"The time gives it proofe": Paradox in the Late Music of Beethoven

by

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ABSTRACT

It is a given that the late works of Beethoven occupy a special place in our musical life; that they continue to speak so directly to audiences more than a century and a half after they were written says much for the universality of their appeal. Although the music of Beethoven's final decade is much appreciated today, some early listeners found the coexistence of apparently contradictory aspects in these works to be very difficult to understand. Analysis that would attempt to do justice to such complex music must take into account the interplay of both form and content, thus broaching the question of how music can communicate that content. Since music has no lexical capacity, it is helpful to consider analogies from other fields in an investigation of the problem. Myth, alchemy, Jungian psychology, and seventeenth-century religious poetry are, like Beethoven's music, engaged with the exploration and communication of meaningful human experience; to deal with such issues requires a means of expressing the inexpressible, and so at the core of ideas in each of these fields is the paradox.

Paradox, an apparent self-contradiction that carries with it the implicit possibility of its resolution, is a self-referential phenomenon. That paradox is present in Beethoven's music has been recognized in a general way by a number of scholars, but a more detailed examination of this aspect of his compositions offers new insight into their construction and content. A precedent for Beethoven's use of musical paradox is found in the reflexive works of Haydn, although Beethoven's use of the technique developed into a tool capable of being applied to many more types of compositional situations, and with a much greater expressive range. An adaptation of William Empson's *Seven Types of Ambiguity* offers an introduction to the use of paradox in Beethoven's works, while two extended critical essays, on the string quartets opp. 132 and 130, develop a multidisciplinary critical framework in order to provide a more detailed examination of the utility of paradox in shaping the overall narrative design and expressive structure in these two compositions, and by implication, in many others of Beethoven's late works as well.

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Dedication

To Mom,
who gave me music

To Dad,
who gave me curiosity

To Helena,
who gave me a good example

To Tom,
who even younger than Beethoven
has "been obliged to become a philosopher;"
may you continue to hear "the inner echo of real joy"

and

To my own dear Jon,
who has always known
"the difference between a hat and an elephant inside a boa constrictor"

with love,

Introduction

It is certainly no very controversial position to assert that as a society, we value the late music of Beethoven. To maintain that this music has meaningful content is a considerably more contentious issue, but it shouldn't be--why would we value something that has no perceptible meaning? In fact, recognition of the communicative impulse present in Beethoven's late works has been a part of their reception history, to varying degrees, from the time they were written until today. Music may not have precisely definable lexical capacity, but this attribute may be more of an asset than a deficiency. Music communicates its import by means of symbolic projection; a common trope which serves to further this end in the compositions of Beethoven's third period is the paradox.

Paradox, often described as an apparent self-contradiction that is nonetheless true, has been noted as present in Beethoven's late works by the authors of several standard studies; these descriptions deal with paradox in quite general terms. For instance, Alfred Brendel has remarked that Beethoven's late style is characterized by "synthesis and expansion of resources," in which "a new intricacy is matched by its antithesis, a new naïvety. Apparent exaggeration is juxtaposed with apparent artlessness, abruptness with a novel, relaxed lyricism." Similarly, Joseph Kerman lists characteristic features of the late works, which co-exist though some of them are in direct opposition: private, or inward traits such as a persistent retrospective current which encompassed interest in modes as well as preoccupation with formal counterpoint, highly concentrated motivic work, and a radical approach to musical contrast, are present alongside more public, outward-looking features, such as a deepened concern for lyricism, use of folklike themes, and instrumental evocations of a vocal idiom. Examination of individual works reveals that such antithetical qualities have implications for musical meaning; Leo Treitler in an analysis of the Ninth Symphony asserts that the piece demands interpretation because "it blatantly confounds efforts to account for its events on formalist terms alone, but also by virtue of the interpretational, or hermeneutic, field in which it has been transmitted to us." Such an approach may lead to an important reconsideration of the way we think about Beethoven's music, as Maynard Solomon has pointed out: "Beethoven's modernist contribution, then, was to symbolize extreme states by means of a host of new musical

images and image clusters that we may collectively designate as authentic characteristic styles, prototypical styles which have yet to be named, let alone fully analyzed."[1]

Such formulations are suggestive and have the potential to augment the possibility of analysis which takes into account both form and content, as well as criticism which engages with works both in their historical context and as we currently experience them. One of Solomon's "authentic characteristic styles" can with good reason be identified as decisively shaped by paradox. Beethoven's use of musical paradox, this oft-mentioned but hitherto unexamined phenomenon, is the subject of this dissertation.

