

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

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Abstract

A contemporary practice of linear analysis must place a high priority on consciously separating hierarchy *in* the text from hierarchical modeling in the *interpretation* and also from what Jonathan Culler calls an inevitable teleology in the *process* of interpretation. Thematic reading of literature is closely analogous to the Schenkerian model for music. Historical context is provided through the American school of New Criticism and the French method of *explication de texte*. Chopin, Prelude in A Major, Op. 28, no. 7, is the subject of a case study in reading/hearing with different guiding themes.