Eero Tarasti

SEMIOTICS OF CLASSICAL MUSIC

HOW MOZART, BRAHMS AND WAGNER TALK TO US

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For Eila

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Preface

This book truly represents a work in progress. In relation to my three previous monographs on musical semiotics – *Myth and Music* (1979), *A Theory of Musical Semiotics* (1994), and *Signs of Music* (2003) – I feel myself moving into new fields of study, method, and theory. At the same time, something always remains the same: my faithfulness to certain foundational ideas and basic hypotheses, gained from my background in French semiotics, ranging from Lévi-Strauss to A. J. Greimas. In this respect, the development has been so to say "organic".

Between these covers the reader will find analyses done with a purely Greimassian, Paris-school methodology, such as the study of a scene from Wagner's *Valkyrie* as well as the essays on Proust and Bohuslav Martinů. Yet those readers who have followed my new paths in general semiotics know that, during the last fifteen years, I have been developing a theory or philosophy that I call *existential semiotics*. After my years under the influence of French semiology, this has meant a return to my earlier roots in German speculative philosophy, and its continuation in continental epistemic thought, also in France. This avenue is now leading me towards completely new types of theories and analytic methods. This new approach, which may be termed *existential and transcendental analysis*, grows from music itself, so that the new theory is always introduced in connection with musical empiria. My hope has always been that both musicians and music scholars would read this, and in so doing would gain new insights into their musical practices. Nevertheless, for readers coming from the musical-performance or -amateur scene, let me recommend that they become familiar with some of my earlier studies in this "philosophical" line, mainly *Existential Semiotics* (2000), which now also exists in French (*Fondements de la sémiotique existentielle, 2009*) and Italian (*Fondamenti di semiotica esistenziale*, 2010), and Chinese (by Sichuan University Press 2012). Yet, this is by no means a precondition to entering the universe of my current ideas, as advanced in this book. For readers not yet familiar with this theory, a Glossary of key terms and concepts is provided following the main text.

The title of the book refers to "classical music", but this does not mean only the Classical style; nor even as Guido Adler broadly defined the term, as covering Palestrina polyphony, Baroque music with fugue as its center, and the Viennese-classicism of Mozart-Haydn-Beethoven. Rather, "classical music" here simply refers to the famous canon of Western erudite music that covers all the art music performed and taught to millions at music schools and conservatories – and also commercialized as the core of the huge art-music enter-

prise that continues to expand globally. People want to hear and play this music everywhere, regardless of their cultural backgrounds. Classical music is just that music which everyone wants to consume whether he or she lives in Venezuela, China, Africa – or in old Europe.

Nevertheless, the myth of "absolute music", which, based upon Immanuel Kant's definition, is that which is valid "in itself and only internally", and, on the other hand, "without limits and in every respect" (Kant 1787/1968), becomes rather more complex in this book, since many chapters link pure music to other arts, like opera, painting, and poetry. Still, a certain repertoire of "classical music" sounds behind the written text, as what Boris Asafiev would call its "intonations". For understanding this study it is helpful to have competency in this repertoire and its development, but again, it is by no means a prerequisite: one can, through these essays, discover new musical worlds, composers and works. But for theoretical reflection, it is music history that provides one with a healthy resistance to "wild" theorizing, and helps keep one's feet on solid intellectual ground. Here, the theory of semiotics remains strongly contextualized in music history.

It may be appropriate to glance at some plans for the future, as they relate to this book. If here there are some essays on Wagner, it is in view of the fact that I am preparing a major monograph on this composer, which will be based entirely upon my "existential" method. Also, I have limited the present focus on Finnish music to Sibelius, reserving that topic for a separate volume. Soon to be published is a new monograph of a purely philosophic-semiotic nature in English, about the most recent developments of my theory (transcendental-existential analysis). One further study, already looming here in the background, will be about music history in general, as written and interpreted by a semiotician.

A crucial factor in promoting and encouraging this study has been the growth and development of musical semiotics from its pioneering state into an internationally accepted, recognized discipline, both in traditional musicology and as an applied field of general semiotics. This development has taken place thanks to the international project of Musical Signification, now in existence for over 25 years. It was founded at a special direct broadcast at the French Broadcasting Company in Paris, with only six scholars present. The project now has over 600 members worldwide, stages major international symposia biannually, arranges doctoral and postdoctoral seminars, and publishes through distinguished houses, beginning as early as 1987 with *Musical Signification* (Mouton). This community of scholars has constituted a strong supportive element for the elaboration of my theories, a public with whom one has been able to test ideas in various contexts, and especially inspired by young

students and their fresh insights and comments. Some ideas discussed here echo the debates and projects in this community, hinging on such notions as narrativity, gesture, and musical topics.

Prelude: Music – A Philosophico-Semiotic Approach

Chapter 1 Introduction to a Philosophy of Music

> Music is a higher phenomenon than wisdom and philosophy. (Beethoven, quoted in Rolland 1918: 117)

Speech about music, both *in* philosophy and *as* philosophy, opens up paths over rugged terrain – in the sense in which Charles Ives applied this metaphor to the Transcendentalism of Emerson, Thoreau and Hawthorne. Music as a whole may be considered as one of the "symbolic forms" of man, declared the neo-Kantian philosopher Ernst Cassirer (1925). It can be studied as a kind of profound metaphor for the process of life itself. Yet, music can also be understood as a *meditatio mortis* or similar antithesis of this metaphor, if we accept the view of Claude Lévi-Strauss (1971) that music is a machine which stops time. Music also touches that horizon of understanding which philosophers reflect upon. In music we may search for values, being and nothingness, meanings, physical phenomena, cosmos, transcendence, truth, logic, reasoning, profound spirituality, subjects, objects, soul, comprehension, moral, ethos, empiricism, matter, ideas, knowledge, and a host of other concepts which we think of as belonging to the field of philosophy. Lewis Rowell, in his book *Thinking about Music* (Rowell 1983), groups these questions according to traditional categories of philosophy. These are presented next, each one followed by brief comments of my own:

(1) *Metaphysics* deals with things beyond the empirical world, such as cosmology, the doctrine of the structure of the universe. Throughout music history, we encounter theories of cosmology in and about music, ranging from Pythagoras's mathematical analogies between music and heavenly bodies, to Athanasius Kircher's concept of "symphonismus", on up to contemporary thought, such as John Cage's Zen philosophy of music and the mystical-occult musical visions of George Crumb.

(2) *Theology*, or philosophy of religion. As late as the Baroque period, music could still be said to have theological content. For example, in one of the C-sharp minor fugues from Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, the subject alludes to Christ with notes that form the shape of a cross (the *Kreuze*-figure, common in many passions, oratorios, and cantatas).

(3) *Ontology*, the doctrine of being. "What *is* music?" Is it something that only manifests as pitches? Is music merely "tonally moving forms" (Hanslick 1854)? How is the identity of a piece maintained from one performance to another?

(4) *Politics* involves reflections on the public good. What music is beneficial or harmful? Most states have a politics of music, which is assigned an

important place in civil education. Some music has even been banned from performance. Yet, "So far, music has not killed anyone", as a character quips one in a film by Aki Kaurismäki.

(5) *Epistemology* is the study of what and how we can know. In our case, it relates to the foundations of musicology. For our study of music always entails some concept or theory about the nature of musical knowledge: is it conceptual or empirical (based on experience)? And how should music be analyzed in the light of that knowledge?

(6) *Ethics* are rooted in a moral philosophy of right and wrong. An important ethical issue in music is that of plagiarism (which could range from short "borrowings" and quotations, to wholesale musical theft). Should a work be performed without the permission of its author? Should it be changed against the composer's wishes?

(7) *Logic* is the rules and principles of sound reasoning. Does the construction of music require logical rules, similar to those of language, mathematics, or even conventional wisdom?

(8) *Aesthetics* is reasoning that formulates ideas and conceptions of Beauty as a general principle and of its manifestations in individual art works, such as musical compositions. Aesthetics deals with musical values, which include style, taste, meanings (whether in the music or outside of it, for example, "programs"), understanding (*Verstehen*), links with other arts, the sublime, the comic, the tragic, and more. Aesthetics may also ask what a composer intends to convey by his or her work, as well as how listeners receive it.

The last category, musical aesthetics, is such an essential part of music philosophy that it often takes complete control of thinking about music. Nevertheless, we should remember that aesthetics, as such, is a sub-field of philosophy. I would argue that music aesthetics and music philosophy are complementary, sometimes competing perspectives on the phenomenon of music. In practice, of course, the two modes of thought intermingle. As illustration, we can glance at two recent "introductions", one to music philosophy, the other to musical aesthetics.

In his *Aesthetics of Music*, Roger Scruton (1997) divides the field into the following aspects: sound, tone, imagination and metaphor, ontology, representation, expression, language, understanding, tonality, form, content, value, analysis, performance, and culture. Some of these categories belong to the field of music philosophy in the proper sense: metaphor, ontology, representation, understanding and value. In dealing with these subjects, Scruton approaches the area of philosophy by way of traditional aesthetics. The book is filled with

observations on music, and despite the fact that the author is not a musicologist, they evidence a remarkable competence in musical issues.

Another well-known music philosopher from the Anglo-Saxon world is Peter Kivy. To show his mixing of philosophy and aesthetics, it is enough to list the chapter titles in his *Introduction to a Philosophy of Music* (2002): "A Little History"; "Emotions in Music"; "A Little More History"; "Formalism"; "Enhanced Formalism"; "The Emotions in You"; "Foes of Formalism"; "First the Words, then the Music"; "Narration and Representation"; "The Work and the Performance Thereof"; "Why Should You Listen?" Notice that all of these titles belong properly to the sphere of musical aesthetics. Instead of a "philosophy", the book would be more aptly titled an *Introduction to Musical Aesthetics*.

The term "philosophy" has a certain allure, perhaps because that word conjures up an entire tradition in European civilization with which to support one's ideas. The latter, however, are usually nothing but absolutisations and universalisations of a particular, subjective life-experience; or as it is put more elegantly nowadays: the "scholar's position". All theories and points of view are constructed, as we now know on the basis of work done by sociologists like Peter Berger and Nicholas Luckmann. Hence we must ask, *Who* has constructed them, in what sense, and for what purpose? In asking this, we are hurled into the all-pervading concept of ideology.

All science is ideological, in the sense that it reflects the values of the scholar. But simply by calling them "philosophies", one can not transform values, which arise from personal choice and heritage, into universal or natural truths. Even when a composer writes about his own music, *what* he writes may not qualify as "philosophy", though one is sometimes inclined to call it that. The composer Richard Wagner, for example, stands out as an incisive and enormously prolific writer of prose. This leads Rowell to make the following observations:

> English-speaking audiences are more aware of Richard Wagner's music than his literary works, but he must be regarded as one of the most important philosophers of the Romantic movement. He was, moreover, one of the few philosophers in history who possessed not only a keen mind and literary ability but the determination and musical talent that enabled him to demonstrate his philosophy in musical practice. (Rowell 1983: 126)

Wagner indeed wrote a lot of prose works, and many of his treatises and pamphlets have philosophical-sounding titles: *Die Kunst und die Revolution* (1849), *Kunst und Klima* (1850), *Metaphysik der Geschlechtsliebe* (1858), *Über Staat und Religion* (1864), *Deutsche Kunst und deutsche Politik* (1867), *Das Publikum in Zeit und Raum* (1878), *Religion und Kunst* (1880), *Über das Weibliche im Menschlichen* (1883).

Yet when one reads Wagner alongside contemporaneous philosophers – such as Kant, Schelling, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche – striking differences appear between his writing and that of these men, whose work he idolized. Wagner's texts do not unfold according to discursive, philosophical logic. His writings fascinated people of his day, and even prompted the intellectual and artistic movement of "Wagnerism", which was by no means limited to the German history of ideas, but exerted an influence everywhere in Western culture. Nevertheless, Wagner's writings mostly constitute a clarification of his ideas, both to himself and to others, not philosophy in the proper nor historically traditional sense. To the luck of all, Wagner was a congenial musician and man of the theater, though not at all able to portray or analyze in words what he created as an artist; nor are his musical compositions mere concretisations of his world views. We would probably not attend a performance of *Tristan* in order to study it as a "metaphysics of sex life", nor experience *Parsifal* strictly as a musical commentary on "religion and art".

Again, fascination with the term "philosophy" is remarkable. Even Theodor Adorno fell prey to this fascination, publishing a book whose very title was a *contradictio in adiecto: Philosophy of New Music*. Nevertheless, it is an excellent example of musicology of a certain epistemological level that is well-grounded in philosophical thought. Hegel supplies a philosophical aspect which distinguishes Adorno's thought from musicology that lacks such a ground. But, as always in Adorno, Hegelian logic helps to back up an ideological and scholarly point of view, and to legitimate and generalize a certain aesthetic attitude. The thesis of the aforementioned book is that progress in music history, its Hegelian *Weltlauf*, was represented by Schoenberg, and regression by Stravinsky. Carl Dahlhaus (1980/1967), pondering the historical roots of aesthetic critique, found its categories never to be as universal (nor timelessly "philosophical", we might add) as they seem at first glance, but always the products of a particular historical experience:

> The decision whether a musical piece is to be classified as art or not-art, conceals either an explicit or implicit judgment... Many aesthetic evaluations are based upon historical roots. All admit that the significance of a musical work written in the nineteenth or twentieth century diminishes if it is interpreted as a [case of] plagiarism. However, the very criterion of originality is historically limited; it loses its validity before the eighteenth century.

Dahlhaus argues that when we experience something as "immediately" aesthetic – according to any category of values whatsoever – it represents an Hegelian, "mediated immediacy" (*vermittelte Unmittelbarkeit*). In Dahlhaus's view, the historical mediations that form, say, the basis for understanding a Brahms symphony or Wagnerian music drama, remain hidden; this is because

they have blended seamlessly together with traditions. Yet, these mediations are not without influence, and the aesthetic experience becomes richer if one is aware of the traditions in play. On Dahlhaus's view, Adorno's music philosophy was only the product of a certain German scholar and his life experience, with all of its limitations, Germano-centrism, and more. Of course, the same can be said of Dahlhaus himself, who, starting from a somewhat similar point and using (seemingly) objective criteria, ends up downgrading the music of Tchaikovsky (but not that of Sibelius) as "trivial".

By now, we should be beginning to see why we need philosophical discourse, which is not always required of aesthetic evaluation of music at the level of mere musical criticism. Philosophical discourse about music is always conditioned by the prevailing musical aesthetic, culture, and situation. But in this era of globalization, the roots of tradition do not run very deep for most people, including music listeners. This widespread shallowness of listeners' background has a positive side: the premisses of aesthetic judgment can serve to enhance the listening experience, as Dahlhaus optimistically argues.

Philosophical reflection, by contrast, requires that we detach ourselves from the snarls of music history and its aesthetic passions, and shift to a meta-level of discourse. At this level, terms and concepts are established temporarily, so that we can use them as universals, or "words of art", in the construction of our philosophical discourse.

Hence philosophy is a place of escape. It is a discourse that transcends the historical and social situation, a place from which we examine our musical situations at a relatively high level of abstraction. Philosophy stands taller than musical aesthetics, but we cannot say that it has no place in musical life. Of course, no musician immediately becomes a philosopher by reading Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* or any comparable tome. A philosopher is simply one who is steeped in philosophical culture. We should remember that, when we say "philosophy", we are referring to a tradition that is thousands of years old, to thinkers who are not cited for the mere sake of citation, nor to give the appearance of being "scientific". They are cited rather because they have something of timely interest to tell us, even in the twenty-first century. Moreover, the philosophical approach to music is not exhausted by a reading of what famous philosophers have said on the subject. Musical philosophy is not just a return to the past, but a journey that can foreground certain categories and cases that are "philosophical" in light of the tradition of philosophy and that of contemporary science. We can look at "what Kant said", then interpret the great philosopher's words through the lens of our own experience.

It is just as important, in this context, to ask *which* philosophy we follow. Commonly, thinkers in the Anglo-Saxon tradition, for example, separate them-

selves from the musical and cultural universe, and make observations about music from a so-called "objective" distance. They conceive of music and its philosophical aspects as natural, scientific objects.

How great this conception duffers from that of thinkers in continental philosophy! This difference becomes clear, for example, when one reads essays by Daniel Charles (1989, 1994, 2001), the leading French music philosopher, or those written by his predecessor, Vladimir Jankélévitch (1961), who was active in both music and philosophy. To these thinkers, the philosophy of music does not appear as a neatly classified, ready-made system, but rather as a form of thought that comes alive via the text and in the writing itself, which accompanies and adapts to the metaphysical process of music. The course of this thought itself is at the same time reportive and poetic. To illustrate, I first quote from Daniel Charles's *La fiction de la postmodernité selon l'esprit de la musique* (Charles 2001: 74):

> Heidegger takes a distance regarding Bergson, to whom the duration avoids the number only to the extent the duration is "multiplicity of penetration and fusion". Contrarily, time, in the Heideggerian sense, i.e., for whom Being has a sense, is not "multiplicity" in the Bergsonian sense, in which what is at work is a continuous creation of unpredictable novelties…. For Heidegger, more important than novelty is the morning, and paradoxically, not every morning [do] we think about the morning of the world…. To recognize this "cosmic" function of "equitemporality" in music leads to a radical reevaluation of harmony and time. Suddenly the primary place of succession in the articulation of harmonic progression is contested: harmony ceases to be assimilated to a simple "causal" chain; once it has been liberated, it [grows] in all directions; being at the same time a crossroads and network, it becomes capable of cutting through the normal, arrow-like movement of time. Such a conception, which we could think of as the basic source of "illumination" in the case of Mozart, as Heidegger noted, Mozart who "saw" everything at one glance, "heard everything at the same time"; such a view supposes the complete abandonment linear time. Heidegger stresses that Mozart was "among those who best understood this" … he "was" essentially that and still is. [A similar case is that of] one of the most fascinating composers of our time, Bernd Alois Zimmermann, who advanced a thesis which guaranteed his celebrity, namely, that of the spherical shape of time (*Kugelgestalt*).

In the passage above, Charles not only deals with a central issue of musical philosophy, that of time, but links it to the tradition of classical philosophy and at the same time to music history, whose linearity is transgressed by the juxtaposing of two, seemingly very different composers, Mozart and Zimmermann. Yet, in the inner sense, the two are found unexpectedly to be soul-mates in their views on temporality.

Another continental philosopher, Vladimir Jankélévitch, writes as follows:

> The puritanical rancor against music, the persecution of pleasure, the hatred of decoration and seduction, antihedonist obsession are all in the end complexes, as misogyny itself is a complex! Under such conditions, one is led to wonder if music might not have, rather than an ethical function, a metaphysical signification. Man, fascinated by allegory, has always searched for the signification of music elsewhere than in the sound phenomenon. There is invisible and inaudible harmony, suprasensible and supra-audible, which is the real key to song…. Yet music? Directly and in itself music does not signify anything, yet it signifies all…. One can let notes say anything whatsoever, endow them with all kinds of analogical capacities; they will not protest! The more that man is tempted to attribute to musical discourse a metaphysical signification, the more that music, not expressing any communicable sense, lends itself easily to the most complex and dialectic interpretations; one is inclined to provide it with profundity, perhaps the more it has only the most superficial appearance…. On the other hand, the metaphysics of music is built upon analogies and metaphorical transpositions: correspondence between musical discourse and subjective life, correspondence between the supposed structures of Being and musical discourse, correspondence between the structures of Being and the subjective life via musical discourse…. Here you have the first analogy: the polarity of major and minor corresponds to those two grand ethoses of the human mind: serenity and depression; dissonance, which leads towards consonance through cadences and appoggiaturas, and consonance, which is in turn troubled by dissonance, together form an allegory of human disquietude and human desire, which oscillates ceaselessly between wishing and languor. Does not musical philosophy reduce partly to a metaphorical psychology of desire? (Jankélévitch 1957: 17–21)

Such texts as the one just quoted are considered in France to be profound music philosophy, but would hardly be acceptable as philosophical discourse in the Anglo-Saxon analytic tradition (as epitomized in the thought of Russell, Whitehead, and others). That tradition views texts such as those of Charles and Jankélévitch's as *ad hoc*, essentially intuitive responses to musical experience – Hegelian and speculative music philosophy are nothing more than "conceptual poetry". Symptomatic of the differences between continental and analytical philosophy, Jankélévitch's texts, and those of a great many contemporary European philosophers, are available only in French; the work of Charles is an exception, in that some of it has been translated into English (and some into German; 1989, 1994).

There are many different manners of talking about music in a philosophical sense, and one must always keep in mind the school and language of whatever philosophy one is reading. Umberto Eco once wondered what would have happened to Heidegger if he had been born in Oklahoma, where without all the German varieties of being (*Sein, Da-Sein, das Seiende*, and the like), he would have had recourse to only one term: "to be" (Eco 1997: 32).

Whatever their country or language, there are basically two types of music philosophers. On the one side are those within music, those who are part of

the tradition which they speak of. Such is the case with Theodor W. Adorno. Although he might have seriously erred in his individual judgments, everything that Adorno wrote, independent of its truth value, proves fascinating and rewarding. On the other side are philosophers who stand outside musical tradition. Either they are unquestionably outsiders in their musical competency, or else they consciously adopt the attitude of an external observer, by which means they (think they) get closer to "objective truth".

The prominent American musicologist, Charles Seeger, distinguished two kinds of speech about music: "music logic" and "speech logic". The first relates to knowledge possessed by the agent, a knowledge that only a musician can have; the second is that of the "optimistic" musicologist, who believes that everything essential about music can be put into words (Seeger 1960). Of course, Seeger was mistaken in thinking that practical competency in music in any way guarantees the ability to speak rationally about it. Many artists can through their performances induce profound "philosophical" and "metaphysical" experiences in listeners, while at the same time lack a corresponding, aesthetic-conceptual background and education.

It is impossible for me to deal here with all aspects of music philosophy. The following discussions, then, are basically subjective, made by a musicologist who at first sought to become a philosopher. The mystery of music perhaps lies in the fact that every musical experience – be it that of the composer, performer or listener – always joins some concrete, sensible phenomenon to one that is abstract, conceptual and intelligible. How this happens I try to clarify next.

1.1 "Being" in music (Ontology)

The first question a philosopher must answer is, What is music? To this question we have in principle two kinds of answers, both of which go back to the philosophy of Antiquity, and to the problem of how we interpret the concept of Beauty. On one hand, we have answers that follow Plato's doctrine, according to which the Beautiful makes up the visible or audible imitation (mimesis, representation) of a higher, absolute beauty. In Plato's famous cave metaphor, one never accesses the things themselves, but only their reflections on the walls. This doctrine, which says that the sensible world is only a reflection of suprasensible, universal ideas, is most usually called Idealism or Platonism.

On the other hand, Beauty can be seen from a realistic perspective. On the realist view, as presented by Aristotle, Beauty is phenomenal; it is not a representation, but something "there" and open to perception by the senses.

According to these doctrines, then, there are two definitions of music: either it is a manifestation of something "else", something higher or more original; or music is only what we perceive, as sound, voice, tones, and so on. These opposing views have not lost their currency, and still impact how music is studied. We may think, for example, of synthetically produced music or the acoustical research of music by means of spectrometers and other technologies. Researchers in this area operate on the (explicit or implicit) belief that music is solely sounds, which signify nothing other than themselves.

The other position also has its adherents, such as the Swiss music psychologist Ernst Kurth, who said "Music is not sounds but only manifests in them" (Kurth 1947: 57). Or one may think of ethnomusicology and the so-called behaviorists, who believe that everything essential and analyzable lies in musical behavior. In the background looms the specter of empiricism: the researcher must quantify everything, and whatever is not countable or measurable should be made such.

Philosophers through the ages have pondered the essence of music. One of the oldest schools of thought, the Pythagorean tradition, combines music with mathematics: numbers rule over music, mathematics, and the cosmos. In medieval theory, the true musician is not a practicing musician, but a theoretician who speculates on tone relations. Boethius typifies this medieval mentality: when he speaks of "music", he means the mathematical science of musical laws.[1] The aesthetic experience of music is based on the concept of proportion. Soul and body are ruled by the same laws that prevail in the cosmos itself. Microcosmos and macrocosmos are joined together by the same knot (see Eco 1986: 30–31; also, Treitler 2003).

During the Middle Ages, the essential ontological status of music was as something not perceived by the senses; it did not appear; it was not a manifest phenomenon. Music, at that time, was still an enactment of transcendental categories of *unum, verum, bonum, pulchrum*. Such speculations gave place to a new type of ontology, which the Renaissance music theoretician Gioseffo Zarlino (1517–1590) stated clearly in his *Le istitutioni harmoniche* (1558): "It seems to me that everything in music that is contemplative and without a sonorous goal, is useless and vain. Since music truly has been invented to develop and delight man, nothing about it is valid except sound and tones" (quoted in Strunk 1950: 259). Much later, in theories of phenomenology, these two aspects were united: music as a Platonic idea and as a sound phenomenon.

The being of music is closely bound with time; hence temporality cannot be excluded from music ontology. According to Boris de Schloezer, the crea-

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1 The acoustical properties of music have been abundantly studied by Robert Cogan (1984), Wayne Slawson (1985), Cogan and Escot (1981), among others.

tions of a composer are doubtless "organized time", but in their unity and significance they are timeless. To organize time in a musical manner is the same as to transcend it. A musician can produce concrete ideas, de Schloezer says, yet refuse to engage in Platonic idealism: "As to music we have to presume the existence of a certain type of being which is paradoxically between two worlds: these entities belong to the material area, they are situated in time and space, but in their own materiality they open to another reality whose being is at the same time concrete and ideal" (de Schloezer 1964: 33).

In German philosophy – which of course manifests Romantic world-view and can be united with the musical practice of that period – two of the most significant philosophers are G. W. F. Hegel and Arthur Schopenhauer.

Hegel's thought had tremendous impact on the whole world-view of nineteenth-century man. Hegel said little of interest about music, his own musical experience being much more limited than that of Schopenhauer. But in his *Wissenschaft der Logik* he emphasized the contrast between being/not-being and becoming, in a manner not far from the musical logic in works of absolute music of his time (such as Beethoven's sonata forms). Hegel writes:

> The analysis of Beginning: the beginning is still not-being, and it has to become something. The beginning is not pure nothingness, but nothingness from which something has to emerge: the being is thus already included in the beginning. The beginning contains both being and not-being, it is the unity of being and nothingness; or it is not-being, which is at the same time being and being which is at the same time not- being. (Hegel 1812–1816/1969: 82; my translation)

Hegel's inclination to think of everything as three entities (thesis-antithesis-synthesis) has greatly influenced music theory. It appears in music history itself, for instance, in sonata form. Later, Boris Asafiev (1977), creator of "intonation theory", argued that Beethoven's symphonies and sonatas – and the Classical style in general – manifested three processes: beginning (initium), motion (motus), and closure (terminus).[2] Kierkegaard's existential philosophy finally emerged as a reaction to Hegel's system. He, too, thought of man's existence as developing in three phases: aesthetic, ethical, and religious. In the Hegelian vision, by contrast, the being of music is that of continuous movement, from being to negation to becoming.

Arthur Schopenhauer assigned music a much more central position than did Hegel, who opined that everything in music was "wenig bewandert" (in Nowak 1971: 16). Still, he emphasized that music was based upon a "subjective

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2 Asafiev's triad of processes in music have their parallels in Greimassian semiotics, in the aspectual semes of inchoativity, durativity and terminativity; and in Charles S. Peirce's philosophy, as Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness.

interiority". Schopenhauer went much further. In his treatise *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, he argued, in the chapter "Zur Metaphysik der Sitten", that music was not the late flourishing of poetry, but of was of all the arts "the most powerful [art], gaining its goals entirely by its own means". Schopenhauer thought that music, unlike other arts, was not based upon ideas but on different grades of objectification of the Will. Since music directly represented the Will itself, it had immediate impact upon the listener's will and emotions, passions and affects. The Will was the basic metaphysical principle in his philosophy, to which everything could be reduced. Schopenhauer argued that the world first appears to us as *Vorstellung*; the term "Will" does not appear until page 163, after the philosopher's extensive "preludizing". Only the conscious subject can have cognitions, and then only via his body. The Will manifests in the acts and actions of the body, and in the end, Schopenhauer interprets Kant's "thing in itself" (*Ding-an-sich*) as the Will (180). My body only expresses and objectifies the Will, hence music directly reflects that Will. Only via music can one get in touch with the thing itself, which in Kant's theory could be reached only through the mental categories of subject, time, and place. At its purest, the Will appeared in Beethoven's instrumental music: "A Beethoven symphony represents vast perplexity based upon complete order, an agitated struggle which at the next moment turns into calmness … it is a faithful and complete picture of the essence of the world.… there speak all the passions and affects of man …" (Schopenhauer 1987/1818, Band II: 585).

The later view of phenomenologists, of music as an intentional object, is strongly reminiscent of Schopenhauer's ideas. His principles show up directly in Ernst Kurth's theory of melody. For Kurth (1922), music did not originate in sound but in its primal will, its *Urwille*, which is the movement of forces within us. Such a musical ontology can be considered a kind of idealism, in the sense that the ultimate instance of being in music is transcendental. On the other hand, this transcendence is, in the Schopenhauerian view, the inner modality of will within man himself. So originated a new version of Plato's doctrine of "forms", according to which music reflected timeless, constant ideas. The only stable element, on this view, is the Will and its activity.

1.2 The *subject*

We have glided, almost unnoticed, from the ontology of music to the question of whom we are talking about; that is to say, *Whose* "will"? *Whose* being? Jean-Paul Sartre dared to consider Beethoven's Seventh Symphony a kind of "person" – an "actor", as it is called in Greimassian semiotics. With this, we encounter a theory of *the subject* (or subjectivity) in music. The subject can of

course be a real person, but ever since the Romantic era, even a piece of music may be taken as a living organism. The "organic" is of course a metaphor for a living or sentient totality, whose opposite is the "mechanical" or "mechanistic". In the subject, the aural and corporeal processes of music take place; it is the subject, also, that connects music to values and to other non-material principles.

Before further discussion of the subject, a short excursion into the roots of existential semiotics is necessary; and this means a return to Hegel and his logic. For some semioticians, Hegel's writing is mere "conceptual poetry", which is now acceptable only to those with Marxist leanings. To many others, however, he stands as the central figure of Western philosophy, the thinker who joined nature and history into a homogeneous construct – though we might not be sure whether the latter is a prison or a palace (Arendt 2000: 111). To Hannah Arendt, Hegel was the last word in Western philosophy. All that came after Hegel was either an imitation of, or rebellion against, his work. The major philosophers in Arendt's day (Husserl, Heidegger and Jaspers) were all epigones of Hegel. They all tried to reconstruct a unity of thinking and being, but failed to balance the two, either by privileging matter (materialism) over mind (idealism) or vice-versa.

Perhaps Arendt was right: even semiotic thought is indebted to Hegel, whose traces we can follow both in Peirce and Royce as well as in French structuralism, the Tartu School of cultural semiotics, and particularly in existential semiotics. Of course, Kant is the other great behind-the-scenes thinker of semiotics. But it would be pointless to evaluate the two thinkers' concepts and systems in historical terms, in the manner of "who is better, Kant or Hegel?" Rather, we are interested in their thought *today*, because of things they said that interest us now, and not because of nostalgia for the philosophical styles of 1805.

Therefore, as the starting point of my "excursion" I take from Hegelian logic only that which is helpful in further developing my theory of subject. These are his categories of *an-sich-sein* (being-in-itself) and *für-sich-sein* (being-for-itself). The *Hegel Dictionary* contains an entry called "In/for, and in and for, itself, himself, etc." (Inwood 1992: 133–136). The third person reflexive pronoun in German is *sich*. It is both singular and plural, and covers all three genders. It can thus mean one-, him-, her-, itself; themselves; each other. It can be either accusative or dative, but not nominative or genitive. It accompanies German's numerous reflexive verbs, and can also be preceded by several prepositions. For example, *für sich* (literally "for oneself") occurs in such contexts as "He needs a room for himself"; "She lives by herself"; and "That is a problem in itself" (that is, apart from its connections with other matters). In ordinary usage, *an sich* ("in itself", and so on) often differs little from *für sich*: to

consider a matter *an sich* is also to consider it apart from its connections with anything else, and if something is certain *an sich*, that certainty is IMMEDIATE, and not dependent on anything else. "An und für sich" (in and of itself) is simply a more emphatic way of saying "an sich".

In everyday German, such expressions usually do not have a single, well-defined usage, but a range of uses overlapping those of other expressions. The only one that had acquired a settled philosophical usage by Hegel's day was *an sich*. In Plato, for instance, it meant the Form or Idea; the Form of beauty, for example, is the Beautiful itself (*an sich*). For Kant a thing *an sich* was a thing apart from its relation to our cognition, separate from the way it appears to us. Thus, *an sich* contrasts not with *für sich,* but with *in uns* or *für uns.*

Hegel used the terms *an sich* and *für sich* in their ordinary senses, but also provided them with alternate meanings. As finite, a thing has a determinate nature only by virtue of its relation with other things: its negation of them and/or by them. This is true not only of things in the world, but also of Kant's thing-in-itself, since it, too, is cut off from our cognition. Thus, a thing as it is *an sich* has no overtly determinate character; at most it has potential character, which will be actualized only by its relations to other things. For example, an infant is *an sich* potentially rational, not actually rational. A tailor is a tailor *an sich*, in the sense of having internalized the skills that enable him to perform this occupation, and of having certain external features that distinguish him from, say, a sailor. Being a tailor, or musician, thus involves an interplay between being *an sich* and being "for another". But a person does not simply occupy a role. He is also an individual "I", and as such can distance himself from his role or occupation, and think of himself as just "me" or "I". When he does this, he is no longer "for others", but for himself. For instance, take the case of a bus driver who starts to drive off, then notices someone running toward the bus stop. Against the rules, but feeling compassion for the late-comer, the driver stops and allows the passenger to board. Although the driver's self-consciousness may presuppose recognition by others, an "I" is not one part of a system of contrasting roles: everyone is an "I".

The idea that, if something is for itself then it is aware of itself, leads to the idea that an entity may have *in* itself certain characteristics that are not *for* itself. As a person, a slave is free in himself, but he may not be free for himself. A student may be a future doctor and professor, but may not know it. Finally, the terms *an sich* and *für sich* can mean either potentiality or actuality, and be used in reference to development. When a person becomes for himself what he is in himself, then he usually recognizes his identity; in semiotic terms, he becomes meaningful to himself.

The foregoing linguistic excursion has prepared us for further reasoning about individual subjectivity. But before we can make a complete, "existential-

semiotic about-face" from Hegel, we must first see what Søren Kierkegaard made of the notions of *an sich* and *für sich*. In his philosophy, they turn into subjective and objective being. In the chapter "Becoming a subject" of his treatise *Unscientific Ending: Postscript*, Kierkegaard speaks about an individual who is said to be a subject, an individual "who is what he is because he has become like it" (see Kierkegaard 1993/1846). In existential semiotics, such a subject, one who has become himself, can be considered a *genosign*. This progression of a subject, from *an sich* being to a *für sich* being, corresponds to his becoming a sign to himself, that is, to the emergence of his identity. Kierkegaard says the task of a subject is to shed his subjectivity more and more, thereby becoming more and more objective. The objective being is the same as observing and being observed. But, in Kierkegaard's theory, this observation has to be of an ethical nature.

The next careful reader of Hegel – as well as of Kierkegaard – was Jean-Paul Sartre, whose *L'être et le néant* (1943) was to a great extent based upon Hegelian concepts of *an sich* and *für sich*; or in Sartre's terms, *être-en-soi* (being-in-itself) and *être-pour-soi* (being-for itself). According to Sartre, being only "is" and can do nothing other than "be".

But as its potentiality, being can become aware of itself via an act of negation. In Kierkegaardian terms: the being becomes an observer of itself, and hence it changes into being-for-itself. This is simply to transcend. For Sartre, the *pour-soi* as an extrusion of negation forms the basis of identity. It appears as a lack, and this is the beginning of transcendence: human reality strives for something that it lacks (Sartre 1943: 124–125). Man starts to exist when he realizes the incompleteness of his being. Also through this realization, value enters human life. Value is what one aspires to be. Being-in-itself precedes every consciousness; Being-in-itself is the same as what Being-for-itself formerly was. The essential change in Sartre's theory, as regards Hegel, is the movement between these two categories, and a kind of subjectivisation of them as they relate to existence.

Now we shall consider one last "modernization" of Hegel and his categories, as offered by Jacques Fontanille in his book, *Soma et séma: Figures du corps* (Fontanille 2005). The book deals with corporeal semiotics, and presents the distinction between categories of *Moi* and *Soi* in a fresh manner.

As a Greimassian semiotician, Fontanille starts from the actant and his/her body. He distinguishes between body and form. We speak of body as such (or "flesh", *chair*), which is the center of everything; it is the material resistance to or impulse for semiotic processes. The body is the sensory-motoric fulcrum of semiotic experience (Fontanille 2005: 22).

On the other hand, there is the "body" that constitutes the identity and directional principle of the physical, fleshly body. This body is the carrier of

the "Me" (*Moi*), whereas the proper body supports the "Self", or *Soi* (ibid.: 22–23). The *Soi* (Self) constructs itself in discursive activity. The *Soi* is that part of ourselves which the *Moi* (Me) projects out of itself, in order to create itself through its activity. The *Moi* is that part of ourselves to which the *Soi* refers when establishing itself. The *Moi* provides the *Soi* with the impulse and resistance whereby it can become something. In turn, the *Soi* furnishes the *Moi* with reflexivity, which it needs in order to keep within its proper limits as it changes. The *Moi* resists, forcing the *Soi* to encounter its own alterity. Hence, the two are inseparable.

Though Fontanille is a semiotician, his reasoning fits well with the Hegelian categories mentioned above, and involves a new interpretation of *an sich* and *für sich*. The first corresponds to bodily ego, and the latter to its stability, identity, and outward aspirations – that is, to Sartrean negation. The self (*Soi*) functions as a kind of memory of the body (*Moi*); it gives form to the traces of tensions and needs that have lodged or been inserted in the fleshly "Me" (*Moi*).

In light of Fontanille's concepts, we might in fact change the Hegelian Being-in-itself (*an-sich-sein*) and Being-for-itself (*für-sich-sein*) into *an-mir-sein* and *für-mich-sein* (Being-in-myself and Being-for-myself). But before pondering the consequences which this might have for our existential semiotics, we shall scrutinize the principles of *Moi* and *Soi* as such, and in music particularly. We shall consider anything belonging to the category of *mir/mich* (me) to concern the subject as an individual entity, whereas the concept of *sich* will be reserved for the social aspect of the subject.

In Jakob von Uexküll's (1940) well-known principle of the *Ich-Ton*, which denotes the identity and individuality of an organism, we can distinguish two aspects: *Moi* and *Soi*. In "Me" the subject appears as such, as a bundle of sensations; in the "Self" (*Soi*), the subject appears as it is observed by others, that is, as it is socially determined. These constitute the existential and social aspects of the subject – that is, its individual and communal sides, respectively. Next I apply these concepts to music.

1.3 Me (*Moi*) and Self (*Soi*) in music

Matter has two dimensions, as Fontanille notes in his semiotics of the body: matter as energy and matter as extension (Fontanille 2005: 24). Energy is articulated as modalities, both *in* us and *for* us. Extension, on the other hand, manifests in the principles of actor-time-space, in what Greimas called the generative phase of "discursivization". These are none other than the Kantian

categories of subject-time-space. What is new here, however, is that the transcendental threshold of Kant now occurs between the *Moi* and the *Soi*. We can ask, for instance, if the unfolding and gestures of the *Moi* in music differ, in content and direction, from those of the *Soi*. The gestures can be either an expression of the *Moi*, or they can be coded into social topics that manifest the *Soi* (this is the core of the theory of musical gestures).

These articulations form the particular *Ich-Ton* of a composer and/or work, and they control the work's relations with its surrounding reality. The *Ich-Ton* filters the signs which the work either allows in or rejects. The *Ich-Ton* likewise "modalizes" all of the intruding elements. The latter are *exosigns*, which via modalization become *endosigns*; conversely, the endosigns, which emerge in the mind of the composer, strive to manifest as perceivable reality, that is, as exosigns (see T. von Uexküll et al. 1993).

Differentiating between aspects of *Moi/Soi* involves a kind of existential analysis that can in turn be applied to a musical work. The *structures of signification* are uncovered in this phase, and in the background, *structures of communication* (Tarasti 1994a: 16).

Ultimately, we come to *transcendental analysis*. The *Ich-Ton* is examined in relation to a transcendental idea and values, which for a subject (composer) are virtual potentialities, either fulfilled or unfulfilled. In such analysis, the *Ich-Ton* is studied in terms of its universality. One determines if and how, from the modalities of the work, the so-called "metamodalities" emerge. These last help to guarantee the immortality of a work beyond its contingent, historical-social *Umwelt* (what Heidegger would call the work's later *Daseins*).

If, then, in all art there is *Moi* (the artist's proper, existential ego) and *Soi* (his/her social-communal self), how do these aspects filter and regulate Otherness in relation to this "Me" and "Self"? Insofar as the Other is another artist-composer, the latter has his or her own *Moi* and *Soi*. Interaction between these two composers can take place as shown in Figure 1:
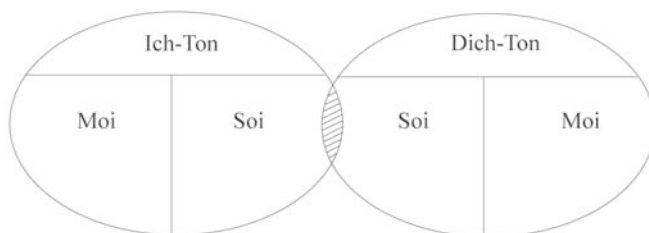
Figure 1: Communication between two Me-Tones.

In this model, the *Sois* of organisms 1 and 2 partially overlap; they have something in common, in the form of precoded sign systems at the social level of their egos. The *Sois* form a bridge from one *Ich-Ton* to another, to a *Dich-Ton,* which the *Ich-Ton* experiences as its Other, and in an extreme case, as something transcendent. In this aspect of strangeness, the "transcendence" also serves a political function: we dispatch to transcendence that which we do not or cannot conceptualize, and hence which we dislike.

Can the *Moi* of a musical organism communicate directly with another composer's *Moi,* without intervening levels of *Soi* in both cases? The answer is Yes, for some composers might be "soul mates", while in no way influencing each other at the stylistic level. On the other hand, mutual influence can occur at the level of recognizably similar styles, strategies[3], and musical topics, but without the composers in question having anything in common in the inner sense (see Hatten 1994: 30; and Monelle 2000: 14–63). Thus, the impact of the *Umwelt* on a composition produces a situation of complex interaction.

Let us take fugue as an example. Certainly, the writing of fugue follows the principle of *Soi* in composition, for it is a strictly coded musical technique (see, e.g., d'Indy 1897–1900). Therefore fugues are mostly written by: (a) young musicians in order to learn contrapuntal-imitative skills, that is, in that educational phase in which the principles of the musical *Soi* have to be learned and applied; (b) peripheral composers, musicians not living at the center of the musical canon, in order to prove that they belong to the Great Tradition; in this case, to write a fugue can mean subordination to musically dominant forces; (c) women who, in this way, are attempting to prove that they can write music just as well and professionally as men do.

In short, fugues are written by marginal composers that seek acceptance. Fugue is purely a *structure of communication*. But can a fugue ever be existential? Can it express the *Moi*? The rules of fugue-writing forbid the use of lied-like melodies as subjects (main themes). Still, fugue can been conceived as more than just technique: the fugue in the overture of Mozart's *Magic Flute*, for example, goes beyond mere handicraft to represent the Sublime. A similar moment occurs in Handel's Fugue in F minor, where at the end it becomes melodic, and one catches a sudden flash of the *Moi* of the composer. Even Brahms, the "classicist", could not restrain a burst of melodiousness in the closing fugue of his Handel Variations.

To take another case: in Classical Viennese sonata form, the theme-actors (essential motives and melodies) of the exposition usually appear in their "correct" order, according to the rules of *Soi*. But in the development they may

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3 On the distinctions between "style" and "strategy" in music, see Hatten (1994: 30).

roam freely, making this a place of struggle where the *Moi* comes to the fore. By contrast, Wagner likes to employ ongoing transition (*Übergang*), and even begins pieces with continuous development: the sphere of *Moi*, free of external constraints such as the norms imposed by exosigns (external constraints).

The *Moi* in music equates with organicism, or "the organic", whereas the *Soi* is inorganic, arbitrary, and conventional. Does *Moi* always appear through *Soi*? Must a composer, in order to be understood, write in a form or genre that is already accepted by the musical community? Or do some forms originate directly from the *Moi*? The last question is difficult to answer. Yet, we know for sure that some composers are adept at combining pre-given genres and styles. For example, in his First Symphony Sibelius writes in a Tchaikovskyan manner, and thus simultaneously listens to the voices of both *Moi* and *Soi*: "There is much in that man that I recognize in myself" (Sibelius, quoted in Tawaststjerna 1976: 209).

The distinction of own/alien, *Moi/Soi,* also manifests in musical gestures. The problem is, how to distinguish between conventional gestural topics and the spontaneous gesticulations of the musical organism that reflect its *Moi*. For instance, Wagnerian leitmotifs are often gestural, indicating a protagonist in the opera. In such cases, it is embarrassing if the singer on stage mimics the musical gestures with his body (as was done in the time of Cosima Wagner's Bayreuth stagings), since the gestures are *already* in the music. The same was said by Richard Strauss, with reference to his *Salome*: the actors need not rush back and forth on stage; it happens already in the music. Hence, there is a body representing the *Moi* and one representing the *Soi*. Mannerisms and gestures can make the realm of the *Soi* conspicuous, and sometimes weirdly so. The *Mois* of performer and composer should be united in an ideal musical performance, in the enunciation as a particular transcendental subject.

1.4 Towards music analysis

The *Moi* of the composer is the pure source of ideas. But we can also say that transcendence lives *within* a person. Even so, this *Moi* is surrounded by the sphere of the *Soi*, that part of the ego which is social, coded, and community-bound – not existential. Together, *Moi* and *Soi* form the phenomenon which Thomas Sebeok coined the "the semiotic self" (Sebeok 1979). This term designates a joining of the physical and virtual bodies. Some identify the semiotic

moment either with social codes (the Saussurean tradition) or with the kinetic energy of the ego (Kristeva 1969). These theories also have their supporters in musical semiotics.

Raymond Monelle adheres to the former theory, when he says that the semiotic appears particularly well in the socially-codified forms of eighteenth-century music (Monelle 1992: 5). The latter view is also taken by "new musicologist" Richard Taruskin, who speaks of the "semiotic" in Russian music in reference to the undulating gestures of the Polovtsian girls in Borodin, which Taruskin describes as a typically Kristevan "semiotics" of music (Taruskin 1997: 152).

In my theory, both aspects – the social and the corporeal – are necessary: they together form the *Ich-Ton* of an organism, which is surrounded by the Other. Insofar as the latter is another subject organism, one can presume that it, too, projects and partakes of both *Moi* and *Soi*. The point of contact, where one *Ich-Ton* organism touches another one (the *Dich-Ton*), of course lies in the sphere of *Soi*. Only on this level does language function as a codified set of rules, which enables communication in the proper sense between these organisms.

I asked earlier whether one subject's *Moi* can directly communicate with another's *Moi*. According to the reasoning above, we can now answer: No, at least for the most part. *Moi* must first transform into *Soi* within one's organism – "I" must become "Me", in G. H. Mead's (1934) sense – before one subject reaches another one.

But correspondingly, if only *Sois* were communicating between themselves, then we would never be sure whether what others express, via their gestures or words, genuinely represents what they consciously intend. Intention always covers both *Moi* and *Soi*.

To return to the composer: he or she is surrounded by transcendence. This transcendence even extends beyond his or her *Dasein*'s store of intonations (Asafiev 1977). The composer can be in connection with this transcendence – with all historically-prior musical ideas, and with the universals (timeless ideas and principles) of composing – only insofar as these principles and ideas are transformed and filtered so as to form part of his own store of intonations, hence constituting an already codified, pre-modalized stock of ideas, techniques, and topics.

Only by this means can ideas from musical transcendence move out of musical transcendence. At the same time, however, a composer has his own, "inner" transcendence; this space seems to furnish new ideas, new thoughts, and innovations, which spring from a seemingly bottomless, unconscious

source. Some writers and composers feel that they create directly from this source, as was the case with the Surrealists' "automatic writing".

The musical compositions of Friedrich Nietzsche seem to have been born directly from the *Moi*; even he was astonished when he later examined them from the point of view of his own, rational-discursive *Soi*. This is one reason why it is interesting to study composers such as Finland's Jean Sibelius, the Lithuanian Mikalojus Čiurlionis, and the amateur Nietzsche, who create, so to speak, outside of the tradition. The direct voice of the *Moi* speaks in their music, while from the standpoint of the *Soi* their music might be unacceptable.

The engine of music history is driven primarily by the transformation of *Moi* into *Soi,* or rather, the constant rebellion of the *Moi* against the communal and conventional world of the *Soi*. In sonata form, for example, the appearance of the *Moi* was at first reserved for the development section, with its relative "chaos" in terms of multiple keys and melodic fragmentation. Then came Wagner, who elevated the developmental principle, the "continuous transition" mentioned above, to the level of the very constructive principle – the *Soi* – of his operas. As music history went on, the shifts of harmony to even more extremes of chromaticism, to atonality, and finally to serialism promoted the *Soi* to the position of total dominance. Yet even it was negated, since it is impossible to repress the *Moi* completely. The sphere of *Soi* forms a perpetual resistance to the being of the *Moi*. Correspondingly, the existence of *Moi* prevents communication from becoming the exclusive domain or *langue* of the *Soi* (which Lacan early on warned about).

It is paradoxical that, if the *Moi* is permitted to realize itself freely, the result is not an abundance of modalities, but their scarcity and suppression. In Nietzsche's compositions 'will', 'know', and 'can' do not develop into anything, since they do not fulfill the forms codified by the *Soi*. Only by using those forms can one create a hierarchical, structural work. Although Nietzsche's inner will is tremendous and he strews German performance indications everywhere, although his writings emphasize the principle of will, and although he resorts to extra-musical programs as in *Ermanarich* and other of his works, neither his 'will' nor his 'know' nor his 'can' comes to full fruition; in other words, the modalities of his music fail to attain completion. They lack the 'must' of the *Soi*. Modalities favored by the *Soi* are precisely those of 'must', 'know', 'can', and 'will', in that order, and such that their amount and cogency diminish toward the end of the list. In contrast, the modalities of the *Moi* run conversely, from "heaviest" to "lightest": 'will', 'can', 'know', and 'must'.

Of the modalities of the *Moi,* 'will' is the most important; it conveys the internal pressure that drives and stabilizes the composition. 'Will' does not

necessarily obtain only as the modality of 'want-to-do', but also as 'want-to-be' or 'want-not-to-do' or 'want-not-to-be'. This holds true also for the second-most important modality of the *Moi*: 'can' (power, *pouvoir*), often even as a corporeally important category. The next-most essential modality of the *Moi* is 'knowing'. It concerns the *Moi*'s memory, which is a kind of "fundamental ego" (*le moi profond*) in the Bergsonian sense. Bergson's concept of "intellectual effort" is of interest here, because it seems to be based upon the modality of 'know', and at the same time on those of 'do' and 'can' (see Bankov 2000). For instance, a composition delivers information only via an effort, not simply by being there, in the static sense. With the help of the memory of the *Moi*, the composition as an organism "remembers", so to speak, its earlier solutions during the act of enunciation. Finally, one can view the *Moi* as possessing its own, inner obligation, or 'must': one who breaks the laws of *Moi* subdues or altogether mutes his own expression.

For the *Soi*, the modality of 'must' takes first place, as normative forms and structures of communication which take the shape of musical styles, techniques, and topics. If the composer labels his work as a "sonata", "symphony", "fugue" and so on, he commits himself to a certain 'must' of the *Soi* (as we recall from the discussion of fugue, above). Second important is the modality of 'know', as the penetration of elements from the universal store of intonations (what Eco would call an "encyclopedia of knowledge"), which themselves are transcendent to the work. For instance, the beginning of Beethoven's last Piano Sonata (Op. 111) displays not only the topics of *Sturm und Drang* but also the "French *ouverture*" style, featuring the dotted rhythms of the Baroque period (reminiscent of the first movement of Handel's Suite in G minor, among many other works of that musical period). Therefore, when we say that the *Ich-Ton* of a composition determines which elements (exosigns) from its surroundings that it will "accept" into its organism, thereby transforming them into endosemiotic entities, what is involved is precisely the modality of 'know'.

The third important modality for the *Soi* is 'can', which is the adoption of certain techniques and resources by which the 'must' and the 'will' may be realized. For the *Soi*, the least important modality is the 'will'. It appears as a kind of collective longing, wish or desire in music; as, for instance, when a composer expresses the voice of his community. This occurs, for example, when Clara Schumann writes variations on the *Emperor Hymn* or when Wagner writes *The Mastersingers* under the grim atmosphere of the Franco-Prussian War. The 'will' of the *Soi* is thus of collective origin.

These reflections can be put into the following diagram. The three circles exhibit how transcendence is filtered via *Soi* into the sphere of *Moi*:
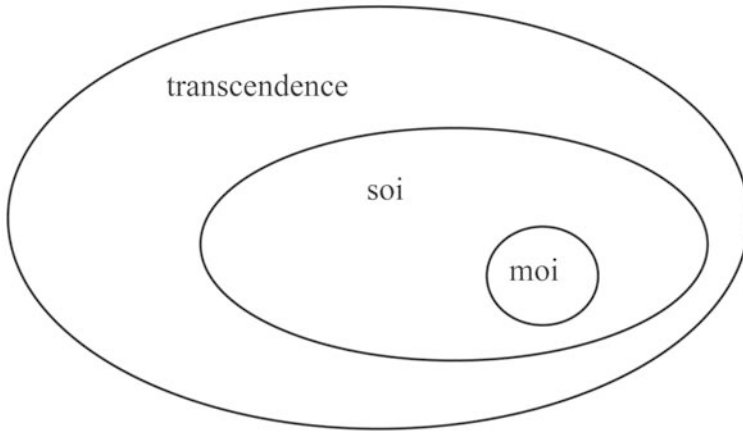
Figure 2: Spheres of transcendence: *Soi* and *Moi*.

Is composing ultimately more a matter of *Moi* or of *Soi*? The writing of fugue is an effort of *Soi*, without doubt. Yet if one provides it with the slightest amount of expressivity (in the line of Mozart, Beethoven, Franck, Brahms), the fugue will contain a certain level of *Moi* as well. Fantasies and aleatoric
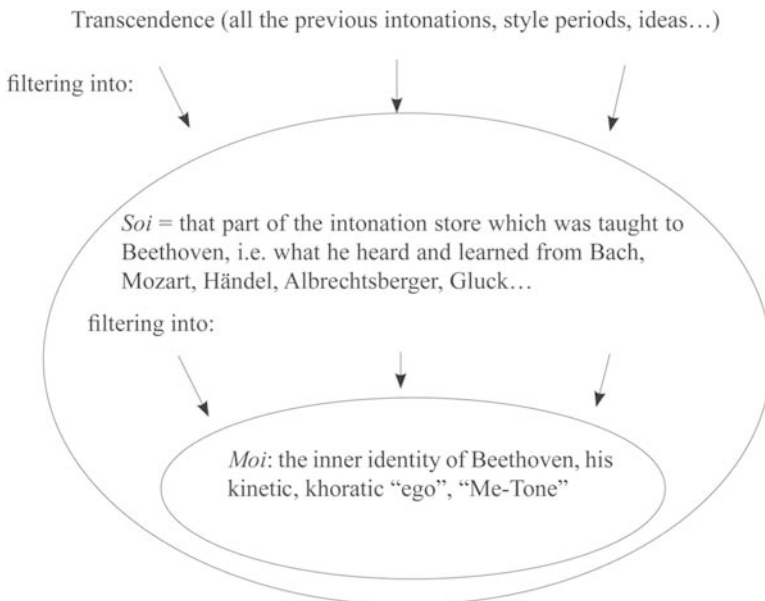
Figure 3: Transcendental entities filtering into *Soi* and *Moi*.

(chance music) works, by nature, have more activity of the *Moi*, although the *Moi* left totally without guidance is most often helpless. This is often the case in improvisation. When complete freedom is granted, as in some jazz performances, the result will often be outworn clichés and mannerisms: as sheer technique stemming directly from the unconscious of the *Soi*, or as forms of the *Moi* with which the subject panders to the audience, playing strictly to its tastes. What is involved is the artistic situation of *das Man: man schreibt so, man malt so, man komponiert so*.... Perhaps the model can be expanded to include the sphere of the inner transcendence of the *Moi*. Figure 3 envisions the case of Beethoven.

1.5 Results

I can now put together the most important ideas of this chapter (though the role of existential semiotics has not been exhausted). Among my intentions was to specify the category of 'being' by providing this basic modality with new aspects taken from Kant and Hegel, and follow up this concept with further help from Kierkegaard, Sartre, and Fontanille. We have shown that, in the search for ever-more subtle tools in semiotics, one can turn to classics of philosophy to find such innovations. In my existential semiotics, Being-in-itself and Being-for-itself are turned into Being-in-myself and Being-for-myself. When these notions are combined in the Greimassian semiotic square, one gets the following results:

being-in-myself
être-en-moi
an-mir-sein
("*will*")

being-for-myself
être-pour-moi
für-mich-sein
("*can*")

für-mich-sein
être-pour-soi
being-for-itself
("*know*")

an-sich-sein
être-en-soi
being-in-itself
("*must*")

Figure 4: The modes of Being according to Moi/Soi.

These existential coordinates can be interpreted as follows:

(1) Being-in-myself represents our bodily ego, which appears as kinetic energy, *khora*, desire, gestures, intonations, Peirce's "First". Our ego is not yet conscious of itself, but rests in the naive Firstness of its being; modality: endotactic, 'will'.

(2) Being-for-myself corresponds to Kierkegaard's position of the "observer". Sartre's negation, in which mere being shifts to transcendence, points up what is lacking in its existence; in this way, being becomes aware of itself and of transcendence. The mere being of the subject becomes existing. This corresponds to the transcendental acts of my previous model: negation and affirmation. The ego discovers its identity; it reaches a certain stability and permanent corporeality via habit; modality: endotactic, 'can'.

(3) Being-in-itself is a transcendental category. It refers to norms, ideas, and values, which are purely conceptual and virtual; they are potentialities of a subject, which he or she may or may not actualize. What is involved are abstract units and categories; modality: exotactic, 'must'.
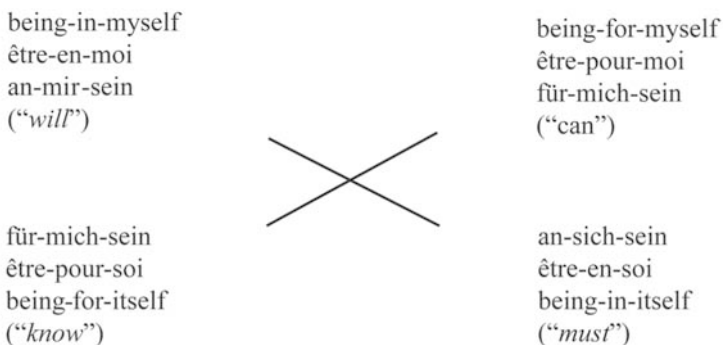
(4) Being-for-itself means the aforementioned norms, ideas and values as realized by the conduct of the subject in his or her *Dasein*. Those abstract entities appear here as "distinctions", applied values, choices, and realizations that often will be far from original transcendental entities; modality: exotactic, 'know'.

The essential aspect of the model is that it combines the spheres of *Moi* and *Soi*, the individual and collective subjectivities. It portrays semiosis not only as a movement of the collective Hegelian spirit. The addition of Being-in-itself and Being-for-itself accounts for the presence of a subject via Being-*in-myself* and Being-*for-myself*. Crucial is not only the distinction between these four logical cases, but also the movement among them: the transformation of a chaotic, corporeal ego into one having identity, into an ego that becomes a sign to itself. Moreover, such a stable and highly responsible ego impacts the actualization of transcendental values, in which the ego becomes a sign to other subjects. In this phase, the being-in-myself and being-for-myself meet the "you", the Being-*in-yourself* and Being-*for-yourself*; in short, it encounters Others. Behind the so-created social field still looms the realm of transcendental, virtual values and norms: signs that have not yet become signs to anyone.

In the classical sense, the semiotic sphere consists only of the fields of Being-for-myself and Being-for-itself. The extremes of the semiotic square are the field of pre-signs, which from two sides surround the semiosis in the proper sense. Yet, one cannot understand this semiosis, the process of act-signs, without going outside of it, to the space of transcendence. Existential analysis thus

becomes a Kantian transcendental analytic in these two phases. Ultimately, we can formulate our semiotic square in music as follows:

primary kinetic energy
"khora", gestuality
("*will*")

musical identity
certain kinetic forms
("can")

exemplification of topics,
individual solutions, applica-
tions, strategies
("*know*")

topics, norms, forms as
abstract, virtual categories,
styles
("*must*")
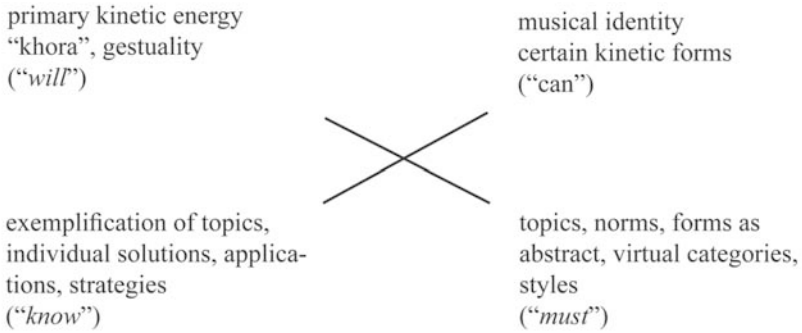
Figure 5: The contents of various modes.

Part I. THE CLASSICAL STYLE

Chapter 2 Mozart, or, the Idea of a Continuous Avant-garde

In the issue of *Dimanche 9 – Lundi 10* (2006, p. 21), *Le Monde* published a photograph that would arrest the attention of any music lover. Entitled *Constance, veuve Mozart, en 1840* the photo shows Konstanze on the left, not wearing her usual rococo-style wig and dress, but with a white scarf covering her dark hair, which is combed in two halves in the German style of romanticism. She is shown alongside composer Max Keller and his wife (sitting on the left). The daguerreotype, recently discovered in the archives of the Bavarian town of Altötting, was made in October of 1840, when Konstanze was 78 years of age and had only two years left to live. She had long ago remarried, taking as a husband the Swedish diplomat Georg Nikolaus Nissen. At the time the photo was taken, Mozart had been buried for half a century, having died on December 5, 1791 at the age of 35.

Our mental image of Mozart and his world leads us to think of him mainly as a part of history, a by-gone era with which we no longer have direct contact. Yet, if someone has been photographed, he/she already belongs to what Walter Benjamin called the "age of technical reproduction" (*Zeitalter der technischen*

Figure 6: Konstanze Mozart photographed in October 1840, at age 78 years.

Reproduzierbarkeit). As such, it is someone ever present, about whom we can apply our reason, psychology and intuition. True, the photo is not of Wolfgang but Konstanze; still, she was close to him and, like Mozart, she embodied the eighteenth century and the world of *l'ancien régime*. A similar impression may strike a tourist of today, while visiting Mozart's house in Salzburg or places in Prague where the composer once stayed. Through a kind of "indexical magnetism" the photograph connects us with Mozart's time – and emboldens me to speak of Mozart as an avant-garde composer.

Of course, to establish such a claim requires more than just a photo. First of all, it is hard to qualify Mozart as a rebellious avantgardist, for what Alfred Einstein (1976) has said about him is indeed true: "Mozart never wanted to exceed the boundaries of convention. He wanted to fulfill the laws, not break them". Be that as it may, Einstein adds, "he violates the spirit of eighteenth-century music by his seriousness and skilful inventions." Mozart, as we know, thumbed his nose at conventional rules of behavior, as evidenced in his famous correspondence, and likewise by composing the music for Beaumarchais's *Marriage of Figaro*. Another scholar, Norbert Elias (2004), goes so far as to explain Mozart's fall sociologically, in terms of his efforts to make a living outside the court, as an independent composer, a status which Beethoven was the first to attain.

Apart from social context, however, we can interpret the concept of avant-garde in terms of a more universal aesthetic attitude or principle of style – not just as it relates to historical phenomena dating from the early twentieth century – just as "baroque" can designate a formal language of overwhelming exuberance, "romanticism" one of generalized sentimentality, and so on. Let us reconsider, then, the definition of avant-garde.

2.1 What is the avant-garde?

We find the concept discussed in the monumental dictionary of aesthetics by Étienne Souriau, *Vocabulaire d'esthétique* (1990). According to Souriau, the avant-garde (vanguard, front-line), a military metaphor, seems applicable to arts dating only from the beginning of the twentieth century. It refers to artists who display a will to break with tradition, convention and permanent schools. The term is adopted by critics, historians and the public for purposes of either praise or blame. (To this one might add that the avant-garde is always a marked, *marqué*, phenomenon, in the sense of salient and striking.) Souriau points out that the avant-garde, in general, is not the creation of an individual; rather, it presupposes a group that attempts new artistic conquests, carries out

experiments, and tries to overturn academic constraints, tradition and order. In this sense, Gustav Mahler was somewhat avantgardist, given his exclamation that *Tradition ist Schlamperei* (Tradition is bungling). An avantgardist takes to extremes the parody of conventions, in attempts to make commonly-accepted bourgeois habits appear ridiculous. This aesthetic was often accompanied by aggressive demonstrations and scandalous performances. The avantgarde favors small performance venues, and takes place outside "official" artistic life. It aims to embody proper artistic values, instead of facile, commercially successful ones. It juxtaposes authentic creation and routine. But carried too far, it may also lead to a snobbery that amounts to no more than the lionization of cult heroes and the imitation of idols.

Do we find such features at all in the phenomenon of "Mozart"? In one sense, No. For we are dealing here with a unique "genius", not with a group. But on the other hand, the answer is a hearty Yes, if one thinks of Mozart's ambivalence, richness, and ingenuity in transgressing the commonplaces of his received tonal language. One needs only to see the film *Amadeus* to understand that Mozart characteristically enacted the avant-garde, in the sense of resisting and parodying all that is schematic and mediocre. Mozart does in his music what the Marquis de Sade did in literature. Sade assailed the hierarchies of language, at a time when the sublime style of eighteenth-century French literature implied similarly sublime contents. Rebelling against this stricture, Sade instead filled this style with frivolous content of lower-level aesthetics.[4] Mozart, too, confronts received style-constraints, in the form of musical *topics*, and countered these with aesthetic content of the most unexpected and contrary kinds. Take, for instance, the Janissary topic (Turkish march), presumably of a naively grotesque content – following the "colonialist" discourse of the period – which Mozart also enacted in Monostatos's arias in the *Magic Flute*; but the Turkish topic also fitted well as the main theme of the first movement to his Piano Sonata in A minor, with its plainly sublime and tragic intention. Consider, likewise, the fugato in the Overture to the *Magic Flute*, which presupposes sublimity, carries a syncopated theme representing the exuberance of worldly joy; or the "learned style" in the opening of the *Requiem*, which suddenly foregrounds corporeal musical signs of the "sigh" – of a type with which Belmonte, in the *Abduction from the Seraglio,* conveys his love troubles: "... *O wie ängstlich, o wie feurig, klopft mein liebevolles Herz!*" In this sense, then, there is quite clearly a bit of the "avantgardist" in Mozart. Still, we have not as yet proved our thesis. Further criteria are needed to determine the avantgarde in Mozart – this time from a semiotic point of view.

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4 My thanks to Harri Veivo for calling my attention to this parallel.

For semiotics, the avant-garde always represents "non-culture" (cf. Lotman 2001); therefore it opposes something on the level of culture, not just as an individual act. Hence an avantgardist cannot use pre-established techniques. We have an example of this in the history of Russian art: when Kasimir Malevitch and Alexei Kruchenykh were planning their cubo-futurist opera, *Victory over the Sun* (1913), they asked the painter Mikhail Matyushin to write the music, specifically because he was *not* a professional composer, but had some skill in notating scores, having studied violin for a while at a conservatory. One could not imagine a professional composer writing the kind of radical, "transrational" music which the authors were seeking (see Taruskin 1997: 86). This really does not hold true for Mozart, not even *mutatis mutandis*, since he mastered all the techniques of his time and that of his predecessors. It is possible, however, that an avantgardist does not always irritate the bourgeois (*épater le bourgeouis*) with exclamation marks, but may do so discretely and without fanfare. When all external effects and fauvisms have been utilized, it is avantgardist to write in an "antique style" (e.g., Cocteau and Radiguet in the 1920s) or by having a stage on which there is only empty space, one chair, and one actor, who is reading a book and making no gestures. Nothing can remain avant-garde for very long; the front lines are changing constantly. For instance, serial music eventually led to such extremely complicated tonal structures that it suddenly turned into aleatorism when it was noticed that free improvisation would produce quite the same result. What Taruskin has called "maximalism" – multiplication of traditional devices to extreme limits – does not necessarily equate to avantgardism. If the front line is always changing, how can we view Mozart as part of a "continuous avant-garde"? Would that not be a *contradictio in adiecto*?

Bringing us closer to the core of the issue is the following semiotic observation: the problem of the avant-garde is whether an artist can communicate both code and message *at the same time*. Isn't this too much for the receiver? As a rule, the code must be familiar, so that energy is consumed only in decoding the message; but if the code is also unknown, then too much is expected of the receiver, who may experience a sort of cognitive overload. Moreover, isn't there always a "theory" behind the avant-garde? In viewing the history of music, Carl Dahlhaus (1988), in an essay on Beethoven, concluded that the most abstract philosophical concepts are in fact the most radically and profoundly changing forces, even at the level of musical practice. Yet, even if there is always a background theory, who can analyze and make it manifest? If an artist is satisfied with *tacit* knowledge, he perhaps has no need to recognize a hidden theory, and even less need to render such a theory in explicit terms. Starting from Wagner, the reluctance of composers to reveal how they compose

is a well-known fact. In the end, the avantgardist is a kind of perpetual *esprit contestataire*, a master of negation – an image that would delight someone like Theodor Adorno.

2.2 Between individual and society; or, How the *Moi* and *Soi* of the composer meet

To go further we must deepen our investigation and consider if the avant-garde has some "theory" behind it. If so, then what is that theory, and by what metalanguage can we can deal with it? We also need more empirical facts and observations about Mozart as a composer and about his music.

I have elsewhere proposed that a composer's work and social context be scrutinized as an interaction between his "ego" and "super-ego", or "self" and "society" (see Tarasti 2005, 2006). Instead of ego, I employ the French *Moi* (discussed above), which in Hegelian terms represents *an-und-für-mich-sein*, or in Sartrean terms *être-en-et-pour-moi*, i.e., being-in-and-for-myself. For the latter term (super-ego), I use the designation *Soi*, understood as the social self or societal aspect. These principles – *Ich und Gesellschaft*, Myself and Society – were also to Adorno the central problem of every composer (that is to say, every "existing" composer). This theoretical idea has been used for interpreting Mozart, in a study by sociologist Norbert Elias (2004), who combines psycho-analytically tuned observations with sociological ones. Elias's central thesis lies in the sphere of what I call the *Soi*. In his view, the concept of the "biologically" creative genius should be abandoned altogether, since the composer's ego, or *Moi*, cannot be isolated from his or her *Soi*, i.e., community and, particularly, the "internalized" society. Elias writes:

> We often think that the ripening of a congenial talent would be a kind of automatic "inner" process which is detached from human destiny in general. One imagines that the creation of great art works is independent of the social existence of their author, his fate, and [daily] life as a man/ woman among other people. Biographers believed they could separate Mozart the Artist from Mozart the Man. Such a distinction is artificial, misleading and needless. (Elias 2004: 73–74)

Anyone familiar with narratology might be upset by this conflation of the physical, real composer with the "implied" composer, although this observation would be a half-truth. Elias uses terms like "innate genius" and "ability to compose" in a rather casual manner. What is involved here, undoubtedly, is an *inherent* ability, on the order of a natural force. Yet, the fact that composing and playing music according to the social habits of his time was incomparably

easy for Mozart can, in Elias's view, be explained as a sublimating expression of natural energies, not as their direct manifestation (ibid.: 79). Even if such a capacity as Mozart's stems from an innate biological trait, reasons Elias, the latter can be only an extremely general one, a vague and indifferent inclination, for which we as yet have no proper concept.

Elias is on the right track in trying to decode the concept of genius. It means that Mozart was able to do something that most other people cannot do, namely, to let his imagination flow freely, as a stream of tones that deeply moved many listeners. The problem lies in the sublimation: how to eliminate the private part of the creative vision and reach the universal form, so as to make art of it. How to cross the bridge of sublimation, as Elias puts it. Or in our terms, How does one proceed from *Moi* – the private, the *an-und-für-mich-sein* – to *Soi*, i.e., the social, the *an-sich-sein*? Elias finds this shift impossible to describe. We shall return to this issue below; for now, let us approach this mystery via principles of existential semiotics.

Elias's interpretation strongly emphasizes the aspect of *Soi*. On his view, Mozart's premature demise was due to social processes in the life of high arts and culture, whose victim he became. This macrohistorical crisis, as reflected in the microhistory of Mozart's life and creative output, embodied a shift from artisanry or handicrafts, to the art of professional artists. In handicraft art, the court nobility of Mozart's time dictated the norms of taste – the creative imagination of the artist was channeled strictly according to the aesthetics of the class in power. By contrast, the next phase saw artists becoming more independent, at least the equals of their audiences, and in a sense determining the latter's tastes and needs by their innovations, which the general public tries to follow. The general transition from hired artisan to independent artist appeared also in music and in the "structural" quality of art works. Mozart's fate shows the kinds of problems encountered by an exceptionally gifted artist in the swirl of such a revolutionary development. He left his employer, the Bishop of Salzburg, broke off his relationship with his father, and tried to live as an independent artist, trusting in the favor of Viennese court circles. Existentially speaking, the issue was that of *freedom versus necessity*: Mozart, seeking to fulfill the fantasies of the *Moi*, now had the freedom to pursue an independent and original tonal language. But, as is known, this effort failed in the social sense, and the court people turned their backs on him.

The other hypothesis by Elias, which again joins individual destiny to that of society, is the so-called "criterion of sense". According to him, the meaning or significance of life comes from being accepted by the group with which one identifies. Mozart experienced a devastating loss of sense upon being rejected by those circles. This rejection, according to Elias, eventually led to Mozart no

longer being able to fight even against his own illness – a thesis rejected by other scholars, who claim there is no reason to take, say, the *Magic Flute* as any kind of "musical testament", since he had started many other composing projects that were interrupted by his sudden death.

A composer's identity, however, is formed by more than just the whims of a given community. We should replace biological models with more precise *biosemiotic* ones. All living organisms, in relating to their *Umwelt*, are guided by the principle of the *Ich-Ton* (Me-Tone), as theorized by Jakob von Uexküll (1940). This musical term, as he used it, serves as a metaphor for the manner or code whereby a living organism selects from its surroundings those signs to which it will react, while rejecting or overlooking others, and furthermore, the kinds of signs by which the organism will respond to its environment. If we return this metaphor back to music – and why not? that is what Ruwet once did for Lévi-Strauss's idea of myth as a musical score – then we get in touch with that "bridge of sublimation" that, according to Elias, constitutes the core of creation and that in our own model corresponds to the shift from *für-mich-sein* to *für-sich-sein* (being-for-myself to being-for-itself).

What would it mean to speak of a Mozartian *Ich-Ton*? Is it a latent content, some principle or deep structure that presses for release through some surface structure, for eruption into music as heard? In Mozart's music do we ever sense some compelling drive, which must first burst forth, and only afterward resolve into tones? Does Mozart's music manifest what Ernst Kurth called *Wille zum Klang*? Another Mozart biographer, Wolfgang Hildesheimer (1984), is correct in his view that the fateful 'must' is missing from Mozart's protagonists – and also from themes, i.e., those musical actors in the musical discourse itself. If, as Alfred Einstein claimed, the criterion of greatness in music is that an artist first creates an inner world and then expresses it to others in his *Umwelt* – or *Dasein*, as we would like to put it – then do we experience such a greatness in Mozart? Is the melody of the *Lachrymosa* such an expression of the soul, a Kierkegaardian lament, squeezed from the poet's breast, becoming poetry and song on his lips? No doubt, Mozart *can* be taken as a romantic; but in general, the impact of his music is not based on the latter kind of aesthetic response or sentiment. The Mozartian *Ich-Ton* does not appear as such a transcendent force, as a pre-sign that precedes its proper, actualized sign; it does not occur as a virtuality awaiting actualisation. Rather, it manifests in the course of the music, in the syntagmatic stream of tones, in that "Mozartian" easiness whereby theme-actors unfold and develop from each other, in a process of constant variation; in a word: in their *horizontal* appearance, in the existential sense of *Erscheinen*.

I borrow the latter concept from German philosophy, particularly from that of Karl Jaspers. One of the fundamental notions of existential semiotics, *Ersch-*

einen does not only mean the vertical "manifestation" of the immanent (which would be simply the same as the appearance of the surface structure from "being" and from isotopies of the deep structure, in the Greimassian or Heideggerian sense), but rather the gradual unfolding of the surface in a linear fashion, in a continuous opening and bursting out. In *existential* appearing – *Erscheinung* and *Schein* – this linear or temporal appearance is *not* the appearance of something predetermined by "being", but something that can at any time freely choose its course. It is guided or drawn along only by the *Ich-Ton* of the events, the identity of the subject; we can never know in advance how it will react in each situation. Therefore *Schein*, which manifests the "truth of being" in the sense that it is a kind of figuration or ornamentation of structure, is not yet a properly existential *Schein*, which would manifest in constant choice at every moment. The choice should be genuinely free, not programmed by any predefined structure or ontological principle. Mozart's music precisely fulfills this idea of perpetual, existential *Schein* and *Spiel*: we can never anticipate in which direction he will go. Therefore his music is maximally informative, instantiating fully the modality of 'know' (*savoir*). One can, of course, find in his music that kind of Schenkerian, "organic" narrativity, which follows the necessity of the *Urlinie*, pulling downward on scale-steps 5–4–3–2–1. But the subject is also present in Mozart's music. This is the subject who, by hesitating, slowing down, giving up, turning around – in a word, by *negation* – demonstrates that he is in an existential situation of choice. If this freedom of choice did not exist, there would be no hesitation, except perhaps as some slight resistance to the "inevitable" *Ursatz*.

Because of its constantly unpredictable, horizontal manifestations, Mozart's is "new music" before the concept of new music existed; it is "avant-garde" before the avant-garde. The same feature has been noticed by others as well, though described in different terms. For example, Ernst Lert, in his rich study *Mozart auf dem Theater* (1918), has noted that the deepest sense of Mozart's music lies in the shape of its melodies, whose length and lushness are the sign of his power. The same is meant by Charles Rosen, in his landmark study *The Classical Style* (1997), when he speaks of Mozart's ability to dramatize concerto form: the object is not the individual themes and their coloration, but their *succession* (Rosen 1997: 203). In this sense, Mozart walked a tightrope between two forces: "... freedom or submission to rules ... eccentricity or classical restraint ... licence or decorum..." (ibid.: 210), and in the end came to represent "... freedom from formal preconceptions" (211). Rosen notes that Mozart bound himself only by the rules that he reset and reformulated anew for each work (210). Is this not precisely what the avant-garde composer – or any other vanguard artist – does?

Essential to the *Ich-Ton* in Mozart is something experienced only in the inner temporality of the music, and not as any external force. For this reason he was open to all kinds of outer impulses as the starting points for composing, whether they were commissions or any other prosaic points of departure. These may have set in motion the syntagmatic "appearance" of his work, but the work that emerged was itself not an exteroceptive or indexical sign of this impulse. It was without foundation that later generations from Beethoven to Wagner disparaged, for instance, the frivolousness of *Cosí fan tutte* – true, perhaps of the libretto, but not of the music itself. The latter is sheer, unadulterated Mozart, a subject who abandons himself unreservedly to his *Ich-Ton,* which, like Goethe's genius, never abandons him.

How exteroceptive and interoceptive – outer and inner – significations interact in Mozart is well illustrated by the *Magic Flute*. As an art work, this opera was possible only because it was created from the position of an outsider, namely, that of Schikaneder, a performer and writer of suburban farce, who produced a libretto that allowed for, and even compelled, an extraordinary variety and diversity of musical topics and styles, in that combination of the sublime and the rustic which characterizes *Singspiel*. Even earlier, in his absolute instrumental music, Mozart had learned how to combine diverse topics, which finds its parallel in the changes of isotopies of contents, plot and aesthetics of opera. In his operas, Mozart takes what was purely musical narration and transforms it into sheer drama. In the framework of diverse topics – folksy couplets, opera seria with its coloratura arias, chorale topics, orientalism, corporeal musical portraits and recitatives – the composer's imaginative fantasies bring about situations that are as richly informative as they are unexpected.

Such entropy reaches its peak in the *Magic Flute*; for here Mozart does not only set styles stemming from entirely different worlds into succession and juxtaposition, but boldly shifts back and forth among them in individual scenes. All this enacts a certain play of contrasts between the sensual and the spiritual, darkness and light, the profound and the superficial, *Schein* (appearance) and Being – all of which are reconciled by the Mozartian *Ich-Ton*; this last being the composer's identity, as that which regulates the linear, syntagmatic course as well as the paradigmatic elements chosen from the outside. It bears mentioning here that as early as 1843 a Russian Mozart scholar, A. Ulibichev, had used the term *Grund-Ton* to describe the composer's success in blending together oppositions, using parody, satire, and irony, while remaining faithful to his own "artistic organism" (cf. Lert 1918). Through the *Grund-Ton* he was able to combine the most varied shades of irony, truth and fraud, the gracious and the amorous, the horrifying and the laughable. Yet perhaps more interesting still is that, even outside of opera and theater, this notion also holds true for Mozart's "absolute" instrumental music.

Ernst Lert, in his profound study, *Mozart auf dem Theater*, noted the stark difference between Mozart and such other composers as Gluck and Wagner. To these last, music was the servant of drama; to Mozart, drama was the obedient handmaid of music; for them, the on-stage action was of primary importance; for Mozart, it was musical logic. For Mozart the central issue was music's capacity to say things which a text cannot say. Mozart's operatic texts are, according to Lert, without value, charmingly uninteresting. The formula for music drama was, in Mozart's time, a simple one: overture – musical dialogue – musical monologue – ensemble scene – chorus and finale. Into this closed formal scheme the obedient poet had to introduce scenic situations proceeding from the rise of a certain tension, which accumulated until the dispelling of energy in the finale. If we are satisfied with just the formulaic point of view, we need not concern ourselves with details about the creation of the *Magic Flute*. However, if we want to understand the semiotics of this work in terms of the alternation of extero- and interoceptive signs, then we cannot ignore certain conditions in the theatrical world.

Jacques Chailley studied the confused history of the birth of the *Magic Flute*, including the myths surrounding its genesis (Chailley 1971). In his view, the plot of the opera is embarrassingly contradictory. The first act starts as a *commedia buffa* and ends in philosophical reflections. The second act is even stranger: the main protagonists are subordinated to arbitrary tests, then suddenly learn that they have merited a place of honor in the realm of Isis and Osiris. The young prince, in Japanese costume (as specified in the score), gets scared when he sees a snake, then murdered by three ladies. Due to a misunderstanding, the Queen accepts the hero's offer to rescue her daughter, who has been imprisoned by Evil. Upon seeing her picture, the prince falls in love with the daughter then sets forth in search of her. Yet, when he enters Evil's palace he forgets all about Beauty, whom he was supposed to save, and instead asks to be consecrated to Virtue, about which, until that point, he knew nothing. Then it is revealed that the evil spirit is in fact the highest priest of Wisdom.

Of course, such a prosaic reading does injustice to the fairy-tale reality of the opera, in which even the impossible may appear quite natural. Nevertheless, facts and conditions surrounding the opera's creation can also help to explain its structure. Schikaneder, Mozart's friend, crafted the role of Papageno for himself. He was an actor, however, not a singer; hence Papageno's parts had to be simple so as not to tax his limited vocal skills. At the time Schikaneder was only 43 years old, but had known Mozart for quite a long time. As early as 1780, Schikaneder had worked as a theater director in Salzburg, where he cast himself in young-hero roles and became famous for his original, if bizarre, stagings. Mozart wrote some songs for him, in return for which the

composer's family was allowed to attend performances at no cost – a free pass that the Mozarts took full advantage of. Like Mozart, Schikaneder was a Freemason, but he had been expelled from his lodge as early as 1789 because of his libertine behavior Therefore when Mozart met him in Vienna, it was not as a brother Freemason, but as a fellow-defender of German opera, of which Mozart also dreamed. As Lert notes, it was not sufficient for Mozart to transfer the Italian style as such into the German language. Mozart realized what great a difference there was between the emotional temperaments of Italians and Germans, and he bridled at the thought of a German duke singing Italianate arias.

In 1790 Schikaneder established a performance house in the suburbs, the Theater auf der Wieden, where the repertoire centered on German *Singspiel*. He was encouraged by the fact that his colleague, Karl von Marinelli, had been successful with his Theater auf der Leopoldstadt, which featured burlesque and magical shows, the hero of which was usually the Punch-like figure, "Kasperl". In November of 1789, inspired by Wieland's *Oberon*, Schikaneder created his own formula for the "magic opera". He asked an actor, one C. L. Giesecke, to write a libretto on the same subject, which later turned out to be a plagiarism of another writer's *Oberon*. The music for Schikaneder's project was written by Paul Vranitsky, the concertmaster of the Vienna Opera, and also a Freemason. The work met with such great success that the story was continued in the *Magic Flute*. Giesecke, who went on to become a renowned professor of Mineralogy in Dublin, was interviewed many years later in Germany, at which time he claimed that he had authored the entire libretto of the *Magic Flute*, except for Papageno's parts, which were written by Schikaneder. In 1856 Otto Jahn, a philologist and Mozart scholar, put credence in Giesecke's claim; others did not. Others in the group surrounding the opera's creation included the Baron Ignaz von Born, a natural scientist and trusted confidant of the Empress Maria Theresa, and the general secretary of the Viennese *Loge zur wahren Eintracht*, to which Haydn was elected in 1785 and whose meetings Mozart also attended (though he was in fact a member of another Freemason brotherhood, the *Loge zur Wohltätigkeit*). Rumor had it that Born served as the model for Sarastro and that his ideas influenced the Masonic content of the *Magic Flute*.

It is commonly argued that there are two stories in the *Magic Flute*: first the Queen of the Night, representing Good and then Evil. Schikaneder started the libretto with the conception that it would become a simple fairytale drama, but when he heard that his competitor had used the same idea, he continued the play from a different ground. Mozart, in turn, would have composed music to the libretto as it became available, and would have had to change his style to suit any changes made to the text. Schickaneder, who had already met with success in performing Gisecke's *Oberon*, had put aside another story from the

same Wieland collection, namely, *Lulu oder die Zauberflöte*. He had already started to arrange the tale when Joseph Shuster, one of his actors, brought bad news: the competing theater in Leopoldstadt had just performed a new magic opera, *Kaspar der Fagottist, oder die Zauberflöte*. How did Mozart react to this situation? In a letter to Konstanze he writes: "I went to Kasperl's Theater to see the new opera *Der Fagottist* which was such a sensation, but there was just nothing in it." From this we may gather (as does Chailley) that Mozart, unruffled by the new situation, calmly went about recomposing and discarded the music he had already written. The fact that there is the scene with a snake at the beginning of the opera negates this thesis, however, since this idea had stemmed from a Freemason text, the book *Sethos*. The story of Oberon came from Wieland's collection (Dzhinnistan 1789); in it the magic flute makes the Musulmans surrounding the hero dance, which renders them defenseless. Yet there is a similar story in the book *Lulu oder die Zauberflöte* in which Prince Lulu rescues a beautiful prisoner, but using a horn rather than a flute. Schikaneder used this story, the entire libretto of which Mozart employed as the basis of his composition.

There remain still other sources. Mozart had earlier written two other operas, *Thamos, King of Egypt* and *Zaide*. Entire passages were transferred from them to the *Magic Flute*. In general, oriental themes were in the air: in September 1790, Wenzel Müller's spectacular opera, *Das Sonnenfest der Brahminen*, had been performed, ceremonies of which are reminiscent of corresponding scenes featuring Sarastro in the *Magic Flute*. In the same year, Schikaneder had written the play *Der Stein der Weisen*, and Lessing had penned *Nathan der Weise*. But above all, and courtesy of Born, the plot was infused with ideas from the novel by Abbé Jean Terrasson (1731), *Sethos, histoire ou vie tirée des monuments, anecdotes de l'ancienne Egypte, traduit d'un manuscript grec*. This tome, translated into German in 1732 and 1778, was at that time – and throughout the nineteenth century – the most important source of information about the mysteries of Egypt, and many features of the *Magic Flute* come directly from it.

One could easily become mired in stories surrounding the creation of the *Magic Flute*, in search of explanations for the many oppositions in the opera. The protagonists of the story are just as ambiguous as the music, hence they, too, evoke contradictory interpretations. For instance, Hildesheimer (1977) totally condemns the figure of Sarastro as a mere paper person, a monument of incoherence, and a false ideal for humanity. Supposedly, his holy halls hold no place for revenge, and yet he orders Monostatos punished for his innocent attempts at seduction. In Hildesheimer's view, the lyrics consigned to Sarastro are devoid of content, which is why no one can perform this role without

(unintentionally) comical effects (Hildesheimer 1977: 337). No bass can sing comfortably in the lower ranges of the E-major aria, which plunges even lower than the orchestra's double-basses.

Joachim Kaiser echoes such negative interpretations in his analysis of the role of Sarastro: the latter is a boring moralist and misogynist (quite correctly, Chailley has noted the analogies between the fraternal societies of *Magic Flute* and *Parsifal*). Yet Kaiser arrives at a sympathetic view of Sarastro: "self-conscious patriarchal dominance, sharpened by an irony towards evil and softened by goodness towards the beloved" (Kaiser 1991: 231). In Kaiser's statements – as well as in other kinds of unmethodical writing about music – the utterances of opera and music are taken for granted, as if the world of representation, with all its modalizations, were the same as our own. Of course, significant art talks to us directly – "Music is man's speech to man", as Finnish Mozart scholar Timo Mäkinen once said. Yet it must be remembered that the signs of music are fictional, *als ob Zeichen*.

In Mozart, music transcends stage and plot, but how? This phenomenon becomes manifest as early as in the overture to the *Magic Flute*. It begins with triads, constituting three exteroceptive signs, if we think of them as representing the three knocks that open a Masonic ritual. At the same time the harmonies I-VI are signs carrying a connotation of the "sublime". Likewise the choice of tonality: three flats symbolizing the Holy Trinity. The suspended notes in the continuation refer in turn to the *gebundene Stil*, or learned style, and its associations with liturgical vocal polyphony of the Renaissance and before.

Yet this isotopy, with its symbolism of dignity, is abruptly cut short by another isotopy, with the allegro motif repeating rhythmically the same notes. Such a repetitive motif is, generally speaking, a gestural sign of emphasis and insistence. Mozart knowingly borrowed this theme from the second movement of Muzio Clementi's Piano Sonata in B flat major Op. 47. In the score we read: "This sonata was played by Clementi in a piano competition between him and Mozart in 1781 in the presence the Emperor Joseph II. Later Mozart used the opening bars of this motif for the overture to his *Magic Flute*." Indeed, Mozart used only the opening bars, and characteristically so, since the continuation of Clementi's sonata inevitably consigned that work to the category of mere talent versus genius, in the well-known classification made by Alfred Einstein (1976) in his *Greatness in Music*. According to Einstein there was no connection between such cases as Telemann and Bach, Bononcini and Handel, Kozeluch and Haydn, Paisiello and Mozart, Cherubini and Beethoven, Meyerbeer and Wagner. What characterized genius was *Verdichtung*, "poetic density". In this case, Mozart condenses his own theme into two *Doppelschläge*, and does not close his motif immediately, as did Clementi. These bring his melody to an

early and decisive cadence, after which comes new thematic material, thus loosening the overall motivic coherence of the piece. (This is not to underestimate Clementi as a composer, who was capable of writing such "dense" and expressive textures as those of his G minor Piano Sonata, *Didone abbandonata*.)

Mozart injects his theme with self-conscious jocularity, by emphasizing with *sforzati* the ornamental figures on the last beats of bars, thus letting the rhythmic impulse propel the music forwards. The only way to avoid monotony is with syncopes, which turn into the leading idea of the fugato. Here Mozart proves himself a student of Handel, not only by his usage of repetitive figures but in the more general use of musical gestures; for example, in Handel's *Water Music* the problem of the alternation of texture is resolved in the same manner, by syncopes. Yet another model is found a little later, in the "Dance of the Furies" in Gluck's *Orfeo*. Mozart's use of a fugue-like texture as such is a reference to the "old style", which contains the affect of the sublime. At the same time, the theme, by virtue of its kinetic energy and shape, represents a buffo-style. This is a semiotico-musical illustration of Greimas's complex isotopy, or two superimposed levels of meaning:

Figure 7: Muzio Clementi, Piano Sonata in B flat major, mvt. II, beginning.

The first scene of the opera plunges us directly into the drama, from which we move smoothly and gradually to lighter stylistic modes, such that the protagonists are seen in a parodistic light. At the end one arrives at a couplet style (allegretto), and the music turns into an endlessly inventive texture that

Figure 8: Mozart, *Magic Flute*, Overture, fugato.

Figure 9: Gluck, *Orfeo*, insistent gestures in "Dance of the Furies".

obscures the borderlines of scenes. Papageno's entrance represents a kind of deliberately naive, folksy style. It is followed by Tamino's aria, which in turn contains one of the central structural motifs of the entire opera: the upward leap of a major sixth, followed by a descending scale. After this lyric scene comes the aria of the Queen of the Night in the opera seria style and quotes of Grétry. Thereafter we return, in the quintet, to a dance-like popular style. Then a more serious style develops, in a tone of moral admonition and with reference to ceremonial ritual with stepwise, sinking harmonies. Monostatos

Figure 10: Insistent gestures in Handel's *Water Music*.

arrives with Janissary topics, and folksong lyricism returns in the duet of Pamina and Papageno. The Finale is equally inventive and rich in its combinations of various styles, containing one through-composed recitative and dialogue. Monostatos again comes to the fore musically: the glockenspiel conjures up a fairy-tale moment, after which Monostatos "orientalizes" Tamino's aria. The sacral style dominating the second act is not realized with baroque references, but forms its own hymn-like topics of *das Erhabene*. The melody of the Men in Armor, as a cantus firmus, is a kind of Lutheran chorale (Mozart first used the melody of a Kyrie from the St. Henry Mass by Heinrich Biber, a Salzburg musician, and then the Lutheran chorale "Ach, Gott, vom Himmel sieh' darein"; see Chailley op. cit.: 275 and 277). Papageno's song is another important motif in the opera – a tune that almost attained the status of folk song (and even found its way to Brazil, resurfacing in Villa-Lobos's *Momoprécoce* [*Carnival of the Children*]). The Queen of the Night's revenge aria, with its repetitive motifs, has already been heard in the overture; hence its effect here stems from familiarity and reprise. Now, however, both the isotopy and affect are

quite different. At the end the harmonic field becomes more luminous; the shift from A major to F major corresponds, at the level of plot, to narrative functions leading towards the glorification of the hero.

Hildesheimer takes a negative view of the whole opera: "Singspiel has never been formally a successful creation. The spoken text, which has to sustain the plot, causes the musical continuity to break down: number remains a 'number'" (op. cit.: 338). One wonders what Bertolt Brecht would say in this regard, who by contrast considered the discontinuity of "stop and go" opera (Kerman) progressive since it prevented the listener from being drawn into the "culinary" illusion offered by this musical genre. On the other hand, Hildesheimer speaks straightforwardly: "One has always overestimated the significance of the *Magic Flute* to Mozart's total output. The sacred monumentality, the twisting of palm leaves, the moving in tough costumes and dignified steps are all alien to Mozart, and are, as it were, an element forced upon him" (ibid.: 339).

But we may ask, How can a writer replace the intentions of the composer, then assume the authority of criticizing them? According to what frame of reference, theory or ideology? When Adorno criticizes even such giants as Wagner or Beethoven, his view is always clear: as a philosopher he represents higher principles than the "concrete logic" of music, and this justifies his criticism. By contrast, Hildesheimer's critique remains in a singular class of its own, one which most closely evokes that of an American college student who started his homework essay by: "... Otherwise I think Aristotle was wrong when he said...."

2.4 The freedom and necessity of composing

We now continue with the idea, presented earlier, of the uniqueness of Mozart's musical fantasy as a technique of perpetual appearance and surprise. This thought is perhaps best clarified if we analyze how it is realized apart from the support of a verbal text, since the latter often tempts one to experience the music as a metaphor or symbol of the lyrics. The work by which I want to elucidate this aspect is his much-played D minor Fantasy for Piano K. 397 (1782). The very choice of tonality connects it to later, large-scale D minor works, such as *Don Giovanni* and the D minor Piano Concerto. In the latter two works, the opposition of D minor and major, the cathartic dissolution of D minor into major, appears as more or less a programmatic idea. D minor has been considered a particularly demonic key in Mozart, the use of which has sparked talk of the "dark side" of his character. As one sign of Mozart's (presumed) demonic nature, Lert adduces the composer's deep concentration and all-consuming drive, which showed themselves when Mozart was yet a young

boy, such that no one dared to interrupt him or crack jokes when he was making music. Lert further claims that Mozart had a double character: on one side, a fantastic geniality, which by its demonic force drove him to create; and on the other, a humorous and accommodating side, which appeared as puns and as scorn for his incomprehensible demon. He had a rustic, Salzburgian-grotesque humor, which acted as a cooling counterforce to his demoniacal and prolific creativity. He was not characterized by external frivolity, however, but by inner eroticism and demonic sexuality. Therefore Mozart always employed two on-stage characters, representing an idealist master and realistic comic servant, genius and sound reason: Belmonte and Pedrillo, the Count and Figaro, Tamino and Papageno. Such pairing extended even to his women characters: Constanze and Blondchen, the Countess and Susanna, Pamina and Papagena. In analyzing the D minor Fantasy, we may find that this aesthetic also influenced his instrumental work, such that the operatic world often thrusts itself into the domain of absolute music.

Schenkerian theorist Edward Laufer has analyzed the D minor Fantasy, remarking that even the choice of genre (fantasy) signals a kind of latitude with respect to musical form. It represents the principle of freedom from solidified formal schemes – in the terms of existential semiotics: a negation of the rules and codes of *Soi*. In a fantasy one is permitted to juxtapose strict and free styles, the latter leading to continuous transformation and development, as in improvisation. In a composition labeled as "fantasy" the composer has the right to wander, go astray, and even to return to an earlier crossroads and try again. What is involved, existentially speaking, is *Erscheinen*, appearance, wandering without a goal, hence towards the unknown, towards the Other. And yet, even fantastic formal designs can be segmented according to their narrative content. The above-mentioned three forms of narrativity – *conventional, organic*, and *existential* – are superimposed within the work in question.

Conventional narrativity takes shape as clear-cut narrative programs in which the musical subject appears, as actor(s), and does something. This type of narrativity engenders the musical events, that is to say, it makes things happen. *Organic* narrativity, on the other hand, exceeds borderlines; it resists clear segmentation as it strives for continuous growth in accomplishing the musical *telos*, the goal(s) or geno-signs toward which the musical process drives, unfolding in cyclic patterns as series of *initium-motus-terminus* (Asafiev). The operative principle of organic narrativity is to let the music appear "by itself", so to say, following the inner laws of its own substance. Finally, *existential* narrativity crystallizes in those moments that constitute unique situations of choice, from which a paradigm of possibilities or virtualities is opened. In such moments one breaks free of the the power and necessity of

both conventional (*an-und-für-sich-sein*) and organic-corporeal (*an-und-für-mich-sein*) processes, and moves towards freedom and potentiality. In music, the existential can focus on just one moment or tone, and it can also be dispersed among various phases and turning points. Existential narrativity does not always have a pre-established structure or program, but it does require notice of the manifestation of transcendence, i.e., watching things happen. Next I scrutinize the narrative programs (PN) of the D minor Fantasy in terms of these three kinds of narrativity.

2.4.1 Conventional narrativity

Bars 1–11, PN1: The piece opens with an expansion of the tonal space by a smooth triplet figuration, arpeggiated triads, particularly in the right hand as six-four chords in parallel motion. From this neutral background emerge two actorial pre-signs: descending major second in bars 7–8 and ascending, chromatic minor second in bar 20, as a passing tone of the broken dominant triad. At the same time, a hemiola (in the pitch content) causes the triplet rhythm to fade.

Figure 11: Mozart, D minor Fantasy, opening.

Bars 12–19, PN2: The main motif unfolds in three four-bar groups that fall into a traditional "aab" design (Stollen, Stollen, Abgesang). As such, the main motif has an exteroceptive quality, on the order of a "danceless dance" (Allanbrook 1983: 60–66): in gesture it suggests a dance, but which one? The key, the slow tempo, the stately movement and duple meter; all this puts it in Allanbrook's category of "ecclesiastical" dances of "exalted passion", in contrast to "galant" dances with "terrestrial passion" in triple meter (ibid.: 22). All this also refers to the social classification of dances in the eighteenth century, such as one

finds in Johann Georg Sulzer's *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste* 1786–1787 (quoted in Allanbrook 1983: 68–69): first are dances of the lowest class, which are called "grotesque"; the second class are "comic" dances – charming, merry, quick and with graceful movements; the third-class dances, called *halbe Charactere* (*demicaractères*), require elegance, pleasant manners, and fine taste; the fourth and final class of dances represents serious matters, dances of a sublime character and of tragic, noble passions. Clearly the main motif of the D minor Fantasy belongs to this last category. Moreover, the tempo adagio marks it as conveying truly "German" motion (as Langbehn claimed, in his 1890 treatise, *Rembrandt als Erzieher*).

Figure 12: Mozart, D minor Fantasy, main theme.

Bars 20–22, PN3: three bars with repetition of the same note, along with chromatically descending harmonies. This is obviously an "intertext" referencing the Stone Guest in *Don Giovanni*. It likewise displays quasi-orchestral writing for piano, here made to imitate the sound of brass instruments.

Figure 13: Mozart, D minor Fantasy, "Fanfare" theme.

Bars 23–27, PN4: development of chromatic "sigh" motif of the consequent phrase of main theme, such that it grows and then is interrupted suddenly with a fermata pause.

Figure 14: Mozart, D minor Fantasy, "Sigh" motifs.

Bars 29–33, PN5: the "danceless dance" returns, and tension is relaxed by liquidation and repetition of the sigh-motif.

Bar 34, PN6: cadence; the descending minor second (c sharp to c) is figured into this virtuoso flourish, leading to an arpeggiated diminished seventh chord constituting the dominant of G minor.

Bars 35–37, PN7: the *Don Giovanni* "brass" return, now in the key of G minor.

Bars 38–43, PN8: another development of the chromatic sigh-motif from the main theme, now lengthened and intensified.

Bar 44, PN9: another cadence, this one more vocal and thematic in nature.

Bars 45–54, PN10: return of the main motif in D minor, now with richer development at the end.

Bars 55–62, PN11: resolution of tension into periodic, 8-bar phases in D major. Motivically this is the same "actor" as in the introduction (i.e., gradually ascending arpeggiations), now in *tempo allegretto*: a kind of instrumental equivalent to the Champagne aria. In the Proppian-narrative sense, the same actor, who in the introduction was still "growing" and striving for "invulnerability", now attains it in this "glorification" of the hero.

Bars 63–70, PN12: the consequent is an 8-bar section which develops the rising scalar motif of the introduction (d-e-f-sharp); as above, it ends in a full cadence.

Bars 71–86, PN 13: recurrence of the first allegretto section, now faster and with Alberti bass; played twice, with many insistent, repetitive gestures.

Bars 87–88, PN 14: another cadence, the trills and figures of which are highly evocative of the human voice.

Bars 89–99, PN 15: the main theme of the allegretto repeats, with a strong cadence on the tonic of D major.

Bars 100–109, PN16: the above program is repeated, thus removing any doubt that is has reached the goal of the tonic, its euphoric solution, which puts an end to the preceding, "errant" fantasies.

The results above show that the D minor Fantasy is articulated by means of clear-cut, conventional narrativity. The work is next analyzed in terms of its organic coherence.

2.4.2 Organic narrativity

2.4.2.1 Corporeal analysis

In this category we shift to the level of *an-und-für-mich-sein* (being-in-and-for-myself), the model of which I have explained above (see pages 24–26). That is to say, we come to the particular gestural, kinetic and khoratic content of the work, its immediate, physical-corporeal first impression; in Peircean terms, its Firstness. Moreover, we come to a recognition of the more stable signs of such kinetic characteristics. To aid us in this task, we use the classifications made by Stefania Guerra Lisi and Gino Stefani of seven style categories, as introduced in their book, *Prenatal Styles in the Arts and the Life* (2007). These styles may be summarized as follows:

1st style: – *concentric*, pulsating; characterized by constancy, looking inward, concentration, meditation, immobile yet dynamic;

2nd style: – *swinging*: lilting, undulating motion, oscillation, binary wave-like patterns (here-there, to-fro, up-down), as in lullabies, pastorals, and the rococo minuet; in the latter, the inarticulateness of organic binary rhythm becomes articulate within a ternary metric framework: the prevailing feeling of minuet highlights this rocking style;

3rd style: – *melodic*; continuous linear flow, ascending and descending, sometimes "arabesque" in feel and appearance;

4th style: – *rolling*, circular; characterized by turns, revolutions, spirals, the double-helix of DNA, energy, asymmetry, motion/inertia, down/up, long/short, ecstatic/pacific;

5th style: – *rhythmic-staccato*; movements in short, rectilinear segments, points, flourishes, impulses, periodic rhythms, pounding motions, evocative of joy;

6th style: – *image-action*; characterized by disorder, chaos, loss of control, the inarticulate valued above the articulate, the informal over the formal, dream-like states, trance-likeness, fragmentation, labyrinths;

7th style: – *cathartic*; energetic, Promethean motion, as occurs in childbirth: labor and effort, panic, strongly accented rhythms, acceleration, liberating conclusion.

Guerra Lisi and Stefani's theory aptly captures the above-cited category of *an-mir-sein*, i.e., that of kinetic energy, rhythms, gestures, and desires as such, as well as its formation into the stable habits of an individual in the category of *für-mich-sein*. Altogether, we have concepts and terminology for portraying what we have called organic narrativity.

How does this function in Mozart's D minor Fantasy? As indicated earlier, organic narrativity does not necessarily segment itself into the narrative programs and Proppian functions of conventional narrativity. Nevertheless, in the upcoming consideration of organic narrativity, I follow the previously delineated narrative programs, but only as a means of locating ourselves in the score.

PN1. The work launches with static, chord-arpeggio in triplet figures within essentially the same register (this triplet figure does not return again in the piece), an empty landscape without an actor. Here we find Guerra Lisi and Stefani's 1st style – meditative, concentric – and a hint of the 2nd style, with the rocking movement up and down. Kinetic energy grows with the rising parallel chords, f–a–d–f, g–b flat–e–g, a–d–f sharp–a (which increases the modality of *vouloir* or want), until a descent at the very moment we hear a touch of actoriality in the upper part with a sinking major second motif (a–g, g–f, f–e flat) – this serving as a pre-sign to equivalent passage in the main theme (middle of bars 12 and 14).

Figure 15: Mozart, D minor Fantasy, dramatic, "existential" turn on the Neapolitan (E flat).

PN2. The kinetic energy of the main theme is that of a slow walking-tempo, a stately dance that takes two deep bows (on the quarter-notes, f and c sharp), followed by one more in the latter part of the actor, on the dotted figure (d–d

sharp-e). This figure – the staccato-note followed by minor second with a slur – serves as a general anthropological code in music, as an embodiment of "sighing", and hence a corporeal sign. We remain here within the 1st style, but elements from the 2nd and 3rd styles also appear: a kind of minuet in duple meter, the "danceless dance" described earlier. Kinetically, the main actor itself contains a pattern of suppressing energy on the long note, followed by its release into quick 32nd-notes. We shall find this figure repeated in larger forms in the piece, but here it is condensed, focused into the shortest possible expression. At the end of the main actor the concentric motion is abruptly cut off by a *subito forte* and pause. This highly dramatic gesture is followed by a timid echo of itself, and a chromatic sinking figure. The pauses in this section are very expressive, and the performer must mark them by pausing briefly, thus creating a momentary disengagement on the microlevel. This is balanced by the *martellato* in bars 18–19 (the hammering indicative of the 5th style) and the "aerial" flight of thirds and fourths, in a spiral-like gesture (Stefani's 4th style). Thus, we find the central "organic" Gestalts to be the following: (1) suppression and release of energy; (2) the corporeal sigh-motif; (3) the interruption of energy flow.

