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A Topical Revelation of the Repressed Structure of Schoenberg's *Pelleas und Melisande*[1]

INTRODUCTION

The question of the form of *Pelleas und Melisande* is a vexed one, and has been so since Berg's 1920 *Kurze Thematische Analyse*. Berg's attempt to map the form as a symphony with four movements can be seen in his introductory passage:

> Never is it purely descriptive; the symphonic form is always perceived as absolute music. Indeed, in the four main parts [*Hauptteile*] of this symphonic poem the four movements of a symphony are also clearly manifest: namely, a big opening movement in sonata form; a second movement consisting of three shorter episodes and thus in three sections (in one of its scenes, at least, this movement displays a scherzo-like character); a long-drawn-out Adagio; and, lastly, a finale constructed as a recapitulation.[2]

Derrick Puffett claims that this was hardly a surprising stance for Berg to hold as

> [...] sonata form was, for German composers and theorists in the second half of the nineteenth century, not just one form among many but the highest form, the principal form (*Hauptform*). [...] Berg's interpretation of *Pelleas*, then, had a clear historicist agenda: it was meant to reaffirm the traditionalism at the heart of the Second Viennese School's view of itself–a view which, first devised as defence mechanism, quickly became dogma, then critical commonplace.[3]

He goes on to explain that 'such an idea, which seeks to turn a piece of *fin-de-siècle* programme music into something "pure" and "abstract" (and thus more fitting for late twentieth-century consumption), is profoundly subversive aesthetically.'[4] Haimo goes further regarding *Pelleas*'s programmatic implications than Puffett, stating that 'Everything about [Berg's abstract symphonic design] is wrong'.[5] Berg, Haimo insinuates, had a 'hidden agenda', to distance the piece from the programmatic element that by 1920 had become criticised by Hanslick and his supporters as 'inferior to abstract music'.[6] What if Haimo's intuition that there is a hidden agenda is right, but that agenda is not what he thinks it is. This hidden agenda is possibly the key to our understanding of this work, but

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[1] This article is based on Chapter 4.3 Schoenberg's Pelleas und Melisande. Hidden Agendas in the Sonata Form, [in:] D. Hood, *Doubles and Duplicity. Topics in Vienna around the Long Fin-de-Siècle, 1874–1928*, Ph.D. diss., The University of Leeds, pp. 205–226.

[2] D. Puffett, '*Music that Echoes within One' for a Lifetime. Berg's Reception of Schoenberg's 'Pelleas und Melisande'*, "Music & Letters" 1995, vol. 76, no. 2, p. 250.

[3] Ibidem, p. 224.

[4] Ibidem, p. 217.

[5] E. Haimo, *Schoenberg's Transformation of Musical Language*, Cambridge 2006, pp. 94-5.

[6] S. Vande Moortele, *Two-Dimensional Sonata Form. Form and Cycle in Single-Movement Instrumental Works by Liszt, Strauss, Schoenberg, and Zemlinsky*, Leuven 2009, p. 105.

Berg's agenda was not just to distance the work from its programme as Haimo suggests, rather it was an attempt to present Schoenberg's treatment of the two aspects of the work: form and programme.

What follows describes the interaction between these two aspects, focussing in particular upon the way in which this interaction simultaneously appears to 'refuse' sonata form, in a manner seemingly analogous to Freudian repression, while also 'staging' the sonata cycle through the deployment of a topical narrative. This description is intimately informed by conceptions of multivalence, as theorised in musical terms by James Webster but, perhaps more importantly here, in more general semiotic terms by Barthes. For Webster, in his analysis of the music of Haydn and Mozart, a multivalent approach suggests that a musical work ought to be "understood as encompassing numerous different 'domains': tonality, musical ideas, rhythm, dynamics, instrumentation, register, rhetoric, 'narrative' design, and so forth."[7] Where Webster has 'domains', in S/Z, Barthes posits analogous 'codes': proairetic, hermeneutic, cultural, semic and symbolic. The terminology is, as Rosenblatt charges, idiosyncratic.[8] Yet, the intent bears comparison to Webster's approach. Barthes's process shows that the particular code of reading impinges vitally upon the meaning any reader infers from a text; though his codes are, more or less, arbitrary, they aim at representing particular tropes of critical reading, such that 'the five codes create a kind of network, a topos through which the text passes (or rather, in passing, becomes a text).'[9] Each 'pass' through a text, a musical text too as Webster demands, reveals different meanings, different 'depths' and 'secrets'. Describing the symbolic, Lavers suggests that 'the logic of symbol is multivalence and reversibility, the logic of dreams and fantasies', which is to say that once signs become symbols they are dreamlike and amenable to a multiplicity of readings.[10] It is just such a multivalent reading which is at stake here. The 'domains' investigated here are theme and topic. However, rather than analysing each domain separately, as in Webster's and Barthes's approaches, here it is precisely the way in which domains (or, as the case may be, 'codes') interact that provides the meaning and, consequently, the structure of the work. The multivalent aspect of the analysis therefore refers to the different levels of signification within the topics, such as traditional signification, portrayal of location and representation of the psychological state of the character or situation present within the programme. This interaction consequently highlights the Freudian themes of the 'Unconscious' and the 'Uncanny' which, in turn, begins to answer the questions about the form of this work posed by Berg et al.

