

Themes and Lines: On the Question of Hierarchy in the Practice of Linear Analysis

David Neumeyer

Introduction

Reviewing the critical literature on Schenkerian theory and analysis from the 1980s and 1990s, Nicholas Cook offers this optimistic assessment of the current state of practice: "Rethinking the *Ursatz*-dominated synthesis of *Der freie Satz* [...] has opened up possibilities within a broadly Schenkerian practice, and in its relationship to other analytical approaches, that were progressively foreclosed during the final decade of Schenker's life." Referring specifically to a published analysis of a Brahms song by Charles J. Smith, Cook says that it "need not be seen as a replacement for Schenker's [own analysis], but can rather stand alongside it as a construal of the music from an alternative perspective, with difference between the two representing [...] the tension of musical coherence, [to use Schenker's phrase]" (Cook 2007: 296).

For those of us who were involved in the early stages of this disciplinary transformation, it is satisfying to observe this consolidation of a pluralistic attitude, not simply because it counters the authoritarian idealism of *Der freie Satz*, as Cook has it, but more so because it stands in rebuke of the ideological hardening of the well-known "Americanization of Schenker" after World War II (Rothstein 1990; Snarrenberg 1994; see also Cook 2007: 274–280). And it was a particular pleasure to observe this pluralism in action during the recent Sixth International Conference on Music Theory sponsored by the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre (Tallinn, October 14–16, 2010), where a range of views and methods of analysis were acknowledged, discussed, and debated.

This article revises and expands on my keynote address for the conference (Neumeyer 2010) to make a number of historical and methodological observations relevant to this welcome historical change. My central argument is that a contemporary practice of linear analysis, if it is to continue to unfold and develop in the

most effective way, must place a high priority on consciously separating hierarchy *in* the text from hierarchical modeling in the *interpretation*, or, more specifically, from what Jonathan Culler calls an inevitable teleology in the *process* of interpretation (Culler 1975: 200).

My recent article in *Music Theory Spectrum* explores the idea of hierarchy as a common mode in interpretative practices (Neumeyer 2009a). I came to the topic, however, not directly from music but indirectly through literature and film. While engaging with the historical aspects of literary theory in relation to film criticism, in support of my ongoing work in film music studies, I became interested in the history of interpretation in the arts more broadly. In the course of this I explored the relationship of musical analysis to the Anglo-American school of New Criticism and the traditional method of thematic reading in literature. The quote from the article below makes an explicit comparison between the priorities and methods of the New Critics and Schenkerian analysis as it was understood and practiced in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s. In particular, "theme" as a general statement of what a poem or story is about is aligned with the background in Schenkerian analysis:¹

Understanding theme as the equivalent of the contents of the background, last stage of reduction, or other "summary," aligns musical analysis with practices in literary interpretation current when Schenkerian analysis was in process of being adopted in the United States. The New Critics believed in the autonomy of the artwork and in its integrity as an organic unity, they emphasized the critic's task as demonstrating that unity, and they put "close reading" at the center (Culler 1981: 3). They used a small group of "rudimentary models of the kind of thematic significance that the reader attempts to find" (Culler 1975: 208): a "set of reduction terms towards which the

¹ Rudolf Arnheim invokes theme with the same functional meaning as I do. Writing about architecture but making an explicit comparison both to music and to Schenker's theory, Arnheim says of a hierarchic structure that "it permits the viewer or listener to grasp a complex whole as gradual unfolding and enrichment of a theme, the bearer of the design's basic meaning" (Arnheim 1977: 252).

analysis of ambivalence, tension, irony and paradox was to move: life and death, good and evil, love and hate, harmony and strife, order and disorder, eternity and time, reality and appearance, truth and falsity [...] emotion and reason, complexity and simplicity, nature and art." As a group, these constrain the practical work of a poem's interpretation in nearly as radical a manner as Schenker's three backgrounds constrain the interpretation of a piece of music (the crucial difference being that the New Critics never insisted on their exclusiveness). (Neumeyer 2009a: 318 (edited))

I argue for the generality of the mode of reading that underlies interpretative practices: "The deployment of thematic reading cuts across theoretical and ideological boundaries. Notions of theme or thesis represent the making of abstractions that are a first step in reflection on any text one reads, a strategy that is routine in the traditional practice of reading and in its pedagogy. Interpretation tends to impose a structure mimicking the teleology of reading" – that is, the process by which one gradually makes sense of a text while reading and emerges from that reading with a general notion of what the text "is about" (Neumeyer 2009a: 320). I go one step further, however, to the reader's reaction or response and thus distinguish between theme as a descriptive statement and thesis as an assertion of truth-value. Said another way, theme is analytical, thesis is ideological. This distinction was central to the argument in the *Music Theory Spectrum* article, as it opened the contents of the background to critique: within this critique, the three *Urnien* are ideological expressions, not exclusive or even necessary contents of the background in a hierarchical analysis.

I will now extend the discussion historically to encompass late nineteenth-century philology and pedagogy of reading, but of a particular kind, the influential French method called *explication de texte*, associated especially with Gustave Lanson and Gustave Rudler. From this discussion, I will conclude not only that the model I described in the *Spectrum* article is productive but also that, in the context of European philology and criticism, Schenker was by no means the reactionary we all assume he was, even if he came to his priorities by a unique path: he in fact shared significant

contemporary concerns with Lanson and with English and American modernists such as T. S. Eliot, I. A. Richards, and the New Critics, the best known of whom are Cleanth Brooks and John Crowe Ransom. The interpretative practices of Schenkerian analysts may be unique in music, but they are not unique in the world; on the contrary, they can be readily understood by analogy with interpretative methods and priorities in literary criticism over the past century and a half. And, like the authors named above, Schenker never resolved the fundamental contradiction "between two incompatible modes of thought: on the one hand the dialectical thinking [...] predicated on an interaction [of tension and balance] between foreground and background; on the other the idealism of a Platonist or Leibnizian type [...], according to which ideas are abstract and eternal, removed from the generations and their times" (Cook 2007: 295).

In order to establish a conceptual framework for analytical methodology, I will invoke a four-element scheme developed by David Bordwell, an eminent film scholar. He uses the scheme to differentiate between priorities of scholarly interpreters of films (Bordwell 1989). Two classes, description and interpretation, are each divided into two categories – referential and explicit in the first case, implicit and symptomatic in the second case. The categories of interpretation – implicit and symptomatic meanings – match closely Cook's "dialectical thinking" versus "[Platonist or Leibnizian] idealism." Bordwell says that ideas of tension and balance are central to the production and assessment of implicit meanings. Symptomatic meanings are those that flow from, and serve to reinforce, the underlying ideological model; Schenker's abstract model as presented in *Der freie Satz* fits this category well. The production of both implicit and symptomatic meanings relies on thematic priorities: the evidence of implicit meanings may generate a thematic statement, and the *a priori* ideological framework, of course, supplies the symptomatic meanings that are realized or repeated through the interpretation.

In the last section of the article, a set of readings of Chopin, Prelude in A Major, Op. 28, No. 7, will serve as a case study in analysis and comparison of analyses based on different thematic priorities. The conclusion, then, asserts that we should understand Cook's "broadly Schenkerian practice"

as a field of linear or hierarchical analysis, within which traditional Schenkerian analysis should be openly regarded as a subspecies.