Questions of music and meaning have engaged scholars for many hundreds of years; the issues involved are difficult ones. Because the primary means by which the human community discusses ideas is through the written or spoken word, and because music is not verbal, analogies from other fields are often drawn in attempts to deal with these matters. "Paradox" is a term borrowed from philosophy and literature, but the range of application of the word is extensive. The quality of paradox is particularly evident in those fields which lay claim to some authority concerning large and messy questions of man's creation, destiny, and quest, including, for instance, myth, alchemy, Jungian psychology, and seventeenth-century religious poetry. An examination in the first chapter of these areas and their interrelationships will provide the cross-disciplinary context necessary to an understanding of the multivalent implications of "paradox," as the dissertation will use that term, and will furnish the means by which a broader cultural critique of the notion of musical meaning, particularly with regard to late Beethoven, can be undertaken. Naturally, it is difficult to posit direct correspondences between artifacts of different art-forms or ideas arising from different areas of study. Indeed, I would argue that not only is it difficult, it is not even desirable; I have no wish to impute any external, quasi-Romantic programs to various works, *à la* Arnold Schering, for instance. Nevertheless, I believe that the sorts of relations implicit within and between the examples cited in the first chapter

[1]Alfred Brendel, "Beethoven's New Style," in *Music Sounded Out* (London: Robson Books, 1990), p. 61; Joseph Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets* (New York: Norton, 1966), pp. 193-95; Leo Treitler, "'To Worship That Celestial Sound': Motives for Analysis," in *Music and the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1989), pp. 55-56; Maynard Solomon, "The Ninth Symphony: A Search for Order," in *Beethoven Essays* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 25.

provide useful models for efforts to trace patterns of meaning in many of Beethoven's compositions.

Paradox, as something which comments upon itself, is a reflexive phenomenon. Chapter Two examines reflexivity in various media, particularly in the music of Haydn, and points out that in their shared self-referential approach to composition, Haydn and Beethoven use significantly similar techniques. These same means, however, lead eventually to very different ends. The technique forged by Haydn to serve primarily comic purposes is expanded by Beethoven over the course of his career into a tool capable of enormously varied expressive effects.

Chapter Three identifies and describes a wide range of Beethoven's musical paradoxes, using examples from all three periods and separating them into categories derived from William Empson's classic *Seven Types of Ambiguity*. This taxonomy of largely local effects supplies an *entrée* into the multitudinous ways in which Beethoven uses paradox, and indicates the variety of purposes to which he put it; it is not intended as an immutable system for mechanical sorting of phenomena into mutually exclusive groups.

In preparation for the final two critical essays, the fourth chapter surveys relevant historical developments in the theory of the meaning of music, and provides a more detailed look at some recent work on musical narrativity. The last two chapters examine two of Beethoven's late string quartets, op. 132 in A minor and op. 130 in B-flat major. These analyses develop the critical framework from the first four chapters in exploring the role of Beethoven's musical paradoxes in greater depth, showing the central role they assume in conveying musical meaning.

