

ASPECTS OF RICHARD STRAUSS'S LATE AESTHETIC

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Merton College, University of Oxford
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for my family

ABSTRACT

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This study of Richard Strauss's late aesthetic develops the following general theses: 1. Strauss's late works fall within what Frederic Jameson calls the 'cultural dominant' of modernism. 2. Strauss's music finds intellectual meaning through the tradition of liberal humanism. 3. The musical work in the age of Strauss is both art and commodity.

The term aesthetic denotes the category of material that is my primary concern—not uncritically, the musical work. I do not hold the aesthetic aspect of Strauss's music to be abstracted from its social, historical, or material properties but to be formed through them; and by engaging with Strauss's works through the idea of the aesthetic I aim to grasp something of their musical subjecthood without equating them directly with human subjectivity.

Each chapter focuses on one of Strauss's later works: *Daphne*, Op. 81; Oboe Concerto, TrV 292; *Metamorphosen*, TrV 290; 'Beim Schlafengehn', TrV 296.c; 'Malven', TrV 297. It is not my aim to produce a comprehensive set of stylistic analyses or to distinguish a singular 'late aesthetic'. Rather, the repertoire under consideration has been chosen from different genres to demonstrate the complexity and variety of music at hand. I employ a combination of analytical and historical frames to consider Strauss's music via its relationship to the conditioning influences of its social and historical situation. This 'situation' is conceived both broadly (in the context of long-standing artistic and intellectual traditions) and particularly (the immediate circumstance of composition).

The dissertation is presented in seven parts, with five chapters offering independent arguments through original analyses of Strauss's music. Of all the music examined in the course of the dissertation *Metamorphosen* is the only work to bring liberal humanism and musical modernism together in a progressive way and it has therefore been positioned centrally in the structure, which falls into three unofficial sections: Chapters 2 and 3 'bourgeois music', Chapter 4 'radical music', Chapters 5 and 6 'late music'.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 General introduction

‘Late style’ has proved troublesome. Aside from the obvious difficulty of determining precisely when a composer’s music becomes stylistically ‘late’ (what if they die early?), a tendency to imbue so-called late works with exceptional aesthetic value might be viewed as symptomatic of the much-criticised ‘great composer’ narrative in musicology. As Gordon McMullen and Sam Smiles point out:

The ascription of ‘late style’ to a body of work has allowed commentators to write as though Titian, Shakespeare, Beethoven, and the rest were somehow united in the same enterprise, that the business of ‘lateness’ is always and inevitably an existential concern, as the supreme creative artist acknowledges his imminent demise—with late style it is almost always a ‘he’, one obvious marker of the limitations of the claim for universality—and devotes what time remains to a testamentary gesture. The attribution of a late phase has thus come to serve as a signal of the elect status of the artist or poet or composer in question; it is incontrovertible evidence of their genius.¹

1. Gordon McMullen and Sam Smiles, eds., *Late Style and Its Discontents: Essays in Art, Literature, and Music*, First Edition (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 4.

McMullen and Smiles are sensible to be wary of ‘late style’, especially when it serves merely to foster the worship of composer idols. In the context of an artistic tradition that holds artworks to be an expression of the human condition, however, it seems reasonable—even historically appropriate—to expect a composer’s later works (when, at least, they have the dubious luxury of knowing themselves to be getting ‘late’) to harbour a more urgent confrontation with mortality than anything written during the prime of life. Even so, the temptation to overestimate the perspicacity of age at the expense of the intellectual and expressive potential of music should be avoided. One commentator has observed wryly that Strauss ‘made a career out of saying goodbye’, and indeed, from the Marschallin’s final scene in *Der Rosenkavalier* (Op. 59, 1911) some of Strauss’s most poignant moments have been reserved for just such expressions of ‘lateness’.²

Strauss was in his seventies by the mid 1930s, and his declining health and propensity for retrospection have already been discussed in numerous biographical studies.³ Strauss was no stranger to stylistic change during his career (his abandonment of expressionist lyricism in favour of a sweeter, more romantic idiom is the most notable example of such a change), but I have found no especial musical reason to suggest that the works produced towards the end of his life cohere as a stylistically distinctive ‘late’ group. So, while this is a project about Strauss’s late works, I will not attempt to determine a particular ‘late style’.

2. Charles A. Riley, *Aristocracy and The Modern Imagination* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 2001), 122–123.

3. See, for example, Michael Kennedy, ‘Strauss’s Autumn Glory’, *Tempo*, no. 210 (October 1999): 17–19; Norman Del Mar, *Richard Strauss: A Critical Commentary on His Life and Works*, 2nd ed., vol. 3 (London: Faber, 1986); Bryan R. Gilliam, *The Life of Richard Strauss* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), Chapter 6; Linda Hutcheon and Michael Hutcheon, *Four Last Songs: Aging and Creativity in Verdi, Strauss, Messiaen, and Britten* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015).

The work of Theodor W. Adorno progresses an altogether different understanding of lateness from that presented above. Although Adorno's own paradigmatic essay discussing the late style of Beethoven seems at times overly preoccupied by the artist's mortality ('[b]y declaring mortal subjectivity to be the substance of the late work, it hopes to be able to perceive death in unbroken form in the work of art'), at other times Adorno is curiously loose in his interpretation of where lateness in Beethoven might be found.⁴ He argues, for example, that Op. 30/3 (1802) and Op. 78 (1809) present 'late style in disguise', while the Ninth Symphony (1824) is explicitly excluded from the class of late works.⁵ Robert Spencer suggests that, for Adorno, the 'late' in 'late style' is not a biographical marker or a specific stylistic attribute, but 'the moribund social order that is dramatized, albeit obliquely,' in art.⁶ In Adorno's writing, the moribund social order is capitalism, but I suggest that it might also be considered the liberal humanist ideology that underlies art music in the era of capitalism. Together these will form an essential context for my own readings of Strauss's late works.

The notion of 'lateness', as opposed to 'late style', has more traction in a critical and historical understanding of Strauss's music. Lateness is a condition that relies on a cultural conception of history, but it is also an attribute of the object under question: a thing can only be late if there is an external impression of time or history against which it is to be measured and through which its own substance is articulated. Therefore, the way a piece of music reveals its lateness

4. Theodor W. Adorno, 'Late Style in Beethoven', in *Essays on Music: Theodor W. Adorno*, ed. Richard D. Leppert, trans. Susan H. Gillespie (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2002), 566.

5. Theodor W. Adorno, *Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music*, ed. Rolf Tiedermann, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Cambridge: Polity, 1998), 98, frag. 226 and 136, frag. 283.

6. Robert Spencer, 'Lateness and Modernity in Theodor Adorno', in *Late Style and Its Discontents: Essays in Art, Literature, and Music*, ed. Gordon McMullen and Sam Smiles (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), Abstract and Keywords. Accessed online 25.10.2018. DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198704621.001.0001.

will not be universal, but specific to a historical situation that includes both the history that is embedded in the material of the music and also the context that conditions that material. Strauss's late works—like their composer—were not isolated in a decade of radical upheaval, but arose from a musical tradition and social situation that interweaved with and formed a vital part of the immediate political circumstances of their time.

The intellectual tradition to which Strauss's music belongs is liberal humanism. Charles Youmans's numerous writings on Strauss's intellectual influences and beliefs already provide valuable insight into the importance of humanist ideas to the avowedly atheist composer, while Goethe's influence in particular has been considered in detail by Timothy L. Jackson.⁷ My own approach will be more general and will not seek specific causes and effects of influence in Strauss's music. The composer's education at the Gymnasium, with its emphasis on languages, classical culture, philosophy, history, art, and the cultivation of the individual as a precondition for collective social benefits, was crucial to his intellectual development, and played a significant role in his understanding of art; but the question of how his art maintains (or not) this liberal humanist foundation merits further discussion. Thus, while the relationship between Strauss and liberal humanism has been recorded biographically, this project will explore how it might be manifested in his music beyond the level of composer intention.

My analytical engagement with Strauss's late works starts from the premise

7. Charles Dowell Youmans, 'The Development of Richard Strauss's World View', in *The Richard Strauss Companion*, ed. Mark-Daniel Schmid (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), 63–100; Charles Dowell Youmans, *Richard Strauss's Orchestral Music and the German Intellectual Tradition: The Philosophical Roots of Musical Modernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005); Charles Dowell Youmans, *Mahler and Strauss: In Dialogue* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016); Timothy L. Jackson, 'The Metamorphosis of the *Metamorphosen*: New Analytical and Source-Critical Discoveries', in *Richard Strauss: New Perspectives on the Composer and His Work*, Paperback edition, ed. Bryan R. Gilliam (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 193–142.

that music is never a ‘purely musical’ phenomenon, and will foreground interpretations that aim to uncover the works’ specific identities as subjects of a particular historical and social context—this context being twentieth-century modernity, late capitalism, and the failing authority of liberal humanist ideals. A small number of studies that touch on these ideas and contexts already exist for Strauss’s early and mid-period music: Walter Werbeck’s *Tondichtungen* discusses the ideological dimensions of the tone poems particularly in the context of nineteenth-century debates about programme and absolute music, while Wayne Heisler Jr.’s study of Strauss’s lesser-known ballets (mostly from a source-critical and reception history foundation) considers the composer’s historicism to be opposed to the ideology of romanticism.⁸ With the exception of the Nazi-period opera *Friedenstag* (Op. 81, 1938), however, the ideological and the musical have often been kept apart in studies of Strauss’s later music.⁹

The lack of political and ideological appraisal in relation to the later music contrasts with the volume of material documenting Strauss’s personal engagement with the Nazi Party.¹⁰ The wealth of literature in this latter category may

8. Walter Werbeck, *Die Tondichtungen von Richard Strauss*, Dokumente und Studien zu Richard Strauss (Tutzing: H. Schneider, 1996); Wayne Heisler Jr, *The Ballet Collaborations of Richard Strauss*, Eastman Studies in Music (Rochester, N.Y. and Woodbridge: University of Rochester Press; Boydell and Brewer distributor, 2009).

9. Pamela M. Potter, ‘Strauss’s “Friedenstag”: A Pacifist Attempt at Political Resistance’, *The Musical Quarterly* 69, no. 3 (1983): 408–424, Alexander Wifling, ‘Hermeneutik, Interpretation, Rezeption: *Friedenstag* von Richard Strauss – Ein nazistisches Bühnenstück?’, in *Mythos – Metamorphosen – Metaphysik*, ed. Gruber Gernot and Oswald Panagl (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2016), 167–188; Peter Petersen, “*Friedenstag*” von Stefan Zweig, *Richard Strauss und Joseph Gregor: eine pazifistische Oper im ‘Dritten Reich’*, ed. Friedrich Geiger, Musik und Diktatur 2 (Münster: Waxmann, 2017); Carl Dahlhaus, ‘Eine Ästhetik des Widerstands?’, *Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft* i (1986): 18–22.

10. Josef Wulf, *Die Bildenden Künste im Dritten Reich; Eine Dokumentation* (Gütersloh: S. Mohn, 1963); Leon Botstein, ‘Collaboration, Principle, and Compromise: Negotiating the Links between Music and Politics’, *The Musical Quarterly* 97, no. 4 (December 2014): 489–498; George R. Marek, *Richard Strauss: The Life of a Non-Hero* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967); Michael H. Kater, *Composers of the Nazi era: Eight Portraits* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Matthew Boyden, *Richard Strauss* (London: Weidenfeld / Nicolson, 1999); Erik Levi, *Music in the Third Reich* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1994); Pamela M. Potter, ‘Strauss and the National Socialists: The Debate and its Relevance’, in *Richard Strauss: New Perspectives on the Composer and His Work*, ed. Bryan R. Gilliam (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992), 93–114.

have discouraged scholars from the pursuit of ideologically critical readings of his music. Instead, advocates such as Edward Said have gone out of their way to separate the composer's late music from any hint of political culpability.¹¹ Said describes the late works as 'reflective and disengaged in tone, and above all written with a kind of distilled and rarefied technical mastery that is quite amazing'.¹² His respect for Strauss's music is cast as neutral admiration for compositional proficiency with the tacit assumption that 'the academic' is in some way detached from 'the social'. Strauss's politics are not directly translatable into his music, but that is not to say that his music is not political. With the conviction that music is not merely a carrier of ideas, but a unique expression of them, I will seek in this project a way of mediating between the spheres of art, ideology, and the ideology of art.

The five main works that will be examined in the course of this thesis have been chosen to represent some of the range of Strauss's artistic output: *Daphne* (Op. 81, 1938); the Oboe Concerto (TrV 292, 1945); *Metamorphosen* (TrV 290, 1945); and the songs 'Beim Schlafengehn' (TrV 296.c, 1948) and 'Malven' (TrV 297, 1948).¹³ All of these pieces can be identified primarily as art, rather than as, for example, propaganda music. Other works receive varying degrees of attention including the operas *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Op. 60, revised version 1916) and *Friedenstag*, and the tone poems *Alpensinfonie* (Op. 64, 1915) and *Tod und Verklärung* (Op. 24, 1890). I do not seek to provide a comprehensive account of

11. Edward W. Said, *On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006); see also John M. Kissler, "'Malven': Richard Strauss's 'Letzte Rose!'", *Tempo* 185 (1993): 18–25.

12. Said, *On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain*, 45.

13. Imposing a self-declared 'late period', Strauss stopped providing opus numbers for his music after the opera *Capriccio* (Op. 85, 1942). *Capriccio* is not discussed here because it is the sole subject of my master's thesis Emily X. X. Tan, 'Capriccio and the Obscure: Modernism and Escapism in Strauss's Last Opera' (Master's thesis, Royal Holloway, University of London, 2015). Where opus numbers are available I use these, but otherwise Franz Trenner's catalogue numbers are conventional. See Franz Trenner, *Richard-Strauss-Werkverzeichnis*, 2nd Edition (Vienna: Richard Strauss Verlag, 1999).

Strauss's late works, or to plumb the depths of his late works' aesthetic purview in their entirety; but I do hope to grasp at least some of the flawed and idealised humanity that is lodged in this music.

1.2 Modernism

The resurgence of Strauss scholarship in the early 1990s, represented foremost by two essay collections edited by Bryan Gilliam, brought renewed focus onto a composer who had for decades remained on the periphery of musicology.¹⁴ It is not a coincidence that this revival occurred at a time when liberal-capitalist optimism was at its height following the collapse of the Soviet Union, nor is it surprising that this generation of writers was the first to have no personal recollection of the Second World War. Changing perspectives within the discipline, together with a more favourable general historical climate, meant that Strauss, whose qualities both as a composer and as a person had previously been considered wanting, found new recognition as a subject worthy of attention.

In the period from 1890 to 1910 Strauss was considered the leading composer of modern music (a view Carl Dahlhaus reiterated in 1989 when he posited *Don Juan* (Op. 20, 1888) as the 'breakthrough' of musical modernism).¹⁵ By 1930, though, Strauss was seen to have 'toppl[ed] from exalted heights of inspiration' and 'walked from them calmly, deliberately, leisurely, straight unto the gutter'.¹⁶ David Ewen's uncharitable pronouncement finds a more measured, though just as striking, counterpart in Richard Taruskin's assessment

14. Bryan R. Gilliam, ed., *Richard Strauss and His World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992); Bryan R. Gilliam, ed., *Richard Strauss: New Perspectives on the Composer and His Work*, Sources of music and their interpretation: Duke studies in music (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992).

15. Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, California studies in 19th-century music (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1989), 334.

16. David Ewen, 'Also Sprach Richard Strauss', *The Musical Quarterly* 6, no. 2 (1930): 207.

of Strauss's shift from 'ardent modernist' to 'the most conservative European composer of major stature'.¹⁷ The alignment of Strauss's later stylistic 'conservatism' with late romanticism has become a trope in more general literature about the composer.¹⁸ But, as Dahlhaus has remarked, Strauss's relegation to the *Spätromantik* corner of twentieth-century composition was a move originally adopted by some of the avant-garde as a means of keeping Strauss's music out of the category of modernism reserved for non-tonal music alone.¹⁹

Even though the brand of the 'late romantic' has lost much of its original pejorative implication, increasingly musicologists are coming to agree with Dahlhaus that the term is a 'terminological blunder of the first order'.²⁰ Jens-Peter Schütte rejects the still widely-held perception of the composer as the 'last romantic' and calls for further critical engagement with Strauss's music.²¹ With this battle cry Schütte joins the prevailing wind of recent Strauss scholarship that attempts to redress Strauss's reputation as a defector from the progressive teleology of music history, and instead to argue in favour of his significance to the positive development of twentieth century music. The tone poems and early operas have provided rich material for such a purpose: James Hepokoski's analyses of deformational form in *Macbeth* (Op. 23, 1888) and *Don Juan* assert the modernist deviance of Strauss's formal procedures.²² Morten Kristiansen ar-

17. Richard Taruskin, *Music In The Early Twentieth Century* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 49.

18. For examples of Strauss 'the Romantic', see Said, *On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain*, 20; Steve Hobson, *Joining the Dots: A Beginner's Guide to Listening to Classical Music* (Leicester: Matador, 2009), 72.

19. Carl Dahlhaus, 'Musikalische Moderne und Neue Musik', *Melos/Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 2 (1976): 90, noted in Morten Kristiansen, 'Richard Strauss, *Die Moderne*, and the Concept of *Stilkunst*', *The Musical Quarterly* 86, no. 4 (2002): 702.

20. Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 334.

21. Jens-Peter Schütte, 'Anmerkungen zur Letzten Aufzeichnung von Richard Strauss', *Musik in Bayern* 65/66 (2005): 85–106.

22. James Hepokoski, 'Structure and Program in *Macbeth*: A Proposed Reading of Strauss's First Symphonic Poem', in *Richard Strauss and His World*, ed. Bryan R. Gilliam (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 67–89; James Hepokoski, 'Fiery-Pulsed Libertine or Domestic Hero? Strauss's *Don Juan* Reinvestigated', in *Richard Strauss: New Perspectives on the Composer*

gues that Strauss's stylistic pluralism in *Feuersnot* (Op. 50, 1901) was consistent with the 'contemporary zeitgeist' of early German modernism, and Leon Botstein comes to a different conclusion with the same evidence, suggesting that Strauss's stylistic 'fragmentation', together with his interest in historicism, was a 'prefiguration of late-twentieth-century postmodernism'.²³

The examination of Strauss's music through the frame of modernism has since moved on to more challenging subjects—works whose musical idiom seems a far cry even from the heavily chromaticised decadence of Strauss's own *fin-de-siècle* operas. Michael P. Steinberg suggests, for example, that *Der Rosenkavalier* does not abandon modernism altogether, but only 'break[s] the association of modernism with ego assertion' offering ascetic withdrawal as an alternative modernist aesthetic.²⁴ Robert Raphael Gibson meanwhile examines Strauss's 'parodic voice' in the post-*Elektra* works; an approach similar to that of Johannes Krogoll who, according to Michaela Baranello, turns to irony as a means of 'rehabilitating *Arabella* for modernism'.²⁵

Arguments that posit Strauss as one of the great innovators of twentieth-century music situate themselves, often explicitly, in opposition to the more common historiographical view, famously proffered by Adorno, that Strauss's music did not live up to the socio-artistic standards demanded by modernism.²⁶ Rather than challenge the scholarly merit of Adorno's unwavering po-

and *His Work*, ed. Bryan R. Gilliam, Sources of music and their interpretation: Duke studies in music (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997).

23. Kristiansen, 'Richard Strauss, *Die Moderne*, and the Concept of *Stilkunst*', 702; Leon Botstein, 'The Enigmas of Richard Strauss: A Revisionist View', chap. 1 in *Richard Strauss and His World*, ed. Bryan R. Gilliam (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 17.

24. Michael P. Steinberg, 'Richard Strauss and the Question', in *Richard Strauss and His World*, ed. Bryan R. Gilliam (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 172–173.

25. Robert Raphael Gibson, 'Parody Lost and Regained: Richard Strauss's Double Voices' (Thesis, University of Oxford, 2004), 327. See Micaela Baranello, 'Arabella, Operetta, and the Triumph of Gemütlichkeit', *Opera Quarterly* 31, no. 4 (2015): 210.

26. Theodor W. Adorno, 'Richard Strauss. Born June 11, 1864', *Perspectives of New Music* 4, no. 1 (1965): 24.

sition against what he perceived to be reactionaries, they serve implicitly to confirm—with their own non-Adornian interpretation of modernism—the notion that modernism in some form represents the only valuable music of the early twentieth century. This tendency, I suggest, arises as much from a problematic conception of the term ‘modernism’ in musicology, as it does from the aesthetic complexity of Strauss’s music, and the ideological commitments of a postmodern academic generation. Ben Earle describes scholars’ continuing interest in modernism as an ‘odd counter-movement’ to the anti-modernist perspective proffered by some quarters of the world of anglophone musicology during 1980s and 1990s, and to an extent, this is true.²⁷ However, as will become clear shortly, rather than being a genuine counter-movement, in many cases the conception of modernism fostered in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries was on a par with the general thrust of musicology towards a more postmodern methodological grounding.

The wealth of writing that exists on modernism—as well as the numerous differently nuanced variations on this term (‘die Moderne’, ‘modernismus’, ‘modernity’, ‘new-’, ‘modern’, ‘avant garde’)—is testament to its richness as a historiographical tool and as an object of enquiry.²⁸ From this forbidding schol-

27. Ben Earle, “‘The real thing – at last’? Historicizing Humphrey Searle”, in *British Music and Modernism, 1895–1960*, ed. Matthew Riley (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2010), 301.

28. From historical surveys of modernism e.g. Tim Armstrong, *Modernism: A Cultural History* (Malden, MA and Cambridge: Polity, 2005), Daniel Albright, *Untwisting the Serpent: Modernism in Music, Literature, and Other Arts* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000); to critical studies of modernism e.g. Michael Levenson, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*, 2nd Edition (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), Erling E. Guldbrandsen and Julian Johnson, eds., *Transformations of Musical Modernism* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015); to studies considered from one particular national perspective such as Walter Frisch, *German Modernism: Music and the Arts* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2005), Philip Rupprecht, *British Musical Modernism: The Manchester Group and their Contemporaries*, Music Since 1900 (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015); to studies of particular composers e.g. D. M. Grimley, *Carl Nielsen and the Idea of Modernism* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010), J. P. E. Harper-Scott, *Edward Elgar, Modernist* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); to studies of modernist aesthetics Stephen Downes, *Music and Decadence in European Modernism: The Case of Central and Eastern Europe* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010);

arly reservoir Annika Forkert has identified two broad schools of thought: A-modernism and B-modernism. She describes A-modernism as ‘the older position of a tightly constricted concept of a modernist modernism with one master signifier’, and B-modernism as ‘the younger position of an open postmodernist modernism held together by a wide network of cultural signifiers’.²⁹

Eero Tarasti, who maintains that the ‘breakthrough of modernism’, which occurred in all spheres of art at the turn of the twentieth century, in music constituted the ‘dissolution of the traditional tonality and transformation of the very foundations of tonal language’, provides us with a quintessential example of A-modernism.³⁰ Modernist music, for Tarasti, marks itself out by employing a certain form of musical language, namely atonal, polytonal, or ‘altered tonality’.³¹ Musical language is thus Tarasti’s master signifier of modernism: music that does not conform to the ‘breakthrough’ is, for him, simply not modernist.

Donald Mitchell, also an A-modernist by Forkert’s system, shares with Tarasti a strict definition of musical modernism. Mitchell’s is not, however, a knee-jerk response to a particular musical style, but has at its core a historical motivation. He views the aesthetic and the historical to be tightly bound, and stresses the significance of musical language as a historicised form of expression. Mitchell thus identifies modernist music as that which not only expresses something, but expresses the historical circumstance of its present by extending the boundaries of

to philosophical explorations e.g. Fredric Jameson, *The Modernist Papers* (London: Verso, 2007), Theodor W. Adorno, *Philosophie der neuen Musik*, vol. Band 12, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1975); to psychoanalytical perspectives conceiving of the ‘modern subject’ e.g. Sandra Corse, *Operatic Subjects: The Evolution of Self in Modern Opera* (Maddison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2000), Michael Leslie Klein, *Music and the Crises of the Modern Subject*, *Musical meaning and interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015).

29. Annika Forkert, ‘British Musical Modernism Defended Against its Devotees’ (PhD thesis, Royal Holloway College, University of London, 2014), 31.

30. Eero Tarasti, *Myth and Music: A Semiotic Approach To The Aesthetics Of Myth In Music, Especially That Of Wagner, Sibelius and Stravinsky* (Helsinki: Suomen musiikkiteollinen seura, 1978), 272.

31. *ibid.*

what has previously been expressible. He cites Schoenberg's non-tonal music as an exemplar, claiming that its ability to convey 'the unconscious' exceeded the expressive status of all music before it.³² With the stakes so high, Strauss's music does not make the cut: Mitchell describes the *Alpensinfonie* (Op. 64, 1915) as harbouring an 'air of complete unreality', for which it must be rejected because it 'has lost the power of meaningful speech'.³³

B-modernism, on the other hand, which self-reflectively problematises its conceptual boundaries, also has modernist 'signifiers'. Crucially, though, these signifiers are held in a state of constant question.³⁴ Forkert takes the example of a 'modernist pastoral', progressed by, among others, Eric Saylor and Anthony Barone.³⁵ For these scholars, the First World War as a traumatic event of modern history, the personal response of the composer, notions of cultural memory, the pastoral as a musical topic, and pastoralism as a concept that reaches beyond a stylistic idiom, all come together to form a web of signifiers that enable the scholar to claim that an environment of modernity has fostered a particular, namely modernist, response.³⁶ With such an array of modernist possibilities, B-modernism has a tendency towards inclusivity. Unsurprisingly, recent studies that aim to re-engage with Strauss as a modernist composer usually fall within the category of B-modernism. Steinberg's proposition that *Der Rosenkavalier*—

32. Donald Mitchell, *The Language of Modern Music*, Rev. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 39.

33. *ibid.*, 66.

34. A particularly effective conceptual questioning of decadence, for example, can be found in Downes, *Music and Decadence in European Modernism: The Case of Central and Eastern Europe*.

35. Eric Saylor, "'It's Not Lambkins Frisking At All'". *English Pastoral Music and the Great War*, *The Musical Quarterly* 91, nos. 1–2 (2008): 39–59, Anthony Barone, 'Modernist Rifts in a Pastoral Landscape. Observations on the Manuscripts of Ralph Vaughan Williams's Fourth Symphony', *The Musical Quarterly* 91, nos. 1–2 (2008): 60–88, considered in Forkert, 'British Musical Modernism Defended Against its Devotees', 55–63.

36. Forkert actually goes on to show how, despite this apparently more spontaneous set of conditions that facilitate a particular modernist identity, in this particular case the First World War comes to stand as an alternative master signifier, but at least the surface differences between A- and B-modernism are evident in this contrast.

usually excluded from discussions of Strauss's modernism—has a modernist streak, provides a case in point.³⁷

The notion that modernism is something that can be identified by signifiers is common to both schools of thought identified by Forkert. The subjective nature of a modernism that poses as a discreet aesthetic category (or as a collection of discreet categories, e.g. pastoral modernism, ego-assertion modernism, ascetic-withdrawal modernism) directs focus away from critical discussions of music and its relationship to a social situation, and onto its own definition. Modernism conceived in such a way ensures that its own terminology and conceptual boundary remains the primary object of scholarly debate. Where the discussion of musical modernism is reduced to taxonomical concerns, and especially where being *in* the modernist category is considered better than being excluded from it, there arises a temptation to turn away from, or in some way to work around, aesthetic aspects that might fail to meet the entrance criteria. To avoid this exclusion is the underlying motivation of B-modernism's conceptual broadness, and yet B-modernism is still hinged on the idea that there is an outside, as it were, to the idea of modernism.

J. P. E. Harper-Scott has recently proposed a new model of musical modernism that enables scholars to move beyond the taxonomic concerns of earlier conceptions and into a critically minded discussion of a musical work's individual response to its social and historical situation.³⁸ Drawing on the philosopher Alain Badiou's theory of history as a series of revolutionary 'events', Harper-Scott's idea of modernism is both historical and social.³⁹ Like many

37. As mentioned on p. 9 of this dissertation. See Steinberg, 'Richard Strauss and the Question', 172–173.

38. J. P. E. Harper-Scott, *The Quilting Points of Musical Modernism: Revolution, Reaction, and William Walton* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

39. Badiou's 'event' is not an event in the ordinary sense of the term, so revolutionary events are not simply revolutions (e.g. French Revolution), but rather 'event' denotes an occurrence that is supernumerary (i.e. it exceeds the quantity of what already is) and establishes the possibility

A-modernists, he posits the emancipation of dissonance as the ‘breakthrough’ of musical modernism, or to use his terms, the ‘trace’ of the ‘event’ of musical modernism. Where his theory differs from A-modernism is in its insistence that *everything* following the modernist event is modernist because it belongs to the new historical present that is created by this event. To understand how this can be (and also how this can be useful) we need to examine the idea of the event more closely.

An event, in Badiou’s theory, is local: it ‘does not take place across an entire situation, but occurs at a particular point in the situation, an evental site’.⁴⁰ In music, then, the ‘site’ of the emancipation of dissonance is the relationship of tones to one another. The event of musical modernism is not rhythmic, generic, textural, tonal or to do with the subject expressed—it is greater than all of these. Its trace (the symbolic encoding of the event at its historical site), however, is tonal—that is, to do with the relationship of tones. Of course there can be no relationship of tones without there being rhythm, texture, and so on, and in this we can begin to understand how music not overtly concerned with emancipating dissonance can still be considered within the body of modernist music. While the trace is local (tonal) it effects a rift in the fabric of the situation it inhabits (music). That is, its being local does not mean that its influence belongs to that isolated locality alone. The modernist event must necessarily be expressed in a form factor that exceeds its own sphere, but to which it is also ontologically bound. Therefore, all music situated historically within the influence of the modernist event is a subject of it because it deals in the relationship of tones. This is how we can posit the emancipation of dissonance as *the* event

for new worlds. A historical revolution may form part of an event (and it is clear to see how a new world might be established through the French Revolution, for example), but the event is greater than every action of violence, every treaty signed, every intellectual perspective, and so on.

40. Oliver Feltham, *Alain Badiou: Live Theory* (London: Continuum, 2008), 100.

of musical modernism over other cultural or musical innovations that occurred around the same time.

Harper-Scott's theory of musical modernism is precisely that—a theory of *musical* modernism—but, as I suggested earlier, it is also historical and social. The attention event modernism pays to the material of music over and above cultural signifiers or non-musical contexts should not be dismissed for being ignorant of the disciplinary event of New Musicology. To turn to music for social and historical knowledge and to expect this knowledge to be embedded *musically* makes sense in light of Adorno's remark, offered long before the 1980s, that art is the social sedimentation of history.⁴¹ Earle's assertion that modernism does not 'reside merely in the presence of certain technical features' is complicated, then, by the fact that technical features are not 'mere', but always already historically and culturally invested.⁴² While it may seem obvious, it is worth reiterating here that music carries its history in its material. A study of music that does not pay attention to its material (i.e. music) therefore risks losing sense of music's historicity. Regardless of its style or intention, music holds a particular disposition towards and within its history, so it is important that a theoretical model of modernism can deal with the wide variety of historical expressions that are possible (it is clear how this is apt for a case such as Strauss's, where both historical context and stylistic change seem urgent issues to address). In acknowledging and articulating within its model the entire richness of stylistic possibility, event modernism can be as socially minded as the music for which it was designed to handle.

'Event' modernism differs from other models by accounting for apparently

41. Theodor W. Adorno, 'Music, Language, and Composition', *The Musical Quarterly* 77, no. 3 (1993): 401–414; see also Richard Leppert's commentary on this essay in Theodor W. Adorno and Richard Leppert, *Essays on Music: Theodor W. Adorno* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2002), 85–112, especially 85–6.

42. Earle, "The real thing – at last"? Historicizing Humphrey Searle', 316.

non-modernist music as existing still *within* the frame of the master signifier (trace) of modernism. Dahlhaus's notion of modernism is stylistically non-determinate. It specifically includes those composers who were not proponents of radical stylistic innovations, but 'nonetheless continued even later to represent modernism'.⁴³ But Dahlhaus does not provide a way of understanding how these different 'representations' relate to one another, or indeed, how they relate to an overarching idea of modernism except by their retrospective acceptance into the category. Contrastingly, there can be no neutral position in relation to the modernist event—a piece of music that disregards entirely the emancipation of dissonance, can do so only as a rejection of that same event. The value of event modernism thus lies in its acknowledgement that music as music is always social—that music itself plays a role in constructing discourses, social bodies, and historical subjectivities.⁴⁴

Frederic Jameson's 'cultural dominant' is a periodizing concept that defines an age by the 'logic or hegemonic norm' of its culture.⁴⁵ He writes: 'if we do not achieve some general sense of a cultural dominant, then we fall back into a view of present history as sheer heterogeneity, random difference, a coexistence of a host of distinct forces whose effectivity is undecidable'.⁴⁶ The concept is thus essentially a historical tool 'designed to project some conception of a new systematic cultural norm'.⁴⁷ While Jameson suggests that postmodernism is the cultural dominant that corresponds to the era of late capitalism, he main-

43. Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 335.

44. Harper-Scott's theory goes into detail about the different kinds of responses that are possible to the event of modernism, categorising them, after Badiou as 'faithful', 'reactive', and 'obscure'. Strauss's music, like most music composed in this period, belongs mostly to the 'reactive' category, but it is not necessary for my purposes to explain the complexities of the subcategories of modernism. What is important, however, is to recognise that music cannot be historically or 'eventally' neutral.

45. Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 6.

46. *ibid.*

47. *ibid.*

tains that modernism, which ‘proposed an alternative, oppositional, and Utopian culture whose class base was problematic and whose “revolution” failed’, never achieved the status of a cultural dominant.⁴⁸ In §1.3 I will suggest that the failure of modernism identified by Jameson actually runs much deeper into Western history than he recognises here, but for now I will propose a method for grasping both modernism and postmodernism as part of the same broad historical course.

Insofar as cultural dominants are not artistic styles or aesthetic categories, but the prevailing manner in which the cultural system defines or relates the subject in connection to its environment, both modernism and postmodernism can be considered cultural dominants albeit on different levels of historical structure. Modernism encompasses postmodernism within its own cultural dominant, or—to put the matter into its Badiouian frame—postmodernism, although originating (and remaining) a response to the modernist event, overtook in all proportion other responses to the modernist event and established itself *as though* it were original in the period of late capitalism. Jameson’s theory recognises the momentousness of this ‘take over’, and apportions suitable significance to the enormity of its influence. What Jameson’s theory does not recognise, however, is how the new cultural dominant relates to the period preceding (how it came to take over), which is a conspicuous fault because the cultural dominant is intended as a periodizing device. Jameson’s theory prioritises cultural hegemony (the mode, perhaps, in statistical terms), and understands that hegemony to arise from present conditions within a completely totalising system of capital. Because his notion of the cultural dominant via capital is totalising, there is no space for the historical confrontation that modernism offers. Jameson is thus locked into a theoretical position whereby there can be nothing

48. Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, 318.

beyond the present cultural dominant and historical periods are self-contained.

I suggest that a synthesis of Badiou's forward-looking historical methodology (which aims to uncover the nature of the 'new' present that is afforded by a certain rift in the 'old' present) with Jameson's backward-looking historical methodology (which seeks to deduce the underlying logic that arises even within heterogeneity) provides a means of understanding both the systematic differences between modernism and postmodernism, and their essential continuity as part of the same even more broadly conceived portion of Western history. The totalising conception of the cultural dominant has its edges softened by the event whose identifying feature is the puncture of the cultural dominant's totality. I propose some changes, then, to Jameson's notion of the cultural dominant.

Firstly, I suggest that cultural dominants exist on different strata of history and that the cultural dominant of postmodernism is further to the foreground than that of modernism. (Western modernity, from the advent of modern capitalism to the present day, could potentially be considered an even deeper level cultural dominant that contains modernism and thus also postmodernism.) Secondly, I suggest that cultural dominants have the appearance of totality because they provide the primary symbolic apparatus of ideology. Therefore, while it is not impossible to resist the totalising appeal of the cultural dominant through art, scholarship, radical adherence to a religious principle (and so on), it is always a genuinely counter-cultural action to do so. Thirdly, Badiou's notion of the event can be incorporated into Jameson's theory of the cultural dominant both as a means of accounting for the heterogeneity within hegemony and also as a tool for gauging continuity and discontinuity between cultural dominants.

By the model proposed above, tonality may be described as a background level *musical* dominant of Western capitalism. Tonality is a musical system that

spans both the cultural dominants of modernism and postmodernism and encompasses a vast body of musical styles and genres. These numerous styles and genres are—to a greater or lesser degree—constructed within the dominant system of tonality, a system that is not fixed, but moulded by its changing historical situation. Tonal music may then be considered the primary cultural expression of the musical subject of capitalism. This is not to say that it is the *only* music possible within a capitalist social framework, or that it expresses the socio-economic framework directly, but that it is the musical language that thrived and was allowed to develop in the historical context of capitalism.

It is not a coincidence that musical form broke its bond with tonality during the brief period in the twentieth century when radical social ideas that rejected the capitalist order gained traction with composers. In his theory of musical modernism, Harper-Scott explains how dramatic changes to musical language at the beginning of the twentieth century coincide with a rejection of the capitalist social order: he suggests that the emancipation of dissonance is the musical manifestation of the resurrected truth of communism in what Badiou calls the second communist sequence.⁴⁹ In the same way that the social truth of communism had the power to transform the structure of its society, so also the musical incarnation of this truth had the potential to reconfigure the language of music away from its bond with capitalism.

The extreme dismissal of Strauss's music by A-modernists such as Adorno and Mitchell, but also the desire to rehabilitate the later music for modernism by Steinberg and other more recent scholars, both miss a crucial discussion of the complexities and social position of aesthetic conservatism. Rather than shying away from Strauss's music on the grounds of its conservatism, or else

49. See Harper-Scott, *The Quilting Points of Musical Modernism: Revolution, Reaction, and William Walton*, especially 181–2.

trying to convert conservative aspects into signifiers of modernism, it must be understood that this music *is* reactive, that it *does* stand in tension with the avant garde of its era. As Katharine Hottmann has suggested, Strauss's musical historicism represents an epoch-specific confrontation with history.⁵⁰ Logically, historicism requires the frame of the present in order to be understood in the first place as historicist, but viewing something from the perspective of its contemporary culture does not necessarily mean finding it to be in accordance with the main thrusts of the cultural, musical, political trends of that moment.

By examining Strauss's music in light of the event modernist paradigm I hope not only to advance critical analytical studies of Strauss's late works, but also to gain an understanding of the role of conservatism and reaction in the modernist era of music history. It is self-evident that the construction of musical language and form in the Western tradition is inextricably linked to the cultural, social, and political circumstances that brought about its particular moment in history, and a discussion of musical language that claims total independence from its historical and social context would be a misrepresentation of music as an art form. Maintaining this position allows the analytical aspect of this dissertation to have its grounding in the presumption that the musical work is both an entirely aesthetic *and* an entirely social phenomenon. The tension between these two ontological dispositions is, I propose, of vital importance, constituting in their relationship the subjectivity of Strauss's late works.

50. Katharina Hottmann, *Historismus und Gattungsbewusstsein bei Richard Strauss* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 2005), see introduction.

1.3 Liberal humanism

The history of liberal humanism is the history of how a certain set of ideas about subjecthood, universalism, and autonomy both influenced and failed to influence the construction of Western society from the Enlightenment period onwards. These ideas can be summarised in the proposition that, regardless of history, culture, or any environmental factors, there is a fundamental constancy to the essence of the human subject; and the autonomous subject—rather than any external power—is the origin of meaning.⁵¹ The establishment of powerful governmental structures in Europe—which in reality meant the rule of the bourgeoisie and capitalist interests—was a direct political and economic consequence of revolutions that had liberal humanist ideas as a broad intellectual context.⁵² Liberal humanism did not, however, present an end point in itself and its intellectual influence was always limited by the material conditions of history.

Ideas that originated in the Enlightenment and that have since been associated with liberal humanism served as just one catalyst in the revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that compromised the authority of monarchs and led to the political dominance of the bourgeoisie.⁵³ Other factors that led to the social transformation of Europe include the economic ascent of the middle class and the growth of banking, corruption or inefficiency of the mon-

51. Catherine Belsey, *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance drama* (London and New York: Methuen, 1985), 8.

52. The intellectual revolutions (which are themselves counter-revolutions to the liberal humanist manner of conceiving the subject and history) that have taken place during the later part of the twentieth century in the humanities, and especially in the discipline of history, make it difficult to make such bold statements as ‘the Enlightenment influenced the French Revolution’, but Jonathan Israel has recently made a strong case against revisionist histories of the French Revolution, arguing that it was, in fact, heavily influenced by the radical ideas of the Enlightenment: Jonathan Israel, *Revolutionary Ideas: An Intellectual History of the French Revolution from The Rights of Man to Robespierre* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014).

53. The significance of liberal humanist ideas during the Protestant Reformation will be discussed in §3.6.

archy, the decline of feudal guilds and religious observance, and the expansion and transformation of industry and industrial methods.⁵⁴ It was these material conditions, rather than more abstracted notions of freedom and subjecthood, that shaped the social structure of modern Western society. Therefore, when Hugh T. Miller and Charles J. Fox observe how ‘postmodernism treats skeptically the notion that autonomous liberal-humanist citizens, can, through public deliberation, come to agreement about what is real, much less what is desirable, and then effectuate their desires through current representative/democratic institutions’, they overemphasise the extent to which Western democracies have actually ever reflected, even imperfectly, liberal humanist ideals.⁵⁵ While aspects of liberal humanist thought can, in some form, be seen in the political principles of democracy, capitalism, justice, and individual human rights, a liberal humanist society as such never emerged and possibly never could.⁵⁶

Liberal humanism is orientated towards a perception of the self that is based on Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s conception of autonomy.⁵⁷ Rousseau’s autonomy denotes a kind of freedom-to-be that is greater than mere self-determination because, while belonging to the subject individually, personal autonomy is conceived socially.⁵⁸ Thus, the category of autonomy speaks simultaneously of the personal liberty of the individual and the universal liberty of all individuals. The liberal humanist notion of autonomy is opposed to systematic regulation of subjects by external structures of power, which includes the restrictions of freedom administered by justice systems and modern governments. In a democratic

54. M. A. R. Habib, *A History of Literary Criticism: From Plato to the Present* (Malden, MA; Oxford; and Carlton: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 349–351.

55. Hugh T. Miller and Charles J. Fox, *Postmodern Public Administration*, Rev. ed (Armonk, NY and London: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 2007), ix.

56. Belsey, *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance drama*, 7.

57. Frederick Neuhauser, ‘Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the Origins of Autonomy’, *Inquiry* 54, no. 5 (October 2011): 479.

58. *ibid.*, 492; Joshua Cohen, *Rousseau: A Free Community of Equals*, Founders of Modern Political and Social Thought (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 16.

system—the system of government that in various forms was realised in the wake of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century revolutions in Europe—each individual subject (or citizen) has, ostensibly, the right to choose their own government. The reality of corruption, false choice, or simply being in a democratic minority places limitations on the freedom of the individual within a democratic system even to choose a government. Indeed, by its very definition, representative government is a proxy for the political autonomy of each individual citizen. Liberal humanism is not, therefore, the political system of the West, and its social apparatus is not democratic capitalism, but the fact that liberal humanist ideas have endured in the era of democratic capitalism at the very least raises the question of their relation.

When I refer to liberal humanism I am referring to a mode of thought that arose among the educated bourgeoisie of the Enlightenment period and went on to provide some of the undergirding principles of modern Western society, but was never itself realised in a social form. Instead, liberal humanist ideas and ideals embedded themselves in the class identity of the socially powerful bourgeoisie and then as the predominant ideological perspective of Western humanities scholarship.⁵⁹ Fox and Miller suggest that it was not until Foucault's writing made its influence that the 'immutability of constructions such as the autonomous human agent' saw any substantial challenge.⁶⁰ However, I suggest that the history of liberal humanist ideas has always been self-critical for the fact that liberal humanism never succeeded in creating an authentic social body, a society. I further maintain that this failure is built into the construction of the subjects it did manage to influence including art, humanities scholarship, and the self-identity of the humanities-educated bourgeoisie.

59. Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Oxford and Minnesota: Blackwell/University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 174.

60. Miller and Fox, *Postmodern Public Administration*, 98.

More than simply being a political statement about liberty, the autonomous subject is an expression of an ideal humanity. It makes a transhistorical and transcultural declaration of what it is to be human. The autonomous subject is also, however, a situational condition that relies on a specific awareness of the self as individual. That situational awareness constitutes the historical and cultural existence of the individual whose self-awareness is formed by this same universalising liberal humanist truth about the subject. In its paradoxical intention to grasp universal humanity in the singular identity of the necessarily historical subject, liberal humanism as an intellectual ideology carries the potential for challenging and constructive reimaginations of human subjectivity. It is for this reason, perhaps, that its most productive stream of application was not the establishment of a liberal humanist society, but in the creation of an artistic canon.

1.4 The musical work

As Karen Leistra-Jones, Mary Hunter, and Alexander Stefaniak have argued, albeit using different terms, the history of music reception in Germany is tied to the history of liberal humanist ideas.⁶¹ One of the most influential ideas in Western music history, and one that has come under criticism in recent years, is the notion that the work of music is itself a source of knowledge.⁶² Reinhard Strohm maintains that there is ‘no coherent account’ for the emergence of the work concept at the beginning of the nineteenth century, but nevertheless, he

61. Karen Leistra-Jones, ‘Hans von Bülow and the Confession of Kunstreligion’, *Journal of Musicology* 35, no. 1 (2018): 42–75; Mary Hunter, ‘“To Play as if from the Soul of the Composer”: The Idea of the Performer in Early Romantic Aesthetics’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 58, no. 2 (2005): 357–398; Alexander Stefaniak, ‘Clara Schumann and the Imagined Revaluation of Musical Works’, *Music and Letters* 66 (2018): 1–30.

62. *ibid.*, 5.

notes that its influence over the study of music of this period has been substantial.⁶³ In explaining the historiographical significance of the work concept to the study of nineteenth-century music in the twentieth century, Strohm writes:

it is not entirely clear to me whether Dahlhaus and his colleagues were pursuing a philosophical work-concept that could exist outside time or a historical, practical one to which Beethoven's contemporaries merely gave philosophical meaning [. . .] This model was the ultimate confirmation that the European musical tradition was *sui generis* in the world context. In its characteristic blend of idealism and historical structuralism, this discourse is one of the twentieth century defining itself in music; the work-concept that emerged here was our own, not the one prevalent around 1800.⁶⁴

Strohm suggests that the notion of the musical work adopted by Dahlhaus, Zofia Lissa, Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht, Walter Wiora and other mid-twentieth century scholars, and applied to music from the early Romantic period onwards, was of a fundamentally modernist disposition. His assertion, however, that this was an anachronistic approach to music of this period is valid only up to a point. As Jim Samson explains, by the mid nineteenth century, the 'newly consolidated bourgeois class defined itself [by] institutionalizing its musical life in a manner independent of sacred and courtly life [. . .] it created a fetishism, even indeed a sense, of the "great work"'.⁶⁵ While the work concept per se did not exist, the elevation of music to the status of a quasi language in the later part of the nineteenth century made music into a vessel for knowledge (and a suitable candidate for exegesis in its time).⁶⁶ This approach to music did not apply only to contemporary pieces, but was practised in the reception of music by Bach and

63. Reinhard Strohm, 'Looking Back at Ourselves: The Problem with the Musical Work Concept', chap. 6 in *The Musical Work: Reality or Invention*, ed. Michael Talbot (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 136.

64. *ibid.*, 137.

65. Jim Samson, ed., *The Late Romantic Era: From The Mid-19th Century to World War I*, Man and Music (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1991), 7

66. Leistra-Jones, 'Hans von Bülow and the Confession of Kunstreligion', 67.

other historical composers deemed significant.⁶⁷ The phenomenon contributed to the construction of a canon centred around certain master composers, but it was crucially the musical work and not the composer or performer that was perceived as being the present, transhistorical source of knowledge. Therefore, the sort of anachronism Strohm suggests was being indulged by mid-twentieth century scholars also had a parallel in the reception of music in the late nineteenth century.

Accounts provided by nineteenth-century reviewers hint at the sort of knowledge that might be gleaned from music, and they show that the primary means of this knowledge's dissemination was experiential: 'not to an artistic pleasure, but rather to a devotional experience, the last Beethoven sonatas gather their congregation around themselves in a temple that is made not with hands, but rather founded in the depths of the soul'.⁶⁸ If we are to take such reports at their word, music produced experiences that transcended the commonplace and entered the realm of awe, joining individuals together in communities connected by the same strand of divine, but not religious, sound. If we take them with a pinch of salt, we might instead suggest that the experience of music as a personal encounter with a sense of revelation was the approved mode of reception for works of art. Either way, however, the notion that music in its own right, independent of cultural or intentional meaning, might provide a source of knowledge independent of the historical context of its composition, performance, or the intention of its producer—can be understood as an aesthetic manifestation in music of the idea of the autonomous subject. We can also see how musical works contribute to the construction of the autonomous subject by ritual: the idea that music could offer the listener an experience of

67. Stefaniak, 'Clara Schumann and the Imagined Revelation of Musical Works', 6.

68. Leistra-Jones, 'Hans von Bülow and the Confession of Kunstreligion', 58.

deeper humanity than is ordinarily encountered suggests that music served in the construction of a identity type associated with this music from at least the second part of the nineteenth century.

Rather than being a natural condition for music to exist in (as though music itself were a naturally occurring phenomenon), the musical work is a historically situated construct—to be precise, it is a liberal humanist construction. In a discussion of the ontological situation of music, Karl Popper explains how the symphony (and it is significant that he is talking about a specific work with a specific identity as such) is:

neither the score [the composer] wrote . . . nor is it the sum total of the imagined acoustic experiences [the composer] had while writing the symphony. Nor is it any of the performances. Nor is it all performances together, nor the class of all performances. . . . [It] is a real ideal object which exists, but exists nowhere, and whose existence is somehow the potentiality of its being reinterpreted by human minds. So it is first the work of a human mind or of human minds, the product of human minds; and secondly it is endowed with the potentiality of its being recaptured, perhaps only partly, by human minds again.⁶⁹

This definition recognises the elusive nature of the symphony's ontology. As an object in itself the symphony as a musical work can only be described negatively—'it is not—the score, any of its performances, acoustic experiences' etc.—but when it is connected to a particular situation it must be said to exist in some way through these things. The musical work is apparent in its performance, in the score, in acoustical phenomena and yet it is not reducible to any of these individually. Furthermore, the musical work is fundamentally related to an idea that is held separately in thought: when somebody plays, composes, listens to, or interprets it, the musical work has characteristic properties which individuate

69. Karl R. Popper and John C. Eccles, *The Self and Its Brain*, Corrected 2nd Printing, 1985 (Berlin: Springer Verlag, 1977), 449–451.

it allowing it to be identified as a particular piece despite wrong notes or unexpected circumstances. The musical work is thus an intentional object—one that depends both on its presence as an abstraction perceived by a conscious, thinking being; and also on its capacity to be made manifest in a real object (performance, score etc.).

I suggest that the ontological tension of the musical work runs parallel to the tension inherent within human subjectivity between fractured self and ideal self, as conceived by Jacques Lacan. Music, like other art forms, has the capacity to present a totality. Likewise, the human subject relies on an illusion of wholeness in order to function in the world. Neither the musical work nor the human being is, however, wholly contained in its material content, nor are their existences wholly abstract. Lacan's well-known idea of the 'mirror stage' offers an explanation: at a certain point in an infant's cognitive development it becomes aware of its body—a closed frame that delimits it from its environment and from other bodies. This body houses the infant's sense of self—its first-person 'I'.⁷⁰ The infant identifies itself in the mirror as a whole subject and yet this does not correspond precisely with its actual existence, which relies on its interactions and expressions with others, and cannot be contained or understood by the physical boundaries of its limbs. The image of the unified body thus presents to the infant an ideal—a *Gestalt* towards which the emerging subjectivity of the child will strive for the entirety of its life. The *Gestalt* is more than a self-sufficient body; it refers to the perception of a form that exceeds its components, that is more than the sum of its parts. Therefore, while human subjectivity is unstable and constantly evolving, there is something beyond the image in the mirror that attests to the existence of a person distinct from their

70. Dany Nobus, 'Life and Death in the Glass: A New Look at the Mirror Stage', chap. 5 in *Key Concepts of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, ed. Dany Nobus (New York: Other Press, 1999), 114–117.

surroundings allowing the idea of ‘I, person’ to endure.

To compare the musical work to Lacan’s *Gestalt* is not to equate musical subjectivity with human subjectivity. Rather, I wish to use this example to draw attention to the musical work as being like the *Gestalt* in psychoanalysis. The *Gestalt* is a construction of psychoanalysis that is intended to explain the self-reflexive development of subjective awareness. So also, the musical work is a construction that facilitates reflection on the nature of subjectivity. Much more than the *Gestalt*, though, the musical work has a material existence that enables the complex exploration of what it is to be a subject (and here I do not intend material existence in the sense of the embodied performance of music, but, paradoxically, the more abstractly material notion of the historical sediment that is musical form). Musical works exist in places and times in a way that the idea of *Gestalt* does not—they each have a presence beyond the merely conceptual sphere posited in the notion of liberal humanist autonomy.

Julian Johnson’s recent book *Out of Time* conceives of the musically modern (specifically *not* musical modernism) as a ‘set of modalities of thought and feeling—enacted, realised, and made sensible through music’.⁷¹ The ‘modern’ for Johnson is not a chronological period or a musical language, but a way of thinking that developed in the seventeenth century out of an altered awareness of subjectivity—a new mirror stage, as it were, in the history of human self-reflection. I suggest that this new sense of subjectivity can be aligned with the emergence of liberal humanist ideals in the Enlightenment, and especially the concept of autonomy. Johnson argues that ‘twentieth-century composers of operas and ballets shared the same instinct as their predecessors in the Baroque, from Handel back to Monteverdi and Caccini’, asserting that ‘the heart of this

71. Julian Johnson, *Out of Time: Music and the Making of Modernity* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2015) see synopsis.

fascination across four centuries is a shared sense of unspoken lack'.⁷² Each of the pieces he addresses 'fulfils its function' in the expression of this lack that he considers to be a constant of modern subjectivity.⁷³ What Johnson here calls modernity I prefer to consider liberal humanist: the function of art *as art* is to present the subject with a critical refraction of itself. Modernity, on the other hand, I consider to be a specific set of historical conditions in a particular historical age. The refraction, in art, of the subject existing under, against, and through these conditions in that historical age is the expression of modernism.

1.5 The bourgeois crisis

The concept of autonomy operates on two levels in liberal humanist music: firstly, it enables the musical form (like the human subject) to be considered a totality unto itself; and secondly, it endows the whole category of art with the character of exception. Peter Bürger describes how autonomy both 'reveals and obscures an actual historical development': the actual historical development, in this case, being the 'relative disassociation of the work of art from the praxis of life in bourgeois society'.⁷⁴ The exceptional character of autonomy masks the extent to which art functions within a given social structure in spite of its detachment from the praxis of ordinary living. For Adorno it is this paradoxical character that lends autonomous art its social function. Art 'implies reality because it is a form of knowledge. Knowledge necessarily points to reality, which in turn necessarily points to society, there being no reality that is not social'.⁷⁵

72. Johnson, *Out of Time: Music and the Making of Modernity*, 115.

73. *ibid.*, 311.

74. Peter Bürger, quoted in Lambert Zuidervaart, 'The Social Significance of Autonomous Art: Adorno and Bürger', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 48, no. 1 (1990): 66.

75. Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Rolf Tiedemann and Robert Hullot-Kentor (London: Continuum, 2004), 383–384.

The stagnation of liberal humanist ideals into what might be considered the intellectual identity of a specific group of educated and privileged individuals is the crisis of liberal humanism that peaked in the twentieth century, and yet this crisis, or this ‘external’ truth, is embedded musically in the work of art that ostensibly rejects it.

Liberal humanist music—art music conceived in singular form to be an individual refraction of the universal human subject—opposes the conception of subjectivity that is demanded of it by capitalism (as a commodity object). But liberal humanism and its music is also indebted to capitalism historically. Jim Samson describes how the bourgeoisie became ‘increasingly aware of itself as a class in the nineteenth century, defining itself not only through a political aspiration which complemented its economic status, but also through its growing influence on the formal culture of Europe’.⁷⁶ This is perhaps why tonal art music has such a complex and often seemingly adversarial relationship to its musical dominant. The cultural residue of the truth of liberal humanism in the first communist sequence was the ‘subjectification’ of the art object in resistance to its commodity status under capitalism, and concomitantly, the situation of the subject under capitalism. The forfeit of this resistance belonging to the cultural sphere alone, was twofold. Firstly, art’s alienation from the socio-economic framework; and secondly—due to its nature as a bourgeois commodity—an encroachment of capitalist values into its subjective identity.

I suggest that the tension between the radical intellectual possibility represented in liberal humanist music, and the social circumstance that facilitated the consumption of that same music, is the manifestation of the failure of liberal humanism to establish itself socially. Samson describes the ‘tone’ of liberalism before the 1848 revolutions as being a ‘lyrical blend of utopian socialism, il-

76. Samson, *The Late Romantic Era: From The Mid-19th Century to World War I*, 4.

luminism, and heady republicanism’, but in the aftermath of these uprisings the ‘middle class, which had climbed to dominance by means of “contractual state” and had bought its freedom through property ownership’ favoured ‘realism’ (in other words, the retention of their political and economic dominance) over ‘idealism’ (any further action towards emancipation for all).⁷⁷ Liberalism thus no longer represented a radical and challenging social idea, but became a badge to distinguish a certain social identity—that of the educated bourgeoisie. In this corruption the very nature of the liberal humanist idea is broken.

The emancipation of dissonance in the early twentieth century presented a new musical expression of the universal human subject. This expression stood in opposition to the ideology of capitalism and concomitantly offered a form of musical expression that was detached from the musical dominant of capitalism—tonality. Unlike liberal humanist art, which had been bound historically to the capitalist expression of the subject, the emancipation of dissonance projected a different path. Thus, in the early twentieth century the musical manifestation of social truth was no longer the liberal humanist autonomous art-subject of the preceding century, but a new subject of music whose lasting impact—or cultural residue into the postmodern era—was the total subversion of tonality’s claim to the universal.

And yet, radical liberal humanism *did* continue to exist in the intellectual spheres of music and philosophy. Adorno, for example, was committed to the ideals of liberal humanism, but highly critical of modern capitalist society. He therefore sought to relocate the liberal humanist truth of music not through an affirmative encounter with—for example—the late Beethoven, but through stark analysis of its dialectical mediation of subjectivity and modern society. The continuity in the cultural reception of music as an expression of meaning that

77. Samson, *The Late Romantic Era: From The Mid-19th Century to World War I*, 9.

exceeds specifically musical value, indicates a shared thought base between the pseudo-religious appreciation of art music, and the highly critical reception of scholars in the mid-twentieth century of those same works of art. It also points to the self-conscious shift that took place in some more critical corners of the humanities, away from a naive confidence in the ideals of liberal humanism towards a more active and critical engagement with its social manifestation.

The declaration of autonomous universality is the lynchpin of liberal humanism. Once the universal is removed from the autonomous subject, or vice versa, so also is the web of social, personal, and subjective meaning that forms the basis of liberal humanism. Although the history of liberal humanism is tied inextricably to that of the bourgeoisie and democratic capitalism, its intellectual and moral value is not, and the distance between these two facets of liberal humanism in the twentieth century will guide my interpretations of Strauss's music.

1.6 Dissertation structure

The dissertation has five central chapters. The chapters are ordered chronologically according to the main work under discussion, but this is coincidental rather than strategic. I do not intend to propose by this ordering a trend (for example of progression or decline) across Strauss's late works. While the dissertation itself 'peaks' at Chapter 4 it should be understood that the piece in question, *Metamorphosen*, does not represent to me the aesthetic summit of Strauss's output following which his music deteriorated, nor that he was building up to this piece in the works preceding. I do, however, consider it Strauss's most important work in the liberal humanist tradition and its central position in this thesis emphasises this conviction. A more enlightening path than straight-

forward chronology through the thesis might be found via three unofficial sections: Chapters 2 and 3 'bourgeois music', Chapter 4 'radical music', Chapters 5 and 6 'end-times music'.

