when there is a semiotics whose expression plane is another semiotics,” and he continued, “the characteristic of a connotative code is the fact that further significations conventionally relies on a primary one [2].” In the following figure, which is similar to Roland Barthes’s model of connotation/denotation, Philip Tagg illustrates the notion of connotation and denotation from a linguistic viewpoint:

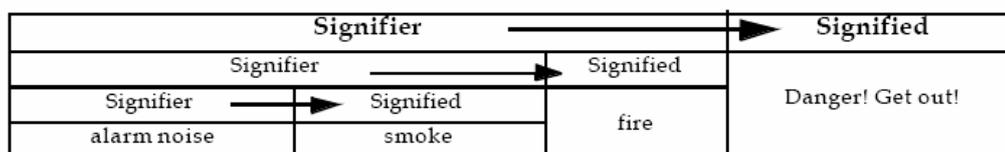


Figure 1: Connotation as “superelevation of previous signification [3].”

The signifier-signified relationships depicted in Figure 1 above are denotative and rely mainly upon indexicality. But the relationship between “alarm noise” and “fire,” or between “alarm noise” and “danger,” is one of connotation. On the notion of connotation in music, Raymond Monelle remarks that

music appears to have denotative meaning when some natural sound is imitated, or when a quotation from some other work or style is presented: a fanfare, horn call or shepherd’s pipe. There is seldom a question of denotative meaning alone, however, as

there can be in language. Karbusicky observes that the sound of the cuckoo, which presumably denotes the bird, can also signify “Spring is here [4]!”

Thus, Monelle and Vladimir Karbusicky’s denotative meaning of a sign is mainly based on onomatopoeia and subsequently extended to topicality. Similarly, Eco claims that “there are musical ‘signs’ with an explicit denotative value (trumpet signals in the army) and there are syntagms or entire ‘texts’ possessing pre-culturalized connotative value (‘pastoral’ or ‘thrilling’ music, etc.) [5].” Thus, Eco’s notion of musical syntagms is akin to Leonard Ratner’s theory of topics. His conception of musical signs however is a misnomer: trumpet signals in the army should not be considered music but sound signals: thanks to the loud and far-reaching sound of trumpets, they serve to communicate commands in open, large places. In case, however, that trumpet signals are incorporated (via onomatopoeia) in opera or even in piano music, they become musical gestures that help define the presence of musical topics.

Accounts of topics within music date to Joachim Burmeister (1566-1629) and then Johann Heinichen (1683-1729); both approached music composition from a surface-oriented perspective. Heinichen, in his *Der General-Bass in der Composition*, includes the *loci topici* (topics for a formal discourse) as a general method of composition that focuses on surface textures. Later Leonard Ratner, Kofi Agawu, and other theorists adopted the concept of topics for the analysis of (mostly) eighteenth-century music.

Figure 2 below shows Agawu’s “Universe of Topics,” which he borrowed from Ratner. Each topic manifests itself in two dimensions: 1) the signifier, which comprises all the surface phenomena, such as rhythm, melody, texture, timbre, etc; and 2) the signified, which makes direct reference to the particular topic as a socio-cultural entity.

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 1. <i>alla breve</i> | 15. Mannheim rocket |
| 2. <i>alla zoppa</i> | 16. march |
| 3. <i>amoroso</i> | 17. minuet |
| 4. <i>aria</i> | 18. musette |
| 5. <i>bourrée</i> | 19. ombra |
| 6. <i>brilliant style</i> | 20. opera buffa |
| 7. <i>cadenza</i> | 21. pastoral |
| 8. <i>sensibility (Empfindsamkeit)</i> | 22. recitative |
| 9. <i>fanfare</i> | 23. sarabande |
| 10. <i>fantasy</i> | 24. sigh motif (Seufzer) |
| 11. <i>French overture</i> | 25. singing style |
| 12. <i>gavotte</i> | 26. Sturm und Drang |
| 13. <i>hunt style</i> | 27. Turkish music |
| 14. <i>learned style</i> | |

Figure 2: Ratner’s “Universe of Topics [6].”

Within the *icon/index/symbol* taxonomy proposed by Peirce, topics would correspond to the third level of semiosis, hence *symbols*. Naturally, topics may rely on basic similarity with the signified (iconicity) or some biological or cultural correlation (iconicity via metaphorical processes). Usually topics originate, and are established, through proximity to their signified (indexicality) or through a metonymic process (i.e. part-for-whole). But, because topics establish an arbitrary signifier-signified relationship,

and because these signs become conventional within culturally defined repertoires, we should regard them as *symbols*.¹

Like Ratner and later Agawu, Tagg provides a universe of topics that he calls the “ethnocentric selection of possible connotative spheres” or feels. The list of feels he provides, as a verbalized form of signs, is not exhaustive. Both the transmitter and the receiver understand these feels because they share the same socio-cultural background and store of signs. Some of the ethnocentric feels that Tagg addresses are: *romantic sensuality, noble suffering, Spaghetti Western, horror, erotic tango, alienated urban loneliness, twinkling happy Christmas, hippy meditation*, etc. He further remarks that

even though creative musicians within the European and North American cultural sphere might never use any of the words in the list to describe their music, they would know how to construct sounds corresponding to most of these “feels” while codal competent listeners from the same cultural background would be able to distinguish that music into categories similar to those listed [7].

In fact, most film directors communicate with their film composer employing words or phrases (i.e. feels) such as the ones listed above; it is the composer’s task to understand and translate these feels into music that evokes the desired response from the audience.

Musical topics are used within film for various purposes, such as to set locale, set time period, as genre identifiers, etc. Manifested primarily as style synecdoches, topics exhibit the two emblematic dimensions of every sign: 1) the signifier: all the surface phenomena, such as rhythm, melody, texture, timbre, etc.; and 2) the signified: the particular socio-cultural associations. Hence, the cognitive process whereby an audience understands musical topics within film is basically a semiotic process. The same cannot be said of *troping*; later within this paper I flesh out the intricacies of this difference.

TOPICS WITHIN A NARRATIVE THREAD

Topics can help shape a musical narrative by interacting with themes or leitmotifs. This fusion affects the musical discourse, often through a process of developing variation, and help guide the dramatic trajectory of a film.² For instance, *The Red Violin* realizes a large-scale structural plan that maps the events in the narrative through a theme and variations formal design in the music. Composer John Corigliano states that in *The Red Violin*, he

planned a big structure of seven chords, which literally formed the basis for the entire movie [...] Because the movie was involved with the tarot, involved with classical music and a violin, and involved with many different ages of music, I felt that one had to tie everything together. If you just wrote baroque, classical, romantic, and so forth, they would be detached, since the only thing that threaded through the 300 years was

¹ Naturally, every signifying process falls into an endlessly unfolding chain of semiosis. Interpretation cannot be reduced to just one semiotic process; rather, interpretation results from a complex web of signification surrounding every sign. This is akin to Barthes’ insistence that the distinction between connotation and denotation inevitably collapses.

² See Hatten’s notion of musical gestures in his *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes*, page 233.

this violin. One needed a thread that had to be thematic and harmonic [...] Unless you tie it together with some common thread, you will not feel the organic quality of the movie [8].

A parallel between the film's narrative structure and the soundtrack's theme and variation design illustrates a sophisticated use of leitmotif fused with topics.³ *The Red Violin* begins with a present-day violin auction, and flashes back to numerous times, places, and performers that surrounded the violin. The main theme is presented in its essential form sung by Anna (Irene Grazioli), whose blood will paint the violin after she dies while giving birth to the luthier's child. (See Appendix, Musical Example 1.) The theme leads into the first flashback: the creation of the violin in seventeenth-century Italy.



Film Excerpt 1: First appearance of the Red Violin. (0:06:50 - 0:07:30)

Film Excerpt 2 shows the second flashback, to an eighteenth-century Austrian monastery. Musical Example 2 shows a variation of the theme. (See Appendix) This variation incorporates stylistic characteristics of the period's music such as clear diatonic harmonic progressions, and continuous rhythmic figuration reminiscent of the works by baroque composers.



Film Excerpt 2: The Red Violin at an eighteenth-century Austrian monastery. (0:39:27 - 0:39:50)

Film Excerpt 3 shows the flashback to nineteenth-century Oxford; a Gypsy female violinist plays a variation of the theme. This scene takes place right before the "Devil" takes possession of the violin. The variation of the theme is in an improvisatory style and makes use of a hexatonic Gypsy/Hungarian mode (G, A, B \flat , C \sharp /D \flat , E, F \sharp) with strong emphasis on the exotic sounding B \flat -D \flat interval. Musical Example 3 shows the last segment of this variation, (see Appendix.) The Gypsy/Hungarian mode acts as a musical symbol (i.e. topic) that triggers the westernized (and thus conventionally established) association of exoticism. Additionally, the scenography and costumes provide a visually topical representation of character type.

³ The extreme nature of the variations (and their grounded in conventional topics) is not suggestive of leitmotif transformations.



Film Excerpt 3: The Red Violin played by Gypsy woman. (0:51:30 – 0:52:20)

At the time the Gypsy violinist stops playing, the “Devil” (as addressed in the movie) appears and takes the violin. This character portrays the typical nineteenth-century virtuoso, such as the legendary Paganini, and tropes on the myth of Mephistopheles. In Film Excerpt 4, this character plays his new composition (clearly a transformation of the main theme), illustrating the nineteenth-century virtuoso style: ricochet bowing, multiple stopping at dazzling speed, extended octave playing, arpeggiated passages requiring continuous rapid string crossings, and superb bow technique. Musical Examples 4 and 5 illustrate several of these techniques incorporated in the variation, (see Appendix). Moreover, the music not only exhibits the technical capacities of the violin, but also allows for an increased intensity of emotional and artistic expression in the hands of the performer.



Film Excerpt 4: The Red Violin played by nineteenth-century virtuoso performer.

(0:56:15 – 0:58:00)

In the forgoing examples from *The Red Violin* a theme is adjusted to conform to various topics; the soundtrack thus informs the audience while helping shape the narrative structure of the film. Adjusting a theme to conform to various topics is not *troping*: troping requires a fusion of two (or more) distinct topics.

TROPING AS NARRATIVE DEVICE

According to Robert Hatten, troping occurs when “two different, formally unrelated types are brought together in the same functional location so as to spark an interpretation based on their interaction [9].” Although primarily explored within the common practice repertoire, musical troping is extremely valuable as a narrative resource within film: the compositional decision to fuse two unrelated musical topics within a scene is generally motivated by a convergence of two distinct elements in the film’s narrative. Through this fusion of two unrelated topics, the music accentuates a plot based on some dichotomy (i.e. two distinct characters, two different cultures, two points of view, etc.). As such, musical troping effectively maps the film’s narrative structure and thus suggests a cognitive process based on metaphor (i.e. iconicity), rather

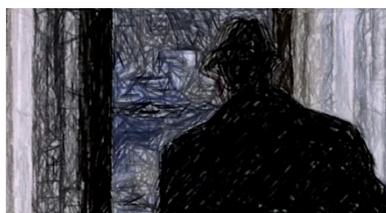
than a purely symbolic process. The process of signification extends beyond the symbology provided by each topic: it resorts to *firstness* by highlighting the analogy between fusing two topics and fusing two elements in the narrative.

Peter Sellers's film *Being There* tells the story of Chauncey Gardiner, who lived his whole life in isolation working as a gardener in the house of a millionaire. When the wealthy man dies, Chauncey is forced out of the house. Chauncey enters an alien modern world; his immaculate appearance merges with the contaminated streets; his regular and predictable life devolves into strange and chaotic situations. The film presents two contrasting elements: 1) Chauncey Gardiner, an old, prudent, innocent, almost sterile human being, and 2) the external world as modern and exiting, yet contaminated and corrupt.

CHAUNCEY GARDINER	EXTERNAL WORLD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Old and prudent - Pure / clean - Innocent - Bases his knowledge on nature - Quiet environment - Classical music 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modern and reckless - Contaminated / dirty - Corrupt - Bases its actions on economics - Overload of city sounds - Disco-funk music

Table I: Contrasting elements established in *Being There*.

Table I compares the essential characteristics of these two elements as established in the film. Each of these elements is represented musically via two distinct musical topics: Chauncey is typified with classical music, while the external world is represented by 'modern' music of the time (70's disco-funk style). The soundtrack in Film Excerpt 5, which accompanies Chauncey leaving the only home he has ever known and stepping into a new world, makes reference to these two contrasting elements, symbolizing their convergence by combining Strauss's *Also Sprach Zarathustra* with the disco-funk beats popular in the 70's.⁴



Film Excerpt 5: Chauncey leaves home. (0:19:00 – 0:22:50)

The musical troping in the scene parallels the convergence (or merging) of elements in the narrative establishing a conceptual metaphor (i.e. iconic resemblance).⁵ Troping is achieved by blending salient stylistic characteristics of each type. As it is

⁴The arrangement featured in the film is by Brazilian pianist and arranger Eumir Deodato.

⁵Following Lakoff's and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor theory, this would be a Convergence Of Narrative Elements Is Musical Troping conceptual metaphor.

evident in Musical Example 6 (see Appendix), many elements from Also Sprach Zarathustra are retained but adjusted to conform to the 70's disco-funk style:

- Instrumentation of the original classical piece expanded to include typical disco instrumentation (organ, drum set, cowbells)
- Melody (played on the original instruments: trumpet with sporadic orchestral tutti) rhythmically adjusted with anticipations and retardations characteristic of the disco style
- Harmonies extended with the addition of 7ths and 9ths typical of more contemporary practices
- Jazzy organ incorporates riffs based on extended harmonies
- Metrical structure maintained, but the beat is emphasized by a disco pattern performed on a drum set
- Non-musical sounds (such as the city noise in the background) help relocate the classical piece into a non-classical context.

Superimposing the musical troping with the convergence of contrasting elements in the narrative, triggers a metaphorical correlation, i.e. a signifier-signified relationship based on firstness or iconicism. As a result, the audience projects the musical troping onto the narrative, placing the convergence of elements at the center of attention,⁶ (see Table II).

NARRATIVE		MUSIC	
Convergence of two elements, each portraying different social, economic, cultural, historical, philosophical backgrounds.		Troping of musical types achieved by maintaining salient denotative characteristics of each type.	
CHAUNCEY GARDINER	EXTERNAL WORLD	CLASSICAL MUSIC	DISCO-FUNK MUSIC
Old and prudent Pure / clean Innocent Draws his knowledge from nature Identifies himself with classical music	Modern and reckless Contaminated / dirty Corrupt Defined by economics Represented through disco music and an overload of city sounds	Instrumentation: symphonic orchestra Pulse: flexible Harmonic language: traditional Dynamic range: large	Instrumentation: 70's electronica Pulse: regular Harmonic language: popular Dynamic range: narrow

Table II: Troping representing the convergence of narrative elements in *Being There*.

The film *Big Night* is about two Italian brothers, Primo and Secondo, who emigrated from Italy and opened a restaurant in America. The restaurant is almost bankrupt, and the lack of success is due to the owners' decision to keep the restaurant as authentic to the Italian tradition as possible. Table III below compares the two contrasting elements established in the film: 1) Italian culture, and 2) American culture.

⁶ The obvious "discovery of a new world" connotation that stems from viewers familiar with the film *2001: A Space Odyssey*, are particular to Also Sprach Zarathustra and not to the instance of troping.

ITALIAN CULTURE	AMERICAN CULTURE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Food: pasta - Language: Italian - Music: Italian Opera - Dress code: elegant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Food: meatballs - Language: English - Music: Jazz - Dress code: casual

Table III: Contrasting elements established in *Big Night*.

The restaurant would have to close due to lack of customers, so Primo seeks the advice of an Italian friend who owns a very successful restaurant called *Pascal's*. The key to *Pascal's* success is the blend of the two cultures in every aspect of the restaurant, from the menu (spaghetti with meatballs) to the live music played in the restaurant; even its very name is a linguistic troping: the Italian name with the characteristically American 'apostrophe + s' added. As Primo enters the restaurant, the music (as well as visuals and the sparse dialogue) portrays this cultural fusion. A conceptual metaphor emerges, via which the audience projects the fusion taking place in the music onto the narrative.⁷ Similar to the instance in *Being There*, musical troping is achieved by retaining distinctive elements from each of the two musical traditions during the synthesis (see Table IV below); elements from 'O Sole Mio are preserved but adjusted to conform to a Jazzy, easy listening style:

- Italian lyrics retained but pronunciation adjusted with a heavy American accent
- Orchestral accompaniment replaced by piano accompaniment
- Metrical structure maintained, but with a profuse incorporation of syncopation
- Timbre of voice and inflections adjusted to 'background-music in restaurant' or 'night-club' setting
- Non-musical sounds (of customers and servers) help relocate the classical piece into a non-classical context.



Film Excerpt 6: Primo enters Pascal's restaurant. (0:23:40 - 0:24:50)

⁷ Following Lakoff's and Johnson's formatting, this would be also a Convergence Of Narrative Elements Is Musical Troping conceptual metaphor.

NARRATIVE		MUSIC	
Convergence of two elements, each portraying different social, economic, cultural, historical, philosophical backgrounds.		Troping of musical types achieved by maintaining salient denotative characteristics of each type.	
ITALIAN CULTURE	AMERICAN CULTURE	ITALIAN MUSIC	AMERICAN MUSIC
Food: Pasta Language: Italian Music: Operatic Dress-code: Elegant	Food: Meatballs Language: English Music: Jazzy Dress-code: Casual	Vocal Style: Operatic Language: Italian Rhythm: sporadic syncopations Instrumentation: Orchestral	Vocal Style: Jazzy Language: English Rhythm: frequent syncopations Instrumentation: Smaller Ensemble

Table IV: Troping representing a convergence of narrative elements in *Big Night*.

CONCLUSION

The primary differences between troping and topics are the conceptual process through which an audience derives meaning, as well as the degree of conventionality of that meaning. Troping establishes new meanings by mapping an analogous blending of narrative elements (characters, places, etc.), whereas topics draw on conventionally established meanings. Therefore, whereas topics exhibit (primarily) a symbolic relationship between signifier and signified, troping reveals an iconic relationship.

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APPENDIX – MUSICAL EXAMPLES

Note: All musical examples are my own transcriptions from the original soundtracks.

Violin

• = 60

Musical Example 1: Theme from *The Red Violin*.

Violin

Presto

Musical Example 2: Variation of *The Red Violin* theme to represent Baroque style.

Violin

ad lib.

f

Musical Example 3: Variation of *The Red Violin* theme to represent (westernized) Gypsy style.

Violin

ffz

quasi gliss.

f

Musical Example 4: Double-stops and ricochet bowing. Variation of *The Red Violin* theme to represent virtuoso Romantic style.

Violin

accel. poco a poco

sf

Musical Example 5: Arpeggiated passage requiring continuous rapid string crossings. Variation of *The Red Violin* theme to represent virtuoso Romantic style.

Trumpet and Orchestra

Electric Organ

Electric Bass

Cowbell

Drums

$\text{♩} = 80$

Tpt. & O.

Org.

E. B.

C.

D.

Tpt. & O.

Org.

E. B.

C.

D.

Musical Example 6: Disco style revamping of Strauss's *Also Sprach Zarathustra* in *Being There*.

Classing Topics: An Analysis of the Music for Ken Loach's *Riff Raff*

Ben Curry, PhD, University of Kent, UK

ABSTRACT

The musical topic as an intersection of formal characteristics and cultural resonances provides a useful means to approach representations of class in the music for Ken Loach's 1991 film Riff Raff. Key to understanding the music for Riff Raff is the tension it reflects between the subject matter of the film, which concerns the working class and homeless in post-Thatcher Britain, and the film's production and consumption, which is dominated by an altogether different stratum of British society.

Through a close reading of Stewart Copeland's opening cue for Riff Raff, this paper will explore how musical topics allow us to analyse the interplay of social forces that shape music in a cinematic context. By drawing on the distinction in Peircian semiotics between actuality and meaning it will engage key questions concerning the notion of class as indicative of both cultural habit and socio-economic position, and music's place in this complex of relations. It will go on to argue that topics in popular music tend to reflect actuality in a manner that can be usefully opposed to those tendencies that characterize music in the classical tradition.

INTRODUCTION AND ANALYSIS

The British film *Riff Raff*, directed by leftist filmmaker Ken Loach in the early 1990s, begins with two shots of rats on a building site. A wider shot follows of two builders and while the film's title is displayed the simple ambient soundscape is interrupted by a slightly brash declamation from a synthetic piano (Example 1).



Example 1. Opening idea of the score for *Riff Raff*.¹

Any stylistic or topical reference for this figure, which outlines a V7 to I cadence in B major, is, in certain respects, indistinct. It articulates a formal device that is a cornerstone of common-practice music but the voicing, phrasing and (to a lesser extent) the

¹ All musical examples are my own transcriptions from the original soundtracks.

timbre aren't quite right. One can hardly have failed to observe the class-bound subject matter of the film even before starting to watch it, and this might lead us to bring to mind that music still closely associated with British working-class culture (albeit a culture of another era), that is music hall. Aspects of the texture might be conceived in terms of a music-hall topic, because the suggestion of an off-beat right hand tallies well with many music hall accompaniments, as does the slightly brash or mildly honky-tonk timbre. But here again categorization is not straightforward because the sudden entry and ensuing silence, and the ambiguous metric organization with the stresses implying a 2 plus 3 might be taken to suggest the modernism of Bartók and Stravinsky or perhaps the additive rhythmic patterns of certain Latin American musics.

The cadential figure is followed by a short rest, at which point *sforzando* Es announce a shift up a tone to C sharp minor, the key center that dominates this opening cue (despite its beginning and ending in B), and we encounter a somewhat different topical reference with the swung, chromatic, walking bass unmistakably suggesting jazz and blues traditions. But again we sense an intersection of references when a shift back down a tone is underlined by the reinsertion of the opening figure which is again articulated so as to give a sense of discontinuity at odds with the dynamic impulse of the walking bass.

The shifting up and down a tone is a gesture particularly characteristic of rock, it perhaps brings to mind the alternation between chord I and the “so-called flattened seventh”, a pattern that tends to be considered a paradigm of rock harmony [1]. The use of two chordal regions a tone apart is such that two tonics are implied in a similar manner to that outlined by Stephenson in relation to rock's ubiquitous major to relative minor ambiguity [2]. But this pattern does not have the cyclic organization that would characterize an overtly rock context, indeed the repeated but irregular shift between C sharp, B and E suggest more of an extensional rather than an intentional approach to musical construction, a distinction outlined in Andrew Chester's influential take on rock aesthetics [3]. Furthermore the implication of two tonics whilst having precedence in rock might successfully be aligned to the juxtapositional logic of certain modernist musics despite the dominance of popular-music or jazz idioms at the surface level of this score.

As the location of the picture track and sound shift away from the building site to a busy London street the texture of the music fills out and there is a modal interchange with the introduction of E sharps implying C sharp mixolydian. This reinforces the growing sense of jazz as a controlling topic as do a series of right-hand piano figures that suggest improvisation.² By this means the ambiguity of musical style partially slips away as the cue plays out. This topical solidification (as we might call it) is also the result of the melody's articulation of what I would term formalized blue notes – formalized in that, what Ripani has identified as a range of pitches, is suggested by the sounding of both the major and the minor third [5]. These notes (G and G sharp) are at times made to work functionally through the implication of an augmented chord on the dominant, which then resolves to a major version of the tonic (a progression particularly characteristic of trad jazz) (see the end of bar 25 into 26 in Example 2 – note that the G is spelt F double sharp). The trill in the right hand also highlights the “blue” character of the phrase in bar 27.

² For a discussion of the notion of controlling topics see Sisman's ‘Genre, Gesture and Meaning in Mozart's “Prague” Symphony’ [4].

The image displays a musical score for the opening cue of *Riff Raff* (Loach/Copeland 1991). The score is written for piano and bass clef staves, featuring complex rhythmic patterns and key changes. The key changes are indicated by letters (B, C#, E, C# mixolydian) placed below the staves at various points in the music. The score is divided into systems, with measure numbers 6, 12, 17, 22, 26, and 31 marking the beginning of new systems. The music includes triplets and other rhythmic figures, and the key signature changes from B major to C# major and then to C# mixolydian.

6
B C#

12
C# B e

17
C# mixolydian

22
B E B

26
C# C# mixolydian

31
C# B

Example 2: Opening cue of *Riff Raff* (Loach/Copeland 1991) with letters below staves indicating key

The developing sense of jazz as a controlling topic is of interest, because, to draw again on Andrew Chester's distinction between extensional and intentional musics, jazz can be seen to have developed such that an essentially intentional music became more closely allied to extensional structural approaches as its harmonic palette broadened and the sense of large-scale harmonic movement became more common. Jazz, then, as with much of the material in this cue is not easily situated within those higher-lower distinctions of musical style that are habitually taken to suggest the differing strata of our class-bound societies.

The close-reading strategy I have deployed in opening this paper especially when focused, as it is, upon topical and genre reference already begins to give some sense of the complexity of significations that underpin the use of even the simplest music in cinematic contexts. It seems apt to begin with such an approach when wishing to consider class and its relationship with musical topics, because class as a social category is, it seems to me, particularly mobile and fraught with contradictions. It is not my intension, however, to simply highlight such complexities and contradictions or to point out their reflection in the music for *Riff Raff*. By relating my opening analysis to the theories of Charles Sanders Peirce, which receive some qualification from Bourdieu's notion of habitus, I hope, instead, to explore the possibility of identifying the ways in which music might be considered significant on two quite distinct but related levels. Identifying these levels in relation to both class and music might, in turn, provide insights into comparable processes that characterize the film text as a whole and lead us to reconsider Monelle's claim that we should not assume that the "signified [of the musical topic] was ever part of the social and material world" [6]. I will first look at these theoretical models before bringing them to bear upon the music of *Riff Raff*.

ACTUALITY AND MEANING

Peircian thought is characterized by triple thinking. For Peirce all thought can be understood in terms of semiosis and this process entails three identifiable aspects the sign (S), the object (O) and the interpretant (I). This, following G-G Granger and Monelle [7], can be schematized as shown in Figure 1.