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> The Bishop speaks often of paradoxes with such scorn or detestation, that a simple reader would take a paradox either for felony or some other heinous crime, whereas perhaps a judicious reader knows...that a paradox is an opinion not yet generally received.
>
> --Hobbes, *Questions concerning Liberty, Necessity, and Chance* (1656)

> This was sometime a Paradox, but now the time gives it proofe.
>
> --Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, III.i.115 (1602)

Chapter One

Suppose you are a musical neophyte attending your first piano recital. On the program is Beethoven's Bagatelle in E-flat major op. 33 no. 6. Ah, Beethoven, you think; the Ode to Joy, dishwashing liquid commercials. The pianist begins with a virtuosic flourish that strangely sounds more like a closing gesture, and then, merely seconds into the piece, a gently lyrical melody ensues. You gradually recover from the shock of such a juxtaposition of compositional materials, and begin to enjoy the music. Perhaps you even have a small tear in the corner of your eye as the pianist approaches what sounds like the end of the piece: the music is getting softer, lower, and slower. Instead of a soulful melting away on the anticipated quiet final chord, however, the fast, loud introductory section rattles by again, and only now is the piece done. What on earth happened? Is it a joke? Is Classical music *supposed* to sound like that? Your reactions to the bagatelle (a work to which we shall return) would not have seemed misplaced to some of Beethoven's contemporaries, to whom much of the music of his third period seemed wayward at best, and incomprehensible at worst, resulting in more unfavorable critical reviews and fewer public performances in his lifetime than one would expect of works now generally acknowledged as among the greatest musical masterpieces of Western civilization. The first review of the B-flat string quartet op. 130, for instance, shows its anonymous author to be so perplexed by the original fugal finale that he could only account for it as being literally foreign:

> But the reviewer does not dare to explain the meaning of the fugal finale: for him it was incomprehensible, like Chinese. When the instruments have to struggle with tremendous difficulties in the regions of the south and north poles; when each of them has a different figuration and they cross each other with accented passing notes and an immense number of dissonances; when the players, distrustful of each other, do not play quite in tune; then indeed the Babylonian confusion is complete; then there is a concert in which, at most, the Moroccans can take delight.[1]

Some later critics persisted in this attitude of puzzlement and general disfavor, the more diplomatic of these delicately suggesting that perhaps Beethoven had been incapacitated by his hearing loss or a possible psychological problem.[2] There is no question that the late music is highly complex, and can be difficult to comprehend; gradually, however, understanding has grown, and it has become a given that few bodies of music occupy such an exalted and central position within the canon as does the group of works written by Beethoven from 1820-26. Beethoven has attained the status of a figure of mythic proportions, a phenomenon whose manifestation in the realm of the visual arts has been studied in fascinating detail by Alessandra Comini in her book, *The Changing Image of Beethoven*.[3] Whatever mythology has attached itself to Beethoven the man, however, it is more important to recognize Beethoven's own role as a maker of myth in his music, as Maynard Solomon notes: "whatever his models, he invented a new mythology at the dawn of our age. We may add Beethoven to Northrop Frye's short list of mythmakers: 'Those who have really changed the modern world--Rousseau,

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[1]*Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 28 (1826), p. 310, cited in Warren Kirkendale, *Fugue and Fugato in Rococo and Classical Chamber Music*, 2nd ed., trans. Margaret Bent and Warren Kirkendale (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1979), p. 257.

[2]See, for instance, André Coeuroy, "L'éternelle controverse," *La Revue musicale* 2 (1921), p. 93, where the author cites an exchange of letters appearing in the *Cäcilia* of 1828, in which one of the correspondents charges that Beethoven's late-period works might well have emanated from an insane asylum. Maynard Solomon, *Beethoven* (New York: Schirmer, 1977), pp. 318-19, notes that in his later years, Beethoven's audience was a small one of connoisseurs, rather than the public at large.

[3]New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1987.