Each chapter is constructed around a musical work and progresses its own account of an aspect of Strauss's late aesthetic: alienation, abstraction, totality, temporality, decay. These 'aspects' should not be considered themes that are dealt with explicitly in Strauss's music, nor are they hermeneutic windows that exist on a totally different plane from the music at hand. Rather, they might be thought of as tendencies embedded in the material of the musical work that refract, in music, the social situation of that particular piece. The 'aspects' I have chosen—which do not pretend to be the entire aesthetic compass of Strauss's late works—were not preordained, but drew their focus in the process of writing. Another scholar faced with the same music may well have chosen differently (beauty, irony, interiority), or conceived of a similar aspect with a different nuance. Alienation, for example, might be formulated as escapism. In this case, where escapism has a seemingly more neutral connotation, alienation has a specifically Marxist inflection that betrays the theoretical frame through which I view the situatedness of the subject. Alienation is preferable because it supports a critical reading of an inhering historical circumstance, while the idea of escapism indulges the ostensive separation between aesthetic object and its historical condition. From the particular nuances of my aspects to their designation as embedded social tendencies, the debt I owe to an Adornian mode of musical criticism is unabashed.

Each chapter has an introduction that draws attention to any relevant existing analyses, historical discussions, or critical frames before proceeding to an original analysis-led enquiry into its primary piece. With the longer works (especially *Daphne*, *Metamorphosen*, the Oboe Concerto) close analysis is ne-

cessarily limited to an excerpt, but in each of these cases I have attempted to provide some more sweeping analytical observations of the whole work for context. While all five aspects named above have permutations across the whole thesis, the chapter in which they find a particular home should lend itself to a more thorough exploration in the context of that particular work. The discussion derived through that work is, however, unique to it and should not be applied to any of the other pieces even though the aspect more generally might be held in common. In other words, alienation in *Daphne* is not manifested in the same way, and therefore does not afford the same interpretation, as alienation in *Metamorphosen*, though both might express alienation in some form. All of the chapters offer original interpretations of Strauss's works, but the first two also propose new theoretical frames through which a particular aspect of Strauss's music might be understood: Chapter 2 posits a new kind of tonality in which consonance is emancipated; and Chapter 3 argues that musical autonomy exists in two configurations—authentic and mimetic. I now conclude this introduction with summaries of each chapter.

Chapter 2, 'Crisis Control', focusses mainly on the opera *Daphne*. I develop a character profile for the bourgeois subject of the early twentieth century and discuss the themes of nature, redemption, transformation, and freedom as they are expressed in the opera. I aim to show how the liberal humanist ideal is in conflict with the social function of opera as bourgeois entertainment. The transformations presented in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and *Daphne* reveal different responses to the modernist crisis (the lost transcendent Other), but neither manages to escape the trappings of their bourgeois contexts. In *Ariadne auf Naxos*, I suggest that self-criticism and alienation—often considered significant to a modernist aesthetic—are a response to the failure of liberal humanist ideals in the twentieth century, and, in their self-congratulatory tone, help to preserve bourgeois

attitudes. *Daphne*, on the other hand, maintains a commitment to the idea of transcendence, but makes that transcendence into something simultaneously horrific and trivial. I suggest that this apparently less critical, more conservatively minded opera, better reveals the underlying barbarism of bourgeois ideology than the earlier work that also deals with themes of transformation and transcendence.

Chapter 3, 'Objectivity', examines the category of 'wrist exercise' in Strauss's oeuvre. I take the Oboe Concerto to be an example of 'mimetic' autonomous music that drives towards formal and expressive abstraction. The nebulous structure of the concerto's form, in particular, its hovering between a multi-movement piece and a through-composition is taken to be symptomatic of the work's tendency towards abstraction. I will suggest that the sonata structure of the Allegro moderato belongs to a new paradigm of sonata form that does not require an internal dialectic between abstract and material forms. I frame this new kind of sonata form in the history of liberal humanist music in Germany, arguing that its 'confession' of liberal humanism fails to recognise the significance of the individual subject.

Chapter 4, 'Subjectivity', locates in *Metamorphosen* a kernel of hope for liberal humanist art. I argue that *Metamorphosen* negates the totalising drive of its tonal form and retains a radical autonomy. I see the work's sonata form as 'self-consciously' instigated with the beginning of the second subject (which might be read as an over-determined S-theme deformation). A consequence of this late-onset sonata form is the generation of a formal narrative that is able to transform the under-determined P-theme into a 'real subject' in the context of the sonata structure. I then argue that this sonata form reading and its associated hermeneutic narrative fails to account for the work's entire form—that sonata form was only retrospectively engaged and did not exist at the work's be-

ginning, nor is it capable of bringing the work to an end. Rejecting sonata form as the sole ‘explanation’ of the work’s musical meaning, I engage the notion of a surplus in musical form, reading the ‘Eroica’ quotation as an attempt to reify that surplus in the context of a transcendent historical identity. Ultimately, I interpret the work as a radical expression of the liberal humanist idea—one that is wholly integrated into the failure of tonal language for the twentieth century. The chapter concludes with a discussion of *Metamorphosen*’s reception history. I propose that one aspect of *Metamorphosen*’s musical meaning corresponds to its position as a commodity item, and another to its status as an object alienated from social function.

Chapter 5, ‘Time’, offers two readings of ‘Beim Schlafengehn’ examining in particular questions of temporality. Having situated ‘Beim Schlafengehn’ historically in a period of suspension between the end of the Second World War and the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany, this chapter suggests that ‘Beim Schlafengehn’ can be read through a new, postmodern subject position (Strauss’s ‘pre-postmodernism’ was first suggested in Botstein 1992). Existing narratives surrounding the *Four Last Songs* tend to conflate a romanticised reading of Strauss’s biography with an understanding of his music as belonging to the Romantic era, but I suggest that Strauss’s tonal form in ‘Beim Schlafengehn’ is fundamentally an expression of its present circumstance. The first reading I propose suggests that the dysfunctional tonal form manifests the postmodern crisis of historicity; and the second reading asserts that its aesthetic structure is not primarily orientated around tonal function, but the material creation of the orchestral song as such.

Chapter 6, ‘Decay’, presents some analytical perspectives on Strauss’s last song ‘Malven’. A rotational analysis of the song’s form documents a shift from generative harmonic language to form-functional progression. Each rotation be-

comes more bound to the 'task' of producing a secure cadence in the tonic key until all that is left of the thematic material is the base assertion of tonality: a perfect cadence. Next, I offer a transformation-based analysis which reveals how tonal function has, from the beginning of the song's text, required a separation of material pitch from functional pitch. I suggest that the deterioration of tonal expression and the unravelling of tonal ideology is embedded in 'Malven' in an aesthetic of decay, and I further argue that decay is the remnant of aesthetic decadence. The expressive possibility that is offered by the language of late tonality provides the concluding theme of the thesis.

Chapter 2

Crisis control

2.1 *Daphne*, via *Friedenstag*

On 7 July 1935, the day after receiving notice of his removal from the *Reichsmusikkammer*, Strauss accepted Joseph Gregor's idea for an opera based on the mythological character Daphne.¹ Gregor had originally conceived of *Daphne* (Op. 82) as one part of a pair of 'festival dramas' with the opera *Friedenstag* (Op. 81) being the other. He envisaged that the works would articulate two expressions of the same idea—peace through the catalyst of love.² On account of this connection (the works were premiered together in accordance with Gregor's intention), *Daphne's* scholarly reception has been tied up with that of *Friedenstag*. Unlike *Friedenstag*, whose celebration of a peacefully reconciled community clearly resonates with pro-*Anschluss* nationalist sentiments, *Daphne* lacks an obvious perspective on its contemporary political situation. In this chapter I aim to show how *Daphne* engages with the social dilemma of the liberal bourgeoisie

1. Kenneth William Birkin, "'Friedenstag' and 'Daphne': An Interpretative Study of the Literary and Dramatic Sources of the Operas by Richard Strauss' (PhD diss., University of Birmingham, 1982), 157.

2. *ibid.*, 238; Bryan R. Gilliam, *Rounding Wagner's Mountain: Richard Strauss and Modern German Opera* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 241.

in the context of pre-war Germany. While not being Nazi propaganda, I suggest that *Daphne* passively favours the preservation of the bourgeoisie under fascism. I will begin by challenging the extent to which intellectual isolationism succeeds in protecting bourgeois ideals from the sphere of Nazi politics, examining the notions of nature, freedom, self-knowledge and autonomy as they are presented through the character Daphne. In the second part of this chapter (from §2.6 onwards) I will make an explicitly musical argument which aims to demonstrate the limitations of Strauss's musical vision of redemption carried through the musical transformation at the late climax of the work's form.

Before presenting my own reading of *Daphne* it is worth examining how political ideology—including the ideas of autonomy and transformation—have been assessed in *Daphne* already. This merits a brief account of *Friedenstag*'s scholarly reception history, too, as the two have so often been considered together. I see no reason that *Daphne* should be read directly through *Friedenstag*, or vice versa, and neither should it be assumed that they share an ideological perspective, but the social issues and political context that scholars have discussed in relation to *Friedenstag* are just as relevant for the opera originally intended to be its partner.

It was *Friedenstag*, rather than *Daphne*, that gained initial critical approval, but for obvious political reasons this hierarchy has since been reversed.³ Gregor was a replacement librettist for the Jewish writer Stefan Zweig (who by the time of *Daphne*'s premiere was already in exile) and has borne the brunt of criticism for both operas.⁴ Bryan Gilliam addresses the 'problem' of *Friedenstag*'s polit-

3. Alan Jefferson, *The Life of Richard Strauss* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1973), 206. For further details of *Friedenstag*'s contemporary reception history see Petersen, "*Friedenstag*" von Stefan Zweig, Richard Strauss und Joseph Gregor: eine pazifistische Oper im 'Dritten Reich'; and for a more detailed account of the work's scholarly reception see Matthew Michael Werley, 'Historicism and Cultural Politics in Three Interwar-period Operas by Richard Strauss: *Arabella* (1933), *Die schweigsame Frau* (1935) and *Friedenstag*' (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2010), 219–223.

4. It was a letter to Zweig that cost Strauss his position at the *Reichsmusikkamer* after he pro-

ical success with the Nazi authorities in his recent monograph *Rounding Wagner's Mountain*. The much longer score for *Daphne* is Gilliam's evidence that the composer always favoured this opera above *Friedenstag* (an argument that is further supported by Gregor's reports on Strauss's multiple interventions into *Daphne's* libretto, while *Friedenstag* was left largely alone).⁵ Holding *Friedenstag* to be the political sacrifice necessary for the sake of the 'serious' opera, *Daphne*, Gilliam suggests all the same that Strauss overcomes the textual conclusion to *Friedenstag* by the 'stupendous wave of sound' that is the work's final chorus.⁶

Pamela M. Potter similarly identifies particular elements of Strauss's music that might nod to the ironic, or otherwise more covertly undermine Gregor's text.⁷ Like Gilliam, she concludes that a 'subtle musical disguise of heroism [...] stood out as a small voice of protest in an overbearing political climate of pro-war enthusiasm'.⁸ Both scholars argue that the musical world of the opera has the capacity to exist on a different plane from its textual world with the assumption that Strauss's music has the upper hand in the opera's hierarchy of aesthetic meaning. Carl Dahlhaus proposes a more integrated reading of music and text. He suggests that Strauss's music redeems the operatic form by transforming the society of *Friedenstag's* narrative from a state of barbarism to an expression of true humanity via the medium of musical autonomy.⁹ Somewhat surprisingly, this argument resonates with one that Gilliam made much earlier in his

fessed not to care about politics, calling his role as President 'troublesome'. Willi Schuh, ed., 'Strauss to Stefan Zweig, 17 June 1935', in *A Confidential Matter: The Letters of Richard Strauss and Stefan Zweig, 1931–1935*, trans. Max Knight (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977), 99–100.

5. In his monograph on Strauss, Gregor notes how his initial idea for *Daphne* was rendered almost totally obscure by the composer's interventions, see Joseph Gregor, *Richard Strauss. Der Meister der Oper* (München: R. Piper, 1939), 257. See also Gilliam, *Rounding Wagner's Mountain: Richard Strauss and Modern German Opera*, 260 and 238; see also *ibid.*, 246.

6. *ibid.*, 254.

7. Potter, 'Strauss's "Friedenstag": A Pacifist Attempt at Political Resistance', 424.

8. *ibid.*

9. Dahlhaus, 'Eine Ästhetik des Widerstands?', 22.

career for *Daphne*, in which he suggests that the work undergoes a formal transformation from opera to symphonic poem.¹⁰ Issues of autonomy, transformation, and sociability are central to both operas, and in both cases Dahlhaus and Gilliam locate the ‘true’ expression of humanity in the idea of the autonomous form. Dahlhaus on *Friedenstag* and the early Gilliam on *Daphne* use these readings to sustain an image of each work as carrying some form of resistance to its contemporary political situation. The fact remains, however, that *Friedenstag* was so plainly mouldable to the social paradigm of its political moment that it gained special status as the first piece of music theatre to capture the ideals of National Socialism, an accolade *Daphne* did not acquire.¹¹

It is perhaps easier to identify (or harder to ignore) ideological allegiance in text than it is in music, and Gilliam and Potter both pit composer against librettist in order to save Strauss’s music from the ideological shortcomings that they identify in *Friedenstag*’s text. While the opera’s positive reception among critics in the Third Reich did indeed hang largely on interpretations of its text, its more general aesthetic tendency towards the monumental was also of use to the Nazi propaganda ministry.¹² Rather than obscuring or redeeming Gregor’s text, I suggest that the ‘stupendous wave of sound’ that constitutes the opera’s final chorus, and that also forms the locus of Dahlhaus’s reading, fits well with the ideological demands of the Nazi state. Strauss was proud enough that, were

10. Bryan R. Gilliam, ‘Richard Strauss’s *Daphne*: Opera and Symphonic Continuity’ (PhD thesis, Harvard University, 1984).

11. In fact, since 1936 the Nazi party had been actively pursuing the ideal standard for a *Volksooper* that might provide a cultural front for its own nationalist endeavour aims. See Michael Meyer, *The Politics of Music in The Third Reich*, American University studies Series IX, History (New York: P. Lang, 1991), 310; also Jefferson, *The Life of Richard Strauss*, 206; on the question of the various different possible interpretations of *Friedenstag*, and the approaches different scholars have taken to this opera, see Wifling, ‘Hermeneutik, Interpretation, Rezeption: *Friedenstag* von Richard Strauss – Ein nazistisches Bühnenstück?’; Dahlhaus, ‘Eine Ästhetik des Widerstands?’, 22.

12. Petersen, “*Friedenstag*” von Stefan Zweig, *Richard Strauss und Joseph Gregor: eine pazifistische Oper im ‘Dritten Reich’*, 135.

he not personally inclined to write a sub-Beethovenian chorus finale, he would no doubt have found a way to avoid it (as he did with *Daphne*).¹³ The tropes of musical redemption and choral intervention that Dahlhaus reads through this finale as the resolute success of the autonomy of *Friedenstag*'s form, may also be heard as a bombastic assault on the eardrums that cries 'peace' while punching the air threateningly. To give it a more specific context, the opera's final chorus might be heard as something closer to the cheers of the Austrian Nazis that drowned out the brutality and coercion that accompanied the apparently peaceful *Anschluss* in 1938. While I do not propose that a direct parallel was intended by the authors of *Friedenstag*, Dahlhaus's exultation of jubilant aesthetic autonomy in spite of Nazi Germany's recent imperial triumph is overly optimistic.¹⁴

The power of music to redeem is a theme in Gilliam's article on transformation in Strauss's operas, too. Here, Gilliam avoids discussion of *Friedenstag* by comparing *Daphne* to the earlier mythological opera *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Op. 60, 1916). He suggests that *Ariadne auf Naxos* and *Daphne* espouse two different kinds of transformation and reveal, through their individual approaches to sociability, a shift in Strauss's understanding of the subject's relation to its environment.¹⁵ Thus *Ariadne auf Naxos* presents the 'process of becoming one with the social, with civilisation and the community of humanity' while *Daphne* projects the 'very act of leaving the human community, joining nature, and becoming divine'.¹⁶

Gilliam attributes the change in Strauss's attitude towards transformation to the influence of the operas' respective librettists: Strauss 'the Austrian' was

13. Gilliam, *Rounding Wagner's Mountain: Richard Strauss and Modern German Opera*, 259.

14. Dahlhaus, 'Eine Ästhetik des Widerstands?'

15. Bryan R. Gilliam, 'Ariadne, Daphne and the Problem of *Verwandlung*', *Cambridge Opera Journal* 15, no. 1 (2003): 67–81.

16. *ibid.*, 67.

animated by Hofmannsthal, and Strauss ‘the German Romantic’, which for Gilliam represents the composer’s ‘natural’ intellectual state, was brought out (albeit negatively) by Gregor.¹⁷ In a further effort to estrange Strauss from the political taint of Gregor, Gilliam argues that the composer received such little inspiration from the libretto that he turned to other—implicitly superior—sources of creative stimulation.¹⁸ These included two poems by the early nineteenth-century writer Friedrich Rückert.¹⁹ The poems ‘share the common theme of an existing evil that is overcome, or redeemed, by the spirit to be found in nature’.²⁰ Gilliam thus identifies in *Daphne* an intellectual commitment to German-Romantic idealism, which he aligns with the very specific idea of redemption through nature that is presented in Rückert’s poems and seems to be played out in the narrative drama of Strauss’s opera.

Michael P. Steinberg, on the other hand, has no patience for such a notion of redemption: he finds no moral or intellectual value at all in *Daphne*’s vision of transformation, which he instead regards as the obfuscation of consciousness in the face of a destructive ideology.²¹ Despite their wildly different conclusions, both Gilliam and Steinberg read in *Daphne* a reluctance to engage with the social situation of pre-war Nazi Germany (fuelled, in Steinberg’s case, by Strauss’s voluntary ignorance; and Gilliam’s by Strauss’s intellectual freedom). If *Daphne* really does represent a reluctance to engage with the political reality of 1930s Germany, Julian Johnson’s interpretation of *Daphne* is more resistant still. In a similar vein to Gilliam, Johnson claims that the opera’s end ‘remember[s] Daphne] as one with the fullness of nature’.²² Rather than aligning

17. Gilliam, ‘Ariadne, Daphne and the Problem of *Verwandlung*’, 67.

18. *ibid.*, 78.

19. *ibid.*, 80.

20. *ibid.*, 81.

21. Steinberg, ‘Richard Strauss and the Question’, 181.

22. Johnson, *Out of Time: Music and the Making of Modernity*, 45.

the 'fullness of nature' with a romanticised conception of nature-as-redeemer, however, Johnson engages modernism as an alternative hermeneutic window through which to view Daphne's transformation to a laurel tree.

Crucial to Johnson's idiosyncratic conception of cultural modernism is the idea that the present (be that Monteverdi's or Strauss's) is disconnected from a past considered to be somehow better.²³ For Johnson, Strauss addresses this fundamentally modern problem by returning at *Daphne's* end to a 'Rousseau-like primal origin of music' (Johnson is alluding here to the 'romantic' musical language of the work's ending, associated with a time before the perceived fragmentation of the subject found a refraction in a particular modernist musical aesthetic).²⁴ For different reasons, and in different ways, both Gilliam and Johnson see *Daphne* offering its audience an apparently emancipatory depiction of the human subject whose full identity or 'true' unity is not to be found in any particular social environment—and especially not modernity; but in an ostensibly more neutral idea of nature.

The subject's relationship to its social environment is clearly a significant theme in *Daphne*, and the notion of redemption, too, is central to *Daphne's* plot. Steinberg's outright dismissal of such a possibility perhaps misses the nuances of its presentation in the opera's form.²⁵ However, both Gilliam's investment in German Romanticism and Johnson's transhistorical modernism serve more to free the opera and its composer from association with the specific historical circumstance of composition than to address the significance of idealism or modernism for the cultural and musical significance of this particular work. In Johnson's case, the transhistorical aspect of his idea of modernism reduces its value as a critical frame through which to view *Daphne* in its own particu-

23. Johnson, *Out of Time: Music and the Making of Modernity*, 115.

24. *ibid.*, 45.

25. Steinberg, 'Richard Strauss and the Question', 181.

lar socio-historical context, and in Gilliam's case, promoting the broader (and anachronistic) context of German idealism as a cultural framework in which to situate *Daphne*, has the effect of projecting onto Strauss's music the same predisposition towards internalisation that ought rather to be the focus of a critical reading of the opera itself.²⁶ Steinberg, Johnson, and Gilliam all identify the transformation at the opera's end as the dramatic crux on which *Daphne's* meaning and political dimension depends, and in the later parts of this chapter I will present a detailed analysis of this section. Through this analysis I hope to offer a more considered view of aesthetic redemption that emerges out of the content of the music, and not from a pre-existing notion of idealised nature.

Daphne's mythological backdrop, fantastical dramatic aspects, and sinuously complex musical language appear a world away from the marching music that sounds out much of *Friedenstag's* military setting. Moreover, *Daphne's* ending, more successfully than *Friedenstag's* at least, manages to avoid propagandistic exuberance. Although their overt differences make it tempting to engage a comparative approach to interpretation, such an exercise risks understanding each opera only as a foil for the other. Without this foil, however, the contemporary cultural situation of the opera seems less urgent. Rather than juxtaposing *Daphne* with *Friedenstag*, I suggest that Gilliam's inclination towards a comparison with the earlier 'Greek' opera *Ariadne auf Naxos* has traction, and might, in the first instance, serve as a better context for the broader cultural situation of Strauss's later opera.

Ariadne auf Naxos and *Daphne* both present responses to the liberal humanist crisis of identity in the twentieth century, and their different endings—one self-critical, but remaining partially hopeful, and one nihilistic—reveal two different political perspectives on the contemporary situation of the bourgeoisie.

26. Gilliam, 'Ariadne, Daphne and the Problem of *Verwandlung*', 81.

Ariadne auf Naxos concludes with the union of Ariadne and Bacchus—the apparent triumph of music’s transformative capacity, albeit limited to the sphere of consciousness thematised in art music alone. In this way it is both similar to and different from *Daphne*, which also concludes with a kind of formal transformation, and sees its title character transposed into an apparently purer plane of isolated existence (albeit one in which her identity as a human subject is compromised). I do not wish to suggest that *Ariadne auf Naxos* and *Daphne* share an exceptional thematic connection, although I do believe that they both handle the crisis of bourgeois identity in the modern era. Therefore, beyond generic details I will not engage in a direct comparison of the operas, but rather, in the following brief review of *Ariadne auf Naxos*, I aim to provide a preliminary context and introduction to the more detailed examination of self-reflexivity, transformation, and bourgeois identity that will form the focus of my fuller discussion of *Daphne*.

2.2 *Ariadne auf Naxos*

Ariadne auf Naxos (Op. 60, 1916) expresses the crisis of bourgeois liberal identity as one of melancholia. In mourning, Freud writes, every memory or situation that demonstrates the libido’s attachment to the lost object is met by the fact of material reality that the object no longer exists.²⁷ The subject is then faced with a choice: it must either perish with the object of desire, or detach its libidinal drive from it. In melancholia, however, the lost object is integrated within the ego, meaning that a detachment of the libidinal drive constitutes a rupture within the imaginary-symbolic system progressed by the ego.²⁸ Freud’s

27. Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Reprint, ed. and trans. James Strachey, vol. 14 (London: Vintage, 2001), 244.

28. *ibid.*, 248–249.

essay on mourning and melancholia was published in 1917 and can be understood as handling psychoanalytically the crisis of its age that *Ariadne auf Naxos* and *Daphne* handle aesthetically.²⁹ I propose that the lost ‘object’, for the bourgeois liberal, is the presumed universality of its subject position and the externally derived meaning that arises from it. In other words, what is lost is the sphere of meaning that sustains a belief in a morality or a subjectivity greater than the singular perspective of the world offered by the personal experience of the autonomous bourgeois individual. *Ariadne auf Naxos*—not only music about music, but music about bourgeois music—self-consciously invokes this crisis of identity, and in so doing, ruptures the imaginary-symbolic system of the autonomous musical work.

Ariadne auf Naxos is in two parts.³⁰ Part 1 ‘Prologue’ is set in the court of the richest man in Vienna. Court servants including a composer, music teacher, and wig maker join a *commedia dell’arte* troupe and an opera troupe to prepare for the evening. A farcical situation arises when time constraints force the contrasting players to have to perform together in an amalgamation of opera seria and *commedia dell’arte*. This opera-within-an-opera is the dramatic conceit on which much of the opera’s critical potential is couched. Part 2 ‘Opera’ is the hybrid entertainment piece that those introduced in the ‘Prologue’ draw together for the enjoyment of the court. It tells the story of Ariadne’s tragedy, her abandonment by Theseus then her joy with Bacchus. Through the briefest exploration of its musical telling, I aim to show how loss and pleasure are one and the same in

29. Sigmund Freud, ‘Trauer und Melancholie’, *Internationale Zeitschrift für Ärztliche Psychoanalyse* 4, no. 6 (1917): 288–301.

30. This discussion that follows is based on the second version of *Ariadne auf Naxos*, premiered in 1916. The first *Ariadne auf Naxos* (1912) was a combination of a play (Hofmannsthal’s translation of Molière’s *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*) with incidental music provided by Strauss, followed by a short masque style opera. Being over six hours in performance, the production flopped and was radically redrawn for the subsequent version with the ‘Prologue’ taking the place of Molière’s play.

Strauss's musical portrayal of Ariadne's bourgeois ego. From here I will go on to show how this conflict operates at a higher level of the operatic form.

Ariadne

Ariadne provides a character type for the bourgeois individual. Her first recitative 'Wo war ich' (rehearsal mark 24) opens with a dramatic expression of grief in the form of a half-diminished seventh chord on B \flat , resolving onto an E \flat major chord with added major seventh (see Figure 2.1). This major seventh, the note D, provides Ariadne's intonation tone for the following recitative as she sings of her sorrowful half-life, and it continues to play a significant role in the proceeding aria. We might take this D, the obstruction of a fully consonant chord, and a wholly conventional tonal expression of longing, to be her painful musical representation of the lost Theseus. The idea of Theseus, thus embodied in the note D, presents us with an incarnation of Ariadne's unattainable object of desire, which is the cause of her grief and the disturbance to her musical identity in the chord E \flat .

Figure 2.1 – Rehearsal mark 24⁴

Ariadne

Lento

Ach!...

In the following aria 'Ein Schoenes war', in which Ariadne imagines her former joy with Theseus, the note D returns translated into a heart-wrenching dissonant major fourth (see Figure 2.2, p. 50). This dissonance forms the emo-

tional core of the aria's harmonic writing and is returned to again and again, resolving to the tonic chord, E \flat major. The shift in the position of D from unresolved dissonance in the concluding E \flat ⁷ chord of the recitative, to a resolving dissonance out of which arises a strong sense of satisfaction can be considered, to use a Lacanian term, the *jouissance* evoked in the imaginary scenario in which Ariadne achieves her desire, her full life with Theseus.

The dissonant D is positioned in the aria not as a traumatic chromatic obstruction, but as a vital part of its harmonic constitution from which stems the emotional core of its lyricism. Theseus has been reified and absorbed as a charismatic point in Ariadne's musical language: his association with the note D, which by itself is devoid of meaning, in the context of Ariadne's music shifted from the symbol of recitative grief to the symbol of imaginary happiness. In this form Theseus may thus be considered the kernel of Ariadne's own musical expression: the void that is his narrative absence is manifested musically as a positive presence, indeed, it is the lynchpin of her identity as a feeling individual.

Figure 2.2 – Recontextualisation of dissonant note D, rehearsal mark 39⁻²

The image shows a musical score for Ariadne, rehearsal mark 39⁻². The score is in 3/4 time and E-flat major. It features a vocal line for Ariadne with lyrics "The - seus und ging im Licht" and piano accompaniment. The piano part includes a prominent dissonant D note in the bass line.

Part 2 of *Ariadne auf Naxos* culminates with the arrival of a new character:

Bacchus, a demigod appearing from outside Naxos. He rescues Ariadne from isolation by lifting her sights away from Theseus and breaking the symbolic framework that she has constructed around him. Hofmannsthal saw the coming together of two individuals in mutual transformation as a social act that required them to give up what he calls their 'pre-existence'—their apparently natural solipsism—in order to function in a social world.³¹ When Ariadne realises that the new arrival is not Theseus she accepts him as the messenger of death and, by embracing death, rejects all hope of Theseus returning to her. In this rejection she becomes free of her life's former burdens. The arrival of Bacchus thus signifies the penetration of her isolated existence on Naxos and the transformation of her situation to a new sociality.

Rather than being a new beginning, however, Ariadne's final transformation is musically presented as a return. Notwithstanding the fact that Bacchus's arrival is tinged with the musical memory of the unnamed and unlikable Tenor from Part 1, who at this time already bore the musical motif associated with his later character, the musical similarity of Ariadne's own sung remembrance of Theseus in Part 2 and the motif associated with Bacchus indicates a connection between Ariadne's original lack (Theseus) and the fulfilment of her desire in this apparently new character Bacchus. It is Strauss's musical joke, perhaps, that the similarity of the musical material for Theseus and Bacchus reaches its peak when the latter declares himself 'ein anderer' (see Figure 2.3, p. 52). The opera's final scene cannot thus be an affirmation of Hofmannsthal's idea of social transformation (as Gilliam suggests that it is) because the lingering knowledge of Bacchus and Ariadne as Tenor and Prima Donna from Part 1 project 'pre-existences' that are not overcome by their union at the opera's end.³² More

31. Corse, *Operatic Subjects: The Evolution of Self in Modern Opera*, 114.

32. Gilliam, 'Ariadne, Daphne and the Problem of *Verwandlung*', 67.

importantly, however, we see in this musical depiction that there was never truly a loss for Ariadne to overcome because Theseus (or Bacchus) was, from Ariadne’s first aria, already a constituent part of her musical identity.

Figure 2.3 – Theseus and Bacchus, rehearsal mark 35 and rehearsal mark 318⁻²



Zerbinetta

The contingency of the work’s particular formal paradigm on its being self-consciously artificial is thematised in *Ariadne auf Naxos*. Benjamin Bennett has argued that the remoulding of two levels of farce (first, the courtly frame, then in the interaction of high- and low-art characters in the ‘Opera’), into a sincerely operatic conclusion, suggests both the complete internal transformation of the formal scenario from ‘accidental’ to ‘necessary’ art; and also, the external conditioning of *Ariadne auf Naxos* to the ‘accidental’ or essentially theatrical and transitory nature of its artistic whole in realisation.³³ However, I will now suggest to the contrary that Part 2 already has embedded within its musical form a self-undermining quality, and that the ‘accidental’ is always premeditated and self-conscious.

From a letter written to Strauss on the question of the opera’s ending it is clear that Hofmannsthal wanted tension to remain between the transformative effect of high art and the limitation of the closure or transformation that high

33. Benjamin Bennett, *Hugo Von Hofmannsthal: The Theaters Of Consciousness*, vol. 40 (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 249.

art can provide for a work that is in its dramatic and musical conceit a mixture of high and low forms.³⁴ When Strauss suggested giving the final word of the opera to the Composer from Part 1, Hofmannsthal protested that this would amount to a frivolous sacrifice of the ‘spiritual content of the closing effect’, that is, of the union of Bacchus and Ariadne in a world in which the Composer does not exist.³⁵ The Composer’s aspirations for Ariadne, thematised in the ‘Prologue’, must for Hofmannsthal, be carried through into Part 2 by Strauss—not the Composer—in a merging of operatic interior and exterior.

Hofmannsthal later wrote to Strauss confirming that the formal and dramatic limitations of the final scene were crucial to his conception of the opera’s meaning as a whole. ‘The cheerful characters [here he is referring to Zerbinetta and the light musicians, as opposed to those who belong to art music and the Greek narrative] do not come to their ‘Recht’ at the opera’s end [...] they are dropped, and this results in a feeling of incompleteness’.³⁶ The incompleteness of the opera’s claim to transcending social transformation is exacerbated still further by the mirroring of the characters Ariadne and Zerbinetta. Not only do Ariadne’s nymphs parallel the role of Zerbinetta’s players, but her loneliness finds a parallel in Zerbinetta’s: the latter tells the Composer in Part 1: ‘In the theatre I play the coquette. But who says my heart is in the game? I seem cheerful, but I’m sad. I’m sociable, and yet so alone.’³⁷ The irony of their closeness (which, of course, is a part of the farce) is highlighted by the music teacher’s frustrated words to the Prima Donna (later Ariadne) in Part 1 ‘Where would

34. Hofmannsthal writes in a letter to Strauss dated 15 May 1916, ‘Das hieße, verzeihen Sie, in frivoler Weise den Grundgedanken den geistigen Gehalt des Ganzen einem Schlußeffekt aufopfern’ (*That would mean, please forgive me, in a frivolous way sacrificing the basic thought of the spiritual content of the closing effect*) Willi Schuh, ed., *Richard Strauss–Hugo von Hofmannsthal: Briefwechsel*, Neuausgabe (Zurich: Atlantis, 1964), 339.

35. *ibid.*

36. *ibid.*, 361.

37. Rehearsal mark 92: *Auf dem Theater spiele ich die Kokette, wer sagt, daß mein Herz dabei im Spiele ist? Ich scheine munter und bin doch traurig, gelte für geselig, und bin doch so einsam.*

you have a better opportunity than on the stage, to show her what an immeasurable distance is established between you'.³⁸

Both Ariadne and Zerbinetta are aesthetic caricatures. Where Ariadne is separated from society by an excess of *innerlichkeit*, Zerbinetta faces the opposite problem. She presents her relationships (including her own position in them) as entirely dispensible. It may be, as Zerbinetta herself suggests, that she finds the man she longs for, but she is wise enough to know that even if she achieves this particular desire it will not satisfy her real need. A short section ostensibly voicing Zerbinetta's longing for a faithful relationship is scored in D \flat major—later the key of Bacchus's and Ariadne's union—but Zerbinetta flits through various other tonal areas (E major, rehearsal mark 109; D major rehearsal mark 111⁺³, C major rehearsal mark 112⁺³) in a symbolic exhibition of freedom, before a rather affected cadence in D \flat major at rehearsal mark 114⁺⁷, undermining its authority as a symbol of permanence.

The mini rondo form at the final section of Zerbinetta's monologue further voices her ostensive freedom in love as part of a 'trapping' musical structure (see rehearsal mark 120⁻³). It doesn't matter how serious each episode becomes, how much Zerbinetta sounds like Ariadne (a cello obligato suggests this connection at rehearsal mark 124⁻⁵), the rondo will always bring her back to its trivial, but catchy refrain. Being open-ended insofar as it has no predetermined endpoint or structural goal, the rondo gives the impression of freedom. Each episode is decorated more impressively than the last, evoking the idea of progression while, in fact, revelling in the return and relief of its easy refrain. A fade-out gesture restating the opening melodic phrase of the refrain draws attention to the simultaneously open and closed nature of the form while the refrain itself

38. Rehearsal mark 106 *Wo hätten Sie eine bessere Gelegenheit, als auf der Bühne ihr zu zeigen, welch unermesslicher Abstand zwischen Ihnen befestigt ist!*

is gradually reduced to the repeated iteration of a perfect cadence. Zerbinetta embraces the predictability of the rondo and the safety of its endless return, building her own virtuosic and expressive excitement around it, but in the end (in her final interjection in the opera's last scene) she becomes herself reduced to the refrain, the pointless carrying on of a perfect cadence as she flattens the union of Ariadne and Bacchus to immediate resolution.

Bennett writes 'the uncompromisingly transient nature of the artistic proceeding in which the work fails to exist outside of its performance is to expose *us* helplessly to the passing of time'; he further adds that 'the idealism of the *opera seria* figures, including the Composer, is more pretence than substance'.³⁹ Bennett's suggestion that the transient nature of the artistic proceeding is 'uncompromising' encounters a problem with Zerbinetta. A crucial aspect of Zerbinetta's character is that she alone acknowledges the various pretences of the scenario at hand. In Part 1 she sums up the triviality of the *opera seria* plot to follow: 'the piece goes like this: a princess is abandoned by her bridegroom, and her next admirer has not yet arrived'.⁴⁰ In Part 2 she points out that Ariadne's loneliness is a product of self-isolationism: 'you do not want to hear me, beautiful and proud and motionless, as if you were a statue in your own tomb, do you not want another confidant than this rock and these waves?'⁴¹ Zerbinetta goes on to generalise from the specific situation of the 'Opera' narrative to speak of a more universal experience of loneliness: 'not you alone, we all—oh, we all—that which has frozen your heart, who is the woman who has not passed through it?'⁴² Thus it is she, rather than Ariadne, who presents the universalising voice

39. Bennett, *Hugo Von Hofmannsthal: The Theaters Of Consciousness*, 248.

40. Rehearsal mark 83: *Das Stück geht so: eine Prinzessin ist von ihrem Bräutigam sitzen gelassen, und ihr nächster Verehrer ist vorerst noch nicht angekommen.*

41. *Sie wollen mich nicht hören – Schön und stolz und regungslos, als wären Sie die Statue auf Ihrer eigenen Gruft – Sie wollen keine andere Vertraute als diesen Fels und diese Wellen haben?*

42. *Nicht Sie allein, Wir alle – ach, wir alle – was Ihr Herz erstarrt, Wer ist die Frau, die es nicht durchgelitten hätte?*

of the bourgeois liberal condition.

Zerbinetta sustains a single personality across the divide between the ‘Opera’ and the ‘Prologue’. However, she also provides a perspective on the operatic scenario from within the opera itself as though she were from the outside. In such a way she acts as a bridge between the external world of the audience and the internal world of *Ariadne auf Naxos*. She is a cipher for the rupture in the imaginary-symbolic space of the work of art while also being a part of it. Rather than contrasting high and low art as opposites for comedic effect alone, Strauss and Hofmannsthal engineer a situation in which both parties rely on one another for their authenticity—Zerbinetta’s worldly wisdom is trivial without Ariadne’s expressive depth, while Ariadne’s expressive depth is just musical indulgence without Zerbinetta’s critical penetration. Zerbinetta’s rondo can be seen as representative of the triviality and suffering of the social world that Ariadne seeks to evade through her self-absorbed musical subject. Her skill as a singer, we know from the ‘Großmächtige Prinzessin’ aria, is at least equal to Ariadne’s, but she has no faith in the aesthetic world to which Ariadne belongs. Ariadne, on the other hand, along with the art music she represents, proffers more than just cynical self-knowledge, and remains committed to the transformation art music offers, despite the increasingly isolated social condition she both holds and promotes through it.

Transformation as farce

In *Ariadne auf Naxos*, the truth of art is found in art critiqued, which, it turns out, is embedded in art in the first place. Hofmannsthal, perhaps more than Strauss, held an idealised view of aestheticism as an agent of humanity. Whereas Strauss originally wanted to bring the Composer back to the stage at the work’s end, to ‘frivolously’ undermine the authenticity of Ariadne’s and Bacchus’s union, Hof-

mannsthal wanted to leave his audience with a musical glimpse of something transcendent. What remains, however, is the question of whether aesthetic transcendence is possible when both art and its critique, self and its other, are lodged in a shared form.

The novel form of *Ariadne auf Naxos*, its mixture of musical genres, and its eclectic collection of characters, makes it more clearly than *Daphne* a product of the modernist era. However, the image of transcendence that it semi-critically proffers—a transcendence for the few and not the many—is progressed in the radiant major mode of completion. The self-confidence of the bourgeois finale coupled with the self-confidence of the bourgeois critique of the same (Zerbinetta's wry smile) closes the case. It is no coincidence that the richest man himself makes no appearance—surely we are meant to recognise our own place in the proceedings as types for the bourgeois gentilhomme even as we find ourselves empathising with Zerbinetta's self-awareness.

Whether we accept Hofmannsthal's aesthetic overcoming or not, the music of the opera indulges in a fantasy of beatitude in spite of itself. In thematising and then 'solving' the issue of the lost object in the narrative of Part 2, *Ariadne auf Naxos* indulges in the fantasy of the transformative potential of an encounter with the self-as-other. At the same time, however, it presents that fantasy as false. The Composer begins *Ariadne auf Naxos* by rejecting the social function—to entertain the richest man in Vienna—of the *Ariadne* opera he is writing. Instead he claimed the work's true purpose to be an exploration of human loneliness. The *Ariadne* opera is thus to the Composer as Theseus is to *Ariadne*. It serves more to quench his desire for deeper meaning for his own music than it succeeds in expressing anything universal. *Ariadne auf Naxos* presents its critical awareness as a framing device that even still detracts from the true melancholia of its situation. The tale of transformation becomes a vessel that enables the

absorption of the audience's libido into its ego: of course the opera is a farce, but that is all the more reason to enjoy it.

The juxtaposition of high and low art betrays a lingering desire to find transcendence in a musical form that seems intellectually opposed to transcendence. *Ariadne auf Naxos* is emotionally persuasive because we still hear the downward resolution of a dissonant fourth as the bittersweet longing for something we know to be corrupting—it is not *mere* jouissance, it is a jouissance that cannot be fully naive, that is tinged with something lost. Zerbinetta's attempts to cheer Ariadne with the trivial songs of the travelling troupe and the acrobatic flights of her showcase aria were fruitless because Ariadne's initial encounter with Theseus (which we don't witness in the Opera or the Prologue, but is present as the lost transcendent), presented her with an experience of life that made Zerbinetta's mentality—and her music—unsatisfactory. The triviality and sufferings of the social world that Ariadne seeks to evade through her self-absorbed aesthetic subject are themselves reason to sustain her isolated existence (which, it is clear, she can continue to some extent with Bacchus). She is looking for something more, which is why she fixates on a supposedly transcendent external idea (the imaginary Theseus); and precisely why the bourgeois liberal subject remains committed to the idea of an autonomous art that expresses its own jaded shade of universality despite being aware of the increasingly isolated social condition it represents.

Ariadne auf Naxos deals overtly with social issues while also harbouring a self-critical awareness of its status as bourgeois entertainment. *Daphne*, however, is more often read as an epic of escapism with an inclination towards interiority.⁴³ Arne Stollberg suggests that *Daphne's* tendency towards a self-

43. Michael Kennedy, *Richard Strauss: Man, Musician, Enigma* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 320; Gilliam, 'Ariadne, Daphne and the Problem of *Verwandlung*'; Bryan R. Gilliam, "'Friede im Innern': Strauss's Public and Private Worlds in the Mid 1930's",

conscious ‘musicality’ stems from the composer’s personal dilemma of composing at what he perceived to have been the end of music history.⁴⁴ Rather than reading the opera’s trajectory as a social drama, Stollberg suggests that the composer strives towards the ‘eternal work of art’ and the ‘spirit of music’.⁴⁵ The two readings need not be kept apart: if *Daphne* depicts the apparently redeeming translation of its heroine away from her humanity, the parallel narrative of the opera becoming the spirit of music may be seen as manifested in a musical abstraction that deliberately excludes the voice. The transformative power of the aesthetic partially sought in the ending of *Ariadne auf Naxos*, seems to be thematised in *Daphne* without the self-reflexive frame that acts as a subverting influence over the trajectory of the earlier opera. There may yet be value in seeking aesthetic redemption in *Daphne*—even one that claims to transcend historical boundaries.

2.3 La fille bourgeoise

Subtitled ‘Bucolic Tragedy in One Act’ *Daphne* is based loosely on the Greek mythological story of Daphne’s transformation. Setting the general facets of Gregor’s narrative beside those of his sources offers some insight into the particularity of the operatic scenario.⁴⁶ Gregor’s primary textual source was the episode of Phoebus (or Apollo) and Daphne as told in Book 1 of Ovid’s *Meta-*

Journal of the American Musicological Society 57, no. 3 (2004): 582.

44. Arne Stollberg, “‘Übergang zum Geiste der Musik’: Ästhetische Diskurse und intertextuelle Spuren in Strauss’ *Daphne*”, in *Richard Strauss: Der Komponist und sein Werk*, ed. Sebastian Bolz, Adrian Kech and Hartmut Schick (Munich: Allitera Verlag, 2017), 381–398.

45. *ibid.*, 398.

46. Birkin, “‘Friedenstag’ and ‘Daphne’: An Interpretative Study of the Literary and Dramatic Sources of the Operas by Richard Strauss’ and Petra Spranger, *Daphne bei Ovid und bei Gregor/Strauß: Untersuchung zum Wandel eines Stoffes*, Self-published (bound by Harold Klein, Karlsruhe), Richard Strauss Institute, call number Smh.201.272.Spr, February 1985 provide detailed studies of Gregor’s sources.

morphoses, lines 438–567. Ovid’s narrative differs from Gregor’s in a number of ways, particularly around the matter of agency. Following an argument with Apollo, Cupid shoots an arrow that causes Apollo to fall helplessly in love with Daphne. In Gregor’s *Daphne*, however, Cupid is totally absent. Apollo is not enticed by magic arrows, but, we learn, by Daphne’s own singing: he misunderstands Daphne’s first monologue, a paean to nature, as a love song for him personally.

The antipathy of Daphne towards human romance is, in Gregor’s version, an apparently innate phenomenon, whereas Ovid has her struck by a second arrow from Cupid, this time imbued with anti-love sentiment. Ovid releases the burden of agency from Apollo and Daphne, presents both characters sympathetically, and makes their doomed relationship part of a fate already prescribed for them. By contrast, in doing away with Cupid, Gregor enhances the psychological dimension of the Apollo and Daphne, and makes Apollo directly culpable for his actions.

Not only are the characters of the operatic *Daphne* granted agency, but I suggest that Daphne’s motivations in particular are defined by the context of her social situation. Unlike their classical counterparts Gregor’s world-bound characters reveal no supernatural abilities.⁴⁷ In Greek mythology Gaea, Daphne’s mother, is the personification of earth. Her father, Peneios, is a river god. These facets of their identities are alluded to, but not made explicit, in the opera. (For example, the part for Gaea is sung by a contralto—like Wagner’s Erda—and her music has qualities of ‘earthiness’, being mostly calm, low, and diatonic.) What is made explicit, however, is these characters’ status within their community. Gaea and Peneios are leaders. They organise their social inferiors, the

47. Daphne, though a nymph in the Classical stories, refers in the opera to her community of ‘people’ (*Menschen*) and there is no indication that she is anything other than a young woman in Gregor’s libretto.

shepherds and maids (who function mostly as a chorus), and host a town festival in praise of Dionysus. Both Daphne and Leucippus, whom Gregor casts as her childhood friend, belong to a class above the unnamed workers, but, unlike Daphne's parents, they themselves do not occupy roles of responsibility. They pass a more leisured life, wandering in solitude and contemplating matters of love and nature. In contrast to the work of the shepherds and maids, Daphne and Leucippus pursue the arts for spiritual activity: Leucippus plays his flute and Daphne sings poetry.

Daphne is a 'free individual' insofar as she does not feel beholden to the authority of her parents and participates only on her own terms in the social activities of the people around her. The social hierarchy depicted in Gregor's scenario facilitates an interpretation of Daphne as a character type for the bourgeois liberal subject of the twentieth century. Daphne's liberal humanist identity manifests itself in intellectual idealism and a desire for a way of life different from that on offer in her own society. We see this at the beginning of the opera when Gaea and Peneois command the lower orders to prepare for the festival of the god Dionysus, but Daphne, who has also been asked to get ready, is disinclined to participate. While the lower orders simply accept Peneois's wisdom, and understand themselves and their own place in society via a pseudo-religious framework governed by Daphne's parents, Daphne—who sees the rituals of the community (such as wearing ceremonial robes) as having little relevance to her own sense of identity—looks for an alternative source of meaning.⁴⁸ For her it is an idealised nature, as opposed to the customs of her society, that offers a frame through which to relate to the external world and to comprehend herself.

48. See rehearsal mark 65, Gaea instructs Daphne: *Nimm erst die Kleider, der Menschen Schmuck, und blüh gesegnet in Ahnung des Festes!* (Take first the dress, the people's jewellery, and the bloom blessed in expectation of the festival!) Daphne responds: *So laß mich, Mutter, so wie ich lief durch blühende Wiesen* (Leave me be, mother, as I run through blooming meadows).

She views nature as having a ‘stronger’ song than the songs of people; one that fits more easily with her own moral ideals and ideas about life’s worth.⁴⁹

Daphne’s status as the daughter of leaders makes her sceptical of the structures governing the lives of the shepherds and maids below her. She has no need to submit intellectually to the ideology of her community because she has no active role within it, either as a worker or as a voice of authority. The shepherds, who labour in the fields all day, eagerly anticipate the harvest feast and the ‘time of mating’ because it brings them out of the isolation of their daily life and provides them with a ritually sanctioned means of engaging with one another. With hymn-like piety they sing in unison (rehearsal mark 15): ‘Leb wohl, du Tag, Einsam ich schritt, Einsam ich lag. Zu Ende die Bürde, öffnet die Hürde!’⁵⁰ The passing of the day, the harvest time, and even their physical contact with one another is understood within the context of the greater community. Daphne’s community is orientated around the gods of nature and work, and for the shepherds nature, time, and community are all connected as part of one social whole.

I suggest that Daphne’s estrangement from other people in her society runs parallel to her estrangement from their idea of nature. The lower orders in the opera are constructed entirely through their relationship to nature and authority, but Daphne is removed from both of these. She displays the social and intellectual isolation of the bourgeois subject whose detachment from labour and disdain for authority acts as an alienating force. Aware of this in some measure, Daphne indulges an intellectual isolationism to justify her existence in a society that seems to have no need of her. Crucial to this process is the creation of

49. See rehearsal marks 33–35, Daphne sings *Sängest du mir [...] sängest ein gewaltiges stärkeres Lied als die Lieder der Menschen, O geliebter Baum!* (Do you sing to me [...] sing a tremendous stronger song than the songs of people, O beloved tree!)

50. *Farewell, you day, Alone I walked, Alone I lay. To end the burden, Open the pen!*

a version of nature that is better suited to her needs and values.

2.4 Intellectual freedom

Instead of seeking to alter the society in which she lives, Daphne's version of nature is reactionary and ultimately intended for her use alone. The daytime, which is the point around which her idea of nature is orientated, arises out of the daytime that is the shepherds' first articulation of their collective desires: 'leb wohl, du Tag' (*farewell, you day*), rehearsal mark 15. Whereas the shepherds say goodbye to the day, Daphne urges—imitating the rising minor third call of the shepherds voiced below her—the day to stay, 'O bleib, geliebter Tag' (*remain, beloved day*) rehearsal mark 17, see Figure 2.4 (p. 64). Rather than continuing in the sustained chorale texture of horns and strings, Daphne's music lifts into a lighter, wind-dominated texture reminiscent of the work's opening. She introduces a neighbour note ornament to the shepherds' dotted minim that brings the music out of its common-time solemnity and into an easy triple time, freely moving between compound and simple divisions of the bar.

While the change in topic from sacred to secular is unambiguous, the musical connection between the idealised pastoral associated with Daphne and the hallowed religiosity of the shepherds' 'song of day' is also apparent. Whereas the shepherds wear their religion outwardly, Daphne, perhaps unaware of her own pseudo-religious engagement with nature, identifies so fully with the ritual of her song that its musical subject becomes inseparable from her own highly personal sense of identity. After rehearsal mark 17, Daphne's music abandons the *semplice* of its opening two phrases and pursues a more overtly 'synthetic' idiom, with quicker text setting and extravagant vocal ornamentation creating an impression of breathless excitement, as false harmonics and glissandi in the

Figure 2.4 – Daphne imitates the shepherd chorus

17+1

Andante

Daphne

Shepherd chorus

O bleib ge - lieb - ter Tag!

Leb wohl, du Tag!

strings contrive to convey the flitting of Daphne’s imagination.

Daphne understands herself in relation to her idea of nature. She finds it directly concordant with her own existence and lifestyle: in lieu of human companionship her brothers are the trees, her sisters the flowers, the fountain her own image.⁵¹ Moreover, she uses her unique idea of nature to criticise the conduct and authority of community: ‘Why, dear father, are you calling the people who trample the meadows with heavy footsteps, crush the grasses with obtuse animals, plunder the branches with violent hands, spoil my beloved sister, the fountain!’⁵² Daphne’s relation to nature is therefore the crux of her intellectual independence. It is the symbolic point around which her whole world is orientated. We might conceive of it as her ‘transcendent Other’; the externalised arbiter of meaning in her world. As transcendent Other, it presents the place of convergence between Daphne’s existence as an individual in the world and what she believes to be the truth of her experience of existing. It distinguishes her from the shepherds and maids, but also sets her apart from her parents

51. *Du lässt mich leben mit meinen Brüdern, den Bäumen Jegliche Blume Die Schwester mir! In dir erkenne ich Die tanzende Quelle, Mein Zwillingsbild*

52. *Warum, lieber Vater, Lockst du heute die Menschen, Die mit schweren Füßen die Wiese versehren, Mit stumpfem Getier die Gräser vernichten, Mit harten Händen die Zweige berauben, Meine geliebteste Schwester trüben, die Quelle!*

who, like those in religious authority, are willing to use their special knowledge to maintain order among their people.

Nature thus provides Daphne with reason for her social isolation and a personal way of mitigating the cynicism she feels towards the structures of meaning presented within her community. Rather than seeing nature as the shepherds do—as part and parcel of daily life, a force controlled by gods who must be appeased in order for life to continue smoothly—Daphne understands nature as a place of equal communion where all manner of beings live in fellowship. This re-imagination of nature serves two functions. Firstly, her social alienation is premised on superior knowledge of what the true nature of nature is; and secondly, it masks the inequality that is present between her and those below her socially by enabling her to believe that it is *their* religious ideology that causes social distinction and not hers; hers only striving towards an equality of all natural things.

Daphne's idea of nature is, of course, not the ideologically neutral, universal space that she believes it to be. The nature Daphne roots for is already so partial and distorted that she fears the night for being able to steal it away from her. In her opening monologue she sings: 'if you leave me, beloved light, they are far from me: trees and flowers, butterflies, fountains [...] vanish from my sight, fade into darkness, they no longer reply when I anxiously call them: all is silent, night and empty'.⁵³ Even as this skewed picture of nature-as-daytime is set up as a state of divinity towards which Daphne strives, Strauss's musical framing indicates a different situation.

The opera opens with a wind nonet, mainly of double-reed instruments, that abounds with open fifths, thirds, and sixths, and is almost entirely composed

53. *Wenn du mich verlässt, Geliebtes Licht, Sind sie ferne von mir: Bäume und Blumen, Schmetterling, Quelle [...] Gehen vor meinen Blicken Ferne ins Dunkle, Antworten nicht mehr Ängstlichen Rufen: Still ist alles, Nacht und leer.* RM 21–23.

of periodic phrases. It sets a quintessentially pastoral scene of *völkish* simplicity in triple time. A solo oboe leads the ensemble with two monophonic bars sounding a musical theme that is to be associated with Daphne throughout the rest of the work. A second thematic module carried by the bassoon answers the 'Daphne' theme in B \flat major, before joining the oboe line in compound thirds and returning to G major for the phrase's closing cadence. Norman Del Mar considers this answering theme also to be portraying Daphne, more precisely, her 'bewitching loveliness', but, as Stollberg points out, its connection to Apollo's music is pivoted on the augmented sixth chord at the end of b. 5 which, enharmonically reinterpreted as the dominant seventh of E \flat , ties this tertiary shift at the work's beginning to what later becomes the tonal identity of Apollo.⁵⁴

Daphne and an un-realised Apollo are represented as part of the same extended phrase in the non-narrative space of the introductory music. What Daphne perceives in her aria as being external to herself, according to this opening passage, emerges directly out of her own musical identity. If we take this pro-dromic tip from Strauss, nature, or her imagination of it, cannot provide a genuinely transformative musical goal for Daphne because its apparent difference (represented tonally) is shown already to be an augmentation of the tonic key and thematic material that represents her. A comparison can here be drawn with Ariadne's relationship to Theseus, but crucially, because the connection in *Daphne* between the title character and nature (or Apollo) is made during the orchestral introduction, there is a naivety, or at least an ambiguity, to the entanglement of their identities that was absent in the earlier opera. This picture

54. Norman Del Mar, *Richard Strauss: A Critical Commentary on His Life and Works*, 2nd ed., vol. 3 (London: Barrie / Jenkins, 1972), 88; Stollberg, "Übergang zum Geiste der Musik": Ästhetische Diskurse und intertextuelle Spuren in Strauss' *Daphne*', 388 I disagree with Stollberg's assertion that the chromatic shift back to G major appears violent, but will accept that the 'shadow' of an unrealised E \flat major in this passage is a darkening presence in its bucolic veneer.

is complicated, however, when Daphne's idealised nature appears in corporeal form with the arrival of Apollo.

Apollo is cast as the embodiment of Daphne's desires. Daphne calls to him in the second scene of the opera as she reaches in the dark for her 'beloved tree' and the protection and comfort it offers her.⁵⁵ She sings of her love for light and, anthropomorphising the sun, she asks it not to kiss her goodbye.⁵⁶ Apollo's musical appearance is hailed with a theme that bears a close relation to Daphne's own (and that has, in fact, been heard already in the opera in the context of Daphne's first aria). Both themes are in three parts, the first part composed of a minim and a crotchet (reversed for Apollo), the second a quaver triplet, and the third a three-note closing gesture that falls before rising again, see Figure 2.5. The B \flat of nature is marked out as a key connecting Apollo's E \flat major key association and Daphne's G major via the hexatonic shift that emerges from Daphne's motif at the very opening of the work. E \flat major is, as it were, a 'reified' form of nature (the tonic that comes from a B \flat dominant). Where nature occupies a place in Daphne's imagination as an *external* transcendent Other, Apollo is the manifestation of this Other in the symbols of her society, which worships gods.

The closeness of Daphne's and Apollo's musical identities can be interpreted in the context of the bourgeois subject position I have set up for Daphne. Daphne, a free subject within her parents' community, replaces the idea of universal freedom with a refracted image of her own ideologically dependent and socially limited freedom. Her appreciation of nature is a manifestation of the freedoms afforded to her by her social class. Her bourgeois status secures her

55. *Die Sonne, Apollo, der grosse Gott, Stolz dahinzieht nach Hause Ins Gebirge der Götter, Blicke ich zu dir! Suchte im Dunkel Deinen schützenden Ast, Umklammerte dich fest, liebteste dich. Und in feinem Rauschen, Im schwellenden Nachtwind.*

56. *Umgib noch nicht mit dem Rot der Wehmut mein Gesicht, Küß meinen Finger nicht mit süßser Trauer Abschiedsglanz – Ich liebe dich – so geh nicht fort von mir!*

Figure 2.5 – Compare Apollo and Daphne motifs



a freedom of body and mind that can be expressed negatively against the practice of her community. That is, she is physically free not to spend her time and effort labouring and, because of this freedom, she is intellectually free not to submit to the beliefs that govern the organisation of her community. Both of these negative articulations of freedom lie at the heart of her social alienation.

The fact that Daphne's supposed transcendent *Other* emerges from within her own subjectivity indicates that her social alienation constitutes part of her understanding of freedom. Inequality of freedom is necessary for a democratic-capitalist society to function, and it is in the interests of the bourgeois liberal to maintain its commitment to a transcendent Other—an idea of nature, or freedom—that is not genuinely universal. The bourgeois subject, within the context of a democratic-capitalist society, is already 'free' and has little personal benefit from risking that freedom. The social freedom experienced by the bourgeois liberal belongs *within* its historical situation and comes at the price of a secure sense of self. Daphne is free from labour in order to spend her time doing what? She is free from religion in order to believe in what? It is this essential lack of social meaning that leads Daphne to her own intellectual isolation. That her social difference can then be rendered so easily in the symbols of authority in the ideology of her wider community (that is, gods), however, further reveals

the falseness of her claim to a genuine detachment from her particular social situation.