Historical context: *Explication de texte*, linguistic formalism and structuralism, the middle path of the New Criticism, the post-structuralist turn to the reader, the pluralistic present

Stanley Fish was one of the best-known American proponents of deconstruction and reader-response theory in the 1980s; he was heavily influenced by French structuralist and post-structuralist theory, particularly Derrida's deconstruction, by way of Paul DeMan. Yet, when Fish was interviewed in 2000, he made these surprisingly positive comments about the New Criticism, which he said had "provided a vocabulary, with its notions of tension and paradox and verbal artifacts, that [was useful for any genre and period]" (Fish 2004: 22). Fish was not criticizing the various structuralist and post-structuralist modes that followed on the heyday of the New Criticism; he was suggesting that the prevailing attitude toward that very influential movement was skewed too far to the negative side: if the New Critics' focus on the text was excessive, the reaction against close reading as totalizing and as apolitical also went too far.

Fish went on to say that "[Despite] laments that close reading is a lost art [...], it still remains [...] [a] powerful pedagogical tool [that] can really awaken students' interest when they begin to realize that they can perform analyses of texts that remove the texts from the category of the alien and the strange, and then begin to actually understand the mechanics of how prose and verse work." Art Berman, a historian of modernism in literature, says very much the same thing: The New Critics' seeming indifference to the political and the historical is "often part of the reason [...] some recent critics vehemently reject [them], even as [these same critics] exercise a critical method that, in most instances, [is what] the New Critics have taught them, a method that was itself at one point 'revolutionary,' displacing both positivist historicism and empathetic impressionism" (Berman 1988: 86).

In the broadest strokes of a progressive historical narrative, interpretation had moved

inexorably on from its beginning point in a focus on the author, represented in nineteenth century concepts of the genius (or author-as-hero), of biography, and of intention. Essential to this view is the poem, novel, or symphony as masterwork. The demonstration or illustration of genius through ever more systematic critical appreciation and analysis in the first half of the twentieth century led, however, to what one might call a competition between author and his or her own text.

This slippage shows vividly in the English critic J. A. Fuller-Maitland's critical appreciation of the C-Major Prelude from *The Well-Tempered Clavier*. For Fuller-Maitland, *The Well-Tempered Clavier* is no longer a part of everyday music making – it has been transformed into a work of heroic perfection, even more than that, into something ascetic and holy: "There are shrines that can only be approached after the worshipper has performed some lustral rite, and the need for such purification meets us at the threshold of the great temple we are now to enter" (Fuller-Maitland 1970 [1925]: 12). The severe, the serious, and the perfect go together in Fuller-Maitland's view: "The [...] Prelude in C [transforms] the arpeggio prelude [...] into a creation of perfect loveliness, the ethereal beauty of which is due in great measure to the subtle suggestions of its harmonies. Like many other flawless works of art, it seems as though it had sprung forth spontaneously, as though it could not ever have gone through any process of development." (Fuller-Maitland 1970 [1925]: 12) Thus, *ex nihilo*, not from the hand of J. S. Bach, in whose genius Fuller-Maitland most certainly believed, nevertheless.

From this self-contradictory position to the pedagogical juggernaut of textual analysis as espoused by the New Critics required just one simple step, to the "intentional fallacy," which asserts that it is an error to assume the author is the final authority on a text's effects. The text is thus free of its creator, to be understood on its own terms. For Cleanth Brooks and his colleagues, the assertion of the intentional fallacy meant freedom from the burden of a historically minded philology, so that one could engage with a poem or story as a self-standing organic and expressive system. As Art Berman puts it,

The strategy for literary criticism through the early 1960s was to seek an adversarial truce with science: incorporating some of its

methodology, by taking the literary work as an autonomous object of study, and turning to the past, following the example of Matthew Arnold, for values and outlooks that allow literature to retain importance as one looks toward the future.

The gradual introduction of Romantic theory into the New Criticism [...] was part of the attempt to retrieve from a past era literary [...] values that could assist in counteracting what were seen by literary critics as the worst aspects of modern technological society. [...] The New Criticism could assign to literature the highest cognitive as well as creative values, both elevating and defending its stature. The best available tactic was, accordingly, to retain the technique of empiricism for literary criticism by claiming that literary criticism could itself be a separate scientific-like enterprise – distinct from the reliance on “extrinsic” disciplines, such as late nineteenth century “positivism,” particularly in philology or history – while at the same time incorporating values of freedom, creativity, and personal human endeavor found in a Romanticism. (Berman 1988: 84–85)

If this seems to be nine steps out of ten in the direction of the French structuralism of the 1950s and 1960s, it was in fact – but without the latter’s explicit and intense orientation to linguistics. The New Critics were, so to speak, sitting on the fence between author and text, despite their claims for formalism. As one example, Brooks, who was a graduate of Vanderbilt University in Tennessee, played a very important role in promoting contemporary American Southern writers such as William Faulkner, Carson McCullers, and Katherine Mansfield.

At this point, I want to step back a generation to consider parallel developments in France, specifically the method called *explication de texte*. It was Gustave Lanson, who died in 1934, that introduced into literary scholarship in France the methods associated with positivism and stylistic analysis, both of which are very familiar to us in music studies through the contemporaneous work of Hugo Riemann in Germany and Guido Adler in Austria.² Lanson “established literary

history as *the* accredited model for literary studies in French universities. In his approach [he emphasized] sources of inspiration and literary influences, cultural milieus and generational interests, biographical features and textual data” (Furman 2005).

The particular form which nineteenth-century positivism conferred on this tendency was the belief that all manifestations of the human intellect were capable of being studied in a methodical, scientific manner by being categorized and classified according to historical principles. It is perhaps natural that, when the study of French literature was encompassed in this development, it should be the historical associations, the philosophical content, and the social relevance of a work, in short those aspects which are more obviously susceptible of objective analysis, that were stressed; the organization of the study of literature according to positivist principles was regarded as a necessary corrective to the vague impressionism of an undisciplined appreciation. (Howarth and Walton 1971: xi–xii)

Lanson’s adoption of close reading as one tool in his system of stylistics had its source not in contemporary philology, however, but in a centuries’-old method of the medieval Scholastics and Renaissance humanists for reading and understanding classical Greek and Latin texts: systematic summary and paraphrase. As Howarth and Walton put it, *explication de texte* “transferr[ed] to the study of [modern] French texts a method hitherto recognized as belonging to the study of the classics” (Howarth and Walton 1971: xv). Consequently, philology gradually became both specialized and marginalized: as Karl Uitti (2005) explains, “in practice ‘philology’ became almost exclusively associated with textual and linguistic study of the earlier epochs. Literary historians concerned with post-medieval developments, like Abel Lefranc and Gustave Lanson in France [...], evinced little interest in Old French or in Old English, and their disciples came to resent having to waste valuable time on these recondite subjects for which they felt little ideological sympathy.”