PN3. This repetition of the same note, as a suasive and insistent gesture, also appears elsewhere in Mozart; for example, in the fugato theme of the overture to the *Magic Flute*, the Queen of the Night's aria, the D minor Piano Concerto, and more. In this case, one may ask why the same note is repeated just on "e" and in this register – a question answered by the overall harmonic-contrapuntal plan of the piece. At this juncture, the "e" does not yet take its place in the "right" register (obligatory *Lage*), as a scale step (*Stufe*) in the overall descent of the Schenkerian *Urlinie* or fundamental upper line, in this case 5–4–3–2–1. Its recurrence on the same pitch here thus misleads the listener, who may not be attuned to this level of organic narrativity; rather, this is a meaning-effect emerging as a consequence of the latter. The long note of bar 22, followed by the dotted quarter note, again enacts the damming up of energy, and its sudden eruption into a 32nd-note figure.

PN4 contains the development of the sigh motif, which grows spontaneously from a small cell into a whole texture. Here the modal values of 'want' and 'can' increase from + to ++ when the repeated motif takes off in a diagonal, ultimately aimless movement; again, this involves the rhetorical figure of interruption. Now, when the sigh motif occurs in Stefani's 5th style (staccato), it becomes a sign of bodily anguish, a sign that we find everywhere in Mozart's output. Its basic meaning is obvious in Mozart's operas; for example, Belmonte's sighs in the *Abduction*:

Figure 16: Mozart, *Abduction from the Seraglio*, Belmonte's aria.

In the D minor Fantasy this corporeal gesture undergoes repetition and development, which deactorializes the motif, transforming it into merely a staccato line (a technique later used by Sibelius).

Figure 17: Mozart, D minor Fantasy, deactorialisation of "sigh" motif.

Such a sudden organic process of growth as in this section is a device that Mozart employs elsewhere. A typical instance takes place in the first movement of his D minor Piano Concerto, namely, the events in bars 99–112. Even here Mozart takes as the initial germ of organic growth the *Doppelschlag* figure from the piano's opening theme, followed by a large ascending leap, embodying the topic of *Empfindsamkeit*:

Figure 18: Mozart, D minor Piano Concerto: Expressive leap as a sign of *Empfindsamkeit*.

Moreover, this leap opens a gap in the tonal space, and the listener expects it to be filled, as occurs now in this development. Rosen's words concerning the D minor concerto: "Everything concurs in this drive towards the climax (even the bass ascends with the upper voices for the first half) followed by an orchestrated crescendo. One aspect of the classical aesthetic can be seen here with particular lucidity: the dramatic manipulation of discrete and well-defined shapes to achieve an impression of continuity by finely graded transitions" (Rosen 1997: 233). Precisely the same might be said about the organic growth of bars 23–28 and 38–43 of the D minor Fantasy.

Figure 19: Dramatic continuity in Mozart's Piano Concerto in D minor.

PN5. The main motif returns along with its latter part, the sigh motif, which swells into something like a cry; the kinetic energy is at first suppressed, then bursts out …

PN6. … into a brilliant display of 'can'. Here the spiraling "arabesque" turns out to be the telos of the preceding process (Stefani's 4th and 7th styles).

PN7. The repetitive "brass" motif in the bass recalls the so-called *chaconne bass*; its chromatically descending bass also has a quasi-religious connotation, as well as an allusion to the Baroque era (Stefani's 1st style).

PN8. A new and even more passionate, organic development of the sigh motif exemplifies Stefani's 5th style: this actor steps boldly to the fore, gathering its energy for the next cadential resolution.

PN9. This cathartic, virtuoso display increases the modality of can (++); a spiral reduces the value of 'know', since what follows is …

PN10. ... the return of the main theme in the tonic key. Again what is energetically significant is the dramatic interruption of motion. Next – after the exquisitely expressive pauses – comes the *sforzato* E flat (Neapolitan of D minor) followed by an arpeggio and cadential chords.

PN11. The euphoric D major emerges from the isotopy of D minor as the genosign of its trials and struggles. The main motif, here seemingly carefree, in fact carries in itself all the problems of previous developments, but now as a their solution, and not as a source of constant worry. At last the E tone is heard in the proper register (bar 59), as an urgent and insistent gesture.

PN12–15. In bars 71–85 this gesture is subjected to the kinds of development and repetition that the sigh motif underwent earlier. An instance of Stefani's 7th style, the motif reaches a well-earned cadence, one that is not a mere instrumental *Spielfigur*, but an imitation of *bel canto*, and hence a vocal intertext.

PN16. In this triumphant closure, the musical subject has found its home and rejoices in it. The 'know' value in this D major section diminishes radically towards the end, giving place to the modalities of 'believing' and 'persuading'. In other words, here the music tries to express truth; 'appearing' and 'being' coincide, producing a true and proper brilliance, or Shine (*Schein*). Altogether the D major section is based on the steady free-flow of energy that exudes euphoria, which stands opposed to the D minor isotopy in the first half of the piece.

As is often the case, events of organic narrativity in this piece do not follow the segmentation of conventional narrativity. At this level of corporeal signs and gestures, meaningful shapes cross the borderlines of sections that were previously delineated into narrative programs.

Next we insert these Mozartian gestures onto the semiotic square, such that the being-in-myself (*Moi*) and being-in-itself (*Soi*), the organic and the conventional, confront each other.

Now let us return to Edward Laufer's interpretation of the Fantasy. Based on a Schenkerian reduction, his analysis shows how Mozart avoids conventional resolution in the main section, bars 12–19. After many interruptions, the music seems always to start over again from the very beginning, as if searching for the right path. The most striking deviation from the right course – such that steps 5–4–3 of the Urlinie would descend to the "correct" E (scale-step 2) in the correct register and afterward to scale-step 1 – has been reserved for the E flat tone, which constantly presents an obstacle to this expected and necessary course. Schenker sees the organic musical process of the Urlinie to be

an-mir-sein
(sighing; suppression of energy)

für-mich-sein
(motifs in the D minor Fantasy, the *Abduction*

klopft mein lie - be - vol - lesHerz

für-sich-sein
actualized topics:
'danceless dance'; chaconne;
the demonic, virtuosity
bel canto gesture

an-sich-sein
the 4th category of dances:
the sublime and the tragic
euphory & dysphory

Adagio
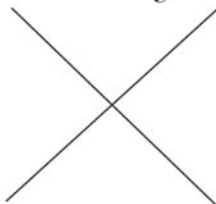
X

Figure 20: The Mozartian *Moi/Soi*.

inevitable and crucial in any well-wrought piece of music. This process can, however, be reversed, circumvented, delayed, attenuated, betrayed – that is to say, negated by a host of means (here we should recall what negation in existential semiotics entails). The initial ascent on notes d–e–f functions as the motto of the piece; heard as early as in the preludizing beginning, it now appears as the proper actant of the main theme-actor and forms passages of thirds (f–d, g–e, a–f). This motion continues with the passing tone B flat, but goes on searching for the correct Urlinie descent, a–g–f–e–d.

Figure 21: Laufer's Schenkerian graphs of the D minor Fantasy.

In the end, the right solution is found as one approaches the euphoric isotopy of D major, where the motto theme is again repeated, now as an ascending d–e–f sharp. The decisive point is the dramatic E flat of bar 52, which at first leads us astray from the proper descent, but thereafter gives way to the latter. It is interesting that via Schenkerian analysis we arrive at the same result: the moment of *peripateia* in the musical narration. While embodying the rhetorical gesture of interruption, this is temporally the most marked moment, since harmonically it is the most disengaged moment.

2.4.3 Existential narrativity

We come now to the third form of narration in the D minor Fantasy, the existential one, the possibility of which seems to proceed from the organic narrativity just described, namely, as the negation of necessity at those moments when the composer's *Moi* asserts its liberty and breaks free of *Soi*. One might of course claim that Schenkerian analysis is just another way of describing conventional narrativity, though it does not articulate music into narrative functions and narrative programs. But Schenker himself conceived of his method as organic, such that it underscores many elements that correspond biosemiotically to the idea of organic semiosis.

Can a Schenker-based, continuous and organic view of a composition also constitute the foundations for its existential analysis, if in no other way than as its negation? The most essential theoretical question here is, What makes a tone "existential"? Is it the position of the tone in the linear course of the music or in its paradigmatic background? Is it the fact that it distinguishes itself from the rest of the texture, as something particularly salient, as a "rupture"? Is it the deviation of a tone from the "automatisation" of the text? These are all negative definitions of existentialty. Yet one may ask whether a musical moment can, in all its positivity, normality, and even its topicality, be existential, namely, an affirmation of Being in music?

Existential narrativity, in general, emerges as a disengagement from the conventional (or arbitrary, in Saussurean terms) and the organic. In this disengagement (*débrayage*) the enunciating subject detaches him-/herself from both *an-und-für-mich-sein* (organic being) and *an-und-für-sich-sein* (social, normative, conventional being). Yet, the following sign relationships, in some way or another, obtain in all three species of narrativity: *pre-*, *act-*, and *post-signs*. On the existential level, this means that not all moments on the horizontal plane are existential, but only some. Those moments have to be prepared, but they can also burst out unexpectedly; however, this means only that their preparation has gone unnoticed, not having been foregrounded. In the chain, *pre-act-post-sign*, the act-sign becomes a transcendent or existential sign when it suddenly becomes a concept – but a concept in a very particular, non-universalizing sense, not an abstract concept that is indifferent to a subject and his situation. It is transcendent insofar as it opens a view onto the entire situation of the subject and the network of his immanence. This act-sign, when transformed into an existential concept, suddenly opens up perspectives on the immanent domain of the subject, and is immediately removed from the realm of the horizontal-chronological into that of the omnitemporal. From there, con-

nections go in all directions. In this manner it transcends the temporal moment in the chain of pre-act-post-signs; it transcends towards the immanence of the subject, which is the sum of all his/her previous experiences. This moment, or act-sign, when transformed into a concept, metamodalizes all other signs; it both evokes the past and anticipates the future. In its existential contact with transcendence, the subject basically encounters his/her immanence. In existential life, at this moment of presence and in relation to it, everything else proves to be *Schein* or appearance. At this moment, the subject attains his/her own immanence, discovers him-/herself, the semiotic self, what Proust would call the "lost fatherland".

If in music, as in life, the existential moment is not just any moment whatsoever, then how can we know when it arrives? What is the existential moment at which music "speaks" to us? Although conventional and organic narrativity may fulfill their own courses, gaps remain, through which sun-rays of existentiality peek out from among the clouds of *Dasein*. Can such an existential moment be foregrounded in music? Can the moment in which music turns into a concept (the Husserlian *noema*) be *marked* in some way? Indeed, existentiality can be prepared: one can produce a pre-sign, and try to re-experience it on the basis of how it was once experienced. In that case, however, what is involved is already a post-sign; it is an effort, generally unsuccessful, to reinvest a post-sign with its original value as as trans-sign.

In any case, existential narrativity applies to a subject that is somehow detached from conventional and organic narrativity. This may occur, for instance, in musical interpretation; for example, Schubert as played by Vladimir Sofronitsky, Liszt's *Vallée d'Obermann* by Arkadi Volodos, a Chopin nocturne performed by Alfred Cortot. Such existential interpretation takes us outside conventional temporal, spatial, and actorial structures; in this case, music becomes something like internal speech, singing, humming. The subject is altogether and definitely present, and this presence, paradoxically, detaches him from that place of presence, which is carved out by all those other coordinates (spatiality, actoriality, etc.). This is exactly what transcending means. It is necessary for a subject, in order to find his place within his own immanence. The subject does not drift off into some external void, but rather encounters his own omnitemporal situation and presence. That is why at such a moment the act-sign, in its horizontal appearance, becomes a trans-sign or a "concept" in the Hegelian sense, i.e., an idea that draws together all previous experience as well as all expectation of the future; it is the sum of *l'attente de l'avenir*. Transcendence is hence a mental operation that opens the immanence of the subject.

2.4.4. ... how it grows from Schenkerian structures

After these general philosophical reflections, we return once again to Schenkerian analysis. Schenker's methodology is essentially structuralist, insofar as it is reductionist in analytic practice; by reducing and eliminating certain phenomenal traits of the musical surface, one can get to its core, its deep structure, the *Hintergrund*. In the end, one attains maximal reduction: the major triad, or *Urklang*. Hence analysis entails tracing all horizontal movement to a vertical structure (the triad), whereas composing consists in what Schenker called "composing-out" (*Auskomponierung*), decoration, figuration of that harmony. In all this, composition is conceived essentially as an expansion of the triad in time, which-said expansion takes place, ideally, in the form of a two-part, contrapuntal-cadential structure (the *Ursatz*). Schenkerian theory, then, accounts for manifest movement in the horizontal and vertical directions. To this semiotics adds yet a third dimension: that of *depth* or metaphorisation, as shown in the following diagram, whereby we may discover the transcendental idea behind the music as heard.
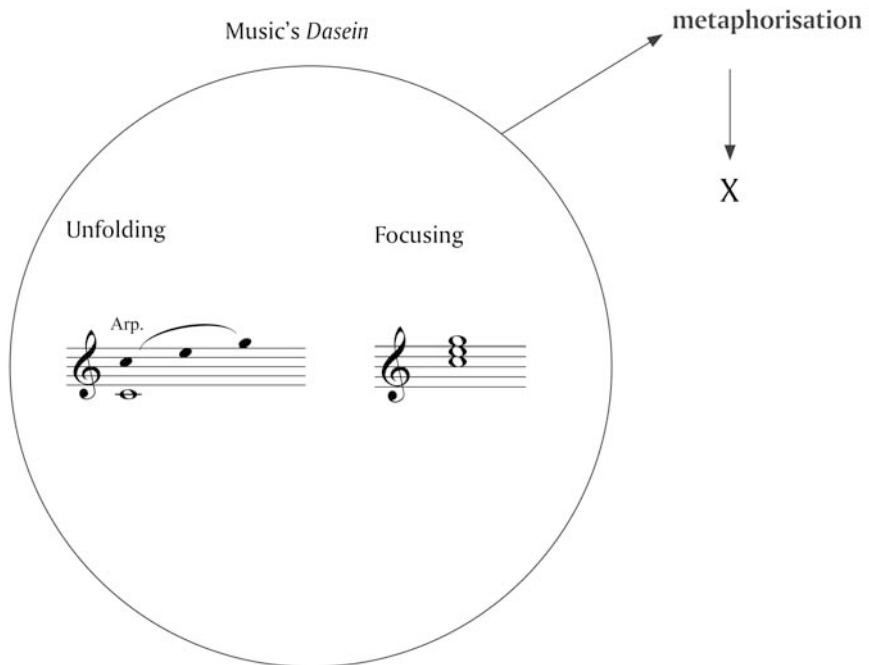

Figure 22: Focusing/unfolding/metaphorisation.

The C major Prelude from J. S. Bach's *Das wohltemperierte Klavier*, Book I, serves as a good illustration. As such, it is a kind of act-sign. But behind it one finds the Schenkerian middleground and background, and their pre-signifying structures, in which everything, at some point, returns to triads. Hence the surface can be condensed or focused into those pre-sign structures. Correspondingly, the composing-out or unfolding of the chord represents the decoration and ornamentation of this pre-sign (in this case, C major).

Figure 23: J. S. Bach, C major Prelude (*Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book I).

Figure 24: J. S. Bach, C major Prelude, Schenkerian reduction.

Yet even such decoration has its limits, namely, in the amount of information we can receive and decode from the musical surface. The same holds true for the modality of 'can'. The movement from pre-sign (i.e., structure) towards act-sign (surface) always means an increase in information and also growth in the modality of 'can' (in the demands of performance, as *Spielfiguren*). Behind all this looms also the modality of 'want', which refers to the basic tensional field of the musical *Dasein*. If we think of the chain from pre-sign to act-sign in music, we can portray it as transformations in the following series: *value–idea–model–type–token* (these are pre-signs)–*occurrence–exemplification–act-sign*. This shows us the emergence of a pre-sign and its transformation into an act-

sign. The difference between the two may be so great that the relationship can be construed only as one of metaphor; i.e., it is no longer iconic or indexical. In this sense, all that we hear as a present act-sign is basically a metaphor of some (horizontally or vertically) pre-existing, transcendental entity. As Goethe said long ago: "Alles Vergängliche ist nur ein Gleichnis." His words may well be interpreted as a reference to temporality (*Vergängliche*, vanishing), i.e., to pre-signs and post-signs as horizontal entities. But what, we may ask, is the metaphor represented or instantiated by Bach's C major Prelude as a whole?

To probe such questions further, let us turn – following theorist Tom Pankhurst – to the Adagietto of Mahler's Fifth Symphony. The content of the movement can be reduced to five basic motifs, as another theorist, Allen Forte, has done. These kinds of linear pre-signs, as such, say nothing about Mahler as a composer. Such motifs show up everywhere in the *Adagietto*, indicating the conciseness of the material from which he builds his work.
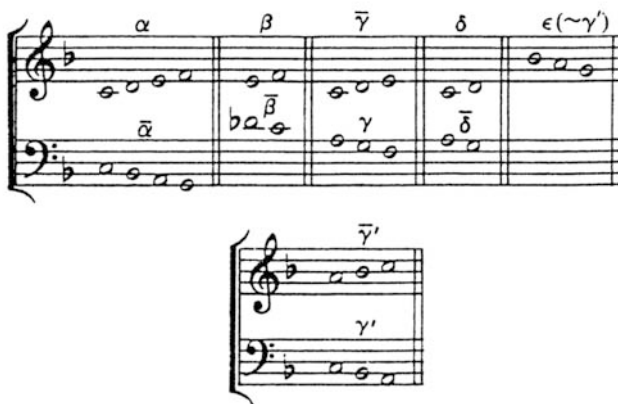

Figure 25: Mahler, Symphony Number 5, *Adagietto*.

As noted earlier, unfolding or composing-out amounts to horizontalization or syntagmatization, whereas verticalization condenses a syntagmatic chain into a single, pillar-like motif, chord or tone. Together, horizontalization and syntagmatization constitute the musical *Dasein*. But there is a third dimension, that of depth, understood as the metaphorisation or movement between the musical Dasein and its transcendence.

We can again formulate our question, Where does the existentiality of a tone come from? What furnishes a tone with expressive power? Does a tone have the capacity to unfold, focus, and metaphorize (itself)? We notice here

that the existential-semiotic concepts of pre-act-post-signs have a certain theoretical power in helping to analyze this situation. One crucial observation is that unfolding/focusing are essentially iconic sign processes (in the inner sense, i.e., based on similarity of musical substance), the description of which is aptly captured by Schenkerian notation. By contrast, metaphorization is a non-iconic, symbolic sign relationship, and consequently more difficult to portray by means of notation.

The act-sign in music is basically a salient, foregrounded pre-sign. The strength and force of an act-sign originate from its preparation and subsequent production. Pre-signs, in turn, are either horizontal anticipations of act-signs, or vertical models from which act-signs are derived and/or to which they may be reduced. To illustrate horizontal pre-act-post-sign relationships, I use a musical example borrowed from Tom Pankhurst's handbook, *Introduction to Schenkerian Analysis*:

Figure 26: Pankhurst's Schenkerian analysis of a children's song, semiotic categories added.

In this naive children's song, the whole melody appears as a kind of tensional musical Dasein. The basic modality in the song is that of 'will', as evidenced by the aspiration to get ever higher; the highest melodic point forms the act-sign, as a kind of organic telos at which one is aiming. Once the top has been reached, the tension subsides.

Yet the act-sign can also be conceived as a verticality, say, when it is reduced by Schenkerian method to the structure of the *Ursatz*. Semiotically, such reduction entails a kind of actantial analysis in the Greimassian sense, namely, the reduction of musical-surface actors to their actantial roles, in quite the same manner as literary actors play certain predefined roles. As a recent example take the *Harry Potter* series of novels, which feature such characters as Harry Potter, Lord Voldemort, the Sorcerer's Stone, Death Eaters, and so on. In the background of all such protagonists loom mythical actantial roles: Subject (e.g., Potter), Object (Sorcerer's Stone), Opponent (Voldemort), Helper, Sender, and the like. Following Pankhurst we can designate as actantial roles the four ways whereby Schenker analyzes the foreground: (1) *arpeggiation*, (2) *linear progression* or scale, (3) *consonant skip*, and (4) *neighbor-note*. The first procedure of the analysis is always to reduce musical actors into actantial roles. These can in turn be mapped onto a semiotic square
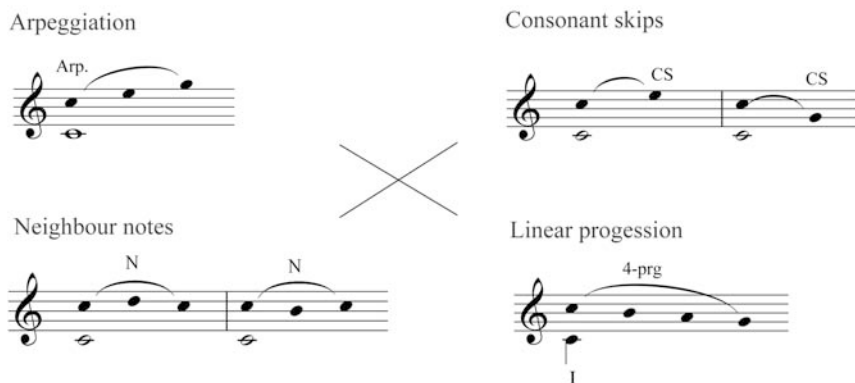

Figure 27: Schenker's linear categories applied to semiotic square.

Pankhurst describes Schenkerian method as a four-phased approach in which as early as the first phase a kind of transcendentalisation of phenomena takes place: the stripping away of temporal, spatial and actorial coordinates. All repetitions are deleted in this phase – but where does that leave us, if the idea of a work or musical passage is precisely one of repetition? Such is the case with Mozart's "insistent" gestures, as discussed above (e.g., the fugato theme of the *Magic Flute*).

In the second phase of Schenkerian analysis, the music has to be grouped into linear units that serve to prolong certain harmonic entities. In this phase, the musical actors, as determined by the first phase, are classified according

to their actantial roles: Arp (arpeggiation); 3prg, 4-prg, etc. (linear progressions filling intervals of a third, fourth, etc.); CS (consonant skips); and N (neighbor-notes). Yet the essential question from the standpoint of composing is, Why does the composer choose precisely these actants? Do these actantial roles correspond to the melodic "archetypes" – axial, triadic, gap-fill, etc. – described by Leonard B. Meyer (1973) as universal melodic Gestalts and cogni-tive models. Even behind such universal models, we find the Greimassian modalities at work, the kinetic energy described by Ernst Kurth, Stefani's "pre-natal styles", and the case of *an-und-für-mich-sein* in our own "organic" model. On this view, then, Arp = movement from a focused being into unfolding; CS = from focused to unfolding between the two notes involved. Or perhaps these two cases would correspond to a kind of 'doing', a moving towards something. Prg = from 'doing' to 'being' or vice versa; N = being – not-being – being. In this case, the composer's task would be to choose actants according to the kinetic shape or combination of modalities that he wishes to actualize. Of further influence are the other modalities, from 'want' to 'can', which are embedded in those actantial roles.[5]

In the third phase of the Schenkerian method, and with the use of special notation, more and more relationships among tones are discerned. Higher-level structural tones are identified, and the shortest routes between them mapped. At this point, the analyst is taking into account the whole tensional field of the work.

In the fourth phase one looks for axiomatic step-progressions filling a third (3-lines) or perfect fifth (5-lines), as well as arpeggiations (initial ascents) lead-ing to the starting tones of lines. As noted above, Schenkerian theory holds that the steps of the all-encompassing, fundamental melodic line (*Urlinie*) must occur in the right space, i.e., the register in which the *Urlinie* began. The com-poser may sometimes let a work seem to resolve on the right step, but in the wrong register, in which case the narration has to continue until resolving within the correct spatial register, thus reestablishing outer spatiality.

The opening of Beethoven's Piano Sonata Op. 14 No. 1 is a good case in point. As early as bar 4, the original register of the E tone is abandoned; an E is sounded, of course, but in the "wrong" registral space. What happens here is a transcendentalisation of the avoided note: the latter signifies via the

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5 In the following I have relied particularly on Tom Pankhurst's *Introduction to Schenkerian Analysis*, a guide written for his courses at the University of Helsinki (2003). Pankhurst has also taken an interest in the semiotic-existential dimensions of Schenker (cf. Pankhurst 2004). For their input regarding Schenkerian theory in general, I should also like to thank my colleagues David Neumeyer, Robert S. Hatten, Michael Spitzer, Richard Littlefield, Lauri Suurpää and Edward Laufer.

modality of 'want', which is not, however, fulfilled. In this way the missing note becomes existential, in so far as a Sartrean "lack" drives the musical subject to look for it and hence attain transcendence. When the note is finally discovered, the resulting certainty has an existential meaning.

If we seem to have stayed too long with Schenker, the master-analyst of musical organicism, it is only because all the foregoing processes are "organic" phenomena of music. In coming to consider existential narrativity, we may ask, What makes those organic processes "existential"? Is it the choice of a 3–2–1 or 5–4–3–2–1 linear progression, a consonant skip, arpeggiation, and so on? If so, then existentiality no doubt "lives" or "subsists" in these figures. But it can also differ from them, manifesting instead in various swerves from such normative models. Does such a deviation take place according to the codes of *Soi* (i.e., of arbitrary or conventional narrativity)? Even the organic narrativity of *Moi* adapts itself to the demands of the Schenkerian *Soi*. Hence in the end we are left to wonder if Schenkerian analysis actually represents organic narrativity, as he himself claimed, or conventional narrativity, which a society agrees upon as a social construction. These questions should be kept in mind when one interprets Schenkerian and other discourses that base their claims on the so-called "natural-ness" of music.

If we conceive of existentiality as penetrating into the codes of the *Soi* via an unmitigated flow of corporeal energy coming from the *Moi*, does this not pose the danger of music remaining imprisoned by the Body? Indeed, the existential course can thus blend together with the movement of both *Moi* and *Soi* (here *Moi* is understood as both organicity in the Schenkerian sense and corporeality in Stefani's conception of styles) – but only if the subject has freely chosen it. But if the existentiality of music appears as something other than the affirmation of the dialectics of *Moi/Soi*, then what are its signs? Put another way: How is the Body (*Moi*) existential, and what is the *Soi* existentially? Is it an interruption, retardation, or acceleration of the *Soi*? Does it appear on the level of the body, namely, in the transfigured or transcendental forms of bodily gestures and kinetic qualities? The answer: an existential tone is one in which the Ich-Tone speaks, a tone that is striving to move from immanence to overt manifestation, from transcendence into *Da-Sign* (which term was invented by Otto Lehto), from the virtual to the actual.

The existential meaning of music is never unambiguously objective (*gegenständlich*); it is in fact quite *ungegenständlich*, even when it accepts, conforms to, and blends with organic codes (such as those of the body or the purportedly "natural" Urlinie) or social codes, such as musical topics (see Monelle 2006; Hatten 2004). But sometimes music rejects such codes, as if refusing to embrace such "safe" Gestalts, and sets itself apart from them, thus arriving at

a heretofore unknown shape. In such cases, we get the feeling that this new, avantgardist gesture signifies an encounter with something transcendental. That is to say, this new entity has emerged from the inner movement of a subject towards transcendence; it is his true appearance, his *Erscheinung* – not the mere *Schein* of the *Moi/Soi*. (The value of 'know' in such a *Schein* is never very high. By contrast, the *Erscheinung* which emanates from transcendence – like the terrifying, apocalyptic angel of composer Einojuhani Rautavaara – always contains an abundance of the metamodality of 'knowing'.)

To apply these thoughts to Mozart: the D minor Fantasy enacts both *Soi* and *Moi* gestures at one and the same time. The *Moi*, embodied by the staccato and slurred sighing motif, constitutes its own topic on the level of the *Soi*, which combines with a neighbour-note actant, an interruptive gesture; we recognize both of these as providing the music with its Da-Sign meanings, which ultimately lead into proper modalities. At the same time, however, if we in some way sense that this subject can, when it wants, freely transform and change those gestures within the temporal course, according as his Ich-Ton – a kind of Husserlian, transcendental subject – so decides, then a tone becomes existential. When the Ich-Ton speaks in music, it is not merely the Lacanian *ça parle*, but an existential manifestation, which displays the freedom to transcend at any time and in any direction.

Is this not precisely a manifestation of the continuous avant-garde, namely, as a detachment from and abolition of the laws of *Moi* and *Soi*? In Mozart's D minor Fantasy we find at least one existential tone – the E flat in bar 52. This tone, though lying outside the realm of the organic Urlinie, proves decisive in the corporeal sense, due to the sophisticated temporal suspensions and disengagements that precede it, and due to the succeeding, surprisingly affirmative gesture in the euphoric D major. The fatefulness of this E flat is based upon its complex, overdetermined isotopicality, which presents a musical borderline between two fundamental isotopies: the dysphoric-demoniac world of D minor, and a catharsis of the euphorically liberating D major.

With this I hope to have responded adequately to the question posed at the beginning, namely, How is Mozart an "avantgardist"? We seem, moreover, to have determined what makes Mozart existential in certain of his decisions. If, as that quite traditional-minded scholar of theater, Ernst Lert, has already concluded, the deepest sense and power of Mozart's music lies in the length and richness of his melodies – and if we interpret the latter as his special ability at combining and manifesting both the vertical and the linear at one and the same time – then we have perhaps come one step closer to solving the mystery of his music.

Chapter 3 Existential and Transcendental Analysis of Music

Within the last decade I have launched a new theoretical project to renew so-called classical semiotics and to rethink its epistemological basis. So far I have published the monograph *Existential Semiotics* (2000) on this topic in addition to articles in various journals and anthologies. A Finnish monograph *Arvot ja merkit* (*Values and Signs*, 2004) represents further explorations along the same lines. Finally, the Belgian review DEGRES published a special issue on *Sémiotique existentielle* in 2003, containing some international reactions to these new theories.

Those theoretical and philosophical reflections began with the hypothesis that semiotics cannot remain forever as Peirce, Saussure, Greimas, Lotman, Sebeok and others have established it. Semiotics is in flux, and it reflects new epistemic choices available to sciences in the twenty-first century. With existential semiotics, I by no means seek a wholesale return to "existentialism" as such, nor to revitalize or refurbish the thought of philosophers such as Hegel, Kierkegaard, Sartre or Heidegger. Rather, I have searched for inspiration in those philosophers, according to the relevance of their ideas in the new context(s) of semiotics.

Existential semiotics aims to reveal the life of signs from "within". Unlike most previous semiotics, which investigate only the *conditions* of particular meanings, existential semiotics studies unique phenomena. It studies signs in movement and flux, that is, as signs becoming signs, which I have described in terms of *pre-signs, act-signs* and *post-signs* (Tarasti 2000: 33). Signs are viewed as transiting back and forth between *Dasein* – Being-there, our world with its subjects and objects – and transcendence. Completely new sign categories emerge in this tension between reality, as *Dasein*, and whatever lies beyond it.

From the start, it was evident that music analysis would provide an area in which to test the theory. For indeed, without a methodology and epistemology to support the musical facts, it is hardly possible to make a musicological statement of any significance or import. Adorno is still considered relevant due to his philosophical background (even when his thinking betrays colossal misunderstanding). Thinkers such as Kurth, Schenker and Asafiev, who share a dynamic conception of musical form, have a common epistemological foundation in the idea of music as energy (a Bergsonian notion). So it was clear to me that existential semiotics likewise had to be tested on musical texts of a complex nature. Since existential models are meant to reflect more faithfully than others our musical experiences of structurally rich and ambiguous works, it seemed wrong-headed for me to address only simple musical texts in the hope that the

theory would later be able to deal with more difficult ones. Here I present some contingent results of such applications, in hopes of developing such models into a full-fledged theory of existential and transcendental analysis of music.

The crucial problem in musical semiotics is whether music is or is not a semantic art. In other words, it is not quite clear that all musicologists endorse the foundational idea of musical semiotics – the concept of music as sign. Considering how little the classics of semiotics have said about musical signs, from Peirce and Saussure to Lotman, Greimas, Sebeok and Eco, one may even wonder if music is a sign at all.

In the history of Western musical aesthetics the school once founded by Eduard Hanslick (1854), based on music as *tönend bewegte Formen* (aurally moving sounds), has had its supporters from Igor Stravinsky to Claude Lévi-Strauss: "Music is a language without sense" (Lévi-Strauss 1971: 579). Even such an eminent music semiotician as David Lidov has argued that music can be conceived either as *design* or as *grammar* (Lidov 1980: 55). The first conception approaches music as aural stimuli forming Gestalts, which are perceived by our senses and then interpreted in our cognition. But this can well happen without any engagement of meaning. The "grammar" certainly refers to meaning, but even there we can study only the syntax of music, as done in the paradigmatic method used by Nattiez and by Chomskyan inspired generativists. Again, one may ask, where is the level of content or meaning?

The problem becomes even more complex when we note that musical meaning can refer to at least three cases: (1) music represents; (2) music signifies; (3) music expresses. If music represents, then it may at least be considered a sign in the medieval sense as *aliquid stat pro aliquo*. But how does such a *representation* take place? There are two major theories: either it happens between elements A and B because they are somehow similar or isomorphic; or, as Peirce suggests, there must be a third element which unites A and B (one element alone can not represent anything). Perhaps the most typical theory of representation in music is that developed Vladimir Karbusicky in his *Grundriss der musikalischen Semantik* (Karbusicky 1986).

But can music *signify* at all? We have plenty of historical evidence of music's signifying capabilities, in that it has been understood as a *signifying practice* from the Baroque to Viennese Classicism through to Romanticism and Modernism. Such practices have been studied and elevated to the theoretical level by many during the nearly half-century existence of musical semiotics. The view that music neither represents nor signifies but only *expresses* is already an anti-semiotic view if expression is understood as something vaguer and milder than the other two cases. Roger Scruton says that all signification in music derives from its verbal titles: change the titles and you change the

meaning (Scruton 1997), which suggests that there are no inherent significa-
tions in music itself, only those added before or after composition. This view
explicitly denies the possibility of a so-called "structural semantics".

In my previous theory of musical semiotics (Tarasti 1994a: 27, 38–43), I
came to the conclusion that the most important way in which music signifies
comes from its modalities. Modalities, as we know, were imported into semiot-
ics by Greimas in the 1970s, and since have remained probably the most dura-
ble and innovative aspect of the Paris School. The modalities of 'becoming'
(the essential temporal nature of music as it unfolds through time), 'being'
and 'doing' (which either retard or accelerate 'becoming') and the other modal-
ities of 'will', 'can', 'know', 'must' and 'believe', seem well-suited to describe
musical realities; hence the modalities are something which I have preserved
from my "older" theory. Music is, one might say, semanticized via modalities.
What is important here is that modalities are a dynamic, processual concept.
If we consider them the fundamental feature of musical processes, then the
most urgent problem of analysis is not segmentation (the cutting of a continu-
ity into fragments and pieces), but rather the presence and intensity of modali-
ties, which manifest themselves as actorial, spatial and temporal articulations.
As to the problem of which is first, modalities or actor/time/place, I am reject-
ing my previous theory, in which the latter was considered as the primary,
observable issue and the modalities as only a kind of coloration Roland Bar-
thes did the same, in his famous *Leçon inaugurale*, when he argued that the
modalities in language are only the coloring of factual statements. In my new
theory, however, I allot the modalities a much more foundational role.

All classical semiotics, like Greimas with his modalities, remains valid
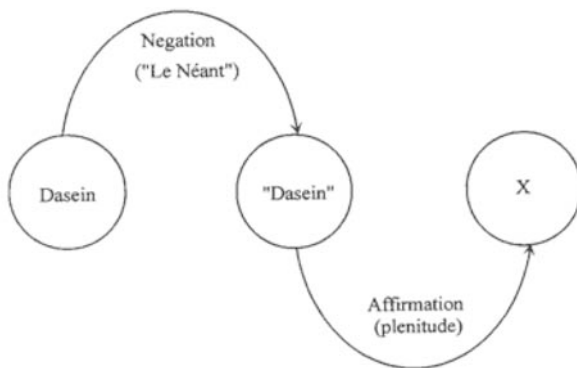within the *Dasein* of the following model:

Figure 28: Existential-semiotic model of *Dasein* and two "transcendental" acts:
Negation and affirmation.

For the model to be realized, we must acknowledge that something exists beyond the concrete reality in which we live, namely, that which is called "transcendent". The simplest definition of the transcendent, which not all semioticians would welcome into semiotic theory, might be the following: anything which is absent, but present in our minds, is transcendent.

Furthermore, a new element is introduced into the model, namely, the subject. There is a subject dwelling in the *Dasein*, who feels it somehow deficient or unsatisfactory, and so negates it. This is what Jean-Paul Sartre called *néantisation* (Sartre 1943: 44–45), the lack in existence which forces the subject to search for something else and something more. There are two transcendental acts in the model, negation followed by affirmation. As a result we have the "existential style" in *Dasein* 'x', also called the "existential move".

One might already be wondering what this has to do with the theory of signs, but, from a semiotic perspective, what these notions mean is that signs are in constant movement between transcendence and *Dasein*. Depending on their distance from *Dasein* – whether they are approaching or moving away from it – we get new types of signs.

First of all we have *pre-signs*, a composer's musical ideas that have not yet become concrete signs in the score or in performance. Such signs are virtual. When they become manifest as notation or as performance they become *act-signs*: music written, played and heard. When they exercise their impact upon listeners they become *post-signs*. In their virtual, potential state as transcendental entities, they are called *transsigns*.

Ultimately, this is an axiological problem concerning the existence of values. In the Saussurean tradition, values are relative: they are determined by the linguistic community only in their context, as opposed to, and hence defined by, other values. In my theory, values are transcendental, but may become signs via actions of the subject. In the field of aesthetics, such a view is of course problematic. How did the "value" of, say, a Beethoven sonata exist before its creation? It is looming somewhere, waiting for its actualization in the *Dasein*? In our view, transcendental values do not become a manifest reality without an agent that actualizes them.

When this occurs, such presigns can also become something different from what they were previously thought to be (as mere presigns). Without the help of other modalities – 'know', 'can', 'must', and 'will' – they are never concretised. Signs can also be classified as endo- and exosigns: either something internal to our subject's world or external to it. The traffic between these instances of signs – between transcendence and existence – is accomplished by what I have called "metamodalities". And finally, signs have their *situations*, an aspect that Kofi Agawu finds essential to the existential approach (see Agawu 2009; Tarasti 2002: 65–87).

One more new scientific paradigm that enters into existential semiotics, perhaps paradoxically to some minds, is biosemiotics. In the last twenty years, biosemiotics has taken its place within general semiotics, thanks to writings of Thomas A. Sebeok, and above all to the rediscovery of the founder of this doctrine, the Estonian Jakob v. Uexküll (see, e.g., Uexküll 1940). Surprisingly, this does *not* mean that semiotic-symbolic processes and forms can be reduced to something biological, as sociobiological theories do in arguing that society is ultimately nothing but biology.

It is, in fact, the other way around: biology and vital processes are shown to be semioses. The son of Jakob, Thure v. Uexküll, believes his father's doctrine to be particularly compatible with Peircean semiotics (T. Uexküll et al. 1993), but nothing prevents us from using it in other conceptual frameworks as well. To illustrate how such semiosis functions within an organism, Uëxkull uses musical metaphors; he says that every organism, surrounded by its *Umwelt*, possesses its own codes (something like a musical score), which determine what signs it accepts from the *Umwelt,* and which ones it rejects. This principle is called *Ich-Ton*, or in English, Me-Tone (on this concept in music, see Tarasti 2002: 98, 109). Thure von Uexküll calls this process *endosemiosis*, in which signs enter the organism and function within it on various levels, from molecules to cells. On this basis, we speak of the two kinds of sign mentioned above: endo-signs and exosigns, which represent these two states of being: inside or outside (Tarasti 2000: 37–56).

I have tried to bring this intriguing idea to music by arguing that every composer has his/her Me-Tone, as does every composition; and it is this Me-Tone that determines the latter's characteristics (this is not the same as Clynes's [1976] idea of "sentics"). In this new framework of existential semiotics, with its fundamental notions of *Dasein* and transcendence, we can interpret *Ich-Ton* through Kantian categories of subject(actor)-time-space, whenever a transcendental idea is filtered into *Dasein*. The following diagram is an attempt to illustrate the situation, to which one could also add "as if"-signs, these last not to be taken quite literally in the *Dasein*, but rather as a kind of metaphor.

I have spoken also about two other types of sign: *phenosigns* and *genosigns*. These have nothing to do with Julia Kristeva's geno- and phenotext (Kristeva 1969), nor with Barthes's pheno- and genosong (Barthes 1977: 182). Phenosigns are simply traditional signs which refer to, or stand for, something else. The sign remains what it is: a conveying medium or window onto the world of the signified. The case of genosign, however, includes the entire process of signs becoming signs: the whole generation of the sign through various phases is vividly evoked by the appearance of such a genosign. For instance, let us

The model of a transcendental analytics in music (transcendental in the Kantian sense) following the biosemiotical principle of "Ich-Ton" (Me-Tone")

The model determines what is same/other, own/alien in a tonal universe of a composer, style, etc. Ich-Ton-principle serves as the filter between the musical "Dasein" and its Transcendence. Transcendence here means the surrounding musical culture, the soundscape, wherefrom certain kinetic elements are accepted, taken in, and certain rejected, left out.
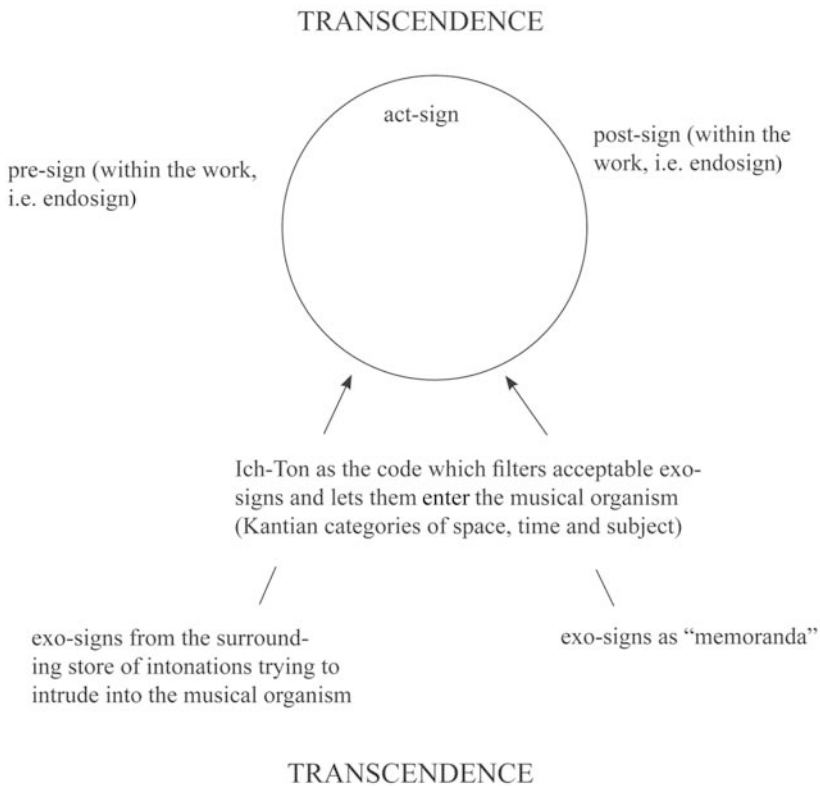
TRANSCENDENCE

act-sign

pre-sign (within the work, i.e. endosign)

post-sign (within the work, i.e. endosign)

Ich-Ton as the code which filters acceptable exo-signs and lets them enter the musical organism (Kantian categories of space, time and subject)

exo-signs from the surround-ing store of intonations trying to intrude into the musical organism

exo-signs as "memoranda"

TRANSCENDENCE

Figure 29: Model of transcendental analytics in music.

take the overture to Wagner's *Parsifal*; it launches with a motif rising from the depths, something solemn, sad, appealing, longing for something. As such, it is a phenosign, which by its mere musical qualities evokes certain modal content ('will', 'can', etc.). An experienced Wagnerian may recognize it as the *Abendmahl* motif, referring to Amfortas. By the time the opera ends, six hours

later, it has become a genosign, taking a turn into E flat major and followed by a cadence. Now we may sense that it contains the whole growth of Parsifal, from a young and foolish lad into the "redemptor" of the Grail knights. It carries the whole story in it. Here again the essential observation is that signs are never fixed; they are always on the move toward becoming something else.

Figure 30: Wagner, *Parsifal*: Abendmal motif as phenosign (beginning) and as genosign (end).

3.1 More on analysis

To probe musical works at a more detailed level, we may now sketch a program of analysis, which proceeds via the following stages:

1. Phenomenological stage: one picks up from a composition its most important *points of attraction*. When we look at a painting, certain points appear more salient than others, attracting our attention first to them; the same holds for music. Such points in music are passages in which the meaning of a work appears marked for consciousness or foregrounded. They are ruptures, climaxes or otherwise distinguishable moments, differences by which we can enter the world of the piece.

2. The points of attraction are situated in their discursive coordinates, that is, within certain *spatial-temporal-actorial dimensions*. These last constitute the characteristic *Umwelt* of such points, and thus enable their life. That *Umwelt* can also extend to transcendence; in other words, the meaning effects of the work emerge via something absent, which serves either as a pre-sign or post-sign of the act-sign in question. Hence the point of attraction can also be an element that is not heard or perceived in the work itself: it can be transcendent. The work creates its signification by negation of something in the *Umwelt* that surrounds it.

3. The search for *modalities*: the impact of attraction points is examined from the point of view of modalities, of which we have two kinds: interoceptive and exteroceptive. Interoceptive (or endogenic) modalities reveal the inner organic life of a musical work, its *Moi,* being-in-myself; conversely, the exteroceptive (or exogenic) modalities reveal the work's outer shape, its social nature, *Soi,* being-in-itself, i.e., those topics into which these modalities can be crystallized. A struggle between these two aspects always takes place in a musical work.

The inner modalities are above all 'will', the internal kinetic energy of a work, and 'can' the ability to employ the right means for making an impact and fulfilling the 'will'. 'Know', on the other hand, is an exteroceptive modality, in so far as the information stems from outside the work; there is also an inner 'know', which takes shape during the piece. 'Must' is always external, an exomodality, an activity of the *Soi.* Thus modalities both support the corporeality of the work and guarantee its continuation outside its boundaries. Ultimately modalities also bring the work into its transcendence (via particular "metamodalities"; see Tarasti 2000: 25–27).

Energy appears, both in us and to us, as modalities, whereas extensional space is articulated as time, space and actors. This means that a work is preceded by an energetic field, which takes shape as modalities. These, in turn, are articulated as deep-level figures, which can be portrayed just as Schenker did with his typical forms of *Urlinie* and *Bassbrechung*: the curves of 'will' and 'can' etc. These figures determine the fate of a musical organism, constituting

its *Schicksalsanalyse.* It is the same as *Ich-Ton.* Thereafter these modal figures and narratives manifest or are actualized in spatio-temporal-actorial situations. These are an empirical reality, since they can be fixed by musical notation. By contrast, there has never been a notation for the energetic field, although musical sign language probably was born from accents and intonations of spoken words, from the "musicalization of syllables" as Vincent d'Indy once put it (d'Indy 1897–1900: 31) . Neumes emerged in this manner (see Treitler 2003), but even in neumatic writing we find red or black notes used to indicate hemiolas, which was obviously an effort to describe the resultant change of kinetic energy. Various modalities, then, might be indicated by different colors, if we want to provide them with a notation: 'will' with red, 'can' with green, 'know' with yellow, 'must' with blue, and 'believe' with brown.

When a work has been notated – that is, when its spatio-temporal-actorial manifestation has been fixed into act-signs or score – it requires a performer who re-modalizes it by finding a correlation between this sign world and its kinetic energy. Music cannot just be mechanically reproduced, but must find a modalization through an interpreter. Music appears as a realized post-sign only at the point when a listener hears it, so that the performance or interpretation is something between act-sign and post-sign. Music again meets kinetic energy in the *Moi* of the listener, for which auditive analysis of music has sought to find proper notation (e.g., Thoresen 1987; Delalande 1998).

The implication-realization model of Leonard B. Meyer aptly describes melodic cognition, but its order should be reversed: musical movement is not provided by melodic archetypes, which represent music in space, as manifest and actualized. Rather, what is primary is the kinetic movement behind them, which is channeled into 'axis', triad', 'gap-fill', and other such melodic types. Thus, Wagner's *Tristan* overture and Beethoven's *Les Adieux* do not unfold due to a gap-fill archetype; rather, their kinetic energy has chosen this particular melodic implication for its actualization Thus the essential problem in studying a score is to get behind the notes, to see the hierarchies looming in them.

What is essential here is to find a new type of notation which would make the modal phases concrete and comprehensible to a musician (in this sense the logical symbols used by Greimas are unsatisfactory, albeit correct). If the Schenkerian *Urlinie* $\hat{3}$–$\hat{2}$–$\hat{1}$ projects the Greimassian modalities of 'want-to-be' (*vouloir-être)* whilst $\hat{3}$ and $\hat{5}$ project 'want-to-do', then we have to indicate the movement of *Ich-Ton* with its own coordinates (and *Ur*-concepts such as *Ur-Raum, Ur-Zeit* and *Ur-Actor*). Hence *Ich-Ton* should not be identified with mere actoriality, because it occurs in all Kantian-Greimassian categories. The Greimassian modalities have been compared to the Schenkerian linear-harmonic processes in the dissertation by British musicologist Tom Pankhurst (2004).

When we go through, say, all the sonatas of Beethoven we notice that their *attraction points* pull our attention to certain situations typical of each sonata, and to the modalities, figures and narratives behind those situations. Such figures can be found at the surface, middle and deep levels. These articulations form the particular *Ich-Ton* of the work and composer, which regulates its relationship in regard to its surrounding reality. The *Ich-Ton* filters the signs which are either accepted or rejected in and from the work. Likewise, the *Ich-Ton* modalizes all the intruding elements (exosigns), which via modalization become endosigns; and the latter, which emerge in the mind of the composer, strive to manifest as perceivable reality, or exosigns.

4. *Existential analysis* of the work consists in distinguishing aspects of *Moi/ Soi*. The structures of signification and of communication are discovered in this phase (Tarasti 1994: 16).

5. The last phase is *transcendental analysis*, in which the *Ich-Ton* is examined in relation to transcendent ideas and values, which for a subject (composer) are virtual potentialities, either achieved or not-achieved. Here the singularity of the *Ich-Ton* is studied regarding its universality. One clarifies whether, from the modalities of the work, such metamodalities emerge that would guarantee its immortality beyond its historico-social *Umwelt*, that is, in its later *Daseins*.

3.2 From modalities to metamodalities

The *Moi* of the composer is the pure source of ideas, but we can also say that transcendence lives within the individual. The *Moi* is surrounded by the sphere of the *Soi*, that part of the ego which is social, coded, community-bound and not existential; together they form the phenomenon called "the semiotic self" (see Thomas A. Sebeok 1979), denoting the physical and virtual body. Some identify the semiotic moment either with social codes (the Saussurean tradition) or with the kinetic energy of the ego (Julia Kristeva), and these theories have their supporters also in musical semiotics. Raymond Monelle, for example, adheres to the former when he says that the semiotic appears particularly well in the socially codified forms of eighteenth-century music (Monelle 1992: 5). By contrast, the new musicologist Richard Taruskin leans towards the latter when he suggests that the undulating gestures of the Polovtsian girls in Borodin might represent a typically Kristevan "semiotics" of music (Taruskin 1997: 152).

In my theory, both are necessary. They together form the *Ich-Ton* of an organism, surrounded by the Other. Insofar as this Other is another subject-

organism, one can presume that it is constructed in the same manner, that is, of *Moi* and *Soi*. The sphere of *Soi* is the point and surface in which one *Ich-Ton* touches the Other, or *Dich-Ton*. Only on this level does language function as a codified set of rules, which enables communication in the proper sense between these organisms.

It was asked above whether one's *Moi* can directly communicate with other's *Moi*, to which one has to answer, mostly no. *Moi* must first be transformed into *Soi* within one's organism; the *I* must become *Me* (in the sense of G. H. Mead) before one subject reaches another one. But correspondingly, if the *Sois* were only communicating between themselves, we could never be sure whether what the other expresses, via gestures and words, *really* represents what is intended in his/her noemas. Intention always covers both *Moi* and *Soi*.

Now to return to the problem of the composer, who is surrounded by transcendence that extends even beyond the intonation store of his *Dasein*. He can be connected with this transcendence – to all previously produced musical ideas in the historic sense and to the timeless ideas and universal principles of composing – only insofar as they are transformed and filtered in to form a part of his own intonation store or of the already codified and modalized set of ideas, techniques and topics. Only via this sphere can ideas be filtered in from musical transcendence. At the same time, the composer has his own "inner" transcendence, which seems to dictate new ideas to him, and from where new thoughts and innovations arise, as if from a bottomless, unconscious source. Writers and composers can "feel" as if they create directly from this source, much like the automatic writing of the Surrealists.

The musical compositions of Friedrich Nietzsche were born as if directly offered by the *Moi*. He even astonished himself when he later examined what he had produced from the point of view of his own rational-discursive *Soi*. That is why it is interesting to study composers like the Finn Sibelius, the Lithuanian Mikalojus Čiurlionis and the amateur Nietzsche, all of whom create, as it were, outside the tradition. From the standpoint of the *Soi* their music can be unacceptable, because it speaks in the direct voice of *Moi*.

The *primus motor* of music history is the becoming of *Moi* from *Soi*, or rather the constant rebellion of the *Moi* against the conventional world of the *Soi*. In sonata form the appearance of the *Moi* was at first only permitted in the chaotic domain of the development. Wagner then elevated the principle of continuous transition into the constructive principle of his operas, or their *Soi*. Then came the shift to atonality and serialism, representing total dominance of the *Soi*. Yet even this was negated, since it is impossible to repress the *Moi*. The sphere of *Soi* perpetually resists the being of the *Moi*. Correspondingly, the existence of *Moi* prevents the communication from ever becoming merely the domain of the *Soi*.

It is paradoxical, however, that if the *Moi* is left to realize itself freely, the result is not a flourishing of modalities but their scarcity and suppression. In Nietzsche's compositions 'will', 'know' and 'can' do not develop into anything, since they do not take on forms codified by the *Soi*. Only through these forms can one create a hierarchical, structural work. Nietzsche's tremendous inner will is evidenced by the German performance indications strewn across his compositions, his resorting to extra-musical programs (as in *Ermanarich*) and by the emphasis on the principle of will in his writings. However, his 'will' does not develop to its climax, nor do his 'know' and 'can' – they lack the 'must' of the *Soi*. Modalities favored by the *Soi* are, in descending order of priority, 'must', 'know', 'can' and 'will' – a modal hierarchy that is reversed in the case of the *Moi*.

Let us consider more closely the modalities of the *Moi*. 'Will' is the most important; it conveys the inner pressure of movement or stability of the composition. 'Will' does not necessarily appear as 'want-to-do', but may manifest as 'want-to-be' or 'want-not-to-do' or 'want-not-to-be' (this holds true also for the other modalities). The second most important modality for the *Moi*, is 'can', the important category of power, often even bodily. Thereafter 'knowing' is essential, since it concerns the memory of the *Moi*, a kind of "profound ego" (*le moi profond*) in the Bergsonian sense. In fact, Bergson's concept of "intellectual effort" (Bankov 2000), seems to be based upon 'know' but at the same time 'do' and 'can'. For instance, a composition delivers information only via an effort, not by itself. With help from the memory of the *Moi*, the composition as an organism, so to speak, remembers its earlier solutions in the enunciation. Finally, one may assume that even the *Moi* possesses its own 'must', its internal obligations – one cannot break the laws of *Moi*. Whoever does so, stifles his own expression.

The most important modality for the *Soi* is 'must', representing normative forms and structures of communication: styles, techniques and topics. If the composer provides his work with a title such as sonata, symphony or fugue, he commits himself to a certain 'must' of the *Soi*. Second most important for the *Soi* is the 'know', or the penetration of elements of the intonation store (Eco's "encyclopaedia of knowledge"), the transcendence to the work. For instance, the beginning of the last piano sonata by Beethoven, Op. 111, concerns not only the topics of *Sturm und Drang* but the French *ouverture* of the Baroque, with its dotted rhythms (cf. the first movement of Handel's Suite in G minor). Therefore, when we say that the *Ich-Ton* of a composition determines which elements it accepts from its surroundings – transforming them into endosemiotic entities within its organism – this involves the modality of 'know'.

The third most important modality for the *Soi* is 'can', the adoption of certain techniques and resources, whereby the aforementioned 'must' and

'will' can be realized. The least important is 'will', but even it appears as a kind of collective wanting in music, as occurs when a composer expresses the voice of his community, or when Verdi wrote his operas like *Il Trovatore* in order to join the Italian *Risorgimento*, or when later Sibelius in his *Finlandia* expressed the patriotism of the Finns. The 'will' of the *Soi* is thus of collective origin.

3.3 Some theoretical results

Although there is much still to do in the project of existential semiotics, I am now in a position to put together the most important ideas of this section. My intention was to develop the concept of being, first in terms of new categories drawn from Kant and Hegel, moving through Kierkegaard to Sartre and Fontanille. When one aims for more subtle tools in semiotics, one can still find basic innovations in the classics of the philosophy. The 'Being-in-itself' and 'Being-for-itself' were turned into 'Being-in-myself' and 'Being-for-myself' in existential semiotics. When these notions are combined in the Greimassian semiotic square, one obtains the following cases (see Figures 4 and 5).

They can be interpreted in the following ways:

(1) Being-in-myself represents our bodily ego, which appears as kinetic energy, *khora*, desire, gestures, intonations, Peirce's "First". Our ego is not yet in anyway conscious of itself but rests in the naive Firstness of its being. The principal modality is the endotactic 'will'.

(2) Being-for-myself corresponds to Kierkegaard's attitude of an observer. In Sartre's negation mere being shifts to transcendence, notices the lack of its existence, and hence becomes aware of itself and transcendence. The mere being of the subject becomes existing. This corresponds to the transcendental acts, negation and affirmation, of my previous model. The ego discovers its identity, reaching a certain kind of stability and permanent corporeality via habit. The principal modality is the endotactic 'can'.

(3) Being-in-itself is a transcendental category. It refers to norms, ideas and values, which are purely conceptual and virtual; they are potentialities of a subject, which he can either actualize or not actualize. What is involved are abstract units and categories. The principal modality is the exotactic 'must'.

(4) Being-for-itself means the aforementioned norms, ideas and values as realized by the conduct of our subject in his *Dasein*. Those abstract entities appear here as distinctions, applied values, choices, realizations, which often will be far from the original transcendental entities. The principal modality is the exotactic 'know'.

3.4 Observations on the Beethovenian discourse

Beethoven's musical texts are characterized by an extremely varied and rich level of *discursivization* (in the Greimassian sense of this term). His musical discourse never simply proceeds as expected, but is maximally entropic and surprising. No musical idea or topic is allowed to continue as such until it is "negated" in the Hegelian sense. And here I agree with Adorno's views on the philosophy of Beethoven. There is no idea or musical entity that constitutes a permanent strategy, that establishes a "norm" for the duration of the work; rather, the universe of style and norm is rejected, and, under the level of *Soi*, the realm of the *Moi* emerges. In fact, the opposition of *Moi/Soi* to a large extent corresponds to Adorno's juxtaposition of *Ich und Gesellschaft* – Me and Society. This revelation of the *Moi*, its breaking out from the cover of the *Soi*, can be realized in these ways: a) a sudden shift between isotopies; b) a change of function (in the sense of musical form); c) an unexpected growth, on a sublime or grotesque scale; d) as the evaporation or dematerialization of a text.

It was a piano recital by Antti Siirala, the young Finnish winner of various Beethoven competitions, that inspired me to investigate these chameleon-like variations in Beethoven's piano textures. What particularly struck me was the way in which Siirala performed the E major Sonata, Op. 14 no. 1. In the first movement the texture always changes after one periodic unit, as illustrated in the examples below:

Figure 31: Beethoven, Sonata Op. 14 no. 1, in E major, opening bars: Sonatina-like texture with rudimentary, ascending gap-type melody.
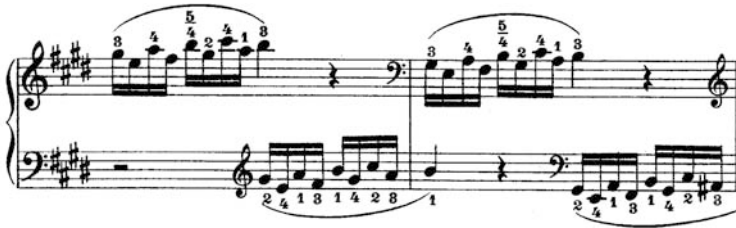

Figure 32: Beethoven, Sonata Op. 14 no. 1, in E major, bars 5–6: Filling of the gap with broken thirds, miniature "virtuoso" texture.

Figure 33: Beethoven, Sonata Op. 14 no. 1, in E major, bars 7–8: String quartet-like, polyphonic texture

Figure 34: Beethoven, Sonata Op. 14 no. 1, in E major, bars 9–12: Polyphonic, "learned" texture with chromatic elements, negation of open fourths in bars 1–4.

This last negation balances the affirmation of the beginning and creates a closed, twelve-bar entity that is both logical and coherent, notwithstanding the variation in discursive types. This balanced world, with its gracious rococo gestures and learned topic, makes reference to the sonatina, and perhaps even more particularly to the practice of domestic German chamber music. However, this established world of the *Soi* is quickly broken in the next period, which is already a miniature *Durchführung* of previous elements. The first motif is transformed into dissonant and aggressive sforzati which, with much effort, prepare the V/V chord of the secondary theme. Here the Beethovenian temperament appears, the *Moi* which is ready to negate the pre-established order of

things. This violent gesture repeats at the end of the exposition (bars 46–49 and 54–55).

Figure 35: Beethoven, Sonata Op. 14 no. 1, in E major: Violent gesture, bars 46–47.

Hermeneutically, this musical episode evokes the anecdote about Goethe and Beethoven's encounter with the Grand Duke and his spouse on a walk in the gardens at Weimar. Whereas Goethe bowed venerably and moved to the side of the path, Beethoven pulled his hat over his eyes, buttoned his coat, and continued walking so that the court were forced to make way – Dukes have to step aside when such artists as we appear, he later admonished Goethe. This anecdote also relates well to the particular strategies of *Moi/Soi* in the level of musical enunciate: the topics and galant gestures have to yield the abrupt emanations of the *Moi* of the composer. A continuous rebellion of *Moi* against *Soi* prevails in Beethoven's music.

The only moments in which this continuous struggle calms down are the sections in which the music suddenly stabilizes into a narrative texture. Often in such circumstances it modulates to the subdominant or mediant field for a while – backwards around the circle of fifths. When one looks backwards, the musical flow is stopped, and the direction of the signs is turned into a counter-stream. It is possible to find such passages in every Beethoven sonata, clearly distinguished from other textures. Often this function is fulfilled by the secondary theme, as in the first movement of Beethoven's Sonata Op. 2 no. 3 in C, where bars 27–38 modulate to G minor, and bars 47–60 to G major.

In the A major Adagio movement of the same sonata, the middle section moves into E minor, whilst the Trio of the C major Scherzo is set in A minor. In the final movement of Op, 2 no. 3 the F major passage in bars 104–167 fulfills this same, backwards-looking function.

Figure 36: Beethoven, Sonata Op. 2 No. 3, secondary theme, bars 27–28 and 46–48.

In the E flat major Op. 7 Sonata, there is a narrative interlude in the development of the first movement from bar 173–185 where the music moves briefly through A minor.

Figure 37: Beethoven, Sonata Op. 7, bars 173–174.

Even more typical is an example from the Largo of the E flat major Sonata, where, in the A flat major section in bars 25–36, the serenade-like accompaniment adopts a narrative "gesture" by imitating the plucking of guitar. There is a prototype for this in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, in which the serenade within the opera institutes a secondary narration.

Another example can be found in the F major Sonata Op. 10 no. 2, when the development moves to D minor.

Figure 38: Beethoven, Sonata Op. 7, Largo, bars 22–25.

Figure 39: Beethoven, Sonata in F major, Op 10 no. 2, bars 77–94.

The Pathétique (Op. 13) yields a final example of a flatwards-leaning passage fulfilling this narrative function, in the *Adagio cantabile* when the music modulates to the tonic minor.

Figure 40: Beethoven, Sonata Pathétique Op. 13, 2nd movement, bars 37–38.

Gradually a set of special narrative figures starts to take shape, which Beethoven uses as inner topics, not socially determined by the *Soi*, but as recurrent identifiers of the *Moi*. These are Beethoven's "manners", his Peircean "habits".

One such figure is very important, since it is based on the shift between the organic and the metaphysical. This figure is manifested in two musical gestures, for which I borrow terms from the existential philosophy of Jean Wahl: *trans-ascendance* and *trans-descendance*. The former appears as a special figure in which music is elevated, lightened, etherealized, raised to transcendence, as in the codas from the slow movement of Op. 7 or the Allegretto from Op. 14.

This figure often occurs in the codas, but it, so to speak, mitigates against the closural effect of linear-harmonic procedures, the reaching of the $\hat{1}$ in the Schenkerian sense. It could in fact be argued that all these narrative figures of the Beethovenian *Moi* are intended to retard and obstruct the "necessary", normative Schenkerian descent from $\hat{3}$ or $\hat{2}$ to $\hat{1}$. The mechanisms of the discoursive level would thus cast doubt on any predetermined tonal motion. The counter-stream of signs, the Adornian negation, would thus be given to the discoursive level to be enacted; these narrative figures would display their own 'will' against the 'must' of the normative Schenkerian linear-harmonic structures. Thus the trans-ascendance would appear as the evanescence of musical texture, its transfiguration.

The opposite gesture, the figure of trans-descendance, signifies a journey towards Nothingness, sinking, plunging down, *Sturz* towards darkness, heaviness. Two hundred years later this can be found in the *düstere Abblendung des Klanges* of the Viennese school, to borrow Adorno's formulation, but in Beethoven it appears as a harmonic device towards darker, flattened chordal values and sonorities, increase of anguish, and negation of the affirmation. An example appears in the slow movement of Beethoven's D major Sonata Op. 10 no. 3.

Figure 41: Beethoven, Sonata Op. 10 no. 3 in D major, slow mvt., bars 65–67.

We find a similar descent in the slow movement of Sonata Op. 2 no. 3:

Figure 42: Beethoven, Sonata Op. 2 no. 3, slow mvt., bars 26–36.

An even more striking example occurs in bars 11–15 of the Maestoso that opens Sonata Op. 111; the heavy downwards accents invoke the aesthetic category of the tragic:

Figure 43: Beethoven, Op. 111, mvt. 1, heavy trans-descendence, bars 10–13.

This is typical trans-descendence: it is the realm of negation, which is accepted and affirmed. In the opening bars, Beethoven stages a fight between two topics of the *Soi: Sturm und Drang* and the Baroque French *ouverture*. These figures, representing two opposing and incompatible topics, are used by a higher level of enunciative subject, the Beethovenian transcendental ego, the *Moi* as the uncompromising *esprit contestataire*.

These two gestures, or narrative figures, of trans-ascendance and trans-descendance have metaphysical consequences at the level of musical enunciation (performance), representing as they do the corporealization of music's inner modal forces. Parisian piano pedagogue Jules Gentil based his teaching on the idea of a "science of gestures" of which he determined two basic types: *pousser* (to push) and *tirer* (to pull). The former means downward movement, the attack of the keyboard, whereas the latter corresponds to "up", the relaxing of the hand. These two keyboard gestures are analogous, of course, to the bowing of string instruments and to the exhalation and inhalation of singers. Through these two gestures the music is made to breathe like an organism. This type of gesturalization or concretizing of the musical utterance into a corporeal technique serves as a crucial phase on the level of the performing subject: the pure musical structure of a musical utterance is provided with the techniques of the performer's *Moi*. "Organicized" in such a way, the Moi, as it appears in Beethoven sonatas, creates the almost metaphysical narrative figure of trans-ascendance or trans-descendance.

Later in music history, these principles cause something organic to become metaphysical, which is the most essential musical and philosophical issue of Wagner's *Tristan*.

Organic	metaphysical
"down" *pousser*	trans-descendance
"up" *tirer*	trans-ascendance

Table 1: Organic and metaphysical "gestures".

When speaking about the performer's role and subjectivity, we can apply the previous model of being-in-myself/being-for-myself; i.e., the semiotic square of those four cases. First, every performer has a body, with its physical, kinetic properties as such; this is 'being-in-myself'. This "body" of the performer is mere potentiality, however, and not yet a performing body at all. A person may have a "voice", but to become a singer requires more than that. Likewise, someone may have good lungs or long fingers, but that is not enough to become a wind player or a pianist. First, the body has to become conscious of its capacities, the inherent modalities of 'can', by training itself in permanent habits. This is the phase of developing certain corporeal techniques; it is the inner side of technical training. Etudes as such are already 'being-for-itself' (i.e., socially coded, external activities); by 'being-for-myself', we mean the adaptation of the body to these external demands and, on the other hand, the organization of the inner kinetic energies of a performer's identity, the latter being unique to that performer alone.

In that case we have two types of beings referring to the social world: 'being-for-itself' and 'being-in-itself'. The former is represented by certain schools and traditions of performance. Those traditions, as they relate to the violin, piano, horn or voice, have to be integrated into the performer's 'being-for-myself' or else they would remain externally learned habits, nothing individually or uniquely corporeal. The latter ('being-in-itself') is represented by style, by topics of music itself seen through the aspect of performance (i.e., musical enunciation). Such acts of enunciation are taken into account by the composer as he or she writes the score. They may be embedded there as idiomatic figures (*Spielfiguren*) or sometimes be adapted to the modality of 'can' in the musical texture. Often composers write music with a particular performer in mind, his or her body constituting the 'being-in-myself' and 'being-for-myself'.

As in the previous application of the semiotic square to a composer's situation, we are now dwelling within the subjectivity of *one* subject, namely the performer, and seeing all these aspects from his/her position. This provides us with all the elements for a theory of musical performance:
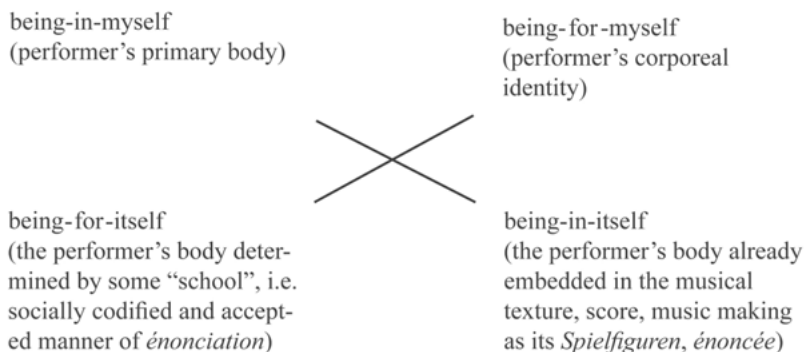
being-in-myself
(performer's primary body)

being-for-myself
(performer's corporeal
identity)

being-for-itself
(the performer's body deter-
mined by some "school", i.e.
socially codified and accept-
ed manner of *énonciation*)

being-in-itself
(the performer's body already
embedded in the musical
texture, score, music making
as its *Spielfiguren*, *énoncée*)

Figure 44: Performer subjectivity mapped onto semiotic square.

We have spoken previously about the existential semiotic categories of nega-
tion and affirmation, and we recall here the logical possibilities of the various
cases:

(1) negation or affirmation of the *Dasein*;
(2) either negation or affirmation of the emptiness of Nothingness;
(3) either negation or affirmation of the "*Dasein*";
(4) either negation or affirmation of Plenitude;
(5) either negation or affirmation of X (the unknown Otherness).

The subject has, in all phases of his transcendental journeys, the freedom to
accept these possibilities, or to reject them, and sometimes by deliberate
means (see Tarasti 2000: 30–32).

Music begins by introducing, presenting or stating something. We must
first have "something" – a motif, theme or other beginning – which thereafter
is either negated or affirmed. Negation means transformation or variation: after
the opening motif (**a**), we hear something else (**b**). If, on the other hand, **a** is
affirmed, we hear a repetition of it (**a′**). Now we can add to this initial situation
the Greimassian aspectual semes of sufficient and insufficient, which go in
two directions: either we have something sufficiently and then excessively (too
much), or we have it insufficiently and then deficiently (too little). The presen-
tation of a motif as such – as something present – is a neutral statement, after
which any initial repetition adds sufficiency. If the "something" is repeated
again, it is now too much. If, on the other hand, we immediately hear some-
thing else after the opening statement, the impression is one of insufficiency.
In the latter case, the *Moi* of the composition is not yet established, since at
least one repetition is necessary in order to establish a more permanent iden-
tity. But if, after this first negation, we hear yet another variation (**a**, **b**, **c**) with

no return or engagement back to **a**, what emerges is the aspectual seme of deficiency (atonal music can operate like this, when lack of repetition creates a permanent state of insufficiency in the listener). In such a composition the *Moi* is not established; the piece does not find its Me-Tone. The following diagram illustrates this situation:
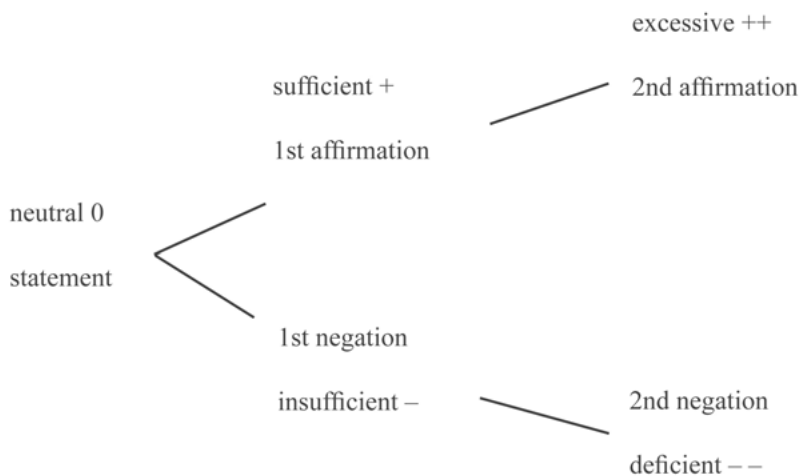
excessive ++

sufficient +   2nd affirmation

1st affirmation

neutral 0

statement

1st negation

insufficient –   2nd negation

deficient – –

Figure 45: Directions of affirmation and negation in the Beethovenian discourse.

In this discoursive logic, we can, in any phase, turn back to the initial situation. In the last phase (2nd affirmation and 2nd negation) we *must* go back or into something else; the music cannot continue any longer along this path. If we do so, however, we meet in the first case the aesthetic category of the Sublime, *das Erhabene* (in the term's original sense of transgressing something sub-lime) or *Überschreiten*. In the second case of negation, we meet the category of the Grotesque. It is interesting to note how in late Wagner the principle of abundant, overwhelming, transgressive and excessive is much used, partly for theatrical and dramatic purposes, which equates to the old German saying, *Lieber etwas Gutes und dafür ein bisschen mehr!* [Rather something good and even more.]

When a topic is introduced into this discoursive musical logic – which as sketched here corresponds to the logic of the *Moi* – it always entails a reference to the social, external world of the work. In topical form, the *Soi* penetrates into the domain of the *Moi*, into the proper identity of a single work. As we saw above, the *Moi* can be either weakened or strengthened by this logic. Introduction of a topic of some codified musical gesture into this autonomous

and self-organizing musical logic often seems to a listener like the appearance of something familiar, a secure point of reference, which temporarily halts the passional course and process of the *Moi*. It gives the listener momentary respite from the play of passions, which Schopenhauer considered the most characteristic element of Beethoven's music:

> *Werfen wir jetzt einen Blick auf die blosse Instrumentalmusik; so zeigt uns eine Beethovensche Symphonie die grösste Verwirrung, welcher doch die vollkommenste Ordnung zum Grunde liegt, den heftigsten Kampf, der sich im nächsten Augenblick zur schönsten Eintracht gestaltet: es ist rerum concordia discors, ein treues und vollkommenes Abbild des Wesens der Welt, welche dahin rollt, im unübersehbaren Gewirre zahlloser Gestalten und durch stete Zerstörung sich selbst erhält. Zugleich nun aber sprechen aus dieser Symphonie alle menschlichen Leidenschaften und Affekte: die Freude, die Trauer, die Liebe, der hass, der Schrecken die Hoffnung, u.s.w. in zahllosen Nüancen jedoch alle gleichsam nur in ab stracto und ohne alle Besonderung: es ist ihre blosse Form, ohne den Stoff, wie eine blosse Geisterwelt, ohne Materie. Allerdings haben wir die Hang, sie, beim Zuhören, zu realisier en, sie in der Phantasie, mit Fleisch und Bein zu bekleiden und allerhand Scenen des lebens, und der Natur darin zu sehn....* (Schopenhauer 1818/1987, Band 2, *Zur Metaphysik der Musik*: 585)

This realm of the *Soi* also falls under the organic logic of music, though it is not given as a definitive "map" for a musical journey. When the topic, or *Soi*, has penetrated into the universe of the work, it is allowed to prevail for a while, but thereafter must give way to the *Moi*, or the properly Hegelian course of music. We may of course imagine a sonata written in a completely academic style (e.g., Adler), in which all the themes, motifs, developments and harmonic procedures are in their proper places, yet without the piece manifesting anything original. In such a case, it is as if the composer's *Moi* was not present at all. Thus the *Moi* is the guarantor of originality, even if it cannot do without the realm of the *Soi*. How the *Moi* proceeds according to its own logic – which could be well paralleled to strategies of the psyche, in the sense of Freudian dreamwork or similar – is in Beethoven's case the same as the principle of *Durchführung*, or as Schoenberg put it, "developing variation", the Wagnerian *Kunst des Überganges*.

3.5 Beethoven, Sonata Op. 7 in E flat major, 1st movement: An exercise in existential analysis

In bars 1–4 we hear only the pulsating triplet rhythm and short motifs (**a**), discussed above in terms of the 'want-to-do' of kinetic energy without stability.

Figure 46: Beethoven, Sonata Op. 7 in E flat major, mvt. 1, bars 1–2.

Figure 47: Beethoven, Sonata Op. 7 in E flat major, mvt. 1, bars 3–4: motif á (i.e., repetition of a, its 1st affirmation).

Bars 1–2: motif **a** (with two semes: triple rhythm and tonic triad)

In bar 5, a new melodic element enters, which is the negation of **a** but at the same time the affirmation of the rhythm triplet figure; this **b** motif then recurs three times (excessively), after which it lingers on in the bass. Beethoven wants to show that music cannot continue thereafter in the same direction, but must shift into something new or return to motif **a**. The **a** motif does return in a way, in the descant register as the inversion of the melodic-triadic motif of the opening. The pulsation from **a** continues but provided with form by motif **b** – we now reach the moment of 'Being-for-myself'.

In bars 17–24, the affirmation of the rhythmic seme of motif **a** is such that the melodic element now turns into a mere scale passage, which constitutes neutral material. In other words, the triadic melody of the opening and neighbour-note melody from bars 5–15 are both abandoned; they are negated, but no other, more cogent motif is brought into play.

Figure 48: Beethoven, Sonata Op. 7 in E flat major, mvt. 1, bars 5–17: motif b.

Altogether the narrative program of these bars is characterized by their *attraction point*; the above-mentioned triplet rhythm is the only seme that appears throughout this universe. The music has now come to a situation, due to the inner logic of the *Moi*, from which there is no other exit than through the appearance of the *Soi* as a call to order. One might say that the musical *khora* is now ready to adopt a patriarchal order, which seems to enter unexpectedly, but which in fact is already prepared and anticipated in the inner sense. The dynamic here is *fortissimo*: we have the moment of Barthesian "geno-play" in which the throbbing body provides accents.

Bars 25–32 see the first occurrence of the galloping horses topic (Monelle 2000: 63–65), which is introduced by the dissonant chordal pillars at the beginning of bars 25 and 27. This topic is not at all detached from the *Moi*, but it has already been prepared: the plain triplet figuration with eighth-notes now turns into galloping iambic figures. Melodically this is in complete opposition to motif **a** which opens the work, but how does this element of the topical *Soi* behave in this musical *Umwelt* that is saturated by triplet figuration?

It soon softens into a pastoral figuration in bars 33–38 when we have heard the dissonant and accented chordal pillars that opened this galloping topic both sufficiently and excessively (three times). What follows in bars 38–58 is the

development of already-introduced elements by the permanent triplet figure. The accentuated and arpeggiated seventh has been derived from the seventh chords of the beginning of the gallop, and from the arpeggiated triadic figuration from the galloping motif itself. These too are used to their limits; the aspectual seme is excessive when the musical *Moi* can no longer continue coherently from here without an intervening new element of the *Soi*, which signifies the emergence of a new topic as a normative, social entity in the musical text. The arpeggiated seventh-chord motif is first repeated (affirmed), then repeated and expanded into a very large leap which, following the gap-fill principle, needs completion. This completion occurs next, at the end of a new chorale motif, in **b** of the **aab** grouping.

We see here how this topic is subordinated to the same logic that dominates the sphere of *Moi* in this music. Beethoven does not leave conventions and norms outside his principle of development, though he does not accept just any "ready-made" entity from the canon. Rather, he thinks that the Hegelian processual logic of negation/affirmation, by which his musical subject operates, also concerns the topic as well. In this sense, Beethoven is both revolutionary and subversive: no topic is so sacred that it can set itself above the logic of the *Moi*.

In bars 59–81 a new topic emerges, a "chorale", which is essentially a melody harmonized so that each stressed non-melismatic tone has its own chord. Such a chorale topic always contains a tinge of the Sublime. This topic of the form "aab" is repeated but an element from the universe of the *Moi* dives up again in the bass, ultimately silencing this occurrence of the chorale.
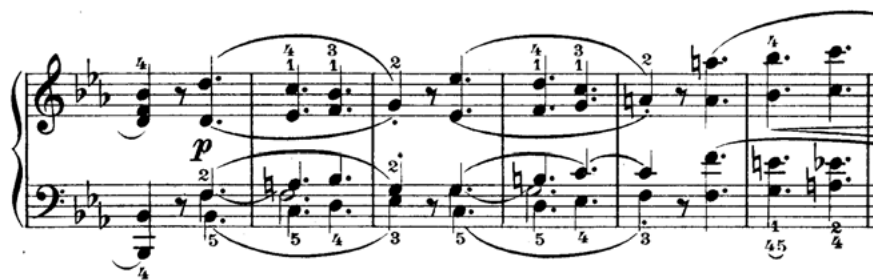
Figure 49: Beethoven, Sonata Op. 7 in E flat major, 1st mvt.: chorale topic, bars 59–63.

In general, the patriarchal order signifies the entrance of the logos with all its authority. In such moments music does not just pretend to speak, *quasi-parlando*, but actually does speak. It is clearly uttering something, arguing

something, even declaring something. But this emergence of authority does not succeed in suffocating those elements of the *Moi* which it tries to dominate. Instead the rebellion of the *Moi* emerges in its shadow, at first almost unnoticed – in this case as a triplet figure, whose descending second serves as the prototype of a supplicating gesture (inherited by instrumental music from Italian opera). This triplet figure starts to unfold and dominate the whole scene, ending with an outburst at bars 79–80, a kind of furious negation of the chorale. At the same time we have ranged far away from the tonic, into C major (V/V/V in relation to the E flat tonic).

In bars 81–92, the chorale motif returns but now completely changed. All that remains is the idea of stressed chords on every note of the melody, and the section ends with the nonchalant return of the galloping motif. It subdues the second choral topic, almost mocking it with the careless cadential movement to the dominant in bars 89–91.

Figure 50: Beethoven, Sonata Op. 7 in E flat major, 1st mvt.: Violent gesture and cadential motion in bars 78–89.

In bars 93–136, a closing theme fulfills our expectations of first-movement sonata form with rising octaves on the B flat major tonic. The gaps created by it are then filled by a virtuosic scale. In this section, *das Spielerische* is again foregrounded as a particularly Beethovenian figure, representing Besseler's *Spielfiguren* by arpeggiated octaves, scales and then arpeggiated triads. The modality of 'can' is marked here, and, as is known, the modality of 'know' in

these cases recedes into the background. When the instrumentality or vocality of music becomes marked, then 'must' and 'know' are silent; virtuoso music is, in this sense, un-intellectual and unemotional. Yet even in this field of the modality of 'can', the logic of affirmation prevails, and the negation of the *Moi* occurs. Everything in this sonata seems to develop through phases of neutral-sufficient-excessive, testing the limits of the subject in almost every section. Even the long arpeggiated figuration in bars 111–127 is extremely and excessively long; hence bars 127–136 provide it with a reassuring solution, namely, the return of the "galloping horses" topic. Hence this one wins the struggle between the two topics on the level of the *Soi*. We can notice all through this section the syncopated accents in which the Barthesian body is both beating and beaten.

The most surprising feature of the development section is that virtually no development takes place. Is it because this particular preserve of the *Moi* within the framework of sonata form has already been realized in the exposition? Has the very intensive activity of the *Moi* reached its limits and exhausted its energy, so that nothing remains to be said here? In the *Durchführung* in bars 137–187, unlike in Beethoven's usual practice, nothing radically new is introduced. The development passes through various tonal isotopies: (1) the chordal seme of the opening, (2) the triplet figure of the beginning, (3) the triumphant topic of galloping horses. But they all lead into an unexpected mini-narrative which is a figure of its own in Beethoven and which was discussed above in relation to music. It is a kind of *Rückblick*, a backwards look or a return – in this case to A minor. What returns is the mocking, ironic and careless motif from the "galloping horses" but now transformed into a nostalgic reminiscence. This motif does not seem to be jubilant about its victory: it is as if the *Moi* has subdued the *Soi* but now regrets doing so. Yet its remembrances are rather brutally interrupted by the chordal pillars from the beginning, which are thus provided with a double, excessive affirmation. In the existential-Hegelian logic of the piece, the backward-looking melodic passage in A/D minor signifies a glance at the previous musical *Dasein*: the musical subject resists going forward, although the chordal pillars are almost forcing it to do so.

In its basic mood, all this is like the negation of affirmation (i.e., negation of the negation of the chorale topic) which is here experienced as a new and affirmative quality of longing. In this short moment, the drama of the first *Dasein* is recalled – galloping horses, chorale, the silencing of the chorale, followed by the victory of the *Moi*. However, this triumph is not celebrated but rather regretted. The modalized, minor variant of the gallop longs for the peaceful haven of the chorale. It seems to find a positive solution by abandon-

ing the all-pervading triplet gallops, since the chordal pillars which previously instigated the galloping rhythm suddenly go silent. As these chordal pillars grow quieter in dynamics, they first invoke the aspectual seme of insufficiency (*piano*, bars 185–86), then deficiency (*pianissimo*, bars 187–188).

The truncation of the development here is the enigma of this sonata, since no development follows but rather an abrupt return to the recapitulation, in which everything is repeated as before. The exception is bars 312–319, where we hear the combination of the galloping motif and the chordal pillars – a glorification of the strangely cadencing section. It declares the union and synthesis of the galloping topics and the pulsating rhythm of the *Soi*. *Moi* is blended together with the *Soi*, and declaims its triumph with the voice of *Soi*. Or if we look more carefully at it from the point of view of the *Soi*, it has succeeded in completely persuading the *Moi* to take its side, coaxed it into stepping into the role and costume offered to it by the *Soi*. Nevertheless, the perplexing question remains, of why a true development is missing in this sonata.

This short analysis gives us material on which to base further general comments on the position and role of various discursive elements on different levels in the Beethovenian musical *Dasein*. We have, thus:

(1) The realm of the *Moi*, or the kinetic energy of a composition as such, appears as a given, as Firstness, a certain quality. In this sonata this 'Being-in-myself' might be represented by the themes in their first occurrences.

(2) When this musical *Ding an sich* is repeated it immediately gains a more stable identity. It is recalled, and thereby becomes a figure whose strength depends on how often it recurs and how clearly identical it is. As a result, figures and gestures ('Being-for-myself') emerge. These figures follow the Hegelian-existential logic of affirmation and negation, and often they force the impact of this logic onto the energy of the *Moi* (rhythmic, melodic, chordal and timbral).

(3) The sphere of *Moi* (i.e., kinetic energy) is penetrated by gestures and topics that are recognized by the musical society and community; they arrive from the sphere of the *Soi*. These are the social elements much exploited by the Classical style (i.e., pastoral, hunting motifs, chorales, learned style, Storm and Stress etc.). These topics encounter a subject in the musical universe who is either ready to affirm them or to negate them. The logic of *Moi* is thus not subordinated to the logic of the *Soi*, which has its established and codified rules.

The encounter of *Moi* and *Soi* is always an unpredictable event – we cannot know in advance what might come about as its consequence. It may be that

in some work the *Soi* seems to repress totally the *Moi*; as, for example, the fugues in Beethoven's late sonatas. Notice, however, that even in Op. 110 in A flat major, the liberation of the subject from the straitjacket of the fugue at the end represents trans-ascendance – also a liberation from the desires of *Moi* towards transcendence. Sometimes *Moi* and *Soi* live in peaceful cohabitation; sometimes they blend into each other (i.e., they mutually accept each other and are at peace). Sometimes the *Soi* masks itself as *Moi*; e.g., the lied theme of the last movement of the E major Sonata Op. 109 is a sarabande; or the opening motif of Op. 111, which is a baroque French overture. Sometimes the *Moi* does the same thing, appearing as a pseudo-*Soi*, as in the telescoping techniques in the transition from development to recapitulation in the first movement of the F major Sonata Op. 10 no. 2.

(4) Music also has its norms of the *Soi* as a kind of Legisign or type. The technical (e.g., fugue) and stylistic (e.g., sonata) norms of a musical culture, which composers recognize as a commonly accepted encyclopaedia of musical knowledge of the period, live outside the musical organism (i.e., compositions) in a kind of social "transcendence". These norms are filtered into the micro-organic life according to the Me-Tone of each individual composer; also, some composers have not found their Me-Tone and hence arrive at schematic and internally contradictory solutions as composing strategies.

(5) There is moreover the sphere of narration, regions within the musical organism or *Dasein*, during which the Hegelian-existential logic stops. They are neither topics in the proper sense, nor sections dominated by the *Moi*, but shifts to a metalevel in which the normal temporal logic of the music is stopped – just as we stop to listen to a story and forget for a moment the cares of everyday life, our Heideggerian *Sorge*.

In the Beethovenian discourse, the existential logic of affirmation and negation serves as a kind of superlogic that rules over both *Moi* and *Soi*. Yet, it is of course purest in the sphere of the *Moi*, since it is the logic of the subjectivity of the composition, on which basis the utterance itself unfolds; further, it represents the logic of the act of enunciation in composing, listening or performing. Finally, we have the logic of a tectonic, and stabilizing formal language, which comes from the sphere of the *Soi*, and which our musical subject either accepts or refuses.

Chapter 4 Listening to Beethoven: Universal or National, Classic or Romantic?

Beethoven is truly a *cultural unit* of our European tradition, in the meaning of that term coined by Umberto Eco. Many dichotomies manifest in Beethoven as a cultural figure, one of which is the Universal *vs.* the National. As a cornerstone of the canon of Western erudite music, he belongs to all countries and cultures. At the same time, his historical roots lead back into German music history, and more precisely, to the territory and musical environment of Vienna. He may even be said to occupy one category of Adolphe Appia's famous opposition of "Die Germanen und die Lateiner" – in the Germany of his time, Beethoven was taken as the opposite pole to Rossini.

Beethoven – Classic or Romantic? Is he to be understood as representing the 18th century or the 19th century? As noted by Russian musicologist Boris Asafiev (1977), Beethoven lived 30 years of his life in the former century; yet, many take him exclusively and typically as a nineteenth-century composer. In contrast, some interpreters, such as András Schiff, consider Beethoven almost entirely an 18th century phenomenon. True, the classical style and its topics are to be found in his music – *galant, Sturm und Drang*, hunting calls, dance, pastoral, tragic, comic features – but always transformed (see Hatten 1994). For instance, the famous opening chords of "Les Adieux" certainly evoke a hunting call, but with the deceptive cadence, those chords also become an indexical sign of a genuinely romantic emotion. In the dramatic opening bars of the Sonata Op. 111, the rhythmic figure clearly enacts the topic of a Baroque French overture. But that is only one aspect of it: the gesture is at the same time tragic, passionate and violent – the qualities we find in the opening of the Finale of the Ninth Symphony, before the entrance of the "Freude" theme. Yet even this musical expression has a "prosodic nucleus", so to speak, if we peel off the external gestural level, and look only at the harmonic devices.

Beethoven – the Viennese, the regional, the local? Charles Rosen (1972) has shown how the success of the classical style was based on its multilevel expression: it offered something to every type of listener (*Hörtypen*) in the Viennese community. Beethoven's music is in fact very local in origin. The following anecdote may serve as illustration. A violinist arrives in Vienna, to play his sonatas at a salon. "Which shall I play" he asked the Madame, "the one in A Moll or the one in C Moll?" She answered, "Play as many as you wish!" She responded in that way because she heard his words as a local dialect, such that "A Moll" became something like "Einmal", and "C Moll" as sounding like "Zehnmal".

We can also agree with Carl Dalhaus (1988a), who speaks about the *ästhetische Gegenwärtigkeit* (aesthetic presence) of art works. In other words, we do not attend a concert to listen to Beethoven's Fifth Symphony as an historical document or as mental structures of the early nineteenth century, but as an art work that speaks to us directly, that impacts us immediately and sensuously. As Finnish composer, Matti Rautio, once said when introducing radio listeners to a symphony concert: In the concert hall there is always someone who is hearing the Fifth Symphony for the first time, and to whom it becomes a powerful experience which he remembers all his life.

When speaking about Beethoven – and in spite of his undeniable grandeur, as Alfred Einstein would call it – we have to determine *whose* Beethoven we are talking about. There are so many different and diverse listeners and listening habits, that we might even doubt whether any fixed musical object exists before us when we are following his works. Naturally, those hearings or receptions that can be expressed and formulated in concepts and verbal metalanguages may become more influential in culture, as a discoursive practice, than those which remain in the amorphous field of non-verbal behaviors In these instances of listening, those of famous music scholars, and their interpretations of the cultural unit "Beethoven", are of course among the most valuable. There follow my analysis of some of them, after which I propose a new interpretation of my own, in connection with my theory of existential and transcendental semiotics of music.

4.1 The performer's Beethoven

Among the paradigms of various Beethoven receptions, those by musicians who take into account the act of enunciation (performance, interpretation) occupy a special place, especially in the phenomenological sense. They are close to the direct musical experience, to its Firstness (in the Peircean-semiotic sense), and also reflect its existentiality. In this respect, Felix Weingartner's *On the Performance of Beethoven's Symphonies* (1906) is highly interesting. It is in fact a goldmine not only for musicians, but also for semioticians that study various "modalizations" of music. At the same time, Weingartner gives advice on how to make Beethoven's music sound as it should. There is always an aesthetic basis for Beethoven's indications; i.e., the musical signifiers, even on their audible surface, have their depth and content, their signifieds. The signifiers must adapt themselves to the contents. For instance, when speaking about the First Symphony, Weingartner notes that, in the first movement (bars 10–13), the accents "should be executed in such a way as to enliven the pas-

sage in a pleasing and gentle manner: the slightest forcing of the notes would be detrimental" (Weingartner 1906: 3). He adds that what is said about "< signs may be applied also to the *sf* ... they are *sf* in *piano* not in *forte*, a difference which must always be carefully observed and equally carefully carried out" (ibid.: 5). In following the indications of crescendo and decrescendo, music obtains a wave-like form.

One might ask here, Which form are we talking about? Certainly the inner one, which is not listened to, but *played*. These terms are also used by Roland Barthes, in his brief essay entitled "Musica practica". He states that, in Beethoven, amateurs lose touch with *musica practica*, because the music becomes so difficult that it needs an interpreter. In regard to the orchestral pieces, we can only imagine the demands made on the conductor of a Beethoven symphony. At the same time, however, Barthes believes that there is an *inaudible* element in Beethoven, which is realized by one who "knows how to displace, assemble, combine, fit together, in a word, who knows how to structure" (Barthes 1977: 153).

There is no doubt that Weingartner, in his booklet, attempts to make explicit just such an inner structuring, in the light of which composing appears as "to give to do, not to give to hear but to give to write. The modern location for music is not the concert hall, but the stage on which the musicians pass, in what is often a dazzling display, from one source of sound to another. It is we who are playing ..." (ibid.). In saying this, Barthes tries to turn the problem into a solely phenomenological one; but it is undeniable that commentaries, written by such musicians as Weingartner, also highlight aspects of performance practice and of traditions to be learned.

In this respect, Weingartner criticizes some practices, such as the introduction of "air-pauses" in Beethoven's symphonies, which he calls "one of the most horrible examples of bad taste in the modern manner of conducting." He warns: "In spite of the artistic freedom of execution, the great sequence of the time must never be broken ..." (Weingartner 1906: 7). Thus, he condemns the following, trivial manner of executing the principal theme of the second movement of the First Symphony:

Figure 51: Wrong phrasing of Beethoven, First Symphony, mvt. 2, according to Weingartner (1906: 9–10).

He recommends that, in whatever part the theme occurs, to give as fine an accent as possible to the up-beat, as follows:

Figure 52: Correct phrasing of Beethoven, First Symphony, mvt. 2 (ibid.).

Concerning the Fifth Symphony, Weingartner cautions against taking as a triplet the three eighth-notes in the basic, opening motif. This is very important, since the whole idea of the famous "knocking" of the Fate-motif is based on a gap, an incomplete *Gestalt* – that of one missing eighth-note – which is filled towards the end of the piece. Hence, this "empty" pause, of one eighth-note value, must be heard as a rhythmic impulse that we infer from the proper execution of the original motif.

The third movement cannot be compared to any other *scherzi* of Beethoven's symphonies. Weingartner says: "It is heavier and more tragic and must therefore be performed more slowly than the others." Again, the signified – the content – is decisive, but it must not be exaggerated.

To illustrate, Weingartner recalls a performance of the Fifth Symphony in Berlin, in which Bülow conducted a huge *ritardando* during the horn theme of the last movement, as if removing it entirely from the normal tempo:

Figure 53: Bülow's interpretation of Beethoven, Fifth Symphony, last mvt. (Weingartner 1906: 80).

Figure 54: Correct phrasing of Beethoven, Fifth Symphony, excerpt from last mvt.

Weingartner's book is full of such details, which are intended to make the work sound as it must in order to be authentic Beethoven.

4.2 British common sense

Also very close to musical practice are the descriptive analyses of Beethoven made by Sir Donald Francis Tovey (1989). Characteristic of his general attitude is Tovey's program note about the Fifth Symphony, and his effort to denounce the argument that "the whole first movement is built up of the initial figure of four notes" (ibid.: 53). In so arguing, Tovey comes against the romantic myth of the "organic symphonic whole", an episteme stemming from German thought (in the line of Goethe-Schenker-Kurth). Says Tovey: "No great music has ever been built from an initial figure of four notes … You may profitably say that the highest living creatures have begun from the single nucleated cell… . [but] it is quite absurd to suppose that the evolution of a piece of music can proceed from 'a simple figure of four notes' on lines in the least resembling those of nature." He quotes Weingartner, who, also going against the myth of a short four-note nucleus, claims that the C minor Symphony is rather remarkable for the length of its sentences. On the other hand, one has to admit that those "four taps", with which "Destiny knocks at the door" in the first movement, do recur elsewhere. Therefore, Tovey sees it as corresponding to a Wagnerian leitmotif – one that exceeds the boundaries of this symphony, and extends to the Appassionata Sonata, the G major Piano Concerto, the Violin Concerto, and more. Accordingly, Tovey sees Beethoven's Fifth within the entire context of symphonic literature – the latter extending even to the musical "symphonic prose" of Wagner.

Altogether, the ways in which Tovey listens to Beethoven display a common-sense musical logic that applies not just to Beethoven specialists, but to anyone. He constructs a listener who could be any one of us. This logic is superior to any historic, aesthetic or conceptual system. Hence Tovey's way of listening to Beethoven differs from, say, Dahlhaus's *geistesgeschichtliche* approach.

Tovey's most successful analysis is that of the Ninth Symphony, and it is the only analysis for which he resorts to a "theory". He evokes ideas voiced by Prof. Andrey Bradley in a lecture given in 1901, on "Poetry for Poetry's Sake". This is done in order to clarify what is obviously the biggest problem in this symphony: how to assimilate singing and words into a piece of absolute music. Tovey firmly rejects the myth that the Finale emerged from Beethoven's (supposed) idea that absolute, purely instrumental music alone was insufficient for the task. Of course, the introduction of voices into a symphony inevitably foregrounds words. Still, in Tovey's opinion, there is "no inherent impossibility in ... reconciling the claims of absolute music with those of the intelligent and intelligible setting of words" (Tovey 1989: 85).

He gives a common-sense program to the whole symphony in order to prove the necessity of infusing it with words and vocal expression: "The first movement gives us the tragedy of life. The second movement gives us the reaction from tragedy to humor ... the slow movement is beauty of an order too sublime for a world of action ..." (ibid.: 117). But when the vocal part enters, it is prose, not poetry: "Oh friends, not these sounds" (*O Freunde, nicht diese Töne*).[7]

Tovey admits that, with the march rhythms, the Finale enters the realm of the grotesque.[8] Yet, his analysis hinges mostly on absolute music, of which he has much inventive to say; e.g., his statement that the very beginning forecasts the grandeur and scale of the whole piece. He also points out that this capacious, "open" and empty sound-field at the beginning of the first movement has served as a presign – or legisign – to many a later symphonic piece, by composers ranging from Mahler and Bruckner to Sibelius.

4.3 Music as conceptual activity

One could not imagine a more striking contrast to the musicians' viewpoints, given above, than those found in German musicology, especially that of Carl Dahlhaus. In his essay on *Hegel und die Musik seiner Zeit*, Dahlhaus demonstrates the amazingly narrow musical experience of the great German philosophers of Beethoven's time and beyond, Nietzsche being the only exception.

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7 An anecdote has it that Hans von Bülow used this phrase as a piano prelude, when he had to play immediately after a bad performance by a singer (Tovey 1989: 121).
8 The realm of the Grotesque, as described by Tovey, has been interestingly related to orientalism and cross-cultural influences; for example, by Leo Treitler, in his consideration of the Turkish topics in the last bars of the Finale.

From Kant to Schopenhauer and Hegel, it is surprising to note how little the philosophers understood about music in the technical sense, and yet how influential their ideas became in the field of in music, not only in abstract musical theories, but in musical practice as well. Dahlhaus wants to emphasize an interesting paradox, namely, that apparently the most abstract aesthetic ideas have proved to be those that have been the most influential in the history of the arts themselves.

Be that as it may, Dahlhaus tries to save Hegel's reputation in this area, but his argumentation is not very convincing. He says that Hegel followed the musical life of Berlin during his time, which included "Rossini fever", Beethoven reception, the premier of *Der Freischütz,* and the performance of Bach's St. Matthew Passion. Yet in his writings, Hegel remains silent about these events. Dahlhaus argues, however, that the latter are present, as background, in Hegel's writings, though they are absent in the literal sense. On Dahlhaus's view, Hegel's silence about Beethoven is intentional ("beredtes Schweigen").[9]

In the polemic "Beethoven versus Rossini", Hegel – shamefully to Germans – took the side of the latter. The reason, put simply, is that Hegel could not understand that, in absolute music, the sound as such is the goal; he was unable to grasp the fact that abstract music does not lead to a concept, as language does.

Dahlhaus's own approach is, for the most part, quite Hegelian itself – in spite of the weaknesses in the arguments that he uses to promote his idol. The Dahlhausian approach to Beethoven is almost completely conceptual. On this basis, it is worthwhile to compare him to another great German music scholar, Theodor Adorno, likewise a passionate Hegelian, but one who came to entirely different conclusions (discussed below).

Such a conceptual approach is, of course, not to be deemed as only a German national peculiarity, since it leads a life of its own in American musicology. Alan P. Merriam's idea of "musical concepts" brought this Hegelian view back to music, paradoxically, in the anthropological, cross-cultural context. Nowadays, so-called "cultural" musicology sees music expressly as something conceptual; and the "new musicology" allows itself, anachronistically and unscrupulously, to impose ideologies and concepts of our time upon music and composers of whatsoever period.

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9 The mention of Hegel's "intentional silence" calls to mind an incident that Charles Rosen related about a Kandinsky exhibition, where one critic claimed that the best proof of Kandinsky's Japanese influences, is that the artist never mentioned them, nor did they appear in his paintings.

In his treatise *Ludwig v. Beethoven und seine Zeit* (1988b), Dahlhaus argues that the Beethovenian idea of a symphony must be related to principles of the contemporaneous literary ode and to the aesthetics of the Sublime. He quotes a contemporary article on the symphony, written by Abraham Peter Schultz, which appeared in Sulzer's anthology, *Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste*. Schulz argues that the style of a symphony has to be sublime, and that the allegro movement of a symphony is the equivalent of a Pindaric ode. In addition to the qualities of *Erhebung und Erschütterung,* the symphony evokes the dithyrambic aspect of the ode, that is to say, the "apparently disordered treatment of melody and harmony, sudden shifts, transitions and deviations from one key to another...." According to Dahlhaus, such a connection to Klopstock's ode theory was very common at the time (Moses Mendelssohn deferred to it, as did Edward Young).

What can we say of all this from a semiotic point of view? First, it should be noted that terms, such as "disorder" that eventually leads to "order", could be seen in the light of information theory (rich/banal, order/disorder). The Sublime can be taken as a narrative mode close to that of the mythical, according to literary critic Northrop Frye (on the mythical in music, see Tarasti 1994). Ode theory is certainly fascinating in its intertextuality, but did a music listener of Beethoven's time really hear such a connection? If music evokes sublimity, should it not do so by its own, musical means, and not by intertextual references of a conceptual nature? The only detailed music analysis which Dahlhaus uses to prove his argument is of the opening of Beethoven's First Symphony. Yet, the analysis is based on the number and irregularity of bars, and thus remains on just the "tectonic level", as Ernst Kurth would call it.

The irregularities in Beethovenian discourse can easily be provided with yet another interpretation, as is done in Paul Bekker's (1911/1971) study of the composer. His view emphasizes the social: the symphony as a means by which to transmit and convey musical ideas to a larger circle of listeners. When writing a symphony, the composer keeps in mind an idealized image of future listeners and their location. In modern terms, the composer thinks of a collective, "implied listener". The social is inside both of these musical subjects – composer and listener. The social is their common *Soi*. At the same time, the composer elaborates his *Moi*, his individual subjectivity. Therefore, the irregularities of a musical text would not be only intertextual references to the theory of ode, but individualized expressions of the composer, Beethoven's *Moi*, which breaks the normative constraints of his *Soi*. On the other hand, and in terms of style history, the "monumentality" of his symphonies had among its "presigns" the Handelian oratorio style, which Beethoven tried to refashion.

4.4 Adorno as pre-semiotician

Another "Hegelian" musicologist, mentioned above, was Theodor W. Adorno, who in his fragmentary Beethoven study (published posthumously) came to completely different conclusions about the composer than those drawn by Dahlhaus (see Adorno 1993). The Dahlhaus/Adorno contrast also displays another, essentially German dichotomy. I dare say that, as a rule, German scholars can not bear to see their cultural idols, from Hegel to Beethoven, treated apart from their original *geistesgeschichtlicher Zusammenhang*. If a non-German scholar (say, the Russian Asafiev) speaks of Beethoven, that scholar is taken as "a strange case", which is in fact the title of Dahlhaus's essay on Asafiev. In a sense, this standpoint is totally legitimate: music has its own "isotopies", its "rootedness" in the national soil of its country, in the social, ideational, and historically unique situation in which was created.

A truly remarkable art work, however, exceeds the frames of its creation (as Goethe stated, when speaking of *Faust*). In such cases, a "universalizing" approach to such a work is possible. Paradoxically, and on a firmly Hegelian basis, Adorno, as a German scholar, goes far beyond any historical context and even criticizes Beethoven for his formal procedures. Adorno thinks he has the right to do so, based solely on Hegelian argumentation. He believes that his philosophical position takes precedence over musical practice. Thus, if a musical form does not reveal its essence, then so much the worse for that musical form. Adorno's point of view is thus very far from a fetishistic one, which considers a genius's work as an untouchable entity having a fixed *Wahrencharakter*.

As an example, let us look at what Adorno says about Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. Concerning the "Fate-motif": "... die rein musikalischen Gründe der Irregularität (Das Hauptthema mit den Fermaten auszählen – auf ihm basiert alle Irregularität. Es ist nocht auftaktig!) die Technik der Irregularität.... die Funktion der Irregularität: Atem anhalten ... die Relation von Irregularität und Ausdruck ..." (Adorno 1993: 159).