Freud, Marx--are those who have changed its mythology, and whatever is beneficent in their influence has to do with giving man increased power over his own vision.'"[4]

What Solomon is attempting in the essay from which the preceding citation is excerpted, as is William Kinderman in his article, "Beethoven's Symbol for the Deity in the *Missa solemnis* and the Ninth Symphony," is analysis which also addresses questions of musical content.[5] Beethoven's late works contain both technical innovations and a more or less elusively definable spiritual element, both of which contribute to some degree to their status as masterpieces. While nineteenth-century criticism tended, by and large, to deal mainly with the personal, subjective aspects of this repertoire, most current analysis usually concentrates on its more technical aspects.[6] In fact, to separate structure from expression, or vice versa, is a highly questionable approach to analysis which risks distorting the object(s) of inquiry. Form and structure must be seen in an aesthetic field, particularly when the work being scrutinized seems, in its richness, to offer continuing opportunities for fresh insights and new approaches. Great art does not yield up its secrets easily, nor would one wish it to do so. Art's very complexity accounts, at least in part, for its enduring appeal, and, in fact, one of the most provocative and compelling attributes of Beethoven's late music is its enormous power to speak so directly to us across nearly two centuries. In order to deal with this music in a way that does justice to the nexus of construction and content, it is necessary to consider the way in which music communicates its meanings.

Music is not, of course, a language in the sense in which we normally think of language; it lacks specific, fixed denotative referents of meaning, and it has been asserted that, even in the somewhat problematic case of program music, it is incapable

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[4]Solomon, "The Ninth Symphony: A Search for Order," *Beethoven Essays* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1988), pp. 31-2. Solomon's Frye citation is from *Northrop Frye in Modern Criticism*, ed. Murray Krieger (New York and London, 1966), p. 144.

[5]*Nineteenth-Century Music* 9 (1985), pp. 102-18.

[6]For nineteenth-century critical response to Beethoven, see Robin Wallace, *Beethoven's Critics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). Important contemporary exceptions to programmatic reviews of Beethoven's music were critiques by E.T.A. Hoffmann and A.B. Marx. The reviews of Beethoven's music up to 1830 have been collected and reprinted in *Ludwig van Beethoven. Die Werke im Spiegel seiner Zeit*, ed. Stefan Kunze (Laaber, 1987).

of functioning as narrative.[7] However, as Susanne Langer has convincingly argued, music, like language, carries its conceptual content symbolically, and fulfils all of the purely structural requirements of a symbolic system. Lacking a vocabulary, but rich in specifically musical attributes (such as timbre, style, etc.), music, whose meaning is symbolistic, "articulates forms which language cannot set forth....[and] can reveal the nature of feelings with a detail and truth that language cannot approach."[8] She further notes that because the elements of music have no assigned connotations, music is an "unconsummated symbol," whose import is not fixed, but ambivalent, and therein lies its peculiar power and special potential.[9] It can speak to different peoples at different times in history, because it deals in the morphology of feeling, rather than the feelings themselves; it can have not only content, but a transient play of contents; "it can articulate feelings without becoming wedded to them"; it is "unconventionalized, unverbalized freedom of thought."[10] Art is something which has "significant form"; that which grants this significance is the symbol. Art forms are abstracted so that they may be "made clearly apparent, and [be] freed from their common uses only to be put to new uses: to act as symbols, to become expressive of human feeling."[11] Genius in art "is not superlative talent, but the power to conceive invisible realities--sentience, vitality, emotion--in a new symbolic projection that reveals something of their nature for the first time."[12]

Langer's definition of music has a great deal in common with the general characteristics of another type of language which relies on symbols for transmitting

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[7]See Jean-Jacques Nattiez, "Can One Speak of Narrativity in Music?" *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 115 (1990), p. 257. Nattiez's view seems too restrictive; for a different and more sympathetic approach to musical narrative, see, for instance, Anthony Newcomb, "Once More 'Between Absolute and Program Music': Schumann's Second Symphony," *Nineteenth-Century Music* 7 (1984), p. 235.

[8]Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key*, third edition (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1957), pp. 233, 235.

[9]Ibid. pp. 240, 243.

[10]Ibid. pp. 243, 244.

[11]Langer, *Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), pp. 50, 51.