MULTIVALENCE AS HIDDEN AGENDA

At no point does Berg suggest this is a 'pure' abstract work. He does not assert that it is *not* descriptive, but that it is 'never *purely* descriptive'. Rather, he is suggesting that the abstract symphonic form co-exists with the programmatic content of the work, creating two levels of signification which are not always clear when analysed solely formally or thematically. Dahlhaus's notion of 'four separate conceptions of form interacting with each other' begins to explain this multi-level signification as he states that:

In the first place the work can be understood as a succession of musical scenes. It is not difficult to recognise the outlines of Maurice Maeterlinck's lyric drama in the symphonic poem [...] the themes which form the basis of the symphonic development are reminiscent of leitmotifs in music drama [...] [F]rom the combined effect of the personal and scenic motifs [...] grows a musical form which resembles a narrative.

Thirdly, the form of the work can be explained as a result of the four movements of the symphonic cycle being compressed into a single span [...] As Alban Berg recognised, the scene by the well is [sic] a scherzo, the farewell between Pelleas and Melisande an Adagio; the recapitulation of the themes functions as a finale. Fourthly, there are the outlines of a sonata form which embraces the entire work. The idea of 'projecting' the four movements of a sonata onto the outlines of a sonata allegro (with exposition of principal and subordinate themes, elaboration and recapitulation) had already been put

[7] J. Webster, *Formenlehre in Theory and Practice*, [in:] *Musical Forms, Form and Formenlehre*, ed. P. Bergé, Leuven 2010, p. 128.

[8] L. M. Rosenblatt, *The Reader, the Text, the Poem. The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work*, Carbondale 1978, p. 170.

[9] A. Lavers, *Roland Barthes, Structuralism and After*, London 1982, pp. 199–200.

[10] Ibidem.

into effect by Liszt in his B minor Sonata; and it was taken up by Schoenberg in his First Chamber Symphony, Op. 9, as well as in *Pelleas und Melisande*. This fourfold planning […] implies aesthetically that the musical form, by virtue of its complexity, is able to accommodate the literary subject without abandoning its own autonomy.[11]

The implication within Dahlhaus's conceptions, however, is that only the leitmotifs form the narrative and the sonata form is in opposition to this, whereas in actuality, as I will argue in further detail below, the sonata form can also be seen as a narrative type. Specifically, the sonata principle shares certain potent structural kinships with Aristotelian drama, following the same dramatic construct of 'introduction' (what Aristotle calls *protasis*), 'rising action' (*epitasis*, in musical terms the exposition), 'climax' (*catastasis* or development), 'falling action' and '*dénouement*' (*catastrophe*, recapitulation/coda).[12] This analogy can be extended to include the characterisations of the main theme as protagonist and subordinate theme as antagonist, or vice versa, and in some cases, the inclusion of the tritagonist, the cause of the protagonist's suffering.

SIGNIFICATION OF FORMAL DIMENSIONS

Vande Moortele expands upon the 'projection' of the sonata form onto the work as a whole in his book on *Two-Dimensional Sonata Form*.[13] He outlines a framework in which the sonata cycle (the overlying dimensions of the whole work) and the sonata form (the local dimensions of the single movement) interact. Taken from the theories of Marx and Riemann, Vande Moortele posits the hierarchical organisation of the musical form into five different levels, demonstrated in Table 1.[14] Within this taxonomy, topics occur at the segment level: the main topical class replacing the main theme group, the second topical class replacing the subordinate theme group, and so on. Example 1 lays out the organisation of the sonata cycle in a three or four movement.

Table 1: Vande Moortele's Hierarchical relationship

Cycle	Overlying dimension of the entire work
Form	Dimension of single movements
Section	Recapitulation, development etc.
Segment	Main theme, transition etc.
Part	Theme A, A', B etc.

1: Positional and functional analogy between the sonata cycle and sonata form.
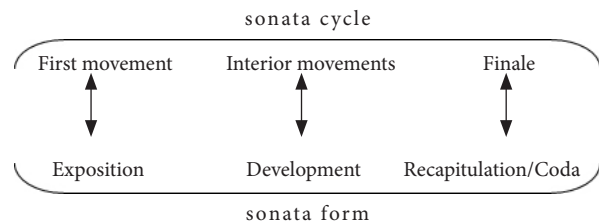
This is not to say that all the elements of the sonata form consistently express structural or semantic functions within the sonata cycle. It is possible both for the individual units of the sonata form to be uncoordinated with the sonata cycle, or not be active within the process at all. In *Pelleas* both of these events occur as Vande Moortele places the development of the sonata cycle beginning in the last stages of the first movement and shows the two inner movements to be 'inactive' within the sonata cycle.[15] This then creates the issue that if the inner movements are in this case inactive, then the dramatic climaxes of the literary narrative (Maeterlinck's play), and consequently the programmatic aspect of the work, are also inactive. The slow movement in particular contains the dramatic climax of the programme, Pelleas and Melisande's love scene and the murder of Pelleas and mortal wounding of Melisande. Hence, despite the similarities between sonata form and Ancient Greek drama Vande Moortele dismisses the link between musical and programmatic narrative by denying the important plot points within the overall structure.