In this championing of modern literature and scientific method, Lanson was certainly no

² The most influential of Lanson’s many publications are Lanson 1898 and Lanson 1925.

conservative (even though that is how he would routinely be described in the twentieth century). Indeed:

Positivism [...] was a decidedly Republican virtue. In the literary sphere this meant the rejection of a tradition of impressionistic literary criticism that focused on questions of rhetoric and appealed to standards of taste. [...] For Lanson, the only Dreyfusard in the otherwise conservative literary world of the Sorbonne, it was a question of replacing this elitist literary criticism with a literary history established on scientific grounds. In the context of the still relatively new public education system literary history was to provide a foundation upon which to establish a literary pedagogy whose task would be to foster a national democratic cultural identity. (Guerlac 2005)

Strangely, it is not his comprehensive, historically oriented approach to the study of literature that Lanson is known for now: instead, *lansonisme*, as it has been called, is associated primarily with textual analysis. The explanation lies in the overwhelming success of Lanson's student and protégé, Gustave Rudler, who not only codified the pedagogy of textual analysis as *explication de texte* but then moved to the United Kingdom, where as a professor in Oxford University he was very influential in spreading a preference for close reading over biography well beyond French classics to the study of both classical and contemporary English literature.³

At this point in my rough sketch of an historical narrative for interpretation, the author threatens to disappear: close reading of a text as a more or less autonomous system encouraged – in fact, enabled – the continuing search for an objective, scientific method. This search, however, diverged toward sharply different results: an empirical, linguistics-based structuralism, on the one hand, and, on the other, a deterministic, ideologically driven set of methods, of which Marxism, then feminism and Lacanism (or psychoanalysis) are the principal instances. As was typical of him, Roland Barthes could argue both sides. In “What Is Criticism?” he objects not so much that [*lansonisme*] became an ideology but that it hid its ideological force and commitments in the name of supposedly

transparent values such as truth and knowledge” (Guerlac 2005). And the overwhelmingly detailed analysis in Barthes's *S/Z* can be seen, of course, as an elaborate parody that drives the method of *explication* to the absurd (see Barthes 1974). But Barthes was also the foremost proponent of a rigid structuralist semiology in the 1960s, before he turned to psychoanalytic criticism under the strong influence of Julia Kristeva.

Structuralism took the text-as-object to the extreme, to a symptom of language, and the other methods reduced both author and text to symptoms of ideology, handy mainly for the repetition of particular cultural critiques or, more narrowly, for disciplinary critique. Symptomatic reading was particularly good for uncovering contradictions or repressed meanings. “What is repressed [became] desire [for Lacan], ideological contradiction [for the Marxist Althusser], or the subversive force of writing [for Derrida]” (Bordwell 1989: 17). No wonder, then, that the “critic [became], in effect, a ‘secondary author,’ reinterpreting and virtually re-creating the original” [Howarth and Walton 1971: xxx]. This result may have suited the methodological goals of the *explication de texte*, but to a very different end.

My rough sketch of an historical narrative would say that the course of criticism and interpretation over the past century or so has been a gradual movement from priority to the author (and therefore to intention and biography), toward priority to the text (and therefore to structure and effects), and then toward priority to the reader or critic (and therefore to subjectivity and ideologically-grounded determinism). To this I would add a final stage: the present situation, where the trajectory just described has played itself out, and the promise of a pluralistic practice has arisen.

Lansonisme et Schenkerisme

Several points need to be emphasized in a historical comparison of interpretation in literature and music. The first concerns a crucial aspect of method. Cleanth Brooks used “a distinctive terminology (e.g., irony, paradox) that sounds like

³ His most important book is Rudler 1923.

the attribution of mental states to the poem itself, a most ingenious strategy to bind subjectivity into an autonomous object" (Berman 1988: 36). This is essentially the same as Schenker's attribution of agency to tones, an idea he inherited from the tradition of Viennese fundamental bass theory, specifically from Simon Sechter, and that had already been explicitly stated and developed by the "energeticist" theorist August Halm (Rothfarb 2002: 936–937). Notions of tension and balance derive directly from this.

The second point to be raised relates to the well-known "art, not science" declaration about Schenkerian analysis, an assertion that is disingenuous, in exactly the opposite direction of the New Critics in literature. The New Critics thought of themselves as grounded in empirical methods of textual analysis but were by no means reductionist in their basic outlook: they were very much focused on aesthetic considerations. On the other hand, if Schenker thought of his method as almost magical revelation of the paths of genius, as he developed this thesis he certainly assembled a large number of tools for analysis along the way, tools that remain very useful into the present.

The third point concerns the direction of analysis. The method of *explication de texte* involved a series of tasks culminating in a general statement about the text; this follows an empirical model in which the data collected from the analysis leads to the possibility of a concise statement of what it is about, or the work's theme. In their textbook, Katz and Hall change the procedure to fit contemporary circumstances of literary pedagogy in the United States in 1970. Theirs is an inductive model, where reading the text and situating it in its historical context provokes a "guess" or hypothesis about the work as a whole; subsequent description of the structure and the work's textual details confirms (or alters) and fills out the analysis. Their discussion of the thematic statement, or what they call "defining the general character of the text," describes the method succinctly:

The student [...] should [now] attempt to characterize [the work] briefly, stating what he finds its dominant theme to be. [...] The aim here is to put into words the central idea of the text, its main preoccupation (though in some cases a simple statement of the subject will suffice). This is important, since the student

will shortly attempt to show how the details of the text are related to the main idea. He may occasionally prefer to perform the detailed analysis first in order to insure a more accurate formulation of the essence of the text. (Katz and Hall 1970: xii)

The ease with which Katz and Hall reverse the direction of the analytical work confirms that *explication de texte*, like the methods of the New Critics, is hierarchical, and it is the general statement, the theme, that sits at the top, whether that position is reached by an inductive or deductive process.

The interplay of reductive and inductive (or generative) modes of analysis is well known to Schenkerians, as is the fact that, pragmatically in the work of reading a piece, it is unproductive to follow one or the other exclusively. Carl Schachter, among others, has written about this on a number of occasions. Here is a representative instance from the essay "Either/Or":

I shall point out some of the kinds of clues to large structure that an examination of details can yield, though it is far from my intention to offer a "method for the reading of diminutions" [...]. I strongly doubt that such methods or theories can be made to work, for I believe that the understanding of detail begins with an intuitive grasp of large structure, however imperfect or incomplete, a process that is ultimately resistant to rigorous formulation. (Schachter 1990: 166–167)

Schachter here is articulating something essentially indistinguishable from Katz and Hall's inductive method. His "large structure" is the theme in the hierarchical model of reading literature.

A fourth point to be made about the historical comparison is that we must be careful to avoid accepting too easily the criticism written by later generations about now-classical modes of interpretation. In particular, we should understand that virtually all the elements of that rough history I have outlined were present nearly from the beginning – in other words, the history of interpretation is one of shifting emphases in a broad field that was essentially defined from the outset, not a progressive history of discovery of viewpoints that were without any precedent.

I quoted Suzanne Guerlac earlier on Lanson's quite coherent ideological – indeed overtly political – goals. If Barthes later complained that Lanson's ideology was suppressed, that was only a necessary step for Barthes so that he could then feel free to interpret the *explication de texte* in symptomatic terms. I. A. Richards, as Berman (1988: 35) points out, was interested in psychological grounding for criticism in the 1920s and therefore "concentrated on the poem's effect on the reader, the establishing of 'attitudes,'" a term that the New Critics adopted as well. In this sense, Richards had the same concerns as did the reader-response theorists of the 1980s. And so on.