To Adorno, the irregularity of Beethovenian musical signs does not evoke a literary theory of ode, as it does to Dahlhaus, but rather conveys their message directly to a "universal" listener. Adorno uses the term "physiognomy" when speaking of Beethoven, by which he comes close to some ideas of Roland Barthes. Even more striking is what Adorno argues about the second movement:

> The slow movement is a focal point of all Beethoven criticism. It has one of his most beautiful themes and (perhaps for that reason?) [is] one of his most problematic pieces. The subsidiary march-idea is discontinued; it is replaced by mere transposition (weak-

ness: the bombast of the expression). The dullness of the figurative variation stems from the fact that there is no development of the paraphrases; this leads to clumsiness and stiffness ... contingency, lack of mediation, unrelatedness of the woodwinds ... the trivial accelerando passage (bar 205), etc. (Adorno 1993: 160)

How does a German scholar have the courage to say this about a cornerstone of his own culture? Yet it is this very aspect which lends geniality to the Adornian approach – in spite of the fact that his Hegelian reasoning elsewhere led him to commit colossal errors of judgment (as in his criticism of Sibelius). His attitude comes close to the one that music semioticians would later take. One might almost view him as a kind of pre-semiotician. For Adorno, there are transcendental, universal values and principles, which stand superior to any actualization and realization of them in any concrete *Dasein*. On this level, Adorno's critique has nothing social about it – note that the subtitle of his Beethoven fragment is simply "Philosophy of music".

4.5 And intonations

Although coming from a totally different cultural context, the thought of the Russian Boris Asafiev is not far from that of Adorno, particularly the view of music as manifesting ethical values or being convincing by virtue of its physiognomy. But for Asafiev, music is always socially determined, as he argues in his theories of intonation and memoranda. Still, Asafiev, as a musician, is not deaf to particular musical qualities of Beethovenian texture and its beauty – in a sense, coming close to Tovey, and even to Romain Rolland (1949), who also said many fascinating things about Beethoven.

For Asafiev, Beethoven is a "realist" composer, because he understood the intonations of his time. Rhythm is his basic musical parameter, and in his symphonies he habitually plays with juxtapositions of binary and ternary rhythms. This was manifest in his two types of march: the resolute tread of the powerful processions of the masses and the movement of armies; and the quiet, introspective tread of people enshrouded in sorrow, or filled with the stately peace of "quiescent will" (Asafiev 1977: 753). In contrast to these marches are the triple-meter *scherzi*. Salon dances of the time demanded smoothness. In the village dance, by contrast, the accents of stamping feet and trampling the earth were linked to triple meter. The frame of the body weighs heavy in the peasant dance. The Beethovenian *scherzi* do not stem from dance-floor waltzes, but from these peasant origins. Yet, the first movement and finale of the Fifth Symphony illustrate, to Asafiev, the ethical principles of struggle, victory, and the joy that comes from peace. The symphony tries to

prove that an individual can have joy only in connection to humanity at large, to his *Dasein*. In this, however, Asafiev saw nothing transcendental.

Part II. The Romantic Era

Chapter 5 The irony of romanticism

Every culture defines for itself what is similar or dissimilar to it, from its own point of view. At the same time, a culture reflects itself in this definition. In the case of German Romanticism, its antithesis is not hard to find: the preceding Neo-Classicism of Goethe and Schiller. German Romanticism manifested itself in interesting ways in other countries at the same time. For example, in Denmark, Romanticism can be said to have culminated in the thinking of the philosopher and writer Søren Kierkegaard, who anticipated existentialism; in France, too, Romanticism took on special national features, such as those found in the writings of George Sand and Sénancour. In short, German Romanticism constituted the foundation of both Danish and French Romanticism.

Comparison shows that the essential way of all Romanticism – the quest for subjectivity – manifested itself differently in each of these three countries. In Germany, the striving for subjectivity perhaps best expressed itself as so-called "Romantic" or "artistic" irony. In Denmark, the same principle took the form of Kierkegaard's idea of "personality". In France, Romantic subjectivism and stress on the individual appeared mostly in the form of lyrical and melancholic reflection, which were quite soon joined by a basically decadent feeling or "malaise of the century".

Here, the expression "Romantic movement" designates the so-called Neo-Romanticism of the first few decades the nineteenth century. In the following we try to answer the question, What was the position of Romantic irony in the culture of those years? We limit ourselves to the three countries mentioned above, although the effect of German Romanticism was strongly felt in England. Moreover, this study does not deal with Romantic irony from a strictly ideological point of view; on the contrary, special attention is paid to technique, or in other words, to how the irony is constructed and how it "works". We focus on how Romantic irony manifested itself in different forms of art, mainly in literature and music. These two will be examined side by side, which we think is justified by the fact that the Romanticists themselves did not draw sharp distinctions between different art forms.

5.1 Irony as part of Romantic ideology

5.1.1 Søren Kierkegaard and Romantic irony

Most nineteenth-century philosophers had to take a position on the Romantic ideology originating in Germany. Among Danish thinkers, German Romanti-

cism became an indispensable source of ideas and a constant inspiration for Søren Kierkegaard. In his *Either/Or*, Kierkegaard describes Romantic ideology as different paths of life for which he himself had felt a strong affection. The book was published at the beginning of 1843 – barely two years after his dissertation – and its strangeness aroused amazement in his contemporaries. Divided into two parts in accord with its title, the book was very cleverly assembled. Externally it was very Romantic, and aroused much curiosity: it included a number of disconnected descriptions of mood, short studies on both ancient and modern literature, music and theater criticism, excerpts from the same author's Diary, and lastly, in the second part, Kierkegaard's fatherly reproaches and warnings.

First Kierkegaard scrutinized three stages (*Stadier*) of the self-indulgent life, which he represented with personages from Mozart's operas: Cherubino (the page in *The Marriage of Figaro*), Papageno from *The Magic Flute*, and Don Juan from *Don Giovanni*. In the book an aesthetician ("poet") is introduced who is aware of the vanity of the pleasures of life, but can neither give them up nor stop praising them:

> Hvad är en Digter? Et ulekkeligt Menneske, der gjemmer dybe Qvaler i sit Hjerte men hvis Leber ere dannede saaledes at idet Sukket og Skriget strömme ud over dem, Lyde de som en skjön Musik.
> (What is a poet? An unhappy man, who conceals suffering in his heart but whose lips are such that when a sigh or scream streams from them, it sounds like beautiful music.)

According to Kierkegaard, this kind of man can never attain adequate self-understanding. Aestheticians, in general, do not find their place in life and end by distancing themselves from normal society. An aesthetician is characterized by arbitrariness, which follows from total, consciously-chosen separation from existing circumstances. Kierkegaard further elaborated his typology of personalities by joining the aesthetic level with two more levels, the ethical and the religious, following the rules of Hegelian logic. What these three types of personality have in common is Kierkegaard's concept of subjectivity. Yet, the philosopher clearly states that the quality and strength of this subjectivity vary greatly from level to level.

The *subjectivity* of the aesthetician expresses itself only as introversion and mood changes that are aroused by goings-on in the outside world. It is just an illusion when he thinks he can control these moods, that he can rouse and subdue them at will. Boredom is the only continuity in the aesthetician's life. From an *ethical* point of view, his subjectivity manifests itself in the resolve to restrict himself to a certain walk of life. Only through such resolution can the aesthetician maintain his way of life. From an ethical vantage point, as from

an aesthetic one, life is not just a sum of episodes. Rather, it is the totality of my own deeds. Hence, what happens to me changes, through myself, from necessity into freedom. (Here we notice the connection of Kierkegaard's thought with the solipsism of Romantic philosophy. If "the world is my mental image", as Schopenhauer taught, then everything really depends upon the individual's will; the world becomes the individual's own doing, so the Romanticists thought.) Finally, from a *religious* perspective, subjectivity manifests itself, according to Kierkegaard, as even more restriction: it is the surrender or submission of oneself to that which, alone, has eternal significance.

Kierkegaard's view was mostly based on German Romanticism. Long before him, the Schlegel brothers, Novalis, and Ludwig Tieck had laid out the essential principles of Romanticism in their theoretical writings and literary works. Kierkegaard nevertheless succeeds in capturing and presenting the essential spirit of Romanticism and irony with as much impact and cogency as did those German Neo-Romanticists.

Kierkegaard defined irony as a view of life that finds expression during certain stages of personality development. The starting point of his definition of irony was thus Socratic; on the other hand, Kierkegaard's concept of the Romantic loomed large in the background. Kierkegaard thought that, above any other trait, it was a longing for the afterworld that best typified Romanticism: "Det romantiske – en ud over Verden liggende Tilfredstillelse" (Romanticism – satisfaction reached beyond the world). When one returns from this sphere of eternity and infinity to the conditions of ordinary life, those conditions are exposed in all their relativity and insignificance. Thus was born Romantic irony, which according to Kierkegaard was located mainly on the first, aesthetic level of personality.

5.1.2 Irony as the Romantic hero's view of life

Lucien Goldmann, in his many studies on "visions du monde", has defined three basic relations that are necessary to each "vision" or philosophy of life: our (1) relation to other people; (2) relation to ourselves; (3) relation to the world. To consider Romantic irony as a philosophy of life, we must be able to define it through these three basic relations. And all "Neo-Romantic" texts lend themselves to that definition.

(1) *Relation to other people*. It is characteristic of Romantic irony that other humans are treated as instruments or objects. (This comes out best perhaps in Kierkegaard's *Seducer's Diary*.) Ludwig Tieck once said that we really own the object of our love only when we find something laughable

about it. One need not look far to find examples of this attitude within Romanticism. It is perhaps enough just to note the popularity of Don Juan as a theme in Romantic literature.

(2) *Relation to ourselves.* Kierkegaard believed that, in Romantic irony, a person's relation to himself manifests itself most clearly in subjectivity, which in turn materializes through self-restriction. In Friedrich Schlegel's view, this self-limitation, "negation", or setting boundaries on oneself is the most essential feature of Romantic irony. He writes: "... [self-limitation] is necessary because anyplace where the human being does not restrict himself, the world restricts him." Carried to extremes, however, self-restriction can turn very easily into mere introversion and isolation. Peter Szondi characterizes the subject of the Neo-Romantic world view as "detached, isolated, the I that has become the object of its own self" and whose "destiny is consciousness" (Szondi 1986: 61).

(3) *Relation to the world.* Friedrich Schlegel wrote that, to the Romantic, one's relation to the world manifests itself as a game. Irony is used primarily to find a point of reference outside oneself, a place where one can rise above the ordinary world and erase the difference between it and the "I". In his *Faust,* Goethe has Mephisto speak the following, probing utterance: "Am Ende hängen wir doch ab den Kreaturen, die wir machten" (In the final analysis we are dependent on the creatures that we have created). The Romantic-ironic takes an opposing view – he wants to rise above his creations so that he can do with them as he pleases. Yet, as noted above, his basic world view is negative, stemming from self-negation and restriction. The Romantic-ironic is unable to rectify his negative attitude through action. Friedrich Schlegel's major work, the novel *Lucinde*, was intended to be the ironic counterpart of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, but ended up being a kind of "idyl of idleness". Indeed, the study of idleness became a sort of religion: "The more divine a human being is, the more he resembles a plant; and of all the forms of nature, a plant is the most virtuous and beautiful." On this view, merely existing or "being around" constitutes the supreme, most complete kind of living. Clearly Schlegel's religiosity was at a far remove from Kierkegaard's religious "stage", which, in contrast to "just being", materializes through acts and choices.

Novalis's unfinished novel, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, would have ended, according to Tieck, in a mystical state of affairs if the protagonist had found the "blue flower of longing" that he was searching for. In Novalis and similar writers, the desire for fantasy and freedom of feeling ran deep. Various literary

genres, poems, dialogue and prose are mixed together in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, and according to Tieck, the artistic form of the planned continuation of the novel was supposed to be even more radical. One of Friedrich Schlegel's many aphorisms would make a fine motto for Novalis's novel: "Romantic irony is consciousness of the complete chaos of infinity." Seen from a generative-linguistic angle, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* might even be reducible to a single, turgid, and all-encompassing word. This early novel toys with signifying in the manner of a modern French one (for example, by Philippe Soller or Robbe-Grillet). Novalis was far ahead of his time, and his output includes every feature of modern avant-gardism – just as the whole aesthetics of the Neo-Romantic movement comes quite close to that of avant-gardism. Such resemblances are one reason for the increased current interest in the concept of irony.

5.1.3 A "sociological" interpretation by George Sand

Idleness and passivity seem to be common qualities of the Romantic hero of French as well as German Romanticism. Aristocratic idleness and meditation are traits of Lamartine's personages, and the same inability or unwillingness to take action characterizes Chateaubriand's *René* and Sénancour's *Obermann*. In her preface to Sénancour's novel, George Sand ponders the reasons for this passivity, and her typology of Romantic heroes is surprisingly reminiscent of Kierkegaard's categorization. Like Kierkegaard, Sand refers to the "moral sufferings" produced by the deficiency of being unable to make choices and act upon them. Sand's three types of personality – Werther, René, and Obermann – would take their place in the first and second stages in Kierkegaard's model of personality development.

In Sand's view, the accidents of these Romantic heroes result from the fact that society has smothered man's natural desire for action, thus forcing him to turn to his inner world. Sand eloquently describes this social malaise: "The number of perceived and poetically described sufferings is growing daily, and tomorrow their number will be even higher than today. The accidents of Werther, René and Obermann are not the only ones which have been caused by a developed civilization.... There is a flaw that has not yet been noted officially ... it is pleasure without strength and the related suffering ... it is the exhaustion of a disappointed passion." Sand must have been thinking about Musset here as representing the fourth "stage" of the future. This is the world-weary cynic, who has no illusions, has experienced everything, and whose sad mantra is "J'ai perdu toute ma vie et force".

Sand disapproves of the Romantic movement and examines it from a sociological perspective: to speak anachronistically, as a phenomenon of alienation.

Like Schlegel, she prophesies the birth of a new literary genre, which is "Romantic" – but only ironically so, in as much as it dwells on the effects of a society that suppresses a person's natural abilities: "Another literature is developing and is making huge progress – an ideal, inner literature that concentrates only on man's consciousness, a literature which gives the world the form and appearance of its own inspiration ... the aim of which is not at all to entertain and amuse idle imaginations, a literature which does not talk to the eyes but only to the soul."

5.1.4 Romantic irony as an artistic technique: Text *versus* rule

Distinctions between German Neo-Classical (Goethean) culture and the Romantic school could be drawn according to Juri Lotman's (1977) cultural typology of those that orientate themselves as form vs. content and texts vs. rules. According to Lotman, culture as a whole can be presented as a totality of texts – or rather, as the mechanism that produces that totality. To carry on that line of thought, we must also account for how a given culture views itself. If a certain culture typically sees itself as a totality of texts, then that culture will appear to another culture as a system of rules that dictates the production of texts. Cultures that emphasize content typically view themselves in the first manner (as a totality of texts), whereas cultures that emphasize form interpret their essence in the second manner (as a system of rules).

Romantic culture typically laid emphasis on content, viewing itself as a corpus of texts that was constantly changing and developing. Friedrich Schlegel writes about "a universally progressive poetry", in this "philosophical fragment" from his Lyceum:

> Romantic poetry is progressive and universal poetry. Its aim is not only to unify all the disparate genres of poetry but also to join them with philosophy and rhetoric. ... [Such poetry] cannot be created by any theory ... the only law it is willing to accept, is that a poet's own free will (*Willkür*) can not be bound by any law.

In counterpoint to content-oriented, Romantic culture, which emphasized the constant emergence of texts, there was Neo-Classical culture, which viewed itself as a system of rules. Reacting against the latter, Romantic irony manifested itself by breaking all the norms valued by Neo-Classicism: by mixing literature with different art forms, breaking laws of narrative (as we shall see below), repealing stylistic standards, by "tastelessness" and mockery of "good taste", and by twisting the semantic level beyond recognition in its quest for the exceptional, the extraordinary, the unusual, and the irritating. Such were

the weapons that the Romantic movement used against the cultural period that preceded it.

5.1.5 A semiotic interpretation

I offer next a present-day interpretation, in semiotic terms, of the aesthetics of early Romantic writers and philosophers. I begin with how Strohschneider-Stolz summarize Romantic irony:

> The principle of artistic irony tries to liberate art from all its subordination to any objective and to confine it as a free and lofty game. The Romantic viewpoint tries to make art comprehensible from an inner organization that belongs only to itself It is meant to be "a free act of feeling", "an endless game of the world".

This kind of aesthetics is easy to translate into contemporary terms from information theory. Chaos can be interpreted as "entropy"; a "game" can be understood in the game-theoretical sense; and "inner organization" as redundancy. Umberto Eco's semiotic aesthetics takes this interpretation as its starting point. On closer examination, however, his aesthetics turns out to be a Neo-Romantic one that has been refashioned into terms of modern communication theory. For Eco, the fundamental quality of an aesthetic message is that it breaks norms and, in a certain sense, strives to attain chaos (as we saw above, in Novalis and Schlegel). According to Eco, an aesthetic message strikes a balance between total disorder and self-explanatory redundancy. An aesthetic message strives for the utmost communication, the highest possible amount of information, between those two extremes. An aesthetic message materializes by the breaking of rules, which is nothing but ambiguous structuring in relation to code. All levels of the aesthetic message rebel against the norm, because they all follow the same rule.

Even the way Eco defines an aesthetic work could be a direct citation from Schlegel. Eco says: "One can always say what a work can be but never what it has been. A critic can only speak about what a work of art has been by telling about his reading experience". Schlegel, for his part, writes the following in his *Lyceum*: "A definition of poetry can only dictate what it has to be, not what it has been or what it will be in the future – this definition could otherwise be shortened as follows: all that is poetry is that which has been called poetry in some place and at a given time."

Romantic irony, as an artistic method, might best be characterized by Eco's description of "breaking the norm". The norms that Romanticism attacked were those passed down from the Neo-Classicist period and from the preceding

"Age of Enlightenment". In what way(s) did this breaking of norms take place? To answer this question, we first need to consider the communication process itself.

We can take Roman Jakobson's (1960) model of communication as our starting point, because of its universality and because it is pliable enough to describe of all kinds of communicative situations – aesthetic ones included. His well-known model consists of six components: sender, receiver, message, context, channel, and code. These, in turn, are interpreted according to *functions*, which designate the nature or mode of the interpretation (emotive, conative, phatic, and the like). We must remember Jakobson's admonition that, where aesthetic communication is concerned, one has to study *all* its functions and their cooperation. Only such comprehensive study reveals the special quality of aesthetic communication as compared with that of ordinary language.

5.1.6 Irony in the plays of Ludwig Tieck

What characterizes the Romantic text is that in it each of the different functions of a language strives for its own, independent realization. The main intention of Romantic texts, and of Romanticism in general, was to transform the whole, customary and "normal" functional system of language. Romantic irony was born through the *rearrangement* of the different functions of a language, so that the conventional and the modified system are juxtaposed and compared in an ironic sense.

Works of art usually contain certain signs that inform the receiver about the genre or type of communication in question (novel, play, symphony, and so on). Yet, Romanticists may, in the ironic sense, contradict these signs of identification for the purpose of calling into question this or that genre of aesthetic communication.

For example, in certain of Tieck's plays a conflation or switching of the roles of audience, author, and characters breaks the "theatrical illusion", which is based on certain presuppositions and aesthetic norms between the sender (author), channel (actors, stage machinery), receiver (spectators), context (theater performance), code (art form, play), and message (play). We next scrutinize how the different functions of communication (Jakobson) express themselves in Tieck's theatrical art, so as to get acquainted with various techniques of Romantic self-irony.

(a) The emotive function. This function comes to the fore in acts and scenes in which the poet is "playing", and the author of the play (sender of the message) is cast in an ironic light. Such acts parody the Romantic view

of the poet as a creative genius, who masters art and life so completely that he can manipulate them at will. Certainly this was an important human ideal in Schlegel's aesthetics: the poet who knows only those limits which he sets for himself. This ideal is turned upside down in Tieck's plays. The poor poet of the play is by no means in control of his audience or the characters that he creates, as one might expect of the "sovereign" Romantic poet. On the contrary, he becomes the brunt of jokes and suffers all kinds of humiliation from the audience. At the start of *Puss in Boots,* the poet and the audience are situated face to face:

Poet (from behind the scenes): The play is about to start.
Müller (one of the spectators): No play – we do not want any play – we want good taste!
Everyone: Taste! Taste!
Poet: I am embarrassed – what do you mean if I may ask?
Schlosser: Taste! You pretend to be a poet and you do not even know what taste means?
Poet: [Be patient with] a young beginner...
Schlosser: We don't want to know anything about beginners – we want to see a decent play – a play that shows good taste.
Poet: What kind of play? What sort of play?
Müller: Family things!
Leutner: Life-saving!
Fischer: Decency and German virtues!
Schlosser: Religiously uplifting and nurturing cabals!

(The poet steps forward.)

Poet: Gentlemen!
Everyone: Is he a poet?
Fischer: He does not seem poetic.
Schlosser: on the contrary, he seems saucy.
Poet: Gentlemen, please excuse my boldness...

In Tieck's play, *Verkehrte Welt*, the poet is again placed in an awkward position. At the beginning, Skaramuz (the main character) and the author of the play are conversing:

Skaramuz: No, Mr. Poet, whatever you say... I will not listen, on the contrary I will stick to my decision...
Poet: My dear Skaramuz.

Skaramuz: I do not hear anything. Look, my dear poet, how I close my ears.
Poet: ... but the play –
Skaramuz: What play? I am also part of the play and I have a right to talk. Or do you think that I have no will whatsoever? Do you think, my dear poet, that actors are always forced to do your bidding? Oh, my dear sir, [...] the times change quickly.
Poet: But the spectators –
Skaramuz: Oh I see, is that why I have to be unhappy, because of spectators? Ah, what a beautiful conclusion.

(b) The metalinguistic function. This function surfaces in many places in Tieck's plays. In them the receiver sometimes wants reassurance that he is using the correct code. For example, in this case are we really talking about a play? In the first act of *Puss in Boots*, after the cat has uttered his first lines, the spectators suddenly must contemplate a surprising situation:

Art researchers (in the parterre): The cat is speaking? What kind of spectacle is this supposed to be?
Fischer: We cannot find any sensible illusion here.
Müller: I certainly will not be deceived, and I will never again attend another play.

(c) The conative function. With this function, attention focuses on receivers of the message. In principle, the conative function is operative in all the places where Tieck lets the spectators intervene in the course of the play. The conative function is also found in many places where there is no actual interference from the receivers. That function is operating, for example, in the scene where Prince Nathanael proposes to the princess and the king is wondering, How is it that you speak our language? You live so far away

Nathanael: Quiet!
King: What?
Nathanael: Quiet!
King: I do not understand.
Nathanael (quietly whispering): Be quiet, please, because otherwise the audience down there will finally notice that that, precisely, is unnatural.

(d) The cognitive function. In this excerpt, the receivers (audience members) are discussing the content of the play:

Fischer: This is getting increasingly mad... Why the last scene now?
Leutner: No reason, it is quite unnecessary. [...]
Wiesener (to his neighbor): Right now I like the play.
Neighbor: Very pretty, very pretty, very pretty. That poet is a great man. He
    really knows how to mimic The Magic Flute.

(e) The phatic function. This function occurs when the emphasis is on the
channel itself; for example, on the actors or on the stage trappings. In
Puss in Boots the hero suddenly interrupts his own speech, saying, "That
blasted prompter speaks so inarticulately that the whole thing will fail if
we have to improvise much longer."
In *Die verkehrte Welt,* Skaramuz and the set designer are having a discus-
sion – in front of the audience:

Skaramuz: ... where are you going?
Set designer: To make the thunder and the lightning. I will also disguise peo-
    ple as lions and wolves. Furthermore, that ass over there is also my
    invention, who could ever identify him as one of our actors?
Skaramuz: How do you make the thunder? [Etc.]

Tieck's plays have often been taken as mocking the bad taste of theater audien-
ces and of the bourgeoisie, but this view hardly does justice to Tieck. Before
assessing the quality of Tieck's Neo-Romantic comedy, we have to determine
the semiotic structure and distinctive nature of these plays. In their relation to
modern Absurdist theater, they constitute audacious and seminal experiments
that demonstrate anything but "unsuccessful ingenuity" of which one critic
accused them.

A constant change of focus from one linguistic function to another takes
place in Tieck's plays, the result being a back-and-forth mixture of poetry and
reality. Tieck probably represents Romantic irony at its most extreme. The con-
tinuous "interference" with normal theatrical communication creates an over-
all impression of alienation and breaking of illusions. This process in no way
results from a lack of skill and consequent arbitrariness; on the contrary, it is
a consciously guided method of creating art.

5.1.7 From E. T. A. Hoffmann to Berlioz

Romantic irony had other manifestations apart from self-contradiction and the
breaking of illusions. One of the most important techniques was that of simple
parody. Mozart's fairy opera, *The Magic Flute*, is parodied in many places in

Tieck's *Puss in Boots*. The second act of Tieck's play ends with a scene in which animals arrive on-stage to listen to the clockwork's playing, just as in *The Magic Flute*. The "entertainer" sings a song:

> Könnte jeder brave Mann
> Solche Glöckhen finden
> Seine Feinde würden dann
> Ohne Mühe schwinden
> Und er lebte ohne sie
> In der schönsten Harmonie

The words are taken verbatim from the scene with Papageno, Monostatos and Pamina in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. By placing this scene in a totally different context from the opera, Tieck creates a parody of Mozart.

Much Romantic irony is found in the *Magic Flute* itself; for example, in the contrasting pairs of Tamino / Papageno, the priests of the temple of Isis / the fairies of the Queen of the Night, Pamina / Papagena. Thus, in Mozart's opera two levels always run parallel to each other, one of which is "serious" and the other "playful". Every element of the "serious" level has its metonymic counterpart on the playful level. These two levels are – taken as a whole – metaphorical of each other, the playful level acting as a parody of the serious level. Tamino's three ordeals are counterbalanced by Papageno's funny mishaps; and the hallowed rituals of the priests of Isis are contrasted with the often too-human quarrels of the three fairies. The opera consists of fantastic illusions and moods and the breaking of them through irony. It seems that Mozart's opera meets the paradoxical demand on the Romantic artist to be simultaneously light and serious, in a natural, unforced way.

E. T. A. Hoffmann's novel, *The Tomcat Murr*, switches the reader from one level to another, breaking the normal syntagmatic structure of a novel by interlacing the "maculatric excerpts" of Murr the tomcat and the autobiographical memoirs of Kreisler the conductor. The continuity of the narration is broken into two pages of Murr, three pages of Kreisler, two pages of Murr, and so on. Conscious irony also appears clearly in the novel's preface. In it Hoffmann has his hero, the tomcat Murr, write the preface to his own autobiography. The tone of the preface is overly sentimental even by the standards of Romanticism. Furthermore, Hoffmann enhances the irony with a French epithet, parenthetical and apposite to Murr's "signature":

> Timidly – with a trembling heart I turn over to the world a few leaves of life, suffering, hope and yearning, which have burst out of my innermost during moments of idleness and poetic inspiration. Shall I be able to stand the severe judgment of criticism? But for

you, you feeling souls, you pure children's minds, you kindred hearts, for you I have written and even one beautiful tear twinkling in your eyes will comfort me, will heal the wound, beaten by the harsh blame of an insensitive critic. Berlin, May of 18... Murr (*Etudiant en belles letters*)

Exaggeration – used to create ironic or grotesque effects – was a popular device also in Romantic music. Hector Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* is perhaps the most famous example of Romantic irony in music. A reworking of the musical motives in an ironic sense takes place when the lyrical main theme of the symphony, called the *idée fixe* by Berlioz, is dramatized and distorted at the end of the work, where it describes the wild gathering of a coven, or "witches' sabbath". The same technique was used by Liszt in his *Faust Symphony*, the third movement ("Mephisto") of which features a parodically twisted version of the theme from the first movement ("Faust"). In the third movement, the motives – inherently heroic in nature – are re-orchestrated and transformed into a totally new form broken by semiquaver patterns. The intent of these changes can easily be determined from the subtitle given by the composer: *Allegro ironico*.

We can also speak of irony in connection with completely abstract, non-programmatic music. As a typical example, we can mention the Trio from the third movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, where the famous fugato for double basses always produces an impression of bumptious excess. This impression is caused by the fact the passage in question is so difficult to perform that its execution usually underlines a disparity between means and ends. As a semiotic process, this situation stresses the phatic function; the composer interferes with the channel by writing music which he knows will surpass that channel's means of expression. The receiver experiences this "clash" as a kind of irony.

One effect of Romantic irony, both in music and literature, is a let-down of expectations: inner tension, as a sense of expectation, is built up in the receiver, then relieved in a surprising way that is totally unforeseen by the receiver. Such cases exploit the conative function. (Lévi-Strauss's music aesthetics, among others, is largely based on the conative function of music.) Much irony of this kind appears in the music of Robert Schumann. In his piano suite *Carnival* there are many places in which the composer creates – with the help of a long crescendo – a tension that "leads nowhere", that is, to no decisive or finalizing musical event. Such is the case, for example, in the surprising return to the allemande after the virtuosic Paganini movement. This kind of "waiting" was in fact typical of the whole Romantic way of thinking. Basically, Romanticists looked upon life as a long period of waiting, an introduction to some more perfect, unknown reality. In the words of Friedrich Schlegel: "A

striving for deep and infinite significance must come out in every poem." When events of daily life were compared with such profound and infinite significance, there resulted a play in which Romantic irony was born. Schlegel writes: "We demand that events, people, life's whole play must really be portrayed as a play."

The aspect of expectantly "waiting" applies to music as well, as in Liszt's symphonic poem *Les Préludes*: all of life is seen as but a preparation for something else. For the verbal program of the composition, Liszt chose the following extract after Lamartine: "La vie n'est-elle pas autre chose qu'une prélude à … ". Seeking self-irony, some Romanticists even mocked their own aesthetic view of life as "but a prelude". In Tieck's play, *Verkehrte Welt*, the epilogue is located at the beginning of the play, and the prologue at the end. Two years earlier, Tieck had written a preface to – nothing.

Chapter 6 "… ein leiser Ton gezogen …": Robert Schumann's *Fantasie* in C major (op. 17) in the light of existential semiotics

6.1 Introduction

Let me begin with a short personal reception-history of this fascinating and perplexing monument of Romantic culture. I first heard this piece in Helsinki when I was sixteen years old, performed by the Finnish pianist Ritva Arjava. As a pupil of Marguerite Long and Bruno Seidlhofer in the 1950s, Ritva had made successful showings in a Chopin competition, among others, and Schumann's *Fantasy* was featured on her recital program. Her mother, Kaisa Arjava, my piano teacher at the time, was an excellent concert pianist, who had studied with Marcel Ciampi in Paris and had been a personal friend of Alexander Borovsky. I wanted to play the piece, and performed the first movement on stage at my school. A year later I played the entire piece, winning a piano competition for Finnish youth. It was also on my program as a major Romantic work when, as a baccalaureate, I applied to the local conservatory, the Sibelius Academy. At the entrance examination, however, the committee interrupted me during the "*im Legendenton*" passage. One professor (Timo Mikkilä) asked me if I also played the second movement. I said, Yes, a little; but fortunately the committee did not want to hear it. Word came later that I had been accepted.

With my piano teacher Liisa Pohjola I began working on other repertoire, but on the back cover of the notes of the *Fantasie* we wrote and signed a contract: "*Diese Fantasie wird nich für trivialen Absichten geopfert*" (This Fantasy will not be abandoned for trivial purposes), "trivial purposes" being course examinations. And there the work remained for ripening. Later, in the 1990s, I played it in Bloomington, Indiana for piano professors Joseph Rezits and Walter Roberts.

Since my first encounter with this piece, I have sensed it to be a kind of philosophical work in its semantic content. In those days I was fascinated by German literature and by philosophy in general, having read all the Goethe and Schiller available in Finnish translation, and also *Untergang des Abendlandes* by Oswald Spengler, which had just appeared in Finnish. This provocative work used a poem by Goethe as its motto, the final verse of which went something like: "... *und alles Drängen, alles Ringen ist ewige Ruh im Gott dem Herrn*"

(and all striving, all struggle, is eternal peace in God the Lord). I connected this verse, in my mind, with the close of the first movement of the *Fantasie*: a definitive cadence in C major, to which all the preceding, fantastic and passionate phases resolve. I had not yet learned about its origins in a Beethoven song, nor did I know the significance of the Friedrich Schlegel citation on the score, which to me remained something poetic and cryptic. Over the years I continued to play the piece; then at some instant, and perhaps influenced by Busoni's ideas on *Ur-Kunst* or *Pan-Kunst* (see Tarasti 1994: 25), I felt the chains of conventional forms fall away, as they had sometimes done with Beethoven and Schumann. It now appeared to me that the timeless and spaceless nature of the last movement formed the central programmatic content of the piece. I thought especially of the subordinate section of the third movement, which reaches extremes of register, and the descending melody, with its hemiolas, seems to hover and float as if in a gravity-free, "transcendental" state (bars 15-20). The only German music to be equated with it was in the final scene of Goethe's *Faust II*, where angelic choirs sing "*Wir immer strebend sich bemüht, Den können wir erlösen*" (Whoever exerts himself in constant striving, Him we can save) as they carry Faust's immortal soul heavenward. *Faust II* would be inconceivable on stage, the essence of it lying in verbal and conceptual expression, but it seemed to me that this music by Schumann came close to that atmosphere.

It was annoying to have no factual evidence for connecting the two, but only a musician's naive, "inner" program, which one often needs to master the qualities and spirit of a piece[1]. As to the "*leiser Ton*" of the Schlegel poem, I had heard that it was linked to Clara Wieck, especially the descending fifths. So obviously the "silent tone" was the main motif, which after ascending a major ninth G to A, sinks down to D and holds there, all this in the context of C major. Later the descending major second appears as a truncated sign of the former, showing up at the very end of the third movement.

Retaking this piece for a first-time semiotic analysis, I discovered from the copious research about it that the literary culture around Robert Schumann included the novelist Jean Paul, whom the composer worshiped, to the point of buying his complete works in later life. In addition, studies by Nicholas Marston (1992) and John Daverio (1987) reveal all the genetic phases that led to the final version of the *Fantasy*. Of course, even before looking at those studies I knew that the *leiser Ton* was in fact a quote from a song, Beethoven's *An die ferne geliebte*, which appears at the end of the first movement. Then

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1 Yet, Professor Tilman Seebass recently remarked to me at a symposium in Vilnius, that it is enough if a person with cultural and musical style competence has this kind of intuition.

Charles Rosen made me aware of the fact that, at this point, Beethoven no longer sounded like Beethoven, but like Schumann! Inspired by this insight, I looked at an earlier version of the piece, in which Schumann allowed the *An die ferne geliebte* melody to return at the end of the third movement as well. Why he deleted this last appearance became understandable to me upon deeper reflection: Two overt occurrences of this theme would have been too explicit, too striking to fit with the general, "metaphysical" *Stimmung* of the whole, and with the Schlegelian notion that only one who listens secretly can hear this tune.

6.2 Genesis

To add the "poietic" aspect, I next present some facts concerning the piece's creation. We learn from Marston (1992: 23 and 27) that the work passed through manifold phases of corrections and deletions: "In June of 1836, Schumann wrote a one-movement fantasy for piano, entitled *Ruins* (*Ruinen*). Here Schumann was following one trend in the Romantic-Classical tradition, namely, a concentration on one movement only – which Liszt had realized in his B minor Sonata (dedicated to Schumann) and Schubert in his *Wanderer* Fantasy." The subtitle, *Ruins*, refers here to Romantic aesthetics in general, as discussed in the writings of John Ruskin (1873) and others (discussed more below).

Later in the same year, Schumann added two movements and entitled the work "Sonata for Beethoven". This was in turn linked to the *Bonner Verein für Beethovens Monument* in which the Schlegel brothers participated. Liszt, among others, donated money to the project, and Schumann decided to contribute by publishing the piece and giving a hundred complimentary copies of it to the committee to sell. He now entitled the piece: "Ruins. Trophies. Palms. Grand Piano Sonata. For Beethoven's Monument". Then in May 1837 he offered the piece to Breitkopf and Härtel as *Fantasies* (*Phantasieen*). In January of 1838 he spoke about the work as *die alte Phantasiestücke*. On February 6 he wrote to his publisher, saying the new title was *Fata morgana*. On April 16 he wrote to Clara, telling her that the *Phantasieen* had three movements: Ruins, Triumphal Arc (*Siegesbogen*), and Constellation (*Sternbild*), and that the whole work should be called *Poems* (*Dichtungen*). On December 19 he again wrote to Breitkopf, saying the definite title was *Fantasie*. We can see, however, that for Schumann the most important title was "Ruins", since that designation remains the same in two versions, while the others change. Clara, upon hearing the piece, liked the second (march) movement best and imagined in it a program: a celebration for warriors returning home, with girls dressed in white bestowing

laurels on the heroes; and she fantasized herself as one of those honoring Robert, her warrior. The publisher preserved none of this in any printed version. The main title became the French version, *Fantasie*, and only one literary program remained, *Im legendenton*.

Much evidence exists about the creative process of the work, in the form of sketches and the *Stichvorlage*, i.e., the copyist's version of the manuscript with Schumann's own corrections on it, making it easy to track deletions and additions. The document is useful for scrutinizing the 'becoming' of the work, and for observing how presigns become act-signs and ultimately post-signs. For instance, in one copy Schumann deleted the titles from all three movements and asked the engraver to replace them with a triangular shape of three stars (Marston 1992: 20). The first movement was headed *Durchaus phantastisch und leidenschaftlich vorzutragen*. The second movement's performance indication, *Rührig und glänzend* (brisk and brilliant), was replaced by *Mässig. Durchaus energisch*; on the last movement, the labeling *Einfach und getragen* (Simply and solemnly) gave way to *Langsam getragen, Durchweg leise zu halten* (Slow and solemn. To be kept soft throughout). A slightly more programmatic title, *Romanza*, appeared in the middle section of the first movement, but the copyist instead wrote *Legende*. This, too, was deleted by Schumann in pencil and replaced with the words *Erzählend im Legendenton*. Finally, *erzählend* was removed, which left only the expression *Im Legendenton*.

Though semiotic interpretation is based mostly upon a text and its structures, a fuller understanding comes about from facts concerning production and processes of "enunciation". If this is appropriate, why not also look at "post-signs" given to the work in its performance history? There is, for example, a particularly valuable moment in Marston's study that describes the work's reception by Franz Liszt – to whom Schumann dedicated it. Liszt played the piece to Schumann in March 1840, when he visited the composer in Leipzig. Schumann wrote to Clara:

> I wish you could have heard Liszt this morning. He really is quite extraordinary. He played from my *Noveletten*, the Fantasy, and the Sonata in a way that affected me deeply. Much of it was different from what I had expected, but all of it was full of genius, and had a tenderness and and sense of daring which is no doubt not an everyday occurrence with him. (Quoted in Marston 1992: 93)

The quality of "tenderness" becomes evident also in an account by Anton Strelezki, one of Liszt's pupils. He performed the *Fantasie* and Liszt complimented him, but observed that his conception of the first movement was "totally wrong". Liszt said: "Everyone plays this opening movement in too vigorous a style. It is pre-eminently dreamy, *träumerisch*, as Liszt said in Ger-

man, and altogether the reverse of 'noisy' and 'heavy'. I do not mean though that it should be played apathetically for, of course, here and there are phrases which demand vigorous execution; but the whole outline of the movement should preserve more of the dreamy character than is usual in depicting it" (in ibid.: 94).

Liszt said the above in 1869, and also told about playing it for Schumann, who after the second movement jumped out of his chair, flung his arms around Liszt, and with tears in his eyes cried: "*Göttlich!*". Liszt kept the piece in his repertoire in 1839–48 and later for his teaching program. Carl Lachmund told about his own performance of the piece for Liszt on 27 May 1882. After mentioning the notorious difficulties in the coda of the second movement, Liszt sat at the piano and played it himself without any sign of strain. Lachmund writes: "I have heard many great pianists play the Fantasy, but all of them, even Rubinstein, displayed physical exertion in this passage. Not Liszt, however" (ibid.: 94–95).

6.3 From modes of being to the Z model and its temporalization

I next attempt an analysis and interpretation of the *Fantasie* based on my existential semiotic theories and philosophies. The reader may, if he or she wishes, become familiar with these through certain of my books (Tarasti 2000; 2009a and b). Yet, it is sufficient to recall the following ideas and analytic method, as presented in foregoing chapters of the present book.

We begin with Hegel's *Logik der Wissenschaft*, specifically his two principal cases of *being-in-itself* and *being-for-itself*. As we know, the first of these is something that stands by its pure inner qualities, "*an sich*" – of which, according to Kant, we can know nothing. Yet, when this entity *an sich* enters a social context, it is determined by the latter, and becomes *für sich*. For instance, someone who is good with his hands (*an sich*) may become a tailor, pianist, or baker (*für sich*); one who is good at speaking may become a teacher, politician, or priest. And so on. To this Hegelian distinction we add the point of view of subject in the proper sense, what is in French called the "*Moi*" (Me). In this way we derive two more categories: *an-mir sein* (being in-myself) and *für-mich sein* (being for-myself).

The remaining category is that of "*Soi*", or the self as determined by society: *being-for-oneself* and *being-in-oneself*. This last means society with it abstract values and norms; the former designates exemplifications of those values and norms via institutions and other social practices. For instance, if

being-in-myself
être-en-moi
an-mir-sein
("*will*")

being-for-myself
être-pour-moi
für-mich-sein
("*can*")

für-sich-sein
être-pour-soi
being-for-itself
("*know*")

an-sich-sein
être-en-soi
being-in-itself
("*must*")
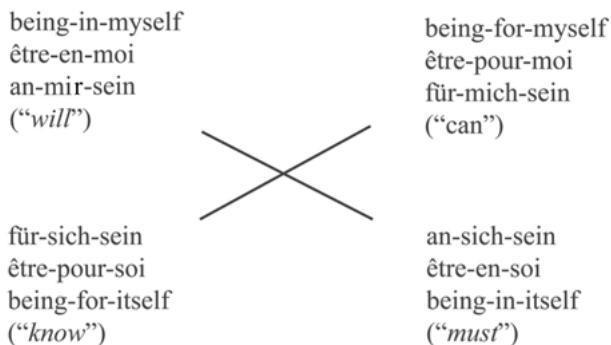
Figure 55: Varieties of being in the semiotic square.

the value of being-in-oneself is Beauty, it can manifest through a conservatory if it involves aural aesthetics; if the value is visual, then through an arts academy; if patriotism, its corresponding practice might be the army. These two aspects of *Moi* and *Soi* represent two sides of our inner subjectivity: the social has impact on and power over us only because it has been internalized in our minds. In this way, the *Soi* can impose itself on our *Moi*.

primary kinetic energy
"khora", gestuality
("*will*")

musical identity
certian kinetic forms
("*can*")

exemplification of topics,
individual solutions, applica-
tions, strategies
("*know*")

topics, norms, forms as
abstract, virtual categories,
styles
("*must*")
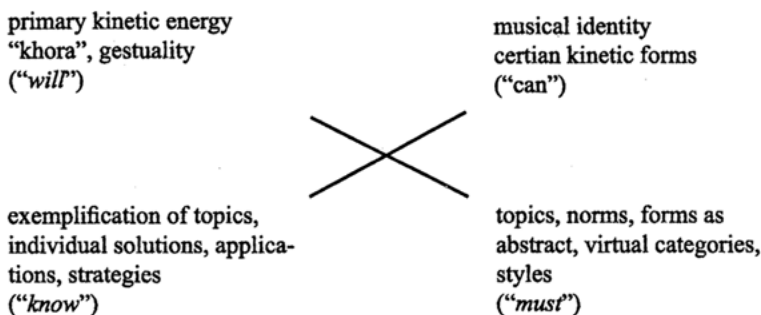
Figure 56: Application in music.

Ultimately, we have four cases in this taxonomic model of 'being': *Moi1* (M1) constitutes our primary body, kinetic energy, desire, *khora*, our chaotic and fleshly physical existence. *Moi2* (M2) means that, via habit, education, and dialogue with others, our subjectivity reaches a more permanent stability and identity; in other words, it becomes a person. *Moi3* (= *Soi2*) signifies a *Moi* that is so reduced as to become subordinated to the *Soi*, i.e., to social practices and

institutions. M4 (or *Soi1*) embodies the abstractly normative aspect of our society, community and culture.

This four-place model resembles the so-called "semiotic square" developed by the Paris School, but is in fact rather different. As with the semiotic square, there is in our scheme an inherent dynamic tension between *Moi* and *Soi*: *Moi* gradually becomes socialized, the materiality of our ego more and more sublimated, until it is capable of serving and representing the most intellectual and spiritual aspects of our society. On the other hand, the *Soi* urges the subject to become more concrete, physical and material, forming the kind of personalities that social practices and institutions can recruit for their purposes. Of course, our most physical acts of M1 also contain a tiny trace of the *Soi*, just as in the most abstract categories of our social existence there also exists a small hint of our physical ego. Hence our square has become what I call a *Z model*, the letter Z portraying these two counterforces as they encounter each other, zig-zag-like, within these four modes of being. Here it is possible to see merely a model of "organic growth" from one state of being into another, but we may also use the model to conceive of what an individual might do in shifts from one state to another. Perhaps most critical is always the step from S2 to M2, i.e., from the predominantly social to the predominantly subjective and individual: the eternal conflict between *Ich und Gesellschaft*, as Adorno described it.

Mieczysław Tomaszewski (2010) also elaborates an interesting musical application of an individual's development through various phases. He speaks of moments in an artist's creative life as stages of adopting a heritage: initial fascination, conflict, significant encounter, threat of existence, loneliness. These are similar to moments of our *Moi2*, which appear in stylistic transformations of early, mature, climactic, and late periods of creativity. We may therefore view the movements and transformations of *Moi/Soi* as kinds of *Bildungsprozesse*, or educational phases (Tomaszewski 2010: 96–98).

Our model can serve as a taxonomy of almost anything that happens in our minds and in our society.

We cannot think of any utterance in which we cannot distinguish among these four cases, and often all of them simultaneously. In every musical text, discourse or expression, we have these four aspects: (1) Concrete physical material appearing as musical gestures and musical desires, more or less chaotic wave-like formations of the kinetic energy of music. (2) Musical "actors" or persons, which are the more stable anthropomorphic entities, like musical motifs and themes; these have clear-cut profiles and constitute units of musical narration. (3) In music we have social norms, manifesting in (a) rhetorical figures, (b) topics, i.e. style features internalized from musical or nonmusical

M1   M2

(S4)   (S3)

Z

S2   S1

(M3)   (M4)

These cases would contain the following issues:

primary kinetic energy   identity, personality

desire, gestuality, khora, body   habit, stability

Z

social roles, institutions,   norms, values, general codes

practices
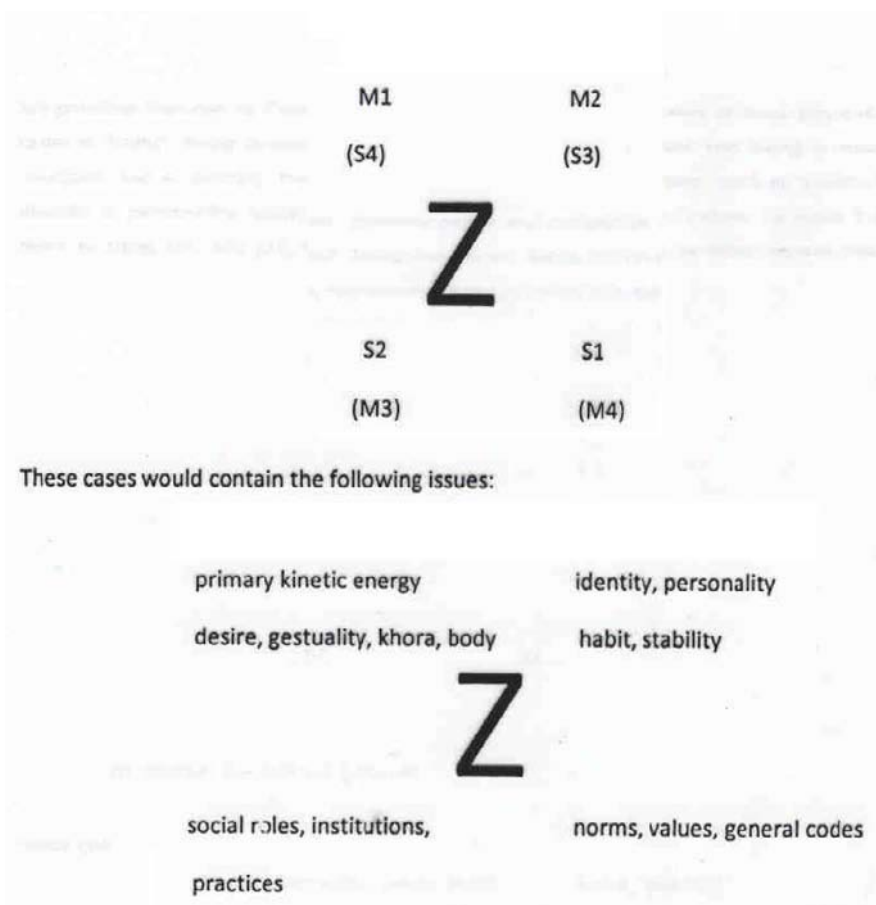
Figure 57: The Z –model of Moi and Soi.

social fields, and (c) genres, the social frameworks necessary for musical communication. (4) Every musical unit has an aesthetic aspect of content, being the values or ideas which the music conveys or signifies. For example, take Schumann's *Aufschwung* piano piece: M1 = its kinetic volative energy; M2 = its basic triple-rhythm musical motif; S2 = it belongs to the genre of *Charakterstücke*; S1 = it portrays Romantic aesthetics, a movement towards transcendence.

We should go further in the application of our Z model to determine how it may apply to linear and temporal texts, such as music and musical performance. Here, instead of speaking about four different cases or positions of the square, we should talk about four different levels, which unfold in time and

M1 = (S4)

SYNCOPES

ACC. RIT.

(gestures, primary modalities)

M2 = (S3)

A   B   A'   B"   C   A"   D

(actors, thematic units)

S2 = (M3)

exposition   development   recapitulation

learned   galant   ellipsis

(forms, genres, topics, rhetorics)

S1 = (M4)

"ein leiser Ton"   fragments   ruins   Faust   arabesque
myth, (legend)

(aesthetics, values, norms, ideas)
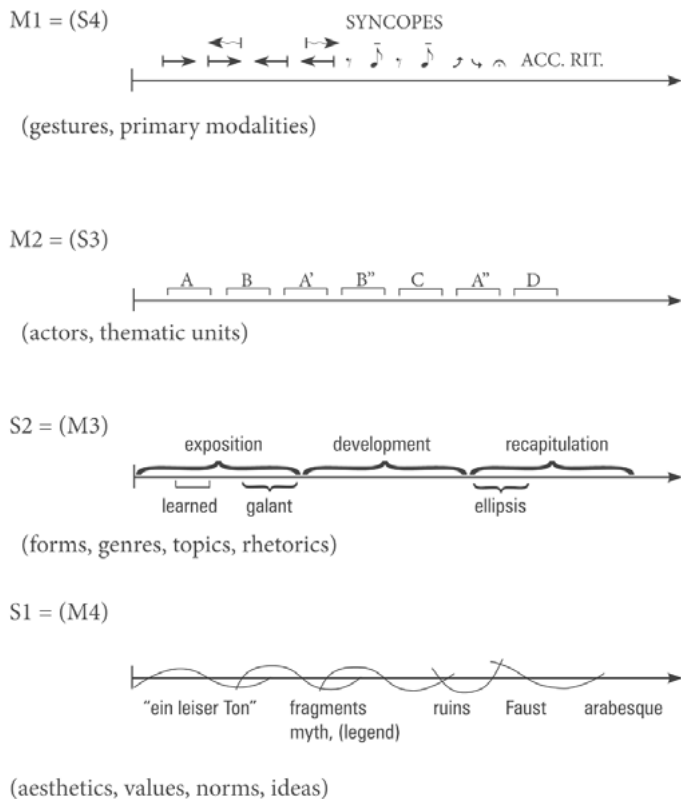
Figure 58: The Z-model and its levels as temporalized.

can proceed simultaneously, each with its own characteristic entities and formations. The M1 level consists of musical gestures and their consequences; these flow in "waves" of organic growth, as more or less chaotic manifestations of our primary will. The M2 level is comprised of units called motifs and themes, which already constitute a kind of narrative chain; i.e., they are identifiable and memorable entities of musical discourse, if still conceived in their physical and corporeal aspects. M3 = S2 articulates the musical course according to traditional formal schemes and topics such as sonata form, rondo, fugue, chaconne, concerto, opera, waltz, march, and so on. These may follow a rhetorical logic, as well, in the form of musical "figures of speech". Finally, *Soi1* = M4 represents the aesthetic ideas behind all these musical processes.

Instead of a static, logical scheme such as the semiotic square, our model may be conceived as a generative one having proper levels of meaning. As such, it evokes similar models in the history of semiotics: Chomsky's "tree",

Y. Lotman et al.: Reconstruction of texts

Semantic gesture

↓

SYMBOLS

↓

SEMANTICS

↓

SYNTAX

↓

METRICS

↓

PHONETICS

M4	norms, values	S1
M3	social practices, genres	S2
M2	identity, person, actors	S3
M1	body, 'khora', kinetic energy, desire	S4
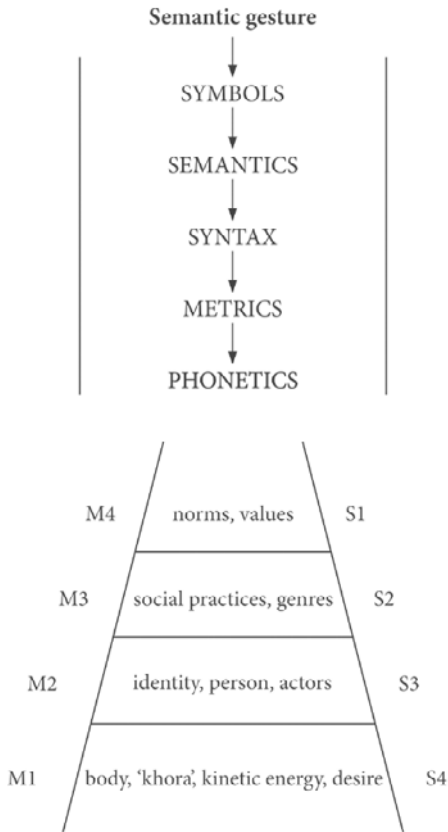
Figure 59: Lotman et alii: Reconstruction of texts (above); The Z-model as a generation (below).

which Lerdahl and Jackendoff (1983), among others, have applied to music; Greimas's *parcours génératif* and its application to music (Tarasti 1994); the model for reconstructing ancient Slavic texts, as sketched by Juri Lotman and others (1975) in their famous essay, "Theses on the semiotic study of cultures". This last has levels going from lowest to highest in the form of a pyramid: phonetics, metrics, syntax, semantics and symbols. Conversely, the unifying principle proceeds from top to bottom in the "semantic gesture" theorized by the Prague School and as does the "dominant" in Roman Jakobson's model. Such generative models are "organic" in nature, such that no gaps or leaps occur in the shifts from one level to the next.

I doubt, however, the validity of such a "quasi-organic" course; for leaps and ruptures occur in the move from deep structure to surface. Not all sign processes proceed uninterrupted from a guiding principle to subsequent formations on other levels. For example, let us reorient our four-level Z structure with the lowest level as M1, the second M2 and so on to the top of the pyramid, S1. This arrangement brings out the conflicts and oppositions among the different levels. For instance, something may happen on level M1 which negates the impact of S1; or the shift from S2 to M2 may not proceed unobstructed, but instead engage in struggle. Concerning Schumann's *Fantasie*, much debate has taken place about whether or not it is a sonata. Against the sonata-form argument stands the *Im Legendenton* section, the developmental aspects of which are ambiguous; Rosen even claims, paradoxically, that it both is and is not developmental at the same time. In any case, a conflict arises: what happens on the level of M does not adapt to or fit the schemes offered by S2, namely the expectations of the sonata genre. Such incongruities can take place among any levels of the model. In fact, the possibility of differences, gaps, and negations can even serve as the constitutive force of a living musical "organism".

Especially for such a radically innovative work as Schumann's *Fantasie*, this can prove to be a significant source of musical meaning and form. If on its *Soi1* level we put various kinds of aesthetic ideas prevailing in Germany at that time, say Friedrich Schlegel's theory of fragments or his theory of Universal Poetry, or the idea of an arabesque, or the Goethean ideology of eternal striving forwards, then we can observe the extent to which such principles manifest on subsequent levels, until arriving at the most corporeal and gestural level of *Moi1*. To do so, one must first analyze the piece on each level sepa-
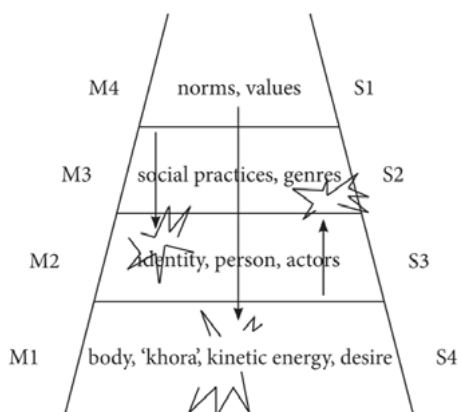
Figure 60: Clashes of the levels in the Z-model.

rately, deriving suitable concepts and perhaps finding proper notation for each type of analytic unit.

6.4 Levels of musical signification in the *Fantasie*

6.4.1 *Moi*, or the level of "body"in music

The lowest and largest level, according to the scheme above, is the sphere of "body", corporeality at its most primal. Here we have Peircean "Firstness", something physical, energetic, sensual, direct, volitional, and kinetic, not yet articulated or conceptualized. What does this mean in musical terms? Certainly music on this level has a direct impact on us; it is music's primitive, naive level, and often the proper "attraction point". Yet, certain formations arise as early as here, which we call "gestures". Gestural phenomena are not limited to this level, but may become intentional sign vehicles of the next level, M2; for example, a person may habitually straighten his hair with a certain gesture.[2] On level M1, however, a gesture is still unintentional, i.e., not directed to communication. Nevertheless, in this phase gestures form a continuum, moments in the constant temporal flow of a work. We must recall that the basic modality of this level is 'will', and here we can underscore its definition by Karl Jaspers: "*Wille ist Dauer als Kontinuität des Sinnes*" (Jaspers 1948: 425). Roland Barthes (1985), in his analysis of Schumann's *Kreisleriana*, spoke of special units of the body as "somathemes", these last coming close to our idea. Theories of musical gesture, too, have recently flourished, perhaps most

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2 This can be illustrated by an anecdote. I was in a hotel, in the countryside, having worked hard the whole day. In the evening I took the elevator to go to the restaurant. In the lift was a mirror, and since I had been doing hard physical labor, I checked my hair to see if it needed combing. Suddenly a young man entered on another floor, and saw my gesture in front of the mirror. He made the same gesture on his side and asked me, Are you going to the ball? He had interpreted my gesture as a social sign meaning a certain type of activity, going to a ball. For me the gesture was not intended to be seen by anyone, but it was interpreted as such. The situation was funny, given that a serious scholar and professor does not normally do make gestures; but that was something which the young man could not guess immediately. Another anecdote shows the role of gesture as intention, as something summarizing a whole semantic universe in one sign. I asked György Ligeti, Do you like Sibelius? He answered, "I do not like that gesture in his music", and then he lifted up his arm. It meant that there was a kind of "sublime" style or elevated gesture that he, as a modernist, found unacceptable. This was a real case of the "semantic gesture", as it is called by the Prague School, or "dominant" by Roman Jakobson: a principle that traverses all levels of an art work.

noticeably by Robert Hatten in his *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics and Tropes: Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert* (Hatten 2004). Hatten advances the following definition: "Gesture is most generally defined as communicative (whether intended or not), expressive, energetic shaping through time (including characteristic features of musicality such as beat, rhythm, timing of exchanges, contour, intensity) regardless of medium (channel or sensory-motor source, intermodal or cross modal)" (Hatten 2004: 97 and 109). This comes close to a view of gestures as iconic signs, which by similarity refer to a corporeal being; in our model, they refer to the level of M1. Gestures often have a communicative aspect, such that they are intended to convey or signal something. This was realized in the last century by social philosopher G. H. Mead: "Gestures become significant symbols when they implicitly arouse in the individual making them the same response which they explicitly arouse ... in other individuals, the individuals to whom they are addressed" (quoted in Mosley 1990: 20). Such a phenomenon, however, would refer already to our level of M2.

One can measure gestures as concrete physical entities, as Paul Bouissac (1973) does in regard to marked gestures in the circus and acrobatics. But even such professional gestuality – which is comparable, say, to a conductor's gestures or those of a ballet dancer – has as its basis a certain naive preunderstanding: "... *c'est l'experience de la dynamique du corps-propre organisée en un système plus ou moins complexe en relation avec une espace structurée*" (it is the experience of the dynamism of the body proper, organized into a system, more or less complex, in relation to a structured space). Here Bouissac is already speaking about gestures on level M2, where they form an "elementary system, largely mythical, which serves as a basic model of interpretation" (Bouissac 1973: 17). Yet, even when he tries to show that gestuality is based on discrete, discontinuous "*gestèmes*" as separate and individual entities, he also admits that gestures constitute syntagms, that is to say, kinds of continuous processes. Obviously this is a problem on level M2: if we start from gestures as iconic signs of individual bodies, how can one construct a discourse, which is an expressive and syntagmatic continuum of such signs? To do so also involves level S2, if the gestures belong to certain social practices, such as circus or musical performance. Adorno (1974) noticed this in his study on Wagner: all music refers back to gesture, but in European art music the gestural has been been internalized and spiritualized into expression. The problem with these "archaic" elements in art music is that they cannot be developed, but only repeated and strengthened (Adorno 1974: 30, 32).

Gestures represent an element of the unsublimated, which is included in a highly organized style as well. On this view, gestures cannot enter the level

of S1; they can only disturb or deny, strengthen or reinforce S1 from the outside. Adorno's view of gestures comes close to what we mean by gestures of M1, M2, and to some extent, S2. In my theory, these are quasi-organic entities that either emerge from or grow out of their proper *Umwelt* or individuate and detach from it. I have distinguished 9 cases on this simple "biological" level, which is that of the chaotic, semiotic *khora* theorized by Kristeva (e.g., Kristeva 1997). I have been speaking of subject and object, but instead we might speak here of "semiogermes" or semio-gestures and their environments: (1) a gesture may harmonize with its surroundings; (2) it may be separate from its surroundings; (3) a gesture strives toward its surrounding field; (4) a gesture wants to be detached from its surroundings; (5) a gesture is indifferent to what happens around it; (6) a gesture has no proper surroundings; (7) there is only *Umwelt*, with no gestures; (8) a gesture tries to dominate its surroundings; (9) the surroundings dominate the gesture (Tarasti 2009: 285–286). These amount to a small paradigm of ideas, factors and aspects, which we should attend to when talking about the M1 level in music.

Perhaps the most encompassing definition of gestures is found in Étienne Souriau's *Vocabulaire d'esthétique* (1990: 793):

> Mouvement du corps, et plus specialement des bras et des mains. Le geste fait partie du jeu de l'acteur, du danseur, de l'action de l'orateur: des gestes de personnages diégétiques sonts représentées dans les arts plastiques. Le geste a deux grandes fonctions, l'une expressive ou significative, l'autre plastique. Les gestes donnent des informations, ils montrent, miment, etc. qu'ils soient spontanées ou codée. Les arts ont assez souvent utilisé des codes speciaux des gestes, plus étroitement réglés que ceux de la vie courante. Mais le geste dans les arts a une fonction plus purement esthetique en tant qu'il dessine une forme, trace une arabesque en mouvement [ou] rythme le temps et l'espace de l'oeuvre.

> (Bodily movement, especially of the arms and hands. The gesture takes part in the play of the actor, dancer, the action of the orator: gestures of diegetic personnages are represented in the plastic arts. Gesture has two major functions, one expressive or significative, the other plastic. Gestures give information, they demonstrate, mimic, etc., should they be spontaneous or coded. The arts have often enough used special codes of gestures, codes more tightly governed than those of daily life. But the gesture, in the arts, has a more purely aesthetic function, in as much as it delimits a form, traces an arabesque in movement [or] rhythm, the time and space of the work.)

Here we see clearly that gestures belong to many modes of being and that, in any human communication, we have to know the mode to which the involved gesture belongs.

Let us open the *Fantasie*. First we hear a murmuring figuration,vibrating, breathing, radiant, very colorful, in the lower register of the piano, all these notes supported by the resonant low G in the bass. This figuration has an

almost quasi-corporeal impact on us, and it lasts a very long time, until bar 49, when its rousing energy mitigates into triplets. But echoes of it occur later, intensified by a trill, until bar 128.

2 (90)

Phantasie

Fantasia Fantaisie

Franz Liszt gewidmet

Motto:
Durch alle Töne tönet
Im bunten Erdentraum
Ein leiser Ton gezogen
Für den, der heimlich lauschet.
Fr. Schlegel

Robert Schumann, Op. 17
(1836)

Durchaus fantastisch und leidenschaftlich vorzutragen M.M. ♩= 80
Sempre fantasticamente ed appassionatamente

29919

Figure 61: Opening of the first movement.

But we soon realize that this figuration, a forest murmur (*der bunte Erdentraum* of Schlegel, as in the motto), is nothing but the musical *Umwelt* to a gesture that strongly and cogently enters in the second bar with an upbeat, onto a falling melodic gesture in solemn half notes, which aims for the descending major second at the beginning of bar 5. The gesture is a kind of singing, but not syllabic singing as in a chorale, but rather like a primal, inner humming or intoning of a *sigh*, which bursts out of the preceding, pent-up energy of 'will'. Of course, the opening notes A-G of this gesture are the most striking ones, since they are the first that we hear. They set up strong expectations and carry much information to us. Since it is a descending major second and not a minor second, the gesture is not a lament, but rather holds a a certain power. After the initial outburst, a descent occurs in bars 15-16, in which the right-hand's scale is broken by the leap of a fourth. This new gesture is repeated in shorter time values (quarter-notes) in bars 17–18. The intense repetition continues, minus the perfect fourth, darkened in color by the flattened, minor sphere in bar 28, preceded by a syncopated and accented rising gesture. All this leads to an almost violent musical gesture in bars 33–39, where a somber melody ascends from the depths, both rhythmically syncopated and accentuated, and now in C minor. It sounds very passionate, something like a forward thrust or penetration, far from the majestic dignity of the first intonation: the descending scale from A to D of the opening. This music is rebellious and challenging, a kind of negation of what happened in the opening. It leads, or rather, does *not* lead: it just stops suddenly, and the listener is moved to the entirely differ-

ent landscape of D minor[3]. The theme in the upper register is a modified version of the first statement, now provided with an anacrusis, rhythmically decorated, and graciously ornamented (bar 44). In bar 49 the latter half of the main gesture is repeated, identifiable as such, but now in a different mood, as if nostalgic or regretful. Next, both pitches and time values become unbalanced. The musical *Umwelt* is gradually changing into a new landscape, and we feel the musical events undergoing a Greimassian *débrayage* (shifting off): the figuration becomes chromatic and elaborates the motif of an ascending fourth and descending major second, alternating with descending fifths, and it soon becomes syncopated. A rhythmical "dissonance" appears in bars 56–57 in which occur two superimposed rhythmic-metric levels. The bass line is grouped in two, while the basic metric pulse is in three. This causes further displacement of the figuration (borrowed from the opening accompaniment), which temporarily slows down. The temporal movement is backwards-flowing, not forward-rushing. We notice in bars 56–57 a very typical superimposition of two different energetic fields: one moving forward, the other backward, like an obstruction preventing the flow. This can be indicated by two arrows; one dark, indicating the basic movement, and the other lighter, indicating the countermovement.

Such metric-rhythmic ambiguity is so typical of Schumann that an entire study has been written about it: Harald Krebs's *Fantasy Pieces: Metrical Dissonance in the Music of Robert Schumann* (1999). Krebs confirms the fact that rhythms, like pitches, can also produce consonance and dissonance: "In clearly metrical music one of the metrical interpretive layers generally assumes particular significance for the listener, its pulses becoming reference points for all rhythmic activity in the given work … it is the primary metrical layer. In pre-twentieth century tonal music generally we have one of the metrical layers and one conflicting interpretive layer or antimetrical layer" (Krebs 1999: 30–31). In our model, this contrast of metrical and antimetrical layers may be seen as a particular device of the composer's *Moi,* a kind of existential negation of the basic and normal pulsation. In Schumann's case this becomes his personal device or trademark on level M2. Some even see here a connection to his madness, his *Moi profond*, which in this way manifests in his symbolic constructions[4].

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3 I disagree with Rosen that all of the previous opening is already in D minor; only in this new section does the leading tone, C sharp, appear.

4 "Schumann's genius was as destructive as it was creative; we might say that he destroyed as he created" (Rosen 1998: 105). Rosen also correctly says: "Too firm an identification of an element in a work with an aspect of the artist's life, does not further understanding but blocks it" (ibid.: 101). We should take this caution to heart in seeking to find "who" was the "secret tone" of the *Fantasie*.

From bar 61 onward another version appears of the previously heard, lyrical D minor melody, now in F major. It is slightly destabilized by the syncopated, "antimetrical layer", but this aspect of rhythmic *débrayage*, shifting off, is only a subordinate modality to the general slowing down, extinguishing, diminishing, and silencing character of the whole passage, until the fanfare in bar 82. In this passage, the music seems to stop altogether, with six ritardandos and two tempo markings of adagio. The gesture of rising fourth and descending seconds is gradually liquidated. Nevertheless, we do not feel that we are attaining balance, undisturbed peace or tranquility. For this detensional field in the main course of events is disturbed by rhythmic dissonances of syncopations, by neighbor-notes, and by pauses on mildly dissonant chords (like the German sixth chord in bar 76). All this leads eventually to almost total stasis in bar 80, with two fermata pauses and a final statement of the motif, all in the extremely "*leise*" dynamic of pianissimo – yet on a harmony that is none other than slightly evoking a Tristan chord before *Tristan*! Thus, harmonically the music remains in a state of unconsummated desire, far from the basic modality of 'being'.

Figure 62: The musical flow leading to the Tristan chord.

One wonders how the music can continue at all from such a stand-still. The "Tristan chord" seems to resolve into D minor, but very weakly, almost like a

whisper, and represented only by the note F surrounded by silences. It is not felt as a destination achieved, though everything seems to end amid deep silence. But on the score Schumann draws double bar-lines, as if to signal the start of something completely new. And indeed, there comes a strongly syncopated fanfare-gesture, on the order of a festive or military topic. Yet the fanfare is followed by a still syncopated but also contrapuntal texture; on level S2, this is a topic of the learned style (as in the main theme of Chopin's F minor Fantasy). Here the music expresses unbounded desire, rushes toward the height of passion, and ends on a pair of staccato chords in the upper register. This energetic outburst is nevertheless soon ameliorated by a harmonic circle-of-fifths which provides the situation with a reassuring and tranquilizing quality. Then comes a return of the main theme, but now as it appeared in its second statement (in bars 19–23).

Then follows a violent interruption, *im lebhaften Tempo*, a strongly syncopated transition in which for fourteen bars the strong beat in the bass is lost or displaced; the basic rhythm is restored only by chords in the right hand, as a kind of abridgment and summary of the opening gesture's dotted-rhythm figure. The melody repeats obsessively an A flat, even when the harmony modulates to C minor; that note is repeated sforzando, expanded and slowed down, arousing our interest to know where it will lead. Surprisingly, and at the last minute, it is enharmonically reinterpreted as G sharp and leads to the return of the main theme in its proper register and tonality, but temporally accelerated to quarter-note values. The murmur of the opening figuration returns also, making this passage an even stronger reprise. But it ends with a fermata pause on ninth chords on C, after which one would expect F major, but instead a sinking scale passage leads ritardando into C minor.

Again a double bar line appears, and we enter an altogether different *Umwelt*. Here appears the programmatic title *Im legendenton*. This entire long passage, from bars 129 to 225, is backward-looking music, something like a "countercurrent" of musical signs.

Figure 63: In legendenton (first movement).

The anti-metrical impulse, reflecting the insanity and disturbance of the *Moi*, has disappeared or retreated into the background. We are suddenly in a universe that lies far from the anguished, dramatic, freely pulsating, and unpredictable "real" world. A melodic gesture appears in walking tempo; like a song, there is something familiar about it. It turns out to be the passionate theme from the first section's lower register, the most fantastic and *leiden-schaftlich* moment of the work thus far (in bars 33–40). It is a reminiscence of a world that has been left behind, now only remembered, and told as a narrative. Narrativity appears now as an aesthetic quality, as the basic character of the music. The romance-type melody is repeated homophonically, without the-matic development, and it intensifies upon each recurrence. This, however, is not a teleological intensification, not progress toward an unanticipated goal; there is nothing unpredictable in this musical flow, nothing that makes us wonder where it is going. The theme recurs many times, decorated in various ways, "modalized" in different *Stimmungen*. It is like a theme and variations, the last variation representing the strongest fortissimo moment in the whole piece. Nevertheless it is a mastered power, which leads to the disappearance of this story within a story, as what happens in Wagner's operas: long, epic stories amidst dramatic action threaten the dramatic course, but are necessary to conceptualizing the whole opera. Here the music becomes epigrammatic in the two final statements in bars 217–225; it dies away, and ends with a fermata pause from which, again, we have difficulty imagining how it might continue.

The *erstes Tempo* returns, and suddenly we are thrown back into the first *Umwelt* of the piece, but without the first 28 bars. It is as if we had forgotten what happened earlier. On the level of S2, this event embodies the rhetorical figure of ellipsis. There is no need to repeat everything stated previously; it is enough just to recall the first "words"[5].

Most of the first section repeats, except for the ending. Now the murmuring figuration and sigh-motif lead to an adagio coda, in which we hear a theme that sounds as if it were some musical "guest," arriving from another other topos. This uninvited guest looks familiar, and we get the feeling we have met him before; but we don't remember his name, so it is best to act "as if" we knew him. The stranger introduces himself three times. The hesitant, chro-matic chordal sections, filling the spaces between these gestures, seem to reflect our perplexity. Yet, at the same time we have a strong feeling of balance, resolution, and final 'being' in the musical space, first in the inner sense, by

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5 This is the "me-too" effect, as Professor Marianne Kielian-Gilbert calls it. One says, "Yesterday I attended the symphony concert at Théâtre du Chàtelet." The other responds, "Me, too."

the tonic of C major, and in the external sense as well, when on the final dominant harmony the range expands from the middle to bass and upper registers.

The second movement is characterized overall by strong, forward-rushing energy. The key, E flat major, is in itself something heroic (an aspect of the next level, M2), and the arpeggiated chords evoke bardic singing of an epic ballad, their harp-like quality suggesting something Appollonian. The melody rushes energetically upward in mostly stepwise motion. Dotted rhythms vary the profile of this march theme, and become the basic quality of the whole movement. All pervasive is the feeling of positive, forward-rushing motion, with polyphonic lines interwoven in the texture. Some aspects of the vigorous march rhythm evoke gestures of the previous movement, but only vaguely. Strong syncopation always precedes the main theme, the hymn of victory, when it returns at points of culmination.

Figure 64: Opening of the march in the second movement.

The middle section, *Etwas langsamer*, again is characterized by displacements of main beats, typifying the metrical dissonance and *débrayage* in Schumann. Efforts to reestablish the basic metric level at the ends of phrases are so fleeting that they do not convince the listener. However, we sense nothing whatsoever of an existential, anguished disturbance of the *Moi*; rather, everything is playful, a model of the Schillerian *Spieltrieb*. This is particularly true of the scherzando section where one can no longer detect the main beat. Interesting amidst this flickering, cheerful texture are the strong accents on Tristan chords, repeated three times, like faded memories of conflicts in the previous move-

ment. The coda releases the overwhelming energy in this musical universe. In the passage *Viel bewegter* the melodic line repeats a motif from the first movement, where it heralded extreme cessation of all motion. Now the same motivic gesture does just the opposite, instead bringing a jubilant and powerful motion that is truly transcendental in the Lisztian sense. A postsign of this movement appears in the march movement of Tchaikovsky's *Symphonie pathétique*. Presigns to this movement are of course the march movements of Beethoven's last sonatas, with their dotted-rhythm variations (e.g., Op. 111). The performance aspect of this movement is extremely corporeal, making great demands on the pianist.

The third movement is the metaphysical one, bringing temporality to the opposite extreme from what just happened.

Figure 65: Opening of the third movement.

In tempo *Langsam getragen*, we enter a transcendental space that no longer follows the normal course of time and narrativity. This movement may be existentially interpreted as a metaphor of the non-narrativity of transcendental realms: backward-looking, supremely static, a space where nothing dramatic happens. Everything important has already taken place. The time has come to comment upon it.

In contrast to the scalar accompaniment of the first movement, this texture is based on arpeggiated chords. The music makes gestures only reminiscent of the past, such as the notes A-F of the first melodic motif. Then the passionate, rising-chord motif is evoked in the middle section. These ideas are developed in opposing lines that lead to an extremely *débrayé* (shifted off) registral situation, where in hemiola figuration the lines then converge toward the center.

This evokes the main motif of the first movement, but the corporeal impression is different. Now we sense ourselves in some high place, breathing very thin air, almost levitating in space – a state Baudelaire wrote of in regard to Wagner's *Lohengrin Overture*. At the same time, all the figuration is thematic, the intervals of a second evoking the saw-like motion of the second movement.

Figure 66: Floating in the transcendence, third movement.

To Marston (1992) the descending bass line and dactylic rhythm in bars 30–31 evoke the *Allegretto* of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, perhaps a not too far-fetched connection. For Arnold Schering, the Beethoven *Allegretto* signified Mignon's funeral in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*. It seems to me, however, that this type of figuration is more reminiscent of the Bach Chaconne, or the transition in the Adagio of Schubert's *Wanderer* Fantasy. It is in any case an extremely serious moment, almost an evocation of death.

It leads to an *etwas bewegter* melody that is new: neither scalar nor arpeggiated, but wave-like. It seems to bring the subject back into the picture. But its regular, periodic phrasing is always interrupted by a fragment of opening arpeggiation, as if representing a definitive space of timelessness, the transcendence to which our subject has now been transferred. The melody, which seems to strive for something, turns into a lilting lullaby. Then comes a moment that is analyzable only as part of M2, since it recalls the descending scale passage from the main theme of the first movement. Here, however, it is chromatic, with the modal value of a painful memory, regrets for previous deeds: "Oh, why did I do so and so? Why didn't I do so and so?" our subject naively asks himself (bars 52–59), alternating between hope and despair. But this atmosphere of "now it is too late" shifts quickly into another, more hopeful modality of expectation. As we await its fulfillment, the lilting motion in uni-

son recalls the passionate theme from the first movement. Again rhythmic dissonance between layers pushes the music forward into a culmination in F major, and the main motif A-D is transformed into a kind of farewell, *Lebewohl* song. In his interpretation, Horowitz brings out these last notes, signs of the main theme, very assertively (they may be played with the left hand to reinforce the accents).
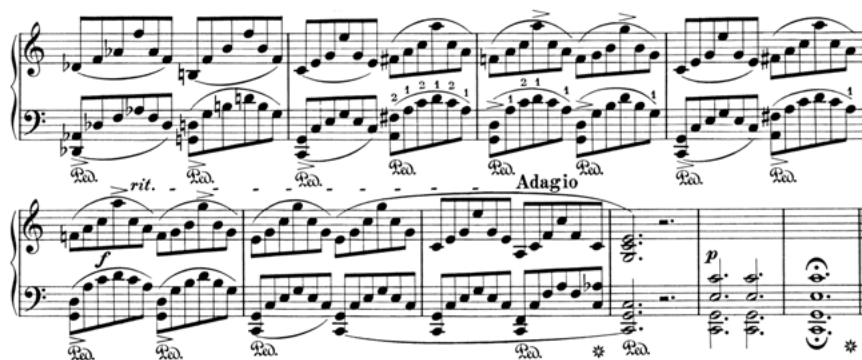
Figure 67: The end of the third movement.

6.4.2 *Moi2,* or the level of actor and person

This is the level of actors and of the modalities packed into these musical "lexemes". If in M1 the modalities were freely fluctuating and gliding *Stimmungen*, here they can be fixed, and they can exercise their action on other musical actors. In relation to our three types of narrativity, M1 represents purely organic issues, perhaps not yet "narrativity". M2 here constitutes both organic and conventional narrativities, since these actors and functions present stable, fixed, and discrete minimal units of narration. Musical actors possess both inner and outer modalities, by which they influence fellow actants in the text. Here also the musical gestures become truly intentional. As motifs they are "spiritualized" as Adorno would say; at the same time, they also involve fixed, dictionary-type meanings.

The new sign categories of existential semiotics can now come into play, since we are dealing here with clear-cut entities of musical discourse and with the processes by which they become such. Certain gestures, motifs, and actors serve as pre-signs to others, which are in turn taken as act-signs that can

lead into post-signs. Further, these three categories may serve as classificatory principles, or musical "subject positions", within the text; that is to say, the same theme can be an act-sign from one point of view, while a pre-sign from another. The themes of the movement have been cataloged at least twice, first by Marston and then by Daverio.

The taxonomic diagrams show the construction of the musical-actorial substance in the first movement. Both authors see essentially two thematic groups of paradigmatic themes: motif A, stemming from the initial descending scale passage A to D; and B, the arpeggiation motif, derived from the citation of Beethoven's song, *An die ferne geliebte*. The latter first appears as a rising gesture from the depths, very passionate, with much inner 'will', 'can', and 'know'; the latter comes to light when the motif is revealed to be mere appearance hiding the original actor, which is descending and tranquil, as it occurs in the Beethoven song. We know the Beethoven citation is presented only at the end, when it occurs as *der Zweck,* the teleological goal of all previous musical events. In existential semiotics we would call it a *genosign*, i.e., one which carries with it the whole process of its generation. As we know, Schumann removed the repetition of this actor at the end of the whole piece – its repeat would have gone against the idea of a *leiser Ton*, to which we listen secretly. The "secret", a position on Greimas's veridictory square, represents something that *is*, but that does not appear. In this case, we listen to presigns of the Beethoven motif during the first movement, expecting they will lead to that particular actor, which would then be an act-sign. Paradoxically, when this act-sign appears we have most probably already forgotten its presigns, or they exist in our musical memory only as subconsciously preserved elements. All this helps create what Liszt called the *träumerisch* character of the piece (in Marston 1992: 94). At work in Schumann is the narrative program of hiding original core motifs or themes, which in some cases the composer never reveals to the listener. Much more in the foreground here are appearances of motif A, the descending sigh-theme. It first sounds clearly in the opening as an act-sign; moreover, motif B, in view of its final version as a Beethoven allusion, is first heard as a passionate act-sign in the "exposition". Hence both become post-signs rather late in the piece. Perhaps, then, we should take the Beethoven allusion at the end of the first movement as a post-sign of the whole thematic process. Accordingly, on this level, M2, we observe the life and vicissitudes of our musical themes. What is pre-, act- or post-sign always depends upon one's point of view.

All the later appearances of motif A may also be considered "as-if-signs", that is, not having their full weight as act-signs, as part of actorial functions, but as something which only hints at what they were earlier. Here the poetic

Figure 68: Thematic chart by Marston (1992: 64–65).

idea of "ruins" fits well. As post-signs, the act-signs become ruins of what they once were. Using this metaphor, the Beethoven allusion is the "ruins" of the

Figure 69: Thematic chart by Daverio (1987: 157).

same motif, as the inverse, rising gesture in the exposition (bars 33–40). After all, it was Beethoven who wrote the *Ruins of Athens* to the drama by Kotzebue. But if Beethoven appears as ruins in the first movement, he appears as the Triumphal Arch in the second.

The treatment of the Beethoven allusion also illustrates impressively how exosigns and endosigns function. If the Beethoven motif as such is an exosign – an element not written by Schumann but borrowed from the outside – it becomes a complete endosign in the thematic-actorial processes of the work. Also the "distant beloved" actor, which this theme represents, always remains

Figure 70: Quotation of the Beethoven theme.

distant, transcendental, but internalized as a sign in the *Moi* of the composer. In the Beethoven song the theme itself is sung with these words: *Nimm sie hin denn, diese lieder, die ich dir, Geliebte, sang....* Hence the song assumes the role of a mediator in the imaginary dialogue between the two actors of real communication simulated in the poem.

Figure 71: Beethoven: *An die ferne Geliebte*.

Yet, in the end we may never know for certain which motif, theme, or musical actor serves as the *leiser Ton*. Further heightening the ambiguity is the fact that both motifs A and B can be derived from B, as was the Beethoven quotation.

The actors in the second movement also make more or less hidden references to material in the first movement. There is no doubt about the strong, act-sign nature of the heroic opening theme. A close look shows it to be a combination of features or "semes" from both motifs A and B: arpeggiated chord and scalar passages, descending and ascending. Motif B in its ascending, passionate version can be heard even in the middle theme, accentuated by the thumb of the right hand in bars 9–10. There the role of the dotted rhythm is that of a textural type, to stress the normal metrical layer. Against this texture, the middle voices "narrate" what happened previously; epigrams of the "Triumphal Arch", they recount victories of the glorified hero. Gestural movement is always upward; the trill serves as anacrusis to an ascending octave leap against the rhythmically dissonant, dotted-figure layer in the left hand.

The middle part of the second movement seems full of disturbances, so much so that it may be taken as a paradigm of Schumann's "constructed madness". Altogether the music is playful and graceful, with metric dissonance balancing the abundantly masculine and virile main part. The theme itself is derived motivically from previous actors, but it sounds different, as if a totally new actor were entering stage. In the scherzando subordinate section, from bar 142 on, we reach the opposite pole of what happened in the first movement, where in bars 77–81 active musical time died out altogether. That occasion is mildly evoked here by a barely discernible variant of the Tristan chord in bars 151, 153, and 155. The coda, too, with its lively energy, hints motivically at those moments of ultimate cessation, but with an inner tension signifying the modality of 'not-being' arising from the melodic curve of the upper part. The climax of everything in bars 254–257 transforms this melodic curve into a closer variant of the Beethoven allusion, as if the beloved were finally rediscovered. It is a positively passionate and inverted version of the *Im Legendenton* melody.

In the last movement, as was said, the opening arpeggiated chords are thematic as such, a figuration of the *Im legendenton* motif, now in mediant harmonies and without tensional content. Here all the musical actors seem to have become transcendental entities, no longer clothed in the flesh-and-blood musical *Dasein* in which they lived in the two previous movements. They have faded into mere "signs" of their previous occurrences. This might portray the difference between "soul" and "spirit" in the Schlegel poem, in the lines *not* quoted in the score but certainly also read by Schumann. Hence we see that

links can exist between levels M2 and S1, and that poetic hermeneutics can be determinant in shaping musical actors. Let us recall that one candidate for the piece's title was *Dichtungen*.

We have also seen that the clear-cut thematic units form a host of organic connections. These last shatter any schematic segmentation into, say, the primary, secondary, transitional, and closing themes of sonata-form (a possible formal outline on level S2).

6.4.3 *Soi2* (= M3), the level of social practices: form, genre, topics, rhetorics

This level brings us to consider such issues as genre, topics and rhetorics, all of which functioned as socially codified rules in Schumann's time. We also see how strict schematic codes on this level can militate against previous levels; it is as if we were moving from Kristeva's "semiotic" phase to that of the patriarchal order, which can make the composer's ideas communicable to listeners that share the same social (S2) competence. At the same time, the patriarchal order constrains the shaping of material in ways which exceed that competence.

A principal question, particularly for the first movement, concerns whether or to what extent it can be conceived as a sonata. Indeed, one of the discarded titles was "A Sonata for Beethoven". We should therefore at least try to view it as a modified sonata (no one has been able to demonstrate "canonized" sonata-form in the piece). Rosen has stated that, with this piece, the Classical style ends. Perhaps. It depends on how we define that style. If we adopt Boris Asafiev's view that "symphonism" was the general character of instrumental music of the period, we might call the *Fantasie* a "symphony" in three movements. It transgresses the boundaries of a "normal" piano sonata à la Beethoven. At the same time, we should remember one musicologist's observation, that Beethoven did not compose *in* sonata-form, but rather *with* it.

A problem appears as early as the second subject, which in "normal" sonata-form ought to contrast with the first one and appear in the dominant or some other key. Actorially, the contrasting theme-actor is the arpeggiated C minor chord motif in bar 33. Then comes the singing melody in bar 41–43, which is clearly in D minor, but motivically the same as motif A. Arriving at bar 61 we enter well-prepared terrain, pre-modalized by the accompaniment to motif A, and we now expect some contrast. But no: it is also a variant of the descending sigh-motif. Then after a total but apparent "rest", in the modality of 'not-Being', we have the surprising fanfare, but it is a variant of the passion-

ate arpeggio-motif, hence transitory. What the fanfare heralds is in fact a return of the main motif in the *im lebhaften Tempo* section, again premodalized with energetic 'will' and 'can', and making the return of the main motif even more convincing and cogent.

Then arrives the *Im Legendenton*, which many analysts try to see as a kind of development section. Nevertheless, Daverio says, it is a self-enclosed, autonomous episode within in the main story, without development of previous materials as one would find in typical sonatas. Furthermore, a major part of exposition is left out at the point where the recapitulation should start. Erika Reiman (2004), in her study of Schumann and writer Jean Paul, is probably right in her assessment:

> … these cycles, to echo the original title of the first movement of Schumann's *Fantasie* op. 17, are "ruins" in that no complete sonata-form movement emerges from their generically mixed, digressive mass. Instead, the signals of the sonata – tonal contrast, thematic development, and opposition, the art of transition – are mixed with the motivic material that unifies each cycle, creating a hybrid genre that incorporates elements of sonata, the waltz, the rondo, the song-form slow movement, and the Romantic fragment into a Schlegelian whole. (Reiman 2004: 125)

Thus, we see that our levels M2 and S2 come into contact with each other, not always harmoniously, but in disturbance and conflict. In this way sonata-form, the main entity of level S2, is reduced to the status of an "as-if" (*als ob*) sign: it is an object only to be signaled, not enacted. Free fantasy, however, needs such a normative generic basis – if only as something to resist. As Rosen says, here we have a kind of "wave" form, on which we need not place generic restrictions. It is an organized whole, what Ernst Kurth called a *Steigerungsanlagen* or *Bewegungsphasen,* the energetic, internal flow of which causes radical changes in genre. (Of course, the fantasy itself was a genre as such, and Schumann was not the first to try it.)

As for topical and rhetorical elements: we have already remarked on the elliptical treatment of the main motif. Rhetorically, much in the piece is based on catabasis and anabasis, descending and ascending motions. Both motifs A and B are essentially catabasis-type statements, even though motif B first appears as a bold and impassioned gesture in C minor, and though the whole second movement is motivically of a strongly anabasis type. As to musical topics, we know the Romantics were inclined to create their own, as has been noticed in Liszt (see Grabócz 1996). But Schumann, like Beethoven, easily took classical topics and parodized them with contrasting connotations. For instance, the second movement is a march, but a march that transcends its topic. It is rather Nietzschean *Rausch* music, which stands in opposition to the dreamy Appollonian atmosphere of the last movement. The metrical dissonan-

ces may be seen as Schumann's own private topos of "constructed madness". Are "ruins" a topic? Yes, in the sense that ruins were an aesthetically appreciated, historical object in the Romantic period, as seen in landscapes and stage scenery. Still, in regard to music we should be able to define "ruins" in more detail. Not just any destruction of canonized form qualifies as "ruins". In the last movement, the second motif (bars 34–51) might be taken as a waltz topos, given its lilting rhythms. Certainly *Im Legendenton* follows the genre of Romance – as well as the category of folklore in the mythical sense of a "legend". It is not *im Balladenton* or *im Sagenton*. A legend usually tells the story of either an extremely good person (saint) or an extremely bad one (devil). Perhaps here the swelling of the romance actor into an almost violent outburst in F minor and *fff* may portray the hero's development from one state to another, from saint to sinner, so to speak.

There is one semiotic study of the *Fantasie*, by the eminent Hungarian-French musicologist Márta Grabócz (1994), who employs the Paris School method of analysis. Her analysis, however, lies just on the borderlines of M2 and S2. This is because the major problem here is the same as in Mozart's Symphony in C major (K. 338), his Prague Symphony (K. 504), and Beethoven's Piano Sonata in C major (op. 2 no. 3) – namely, a new element emerges in the development and is provided with a new semantic feature, followed by its negation, and after that by its cathartic reinterpretation in the recapitulation and/or coda. Grabócz notes that either the initial themes assume additional meanings in the recapitulation or an entirely new theme appears. Such "unexpected material, alien to the whole system" is precisely represented by the *Im Legendenton* section. She states that the conflict entails a transformation of sonata form (= S2) or the change of its elements (musical actors, themes) into something uncommon and exceptional (= M2). Grabócz also points out that Romantic narrativity operates with consecutive negations, in the form of the deconstruction of elements.

In our piece, at the end of the first movement, the communication between the beloved and the narrator is consummated with the Beethoven quotation, finishing with the hope that songs sent by the lover will reach their destination. Previously this theme always appeared resigned, calm, and not in the tonic key, but here it obtains the modality of 'being'. For this reason Grabócz segments the form into the following macro-units: S1, bars 1–28, Dorian version of the theme, enthusiastic, passionate, fantastic; non-S1, bars 41–54, minor version, melancholic, resigned; S2, bars 61–72, quotation of the Lied = affirmative, epic, storytelling, Lydian or major version; non-S2, bars 74–81 and bars 126-238, negation of affirmation, skeptical, querulous, rejection and withdrawal. (Notice here that the symbols S1 and so on do not refer to our Z model,

but to the Greimassian semiotic square and its articulations.) Accordingly, Grabócz thinks that the exposition passes through the whole narrative chain of phases S1/ non-S1 and S2/non-S2, calling the ensemble a "full narrative cycle".

Now we must decide where in our model to situate this canonical Greimassian narrative scheme. I have long thought the semiotic square to be applicable on all levels of generation, that it applies equally well to both micro- and macro-syntagms of a text. Thus I have used it as such in my previous studies, ranging from Beethoven and Chopin to Wagner and Debussy. But is this canonical narrative scheme comprised of *Soi2* entities, as forms, genres and rhetorics? Or is it best conceived as a universal model of human mind, something like an inevitable and organic mental process? Before deciding, we must remember that the linear unfolding of the canonical form, as sketched above, is only *one* possibility. The composer might well have started with non-S2, then gone to non-S1, then to S2, and only then to S1. Hence, different temporalizations are available. Nevertheless, since such a narrative canon operates with units closest to the actorial level, and forms entities within a sonata exposition, it should be situated in the *Fantasie* between levels *Moi2* and *Soi2*. As we have said, one level denies the other in this case, hence we also encounter here a conflict among levels or modes of being.

6.4.4 *Soi1* (= M4), the level of the ideas and values

On this level we engage with aesthetic ideas, norms and values behind a work, which may in some cases serve as its "semantic gesture". Indeed, many different isotopies exist in Romantic culture, into which we may insert this work.

The most concrete empirical issue is of course the motto quotation on the first page of the score. It is there inevitably, and we must consider its consequences for our whole interpretation. We know that the quotation is only a fragment of a longer poem, all of which Schumann must have read. Whether to follow the publisher's wishes or for practical purposes, only the final verses were printed on the score. The entire poem, *Die Gebüsche* (*The Bushes*) from a collection entitled *Abendröte*, is worth citing:

Es wehet kühl und leise	There blows cool and gentle
Die Luft durch dunkle Auen,	The breeze through the dark fields,
Und nur der Himmel lächelt	And only heaven smiles
aus tausend hellen Augen.	From a thousand bright eyes.
Es regt nur Eine Seele	There moves only one soul
Sich in der Meere Brausen,	Amidst the roar of the sea,

Und in den leisen Worten,	And in the gentle words,
Die durch die Blätter rauschen.	That whisper through the leaves.
So tönt in Welle Welle,	So waves echo waves,
Wo Geister Heimlich trauren;	Where spirits secretly mourn;
So folgen Worte Worten,	So words follow words,
Wo Geister Leben hauchen.	Where spirits breathe life.
Durch alle Töne Tönet	Through all sounds sounds
Im bunten Erdentraume	In the varied colors of earth's dreams
Eine leiser Ton gezogen,	One, only one faint sound,
Für den, der heimlich lauschet.	For the one who listens in secret.

The poem mentions fields, sea, starry sky (metaphorically as *hellen Augen*), tree leaves, and waves. We learn that the waves have *Tönen*, which produce a murmuring sound, and we hear words among the rustling of leaves. But *who* utters these words is not stated. Instead, two entities appear: *eine Seele*, one soul, and *Geister*, spirits. We learn that the spirits are able to follow the words and that they breathe forth life. All this is the basis of how the poem closes. The one soul may be identified as the core musical motif from which all the musical actors stem; or else variants of the motif represent different entitites, like "spirits" breathing life. But this one soul, *Eine Seele*, remains hidden to the very end.

Behind all such programmatic notes and hermeneutics stood a whole philosophy of Romanticism shared by many artists. At the same time as John Ruskin, in England, was writing wrote about ruins – the stones of Venice, emotions projected onto landscapes (pathetic fallacy) – Caspar David Friedrich was painting his romanticized visions of sea, mountains and ruins, with a lonely subject in the foreground as a *Rückfigur*, seen from the back, and representing the Schlegelian lonely "Soul". Ludwig von Tieck dedicated much of his literary activity to the romanticism of ruins. In his collective work, *Phantasus*, Tieck offers up copius discussions about the ideas of his young years, the period of Storm and Stress (*Sturm und Drang*). One of his protagonists describes the beauty of making pilgrimages in one's youth to see ruins and monuments of ancient times. Such a person is then able to blend everyday reality and past memories into a single, sublime image (in Koskimies 1930: 76). He goes on to say how Friedrich Schlegel, in particular, taught his contemporaries to admire the rich spiritual life of the Middle Ages. For the protagonist, as well as Tieck himself, ruins signify a source of inspiration, and launch unbridled wanderings of fantasy. He despises his own time, which has neglected those old monuments or turned them into factories, allowing splendid halls of knights to deteriorate into miserable shambles. Ruins evoke fairy

tales and also emotions of horror, "*die ungeheure Leere, das furchtbare Chaos mit Gestalten bevölkern*". Such feelings of fear and the uncanny were portrayed also by Schumann, for instance in his *Waldscenen* movement, *Verrufene Stelle.* Tieck's *Phantasus* teaches, however, that fear and horror can also contain something charming, moving and melancholic. In Tieck's fairytale *Der Runenberg* the narrator, perplexed by loneliness and unrest, starts to wander and arrives at mountains where, amidst a romantic landscape, he notices an old ruined castle, pale in the gloom.

All these emotions were theorized earlier by Friedrich Schlegel. In his *Psychologia universalis* (1827), subtitled *Zur Theorie des Menschen*, Schlegel laid the foundations of his thought on man and creativity. Concerning man's character (M2, personality), the British world had formulated "universal ideas" about the desired goals of any education being such virtues as clarity, aversion to nonsense, stability of character, good principles, intelligence, understatement, slow and careful reasoning, avoidance of extravagance, kindness of heart, and so on. Schlegel, by contrast, believed in the fantastic and the imaginative. The thinking soul, at the center of everything, has double duties: dividing and combining, intellect and feeling, inventing and anticipating fantasy. These are united by an internal pulsation (*pulsieren*), like that of a living body. Ultimately there exists an invisible and etheric light-body, *Lichtkörper.* The doubling is based on oscillations between two poles: constant doing and letting-go, tension and tiredness, will and realization, thought and achievement; and this dialectic takes place in the arts as well. Writes Schiller: *Dein Wissen teilest du mit vorgezogener Geister... die Kunst, o Mensch, hast du allein* (You share your knowledge with by-gone spirits ... Art, oh man, you alone have). The German Romantics believed that they had discovered the universal basis of all art and science, which Friedrich Schlegel called "progressive Universal poetry". This Romantic principle was said to pervade everything, hence individuality manifested it best: the highest virtue of man was his originality, not his domestication, as British thought had it. In man's uniqueness appear moments in which reality is condensed, and these are elevated to the level of the universal. Here originality attains the status of myth or "universal poetry". There exists an invisible "hyle" level of mankind and reality, where events follow their own mystical and unexplainable logic. The continuum of human signs constitutes a blurry reflection of this ethereal reality. This is what Schlegel meant by his idea of "symphilosophy". Universal poetry issues from one who has reached this level and there discovers the true and fateful unity of mankind. Signs emerge from nothingness, but the nothingness itself is an individual experience; in fact, everything is held together by an unknown *energeia*, a law upon which everything depends. Schlegel wrote: "The life of the

universal spirit is an unbroken chain of inner revolutions; all individual, original and perpetual ones live in it." We may take all this as the background of such a work as Schumann's *Fantasie*, which certainly represents "universal poetry" in music, an art in which musical signs seem to dive up from "nothingness", then condensate in order to reach the mythical, as in the *Im Legendenton* passage.

In his *Athenäum Fragmente*, published much earlier (1798), Schlegel had already conceived of a project to be called "fragments from the future". Essential in this case is the ability both to idealize things and to realize them. For him, the "transcendental" is precisely the connection and separation of the ideal and the real: the sense of fragmentation and projection is the transcendental ingredient of the historical spirit. Later in his study Schlegel (1798/1997: 105) specifies a poetry for which the only essential thing is the relationship between the ideal and the real, analogous to the philosophy called "transcendental poetry" (*Transzdendentalpoesie*). This we may interpret in the framework of our Z model, such that the "historical" development of the spirit is its movement from M1 to S1; the transcendental force in this process is our ability to affirm and deny it, thus stepping into transcendence. Transcendental poetry is realized on level S2 as particular genres: satire emphasizing absolute difference, elegy in the middle, and idyll as the identity of both combined. For Schlegel this was a continuous process of 'becoming'. One could never *be* a learned man, one could only try *become* such (in other words, we are all perpetual students): *Man kann nur Philosoph werden nicht es ein. Sobald man es zu sein glaubt, hört man auf es zu werden* (ibid.: 82).

Schlegel distinguishes between the concepts of "transcendental" and "transcendent", as Kant did in his *Critique of Pure Reason*. Schlegel says: "The transcendental is what is highest, what must and can be: transcendent is what one wants to be the highest, but cannot or must not do." One is the universe of Platonic, universal ideas, and the other mankind's aspiration toward them[6]. Schlegel had other, more concrete ideas about how his universal progressive poetry could manifest in the symbiosis of literature and music, and this certainly interests us as we ponder the connection between the poetic fragment by Schlegel and Schumann's *Fantasie*. He writes:

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6 We may quote Kant on this issue: "*Unser Geschäfte ist hier nicht, vom empirischen Scheine … zu handeln…. Sondern wir haben es mit dem transzendentalen Scheine allein zu tun … der auf Grundsätze einfliesst, deren Gebrauch nicht einmal auf Erfahrung angelegt ist … wir wolllen die Grundsätze … immanente … transzendente Grundsätze nennen. Ich verstehe aber unter diesen nicht den transzendentalen gebrauch oder Missbrauch der Kategorie. Daher sind transcendental und transzendent nicht einerlei*" (Kant 1787/1968: 378–379).

> It would seem to many ridiculous when a musician talks about the ideas of his compositions. They have more ideas *in* their music than what they express from their minds. Yet all absolute instrumental music has a tendency to blend with philosophy. And so, should pure instrumental music provide itself its own text? Is it not so that there the theme will be so developed, confirmed and varied and constructed, just as a series of philosophical ideas in a meditation? (Ibid.: 140).

For Schlegel this represents a kind of numerology of energy, which one might call "historical mathematics". And ultimately about music Schlegel writes: "Many musical compositions are only translations of a poem into the language of music" (ibid.: 127). Yet perhaps the best known comment by Schlegel is his idea that an art-work evokes a very particular animal: "A fragment should be like a little work of art, complete in itself and separated from the rest of the universe like a hedgehog" (ibid.: 99). Charles Rosen fleshes out the analogy: "Its form is well defined and yet blurred at the edges. This spherical shape, organic and ideally geometrical, suited Romantic thought … separate from the rest of the world, the Fragment nevertheless suggests distant perspectives. Its separation indeed is aggressive. It projects into the universe precisely by the way it cuts itself off" (Rosen 1995: 48).

6.5 Existential tones of the *Fantasie*?

Ultimately we have to observe the genuinely Romantic character of this music, which transcends its materiality; all its levels of being are more or less bound to the *Dasein* of the composer. There is always the possibility of affirmation or negation behind musical processes: how the music encounters Nothingness and how it is absorbed by Plenitude. Certainly, such existential acts appear more strongly at some moments than at others. To put it in Schlegel's words, the transcendental emerges from a conflict between the real and the ideal. Though Schumann could have expressed his ideas and intentions via four modes of being (M1, M2, M3, M4), there remains something ineffable, something more. There are moments in which the music becomes metaphysical, in the sense that both enunciator and enunciate have the freedom to go beyond the materiality of mere sound.

What moments in this piece are so dense with transcendental meanings that they stand out as something existential? One, perhaps, is the transformation of the main first theme, the descending scale from A to D, into its "transcendental" sign quite at the end of the third movement. Another may be the atemporal nature of the last movement, with its reminiscences of previous actants who have now lost their character as "real" and become something

"ideal". And there is the attainment of the C major tonic in the coda of the first moment, at the same time as the Beethoven *An die ferne geliebte* motif appears as a "transcendental" actor indeed, since it originates from outside the work. Anticipated many times earlier on level M2 – albeit hidden, filling Greimas's veridictory category of secret – this motif when it bursts out is also a genosign; as we have said, it brings with it the whole process of its generation.

The existential might also arise from a clash of levels, say between sonata form (S2) and real actors (M2), manifesting via the rhetorical figure of ellipsis in bar 226 of the first movement. Or does the existential manifest as an abrupt return from transcendence – the mythical legendary sphere – back to earth, and as the "forgetting"of half the exposition in this supposed recapitulation? Or is it in the alternation of melodious and actorial singing of the *Moi* (M2) and the repeated arpeggiations in the last movement (bars 34–37) and else-where? Or again, in the extreme *ritardando* and cessation ending in the "Tris-tan chord" of bars 80–81? These all represent aspirations towards what is "transcendent" to Being but does not attain it, just as the "transcendental" in Schlegel and Kant strive toward transcendence, but never arrive there once and for all. If we accede to this view, then we are at the same time agreeing with Schlegel's idea of the fragment as a manifestation of transcendence in art.

Sometimes existential moments have a compelling character, such that "it *must* be this way"; sometimes we feel in them the air of freedom: they are choices, and often against the rules and norms of S2. Clashes and conflicts do not exist only among different modes of Being or among "levels", say between M1 and S1; rather, they may occur at any moment, between the sounding music and its transcendental dimension. This leaves us very much still in search of a "*leiser Ton*" – which is nothing if not also an existential tone, in the "bright dream of the earth".

Chapter 7 Brahms and the "Lyric I": A Hermeneutic Sign Analysis

7.1 Introduction

How charming are those yellowed and dusty old German books, printed in Fractura font. Just such a booklet is *Das deutsche Lied* by Hermann Bischoff, which has found its way into my library, and which bears neither the date of printing nor name of publisher. Maybe that is why Bischoff's characterisation of Johannes Brahms as a Lied composer seems to remain universal and time-less:

> Brahms Lieder geben ein treues Bild seines Wesens. Ihre Tonsprache ist zumeist sehr zurückhaltend, umsomehr ergreifen allerdings in ihnen ganz ungewollte leidenschaftliche Ausbrüche. In den meisten gibt uns Brahms schöne, edle Gesangsmelodien die sich in weiten Bogen spannen. [...] Brahms liebt es, in seinen Werken sein Leben in stiller und ruhiger, in sich versunkener Weise zu überschauen. Man könnte sagen, er habe den Blick nicht sehnsüchtig in die Zukunft, sondern wehmutsvoll in die Vergangenheit gerichtet. [...] Die Brahmssche Musik braucht, um zu ihrer vollen Wirkung zu gelangen, die Möglich-keit, sich ausdehnen zu können. [...] Wenn ich die Erscheinung Brahms' betrachte, so habe ich immer das Gefühl, er habe auf irgend ein Glück, auf irgend ein Ereignis gewartet, welches seinem Leben eine neue Wendung geben sollte. War es die Liebe einer edlen Frau, war es ein neues Amerika der Kunst? Es ist dies nur ein Gefühl für mich, ich könnte keine Beweise bringen. Aber ich sehe ihn immer mit offenen Händen dastehen, bereit, das Glück zu empfangen, welches doch nicht kommen will. Und das Leben verrint, und Brahms sieht mit Wehmut zu, und je weniger er noch von der Zukunft hofft, desto mehr richten sich seine Blicke in die Vergangenheit. "Die Melancholie des Unvermögens", so hat Nietzsche das Wesen der Brahmsschen Musik bezeichnet. Das kann aber höchsten in dem oben ausgeführten Sinne zutrefen, denn als Künstler war Brahms so potent, wie nur irgend einer. Aber auch über seiner Kunst liegt jenes wehmutige Hauch, auch seine Werke haben für mich j enes Bereitsein für etwas, was nicht kommen will. (Bischoff, n.d.: 65–70)

> [Brahms's songs give a faithful picture of his being. Their tone language is mostly very restrained but all the more powerful are the bursts of passion that occur in them from time to time. In most of them Brahms gives us beautiful, noble tunes which open up into large arcs [...] Brahms in his works likes to peruse his life quietly and calmly, in an introverted manner. One could say that he does not gaze nostalgically into the future but melancholically into the past. [...] To gain its full measure Brahms's music needs an opportunity to spread out in time. [...] When I consider Brahms's nature, I always have the feeling as if he had awaited some kind of happiness, an event, which would have given his life a new turn. Was it the love of a noble woman or the new artistic America? But this is only a feeling which I cannot prove. Yet I always see him open-armed, ready to receive the happiness which will never come. As life continues Brahms beholds it

melancholically. The less he expects from the future, the more his gaze is aimed at the past. "The melancholia of ineptitude", as Nietzsche described the nature of Brahms's music. The statement can hold up only in the aforementioned meaning because as an artist Brahms was as capable as anyone. But this melancholic breath rests upon his art, and in his works, too, as a sense of waiting for something that will never turn up.]