2.5 Bourgeois resistance?

Democratic capitalism might not be viewed as the appropriate historical context in which to situate *Daphne* (or, indeed, the other late works examined in this thesis), given that fascist social ideology had already come to govern the discourse of institutional authority in Germany by 1938. The fact that the Nazi party gained political ground, in part, through opposition to the economic and social inequality that plagued the struggling authority of the Weimar Republic, may further suggest democratic capitalism to be an anachronistic context for *Daphne*. Crucially, however, fascism is not an economic ideology and did not dismantle the class structure already established in twentieth-century Germany.⁵⁷ Businesses were nationalised during the Great Depression only to be re-privatised as conglomerates ruled by Nazi leaders, the army, and the SS. The economic structure of capitalism, wherein commodities are produced for the profit of the owning class via the exploitation of the worker, was preserved to the benefit of those in political authority.

Fascism may not be inherently capitalist, and capitalism need not be fascist, but under Hitler capitalism as an economic system and the ideology of fascism formed a symbiotic relationship. Firstly, capitalist structures of exploitation and control created the surplus of equipment required to sustain Hitler's aggress-

57. David Baker is the only scholar of fascism I have found to have asserted that there is an identifiable and specifically fascist economic system. However, he still acknowledges that the economic desires of Hitler and Mussolini were 'undoubtedly modified by the inherited exigencies of the pre-existing economies and by external forces in the international economy, undermining any genuine "fascist" political economy'. David Baker, 'The Political Economy of Fascism: Myth or Reality, or Myth and Reality?', *New Political Economy* 11, no. 2 (2006): 230.

ive policies of land expansion and the financial surplus necessary to fuel the very expensive Nazi mission of racial purity. Secondly, a greater workforce with greater levels of alienation provided an ideal space for the impregnation of a corporate fascist identity in which the individual is primarily an instrument of the nation and a subject of the Führer.

In exploring a bourgeois, democratic-capitalist vision of the subject, it could be proposed that Strauss embraces in *Daphne* something quantifiably less evil than fascist ideology (there is no all-powerful leader, no aggressive expression of national identity, no surreptitious antisemitism, nor a triumphant unification of German-speaking lands). Even in its limited expression of freedom, *Daphne* preserves a kernel of truth in the face of adversity. One might suggest that the vision of nature represented through Daphne's character, though flawed, belongs to an idealising strand of nature-worship that exceeds the limited possibilities of thought and liberty afforded to the ordinary subject under the Nazi regime. It expressly does not belong to the sentimentalising and nationalistically-minded *Völkish* idiom that was popular among intellectuals and conservatives during the nineteenth century, and later adapted to the more socially-orientated Nazi notion of *Volk*.⁵⁸ In her forceful individualism—transformation occurs at the level of the individual for the sake of the individual—Daphne might protest her contemporary society by embracing and preserving the bourgeois luxury of *innerlichkeit*. In her intellectual inwardness, however, Daphne shows no care for the plight of her fellow citizens. Nature and transformation are for her alone.

As a precious cultural icon and cosmopolitan artist Strauss was free not to consider himself an instrument of the state and not to work towards the Führer and his ideological aims—at least, he was after his dismissal from the *Reichsmusikkammer* (following which he was still protected by his reputation and race

58. Meyer, *The Politics of Music in The Third Reich*, 74.

from the excesses of violence done to others in Hitler's name). He could, potentially, imagine himself as being immune to ideology, pure of thought in the face of violent antisemitism, even a voice of resistance as he attempted to save his own family and friends from the Holocaust. Strauss's commitment to the fallacy that an intellectual perspective is itself a redeeming property is seen in his attitude towards Zweig. Assimilated or not, great writer or not, practicing Jew or not, Zweig could not merely 'be a good boy' and 'forget Moses' (as Strauss commanded him) because what he personally believed did not matter to a regime that did not recognise his humanity in the first place.⁵⁹

In this respect Strauss, like Daphne, was prepared to accept the relative prosperity of his lot. When personal circumstances later forced him out of his desire to remain silent he, again like Daphne, momentarily forgot his 'apolitical' stance and went to Theresienstadt in a failed attempt to rescue a relative from what he thought was a labour ghetto.⁶⁰ If the opera is treated as the critical refraction of the socio-historical context that bore it, this particular musical work reveals the corruption of an artist and artistic class that sees aesthetic autonomy as a genuine space for redemption amid social crisis (be that bourgeois or fascist). We see aesthetic autonomy here serving as a justification of the relative freedom afforded to some in the face of others' adversity.

Capitalism can be moulded to the political ends of the liberal humanist as it can to those of the fascist. Liberal humanism, like fascism, does not itself structure society, but exists in a symbiotic relationship with the mechanisms of capitalism. In the cultural sphere, the Nazi Party was keen to make the most of institutionalised art forms that were already in place, as beacons of their own legitimacy. Goebbels in particular recognised the importance of opera as a ritu-

59. Schuh, 'Strauss to Stefan Zweig, 17 June 1935'.

60. Kennedy, *Richard Strauss: Man, Musician, Enigma*, 339.

alistic social activity for the German elite.⁶¹ While it was Daphne's scepticism of social ideology that initially drove her to seek meaning outside the perceived naivety of her community, far from escaping it, I suggest that the nature she idolises represents nothing more than a replication of her own limited freedom within this social ideology.

Daphne's fixation on her false transcendent Other undergirds her own place in the social hierarchy and makes her an agent of the unfreedom governing the lives of the lower orders in her society. It would be wrong, therefore, to imagine that her transformation represents anything other than a form of ideological assimilation. Even in the isolation of its flawed, bourgeois notion of freedom, *Daphne* cannot offer a transformative position against fascism because the historical particularity of the thing that it clings to—relative freedom—is, in this case, a voluntary blindness to the ideologically impartial structures of capital that formerly enabled democracy, and then fascism, to flourish. Rather than being a direct depiction of Hitler, the relation of Apollo and Daphne reveals a far more disturbing truth for the bourgeois intellectual: that there is complicity in isolationism.

In the reading given here it is possible to see how the idea of nature-as-redeemer does not offer the intellectually transformative space that Gilliam suggests it might.⁶² The idea of intellectual freedom (which is the idea undergirding Daphne's notion of nature) is only understood via the ideological framework that has already granted relative freedom to the subject doing the imagining. Daphne's idea of nature represents an intellectual commitment to liberal humanist ideology and to the transcendent Other of a universal free subject. The opera's failure to represent this as an intellectually emancipatory position is also

61. Meyer, *The Politics of Music in The Third Reich*, 310

62. Gilliam, 'Ariadne, Daphne and the Problem of *Verwandlung*', 81

aligned with the situation of liberal humanism in the twentieth century, which could no longer truly hold itself accountable to a universal notion of humanity.

Turning back to Julian Johnson's description of the end of *Daphne* as a return to a 'Rousseau-like primal origin of music', we might begin to see how the notion of nature-as-redeemer was destined to fail from the start.⁶³ Rousseau's posthumously published 'Essay on the origin of languages' and the work which was its foundation, 'Discourse on the origin and basis of inequality among men' (known as the *Second Discourse*) proffer a conception of modernity that adds depth to Johnson's own, and one that I suggest has a useful application in the case of *Daphne*.⁶⁴

For Rousseau modernity is coeval with society. His idea of modernity has next to nothing to do with the periodization of history. Rather, he posits it as the frame through which the condition of social humanity as a whole should be understood. Use of the word 'Origins' in his titles do not, in this case, refer to chronological starting points, but to the basic condition of human nature.⁶⁵ There are two differences for Rousseau between human and animal: free will and self-improvement. Humans are not exclusively driven by the necessities of existence but can choose to act against animal survival instincts. Rousseau suggests that they also harbour an exponential potential for self-improvement. Both free will and self-improvement are the originating features of humanity and remain the distinguishing character of humanity today. Thus, despite its rhetorical conception, Rousseau's genealogy of inequality is not to be taken liter-

63. Johnson, *Out of Time: Music and the Making of Modernity*, 45.

64. Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Everyman Edition, trans. G. D. H. Cole (New York: E. P. Dutton / Co., 1993), chap. Discourse on the Origins of Inequality Among Men (1755); Victor Gourevitch, *Rousseau: The Discourses and Other Early Political Writings* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 393–394.

65. Frederick Neuhouser describes the Second Discourse as a 'genealogy' of human inequality, Frederick Neuhouser, *Rousseau's Critique of Inequality: Reconstructing the Second Discourse* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 4.

ally as a historical account. It is through these conditions that the social human (i.e. the human) is understood. It is clear to see how Johnson shifts from his own conception of modernism to Rousseau's when considering *Daphne's* anti-social ending: for Johnson, Strauss's *Daphne* is modernist precisely because it attempts to engage a pre-modern (i.e. a non-social) conception of self.

Rousseau's discourse on inequality may thus prove useful for understanding *Daphne*, which, as argued above, may also be considered a discourse on inequality and the failure of the individual to recognise its integration with the social. Especially relevant is his assessment of the role of 'human nature' in the perpetuation of inequality in society. Rousseau's political thought binds individualism to communitarianism, blurring the assumed opposition between individual liberty and social discipline.⁶⁶ He grasps how the 'law that the individual freely imposes upon itself is both individual and social'.⁶⁷ This is precisely what I have attempted to show through my interpretation of *Daphne*. The individual freedom afforded *within* a given social situation is a voluntary freedom by mutual consent to the unfreedom of others: freedom here *is* the social discipline of authorization that Rousseau claims is the basis of all social inequality.

Rousseau distinguishes between natural inequalities among humans (which account for physical attributes, such as height and age), and what he calls 'moral' inequalities, which are based on a hierarchy of privilege.⁶⁸ Frederick Neuhouser explains the difference between these types of inequality more clearly, substituting the term 'social' for 'moral' inequality. He writes:

The characteristics in terms of which social, as opposed to natural,

66. Keith Ansell-Pearson, *Nietzsche contra Rousseau: A Study of Nietzsche's Moral and Political Thought* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 22.

67. *ibid.*, 23.

68. Neuhouser, *Rousseau's Critique of Inequality: Reconstructing the Second Discourse*, 16.

inequalities are defined are robustly relative, or positional, properties rather than 'absolute' qualities. Strength of body, mind, and character—differences in which constitute natural inequalities—are properties that individuals can possess, and desire to possess, without regard to whether others possess more or less, or even any amount, of the same [. . .] Social inequalities, by contrast, are made up of disparities in qualities in which the factor of privilege (over others) plays a central role. This is easy to see in the case of authority, where a person can be said to have authority only when there is someone else who must obey him.⁶⁹

Logically, natural inequalities may be classed as social inequalities as soon as they are coded in terms of privilege, or aligned with a social inequality. For example, height—a point of natural difference, might be coded together with power—a point of social difference. The fact that these categories can blur into one another should not be perceived as a weakness in their formulation, but the crux of Rousseau's argument against the 'natural' situation of inequality in society. His claim is 'not that social inequalities first come into the world through human agreement but rather that, once present, their continued existence depends on a kind of consent that he calls authorization'.⁷⁰ Authorization is perhaps better called ideology: it is the mutual agreement that binds different parties to the terms of inequality that describes their difference. It is what loads natural inequality (difference) with value, thus transforming it to social inequality, or privilege. Because freedom can be called natural only insofar as its claim to nature is ideological, in order to be truly radical, freedom has to be presented as an unnatural situation for the subject. By refusing to acknowledge any social inequality as natural—indeed, by making the concept of nature irrelevant to a discourse about modern, social humanity—Rousseau shows the perversion that underlies the basic premise of *Daphne's* vision of nature.

69. Neuhouser, *Rousseau's Critique of Inequality: Reconstructing the Second Discourse*, 17.

70. *ibid.*, 19.

I have so far reviewed three basic character types for the bourgeois liberal in the twentieth century: Ariadne as naive and self-serving, Zerbinetta as self-critically aware, and Daphne as intellectual idealist blending elements of both. There is much more that might be said about each of Strauss's characters (and, for that matter, about the character types I have proposed for the liberal humanist), but their purpose here has been to introduce a basic working subject for liberal humanism in the period of Strauss's later works. Having now established this context and begun to probe its intellectual and social impact in the context of Strauss's music, I will turn to matters more explicitly aesthetic. In the following sections of this chapter I will examine how Strauss attends to notions of subjectivity, totality, and transformation in *Daphne's* operatic form, beginning with an exploration of the 'Apollonian' in the presentation of operatic subjectivity.

2.6 Nietzsche and Nazism

In a letter to Gregor dated March 1936 Strauss wrote: 'could not Daphne represent the human embodiment of nature itself, touched upon by the two divinities Apollo and Dionysus, the contrasting elements of art?'.⁷¹ As Michael Kennedy points out, Strauss's knowledge of Nietzsche makes the philosophical underpinning of this proposition unmissable. Margarethe Satorius frames *Daphne* as a direct meditation on Nietzsche's text *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*.⁷² However, despite what may well have been the composer's intention, and unlike Satorius, who sees in the opera an 'artful symbol of this eternal tension', I do not find *Daphne* to be an authentic rendering of Apollonian and Dionysian

71. Kennedy, *Richard Strauss: Man, Musician, Enigma*, 311

72. Margarethe Satorius, 'Das "Ewige Kunstwerk": Friedrich Nietzsche's Apollonian-Dionysian Opposition in Richard Strauss's *Daphne*', *Religion and the Arts* 17 (2013): 271.

drives as described in *The Birth of Tragedy*.⁷³ Moreover, I propose that the ideological element of *Daphne*'s musical aesthetic might be found in the imbalance inherent to Strauss's projection of these drives in the opera. By analysing the relation of Apollonian and Dionysian drives in *Daphne*'s musical language, I aim to demonstrate how the ideological truth that equates an ostensibly ahistorical universal (nature) with an ostensibly ahistorical human consciousness (liberal subjectivity, embodied in *Daphne*), can be found as a guiding feature of the opera's aesthetic. Through this frame I endeavour to critique the reification of abstract aesthetic truths (such as 'resolution' or 'function') that underlie Strauss's tonal idiom.

The resonance of classical culture with Nazi-era aesthetics should not be overlooked in an interpretation of *Daphne* as an inadvertent act of collaboration with the fascists. Neither, however, should classicism's relation to Nazism be overemphasized: the Nazis did not have a monopoly on the rejuvenation of classical aesthetics for the modern age.⁷⁴ From the era of the German Empire, Latin and Classical Greek or Hebrew formed part of the standard humanities education in *Gymnasien*, and it was at school that Strauss's interest in classical history was instilled.⁷⁵ Its enduring influence on his own artistic thought is evident in his recourse to Greek subjects throughout his career, and not simply during the period of National Socialism in Germany. Given the longstanding and widespread engagement with classical culture in Germany, it would be sensationalist to view every allusion to antiquity after 1933 as an endorsement of Nazi polit-

73. Satorius, 'Das "Ewige Kunstwerk": Friedrich Nietzsche's Apollonian-Dionysian Opposition in Richard Strauss's *Daphne*', 287.

74. A general cultural interest in the Classical Era among German-speaking intellectuals can be traced to the 1764 publication of a volume by Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Kunst des Altertums*, with which Goethe, Herder, Lessing, and later Hitler were all familiar. Sherree Owens Zalampas, *Adolf Hitler: A Psychological Interpretation Of His Views On Architecture* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 72.

75. Willi Schuh, *Richard Strauss: A Chronicle of The Early Years, 1864–1898* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 56.

ics. It is of course true that the monumental form of Albert Speer's New Reich Chancellery allowed Hitler to turn the ideals of beauty and function (which he considered to be the pinnacle of Greek art) to the ends of his own political vision. However, the square-faced columns of the Chancellery that supported the vast Imperial Eagle—itsself a Roman symbol adopted by the German Empire in 1871—and framed muscular, torch-bearing nudes that projected the might of the thousand-year Reich that was to come, succeeded in promoting the political vision of the Führer because they could appropriate the signs of a culture to which the nation's imagination was already positively disposed. Rather than taking the classical setting of *Daphne* to be solely an element of its outward or 'party-political' character (or less plausibly, a direct pastiche of Greek tragedy), I will engage Nietzsche's notions of the Apollonian and Dionysian, both as a historically appropriate way into the Classical basis of the opera's plot and as a theoretical tool through which to view the work's broader musical aesthetic.

Like Classism, any discussion of Nietzsche in the context of Nazi-era culture has to be couched with a disclaimer. Hitler's personal interest in Nietzsche was probably less than propagandistic photographs might suggest, but the philosopher was undeniably popular among numerous high-profile Nazi intellectuals.⁷⁶ The notion that Nietzsche was himself a proto Nazi, and that engagement with Nietzsche's philosophy is commensurate with Nazism, can, however, be immediately dismissed. Nietzsche's writings were a vital contribution to the German intellectual tradition, but it is unhistorically deterministic and philosophically blinkered to jump from intellectual influence to the installation of Hitler as Reich Chancellor.

The adaptation of Nietzschean ideas by certain Nazi intellectuals was crucial

76. I refer here to the famous picture of Hitler staring at the bust of Nietzsche that was reproduced in the German national press.

to his reception as a ‘Nazi philosopher’. Alfred Bäumler, for example, who was in 1933 the director of the Institute for Political Pedagogy in Berlin, noted the lack of positive racial theory in Nietzsche’s writing, and sought to ‘correct’ this shortcoming by aligning the Nietzschean individual’s struggle for integrity with the Nazi ideal of collectivism.⁷⁷ Rather than examining how the philosopher’s writings do and do not correspond with Nazi ideas, to call Nietzsche’s writing proto Nazi on the grounds of his popularity among certain Nazi intellectuals is to grant historical truth to their perspective beyond all others. Nazism is as much a post-Nietzschean ideology as Michel Foucault is a post-Nietzschean philosopher, George Bernard Shaw is a post-Nietzschean playwright, psychoanalysis is a post-Nietzschean discipline, and ‘be true to yourself’ is a post-Nietzschean aphorism. The philosopher’s influence can be found in some measure in all of these, but the extent of each phenomenon is not reducible to its Nietzschean element.

Strauss’s engagement with Nietzsche was aesthetically political insofar as it challenged existing traditions of musical composition, but it was not Nazi (and, like his interest in classicism, it predated the Munich Putsch by at least thirty years). It was not Nazi because it was not mediated by the specifically Nazi discourse, such as that cited above, surrounding Nietzsche’s philosophy. Strauss encountered the philosopher’s writing in the late 1890s and discussed it with the scholar and dramaturg Arthur Seidl, who like Strauss was less interested in contemporary debates pro- and contra-Nietzsche, and more in how the philo-

77. Jacob Golomb and Robert S. Wistrich, *Nietzsche, Godfather of Fascism? On the Uses and Abuses of a Philosophy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 5. There were also Nazi philosophers who did not engage with Nietzsche, or only engaged negatively. Among these was Christopher Steding who considered Nietzsche’s interest in intellect and culture over military endeavour to be a threat to the successful establishment of a Nazi state, see also Kurt Rudolph Fischer, ‘A Godfather to Nazism as a Nietzschean Experiment’, in *Nietzsche, Godfather of Fascism? On the Uses and Abuses of a Philosophy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 294.

sopher's writing might have application in his specific field of interest.⁷⁸

In the early part of his career Nietzsche's writing stimulated Strauss in the pursuit of two artistic objectives: the first was to re-evaluate his own relationship with Wagnerian aesthetics;⁷⁹ the second, more general in nature, was to free German art from its reliance on metaphysical Christian idealism to the expression of a more 'worldly' grasp of human subjectivity.⁸⁰ Crucial to Strauss's initial engagement with Nietzsche, then, was the modernising potential of his worldview. The young composer sought and found in Nietzsche's writing an intellectual justification for his artistic instincts against the previous generation of composers. In the same way, I suggest that the older Strauss found (perhaps unwittingly) in the Nietzschean concepts of Apollonian and Dionysian impulses vindication for his own aesthetic choices.⁸¹

2.7 Apollo and Dionysus

In his study of Ancient Greek culture Nietzsche identifies two impulses—the Apollonian and Dionysian—that reach their 'most advanced stage' in the tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles.⁸² He names these impulses, or drives as they are more commonly known, after Apollo the god of light, associated with

78. For a more detailed discussion see Charles Youmans, 'The Role of Nietzsche in Richard Strauss's Artistic Development', *The Journal of Musicology* 21, no. 3 (2005): 318.

79. *ibid.*, 319. See also Stollberg, "Übergang zum Geiste der Musik": Ästhetische Diskurse und intertextuelle Spuren in Strauss' *Daphne*'.

80. Youmans, *Mahler and Strauss: In Dialogue*, 103. See also Kennedy, *Richard Strauss: Man, Musician, Enigma*, 111.

81. Strauss's interest in the nature and value of music was, in his old age, perhaps even more potent than it had been with the tone poems: *Daphne* might, in some ways, be read as a precursor to *Capriccio* in its concern with opera as an art-object, in particular the relation of text and music.

82. Paul Raimond Daniels, *Nietzsche and The Birth of Tragedy* (London: Acumen Publishing, 2013), 41. Nietzsche was by no means the first to discuss Apollo and Dionysus together (the Ancient Greeks themselves considered the two gods to have a nature in some way entwined, though not necessarily oppositional), but Nietzsche was the first to direct this pair into an aesthetic theory, and Strauss was certainly familiar with the Nietzschean appropriation of this duality.

the plastic arts and comprehensible knowledge; and Dionysus the god of the grape harvest, associated with music and drama, excess, and intoxication. The Apollonian drive is the self-conscious push towards individuation and structure while the Dionysian drive grasps the ecstasy of subjective awareness without individuation.⁸³

While Apollo has a clear dramatic role in the opera, the place of Dionysus in *Daphne's* narrative is muddier. Despite its setting during the festival of Dionysus the god himself is never encountered in the opera. Instead Leucippus, who in Greek mythology is the son of Oinomaos (indicating his association with wine), is the closest *Daphne* comes to representing Dionysus as a character. Leucippus's instrument, the flute, references a story in which Dionysus inflicts madness on his captors with flute music, and the episode in which Leucippus dresses as a woman may also be taken as an allusion to the androgyny associated with the god Dionysus. Leucippus has no part in Ovid's account of the Daphne myth, but the character can be found in a version told in Pausanias 8.20 and the *Erotica Pathemata* by Parthenius (story 15).⁸⁴ These two accounts place emphasis on the tragic friendship of Daphne and Leucippus, with Apollo featuring as a secondary character. In Parthenius's telling Apollo, jealous of Leucippus's closeness to Daphne, plants in her mind the desire to bathe in a stream. When Daphne and her fellow female hunters reach the stream Leucippus is unwilling to take off his clothes and the hunters spear him to death on discovery of his deceit. Thus, Leucippus is killed by the jealous phallic will of Apollo symbolically embodied in the spears of the maidens. Gregor's Apollo, on the other

83. Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *The Nietzsche Reader*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson and Duncan Large (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 34; and Peter R. Sedgwick, *Nietzsche: The Key Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2009), 60.

84. In his account of Gregor's sources Birkin does not mention the *Erotica Pathemata*. I do not know whether Gregor ever encountered it. In a way it doesn't matter whether or not Gregor actually knew this particular source (he was not, after all, creating an edition); but he was clearly familiar with Dionysus, Leucippus and their Greek associations.

hand, does not stage-manage the revelation of Leucippus from a distance, but confronts him publicly, condemning his deceit and fatally wounding him.

Satorius suggests that there is an ‘oppositional duality presented onstage between Apollo and Leukippos-Dionysus’ and considers both Nietzschean drives to have consequential dramatic representations.⁸⁵ However, even though it is Leucippus who opposes Apollo over the heart of Daphne, I suggest that these two characters do not themselves present a balanced pairing of the Apollonian and Dionysian drives. Rather, the opera’s primary dramatic source of Apollonian-Dionysian dualism can be found in Apollo’s character alone. Strauss explained the centrality of Apollo’s Dionysianism to the opera’s narrative in a letter to Gregor, writing: ‘Apollo betrays his godhead by approaching Daphne with Dionysian feelings’ it is for this reason that he must ‘undergo a purification within himself’ and, by killing Leucippus, destroy also the ‘Dionysian element within’.⁸⁶ That this purification is itself enacted in a moment of Dionysian rage and chaos seems to be a contradiction that its authors were willing to overlook.

While Strauss and Gregor both viewed Leucippus’s death to be fundamentally about the cleansing of Apollo, it may also represent a significant turning point for Daphne’s character. Leucippus, who is not Dionysus, and who, as a mortal character in his own right, is certainly not the origin of the Dionysian drive in Apollo, is the scapegoat nevertheless. I argued earlier (§ 2.4) that the nature manifest in Apollo’s identity is the part of Daphne’s subjectivity that sustains her comprehension of the world, her transcendent Other. I further suggested that in this moment of murder Daphne realises her own culpability.

85. Satorius, ‘Das “Ewige Kunstwerk”’: Friedrich Nietzsche’s Apollonian-Dionysian Opposition in Richard Strauss’s *Daphne*’, 285.

86. Letter to Gregor, 9 March 1936 Richard Strauss and Joseph Gregor, ‘Selections from the Strauss–Gregor Correspondence: The Genesis of *Daphne*’, ed. Bryan R. Gilliam, trans. Susan Gillespie, vol. Richard Strauss and His World (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 254.

Introducing the idea of sacrifice, it becomes clear how Leucippus's murder is both an encounter with something that exceeds ideology, and also the redemption of the ideological present conjured by Daphne to account for her own place in the world. Leucippus does not volunteer himself Christ-like to save Daphne, but is the necessary price for the salvation *of ideology* and the restoration of order.

At the beginning of the opera Daphne is estranged from a nature she views to be external to her own. This nature provides the mediating focus for her conception of self and other. Leucippus's imminent death causes Daphne to encounter him in a new way—for the first time she sees his humanity as something that is, via mortality, in some way also hers. Although the empathy she now experiences is stronger than anything she has felt for trees and flowers (which is why she volunteers to give up her dreams of nature), it is powerless to save him, and he—as well as she—is destined to die in spite of this newfound understanding of common humanity. In this way, unlike the accounts from Ovid, Pausanias, and Parthenius, the operatic Daphne undergoes two transformations; the external transformation to a laurel bush, and an inner transformation caused by the death of Leucippus.

Leucippus's death-wound lifts Daphne briefly out of her self-induced state of isolation only to reveal a far deeper alienation. His death is a hole in the fabric of her meaning and enables a brief encounter with an irrational truth of existence. The extreme empathy brought about by a confrontation with mortality has no place in Daphne's ideological understanding of the world and the self. The orchestra falls silent at precisely the point Daphne encounters the gap in her own symbolic structuring system (rehearsal mark 214–215⁺¹) and her voice is heard alone in the dramatic climax of her second monologue. This brief exposure can be read as emblematic of her self-encounter outside the symbolic order that structures both her identity and the social space around her. This moment of

ideological confrontation has the potential to begin a ‘Hofmannsthalian’ process of resocialisation, enabling Daphne to reconstruct her understanding of self and world on this newfound appreciation of human empathy, but this possibility is closed off when the orchestra returns with a new key for Apollo’s salvation.

Figure 2.6 – Apollo’s kiss, rehearsal mark 140²

The musical score for Figure 2.6 is for five string instruments: Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The passage consists of four measures. Violin 1 plays a half note G4, followed by a half note A4 with a sharp sign. Violin 2 plays a half note G4, followed by a half note F4 with a flat sign. The Viola plays a half note G4, followed by a half note F4 with a sharp sign. The Violoncello and Double Bass both play a half note G3, followed by a half note F3 with a flat sign. The score includes dynamic markings such as hairpins and accents.

Figure 2.7 – ‘Unheilvolle Daphne’, rehearsal mark 196⁵

The musical score for Figure 2.7 is for a woodwind section: Bassoon, Contrabassoon, Horn in F, Trumpet in C, Tenor Trombone, and Bass Trombone. The passage consists of four measures. The Bassoon and Contrabassoon play a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) in the first measure, followed by a half note G4 in the second measure. The Horn in F and Trumpet in C play a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) in the first measure, followed by a half note G4 in the second measure. The Tenor Trombone and Bass Trombone play a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) in the first measure, followed by a half note G4 in the second measure. The score includes dynamic markings such as hairpins and accents.

Apollo's return at rehearsal mark 215⁺³ extinguishes the socialising potential of Daphne's inner transformation because it denies a second truth that is illuminated to her in the previous scene: that her desire for 'unideological' nature and the presence of Apollo are intrinsically connected. Aside from their motivic similarity, this connection is hinted at narratively relatively early in the opera. When Apollo kisses Daphne a B \flat ⁷ chord is heard with an augmented fifth degree (F \sharp) in the context of a mysterious progression just before Daphne withdraws from the kiss apparently uncertain of the god's motives (rehearsal mark 140⁻², Figure 2.6, see third chord). In this earlier scene Daphne does not comprehend the situation: although she recognises Apollo as the voice from her dreams, she does not yet make the connection between his existence in her human society and her desire for the idealised nature. (The kiss progression, though disconcerting, brings her back to G major).⁸⁷ The mysteriousness of this musical moment can be contrasted with the clarity of the music at the beginning of her monologue following Leucippus's wound. At the beginning of 'Unheilvolle Daphne' (rehearsal mark 196⁺⁵), Apollo's theme is sounded three times, each increasing in volume with an F \sharp forming an augmented fifth within its culminating B \flat triad, see Figure 2.7 There is nothing mysterious about this abrasive tritone dissonance now and it is clear from its place at the start of her aria that Daphne recognises her complicity in this tragedy.

The influence of self-knowledge offers a new perspective on Daphne's external transformation. A telling novelty of Gregor's narrative is the instigation of Daphne's transformation. In Ovid and Parthenius Daphne's transformation to a laurel bush answers her own cries for help. She is in flight as she calls for aid

87. Gilliam's analysis reads the entire opera through the tonal trajectory of a shift from G major, Daphne's key of 'worldliness', to F \sharp major, her realised desire. By this reading, Apollo's influence seems to bring Daphne back to earth. See Gilliam, *Rounding Wagner's Mountain: Richard Strauss and Modern German Opera*, 266 and Gilliam, 'Ariadne, Daphne and the Problem of *Verwandlung*', 78.

and she loses her figure out of fear and not some pre-formed desire to be at one with nature. As she flees Apollo, Daphne cries out in desperation to be saved, to have her outward appearance transformed: in Ovid she calls to Peneios, 'help me father! If your streams have divine powers change me, destroy this beauty that pleases too well', and in Parthenius she calls on Zeus to 'translate' her 'away from mortal sight'.⁸⁸ Gregor's Daphne, on the other hand, is not transformed of her own volition. Apollo instigates the transformation scene and presents his appeal to Zeus as though it were a gift for Daphne. He calls on Zeus to transform her, and, though it may be framed as a benefaction to Daphne, the real recipient of this transformation is the god who requested it. Apollo gains in this 'gift' the forgiveness of Zeus, the satisfaction of his own self-righteousness, and, after all that, the perpetual presence of his desired Daphne. Daphne's transformation is a symbol of Apollo's purification from Dionysian lust—that is, it is the flip-side of Leucippus's murder.

As the outward projection of an internalised agent of ideology, Apollo is the means through which Daphne's ideology is made apparent, but he cannot be the means by which she is returned to a state of ignorance. This is the case because the ideological frame relying on Apollo/nature as transcendent Other has been compromised. Recognising Apollo as an agent of her own will—an externalised part of her own world-view—the intellectual emancipation she once felt through her idealised vision of nature is now irredeemably lost. Zeus, whose name is mentioned only once in the opera, is called on almost arbitrarily at its end to do that which Daphne, in knowledge of her own self-deception in Apollo, cannot

88. Ovid, 'Bk 1:525–552 Daphne becomes the laurel bough', translated by Anthony S. Kline. Online. Acc. 3.12.16 <http://ovid.lib.virginia.edu/>; Parthenius, 'XV. The Story of Daphne' *Love Stories (Erotica Pathemata)*, translated by S. Gaselee. Online. Acc. 3.12.16. <http://www.theoi.com/Text/Parthenius.html>. Originally published: Parthenius, *Longus, Daphnis and Chloe. Parthenius, Love Romances*, trans. J. M. Edmonds and S. Gaselee, vol. 69, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916).

do for herself—return to a state of innocent ignorance. This unformed Zeus may be read as a final attempt at self-delusion to remove responsibility from the bourgeois subject. Strauss did not originally want Zeus to feature in the opera, thinking his character unnecessary to the drama, and vetoed Gregor's original draft that had Zeus speak in 'schoolmasterly Weltanschauungs banalities'.⁸⁹ But Zeus's purpose here is absolutely vital: as a new *external* agent he alone can recreate what is lost, and return to the bourgeois subject that which it desires most of all; the ability to believe in its fallacy. Thus, in Apollo's forgiveness and Daphne's transformation, the opera ends with a paradox: the conceit of their distinction is borne out in the reciprocity of their dual redemption.

2.8 A new tonal subject

Daphne's metamorphosis propounds a new image of totality. There are no loose ends to tie up narratively, no celebration from the minor characters or comment from Peneios because Daphne's transformation takes over the entirety of the operatic situation. This was a conscious decision on the part of the composer: by the latter stages of composition Strauss was determined that there should be no voices at the opera's end—a chorus close was quickly dismissed, and a monologue for Peneios, already sketched, that granted Daphne a blessing was also rejected. The closing situation is very different from that found in the ending of *Ariadne auf Naxos*: while Zerbinetta and the other characters of the earlier work are 'left hanging' on stage in the incompleteness of their stories, Daphne's transformation represents less the transfiguration of a single character than a transformation of the operatic scenario in its entirety. The diatonic F# major musical surface of the final scene of the opera projects Daphne's transformed

89. Gilliam, *Rounding Wagner's Mountain: Richard Strauss and Modern German Opera*, 258 .

state as the accomplishment of a bliss previously only imagined, but for this to constitute a happy ending a lot needs first to be pardoned. The libretto, for a start, makes it clear that this transformation binds Daphne to an eternity of servitude and objectification to Apollo (or, in my interpretation, to a lifetime of self-delusion). Apollo sings: 'Priesterlich diene, Verwandelte Daphne, Dem ewigen Bruder Phoibos Apollon!' (*Serve priest-like, transformed Daphne, forever the brother of Phoebus Apollo!*).

The last fourteen pages of the opera's score, from rehearsal mark 250 to the end, are saturated in what Gilliam calls the magical sonic realm of F \sharp .⁹⁰ Daphne's transformation into the symbol of eternal devotion is parsed by the same musical signifier—F \sharp major—as the image of idealised nature we witness in her first aria. Daphne's voice is heard one final time, without words, echoing and joining with the oboe, which is often interpreted as an indication that she has achieved full communion with nature.⁹¹ However, the extent to which Daphne's transformation even constitutes a change in circumstance is questionable. As Gilliam points out, Daphne's opening monologue concludes triumphantly with a perfect cadence onto F \sharp major (rehearsal mark 35) before she is disturbed by the entrance of Leucippus, who, after mimicking the 'geliebter Baum' motif in the original G major, moves swiftly away to F major.

Daphne's transformation takes place regardless of her 'real' situation in the opera's narrative: her newfound self-knowledge does not prevent her from attaining a bliss that is fundamentally at odds with this knowledge. The transformation is, then, either a farce—an impossible retraction of Leucippus's death, the event that caused Daphne to become aware of her own humanity—or an ex-

90. Gilliam, *Rounding Wagner's Mountain: Richard Strauss and Modern German Opera*, 268.

91. See, for example Satorius, 'Das "Ewige Kunstwerk": Friedrich Nietzsche's Apollonian-Dionysian Opposition in Richard Strauss's *Daphne*', 287; and Gilliam, 'Ariadne, Daphne and the Problem of *Verwandlung*', 81.

treme response this event, which is considered so unbearably traumatic that it must be fully negated. By concluding the opera un-operatically—with what Gilliam describes as a tone poem—this negation is manifest at an extreme formal level.⁹² In this symbolic shift from the theatrical sphere to the symphonic (and it is symbolic rather than formal because the visual transformation continues to unfurl on stage and the musical transformation has no other context than that in which it is embedded dramatically), what is really gained is not a new state for Daphne, but the assurance that Daphne's nature worship will not ever be interrupted by Leucippus's frustrating sociability again.

The F# major finale is a return to the symbolic representation of an ideological aesthetic truth that was, from the beginning of the opera, already present. I suggested earlier that Nietzsche's Apollonian and Dionysian drives are embedded in the opera at a number of different levels. I now turn to the pastoral and storm topics of the introduction that provide a backdrop of a world constructed in two parts. Leucippus's death is not simply a tragic plot element, but vital to the aesthetic agenda of the opera as I perceive it. The assumed destruction of the Dionysian drive allows Strauss to leave the conventions of operatic form behind and instead create a new aesthetic space for a symbolically purer sort of music.

Daphne's instrumental introduction provides a crude guide to the symbolic framework in which the Dionysian and Apollonian drives are exposed musically: its two parts are distinguished from one another in texture, instrumentation, key signature, and mood (one peaceful, one turbulent), corresponding to the Apollonian and Dionysian respectively. The Apollonian section (from the beginning of the opera to rehearsal mark 3) with its initial nod to the tertiary

92. This argument is made at length in Gilliam's PhD thesis, Gilliam, 'Richard Strauss's *Daphne*: Opera and Symphonic Continuity'; and later, briefly, in Gilliam, *Rounding Wagner's Mountain: Richard Strauss and Modern German Opera*, 268.

key B♭ major and frequent use of chromatic ornaments to consolidate the G major tonic, exhibits the harmonic variety that is possible within the context of a stable tonal centre. The Dionysian section (rehearsal mark 3 to rehearsal mark 6), on the other hand, has no perfect cadences, is rife with unresolved dissonances, cross-rhythms, and chromatic flurries and projects the impression of disorder while all the same being harmonically restricted. These two images are connected by an Alhorn interjection three bars before rehearsal mark 3. The Alhorn motif might be interpreted as a symbol of the human agents at the heart of this dichotomy, the people of this divided world whose entrance is hailed by the third *sehr stark* sounding of the horn.

While it may appear in the opera's introduction that Strauss balances these drives perfectly on the pivot of the human subject, I suggest that *Daphne* all along favours the Apollonian condition of being. This might seem illogical because Nietzsche associates music predominantly with Dionysian attributes.⁹³ Furthermore, the desire for unity with nature that underlies the dramatic action of the narrative, ought to have as its goal the achievement of a Dionysian state of existence: 'the Dionysian world is one where these separate individual identities have been dissolved and human beings find themselves reconciled with the elemental energies of nature. Through Dionysian rapture we become part of a single, living being with whose joy in eternal creation we are fused'.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, I will argue that it is the drive towards reification that has the greatest hold over the aesthetic content of this work, and this can be linked to Daphne's repressed desire to retain a partial freedom within the existing social structures.

93. Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Nietzsche: The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writing*, ed. Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs, Cambridge texts in the history of philosophy (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 14.

94. Nietzsche, *The Nietzsche Reader*, 34

2.9 Two kinds of stasis

Nietzsche's concepts have been adopted in psychoanalytical discourse after Freud and abstracted such that the Apollonian represents the death drive while the Dionysian corresponds to the force of life.⁹⁵ In such a way they can be seen to represent more broadly the opposing inclinations of human identity and may be used as tools to help to elucidate the modern human condition.⁹⁶ Rather than considering the drives psychoanalytically, however, the conflict between the Apollonian and Dionysian might be described aesthetically as the force to objectify and the force to resist objectification, respectively.

The dualism of Apollonian and Dionysian aspects in the opera's opening appears on first hearing to be located in the musical juxtaposition of topics balanced on the human signifier—the Alphorn motif. However, this connection does not extend deeper into the musical structure. The Alphorn's 'pivot' note D, which seems to unify the music tonally, only succeeds in joining these two spaces through its programmatic content—that is to say, via an external referent—and not through any embedded musical function. In fact, the note D functions differently in the context of each part of the introduction: in the Apollonian section it is heard as the prolonged fifth scale degree in the melodic voice; and in the Dionysian section it provides an unstable tonal centre that, through its chromatically oscillating neighbour-note prolongation together with the addition of a dominant seventh at rehearsal mark 4⁺⁴, paradoxically simulates both tonic and dominant function.⁹⁷ See Figure 2.8 (p. 93).

95. Joel Faflak, *Romantic Psychoanalysis: The Burden of The Mystery* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008), 70.

96. Satorius, 'Das "Ewige Kunstwerk": Friedrich Nietzsche's Apollonian-Dionysian Opposition in Richard Strauss's *Daphne*', 275; Nietzsche, *Nietzsche: The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writing*, xi.

97. This paradox is the aural effect of having an extended prolongation of a single bass pitch that, while surrounded by chromatic dissonance does not itself develop harmonically or themat-

The symbolic force of the pitch D as a shared note that bridges the two drives is thus undermined by this conflict of function: it operates as a unifier by virtue of its pitch name, not by a ‘deeper’ identity of structural function. Rather than viewing the opposition of Dionysian and Apollonian drives in the opera at the level of topic, then, a better reading of their significance to the opera’s musical aesthetic can be found in their tonal ‘condition’ (by which I mean the way they deal with or condition the pitches that make up their content within the context of the broader tonal syntax). The Apollonian section organises its content into a stable tonal stasis while the Dionysian section projects an unstable tonal stasis.⁹⁸

Neither stasis is productive: one meanders, aimlessly circling through domesticated dissonances, the other is compelled by violent dissonance into a state of fraught repetition. In an opera whose goal is transformation, it would appear that the obstacle to change is contained within these opening passages. While *Daphne* does not engage overtly with the compositional avant-garde of composition (the incomplete version of *Lulu* was performed in 1937 and in 1938 Bartok’s *Sonata for two pianos and percussion* received its premiere), it carries all the same the burden of its musical era, that is, that tonality is no longer a naive condition of musical syntax and structure. The final music of the opera, the ‘Mondlichtmusik’ once Daphne has been transformed into a tree, corresponds wholly with the Apollonian mode. The stable stasis of its symphonic F# major offers an ending that embraces the absolute and frames the opera as though the shift from G major to F# major were truly transformational. As outlined in §2.7, in dramatic

ically to confirm either tonic or dominant function—indeed, the cadence that it eventually gives rise to is on Bflat major (rehearsal mark 6⁴).

98. A simple metaphor for these two kinds of stasis might be found in contrasting the two different kinds of ‘pause’ available on video playback. A DVD player will pause with a single frame, a moment captured in total stillness; while a VHS player will pause with a distortion, shaking the frame backwards and forwards, up and down, in a state of constant inconstancy.

Figure 2.8 – Apollonian and Dionysian stases shown via different handling of D pitch

The figure displays three systems of musical notation, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system, labeled 'Apollonian section', features a melodic line in the treble staff with a long, sweeping line above it and a bass line below. A box labeled 'RM1' is positioned above the end of the treble staff. The second system, labeled 'Dionysian section', shows a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a more complex, rhythmic accompaniment. Boxes labeled 'RM2', 'RM3', and 'RM4' are placed above the treble staff, and 'Alphorn' is labeled in the bass staff. The third system, labeled 'RM5', continues the bass line from the second system, with 'Alphorn' labeled in the bass staff.

sense this transformation fails to ring true, but musically, too, it falls short: a key change in 1938 is not the revolutionary achievement of a new state of existence that, in *Daphne*, it purports to be, especially in a musical form that seems self-aware in its measure both of tonality and repressed ideology.

Rather than becoming one with nature, I suggest that Daphne's transformation is the necessary conceit to preserve the identity of the bourgeois liberal in spite of a more critical awareness of its own place in society. Michael P. Steinberg describes Daphne's transformation as a 'total relief from the burdens of consciousness', and this final process, he concludes, dehumanises her.⁹⁹ He compares Strauss's transformation scene to the practice of *tableaux vivants*, or *lebende Bilder*; a pastime popular in the nineteenth century. Partakers would dress up in period clothing and pose as characters from Renaissance paintings. The phenomenon of the *lebende Bilder* draws on an artistic desire for possessing a non-existent time, which, I suggest, is precisely what Strauss's affection for the Apollonian also presents. Going beyond the personal experience of the participant, and considering the 'living picture' as performance art itself, the political connotations inherent to the practice become clearer. The living picture presents life as an aesthetic spectacle: the act of living, of moving, speaking, dancing, or looking offers *itself*, in a moment of suspension, as art. The inspired portrait—true to life, or not—portrays the feelings, situations, and actions of its subjects through the painter's imagination as an object that is fixed in space. The *lebende Bilder*, on the other hand, is a reified deceit—perhaps better—a deception of reification, a staged imprisonment of the subject and an attempt to stall time in space. As performance art it presents the living subject as if it were an object, not, as in more conventional art, the other way around.

In *Daphne* the notion of musical autonomy betrays the subject it ostens-

99. Steinberg, 'Richard Strauss and the Question', 181.

ibly manifests. While an autonomous musical work has the potential to explore and challenge questions of the closed-and-yet-open human subject in society, as soon as objectivity is the characteristic prized most in a work of art its capacity to relate progressive truths to the subject it ostensibly expounds is compromised. One might claim that Strauss's music achieves closure through modified formal return. Focussing on the tonal change that occurs between the work's beginning and its end isolates the single aspect of the musical form that provides the listener or analyst with the most satisfying interpretative trajectory. Thematic and topical return seal the opera's musico-dramatic structure while the tonal modification acknowledges the temporal dimension of the work and provides a musical parallel to the narrative. There would then be nothing objectionable about the analytical conclusion that *Daphne's* F# major ending (the 'Mondlichtmusik') is a transformed version of the work's beginning: not only are the notes of the ending literally different (in a different key) from the work's opening, but this extended symphonic passage is far beyond what Strauss offers in either the introductory Apollonian section of the score or the most peaceful passages of *Daphne's* first monologue.

It makes sense, on one level, for the analyst to draw attention to the role of keys and topics in the operatic structure because it is these that are emphasised at the very beginning of the work. However, affording too much interpretative weight to this tonal change fundamentally distorts the musical premise on which the opera is built. Accepting the F# major finale as a *transformed state* relies on the assumption that the aesthetic form of the work is defined by its key relations. While keys and tonal relations provide one level of dramatic function for the opera's music, the aesthetic crux of the work can be found in the problem of dissonance embedded in the two stases of the introductory passages. Focusing attention onto topical attributes and away from structural ones relates

the *schein* of transformation while embedding anew the *sein* of tonal stasis. By staging a dichotomy of topics in the opera's introduction Strauss covers over the structural dilemma that is common to both. He thus makes it possible to project a victory for the Apollonian mode at the work's end in spite of the enduring issue of non-change that was, and remains, the opera's response to the structural problem of musical language in its historical situation.

The transformation of Daphne represents only one dimension (the narrative one) of an objectification that runs deeper into the work's aesthetic. In a musical work of the liberal humanist tradition, the drive to objectify is always in conflict with the drive to express subjectivity—this is the intellectual value of music conceived autonomously. In *Daphne*, however, the drive to objectify is granted aesthetic preference. It is reified via the particular topical attributes associated with the Apollonian section of the opera's opening and achieves structural advantage through its position as a musical framing device. The false wholeness of the musical language that lays claim to *Daphne*'s totality validates the musical work foremost as an object. Aligned with the plot's narrative arc, the collapse of musical form into its totalising gesture permits an image of individual liberty to reign supreme in spite of the wider social unfreedom it perpetuates.

2.10 Transforming music

The tonal stasis of the transformed Daphne in F \sharp major follows the turbulent music that dramatically portrays the transformation process itself. Strauss labels the transformation passage '*Daphnes Verwandlung*' and it is here that I will suggest that he succeeds in sublating both the Apollonian and the Dionysian drives. The transformation music proper, in which can be found the only genuinely dialectical moment of the musical form, lies between rehearsal marks 239

and 250, see Figure 2.9 (p. 98). Here the drive to objectify and the drive to resist objectification are brought together briefly to create a new kind of tonality whose formal bounds are not determined by the resolution of dissonance. The musical stasis of the Apollonian and Dionysian drives erase themselves through an insubordination of tonality's most basic elements, tonic and dominant function. Strauss thus achieves here the feat of detaching cadential motion from its totalising compulsion *within* a broader tonal context.

The transformation music begins with a catastrophic percussion clash out of which emerges a low C♯ pitch that gradually builds into a C♯⁷ chord at rehearsal mark (hereafter RM) 239. The seventh pitch does not fall, however, to form a consonance, but remains lodged in the third flute part until RM 241⁻² where it rises chromatically to the root of the chord C♯ major. This melodic-voice rising resolution is doubled at the octave and in the vocal part, and it follows a bass-line descent from dominant to tonic, but aurally the resolution to C♯ is barely appreciable. Less still does this C♯ sound like a tonic statement. Its failure to articulate a tonic key arises from functional overlap. A strong linear ascent from the original C♯ at RM 239 through to G♯ at RM 240⁺³ in the melodic voice is consolidated by harmonic shift from I⁷ to V₄⁶, with persistent tonic seventh dissonance (beamed in Figure 2.9).

The melodic ascent and bass line harmonic descent that is set up in the initial progression continues right through to the C♯ resolution mentioned above. However, from RM 240⁺³ onwards the voice-leading graph begins to fall apart. There is no cadence consolidating the tonal movement from root-position dominant at RM 240⁺³ to root position tonic at RM 241⁻², and the chromatic ascent through which the dominant seventh found its resolution slides right through C♯ to D in the next beat. What at first appears to be an 8-line ascent in the melodic voice (first dotted slur above)—casting a modal transformation from I⁷

Figure 2.9 – Voice leading graph of *Daphnes Verwandlung*

239 240 241

Failed dominant

C#: I I I⁶ iv V⁴ Lost V i Lost C# tonic

242 243 244

Failed dominant

C# Enharmonic transformation to D b V⁴ V⁷ V⁴ V⁴ Absent E^b cadence

Lost D b cadence

245 246 247

10 10 10

Lost dominant

V⁴ V⁷ V⁴ V⁴ C#-D transformation

248 249 250

8 - 8 - 8

* Chromatic descent begins

F#: V⁷ V⁴ (II⁷) V⁴ V⁴ I

to *i*—becomes confused with an enharmonic transformation of the fifth scale degree (from $G\sharp$ to $A\flat$, overlapping second dotted slur above).

In a similar vein, a succession of dominant seventh chords seem to lose track of their function, with each voice taking its own resolution, but failing to work in tandem with the others. The $B\flat$ dominant seventh chord at RM 241 sees its dissonant seventh (soprano voice) fall a semitone to the note G too late, by which time the bass has finished its shift to $E\flat$ and continued on to a new cadential articulation onto G major. G major does not gain full tonic status, however, but is also afflicted with a dominant seventh (inner voice F). This G^7 resolves in the bass voice to C , but its seventh dissonance (F) fails to fall and instead provides the root of an F major interruption. This F interruption hails the arrival of a new tonal area, $D\flat$, which is of course the enharmonic equivalent of the original lost tonic (RM 241⁻²). At RM 242⁺¹ a proper V_4^6 is heard without the intruding tonic seventh (formerly B , or $C\flat$ now). The prodigal V_4^6 gathers harmonic momentum and resolves to a true V^7 at RM 243. At the moment of harmonic climax the root position tonic remains absent, however, leaving a rootless V_4^6 to deputise and drift away.

The labels in the voice-leading graph employ the language of failure not to indicate musical inadequacy, but in order to highlight aspects of the tonal form that defy common-practice expectation. In crude terms Daphne's transformation might be described as being 'about' the non-function of tonal gestures in the formal prescription of a harmonically consonant totality, not their failure to function at all. The longer ranging tonal progressions here do not contribute towards the erasure of dissonance, but negotiate dissonance and consonance as they exist together within tonal form in its constituent parts and its collective whole. In this passage dissonance is no longer perceived as oppositional to tonic triads (as it was in both sections of the work's opening), but intrinsic to

them—as copiously displayed in the repeated substitution of V_4^6 chords for tonic placement.

Cadences are both present and absent: they are not evaded or interrupted, but are simply passed through. There is harmonic return, but by no means is this return the inevitable consequence of a linear progression based on consonance and dissonance. The $C\sharp^7$ chord that opens the section at RM 239 is neither tonic nor dominant: vertically it presents a dominant seventh chord, but horizontally it opens onto its own dominant $\frac{6}{4}$, albeit with the aforementioned dissonant seventh degree. On losing its dissonant seventh, the V chord also loses its root, leaving dominant function to the stepwise contrary motion of the outer parts ($B\sharp$ moves up to $C\sharp$ while $D\sharp$ falls down to $C\sharp$ in the bass). From the voice-leading graph it appears that the chord of $C\sharp$ begins to fulfil a more tonic function, but this exaggerates the auditory effect of this bass-line descent beyond the auditory perception. Moreover, the mode is changed from the major dominant function to the minor subordinated tonic function adding further complexity to the structural roles of dominant and tonic.

In Daphne's transformation music I suggest that tonality is transformed, but not in the linear, modulatory fashion that the final shift to $F\sharp$ major implies. It is only in situating the Apollonian and Dionysian drives historically—i.e. by dealing with the particular historical force that aims to objectify the subject, and the particular means of resisting that objectification in the context of the specific artistic form—that the work can fulfil its critical and intellectually life-giving purpose. The objectifying drive here is a conjunction of narrative and tonal closure that rationalises the opera's social and musical existence. This rationalisation is hinged on two assumptions: the moral rectitude of Daphne's transformation and the purity of the tonic key (that is, structural consonance). As detailed earlier, however, musical and dramatic closure come at the expense

of the Dionysian knowledge of absent totality. This absent totality can be read as both Daphne's ideological fantasy of intellectual liberation through nature, and the failure of tonal music to refract adequately the full condition of the subject in the time of *Daphne's* composition. The transformation music alienates tonality from the drive towards consonance by overhauling the relation of consonance and dissonance within tonal structures: by analogy of form, then, it takes the contemporary language of self-aware musical ideology (tonality) to express simultaneously the need for a socialised sense of self-identity (consonance) and the conscious awareness of the breach that exists between subject and society (dissonance).

For a brief period in *Daphne* I suggest that Strauss presents us with a new musical language, one that is remarkable because its genuine novelty exists within the paradigm of tonality. The negotiation of consonance and dissonance urges onwards through time without embedding a known quantity of final closure—such as would be provided by a structural perfect cadence. The antagonism of dissonance against consonance remains the energy that shapes the structural pillars—or cadences—of the music's form, but no sooner have these pillars appeared than they fade away. If tonality is ordinarily solid, in the transformation music it is more like a non-Newtonian liquid. Each resolution of dissonance is like a punch to the musical matter: dominant energy forces the music briefly to assert the properties of a fixed tonal form, but once this cadential energy subsides so also the musical form resumes its fluid state leaving no trace of its former solidity. The transformation music thus projects the work's second moment of subjective awareness (the first being Leucippus's death and Daphne's unaccompanied scream). The framework through which Daphne understood herself before Leucippus's death, and the society to which she belongs even after his death, still make up the principle parameters of her

self-knowledge and social existence, and yet she is no longer able to find a fixed identity or purpose either within or against them. More than simply depicting Daphne's relationship to her agricultural community, the transformation music projects *Daphne's* relationship to musical modernism and the problem of the tonic as a totalising structural agent.

The tonal language of the transformation music is premised on an emancipation of consonance: tonic consonance is liberated from its signifying function within the ideology of tonality as the marker of its totality—as the lynchpin, keystone, or transcendent Other of tonal ideology. *Daphne* here recognises the false universality of the structural tonic and relieves it of its totalising obligation by inverting the tonic chord and revealing the tonal dissonance that is inherent within it.¹⁰⁰ Dissonance and consonance are shown to be present and absent simultaneously in tonality's tonic chord, and so the cadential moment cannot serve its totalising function by enacting the symbolic erasure of dissonance. Thus the structural tonic, which in the abstracted ideological system is consonant, is shown to be simultaneously consonant and dissonant within the context of a tonal form. In other words, the notions of dissonance and consonance are transcended by the new language Strauss presents in the transformation music.

2.11 Conclusion

Daphne's response to the crisis of bourgeois identity can be seen to be manifested musically by the work's relationship to the event of musical modernism, the emancipation of dissonance. The event of musical modernism, which annuls the conception of consonance and dissonance as antagonists, also challenges

100. Other reactive modernist works problematise the structural tonic (e.g. Sibelius 5), which has the effect of reinscribing the power of the structural tonic, but I cannot think of any that 'liberate' it in the way that Strauss does here.

the position of tonality as grand arbiter of the musical subject. Harper-Scott writes: 'the claim that music must trace its course through and in relation to the binary of consonance and dissonance carries the same force as the claim that the human subject must interpellate itself in relation to the binaries of masculine and feminine, gay and straight, and so on'.¹⁰¹ Through the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, such binary notions of subjective identity have come under criticism. In challenging these binaries artists, activists, intellectuals and so on have sought both a deeper understanding of the complexity of human subjectivity, and often also a more just society.¹⁰² The binary at work in *Daphne's* conception of the subject is that of freedom and unfreedom *within* an ideological system, and it is the false opposition that is disclosed in the transformation music's negotiation of consonance and dissonance. The social truth embedded in the new tonal subject is precisely that the ideological conceptions of freedom and unfreedom or consonance and dissonance do not encompass the historical extent of the truth that might be found in these abstracted notions, but it remains closed off from the subjective possibilities that exist beyond the sphere of tonality even while recognising the weakness of its own expressive freedom.

The transformation develops a new kind of tonal music that transcends the stases of the Apollonian and Dionysian drives found at the opera's very beginning. However, the transformation music cannot be understood in isolation of its operatic function, and when placed in context it becomes clear that the whole passage from RM 239–RM 250 assumes the role of transition. That is, the critical awareness presented in the new tonal subject does not ultimately depict that

101. Harper-Scott, *The Quilting Points of Musical Modernism: Revolution, Reaction, and William Walton*, 177.

102. It should be noted that liberation is not a default repercussion of the dissolution of binary modes of conceiving of the subject. The critical question for the postmodern generation must be whether more categories, choices, descriptors, and so on necessarily represent greater freedom,

new state of subjecthood the title character appears to obtain at the opera's end. The impermanence of the new tonal subject is secured by the dramatic demands of the narrative and the Apollonian musical frame that produces the operatic whole. If the music and narrative are read as fundamentally complementary (as they probably should be), the transformed Daphne emerges directly from the transformation, and is not the transformation moment itself. Rather than being transformed by the transformation music (in a true unification of drama and music), the narrative transformation happens *to the tune of* the transformation music. The new tonal subject that I suggest is created in the transformation music is re-functioned by the operatic drama and becomes description—a programmatic expression—of what occurs independently of it. The new musical subject is ultimately dissolved into Daphne's 'new' existence in the F♯ major state of nature.

Daphne's musical form displays a bias towards objectifying Apollonianism that is greater than the new tonal subject's capacity for self-preservation. The passage from RM 246 to RM 250⁺⁴ is marked in Figure 2.9 (p. 98) as C♯ T–D transformation (tonic to dominant transformation) because the V₄⁶ at RM 246 can imply a secondary dominant of the eventual F♯ major that follows at RM 250⁺⁵. However, this is an analytical reading whose formal awareness is structured by precisely that relation of consonance and dissonance that I argue is overcome in the transformation music. The voice-leading graph may be considered, then, an inappropriate mode of analysis for the transformation music itself because it attempts to explain harmonic movement via a totality that, for the duration of the transformation music, is not present. However, the larger musical context in which the transformation music is embedded has the effect of overwriting this brief moment of musical transcendence. At RM 250⁺⁵ the *Mondlichtmusik* closes with the resolution of V₃⁵ to I in F♯ major.

I maintain that the transformation music defies the formal and tonal logic of the rest of the work when considered in isolation (and thus constitutes a new, albeit weak, tonal subject). The progressions that connect this V_3^5 with the I^7 at RM 239 are not the means by which a $C\sharp$ tonic becomes a $C\sharp$ structural dominant. The engagement of a dominant relies entirely on the presence of a structural tonic, and without a known quantity of closure (that is, a tonic towards which a tonal progression is orientated) the tonic-dominant relationship cannot be structural. There is no known quantity of closure in the transformation music itself: the secondary dominant at RM 246 never finds its $\frac{5}{3}$, and the V^7 at RM 246⁺¹ and V_4^6 at RM 250 are connected via a chromatic bass descent from $F\sharp$ that transfers register and flows directly through an iteration of V_4^6 at RM 248. I can assert, therefore, that the V_4^6 at RM 248 bears no structural relation to the assumption of any overall tonic. It is only when V_3^5 resolves to a root position $F\sharp$ *beyond the double bar* that it is possible to back-project dominant function onto the transformation music.