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[11] C. Dahlhaus, *Schoenberg and Programme Music*, [in:] *Schoenberg and the New Music*, trans. D. Puffett, A. Clayton, Cambridge 1989, pp. 98–99.

[12] Terms taken from G. Freytag, *Technique of the Drama*, trans. E. J. McEwan, Chicago 1900, pp. 114–140.

[13] S. Vande Moortele, *Two-Dimensional Sonata…*, op. cit., pp. 101–123.

[14] Ibidem, pp. 18–19.

[15] Ibidem, p. 119.

Therefore, there must be another level of signification that can encompass the musical material that is here discounted and provide a link between the form and programme of this piece. A topical narrative demonstrates this level.

NARRATIVE OF THE TOPICAL SONATA CYCLE. FREUDIAN REPRESSION OF THE SONATA FORM

Table 2 maps all of the above formal hypotheses alongside the topical narrative and the thematic ordering. The shaded areas delineate the formal outline of the sonata cycle as suggested by the syntagmatic axis of the topical structure. This structure is set against the sonata form of Berg's original analysis because of the issues arising from the difference in the placement of the development section within Vande Moortele's analysis. Vande Moortele posits changes to Berg's thematic analysis such that the first movement has

the development that was lacking in Berg's analysis. Vande Moortele therefore has to alter what Berg said in order to make sense of it. The development section that Vande Moortele picks out, from bars 113-136, is not a thematic or syntactic development but rather is based on other factors, such as 'tempo changes, a combination of thematic material from various parts of the exposition, and a rather wayward modulatory trajectory.' Vande Moortele justifies this decision because the outlined factors 'generate a loose texture that is more in line with what we expect from a development than with a closing group.'[16] The equivocal nature of this section as the development in Vande Moortele's reading suggests that Schoenberg did not intend to use the thematic or tonal content to pinpoint such structural pillars. Yet the below explanation of the deferment of the developmental section allows these structural pillars to survive as structural pillars and, perhaps yet more significantly, allows Berg's reading to be understood without amendment.

Table 2: Form of Pelleas und Melisande

Fig	Acts/ scenes	Berg	Vande Moortele	Tonal	Topical	Themes
0	1.2	Introduction	**Introduction**	D/d	*ombra/pianto*	ML. 0.2: Fate theme, 0.6 Fate ostinato
1						M and ML
3	1.2				Hunt	G, M
4					*Sturm und Drang*	M condensed
5	1.3	First theme	**Exposition** First theme	F maj	**Exposition First subject** Romance	GWB 5.3: in KB and KF: M inverted
6			Transition	A maj		GWB
7					Fanfares	Repressed Fate
8		Transition (6 after 8)			*Ombra → romance*	Fate, WB, 8.10: M
9	1.4	Second theme group	Second theme	E maj	hunt, alt romance	P
11		Codetta (11.7)	**DEVELOPMENT** (11.7)		Romance	P, 11.7: M
12				D min: A^7		P, 12.4: M, 12.8: E and P 12.12: F
14		Developmental recap.	Recapitulation	F maj		G, M condensed, WB
15		Coda space			Cadenzas	E, P, M
16	2.1	Scherzo-like 2nd movt.	**Series of Episodes "SCHERZO"**	A maj	**Transition** Waltz	

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[16] Ibidem, p. 116.

Fig	Acts/scenes	Berg	Vande Moortele	Tonal	Topical	Themes
18					Fanfare	
21	2.1					
22	2.2				**Second subject** *Ombra*	G, WB, M
23						J, E, P, M
24					8 before 25: alla breve	P, M
25	3.2	Episode 1			Pastoral/romance	M
26						M, E, P
28					March/ *Sturm/ ombra/* coup d'archet	J, M
29						E, WB, F
30.6	3.3	Episode 2			*Ombra*	
31						WB, E, J
32					*Ombra*/ Fanfare	F
33	4.4	Adagio Intro	**SLOW MOVEMENT**		**Development** Romance/pastoral	E, WB, M. in BC: segues straight from WB->M
36	4.4	Love scene		E maj	Syncopated romance	L
38				Begins in Db maj		E, L
41				D maj to sust. V of E	Sensibility	ML, M, E
42						M,WB
43				Begins in Ab		43.8: E, P, M
44				Begins in F		L, E
45					*Ombra*	L, E, M, F
48	4.4	Coda		Over F pedal		47.6: M, P, G E, G, P, M. 48.6: F
49				F pedal to E, then D		P
50	5	Recapitulatory finale. 1st movt. Intro.	**Development continued**	C# min	**Recapitulation** *Ombra/pianto* then Death Dance	ML, DD, M, LI
51					*ombra/pianto*	M, LI, P
52			**Episode**		Death Dance	M, WB, DD, P
53				c# pedal	*Ombra*	DD, LI
55		First theme recap.	**Recapitulation**	D min		GWB, J, LI
56	4.2	Love theme recap.				L, LI, WB, G 58.1: M, LI
59	5.2		**Episode**		*Ombra*	DD
61	5.2				4 before 62: Hymn	M, E
62		Epilogue	**Coda FINALE**	Eb min → D min	**Epilogue** Funeral march	GWB