The final point to be made here also concerns criticism from later generations. I claim that Schenker, like Lanson, when considered in the context of his time, cannot be called a reactionary, at least outside the sphere of national politics. Lanson was liberal in the nineteenth century sense – he believed in education and science as progressive, and he favored the study of modern literature over classics. What Schenker did for music was to create a fully worked out analogue to close reading. William Benjamin, therefore, was wrong when he said "Schenker's pessimism is in keeping with the predominantly elegiac tone of his writings, which may be read as a magnificently sustained and passionate lament for the music which he loved and to which he was utterly devoted, the apparent death of which was visited upon him in his youth" (Benjamin 1981: 155). Eloquently stated – but Schenker was already thirty years old when Brahms passed away. Even by the early 1920s, the composer had been dead for just twenty-five years, barely

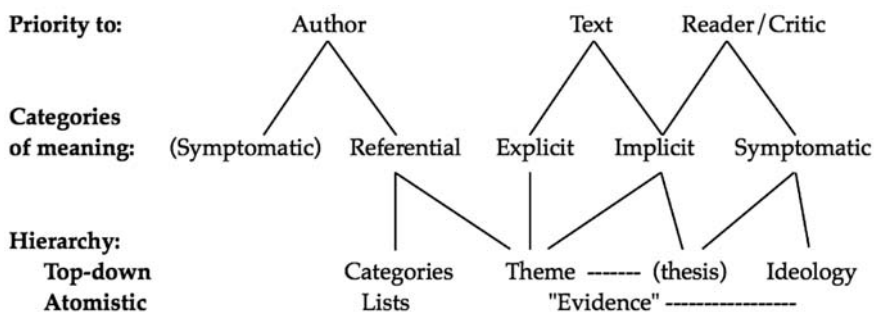
a generation. A good argument could be made that what Schenker engaged in was a defense of Brahms and promotion of his music. Brahms was the present for Schenker, as much as were any of his avant-garde antagonists, such as Schoenberg, Hindemith, or Stravinsky. The classical past was represented by Fux and C. P. E. Bach; theirs were the aesthetic priorities and music that had to be recovered through close study, like Greek and Latin authors for the Renaissance humanists.

Theme and modes of interpretation

The table below (Example 1) aligns the historical process outlined earlier (priority to author, priority to text, priority to the reader) with Bordwell's classes and categories. At the bottom of the table are the two directional schemes for a hierarchical model – generative or top-down and atomistic or bottom-up – with some terms that correspond to Bordwell's categories above. Thus, a bottom-up approach to referential meaning would most commonly generate lists of characteristics (or style traits), whereas a top-down approach would search for information in regard to a set of given categories (such as the classic narrative elements: space, time, agency).

Referential meaning, according to Bordwell, is concerned mainly with the reader/viewer's construction of the world of the narrative, in its spatial and other characteristic aspects. The second descriptive category, explicit meaning, attempts to characterize and summarize the text's meanings as they are presented, or from the point

Example 1. Priorities, categories, and hierarchies.



of view of the text; this is essentially the paraphrase of the *explication de texte*. Reading for implicit meanings takes a step beyond paraphrase, passing from description to interpretation as it seeks to construct meanings that are “covert [or] symbolic” (Bordwell 1989: 8). These “[u]nits of implicit meaning are commonly called ‘themes,’ though they may also be identified as ‘problems,’ ‘issues,’ or ‘questions’” (Bordwell 1989: 9). Accordingly,

the spectator may seek to construct implicit meanings when she cannot find a way to reconcile an anomalous element with a referential or explicit aspect of the work; or the “symbolic impulse” may be brought in to warrant the hypothesis that any element, anomalous or not, may serve as the basis of implicit meanings. Furthermore, the critic may take implicit meanings to be consistent, at some level, with the referential and explicit meanings assigned to the work. Or, as in the process of irony, implicit meanings may be posited as contradicting other sorts. (Bordwell 1989: 8)

The extreme form of interpretation is built on a symptomatic bias, which always has the effect of “subsuming [a reading of a film] to a theory of cinema, of culture, or of criticism” (Bordwell 1989: 235). In this case, “[hidden, symptomatic, or “repressed”] meanings are assumed to be at odds with referential, explicit, or implicit ones. Taken as individual expression, symptomatic meaning may be treated as the consequence of the artist’s obsessions. [...] Taken as part of a social dynamic, it may be traced to economic, political, or ideological processes” (Bordwell 1989: 9).

Perhaps the most familiar example of interpretation by implicit meanings in the music analysis literature is Edward T. Cone’s “promissory note,” an anomalous E₄ near the beginning of a piano composition in A₁ major by Schubert. Cone shows that this odd pitch is rich in implications for the way the work unfolds harmonically, formally, and expressively (Cone 1982). In the traditional Schenkerian literature, analyses that focus on hidden repetition are concerned with

implicit meanings. One of the most elegant examples I know is William Renwick’s study of the motivic (linear) shapes that emerge from fugue expositions (Renwick 1991). When Schenkerians favor tonal structures (in the levels) over surface features, they are also favoring implicit meanings.

As an example of symptomatic meaning, in this case put forward almost in the manner of a myth-closing moral tag, is the appendix to the English translation of Schenker’s *Harmony*, where Oswald Jonas briefly lays out the successive levels of structure in J. S. Bach, Little Prelude in F Major: this prelude “is the artistic elaboration of one single chord, projected in time. It is the expression of true tonality. Such a creation is conceivable only if it is drawn from a unitary background.” (Schenker 1954 [1906]: 352)

Bordwell stresses the point that the “four categories of meaning-construction are functional and heuristic, not substantive. Used in the processes of comprehension and interpretation, they constitute distinctions with which perceivers approach [texts]; they are assumptions which can generate hypotheses about particular meanings” (Bordwell 1989: 10). The process of making an interpretation, then, requires two steps: first, having established whether the “most pertinent meanings” are implicit or symptomatic, the interpreter chooses and maps onto the text “at several levels” certain concepts or clusters of ideas (such as closely related words or oppositions) and schemata (such as genre categories or character centrality); then, he or she “articulate[s] an argument that demonstrates the novelty and validity of the interpretation” (Bordwell 1989: 40–41).

Case study: Chopin, Prelude in A Major, Op. 28, No. 7

Example 2 reproduces the score of Chopin’s A-Major Prelude in a modern edition, to which I have restored the pedaling of the first Paris edition (1839a) (see the arrows below the staff).⁴

⁴ The pedalings in the London (1839b) and Leipzig (Breitkopf; 1839c) editions in fact vary slightly from those in the Paris edition – and also from each other. All three, however, are consistent in the main idea of generally holding the pedal down through two-bar units.

I have also indicated details relating to the ninth of the dominant. These will be of interest later on.

Example 3 is a first mapping of the hierarchy for thematic reading onto music. Bordwell's distinction between descriptive categories of referentiality and explicit meaning is roughly reflected in "elements" and "motif" but the real focus of interest is in the two upper rows, "theme" and "thesis." Here I have separated theme and thesis, as in Neumeyer 2009a, in order to distinguish more effectively between implicit and symptomatic meanings. In Example 3a, at the left, for Schachter's well-known reading of another

Chopin Prelude (Schachter 1995: 153), the thesis or the symptomatic meaning is hermeneutic – that is, it represents the possibility that something like musical narrative, based in metaphor, can co-exist alongside synthesis, or organic unity (therefore specifically excluding gaps, contradictions, and the like). The theme or implicit meaning, on the other hand, is the *Ursatz*, or more narrowly here, the *Urlinie* from $\hat{5}$, along with the registral instantiation of the narrative figure. The concrete level of the motif is that of the musical motive or theme in the usual musical sense of a melody.⁵

Example 2.

Chopin, Prelude in A Major, Op. 28, No. 7.

Andantino.