Bischoff's ruminations are typical of musical hermeneutics. He has no inhibitions about mixing up the artist's persona with the real person, he has heard nothing about "the intentional fallacy", he cannot make a narratological distinction between the physical narrator and the inner narrator (the physical composer and the "inner composer") – plainly, he sees a work of art as a direct reflection of the artist's psyche, with an almost "causal" relation obtaining between the two. His thinking has not yet been sliced up into neat little preparations for the kind of microscopic investigation favored by Anglo-analytic aesthetics. And that is precisely what makes Bischoff's text interesting in the first place. It offers a hermeneutic *preunderstanding* of the hidden meanings of the "Lied". Because emically the writer still belongs to that part of culture and tradition which the music itself expresses, his feelings and anticipations have a special value of their own. They refer to meanings that exist even before they are analyzed.

My analysis of Brahms's Lied, *Der Tod, das ist die kühle Nacht*, Op. 96 No. 1, takes as its starting point the epistemological premises of so-called "romantic semiotics": (a) Meaning is a process; i.e., it manifests itself as a temporal series of events, as a chain of situations in which the subject (subjectivity) plays a central role. (b) Meaning is born immanently, starting from something internal, perhaps from intention, from a *signifié* (signified) or similar; it strives for expression, to become manifest. (c) Meaning is born out of differences within a given system or an entity (composition, style, culture).

Careful study of Bischoff's text reveals all the elements just listed, albeit expressed in the figurative language of his time: (a) Meaning as process and as presence of the subject: "Brahms going over his life … needs a temporal unfolding…". (b) From the immanent to the manifest: "the melancholy of inability… Lieder give a faithful picture of [Brahms'] being". (c) Differences abound: restraint / eruption, future / past, nostalgia / melancholy, and so on. Bischoff is not so naïve as to completely confuse Brahms-the-person with Brahms-the-artist, but he does see a certain connection between these two subjects – which opens the door to all kinds of psychoanalytic and/or gender-obsessed "new musicology". I return to this possibility later.

In the following analysis I consider first the text of the Lied, then the music, and finally the interaction of the two. The problem of a speaking or "enunciating" subject (enunciator) is confronted and described across these several levels.

Figure 72: Brahms: *Der Tod, das ist die kühle Nacht*, Op. 96 No. 1, bars 1–14.

7.2 Semantics: Basic oppositions

> Der Tod, das ist die kühle Nacht,
> das Leben ist der schwüle Tag.
> Es dunkelt schon, mich schläfert,
> der Tag hat mich müd gemacht.
> Über mein Bett erhebt sich ein Baum,
> drin singt die junge Nachtigall;
> sie singt von lauter Liebe,
> ich hör es, sogar im Traum

Heine's short poem presents a variety of situations. The first two lines intro-duce, as a kind of aphorism, the common Romantic maxim of euphoric night as against dysphoric daytime. These two lines form the poem's "basic isotopy", the lens through which all consequent situations should be seen. The lines evoke the kind of nocturnal loneliness and dark spells as one finds in Novalis's poetry collection, *Hymnen an die Nacht* and in Caspar David Friedrich's sombre and desolate paintings, which capture poignantly the loneliness of the subject, or "lyric I". This is not, however, a negative or oppressive loneliness, but rather the loneliness of *Waldeinsamkeit*, as a positive sentiment of solitude. The sub-ject – at some lonely moment of the night or even-tide – has broken free of the sultry, never-changing days which seem to come in constant, dreary circles. Night constitutes a pause for contemplation, an opportunity to formulate apho-ristic truths. The beginning of the poem is seemingly timeless, spaceless, and without a subject.

The first subjects to appear are *death*, traditionally associated with night, and *life*, identified with day. Yet, here an essential difference exists in associa-tions between the two: *this* night is pleasantly cool ("kühle"), and the day miserably sweltering ("schwül"). In other words, "day" and "night", as Death and Life, are modalized in ways almost opposite to the values one usually gives them. From these values a semiotician might easily derive the following square of oppositions:
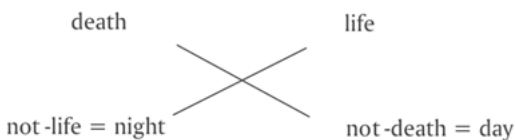
Figure 73: Values and actors of the poem in a semiotic square.

The following lines of the poem change the situation. Temporal setting is defined ("es dunkelt schon") and so is the subject, who is described as fatigued by the day: "mich schläfert, der Tag hat mich müde gemacht".

Hence, the first line defines both time and actor. But rather than the lyric I, this is an *actual* actor, "der Tag", which is the main subject of the phrase. Day has the habit of turning into night; hence it cannot be a constant subject. We are about to move from the term of "life" to that of "non-life" on the square. The day has made me tired (death), as depicted by the dashed line on the square:

death   life

night   day
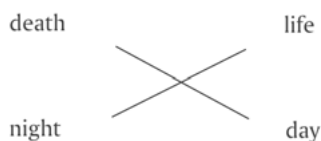
Figure 74: Action within the square.

In this way, a clear action takes place between the basic oppositions of the poem. At the same time, the real *lyric I* appears only as an "object", in the form of "mich". He is not active, but passively experiences the conditions into which he is placed.

The next lines highlight locale or setting: "über mein Bett erhebt sich ein Baum". The subject-actor, the *lyric I*, is located on a bed, but we do not know whether he is indoors or outdoors. For example, is he in a room with an open window and with a view of a towering tree? Or is the "bed" to be understood metaphorically? Could it be a bed of moss beneath a tree, with the whole scene taking place in the open-air? Whatever the case, the situation is about to change, because the place, which is connected with the lyric subject only through the possessive pronoun "mein", is entered by the first active actor of the poem: a bird ("die junge Nachtigall"). It is also a question of a feminine subject, as opposed to masculine subjects "der Tod" and "der Tag" from the previous stanza. This new actor is active, too; it does something – it sings (*singt*) about a "noisy love". The word "laut" points up the fact that a nightingale's love is not a purely inner, brooding state. On the contrary, it manifests itself as a sign, as a song.

The nightingale sings, telling us about love. The last line of this song includes the only direct repetition of the poem ("ich hör es"). The repetition is emphasized such that it signifies – at the very end of the poem – as an echo of, or reply to, the lyric subject of the poem. But we may also assume that the

I of the poem hears this love-song even through a dream. In other words, he would hear the love-song, as such, only if he interpreted this animal-human communication to be one in which the bird is specifically singing about love. Thus, the subject experiences the singing of the nightingale as a metaphor of its own (the subject's) existence. What the bird goes through *inside* the poem is the same as what the lyric subject of the poem experiences – the lyric subject being the actual reader who, as a text, pre-exists the poem. For the subject, the poem as a whole is an expression of this lyrical state of love. In other words, it is as if the poet's reader, the enunciator, is revealed through the nightingale metaphor only at the end of the poem. The reader of this poem cannot understand the text without journeying outside it, to a process or condition completed "before" the poem. This process of falling in love is actualized, then crystallized as a poem. The poem as a whole is a manifestation of falling in love, but the manifestation is expressed on the level of the text only as a metaphor, as birdsong.

The progression of the poem is a gradual revelation of the enunciator of the lyric subject. This is precisely what happens during the repetition at the end: "ich hör es, ich hör es". He does not say "ich liebe, ich liebe", however, but just hints at his love. Also, the reader might wonder, What *kind* of love is it? Is it a "new" love, which has not yet been confessed to its object? Or is the text representing a by-gone or even forsaken love? To these questions the text remains open in a fascinating way. In Greimassian terms, the text displays the transition of the subject, from a "shifting out" (*débrayage*, or disengagement) to "shifting in" (*embrayage*, engagement).

The theme of the poem is a transition between two extremes: from day to night, from life to death (metaphorically speaking), from waking state to dreamworld. Yet, remaining constant in all these situations is the love which the subject experiences, but which is never expressed directly. We may thus classify this poem as a genre of *allusion*, and even of *illusion* in its sleight-of-hand between a perception of the universe as signs or as a metaphor existing prior to these signs. The real referent of these signs (night, day, cool, sultry, nightingale, bed, dream) goes unrevealed.

7.3 "Instrumentation" of the poetic language

I next study the "instrumentation" of the poem, not yet in Brahms's music, but in the phonetic form and linguistic material of the poem. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Russian Formalist Yury Tynyanov discussed the "instrumentation" of poetry, in his now-classic treatise *Problema stikhotvor-*

novo yazyka (Tynjanov 1977/1924). By "instrumentation" he meant the musical-ity of the poetic language, the continuity of its phonetic level, and the general phonetic overtones of a line. Instrumentation refers to groups of sounds that, by means of repetition, stand out more than others against the articulatory background of the musical texture. This phenomenon of repetition often dis-torts the semantic meaning of words. The phonetic material of words entices one to say something that brings a surprise on the level of significance. Goethe said that those who have something to say write prose, whereas those who have nothing to say, but who want to give the impression that they do, write verse.

If the recurrent phonemic combinations are circled, one notices that the poem is based on a very tight net of phonemic references, in which repetitions mostly materialize over more than one verse, while binding the verses together. Verses usually do not contain repetition, especially at the beginning of pieces. (The beginning of poems "usually" creates this rule, a deviation from which becomes a significant feature that separates verses.) The verse "Der Tod, das ist die kühle Nacht" does not contain phonemic repetition, nor does the follow-ing verse, "das Leben ist der schwüle Tag". But there is a repetition between these verses which creates a symmetry that is opposite to the terse manner of enunciating at the beginning of the poem: *der/der, das/das, ist/ist, kühle/*
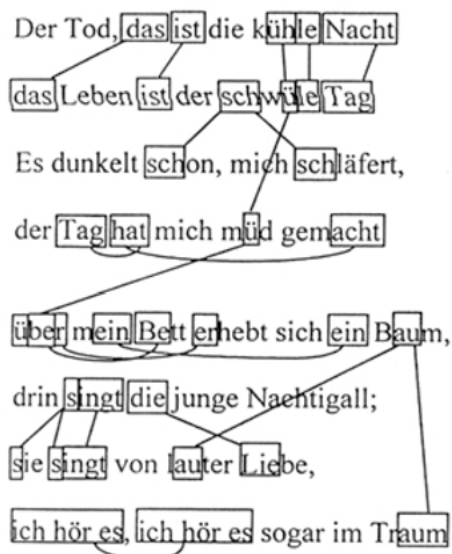
Figure 75: Distribution of phonemes in the poem.

schwüle, Nacht/Tag. Even the next verse contains no repetition, though much of its material has occurred earlier: *der/der, Tag/Tag, hat/Nacht, (m)ü(d)/ (schw)ü(l), ge-/le-, -macht/Nacht.* In contrast to the inner invariability of the preceding verses, this one has much internal repetition (inner iconicity): *der/ ge-, Tag/hat, -macht, m(ich)/m(üde).*

The following verse also begins with allusions to preceding verses: *ü(ber) / (k)ü(hle)/ (schw)ü(le), hebt / (leb-), sich / ich.* At the same time, it contains an inner repetition within the verse: *mein/ein, bett / hebt, -be(r) / be(tt).* By these means, the poet establishes continuity and coherence in the poem's instrumentation. Previously-heard sound colors are repeated, while another tendency is becoming stronger: condensation of the inner orchestration and "tone" of each verse. What Tynyanov called "tonal gestures" begin to emerge out of the verses, and this impression gains strength as the song proceeds: *drin / sing-, sing- / jung, die /- ti-, -a- /-a-.*

In the third verse the inner repetition relaxes somewhat (*sie/lie-*), so that the upcoming inner repetition, *ich hör es / ich hör es,* of the final verse will be even more impressive. This last-mentioned repetition takes both a phonetically emphatic and a semantically decisive position (the meaning of the semantic level is emphasized with a corresponding tonal gesture).

A vowel and consonant map may be compiled from the poem, to tally up which vowels and consonants occur most and least often. On this level one in turn notices that, the more seldom a vowel occurs, the stronger it stands out from the background of the other vowels. Statistically, *e* occurs 20 times, *i* 16, *a* 9, *o* 4, *au* 3, *ö* 2 times, and *ai* occurs once. The vowel *a* is the predominant element at the end of the first verse, which ends in a hard consonant. The *o*'s and *u*'s are distributed evenly, and *ö* occurs only at the end, for which it has been saved in order to evoke an effect of surprise.

The consonant map specifically shows that all sibilant *s*'s are found at the beginning of the poem – perhaps as an allusion to dreams and night – whereas all voiced *s*'s occur at the end of the poem. The consonant *r* is found most often (4 times) in the eighth and final verse. In sum: the instrumentation of the poem clearly supports certain semantic gestures; it also underlines the last verse as being exceptional in every respect.

7.4 Musical paradigms

Next, the melodic vocal line is examined on its own. Some paradigmatic analysis is in order here; not because the analysis should remain on this level, but because it reveals the basis upon which the system of differences of this song can be built up melodically.

Figure 76: Paradigmatic melodic chart of the Brahms song.

The melody has two central paradigmatic units: (A) an ascending gesture made up of gradually expanding intervals and sometimes quickened rhythmic val-

ues; and (C) which appears as a descending tetrachord or pentachord. As a variant, the latter sometimes descends further, by expanding stepwise to a sixth. In the course of the composition, an ascending and descending gesture alternate, producing the *weite Bogen* (broad arcs), mentioned by Bischoff. The significance of a descending passage further depends on its location in different registers. Consequently, the transposition of paradigmatic elements to a single pitch center ignores registral changes and their accompanying tone colours; while common in Nattiez's and other paradigmatic methods, the leveling of pitch center can be quite misleading, especially in the interpretation of vocal music. When the descending scale is placed in the top register of this Lied, it becomes a *bel canto* that imitates the song of the nightingale. The melody also has the tendency to change from syllabic to melismatic, when the lyrical atmosphere becomes more intimate; and this common stylistic device of *bel canto* is useful for more than just imitating bird-song: it also expresses the internal tension of the music.

On the paradigmatic table attention is also drawn to two elements which occur only once: an arpeggiated triad motif (B) and a cyclic motif (D). Motif (B) moves from the vocal line to dominate the figurations of the piano part in the latter section. The cyclic motif (D) derives from the heavy, "horn call" motifs of the piano, which tend to center on the same note, and which in Romantic music always symbolize hunting and farewell.[11]

The piano part and its harmonic implications are interpreted next. One could of course argue that everything starts with the harmonic level, and that melody serves only to decorate it. In that case, the chords would represent the intentions and emotions that the *inner narrator* wants to express with his song.

The first six bars form a well-defined, harmonically closed unit that begins and ends in C major. Despite this normative phrase-form, however, these bars contain a certain energetic "charge". Even alone, a third can be a charged element; and when raised to F sharp through a diminished-seventh chord, it becomes even more tense. But this chord does not act just as an element of functional harmony, it also acts as a coloring element. Also in this phrase, the piano's trochaic rhythm sounds against the triplet figurations of the vocal part. Although the D flat of bar 7 contains the possibility of a Neapolitan chord, it turns out to be a passing note to the B flat major chord. There follows a series of harmonic surprises.

The B flat major turns out to be the dominant of E flat minor at the beginning of bar 8. It is an ascending gesture in sequences of sixths ornamented

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11 On this kind of musical signification, see Charles Rosen's analysis of Schubert's "Der Lindenbaum" (Rosen 1995: 116–122, 135).

with unexpected "filler" tones in different harmonic contexts. The dominant seventh of G is prepared via an Italian sixth chord; and further, the parallel minor is reached, which is soon transposed into G major. For a moment G major acts as the tonic, but in bar 18 it resolves into C major, from which point the gesture is carried on by a diminished seventh degree. The chromatic chords still function as coloring elements; but more essential are the arpeggiation figures in the piano and in the melody of the top voice. These repeat the vocal gesture, first as the representation of a nightingale, and then as an indexical sign of a declaration of love. The flattened sixth degree hints at the harmonic fields of F minor and C minor. (Intertextually, the piano figure is related to the heaviness of the slow movement from Brahms's Horn Trio.) The work ends on the tonic C major in root position; yet, a full V-I cadence does not occur, which lessens the sense of finality or full closure.

7.5 Interpretation – Four musical-poetic situations

In closing, I will integrate my observations of poem and music into an overall interpretation. It describes a series of musical-poetic situations in which the poetic and the musical texts are linked together both iconically and indexically.

It is interesting how Brahms creates tension between these two layers, in a way that allows the music to express something totally opposite to the words. The layers are polyphonically interrelated, as suits a romantic night-topos. Sometimes a word from the poem may produce indexically a certain state or thing, or it may represent a musical object. For example, the fact that "night" is first, and paradoxically, depicted by an *ascending* passage, relates intertextually to certain night-topics of Wagner's music, as in the "Traum" section of his *Wesendock Lied* or in the second act of *Tristan and Isolde*. In the song at hand, "day" is represented by circular figures (a common topic with Brahms). They express a certain melancholy, in their slow, trudging repetition.

As said above, the relation between text and music of this song can be surprisingly antipathetic: "es dunkelt schon" is depicted as an *ascending*, brightening sequence of chords, traditionally suggestive of joy and heavenward motion. Upon arriving at the word "day", in turn, the harmony surprisingly transforms itself into the parallel minor variant of the dominant, undermining the usual association of "day" with the happiness of the major mode, before going on to tonicize the major dominant.

The song can therefore be depicted as a series of partly interlocking situations which are separated from each other by a signifying difference. Not all

differences are signifying or pertinent, however. Though it is probably impossible ever to make explicit all the criteria by which we determine what is and what is not a signifying difference between two situations, it is necessary to take into account the totality of poem and music, of vocal part and accompaniment, the wider context of the syntax and style of Classic-Romantic music, and above all, the articulating subjects.

The Lied has one inner actor, an *inner narrator*, which is not the same as the singer or physical voice. Neither is the inner narrator the pianist (as persona or performer), the vocal part as an expression of the singer, or piano part as an expression of the player. Rather, all of these *combine* to make up the inner narrator. On another level, we encounter two different *subjects*: the vocal part and the piano part. The vocal part itself divides into two different subjects (actors): the *subject expressed by the text* of the poem, and *the subject expressed by the sounding substance* of themes and motifs recognizable as actors. Likewise, the piano part can act as a subject-actor: the accompanying chordal texture and its upper voice, the latter often being a mirror image, representation or sign of the vocal line.

When the vocal part reaches its pinnacle, it imitates the song of the nightingale, with a chromatically descending, melismatic scale-passage. This is a strong contrast to the descending (rather than upward-springing) motif describing night at the beginning of the poem, and to the ensuing chromatic ascent of chords and melody that depicts daytime. This *bel canto* melody is a powerful indicator of a *lyric subject*, that is, an actor. The inner narrator of the poem is strongly emphasized here on a musical level, if not on the verbal level of the poem. According to Romantic doctrine, this is how and why *absolute* music (i.e., not verbal poetry) best expresses the hidden depths and feelings of the human soul.
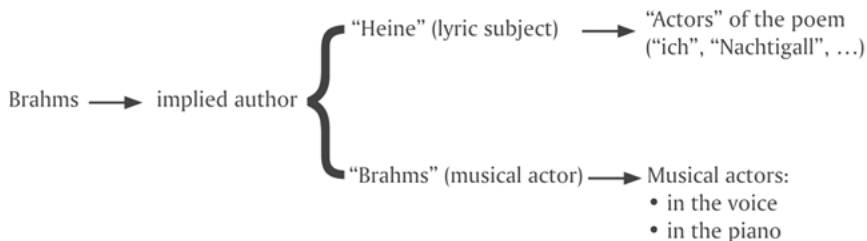
Figure 77: Brahms, *Das ist die kühle Nacht*: Implied authors of music and poem.

The inner narrator of the Lied obviously is *not* Brahms himself. On the other hand, psychoanalytic interpretations can be made, based upon the view that the meaning (signification) of music is "subject-causal". Psychoanalysis, gender-theories, and the like are based on this way of thinking; that is, on the assumption that the signs which can be heard and read, in music as well as in poetry, have been motivated by this kind of psychic-physical subject. If that is so, it would be fascinating to find out when and in what kind of personal existential situation Brahms wrote this Lied. But there is also the danger – as Charles Rosen warns – that the interpretation empties itself in dealing with this personal history. It reduces and finally extinguishes the possibilities of expression of a Lied; for example, by bringing the listener to think the commonplace, "Ah, here Brahms is just depicting his relationship with Clara Schumann". If the origin of signification is specified as *only* a certain historical context, then the process of signification stops, it stagnates, and the listener is deprived of the possibility of experiencing Lied as a medium of his or her own experiences. Herein lies the danger of psychoanalysis and gender-theories.[12]

Four situations, with two transitions between them, can be discerned in *Der Tod, das ist die kühle Nacht*. To define these situations is not only a problem of morphological segmentation; on the contrary, another criterion for parsing includes the totality of text-and-music, including the enunciators-subjects that occur in them or that loom behind them.

Situation I, mm. 1–6. From the point of view of the lyric subject (internal narrator), the static beginning establishes the basic topos of both music and text. The subject is absent from the poem; i.e., the enunciation does not manifest itself as the "I" but as an objective statement: death is a chilly evening. In the music the actor-motif (A) is initially the same in both the vocal part and the piano part. Later these two actors diverge: the vocal part plays elements (B) and (C) of the paradigmatic table; the piano, in turn, represents the content of the lyrics, when the tiring day is iconically presented through a recurrent, cyclical triplet figure.

Transition I, mm. 7–10. In semiotic terms, this transition is an internal *index*; in other words, it accelerates the flow of music and gives it direction. This

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12 Still, it is not out of the question that the theory of man's psychic-bodily significance might someday be employed as an analytic tool. Marc Leman's theory of causal signification might be a step in this direction (e.g., Leman 1995). Oliver Parland, in an unpublished essay issuing from a seminar at the Department of Musicology, University of Helsinki, discusses the relationship between Brahms and Schumann in a way that provides many of such psychoanalytic insights, supported by ample musical examples and bibliographical references.

Figure 78.: Four Situations in the Brahms song.

occurs here in a peculiarly ambivalent way. It is not a question of a simple ascending sequential passage of parallel thirds. On the contrary, each chord is experienced as a surprise, as something unexpected. Thus, while the music moves in a clear direction, the motion slows at every step. An internal tension arises from the fact that text and music express opposing things. The enunciator of the verbal text announces that it is getting dark and he is sleepy; but the piano part contains a series of chords the color of which changes from dark to light (if flat signs, dissonance, and incomplete chords are considered as criteria for darkness). The first chord of the piano sequence is a "darkening" event, which at first seems destined to act as a Neapolitan chord. Only when the harmony moves unexpectedly to the B-flat chord, does the vocal part realize that the darkening occurs as if in reaction to what happens in the piano

part. Finally, having reached the fifth degree of the new tonic G during the transition to Situation II, the passage begins surprisingly with a darkened minor variant (G minor). At that same moment, one hears the words, "der Tag". This poses a kind of contradiction, since one would naturally expect a brighter choice of chords for the day. The subject that is behind the music thus appears in an intersection of many differences in this transitional section; he is about to move somewhere.

Situation II, mm. 11–13, expresses daytime (and through that, life itself) on the verbal level, which is not seen as exhilarating, however, but as exhausting ("hat mich müd gemacht"). Here the essential difference is the unexpected key. The actors of the vocal part and those of the music sharply diverge.

Situation III, mm. 14–19, starts as if it were a new story within a story. In the vocal part, elements (A) and (C) have been linked together in a long, wave-like line which expresses the state of mind of the lyric subject. There is an immediate and emotional indexical relationship between the music and the subject (cf. Karbusicky 1986: 59–60). But the piano part, with its arpeggios and use of the treble register, imitates iconically the actor of the text: the nightingale. In the vocal part, a contrast emerges between the music and the text, because motif (A), which at the beginning of the Lied so emphatically evinced the cool night of death, here expresses "vociferous love". And yet, a *continuity* separates situation III from Situation I, in the form of the full texture and *bel canto* line (with a melodic climax on the note *a*). This is the emphatic affirmation of the lyric subject, which is so strong that Brahms repeats a line from Heine's poem ("von lauter Liebe") in the following transition, as if it were an echo of the previous culmination; this is but one kind of "post-modalization".[13]

Transition II, mm. 20–22. A flattened seventh degree appears in the tonic chord anticipated earlier, its chromaticism guaranteeing that the music cannot stop here. The motion continues in this transition until reaching the tonic of C major (m. 22), from which the harmony retreats into the minor subdominant field. The transition could also be understood as an internal *anti-index* of the music, because the musical motion slows down (contrary to the acceleration of Transition I). The piano continues the *bel canto* idea with motif (C), although the vocal part has already given it up. In this way the actors of both the piano and the Lied are mostly desynchronized, and they engage with each other only in culminations and affirmations. If the subjects were always "shifted in", simultaneously and on every level, there could be no story. For a story begins

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13 I have discussed the phenomenon of post-modalization in my earlier theories of music semiotics; see, e.g., Tarasti 1994: 165–180.

always with the emergence of a difference (a *débrayage* or "shifting out"), i.e., a change-over from I to non-I. In this case, the disengagement occurs at the level of both the lyric subject and its signs, i.e., the musical actors.

Situation IV, mm. 23–26 present a reattainment of tonic and return of the basic isotopy of "the cool night of death". Here, however, that isotopy is interpreted as a dream, represented by the minor subdominant area and the circular triplet figure, which at the beginning of the song represented "day". Now the circular figure appears as an actor, and it takes over both the vocal and the piano parts (in measure 24). The important repetition "ich hör es" of the text is not repeated in the music; instead, a new motif arises in the vocal part, which in fact has already been heard, albeit somewhat transformed, in the piano part in measure 12. The word "Traum" triggers a chromatic passage in the piano part (mm. 25–26).

Codetta, mm. 27–31. Essentially, this passage continues the preceding situation, but with a clarification of tonic, if by a slightly insecure first inversion. The "double theme" technique is such a common device with Brahms, that its occurrence here (the secondary theme in the piano) constitutes a reference to the composer-subject (e.g., his Symphony No. 2); the latter as a sort of harmonious enunciator I, which returns to itself after telling the. The system of differences relaxes when the lyric I "finds himself", as it were. In the end, it is unclear to the listener what really happened or if anything happened at all.

With this, our situation-analysis reaches the same conclusion as that of the hermeneutic interpretation with which we began: Brahms expects something, but that something never arrives. It is impossible, however, to call this experience "frustration". For the function of the musical-lyrical enunciation called Lied has been fulfilled, inasmuch as it has acted as an instrument of controlling man's internal world, as the psychoanalytically-oriented scholar would put it – or as Lévi-Strauss might say, a "means to stop the flow of time".

Chapter 8 Brünnhilde's Choice; or, a Journey into Wagnerian Semiosis: Intuitions and Hypotheses

8.1 Introduction

Can one retain sufficient objectivity when exploring a phenomenon to which he or she is strongly and emotionally attached? Can a musicologist analyze music that he or she likes above any other? The question may be put another way: can one study art that one does not like at all? Doubtless one can, since often during the research process one learns to like the object, the more its various faces are revealed. John Ruskin called the way in which man mirrors his own emotions in the object under investigation a "pathetic fallacy", such that the object becomes distorted and loses its original character. On the other hand, he regarded as poets of the highest category those who saw objectively in spite of feeling strongly.

When as a semiotician one examines something that thousands have already studied, it turns out to be most important what new features of the object are investigated and in what new aspect knowledge is sought. Therefore, when I write about Richard Wagner, the most studied composer in the world, I have no other alternative than to write about "my" Wagner, even at the risk he has little to do with the so-called "real" one. Marcel Proust justified this approach in a congenial way by saying (in *La Prisonnière*) that of everyone we know we possess a double in our minds, and that in reality we have, from day to day, much more to do with this "copy" than with the real being it represents. A semiotician might say that we do not communicate so much with real people as we do with the signs these people have left in our consciousness. Accordingly, the "double" Wagner, with whom I deal in what follows, is perhaps already a "semiotized" Wagner. Nevertheless, my intention is also to take a kind of global view of Wagner's music as the basis for a future study dealing with his entire output.

With all this I am simply trying to clarify where the fascination of Wagner's music lies. Perhaps such a study will be expanded into a treatise on the semiotics of German culture, since apparently no German has undertaken such a task. On the other hand, my Wagner is a universal figure, whose music has appealed to nations, races, and social classes of all kinds. Where lies the secret of his music? What element of it still overwhelms people with its almost hypnotic impact?

I confess to being taken over by the music's power, and heartily concur with what Lévi-Strauss wrote in his *Mythologiques* about that "god, Richard Wagner": "If Wagner is accepted as the unquestionable initiator of structural analysis of myths (and likewise of folk tales as in his *Meistersinger*) it is really a deeply significant fact, that such an analysis was for the first time effectuated in music" (Lévi-Strauss 1964: 23). The present analysis is an experiment, to find out if it is possible to study properly a phenomenon to which one feels closely bound. Feels? Only after many years of studies in semiotics and structural analysis do I dare to write about such subjective items as "feelings". We retain at least some objectivity, however, since behind the present chapter stands the "method" – at the least meant to be "objective" and repeatable – presented in my *A Theory of Musical Semiotics* (Tarasti 1994a).

My interest is also an *existential semiotic* one, which investigates not only the concrete situation in which a scholar is writing his study, but also those concrete qualisigns in which music appears, those situations into which musical "themes" or "actors" come, and the ways in which these "doubles", hidden in the music, react to situations and function in them. This functioning does not always happen according to a normative actantial model. For example, Alfred Lorenz (1924) tried to force all Wagner's music into the framework of periodic form (which he had misunderstood), so that the scheme *Stollen – Stollen – Abgesang* recurs everywhere. Nevertheless, he made several sharp observations about the real "semiosis" of Wagner's music, like his continuous "melos" – the art of continuous transition (*Übergang*) – which fused discrete actors to itself much more efficiently than did the forced periodic scheme.

Using a semiotic and conceptual apparatus, I try here to grasp those situations which in my view are condensations of significance or pertinence in Wagner's music. I do not say "the top moments of signification", that fashionable expression, typical of our time. For if we call something a "top" we at the same time make a distinction between top and not-top; and in the wake of deconstruction, it would be rash to accept such an abrupt distinction, when significance can spring unexpectedly from something excluded, deleted or considered marginal.

A basic truth about the study of Wagner – and of all operatic music – is that in such a world we move in a kind of virtual reality. This reality emerges from all the signs which different discourses of opera send to us from the stage, orchestra or audience. From a semiotic point of view, this virtual reality consists in much more than concrete, sensory stimuli; it pertains also to our ways of evaluating, enlivening, rejecting, becoming enchanted or overwhelmed, identifying, criticizing, distancing ourselves from these signs. That is to say, such a virtual reality affects our entire *modal* dimension. To begin, I formulate three hypotheses about this virtual space of opera.

(1) Its existence is always more abstract than concrete, more conceptual than physical, more spiritual than material. That is to say, it consists of the whole field of modalizations (regardless of the fact that opera performance constantly depends on the congruency among innumerable physical signs and signifiers).

(2) The virtual space is always variable in nature. This means that our consciousness always stores traces of previous modalizations of opera and of the social realms to which it belongs. Our operatic experiences – as performers, singers, conductors, directors, stage managers, film makers, spectators – always occur via these traces, either by following them or deviating from them.

(3) Any element or sign can suddenly become dominant in this virtual space. The mere trace of a sign in someone's mind is sufficient to create this pertinence. For example, a person who inserts "German ideology" as the unequivocal signified of Wagner may totally reject his music. Correspondingly, a listener who may be the nearest equivalent to Adorno's "expert" can be enchanted by the performance of a given singer, to such an extent that all else is forgotten. Typical of the paradoxical phenomenon of Wagner, is that all these listening habits are in a sense justified, since we find evidence for all of them in his writings and other documents of his life.

These three hypotheses must suffice as a methodological introduction, in order to show that our semiotic analysis must be extremely flexible. Musical and aesthetic intuition will lead us along the right paths.

8.2 Wagner's early operas

Wagner is Wagner almost from his first melodic expressions. The theme-actor of *Rienzi's* prayer already contains everything essential: the slow, walking rhythm, with a new chord on every as suits a choral texture (the connection of the Wagnerian melos with the Protestant chorale is most obvious); the rising intervallic leap and its filling (with a sinking scale, and later with a chromatic one) which form a decorative gesture – as if the singer would raise his hand as a bodily continuation of the melody – a "Wagner ornament" between the beats. Normally, if a melodic antecedent phrase is very mobile, then the consequent is stable as a contrast to it. Here, the melodic invention does not stop with the ideas presented in the antecedent, but continues unabated in the consequent and even thereafter. All this creates a kind of overwhelming experi-

ence of abundance and excess, in which the listener is given more and more until he is totally stunned by the flow of music. In Greimassian terms, the aspectual seme of excessiveness is a central one in Wagner.

Quite instinctively, I have begun with melody in Wagner's early operas, since undeniably this parameter is the most salient one. There is evidence that Wagner himself, in composing the *Flying Dutchman, Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* often began with one nuclear "lexeme": a melodic invention, around which the whole opera gradually took shape. Senta's *Ballade* is such a "basic intonation" in the *Flying Dutchman*; Elsa's and Lohengrin's duet and aria ("Elsa's Admonition") is central in *Lohengrin*. (Liszt realized this when he selected precisely these basic intonations as starting points for his Wagner paraphrases; to get a panoramic view of the Wagnerian melos, it would be sufficient to play through Liszt's piano arrangements.) In addition to the aforementioned melodic features, and particularly on the basis of *Tannhäuser*, we should also note the strong melodic, harmonic, and rhythmical pillars upon which the melody unfolds, as the Pilgrims' Chorus well illustrates.

In these early operas – and more so in later ones – Wagner's melodic invention is intimately bound to the dramatic situation on stage. Of course, Wagner's arias and scenes can also be performed as concert versions apart from the operatic context. This seems to be justified by the fact that many of them are written according to the traditional Italian model (like Wolfram's recitative and romance "Evening Star" from *Tannhäuser*). Although Wagner's aim was to develop German melody and singing, he admitted that they had adopted music from Italians (so he writes in his essays *Was ist deutsch?* which were written during his most national-minded period in the 1860s).

Yet if we take, say, the overture to *Tannhäuser*, which contains the basic opposition of the entire opera between "the sacred" (the Pilgrims' Chorus) and "the sensual" (the music of Venusberg), and move it to the concert hall, it loses much of its power and sublimity, almost to the point of becoming banal. The transition to the tutti of the choir, with ascending upper parts and descending basses, displays a stereotypical, elevated topic of romanticism, leads to the fortissimo of the choral theme. It is accompanied by violin figurations that, in the Beethovenian paradigm of symphonic music, appear tremendously vulgar.

But on the opera stage, in its virtual space, everything is different. Let us think of the "existential" situation of the listener in the third act of *Tannhäuser*. Wolgram has sung his song to the evening star, which Wagner congenially saved for this scene instead of using it earlier (in the song contest of the second act). Elisabeth has given up hope of reuniting with Tannhäuser; still, expectations run high. Suddenly one notices from a distance the Pilgrims' Chorus,

which gradually increases in volume. It is crucial for the listener to recognize the theme-actor, since it relates to the pilgrims' *return* home. The power of the melody lies as much in its naiveté as in the fact that, in this dramatic situation, it falls (in the mind of the spectator-listener) into the narrative category and function of return, with all of its inherent meanings. Precisely the fact that this chorus has already been heard earlier in the opera enables it to serve in this narrative function (as remarked also by Ernst Newman, who noted that Isolde's *Liebestod* has already occurred in passing, in the love duet of *Tristan and Isolde*).

Pierre Boulez, speaking of *Parsifal*, may be right when he says that the opera's effectiveness is not based on religious sentiment. Still, the theme of redemption certainly helps increase the power of the musical message. In its own strange way, the scene is as moving to a believer as to a non-believer. Musical banality is transformed into a naive certainty of belief on stage, and the spectator-listener abandons him- /herself to the power of a theatrical effect without becoming conscious of its "theatricality". Music and drama make an immediate impact.

The power of the scene is strengthened by another typical trait in Wagner: he does not obey stereotypical series of functions or actantial models of oral narrative tradition. Elisabeth does not find Tannhäuser among the pilgrims, and thus the whole scene ends in tragedy, since he returns only as a "false hero". To some extent it remains incomprehensible how Elisabeth's death can save him from this fate.

Wagner's procedure for composing, from *Tannhäuser* on, was to start from an amorphous, general atmosphere of the "deep" level, which he then differentiated into music, poetic text and scenic action. His method might be thus called "generative" in the sense that he begins with *isotopies,* the deep levels of the meaning, which gradually become discourses. The writing process itself began with a pencil-draft on two staves (one for the vocal part, the other for supporting bass notes), completing it with ink and finally arriving at the whole score. Wagner, when writing *Tannhäuser* in 1844, said to his friend Karl Gaillard: "I am only fascinated by such topics which do not only prove too poetical to me, but at the same time musically significant. Even before I have written any line of the text or sketched any scene, I have already sunk into the musical aura of my new creation."

The fact that Wagner's melodic inventions and key relationships are bound to the dramatic isotopy may have led some scholars not to esteem him as a "melodist". This is illustrated by the Bence Szabolcsi's fascinating treatise, *History of Melody*. The author finds nothing particularly good to say about Wagner:

> Wagner's prime concern was with painting, or rather, with composing in large dynamic col our-surfaces. Drawing – that is, melody – was pushed into the background ... the Northern composer was trying to substitute "studied harmonies" for the lost magic of *bel canto* – melody's natural and deeply musical function – and making up at the same time for the lost magic of general intelligibility. The melody-style which emerged from the "cultivated" melody of the end of the century was artificially constructed – stifled, stunted and decadent. (Szabolcsi 1965: 181–182)

An unconvincing argument, particularly when one thinks of Wagner as a melodist (let us say, in *Meistersinger*). If Wagner is accused of indulging in "artificiality" of melody, one has to recall that this quality serves as a dramatic device, as a sign of the opera's virtual reality. Tannhäuser's contest song, for example, must sound somewhat hysterical and excessively exalted since he performs it in his role of a "false hero" in the isotopy of worshiping Venus. Similarly, the contest song by Walther v. Stolzing, with its overwrought ebbs and flows, forms an ironic interpretation of romantic enthusiasm and is to be taken as a parody just like Beckmesser's aria.

One must recall that, in opera, melody usually never occurs without words (poetic text). When one reads Wagner's own writings, one is struck by how very much he cared about the correct interpretation of his operatic texts. For the *Tannhäuser* performances in Paris in 1851 he prepared program comments as a guide for the audience. Later, the explanatory leitmotif tables by the "Bayreuth circle" (Hans v. Wolzogen and friends) served the same goal – signaling a basic mistrust in music's own force alone, and at the same time a belief in the omnipotence of verbal discourse. Charles Baudelaire's famous essay, "Richard Wagner et *Tannhäuser* à Paris", is another contribution to the literary explanation, although he states there (Baudelaire 1971: 223, 246): "Dans la musique comme dans la peinture et même dans la parole écrite, qui est cependant le plus positif des arts, il y a toujours une lacune complétée par l'imagination de l'auditeur.... L'ouverture de *Tannhäuser,* comme celle de *Lohengrin* est parfaitement intelligible, même à celui qui ne connaîtrait pas le livret." [In music as in painting and even in the written word, which is however the most positive of the arts, there is always a lacuna completed by the listener's imagination.... The overture to *Tannhäuser*, like that of *Lohengrin*, is perfectly intelligible, even to someone who does not know the story.] Baudelaire also produced his own poetic-verbal programs to the overture to *Lohengrin*.

When composers of the romantic period wrote about music, they never revealed their music-technical, professional secrets. Instead they depicted the content and plot of the music, what we nowadays call narrativity. Such depiction serves a good purpose, since even in vocal music the listener – even a German one – cannot distinguish all the words in Wagner. Inevitably a good

deal of the libretto is "lost"; that is to say, there takes place no decoding of the verbal message. The listener must orientate himself according to some keywords extracted from the melos: "Erlösung…", "es hilft nur eines", "Ewig einig", "In Paradies", "Heilig …", "Zum letzten Mal", etc. In this way, verbal communication always remains fragmentary in any kind of opera. So what is its purpose?

Julia Kristeva's theory of geno- and phenotext may help us understand this situation. In Wagner the verbal discourse, libretto and literary program correspond to the "symbolic" order (phenotext), whereas music and gestural language describe the libidinal, "semiotic" level of the *khora* (genotext). In this view, the genotext dominates overwhelmingly in Wagnerian semiosis. Post-facto commentaries and literary explanations invented by himself and others do not change the matter. In other words, if one conceives of music as having two sides, *signifier* (the heard sounds) and *signified* (the conceptual or emotional content of the sounds), then it would be misleading to imagine that Wagner's writings or any other literary programs could take the place of the musical *signified*. Rather, the content (signified) is constituted precisely by the kinetico-rhythmic *khora* (genotext), which appears as the phenotext of song and symphonic music within the scenic reality.

If *Tannhäuser* as a whole is articulated – in both its fundamental isotopies and superficial discourses – according to the opposition sacred/sensual (in music, the Venusberg's isotopy of E major, the Pilgrims' E-flat major), *Lohengrin* is even more complex in structure. It is an opera of metamorphosis and transformations. The code for reading it is, in fact, already given by the overture. The basic topological organization of *Lohengrin – diesseits/jenseits,* here / elsewhere, topos/heterotopos – appears there in orchestral form. The orchestral part to *Lohengrin* already starts to signal that Wagner in whose music basic denotations allotted to various instruments take shape. The prelude seems to be musically symmetrical; but it is asymmetrical on the level of modalizations, which involves is approaching, encountering and withdrawing.

Elsa of Brabant is an allegory of innocence and purity, but she is accused of murdering her brother. Behind the prosecution lurk typical theatrical villains, Ortrud and Telramund. Hence evil is represented by separate actors, but at the same time also *within* the protagonists. Lohengrin, the Swan knight, arrives to rescue Elsa, on the condition that she will not ask about his background. The psychological plot of the whole opera rests upon Elsa's confidence in Lohengrin and on the issue of whether she can maintain it and restrain herself from posing the "forbidden question". (It is hardly an accident that a central theme in Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* is exactly the same as the motif of concealed identity and the forbidden question in *Lohengrin*; this theme of

confidence was further emphasized by Oscar Parland in his interpretation of *Lohengrin*). Consequently, the level of protagonists involves transformations among the epistemic modalities of lie, secret and truth. One might even describe *Lohengrin* in a Greimassian way as a "veridictory" opera. The supposedly war-like nature of the opera is really mere scenery. The troops never start fighting, but only prepare themselves for battle. On the other hand, Carl Dahlhaus considered the choral scenes even in *Tannhäuser* to be purely theatrical – in order to sweep away the last "trace" of their ceremonial stagings in national-socialist Germany. Almost all German scholars of post-war times have an understandable phobia about Wagner's "phantasmagorias" (a designation used by Adorno in his *Versuch über Wagner*). This tactic is well illustrated by the Wagner films of the German director Schyberberg. For example, his *Parsifal* takes place upon a huge death-mask of Wagner, which momentarily disappears from view during close-ups, but returns to sight immediately, as the macabre fundamental isotopy, when the music threatens to become too "transcendental" or too expressive.

In *Lohengrin* the action never attains completion. The trial is interrupted; the wedding procession is delayed several times; the wedding night of Elsa and Lohengrin does not come to fruition; and Lohengrin does not have time to serve as Brabant's savior-hero before rejoining the Grail knights. In short, it is an opera of unachievement (to use a narratological term). Lohengrin's metamorphoses are portrayed by corresponding musical devices (enharmonic modulations). The fulcrum of all transformations is the Grail, along with the A major that denotes it. When Lohengrin's concealed identity is uncovered, the music moves from A-flat major to A major. The music of Elsa's dream is likewise an example of changes and modulations: within just eight bars it passes through seven keys – of which Wagner himself gives an example in his *Über die Anwendung von Musik in Drama*.

In fact the whole opera deals rather with Elsa's inner change of mind than with Lohengrin's external metamorphoses. This is so despite the fact that Lohengrin is at the same time a Grail knight, a stranger who has come from "elsewhere", the rescuer of Brabant, and the incarnation of Elsa's dream. Wagner's intent in *Lohengrin* was to portray himself, a misunderstood artist, who must mingle with ordinary mortal beings in order to fulfill his artistic mission. He says the following in his essay *Mitteilung an meine Freunde* in 1851 (quoted in Dahlhaus 1984: 138):

> Lohengrin sought a woman who would believe in him, who would not ask who he was or whence he came, but would love him as he was and because he was as he appeared to her to be…. What he longed for was not admiration and adoration but the one thing

Figure 79: Wagner, *Lohengrin*: Modulations in Elsa's dream.

> that could release him from his isolation and satisfy his yearning…. But he is unable to shake off the tell-tale aura of his higher nature; he cannot help but appear an object of wonder … the venom of envy throws its shadow even into the heart of the loving woman; doubt and jealousy prove to him that he is not understood but only adored, and tear from him the confession of his divinity, with which he returns into his isolation, destroyed.

Yet this aspect hardly comes to the mind of the spectator. Only a few people experience the opera's narration from Lohengrin's point of view. Rather, the main hero, who determines audience's point of view, is none other than Elsa. One does not feel Lohengrin's return as a tragic event, since he is a mythical hero, a stranger in Brabant's topos. Instead, the tragedy is based on the modality of 'knowing', on that psychological drama which makes Elsa ask the forbidden question. It seems that in the Wagnerian universe modalities have their boundaries, which cannot be transgressed without retribution. Elsa exceeds the limits of knowing, whereas Tannhäuser transgresses bounds to fulfill his desire. Therefore the essential metamorphosis, which takes place in Lohengrin's mind, does not form the tragedy; rather, it is Elsa's question which causes this transformation. In any case, it is an unavoidable event in the plot; and as early as in the overture, the basic intrigue was revealed to the listener: the arrival of a stranger, his encounter, and return.

Lohengrin might therefore also be investigated in light of the theory of "modulations of passions", developed by A. J. Greimas and Jacques Fontanille (1991). For in Wagner, euphoric and dysphoric emotional values start to

exchange places: dissonance, such as continuous and unresolved tension on a dominant, is no longer felt only as unpleasant, but also as sweet, tempting. In the work *Oper und Drama* Wagner explains how he composes music for a phrase like *Liebe bringt lust und Leiden* (Love brings pleasure and suffering), which accordingly contains a mixed emotion:

> ... so the musician would feel himself inclined to move from the key corresponding to the first feeling to another, second feeling. The word "pleasure" ... would in this phrase contain a completely different tone than in the other one.... The tone sung with it would necessarily become a determining leading tone to another key, in which the "suffering" was expressed. (Wagner, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Band 10–11: 260)

In this quotation Wagner does not mean by "leading tone" the musical term in the proper sense (as the seventh scale degree), but takes it as an entity or bridge modulating to another "isotopy" or key. Moreover, if the aforementioned phrase were to be continued by another one: "Doch in ihr Weh webt sie auch Wonnen" (However, in its woe it also contains delight), then the word *webt* would preclude a modulation back to the first key, to which one nevertheless returns, being one experience richer. In Wagner's example the melodic phrase therefore subtly conveys *several* emotional states, functioning as an index to both euphoric and dysphoric feelings.

After *Lohengrin* Wagner's music also realizes the idea that the orchestra might possess a certain *Sprachvermögen*, or "speaking ability" (Voss 1970: 27). The orchestra was needed in order to fulfill the poetic intention; the instruments were entities emerging from the human voice, and also connecting to an actor's gestures. On the other hand, Wagner's orchestration aimed at idealizing timbre, by removing the sound source from sight (in the Bayreuth opera house, conductor and orchestra were invisible): the physical sender of the sound had to be concealed in order for the sound to create a perfect illusion. In Wagner's scores every instrument has its particularized meaning or denotation, comparable to the words of a language (Voss, op. cit.), yet the task of orchestration in the operatic art was to serve the dramatic situation, thus providing the instrumental denotations with connotations according to their context. Hence, the denotation of the *violins* in Wagner, in their upper register, was symbolic of the Grail, sublimity, and religiosity. The violin cantilena depicted the modality of "*süsse Wonne*" (sweet joy). The *violas* had a sad, melancholy meaning, just as Berlioz characterized their timbre (Berlioz 1991: 60). The *violoncelli* expressed passions, but also need and disaster. The *contrabassi* depicted gloominess and threat. The *flute* provided light effects, but it does not often occur in Wagner as an independent musical actor. The *oboe* refers to naiveté and innocence, as well as to sorrow and nostalgia, one of its semes being

pastorality. The *English horn* portrays sadness and plaintiveness (in Berlioz it represents dreamlike evocation of distant events, and is also used in this sense in Marguerite's aria in the *Damnation of Faust*). The *clarinet* in Wagner signifies love and eroticism. The *horn* is an instrument of hunting and refers to nature in general. It depicts solemnity and rejoicing; and for some interpreters (like Paul Claudel) it was a call to a "lost paradise". The *trumpet* is an instrument of heroes and rulers; it also contains a tinge of religiosity. The *trombones* illustrate festivity, nobility and sublimity. The *harp* serves as an index of local as well as historical color (e.g., in the singing contest of Wartburg in *Tannhäuser).* Therefore, orchestration serves in Wagnerian semiosis as a crucial factor in bringing meanings to music. It animates the musical structure and provides it with "modalities".

8.3 The Nibelungen Ring

In *Lohengrin* or *Tannhäuser* Wagner's highly acclaimed (and much-maligned) leitmotif technique had not yet reached the flexibility with which it appears in the Nibelungen tetralogy. He still moves – as Newman (1949) astutely observed – whole motivic blocks from one section to another, and only later learned to use leitmotifs of few notes in contrapuntal combinations and variations. When the leitmotifs occur, they still evoke the person to which they are attached.

Nevertheless, in the *Nibelungen Ring* the leitmotifs as such are no longer of primary import. Most important is the musical network – the temporal-spatial-actorial texture – which they create. It is not hard to do a *taxonomic* analysis of Wagner's *Ring,* in which the operas are examined lexeme by lexeme. One simply observes (a) to which isotopy each passage belongs, (b) the predominant pheme/seme or leitmotif therein, (c) the actant(s) realizing the scene on stage. I did such a lexemic analysis of the whole tetralogy in my earlier study *Myth and Music* (Tarasti 1979), but am no longer drawn to such models. What I find essential now is how the scenes are constructed from different signs: how they form the continuum, how the semiotic *khora,* the genotext of opera, takes shape from them.

In what follows I scrutinize only one scene, the fourth in the *Nibelungen Ring,* the so-called *Todesverkündigung* scene from the second act of *Valkyrie.* As material for the analysis I use three different video-stagings of this scene: Patrick Chereau's at Bayreuth, Otto Schenk's at the Metropolitan Opera, and Nikolas Lehnhoff's version at the Bavarian State Opera. Aside from the matter of authentic/nonauthentic stagings of Wagner, a video recording of an opera,

as a genre, constitutes its own category, in which many of the original scenic aspects receive a totally new interpretation. Not surprisingly, singers who are accustomed to performing on big opera stages do not always master the intimacy of expression required by the close-ups characteristic of film. In live opera, the singers are rarely seen close-up in their roles – an aspect which is not at all disturbing on stage, where the distance between spectator and actor always creates a separating factor. On stage, vocal brilliance can compensate for visual deficiencies, but not in a film. In this sense, video or film is a more demanding genre than original performance.

As part of the background of this whole scene one must see Wagner's intention to get beyond schematic actantial models, to break with the conventional roles of mythical narration and action, and thus produce new psychological content. Why, then, does Wagner use mythical substance in his opera, if its protagonists are intended to behave according to a psychology of modern man? The mythical equipment is necessary for him to elevate the scenic events from their temporal context to a level of extra-temporal universality. Only through myth was he able to convey the universal themes of will, renunciation, rejection of love, guilt and redemption. At the same time, his dramas are built in such a way that each scene must be staged exactly according to his indications. Only stagings that scrupulously follow his advice prove satisfactory, bringing about the desired impact.

The most essential dramatic event in the second act of *Valkyrie* is Brünnhilde's change of mind. Wotan sends her to carry out his order and take Siegmund to Valhalla. Wotan's will thus establishes an actantial model according to which Siegmund, who has committed the crime of incest with his sister, must be brought down. Yet Brünnhilde, who thus far has served only as a continuation of Wotan's will, rebels against his decision. She escapes his dominance, gives up her actantial role as Wotan's helper and, conversely, becomes the helper of the "anti-hero" Siegmund and, thus, an adversary of Wotan and Hundig.

The only motivation for this surprising decision is compassion, and so, as early as in *Valkyrie* the central theme of Parsifal is realized: "... Made wise through pity/the blameless fool...." It is as a consequence of this change that one also has to interpret the famous ride of the Valkyries that begins the third act. It is precisely the detachment of this scene from its original context that led to disastrous misinterpretations which influenced Wagner's consequent fame. Namely, it is not a celebration of warlike aggression. Quite the contrary: it is the female community of the Valkyries which receives Brünnhilde and Sieglinde, whom she has rescued out of compassion. The dramatic content of this scene is therefore completely different from what is generally imagined, and

semiotic analysis can help erase such stereotypical misconceptions of Wagner. Now let us look closer at the fourth scene in Act II of *Valkyrie*.

8.3.1 *Valkyrie*, Act II, scene 4

Alfred Lorenz (1924), in his well-known treatise *Das Geheimnis der Form bei Richard Wagner*, developed a method of exploring Wagner's musical texture as large, closed totalities. As such, his aim is quite praiseworthy, but the method remains constrained in its realization. Regardless of this fact, let us not totally reject Lorenz's study, since he succeeded in clarifying many problems of Wagner's formal language. Particularly valuable is the chapter in which he ponders the role of melody in musical formation. His discussion ends with a statement about the emergence of endless melody: "... the melody does not cease with the song, but continues in breathing points, in the orchestration. Even in singing very often the main effect is in the orchestra, when namely the innermost core of the soul, which is followed by the orchestral melodic activity, is more powerful than any external verbal expressions" (Lorenz 1924: 69–70). Such a melody might be called a "modal" melody in our semiotic sense, given that it is based upon that continuity of modalities which creates the virtual reality of opera: "This melody, which is not sung, acquires the nature of a symphonic 'melos' and influences the whole musical event. The symphonic melos appears also as a latent melody, which is the sum of symphonic motifs and their elaboration. This melos, which incessantly breaks off from the orchestral symphony, is at same time the soul enlivening the whole work. The vocal song is only a part of it" (ibid.). Lorenz has caught something quite essential about the nature of Wagner's art of "continuous transition". It follows from his comments that the orchestra can be seen as a kind of collective actor that interacts with the actors on stage, a kind of super- or arch-actor, who evaluates and modalizes everything (similar to the way, nowadays, that the dramatic music of CNN-TV News helps in coloring world events).

What is quite lax about Lorenz's formal analysis is that the units of segmentation, *Stollen* and *Abgesang*, are of arbitrary length, as long or as short as necessary to fit the situation. This is arbitrariness is quite peculiar, given that Wagner himself, in *Meistersinger*, described precisely how long *Stollen* and *Abgesang* must be (Act Two, scene with Hans Sachs and Walther v. Stolzing). The expansion of these units to cover any and all formal elements is thus quite artificial, as the following diagram shows.

What really happens in this scene, both musically and dramatically? The following three actors appear on stage: Brünnhilde (Subject S1), Siegmund
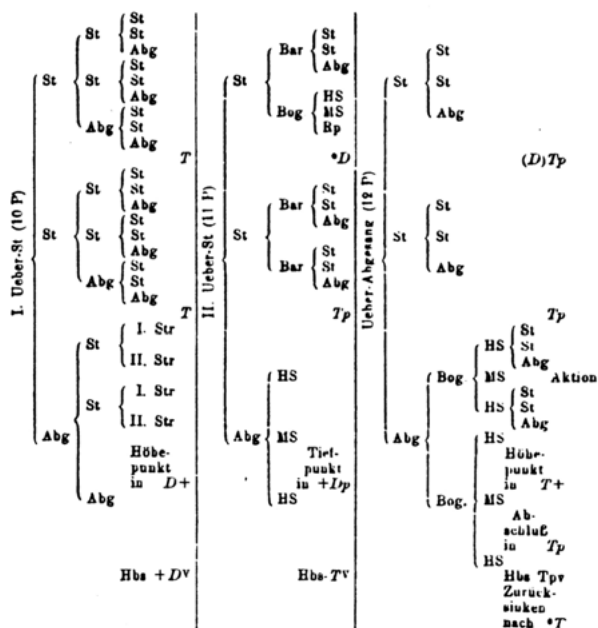
Figure 80: Arbitrary lengths of *Stollen* and *Abgesang* in a scene, according to Lorenz.

(Subject S2) and Sieglinde (Subject S3). The last mentioned remains silent through the whole scene, exhausted and asleep in the foreground. Though mute, however, she is present as the third actor implied by the action.

At the beginning of the scene Siegmund is found hovering over the sleeping Sieglinde, and Brünnhilde enters in the tempo *sehr feierlich und gemessen,* leading her horse Ross and progressing slowly and solemnly to the foreground. During the first 29 bars of the scene no one says anything on stage. Brünnhilde, with a very serious expression, merely looks at Siegmund.

The so-called *Todesmotiv* takes a central role in the musical realization of the scene. The whole fourth scene is built upon this motif, which is repeated 43 times by different instruments. The motif's structure is interesting insofar as it consists of two distantly related chords: D-major (tonic) and F-sharp minor. However, a D-flat chord, written enharmonically, acts as dominant of the chord that follows it. To the ear the uniting of chords from a flattened and sharpened area produces a strange, frightening, almost gruesome effect (similar to the impression made by the enharmonic chords in the coronation scene of *Boris Godunov*). As the motive is repeated, the passages form two four-bar units, which Lorenz calls *Stollen*. There follows a third four-bar unit in which the

Todesmotiv occurs at the end of the phrase instead of the beginning. It is embellished by a serious and beautiful, elegiac motif, which Lorenz entitles *Sterbegesang*. Together all this is equates in his mind to a bar-form.

This analysis gives the impression of a self-sufficient, closed formal unit. In reality, however, the listener probably does not hear these three four-bar phrases as an autonomous whole, but rather as an interrupted period of 16 bars, whose last four-bar phrase is missing. The *Sterbegesang* is rather like a question thrown into the air, for which one awaits an answer:

Figure 81: "Sterbegesang" motif in *Die Walküre*.

In the third phrase a modulation into D-flat major occurs, the key of Valhalla, its leitmotif reminding the spectator of the actantial role of Brünnhilde as the helper of her sender, Wotan. This is followed by Brünnhilde's exhortation: "Siegmund! Sieh'auf mich! Ich bin's der bald du folgst." Siegmund asks "Wer bist du, sag! die so schön und ernst mir erscheint?" A question that strengthens my hypothesis about the interrupted nature of the *Sterbegesang*.

Brünnhilde replies by issuing an order, which this time she euphorizes by telling Siegmund that Valhalla is the place of "nobles". In her story, too, the music moves into B major. In the eight-bar transition, Siegmund's Wälsunga-motif is evoked, freely varied. The music has so far been slow, extremely lingering, halted by long pauses. Now the action settles into clear, four-bar phrases, in which Siegmund asks questions and Brünnhilde answers, describing Valhalla with rosy colours. Then Siegmund's last question changes everything: "Begleitet den Bruder die bräutliche Schwester? umfängt Siegmund Sieglinde dort?" Siegmund's questions are in sharpened keys, Brünnhilde's answers in flattened ones. The shifts between them are abrupt and unprepared. Siegmund welcomes Valhalla, but the key of his answer, which is not in the tonal isotopies of G-flat or B-flat major of Valhalla, reveals what he is really thinking. Therefore his is a "false welcome"; it ends with a rejection, which surprises Brünnhilde, but not the listener: "Zu ihnen folg'ich dir nicht!" This, of course, is not the only case in which music reveals the truth, while an actant on stage says otherwise.

The fight between Brünnhilde and Siegmund begins in earnest, and the music becomes more agitated. In general, the tension culminates with the typically Wagnerian diminished-seventh chord, from which one may move to a variety of other sonorities. Such chords also form false cadences, pushing the music forward, without the expected resolution. The point of rest does not come, but is shifted to a new "wave" in the musical course. At the end, the music stays on the dominant-seventh chord in B-flat minor when Siegmund despairs (*Er beugt sich mit hervorbrechendem Schmerze zärtlich aber Sieglinde*). The tonic never arrives, the music passes directly to the next section, and the opening tempo returns.

A change has taken place in Brünnhilde's mind, as she observed Siegmund's passionate despair. "So little you respect the eternal will? Is that poor woman everything to you?" She does not say the scornfully, however, but in a manner that conveys how much she is upset (*erschüttert*). Thereafter the music starts again in a continuous triplet figuration. The *Sterbegesang* returns, now twice as fast and provided with the answer which was lacking at the beginning, and with the melody reaching its highest point:

Figure 82: Completed phrase of *Sterbegesang*.

This reflects the firmness of Siegmund's decision: he no longer asks anything, but only states bitterly his decision. Brünnhilde still tries to persuade Siegmund, but now her speeches take on the same passionate melodic flow as Siegmund's, and are even transposed into his key. Again, this reveals better than any words the fact that he has already given up. Finally Siegmund pulls his sword and makes up his mind to kill with one stroke both Sieglinde and the new life in her. In this section the actors no longer guide the music with their vocal parts; the symphonic melos has overcome them. Their dialogues are like obbligato-parts, mere attachments to the dense and dramatic musical texture.

When Siegmund raises the sword Brünnhilde, "overcome by a most fervent compassion" (*mit heftigsten Sturm des Mitgefühls*), asks him to stop. In the music occurs a dramatic stretto, in which the *Todesmotiv* sounds six times consecutively when Brünnhilde exclaims: "Sieglinde lebe und Siegmund lebe mit ihr!" Nevertheless when she concedes victory to Siegmund, and we are waiting for the A-major tonic in the music, we hear instead a false cadence with a diminished seventh chord. This reveals again that Brünnhilde's promise will never be fulfilled: the music displays what is true and what is false. Brünnhilde and her horse rush off stage, while Siegmund remains in a joyfully expectant state of mind as the music moves to the A-major tonic, which perhaps can be experienced already as the dominant of D minor. The scene ends with the *Todesmotiv* in its original form, and D minor is confirmed at the beginning of the next (fifth) scene.

Now we are ready to analyze this scene further. What is it all about? Musically the entire scene is situated between two extreme poles: extremely slow, non-inchoate (non-starting) action and a terminative action that is extremely imposing, passionate, and penetrating. The orchestration goes from a choral texture, dominated by the brass, into *tutti* effects of the full orchestra. At first the music is segmented into short, clear-cut phrases, at the end into broad and irregular lines, such that it is no longer pertinent to count the number of bars. Any analysis which does not account for these inner dynamisms cannot describe the true musical process.

As to content, what is involved is the rejection of normal communication; that is to say, the interlocutors do not accept the roles to which they have been assigned. The whole is an effort to force one to bend to the other's will. Therefore, it constitutes a persuasive or manipulative communication. At the same time, it is literally a fight about life and death. However, "life" and "death" are not unambiguous categories, but are both provided with their proper negations. For Siegmund, life without Sieglinde is "not-life"; correspondingly, for Brünnhilde the hero's death is in fact a "not-death", in view of the eternal joys of Valhalla. Greimas's semiotic square can help to elucidate the fundamental semantic structure in our example:

Figure 83: Semiotic square: Life and death in *Die Walküre*.

Siegmund, however, refuses to accept the offer of "not-death", i.e., the chance to follow Brünnhilde to Valhalla. For her part, Brünnhilde cannot understand what would tempt Siegmund to remain with Sieglinde, who as a Valkyrie had nothing to do with men.

These principles have their counterparts in various keys: the key of life, A major (dominant of D minor), and the F-sharp major at the end. The key of the dysphoric life which is only awaiting death, i.e., of not-life, is D minor (as the *Todesmotiv* of the beginning). Death's key, in turn, is E-flat minor, in which Brünnhilde answers Siegmund's questions. But at the same time the keys of Valhalla, that of euphorized death, are D-flat major and B-flat major. We can insert the proper keys on our square:

A major, F-sharp major
Life   E-flat minor
                                     Death

          Not death   Not life
D-flat major, B-flat major   D-minor
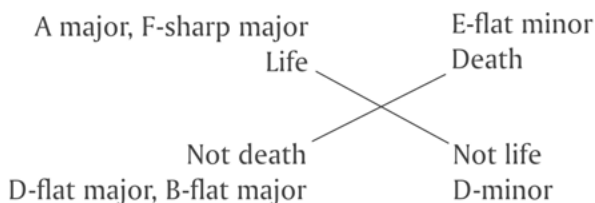
Figure 84: Semiotic square: Semantic values of keys in *Die Walküre*.

The *Todesmotiv,* by uniting two distant key areas, tries to combine in one lexeme two opposing semantic categories. This ambivalence explains its enigmatic, gloomy, *ahnungsvoll* (Goethe's term) nature, in another transformation between two opposing poles. Using the terms of Greimas's narrative grammar, we get two situations: **S** ∨ **0** or **S** ∧ **0**: Brünnhilde wants to conjoin Siegmund to an object (death) which he finds dysphoric, but she describes it to him as euphoric.

Using Greimas's semiotic formalism we can describe the unfolding of the whole scene in terms of its situations of communication. In this analysis we also use the interesting formal method of describing dialogues, as elaborated by Roland Posner (1992), which accounts for modalities as well. His distinction of various genres of communication – such as declarative, interrogative, affirmative, etc. – prove especially informative, when slightly transformed and supplemented.

Brünnhilde's first speech is obviously declarative, an exhortation or command: "Siegmund! Sieh'auf mich." It contains the modality of 'must', whereas the continuation refers to 'know' in its role of forecasting: "Ich bin's der bald du folgst." The formalization would thus be as follows: **S1f** ⇢ **[S2d** ∧ **0]**. Brünnhilde does (f) something: she encourages or announces such that subject

S2 (Siegmund) will or must be soon be conjoined to the object O (death), which, however, is not yet revealed to subject S2.

Siegmund's answer is both question and demand: "Wer bist du, sag, die so schön und ernst erscheint?": **S2 vs [S1 = O eu./dys.]**. In other words: S2 wants to know (vs = *vouloir/savoir*) what or who the object is, the latter being at the same time both euphoric (*schön*) and dysphoric (*ernst*). Continuing in this manner, we may formalize the whole scene as follows:

8.3.2 *Todesverkündigung* scene: A modal-narrative formalization

section / function / type of discourse / formalizations

I (bars 1–29)

Function	introductory, preparative; the now-moment of action: the topos of *Angst* (D minor /F-sharp minor)
Discourse	Intentional
Formalisation	S1 ∨ S2 (∧ S3); S1e ┄┄⟩ [S2]
Interpretation	Brünnhilde's look shows that she intends something but the modality of this intention is not revealed.

II (29–37)

Function	inchoative, phatic (opening of communication)
Discourse	announcement, order: declarative/
Formalisation	S1 sf ┄┄⟩ [S2 d ∧ O]
Interpretation	S1 sf = S1 is the subject of knowing and shares her knowledge with S2.

III (38–41)

Function	inchoative (being)
Discourse	question, order: interrogative
Formalisation	S2 vs e [S1 = O euf./dysf.]
Interpretation	S2 wants to know who S1 is; the latter appears with thymique values of euphoria (*Schön*) and dysphoria (*Ernst*).

IV (42–47)

Function	inchoative doing
Discourse	answer: responsive and declarative
Formalisation	S1 f ┄┄⟩ [S1 vF ┄┄⟩ (S2d ∧ Odysf.)]

V (48–55)

Function	durative doing
Discourse	narrative
Formalisation	S1 fs (S2) ┄┄⟩ [S2d ∧ O euf]
Interpretation	S1, or Brünnhilde, transforms 0, death, from dysphoric to euphoric by uniting 0 to a euphoric heterotopos (elsewhere), in this case, Valhalla.

VI (56–68)

Function	interruptive or quasi-terminative; being is dysphorized by a quotation of the Wälsunga motif
Discourse	meditative: information pondered in an apparently affirmative way, admittedly
Formalisation	S2 pv e (affirm) [S1ld] ┄┄⇾ S2 ∨ nonf [S1 d(declar.)]
Interpretation	S2 seems to be willing to accept the 'must' or declaration presented by S1, but then changes his mind or refuses to affirm S1's declaration, message or announcement as such, without other conditions ("… Siegmund wendet sich endlich mit Entschluss wieder zu ihr").

VII (69–73)

Function	durative (communication established between S1 and S2; the sign of which is the indexicalization of music, i.e., its becoming more fluid, tensional
Discourse	interrogative
Formalisation	S2 vsf (interrog.) ┄┄⇾ [Slf ┄┄⇾ (Sn ∧ O)]
Interpretation	Siegfried wants to know (vsf) the place, O (death could also be called an isotopy or a particular topos) to which heroes (Sn) are brought (conjuncted).

VIII (74–80)

Function	durative, detensional
Discourse	declarative, narrative, responsive
Formalisation	S1 f(declar.) ┄┄⇾ [Af(Sn=S2 & S2) d ∧ O euf]
Interpretation	A = actor, here Walvater, who has chosen S2 as the hero to be taken (Sn). S1 announces the euphoric topos of Valhalla. The key topos of S1 is here the same as that of S2, which means that Si euphorizes the *Angst* topos of S2, F-sharp minor (and D minor) moving into E major.

IX (81–85)

Function	durative, tensional
Discourse	interrogative, but implicitly affirmative
Formalisation	S2 f ┄┄⇾ [S2f(affirm.) = Sn & S2f(interrog) ∧ A)
Interpretation	S2 first admits indirectly to being the hero in question, Sn, but then asks whether he will be conjuncted merely to actor A.

X (86–91)

Function	durative, detensional
Discourse	affirmative, narrative, declarative
Formalisation	S1f (decl./narrat.) ┄┄⇾ [S2 ∧ Sn…]

XI (92–95)

Function	durative, tensional
Discourse	interrogative
Formalisation	S2f (interrog.) ┄┄⇾ [S2 ∧ A]?

XII (96–97)
Function   durative, detensional
Discourse   affirmative
Formalisation   S1f (declar.) ⤳ S2 ∧ ⤳ A]

XIII (100–104)
Function   durative, repetitive
Discourse   interrogative
Formalisation   S2f (interrog.) ⤳ [S2 ∧ AF] ?
Interpretation S2 has almost been persuaded to accept the message; i.e., he has almost become the actant object of S1.

XIV (105–115)
Function   durative, detensional
Discourse   affirmative, narrative, declarative
Formalisation   S1 e (declar./narrat.) ⤳ [I=W; Am…]
Interpretation isotopy I = Valhalla, which consists of actors Am…, the "wish maidens" (*Wunschmädchen*).

XV (116–133)
Function   durative, detensional (!)
Discourse   interrogative (but implicitly affirmative)
Formalisation   S2 f (interrog.) ⤳ [S1f ⤳ (S2 ∧⤳ S3)] ?
Interpretation a modal transformation in which *Angst* has become hope.

XVI (134–140)
Function   durative – (detensional) terminative
Discourse   negation, declarative, in other words the object or isotopy (Valhalla) is revealed to S2
Formalisation   S1 f (declar.) ⤳ [S2d ∧ O & ∨ S3]
Interpretation in music a firm cadence into E flat minor

XVII (141–145)
Function   transition (in the music: the *Schwesterliebe* motif i: S2 ∧ S3 and *Wälsunga* motif. **S2 ∨ S3**)
Discourse   affirmative
Formalisation   S2 ∨f(affirmat.) ⤳ [S2 ∧ S3]
Interpretation S2 wants, with his non-verbal behaviour, to confirm his conjunction to and love for S3: "… Siegmund neigt sich sanft über Sieglinde, küsst sie leise auf die Stern".

XVIII (146–161)
Function   terminative
Discourse   negation, rejective, declarative
Formalisation I First level (verbal discourse):
                    S2p (= paraître)f(declar.) ⤳ [S1declar.]; S2 non-f ⤳ [S1]
Interpretation S2 at first pretends to accept the declaration (pf) of Sl, but then rejects it (non-f).

Formalisation II   Second level (musical discourse):
                         S2 ∨ f (declar.) ⋯⟩ [S2 ∧ S3; nonS1f]
Interpretation   the musical discourse, which 'knows' more than the verbal one, uncovers
                         the truth by placing the reply of S2 into E major, the key of "life".

XIX (162–167)
Function   inchoative (the beginning uncertainty of S1 – in the music, the figure of
                         disquiet – is a sign that S1 does not accept the rejection of S2), tensional
Discourse   directive
Formalisation   S1f (direct.) ⋯⟩ [S2 d ∧ S1 & Odys]
Interpretation   the object to which S2 must be conjuncted is now barely dysphoric; from
                         here on, modal segments get longer; the emphasis of narration shifts
                         from outer to inner action.

XX (168–175)
Function   quasi-terminative (ends with a false cadence), tensional
Discourse   declarative
Formalisation   S2 vF /declar.) ⋯⟩ [S2 ∧ S3; non S2 ∧ S1]; a false cadence at the *Todes-*
                         motiv S2 f(rejective) ⋯⟩ [S2 ∧ Odys.]

XXI (176–211)
Function   durative, tensional, active
Discourse   directive and rejective alternate very densely
Formalisation   S1 f (declar.) ⋯⟩ [S1 ∨ ⋯⟩ S2s (interpret.) ⋯⟩ d Odys.]
Interpretation   S1 announces that S2 must interpret her appearance as a sign of inevita-
                         ble death;
Formalisation   S2 f (interrog.) ⋯⟩ [S1declar. (A ⋯⟩ S2 ∧ Odys.)]
Interpretation   S2 asks who is actor A, which conjuncts him to the dysphoric object O, or
                         death);
Formalisation   S1 f(declar.) ⋯⟩ [A = H];S2 f(reject.) ⋯⟩ [S1 declar.]
                         S1 f(direct) ⋯⟩ [S1 declar.] & S2 psf
                         (*paraître savoir*) (reject) ⋯⟩ [S1 declar.]
Interpretation   S2 interprets the diminished seventh chord in bar 200 in favour of himself
                         by channeling the musical discourse into the key of life, B major.
Formalisation   S2 f (declar.) ⋯⟩ [S2 ∧ aO)
Interpretation   S2 announces that he possesses an auxiliary object, a "sword".
Formalisation   S1 f (declar.) ⋯⟩ [non aO; Aw vf ⋯⟩ (S2 /∧ Odys.)]
                         S2 e(affirm.) ⋯⟩ [S1 direct. (S2 ∧ Odys.)
Interpretation   S2 accepts the declaration/order of S1.

XXII (212–242)
Function   durative, *Angst* topos, tensional
Discourse   affirmative
Formalisation   S2 e (affirm.) S1 f(declar./dys.)

Interpretation	the section depicts the modal state of S2 not as an agent but as a pathemic subject: he accepts the dysphoric declaration of Sl; music: the gloomy key topos of death: B-flat minor.
Formalisation	S2 f (neg.) ⇢ [S2 ∨, non-p, ∨ Odys.]

XXIII (243–254)

Function	*non-savoir,* inchoative or terminative (?); one does not know whether this section begins something new or ends something old
Discourse	detensional, weakening
Formalisation	S1 f (interrog.) ⇢ [S2 ∨ ∧ ⇢ S3]
Interpretation	S1 for the *first time* asks a question – this reflects her uncertainty and change of mind (*erschüttert*); in fact, the choice has already been made.

XXIV (255–323)

Function	durative (but teleological, goal-directed) tensional
Discourse	a dense alternation of rejective and affirmative
Formalisation	S2 f (reject.) ⇢ [S2 v∨ S1dys.] S1 vf (affirm./direct.) ⇢ [S1 ∧ S3]
Interpretation	S1 admits that S2 is right and she wants to rescue S3.
Formalisation	S2 non v f(reject.) ⇢ [S1 ∧ S3] S1 vf (affirm./direct.) ⇢ [S1 ∧ S3]
Interpretation	S1 utilizes her knowledge about the conjunction of S2 and S3.
Formalisation	S2 vp f ⇢ [(S2 ∨ S3; S2 ⇢ (neg.) S3] S1 f (affirm./direct.) ⇢ [S2 non d∨S3; S2 ∨ S3; non-Odys.]

XXV (324–386)

Function	terminative, tensional
Discourse	great affirmation
Formalisation	S1 f (affirm) ⇢ [S2 ∧ S3]

I should like to pay attention to one more interesting sign in the musical discourse, namely, the role of diminished seventh chords in the aforementioned scene and in general in Wagner. One means by which he creates "the art of continuous transition" is based upon the use of diminished seventh chords. As is known, each tone of that chord can serve as a leading tone, and can resolve or continue from it in multiple directions. In principle, in the aforementioned scene Wagner uses the diminished seventh chord as a dramatic effect to describe the "tensionality" of the action. Nevertheless, when the discourse climaxes with this chord, the listener cannot anticipate to which key or spatial "topos" the music will proceed thereafter.

A literary interpretant (or rather argument) from Marcel Proust's novels relates to the discussion at hand. The author's prose often has been called "Wagnerian", which may be taken to mean that he moves his protagonists and actors contrapuntally, as Wagner does his leitmotifs. There is another, more

Figure 85: Various diminished seventh chords in *Die Walküre*.

concrete way, however, in which Proust resembles Wagner's "musical prose". Proust typically lays out an exalted aesthetic description, full of poetic metaphors, which at its climax turns abruptly towards irony and parody, in such a way that a key word is interpreted again in a quite new and unexpectedly prosaic context. We find numerous illustrations of this in the series *A la recherche du temps perdu*. For instance, in *L'amour de Swann* (*Du cote de chez Swann, deuxième partie,* Paris: Gallimard 1954: 421–422), the composer Vinteuil's "small phrase" is held as an inexpressively impressive phenomenon, until one comes to the following statement:

> … Quand la phrase se fut enfin défaite, flottant en lambeaux dans les motifs suivants qui déjà avaient pris sa place, si Swann au premier instant fut irrité de voir la comtesse de

Monteriender, célèbre par sa naiveté, se pencher vers lui pour lui confier ses impressions avant même que la sonate fut finie, il ne put s'empecher de sourire, et peut-être de trouver aussi un sens profond qu'elle n'y voyait pas, dans les mots dont elle se servit.... merveillé par la virtuosité des exécutants, la comtesse s'écria en s'adressant a Swann: "C'est prodigieux, je n'ai jamais rien vu d'aussi fort ...." Mais un scrupule d'exactitude lui faisant corriger cette première assertion, elle ajouta cette reserve: "rien d'aussi fort ... depuis les tables tournantes!"

(So that, when the phrase came unravelled at last, floating in shreds in the motifs which followed and had already taken its place, if at first Swann was irritated to see the Comtesse de Monteriender, famous for her naïve remarks, lean towards him to confide her impressions even before the sonata had ended, he could not keep from smiling, and perhaps also found a deeper meaning that she did not see in the words she used. Awestruck by the virtuosity of the performers, the Comtesse exclaimed to Swann: "It's amazing, I've never seen anything so powerful ..." But a scruple for accuracy causing her to correct her first assertion, she added this reservation: "anything so powerful ... since the table-turning!") (Translated by Lydia Davis, The Way by Swann's: 355)

Similar passages easily can be found elsewhere in Proust. The way he plays with the ambiguity of certain words (as above, with the word "execution") is tightly analogous to the way Wagner operates with different resolutions and interpretations of diminished seventh chords.

8.4 Some remarks on the later operas

Wagner's *Tristan* and *Meistersinger* interrupted the composing of the *Nibelungen Ring* for over a decade, and naturally influenced the style of the tetralogy proceeding from the third act of *Siegfried*. Harmony has been taken as the decisive, pertinent dimension of *Tristan*. One of the most remarkable works by Ernst Kurth was consecrated to it, and semiotician Jean-Jacques Nattiez analyzed paradigms of various interpretations of the "Tristan chord". It has been correctly remarked, however, that the harmonic aspect is insignificant unless it is seen in relation to melody, counterpoint and instrumentation. The highlight of the opera is of course the love duet of the second act, and the impact of Isolde's *Liebestod* at the end to some extent depends on the fact that it has already been heard in part, as one ingredient of that duet.

Also in *Meistersinger*, one the most impressive ideas is based on techniques of transformed repetition. The prelude to this opera is one of the culminations of Wagner's orchestral fantasy. The prelude still shimmers in the mind of the listener when he hears the great finale, which seems never to end. One keeps in mind the musical form of the prelude, which threatens to burst out at any moment, reminding the listener that this will soon end, when new and different sections are interpolated among its elements. This is almost literally a

realization of the narrative scheme by Claude Brémond, in which new episodes and plots always intervene between the story kernels (Al, A2, A3 ...) new episodes and plots. Here, sections of the prelude keep returning, to serve as unifying indexical-iconic forces. The musical form finally channels the stream of the dramatic events into a certain direction. The ideal musical form achieves realistic narration.

There are still other "semiotic" aspects of *Meistersinger*. The tradition of the guilds in late-medieval Germany is interesting in this respect. In a sense, the mastersingers themselves were "generativists" given their naive and unwavering trust in musical rules. A genuinely German manner may be discerned in the 25 statutes of punishment for breaking each rule (somewhat as when Germany produced Austrian trams in Vienna – one finds a table of reimbursements, *Ersatztabelle,* listing the penalties for breaking this or that part of the wagon). Indeed, the generativist spirit was alive as early as in the fifteenth century.

On the other hand, Wagner perhaps wanted to describe the Schillerian distinction between "naive" and "sentimental" creation, the former represented by Hans Sachs with his handicraft skills and the latter by Walther v. Stolzing with his romantic melodies. Basically, Wagner sketches here three kinds of musical "semiotics":

(1) Beckmesser "semiotics": ridiculous, meticulous, scholastic, rule-oriented culture (a good illustration of the "academic" style defined by musicologist Guido Adler);

(2) Walther v. Stolzing "semiotics": Wagner parodied this as much as the former; this is over-exalted "semiotics", exaggerated and swollen with modal emotion – a semiotician who creates as if in a dream, resorting only to inspiration, with no awareness of the rules (he is the proper semiotician of "modalities");

(3) Hans Sachs "semiotics": the masterful and sovereign artist, who knows the rules as well as their pragmatic-concrete conditions; he adumbrates the defender of modern ecological thought, by emphasizing locality, community, and handicraft.

The summit of Wagner's output is of course *Parsifal*. It is so conspicuously the "ultimate" work of the composer, his last will and testament, that its position as such cannot be shaken. The most amazing element in this opera is how the original, extremely action-packed poem by Wolfram v. Eschenbach has in the hands of Wagner turned into a completely internal opera, with almost no action, whose content turns mainly on psychological polyvalence and cogency. For instance, Parsifal and Kundry are psychologically the most complex figures

that Wagner ever created. They are different in each act, always growing in some new direction. Also essential is the fact that all of the central action has already taken place, in prehistory, and the weight of the past lies heavily upon the now-moment of the stage (as in Ibsen's dramas). The action is made enigmatic and mythical by the category before/after alone.

Parsifal was the first Wagner opera, and opera in general, which I attended, and that at the age of twelve years. Oddly enough, I did not then, nor do I now, sense that this, Wagner's most extensive opera, is in any way too long. Rather, it has always seemed to finish too early. Behind *Parsifal* there might loom another peak of Western musical culture – Mozart's *Zauberflöte* – but as Jacques Chailley argues, *Parsifal* remains unique as an analysis of the European soul. For a scholar of the life of signs, it forms an inexhaustible object.

Chapter 9 Do Wagner's leitmotifs have a system?

Richard Wagner's concept of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* was based largely on his leitmotif technique. That technique served both as the structural principle that bound together various art forms and as the unifying force of the music. Unlike the deep structures of harmonic-tonal organization, the leitmotif was a phenomenon to be received immediately on the surface level, something that all listeners could perceive regardless of their degree of musical competence. Wagner's leitmotif technique was also an extraordinarily efficient means for conveying the idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* to the general public, a kind of "marketing" device, to use a term of our own time. The continuing success of the technique could be seen in the fact that the first automobiles in the German empire were equipped with signaling machines that emitted the blast of Siegfried's horn. And even today, Hollywood movie-makers still use Wagnerian leitmotif techniques in their film scores.

Yet the question remains: on what factors was this enigmatic and powerful technique based? Did Wagner have in mind a consistent system, which after his Nibelungen *Ring* he followed in his operas? Anyone who studies Wagner's leitmotif technique cannot avoid concentrating on the tetralogy, since in the earlier operas it was as yet a rather unelaborated musical tool: in order to repeat a motif, the composer had to shift entire blocks of motifs from one scene to another.

The secret of Wagnerian leitmotifs has long fascinated his researchers and admirers, whose efforts to find the key to them can be classified into four groups: (1) traditional "paradigmatic" classifications, starting from the so-called leitmotif tables; (2) analyses based on content; (3) more global musical and musicological approaches; and (4) semiotic analyses. After a look at the first three groups, I shall sketch my own semiotic theory of the leitmotif "system".

9.1 Leitmotif diagrams

Quite soon after Wagner's death, the so-called Bayreuth circle undertook to canonize the leitmotifs and to and furnish them with appropriate sobriquets. The studies by Hans von Wolzogen were decisive for that project. Soon the piano scores of Wagner operas were provided with tables of leitmotifs, which, like the synopsis of a play, informed the reader about the most important musical "actors" of the drama (Diagram 28).

Figure 86: Table of leitmotifs from *The Rhinegold*.

In these tables, leitmotifs are not classified as such in any particular order, but may appear in the alphabetical order of their verbal titles. In Bayreuth, one can buy a leitmotif handbook entitled *Das Buch der Motive,* printed by Schott and edited by Lothar Windsperger. Altogether 194 different motifs are distinguished therein, arranged for piano and provided with corresponding texts from the libretto. The motifs appear in the handbook in the order of their occurrence in the tetralogy. Yet some themes called leitmotifs – for example, no. 286 *Siegmunds Erschöpfungs-Motiv,* no. 377 *Weib-Motiv,* no. 370 *Liebesglut-Motiv,* no. 441 *Mord-Motiv* – should not be conceived as leitmotifs at all, since

they do not return sufficiently; thus the real number of leitmotifs is approximately half that given in the handbook.

Despite their obvious superficiality, such tables served as a kind of primitive analytic tool for amateur listeners, with which one could identify and recall the onstage actions. The leitmotif tables doggedly survive, as evidenced by Deryck Cooke's well-known *Introduction to Wagner's "Ring"* (recorded in 1967, now available as a CD). Cooke's "system" contains altogether 193 examples, though even there one finds much repetition. The good side of his presentation is its clarity and elegant realization. Moreover, one hears the music examples played by an orchestra. This is a vast improvement over the piano transcriptions, since very often the decisive aspect of a leitmotif is timbre, not melody or rhythm.

Cooke's efforts to recover the hidden system of leitmotifs (at least those appraised as such) raises certain questions. Can any leitmotif have a "definite" form? Wagner himself let it be understood that he had some basic motifs, from which all the others were derived. In his books *Oper und Drama* and *Mitteilung an meine Freunde* (*Announcement to My Friends*), Wagner spoke about the most important melodic elements (*melodische Momente*) or basic motifs (*Grundmotive*), which nearest meant dramatic motifs that corresponded to musical ideas. Also, in his essay "Uber die Anwendung der Musik auf das Drama Wagner" (On the Usage of Music in Wagner's Drama), he referred to Wolzogen's leitmotif tables, stating that they had correctly revealed the dramatic meaning and efficacy of the motifs, *but had not paid attention to their function in the musical structure* (italics mine). A little earlier in the same essay, Wagner spoke about networks of basic themes (*Grundthemen*), which could be equated with the thematic ideas of a symphony.

In any case, the same leitmotif may occur in innumerable forms in the Tetralogy, but it is impossible to determine its primary shape. If one considers the primary form of a motif to be that of its first occurrence, as Cooke seems to do, this leads to a contradiction, since no motif is a leitmotif upon its first appearance, but only when it is repeated. Most of the motifs are grouped around certain thematic ideas, as proven by the many derivations from Wotan's spear-motif or the nature motifs derived from the Rhine River motif. The order in which the motifs appear has no significance, inasmuch as their process is not diachronic in nature, but rather constitutes a *panchronic* semiosis. Naturally the number of leitmotifs decreases towards the end of the tetralogy, when their usage fades or when they even find completely new significations.

When dealing with such a large number of leitmotifs, every musicologist knows that anything can be deduced from anything else. Hence it is useless to try to place the motifs in any kind of "generative" order. At first, the idea of

preparing an inventory of leitmotifs based on their derivation from each other (on their inner logic or "endogenic" relationships) seems reasonable, especially in view of the composer's remarks about using generative kernels. But it ultimately turns out to be an impossible project. For by the time the 146th motif is sounding, one realizes that Cooke's presentation is unfortunately a rather confused jumble of motifs which have been detached from their contexts, and which could have been selected in other ways as well. No binding logic or system can be found in his discourse on the leitmotifs, except that it vaguely obeys the chronology of their occurrences. In the end, Cooke's presentation itself becomes a kind of "Illustrated Classics", a cartoon version of the *Ring*.

Likewise, verbal labels have little value as a means of systematization, even if it may be easier to speak about the Ring-motif or Sister-love motif than about motif A or B. Even as early a commentator as Alfred Lorenz criticized von Wolzogen on this count:

> ... das stete Hervorsuchen zahlreicher "neuer" Motive ist durchaus nicht die Aufgabe, um die es sich bei der Erkenntnis der Wagnerschen Kunstwerke handelt. Auch kann es die Wissenscahft nicht fördern, eine fortwährende Umänderung der Motivnamen vorzunehmen kann ruhig zugegeben werden dass von den Motivnamen Wolzogens einige unschön andere zu eng gefasst sind....
>
> [... the constant search for numerous "new" motives is not at all the activity on which to base knowledge of Wagnerian artworks. Neither can the perpetual change of motive names be helpful to research ... it can be said with little fear of contradiction, that some of Wolzogen's names for motives are ugly and others are too limited....]

Ultimately, Lorenz emphasizes the fact that one cannot find appropriate titles because, as words, they represent a concept, and music has nothing to do with concepts. Wolzogen himself said that the names are only signs to help the understanding. If this view were interpreted in the modern linguistic or semiotic way, one could argue that leitmotifs, in both music and language, serve as units of the first articulation, that is, mere "syllabic" instances. In that case, however, the only thing distinguishing them from spoken language would be that the leitmotifs, in their most perfect form, are already kinds of mini-narratives or units corresponding to a phrase (for instance, *Wälsungenleid Motive, Schwesterliebe Motive,* etc.). If one takes this level as that of the first articulation, then its units can be broken down into units of the second articulation, i.e., "words".

They can even be further into units of the third articulation, which consists of meaningless units, letters, phonemes, or rhythms, timbres, and intervals. In that case the leitmotifs, in the linguistic sense, would be as follows: First level of articulation (phrase): "Siegmund pulls his sword from the oak"; second level of articulation (words): "Siegmund", "sword", "oak"; third level of articulation (phonemes): /s/, /i/, /e/, and so on.

In the musical sense, the leitmotifs would be construed in this way: *First level of articulation*: a series of motifs describing musically how Siegfried pulls the sword from the oak. This corresponds to Wagner's notion of the *dichterisch musikalische Periode*. It is strange how much discrepancy one finds in opinions about the proper length of this unit. Wagner himself describes it quite clearly in *Die Meistersinger,* in the scene with Hans Sachs and Walther von Stolzing. Yet this did not prevent Lorenz himself from erring in his analyses, although he correctly noted: "… Die Hauptfrage vom Standpunkt der Tonkunst ist doch, was schliesslich aus den Leitmotiven gemacht worden ist" (In the end, the main question, from the standpoint of composition, is to what use the leitmotifs are put). *Second level of articulation*: the motifs of Siegmund, the sword, and so on, taken individually. *Third level of articulation*: rhythms, chords, timbres, intervals (i.e., musical parameters).

Hunding

Golden Apples

Alberich's Threat

Siegfried's Anger

Figure 87: Leitmotifs of Wagner's *Ring* tetralogy, chosen by Deryck Cooke.

9.2 Systematization in terms of content

The starting-point for this category is what the leitmotifs express, their content, and, in a deeper sense, what their conventional titles convey. A typical interpretation belonging to this category is the depth-psychological or Jungian one by Robert Donnington. In the first place, Donnington is interested in leitmotifs as *symbols*. He in turn wants to interpret these symbols in the light of three different areas: mythology, anthropology, and depth psychology. In his view, Wagner's own attitude toward his symbols was three-fold: First, Wagner had an enormous amount to say about them. Second, what he said sometimes conflicted with how he actually used the symbols. Third, Wagner was aware of this conflict, but his artistic intuition took precedence over his theoretical rationalisations. Donnington's thesis is that whenever Wagner uses a traditional symbol – such as fire, water, ring, theft, thwarted love – the basic meaning of that symbol is the same as the one it conventionally has in the realms of myth, ritual, folklore, arts, dreams, fantasies and visions. For Donnington, a musical motif is a symbolic image, which in turn reflects something archetypal. Thus the motif presents itself in the mind of a composer, since that is where archetypes function. Music does not lie somewhere "outside". Rather, it waits in the mind, since all archetypes await their opportunity to appear as mental images. One could thus qualify Donnington's approach as "endogenic"; in other words, leitmotifs as symbols emerge from the inside and are not dictated by external "programs". This view coincides with current theories according to which music manifests archaic, primal processes of the human psyche. How does Donnington's method function in practice? What kinds of symbol does he hear in his Wagner?

For one thing, Donnington finds that the prelude to *Rheingold* evokes both a return to nature and the symbolism of reincarnation. He justifies this interpretation by Wagner's dream experience, in September of 1853, about the creation of the prelude to the opera. In turn, the key of *Rheingold,* E-flat major, refers to Elsa's dream in *Lohengrin.* Therefore the prelude to *Rheingold* alludes to reincarnation by water symbolism (in the Freudian sense) and key symbolism. (Intertextual aside: In Mahler's "Resurrection" Symphony, the key shifts to E-flat major when belief in the resurrection is affirmed.) Donnington goes through the whole *Ring* in the same manner. The trip from Nibelheim back to Valhalla signifies a shift from the mother's world to that of the father; in more modern terms, a journey takes place, from the *khora* to the symbolic, patriarchal order. Wotan is the symbol of fire; gold in turn represents the fiery libido and, as the symbolic counterpart of light, the consciousness. To Donnington the complex symbolism of the *Ring* represents force itself.

It might at first seem that Donnington has elaborated a unique system based on the content of Wagner's leitmotifs, and indeed his observations do proceed according to principles of British common sense and of psychology. Although Donnington would seem to have succeeded in his depth-psychological interpretation, even the latter has been criticized in the interpretation of myths, perhaps most harshly by Roger Caillois in his *Le mythe et l'homme*: "The need to bring by force to the myths a theory which is already discredited in psychology – the blind and mechanical use of symbolism, which makes dilettantish negligence possible – has led to results for which one cannot but hope an eternal silence" (Caillois 1972: 21).

On the other hand, an analysis such as Donnington's might be possible if the emphasis were shifted to the concrete logic of the leitmotifs; in other words, to that which its various musical and visual elements represent. Even sense qualities have their own symbolism and poetics, as Gaston Bachelard has shown.

For instance, the prelude to the third act of *Siegfried* superimposes all four Bachelardian symbolisms: earth, fire, air, and water. Also, in the purely musical sense, it is an excellent example of the sophistication that Wagner reached in his leitmotif technique. The bass part presents the *Erda Motive*, arrived at by way of the Rhine-motif; that is to say, it belongs to the group of nature motifs which represent both earth and water at the same time. Above the *Erda Motive* we hear the dotted rhythm of the *Walkürenritt* motif as an allusion to the air. Finally, the chord progression of the Wanderer's sleep motif is added, which evokes the end of *Die Walküre* and Brünnhilde within the circle of fire. The superimposition of motifs also displays Wagner's skill in the simultaneous use of various musical parameters: the Erda motif is primarily melodic, the *Walküre* motif rhythmic, and the Wanderer motif harmonic.

Another attempt to classify the leitmotifs as to content can be found in my study, *Myth and Music* (Tarasti 1979). There the leitmotifs are viewed on the basis of the aesthetics of myth, and are shown to express all the nuances and "semes" representative of mythology. My criterion of classification was in the first place actorial, which means that each personage in the *Ring* has his or her own leitmotifs. Moreover, those actors can be situated on three different levels or "isotopies": (1) the level of Nature or myth, which is further characterized by the modality of 'know'; that is, actors here possess mythical knowledge which enables their actions in the story; (2) the level of society, or *Saga,* which has the modality of 'want'; its actors are spurred to action by desire or need; (3) and the level of not-nature and not-society, which is that of the fairy tale; this level is qualified by the modality of 'can', which is ability or power, be it physical or magical; in this case, the power to do certain things that are normally impossible.

Figure 88: *Siegfried*, Act III, Prelude and scene 1.

Figure 89: Superimposed leitmotifs in *Siegfried*, Prelude to Act III (bars 1–2 and 55–56).

In such a taxonomy, the same actor may have several leitmotifs, depending on which level of action he or she is functioning. Accordingly, Wotan, when represented as a member of the society of gods, receives a descending-scale motif; but when he is conceived as a person outside of society and nature, who has lost his mythical authority and travels aimlessly as the homeless Wanderer, then he is represented by a motif of descending triads. Correspondingly, Siegfried has three motifs according to whether he is a mythical hero, member of the Wälsunga, or fairy-tale prince. Some actors appear on only one level, as do Sieglinde or Alberich, who are exclusively "social" protagonists.

The main function of leitmotifs here is *indexical*. They refer to a certain person or level of action; they place one straightway at the right point in the topology of the *Ring*. The network of leitmotifs serves as a cognitive map for the listener/spectator, a map which towards the end of the *Ring* becomes more and more accurate.

9.3 Music-analytic point of view

Many scholars have scrutinized leitmotifs from a purely musicological standpoint. Yet, many of those whom we might expect to represent such a viewpoint deal with everything but the leitmotifs themselves. Carl Dahlhaus (1984) says,

in his *New Grove Wagner* (co-written with John Deathridge), that the leitmotif in the musico-dramatic sense can be fully understood only when it is joined both to words and scenic action. Dahlhaus does not even attempt a musical systematization of leitmotifs: "It is only when a musical motif has been the symbol of something seen on the stage, that its association is established with the gold, the ring, Valhalla ... a means of linking what is seen and spoken with what is not seen and not spoken" (Dahlhaus 1984: 146).

At the same time, however, Dahlhaus states that Wagner had not only dramaturgical but also musical reasons for writing three dramas to precede *Siegfrieds Tod*: the task of the music was to portray the myth of the gods and the heroic tragedy directly to the senses (the aforementioned "isotopies" are in a way "invisible", abstract categories of interpretation). Wagner sought to guarantee the unity of musical form by the recurrence of leitmotifs. Yet even this had its dangers, for repetition could cause monotony, redundancy in the worst sense. Therefore he had to create a sufficient number of leitmotifs (according to Dahlhaus, there were more than 100). On the other hand, the demand for a wealth of leitmotifs ran up against the aesthetic desirability of limiting their number in order to facilitate immediate comprehension: they must be few enough so that the listener can catch the drift of the opera. In sum, Dahlhaus states the basic problem of leitmotifs without examining it closer.

Pierre Boulez (1986) has conducted a lot of Wagner and written of those experiences in his collection of essays, *Orientations*. For Boulez, in contrast to Dahlhaus, the scenic action is nothing compared to the complexity and development of musical ideas. He writes:

> Some of the musical themes gradually disappear from the score, as though the composer had lost interest in their musical substance, or abandoned them as the victims of whatever detail of the story they represented. Other themes, which may have been comparatively unimportant at their first appearance, develop out of all proportion to our expectations. Thus it happens that reading the score today we are aware that certain initially important themes are in fact destined to disappear, while others, which make only a passing appearance, are destined to acquire increasing importance and even to become essential later in the work ... Watching this vast musical spectacle ... we are in the same position as the narrator in Proust, who after years of absence returns to a party at the Guermantes. The motives that one thought of when still a young man are already white-haired ... It is hard to believe in their transformation; their youthfulness is still deeply impressed on our memories, and here we suddenly meet them on the threshold of old age! (Boulez 1986: 264–265)

Boulez is certainly right: it is precisely the feeling that overtakes the listener who hears, for instance, Brünnhilde's farewell at the end of *Götterdämmerung*. The world has become old; the leitmotifs, nigh to being overloaded, are bursting with significations. At the same time, we know that nothing more can be

added to them, that it is senseless to introduce new leitmotifs here, during the last stages of the drama. The redundancy (in the information theory sense) is at its greatest at the same time as the entropy, or information in the proper sense, is at its minimum. The only possibility for expanding and deepening the opera is on the level of signification, where the musical information becomes knowledge, where one shifts from knowing to understanding, from *Wissen* to *Kennen,* from *savoir* to *connaissance.* Many leitmotifs share such a destiny – one need only think of the *Todesmotive* with its altered harmonies. When that motif occurs for the first time in *Die Walküre* there is no doubt about its denotation: it means that Siegmund must soon die. At that point the motif is clearly indexical. But gradually it loses its indexical nature and becomes a general symbol of something threatening; its initial denotation fades away, as it were. At the end, however, as Siegfried is dying, its original meaning returns. But now its effect is no longer the same. Now it is heard as part of a broader symphonic whole, which is formed by Siegfried's last narrative. Now it serves as material for a more extensive musical form, despite the fact that its presence coincides scenically with Hagen's murderous act.

Boulez thinks that certain motifs have on their first occurrence a clear denotation, when they refer to a thing or a gesture. But as the work develops the music constitutes more and more its own world, which exists beyond the world of the stage:

> There are some scenes composed entirely of motives with no neutral, conventional signs ... Instrumental texture in such scenes becomes extremely close – close, but not always com pact, creating a world increasingly independent of the stage. At such moments in the *Ring* there is something like a duality between the worlds of the drama and of the music. (Boulez 1986: 265)

Nevertheless, for Boulez the motives have a strong tendency to become autonomous, with the stage action serving perpetually as pretext and providing explanations. The worlds of music and text become rivals when they continually corroborate each other. In the end, however, he is more convincing as a composer than as a dramatist.

Boulez next poses a crucial question: By what means does Wagner hold the drama together? Boulez says first that if Wagner's motifs were like the motivic cells or germinal ideas of Beethoven's symphonies, they would not grip the listener with the same intensity as they do in opera. In that case, what musical quality in Wagner's leitmotifs makes them so captivating and so immediately provocative? This question Boulez does not answer. Instead he moves to another, broader problem, that of the network of motifs. Boulez supposes that the coherence of that network is due to the motifs' malleability in time

(1986: 266). Although they originally appear in a particular tempo, they can be accelerated or decelerated, condensed or expanded. Such motivic manipulation was of course not Wagner's invention, but a centuries-old contrapuntal technique. True, Wagner used the same devices, but not in order to create strict, closed forms such as those of J. S. Bach. He instead strove for change and fluency in his music, not rigid codes and formal schemes. Thus Wagner's motifs do not follow a given form or rigid hierarchy. Instead he makes the shift from a general structure, which serves as the basis for themes arising from it, to a structure in which everything is thematic. Everything can be transformed, and, Boulez sighs, it is impossible to find any form in this mass of sound in perpetual motion. There are moments when we find ourselves wanting to grasp the form as something more than the sum total of individual moments.

Boulez makes interesting observations about the transformation of various motifs. For instance, he shows how the Valhalla motive is transformed by all sorts of manipulations but still preserves its identity. Yet in his Wagner essays, Boulez ultimately answers "no" to the question that began the present chapter: Do Wagner's leitmotifs have a system? This negative answer is a little surprising coming from Boulez, the most rigorous systematizer on the contemporary musical scene. Yet before we give up our task, let us try another route in looking for a system of leitmotifs. In what follows I present another view, which argues that the leitmotifs *do* have a system, but on a level that has not yet been found or even sought.

When thinking of the totality of leitmotifs, detached from their dramatic situations, how can such material be classified and its operations defined? In fact, if we ignore the context, our situation is quite the same as that of a scholar trying to elucidate the systematics of Indian ragas. There are about 200 ragas, and they function as a part of "mythical communication". They are connected to certain meanings, which a competent music listener recognizes. According to the American musicologist Lewis Rowell, the ragas can be located between two extreme poles: at one end we have ragas which blend together with, and are essentially indistinguishable from, certain scales; at the other end are ragas that are independent melodies:

ragas

scales   ————————   melodies
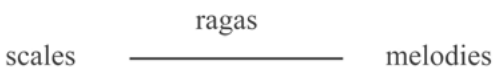
Figure 90: Structure of ragas.

All the ragas can be situated along this scale. In fact, Wagnerian leitmotifs could be classified in a similar way, that is, into certain elementary structures, not confined merely to scales, but also including certain chord progressions, timbres, and rhythms. They could be classified further in terms of independent melodies and themes that, in effect, are kinds of mini-narrative comprised of various primary structures:

leitmotifs

primary structures ——————————— independent melodies
(motifs, "archetypes")   (themes, mini-narratives)
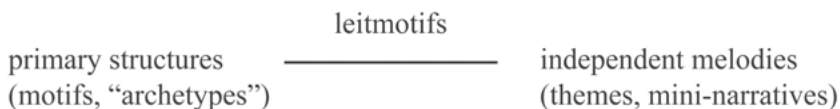
Figure 91: Leitmotifs as mini-narratives: Primary structures.

On the extreme left side of the diagram we would have such motifs as the Sword and the Ring, and on the right those such as Hunding's motif, Wälsunga motif, Siegfried motif, Valhalla motif, and so on.

Going further into the systems of Indian ragas, Rowell presents tables drawn by Indian theoreticians themselves. Those tables show that all the ragas are "generated" stepwise from two basic types, called *Prati Madheama Meles Suddha Madhyama Meles.* These two types can in turn be divided into six subspecies, and further into 36, as more and more melodic variables are added to the basic types. Even on the level of ideas, the comparison to Indian music is not far-fetched in Wagner's case, if one takes into account how much Indian philosophy, via Schopenhauer, influenced him, and how well he knew Indian mythology (we can assess this by the amount that Wagner wrote on such topics, in books now housed at the Wahnfried Library).

Could a similar kind of systematization be applied to the leitmotifs? We find help for such a task in the theory of melody developed by L. B. Meyer, according to which melodies of Western art music are based on certain cognitive archetypes. In Meyer's view, one should start with a tripartition of melodies into those that are symmetrical, scalar (conjunct, stepwise patterns), and non-scalar (disjunct, leaping patterns). The latter category is further divided into subtypes: gap-fill (stepwise melody interrupted by a leap, then filled by scale) and triadic melody (arpeggiated triads). Symmetrical melodies are so-called "complementary" figures; for instance, when a melodic pattern is followed by its exact inversion, or when a melody turns around a central tone or "axis".