Fig	Acts/scenes	Berg	Vande Moortele	Tonal	Topical	Themes
Steigernd					Hymn	WB
64					Romance/sensibility.	M, P

Topical and Thematic Multivalence

Within this analysis there are three levels of topical signification. These levels mean that each topic can affect the thematic and structural narratives in different ways. The placement of the themes within these levels then changes the signification of the themes. On the most basic level topics signify traditionally, that is they represent recognisable types or styles of music such as a waltz type, or a military style. On another level they signify locations, for example the pastoral topic evokes the countryside or the military topic the parade ground. Finally, topics can also signify the psychological state of a character; the romance topic is an excellent example of this, as are the *Sturm und Drang* and sensibility topics, all of which suggest the emotion of a character. The introduction of *Pelleas* sets the different levels of signification out in the forest scene, where the use of the *ombra* topic, in conjunction with the *piano* topic, reveals the main character, Melisande, the character's turbulent psychological state and the opening locale of the forest.

The *ombra* topic, signified by the use of low instruments, sparse texture, chromatic intervals and hesitations produces the tense forest atmosphere. Although this topic is not conventionally synonymous with the forest, Schoenberg's similar use of it at the beginning of *Verklärte Nacht*, and "Wir Bevölkerten die Abend-düstern" from *Das Buch der Hängenden Gärten* op. 15 suggests that this topic is related to such an environment in Schoenberg's music more generally. The rhythmic quickening of pace through the first eleven bars paints the wind and increases the feeling of anxiety and confusion. The *piano* topic in the cello accompanies the English horn's Melisande Lost theme. The rising three semitones then the drop of an augmented fourth of the theme (this drop emphasised by the contra-bassoon doubling), coupled with the dynamic swell indicates weeping and sighing.

The syncopated *piano* figure in the cello underscores this indication, confirming the emotional context, of fear, confusion and grief.

2: Schoenberg, *Pelleas und Melisande*, bars 1–5, ombra and piano topics with Melisande Lost theme and Fate theme.

2a: Schoenberg, Pelleas und Melisande, Melisande theme.

The 'Unconscious'

The Fate theme interrupts the melody at bars 2 and 4, before becoming an ostinato in the double bass and contra-bassoon at bar 6. This portentous theme, seen here in the bass clarinet, appears throughout the work at points of dramatic importance as 'catastrophic intrusions', usually associated with the character Golaud (at this point it is the meeting of Golaud and Melisande

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that initiates the theme's entrance).[17] Within the introduction this theme has two significant levels. First, it signals the pervasive sense of fate over the plot – an as-yet-unknown event is destined to happen – and it is destined to happen in as sudden a manner as the motive earlier interrupted the initially stagnant texture of the *ombra*. The major triad that ends the theme acts against the persistent chromaticism that surrounds it, increasing the effect of the interruption. Second, it introduces the Freudian themes that permeate this work. The repression of the unconscious as a process within this work also occurs on two levels: the section and segment dimensions of Vande Moortele's hierarchy. The id, which Freud describes as being unconscious, constitutes the pleasure-seeking part of our personality. Whether it is lustful or aggressive, we are born with urges, wishes and obsessions that are constantly pushing for satisfaction and being persistently repressed by the ego. At the same time, the superego is similarly repressed as it pushes for ethical perfection.[18] Here the concept of the unconscious emerges as the ostinato Fate theme acts to control the anxious undercurrent of the forest that, with its quickening pace, threatens to erupt and destroy the semblance of control on the surface.

The correlation between the Fate theme and the repressed unconscious continues from figure 3 when a new theme, a hunting call, enters in the horns. Its declarative dotted rhythm and large intervallic leaps are a stark contrast to the more chromatically contoured Melisande theme (examples 2a and 3). The theme, associated with Golaud, is played by three unison horns until the last note where they spread into a C major chord. The swirling repetitions of the Melisande theme and the Melisande Lost theme cease as that starkly major chord brings a moment of calm to the anxiety of the preceding section, conversely to the Fate theme's parallel interruption in the first 11 bars. The hunt call affects here both the music that has preceded it and what is to come. The hunt topic evokes the woodland, although it is now a different type of woodland than the *ombra* topic symbolised. The sparse texture remains, but the tension has receded, leaving a more homophonic, consonant, pastoral topic while at the same time signifying noble chivalry and moral attitudes thereby changing the mood for the next section.

3: Schoenberg, *Pelleas und Melisande*, bars 27–31, Golaud theme in horns.