[12]Ibid. p. 409.

meaning--i.e. myth, which is one of those problematic words whose current, popular connotations--in this case, of something false, childish, or anti-intellectual--have little to do with past or present denotations.[13] The connections between myth and music have been recognized by Claude Lévi-Strauss, who has posited the realm of myth as the middle way between two types of communication which might seem to be very different: "Mythology occupies an intermediary position between two diametrically opposed types of sign systems--musical language on the one hand and articulate speech on the other; to be understood it has to be studied from both angles."[14] From still another angle, myth and music are related to each other inasmuch as both are social manifestations of the play element in culture. In the "most significant advance in the theory of play since Plato," Friedrich Schiller in his *Aesthetic Letters* posited three basic drives in humans:

> the sensuous drive (*Sinntrieb*) strives for sensations or content, expressing time and change; the form drive (*Formtrieb*), manifesting humans' rational nature, seeks to annul time and to establish laws of universality; finally, the play drive (*Spieltrieb*) synthesizes the other two by seeking "life" and form (*Gestalt*) or the formal qualities in things and their relation to thinking. The final object of this drive is beauty defined as "living shape" (*lebende Gestalt*). From one perspective, then, the play drive represents the simultaneous activation of the two drives of sense and form; from another, it is only when the play drive is activated as qualitatively different from the other two that the latter are simultaneously active.[15]

Included or at least implied, then, within the play drive, whose final object is beauty, is the drive to artistic creation and appreciation. From the natural energy of play arises the

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[13]See Harry Levin, "Some Meanings of Myth," in *Myth and Mythmaking*, ed. Henry Murray, Boston: Beacon Press, 1968, pp. 103-14. Myth will be discussed at greater length and in various ways later in this chapter, but I wish to emphasize at this point that within the context of this dissertation I do not intend that any pejorative implications be imputed to my use of the word "myth," particularly in regard to religious writings, practices, or beliefs of any faith. I use it merely as a term which encompasses various attempts by different groups to understand large questions of life, meaning, and experience.

[14]Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), p. 15.

[15]Josef Chytry, *The Aesthetic State* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), p. 82.

perception of form and free delight in beauty, which in turn may well stimulate the capacity in humans "to imitate this experience in themselves and explicitly to create forms." Schiller significantly conjoins "humans' first empirical experiences of being free with their first aesthetic experiences," a hypothesis that has mythopoetic implications: in the progress of early civilizations' art forms from dance, which "represents harmony between individual freedom and group order," to drama (the highest art form, in Schiller's view), which confers "that beauty in free movement...call[ed] grace," the foundations of civilized society are laid. Play lifts mankind to the level of selfless love, "a feeling that is inseparable from grace and beauty," the products of artistic experiences. [16]

Important work on the theory of play has been carried out more recently by Johan Huizinga. Play in its various forms is characterized by him as a voluntary activity, removed in a certain sense from "ordinary" life, yet which functions in an orderly fashion within particular temporal and spatial boundaries and according to a set of rules.[17] Play is a significant function:

> ...culture arises in the forms of play...it is played from the very beginning....It is through...playing that society expresses its interpretation of life and the world. By this we do not mean that play turns into culture, rather that in its earliest phases culture has the play-character, that it proceeds in the shape and the mood of play. In the twin union of play and culture, play is primary....As a culture proceeds....the play-element gradually recedes into the background....The remainder crystallizes as knowledge....The original play-element is then almost completely hidden behind cultural phenomena.[18]

An aspect of the play-element which is not totally submerged and can be brought to the surface for analysis in most, if not all, myth and in some music is the use of the device of the paradox.

[16]Chytry, pp. 83-84.
[17]Johan Huizinga, *Homo ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), pp. 1-14.
[18]Ibid. pp. 46-47.