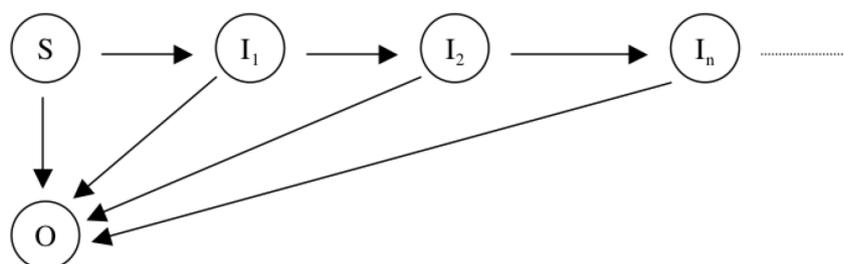


Figure 1: Monelle's schematization of the Peircian sign-complex following Granger

The components of the sign complex are not static but instead generate a series or network of significations because each interpretant will become a sign in relation to a new

thought that develops from it with reference to the object. Thus interpretants continually develop but the object is relatively fixed.

The relative fixity of the object brings us to the wider significance of Peircian thought. Each component of the sign complex is grounded in one of Peirce's three universal categories. Thus the sign can be described more broadly as firstness or potentiality; the object as secondness or actuality; and the interpretant as thirdness or habit.

Whilst triple thinking is central to Peircian models, there is a sense in which oppositions are also important. Something of this importance is gained when we consider his assertion that "nothing is more indispensable to a sound epistemology than a crystal-clear discrimination between the Object and the Interpretant of knowledge" [8].

What Peirce is getting at here is the sense in which actuality, the world as it is regardless of what we take it to be, can be opposed to habit or what I will term meaning. Actuality and meaning are related because the process of semiosis should lead to an ever fuller understanding of actuality or, to put another way, meanings will come to correspond to actuality in the long run. But despite this convergence it will be necessary in certain analytical contexts to discriminate between actuality and meaning.

The difficulty we can encounter in applying Peirce to say the music of *Riff Raff* is that whilst his distinction between actuality and meaning provides considerable scope for understanding the two levels of significance I wish to pursue in this paper, the idea that actuality and meaning will always converge is not particularly helpful in theorizing their stubborn separation in certain contexts. Or, to put another way, the idea that semiosis develops towards a matching of meaning and actuality does not always accord with aesthetic texts, because such texts can exhibit a central tension between their indexical dimension (that concerning actuality) and their symbolic dimension (that concerning their meaning).

It is on this point that the connection between the Peircian notion of habit (thirdness) might be developed in relation Bourdieu's concept of habitus. Habit, thirdness or meaning is not simply the product of semiosis for Peirce it is in a sense the governing principle of the process as a whole. Thus while the standard diagram of the sign complex suggests three distinct but relate components we need to qualify this model by considering the way in which the categories are contained within each other, suggesting the schematization favored by José Luiz Martinez (see Figure 2) [9].

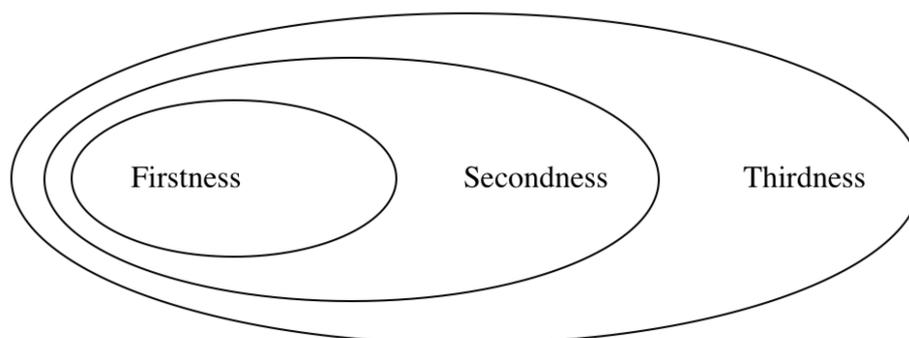


Figure 2: The interrelationship of the Peircian categories

For Peirce habit is the overriding principle of inquiry and it is thereby synonymous with reason. In our efforts to understand the world we deploy those habitual activities that allow us to gain an ever fuller and more accurate understanding of actuality. In considering a film or music text, however, the assumption that its meaning is driven solely or even primarily by reason seems problematic. What I have termed aesthetic texts will tend to concern themselves and/or an overtly unreal world and in this sense undermine the more straightforward connection to actuality suggested by Peirce's model. But how then can we theorize the distinct levels of signification that I, following Peirce, term actuality and meaning for a film such as *Riff Raff*? Bourdieu's ideas on cultural production point a way forward, I would suggest. Consider for example his statement that:

Each agent, wittingly or unwittingly, willy nilly, is a producer and reproducer of objective meaning [...] It is because subjects do not, strictly speaking, know what they are doing that what they do has more meaning than they know [10].

This notion of a set of meanings that are unintended or derived from a kind of unthinking process of production stands in stark contrast to Peirce's ideas concerning habit or reason. Like Peircian habit, however, Bourdieu's notion of habitus points to a generalized force that underpins human activity but it emphasizes the possibility of what we might understand as a kind of ideological interference that can lead to the reproduction or reinscription of assumptions and ideas that run contrary to the engagement of actuality so fundamental to Peircian models.

I would not want to eject the possibility of Peirce's more positive conception of human endeavor, however, not least because it enables us to see why Bourdieu's adherence to the empirical method is vitally important to the success of his projects, but also because it allows us to counter those claims that theories of ideology can simply be turned in on themselves as they lack an account of how it is possible to escape ideology in order to critique it. From this perspective the empirical method provides a means to pursue a fuller understanding that will, in the long run, come good despite the power of the habitus to interfere with such a process.

CLASS AND TOPIC IN FILM MUSIC

The theoretical possibilities afforded by Bourdieu's notion of habitus when brought within a Peircian framework are particularly useful as we approach the question of class and how the representation of class might be manifest in the topical fabric of the music for *Riff Raff*. Consider first the way in which the notion of class is itself subject to the tensions that stem from the habitus/actuality split. This can be explored through the distinction between class as culture and class as socio-economic position. This distinction highlights the possibility of economic mobility unaccompanied by cultural renegotiation or only partial change – the old adage that you can take someone out of the ghetto but you can't take the ghetto out of her or him. Furthermore a change in cultural modes of reference do not necessarily entail a change in socio-economic position, like Susan in *Riff Raff*, one might adopt the trappings of lower-middle class hippiedom and consider oneself a part of the cultural industries whilst remaining precariously close to destitution.

If we accept the far-reaching distinction between actuality and habitus, however, we can firstly recognize that an incongruence between the symbols of the habitus (class as

culture) and the indices of actuality (class as socio-economic position) should not lead us to suggest that injustices at the level of actuality are no longer intelligible or relevant. If there appears to be a tendency for high-low class-cultural distinction to be eroded by the culturally omnivorous middle-classes this should not lead us to ignore what appears to be a concomitant reinforcing of class division at the level of actuality or socio-economic position. Furthermore, the possibility afforded by Peircian models concerning the process through which meaning or understanding can be brought into line with actuality allows us to reassert Derek Scott's point, made with reference to Bourdieu's *Distinction*, that it is possible to trace a clear connection between class as actuality and the musical culture developing around and through it [11]. In the final part of this paper I will bring these arguments to bear upon the close reading strategies deployed during its opening.

In the study of popular music we can identify two central claims concerning its value. The first, which tends to be used to counter Hanslickian thought, is the point that popular music needs to be understood as a social phenomenon that makes no claims for transcendence, claims which are themselves viewed with suspicion [12]. The second, which tends to be used to counter certain Adornian arguments, is the point that popular music places special emphasis on those elements that are transparent to traditional Western music analysis, which Middleton frames in terms of "sound", motoric stimulus and nuance of pitch inflection [13].

These two points can be connected; it seems to me, through their tendency to invoke the actual. The social world, for example, is located in actions and objects (actuality) in a way that musical form and ideas are not. Similarly the narrowing of time frame that characterizes those elements of particular importance to popular music reflects the process by which actuality can be perceived. In Peirce's phenomenological terms, actuality is that which we knock up against and which is the case regardless of whether we understand it as such. Similarly, whereas classical music reception will tend to value the dynamic level of music in terms of its shaping, popular music reception tends to be more concerned with loudness per se – the point is as much to feel the bass as it is to reflect on its shaping.

In my account of the opening cue for *Riff Raff* I pointed to a number of broad topical references and suggested a tension between them, a tension that can, in turn, be taken to reflect a high-low cultural divide. I touched upon music hall, blues and rock and opposed them to tendencies, albeit slight, towards modernist techniques in the suggestion of additive rhythms and juxtapositional logic, and in the discontinuities in dynamic impulse. The emergence of jazz as a controlling topic, I also suggested, is significant at the level of meaning (as opposed to the level of actuality) because jazz has become something of a middle-brow genre.

At the level of meaning then we can recognize in the music for *Riff Raff* a series of topic-like references that serve as a means of negotiating the tension that derives from the class incongruence between its subject matter (the British working class and homeless) and its producers and audience, undoubtedly dominated by the professional or middle classes. In this way we can begin to explain why jazz, a music so often used in film for its association with black Americans, nightlife and clubs, is used to accompany shots of white British people in the daytime on building sites and London streets.

But this tension at the level of meaning derived from analysis, it seems to me, points to and intersects with a more fundamental tension articulated at the music's own levels of meaning and actuality. The point I am getting at here is that those elements

more closely bound to music's actuality do not tend to reflect the subject matter of the film. The absence of a drum kit, an instrument that will, more often than not, play a key role in providing the motoric stimulus of popular idioms, is particularly important here. More generally the palette adopted is that of a kind of jazz trio clearly dominated by the piano an instrument that, like jazz, has a mobile relationship with high-low cultural divisions. The absence of a drum kit might not prevent the development of a sense of motoric stimulus and indeed around bars 26 we gain something of this impulse through a far less fragmented right-hand piano part and the brief introduction of an inner part to provide further impetus. But this texture is reasonably short lived and needs to be placed in the context of the particularly discontinuous passage that proceeds in bars 22 to 25.

It does not seem far-fetched to me, then, to posit a perceptible tendency for the actuality of a film's music to reflect more determinedly the actuality of the film. That is for those elements that are often rendered transparent in traditional music analytical practices to be particularly important in understanding not the meaning of the film (its characters and narrative constructs) but its actuality – its social and market positioning and more specifically the actions and lives of its producers. The “sound” of the topics, then, perhaps says as much or even more about those institutions and producers that underpin the film's production and reception (i.e. Ken Loach, Channel 4, the International Federation of Film Critics, the Spanish Academy of Cinematic Art and Science, and the large body of organizations that form the Prix Italia community) as it does about the plight of large sections of the working class and the homeless in Britain. Furthermore, just as class as meaning or culture should not be wholly divorced from class as actuality or socio-economic position, so the class implications of musical topics should not be isolated from the real world through which they develop because the class-implications of any musical utterance comes into play at the level of the music's very fabric or actuality.

Finally, then, and to stretch my central point a little further, might we even come to question whether similar insights can be developed in relation to the film's meaning? If at the level of the music working-class idioms are made palatable by aligning those more telling musical elements to the expectations of a middle-class audience could it also be the case that the lives of British working class men and women are presented in accordance with the habits or habitus of middle-class cinematic conventions so as to render them assimilable by a more dominant stratum of society?

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“To Everything There Is a Season”: Topic Formation and the *Hearts of Space*

Byron Almén & James Buhler, *The University of Texas, TX, USA*

ABSTRACT

Hearts of Space is an American radio program that began in 1973 as a weekly show on KPFA-FM in the San Francisco area devoted to a range of newly emergent music genres—among them ambient and so-called “space” music. By 1983, it had achieved sufficient stature to be syndicated on public radio stations across the U.S. and was part of the development of a growing “New Age” movement, a phenomenon that it has significantly helped to define and shape over the last thirty years. As a result of its privileged status and dedicated fan base, the show has become a pivotal force in the construction and formation of this new genre, including the development and codification of its constitutive stylistic categories and subcategories. Soon after its syndication launch, the program began to release CDs on its own record label; these efforts at branding were eventually eclipsed by web-based distribution of its many weekly programs (totaling 980 episodes as of 25 May 2012) and recordings (around 150 as of the same date).

The show’s website offers numerous categorical divisions of its extensive content, including geographical-stylistic genres such as “African-Sub-Saharan,” “Ambient,” “Cinematic/Soundtrack,” and “Sacred/Choral,” among others. But the site reserves a special place for organization via the four seasons: roughly 2/3 of its content has been catalogued under one of these four categories. This foregrounding of seasonal topical associations invites critical consideration of its classificatory criteria. In this paper, we will offer a mapping of these seasonal topics and their subcategories. As an example of topic formation in tandem with genre construction, the use of seasonal categories in *Hearts of Space* offers a window into the complicated negotiations between artists, audiences, distributors (both corporate and nonprofit), and the distinctive and emergent properties of the genre.

INTRODUCTION

Hearts of Space is an American radio program that began in 1973 as a weekly show on KPFA-FM in the San Francisco area devoted to a range of newly emergent music genres—among them ambient and so-called “space” music. By 1983, it had achieved sufficient stature to be syndicated on public radio stations across the U.S. and was part of the development of a growing “New Age” movement, a phenomenon that it has significantly helped to define and shape over the last thirty years. As a result of its privileged status and dedicated fan base, the show has become a pivotal force in the construction and formation of this new genre, including the development and codification of its constitutive stylistic categories and subcategories. Soon after its syndication launch,

the program began to release CDs on its own record label; these efforts at branding were eventually eclipsed after 2001 by web-based distribution of its many weekly programs (totaling 985 episodes as of 24 July 2012) and recordings (around 150 as of the same date).

The show's website (hos.com) offers numerous categorical divisions of its extensive content, including geographical-stylistic genres such as "African-Sub-Saharan," "Ambient," "Cinematic/Soundtrack," and "Sacred/Choral," among others. But the site reserves a special place for organization via the four seasons: about half its content has been catalogued under one of these four categories: 165 shows for summer, 133 for winter, 132 for autumn and 94 for spring. This foregrounding of seasonal topical associations invites critical consideration of its classificatory criteria and this paper will offer a mapping of these seasonal topics and their subcategories.

PROCEDURE

Because every weekly episode is characterized by three descriptions of increasing size and level of detail—(1) a short one-to-six-word title, (2) a phrase or pair of phrases that summarizes the essential content, and (3) a lengthier treatment of one or more paragraphs that is also heard to accompany the program's opening minutes, along with a track listing narrated in the closing minutes—it is possible to produce a mapping between the verbal descriptions and the musical-semantic content of the episodes within each season category.

We approached this task from both a quantitative and a qualitative angle. The *quantitative* approach consisted of processing all textual descriptions for the programs within each seasonal category through a word-cloud generator. We then removed all non-pertinent words, such as grammatical modifiers, from the word cloud. The remaining words in the cloud provided a visual representation based on a statistical measure of the semantically relevant terms central to the season. Tables 1-4, included in the Appendix, illustrate the resulting word cloud (and accompanying word counts for the top 50 terms) corresponding to each season.

The *qualitative* approach consisted in analyzing a representative sample of 50 descriptive entries for each seasonal category, drawn from four different periods of the program's history (early, early-middle, late-middle, and recent). Based on our own musical expertise and our experience with the music and the site in question, we selected what seemed to us to be the most important and salient terms for each entry. When possible, we removed those terms that were common to all four seasons—terms such as "music" and "ambience" that characterized the whole genre rather than a single season. From the resulting list of terms, we selected those which were most common and/or most striking to form a master list for each season. In so doing, we attempted to retain sufficient terms to establish the diversity of semantic content. Next, we grouped these terms into emergent functional categories based on shared features. Our analysis revealed that the terms organize themselves into five functional categories: (1) nature images, (2) cultures, (3) moods and symbols, (4) seasonal holidays, and (5) certain highlighted musical features, genres, or types. Table 5, included in the Appendix, presents the selected terms for each season grouped by functional category. We then compared the quantitative word-cloud lists with the qualitative functional lists to determine whether certain terms worthy of

attention had been omitted from one or the other. We made corrections to the qualitative list based on this comparison.

Even given this classification, the terms and categories seems at first glance somewhat scattered and diffuse. The lists, however illuminating, do not reveal the diverse hierarchical deployment of terms within the signifying system. Examining their use carefully shows that certain terms derive from other terms and that some terms play a much more integral role in organizing the seasonal category than do others. This in turn suggests that the seasons form a general conceptual matrix that generates and orders the terms. We suggest a provisional hierarchy of these terms in the following discussion, premised on the following principles that we imagine the site's creative team to have followed, at least implicitly.

1. Each season as a semantic entity is assumed to comprise a small set of primary terms corresponding to a relatively more immediate range of associations that define the basic conceptual topography of each season.

2. Another, larger, set of secondary terms can be derived from the primary terms. These terms appear to characterize the primary terms more precisely and to contribute a greater degree of nuance, but their connection to the season labels themselves are more indirect.

3. Further levels of association can be established for the remaining terms until the entire list is accounted for. In general, non-primary terms intersect with musical signification and pull musical elements into the semantic orbit of seasonal topical signification through the process of connotation.

4. We have not ruled out the possibility that a term may appear at multiple points in the hierarchy (reflecting a kind of semantic reinforcement of the term from several angles). The matrix also generates formulations that are hybrids of seasons and so are not well-defined in and of themselves. Indian music, for instance—while associated primarily with spring (e.g., 191)—also appears quite frequently with summer (e.g., 737) and many of the Indian-themed shows (e.g., 839, 875, 948, and 979) are listed under both. Water and light likewise figure in all seasons, although each season gives the term a distinctive inflection. Other articulations of season arise from clouds of excess signifiers, any of which may be present or absent but as a group nevertheless suggest the season. What is also striking is that the seasons are not treated equivalently in either discursive or musical registers despite their common hierarchical organizations. In both cases, different categories are chosen as primary for each season. This provisional hierarchy helps to explain the inclusion of each term and its place in the signifying system of each season.

5. Working against this proliferation of terms are various means of concentrating the force of signification to increase the conceptual coherence of each season into a more or less well-ordered metaphorical field. We have identified four primary means of giving definition to this metaphorical field:

- (a) **Basic organizing concept**—a general term that distills the conceptual framework of the season. For example, summer's basic organizing concept is heat; winter's concept is not cold, however, but absence.

- (b) **Representational tenor**—a more particularizing term than the basic organizing concept; it draws other terms in to fill out the conceptual framework with a distinct metaphorical resonance. For example, summer's representational tenor is plenitude, which combined with the basic organizing concept of heat, yields the image of the steamy jungle.

In the case of winter, the representational tenor of austerity relates to deprivation, lack and stasis.

(c) **Characteristic timbre or instrument**—an instrument or timbre consistent with and reinforcing the organizing concept and representational tenor. The characteristic instrument of summer, for instance, is the drum, whereas for winter it is the bell.

(d) **Representational mode**—the dominant set of codes (real to imaginary) and hue (dark to light) that control the strategies of representation for each season. Both summer and winter are characterized by a fusion of codes with respect to the continuum of real to imaginary but they differ with respect to hue, with summer being light and winter being dark. Table 6 presents a summary analysis of the terms of conceptual coherence for each season.

	<i>Summer</i>	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Winter</i>	<i>Spring</i>
<i>Organizing Concept</i>	<i>Heat</i>	<i>Decline</i>	<i>Absence</i>	<i>Emergence</i>
<i>Representational Tenor</i>	<i>Plenitude</i>	<i>Loss and Melancholy</i>	<i>Austerity</i>	<i>Pastoral</i>
<i>Characteristic Timbre</i>	<i>Drum</i>	<i>Wood flute</i>	<i>Bell</i>	<i>Guitar</i>
<i>Representational Mode</i>	<i>Light Fusion, Cultural Codes</i>	<i>Dark Cultural Codes</i>	<i>Dark Fusion, Cultural Codes</i>	<i>Light Realistic Codes</i>

Table 6: Summary Analysis of the Seasons

The final step in the present analysis is to suggest certain musical features within the episodes of each system that correlate with the system thus obtained. This process of correlation is not simple, and a corresponding analysis proceeding in the other direction—from a map of the musical-semantic content toward the verbal descriptors—is required for a full treatment of the material. We have confined ourselves to the text-to-music direction for the purposes of this paper in the interest of space. For the same reason, we have also restricted detailed consideration to summer and fall.

SUMMER

By far the largest category, summer also appears to be the most central to establishing the matrix of the seasons, which is why we begin our analysis with it. It is also the one that is most coherent in its organization and the one that emerged in definite form at the earliest stage in the show. As noted above, the primary concept that organizes summer is heat, and the other terms in the category reflect it in direct (desert), oblique (dream, breeze) and even seemingly contradictory (cool) ways. The use of heat as the primary organizing concept for summer leads directly to the association with warm geographical regions, specifically the equatorial zones. Many of the summer-themed shows therefore feature the music of the Middle East (108, 294, 523, 630, 631, 637, 670, 694, 698, 805, 811, 838, 878, 887, and 984), Latin America (559, 701, 706, 734, and 917) and the Mediterranean (227, 704, 571, 637, 668, 694, 769, 811, 846, and 950). In fact, summer is somewhat unusual in having such a strong geographical emphasis to its representation. Although each of the seasons does draw music from particular regions and although the seasons are mapped onto global regions—summer as equatorial; fall and spring as temperate; winter as arctic—so that a year seems to trace a cyclic journey from the equator through the temperate zones, to the arctic and back, summer features cultural importations far more prominently than do the other seasons.

The chain of associations often moves past geographical location to focus, for example, on the most obvious climatic conditions of the equatorial zone, desert and rainforest, which leads immediately to an opposition of humidity and aridity. This opposition explicitly structures “Equator” (455). The program opens with this description:

STEAMY jungles, exotic birds, trackless deserts, and trancelike rhythms. Just a few of the sights and sounds that come to mind when we think of the music on this program. On this edition of Hearts of Space called EQUATOR, we travel along the sun-drenched midsection of the planet [...] in search of the spacemusic of heat.

The program includes music of Tuu (UK), Steve Roach (US), Vidna Obmana (Belgium), Mo Bama (US), O Yuki Conjugate (UK), Jon Hassell (US), Robert Rich (US), Alio Die (Italy) and basically consists of exotica of the equatorial region, that is, music composed to evoke the concept of “heat” more as a figure of imaginary dream state than as a signifier for actual geography. Other shows focus on the arid or on the humid rather than on the opposition per se. Like “Equator,” “Tales of Sand” (434), for instance, derives its sensibility from Western cultural myths and cinematic moods conventionally used to depict the desert. The soundscape is more imaginary than real. Over the years, the show has increasingly tapped into the resources of the burgeoning world music market to fill in its imaginary soundscapes with concrete indigenous musical detail, the code of the real.

Even with the increased use of modalities that draw liberally on nature sounds and indigenous idioms, the show’s focus remains on the construction of imaginary rather than documentary soundscapes. “Desert Caravan” (984), for instance, purports to offer a rich mixture of North African, Greek, Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic, and Indian music. But the show’s focus remains the image, “the romantic trans-cultural sound of the Middle East,” rather than any actual sound rooted to place, and so the music selected retains a sense of having been worked on to produce the imaginary particularity of its soundscape; its representational modes continue to draw primarily from fusion or exotica rather than from

nature sounds or indigenous folk music. The preference for a mode of representation that emphasizes codes of the imaginary over those of the real seems even stronger for the shows devoted to the rainforest or jungle (“Amazon Passage” (296), “Lagoon” (233), and “Amazonia” (228)). This suggests perhaps that humid heat provides fertile conditions for musical fantasy to run wild.

The steamy heat of the jungle is a figure of excess and plenitude, the representational tenor of summer. The dry heat of the desert, by contrast, plays more toward its contrary of austerity, the representational tenor of winter. As such, the jungle is arguably more central to the image of summer than is the desert. Yet in general the category of summer is defined less by the presence of positive terms than by structuring oppositions: day/night, light/dark, wet/dry, excessive/austere, earth/sky, energetic/languid, and in terms of representational modes real/imaginary. Even its primary structuring concept of heat enters into the opposition with cold to form the common dyad warm/cool. As in the case of desert, the minor term of the opposition is often an effective means of representation, and the unrelenting quality of the major term, day or warmth, for example, is often figured through negation by the respite offered by its corresponding minor term—for example, the relaxing summer night, the refreshing cool breeze. Notably, the two summer holidays that get the most attention—the solstice (Midsummer) and American Independence Day (844, 916)—are both focused on evening activities, which likewise emphasizes the minor term of the opposition. As befits their status as exceptions, holidays disrupt the usual representational regime and disrupt the musical field. The shows based around Independence Day, for instance, feature American patriotic music, which lies off the representational grid of the show; so much so, that these shows are not even catalogued under the rubric of “summer.”

These oppositions generate a constellation of tertiary terms that are not themselves strictly speaking oppositional: earthy, rhythmic, sensual, sultry, floating, tribal, and so forth. Earthy, sensual and sultry all relate to the representational tenor of plenitude, to the manifest physicality of life, and to the requirements for its sustenance and reproduction. Floating suggests a suspended, languid quality that plays toward the sky, a lifting of energy that radiates upward from the earth. Prominent rhythmic figures, which, like melody, are generally given less emphasis in the music featured on *Hearts of Space*, appear more frequently in summer, and it is likewise linked to the energetic quality: rhythm as self-perpetuating, organic, the heartbeat of the world. Summer is also therefore more likely to feature the sound of the drum, its characteristic timber, which links it as well to a tribal element. As noted above, summer is of all the seasons the one most likely to draw on indigenous music and from a much wider range of sources. The profusion of musical cultures in summer draws from the tenor of plenitude but also suggests the musical articulation of human culture at its zenith.

AUTUMN

Autumn presents an interesting contrast to summer. Rather than heat, the basic organizing concept is decline. Because autumn therefore works on the conditions of summer, it is a transitional season, presenting the turn from heat to cold, the shortening of the day, the descending angle of the sun. “As the shadows grow longer, the earth rumbles and contracts and the leaves wither and die, leaving a world of orange, red and brown

relics decaying on wet ground” (539). Autumn is structured not by opposition but by mixing and a loss of the distinctions of summer. As such the representational strategies of autumnal music do not rely as heavily on geographical regions. That is, unlike summer with its polyglot of cultural importations, few autumnal programs focus exclusively on musical evocations of a particular geographical region. The main exception to this rule is the relatively common appearance of Native American music (404, 437, 504, 577, 608, 647, 677, 710, 744, 783, 817, 854, 893, and 929), which might relate symbolically to the notion in the American imaginary of Native American culture as historically destined to fade as the frontier advanced. In these cases, the modality of musical representation rarely moves beyond evocation and fusion; the programs only present, as it were, the ghostly trace of Native American music, usually in the form of a breathy, melancholic wood flute playing in an idiomatic fashion. In any event, the representational modality of pure indigenous folk music, uncommon even in summer, is virtually absent from autumnal programs.