The 'Uncanny'

The oboe at figure 1 presents the Melisande theme. The oboe states it only once before passing it to the English horn, transposed down a tritone. It is then transposed down another tritone by the bass clarinet. The atmosphere created by the *ombra/pianto* does not change, nor does the Melisande Lost theme diminish, placing the Melisande theme both in the same physical forest locale and in the same psychologically turbulent state as the Lost theme. Indeed, the Melisande Lost theme could be considered a fragment of the Melisande theme, built as they both are on the semitone movement (labelled x in example 2 and 2a). This introduces the second Freudian theory in this piece: the 'Uncanny'. This theory was presented by Freud based on the arguments of Otto Rank.[19] He begins by examining the German word *unheimlich*, meaning 'uncanny' or 'unfamiliar' as opposed to *heimlich* meaning 'familiar' or 'native'. As such, Freud suggests 'we are tempted to conclude that what is "uncanny" is frightening precisely because it is *not* known and familiar.'[20] Of course, not everything is frightening because it is unfamiliar, but the Melisande Lost theme represents an unknown character in Maeterlinck's play. When the character is introduced she is sitting beside a pool weeping, a golden crown has slipped from her hair into the water and she is dressed as a princess. She is unknown to the audience and to Golaud, characterising her as unfamiliar and, with the accompaniment of the *ombra* and *pianto* topics, 'uncanny'. At figure 1 the Melisande theme is presented simultaneously with Melisande Lost. The Melisande theme is not yet familiar, but the constant repetitions

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[17] M. Cherlin, *Schoenberg's Musical…*, op. cit., p. 73.

[18] H. De Berg, *Freud's Theory and Its Use in Literary and Cultural Studies. An Introduction*, Suffolk 2004, p. 50.

[19] O. Rank, *Der Döppelganger*, Vienna 1925.

[20] S. Freud, *The Uncanny*, first published in *Imago*, Bd. V.; reprinted in *Sammlung*, Fünfte Folge, trans. by A. Strachey, 1919, p. 2.

of the theme, here and as the most consistent theme through the work, make it familiar. Thus, at first the simultaneous presentations of the familiar and uncanny sides of the Melisande theme give the symbolised character a split personality, a 'double self', as it were, in which the id (Melisande Lost) opposes the ego (Melisande).

Although Freud begins his discussion of the 'double' in relation to two people 'who are considered identical by reason of looking alike' he goes on to suggest that in the sense that it is seen working in this theme it is linked to the unconscious. Freud posits that:

> A special faculty is slowly formed […] to be able to oppose the rest of the ego, with the function of observing and criticizing the self and exercising a censorship within the mind, and this we become aware of as our "conscience" […] this renders it possible to invest the old idea of a "double" with a new meaning and to ascribe many things to it, above all, those things which seem to the new faculty of criticism to belong to the old surmounted narcissism of the earliest period of all.[21]

The Melisande Lost theme disappears at figure 3, when the Golaud theme enters, and does not appear again until figure 50, when the sonata cycle's recapitulation begins. 'Melisande' could therefore be seen as the controlling ego that suppresses the Melisande Lost id, signified concurrently by the *ombra* topic, as it also disappears here. At figure 50 it is Melisande's unconscious state that is being symbolised and as such her control on her id has been lost. On a larger scale the Melisande theme also acts as the work's ego repressing the first movement's thematic development section at figure 14. Although the main Golaud Wedding Bond theme returns here, the Melisande theme returns only very briefly in the oboe and in a condensed manner, effectively denying a complete development of the first theme group. It is not until figure 22 that the group returns completely and signals the arrival of the *ombra* topic, the second subject within the narrative of the topical sonata cycle. The overlying topical presentation of the sonata cycle, shown in table 2, expounds the use of two 'topical classes' to represent the sections of the sonata cycle.

Exposition

The romance topic accompanies the main theme group at figure 5, signified by the full texture, octave doubling in the strings, swelling dynamics and arch melodies. As the harp runs are added the music becomes more ecstatic, particularly when the romance topic is inflected with fanfares. The fanfare topic has significance on three levels. First, is it a retrograde version of the Fate theme, which Cherlin suggests: 'seems to express an "unconscious" or repressed awareness of the fate to come'. Once again the Fate theme is associated with repression but here it symbolises the repressed id rather than the controlling ego. The fanfare also carries its own signification.[22] Associated with the military and the aristocratic class it signifies the royal nature of the protagonist Golaud, and possibly also of Melisande, as Maeterlinck describes her as dressed in finery when she is first found.

The third level of signification is the fanfare's formal implications as a signal of announcement, of forewarning or premonition. In this case it signals the entrance of the Pelleas theme, symbolising Golaud's younger stepbrother which is preceded by the first of Cherlin's 'catastrophic intrusions' of the Fate theme. The warning becomes clear now as at figure 8 the Fate motive breaks free from its earlier repression and is stated outright by the trumpets, Eb clarinet, piccolo and violins. The use of the trumpets for this theme is significant in that it is a trumpet that plays the theme associated with Pelleas at figure 9, rather than the French horn, English horn and bass clarinet with which the Golaud theme was initially presented, and which play the 'repressed' Fate fanfares. The emphasis has therefore now been moved to the tragic cause of the action in this symphonic poem, the meeting of Pelleas and Melisande.