The word "paradox" comes from the Greek "parádoxon," that is, "unbelievable," or, literally, "beyond what is thought." Its Latin equivalent, "paradoxia," denotes "an apparent contradiction." In general usage, "paradox" as a term encompasses various shades of meaning; however, "one of the paradoxical qualities of paradox is that all its categories may ultimately be seen to be related."[19] An early use of the device was in the form of the rhetorical paradox, a subversion of the traditional *encomium*, in which a formal defense was made of an unusual, undeserving, or indefensible subject. The object of such a perverse exercise was *epideixis*, a showing off of the rhetorical virtuosity of the speaker. Classical examples of this genre are Synesius's praise of baldness, Lucian's of the fly, Ovid's of the nut, and pseudo-Vergil's ode to the gnat. Although the tradition never died out, the next great flowering of these "exercises of wit designed to amuse an audience sufficiently sophisticated in the arts of language to understand them" occurred in the Renaissance, when the rhetorical paradox was espoused by men such as Erasmus, Rabelais, Montaigne, and Shakespeare (cf. Falstaff in *Henry IV, part I*).[20] Numerous anthologies of such paradoxes were published, attesting to their widespread popularity, and included "defenses of the ant, the flea, the fly, the ass, the fool, and folly; of the pox, of bastardy, of debt, of imprisonment, of tyranny; of hair, of baldness, of drunkenness, of incontinence."[21]

Given that a rhetorical paradox was undertaken as praise of the unpraisable, it is clear that the rhetorical paradox is itself a sub-type of the larger class of logical paradox. This class comprises those paradoxes dear to the hearts of small children and logicians alike, and includes many classic examples about the interpretations, meanings, and/or solutions of which there still may be little agreement among scholars today. Perhaps the most famous of these is the Liar's Paradox: Epimenides, a sixth-century B.C. Cretan prophet, declared, "All Cretans are liars." The difficulty here is obvious, and perhaps also hazardous to one's health: this paradox is said to have "tormented many

[19]Rosalie L. Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica: The Renaissance Tradition of Paradox* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 3.
[20]Ibid., pp. 4-5.
[21]Ibid., p. 4.

ancient logicians and caused the premature death of at least one of them, Philetas of Cos."[22] Epimenides himself, poor fellow, fell promptly asleep after coming up with the Liar, in which state he reputedly remained for the van Winklesque period of fifty-seven years, presumably exhausted by the cogitational contortions to which this paradox put him.

The Liar is an example of paradox involving the nature of truth; other types of paradox exist which are associated with other broad notions, such as the properties of a class, the idea of vagueness, the characteristics of rational action, the nature of knowledge and belief, and the properties of time, space, and motion. Some simple examples of these may serve to illustrate what sorts of logical paradox exist, and what purposes they may serve. Paradoxes concerned with physical properties have a long tradition, originally coming to us from the ancient Greeks. Some of these may at times seem rather like amusing parlor games, but they have had important implications in mathematics (as have paradoxes concerning classes, which Bertrand Russell asserted were of a kind with the Liar paradox).[23] For instance, Zeno the Greek of Elea proposed in the fifth century B.C. a paradox about a race between Achilles and a tortoise. Since Achilles is able to run faster than the tortoise, the tortoise is given a head start. Zeno asserted that Achilles can never catch up with the tortoise, because Achilles must first reach the point at which the tortoise started. However, in the meantime, the tortoise has made a certain amount of progress, so Achilles next must reach the new point at which the tortoise has arrived. While making up that handicap, the tortoise has proceeded still further. Theoretically, the tortoise cannot be beaten as long as he keeps going steadfastly, because there will always be a gap, and while Achilles is making up the previous gap, the tortoise will have created a new one. This

[22]Alfred Tarski, "Truth and Proof," *Scientific American* 194 (1969), p. 66.

[23]See Bertrand Russell, *The Principles of Mathematics* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1903). Russell's assertion is highly controversial to this day, however, among logicians and mathematicians; see R.M. Sainsbury, *Paradoxes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), chapter 5.
It is interesting to note parenthetically at this point that a great deal of theoretical mathematics arises from a consideration of the relationship of opposites: out of the conflict of plus and minus infinity (∞-∞) comes the theory of limits; study of the relations ∞/∞ and 0/0 gave rise to the fields of differential and integral calculus, respectively.

paradox is related to that known as the Racetrack or Dichotomy, which seeks to demonstrate that motion is impossible. A runner, to reach the end of the track, must first reach the midpoint, then the point midway between the midpoint and the end, then the point midway between that point and the end, and so on, therefore necessitating an infinity of movements even to begin to get anywhere. Since it is logically impossible for anyone to perform an infinite series of movements, the runner can never reach the end of the track. (One thinks in sympathy of Ogden Nash's centipede!)