Soundscapes for the autumnal programs are primarily constructed around the basic organizing concept of decline itself: dark timbres, muted colors and dysphoric, sometimes turbulent moods. And mood is the dominant representational mode. This gives autumn a representational tenor of loss and melancholy. If autumn is the season of harvest and momentary abundance, any feeling of exuberance is tempered by the recognition that the world is dying and that the stores cannot be replenished. The clearly marked oppositions that ruled over summer recede into an undifferentiated world of mist and gloom. Autumn therefore also presents a crisis of cultural articulation, where on the one hand an assertive stormy face rages at a loss of distinction that its turbulence only further erodes, but on the other hand a pensive elegiac face reflects on those distinctions that it can retain only as haunted forms. This play between energetic turbulence and introspective haunting gives autumn a narrower, but more characteristic representational field than summer, whose representational range is much wider, but also for that reason more diffuse. It is not surprising then that unusual emphasis is given to the zodiac sign of Scorpio and the cross-quarter festival of Halloween, which celebrates the dark spirit of nature and inflects the season’s representational tenor of loss toward a gloomy melancholia.

CONCLUSION

As mentioned above, the preceding semantic analysis of the season categories in *Hearts of Space* forms one part of a larger project. Missing from the present discussion are the roles that the musical content itself plays in the establishment and development of the new topical categories. For example, features of the ambient and spacemusic genres themselves constrain the range of acceptable semantic choices; these choices give rise to particular signficatory axes rather than others. Furthermore, pre-existing musical *topoi* certainly suggest, through their inclusion in the weekly programs, other music-topical associations that can be more determinative of topical categories than those derived from verbal descriptors.

Finally—and especially in the earlier stages of the program’s history—the choice of repertoire to be included in individual programs appears to be more determinative than the semantic associations with which they are (or become) associated. This observation also touches upon the larger issue of how the seasonal topics were shaped over time. In the

program's early years, seasonal categories were not explicit, since these categories appeared only with the emergence of the website archive in the last decade or so. Instead, the back catalogue of titles appearing on the program before syndication and the demands of surveying new recordings were likely the primary influences at this point. Insofar as *Hearts of Space* is a weekly program, the neo-pagan aspects of the New Age genre (including seasonal associations) would have emerged naturally out of consideration of what should be included at a particular point in the year. Over time, the implicit weight of emerging seasonal connotations would have suggested themselves directly to the program's creative team, and would likely have become a more explicit criterion for the development of episode content. By the time seasonal categories were introduced, the program had a long unspoken history of associations to draw upon. Later programs (after about Episode 600) are therefore more articulate with respect to seasonal distinctions, a phenomenon that is less focused in the earlier episodes. As a result, the formation of seasonal topics can be said to result from a complex interplay between musical content and associations, semantic content and associations, the influences of the foundational genres (ambient, spacemusic), issues related to producing a weekly program, and the influence of new forms of distribution (syndication, the internet). These issues will be further developed in our future publications on this subject.

	<i>Summer</i>	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Winter</i>	<i>Spring</i>
<i>Nature images</i>	Jungle Desert Water Breeze Sky Warm/Cool Day/Night	Mist Shadow Darkness Transition Gloom Cold Twilight	Mountains Seas Dark/Light Cold/Warm	Water Thaw Day Green Dawn Light Birds Earth
<i>Cultures</i>	Mediterranean Arabic Indonesian Spanish Latin America Equatorial South Asian	Scandinavia (like winter) Native American Peru	Scandinavia Tibet Eastern Europe Celtic Classical (choral)	Celtic (St. Patrick's) Pacific Japan India China England Middle Eastern (like Summer)
<i>Symbols</i>	Energetic/Languid Floating Tribal Rhythmic Dream Culture Life	Changing Bittersweet Hidden Calm Foreboding Catharsis Somber Ghosts Spectral Subtle Restraint Deflationary Receding Wistful Turbulence	Quiet Consolation Harmony Peace Catharsis (like Fall) Austerity Silence Nothing Death	Cyclic elements Dawn of Culture Redemption Rebirth Emergence Pastoral Garden Fertility Nature
<i>Holidays</i>	Midsummer American Independence Day	Halloween/All Saints Day Scorpio	Christmas Solstice New Year's	St. Patrick's Day Easter
<i>Music</i>	Drum Rhythm	Wood Flute Lullaby Elegy	Bell Christmas Carols Choral Drone Wire-strung instruments	Nature sounds Guitar

Table 5: Semantic Fields by Season

Topical Uses of Opera in Television Commercials: Three Case Studies¹

Su Yin Mak, PhD, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, HK

ABSTRACT

This paper adapts and broadens topic theory to study the interaction between cultural themes and musical styles within a contemporary context in which the rhetorical act is clearly circumscribed: the television commercial. Comparative analysis of three television commercials from Britain, Korea and Hong Kong which all use Puccini's "Nessun dorma" as soundtrack demonstrates different semiotic alignments between cultural and musical codes. I argue that these commercials not only articulate subsets of a global cluster of meanings associated with opera, but also posit new, locally defined connotations for the topos. The analysis also problematizes opera's place within current debates about "high" and "low" culture, and explores the extent to which these classifications are continually being repositioned.

INTRODUCTION

Recent research has witnessed growing interest in the ways global and local factors interact in the production of meaning in music. The methodologies that have emerged, though diverse, are inevitably grounded in the notion of style. That is, when considering the ways in which communities of listeners recognize, construct and interpret musical meanings, reference to stylistic categories or distinctions is unavoidable. Yet the question of how styles may foster rhetorical linkage between music and meaning, and more crucially how the modes of such linkage may vary from community to community, have rarely been addressed from a music-theoretical perspective.

This paper adapts and broadens topic theory to study the interaction between cultural themes and musical styles within a contemporary context in which the rhetorical act is clearly circumscribed: the television commercial. It will be in two parts. Part I draws attention to three semiotic features of musical topics that allow the efficient communication of meaning, and considers how the associations of Italian opera in popular culture may be modeled topically. Part II compares and analyzes three television commercials from Britain, Korea and Hong Kong which all use Puccini's "Nessun Dorma" as soundtrack, but which have very different intended messages, towards demonstrating the multivalent role of music in the promotion of social and cultural paradigms.

¹ This paper is a shortened version of my article "Pitching the Sale: A Cross-cultural Comparison of Operatic Topoi in Television Commercials," *Musica Humana* Vol. 3 No. 1 (Spring 2011), p. 61-82.

PART I: TOPIC THEORY

Since conference participants are no doubt familiar with topic theory, I will focus directly on three semiotic features of musical *topoi* that are particularly noteworthy for our present purpose. First, topical signification is dependent upon familiarity with stylistic conventions and knowledge of the cultural contexts in which they have been habitually employed. Second, topics signify metonymically: stylistic gestures are recognized as tokens of a type rather than appreciated for their uniqueness. Third, the notion of “topic” does not describe a one-to-one correspondence between gesture and meaning, but rather posits semiotic links between a characteristic musical style and a range of expression.

The point may be illustrated by the pastoral *topos* in Western art music of the common practice period. Composers and listeners of the time would have had a shared consensus on the stylistic markers for the pastoral: moderate tempo, compound duple meter, use of wind instruments, and simple diatonic harmony often involving a drone. These features together constitute a single topical category, yet its signification is multivalent. It may function as a marker for low social status (as in the aria “Deh veni, non tardar” from *The Marriage of Figaro*, which is sung by Susanna, a maid servant), or as a Christian symbol of the Nativity (as in Handel’s “He shall feed his flock like a shepherd” from *The Messiah*). It may even metaphorically refer to a lost Arcadia to signify nostalgia and loss (as in “Der Lindenbaum” from Schubert’s *Die Winterreise*). The pastoral *topos* points towards a cluster of related meanings, which a composer may *selectively* call forth depending on the needs of the particular communicative context. It delimits, rather than dictates, the shared response that a particular musical style will induce.

Compare the topical use of “Italian opera” in contemporary popular culture. Since musical *topoi* function as aural analogues of cultural *topoi*, in today’s heterogeneous global culture they often have a greater semiotic range, and may indeed even enshrine potentially contradictory meanings. To cite an obvious example, “Italian opera” signals “Italian-ness”, but because this “Italian-ness” would be variously stereotyped by different communities of listeners, the *topos* might evoke timeless classicism for some, ephemeral fashion for others, and even the Mafia for certain American audiences. Likewise, the elitist connotations of opera can be interpreted positively or negatively. Indeed, opera could suggest *both* emotional authenticity via its associations with the passionate *and* the opposite effect of emotional phoniness via its associations with social snobbery.

The following issues arise: What happens to the signification process when stylistic recognition remains constant but the social and cultural context has shifted? Do disparate listening communities articulate different subsets of a global cluster of meanings, or do they each posit new, localized associations? Do other semiotic factors come into play? The rest of this paper considers these issues with reference to three television commercials from Britain, Korea and Hong Kong with operatic soundtracks. The analysis proceeds from a clearly-defined communicative function – from meaning – to the part played by music in the realization of that meaning.² To minimize the number of variables, I have chosen examples which all use the same music: the aria “Nessun Dorma” from Puccini’s *Turandot*.

² Thus I approach the question of musical meaning from the same direction as Nicholas Cook in the opening chapter of his book *Analyzing Musical Multimedia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998). My topical methodology is, of course, quite different from Cook’s.

PART II: THE TELEVISION COMMERCIALS

The notion of musical topic, derived from the cultural contexts in which stylistic gestures have been habitually employed, signifies referentially. It therefore has tremendous potential as an analytical model for the use of music in advertising: Because advertising is an act of rhetorical persuasion that, unlike the one-on-one sales pitch, relies entirely on mass media, it is consequently dependent on widespread social meanings rather than on personal motivations for consumption. In modeling both the shared recognition of characteristic musical styles and their associated meanings for a given community of listeners, topic theory allows us to analyze musical styles as social and cultural signifiers – as what Umberto Eco has termed “cultural units” [1].

An Example from the UK

My first example is the BBC’s title sequence for its telecast of the 1990 Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup competition, which features a performance of “Nessun Dorma” by Luciano Pavarotti [2]. The sequence begins with scenes from classical antiquity, which turn out to be part of the décor of a grand theatre. Accompanying these images is the introductory chorus of the aria’s last section. At Pavarotti’s solo vocal entry, the stage curtains open to reveal two muses dancing around a giant World Cup trophy on what looks like a grandstand, with a large crowd of spectators in the background. On the word “vincero” (“I will win”), we see virtuoso play by famous footballers from international teams, and finally, on the climactic high C, we see goals being scored and celebrated.

An Italian aria sung by Italy’s most famous opera star is an obvious means of identifying the locale for the football tournament, and points towards several meanings popularly associated with opera: passion, virtuosity and spectacle. Pavarotti’s role as the BBC’s World Cup spokesman also resonates with the first “The Three Tenors” concert, which took place in Rome on the eve of the 1990 World Cup final and similarly establishes a link between the worlds of opera and football.³ But why merge the highbrow, elitist associations of opera with the working class sport?

Such a usage might be read in the light of two factors in Britain’s cultural climate at the time, the first having to do with opera and the second with football. As David T. Evans has shown, in Britain a state-supported opera has been promoted since the 1940s as an integral part of “culturism”, out of the belief that “a wider distribution of culture through society is desirable” and that “opera along with the best in all art forms should be available to everyone rather than just the privileged minority.” [3] A related phenomenon is the classical music boom in the 1980s, thanks to the rise of the compact disc and aggressive “crossover” marketing by record companies. This made Pavarotti a superstar. Three months before the BBC selected “Nessun Dorma” as its World Cup theme, the celebrity tenor’s compilation of his greatest hits, entitled “The Essential Pavarotti,” became the first classical album to make it into the British pop music charts, eventually reaching No.1 on 23 June 1990 [4]; “Nessun Dorma” spent 11 weeks in the singles chart and reached No.2, the highest position ever for a classical work, on 30 June 1990 [5].

³ I was, however, unable to find any documented evidence as to whether advance publicity for the Three Tenors concert might have influenced the BBC’s choice of World Cup theme music.

As for football, from the late 1960s football hooliganism was a well-known social problem in Britain, and by the 1980s this “English disease” was being exported to continental Europe. On 29 May 1985, a serious riot occurred at Heysel Stadium in Brussels on the occasion of the European Cup Football Championship Final between the English and Italian teams Liverpool and Juventus. Shortly before kickoff, Liverpool supporters stampeded through section barriers towards their rival fans, causing 39 deaths and more than 400 injuries. The tragedy resulted in all English football league clubs being banned from playing in European competitions by the Union of European Football Association (UEFA), a ban that was not lifted until 1990, the year of the World Cup.⁴

In light of the crisis in the image of professional football in Britain around 1990, the BBC’s use of “Nessun Dorma” as its World Cup theme communicates complex and multiple layers of message. First, the operatic style is a means of gentrification, but in order to avoid alienating the traditionally working class football audience, the BBC downplays the elitism and exclusivity popularly associated with opera by choosing an aria and a singer with mass appeal. Second, the use of an opera aria as a football anthem *both* acknowledges that football involves passion, physical strength, and acts of virtuosity, *and* implies that these qualities may be expressed in a genteel and civilized manner. Likewise, the quasi-classical and theatrical allusions turn spectator sport into spectacle, and situate the World Cup tournament in a “safe”, non-violent environment. Finally, the image of Pavarotti further distances football from its associations with hooliganism, as the singer’s big, cuddly persona is about as far removed as possible from that of the football thug. The advertising message relies on both the topical associations for opera and the persona of the performer. Indeed, Pavarotti himself becomes a commodity that enshrines the very qualities that the operatic style is meant to project.

Two Examples from Asia

The semiotic role of singer’s persona may be clarified by my next example, a Korean commercial for luxury apartments by the Doosan Construction Company [6]. The commercial begins with the image of a satellite orbiting the earth in space. A female voice marvels, “It’s the sun – no, it’s The Zenith,” and tall skyscrapers rise up from the ground. The picture then switches to the interior of a luxury apartment decorated in a contemporary modernist style, and occupied by an elegant woman in an ornamental pose. The voice-over changes to a male voice: “The 80th floor: how high you live represents how high you have risen in life.” As the woman moves to stand in front of a picture window with a spectacular view of the city, the message is made explicit: The Zenith is “for the top in Korea.”⁵

Why does “Nessun dorma” accompany images of technology and outer space, images that are quite foreign to opera’s usual range of reference? As in the BBC title sequence, the music in the Zenith commercial is also a quotation of a popular hit, and the singer’s persona likewise plays an important role in its signification. What is quoted – and credited on screen – is a performance by Paul Potts. Potts was a mobile phone salesman in a small town before rocketing to worldwide fame after winning the 2007 Britain’s Got Talent competition with a performance of this very aria [7]. In January 2008 he began an international concert tour that included performances in Korea. Potts cultivated a public persona as a man of humble origins whose talent and perseverance

⁴ I am grateful to Christopher Pak for drawing my attention to the significance of the Heysel Stadium riot.

⁵ I am grateful to Youn Kim for helping me translate the Korean text of this commercial.

led him to success, and this image was propagated by the Korea media in the advance reports of his concerts in Seoul [8].

In this Korean commercial, Potts is thus an icon for rags-to-riches success, his high C an aural analogue of the skyscraper that symbolizes the “zenith” of achievement. Moreover, the commercial taps into the primary topical association for opera in Asia, which is social rather than cultural elitism – a social elitism that moreover, is premised on wealth rather than on notions of taste and refinement. Like the staidly elegant woman in the commercial, the opera *topos* is a status symbol and a status symbol only. The advertising message has little engagement with the passion and theatricality of the music, which has become a mere subtext.

This is not the case in my last example, which is also a commercial for apartments from Asia, but one by the Hong Kong property developer Sino Land [9]. How does the operatic soundtrack participate in the construction of social paradigms? In line with the property’s ostentatious name, The Palazzo, the commercial is replete with overblown images of opulence and aristocracy (horses, ballrooms, grand staircases and the like). It also alludes to a stereotypical understanding of opera plots: there is some sort of love story that involves feverish pursuit and complex intrigue before ending with passionate consummation. Furthermore, all the actors in the commercial are Caucasian: what is being touted as “a classic above it all” is the “Western-ness” of a Europhile imagination.

Market research has shown that Chinese consumers tend to associate global images and foreign appeals in advertising with status, modernity, and cosmopolitan sophistication. In a study by Nan Zhou and Russell W. Belk, which uses a reader-response approach to learn how Chinese consumers react to television and print ads with various emphases on the global, foreign or Western on the one hand, and the Chinese, local or Asian on the other, informants have commented that foreign models “have better figures and better dispositions,” “show the prestige of the owners,” and “look more expressive and unrestrained.” The researchers conclude that “the current gauge of status and success in China is the degree to which something is thought to be ‘global’, or more accurately, Western ... as it is a symbol associated with people who are recognized as being successful, those claiming to be successful, and those aspiring to success. Consumption of Western things is perceived to separate the ‘successful’ from the ‘unsuccessful’” [10].

In Hong Kong, the association between opera and luxury residential developments is a commonplace one. Because opera performances are seen as occasions for social networking among the elite, they are often sponsored by property developers who wish to capitalize on opera’s exclusive status. The inaugural gala concert of Opera Hong Kong, the city’s professional opera company, is a case in point. The name of a luxury property, Residence Bel-Air, is prominently displayed on the concert poster, while the names of the performers only appear in fine print (see Figure 1).

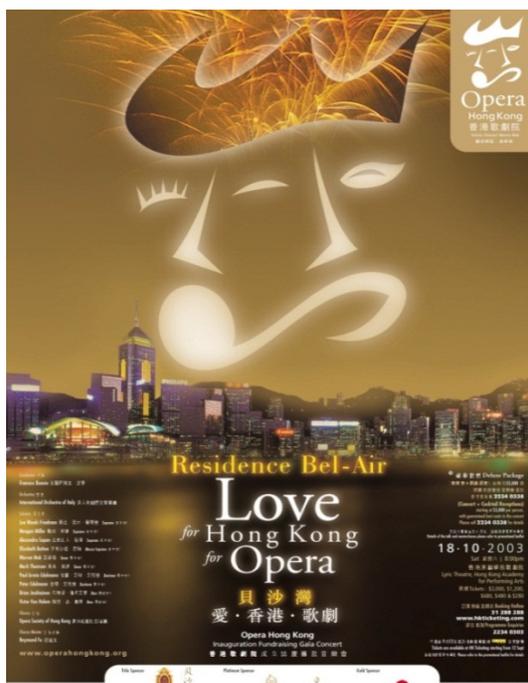


Figure 1: Poster for Opera Hong Kong's inaugural gala concert⁶

As in its Korean counterpart, then, the Hong Kong commercial uses the opera *topos* as a shorthand signifier of high status and wealth. Yet here the impression of luxury is mostly window dressing: the property is actually located in a suburb near an industrial area — not a high-end neighbourhood at all — and includes small-size units targeted towards the middle-class buyer rather than the economic elite. Now the target buyers are well aware of the huge gap between the advertising image [11] and the actual product (Figure 2): so *what* is the advertising message? I believe that, unlike the Korean commercial, what is being sold here is not a realistic status symbol, but a fantasy ideal of an imagined cosmopolitanism; not “this property is tangible proof that you have attained success,” but “this property would make you *feel* like you are living in the passionate, sophisticated, luxurious and Westernized world of grand opera.”



Figure 2: The Palazzo, photograph by the author (2011)

⁶ Reproduced by kind permission of Opera Hong Kong.

This is a dubious message indeed for those who know that most grand operas do not have happy endings. For those who are familiar with Puccini's aria, the text of "Nessun Dorma" is also difficult to reconcile with the advertising of residential properties. Beginning with the words "no one will know his name" is surely inauspicious for brand recognition, and besides, who would want to live in a place where "none shall sleep!" Yet, before we mock the Asian advertisers for their imperfect understanding of Western highbrow culture, it is worth remembering that the original meaning of the aria is also irrelevant to the BBC example we saw earlier. As David T. Evans has suggested, the fact that opera is performed in languages that audiences are not expected to understand serves the generalized international requirements of advertising well; all the consumers need to know is that they can experience a "quality moment" by listening to what they are assured is "quality music" [12]. If in these commercials the misalignment of cultural and musical codes posits an ironic relationship between high art and mass culture, such irony is surely unwitting.

Power, authority and social class have long been articulated through cultural artifacts and their accompanying rituals, and, to quote the cultural historian Lawrence Levine, "precisely the same forms of culture can perform markedly distinct functions in different periods or among different groups [13]." In the three television commercials, we have seen how the operatic style is plundered and fragmented to form part of a globally or locally oriented cultural code. In modeling both the shared recognition of characteristic musical styles and their associated meanings for a given community of listeners, topic theory allows us to analyze such usage as social and cultural signifiers. It allows the scholar to problematize opera's place within current debates about "high" and "low" culture, and to explore the extent to which these classifications are continually being repositioned. After all, it is the intertextual spaces between music and culture that have the richest meaning.

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Listening to the Pop Music within the CCTV Spring Festival Gala

Jingdi Li, *The University of York, UK*

ABSTRACT

After Reform and Opening Up, the CCTV Spring Festival Gala, from the government-controlled station China Central Television, has disseminated performances to the whole of China annually on Chinese New Year's Eve. This programme has become the most watched television show in China with hundreds of millions of enthusiastic viewers nationwide. Its total length is 4.5 hours including all sorts of musical forms, not only focusing on traditional Chinese music, but also trying to introduce new kinds of Pop music. An examination of post reform Pop music on the CCTV Spring Festival Gala stage will shed light on how Chinese musical development continues to be closely intertwined with politics under tight state control.

Since the Reform and Opening Up Policy was introduced in Mainland China in 1978, China's relationship with the outside world and its self-image have altered drastically, while the relationship between music and politics has continued to push Communist agendas and to maintain a favorable view of the Party.

In this paper, I will focus on the Pop music theme from the most widely watched TV program of the past 28 years in China: the Spring Festival Gala that is broadcast annually through the official propaganda arsenal of the Party-China Central Television (CCTV in short). After its first broadcast in January 1983, the four-hour long TV show caused immediate shockwaves throughout China, and even brought overseas Chinese circles a sense of home. The total number of viewers was reported to be 499 million after the 2012 CCTV Spring Festival Gala, which was confirmed as a Guinness record [1].

After the implementation of the Reform and Opening Up policy, with economic change has come a cultural shift; foreign capital has arrived, bringing with it new cultural influences. Such rapid changes have challenged China's traditional culture. Communal identity is no longer only based on closed borders and strong political ideology. Most Chinese people now share a similar goal to their western peers, which is to improve their lives economically. The country looks and feels very different to its pre-reform self. With its vast audience and place at the centre of China's most culturally significant national festival and holiday, the CCTV Spring Festival Gala is an ideal tool for promoting 'harmony' by instilling a sense of identity and cohesion. However, while much attention has been paid to the sociological, economic and communication dimensions, little work has been done from a musicological approach [2] [3] [4].

How did politically influenced Pop music come to feature as the Party's newest propaganda tool in post reform China after a history of underground growth? I attempt to answer that and the following questions in this paper: how and why was Pop music introduced to Chinese audiences for the first time via the official propaganda platform,

the CCTV Spring Festival Gala, in 1983; what does the music sound like; how did the Party 'communicate' to the audience and deliver certain political information by encouraging and playing this type of Pop music; how did the audience receive it?

In 1978 the Chinese government introduced the Reform and Opening Up Policy, enacted at the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, aimed at opening China to the global economy and shifting it towards a market economy [5]. The term 'open' mainly referred to the outside world, in a broad sense, but also included internal opening. In these many ways, China's economic development has had a huge impact. This policy changed China's course politically, economically and culturally, in an attempt to gain global acceptance. While the value of Chinese civilization was challenged on the one hand, the Party on the other hand, was trying to maintain the idea of 'harmony' nationwide which has played a strong part in Chinese culture for 2,500 years. Harmony, an idealized way of expressing uniformity and conformity, features heavily in the works many Chinese philosophers, including Confucius. Maintaining harmony during this modern period of such great and rapid change is an issue for the Chinese government. The Reform and Opening Up period has seen a resurgence of interest in traditional Chinese music and instruments, as well as in Chinese history and traditional legends in general. The government has introduced new national holidays to mark Chinese traditions, such as Chinese New Year's Eve, and encouraged interest in Chinese history, art and music. At the same time, the relationship between music and politics has remained a regular feature of life, and represents the voice of the Party. Under its direct control, China Central Television broadcasts the CCTV Spring Festival Gala in order to promote China's transnational unity and its social harmony during the Party's new holiday evening, and also reconstructs China's multi-culture.

Mao required the direction of Chinese art to "remain the revolutionary theme" as it is a "part of the revolution career" and "represents the great Chinese people and their benefit" [6]. Since then, most Chinese artistic work has assumed a Communist identity, in other words serving as the Party's propaganda tool. However, after the Cultural Revolution, the Party's propaganda became much subtler.

Using Pop music (or *tongsu gequ* in Chinese) as a propaganda weapon on the CCTV Spring Festival Gala in 1983, was a significant turning point for the Party. CCTV invited a female Pop singer Li Gu-yi to perform nine songs in that year's Spring Festival Gala, including "*The Love of my Hometown*", which has a strongly characteristic Pop style. However before the reform, Pop music was banned by the Party and considered the sound of 'decadence', a symbol of 'Capitalism bourgeois', it was even renamed by the left wing newspapers as "*Huangse gequ*" ("porno songs") because it "sounds vulgar, contrived, and has no connection to the revolutionary career", it is the "low art" [7] [8]; additionally, China's highest leader Deng Xiao-ping announced a public document against 'spiritual pollution' three months before that performance. In this document, he says: the situation of the commercialized spiritual products influenced by the western world has reached its limitation [9] [10]. In regard to this, the Chinese Scholar Song Xiang-rui, from the Wuhan Conservatory of Music, thinks CCTV's behaviour in 1983 "was such a contradiction to the Communist Party's demand" [11]. But was this really a contradiction?

