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Mozart, or, the Idea of a Continuous Avantgarde

In its 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 (and 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 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 avantgarde composer.

Of course, to make such a claim requires more of a foundation 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 fulfil 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 behaviour, 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 avantgarde 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 avantgarde. *What is avantgarde?*

We find the concept discussed in the monumental dictionary of aesthetics by Etienne Souriau, *Vocabulaire d'esthétique* (1990). According to Souriau, the 'avantgarde', a military metaphor, seems to apply only to arts dating 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: the avantgarde is always a marked, *marqué*, phenomenon, in the sense of salient and striking.) Souriau points out that the avantgarde, in general, is not the creation of an individual; rather, it presupposes a group that attempts new artistic conquests, that carries out 'experiments', and that tries to abolish academic constraints, tradition and order. In this sense, Gustav Mahler was somewhat 'avantgardist', given his exclamation: '*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 favours small performance venues, and takes place outside the '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 an avantgarde snobism 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 'avantgarde', in the sense of resistance and parodizing of 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[1]. 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), presumedly 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.

For semiotics, the avantgarde 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

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[1] I am indebted to Harry Veivo for calling my attention to this parallel.

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 bourgeois*) 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 avantgarde 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 mean avantgardism. If the front line is always changing, how can we view Mozart as part of a 'continuous avantgarde'? Would that not be *contradictio in adiecto*?

Bringing us closer to the core of the issue is the following semiotic observation: the problem of the avantgarde 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 avantgarde? 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 analyse 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.

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 avantgarde 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*, 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, I use the designation *Soi*, understood as the social self or 'society'. 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 at last been used for interpreting Mozart, in a study by sociologist Norbert Elias (2004), who combines psychoanalytically tuned observations with sociological interpretations. Elias's central thesis clearly 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 who has studied narratology might be upset by such confusion between the physical, real composer and 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 (op. cit.: 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 surely on the right path when he tries 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 notions 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 channelled strictly according to the aesthetics of the class in power. By contrast, the next phase saw artists becoming more independent, at the 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 favour of Viennese court circles. Existentially speaking, the issue was that of *freedom versus necessity*: Mozart, seeking to fulfil 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 when upon being rejected by those circles. This rejection, according to Elias, eventually led to Mozart's 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 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 used by Uexküll, serves as a metaphor for the manner or code whereby a living organism selects from its surroundings those signs to which to react, while rejecting or overlooking others, and furthermore, the kinds of signs by which it responds 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 in 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 afterwards 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 claims, 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, *Erscheinen* 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 the *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 take place 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 fulfils 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* – shows 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 'avantgarde' before the avantgarde. 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 were 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 the concerto form: the object is not the individual themes and their colouring, but their *succession* (op. cit. : 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 avantgarde composer – or any other vanguard artist – does?

What is essential to the *Ich-Ton* in Mozart is something experienced only in the inner temporality of the music, not as any external force. For this reason he was open to all kinds of outer impulses as the starting points for composing, whether 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 the later generations from Beethoven to Wagner disparaged, for instance, the frivolousness of *Cosi fan tutte* – true, perhaps of the libretto, but not of the music itself. The latter is sheer, unadulterated Mozart, a subject who casts himself worrilessly on 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 – folkish couplets, opera seria with its coloratura arias, choral 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, Ulibichev, had used the term *Grund-Ton* to describe how the composer succeeded in blending together oppositions, to use 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 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 certain scenic situations proceeding from the rise of a certain tension, which accumulated until the resolution of energy in the finale. If we are satisfied with taking 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 has 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 'reasonable' 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 he 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 behaviour. 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 Schickaneder'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 (if 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 the Good, and then the 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 Giesecke'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 Kasperls 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 had been 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 had adopted ideas from the novel by Abbe 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 to be 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 (ibid.: 337). No bass can sing

comfortably in the lower ranges of the E-major aria, which plunge 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 an understanding 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 – one notes that the 'utterances' of opera and music are taken for granted, as if the world of representation, with all its modalisations, 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 opening a Freemason 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 and 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. One knows that Mozart deliberately borrowed this theme from Muzio Clementi's Piano sonata in B flat major Op. 47 II. 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 the latter 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 we may remark how Mozart condenses his own theme into two *Doppelschläge*, and does not close his motif immediately, as did Clementi. The latter brings his melody to an early and decisive cadence, after which comes new thematic material, thus loosening the overall thematic 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*. Nevertheless, 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. What is involved here is a semiotico-musical illustration of Greimas's 'complex isotopy', or two superimposed levels of meaning (Music example 1a-1e.)