4: Schoenberg, *Pelleas und Melisande*, bars 44-47, Golaud Wedding Bond theme.

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21 S. Freud, *The Uncanny*, op. cit., pp. 9–10.

22 M. Cherlin, *Schoenberg's Musical…*, op. cit., p. 118.

The introduction of the Pelleas theme at figure 9 is accompanied by the march topic. This is signified by the dotted rhythms and steady on-beat accompaniment in the violins, violas, horns and bassoons, and is inflected with the pastoral topic illustrated by the flourishes in the clarinets. Once again the topical signification works on two levels, indicating the locale of the royal castle and Pelleas's "youthful and knightly character" which Schoenberg expresses with the use of both the march and the ebullient sound of the E trumpet. An equally high-spirited horn fanfare complements the trumpet, possibly signifying Golaud's joy that his brother and wife have met. Pelleas is here introduced as the antagonist of the play, the opposition against which the protagonist (Golaud) must contend.

The march theme (example 5) alternates momentarily with the romance topic from the fourth bar of figure 9 to figure 10 as the second part of the Pelleas theme is taken by the flutes while the Fate theme appears, just once, in the bassoons. The dynamics of the Fate theme are only *mf* to the flute's *f* marking so it is meant to be only a subdued echo of the premonition from figure 8. At figure 10 the march topic begins to transform into the cavalry march, signified by the saturation of staccato triplets to indicate the cavalry horse, the rhythmic fanfares in the horns and bassoons, and the pastoral inflections in the clarinets. This topic is associated, to a greater extreme than the march, to Pelleas's noble character, as in addition to its association with the nobility of war it evokes the image of an officer rather than a common foot soldier. The infiltration of the romance topic into the second theme group links the topical signification of the march and the romance. When the march then begins to transform into a cavalry march the links solidify through the similar signifiers that the cavalry march and the hunt topics share (the galloping horse signifiers and the fanfares/ horn calls). The link with the hunt topic brings the topical signification full circle back to the hunting horn that originally signified Golaud in the introduction. At figure 10 the horn now signifies Pelleas and continues to do so until his death at figure 49. This 'swap' in the instrumentation signals a 'swap' in the roles of the characters within the drama which is demonstrated in the topical second subject starting at figure 22.

5: Schoenberg, *Pelleas und Melisande*, bars 89-97, Pelleas Theme.

At figure 22 the Golaud theme appears suddenly, accompanied by the *ombra* topic. At this point in the drama Melisande drops her wedding ring and at the same time Golaud falls from his horse. The *ombra* topic here, signified by the use of the trombones to play Golaud's theme (example 6), gives an iconic representation of the dramatic action. The association of the *ombra* topic with oracles, the supernatural and the 'Uncanny' makes the theme's use here especially significant to the plot. The return of the *ombra* topic, which in the introduction signified the id, symbolises the id's freedom from repression. This signifies not only Melisande's unconscious id acting to break her wedding vows, but also the correlation between the Golaud theme and the *ombra* topic and the confirmation of the character as a false protagonist (a character who is initially presented as the protagonist but is actually the antagonist). This swap between the brothers' character roles confirms the association with this section and the 'Uncanny'. Claire Rosenfield suggests the Double could be "a juxtaposition of two characters; the one representing the socially acceptable or conventional personality, the other externalising the free, uninhibited self."[23] In this work the Golaud theme is initially presented in a good light, the horn melody breaking through the murk of the introduction with the C major chord. The Pelleas theme once presented almost immediately becomes entwined with the Melisande theme and the romance topic suggesting his character is the uninhibited one, acting on his love for Melisande when he should have repressed his urges. It is, instead, the Golaud theme that eventually loses control as it approaches figure 48, the accompaniment of the violent presentation of his theme by the *ombra* topic and the subjugation of his theme by the Jealousy theme at

[23] C. Rosenfield, *The Shadow Within. The Conscious and Unconscious Use of the Double*, "Daedalus" 1963, vol. 92, no. 2, *Perspectives on the Novel*, p. 328.

figure 28 demonstrating this swap from protagonist to antagonist. The premonition of death and subsequent fall from grace that the Doppelganger provides, and which is suggested by his theme's low range and falling contour, is not in fact his but caused by him. A moment of relative calm passes before the *ombra* topic returns fully at figure 23. The following topics fall into the same dark topical class: the *Sturm und Drang* and the *coup d'Archet*, providing the second subject topical class.

6: Schoenberg, *Pelleas und Melisande*, bars 214–216, Golaud falls from his horse.

7: Schoenberg, *Pelleas und Melisande*, bars 223–224, Jealousy theme.