The Wagnerian leitmotifs could certainly be classified according to Meyer's system, but such a classification would be lacking. For that system only accounts for the melody. By contrast, in the leitmotifs different musical param-
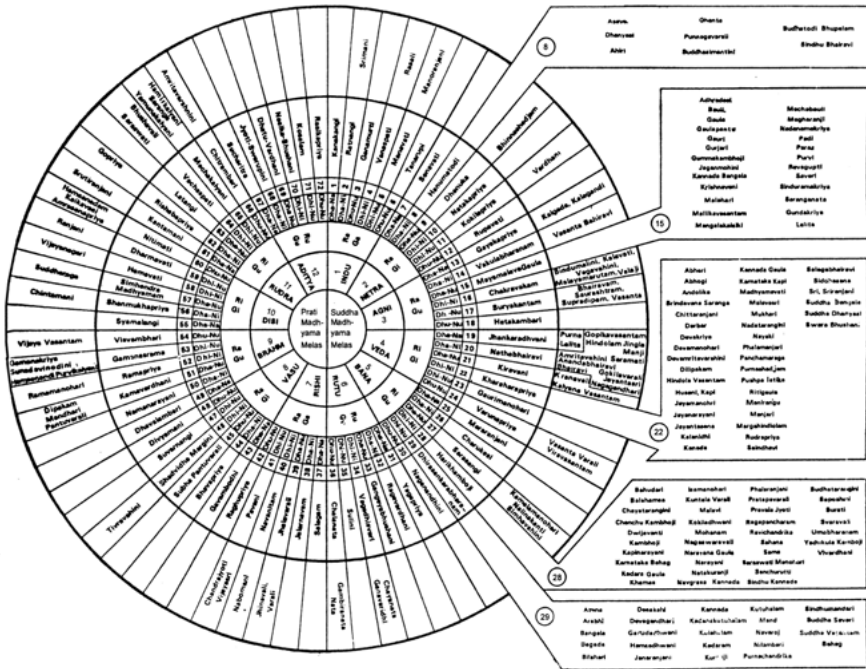
Figure 92: Classification of Indian ragas by Lewis Rowell (1983).

eters vary in importance. In some of them the harmony is most important, whereas in others it is rhythm. Nevertheless, Meyer's archetypes form a foundation to which one can add information from other parameters.

There remains yet another problem, namely, that Wagner's actual melodies are often combinations of more than one Meyerian archetype or "primary structure". According to what type or structure is a leitmotif to be classified? Probably, in the majority of leitmotifs some archetype is so cogent that it clearly distinguishes itself. Wagner knew this when for the leitmotifs he specified demands of concreteness, captivation, and immediacy, mentioned above by Dahlhaus and Boulez. Overly complex motifs lose their identity. Secondly, a group of leitmotifs cannot be classified unequivocally as any type, because their effect is based on the joint action of structures. The closer the motifs come to the rightmost end of the above continuum (i.e., the closer they are to being a mini-narrative), the more they rely on such joint action. In sum, our answer must be twofold: one group of leitmotifs has to be classified according to its most conspicuous and striking feature, its "primary structure". And one group has to be left unclassified, since it is made up of small narratives consisting of several traits. For instance, consider the Siegfried motif:

Figure 93: The Siegfried motif.

The motif is triadic, but at the same time it belongs to the gap-fill type, so that the three gaps at the beginning are carefully filled at the end. Moreover, it has a strong, defining rhythmic impulse.

What, then, are the basic types of leitmotifs? A clear group is formed by *triadic* motifs (sword, gold), though they may be arpeggiated in various ways. This type was noted by Boulez: "... Many of the themes are based on arpeggios, or variations of arpeggios ..." (1986: 267). Other types include *scalar* motifs (e.g., Wotan's motifs), *axis* motifs (those of the giants, the Nibelungen, Hagen's calls), and *gap-fill motifs* (Siegfried's horn signal). So Meyer's categories may serve as a heuristic starting-point, if one bears in mind that they have to be completed. If we attempt such a taxonomy for leitmotifs listed in the *Buch der Motive,* we get the following results:

(1) *Triadic motifs.* This class includes triad motifs in the proper sense, arpeggiated triads, and neighbour-note + arpeggiation motifs. This is the largest category, containing fifteen motifs altogether: *Rheingold-, Natur-, Schwert-, Gewitter-, Regenbogen-, Walhall-, Walküren-, Ritt-, Waldvogel-, Erda-, Jugend-, Rheintöchtergesang-, Froh-, Jugend-Motive.* In addition, the triadic group consists of several derived motives which almost belong to this class. They are as follows:

   a) *One-chord motifs.* This group does not include plain major and minor triads, but rather those such as diminished seventh chords, added-sixth chords, and augmented triads. Quite often such a chord is provided with symbolism through its altered tones: *Nibelungenhass* and *Arbeit* motifs (in which the rhythmic trait may be stronger), *Vergessenheit-, Walküren-Ruf-, Nothung-Motive, Motiv der Aufregung, Walküren-, Siegmunds Wälseruf-Motive.*

   b) Neighbour-note or appoggiatura-chord motifs, or two chord motifs in general, with one chord resolving to the other: *Erwachens-, Wehe-, Rheintöchter-, Feuerzauber-, Tarnhelm-, Loge-. Abenteuer-,Wasser-spiel-Motive* (the last one is in fact an expansion of a neighbour-note idea).

   c) *Series of thirds motifs.* These are kinds of deductions from the Ring motif (they can as such be put in the Meyerian category of comple-

mentary melodies): *Ring-, Sieglinde-, Grüble-, Goldherrschaft-, Gut-rune-Motive* and *Motiv des Hochzeitsrufes*.

d) *Chromatic-harmony motifs.* In the Ring, these often convey a magical action, a psychic-mythical quality, psychological complexity and expressiveness or intimacy: *Tarnhelm-, Liebes-, Schicksal-, Schlaf-, Waberlohe-, Wanderer-Motive*.

e) *Chord-progression motifs.* These are series of chords that function as a kind of small narrative. With these motifs we have already moved from the archetypal structure of triadic motifs to the other end of the scale, to independent thematic or melodic units: *Hunding-, Entsa-gungs-, Todesklage-, Wehwalt-, Walhall-, Siegfriedliebe-, Wälsungen-, Blutbräderschaft-, Wurm-* (extended version)*, Speereid-Motive*.

(2) Scalar motifs. These are of two types: (a) descending scales: Vertrags-, Weltesche-, Jubel-, Hingebungs-, Götterdämmerungs-, Entsagungs-Unmut-, Schleich-, Weltesche-, Freiheit, Wotans Abschied-, Brünnhildes Verteidi-gungs-, Wotans Strafverkündigung, Walkürenritt-, Sturm-, Siegmund-, Frei-heit-, Unheil-Motive; (b) ascending scales: Natur-, Erda-, Unruhe-, Wasser-spiel-Motive.

(3) Axis motifs: Nibelungen-, Wurm-, Mime-, Riesen-, Hagens Ruf-Motive.

(4) Gap-fill (or fill-gap) motifs: Wälsungenleid-, Siegmunds Lenzlied, Horn-, Liebesverwirrungs-, Helden-, Entzückzungs-, Wälsungenliebe-, Reinheit, Liebesglück- Siegfriedliebe-, Brünnhilde-, Verlockungs-Motive.

(5) Leap motifs, based upon back-and-forth figuration with no clear direc-tion: Gewitter-, Jugendkraft-, Siegfrieds Schmiedelied, Fluch-, Liebes-bund-, Nornengesang-, Vertragsschutz-, Mannen-, Hagen-, Unheil-, Treue-Motive.

(6) Various combinations of the previous types:

a) diatonic-harmony motif, with scalar elements and chord progres-sions: Siegfrieds Schmelzlied, Siegfrieds Wanderlied, Mimes Erzie-hungslied.

b) motifs with a scale + arpeggiated triad: Freia-, Verzweiflungs-, Wäl-sungen-, Gattenliebe-, Gibichungen-, Anmut-, Angst-Motive.

c) chromatic scale + symmetry (axis type): Liebessehnsucht-Motiv.

d) gap-fill (three times), arpeggiated triad, chord progression as a narra-tive: Siegfried-Motiv.

e) scale, timbre, and gap-fill: Waldweben-Motiv.

The latter cases above call attention to the fact that the *Ring* contains many leitmotivic situations in which, by combining motifs either successively or simultaneously, one can produce an almost endless supply of various "types".

There is also a whole category of "unclassified" motifs that do not fit any of the aforementioned basic types. In addition, there are cases that do not constitute leitmotifs at all, because they do not recur (e.g., such melodic innovations as *Siegmunds Lenzlied*). The present taxonomy is also lacking in that it does not include motifs whose primary parameter is rhythm or timbre. There exists at least one study of Wagner from the perspective of rhythm: the analysis by Francis Orlando of dotted-rhythm figures in the *Ring* and their symbolism. Orlando believes that the undeniable signified of such motifs is physical activity or work. As concerns timbre, there is Egon Voss's (1970) study of Wagner's orchestrations, although to my knowledge he does not deal with timbre as constituting a special class of leitmotifs.

The analysis presented above is a tentative, hypothetical mapping. It may be sharpened by a semic analysis of the motifs; that is to say, they should be broken into their smallest common units, reduced to the "phonemic" level. That level corresponds to the second articulation of language, which consists of meaningless units. If the aforementioned archetypes function as "semic dimensions", one may engage the issue of how many semes each leitmotif contains. Thereafter one may ponder their hierarchies or equivalencies in relation to each other. The question of which seme predominates over others probably cannot be answered by formal analysis, but is rather a choice made by the listener and based on personal preferences. Here one might also apply the concept of "markedness" from linguistics (see Hatten 1994). For instance, rhythm can be more marked, that is, more perceptually salient and/or semantically weighted, than the category of the arpeggiated triad, as in the *Walkürenritt* motif. Similarly, though it may be classified as an augmented-triad motif, Siegfried's forging motif projects a rhythmic impulse that is more perceptually salient than the chordal background (also the case with the Horn motif).

In sum, it seems possible to use purely musico-analytic criteria to elucidate rather extensively the whole systematics of leitmotifs. At the same time, it is hard to render explicitly how they are formed, in terms of an unambiguous set of rules.

9.4 Semiotic approach

The preceding reflections already have a semiotic nature, but only incidentally. My intention now is primarily semiotic: to search for the system of leitmotifs in their global intertextual space of play, on the level of "significance". My search involves a model that might be characterized as "existential-semiotical".

I return now to what Lorenz took to be the critical issue: "*...was schliesslich aus den Leitmotiven gemacht worden ist*". The starting-point of my response is

that a musical work is fundamentally a process, in which various *situations* take shape. My thesis is that, in so far as there is a system of leitmotifs, it must be based on the relationship between the leitmotif and its situation. In that case, the notion of a system changes into a function, one that is dependent on the listener. Let us illustrate this view of the *Ring* as follows:
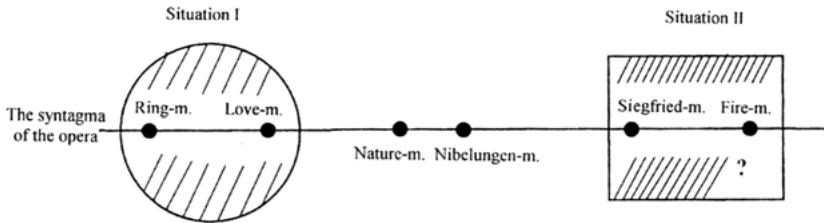
Figure 94: Leitmotifs in various situations.

The figure portrays a fictive passage from the *Ring of the Nibelungen*, in which certain leitmotifs are conceived as belonging to the same musico-dramatic field or situation. How such a situation is delimited is not pondered here. It can be a musical form defined by exclusively musical criteria, and it can also be a dramatic situation. Some leitmotifs belong to such situations, which constitute the isotopies of leitmotifs or determine their modalities; on the other hand, some isotopies remain outside such situations. Again using Greimas's terms, one can say that leitmotifs are either "engaged" to a certain situation or "disengaged" from it. The same observation may be put another way: some leitmotifs appear in, while others transcend, the existential situations of the actors of the drama.

Transcendent leitmotifs, in their extreme form, can be found in the leitmotif tables, mentioned earlier, such as those at the beginning of piano arrangements. In that case they are signs detached from their situations, and can be scrutinized as such, as we have tried to do above. The essential problem, however, is how they function as engaged in or shifted from the situation. The basic question is this: Does the sign evoke the situation, or does the situation evoke the sign? Is the leitmotif ruling over the musico-scenic situation that creates it, or does the leitmotif emerge from such a situation? This basic problem could also be stated in terms of the concepts of endogenic and exogenic: Are the occurrences of leitmotifs endogenic, that is, caused by musical structures of Wagnerian "symphonism" Or are they exogenic, prompted by extramusical, dramatic, or intertextual factors? Dahlhaus endorsed the latter viewpoint; Boulez opted for the first, yet without finding any deeper, more binding

musical logic. One can say that in Wagner a development takes place, from exogenic to endogenic signification. In their most rudimentary form, the leitmotifs can still be concomitant with events of the plot. This was Wagner's technique in his early operas, and even in *Rheingold* he was still wondering whether he should show a sword on stage at the moment when the Sword motif is heard for the first time, in connection with Wotan's great idea. In his next phase, however, the leitmotifs are "disengaged"; they become signs that transcend the concrete scenic and textual space. Nevertheless, even these refer to their basic level and function within the limits of primary denotation, by either anticipating or recalling an event. This is illustrated in the above diagram, by the arrow leading from Situation II to I. Thus, we have to distinguish two directions of disengaging (or transcending): forwards or backwards. The further the drama proceeds, the more the leitmotifs take the latter function, since little or nothing remains to be anticipated. As early as in Brünnhilde's farewell one encounters a veritable "stretto" of signs. What about Siegfried? In *Götterdämmerung* we find two narratives related to him: his own story during the hunting trip and the funeral march that follows it. They are both "post-disengaged"; that is, they both represent backwards transcendence, but each in a different way. The leitmotifs of the story refer to particular events as experienced by a subject. They are Siegfried's existentials, the "limit situations" of his life. In turn, the leitmotifs of the funeral march no longer allude to any special scenic events or situations in Siegfried's history, but instead recount the main features of his life and background, as a kind of musical epitaph. All the music, not just various leitmotifs, has shifted to a transcending function. We thus encounter two species of post-disengagement: (1) Allusion to particular events via the leitmotifs representing them; such a reference constitutes a *statement*. (2) Allusion to the symbolic value of events in the drama; such is an *evaluative* reference. In the first kind of reference, the leitmotifs function as exogenic signs; in the second, as endogenic. What is involved, however, is not the endogenesis of one person or actor (Siegfried), but rather the endogenesis of the addressee of the utterance (i.e., the listener). The listener is carried along with and by the process of meanings in the drama. Listeners recognize themselves in the leitmotifs, listen to themselves by means of them, since only the listener, and not the protagonists on stage, can recall all the meanings of the leitmotifs.

Another essential difference between Siegfried and Brünnhilde and their stories, is that Siegfried tells only about *himself,* whereas Brünnhilde becomes conscious of the fate of all Valhalla. Siegfried has two stories, since he himself cannot tell the story of his own life; Brünnhilde has only one tale, but at the same time it is a summary of the whole *Ring*. In her story the events do not

seem to follow their original causal order, but follow the course of her conception of the world.

Now I return to the diagram above, and consider how the global situation of the leitmotifs might be approached from six different standpoints. The area indicated by a question mark means that the leitmotifs alone do not fill the whole musical situation, but merely distinguish discrete actors. What is this *other* texture? How do leitmotifs grow out of it? Does something in the situation catalyze the leitmotif? If we think of the text-music relationship, we find that it often occurs in both directions: a leitmotif may first be in the text and then in the music, or vice versa, first in the music then in the text. Naturally, in order to study this relationship one must pay attention to events shortly preceding the emergence of a leitmotif. In turn, one might expect that a musical texture can become so dense that a leitmotif suddenly bursts out of it. Altogether, we have to observe the relation of leitmotifs to their musical surroundings, their *Dasein*.

Next we ask the properly semiotical question, What do the leitmotifs *represent?* On the one hand, they are undeniably exogenic signs, indicating such objects of external reality as the ring, dragon, riding, fire, earth, water, sword, and so on. But on the basis of which sign relationships does this semiosis take place? Are the relationships mainly iconic, indexical, or symbolic? On the other hand, if the leitmotifs are signs of objects, then they clearly also have an endogenic aspect – expressiveness based on purely musical conventions – which enables them, conversely, to *modalize* or evaluate the objects which they originally represented. Interestingly, this process involves a doubly-directed sign: the signifier does not only stem from the signified, but in turn produces a new content, a new signified. (It may be that existential signs in general are precisely this type of bi-directional sign, in which the "new" content of signs constitutes a sort of endogenic, backwards reference.)

Leitmotifs form *small narratives,* fragments of musical narration or, ultimately, narration within narration. This issue was touched on above, in connection with Rowell's model. Now we ask, what are the minimal requirements for something to be a narrative? The answer is that "something becomes something else"; in Greimassian terms, a subject regains an object after having lost it. Some leitmotifs contain a certain chord progression; that of Siegfried's motif is I–VI–II–V/III–III(= I), specifically, a modulation from C minor to E-flat major. In addition, other features of that motif include so many events – three times a gap-fill pattern, a rhythmic impulse, a triadic figure – that the minimal conditions for a narrative are fulfilled. In Hunding's motif, in turn, the tonic subject is never attained; instead, the music hovers near it, in the tensional subdominant and dominant areas. This symbolizes the unsatisfied, anxious character of the actor; it is a mini-narrative of his life.

Finally we have to take into account the global form of situations, that is to say, their "musical form". The entire system of leitmotivic allusions is based on the idea of an inner listener, mentioned earlier, whose cognition arranges motifs into a kind of *panchronic* store of signs. Also, situations constitute their own paradigm during the work. Wagner often trusts in his listener. He builds entire scenes on the idea that the musical form is determined by a series of events heard earlier, with interpenetrating episodes expanding it and deviating from its main trajectory. Wagner uses this technique in Siegfried's narration as well as in the finale of the *Meistersingers.* This finale is an expansion of the overture; correspondingly, Siegfried's story is a condensation of the forest-murmur scene and Brünnhilde's awakening. In a clever twist of plot, however, Siegfried is not permitted to tell his story all the way through; Hagen kills him in the middle of the tale, and the whole narrative assumes an even more hallucinogenic tone.

Music also has its own linear logic, caused by its unavoidably temporal structure (to which Boulez often refers). Naturally everything happens within a continuous process of becoming. Still one must remember that Wagner's compositional technique was such that, in the early phase of writing the *Ring,* he first sketched the melodic line with text in its entirety and then placed under it, on another staff, the tones of the supporting harmonies. Only after this draft did he write the whole texture and orchestration. And although Wagner spoke about the general musical atmosphere, the libretti always came first, without which he could not delineate any scene. Nevertheless, the *rhetoric* of the melody line deserves its own attention.

The last issue concerns how leitmotifs can *transcend* a situation. As noted above, not every motif is justified, or "motivated" in the Saussurean sense, by the musical or dramatic situation. In addition, an entire situation or area can be transcended by another, more "real" field or area. Or situation II can be a transcendent version of situation I. Practically speaking, this technique is foregrounded in the stories. In order to transmit the information from one opera to another, the stories told on stage are necessary, but they are always disengaged transformations of the original situation. Moreover, the orchestra as such may function as a transcending element, through its constant oscillation: sometimes it is part of the diegesis (the story-world), and at other times it is nondiegetic (outside the story-world). Some motifs, on first occurrence, are diegetic: the music of the wedding scene, the song of the bird, Siegfried's horn signal. But later those same motifs can appear as non-diegetic, or purely "musical". In turn, some motifs are non-diegetic from the very beginning. The force of leitmotifs is often based on this very dialectic of diegetic/non-diegetic. The emphasis sometimes lies on the real scenic situation, at other times on

the listener's purely cognitive recollection, which often is represented by the orchestra and its endogenic symphonism.

Part III. Rhetorics and Synaesthesias

Chapter 10 Proust and Wagner

Marcel Proust and Richard Wagner rank among the most central names in the arts of pre-war Europe, their impact upon culture and art immeasurable. Further, their lives and works touch each other to some extent. Wagner lived from 1814 to 1883, and Proust from 1871 to 1922; hence one can speak of a genetic influence in only one direction. Proust's life and work show so many strong indications of an intimate spiritual and technical kinship between the two men, and both specialized in producing gigantic series of works. If Wagner's tetralogy has as one of its "pre-signs" the trilogy of Aeschylus, then in turn one model for Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* (*À la recherche du temps perdu*) – besides Balzac's *Human Comedy* – was perhaps Wagner's *Nibelungen Ring*. Proust himself passingly refers to this in a moment of *The Prisoner* where he speaks about Wagner's composing techniques:

> Wagner ... having written one mythological opera, then a second, then more, realized he had composed a Ring Cycle, he must have known something of the same intoxication Balzac felt when, casting over his novels the eye of both of a stranger and father ... he suddenly saw ... that they would be even more beautiful if brought together in a cycle in which the same character would recur.... (The Prisoner: 144)

Is the Proustian novel, then, an *ekphrasis* of Wagner's Ring? The term "ekphrasis" designates, in arts research, the idea that one art is explained or described by another art – for instance painting in literature, music in painting, music in literature, and so on. Hence, one is moving in the inter-media field among the arts, looking for exact connections. The American-German musicologist Siglind Bruhn does this in her work, *Musical Ekphrasis: Composers Responding to Poetry and Painting*. To her "ekphrasis" means the shift of a message from one medium to another – as concerns both its form and content, its imagery and symbolic signification (Bruhn 2000: xvi). In ancient Greek rhetoric, ekphrasis meant in general "to describe and present something very clearly" (ibid.). At that time it was a general rhetorical device, but in late Antiquity it came to refer especially to verbal portrayals of sculptures and paintings. On this basis, it might seem a rather strong claim to say that Proust was pursuing the ekphrasis of Wagner in his novel. Still, the idea might be acceptable in light of all the evidence we have about these two "great" men. I roughly divide my discussion into three parts: Proust's life, output, and theories.

Let me state right away, however, that "hermeneutic" observations by Frenchmen themselves have always come together in stressing the importance of music as the Proust's source of inspiration. In his profound study, *La*

musique et l'immortalité dans l'oeuvre de Marcel Proust (1926: 35), Benoist-Mechin remarks:

> In the series *In Search of Lost Time* music has a kind role as an immediate metaphysic. Alongside memory, it seems the source from which the whole work stems. Those pages in which Proust speaks about it are its climaxes in which the deepest sense of his psychology and ethics are revealed. In music Proust situates the "paradise" of his work.... Ultimately he lets music reveal to us in its concealed manner "the highest truth".

10.1 Wagner in Proust's Correspondence

Although almost all recent theories of art and literature try to minimize the role of the author and to claim that "beyond the text there is nothing", one cannot avoid the fact that all stems from some person or subject. In his lifetime Marcel Proust was best known in Parisian social circles as "small-Proust", as apart from his father, a famous doctor. No one could have guessed that everyone he met and all his experiences would ultimately, in one form or another, end up being included in his novel. These ingredients included music – and particularly Wagner. As is known, towards the end of his life Proust remained more and more secluded at his home on Boulevard Haussman, completing his great work; when asked to write a critique of another author, one of his contemporaries, he refused, responding with these words: *Magnum opus facio, non posso descendere!* (I am pursuing a great work; I cannot descend). Yet, taking into account Proust's musical *Umwelt* I have always been struck by how eloquently and profoundly he penetrated into the essence of music. It is still a mystery how a literary dandy of the salons could write about music more "scientifically" than many leading scientists of his own age and of later times. This mystery I shall try to elucidate in what follows.

Proust heard music at his home. His mother, whose maiden name was Weil, was a competent pianist who would play Beethoven sonatas, among other works, as Proust related in his essay "On Reading". She was perfectly aware of what counted as perfection, on the basis of how one prepared certain dishes, performed Beethoven, and received guests – it was impermissible to play with too much pedal and emotion. Proust himself probably played piano in some fashion, his familiarity with music not based on reading it, but upon aural perceptions, or as one might now say, a kind of auditory analysis. In fact, many statements in his novel suggest that his listening was strongly synaesthetic.

We do not need to guess which music he heard, since there is much documentation on this in his vast correspondence which has been published in

many volumes. The most useful and practical of these is the meticulously edited abridgment into one volume of 1353 pages (Proust, *Lettres* 2004). Its index of persons shows Wagner as the most often mentioned composer (37 times), Beethoven next (30 times). Proust's musical taste developed gradually in a more serious direction over time. We know, for example, that when he was quite young, Proust responded to an English questionnaire from Antonietta Fauré. When asked to list "Your favourite painters and composers", he wrote in a rather childish handwriting: "Meissonnier, Mozart, Gounod". The date is not known exactly, but Proust was likely 13 years old at that time. When a little older than twenty, he answered his own questions in *Marcel Proust par lui-même* and listed as his favorite composers Beethoven, Wagner, and Schumann. The moments where Wagner is mentioned in his letters and early newspaper essays, written before the novel, reveal many aspects of Proust's reception of the composer.

In a letter dated September 16, 1892, Proust deals with Wagner as a fashion phenomenon: "In fine circles Voltaire's rule still holds, that it is even finer to admire unfashionable phenomena than fashionable ones, hence when people praised Wagner, the ex-Wagnerians already preferred Beethoven, Bach and Handel to him." Proust writes to Robert de Montesquiou on May 25, 1893 that "certain Wagnerian phrases have that grace of certain glances typical of da Vinci." On Sunday morning, September 16, 1894, he reports to his friend Reynaldo Hahn on a recent performance of *Lohengrin* – which obviously had not pleased Hahn, the anti-Wagnerian: "The role of the king and herald, Elsa's dream, the arrival of the swan, the choir of sentencing, the scene between two ladies, *le refalado* [Proust here refers to solfège re–fa–la–do, i.e., the notes d–f–a–c], Graal, the pretense of the horn, sword and ring and prelude – is that not all is beautiful."

Sometime in May 1895, Proust wrote to Suzette Lemaire, after *Tannhäuser* had been performed in concert version with great success, in the series Concert d'Harcourt under the direction of Eugène d'Harcourt (the beginning of the letter is missing):

Parsifal, and the death of Elisabeth who gives redemption to the soul of Tannhauser [sic!] already represents the Christian doctrine which manifests in Parsifal. I say this quite silently – when Reynaldo is not listening – that I believe that these are essentially musical themes, since they are irrational. But I am afraid I am annoying you…. In Tannhauser I once again noticed the stupidity of people. Your fine taste certainly realizes that the prayer of Elisabeth and the Romance to the Evening Star are weak and tiring pieces, whereas the last act and particularly its ending are entirely admirable. But when the romance ends and as early as before the narrative of the Roman journey, before the death of Elisabeth and joy of the pilgrims, when the stab wound starts to turn green [cf. the

Good Friday miracle], Carl and Hippolyte Dreyfus stood up with determination and left. Their jubilant glances showed what Gustave Dreyfus had always said as an expert: "Leave after the Evening Star romance, there one has to exit, thereafter comes nothing." Although it is precisely there when everything truly begins.

Here Proust intermingles purely musical perception, the process of work's reception, and the context of the event – as he would later do so often in the music scenes of his novel.

In a letter of March 1904 he mentions among the errors of great artists Tolstoi's views on Wagner, referring to the Russian author's essay, "What Is Art?" There Tolstoi characterized the *Siegfried* he saw in Moscow as ridiculous. Proust was well familiar with the general ideas of his time. In 1905 Proust writes to Paul Grunebaum-Ballin again about the musical taste and snobbery of the public: "The snobs cannot go follow Wagner in opera, since the dress of the female singer is so terrible, since the choirs are so miserable, since some part is sung too slowly. Those who really love Wagner are, by and large, satisfied when they can go to listen to his operas, and they pass over those errors, even though they well recognize them."

A letter to Reynaldo Hahn on July 3, 1907 illustrates the milieu in which Proust's Wagner reception took place. Proust had arranged a dinner at the restaurant Ritz for which he wanted a musical program. Fauré, who was supposed to play at the occasion, had to cancel suddenly, so Proust wrote to another pianist, Eduard Risler, offering to pay him 1000 francs for the whole evening's program. In a message to "Bunchnibuls", Reynaldo's nickname, Proust carefully lists who came to the occasion: for the dinner 14 persons, and to the concert afterwards an additional 19 persons. He also mentions those who were absent. Present was the whole "parrockuee" of Proust. The concert featured the following works: Fauré's Violin Sonata, Beethoven's Andante (*favori*?), *Des Abends* by Schumann, a prelude by Chopin, the overture to *Mastersingers*, an idyll by Chabrier, *Les barricades mystérieuses* by Couperin, a nocturne by Fauré, Isolde's love-death music, and Fauré's *Berceuse*. Proust complains that, because of people leaving, there was no time to play the waltzes by Hahn, nor those pieces he had requested: the Viennese *Carnival* by Schumann and *Soirées de Vienne* by Schubert-Liszt. Wagner was placed on the program as a picturesque number amidst a stylistically diverse repertoire.

A message to Reynaldo Hahn, dated February 21, 1911, reveals another crucial feature in Proust's listening to Wagner, namely, the use of the so-called theatrophone. It was a kind of telephone connected to the stage of the Palais Garnier; using it, one could be at home and still follow an opera performance: "I have to irritate you now terribly by speaking about music and saying that I yesterday heard on the theatrophone one act of *Mastersingers* (when Sachs

writes by dictating to Walther that master song which he does not know that Beckmesser will steal from him, [which is] therefore why he writes those ridiculous words (incomprehensible) …, and tonight the whole *Pelléas*."

In his letter of January 6, 1914, to Henri Gheon, Proust mentions the first *Parsifal* performances in Paris. Gheon had published an article about *Tristan* on which Proust commented. Did Proust hear *Parsifal* then in a French version? Probably, since he writes on February 6 to Jacques Rivière about the search for truth as the goal of the art of the novel, and denies the criticism that his novel would represent an illusionless skepticism. He compares this view to *Parsifal*'s first act, when Gurnemanz expels him as a person who doesn't understand anything, on which basis the spectator believes that Wagner wants to say that sincerity of heart leads to nothing.

Proust, in a letter to Lucien Daudet on November 16, 1914, evokes the whole ongoing anti-German debate. One Frédéric Masson had published in *L'Echo de Paris* newspaper an article against Wagner: "The Parisians whom this man had insulted since they did not applaud him enough, have covered by bravo calls the miserable rhapsody of *Mastersingers*, and have not even read the author's pamphlet against them." The same writer was convinced that, since Wagnerism was the most perfect expression of German culture, the Frenchmen infected by "Wagneritis" would immediately abandon themselves to the Germans. Proust opposed this type of chauvinism. He said that if war was to be waged against Russia, the target of the attack would be Tolstoi and Dostoevsky. He mentions how *Tristan* and the tetralogy had inspired French writers – which in Proust's view in no way diminished Frenchmen. The same theme is dealt with by Proust in his letter to Walther Berry on July 21, 1917; the author's antimilitarism appears again when he notes that "Walther's prize song in Nürnberg was not bad at all, and it was truer than the bombs of the year 1914."

Letters to Rumanian prince Antoine Bibesco on October 4, 1915 and to Jacques Lacretelle on April 20, 1918 touch on a problem very close and important to Proust's output, namely, the possible composer and model for the sonata and "small phrase" by Vinteuil. To Bibesco Proust says outright that he did not have in mind Franck's Violin Sonata. According to Proust, it had also been rumored that his model was the sonata by Saint-Saëns; and that the small phrase and accompanying tremolos had stemmed from Wagner's overture (Proust meant the prelude to *Lohengrin*), whereas the beginning of the sonata was from Franck's sonata and spatial arrangement were taken from Fauré's Ballade (which we know was inspired by *Siegfried*). In the letter to Lacretelle, Proust speaks about the keys to his novel; for him there were always several, ranging from eight to ten for one protagonist. In the same way, there

were several models for the church of Combray. Yet his memories of the sonata were more accurate. The small phrase is definitely from the end of Saint-Saëns's violin sonata – the mediocre, but charming theme, particularly as played by Jacques Thibaud. Proust does not consider it surprising that it had been compared to the Good Friday wonder of *Parsifal*. The tremolos accompanying the theme, Proust confirms, do originate from the prelude to *Lohengrin*, but at the same time there is something in them of Schubert. In any case, Wagner was again in the background. In a letter in 1920 to Jean-Louis Vaudorele, Proust defends the length of Wagner's music, and says that *Rhinegold* pleases him since it is heard as one action, although musicians hold in contempt any piece that lasts longer than five minutes, and therefore consider Beethoven's last quartets unplayable.

10.2   Wagner in Proust's writings and novel

In Proust's series of novels constituting *In Search of Lost Time*, there are two big scenes in which music is vividly portrayed – and moreover joins his inexhaustible store of metaphors. For him it is essential that music, in the novels, always be described via the consciousness of a protagonist, hence filtered into some subjective experience. In the volume *Swann in Love* this subject is Swann, who falls in love with Odette in the salon of Madame Verdurin, when a violin sonata by an unknown composer is played there. At first, the music is, to him, completely chaotic. Then he recognizes some musical characteristics and, finally, the composer. His first experience is provided with a certain shape and identity. In the end, however, this identity disappears, when the music becomes outworn and ultimately a matter of indifference, like his relationship with Odette. Yet, in the second phase the small theme is still the anthem of their love. The Wagnerian connections of the theme were mentioned above.

Another great musical scene occurs in the volume *The Prisoner*. Again, it is a concert, this time of music by the fictive composer, Vinteuil, now deceased; his Septetto is performed as a reconstruction made by his daughter and her female friend. Wagner, especially his music for the Good Friday wonder, has again been taken as the model of the Septetto. Aside from this, Proust's description is one of the most congenial portrayals of musical communication one can find, and its view of music astonishes the reader by its depth and richness. I have analyzed this scene in my essay "The implicit musical semiotics of Marcel Proust" (in English 1997; in French 1991). What is most interesting about it is that no musical object exists, since the music is present simulta-

neously in the reactions of the audience, the physical activities of the perform-ers, intentions of the composer, the musical structure itself, its aesthetics and conditions of creation. It is impossible to determine any focus, any privileged mode of being in the music. The Proustian conception is the same as the later one of Walter Benjamin, who asserted that the listener to modern music is an absent-minded receiver, whose perception is interrupted by anything whatso-ever; we listen to Wagner on the radio, but at the same time we are washing the dishes, talking with others, reading the newspaper, etc. The roots of the Proustian, fragmentary musical experience certainly lay in opera performan-ces, in which the social context and display of competence were at least as important as enjoyment of the work itself. Proust makes social distinctions just by the behavior in opera halls, between the *petit bourgeois* Verdurin and the high nobility of Guermantes. When the first-mentioned arrive at the opera they "show" themselves, whereas the last are extraordinarily humble to persons beneath them on the social ladder:

> As I ascended the grand staircase of the Opéra, armed with the ticket my father had been given, I saw in front of me a man whom I took at first to be Mr. Charlus, whose bearing he had; when he turned to ask something of an attendant I saw I had been mistaken but I had no hesitation in placing the stranger in the same social class.... For quite apart from individual characteristics, there was still at this time a very marked difference between a rich and dressy man from this section of the aristocracy and a rich and dressy man from the world of finance or high industry. Where one of the latter would have thought he was asserting his elegance by adopting a cutting and haughty tone in speaking to an inferior, the aristocrat, and affable, would convey the impression of respect, of practicing an affectation of humility and patience, the presence of being any ordinary member of the audience, as the prerogative of his good breeding. (*The Guermantes Way*: 34–35)

The manner in which Proust describes music is at the same time a sociological observation on people's musical "behavior" (in Alan P. Merriam's ethnomusi-cological sense of the term), which penetrates to the core of the musical mes-sage. The portrayal of Vinteuil's Septetto, which most clearly manifests this view, was preceded by similar scenes in the writings of Proust. Often Wagner looms in the background, since Proust lived amidst the cult and religion of Wagner, in the Paris of 1880–1900. Accordingly, he at least knew Wagner's at *Tannhäuser, Lohengrin*, and part of the tetralogy, namely, *Tristan, Mastersing-ers* and *Parsifal*. After *Tristan*, the last-mentioned was the most important. It is no wonder that, for Proust, Wagner was automatically evoked by the most varied occasions, and hence an apt metaphor for almost any subject.

He appears again in an essay by Proust, written under the influence of John Ruskin and titled *En mémoire des églises assassinées: Les églises sauvées,*

les clochers de Caen, la Cathédrale de Lisieux, the subject of which was a car ride in the area (as his chauffeur he employed a young mechanic, Agostinelli, an important figure in Proust's life). The subtitle of the essay is *Journées en automobile*. Here is a fragment from this essay:

> But our car had stopped at the crossroad, in front of a gate decorated by an iris and roses. We had arrived at the home of my parents. The mechanic sounded the car horn so that the gardener would come to open the gates, that sound of the horn, whose tone was for us unpleasant due to its penetrating and monotonous quality, but which still like whatsoever matter, can turn out to be beautiful if it is furnished with some emotion. In the hearts of my parents it sounded like an unexpected speech. "It seems to me as if I had heard ... but it cannot be anyone other than he."... the horn signal which threw its uniform call like a *fixe idée* of their approaching joy, pushing to their ears and increasing their growing anguish. And I dreamed how in *Tristan and Isolde* (in the second act first, when Isolde waves her scarf as a sign and in the third after the arrival of the ship). It is, at the first time, said penetratingly as an indefinite and always faster series of two notes, whose succession emerge by accident in that unorganic world of noises; it is the second time the "whistle" of a poor shepherd which Wagner, with an increasing intensity and unmitigated monotony, with his congenial power of creation, lets be conveyed the most wonderful expectation of happiness that ever can fill a human soul. (Proust 1971: 68–69)

It is interesting that Proust also refers to this passage in an aforementioned vision of his cycle of works *à la* Wagner's tetralogy and the *Human Comedy* by Balzac. At the same time, Proust admits that if he should say as much, having visited Bayreuth, then the opera-season snobs would complain that they could not follow him. On the other hand, if he tells of having stayed in Normandy or having seen blossoming apple trees in Amiens, he would have been smiled upon with a certain pity (op. cit.: 71). Proust wonders why the State does not support cathedrals but rather performances of Catholic ceremonies in opera performances; true, the latter held historical, social, plastic, musical and aesthetic interest – but Wagner was able to approach such rites by imitating them in his *Parsifal* (op. cit.: 142). He points out next that a Wagner performance in Bayreuth is a humble affair when compared to the celebration of a great Mass in the cathedral of Chartres (op. cit.: 146–147). Later, Pierre Boulez repeats the same idea about Wagner: that for a believer a Mass is more valuable than even the finest performance of *Parsifal*.

Proust devoted no essay exclusively to Wagner. He did, however, write a critique of Saint-Saëns's playing of Mozart, after the French composer had appeared as a soloist at the conservatory. It reveals something about Proust's musical aesthetics: he writes that many left the hall unsatisfied, that Saint-Saëns played too fast, too dry, the wrong piece, etc. Yet for Proust these negative reactions had a quite different source: the fact that the piece was truly beautiful. Beauty cannot be blended with other virtues: skillfulness,

sensuality, acting and the like. The origin of beauty is in Truth, to which it has been linked through the ages in a perpetual friendship, and for which it needs no other attractions. Saint-Saëns's playing was based on purity and transparency; it was like clear water. But the best recommendation Proust could give him was that he was a "great music writer" in search of the truth. The same idea is repeated in Proust's essay on his friend Reynaldo Hahn, Proust's most important advisor about music – more about him soon. Proust believed that Hahn, too, was inclined to abandon all other graces, charms and gifts to the more severe Goddess who was Truth. By this he did not mean Italian *verismo*, "that parody of the truth by the neo-Italian school", but inner psychological truth. His truth was the life of the soul itself, the inner substance of language, which deliberated itself, rose, started to fly and became music. (Proust op. cit.: 556)

10.3 Proust and musicians

Proust depicts musicians as well as music. He admired them, understood their work, and relied on them to provide him with the musical experiences he desired. Madame Strauss tells us that Proust had a pianola in his apartment, on which he would play Wagner's piano scores. A scene from *The Prisoner*, in which the narrator sits at the piano, "musicalizing", clearly discloses something quite personal about the author:

> Making the most of the fact that I was still alone, and half closing the curtains so that the sun would not stop me reading the notes, I sat down at the piano, opened Vinteuil's Sonata which happened to be lying there, and began to play (p. 141).... As I played the bar, and despite the fact that Vinteuil was at that point expressing a dream that would have remained quite alien to Wagner, I could not help murmuring, "Tristan!" with the smile of a family friend recognizing something of the grandfather in an intonation, a gesture of the grandson who never knew him. And just as people then turn to a photograph to confirm the resemblance, I set on the music-stand the score of *Tristan*, fragments of which were being performed that very afternoon in the Lamoureux concert series (p. 142).... I went on playing *Tristan*. Separated from Wagner by the intervening sound, I could hear him exulting, inviting me to share his joy. I could hear over and over again the eternally youthful laughter and the hammer-blows of Siegfried, in which furthermore, the more perfectly struck out the phrases were, the more the workman's technique served to make them soar more freely above the earth, like birds resembling not Lohengrin's swan, but the aeroplane I had seen at Balbec turning its energy into elevation, gliding above the waves and disappearing into the sky (p. 145).

In addition to the fact that the narrator, by playing, gets familiar with Wagner, it also becomes a metaphor of flying – which in turn connects in many ways

to real-life events: like that in which Proust's chauffeur, Agostinelli, "escaped" to Antibes, enrolled in pilot school under the pseudonym Marcel Swann (!), and, after surviving an airplane crash, drowned close to shore. Proust returns to airplanes and Wagner in the last part of the novel, when he compares a German zeppelin attack to Valkyries flying in the air – from which we have a direct connection to Francis Ford Coppola's film, *Apocalypse Now*, in which the "Ride of the Valkyries" accompanies, as diegetic music, the bombing of Vietnam by American helicopter pilots.

Proust used to commission musicians to perform at his home. Among others, Georges de Lauris has told how the Capet Quartet received a telephone call at three o'clock in the morning: Proust wanted to hear the quartet by Debussy immediately. René Chalupt in turn tells how on a November midnight in 1916 someone knocked on the door of the home of violist Amable Massin of the Poulet Quartet. The musician's mother opened the door and there stood a man who announced himself as Marcel Proust. He wanted to hear Franck's string quartet played at his home, and said that a taxi was waiting for them. The musicians were called and brought to Boulevard Haussmanm, the work was performed, and Proust paid them a princely sum. On another night he wanted to hear the Fauré Piano Quartet, with Gaston Poulet as the pianist, and even this he managed. Proust's idea was to hire a house in Venice and bring musicians there, so he could hear them play all night. However, the war had broken out and the project remained unrealized. Moreover, Proust became more and more Wagnerian in his musical taste, on which the chauvinism and anti-German spirit of wartime made no impact (Piroué 1960: 32–33).

10.4 Reynaldo Hahn (1875–1947)

It is strange that the Venezuelan-born composer and life-long friend of Proust, Reynaldo Hahn, was in his musical orientation a complete contrast to Proust. He was anti-Wagnerian and opposed to everything German. Yet Proust understood him and even wrote an article about him. In 1901 the Duke of Gramont says: "Hahn sat at the piano after dinner and enchanted us by his talents, interpreting Fauré and Duparc, and his own works, imitating fashionable tenors and smoking cigarettes and joking" (Piroué 1960: 26). Marie Scheikeivitch recalls: "Reynaldo Hahn, always lovely, out-did himself. In his warm-sounding and incomparably charming voice he sang some of his tunes, and then some old French chansons ..." (ibid.: 27). Hahn's voice, as well as his music, can be heard on a recording made on December 18, 1933, on which he sings, among other things, the couplet "*Qu'est-ce qu'il faut pour être heureux?*" from his work

Felicie, Le vieux monsieur together with Arletty Hahn (on the compilation CD, *Les introuvables du Chant Français,* EMI).

Marcel and Reynaldo were family acquaintances and met for the first time in 1894. They became life-long friends. Hahn became a celebrity in Paris long before Marcel. He wrote songs, operas, operettas and a piano concerto (recorded by Magda Tagliaferro, among others). His best known song is set to a text by Verlaine entitled *L'heure éxquise*, which has been immortalized in a recording by Gérard Souzay. Hahn was an anti-Wagnerian, but did not manage to divert Marcel from the latter's belief in Wagner. In spite of his hostility to Wagner, Hahn says in his book *Du chant*, which is based on his lectures in 1913–1914, that the decline of vocal art was not the fault of Wagnerian singing. He confirms that great Wagner singers – Lilli Lehmann being one that he knew particularly well – maintained their voices even at an advanced age. Vogl still sang Tristan at the age of 60, Materna sang Brünnhilde, and even Lilli Lehmann continued her career into her 60s. This was thanks to their beginning as *bel canto* singers, and thus "their healthy voices, skills and techniques made them able to sing so-called 'music of the future' without overtaxing their voice" (Hahn 1957/1990: 136–137).

In Hahn's charming memoirs, *Notes: Journal d'un musicien* (1933), one reads many of Hahn's reminiscences of Proust in various phases of his musical career. Hahn always refers to Marcel solely by his first name. Although Hahn is not a writer he shares with Proust his inclination to all arts, particularly to visual arts, about which the two often talk. When he visits museums and exhibitions, he usually has Marcel with him. "I was not surprised when I heard Marcel saying one day that he knew only a little literature". Hahn admits that neither does he know much music, and that the list of pieces not familiar to him was endless. He, like Marcel, also heard Saint-Saëns as a Mozart pianist, and remarked that he played dryly, without pedal, devoid of effects. This leads him to talk about hands, wondering if they were predetermined or formed by the profession. He states that the hands of *friseurs* are particularly supple, an opinion shared by Marcel. In the Louvre he and Marcel admired the pastelles of Chardin and de La Tour, and later Monet (Hahn 1933: 19 and 31).

Hahn talks about Wagner's need for a piano when composing *The Flying Dutchman* in Meudon (p. 43), without which he could write nothing. Hahn criticizes the Wagnerian d'Indy, who wants to write literature as a musician without having a read a line of Voltaire. However, he pities those who follow in the wake of Wagner and Franck, many of whom exhibit simplicity and humility, but not genius. "Brahms dies", he stated, "surely a great musician; but how is that one does not feel emotionally empty after his passing away?" (p. 57)

On his journey to Berlin, Hahn visits the Café Pitzen where he takes a glass of Nackenheimer. To his eyes it conjures up visions of Gothic halls, Rhineland castles and the atelier of Hans Sachs, bearded beer drinkers, tankards of grog, foggy nocturnal scenes, naïve and heavy German idylls against the scenery of Faust and *Mastersingers*. Lecturing in Hamburg, he presents a critique of German culture. He cannot understand why listeners nod their heads rhythmically, and further with their fingers and legs. Is it in order to get the right rhythm? No, since at those moments they adopt an expression of complete satisfaction. People behave in such a way particularly at public concerts. From where does this bizarre habit stem? Many things in Wagner would have upset Goethe, and they are just those aspects which repel us even today (p. 91). Thus it is no wonder that Strauss's *Salome* proved far too much for Hahn. The final scene was altogether repugnant to him. What rudeness, what bad taste! The peak of grisly enjoyment, the heaviness and ugliness of the harmonies – was this intentional? Hahn is particularly repelled by the excess, hypertrophy, grandiloquence, the exaggerated bloodiness, the striving for monstrosity, and the fatiguing, continuous polyphony. The effects of seeing this performance linger on for Hahn, who later during his journey, in Venice, reacts when he hears German spoken at the palace of St. Mark: "Germans are remarkable in their own country, elsewhere: unbearable!" Yet, he receives Wagner singers and meets Lilli Lehmann in Berlin (p. 236). Lilli talks about the beginning of her career in *Rhinegold* at Bayreuth. In reminiscing she calls Wagner "Richard" and reveals that Schroeder-Devrient was unable drop the German "r".

In Paris, Hahn considers the self-prepossession of young artists appalling: they leave no doubt about their own genius. This he takes this as a Nietzschean trait. Their master said: Not to talk about oneself is pretension. Hahn tells of taking lunch with X, who all the time talked about himself. In the evening, however, Reynaldo was compensated by reading, with Marcel, Chateaubriand's *Mémoire d'outre tombe* (p. 283).

10.5 The presence of Wagner in *À la recherche du temps perdu*

Many scholars agree that Wagner and, via him, Schopenhauer became the most important background philosophers for Proust's entire series of novels. Indeed, Wagner is omnipresent in the novel, reflecting a French society saturated by Wagnerism. The condition for belonging to the inner circle Madame

Verdurin's salon was that everyone accept a certain young pianist of whom it was said, "No one should be allowed to play Wagner so well", and who even won over such artists as Planté and Rubinstein. The program of the evening was not fixed before-hand, and the young pianist played only if he felt like doing so (*Swann in Love*: 8).

If the pianist wanted to play the ride from *The Valkyrie* or the prelude from *Tristan,* Mme Verdurin would protest, not because she did not like that music, but on the contrary because it made too strong an impression on her: "So you want me to have one of my migraines? You know perfectly well the same thing happens every time he plays that. I can count on it! Tomorrow when I try to get up – that's it, not possible!" (*Swann in Love*: 192 [in *Swann's Way*])

So begins the second volume of the novel series. Later in the concert, in the volume *The Prisoner*, Madame Verdurin is introduced as reddish in appearance, the goddess of Wagnerism and migraine. Hence Wagner is an essential part of the identity of this protagonist, and connected to the neurasthenia common in the world of the salons. However, the proper music specialist was Madame Cambremer, into whose mouth Proust puts many characteristic opinions of Wagner. It is said about her that "... she had learned to caress the phrases of Chopin with their sinuous and excessively long necks, so free, so flexible, so tactile, ..." (op. cit.: 334). Yet the music of Chopin had already given way to Wagner, and one almost showed bad taste to be enthusiastic about it (op. cit.: 186).

The ignorance of salon-goers is a target of Proust's irony throughout his novel. He does not only portray an ideal, all-knowing music listener, but also mediocre listeners. Mrs Bontemps says: "It is only a week ago when I spoke about *Lohengrin* with the wife of the minister of education who answered: *Lohengrin*? Oh, that new revue of Folies Bergères, I have heard it is unbelievably funny...". Such talk set her "blood coursing", and she loved dinner parties where they knew, week after week, that they would have to defend their gods against the Philistines. If some lady who was unable to distinguish Mozart from Wagner, in talking about novelties in Paris, said that *Pelléas et Mélisande* was "ghastly", Mme Cambremer used to exclaim:

> What a masterpiece *Pelléas* is! I simply adore it; and drawing closer, with the gestures of a female savage seeking to have her way with me, and making use of her fingers to pick out imaginary notes, she began humming something that I supposed for her represented Pelléas's farewell. "I think it is even more beautiful than *Parsifal*", she added, "because in *Parsifal* the most beautiful things have had a certain halo of melodic phrases added to them, obsolete because melodic." (*Sodom and Gomorrah*: 214)

Thereafter Mme Cambremer was asked to play something, for it was true that:

> Chopin's one surviving pupil had declared, rightly, that the Master's way of playing, his "feeling", had been handed down, through her, only to Mme de Cambremer, but to play like Chopin was far from being a commendation for the sister of Legrandin, who despised nobody so much as the Polish musician.... Because she saw herself as "advanced" and (in art only) "never far enough to the left", as she put it, she imagined that music not only progresses, but does so along a single line, and that Debussy was some sort of super-Wagner, a little more advanced even than Wagner. (Ibid.: 215)

Nevertheless, in the long description of Vinteuil's Septetto, Wagner receives scant mention (*The Prisoner*: 237–259). Only at the end of the scene, when a sonata from the early output of Vinteuil is compared to his posthumous masterpiece, the Septetto, does an analogy to Wagner occur:

> ... the few passages of the sonata that were all the public had known before seemed so banal that one could not understand how they had excited such admiration. In the same way we are surprised that for years such insipid pieces as "O Star of Eve" or "Elisabeth's Prayer" could have brought audiences to their feet, applauding wildly and crying "encore" at the last notes of what seems to us poor, colourless stuff now that we have heard *Tristan, The Rhinegold* and *The Mastersingers* (*The Prisoner*: 241).... We must suppose that these characterless melodies nevertheless contained in tiny and therefore perhaps more easily assimilable quantities something of the originality of the masterworks which now are the only important ones for us.... The same would be true of Vinteuil if he had not left anything but the sonata and not the septetto. (Ibid.: 242)

Yet the entire description of the Septetto makes us presume that its subtext or isotopy – its hidden level of signification – is precisely Wagner, and the Wagner of *Parsifal*. The narrator is searching for the basic character of Vinteuil's music, his individual tune, which in the metaphysical sense was for Proust a proof of the "existence of an absolutely individual soul".

This tune or trait, where had Vinteuil learned it, where had he heard it? Every artist seems to be a citizen of an unknown country, a fatherland he has forgotten, different from that which some other great artist is going to leave in order to get to the earth. At least in his last works Vinteuil seemed to have approached this fatherland. (Ibid.: 248–249)

The course of thoughts here is very Wagnerian. Namely, the first melody in which Wagner appears as Wagner is doubtless the prayer of Rienzi; and undeniably the opening theme of the Holy Communion of *Parsifal* gestures to us as a kind of prayer rising from the depths. The syncopated, descending motif with parallel chords from the *Prélude, Chorale et Fugue* of César Franck (bars 8–9) represented to Jules Gentil, piano professor at the École Normale de Musique in Paris (oral communication in 1973), not only the use of the so-called *e muette* in French music (i.e., the end of the motif had to be played

diminuendo), but also one could imagine singing it with the words, *Je vous prie*.

Precisely this, too, is what Proust sought. On the other hand, the idea of an artist who arrives on earth from somewhere else can be found also in Wagner – in the *Flying Dutchman* and *Lohengrin* – and similarly the idea of a hero bringing redemption from elsewhere (*Siegfried, Parsifal*). The fact is obvious that Wagner, as an artist, here idealizes himself into a mythological figure. Proust combined this view on the composer's task into his own aesthetics.

Timothée Picard (2006), in his outstanding study, *Wagner, une question européenne: Contribution à une étude du wagnérisme (1860–2004)*, has shown how sketches for the novel prove that the whole description of the Septetto was from its inception based on *Parsifal*. To Proust the work is linked above all to the problem of time (Picard 2006: 453). The question of time is crucial even in *Parsifal* – not only due to the famous "slowness" and length of the opera, but because when it starts everything has in fact already taken place. The opera is a huge post-script to what previously happened to its protagonists; it forms a kind of "post-sign" (see Tarasti 2000). The fate of the actors (Amfortas, Kundry, Klingsor, etc.) unfolds such that their actions weigh heavily upon them. In the narration of the opera they are always evoked. Parsifal matures from a naïve youngster into a redeemer. Proust has turned this around: when the novel closes, in *Time Regained* (*Le temps retrouvé*), the author makes up his mind to write a novel. What is involved is the maturing of the narrator into a writer, whose work brings redemption to his reader. This is possible because the writer is searching for the truth. The program is therefore the same as in *Parsifal*.

The portrayal of the Sonata also contains many obviously Wagnerian references. At the end Swann succeeds in analyzing the small theme, deciding that its "impression of tenderness" was due to the slight difference of scale among its five tones, and to the constant recurrence of two of them. Here Proust describes music more technically than he does anywhere else – unless one wants to search for hidden codes in verbal puns. The extreme example of such a search is probably that of Richard E. Goodkin in his study *Around Proust* (1991). Goodkin claims that frequently the *O sole mio* heard by the narrator and sung by a gondolier, in Proust's description of Venice, references the interval *sol* to *mi* (notes g and e); this, in turn, is the same as the famous ascending motif that opens the overture to *Tristan*. There, however, it occurs as a *minor* sixth, on the notes *la-fa* (a–f). The rising sixth of the Tristan motif namely occurs at the beginning of the vocal parts in the opera. It is evident that *Tristan* had been Proust's central model ever since his description of the Vinteuil Sonata. The small theme lives as a kind of "double" in Swann's mind. This

leads to a moving metaphysical vision of music and a kind of immortality of the soul:

> In this way Vinteuil's phrase had, like some theme from *Tristan* for example, which may also represent to us a certain emotional accretion, espoused our mortal condition, taken on something human that was rather touching. Its destiny was linked to the future, to the reality of our soul, of which it was one of the most distinctive, the best differentiated ornaments. Maybe it is the nothingness that is real and our entire dream is non-existent, but in that case we feel that these phrases of music, and these notions that exist in relation to our dream, must be nothing also. We will perish, but we have for hostages these divine captives who will follow us and share our fate. And death in their company is less bitter, less inglorious, perhaps less probable. (*Swann's Way*: 352–353)

In the aforementioned scene, when the narrator has lost Albertine and left with his mother for Venice, this is heard while one looks at the sunset on a canal, as a musician sings "O sole mio". The sun sinks lower and lower. "Mother could not be too far from the station. Soon she will leave, I would be left in Venice, sad and alone" (*triste et seul*).

Essential here, phonetically, are the words *triste* and *seul*, which in French form part of the title, **Tris*t*an et I*seul*t**. In other words, it evokes Wagner. Also, Proust certainly knew Wagner's story about the creation of the *Tristan* overture in a single night, and precisely in Venice. Goodkin points out that Proust's names are full of musical symbolism, Odette = small Ode, whom Swann meets in *Maison Dorée* = do-re, a reference to the first tones of the scale. In turn, Jean-Jacques Nattiez remarks the German connection of the name Swann to *Schwan,* which of course belongs to central Wagnerian imagery (Nattiez 1984: 67).

10.6 Species of narration

Next I shall try to situate my observations about the kinship between Proust and Wagner within a kind of theoretical framework, in order to ponder their connections more systematically. What is involved in both Proust and Wagner is narration, story-telling, albeit with different tools. Yet in addition to reporting something directly to a reader or a listener, they often turn to themselves and observe the narration itself; i.e., they tell about telling. Carl Dahlhaus has remarked on the difficulties of the narrative aspect in Wagner, since arranging epics into dramas had been warned against as early as Aristotle (Dahlhaus 1984: 142, 146, 148). Long stories on stage retard and obstruct the action. Yet the whole series of novels by Proust puts narrating first: it is a story about how the narrator develops into a writer.

In any case, we may distinguish three kinds of narrativity: *conventional, organic* and *existential*. *Conventional* narration is articulated via traditional forms, in which a story can be segmented into "functions", fulfilled by actions of the protagonists, which method was used by Vladimir Propp in 1928 in his study of the morphology of Russian fairy tales. There he distinguished altogether 31 functions, which he described with such terms as lack, departure, donor, hero's reaction, receipt of magical agent, struggle, victory, return, pursuit, rescue, recognition, transfiguration, punishment, wedding. The functions always follow each other in a certain order, but different stories often realize only certain items from each. This theory was further elaborated in two directions in the time of structuralism. A. J. Greimas created a typology of protagonists and distinguished altogether six "actants": subject, object, sender, receiver, helper, opponent. Claude Brémond in turn developed the idea of the dynamics of plot, which proceeded via three phases: virtuality (or possibility for action), passage or non-passage to action, and achievement/ non-achievement of the goal. If a negation occurred in the chain, one had to return to the previous phase and try again. Likewise in music we speak of beginning, developing and closing functions; or, in Boris Asafiev's terms, of phases: *initium, motus, terminus*. Greimas refers to these as inchoativity, durativity and terminativity. Such reflections provided insight into so-called conventional narrativity, allowing it to be analyzed as a construction made up of discrete units. Moreover, I would encourage the reader to get familiar with musico-narrative theories by Byron Almén, which seem to grow, to some extent, from this type of models (Almén 2008).

Our first impression is that both Proust and Wagner question conventional narrativity. Proustian phrases unfold capriciously, like the "long-necked theme of Chopin", and his prose embodies the Wagnerian art of continuous transition (see Tarasti 1993: 61–62). On the level of plot, his novel cannot be read at all as a traditional narration, that is, phase by phase. Events follow so slowly that, in the end, it does not matter where one starts reading. The sense of micro-time seems to be lost altogether, as if there were no plot at all to be segmented into functions. With Wagner, a gradual shift towards his late style takes place, such that he rejects Italianate, stop-and-go opera. In the *Ring* and *Parsifal* the drama becomes a self-referential, continuous process, in which the tonal basis of music starts dissolve: a sense of directionality in harmonic processes vanishes, and the listener's expectations are constantly betrayed as to where the harmony is going. The *Ring* contains about 200 leitmotifs, which are recognizable, it is true, as basic units of narration; and yet, they undergo so many transformations that the result, rather than clear-cut narrative, is a network in which everything refers to everything. Alfred Lorenz tried to reduce

Wagner's music to something fundamentally "symphonic", such that all his works could be articulated by the old medieval form principle of *Stollen, Stollen, Abgesang* – what may nowadays be called AAB form (or bar-form): a motif, its repetition, then something else (Lorenz 1924/1966). However, this generalization, as we saw above, proves unconvincing (as do Ilmari Krohn's "Wagnerian" analyses of Sibelius, which reduce the music to symmetrical spans of beats; Krohn 1945). One can therefore state that, for the most part, conventional narrativity functions in neither Proust nor in Wagner; moreover, Wagner radically changes and distorts stereotypical actant roles, as the case of "Brünnhilde's Choice" (above) has shown us.

Organic narrativity downplays discrete units (such as AAB) and segments of tectonic form, and instead emphasizes continuity and the shift from *phenosigns* to *genosigns*, which when they appear bring along the entire process of their elaboration and generation. When *Parsifal* starts with the prayer theme of the communion, that theme is still a phenosign, which makes an impact by its mere sensual presence and emergence, its *Schein*. It is experienced as an unconsummated sign. But six hours later, when it returns in the finale and resolves to the E flat major tonic chord, it becomes a genosign, the goal of the whole narrative course, its achieved end. The creation of such tensional arches inside the work is precisely what constitutes its organic form.

Organic narrativity must not be confused with what Monika Fluterdijk considers so-called "natural" narration (see Berruti 2007), by which she means the small stories told during everyday life, as when meeting with neighbours and exchanging news, or at coffee parties which abound in small stories, even those of joke-tellers. Such stories, no sooner kindled than extinguished, occur all the time in Proust and Wagner. For example, Verdurin's and Guermantes's descriptions of salons are full of such small stories – and they continue as "autocommunication" inside the narrator, as kinds of inner narration and fabulation.

In Wagner much is narrated, and the stories give unity and coherence to the entire tetralogy, saving it from dissolution and reminding us of what happened previously. In this way they create a kind of organic unity. In turn, the organic narrativity of Wagner's music is very obvious: in the stream of his music one distinguishes telos (as *Zweck* or goal-directedness), goals and destinations of growth, culminations, waves. Let us borrow from Schenkerian analysis two principles: *Ausfaltung* (unfolding) and *Fokusieren* (focusing). Focusing means that music clusters or crystallizes, let us say, into one vertical chord. When the music resumes, something unfolds and emerges from the chord; and because it opens or unfurls from this focused bundle of signs, its emergence is organic. The triad c-e-g is a focused musical utterance, from which launches

the fundamental melodic line (*Urlinie*) following, say, scale-steps 5–4–3–2–1, accompanied by the so-called *Bassbrechung* or I–V–I (see Pankhurst 2003 and, particularly, 2008a). In Ernst Kurth's terms, this would constitute a *Bewegungsphase*.

In Wagner, this principle appears in the preludes, among other places. In *Lohengrin* the timbre gets denser from top to bottom, culminating from static harmonies into an appoggiatura chord on the dominant, which is resolved (bar 54). This chord represents the genosign at which we aim; one focuses on it upon its arrival, which is followed by a resolution. Correspondingly, the overture of the *Rhinegold* on the E flat major tonic constitutes an unfolding of that chord. In music this type of "organicity" is evident, but how does it appear in literature?

Even in Proust the narration proceeds in "waves" in which condensation and focusing takes place, into one symbol, for instance, which then proceeds to dissolve. As is known, the whole novel starts from a single sensation, the famous Madeleine cake and tea, and the associations they launch, as a kind of *Ausfaltung* of this motif. Of this technique we have many examples in Proust. When speaking about Elstri, his fictive painter, Proust writes: "And this eye had been able to arrest the passage of the hours for all the time in this luminous moment when the lady had felt hot and stopped dancing, when the tree was encircled by a ring of shade, when the sails seemed to be gliding over a glaze of gold" (*The Guermantes Way*: 419).

The "arrest" of the hours into a "luminous moment" is precisely such a moment of crystallization – followed immediately by its unfolding into Proustian images, the narration in the painting continuing after a pause (in conventional narrativity, this represents the rhetorical figure of ellipsis):

> But precisely because that moment had such a forceful impact, the fixity of the canvas conveyed the impression of something highly elusive; you felt that the lady would soon return home, the boats vanish from the scene, the shadow shift, night begin to fall; that pleasure fades away, that life passes, and that the instant illuminated by multiple and simultaneous plays of light, cannot be recaptured. (Ibid.)

Focusing also occurs as a humouristic technique, whereby salon-goers abridge their names. Duke von Faffenheim, for instance, comes to be called only "Von", which he eventually uses as the signature to his letters. Montesquiou becomes mere "Quiou". One Polish name is turned into "Ski"; Elisabeth becomes "Lili", and so forth.

Organicity does not only appear as horizontal unfolding, but can be realized in depth as well: the entire musical surface, its thematic network, is derived from a germ motif, which never sounds as such, but which remains in

the background as an implicit legisign from which all else may be inferred – somewhat as in narration all modalizations eventually reduce to processes of signification of one transcendental ego or subject, although this ego may not be revealed to listener/reader/spectator. Some scholars (such as Deryck Cooke) have claimed that Wagner's leitmotifs originate organically in such a *Grundmotiv*, or basic motif. Proust in turn has many passages in which he presumes that behind the surface phenomena looms the principle generating them, be it a Schopenhauerian will or Bergsonian duration. Proust refers to Celtic mythology, in which stones, plants and trees conceal from us their hidden spirits which we ought to deliberate. "The souls of the dead are shifted to some inferior creature, animal, plant, even a thing, and are thus kept beyond our reach, until the day which for many never arrives, when we happen to wander or pass by a certain tree or get in our possession a ring, which is the prison of the souls. Then they shatter, they call us, and once we have recognized them, they return to live with us...". This thought certainly holds true as well for musical works and their appraisal in a performance. Hence this would constitute a kind of organic *Ausfaltung*, but in a "vertical" sense.

Yet in Proust's novel there is always someone who questions such sublime philosophies. Swann says: "I'm merely trying to point out to this young fellow here that what music shows, to me at any rate, is nothing like 'The Will-in-Itself' or 'The Synthesis of the Infinite' but something like the palm house at the zoo in the Bois de Boulogne, with old Verdurin in his frock-coat" (*In the Shadow of Young Girls in Flower*: 110).

Ultimately, in the larger scale of narration, an art work may have some driving background idea or *raison d'être*, which was extremely important to its author during the creation process. In the final version, however, nothing of it may remain. The decisive *peripeteia* passes by unnoticed, leaving us cold. For instance, Wagner's tetralogy was launched by the death of Siegfried, around which all else was built gradually as circles of narrativity. Yet, when that death finally takes place in *Götterdämmerung*, it is not so effective as it should be. The moment on which the work ought to focus brings disappointment. We are much more moved by the young Siegfried amidst the murmuring forest, the hero who has conquered Brünnhilde and for one moment enjoys happiness – before leaving on his fateful journey. Even in life we cannot always know which is a "focal" moment and which is not:

> Thus it often happens that later in life one encounters some dislikable school-mate and scarcely even shakes his hand, whereas if one ever thought about it, it is from some passing comment he made to us, like "You ought to come to Balbec", that our whole life and our whole work have sprung. (*Time Rediscovered*: 224)

Another manifestation of organic narrativity takes place in the maturation or "growing old" of themes. When the leitmotifs are heard repeatedly – at least a hundred times in Brünnhilde's farewell – they no longer move us so much as at their first occurrence. They have gotten old, as Boulez remarks, comparing this phenomenon to the end of Proust's novel, in which the same actors, now aged, have become almost unrecognizable. At the level of plot, the idea of aging appears in Wagner also in the *Rhinegold*, where the gods immediately begin to grow grey-headed when they stop eating Freia's apples. In Act III of *Parsifal* years have passed since the previous act, Gurnemantz has turned into an old man, and the knights have paled without the miracle of the Grail.

In both Proust and Wagner, organic can blend together with conventional narration; the former exploits the latter while at the same time denying it. For instance, the extreme corporeality of the Ride of the Valkyries is of course organic or "vegetative" – one of Schopenhauer's favourite expressions. It represents the foregrounded form and affirmation of corporeality, movement, ecstasy of speed, wildness, immodesty, *Rausch*, the Dionysian quality (as in Nietzsche). At the same time it conveys the thrill, the *joi de vitesse*, that comes when skiing down a hill or when driving a car: one arrives at the top of a hill that drops suddenly and precipitously. Yet, unmitigated desire can bring unexpected results, whether it be ethically acceptable or bear the seeds of evil – one thinks of how unbridled desire symbolizes aggressive masculinity and virility in Wagner. At the end of Proust's novel, the First World War has broken out, and the narrator, along with Robert, admires airplanes flying: "And those sirens, weren't they Wagnerian? ... one wondered whether they really were airmen and not Valkyries who were climbing into the night.... obviously the Germans have to come before we can hear Wagner in Paris" (*Time Rediscovered*: 66). This is the "organic" side of the Ride of the Valkyries. Yet at the same time it utilizes the fairly old musical topic of "galloping horses", one of the musical figures linked to the military and the pastoral ever since the Baroque and the age of Viennese classicism (Monelle 2006: 24). What is involved is conventional narrativity linked to the organic one.

We come now to the third species of narration: the *existential* (see Tarasti 2007). Although conventional (arbitrary) and organic narrativity follow their own paths, they nevertheless contain "cracks" through which one may glimpse, as it were, "sunbeams" of existentiality. Not every or any moment in music is an existential moment. Rather, in such moments we go beyond and outside of conventional time and space coordinates. The knowing subject is altogether present, and this presence allows him to detach from the framework of external Dasein. This is precisely what it means to "transcend": at such a moment the subject attains an omnitemporal situation. At the same time, a

view opens on the immanence of the subject; what is involved is *Erscheinen*, appearing, in which a sign changes into a transsign, becoming existential. The sign turns from its horizontal, temporal appearance into an omnitemporal one. From it, connections lead in all directions at once; like Augustine's "specious present", it refers to the past and anticipates the future. In such a moment all other projects of the existential subject prove to be mere *Schein*, appearance; here a subject finds his/her semiotic self, the "lost fatherland", as Proust calls it in *La prisonnière* (236).

Accordingly, the existential narration always means stopping, in the sense of negation or affirmation. In these, behind the world of *Schein*, the "truth of being" is revealed; the external vanishes in favour of the internal. Existential narration can therefore appear not only as particular mechanisms of textual production, but also as a kind of enlightenment of the normal narration, as a Heideggerian *Stimmung* or "attunement" of being (*Befindlichkeit*). In relation to the principles of organic narrativity, such as focusing/unfolding, it appears as metaphorization; there the organic and conventional procedures prove to be only a metaphor of something that looms behind this phenomenon. As pointed out by Solomon Marcus, the Rumanian academician and mathematician, transcendence appears to us only as metaphors. In Wagner such moments of existential halting occur often. They can be enacted as affirmation at the climaxes of musical-dynamic movement, as in *The Valkyrie* when Sieglinde prophesies about Siegfried and the music bursts into *bel canto*, or when the same leitmotif appears at the end of *Götterdämmerung* as the final theme of the whole *Nibelungen Ring*. The manifestation of beauty, overwhelming aesthetic elevation, can also serve as such an existential narration. Siegfried amidst the Germanic forest, in search of himself and identity, constitutes precisely such an existential halt.

Likewise, Proust's narration features such moments; for instance, when the narrator-ego has finally been allowed to enter the salon of Guermantes, sat down to dinner, and there experienced exaltation. When he exits, the narrator tells us the following:

> An exhilaration which, because it was artificial, tailed off into melancholy was what I also felt, though quite differently ... once I finally left her house in the carriage that was to take me to M de Charlus. We are free to abandon ourselves to one or the other of two forces, one arising in ourselves, emanating from our deepest impressions, the other affecting us from without. The natural accompaniment of the first is a joy, the joy that springs from the life of creative people. The other current, the one which aims to introduce into us the impulses by which people external to ourselves are stirred, is not accompanied by pleasurable feeling; but we can add pleasure to it through a vicarious reaction, adopting an intoxication so artificial that it quickly turns into melancholy, into boredom; whence

the gloomy faces of so many society people and their pronounced tendency towards nervous conditions.... (*The Guermantes Way*: 547)

Any sign whatsoever can open the existential dimension, even a quite ordinary telephone call in which the narrator hears his grandmother's voice from a distance. Since a telephone line had just been strung between Doncières and Paris, Saint-Loup proposes that the narrator call his grandmother. This happens: "But was it solely the voice, heard in isolation, that created the new impression which tore at my heart? Not at all; it was rather that the isolation of the voice was like a symbol, an evocation, a direct consequence of another isolation ..." (op. cit.: 132). This incident involves the voice becoming a metaphor, as said above; the person herself is "transcendent", absent.

Another existential experience of the narrator-ego took place on a journey to Balbec, where he was suddenly filled by a deep happiness of the kind he had not felt since his days at Combray. And the reason for this happy feeling, the existential affirmation and halting, was three trees: "... but my mind suspected that they hid something on which it could have no purchase..." (*In the Shadow of Young Girls in Flower*: 296). Then follows a long development, "unfolding" the theme of the three trees:

> ... were they perhaps only an invitation to comprehend an idea, concealing behind them selves, like certain tresses or clumps of grass ... a meaning which was every bit as obscure and ungraspable as a distant past? ... still coming towards me they might have been some mythological apparition, a coven of witches, a group of Norns propounding oracles.... I watched the trees as they disappeared, waving at me in despair and seeming to say, "What ever you fail to learn from us today you will never learn. If you let us fall by this wayside where we stood striving to reach you, a whole part of your self which we brought for you will return forever to nothing." (op. cit.: 298–299)

The excerpt above illustrates an unfolding that begins from a simple lexeme, "three trees". At the same time, it is an intertext or reference to Wagner: the scene of the three Norns from the beginning of *Götterdämmerung*. They offer their knowledge about the fate of the world, about which, however, the protagonists of the *Ring* do not want to hear. Also involved is a case of the pathetic fallacy (the anthropomorphizing of Nature) described by John Ruskin, whose work Proust admired (Ruskin 1873/1987: 362–368). At the same time, it represents existential narration, a stopping point of illumination.

How the three types of narration function side by side, not against but supporting each other, is exemplified by the main leitmotif of Wagner's *Tristan* prelude. It represents conventional narrativity: the music takes shape as periodic groups and is based upon the rhetorical figure of anabasis/catabasis (rising/falling). In the rhetoric of antiquity, catabasis signified sinking down. At-

hanasius Kircher explains the figure as follows: "... *descensus periodus harmonica est, qua oppositos priori affectus pronunciamus servitutis, humilitatis depressionis affectus, atque infimis rebus exprimendis, ut illud Massaini 'Ego autem humiliatus sum nimis' et illut Massenti 'Descenderunt in inferum viventes'*"(Unger 1941/2000: 36). Freely translated it means this: "a descending tonal passage, which expresses an emotion opposed to the previous emotional state [anabasis], subordination, humility, depression, portraying the lowest things, like Massaini's expression 'I, too, have been humiliated' or Massenti's utterance: 'Living creatures descended to inferiority'".

After the ascending minor sixth, a-f, there follows a chromatic descent, a catabasis, which as such is a common rhetorical figure in Wagner, upon which Wolfram's "Song of the Evening Star" is based; it occurs in Lohengrin's admonition to Elsa, and elsewhere. Next in the Tristan prelude one hears a chord that corresponds to the figure of *circulatio*, focused in one cluster, whose elements are in mutual tension as a dominant-function appoggiatura chord, whose "pre-signs" in music history have been documented by Jacques Chailley, from the introduction to Beethoven's *Pathétique* Sonata to the opening chord of the Wesendock song, *Schmerzen* (Chailley 1972: 32, 79).

The chord dissolves with an upward figure which is nothing other than a musical instance of rhetorical anabasis: "*Sive ascensio est periodus harmonicam qua exaltationem ascensionem vel res alteras et eminentes exprimimus, ut illud Moralis Ascendens Christus in altum*" (Kircher, op. cit.). Roughly translated: "We have here a chordal passage which expresses exalted ascending and other sublime issues such as Christ ascended on high." The anabasis's course then continues as the implication of melodic movement, dissolving two octaves higher onto the submediant in F major in bar 17.

Figure 95: The Tristan chord.

The processes just described represent conventional narrativity in the Tristan chord. But at the same time it is organic, based upon movements of pushing and pulling, which my piano professon Jules Gentil described with arrows:

"⤓" for downward movement, the feeling of heaviness of gravity, in a cataba-
sis; correspondingly, "⤒" for a lightening, upward movement, the elevation
of anabasis. All this is likewise existential, in as much as catabasis represents
what Jean Wahl calls *trans-descendence*, that is, a sinking into transcendence
or emptiness, and *trans-ascendence*, designating anabasis rising into transcen-
dence. Perhaps a still more striking example of the latter figure is the Grail
motif from *Parsifal*, whose origin is in the so-called "Dresden Alleluia" tune:

Figure 96: Anabasis of the Grail motif.

In this manner the organic and the conventional rise into a metaphysical
meaning, which for Proust is precisely the message of *Tristan*. These three
types of narrativity also concern the performance and staging of Wagner's
operas. His own conducting was thoroughly organic. The following words were
written by Richard Fricke, an eyewitness of Wagner's style of conducting in
Bayreuth in 1875–1876:

> Working with Wagner is extremely difficult, as he does not stick to one thing for long. He
> jumps from one subject to another, and you cannot pin him down for *one* subject, which
> could immediately find a solution. He wants to be his own stage director, but for this de
> tailed work, I may say he lacks all it takes, for his mind is always focused on the entirety,
> losing sight of the details and forgetting how he had wanted things done the days before.
> So what can we do? (Fricke 1906/1998: 32)

10.7 Ekphrasis and levels of texts

We may now try to pull together our observations about the kinship between
Proust and Wagner, using in our interpretation a model which semioticians of
the Tartu-Moscow school created for the reconstruction of ancient Slavic texts
(Uspenski et al. 1981: 25). It is presumed that each work consists of levels,
whereby a text – of any kind, be it a poem, novel, film, theater performance,
building, composition, etc. – is "generated" or produced. These levels are as
follows:

```
              semantic gesture
         symbols            isotopies
         semantics          signification
Proust   syntax      ↓      discoursivisation     Wagner
         metrics            actoriality
         phonetics          substance (Hjelmslev)
                            "matter"
```
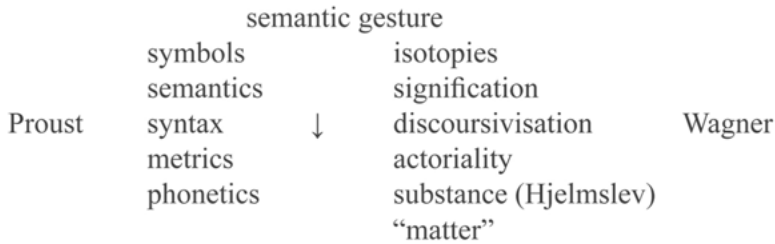
Figure 97: Textual levels in Proust and Wagner: A model for comparison.

Originally called "a general scheme for recoding a linguistic text by levels", its levels, from top to bottom, were designated as these: the general intention of the text, the level of principal semantic segments, the level of syntax-semantics of a phrase, level of words, level of phonemic groups (syllables), and level of phonemes (op. cit.).

For these there is a unifying principle, called the "dominant" by Roman Jakobson and the Russian Formalists, who borrowed the term from music; later, the Prague Circle in the 1930s would call this principle a "semantic gesture". It guarantees that a work "functions", i.e., constitutes a coherent whole. Levels are designated by terms borrowed from linguistics, on the assumption that all sign-complexes are "languages" – even forms of non-verbal art, like music and painting. Without probing the intriguing question of whether this is always the case, I accept the aforementioned model and structure as a kind of *ad hoc* hypothesis in order to complete my comparison of Proust and Wagner. In order to make the levels better fit with music, we have put Proust in the left column and Wagner in the right.

1) Phonetics, "matter", "substance" – this means the first material impression of the text, its Firstness, as Peirce would say, in all its chaotic and physical nature. In existential semiotics this would equal the first case of *être–en–moi, an–mir–sein*, as mere gestures, pulsations, kinetics, without any stability or shape. Swann's first impression of Vinteuil's small phrase was of this kind:

> Now, scarcely a few minutes after the young pianist had begun playing at Mme Verdurin's, suddenly, after a high note held for a long time through two measures, he saw it approaching, escaping from under that prolonged sonority stretched like a curtain of sound hiding the mystery of its incubation, he recognized it, secret, murmuring and divided, the airy and redolent phrase that he loved ... it had a charm so individual, which no other charm could have replaced, that Swann felt as though he had encountered in a friend's drawing-room a person whom he had admired in the street and despaired of ever finding again. (*Swann's Way*: 214)

And later: " ... after an instant's pause it abruptly changed direction, and with a new movement, quicker, slighter, more melancholy, incessant and sweet, it carried him with it towards unfamiliar vistas" (ibid.: 212–213). Yet even though it was a shapeless, unnamed phenomenon of the "phonetic" level, it had, via its synaesthesias, already taken on a kind of sensual, protosemantic meaning. Proust's prose represents Impressionism in literature. For this school, the detail was all in all; one word or phrase was more important than the entire novel. In a painting one saw only flashes: "Flashes, flashes, flashes", people exclaimed in front of a painting of Monet. The musicality of Proustian style is not so much based on his effort to imitate musical timbres, as it is to create musicality of language on the level of phonetics – as if he were, so to say, "instrumenting" his prose (see Tynianov 1977: 136). Jean Milly states in his study, *Proust et le style* (1991), that Proust was much more oriented towards the level of phrases than that of words, since his technique is built upon associative word-chains rather than on individual words. However, as an heir of Symbolism he admits that a single word can gain poetic dignity, and that one can derive much from the sonority of words and their etymological resonance (op. cit.: 125).

By contrast, Richard E. Goodkin bases his deconstructionist interpretations precisely on playing with the phonetics and meanings of words. To him the key scene of the whole series of novels occurs at the beginning, when the narrative ego must climb a staircase in order to separate himself from his mother. In French the word *escalier* is close to the word *escale*, or musical scale. To ascend a scale means to rise upward toward the octave, at which point fulfilment takes place, as when the mother comes to give Marcel a kiss. Correspondingly, the breathing of the narrator's grandmother on her deathbed is compared to ascending one octave higher when the doctor has given her morphine: "Grandmother seemed to be humming to us a long happy song, whose quick melodious tones filled the room ... leading to a rising leitmotif, which extended ever higher until it fell again." Earlier the sounds of the grandmother sleeping were compared to *bel canto* singing and its so-called "head-tones" one octave higher. Reaching the octave symbolized the fulfilment of happiness, but also of death. It is no accident that one of the unrestrained, hedonistic protagonists in the novel is called Octave – nor is it coincidental that the grandmother's name, Amédée, is a reference to Mozart.

The rising to the octave in the grandmother's breathing can be compared to the figure of anabasis. The grandmother has earlier spoken about ascending the tower of Combray church, which is equated with playing the piano, but not "dryly". What is involved here is the phonetic level of both language and music being furnished with a narrative intention, organically (fulfillment/

sounds of dying), conventionally (anabasis), and existentially (life/death). Goodkin states: "It is here the grandmother seems at last to give up all hope that Marcel will ever be willing or able to make the climb up toward the octave above her, to follow her up to the heights of self-transcendence through self-resistance" (op. cit.: 109).

In the *Tristan* section, which takes place in Venice (*The Fugitive*), the term "resolution" is mentioned often; in terms of the Tristan chord, it signals the reaching of the octave in A minor after gaining the leading tone. To this refer to the tones of A and G (sharp), respectively, which are in turn the first letters of the two protagonists' names: Albertine and Gilberte. Is Gilberte, then, a kind of "leading tone" to the tonic of A minor, the goal to which one aspires? Proust's novel consists of seven parts, and the musical octave, before the return of the tonic, has seven notes. Does it follow that *À la recherche* also has a structure equating to the progress of keys – as Bach wrote his *Well-Tempered Clavier* in stepwise rising keys and Chopin his preludes – in order to give inner coherence to the series? This question is not engaged by Goodkin.

Also of interest is the term "syncope", which in Proust designates an attack of the illness that brings death to the grandmother. But in music it means ambiguity between weak and strong beats, such that syncopation anticipates motion to the strong beat. For this Proust also uses the term "discordance", or absence of harmony. Hence the syncope anticipates death, which is the same as resolution.

In Wagner, timbre, the equivalent to phonetics, has crucial meaning. His orchestration is loaded with basic connotations of the various instruments, as Egon Voss has shown. The clarinet conveys sensuality and innocence; the oboe and brass, solemnity; horns, "the call of paradise" (Paul Claudel), and so on, not to mention the meanings of singers' voices. Many of Wagner's innovations in instrumentation have attained textbook status; for instance, in the influential Berlioz-Strauss guide to orchestration, with examples such as Brünnhilde's awakening and the austere darkening of tone colour following Siegfried's third act. All this involves intonations of the basic level of music.

2) In metrics we shift to the level of words, as "actors", in the discourses of both music and novel. We have already pondered the role of the phonetic values of words. Going further, in Proust we encounter a leitmotif technique quite similar to that of Wagner: protagonists surface in his novel in various figures, but they are always recognizable by their characteristics:

> Where a lesser musician would claim he is depicting a squire or a knight, while having them sing the same music, Wagner, on the other hand, places under each name a different reality, and each time his squire appears, a particular figure at once complex and

simplistic, bursts, with a joyous, feudal clashing of lines, into the immensity of sound and leaves its mark there. Hence the fullness of a music, in fact, is filled with countless different musics each of which is a being in its own right. (*The Prisoner*: 143)

The thematic catalogue of protagonists in Proust's novel shows us on which pages and in which connections figures such as Saint-Loup, Odette and Vinteuil appear – much like in the first pages of piano arrangements of Wagner operas we see diagrams of leitmotifs with all their names. Other writers as well apply a similar leitmotif technique, for example, Thomas Mann, likewise an admirer of Wagner and his pupil in building his musical prose.

3) The main stylistic effects of Proust emerge on the level of syntax, namely, in phrases. This was noticed by Benoist-Mechin:

His style, his endless prolificness with episodes, his long notes which recall the long tone of cello strings, lead him to imitate instinctively the musical course, in which the final cadence retrospectively provides the meaning for the entire period. Behind the arabesques of the words and thoughts it is easy to distinguish the constant presence of the hidden but dominant music. What gives many pages of *In the Shadow of Young Girls in Flower* their flowing rhythm is the undulation of associations. (Benoist-Mechin 1926: 41)

The great length of Proust's phrases is a well-known style feature, behind which stands the idea that short, dry sentences diminish originality of expression. Proust tried to abridge his phrases and for this purpose wrote newspaper articles, but would then return to his periphrastic style. There is a recognizable analogy here to the musical prose of Wagner and his art of continuous transition, the principle of *unendliche Melodie*. Wagner carries this out by avoiding the tonic; for example, by employing the diminished seventh chord, from which one can easily modulate to almost any key and thus provide the musical narration endlessly with new directions. The impression of Wagner's late style is one of ceaseless tension arising from dominant-function chords – a device carried on by Scriabin (*Prometheus*), among others. There are numerous illustrations of this, such as in Brünnhilde's farewell in *Götterdämmerung* and Kundry's fragmentary singing in Act I of *Parsifal*, to name but two. In Proust the same technique functions in such a way that a long phrase does not end with a cadential verb that would fulfill expectations, but with a word which carries a so-called complex isotopy, that is to say, several superimposed levels of meaning, from which the author suddenly chooses the most surprising one. Sometimes the effect is humorous: "… what we remember of our conduct remains unknown to our nearest neighbour… and the image other people form of our actions and exploits no more corresponds to our own that an inaccurate tracing does to the original drawing …" (*The Guermantes Way*: 268). This Proust compares to a strange image that doesn't resemble its object:

> A man who is used to smiling in the mirror at his handsome face and figure will, if he is shown an X-ray of them, entertain the same suspicion of error at the sight of the rosary of bones presented as an image of himself as the visitor to an exhibition looking at the portrait of a young woman and reading in the catalogue: "Camel resting". (ibid.: 269)

Such discoursive devices are non-organic in as much as they create a kind of false cadence or non-telos.

4) We have already dealt at length with semantics, which one finds in abundance in both musical and literary universes. The significations that the reader puts in Proust's phrases and figures of course depend on his/her competence. One sees in his writing a contrast between French society with all its classes, values and behaviours, and the narrator's "I", who within this *Dasein* lives his own existential life. In Proust one can experience various semantic fields, beginning from the love-death topics of romanticism, to dream-awakening, and more. Correspondingly, in Wagner the plot, mythological structure, dramatic motifs, theatrical situations, global meaning of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, and furthermore the particular phenomenon of his mythological heroes behaving according to the same psychology as the protagonists in a nineteenth-century novel. The mythological armature, then, serves for alienating effects (*Verfremdung*) in discourse about such universal semantic themes as power, desire, possessing, and redemption.

5) Finally, on the highest level of symbols in Proust two themes meet each other, as André Maurois so keenly observed: time, which destroys – and memory, which preserves. In Wagner, in turn, we have *Erlösung,* the art work as a religion, more than theater, as a *Bühnenweihfestspiel,* the Schopenhauerian principles of compassion and sympathy.

Chapter 11 Rhetoric and Musical Discourse

> Alle Poesie, die auf einen Effekt geht, und alle Musik, die der ekzentrischen Poesie in ihren komischen oder tragischen Ausschweifungen und Übertreibungen folgen will, um zu wirken und sich zu zeigen, ist rhetorisch. Friedrich Schlegel, *Athenäum-Fragmente* (1798/1997: 109)

In his classic study from 1941, *Die Beziehungen zwischen Musik und Rhetorik im 16.-18. Jahrhundert*, Hans-Heinrich Unger (2000) states that, on the one hand, the term "rhetoric" evokes the thought of empty phrases, locutions void of content; and on the other hand, the art of speaking in Antiquity, for some culminating in Cicero and for others in Quintilianus. Almost seventy years have passed since Unger's study was published, and in our own time rhetoric brings to mind two additional aspects. First, a rhetorical expression is always *marqué*, foregrounded, salient. It is obvious, concrete, visible, a conspicuous discoursive activity that grabs attention, even if it employs hidden, immanent levels of meaning (e.g., isotopies). Second, rhetoric, historically, is persuasive communication; with it we try to influence listeners, change or intervene in their world-view, cause them to behave in a certain manner. Hence rhetoric belongs to the world of action, and enacts the modal categories of *faire* and *agir,* rather than *être* and *paraitre,* to use Greimassian terms. We can say, with Charles Morris, that rhetoric represents "movement against" (aggression) and the principle of *dominance.*

The pejorative meaning of rhetoric appears in Theodor Adorno, who in his famous essay *Versuch über Wagner* links its appearance in music to the gestural moment. To his mind, all music is based more or less upon gesturality. In Western music, however, the latter has been sublimated and internalized into expression. In Wagner the gestures are associated, Adorno thinks, with an imagined public to which the gestures are supposed to be reactions, for example, the murmur of the people, applause, triumphs, waves of enthusiasm on stage. The conductor is a kind of orator, who transmits the gestures to the listener. In music, the carrier of such rhetorical gestures is the motif, from which one can build sequences, but which cannot be developed. They can be repeated and strengthened, but one cannot weave a symphonic texture from them. That is why in Wagner musical logic is replaced by a kind of gesticulation, just "as agitators replace with their speech gestures the discursive development of their ideas" (Adorno 1952/1974: 30). To generalize, from this point of view the rhetorical substance in absolute music would function against that music's own logic. Nevertheless, it is largely agreed that music should not be "talkative", or that it should even represent "true speech", as Boris Asafiev

said, or "man's speech to man", as Finnish musicologist Timo Mäkinen has argued. If this is true, we are still not far from the centuries old tradition of rhetoric. In fact, as early as the Baroque period a strong analogy was felt to exist between musical formation and the construction of an oration.

11.1 Rhetoric as Speech Act

Therefore rhetoric is speech. How do we prepare ourselves for a speech act, and its public genre, namely, its delivery before an audience? In coming to the situation of speech, we decide about what or whom it is to be spoken, and to whom. Also, who is the speaker in relation to the listeners? What is the speaker's subject position? Should one use "upper-class" or "working-class" language, and in what style? If these questions have been answered, thus determining the social order of the context, can one estimate the impact of a speech upon the audience in question? One also has to formulate something striking, funny, typical, characteristic, anecdotal, about the subject matter, something which makes it very concrete and apparent – and experienced. It must, in fact, be both a characterization of the topic and personal experience about it. One may recall an event, message, letter, or other utterance which fulfills this requirement. These are key points, the climaxes of the speech. The building of a speech starts from such "points of attraction".

Next, one may ponder some broader theme to which this phenomenon is connected, some context which makes it appear as a special case, an individual example of something general or even universal. Then a paradigm is formed, a store of elements, particular and general. They are numbered and their syntagma, or temporal order, is planned. As this is done, both choice and pruning come into play: what is amusing is perhaps not reasonable, etc.

The speaker arrives at the occasion – and situation – in good time, to see who is present in the audience, who the important persons are, and where they are sitting; the speaker talks about his or her topic even before getting in front of the audience. Very often from these last-minute exchanges one gets appropriate deictic signs for the speech itself. They make the speech sound fresh and provide the illusion that it is improvised. In fact there is no such thing as an improvised speech. There are only speeches which are realized so masterfully that they *seem* to be quite spontaneous. One lets the speech take shape only in this decisive movement, which can also be decorated with figurative locutions. A speech must start so that it pleases the listener: *benevolentiae captatur* was one of the most important points as early as in ancient rhetorics. The speech act itself can be compared to the art of singing, which, as the

German saying goes, *ist eine darstellende Kunst*; that is to say, it is something set in front of the listeners. The speech must project to all the listeners, up to the very last row of audience. In closing, one has to set in motion something indexically elevating, something which leads back to the living world of the listeners and perhaps makes them act in a certain manner. Often at the end of a speech the words are so-called performatives: "I declare the festival year to begin"…"Let us toast to…."; i.e., words to be followed by acts.

We also employ a rhetoric of everyday life, what Monica Fluterdijk calls "natural narratology", daily and on the most varied occasions: for instance, when two friends meet on the street and exchange news; at coffee parties, with their incessant small narratives. All this, too, has its own rhetoric.

11.2 The Classics

Next we turn to the history of rhetoric and present some of its foundational ideas. As early as Cicero we find the division of a speech into four parts: (1) *inventio*, (2) *dispositio* (*elaboratio*), (3) *decoratio*, (4) *pronuntiatio* (*elocutio, actio*). Invention (*inventio*) concerns the discovery of the topics of the speech; i.e., the contents, that which it is to be spoken about. Much later, in 1730, the German poet Gottsched was saying essentially the same thing in his *Grundriss zu einer vernunftmässigen Redekunst*:

> *Die allererste Frage welche ein Reder bei sich selbst anstellt, ehe und bevor er redet, ist ohne Zweifel: was, oder wovon soll ich reden? Dieselbe wird nun mehrenteils durch diejenigen Umstände beantwortet, die ihn zum Reden veranlassen.* (Quoted in Unger 2000: 35)

> [The very first question a speaker sets to himself before he starts is obviously this one: what or about what shall I speak? The answer to this is found in the circumstances which have made him speak.]

If, however, a speaker does not have the natural ability to invent subject matter, he is helped by the so-called *loci topici*, the topics or commonplaces, "general themes and subjects", which another German, Christian Weise, listed as twelve points in his *Der grünen Jugend nothwendige Gedancken* (Leipzig 1675):

> The first locus is "*notationis*" and plays with names: what is the origin of a name and how one can play with it without offending. Another *locus* is called *a genere*: a person is praised so that he is elevated to a higher position than others. The third *locus* "*definitionis*" focuses more on things to be portrayed. The fourth *locus* "*partium*" the thing alone looks to be too unimportant and is divided into smaller parts which are then examined as its reasons. The fifth *locus* "*causae efficientis*": instead of a thing or a person their cause is dealt with. The sixth *locus* "*causae finalis*" [is] when the goal of a person or

thing is discussed. The seventh *locus* is "*causae formalis*" [in] which the essence of a thing is sketched. The eighth is "*causae materialis*" in which it is mentioned from where the thing has emerged or what it consists of. The ninth is "*effectorum*" in which one presents what a person has done or produced. The tenth is "*adjunctorum*" in which one ponders all that concerns a person, his body, his character, his good qualities, or conditions in which he has grown, i.e., all that preceded his prestigious position. The eleventh is "*contrariorum*" in which one presents something contrary to a person or thing. The twelfth *locus* is "*comparatorum*" in which something else is joined to the theme.

What is interesting in all these theories is a certain normative aspect of rhetoric, which the semiotician Greimas later emphasized in his own definition (Greimas and Courtés 1979: 317–318): "Lorsque la rhétorique est donné pour tâche d'elaborer des 'règles d'art' elle comporte un caractère normatif, prononcé la grammaire normative, qui lui est parallèle" (When rhetoric is tasked with elaborating "rule of art" it carries a normative character, called normative grammar, with which it is parallel). In other words, rhetoric is useful for the less talented, who do not (or cannot) invent topics of discussion on their own. Rhetoric as a discipline comes from the outside, and with ready-made advice.

I later introduce the other, more existential origin of rhetoric, which emerges as the result of an individual speaker's experiences, and is an inexhaustible source for invention – albeit many artists who go through a number of style periods may lock themselves into using merely rhetorical figures. If an artist or a celebrity states about him-/herself, "As I said then and then", the original *inventio* has been exhausted, leaving only the rhetoric of previous discoveries. Here one returns to the negative aspect of the concept.

When the speaker decides what to speak about, he must plan the order in which he will present his issue, which brings us to the phase of disposition. Again following Gottsched, a complete speech contains the following sections: (1) *exordium* – beginning; it must catch the listeners' attention, following the old principle of *captatio benevolentiae*; (2) *narratio* – an historical description of the materials involved; (3) *propositio* – the main point(s) or thesis on which the speech focuses; (4) *confirmatio* – the elaboration and confirmation of the main thesis; (5) *confutatio* – the rejection and abolition of false statements about it; (6) *conclusio* – conclusion, also called *peroratio* (peroration).

When the order of the speech is clear one has to find the right words for it. In this choice of diction we have actorialisation, as well as modalization, since the speech must be combined with the pathemic units of a discourse. Such emotional states utilized by rhetoric, according to Gottsched, are love and hatred, scorn and compassion, joy and sorrow, fear and hope, confidence and despair, shame and ambition (quoted in Unger 1941/2000: 6).

For this purpose rhetoricians have invented particular linguistic forms, called *tropes* and *figures* as early as Quintilianus, which deviate from simple,

everyday speech genres. Figures are deviations from regular or common words and grammatical constructions so as to obtain particular expressions or effects; tropes, on the other hand, are transformations of contents. The list of rhetorical figures is long, and when applied to music even longer. For instance, the figure *anaphora* is a repetition of beginning words, as in Goethe: *Gottes ist der Orient, Gottes ist der Occident* (Goethe). And there is *epizeuxis*, when a word is repeated many times: *Qu'est qui beau? Je ne connais pas, je ne connais pas, je ne connais pas…* (Tristan Tzara). *Epanalepsis*: the opening words are repeated at the end: *Não tem um brasileiro um carater, não* (Mario de Andrade).

The figure *anadiplosis* means that next phrase starts with the words with which the previous one ended. An instance of this in music is when the development section of a sonata begins with the closing theme of the exposition. *Gradatio* means a culmination built by gradual ascent. In prose, for example, "First sand, then rocks, then ridges, then the mighty mountains." Or in music, "*Vocatur climax periodus harmonica gradatim ascendens*" (Kircher, in Unger 2000: 78), which may designate a musical line rising in pitch, an upward modulation around the circle of fifths, etc.; moreover, it is a figure used in painting. These rhetorical figures represent the expression of affects, and hence are closely connected with the pathology of speech (obviously not in the sense of illness).

With tropes one deals with poetic transformations. Typical tropes are metonymy, synecdoche, metaphor, prosopoeia and allegory. Metaphor is thus an utterance that does not mean what its words literally mean. The classic example from Greimas's *Sémantique structurale* is: "*Cet homme est lion*" (This man is a lion), which of course means that the man is as courageous as a lion (Greimas 1980: 115, 118–119). Another is the "black sun of melancholy", the title of a book by Julia Kristeva, referring not to the physical sun but to the darkened mental state of depression. Allegories are expanded metaphors, in which lifeless things or abstract concepts – used to convey virtues, vices and other properties of living creatures – that are presented as feeling, acting, listening and speaking entities.

From all this one can infer that rhetoric is a type of primitive semiotics, a kind of presemiotics – above we have already given cases of metonymy and metaphor, notions which semiotics provided with precise meanings (as did Roland Barthes, in his *Elements of Semiology*). In his *Dictionnaire*, Greimas says the following about rhetoric: "Rhetoric appears as a kind of prescientific theory of discourse, which is characterized by the cultural context in which it has emerged. The actual renaissance of rhetoric is due to the actualization of the problems of discourse, thanks to impulses stemming from semiotics …" (Greimas 1979: 317). Most of the aforementioned procedures could be translated

easily into phases of discoursivisation in the Greimassian generative course: actorialisation, spatialisation, and temporalisation, and their disengagements/ engagements, as well as by deixis, aspectualisation and modalization. Greimas argues that rhetoric represents persuasive discourse, and the so-called *μ-groupe* at Liège has aimed at producing a general theory of rhetoric. One can get a good picture of that enterprise by reading Jean-Marie Klinkenberg's (1996) *Précis de sémiotique général.* Klinkenberg sees rhetoric as a part of pragmatics, in which what is essential is not only the utterance, but also the act of uttering, and particularly its impact on the addressee, *l'énonciataire.* As did Searle in his *Speech Act Theory*, Klinkenberg distinguishes three aspects of uttering: locution, illocution and perlocution. Locution is the utterance itself, along with its grammatical structure. Illocution means that it is uttered in a situation in which the idea is not to transmit information but to act (*ce n'est pas seulement transférer des informations: c'est aussi agir*; Klinkenberg 1996: 315).

Precisely this aspect is interesting for our own theory, since by illocution a phrase becomes, so to say, *present,* being there, and appearing – which are static states (except in syntagmatic or horizontal appearing, *Erscheinen*) that turn into active ones. The act of illocution is directive, as Klinkenberg states. It is based upon locution, but at the same time transcends it (op. cit.: 316). Therefore the same locution can correspond to several illocutions. I can say: "It rains today in Helsinki" in order to convey joy that I can stay inside and read a book, or disappointment that "it is raining again", or delight that "finally it is raining" after a long dry spell. Conversely, the same illocution can correspond to many locutions. For instance, a Wagnerian leitmotif can appear in many connections and each time mean completely different things, regardless of the syntactic structure of the musical "locution" proper. If locution is directly linked with some parallel activity, what is involved is a performative. For instance, three knocks at the beginning of a theater piece signal a beginning. In the overture to Mozart's *Magic Flute*, the three chords signify the start of the opera – but at the same time they symbolize the Trinity, thus serving as a metaphor. Finally, the real impact of these signs upon the receiver-listener gives the case of perlocution. This is found most often in the issue of orders or commands. For example, when the priest says, "Let us pray" and in response the congregants fold their hands and bow their heads; a teacher of solfeggio says, "Let us sing" and the class sings; and the like.

It is not hard to see how the theory of pre-, act-, and post-signs can be used here. Rhetoric is always based upon background information, a previous signification, which is implicitly taken as granted or learned. Otherwise rhetoric would not function. Accordingly there is the level of rhetorical pre-signs presigns. As early as 1606, Joachim Burmeister outlines something similar in

his work *Musica poetica* (see Unger 2000: 47), such that *exordium* refers to the beginning of a work, preparing the ear and soul of the listener for the forthcoming main phrase: "*Exordium est prima carminis periodus sive affectio ... qua auditoris aures et animus ad cantum attenta redduntur*" (ibid.: 51). Mattheson, in turn, considers this the beginning of a narration: "Narration is a story whereby one evokes the purpose and quality of the presentation. It can be found just at the entrance of a vocal or instrumental part, also in a textless music, and hence refers to the preceding exordium" (ibid.). Yet, the rhetorical sign itself is an *act-sign*, i.e., what is uttered in the illocution. Its impact again is perlocution: the destinatee does something, such that the conative or persuasive function of communication has been fulfilled.

Let us return to the earlier example of metaphor: "This man is a lion". It has a certain syntactic structure as a *pre-sign*, i.e., an illocution preceding the rhetorical act. Yet, in rhetoric this primal meaning is pushed into the background and replaced by the *act-sign*: "This man is courageous!" Moreover, if it is pronounced, let us say, by a general in front of his army in order to reward a soldier for bravery in battle, followed by a decoration being pinned to his uniform, then it is a perlocution, which fulfills the final meaning of rhetoric.

Roland Barthes was right when he said that rhetoric probably has only one form, which is realized in various substances. When he analyses the rhetoric of a Panzani pasta advertisement, he finds behind it the final connotation: "Italianity". Rhetoric is kin to mythical sign systems, which replace the original signified with a new signified, the latter, in the case of modern Western myths, being a certain ideology. Rhetoric is thus bound up with ideology.

All this concerns rhetoric as a normative semiotic act, which deals with the subject and forces him/her to assume given norms of the society. Such a rhetoric is essentially exogenic and exteroceptive, since in it the values of a society become manifest and compelling. Is there an endogenic, interoceptive rhetoric? Its point of departure would be from the subject itself, his development and potentials, which would manifest gradually, flourish in a certain community, and in the end find its own radically authentic forms and illocutions.

As to the subject, such a rhetoric would render his/her inner semiosis external, and manifest it to other partners of communication. An artist reaches a certain solution after long hesitation and much trial and error, and gradually this new artistic quality becomes his mark or "signature": he is recognized by it. It is sufficient for the public to recognize this feature in his work when they are already abandoning themselves to its rhetorical impact and sigh enthusiastically, "This is genuine van Gogh, genuine Brâncuș, genuine Brecht, genuine Lang or Rohmer, genuine Penderecki, genuine Alvar Aalto...." Ultimately this

original innovation becomes an object of imitation by other artists – a rhetorical topic, a *locus communis* – and then the original practice fades into mere metaphor.

Beethoven, for instance, discovered that a symphony can open merely with a field of empty fifths and fourths, into which penetrates, little by little, a theme based on an arpeggiated triad. Wagner quoted the same gesture in the overture to his *Flying Dutchman*, then Liszt in his Dante Symphony, Bruckner in his Third Symphony, then Sibelius in his *En Saga*. Similarly, in the history of cinema the montages, lighting effects, and so on form their own topics. In this way a rhetorical figure eventually takes its place in the transcendent, supratemporal store of art. However, the origin of such a rhetorical figure may indeed be obscure, a pathemic state in the mind of an author (writer, composer, film director or similar), which gradually crystallized into an act-sign and further into a rhetorical illocution.

Hence there are two routes to becoming a rhetorical figure. The first starts from society, its values and norms, and their transformation into social rhetorical practices and topics, and from there into part of an artist's technique and ultimately his innermost identity. The other route launches precisely from this core of a subject, fixes onto his personality and technical knowledge, shifts into social practice, and finally becomes a topic identified with the whole community. To recall our semiotic square of existential semiotics, we have four modes of being: from *an-mir-sein* into *für-mich-sein* and further into *für-sich-sein* and *an-sich-sein*. From this point of view a rhetorical figure by an individual author becomes a crystallized and condensed archetype of his output and thought, *un mythe obsédant*, from which he cannot escape and which recurs throughout his entire output as its trademark.

When all is said and done, a writer writes only one book, a composer only one musical work, during all his life. Similarly, a performing artist can remain a prisoner of such crystallization, of his own rhetoric, as happens in the sad case of aging singers, for instance, who continue to repeat rhetorical gestures without knowing that their charm has long faded away. They are mere *Wissen* without a trace of original *Kennen*.

11.3 Applications to music

As paradigmatic cases, I next present a series of examples illustrating how musical rhetoric functions, analyzing them in the light of aforementioned notions. The theoretical literature contains a plethora of diagrams that accurately portray various musical-rhetorical figures of the Baroque period. Guido

Adler, in his book *Der Stil in der Musik,* ponders various factors influencing melodic formation and considers the so-called "declamatory" melodies, imitating speech, as one category and as another, the properly melodious type. In the first-mentioned the imitation of speech dominates with its characteristic accents and rhythms; the latter style, in turn, is based upon musical criteria.

However, music can also imitate the metrics and versification of poetry, in which case the declamatory element is identified with a closed musical form and rhythm pattern. On the other hand, music can imitate freer prose, leading to an arioso style. Even there it is possible to realize purely musical principles of formation, motivic development, and so on. The chorale represents such a style, devoid of melismas, in which the rhythm can be considered oration-like, imitating speech (not to be confused with the musical genre of oratorio). Crucial is that the declamatory style appears through various historical style periods. The syllabic song of the chorale is one prototype of musical style. Yet, at the same time it makes declamatory style seem overly rigid and stiff. Moreover, from syllabic song emerges *stile recitativo,* the *parlante* style of *recitativo secco,* and *stile narrativo*; that is, it limits the musical substance to simple devices appropriate for a normal speaking voice backed by equally simple harmonies. To such recitation the *stile imitativo* adds emotional tinges and pathetic turns.