SONATE

Diese Sonate spielte Clementi bei einem Wettstreit im Klavierspielen zwischen ihm selbst und Mozart, im Jahre 1781 in Gegen_ wart des Kaisers, Joseph II; späterhin benutzte Mozart die Anfangstakte als Thema für seine „Zauberflöte" Ouverture
Clementi joua cette sonate à un concours de piano entre Mozart et lui en 1781, en présence de l'empereur Joseph II; plus tard Mozart en employa les premières mesures comme thème de l'ouverture de sa "Flûte Enchantée"

Revidiert von Franklin Taylor

M. Clementi, Op. 47[II]

Ex. 1a. Clementi.

Ex. 1b. Mozart.

Ex. 1c. Insistent gestures in Handel's *Water Music*.

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

Ex. 1d. Insistent gestures in the "Dance of the Furies" from Gluck's *Orfeo*.

the music turns into an endlessly inventive texture that provides the scenes with no clear borderlines. Papageno's entrance represents a kind of deliberately naïve, folkish 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 Gretry. Thereafter we return, in the quintet, to a dance-like and 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 arrives with Janissary topics, and folksong style 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 used first a melody of Kyrie from 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 *Momoprecoce* [Carnival of the Children]). The Queen of the Night's revenge aria, with its repetitive motifs, has already been heard in the overture; hence the effect here stems from familiarity and return. 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 succesful 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 says 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' (op. cit.: 339).

But we may ask: how can a writer replace the intentions of the composer and assume the role 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 logics' 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...'

The Freedom and Necessity of Composing

Let us 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 KV 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 been used to spark talk of the 'dark' side of his character. As one sign of Mozart's presumed 'demonic' nature, Lert adduces his deep concentration and all-consuming drive, which showed themselves when the composer was but a small 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 – a pairing that extended even to his women characters: Constanze and Blondchen, the Countess and Susanna, Pamina and Papagena. But did this aesthetic also influence his instrumental work, such that the operatic world would often thrust 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 granted 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 and 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 following the Proppian functions as clearcut narrative programs in which the musical subject appears as actors 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 towards which the musical process is driven, 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 gets free from 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 existentiality 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 noticing the manifestation of transcendence, i.e., watching things happen. Next I shall scrutinize the narrative programs (PN) of the D minor Fantasy in terms of these three kinds of narrativity.

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 (Ex. 2).

Ex. 2. Mozart.

Bars 12-19, PN2: The main motif unfolds in three four-bar groups that fall into a traditional 'aab' (*Stollen*, *Stollen*, *Abgesang*) design. As such, the main motif has an 'exteroceptive' quality, something like the sort of 'danceless dance' described by 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 (see op. cit.: 22). All this also refers to the social classification of dances in the eighteenth century, such as one finds in Johann George Sulzer's *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste* 1786-1787 (quoted in Allanbrook, op cit.: 68-69): first are the 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, represent serious matters, are of a sublime character and 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 the truly 'German' movement (as K. Langbehn claimed, in his treatise *Rembrandt als Erzieher* 1889) (Ex. 3).

Bars 20-22, PN3: three bars with repetition of the same note, along with chromatically descending harmonies. This is obviously an 'intertext' or reference to the Stone Guest in *Don Giovanni*. This likewise portrays quasi-orchestral writing for piano, which here is made to imitate the sound of brass instruments (Ex. 4).

Bars 23-27, PN4: the development of the chromatic 'sigh' motif of the consequent of the main theme, such that it grows and then is interrupted suddenly with a fermata pause (Ex. 5).

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

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

Bars 35-37, PN7: the *Don Giovanni* 'brass' returns, now in the key of G minor.

Bars 38-43, PN8: another development of the chromatic sigh-motif from the main theme, now made longer and more intense.