At figure 25 a dream-like stasis is imposed on the music, what Cherlin terms a 'sense of temporal suspension' which 'seems to suggest a history of "thens" contained in an extraordinary "now"'.[24] This short recapitulation of the romance topic is signified by the stretto entrances of the theme encapsulating the sensation that the music is wrapping around itself, never ending. The octave strings and full texture, despite the relatively sparse orchestration, further signify the romance topic. The twenty-bar reprise of this section is seen as a brief transition or episode within the second subject, necessary within the dramatic course of the plot to give the Golaud theme justification for the direction it is now taken. Programmatically, Golaud must have his suspicions confirmed by seeing Pelleas and Melisande together in the castle so that he has incentive to murder his stepbrother. By encapsulating the section of music–'wrapping it around itself'–Schoenberg can place a seemingly out-of-place

topic within the second subject. The 'dream-like' quality it possesses places it outside of the temporal time frame, thus outside the syntagmatic axis, and in turn, the section is able to act independently of the formal narrative while still being essential to the literary narrative.

Development and Recapitulation. The End of Repression

The sonata cycle development begins at figure 33 with the development of the romance topic and the modulation of the key. The themes which are developed first are the Pelleas, Melisande and Eros themes, all of which are from the second theme group. This is the consequence of the earlier swap between the roles of Pelleas and Golaud, such that now, the theme group associated with Pelleas has been given the principal position. The topical development occurs when the romance topic is inflected with other topics, in this instance the pastoral, the *alla zoppa* (to create a syncopated romance topic) and the sensibility topics. This development coincides with the slow movement of the work and the end of repression for the characters. The revelation of Pelleas as the protagonist lifts the need for the Melisande theme to impinge control on the other themes by repressing their desires, either for the characters' actions in the plot or for the long-awaited development of the sonata cycle. The Pelleas and Melisande themes at 33 are accompanied by the romance topic inflected by the pastoral. This inflection supplies the music with the multi-level signification of the outside locale and the happy, in love, psychological state of the characters. The sensibility topic, which emerges at bar 41, is a musical aesthetic similar to the romance as, associated with mid- to late-eighteenth-century Germany, it expresses intimate sensitivity, to 'touch the heart and move the affections.'[25] It served as an early defence of sense (in this instance referring to the senses and emotions) over reason and rationalism and was therefore a re-

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[24] M. Cherlin, *Schoenberg's Musical…*, op. cit., p. 109.

[25] D. Heartz, B. Alan Brown, *Empfindsamkeit*, [in:] *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/08774 (access: 5.05.2011).

action to the 'strict' or 'learned' style.[26] The use of this topic affects only the growing emotional turbulence of the symbolised characters. It suggests an understanding by the characters that what they are feeling is against the rules, just as this topic acts out against the 'rules' of the learned style.

The development continues with the *ombra* topic at figure 45, the Golaud theme group adding to the Pelleas theme group until at 48 there are simultaneous statements of the Golaud, Melisande and Pelleas themes. The death-blows, symbolised by the percussion section, accompany the last intrusion of the Fate theme until a final solo presentation of the Pelleas theme announces his death.

The recapitulation at bar 50 begins with the *ombra* topic symbolising the victory of the antagonist, categorising the programmatic narrative as an Ancient Greek tragedy. The first movement introduction returns, although altered. The Melisande Lost theme is clearer now, not the murky disoriented forest, but comprehensible as if seen in the hindsight of a memory. The *pianto* topic also returns, symbolising now not the weeping of a young girl but the fall from grace of the three main characters. The loss of control by the ego, represented by the Melisande theme, has led to this tragic end and is symbolised by the *passus duriusculus* at figure 51. This interval of a fourth 'filled in' by the duplication of semitones, particularly in combination with the *pianto* topic signifies the topical class of the lament. The use of this topic here symbolises the grief of the tragedy that has passed. But the use of the literary device of the mortally wounded Melisande reliving her memories while unconscious, suggests it is possibly also the guilt of the character that could have changed the outcome, had her theme/ego continued repressing the others as it did in the first 33 figures.

The lack of the movement inherent in the introduction gives this section a feeling of suspension, similar to the earlier stasis at figure 25, but here it is the lack of motion rather than the continuous circling of the theme which creates the temporal stasis. The Melisande theme is interjected by the Melisande Lost theme and the new Death Drive theme, based on the Eros theme. One more new theme is introduced two bars before 52: Innocence Lost. This theme has its origins in the Melisande theme, while its 'rhythmic shape, tonal directness and homophonic presentation' are more closely related to the opening of the Golaud theme, its contour is closer to Melisande's.[27] Its dotted rhythm, jaunty character and on the beat accompaniment gives this theme the appearance of a death dance, adding to the signification of the *ombra* topic. The rhythmic stability of this theme jars against the fluidity of the preceding few bars, the disjointed effect disrupting the stasis surrounding it, effectively adding to the dreamlike quality of the section. Fragments of other themes intrude, such as Pelleas theme and the wedding bond, like memories flashing through Melisande's unconscious.