In opposition to Song's opinion, I think the first taste of Pop music on the CCTV Spring Festival stage was not a conflicting event. After the opening up, the Communist Party gradually abandoned its priority of being the only resource for information on

literature and music. From the communication point of view, the mass audience became an active receiver instead of the final passive target of the communication process. This model was reinforced dramatically. Information and feedback about various music themes and styles, especially Pop music, were exchanged among the audience regularly. They were eager to experience their real feelings by choosing the music they enjoyed, not just that fed via the Communist Party's choices. Influences from nearby Asian countries and further afield were introduced and widely spread in mainland China via unofficial channels, which was a cause for concern to the Party because of the unexpected underground growth of Pop culture, that prompted Deng's previous discourse. Therefore, as the 'receiver', during this music dissemination process, more than one billion Chinese people did hear one voice at the same time decided by their 'sender': an exquisite female voice gently performing in a 'untrained' style, delivering a sweetly melodic line within a relatively narrow musical range, as friendly as any ordinary person's speaking voice, completely different from the Western operatic singing style or the revolutionary themed marching songs during the Cultural Revolution, and it was readily accessible and memorable. Moreover, the lyrics were also very approachable and romantic:

We are far apart, but you keep all my deepest love.
Even if it is hard to meet you again, I will always remember your voice,
just let the wind bring my emotion to you, my dearest hometown [...]

After decades of strict control by the Party, the audience was deeply touched, and almost convinced this was a freshly composed love song. The singer and her song both soon became well known throughout the whole nation [12]. Pop music might originally have been a product of the bourgeoisie, but it could be refined and "serve the Great Chinese proletariats life" too. Nevertheless, this was only the prelude to the introduction of Pop music in mainland China on the CCTV Spring Festival Gala stage. China had opened its culture to the globe and with the barriers down, the Chinese people became free to explore outside influences.

Deng also indicated two primary missions of the country in the 80s: focusing the nation's attention on economic growth and resolving the problem of Taiwan [13]. This explains the following performances of 1984 and 1985's CCTV Spring Festival Gala music performance: respectively, the Hong Kong singer Zhang Ming-min who brought his song "My Chinese Heart" followed by the American Taiwanese singer Fei Xiang with his songs "The Fire in the Winter" and "The Clouds of my Hometown". By inviting these singers, the Party was trying to express the point that Hong Kong and Taiwan are both part of P.R China, and the latter will return to its motherland sooner or later; Chinese people both from Taiwan and mainland are a family, just as Fei's lyrics described 'Come back home, you wandering wanderer' in "The Clouds of my Hometown".

The most recent and surprising performance was in the 2009 Gala [14]. It attracted the highest viewership of any year's Spring Festival Gala according to the media research company CSM's data [15]. It was a joint performance mixed from two individual repertoires performed by two of China's most popular music stars—Song Zuying, a well-known Communist propaganda singer, and Taiwanese Pop star Jay Chow. Jay's original song title *Bencao Gangmu* comes from a Chinese *materia medica* work *Bencao Gangmu* written in the fifteenth century by one of the greatest Chinese herbalists and acupuncturists in history. Jay composed the music and Fang Wen-shan the lyrics. The performance begins with Jay Chow's rap singing accompanied by a mixture of



Fig 2. Song Zu-ying's *Spice Girls*

As the notation above shows, similar rhythmic patterns can be seen in the two songs. *Spice Girls*, composed by Xu Pri-dong, was originally performed by Song Zu-ying, the best-known folk propaganda singer. Song was born in Mao Ze-dong's hometown in Hu Nan province where the first military uprising of the PLA took place. The local people including Mao himself enjoyed eating spicy food. Once Mao joked "spicy pepper is the real food for revolutionaries" [16]. When Jay became a drummer on the traditional Chinese big drum, enhancing the heated atmosphere, the audience cheers and applauds. As the music gradually approaches its hook again, Song Zu-ying rises slowly in the middle of the stage, singing the hook of her own *Spice Girls* (see bar No.9 to 16, Fig. 2). The audience screams and sings along with the performers. The background music still remains Jay's Pop tune, but is performed by artists from multiple backgrounds. Age, gender, even the lyrics seem to be not as important as the two singers' determination to give a joint performance. Jay's Pop song *Bencao Gangmu* perfectly marked his Chinese cultural identity, which satisfied the Party's political expectations. Nothing could better express Chinese unity than the most famous singer—moreover from Taiwan—in a costume inspired by traditional dress, playing a Chinese drum and bringing together many other elements from traditional Chinese shows.

Claude Shannon formulated the idea of measuring the quantity of information in a given message by examining its "surprise value", in other words its degree of "predictability or unpredictability" [17]. The high degree of unpredictability in this collaboration proved a highly effective means of furthering Party ideals. The sender, as the Party, delivered a very successful performance provided by the artists from mainland China and Taiwan. Although the political issue with Taiwan was not resolved as Deng wished, the common heritage and shared tradition of celebrating Chinese New Year with a musical performance was a major contribution in achieving the ideal of 'harmony' in Chinese society.

CONCLUSION

The Reform and Opening Up policy not only revolutionized China's economic and political order, but also re-orientated China's mainstream culture by fostering politically influenced Pop music to further the Communist Party's political aims and ideals regarding Chinese society. Designed as a strict propaganda device, the CCTV Spring Festival Gala has progressively harnessed modern technology and singers from different backgrounds to increase its audiences each year. Through its first experiment of

introducing Pop music it has gradually become the major propaganda force sustaining the centralised power of the Communist Party.

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The Bolero Rhythm in Rock

Mark Yeary, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, USA

ABSTRACT

The Bolero rhythm, a triplet-infused rhythm pattern derived from Maurice Ravel's "Boléro", appears in a number of rock music singles beginning in the late 1960's. Although Ravel's highly recognizable pattern is commonly quoted in many genres of popular music, the Bolero rhythm takes on added significance in the realm of hard rock: it acts as a symbolic musical topic that represents military fanfare. In this paper, I provide a brief history of the Bolero rhythm topic as it appears in rock recordings, and I explore the features that characterize this topic—triplet patterns, a featured snare drum, and a unison "riff"—as it is frequently heard in a rock context.

INTRODUCTION

In the genre of early 1970's music that we now call hard rock, three bands fought for supremacy: Led Zeppelin, Black Sabbath, and Deep Purple. Although Deep Purple's legacy has softened over time, their star burned brightly in 1970; the group that had offered the pretentious *Concerto for Group and Orchestra* just a year earlier met the new decade with a more focused, no-nonsense approach, as heard in their album *Deep Purple In Rock*. The obligatory minor-mode rock ballad that closes side 1 of this album, "Child in Time," is a showcase for newly hired vocalist Ian Gillan; the section that follows the song's opening verses features Gillan soaring through the upper range of his head voice, reaching a peak of A5. And although the eight-bar instrumental break that follows may seem incongruous to modern ears, this brief passage is the perfect match to the intensity of Gillan's stratospheric scream as it prepares the following guitar solo. This break, with its percussive, triplet-infused unison riff, is known to rock musicians as the Bolero rhythm.

[Example 1: Deep Purple, "Child in Time" \[1\].](#)

The Bolero rhythm appears in a handful of rock recordings of the late 1960's and early 1970's, and we may safely assume that its title is derived from the well-known Maurice Ravel work of the same name. But whereas the eight-bar break in "Child in Time" shares Ravel's use of triplets, there is little else in this passage that would suggest association with *Boléro*. Treating this rhythmic break as a hard-rock convention allows us to look beyond Ravel, and beyond the dance it represents, and in the examples that follow I offer a framework for hearing the Bolero rhythm as a shared cultural code—a musical topic—with its own associations derived from a handful of musical features. These features are the triplet rhythm pattern, the snare drum, and the monotonic unison riff.

BOLÉRO, “BECK’S BOLERO,” AND THE BOLERO RHYTHM

That the Bolero rhythm takes its name from Ravel’s *Boléro* is largely due to the popularity of this work among Western listeners of all cultural strata. One of the more notorious assessments of the cultural currency of *Boléro* comes from Allan Bloom, whose 1987 monograph *The Closing of the American Mind* focuses on the implications of repetitive rhythm: “Young people know that rock has the beat of sexual intercourse. That is why Ravel’s *Bolero* is the one piece of classical music that is commonly known and liked by them [2].” Perhaps Bloom’s decision to single out of *Boléro* was influenced by its featured role in the 1979 movie *10*, in which Jenny, portrayed by actress Bo Derek, tells Dudley Moore’s George Webber that “*Boléro* was the most descriptive sex music ever written.” Yet if we wish to propose references to Bolero in rock, there are much more suitable candidates to be found: “Abbadon’s Bolero” by Emerson, Lake and Palmer, and “Bolero,” a section of the side-length track “Lizard” by King Crimson, both use Ravel’s snare-drum pattern as an ostinato, in its original triple meter, with Ravel-like melodies floating above. Another contemporary recording, “The Bomber” from the James Gang’s 1970 album *James Gang Rides Again*, contains a middle section labeled “Bolero,” attributed to Ravel, in which both Ravel’s melody and his 3/4 snare ostinato are preserved; Ravel’s estate threatened legal action upon the release of this album, and the track was edited to exclude the Bolero section in subsequent pressings.

In comparison, the break from “Child in Time” would strike us as a rather weak allusion to Ravel’s *Boléro*. If we wish to associate this passage with another musical work, a more compelling alternative is the influential 1967 single “Beck’s Bolero,” featuring guitarists Jeff Beck and Jimmy Page. Though both Beck and Page have in the past claimed authorship of the track, both acknowledge that Page was responsible for the Bolero rhythm that drives the opening section; not surprisingly, Page specifically mentions Ravel’s *Boléro* as the inspiration for the rhythm pattern of the piece [3]. The stature of Beck and Page among hard rock guitarists, and the surprising chart success of “Beck’s Bolero”—released a year after its recording date, as a B-side to the bubblegum pop tune “Hi Ho Silver Lining”—suggests an attractive alternative to the Ravel lineage: Deep Purple and other performers of the Bolero rhythm may have turned to “Beck’s Bolero,” not Ravel’s, for their musical inspiration.

[Example 2: Jeff Beck, “Beck’s Bolero \[4\].”](#)

FEATURES OF THE BOLERO RHYTHM

The triplet rhythm pattern heard in Page’s strummed 12-string guitar is the most aurally distinct element of the Bolero rhythm: it is a salient departure from the simple meter typical of rock music. And whereas the cultural influence of Ravel’s *Boléro* suggests that this triplet rhythm is the mark of a dance topic, a broader survey of 19th- and 20th-century Western concert music confirms that triplet rhythms may conjure any number of musical associations. Raymond Monelle writes in *The Musical Topic* that a triplet or 6/8 rhythm is often used to invoke hunting, but this is a rather unlikely interpretation in a rock context. More promising for our purposes is Monelle’s association of triplets with march topics: in a pithy statement in *The Sense of Music*, Monelle notes that Leonard Ratner’s description of march topics omits “an essential

feature of the march: its tendency to articulate in dotted figures and triplets, which continued well into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries [5].”

With this possibility in mind, I offer another late-1960's single that makes similar use of triplet rhythms. Although the snare drum riffs heard in the opening minute of David Bowie's 1969 single "Space Oddity" are not an instance of the Bolero rhythm, they do share with the Bolero rhythm the same use of triplet figures. Drummer Terry Cox's triplet patterns, heard in relief against the simple-meter texture of guitars and vocals, capture the solemnity of the moments leading up to a spacecraft launch. "Space Oddity" invites us to consider triplet rhythm patterns in a context that has little to do with dance: these rhythms are the sounds of a ceremony, and as such we may understand them as a form of march topic.

[Example 3: David Bowie, "Space Oddity \[6\]."](#)

The introduction to "Space Oddity" and the Bolero break in "Child in Time" share more than just triplet rhythms: in each passage, the percussionist performs the rhythm pattern solely on the snare drum. To the modern listener, the snare drum is able to evoke images of ceremonial marches with relative ease; it is one of the instruments most associated with military music. Yet this association is relatively recent: Monelle notes that the trumpet, not the snare drum, was understood as the primary instrument of military music up to and including the early 19th century, and that "the military snare drum was at first excluded from European bands because it was established as a *signaling* instrument in the West [7]." Once admitted into the orchestra, the snare drum quickly became identifiable as a signifier of marches or calls to military action, as befitting a signaling instrument: the most obvious use of the snare drum in this capacity is heard in the opening movement of Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony, dubbed "Leningrad." The snare-driven ostinato that dominates this movement is the military equivalent of Ravel's *Boléro*. Whether one hears this passage as either patriotic propaganda or dystopian parody of war, its signification of the German/Russian encounter during the Siege of Leningrad is unmistakable: the snare drum is both the call to arms and the sound of the battlefield.

[Example 4: Dmitri Shostakovich, Symphony no. 7, I. Allegretto \[8\].](#)

In contrast, the snare drum has always been a staple of rock; the constant presence of the snare backbeat in rock is not the sound of battle, but of youthful energy and dance, as aptly captured by The Beatles in their single "Rock and Roll Music." But the percussive strikes of the snare can also model the sounds of military procession, and examples of the Bolero-as-march rhythm beckon within the genre of hard rock, with noted gun enthusiast Ted Nugent providing the most telling of these. In the 1975 single "Stranglehold," drummer Tommy Aldridge produces the Bolero rhythm march signal, while Ted Nugent's overdubbed guitar lines, with their sudden shift to the major mode, provide the unmistakable trumpet fanfare that punctuates his triumph over Death: "some people think they gonna die someday / I got news you never got to go."

[Example 5: Ted Nugent, "Stranglehold \[9\]."](#)

The third element of the Bolero rhythm, the monotonic unison riff, is lacking in the percussion-only rhythm pattern heard in "Stranglehold," but in a *tutti* or homophonic texture it is always present: the classic Bolero rhythm break is the sound of

a single repeating note or chord, with changes in pitch only where mandated by a change in harmony. Such bluntly repetitive riffs, of course, are a staple of the genre of rock that would become heavy metal, and as such they have attracted the greatest ire of rock critics: the unison riff is maximally simple music made accessible to contemporary youth with little capacity to digest polyphony. The notebooks of 1970's rock critics such as Lester Bangs and Robert Christgau are filled with invectives against riffmasters like Black Sabbath, as their barbs take aim at both the technical limitations of the band and the haplessly simple results of their performances. Yet Deep Purple are clearly above such limitations: the tightly synchronized Bolero rhythm riff in "Child in Time" is not the sloppy sound of drug-addled performers outfitted with overly loud amplifiers.

Done well, simplicity can be a difficult thing to achieve: whereas any foot soldier can master the simple steps of a march, coordinating the steps of hundreds of soldiers requires effort and discipline. And although this observation opens the door for an Adornian critique of repetition in popular music, numerous scholars have rebuffed such critiques by embracing the social connotations of simplicity. Robert Walser's defense of simplicity in *Running With the Devil* is particularly fitting for this purpose: while acknowledging the repetitive similarities of heavy metal music and military marches, Walser states that the purpose of marches

is not to inculcate mindlessness but rather single-mindedness. [...] both marches and metal sometimes rely upon an impression of simplicity for their social effectiveness, an impression that in fact may be made possible only by considerable skill and technical mediation and that may serve to help articulate complex social meanings [10].

The archetypal Bolero rhythm break, therefore, is a display of military precision, which lends itself well to the tropes of power that Walser and other rock scholars locate in nearly every sonic detail of hard rock: in the guitar's distorted timbre, in the vocal scream, and in the whack of the drums. But the Bolero rhythm does more than simply repeat a march pattern in homophonic texture: it does so by repeating a single pitch. There is no melody to speak of in the Bolero rhythm: the extensive repetition of a pitch thwarts the basic human expectation of pitch variation as an essential melodic element. This distinction is critical: whereas a regularly rhythmic melody suggests the musical coordination of human activities such as dances and marches, the same rhythm used in the service of a single repeated sound is anti-lyrical, even anti-musical, as Stravinsky aptly demonstrated by using his repeated "Augurs chords" as the sonic record of primitive ritual. Human speech is never strictly monotonous, barring physiological impairments; but the sounds of humans' activities, their physical exertions upon the world, can be monotonous, and in industrial society they often are. The single repeated pitch or chord in the Bolero rhythm is not a musical accompaniment to marching soldiers: it is the sound of marching itself, of boots upon stone, and of war machines.

The exemplar of this tactic in Western concert music is Holst's "Mars, the Bringer of War," the first of seven movements from *The Planets*. "Mars," like the first movement of the "Leningrad" Symphony, is about battle, but the two works emphasize different aspects of battle: whereas Shostakovich gives a sonic rendering of a battle scene, Holst chronicles the impending threat of attack. Holst's pulsing figure heard in the low strings and percussion provides the ominous backdrop of war, the sounds of innumerable assembled forces, which characterizes the movement. All of the ingredients of the Bolero rhythm break are heard in this riff, and if this movement were as widely

known as Ravel's *Boléro* I might be discussing the "Mars rhythm" in rock, similarly transformed into a 4/4 meter.

[Example 6: Gustav Holst, *The Planets*, I. "Mars, the Bringer of War" \[11\].](#)

The Bolero rhythm represents battle in a rock context equally well; it is heard at the climactic moment of "The Knife," a recording by the progressive rock group Genesis that tells of a fictional, dystopian armed revolution. Following a long instrumental section that includes the sounds of soldiers' voices and guns, the Bolero rhythm enters with a monotonic unison riff that stands in shocking contrast to the multi-layered passage that precedes it. This unison riff gives way to a slightly more complex blues-scale riff, and organist Tony Banks soon follows with an arpeggiated figure, seemingly to remind us that we are, in fact, listening to Genesis. In a nod to Allan Bloom's critique of rock music, the actions portrayed by this musical section are indeed mindless; singer Peter Gabriel's lyrics point toward the futility of violent revolution. Yet the effect of militaristic single-minded uprising is fully present in this passage: it works perfectly as a soundtrack for the pending and actualized conflict of Gabriel's revolutionaries.

[Example 7: Genesis, "The Knife" \[12\].](#)

CONCLUSION

As I've noted earlier, the Bolero rhythm held a relatively brief period of popularity: Ted Nugent's "Stranglehold" is one of the later rock recordings to employ the Bolero rhythm as a break. Its strength as a musical topic is its ability to model the sounds of marching and battle; when grafted onto a less militaristic context, as in the Styx power ballad "Lady" from 1974, it is reduced to one of many tropes of power heard in 1970's rock. But shades of the Bolero rhythm may also be heard in the newer generation of hard rock that emerged mid-decade, as heavy metal bands such as Judas Priest and Iron Maiden favored a riff-heavy texture that left little room for the R&B-derived textures of 1960's rock. In the following clip, taken from the first track of Iron Maiden's 1981 album *Killers*, the Bolero rhythm is heard as an extension of the unison, rhythmically driven section that opens the piece: the effect is no longer one of difference, but of rhythmic diminution. The title of this track, "The Ides of March," provides a wonderful double entendre with which I'd like to conclude: although we may acknowledge the nominal links between the Bolero rhythm and the Ravel work of the same name, my exploration of the Bolero rhythm suggests that the historical and topical path of this motive may be understood in its most prototypical form—as a triplet-infused snare pattern, accompanied by monotonic riff—as a late 20th-century form of a march topic, signifying the mechanized sounds of military activity, and the procession of military might.

[Example 8: Iron Maiden, "The Ides of March" \[13\].](#)

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The Big Note, Xenochrony and All Things Contextual: Frank Zappa and the And

Paul Carr, the University of Glamorgan, UK

ABSTRACT

This essay is an edited version of the introductory chapter to a forthcoming book being published by Ashgate entitled Frank Zappa and the And: A Contextual Analysis of his Legacy (2013). The essay outlines the richness of Zappa's career in terms of semiological depth, and how his cross-referencing of both his own, other composers music, and popular culture at large provides a complex web of meaning, in which he often re-signified musical materials in subtle, and often humorous ways.

INTRODUCTION

Composer, guitarist, film maker, satirist and political activist, of all the prominent rock musicians to emerge during the mid 1960s, Frank Zappa is arguably the most complex and prolific. During his 27 years in the public eye (1966–1993), Zappa released over 60 official albums between the inaugural *The Mothers of Invention* recording *Freak Out!* [1] and *Civilization Phase III* [2], a figure that does not include numerous bootleg recordings, or the “official” posthumous releases made available by the Zappa Family Trust. This inexhaustible creativity is complemented by unusual eclecticism, with Zappa being one of the few rock musicians to interface with both high and low culture on a regular basis, a process in which he freely juxtapositioned otherwise disparate musical styles (such as doo-wop, reggae and *musique concrète*) within the same compositions and albums. Besides a tendency for implementing this artistic freedom via his much quoted maxim, “anything, anytime, for no reason at all” [3], Zappa also progressively cross-referenced his own, other composers’ music, and popular culture at large throughout his career, providing a range of what Roland Barthes described as *obvious* and *obtuse* meanings for his audience [4]. For example, *Absolutely Free* [5] alone has allusions to “Louie Louie”,⁹ Stravinsky’s *The Rite Of Spring*,¹⁰ *Petrushka*,¹¹ and *The Soldiers Tale*,¹² “Duke Of Earl”,¹³ “Baby Love”,¹⁴ Holst’s *The Planets Suite*,¹⁵ Irving

⁹ Quoted between 0:06–0:16 of “Plastic People”.

¹⁰ Between 0:00–0:07 and 0:16–0:21 of “Amnesia Vivace”.

¹¹ Between 1:29–2:07 of “Status Back Baby”.

¹² Between 1:25–1:32 of “Soft Cell Conclusion”.

¹³ Quoted between 0:46–1:00 of “Amnesia Vivace”.

¹⁴ Quoted between 1:11–0:47 of “The Duke Regains His Chops”.

¹⁵ Between 0:08–0:26 of “Invocation and Ritual Dance of the Young Pumpkin”.

Berlin's "God Bless America",¹⁶ and "White Christmas",¹⁷ all of which simultaneously depict *obvious* genre synecdoches, in addition to more *obtuse* relationships between signifier and signified, what Barthes describes as the *third meaning*. He commented:

I do not know what it's signified is, at least I am unable to give it a name, but I can see clearly the traits, the signifying accidents of which this – consequently incomplete – sign is composed [6].

This process of course has a particular resonance with instrumental music, whose commentators have noted long-standing concerns regarding the relationship of abstract sound to language based concepts and descriptors. Edward Hanslick's (1825–1904) then controversial belief that "instrumental music cannot represent the ideas of [emotions such as] love, anger and fear" [7] were reiterated over one hundred years later by Michel Imberty, who stated:

The musical signifier refers to a signified that has no exact verbal signifier [...] musical meaning, as soon as it is explained in words, loses itself in verbal meanings, too precise, too literal: they betray it [8].

It is important to note that Hanslick in particular was not asserting that musical structures could not impart extra-musical meaning, but that they "can [only] express the various accompanying adjectives and never the substantive, [for example] love itself" [9].

Zappa himself appeared to have a clear belief in the semiological power of music, describing the process as *Archetypical American Musical Icons* in his biography, incorporating them to put what he described as "a spin on any lyric in their vicinity" [10]. Regarding the intended impartation of meaning, he stated:

The audience doesn't have to know, for example, who Jan Garber or Lester Lanin is to appreciate those textures – the average guy is not going to say 'Hey, Richie! Check this out! They're doing Lester!' He knows what that style means. He's groaned over it in old movies on Channel 13 for years [11].

When discussing the incorporation of a similar, albeit less pervasive practice in Ice Cube's "When Will They Shoot" [12], Robert Walser outlines how Ice Cube "is in a dialogue with these artists, their contexts, [and] their audiences", assuming "of his listeners a certain kind of cultural literacy" [13]. This comment not only resonates with Zappa's acute awareness of his audiences' musical knowledge, which he used as a semiotic horizon to not only signify meaning, but to *re-signify* musical materials. As indicated in a recent essay in *Contemporary Theatre Review*, Zappa would often "accentuate the light entertainment of otherwise serious pieces by superimposing frivolity over the original text" [14], resulting in compositions such as *Also Sprach Zarathustra* and "La Donna è Mobile" becoming detached from their original meaning, as parts of a musical bricolage. This juxtaposition of low and high art occurred not only via overt quotation, but also more subliminally in pieces such as "Fountain of Love" [15] and "Status Back Baby" [16], both of which incorporate fragments of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* and *Petrushka* respectively. In addition to attacking the seriousness of high art, Zappa is quoted as regarding the introduction of Stravinsky into his early work as "a get

¹⁶ Between 0:47–0:54 of "Soft Cell Conclusion".

¹⁷ Between 0:00–0:02 and 1:50–1:52 of "Uncle Bernie's Farm".

acquainted offer” [17], seemingly using these gestures as tasters for the more avant-garde experiments he was to introduce later in his career. Indeed when one reflects on the processes highlighted above, Zappa’s practices resonate somewhere between the ideals of Paul Hindemith’s notion of *Gebrauchsmusik*,¹⁸ and the elitist musical snobbery outlined by Milton Babbitt in his 1958 essay “Who Cares if You Listen”, where the complexity of Babbitt’s tonal language is seen to call for an “increased accuracy from the transmitter (the performer) and activity from the receiver (the listener)” in order for the work to be “communicated” [18].

THE ONTOLOGICAL STATUS OF HIS MUSIC, AND REFERENCES TO HIS OWN AND OTHERS’ WORK

It is important to point out that musical references to Zappa’s *own work* are also prevalent, with indicative examples including “Help I’m A Rock” [19], “Dog Breath, In The Year Of The Plague” [20], and “Lonely Little Girl” [21], in addition to his final album *Civilization Phase III* [22], which merges music from the early 1990s with material from *Thing-Fish* [23], *The Perfect Stranger* [24], and *Lumpy Gravy* [25]. Although this practice could be regarded as self-plagiarising, Zappa considered it as similar to the re-emergence of characters in novels, he commented:

When a novelist invents a character. If the character is a good one, he takes on a life of his own. Why should he get to go to only one party [26]?

Although this overt cross-referencing process could be sarcastically regarded as a means of manipulating the music business, facilitating what Ben Watson describes as “a neurotic response to mass culture: the transformation of consumer into collector” [27], it also has the impact of making the *intended meaning* and classification of Zappa’s work unusually problematic: for example albums such as *London Symphony Orchestra Vol.1* [28] and *Hot Rats* [29] are classified as Rock/Pop by the *All Music Guide*,¹⁹ despite their explicit classical and jazz leanings. Additionally, depending on where one accesses Zappa’s music chronologically, this constant recursion of musical and cultural material has the potential of instigating a psychological Russian Doll effect on the listener, often prompting the close examination of not only his musical influences and past/future catalogue, but also the *extra-musical* meanings that he is referring to.