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, but now with richer development at the end.

Bars 55-62, PN11: the 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 sense, the same actor, who in the introduction was still 'growing', striving for 'invulnerability', has now attained 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; this is played twice and contains many 'insistent', repetitive gestures.

Bars 87-88, PN 14: another cadence, the trills and cadences of which are extremely 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 is repeated, thus removing any doubt that is has reached the goal of the tonic, its euphoric solution putting an end to the preceding, 'errant' fantasies.

To summarize: the D minor Fantasy is articulated by means of clearcut, conventional narrativity.

Organic narrativity

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 elsewhere (see Tarasti 2005). 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 may use the classifications made by Stefania Guerra Lisi and Gino Stefani of seven style categories. As the authors introduce them in their book, *Prenatal Styles in the Arts and the Life* (2007), these 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 roccoco minuet; in the latter, the inarticulateness of organic binary rhythm becomes articulate within a ternary metric framework: the prevailing feeling of minuet is 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, pounding motions, evocative of joy, periodic rhythms;
> 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: labour 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 shall follow the previously delineated narrative programs, but only as a means of locating ourselves in the score.

PN1. The work launches with static, chord-arpeggiation in triplet figures within essentially the same register (by the way 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-e-g, a-d-f sharp-a (which increases the modality of *vouloir* or want), until the ascending movement turns into a descent at the very moment we hear a touch of actoriality in the upper part with sinking major second motif (a-g, g-f, f-e flat) – this serving as a 'pre-sign' to the equivalent passage in the main theme (middle of bars 12 and 14) (Ex. 6).

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 as a corporeal sign. We remain here within the 1st style, but elements from the 2nd and 3rd styles also appear: a kind of menuet in duple meter, the 'danceless dance' described earlier. The main actor itself contains a kinetic pattern of suppressing energy on the long note, followed by its release into quick 32nd-note values. 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, 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

Ex. 8. Mozart, from *Abduction from the Seraglio*.

dotted quarter note, again enacts the damming up of energy, and its sudden eruption into a figure comprised of 32nd-notes.

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 a rhetorical figure of interruption. Now, when the sigh motif occurs in Stefani's 5th style (staccato), it becomes a sign of an anguished body, 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* (Ex. 7).

In the D minor Fantasy this corporeal gesture undergoes repetition and development, which deactorializes the motif, transforming it into a merely staccato line (a technique later used by Sibelius Ex. 9).

Such a sudden organic process of growth as in this section is a device that Mozart employs elsewhere. A typical illustration takes place in the first movement of his D minor Piano Concerto, in a section to which musicologist Charles Rosen has paid particular attention, namely, the events in bars 99-112. Even here Mozart takes as the initial germ of organic growth the Doppelschlag figure from piano's opening theme, followed by a large ascending leap, embodying the topic of *Empfindsamkeit* (Ex. 10).

Moreover, this leap opens a gap in the tonal space, and the listener expects it to be filled, as occurs now in this development. In Rosen's words: "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 op. cit.: 233). Precisely the same might be said about the 'organic growth' of bars 23-28 and 38-43 of the D minor Fantasy (Ex. 11).

PN6. The main motif returns along with its latter part, the sigh motif, which swells and grows 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 (++), spiral, which at the same time 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, though seemingly carefree here, in fact carries in itself all the problems of previous developments, but not as an object of constant worry but rather as their solution. At last the 'right' E tone is heard, in the right 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, however, but an imitation of *bel canto*, 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': here music tries to express truth; that is to say, '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 – all that stands opposed to the D minor isotopy in the first half of the piece.

As is often the case, the 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 are seen to cross the borderlines of sections that were previously delineated into narrative programs.

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

für-mich-sein
(motifs in the D minor Fantasy; D minor Concerto,
the Abduction)

klopft mein lie - be- vol - lesHerz
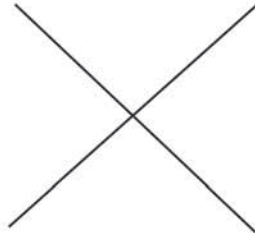
für-sich-sein
actualized topics:
'danceless dance'; chaconne;
the demonic D minor, virtuosity;
bel-canto gesture

an-sich-sein
the 4th category of dance: the
sublime and the tragic;euphory/
dysphory

X

Adagio

Diagram 1. Mozartian *Moi/Soi.*

Next we can 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 (Diagram 1).