The transformation music can of course be parsed as an extended and highly intricate dominant prolongation for the tonic that encompasses the opera's finale. However, such a conclusion may only be drawn retrospectively and is *not* an immanent result of the transformation music. Is, then, the perfect cadence into RM 250, which enables such a reading, the Transcendent Other of *Daphne's* ideology—the almighty hand of Zeus that affected her and Apollo's redemption (see §2.7)—the agent of tonality realigning the stars and suspending the disbelief of its audience to end the show in the safety of a tonal totality? In short, I do not think it is. Rather, I think that the return of 'normal' tonal practice was always already inevitable.

The new tonal subject of the transformation music is powerless to prevent its own erasure by the return of the Apollonian tonal mode. It cannot engineer

a true change of circumstance because it is inherently unproductive. The language of the transformation music cannot make a structural reality of its emancipation (that is, of the emancipation of consonance) because it has no means of escaping its own, fundamentally tonal, stasis. It relies on the traditional conditioning structures of tonal form not so much for its surface level syntax, where the normative syntax of tonal form is kept at a mildly disorientating distance, but for the possibility of musical development. The transformation music replicates the problem of stasis present in both the originating Apollonian and Dionysian poles and reveals the impotence of any form of tonality-based emancipation as a musical agent for structural change. It submits, in the end, to the totalising cadence that re-engages the Apollonian mode because it has no alternative but to do so.

The new tonal subject presented in the transformation music thus encapsulates the limitations of the bourgeois subject's 'freedom'. There is no space for structural transformation when the subject's understanding of freedom is limited by a pre-existing ideological paradigm (in this case, tonality). The subject conditions itself, via a pseudo-transgressive relationship to the authoritative structures it exists within, to a non-transformative, imaginary state of freedom. For Daphne and in *Daphne*, the truth of liberal humanist ideology can no longer be found in the bourgeois subject of the twentieth century. The notion of the 'autonomous subject' is no longer a universal idea to bring all humanity out of the un-freedom of its present historical condition. Rather, it is a replication of the situation of those who *already are* relatively free subjects in the context of their historical social situation and manifests as an excess of self-regard for those 'in the know'. The false universal therefore serves to alienate the bourgeois liberal from the rest of its society, from *within* the ideological context of the social whole.

Chapter 3

Objectivity

3.1 Out of the workshop

Strauss wrote four concertos: the Violin Concerto in D minor, Op. 8 (TrV 110) composed while he was still at school; the Horn Concerto No. 1 in E \flat major Op. 11 (TrV 117) premiered in 1883; the Horn Concerto No. 2 in E \flat major (TrV 283), 1942; and the Oboe Concerto in D major (TrV 292), 1945. Viewing the concertos in the context of Strauss's long career, Jürgen May has cast the genre itself as 'retrospective'. He writes: '[the Oboe Concerto and the Second Horn Concerto] may be considered representative of the style of the last products from Strauss's workshop. Not only the choice of genre, but also the almost persistently conventional approach, especially to form and structure, is indicative of the retrospective nature of these works.'¹ The two concertos penned prior to the 1940s date to a time before Strauss had been introduced—via Alexander Ritter—to Liszt and Wagner. Both composers were to exercise a significant influence over the philosophical and musical direction of Strauss's compositions

1. Jürgen May, 'Last Works', chap. 10 in *Cambridge Companion to Richard Strauss*, ed. Charles Youmans (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 181.

from the early 1890s onwards.² May implies that Strauss's return to the concerto genre was that precisely—a return. Certainly, Strauss's apparent rediscovery of more 'abstract' musical genres at this time might mark a reconsideration of the philosophical and aesthetic principles that he had adopted at the beginning of his career, but it need not indicate a reversion to the intellectual and musical position he held at the dawn of the twentieth century.

The subtitles of the two late wind sonatinas, 'From the workshop of an invalid' (1943) and 'Happy workshop' (1946), present another possible motivating factor for Strauss's renewed interest in 'abstract' music.³ While the workshop presents a charming frame for the composer's working habits, it is worth reflecting on why it became Strauss's preferred description of his working conditions given its distance from his actual professional context.⁴ From the turn of the twentieth century onwards Strauss enjoyed the status of a celebrity, and it was his reputation as an internationally renowned composer that saved him from significant redress at the end of the Second World War. It was also his reputation that ensured a privileged position in the eyes of leading Nazis. If at all, it was during his tenure as President of the *Reichsmusikkammer* that Strauss most closely resembled a craftsman, receiving commissions he could not refuse and

2. Strauss wrote to his friend Ludwig Thuille: 'My upbringing had left me with some remaining prejudices against the works of Wagner and, in particular, of Liszt, and I hardly knew Wagner's writings at all. Ritter patiently introduced me to them and to Schopenhauer until I both knew and understood them.' Richard Strauss, 'Recollections of My Youth and Apprenticeship', in *Recollections and Reflections*, ed. Willi Schuh (Boosey and Hawkes, 1953), 138. For examples of how Strauss's composition was informed by Liszt see David Larkin, 'Reshaping the Liszt-Wagner Legacy: Intertextual Dynamics in Strauss's Tone Poems' (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2007); by Wagner see Charles Dowell Youmans, 'Richard Strauss's *Guntram* and the Dismantling of Wagnerian Musical Metaphysics' (PhD diss., Duke University, 1996); and by Brahms, see R. Larry Todd, 'Strauss before Liszt and Wagner: Some Observations', chap. 1, ed. Bryan R. Gilliam (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1992), 3–40. The musical repercussions of Strauss's pursuit of a Lisztian 'poetic idea', for example, will be considered in more detail in §3.7.

3. Note that the publisher changed 'the' to 'an' in the subtitle of the first sonatina.

4. See, for example, Strauss's letters to Willi Schuh dated 15 August 1943 and 6 July 1945 in Willi Schuh, ed., *Richard Strauss: Briefwechsel mit Willi Schuh* (Zurich: Atlantis, 1969), 43 and 84.

producing art not simply to the taste, but to the ideological requirements of the authority that had claim to his labour.⁵ ‘From the workshop of the ex-President of the *Reichsmusikkammer*’ has a less favourable ring, but the psychological appeal of craftsmanship and the workshop may in part be attributed to the moral difficulty of artistic production in a culture that has historically considered music to be of intellectual as well as entertainment value. By emphasising the skills and techniques of composition, drawing attention to the apparently humble practice of musical creation over claims for the meaning of the musical work itself (such as that he professed for *An Alpine Symphony*, detailed later in §3.7), the badge of the craftsman may appear to offer a protective shield, distancing the maker from the burden of that which is made.

The circumstances that encouraged Strauss to return to the concerto in 1942 after more than fifty years are yet to be fully explored. Moral distance may or may not have been an explicit aim of Strauss’s subtitles, but scholars’ frequent allusion to Strauss’s ‘workshop’ even beyond the Nazi period seems to fulfil precisely this object.⁶ The idea of the workshop complements a broader tendency among scholars and critics of Strauss’s late music to draw attention to compositional virtuosity at the expense of its other attributes. Robert P. Morgan represents an extreme example of this position when he writes that ‘all of Strauss’s music after *Elektra* seems curiously ‘unhistorical’, giving the impression of having been composed in a time warp [...] although this fact need not reflect on its quality [(and Strauss’s technical mastery has never been questioned)].⁷ The trend of emphasising technical mastery is apparent in the Oboe

5. Ernst Roth notes that Strauss took only two commissions ‘in the proper sense’, and both of these were in the Nazi period: an anthem for the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games, and in 1939 a tone poem for the anniversary of the Japanese Empire. See Ernst Roth, *The Business of Music: Reflections of a Music Publisher* (Cassell, 1969), 182.

6. May, ‘Last Works’, 181 see also Heiner Wajemann in Mark-Daniel Schmid, *The Richard Strauss Companion* (Westport, CT and London: Praeger, 2003), 27.

7. Robert P. Morgan, *Twentieth-Century Music: A History of Musical Style In Modern Europe and*

Concerto's reception even from its premiere: 'This small oboe concerto has been written with a wonderfully light hand. The mellow and refined motivic interplay and the transparent melodic polyphony of the orchestra display a refinement and relaxed transparency which are the hallmark of ultimate maturity and of an almost incomprehensibly formal and technical mastery'.⁸ Such an emphasis on musical technicalities may be a subconscious response to the super-musical frames proffered by Strauss himself, but they are also a means of acknowledging the sometimes strange musical turns of the wrist exercises without having to account for them beyond their mechanical presentation.

In his detailed analysis of the *Sonatina for Winds No. 2*, Michael Votta Jr., for example, exposes the numerous structural and harmonic complexities that pervade its formal structure. He suggests that Strauss wedded in this work the 'post-Wagnerian symphony with wind music in the tradition of Mozart's serenades'.⁹ Rather than developing a historically critical reading of this unlikely musical fusion, he suggests that a spirit of playfulness fills the work—a spirit that can be attributed to the technical brilliance of Strauss's compositional abilities: 'just as Mozart wrote his wind music primarily for less serious purposes than his other works, Strauss wrote this work, it seems, primarily for the joy of composing. It seems as though Strauss is reveling [sic] in his compositional craftsmanship'.¹⁰ Although Strauss dedicated the last movement of the *Sonatina for Winds No. 2* to 'Den Manen des gottlichen Mozart am Ende eines

America (New York: Norton, 1991), 35.

8. An unsigned review quoted and translated in Valerie Victoria Poppy, 'An Examination of the Richard Strauss Concerto for Oboe and Small Orchestra (1945–6)' (Master's thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1977), 38 *Neue Zürich Zeitung*, February 28 1946. See also Said, *On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain*, 45.

9. Michael Votta Jr., 'Symphonic Elements in Richard Strauss's *Symphony for Winds* (1945)', in *The Wind Band and Its Repertoire: Two Decades of Research As Published in the College Band Directors National Association Journal*, ed. Michael Votta Jr., Donald Hunsberger Wind Library (Miami: Warner Bros., 2003), 70.

10. *ibid.*

dankerfüllten Lebens' (*To the spirit of the divine Mozart at the end of a life filled with thanks*), Votta's conclusion fails to provide an adequate explanation for the murky opening and angular harmonic deviations that fill the primary theme of the first movement, and which do not come near the expressive clarity familiar from the earlier composer's music for winds.

Notably, what is praised in Strauss's late works is couched in a critical tone in relation to his earlier ones. On the composer's death, the English critic Rollo H. Myers offered a biting assessment of Strauss's career: 'Richard Strauss is the story of the decline and fall of a genius who might have been a great artist had the quality of his mind been on the same high level as his extraordinary technical prowess'.¹¹ James Hepokoski also entertains the possibility that 'Strauss's radicalism in *Don Juan* is deceptive: a dazzling technical facade conceals far more conventional attitudes'.¹² In the *Sonatina No. 2* we witness an inversion of the effect Hepokoski identifies in *Don Juan*—instead of highlighting the 'unconventional attitudes' of the composer's form, the late work's Mozartian facade betrays little to Votta of its underlying idiosyncrasy, or at least, the latter is not something that Votta wishes to draw overly much attention to in his analysis. Consistent among these reports is the convenient notion that Strauss's ability as a composer lay on a different plane from his mental acuity. While the distinction between Strauss's thoughts when creating music and his skills of creation may be considered of some relevance, an approach that focusses predominantly on composer intention places an artificial limit on the expressive potential of a musical work.

Composers are problematic sources of information about their own music and in this regard Strauss is no different. His claim to be writing only 'stud-

11. Rollo H. Myers, 'Richard Strauss, 1864-1949', *The Musical Times* 90 (October 1949): 347.

12. Hepokoski, 'Fiery-Pulsed Libertine or Domestic Hero? Strauss's *Don Juan* Reinvestigated', 164.

ies' for 'wrist exercise' in the years following *Capriccio* is particularly difficult to take seriously when this period saw the production of some of his most celebrated music. Rather than dismiss his assertion altogether, I suggest that some of Strauss's late music does indeed take on a different character from that found earlier in his oeuvre. On the one hand Strauss composed *Metamorphosen*, a masterpiece of the liberal humanist tradition, whose truth content I will later argue is the promise of a liberated and universal subject; on the other, he wrote a selection of lighter instrumental pieces including the Second Horn Concerto, the Oboe Concerto, Duet-Concertino (TrV 293), and two sonatinas for sixteen wind instruments (TrV 135 and TrV 143). In this chapter I hypothesise that the music of the second group of pieces—for which I shall appropriate Strauss's own term and call collectively the 'wrist exercises'—projects a stylistic engagement with the tradition of autonomous music without espousing the radical and socially constructive form of liberal humanist autonomy art music has the capacity to offer.

The Oboe Concerto will provide the case study of this chapter, with some analytical reflections proffered in §3.2, §3.3, and §3.4. In contrast to *Metamorphosen*, which I will later argue presents an individualised and emancipated autonomous musical subject, in this chapter I will suggest that the Oboe Concerto submits to the idea of a collective liberal humanist identity and constitutes an abstracted and mimetically autonomous musical subject. The comparison with *Metamorphosen* is not completely arbitrary. Aside from the fact that these two works were the only pieces from Strauss's post-opus number compositions that were published during his lifetime, and that they received their premieres a month apart, the Oboe Concerto and *Metamorphosen* also have a thematic connection via motif w (see Figure 3.1, p. 118). Having acknowledged this link, however, I do not consider them to be formally dependent on one another or

in any other way to be aesthetically similar. By focussing on these two works in the next two chapters I hope to demonstrate how similar musical material can forge totally different aesthetic subjectivities.

Rather than developing an authentic relation to liberal humanist subjectivity via the dialectical negotiation of individual and universal, in §3.4 I will propose a new kind of ‘objective’ autonomy and, correspondingly, a new type of sonata form, to describe the formal construction of the Oboe Concerto. In §3.6 I will frame musical autonomy in the history of liberal humanist trends in German culture more broadly and align the Oboe Concerto with what I suggest might be called a ‘Catholic’ confession of liberal humanism. §3.7 focusses on how the soloist as virtuoso carries the burden of the work’s identity, but is also compromised in the presentation of this identity in performance. Contrary to earlier studies of the work, I will propose that the virtuosic—or perhaps just unsympathetic—nature of Strauss’s writing for the oboe is part of a deeper conflict in the musical form between continuity and fracture, and I will further suggest that its ‘shortcomings’ relate the difference between material and ideal form, and need not be overcome in a sensitive performance of the work.

3.2 Oboe Concerto

The Oboe Concerto was composed in Garmisch-Partenkirchen in 1945 while the town was still under US occupation. It received its premiere performance the following year in Zurich.¹³ The story of the work’s inception is well known: a

13. Two versions of the concerto were published by Boosey and Hawkes, in 1946 and in 1948. The second edition was revised by Strauss after the work’s premiere and is the regular performing version today. For a detailed discussion of the two versions see Linda Elizabeth Binkley, ‘Three Versions of the *Concerto for Oboe and Small Orchestra* by Richard Strauss: an Analytical and Historical Study for the Performer’ (PhD thesis, University of Arizona, 2002), especially chapter 2. Binkley offers a detailed account of de Lancie’s involvement in the history of the concerto (including de Lancie’s later revisions to the score), and is especially helpful for comparing the

young oboist and US soldier, John de Lancie, met with Strauss (whose residence was protected by the occupying forces), and asked whether the composer had considered writing an oboe concerto. By the end of the year the first version of the work was complete.¹⁴ The extent of de Lancie's influence varies by the telling, but it is supplied in some measure in almost every concert programme and CD liner-note I have found.¹⁵ Perhaps the idea of an American exerting an influence over the work's composition is attractive because it helps to articulate a break between the Strauss who worked for the Nazis and the Strauss who visited the USA and delighted Metropolitan Opera audiences throughout the war and after it.¹⁶ Or perhaps the redemption effect works the other way around: the image of a soldier more concerned with culture and music than brutalising the captured enemy helps maintain the image of the US army as a morally good institution. Or maybe the story has an even more basic appeal as a rags-to-riches tale of an ordinary man whose dream came true.¹⁷ The tale of the concerto's origin has without doubt helped to market Strauss's music to an international audience, but the Oboe Concerto is of a kin with the style of the Horn Concerto

1946 and 1948 Boosey and Hawkes editions of the score. Günter Brosche, 'The Concerto for Oboe and Small Orchestra (1945): Remarks about the Origin of the Work Based on a Newly Discovered Source', in *Richard Strass: New Perspectives on the Composer and His Work*, ed. Bryan R. Gilliam (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992), 177–192 provides an exhaustive explanation of Strauss's compositional process.

14. This narrative is given in: *ibid.*, 180; and Scott Warfield, 'From "Too Many Works" to "Wrist Exercises": The Abstract Instrumental Compositions of Richard Strauss', in *The Richard Strauss Companion*, ed. Mark-Daniel Schmid (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), 223.

15. See, for example, Richard Strauss (1865–1949). *Oboe Concerto, Till Eulenspiegel etc.* 2011. Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, cond. Michael Gielen and Thomas Schippers. Alto. CD. Liner note by James Murray, 2011.; Richard Strauss. *Metamorphosen / Oboe Concerto in D Major (Late Orchestral Works)*. 2014. Schilli, Bavarian Radio Symphony, Jansons, Jochum. Oehms Classics, CD. OC1802. Liner note by Walter Dobman, 2014. This booklet also includes a photograph of Strauss and John de Lancie.

16. Strauss's opera *Der Rosenkavalier* alone received twenty-two Met Opera performances between 1942 and 1946, see the Metropolitan Opera Archive: <http://69.18.170.204/archives/frame.htm>.

17. This is the impression given in John de Lancie's own essay 'Conversations with Richard Strauss', *Richard Strauss Blätter* 11 (June, 1984) 36–40 (German), 41–42 (abridged English version, tr. Stephan Kohler).

and others of Strauss's late chamber works, and I see nothing to suggest that de Lancie's influence affected Strauss's music in a way worth commenting on here.¹⁸

In score, the concerto appears as a single continuous form with four double-barred tempo divisions (Allegro moderato - Andante - Vivace - Allegro) that are played without breaks and have significant thematic overlap. Despite there being four separate tempo marks, Scott Warfield reads only three movements across the work's form. The divisions of the concerto he proposes are as follows:

The first section is a modest sonata-allegro movement, whose only exceptional features are a very brief development and a second theme that is recapitulated in the submediant rather than the tonic. The middle section is likewise an easily heard ternary form, while the concluding third section has some traits of a rondo, but clings less dogmatically to a textbook scheme than the preceding movements.¹⁹

Warfield's claim to analytical authority is compromised because he does not provide bar numbers (or any other reference point) to indicate how his analytical conclusions relate to Strauss's score. It is impossible to address, for example, his assertion that the second theme of the first movement is recapitulated in the submediant because we do not know what, in the first place, he identifies as the second theme. For now, I simply assert against Warfield's analysis that none of the internal movements has a straightforward structure, let alone a dogmatically textbook approach to form.

While on paper the divisions are clear, the concerto has been described variously as having three movements, four movements, just one movement,

18. De Lancie did, in fact, make his own version of the Oboe Concerto, which suggested cuts to various movements and removed doubled passages from the solo part, but these are unpublished and Strauss did not live to witness them. For more detail of de Lancie's edition see Binkley, 'Three Versions of the *Concerto for Oboe and Small Orchestra* by Richard Strauss: an Analytical and Historical Study for the Performer'.

19. Warfield, 'From "Too Many Works" to "Wrist Exercises": The Abstract Instrumental Compositions of Richard Strauss', 223.

or a combination of these with a double-function form of three or four movements brought together under a single overarching structure.²⁰ Reviews of the premiere performance mostly identify the Oboe Concerto as a three movement work, which is unsurprising given the length of the final section. The Allegro in the original version of the concerto (as heard in the premiere performance) was twelve bars, that is, around 10 percent, shorter than the revised version that is the text of my own analysis.²¹ All the same, the incomplete impression cast by the third movement together with the still-short last movement continue to contribute to the discrepancies among analysts's numbering of the work's movements.

Linda Elizabeth Binkley does not recognise a double-function form, but four independent movements (corresponding to the tempo divisions above): a sonata form; song-form (ABA) with coda; sonata rondo; and final ABA with coda which develops all the basic thematic and motivic material from previous movements. Her formal diagnosis is similar to that progressed by Cleobaldo de Oliveira Chianca, but Chianca describes the Vivace as a 'modified rondo' rather than sonata rondo, and suggests that the concluding Allegro is a coda movement. The object of Chianca's dissertation, which is to determine whether Strauss's Oboe Concerto is multi-movement or single-movement form, hits on the heart of the work's formal complexity—its hovering between fragmentation and continuity—which will be discussed further in §3.7. Chianca concludes with

20. See, respectively, Brosche, 'The Concerto for Oboe and Small Orchestra (1945): Remarks about the Origin of the Work Based on a Newly Discovered Source', 181; Binkley, 'Three Versions of the *Concerto for Oboe and Small Orchestra* by Richard Strauss: an Analytical and Historical Study for the Performer'; Warfield, 'From "Too Many Works" to "Wrist Exercises": The Abstract Instrumental Compositions of Richard Strauss', 223; Cleobaldo de Oliveira Chianca, 'Formal Analysis of the Concerto for Oboe and Small Orchestra by Richard Strauss' (PhD thesis, The Hartt School, University of Hartford, 2004) begins with this interpretation before departing from it, but I will re-assert that the formal identity of the concerto is tied to the single overarching form as surely as it also has four independent movements, which is to say, not very surely.

21. See Poppy, 'An Examination of the Richard Strauss Concerto for Oboe and Small Orchestra (1945–6)', 39.

the notion that the work is in separated movements, but suggests that the guiding principle of the concerto is that of continuity and motivic development.²²

The Oboe Concerto is presented in such a way as to facilitate its perception both as a single continuous form and as a multi-movement work: each double bar line brings a change of tempo and mood, but the concerto's motivic material remains constant across these divides. Although he does not provide a comprehensive analysis, May speaks of a 'Vivace-finale' which has a 'surprise' Allegro in $\frac{3}{8}$ that comes across 'as if it were an additional, fourth movement with a character of its own'.²³ I am sympathetic to May's observation here, which captures the ambiguity of Strauss's form, but his proposition that the concerto displays a 'persistently conventional approach' to form and structure, carries the dismissive tone of one too easily accepting Strauss's own motion to brand these works mere compositional studies. Formal uncertainty is a hallmark of the entire concerto, and any attempt to claim decisively that it bears one form over another closes off a valuable course of interpretation.

Before considering aspects of the Allegro moderato in closer detail, I will make some more general observations about the concerto's formal structure. Table 3.1 presents a table of the Oboe Concerto's form showing both the internal structure of the movements and how they contribute to a global form. TCF stands for 'through-composed form' and MMF for 'multi-movement form', RM is rehearsal mark. 'Section' designates the formal design at the level below movement, for example, the level of exposition in a sonata movement. The 'theme' column details the structural themes of each movement designated in the MMF, and the system is refreshed at each new double bar (or movement of the MMF), so 'A' in the Allegro is *not* equivalent to 'A' in the Andante. The

22. Chianca, 'Formal Analysis of the Concerto for Oboe and Small Orchestra by Richard Strauss', 82.

23. May, 'Last Works', 183.

Figure 3.1 – Oboe Concerto motifs

motif *z* (b. 1)



motif *y* (b.7)



motif *x* (b. 76)



motif *w* (b. 84)



motif *v* (b.100)



‘Master’ column notes recurring thematic material (albeit not closed themes) that are found across the movements. The labelling system here corresponds to the motivic labels provided in §3.4, Figure 3.1, p. 118.

The first proposed movement in the MMF has the overall shape of a sonata form and is the most substantial. It opens with a repeated semiquaver motif in the cello that returns at the end of the movement as a transitional passage leading to the second movement. The second and slow movement, in B \flat major is in ternary form with its B section in E \flat major. An extended cadenza passage with

Master	TCF	MMF	Section	RM	Theme	Key	
z	Exp.	Allegro Moderato	Exp.	0–5	P	D	
				5–11 ⁺⁵	Tr	→ A	
Cod./Dev.			11 ⁺⁵ –15	Tr → MMS	A		
			Recap.	P → S	F → A		
			Coda → Tr.	P + S	D		
z w		Andante	A	22 ⁺¹⁰ –24	A	Bb	
w			B	24–26	B → Retr.	c →	
z w x			A'	26–33 ⁻⁹	A' → Tr.	Bb	
z w		Transition		Cadenza	33 ⁻⁹ –34 ⁺¹¹	Cadenza	→ D
v		Dev	Vivace	Exp.	34 ⁺¹¹ –35 ⁺⁴	P	D
	35 ⁺⁴ –38				P-based Tr.	→ A	
38–42	S				A		
w	Dev.			42–44	P-based Tr.	A	
				44–46	Episode 'Trio' (E)	d / F (n/c)	
v				46–47	P-based Retr.	D	
w	Link	Recap.	47–50 ⁺¹⁴	P + S	D (n/c)		
			50 ⁺¹⁴ –51 ⁻¹²	Summary (PSE)	D (n/c)		
x	Coda.	Allegro	A	51 ⁻¹² –53	A	D	
w z			B	53–56	B	b → D	
z			Coda		56–57	C	D
v					57–57 ⁺¹²	D	D (IV)
z					57 ⁺¹² –end	C'	D

Table 3.1 – Oboe Concerto form table

orchestral punctuation leads into the third movement. The third movement is particularly difficult to pin to a specific formal model. It espouses a Scherzo and Trio character, but more closely resembles a sonata rondo without a final refrain. Unlike a normal rondo, the P-based refrain returns in different keys, and is blurred with episodic function (for example, at RM 46–47 P explores a miniature fugato effect). The Vivace might alternatively be considered a Type 3 sonata form with a central episode taking the place of a development section, and an unorthodox thematic summary that elides with a solo transitional passage in place of recapitulation. The final Allegro is disproportionately short even accounting for the additional bars in the revised version (inserted at b. 697).²⁴ It presents altered versions of the main thematic material before assuming a coda function.

The integration of material across the whole form (even if there is motivic and tonal continuity) fails to produce a continuous thematic structure. For example, while there can be no doubt that the B section of the Allegro manifests the *w* theme in a new guise, there is no logic of progression through the preceding movements that enables this to be called a transformed or developed thematic version of the *w* found in the Allegro moderato, and as an episode in the Vivace. Rather than receiving formal meaning from a frame that reaches across the movements, I propose that the new rhythmic lilt of the thematic material drawn from the *w* motif is a repercussion of the new time signature of the final section of the MMF. The burden of motivic development is externalised onto the process of a discreet formal procedure such as changing time or changing key rather than handled as the realisation of musical material. The effect of this is to point away from a large-scale form in which motivic transformation

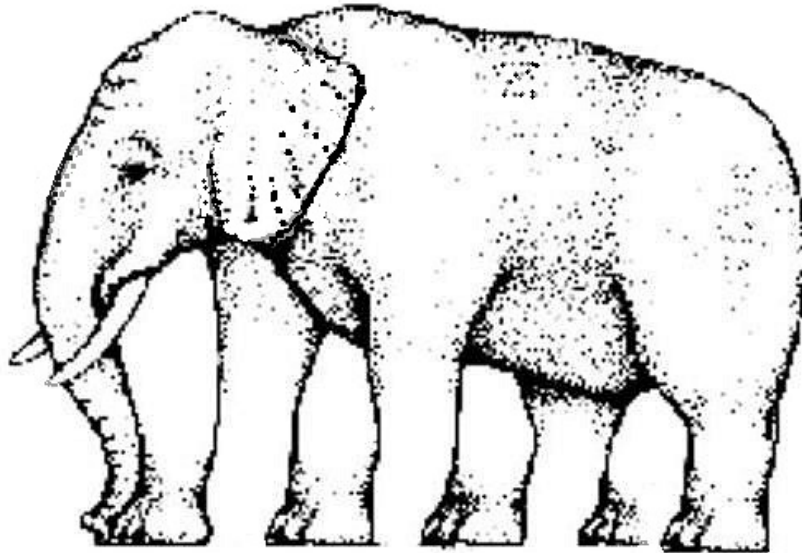
24. In François Leleux's 2010 recording with the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra under Daniel Harding (conductor), the fourth movement takes 2 minutes and 25 seconds in a total recording time of 24 minutes and 50 seconds for the whole concerto.

is a continuous process, and towards a structure of independent movements marked by their formally determined character (such a principle is paramount in the theme and variations genre).

The Oboe Concerto cannot be said to have a double-function form because its parts do not espouse the double standard of belonging to two levels of form at once. The formal sections indicated by the double bar lines allude to the separation of movements while motivic continuity is suggestive of an integrated overarching form. Something like the opposite of a double-function form might instead be read onto the structure of the concerto. A familiar optical illusion shows an elephant that has five feet, but only one complete leg and foot combination. While this beast might sound monstrous, it takes more than a quick glance to realise that there is anything at all the matter with its form, see Figure 3.2 (p. 122). The relationship of the ‘movements’ of the concerto to the through-composition of the global form can be likened to the relationship between the elephant and its legs. There is only one complete movement in the Oboe Concerto’s form, and that is its second (incidentally, the elephant’s only complete leg is its final one). The Andante has a simple ABA’ structure, with the B section providing tonal interest, and the A section returning in altered form to accommodate a transition after its final structural cadence at RM 32. This complete movement is followed by a cadenza with transitional function that connects the Andante to the Vivace in the MMF and the Exposition to the Development in the TCF. This is the only point of shared function between the TCF and MMF and it facilitates both the appreciation of the concerto as a continuous form and paradoxically also its division into movements.

Rather than fixing the Oboe Concerto’s structure to either a multi-movement or a through-composed form, I suggest simply that the form espouses qualities of both. It is not fully a multi-movement work because the final two sections in

Figure 3.2 – Elephant optical illusion



particular lack the requisite formal authority to exist independently of a larger form. The *Vivace*, although suggestive of multiple different structures (sonata rondo, sonata, scherzo and trio), cannot round its form via a thematic recapitulation, scherzo return, refrain return, or even a tonic-key cadence. The final *Allegro*, meanwhile, is disproportionately constructed from closing material and does not progress any structural dissonance or internal thematic development.

It would be just as wrong to say that Figure 3.2 is *not* a representation of an elephant as it would be to say that it *is* one. To suggest that it is not an elephant overlooks the glaringly obvious presence of its generic identifiers: aspects that are common to all elephants—a trunk, large ear, wide legs, fat body, stumped feet—are present and in roughly the right places. It takes a closer look to realise that its feet do not join coherently to its body, that, as a representation of an individual creature, it is impossibly fragmented and therefore cannot be an ele-

phant at all. Of course the elephant is an optical illusion. It is designed first to trick its audience, then to make them reconsider what they first held to be true. The formal construction of the concerto, on the other hand, is in earnest. There is no ironic or parodic tone signalling the presence of an internal critique, and yet the quality of allusion, if not illusion, and the relation of the particular to the generic, are defining facets of its form. I now turn to the Allegro moderato where I will discuss these ideas in more detail.

3.3 Allegro moderato

Bars	Section	Sub-section	Texture	Key	Add. notes
1–2	Exp.	Intro.	Tutti	D	
3–59		P	Solo		
59–75		Tr.	Tutti		
76–83		Tr. ⁺	Solo	B→A	V:PAC elided
84–92		S1	Tutti	A	PAC
92–114		S2/code.	Solo		PAC int.
114–124	Code./Dev.	Tr.-based	Tutti	F	
124–132		S2-based			
132–147		Retr.	Solo		
148–171	Recap.	P	Solo	D	
171–179		Tr. ⁺			
179–203		S1	Solo	b→D	
203–210		Tr. ⁺			
211–213		S2			
214–215		Tr. ⁺			
216–226	Coda			P/S1-based	

Table 3.2 – Allegro moderato form table

Every analysis of the Oboe Concerto that I have cited so far describes the Allegro moderato as being in sonata form, but the basis for this formal diagnosis is less sure than the consistency of interpretation might suggest. In the following two sections I will attempt to show how the sonata form that is manifested in the

Allegro moderato is not of a kind with sonata forms of the nineteenth century, but rather, progresses a different conception of its formal relationship to the abstracted structure. I will begin by showing how the constituent components of the sonata form at hand do not readily articulate their formal or thematic functions.

All four sections of the Oboe Concerto have in common a theme that, in the context of the Allegro moderato, I will call S1. It begins at b. 84 of the Allegro moderato and in Table 3.1 (p. 119) this theme is identified in the TCF as *w*. S1 bears a close resemblance to the primary theme of *Metamorphosen* and is the thematic crux of the Oboe Concerto too.²⁵ Although it presents some of the most important thematic material of the concerto, its position within the opening movement is not immediately clear. Binkley places it at the beginning of a development section in the context of a sonata form movement, while Chianca, also in the context of a sonata form interpretation, calls it the secondary theme without further qualification.²⁶ I consider it one of three possibilities for an unstable secondary theme.

After the extensive D major primary subject area (bb. 3–59), a vigorous tutti indicates the onset of a new formal section. Chianca considers this an ‘alternative opening’, but it is more aptly described as a P-based transitional passage.²⁷ This P-based passage forms the first part (bb. 59–69) of a two-part transition between thematic areas (bb. 59–73). It makes extensive use of the opening motif (motif *z*, see Figure 3.1) and motif *γ* from the first bar of the P theme. The second part of the transition develops a motif from a contrasting idea and concludes with a cadence onto B♭ major (PAC bb. 72–73). This cadence consolidates

25. May, ‘Last Works’, 182.

26. Binkley, ‘Three Versions of the *Concerto for Oboe and Small Orchestra* by Richard Strauss: an Analytical and Historical Study for the Performer’, 61; Chianca, ‘Formal Analysis of the *Concerto for Oboe and Small Orchestra* by Richard Strauss’, 35.

27. *ibid.*, 34.

the B \flat major introduced by a stepwise bass motion four bars earlier (b. 69, RM 6⁻¹)—a figure that will be employed again at the end of the movement to effect the shift from the D major tonic of the first movement to the B \flat major tonic of the Andante.

The PAC at bb. 72–73 is followed by two and a half bars of soli first violin playing a triplet figure that sounds like caesura fill before the entrance of a new theme in b. 76 (RM 7). This theme from bb. 76–84 (RM 7–8) is not in B \flat major, however, as the preceding cadence would appear to have recommended, but begins in B major before concluding with a PAC onto A major. The medial caesura function of the cadence and fill at bb. 72–75 is thus undermined by this tonally shifting thematic module. Binkley calls this passage the secondary theme, but, more hesitantly, I suggest that the question of whether this short passage between RMs 7 and 8 is secondary thematic material or a second transitional module is at this stage left open. The PAC at bb. 83–84 (RM 8) cannot function as an EEC because it is too early in the exposition to produce an effective ending (especially after the lengthy P subject), and its last-minute shift to A major makes only a weak tonal statement. And yet, the lyrical appearance of new thematic material after the rhetorical MC ending of the motif-driven transitional material preceding it would ordinarily indicate the arrival of the secondary subject area.

If the new motivic material introduced at b. 76 (RM 7), in particular motif x (see Figure 3.1, p. 118), were to have continued beyond the PAC at bb. 83–84, we might have been inclined to describe it as an off-key S theme beginning, overwriting the ‘incorrect’ MC at bb. 72–73. However, motif x vanishes at b. 84 (RM 8) and gives way to a totally new theme with a different character altogether. This formal oddity might be accounted for by calling the passage between RMs 7–8 a twist on a preliminary or preparatory S module. While the ordinary func-

tion of an S^0 module is to prolong the tonal course inscribed by the MC (usually by prolonging the dominant of the S theme), here it assumes a different role. Because the rhetorical MC is tonally ‘incorrect’, the passage in question adopts a modulatory purpose as if to overwrite the course set out for it at bb. 72–73. The presence of new thematic material indicates the onset of S, while actually having a tonally transitional function.

There is a confusion therefore between theme and transition. It is not satisfactory to call this passage transition proper, but it is also not satisfactory to consider this passage the onset of the secondary subject area. I propose the label TR^+ . This is also not a wholly satisfactory label because the section hovers somewhere between theme and transition. It clearly asserts new thematic material in the formal space reserved for precisely this occasion, while fulfilling the transitional function that the TR proper, with its wrong-key, rhetorically convincing MC, did not achieve.²⁸ TR^+ is vital to the tonal progression of the movement, while in terms of its own thematic statement and rhetorical function, it seems, at this stage, to be dispensable.

A largely homophonic tutti passage in the global dominant (bb. 84–92, RM 8–9) is elided with the A major PAC at the end of TR^+ . This passage introduces the *Metamorphosen* motif (motif *w*, p. 118) and presents a new musical subject

28. For Hepokoski and Darcy, the medial caesura is a formal moment that brings together tonal and rhetorical function. They describe it as the ‘brief, rhetorically reinforced “break” or “gap” that serves to divide an exposition into two parts, tonic and dominant’ without it, the exposition is said to be continuous. James A. Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 25 Here, however, Strauss divides the tonal and rhetorical functions of the MC between two sections of music. An orthodox Sonata Theory reading would not grant either part the label MC, and would thus assert the presence of a continuous exposition. Paul Wingfield criticises the lack of flexibility in Sonata Theory’s use of the MC as the sole designator for a two-part exposition, citing Charles Rosen and Donald Tovey as holding more reasonable views of the importance of tonal drama for an exposition over a form functional procedure. I maintain, with Wingfield, that the need for flexibility, especially when dealing with later repertoire, is important, but also that the category of the MC, which this passage is clearly alludes to, serves as a valuable interpretative tool.

that ends with a PAC on its own tonic. It appears at first to be a perfect contender for the S theme if only it were longer than 8 bars and not followed by another, contrasting theme in A major. A multi-modular S (MMS)— a relatively common type of secondary subject area in Classical period sonata form—may help explain the presence of two (and a half, if we include TR⁺) S themes.²⁹

Hepokoski and Darcy identify an MMS where the first thematic passage in the S zone fails to attain the EEC—we certainly see this in TR⁺. Typically a composer might pass through a number of styles or topics in ‘pursuit’ of a satisfactory PAC, and indeed, we have three contrasting themes here, two solidly on the global dominant, and the first modulating to it. While the first PAC has been dismissed already, so also the second PAC at bb. 91–92 seems to reach its cadence too early to be considered an EEC. The sense of being too early is compounded by the sudden chromatic embellishment of the cadential sequence, particularly the passing chord on the augmented fourth in the bass at b. 91. Rather than heighten the sense of expectation, after a completely stable theme, this chromatic turn offsets the ensuing cadence.

New motivic material (motif *v*) is introduced at the beginning of b. 92 (RM 9). It offers another potential S theme (S2), but it does not reach a PAC at all. In spite of this vital lack, in many ways S2 is the theme that presents the most satisfactory subject. At 22 bars, it more than doubles the length of either of the previous candidates. Its first cadence, local tonic IAC into b. 100 (RM 10), spurs a developing continuation phrase, and the antiphonal exchanges between solo oboe and clarinet (from b. 103 also the first violin) further give the impression of this being the most fully worked out secondary thematic material. An extended dominant pedal from b. 110 (RM 11), preceded by a chromatic bass descent

29. Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late Eighteenth-Century Sonata*, 139.

from b. 106 would seem to pave the way for the EEC, but the cadential moment is evaded by a sudden shift to F major—a tutti *vivace* explosion on the flattened sixth of the local tonic, that is, the flattened third of the global tonic. The strong dominant harmony professed from b. 110 (RM 11) thus fails to resolve to A major and a satisfactory EEC is fully eluded.

The question might arise as to why it matters that there is no EEC. At this point listening to the concerto it is quite possible to imagine that the EEC has already passed and that the development section is well under way (either in sense that S has ‘become’ development, $S \Rightarrow \text{Dev.}$, or in the retrospective acceptance of one of the earlier EEC candidates).³⁰ Such a reading fails to make sense of the dominant preparation, which projects much more the rhetorical effect of impending EEC than a developmental passage, but nevertheless can be accepted by the analyst intent on reading a straight-forward sonata form.³¹ And it would seem that analysts *are* intent on hearing a sonata form: when, for example, Warfield dismisses the ‘very short development’ and a ‘second theme that is recapitulated in the subdominant’ as ‘exceptional features’ of the work’s sonata form, he prioritises similitude over difference and reveals a greater interest in categorising music as belonging to one tradition or another than in understanding it.³²

30. The double arrow symbol for ‘becoming’ has been used by other sonata form theorists including Caplin (after Schmalfeldt) and Hepokoski and Darcy, but here I mean it in the sense that Janet Schmalfeldt proposes in her own development of Dahlhaus’s ‘processual’ notion of musical form. The double right arrow sign is used when the listener or analyst, cognisant of a change in form function, nevertheless cannot determine the precise point at which this functional shift was engaged because form function is not fixed to a precise moment or gesture, but retrospectively cast as having happened in the broader context of musical progression. See Janet Schmalfeldt, *In The Process Of Becoming: Analytical And Philosophical Perspectives On Form In Early Nineteenth-Century Music* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 9.

31. In this way it is clear to see how the use of the ‘becoming’ symbol is inappropriate—there is a tangible lack of functional articulation rather than a retrospective acknowledgement of functional change having been realised.

32. Warfield, ‘From “Too Many Works” to “Wrist Exercises”’: The Abstract Instrumental Compositions of Richard Strauss’, 223.

At first glance (or on first hearing) the Allegro moderato gives the impression of being a complete sonata structure, but closer inspection reveals that many of its details are missing or lacking their full functionality. Like much of the music of the exposition, the section between the F-major interruption at b. 114 and the recapitulation at b. 148 (RM 11⁺⁴ and RM 15) seems to exist in a state of indecision. It cannot be a codetta because it is in the wrong key. Furthermore, it arrives far too late in the form of the exposition to follow the potential S1 EEC at b. 92 (RM 9), and it obstructs a satisfactory EEC for S2. It can neither be classed satisfactorily as development. Its opening effect is stabilising rather than disruptive, and, when motivic material from S2 and S1 does return (at b. 128, RM 12⁺⁵ and b. 132, RM 13 respectively), it peters out after four bars of each theme. The S2 motif begins to develop harmonically only to get lost on a D \flat chord that seems to dissolve the theme altogether, and the S1 theme just stops after a repetition of its first two bars in order to give way to motif γ and tonal preparation for the recapitulation.

Like the elephant in Figure 3.2 (p. 122), where the overall form is not revealed in the connection of the parts to the whole, but the separate impressions of whole and part in isolation, the sonata form does not articulate the coherence of its unfolding via the relationship of its individual parts to a wider structural whole. Alternatively we might think of the sonata form frame as a doll's house: it is perfectly easy to appreciate, from a distance, what formal paradigms are invoked in the presentation of this form, but if one could shrink and enter the house it would soon be discovered that what appears to be a miniature recreation is something of a totally different order. This 'doll's house' phenomenon, in which the whole picture provides a distortedly functional presentation of its internal components, can be seen in the detailed analysis of the secondary thematic area presented above. The multi-modular S-zone that seems to be the

structural basis of the second half of the exposition is not supported by close analysis, which instead reveals an almost haphazard array of thematic ideas, none of which achieve sonata form function. And yet, as almost every existing analysis of the work testifies, it is still perfectly easy to assert a sonata form in the formal layout of this movement. In such a way the analyst or the educated listener (Warfield might here stand as my ideal type), objectifies the work: they create a sonata form that is not materially present in order to make the contents of the concerto fit its outward appearance.

3.4 Abstraction

The compulsion to objectify the Allegro moderato's form could perhaps be conceived of as a response to the Oboe Concerto's 'essential poverty'—a term used by Jean-Paul Sartre to describe the aesthetic ontology of the imaginary observations we hold as images in our heads.³³ As explained by Richard Kearney, Sartre understands imagination to be:

the power of consciousness which can only present a thing as a *nothingness* (in the sense of *not* being an empirical thing in reality). The object of perception overflows consciousness constantly; the object perceived is always *more* than our intention of it. But the object of imagination is never more than my consciousness of it; and so I cannot learn from an image more than I already know.³⁴

Invoking earlier writing by the French philosopher Alain (whose real name was Émile Chartier), Sartre explains how the imagined object is not simply a non-material replica of a really existing object, but something of a different order

33. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Psychology of Imagination*, trans. B. Frechtman (New York: Washington Square Press, 1966), 11 and 19.

34. Richard Kearney, *Dialogues With Contemporary Continental Thinkers* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 69.

entirely.³⁵ He takes Alain's example of the Pantheon by way of explanation: many people might claim to have an image of the Pantheon in their mind's eye, but this image does not have the property of true seeing because it cannot be engaged as a source of knowledge itself. Therefore, one who does not already know how many columns stand in support of the triangular pediment cannot use the mind's picture to count them.³⁶

Sartre uses the example of the Pantheon to reveal the 'poverty' of imagination, but we might take this a step further with the Allegro moderato. When an analyst claims without qualification the presence of a sonata form in the first movement of the Oboe Concerto, that empty and abstracted structure is read onto the material of the work not in order to gain a better understanding of the material present, but to turn this deficient object into an apparently whole imaginary one. The act of imagining a sonata form in the perception of the first movement is to do away with the idea that what we really have in that movement is a source of knowledge itself. It is to accept in the mind's ear, for example, that there really was an EEC, though we cannot actually find it in our vague recollection of the movement (this would be, then, the opposite of Adorno's structural listening and the mode of listening encouraged by such ideas as Schmalfeldt's '⇒').

The exaggerated cadence at the end of primary theme provides the mind's ear with the opportunity to plug the hole in the material form of the Allegro moderato. Despite this theme already being incontrovertibly in D major, the tonic is reasserted by an exaggerated cadential module lasting nineteen bars. V_4^6 is reached at b. 41 and chromatically expanded between bb. 43–48 before a dominant lock lasting ten bars (beginning b. 49) leads to an emphatic scalic

35. Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Imaginary: A Phenomenological Psychology of The Imagination*, ed. Arlette Elkaim-Sartre, trans. Jonathan Webber (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 87.

36. *ibid.*, 88.

descent from C \sharp to D in the oboe part. This culminates in an overdetermined PAC at b. 59. The rhetorical force of such a musical moment echoes through the movement's form as if to say 'yes, the EEC is possible, but why do you insist that we need one in the secondary theme when we already have such a convincing one here'. In fact, this rather overwhelming cadence appears in the wrong place in the movement for its rhetorical force to be justified: such a strong cadential assertion is ordinarily reserved for the end of a structural section, but here it appears midway through the exposition, thus proposing the end of a continuous exposition while all the same leading into a transition. Rather than having formal value in its material appearance, this cadence becomes like the imaginary pillars of the Pantheon—in the imagination, it substitutes for the real thing simply by alluding to its existence.

After the overdetermined P cadence, the expositional space of the Allegro moderato fragments. Not only the S theme, but larger structural dimensions, too, have a hazy quality despite their apparently clear demarcation. The abrupt and unprepared tonal shift that hails the F major tutti section from b. 114, might be considered an expositional codetta *or* the onset of the development. Its textural homogeneity and tonal confidence support the first interpretation. Functionally, however, this section does not serve to bring the exposition to a close. At b. 124 motivic material (motif γ , see Figure 3.1, p. 118) originally heard in a slightly different form in the P zone at b. 9, but more recently associated with the transition, recurs over motif z , spurring a harmonic shift towards A minor (b. 128). From here thematic material from S2 (see b. 92) returns in sequence, but stops short after four bars on a surprise D \flat major at b. 132 (RM 13). This D \flat is reinterpreted as the sharpened seventh (C \sharp) in D minor for the return of S1's motif w on this key. The D minor return of S1 lasts four bars again, before giving way to motif γ which, this time, is treated in ascending sequence and

leads to a global dominant pedal (A) at b. 142 (RM 14) paving the way for the recapitulation.

What emerges, under closer analytical scrutiny of the *Allegro moderato*, is a form that depends on a short section of music that belongs outside the sonata form reading for its tonal closure. The TR⁺ passage that at first seemed a peculiar addendum to the transitional space, or else a pre-S ‘vanishing’ theme with modulatory function, becomes the structural lynchpin of the recapitulation, which begins at b. 148 (RM 15). The primary thematic area of the recapitulation is much truncated, concluding after 24 bars at b. 171 (RM 17). It remains in D major throughout, with a little chromatic interest provided by a Neapolitan decoration before the dominant lock sets in at b. 167. The original transition does not return, instead a module bearing a close motivic resemblance to TR⁺ stands in its stead. This time TR⁺ does not modulate but remains in D major throughout its 8-bar appearance. No medial caesura effect can be heard in this section at all, but at b. 179 (RM 18) the S1 theme returns, beginning on B minor before turning at the last minute to a D major PAC at b. 187 (RM 19). This cadence is not in the obligatory register, and unlike in the exposition, S1 is immediately repeated with the soloist. The repetition is not exact, and after 6 bars the theme dissolves into a chromatic descent linking back to another variation of the TR⁺ in D major. This TR⁺ module again displays the thematic confidence of a subject in its own right, and a dominant lock from RM 20⁺⁷ ends with an energetic PAC at RM 21. Although the tonic is ascertained by contrary motion in two solo voices (clarinet and oboe), this PAC also misses the obligatory register. Were a cadence six bars following not to produce the tonic in the obligatory register, I would make nothing of this theoretical ‘fault’, but the almost pedantic correction offered in the cadence at RM 21⁺⁶, together with the cursory 3-bar recapitulation of S2 material, suggests that this rhetorically

lesser cadence ought to be considered the ESC and structural close proper.

In its first recapitulation appearance TR⁺ holds its own as a subject, though leading directly into S1 it could equally be considered a lyrical transition between two subjects proper. Its second appearance, however, solidifies its authority as thematic material and creates the tonal and lyrical momentum to effect a rhetorical end to the movement, while its third appearance ties up the loose ends of the recapitulation hijacking S2's recapitulation to engineer a PAC in the obligatory register. The theme which earlier I described as the most convincing contender for S2 (at 22 bars in length) is reduced to a mere three bars. We might read the sonata form of the Allegro moderato as undergoing a process of erasure. The ambiguities and insufficiencies of its thematic material are consumed by a musical passage that ought not to have had anything to do with the sonata form. This passage comes to possess the secondary thematic area of the recapitulation to the end of achieving the ESC necessary to create a closed sonata structure. Having achieved full secondary thematic status, the TR⁺ module eventually gives itself over to form function in a pedantic act of completionism.

3.5 Norms and deformations

The desire to appreciate the Allegro moderato through the lens of sonata form is one that the work's outward presentation clearly affords—moreover, it seems to strive itself towards this status even at the cost of its own thematic fidelity. On the other hand, a resistance to a reductive sonata form reading can be seen multiple times when close analytical attention is paid to even just a small section of music. Why should the Allegro moderato be called a sonata form when it has no EEC and a highly irregular ESC? A reason in favour of maintaining the comparison is the critical value its relation to sonata form offers: the Allegro moderato

presents the listener with a challenge to hear through the foregrounded sonata rhetoric and acknowledge the fragmented musical form that lies beneath—but this is only useful up to a point.

Instead of taking Sonata Theory's system of the sonata norm and its deformational series, I suggest reconsidering the nature of the sonata form here altogether. The idea of the sonata deformation has already been the subject of criticism. In particular, the associated notion of the sonata 'norm' has been considered about as sound as a plastic cutout of A. B. Marx.³⁷ My own contribution to this discourse is orientated not so much against the idea of there existing generic norms and deformations (by the twentieth century, an age of self-conscious historical posturing, this argument is perhaps less relevant), than with the question of how sonata form actually articulates itself in Strauss's musical form, and what I see as the total absence of any formal tension between even the idea of norm and deformation in the Oboe Concerto.

Hepokoski and Darcy describe a deformation as 'the stretching of a normative procedure to its maximum expected limits or even beyond them—or the overriding of that norm altogether in order to produce a calculated expressive effect'.³⁸ Regardless of what that particular 'norm' might actually be, the *Allegro moderato* cannot be adequately explained by its relation to it because the idiosyncratic aspects of its musical structure are not orientated around an internal tension with the sonata paradigm. That is, the aspects of the Oboe Concerto that might be conceived as being deformational are not such because they do not have a corresponding sonata norm to deform. There is no *internal* tension in

37. Julian Horton, 'Bruckner's Symphonies and Sonata Deformation Theory', *Journal of the Society for Musicology in Ireland* 1 (2005): 7–11, Paul Wingfield, 'Beyond "Norms and Deformations": Towards a Theory of Sonata Form as Reception History', *Music Analysis* 27, no. i (2008): 'Fundamental Axioms'.

38. Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late Eighteenth-Century Sonata*, 614.

the musical form between an ideal (or abstract), and a material (or immanent) sonata form that is this tension's working out. Rather, the TR⁺ module creates the crucial closing gesture of the sonata structure in obedience to a principle long-established by tradition and not for the expressive effect of the movement's self-becoming in relation to the abstracted structure of the sonata.

I suggest that the *Allegro moderato* expresses a new kind of sonata form. This new formal type is aligned with the paradigm of its historical moment: in particular, it expresses both capitalist and fascist tendencies. The need for material fidelity to a historical tradition—for the internal manifestation of a tension between ideal and real—is not a concern of the concerto's formal structure. Thus it lacks a formal means of self-criticism because it has no internal antagonism of social and individual by which to measure itself, and it also lacks the aesthetic expression that is the grain of the emergent musical subject. The individual subject (the *Allegro moderato*) and the socio-historic system (the sonata form) are merged in a way that denies the meaning-producing potential of both.

The philosopher Slavoj Žižek progresses a conceptualisation of the subject that is useful for elucidating the difference between a subject of music in the liberal humanist tradition and an object—or better, an 'inauthentic' subject—of the same. In contrast to an authentic musical subject, which has, to use Adorno's term, a surplus that cannot be explained by the reifying force of ideology, the formal construction of the *Allegro moderato* projects what might be perceived as an excess of ideology. Here Žižek explains the difference between the subjectivizing process and the subject itself:

subjectivization designates the movement through which the subject integrates what is given them into the universe of meaning—this integration always ultimately fails, there is a certain leftover which cannot be integrated into the symbolic universe, an object which resists subjectivization, and the subject is precisely correlative to this object. In other words, the subject is correlative to its

own limit, to the element which cannot be subjectivized, it is the name of the void which cannot be filled out with subjectivization: the subject is the point of failure of subjectivization.³⁹

Zizek describes the process by which the subject realises itself in the symbolic universe of ideology. Being more than symbol, the subject is not reducible to its function within an ideological totality—it is not fully subjectivized by ideology. Materially, the Allegro moderato is not reducible to sonata form, even with the self-destructive TR⁺ module, or to the tonal function of its parts. On its own terms it is ‘correlative to its own limit’ and therefore a subject. However, in *not* developing an expressive opposition to the subjectivization of sonata form it is foreclosed in the symbolic universe of the new sonata form ideology.

The new sonata form ideology that I propose projects the Allegro moderato as its object by rhetorical force not by structural expression. In other words, the symbolic gestures of form are the means of articulation that establish the sonata, and not the movement’s congruence and incongruence with a historical precedent. It might be supposed that a certain amount of formal freedom emerges from the sidelining of the internal dialogue between abstract and material sonata, and, while materially that is true, the *actual* freedom that results is null. While the new kind of sonata form is not tied to the expression of deformation against norm, the impossibility of registering a deformation as such effectively cancels out the expressive potential of this newfound formal liberation.

There is no tension between the new sonata form paradigm and the sonata structure of the Allegro moderato in spite of the latter’s radical deviance from any potential ‘norm’. In a sense, by simply asserting sonata form onto the Allegro moderato, Warfield and other analysts recognise the form in a more appro-

39. Slavoj Zizek, *Interrogating the Real*, Bloomsbury Revelations edition (1st edition, 2005) (Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 242.

appropriate way than an analyst intent on hearing deformations. Rather than being an invitation to examine the form in minute detail, the freedom of the new kind of sonata form is tied to an unfreedom of interpretation. Such an unfreedom is symptomatic of an age of listening in which the intricacies of structure are secondary to the perceived overall effect of music.⁴⁰ It stands to reason that the more liberal one's definition of sonata form becomes, the more variation can occur within its bounds. It does not follow, however, that more variation correlates to more varied meaning, or a larger range of interpretative possibilities.

The new kind of sonata form is more than just a category of perception. It is a category of perception that is afforded by material properties of the individual sonata form, and also has consequences of its own. The Allegro moderato exhibits material traits akin to Sartre's imaginary object (as detailed in §3.4) and thus it affords its perception as such. If measured against the 'old' paradigm of sonata form, the first movement of the Allegro moderato reveals a subject that is so far removed from a sonata norm as to be only questionably 'within' it. Measured against the 'new' paradigm of sonata form that I have proposed, the Allegro moderato expresses precisely the ideological subjectivization of its moment, is undeniably in sonata form, and yet it fails to develop as an authentic sonata form subject.

If we perceive a sonata form movement as expressive of the tension between individual and society, each individual sonata form exists separately from its basis in a historical tradition because tradition is what is forged anew via the subjects of history. Thus tradition proceeds from the individual subjects that are its body. If, however, a sonata form movement is conceived of as an expression of an individual *in* society (i.e. without bearing internally the essential tension created in, for example, the system of norms and deformations), then

40. This idea will be proposed in §4.7.

the sonata form precedes the creation of the individual form. The individual, or the specific sonata form in question, simply affirms the existence of an abstracted sonata form tradition, regardless of its own material proportion. In such a way no subject proper can be recognised, even though the material of music is expressive of the subjectivization process, because no surplus is found to have been left over. This is how the new conception of sonata form, which I propose is adopted in Strauss's Oboe Concerto, can be understood as expressive of both the standardising liberalism of capitalist ideology and the denial of historical materialism that feeds fascism.

3.6 Confessions of liberalism

The sonata form ideology at work in Strauss's Oboe Concerto, which I described in the previous section as harbouring both the capitalist and fascist tendencies of its era, also has a context in the social history of liberal humanism. In this section, I will suggest that the abstraction of form in the Oboe Concerto represents a 'Catholic' relationship to liberal humanist ideals while some of Strauss's earlier work corresponds more to a 'Protestant' interpretation of the subject. To align a musical practice with a religious one is not without its problems, especially as the overarching 'tradition' in question, liberal humanism, itself bears a complex historical relationship to both Protestantism and Catholicism in Germany. However, I suggest that this might be used to critical advantage in a discussion of how two reactive forms of liberal humanism in Strauss's music facilitate the existence of different kinds of bourgeois music in line with the socio-political context of their respective historical moments. In drawing attention to the difference between Strauss's earlier 'Protestant' liberal humanist music and his later 'Catholic' liberal humanist music, I further challenge the

idea that the Oboe Concerto (and by extension his ‘wrist exercises’) represent an artistic return.⁴¹

‘Confessionalization’ is a broad-reaching historiographical concept that arose in the mid 1970s as a means of examining the social and religious changes that took place in Germany from the late 1500s onwards.⁴² It provides a useful tool for understanding the way in which values are embedded in a religious and social practice while also acknowledging that a difference of practice, including creed, does not amount to a totally different religion. A ‘confession’, then, is the manner in which a religious conviction is practiced and articulated in the world, and has been defined in terms of ‘religious doctrine, relationships with the state and developing religious identities’.⁴³ I will make use of this idea in my explanation of how Strauss’s music expresses liberal humanist ideas while also being in correspondence with broader social and political trends in Germany.

Being without a god, liberal humanism is fundamentally at odds with both sides of the confessional divide: Protestantism and Catholicism. However, humanism as it existed before the Reformation was associated with both denominations of the Christian church in Germany. The following glimpse of the relationship between humanism and politics in Germany will provide an insight into the overlapping intellectual and political frameworks of Protestantism, Catholicism, humanism, liberalism, and nationalism. While liberal humanism is not a religion and it does not actually have confessions, I suggest that

41. As posited by Jürgen May, see May, ‘Last Works’, 181.

42. For more detail about confessionalization as a historiographical phenomenon, see Heinz Schilling, ‘Confessionalization: Historical and Scholarly Perspectives of a Comparative and Interdisciplinary Paradigm’, in *Confessionalization in Europe, 1555–1700*, ed. John M. Headley, Hans J. Hillerbrand and Anthony J. Paplas (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 21–35.