Regarding Zappa’s personal conceptual positioning of music, he was clear that all of his creative output was unified by a philosophy he entitled *The Big Note*. In a 1968 article he wrote for *Life Magazine*, he stated:

Everything in the universe is composed basically of vibrations – light is a vibration, sound is a vibration, atoms are composed of vibrations – and all these vibrations just might be harmonics of some incomprehensible fundamental cosmic tone [30].

As outlined by Delville and Norris, the *Big Note* concept resonates strongly with the discoveries of Nobel Prize winners Robert Wilson and Arno Penzias, who discovered three years earlier (in 1965) that a residual sound related to the Big Bang was still

¹⁸ Although Hindemith was not addressing popular music, the ideal of *Gebrauchsmusik* was that all people of the world could listen to and be moved by one music.

¹⁹ Refer to <http://www.allmusic.com/>.

apparent in the universe, and that this sound was judged to be vibrating at approximately 4080 mega hertz, slightly flatter than B in equal temperament tuning [31]. Zappa's *Big Note* also has some resonance to Pythagoras' belief that music serves as a reflection of the inherent sounds produced by the solar system, a philosophy continued by Plato in *Timaeus*, (where the *Demiurge* fashions the universe in a way that is explicitly musical) and *The Myth Of Er*, where he envisaged the resonance inherent in the orbit of the earthly planets to constitute a single harmonious scale. As outlined by Plato's pupil Aristotle in *De Caelo*, one of the few authentic accounts of Pythagorean philosophy:

The motion of bodies of that size must produce a noise, since on our earth the motion of bodies far inferior in size and in speed of movement has that effect. Also, when the sun and the moon, they say, and all the stars, so great in number and size, are moving with so rapid a motion, how should they not produce a sound immensely great [32]?

This paper is not suggesting that Zappa's music incorporated a mystical Pythagorean/Platonic dimension – where the results of his creativity would be regarded as a metaphysical representation of the eternal. However, his practice of developing individual compositions over many years does resonate with a musical-pendurantist perspective: were musical works are seen to exist atemporally – obtaining their ontological status from what Caplin and Matheson describe as a “fusion of performances” [33] – with individual performances being regarded as “temporal parts” of an *ongoing* musical work [34].

Regardless of whether Zappa was aware of these philosophical positions or not, it is apparent that not only his compositions, but his entire creative output is littered with a web of fractal logic, where consistent patterns are apparent between single tracks, entire albums and public performances, in addition to non-musical materials such as press interviews and cover art.

The cover of *Over-Nite Sensation* [35] represents an indicative example, and can be regarded as a *painting inside of a painting*, which is itself a painting of a mirror. The reflection in the mirror is of a hotel room, which graphically depicts Zappa's perception of the life of a touring musician, with indexical signifiers such as underwear, band publicity, suitcases and flight tickets, combined with more subliminal phallic symbols such as a penis-like fire hydrant, a vagina-shaped grapefruit, and a semen-dripping water hose. This direct and subliminal attention to explicit content in particular has the capacity to facilitate one to ask *who* is looking in the mirror – almost in a Kierkegaardian sense.²⁰ Does the meaning relate exclusively to Zappa and his band members, or as outlined in a 1973 *Go Set* article, is Zappa “the distorted mirror through which we experience ourselves and the neurotic perverted society that man has created” [36]? As discussed in selected essays in the forthcoming edited collection, this dialogic balance between the meaning of Zappa's work being extraneous or personal in nature is one of the principle factors that make his work so appealing.

²⁰ Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855) adopted a similar technique as Zappa when encouraging his readers to question their preconceptions of “truth”. Concisely speaking, it is suggested that both used irony, often depicted in story form, to encourage their audience to deconstruct prior assumptions. It is also interesting to note that both often used aliases/third parties/pseudonyms (such as “Billy The Mountain” or “Joe” in Zappa's case, or Johannes Climacus or Constantin Constantius in the case of Kierkegaard) to depict their positions, rather than presenting their ideologies directly.

In order to further conceptualise his creative practice, Zappa developed the terminology *Project* and *Object* to describe the difference between the completed work of art and the ongoing process of redefining it, clearly considering individual works of art as being in a constant state of development. He commented:

Project/Object is a term I have used to describe the overall concept of my work in various mediums. Each project (in whatever realm), or interview connected to it, is part of a larger object, for which there is no technical name [37]

This course of action is similar to the *Works* and *Texts* continuum described by Joseph Grigely, who asserts that a *text* is “constantly undergoing continuous and discontinuous transience as it ages” [38] and how artworks have “multiple texts”, with the meanings we create being a “direct product of the textual spaces we enter and engage in” [39]. This is certainly the case for Zappa, whose portfolio has numerous examples of compositions progressively developing over the entire time he recorded music. Examples range from single pieces such as “A Pound For A Brown On The Bus” and “Legend Of The Golden Arches” [40], both being obvious variations on the same creative materials, to entire albums such as *Thing-Fish* [41], which includes rearrangements of pieces from earlier albums such as *Sheik Yerbouti* [42], and *Them or Us* [43]. This perdurantistic process of developing *texts* into ever evolving *works* has also continued in the performances and recordings of countless tribute bands that have emerged since Zappa’s death, a phenomena that has often resulted in litigation by the Zappa Family Trust.²¹ These tribute bands range from those that aim to replicate Zappa’s music faithfully,²² to those that adapt his music into new directions,²³ with both practices not only perpetuating his *Project/Object* philosophy, but also resonating with Eco’s belief in the aesthetic value of *ambiguity of meaning*, via what he described as the *Open Work*. Writing just prior to *The Mothers of Invention*’s inaugural release, Eco commented:

The work of art is a fundamentally ambiguous message, a plurality of signifieds that coexist within a single signifier [...] today, this ambiguity is becoming an explicit goal of the work, a value to be realised in preference to all others [44].

The final important inter-textual process that Zappa employed is his self-titled *Xenochrony*,²⁴ a studio technique he incorporated to horizontally fuse often unrelated tracks recorded in incongruous times and places. After initially experimenting on Captain Beefheart’s “The Blimp” [45], Zappa continued to employ the technique on albums such as *Lumpy Gravy* [46] and *Sheik Yerbouti* [47], with *Joe’s Garage* [48], arguably representing the most interesting example, where all of the guitar solos aside from “Watermelon in Easter Hay” [49] being transported from other recordings. As indicated in my own essay in the collection, this technique has the capacity of simultaneously combining otherwise incongruent times, places and spaces, adding another dimension to his tendency toward self-reference.

²¹ See Carr, “An Autocratic Approach to Music Copyright?”.

²² For example Bogus Pomp, The Grandmothers and Project/Project.

²³ For example The Ed Palermo Big Band and Le Bocal lean toward Jazz, while the The Omnibus Wind Ensemble and Ensemble Ambrosius focus on various classical influences. In the case of the latter, the instrumentation is that of a baroque ensemble.

²⁴ Meaning “Alien Time”, with an etymology deriving from the Greek words *Xenos* (strange or alien) and *Chronos* (time).

As Zappa's music is constructed in such a way to at times ignore conventional notions of linear time, it is suggested that any analysis of his musical output should place a particular emphasis on the synchronic nature of his texts. Barthes describes these multi-layered narratives as "intergrational" in nature, asserting that "a unit belonging to a particular level only takes on meaning if it can be integrated in a higher level" [50]. Barthes' precedence of the intergrational over what he describes as the more linear "distributional"²⁵ has a particular resonance with Zappa's creative practices, in addition to the potential meaning of his texts. His *Big Note* and *Xenochronic* concepts in particular encourage the listener to engage with his music "vertically": comparing specific sound objects to similar or identical practices that have occurred elsewhere; considering the impact of what sounds like twentieth-century classical music being composed by a rock musician; or pondering the result of two otherwise incongruous styles or sounds that don't (but somehow do) belong together.

According to Middleton [51], popular music analysis has a tendency to focus on connotative as opposed to denotative meaning. He terms this connotative–denotative dialogic as *secondary* and *primary* forms of signification, and regards the later, "in the sense it is used in linguistics [to be] rare in music",²⁶ quoting animal noises in The Beatles' "Good Morning" [52] or the motorbike noises in The Shangri-Las "Leader of the Pack" [53] as indicative examples. Regarding the practices of *quotation*, *stylistic allusion* and *parody* as sub-categories of primary signification, these processes are seen to have the capacity to refer to music from both inside and outside the artists own repertoire. Using The Electric Light Orchestra's "Roll Over Beethoven"²⁷ as an indicative example of *outside-quotation*, and the Beatles' "A Day in the Life"²⁸ as an instance of *self-quotation*, Middleton provides a useful context to the much more pervasive use Zappa made of these devices outlined earlier. Examples of *stylistic allusion* include "A Whiter Shade of Pale" [54] and The Beatles' *White Album* [55], both of which provide interesting isolated counterparts to entire albums such as *Crusing with Ruben and the Jets* [56] (1950's Do-Wop), or indeed allusions to composers such as Varèse and Stravinsky in Zappa's orchestral repertoire. Middleton regards his final form of primary signification, *destructive parody*, to be even "less frequent [than *quotation* and *stylistic allusion*]" but considers it "fundamental to the work of Frank Zappa" [57], and although he mentions no examples by name, he is correct in regarding the technique as an important part of Zappa's idiolect. As indicated earlier, Zappa had a tendency to trivialise otherwise serious pieces of music in some of his compositions, and acknowledged American satirist Spike Jones as an influence on this process. Additionally, Zappa would "destructively" allude to a range of personalities in his lyrics, ranging from parodies of musicians such as Bob Dylan and Al Di Meola, to ex-presidents such as John F. Kennedy, Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan, to more generic phenomena such as rock band folk law, or corrupt televangelists.

It is apparent that Middleton's secondary signification (connotation) can arise as a result of individual or combinationary primary significations, a process Zappa intentionally propagated via his *Big Note*, *Project/Object* and *Xenochronic* philosophies. Indeed in the sleeve notes of *You Can't Do That On Stage Anymore Vol. 3*, [58] Zappa

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Middleton, *Studying Popular Music*, p. 220.

²⁷ Which quotes the opening of the first movement of Beethoven's 5th.

²⁸ The Beatles, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, which uses a short extract of "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds".

effectively discusses the means through which combinations of primary meanings can result in secondary signification. When providing a list of rationales for his cut and paste techniques while compiling the six-part *You Can't Do That On Stage Anymore* series, he asks two significant questions. Firstly, “is there some ‘folkloric’ significance to the performance?” And secondly, “will it [the inserted section of audio] give ‘Continuity’ clues to the hard-core maniacs with a complete record collection?”²⁹ Taking Zappa at his word, the terminology *Conceptual Continuity* has become the means through which many Zappa fans describe their tracking of denotative meanings, and as outlined by Middleton, the connotations associated with these meanings are “in theory, of infinite size” [59].

CONCLUSION

This forthcoming collection by Ashgate does not intend to postulate a unified interpretive code, either between authors, or between authors and readers, but a range of analytic reactions to pertinent contextual areas related to Zappa’s oeuvre. As outlined by John Blacking, the “sound may be the object, but man is the subject; and the key to understanding music is the relationships existing between subject and object” [60]. Taking Zappa as the “subject”, the book intends to ultimately explore this relationship, and it is hoped that it will in some small way become part of his ongoing *Conceptual Continuity*.

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The Flat Second to Tonic *Jaws* Motif in Heavy Metal and Film Music: Transformations and Orientalist use of the *Pianto* Topic

Sarah Moore, *The University of Sheffield, Sheffield, UK*

ABSTRACT

Monelle identified the falling semitone motif as the *pianto* topic, dating back to Renaissance madrigals where it accompanied lyrics about weeping (*pianti*). Within Classical period it was called a “sigh”, signifying distress, sorrow and lament.³⁰ Later, transformations created more disturbing meanings, such as anger and terror. Monelle described the *pianto* in Wagner’s Ring Cycle as a “sharply dysphoric and ominous figure”. In the 1970s it “conjures terror” in John Williams’s *Jaws* motif.³¹

This paper discusses a particular component of the *pianto*, the $b\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ motif. I argue that this falling semitone $b\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ motif, as in the *Jaws* motif, is a particularly intense component of the *pianto* topic, and its transformation and abundance in Heavy Metal and film music is attributable to its tense, powerful connotations. In Heavy Metal, the $b\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ motif is associated with positive discourses of hell and death, and in film soundtracks it appears alongside the depiction of terror. Through film and recording analysis, interviews and secondary literature, this research studies the significations of the $b\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ gesture in Metal tracks, including in the genre of Oriental Metal, and Hollywood and Bollywood film soundtracks.

The parallel use, since the nineteenth century, of the $b\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ motif as an Oriental signifier complicates its associations. For example, in war films based in the Middle East the $b\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ motif may support a narrative of terror associated with the Arab. When the $b\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ motif is also used to depict the Orient, signification may take on a political and demonising function.

INTRODUCTION

The *pianto* is a falling semitone musical gesture that appeared in the Renaissance alongside lyrics concerning weeping. By the Baroque period the *pianto* had lost direct attachment to lyrics of weeping, and now signified “grief, pain, regret, loss”. Within early Classical music of the 18th century it was named the “Mannheim sigh” [1]. Through into the 19th century these associations continued, sometimes associated with dysphoria as when Monelle describes the *pianto* in Wagner’s Ring Cycle thus:

³⁰ See Monelle, R. 2000. *The Sense of Music: Semiotic Essays*, Princeton University Press, pp. 17 and 66-73.

³¹ *Ibid*, pp. 71-2.

The motive of servitude in the Ring is heard as a sharply dysphoric and ominous figure [...] It is merely the two-note figure of a descending semitone [...] The topic of the *pianto* is everywhere in the Ring; it is always a minor second, always descending [...] it is the basis of the motive of fate [...] the moan of the dissonant falling second expresses perfectly the idea of lament [2].

The association of the *pianto* to the expression of omen was a new transformation of this topic, the dysphoric semitone fall.

Writings on the falling semitone motif often place it in the context of the falling “Phrygian” tetrachord, named after the lower tetrachord of the Phrygian mode. However, much of this writing places this tetrachord freely within a scale, for instance $\hat{8} - \flat \hat{7} - \flat \hat{6} - \hat{5}$. This extended figure became known as the “lament motif” [3]. William Kimmel takes the signification of grief to an extreme and associates *all* occurrences of a falling “Phrygian” tetrachord with death, writing: “Wherever in music these configurations occur prominently, they disclose the presence and workings of death in the musical being” [4].

My concern here is for the Phrygian cadence $\flat \hat{2} - \hat{1}$, which, surely, is a particular occurrence of the *pianto* holding specific connotations. These result partly because of its fall to the tonic, partly due to the $\flat \hat{2}$ note degree being Other to commonplace Western scales. This paper discusses these particular significations, the dysphoric transformations that have emerged, especially in the late 20th century, and the complications resulting from the parallel Oriental associations of the Phrygian mode.

THE INHERITED CODES OF THE $\flat \hat{2} - \hat{1}$ PIANTO

The semitone degree above or below the keynote holds particularly strong associations of attraction, “leading” to the keynote. The falling “upper leading note”, the $\flat \hat{2}$, also carries the connotations of the *pianto*. Musicologist Deryck Cooke described the flat second degree as “an expression of anguish in a context of finality, a hopeless anguish”, in contrast to the $\flat 6$ that is “anguish with hope” [5].

In addition to this, since the late medieval period the rise of polyphony in Western music brought the demise of the modes that were commonplace in Gregorian chant and early In addition to this, since the late medieval period the rise of polyphony in Western music brought the demise of the modes that were commonplace in Gregorian chant and early troubadour music. The Phrygian mode held a particular “problem” within a harmonic framework due to its flat second, which prevented a conventional “dominant” chord. Susan McClary explains how the Phrygian was unsuitable for the vast majority of situations and that it was deemed “illegitimate” [6]. McClary told me in interview: “In the physical bodies [in the Western World] that are accustomed back to the 15th century it is going to sound profoundly alien, and there may be even a physical reaction”. The flat second after this time connoted “pathos” and “anguish” in Western music. For instance, in the 16th century madrigal *O Dolce Notte*, by Verdelot, the movement from the key note up to the flat second and back is described by McClary as a “nocturnal arch” that haunts the madrigal [7]. Musical motifs containing the flat second signify the Other, the note itself being Other to the “normal” choice of musical notes in Western genres.

$\text{♩} = 136$ Let the bo-dies hit the floor, Let the bo-dies hit the floor, Let the bo-dies hit the floor.

Figure 3. “Bodies” theme tune

The lyric and the backing music of “Bodies” are both melodically built on the $\flat\hat{2} - \hat{1}$ *pianto* (Figure 3) [19]. The sedimented meanings of the $\flat\hat{2} - \hat{1}$ gesture add weight to “Bodies” powerful connotations.

$\flat\hat{2} - \hat{1}$ IN ORIENTAL MUSIC

The $\flat\hat{2} - \hat{1}$ gesture also has a significant presence in the music of countries that have been touched by the Arab and Ottoman empires, and in Indian music. For instance, in Turkish classical music the $\flat\hat{2}$ appears in upwards of 80% of all common tunes, and the $\flat\hat{2} - \hat{1}$ gesture is always a strong feature. Associations for this gesture are abundant, yet have little connection with the Western *pianto* topic.

In many 20th century compositions there is an awareness of difference between Eastern and Western scale choices, which may be exploited by musicians. Bálint Sárosi, researching Hungarian gypsy performance, discovered that the musicians encountered in one village would bring “even the commonest melody to an end with a Phrygian cadence” as it “pleased the collector” [20]. Self-conscious tunes are also composed, that emphasise the $\flat\hat{2}$ to represent the “emotionality” of the East, as opposed to the “rationality” of the West.

$\flat\hat{2} - \hat{1}$ as Oriental Topos

This “Orientalist” signification of the $\flat\hat{2} - \hat{1}$ gesture is also prominent in Western compositions. Spanish folk music and dance, particularly Andalusian, became fashionable in nineteenth century Paris, spearheaded by Debussy, Ravel and the Spaniard la Falla. Much was made of the Andalusian cadence, the same falling Phrygian tetrachord that was basic to the lament motif (see above). Its mere presence conjured up Spain, or a generalised gypsy or Arab [21]. Philip Tagg writes about the Phrygian mode: “From a Eurocentric viewpoint, this is the mode of Spain, gypsies, Balkans, Turks and Arabs.... music from somewhere else ... the Phrygian is obviously neither default mode nor default melodic vocabulary” [22]. Alongside location, the $\flat\hat{2} - \hat{1}$ gesture may have other Oriental associations of exotic and sensual, with possibly violent undertones [23]. The gesture has been maintained as a signifier of the Oriental throughout the 20th century.

COMBINED TOPOI

Significant combinations have been made between the $\flat\hat{2} - \hat{1}$ Oriental topos and the $\flat\hat{2} - \hat{1}$ *pianto*. The ease of moving between these two gestures provides a tight fit for

transgressive. Contrasted to this, the depiction of the “Indian hero/heroine” within Bollywood films traditionally would be likely to use a classical raga, and in early Bollywood the soundtrack was closely identified with a nationalist spirit [27]. Distinctive pitches, such as the $\flat \hat{2}$, depict the identity of the Indian separate from Western influence.

Since the 1990s changes within the Bollywood film industry have resulted in the “Indian hero/heroine” being as likely to be portrayed using international pop and/or Latin music genres, with traditional raga and folk music conveying conservative, perhaps “backward” values. However, tunes that combine some element of “Indian melody” with a pop tune may be the biggest hits [28]. An example, using the $\flat \hat{2} - \hat{1}$ gesture as Indian topos, is the 2004 smash hit “Dhoom Machale” (Figure 5) [29].

♩ = 100
 Dhoom ma-cha-le dhoom ma cha - le - dhoom Dhoom ma-ch - le dhoom ma ch - le -
f legato $\flat 2 \flat 2 1$ $\flat 2 \flat 2 1$
 dhoom *strings* Dhoom ma-ch - le dhoom ma- cha - le -
f $\flat 2$ $\flat 2 1$ $\flat 2 1$ $\flat 2 \flat 2 1$ $\flat 2 \flat 2 1$

Figure 5. “Dhoom Machale” theme tune

In such songs, the *pianto* topic is, arguably, meshed onto the Oriental topos. The combination conveys “Indian cool”, with lyrics about burning passion and images of vampish dance. The awareness and use of Western musical gestures such as the *pianto*, combined with “Indian” identity markers, gives scope for complexities of associations beyond both the Hollywood use of the $\flat \hat{2} - \hat{1}$ gesture and traditional Indian classical conventions.

Dysphoric Arabs

The most potent meeting of the $\flat \hat{2} - \hat{1}$ *pianto* topic with the $\flat \hat{2} - \hat{1}$ Oriental trope is, perhaps, in the depiction of the Arab in war films. The depiction of the Arab within film has frequently been overlaid with the “sinister” and “evil”. Nassar Al-Taee, writer on Orientalist representation in music, reports:

The romanticised image of the Orient in the first half of the 20C [...] gradually evolved to produce a more explosive version of the Arab as a violent terrorist who seeks to destroy American values. Since the 1970s, terrorists who threaten the Western world have taken over and dominated the image of the Arab in American film [...] Since [9/11], the Arab has come to represent the “antithesis of Western values and rationality” within binary lines of good versus evil [30].

The “unheard” nature of the film soundtrack, so defined by Claudia Gorbman, can create a situation where connotations that are unacceptable in words and images slip by into the musical “text” [31]. For instance, in the 2008 film *The Hurt Locker*, set during the Iraq war, the masculinity and machismo of the main character Sergeant James is underlined by his listening to the track “Khyber Pass” which combines “Arabic” singing

with a Metal track using a $\flat \hat{2} - \hat{1}$ bass riff [32]. This could be heard simply as “pumping-up” music for battle. Yet when codes of East and “beast” are brought together in a Middle Eastern war setting, through the commonality of the flat second motif, Othering connotations are being reinforced.

Another instance is a 2007 American military recruitment video that has the $\flat \hat{2}$ firstly appearing behind the image of an Eastern man holding a weapon, with captions regarding a threat from terrorism (Figure 6) [33]. Then it continues more menacingly with an American soldier in a stealth image with a caption “We are watching you”, using an electric guitar playing fast repeated key-note to flat second.

The figure shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is for strings, starting with a tempo marking of 126. It features a flat second motif (B-flat) with a slur over it. The bottom staff is for guitar, starting with a tempo marking of 160 and a fortissimo (ff) dynamic. It features a fast repeated key-note to flat second motif.

Figure 6. Military recruitment video

I argue that this video is underlining a perceived threat to the American way of life from the “East” by using the “Eastern” $\flat \hat{2}$ almost subliminally under the image of the Eastern man. Then it is “appropriated” by a powerful image of a U.S soldier. The sinister and dangerous is complexly situated both without and within the American subject. This “appropriation” of the $\flat \hat{2} - \hat{1}$ gesture can be thought of as an example of a more widespread blurring of the “hero” and the “anti-hero” [34].

The ominous connotations of the $\flat \hat{2} - \hat{1}$ gesture, and the Oriental Otherness of its presence, both contribute to its effectiveness in sound tracks that depict threat and possible “underhand” attack. A complex of sedimented meanings empowers the flat second to support film depictions of a “diabolic” and aggressive threat from the East.

CONCLUSIONS

This discussion has led from the dysphoric transformations of the general *pianto* topic, to the specific $\flat \hat{2} - \hat{1}$ *pianto* and its manifestations in film music and Heavy metal. There are, I argue, significant and particularly intense connotations of lament and anguish connected to the $\flat \hat{2} - \hat{1}$ *pianto* due to the perceived Otherness of the $\flat \hat{2}$ and the negative metaphors attached to its fall to the tonic. The $\flat \hat{2} - \hat{1}$ *pianto* has a strong presence in contemporary film and Heavy Metal; its intense connotations have been exploited to create “edgy” action film soundtracks, and *positive* discourses within the transgressive genre of Metal.

When regarded together with the Oriental topos of $\flat \hat{2}$ Phrygian, alongside or enmeshed with the *pianto* topic, there are more complex connotations. These range from the powerful identity markers within Oriental Metal and Bollywood to the, often covert, violent and irrational connotations for Arabs within war films set in the Middle East. This slippage between connotations of the Orient and those of anguish and dysphoria

create a heady mixture that all who study contemporary film and media should take note of.

INTERVIEWS

Interviews with Pete Herbert, Yossi Sa'aron Sassi, and Susan McClary conducted by Sarha Moore between 2009 and 2010 in London, Israel and Los Angeles.

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Black Sabbath and the Creation of Musical Meaning in the Devil's Topos

Paolo Ribaldini, University of Helsinki, FI

ABSTRACT

Black Sabbath is recognized nowadays as one of the most important bands in the development and history of heavy metal music since its first namesake release in 1970. This paper focuses on the Devil, one of the most important and stereotypical topics throughout heavy metal, which recurs regularly in Black Sabbath's discography. My main question is: is it possible to find in Black Sabbath's music the musical topos which represents the Devil? And does it refer only to one musical feature or to more than one? Does it depend only from music or also from extra-musical context?

INTRODUCTION

Devil's musical topos refers here to a musical element which recalls the idea of the Devil in the listener. This idea is intended as a personified contrast between God (good) and the Devil (evil), which is a common feature of Western symbolism and culture, especially in the Christian Age: in this perspective there is no room for any shade of grey, the distinction between good and evil is clear.

Western civilization culture offers examples of how the Devil is depicted in the common imagination: from Medieval illustrations which represent the Devil pursuing the souls of the damned, to literature (e.g. Dante's *Commedia*) and, in the 20th Century, media like cinema (e.g. *The Exorcist* by W. Friedkin), comics or video-games (e.g. *Diablo* by Blizzard Entertainment).

Methodology

I use standard font to indicate bands (e.g. Black Sabbath), *italics* for albums (e.g. *Black Sabbath*), standard font in quotation marks for songs (e.g. "Black Sabbath") [1]. I also use BS, Black Sabbath or just Sabbath as synonymous.