This technique eventually makes its way into absolute instrumental music. From the seventeenth century onward one finds *instrumental recitatives*; these appear in pieces for organ, keyboard, and other solo instruments, and finally in orchestral works. Such instrumental recitatives end by functioning as a constructive element in program music, as in Beethoven sonatas and symphonies. Between the declamatory and melodic styles lies the *arioso* style, which is free from the periodicity dominating the melodic style, i.e., four-bar units. Melismas and ornamentation decorate arioso melodies. In fact, Adler described rhetorical figures in various musical style periods, although he approached the issue from the viewpoint of inner, "organic" development of music – whereas in rhetorical figures what is most often involved is a normative or persuasive aspect. Another viennese professor, Hartmut Krones has in his masterful essays elucidated devices of musical rhetorics (see a.o. Krones 2001).

Unger presents a diagram in which he systematically unites the rhetorical figures of music and speech, numbering 138 altogether. He distinguishes three kinds of rhetoric: (1) purely musical, (2) common to music and rhetoric, and (3) purely rhetorical. Some of these figures have been generalized; e.g., *anabasis* (ascending movement, towards the sky *ad coelum), catabasis* (descending movement, from the Heavens, *de coelis*), anaphora (repetition), ellipsis (interruption), etc. They can be used also in the analysis of music other than that of the Baroque. For example, Unger analyses the main theme of the slow move-

ment of Beethoven's Fifth Piano Concerto and finds there many rhetorical figures (Unger 1941/2000: 106–107). The advantage of rhetorical research is that it is not bound to any style or period. In this sense it truly is a kind of semiotics.

Likewise, Wagner's "Tristan chord" crystallizes the essential content of the opera, but it also makes an immediate rhetorical impact; there is at the same time something existential if we interpret the rising anabasis as "trans-ascendence" and the ensuing catabasis as "trans-descendence". Moreover the appoggiatura chord itself, amidst these gestures, is an extremely tensional cluster of intervals. The motif consists of three consecutive gestures: catabasis (transdescendence), the chord itself (cluster of tensional intervals), and anabasis (transascendence). The catabasis and anabasis can be taken as pre- and post-signs of the chord itself as an act-sign, its anticipation and detachment from it, respectively. The idea itself – from the aspect of text strategy – of starting the work with such a tense, not tonic but subdominant/dominant affected chord, stems from Beethoven; think, for instance of the beginning of the First Symphony or of the Sonata in E flat major Op. 31 No. 1. What is involved is therefore just one case of this technique (hardly yet a trope). Instead, the same

Figurentabelle I.

Nr.	nur musikalische	namensgleiche	bedeutungsgleiche	nur rhetorische	Nr.
1	Abruptio			Adjuratio +	1
2				Admiratio +	2
3				Aetiologia	3
4					4
5	Anabasis				5
6			Anadiplosis		6
7	Analepsis				7
8			Anaphora		8
9	Anaploce				9
10				Anastrophe	10
11				Antanaclasis	11
12				Antemeria	12
13	Anticipatio Notae				13
14				Antimetabole	14
15				Antiptosis	15
16	Antistaechon				16
17			{Antithesis		17
18			Antitheton.}		18
19				Aphaeresia	19
20				Appositio	20
21		Apocope			21
22			Aposiopesis		22
23				Apostrophe +	23
24	Apotomia				24
25		Assimilatio			25
26				Asyndeton +	26
27			Auxesis		27
28				Barbarismus	28

Nr.	nur musikalische	namensgleiche	bedeutungsgleiche	nur rhetorische	Nr.
29	Cadentia duriuscula				29
30	Catabasis				30
31		Catachresis			31
32	Circulatio				32
33				Collatio	33
34				Comparatio	34
35				Communicatio +	35
36				Commutatio	36
37			Complexio		37
38				Concessio +	38
39				Confessio +	39
40			Congeries		40
41	Consonantii improprii				41
42				Contentio	42
43				Correctio +	43
44				Cumulus +	44
45				Dihaeresis	45
46				Dialogismus +	46
47				Digressio	47
48	Diminutio				48
49				Diplasmus	49
50				Dissimilitudo	50
51			Distributio		51
52			Dubitatio		52
53				Ectasis	53
54			Ellipsis		54
55			Emphasis		55
56				Enallage	56
57				Endiathes	57
58		Epanadiplosis			58
59		Epanalepsis			59
60				Epanhodos +	60
61				Epanorthosis	61
62				Epenthesis	62
63				Epiphora +	63
64				Epiphonema	64
65			Epistrophe		65
66				Epithetorum ursurpatio	66
67				Epizeuxis +	67
68				Euphonia (!)	68
69			Exclamatio		69
70				Exergasia +	70
71	Extensio				71
72	Fauxbourdon				72
73	Fuga				73
74	Fuga (alio nempe sensu)				74
75				Gnome	75
76			Gradatio		76
77				Hendiadis	77
78		Homaeoteleuton			78
79	Homoiopsoton				79
80				Homoioptoton	80
81			Hypallage		81
82			Hyperbaton		82
83	Heterolepsis				83
84		Hyperbole			84

Nr.	nur musikalische	namensgleiche	bedeutungsgleiche	nur rhetorische	Nr.
29	Cadentia duriuscula				29
30	Catabasis				30
31			Catachresis		31
32	Circulatio				32
33				Collatio	33
34				Comparatio	34
35				Communicatio +	35
36				Commutatio	36
37			Complexio		37
38				Concessio +	38
39				Confessio +	39
40			Congeries		40
41	Consonantii improprii				41
42				Contentio	42
43				Correctio +	43
44				Cumulus +	44
45				Dihaeresis	45
46				Dialogismus +	46
47				Digressio	47
48	Diminutio				48
49				Diplasmus	49
50				Dissimilitudo	50
51			Distributio		51
52			Dubitatio		52
53				Ectasis	53
54			Ellipsis		54
55			Emphasis		55
56				Enallage	56
57				Endiathes	57
58		Epanadiplosis			58
59		Epanalepsis			59
60				Epanhodos +	60
61				Epanorthosis	61
62				Epenthesis	62
63				Epiphora +	63
64				Epiphonema	64
65			Epistrophe		65
66				Epithetorum ursurpatio	66
67				Epizeuxis +	67
68				Euphonia (!)	68
69			Exclamatio		69
70				Exergasia +	70
71	Extensio				71
72	Fauxbourdon				72
73	Fuga				73
74	Fuga (alio nempe sensu)				74
75				Gnome	75
76			Gradatio		76
77				Hendiadis	77
78		Homaeoteleuton			78
79	Homoiopsoton				79
80				Homoioptoton	80
81			Hypallage		81
82			Hyperbaton		82
83	Heterolepsis				83
84		Hyperbole			84

Nr.	nur musikalische	namensgleiche	bedeutungsgleiche	nur rhetorische	Nr.
139				Sermocinatio	139
140	Sexta superflua				140
141				Subjectio	141
142	Subsumptio				142
143	Superjectio				143
144			Suspensio		144
145				Syllepsis	145
146			Symploce		146
147			Synathroismus		147
148	Syncopatio catachrestica				148
149		Syncope			149
150			Synhaeresis		150
151				Synonymia +	151
152				Synizesis	152
153				Synthesis	153
154				Systole	154
155	Tertia deficiens				155
156			Tmesis		156
157	Transgressus				156
158				Transitio	158
159			Variatio		159
160				Votum +	160
161				Zeugma	161

Figure 98: *Figurentabelle* of Baroque music according to Unger.

Tristan chord at the opening Chausson's *Poème* is precisely a Wagnerian trope, as a transformation and almost a metaphor of the original.

Baroque rhetorical figures are also applicable to the analysis of subsequent music, argues Finnish organist and Baroque specialist Enzio Forsblom (1994) in his treatise *Mimesis*. Forsblom deals particularly with repetition as a rhetorical device. As it relates to the idea of mimesis, imitation represents a kind of repetition. We repeat words when we want to give a speech more cogency and to underline the essentials. As in poetry, recurrence can be used as form-creating element. In music when a theme is repeated according to certain rules, we get a fugue. In canon the theme is repeated, but always delayed to some extent. Another kind of repetition is the ostinato technique found in chaconnes and passacaglias (Bach, Handel). Forsblom presents a diagram of various species of repetition as a kind of repertoire of analysis.

The only problem with rhetorical theories from the Baroque is that they do not fulfill the requirement of foregrounding or salience, an impact made by some exceptional, penetrating feature or technique. Often what is involved are compositional techniques that have become almost self-evident and hence go unnoticed. If one takes as the principle of a functional art work that all atten-

Figure 99: Repetition as a rhetorical device, according to Forsblom (1994).

tion should be drawn to its content, then a rhetorical figure would prove a catastrophe. Le Clézio, the French novelist, commented that as soon as we say of a phrase, "Well, that was truly well said!" then it no longer serves a functional purpose. The same holds true for music: at the moment we lose the guiding thread of the narration, the text shifts from Barthes's category of *lisible* to that of *scriptible*, from readable to writable. On the other hand, a text needs "hooks" and ruptures, which grasp us and to which we cling. This belongs to the second demand of rhetoric: to influence people by raising attention, providing exclamation signs, deviations, even breaking norms. If a speaker is wearing a bright red cravat, that can be interpreted as a rhetorical gesture. The same can be said when a musician comes on stage in bright green shoes (as pianist Stephen Hough did at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées in Paris).

At this moment it is appropriate to offer some remarks about kinds of rhetoric that do *not* convince us. I mean rhetorics which remain alien to a composer's *Ich-Ton*. But how do we know if the rhetoric does not originate from the innermost self of an artist? How or by which signs can one distinguish apparent rhetoric (*Soi*) from the genuine, inner one (*Moi*)? In general, rhetoric operates on the manifest level. Such a distinction is possible only by comparing the manifest with the immanent or essential. Yet upon what knowledge do we base our conception of a speaker's essence? The essence is that pre-sign which differs from the act-sign – and since what we encounter here is a rupture, a non-isomorphism, or pre-sign to the act-sign, the passage from act-sign to post-sign becomes impossible; that is, the chain locution-illocution-perlocution does not work. We have an interesting semiotic case of a rhetorical disturbance.

Furthermore, rhetorical figures can be used in order to deny or oppose themselves. In the end, do we need rhetoric at all? If an artist expresses him/herself genuinely, is it not sufficient to have the mere narrative course without any rhetoric? Is rhetoric mere frosting on the cake, a decoration of the message's surface? Or is rhetoric an authentic semantic gesture, which passes through all levels of generation? Are there rhetorical and non-rhetorical types of composers?

The rhetoric of musical interpretation and performance has not been studied much – at least in Finland – since the thesis of Samuel Preutz in 1703. A rhetoric of performance is based upon the coincidence of the inner kinetics of a musical or verbal utterance and the kinetics of the enunciater's (performer's) body. Everyone has his or her own tempo, which must be found and moderated according to the music to be performed. On the level of perlocution, we may ask: How does a destinatee (receiver) recognize rhetoric? In using rhetoric, the destinator (sender) must master the codes of the destinatee more fully than is

necessary in mere narration, since rhetoric is persuasion in addition to telling. The *Moi* of the destinator penetrates into the destinee's codes of *Moi*, or via the codes and conventions of *Soi*. In any case, the difference between narration and rhetoric lies in the fact that the latter is always a phenomenon of *parole*, whereas narration is more akin to *langue.* In both cases, we have first a theme of which one speaks or narrates, which appears via a narrative strategy or a rhetorical gesture.

The American musicologist Robert S. Hatten defines musical rhetoric as follows:

> Rhetorical gestures … may also be defined as those highly marked musical events that direct our attention to some aspect of the ongoing musical discourse, perhaps dramatically redirecting our path through the form or genre. In the latter case the composer may either (1) rhetorically mark the initiations, arrivals, and closures of an unmarked formal scheme, or (2) mark strategic departures from the expected tracking of events according to such formal schemes, by such strategies as reversals, undercuttings, and shifts in level of discourse. In either case rhetorical gestures are characterized by sudden changes in energy, force, direction, and character, and hence imply the marked presence of a higher, narrative agency. (Hatten 2004: 164–165)

Hatten's examples are convincing: the finales of Beethoven Sonatas Op. 101 and Op. 7. There the enharmonic changes – in our terms, changes of isotopy – certainly serve also as a rhetorical device. An even clearer example of such abrupt rhetorical change (*abruptio*) of narrative level, is the sudden enharmonic shift from A flat major to E major on the words "Du bist die Ruh'" in Schumann's song *Widmung.* As another example, Hatten uses the dramatic textural change of all parameters at the beginning of Beethoven's Op. 109, in which the equal sixteenth-note movement suddenly changes so drastically that it provides a "radical annihilation" of the preceding texture. One could not find a better case to challenge Klinkenberg's thesis that in music one cannot negate anything. "The concepts of negation and question do not occur in visual icons or in music" (Klinkenberg 1996: 332). Music is expressly an art of negation as well as of affirmation.

11.4 Rhetoric through the ages

In light of the theories presented above, I next illustrate musical rhetoric with a collection of examples from various style periods.

(1) First, a rhetorical device may *alone* and upon its *first occurrence* catch our attention and fulfill all the demands of foregroundedness, persuasiveness, and normativity. A musical event that satisfies these conditions has

an immediate rhetorical impact. Some of Wagner's leitmotifs are good illustrations of this – the mere idea of a leitmotif technique as the unifying force of the tetralogy contains some notion of rhetoric. Namely, the leitmotifs have to be immediately impressive and memorable; otherwise they would blend together and no one would recognize them any longer. There are motifs which arise only two or three times – for instance, the motif of hope sung by Sieglinde in the *Valkyrie* and then passing over all of *Siegfried*, until the end of *Götterdämmerung*, thus closing the whole series. The rhetorical force, then, lies not only in the motif's repetition but in the fact that it is recognized as something already heard (the same technique used by Wagner in *Tannhäuser,* with the Pilgrim's Chorus, in *Tristan* and at the end of the finale to *Mastersingers,* which is an expanded overture). In the latter case we are dealing with an interior rhetoric, as a device for elaborating extensive textual syntagms.

Such leitmotifs are kinds of illocutions or perlocutions, aimed at influencing other protagonists in the drama as well as the spectators/listeners. Such may be found, for instance, in Siegfried's hero motif or horn-signal motif. In general, the signal type of motif easily assumes a signification of stopping movement, as required by rhetoric. Alberich's revenge motif, with its threatening gesture, is likewise a rhetorical figure, as is Donner's performative thunder motif.

When transformed, such rhetorical devices easily become tropes or metaphors. That is to say, their original meaning is obscured, yet their connections with it are still recognized. A new variant is experienced as a kind of new entity, whose meaning still relies on the recognition of something that occurred earlier.

Rhetoric is always based upon familiarity, upon a competence common to both the orator and his listeners; otherwise this sign category does not function at all. A case in point is the galloping motif of the Valkyries, a rhetorical gesture in which the original topic – galloping horses – serves as the basis for a trope constituted by the leitmotif. Also, leitmotifs producing a direct effect may be revealed to be tropes or metaphors of some earlier examples.

Finally, a leitmotif serves as the basis for subsequent post-signs, thus becoming a trope or metaphor of the original leitmotif. For instance the aforementioned hero motif of *Siegfried* is directly shifted to the F minor Piano Sonata of the young Brahms as its main theme – just as a leitmotif from *Rhinegold* becomes its slow theme.

(2) Sometimes the meaning also completely changes, and the new motif is something quite different from the original. Such *secondary rhetorical ges-*

Figure 100: Wagner: Siegfried's hero-motif.

Figure 101: Brahms: F minor Sonata, mvt. 1, opening theme, bars 1–5.

tures are a category in which a present sign is experienced as a transformation or pale version of some pre-sign that looms in the background; contrarily, the present sign may intensify the pre-sign. For instance, the dotted rhythmic figure of Bach's C minor Partita, with a prelude in the style of a French *ouverture*, can be heard as a pre-sign of the "rhetorical" opening motif of Beethoven's Piano Sonata Op. 111, which at the same time has been dramatized to the extreme. To interpret Beethoven correctly, it is essential to become aware of such origins.

The piano figuration at the opening of Saint-Saëns's G minor Concerto imitates Bach as a rhetorical gesture and metaphor, while also illustrating the French composer's classicizing tendency. In Villa-Lobos's *Bachianas brasileiras No. 4*, the languid, rising, arpeggiated triad in the prelude is nothing else but a distant copy of the prelude to Bach's E minor Partita, with its dramatic, tensional gesture.

Figure 102: J. S. Bach: C minor Partita, opening, bars 1–2.

Figure 103: Beethoven: Piano Sonata Op. 111, opening, bars 1–2.

Figure 104: J. S. Bach: Partita in E minor, main motif.
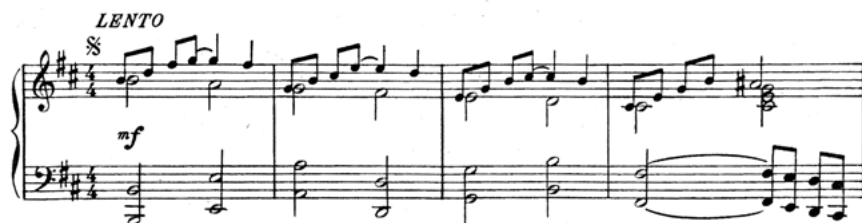
Figure 105: Heitor Villa-Lobos: *Bachianas brasileiras No. 4*, 1st mvt., Preludio.

Another example by the same composer is the quotation from Mozart's *Magic Flute* of Papageno's tune for his piano concerto, *Momoprécoce,* the carnival of Brazilian children. This illustrates as well how an art-music invention – namely the tune by Mozart – may wander into popular music then return back to art music. What is involved, also, is the case of how a musical gesture can wander through various style periods and cultural spheres.

(3) A structural musical figure may act as a *hidden* rhetorical gesture. Take, for instance, quotations of the theme B–A–C–H recognized by any competent music listener, as in the theme of Bach's C sharp minor fugue (*Das wohltemperierte Klavier I*), and the opening theme of the *Prelude, Choral and Fugue* by César Franck; the *Dies irae* theme – quoted in Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, Penderecki's *Credo*, etc.; the chaconne figure, say by Bach and Handel, which evokes the figure anaphora – an effective device even in later periods, as in Rachmaninov's *Moment musical* Op. 16, no. 6. Often such a figure blends in unnoticed, as part of the composer's own expression, such that its rhetorical import is no longer strongly underlined.

(4) Rhetorics of citations: these can be either apparent and penetrating, as in the revolution songs in Shostakovitch's symphonies; or they may be hidden and fade into the background. Schumann in his *C major Fantasy* quotes the main theme of Beethoven's song, *An die ferne geliebte,* at the end of the first movement. He provides a hint as early as in the literary motto of the work, a quotation from Friedrich Schlegel: *... ein leiser Ton gezogen für den der heimlich lauschet....* As Charles Rosen says, the citation no longer sounds like Beethoven but, rather, like Schumann.

Figure 106: Beethoven: *An die ferne geliebte*, bars 1–6.

Still more hidden in this *Fantasy*, in the last movement, is the "floating", subordinate motif's connection to Goethe's *Faust II* and its choir of spirits in the mountains. This is almost the only music whose hermeneutics can be conceived in terms of this immaterial scene, which displays not a trace of theatrical gesturality. In the same way, some have read *Faust II* as they would Bach's

Figure 107: Schumann: *Fantasy in C major,* end of first movement.

Kunst der Fuge, which represented pure structure without any sounding reali-zations. One may even speak of a *transcendental* rhetoric. The latter either occurs as "transascendence" or a rising gesture – to which we have already referred in connection with the anabasis in Wagner's *Tristan*; further examples would be the end of Beethoven's Sonata Op. 110, or at the end of the slow movement of his Op. 7. Conversely, we may speak of transdescendence, like the chromatically sinking passage in the bass in the introduction of Beetho-ven's Sonata Op. 111, with its minor-second suspended notes – catabasis as stark contrast to the anabasis at the end of the first movement. Catabasis comes close to exemplifying the aesthetic category of the tragic in music, with descending bass movement I-VI, which is a reference to death or at least to something very serious, a fateful transcendence as in the slow movement of Schubert's *Wanderer Fantasy* or in the subordinate section of the third move-ment of Schumann's *Fantasy*.

(5) Almost all semiotic textual mechanisms can also be used as rhetorical gestures when they are foregrounded and marked for consciousness. All of the modalities fit well as substance for musical rhetoric: 'will' – Kurth's *Wille zum Klang*; 'can' – particularly in performance, the rhetoric of virtuosity; 'know' – figures of a learned style; 'must' – the normativity of music, for instance, remaining within a 'style'; 'believe' – the persua-siveness of music. When one or several of the modalities goes unmiti-gated, out of control in its manifestation, then we have a *pathology* of rhetoric, in which the aspectual seme of "excess" dominates.

Music also makes use of *veridictory* rhetoric, which operates with the catego-ries of secret, lie, truth and untruth. *Secret* is close to an ellipsis, that figure in which something is left unsaid, on the presupposition that the listener knows how to "fill in the blanks". The normal discursive unfolding is broken, and the receiver must supply the missing part of the text. There is music that, so to say, withdraws and hides within its own enigmatic nature – many cases of which occur in twentieth-century music – but also music that consciously

exploits the concealment of some structural moment, in order for its eventual revelation to have an even greater effect. The figure of secret would manifest only in its discovery, not in hiding itself. For instance, Sibelius's Fourth Symphony launches with a tritone motif, which, one eventually finds out, serves as the code for the entire piece, while embedded in various thematic processes. The figure of a *lie* functions in the same manner, either by distorting some affirmative element in the music, such that it is experienced as a betrayal, or simply by misleading the listener into a state of consternation. The march movement of Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique* Symphony and the following, elegiac catabasis produces such an effect. The same effect occurs with the shift from the victorious march of Schumann's C major Fantasy and its second movement, from the heroic E flat major, into the transcendental atmosphere of the third movement. The fact that the audience applauds in the wrong place would indicate the rhetorical figure of a lie performed its function.

Truth as a rhetorical figure is particularly interesting. The ultimate goal of art is to show the truth, as many great artists have thought, from Wagner to Proust. Even this has its own rhetoric. I take one example: use of the chorale as such a moment of truth in music, when the listener experiences a cathartic state, so to speak, of "so it was at the end". Naturally, one prototype or pre-sign of it can be found in Bach's chorales, which, as the voice of the congregation, interrupts the action of the drama. In Beethoven this figure occurs often. But in all these cases, what is most interesting happens *after* such a moment of truth.

The storm in Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony leads into a serene chorale passage, which conveys the emotions of gratitude and relief experienced by those who were saved. In the *Egmont Overture*, the chorale has a double function: on one hand, it is like a priest's prayer after the execution of Egmont, but on the other hand, it is like a bridge to the post-mortem triumph of the hero and, in fact, a negation of death. In the final climax of Chopin's F minor Ballade, in its aggressive resolution into staccato chords, the chorale interrupts the drama as a promise of peace – but even that is shown to be illusory. The final truth is not an anabasis; rather, the musical subject remains amidst the whirling passions of the world of *Dasein*.

As early as in Bach, the chorale-type "Satz" appears as the above-mentioned rhetorical figure. For instance, in chorale overtures a theme is surrounded by figuration which emphasizes its declarative effect as the "voice of truth"amidst the "secular" decorations. He sometimes uses the same technique in his fugues, in which cases the foregrounding of this figure depends much on the performer's realization and skills. For instance, in the F minor Fugue from *Das wohltemperierte Klavier I*, the rigorous subject, almost anticipating

Figure 108: Beethoven: Sixth Symphony, transition to last movement.

Figure 109: Beethoven: *Egmont Overture* (excerpt).

Figure 110: Chopin: *Ballade in F minor*, bars 201–210.

the "tone row" of dodecaphonic music, is an expressionless, purely structural, chromatic theme that returns twice. It has to be performed like a trumpet, a penetrating chorale melody, which refers to the iconographic figure of angels in Baroque paintings. What is involved is the announcement of the end of the time, but also of resurrection. The "appearance" or *Erscheinung* of the theme calls for precisely such a declarative rhetoric.

There are still other examples of how, amid the strictly structural texture of a fugue, a composer will break the rules. Following a rhetorical-musical impulse, he will elevate the fugue theme, normatively not lyrically expressive, into a melodic gesture of some grandeur. The subject of Handel's F minor Fugue undergoes such a metamorphosis in the final bars; and the same takes place in the final climax of Brahms' *Handel Variations*.

Figure 111: J. S. Bach: *Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book I, Fugue in F minor, bars 34–36.

Figure 112: Handel: Fugue in F minor, bars 129–137.

Figure 113: Brahms: *Variations on a Theme by Handel*, fugue.

In these cases, what is involved is no longer the figure of *abruptio*, but rather organic growth towards melody proper.

At its extreme, the rhetorical usage of chorale textures may be found in Wagner's *Mastersingers*, in the shift from the prelude and its comedic cheerfulness, without any *gradatio*, but an *abruptio* amidst the Lutheran service in Nürnberg. We have here an abrupt change of style and topos, dramatically very effective; but soon the choral texture glides again into a comedic speech song, during which the flirting between Eva and Walther v. Stolzing begins.

(6) Rhetoric of the unexpected, including *abruptio*, likewise belongs to the arsenal of Wagnerian rhetorical devices, though he perhaps adopted it from Berlioz and his *esthétique de l'imprevu*. In the *Flying Dutchman* the

main protagonist, amidst the open fifth-fourth leitmotifs, always appears on stage unexpectedly. It is paradoxical that, at the same time, this motif is as such a familiar quotation from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and its arpeggiated D minor triads. Therefore it is a Beethovenian trope, but the effect is based on its surprising nature. In the same way, Mozart allows his *Commandatore* appear as an astonishing interruption – then moves this idea to his small D minor Fantasy, which is full of abrupt changes, fermata pauses, and unanticipated turns.

Another source of musical rhetoric is inner disengagement (*débrayage*) of the text, for instance, in musical space as register (outer) or as harmony (inner) inner. Moreover, temporality and actoriality can serve as a source of rhetorical devices. For example, Szymanowski's Etude in B flat minor, Op. 4 no. 3, raises attention right at the beginning, with an altered chord on the second beat of bar 2. Precisely this idea provides the entire small work, to be performed *in modo d'una canzione (con dolore),* with its emotional tinges: a certain flavor of strangeness, yet even amidst this deeply melancholic, Slavonic atmosphere, also a certain *quand même* effect.

In the temporal respect, surprising metrical changes are rhetorical devices, as in the second movement of Brahms D minor Piano Concerto, when the triple meter turns into duple hemiola while at the same time going into D major:

Figure 114: Brahms: Piano Concerto in D minor, mvt. 2 (excerpt).

Hemiola is also much used by Ernest Chausson, whose A major Piano Quartet Op. 30 is full of capricious, rhetorically marked changes of tempo and rhythm.

At one point in the piece, he realizes a triple hemiola in which violin, viola, cello and piano all play in their own, individual meters:

Figure 115: Chausson: Piano Quartet in A major, mvt. 1.

(7) More extensive textural strategies can also serve as rhetorical effects. Klinkenberg speaks about *sous-entendement*, or the technique of understatement, which presupposes secondary meanings. In music, we ultimately have two kinds of utterance: those which represent action, and those which comment on the action, these last withdrawing to the level of narration. A composer may develop typical textural strategies to solve certain musical situations, to which he always seems led in his discourse, following his own obsessive myth. This would be one category of endogenic rhetoric, stemming from the innermost essence of a composer, from his *an-mir-sein*. For example, Wagner's so-called art of continuous transition and endless melody are based, as is known, upon the dominant-harmony effect, which does not close with a tonic but via a diminished seventh chord to a deceptive cadence, from which music proceeds in an unexpected direction. This is richly illustrated in *Götterdämmerung, Parsifal* and *Mastersingers*.

This technique of musical prose was inherited by Wagnerians, by Chausson, for instance, an example being at the end of his *Poème*. There one expects E flat major as a solution, but instead one hears a diminished seventh chord and the music continues still as diagonal movement between violin and orchestra. This can be interpreted in a literary manner, in the light of the ending of Turgenyev's short story, "Hymn of Victorious Love", which inspired the piece.

A corresponding, if different, effect is brought about by the rhetorical devices in Rimsky-Korsakov, through his manner of cadencing the melody-actor with ostensively schematic harmonies, perhaps as a reference to the military music which the composer used. Among other places, such a cadencing passage occurs in the opera, the *Legend of Czar Saltan*, in the overture to *The Tsar's Bride*, and in *Scheherazade*.

Figure 116: Rimsky-Korsakov: A theme from the *Legend of Czar Saltan*.

Figure 117: Rimsky-Korsakov: *Scheherazade*, pochissimo più mosso.

The aforementioned understatement or "side phrase" technique can also function as textural rhetoric. It is used as such, for instance, by Tchaikovsky in the side passage of the Intermezzo in the *Nutcracker*, and by Fauré in the recur-

Figure 118: Rimsky-Korsakov: Secondary theme from overture to *The Tsar's Bride*.

rence of the main theme in his Ballade, where it at the same time modulates from F sharp major to A major.

(8) From the aforementioned figure emerges a quite particular narrative gesture that is already close to the next rhetorical technique, namely, the

Figure 119: Tchaikovsky: *The Nutcracker*, Intermezzo.

Figure 120: Fauré: Ballade in F sharp major, modulation of main theme.

imitation of speech or narrating voice, to which reference was made earlier in the discussion of Guido Adler's declamatory style, *stilo recitativo*.

The speaking gesture has been common in music since the sixteenth century, but in absolute music it is used characteristically by Beethoven, among others, in his sonatas Op. 31, "The Tempest", and Op. 110. The performance directives for those include *con espressione e semplice* or *recitativo* or *klagender Gesang*. The famous recitative section of the Tempest sonata has been scrutinized by August Halm, in his treatise *Von zwei Kulturen der Musik*, who came in his hermeneutics to the argument that a kind of "ghost" appears amidst the sonata form such that the interpretation should also follow this idea. What is involved is a kind of *befreiete Melodik* which aims to slow down the dramatic course of

Figure 121: Wagner in Heaven. (Grand-Carteret, s.d.: 131.).

events. Also, in the Finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, before the *Freude* theme enters, we encounter just such a recitative-like gesture. The Romantics continued from here. For example, Schumann did so in his suite *Kinderszenen* and its final piece, *Der Dichter spricht,* in which the music becomes fragmentary and interrupted by pauses, as if the poet were forgetting what he had to say. Still further away from the imitation of verbal speech are general reproductions of the human voice, as in the *bel canto* gestures of instrumental music. These can, notoriously, be found in Chopin but also, for instance, in the finale of Glinka's *Trio pathétique*, in which clarinet, bassoon and piano alternate, functioning as surrogates of the singing voice, following the rhetoric of vocal gestures.

Our list could be augmented by an endless search for rhetorical figures in various style periods of music, either starting from its signifiers – for instance, the rhetorics of repetition in Beethoven (think of the seemingly endless repetitions in the Pastoral Symphony) – or from the signifieds, such as the rhetorical gestures of heroism and the like.

The problem remains, however, of how rhetoric is ultimately defined, since it would not be meaningful to claim that, in music, everything is rhetorical. There is certainly a distinction between rhetorical and non-rhetorical composers. Doubtless, the "rhetorical" composer represents those extroverted types, who strive for a deliberately ostentatious effect. One of the best examples is certainly Richard Wagner. In a well-known Viennese cartoon from the end of the nineteenth century, he has finally arrived in Heaven, where a harp orchestra of angels surrounds him. This makes the master utter: "Dear little Angels, the reception was truly nice, but without trumpets and timpani, you will never make any impact!"

Chapter 12 The semiosis of light in music: from synaesthesias to narratives

12.1 Introduction

In approaching notions such as light and darkness in music, it often seems as if the entire history of that art could be written in terms of various degrees of illumination. Indeed, as we have just seen, instrumental "colouration" played no small part in the music of Wagner, which in itself is a kind of elementary synaesthesia between light, drama, narrative, and more. Further, we frequently abandon "purely" musical concepts in order to grasp music's most pertinent aspects. Yet we would stray from our own field, if in writing about music we were to trust completely in Roland Barthes's saying: *Seule la métaphore est exacte*. Moreover, to speak about purely musical or purely visual perception is an illusion that semiotics in particular has shown to be erroneous. Metalanguage dealing with light in music is common indeed, and not only concerning portrayals of the musical enunciate, but also of the enunciation. Yet if we search for the term "light" in histories of music or in treatises on musical aesthetics, we usually find very little. We must be satisfied if something is said about colour. Yet colours would not exist without light. "Farben sind Thaten des Lichts" – Colours are acts of light, said Goethe in his *Farbenlehre*.

Timbre in the history of Western erudite music has been strongly subordinated to other, so-called syntactic parameters of music. Leonard B. Meyer classifies musical parameters into two main types: primary ones of melody, harmony and rhythm; that is, those which can be quantified into hierarchic relationships; and secondary parameters, which are dynamics and tempo indications, timbres and performance directions. The latter parameters have quantities that can be measured and counted, but not prioritized. Hence, Meyer calls them statistical. Musical form can not be built upon secondary parameters, since they cannot make cadences: they can finish or begin, but they cannot close a work. Western music has obviously focused on the rules and conventions of the primary parameters. Secondary parameters have come into more systematic usage only in music of the last and present centuries (in fact, many compositional techniques of the twentieth century negate Meyer's thesis that timbres cannot form hierarchies). No doubt, color and light in music would belong to the latter category. And that is strange, if one considers the fact that music is basically nothing other than sound, therefore timbre, and hence degrees of lightness/darkness.

Film director Eric Rohmer, in his booklet *De Mozart en Beethoven*, ponders the problem of colour in music and confronts Beethoven and Matisse:

> Why Matisse? Because his paintings with apparent lines, beautiful as such, do not give us the impression that the act of painting has been a simple coloring, a simple series of drawings, but the result of a will to conquer, to adapt the colour by the drawing ... The harmony of the traces prevails over that of the colours. The line really "chooses" its colour, which is its prolongation, its expression by other means, although with Picasso, for instance, the world of colours is superimposed upon the one of lines without any essential reflection. The same in Beethoven: the beauty of this motif is certainly linear, but it announces, it demands a colour which will not reach its maximal splendour except by the counterpoint and the harmony. (Rohmer 1996: 219)

Theoreticians of the subject, such as the Italian Manlio Brusatin, assert that colour is primary, that we perceive the visual first as colours. Even in semiotics, Peirce illustrates Firstness with colour, which we notice before we recognize any token of a type. The Italian musical therapist Stefania Guerra Lisi has developed a theory according to which "every motion of the mind, every motif of physical action possesses a certain colour". Thus yellow would equal ample breathing, blue would signify deep breaths, and red fast. With Gino Stefani she has created a therapeutic praxis called *Globalitá dei linguaggi*, in the belief that colours are a universal foundation for any kind of activity.

The Hungarian music pedagogues Géza and Csaba Szilvay have developed, on the basis of Zoltán Kodály's musical pedagogy, a "coloured string" system, which presupposes that various registers are experienced primarily as colours: yellow (two-line octave range), red (one-line octave range), blue (small octave range) and green (large octave). At the same time, the authors semanticize the registers and colours by labeling them "bird, mother, father, and bear". The idea is that what is learned via several senses has a more permanent impact than what we learn by only one. The connection of music with colours and their shades becomes obvious as early as at the beginning of the learning process.

From the visual domain the concepts of light and colour expanded to music, where they have been noted quite often and with great sensitivity by non-musicians. Michel Butor classified music into various genres precisely on the basis of its colours. In his essay *Musique, art réaliste* (1960) he spoke about six different colours: physiological, functional, modal, tonal, local, and historical. The physiological level is the same for all people and refers to the functioning of the human ear; for instance, the middle range of pitches is experienced as pleasant, the extreme registers as unpleasant. Functional colours refer to the functions of music in a society. When an organ plays with a symphony orchestra, it adds a sacred tinge, since organs are historically associated with

church. In turn, the use of the saxophone in art music immediately evokes popular and jazz music, just as the accordion recalls traditional music. Modal colour refers to the musical modes determined as far back as antiquity (dorian, lydian, and so on) and their emotional values (as, for example, in Plato's theories), even though modes also can be arranged according to the their degrees of brightness and clarity, as the American composer Vincent Persichetti has done. Tonal colour in art music is based on the shades of keys; for instance, C major is experienced as white (more on this later). Local colours in art music are simulacra of the spirit of certain places, like the Polish colour in Musorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, Italian colour in Tchaikovsky's music, and oriental colour in Sibelius's *Belshazzar's Feast* or in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*. Historical colours are created, for instance, when earlier styles are imitated; for example, the fugue in Beethoven's Sonata in A flat major Op. 110, or Pergolesi's style in Stravinsky's *Apollon Musagete*, or Bach's style in Villa-Lobos's *Bachianas brasileiras*.

My aim here, however, is not to delve further into the role of colour in musical aesthetics, but more specifically to explore the colour and light phenomena of our long tradition of music. My aim here is to create, introduce, and ponder theories of "universal" mechanisms of colour-hearing in music. Yet, as music semiotician David Lidov has argued, timbre cannot be explained merely as an acoustic phenomenon. It depends as much on other levels of music: "I doubt that the fresh sound of *L'Après-midi d'un faune* can be accounted for in terms of purely acoustical facts (such as the prominence of low flute and harp sounds)" (Lidov 1980: 17).

For instance, if we listen to the awakening scene of Brünnhilde in Wagner's *Siegfried*, its brightness arises not only from the orchestra but also from the selected harmonies. According to Berlioz-Strauss, this effect is based mostly on the trills in the high register of the strings, which they do not generally recommend in orchestration. In this case, however, they are struck favorably by Wagner's congenial invention: "See the wonderful trill passage in the third act of *Siegfried* during Brünnhilde's awakening as she looks into the light of the sun, enchanted and at the same time blinded by the unwonted radiance" (Berlioz-Strauss 1991: 2).

But when the same motif appears darkened at the beginning of the *Götterdämmerung*, a doubly darkening effect takes place in which both orchestration and harmonies have changed.

Some theoreticians, like the composers Robert Cogan and Pozzi Escot, resort to the language of physics, using spectrographs to reveal the "sonic design" of all kinds of music. The problem here, of course, is how to choose the pertinent metalanguage with which to examine light and colour in music.

Figure 122: Brünnhilde's awakening, *Siegfried*, Act III.

Can we can speak of them satisfactorily in a physical or physiological language, or do we need something else, such as aesthetics, or even analysis in literary terms?

Light and darkness are not absolute binary articulations. And in music, a temporal art, the categories of non-light and non-darkness are just as relevant: light that is getting dark = non-light, and darkness that is becoming light = non-darkness. This situation calls for a temporalization of Greimas's semiotic square. What is more, Vladimir Jankélévitch has noted, from a phenomenological standpoint, that the same amount of light can mean completely different things – for example, whether we are facing sunrise or sunset – and the same holds true for their musical representations, as in Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloë* or Debussy's *L'harmonie du soir*.

Next, I scrutinize light in music as a physiological and psychological phenomenon, without yet arguing that it could be exhaustively dealt with by such

metalanguages. Then, in the second part of the theoretical section, I ponder what a semiotic theory of light and/in music might be. Third, I shall analyze cases from music history in which light is a pertinent and marked feature of a musical work.

12.2 Bases for synaesthesias

It is appropriate to quote John Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and one particular passage in it which sparked a lively discussion throughout the eighteenth century. The citation concerns the possibility of so-called *audition colorée*.[14] As is known, central to Locke's study is the notion of the "idea", which later influenced Peirce. Locke doubts whether people have the same idea if they use different terms for it; for in that case, how could they understand each other? As an example he gives the following: "A man who not being blind or deaf, has distinct ideas of the colour of scarlet and the sound of trumpet, could discourse concerning the scarlet-colour with the blind man I mention in another place, who fancied that the idea of scarlet was like the sound of a trumpet."

Locke considered such a combination of colour and timbre to be mere fancy and not real perception. Indeed, the phenomenon has often been taken as pathological. Yet music psychologists have devoted serious attention to coloured hearing and studied some obvious cases of synaesthesia. Even Musicologist Alan P. Merriam (1964) gave serious consideration to synaesthesia in his study, *The Anthropology of Music*. Although there has been much discourse on correspondences between colours and keys, no one has yet shown the universality of the phenomenon. It has always been viewed as returning to an individualized way of listening or to some cultural competence.

On the other hand, Jacques Handschin argued the following in his classical work *Der Toncharakter*: "Timbre has a particularly close relationship with colours. But one cannot speak of [timbre as] having functional meaning in music as colours have in painting" (Handschin 1948: 378). He admits, however, that colours do have a structural role in music. But he also points out the following differences, which prevent us from developing this analogy further: 1) In the optic sphere both colours as well as lightness or brightness (*Helligkeit*) belong to the sensorially perceivable or primary area; whereas in the acoustical area,

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14 Albert Wellek also mentions this source in his article *Farbenhören* in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* but refers to a wrong chapter. The quotation is not from Book III, but from Book II, chapter 4.

the tonal characteristics demand mental activity. 2) Tone characteristics are quantitative and not continuous like colours. 3) Unlike colours, tonal characteristics are socially determined. 4) In music, tonal characteristics are not known apart from pitches, nor pitches apart from tonal characteristics; whereas in the optical area, white and black are furthest away from lightness and darkness. 5) The same tonal characteristic can appear on various pitches, whereas the same colour can have different degrees of saturation or brightness. 6) Colours can blend, but tonal characteristics cannot (according to Lotze, colours are much more reminiscent of vocalics than of tones). From this point of view, the mapping of correspondences between tones and colours appears doubtful. And yet history is full of such analogies. Handschin distinguishes four basic cases:

1. Double-sensation (sensation + sensation)
2. Consecutive Idea (sensation + idea)
3. Consecutive sensation (idea + sensation)
4. Double idea (idea + idea)

In the first case a peripheral impulse unites two sensory spheres, producing two different sensations; as in Locke's example, in which the sound of a trumpet is heard and at the same time seen as red. In the second case, we have again the same impulse, but it produces an idea belonging to another sensory sphere, such that red is only imagined or conceived as the consequence of hearing the trumpet sound. In the third case the situation is the reverse of that in the previous case: first comes the idea, and then a sensation belonging to another sensory sphere, so that the idea serves as an outer impulse to the sensation (someone thinks of a trumpet sound and experiences the sensation of red). In the fourth case two simultaneous ideas take place, which refer to different sensory spheres: someone "imagines" the trumpet sound and at the same time the colour red.

Wellek (1963) introduces two technical terms: when we move from the acoustical area into that of the visual, the secondary quality in question is called "photisma". For instance, a colour is associated with the sound of an instrument, vowel, noise, or even with abstract entities such as numbers, weekdays, or persons. As an ideal type we have the "universal synaesthetician", who hears everything as colours and, vice versa, sees everything as sounds. The latter case, in which some visual phenomenon is heard as tones, is called "phonisma". But as Wellek states, history is full of descriptions of various synaesthesias, all of which are different.

Every genuine synaesthetician is quite convinced about the correctness of his/her way of hearing or seeing. For instance, Olivier Messiaen made his

composition pupils listen to various chords and themes, and asked about their corresponding colours. When the pupils did not see them, he was sincerely astonished. One of the best known cases of synaesthesia was the Viennese composer and musicologist Robert Lach, whose abilities were investigated in 1905. He had a very refined system according to which he heard all the notes of an octave as colours; and the same with all major and minor scales, all the intervals, all instrumental and vocal parts, and all vowels and diphthongs. To the then 29 year-old composer, they appeared "in front of his eyes as powerful kaleidoscopic images – brilliant, glittering, vibrating waves of flames", that is, as strongly eidetic phenomena.

Sometimes coloured hearing, or photisma, is linked with absolute, or perfect, pitch. But in the end Wellek came to the conclusion, which is interesting from the viewpoint of subsequent semiotic interpretation, that the acoustical and optical spheres are not at all clearly separated from each other. The borderline between them can be transgressed, since it emerged quite late in the development of our civilisation, and as the result of logical and abstract thinking. By contrast, in an uncontrolled and unfragmented experience, we still encounter the unity of the senses (*Einheit der Sinnen*) mentioned by Herder, in support of which we also have rich cultural, historical and ethnographic materials. Within a certain culture, for instance, composers and musicians of the same style period can experience similar photismas; for instance, by associating the same keys with the same colours, as in the famous diagrams by Alexander Scriabin and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. In a chart published in 1937 Friedrich Daub described the equivalency of colours and keys as follows:
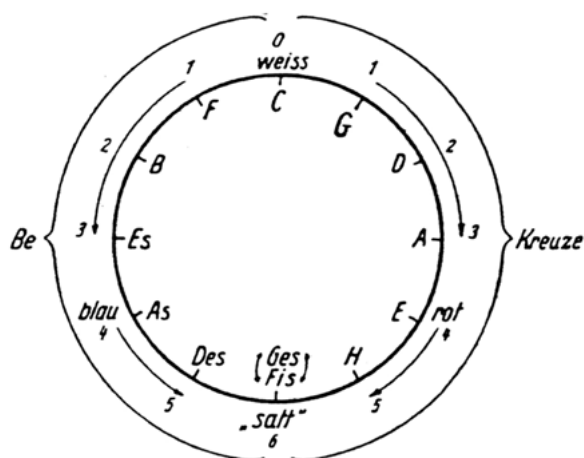
Figure 123: Daub's chart of colours and keys.

In an ascending circle of fifths the colours become more red, and descending they become more blue. When one reaches the tritone one no longer sees colours but only an unidentifiable quality of saturatedness (*Satt*). The same phenomenon was investigated later with mathematical and physical methods. The Argentinean architect José Luis Caivano has compiled some of the most important approaches to the problem. He states, however, that "there is no guarantee that the physical analogy must coincide with the psychological one" (Caivano 1994: 131).

12.3 Synaesthesias in artistic practices

The psychological fact of synaesthesia has prompted several efforts to render this cognitive ability into an explicit principle of musical composition. Such is the case of so-called colour music today. Much earlier, Athanasius Kircher, on the basis of a misunderstood quotation by Vergilius, spoke about the synthesis of light and sound. For him, all vowels and all intervals had their own colours, according to the following chart:

White	Semitonium
Yellow	Semitonus
Pink (red)	Ditonus
Gold yellow	Diapente
Scarlet	Hexachordum maius
Violet (purple)	Hexachordum minus
Green	Diapason
Reddish violet	Diahepta
Blue	Semidiapente
Dark brownish (dark grey)	Tritonus
Pink	Diatessaron
Ash grey	Tonus minor
Black	Tonus maior

A similar effort was Newton's famous *Colour Harmony* (1704), which attempted to correlate the seven principal colours of the spectrum with the intervals of a scale. This comes close to expanding the analogy to cover the seven planets

as a harmony of colours. Newton's mistake, as Goethe noticed, was to compare abstract number-relations of intervals to perceived, phenomenal scales of colours, thereby conflating the physical and psychological levels. In addition, as a conservative-minded Englishman number his scales according to modal hexachords instead of the major/minor system. Hence, his starting point was the Dorian mode, which he counted as starting from either D or G. This had no meaning as such, of course, since what is crucial in his diagram are the intervallic relationships:

Rot	Kress	Gelb	Grün	Blau	Indigo	Violett	
d	e	f	g	a	h	c	d
g	a	b	c	d	e	f	g

Figure 124: Newton's chart.

Inspired by Newton, Louis-Fernand Castel built a special instrument in the mid-eighteenth century called the *claveçin oculaire*, a visual keyboard in which the twelve notes of an octave were equated with twelve colours (it was thus a well-tempered keyboard instrument). Castel was quite aware of the difficulty in drawing correspondences between painting and music. Therefore he wanted to elevate painting to the level of music. He also believed that the visual sphere provided the key to rhythm. Not a painter himself, he was able to create thousands of paintings by means of his visual keyboard. On canvas he "painted" rigaudons, menuettos, sarabandes. The only weakness in them was the same as that of music in general; namely, they disappeared with their performance. Still, he planned to perform whole operas on canvas. For Castel painting, which rightfully could be called mute music, moved the hearts even more when it was produced with less noise and disturbance than was real music. Moreover, he designed an instrument called the *claveçin des sens*, with which he intended to unite gestures and dance steps. Castel was adjudged to be a dilettante of various arts, but he was also a rare synaesthetician, who anticipated Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk*, Rudolph Steiner's eurhythmics, and even some of Jacques Dalcroze's ideas.

Among several efforts in the twentieth century to produce colours in music, one of the best-known is Alexander Scriabin's *Prometheus*, the instrumentation of which includes a light-piano, *tastiera di luce*, to indicate which colours are to be imagined in each section of the work. At the same time, the *tastiera di luce* past was in fact an analysis of the tonal structure of the whole piece. Scriabin developed a sophisticated system in which each note corre-

sponded to a certain colour. Musically *Prometheus* was based one chord made up of various types of fourths (diminished, perfect, and augmented) which could be transposed to different positions. The aural impression of this chordal basis was that of an unresolved dominant function, whose colourfulness was intensified by orchestration, piano, and choir (used without text, as in Debussy's *Sirènes*). At the end of the piece, the Prometheus chord resolves to F sharp major at the same time as the colours stop in blue. In the Scriabin Museum in Moscow a primitive technical device is displayed, a wooden circle with lamps of different colours. Scriabin's wife would switch them on and off when her husband was playing *Prometheus* at the piano. This piece was first realized with colours in New York in 1916 by an Englishman, A. Wallace-Rimington, who followed his own scale of colours. Subsequently, cinematic productions based on Scriabin's music were realized in the Soviet Union, other than at the Moscow Scriabin Museum. Such realizations are always problematic, however, since often the impulses of the visual colours are weaker than the sensations and ideas aroused by the music itself, by the "photismas", as Wellek would say.

Scriabin has overshadowed another significant synaesthetician of the turn of the century, the Lithuanian Mikalojus Čiurlionis, who "painted" sonatas and fugues and "composed" pictures of seas and forests (below, an entire chapter is dedicated to Čiurlionis) . A pioneer of abstract art, Čiurlionis advanced ideas that were later recognized as belonging to Kandinsky, and he arrived at a kind of atonality even before Schoenberg did. His originality lay in the blending of colours and sounds, which he did not, however, develop into a system, as did Kandinsky. The latter, for example, declared in his book *Punkt und Linie zu Fläche*, that the sharp angle was yellow, the rectangle was red, and the obtuse angle (or circle) was blue.

Before Scriabin there was another Russian music colorist, Modest Musorgsky, who like Rimsky-Korsakov sometimes provided his harmonies with color functions, thus anticipating Impressionism (for instance, the enharmonic bell chords in the coronation scene of *Boris Godunov*). He joined together light, colours, and music in his *Pictures at an Exhibition*, which was based on watercolors by the Russian architect Victor Hartmann. The hidden colourfulness of the piano texture has tempted many orchestrators to intensify the colour effects of the work, from Maurice Ravel to the Finnish Leo Funtek and Russians Gorchakov and Vladimir Ashkenazy. The colourfulness is in fact built into the very music. For instance, looking at Hartmann's watercolor, *In the Catacombs*, one's attention is caught by the bluish, *claire obscure* lighting, reflected from a lantern onto two gentlemen wearing top hats and onto rows of skulls. This lighting effect is realized in the music, the source of which sounds in the

movement after *Catacombs*, in the "walking" section entitled *Con mortuis in lingua mortua* (Promenade VI). It is represented by an F sharp organ point in the upper register, which proves to be the dominant of B major. For Rimsky-Korsakov, as well as for Scriabin, B major was expressly the key of blue, dark blue or steel blue. When the organ point on the tone B twice descends, flickering chromatically, we are as it were shifted to the *claire obscure* effect of the lantern light; that is to say, we are made to look at the persons in the painting, whose pathemic state of mind the music is portraying. This is a good example of a kind of intuitive synaesthesia in music: if we look at the painting we get the sensation of the F sharp tone as a "phonisma"; and if we listen to the music, the twilight of the catacombs may be sensed or experienced as a kind of "photisma".

Twentieth-century music has of course had its own synaestheticians, among which one of the best known is Olivier Messiaen. One might even say that, for Messiaen, there was no modal, tonal or serial music and no musicians, but only colorful and colorless musics. According to Messiaen, the resonance of overtones is a phenomenon precisely analogous to the occurrence of complementary colours: "When I hear music, I internally see complexes of colours which correspond to complexes of tones; it is therefore quite normal that I am interested in colours at the same time as in tones" (Messiaen 1986: 66). Messiaen lists many "color composers" who had the same sense for colors as himself, among them Debussy, Wagner, Chopin, and Mozart.

As the latest invention in avant-garde music we have so-called spectral music, which refers to the use of synthesizers to build the spectrum of the overtone series, which makes the composer into something of a sculptor. The school of spectral music in France cambe about in connection with the experiments at IRCAM, the Paris Broadcasting Studios, and elsewhere. Spectral music was preceded historically by Pierre Schaeffer's studies on sound objects in the 1950s and 1960s. Some spectral composers aim consciously for visual effects, as does Kaija Saariaho in *Lichtbogen*. The composer herself has said: "Ce que je traduis en musique vient du mode visuel, mais je ne sais pas dans quelle mesure il fonctionne comme visuel".[15]

Another spectral composer, Tristan Murail has said about the use the spectrum that it is "à la fois grille qui permet les operations d'écriture et le materiaux lui-même, le mode et le thème tout à la fois." Spectral composers often isolate a single tone whose colour is analyzed and transformed by a synthesizer, as does the Italian Giacinto Scelsi. At the same time, the idea is to reveal the inner life of each tone. Gérard Grisey has said: "L'idée d'une composition

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15 Cited from memory by Heli Sinervo (1997).

'biomorphe' qui comprende le son non comme un objet rigide, susceptible de classifications parametriques, mais comme un (micro) organisme vivant, dont la dynamique propre peut constituer un modèle pour toutes les dimensions de la composition."

The analogy between the visual and the musical has been carried perhaps further today than in any other style period in European music history (Sinervo 1997: 29). Above all, spectral music makes us attend to the very concept of tone colour, which, as mentioned above, has always been subordinated to other, so-called primary parameters of music (like pitch). Yet years ago, Pierre Schaeffer defined timbre simply as the quality of the sound: "l'ensemble des caractères du son qui le referent á un instrument donné" (Schaeffer 1966). Following this definition, what is essential in timbre is to recognize the quality of the instruments from which it originates. Such cases will be analyzed later, when we speak of the tone colours of various orchestral instruments as a source of light in music.

12.4 Is it possible to measure timbre?

Technological developments have made it possible to measure light and colour in music. With spectrograms, Robert Cogan and Pozzi Escot tried to analyze musical parameters other than sound in their book *Sonic Design* (1976). In chapter 4, "The Color of Sound", they write the following:

> Tone color is perhaps the most paradoxical of music's parameters. The paradox lies in the contrast between its direct communicative power and the historical inability to grasp it critically or analytically. A theory of musical tone color has yet to be created ... While it is true that psychophysics has developed theories and procedures of tone-color analysis, this is not yet the analysis of tone color in music. The musical analysis of tone color requires an explanation of the choice and succession of the tone colors of a musical context. Such analysis must explain the principles that interrelate the diverse sounds of a given work. Put another way, the analysis cannot limit itself merely to the description of *single* sounds, no matter how technically sophisticated that description may be. (Cogan & Escot 1981: 327–328)

The authors admit that tone colour should be analysed as part of the musical continuum, that is to say, as part of the narrativity, as it is called in semiotics. On the other hand, they argue that tone color has almost never been notated. Even far into the seventeenth century music was not idiomatic; that is to say, it did not matter on what instrument the music was performed. The tone color itself was not so much indicated by notation as by the ways the performer had to play (touch, strike, bow) the instrument. To condense Cogan and Escot's

observation: tone color and light effects in music can also be caused by a certain manner of playing the instruments.

For instance, in Wagner's operas the vocal line occasionally brightens with the use of *bel canto*, bursting forth from a continuous melody that is primarily recitation (for example, Brünnhilde's revelation of the future Siegfried to Sieglinde at the beginning of the Act III of *Die Walküre*). On the piano, one can perform Debussy's *L'isle joyeuse* by coloring in the middle section melody by alternately stressing fifth finger or thumb in the right hand, causing the tone color of the chords to change completely (as Jules Gentil has advocated). Color is thus something to be localised in both the construction of the instrument and in how it is played.

Cogan and Escot go on to confront the problem that Helmholtz faced in his study *Tonempfindungen* in 1863, when he said that "differences of tone colour arise principally from the combination of different partial tones with different intensities" (Cogan & Escot 1981: 329). For researcher James Jeans (1937), the general results were these:

> The second partial adds clearness and brilliance.
> The third partial adds brilliance but also a certain hollow, throaty, or nasal quality.
> The fourth partial adds more brilliance, and even shrillness.
> The fifth partial adds a rich, somewhat hornlike quality to the tone.
> The sixth partial adds a delicate shrillness of nasal quality.

The partials are of course all parts of the basic triad. Helmholtz's own taxonomy of tone colours is almost the same:

> First class – simple sine tones, like those of a tuning fork mounted on a resonator, and of wide-stopped organ pipes; they have a very soft, pleasant sound, free from all roughness, but wanting in power and dull on low pitches.
> Second class – notes accompanied by a moderately loud series of the lower partial tones up to about the sixth partial, like those of the middle register of the piano, open organ pipes, and the softer tones of the human voice and of the French horn; these are more harmonious and musical, rich and splendid compared with simple tones, yet at the same time sweet and soft if the higher partials are absent. [Etc.] (in Cogan & Escot 1981: 368–369)

But as the authors note, tone colour does not consist merely of quantities. Hence they propose that spectrographic results be complemented with musical analysis. In this way they deal separately with all the timbres of orchestral instruments. For instance, a spectral analysis of the beginning of the second movement of Beethoven's Violin Concerto looks as follows:
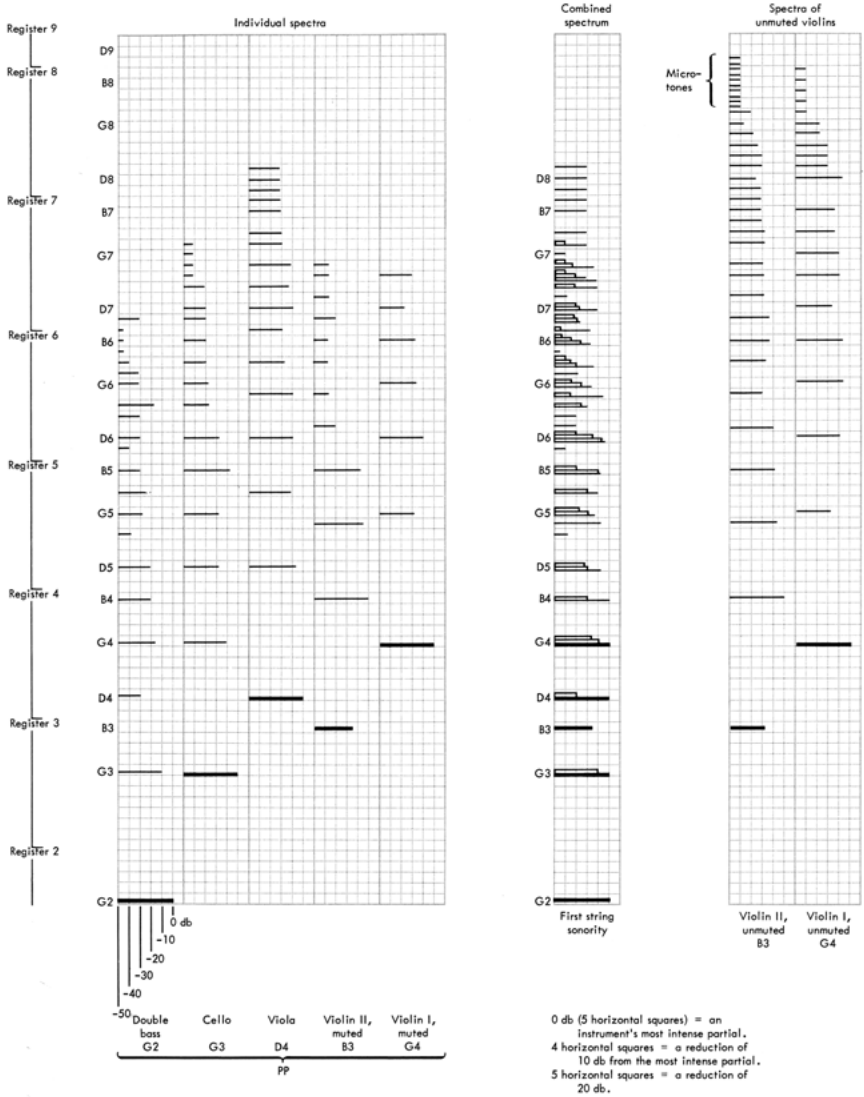
Figure 125: Beethoven, Violin Concerto: Spectral analysis, mvt. 2, beginning.

The question asked by Lidov remains: is a physicalist approach and metalanguage the right one for depicting color in music? In the background looms the profound philosophical question of whether one level of reality would be, so to say, more objectively existing than any other, so much so that other levels should be reduced to it. The answer, according to Finnish philosopher Lauri Rauhala, is that the physical description of a phenomenon perhaps helps us specify our observations; but when existence becomes more complicated, proceeding from the atomic level to levels of more variety, new structures emerge, which have to be studied on the level of their own complexity. For the present task, this means that we should not be limited to one level, but go on to investigate aspects of meaning as concerns light in music. We can examine the problem from a semiotical point of view.

12.5 Semiotics of light

One of the most systematic efforts to scrutinize light semiotically is Jacques Fontanille's book, *Sémiotique du visible: Des mondes de lumière* (2005). The author first compares the theories of Newton and Goethe, as do many other theorists of light (for instance, Caivano 1994). Fontanille's essential starting point, however, is that the investigation of light, with all its ingredients of luster, tone, and saturation, belongs neither to the level of substance nor to that of content. Light is semiotized only in the act of enunciation that constructs it. Interestingly, Fontanille supports his theory of light with his ideas about musical semiotics, when he speaks of the signification of non-linguistic sign systems. In these non-languages, signification does not necessarily emerge from the classical relationship between levels of content and expression, but in a process that permits us to move from the perception or sensation of sound, to musical cognition, and from there to musical interpretation. In other words, according to Fontanille on non-languages, the generative course of the expression leads us to acts of enunciation (for instance, performance and interpretation of music), and the sense of the entire course lies in what is realized in this act: what has been modalized, narrativized, aspectualized, spatialized, and so on. It is precisely the act of enunciation itself, and not an enunciated content, that is normally joined to the expression.

I reached the same conclusion, after my *Theory of Musical Semiotics* (1994), when pondering Proust's "musical theory". I concluded that there is no such thing as a musical object as a physical, articulated thing in front of us, since it belongs at the same time to innumerable levels of reality depending its position in the process of communication. My model comes close to the one pre-

sented by Proust in his amazingly profound analysis in the *La prisonnière* volume of *A la recherche du temps perdu*, in which he describes a concert at the home of Madame Verdurin. The piece that is performed there, the Septet by fictional composer Vinteuil, is not at all the privileged fulcrum of this communication. Rather, the focal point is the metamorphosis of the work, from the physical activity of the musicians to the motives of the organizers of the occasion. In portraying the music itself, Proust uses colours and light phenomena as the primary descriptors. In this he follows exactly the process of enunciation as depicted by Fontanille. We have here a relativization of musical meaning on a level in which all the sense organs are equal, and evoked in their proper places and moments. In the following quote from Proust, all the terms referring to colours and light appear in boldface type:

> Tandis que la sonate s'ouvrait sur une **aube liliale** et champêtre, divisant sa candeur légère pour se suspendre à l'emmêlement léger et pourtant consistant d'un berceau brustique de chévrefeuilles sur des géraniums **blancs**, c'était sur des surfaces unies et planes comme celles de la mer que, par un **matin** d'orage déjà tout **empourpré**, commençait au milieu d'un aigre silence, dans un vide infini, l'oeuvre nouvelle, et c'est dans un **rose d'aurore** que, pour se construire progressivement devant moi, cet univers inconnu était tiré du silence et de la **nuit**. Ce **rouge** si nouveau, si absent de la tendre, champêtre et candide sonate, **teignait tout le ciel**, comme l'**aurore**, d'un espoir mystérieux.... L'atmosphère froide, lavée de pluie, élctrique ... changeiat à tout instant, efacant la promesse empourprée de l'**Aurore**. A **midi** pourtant, dans un **ensoleillement brûlant** et passager ... tandis que pr4s de lui la harpiste ... en jupe courte, dépassée de tous cotés par les **rayons du quadrilatère d'or** ... semblait aller y chercher, ca et là, au point exigé, un son délicieux, de la même manière que, petite déesse allégorique, dressée devant le treillage **d'or** de la voute celeste, elle y aurait cueilli une à une, des **étoiles** ... Vinteuil joignait celui que peu de musiciens ... d'user de **couleurs** non seulement si stables mais si personnelles ... Chaque timbre se soulignait d'une **couleur**, que toutes les règles du monde apprises par les musiciens les plus savants ne pourraient pas imiter ... Une page symphonique de Vinteuil, connue déjà au piano et qu'on entendait à l'orchestre, come un **rayon de jour** d'été que le **prisme** de la fenêtre décompose avant son entrèe dans une salle à manger **obscure**, dévoilait comme un trèsor insoupconné et **multicolore** toutes les pierreries des mille et une nuits. Mais comment comparer à cet immobile **éblouissement de la lumière**, ce qui était vie, mouvement perpétuel et heureux?... sa grande fresque musicale, comme Michel-Ange attaché à son échelle ... Sans doute le **rougeoyant** septour dofférait singulièrement de la **blanche** sonate ... faisant vibrer la **rougeur** encore inerte du **ciel matinal** ... les **colorations inconnues** ... **l'air délavé du matin et du soir** semblait y influencer jusqu'aux cordes des instruments ... l'art d'un Vinteuil comme celui d'un Elstir, le fait appraitre, extériorisant dans les **couleurs du spectre** la composition intime de ces mondes.... Le seul véritable voyage ... de **voir** l'univers que chacun d'eux voit, que chacun d'eux est.... (*La prisonnière*: 67–75)

The examples above showcase the synaesthetic talents of Proust, his blending of the visual and the musical. The colours of his novels have also been investi-

gated systematically. Allan H. Pasco writes, in his *The Color-Keys to "A la recherche du temps perdu"* (1976), that Proust operates with images so that they function as signifiers of the words. Correspondingly, the signified of some signifier cannot be defined except as a kind of network of signifiers, that is, by all the images which it evokes: "The *signifié* of the reappearing word is the relationship between all of its *signifiants*, as defined in the various contexts. The *signifié* thus results, from a metaphorical relationship. It can in turn become the *signifiant* of another *signifié*, progressing finally to one *signifié* that is the book's totality of meaning" (Pasco 1976: 14).

Returning to the present task, we look again to Jacques Fontanille who, not surprisingly, has also studied Proust. He argues that, in Proust, the body is made to interact with the visible world. The glance replaces the imaginary body, which wanders through a visual field, adopts its forms, and reveals the secrets of matter. The exteroceptive turns into the interoceptive (the exogenic becomes endogenic). Fontanille scrutinizes four visual manifestations of light: brightness (*éclat*), matter (*matière*), chromaticism, and illumination, each one corresponding to an activity of the semiotic subject. These terms can be inserted into the semiotic square:
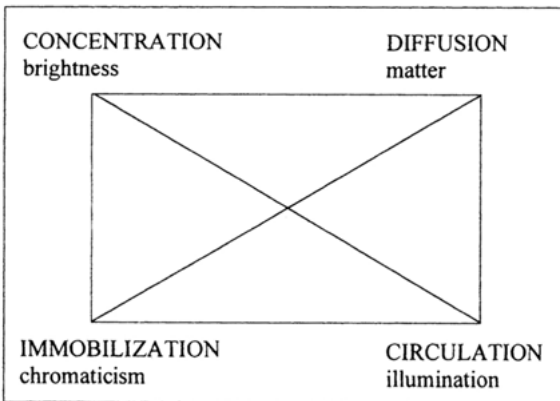
Figure 126: Fontanille's four visual manifestations of light, according to the semiotic square.

With these operations light transforms visible space into a tensional space having various "values". In *immobilisation*, the division of light stops, and it appears as a colour. In concentration, light is reduced to a punctual impact interpreted as brightness, whose intensity depends on the degree of *concentration*. *Circulation* puts the light into motion, providing avenues for its distribu-

tion. *Diffusion*, a contrary phenomenon to concentration, strives to make per-
ceptible the material nature of the space. Each corner of the square brings its
own particular style of light. Brightness represents a punctual, dotted style;
illumination, a vectorial event or the circulation of light on various objects;
chromaticism situates the light in a certain place as an immobile element; and
materialisation means that light is shed upon material objects. When we go
backwards in the scheme, down to the level of corresponding semiotic activi-
ties, we arrive at the following four categories:
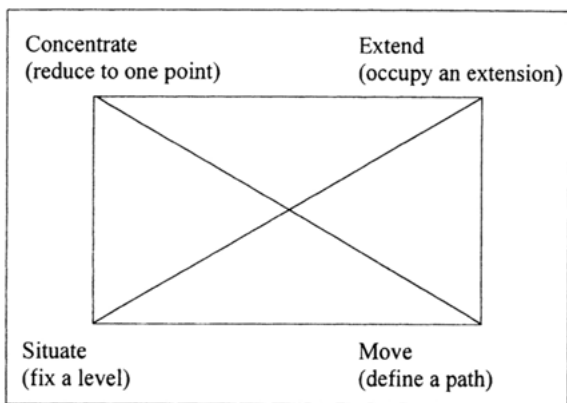
Figure 127: Light: Four operations.

When we proceed towards the visual field, however, these activities appear as
the following categories of light:
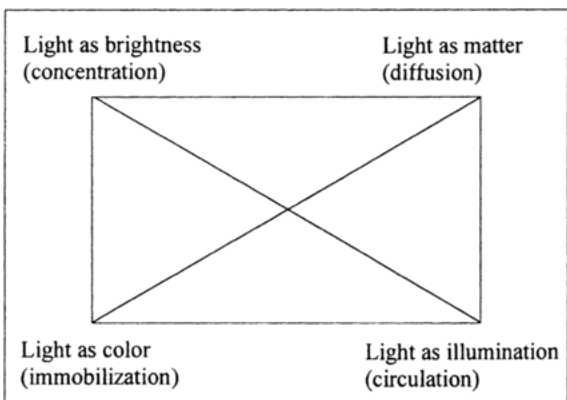
Figure 128: Four categories of light, according to tensional space.

If Fontanille's theory constitutes a valid general description of the semiosis of light, it also should apply to other non-languages, such as music. He has himself applied it to Čiurlionis's painted music, or musical paintings, but not yet to genuinely musical works. If we accept the aforementioned unity of senses, and particularly the dependence of meaning on the process of enunciation articulating the sensorial field, we should find no obstacle in taking inspiration from his theory in the musical area as well.

12.6 Theory of light in music

As we move towards a theory of light in music, we should note that a similar classification has been given by the German composer Helmut Lachenmann in his work, *Musik als existentielle Erfahrung* (1996). In his music the composer creates magnificent lighting effects, such as those particularly in his Second String Quartet (*Reigen seliger Geister*). This quartet makes abundant use of flautando bowing, which produces a specially luminous, "Arctic sound field" of "spherical glissandi".

His theoretical chapter, *Klangtypen der neuen Musik*, presents a typology of various cases of timbre. Although Lachenmann's emphasizes avant-garde music, he also examines previous musical practices. He first distinguishes between sound as a space and sound as a process; in other words, sound as a relatively long-lasting simultaneity which is bordered from the outside, and sound as a characteristic course unfolding by itself in time. The first of Lachenmann's sound types is the classic sinusoidal model, which serves as a kind of sound cadence and which he also calls "impulse sound". This case involves a temporally unfolding sound whose time is simply the same as its duration. The second type is "colour sound", or tone colour. It must not be confused with *Klangfarben* composition, as generalized in Schoenberg's serial school. Rather, it means that the pitches remain the same, but their tone colour changes. Static tone colour, which Lachenmann mentions as his second category, appears as a diagram:
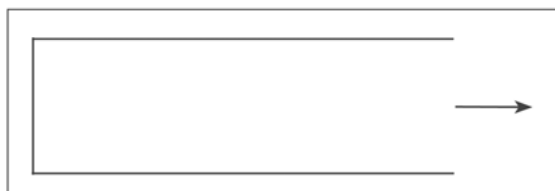
Figure 129: Diagram of static tone color.

This kind of sound has nothing to do with time, but as a vertical unit may be of any duration. In his *Anaklasis* Penderecki works with such sound boxes. Also the static sound contour of Ligeti's *Atmosphères* is a suitable example here. Although Ligeti fills his sound boxes with trills and tremolandos, that is, with so-called punctual textures, the final result resembles a simultaneous sound field:

Figure 130: Excerpt from Ligeti's *Atmosphères*.

Lachenmann also finds such examples in pieces from earlier style periods, as in the sound field that opens Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, in Chopin's Etude Op. 25 No. 1, and in Debussy's prelude *Feux d'artifice* (to which I shall return). All these examples enact the following visual diagram.

This is called "fluctuation sound", and it is characterized by an active inner streaming whose outer profile remains motionless. Yet there are also cases of outer fluctuation, as in Chopin's Etude Op. 10 No. 1, in which the fluctuation takes place as a wave-like, back and forth movement. Fluctuation sound presupposes a certain duration for its idea to be understood. At each moment one hears something else, but what is heard is neither new or unexpected.

The next type is "texture sound", which, unlike fluctuation sound, can change into something else over time. The particular duration of this type is limitless, since it can last as long as possible. Therefore it shares the same fate as the previous case: it does not appear as a process, but as an arbitrarily
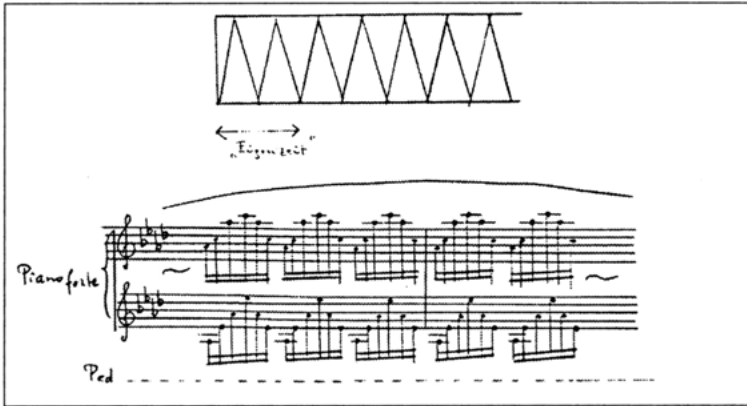
Figure 131: Wave-like fluctuation.
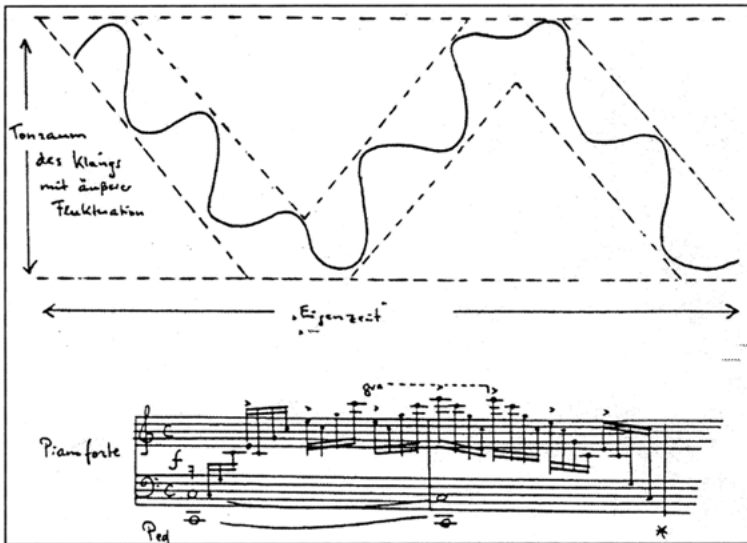
Figure 132: Fluctuation sound in Chopin's Etude Op. 10, No. 1.

continuing space. It can, however, gradually change into a different texture, as happens in Stockhausen's *Gruppen*.

Color sound, fluctuation sound, and texture sound constitute Lachenmann's first class of sounds, all of which stand in contrast to cadential sound. They all represent a static sound event whose durations are independent of the time they actually last.

In the next category, sound assumes a form-creating function and is thus enriched as to its temporal shape. This last type in Lachenmann's theory is structural sound. Sonorous and formal aspects inhere in it. Externally, it constitutes a continuation of texture sound. Structural sound has its own time, which is identical with its duration. It cannot be continued arbitrarily, as can color sound or texture sound.

Lachenmann's four classes of static sound can all be projected onto Fontanille's semiotic square. Cadential, or impulse, sound corresponds to light as brightness and concentration on one point having its own duration. Colour sound is equal to light as a colour or as immobility. Fluctuation sound evokes light as matter or the diffusion of light, and texture sound is the same as the division or circulation of light (illumination).

Lachenmann's fifth type, in which sound appears as a process or form building force, does not occur in Fontanille's square, but it would constitute a case in which light/sound functions already as a narrative event, which possesses a certain temporal duration and which undergoes at least the three phases of Asafiev's intonation theory (impulse, duration, and end) or of Claude Brémond's virtuality/passage to an act/achievement. Next I discuss the manifestation of light in music according to the taxonomy of these five types.

12.7 Light in music: Examples and analyses from music history

The appearance of light in music can be divided into five main categories:
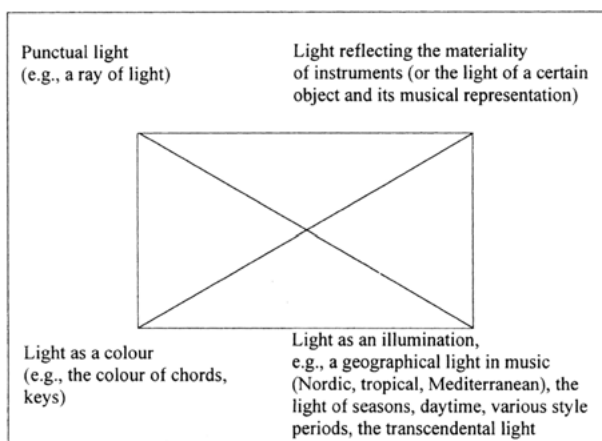
Figure 133: Fontanille's semiotic square of light, as applied to music.

Beyond this field lie cases in which light is used as a narrative musical device.

Is light in music a kind of sign? If music as such is a sign, then is the light phenomenon experienced via music a kind of sign of a sign, a secondary sign? In that case it would come close to Peirce's interpretant. Yet if the interpretant is a sign, which connects the primary sign (representamen) and its object, then to what kind of object does such a sign of light connect a tone? At the least, when we are dealing with a tone yielded by some material, say, the tone colour of a certain instrument, we may have an interpretant. In that case, according to Wellek's categories, we would encounter the light as an "idea" (*Vorstellung*) and not as a sensation (*Empfindung*). But when light is received as an immediate reaction to the sensory impulse of some music, the it would instead be a kind of indexical sign, which stands in a relation of contiguity with its object. For instance, if we listen to the voice of the Swedish tenor Jussi Björling, we feel it immediately as bright and light in a "Nordic" way. We do not only interpret it as bright, but it *is* bright, as directly as if it were an indexical sign. Whereas if we hear the trumpet theme in Scriabin's *Poème de l'extase*, and consider its colour to be flaming red, what is involved is already a less certain case, mediated by cultural conventions; one would be inclined to take this colour rather as the interpretant of the trumpet theme. In some cases the colour of music is clearly cultural, while at the same time something immediate, as in the famous colouristic passage in Sibelius's *En Saga*. That passage, said to portray the falling of ice flakes, was visualized by Akseli Gallen-Kallela in his portrait of the composer and landscape from *En Saga* (though Sibelius never accepted it as the visual counterpart of his music, and refused to write his signature in the empty space reserved for it on the painting).

In cases of obviously programmatic or scenic music, the connections between light and music are unambiguous. In this respect Wagner's operas provide us with an inexhaustible source of examples. It is often impossible to say whether some musical leitmotif or passage, in connection with the scenic view, is a sign of optic light, or whether the lighting effect on stage is the eidetic "photisma" of the music, whether music is an indexical sign of visual light, or whether visual light is an indexical sign of music. In the final scene of *Parsifal* both music and the Grail vase glow side by side, bathed in various colours. Wagner does not specify which colours to use, so directors employ red as the colour of blood, or green or yellow, to suit their purposes. In the score Wagner specifies that the top of the spear should glow red: "Das rote Licht der Lanzenspitze". But of the vase he says only: "Allmählich sanfte Erleuchtung in der Tiefe, bei wachsendem Lichtschein aus der Höhe … Lichtstrahl: hellstes Erglühen des Grales".

This is certainly one of the most striking light scenes in the history of opera, a prime illustration of Fontanille's category of brightness, or punctual light (*éclat*). In his music Wagner used concomitant lighting effects: the tension of the *Abendmahl* motif is resolved with the word *Erlösung* (the phonemic and semantic "lightness" or "transfiguration"); the chromatic neighbour-note harmonies; bright orchestral colours; the Gregorian thematics of the woodwinds; colouristic effects of the harps; the choir primarily as a colourful element that blends its motifs and words by a canon; and so on. The red glow of the top of the spear is illustrated by the extreme lightness of the orchestration and the sound of the trumpet united with chromatically descending melodic figures. Here Wagner writes the scenic indication "Dämmerung" although the musical brightness is at its highest.

All this points out that, in real acts of operatic enunciation, it is not possible to say what is a sign of what. They all form an endless chain of interpretants in which one sign refers to another. In some cases the correspondence of sound and light is so strong that they are iconic imitations of each other. For instance, often when we speak about tone colour, we use an iconic terminology like that in Lachenmann's classification – impulse, fluctuation, structural sound – which would describe visual things and events as well as it does aural phenomena.

Finally, light can be interpreted as a symbolic sign of music, in cases where it is detached from its immediate sensory unity. This interpretation has been carried out by the French musicologist Mireille Vial-Henninger (1996), who examines both inner and outer light and darkness on a symbolic level. She supposes that inner light equates with "security", and outer light with "reason" or "justice", both altogether Appollonian in nature. By contrast, outer darkness, as Dionysian, would signify "danger", and inner darkness the "dream". Such manifestation of light in music is not verifiable by the sensation of music itself and of related ideas, but in the discourse and metalanguage in which these terms function, and to what extent they constitute a consistent and coherent conceptual network. It is clear that, when dealing with these issues, we might easily drift into endless problems of musical representation. Going on, then, let us see if we can successfully apply Fontanille's square, with its four classes, to phenomena of light in music.

12.7.1 Light as a brightness (*éclat*) in music

Brightness involves the focusing of light on one point or in one line (Lachenmann's first category of sound). This effect occurs when a specific passage or

moment in music is perceived as a kind of ray of light against an otherwise less bright or even darkened background. Here light is something marked for consciousness, bringing the musical event to the foreground of the listener's experience.

For instance, in the first act of Wagner's *Die Walküre*, when the stage darkens prior to the coming of spring, the sword handle remains glowing in the oak, caught by a ray of light. Then, correspondingly, we hear in the music a trumpet motif representing the visual scene. In Wagner's *Das Rheingold*, the leitmotif of the gold itself radiates with colourful ninth chords, as does the rainbow motif of the final scene. Another leitmotif based upon a lighting effect is the sword motif that bursts out in a "white", steel-like C major amidst the darkened area of D flat major in connection with Wotan's grand idea.

Among the lighting effects in Sibelius is the tremolando at the beginning of the First Symphony, which, after the dreaming and sombre clarinet introduction, appears like a sudden ray of light that shines upon the main protagonist: the principal theme that will soon enter. A similar effect is the sudden trills in the middle section of Sibelius's piano piece, *Kyllikki*. In some cases, the shining produces a transfiguring effect after a preceding darkness; among others, the violin theme in the Finale of Sibelius's Second Symphony represents such a stroke of light. Carried to its extreme, a light distinguishing itself from the prevailing texture produces a blinding, dazzling effect in music. A good illustration is the worship of the sun god Veles in Prokofiev's *Scythian Suite*. There the colourfulness of the music is so strong that no literary program is needed to explain it.

In some cases the radiance of light is emphasized by being juxtaposed with an equally strong darkening effect. For instance, in the third movement of Einojuhani Rautavaara's symphony *The Angel of Light*, a dark and sombre motif ascends against a thick texture of strings in the upper register, as if rising from the depths of the orchestra (a similar orchestration idea is found in Villa-Lobos's *Chôros No. XI*). In Messiaen's *Turangalila* symphony the theme of joy is at the same time the theme of light, by virtue of the prevailing mode, rhythm, and instrumentation (*ondes martenot*). It represents a penetrating light, much like the clarinet solo in the "L'abîme des oiseaux" movement of Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time*: the piercing crescendo on one note can be perceived as a penetrative lighting effect. Finally, light as a punctual element, whose rays switch off and on, is realized in Debussy's *Feux d'artifice*, as we shall see.

12.7.2 Light as matter: Diffusion

Here light reflects the materiality of its starting point. This category includes light produced by pure timbre, and thus involves that tone colour which

Schaeffer determined as originating in certain instruments. At the same time, the musical light in question represents light transmitted by some optical object. A good example is the use of *divisi* strings, which blend together in the acoustical impression. In Berlioz-Strauss's book on orchestration, this technique is compared to the *al fresco* style of painting in Florentine painters, in Velázquez, Rembrandt, Franz Hals and William Turner, "with their wonderfully shaded color combinations and differentiated light effects" (Berlioz & Strauss 1991: 43). As the most obvious example, the authors took the music of the magic fire in the third of act of Wagner's *Die Walküre*: "A better musical description of the seething flames flickering in a thousand tints cannot be imagined." Although the string sound blends together with the immaterial sound, hence concealing the performing technique as Wagner required, the result of the musical representation of the flames is as much caused by the piccolo as by the appoggiaturas and altered harmonies.

Some cases of *musique concrète*, such as the Nibelungs' anvil in *Rheingold*, are also a color effect, and at the same time an impression of light referring to the materiality of the sound source. Such an effect should not be used too frequently, however, lest it cause the light effect to fade: "like most colored instruments it cannot be used too continuously without losing in effectiveness" (ibid.: 80).

In general, unusual ways of playing orchestral instruments, or the use of less common instruments, evoke color phenomena in the instrumental sense; for instance, string techniques such as détaché, martellato, portato, spiccato, saltando, pizzicato, and flageoletti. Also the use of overtones in the strings brings about effects: "They have a flutelike, silvery quality that can be highly effective as a special colour" (Kennan & Grantham 1990: 69). In considering how to proceed, the orchestrator is encouraged to think of "What coloring seems appropriate – brilliant or somber, warm or cool" (ibid.: 207).

Many less frequently used instruments immediately evoke their color when played, because "normal" instrumental sound is usually experienced as a channel of communication, meant to function without disturbances in order to transmit the message. In the light and colour effects of rare instruments, the channel becomes the main thing, an essential part of the musical message. In such cases, the global message decides whether or not the instrument is apt to distract attention from the main content, or only foregrounds something crucial in it. For instance, Vladimir Ashkenazy's orchestration of Musorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* is too colourful at times. For example, in the Old Castle, the proper aesthetic idea of the movement – a pastiche from times past and a certain nostalgic monotony – becomes lost amidst the orchestral colourfulness (the gist of the movement is better conveyed by the saxophone as used by Ravel).

Figure 134: Wagner, *Die Walküre*, Act III, Magic-Fire music.

Rarely used instruments, which have the ability to captivate the listener's attention, include the xylophone, marimba, Glockenspiel, vibraphone, anvil, triangle, celesta, *ondes martenot*, Heckelphone, sarrusophone, Flügelhorn, guitar, mandolin (in an orchestra), organ, harmonium, tape recorder, and synthesizer. The romantic orchestra, in particular, featured new colours and timbres for single instruments. Also, usual instruments were employed to create lighting effects, as does the upper-register violin solo in the third act of *Siegfried*, which anticipates Brünnhilde's awakening. A quite similar lighting effect takes place in Sibelius's Fourth Symphony, against otherwise austere tone colours.

The radiance of the last movement of Musorgsky's *Pictures*, "The Great Gate of Kiev", is produced by the piano being treated like a bell, imitated by various means in orchestral versions. Much earlier in history we find the famous "sunrise" motif at the beginning of the third movement of Beethoven's *Waldstein* sonata, which is based on a particular imitation of the overtone series, with an arpeggiated triad covering the whole keyboard and other special pianistic techniques. Some of Chopin's Etudes give a primarily coloristic effect, by virtue of a kind of *Klangfarben* melody, as in the Etudes Op. 25 No. 1 in A flat major, or in No. 2 in F minor. The first mentioned well illustrates Lachenmann's fluctuation sound, with a melody like a punctual light with its special brightness. The latter Etude could be imagined as a beam of light moving in space, when its instrumentality fades into the background. By contrast, in the A flat major Etude the feeling of the instrument's materiality persists, though felt as a vibration of light in the air.

12.7.3 Light as colour

According to Fontanille, this case represents the localization of light as the colour of an immobile object. This in turn refers to the color inherent in music, without the aforementioned level of instrumentality. To this category belongs the color function of chords, that whole shining colour world of romantic music, as Ernst Kurth put it. But we also have to count here the shades of colour caused by keys and textures. The black and white colours favoured by the neoclassicists, created by combinations of very low and very high registers in octave unisons, illustrates this phenomenon well, as in Creon's aria in Stravinsky's *Oedipus rex*. The sparklingly bright colors at the opening of the first movement of Prokofiev's First Piano Concerto arise not only from the orchestration but also from the key of D flat major. The dim light of Gabriel Fauré's Ballade in F sharp major, like a never-ending summer afternoon, comes from the pastoral coloring and static musical events, as well as from the special tinge of F sharp major.

In Mozart's music, whose colourfulness Messiaen highly praised, the keys and harmonies have an undeniable colour function. For instance, the so-called Mozart fifths (consecutive perfect fifths in resolutions of the augmented-sixth chord) produce a colouristic effect whenever they occur. The entrance of the commandant in *Don Giovanni* is realized with the "right" key as well (D minor, of course). In Wagner's *Lohengrin* A major symbolizes the light and its knight. And the enharmonic colour effects are essential in Rimsky-Korsakov.

The colour in Impressionist music is as much yielded by harmonies as by orchestration. For instance, the prelude *La terrasse des audiences de clair de lune* portrays the moonlight with parallel fifths in the upper register in the final bars of the piece. The colourfulness of *Feux d'artifice* is caused by fluxuating textures and dynamics, but also by chord changes between harmonies of distant key regions. In this piece by Debussy we encounter all the previously mentioned cases of light in music. Let us have a closer look.

Study of this prelude shows that our square provides an operational way of classifying cases of light in music. But in practice these classes overlap: any passage we choose may function simultaneously as punctual light (brightness), as material light, as illumination, or as a certain chromatic colour. For instance, the opening motif, mentioned by Lachenmann, appears in punctual, staccato flashes against the ostinato figure on black and white keys: (1) the punctual motif appears as on-off sources of light; (2) the superimposed black and white keys as a characteristic piano-playing technique or as light reflecting the materiality of the instrument; (3) the noise-like cluster figure functioning as a dark grey background for the light (recall that, above, tritones were related to greyness); (4) the tritonal harmony providing the section with a special colour.

The situation in bars 25–35 is quite different. There all the above classes of light function as concomitant elements: (1) light as a detached point in the signal-like motif of the lower part (later, when this motif repeats, Debussy writes *éclatant*); (2) the fluctuating figure in the upper register serves here, unlike in the previous section, as colourful illumination of the punctual light of the signal motif; (3) the aforementioned figure reflects the instrumentality, or materiality, of the piano; (4) the harmony is based on overtones and a C eleventh-chord, which provides the section with the rich colouration of Impressionism.

Some of the above-mentioned categories of light are always foregrounded. For instance, the slight glissando in bar 17 serves as an illumination, like the switching on and off of a light, while also reflecting the materiality of the instrument and the special pentatonic colour. By contrast, in the following, rubato section, the harmonic colour and chromaticism are dominant.

There the tritone-related fields of C major and F sharp major alternate abruptly, this change of color softened by a glissando that serves as to illuminate the alternation.

The narrative idea of the piece is the culmination and extreme intensification of all its elements. The signal motif, based on the interval of the fifth, changes into the rattling of fireworks, accomplished by octaves played martellato. The chromatic harmonies change into a stretto of various colours, and the sound fluctuations into abrupt, violent glissandi of white and black notes played simultaneously. The fermata pause is followed by an enigmatic codetta: into this empty space enters the first real musical actorialisation, a recollection of "La Marseillaise" heard as if from a distance (*de très loin*). It makes visible the spectators of the fireworks display, the subjects that until now have been the concealed audience. But even they are leaving the stage, abandoning the empty hall, where we still hear and see some flashes of light.

Figure 135: Debussy, *Feux d'artifice*, bars 25–35.

12.7.4 Light as illumination in music

Illumination is one of the most important ways of experiencing light in music. First, the light can be geographical, in a metaphorical sense. We speak about Mediterranean luminosity, such as that which colours, for instance, Darius Milhaud's music. His Sonata for Piano features octave unisons in C major, associating the piece with the neoclassical style, as well as colouristic devices,

Figure 136: Debussy, *Feux d'artifice*, bars 62–65.

energetic and extroverted rhythms, impressionistic stylistic devices, and bitonality. In his suite *Saudades do Brasil*, for example in the "Botafogo" movement, the superimposed F and F sharp minor create a gloomy colour. One can also speak of tropical light in music, as illustrated by Chavez's so-called Aztec style, with its Indian instruments and austere, but dazzlingly bright images, or in his piano preludes, all of them various modes of C major. Also Villa-Lobos, one of the greatest musical colorists of our time, depicted the tropical lights of rain forests in his *chôroses* and *bachianases* as well as in his chamber music. The tropical composers are as skillful in describing night as in depicting the day.

Nordic light appears in music usually as a polyphonic texture in the strings in the upper register and pianissimo. Model examples here are Sibelius's *Andante festivo* and the beginning of the slow movement of Grieg's Piano Concerto. In Sibelius's music, in addition to strict thematic constructions, there is also the level of lights and shadows. For instance, in the famous "rain" passage at the end of Sibelius's *Tapiola* the listeners perceive light that is filtered through the forest. Nordic darkness and gloominess in turn appear in the whole ascetic range of colours in the Fourth Symphony.

Particular moments of the day have been depicted in music, from various sunrises – Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloë* and Erik Bergman's *Aubade* – to the colours

Figure 137: Debussy, *Feux d'artifice*, closing.

of the morning – Wagner's Good Friday music – to the waning light of evening – Schumann's *Abends* – and the darkness of night, illustrated by such impressionistic textures as in Szymanowski's Symphony and in Manuel de Falla's *Nuits dans les jardins d'Espagne*. Roughly speaking, entire musical style periods can lean toward particular colorings: night and evening, for romanticism, late-romanticism, and symbolism; day, for neoclassicism; morning, for impressionism.

Changes of color according to season also occur in music of different lightings. Sometimes these changes are linked with musical enunciation, as when American violin pedagogue, Joseph Gingold, advised a Japanese pupil to imagine a snowy forest in wintry Finland in order to attain the right colour at the opening of the Sibelius Violin Concerto. The Bach theme at the beginning of César Franck's *Prelude, Chorale and Fugue*, surrounded by an arpeggiation in B minor, has been said to evoke the bluish light that bathes the shadows of a cathedral. The Polish piano professor Jan Hoffman admonished his pupils to think about "Italian light and sky" at the beginning of Mozart's D major Piano Sonata. There is also a kind of transcendental light in music, as in Fauré's *Requiem*. In the music of Bohuslav Martinů we often encounter string cantilenas in the upper register, where they represent a completely symbolic, spiritu-

alized light. And of course there are programmatic illuminations, as in Richard Strauss's *Tod und Verklärung*.

In addition to these four cases, light can serve as a narrative element in music, such that the musical form can be based solely on changes of lighting. A typical example is provided by the middle movement of Beethoven's *Appassionata* Sonata, whose simple narrative program goes from shadow to light and back. The variations begin in a thick, low register, from which the texture gradually thins out, moves towards the bright upper register, and then returns. A contrary narrative course is found in the prelude to Wagner's *Lohengrin*. It starts in the thinnest upper register with woodwinds and strings, then descends towards the depths of the orchestra as a an allegory of the journey of the main protagonist, the knight of light. Just as Lohengrin returns to his realm, the prelude also reascends to heavenly spheres. In these and other cases, structural sound-colour serves as a narrative device. In the next chapter, the tables turn: we shall see how a great novelist uses narrative to convey his impressions of musical sound.

Chapter 13 The implicit musical semiotics of Marcel Proust

Because of his awareness that the surface of every narration is a tissue of signs, Proust could present a semiotic analysis of musical enunciation in his description (in *La prisonnière*) of a performance of the fictional Septet by Vinteuil. He shows music as a social totality, in which the enunciate is in dialogue with the enunciation; and thus he discusses different ways of listening, different aspects of the composer as man and as musical subject, different metaphors of the music (spatial, visual or aural), different philosophical reflections, as well as the strictly musical characteristics of the enunciate, aspects of repetition and cyclic form. Musical communication is presented as a multilevelled whole in which one moves freely from one level to another, without the control of a unilinear generative principle. Finally, the interaction of actors, modalities and isotopies can be shown with a semiotic analysis of the passage from Proust's novel.

13.1 Toward new areas of sign theory

Few scholars would deny that Marcel Proust (1871–1922) numbers among the greatest semioticians of all time. From a semiotic viewpoint he has been already investigated by Gilles Deleuze (1979) and Jean-Jacques Nattiez (1984), among others. On the surface of Proustian narration, its thematic-figurative level, we obviously find signs, and not only of a verbal nature (who said what to whom), but also other messages: rules of habits and politeness, food, landscapes, paintings, gestures, and of course, musical signals and symbols. Musicologists might express doubt, however, should Proust also be touted as a great music analyst. After all, even when commenting on the famous "petite phrase" of Vinteuil's Sonata, he makes only the amateurish musical observation that it consists in five notes, two of which are repeated. Nevertheless, Proust realized something essential about the nature of musical communication itself; and under his guidance, we can begin to elaborate new starting points for research, apart from the old semiotic-generative methods.

This is not to deny the validity of the latter, which have come to function as useful tools for music analysis. Indeed, some "old" methods retain their usefulness in describing certain kinds of musical texts. At the same time, we need a new theory, one more generally semiotic than that produced by earlier methods of score analysis. Poiesis and aesthesis must be linked with observa-

tions concerning all levels on which generation, enunciation and enunciate may occur. In such a total musical semiotics, no reading or code as such is more justified than any other, but each emerges as the music becomes a sonorous and spiritual reality, that is to say, as it starts to exist beyond the enunciate (score). All aspects of this process can likewise constitute an object for artistic transformation – and this is what happens in the music of our time. In no case does the poetic function of music focus exclusively on the structure of the message itself, on its self-reflexive form, as Roman Jakobson supposed; rather, it lies precisely in the fact that all functions, levels and phases of communication can be varied freely.

Emphasizing the opposite pole of the matter is Gianni Vattimo's remark that the relevant aspect in art is no longer the work itself, but the experience (see Vattimo 1985). A statement typical of the cognitive era, it does not yet represent a universal, prismatic model whose most essential features are the very *shifts* of viewpoints. Here, the most important points in the entire aesthetic communication are those places where point of view, level, approach, function, modality – any stable or constant aspect – *changes*.

Almost the only device at a composer's disposal is to leave a *trace* of such moments in the notation or somehow indicate when the code or isotopy should be shifted. Furthermore, the artist cannot anticipate what the other subjects of communication are doing. For if communication in the arts is prismatic, it is also polysubjective. Such shifts of codes are, in fact, exemplified by certain ambiguous events coded in the score, where some passage, verse, phrase, section can be heard in two different ways; like the "duck/rabbit" phenomenon adduced by Gestalt theorists and by Wittgenstein in his psychological remarks (Wittgenstein 1980: 16e). For example, according to a *spatial* way of hearing, the main theme at the beginning of Chopin's G minor Ballade can be imagined to start, after the introduction, as late as when the G minor tonic is reached; or according to an *actorial* way of listening, it may begins as early as when the arpeggiated dominant seventh serves as anacrusis to the ensuing tonic chord.

Sometimes there is an inbuilt surprise in a piece, when suddenly the "right" isotopy is revealed. This may be illustrated by the beginning of the Piano Quartet in A major, op. 30, by Ernest Chausson (1897). In the first 26 bars the listener does not know in which style, year, or country we are; when the ninth chord occurs in bar 27, it at once shifts us to the correct topos of French late Romanticism and burgeoning Impressionism. Thus, a single chord can serve as a sign – a revelation – of such a code shift.

Let us assume that we are going to study the semiotics of opera. First, we could prepare a musical sketch of a chosen opera – let us say, by Wagner or Verdi – in terms, say, of the Schenkerian *Ursatz*. We might then trace other levels of the (narration, drama, rhythm, harmony, timbre, etc.). In a word, we

Figure 138: Chopin, G minor Ballade, bars 5–9.

Figure 139: Chausson, Piano Quartet in A major, bars 1–6.

could portray the energetic course of the piece. However, we remain in need of an approach that moves smoothly from one level to another, from one aspect to another, since reception is a manifold, multidimensional process, which constantly changes form, and in the most varied of ways. If we proceed in a rigorously generative manner, passing systematically through all the phases, the result does not correspond to the reality in which we live, and which we bring to our reception of an artwork.

These two approaches can be united. On one side runs a deep and basic narrative stream, now faster, now slower, now broadly, now thinly; narrative lacunae may form, or the stream may evaporate altogether. On the other hand, at surface levels we encounter the play of all semiotic mechanisms, becoming like Walter Benjamin's "absent-minded" receivers (Benjamin 1974: 471–508) or

like Theodor Adorno's types of listener (Adorno 1962). In other words: sometimes the important thing is a motif, sometimes the whole sound field, sometimes a scenic gesture, sometimes a speech, sometimes a visual effect of scenery or lighting – in short, any aspect whatsoever of the enunciation or virtuality of the utterance. Such a model would combine enunciation and enunciate, because of their constant interaction and competition for pertinence in the artistic communication.

Of no help is the mere statement that signs do not signify anything except as part of a significant environment, *semiosphere* (see Uspenski et al. 1973), *perfusion* of signs (C. S. Peirce, quoted in Sebeok 1977: ix), or *isotopy* (Greimas et Courtés 1979: 97–198). Rather, what signifies and becomes significant depends on the *interaction* between enunciation and enunciate. No part of the enunciate is pertinent as such, by any cogency of its own, unless it takes a position in the enunciation. Accordingly, some element may be totally unimportant in terms of the structure of the enunciate, but can become an essential item in the process of enunciation, since it gives an impulse, serves as an index for a completely new semiotic development. In such an analysis everything is moving, flexible, changing, like reality itself, following the *mémoire involontaire* of Henri Bergson or Marcel Proust.

The generative course is, in the end, impossible; not because it could be shown as somehow logically inconsistent, but because there is no musical or poetic object to which it can be applied. A musical reality, even its smallest element, is a totality, a *fait total social* (Marcel Mauss 1950), and not only a social fact but also psychological, physiological, physical, mathematical, semiological, acoustic, cognitive. Thus we cannot at all isolate the musical object, and an extensive study such as *Traité des objets musicaux* (Schaeffer 1966) stands as a paradox in point.

The musical object does not exist, since music is always simultaneously, concomitantly and consecutively present in all the human subjects attending to its course, as well as *apparently* objectively present as notation, recording or acoustic stream. Because these various spheres of reality each follow their own laws, it is impossible to imagine a generative trajectory covering the pertinent traits of a whole musical reality.

All the aforementioned features of musical reality are semiotic in nature; at the same time, their internal laws differ. Some concepts offered by certain semiotic theories are valid in many segments of reality at the same time, perhaps to the extent that one may consider them universals. Nevertheless, a universe of semiotic phenomena takes shape so variously and incalculably on each occasion and in each situation of communication, that the totality can not be captured by explicit rules. These parallel semiotic realities are actualized by

impulses stemming from various sources, in such a way that a definite meaning of music can never be fixed. Meaning or signification is based upon alternation and incessant change among different semiospheres. Musical signification is not an object to be set in front of us, whose structure and layers can be "peeled", revealing the thing itself. The fiction of universality of meaning occurs persistently in some sciences, limiting the validity of their results. The belief that one can peer inside the human brain with surgical tools, and thus see what "really" happens, forms the basis for a view of the mind as a huge computational network.

Let us return now to the relationship between enunciation and enunciate, as it appears in the correlation between a musical performance and the music to be performed. If we listen to a piece like Brahms's Clarinet Sonata, we are operating on the level of the musical enunciate when we follow, say, the unfolding of its main theme, modulations and chord progressions. Yet, as soon as the clarinetist plays a little louder, or the pianist makes a striking visual gesture, or someone starts to cough in the audience – then our attention automatically shifts, because of the impact on the enunciation itself, on events that bring about the enunciate, and upon which its existence is, in fact, always dependent. If by this sign the clarinetist wants to express a pathemic state or emotion, if the pianist wants to gesture the kinetic aspect of the music, if somebody entering turns our attention away from the performance toward the social milieu, these impulses correspondingly catalyze various semiotic paradigms or realities, be they emotional-aesthetic, gestural, physiological, or social. All these spheres belong to what Greimas calls *le monde naturel*, or "natural world" (Greimas et Courtés 1979: 233), which is itself already semiotized. But is there any logical consistency in the actualization of these worlds? In the end, is it possible to portray semiotically the alternation of enunciation and enunciate? In my view, Marcel Proust succeeded in doing so, with his model of "semiotic" music description.

13.2 Music at the salon of Madame Verdurin

Music plays an important role in Proust's long, multi-volume novel, *A la recherche du temps perdu*. Nevertheless, it is no accident that music attains its most central role in relation to the other arts only at the end of the series, in the scene at the bourgeois salon of Madame Verdurin in the volume *La prisonnière*. Earlier in the series, Proust had embodied literature in the form of the author Bergotte, and painting in the output of Elstir. Both artists are fictional figures, of course, as is the composer Vinteuil. However, it is music that becomes the

central art form as part of a "semiotics" of the passions. The scene I refer to takes place in the aforementioned novel on pages 62–85 (vol. VI, 14th edition, Paris, 1923). It consists of 148 sentences; as the criterion of a sentence in this segmentation I have chosen a full stop – which does not tell us much, since in Proust one sentence can be a single line or a whole page.

The content of a sentence can be summarized according to the level it occupies in our model of musical communication: poiesis, aesthesis, neutral level, aesthetic ideas, performance situation, notation, reception, physiological states, ethical observations, functions of communication, the levels of the piece itself: symbolic, semantic, metric, syntactic, phonetic, etc.

The description occurs through the narrating *I* of Marcel Proust, which is comparable to an anthropologist or explorer, who in his diary notes everything he experiences in the smallest detail, alloting each observation to many different semioses, not limited to mere aesthetic or musicological observations, i.e., to the levels of semantics and syntax. Since Proust moves from one sphere of reality to another in this way, he is expressly a semiotician and anthropologist.

In this first, quick analysis I do not adhere to a particular semiotic meta-language, but remain open to any theoretical interpretation. One can draw from Proust's descriptions an entirely new, so far unknown, more exhaustive model for music, which ought not be bound to any ready-made, pre-existent semiotic theory.