According to Berg's analysis, Melisande finally dies from her wounds at figure 61. Significantly, at this point it is the Eros theme that then symbolises her death, after a cadenza based on the Melisande theme. Thematically and topically her final moments actually occur just before figure 59. Here her death is signified in the same way as Pelleas's death, with her theme played completely on its own and dying away. The fact that the final full rendition of her theme is played by the English horn, the instrument that played the Melisande Lost theme, and the second, and clearest rendition of her own theme lends this theory credence while the plagal cadence two bars before 62 signifies the finality of her death.

The Golaud theme leads the funeral march at 62, the beginning of the epilogue, which quickly descends into the sensibility topic. This demonstrates that it is no longer Melisande who acts as the controlling ego, as it has been throughout the work; it is now Golaud. His sadness at losing Melisande is represented by the disintegration in the firm resolve of his theme, the other themes intruding in fragments over the emotional turbulence of the sensibility topic.

CONCLUSION

The question posed by previous scholars about *Pelleas und Melisande* is whether Berg's original presentation of the work in sonata form was feasible. Earlier research has so far concluded that, due to *Pelleas*'s programmatic

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26 Ibidem.

27 M. Cherlin, *Schoenberg's Musical…*, op. cit., p. 146.

nature, the idea that it can also have an 'abstract' symphonic form was 'profoundly subversive'. The answer to the question of form has therefore been essentially unequivocal, it either is in sonata form (Vande Moortele's conclusion) or it is not (in this Puffett and Cherlin both agree). The above discussion has shown that the reason why the conclusions reached by the previous research is contradictory is that the reality is ambiguous: it both 'is' and 'is not' simultaneously. The real meaning lies in this ambiguity as the initial staging of the sonata form is 'repressed' at the level of form, while it continues to play out at the level of the sonata cycle. The narrative, formed by the topical analysis, makes sense of the form through its multivalent function. By not limiting the analysis to single 'domains', such as theme, topic and so forth, connections have been made between the formal functions, the thematic groups and the topical content, most prominently through the relationship between the *ombra* topic and the main theme group, thereby providing viable reasons for the issues found in the previous analyses. Hence, not only do the programme and form 'co-exist', but it is, in fact, the programmatic nature of the work that informs its structure. The taxonomic system, taken from Vande Moortele's *Two-Dimensional Sonata Form* provides a framework onto which one can map the musical narrative, becoming a useful tool with which to explain the levels on which the topical sphere functions. When combined with the application of the Freudian theories of repression and 'doubles' the initial refusal of the unfolding sonata form is explained through the deferment of the development until the first subject's topical class is developed at figure 33. This shows that it is at the level of the sonata cycle in which the overall form is at play. The 'scherzo-like' second movement acts as a musical decoy, keeping as it does within the second subject's topical class while the 'inactive' third movement in Vande Moortele's proposed form is now exposed as the development of the sonata cycle. The repression of the other themes by the Melisande theme ceases at figure 50, the cessation made possible by the amalgamation of Freud's concept of the double and the Greek dramatic action centred around the triad of protagonist, antagonist and tritagonist. The exchange in roles between Pelleas and Goulaud–the gradual uncovering of Goulaud as the false protagonist–explains the final 'vexing' question of

the recapitulation: the return of the first group themes with the second subject's topical class. Through the mapping of the topical narrative onto the programme as set out by Berg, the first theme group becomes inextricably linked with the second topical class. The character of Golaud, portrayed by a declarative theme becomes associated with the *ombra* and *pianto* topics. This provides a mutlivalent representation of his 'uninhibited, criminal personality', his grief at losing his wife and brother and finally the freedom from repression of the Melisande Lost theme from the control of the Melisande theme before fragmenting and developing throughout the recapitulation. The multivalent signification of the topical narrative therefore resolves the difficulty of expressing sonata form within a work known for its thematic uncertainty.

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SUMMARY

Danielle Hood

A Topical Revelation
of the Repressed Structure of Schoenberg's
Pelleas und Melisande

The question of the form of *Pelleas und Melisande* is a vexed one, and has been so since Berg's 1920 *Kurze Thematische Analyse*. Berg described it as '[n]ever […] purely descriptive' but against popular viewpoints claimed it is in symphonic form. Derrick Puffett attributed this stance to Berg's 'clear historicist agenda' to 'reaffirm the traditionalism at the heart of the Second Viennese School's view of itself'. In the minds of contemporary scholars, the attested 'purity' of the sonata form could not be associated with this 'inferior' programme music. This article describes the interaction between the two aspects—programme and form—focussing in particular upon the way in which this interaction simultaneously appears to refuse sonata form, in a manner seemingly analogous to Freudian repression, while also staging the sonata cycle through the deployment of a topical narrative. This description is intimately informed by conceptions of multivalence, as theorised in musical terms by James Webster but, perhaps more importantly here, in more general semiotic terms by Barthes. Finally, through mapping the topical reading onto Vande Moortele's taxonomic system and his analysis of the piece the hidden agendas of the repressed form are exposed in a work known for its thematic and formal uncertainty.