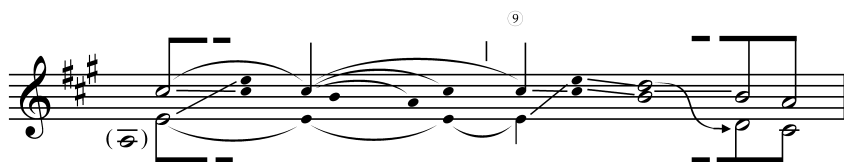
p dolce

The image shows three systems of musical notation for Chopin's Prelude in A Major, Op. 28, No. 7. The tempo is marked 'Andantino' and the dynamics 'p dolce'. The score is annotated with Schenkerian analysis symbols: 'Ura' (Ursatz) and '*' (Urlinie) with arrows indicating structural levels. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 5, 8, 9, 10. The first system covers measures 1-4, the second system measures 5-8, and the third system measures 9-12. The notation includes treble and bass staves with various musical symbols like notes, rests, and accidentals.

⁵ The *Urlinie* in a Schenkerian analysis is not automatically assigned the place of theme or implicit meaning. If, for example, the specific point of the analysis is to justify the *Urlinie* itself, along with the structural levels, then it becomes symptomatic. The *Urlinie* can even be understood in terms of explicit meaning in a short composition where the line is especially obvious on the surface.

Example 3. Levels in Carl Schachter’s reading of Chopin, E-Minor Prelude (a); levels in my registral reading of Chopin, A-Major Prelude (b).

(a)	thesis: metaphor linked to design (possibility of narrative) synthesis	(b)	thesis: opening and closing have cognitive and structural priority listening is strongly hierarchical (as in Lerdahl 2001)
theme:	<i>Urlinie</i> from $\hat{5}$ downward pull on register descriptive metaphor (vision of death)	theme:	priority to temporal frame strong teleology
motif:	C–B motive b^1 as first <i>Urlinie</i> note	motif:	interval of the sixth interval inversion as registral device
elements:	harmonic functions, phrase articulation, etc. (see Schachter 1995: 153).	elements:	harmonic functions, phrase articulation, etc.:



In Example 3b, I have anticipated a reading of the A-Major Prelude to be discussed later in the context of several similar ones. The thesis in this case is that openings and closings have cognitive priority, based on the belief that listening is strongly hierarchical, as in Lerdahl’s conception of tonal space, though of course I am not following his prolongational reduction method (Lerdahl 2001). The theme instantiates this thesis directly: the analysis gives sharp priority to the temporal frame (that is, beginning and end get the open notes) and the piece is read in terms of a strong teleology, where everything else is subordinated to beginning and end. The beginning itself is even subordinated to a prior understanding of key – the initial sixth, whose upper note $C\sharp^2$ sounds with the dominant bass, opens a register that belongs to the tonic of the underlying key expressed by that bass as dominant. The prominent recurring figures – the principal motifs – are the interval

simultaneity of the sixth and interval inversion as a prolonging or elaborating device.

Overall, then, the meanings generated by the reading in Example 3b are symptomatic: that is, all features of the piece are subsumed under my theoretical insistence on temporal frames and intervallic-registral motions.

Let us turn now to traditional Schenkerian readings of the Prelude – see Examples 4a, b, and c. Here, “background” not only has its usual role of the initiating level in a generative hierarchy (its content being the *Ursatz* with a specific *Urlinie*) but also acts as the site of the musical-analytic theme, the concise description of what a piece is about from the point of view of its materials. The readings from $\hat{3}$ and from $\hat{5}$ work quite well; from $\hat{8}$, the line cannot be completed, but, on the other hand, the $\hat{8}$ line is the only one that is able to incorporate the $F\sharp$ as 9 over V.⁶

⁶ See also Humal 2007, II: 10–11, where the Prelude is read from $\hat{3}$ but the $\hat{5}$ is in m. 1, displaced from the tonic bass that appears in m. 3. Ayrey 1998: 372–373 is very similar, but the $\hat{1}$ arrives in m. 11 – and we should note that the author finds fault with the reading in his subsequent deconstructive exercise. Sobaskie 2007–08: 43–44 reads the upper voice in the first phrase as in my version from $\hat{3}$ but V is prolonged till I arrives in m. 4, then in a parallel construction $\hat{2}$ arrives immediately in m. 9 over what will be a prolonged V. In Pierce 2007: 92–93, $\hat{2}$ over V is understood as enacting an almost physical momentum across the entire Prelude, relaxing only in the final tonic – a reading very similar to Lerdahl and Jackendoff 1983: 237 – see my commentary in Neumeyer 2009b: 85–90. Edlund 2003 reproduces Ayrey’s analysis and adds three other, non-traditional readings.

Examples 4a–4c. Chopin, A-Major Prelude: Schenkerian readings.**Example 4a** (with the $\hat{3}$ -line).

Example 4b (with the $\hat{5}$ -line).

Example 4c (with the $\hat{8}$ -line).

The $\hat{8}$ line is also the best suited for a Schenkerian hermeneutic reading, which is essentially an analysis that maintains the methodology but shifts attention away from the structure (text) to a hearing (reader/listener). Cook describes the motivation succinctly: “present-day Schenkerians such as Schachter have resorted to explanations that are perceptual in [...] that they revolve round aural-imaginative experiences, ‘hearings’ of the music prompted by analysis. [...] [Such a reading] might be considered postmodern in its ascription of meaning not to the music but rather to the act of interpreting it.” (Cook 2007: 296) Here, the incomplete $\hat{8}$ line matches very well the affective

traits of this Prelude as a *souvenir* or album leaf, more specifically a reminiscence of a dance and the environment of dancing. As Example 5 documents, the A-Major Prelude is not a compact and perfect waltz miniature or a brief mazurka, both common characterizations of this piece. In fact, it is a polka-mazurka, the characteristic music of which is the same as that for the dance later called the *varsovienne* (literally, “Young Woman from Warsaw”). As a dance, the polka-mazurka was no more than modestly popular in Paris in the 1830s and 1840s, apparently because its slow tempo was at odds with the trend toward faster speeds, as exemplified by the *valse à trois temps*

and the galop. The polka-mazurka is not a waltz⁷ – instead, it combines the characteristic polka *chassée* step with a mazurka hop. For the dancers, the experience might be slightly disconcerting, like dancing a slow polka in triple meter.⁸ We know that Chopin was an enthusiastic and skilful dancer (McKee 2004: 109, 118); there is little doubt that he danced the polka-mazurka himself while in Paris, if not earlier in Warsaw. Quite appropriately, the first manuscript version of this Prelude was indeed a souvenir written into a woman’s album in 1836. Chopin recalls or imagines the dance at a distance, rendering it doubly nostalgic by the *piano-dolce* marking, slower-than-normal tempo, and murky pedaling.

Among the three traditional background lines, the $\hat{8}$ line, with its unusual trajectory through $\hat{7}$ and $\hat{6}$ in mm. 9 and 10 and its failure to reach $\hat{1}$, is obviously suited to the atmosphere that Chopin invokes. The lines from $\hat{3}$ and $\hat{5}$, by contrast, are as insistently teleological as was my registral reading

in Example 3b: they force the piece into the perfection of synthesis against its will, as it were.