I assume as my point of view that a musical piece is made in its wholeness by a large amount of elements. Here I prefer to differentiate between "musical content/features" and "extra-musical features", the former being merely the "sounds" that form the piece (harmony, melody, rhythmical patterns, arrangement, timbre and so on), the latter dealing with lyrics; album artwork; on-stage and off-stage presence of the performers in a live context; social background where the author acts at the moment of composing a song; his personal life, story and experience; piece's influence on forthcoming authors; historical events; etc.

Exploring the complete work of the band would be impossible in such a brief paper, so I'll show just some examples I consider worth attention. The transcriptions used here are made by me from original recordings, except where noticed. They report only the part of the songs which support the illustration of the Devil's topic.

THE DEVIL IN EXTRA-MUSICAL CONTEXT

In this section I'm going to choose some sample songs to put them as starting points for the purpose of my contribution. The choice is absolutely arbitrary and abides by the following criteria:

- Presence of extra-musical elements (primarily lyrics) referring to the Devil. Already at this early point of the inquiry, it is quite clear that, if the Devil's topos exists in musical context, it is always supported by extra-musical elements.
- Variety through the varied band's line-up and periods in its 40-years long history.
- Title tracks, singles, album openers, live setlist classics are privileged.

It is also important to have an idea of how was the Devil's musical topos handled in other contexts than Black Sabbath.

The tritone interval is also nicknamed "Devil in music", a name inherited from Medieval harmony, where it was forbidden on mathematic criteria. Pythagorean music theory was involved: in fact, *diabolus in musica* wasn't symbolically related to the Devil until later periods. In the Middle Age its prohibition was merely formal and theoretical, not religious in itself (although mathematics was also religion in the Pythagorean doctrine), because this interval didn't abide to the mathematic-driven harmony rules of that time [2]. In spite of that, the "Devil in music" has been standing more and more as the musical sign of the Devil through the ages so far.

In contemporary culture, the soundtrack is another suitable which to be brought as example: Roman Polanski's *Rosemary's Baby* (1969) and the abovementioned *The Exorcist* (1973) have been standing as paragon in horror movies since their release, and nowadays are some of the most renowned films about the Devil. Here I also take in account Geezer Butler's (former bass player and lyrics writer in BS) large passion for horror movies and literature. At the beginning of their career, the intention of the band was mainly to give the idea of such scary topics and landscapes. The name of the band itself comes from an Italian horror movie by Mario Bava, *I Tre Volti della Paura*, whose English title is *Black Sabbath*.

Thus, the musical themes and features in the abovementioned movies' soundtracks are going to be considered: tritones, flat 2nd interval, howling screams, sudden sounds, chromatism are some of the most common elements in these soundtracks, which of course stood as models for plenty of other likewise ones in the following decades. Tritone and flat 2nd in particular are used as "tension makers", as stated by Cope, who himself quotes Tagg, Deathridge and Smirnov [3].

Black Sabbath

The reputation of being “satanic” has been one of BS’ trademarks across the decades. Everyone who has even sketchily heard about the band knows its alleged involvement in occult and paranormal. The purpose of this paper is, however, not to inquire whether or not the band was really involved into Satanism. The beginning of the relation between BS and the Devil’s topic is to be individuated in the namesake song, released in *Black Sabbath* album (1970) [4]. The lyrical theme leaves no room for misunderstanding: it tells about someone who frighteningly discovers to be drawn in an evil context and to be a “chosen one”. The artwork cover shows a mysterious woman in black cloak creeping in a moor landscape, in front of a country house or farm [Appendix 1, 1].

Other examples of *Black Sabbath* song lyrics which deal with occult and Devil are “N.I.B.” and, only in a slighter way, “Evil Woman” and “The Wizard”. Being half of the songs in *Black Sabbath* related to the Devil’s topic, this album stands as one of the most occult-related in BS’s career.

***Born Again* and “Disturbing the Priest”**

In 1983 Ian Gillan, formerly in Deep Purple from ’70 to ’73, joined BS as singer. The band released *Born Again*, sometimes considered their darkest and controversial work [5] [6]. The first extra-musical element that suggests an agreement to our central topic is the artwork cover by Steve Joule: on electric blue background, a redskin newborn poses tenderly, and shows his vampire-like teeth and Devil’s horns. It is possible also to imagine a correspondence between the artwork and one of the final scenes in *Rosemary’s Baby* movie. The cover was always considered with a mixture of distrust and anxiety both by the band and the audience. Gillan himself later stated that the artwork gave him a creepy shiver [7].

The song I’ve taken from this album is “Disturbing the Priest” [8], which was originally inspired by a funny event: the priest of the church next to the band’s recording studios complained because of the high playback volume [Appendix 1, 2]. However, most listeners were not aware of this event and considered the song related with the Devil due to both the sonic environment and the artwork sleeve.

Headless Cross

Headless Cross, dated 1989 and featuring vocalist Tony Martin, is one of the most Devil-related Black Sabbath albums on the lyrical themes’ side. The title track [9] tells about a namesake village near Birmingham (hometown of the former band members), upon which a legend was told: during a raging period of the black plague in the Middle Age, the villagers tried to escape death through a deal with the Devil. The deal didn’t work and they were all slain by Satan himself [Appendix 1, 3].

The album was slighted by audience and critics in the USA, maybe due to PMRC (Parents Music Resource Center) indirect strong influence at that time. This committee’s purpose was to improve parental control over the access of children to music containing reference to violence, sex, drugs, alcohol, and so on.

***The Devil You Know* and “Breaking Into Heaven”**

Up to now, *The Devil You Know* is BS' latest studio release (2009), though under the name of Heaven and Hell. Starting from the artwork, an adjustment of the painting *Satan* by Per Øyvind Haagenen, the whole album is characterized by a dark and occult atmosphere.

This atmosphere is maybe also influenced by the attention paid by Ronnie James Dio (singer and lyrics writer) to religious matters: on the metal scenery he holds the paternity of the horns' symbol (closed fist with second and fifth fingers lifted up forming the shape of two horns), which he always awarded with an apotropaic function.

On the cover there are also the numbers 25 and 41, referring to Matthew's Gospel 25, 41 (King's James version): “*Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*”. The Devil seems to be one of the main thematic figures. “Breaking Into Heaven” [10] refers to the legendary clash between God and fallen angels lead by Lucifer, also narrated in John Milton's literary masterpiece *Paradise Lost* (1667) [Appendix 1, 4].

THE DEVIL AS A MUSICAL TOPOS

Analysis criteria

The following musical elements are taken into account to analyze the songs:

- Riff melody
- Rhythms
- Lead vocals melody
- Harmony
- Instruments and timbres

The chosen examples are going to be investigated in order to identify some specific features and elements which musically refer to the Devil's topic.

Hence, they are going to be considered in comparison, and then conclusions will be drawn from this process. The comparison is going to be made both from aural and analytical point of view.

Riffs

A riff is a short repeated melodic fragment, phrase or theme, with a pronounced rhythmic character. Riffs can be played in any combination of instruments and can be spontaneously improvised or pre-composed. A riff may be repeated unchanged or it can be altered to fit the harmonic changes of a song [11].

Riffs belong to the very core of popular music, and even more when taking heavy metal into consideration.

Since Tony Iommi is the author of most BS riffs, this section is going to focus especially on guitars (and bass guitar).

“Black Sabbath” – The starting riff (00:38) [App. 2, Fig. 1] after the rain and church bells sound presents the tritone between G and C[#] as main feature. The final riff (04:36; transcription by Lilja, [12]) is particularly interesting [App. 2, Fig. 3]: a rush of triplets in 4/4 which prepares a long-strokes section with G⁵ and G⁴ (quartal chord on G: G-C-F-Bb, practically a guitar barre on four strings) chords and guitar solo which leads to the end.

“Disturbing the Priest” – In the first riff [App. 2, Fig. 4] the bass covers a descending scale from tonic to dominant (embellishment on the subdominant) following the I-VII-VI-V-I in D-Aeolian mode. Then (00:10), guitar plays a broken, distorted melody with a flat 2nd: A-D-C^{#5} and A-D-Eb⁵, with A and D harmonics; the verse riff (00:55) is held up by the bass, with E steady quavers walk, while Iommi gives up rhythmical guitar playing in advantage of a more atmospheric instrument effect production.

“Headless Cross” - The Db-Mixolydian riff at the beginning (00:10) [App. 2, Fig. 5] is much closer to classic heavy metal than to Black Sabbath’s early style: power chords proceed through stepwise motion on a steady bass fundamental. The second main riff (00:32, Aeolian) [App. 2, Fig. 6] is also something very “classic”, again based on power chords with a typical closing filler at the end of the fourth repetition (00:50). The bridge - chorus (01:37) [App. 2, Fig. 8-9] lies on long strokes, though at its end stands a pattern with the succession Eb-D-Ab-G, which gives a tonal dominant taste even in C-Aeolian. Keyboards are also to be mentioned: the special break (03:04) [App. 2, Fig. 10] presents a synth choir melody with flat 2nd D-Eb.

“Breaking Into Heaven” – Riffs in this songs walk slow but flawless. The opening one [App. 2, Fig. 11] is based on a very simple rhythm and involves the flat 2nd between Bb and A, also a tritone between the fundamental Eb and A itself. The Eb-Phrygian verse (00:39) [App. 2, Fig. 12] is based on the Gb-Eb then Ab-Abb-Gb tones patterns, while its rhythm presents syncopation and the ascending closing fragment Bb-Cb-Eb-Fb-Cb-Bb, also used at the end of the chorus [App. 2, Fig. 13]. The bridge is a succession of descending power chords from IV to I.

Rhythms

All the considered songs are in the time signature of 4/4, typical of most rock and metal music. Though, the rhythmical point of view is the less influencing in the Devil’s topic. Its analysis is therefore here less detailed.

“Black Sabbath” – Guitar and bass rhythms are very monolithic and often based on half-notes or whole notes. The drumming is not based on keeping the tempo, whereas rather meant to be “orchestral”, according to the words of drummer Bill Ward himself [13], whose main purpose was accompanying guitar, riffs rather than being technically precise.

“Disturbing the Priest” – The prevailing pattern in the piece is the 16th-16th-8th module, which can be found in the vocals verse on the words “not at all”. Nevertheless, in a more specific way it is possible to observe a strong contrast between the quite free attitude of vocals’ rhythm and the strong rhythmicity of the instruments in the riffs, which often lay on combination of quavers or semiquavers and pauses. Only the chorus (00:40) is built on deep long strokes, the second of which is on upbeat.

“Headless Cross” – The bassist steadily fingerpicks the chord fundamental in homorhythmic patterns (in this case, 8th-16th-16th) in a way that was common in the Eighties heavy rock music. Instrumental rhythms often lie on upbeats, especially on chords changes, while the vocals rhythm is quite complex and varied, usually shifting among combinations of quavers and semiquavers.

“Breaking Into Heaven” – There’s large variety of rhythms in this piece: the opening riff is a heavy on quarter-notes, the verse lies on syncopation on countered sixteenth-notes, the bridge is mainly made by long half-notes power chords, with a final bar made by countered 16ths quatrains which lead to the chorus; the guitar in chorus presents a very interesting syncopation pattern with four notes in the first three beats of the bar and then a further syncope on the last beat.

Lead vocals

“Black Sabbath” – Vocals are quite repetitive and turn around the G-aeolian scale (01:25), hitting the first five degrees in ascending sequence, then the octave and finally conforming to the C# riff peculiarity [App. 2, Fig. 2]. There are some slight variations, but the vocals melody basically relies on this pattern. They follow the rhythmical path of the piece: they are narrative and free from tempo in the first part, and then conform to a more disciplined pulse when the rhythmic section begins to impose (04:43).

“Disturbing the Priest” – Gillan opens the song with piercing high-pitch distortions. Gillan takes advantage of his wide vocal range with falsettos. The singer goes through the verse (00:55) almost speaking, often following the 16th-16th-8th basic rhythmic pattern on a D-C constant trill, which then becomes A-G. In general terms, the vocals of the songs are based on two main features: Gillan’s excursion back and forth through his range (often with “demonic” screams) and the contrast between the homorhythmic verse and the melodic bridge and chorus. It’s noticeable that, differently from Osbourne (who simply overdubbed the vocals keeping the same melodic line), Gillan often harmonizes vocals.

“Headless Cross” – Tony Martin’s use of the vocal range varies throughout the piece and covers almost two octaves. The intervals are quite wide in the verse [App. 2, Fig. 7]; on the contrary lead vocals tend to proceed stepwise in the bridge, just before the sudden leaps at the end of the chorus (01:53, C-G, and then G to Eb-D-C scale) which also follow the general trend of instruments at that point.

“Breaking Into Heaven” – Ronnie James Dio developed his own inimitable vocal style during more than fifty years on stage, shifting across genres such as swing, romances, hard rock and classic heavy metal. These are the words Tony Iommi spent on him: “He would sing sort of across the riff, whereas Ozzy would probably follow the riff, particularly on ‘Iron Man’. [...] He [Dio] gave us another angle on writing” [14]. His weaponry on this song is various: from a melodic point of view, he uses both stepwise flow (e.g. in the bridge, 01:46) and leaps (as in the verse, 00:39), then harmonization especially in the bridge (one of his characteristics during his whole career). Dio’s tone is majestic and epic, and on the rhythmic side he drags the phrase seeming often out-tempo (giving quite the out-of-time impression) through a complex rhythmicity which actually is far simpler if considered as widening the phrase and following a solemn exposition.

Harmony

“Black Sabbath” - The key is G-Aeolian. A very particular harmony lies at the end of the song (05:14), where a succession of whole-notes draws in an alternation of G5 and Gq chords, with bass playing G-F-E-Eb. The resulting harmony is very complex: I-VIIq(2_4_5)-dorVI7-VIq(2_3_5_6) [15].

“Disturbing the Priest” – D-Aeolian is the key exploited in the piece, except for the initial riff, where both harmonic minor (which is found in C# tone) and Phrygian (Eb instead of E).

“Headless Cross” – Whereas the intro mode is Db-Mixolydian, from the verse going on it changes into C-Aeolian. The basic feature of this song is the wide use of power chords, and the most common harmonic functions are I, VII, VI and III: again, both very common in Eighties heavy rock music (though in modal, not tonal system).

“Breaking Into Heaven” – In the starting riff there’s an ambiguity between Eb-Aeolian and Eb-Phrygian mode, the latter being the scale of verse and bridge (though the closing bar of the bridge shifts to an Aeolian chord and then back again to Phrygian, but this may also be a chromatic use of II degree to fulfill a dominant function), lowering the II degree of from F to Fb. The chorus is instead in Eb-Aeolian.

Instruments and timbres

“Black Sabbath” – Rainfall and church bells are evocative, but the distorted sound of Iommi’s guitar is very important. Due to a factory accident, he had to learn all the basic technique from the beginning and play with prosthesis on two fingertips on the right hand. The limitation in his technical possibilities at that time led him to play a lot of power chords and partly built the recognizable sound of BS.

“Disturbing the Priest” – Ian Gillan’s timbre is screaming and hysteric, a feature which could recall an evil environment. The sound of *Born Again* was heavily criticized at the time because of its roughness, but it’s my opinion that the same roughness gives the song a dark, creepy and haunting atmosphere. There’s a difference between *Born Again* and the first BS release: from 1971 (*Master of Reality*) and on, Iommi began to experiment with every kind of imaginable devices he found in recording studios, making BS’ sound much more complex. *Born Again* is unique in BS’ discography due to its sharp and cutting sound, being perhaps the band’s “darkest and most morbid” album.

“Headless Cross” – The sound is brighter than in *Born Again*, also due to an extended use of keyboards. The drumming style of Cozy Powell is pattern-varied and on tempo, in sharp contrast to unique “orchestral” Bill Ward’s style. The sounds of instruments are equalized and reverbed in balance one with each other, while Tony Iommi uses many guitar effects, which became very popular in the Eighties onwards. It is possible to daresay that, after *Seventh Star* (1985), the sound of BS became very similar to most other heavy/hair metal mainstream bands, losing many sound features of the first BS’ releases.

“Breaking Into Heaven” – Production follows the standards of nowadays heavy metal discography market and balances every instrument with the others keeping each voice audible, but at the same time giving the song a powerful and massive sonic feature.

Features that recall the Devil's topos

“Black Sabbath” – The starting distorted riff's specific feature is the tritone from G to C#. The latter note is also hit by a church bell, which remarks it to the listener (furthermore, the bell's tone is G, which recreates harmonically the tritone). The verse drumming (01:08) on toms, timpani and bass drum gives the idea of something detached and creepy, which can qualify as bearer of the *topos*. The G⁵-G⁹ chord alternation in the ending (04:36) is dissonant (according to standard tonal/modal harmony), at the same time threatening and epic. The main “demonic” features in the song are therefore *harmonic* (tritone, G⁵-G⁹) and *timbral* (bells, the sound of G⁹). Thus, the idea of the considered *topos*, suggested by the lyrics, is also musically quite strong.

“Disturbing the Priest” – Wild, high-pitched screams throughout the whole song, which could represent the *Devil's topos*. The guitar riff (00:10) with the distorted harmonics and flat 2nd is representative of that *topos* and is also a very important part of the piece's identity. The contrast between upward and downward guitar-effect *glissandos* in the verse gives the idea of something ancestral, mythical and threatening (it almost resembles a non-human voices choir). Finally, the rough sound obtained by the equalization and mixing, though disliked by musicians themselves, is enough sharp and edgy to upset the listener and give him a sensation of discomfort, as if a dark presence was creeping around. Thus, this song has primarily *timbral* (voice, *glissando* effect, production, distorted harmonics) and *harmonic* features (flat 2nd). Musically, the Devil's feature is strongly present in this song.

“Headless Cross” – Two elements recall the *Devil's topos*. The Eb-D-Ab-G pattern at the end of the chorus, which exploits two flat 2nd intervals in the scale voice leading: $\wedge 3$ to $\wedge 2$ and $\wedge 6$ to $\wedge \#5$ (since G is chromatic in the Aeolian mode). Secondly, the brief keyboard melody in the special, with the flat 2nd and the ambiguity between D in the ascending scale (Phrygian mode) and Db in the descending one (Aeolian mode). Both the features involved here are *harmonic*.

“Breaking Into Heaven” – The two main riffs are the most musically related to the *topos*: their wide and inexorable pace mirrors the cover artwork, an evil and powerful entity which can't be escaped from. The first of the two riffs, again, employs the tritone. The darkness and fullness of the sound is also another element which improves the idea of something enormous and unavoidable. The *Devil's topos* here is given by *harmonic* (tritone, flat 2nd), *melodic* (pounding, slow riffs) and *timbral* (powerful equalization) features.

According to my analysis, every considered song somehow contains musical elements of the *topos* I was looking for. However, there is no fixed recurrence among them through the different pieces. The tritone as *Devil's topos* is an important feature, but it is present only in two pieces out of four. Sound effects, though widely used, do never repeat the same ideas or characteristics (they are based variously on guitar effects, screaming vocals, church bells, etc.). If we want to consider what recurs in every piece under investigation, it's possible to identify distortion, flat 2nd and power chords as common elements. Hence, one could believe they are the *Devil's topos* features, but they all are actually quite common elements in the Black Sabbath discography, not only in the songs which deal with the Devil as an extra-musical *topos*.

CONCLUSION

The starting purpose was to inquire the presence or absence of one or more musical elements which could be considered having a relation to the extra-musical *topos* of the Devil. I analyzed some BS songs, firstly from extra-musical point of view, then from a musical one. This brought to the identification of some features which could be related to the *topos*. Thus, I can state the *presence of a musical Devil's topos* in Black Sabbath's music.

Nevertheless, this is brought by different elements from time to time, since no strong recurring element was found to be always present through the different songs. In the music of Black Sabbath the reference to this specific topic is not granted by fixed musical items, but rather by the band's adjustment to the aesthetic and performing perspective of their times.

Furthermore, it was stated at the starting of the paper that the extra-musical point of view is fundamental, being it related to lyrics, artwork, etc. Without it, the considered music features would not have their "topical" meaning. Hence, it is clear that the presence of this musical *topos* is the extra-musical context are strictly related, and support each other in the exploitation of musical meaning.

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APPENDIX 1 – LYRICS

1. Lyrics to "Black Sabbath"
http://www.metal-archives.com/albums/Black_Sabbath/Black_Sabbath/482
2. Lyrics to "Disturbing The Priest"
http://www.metal-archives.com/albums/Black_Sabbath/Born_Again/517
3. Lyrics to "Headless Cross"
http://www.metal-archives.com/albums/Black_Sabbath/Headless_Cross/524
4. Lyrics to "Breaking Into Heaven"
http://www.metal-archives.com/albums/Heaven_and_Hell/The_Devil_You_Know/228522

HEADLESS CROSS

Headless Cross - Main Riff

Black Sabbath

Guitar

Bass
C#/D♭-Mixolydian

3

D♭5 E♭5 F♯ E♭5 goes to C-Aeolian

Figure 5

Headless Cross - Second Riff

Black Sabbath

Guitar
C-Aeolian

C⁵ B^{♭5} C⁵ B^{♭5} C⁵ E^{♭5} C⁵ B^{♭5} C⁵ E^{♭5} F⁵ B^{♭5} C⁵ E^{♭5} D⁵

Figure 6

Headless Cross - Verse Voice

Black Sabbath

Vocals

Look through the peo- ple... and on through thanist to the hill of the head less cro - ss

Figure 7

Headless Cross - Bridge

Black Sabbath

Vocals

Li- sten for the feet as they pound the land to a tune of thun- der

Guitar
C-Aeolian

A^{♭5} F⁵ C⁵ B^{♭5} C⁵

Figure 8

Headless Cross - Chorus

Black Sabbath

Voice

Watch as the le- gions ride a- gain to a fa- te of death and tor - tu - re at Head less Cro- ss

Guitar
C-Aeolian

A^{♭5} F⁵ G⁵ A^{♭5} G⁵ C⁵

Figure 9

Headless Cross - Key Special

Black Sabbath

Keyboard

Figure 10

Does Topic Theory Require a Monological View of Competency? Perspectives From Popular Music Studies and Reflections on the Emergence of Psychedelia as a New Topical Field

William Echard, Carleton University, CA

ABSTRACT

This paper asks in what ways existing topic theory should be modified when being used to study new topical fields at the time of their emergence, i.e., when the researcher is working with relatively contemporary materials rather than at an historical remove. Most importantly, the traditional semiotic idea of a single competency shared by all members of a community is questioned, and steps are taken to replace it with a more dialogic perspective on the creation, circulation, and regulation of meaning. The example of psychedelic popular music is explored as a case study.

The theory of musical topics has much to offer popular music studies, being consistent with the sort of Saussurian model that has tended to dominate the study of popular music but offering many extensions and refinements. However, topic theory in its present form was developed in order to study music at a significant historical remove, and its subsequent major developments and applications have similarly been focused on music of the 19th century and earlier. For music of such time periods it has proven methodologically effective to proceed as if the object of study is a single competency, universal to the culture in question. As a result, when we try to apply topic theory to contemporary genres and especially to the study of emergent topics, important methodological and theoretical questions arise. In such cases, it is important to explain how fresh topics appear and older ones are transformed in ways which are contingent upon local and personal circumstances. This is a highly dialogical situation, and so the question arises: can we support a monological view of semiotic competency and still do justice to such a context? I will argue that it is possible to reconcile the most useful aspects of existing topic theory with the claim that interpretive competencies are multiple and contingent, explain the reasons for adopting such a view when studying contemporary emergent topics, and explore a case study---the development of psychedelic styles since the 1960s---with an eye towards two main questions: (i) in what ways might we need to change the emphasis of existing topic theory in order to address this kind of context, and; (ii) in what ways can we see psychedelic styles moving from a

relatively fluid and dialogical situation to a more static and monological one, as topic theory would predict them to do in the long run?

In choosing to redesign topic theory for the study of contemporary emergent topics, I do not wish to imply a sweeping critique of existing work, much less rejection. The question is not one of absolute theoretical adequacy, but rather of which choices are most appropriate for which research situations. It is not so much the case that the development of topics, and the dialogism associated with such development, have been ignored in existing work but that even this development has been cast from the perspective of an historical remove, as already-completed. My question is: what should we say about emergent topics *from the perspective of participants in the time of their emergence?*

While many have contributed to the study of topics, the work of Raymond Monelle is perhaps most significant with respect to two aspects of the theory. First, his work offers the greatest historical depth. Second, he has offered the most extensive model of the internal working of topics (although others have done more to theorize the ways in which topics participate in elaborated structures). However, I would also suggest that from the perspective of the contemporary study of emergent topics Monelle's work presents the greatest ontological and epistemological difficulties. In a sense this is another compliment: Monelle does us the service of making his assumptions and choices entirely clear. But some of these are precisely the things that I will suggest need to be transformed in approaches concerned with contemporary situations. In developing this argument, I will therefore engage most directly with Monelle's work, bringing in references to other theorists as appropriate. The range of texts I engage is quite narrow, confined to fairly recent work from a single publisher, but that is because the community of scholars who have done the most to advance topic theory are represented here. Elsewhere I have presented a much more extended review of how such work can be situated relative to the full range of music-semiotic theories, drawing on the literature of popular music as well as others [1].

This paper has three parts. First I will describe in fairly neutral terms some of the ontological and epistemological assumptions of current topic theory. Then I will offer a more critical perspective on these features, and finally proceed to the case study. Throughout, I will focus on three main aspects of topic theory: (i) its tendency towards an atomistic view of the topic; (ii) its monological view of competency, and; (iii) its attempt to keep separate various semantic domains.

The theory of topics does offer certain kinds of dynamism insofar as a great deal of work has been done on how topics participate in processes of style change and in dynamic elaborated forms of meaning, for example Hatten's work on troping of topics and on expressive genre [2] or Almén's on narrative [3]. But in such cases the topic itself is still generally treated as atomic. It is the relative fixity of topics as signifying units or as coordinates in a semantic field which is relied upon as a framework against various forms of combination and movement is analyzed. It is not generally asked how the meaning or structure of topics themselves is changed through participation in such situations. On one level this could be seen as antithetical to the general semiotic program of emphasizing systems and mechanisms rather than items of vocabulary, although it is also true that any system requires certain fixed terms and recent theories of musical semiotics have tended to use topics in this way. This is not to say that workers in the area are unaware of the issue. Monelle's own work in many ways can be read as an attempt to get past the atomic approach to topics through an emphasis on historical context, textuality,

and cultural units. But as we will see, Monelle makes other choices which put strict limits on how far such topical dynamism can be extended. Similarly, Hatten does note that topics are synthetic emergent entities [4] but for the most part this aspect of topicality is not developed in his work.