43. Quoted in Dean Phillip Bell, ‘Confessionalization in Early Modern Germany: A Jewish Perspective’, in *Politics and Reformations: Histories and Reformations Politics and Reformations: Histories and Reformations – Essays in Honor of Thomas A. Brady, Jr.* Ed. Christopher Ocker et al., Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions, Vol. 127 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 345 original from H-German forum launch (4 April 2005), found online here: http://h-net.org/~german/discuss/Confessionalization/Confess_index.htm.

the notion of the confession remains useful for two reasons. Firstly, it provides a way of talking about liberal humanism in practice, i.e. how Strauss's music 'practices' the convictions of liberal humanism discussed in §1.3. Secondly, in identifying points of convergence between Strauss's musical 'confessions' and other trends in German culture I aim to show how liberal humanist music consolidates the identity of a particular group in society (in the manner of a confession).

It is a testament to the breadth and significance of humanist influence from as early as the sixteenth century that it traversed the most essential social divide of its era during the Reformation period. The historical connection between the Protestant Reformation and humanism is encapsulated in Bernd Moeller's laconic declaration 'ohne Humanismus keine Reformation', but it would be a mistake to suggest that humanism influenced only Protestant revolutionaries, and by that route alone entered the general sphere of German thought following the Reformation.⁴⁴ It was the Roman Catholic scholar Desiderius Erasmus—rather than the Protestant reformers Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, or Melancthon—who gained the title 'Prince of the Humanists', and while there remains considerable debate over Luther's humanist credentials, Erasmus's name has become synonymous with Christian humanism.⁴⁵ It is clear that a desire for reform existed among both Catholic humanists and Protestant branches of Christianity, and while reformers from both sides took advantage of the intellectual cache of humanism, so also did those opposed to religious change use the revolutionary reputation of humanist thought against them.⁴⁶ The influence of humanism

44. Bernd Moeller, 'Die deutschen Humanisten und die Anfänge der Reformation', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 70 (1959): 59.

45. Timothy P. Dost, *Renaissance Humanism in Support of the Gospel in Luther's Early Correspondence: Taking All Things Captive* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2001), 10–18.

46. Erika Rummel, *The Confessionalization of Humanism in Reformation Germany* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3.

was a central force for social development during and after the reformation, and was not limited to either denomination of Christianity.

In the mid nineteenth century liberal ideas became politically embedded in Protestant discourse. The National Liberal Party was originally minded to create a nation governed by liberalism and individualism, but, threatened by the growth of an industrial working class, it joined forces with the Protestant princes in order to avoid any radical social change.⁴⁷ Liberal parliamentarians and Protestant social conservatives were united in their efforts to overthrow the political stake of the Catholic *Centrum* party, and the allegiance of these two groups turned what was initially a party-political agenda into a much broader 'cultural struggle' (*Kulturkampf*) against the Catholic Church.⁴⁸ Though ultimately unsuccessful in its attempt to remove *Centrum* from parliament, the *Kulturkampf* had a wide-reaching effect on the political alignment of Germany, uniting Protestants and middle-class liberals under the flag of nationhood (and collaterally, Catholics and left-liberals against the authoritarianism of the new *Kaiserreich*).⁴⁹ This second period of confessionalization, as it has sometimes been called, was led by the National Liberal Party aligned with Otto von Bismarck and exerted a strong influence over the creation of a national identity.⁵⁰ Catholicism was condemned as anti-nationalist and, by the same process, ideas and activities associated with Protestantism were hailed as foundational to German culture.

During the *Kulturkampf*, Protestantism and nationalist liberalism gained official status as expressions of German *Kultur*. Also at this time an amalgam-

47. Pamela M. Pillbeam, *The Middle Classes in Europe, 1789–1914: France, Germany, Italy, and Russia* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1990), 268.

48. Michael Rowe, *From Reich to State: The Rhineland in the Revolutionary Age, 1780–1830* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 290.

49. *ibid.*

50. Leistra-Jones, 'Hans von Bülow and the Confession of Kunstreligion', 62.

ation of Protestant and liberal influences translated into a form of ‘art religion’, which took the place of conventional Christian practice.⁵¹ David Friedrich Strauss (1808–74), formerly a German liberal Protestant theologian, was a prominent exponent of this latter development. His book *Der alte und der neue Glaube* (‘The Old and the New Faith’) was published in 1871 and proposed a new religion of art. D. F. Strauss’s theological agenda has been described as ‘an attempt to legitimise the bourgeois claim to socio-political emancipation in the medium of classical theological subjects’.⁵² The fact that many opponents of D. F. Strauss’s new religion criticised it via explicitly Protestant terms of humanism (for example, by suggesting that the ‘art religion’ could not adequately express the autonomy of the individual) points again to the overlapping grails of the sacred and secular Protestant confessions.⁵³ The development of D. F. Strauss’s ‘art religion’ can be viewed as a branch of secular Protestantism for the liberal bourgeoisie: the notion of self-improvement, adopted from the Protestant confession, became self-improvement *through art* and forged a practice of concert-going among its followers. In this context, art music accrued political value in the context of Liberal-Protestant German *Kultur*.

51. On the role of music in establishing the connection between the idea of German *Kultur* and Protestantism, see Leistra-Jones, ‘Hans von Bülow and the Confession of Kunstreligion’, 73; and for a case study on the specific role of Brahms’s music in German *Kultur*, see Daniel Beller-McKenna, *Brahms and the German Spirit* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 4–10.

52. Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, ‘The Old Faith and the New: The Late Theology of D.F. Strauss’, chap. 7, ed. Henning Graf Reventlow; William Farmer, vol. *Biblical Studies and the Shifting of Paradigms 1850–1914* (Midsomer Norton: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 224.

53. An earlier work by D. F. Strauss (drawing on a mixture of Enlightenment imperative towards scientific rationality and the humanist drive to find truth in the material of human history) sought to socialise the status of individual liberty that once belonged to Christ alone: ‘what once was valid for only *one* human being and exclusively for him, is now valid for humanity as a whole and thus for every single human being’. *ibid.*, 226. The historical manifestation of this idea changed between Luther’s era and D. F. Strauss’s but both bear the same underlying call for individual human autonomy. See also Luther’s treatise *Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen* 1520, which argues that Christians are forgiven by God and, not being compelled to do his will, have the choice whether or not to obey the law of God. Thus it is the same liberal humanist principle of autonomy that was, much earlier, embraced by Luther in his own revolutionary moment as the autonomy of the sinner’s righteousness by the grace of God.

It was during this period of political and cultural change that Strauss proclaimed himself to be compositionally mature. ‘Maturation’ (rather like late-ness) was a self-conscious process for the composer signalled musically by *Aus Italien* (Op. 16, 1886), which he described as the link between the ‘old’ and ‘new’ method of composition, corresponding to absolute and programme music respectively.⁵⁴ R. Larry Todd explains how ‘in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, Strauss occupied the unusual position of having thoroughly mastered the German instrumental tradition before separating from that tradition to embrace a fundamentally different musical aesthetic and to discover, at Ritter’s urging, his own identity’.⁵⁵ Ritter introduced Strauss to the writing of Schopenhauer, and while the young composer disagreed with much of what he encountered (he found Schopenhauer’s notion of the will at the same time too utopian—it favoured the possibility of a broader connection between the will of the individual and that of a more universal idea of will; and too nihilistic—it denied the possibility of a positive affirmation of the will), it was this intellectual stimulation that caused Strauss to form his own philosophical perspectives on music.⁵⁶ In rejecting Schopenhauer, Strauss turned towards the pursuit of a different sort of musical will—a Lisztian poetic idea—blending it in particular with the notion of *Eigentümlichkeit*, an idea originally fostered by nineteenth

54. Strauss did not reject the ‘old’ method, but considered it the requisite technical foundation for composers of the new music. See Richard Strauss, *Dokumente seines Lebens und Schaffens*, ed. Franz Trenner (C. H. Beck, 1954), 56, quoted in Heiner Wajemann, ‘The Influences of Richard Strauss’, chap. 1 in *The Richard Strauss Companion*, ed. Mark-Daniel Schmid (Westport, CT and London: Praeger, 2003), 3–30.

55. Todd, ‘Strauss before Liszt and Wagner: Some Observations’, 38.

56. Strauss’s self-professed maturity seems to have been as much about a negative encounter with Schopenhauer as it was connected to his discovery of adulthood. A letter to his father, dated 1 February 1893, lets slip his essential juvenility: ‘in the end there is no one who can forbid me to look at the world through my own eyes from time to time, even if they do not always see straight. In the end it is only what one has seen *oneself* that has any real significance’. Letter to Franz Strauss, in Willi Schuh, *Richard Strauss. Jugend und frühe Meisterjahre. Lebenschronik 1864–1898* (Zurich: Atlantis, 1976), 289–90 translated and quoted in Youmans, *Richard Strauss’s Orchestral Music and the German Intellectual Tradition: The Philosophical Roots of Musical Modernism*, 81.

century German Romantic artists who saw the autonomy principle in the protestantised artistic quantities of uniqueness, originality, and a drive towards self-realization.⁵⁷

Heiner Wajemann describes the late 1880s as hailing a new compositional era for Strauss in which he 'became aware not only of the musical temper of the time, but also of his own artistic view of himself, which was gradually taking on a character of a religious creed'.⁵⁸ With D. F. Strauss's 'new faith' in mind, and the relationship of liberal values and Protestantism, Wajemann's evocation of religion in his description of Strauss's attitude to music is apt. In this context it is worth turning briefly to a diary entry Strauss penned on the death of Mahler. As late as 1911 it demonstrates the enduring influence of German *Kultur* on Strauss's artistic worldview.

The death of this lofty-minded, idealistic and energetic artist is a heavy loss. [...] It is absolutely clear to me that the German nation can only attain new vigour by freeing itself from Christianity [...] I shall call my *Alpensinfonie*: the Antichrist, since it embodies: moral purification through one's own strength, liberation through work, worship of eternal, glorious [n]ature.⁵⁹

Strauss presents *Alpensinfonie* as the adversary of the Christianised subject of music, and claims that it represents the true course of German art. He names it the Antichrist (after Nietzsche) and condemns Christianity's influence over art, and urges instead for the worship of nature.⁶⁰ The 'eternal, glorious nature' Strauss describes here lacks agency: neither retribution nor redemption will flow from it because this unthinking force bears no trait of humanity itself.⁶¹

57. Steven Lukes, 'The Meanings of 'Individualism'', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 32, no. 1 (January 1971): 54.

58. Wajemann, 'The Influences of Richard Strauss', 14.

59. Youmans, *Mahler and Strauss: In Dialogue*, 19.

60. Note that the title of Nietzsche's text may also be translated as 'anti-Christian'.

61. Youmans, *Mahler and Strauss: In Dialogue*, 197.

Instead, moral purification comes from personal strength—from within—and liberation is achieved by work. The neutrality of nature is surely not ideally represented by a symphony called ‘Alpine’, just as the freedom of humanity has measures other than hard graft. Strauss’s inclination towards a state of moral purity, moreover, not only resonates with religious maxims he seems to want to reject, but, in its direct association with personal strength, carries fascist inclinations too. The application of human qualities to the musical work reveals the influence of *Eigentümlichkeit* on Strauss’s conception of the work’s autonomy, and *Alpensinfonie*’s apparent melding together of teleological drama (‘liberation through work’) and the majesty of an unchanging German geography (‘eternal, glorious nature’) reveals the ideological underpinnings of the composer’s attitudes.

Alpensinfonie resonates with the particular brand of political Protestant-Liberalism that was advocated in Bismarckian German *Kultur* and embedded in the decades that followed. While Strauss posits the work, in the quotation presented above, as a revolutionary new course for the subject of German art, *Alpensinfonie* fails to challenge any existing notion of subjecthood. Instead it invokes one already present in his contemporary historical situation. Strauss protests the religious argument of salvation by god, but the closeness of his declaration here—which hangs on ideas of purity, freedom, and worship—to the language of religion is unmissable. The tension between universalism and individualism that lies at the core of liberal humanist subjectivity is what sustains the autonomy of the authentic liberal humanist musical form. *Alpensinfonie* submits to a ‘particular’ universalism—that of Protestant-Liberal *Kultur*, and thus favours a particular type of individual over any genuine aspiration towards universality.

Whereas *Alpensinfonie* is framed by *Kultur*, I propose that Strauss’s Oboe

Concerto possesses a different sort of universalism altogether. The Oboe Concerto cannot share in the individualistic confidence of *Alpensinfonie's* autonomy—which had a direct social function in the consolidation of the politically affirmed identity of the German bourgeoisie—because by the time of its composition this identity was no longer (historically) valid. In valuing the universalising potential of tradition over the development of the autonomous individual, I suggest that the Oboe Concerto displays a quasi Catholic devotion to liberal humanism that is at odds in its projection of autonomy with both the ‘Protestant’ strain of the same (represented above by *Alpensinfonie*) and also with the authentically liberal humanist work *Metamorphosen*.

I do not draw on the terms ‘Protestant’ and ‘Catholic’ as markers of religious belief, but as ways of identifying particular priorities in the formation of the musical subject. Attaching the label ‘Protestant’ to *Alpensinfonie* does not suggest that this work embraces any of the particular religious beliefs of Protestantism. Instead, I wish to highlight a single strand of liberal humanism’s revolutionary impulse—the autonomy of the individual (which, as demonstrated, was Protestantism’s most important intellectual connection to liberal humanism)—and the reification of that impulse in the highly politicised language of German *Kultur*. Likewise, applying the label ‘Catholic’ to the Oboe Concerto is intended to reveal the distance between the concerto’s abstracted universalism and the radical universalism of the liberal humanist *Weltanschauung*.

By the late nineteenth century the *Eigentümlichkeit* that was valued in art, and the private inwardness that was valued by the art religion, were not cultivated for the benefit of all society, or even—as the proponents of *Kultur* envisaged—for the benefit of a particular political vision of society, but for their own sake.⁶² A parallel may be drawn between art’s increasing social alienation

62. On the historical position of culture in German society as part of *Bildung* see Thomas Prüfer,

and the political impotency of the National Liberal Party whose failure to curb the violent authoritarianism of their Protestant political allies undermined the entire liberal project.⁶³ The music that was previously associated with individual and social improvement ceased to be valued for its social dimension, but took on a quality of neutral virtue, as Wattenbarger writes ‘they [autonomous musical structures] were increasingly taken to be “given” as nonhistorical “things”’.⁶⁴

Walter Frisch differentiates between a musical historicism that ‘collapses’ the distance between past and present—a ‘naive traditionalism’ that maintains a belief in the constant validity of a historic style; and a musical historicism that exaggerates that metaphorical distance by appropriating aspects of traditionalism to demonstrate the past’s alienation from the contemporary state of culture.⁶⁵ The Oboe Concerto does neither of these precisely, though it is closer to the former. Its relationship to its musical legacy is not overtly nostalgic, critical, or unusually referential, and it does not engage in an obvious form of pastiche. Rather, I suggest that the concerto simulates autonomy as a quality of the work’s musical character as though it were an aspect of mere style—its autonomy is a fact of its status as a musical object in the western art music tradition and not a fact of its status as a subject of liberal humanism.

The autonomous work inhabits a certain level of ‘thingness’ in all circumstances: both its social weakness and intellectual strength come from its ability

Die Bildung der Geschichte: Friedrich Schiller und die Anfänge der modernen Geschichtswissenschaft (Köln: Boehlau Verlag, 2002), 216–218, Philip J. Kain, *Schiller, Hegel, and Marx: State, Society, and the Aesthetic Ideal of Ancient Greece* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1982), 26.

63. Pillbeam, *The Middle Classes in Europe, 1789–1914: France, Germany, Italy, and Russia*, 266.

64. Richard Ernest Wattenbarger, ‘Richard Strauss, Modernism, and the University: A Study of German-Language and American Academic Reception of Richard Strauss from 1900 to 1990’ (PhD diss., Graduate School of the University of Minnesota, 2000), 331.

65. Walter Frisch, ‘Reger’s Historicist Modernism’, *The Musical Quarterly* 87, no. 4 (November 2004): 733. Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker suggest, for example, that *Der Rosenkavalier* combines a wistful longing with ‘estrangement effects’ to divulge the perceived distance between past and present. Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker, *A History of Opera: The Last Four Hundred Years* (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 2012), 461–468.

to stand independent of the reifying structures of social ideology while also being objectified by them. By proceeding from abstracted rather than immanent formal qualities (as argued in §3.5), the Oboe Concerto invokes a universality in sonata form that does not exist—at least, that does not exist in the standardised formal attributes of a sonata form structure, even if it does have some form of existence in the idea of sonata form. The conception of non-immanent formal autonomy that is found in the Oboe Concerto has reifying and generalising interpretative consequences: the formal identity of the work is shifted away from its material and onto its place in a tradition of similar materials, with an emphasis placed on commonality of surface properties over commonality of conviction or idea. The problem of this particular vision of universality (universality by stylistic or formal abstraction) is its confidence in a tradition that is based on ritual rather than thought content.

In Catholicism, the eucharistic ritual is the repeated exclamation of an ever-contemporary truth. Because the bread and wine do not just signal, but *are*—via the doctrine of transubstantiation—the body and blood of God, the ritual exceeds its status as re-enactment and becomes an agent in the forgiveness of sins, the expression of collective identity and, through faith, presents a prophetic foretaste of eternal life. Without belief, however, bread and wine is just that. When the style of liberal humanist music is allowed to develop in the absence of its idea, it becomes ritual without belief and its value as something greater than the social identity it fosters is brought into question. The Oboe Concerto contributes towards the aestheticisation of liberal humanism as a stylistic category in music, and does not sustain the set of radical ideals which is the lifeblood of liberal humanist thought.

A mimetic relationship to subjective autonomous music is crucial to the nature of the ‘objective’ musical autonomy that I propose might be found in

the Oboe Concerto. The Oboe Concerto has the outward appearance of liberal humanist autonomy because it situates itself stylistically within the frame of this tradition, but it does not possess the emancipatory, transcendent form that I will later suggest makes *Metamorphosen* a profound example of the intellectual potential of liberal humanist (subjective) autonomy. By making autonomy a quality of style rather than form, the Oboe Concerto compromises its fidelity as an individuated subject and overlays a standardised notion of selfhood. Style, however, was never the place in which the liberal humanist ideal could be found, so it cannot be the place in which this ideal is preserved.

3.7 Practical inconsiderations

It may seem odd to call the Oboe Concerto a work of liberal humanism in the ‘Catholic’ confession (that is, with an inclination towards the universal), when its genre as a concerto seems to lend itself more readily to the ‘Protestant’ emphasis on individualism. However, I suggest that Strauss’s writing for the soloist compromises the expression of the oboe part, and that the genre of the concerto can be seen in some ways to parallel both the abstraction of the sonata form in the *Allegro moderato* and also the division of the overall form into movements. The genre of the concerto points towards an individualism that is problematic at both the local level of the work and at the social level of the genre.

Most existing analyses of the concerto are written with the solo performer in mind. Linda Elizabeth Binkley’s analytical thesis is primarily intended to assist oboists preparing the concerto for performance.⁶⁶ Her work complements Valerie Victoria Poppy’s thesis, which provides an overview of the performance

66. Binkley, ‘Three Versions of the *Concerto for Oboe and Small Orchestra* by Richard Strauss: an Analytical and Historical Study for the Performer’.

history and reception of the concerto as well as an ethnographic report on the attitudes and methods of soloists engaging the work in performance.⁶⁷ Both scholars focus on problematic aspects of Strauss's writing for oboe, and the potential difficulties that must be surmounted by the soloist before the work can be performed convincingly.⁶⁸ Although there is nothing outwardly wild about it, Strauss's oboe writing does not lend itself particularly to the instrument. Binkley notes that the soloist must play for a full two minutes before any release of the embouchure is allowed, and she describes the three main challenges of Strauss's writing to be 'phrasing, physical endurance, and respiration'.⁶⁹ While Binkley and Poppy consider Strauss's music a challenge for the performer to overcome—Binkley addresses, for example, the appropriateness of methods like circular breathing (not common practice in Strauss's time) for dealing with the excessively long phrases—I offer a different interpretation of the written music's relation to its performance.⁷⁰

The Oboe Concerto consistently presents a schism between smoothness and fragmentation, and yet the work's performers seek invariably to project only the former. The opening sixteen bars of the oboe solo (bb. 3–19) comprises a modified take on the period. The period, which is usually characterised by balance and symmetry, is here irregular both in the distribution of its motivic ideas and in its tonal trajectory. The basic idea (bb. 3–7) lasts five bars and can be divided still further into a two-part, two-bar motivic device treated in modified repetition one and a half times. The contrasting idea (bb. 8–10) lasts only three bars and interrupts the second repetition of the two-bar unit of the basic idea. An ante-

67. Poppy, 'An Examination of the Richard Strauss Concerto for Oboe and Small Orchestra (1945–6)'.

68. Binkley, 'Three Versions of the *Concerto for Oboe and Small Orchestra* by Richard Strauss: an Analytical and Historical Study for the Performer', 47.

69. *ibid.*, 45, 47.

70. *ibid.*, 99.

cedent phrase in the Classical-era period would be expected to conclude with a HC or IAC on the dominant or tonic. Strauss closes the antecedent unexpectedly with an IAC on the supertonic minor, but all the same sustains a dominant harmony throughout the ensuing consequent. The consequent phrase from bb. 11–18 is, as to be expected in a period, a slightly varied repetition of the opening 8 bars of the oboe solo, orientated harmonically in anticipation of a concluding cadence in D major. Rather than bringing back the tonic, however, the return of the *Kopfton* at b. 19 is sounded above a B minor harmonic shift signifying the onset a developmental passage. The division of the antecedent and consequent into 5+3 units blurs the rigidity of the period structure, and the phrase itself is simultaneously splintered and protracted by the fragmentation of the basic idea into a two-part motivic device. This fragmentation is what enables the ‘contrasting’ idea to sound initially like a continuation—that is, the protraction of a single idea.

The wider tonal structure of the primary subject also evokes smoothness and fragmentation. Although the primary theme is prolonged for a full fifty-seven bars its D major tonality remains completely stable, but for a single interruption: F major at b. 23 (RM 2). This interruption, however, generates a brief harmonic snag at the heart of the tonic triad. As noted, the antecedent begins with a melodic D in the oboe part, the consequent with E, a whole tone higher, and the third phrase (the development of this consequent) climbs another tone to F♯. The overall melodic trajectory of the primary theme articulates an arpeggio from D4 to D5 before descending by step back to D4. The ascending pattern of the arpeggio is broken at b. 23 when the chromatically contracting motion between the oboe and the tutti violas pulls towards F major (affirmed by bass V–I motion). F major thus splits the ascending tonic arpeggio at its harmonic midpoint, offering just a glimpse of something foreign buried right in

the middle of the tightly knit D major frame. The key of F major returns at b. 114 creating a curious formal junction that blends developmental and codetta properties.

Were Strauss to have left the articulation entirely to the oboist, an impression of thematic seamlessness could probably be carried through the whole of the primary theme—it is to this end, after all, that Binkley attempts to assist the oboist's breathing. However, Strauss places slurs across every two bars in the oboe part that do not correspond to the natural phrase structure of the musical line.⁷¹ These slurs are at odds with the slurs provided in the accompanying strings, for instance at bb. 4–5 and 6–7. It is possible that the overlapping of articulation points between the parts may be intended to create an effect of total legato, but the contrasting timbre of the oboe articulation remains prominent above the accompanying instruments and the effect of total legato cannot wholly be achieved by this means. Moreover, given that the oboe carries the melodic phrase, it would make sense for its own line to be prioritised musically in a distribution of articulation, but this is clearly not the case. An example of counterintuitive articulation can be found in the three quavers at the end of b. 10 which lead lyrically to the downbeat of b. 11, but where Strauss's slurs indicate to the contrary that they 'belong' to the phrase preceding. That these slurs are intentional is further suggested by Strauss's meticulous articulation marks elsewhere, see, for example the oboe part at b. 74, or the change from bowed to slurred articulation in the strings for the same figuration at bb. 69–70.

The issue of breathing, while critical, is not a flashy obstacle for the virtuoso performer to overcome, and some oboists (for example Leon Goosens, who

71. It is perhaps worth noting that even in the earliest sketches for the Oboe Concerto, in which little other than the shape and harmony notes of the melodic phrases are present, Strauss slurs the soloist's bars uniformly in groups of two, See *Sketchbook 135*, p. 124 (Richard Strauss Institute).

recorded the work in 1947) have chosen to ignore Strauss's slur marks to 'more effectively express the inherent shape of the musical phrases'—and presumably also to draw some more air into their lungs.⁷² The freely breathing oboist here departs from the articulation instructions Strauss provides in order to create an expressive effect that is ostensibly present in the musical phrase, but undermined by Strauss's own instructions. But even the soloist who chooses to ignore Strauss's slurs must fail in their expression of this fifty-seven bar subject, and so the challenge of articulation becomes a matter of how best to hide the impossibility of the task set by the musical subject, rather than how best to overcome it.

In his book *The Free Spirit*, C. B. Cox undertakes an appraisal of liberal idealism in English novels of the early twentieth century. He identifies a common trope of disability that is associated with certain characters, and which comes to stand for the lack of purposeful action associated with being an intellectual, or an educated liberal, in a period of revolution.⁷³ In the Oboe Concerto, I propose that the virtuoso performer is hindered by Strauss's writing in a manner akin to the disabilities of these characters. Binkley shows how the oboist is compromised in the expression of the concerto's motivic continuity using an example from the cadenza of the second movement.⁷⁴ In order to draw out the melodic connection between the motivic material of the second movement's primary subject and that of the *Metamorphosen* theme (*w*) found throughout the work, the oboist could adjust their phrasing (see square brackets in Figure 3.3). However, though the melodic gesture is repeated, Strauss articulates it in the same

72. Binkley, 'Three Versions of the *Concerto for Oboe and Small Orchestra* by Richard Strauss: an Analytical and Historical Study for the Performer', 47.

73. C. B. Cox, *The Free Spirit: A Study of Liberal Humanism in the Novels of George Eliot, Henry James, E.M. Forster, Virginia Woolf, Angus Wilson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 2.

74. Binkley, 'Three Versions of the *Concerto for Oboe and Small Orchestra* by Richard Strauss: an Analytical and Historical Study for the Performer', 48.

Figure 3.3 – Binkley’s alternative phrasing in cadenza



way each time (in the manner of the primary subject) to cut off the possibility of an expressive allusion to theme *w*.

Rather than admit a deficiency of idea, Cox’s characters shift the onus of the idea’s expression onto the deficiency of the human expressing it: translated into the terms of the Oboe Concerto, then, it does not matter how large the oboist’s lungs are, they cannot be true to what is presented in the score while also seeking maximum smoothness in performance. Goosens and others recognise a discrepancy between what they consider the expressive potential of the music and the expressive interpretation Strauss himself provides, and so artificially engineer the effect of continuous sound by breaking tied notes in order to breathe in inconspicuous or ‘natural’ places, or else they change Strauss’s phrasing to heighten formal continuity between movements. Oboists who have undertaken to play this concerto without Strauss’s articulation, and who have even decided to alter its notes to increase playability or enhance expression, seem to have different priorities from the intellectual characters Cox discusses, who come to take pleasure in their disability because they believe it excuses them from taking the action they intellectually commend.

The question of what, if anything, the Oboe Concerto is trying to express remains open. It leaps over the monumentality of the nineteenth-century symphony, the drama of Strauss’s tone poems, and the emotional grit of his operas

to present a work that seems altogether more pedestrian. The concerto does not reach expressively into the depths of experience or challenge the sonic possibilities of the instrument, but focusses the performer's energy on breathing in as inconspicuous a manner as possible. One might argue that the comparison with symphonies and operas is a false measure for a work such as this—that, historically, this vision of a grand, public, and social music had had its day and its ideals had proved ineffectual. One could even suggest that it is to this end that the oboist should fail in the convincing presentation of their part. However, the work does not lend itself to such a critical reading, and nor do soloists seem inclined to engineer their own. It takes great skill, of course, to play the piece, but this skill falls mostly on deaf ears when, in attempting to read through Strauss's slurs to the 'real music', the performer joins in with the task of masking the friction between the 'universal' ostensibly carried by the style of the concerto, and the material of it (the singular, flawed identity of the work). The concerto becomes for the performer an expression of their own manner of overcoming—that is, of their personal overcoming of the problems of the work.

Strauss's Oboe Concerto may hold an important place in the history of oboe repertoire, but, like most other twentieth-century concertos, it is otherwise not an especially well known piece. Chianca suggests that 'the oboe flourished in the eighteenth century, but missed the golden era of virtuoso players in the nineteenth century because the instrument was still undergoing important developments in its construction' and it 'could not provide the sonority valued by Romantic composers'.⁷⁵ While Strauss's Oboe Concerto played a role in the development of repertoire for the instrument, it did not provide justification for *why* a repertoire should be developed for the oboist into the twentieth century;

75. Chianca, 'Formal Analysis of the Concerto for Oboe and Small Orchestra by Richard Strauss', 2

and because of this failure, the solo protagonist is destined to play out its act of personal endurance in an increasingly dim parallel universe.

‘The plain fact that works called “concerto” continued to be composed after 1945’, writes Arnold Whittall, ‘demonstrates the failure of the twentieth-century avant-garde initiatives to create a totally new musical world’.⁷⁶ Nothing about the Oboe Concerto gives the impression that Strauss intended to create a new world through its composition. The work is light, but it is not background music. It is difficult to play, but it easy to listen to. It is not reducible to mere entertainment, but neither does it take responsibility for the dialectic of universality and individuality that is demanded of serious musical forms in the tradition it ostensibly stands to preserve. The Oboe Concerto is a connoisseur’s piece that blasphemes against both of its parent genres (the virtuoso concerto and the symphony) for the mild delight of those who have a chamber large enough to accommodate a small orchestra.

76. Arnold Whittall, ‘The Concerto since 1945’, chap. 9 in *The Cambridge Companion to the Concerto*, ed. Simon P. Keefe, Cambridge Companions to Music (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 161.

Chapter 4

Subjectivity

4.1 *Metamorphosen*

Strauss completed *Metamorphosen* (TrV 290) during the final months of the Second World War. The work was commissioned in the summer of 1944 by Paul Sacher for the Zurich-based Collegium Musicum in part as a ruse to procure the ailing Strauss a travel permit.¹ Strauss had, in fact, been working for some time prior to the official commission on an 'Adagio for circa eleven strings', but he dated the autograph manuscript as having begun composition on 13 March 1945, the day after the Vienna State Opera was bombed.² The completed work is scored for twenty-three solo strings: ten violins, five violas, five cellos, and three double basses.

In this chapter I will bring together historical and musical aspects of *Metamorphosen* that have tended to occupy separate realms in musicological writing on the work, but I also aim to challenge the now almost automatic reception of the piece as inherently pessimistic. In keeping with ideas developed in previous

1. May, 'Last Works', 186.

2. *ibid.*

chapters, and situating *Metamorphosen* in the context of liberal humanism, I will explore how the work relates to a radical liberal humanist subjectivity by considering the musical form as a purposeful arrangement of numerous independent musical moments that collectively declare a single musical entity. I will argue that *Metamorphosen*'s closed musical form is not fully explicable by the functional properties of sonata form despite being dependent on sonata form for the organisation of its musical language.³

Unlike many of Strauss's late works *Metamorphosen* has received a significant amount of scholarly attention. Following its premiere performance Willi Schuh extended his original programme note into a three-page article published in the *Schweizerische Musikzeitung*, and the work has since maintained interest in various quarters of the musicological community.⁴ While the majority of German-language literature on *Metamorphosen* focuses on aspects of the work's compositional process—in particular the genesis of specific thematic ideas, detailed below—English-language studies are usually contained within book-length biographies. The symbolic dating at the top of the score, numerous letters expressing the composer's devastation at the state of Germany's cultural monuments, and the score's famous annotation 'IN MEMORIAM!' (which accompanies a quotation from the slow movement of Beethoven's 'Eroica' symphony), have bolstered interpretations of the work as Strauss's personal elegy to the decline of western culture.

Six pages devoted to a descriptive analysis of *Metamorphosen* in the third volume of Norman Del Mar's biographical trilogy typify the life-and-works style

3. Leonard B. Meyer has described in detail how the history of the theory of sonata form is aligned with the history of the form itself, and also how sonata form came to reflect trends in the philosophical reception of music. See Leonard B. Meyer, *Style and Music: Theory, History, and Ideology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 306–308.

4. Willi Schuh, 'Richard Strauss' "Metamorphosen"', *Schweizerische Musikzeitung* 86 (1946): 80–3.

reading.⁵ Del Mar's analysis, reminiscent of Hans von Wolzogen's leitmotiv guides for Wagner's music dramas, takes the reader on a tour of the work's various themes and tonal areas, and concludes with an interpretation of *Metamorphosen* as a statement of loss and cultural mourning. In addition to Del Mar's example, such readings can be found in *Richard Strauss: Man, Musician, Enigma* and an earlier volume *Richard Strauss* both by Michael Kennedy, Tim Ashley's *Richard Strauss*, Matthew Boyden's biography *Richard Strauss*, and Bryan Gilliam's *The Life of Richard Strauss*.⁶ These volumes, which vary significantly in scope and style, sit at the boundary of academic writing and arts journalism.⁷ Each pursues its own chronological journey through a portion of the composer's life and is directed towards a general readership more than those wishing to gain close critical insight into Strauss's music.⁸

Two recurring themes in German-language analytical studies of *Metamorphosen* are the work's musical origins and the way in which the idea of metamorphosis might be embedded in its musical form. Hermann Danuser's 1986 chapter 'Über Richard Strauss' "Metamorphosen"' locates *Metamorphosen*'s transformational aspect at the level of structure: he proposes a theory of musical develop-

5. Del Mar, *Richard Strauss: A Critical Commentary on His Life and Works*, 425–431.

6. Kennedy, *Richard Strauss: Man, Musician, Enigma*, 361 and Michael Kennedy, *Richard Strauss*, Rev. ed (London: Dent, 1988), 107; Tim Ashley, *Richard Strauss* (London: Phaidon, 1999), 203; Boyden, *Richard Strauss*, 354–355; Gilliam, *The Life of Richard Strauss*, 54–55.

7. Robert Wattenbarger has suggested that the influence of Michael Kennedy's and Norman Del Mar's biographies (and their style of scholarship) over subsequent writing on Strauss was possible in part because musicology in Great Britain was not fully professionalised until the second part of the twentieth century, before which time the academic study of music was often undertaken from outside the disciplinary structures of the university. See Wattenbarger, 'Richard Strauss, Modernism, and the University: A Study of German-Language and American Academic Reception of Richard Strauss from 1900 to 1990', 242.

8. A small number of more general analytical texts, for example Daniel Harrison's *Harmonic Function in Chromatic Music*, isolate elements of *Metamorphosen*'s musical language to demonstrate broader analytical or theoretical points. Daniel Harrison, *Harmonic Function in Chromatic music: A Renewed Dualist Theory and An Account of its Precedents* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 132-3. Such texts are not included in this overview because they do not present complete or near complete analyses of *Metamorphosen*, however, Harrison's particular dealings with the opening motif of *Metamorphosen* will be considered in more detail in §4.3.

ment that negotiates between musical continuity and musical discontinuity and ultimately transforms the larger sonata structure into a unique form—this is an idea I will develop in my own reading.⁹ In 1963 Wilfred Brennecke published his analysis of *Metamorphosen* as the first half of a two-part study on Strauss's and Paul Hindemith's respective metamorphoses.¹⁰ Brennecke suggests that the 'Eroica' quotation found at the end of the piece is the 'true form' of the work's principal theme, but that the constant contrapuntal treatment of motifs and themes gives the impression of musical material in constant transformation.¹¹ Beyond this, he is reluctant to make claims about *Metamorphosen*'s large-scale structure, asserting instead that the work is *sui generis* and not to be understood through its form. Brennecke does, however, suggest that *Metamorphosen* alludes to both a three-part archaic fantasy form and a free sonata form.¹²

One theory in particular about the work's origin has maintained an influence over *Metamorphosen*'s reception since it was aired in a broadcast on Bavarian radio in 1950 (the theory was later published as an essay both English- and German-language journals).¹³ Kurt Wilhelm and Ludwig Kusche suggested that *Metamorphosen* grew out of a sketch for an unfinished piece entitled 'Trauer um München'. They drew attention to Strauss's involvement with the Dresden, Munich, and Berlin theatres (which were all destroyed in Allied bombing) as biographical evidence of the composer's emotional attachment to German cul-

9. Hermann Danuser, 'Über Richard Strauss' "Metamorphosen"', in *Festschrift Hans Conrandin zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. V Kalisch and A. Zimmerlin E. Meier J. Willmann (Bern and Stuttgart: Haupt, 1983), 179–98 as noted in Patricia Ann Dobiesz, 'Richard Strauss's "Metamorphosen": A Reception and Performance History' (Thesis, 2002), 53.

10. Wilfried Brennecke, 'Die Metamorphosen-Werke von Richard Strauss und Paul Hindemith', *Schweizerische Musikzeitung* 103, no. iv (1963): 199–208.

11. *ibid.*, 137.

12. *ibid.*, 131.

13. Ludwig Kusche and Kurt Wilhelm, 'Die "Metamorphosen" von Richard Strauss: Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Werkes', *Schweizerische Musikzeitung* 91 (1951): 51–4 reprinted in English as Ludwig Kusche and Kurt Wilhelm, 'Richard Strauss's "Metamorphosen"', *Tempo* 19 (1951): 19–22.

tural institutions. From here, they pointed to a musical similarity between the thematic material of ‘Trauer um München’ and *Metamorphosen*’s main theme.

Until Timothy L. Jackson’s analytical chapter ‘The Metamorphosis of the *Metamorphosen*’, this genesis narrative dominated both popular and academic interpretations of the work.¹⁴ Jackson’s comprehensive study of the work’s preliminary sketches and Schenkerian-style analysis of the final score refutes the theory presented by Wilhelm and Kusche. He concludes that the ‘Trauer um München’ theme belongs to a shorter piece, ‘München, ein Gedächtniswalzer’ (which was originally intended as film music for a documentary about the eponymous city), and was not the precursor of *Metamorphosen*’s principal theme. Writing two years after Jackson’s article, the German musicologist Birgit Lodes further dismisses Wilhelm’s and Kusche’s origin theory on the grounds of its chronological impossibility according to the order of compositional sketches, and a metrical dissimilarity between the two works.¹⁵ That the ‘Trauer um München’ sketch is still cited in CD liners and programme notes as the thematic origin of *Metamorphosen* shows the appeal of such biographically motivated interpretations of Strauss’s music.¹⁶

The most influential reading of *Metamorphosen* to date is Jackson’s 1992 chapter. Jackson suggests that *Metamorphosen* depicts humanity’s descent to bestiality, carried musically through a modal transformation of C major to C minor. Grounding this reading is Goethe’s poem ‘Niemand wird sich selber kennen’ (*No one can know themselves*), which Strauss set prior to the composition of *Metamorphosen* as a part-song for male voices, but which was never published.

14. Jackson, ‘The Metamorphosis of the *Metamorphosen*: New Analytical and Source-Critical Discoveries’.

15. Birgit Lodes, ‘Richard Strauss’ Skizzen zu den “Metamorphosen” und ihre Beziehung zu “Trauer um München”’, *Die Musikforschung* 47 (1994): 234–252. Unlike Jackson, Lodes does not reassign the ‘Trauer um München’ sketch to ‘München, ein gedächtniswalzer’.

16. The work’s reception history will be considered in §4.7.

Based on this sketch-book connection Jackson once again makes a biographical reading of the work, proposing that Strauss's reuse of part-song material—deliberately inverting its philosophical message of redemption—in *Metamorphosen* amounts to a personal confession of culpability in the Nazi regime; an idea that has been absorbed into the mainstream commentary on the work.¹⁷ He claims that, with Goethe's poem as its basis, the “precise concept” of *Metamorphosen* is thus poetic, philosophical, and possibly personal: the negation of traditional affirmation of self-knowledge as a means of discovering the divine within'.¹⁸ It is the personal aspect that has been taken up most enthusiastically by Strauss's subsequent biographers, one of whom sees *Metamorphosen* as ‘a deeply personal apologia for having had anything to do with the Nazi regime at any time’¹⁹ and another ‘so intensely personal a statement that he [Strauss] shied away from the idea of its being heard in public’.²⁰

Jackson's reading of the sketch books is compelling, and the musical evidence he provides to indicate a relationship between the incomplete ‘Niemand wird sich selber kennen’ and *Metamorphosen* certainly suggests that there is a musical relationship between the two that exceeds mere resemblance. That is not to say, however, that the poem's text is the ultimate key to understanding *Metamorphosen*, or even, that it should necessarily be taken into account at all in an analysis of the string study. Matthieu Schneider is the only scholar to have posed a challenge to the now-received view that *Metamorphosen* is based on Goethe's poem. In his 1998 article ‘Les Métamorphoses étaient-elles à l'origine

17. Boyden is the strongest advocate for a reading of *Metamorphosen* as a personal admission of guilt. See Boyden, *Richard Strauss*, 354–355.

18. Jackson, ‘The Metamorphosis of the *Metamorphosen*: New Analytical and Source-Critical Discoveries’, 200.

19. Kennedy, *Richard Strauss*, 107.

20. Ashley, *Richard Strauss*, 203 The evidence of Strauss ‘shying away’ from performing *Metamorphosen* has been contested in Dobiesz, ‘Richard Strauss's “Metamorphosen”: A Reception and Performance History’, ch. 2.

de forme lied', Schneider argues that there is no direct relationship between *Metamorphosen* and Goethe's poem, but that the composer felt some more general inclination towards the despondency of Goethe's poetic subject, which he sought also to express in his own composition.²¹

While Jackson himself makes the relationship of the poem to *Metamorphosen* the crux of his interpretation, it seems to me significant that Strauss chose not to publish Goethe's poem alongside the final score of *Metamorphosen*, and made no reference to the existence of the poem in direct relation to the composition beyond the proximity of the early sketches for each work. Even if he had (and here I am inclined to agree with Schneider), I would suggest more cautiously than Jackson that the most it is possible to assert is that both the poem and Strauss's composition meant something to the composer at this particular moment in his life. 'Niemand wird sich selber kennen' may well contribute to an understanding of *Metamorphosen*, but to overlay direct congruencies between the poem's narrative and Strauss's music is to risk imposing a meaning on *Metamorphosen* that could distort any aesthetic character that the work might have independently.

One further analysis that stands apart on methodological grounds from those mentioned above can be found in the private *Sydney Undergraduate Journal of Musicology*. Carlo Antonioli employs Hepokoski's and Darcy's sonata theory in his examination of the work and extends a hermeneutic reading that projects the whole work as a 'dream fantasy' staging a conflict between pan-triadicism and tonality.²² While I disagree with his interpretation, I share with Antonioli a set of theoretical tools, which will themselves be considered in more detail in

21. Matthieu Schneider, 'Les Métamorphoses étaient-elles à l'origine de forme lied?', *Cahiers Franz Schubert* 13 (1998): 17–38.

22. Carlo Antonioli, 'Sonata Form and Key Centres in Richard Strauss's "Metamorphosen"', *Sydney Undergraduate Journal of Musicology* 5 (2015): 3–33.

§4.2.

Building on the analytical theme of a *sui generis* form pursued by Danuser and Brennecke, I suggest that the aesthetic totality constructed in *Metamorphosen* rejects the ideologically constrained projection of the human subject found in its contemporary historical circumstance (represented foremost by sonata form and the formal unity it projects), and I will further question the idea of transformation as it relates to the work's main musical theme. In order to grasp *Metamorphosen* not just as the sum of its formal components, but as the greater totality of a musical history that is sedimented in its content, I will examine the relationship of the work's independent form to inherited formal conventions. In particular, I will consider how its negotiation and ultimate rejection of sonata form discloses a profound understanding of the limitations of aesthetic truth. By attending to apparently abstract musical issues I will suggest that *Metamorphosen* is able to find meaning that is beyond the ability of its own musical language fully to express. I will suggest that *Metamorphosen* runs counter to the pessimistic interpretations that have come to dominate the work's reception history. Disenchanted with the ideology that supports it, I will propose that *Metamorphosen* discovers a new 'totality' beyond its own formal parameters and makes the autonomous musical work, perhaps surprisingly, once again a space for radical contemplation. Contrary to the pessimistic interpretations that have come to dominate the work's reception history, my reading suggests that *Metamorphosen* presents a means of hoping at a historical moment in which no hope for the future seemed possible.

4.2 Establishing a sonata form

Just as works of sonata form can expose historical prejudices and anxieties, so too can each theory of sonata form harbour those antagonisms and intellectual biases that are found in the context of its inception. Its first major theorist, A. B. Marx, saw sonata form as the pinnacle of complex musical form, reaching a state of ‘maximal variety’ within an ‘organically conceived unity’ via the increasingly complex synthesis of melodic and harmonic modules.²³ Although Scott Burnham has argued that Marx’s aim was not specifically to reproduce Hegelian intellectual models for musical creation, Hegelian ideas of dialectical synthesis clearly underlie aspects of Marx’s theory of musical form.²⁴ More recently, Daniel K. L. Chua has returned to the notion of synthesis, arguing that sonata forms emerge from the ‘double activity of indicating and subverting [the sonata form] structure in an ironic attempt to synthesise the universal and the particular—the dichotomy of subject and object, content and form’.²⁵ Again, he considers sonata forms the result of a dialectic—idea and material represented in the fusion of form and content—but the end towards which he claims these sonata forms are directed is different from those of Marx. Chua’s disbelief in the possibility of synthesis is apparent in his use of the adjective ‘ironic’, but this perhaps postmodern insecurity surely cannot be applied to every sonata form from the Romantic era onward (as is Chua’s source base), nor to the modernist sonata forms whose object is less sardonic synthesis than the brutal expression

23. Adolf Bernhard Marx and Scott G. Burnham, *Musical Form in the Age of Beethoven: Selected Writings on Theory and Method*, Cambridge studies in music theory and analysis (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 10.

24. Scott Burnham, ‘The Role of Sonata Form in A. B. Marx’s Theory of Form’, *Journal of Music Theory* 33, no. 2 (1989): 248.

25. Daniel K. L. Chua, *Absolute Music and the Construction of Meaning* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 211.

of its impossibility.²⁶

Jackson's analysis of *Metamorphosen* takes a Schenkerian approach to the work's tonal form. His middleground and background graphs more clearly reveal a continuous structure than they do Schenker's bipartite model for sonata form, but, despite this, Jackson still proffers the bipartite reading.²⁷ Even without its suggestive title, Strauss's *Metamorphosen* certainly seems to deal with long-ranging musical transformation in the context of a sonata form—something clearly revealed in Jackson's analysis. However, I suggest that the process by which this transformation occurs is less to do with the internal mutation of musical material (as also argued by Brennecke and Danuser) than it is with the more abstract framing devices that re-interpret the musical material in the progression of the work. These structural 'framing devices'—the generic markers of sonata form—are not fully accounted for in Jackson's voice-leading graphs; but with a different set of analytical tools, Jackson's instincts about Strauss's sonata form and the work's large-scale structural continuity might be brought together to reveal more about *Metamorphosen's* form than was seen in 1992.²⁸

26. Pierre Boulez's Piano Sonata No. 2, for example—see Dominique Jameux, *Pierre Boulez* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 241.

27. Jackson's background voice-leading reduction (Jackson, 'The Metamorphosis of the *Metamorphosen*: New Analytical and Source-Critical Discoveries', 212) nominally indicates a two-part sonata structure. He suggests that the conventional $\hat{2}$ interruption (voiced enharmonically as a $\sharp\hat{1}$ is transferred to the bass voice at b. 386, but in the context of his own graph this is far less the tonal demarcation of the *Urlinie* marking the end of the first section of a sonata form, than it is part of a single chromatic bass progression spanning the entire work. The contradiction Jackson encounters between the continuous structure of his own graph and the bipartite model he overlays has a precedent in music of the nineteenth century. As Peter H. Smith has argued, Schenker's notion of the unified organic form has more in common with sonatas more nearly contemporary with the theorist (for example Brahms's) than the eighteenth-century examples the theorist himself chose as models. Smith explains how both Brahms and Schenker shared 'historical positions, musical inclinations and [a]esthetic values' together with a desire to reconcile the 'sharply articulated musical surfaces of the late eighteenth-century sonata style with the [a]esthetics of the late nineteenth century, which in contrast favoured continuous motion and highly evolutionary formal relationships'. Peter H. Smith, 'Brahms and Schenker: A Mutual Response to Sonata Form', *Music Theory Spectrum* 16, no. 1 (1994): 77–78, doi:10.2307/745831.

28. In this regard, the notion of a 'reversed recapitulation' (a phenomenon Jackson wrote about

Since Jackson's analysis of *Metamorphosen*, methodological approaches to musical form—in particular sonata form—have changed dramatically. Notably, the publication of William Caplin's *Classical Form* and James Hepokoski's and Warren Darcy's *Elements of Sonata Theory*, have had a profound effect on the discipline. Caplin's revival of *Formenlehre* is a conscious response to new musicology's 'mistrust of systematic classificatory models of musical organisation',²⁹ but its indebtedness to new musicology's turn towards post-structuralist discourse is evident in his reluctance to commit to a definition of 'form' beyond the processes by which the idea of form might be determined or constructed.³⁰ Caplin's theory is 'empirical and descriptive, not deductive and prescriptive', which is to say that it arises out of real examples of sonata forms and not from the notion of sonata form as a generic model. Where Caplin's *Classical Form* combines a more traditional empirical methodology with postmodern principles, Hepokoski's and Darcy's *Sonata Theory* mixes a positivistic approach to musical material with a methodologically post-Hegelian dialectic of abstract and material form. Their concept of a dialogic form—of a material sonata in constant relation to a (non-material) generic norm—drives the analyst always towards the space between material and ideal, and it is in this theoretical space, made tangible in the uniqueness of its musical form, that I suggest the liberal humanist subjectivity of *Metamorphosen* might be found.

While my analysis focusses on the 'process' of form, I do not aim to describe how *Metamorphosen* works as a sonata form, nor how it relates to other sonata

himself after the publication of his *Metamorphosen* essay) would surely also have an influence on any subsequent reading of the work's sonata form. Timothy L. Jackson, 'The Tragic Reversed Recapitulation in the German Classical Tradition', *Journal of Music Theory* 40, no. 1 (1996): 61–111.

29. William Earl Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 3.

30. William Earl Caplin et al., *Musical Form, Forms and Formenlehre: Three Methodological Reflections* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2009), 11; Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven*, 9.

forms of its era, but rather, I wish to examine how *Metamorphosen* both depends on the idea of sonata form and yet also negates it. In this way my reading of *Metamorphosen* resonates with the discussions of processual form in Beethoven's 'Tempest' sonata by Dahlhaus and Janet Schmalfeldt.³¹ In particular, Dahlhaus describes the opening movement of the sonata as 'thwart[ing] and negat[ing]' the modular notion of sonata form a contemporary listener might expect.³² The crucial difference between my approach here and Dahlhaus's and Schmalfeldt's can perhaps be explained historically: while Beethoven's 'Tempest' sonata makes the process of becoming a subject an undertaking in dialogue with the sonata form whole, the historical situation of *Metamorphosen* questions the possibility of a sonata form totality altogether. What these works and readings do have in common is the notion of subjective becoming via a radical relationship to form. They both assert, through an encounter with and immanent transformation of the idea of sonata form, an original and profound musical subject. Sonata form was an 'indispensable precondition of the elevated artistic status enjoyed by Beethoven and the Austro-German masters who followed him [...] and a guiding parameter of Strauss's own musical education, one that he had explored and mastered with unrivalled precocious fastidiousness'.³³ As the archetype of tonal form, sonata structures in the twentieth century bear the historical weight of tonal ideology even more keenly than their predecessors had done. *Metamorphosen's* interaction with sonata form can, therefore, be read itself as a point of historical and hermeneutic interest.

A full diagram of *Metamorphosen's* sonata form is inappropriate for the piece

31. Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 14; Schmalfeldt, *In The Process Of Becoming: Analytical And Philosophical Perspectives On Form In Early Nineteenth-Century Music*, Chapter 2, see also Janet Schmalfeldt, 'Form as the Process of Becoming: The Beethoven-Hegelian Tradition and the 'Tempest' Sonata', *Beethoven Forum* 4 (1995): 37–71.

32. Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 14.

33. Youmans, *Richard Strauss's Orchestral Music and the German Intellectual Tradition: The Philosophical Roots of Musical Modernism*, 176.

Table 4.1 – Formal outline of *Metamorphosen*

Bar	Area	Section	Key	
1–60	Exposition	P	c/e	
60–82		Tr		
82–95		S1.1	G	
95–103		S1TR		
103–130		S1.2		
130–145		Tr		
146–187	Development	S2	E	
187–212		Tr		
213–332			c	
333–344		Retransition		
344–389		Reversed recapitulation	R:S	C
390–400			R:-P	c
400–432	R:P–S			
433–449	R:P		c	
449–481	Coda			
481–501		Tr		
502–560		Coda to coda		

at hand because, as I will shortly suggest, sonata form is not present at the beginning of the work. All the same, to give an idea of the whole formal framework a table is presented in Table 4.1 (p. 170) for guidance. I propose the following broad sections: exposition bb. 1–212, development bb. 213–344, recapitulation (reversed) bb. 344–449, coda bb. 449–end. The exposition is in three thematic areas: P (bb. 1–82), S1 (bb. 82–130), and S2 (bb. 130–187), followed by transitional material. Despite the opening key signature, and the double-tonic complex posited at the work’s beginning (C minor; E minor), by virtue of its closing structural cadence (ESC) the sonata form itself is in C minor. The first clearly defined tonal area, and also the first obvious large-scale structural marker in the absence of a clearly defined MC, is the onset of the second subject at b. 82. From here S1 can be divided into three sections, each ending with a cadence: S1.1, bb. 82–95, PAC onto C major (viola 1 and cello 1 carry the melodic voice);

Figure 4.1 – Comparison of *Metamorphosen*'s opening bars with S1.1

The figure displays two musical excerpts. The top excerpt, labeled '82-84', shows the opening of *Metamorphosen*. It features a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a bass clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The treble staff is labeled 'Vln 8, Vla 1-3, Vc 1' and contains a melodic line with a long note followed by a series of eighth notes. The bass staff is labeled 'Vc 2' and 'Vln 1' and contains a counter-melody with triplet markings. The bottom excerpt, labeled '1-3', shows the opening of S1.1. It features a bass clef staff with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and another bass clef staff with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The top staff is labeled 'Vc 1' and contains a long note followed by a series of eighth notes. The bottom staff is labeled 'Vc 4' and contains a counter-melody with a rising eighth-note pattern.

S1TR, bb. 95–103, IAC in G major; S1.2, bb. 103–130, PAC in G major (violins 5/7/8, violas 2/4 have the melodic voice). The analysis that follows is built around significant moments of structural unfolding and their consequences for understanding the work's formal logic.

The thematic material of S1.1, although very different in mood from the music at the beginning of the work, is nevertheless closely related to it. S1.1's opening melodic gesture (heard in the violas) is rhythmically identical to the work's opening, and the countermelody in the first violin part and upper cellos reinterprets the rising quavers of the cello 4 countermelody of the opening bars (see Figure 4.1, p. 171). The rearrangement of motivic material in S1.1 that was heard first at the opening of the work can be read in three ways: (i) the secondary theme is a transformed version of P material—inviting a monothematic reading of the exposition; (ii) S1.1 presents a totally independent subject conveying a sonata form whose primary contrast is one of mood rather than thematic content; or, more radically, (iii) S1.1 complicates the relationship of P

to S in the sonata form structure, positing an alternative P statement within the S zone. The lack of foreground motivic transformation together with the obvious punctuation of the transition (bb. 60–82) impedes a monothematic reading of the exposition and engineers a rhetorical break between material before the transition and material afterwards. Thus option (i) can be dismissed, leaving the normative secondary theme (ii), and the S–as–P secondary theme (iii) options as possible interpretations.

While the transitional passage leading towards S1.1 has some of the cosmetic features that might be expected of a transition—it builds energy before engineering a sudden contrast in harmonic rhythm and texture at b. 80 (taking the place of a medial caesura)—it presents neither a dominant lock nor any other form of tonal preparation, thus it fails to prepare structurally for the onset of the secondary theme. Moreover, when the ‘new’ thematic material arrives at b. 82 it does not correspond rhetorically to the presentation of a secondary theme. The melodic voice is hidden in the lower range of the viola and the note D is emphasised continually via an ornamental motif heard no fewer than 9 times in the 13 bars that make up S1.1, dominating the mid- and upper-registers of the texture (see Figure 4.2, p. 173—only recurring motif is shown, all other notes are blanked out for clarity). Instead of moving the large-scale thematic structure of the work forward, the repetition of this motif and the concealment of the theme proper give more the impression of closing material in a stable tonal space.

The C major cadence concluding S1.1 at b. 95 is perhaps the theme’s most indicative idiosyncrasy. To make sense of this unexpected turn away from the assumed tonic of the section (G major) it is necessary to view the theme in a wider context. Classically, the formal function of the secondary subject is to present a different tonal area from the preceding P material. In *Metamorphosen*, how-

Figure 4.2 – Emphasis of D through repetition of ornamental motif in bb. 83–93

The image shows two systems of musical notation. The first system consists of two staves: the top staff is for Violin 1 (Vn 1) and the bottom staff is for Viola 2 (Vlc. 2). The second system also consists of two staves: the top staff is for Violin 8 (Vn 8) and the bottom staff is for Viola 3 (Vlc. 3) and Viola 2 (Vlc. 2). The music is in G major (one sharp) and features a repeated ornamental motif that emphasizes the note D. The motif consists of a sequence of notes: D, E, F#, G, A, B, C, D, with various ornaments and phrasing marks.

ever, the space occupied by primary thematic material is tonally ambiguous. G major is clearly the principal key of the S1 space, but the transition leading to it concludes in C# major—an augmented fourth removed from S1's proposed tonic. At the pseudo caesura, bb. 80–81, the melodic voice (carried by violins 1, 4, 7, and viola 4) descends in a C# major triad (in violin 7 this is doubled enharmonically as D \flat major); in the second half of b. 81 the melodic C# falls down a semitone to B#, destabilising its tonal centre with a major seventh dissonance before slipping another semitone into b. 82. The major third, E# (violin 3) falls an augmented second to D, and G# falls a semitone to G natural. The C# at the bottom of the texture rises a semitone to D, thus emerges a G major chord in second inversion from the inward collapse of the C# major chord. The failure of the transitional space preceding the entrance of S to present adequate dominant preparation may itself be heard as a consequence of the earlier failure of the P space to present a strong tonic.

Perhaps counterintuitively, S1.1 deals with its inherited formal weakness by imposing this unexpected C major cadence at b. 95. For G major to be recognised as a proper secondary key area it must retrospectively create a tonic complex against which to stage a dominant. The C major cadence is, as it were,

Figure 4.3 – Voice-leading reduction showing structure of S1 theme

taches itself to the sonata form and declares its identity within that paradigm. The moment that S1 ‘touches’ the generic norm of the secondary subject function, it orientates the rest of the work through its clarifying lens. The matter before S1 retrospectively becomes P. The end of the secondary thematic area brings the development into being, and any return of thematic material constitutes a recapitulation. Were there no return of thematic material this absence would still be viewed in relation to sonata form as a deformation, such is the strength of sonata form’s influence as the signified structure projected by the apparent arrival of the secondary theme.

I have already noted that the alignment of the musical work with subjectivity is an ideological position derived from the liberal humanist notion of the autonomous subject (§1.4), but for meaning of any kind to emerge, some form of ideology is required.³⁴ Being a necessary part of any social structure or thought process, ideology is, then, inescapable, and the most pertinent question becomes how the subject relates to the ideology that defines it. Ideology is most noticeable when the gaps within its totalising allure are revealed, and already in *Metamorphosen* the sonata-form structure reveals itself to be a conscious construction. By the early twentieth century the gaps in sonata form’s claim to presenting a musical totality were, of course, writ large.