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 and breaks, the music always seems 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 always presents an obstacle to this expected and necessary course. Schenker sees the organic musical process of the Urlinie as an inevitable and crucial process 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 also 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 preludising 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 descending Urlinie passage, a-g-f-e-d (Ex. 12).

Danter's diagrams

In the end the right solution is found as one approaches the euphoric isotopy of D major, in which 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 opens its gates 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, as it is also harmonically the most disengaged moment (Ex. 11).

Existential Narrativity

Now we come 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* exercises its liberty and breaks free of the chains 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, as an affirmation of Being in this music?

Existential narrativity, in general, emerges as a disengagement from its two preceding narrations: 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-post-signs*. On the existential level, this means that not every moment on the horizontal plane is 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 into 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 it is immediately removed from the realm of the horizontal-chronological into that of the **omnitemporal**. From it, connections 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 such a moment everything else proves to be *Schein* or appearance, in relation to this moment of presence. 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 comes? 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 sunshine of existentiality peeks 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 re-invest 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 the conventional temporal, spatial, and actorial structures; in this case, music becomes something like inner speech, song, humming. The subject is altogether and definitely present, and this presence paradoxically detaches him from that place of presence, which is carved out for it by all those other coordinates (spatiality, actoriality, etc.). This is exactly what transcending means. It is necessary for a subject, in order for him to find his place within his own immanence. The subject does not 'fly away' or drift off into some external void, but rather encounters his own omnitemporal situation and presence. That is why in 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.

... how it grows from Schenkerian structures

After these general philosophical reflections, we can
return once again to Schenkerian analysis[2]. Schenker's methodology is essentially

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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, deep structure, *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 Schenkerians call 'unfolding' (*Ausfaltung*), decoration, figuration. All this essentially conceives of composition as an expansion of the triad in time, whichsaid 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, whereby we may discover the transcendental idea behind the music as heard (Diagram 2).

Diagram 2.
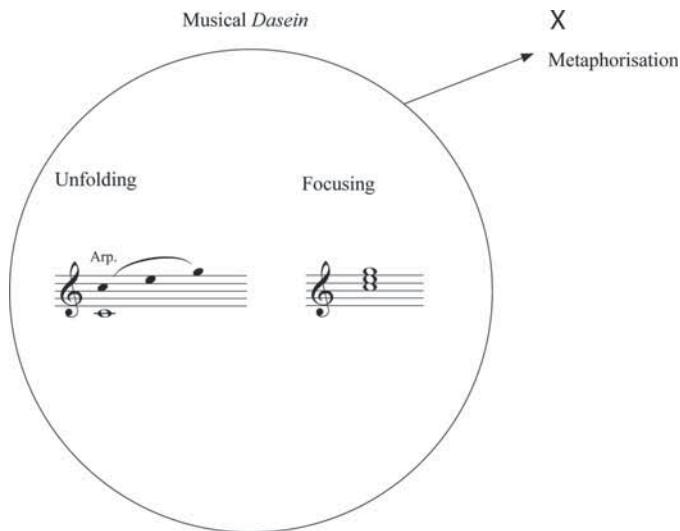
The C major Prelude from J. S. Bach's *Das wohltemperierte Klavier*, Book I, serves as a good illustration. It is as such a kind of act-sign. But behind it one finds the Schenkerian middleground and background, and their pre-signifying structures, in which everything, at some point, returns to triads. Hence the surface can be condensed or focused into those pre-sign structures. Correspondingly, the unfolding represents the decoration and ornamentation of this pre-sign (in this case, C major). 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 of information and also a growth of 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* (theses 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 only a metaphor of some (horizontally or vertically) pre-existing, transcendental entity. As Goethe said long ago: 'Alle 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 to the Adagietto of Mahler's Fifth Symphony. The content of the movement can be reduced to five basic motifs, as theorist Allen Forte has done. These kinds of linear 'presigns', as such, do not say anything about Mahler as a composer. Such motifs show up everywhere in the *Adagietto*, indicating how concise the material is out of which he builds his work (Ex. 12).