Sentences 1–4 (Section 1)

The musicians are seated on stage, the listeners preparing themselves for the performance. The situation is prepared, and the audience's expectations are portrayed:

> Morel était déjà montée sur l'estrade, les artistes se groupaient, que l'on entendait encore des conversations, voire des rires, des qu'il parait qu'il faut être initié pour comprendre. Aussitôt M. de Charlus, redressant sa taille en arrière, comme entre dans un autre corps que celui que j'avais vu, tout à l'heure, arriver en trainaillant chez Mme Verdurin, prit une expression de prophète et regarda l'assemblée avec un sérieux qui signifiait que ce n'était pas le moment de rire, et dont on vit rougir brusquement le visage de plus d'une invitée prise en faute, comme une élève par son professeur en pleine classe. Pour moi l'attitude, si noble d'ailleurs, de M. de Charlus avait quelque chose de comique; car tantôt il foudroyait ses invités de regards enflammés, tantôt, afin de leur indiquer comme un *vade mecum* le religieux silence qu'il convenait d'observer, le détachement de toute préoccupation mondaine, il présentait lui-même, élevant vers son beau front ses mains gantées de blanc, un modèle (auquel on devait se conformer) de gravité, presque déjà d'extase, sans répondre aux saluts de retardataires assez indécents pour ne pas comprendre que l'heure était maintenant au Grand Art. Tous furent hypnotisés; on n'osa plus

proférer un son, bouger une chaise; le respect pour la musique – de par le prestige de Palamede – avait été subitement inculqué à une foule aussi mal élevée qu'élégante (p. 62). [Morel had already mounted the platform, the musicians were assembling, and one could still hear conversations, not to say laughter, speeches such as "it appears, one has to be initiated to understand it." Immediately M. de Charlus, drawing himself erect, as though he had entered a different body from that which I had seen not an hour ago, crawling towards Mme Verdurin's door, assumed a prophetic expression and regarded the assembly with an earnestness which indicated that this was not the moment for laughter, whereupon one saw a rapid blush tinge the cheeks of more than one lady thus publicly rebuked, like a school girl scolded by her teacher in front of the whole class. To my mind, M. de Charlus's attitude, noble as it was, was somehow slightly comical; for at one moment he pulverised his guests with a flaming stare, at another, in order to indicate to them as with a vade mecum the religious silence that ought to be observed, the detachment from every worldly consideration, he furnished in himself, as he raised to his fine brow his white-gloved hands, a model (to which they must conform) of gravity, already almost of ecstasy, although acknowledging the greetings of late-comers so indelicate as not to understand that it was now the time for High Art. They were all hypnotised; no one dared utter a sound, move a chair; respect for music – by virtue of Palamede's prestige – had been instantaneously inculcated in a crowd as ill-bred as it was exclusive.] (English translation by C. K. Scott Moncrieff)

Sentences 5–6 (Section 2)

The performance is described mostly through the consciousness of the narrating *I*. His false expectations and errors regarding the piece are presented; this is the first but not the last time when the identity of the musical work is destabilized – not even the main protagonist knows what he will hear. Not only does he not know, but he takes the piece to be an entirely different one.

Sentence 7 (Section 3)

We return to the portrayal of the reception, and to the position and attitude of one listener, Madame Verdurin. This narrative movement between the *I* and the other actors, this actorial disengagement, reflects the blending of the *I* with the rest of the audience, since he belongs, in the first place, to the same musical reference group:

Mme Verdurin s'assit à part, les hemisphères de son front blanc et légèrement rosé, magnifiquement bombés, les cheveux écartés, moitié en imitation d'un portrait du XVIIIe siècle, moitié par besoin de fraicheur d'une fièvreuse qu'une pudeur empêche de dire son état, isolée, divinité qui présidait aux solennités musicales, déesse du wagnerisme et de la mi graine, sorte de Norne presque tragique, évoquée par le génie au milieu de ces

ennuyeux, devant qui elle allait dédaigner plus encore que de coutume d'exprimer des impressions en entendant une musique qu'elle connaissait mieux qu'eux (p. 63).

[Mme Verdurin sat in a place apart, the twin hemispheres of her pale, slightly roseate brow magnificently curved, her hair drawn back, partly in imitation of an eighteenth century portrait, partly from the desire for coolness of a fever-stricken patient whom modesty forbids to reveal her condition, aloof, a deity presiding over musical rites, patron saint of Wagnerism and sick-headaches, a sort of quasi-tragic Norn, evoked by the spell of genius in the midst of all these bores, in whose presence she would more than ordinarily scorn to express her feelings upon hearing a piece which she knew better than they.] (English translation by C. K. Scott Moncrieff)

Sentences 8–23 (Section 4)

The first listening period – the period of attention – of the narrator is mostly situated on the epistemic axis of 'knowing'. At first, it is as though he were in an unknown realm – a spatial metaphor – in which he finds a familiar path through a theme borrowed from an earlier piece.

The reference to Vinteuil's Sonata means a step outside the musical object. The small phrase is used as a kind of interpretant, by which the text opens itself to the listener; it forms a *rupture*, a cleavage, through which one enters into the object. Although the listener feels as if he were in an unknown country, this small phrase of the Sonata helps him to orientate himself, i.e., to achieve spatial engagement. Since the small phrase is, from the point of view of its aesthetic information value – its 'knowing' or *savoir* – outworn for the listener, it assumes, on the other hand, a new meaning in the so-far unfamiliar context. The small phrase therefore functions like a Wagner leitmotif; it adopts new meanings in various contexts of meaning inside the work.

The unfamiliar music of the Septet is first described with colour ("red") and light phenomena ("dawn"). Thus, new interpretants are sought, taken now from a reality external to the music.

Then (sentence 20) the first syntactic observation is made on the musical text: it is called "a song of seven notes". Thereafter it is described as a kind of "call" or as the crowing of a cock. But the motif is changing in meaning – meanings constantly change in the Proustian text, since he describes them precisely as they take shape in time and in a certain concrete situation.

In passing, the narrator also presents a hypothesis about the poiesis of the motif, in supposing that it originates in the sound of the bell at Combray.

Thereafter the narrator – the *I* or ego – conveys his own reception of the music, with clearcut aesthetic evaluations. He engages a dysphoric category in saying the motif does not please him, and seems almost ugly. This sudden judgment of taste shifts him from the inner musical world, from the enunciate

or utterance, to the world of the enunciation, to the performance situation of the piece. This is characteristic of the Proustian narrator: as soon as something reaches a certain limit of meaning, it ceases to be interesting and causes a reaction of boredom, a shift to another level of reality. For this narrator, everything that is fixed, determined and unambiguous is dead for him, having lost any valid purport.

Sentences 24–29 (Section 5)

His attention is caught again by Madame Verdurin's reaction and particularly the non-verbal behaviour caused by the music. Her entire body is "talking" and "telling"; it speaks more loudly than words. It reveals her to be a competent listener; in contrast, there is the incompetent herd of other listeners, who at this stage still remain anonymous.

Sentences 30–32 (Section 6)

Now one moves to the level of the musicians' physical activities, and the act of performing is depicted, i.e., the concretely physical aspect of the enunciation. This might, of course, be investigated by exact methods of measurement, in the manner of Paul Bouissac (1973), but Proust approaches even this area by means of metaphors and interpretants. Through the reference to a curl fallen over the forehead of the violinist Morel, one again moves to a new level, a description of the reception.

Sentences 33–34 (Section 7)

The narrator wonders what effect this curl might have on Baron de Charlus, but he is only able to see Madame Verdurin. Thus, he is unable to answer the question.

Sentences 35–37 (Section 8)

Now follows an extensive musical reflection, in which the narrator presents profound philosophical remarks, which proceed apace with the music.

First (Sentence 36), the narrator realizes that what is involved is a masterpiece, in relation to which all previous works by Vinteuil were only drafts. Next

(sentence 37), the narrator compares Vinteuil's pieces to his earlier loves, among which only the last, his love for Albertine, is equal to the Septet.

The narrating *I* presents his "actorial theory": we carry in our minds a kind of sign, a double, of all the persons we know. He sinks into reflections on the "inner actorial sign" of Albertine. As he imagines how the pseudoactor Albertine falls asleep, a signal from the music penetrates into his consciousness. This signal serves as a kind of bridge and shifts him again to ponder the creation – the poiesis – of the piece, and think of Vinteuil, especially with regard to his sleeping daughter. This image is strengthened by a music-historical association – a reference to Robert Schumann.

Sentences 48–59 (Section 9)

The narrator expels the sign of Albertine's "double" or pseudoactor from his mind and sets to thinking about the composer of the piece, Vinteuil, now not as a real person – as he was above – but precisely as a subject of enunciation (composing).

He states that Vinteuil's style is inimitable, and that it cannot be attained by merely following (generative) rules. On this level, the narrator-ego does not believe in the universal categories from which an art work emanates, but instead takes as Vinteuil's distinctive feature a kind of lasting novelty (*durable nouveauté*).

The narrator remarks how Vinteuil the man was completely different from Vinteuil the composer – or perhaps this is Proust stressing the difference between the real person and the artist's identity. As a real man Vinteuil was timid and sad, whereas as a composer he was joyful. This state of joy is transmitted from the work to the listener. Thus Proust believes that the purely artistic emotional state, that of the subject of the enunciation, can be transmitted to the listener via musical signs. In this way Proust confronts art and life, suggesting that the concrete performance of Vinteuil's piece, by means of instruments animated by his music, are apt to prolong his own life – though such a prolongation was unreal.

Sentences 60–84 (Section 10)

The narrator moves from Vinteuil's composer-ego to examine the Septet itself. First, the Septet is compared to the Sonata; then the two semiotic objects are scrutinized side by side.

Although the two works are apparently quite different, they have the same semantic gesture: a prayer of hope. The narrator admits that a strictly musicological or "musicographic" description might explain the genealogy of these themes, that is, in what ways they were derived from the same nuclear motif. If congenial because of its scientific flavor, such reasoning is not semiotics, since it takes place only on the level of the signifiers, and does not account for the signified, the content.

Consequently, according to Proust, when great diversity prevails on the manifest level of Vinteuil's work – that is, on the level of sound or signifier – the level of content reflects great unity:

Signifier = variety
Signified = unity

The hidden unity of Vinteuil's output is also reflected on the acoustical level as his typical "accent". At the same time, this accent is said to be a sign of the individuality of the soul, and that it is characteristic not only of the composer but also of the performer (the example is given of singers).

The accent in question distinguishes Vinteuil from all others, but also guarantees that his identity remains always the same. It represents an enigma that is pondered by the narrator, who asks how it can be learned or heard. He remarks that it stands as the background of every artist, as his own semiosphere, and he depicts it as his lost fatherland. In Greimassian terms: the composer – and similarly, the performer – is like a subject who has been separated from an object, and who tries constantly to reattain it, with varying degrees of success.

When he notices that Vinteuil, in his Septet, has drawn closest to this lost, separated object, the narrator refers to the enunciation itself, in which even the violinist, Morel, had come near it. His performance is characterized by the qualities of moral strength and intellectual superiority. These qualities are – as in the comparison of Vinteuil's real personality and his artistic ego – completely opposite to his true character, which is sketched elsewhere in the novel. Nevertheless, the narrator notices that his theory of the "lost fatherland" can not be justified by reason.

It is likened to an unknown star. Listening to various pieces by various composers is like making journeys from one star to another. Music becomes the only sign process (besides painting), through which we can look into the individuality of a human soul.

Sentences 85–100 (Section 11)

There follows an interval between two movements in the performance. The audience splits clearly into two groups, unlike at the beginning. The narrator has undergone a deep artistic experience; the other people had experienced nothing of the kind, however, and they go about exchanging meaningless news with each other. Social status now appears entirely devoid of signification compared with the inner experience of the narrator – the enunciate has become superior to the enunciation.

Sentences 101–112 (Section 12)

The end of the Septet is described, and once again the description reverts to an analysis of the musical enunciate itself. It is most closely examined in the light of various themes, phrases, and on its actorial level (recurrence of the inner actors of music).

The music is now characterized as having a violet colour, and the musical form is portrayed as a fight between theme-actors. The syntactic structure of the music is viewed as the coming and going of various motifs, as movement in general. One motif is repeated five or six times, as a return of the mystic call of the beginning. What is involved cyclic form, characteristic device of César Franck and his pupils.

In the end, the rejoicing motif wins; it has a purple colour. The signification of the motif makes the narrator-ego shift within, to his own real ego, and ask whether he can ever participate in such supernatural joy. In the Proustian world one glides constantly and imperceptibly from one level to another, from one semiosphere to another.

Sentences 112–135 (Section 13)

Moving to the level of poiesis, the narration tells of the reconstructive work of Vinteuil's daughter and her friend, the writing and amassing of the whole score on the basis of sketches. Accordingly, one now returns to the level of material production, at the same time wondering why authors engage in such laborious work.

Sentences 136–141 (Section 14)

Here we have observations on the posthumous reputation and reception of Vinteuil, as compared to other masters. It is stated that, without the Septet, he would not have become the immortal genius which the narrator and society deem him to be. The cornerstone of his reputation is a combination of ingenuity and vice.

Sentences 142–148 (Section 15)

The same combination also brought about the performance of the Septet. Its invisible but real cause was the relationship of Baron de Charlus to Morel, specifically, the Baron's wish to arrange an opportunity for the musician to perform before high nobility, in order to be granted a particularly distinguished decoration.

Only at the very end does Proust describe what came first in chronological order: the reasons which led to the whole situation. By this means, Proust wants, on one hand, to show that those reasons are not immediately observable by us, but only to be inferred on the level of *thirdness*. Moreover, he shows that even the most profound and subtle experiences are always dependent on the material and inferior sphere of ordinary reality.

13.3 The Proustian "musical model": A Greimassian explication

Before summarizing Proust's description, it is proper to make some general remarks on his "musical model".

(1) Musical communication for him is a multilevelled whole in which one constantly moves from one level to another. It is impossible to say of any level that it is more "justified" or important than any other. In further analysis, particular attention must be paid to how these shifts take place; to what makes the narrator-ego – the most central musical listener – shift focus, say, from enunciate to enunciation. The Proustian musical listener is a modern, absent-minded listener, whose attention does not follow logically a determined course or semiotic process. For example, he does not discern the aesthetic associations of the piece until the end, nor perceive its syntactic course as a fight among various themes, but drifts from one point of view to another.

(2) Musical communication is by nature a continuous process. This becomes obvious on the level of the text itself; phrases follow each other without divisions into paragraphs or sections, groupings, but pass by like a continuous stream of words. In Proustian descriptions, all human agents of the communication are present, just as all musical ingredients are present – the composer's living conditions, professional work, reconstruction of a score or notation, the players' physical conduct, the portrayal of the music itself as a colour, the elucidation of compositional structure, its comparison to other musical pieces and composers, and finally, the receivers and their verbal and non-verbal behaviours.

(3) In Proust, musical communication does not proceed in a straight line, from sender to receiver, as conceived, for example, by the Swedish musicologist Ingmar Bengtsson (1973). Such is the general scheme of information theory, of which we have numerous variants.

The divergence of the Proustian patterns from that linear scheme is striking. In Proust the communication proceeds as follows: performers ⋯⟩ listeners ⋯⟩ narrator ⋯⟩ listener-narrator (composition) ⋯⟩ listener ⋯⟩ performers ⋯⟩ listeners ⋯⟩ narrator (composition; minor character) ⋯⟩ composer ⋯⟩ composition ⋯⟩ composer ⋯⟩ performer ⋯⟩ listeners ⋯⟩ composition; main character)⋯⟩ composition/authors ⋯⟩ composer/authors ⋯⟩ composer/listener

Admittedly, this scheme enormously simplifies the whole of Proustian description, but it reveals to us one important thing: in his model, one is constantly passing among different entities of communication. In the original Bengtssonian model, the boxes displaying the direction prove to be completely illusory. Musical communication does not have any direction in the proper sense, since the normal course can be interrupted at any time, from any impulse, causing either a flashback to a previous or subsequent place in the communication chain or suddenly moving us totally outside it.

In this model the musical subjects and objects are not bound by any unilinear generative course, but move freely within the limits of these roles. From this we can only conclude, as was stated at the beginning, that a complete and exhaustive description of any musical reality must take into account this Proustian multifariousness and mobility.

(4) There is one more crucial difference between Proustian musical communication and the "normal" transmission of messages. In Proust, the maker of the model, the analyst, has been included in it as an essential part: the narrator-ego. In the Bengtssonian model, the researcher fades into the background, as its anonymous sender-creator. Yet, every semiotic inquiry must, in my view, start from the same situation as any narration does: Who is the subject of this semiotic analysis, examination, narra-

Figure 140: The Bengtsson model of musical communication.
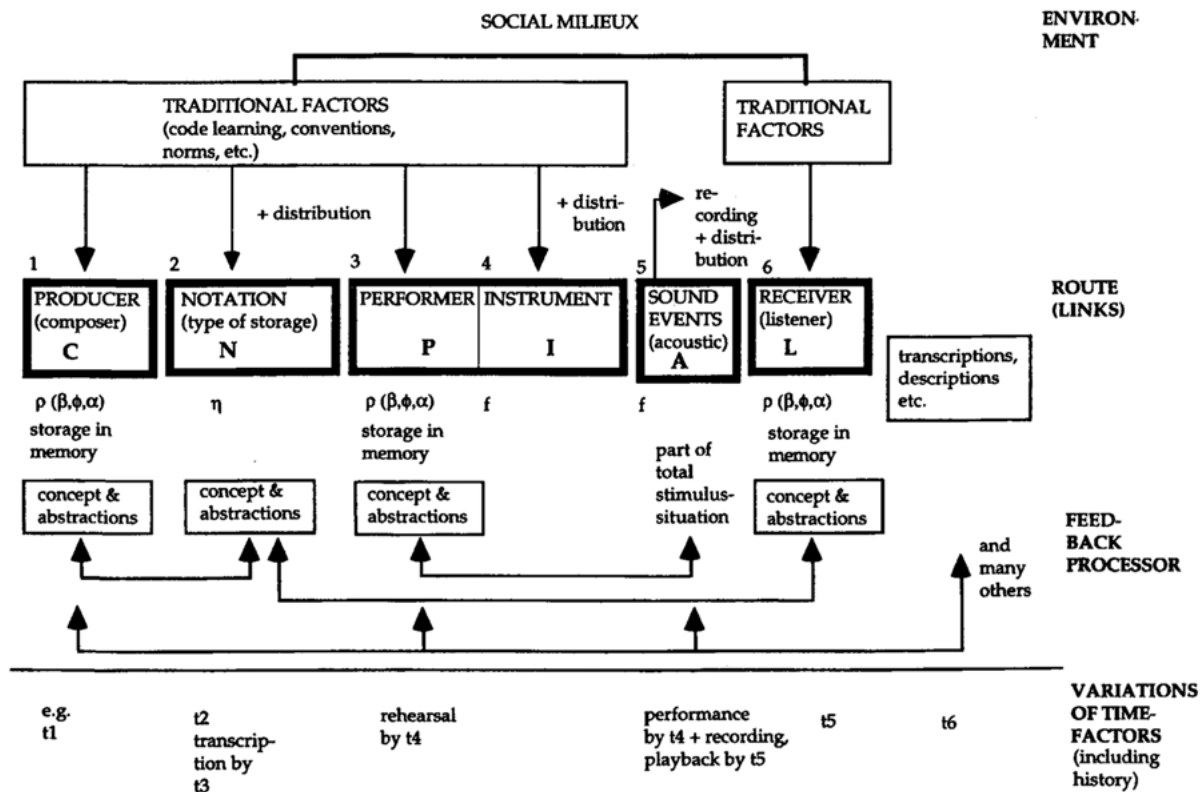
tion? A model that lacks its author is deficient. Making the author, or narrator-ego, explicit in the research is not at all a matter of unscientific subjectivity. On the contrary, it accomplishes the Hjelmslevian criterion of the explicit nature of scientific discourse better than does any apparently objective, positivist description.

(5) In order to apply the Proustian model to any new object, one should therefore take into account the entire situation of the musical enunciation: performance and performers, where and when the performance takes place; who the listeners are, what they experience, how their differing competencies influence decoding of the musical message; what the structure of the piece expresses; how the piece is related to other works by the composer; to which musical genre it belongs, and the general role of its traditional genre; how it has been made (the kind of melodies, dynamics, chordal processes, rhythms); and its temporal nature in relation to the inner time conceptions of the listeners.

But would such a description be a satisfactory *semiotic* analysis of the performance situation? What would make it particularly semiotic?

Such an analysis would undoubtedly be changed from mere taxonomy into semiotics by a demonstration of the meaning and signification of the whole process, the fact that music as a sign exists in an infinite number of simultaneous modes of being, and that it can be compared to the "double" of entities, as described by Proust, or even to the sign of the reality which we have in our minds. Also, "semiotic" is an apt term because the mode of existence of these signs in our minds conveys their individual "accent", as Proust says. This means that we all receive the communication in slightly different ways, but in spite of these differences there is also something stable in these modes of existence. We have tried to conceptualize these constant, universal laws, using our semiotic metalanguage to portray that aspect of the reality which is significant to us.

(6) A final remark about Proust's description: we must recall that he gives us an analysis of a nonexistent composition by a nonexistent composer (I am grateful to my colleague Erkki Salmenhaara for reminding me of this important aspect). On this view, then, music is essentially and purely a product of our mind and nothing else.

Below, I summarize the Proustian description by focusing on its most essential contents, using formalizations stemming from Greimas's theory ("universalities") . The numbers refer to sections in general; I give first the position in the chain of communication in which the description takes place.

13.4 Semiotic analysis: Proust's description of a *soirée* at Madame Verdurin's

(*La prisonnière* 1923: 62–85)

1. Pd = physical activities of the performers (d = to do)
   m(e) = "expectation", "preparation" as modalities
   Lm(e) = introduction of the listeners (L) and their expectations
2. S1 = subject (1), the narrator
   m(e, *not-to-know*) = The modalities of this subject are expectation and ignorance.
3. LSl = "Listener subject 1", Madame Verdurin
   The basic isotopy in these first three sections is "society", since the different subjects in these sections are seen as members of this collective actor, as yet without individual characteristics, as possible destinatees of a musical experience.
4. S1ph = The musical, phenomenal experience of subject S1 is described. m(*not-to-know*) MOsp: music as a spatial object whose modality is "unknown"
   m(*know*) Ma1 = One familiar actor appears in the music ("la petite phrase").
   Mi(ex) = The music is provided with an external interpretant ("colour").
   Ma(*phemes*) = phemeanalysis (syntactic properties) of the musical actor
   m(dys)Ma = dysphoric evaluation of the musical actor
   trans(index) = transition which is particularly indexical: S1 gets bored, which causes a "move" to the next place in the communication.
5. LS1d(*non-verb*) = The non-verbal conduct of listener S1 (Madame Verdurin) is depicted (d = to do).
   m(*know*)LS1 = The modality of listener S1 is *knowing*, i.e., her musical competence.
6. Pd = depiction of performers' physical actions
7. LS1, LS2, S1 = listeners S1 and S2 (Mme Verdurin and the Baron de Charlus) and the narrator
8. S1ph = the inner world of the narrator
   m(euph)M(*can + know*) = The music is acknowledged as a masterpiece (+*know*) and as if it were the end-point of various sketches (*can*).
   PseudoA = Albertine's "double": a pseudoactor
   trans(index) PseudoA = pseudoactor rejected or negated
9. Real actor" vs. "composer actor" = The composer is introduced in his two opposing roles, as both a real person and a composer.
10. M(O1 v o1) = The music itself is examined; Object 1 (the Septet) is compared to object 1 (the Sonata); these reflections are given without any modalizations by the narrator, Subject 1.
    dC (*composer actor*) (S ∨ O; S-O) = It is said that the author in his role as a composer-actor is disjuncted from his object and that he is trying (d=do) to reach it.
    dP(S ∧ O) = It is said that the performer subject (Morel) has in his interpretation reached his object ("the lost fatherland").
    P(*real actor v. performer actor*) = The performer is presented in his two roles as a real person and as a performer; just as in the preceding analysis of the author or com-

poser, it is stated that the performer actor is euphoric whereas the real actor is dysphoric.

11. L[m(euph) S1 v m(dysph)] = The listeners have been divided into two groups: Subject Sl (the narrator) whose modalities are euphoric; others, who are modally (thymically) indifferent or dysphoric.

12. M[A(phemes: a1 vs. a2)] = phemeanalysis of the music: fight between two actors or themes
    S1ph[m(euph)a1] = Subject S1 experiences theme or actor 1 as a motif of joy or something else euphoric.

13. [Onot.(A2,A3dO)]= The authors or composers, actors A2 and A3 (Vinteuil's daughter and her friend), are portrayed since they have "done" or prepared the Object, the score of the Septet.

14. mC(A1) = evaluation of the posthumous fame of the composer, actor A1, Vinteuil
    m[C(real A2, A3)] = dysphoricization of the real actors A2 and A3 – a reference to their vices

15. mP[(dysph)realA], mL(dysph)realS2 = dysphoricization of the real performer actor and the real listener actor S2

Chapter 14 M. K. Čiurlionis and the interrelationships of arts

The Lithuanian painter, composer, and poet, Mikalojus Constantinas Čiurlionis (1875–1911), presents an interesting case – even a challenge – for semiotic, interdisciplinary, as well as purely musicological and art-historical research. How music and painting meet in his works is the central concern of this essay. But since this artist has not yet achieved the international recognition he deserves, we start with a few biographical and historic facts about his life.

Čiurlionis was born in 1875 in Druskininkai, southern Lithuania, where he grew up amidst old legends, folktales and *dainas.* He received his musical education in the private orchestra of Duke Oginski and was granted a scholarship at the age of 17 to study music in Warszaw. There he became acquainted with modern European ideas – those of Nietzsche, the French Symbolists, Scandinavian and Russian poets, as well as Polish modernists such as Wyspińaski and Przybyszewski. He also studied natural sciences, astronomy, and psychology. After six years of studies he wrote his first symphonic poem, *The Forest,* and was then sent to Leipzig to continue his musical training. Musical education was more serious at the Leipzig conservatory, with its Reger-Bach tradition, than at Warszaw, amidst the morbid-romantic, Chopin cult. All his holidays, however, Čiurlionis spent in the countryside, in Druskininkai, where he kept contact with pantheist mythology and with peasant arts and crafts. After the death of his sponsor, Oginski, Čiurlionis had to return to Warszaw, where he turned more to painting. He enrolled at the Warszaw Art Academy, at that time headed by the painter Stabrauskas. The subjects of Čiurlionis's painting came from the poets of his time; hence he used similar themes as Munch and Klinger; these included demons, vampires, dreams, and the like. Typically, he was not content with one art work at a time, but instead produced series of works.

This series of paintings, aquarelles, may be considered illustrations of unwritten poems, in the same sense as Mahler's symphonic themes have been held to represent fictive protagonists of novels. Poetic ideas manifested in Čiurlionis as film-like series of pictures, and if he had lived in our time he would have certainly experimented with abstract audiovisual art. He became more and more interested in depicting *movement,* a kind of rhythm of cosmic life, the music of the universe. Also, he aimed for a synthesis of arts, with pictures which he gave musical titles such as "Sonata", "Fugue", and so on. In the same year as he wrote his second symphonic poem, *The Sea*, he began painting a four-part series of aquarelles: "The Sun Sonata", "The Spring Sonata", "The Summer Sonata", "The Snake Sonata", the three-part "Sea", and two-part

"Chants", and "Pyramids". To individual sections he gave titles such as Allegro, Andante, Scherzo, and Finale. These paintings are preserved, as national treasures, at the Čiurlionis Museum in Kaunas.

Towards the end of his life – he died when only 36 years old – he visited St. Petersburg and became well known there. Ironically, the more his paintings developed towards abstract expression and non-representative art, with geometric forms having a symmetrical and static quality, the more his music moved towards chaos, with atonality expressing strange and gloomy atmospheres. So he became in both arts a pioneer of modernism, writing atonal pieces before Schoenberg did, and painting non-figurative, abstract pictures in advance of Kandinsky.

We can use semiotic analysis to engage the problem of the fusion of the visual with the musical in Čiurlionis's work. In her essay on Čiurlionis, Dorothee Eberlein (1980) studied his output using a kind of levels-theory. In both his music and painting she discerns three levels: (1) auditive or visual *plasticism,* represented in his music by folklore themes and in his painting by Lithuanian landscape motifs, grave decorations, village, the sea, etc., as well as mythological motifs such as the sun, forest, birds, and the like. (2) Second, she distinguishes a *constructive* level, which appears in the music as a "graphic" up and down movement, as a diagonal melodic passage, as a series of notes instead of themes; in the paintings this movement appears in constructions with pyramids, levels, and cycles. (3) Third, Eberlein speaks of the *content* level, which she calls speculative. This level in music, for example, may be filled by a theme with eleven notes (because the number eleven represents occult incompleteness) or by the symbolism of ABA form (when it represents the principle of becoming–being–destruction). In his painting, the speculative level manifests as cosmic subjects or as combinations of antique, oriental, and Lithuanian mythology.

A levels-theory can be of great help if our aim is to investigate Čiurlionis's paintings and compositions *separately,* but it does not grasp the core of the problem, namely, how a painting can be music and music painting. Instead, this synthesis of music and painting is better approached by examining the concepts of movement and energy, since in his paintings Čiurlionis strove for a kind of mimetic-rhythmic language related to turn-of-the-century *art nouveau,* especially to its ornamental motifs, with their capriciously decorative, "syncopated" motions. In this regard, we should remark that Čiurlionis was a pioneer of abstract art, in that he painted his "Sonatas" at least four years before Kandinsky's first abstract painting (1911).

An interesting methodological task would be to apply Kandinsky's universal grammar of art, introduced in his work *Punkt und Linie zu Fläche* (1926),

to Čiurlionis's music and paintings, to see whether Kandinsky's theory has value only as a verbalization of his own creative process, or whether it is also valid regarding the output of other contemporary artists. At the same time, one can assess its value as a method for studying the interrelationships of arts.

Kandinsky's conception of form, both in painting and music, is based upon the then-prevalent concept of energeticism (also found in the musical theories of Ernst Kurth). On the other hand, Kandinsky is a structuralist in the sense that he looks for "elements" of art, its smallest significant units, from which one, by *ars combinatoria,* creates more extensive sign complexes. Kandinsky does not consider just any graphic or pictorial form to be an element; rather, an element must be an inner, living tension of these forms. Not the outward appearance, but the forces and the tensions that reside in these forms determine the content of a pictorial work. Umberto Eco, in his earlier semiotics (*La struttura assente* 1968), shares this view of a structure consisting of tensions and comparable to a kind of magnetic field, where the interrelations among different points have been magnetized, and attract/repel each other according to a given code. If these tensions suddenly weaken or cease to exist, the living work disappears.

As is known, Kandinsky starts from the concept of a point, but in the present context his theory becomes interesting only when he moves to the next level, that of lines, which are "traces of points when they move". The external forces that make a line from a point can vary greatly. In principle, however, Kandinsky reduces them to two cases: (a) the influence of one force upon a point, (b) the influence of two forces on it, either alternately or simultaneously. Kandinsky thus replaces the ordinary concept of movement with two new ideas: tension and direction (Kandinsky 1926/1971: 66). For example, a point has only one tension and direction. The fact that Kandinsky sees the horizontal line as a "cold" movement and the vertical line as a "warm" movement may be a semantic investment that holds true only in his own aesthetic universe. In any case, in Kandinsky's theory the origin of every line is the same: Force. Kandinsky's theory is also relevant to the modern semiotic context; in the Paris School, for instance, some scholars have aimed at a semiotic definition of concepts like force, power, tension, energy, morphodynamism, etc. One can in this context refer to theories by Per Aage Brandt, Jean Petitot, and Marcello Castellana. In America, Charles Morris, among others, borrowed from George Herbert Mead the idea of types of movements of living organisms – toward something, against something, and away from something. On this basis Morris defined his three types of attitude, according to the type of movement prevailing in each case: dependence, dominance, and detachment. This idea he applied to his intercultural comparison of visual art in his book *The Open Self* (1948).

According to Kandinsky, the line also has an important place in music. We know, of course, that the melodic line is an essential parameter of music. On Kandinsky's view, even some instruments, such as violin and organ, have a linear nature, whereas the piano produces a pointlike sound. In music the line represents the dominant means of expression; painting, too, stresses dynamic values and duration. The dynamic scale from pianissimo to fortissimo finds its analogy in the growth, decay, and clarity of a line.

Kandinsky pays special attention to musical notation, which is nothing other than combinations of lines and points. Duration can be read from the color of a point (white or black), and height is conveyed by the five horizontal staff-lines. (In this respect, Ernst Kurth, in his *Grundlagen des linearen Kontrapunkts* of 1922, comes close to Kandinsky's music-theoretical formulations.) It seems that, using Kandinsky's theory, one might study the synthesis of music and painting in Čiurlionis, particularly if one also treats *iconic* sign relations. Vytaytas Landsbergis, among others, has compared the melodic curves and painted lines in Čiurlionis with each other, strictly on the visual basis of the score, and not on aural impression (Landsbergis 1967). He suggests that the melodic line of music is an iconic (materially similar) sign of the painted line, and/or the movement of the line in painting is an iconic sign of musical movement. For example, Landsbergis points out the following typical melodic figure:

Figure 141: Čiurlionis, Prelude, Op. 21 No. 2.

He projects this melodic figure in space and gets lines as follow:

Figure 142: Melodic figure in space, according to Landsbergis.

This approach is in principle the same as that taken by Etienne Souriau in his work *La correspondence des arts* (1969). In the chapter, "Le problème de la spatialisation des mélodies" (223–235), Souriau depitcts the slow movement of Beethoven's *Sonate Pathétique* solely by lines:
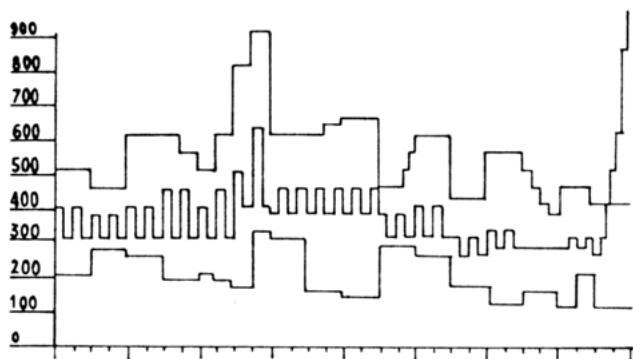
Figure 143: Spatialisation of slow movement from Beethoven's *Sonate pathétique*, according to Souriau.

Souriau also remarks, however, that such an illustration cannot adequately portray, among other things, the fact that the beginning of a melody is based upon the tonic chord and the fourth bar on the dominant, nor relations of consonance and dissonance. For example, there is a moment in the composition above in which the lines converge to form the dissonance of a second, the sense of which mere lines cannot convey to us in any way. Accordingly, such figures are able to describe only the contrapuntal aspect of music. Souriau's book contains a depiction with lines of the eighth Prelude from J. S. Bach's *Das wohltemperierte Klavier*. This depiction calls to mind some aquarelles by Čiurlionis, which he called "fugues".

Before closer analysis of some paintings and music of Čiurlionis, we offer some remarks about general characteristics of his output. First, Čiurlionis's paintings grab our attention by the use of colors that, in his time, were perhaps jarring to the Western tradition of art, but in oriental philosophy and color-sense were totally acceptable. Second, one notices the changes of *perspective* in Čiurlionis. His paintings include a conscious estrangement and distortion of perspective: the profile of a distant landscape is situated in the foreground, and objects, which to normal perception are close, are placed farther back. In music this corresponds to the placement of dense sound complexes in the bass register and thinner ones in the high ranges. Such a procedure goes against
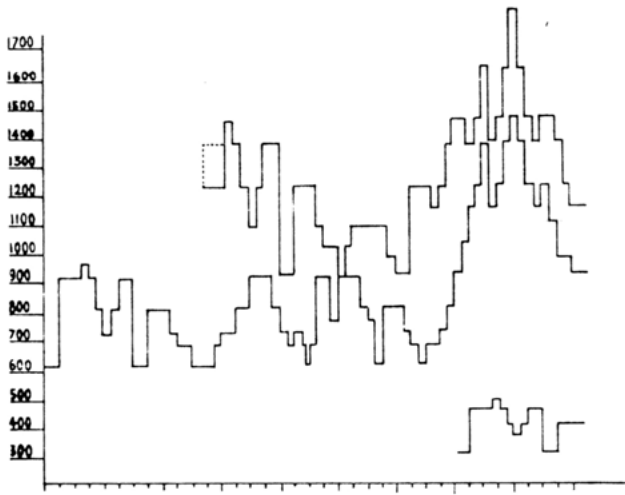
Figure 144: J. S. Bach, *Das wohltemperierte Klavier*, Prelude No. 8, spatialized.

the "normal" sound and "gravitation" of music, in which the degree of density usually grows from bass up to discant, following intervals of the overtone series.

The distortion or absence of perspective might also be interpreted as a weakening of the ego function (the actorial *I*), or the disappearance of the subject in painting or music. Moreover, when one joins to this the oneiric quality of Čiurlionis's works – the dreamlike semantic gesture that is their *dominant*, in Formalist terms – we come close to a new interpretation. In his book, *Der Traum und seine Auslegung*, Medard Boss has outlined the emergence of perspective in Western painting, and specified its connections to epistemic changes of the whole culture:

> The masterpieces of Japanese art do not know any perspective. The spirit of oriental culture has directed itself towards the dissolution of all tension between ego and non-ego, and to the idea that every single phenomenon returns to unity with the only "great life". Similarly, perspective was foreign to the Ancient Greeks. Nevertheless, did they not also experience all phenomena as something which came before, from the secret of the hidden essence? Was it not so that, even for them, all entities in the world were hidden as to their content which only appeared in their realization? Therefore the Ancients thought a thing to be an *ergon,* as a work which manifested in its fulfillment. The Romans started to interpret the Greek *ergon* as an *opus,* as a product created through laborious, human *operare*; until finally the Latin verbs *operare, agere,* and the concept of *actualitas* were

reduced to the Greek *energeia,* which provided this concept with its present meaning of power and efficiency. Alongside this Roman turn of thought, people began to believe more and more that it was man who, as a thinking and imagining ego, provided the world with meaning. Increasingly, one started to think of the essential content of things as a result of human activity and imagination. This line of thinking culminated in the Cartesian concept of *res cogitans*, the human spiritual being or subject, which Cartesius considered the only doubtless and real thing. With the ever growing dominance of subjectivism, with the elevation and institution of the human subject as enveloping all other reality, the new way of seeing perspective was also born. (Boss 1953: 36)

The "oriental" quality in Čiurlionis's paintings – the absence of perspective and subject – signals a return to an old world-view, a denial of the Cartesian model. According to Worobiow (1938), this takes place in Čiurlionis in such a way that the musical assumes the visual: every object becomes part of a cosmic orchestra. The harmony is broken by what separates, by that which remains deaf to the music of the cosmos, or that lets its own voice sound alone above the others. In semiotic terms, Čiurlionis totally lacks the third category of engagement: actoriality. (Other categories, of temporality and spatiality, are analyzed in detail below.) He has no "actant themes", in the manner of, say, Liszt, with which a listener could identify. And this is true of his paintings as well: the anthropomorphic creatures and other mythological figures in some of his works function only as metric units revealing the cosmic scale of the painting. Čiurlionis is modern because he does not reproduce the grand narrative model created by Romanticism, but rather questions it. Of course, his paintings and compositions still have referents: in music, the modal scales allude to *dainas* as units of the level of first articulation ("word"); and in his paintings one finds themes, like "fairy tale" and so on, as well as recognizable objects. From this one may draw a third general conclusion about the *paradigm* and *syntagm* of Čiurlionis's output: the paradigm of his paintings consists of common, identifiable, objects such as trees, stars, clouds, mythical figures, and so on. What is particularly modern in his work is the syntagmatic placement of these paradigmatic elements, a placement which breaks conventional norms of painting (perspective, e.g.). In this regard, Čiurlionis resembles Marc Chagall.

On the other hand, the syntagm in Čiurlionis includes not only horizontal and vertical movement, but also movement in depth – from near to far, and far to near, the illusion created by the surface of a painting or music. As such, these kinds of perspective effects are not rare in music. For a classic example, think of the slow movement of Beethoven's *Appassionata,* where motion from one variation to another can be interpreted as movement from shadow to light and back, or from far to near and back.

14.1 Analysis

Some of Čiurlionis's piano works illustrate the overall stylistic development of his music. The collection for piano, *Kuriniai Fortepijonui,* published in Vilnius in 1975, contains 91 pieces, all written between 1899 and 1909. This is not the kind of "picturesque" music that Liszt created out of his travel experiences in his *Années de pèlerinage*, or Debussy and Albeniz in their musical "post cards". Čiurlionis's piano pieces are all purely musical, *tönende bewegte Formen*, without any intentional programmaticism. Although among their common features are influences from Lithuanian dainas, the folk-music character manifests differently in different periods. In his early phase this influence gives rise to either Chopinesque or Scriabin-like mazurkas and nocturnes:

Figure 145: Čiurlionis, Prelude op. 3 no. 3, bars 1–6.

Sometimes, an almost Schubertian singing quality:

Figure 146: Čiurlionis, Prelude op. 6 no. 1, bars 1–7.

Later it appears in a more abstract way, in the modal intervallic structures of motifs. Yet even in the early works one constant feature of Čiurlionis appears: linearity, the inclination to polyphonic writing, such as fugue and canon. These works can also be viewed as character pieces in the vein of Schumann and Mendelsssohn, belonging to the genre of romantic, rhapsodic piano preludes, as for example in this reminiscence of *Vogel als Prophet* by Schumann:

Figure 147: Čiurlionis, Prelude op12 no. 1, bars 1–5.

Even in these cases a certain linearity persists. Often the parts diverge from each other and the ambitus is wide: a dark, Nordic color arises from the use of the bass register (in this respect, Čiurlionis resembles the Swedish composer, Wilhelm Stenhammar). The pieces are generally rather short, without extensive developments. The most extensive formal type is a set of variations. There is scant elaboration of motivic material, in the way of a *Durchführung*; rather, each piece is based on the presentation of a rhythmic, melodic, or textual idea. The motifs serve as exclamatory "gestures", and as Adorno has stated, gestures cannot be developed, only repeated. Ostinato figures are common to Čiurlionis – they appear in almost any part, while the other parts are varied.

Towards the end of the collection a swerve towards atonality occurs, such that constant modulation often erases the feeling of a particular key. The simultaneity of parts does not, however, lead to sharper dissonance even in the late pieces, although the chromaticism and instability of melodic line border on complete athematicity. Chromaticism occurs especially in the fugues, not however based on diminished seventh chords in the manner of Franck or on *Tristan*-like modulations. Instead, Čiurlionis's fugues come close to those of Shostakovitch. In the preludes, in turn, certain types and topics are

repeated. For example, agitated ostinato figuration often occurs, against which a convulsive motif is thrown, usually first in the highest voice; then it is answered in the bass, requiring cross-positioning of hands:

Figure 148: Čiurlionis, Prelude op. 21 no. 1, bars 1–6.

In the next example, we find a polyphonic texture, constructed so that the sonority based on the overtones forms a smooth timbral surface extending over the range of the whole keyboard:

Figure 149: Čiurlionis, Prelude op. 29 no. 3 bars 1–2.

Here is a type consisting of a continuous, often dactylic, galloping rhythm (perhaps an allusion to motoric passages in Schumann):

Figure 150: Čiurlionis, Prelude op. 13 no. 3 bars 1–2.

A type based on only one melodic motion, often diagonal; the latter is a visual counterpart of paintings depicting a stormy sea or "cosmic storm":

Figure 151: Čiurlionis, Prelude op. 28 no. 3, bars 1–5.

Chromaticism, as a colouristic device, occurs most often in descending figures and in harmonic development. The Prelude Op. 26 No. 4 (1907) is typical in this sense: the ostinato of the A section is based on the alternation of B, B-flat, and A minor tonic chords, use of the lowest bass register, and changes of color in the arpeggiated figure, with its arabesque-like melody (in the same way as Wagner creates his "Arabian", demonic tinge in the Klingsor motives of *Parsifal*). The undulating figure, familiar from many other works of Čiurlionis, produces not only an up-and-down effect, but also of depth (near and far):

Figure 152: Čiurlionis, Prelude Op. 26, No. 4, bar 1.

The B section of the same piece (after which A returns) exhibits diagonally rising movement, in which the musical expression changes, dotted rhythms prevail. The whole section culminates in a chordal tremolando, ascending by whole steps, as a series of tonic chords of B, A-flat, B-flat, along with C major seventh and ninth chords – a kind of crest of the wave (cf. the painting, "Sea"):

Figure 153: Čiurlionis, Prelude op. 26 no. 4 (bars 23–27).

Perhaps a formal counterpart of this ABA form exists in the visual universe of Čiurlionis, such that the temporal succession of sections would correspond to a superimposition of the three levels of the painting. On the other hand, ABA form might equally mirror the strict symmetry of this artist's most abstract paintings. Ostinato figures of the same pitch recall the horizontal line, which recurs often to articulate the surface of his paintings.

A central question in the analysis of Čiurlionis's paintings is to what extent pictorial-visual "fugues" and "sonatas" should be interpreted as such. To probe this issue I next examine closely an aquarelle of Čiurlionis entitled "Fugue". (I leave aside for now any attempt to find sonata form in his paintings and his four-part "symphonic" series of pictures).

The central idea in the aquarelle "Fugue", one which first strikes the spectator, is the use of mirror effects. As pointed by Oscar Parland, reflections on a watery surface also occur in other paintings of Čiurlionis. One can distinguish two basic levels in the painting: (1) the silhouette of a forest, with tops

of pine trees thrusting upward, in the upper part of the aquarelle; (2) in the lower part is a multi-levelled silhouette, likewise depicting a forest.

A closer look at the upper part reveals the alternation of two motifs, the pine-motif (A) and the indefinite, rounded silhouette-motif (B). Both motifs are projected on the water's surface, allowing us to describe the entire level as follows:

1st level

A B A A B (expanded)   a b a b
_____

Ɐ ƆB   B Ɐ   q   q ɐ
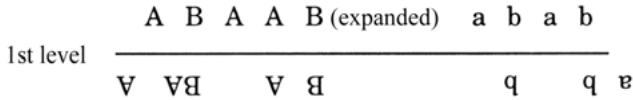
Figure 154: Structure of motifs in Čiurlionis's aquarelle, "Fugue".

Reading the level from left to right, as though it were a musical staff, we notice that when motif B repeats it is temporally augmented; in the right corner takes place what in music is called a liquidation, i.e., a motivic truncation or dissolution. In a purely formal sense, what is involved is a very common musical form of development: a motif, its repetition, then something else – xy xy z (for examples, see the first themes of Beethoven piano sonatas). One might think that the first level would introduce the fugue theme, proper to this so-called developmental or processive form; the second level (lower part of the painting) would represent a fugue-like, three-part elaboration of this theme.

On the first level our attention is drawn mainly to the pine-motif – first, because it is such a clearly identifiable object, and second, in a purely visual sense, because as a composition of line it stands out most conspicuously from the background. Nevertheless, the creation of a genuinely Čiurlionis-like, anti-illusionist effect – *estrangement* – appears in two ways: first, the reflections of the pine-motif (A) in the water (V) *do not* correspond to any real object above the water; they are not even of the same color as the pines standing above: in the left upper corner the trees upside-down are green, the trees right-side up are blue. Second, strange combinations of lines and small balls, reminiscent of mossy spores, ascend from motif B. If this interpretation is right, then Čiurlionis unites in the same representation elements from both a macro-(tree) and micro-(moss) world.

The second level of the aquarelle, the lower part as a whole, is not based on a horizontal line but on an undulating (non-diagonal), back-and-forth movement. This level consists of three lines, again constituted by motifs A and B, with the A motifs perhaps the more clearly projected. We shall call these lines, from top to bottom, alpha, beta, and gamma.

The alpha line contains only the B-type, softly undulating profile. The only change taking place is that of the color (similar to a modulation in music),

which begins at the point where the pine-motif (A) of the lower beta line pene-trates before intersecting the alpha line. From this intersection one might infer that alpha and beta lines influence one another.

The beta line entails first a pair of motifs A^1a^2 (dark green), then motifs of B (soft waves), and thereafter the A motif three times. Then again the B motifs almost fuse with the corresponding B motifs of the alpha level.

The gamma line in turn consists first of B motifs (where the line-ball motifs are emphasized by balls' shining yellow). Precisely at the same time as in the beta line, the A^3 motif wells up. Also in the gamma line occurs the greatest and most striking A motif, which appears precisely in the same vertical line as the A^3 motif of the beta line; one might say, at the same *moment*. With this we come to the formal description of the lower part (second level) of the painting:

alpha line	(α)	B........................	B' change of color) ...	
beta line	(β)	A^1a^2... B'............	A^3..... A^4... A^5.....	B'... melt together
gamma line	(γ)	B........................	A^1a^2. B..............	a^3a^4...

Figure 155: Aquarelle, "Fugue": Structure of lower part.

What is there about this three-line arrangement that would enable us to call it a three-part fugue? The aforementioned lines are first distinguished from each other as independent "parts", but they are also metonymically intercon-nected: alpha and beta merge together at the right side; the gamma part bor-rows the pair of motifs Aa from beta (both occurrences of Aa are even of the same color). These are all observations concerning *metonymic* relations, i.e., the proximity of motifs and their placement far apart, close together, superim-posed, one under the other, etc. As Roland Barthes did in his *Elements of Semiology*, we may ask, What are the *metaphoric* relations? Obviously, the first level (upper side) and the second level (lower side) have to be interpreted as metaphorical in relation to each other, since there is no metonymic factor unit-ing them and because all the motifs of different "parts" of the second level have been borrowed precisely from the paradigm offered by the first level. Nevertheless, the painting also has metaphoric relations with outer reality, such as the "developmental" form of the "theme" of the first level, borrowed from music, and the fugue-like elaboration of the alpha, beta, and gamma lines as parts in dialogue with each other.

So far, our analysis has relied on an implicit supposition which we now render explicit: all along we have been reading the painting from left to right. Is this way of reading more justified than others? We read a score from left to

right and similarly a written text, but does this fact justify our reading paintings in this direction? In other words, does the movement of a painting from left to right correspond to musical time?

We have in fact already referred to another way of reading, namely down-up, which would parallel the perspectival distinction of close/far. In this sense the foreground of the painting forms a mobile silhouette of a forest, the background a static arabesque of line that remains on one level. Not going into too great a detail, we can depict the interrelations of the first and second levels as follows:
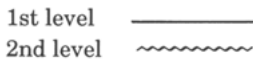
Figure 156: Interrelation of levels in "Fugue".

This general model is repeated in many of Čiurlionis's piano works as a textual event (for instance, in the Prelude Op. 6 No. 1 from 1901), and perhaps even more often as an inversion,

Figure 157: Čiurlionis, "Fugue" (watercolor).

where the ostinato motif appears in the bass and the figuration in the discant. The normal perspective, however, is broken in the relation between the first and second levels: the water's surface has been drawn above the profile of the forest. Such estrangement is a typical device of Čiurlionis; it can also appear as deliberate exaggeration, as in the expansion of the size of the waves in relation to the ships in the painting entitled *The Sea*.

It seems that Worobiow's thesis might not hold true, namely, that one would not able to find any imitation of a musical form with main and secondary themes, exposition, development, and recapitulation sections in the "Sonatas" painted at the same time as his "Preludes and Fugues". Still, close examination of Čiurlionis's work may perhaps one day reveal something central to the problematics of the interrelationships of arts, and offer on a theoretical level an answer to the question, By what mechanisms does human cognition transform music into colors and lines, and vice versa?

Chapter 15 Čiurlionis, Sibelius and Nietzsche: Three profiles and interpretations

In the title above, the juxtaposition of three such seemingly different artists and thinkers needs explanation. In the theoretical sense, their output is characterized by certain qualities which make them suitable for application of my theory of existential semiotics. On the other hand, and given the many differences among the three, it must be noted that their common denominators stand more in the Wittgensteinian line of "family resemblances" than in one to one correspondence.

First, why Sibelius and Čiurlionis? They are both "national" composers. But what does it mean to assume such a role? How are national and regional qualities filtered into a musical work and style in the iconic, indexical and symbolic respects? This is also a cultural semiotic problem. During his stay in Helsinki in 1887 Busoni wrote a piece, *Finnische Ballade*, which represents Finland as seen through the eyes of an Italian – in the same way as Glazunov's *Finnish Fantasy* is Finland in the eyes of a Russian, and Čiurlionis's mazurkas are Poland seen by a Lithuanian, his "Fugues" Lithuania as seen through German glasses.

The Finnish quality of Sibelius, however, does not stem from quotations or arrangements of Finnish folk tunes. In some of his pieces we can hear such "national style": the folk tune harmonized according to late romantic norms, or when a composer writes a "folkish tune" because he has mastered the idiom so perfectly that he can "speak" that musical style as his "mother tongue" (the third category of Béla Bartók, on how to arrange *Bauernmusik* into erudite music). Such Finnish style we meet for instance in the middle section of the Caprice in B minor for piano:

Figure 158: Middle section of Sibelius's *Caprice,* op. 24 no. 3 (bars 52–56).

Sibelius himself always denied that folk music had any influence on his symphonic style. Rather, he used to make general references to Finnish nature, as he once did to his pupil Bengt von Törne during a voyage on the Baltic Sea. Upon seeing the granite rocks of the coast, he exclaimed: "...we know why we are able to treat the orchestra as we do" (Törne 1937: 97; see Tarasti 2001a: 10). On the other hand, in his early *Kullervo* symphony the folkish "Karelian" quality is easily recognizable. Contrary to his own explanations, before composing it in 1892 he had visited and heard an Ingrian runic singer, Larin Paraske, who had mastered tens of thousands of runes. The late Erik Tawaststjerna, biographer of Sibelius, came to the conclusion that the melodic style of Sibelius's more "absolute" symphonies originated from some very archaic pitch structures and formulas to be found in old Finno-Ugric music. But this could be revealed only by a deep structural analysis (see Murtomäki 1993).

As to Čiurlionis, I am not competent to tell on which musical factors his "Lithuanian" quality is based. Yet, we may accept Carl Dahlhaus's view on national style, namely, that it is first created by great composers: it is their innovation, which the folk later find and identify with. A kind of "folkish quality" can be distinguished in the early piano pieces of Čiurlionis, as in the Prelude in B flat minor; by contrast, his folk dances sound still very Chopinesque. The true Lithuanian identity of his music is in its structural properties and unique artistic interrelationships. He also represents an interesting case in which the National is transformed into the Modern. As known, twentieth century modernism (e.g., serialism) was hostile towards anything national. Yet, even in his most avant-garde experiments Čiurlionis remains "Lithuanian", but in a more profound sense than through any connection to folk music proper.

Another way to view both Sibelius and Čiurlionis is from a postcolonial perspective (see Tarasti 2000: 137–153). Sibelius became a national icon of the Finns, a symbol of nationalism, first under the colonizing Russian empire – Finlandia! – and then in the young, independent Finland after 1917. Čiurlionis likewise played an active role in the Lithuanian national project, with far-reaching visions that were not realized in his lifetime. Later his role in the colonized Soviet Lithuania was a very strong one, as a sign of resistance. Now Čiurlionis is Lithuania's contribution to pan-European culture, again a force to maintain national identity in a globalized world. He can be seen again in the light of the "neo-colonial" situation of nameless, nationless, international market forces.

The same holds true for Sibelius, who also suffered from his role as a national icon. He wanted to be a universal symphonist in the line Beethoven-Brahms-Bruckner-Mahler, to belong to the German dominated canon of European erudite music. In this sense it is understandable that some intellectuals

saw him as an obstacle to a pan-European, progressive modernism in the Adornian sense. Accordingly the analysis of his iconism in Finnish culture took an iconoclastic position. But that now has become old-fashioned. Now, national, local cultures are said to contain the seed of true progress – it is nationalism in music, for which music is "the flower of the earth" (Jean-Aubry 1922: 33), that is now threatened by the new type of colonizing power from globalization processes. Therefore, the perspective from which we presently see the nationalism of composers like Čiurlionis or Sibelius has again changed. We see nationalism again as "progressive", and want to study it more deeply.

15.1 Narrative space

Both composers employ structural secrets which make their music fascinating to a listener of any time and culture. Among the modernist techniques of both these composers, there is a particular sense of spatiality which perhaps unites them. Sibelius's symphonies display what is called by German musicologists *Raumdramaturgie* (in the quasi-Wagnerian sense: *Zum Raum wird hier die Zeit*). Actoriality (melodies and themes) becomes via repetition a kind of spatial technique, which at the same time is something deeply "Finno-ugrian" as James Hepokoski has shown in his analysis of Sibelius's Fifth Symphony (Hepokoski 1993): the same motif is rotated endlessly, like a magic incantation, in many of his pieces, from *Kullervo* to *En Saga*.[16] Hepokoski notes that this technique stands out even in such smaller forms as the song *Illalle*, in which the same motif repeats 16 times with slight harmonic changes. In *En Saga*, the same happens with the abundant recurrence of one of the motifs. Even the early orchestral piece, *Skogsrået*, displays the same idea.

In Čiurlionis, space is the basic category of discursivization, both in his paintings, which utilize a new sense of perspective, and in his musical works (e.g., see Landsbergis 1992; Kučinskas 2002, 2004). Both inner (tonal relations) and outer (register) spatiality seem to be without focus in Čiurlionis's most radical preludes and aquarelles.[17] What is involved is the engagement/disengagement of time, space and actors (in our sense of Greimassian semiotics). Let us look more closely at this aspect of Čiurlionis's artistic procedures.

Čiurlionis expressed in literary form a quite characteristic narrative technique, which appears also in his paintings and musical compositions. For

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16 The reader is referred to my *Myth and Music*, concerning the repetition of the runic theme in the development of the first movement (Tarasti 1979: 243).
17 The narratological concepts of inner and outer spatiality are defined and exemplified thoroughly in Tarasti 1994a: 79–80, passim.

example, consider the short story *Fairy Tale* (*Märchen*) written in 1908 (quoted from Verkelytė-Fedaravičienė 1997: 185–186):

> The narrator sits on a bench, tired after wandering around the streets of a town. It is oppressively hot, and yellow grey houses and golden sunny towers are seen; people move slowly, like drunk in a dream.
> An old man passed by, leaning on a stick, stopped at the narrator, looking at him. His eyes were sad, and thoughtless. On his breast were hanging all kinds and sizes of crosses, of copper, iron, silvery. Yet the old man asked: Tell me, what does the colour green look like? Green colour? Hmm, green is like – the grass, the trees. The old man laughed and grasped him on the head: Come with me friend when you like. I am hurrying to a land; during the journey I shall tell you something interesting.
> When I stood up and followed him he started to tell:
> Once upon a time when I was still young like you are now, my son, it was oppressively hot. Deathly tired after wandering on streets of a town, I sat on a bench. It was very hot, and yellow green houses and golden sunny towers were seen, and people went slowly like in a drunk in a dream.
> I looked long at him and longed for meadows, trees, the green, the green of May.
> Suddenly I stood up and began to wander all my life along. I went forwards and asked from all people I met, but as an answer I received only a tiny cross. I climbed up high towers and looked at the town as far as I could, but could not see anything green.
> The narrator looked at the old man who cried like a child.
> At the end he stopped wandering, tired, and said: this is enough, I stay here; you go forward, without rest. The heat will follow you, there is no night this way, only perpetual day.
> During your journey tell the people about meadows and trees, but do not ever ask; and take this robe to bind the tiny crosses.
> But when the narrator took ten steps, the old man exclaimed, Wait son, I forgot: look from the tower, so you can find the way. You will as an old man find there a bench where you can always meet younger people.
> So said the old man, and I went far and looked from the high tower around ...

What is typical in this story is not only its strong synaesthesia, but its structure. Čiurlionis wants to include or frame several stories, to encircle one inside the other, and blur their boundaries so that the reader will no longer know which story he is following – the framing story or the one embedded in it – or who the narrator is. Such playing with the relationship of surrounding/surrounded is typical also of his musical pieces and semi-abstract paintings.[18]

15.2 Painted sonatas

Čiurlionis's interest in structural interrelations betwen music and painting are obvious in many of his aquarelles. They have been studied by at least by three

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[18] This is a semiotic mechanism studied by A. J. Greimas as early as in his *Sémantique structurale* (1966).

Greimas-oriented semioticians: Jean-Marie Floch (1987: 593–601), Jacques Fontanille (1995: 100–124) and myself (Tarasti 1993: 125–145; 1992: 147–175; 1999: 88–91).

Jacques Fontanille likewise takes on the challenge of musical form in Čiurlionis's paintings, in his detailed analysis of the paintings "Allegro" and "Andante" of the *Star Sonata*. His study is a sophisticated application of Greimassian methodology to visual semiotics, but he seems to miss the essential point: how a painting crosses boundaries in order to become music, and vice versa. Again, the crucial question is how a musical formal principle is transformed into a visual one without being merely a metaphor. That is the theme of the analysis which follows.

In "Allegro" our attention is caught by the wedge-type motion that pushes up from below. Other elements of the picture are grouped symmetrically around this vector. The image consists of a kind of stretched pyramid at the top, where we see an angel-like figure directly facing the spectator. This actorial figure is ambiguous: on both sides of it are similar pyramids, which are interrupted in their rising movement and with no angle at the top. Second, the angel's wings could as well be interpreted as sun rays, filtering down from on top. Hence we do not know if this is really an angel that, by appearing out of primal chaos, brings order to the latter, in pulling behind itself an array of stars. Here are the elements we encounter in the picture, and the ones framing this central motion:

(a) The foreground of the painting consists of thick, surging lines which change colours among blue, green yellow and brownish. Amidst these wave-like twines swim …

(b) … orbs, which could be interpreted as kinds of planets.

(c) In the upper part of the painting, about one-third of the canvas down, there is a horizontal row of stars, in which one can distinguish familiar constellations.

(d) The stars appear disordered, as if swept along with the motion of the central wedge.

(e) Under the wedge prevails the aforementioned chaos; above it is an intermediate layer having a kind of order: the twines take a horizontal direction as well, and stars and planets occupy this intermediate space.

(f) Above that rises a kind of sphere, dominated by the sun, from which two other, more distant pyramids rise. The sun is emitting rays and blue light.

(g) From the horizontal line of stars four vertical lines descend at regular distances, cutting the entire surging sea of the universe as if measuring it.
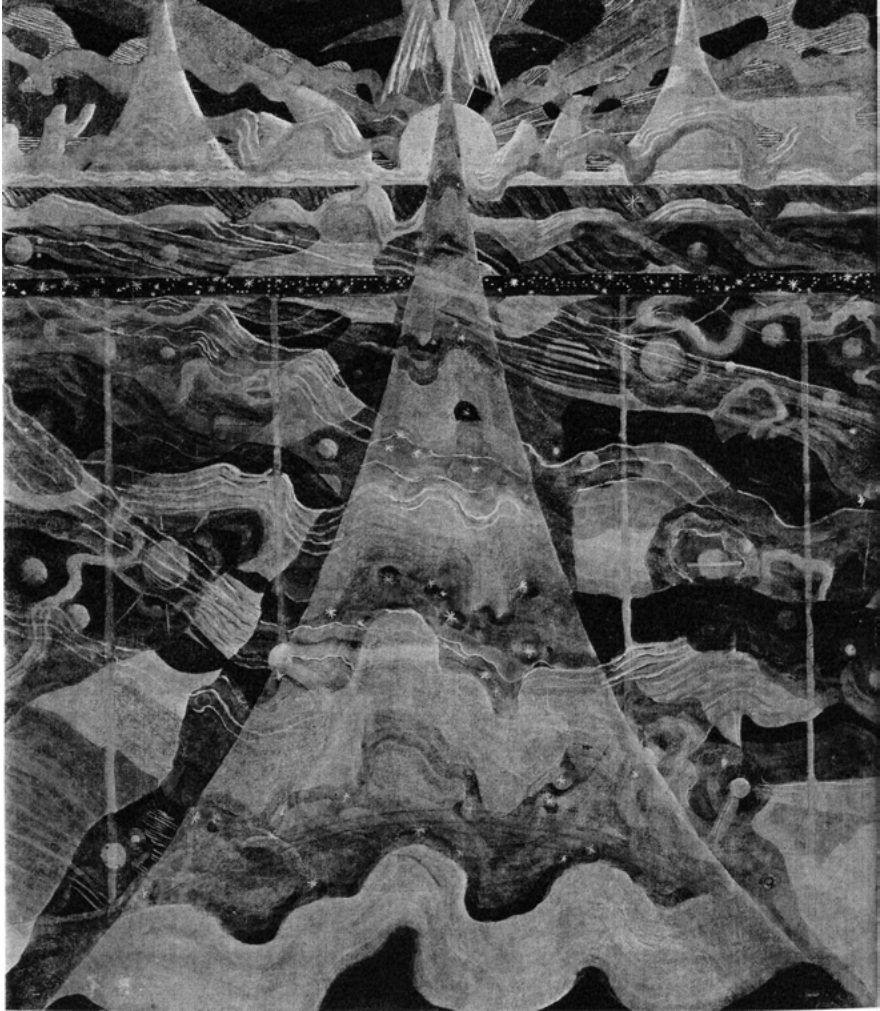
Figure 159: Čiurlionis: *Star Sonata*, "Allegro" (painting).

It is immediately clear that, if one wants to interpret this painting temporally, the time dimension goes from down to up. The motion of "Allegro" is to ascend very actively. This time rising upwards is like a measurement, whereas the other universe is undulating back and forth, sloshing about planets, and shapes like twines and veils. It is hard to say whether this portrays water or air.

Does anything here refer to musical sonata-allegro? Fontanille, referring to J.-M. Floch about sonata form in these paintings, is going in the right direction when he states the following:
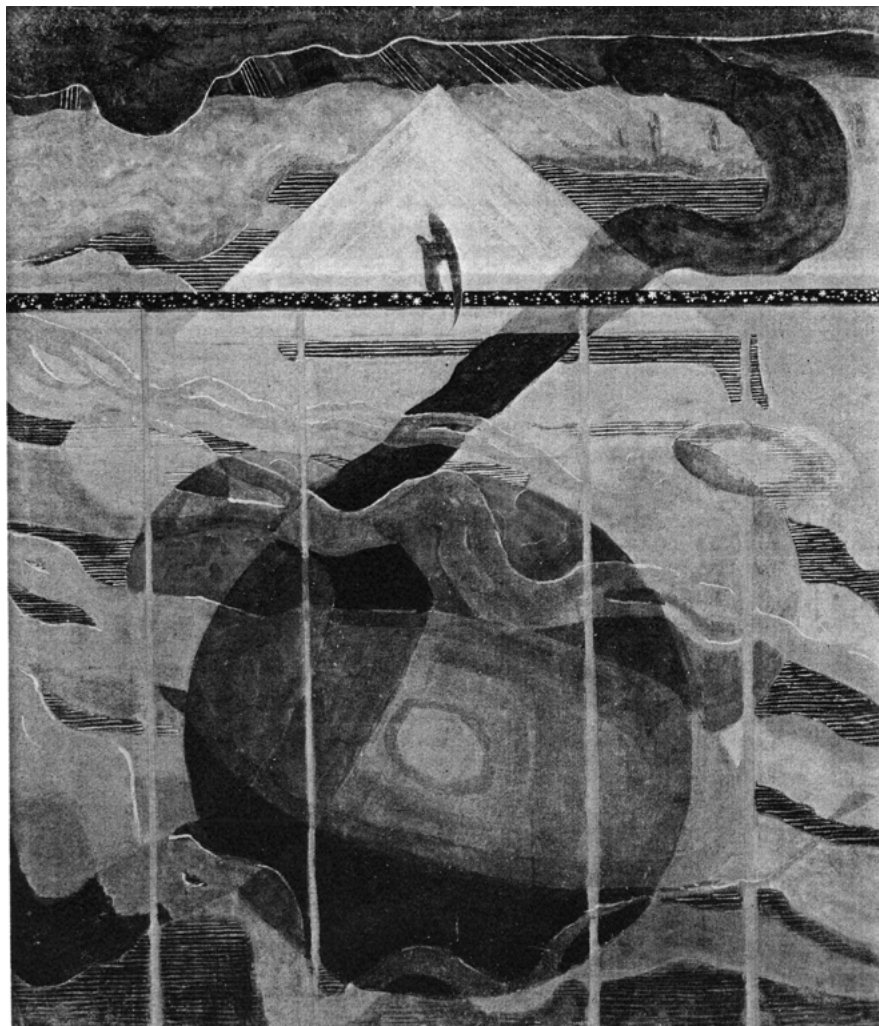
Figure 160: Čiurlionis: *Star Sonata*, "Andante" (painting).

Par ailleurs la sonate est bâtie autour et à partir de son prémier mouvement, l'Allegro: deux thèmes y sont confrontés, et le développement de ces deux thèmes, considérés et traités comme antagonistes à partir de Beethoven, permet de faire varier les points de vue et le rapport de forces au sein du conflit thématique de base.... Indépendamment de toute application de la forme sonate à la peinture, nous pouvons au moins supposer que, tout comme la sonate déploie les variations tensives d'un conflit de base, les sonates peintes déploient elles aussi ce même type de tensions, au sein de la configuration de la lumière. (Fontanille 1995: 100)

[Moreover, sonata is constructed around and takes its direction from the first movement, Allegro: there two themes are juxtaposed, and the development of these two themes, considered and treated as antagonists since the time of Beethoven, allows for varying points of view and varying relations of force amidst the basic thematic conflict…. Independently of any application of sonata form to painting, we can at least suppose that anything like sonata, deploys variations of tension from a basic conflict; painted sonatas deploy the same type of tensions, amidst a configuration of light.]

This gives Fontanille opportunity to apply his fascinating theory of light (see Tarasti 2001b).

As to our own question about musical form in this painting: the only trichotomy that would correspond to Exposition, Development and Recapitulation of a sonata would be the three rising pyramids. If the middle pyramid equals the Development, it is certainly a very strong and powerful one. It seems to culminate in the actorial thematic figure. Perhaps in this "sonata" the radical solution is that the main actor, the angel, occurs in its entirety only in the development, as in the symphonies of Sibelius (for instance, in his Second Symphony). Various key areas would correspond to different colours of paint. The vertical lines indicate the musical time measured by bar lines. The horizontal belt of stars is like a key signature, setting all the events in their proper places. If the main theme is the ascending, culminating movement, then the subordinate or secondary theme would equate to the wave-like twines or algae. The third thematic element consists of the orbs (stars, planets).

If the horizontal belt of stars portrays established key areas, then the blurred streaming of stars in the ascending pyramid would constitute a new principle of tonal organization: a kind of atonality, in which the different keys have no hierarchic center or "tonic". Or perhaps the painting does have a tonic: the actor (angel) standing on top of the pyramid, and its movement upward, which dominates the picture. Its modality of 'will-to-do' carries away all the other elements. In the upper section of the painting is the sun – safe haven of the tonic – at last reached in the Recapitulation of this "sonata".

In the second painting of the *Sonatas*, "Andante", it is significant that the angel does not walk along the belt of stars backwards or from right to left. This means that, in this picture, one is looking behind, at what has already occurred. The chaotic surge of the cosmos has now been calmed. The well-balanced horizontal strokes loom in the background of everything. The undulating lines still prevail; but their motion has slowed down, and they no longer struggle violently in opposing directions. This is precisely an *andante* in relation to the *allegro* of the previous painting. The vertical lines are also the same, but now they measure time even more distinctly, without being subordinated to other events as they were in "Allegro". The center of attraction is no longer

the pyramid or wedge, but a dark ball that is bound to this universe by a diagonal twine, which freely meanders from the lower left corner to the upper right corner. In the background of the angel is a light-pyramid, which has been flattened or expanded from the previous painting. There these pyramids were still under construction. Here the pyramid takes on its fixed form.

In a musical sonata consisting of three or four movements, the andante movement is often in the key of the subdominant. We can presume that the green-grey tinge of this painting indicates this synaesthetically, when compared to the brightness of the previous picture. Its theme may have been elaborated from materials of the preceding movement, since the angel goes backwards and appears in a somewhat bowed position, as if listening to something.

In searching for a musical piece by Čiurlionis that would correspond to these pictures, I have found only one that might be paralleled to this painted "Allegro": his Prelude Op. 26 No. 4 (1907), composed a year before the *Star Sonata*. It is a very colourful and surprising musical piece, which does *not* represent the composer's usual, linear style. The climax of this prelude is an impressionistic colour-effect as the culmination of its development. In the beginning we hear back and forth surges, arpeggiated "Klingsor" harmonies from *Parsifal* in B/B flat minor – they portray the chaotic universe shown in the lower part of the aquarelle. The modulations correspond to colour shifts in the picture. The theme, which rises like a cry, refers to the sweeping upward-motion in the painting. The second section starts, with completely different music, as if one were moved to the middle level of the painting. This is followed by a musical climax featuring a whole-tone scale. The development stops on this extremely colourful and radiant moment, from which one returns to the beginning. Hence the form is symmetrical, as in the painting; and in the middle of the picture is the main point of attraction: a "projecting top", paralleled by the unmistakeable culmination in the music. In music we only have to be patient and wait for the attraction point, since it is not always at the beginning of a piece, but appears rather as a "genosign" in its later phases and as the goal. In a painting, we reach it immediately in the global impression.

The musicality of Čiurlionis's visual imagination extends to his paintings, the *Sea Sonatas* (see Tarasti 1999). He wrote his symphonic poem, *The Sea*, when he was traveling a lot, to Prague, Dresden, Nürnberg, München and Vienna, among other cities, where he saw many paintings by Böcklin, Klimt and Puvis de Chavannes. At the same time, he was actively engaged in painting and composing music.

Vytautas Landsbergis studied *The Sea* in his monograph on Čiurlionis, and joined it stylistically to late Romanticism, but emphasized that, on a deeper

level of signification, it proves to be a very unique and original work (Landsbergis 1992: 65). *The Sea* has a leitmotif, a solemn rising motif in the cellos and horns, which sounds right at the beginning, alongside other melodic material. Landsbergis compares the impression to similar devices in paintings with simultaneous events and figures. The descending second theme, mentioned by Landsbergis, evokes the dream motif of Wotan from the *Ring* as well as *Parsifal*. Yet Čiurlionis's *Sea* is a sonata form work in which the sea-motifs undergo various developments. The work has a narrative plot, which Landsbergis joins to an existential poem written by Čiurlionis at the time he was composing the musical "sea".

Some years later Čiurlionis painted a series of aquarelles entitled the *Sea Sonata*. The "Allegro" of *Sea Sonata* is a typical multi-layered painting, in which the various levels of the waves correspond to the superimposed lines of his piano works. The second "movement", "Andante", portrays a sunken boat at the bottom of sea; on the horizon glimmers a mystic, double light. Typically, the figures are projected on the surface of the water. The "Finale" contains a distorted perspective that is characteristic of Čiurlionis: waves expand to a gigantic scale while the boats diminish in size. The parallel with Hokusai's famous painting, *The Wave*, is evident.

How are these aquarelles "sonatas"? In the first movement, can we distinguish exposition, development and recapitulation? Is the slow movement in lied-form? And is the "Finale" perhaps a rondo? These questions come to mind immediately when one inquires about stereotypical sonata forms in music. On the other hand, we know from Čiurlionis's orchestral work, *The Sea*, that he could apply sonata form quite freely, and from this we might reason that he also employed it creatively in his paintings. In any case, the one thematic unity among the three aquarelles is the waves; the boat appears only in the second and third pictures.

In "Allegro", the essential elements are the tiny bubbles of water which occur on three levels and throughout the surface, with the exception of the upper part. The latter portrays land seen from a distance; even the hills are kinds of "waves", like aquatic forms moved to land. On the wave tops appear dots, which by a perspective transformation come to look like bubbles. The different levels of waves move in different tempos. The bubbling wave motion of the sea surface is repeated in the bow-like form of the earth.

The tempo shift in "Andante" is caused by the horizontal lines dominating; there is only a vague reminiscence of waves in the middle part, with its three underwater hills. The actorial element consists of a hand holding the boat. In the upper horizon are two sources of light, which are like two eyes looking at the boat. The direction of the glance is underlined by globular dotted lines –
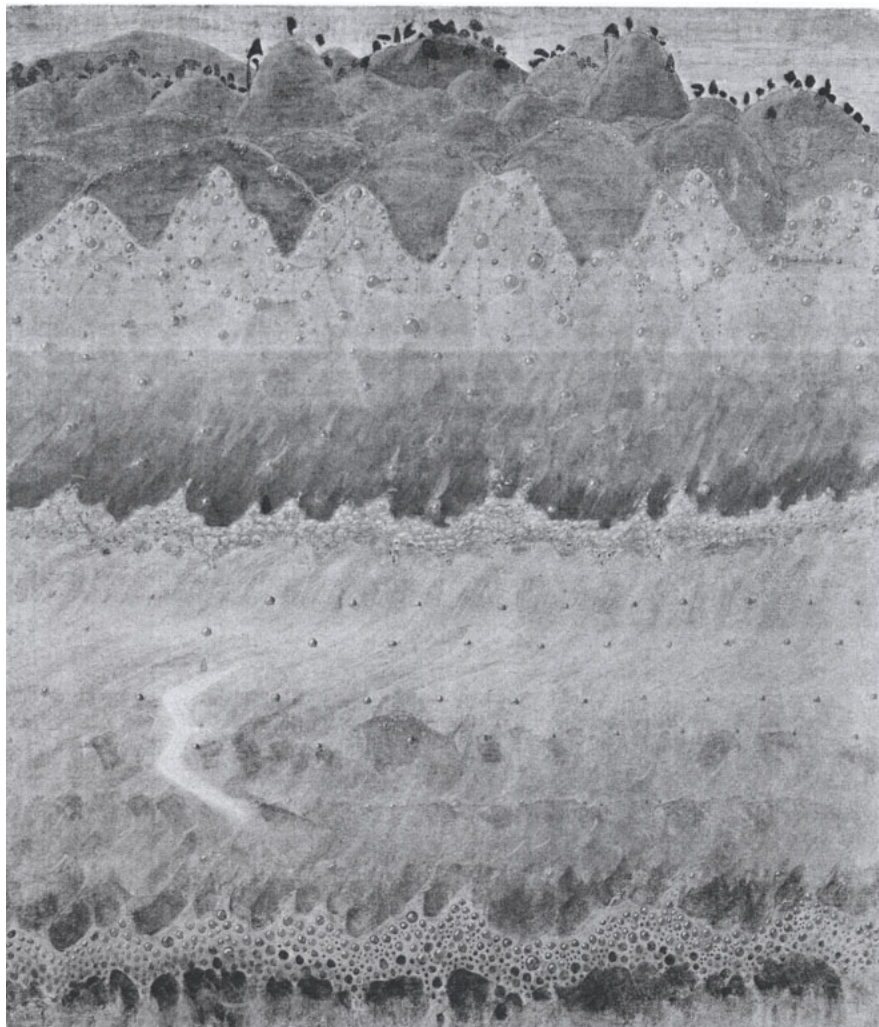
Figure 161: Čiurlionis: *Sea Sonatas*, "Allegro".

again, an allusion to the previous painting. As in *Sadko*, at the very bottom of the sea lies an underwater realm, with buildings that even have lights shining in their windows.

In the third picture, "Finale", the prevailing element is a diagonally rising wave motion. Four small boats are at its mercy, and the bubbles are now condensed into surfaces of foam-crested waves. This work features an obvious crescendo towards its end, where the wave drowns four smaller motifs. If one thinks of Čiurlionis tone poem, *The Sea*, one might consider the elevation of
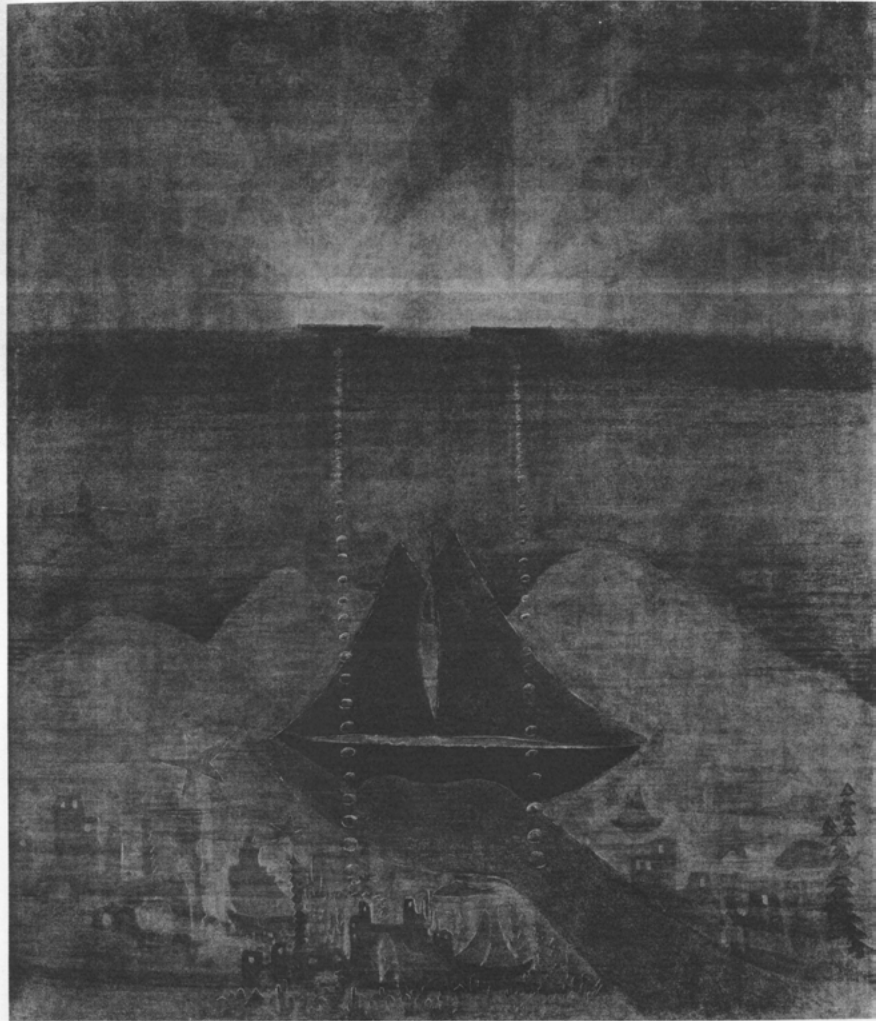
Figure 162: Čiurlionis: *Sea Sonatas, "*Andante".

the sea-motif to its full orchestral cogency there to equate with the visual climax of the massive wave in this painting.[19]

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19 See also my essay, "Metaphors of Sea in Music and Painting" in the journal *Synteesi* in Finnish No. 2 (1999).

Figure 163: Čiurlionis: *Sea Sonatas*, "Finale".

15.3 Sibelius – Synaesthetician

Both Sibelius and Čiurlionis share extramusical inspiration and narrativity. If Čiurlionis wrote *The Forest* and *The Sea*, Sibelius created *Tapiola* and *Oceanides*. Mythicism appears in the most varied forms in both men's work. The visual impulses are strong in Čiurlionis's music, but neither are they alien to Sibelius. Do we find similar synaesthetic qualities and correspondences of arts in Sibelius?

From his biography we know that he was a synaesthetic type. At his home, Ainola. one sees evidence for this in an oil painting, *Funeral Procession*, by Oscar Parviainen (above the entrance from the kitchen into the dining room), painted in black, red and yellow. Sibelius used to say that it was in D major. In the library is a framed portrait of young Sibelius, and at its side, also framed, a small, colourful oil painting portraying a magic forest with typically *art nouveau* colours. Both are by Akseli Gallen-Kallela, who imagined that the forest in the painting represented Sibelius's *En Saga*. He proposed that Sibelius confirm this analogy by putting his signature in the empty space under the forest picture. Yet the composer never did so. Erik Tawaststjerna has studied this enigma and tried to trace its literary background even in the novel *Seven Brothers* by Aleksis Kivi. But he is skeptical about the connection between painting and music:

> The piece inspired Axel Gallén to do an aquarelle in the form of a diptych: on the left there was a phantastic landscape and to the right a portrait of the composer in half profile A small thin part of the canvas remained blank, the idea being that Sibelius himself would fill this in with a quotation from *En Saga*. But he never did so, presumably because he found no connection between Gallén's painting with its trees and knotted roots, apples, castle, river, and snowflakes all somewhat suggestive of Japanese paintings, and his own tone poem. (Tawaststjerna 1976: 130)

Throughout his life, Sibelius remained dubious about overtly programmatic and "hermeneutic" interpretations of his music. He rejected Ilmari Krohn's famous analyses on the *Stimmungsgestalt* of his symphonies. But when one thinks of music as evocative as *En Saga*, and from a cultural semiotic point of view, we certainly have legitimate grounds on which to search for visual interpretants to his music. Intertextuality, in the form of correspondences of arts, was an unquestionable fact of the period as well.

My own study of the Finnish painter Hugo Simberg deals with correspondences among music and visual arts (Tarasti 2000). Many of his paintings have directly noticeable musical topics. Even in one of his best-known pictures, *Halla* (*The Frost*) – which strongly evokes Edvard Munch's *Cry* – the imaginary figure seems to be listening to something with his huge ears. Many musical works have also been connected to his paintings by Finnish iconographers. For example, Timo Mäkinen (1967–68) associated Simberg's *Garden of Death*, in which flowers are portrayed in a way reminiscent of Čiurlionis, with Erkki Melartin's piano suite *Der traurige Garten* (Op. 52). Another possible intertextual link would be the piano suite, *The Garden of Death* (Op. 41), by Leevi Madetoja (composed 1918–1919). And Salme Sarajas-Korte has attempted to discern a connection between Sibelius's *En Saga* and Simberg's aquarelle, *Satu* (*Fairy Tale*).

Sibelius's *En Saga* has been translated into Finnish as *Satu*, which is some-what inaccurate, since rather than intimate storytelling, the atmosphere rather evokes the Scandinavian *Eddas* – runes having a distinctly mythical atmos-phere. In the painting by Simberg we notice a girl dressed in white, who has been riding a bear-like animal, a kind of monster. Their ride has stopped at a pond, at which the animal is staring. In the foreground of the picture we see a tiny frog. The girl keeps her eyes closed, as if thinking intensely of some-thing, or listening to her *voces intimae*. The scene is framed by the silhouette of a forest, coloured in unnatural, Symbolist hues.

In Sibelius's *En Saga*, as well, there are violent chase scenes and sudden stops. For instance, the motion ceases almost completely in one scene. There the opening minor-second motif, now harmonized in a subtle and poignant manner, sounds in the "Nordic", upper register of the strings.

In the intertextual network of Finnish turn-of-century culture, this moment in Sibelius could be well paralleled to Simberg on both narrative and synaes-thetic grounds. They are closely bound "cultural units" in the sense of Umberto Eco, which can be situated within a broader paradigm of interrelations of arts of the period.

The Schoenberg–Kandinsky relationship has been well documented as to their correspondence and paintings. Schoenberg wore two hats: in addition to composing music, he also painted scenes from his dramatic works (Schoen-berg-Kandinsky 1984). Darius Kučinskas has studied the relationship between Čiurlionis and Schoenberg regarding their creative processes, particularly as regards "constructional principles" such as symmetry. Yet as Kučinskas says: "Everything indicates Čiurlionis attempted to create a certain mono-structural super-opus that would combine several art forms" (Kučinskas 2004: 6). In this sense, the case of Čiurlionis parallels that of Scriabin as well.

At the same time we have the parallel between Sergei Rachmaninov and Arnold Böcklin regarding the tone poem *Isle of the Dead*, inspired by the lat-ter's painting. Many scholars have noticed that Böcklin created all his work out of what Nietzsche called "the spirit of music". Max Schneider (quoted in Zelger 1994) described him as a thoroughly musical painter, but not a Wagne-rian. Böcklin never accepted the Wagnerian idea of *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Never-theless, he did understand painting as a kind of musical activity: "Wie zwei Töne in der Musik noch nicht disharmonisch sind, so auch nicht zwei Farben, erst eine dritte kann sie zur Disharmonie machen" (As two tones in music are not yet a discord, nor two colours, only a third can turn them into a discord.) The scholar Floerke argued for Böcklin as a synaesthetist; for instance, the sound of a trumpet was vermilion (red). Böcklin calculated with colours, and his method of painting was a kind of musical composition: he composed picto-
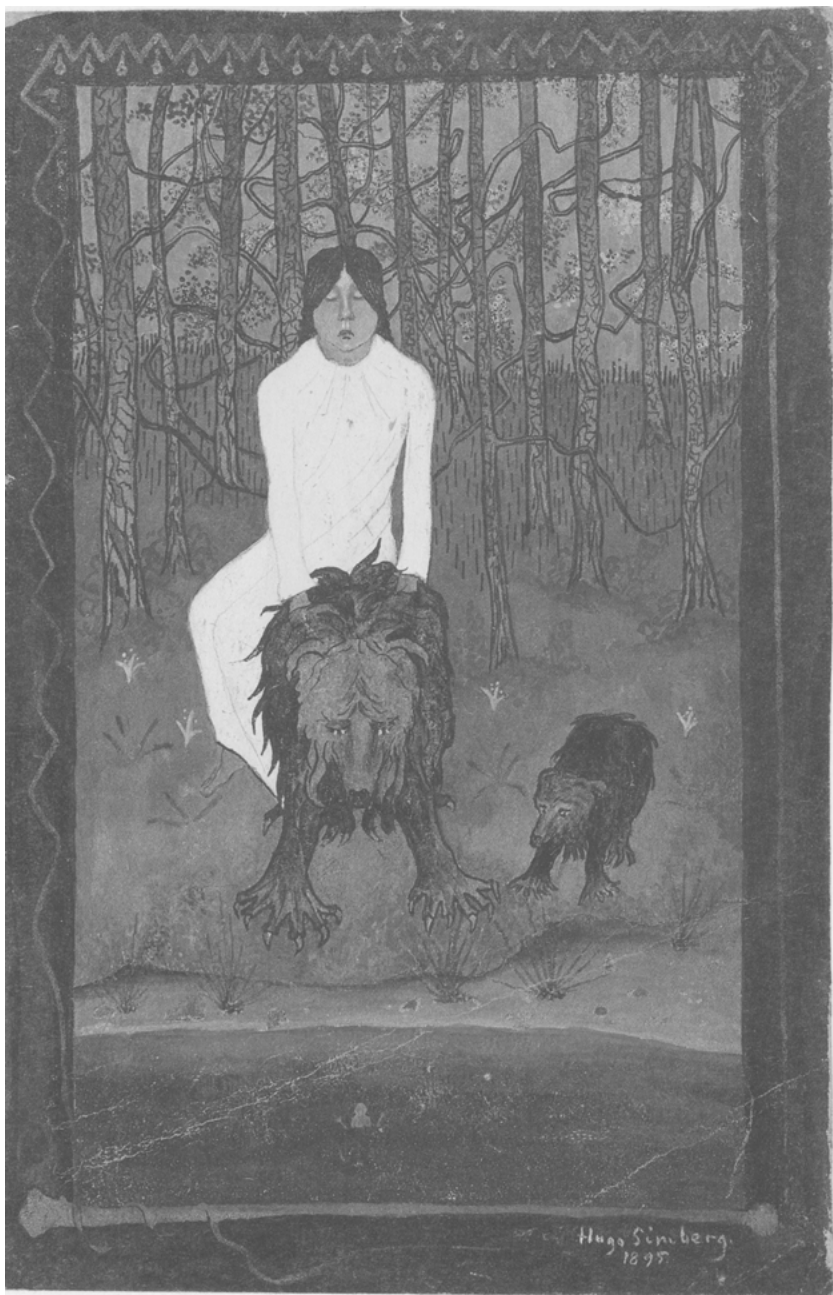
Figure 164: Hugo Simberg: *Satu* (*Fairy Tale*).

Figure 165: Jean Sibelius: *En Saga*, Lento assai.

rial thoughts and orchestrated them in colours. Someone else remarked, "It is quite clear that to unmusical persons Böcklin's art would have no impact." However, the primary generator of musical atmosphere in his paintings was the landscape. Yet, that was often not enough for him, so he would add a figure playing some instrument, such as Pan playing a flute.

What then makes Böcklin's *Isle of the Dead* so suggestive? Out of the darkness, barely moving, magically radiating rocks ascend into a dark night sky. These are pictured from below, and with them a dense group of cypresses. From these arise stone buildings arranged in a half-circle. The strange land, far from all civilisation, dominates the picture and articulates it symmetrically. On the right and left one recognizes the horizon of the sea, which underlines the impression of austerity and loneliness. The horizontal line is kept so low that it induces an effect of vast and endless space. Traces of human labour can be seen in the harbour, the tombs, and the bright walls of terraced fortresses. In the background looms a mummy-like figure and a paddler.

Böcklin's death-centred themes belong to Symbolist aesthetics – but we should remember that he also painted an opposite version: *The Isle of Joy*. In 1907, Rachmaninoff was in Paris, where he saw a black-and-white copy of Böcklin's *Isle of the Dead*, which made a deeper impression on him than did the coloured original which he saw in Berlin and Dresden. He wrote: "I was not much moved by the colours of the painting. If I had seen first the original, I would have not written my *Isle of the Dead*. I like it in black and white." In

Figure 166: Böcklin: *The Isle of the Dead*.

fact, it was Nikolai Struve who proposed he use the painting as the subject of a tone poem. Rachmaninoff revised his work in 1909, and again twenty years later, in the USA. Rachmaninoff's music portrays a virtual journey into the Böcklinian landscape, in a typical pathetic fallacy.

In this paradigm belongs also the parallel Debussy–Watteau: the famous painting *L'embarquement à l'isle de Cythère* by Watteau was of course created in the eighteenth century, but according to oral tradition in Paris, it inspired Debussy to compose his *L'isle joyeuse*. In this case we have an indexical relation between painting and music: the arabesque, ornamental movement of the image continues in the music by Debussy. The lively rhythmic impulse and the airy timbres of Debussy's music evoke the same devices as in Watteau's painting. The raised, or "Lydian", fourth in its main theme, along with the dotted swing-rhythms, provide a certain archaic flavour that is also characteristic of the painting.

15.4 … and Nietzsche

Čiurlionis's music is sometimes linked to Nietzsche's philosophy, with its irrationality and contradictions. Sibelius also knew Nietzsche, and had read a

book by the Polish writer Prszybyszewsky (1892), *Chopin und Nietzsche, zur Psychologie eines Individuums*. But Nietzsche was also a composer, who made serious efforts at this form of expression as well. He even sent his works *Ermanirik* and *Manfred* to Hans von Bülow, receiving in return bitter criticism and rejection. He believed his most remarkable musical piece was *Hymnus an die Freundschaft*. He was, of course, an amateur as a composer. Still, we have to remember that Adorno, in his *Glosse über Sibelius*, levelled such criticism at Sibelius, finding the composer's musical logic incomprehensible. He said, in this famous pamphlet, that the composer was hiding his counterpoint teachers among the thousands of lakes of his country. Čiurlionis, too, was considered a kind of dilettante (by Ivanov, among others). But later research has shown how unjustified such claims were. Deviations from traditional canons were interpreted as awkwardness and formlessness. But in semiotic terms, they were the reaction of a dominated, peripheral composer to the centralizing power of the "correct" (read: German) musical grammar. To put it positively: such works show how structures of signification can do without the support of conventions of structures of communication.

Nietzsche's musical output consists of 74 opuses and drafts. Starting at the age of nine, he received piano lessons and became a good pianist, to whom Schumann was close and Beethoven the highest ideal. His music-making was improvisational, and he never received any general music education. In philosophy, also, he was a self-taught man, although his philological skills served him well as a cognitive basis.

As one might expect, Nietzsche's compositions are dilettantish: when the text does not provide a piece with form, the musical impression is one of mere atmosphere. Yet music meant much to him, and indeed, his musical abilities survived longer than his philosophical ones after his collapse in 1889. Even after that, he could still play Beethoven sonatas from memory. His most important works – kinds of symphonic poems – are written for four-hands piano and string quartet: *Ein Sylvesternacht, Nachklang einer Sylvesternacht, Manfred Meditation*.

Nietzsche also sent his pieces to conductor Friedrich Hegart, who replied: "The whole indeed fails to fulfil certain architectonic conditions, to such an extent that the work looks more like an improvisation than a thoroughly thought-out art work". One of his most extensive pieces is *Hymnus an die Freundschaft, Phantasie für Chorus und Orchester in Klaviersatz,* from 1873. He was very satisfied with it and wrote again to Hans von Bülow:

> There was a time when you let fall upon me a most legitimate death sentence *in rebus musicis et music natibu*s. In spite of it, I dare to send to you my Hymn to Life, which I hope will stay. It has to be sung in some close or distant future for my memory, for a

philosopher, who never had a presence and who did not even want it. (Quoted in Janz 1976: 341)

Nietzsche's pieces are strangely formless, exhibiting a strain of expression and formal awkwardness like that of, say, Rudolf Tobias of Estonia. With a certain amount of good will, all this can be considered a new aesthetic quality. Yet it is likely that Nietzsche's lack of technique made him unable to articulate his musical ideas. The end result was probably not what he had intended.

Figure 167: Nietzsche: *Hymnus an die Freundschaft*, bars 64–68.

15.5 Conclusion: Toward existential and transcendental semiotic interpretations

Next we ask if semiotics, and particularly existential semiotics (see Tarasti 2000), can provide us with a theoretical framework for studying these three different, but somewhat analogous cases of Čiurlionis, Sibelius and Nietzsche. We are perhaps at the threshold of a truly semiotic analysis of those three if we ask, Behind all of them, is it possible to construe a similar type of transcendental ego or subject?

This question returns us to the terminology of biosemiotics (Uexküll 1940), as explained in the Prelude and first chapter of the present book. Do Čiurlionis, Sibelius and Nietzsche share a similar type of *Ich-Ton*, which would determine the kinds of musical organisms they create? The principle of *Ich-Ton* (Me-Tone), as we recall, determines which signs a composer accepts from his *Umwelt*, and which ones he rejects. Even further, it determines how these elements unfold and behave in the course of a musical piece, and in what kind of situations they occur. Both Sibelius and Čiurlionis seem to have a relatively stable *Ich-Ton* whereas Nietzsche's is more fragile.

In addition, a tension always exists between presign, actsign and postsign: i.e., the *Ich-Ton* does not always operate satisfactorily. One can sometimes hear what was meant to be expressed, but something failed in the carrying out of that expression. When this happens, is it during intersemiotic exchanges, as when the *Ich-Ton* shifts from music to painting in Čiurlionis? Or from music to literature in Nietzsche?

As we know, the *Ich-Ton* has two aspects: *Moi* and *Soi* (Fontanille 2005). The first is a bundle of sensations, primary experiences and feelings; the second is the socially determined ego as observed by others. The first is internal, the ego's existential mode of operation; the second, its communitarian aspect. As noted in the Prelude and elsewhere, Sartre meant the same with his concepts of *être-en-soi être-pour-soi* (Sartre 1943).

The next step would be to apply to these three artists – Sibelius, Čiurlionis and Nietzsche – the analytic method sketched in Chapter Two, Existential and Transcendental Analysis of Music, in order to determine the conjunction and co-functioning of three principles: *Moi, Soi*, and the *Other*. In Chapter Two we focused on the music of Beethoven in applying those principles. Now we leave our present three artists, and apply those principles in regard to several Russian composers.

Part IV. In the Slavonic World

Chapter 16 An essay on Russian music

Here I present a brief, synthetic view of Russian music from my own perspective as a Finnish musicologist and semiotician, knowing that any such effort is always only temporary and subjective. In doing so I address issues pertaining not only to music, but to Russian culture in general.

Is Russian music a part of European history, or is it something unique and irreducible to any other aesthetic category? Some consider Russia a part of Europe, whereas others think it is a universe of its own. Even those who view Russia as essentially a kind of "peripheral" region of the West must acknowledge its unique and peculiar status. In this camp we find the philosopher Vladimir Solovyov, who at the turn of the previous century had much to say about Russia in this regard. In his treatise, *Die nationale Frage in Russland 1883–1888*, Solovyov (1922) argued that the very existence of many countries hinged on settling the national question. Russia, however, does not face such a problem, since it has been a major power for most of its thousand years of existence. A more pertinent question in this regard is, Why and under what name does Russia exist? The national question in Russia is not one of existence, but of *dignified existence.* Solovyov warns against Russia withdrawing into national egoism:

> The ideal of Russia must be to abolish national isolation and self-centrism. By its negative attitude toward the West, it comes into conflict with its own brothers, those of other Slavonic nations, such as the Poles, Croats, Czechs, and Märs, which are in the West. Russia may possess large and independent spiritual forces, but in order to realize and manifest them it has to adopt the common forms of life and knowledge of Europe and make them functional. The demand for a kind of extra- and anti-European originality is an empty request. If Russia does not fulfil its moral duties and give up its national egoism, if it does not abandon the right of power and start to believe in the power of the right, its outer and inner aspirations can never be achieved with any permanent success. (Solovyov 1922: 133)

Solovyov's vision is more pertinent now than ever before. But what does it mean, when viewed in the light of Russian musical life and history?

In answering that question, I begin with an anecdote. As late as 1988 I was introduced at the Moscow Conservatory as a "professor of foreign music". When I asked what that meant, the reply was, "European music, of course". Music per se was their own, *Russian* music. In the West we encounter just the opposite view. In the first place, "music" signifies the traditional Western classical canon, the core of which is comprised of Germanic musical works. All other kinds of music "bleiben auf dem Rande", on the outskirts, as H. H. Eggebrecht said, by which he meant that all other music traditions are periph-

eral, national, exotic (Eggebrecht 1996: 9). On this view, Russian music would automatically fall into the category of the "national".

But are Russian composers really "national"? Was Tchaikovsky? Certainly not. He emphasized that music was universal as to its emotional content, and he never searched for exotic colors for their own sake (except perhaps in ballets like the *Nutcracker*). On the other hand, in Paris he was considered too "European" to represent the genuinely "Russian" style. Scriabin? He was a theosophist, and not inclined to any kind of patriotism. Yet it has been said that only in Russia could his mystical musical views receive such acclaim and support. There was something very "Russian" about Scriabin's monistic musico-philosophical system, which culminated in his tone-poem *Prometheus*, with its so-called "mystery chord" and the synesthesias he hoped to effect by means of the light-colour keyboard (*tastiera di luce)*. Later in twentieth-century music, we find among Russians a more "universal" type of composer: the nomad, the emigrant musician, who is no longer living in connection with his roots. Igor Stravinsky, a typical representative of this type, said: "Je ne vis ni dans le passé ni dans le futur, je ne vis que dans le présent" (I live neither in the past nor in the future; I live only in the present). This kind of composer, detached from his "national" context, may be any of any nationality whatsoever. Or as Stravinsky put it: music does not have a passport.

Stravinsky was the idol of many composers of the twentieth century, including Einojuhani Rautavaara in Finland. In contrast, we encounter another type of emigré musician, well-represented by Rachmaninov, who even while wandering remained faithful to his origins. The avant-garde of our time often sets itself as the antipode of national traditions and schools. Composers such as Prokofiev and Shostakovitch, who were acclaimed as avant-gardists, were in fact nothing of the kind. Shostakovitch, for example, was basically a classicist who by "maximalizing" his style, created music that *sounded* radical and fauvistically avant-garde, but was in fact based on classicizing principles. The term "maximalizing" comes from Richard Taruskin (1997: 85), who in his two-volume set, *Defining Russia Musically*, uses it to denote an intensification of devices so as to reach accepted goals. Stravinsky's *Sacre* belongs under this heading, too, since even the famous bitonal chord with which it begins was nothing but an application of Rimsky-Korsakov's conservatory harmony. A maximalist is never a true avant-gardist.

Be that as it may, and whether one takes it as overtly nationalistic or overtly universalist, Russian music has contributed greatly to the rich heritage of Western erudite music. Next I describe some of these emergent "Russian" qualities in our music history – and I intentionally dare to say "our", thereby including the Russians.

16.1 Emergent Russian qualities in music history

Erudite secular music arrived in Russia relatively late. Its history can be dated from 1735, when the Empress Anna (ruled from 1730 to 1740) decided to invite an Italian opera troupe to decorate her court with exotic and light *divertissement*. They made their debut in the Winter Palace in January 29, 1736, performing the opera *La forza dell'amore e dell'odio* by Francesco Araja, leader of the group. From then on, the practice of art music was based upon activities of visiting conductors or *maestri di capella* like Manfredini, Galuppi, Traetta, Paisiello, Sarti and Cimarosa – all of them Italian. Taruskin has claimed that European art music did not play any role in the formation of national identity in Russia before the age of Catherine the Great (Taruskin 1997: xi-xii). It was not until European manners and attitudes expanded outside the court and Russian presence was greater in Europe (due to the Napoleonic wars) that European high culture took root in Russia's major cities. In the 1860s the institutional basis of music was laid by Anton Rubinstein; but even in the same decade one can find such a creature as a "Russian musician". True, in the eighteenth century there were such figures as Berezovsky (1745–1777), the son of a slave, who was trained at Galuppi and then sent to Bologna to Padre Martini where he obtained a diploma in 1771, just a year later than Mozart. Also fueling his legendary status was the fact of that he committed suicide at the age of 31. Berezovsky, who was perhaps the first Russian composer, was followed by yet another: Bortnyansky, who came from the same Ukrainian village as Berezovsky, and was also sent to Italy for music studies.

To be a free artist in Russia was difficult, yet there were amateur noble musicians like the brothers Wielhorski, mentioned even by Berlioz. Aleksei Lvov (1798–1870), court choirmaster and writer of the imperial hymn "Bozhe tsarya khrani" (God Save the Czar, 1833), played in a trio whose pianist – Franz Liszt – received payment for his services from acquaintances who were members of the nobility. Composers like Glinka, Dargomyzhsky and Musorgsky were all noblemen. Tchaikovsky was the first fully educated Russian musician to gain a position in Russia without being a nobleman or a performing virtuoso.

How, then, could such a thing as genuinely Russian national music emerge so quickly, as it did in the 1870s and 1880s? The Russian quality in music originated from its late development, late professionalisation, ethnic origin, social marginality, along with its exotic language and alphabet. All this provided Russian music with a tinge of Otherness, which was sensual and glorified but also disputed and exaggerated – as Taruskin puts it. To be "Russian" was to be "marked"; it was a distinguishing label. In the nineteenth century

and beyond, Europeans commonly took a high-brow attitude towards Russian music and, it seems, of all Russian culture (see, e.g., the travel diaries of the Marquis de Custine 1839/1989). Nevertheless, European musicians flooded into Russia. Great composers, including Berlioz and Wagner, visited the country, and were viewed with suspicion by Russians (see Rimsky-Korsakov's diary for his comments about Wagner in Russia; 1938: 47, 52 et passim).

A crucial factor in the musical Europeanisation of Russia was Italian opera. In fact, the whole institution of theatre was strongly monopolized and centralized by the State as early as 1803. At that time, Alexander I reorganized Russian public theaters into a new, state-centered system which lasted until 1888. All theaters became property of the crown and were directly controlled from St. Petersburg. Four new theaters were built in that city, one of them dedicated only to Italian opera. The Russian opera house performed Rossini in Russian; likewise, Mozart's *Don Giovanni* was heard in Russian in 1828. Italian opera also reached the capital via another route, namely Odessa, which since 1809 had played host to visiting Italian troupes. (Pushkin's favourite hobby was attending the Odessa Opera, where he heard many Rossini operas.) These troupes gradually moved to Moscow and to St. Petersburg. The quality of performance was probably horrible: the singing in Odessa has been likened to that of a nomadic tribe whose worn-out singers, after touring all the Italian regions, finally reached Odessa.

Censorship proved yet another obstruction to free musical life in Russia, and from the rule of Nicolai I onward it became increasingly oppressive. All plots with any hints of revolt against tyrants were forbidden, even Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito*. Likewise, no plots with references to the Bible were allowed – something not unusual even in the European context (even as late as 1890, when Saint-Saëns at last succeeded in having his *Samson and Delila* performed in France).

Incursions of European music into Russia, such as those just described, brought with them the dichotomy of the two primary cultures within Europe itself (see Taruskin 1997: 251). On one side was German-based culture (*Kultur*), which emphasized profundity and spirituality; on the other, Italian-French "civilisation", with its penchant for the material, the sensual, and the conventional. It was the latter, Italian-French culture that came to dominate in Russia's adoption of European values. This dichotomy appeared in different ways in various Russian composers, influencing both their European-ness/Russian-ness and their subject positions.

16.2 Glinka

There is a well-crafted and fascinating movie by Grigory Alexandrov from 1953 about the life of Glinka (*The Composer Glinka*), which centers around the creation of the opera *Ivan Susanin*, later retitled *A Life for the Czar*. Deeply Russian in its imagery, the film shows Glinka planning his opera while lying on a sofa, in the same position shown in Ilya Repin's famous portrait of the composer. The film also includes a scene in which Franz Liszt plays a recital in St. Petersburg and, as was his habit, improvises on a theme given by the audience. From among all the proffered motifs, he chooses that of "Chernomor's March" from Glinka's *Ruslan and Lyudmila*. At the end of the scene, Glinka is introduced to Liszt and the two men shake hands, with no signs of the condescension with which Tchaikovsky claimed European musicians always treated Russians: "You can read it in their eyes: 'You are Russian, but I am so kind and benevolent that I pay attention to you!' To hell with all of them!" (Tchaikovsky after having met Liszt, quoted in Taruskin 1997: xiv).

Glinka received his musical training in Italy; hence, it is little wonder that opera became his genre of choice. His recitatives have been qualified as "Russian" because they display a mixture of German expressivity and dramatic quality, along with Italian melodiousness. For instance, the obvious "type" for *Ruslan* is the *Magic Flute*. As Richard Taruskin has argued, it was thought that, by combining the best of the West, one became a Russian. German music was considered as "*dukh*" – brain without beauty – whereas Italian music was "*chuvstvennost*", beauty without brain. Only Glinka knew how to blend the two.

In fact, Glinka's output manifests three general topics that pervade Russian music: (1) Italian-ness, (2) Orientalism, and (3) Finno-Ugrian qualities. Italianness has already been discussed, a good illustration of which may be found in the last movement of Glinka's *Trio pathétique* of 1832.