Paradoxes involving rational belief have been of assistance in the study of confirmation theory, a branch of philosophy whose practitioners attempt to articulate general principles about the nature and quality of evidence. In such paradoxes, apparently acceptable general principles and apparently acceptable propositions can lead to genuinely paradoxical results. For example, consider the following:[24]

G1: A generalization is confirmed by any of its instances.

E1: If two hypotheses can be known *a priori* to be equivalent, then any data that confirm one confirm the other.

R1: All ravens are black; and, There are no ravens that are not black.

R2: Everything nonblack is a nonraven.

P1: This nonblack (in fact, white) thing is a nonraven (in fact, a shoe).

"Instance P1 confirms R2, but R2 can be known *a priori* to be equivalent to R1. So, by E1, P1 confirms R1, 'All ravens are black.' This, on the face of it, is absurd. Data relevant to whether or not all ravens are black must be data about ravens. The color of shoes can have no bearing whatsoever on the matter. Thus G1 and E1--apparently acceptable principles--lead to the apparently unacceptable conclusion that a white shoe confirms the hypothesis that all ravens are black."[25] Confronted with such a paradox, there seem to be only three possible solutions: either the apparently paradoxical conclusion is indeed acceptable, or E1 is false, or G1 is false (the third of these possibilities is the one most favored by logicians). Other paradoxes arising from work in confirmation theory help scholars to examine notions of induction, causation, characterization, and various related issues.

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[24]This example is taken from Sainsbury, *Paradoxes*, pp. 75-81.

[25]Ibid., p. 80.

Some paradoxes have ramifications for the study of language itself. Ponder, if you will, this *sorites* paradox:

> Suppose you have a heap of sand. If you take away one grain of sand, what remains is still a heap. In general, removing a single grain can never turn a heap into something that is not a heap....If two collections of grains of sand differ in number by just one grain, then both or neither are heaps. This apparently obvious and uncontroversial supposition appears to lead to the paradoxical conclusion that all collections of grains of sand, even one-membered collections, [or, one might add, the Sahara Desert,] are heaps.[26]

The difficulty here lies in the vagueness of the word "heap," which can in no way be specifically quantified. The larger question that such paradoxes raise is a metaphysical one: is vagueness an inherent characteristic of reality, or is it only the way in which we describe reality (i.e. language itself) that is vague?

In consideration of many large and complex issues, then, as has been demonstrated to a certain extent in the preceding examples, it is seemingly impossible to escape paradoxical formulations:

> a paradox is an idea involving two opposing thoughts or propositions which, however contradictory, are equally necessary to convey a more imposing, illuminating, life-related or provocative insight into truth than either factor can muster in its own right....[It] may be said to reflect the meeting of opposites as something essential to the understanding of things....[B]eneath most truth relevant to the individual of finite existence there is paradox, and...true paradox bespeaks a dialectical reciprocation of opposites without dissolving their polarity or distinctiveness.[27]

Paradox is necessarily involved in those areas of study which exceed the bounds of the purely rational; four such areas rich in paradox, the resultant intellectual tension of which has provided long-term opportunities for creative thought, are myth, alchemy, psychology, and literature, various aspects of which are all inter-related, and, as will

[26]Ibid., p. 25. *Sorites* is the Greek word for "heap," and is used to refer in general to all problems of this sort.

[27]Howard A. Slaatte, *The Permanence of the Paradox: The Dialectics of Reason-in-Existence* (New York: Humanities Press, 1968), pp. 4-6.

gradually become apparent, also can be related to music in specific and interesting ways.