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

Now 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-sign have a certain theoretical force 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 done by Schenkerian notation. By contrast, metaphorization is a non-iconic, symbolic sign relationship, and consequently more difficult to portray by means of any 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* (Diagram 3).

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) *neighbour-note*. The first step of the analysis is always to reduce the musical actors into actantial roles. These can in turn be located on a semiotic square (Diagram 3).
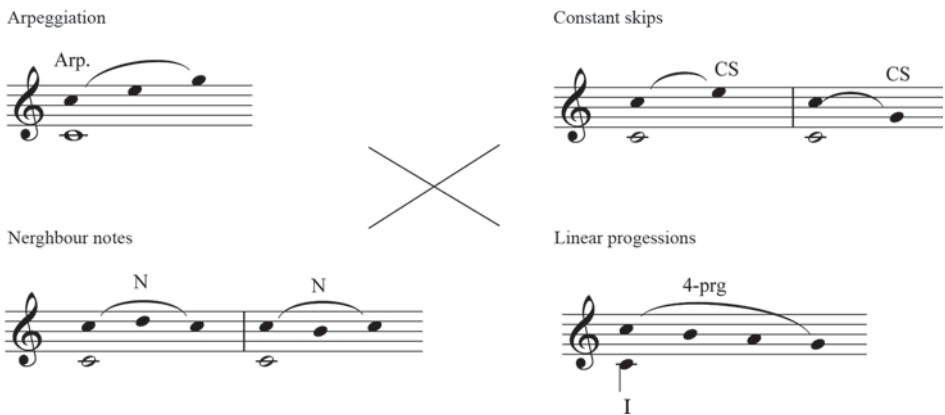
Pankhurst describes Schenkerian method as a four-phased approach in which as early as the first phase a kind of 'transcendentalisation' of phenomena takes place: the stripping away of temporal, spatial and actorial coordinates. All repetitions are deleted in this phase – but where does that leave us, if the idea of a work or musical passage is precisely one of repetition? Such is the case with Mozart's 'insistent' gestures, as we have 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); 'CS' (consonant skips); and 'N' (neighbour-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 cognitive models? Even behind such universal models do we not find the Greimassian modalities at work, the kinetic energy described by Ernst Kurth, Stefani's 'prenatal styles', and the case of *an-und-für-mich-sein* in our own 'organic' model. If so, 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 from being to doing; N = being – not-being – being. In this case, the composer's task would be to choose actants according

to which kinetic shape or which combination of modalities he wishes to actualize. Of further influence are the other modalities, from 'want' to 'can', which are embedded in those actantial roles[3].

In the third phase of 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. At this point, the analyst is already taking into account the whole tensional field of the work.

In the fourth phase one looks for the axiomatic step-progressions filling a third (3-lines) or perfect fifth (5-lines), as well as the arpeggiations ('initial ascents') leading to the starting tones of lines. As noted above, Schenkerian theory holds that the steps of the Arp.CSCSNN4-prgArpeggiointiKonsonoivat hypytSivusäveletLineaariset kulut all-encompassing, fundamental melodic line (*Urlinie*) must occur in the right space, i.e., the register in which the *Urlinie* began. The composer 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 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 organic narrativity, 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 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, obtaining 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 'naturalness' of music.

Now, if we conceive that existentiality is penetrating into the codes of the *Soi* via an unmitigated stream and flow of the corporeal energy coming from the *Moi*, does this not constitute 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

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[3] The styles theorized by Guerra-Lisi and Stefani (2007) can be seen to operate behind these roles: Arp and CS: rocking style, swinging style; Prg: the melodic, spiraling style; N: concentric style; etc.

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*, from virtual to 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 Rautvaara – 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 to 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 avantgarde, namely, as a detachment from and abolishment 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 lying between two fundamental isotopies: the dysphoric-demoniac world of D minor, and the 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 of Mozart's music lies in the shape of its melodies, whose length and richness was to his mind a sign of the composer's power – 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.

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