Robert Witkin explains, after Adorno, how classical tonality was understood as being ‘integral to bourgeois ideology. As ideology it offered an *image* of recon-

34. Concepts of autonomy, unity and organicism may be considered not so much the immanently coherent truths of great musical forms than tools for unveiling an ideological disposition towards the musical work as it relates to the human subject. And yet, the connection of musical and human subjectivity is a historically contingent fact that cannot be swept away as being ‘merely ideological’, because it is within this ‘mere’ ideological paradigm that much post-Classical era western art music was composed and began the generation of its meaning. It is, therefore, only through a technical examination of how the ideological conception of the autonomous musical subject functions as a totality that analysts can address the more specific issue of unity in individual musical forms, and the much broader question of musical meaning. See also Kevin Korsyn, ‘The Death of Musical Analysis? The Concept of Unity Revisited’, *Music Analysis* 23, nos. 2/3 (2004): 338, ISSN: 02625245, 14682249, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3700450>.

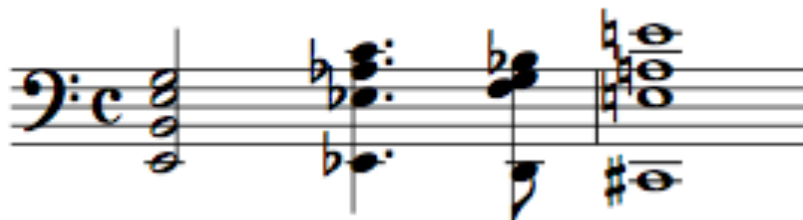
ciliation. In an antagonistic society constructed for the exploitation of nature, all social relations bear the scars of that antagonism and no identity is possible between the oppressive force of society and the spiritual needs of the individual.’³⁵ Even though the G major subject (that is, S1) is the first moment at which the work responds unequivocally to a sonata structure, that subject does not present itself as the *arrival* of sonata form. Instead, it stands as the affirmation of something that *has always already been there*. This is how and why one might consider sonata form to be an ideological structure, or at least, an apparatus supporting some more general ideological authority—say, tonality. Tonality, which undergirds the formal logic of the musical structure, by the early twentieth century was failing to represent the total extent of musical grammar and not unrelatedly, the liberal subject could find fault with this musical tool that had previously enabled some form of reconciliation between subject and world. *Metamorphosen*, I suggest, is a critical contribution to this process.

4.3 Establishing a primary subject

The affirmative tonal teleology of sonata form is problematised in *Metamorphosen*. It is not the S theme that needs tonal redemption (as is more usually the case), but the P theme: it is P’s tonic key and thematic parameters, not S’s, which are not fully established, and which it falls to the later sections of the form to achieve. *Metamorphosen*’s first nine bars consist of three modified repetitions of motif A (which is sometimes called the ‘transformation motif’), see Figure 4.4. In its first iteration, motif A leads the music away from an E minor chord and onto an A major chord in first inversion. This apparently tonal shift is realised hexatonically via A \flat major and G minor 7, with the bass voice descending chro-

35. Robert W. Witkin, *Adorno on Music* (London: Routledge, 1998), 45.

Figure 4.4 – Motif A

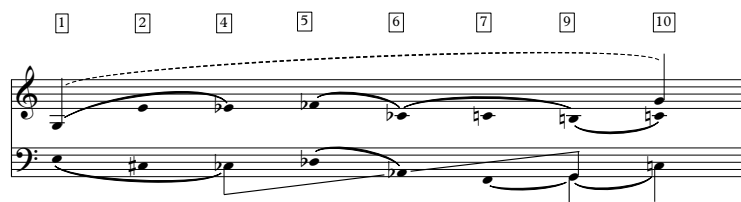


matically: E minor to A \flat major registers a T3 shift (P–L–P), and each voice then moves by step to form G minor 7. From there, the accompanying voices move by step while the melody leaps an augmented fourth to an E natural. Daniel Harrison has examined *Metamorphosen*'s opening bars in detail and suggests a multiple-tonic reading of the initial motif. He proposes four feasible interpretations of b. 1's harmonic movement based on four different tonics (A \flat /E/D/A) identifying later moments in the work that recover each of these tonic possibilities.³⁶ Although privileging the motive's isolated harmonic identity over a structural-harmonic reading of the phrase's unfolding distorts the extent to which this motif is tonally open ended, his reading is useful insofar as it reveals the basic tonal uncertainty of this opening gesture.

At the level of the motive, certainly, there is no tonic, but at the level of the phrase two tonic possibilities begin to emerge. The quasi-sequential repetition in bb. 3–4—which move from the concluding A major to C \flat major—might suggest, albeit covertly, E minor as the local tonic of the work's opening. The principal chords (those which begin and end each assertion of motif A in the first four bars) can be read—with enharmonic equivalents—as chords I–IV \flat –V

36. Harrison, *Harmonic Function in Chromatic music: A Renewed Dualist Theory and An Account of its Precedents*, 132–134.

Figure 4.5 – Voice-leading reduction confirming C minor as tonic



of the initial root position E minor that began the piece. Rather than confirming this ‘hearing’ with a cadence onto E minor, however, a two-bar transition leads to a third iteration of motif A beginning on $A\flat$. This time, motif A adopts a functionally tonal role leading to a C minor cadence: $vi-iib^{\circ}-V_4^6-V_3^5-Ib$. When viewed at the level of the phrase, then, the first two iterations of motif A can be read as an elaborately chromatic dominant preparation for b. 8 (see Figure 4.5) in which the $C\flat$ of b. 4 is picked up in the dominant chord (b. 9) as the leading-note of C minor.

It is tempting to reduce the opening seven bars to the status of dominant preparation. The C minor chord at b. 8 replicates on a small scale the effect of S1 at b. 82 insofar as it retrospectively reframes the functional progression of the immediately preceding music. In the same way that S1 had posited bb. 1–82 as ‘P’ to its S, the C minor at b. 8 posits bb. 1–4 as dominant preparation to its cadence. This reading is somewhat disingenuous, however, as outlined above, when the passage is considered in ‘real time’ appreciation of the chord changes—that is, in the aural context of performance. What we have, then, is the $C\flat$ major of bb. 4–5 operating as weak V whichever way it is perceived: either as part of a prolongation of $c:V$ at b. 9, or as the aural presentation of $e:V$, weakened by the hexatonic and chromatic harmonic language from which it proceeds. Rather than accepting Harrison’s four feasible tonics, I therefore suggest that a hesitant dual-tonic complex is introduced in the work’s opening

phrase, with C minor as the dominant partner in the relationship of tonics. This imbalance might appear inconsistent with the idea of a dual-tonic complex (surely E minor is simply part of an elongated dominant preparation of C minor, as per Figure 4.5, p. 178), and certainly it is not a satisfactory conclusion to the tonal reading, but it does acknowledge the structural fragility of the tonic in *Metamorphosen* and, more importantly, it draws attention to the significance of the note G as a shared sonority and structurally important tone ($\hat{4}/c$ or $\hat{3}/e$).

The end of the P space clarifies this dual-tonic complex further. The C minor cadence at b. 52 brings about a texture change from predominantly lower voices to predominantly upper voices and may at first appear to mark the end of the P theme. But ambiguity is cast over this when, at b. 60, a cadence at least as strong in E minor is heard in a second, alternative structural close. As at b. 52, this E minor ending also marks a change in texture, and the material directly following it is more obviously transitional—with sequential treatment of the rising quaver motif introduced earlier—than that in the intervening bars between bb. 52 and 60. In light of the argument presented above, I suggest that there is no formal ending to the P zone because, as P unfolds, it is unrecognisable as a subject (it is only when S retrospectively ‘declares’ a sonata form structure that the preceding material takes on the appearance of a P theme).

It may seem counterintuitive to turn again to the S theme, but it is here that the tonal ambiguity of the work’s opening motif is resolved, and it is also here that material from the work’s opening is glimpsed in the guise of a true P theme. As S1.2 moves towards its end a restatement of material from the very opening of the work is heard at original pitch. Crucially, this material achieves here, in the tonally stable and formally functional space of the S zone what it failed to do at the work’s opening: namely, to assert an E-based tonic via a stable dominant. Before this tonic can become fully established, however, it dissipates

Figure 4.6 – Middle-ground reduction of S1 showing brief E major interruption



back into the G major world of S1, and a dominant lock at b. 126 leads directly to a PAC on G, marking the essential expositional closure (EEC). See Figure 4.6, p. 122.

The sonata form articulated via the S theme is posited as a structure to rebel against, and, in such rebellion, material from the work's opening is moulded into a tonally compelling subject in its own right. Material from the P space stands in the way of S1's attempt to reach an EEC with a newfound sense of tonal direction. It reveals an apparently defiant subject breaking the rules of sonata form and obstructing a crucial structural moment. This moment demonstrates the power of the sonata form idea to redefine (or, in this case, to define for the first time) the subject. It is only through opposition to the abstract sonata—which *Metamorphosen* holds as a standard *within* its own structural working out—that P locates a tonal and thematic impetus that confirms not its independence as a subject, but its identity as a product of sonata form ideology.

Hepokoski's and Darcy's *Sonata Theory* describes the trajectory of sonata form as a 'structure of promise', setting up in the exposition the anticipation of tonic-key triumph in the recapitulation. This structure is complicated in *Meta-*

morphosen by the fact that S1 is the principal governor of the sonata form and P is the subject in need of structural consolidation. The relationship of the part to the ideological whole in *Metamorphosen* thus has a narrative analogue in the relationship of P to the sonata-form idea. It demonstrates the mutual reliance of material content and abstract form in the maintenance of an ideological system. Moreover, what is initially cast as an act of rebellion against the superstructure is, ultimately, the factor that confirms the subject's identity within it, for when the recapitulation comes the onus is now on the primary theme to bring about the ESC and prove itself a fully functioning—that is, ideologically assimilated—subject.

4.4 Promise fulfilled

Metamorphosen's reversed recapitulation begins with a glorious rendition of the S theme in C major, the original 'tonic' key which had been retrospectively posited by S1.1 in the exposition. The recapitulation of S1 (which from now on I'll refer to as 'R:S') combines material from both S sections, and explodes from a stuttering fragmentation of P material (bb. 341–344), that has been condensed to the oscillation of G minor and C \flat major chords (notably both twists of a 'correct' dominant for C- and E- based tonics) at the end of the short retransition (bb. 333–344).³⁷ This P material is too fragmentary to be considered recapitulatory, though its presence might once again point towards a kind of S-theme 'agency' that seeks to frame the sonata via its own parameters. In place of a proper dominant, the last triplet-crotchet of b. 344 presents a B \flat minor 7 chord (iii⁷/g). In the same way that, in the exposition, S1 had emerged from the in-

37. The second S section has not been discussed, but, in short, what appeared in the exposition as S2—a theme in and of itself—is reduced in the recapitulation to transitional material.

ward collapse of C♯ major, now B♭ minor 7 responds by opening outwards into the C major first inversion tonic, with B♭ pushing up a whole tone while the other voices fall a semitone. This tonal shift sounds a rhetorical blast, opening in unmissable fashion the space of recapitulation. Harmonic tension is peeled back to reveal an all-encompassing C major—the key that was retrospectively declared tonic by S1.1 in the exposition. R:S spans bb. 344–89 with a dominant lock from b. 377 that pushes towards the first attempt at an ESC.

The topic of utopia, glimpsed in the glorious C major of R:S, is couched in densely textured, major-mode tonal language—both tropes of a lost-age paradise in music of the twentieth century.³⁸ It revels in the promise of a tonal totality that appears to recall the imagined grandeur of a bygone golden era (see Neil Gregor for a detailed discussion of the nostalgic connotations of this musical moment in *Metamorphosen*).³⁹ A work such as this, which embraces a nostalgic utopian vision, holds up to view a false impression of its historical legacy, with the aim of somehow compensating for a lack in the present. But this utopia undermines itself twice. An ideal aesthetic cannot simply be laid before the listener in the musical language of the past, because any attempt to graft an idealised historical aesthetic onto an otherwise ‘modernist’ work would only show up with even greater clarity the wound in the present. Furthermore, for simple logical reasons, if it is already possible to express a concept, then that concept necessarily falls short of truly utopian idea, because the power of utopian discourse lies not in material realisation, but in the productive possibility that the idea itself affords.

38. See, for example Hepokoski’s discussion of utopian topics in Elgar’s music: James Hepokoski, ‘Gaudery, Romance, and the “Welsh Tune”: Introduction and Allegro’, in *Elgar Studies*, ed. J. P. E. Harper-Scott and Julian Rushton (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 135–71.

39. Neil Gregor, ‘Music, Memory, Emotion: Richard Strauss and the Legacies of War’, *Music and Letters* 96, no. 1 (2015): 55–76.

Utopia is an ideal towards which one might always imperfectly reach, and through which a material circumstance might be transformed, if only incompletely. The ‘hope’ offered in a nostalgic utopia might be emotionally persuasive, but intellectually it requires submission to an expired and imaginary transcendent other (golden-era nationalism or the cow-patty allure of pre-industrial countryside, for example). Moreover, any form of realisable utopia would—as well as being false for the logical reasons above—be tantamount to the declaration of the end of history, the end of historical striving towards a better state. It would entail the calcification of the subject, not its self-becoming. In a sense, then, the presentation of aesthetic utopia is not only straightforwardly anti-utopian, but also anti-historical in the way that it places all meaning on the emotional gratification one might receive purely and wholly within the bounds of a contemporary situation that is considered to be everything that can be imagined.⁴⁰

The appearance of *Metamorphosen*’s most jubilant moment in the first part of a reversed recapitulation highlights its presentation of utopia as something that is not available to the listener except through faith in a formal structure, which, as I have shown, is wanting in all other aspects. That this utopia occurs in the ‘wrong’ place is made all the more flagrant when the recapitulation of P crashes into the form in the minor mode. The extended dominant lock in R:S (from b. 377) that in a normative sonata rotation would prepare for the ESC now gains energy, becoming more frantic as the inevitable arrival of R:P draws closer. In the moment before the return of P, this forward motion is suspended in the note G in two octaves (G^1 and G^2)—a reminder of the dual-tonic *Kopfton* that had

40. Terry Eagleton describes the paradox of utopia in the following way ‘all utopian writing is also dystopian, since, like Kant’s sublime, it cannot help reminding us of our mental limits in the act of striving to go beyond them’. Terry Eagleton, ‘Pretty Much Like Ourselves’, *London Review of Books* 19, no. 17 (1997): 6–7, <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v19/n17/terry-eagleton/pretty-much-like-ourselves>.

been the melodic hinge for the complex of E minor and C minor at the opening of the work. The Gs fall through an octave and a half to the note C ($_1C$ and C^1), before rising again to $E\flat$ in the same octaves. As predicted in the exposition, the P theme interrupts R:S and makes its own key (C minor) the conclusive tonic of the sonata-form structure. This dramatic entrance of P quickly loses its potency, however, and fails to follow through to its own ESC. What appears a second attempt to instigate an ESC in the relative major via a mini rotation of thematic material (P–S) peters out into a general pause at b. 432, leaving a weak, first-inversion $B\flat$ dominant seventh hanging listlessly. Following b. 432's general pause, P material once again enters strongly, abandoning C minor initially for pitches transposed a major third higher. This final P iteration deflates to an ESC in C minor at b. 449.

Despite its hesitancy, what Hepokoski and Darcy call the 'structure of promise' is, at this point, technically fulfilled. Through the structure of promise the sonata form is seen to have enacted a form of structural validation on the P theme. Not only is P transformed from a collection of tonal possibilities (E minor/major, C minor/C major) into a definitive subject via the structure of promise, but it demonstrates its full independence from S by projecting its own minor key as the sonata form's tonic, thus symbolically overwriting what S1.1 had done in the exposition, namely to back-project its key (G major) onto the 'supposed' tonic of the tonally uncertain P that had preceded it. Moreover, it overcomes its own tonal idiosyncrasy in order to provide the unification of themes that is necessary in the recapitulation, in this case by dividing its expanded dual-tonic complex between the expositional interruption (which takes E major) and the recapitulation interruption (which takes C minor). It would appear, then, that *Metamorphosen* succeeds at last in forging an immanent and authentic sonata form which is ultimately guided by the P theme, and thus

wrenches an 'orthodox' tonal prolongation out of its self-conscious struggle with the sonata form.

Strauss takes the fractured tonal musical material from the work's opening and provides it with purpose in the context of sonata form ideology. By making it functional with the sonata he transforms this material into a proper primary subject. In one way, then, *Metamorphosen* might be narrated as the 'journey' of the P theme from its tonally muddled opening to the tragic fulfilment of the structure of promise in the recapitulation (this C minor tonic is surely the most depressing of the options presented at the work's opening). An analogy can be drawn here with the tragedy of the bourgeois subject, whose enlightenment is not freedom, but the knowledge that their purpose, indeed their entire being, is dictated by an inescapable and ultimately oppressive ideological force, as I suggested in Chapter 2. But this reading of *Metamorphosen* (and its analogy) is limited because it only tells one part of the work's form—that is, the 'narrative' of the P theme.

It is tempting, as a way of opening up a hermeneutics, to point to the work's sonata-form deformations—its underdetermined P theme, overdetermined S theme, hesitant ESC, reversed recapitulation, 'tragic' tonic of the P recapitulation etc.—as the primary source of the work's meaning. However, I suggest that this places too much authority on a musical moment (the arrival of the S theme) that is already undermined in its relationship to sonata form. That is, to imagine that this work is fully explicable via the language and norms of sonata form is to fall into a falsely authoritative formal logic. It is not enough to view *Metamorphosen* through the lens of sonata form because sonata form does not (and never has) been able wholly to contain *Metamorphosen*. The work depicts sonata form's failure not as a lack of major-mode triumph, but, much more fundamentally, as the failure of the ideology or formal structure itself. This failure

is represented by the insufficiency of sonata form's structure of promise to account for the totality of this work's form. While its relationship to sonata form helps generate one aspect of the work's meaning (namely, the linear narrative of the P theme) the sonata form—the ideology, that gives meaning to the P theme, S theme, tonal relations (and so on) fails to create a totality of *Metamorphosen's* form and therefore fails to explain the entirety of the subject, that is, the work as a whole.

There are at least four potentially 'totalising' gestures near the end of the piece: the sonata form is closed by the ESC; the P theme is granted a tonic; a paragenetic coda space enables rhetorical closure; and in the very last bars of the work the topic takes the explicit form of a funeral march. But one structural matter remains unresolved—the *Urlinie*—and it is through this, the final arbiter of structural unity in tonal music, that I suggest Strauss reinvigorates a revolutionary aspect of the liberal humanist ideal. The aspect that cannot be accounted for in twentieth-century tonal form is precisely that which autonomous art music is mandated, as a product of liberal humanism, to project—the universal element of human subjectivity that transcends the historical and ideological spaces of particular moments in space and time. In exposing this aspect (which might be conceived as the surplus part of human subjectivity that evades ideological explanation) *Metamorphosen* generates in its form a truth that exceeds its immediate historical circumstance and finds meaning beyond its structural reliance on sonata form. Only by reaching outside the language of its own structural framework can *Metamorphosen* find its totality, and this necessarily involves shifting register (both musical and hermeneutic).

4.5 Strauss Hero

The coda to the coda, as Jackson calls it, i.e. the music from the upbeat to b. 502 to the end, constitutes the most famous passage of the piece.⁴¹ *Metamorphosen* closes with a quotation, inscribed 'IN MEMORIAM!', from the second movement of Beethoven's Third Symphony, the 'Eroica'. This quotation and its inscription are responsible for wide-ranging speculation concerning Strauss's personal ambitions in writing *Metamorphosen*. The quotation has, for example, been considered an allusion to Hitler—the 'hero' who, like Beethoven's Napoleon, was eventually rejected by the composer.⁴² More often than not, however, it is understood to be a memorial for German culture—Strauss aligning his own music with the death of art music more generally.⁴³ According to this view, by 1946 the composer could not bear what had become of his world, and, not only wanted to declare its end, but apparently also wanted to control that ending. Rather than representing a single, symbolic death—the death of history, of Strauss, German music, or the people of Munich—I suggest that the 'Eroica' quotation stands for the unknown, unaccountable, universal aspect of twentieth-century human experience that makes the human more than the individual, and yet is not fully explained in contemporary narratives of social ideology.

Strauss's re-orchestration of the 'Eroica' quotation shifts the melodic line from the first violins to the double basses. This creates an un-Straussian harmonic problem. The tonic chord is sounded, on the first beat of b. 502, in second inversion. Echoing Jackson's reading, Gilliam describes this 'error' of orches-

41. Jackson, 'The Metamorphosis of the *Metamorphosen*: New Analytical and Source-Critical Discoveries', 208.

42. Boyden, *Richard Strauss*, 354.

43. As recorded by Gregor, 'Music, Memory, Emotion: Richard Strauss and the Legacies of War'.

tration as an ironic symbol of humanity's basest instincts.⁴⁴ But while a second inversion tonic might be abnormal, even destabilising, it seems like a stretch to hear it as the basest instinct of humankind. Instead, I feel that the harmonic 'problem' at the beginning of the funeral march simply reminds the listener that even within the perceived security of an ideological structuring system such as tonal sonata form, meaning is not fixed. The grammatical context that the tonal configuration provides can indicate function within the tonal network, but it cannot provide an inherent or implicit *value* (a base instinct, perhaps) to a pitch or even a collection of pitches. This moment is the arrival, at last, of C, Eb, and G in a para-structural space which exists solely to afford closure, and yet these notes do not present the perfect concluding tonic that *Metamorphosen* has been seeking. In context, these pitches present a $\frac{6}{4}$ chord; they do not provide tonic stability, but function as a double suspension over an absent dominant. In this way, the inverted C minor chord, 'the tonic chord', at this crucial moment in *Metamorphosen* points away from itself, and towards its own dominant $\frac{5}{3}$, in the search for a more satisfying closure.

This perfectly normal consequence of tonal grammar points to the aforementioned insight about the relation of the part to the whole, namely that the meaning imbued to the part by the ideological totality is real, but incomplete. The dramatic effect evoked at this final conjunction of rhetorical and tonal closure is thus one of reticence—a heaviness in the lower sonorities and a reluctance in the dragging bass to end the musical form for good. Certainly the harmonic dissonance caused by the second inversion implies a contrapuntal compulsion to keep going, but I suggest that the inability of *Metamorphosen* to reach an ending on its own terms stems not from a fear of an ugly fate or impending emptiness, but an acknowledgement that the future is unknown. Neither the

44. Gilliam, Grove Online 'Strauss', §7.

abstracted sonata structure nor a vaguer appeal to tonal structure has helped the work to come to a convincing conclusion, and it seems that the composer has no idea what might help this endeavour.

The separation of the quotation from the form of the rest of the work means that it has a trajectory of its own, one that has a directional propulsion which is independent of the sonata form and the tonal ambiguity that sets up between P and S. The quotation's formal independence enables Strauss to use it as a surrogate for *Metamorphosen's* own greatly desired ending, but without immanently solving the problems of the work's own form. Paradoxically, the surrogate ending serves to sustain the modern subject's inability to conceive of itself in terms of a totality, while also functioning as the concluding piece in that same totality puzzle.⁴⁵ While I argue that the 'Eroica' quotation is distinct from the wider form of the work, I do not propose that it is completely isolated from the anxieties that wrack the work's structure. Indeed, the quotation can function as a convincing surrogate only because it is knitted to an existing aspect of the work's form, the *Urlinie*.

The completion of the *Urlinie*, which traditionally stands for the final moment of tonal closure, is continued through the grafted Beethoven and binds the borrowed music to the immanent form. The *Kopftón*—G—had remained static at the completion of the sonata structure, preventing an *Urlinie* descent. Rather than descending at b. 449 (the ESC) G was reinstated at in violin 1, as the main melodic note of a new countermelody. From b. 498 the *Kopftón* descends through two octaves in cello 5 to the upbeat to b. 502. Though it is now embedded in the harmonic bowels of the work with the 'Eroica' quotation, it con-

45. In this way it contrasts with *Daphne's* means of overcoming the formal problem of $\frac{6}{4}$ tonic substitutes. The cadence that connected the 'radical' transformation music with the totalising concluding music was a gesture that came from within *Daphne's* own aesthetic frame (the Apollonian bias) and not from an attempt to reach beyond this frame.

tinues to function melodically. The ‘Eroica’ theme is treated in counterpoint with the P theme in the first violins until the first beat of b. 504, where an E minor first-inversion chord engineers an exchange of primary voice from the bass-led ‘Eroica’ theme to the soprano-led P theme. This surprising E minor chord is the moment of immolation and functional conclusion for this side of the dual-tonic complex. It interrupts the otherwise C minor context and prevents the *Kopfton*, once again, from fulfilling its structural obligation to fall to a tonic. Rather than pressing towards a PAC in E minor, the top voice begins a melodic *ascent*, doubled by first viola, through F, F \sharp , G, A, and B to C, and it is this final note that signals the thematic completion of the work and completes the *Urlinie*—from below.

Figure 4.7 – Graph showing *Kopfton*

Figure 4.7 displays two systems of musical notation for the *Kopfton*. The first system (measures 1-389) features a treble staff with notes and a bass staff with figured bass notation. Annotations include 'P', 'S1', 'S2 => dev', and 'R:S'. A boxed 'EEC' label is positioned above measures 130-145. The second system (measures 432-502) continues the notation, with annotations for 'R:P', 'R:S', 'Coda', and 'Eroica'. A boxed 'ESC' label is positioned above measures 449-495. Below the staves, the figured bass notation is: $\frac{6}{4}$ (G:Ic) eii (G:V) G:I E:I e \flat :V i eii C:V \flat /V I (NoCad.) for the first system, and cii g:V E \flat :i V \flat c:V i $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{6}{3}$ $\frac{6}{3}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ $\frac{6}{4}$ for the second system.

It is for contextual rather than theoretical reasons that I consider the melodic ascent in violin 1 at b. 502 to be the completion of the *Urlinie*. Schenker, of course, would not agree. Throughout the work, the *Kopfton* has been without the structural support it requires to function in the context of an *Urlinie*—it has been torn between E minor and C minor, and neither tonal area has provided the harmonic support necessary to join the *Kopfton* to its ‘fate’ in the totality of the *Urlinie*. In fitting with the ambiguity of the work’s first 81 bars the *Kopfton* has two first appearances according to its two potential structural positions. It opens the work as the upper voice and minor third of an E minor triad— $\hat{3}$ of an assumed E minor tonic—but at b. 10 it has a new start in a new register as $\hat{5}$ of the alternative C minor tonic. This ambiguity is retained throughout—see Figure 4.7 (p. 190). Only when the *Kopfton* assumes a functional role itself—forcing the necessary dominant support for the anticipated descent of the scale degree—can the fundamental line be drawn towards its resolution. That is, only when the *Kopfton* is removed from its initial role as head of the fundamental line, and placed into a structural position that enables the *Urlinie* to function (when it is shifted to the bass register), can the completion of the *Urlinie* be achieved. It is the transformation of this individual part (the *Kopfton*) which enables the totality (the *Urlinie*) to function, and not the imposition of structural authority from some abstracted formal requirement. In this final musical gesture *Metamorphosen* is brought to its end. Closure is achieved, and thus the work’s autonomy is preserved, but the nature of this resulting totality is left open.

A brief comparison with a much earlier work might help to explain the radical nature of *Metamorphosen*’s musical form. *Tod und Verklärung* (Op. 24) was completed in 1889 and is dedicated to Friedrich Rösch, but arguably the most significant influence on the work’s conception and reception was Alexander Ritter. Ritter, who encouraged Strauss to follow in the compositional footsteps

of Liszt and Wagner, also introduced the young composer to Schopenhauer's writings and provided a *post hoc* 'programme' for the work in the form of a poem.⁴⁶

Similarities between *Tod und Verklärung* and *Metamorphosen* extend beyond titular thematic allusions. Like *Metamorphosen* the musical structure of the earlier work presents a distorted sonata form, with incomplete recapitulation, surrounded by an introduction and extended coda.⁴⁷ The second theme of *Tod und Verklärung*'s sonata form might also be viewed as an interpolated slow movement, and its return later in the work functions more as a transition to an interpolated finale than as a recapitulating subject. This formal ambiguity leads Dahlhaus to describe the work's musical structure as a double-function sonata form—an idea that has recently been re-theorised in Steven Vande Moortele's *Two-dimensional Sonata Form*.⁴⁸ This is a musical framework that conveys simultaneously a multi-movement sonata cycle and a single sonata form, and can be found in a number of Strauss's tone poems including *Tod und Verklärung*, *Don Juan* and *Ein Heldenleben*. Strauss's particular use of this deformation might later contribute to what Youmans refers to as Strauss's 'critical agenda' against the liberal-humanist metaphysical art of his predecessors, embodied most readily in the symphonic genre, but at the time he was writing *Tod und Verklärung* (relatively early in his career) I suggest that it functions as a means of progressing a dramatic narrative of aesthetic redemption.⁴⁹

In *Tod und Verklärung*, whose subject matter—especially following its

46. Strauss would later abandon Schopenhauer, writing to Ritter 'I am not giving up art. And I am not Guntram either'. See Youmans, *Mahler and Strauss: In Dialogue*, 72.

47. Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music* 363.

48. Steven Vande Moortele, *Two-Dimensional Sonata Form: Form and Cycle in Single-Movement Instrumental Works by Liszt, Strauss, Schoenberg, and Zemlinsky* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2009) His work theorises an idea that has been in circulation for decades, though not formalised: see also Dahlhaus's 'multi-movement form within a single movement'

49. Charles Youmans, 'The Twentieth-Century Symphonies of Richard Strauss', *The Musical Quarterly* 84, no. 2 (2000): 239–40.

composer-sanctioned association with Ritter's text—is open to detailed programmatic interpretation, the two-dimensional sonata becomes a vessel for the poetic subject's transfiguration. Hepokoski describes how the 'death struggle' of the truncated exposition permits only a glimpse of the future transfiguration of the secondary theme, that occurs only after the subject's death in the recapitulation.⁵⁰ In the end, then, the secondary theme functions as a transformational device whose apotheosis comes after the formal recapitulation, and overrides the sonata form to take the music into a world apparently beyond death (or sonata function). The inbuilt layering of structure in the two-dimensional form, however, provides a structural means for accounting for the re-emergence of the secondary theme that corresponds to the work's programme.

The work's programme and its musical form become interlocked via the two-dimensions of the sonata structure. The quasi-religious conception of death (expressed most plainly in Ritter's poetic contribution), joins a 'self-overcoming' two-dimensional musical form to allow *Tod und Verklärung* to resolve the problem of the subject's detachment from its environment after death. Rather than being centred about the resolution of a structural dissonance, Strauss makes the sonata form the means by which thematic material finds completion and the redemptive message of the poetry is carried forward. Where the exposition could only present fragmentary nodes of melodic matter, the recapitulation offers a space for completion. Ritter's poem and the programmatic elements of the musical themes combine to explain, as it were, the metaphysical aspect of the work and present a symphonic-scale sonata form that reflects the promise of the poetry.

Tod und Verklärung, Youmans argues, achieves a simultaneously critical and

50. James A. Hepokoski, 'Review: Die Tondichtungen von Richard Strauss by Walter Werbeck', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 51, no. 3 (1998): 621.

productive approach to the sonata idea by adapting its premise from ‘correction’ to ‘progression’; from the resolution of large-scale dissonance to the productive unification of fragmentary thematic material. Youmans suggests that the amplification of Strauss’s programmatic impulses in the tone poems was the composer’s response to the crisis of abstract music and the decline of the symphonic genre.⁵¹ If we make a comparison of the work’s ending with *Metamorphosen*’s ending, it is evident that the ‘progression’ through *Tod und Verklärung* of one-dimensional sonata into a form that must necessarily be read at two formal levels is a means by which Strauss can contain the totality of the redemption within the aesthetic structure—a musical structure that is already to an extent foreclosed by the poetic form it follows. Totality in *Metamorphosen*, on the other hand, is not itself a force for redemption.

Metamorphosen has neither an explanatory poem nor an obvious narrative thematic development.⁵² Even the sonata structure loses its potency as a narrative device: by the end of the work sonata form is unable to account for the material outside its formal parameters, and the material within the sonata structure dissolves with the sonata form. The recapitulatory second theme apotheosis belongs within the sonata structure rather than at the point of structural breakthrough. And the image of a subject reconciled—after death—to knowledge of itself as redeemed and transcendent, is completely lost. Thus the secondary thematic area fails, somewhat paradoxically, in its effort to bring meaning to the work through its engagement of an assumed sonata form totality.

51. Youmans, ‘The Twentieth-Century Symphonies of Richard Strauss’, 240.

52. Hans von Bülow and Richard Strauss, *Correspondence: Hans von Bülow and Richard Strauss* (London: Boosey and Hawkes, 1955), 83.

4.6 Reaching out

When composing his first opera, *Guntram*, Strauss underlined the following passage of Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation*: 'it [art] does not become for him an extinguisher of the will, as we shall see in the following book in the case of the saint who has attained resignation; it does not deliver him from life forever, but only for a few moments'.⁵³ Although Strauss later rejected Schopenhauer's view of art, the lack of deliverance in *Metamorphosen* is fundamental to its conception of the subject. If transcendence is self-overcoming (finding universality from the condition of autonomy), then the transcendent aspect in *Metamorphosen* is found not in the moment of totality, but in the negation of this moment. *Metamorphosen* succeeds in masking the actual moment of structural closure by numerous 'false' endings, and makes the symbolic death—that embodied in the completion of the *Urlinie* in the shared space of the funeral march—the least important formal juncture of the work and the most important thematic one.

In the same way that history is not a continuous progressive trajectory, *Metamorphosen* is not the linear unfolding of a musical inevitability. The funeral march, evocative of an imaginary hero more than a century before *Metamorphosen* was composed, might be seen in Strauss's own work as a sign that history continues beyond the end of the individual, and that neither history nor the human subject can be fully explained by looking backwards. *Metamorphosen* seems to capture this temporal disposition of subjectivity: we do not walk forwards into the future (to death or to victory), but backwards—our only knowledge of who we are, and what might be ahead, lies in knowledge of our history. Just as importantly, however, *Metamorphosen* also seems to recognise that this knowledge,

53. Youmans, *Mahler and Strauss: In Dialogue*, 71.

useful as it is, will not provide the modern subject with the full means of comprehending itself. We might suggest that transformation in *Metamorphosen*, if it is present at all, comes through the knowledge that autonomy, self-knowledge, and corporate identity are not in themselves transformative. Unlike Schopenhauer, who suggests that the ultimate state to achieve is that of total self-denial, a state of nothingness, Strauss shows how art can bring together knowledge of the self with a wider conception of humanity in a utopian ideal that finds no completion in art.

Both *Metamorphosen* and the 'Eroica' symphony portray a struggle to find meaning within the ideological framework that is provided by tonal form. The tonal totality does not fully account for the subject even though the subject is bound to it in the search for a greater totality. Michael L. Klein's discussion of the 'Eroica' draws attention to the failure of the hero's 'ritual death'—which is symbolically presented in the second movement's funeral march—to overcome the work's subjective 'symptom', which is embodied in the famous C♯ sonority of the opening theme.⁵⁴ It seems incongruous that the triumph of the first movement over this sonority should lead immediately to the apparent death of the hero in the next movement. Moreover, in the context of the second movement, it is the same, but now 'neutralised', sonority (D♭) that leads the trio out of its *Maggiore* triumphant reminiscences to the funeral march—that is, it points straight back to the death of the hero. Klein suggests that the hero's death in Beethoven's narrative demonstrates the falsity of the apparent cure: we are never rid of the symptom, and the symptom cannot be vanquished by heroic action because it extends beyond the scope of the individual.⁵⁵ The symptom is not the cause of death. It is only a sign of subjective trauma, which changes in the moment it

54. Klein, *Music and the Crises of the Modern Subject*, 25.

55. *ibid.*, 27

appears cured. In Beethoven's work the first movement stages a victory over the 'symptom' that is undermined by its return in the guise of the G minor chords that frame the Finale, and in Strauss's *Metamorphosen* the 'death of the hero' only confirms the failure of the ideological totality to fully realise its own subject.

The idea that, in 1946, the best way forward was a wholesale return not only to the ideas of the very early Romantic era, but also directly to its music, surely does not bode well for the musical future of the Austro-German tradition—a tradition to which Strauss was completely devoted. What happened to the generations of music intervening Beethoven and Strauss? What happened, most especially, to Wagner, whose revolutionary music transformed the young Strauss's own compositional development and arguably had more of an impact on his outlook as a composer than did the classical masters of his childhood? I suggest that the answer to these questions can be found once again in the alienation of music from direct social function. Certainly, Wagner's music had become implicated, during the Nazi era, with a social discourse that was to tar its reputation even to the present day, but more importantly, the ideals embedded in the artistic experiment of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* were seen to have failed.

Max Paddison explains how Wagner's music came to represent an extreme example of the desire to externalise the subjective inwardness of the individual.⁵⁶ The objectification of subjectivity on the scale of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* might be seen as an effort to reconnect the individual to the social, to counter its perceived alienation. Inwardness or *Eigentümlichkeit* is projected not merely as a facet of the singular, the construction of the identity of the individual, but rather, as the lifeblood of the social world, the bourgeois crisis of alienation is confront-

56. Max Paddison, *Adorno's Aesthetics of Music* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 252.

ted head on. However, in the attempt to bring the social, the individual, and the musical together in one great artistic form, Wagner created a revolutionary artistic whole that nevertheless failed in its revolutionary aim. The subjectivity of the individual is presented in a form that is both overwhelming artistically and reified commercially, and it is precisely its artistic radicalism that is so susceptible to commodification; the monumentality of its form diverts its radical social critique into a spectacle of artistic wonder.

Even the *Gesamtkunstwerk* has to remain alienated from the social if it is to reveal its revolutionary promise. In its fully worked-out totality, Wagner's music drama—in particular, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*—represents precisely the opposite of what I suggest the Beethoven quotation provides in *Metamorphosen*. If Strauss were to have quoted from Brünnhilde's immolation scene it would have been too overt a reference to the twilight of the gods. It would have signified too clearly the end of the world as we know it and closed off the musical form from the social form external to its construction. In other words, it would have invited the monumentality of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* to stand for closure when, in fact, the potential of Wagner's form was not in its spectacular totality, but in the radical confrontation of the individual experience with the reified social.

The funeral march quotation, on the other hand, is severed from Beethoven's Third Symphony and from its own historical particularity. It doesn't have its own world, except, perhaps, the notion of a music that is permanently an object of alienation and yet still capable of expressing the depth of human sociality across history. Beethoven's music expresses the radical aspect of liberal humanist subjectivity by virtue of its formal design. It does not present its listener with a scenario or specific musical aesthetic that suits or expresses the perceived liberal humanist cause, as does Wagner's music (and Strauss's *Tod und Verklärung*, for that matter, where a Ritterian narrative and sensible sonata form ruin its

pretensions towards radical subjectivity). Nevertheless, Beethoven's music, remains an aesthetic incarnation of the liberal humanist subject of its era. When *Metamorphosen* uses Beethoven's music then, it does not merely quote a national hero, but takes a fragment of a musical subject to plug the void in its own fragmented musical subject, and thereby demonstrates a commitment to something that exceeds historical or circumstantial particularity—to a universal aspect of subjectivity.

The 'Eroica' quotation becomes the host in which the end of the work can be comprehended and once rationalised and the totality secured, the work can be laid to rest—it can end. The funeral quotation serves precisely as a funeral; it does not explain but announces with symbolic authority, through its commitment to the ideological whole, the totality of the work. The work's ending then becomes the vantage point from which the problem of its totality is thrown into sharp relief. *Metamorphosen* does not deny the liberal humanist possibility of a universal individualism, but recognises that the totality connecting the individual to an idea of universal humanity cannot be known within the contemporary ideological circumstances—the circumstance through which the individual comprehends itself. For *Metamorphosen* the end does not make sense of the beginning: the *Eroica* quotation is not the key to understanding the whole work. As much as the opening motif presents mutually exclusive tonal 'directions', so the ending does not constitute the consummation of these possibilities (it is not the result of a processual form). The quasi-revolutionary social force at work in *Metamorphosen*, is, I suggest, its witness to an unknown universal humanity—the utopian idea—that cannot be comprehended in the limitations of the ideological structures that surround it, nor created by them.

Rather than engineering a false utopia, the structural support for the contemporary subject is found in its constancy with a historical subject (represented

by the Beethoven quotation). The wider context of *Metamorphosen*'s tonal structure and its static *Kopft*on ensures that the Beethoven quotation is tied to the work's form so that this musical graft, while retaining its historical identity, also becomes an integral part of *Metamorphosen*'s own trajectory thus joining Beethoven's struggling totality with Strauss's. The shared struggle exceeds the precise historical circumstance of either work, and the implication of this connection is that the questions of humanity that concerned Strauss and Beethoven will also extend into the unknown future. For the moment, however, *Metamorphosen* expresses a transcendent idea that enables it to mean something beyond the particularities of its own ideological struggle.

Jonathan Lear writes that 'radical hope anticipates a good for which those who have the hope as yet lack the appropriate concepts with which to understand it'.⁵⁷ In surrendering the vision of optimism presented in the sonata structure, in the belief in a superstructure of the idealised sonata framework, *Metamorphosen* carves out a space for radical hope by keeping open the space for a universal idea of humanity while not yet articulating the nature of this universality. In accepting the deficiency of sonata form and its promise (read here as a social utopia based on bourgeois ideals), *Metamorphosen* acknowledges and breaks the bourgeois liberal's reliance on its own image and reaches into its own history to find expression for a communal hope. The totality on offer in *Metamorphosen* is a sceptical whole that mitigates the satisfaction of completeness by presenting multiple endings, of which none succeed in achieving a full synthesis of the work's material. *Metamorphosen* thus provides a means of asking questions with renewed urgency because it explores ideas that are beyond its ability to resolve through matters of internal unity. The subject and its lack are presented

57. Jonathan Lear, *Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 103.

in this musical whole in spite of itself, and *Metamorphosen* succeeds in formally becoming, and not merely representing, liberal-humanist truth in the twentieth century.

4.7 A response to recent reception history

My reading of *Metamorphosen* as a work of ambiguous yet aesthetically tangible hope departs considerably from the historical interpretations of *Metamorphosen* identified by the social historian Neil Gregor.⁵⁸ Within the historical interval he examines—1949 to the present—Gregor identifies two periods in the reception history of Strauss's composition.⁵⁹ He suggests that the work was first embraced by German audiences as a nostalgic recollection of the lost era of Wilhelmine culture, but has since been more consistently heard as a 'set of reflections on the impact of the violence of the events of war'.⁶⁰ Gregor further argues that, from the late 1980s onwards, *Metamorphosen* ceased to be a symbol of a lost 'golden' era and became instead a description of a particular historical event—the bombing of Germany.

For Gregor, the analytical 'hearing' of *Metamorphosen* presented earlier, by virtue of its being scholarly, belongs to a category that is more or less totally independent from the popular discourse, 'confined to spaces—be they institutional or literary—which that discourse customarily inhabits, rather than a popular one'.⁶¹ It might seem reasonable to suggest that an interpretation of *Metamorphosen* that is derived from a structural analysis of musical form and

58. Gregor, 'Music, Memory, Emotion: Richard Strauss and the Legacies of War'.

59. He actually identifies three periods, but the 1970s and 80s are notable only for the absence of a reception history, constituting an era when *Metamorphosen*, lacking performances, was seemingly irrelevant to the emotional needs of a generation. *ibid.*, 72–73.

60. *ibid.*, 56.

61. *ibid.*, 60–61.

interpreted through the liberal humanist paradigm of the autonomous musical work, is neither accessible, nor of particular interest, to most listeners. However, this creates a false articulation between academic and popular spheres, and fails to recognise that musical analyses are just as much a part of a work's historical appreciation as popular reception. I suggest that the self-reflective, contextualising historical perspective fostered by methodologies of reception history may offer a broader context for my own reading of *Metamorphosen*, and, rather than confirming its isolation in the reified space of the academy, my interpretation offers an alternative to the essentially bourgeois liberal concerns of Gregor's reception history.

Gregor's article is significant as much for what it says about *Metamorphosen* as for what it says about the condition of musicology in the twenty-first century. Although his own discipline is social history, Gregor's position follows a wider movement in musicology towards the idea that music is an entirely subjective phenomenon. This shift, I suggest, forms part of musicology's response to the liberal humanist crisis in the humanities and is manifested in the heavily theorised cultural study of music brought to prominence by New Musicology.⁶² Gregor dismantles the notion of musical autonomy, deconstructing not only the musical work, but the scholarly narratives that have sustained its appreciation as such. He seeks instead the work's reception by 'ordinary people'—an approach that belongs to a trend in contemporary musicology of seeking hidden or obscured voices in the history of music.⁶³ In Gregor's case it can also be aligned with a shift away from formal analysis, perhaps with the intention

62. See also Carl Dahlhaus, *Foundations of Music History* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 150.

63. See, for example Michael Brocken, *Other Voices: Hidden Histories of Liverpool's Popular Music Scenes, 1930s–1970s* (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2010), Bill Banfield, *Musical Landscapes in Color: Conversations with Black American Composers* (Lanham, Md. and Oxford: Scarecrow Press, 2003), Anna Beer, *Sounds and Sweet Airs: The Forgotten Women of Classical Music* (London: Oneworld, 2016).

of de-aestheticising music in order to re-socialise it as performance and reception.⁶⁴ Starting from the assumption that meaning is transferred not from musical work outwards, but from the individual onto the musical work, Gregor's approach makes the receiving individual the primary site of authority. *Metamorphosen* is conceived through its reception, which may then (rather than its musical form) be subjected to analysis.

Gregor advocates an interdisciplinary approach to music history, proposing the idea of an 'emotional landscape' as a means of providing insight into a given historical moment. His methodology is a reaction against forms of historical enquiry (explicitly, formal analysis of historical artefacts) that he considers to be impersonal and reductive.⁶⁵ I suggest, however, that the reductiveness of his own methodology not only stifles the critical potential of music, but also compromises the critical potential of studying music. The substitution of reception in favour of analysis, and the increasingly anthropological approach to music in society, is, I suggest, a damaging influence in music scholarship. The purpose of the following engagement with Gregor's article is to expose the dangers that I think are inherent to some of the underlying assumptions of the methodology he proffers.

A more or less explicit aim of Gregor's approach to music is to 'democratise' its history so that the voices of ordinary people—as well those of patrons, composers, institutions, and scholars—might be given fair due.⁶⁶ Gregor employs the concept of the emotional landscape as his means of achieving this. He

64. See also, Stefaniak, 'Clara Schumann and the Imagined Revaluation of Musical Works', Marina Frolova-Walker, 'An Inclusive History for a Divided World?', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 143, no. 1 (2018): 1–20, Edward Klorman, *Mozart's Music of Friends: Social Interplay in the Chamber Works* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), Stacy Wolf, *Changed for Good: A Feminist History of the Broadway Musical* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

65. Gregor, 'Music, Memory, Emotion: Richard Strauss and the Legacies of War', 57.

66. *ibid.*, 58.

writes:

if we instead see both the composition and responses to it as part of the same emotional landscape, and consider both the piece and the interactive processes of constructing meaning between composer, performers, critics, audiences, and listeners as mutually constitutive elements of a broader ecology, one that is unstable and constantly evolving, but inside of which all live, then the distinctions between a supposedly authoritative ‘meaning of the piece’ intended by the composer and the meanings constructed by listeners can be pragmatically dissolved.⁶⁷

Gregor’s desire to dissolve boundaries between listeners has a postmodern academic bias. The emotional landscape is grounded on some significant and unsubstantiated assumptions: that music’s primary function is to induce an emotional response, and it is in this response that its meaning is located; that the emotional response elicited by music is a neutral lens through which music can be experienced (i.e. it is not an ‘elitist’ category of appreciation requiring prior knowledge); and that the musical object has no inherent meaning.

While Gregor describes the emotional landscape as being all-encompassing, he does not recognise existing scholarly discourse as being a significant part of this ‘ecology’. In fact, it is directly in opposition to the ‘tradition of writing about the allegedly inherent meanings of a work’ that the notion of the emotional landscape is formed.⁶⁸ The emotional landscape is designed to erase, or at the very least, to diminish traditional voices of musical authority (composers and academics) whose influence over the listener he sees as forming part of a brainwashing process that makes art music into a ‘coercive regime’ regulating an emotional response to ‘the event the music putatively describes’.⁶⁹

67. Gregor, ‘Music, Memory, Emotion: Richard Strauss and the Legacies of War’, 58.

68. *ibid.*

69. *ibid.*

The total relativisation of musical meaning may be the democratic ideal of the emotional landscape, but this ideal is not a neutral one. The question of how a collective emotional response—or well-trodden path through a given landscape—arises in the first place is surely located somewhere other than the spontaneous response of the individual. Crucially, it is not the composer's authority or the academic who claims jurisdiction over musical meaning in the present age, but those who control the dissemination of information to the public—primarily the music industry. Gregor has thus identified the wrong enemy if his desire is to democratise music history.

The emotional landscape is posited as a means of reducing the authority of the composer and academic as disseminators of musical meaning, but its real effect is to reduce the level of influence accorded to the historical object—the musical work. While Gregor rehearses Adorno's argument that 'specifically musical problems cannot be avoided, unless the sociology of music wants to narrow itself to the identification of subjective responses, without regard to the object', he sidesteps this Adornian obligation by reinventing (with the help of Nicholas Cook) what constitutes the musical object. Rather than addressing *Metamorphosen* as music, he turns sideways to the 'sleeve image or the concert programme notes ...images, notes, and adumbrations attached to it by record companies, critics, radio announcers' which all contribute to the 'webs of meaning that become centred on a particular work'.⁷⁰ There can be no doubt that artworks accrue historical meaning by such media, but it is necessary to engage critically with these meanings or else they come to assume precisely the claim to the 'truth' of a work that the author intends to avoid.

While Gregor fully acknowledges the effect of marketing on the appreciation of a work's meaning—noting that 'the construction of the piece in many LP and

70. Gregor, 'Music, Memory, Emotion: Richard Strauss and the Legacies of War', 59.

CD sleeves or journalistic reviews stands out for its insistent reproduction [...] of ideas contained in standard sources, previous reviews, popular accounts, reference works or encyclopaedias, a self-replicating discourse that is largely resistant to academic “correction”—he does not consider what the repercussions of this are for the veracity of the emotional landscape as a historical tool.⁷¹ Ironically, his liberal interpretation of the musical object actually functions to solidify the tropes of composer intention (imagined or otherwise) that are still held by the audience, or the consumer, as the ultimate authority of musical meaning. The ‘masterwork and its composer’ is not now an academic narrative, but one that has become ensconced in musical marketing.

The physical peripherals—the album cover, programme note, or four-star review—are the surplus material of the musical object in the marketplace. If we are satisfied to limit music to its commodity status, and, further, if we are willing to accept the market as the ultimate marker of a general cultural disposition, then this method suffices. In the current socio-economic climate there is certainly an argument in favour of holding the market as the measure of culture. However, such an approach places an ideological frame around music, especially art music, that was formed in the first place by the logic of capitalism. That is, if the meaning of music is measured through those factors that identify it as a commodity—even unwittingly—its meaning will be limited to that sphere of influence.

A problem thus arises for Gregor when he attempts to extrapolate meaning beyond the capitalist sphere for *Metamorphosen*. Gregor notes that the modern commentator tends to hear *Metamorphosen* as a ‘tragedy in one act’ while the earlier commentators heard it as a three-part drama in which there is a posit-

71. Gregor, ‘Music, Memory, Emotion: Richard Strauss and the Legacies of War’, 61.

ive central section.⁷² ‘It is striking’, he writes, that the post-war responses to the piece were ‘allied to a different experience of hearing the music itself’.⁷³ He proposes the notion of a ‘period ear’ in the 1950s and 1960s—a way of hearing *Metamorphosen* that he believes ties into a general culture of nostalgia in Germany during this era. Gregor associates this different experience of *Metamorphosen* as being one of emotional response, but the evidence he uses—predominantly newspaper reports and reviews—are more suited to providing an insight into *Metamorphosen*’s popular reception history as musical reportage, not as emotional history. When considered in this way a different conclusion might be drawn from his sources.

I suggest that a shift took place in reporting style during the period of Gregor’s study, from more detailed musical commentary to an emphasis on general historical and interpretative comment. In 1954 the Munich-based *Die Südpst* wrote how the ‘ghostly memory of the funeral march of Beethoven’s “Eroica” surfaces in the theme [...] rising from the dark realms of the cello through constant variations’.⁷⁴ And in Bern the *Morgenblatt* wrote how *Metamorphosen* was like ‘a funeral song in a dark minor key, and with surprising shifts in tone. Gradually an Allegro grows out of the Adagio’.⁷⁵ The presence of basic, specifically musical vocabulary in these reviews, together with special attention to particular musical moments contrasts with the later reviewers’ sweeping statements about the piece as a whole. In 2009, the *General-Anzeiger* in Bonn, wrote ‘mourning . . . was positively branded into the half-hour adagio movement’, and the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* describes *Metamorphosen*

72. Gregor, ‘Music, Memory, Emotion: Richard Strauss and the Legacies of War’, 71.

73. *ibid.*

74. ‘Konzert im Gedenken an Richard Strauss’, *Die Südpst* (Munich), 14 Sept. 1954. Quoted in *ibid.*, 72.

75. ‘Die “Metamorphosen” von Richard Strauss’, *Morgenblatt* (Bern), 30 Jan. 1946. Quoted in *ibid.*, 71.

being 'a study in horror and mourning'.⁷⁶

As the place of music in society has changed, so also has the constitution of its criticism. The modern critic might, quite simply, be less concerned with the structure of a work or the details of its musical nuances, than with the work's origin or a critique of its composer's politics. It is not necessarily that they are incapable of hearing distinctions in the musical form, but that they are less inclined towards remarking on them if they do. A concert review in the *New York Times* provides a case in point:

it [*Metamorphosen*] is an elegy by an old man for the German cultural life that he had revered and flourished in. One could say that Strauss might have sorrowed instead over the systematic destruction of human life by the Nazi regime. Still, Strauss's music touches on universal feelings of loss, despair and pointless tragedy.⁷⁷

The first sentence repeats the handed-down interpretation of *Metamorphosen* as an elegy for German culture. The second offers a condemnatory assessment of the composer's personal morality based on the assumption of the first sentence's veracity, and the odd implication that the destruction of Germany's cultural life was not itself intimately bound up with the Nazi period of its history. The third sentence opens the work up to transhistorical truth and meaning based on the idea of its universalisable emotional content. Written for a less musically literate (or perhaps just less *musically* interested) audience, the review's subject takes a different form. *Metamorphosen* is here conceived twice. Firstly, it is a historical object, whose historical meaning is derived entirely from the

76. 'Jeder Streicher ist hier ein Virtuose', *General-Anzeiger* (Bonn), 5 Oct. 2009. Quoted in Gregor, 'Music, Memory, Emotion: Richard Strauss and the Legacies of War', 69; Baldur Bockhoff, 'Etwas rauh, etwas vordergründig', *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 14 Mar. 1988. Quoted in *ibid.*, 68.

77. Anthony Tommasini, "'Metamorphosen,' Literally', *New York Times*, November 2000, Online edition, <https://www.nytimes.com/2000/10/11/arts/music-review-metamorphosen-literally.html>.

intention of the composer; and secondly it is a present object for the consumption of a modern audience totally estranged from the historical situation and meaning of its origin. The modern-day listener is left free to enjoy the music, having dealt with the political shortcomings of the composer and removed the possibility for any other meaning to emerge.

In 1949 Joseph Kerman lamented the state of art appreciation in the USA, suggesting that a 'tacit tradition of apathy towards any intellectual consideration of the art' prevailed in education, performance, and even aesthetic spheres.⁷⁸ It is possible that, by the 1990s, the state of music journalism in Germany had reached the level of antipathy towards the medium of music that Kerman identified as early as 1949 in America. A 1999 review of *Metamorphosen* printed in the Berlin *Tagesspiel* expresses sentiments almost uncannily similar to those found in the *New York Times* quoted above. The *Tagesspiel* reviewer writes:

Germany 1944/45: city after city is reduced to rubble and ash, and Richard Strauss plaintively cries not over the loss of people, but over the loss of cultural life and opera houses. . . . At the end, Beethoven is cited directly, and the composer demonstratively writes underneath: 'In memoriam!' In memoriam for whom? For the German romantic tradition. This is how Richard Strauss imagines composing after Auschwitz.

This quotation receives *Metamorphosen* as nothing more than a means of reading its composer. In this way it parallels Gregor's reception of *Metamorphosen* as a means of reading the emotional condition of its audience. The emotional response elicited in the reviewer is clearly powerful, but it does not appear to originate in Strauss's music (Gregor's conclusions likewise originate from somewhere other than the music). I do not have enough primary evidence to assert that the shift Gregor identifies in *Metamorphosen*'s reception history results

78. Joseph Kerman, 'Music Criticism in America', *The Hudson Review* 1, no. 4 (1949): 557

from a more general shift of the position of music in society, but the observations made here surely pose a challenge to Gregor's reading of cultural memory.

Indeed, Gregor's own contribution to *Metamorphosen's* reception history registers a further remove in the direction of the trend I propose. Not only newspaper reviews and CD liners, but, if Gregor's article is representative, musicology too is turning away from an interest in music *as music*. Strauss scholarship is shaped by the condition of the academy as a whole. As Richard E. Wattenbarger notes, 'the changing conceptions of the human, of scientific knowledge, and of the purpose of the university' have all influenced the way Strauss and his music have been perceived over the past century of scholarship.⁷⁹ German writers at the turn of the twentieth century saw Strauss in the context of nineteenth-century aesthetic debates surrounding programme music and intellectual value, while champions of modernism and notions of progress in the early-mid twentieth century criticised Strauss for being out of touch with the times.⁸⁰ Writers of the post-war era examined the moral situation of the composer and the ethical quality of music in society, while the postmodern shift in the 1980s saw a rehabilitation of Strauss against modernist narratives of aesthetic progress.⁸¹ In Gregor's article I tentatively propose that we witness another stage in musicological history, borne out in the treatment of Strauss's *Metamorphosen*. Following the deconstructing tendency and high social ethics of the 1980s New Musicological turn, the discipline of the most recent post-Cold War period has settled into a state of dogmatic democracy.

This afterword therefore stands in opposition to the complacency and un-reflection in some anglophone music scholarship whose apparently utopian

79. Wattenbarger, 'Richard Strauss, Modernism, and the University: A Study of German-Language and American Academic Reception of Richard Strauss from 1900 to 1990', 14.

80. *ibid.*, 12.

81. *ibid.*

democratic ideals are played out in methodologies that fail to attend critically to the true structures of power in democratic societies. This academy is invested in democracy, but, like the bourgeois liberals of the previous century, it believes the political to be distinguishable from the economic.

Chapter 5

Time

5.1 Opus ultimum? A note on the *Four Last Songs*

Strauss's *Four Last Songs* (TrV 292)—in order of composition 'Im Abendrot' (6 May 1948), 'Frühling' (18 July 1948), 'Beim Schlafengehn' (4 August 1948), and 'September' (20 September 1948)—have assumed the status of an *opus ultimum*, but the question of whether they actually constitute a single work remains open.¹ It is well known that the set's title was provided after Strauss's death by his friend and London-based publisher Ernst Roth, who also decided the songs' printed order. Roth's decision to publish the songs together not only

1. Klaus Rennicke, 'Romantik und Resignation—Der Schwanengesang eines Unzeitgemässen: Die "Vier Letzten Lieder" von Richard Strauss', *Musik und Bildung* 7–8 (1990): 442–446; August Everding, 'Richard Strauss', ed. Peter; Christopher Stölzl Gauweiler, vol. Bayerische Profile (München; Berlin: Langen Müller, 1995), 286; Jane Jones, 'Richard Strauss: Four Last Songs - a swansong of sublime beauty', *Classic FM* website acc. 20 July 2017 <http://www.classicfm.com/composers/strauss/guides/richard-strauss-four-last-songs/>; Roland Tenschert, 'Richard Strauss's Schwanengesang', *Österreichischer Musikzeitschrift* 5, nos. 10/11 (1950): 225–9; Patrik N. Juslin and John A. Sloboda, *Handbook of Music and Emotion: Theory, Research, Applications* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 361; in Hobson, *Joining the Dots: A Beginner's Guide to Listening to Classical Music*, 72, the *Four Last Songs* are not just Strauss's swansong, but the swansong of romantic music; Marek, *Richard Strauss: The Life of a Non-Hero*, 306 citing Neville Cardus, *Talking of Music* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1957); James L. Zychowicz, 'The Lieder of Mahler and Richard Strauss', chap. 12 in *The Cambridge Companion to the Lied*, ed. James Parsons (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 270–271.

frames their popular reception as a single unit, but has also dominated scholarly discussions and analyses of the songs.