In Example 6, four additional thematic readings of the A-Major Prelude follow models originally presented as alternatives to traditional Schenkerian analyses in Littlefield & Neumeyer (1992: 61–62). In the present context, Example 6.1 is perhaps the most radical because it undermines the hierarchical structure of the analysis, indeed it thwarts reduction beyond the phrase by “democratizing” the structural levels – instead of one overarching melodic structure fanning out through a series of prolongations, this is a chain of melodic structures. It is very cautiously reductionist, assuming the equality of rising and falling lines and the appropriateness of multiple melodic structures where needed, and ignoring most implicit or hidden melodic patterning, preferring to drape the interpretation about the most obvious melodic shapes. This restrained middleground reading might be said to resemble

Example 5. Polka-mazurka melodies: Chopin, A-Major Prelude, Paris edition (a); Maxime Alkan, Polka-mazurka *Maria* (ca. 1850), music associated with the dance studio of Henri Cellarius (Paris), first strain (b); C. Elbel, *Welcome Friends Varsoviennne* (Ferrero 1859, music section, p. 56), first strain (c1); *Welcome Friends Varsoviennne*, second strain (c2).

⁷ I mistakenly called it a *waltz-mazurka* in my review of Alexandra Pierce’s book (Neumeyer 2009b: 88).

⁸ The dance master Carlo Blasis gives a detailed description of the polka-mazurka figures (Blasis 1866: 40–41).

Examples 6.1–6.4. Four analyses of Chopin, A-Major Prelude (after Littlefield and Neumeier 1992).

Example 6.1. Priority to melodic shape but limited hierarchy.

Example 6.2. Priority to temporal frame within a reinstated strong hierarchy.

Example 6.3. Priority to metric placement, again within a strong hierarchy.

Example 6.4. Priority to registral invariance or basic tonal space (similar to the proto-background).

some of the analytic graphs in Schenker's early *Tonwille* volumes.

Example 6.2 is the version we have already seen under Example 3b. It is a foil to Example 6.1, as it gives priority to a temporal frame within a reinstated hierarchy. This model strongly emphasizes teleology and invests considerable significance in the opening as a "generating gesture" spawning motion.

Example 6.3 shifts the theme to rhythmic/metric placement, again within a strong hierarchy. The person who prefers this reading gives first priority to the power of meter to shape perception and therefore ties its background tones to primary rhythmic/metric divisions (two- and four-bar hypermeter). The background form is both linear (B–A) and intervallic (the tonal space of the octave). No special allowance is made for cadence tones. Improbably perhaps, this reading exposes a strong pattern of hidden repetition, identified by the circled numbers: 1 for the immediate C \sharp –D pair, 2 for the C \sharp –B, 3 for B–A over the phrase, and 4 for B–A over the entire Prelude.

Priority to register in Example 6.4 generates a result similar to Example 6.2. Patterns of movement to and from the basic tonal space of e¹–c \sharp ² work out this registral theme. Most rising or falling patterns of line either disappear or are subordinated, since the focus is on an invariant registral shape that serves as the anchor for melodic movements. Such readings from tonal space are typically hierarchical but anti-linear.

So far, then, we have seven readings available: three traditional Schenkerian analyses and four alternatives.⁹ To these I add one more linear analysis: Examples 7 to 9 serve the thesis that the Prelude is indeed a reminiscence of dancing, not merely of music: it is the image of a couple dancing the polka-mazurka as heard from a temporal or physical distance. Of the seven existing readings, the incomplete *Urlinie* from $\hat{8}$ comes closest, as noted above, but its pitches and shape do not align at all well with the dance's metric design and motivic figures, an essential point if one is to imagine dancing.

A subtle detail of Chopin's part-writing contributes expressively to the souvenir affect. Example 7 shows the essential dominant-to-tonic voice leading in each of the four-bar phrases (marked 1–4). The movements of the ninth over V were also traced in the solid lines marked on the score (refer again to Example 2). Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, composers were as fascinated by the dominant ninth (or $\hat{6}$ of a major scale) as they were careful in their treatment of it (Day-O'Connell 2002). Direct resolutions of V⁹ to I were still rare, the relevant statistic being that they occur mostly in dance music. Chopin was particularly fastidious on this point, but in the A-Major Prelude he strove to enhance the dance topos in a subtle and most expressive way using that same ninth. In the first phrase the resolution is direct, except that Chopin inserts between $\hat{6}$ and $\hat{5}$ the even more expressive chromatic neighbor, which continues to ring throughout the bar because of the held pedal and therefore almost completely obscures the briefly sounded resolution to e². In the second phrase, $\hat{6}$ "dissolves" into the leading tone $\hat{7}$ before the resolution. Phrases 3 and 4 duplicate the motions of 1 and 2, respectively.

As in most couple dances of the era, the polka-mazurka's figures are two measures long, a design that is plainly reflected in the hypermetric (sub-phrase) rhythms repeated throughout the Prelude and reinforced by the pedaling marks. In each sub-phrase unit before m. 11, dissonance slowly clears to consonance. The upper system of Example 8 shows the dissonance-to-consonance details for each of the eight two-bar units. The square brackets above the system mark the units as defined by the pedaling marks. The harmonic acceleration after m. 11 is sharply marked by the F \sharp ⁷ chord – this might be taken as the moment when a physical representation of the dance passes over into memory.

The dissonance-to-consonance process works at several levels. To illustrate, I have shown three levels of this process in the opening phrase (see Example 9): at (a) or m. 1, the immediate level in

⁹ Edlund 2003: 173 offers three more alternative readings, which, however, are "not to be considered as alternatives to each other in an excluding sense; they are rather to be thought of as representations of musically vital, complementary aspects within the music" (Edlund 2003: 177): (1) a static C \sharp as the "Urlinie"; (2) an *Urlinie* made out of double neighbor notes (so, A–B–G \sharp –A), where B is over ii in m. 13, G \sharp over V in m. 14; and (3) an *Urlinie* rising from $\hat{5}$ to $\hat{8}$ in mm. 13–16.

Example 7. Chopin, A-Major Prelude: dominant-to-tonic voice-leading in phrases 1–4.

1. 2. 3. 4.

Example 8. Chopin, A-Major Prelude: another reading of pitch design focusing on register.

a. b. a. b. a. b.

Example 9. Chopin, A-Major Prelude: dissonance to consonance: immediate (a); at two bars, with pedaling (b); at four bars (c).

(a) (b) (c)

8 - 7
6 - 5

the opening “cadential dominant” figure; at (b) or mm. 1–2, the two-bar level where the V⁷ harmony emerges from the earlier dissonances but is also reduced in volume; and at (c) or mm. 1–4, the four-bar level where the initial V⁷ dissonance resolves to the tonic.

The dissonance-to-consonance process, essential as it is to the Prelude’s affect and expression, operates alongside a second thematic element based on register. The lower system of Example 8 isolates the principal elements for each two-bar unit and positions these within a pattern of registral play that enacts its own narrative in terms of a pairing of lower/higher, darker/brighter, muddier/clearer registers. The lower register, *a* in the graph, gives way to the higher register; *b*, as V resolves to I in m. 3. The succession *a*–*b* is repeated but also greatly expanded over the next five two-bar units: the lower register *a* for three, and the upper register *b* for two. Here, however, narrative dissonance or conflict arises through positioning sonorities in the “wrong” register: the tonic of bars 7–8 in the lower and the surprising F⁷ chord in the upper. This reversal of registers is resolved simply and compactly through the final two measures, as the tonic sixth C⁶–A appears in upper and lower registers alike, both captured in the held pedal.¹⁰

If there is a musically revelatory element that can be said to arise from this eighth reading, it is in the organized – and, I believe, expressive – interplay of registers that is resolved by sensitive combination in the final sub-phrase of the Prelude, closing the window of nostalgia on both dance and dancers. What this suggests for performance is that the blurred pedalling is essential – without it, the Prelude is weakened, its timbres distorted like those of Bach keyboard works to which mid-twentieth century pianists applied a *non legato* performance style.