Monelle frequently asserts that topics are defined by complete conventionality: that a topical signifier evokes the same cultural unit for competent listeners wherever it occurs. This is not to say that Monelle fails to study the varieties of meaning and changes in meaning associated with topics as they develop, but that his ultimate perspective is removed from such multiplicity. The diverging and partial reports of contemporaries are discussed, but ultimately sublated within the holistic perspective Monelle wants to develop, and the competency he ultimately describes is based on consensus, albeit often tacit. Hatten offers a position similar to Monelle's, but somewhat more moderate:

I maintain that we still have access to relatively objective (by which I mean intersubjectively defensible) historical meanings. [...] I do not claim there must be one and only one musical meaning [. . .] but rather that we can propose plausible, contemporaneous meanings, at an appropriate level of generality [5].

The crux of the discussion is this: what constitutes the appropriate level of generality in any given case? Monelle's understanding of competency appears to posit an extremely high level of generality, even universality. This choice makes sense relative to certain of Monelle's linguistic and semiotic sources, but it also creates a tension with his otherwise particularistic and nuanced descriptions of specific historical situations and of the differences between them.

When discussing the relationship between various semantic domains, systems of code, and so forth, some of what Monelle says would be entirely consistent with mainstream views in fields such as ethnomusicology or popular music studies. For example: "all musical signification is social and cultural . . . because topics are paradigms, signifying in relation to culture" [6]. But in other respects Monelle defends views that appear more traditional, perhaps to the point of being reactionary, by insisting on the separation of different signifying regimes and by seemingly attributing agency to texts and to signifying systems. For example: "a theory of the sense of music is not autonomous, but it is immanent, self-related, and logically prior to music sociology" [7]. Similarly, while Monelle adopts the theory of *cultural units* to describe the object of topical signs, he defines cultural units in terms of a split between external-world experience and convention which stands in sharp contrast to many forms of contemporary cultural theory [8]. Although such theoretical tendencies are arguably divergent, there are good reasons that Monelle would hold them all at the same time, since his work is situated at an intersection between the study of history, which tends in a pluralistic and pragmatic direction, and traditional semiotics, which requires as one of its fundamental tenants that "the status of a sentence or term as a semiotic entity is not guaranteed by its relation to a real state of affairs, but by its interpretability within a code" [9].

Having now described some of the theoretical choices which I will want to nuance or change in the study of contemporary emergent topics, we can move to a discussion of why such changes may be needed, starting on a theoretical level and then continuing into the case study. Many of the points I want to raise have already come up

in the literature, and indeed within the community of musical semioticians concerned with historical styles. Consider, for example this extended quote from Melanie Lowe:

To limit contextualization, while perhaps prudent, creates as many theoretical questions as practical answers it provides. For one, limiting context draws firm boundaries around the text as well, sustaining the problematic text/context binary [. . .] Moreover, by constraining context and allowing a text to embrace only 'relevant' intertextual relationships, the main mechanism of intertextuality itself--- context becoming text---can ultimately fail to operate [. . .] Equally problematic is the question of who decides which 'some' things outside of the text 'ascend' to become part of the text [10].

The issues raised by Lowe are both ontological, having to do with the site of immanence of textuality, and epistemological, having to do with unexamined choices about whose discursive authority should be favoured. My concerns are similar, but center on the nature of competency, and the ultimate untenability of a strong separation between semantic domains and semiotic regimes.

In its original form within Chomskyan linguistics, linguistic competency is universal to all humans. The same competency underlies all natural languages, and it is a cultural universal that linguistic competency is a prerequisite for being considered normal by any community. The object of study in such a model is the ideal speaker in an homogeneous community. So at first it seems entirely reasonable that a theory of music-semiotic competency will be similarly Universalist and consensus-oriented. However, there are important respects in which this mapping fails to operate. First, the frame of reference for topic theory is not all music, or even all music within a particular culture, but rather certain substyles. A kind of universality is asserted, but it is difficult to justify given that true universality has already been set aside. Second, while aesthetic and social value judgments are outside the scope of Chomskyan linguistic competence, they are an important part of music-semiotic competence. I therefore characterize the view of musical competency typical of existing topic theory as monological in two related senses. First, in the assumption that stylistic competence is singular and universally distributed within a culture, and second, in the assumption that such competence includes consensus on certain judgments of aesthetic and social value. But I have described a contradiction in the first kind of monologism, since it tries to be particular and universal at the same time. When working on primarily historical materials such a position may or may not be avoidable, but in my experience it's more trouble than it's worth when working with contemporary cultures, not only for reasons of epistemological politics but also for simple methodological and ontological reasons. It is too difficult to pry apart the obviously intertwined stylistic and interpretive frameworks active in the present moment. If we accept this analysis of the first kind of monologism, then we have much less motive to try and sustain the second.

My suggestion is that when doing any kind of analysis on contemporary music-semiotic practices, including the study of emergent topics, it is necessary to recognize that the kind of competency involved is like competency in a single language or even a dialect, and therefore not a universal competency. Further, discursive struggles over authority can often be productively understood as a clash of competing competencies, and this approach can help to explain the unique mixture of disagreement and frank mutual incomprehension typical of such encounters. Of course we also need to attend to the fact that such a competency will include strategies for negotiating with and

translating between competing competencies, such that over time the interaction between several of them may well produce competencies of greater generality and more widespread distribution.

Even allowing for such a radical alteration, there is much in existing topic theory that should be retained in the study of emergent topics. In my own work, one of Monelle's most consistently useful insights is also one of the most subtle: the fact that a topic is distinguished in part by *indexicality of the content*. In short, the idea is that a topical sign in the first instance signifies some object of cultural importance, often for historical or social reasons, but that object is taken in turn as an index of broader cultural units.¹ This model not only suggests the final structure towards which topics develop but also the sort of social processes that allow it to happen. Indexicality of content is one of two criteria of topicality emphasized by Monelle, both of which will be useful in our case study of psychedelia:

- "Has this musical sign passed from literal imitation (iconism) or stylistic reference (indexicality) into signification by association (the indexicality of the object)?"
- "Is there a level of conventionality in the sign?" [12]

But since the study of contemporary emergent topics requires us to take such signs not as a given but to examine the processes through which they develop, further questions are necessary. With regard to the indexicality of content we need to pay special attention to instances of signs being removed from their original stylistic frames, or of entire styles being removed from their contexts. Such acts of removal and distancing are necessary for the immediate signification to be weakened and the indexicality of content to become conventional. With respect to conventionality more generally, we can look for struggles over epistemic authority, and should be careful not to minimize differences of understanding. We can also look for moments where the meanings preferred by one community, or the version of a textual feature typical of one style, gain more widespread distribution and acceptance. And we can ask in every case how sensitive a particular meaning is to the identity of the interpreter. In cases where this judgment drifts towards 'relatively insensitive', a new topic may be developing.

At this point I have finished my summary and critique of certain aspects of topic theory, and offered suggestions about what an approach more appropriate to the contemporary study of emergent topics might look like. For the remainder of the paper I will examine a case study: the emergence of new topics in connection with psychedelic styles and cultures since the 1960s. Since space doesn't allow a comprehensive overview, I will focus on three features:

(i) the intense dialogism of early psychedelic styles; (ii) instances where indexicality of content is evident but not yet monological; (iii) an example of continuing openness and contested definitions within a likely emergent topic.

The first points I wish to make have more to do with the creation of a psychedelic style and genre in general, rather than topics in particular. But since the two are not really separable in practice, and are to a degree mutually defining, it will be a useful exercise. In the 1950s and into the 1960s there were a range of constituencies and agendas active in the creation of psychedelic culture. Some prominent groups and figures include: Aldous Huxley, psychological researchers (often concerned with mimicking

¹ For a full explanation see Monelle [11].

psychosis), clinicians, therapists, Timothy Leary and other popularizers, The Diggers, The Merry Pranksters, Hunter S. Thompson, and social-political radicals such as The White Panthers and the Yippies. Between them were a range of agendas, which could be arranged into at least four types: scientific, humanistic, hedonistic, and political. This overview is necessarily very crude but should at least give a sense of the cultural complexities surrounding early psychedelia. Also important is the shift of the mid-1960s, which altered psychedelic culture from something limited to the laboratory and private salon and turned it into mass culture. It was at this point that deliberately psychedelic music began to be created, shortly followed by widespread commodification of the associated styles. After the 1960s, we see continuing subcultural and stylistic fragmentation in psychedelia along with an increasing degree of historical reflexivity.

Apart from this contextual complexity, early psychedelic styles were intensely dialogical in that psychedelic music were always created as substyles of styles which were not primarily psychedelic in orientation (psychedelic rock, psychedelic folk, etc.). There are a range of subtle relationships that can be found between source styles and their psychedelic variants, but for now we can simply note the existence of two major groups. *Token contributors* are styles which contributed signifiers but which did not develop an extensive psychedelic substyle/subgenre.² *Base styles* are styles which are not always or even usually psychedelic, but which developed an extensive psychedelic substyle/subgenre. Table 1 gives a sense of which major source styles for early psychedelia may be fit into each category.

Styles that were token contributors but not base styles	Base styles established before the mid-1960s	Base styles established in the mid-1960s or later
Electronic and musique concrète Free jazz Indian classical Instrumental surf 1950s rock and roll Rhythm and blues Vaudeville and Music Hall Circus music Church music Brass bands	Soul Country Chicago and folk blues Folk	Electric blues rock Jazz-rock fusion Funk Folk rock Progressive rock Minimalism (marginal, but Terry Riley is at least one example, and maybe also the Velvet Underground and German rock bands such as Can and Amon Düül II)

Table 1: Psychedelic-related styles of the 1960s and early 1970s.

Generally, a token contributor or base style is in some way cognate with psychedelic experience or intent, and further complexities arise from that fact that there are several ways in which this can happen:

Cognate by intent: Genres that are associated with the transformation of consciousness but which do not have psychedelic intent (e.g., Buddhism, Hinduism, Surrealism).

Cognate by formal affect: Styles that are formally amenable to psychedelic use, especially because they offer icons of psychedelic experience (e.g. drones in Indian classical music, or timbral and spatial experimentation in classical electronic music).

² I do not mean 'token' here in the formal sense of a type/token relationship. I simply mean that individual musical features are borrowed in isolation, without any extensive generic or stylistic mapping.

Cognate by context. Base styles that become implicated by time/space connection to psychedelia. Some may also be cognate by formal affect (e.g. Yardbirds-style rave-ups) and some may not (e.g., country music, pre-1960s blues).

Cognate with redirection. Deliberate use of psychedelic styles for some non-psychedelic purpose (e.g., exploitation, nostalgia, decoration).

We do not have room to pursue this analysis in more depth, but it should be clear that early psychedelia was exceptionally rich in dialogical relationships. Each of these borrowings, removals, and redefinitions was associated with a range of negotiations over meaning, and in some cases clashes between previously separate or even previously opposed styles and systems of musical understanding.

Often, we can directly map Monelle's model of indexicality of content into a psychedelic context. For example, see Table 2.

Musical Item		Object		Signification
Indian stylistic influences in The Beatles "Love You To" [14]	index	Indian spirituality	index	Consciousness expansion (as part of psychedelic philosophy)
Harmonic oscillation in The Grateful Dead "Dark Star" [15]	icon	Suspended time sense	index	Altered sensory and cognitive states (as part of psychedelic experience)

Table 2: Two straightforward examples of psychedelic indexicality of content.³

Such an analysis probably mirrors quite well the ways in which such gestures became standardized to signify widespread features of psychedelic culture. But Monelle's model can also be useful in showing how meanings can be contested or divergent. For example, Table 3 offers two ways of reading the same signifier, both of them topical and both likely consistent with the interpretive priorities of different groups of listeners.

Music Item		Object		Signification
Sitar-like guitar solo in The Hollies "Bus Stop" [16]	heard as an <i>index</i>	raga rock as a trend	index	Psychedelia as a style with which The Hollies display solidarity
	heard as an <i>icon</i>	raga rock as a trend	index	Psychedelia as a style which The Hollies are cynically exploiting

Table 3: Two different readings of the same topical sign

In this example, it is possible that two disagreeing interpreters would both self-identify as insiders to rock culture. Similar divergences, or even greater ones, could be possible between self-identified subcultural insiders and outsiders. For example, consider a disagreement over whether a loose improvisatory approach to music ultimately represents social and artistic progress, or social and artistic degeneration. It is important to note that in some cases holders of the different views do not only disagree, but fundamentally perceive different situations. Their divergent competencies invite the construction of different symbolic worlds, which then struggle for discursive authority.

I would like to discuss one other application of the indexicality of content model, having to do with the increasing historical self-reflexivity that became important to psychedelic culture by the 1970s. Signs which had previously signified contemporary

³ All tables of this type are based on the format suggested by Monelle [13].

struggles and abstract values maintained these associations, but with an added layer of signifying the 1960s themselves. For example, see Table 4.

Musical Item		Object 1		Object 1		Signification
Drum loop in The Chemical Brothers "Setting Sun" [17]	icon	The Beatles "Tomorrow Never Knows" [18]	symbol	The Chemical Brothers asserting their place in a lineage	index	1960s psychedelic culture both re- inscribed and seen as an object of solidarity and tribute

Table 4: Historical reflexivity in later psychedelia, analyzed as an instance of indexicality of content with one extra signifying stage

In all of these examples, Monelle's model of the topic remains useful but within a context that emphasizes multiplicity of perspective and perhaps even the social encounters between multiple competencies.

I'd like to conclude by briefly considering another example which shows the benefits of recognizing ambiguity and openness in topical definitions, and suggests that we should not rush to foreclose these. One of the many electronic dance music subgenres to emerge in the mid-1980s was *acid house*, defined largely by the distinctive 'squelch' noises produced by the Roland TB-303 bass synthesizer. This combination of timbre with characteristic melodic and rhythmic programming is a good candidate for an emergent topic because, for those familiar with electronic dance music, when used in certain ways it immediately and fairly universally connotes the acid house genre along with all the associated cultural units, even in the absence of other cues. But should this potential topic also be seen as part of the emergent topical universe of psychedelia? The name 'acid house' might suggest so, especially given the iconic relationship between the TB-303 squelch and certain types of electronic sound already associated with psychedelic styles. However, there are conflicting reports regarding the origins of the name and none have emerged as definitive. They do not even all accept that the psychedelic reference was primary -- other connotations of the word 'acid' are sometimes preferred.. I would argue that at this point in time, given the indexical connection of the style to a dance culture with psychedelic elements, and given the iconic relationship to certain psychedelic music, that the psychedelic correlation is becoming dominant and that the further indexicality of content back to psychedelic experience and culture more generally is becoming conventional. But not entirely, and not for everyone, and not with any clear understanding of the original motives, which remain close enough in time for many participants in the culture to care about them. We may or may not in this case be witnessing the moment of standardization and a collapse of multiple perspectives into something monological. And the model of the topic can be very useful in helping to sort out what's going on. But I think we should avoid the temptation to jump to an early closure of such issues.

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Along the Lines of the Roland TB-303: Investigating the Topic of Acid in Techno

Botond Vitos, Monash University, Melbourne, AU

ABSTRACT

Based on ethnographic data from my performance studies PhD project, this paper addresses the concept of the musical topic in the context of the popular music meta-genre of electronic dance music (EDM) and particularly the sub-genre of acid techno. Dance music signifies embodiments of particular sensibilities and arrangements, and indeed the music is one primary layer in an interconnected web of mediations within the ritual context of electronic dance floors, with other layers including recreational drugs and environmental arrangements. These electronic rituals often seem devoid of referential messages or at the very least detached from textual explanations, as indicated by the music's lack of lyrics and the scarcity of ideological references.

In EDM the synthesized or sampled sounds of instruments such as drum machines are misappropriated or untied from the cultural units corresponding to the original instruments, signalling an engagement with the intertwined mediums of electronic sounds and drugs from which a range of cultural, social and historical ties unfold. A primary topic in acid techno is related to the Roland TB-303 bass synthesiser responsible for the 'acid sound', the history of which emerged from the creative 'perversion' of technology by early techno producers, went hand in hand with the reattribution of pharmaceutical drugs as recreational and found its natural habitat in the post-industrial space of the squatted warehouse party. Indeed this supports Monelle's argument that musical signification is inseparable from historical, social and cultural processes, indicating the relevance of interdisciplinary approaches.

EDM AND THE MUSICAL TOPIC

The popular music meta-genre of electronic dance music (EDM) is a relatively new phenomenon. Evolving from the 1970s New York disco, its first significant genres appeared in the US in the mid-eighties, where DJs from Detroit and Chicago constructed "machine music [...] that turned you into a machine" [1]. Dance music signifies embodiments of particular sensibilities and arrangements [2], and indeed the music is one primary layer in an interconnected web of mediations within the ritual context of electronic dance floors, with other layers including recreational drugs and environmental arrangements [3]. These electronic rituals often seem devoid of referential messages, or at the very least, seem detached from textual explanations, as indicated by the music's lack of lyrics and the scarcity of ideological references. Similar to a musical meta-language, EDM is explicitly concerned with the qualities of the medium into which it is embedded; the 'content' of most tracks is generally very limited or subordinated to this primal concern, and lyrics are either non-existent or applied as atmospheric effects reinforcing the sound.

During the early years of EDM, producers discovered creative new ways for using drum machines and synthesizers which had been originally designated by manufacturers as substitutes for ‘real’ instruments and human performers. The intention of early EDM producers was not to create replicas but ‘machinic’ sounds, rhythms and effects never heard before, and to put them into circulation within their immanent techno-aesthetic contexts. These artists produced copies without originals by steering away from the natural referent and using these ‘fake’ instruments for their own special sonic attributes [4]. Inspired by the working mechanisms of the drum machine, the foundations of loop-based, ‘synthetic’ dance music were laid. This inexhaustible manufacturing of repetitive sound patterns in EDM, traceable to the working mechanisms of the drum machine, is reminiscent of Baudrillard’s [5] consideration of the serial form of models generated in infinite chains, which carries out the ‘murder of the original’ through its infinite diffraction into itself. This process can be originally reproduced in the historical-cultural context of an art movement: such as Warhol’s early production of soup can series through which he “attacked the concept of originality in an original way” [6].



Figure 1: Series of Roland TB-303 drum machines: ‘acid’ as a sound.¹

Similarly, much of the characteristic ‘machinic’ sound of EDM is derived from a series of sound patterns returning into themselves and generally aligned to a repetitive flow of bass. This diminishes temporal referentiality and contributes to the illusion of a timeless progression at parties. The experience of this is related to a contemporary ‘digital aesthetics’ which, as described by Murphie and Potts [7], instead of focusing upon an eternal idea of art or beauty, is engaged in the endless transformation of our sense of perception through technology. This ‘differential aesthetic’ acquires a multi-dimensional depth in EDM: not only is the sound and the music under continuous manipulation by means of an infinite number of effects and re-mixes, but the effects of sound systems and visuals at parties are further enhanced by the technology of consciousness-altering drugs.

My consideration of topic theory in EDM draws on Monelle’s guidelines::

In order to understand a topic, we need to relate a long narrative of fantasy and imagination, as well as to understand social and technological history. [...] Both

¹ Author's own artwork.

signifier and signified must be investigated if we are to reach some grasp, at least provisional, of the meanings and evocations of each musical topic [8].

Considering the merely three-decade long history of EDM, the main social and technological concerns of my discussion are related to the above-described developments in late 20th century popular music. In this context specifically the relationship between signifier and signified is worth investigating. In contrast with topics in classical music where, for example, a musical horse would correlate to the conventional ‘cultural unit’ of the horse [9], in EDM the synthesized or sampled sounds are misappropriated or untied from the conventional cultural units relating to the original instruments or sound samples. Cascone [10], for instance, describes techno as an “appropriation machine, assimilating cultural references, tweaking them, and then re-presenting them as tongue-in-cheek jokes”. Following McLuhan [11], the medium becomes the message: the collapse between the topic’s signifier and newly developed signified refers to an engagement with the intertwined mediums of electronic sounds and recreational drugs from which a range of cultural, social and historical ties unfold.

The remainder of this paper addresses the acid techno sub-genre and its primary topic of ‘acid’ as part of my broader PhD research of Melbourne EDM scenes. The discussion is illustrated by interview excerpts drawn from a recent focus group I conducted with performers/organizers and regulars at the core of the scene.

TECHNO AND THE ROLAND TB-303

Particularly in the genre of techno, the key structural particularity of the music lies in the manipulation of repetitive loops: the music is engaged in further repetitions of a copy that lost its original. In techno tracks this act of copying the copy is associated with subtle changes in the sound layers, leading to a differential repetition. The layers are typically endowed with percussive, rhythmic functions: contrary to most genres of popular music where drums establish the meter of the track while remaining in the background, in techno “drums *are* the music, to the extent that the few melodic elements that are present (e.g., the riffs) frequently assume a percussive role as well” [12]. Consequently, the music itself becomes a ‘drum machine’ even in its present context, when it is created by means of hybrid methods often including computerized sound production [13].

One of the ‘fake’ instruments that had been ‘perverted’ by early producers, the Roland TB-303, reached iconic status, particularly in the acid techno sub-genre. This was the same instrument that fuelled UK acid house scenes, notorious for drug-related moral panics in the 1990s. Acid house was responsible for the wide-spread of house in the late 1980s and early 1990s UK after its original development by hedonistic, gay black communities in early 1980s Chicago. Techno, originally related to Chicago house, emerged from the more intellectually oriented middle class black youth of late 1980s Detroit, relying on influences such as Kraftwerk, funk, European synth-pop, and the post-industrial cityscape of decaying Detroit City [14]. The first incarnation of the genre was connected to Belleville Three, a group of producers paying increasing attention to instrumentation details in their tracks, influenced by sci-fi imagery and stark European synthesiser music. In the early 1990s the second wave of Detroit techno artists pushed the

music closer to the form as we know it today. Inspired by electro, U.K. synthpop, industrial music and EBM music, a harsh sound was in development [15].

The TB-303 bass line generator was unsuccessful for its designated scope because it produced 'inauthentic' sounds, and its design made it incompatible for playing, yet suitable for programming music [16]. By applying its built-in effects in the 'wrong' way to its programmed sound patterns, EDM producers started creating extremely resonant, squeaky and distorted sound layers. In acid techno this modified bass line (that hardly resembles bass) is used in conjunction with the physically moving grooves of hard techno music, contributing to an intensity that is often further amplified by drugs, as explained by the following focus group participant:

Cooper: Yeah, that's just something about the power or intensity of it... A lot of people think hard music is aggressive or, you know, there's something unsocial about it, but really, for me it's like, you can't say a sports car is evil or aggressive, but you know, it must be really enjoyable to drive on, because it's powerful. And the music basically is just the only thing that kind of... that's caught me. And for some instances I wouldn't even say techno is like music to me. I hate saying this because it's kind of cliché. But music to me, I like a lot of bands and stuff like that, but the only thing that actually gives a physical response to music, regardless of, you know, drugs or no drugs, is techno and acid techno.

THE MARRIAGE OF SOUND AND DRUG

After the second wave techno lost popularity among the black inhabitants of Detroit, and due to influences of global EDM culture and geographical/cultural shifts it apparently ceased to be 'black' music, with Berlin becoming one of its main global hubs. However, certain Detroit DJs did not even regard techno as a black phenomenon in the first place. A similar detachment from black realities is discussed in *More Brilliant than the Sun: Adventures in Sonic Fiction*, a book by Kodwo Eshun on the musical manifestations of black science fiction sensibilities. Eshun situates Detroit techno within the context of Afro-futurism, which, in contrast with, for example, the street reality of mainstream hip-hop, is engaged with the unreality-principle of a sonic science developing the "alien discontinuum" of machine music. With techno, according to Eshun [17] "the machine goes mental", it "turns the soul into sound-fx" and burns out colour. Eshun also notes that there was a general confusion about the skin colour of the first Detroit techno producers.

The consumption of popular recreational drugs such as acid (LSD) and ecstasy (MDMA) was almost completely absent in the Detroit techno scene yet became organically connected to the genre after its exportation to the British rave parties of the late eighties [18]. The emergence of these drugs can be regarded as a technological misappropriation, with both MDMA and LSD being invented as pharmaceuticals first and then appropriated for other uses [19] [20], intensifying the further explorations of the machine aesthetic evoked by Eshun. In the focus group I conducted both drugs were frequently mentioned, with acid considered particularly conducive for directing attention on previously unnoticed layers in the music.

Jake: The TB-303 which is the main instrument of acid techno is referred to as the acid sound. Which, hence, acid techno. Basically the particular tone, and the

way it changes frequency, and the way it rises and drops, on certain drugs can really take you to... for the lack of another term, take you to another world. I took a lot of LSD and hallucinogenic drugs at one particular event to see one particular acid techno artist, and I was, like, the drunk guy at the party. Like, I could barely stand up straight. I was stumbling all over the place. Two of the weirdest guys that I would usually be looking at, I saw at the corner of my eye, going: look at this guy... Looking at me, tapping each other, laughing: look at this guy! But it really opened up my perception to sound and frequency range. Hearing this particular tone from speakers higher than the roof, and, you know, your mind grabbing onto different parts of it, that you wouldn't usually sort of zone in on when you would go to a party 'straight'.

For Jake, experiencing acid (techno) while on acid (LSD) is considered a decisive experience, opening up his “perception to sound and frequency range”. The two corrosive components are thus inextricably linked in the formation of acid as a musical topic inherent in this expanded flow of frequencies. Monelle [21] highlights the imaginative and processual dimension of musical topics: musical texts, similarly to literary texts, are transforming meaning, adding an imaginative dimension to the one inherent language. Acid as a topic correlates to a transformative and imaginative expansion of this fusion of the linguistic sound/drug mixture: for Jake it signifies a powerful aesthetic experience, the linguistic definition of which is problematic (“for the lack of another term”). Furthermore, in this case even the linguistic signification relates to processes of technological misappropriation, creating further shifts in meanings or losses of original referentiality: the TB-303 is no longer used as a ‘fake’ instrument; LSD is no longer a pharmaceutical drug.