Andreas Pernpeintner and Rheinhold Schlötterer have argued against the notion of there being a *four* song set at all. Pernpeintner cites a note in Strauss's autograph manuscript for 'Beim Schlafengehn' that suggests the collective title *Gesänge von Hermann Hesse für hohe Singstimme mit Orchester*, which would of course exclude Eichendorff's 'Im Abendrot' from the proceedings.² Schlötterer further observes the time it took Strauss to compose 'Im Abendrot' in comparison to the relatively fast production of the Hesse settings, and postulates that 'Im Abendrot' has more in common with 'Ruhe, meine Seele!', a poem by Karl Friedrich Henckell that Strauss set originally for voice and piano in 1894 (Op. 27, No. 1).³ Timothy L. Jackson also establishes a convincing musical connection between 'Im Abendrot' and 'Ruhe, meine Seele!', but his analysis leads to a different conclusion than Schlötterer's and will be discussed now.

Jackson maintains that the *Four Last Songs* all explore a single musical motif presented, but unresolved, in 'Ruhe, meine Seele!'.⁴ The musical connection to 'Ruhe, meine Seele!' has further led Jackson to suggest that Strauss's 1948 orchestration of the song should also be included as one of *five* songs in what ought to be known as the *Letzte Orchesterlieder* cycle.⁵ Given that no other scholar has provided a persuasive musical explanation of why 'Frühling', 'September', 'Beim Schlafengehn', and 'Im Abendrot', should be considered a closed cyclic unit (though some have attempted to rationalise Roth's order-

2. Andreas Pernpeintner, 'Der späte Strauss und seine frühen Lieder', in *Richard Strauss: Der Komponist und sein Werk*, ed. Sebastian; Adrian Kech Bolz and Hartmut Schick (Munich: Allitera Verlag, 2017), 427.

3. Reinhold Schlötterer, 'Musikalisch-Elementares bei Im Abendrot von Richard Strauss', in *Richard Strauss: Der Komponist und sein Werk*, ed. Sebastian; Adrian Kech und Hartmut Schick Bolz (Munich: Allitera Verlag, 2017), 498.

4. Timothy L. Jackson, 'Ruhe meine Seele! and the Letzte Orchester Lieder', in *Richard Strauss and His World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 90–137.

5. *ibid.*, 2

ing with reference to the poems' thematic material and key relations),⁶ logically it also follows that there is no current analytical objection to the exclusion of 'Ruhe, meine Seele!' in a five-part cycle.⁷

Jackson's main circumstantial argument for a five-part *Letzte Orchesterlieder* is confusing. He notes that, according to Edwin McArthur (who was a friend and accompanist of the soprano Kirsten Flagstad) Strauss wanted Flagstad to give the world premiere of the songs.⁸ Jackson surmises from this that Strauss 'must have regarded the cycle of orchestral songs as complete' or else he would not have begun to organise a concert for them; and yet the premiere performance did not include the orchestral version of 'Ruhe, meine Seele!'.⁹ Although persuasive apropos the appropriateness of Flagstad for this particular occasion—he draws attention both to the emotional suitability of the older singer and to the shared suffering of singer and composer in the post-war political environment—the lack of material evidence for the claim makes it difficult to verify. Even if there is substance in McArthur's second-hand report, it is too much of a leap to assert from his anachronistically worded recollection (he refers to the 'Four Last Songs') that Strauss intended to make a cycle of his latest compositions.¹⁰

6. see Jane Elizabeth Berntsen Strickert, 'Richard Strauss' Vier Letzte Lieder: An Analytical Study' (PhD Thesis, Washington University, 1975).

7. David Siener suggests that the *Four Last Songs* were plainly composed as cycle, but his biographical evidence for this claim is weak, and his analytical argument is not adequately presented. David Siener, *Richard Strauss Op. 150 "Vier Letzte Lieder"*, Studienarbeit, Document no. 17921 (München: Verlag für Akademische Texte, GRIN, 2003).

8. McArthur's written account of Flagstad's involvement with the premiere of the *Four Last Songs* can be found in Edwin McArthur, *Flagstad: A Personal Memoir* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1980), 289-91.

9. Jackson, 'Ruhe meine Seele! and the Letzte Orchester Lieder', 92.

10. On 5 June 1950, Time magazine quotes apparently from a letter Strauss wrote to Flagstad saying: 'I would like to make it possible that [the songs] should be at your disposal for a world premiere in the course of a concert with a first-class conductor and orchestra'. The editorial square brackets indicate that there was an original, but I cannot find further record of such a document anywhere including Franz Trenner, *Richard Strauss: Chronik zu Leben und Werk* (Vienna: Richard Strauss Verlag, 2003) and at the Strauss family archive (RSA). Nor is the idea that Strauss wrote to Flagstad mentioned in her memoirs—though this particular absence might be explained by her anxiety about being associated with a composer whose reputation might tarnish her own. See Louis Biancolli, *The Flagstad Manuscript*, Reprint edition, 1977 (New York: Arno Press, 1952).

A song that belongs to a cycle always has a dual identity in one part as an individual number and in another as part of a larger musical form. The element of design at the compositional level is significant in identifying a true cycle from a song collection, or else every song recital might be considered a song cycle. Jackson's assertion that the compositional process for the song cycle was 'additive' is based on an examination of the sketches and their compositional order, but the 'thematic subtext' that he suggests ties the sketches together is one so generic ('the approach to and ultimate acceptance of death') that it neither depends on the order of composition nor sustains the very specific claim that these songs form a musical cycle.¹¹

While Jackson's analytical argument may describe a compelling musical relationship between 'Ruhe, meine Seele!' and 'Im Abendrot' via what he terms the *Notmotiv*, a recurring appearance of the *Notmotiv* would alone not be enough to justify considering the songs a cycle, especially given Strauss's propensity for self-quotation. Moreover, Jackson does not demonstrate how the other songs are musically related to the *Notmotiv*, instead calling attention to the textual relationship of the poems and the choices Strauss made in deciding between similar texts.¹² To have my cake and eat it, I suggest that the cumulative effect of these songs in performance exceeds their power individually to move and provoke, and Jackson's reading of the *Letzte Orchesterlieder* is stimulating. However, there is not sufficient musical evidence to draw all five songs into a formal *cycle* and no reason, therefore, to consider the songs as being anything other than independent musical pieces.

For practical reasons I will continue to refer to the songs commonly known as the *Four Last Songs* as such, but I do not consider them a song cycle. Songs

11. Jackson, 'Ruhe meine Seele! and the Letzte Orchester Lieder', 93, 111, 110.

12. *ibid.*, 99, 113.

can, of course, be related to one another without necessitating the formal structure of a cycle, and it may be appropriate to consider those under question as constituting a set of a different kind. The separate dedications for each of the songs, and the individual manuscripts Strauss presented to the friends who helped him during his Swiss exile, might suggest that the composer considered his last songs part of the same project of thanks, if not his *opus ultimum*.

5.2 Historicity

It is a common assertion that Strauss's later music presents an aesthetic inconsistent with its historical situation, namely, that it is viewed as being 'too late' for its time. This is particularly true of Strauss's *Four Last Songs*, and it is their perceived untimeliness, combined with a hallowed (and in this case, false) notion of a composer's last creative endeavour, that has been considered the crux of their musical and historical value. Aubrey S. Garlington, Jr., for example, suggests that the songs constitute a unique occurrence in the 'annals of Western music', being, as both he and Jane Elizabeth Berntsen Strickert have argued, the songs that mark the end of German Romanticism.¹³ This claim of Strauss's romanticism in 1948 is particularly striking given the fact that the *Four Last Songs* are much closer in historical proximity to Cage's *4'33* (1952) than to Wagner's *Parsifal* (1882), and even then, the composer of the latter represents to some the

13. Aubrey S. Garlington, 'Richard Strauss's "Vier letzte Lieder": The Ultimate "opus ultimum"', *The Musical Quarterly* 73, no. 1 (1989): 80; Strickert, 'Richard Strauss' Vier Letzte Lieder: An Analytical Study', 3, see also Edward F. Kravitt, *The Lied: Mirror of Late Romanticism* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), 245 this is a position also commonly held in less formal contexts, such as CD booklets and programme notes see Ondine Records, Soile Isokoski and the Rundfunk Sinfonieorchester Berlin, cond. Marek Janowski 'Richard Strauss Orchestral Songs: Vier Letzte Lieder, Four Last Songs'. CD liner note by Jaakko Mäntyjärvi, translated by Kimmo Korhonen. 'The sunset in *Im Abendrot* represented the twilight not only of an exceptionally long career but of the entire Romantic tradition whose last great representative Strauss was.'

beginning of musical modernism.¹⁴

While Garlington Jr. and Strickert all but erase modernism as a musical era in their understanding of Strauss's late music, Julian Johnson claims aesthetic disjuncture to be a direct consequence of a pan-historical modern (though not modernist) perspective in musical composition. He writes, 'Strauss's lateness is key to the modernity of his music because historical memory is part of the modern, the self-reflective, and self-critical twin of its future orientation'.¹⁵ Johnson uses the idea of lateness to cut across the aesthetic divide that is so apparent in Strauss's oeuvre between the 'ultra-progressive' musical language of *Elektra* (1908) and the 'ultra-conservative' language of *Der Rosenkavalier* (1910). In isolating 'lateness' as a general concept lying behind a musical composition (rather than viewing it as having specific musical manifestations within individual compositions), he fails to address the possibility of different kinds of 'lateness', or to assess critically his own assertion that 'lateness' necessarily reflects modernity in music. The assertion that both *Elektra* and *Der Rosenkavalier* are 'modern' insofar as they both have pasts that recur in some problematic or self-reflective way in the present of the opera is superficial when the presentation of this past is not also considered. Certainly, both operas deal in their plots with a contemporary struggle that arises out of a relation to the past (be that violent, fond, false, or nostalgic), but the musical construction of this relation is as radically different in each opera as the internal memory of the past that stimulates the dramatic trajectory of their narratives.

Johnson's deliberate avoidance of the term 'modernism' furthermore also allows him to evade the direct historical situation of the music under question. In the case of Strauss's *Four Last Songs*, an understanding of the very specific

14. See, for example, Juliet Koss, *Modernism after Wagner* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

15. Johnson, *Out of Time: Music and the Making of Modernity*, 44.

historical context of their composition is vital to understanding not only their relationship to modernism as a cultural movement, but also to the idea of modernity as being at the forefront of an era. Composed in a historical limbo between the Second World War and the Cold War, this chapter pursues the notion that the *Four Last Songs* are also situated between the cultural dominants of modernism and postmodernism—not so much being ‘early’ historically, but reflecting a genuinely remarkable moment of historical suspension that was the immediate context of their composition.

1948 was a historical crossroads for Germany. The need to fill the political vacuum that resulted from the fall of the Nazi regime was a priority for the victorious powers. The Potsdam Agreement (prepared in 1945) was made with the aim of demilitarising, denazifying, decentralising, and democratising Germany.¹⁶ It began by splitting the country into four sections, each governed by a victorious foreign power (France, Britain, Soviet Union, USA). The internal contradictions of the Potsdam Agreement—which sought both to punish the citizens of Germany, demanding reparations payments and instigating re-education programmes fostering collective guilt, while also supporting the rise of a new, and crucially, a trading nation out of the ashes—rendered it unsustainable as a long-term plan.¹⁷ As Christopher Knowles writes, Germany saw ‘limitations on industrial growth imposed at the same time as measures to promote economic reconstruction, pragmatism combined with idealism, occupiers and occupied living separate lives in parallel worlds coexisting with examples of intense personal engagement’.¹⁸ By 1948, however, the tide had turned away from a focus on German guilt and reparations, towards the role Germany might

16. Bill Niven and J. K. A. Thomaneck, *Dividing and Uniting Germany*, e-Library, 2006 (Routledge, 2001), 9.

17. Christopher Knowles, *Winning the Peace: The British in Occupied Germany, 1945-1948* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), 1.

18. *ibid.*

offer both as a buffer between the Western allies and the Soviet Union, and as an exemplar of the Western model of democracy.¹⁹

In June, the Western-occupied zones agreed to combine their regions to form a single administrated area, the Trizone, and introduced a new currency as part of a programme of economic reform. The Deutschmark, together with the relaxation of price and production controls, was intended to facilitate the European Recovery Program (more commonly known as the Marshall Plan) and Germany's post-war reconstruction, and it helped pave the way to the administrative independence of the Federal Republic of Germany less than a year later. On 24 June 1948, in direct response to the Western allies' economic reform, the Soviet Union, which had been implicitly excluded from the Marshall Plan on ideological grounds, retaliated with a ten-month blockade on land-transport routes to the Western-occupied sectors of Berlin—often referred to as the Berlin Blockade.²⁰ The mounting conflict between the ascending Western and Soviet superpowers manifested itself in the divided nation as Germany became a geographical proxy in which a new war of ideology was waged.²¹ The implementation of the Marshall Plan in the Trizone was accompanied by a large-scale propaganda operation taking the form of posters, films, exhibitions, and radio programmes, that extolled the virtues of democracy, liberal politics, and the USA's influence in Europe.²² Meanwhile, Germany's heavy industry was reduced to

19. Marc Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945–1963* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 101–2,

20. The conditions of the Marshall Plan's implementation required any country partaking of it to commit to the political ideology of the USA including free elections, thus the Soviet Union and its German sector were excluded from the benefits it afforded.

21. Tony Shaw suggests that the Potsdam conference did not mark the beginning of the Cold War, but certainly 'set the tone' for what was to follow. See Tony Shaw, 'The British Popular Press and the Early Cold War', *History* 83, no. 269 (January 1998): 69.

22. See Hans-Jürgen Schröder, 'West European Identity in Marshall Plan Propaganda Films', in *War of Words: Culture and The Mass Media in the Making of the Cold War in Europe*, ed. Judith; Christoph Hendrik Müller Devlin (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2013), 129–136; Sandra; Richard Peña Schulberg, *Selling Democracy: Films of the Marshall Plan, 1948–1953* (New York: New York Film Festival, 2004).

a minimum, its agricultural industry increased, trading and business models were reconfigured in favour of free market principles, and the nation's military capacity was dismantled completely. The Federal Republic of Germany was constructed in the image of and to the desires of its most powerful occupier, the USA, which 'nurtured a "special relationship" with the new Bonn government, its "ward" and protege in Europe'.²³ The Marshall Plan and its associated propaganda thus played a significant part in forming the USA into a superpower, granting it political hegemony and economic world dominance for the remainder of the twentieth century.

The Allied initiative that was made official in the Potsdam Agreement to rid German society of Nazi influence saw many leading academics, artists, and cultural figures investigated and categorised into five differing levels of Nazi rapport from 'exonerated persons' to 'major offenders'.²⁴ Strauss was exonerated of all Nazi guilt, though this decision was made arguably with less concern for his actual relationship to the party than it was to do with the political upheaval an alternative outcome might have aroused. Strauss was a significant cultural figure not only in Germany, but in the cultural life of the USA, and, just as his reputation had served the Nazis, so also it also stood to serve the Americans. Strauss had been received warmly on his numerous trips to North America in 1904, 1920, 1921–2, and 1923 (he also visited South America in 1923), and his music made a lasting impression on the concert and operatic scene across the Atlantic.²⁵ John de Lancie, for example, was only 24 when he asked Strauss

23. Thomas Schwarz, 'The "Special Relationship"', ed. Charles; Günter Bischof Maier (New York: Berg, 1991).

24. Eric Stover, *Hiding in Plain Sight: The Pursuit of War Criminals from Nuremberg to the War on Terror* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2016), 40.

25. See Wolfgang Rathert, 'Richard Strauss und die Musikkritik in den USA', in *Richard Strauss. Der Komponist und sein Werk*. Ed. Sebastian; Adrian Kech und Hartmut Schick Bolz (Munich: Alitera Verlag, 2017), 517–532. Strauss's 1904 trip to the US is also the subject of Matthew Reese's MPhil dissertation 'Strauss and the Americans' (University of Oxford, 2016). Quotations from contemporary news papers and magazines documenting the trip reveal how the tour was as much

whether he would consider writing an oboe concerto, and yet he was intimately familiar with Strauss's orchestral writing from his work as a section oboist with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. The political and emotional difficulties of separating a composer from their music—as is clear from the absence of Wagner's music in Israel—would have made it difficult for American orchestras and opera houses to continue performing his work had Strauss have been found guilty in his denazification trial.²⁶

In 1948, with communism increasingly considered the real threat to the security of the Western allies, rather than any latent Nazism in Germany, the denazification procedure under which Strauss was assessed, was correspondingly wound down in order to foster and maintain positive relations between German people and their Western occupiers.²⁷ In this way, Strauss might be considered a living face of the propaganda mission of the Western allies who sought to present themselves as the all-benevolent helper in Europe. Regardless of the manner by which it came about, Strauss's personal war was, for the time being, over. One of his first undertakings as a man newly acquitted from the weight of Nazi guilt was to help finance the return of his work in what was left of Germany's opera houses.²⁸ That the preservation of his music was at the forefront of his ambitions coincides, albeit on a wholly different level, with Charles Youmans's interpretation of Strauss's psychological state during the composition of the late songs. Youmans suggests that the numerous self-references that

an opportunity for the American press to blow its own cultural trumpet as it was beneficial to the composer's reputation abroad. See, for example, Richard Aldrich, 'Richard Strauss the Composer: Some Facts about the Famous Musician Who is Coming to New York this Week', *New York Times*, 21 February 1904, 30; and Walton Perkins, 'Dr. Strauss Leads Chicago Orchestra: Great Composer Calls Theodore Thomas' Musicians One of Two Greatest Organizations in the World', [Chicago] *Inter Ocean*, 2 April 1904, 3.

26. Even while Strauss was President of the *Reichsmusikkammer* his reception in the US did not suffer greatly, see Rathert, 'Richard Strauss und die Musikkritik in den USA', 518.

27. Fred Taylor, *Exorcising Hitler: The Occupation and Denazification of Germany* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2013), 277.

28. Kennedy, *Richard Strauss: Man, Musician, Enigma*, 383.

are embedded in the songs' music were a means by which the composer came to terms with his own impending death. Setting texts by Joseph Freiherr von Eichendorff and Hesse that deal explicitly with nature's time and the coming of sleep, the *Four Last Songs* lend themselves in particular to romanticised biographical interpretation. Michael Kennedy writes 'they are the music of old age and wisdom and serenity, of death and transfiguration'.²⁹ Kennedy's allusion to Strauss's 1889 tone poem here gives a nod to Strauss's own self-borrowing at the end of 'Im Abendrot'. For a non-religious man who believed his music to be the only aspect of his being that might have any chance of surviving his body, Youmans proposes that Strauss's music about his own music was the nearest the composer came to the idea of immortality.³⁰

Whether or not Strauss contemplated immortality in their composition, the aesthetic vitality of these songs is at odds with any narrative of decay that it might be tempting to make in light of the composer's age: 'even his harshest critics see in them [*Four Last Songs*] "renewed creative freshness" and "a resurgence of Strauss's talent"'.³¹ Articulating the end of an era that seems long ago already to have passed, or else depicting an atheist's glimpse of an afterlife that is perhaps already here, one of the most striking aspects of the 'lateness' of the *Four Last Songs* is that it is expressed in a manner that seems to controvert the possibility of demise at all. One very straightforward reason for this aesthetic disposition, which speaks both to the idea of being too late and to the richness of this lateness, might be traced to the historical situation of the songs' composition.

In this exposition I have shown how the period from the end of the Second

29. Kennedy, *Richard Strauss: Man, Musician, Enigma*, 386.

30. Youmans, *Mahler and Strauss: In Dialogue*, 207.

31. Hutcheon and Hutcheon, *Four Last Songs: Aging and Creativity in Verdi, Strauss, Messiaen, and Britten*, 58.

World War to 23 May 1949, when the Federal Republic of Germany was founded, can be considered a moment of historical suspension both for the composer and for his environment. Western Germany did not yet have the governing and economic structures of democratic-capitalism in place that were going to rule their country from the advent of the FDR to the present day. Neither was the country able to return to the totalitarian fascist social order of its recent past, or the pre-war, state-led monopoly capitalism of the Weimar Republic. The promises of American propaganda which proclaimed the vision of a united Europe, juxtaposed with the reality of an increasingly hostile division between Eastern and Western Germany. All the same, while the old order crumbled, brightly-coloured posters sold the Marshall Plan as the guarantee of an abundant future. Strauss was in his eighties when he began composing the *Four Last Songs*, and he was ill; but his eighty-fourth birthday also marked a new beginning. There could be no natural sense of historical continuity for either Strauss or Germany under the new circumstances of their existence. They had both been severed from a past that it would be expedient, for the time being, to forget.

5.3 ‘Beim Schlafengehn’—missing something?

Nun der Tag mich müd gemacht,
soll mein sehnliches Verlangen
Freundlich die gestirnte Nacht
Wie ein müdes Kind empfangen.

Hände, laßt von allem Tun,
Stirn vergiß du alles Denken,
Alle meine Sinne nun
Wollen sich in Schlummer senken.

Und die Seele unbewacht
Will in freien Flügen schweben,
Um im Zauberkreis der Nacht
Tief und tausendfach zu leben.

Hermann Hesse, 1947³²

Strauss’s ‘Beim Schlafengehn’ is in binary form with its sections demarcated tonally, see Table 5.1, p. 225. The A section (bb. 1–23)—in which the first two stanzas of the poem are presented—fluctuates harmonically, but has a key signature denoting F minor. The remaining forty-seven bars (bb. 24–70) make up the B section, which stays in D \flat major throughout. Bars 38–60 of the B section carry the text of the third stanza, while its initial part is given over to a violin solo that dissolves into tutti violins when the vocal part re-enters at b. 38. While texturally ‘Beim Schlafengehn’ might be divided into three sections (ABA, with the violin solo comprising B) the elision of the melodic voice between the violin solo and the vocal part at b. 38, and the exceptionally static harmonic form of the song after b. 24, indicates more strongly a bipartite tonally structured form.

32. Reinhold Schlötterer, ed., *Die Texte der Lieder von Richard Strauss* (Pfaffenhofen: W. Ludwig Verlag, 1988), 249 *Now the day has made me tired, shall my longing desire friendly embrace the starry night like a tired child. Hands, leave all your doing; brow, forget you all thoughts, all my senses now want to sink themselves in slumber. And the soul unwatched, wants to soar in free flight, in order to live deeply and a thousandfold in the magic circle of the night.* Translation my own.

Over the course of this analysis I will suggest that both sections of ‘Beim Schlafengehn’ have a problematic relationship to temporality. Part 1 struggles to bring together the different components of its musical language to create a temporally coherent tonal form, while Part 2 succeeds in binding the formal components of musical language together only by surrendering the possibility of tonal progression altogether.

Table 5.1 – ‘Beim Schlafengehn’ Form table

Part 1 (A)			Part 2 (B)		
1–5	5–14	15–23	24–37	38–60	61–70
Introduction	Stanza 1	Stanza 2	Interlude	Stanza 3	Coda
?→Eb	Fm→?	C#→	Db		

The German word ‘nun’ does not exclusively denote time. Like ‘now’, it has a number of semantic and rhetorical functions. For instance, it can function as an interjection: ‘now that was an obvious point’. In this example the original point, though not directly presented to the reader, exists at least hypothetically in the response. ‘Nun’ at the beginning of the poem may then be heard as an allusion to a hypothetical stimulus not presented within the main scope of its content, but that nevertheless exercises some influence over the poem’s narrative present. In this case, ‘nun’ refers to the day that is already passed by the time of the poem’s beginning; and yet, the poem’s narrative voice describes no event or consequence of this day except for the fact that it has been made tired by it. Jackson suggests that ‘Beim Schlafengehn’ looks back on the day from the position of night (this fits into his understanding of the song as part of a cycle whose main theme is reflection on things passed), but I suggest that the song’s

text projects more the inaccessibility of the past than a recollection of it.³³

While the observation above may seem an insignificant linguistic point, this ‘nun’ embodies two of the grounding aspects of the poetic aesthetic of Hesse’s ‘Beim Schlafengehn’. Firstly, it engenders from the beginning of the poem a sense of historical detachment (I will return to this point later in the chapter); and secondly, it represents the first instance of a recurring emptiness in the poem’s semantic content. The poem’s internal narrative voice describes itself with a simile ‘wie ein müdes Kind’, which both repeats the word ‘müde’ from earlier in the text and also introduces a new figure—a child—to the verse that has no existence save as a static (non-developmental) literary device. The child is summoned to conjure tropes of innocence, neediness, or other generic markers of childhood, but it has no direct presence of its own. Like the day that is passed, it belongs to the text in its absence.

The poem’s drive towards abstraction is found in the gradual separation of its narrative voice from its body, then mind, and finally the soul. This process is articulated through the shift from the first-person imperative in the second stanza to the third-person, future-orientated desire of the third. The first stanza uses a reflexive construction to remove agency from the narrative voice, ‘the day has tired me’; the second stanza detaches the senses from the subjective desire of the narrator ‘all my senses now want to sink themselves in slumber’; and the third stanza removes the first-person voice altogether referring to ‘the soul’ using the definite article as though it were a poetic character of its own. The narrative voice is no more substantial than the fragmented parts it summons into being only to dismiss immediately to the ether: ‘hands, leave all your doing; brow, forget you all thoughts’ (stanza 2, lines 1–2). The symbol of the tired child and the image of the hands leaving off from work are sufficiently stimulating

33. Jackson, ‘Ruhe meine Seele! and the Letzte Orchester Lieder’, 111.

as to evoke a sense of the poetic world they belong to—or rather, create—and certainly vivid enough to be appreciated at an aesthetic level, but they have no content beyond that. The tired child has no face, gender, age, reason for tiredness, and the hands had no purpose before receiving their instruction to cease from action.

A similar quality of semantic emptiness is also present in some aspects of the song's musical text. For Susan Wanless, the motivic cell (motif *a*) that opens the work encapsulates the overall mood of the song by combining 'restful' qualities (the descending seconds) with 'yearning' qualities (rising sevenths).³⁴ In her analysis, the first gesture of 'Beim Schlafengehn' comes to stand in for the song's entire musical meaning because its apparently inherent emotive quality encapsulates the mood of the piece as a whole. While this approach may highlight what is immediately perceptible to the listener, it renders only a partial understanding of the musical text and much of the ambiguity of the musical language is lost. Aspects of the song's meaning that, on an *Affekt*-driven first hearing, seem obvious, are less transparent when held up to closer scrutiny. For example, the extent to which 'restful yearning' really captures the full nature of the motif's meaning—even if it succeeds in recognising its emotive quality—is cast into doubt when the formal structure of the motif is examined.

Wanless identifies motif *a*'s falling second as harbouring 'restful' qualities, but the musical aspect that stimulates the idea of rest is perhaps more the association of the falling semitone with the resolution of dissonance rather than the interval per se.³⁵ Being monophonic there is no dissonance present in the first bar of Strauss's song except that implied by the contour of the gesture. The

34. Susan Wanless, *Richard Strauss: Vier Letzte Lieder = Four Last Songs* (Leeds: Mayflower, 1984), 22.

35. Consider, for example, the similarly monophonic opening to Beethoven's Bagatelle No. 25 in A minor 'Für Elise', which also has a falling semitone. In this situation the gesture creates tension in its repetition.

evocation of rest from this gesture relies, to an extent, on the listener inventing a musical context in which to hear it. Furthermore, Wanless understands the shape of this figure as fundamental to the musical meaning of the song, but, if for a moment we disregard its contour, the figuration might be reframed so that the rising seventh with octave displacement becomes a falling second, and the falling second becomes a rising seventh. The mirror effect in the inverted intervals of the opening motif (falling second, rising seventh) masks its linear pitch progression: the rising contour of the motif is, in pitch class terms at least, falling: D \flat , C, B \flat , A \flat —a simple diatonic step-wise descent. Wanless's interpretation of motif *a* as 'resting and yearning' perhaps recognises a deeper formal attribute of the motif than simply its emotional properties. It highlights a level of internal contradiction that exists in its *Affekt*, but also in its musical presentation.

The song's instrumental introduction is another place where we might appreciate a musical contradiction between *Affekt* and formal construction. The emergence of a musical form from the very lowest part of the orchestra has been, since Haydn's *Creation* at least, a trope of large-form instrumental music seeking to present the emergence of the something—typically the universe—from nothing. Firstly, this programmatic evocation at the start of 'Beim Schlafengehn' is at odds with the song's text, which engineers the reverse effect, taking the narrative subject from the particular to the abstracted; and secondly, in both musical and textual cases the subject's 'whole' is constructed through seemingly negative processes.

Rather than being the generative unit of the song's musical form motif *a* establishes a basic formal problem. The motif begins on the second semiquaver of the bar, meaning the downbeat that would give its syncopation metrical temporal stability is missing. Indeed, this absence is only revealed at the downbeat

of b. 2 when the first transposed repetition of this motif presents the original motif as the content of a full bar rather than an upbeat gesture to a melodic continuation. The semiquaver rest at the motif's beginning then becomes a sticking point. It halts the melodic development of this musical cell at the start of each new bar as every reiteration of the motif imparts its own empty downbeat. By conceding the melodic voice to the rhythmic vacuum of the downbeat, the line that appears at first to carry the song's melodic material ceases to develop into a musical subject, and instead settles as a layer of harmonic background. The harmonic basis of the introduction is therefore constructed out of failed melodic material. Not only is the development of the melodic motif itself stilted by the initial semiquaver rest, but the introduction's harmonic direction is also sapped by the sequentially driven attempt to build a functioning melodic phrase.

Motif *a*'s function within the song is obscured from its initial monophonic presentation. Without any accompanying voices, and with a linear rather than harmonic form, the musical cell assumes the role of a melody, but no melodic continuation emerges. While the key signature suggests either an $A\flat$ major or F minor tonic, neither of these keys is achieved in the song's introduction. The first iteration of motif A fits most readily into a $D\flat$ major scenario, taking the contour of a I–IV–V bass movement with a passing C natural. Being monophonic, however, no vertical harmonic support consolidates a $D\flat$ tonal reading, and when the melodic development of the motif is halted on the first beat of b. 2, $D\flat$ loses any aural authority it might originally have had. Landing on a major seventh above the proposed tonic root, elevating the pitch that was originally heard as a passing note between the root and scale-degree 4, the effect of the motif's culminating C natural at b. 2 is to destabilise the notion of a $D\flat$ tonic. Motif *a* thus fails to establish either a tonic key to form the basis of the song's harmonic language, or to provide an adequate thematic module from which the

song's melody might develop. While the impression of a melody emerges in the ascending transpositions of motif *a*'s imitation, its repeated failure to develop thematically means that the resulting introduction is neither properly melodic nor conventionally harmonically functional within the work's form.

Jameson describes a driving force behind postmodern culture as 'an attempt to think the present historically in an age that has forgotten to think historically in the first place'.³⁶ Not only is the notion of universality compromised in the postmodern cultural sphere, as it was in the era of modernism, but as an extension of this loss, the postmodern cultural dominant also fails to generate a historically defined, situated individual. I suggest that the collapse of the individual's identity as much as the historicity of the singular (which, being a crucial factor of a subject's situatedness, is a fundamental aspect of its identity) is embedded in the postmodern cultural dominant.³⁷ As is evident in the short discussion of motif *a* above, the joint issues of historicity and individual autonomy are lodged in 'Beim Schlafengehn' as the negotiation of temporal form and expressive abstraction, but so also, I suggest, is a desire to overcome the disintegration of aesthetic autonomy.

Crucial to Jameson's understanding of postmodernism as a cultural dominant is its continuity with modernism, and, while postmodernism is the *dom-*

36. Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, ix.

37. The rise of identity politics, for example, is a product of late capitalism, and the importance of art—and increasingly commodities—in Western societies as a constructing and consolidating factor of personal and group identity evinces the significance of identity politics in the sphere of cultural production. Capitalism is embedded in the democratic process in the form of corporate influence, and, just as true political choice is stymied by corporate power, so also is the individual's capacity to resist its assigned role in a capitalist society. Mary Wrenn summarises the problem of identity in the neoliberal era of capitalism as follows: 'a person's identity becomes so undermined by the system that she must adopt a social identity in order to create a sense of personal identity and connection with others since her problems remain unanswered within the neoliberal state, and her personal success is pre-determined by an economic system that associates financial shortcomings with a failed individual identity'. Mary Wrenn, 'Identity, Identity Politics, and Neoliberalism', *Panoeconomicus* 4 (2014): 503. See also Bradley Campbell and Jason Manning, *The Rise of Victimhood Culture: Microaggressions, Safe Spaces, and the New Culture Wars* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

inant cultural system of late capitalism, it has no totalising claim to its culture. He writes, ‘postmodernism is not the cultural dominant of a wholly new social order [...] but only the reflex and the concomitant of yet another systematic modification of capitalism’.³⁸ A broadly continuous socio-economic paradigm underlies both modernism and postmodernism, so it makes sense to view their cultural dominants as responding to the same overall relation of subject and society. In other words, the framework of capitalism provides the ideological structure on which cultural manifestations of both modernism and postmodernism are foregrounded.³⁹ I will now offer two connected readings of ‘Beim Schlafengehn’. The first aims to show how the song can be read as an artistic subject dealing in the specific issues of the postmodern cultural dominant, and the second considers the way in which the song develops a new mode of expression in spite of the shortcomings of its tonal progression.

5.4 Finding time to be postmodern

The musical progression of ‘Beim Schlafengehn’ denies a single, linear explanation of its formal development. The inability to progress a single path of musical development can be seen in the structural discrepancies between different facets of the song’s musical form. The melodic dysfunction of the song’s introduction, which I began exploring in §5.3 finds a belated resolution in the vocal entry. The C♯ in the vocal part on the downbeat of b. 7 can be understood as

38. Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, xii.

39. Because postmodernism is merely an extension of modernism into a new stage of capitalism, one might conceive of the period from the French Revolution to the Russian Revolution as the first modernist era, and the period from the Russian Revolution to the fall of the Berlin Wall as the second modernist era. The period from the fall of the Berlin Wall to the present day quite possibly falls into a third modernist era in which we are beginning to witness the erosion of capitalist democracies. This terminology of stages is better because it recognises the cumulative aspect of the cultural crises that accompany capitalism. For the sake of their immediate familiarity, however, I will continue to use the terms ‘modernism’ and ‘postmodernism’.

corresponding to the C that loses its melodic function on the downbeat of b. 2. Where the C in b. 2 ought to have presented a melodic continuation, it instead adopted an accompaniment role. It stopped short the melodic development of its voice at the downbeat, and forced the next attempt to bring about developing melodic material (the imitation of motif *a* at a new transposition) onto the second semiquaver of the bar. The structural problems arising from this semiquaver rest will be explained in due course, but first I will explain how the C at b. 7 might be seen as the continuation of the melodic voice that failed to develop in b. 2.

In order to bring about the connection between the C at b. 7 and the C at b. 2, the song has to 'lose' a semiquaver beat in the melodic voice, forcing the downbeat of the melodic line back onto the strong beat of the bar while also retaining its melodic purpose. A falling, four-semiquaver motif (motif *b*) heard initially in b. 5 provides the vehicle for this rhythmic adjustment, see Figure 5.1, p. 233. Motif *b* is repeated in b. 6, but this time it occurs a semiquaver later than its original presentation in the previous bar. Rather than marking out the second beat of the bar, it obscures the bar's midpoint and creates the effect of almost tripping into b. 7 when the vocal part presents the melodic downbeat a semiquaver sooner than anticipated. The vocal line is thus pulled forward by the 'late' repetition of the descending line in the upper-string motif. That is, the shortening of the accompaniment's melodic upbeat emphasises the arrival of the vocal part's C♯ on the downbeat of the bar. The ungainly concurrence of melodic and rhythmic emphasis on this C♯ in b. 7 provides a disjointed cure for the loss of melodic continuation on the downbeat of b. 2. As motif *a* finds its melodic continuation in b. 7 so also is it liberated to function as an accompaniment figure; note the re-emergence of motif *a*'s distinctive rhythmic pattern in the second violin, then viola at the end of b. 7 and going into b. 8, see Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1 – Opening bars of ‘Beim Schlafengehn’

While b. 7 may appear to provide the solution of the melodic-motivic problem of ‘Beim Schlafengehn’s introduction, it has not come without a cost. The rhythmic awkwardness on the melodic surface of this ‘correction’ is compounded by a frustrated harmonic rhythm too. In order to posit the b. 7 vocal-line $C\sharp$ as a melodic continuation of motif *a* in b. 2, the harmonic structure of the song has now to overcome the unexpected $E\flat$ minor deceptive cadence at b. 6. This $E\flat$ minor disturbance emerges out of a harmonic indecision that might once again be attributed to the harmonic intervention of motif *a*.

As the C of b. 2 changes its function from melody to harmony, it sets up a dominant pedal for an F minor resolution. However, when the sequential repetition of motif *a* in bb. 2–3 stops on at the barline on $A\flat$ this tonal course towards F minor is brought into question. Rather than the root of V of F minor, the C pedal enduring from b. 2 may be considered the third degree of the dom-

inant chord of D \flat major, as implied by the new layer in the harmonic texture. As the C pedal in the double bass drops by step towards its new root (A \flat) so the C in the first cello responds in contrary motion towards E \flat . The second cello, a third below the first cello, had originally carried the all-important E \natural —raised third of V of F minor—but in parallel motion with the first cello it ascends by step towards G \flat . The downbeat of b. 5 presents a strong V⁷ in D \flat , but in place of the anticipated D \flat major in the following bar the bass shifts mid-bar up a tone to B \flat , undergirding the chord of the relative minor. Being on the weak beat of the bar this shift does not project an effective interrupted cadence in its own right, but it does pave the way for a v–I cadence onto E \flat minor.

In this way, the E \flat minor cadence in b. 6 seems to be an unhappy reverberation of the failure of the harmonic trajectory of the orchestral introduction to establish either F minor or D \flat major. In order to re-establish the melodic subject, the vocal line must regain F minor, the key implied by the original C in b. 2. However, its mechanism for doing so, motif *b*, is harmonically compromised. Instead of looking harmonically towards F minor, its pitches in b. 7 still cling to the E \flat minor cadence. The vocal line must now also correct the harmonic problem of motif *b* (the continued association with an E \flat minor tonic) by lifting its flattened C by a semitone. It does so by offering another variation of motif *b*'s descending fourth from D \flat –A \flat . The vocal part echoes in non-proportional rhythmic augmentation the four falling semiquavers of the accompaniment with emphasis on the all-important C \natural , rather than C \flat in the original scalar descent of motif *b*. Below this altered melodic descent (from D \flat to A \flat) the bass brings about the F minor close. The vocal part thus offers the melodic stimulus for a form-functional harmonic progression connecting the opening motif with its proper tonic, but only by erasing the formal value of the cadential movement towards D \flat major, and the tonal authority of the most rhetorically, if not

harmonically convincing cadence of the introductory space.

The cadence at b. 6 represents the culmination of the instrumental phrase and the introduction's textural climax, while bringing a perfect cadence onto an E \flat minor tonic chord. It may be that the formal value of E \flat minor as a tonal area is expunged by the subsequent F minor cadence in b. 7, but the rhetorical authority of this first cadence still outweighs that of the second. The first tonal phrase of 'Beim Schlafengehn' can be divided into a lopsided 6+1, the F minor cadence midway through b. 7 constituting the +1. The tonal phrase structure presents an extended harmonic upbeat with a wrong-key, dissolving downbeat that corrects itself in 'extra time' (that is, in the +1). In a Schenkerian reading of the opening bars, the C pedal in bb. 2–3 may be seen as foreshadowing the dominant chord (of F minor) in b. 4. This dominant eventually produces the V $_4^6$ –V $_4^7$ –I cadential structure in beats 1–2 of b. 7. However, the weak culmination within the bar of this harmonic structure means that the F minor cadence at b. 7 lacks the structural authority of a tonic. Although a middleground diagram joins these two points, the connection between the cadential resolution to F minor and the C pedal in the bass is disrupted by the texturally stronger E \flat minor cadence at b. 6.

The +1 ending of the tonal phrase thus engineers a forced resolution (brought about through melodic manipulation) of the weak dominant provided in the harmonic upbeat (in particular b. 4), lifting the key by a tone out of the E \flat minor cadence to the 'proper' tonic. The cadence structure is thus disconnected from the expression of the song's tonal form. The textural and metrical emphasis on the E \flat cadence at bb. 5–6 does not correspond to its harmonic stature, which is fleeting. The underdetermined F minor cadence, on the other hand, piggy-backs off the textural authority of the E \flat minor cadence despite its 'correct' tonal content. Thus the two cadences are connected—neither functions

properly without the other: the texturally weak F minor cadence at b. 7 provides both the harmonic and the melodic resolution that the texturally strong cadence at b. 6 failed to produce.

The temporal instability of 'Beim Schlafengehn' is thus directly related to its tonal structure, as epitomised in the failure of the introductory bars to establish a satisfactory harmonic rhythm. The song fails to attain proper linear function in its tonal form, instead having to double back on itself in various different layers of its form (melody, harmony, rhythm) in order to create some semblance of progression. The process of 'doubling back' at b. 7 to recover aspects of the melodic and harmonic progression causes an irresolvable conflict between the layers of musical form that are both fundamental to the song's structure. The stepwise ascent from D \flat (first note) to F (b. 7 cadence), is texturally muddled. The bass-voice dissonant passing note E \flat is drawn out at the expense of the two consonances—the E \flat cadence at b. 6 has the textural authority that ought to have supported the F minor cadence in the following bar. The original cause of this structural trouble might be traced back to the semiquaver rest at the work's very opening. This initial lack is represented as a musical tick, and the apparent fixation on this rudimentary absence of pulse has repercussions on the entire musical structure of the introduction. The 'extra time' in the musical phrase that is required to rescue the functioning of tonal form in 'Beim Schlafengehn' emerges, I suggest, out of the failure of tonal form to create a temporally coherent subject.

The song's melodic form folds in on itself in an attempt to 'correct' its particular interpretation of the present (by pulling the melodic voice forward a semiquaver), thereby securing the linear development of its melodic material only through a process of erasure. What is erased is not the music itself—the bars intervening between b. 2 and b. 7 must be accounted for—but the harmonic

continuity of the tonal phrase. The C placed in the bass at b. 2 that would be construed in a voice-leading diagram as dominant preparation for the F minor cadence in b. 7 undergoes, I suggest, a process of gaining and losing its historicity, which is to say, its tonal function.

Historicity can be aligned directly with tonal function in this way because the functional facet of chords or notes in the context of tonality is always dependent on an event that occurs before or after the specific event at hand. Tonality is an inherently temporal structuring system: musical structure depends on the linear presentation of musical material—this is clearly evident in the fact that I–V and V–I evince different musical meaning. The note C in b. 2 gains its first harmonic function at b. 4 where it is presented as the root of the full dominant chord of F. Its significance within the song’s tonal structure is read backwards from this particular moment (thus the ‘present’ moment at b. 4 has a history and a linear directive that explains its authority), that interprets the harmonic fabric of b. 2 as the prolongation of the dominant. By the time the F minor cadential sequence occurs in b. 7, the C♯ of the vocal line comes as a harmonic surprise, however. It is unexpected because the C-based pedal note in the introductory bars no longer carries the harmonic authority it espoused at b. 4, partly through the emergence of D♭ major as an alternative tonic, but mostly through the solidity of the E♭ minor cadence in b. 6. When a C major chord re-emerges on the first beat of b. 7, it has lost the ability to express dominant function with authority because it no longer has the capacity to parse the preceding musical material directly. The melodic authority of C is cut off from the history of its harmonic function: ‘Beim Schlafengehn’ has lost the structural connection between the different components of its musical language and this manifests itself in the problem of constructing a temporally coherent form in the introduction.

The struggle, in Part 1 of 'Beim Schlafengehn', to knit the song's formal elements together and resolve the problems of its musical progression might be interpreted as the desire to reinstate a sense of historical certainty via the construction of a musical whole. Although I have framed it here as a modernist struggle (a response to the failure of functional tonality), there is nothing stylistically modernist in the musical idiom of the opening elevation of motif *a* sequentially through the orchestral texture. The aural effect of this introduction is certainly not that of fractured parts seeking meaning through development and transformation, and so, while we might explain away the structural fragmentation of 'Beim Schlafengehn' as an attribute of its grappling with the modernist crisis of music, this does not satisfactorily describe the musical process of these opening bars.

The basic problem 'Beim Schlafengehn' espouses in its form is not the material fact of its 'historical' musical content—as, for example the disruptive C♯ of the *Eroica* symphony might be described—but a crisis of negativity, the absence of a historical structure with which to grapple. The semiquaver rest at the work's opening is reified in the manner of a historical fact such that the song's musical form can construct its fractured discourse around it. Because this semiquaver rest sticks, it embeds in the song's continuation an underlying and self-conscious instability. Pulling the melodic voice onto the first beat of the bar engineers a cover-up for the fact that the downbeat is something that was, at least at first, present only as an absence.

Part 2 of 'Beim Schlafengehn' appears as though all the formal difficulties of Part 1 have been worked through and resolved so that the violin solo beginning at rehearsal mark C can present a fully fledged continuation of the motif *a* from the offset. I suggest, however, that Part 2 also is founded on the notion of a formal void. Rather than a fragmented musical language, the excess of D♭ major

fills up the tonal form as though it were the form in its entirety with no space for any other key, i.e. for a larger tonal context. Harmonic variation belongs *within* the key of D \flat major not in opposition to it. The chromatic interest in bb. 34–35, for example, is simply an expansion of the relative minor (B \flat minor), itself an upper neighbour to the dominant of D \flat major tonic: an upper neighbour C \flat ⁷ resolves to F \flat major, whose root is raised a semitone to bring about the minor dominant of B \flat minor with a flattened fifth degree enabling a smooth semitone drop back to the root of B \flat , now with major third and flattened fifth in both cases to lead to the root of v of V (E \flat minor) which then follows the anticipated tonal progression through V $_4^6$ –V $_3^5$ –I.

It is, of course, normal for a piece of tonal music to have a section designated specifically for tonic key saturation, but this is usually reserved for recapitulatory function, or the establishment of a primary theme area *prior* to tonal change. Observing how motif *a* proliferates throughout the song's form, and especially its recurrence in the violin solo beginning at rehearsal mark C, Wanless has argued that its function is to provide a sense of formal unity.⁴⁰ Indeed, motif *a* opens the violin solo theme at the heart of the song with a strong D \flat major chord on the first beat of the bar, such that we might even posit this passage as projecting the 'full' form of the song's melodic subject—that which failed to be achieved in the vocal line in Part 1. Bar 28 (violin) presents motif *a* a major fourth higher with an additional note filling the originally absent semiquaver downbeat; and in b. 33 the motif is expanded through the recasting of the first falling second as a descending broken triad, which is then repeated sequentially in b. 35.

Having come through the struggle of Part 1, it might be imagined that Part 2 of the song is able to luxuriate in a newly freed melodic subject in a tonally

40. Wanless, *Richard Strauss: Vier Letzte Lieder = Four Last Songs*, 22.

stable environment of bliss. The song's trajectory might thus be posited as one of strife and redemption. This reading fits with Strauss's biography: two months before he finished 'Beim Schlafengehn' he was exonerated of all Nazi guilt. The song's text and tonal rest may then be read as the benediction of one newly released to live the rest of his life and die in peace. That is, assuming a rich orchestral texture, soaring lyricism, and major-key tonality amount to a peaceful end. Rather than a glance towards future happiness, Part 2 projects a sense of nostalgia. Nostalgia is a distorted perception of history that isolates certain aspects of the past for elevation while ignoring the wider contexts from which they are taken or transplanted to. The extensive presence of the tonic key in Part 2 has a quality of contextlessness that aligns with a nostalgic perception of tonality—it also fits with the increasing abstraction of the text that seeks to purge even the context of body from soul and body part from body part. Part 2 does not develop tonally or recapitulate music heard before, but it does establish a coherent melodic theme from material previously considered wanting.

Instead of considering Part 2 the 'B' of a binary form, we might posit it as the return of A (A') in a ternary structure that has managed to lose its expositional A. We could claim for 'Beim Schlafengehn' the desire to construct a musical whole out of musical parts whose condition in the historical present seem impossible to reconcile to one another. 'Beim Schlafengehn' is an inherently fragmented musical subject whose sense of wholeness is orientated around a response to the problem of tonal form—the lost universal—in the twentieth century. However, this rather extravagant interpretation fails to acknowledge the paradox of its form, whereby the perceived fullness of tonal redemption in Part 2 actually belongs aesthetically to a time that precedes the crisis of its form. 'Beim Schlafengehn' does not actually transcend its formal structure to reach a new equilibrium with a universal because the construction of that universal *within*

the song's form as a return is premised on the absolute absence of anything to return to.

'Beim Schlafengehn' cannot solve its temporal disorientation by a process of return—the progressive value of formal return is no longer an option for the art object under the cultural dominant of postmodernism. In Part 1 the lack that was found in motif *a* right at the beginning of the work is transferred into the material of the present as a persistent problem. Rather than establishing a linear progressive connection between b. 2 and b. 7 'Beim Schlafengehn' makes the temporal advance of the work essentially digressive. The downbeat of b. 7, which brings the melodic voice back to its 'rightful' place at the beginning of the bar, does not refigure the song's musical past, but only absorbs the structural absence of this past by substituting its own material properties for the space that originally stood void. In Part 2 the issue of the subject's historicity cannot be resolved without 'rewriting' its entire formal structure and abandoning altogether the notion of the self as autonomous. The idea of return, for the postmodern art subject, is not a question of teleological resolution (or of creating a totality), but of ontological crisis (of having no totality to create).

5.5 Finding form for modernism

In §5.4 I argued that 'Beim Schlafengehn' expresses the crisis of historicity that is associated with the postmodern cultural era. In this section I will make a brief alternative reading of Part 1 that reveals how the song is also engaged with the modernist aim of overcoming the limitations of tonal language in a totally different way. Rather than reconciling itself to the identity crisis of its historical moment by reflecting in its musical form the failure of tonally linear progression to project a coherent image of the subject, I suggest that Part 1

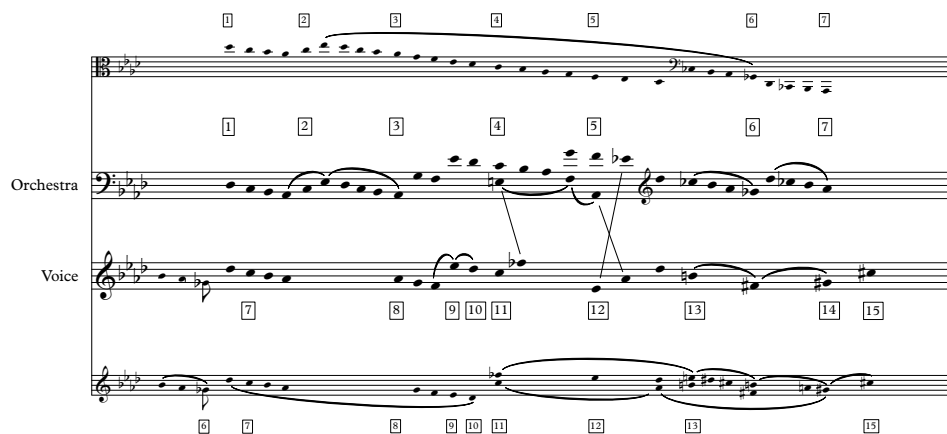
of 'Beim Schlafengehn' can be understood as seeking an authentic encounter with the temporal nature of its subject via another means. In order to mediate its historical condition and realise its individual autonomy, I will suggest that the song grasps the temporality of its form through a novel re-engagement with its material content.

Markers of time that are foundational to a person's self-perception are found obscured in the song's text, and replaced with a spatialized conception of the self as dismembered parts. Meanwhile, markers of time that are associated with formal progression in music are also obscured: a ternary form that lacks its originating A section, a failure of melodic development arising from motif *a*, and the interruption of prolongational structures in the tonal progression of Part 1. A formal preoccupation with failed progression might be read as a musical response to the loss of historical continuity in German culture following the Second World War, or even to a loss of confidence in the nature of German identity. It might also, however, be read as a preliminary requirement of a new construction of temporality that re-imagines the nature of musical form for the present historical moment.

The first stanza of the song's text is presented in a melodic subject derived entirely from material found in the instrumental introduction. The vocal part traces the melodic ascent of the instrumental opening, sometimes directly and sometimes prolongationally with melodic elaboration. Their relationship is graphed in Figure 5.2, p. 243. Bar numbers are shown in boxes above the staff for the orchestra and below the staff for the voice. Note that the first three notes of the vocal part are not accounted for at the start of the orchestral introduction, but at this stage in the actual progression of the song the vocal line is in precise unison with the melodic part (violin 1) of the orchestra (and thus has no independence from it). The stemmed G \flat returns at the very end of the second

stanza and will be discussed in more detail later.

Figure 5.2 – Instrumental and vocal part relationship



The two middle staves of Figure 5.2 show the correspondence of pitches between the introduction and the vocal entry. Every pitch in the melodic voice of the introduction is presented in sequence without its rhythmic value or any indication of harmonic function. The slurs in the vocal part indicate where pitches are added (not included on the graph) in a melodic elaboration that prolongs the first pitch of the slur, while slurs in the orchestral part indicate where pitches are skipped in the vocal part. Some inner voices have been included in the orchestral reduction where they appear prominently in the corresponding place in the vocal part and indicate the presence of a compound melodic line. The top staff (small) of Figure 5.2 presents each pitch of the orchestral introduction in its closest registral relation to the previous pitch. The slur here simply highlights the extent of the phrase that can be represented as a single descending stepwise movement. The bottom staff (small) also presents the vocal pitches in closest registral relation to one another, reveals more detail of the melodic elaborations towards the end of the phrase, and shows the harmonic compression of the compound melody.

It is clear from Figure 5.2 that the vocal part and the orchestral introduction are intimately related. Rather than constructing the musical development of motif *a* via familiar ‘organic’ processes such as variation, rhythmic augmentation, inversion and so on, the vocal part takes the whole passage of the instrumental opening and transforms it almost entirely beyond aural recognition. Unlike the sequential repetition of motif *a* in the introduction—which I suggested was a crucial factor in its failure to develop—not a single motivic unit is reproduced directly in the vocal line of Part 1. The vocal part does not present the ‘growth’ of the melodic germ presented in the orchestral introduction, but the realisation of a melodic subject already latent in its material. Unlike a keyboard realisation of, for example, a ground bass, whose primary object is to elaborate a tonal form, this inverted ‘ground’ (that is, the melodic line presented in the orchestral introduction) is emancipated from its original harmonic and rhythmic context in its refiguration in the vocal part.

The harmonic passage of the song’s introductory material is not implied by the original succession of tones, and the vocal part does not cadence onto E \flat minor as the orchestral introduction did. Instead, we see here a transformation of the opening note, D \flat to its enharmonic equivalent C \sharp . From the second stanza of the song’s text the vocal line takes C \sharp minor and progresses on its own, i.e. without a ‘ground’ structure derived from the introduction. This passage has the overall harmonic goal of reinstating what in §5.4 I suggested was the unrealised D \flat major key implied in the ‘lost’ passage of the introduction between b. 2 and b. 7. Note also how the original vocal G \flat at b. 6 and its upbeat at the end of b. 5 are the only melodic notes that are not accounted for in the sequential progression of the vocal part in accordance with the introduction. The significance of their exclusion comes at the very end of Part 1. B \flat , A \flat , and G \flat provide the very last notes in the vocal part verbatim, but more than this, the three notes

Figure 5.3 – Tonal reduction of first and second stanzas

The figure displays a musical score for the first and second stanzas, presented as a tonal reduction. The score is organized into three sections: A, B, and C.

- Section A:** Measures 4, 6, 9, and 11. It features a treble and bass staff with various chords and melodic lines. A dashed line connects the bass line of measure 4 to measure 6, and another dashed line connects the bass line of measure 9 to measure 11.
- Section B:** Measures 13, 15, 17, and 19. Similar to section A, it shows a treble and bass staff. A dashed line connects the bass line of measure 13 to measure 15, and another dashed line connects the bass line of measure 17 to measure 19.
- Section C:** Measures 20, 21, 23, and 24. This section includes a treble and bass staff. A large bracket spans across measures 20, 21, 23, and 24, indicating a specific tonal structure or phrase.

The notation includes treble and bass clefs, a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and chords. The reduction focuses on the harmonic structure, with some notes and chords highlighted by brackets and dashed lines to show their tonal relationships.

are highlighted in the harmonic preparation for the $D\flat$ cadence that closes the section. This is shown in Figure 5.3 (p. 245), which presents a middleground tonal reduction of the first two stanzas of the song. A chromatic slide from $F\sharp^7$ to $B\flat$ major brings the vocal part to $B\flat$, which, by way of a *leittonwechsel* morphs to a D minor, that in turn shifts to the parallel minor of its relative F. At the top of this F minor chord sits $A\flat$, which falls to $G\flat$. The original $G\flat$ served as the minor third in the song's first, problematic cadence onto $E\flat$ minor, is here the crucial seventh degree, offered by the vocal line to the orchestra, which then brings about the $D\flat$ it could not achieve in the introduction.

One might extrapolate from the interpretation offered above that this cadence, which elides directly with the violin solo that opens Part 2 and leads into the third stanza of text, is the true realisation of the $D\flat$ major subject the introduction was always meant to produce. To do so, however, undermines the self-realising freedom of the melodic subject just witnessed in the presentation of the first two stanzas. Rather than replacing the original musical theme, the $D\flat$ major theme that arises with Part 2 may be perceived as the further exploration of the expressive potential within the sonority of the *Orchestergesang* through different means. For example, the heterophonic texture of the principal melodic voice enables impossibly long vocal phrases such as 'tief und tausendfach zu leben' to blend the fragility of the singer's breath with the infinite line of the violins. Such a match broadens the expressive scope of both instruments and surely contributes to the phenomenon noted by one of the premiere's reviewers: 'there seems some disproportion between the magnitude of the medium and the essential intimacy of its lyrical utterance'.⁴¹ 'Beim Schlafengehn' drives towards authentic expression by making accessible through uniquely musical

41. Review of *Four Last Songs* premiere performance in *The Times* quoted in Strickert, 'Richard Strauss' Vier Letzte Lieder: An Analytical Study', 8.

means the experience of self-overcoming that comes in the essentially private moment of falling asleep.

‘Beim Schlafengehn’—in Part 1 at least—resists the rationalising processes of conventional motivic development, and the cadentially progressive drive of tonal form. In other words, the musical subject that develops with the entry of the voice seeks to become an autonomous form, and thus withstand the standardising petrification and false individuation of mechanised, capitalist music. Of course, the totalising drive of tonality is not arrested entirely, and the relationship between harmonic segments can be explained in the theoretical language of abstracted tonal progressions, but ‘Beim Schlafengehn’ has something more as well. Its form, though ultimately tonal, is not the sum of a totalising tonal progression. The vocal part is composed of numerous short units that are held together by overlapping phrases and melodic extensions in the orchestral text. For example, the vocal part articulates a division between b. 10 and b. 11, introducing a new melodic idea in b. 11. The bassoon and lower strings connect b. 10 and b. 11 as a harmonic unit in a plagal cadence onto F minor while the violins offer a variation on an earlier countermelodic motif across the cadence to complement the new unit in the vocal part. The overall effect is of one an extended phrase constructed of many interwoven parts.