This eighth reading articulates a theme/thesis pair, as did the previous seven, but I have also highlighted an interpretative routine that links hierarchical modeling and Culler’s teleology of reading, or the impulse to “make sense” of a poem or piece of music, usually as a system of tension and balance (in the New Critics) or the synthesis or rapport between levels (in traditional Schenkerian

analysis). To work this out thoroughly, I might have invoked implicit meanings more directly (recall that this is the same as Cone’s “promissory note”) to write a story of the F⁷. (The “bright” F⁷ that appears suddenly at the end of measure 2 also initiates a “muddy” lower register that “clears” to $\hat{8}$ above it and the tonic triad in mm. 3–4. The F⁷ finally asserts itself as the root of a chord, interrupting the two-measure dissonance/consonance patterns. Etc.)

Conclusion

With eight readings in hand – three Schenkerian linear analyses, four alternative linear analyses, and one reading modeled as an interpretation based on implicit meanings – we may proceed in any of three ways: let each stand on its own, draw comparisons between the several readings in order to make some general statement, or reject all but one, which would then stand as preferable, correct, or even true. My mode of presentation in the previous sections has, with only one or two minor deviations, followed the first of these paths: each of the eight readings was presented in the same way, identifying thematic and tetic priorities while avoiding any but the simplest comparisons. Unencumbered by a need for critique, we can appreciate what each of these offers to the act of listening to the A-Major Prelude.

In order to take the second path – drawing comparisons and aiming to reach a general conclusion – we step back to the level of theory, because it is the efficacy and efficiency of the theme/thesis pairs that are properly to be considered. These pairs exist within the same practice of linear analysis – or, more broadly, of hierarchical musical analysis – and thus there is no real consideration of a “meta-theoretical” level. What we can gain are statistics: a certain number of readings integrate the dominant ninth, some ignore or suppress it; some readings align with the hypermeter (linked, of course, to the dance) but others readings do not. And so on. Here it will be useful to have Kofi Agawu’s comments as he considers different views on the essential or

¹⁰ Please note that the lower system of Example 8 shows registral positions, not voice leading between the successive chords.

contingent nature of the relationship between strict counterpoint and free composition: “As always with debates within a binary axis, aligning oneself with [one side] is ultimately not as valuable as simply being aware of what each position enables, affirms, hides, or denies” (Agawu 2009: 115).

The last of the three paths builds on, or goes beyond, the others to state a preference. A pluralistic practice like the one Agawu proposes is inherently unstable because it is too easily undermined by the rhetoric of performance, by a teleology of presentation that engenders a subtle shift from statement of a preference to insistence on it. In terms of methodology, this means that worked-out interpretative routines always have an advantage (as readily packaging that teleology). It might seem obvious that the eighth reading is superior to the others, but I deliberately constructed it to seem so. In fact, I could have followed a similar interpretative routine for any of the other readings. Interpretation has no special brief. I argue along with Agawu, therefore, that the most productive pathways for linear analysis will be found only if constant critical attention is paid to the background and what it represents, not just in abstract terms of theory but also in the practice of analysis of individual compositions. We can establish a binary pair as a first step toward organizing and developing positions; and we can, as Agawu says, then make an effort to master those positions, or to set their contexts, by gaining as acute an understanding of their strengths and weaknesses as we can, in the service of a continuing conversation among committed views. A pluralistic practice is engaged and creative; a relativistic attitude, like an authoritarian one, shortchanges judgment and is static, uncreative.¹¹

I do not, however, want to leave the impression that I am advocating a practice that does not yet exist. As is well known, alternatives to the three *Urfurien* and the *Ursatz* with I–V–I bass were invented early on in the history of Schenkerian analysis, the most familiar and influential example

being Felix Salzer’s “contrapuntal structure” or CS, which was originally devised for use with Renaissance music but proved very fruitful for contemporary music as well (Salzer 1962). There has been lively discussion over the years on *Ursätze* spanning multiple movements, on ascending *Urfurien*, on musical form and the background, on backgrounds for pieces that begin and end in different keys, on extensions to non-classical repertoires, and so on. The critical tradition has found its way into the recent past and present, as well, in a number of different forms. Lewin 2006 discusses modal *Ursätze* in examples from Schumann and Brahms. Willner 2007 proposes a four-part *Ursatz* (as an extension of my three-part model). Peter H. Smith has emphasized studies in which traditional Schenkerian analyses are “paired” with others that offer different but complementary insights, thus breaking down to some extent the unilateral authority of the background in interpretation without sacrificing “the explanatory power of Schenker’s ideas” (Smith 2010; see also Smith 2009). Väisälä 2008 identifies “four significant structural determinants that are logically independent of the norms of harmony and voice-leading: design (including figuration), register, meter, and rhetorical/gestural devices” (Väisälä 2008 quoted in Väisälä 2009: 102, Note 2) and argues that the structural levels depend “on the fundamental principles of harmony and voice leading [...], the determination of structural weight – which element belongs to which level – is largely based on quite different factors, such as figuration and register” (Väisälä 2009: 101–102).¹² Humal 2010 replaces the two-part contrapuntal *Ursatz* as the content of the background with the Voice-Leading Matrix (VLM), a five-part model of the complete harmonic cadence progression.

My goal here has been to put the existing contemporary pluralistic practice into a conceptual framework that focuses on methodology, rather than on philosophy or history as in many sources over the past decade or more (such as Eybl 1995, Blasius 1996, Snarrenberg 1997, Cook 2007, among

¹¹ This is in line with Joakim Tillman’s comments about a contemporary pedagogy of music history: “the best solution in a pluralistic climate is an eclectic approach, which does not fall into the trap of total relativism” (Tillman 2000).

¹² Väisälä 2008 uses this approach to provide trenchant criticism of David Beach’s analyses of Bach partitas, these analyses being heavily symptomatic in a style that was common 30–40 years ago. Väisälä’s ideas with respect to register and motivic enlargement are creative and insightful. It is unfortunate that Beach, in his response in the same issue of the journal, chose simply to defend his outdated views along with an equally outdated notion of Schenkerian exceptionalism.

others). In this conceptual framework, traditional Schenkerian analysis is one type among potentially many modes of linear or hierarchical analysis. Given an understanding of the historical context of thematic reading, in which a top-down model of logic is combined with a teleological

model that follows the path of reading or imitates its process, we can conceive hierarchical reading – and hierarchical music analysis – in a more expansive way than is implied by the traditional “Schenkerian analysis”, which cannot escape the limitations of its symptomatic biases.

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Teemad, hierarhiad ja liinid: Schenkeri analüüs kui lineaaranalüüsi alaliik

David Neumeyer

(tõlkinud Mart Humal)

Schenkeri väljatöötatud lineaaranalüüsi meetod pärineb 20. sajandi algusest, kuid selle tänapäevapraktika moodustab laiema valdkonna, millest Schenkeri analüüs on vaid üks tüüp või alaliik. Lineaaranalüüsi võib mõista sellise muusikaanalüüsina, mis keskendub helikõrgusstruktuuri hierarhiilestele aspektidele. Selles kontseptuaalses raamistikus on traditsiooniline Schenkeri analüüs vaid üks paljudest meetoditest. Teemaatilise tõlgenduse ajaloolises kontekstis, kus loogiline ülalt-alla mudel kombineerub järjepideva arengu teleoloogilise mudeliga, võib hierarhilist tõlgendust – ja hierarhilist muusikaanalüüsi – mõista laiemalt, kui seda kasutab traditsiooniline Schenkeri analüüs, mida kammitsevad selle ideoloogilised eelistused. Selline pluralistlik praktika on võimalik vaid juhul, kui teadlikult eristada teksti hierarhiat tõlgenduse hierarhilisest modelleerimisest.