Figure 2: Series of LSD-containing blotters: ‘acid’ as a drug.²

The understanding of acid as a musical topic must be based on the investigation of the drug/music experience in context: as Monelle [22] emphasizes, musical signification is inseparable from historical-cultural processes, indicating the relevance of interdisciplinary approaches. My final investigation situates the experience in its closest cultural context, the environment of the acid techno party.

² Mad Hatter LSD Blotter Art. Image by Apothecary, © 2001 Erowid.org. reprinted with permission from Erowid.org.

URBAN SQUAT SPACES

The history of acid techno is interwoven with technological perversions, such as exploring the acid sound of the Roland TB-303 drum machine, or the ‘rediscovery’ of pharmaceutical drugs such as LSD or ecstasy as recreational. This is complemented by a third misappropriation of industrial spaces: abandoned squat warehouses and factory buildings used for dance events. In Melbourne, the latter was an international import first and became a necessity later, with increasing regulation and security measures pushing the sub-genre to the margins of urban nightscapes. The eerie atmosphere of such settings is a good companion to the squeaky frequencies of acid, as the recollections of a party-goer from a recent party suggest:

Stan: A kind of theatre/factory sort of structure with no purpose, just kind of sitting there with no reason in the middle of which is quite a dynamic and industrial area. It’s quite good to see this relic type of artifact ... the 50s or 40s factory that’s sort of fallen on hard time[s]. But I’m not sure what they did there, it’s a mystery what they did there. It’s not quite a theatre, not quite a factory; it’s quite enigmatic as a venue... There is something very artistic about a disused industrial building. It just seems like a place in incredible flux which is on the cusp of being demolished, but in that sort of transition between what it was and what it will be, in a sort of limbo.

Just as early producers were exploring the ‘gaps’ in technologies outside of their intended or ‘useful’ applications, with the TB-303 being one of the notable examples for this process [23], such places “in incredible flux”, as the one evoked in the fragment, are discovered as gaps in the machinic landscape to be filled with the technological imaginary of EDM. In these post-industrial mansions haunted by the ghosts of production, Eshun’s “secret life of machines” [24] prevails, with party-goers partaking in the evolution of human-machine interactions. Such corrosive environments carry the connotations of familiarity and freedom to the interviewees, as opposed to the ‘shinier’ but severely regulated commercial clubscapes of the Melbourne CBD.

CONCLUSION: PERVERTING MACHINES

Musical topics add the imaginative dimension of cultural contexts to the semantic field of simple linguistic terms [25]. This paper argued that the crystallization of acid as topic is inseparable from cultural processes and is shaped by sound, drug and environment as three intertwined layers of technological misappropriation. As an interviewee confirms: “techno is like a drug to me now”; and indeed these two components contribute to the aesthetic experience that emerges from the same corrosive logic that defines the use of urban squat environments. From the after-life of technologies and environments, the acid techno party invokes machine-ghosts that are sometimes brought back to haunt the everyday as well, as the concluding fragment humorously suggests:

Sophie: My dad used to joke that the music I listened to sounded like when he used to work at the factories... [Laughs] Like the machinery... It's like: Aaah...

Cooper: Yeah, and a lot of people say that about Detroit [techno] too...
 Sophie: And my mum has caught me dancing to the washing machine before [Laughs]. And the other day at work, I'm like: someone's playing really good music, who is that? And I'm wandering around the offices, trying to work out who it was, who is playing good music, and I realised it was a dot matrix printer. My god... It was like: Oh god, I need help [Laughs].

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Raymond Monelle (1937 - 2010)

Professor Raymond Monelle was a musician, composer, conductor, music lecturer, semiotician, author, and critic. He was born in Bristol in 1937 and educated at the city's grammar school. In 1948, his family moved to Hull, where he went to Hymer's College, before going on to spend two years in the R.A.F doing National Service. While he initially became a teacher at Ottershaw School, his love and passion for music led him to a career change; he returned to education and obtained a BMus from the Royal College of Music in London, a Masters degree in Modern History from the University of Oxford, and a PhD for his thesis on *opera seria* from the University of Edinburgh.

In 1969 Raymond Monelle joined the University of Edinburgh as a member of staff, where his friendliness and affable reputation among the students made him a popular lecturer. He was a prominent member of the music faculty at Edinburgh University for more than 30 years with an active involvement in the department's musical activities, before his retirement in 2002. He continued to teach some classes, supervise postgraduates and undertake some work at Napier University. He gave talks from Rome to Mexico, sharing his experiences and knowledge. On his retirement, he achieved an honorary professorship in recognition of his work and maintained his passion for the subject until his death.

His most influential and inspiring output was in the area of the semiotics of music; it was a field in which he was internationally recognised and respected. He wrote three books on this subject: *Linguistics and Semiotics in Music* (1992), *The Sense of Music* (2000), and, *The Musical Topic: Hunt, Military and Pastoral* (2006). Among numerous essays and papers, he also wrote a novel, *Bird in the Apple Tree*, about the adolescence of the composer Alban Berg (unpublished). He was also a keen composer, he composed several piano and organ works, as well as a *Missa Brevis*, among others. Apart from his academic duties, he was conductor of the opera club and university society choir. During the 1970s, he conducted performances including Handel's *Judas Maccabaeus* and Stravinsky's *The Wedding*, as well as a number of opera club productions, such as Weber's *Oberon*, Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld*, and Boieldieu's *La Dame Blanche*. He also had a lifelong love of jazz and performed with his own trio – as an accomplished and inventive jazz pianist, he once played his way from Southampton to Cape Town at the head of a jazz group which entertained passengers sailing with the Union Castle shipping line. As a critic, he was a reviewer of music for *The Scotsman* and later for *Opera Magazine* and *The Independent*.

He is survived by his wife Mhairéad, his sister Suzy and his daughters, Cathy and Julia.

AUTHORS

Almén, Byron is an associate professor of music theory in the Sarah and Ernest Butler School of Music at the University of Texas at Austin. He is the author of *A Theory of Musical Narrative* and is currently working on a book on musical discourse and the theory of consciousness.

Atkinson, Sean is an assistant professor of music theory at the University of Texas at Arlington where he teaches courses in post-tonal analysis, musical semiotics, and 20th-century form and technique. He currently serves on the executive board of the Texas Society for Music Theory and on the advisory board of *Mosaic*, a new graduate music journal sponsored by the State University of New York, Buffalo.

Balter, Tamara holds a Ph.D. in Music Theory from Indiana University (2009). Research interests include music aesthetics and 18th century music. Publications: "The Structure of Irony and How it Functions in Music," in *Philosophers on Music: Meaning, Experience and Work*, (ed.) Katherine Stock (Oxford University Press, 2007), co-authored with Eddy Zemach; "Parody of Learned Style," in *Music Semiotics: A Network of Signification: In Honour and Memory of Raymond Monelle*, (ed.) Esti Sheinberg (Ashgate, 2012).

Bar-Yoshafat, Yonatan is a music lecturer at the Department of Literature, Language and the Arts, The Open University, Israel. His Ph.D., "Romantic Irony in C.P.E. Bach's Music: Formal, Semiotic and Narrative Manifestations and Historic-Stylistic Significances", was written at Tel-Aviv University. He published articles and study materials in Hebrew, and a new article of his is about to be published in the IRASM.

Mario Baroni¹ has been full professor at the Department of Musicology of the University of Bologna (Italy). In 1990 he founded an association for the analysis and theory of music (Gruppo Analisi e Teoria Musicale). As president of this association he co-organised the second and the sixth European Conferences of Music Analysis. He was also President of ESCOM (European Society for Cognitive Studies of Music) from 2003 to 2006. His research fields are mainly devoted to problems of music analysis, music communication and music education. His book *Le regole della musica* (on the concept of musical grammar) in collaboration with R. Dalmonte and C. Jacoboni was published in Italy and translated into English and French.

Bratus, Alessandro is a postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Pavia-Cremona where he gained his Ph.D. in 2009 with a dissertation on Bob Dylan's *Basement Tapes*. His field of research is popular music, with particular interest in the analysis of song and multimedia products (especially British and American) from the 1960s on.

¹ Keynote speaker at the *International Conference on Music Semiotics in Memory of Raymond Monelle*, University of Edinburgh, 26-28 October, 2012.

Buhler, James is an associate professor of music theory in the Sarah and Ernest Butler School of Music at the University of Texas at Austin. He is an editor of *Music and Cinema* and the co-author of *Hearing the Movies*. He is currently working on a book on music, myth, and the cinema.

Carr, Paul is Head of the Division of Music and Sound and Reader in Popular Music Analysis at the University of Glamorgan. His research interests focus on musicology, the music industry and pedagogical frameworks for music education. He is also an experienced performing musician, having toured and recorded with artists as diverse as The James Taylor Quartet and American saxophonist Bob Berg.

Castro, Paulo (PhD, Royal Holloway, University of London, with a thesis on Wittgenstein and music) is a musicologist, a lecturer at Universidade Nova, Lisbon, and a member of the CESEM research centre (Portugal). He has published several books and essays on 19th- and 20th-century music. His interests as a researcher include topic theory and the philosophies of musical modernism. Paulo F. de Castro is Chairman of the Portuguese Society for Music Research.

Cecchi, Alessandro holds a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Turin for research on film music in Italian industrial cinema. He received his Ph.D. at the University of Pavia-Cremona, with a dissertation on Ernst Kurth's theory of musical form. His publications focus on film music, history of the concepts of music and cinema, 19th-20th century music theory and aesthetics, the symphonies of Bruckner and Mahler.

Chattah, Juan is Assistant Professor of Music at University of Miami, where he teaches courses on Musical Semiotics, Narrative Sound, and Film Music. His primary research interest concerns the application of models drawn from linguistics and critical theory to the analysis of film music. His dissertation "Semiotics, Pragmatics, and Metaphor in Film Music Analysis" is under review for publication. He is currently director of the CMS Institute for Film-Music Pedagogy, held every summer at the Frost School of Music, in beautiful Miami.

Corbella, Maurizio is postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Milan, where he received his Ph.D. in 2010 with a dissertation on the role of electroacoustic music in the Italian cinema of the 1960s. His publications include essays on Nino Rota's music, Federico Fellini, Michelangelo Antonioni, sound design, science fiction, early electronic music in Italy and American third stream.

Curry, Ben completed his first degree in music at Cardiff University in 1996, his MA in Film and TV Composition at Bristol in 2003, and his doctoral studies in Musicology at Cardiff in 2011. His PhD thesis concerns the application of semiotics to music and he has given research papers on this subject in the UK and elsewhere in Europe. He has published an article in *Studies in Musical Theatre* and in a collection of essays in honour of Raymond Monelle. Ben's musical interests stretch from the eighteenth century to the present day and his research focuses upon twentieth-century popular music and late eighteenth-century music.

Debenham, Jory is a doctoral candidate at Lancaster University, researching the music of the Theresienstadt concentration camp, exploring ways of deriving and uncovering meaning from the surviving scores and texts. She is also active as an educator; in addition to private piano teaching, she is in demand as an adjudicator and examiner for the *Royal Conservatory of Music* in Canada.

Echard, William is an Associate Professor of Music at Carleton University, Ottawa. His early research on energetic and spatial icons and indices in rock music led to a book on Neil Young published by Indiana University Press. He is currently working on a long-term project concerning topic theory and the historical development of psychedelic popular music.

Everett, Yayoi Uno is Associate Professor at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Her research specializes in the analysis of postwar art music, art film, and opera from the perspective of music theory, semiotics, cultural studies, multimedia theories, and East Asian aesthetics. She is currently working on a monograph on contemporary operas and her previous publications include a monograph on Louis Andriessen's music, co-edited volume *Locating East Asia in Western Music*, and analytical articles on György Ligeti, Elliott Carter, Toru Takemitsu, and Chou-Wen Chung.

Field, Ambrose is Reader in Music at the University of York. He has published writings on digital culture in Continuum Press and Ashgate, and his musical compositions are recorded on ECM records and Sargasso. His work concerns the exploration of new sonic and cultural territories through digital technologies, and is an award winner at the Prix Ars Electronica, Linz (1997, 1998, 2006). He has broadcast on the BBC, the ORF, RTE, and SWR networks.

Giuggioli, Matteo is postdoctoral research fellow at the Centre d'Études Supérieures de la Renaissance of Tours. He gained his Ph.D. at the University of Pavia-Cremona with a dissertation devoted to narrative implications in Boccherini's String Quintets. His publications focus on 18th-century instrumental music and film music, especially the relation between opera and cinema.

Greer, Taylor A. an Associate Professor at the Penn State University, received his Ph. D. in music theory from Yale University. His first area of research, for which he received an ACLS fellowship, resulted in *A Question of Balance: Charles Seeger's Philosophy of Music*, published by the University of California Press (1998). His present research project focuses on another American composer at the turn-of-the-century, Charles Griffes.

Grimalt, Joan conductor, philologist, and PhD in musicology with a thesis on G. Mahler supervised by Raymond Monelle until his decease. He is teaching at the *Esmuc* (Conservatory), at the *UPF*, and at the *Uic*, Barcelona. Among the international group on Musical Signification led by Eero Tarasti, his main research subjects are Mahler's work and sacred music.

Groffman, Joshua is currently a doctoral student in composition at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, where he also earned a master's degree. He graduated from Cornell University in 2007, where he completed double majors in music and history. He has written works for orchestral, vocal, and chamber ensembles, as well as for theater and film.

Hammond, Jane is a PhD candidate at the Sir Zelman Cowen School of Music, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia. She has composed original music for mainstream and community theatre, and the concert stage. Her doctoral research in music composition focuses on an exploration of musical meaning through the theory of musical topics, in particular the pastoral topos.

Haringer, Andrew received his Ph.D. in Historical Musicology from Columbia University in 2012, with a dissertation on the early works of Franz Liszt. His research interests include political, religious, and poetic influences in Liszt's life and work; music semiotics and topics theory in particular; and the fantasy tradition in Romantic piano music.

Heimonen, Panu has been educated at the Sibelius-Academy (Music theory and analysis) and the University of Helsinki (Musicology, Philosophy). His research centres on music analysis and narrative theory with applications to various musical contexts, including musical performance. He has special interest in bringing together narrative ways of analysing music with traditional music analytical techniques such as Schenkerian analysis and musical *Formenlehre*.

Hood, Danielle is a third year part-time postgraduate research student at the University of Leeds, supervised by Dr. Martin Iddon and Dr. Mic Spence. My research considers the presence of topoi in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, focusing on formalising specific 'Viennese' topics and tracing them through the major Viennese composers, from Johann Strauss and Mahler to Webern and Eisler.

Köksal, Füsün is a composer currently pursuing a Ph.D in composition with music theory minor at the University of Chicago. Köksal is a recipient of several international awards, including a third prize at the 6ème Concours International de Composition Henri Dutilleux (2008), and her works have been performed by prominent ensembles such as Eighth Blackbird, International Ensemble Modern Academy, Arditti String Quartet, and Penderecki String Quartet.

Li, Jingdi currently a second year music PhD student at the University of York conducts musicological research. She completed her MA in the same field in 2010. Prior to coming to the UK, she worked in China as a teacher at a well-known private school. Before that she studied Music at Capital Normal University in Beijing.

Liu, Lucy is a doctoral student in music theory at Indiana University. She has a BA (summa cum laude) from the University of Western Ontario, where she was a recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II Aiming for the Top Scholarship from 2006-2009. Lucy is part of the editorial support team for *Indiana Theory Review*.

Mak, Su Yin is Associate Professor of Music Theory and Vice-Chair at the Department of Music of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Though primarily known as a Schubert scholar, she has also published on other topics that engage the relationship between musical structure and expression in tonal music.

Matras, Judah is Professor Emeritus of Sociology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Carleton University, Ottawa, and the University of Haifa. His main career research and teaching were devoted to social stratification and mobility, population studies, and social gerontology, but most recently he has taught courses and seminars in the Sociology of Music and has presented numerous of research papers.

McKay, Nicholas is Head of Music and Senior Lecturer at the University of Sussex, U.K. He was awarded a Leverhulme Research Fellowship to complete a monograph on the semiotics of quotation, allusion and topical reference in Stravinsky's music. He is Assistant Editor of the *Journal of Music and Meaning* and has published articles on music semiotics and topic theory including a recent chapter in honour of Raymond Monelle.

McClelland, Clive is Principal Teaching Fellow in the School of Music at the University of Leeds, where he gained his PhD in 2001, and where he delivers courses in 18C music, opera, analysis and harmony & counterpoint. He is also very active as a choral director and performer, and is chorus master of Leeds Baroque. His main research interest is in the field of topic theory, and he has written the entry on *ombra* in the *New Grove* dictionary. His first book, *Ombra: Supernatural Music in the Eighteenth Century* has just been published with Lexington Books. It has been described as representing 'a milestone in the ongoing search for understanding how composers used musical conventions to communicate with their audiences'. He is also contributing the chapter on *ombra* and *tempesta* in the forthcoming *Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory* (ed.) Danuta Mirka, and is starting to look closely at horror movie music.

Mika, Bogumila is an associate professor in the University of Silesia, Katowice, Poland. She is a music theorist (MA) and a composer (MA), music sociologist (PhD, 1999) and musicologist (habilitation 2011, Jagellonian University, Cracow). She has published three books and 45 articles on contemporary music and semiotic aspects of music. She presented papers in the USA and in many European cities.

Milia, Alessandro studied clarinet and composition in Italy. From 2002, he attended the Italian composer Franco Oppo with which he followed his first composition lessons, then a course of musical analysis. In 2007, he moved away in France where during two years he followed the *Master Arts Research and Composition* at the University Paris VIII with professor Antonio Lai. In 2011 a part of his Master's research was published in an article entitled *Franco Oppo, Appunti sulla figura e sullo stile*, in the Italian review *Musica/Realtà*. Currently, he is a doctoral student at the University of Paris VIII under the direction of Ivanka Stoianova, in collaboration with the University Ca'Foscari of Venice. His musicology and compositional Research approaches the study of relations between oral traditional music and news compositional strategies.

Moore, Sarha is a musician, teacher and PhD student of World Music. She plays saxophone with the Bollywood Brass Band and has played and recorded with Highlife, Klezmer, big, street and jazz bands. Her PhD at Sheffield University, “The Other Leading Note”, is a comparative study of the appearance of the phrygian or flat second in raga, maqam, Klezmer, Heavy Metal and Western classical music. It assesses the importance of the flat second in music, both structurally and emotionally, and considers how varied associations attributed to it can lead to miscommunication and its use as an Orientalist tool.

Nagy, Daniel is a Hungarian musicologist and an MA student of semiotics at the Loránd Eötvös University in Budapest. He studied history at the University of Pécs (his home town) and finally he gained his Bachelor degree in musicology at the Ferenc Liszt Music Academy in Budapest in 2011. He participated in several researches of the Musicological Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences about the history of 20th century Hungarian music, and of the Liszt Memorial Museum and Research Center about Liszt. His main interests are the music of the 19th century (Liszt and Wagner especially), music semiotics and comparative studies between music and literature, art etc.

Oliveira, Isis does her Master’s degree with funding from FAPESP at USP, where she graduated. Her thesis is focused on the analysis of Ligeti’s *Requiem* under the orientation of Paulo de Tarso Salles. Isis also conducted a survey of undergraduate research about the *Op. 30* by Webern under the guidance of Salles and funded by FAPESP, which received Honorable Mention.

Palopoli, Cibele has a bachelor in Flute by Universidade de São Paulo (USP) with a scholarship offered by the State of São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP). Cibele Palopoli earned an M.A. at the same University (USP/FAPESP). Recently she won an International Mobility Scholarship funded by Santander Group, allowing her to study at the Music Department of King’s College London.

Piedade, Acácio T. C. (Ph.D. Federal University of Santa Catarina, Brazil, 2004) is currently associate professor at Universidade do Estado de Santa Catarina (UDESC) in Florianópolis, Brazil, where he teaches and coordinates researches in Musicology, Ethnomusicology and Music Analysis. He is the author of several articles and book chapters on music analysis of Brazilian music, music signification and topics.

Plesch, Melanie is an Argentine musicologist currently based in Australia. Formerly an Associate Professor at the University of Buenos Aires, she is now a Lecturer in Musicology at the University of Melbourne. Her research focuses on the intersections of music, politics and society, with particular emphasis on the relationship between music and the construction of national identities.

Raba, Bogusław was born on 30th of October 1976 in Legnica. In 2000 he graduated with distinction in theory of music from Wrocław. In 2003 he graduated with distinction in organ study also from Wrocław. He took private lessons of improvisation by Jos van der Kooy in Amsterdam, then organ improvisation and French organ music in masterclass by Julian Gembalski in Katowice. Since 2000 he taught as assistant at the High School of Music (Harmony, Countepoint, Analysis of Music, Musical Forms).

Since 2005 he began to teach at the Institut of Musicology (University of Wrocław): Analysis of Music, Harmony, Counterpoint, History of music XIXth century. In 2008 he defended Ph.D.: *Between Romanticism And Modernism. Compositional works of Ignacy Jan Paderewski*. This first monography of Paderewski's oeuvres was published in 2010. The English translation of his book is in preparation in Peter Lang Edition.

Ribaldini, Paolo was born in 1986, and attained both Bachelor (2008) and Master's Degree (2010) in Philosophy at the University of Verona (Italy). In 2011 he also took a Bachelor in Violin at the Conservatorio of Mantova. He is currently a PhD student at the University of Helsinki, Faculty of Arts. His study concerns the application of musical philosophy to heavy metal music.

Rodríguez, Bienvenido Arana is a Ph.D. student of the Université Marc-Bloch de Strasbourg under the direction of Márta Grabócz and he is a member of the Laboratoire d'Excellence GREAM (*Groupe de Recherches Expérimentales sur l'Acte Musicale*). Currently, he researches on the signification processes of an opera spectator.

Salles, Paulo de Tarso was born in Sao Paulo, Brazil. His specialties are in composition, musical research and guitar. Dr. Salles teaches Music Theory in the Music Department of ECA/USP (University of Sao Paulo). He works as a coordinator of a research project on the string quartets by Villa-Lobos with the sponsorship of FAPESP (The State of Sao Paulo Research Foundation) and as well, co-coordinates PAM - laboratory of perception and Musical analysis. He is the author of the books *Aberturas e impasses: a música no pós-modernismo* [Openings and deadlocks: music in the postmodern age] (Ed. Unesp, 2005) and *Villa-Lobos: processos composicionais* [Villa-Lobos: compositional processes] (Ed. Unicamp, 2009), as well as several articles published in journals and congresses of musicology.

Sánchez-Kisielewska, Olga is a doctoral student in Music Theory and Cognition at Northwestern University. She holds master degrees in Music Theory and Musicology and bachelor degrees in clarinet and economics. Her research interests include musical meaning, connections between music, literature, and the visual arts, and the phenomenology of the aesthetic experience. She volunteers as a docent for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Souza, Rodolfo Coelho is associate professor of Music Theory and Composition at the University of São Paulo, Brazil. He has a DMA in Music Composition from the University of Texas at Austin, where he studied with Patrick McCreless, Elliott Antokoletz, Douglass Green, Michael Klein and Russell Pinkston, who advised his dissertation *A Concerto for Computer and Orchestra*.

Suominen, Marjo is a doctoral student at the University of Helsinki, (Department of Philosophy, History, Culture and Art Studies, in Musicology). Her research discipline concerns with Handel's Giulio Cesare by musical performance practices of musical rhetoric (the affections theories). There has been published an online conference proceedings article in English by her on December 14th 2011.

Suurpää, Lauri is the Professor of Music Theory at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, Finland. His main research interest is the analysis of tonal music, and his

publications have combined examinations of tonal structure from a Schenkerian perspective with aspects such as form, programmatic features, narrativity, musico-poetic associations in vocal music, eighteenth-century rhetoric, and Romantic aesthetics.

Venn, Edward is Senior Lecturer in Music at Lancaster University. His research interests focus on twentieth-century and contemporary music. Recent writings include a monograph (*The Music of Hugh Wood*, Ashgate), two chapters in *The Cambridge Companion to Michael Tippett* (forthcoming, 2013) and various articles, chapters and dictionary entries on the music of Thomas Adès, Mark-Anthony Turnage, David Matthews, and Nicholas Maw. He is Critical Forum Editor for the journal *Music Analysis*, serves on the editorial board for *The Journal of Music and Meaning*, and writes reviews regularly for both *Tempo* and *Music & Letters*.

Vitos, Botond is a PhD candidate at the School of English, Communications & Performance Studies, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia. He received an MA in Cultural Anthropology from the ELTE University, Budapest, Hungary. His research interests include electronic dance music studies, the relationships between music and technology, the cultural contexts and meanings of drug use and the interconnectedness of music scenes.

Waltham-Smith, Naomi is Assistant Professor in Music Theory at the University of Pennsylvania. Sitting at the intersection of music theory and Continental philosophy, her research explores how the critical resources of recent French and Italian thought might be deployed to interrogate the ethical significance of encounters with music's sounding materiality. She is currently writing a book on "Music and Belonging Between Revolution and Restoration."

Weiß, Robert Michael born 1956 in Vienna; growing up with jazz music. Studies in piano, music pedagogy, jazz piano; harpsichord and the *Zwölftonspiel* with Victor Sokolowski (student of Twelve-Tone-pioneer Josef Matthias Hauer). Certified teacher of George Russell's "Lydian Chromatic Concept" International concert activities and recordings, as composer, conductor, pianist. Design of interactive exhibits on Music and Mathematics, presented in Austria, Italy and Germany.

Yeary, Mark is Visiting Assistant Professor of Music Theory at the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University. His recent research interests include the structure and use of chords in the works of Stravinsky and Messiaen, the roles of timbre and context in the aural pedagogy of harmonic music, and the cultural and musical exegesis of progressive rock.

Yu, Grace is a full-time lecturer of the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, holds a Ph.D. in music theory and M.M. in piano performance from the Indiana University Bloomington. She presented papers and lecture-recitals at the World Congress of Semiotics, European Music Analysis Conference, the International Liszt Conference "Liszt and the Arts", International Congress of Music Signification, Canadian University Music Society, and West Coast Conference of Music Theory and Analysis. Other than researching and teaching music theory, Yu was an orchestral pianist for Bloomington Symphony Orchestra and Columbus Indiana Philharmonic. Yu's

achievements in music have been recognized by the Phi Kappa Lambda honor, Bernard Van Zuiden Music Scholarship, Sir Edward Youde Memorial Scholarship, among numerous others.

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