There the composer imitates Italian *bel canto* as obviously as Chopin would do in his own melodies. Orientalism comes to the fore in the Persian Choir and other scenes from *Ivan Susanin*, as well as in Russian music in general. These include struggles with the Mongols as well as a kind of romantic fascination with the languishing slavery of the Orient, embodied in the concept of *nega* – so clear in the kinds of undulating movement one finds in the "Dance of the Polovtsian Girls" in Borodin's opera, *Prince Igor*.

Finno-Ugrism, too, constitutes an obvious strand of Russian music. Finno-Ugrian musical topics are clearly present in Russian music, but Taruskin, like most musicologists, never mentions them. There are clear cultural reasons for this omission: although Finnougrians once inhabited all of the area later conquered by Slavs, they remained the most docile, silenced and forgotten "caste"

Figure 168: Glinka, *Trio pathétique,* 3rd movement, Largo, bars 37–39. (Monteux: Musica rara, © 1957).

of the Russian Empire. They were considered humble, stupid, and naive peasants who posed no threat to Russians. Because of their perceived harmlessness, Finno-Ugrians are seldom represented in Russian artistic literature or music. Yet many Russian composers met Finno-Ugrians not only on their own soil but also during visits to Finland, their "window to Europe". There are few Russian composers who did not take summer vacations in Finland. Tchaikovsky visited Finland for just a short time – he had to leave quickly due to lack of money, but was evidently impressed enough by his stay that he wrote his *Souvenir de Haapsalu* (which of course portrays Estonia, to be exact). Rimsky-Korsakov passed several summers at his brother's summer-house in Finland. Rachmaninov, fleeing the Revolution, made his escape through Finland. Scriabin wrote poetic letters from Lake Saimaa, and Prokofiev, too, visited Finland. Shostakovitch was commissioned to write a hymn celebrating Stalin's conquest of Finland (which of course never took place). Finally, Stravinsky received the Wihuri Prize in 1959, which practically saved him from financial ruin during his emigrant years in California. Indeed, the Finno-Ugrian impact on Russian music is long and diverse. And the reverse also holds true: the Russians were quick to see Finland as a part of their Empire; thus, for them Sibelius was nothing but a Petersburgian composer who happened to live in Järvenpää (see Russian journalist Ivan Lipayev's account of his visit to Ainola 1913/1991).

Glinka visited Imatra, where he picked up a tune from a local sled-driver, a Finnish horseman, and used it for the "Finn's Ballad" in *Ruslan*. It is amusing that this melody does not sound very Finnish at all, except in the obstinate recurrence of the main motif. More Finnish would be the "Ballad of the Head" in the same opera, with its modal inflections in the key of G minor. In the plot of *Ruslan*, the Finnish character is cast as a Sorcerer, a kind of Sarastro that

acts as a counterforce to the evil Queen Naina. Finns were in no way threatening and thus they did not even receive there own topics as a subgenre of orientalism. (The latter classification would not have been far-fetched; even now the Finnish language is taught at Paris University in the Department of Oriental Civilisations and Languages.)

Nevertheless, sometimes Finnougrian themes are prominent, but most often they go uncredited as such. For instance, the theme of the miraculous squirrel in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Legend of Czar Tsaltan* sounds thoroughly Finnish – it evokes a folk tune known by Finnougrians in both the "West" (i.e., Finland) and the "East" (Russia). The tune, called "Kukkuu, kukkuu kaukana kukkuu", is one that Marshall Mannerheim taught to his musically gifted wife, Anna Arapova; and it was directly quoted by Glazunov in the opening of his *Finnish Fantasy for Orchestra*. It might be stretching things too far to hear something like Sibelian obsessiveness in the main theme of Rachmaninov's Second Piano Concerto (Op. 18, in C minor). It is safe to say, though, that there is nothing "folkish" about it since, when asked about the matter, Rachmaninov himself replied: "If I had wanted them, I would have of course put modal elements in it."

16.3 Rimsky-Korsakov

It is an amazing fact that all the founders of Russian musical nationalism were amateurs, who started off as gifted dilettantes and (sometimes) went on to become professionals. The reason for not pursuing music as career at that time is said to have been largely social: to be a musician in Russia meant being marginalized and looked down upon.

A typical case of this kind, but no less astounding for that, is the success story of Rimsky-Korsakov, who died in 1908, after a rich life that took him from service as a young marine officer to a professorship at the Conservatory. A year later his widow published his diaries, after excising some overly harsh passages about his contemporaries. Generally speaking, people usually write their memoirs at the end of their lives; Rimsky, however, started his diary as early as 1876, when he was only 32 years old. The French version of his memoirs contains an interesting Preface, written by the musicologist Boris de Schloezer (a cousin of Alexander Scriabin). Rimsky ostensibly kept the diary for the purpose of getting to know himself better, the composer's *Moi*, as it is called in existential semiotics. But in the memoirs one finds no trace of self-analysis; introspection is totally alien to Rimsky, and he examines and assesses himself only in terms of what he has done. He studies those about

him in the same way: he considers only outward acts, not inner motives; only *homo faber* interests him. That same attention to outer detail proves to be the great merit of Rimsky's diary, which closely describes the heroic period of Russian music and the group that gathered around Balakirev, later dubbed the "Mighty Five" by Stasov. Rimsky's nomination to professor of composition at the Conservatory was first the triumph of this group; at the same time, it meant the end of this amateurish but enthusiastic period.

He was sent to marine school as a young boy, during which time he gradually developed musical inclinations. He attended concerts and opera performances during his short holidays and bought piano scores of Glinka's opera. He writes: "Accordingly I was an amateur of music; I had never heard vocal music except in opera, neither quartets nor great pianists. I had no conception of music theory. I tried to orchestrate *A Life for the Czar* from piano score, with the results one would expect." He had no idea of what the Italian musical terms on a score meant. But then he met Balakirev, who encouraged him to try composing. Cesar Cui and Musorgsky also visited his home, and together they made and discussed music. They were very critical: only Glinka and Schumann were acceptable, as well as late Beethoven. Mozart and Haydn were considered old-fashioned. Bach was petrified, mathematical, without emotion and life, like a machine. Balakirev viewed Chopin as a neurasthenic woman, Berlioz was respected, Liszt was largely unknown but understood as confused and decadent, even grotesque. Wagner, too, was just as unfamiliar to them.

Balakirev was the center of the group, and Rimsky-Korsakov describes this exciting half-savage, half-Tatar figure. By disposition nervous and impatient, Balakirev was a brilliant pianist, who had developed his innate talents without any discipline. In his diary, Rimsky complains, with some bitterness, that Balakirev should have at least taught him how to play piano, but instead only advised him about composing. Still, Balakirev was the first to tell him that a composer also had to read, study, know history, literature and criticism. Rimsky frequently visited Balakirev and absorbed his knowledge (even now, that is probably the only efficient method of education). Balakirev owned a huge collection of oriental melodies and dances which he had arranged for piano, whichsaid source also launched the orientalism in Rimsky's output.

But soon came emancipation. Balakirev proved to be too despotic and patriarchal, and in the end Rimsky was nominated in 1871 as professor, and also received other leading appointments in musical life. He lived long enough to report about the collapses of Balakirev, Musorgsky, and Tchaikovsky. Maybe he was saved by his alter-ego as a marine officer and his ability to organize. And finally this man – who in Balakirev's circle was considered merely a promising dilettante musician, and who in marine school was taken as a gifted

officer with musical talents – came to write those famous books on harmony and orchestration, subjects about which he knew nothing when first starting out.

Rimsky's major contributions to Russian music are his operas. One may divide Russian opera in general into three general categories: (a) *epic*, which treats of matters ideological, political, nationalistic, historical and such (e.g., *Ivan Susanin, Boris* or *Khovanshchina*); (b) psychological, realistic, narrative (e.g., *Eugen Onegin*); and (c) mythological, fabulous, distinctively "Russian" (*Maynight*). If one accepts this categorisation, then most of Rimsky-Korsakov's operas clearly belong to the last category. Why he succeeded only in the realm of the fabulous can be explained by his lack of psychological insight, which prevented him from creating on-stage protagonists that spectators found convincing. Be that as it may, he wrote an impressive number of operas. These remain part of the repertoire in Russia, but only a few of them are known in the West: *The Maiden of Pskov* (young Russian style); *Maynight* (phantastic lyrical style); *Mlada, Christmas Night, Sadko*: romantic-epic style, with large and colourful orchestral interludes, symphonic and virtuosic orchestration. *Mozart and Salieri* and *Pan Woewoda* evidence a dramatic style. *Legend of Czar Tsaltan* and *The Golden Cockerel* demonstrate his fantastic, miniaturist style; featuring original leitmotif techniques, mosaic-like textures, humorous and satirical, with strong elements of the exotic-oriental, complex harmonies and modulations, all scored with the most colorful instrumentation imaginable. *Legend of the Invisible Town of Kitezh* is written in a religious, epic lied-style, with melodies and harmonies partly derived from Russian church music and evoking a contemplative, Christian-transcendental atmosphere (see van der Pals 1929: 50–55).

Quite often the origin of a musical impulse in Rimsky turns out to be visual, as Boris de Schloezer has pointed out. It is no wonder that a symphonic poem like *Scheherazade* remains among his most-played works, since it is the musical counterpart to Aivazovsky's paintings: quite obviously its phrase structure imitates iconically the rhythm of ocean waves (cf. Aivazovsky's *The Seventh Wave*).

Rimsky's orchestral writing is at its best in the prelude to *The Tsar's Bride*, where it also represents the "symphonism" valued so highly by Boris Asafiev, inventor of proto-semiotical intonation theory and a composer himself. The prelude opens with a kind of balladic theme, which starts in D minor then takes a modal turn (Dorian). Soon it is treated in "learned style", in imitative counterpoint. Yet even here we sense something folkish, something redolent of Glinka and the latter's ideas about the polyphonic singing of peasant choirs. Then comes the secondary theme: intellectualized, expressive, tonal, with

clearly articulated cadences, leading tones and modulations. The contrast between the objective/folkish/Russian and subjective/ excessive/European elements could not be made more clear. Nevertheless, at the end all these are put together in a skilfully crafted stretto which features contrapuntal techniques not so different from those taught on the other side of Europe, in Paris at the Schola Cantorum by César Franck (see, for example, the stretto that ends the latter's *Prelude, Chorale and Fugue*).

Figure 169: Rimsky-Korsakov, *The Tsar's Bride*, Overture, bars 1–15. (Moscow: Muzyka, 1980).

16.4 Tchaikovsky

Tchaikovsky continues to number among those composers most mythologized as distinctively "Russian" despite recent efforts of some musicologists to fix attention mostly on his gender identity and the consequences that it had for his musical language. The best argument against all such efforts may be read in Malcolm Brown's contribution to a collection of essays edited by Alexander Poznansky (1999), *Tchaikovsky through Others' Eyes*, which also presents documents related to the composer's private life. It is true that he tried to end his life, having been driven to marriage by benevolence and compassion. (A young female student of his wrote him love letters at the same time as he was writing his *Eugen Onegin*, which forced him to think: "Heavens, am I as evil and cold as Onegin? No, I shall marry her!") But even his suicide attempts bordered on

the tragi-comical: he first decided to kill himself by vodka but, unlike in the case of Musorgsky, it did not work. He then tried standing neck-deep in the cold River Neva. But even that did not kill him.

Such biographical vignettes, however fascinating, should be kept in perspective. As the New Critics, and later the structuralists, taught us: the physical author is never the same as the implied author. Thus, the real, flesh-and-blood composer is never the same as the heroic persona of him presented in his music. Rather, the latter projects the "implied composer", as well as the "implied listener", i.e., the intended receiver of his message.

Tchaikovsky has been interpreted correctly by Taruskin, with regard to the previously mentioned dichotomy of culture/civilisation. Tchaikovsky endorsed the latter, thinking beauty to be the main goal of music. Hence Brahms, while respectable, skilful, professional and serious, was never acceptable to him; for Tchaikovsky, Brahms' music lacked the sensual qualities of Beauty, such as those produced by long and flowing melodies. However, we cannot deny that Tchaikovsky also reached the other pole: that of highly transcendent music. One hears the latter, for instance, in the obvious portrayal of death at the end of his *Symphonie pathétique* – death being a topic so generally known in Russian circles that the wife and secretary of the aged Stravinsky never permitted him to hear such music. Attempts to link that symphony to Tchaikovsky's own end, as a harbinger of his own death, have proved unconvincing, and are based only on the external fact that the work was premiered just after the composer passed away.

But as we know, as early as during his student years in Moscow, Tchaikovsky was not considered particularly Russian, and was in fact essentially a cosmopolitan. Nevertheless, he later became the official composer for Alexander III, and among his musical topics is the so-called "Imperial" style, as may be heard in the scene with Catherine the Great in the *Queen of Spades* or in the polonaise in *Eugen Onegin*.

It was Tchaikovsky who "psychologized" the symphony, despite the fact that in Paris he was categorized as one of those externally impressive, oriental-barbarian Russians. His means of psychologization were similar to those used by Musorgsky in his *Pictures at an Exhibition*, in which each picture and promenade follow the inner psychic impulses of the "spectator", which in the musical rendition is the implied listener of the piece (see Tarasti 1994a: 215). Apart from the symphony, however, Tchaikovsky's "psychologizing" efforts peak in the transformation that takes place during the Christmas-night scene in the *Nutcracker,* when the rather dull and commonplace music of the adults gives way to that representing the young girl's phantasmal visions. Here the obsessively repeated theme, a hallmark of Tchaikovsky, rises from the depths of the

orchestra, instantly transporting the spectator-listener to the world of fairy tales, which, in the end, turns out to be more serious and genuine than the so-called real world. That scene is as impactful and convincing as any climax of any of his symphonies, comparable to the moment when the love potion takes effect in Wagner's *Tristan*.

Yet critics in the "West" have never understood that this "semantic" aspect of his music by no means precludes formal perfection. For example, the prominent German musicologist Carl Dahlhaus could never accept Tchaikovsky as part of the great European symphonic lineage of Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Brahms, and Mahler – and neither could Adorno. The lyrical impulse in Tchaikovsky's music was too strong; the long, languorous melodies, it was said, inhibited the construction of large-scale symphonic developments out of tiny structural units. For that reason Tchaikovsky was consigned to the category of what Adorno called musical "kitsch", for trying to make his melodious themes sound more cogent than they were. A similar view is evident in Dahlhaus's analysis of the trombone theme that begins the slow movement of the Fifth Symphony. Dahlhaus thinks the composer took far too long in resolving the prolonged dominant-seventh chord – but then, "Russians always exaggerate".

By contrast, Igor Glebov (an alias of Boris Asafiev) attempted to show the Russian quality of musical language in *Eugen Onegin*. The background was that of the new lied-style, as it had expanded to Russia from European salons, and Schubert's lieder, of which only short motifs and intervals were assimilated. The melodic types in question share the following characteristics: (1) the melody starts on the third of the triad, the main (tonic) tone of which is reached after some delay (e.g., Schubert's "Lindenbaum" or the pastoral girls' chorus in Tchaikovsky's *Eugen Onegin*); (2) the use of the hexachord, most often from lower fourth to upper third, which is then filled with a six-tone scale passage, as in Schubert's *Erlkönig* (order reversed) and Tatyana's letter aria, on the lyrics "There is no doubt". Altogether, this produces that peculiarly Russian form of romance in which "language sings and melody speaks", and ultimately the interval of a sixth becomes its basic intonation (Asafiev-Glebow, n.d.: 48–49). That interval appears in two main types, as found in *Eugen Onegin*: (a) ascending, as a bold leap into the unknown (as in Tatyana's aria); or (b) descending, from upper third to lower fourth. The latter type, called "Lenski's sixth", takes on particular signification in Tchaikovsky's music (e.g., Mignon's song, *Wer nur die Sehnsucht kennt*). Sometimes the sixth expands to a seventh, which when filled by steps produces the mixolydian scale. In Asafiev's opinion, this motif of the sixth is treated in a symphonic manner in the opera. It should be underlined, however, that this Russian quality was of course completely interoceptive, as Greimas would have put it, and no longer

served as an external topic. That is why Tchaikovsky was considered too "European" in the big metropolitan centers of the West, which hungered after more oriental brilliance.

By and large, the same German criticism trained against Tchaikovsky was also directed at Sibelius, who while writing his first symphonies said: "In that man [Tchaikovsky] there is much similar to myself". Sibelius, too, never gained acceptance by the central German musicologists as a serious composer, but was categorised among those who produced "*Heimatkunst*", and to which Mahler referred contemptuously as "those Gentlemen national geniuses". For Adorno, long ostinatos and obsessively recurring themes were a psychoanalytic proof of regressive infantilism, whether such musical devices occurred in Sibelius or in Stravinsky (on the former composer, see Adorno 1938/1997, "Glosse über Sibelius"; on the latter, see his *Philosophie der neuen Musik,* Adorno 1949/1958).

16.5 Rachmaninov

Though Rachmaninov lived most of his life in the twentieth century, he belonged artistically to the previous one: not a trace of "modernism" appears in his output. Also, Rachmaninov the pianist stood in the shadow Rachmaninov the composer, a bit like the case of Busoni. There the similarities stop, however, since Busoni, who once was a piano teacher in Helsinki and later in Moscow, became a fervent defender of modernist tendencies and also expressed himself in intellectual writings.

One of the Russian topics we meet with in Rachmaninov is his classicist drive, expressed by the taking of reference points from previous style periods. If Tchaikovsky had his rococo variations, Rachmaninov could write a prelude in *tempo di minuetto*. This last evokes a literary intertext in the figure of the poor German music-master Lem in Turgenyev's novel, *A House of Gentlefolk*. Lem has been forced to remain in Russia, where he leads an ignominious existence as an unknown music teacher in the musically uneducated – in the German sense – countryside.

Bach polyphony is imitated in Rachmaninov's Third Piano Concerto. His famous *Vocalise* belongs to the same paradigm as Villa-Lobos's *Bacchianas brasileiras* No. 5 (also a kind of neoclassicism). To those we may add the chaconne-like bass figuration in his "Moment Musical" in C major: a clearly baroque gesture, here "maximized" by a romantic pianistic texture.

Rachmaninov's musical creation sometimes followed visual impulses; or rather, emotions that could be portrayed visually as well. For instance, the

Prelude in B flat major, in its overwhelmingly ecstatic atmosphere, comes close to what we see in Ilia Repin's painting, *Freedom*. One of Rachmaninov's important synaesthesic works was the orchestral piece, *Isle of the Dead*, which he wrote after seeing pictures of Arnold Böcklin's famous symbolist painting of that title. Those pictures, it should be noted, were in black and white, not color; hence any colors he might have envisioned as being in his musical *Isle of the Dead* existed only in his imagination.

Rachmaninov's musical education took a path typical of the day. He became a pupil of Nikolai Zverev, who taught piano at his home. Zverev allowed his best students to try their hand at composing as well. Sergei numbered among those showing the most promise, and was sent to study under the tutelage of Alexander Siloti. The year was 1885 and the place Moscow, where musical life was at its peak. Tchaikovsky was widely acclaimed, the Mighty Five still living: Taneyev became a rector, and Glazunov's star was on the rise. Rachmaninov made a piano reduction of Schumann's *Manfred Overture* for Tchaikovsky and in 1887 wrote his first composition, the *Scherzo for Orchestra*. He received the gold medal from the conservatory for his opera *Aleko* and in 1892 wrote his famous C-sharp minor Prelude. When he played the Prelude for Taneyev, the latter responded laconically: "It reminds me of Schumann's *Novelettes*."

Aleko was performed, and Rachmaninov continued to write music, meeting Tchekhov in 1893. All seemed to be going well until the premier of his symphony in St. Petersburg. It was a fiasco, and the critics were quick to mock the young composer as a representative of Muscovite "modernism". The worst was Cesar Cui, to whom its harmonies sounded like music portraying the Seven Plagues of Egypt and intended for the inhabitants of Hell. All this threw Rachmaninov into a depression that was worsened by his meetings with Tolstoi, the second time in the company of the young Shalyapin. Tolstoi asked tersely, "Which music is the most important for man, erudite or folk music?" Which he followed up with: "Beethoven was nonsense."

After three years of depression, and following treatment by the physician and hypnotist, Nikolai Dahl, Rachmaninov wrote his Second Piano Concerto, began touring in Europe, and ended up in the United States, where the typical reception of his music may be exemplified by this description of a New York performance of *Isle of the Dead*: "... it is weighted down with a melancholy which seems to be racial in its existence...." When Rachmaninov played he had a theory that everything in music is focused around a single climax, which has to be carefully planned and calculated. If it is missed, all is lost. Still, the composition itself normally determines that moment which the performer must convey with absolute precision.

There have been many arguments asserting Rachmaninov's "American-ness", but the major part of his output was already completed before his emigration. Of course, when listening to the lyrical theme of the *Paganini Rhapsody* one may well be reminded of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. Another problem has to do with the American reception and propagation of his music. Just one example: in the Billy Wilder film, *The Seven-Year Itch*, the Second Piano Concerto serves as musical background for the wild daydreams of the leading male actor, who is enraptured with thoughts of having an extramarital affair with the lead female character, played by Marilyn Monroe.

16.6 Shostakovitch

The lives of those composers who in spite of revolution (or because of it) remained in Russia, proceeded along totally different lines from those who emigrated. Among them the most problematic has been the case of Shostakovitch. His international fame and positive reception was increased by the publication in 1979 of Solomon Volkov's book, *Testimony*, which purports to be the composer's secretly dictated autobiography (Volkov 1979/1980). Its authenticity was hotly debated, but in the end, Malcolm H. Brown's collection of important documents surrounding the matter, inarguably show that the book is a fake (Brown 2004). Many other strong "testimonies" also aruge for the book's falseness. One of the most amusing is that of Grigory Orlov, a famous Russian scholar who took up residence in the United States. Invited by the publisher of Volkov's book to evaluate its truthfulness, Orlov was allowed to look at the manuscript secretly in an isolated room, but forbidden to make any notes. When he asked the publisher what would happen if he determined the book was a fake, the publisher responded nonchalantly: "No matter ... It's already been already translated into many languages and in two weeks will appear through five European publishers as well" (Brown 2004: 97–125).

Two other musicologists – Richard Taruskin and Erik Tawaststjerna – are correct as concerning Shostakovitch's identity being essentially classical. Taruskin has argued that in this sense Shostakovitch was like Scriabin. In spite of the differences in their ideologies and maximalizing techniques, both composers were basically formalists, who articulated their music according to traditional, classical designs. Tawastjerna has rightly noted that Bach and counterpoint were Shostakovitch's fundamental influences: clearly the former composer's 24 preludes and fugues made a huge impact on the latter.

Yet in spite of their neoclassical – or perhaps "young classical" in the Busonian sense – impulses, Shostakovitch's themes often sound very "Rus-

sian", as if following intonations represented as early as in the music of Glinka. In Shostakovitch those intonations, or musical topics, are shifted as to content and aesthetic values. For instance: a slow, dotted or double-dotted rhythm is often referred to as the "French overture" topic; it occurs quite frequently in J. S. Bach's music, and commonly appears in that of later composers, from Mozart to Beethoven (e.g., in the opening bars of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in C minor, Op. 111). A musical signifier does not function alone, however, but needs an equivalent, aesthetic content to give it substance; the latter is defined or constituted by how the topical figure is concretely actualized in the music. Here the avant-gardist appears in Shostakovitch: in the opening of his Fifth Symphony, the dotted rhythm represents the Sublime, as this figure should do in launching the vast enterprise to follow, but then it expands into dimensions so gigantic as to approach the realm of the Grotesque. The same phenomenon occurs elsewhere in his music. Of course in this he had romantic predecessors, such as Schumann's lied "Eine verrufene Stelle" from the *Waldszenen,* which features a baroque-like, dotted-rhythm texture used to effect a Hoffmannesque, romantic-horror scene. Much of Schumann can also be heard in the aggressive and violent climaxes of Shostakovitch's symphonies – small wonder that the latter were often received as illustrations of events in the Soviet Union.

Therefore Shostakovitch, in the end, numbers among the neoclassical composers, though without their cheerfulness, playfulness and *Heiterkeit.* Rather, his music tends mostly toward the Epic, the Serious, and the Tragic, no matter what programs we envision therein. It is hard to imagine a more dreadful music than, say, his Seventh Symphony, with its frightful crescendo; or the terrifying final scene of his opera *Katarina Ismailova* (*Lady Macbeth of Minsk*), with its abject despair and hopelessness. In this he comes close to Richard Strauss. The latter, however, euphorized evil at the end of *Salome* by letting the orchestra burst forth colorfully in the key of B major when Salome kisses the head of Johannes. In this case, the grotesquely horrible stems precisely from this shocking juxtaposition of the euphoric major mode and the dysphoric evil portrayed on stage. In the parallel scene in Shostakovitch's *Lady Macbeth*, cheery, dance-like (polka) music accompanies the violence on stage; in the end, however, the composer uses dissonant and piercing harmonic combinations to describe Katarina's desperate act.

Shostakovitch also penned an enormous amount of ironic, parodic and grotesque music, as Esti Sheinberg (2000) has well-argued in her book on those subjects. Musically speaking, the effect of humor is accomplished with the same technique that Stravinsky employed in the Chorale of his *Histoire du soldat*: Bach with "wrong" bass notes. But humor is so intimately interwoven with Shostakovitch's instrumental writing that a certain playfulness comes to

constitute its own topic – from the march in his ballet *The Golden Age* to the Fourteenth Symphony, with its xylophone rhythms in the fifth movement, "On Watch", set to a text by Apollinaire. But Shostakovitch could not help falling victim to all kinds of ideologizing tendencies of his time, as did Scriabin and other "formalists" of Russian music (I use the term formalism in the sense it used by Taruskin, i.e., as defining a precise and clearcut sense of form). Scriabin became unacceptable due to his eccentric theosophical ideas. But in the case of Shostakovitch, it is hard to pinpoint what side he was on, ideologically speaking. Such ambiguity of personality was not uncommon in those days, and it often was a means of survival. In this regard Heinrich Neuhaus, the great pianist-teacher and a contemporary of Shostakovitch, tells the story of attending a concert where he heard a terrible performance of a symphony by some new Russian composer. He whispered into Shostakovitch's ear: "This is awful!" Whereupon the latter turned to Neuhaus and said: "You are right, It's splendid, Quite remarkable." Thinking he had been misunderstood, Neuhaus repeated his earlier remark, to which Shostakovitch muttered the reply: "Yes, it is awful" (quoted in Brown 2004: 272).

Finally, we must remember that, in the days following the Revolution, Shostakovitch eagerly attended local committees of the communist party in Petersburg. As to the famous attack on his "formalism", the article might have been written in collaboration with his colleague, musicologist Boris Asafiev; but no one can say for sure. Juri Lotman once told me, having heard from Asafiev's sister who was a composer and living in Moscow, that Asafiev was ultimately a "Dostoyevskian" character. What Lotman meant by that remains an enigma. In any case, the designation "Shostakovitch – composer of resistance" may be true, though we may never know exactly whom or what he resisted.

16.7 Semiotic interpretation

Categories of existential semiotics can help to interpret the above glimpses of Russian composers. We have seen that two oppositional principles of subjectivity operate in every composer; these have been designated with the French terms *Moi/Soi*. The former denotes the highly individualized, single, corporeal being of artists; the latter describes the impact of social norms, styles, and musical conventions (such as "topics") on their creativity. These two constraints were applied by Adorno, who spoke of the dichotomy *Ich und Gesellschaft*. In an Hegelian manner, we can speak of two phases within the *Moi*: (1) being-in-myself and (2) being-for-myself, the former referring to the composer's

ego as such, in all its energetic and kinetic manifestations, the latter to its becoming, its attainment of a more or less stable identity via habits and communication. The *Soi* also has two aspects: (1) being-in-itself, representing the norms, style and values as such, i.e., as abstract entities; and (2) being-for-itself, which refers to their application in particular works. The crucial point in this "autocommunication" is of course the place where ego and society meet, and what happens in this encounter. Does the *Soi* appear as a restricting, compelling force that acts as an agent of Necessity, and Moi as the field of Freedom?

In applying this four-case field (a kind of semiotic square) to Russian music and our paradigm of its composers, we can see how each composer possesses his own profile and configuration of *Moi/Soi*. In each case the dialectics between *Moi* and *Soi* manifests in different ways, either as acceptance and affirmation of the *Soi* or as negation or resistance to it. We of course must ask, Which *Soi*? For the tradition of art music can mean many things in our case: the Russian musical community or the European one; and within the latter, the many branches and varieties of the opposition between "culture" and "civilisation". (Stravinsky is perhaps the archetypal, twentieth-century model of a composer who constantly changes his *Sois*, or external points of reference.) To close this chapter, the following chart summarizes my observations concerning the composers discussed above, in terms of their *Moi* and *Soi*, and the manner(s) in which those two principles converge in their music.

Glinka:

Moi: modalities ranging from cheerfulness and graciousness to epic exaltation.

Soi: non-Russian. "Russian" music per se did not yet exist; Glinka was creating it himself, employing Italian and German musical styles and techniques.

Moi/Soi encounter: unproblematic; a smooth blend of Italian *bel canto*, German counterpoint, and Russian folk elements ranging from romances to dances; harmonious and Appollonian in nature.

Rimsky-Korsakov:

Moi: disappearance of *Moi* behind techniques of *Soi*; visuality of musical images.

Soi: techniques of erudite European music, as well as those embodying the Russian zest for folk and oriental prototypes.

Moi/Soi encounter: *Soi* prevails over *Moi* in orchestral and other types of technical virtuosity, resulting mostly in euphoric, sometimes even Dionysiac moments.

Tchaikovsky:

Moi: emotional, psychological (great amount of the modality of 'will'), sensual beauty.

Soi: influences of German symphonism and Italian-ness combine with Russian social topics such as the fabulous, narrative, epic.

Moi/Soi encounter: the gendered *Moi* dominates the *Soi*; even dysphoric elements are euphorized.

Rachmaninov:

Moi: obsessive, closed, melancholic; calculated musical climaxes.

Soi: neoclassical forms, idiomitically pianistic textures.

Moi/Soi encounter: the withdrawn *Moi* resignedly adapts to *Soi*; euphoric melancholy.

Shostakovitch:

Moi: formalism, precision, rhythmic-expressive gestures, march and dance topics; meditative; crescendos and maximalixing tendencies.

Soi: counterpoint, emphasis on linearity, neoclassical Bach influences, Mahleresque symphonism.

Moi/Soi encounter: often violent, resistant, interrogative, unresolved struggles, dysphoric.

Chapter 17 The stylistic development of a composer as a cognition of the musicologist: Bohuslav Martinů

To study a composer whose output consists of about 400 opus numbers poses a special problem for anyone who takes such a challenge seriously. As a semiotician as well as a musicologist, I also became interested in what happens in the mind of a scholar who starts this kind of study. Or to put it in modern terms, How does the cognition of a musicologist develop when he penetrates deeper and deeper into his subject? Can this process be portrayed at the same time as one is trying to make a stylistic overview of the development of such a prolific composer as Martinů?

I soon formulated two major questions. First, How can a single musical subject, *énonciateur,* produce such varied discourses as did Martinů? In other words, Can a subject be equally authentic when he speaks in so many different "languages"? Martinů is one of those composers who could radically change his style, either as a result of changes in context – caused by emigration first to France and then to the United States – or because of his inner, chameleon-like nature.

Second, How is it possible for a single musical subject to produce such a large quantity of musical discourses or musical texts? Is such productivity common among composers who create spontaneously and unconsciously? These last do not take a metalinguistic approach to their musical "language" but rush headlong to produce musical "speech" (*parole*), letting themselves be guided by the musical situation in question. Such a composer seems to represent a type ruled by external factors, as opposed to composers who constantly change their musical "language" (*langue*) and are thus lead by their inner views.

Martinů serves as ideal material to experiment with a new approach to the problem of how to write a study about a hitherto unknown composer, and at the same time to study what happens in the cognition of a musicologist in such a case. Here I apply the three existential categories defined by the American philosopher and semiotician Charles S. Peirce, namely Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness. What is involved here is a kind of process of forming models about the object of study, which gradually become more precise and organized as the cognition proceeds. After sketching this modelling process on the basis of Peirce's philosophy, that I discovered that similar ideas had been introduced by the cybernetician Georg Klaus, who in his *Dictionary of Cybernetics* spoke about "Schema eines Modells für Erkenntnisgewinnung in drei Phasen" (1968: 422):
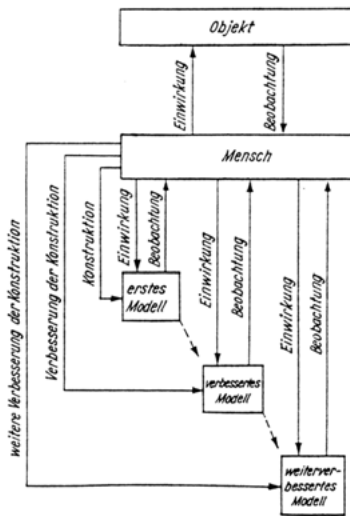
Figure 170: Cognition in three phases, according to Georg Klaus (1968).

As I applied Peirce's distinctions in studying Martinů, a more and more sophisticated model emerged as a result of continuous interaction between the empirical facts and the analysis. Also, Peirce's other methods proved useful both for describing this modelling process as a whole, and for analyzing each phase separately.

Firstness simply means the first and immediate contact with a phenomenon – in this case Martinů's music. Firstness is the direct experience: unreflective, emotional, and often almost chaotic in nature. Here it encompasses all those first impressions which one gets when compiling and becoming acquainted with empirical material. Naturally, it could be questioned whether a musicologist ever is capable of a genuine Firstness in respect of any composer or type of music. In our time, we have already heard such an enormous amount of music that we are not likely to listen to it purely in its own terms, without measuring it against some other aspect, a second meaning or style, that is, without already moving to Secondness.

Nevertheless, Martinů himself emphasized the importance of a kind of Firstness in relation to his music, as indicated by the following statement: "My thoughts deal with things and events which are almost banal in their simplicity and close to any ordinary and not only to exceptional persons. They seem to be so modest that we hardly notice them at all, although they may have a deep signification and can serve as a source of true joy for a human being, who

without them would feel his life boring and without shine. And perhaps they are precisely these matters which help us to live easier – and if we reach their true value – to attain the highest stage of the thought" (quoted in Mihule 1966: 31).

In Secondness we relate our emotional, primal impression to something else, a "second"; for example, to a style or a form principle which we think may be of relevance or, in our case, Martinů's life, to the knowledge we have about its cultural context. At this stage we also identify the piece and start to articulate our impressions about it.

Finally, in Thirdness our reflection joins the First and the Second, the immediate impression and the form analysis, to something which is a Third. In our case this means a generative, semiotic method, the concepts of which help us to obtain a deeper understanding of our musical experience as well as of our analysis. On this level we can reveal the isotopies, the temporal-spatial-actorial categories, and the modalities of Martinů's music.

Therefore, if Firstness means our emotional, instinctive and intuitive reaction and its verbalization, then Secondness would consist of "normal" musicological analysis. Thirdness would be semiotic meta-analysis of the first two. Nevertheless, when shifting from one phase to another it is essential always to return to the "empirical" level, i.e., to Martinů's music itself, and revise the knowledge we gained in the previous phase. Thus the categories of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness are realized in this "cognitive" model simultaneously on two levels: in the observation of music itself and its increasingly complex analysis:
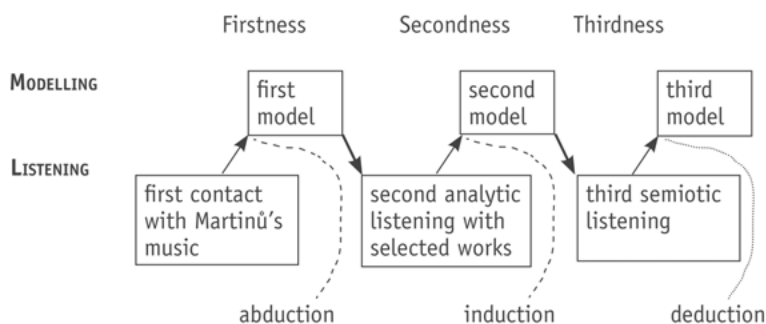
Figure 171: Semiotic-cognitive model of Martinů's stylistic development.

We start from a kind of "neutral" zero-point and try to make every phase as explicit as possible: the scientific discourse itself thus manifests its own direc-

tion. The idea is to eliminate the influence of one's own cultural background and competence by rendering them as explicit as possible. I have applied this idea to a study of narrativity in Sibelius, as well, particularly in the analysis of his Fourth Symphony (Tarasti 1994a). Such a study describes its own process, constant fluctuates, and is not made deductively following a ready-made scheme of analysis. Such a scheme does occur in the last phase of the study (see the generative course formulated to analyze a Ballade of Chopin; Tarasti 1994a: 177 and 179). On the level of Firstness, however, the procedure is like an abduction, providing us with uncertain, plausible knowledge; on the level of Secondness, the basic mode of study is induction.

17.1 Orientation to the style of Martinů

To form any conception of Martinů's music one is obliged to make choices in order to find a reasonable corpus for research. At the beginning one is guided by all kinds of references from books, letters, concert programs, one's own earlier experiences, etc. Soon this preliminary information enables one to enter Martinů's universe through its most familiar and accessible aspects. These *ruptures* – or *points of attraction*, as we have called them above, in the chapter on the existential analysis of music – are, in Martinů's case, the places in which he catches the ear of the listener by means of purely musical elements. This could be paralleled by the use of simple, bright colors in the style of naive painting. Such individual "qualisigns" are effective when contrasted against a white, empty canvas. In Martinů's music, too, simple elements are presented without a complex background texture. They are neither supported by a chordal-polyphonic texture, nor by rich orchestration. In these places Martinů is, in Kandinsky's terms, a composer of musical points, rather than of lines or levels. Thus one is struck by the lively speech motifs and on-stage accordion sounds at the beginning and end of the opera *Julietta*, by the musical iconicity of animal dances in the ballet *Spalicek*, by the elementary, compelling rhythms in the scherzo of the Fourth Symphony, by jazz elements in *Revue de cuisine*. One even encounters elementary forms of cluster or field technique, as at the beginning of the *Fantaisies symphoniques*. Syncopated hemiola-rhythms occur almost everywhere in Martinů's melodies, as do outbursts of singing string cantilenas in their upper register – a gesture reminiscent of Sibelius, that has something "Nordic" about it. Perhaps Martinů's widow was speaking about these cantilenas when she commented that, in almost all of his works Martinů, "opens the heavens" for the listener.

After this Firstness contact with Martinů's music, as well as with documents related to his life and work, I was ready to move to the level of Second-

ness. At the same time, I was able to distinguish the following main stylistic features and classes in his music: *Vocal style* in his operas and cantatas; the melodic line revealing his close contacts with the Czech tradition, Janáček for example. *Folklore style*, although this term is to some extent misleading even in such works undeniably inspired by folklore like *Spalicek*. More important than the use of Moravian folk tunes is the distance the composer takes in relation to them; in this sense, Martinů's approach to folklore often follows the aesthetic ideas of Satie and Cocteau. He represents the kind of musical infantilism or naivety which French modernists made a supreme virtue, but which in Germany was condemned as "regression" – Adorno's critique of Stravinsky in his *Philosophie der neuen Musik* is a typical illustration of this attitude. This style also appears, more particularly, in the aforementioned string cantilenas of Martinů's later works as a kind of "spiritualized" and idealized folklore.

The composer's jazz style also follows principles formulated by Satie and Cocteau. As an example, one might take the chamber music work *Revue de cuisine* (1930) for clarinet, bassoon, trumpet, violin, cello, and piano. Martinů is reminiscent of Darius Milhaud in this piece, although the latter, for example in his *La création du monde*, was much more serious than Martinů ever was in his pieces belonging to the jazz paradigm of twentieth-century art music. The Firstness impression of this piece is that of spontaneous humor, while on the level of Secondness one has to ask on what its jokes are based.

In the opening movement, "Marcha", already the first signal by the trumpet is comical in its naivety and forced briskness. It is followed by an energetic accompaniment figure in the piano, which gradually diminishes during an overly long continuation for such a beginning. In the next phrase, the glissandi constitute a "perversion" of cello-playing techniques. In what follows, the whole piece, little by little, turns out to be totally formless, and the banal musical material remains unbalanced in proportion to the length of the movement. Meaningless accompaniment figures begin to dominate, and the idea of musical development is parodied.

In the next movement, "Tango", a dramatic gesture is exaggerated. The theme in the proper sense, written for muted trumpet, reminds one of Ravel, who utilizes such figures seriously, as does Debussy (see, for example, Ravel's Piano Concerto for the Left Hand).

Particularly strange is the brief section at score rehearsal No. 4, with its almost otherworldly intervening idea, reminiscent of the dialogue between bassoon and string pizzicati in Sibelius's Second Symphony.

"Charleston", the third movement, starts with a long introduction, which leads one to expect something quite different from what follows. The "Finale"

Figure 172: Martinů: *Revue de cuisine*, exceprt from 3rd movement.

is a parody of cyclic form (many preceding motifs recur), as wells as of the "victorious Finale" of Romantic, four-movement symphonies; here, French children's tunes are used as hymn-like closing themes.

A competent listener notices in the Secondness level that the piece is, in fact, a parody of Viennese-classical sonata, where the structurally complicated development is replaced by something quite different; the slow movement by an ironic tango; the scherzo or menuetto by a Charleston; and the "Finale is banal", as musicians are wont to say. "Quadratic", German periodicity is also parodied by violations of it throughout the piece.

Martinů resorts to an "absolutist" style in his works without extramusical inspiration, such as his very rich chamber music production. This style is also near to the Symphonic style, which can be considered the extreme opposite of the aforementioned "Parisian" folklore style. This symphonism is somehow related to his emigration to America – forming a parallel with the Brazilian Heitor Villa-Lobos, who also wrote many symphonies in his American years in the 1950s. But unlike Villa-Lobos, Martinů did not move from his "Parisian" style into national-romanticism, as happened with some composers in the 1930s and 1940s. Instead, he followed a kind of universal symphonic style in

the Hindemithian line of neoclassicism; i.e., he began to make music out of purely musical elements and to use established form principles (such as *concerto grosso*).

Neoclassicism constitutes a problem of its own in the case of Martinů, as it does with many other composers. It is not an independent style principle which exists on its own, but must be defined in relation to, or as a negation of, something else. As regards classicism, it is a "neo" phenomenon. On the one hand, it belonged to the anti-romantic movement of modernism: in a way it belonged to the kind of modernism in which classics were harmonized with "wrong" basses (Stravinsky). On the other hand, it was the antipode of Fauvist, dissonant and atonal avant-garde. The whole situation may be analyzed by the following semiotic square, the governing principles of which are the categories Before/Now and Obedience to/Breaking of rules:

classicism   romanticism

neoclassicism   modernism

Figure 173: Martinů: Stylistic elements placed on a semiotic square.

When one says a composer is a neoclassicist, one must also answer the question, In relation to what? In relation to classicism insofar as the composer uses certain forms and genres? Or in relation to romanticism, insofar as actoriality is no longer central, as a musical subject narrating in the music? In other words, the composing subject, the *énonciateur*, may not identify himself with the theme-actors of the music itself, the *énoncé musical*, as in the romantic symphonism of Liszt, Strauss, and Mahler. Or perhaps one is neoclassicist in relation to modernism, insofar as the composer does not aim to create a work that is at the same time a code and with the message encoded in it; i.e., the composer does not want to create an apocryphal, incomprehensible musical text, which would be totally "disengaged" in the semiotic sense. A composer utilizes the principle of disengagement only to the extent that the listener can tell the difference between, say, an original fugue and his own, or between an original *concerto da camera* and his unauthentic, distanciated version of it. Could a neoclassicist be at all serious, or was his attitude similar to those of the postmodernists of our time? Yes, he could be. Martinů certainly was. His neoclassical works display a rare inner intensity and

energy, not typical of most other neoclassic composers. His spiritualized, "folkmusical" gestures in this style can also serve as keys to the composing subject, at least for one raised in the Sibelian tradition. There are also "gradual processes" of development, in which Martinů again comes rather close to the Finnish master.

The importance of this neoclassic, symphonic style of Martinů is reflected also by the fact that Paul Collaer, in his *History of Modern Music* (1955), listing the most important works written from 1887 to 1956, mostly mentions works of Martinů that belong to this category: Concertino for Piano and Orchestra, 1937; *Tre ricercari*, 1938; Double Concerto for Two String Orchestras, Piano and Timpani, 1940; Fourth Symphony, 1945; Fifth Symphony, 1946. (On the other hand, Collaer's list can be rather arbitrary; for example, Sibelius is only mentioned in a chapter dealing with the conservative and superficial musical taste of Englishmen.)

In Martinů's mannerist style, the composer unfortunately plagiarizes himself, and there the stylistic elements, originally fresh, have become lifeless. I include the Etudes and Polkas in this category. One can recognize in them all the rhythms, melodic types, and harmonizations typical of Martinů. However, the music is generated merely from the "grammar" which the composer had already established in his earlier works.

For a composer, the absence of a style dominant among other composers of his time can be of equal importance to the styles that he *does* use. In addition to these main "styles" in Martinů, for example, one notices no trace of Expressionism in his music, not even in his opera *Julietta*, whose surrealistic plot might have tempted the composer to go in that direction, as others of that time were doing.

In what follows, general style features of Martinů are analyzed more carefully, by means of the Peircean categories of Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness. Applied to his Fourth Symphony, this kind of semiotic approach is aimed at showing similarities on a deeper level regarding Martinů's style and even among some of his compositions from quite different periods.

17.2 Fourth Symphony

17.2.1 Firstness

Martinů's Fourth Symphony is a classic example of symphonic thought, that is, the shaping of music according to that traditional four-part scheme. As such, the first movement contains a lot of action with a clear-cut formal out-

line; the second movement is a scherzo based upon a rhythmic-motoric ostinato; the third movement is a lyrical and contemplative slow section, raised to a pathetic melos; and the finale is a fast, synthesizing and terminating phase.

The orchestral influences and parallels derive from the French tradition: from Berlioz (notice the similarity between the main theme of the first movement and the *idée fixe* of Berlioz's Fantastic Symphony), Paul Dukas (the undeniable model for the Scherzo is *L'Apprenti du sorcier*), Florent Schmitt (dense orchestration throughout the piece), Albert Roussel (impressionistic and lyrical treatment of the orchestra), Jean Sibelius (for example, the strings in the third movement, where there is also a thematic allusion to the slow movement of Sibelius's Fourth Symphony), Anton Bruckner (typically Brucknerian developmental lines, *Steigerungsanlagen*, throughout the whole work), Gustav Mahler (the culmination of the development in the Finale to a "catastrophe", as a kind of peripety of the action, in bar 13: 5), and finally the Czech symphonic tradition, particularly in the climax of the Finale, with its syncopated dance rhythm in the manner of Dvořák.

Martinů's starting points are thus revealed quite clearly right at the beginning, in the Firstness listening of a musicologist, which is never, as was pointed out, absolutely pure, primal listening but always conditioned by experience, competence, and history. The overall aesthetic impression is of freshness and effectiveness; i.e., the composer's will is in harmony with the stylistic and formal decisions and techniques he has chosen. In semiotic terms: structures of signification (content) and communication (form) coincide, and there is, following neoclassical principles, no contradiction between the "meaning" and its "expression".

As to content, the first movement is pastoral and euphoric. The second movement, by contrast, grows into something quite threatening, a march shattering everything in its way; the third movement represents spiritualized nostalgia, longing, and transcendence (on the level of separate qualities, "qualisigns", as so often in Martinů, the piano timbre is used to give neoclassic color to the music). The fourth movement is syncretic, mixing the meanings of the previous movements, until at the end a euphoric triumph arrives in the foreground.

17.2.2 Secondness

17.2.2.1 First Movement

0–4: Poco moderato; an introduction, no melodically or thematically characteristic elements; figuration, trills, tremolandos, scale passages; the dominant

of the B flat major of the following section is prevalent. The tone f appears mostly in the bass; above it are altered chords, parallel chordal movements and apparent shifts of keys, but there is no doubt about the basic tonal function. This is typical of Martinů and occurs even in his smallest pieces, as for example in the opening bars of the third movement of the piano piece *Fenêtre sur le jardin* (movement V-I in G major) or in the first section of the first movement of the Suite in D major, which is "colored" mainly with alternating major and minor thirds, secondary dominants, chromatic and added notes, parallel movements in sevenths, etc., but whose functional role is never put in question.

Figure 174: Martinů: *Fenêtre sur le jardin*, excerpt.

4–7: exposition with a lyrical, unison string melody, à la Berlioz, on the tonic chord; in the development of the theme Martinů's typical hemiolad prevail; here, six sixteenth-notes are grouped into two triplets on the melodic level, against a basic rhythmic pulse that divides itself into three groups.

8–11: development, in which elements of the main motif are united with those of the introduction; it is not a question of dramatic juxtaposition of thematic elements according to the narrative figure of "fight", but merely of combining textures that have been provided with a certain direction; namely, these textures indexicalize the section with a continuous movement towards the return of the tonic in the recapitulation.

12–15: recapitulation, in the same key as the exposition, apart from the expansion of the end leading to the coda at rehearsal number 16.

A scherzo in ABA form, based on a rhythmic ostinato in 6/8 meter; the syncopated main motif circulates through different instruments: bassoon, trumpet, woodwinds and piano, English horn, brass. Martinů rarely builds a whole movement on this kind of continuously growing motoric impulse. In general, his motifs are so syncopated that the main beat is not felt at all. The trio section consists of a dialogue between woodwinds and strings, which with its euphoric flavor forms a contrast with the threatening growth of the A section.

17.2.2.3 Third Movement

This largo movement exemplifies the linear thinking theorized by Ernst Kurth. The movement has a symmetrical structure: ABA + coda. The most essential gesture is formed by the unison violins and their melodic curves, the *Bewegungsphasen* in the upper register. The piano, introduced at rehearsal number 2, provides the whole section with its particular tone color, representing the transparent, luminous texture dominated by strings, characteristic of Martinů's late period. The movement starts in B flat minor and ends on D major, which indicates detachment from the principle of one predominant key.

17.2.2.4 Fourth Movement

The movement is built between the pillars of C minor and C major. The unifying main motif is an inversion of a motif heard at the beginning of the first movement (1: 4–5). The orchestration is mostly based on tutti effects which are skillfully constructed to avoid muddling of timbre. One may distinguish the following sections:

> Fluttering motif; transition: 4: 6–5; Subordinate phase: 5–7 with singing string cantilena; Development: 7–11, the texturalization of the main motif; Return of the subordinate phase: 11–13, 5, the development and culmination of the singing cantilena and its surprising climax with a "Mahlerian" catastrophe chord; Return of the main motif (recapitulation) 13: 6–16–2; Coda 16: 3–20, where elements from the scherzo, cantilena of the subordinate phase of the finale, and main motif are combined, culminating in a kind of Dvořákian dance in the Czech symphonic tradition.

17.2.3 Thirdness

17.2.3.1 First Movement

The lst Isotopy (0–4) constitutes an opening modus, a kind of "gliding" towards the main isotopy; the function of this isotopy is to prepare the entry of the next one. A typical example of such an isotopy elsewhere in Martinů's oeuvre is the introduction to the Charleston in the suite *Revue de cuisine*. In the latter piece, such isotopies are indexical in character, i.e., they are sign complexes which as a whole refer to the next isotopy. They create expectations and modalizations which seem to imply that something is to follow. The following elements constitute the indexical isotopy of the first movement of the Fourth Symphony: (1) trills and tremolandos, even simultaneously in the whole orchestra , which create a sort of sound field vibrating in the air, and not yet come to rest (measures 2: 1–3); the timbre then emerges from the trills of entire chords, which produce the impression of an orchestral "vibrato"; (2) glissandi and scale passages; (3) ostinato figures (for example, in the piano, 0: 5–8); notice particularly the typical Stravinskyan rhythmic-melodic syncopation: the disengagement of rhythm and melody.

In the temporal sense this section is varied, not proceeding linearly; the indexical nature is not produced from the temporal category in as much as it is by other parameters. From the temporal-rhythmic point of view, Martinů's textures are often diversified or *debrayé* (the Scherzo of the 4th Symphony is an exception). Instead, the indexicality is created with spatial relations. The inner spatiality is created in a movement from the dominant to the tonic of B flat major with camouflaged surface harmonies. The outer spatiality (range, register) is created by upward movement, often stepwise. It is characteristic that these scale passages do not lead to anything, i.e., they do not produce the impression of teleological achievement of a goal, the narrative fulfillment of action. At first (1:1–3) the upward scales lead into a descending, resigned passage with minor thirds and augmented seconds – a motif used by Martinů subsequently as the main actor of the last movement. The second time the figure of ascending scales appears (2:4–9) and leads to a kind of diminution, liquidation and disappearance of motifs, until at the third reappearance the music shifts almost unnoticeably to the main section, which is heard in an unexpected register, dominated by the main actor. All this creates a feeling of indefiniteness; it is a way of creating a texture which from the thematic and tonal point of view still belongs to Romantic symphonism, yet "modernized" or estranged.

Actoriality: As pointed out, the proto-actor of the main motif of the last movement already occurs in this movement:

Figure 175: Martinů: Fourth Symphony, H305, Ist mvt., main motif.

At this stage, however, it remains unaware of its function in the sequel. In as much as symphonic thinking is the creation of large networks and textures from certain motifs, this section clearly displays the symphonic quality in Martinů's music. Nevertheless, there are no particular actors in the first section, and the introduction of actors in the proper sense is saved for the beginning of the next isotopy.

In the modal respect, the epistemic impression is of something about to burst out, but that has not yet come into 'being'. The modality of 'knowing' dominates that of 'can'; i.e., the orchestration is skillful, but not yet used to emphasize any sound effects as such, nor, in general, the orchestral texture. The kinetic energy ('will') has no compelling direction, but it still moves towards something, which has not yet been revealed, but which proves to be an action, 'doing'; therefore, what is involved is the basic modal category of 'not-being'.

From the temporal point of view, the 2nd Isotopy (4–8) is more unified. It is divided into an opening part in 6/8 meter (poco allegro) and a closing part in the same meter, but in such a faster tempo (allegro) that one could take it as a duple meter. The main motif of the opening section is so highly syncopated that, after its symmetrical beginning (motif and its repetition), one cannot hear the main beat at all. This section, which otherwise has been in a regular meter, is thereby provided with a feeling of rhythmic disengagement.

In the spatial respect, the main motif is scattered into various registers in the orchestra: motif a – violins, motif b (the answer) – woodwinds in the upper register. The gradually growing motifs a and b together force all the other instruments to join them. The strings continue in an intense legato which pro-

duces a transparent sound. They repeat the main motif, which is thus "texturalized"; that is to say, an entire "tonosphere" arises from this motif.

In the actorial regard, this main motif and its texturalized continuation reveal Martinů's melodic principles. His main actors remain ambiguous, undefined and non-profiled in nature; i.e., they are without clear direction and melodic implications. But, ironically, this does not mean that they lack kinetic energy, i.e., the modality of 'willing'; rather, what happens is that their extremely ambivalent and syncopated character makes them lose the identity or distinction necessary to make them musical actors. Instead of catalysing something in the musical texture – instead of "acting" like Beethovenian or Mahlerian symphonic themes or even like the themes of Sibelius, not to mention Tchaikovsky – the motion of Martinů's music sweeps his themes into its stream. The actors thus become in a way "de-actorialized".

Martinů's relation to themes, in this actorial sense, displays a modernist aspect of estrangement. His world is no longer one of traditional musical actors. Instead, they appear and disappear in his music, blending into a kind of collective, anonymous subjectivity which, due to the folk-music character of syncopation, can easily be identified with his homeland as seen from a distance, by one who no longer lives there. Such theme-actors in Martinů often also represent idealised and spiritualised folklore, though such a notion in connection with Martinů may be questionable to some.

In its basic modality, this section (isotopy), with its neoclassic serenity, represents the modality of 'doing', without any dysphoric features. In relation to it, the latter half of the section, presents the modality of 'doing+', i.e., a sort of indexicalised or agitated action. The orchestral tutti, the climax of 'can', has been reserved for this unexpected arrival of the A minor tonic chord. It consists of a continuous increase of the 'will' and 'can' modalities towards a resolution which turns out to be dysphoric. The degrees of the modalities of 'knowing' and 'must' are small here. Despite its skillful symphonism and classic formal design, Martinů's music does not emphasize the role of intellect or style norms.

The 3rd Isotopy (8–12) is a repetition and development of the introduction. As a connecting chord with the preceding A minor tonic, a bitonal combination appears: the six-four chord of E flat major (cellos) and the six-four chord of F sharp minor (violins in the upper register). Particularly noteworthy in the return of this introduction/exposition is the development that begins gradually at score number 10, with a motif that is insignificant as such. A remarkable aspect about this texture – which slowly grows from this motif and undergoes a gradual, almost Sibelian transformation – is that Martinů uses none of the central actors of the symphony as material for the development. Hence this section's relation to the actors remains somewhat problematic.

The 4th Isotopy (12–16) is an unproblematic repetition of the exposition; thus, the modality of 'must' becomes stronger. The brief coda does not change the semiotic content of the movement.

17.2.3.2 Second Movement: Allegro vivo

The whole movement can be treated as three isotopies according in ABA order. Whereas the first movement featured various tempos and ambiguous articulations, here an accentuated strong beat on each measure can be heard throughout the main section (A). Although the meter is Martinů's favourite 6/8, the duple accents produce the impression of a march. The temporal dimension is thus very stable, engaged, making possible to pay attention to other dimensions.

Spatially the movement is based upon alternation of thick orchestral fields, the use of all registers simultaneously, and "thinner" sections employing only solo instruments. The inner spatiality of the movement is created by long, static chordal pedals, ninth chords à la *Sacre du printemps* (for example, see 2: 4–5), descending modal scales, and primitivistic motifs. The main motif of the movement, in the accompanying figure, is also a variant of the kernel motif of the whole symphony:

Figure 176: Martinů, Fourth Symphony, H305, mvt.2, bars 1–6.

Actorially the movement is built upon a single motif, played by different instruments. In other words, there operates a kind of double actorialisation: first in the melodic-motivic construction, and second in its timbral realization. The movement emphasizes the modality of 'doing', as well as an extraordinarily energetic modality of 'willing' and orchestral 'can', along the lines of Dukas's *L'apprenti du sorcier* and Ravel's *Boléro*, as noted earlier.

The main isotopy of the trio (B) is formed by a diaphonous string sound combined with a singing, extremely syncopated melodic line in the upper register. This is a typical "heavenly" section of Martinů, a "spiritualisation" of folklore. The A section is repeated extremely symmetrically, the normative effect of 'must' increasing the kinetic force.

17.2.3.3 Third Movement

This movement consists of static 'being', which in the global modalization balances the extraordinary energy of the *Riesentanz* of the preceding movement. Temporally the movement is dominated by half-notes and slurs which make it impossible in certain places to distinguish the pulse of the notated ¾ meter. The movement is characterised by bright string timbres, to which the colour of the piano has been added as a neoclassic element (in the manner of Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms* and *Oedipus rex,* or Villa-Lobos's *Bachianas brasileiras No. 3*). Therefore, spatially this movement is a kind of euphorisation of the upper register of the orchestra:

Figure 177: Martinů: Fourth Symphony H305, mvt. 3, bars 17–24: Typical use of upper registers.

Actorially, the overall linearity of the movement is more important than the individual, identifiable theme-actors. A kind of sentimental, transcendental expression characterises the entire movement. On this Thirdness level, the epistemic modality corresponds to the appearance of something that has already taken place (this may be contrasted to the beginning of the first movement). Such an articulation cannot be accounted for semiotically, in Greimas's veridictory square.

Something has happened. The first two movements contained many musical events, representing the basic modality of 'doing'. Now this last has definitely disappeared. It is not a question of a "secret", since the musical destinatee does know what happened. Neither is it a "lie", since it does not attempt to look as if it were something other than what has been. It is neither truth nor untruth, since it is not concerned with anything that is "present". It represents something which appears and which has been. This category does not seem to have any name in Greimassian semiotics. Within this modality occur constant changes of other modalities. Martinů's music is characterised by continuous motion, even within movements or sections, that represents static 'being'. Here we can distinguish the following sub-isotopies:

(1) "Prelude" (0–3): It is astonishing that the movement starts with a "descending" development, sinking to a zero point (measures 0–1:5), with a reduction of the modality of 'will' to its minimum. What follows immediately is a rising gesture which makes, in respect of the 'knowing' of the composer, an essential reference to the main subject of the last movement: the defiantly rising minor thirds. Yet what is involved here is an entirely different kind of gesture, and the listener cannot foresee the future of this motif except by noticing that the passage – which makes an allusion to Sibelius's Fourth Symphony (even the key is the same: A minor) – is an inversion of the descending motif that was heard at the beginning of the first movement. The modality of 'will' rises again at score number 2, where an orchestral element of 'can' (namely, the colour of the piano) heightens the effect.

(2) "Meta-Prelude" (3–6): Spatially, the upper register opens, setting the stage for the outburst of the main actor in the following section. We do not yet experience the presence of a musical subject. We recall a euphoric place in the past, but it is as if the actor was absent. The section ends with a descending movement, a negation of 'willing'.

(3) A transition (6) develops the theme with the descending minor thirds.

(4) A "swan song" or "heaven" theme (7–10), prepared spatially and actorially, enters as late as score number 8, in the brightly coloured key of F major. This actor is the first in the whole symphony to have an obvious

Figure 178: Martinů: Fourth Symphony H305, Section illustrating the use of piano colour in Martinů (3rd movement, bars 41–50).

implicative structure in the Meyerian sense. In other words, it has an inner spatial 'will', created by a gap in the main theme: the tone D is not heard on the stressed beat but only in the Brucknerian climax at score number 9.

(5) Return of the "Prelude" (10:1–10). This opening section is regained almost unnoticeably, as part of a broader movement, or *Bewegung-sphase*. Therefore it is not experienced as a reduction in the modality of 'knowing' (the redundance is hidden) nor as an increase of the modality of obligation or 'must'. Abrupt juxtapositions of modalities do not belong to Martinů's aesthetics, at least not in the context of a single piece, though on the whole he belongs to those composers who change their style like a chameleon.

(6) Coda and development (10:11–12). A de-actorialisation occurs, and at the same time a remodalization of elements of the main actor, dispersed in a way that reminds one of dream images dissolving in the process of awakening. If the "interpretant" of the sound of section 10:14–24 is Sibelian organic development, then the obvious legisign for the section at score number 12 – as well as its interpretant for a competent music listener – is the neoclassic sound of Stravinsky: flute, clarinet and piano (cf. *Oedipus rex*, among others). Spatially the movement ends with a disengagement in D major.

17.2.3.4 **Fourth Movement**

The movement as a whole is characterized by indexicalization of all its elements to a greater extent than before. All the musical actors disappear, blending into the global motion of the music. At first these actors add impetus to this movement, but are then caught up in the ensuing motion. This applies even to the main motif: it is a forward-driving gesture, like a hand clenched into a fist, with two rising minor thirds (the beginning of a diminished seventh chord). The latter musical phemes have already been much used as supporting actors, or "helper" actants, in the functions of transition, development and ending, but never yet as a principal actor. As such, the inner modality of this actor is that of 'will+' in its kinetic energy, but as to 'knowing' it presents nothing new nor original.

Figure 179: Martinů: Fourth Symphony H305, Kinetic energy in an actor from the fourth movement.

When a whole theme begins at score number 1, its kinetic energy is soon consumed in a restless saw-like movement without clear direction. Typically, this melody does not end anywhere in the true sense, but fuses unnoticed and gradually into the actor of the following section (1:15–16), which in turn is a dance-like version of the "heaven theme" of the third movement. But as was

said, the premise of the whole movement is in the sequence of strongly indexical, forward rushing sections, according to the following program:

(1) Exposition of main theme (0–1:13)

(2) First index section (1:13–4:4), culminating in repetition of the main actor in the brass (3:9).

(3) Transition (4:5–5), where the texture becomes polyphonic.

(4) If the main motif of the movement is a kind of narrative "opponent", then the present actant serves as a "helper". It is a motif radiating positive energy ('will'), as one encounters in some sonatas and symphonies of Brahms. Its modality of 'knowing' refers to the "heaven" theme of the third movement; it is an intervallic inversion of the latter, whose descending fifth is here replaced by a rising one. This helper-actant appears only for a short time (5:1–11).

(5) Second index section (5:12–7): transformation of helper-actant into an indexical, continuous texture.

(6) Brief return of the helper-actant (7:1–7).

(7) Third index section (7:8–9), leading to no goal.

(8) Fourth index section (9–11), which leads to ...

(9) ... the third occurrence of the helper-actant (11–12).

(10) Fifth index section (12–13:5): the spatiality intensifies the tension, culminating with a return of the rising fifth in the melody. The orchestra sounds with full power, in extreme registers and with all the sound mass available to it. After each indexical moment little by little amplifies the modalities of 'willing' and 'can', the climax is attained in measure 13:5, on the notes C and D flat, played *fortissimo*.

(11) The preceding peripety of action is immediately followed by the return of the main actor, the opponent-actant of the movement, so that even the modality of 'being obliged to' (must) obtains its highest value here. This intensified repetition begins at score number 13:6 and continues until 16:2.

(12) This transition (16:3–18) is a kind of remembrance of the second movement, with its march rhythms. Accentuated main beats provide contrast to the overall syncopation. This return is so transformed that it does not diminish the informational value, the modality of 'knowing'. Quite the contrary, the realization of this cyclical idea is experienced as a surprise, and not as intended or necessary, i.e., according to requirements of 'must'.

(13) Coda: the main theme of the first movement returns, but transformed, as was the scherzo theme above. The orchestral power is at its mightiest, so that Martinů in this closure raises all the modalities to their highest val-

ues. Consequently, also the epistemic value displays the category of 'truth' at its most convincing.

Still, the end of this symphony cannot be a romantic "finale of victory", due to the many personal innovations made by the composer-énonciateur, as was shown above. The relation between the musical subject-énonciateur and the enunciation which he has produced, relative to the genre tradition of the symphony, strikes a parallel with the case of Sibelius. Both Martinů and Sibelius continue the genre tradition. They are not creators of new tonal grammars, but they are innovators and reformers who remain within the predominant grammar or *langue* of music.

Postlude I

Chapter 18 Do Semantic Aspects of Music
Have a Notation?

According to many scholars and philosophers, music is not the same thing as sounds and notes, but only manifests through them. Some scholars think that real music lies in its values, ideas, noemas, all of which are transcendental in relation to empirical sound realities. It is an ever-changing variable, however, the extent to which the purely human side of music – its *modalities*, in the philosophical and semiotic sense – may find their equivalent sign-vehicles, and the importance of their fixation into concrete visual or other signs in music history. The relativity of notation was noted early by François Couperin when he said: "Nous écrivons differemment de ce que nous exécutons" (We write differently from what we play) (quoted in Veilhan 1977). Two centuries later, musicologist Charles Seeger (1960) spoke about "prescriptive and descriptive" notation. The conductor Serge Koussevitsky once expressed dissatisfaction with a musician's performance. When the player asked which note was wrong, the maestro replied: "No, the mistake was *between* the notes" (quoted in Slonimsky 1988). Hence notes, as notation, do not say everything about music; nor do they tell us what, in the end, makes something music.

The *modalities* have been an essential component of generative models of musical semiotics. In language they appear through verbs such as to be, to do, to want (will), to be able (can), to have to (must), to know, and to believe. Applied to music, they have been described by a notation system stemming from modal logic and Greimas's semiotic system (explained further in Tarasti 1994a). However, the symbols of formal logic are insufficient for portraying a living and processual musical semantics devoid of concrete "meanings". First, such symbols are difficult for a non-specialist to grasp; and second, music cannot be entirely digitalized into discrete units of notation, because it is a continuous process. Music is a constant transformation from pre-signs into act-signs and from act-signs into post-signs. Other new sign categories – as revealed by existential semiotics (Tarasti 2000) – are endo-signs and exo-signs, pheno-signs and geno-signs, quasi-signs (as-if signs), and trans-signs. Music consists in a continuous dialectic among them, and hence remains in constant flux between transcendence and *Dasein*. How might music be analyzed and the results notated in the light of this fundamental view of its significative and communicative nature? Certainly this level may be described, but can it ever be *prescribed*, in the sense that musicians would understand it and take it into account in their performances?

My hypothesis is that a new notation may be developed that would reveal and communicate this essential aspect of music. It would be developed by a

combining of Greimassian-based formal grammars of modalities and the theoretical ideas of Heinrich Schenker. That would be the next step in the elaboration of theories in musical semiotics.

At first glance one would think musical notation to be the primary object of such a discipline as semiotics when the latter is applied to music. Yet, it is amazing how few semiotic scholars have addressed musical notation. The late Ingmar Bengtsson, in his panoramic study *Musikvetenskap* (1977), put forth some ideas on it. But apart from Gregorian semiology, the term "semiotics" seldom appears in specialized studies in the field. The medievalist Leo Treitler has written much on this topic in his book, *With Voice and Pen* (2003), in an attempt to relate theories of general semiotics to notational problems of musical discourse and its history in the Middle Ages. So a historically-oriented musicologist certainly would see our problem as a variable of historical contexts. If we further accept Treitler's principle that we always write history from the point of view of our own time (Treitler, oral communication with the author), then we might think that, in the present age of semiotics, it is only one new interpretative means in a series of diverse paradigms and scientific contexts for musical studies. In fact, some examples by Treitler display interesting aspects of medieval notation, such as a score in the shape of a heart, with red and black colors denoting time values. On the one hand, the "Gestalt" here is an iconic sign of the contents of the song, whereas the colors indicate the time values of performance.

The title of this chapter contains yet another term which is at least as problematic, namely, "semantics". Semantics has been often confused with semiotics. The latter is of course the umbrella term covering all meanings, with semantics as one of its subfields. By contrast, the study of significance – i.e., semiotics – also concerns those signs which carry meanings, or what we call "sign vehicles" (Nöth 2000). Semiotics is often considered a combination of significance and communication. This poses a very simple question: how does musical semantics differ from verbal semantics? In spoken and written language, where the "word" is considered the basic semantic unit, we rarely need to ask what it means. No special signs or notations are needed for semantics as they are for syntax. When we read or hear a verbal sign we automatically associate it with a meaning, by convention and following codes of grammar. If a problem occurs, such that we do not directly understand the verbal side, we use a dictionary or other words to clarify the situation.

In music, the situation is much more complicated. Musical signs of notation refer first to performance instructions and aural manifestation. These of course pass through the mediation of gestural language; that is, the notation is first rendered via tactile signs or "gSigns", to use Thomas A Sebeok's formu-

lation (see, e.g., Sebeok 2001). Only thereafter do we think further about what this sound form or Gestalt might mean. Some scholars argue that those "tönend bewegte Formen" do not mean anything and so they stop the discussion there. To their mind music is only "Form in Spiel der Empfindungen", as Immanuel Kant put it, what music semiotician David Lidov (2005) calls mere Design, or what is called "absolute music", that is to say, totally abstract. Such a formalist attitude is considered a totally legitimate aesthetic position, from Eduard Hanslick to Igor Stravinsky and Claude Lévi-Strauss, the latter describing music as "le langage moins sens" (Lévi-Strauss 1971: 579). On such views, there is no meaning, no semantics in music, we only add it later for various reasons, arising from social habit (contextual theories), due to the fact that all music is communication (mediatic theories; see, e.g., Hennion 1994); because music evokes other artistic texts or events in its external world (intertextual and programmatic tendencies); or because music is one of the subject strategies by which we orient ourselves deep within our psyche (psychoanalytic theories). Some philosophers of music take a more moderate view, such that music does not convey meanings but only expresses something "meaningful" (Scruton 1997).

At the same time, we come close to the problem of representation, which is the strongest relationship between a sign – such as music notation – and something to which it refers, as argued by Roman Jakobson (1963). In this regard, philosopher Nelson Goodman (1976) has pondered the ontological status of the score in his study *Languages of Art* where he claims that musical performance is an "exemplification" of the score, also calling this relationship one of type/token (borrowed from Peirce). Another approach to this problem in the Anglo-analytic tradition has been made by the Finnish musicologist Kari Kurkela (1986) in his article "Note and Tone: A Semantic Analysis of Conventional Music Notation", which applies Montague's semantic theory to music. Moreover, the issue has been scrutinized from the viewpoint of computer-assisted studies, such as those by Kai Lassfolk (2004), in his "Music Notation as Objects: An Object-Oriented Analysis of the Common Western Music Notation System". We must remember, however, that we have "less" strongly meaningful representations, such as to signify, to express, to convey, and the like.

Amid all these sophisticated musical theories, we should take into account one general truth revealed by general semiotics concerning all sign systems and all symbolic forms invented by man/woman. Namely, that *something which has no meaning can appear only as a negative side of its primary meaningfulness*. This was noticed as early as 1976 by a semiotician of the Tartu School, Boris Gasparov (1976). This means that while music is an "absolute" and "abstract" form, it is also and always a symbolic form even when negating any

overt and explicit meanings; music retains a meaningful aspect, even if it is only a Hegelian negation through a kind of negative dialectic. The problem here is how such meaningfulness may be approached and how that which is implicitly semantic in every musical utterance can be made audible, visible, and ultimately explicit by notation. Some scholars of general semiotics, such as A. J. Greimas (1966), speak of a "structural semantics", and others, such as music theoretician Leonard B. Meyer (1973), talk of "embodied meanings".

Does our conventional, prescriptive musical notation contain anything of this implicit or hidden semantic aspect of music? Have methods of analysis developed by music semioticians produced an appropriate notation for musical semantics? To answer these questions we have to make a short overview of the history of musical semiotics, to find out whether there is anything like semantic analysis or descriptive notation of musical semantics. Of course such an overview cannot be given without simultaneously inquiring into the epistemic foundations of each scholar as concerns the nature of such implicit semantics. Is it anything which can be grasped by verbal reactions to music, when we suppose we can only try to construct a successful verbal meta-language for such entities? This would be the same as Nattiez's aesthesic viewpoint or "Rezeptionsgeschichte" of musical works. We look at traces of musical meanings as experienced by listeners and their verbal commentaries as the ultimate form of musical hermeneutics (say, of Arnold Schering's romanticism). Or is it something of which we become aware when dealing with either verbal or notational performance indications, as when Robert Schumann writes "rasch" (studied by Roland Barthes) or "durchaus phantastisch und leidenschaftlich", or as in the case of such conventional signs as *crescendo, diminuendo, sf, pedal, etc.*? In such instances, musical semantics would be something like aspectual semes in verbal language: grammatical forms which determine whether something is said sufficiently/insufficiently, too early/too late, with certainty/ uncertainty, and so on. Ultimately we must admit that without such aspects music would not be music, but something lifeless – although again some periods, such as ours, with its passion for "Urtext", deny the relevance of this level. Moreover, we have to admit that "isotopies" – the deepest semantic categories – are decisive as to what communicative devices a composer/performer/ listener applies. For instance, in a piece like Robert Schumann's *Fantasy in C major*, the composer uses isotopies that allow us to grasp the musical surface and "notes" in a semantically correct manner. Further, I have long been convinced that the music in the last movement, "Langsam getragen, Durchweg leise zu halten", evokes the final scene of Goethe's *Faust II* through its temporal, actorial and spatial disengagements. This is a musician's and a semiotician's intuition. But how can we prove and justify it on the basis of the nota-

tion, that is to say, by interpreting what the composer wrote down in notes? We must go far beyond the concrete visible signs of the score to legitimize such reasoning. To do so is ultimately possible only if we are competent in the "isotopies" of romantic culture and its intertextual field, what Umberto Eco (1999) calls the "encyclopedia of culture".

Thus, in addressing the question of whether musical semantics has a notation, we should move along these lines and try to grasp Ernst Kurth's argument that music is kinetic energy. Something similar was later stated by L. B. Meyer (1973), who claimed that music operates essentially by "implication and realization". These ideas would presume musical semantics to be of a fundamentally temporal nature, very much in line with Heidegger's sense. Yet Meyer thought that the archetypal, cognitive *Gestalten* of music (axis, symmetry, scale, triad, and so on) lie behind the implication. From an energetic point of view, these *Gestalten* are not the primary thing, but are rather chosen by a composer when he wants to express a certain type of kinetic energy and its unfolding. Altogether, we see here how musical semantics is inextricably connected with postulates on the epistemic nature of music itself.

To refer to my own recent theories on existential semiotics, I would argue that music is a kind of *Schein* (in the sense of Kant, Schiller and Adorno), such that something immanently semantic manifests itself "vertically" in every musical utterance. At the same time, music has a horizontal, linear and syntagmatic appearance, which is essentially processual and dynamic – just as Kurth thought. I have underlined the importance of Kurth's view on music and its essence in *A Theory of Musical Semiotics* (Tarasti 1994a: 98–106). We also know how crucial Kurth was to Heinrich Schenker. But now if we accept that music is "Erscheinung", that is, "horizontal appearance", we reach a very profound epistemic level on which to build an entirely new theory of musical semiotics. This should also include a new type of notation to represent such "appearance" (see ibid.: 154–180).

My earlier solution was to use symbols borrowed from formal logics, the same ones which Greimas used in his extremely formalized analytic meta-language. I refer, for instance, to my study of Chopin's G minor Ballade, in which such a formalized procedure reaches its culmination. Such a procedure is still possible, but in a pragmatic sense does not yet fully realize the potential of musical modalities (be, do, will, can, know, must, believe). Nor is it very comprehensible to musicians without education in formal logic. Yet I strongly believe that Schenkerian notation could be turned in that direction. For one reason, it portrays music as a temporal unfolding (appearance); and second, every single musical event can be situated within the whole process. Tom Pankhurst (2004: 61–65) has already proposed that the Schenkerian *Stufen*

descent, 3–2-1, may equate to such Greimassian modalities as want-to-do, want-to-be, and so on. This idea could be elaborated further by study of the "existential" moments of a musical work; that is, those moments in which the necessity of the Schenkerian generative course coincides with the freedom of choice which a composer always enjoys within the limits of the grammar. In fact, some leading Schenkerians have argued that this method requires a kind of semantic aspect in order to legitimize its meaningfulness. This would enable us to interpret music as an existential and even transcendental phenomenon (cf. Tarasti 2005; also, 2003a, 2003b). It would moreover bring meaningfulness quite concretely into the practice of musical analysis and into rigorous notation.

Postlude II

Chapter 19 Music – Superior Communication

19.1 Music and medicine: Some reflections

Many issues in the medical sciences involve phenomena of communication, and hence they closely touch disciplines specializing in the transmission of signs, meanings, and significations (i.e., semiotics). Here I try to open some avenues in this direction, as well as to show particularly how music constitutes a special case of communication. Thus the knowledge obtained about musical communication may prove relevant also to medical studies, both theoretical and practical.

The impact of music upon the human mind and body was noted long ago. Physicians were not only doctors in ancient Greece; they were also the first semioticians, since they interpreted symptoms (i.e., signs) of illnesses and used the healing force of music in what we today call music therapy. It is also true that, in such interpretations, a particular human encounter takes place in which the "other", the patient, expresses certain "signs" according to which the physician must make inferences as to what is happening inside the ill person. In philosophy (cf. Tarasti 2002), we speak of the problem of "alien-psychic or auto-psychic" (*fremdseelig* or *eigenseelig*).

In applied medical research the problem of how to deal with objective and subjective signs of illnesses has received much scrutiny. In her dissertation, Marja-Liisa Honkasalo (1988) presented a case in which the patient had subjective signs of illness but no objective ones (i.e., based on exact measurements of bodily processes, tests, indicators). She studied how such persons, in spite of a lack of objective signs (tests, numbers, indicators), nevertheless feel that they are ill. They are "semiotically" ill and capable of communicating verbally with other patients about their symptoms. Honkasalo observed how female workers in a factory would talk about their symptoms when they met, and how musicians, when meeting for rehearsals, seldom speak about intellectual aspects of the music to be performed but instead discuss their bodies, aches, feelings, and the like – i.e., entirely corporeal issues. Therefore, communication about "subjective" and "objective" signs of bodily feelings constitutes a particular means of human interaction. The Finnish psychiatrist Oscar Parland spoke about music as therapy, terror, and redemption – and portrayed various mental diseases musically in his piano suite.

Since communication belongs to the core of medical studies, music may hold the key to several fundamental problems in such communicational processes. In fact, a completely new paradigm has come to the fore in semiotics

during recent years, called "biosemiotics". Unlike what we might presume, it does *not* imply a reduction of human communication and meanings to biology; on the contrary, it means to consider biology as a "semiosis", a process of signs, and to interpret the whole phenomenon of life in semiotic terms.

The first to advance this argument was the Baltic biologist Jakob von Uexküll (1940: 13), who was influential in Berlin before World War II, and thereafter in Naples, Italy. His son Thure von Uexküll, a medical scientist who specialized in psychosomatics, later developed his father's ideas on semiotics, which in the meantime had become an independent discipline thanks to such scholars as the Hungarian-American Thomas A. Sebeok (who in his later years, until 2002, strongly promoted biosemiotics) and Umberto Eco, among others.

The main thesis of biosemiotics is that each organism lives in its own *Umwelt* and is capable of receiving only signs that are specific to its species. This idea was proposed by Jakob von Uexküll as early as 1940, in his treatise *Bedeutungslehre*. It is relevant for us that Uexküll took many analogies from music. As we have noted elsewhere in this book, he argued that each organism has its own *Ich-Ton*, "me-tone", which accepts certain signs and rejects others. Therefore, if noxious viruses penetrate the organism, it means that the *Ich-Ton* of this organism has weakened and allowed them to intrude into the body, which is no longer able to reject the alien signs. Each organism functions as an "orchestral score", or like a group of bells played by signs entering from the *Umwelt*. The two ways in which an organism communicates with its environment are, as Uexküll puts it, *merken* and *wirken,* the former meaning the assumption of signs, and the latter referring to "feedback", or reaction to the *Umwelt*.

In the history of semiotics, it is not surprising that music has been used as a model of communication and signification. For the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, music was one of the greatest mysteries of mankind. Through music humans become aware of their physiological origins, while myth teaches them their social essence. Ludwig von Beethoven, believed music to be more profound than any philosophical doctrine.

Upon what is musicality based? We can ponder this question as it obtains in the human world, and even among animals, which obviously have a musical sense, as shown by the Italian zoomusicologist Dario Martinelli (2002). Musicality is certainly a special skill or attribute, but one that is very difficult to measure objectively since it is also a result of education, context, and culture.

Ethnomusicologists oppose the idea of music as a "universal language", since there are numerous types of music that we do not necessarily understand, because we are familiar only with the type that we grew up with. Yet,

now we arrive at a paradoxical property of music, in that music is not something which we even *should* understand cognitively.

Music influences us through an immediacy and force which no other art possesses. To paraphrase the American avant-garde composer John Cage, there exists no one, correct understanding of music. Still, neither is music a field of arbitrary taste, given that we live in music cultures which have values and aesthetic judgments based on certain "objective" qualities. Nevertheless, only those who are competent in such values can use them for arguing and reasoning. In other words, music reaches man beyond his conceptual, cognitive, and verbal abilities. Former professor of musicology at the University of Jyväskylä, Timo Mäkinen, has stated that music is man's speech to another man (or woman), but as speech, it is of a particular kind. Music can be totally "absolute", i.e., devoid of any "signs" referring to outer reality (not representing anything but themselves) and without lexicographical meanings.

19.2 Transcendence and nonlinear communication

Let us look more closely at the communicative power of music, before introducing some recent theories about music and its role in our existential situations of communication. First of all, the force of music is based on abilities that are almost opposite in nature (Tarasti 2005). Through music, we can rediscover our lost self, our own *Ich Ton,* in the world of external needs and "society's affirmative pressures", as Theodor Adorno put it, or in our *Dasein,* daily existence, as Heidegger stated. This last is characterized by *Sorge,* care; through music we can return to our most archaic ego, the mythical one, which also constitutes our *khora,* a term that psychoanalyst and feminist Julia Kristeva adopted from Plato's dialogues. Such a *khora* is the level of nonverbal gestures, kinetic energy, pulsation, desire – essentially the non- and preverbal realms upon which, later in a child's development, the patriarchal order is settled. People commonly think that semiosis starts with language and its articulations and that all sign systems are like "language". But for Kristeva, *le sémiotique* is not language, and its signs systems are those of this primary and much vaguer energetic level of *khora.*

In any case, through music we can enter into communication with our primary ego and self. In the model of biosemiotics, communication between two persons (or other organisms) is possible only if they have first discovered their own *me-tones.* In colloquial language, when we relax into musical time and space, in moments of extreme fatigue and stress, we immediately forget

external demands of life. When we start to play, the musical process occupies us, grasps us with its power; it is simultaneously mental and physical; it is total. This is, perhaps, the first healing effect of music.

Yet music also has a contrary property; namely, through it, we can forget ourselves, "disengage" from our ego, and *transcend* our *Dasein*. Therefore, music is also extremely consoling and comforting. In an extreme situation in which the human ego is threatened by a dysphoric state, music is a consolation. As a temporal art *par excellence* music is the most beautiful metaphor for vanishing human life. A composition has a beginning and an end, and all that happens in between is extremely significant, and often in a manner in which we are unable to portray in any verbal or conceptual language. At the same time, we are aware of the fragility and ephemeral nature of this phenomenon. Music as a social force is also a habit through which we blend together with a community, as in singing or dancing together. In these and other ways, music makes us assimilate with a community and thus causes us to forget our individual existence. A patient in a reception hall or at the dentist's office listens to music and thus temporarily transcends his or her body. Concerts are always also social occasions, where music efficiently unites and connects people. There are no celebrations or ceremonies without music. In a word, music makes us both *remember* ourselves and *forget* ourselves, at one and the same time.

We have seen how Marcel Proust, in his series of novels, *A la recherche du temps perdu,* abundantly described music, and in a more profound manner than many a scientist has done. We saw that, in the seventh volume of the novel, *La prisonnière*, he describes a performance, in a Parisian salon, of a posthumous piece by a fictional composer, Vinteuil. He tells how each person in the salon experiences music in his or her own manner and how music, in fact, emerges from quite another type of motif and passion than itself, simultaneously transgressing material and social conditions. Above all, Proust wants to show one aspect of musical communication. It is not *linear,* moving from "left to right", as we are accustomed to envision it on the basis of schematic models, which have expanded from communication studies to many other disciplines. I am referring to the famous Shannon-Weaver model, sender ┈┈⟩ {message – channel – code – context} ┈┈⟩ receiver, which these two New York engineers constructed merely to measure how we can, in a very efficient manner, transmit signals in telecommunication.

What takes place in human communication is different. This difference was noted by A. J. Greimas, the Lithuanian-born scholar and founder of the

Paris school of semiotics, when he proposed the terms "destinator" and "destinatee" for human communication, in contrast to mechanized, man–machine communication, in which we use the terms sender–receiver. The Proustian music model is nonlinear. Any particular moment in musical communication can prove to be the focal point, and the communication itself takes place in all directions, from composer, to performer, to listener, to the message itself, back to context, to composer, to performer, to listener, and so forth. The utmost consequence of the Proustian model is that, obviously, there is no such thing as a musical *object*. Music is not like any kind of transmitted "thing".

How then does the world of music open to us? How can we share in this miracle? On the whole, the term "musical" does not primarily mean the use of an abstract cognitive capacity to distinguish pitches, rhythms, and the like, but, instead, the fact that music is speaking to us and about us. When said in French, *Vous êtes si musicien* has the same meaning in German, *musikalisch*. Hence we can say that music is something existential. But its existentiality has many dimensions: corporeality, affectivity, expressivity – a cure for alexithymia. And it is also often synesthetic; i.e., it catalyzes all the senses. On the other hand, it is something communal and social – yet also independent of social norms and, ultimately, free of any ideology.

In my theory of existential semiotics (e.g., 2000, 2005), I have been aiming to produce models that more profoundly explain such basic facts as those advanced above. And in this book, I have presented some of my recent approaches to the problem of musical communication. Drawing from many sources – especially philosophy and semiotics – I have advanced here a model that more precisely articulates our "being" in the world, a synopsis of which follows.

As early as in the logic of Hegel, we find categories such as *an-sich sein* and *für-sich-sein* (being-in-itself and being-for-itself). The former designation simply means our unique being, without any social distinctions; the latter, our being observed and defined by others, our social roles, and the like. For example, if we are good with our hands (being-in-itself), we may become a baker, a pianist, or perhaps a surgeon (being-for-itself). Such distinctions of being were embraced by later philosophers ranging from Heidegger to Sartre.

We further enriched this dichotomy by adding the aspects of *Moi* and *Soi*, as drawn from the thought of Paul Ricoeur and Jacques Fontanille. The former indicates a kind of being-in-myself or for myself; the latter, a being-in-itself or for itself. Putting all four cases together onto the "semiotic square" (square of oppositions), along with accompanying modal categories, we arrived at the following:

Figure 180: The existential "square".

They can be interpreted in four ways. First, being-in-myself represents our bodily ego, which appears as kinetic energy, as "khora", desire, gestures, intonations, Peirce's "First". Our ego is not yet in any way conscious of itself, but rests in the naive "firstness" of its being (modality: endotactic, 'will').

Second, being-for-myself corresponds to Kierkegaard's attitude of an "observer". It is Sartrean negation, in which the mere being shifts to transcendence, notes the lack of its existence, and hence becomes aware of itself and of transcendence. The mere being of the person becomes existing. This situation corresponds to the transcendental acts of my previous model, negation and affirmation (Tarasti 2000). Ego discovers its identity and reaches a certain kind of stability, a permanent corporeality via habit (modality: endotactic, 'can').

Third, being-in-itself is a transcendental category. It refers to norms, ideas, and values that are purely conceptual and virtual. They are potentialities of a person, which he or she either does or does not actualize. Here, abstract units and categories are involved (modality: exotactic, 'must').

Fourth, being-for-itself means the aforementioned norms, ideas, and values as realized by the conduct of our person in his or her *Dasein*. The abstract entities appear here as "distinctions", applied values, choices, realizations that are often far from the original, transcendental entities (modality: exotactic, 'know').

Essential to the model is the combination of *Moi* and *Soi,* the individual and collective subjectivities. It portrays semiosis not only as a movement of the collective Hegelian spirit, but also through the addition of the being in and for itself, the presence of a person via being in and for myself. Crucial is not only the distinction of these four logical cases, but also the movement among them, the transformation of a chaotic corporeal ego into its identity, the ego

becoming a sign to itself. Furthermore, such a stable and completely responsible ego impacts the actualization of transcendental values, in which the ego becomes a sign to other persons. In this phase, being in and for myself meets the "you", or the being in and for yourself (others).

Behind this created social field looms the transcendental: virtual values and norms – signs that have not yet become signs *to* anyone. As we have noted earlier, the semiotic sphere consists only of fields of being-for-myself and being-for-itself. The extremities of the semiotic square are the field of pre-signs, which surround the semiosis from two sides in the proper sense. However, this semiosis, the process of act-signs, cannot be understood without going outside of it, to transcendence. The existential analysis hence becomes a Kantian transcendental analytic in these two phases.

In sum: our existential semiotic model may be applied in order to portray not so much the external communication that takes place in music, but the internal one. The model portrays the autocommunication within a person's mind, which of course consists of many elements that are internalized from the social context, but which also stems from our personal, inner essence as a corporeal entity. Altogether, and when used in music analysis, it shows us how every act of communication in music contains many levels that it sets forth, as well as how complex music ultimately is as a manifestation of "superior communication".

Glossary of Terms

Act-sign: A notion in existential semiotics denoting the moment in which a presign, or "not-yet-a-sign", becomes a fixed entity. We encounter an act-sign when some virtual, transcendental value, idea or norm has become "actualized" within the *Dasein*. Greimas speaks about three types of modalities, as well: virtualizing, actualizing and realizing; akin to the three basic stages of signs in existential semiotics: pre-signs, act-signs and post-signs.

Actoriality: Adopted from Greimas's semiotic narratology, it denotes all the anthropomorphic elements in a musical discourse or musical text. In the Classic-Romantic period of art music, musical actors were simply musical themes, whose phases and developments a listener could follow throughout a piece. Close to actors is the notion of **actant**, a term used to designate generalized, "actantial roles" in a narrative; e.g., subject, object, sender, receiver, opponent, helper, etc., which are filled by specific actors.

An-mir-sein: Existential variant of the Hegelian "an-sich-sein" (being-in-itself), which here means the "Me" or "Ego" or subject-in-itself, as such; i.e., as a body as yet without structure or articulation. From it, the next step would be **Für-mich-sein**; i.e., a body that has become more determined by habit and education into a person with an identity.

An-sich-sein: Hegelian category in his Logics of Science; it means the being-in-itself, as such; e.g., the famous "Ding an sich" (thing in itself). It is close to another distinction by Hegel, namely, **Für-sich-sein** (being-for-oneself), which refers to being that is already imbued with some properties, for instance, those given by society.

Appearance; Fr., *apparance*; Ger., **Schein**: the phenomenal, sensible appearing of signs; something which appears but sometimes "is" not really what it is. Music revealing to us the truth allows us to look behind the sonorous surface of a musical work. Music is not only as it appears or sounds to us. As Bernard Shaw said about Wagner, "His music is better than it sounds." Appearance also belongs to the basic modalities, alongside being.

Arbitrary, arbitrariness: Term used by Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1916) to describe signs that do not have any direct or motivated relationship to what they signify. Letters, phonemes and words are thus "arbitrarily" chosen. In this sense, they are **conventional**, i.e., based upon convention or contract. (For another usage of the term, see the definition below.)

Avant-garde: Originally a military term specifying the front line or vanguard; used metaphorically to describe those on the cutting edge of their field, especially the arts, and who aim to create the radically new. Thus, avant-

gardists rarely have a professional education in the arts, since it would force him/her to repeat old practices and aesthetics. If radical novelty is the essence of the avant-garde, it can be identified with the principle of entropy as opposed to redundancy, as understood in information theory.

Communication is the transmission of signs between at least two entities (subjects). It is essentially also a transcendental act, since, basically, the sender and receiver of a transmission always remain unknown to each other, each as the alien-psychic or "transcendental". Therefore every act of communication contains the risk of misunderstanding. Nevertheless, the gap between communicators is not empty, because this "transcendental" space is filled by the modalities of the interlocutors. Without this modalizing field between them, communication would not be possible at all.

Conventional: A special type of narrativity based upon clear-cut, segmented units, or "functions" as Vladimir Propp put it. A function is an act or action pursued by a protagonist in a story. In music, an example would be sonata form, with primary and secondary theme areas, transitions, expositions, developments and recapitulations; refrains in a rondo are entities of conventional narrativity; etc.

Dasein: Being-there; term used by German philosophers from Heidegger to Karl Jaspers, to designate the world in which we live, not only "me" but also other subjects and objects. Ultimately we can also speak about musical "Dasein", as a universe or work.

Débrayage/embrayage (engagement/disengagement): terms in Greimassian semiotics meaning the shifting off and on, respectively, of three categories: time, space and actor (subject). A narrative normally begins with "now" but shifts off when the story goes to past or future. Similarly, one usually begins "here" but is disengaged into "there". Finally, the actor may first be "I", but then move to other protagonists: you, he, she, they, etc. At the end of the tale this purposeful imbalance is usually reestablished, when the initial situation (*hic, nunc, ego*) returns, shifted on or "engaged". In tonal music, disengagement means moving away from the tonic, changing the tempo, shifting from the main theme into a secondary one. At the end of the piece they are normally restored.

Ekphrasis: In antiquity, the verbal explanation of a sculpture; later it came to represent any utterance whereby one "talks" with one art about another art. For instance, a hermeneutic or poetic description of a composition would be its "ekphrasis"; a painting may "comment" on a musical work; etc.

Endosigns/Exosigns: endosemiosis is a signification process within a living organism; e.g., how cells "communicate" among each other. Hence, endo-

signs are signs felt and received within a living organism – the latter understood even in its metaphorical sense as a musical work. On the other hand, exosigns arrive from outside, sent by another organism; they are external.

Existential: designates a moment, in one's life or its representation in a narrative, which is more meaningful than others, which distinguishes itself as something almost transcendental; a moment in which a virtual, transcendental idea or value is actualized in the Dasein. Normally the everyday course of events stops there, either by affirmation or negation. In the first case, the presence of the transcendental is felt as *plenitude* (pleroma) and in the latter as *nothingness*, or 'le Néant' (Sartre). In music, there are existential moments that, with their particular cogency, elevate themselves from the rest. All this applies also to narrativity (for the latter, see below).

First, Second, Third, or Firstness, Secondness, Thirdness: Stemming from Charles S. Peirce's semiotic philosophy, these mean the three stages of our perception and approach to the world, and lead to nine categories of sign. "First" means the reality as such, in its emotional and chaotic, unpondered essence. "Second" means taking distance from the First, and reasoning about it. "Third" refers to a more profound reflection, a stage in which we conceive values, more complex emotions, laws, etc. In music, the reception process of a musical piece could be articulated as these three phases (as Proust did with his "small phrase" of Vinteuil)

Gesture: The origin of gesturality in music lies in the latter's basic corporeality. We use the term gesture in music as a metaphor to portray a unit that communicates something to us non-verbally, by being foregrounded and striking. The use of gestures refers as well to rhetorics. Adorno said that gestures cannot be developed, they can only be repeated and intensified; hence one could not make a symphony of musical gestures, because they would first have to be sublimated into expression. Robert S. Hatten has brought the notion of gesture to the center of musical semiotics.

Icon, index, symbol: Sign categories defined by Charles S. Peirce, they belong to basic semiotic vocabulary. Iconic signs are based on similarity between the sign and its object (the cuckoo motif in Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony, leitmotif of fire or ring in Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelungen*). The index is based on contiguity between sign and object (musical signals, such as the sound indicating the intermission of a concert, a trumpet blast to muster troops, etc.). In a symbol the relationship is conventional or arbitrary (for instance, national anthems).

Ich-Ton, Me-Tone: A concept borrowed from the biology of Jakob v. Uexküll, it means the filter whereby an organism accepts or rejects signs from its environment. It is a metaphor referring to the "musical score" within an

organism, played by external stimuli. Similarly, in music, every composer and performer has his/her own "Me-Tone" determining style.

Inner/Outer: category applied in many processes of discursivisation; for instance, in music one can speak of inner (tonal) /outer (registral) space, as well as inner or outer time or actors.

Interoceptivity/exteroceptivity: Two aspects of the cognition of a sign, the former refers to what happens within a mind; for instance, a receiver of a sign. The latter refers to an external source of signs, say, the sender, but in any case something outside the subject.

Inventeurs/novateurs: terms coined by French music philosopher Vladimir Jankélévitch, who said that the innovators are those composers who create new musical languages (e.g., Schoenberg); reformers are those who create new works within the tradition, that is, within already established codes. Both can represent congeniality in music.

Intonation: a concept used by Russian musicologist and composer Boris Asafiev, who created so-called intonation theory, the major theory of music analysis and education in Eastern Europe in during the twentieth century. An intonation designates a musical unit which can be a motif, theme, interval, timbre, chord, rhythm – any characteristic element – that can be perceived and felt together with its proper meaning, emotion or value. Thus, intonation theory is a kind of implicit musical semiotics. It attends to musical form as an experienced process, as something heard and remembered. Living musical culture consists of "memoranda", i.e., musical signs which a listener and his community can remember and maintain in their collective consciousness, which Asafiev called the "store of intonations".

Isotopy: A term Greimas imported from the physical sciences into semiotics, it is one of his most important discoveries. It means the level of meaning whereupon all subsequent sign processes depend. Isotopy guarantees the coherence of a text which may seem fragmentary and/or illogical. Thanks to isotopies we can read, listen to, or perceive a text, or a part one, as a coherent whole. In a composition, successive musical events may be separated by pauses and appear inconsistent, but thanks to isotopies the text holds together. The functioning of any single sign depends on its deeper isotopies. Musical performance must also find the correct isotopies for a "*werktreu*" and authentic interpretation.

Merken/Wirken: In the biosemiotics based upon the Uexkülls' research (Jakob the father, Thure the son), these are two semiotic operations whereby an organism receives and reacts to signs from its environment (*Umwelt*). For instance, a lamb in a meadow signifies different things to a man and to a

wolf: for the man it may signify an aesthetic, pastoral quality to be admired (merken); for a wolf, it means something edible, and it attacks the lamb (wirken).

Metamodalities: Transcendental modalities, beyond our daily life. They guarantee the movement and circulation of values and ideas between *Dasein* and transcendence.

Modality: In linguistics, it refers to the manners whereby a speaker animates his/her utterances by his/her wishes, hopes, fears, emotions, etc. It appears in grammars as a particular verbal mood, the subjunctive, conveying this aspect. For instance, if the main phrase expresses modal content, the verb in the subphrase must be put into subjunctive form, as in French: I have to go to the bank: Il faut que *j'aille* à la banque. The fundamental modalities are 'being' and 'doing', and additional modalities are 'can', 'want', 'know', 'must' and 'believe'. Moreover, there is the modality of 'appearing' (Schein, as above). Modalities in music are a most important source of semantics without any particular contents. Music is modalized when it is performed or listened to. Modality in this philosophical sense has nothing to do with modal scales and the like in music.

Moi/Soi: A fundamental existential semiotic distinction stemming from French philosophy, where "Moi" means "Me", the subject, an individual. "Soi" signifies oneself or itself, or simply the society, the social within us. In the terms of Theodor Adorno, the distinction is the same as "*Ich und Gesellschaft*" (Self and Society).

Musical semiotics: The discipline which studies music as signification and communication, in all its forms of manifestation and in cultural practices. The minimum level of musical semiotic analysis requires at least two "levels of articulation": the primary (like words, i.e., meaningful units; the signified) and secondary (like phonemes, without meanings as such; the signifier), the two being somehow connected. On the one hand, musical semiotics is a special branch of musicology; on the other, it forms part of general semiotics, as one of its fields of application.

Narrativity: The central semiotic principle that organizes events in the world into a coherent, logical and linear order. Some say that the minimum requirement for narrativity is that something changes into something else. Some emphasize its nature as strictly textual, having an implied author (in music, implied composer) who is not the same as the real author. Some theories, like Greimas's, consider the generation of a text as stemming from basic logical operations, such as contraries and contradictions in a semiotic square; others consider the trigger to be conjunction or disjunction of subject and object (Propp 1928). When a subject is disjuncted from

an object, this creates an initial lack, which launches the whole story (as when Alberich steals the Rhinegold at the beginning of the *Nibelungen Ring*). Some speak about a narrative arch or tension, which resolves at the end of a story. For instance, myth is a narrative that tries to find a logical solution for some basic problem. Music semiotician Márta Grabócz has recently focused on musical narrativity in her remarkable studies.

New Musicology: An American school of music studies which has a strongly interpretive and hermeneutical character as a reaction against positivist methods in musicology (Schenker, set theory, etc.). It combines cultural, ethnomusicological, biographical and archival studies with ideas borrowed from gender studies, psychoanalysis, sociology, cultural studies, semiotics, etc. It questions traditional forms and schools of musicology but often forgets critiques against the intentional fallacy by committing "argumentum ad hominem". It is overtly ideological, claiming, say, that if a composer or performer represents morally low or unacceptable values, one can always hear them in the music he/she produces.

Ontology: That branch of philosophy which studies being as the foundation of everything. Ontological semiotics would thus study signs in terms of some kind of foundational being behind them.

Organic: In music, the organic may refer to processes that originate in our body, in our "nature", so to speak; e.g., corporeal rhythms of heartbeat, breathing, gestures, etc. This does not mean, however, that something essentially symbolic might be "reducible" to biology. In the aesthetics of Western art music, the organic became an normative principle in the line of Goethe and Schenker. An art work should have an organic unity (*zusammenhangen*). Hence in music analysis the organic refers to principles of growth, development, thematicity, and more; i.e, the spinning of a musical texture out of a few, germinative "cells". By good continuity and goal-directed movement, the organic overcomes the discrete units of conventional, outer musical form. The principles of focusing/unfolding (*Fokusierung/Auskomponierung*) are characteristic of organic narrativity both in music and in literature.

Postsign: Notion in existential semiotics which refers to the impact a sign, during and after a work, can have upon either the receiver in general, or within the text to other, subsequent signs. Thus act-signs – when they exercise influence within the "*Dasein*" – can lead into their proper post-signs. Post-signs are thus "realized" signs; only in this moment does the sign become realized.

Prenatal styles: Theory elaborated by Stefania Guerra Lisi and Gino Stefani concerning the primal corporeal expressions of any semiotic activity of

man, including music. The seven basic styles reflect types of fetal movement in the womb: concentric pulsating, swinging, melodic, rolling, rhythmic, image-action and cathartic. The theory is also well-known as *Globalità di linguaggi.*

Presign: Notion of existential semiotics which designates signs that have not yet become signs, i.e., kinds of virtual ideas or values leading to a sign as a fixed unit. In music, for instance, sketches for a composition can be seen as its presigns. Within a composition, certain signs can be prepared by their pre-forms in the thematic process, before they appear as act-signs, i.e., actually heard signs.

Schein: A term in German speculative philosophy and aesthetics (Kant, Schiller), also used by Adorno. It can be interpreted as the outer appearance of a phenomenon. For some scholars it is always something "less" than the real thing; it is mere appearance. For others it has a positive value, coming close to the concepts of "shine" and brilliance.

Semiotic square: An analytical device adopted by Greimas from logic for his semiotic theory. It means that exploration of any empirical field can start by distinguishing the contrariety between S1 and S2, two variants of the semantic category S. Yet, both these terms can be logically denied as non-S1 and non-2. Then we get a scheme with four entities.
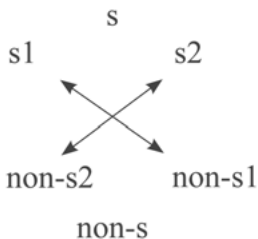
Figure 181: Semiotic square.

We see immediately how three types of logical relations emerge in it: contrary relations between S1 and S2 , and non-S2 and non-S1; *contradictory* relations between S1 and non-S1, and S2 and non-S2; and of *implication*: S1 and non-S2 , and S2 and non-S1 – which amounts to almost the same thing. The significance of the square is revealed when one invests in it various semantic contents, such as nature/culture/non-culture/non-nature, or musically: tonic/dominant/non-tonic/non-dominant, etc. The semiotic square can be used as a methodological tool any level of inquiry whatsoever – a characteristic of the Parisian school of semiotics.

Semiotics is the study of signs, particularly in their two crucial aspects: *signification* and *communication*. Hence, the scope of semiotics is broader than that of semantics, which pays attention only to meanings and not to the signs themselves, which carry the meanings. As a discipline, semiotics came into its own in the 1970s, arising from linguistics and communication studies, information science, cybernetics and more, as an individual scientific paradigm and field of study. As applied to music, the semiotic approach can mean the study of musical grammars: the systemic, normative, *langue* aspects of music, its codes. Some scholars, however, define the "semiotic moment" of music quite contrarily, as a reference to its prelinguistic, non-verbal state: rhythms, pulsations, intonations, kinetic energy, gestures – in a word, to what Julia Kristeva calls the "khora", an originary, individual, and internalized place or state. Therefore, when speaking about semiotics of music, it is always essential to note which and whose semiotics we are dealing with.

Signification: Along with communication, signification is the major issue of semiotics. It means the process of sign formation: how the *signifier* – the material aspect of a sign or "sign vehicle" – is connected to the *signified* – the content or meaning of the sign. Since with signs we can talk about things that are not present, the sign – like communication (in light of existential semiotics) – is a transcendental unit.

Topics: In music, these consist of characteristic, recurrent musical style features and elements, which are often borrowed from extramusical realities and inserted into musical works as particular "signs". Thus, they stem from socially codified musical behaviours, such as dances, military signals, hunting calls, national elements (Turkish elements in the 18th century), quotations, etc. If Leonard Ratner launched the topic into music history and analysis, Raymond Monelle splendidly carried it further, to musical semiotics.

Transcendence: A philosophical notion which designates realities beyond our concrete, everyday realities. The notion came into semiotics via existential semiotics. For transcendence simply means anything which is absent but present in our minds. It can mean 1) a kind of place or store for ideas and values, for their virtual existence, before they are actualized in our world; 2) a kind of more complete stage for which we aim due to the incompleteness of our own lives; 3) an aspect of divinity, i.e., a theological meaning.

Umwelt: Another concept from Uexküll's biosemiotics, it means the environment or surroundings of living organisms.

Ursatz: A term invented by Heinrich Schenker to portray the basic and primal musical expression, which consists of a triad; from it emerges the **Urlinie**

as the fundamental melody, mostly a descending line, and the **Grundbrechung**, the movement of the bass between scale-degrees I and V. Together these form the *Ursatz*. For Schenker, all composing was improvisation from the *Ursatz*, its unfolding and extension over whole musical movements and pieces. Basically, the Schenkerian view comes close to generative theories in musicology and musical semiotics, since it argues that all music on the surface can be reduced to its basic deep structure, or vice versa, derived from it. Not all scholars agree that such a thing as a deep structure or *Ursatz* exists. However, in the Schenkerian model such a generation is conceived as an organic process, just as it happens in Greimassian semiotics, where it is called "generative course" (*parcours génératif*).

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