Ajalooliselt on Schenkeri muusikaanalüüsi mudel oma meetodite ja eelistuste poolest suguluses teemaatilise tõlgendusega kirjanduses, mida esindavad näiteks *New Criticism* Ameerikas ja *explication de texte* Prantsusmaal. Kõik kolm tekkisid ajal, mil tõlgenduses leidis aset järkjärguline eelistuste nihe autorilt (viimase eluloolt ja loominguulistelt kavatsustelt) tekstile (koos selle struktuuri ja mõju uurimisega). Selles mõttes polnud Schenkeri meetod (erinevalt tema poliitilistest vaadetest) sugugi reaktsiooniline, kuid nagu ka *New Criticism* ja *explication de texte*, on ta sellegipoolest saanud viimastel aastakümnetel kriitika osaliseks, seda seoses raskuspunkti nihkumisega lugejale ja kriitikule (ning seega subjektiivsusele ja ideoloogilisele determineeritusele).

Oma artiklis „Thematic Reading, Proto-backgrounds, and Transformations“ (2009) väitsin, et ka teose teemad või aines väljendavad kas otseselt või varjatult mingeid teese: teema on deskriptiivne mõtteväljendus, tees aga on tõeväärtuse kinnitus; teema on analüütiline, tees ideoloogiline. See tähendab, et Schenkeri *Urlinie* kolme kuju võib mõista kui helistiku kokkuvõtvat kirjeldust, kuid samas on need ka ideoloogilised avaldised, mis kinnitavad teatud uskumusi helistiku olemuse ja ajaloo kohta.

Ideoloogilise avaldisena võib konkreetseid *Urlinie* kujusid kas aktsepteerida või tagasi lükata; nad ei ole ainuvõimalikud ega universaalsed. Võimalike teemade suur hulk eeldab paljusid erinevaid mudeleid, millest igaüks on rakendatav strateegiana, olenevalt ideoloogilistest eelistustest. Seejuures on vaja õigesti mõista ideoloogiat ja teema vahekorda.

Tüüpilise näitena erinevatel teemaatilistel eelistustel tuginevatest analüüsides on vaadeldud Chopini prelüüdi A-duur *op. 28/7* (näide 2; pedaalitähistused, mis on võetud Pariisi originaalväljaandest, on pala väljendusliku sisu avamiseks väga olulised, vt. ka näiteid 8a ja 9).¹ Näide 3 kujutab pala kahte teemaatilise tõlgenduse tasandit – „teesi“ (lugejale sisendatavat ideed) ja „teemat“ (teose abstraktset lühikirjeldust). Vaadeldava Chopini pala puhul seisneb „tees“ selles, et eelistuseks on algus ja lõpp; see eeldab ranget hierarhilist muusikataju, nagu näiteks Lerdahli heliruumis (*tonal space*; vt. Lerdahl 2001). „Teema“ realiseerib „teesi“, andes tugeva eelistuse algusele ja lõpule.

Järgnevalt on palast esitatud kolm Schenkeri meetodil lineaaranalüüsi (näited 4a–c, vastavalt tertsi-, kvindi- ja oktaviliiniga, neist esimeses kahes on *Urlinie* lõpetatud ja kolmandas lõpetamata, kuid see-eest sisaldab heli fs^2 kui dominantakordi nooni) ja neli alternatiivset lineaaranalüüsi (näited 6.1–6.4), kus Schenkeri „teema“ – *Ursatz* või *Urlinie* – on asendatud teistsuguste mudelitega. Näites 6.1 on ühtse meloodiajoonise asemel rida tõusvaid ja laskuvaid liine ilma selge hierarhiata. Näites 6.2 (= näide 3), mis algab samuti, nagu näite 6.1 alumine süsteem, on hierarhia taastatud. Näites 6.3, mis on samuti rangelt hierarhiline, on muudetud helide rütmilist paigutust ja näidatud varjatud motiivikordusi cis^2-d^2 , cis^2-h^1 , h^1-a^1 või h^1-a^2 . Näide 6.4 tugineb korduvalle registrivahetusele e^1-cis^2 , kuid annab sama tulemuse nagu näide 6.2.

¹ Kuigi kirjanduses on kõnealust prelüüdi sageli nimetatud masurkaks, esindab see žanriliselt Pariisis 1830. ja 1840. aastail tuntud seltskonnatantsu „polka-masurka“, mis on ühtlasi identne 19. sajandil levinud tantsuga *Varsovienne*. Näites 5 on võrreldud Chopini vaadeldavat prelüüdi mõningate tolaeagsete näidetega viimati nimetatud tantsust.

Näide 7 näitab varjatud tertsikäiku $gis^1-fis^1-e^2$ (vrd. näide 2, taktid 2–3, 6–7, 10–11, 14–15). 19. sajandi esimeses pooles kasutati dominantnoonakordi lahenemist otse toonikasse peamiselt tantsumuusikas. Chopin, kes sellist lahendust enamasti vältis, on siin selle abil rõhutanud pala tantsulist iseloomu. Näite 8 ülemises süsteemis on näidatud igas taktipaaris (taktid 1–10) dissonantsi lahenemist konsonantsi; see on ühtlasi vastavuses autori pedalisatsiooniga. Näite alumises süsteemis on igast taktipaarist võetud üks põhielement ja need omavahel ühendatud, näitamaks registrivastandusi printsibiil madal/kõrge, tume/hele, hägus/selge (tähistatuna a/b). Võrreldes esimese registrivastandusega (taktid 1–2) on järgmine (taktid 5–14) tugevasti laiendatud. Viimasel vastandusel (taktid 15–16) kõlab sekst *cis–a* mõlemas registris. Näide 9 illustreerib dissonantsi lahenemist konsonantsi algusfraasis kolmel eri tasandil: takti tasandil (a, takt 1), taktipaari tasandil (b, taktid 1–2) ja fraasi tasandil (c, taktid 1–4).

Kofi Agawu raamatu „Music as Discourse: Semiotic Adventures in Romantic Music“ (2009) eeskujul võib väita, et kõige produktiivsem võimalus jõuda lineaaranalüüsini eeldab pidevat kriitilist tähelepanu süvatasandile, ja seda mitte ainult abstraktse teooria mõttes, vaid ka individuaalse teose analüüsipraktikas. Sellise praktika kohta on näiteid kirjanduses piisavalt; nende aluseks võib olla: „kontrapunktiline struktuur“, mida kasutati esmalt renessansimuusika analüüsimisel, kuid mis on osutunud viljakaks ka nüüdismuusika puhul (Felix Salzer, 1952); modaalne *versus* tonaalne *Ursatz* Schumanni ja Brahmsi puhul (David Lewin, 2006); Schenkeri analüüsi ühendamise teiste meetoditega, mis pakuvad erinevaid, kuid vastastikku täiendavaid tulemusi (Peter Smith, 2010); struktuurilised determinandid, mis on loogiliselt sõltumatud harmoonia ja häältejuhtimise normidest (Olli Väisälä, 2009), või häältejuhtimismatriks, viiehäälne mudel, mis asendab kahehäälsel kontrapunktilist *Ursatz*'i.