The linear melodic ‘ground’ presented in the orchestral opening may be considered the expressive kernel of ‘Beim Schlafengehn’. At the entry of the vocal part it transcends a mechanised progression of tonal form and is realised in the fullness of the orchestral song, not—in the first place—as a melodic or harmonic template for the production of a tonal form, but as the expressive basis of a musical subject. I suggest that Part 1 of ‘Beim Schlafengehn’ re-engages with an internal sense of temporal coherence by de-sensitising the signifiers and structures that a subject ordinarily depends on for an externally derived

understanding of its self. In place of these structures it inscribes its own temporality via the linear elaborations and harmonic extensions that are derived from a fresh engagement with musical materiality. Through this process of re-engaging with its internal temporal condition it instills in the originating musical material a kind of expression that is unique to the orchestral song. Reinhold Schlötterer points out that the designation of *Lied* for the *Four Last Songs* was made by their publisher, and that Strauss more often called this kind of composition an 'Orchestergesang'.⁴² Given my analyses here, 'orchestral song' seems the only appropriate title.

5.6 Conclusion

'The elderly Strauss', writes James L. Zychowicz, 'in his *Vier letzte Lieder*, with the rubble of World War II around him, invokes a sound world impossible to describe adequately: tempered by the times he had survived, steeped in the traditions of the Romanticism that shaped him, but not truly part of either'.⁴³ Zychowicz's claim that the soundworld of the *Four Last Songs* belongs neither to the Romanticism of its heritage nor to the immediate history of its composition might first be read as a pithy observation, but it speaks to the particular, anomalous set of historical circumstances that I believe undergirds the aesthetic condition of 'Beim Schlafengehn'.

Contrary to the more-or-less received view of the *Four Last Songs* as backward-looking icons of Romanticism, I suggested in the first reading of 'Beim Schlafengehn' that the song's form manifests the crisis of historicity. This crisis, which arises in the attempt to situate the subject historically at a time when

42. Schlötterer, 'Musikalisch-Elementares bei Im Abendrot von Richard Strauss', 497.

43. Zychowicz, 'The Lieder of Mahler and Richard Strauss', 245.

history is impossible to grasp, hails the new stage of modernism in postmodernity. It overlaps with and augments the modernist drive towards autonomy, which is brought to bear in my second reading of 'Beim Schlafengehn' (§5.5). In the second reading of the song, I suggested that 'Beim Schlafengehn' seeks to overcome the problem of the 'lost universal' of tonal totality by disregarding the logical progression of tonal form in favour of a lyrical progression based on transformed imitation. Insofar as it is also premised on the song's response to the problem of tonal temporality and the issue of totality, the first reading could equally be considered a response to the modernist crisis of tonal form. The second reading, meanwhile, could be considered indicative of the song's postmodernism: the musical progression that results from the vocal subject's formal imitation is not founded on the elaboration of tonal structures, but on the realisation of a melodic subject through an excess of materiality that makes the song's formal past new again.

The view of 'Beim Schlafengehn' that emerges from these readings is one in which the impossibility of understanding the present is equalled only by the exhilaration of being present. The sorrow, discomfort, loss, and uncertainty of 1948 is balanced in the relief, promise, and even bliss that can be found in the mere fact of surviving to imagine a natural death.

Chapter 6

Decay

6.1 Introduction

It is now relatively well known that the *Four Last Songs* were not Strauss's final contribution to song repertoire. A short piece for voice and piano 'Malven' (*Mal-lows*) received its premiere in New York thirty-seven years after its completion in 1948. While the existence of the work was first noted in Willi Schuh's 1950 article *Unvollendete Spätwerke von Richard Strauss*, it was presumed by many, including Schuh, unfinished until an autograph score was acquired by the New York branch of Sotheby's in 1984.¹ Until this time, the singer Maria Jeritza had possession of the only existing score. Jeritza received the piece together with an autograph copy of 'September' and an accompanying note from Strauss requesting that she have photographs of 'Malven' made and returned as soon as possible. Despite Strauss's repeated appeal, and later attempts from Strauss's son Franz and the Austrian National Library to gain access to the score, no reproduction was made during Jeritza's lifetime. The manuscript is inscribed 'Der

1. Willi Schuh, 'Unvollendete Spätwerke von Richard Strauss', *Schweizerische Musikzeitung* 90, nos. 8/9 (1950): 392–402.

geliebten Maria dieser letzte Rose! ('To the beloved Maria this last rose!').²

Perhaps because of its relative obscurity, or perhaps for its seeming insignificance in the context of Strauss's wider output, there is little scholarly interest in 'Malven'.³ Barbara A. Petersen has produced a detailed account of the song's rediscovery, and assessed the quality of different news and magazine articles that reported on this occasion and the song's subsequent premiere.⁴ She also compares Jeritza's score to earlier sketches from the Garmisch collection, noting significant structural changes between earlier and later versions of the song. For example, in its first draft the song lacked an introduction, and it would seem that Strauss had some difficulty working out how to end 'Malven' too: earlier versions had a 'Schluss' section that repeated material from earlier in the song, but this was later abandoned.⁵ The song's final form will be considered in more detail in my own analysis.

John M. Kissler presents another useful account of the song's rediscovery and also provides some biographical context for its composition.⁶ He dwells extensively on the song's musical material, comparing the final score to an earlier sketch documented in Schuh's article, as well as drawing attention to minor discrepancies between Jeritza's autograph score and the Boosey & Hawkes published score. However, Kissler's interpretation of 'Malven' is overshadowed by a barely veiled attempt to use the song as evidence of Strauss's political innocence. While he refrains from any explicit comment on the song's relationship to its musical and historical contexts, Kissler closes with a paean to Strauss's

2. Kissler, "'Malven': Richard Strauss's 'Letzte Rose!'", 18–19.

3. A short article on 'Malven' appeared in a Swiss journal, see Z(?) [Unknown], 'Malven', *Librarium: Zeitschrift der Schweizerischen Bibliophilen-Gesellschaft = revue de la Société des Bibliophiles* 35, no. Heft 1 (1992): 60–65. Its length and content (mostly a description of the text and an account of the song's rediscovery) is typical of writing about 'Malven'.

4. Barbara A. Petersen, 'Richard Strauss in 1948–49: Malven, September and Letzte Briefe an Maria Jeritza', *Richard Strauss Blätter* Neue Folge, no. Heft 13 (1985): 3–20.

5. *ibid.*, 8.

6. Kissler, "'Malven': Richard Strauss's 'Letzte Rose!'"

artistic gift: ‘for whatever reason or reasons, the world has benefitted from this composer’s innocent genius’.⁷

Throughout the article Kissler seems determined to avoid any criticism of the composer or his music. He praises Strauss’s decision to remove an A minor section present in an earlier draft from the song’s introduction, saying ‘musically, aesthetically, and dramatically speaking it was a better choice to refrain from using the raised minor subdominant key until m. 23’.⁸ The song’s final cadence (I–♯iv–I) is described as a ‘unique and fitting’ end not only to the piece, but also to Strauss’s ‘overall musical output and ultimately his life’.⁹ Finally, Kissler suggests that it was Strauss’s ‘love and admiration for nature’ that inspired him to produce this last song in response to the ‘everyday simplistic beauty’ of the poem’s text.¹⁰ With ‘Malven’ as his prop, Kissler presents us with precisely the image of the composer genius that Gordon Smiles and Sam McMullen found so objectionable in the first quotation of this thesis.¹¹

While ‘Malven’ might provide us with an insight into its composer’s frame of mind, neither the poem alone, nor its musical setting, can be used as evidence either for or against Strauss’s own political accountability. ‘Malven’ describes the short-lived beauty of a flower that, in its moment of resplendence, is already a sign of decay. It is obvious how this poem would have appealed to the aged Strauss—a composer who viewed himself to be the end of a long line of great German composers, and who fell out of favour with critics when his musical style began to adopt an apparently regressive position in musical composition. However, in the spirit of the rest of this thesis, with this final case study I will

7. This is clearly an allusion to a near contemporaneous event in Strauss’s life: on 7 June 1948 he was found ‘not incriminated’ by the criteria of Nazi political involvement following a denazification trial that lasted over a year, see Kater, *Composers of the Nazi era: Eight Portraits*, 261.

8. Kissler, “‘Malven’: Richard Strauss’s ‘Letzte Rose!’”, 23.

9. *ibid.*, 24.

10. *ibid.*

11. McMullen and Smiles, *Late Style and Its Discontents: Essays in Art, Literature, and Music*, 4.

volunteer a new reading of 'Malven' that turns attention away from the composer and the mere fact of this song's existence, and onto what 'Malven' might have to offer to as an example of tonal art music in the period of modernism. It is a late work of Strauss, possibly the last he completed before he died, but it is also a work of late capitalism, late tonality, and late modernism.

As with the *Four Last Songs*, also composed in 1948, 'Malven' is written for soprano—a voice type that seemed to hold an especial appeal for Strauss in his later years. Its subject matter too is comparable with the *Four Last Songs*, most notably the song 'September' with which it shares not only a dedicatee, but a turn-of-the-season garden setting. However, I suggest that 'Malven' has a very different relationship to tonality and to its position in music history than, for example, 'Beim Schlafengehn'. While I suggested in the previous chapter that 'Beim Schlafengehn' found an expressive capacity beyond its tonal form, I will argue that expression in 'Malven' is essentially concerned with its tonal quantity.

In the following analysis I will aim to demonstrate how the song's expressive potential is transformed through its rotational structure into a basic cadential gesture. Rather than becoming meaningless by this process, I suggest that what remains at the song's end is the distilled expressive kernel of tonal form. The final gesture, this 'unique and fitting end', is not the complete erasure of tonal expression, but the sublimation of all other expressive meaning to the lowest common denominator, the remainder of the tonal aesthetic in the modern era, and the only authentic expression possible within tonal return: decay.

6.2 'Malven'

Aus Rosen, Phlox und
Zinienflor,
ragen im Garten
Malven empor,
duftlos und ohne
des Purpurs Glut,
[wie eine Hand,
Die müde ruht,]
wie ein verweintes,
blasses Gesicht
unter dem gold'nen
himmlischen Licht.
Und dann verwehen
Leis sie im Wind.
zärtliche Blüten
Sommers Gesind...

Betty Wehrli-Knobel, as printed in *Weltwoche* on 29 October 1948¹²

In Strauss's song two lines are removed from the middle of Wehrli-Knobel's text disrupting the poem's rhyme scheme ('ruht' no longer follows 'Glut'). This adjustment is typical of the changes Strauss made to his songs' literary sources and has no noteworthy impact on the broader meaning of the poem. Strauss's word setting is sensitive to the connotations of the text with expressive melismas exchanging natural speech rhythms for the word-painting potential of musical gestures. With the exception of the flower statements, the short lines are generally paired, with rests between that allow the singer to breathe (this contrasts with the extended periods without rest for the singer of 'Beim Schlafengehn', and even the long phrases of the Oboe Concerto as discussed in §3.7).

12. *Mallows. Over roses, phlox and zinnias, mallows tower in the garden, scentless and without the glow of purple, [like a hand, which tired rests,] like a tear-stained, pale face under the golden, heavenly light. And then it blows away softly in the wind. Tender flowers summer's servants.* Translation my own.

Bars	Section	Text	Key chord	Rotation
0–11	Text block A (TB-A)	(-)	E \flat	R1
11–13		Roses		
13–16		Phlox	e/B \flat	
17–20		Zinnias	C \flat	
21–26		Mallows	a	
27–31		Scentsless, glowless	B \flat	
32–42		Tear-stained face	g	
42–53	Piano interlude	(-)	E \flat	R2
54–55	Text block B (TB-B)	Blowing away	e/B \flat	
56–57		Softly	C \flat	
58–60		Softly in the wind	a	
61–64		Tender flowers	B \flat	
65–66		Summer's servant	E \flat	
66–72	Coda			R3

Table 6.1 – ‘Malven’ form table

The poem’s text is divided into two parts separated by a piano interlude that presents an exact repetition of the introduction. ‘Malven’ lasts a total of 72.5 bars (the upbeat is not accounted for later on in the work and will be called bar 0 for numbering purposes) and can be split into three musical rotations: Rotation 1 (R1), 0–42; Rotation 2 (R2), 42–64; Rotation 3 (R3), 65–72. R1 comprises the piano introduction (bb. 0–11) and text block A (bb. 11–42); R2, the piano interlude (bb. 42–53) and text block B (bb. 54–66); R3, the coda (bb. 66–72) in which Strauss repeats the last line of the poem, ‘Sommers Gesind’. Table 6.1 also displays this information.

‘Malven’ begins with an ending.¹³ At the middle ground structural level the

13. Hepokoski and Darcy discuss the ‘seemingly paradoxical use of closing formulas to begin a piece’ in their theory of sonata form, suggesting that ‘such an obvious displacement of typical function must have had witty or other clever resonances that were especially appealing to connoisseurs’, Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late Eighteenth-Century Sonata*, 66. Their own examples are exclusively taken from the Classical period sonatas, and, while I do not think that the gesture carries precisely the same implications as it did for audiences of Mozart’s and Haydn’s sonatas, V–I nevertheless continues to be the mechanism of ending in the context of tonal form, which ‘Malven’ undoubtedly is. Therefore I consider it appropriate to interpret this opening motif in ‘Malven’ as bearing a gestural inflection of closure.

Figure 6.1 – Middle ground voice leading graph of bb. 1–11

piano introduction presents a single perfect cadence (see Figure 6.1)¹⁴ anticipated in the foreground by a repeated cadential figure, motif *z* (see Figure 6.2, p. 257). Motif *z* is composed of two three-note chords ($B\flat-G-C$ and $C-A\flat-D$) which lead to the root position $E\flat$ major triad that follows them. The dissonant ninths between bass and soprano voices in the texture are ‘corrected’ when the two bass notes are reversed (thus implying a $iv-V-I$ cadence), but the aural effect of this motif is already to present an $E\flat$ major tonic via a cadential gesture. The uppermost voice ascends $C-D-G$ rather than $C-D-E\flat$, leaving a gap in the resolution of this line until the third bar where the expected $E\flat$ appears as an ornament to G .

The full cadence and the confirmation of $E\flat$ major is achieved at bb. 10–11 when the piano articulates precisely the same progression as it opened with (motif *z*). This time, the strength of the dominant that has been building for five bars prior to b. 10, subsumes motif *z* harmonically into the prolongation of the $B\flat^7$ chord posed at the start of the bar. The ascending melodic trajectory of its $C-D$ quavers do not lead to the G above (this emerges from the F at the top of the texture in b. 10), but directly to the $E\flat$ sung in the vocal part.

14. Small noteheads denote inner voice, bracketed noteheads show the smoothest registral voice leading by octave substitution.

Figure 6.2 – Motif z



The G on the downbeat of b. 1 cannot be a true *Kopftön* because it pre-empts an inner voice, albeit one that sounds at the top of the texture. From b. 11, when motif z is repeated as part of a structural cadence in the middle ground, the subsidiary position of this G becomes clear, but even at the beginning of the song there is no structural reason to view the G at the downbeat of b. 1 as projecting the third degree specifically. At this stage, rather than simply trusting it to be an inner voice, one might better call it an overreached tonic (it is not reaching-over in the Schenkerian sense, because there is no melodic descent to the Eb, rather this G already *is* in a structural sense, the tonic).

As an overreached tonic, this G strongly implies the function of the melodically absent root and foregoes any structural function it might otherwise have had as an authentic mediant. There is no structural descent ($\hat{3}$ to $\hat{2}$ to $\hat{1}$) from the G in b. 1 to the first true sounding of the tonic note in b. 2, and there is no structural ascent to the G at the top of the texture in bar 12. So, while Eb might first appear to us in the guise of ornamentation, it is really not such. The structural presence of Eb is confirmed by the middleground skip down to C in b. 3 and then the step to Bb in b. 7, which also represents the tonal pivot point of the introduction wherein the note Bb shifts from $\hat{5}/I$ to $\hat{1}/V$.

Just as the original absence of $\hat{1}$ in the melodic voice on the downbeat of b. 1 was never a structural one, the G that remains in the top voice even at the very end of the piece is only present as the negative afterimage, the upper

harmonic, of the E \flat tonic that is from the beginning a constant presence in the tonal structure of the song. What is set up in the introduction, then, is a closed tonic—there is no *Kopftön* posited to create space within the tonic key for any structural dissonance to emerge.

The characteristic tonal colour of each flower described in the main body of the song is foreshadowed in the piano introduction. Here, however, dissonance is kept within the boundaries of ornament: each occurrence of the note C \flat is resolved downward to B \flat , twice directly to B \flat ⁷ chords (bb. 3–4 and 4–5), and once to an implied B \flat ⁷ (b. 6) that appears properly later (b. 10); A \natural makes a fleeting appearance during the transformation of B \flat likewise, the E \natural , expanded later into a full chord with the arrival of the phlox flowers is, in b. 6, the third degree of a C major chord that functions as a modally altered upper neighbour to the dominant. The harmonic material that stimulates tonal progression in Strauss's setting of the first stanza of the song is thus present in the piano introduction, but the piano introduction itself is characterised by a totally stable E \flat major.

The piano introduction to 'Malven' gives the impression of being open and closed at the same time. It begins with a gesture that, in a mixed up way, sounds like an ending, and indeed, its immediate repetition further gives the impression that it might just as well function as a self-contained statement of its own. The return of motif *z* at the end of the introduction might in the foreground suggest a broader temporal stasis (or a formal circularity), but, because motif *z* undergoes a functional repositioning in the course of the introductory bars from a self-contained surface fragment into a deeper-level closing gesture it connotes at the middle ground level not temporal stasis, but progressive motion to finality.

The chromatic colour of the song's proceeding structure, which is held in

the introduction as inner-voice ornamentation to a single dominant–tonic progression, could suggest, in a metaphorically organic way, that the introduction contains the germ of musical expression and progression that is to come. And yet there is no implication within the introduction that these chromatic inflections can even exist apart from the Eb cradle that contains them. Like the *Kopftön* effect of the original note G in b. 1 which actually functions as an overreached tonic, the dissonances found in the introduction are always already inhabiting a world of tonic. The open- and closedness, particularly as it relates to tonal function and musical form, can be considered, I suggest, an attribute of the song's aesthetic of decay. The end has already made itself manifest in the beginning not as anticipation of what is to come, but as an intrinsic part of the fact of beginning.

6.3 Decay and decadence

In this section I will suggest that the aesthetic of decay that is developed in 'Malven' is a remnant of aesthetic decadence (the parallel that might be drawn through Strauss's own stylistic history from decadence to decay provides biographical nourishment for my suggestion, but is not vital to the aesthetic argument I will pursue). The crucial point of difference between decay and decadence, I suggest, is their relationship to failure: the former admits itself of an inhering and rudimentary failure, while the latter runs from it. In human terms—and the biographical context for Strauss's song is here also a relevant point of reference, but not one I wish to push through as an interpretation of the song—this notion of failure might be considered the certitude of death. Decadence has a traumatic relationship with death. Death in its horror is suppressed as an exorbitant and constant negativity that haunts even the greatest excesses

of living—the wilder, keener, richer the living, the greater its suppression of and thus also its obsession with death. Aesthetic decay, on the other hand, is in psychological concord with death: failure is acknowledged to be always already there—it is life itself—and is as congruous with the process of living as breathing.

For Stephen Downes, decadence is a means by which the work of art responds to its social situation. He defines it as:

a pessimistic critique of the bourgeois affirmation of subjective, psychological, physical and social progress and unity through the denigration of wholeness and wholesomeness and the celebration of the toxic and taboo [. . .] The work ethic and hopes of self-improvement were replaced by the provocative pose of the hedonist, the delights of ennui and lassitude, and the perverse pleasures of self-debasement.¹⁵

Decadence acknowledges the crisis of bourgeois identity in the externalisation, through exaggerated caricature, of the dimensions of life that are repressed in bourgeois society. Downes identifies pessimistic critique as a motivating force of artistic decadence, but critique, especially pessimistic critique, is trapped by the negativity of its project. Every day activities are twisted into their grotesque excess, and the artistic representation of bourgeois society becomes the megalomaniac pursuit of self-consumption as it seeks to expose the sordid underbelly of which it is itself a part. Insofar as they are both self-critical, there is a family resemblance between a decadent critique and the lighter manner of self-criticism found in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, though there the former leans towards self-destruction through criticism while *Ariadne auf Naxos* embraces criticism as an affirmative part of the bourgeois condition.

15. Downes, *Music and Decadence in European Modernism: The Case of Central and Eastern Europe*, 1.

The essential negativity of aesthetic decadence can be seen in the musical language of late tonality. Strauss's decadent tonality reaches into the dark abysses of distortion—it climbs further into a web of chromaticism in the hope of finding something more, something authentic in its field of expression. Salome's kiss, which grasps at the double core of the triad and wrenches it in half, removing the major third from the minor third by a span of octaves through the orchestra, returns even so to C# major in a horrifying plagal cadence.¹⁶ By perceiving of chromaticism as an obstruction to an unobtainable purity, the decadence of late tonality has already given in to the eventual and inevitable lure of an expression that is wholly governed by the law of resolution. Its self—its drive towards I (an appropriately psychological symbol of tonic as self 'I', and also the finality of ending)—is repelled and affirmed in the late tonal language of decadence.

Even a decadent tonal form that denies itself the full satisfaction of consonance, adding dissonant layers to the tonic chord in an attempt to find more expression lurking on the inside, nevertheless submits to a frame of a tonal closure (or, in a deeper show of self-hatred, leaves a suspended dominant aching for that resolution which is made more powerfully present by its absence). Decadence does all it can to obscure the truth of its demise in tonal function—the failure of musical expression to move beyond that essential desire to return to tonic. It craves greater expression and turns towards things seemingly too extreme and deranged for tonality to handle, as though daring the tonic ogre not to follow. And yet, the desire to return does follow, because no amount of strobing from major to minor mode, or nauseating spinning further around the distant poles of hexatonicism can emancipate its critique from the object critiqued.

Decay is like decadence without energy—there is no delight in ennui and

16. Richard Strauss, *Salome*, rehearsal mark 361.

lassitude, no perverse pleasure in self-debasement. There is just ennui and lassitude, self-debasement. Where a decadent aesthetic circles manically around the object and focal point of its failure (the inevitable return of I), an aesthetic of decay recognises the contrivance of this exhibition of action. In failing to resist the tonic-I as being wholly and uncompromisingly its source of form and meaning, the aesthetic of decay is reducible to this now corrupted tonic-I. The tonic-I is corrupted because it has no outside, or rather, that which was originally considered to be its outside, or its other, has been proved false. The loss of transcendent other is, of course, the crisis of modernist subjectivity that I discussed earlier, and it is this crisis that both a decadent musical aesthetic (characterised by the yet-searching pessimism of its self-critique), and a musical aesthetic of decay (characterised by the tonic-I sustained in etiolation) expresses.

6.4 Rotational structure

Whereas Wehrli-Knobel casts roses, phlox and zinnias as a single 'other' to the mallows by containing them within the same two-line rhythmic unit, Strauss's setting, having removed the conjunction 'and', makes a point of differentiating between the flowers harmonically and rhythmically. Each flower is granted its own motivic material (and each flower's sung name is separated with an entire bar rest for the voice). The flowers' recurring motivic and tonal musical identity is used as structuring force in the music, and the first two rotations of flower material map onto the two-stanza structure that is formed from the division of the text into two blocks. The third rotation, which begins after all of the song's text has been sung for the first time, hardly merits the term 'rotation', but the implication of its harmonic movement leads me to make a case for its position as the inevitable culmination of a rotational structure whose primary rationale

lies in preserving, through a process of its own decay, the withering expression of tonal form.

The hints of chromatic colour that provided ornamental interest in the E♭ major introduction appear in R1 as independent motivic units. The phlox, zinnias, and mallows each glint with their own harmonic streak, pushing away from the song's tonal centre into space beyond the solid ground of E♭ major. Roses stem from the tonic with a B♭ hint of relative minor echoing the melodic line of the piano introduction. Phlox oscillate between E minor and B♭⁷. The zinnias' prominent C♭ chords emerge out of an enharmonic transformation of the phlox's B♭ (♮/E minor) and, after a fleeting mid-phrase cadence on C♭, progress to D♭⁷, suggesting a continuation to G♭ major though this latter key is not realised. The mallows from line 4 of the poem exert a strong A minor, arpeggiated melodically and supported harmonically by different inversions of A minor block chords. Each flower thus has its own principal triad which is expressed in the vocal part, sometimes with decoration: roses E♭ major (b. 12); phlox E minor (b. 15); zinnias C♭ major (bb. 17–18); mallows A minor (bb. 23–24). I suggest that these chords form the basis of each rotation.

In R1 the phlox, zinnia, and mallow, play off one another developing their musical material and taking the song in new tonal directions. Their harmonic colours are 'productive' leading the song's musical form. As 'Malven' progresses through its rotations, however, the initial striking harmonic colour and the form-producing nature of the flower music found in R1 fades. The piano interlude, which begins as a direct repeat of the introduction, indicates the start of a second rotation, R2. It closes with two transitional bars, new from the initial introductory passage, (bb. 52–53) whose material can be read as an appropriation of the triplet rhythmic cell introduced with the zinnias.

Rather than standing on its own, the triplet figures here as an ornament to

the rhythmic unit that pervades the introduction material. Moreover, it outlines Eb rather than its original Cb. The first beat of b. 54 presents V⁷ in Eb major, but fails to cadence on its tonic because b. 55 reiterates the phlox's E minor–Bb⁷ shift. In this iteration, however, the phlox's E minor chord plays a far less significant role than it did previously—the syllable stress of *verwehen* reverses the local E–Bb hierarchy, making the E of E minor into the leading note of the F of Bb. This upward resolution is found in two octaves in the accompaniment and is also carried by the voice. With the structural significance of Bb still maintained from the interlude the effect of E minor as a form-producing dissonance is thoroughly overwritten. No longer does E minor disrupt the harmonic flow in its stuttering struggle to secure a proper dominant. Instead it assumes a decorative role within the tonic key—a chromatic ornamentation of chord V—sapped of its vigour, E minor disappears from the score and the phlox music is heard only in Bb.

Instead of pressing forward to new tonal territory, as it had in R1, the zinnias' Cb at bb. 56–57 does little more than outline its own chord. Its appearance is no longer supported by the transformation of the phlox's E minor—a reinterpretation that offers an altogether new tonal area to emerge—but must be tied to the directly preceding Bb major chord. Marked *pp*, the expressive capacity of Cb is accounted for and contained by the text it supports. Its function is no longer directional formal progression—musical development—but static word-painting. Cb-centred semiquaver billows in the piano part give way to the mallows' A minor, which, again, is stripped of its earlier potency. No longer rhythmically empowered or introduced by D minor, the mallows' A minor slips to V₄⁶ of Eb via an amalgamation of the minor thirds of Cb and A minor. Together these produce a diminished seventh chord that brings the song back to its tonic, Eb major. Like E minor, the form-producing force of Cb is diminished

in this second rotation; and A minor, which had initially prevented the arrival of a strong dominant chord in E \flat , in R2 transforms itself into a dominant-function chord.

R2 is markedly shorter than R1, and in the final rotation, R3, material is condensed once again so that the B \flat (substituting for E minor)–C \flat –A minor movement takes place over just three beats (bb. 67–68). The progression is already so familiar that, by this point in the short song, it sounds ordinary. No longer possessing form-generating (that is, structural) dissonance, as in R1, the chords have a purely functional capacity: in close proximity and in the same register, C \flat and A natural clearly function as chromatic neighbour notes to B \flat which cadences perfectly and routinely onto E \flat (bb. 69–70). The flowers, which at their first exposure promised change, are in R3 reduced to base formulaic functions within the E \flat major tonic.

6.5 Infinite function

That a reduction to formal function would be the eventual fate of the dramatic harmonic colours of the flower music is signalled even before the text of the song has begun. Because their cues came from the already closed space of the piano introduction it would appear their destiny is to return to it: the finite (that which is destined to progress and pass) must be subsumed by the infinite (the ever-present). Initially form-producing harmonic language is stripped of its transformative capacity as the song cycles through its thematic material: each rotation is condensed, and the lure of the tonic key against the chromatic colour of the flowers becomes stronger. But the question arises of whether these chords ever posed an alternative tonal centre from the E \flat major tonic set up in the introduction, or, to re-phrase, if it is a teleological fantasy that the object of

this piece was ever to move away from an E♭ major tonic.

A series of progressions show how the flower chords are related to one another. E♭ major is a T3 shift away from E minor (E♭ major leading-note exchange to G minor; parallel shift to G major; relative shift to reach E minor), C♭ major is the enharmonically altered V of E minor, and A minor is the minor subdominant of E minor. Thus, it is possible to frame the E minor of the phlox as having assumed—through its relationship to the other plants' chords—the status of a conflicting or secondary tonal centre to E♭ major, with pre-dominant, dominant, and tonic chords all present in some form. While being tonally related within the context of E minor, this reading begins with a progression that Neo-Riemannian analysis posits as being non-tonal or at least, not functional within the context of a single tonic key. It could be suggested, then, that the flower chord series exists on a separate level from the E♭ major tonic that is posited at the beginning and end of the song, that it offers a non-teleological and, to an extent non-dialectical, expression of tonal dialogue.

In context, however, it is clear that the flower chords do not exist on some other plane from the E♭ major of the song's opening. Rather, they are bound to the E♭ major tonal centre via the false *Kopfton* of G posited at the song's beginning. Thus, E♭ major and E minor are rooted in 'Malven' by a sonority that has already been singled out in the piano introduction as carrying only foreground presence, while functioning structurally as the root of the tonic. The false *Kopfton* is the stabilising pin between the E♭ major tonic and E minor. Therefore, rather than conceiving of E minor as a secondary key, I suggest that E minor, like the G of the false *Kopfton*, projects a shadow of the true tonic, E♭ major. Just as I have already suggested that the G belongs only to the surface of the song, being structurally an 'overreaching' of the tonic root, I suggest that E minor does not simply relate to the E♭ major, but, in a sense, *is* that tonic.

The song's final, haunting gesture brings this assertion to bear. 'Malven' closes with the chords E \flat major–A minor–E \flat major (I– \sharp iv–I). Rather than being \sharp iv, I suggest that we have a progression that is tonic, tonic variant, tonic. In a normal tonal theory A minor can be considered a subdominant relation of E minor, or the flattened subdominant relation of E \flat major. In an extended tonal theory, however, A minor might be considered part of the tonic spectrum of E \flat major because it is through tonic transformations alone (both relative and parallel) that A minor and E \flat major are conjoined. A minor and C major are tonic variants of each other. C major and C minor are tonic variants of each other. C minor and E \flat major are tonic variants of each other. Thus, through it is through a cycle of tonics that A minor and E \flat major are shown to be related.

While a 'common-sense' approach to tonal form might simply dismiss this claim, my original argument that the false *Kopft*on G is itself part of the tonic—and that the E minor key area which is connected to E \flat major via this G is therefore also an extension of the tonic key—lends further weight to the notion that there is no progressive (that is counter-tonic) tonal development present in 'Malven' whatsoever.

6.6 Phlox and transformation

Tonality attaches a hierarchical system of dissonance against a single triad—the tonic, but in late tonality, as I suggested earlier, this system is broken. Using Steven Rings's notion that a chord's 'quale' (its function within a theoretical structuring system) can be split from its 'chroma' (its literal frequencies, or better, its pitch), I will now offer another reading of the flowers' chromaticism. By suggesting that the apparently fixed quale of pitch classes within a tonal structure can be conceptually shifted in late tonality, I suggest that 'Malven' under-

mines in its form the fundamental tenet of the tonal system: its ability to unite chroma and quale, or pitch and function. I will suggest that the expression afforded to tonal dissonance fails in ‘Malven’ because the veracity of the tonal hierarchy is no longer historically sustainable.¹⁷

On one possible hearing, the Phlox’s E minor–Bb⁷ shift articulates rhythmically (quaver upbeat to a dotted crotchet over the barline) a quasi-cadence, with E minor chords on the upbeat ‘cadencing’ into Bb⁷ chords on the downbeats of bb. 14–16. But there are two confusions. Firstly, the supposed chord I has an added seventh, so that its position as a ‘tonic’ is inherently unstable. Secondly, the E minor chord has the tonal quale of minor dominant in Bb but the pitch classes of ♯iv in that key: heard quasi-cadentially in this way, the dominant minor has been ‘pulled’ down a semitone by a T(*e*, –1) transposition (the ‘*e*’ here indicating that the tonal quale remains unchanged, the ‘–1’ indicating that the pitch classes have been moved down a semitone)¹⁸. The chords ‘are’ thus heard as a rocking v–I⁷ motion. And yet, despite the ‘pulling down’ of its dominant and the addition of a seventh in the tonic, this progression is probably heard, latterly, as a repeated perfect cadence. This is because the place of Bb in the pattern is taken up in b. 17 by the note Cb. The cycle of failed cadences is finally broken when Cb emerges, via enharmonic transformation, from the B♯ of the E minor chord ‘v’. The position of the Bb ‘tonic’ in this sequence is now taken by Cb. E minor exercises its function as a dominant not through traditional cadential voice leading—it remains a flattened T(*e*, –1) transformation—but via a pivot on a single note, B♯/Cb. The tonic chord must then be pulled up a semitone to fit the dominant.

An alternative hearing also engages the transformational potential of the E

17. Steven Rings, *Tonality and Transformation*, Oxford studies in music theory (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

18. *ibid.*, 44.

minor–Bb⁷–E minor–Cb shift. In this case, the chords are recast in their more obvious positions: E minor as chord I (a stronger tonic than the Bb⁷ on the first reading) and Bb7 as V⁷ (still undergoing a T(*e*, –1) transformation). Here, through the enharmonic transformation introduced via the B♯ of the E minor triad, phlox ascertains its own dominant in sonority, but not in function. The chord on the first beat of b. 17 is *heard* as V of *e* (B–D♯–F♯), but is *written* as I of C♭ major (C♭–E♭–G♭). At this moment the chord functions simultaneously as V/E minor and I/C♭, an effect that Rings would designate a ‘pivot fifth’, the pitch classes remaining the same but the tonal quale shifting a fifth. Its position as chord I is consolidated by the immediate appearance of a normative V⁷–I cadence on C♭ into b. 18.

What these readings amount to is a sense that tonal function can only be gained at the same time as something is lost. In the first situation it is only through the sacrifice of its position as a tonic that E minor can achieve its dominant: only at the moment of the pivot fifth onto B/C♭ does E minor ‘become’ a tonic. And in the second reading, it is only through its transformation to a new sonority, a semitone higher, that Bb⁷ can fulfil its function as a local dominant (as opposed to a T(*e*, –1) transformation of one). It is important that the ‘true’ realisation of the local dominant, where the chroma are correct (in the form of C♭ major), is preceded by the quale dominant (T(*e*, –1) Bb⁷) because this enables a retention of the sonorities required to behave as the structural dominant at a background-level reading. So, only by creating a local tension the song can retain a grasp of its structural dominant—albeit one that is to be relinquished when the local dominant chroma is achieved in C♭ major. The strangeness of the E minor triad is both highlighted and undermined by its attachment to Bb⁷, but the chords cannot be reconciled without engendering some sort of transformation. Through transformation the phlox music escapes the bind of the Eb

major tonic, but this comes at the expense of its own proposed tonal centre. The realisation of the expressive potential of the flowers' harmonic material in R1 is thus achieved in the process of their original dissonance being extinguished.

6.7 Zinnias, Mallows, structural dominant

With the zinnia flowers the vocal line rises through a $C\flat$ major triad to $G\flat$, introducing triplet ornaments—another new decorative rhythmic feature—to the piano accompaniment. The enharmonically acquired $C\flat$ is stabilised with a mid-phrase V–I progression (bb. 17–18) before shifting up a tone to $D\flat^7$ via $A\flat$ minor. This shift retrospectively casts $C\flat$ as IV in $G\flat$ major, but the perfect cadence onto a $G\flat$ tonic is eschewed by the appearance of $B\flat^7$ where the tonic chord should have come in b. 20.

The unexpected arrival of $B\flat^7$ faces the same identity problem as its earlier appearance in the phlox music. Here it takes the place of the anticipated chord I, but does not provide the correct notes—quale I, T(e, 4). It would take a great stretch of the imagination to hear this $B\flat^7$ as the local tonic of the zinnias, but its appropriation of the zinnias' new triplet decorations, its position at the end of a four-bar phrase prepared by a IV–V progression, and its upper and lower chromatic neighbour notes all suggest its function as the concluding chord of this section—conventionally this would make it the local tonic. Thus, the $B\flat^7$ of b. 20 has the paradoxical effect of ventriloquising $G\flat$ by assuming the position of a local tonic while also, in the larger structural reading, reasserting the true dominant in the $E\flat$ major song at a crucial moment of tonal wandering. This is not an altogether successful endeavour: $B\flat^7$ accounts for its ill-fitting environment by incorporating the $C\flat$ s from earlier in the zinnias' music to its own chord through the appropriation of the ornamental triplet motif. This has the

required effect of neutralising $C\flat$'s influence, tying it to $B\flat$ as an upper neighbour, but as though attempting to hide its dominant seventh, it also introduces $A\sharp$ —a presence that, while consolidating $B\flat$ as its tonal centre, is to prove disruptive.

Reassuming its role as the structural dominant (rather than the local tonic) the last quaver of b. 20 'corrects' the earlier $A\sharp$ from the triplet decoration. In spiteful rebellion, however, $A\sharp$ returns in full force—a dramatic cadenza of the lower-neighbour ornament—with the mallow music. At b. 21 $B\flat$ gives way altogether to $A\sharp$ forming a D minor triad—the bedrock for the rising A minor arpeggio of the mallows that follows in bb. 23–24. After its impressive ascent no cadence consolidates A minor and the harmony moves back whence it came—to $B\flat$. This $B\flat$ cannot, however, function as V in $E\flat$ major because $A\sharp$ has retained its influence by readopting its familiar position as the major seventh of the $B\flat$ chord (b. 26). Kissler finds the next few bars tonally elusive, and indeed, like the phlox earlier, they stall the song's harmonic progression.¹⁹ The $B\flat$ chord inverts itself so that the major seventh forms its bottom sonority but this does not mitigate the effect of $A\sharp$ on the dominant chord. The only way $A\sharp$ can be vanquished is by the incorporation of the $C\flat$, $D\flat$, and $G\flat$ sonorities that were introduced two phrases earlier by the zinnias. This produces two chromatically inflected chords: $b\flat^{b2}$ ($B\flat-D\flat-F-C\flat$) and $B\flat^{7b6}$ ($B\flat-D-G\flat-A\flat$).

$B\flat^7$ is forced to retrace its steps to the point at which it acquired the $A\sharp$ (b. 20) in its attempt to be rid of it. As though attempting to undo its work as the pseudo tonic, whereby it allowed $A\sharp$ into its anatomy, $B\flat$ adopts the harmonic content of the bars preceding its interruption, allowing the zinnias $C\flat$, $D\flat$, and $G\flat$ to infiltrate its $B\flat$ sonorities while retaining $B\flat$ as the common note to all

19. Kissler simply puts a question mark over b. 26 in his form tables. Kissler, "Malven": Richard Strauss's "Letzte Rose!", 22.

chords. This, however, does not succeed in producing a clean Bb^7 because the unrealised Gb tonic works against the resolution of the Db and Cb within the would-be Bb chord. bb^{b2} and Bb^{7b6} oscillate so that each time Db is made natural ($D\sharp$) and Cb pushed into the place of the dominant seventh ($A\flat$), Gb takes the place of the fifth preventing the occurrence of an unblemished Bb^7 chord. The effort to produce a clean structural dominant having failed, Bb takes the drastic step of returning to the very beginning of the song—the rising cadential figure, motif z . As discussed earlier, however, this motif is weak as a cadential gesture. Even with the $E\flat$ tonic appearing in the top voice of the progression, as it does in its desperate $b. 31$ incarnation, it lacks the authority to keep hold of its $E\flat$ tonal implications and the progression continues right through the appearance of the structural tonic chord. It becomes clear that the initial strength of motif z as a tonicizing gesture relied on the lack of chromatic complications preceding it and the willingness of its audience's ears' to hear a tonic chord at the start of the song. In $b. 31$, appearing too early in the bar to garner rhythmic authority, and without the assumption of a strong dominant in its muddled interval content, it fails to impose the dominant or the tonic. Instead the continued quaver sequence exercises another enharmonic transformation from the original Gb into $F\sharp$.

The two interrupting notes of this section: $G\flat$ (now $F\sharp$) and $A\sharp$ come together to form a D major chord whose presence brings about a perfect cadence on G. Chromatic triplets falling in the piano right hand bring a sob to the tear-stained face and decorate this V–i in G minor at $bb. 33–34$. Although Bb failed to regain its hold as structural dominant during its masquerade as Gb , it did succeed in creating an environment that would allow a more long-term solution to its problem. This G minor perfect cadence sets up the concluding tonic cadence of R1 via the G minor:V–i–(III \Rightarrow E \flat major:V)–I, $bb. 41–42$.

Rings's separation of quale and chroma provides the analyst with a way of accounting for the unravelling of tonal expression in 'Malven'. While it is certain that the greatest force at work in the construction of the song's musical structure is tonality there can be no genuine sense that tonality is the 'natural' position of its musical language. The analytical manipulation required to sustain the position of B \flat as a structural dominant is as artificial as the notion of structural dominant itself in the context of a tonal form that has exhausted the expressive potential of even seemingly remote tonal possibilities. In a Ringsian interpretation, the final bar of the song condenses this broken tonality into its most basic form: a perfect cadence whose would-be dominant chord, has been pulled downwards by a semitone to cling more closely to the E \flat major tonic.

6.8 Abschied

'Malven', with its moderate vocal range, maximum dynamic of *mf*, and delicate piano accompaniment, paints the plaintive garden as a vignette of decay. The tonal struggles, as I originally set them up to appear, of each flower's attempt to make its own way through the form, are as consequential as leaves blown from one patch of sky to another: no trail of destruction is left behind them as they pass on from chromatic whim to the slipstream of an E \flat major tonic. 'Malven' seems a world removed from the ostentatious chromaticism of Strauss's earlier operas—the cruel blows of C minor at the end of *Salome* quashing the unbearable F \sharp major/minor clash of Salome's bliss with all the vengeance of a despot.

It does not matter, in a sense, whether A minor in the song's last progression stands for a pseudo dominant (as in the Ringsian reading §6.7) or a pseudo tonic (as in the reading tendered in §6.5) because the expressive potency of this final gesture is the same either way. Its formal position within a complex tonal system

is arbitrary because this system can no longer sustain the ideological structure on which its meaning is based. Only the gesture remains that takes us away from the tonic in order to return directly back to it. The resulting dissonance from this arbitrary shift is static even as it articulates its difference from the tonic, because it is destined by the only functional possibility it knows within tonality (to return). Therefore, it is expressive, but only in its orientation towards E \flat major, only through its articulation of tonality; and when musical expression is located in an ideology that no longer has the potency to function structurally, so also the expression that hangs on it falters.

In another sense it does matter how this concluding A minor chord is accounted for theoretically. A decadent musical aesthetic estranges itself from the tonic, and all that has come to be associated with it (purity, closure, autonomy, teleology, security), and extends dominant function through an excess of dissonance. An aesthetic of decay, on the other hand, no longer has the capacity for expression beyond that of tonic, and the tonic, rather than being strengthened by its gathering of dissonance, comes to sound an increasingly grey shade of truth. The differences between decadence and decay, as well as their similarities, must be recognised if we are to understand 'Malven' properly. To make the analytical decision that A minor is a pseudo-tonic and not a dominant at the song's end is to grant authority to the aesthetic quality of music that exists beyond the formal procession of its tones, or the memory of more established feelings it seems able to render.

The mallow, a tall, grand, and late-flowering plant does not blossom until the end of summer when many other flowers have already begun to wilt. Its bloom is a sign that the months of abundance are coming to an end. Its immediate beauty is overshadowed by its status also as a harbinger of winter. The text accentuates this shadow in the mallow's character: the mallows in Wehrli-

Knobel's poem lack a scent, and their usually ostentatious colour has no 'glow'. In Strauss's 'Malven' there is no glow either. While the subject withers through its rotational structure, its hollowed-out remainder is the expression of aesthetic decay. Everything is made into tonal function and the expression of tonal function becomes everything, which is to say, it becomes nothing. In 'Malven' there seems to be a tacit understanding that no dissonance can be so remote as not to be subsumed by an eventual tonic. What can possibly change when change is always already part of the infinitely liberal—and once everything is equal in tonality what is left of tonal expression is only that which was always desired, but now it seems to mean less.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

7.1 Chapter summaries

In the introduction to this thesis I said that I would consider the lateness of Strauss's music without attempting to determine a specific late style. The lateness I wanted to discern was both a part of the historical context of Strauss's music and an aspect of that music in its context. Having reached the end of my study I propose that lateness in Strauss's music is manifested in the endurance of liberal humanist ideals in a period dominated by the interests of the bourgeoisie, and the endurance of tonal form in a period of musical modernism. The association of lateness with death—biological ageing or linguistic euphemism (the late Richard)—is not part of the definition here at hand. While lateness can be the expression of decay, such as I have demonstrated in the previous chapter on 'Malven', it can also provide a language of self-questioning and denial as in *Daphne*. It can represent the attempted preservation of tradition as in the Oboe Concerto, or it can form the basis of self-overcoming as in *Metamorphosen*. Despite the implied sense of temporality the term itself presents, lateness in 'Beim Schlafengehn' speaks of the attempt to find a satisfactory expression

of the present moment.

Lateness by the definition I proffer can mean so many different things that are so far removed from the ordinary use of the word that, in some ways, it seems rather arbitrary to continue to call this music 'late' at all. The same criticism might be levelled at the idea of calling Strauss's music modernist. If the works discussed, in their great diversity, are all modernist, then why continue to make this distinction? I suggest that the value of such frameworks—which are theoretical—lies in their relationship to the object to which they are applied, and not in their categorisation of it. Modernism and lateness do not provide an endpoint—they are not the answer of the analysis or the meaning of the music—but, in different ways, they present a perspective through which to find answers and meanings beyond the lures of context, comparison, or descriptive formalism.

Modernism, for example, might be thought of as a superstructure on a grander scale than sonata form, but that has a similar relationship to its artistic subjects as that of sonata form. Subjects of artistic modernism do not exist in the abstract, but are present in the particular identity of each musical work, and collectively, they form a body that articulates the range of subjectivities that are modernist. Modernist musical pieces are thus not vessels of modernist tropes—imitations of imaginary structures like the sonata form read onto the Oboe Concerto's *Allegro moderato*; but the working out of musical material in the context of a singular form in the modern era of history. In other words, the subjectivity of the work is found in the actual musical structure that constitutes the mimetic autonomy and abstracted stylised form of the Oboe Concerto's *Allegro moderato*—and not in one or the other.

In each chapter, then, I have sought both to grasp the subjectivities of Strauss's musical works and to develop a way of accomplishing this aim spe-

cific to the work in question. There is some overlap—the sonata paradigm, for example, is invoked for both the Oboe Concerto and for *Metamorphosen*; but I hope that this is justified by the different ways in which I argue that these works gain meaning through the idea of sonata form. I follow now with a summary of the principle arguments progressed by each chapter.

Chapter 2 presented *Ariadne auf Naxos* and *Daphne* as two musical responses to the crisis of liberal humanism in the twentieth century. Beginning with *Ariadne auf Naxos*, I examined the melancholic aspect of the Ariadne character and Hofmannsthal's aesthetic need for transcendence. I further considered the self-conscious artifice of the opera's form, and argued that its critical perspective was the formal limitation placed on the operatic presentation of transformation. *Daphne*, I suggested, explores a different form of self-knowledge, this time through a title character whose relationship to nature seems to offer redemption to her troubled social identity. I exposed the presentation of this nature in Strauss's musical depiction of Daphne as the externalised desire for a limited and ideologically compromised form of freedom via the character Apollo.

Inspired by Nietzsche's Dionysian and Apollonian drives, I proposed a conflict between two different styles of musical stasis—one stable and the other unstable—in the work's opening music. I then argued that *Daphne's* musical depiction of transformation, though for a moment presenting a new kind of tonal progression, submits to the calcifying urge of the Apollonian drive towards totality (musically ensconced in stable tonal stasis). Finally, I suggested that the outward appearance of conflict between Apollonian and Dionysian drives at the work's beginning masks a deeper conflict between 'traditional' tonality represented by the closure of the tonic chord, and a 'new' tonality represented in the transformation music. I concluded that the return of traditional tonality at the

work's end—under the auspices of a transformed state—represents the surrender of *Daphne's* musical form to the false universality of tonality's nature.

In Chapter 3, I examined the formal structure of the Oboe Concerto and developed the idea of 'mimetic' or objective autonomy. I attempted to make sense of why scholars often refer to the Allegro moderato as being in sonata form when not only are the divisions of movements unclear, but the thematic and tonal elements of the Allegro moderato resist the generic descriptors (first subject, second subject, transition) of the formal parts of a sonata. I considered what sort of a sonata form the Oboe Concerto's first section might possess and suggested that it was not one readily served by a comparative approach to other sonatas or the paradigm of sonata deformations offered by sonata theory. Instead I proposed a kind of sonata form in which rhetoric and impression are more significant than the unfolding and 'working out' of thematic and tonal conflict.

In the second part of the chapter I put the abstraction of the Allegro moderato's sonata form into the wider cultural context of liberal humanism in Germany. I discussed how the Protestantism of German *Kultur* influenced Strauss when he wrote *Alpensinfonie*, but that the confident individualism Strauss declared for this earlier tone poem was not present in the Oboe Concerto. I suggested that the Oboe Concerto's formal abstraction was a result of its mimetic relationship to the musical styles (or the outward appearance) of liberal humanist music and not a result of the drive towards subjectivity that is found in authentic or 'subjective' musical autonomy. In this way, I argued that its function was to preserve a tradition by the ritual of repetition, which I dubbed catholic; and not to develop the body of liberal humanist music by carrying its truth inwardly. The obligation to articulate a singular or individual identity (to develop as a liberal humanist subject) is, I suggested, shifted onto the oboe player and

the genre of the concerto, but this presentation of a subject is necessarily unsuccessful because the oboist and genre cannot carry an idea except through the musical form at hand.

Chapter 4 developed a reading of *Metamorphosen* as a work of ambiguous hope. I made a case that a sonata form is only established in the work at the entrance of the second subject and midpoint of the exposition. At this point in its unfolding I suggested that the work engages with the tradition of sonata form and its expectations, including, especially, the trajectory of a ‘structure of promise’ in which the primary and secondary subjects are recapitulated in the tonic. In fulfilling this structure of promise, however, the work does not find its conclusion. I proposed that the actual goal of *Metamorphosen*’s form is to create a totality that is not bound to the ideological frameworks of tonality or sonata form (as the historical pinnacle of tonal form). After multiple gestures of formal closure *Metamorphosen* is finally completed through a quotation from Beethoven’s ‘Eroica’ symphony and a symbolic ascent from the *Kopftön* to the tonic. The autonomy of the form is preserved in this ending, but this formal totality (in being almost arbitrary as an ending) does not extend to the part of the musical work that exceeds material presentation. Thus, I suggested that the work can point to something greater than its own particular ideological handling of its situation in the world. I concluded the chapter with a brief discussion of *Metamorphosen*’s postmodern reception history.

Chapter 5 offered two readings of ‘Beim Schlafengehn’. After establishing that the *Four Last Songs* are not a song cycle, I suggested that they served a more practical purpose as part of a project of thanks written by Strauss during a period of personal and historical suspension. My analysis of the text and introduction of the song identified an abstraction that I aligned with the developing crisis of the postmodern era—historicity. I showed how the lyrical progression of the

song's opening is disrupted by the incongruence of its parts: the harmonic progression does not align with the melodic progression, and the rhythmic progression is stuck in a cycle of repetition. I then offered a reading of the song's form that accounted for the problems of its beginning by alluding to a 'lost' first part in what is otherwise a ternary form. My second reading of 'Beim Schlafengehn' drew focus on the materiality of the orchestral song. I argued that the vocal subject is derived from material found in the introduction 'realised' by means other than conventional tonal development. In this, I suggested that the song resists the mechanical progressions of motivic variation and the prolongation of a particular harmonic trajectory, and finds a new progressive form derived from a renewed encounter with the fabric of the introduction's musical material.

Chapter 6 deals with 'Malven', Strauss's last song. Through 'Malven' I considered the relationship of Strauss's musical aesthetics of decadence and decay. I suggested that both carry the liberal humanist crisis of lost universality in the modern era, but that decay is characterised by an expressive lethargy. This lethargy, I proposed, results from a lack of possibility in a musical framework governed by the single law of resolution. My analysis of the rotational structure of the flower music in 'Malven' demonstrated the gradual erasure of formal direction, while my theoretical discussion of the relationship between the signature chords of each flower proposed a double-tonic conflict between E \flat major and E minor. By examining how the E minor and E \flat major tonics relate to one another via the song's *Kopftön*, I suggested that—in fact—there was no true tonal friction to be found between them. I concluded by suggesting that the only expression possible for a musical language in which the idea of tonic has become so bloated as to be able to absorb any harmonic difference is its own—liberal—obsolescence.

To reduce a piece of music to the concluding sentence of its interpretation—*Daphne* portrays the alienation of the bourgeois intellectual, the Oboe Concerto is the *Gebrauchsmusik* of the bourgeoisie, *Metamorphosen* glimpses hope through radical autonomy, ‘Beim Schlafengehn’ articulates the crisis of historicity alongside a modernist urge to overcome tonal form, ‘Malven’ cannot express more than the decay of tonality—does injustice to the complexity of each work. *Metamorphosen* is not always radical, and *Daphne* is not always reactive, the Oboe Concerto could inspire a generation of oboists, ‘Beim Schlafengehn’ might sound perfectly complete to everybody else, and ‘Malven’ could voice a new era of tonal meaning that I have not had the foresight to notice here. Summaries do, however, form a necessary part of scholarly engagement and so, notwithstanding their insufficiency, I stand by the conclusions advanced above.

7.2 A totalising gesture

There is some irony in the fact that this ‘aspects of’ thesis sets such score by the notion of totality. Although none of the chapters has sought to present a comprehensive analysis of any of Strauss’s late works, the idea of totality has nevertheless loomed large. The opera-within-an-opera frame of *Ariadne auf Naxos* compromises the aesthetic transcendence presented at its end. The objectifying totality of *Daphne*’s Apollonian petrification and the stasis of tonal form speak of a structural frigidity in Strauss’s use of tonal language. The abstracted totality of sonata form overwrites the formal singularity of the Oboe Concerto. The radical totality of *Metamorphosen* leaves room for hope while closing its own form multiple times. The hallucinatory totality of the (A)BA reading of ‘Beim Schlafengehn’ professes a suspension appropriate to its particular historical circumstance, and finally, I argued that the totality of tonal expression can be found

in the single concluding gesture of 'Malven'.

It is only possible to recognise Strauss's music as dealing in the rather abstracted quantity of totality when each piece is viewed through the lens of the autonomous work, and yet, none of the interpretations I have proffered has sought to close off the social aspect of music. From the beginning I have drawn attention to the difference between the social situation of each musical work and the meaning gleaned from its analytical interpretation.

In the opening miniature case study of *Ariadne auf Naxos*, the self-criticism apparent in the work's form is shown also to affirm the subject position it ostensibly criticises. *Daphne*, too, presents the corruption of the bourgeois liberal subject position through its musical language while at the same time embracing an intellectual isolationism that turns a blind eye to the unfreedom of capitalist society. The Oboe Concerto carries bourgeois isolation a step further in its earnest caricature of liberal humanist autonomy. It preserves the practice—the bourgeois pastime—of autonomous music, without confronting the idea of the subject whose identity it has come to represent in stylistic abstraction. Even *Metamorphosen*, whose pessimism of strength I argued leaves space for the hope of a future totality that exceeds its own language, is susceptible to commodification and the paraphernalia of marketing. Rather than a voice of possibility, this work has come to stand as little more than an emotional ode to a traumatic time that few people can actually remember for themselves. Likewise, in its struggle to find both historicity and substance, 'Beim Schlafengehn' may breach the cultural dominants of modernism and postmodernism, but with a text and a lyricism so readily expressive of a romantic vision of ending, the tradition of biographical writing about the great men of music will, for many listeners, obscure further historical meaning that might be gleaned from the music. Finally, 'Malven' embodies decay so effectively that its expiration is in vain despite the

aesthetic potency of its farewell to tonal expression.

One might question the value of the ‘highbrow’ readings of Strauss’s music that have been offered in this dissertation, given the ease with which all of this music is either subsumed by social function or has a more obvious common-sense ‘meaning’. However, I have endeavoured to show how critical and analytical encounters with music conceived via the concept of autonomy (that is, as an artistic refraction of human subjectivity) can open up space for reflection that can only be found in music when it is viewed through this particular liberal humanist frame. The hope that I identify in *Metamorphosen* arises from my analysis of its formal construction and its relationship to musical tradition. It is not a hope that I have drawn from my own situation, or that I apply via analogy to my own situation, but it is a conceptual hope that emerges from the material of the musical form and has no application beyond this. The failure of liberal humanist principles to be transformative in *Daphne* carries the self-knowledge of its shortcoming in *Daphne*’s character and in the static language of tonal ideology. Both the flawed independence of the title character and the false universality of the tonal totality are as valuable as the radicalism of *Metamorphosen*’s form. Therefore, we do not ‘get more’ out of *Metamorphosen* than we do out of *Daphne* because what is ‘got’ is not quantifiable.

The interpretative richness such a perspective affords is perhaps the greatest intellectual stimulation that liberal humanist music can offer and for this reason it is invaluable. To appreciate a piece of music in the liberal humanist tradition as a work of art is not elitist, but acknowledges a truth about it that is otherwise obscured by contemporary ideology. This truth—that art music is human not only in the commodity or otherwise functional status that it assumes in society, but also as the autonomous expression of its own formal condition—is at risk in an academy that cannot or will not admit to there being compelling humanity

in art.

The fact that the liberal humanist frame of musical autonomy is only appropriate to music under the influence of the tradition of liberal humanism demonstrates the inseparability of the intrinsic knowledge of art and the social situation in which art is granted the authority of knowledge. Although rhetorically this explanation may seem circular, its reasoning is not as fallacious as it may first appear. The tradition that grants knowledge to art does not foreclose the knowledge of the art whose meaning it grants. Neither does art written in the light of this tradition necessarily affirm the tradition on which it depends for meaning. While mutually reliant, the existence of liberal humanist art and the social situation in which liberal humanist art has an existence are at variance with one another. The friction derived from the antagonism between the objectifying drive of ideology and the subjectifying drive towards true expression is the meaning I have tried to grasp through the aspects here discussed of Strauss's late aesthetic.

7.3 Final word

A quarter of a century ago scholars who wrote about Strauss's music did so in the context of a strong European identity, with confidence in western democracy, and from a position of academic security. This dissertation has been nurtured by a different scholarly perspective—one born in an age of identity politics, nationalist populism, and a university system driven by the structure and language of business. Given this background it might seem inevitable that the liberal humanist ideology through which I have viewed Strauss's music should be presented in a near constant state of atrophy, because through this music I have simply read the crumbling liberalism of my own experience. Yet I would

argue against the accusation of such complete reflexivity.

Analysis and the notion of autonomy have been vital points of resistance against the bourgeois tendency towards inwardness and the capitalist obligation to commodify. Analysis forces a relationship with the work that addresses the fact of its musical existence—an existence that is as distinct from the impression it makes on the listener or scholar, as it is from the intention of the composer or critic who discusses it. Conceiving of Strauss's musical pieces as autonomous works, on the other hand, drives towards an understanding of them that presses beyond the merely musical.

The *Gestalt*—the idea of self towards which the infant reaches—is theoretical and cannot be attained; only the struggle towards it remains an authentic expression of humanity. With the dual frames of autonomy and subjectivity applied to the musical work as the foundation of my interpretations, it is the struggle towards subjectivity and not the demise of liberal humanism, tonality, or bourgeois society that I have tried to draw out of Strauss's music. The theory of *Gestalt* can also be applied to this thesis, which strives towards an understanding that it has not managed to attain. Even so, in the process of reaching towards this state, I hope to be closer to understanding than I was when I began.

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