Myth, as mentioned above, has been something of a "semantic hobo;"[28] however, a workable definition for present purposes can be obtained by considering briefly both its etymology and the types of issues it typically addresses. *Mythos* means "word." So does *logos*, and thus "mythology" literally means "the word of words." *Mythos* was a technical term of literary criticism for the ancient Greeks, signifying "plot," the most vital feature of tragedy, according to Aristotle. Plots of tragedies were drawn from "an inherited body of narrative lore, which was regarded as roughly true on the plane of universalized experience."[29] Giambattista Vico in 1725 described myth as "protohistory." Myths had and have religious aspects, "as symbolic answers to questions raised by man's curiosity about causes."[30] They have come to serve as the raw material of literature and other art forms, and perhaps are the stuff of Jung's "collective unconscious," in that "myth is fundamental, the dramatic representation of our deepest instinctual life, of a primary awareness of man in the universe, capable of many configurations, upon which all particular opinions and attitudes depend....Myths are the instruments by which we continually struggle to make our experience intelligible to ourselves."[31] They are also the instruments by which we attempt to come to some understanding of something deeper than ourselves: "the very essence of myth is that haunting awareness of transcendental forces peering through the cracks of the visible universe."[32]

In attempting to deal with cosmic questions of origins, natures, and meanings, man has had to confront issues that are invariably complex and contradictory, and which admit of no, or few, simple answers. Myth is the primary means by which humanity has sought to resolve these metaphysical conundrums. Lévi-Strauss suggests that "mythical thought always works from awareness of binary oppositions

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[28]Henry A. Murray, "The Possible Nature of a 'Mythology' to Come," in *Myths and Mythmaking*, p. 301.
[29]Levin, "Some Meanings of Myth," p. 104.
[30]Ibid., p. 105.
[31]Mark Schorer, "The Necessity of Myth," in *Myths and Mythmaking*, pp. 356, 355.
[32]Philip Wheelwright, source unknown, cited in Schorer, p. 355.

toward their progressive mediation. That is, the contribution of mythology is that of providing a logical model capable of overcoming contradictions in a people's view of the world and what they have deduced from their experience."[33] Paradoxically, in essaying resolution of such paradoxes of ontology, eschatology, epistemology, soteriology, and the like, myth very frequently invokes new paradoxes of its own in whole or partial "explanation" of the contradictions under consideration. Indeed, it would seem that one characteristic common to the vast majority of mythology is the tacit acceptance (or often, glorification) of a paradox central to the understanding of a given myth; myth almost always has a paradox at its core. At this central point, no more logical explanation is possible: one must either simply take a leap of faith, or refuse to do so. The vast number of people throughout history who have chosen the former course of action attests to the power of myth over the human imagination (either because we find some truth in it, or because the alternative void is too uncomfortable); another testament to myth's role as an integral aspect of the thought-life of mankind is the remarkable similarity of myth-types found in societies widely separated by time, space, and cultural differences. Obviously, there is not here the need nor the space to consider the complete ramifications of individual myths, or to outline in any great detail all or any specific systematic mythology. It will prove useful, however, briefly to examine those central mythic paradoxes and certain mythological commonalities which may have the greatest potential utility as tools in examination of paradoxical aspects of Beethoven's late music.

Myths of death and rebirth are among the most ancient and the most widespread of all myth-types. Agricultural imagery of seeding (an act analogous to burial), followed by germination and eventual growth of a new plant (analogous to resurrection), became more fully realized in rituals surrounding the change of seasons and celebrating astrological events such as solstices, and took on new significance in stories of the death and rebirth of a god-king figure (e.g. Osiris, Tammuz, Orpheus, Balder, Jesus, the Fisher King). These persons not only conquer the finality of the power of death by achieving rebirth, but frequently attain some type of benefit for their

[33]Cited in Clyde Kluckhohn, "Recurrent Themes in Myth and Mythmaking," in *Myths and Mythmaking*, p. 58.

disciples as well, as in, for example, the myths surrounding Osiris and Jesus. Osiris was the son of the heaven-goddess Nut and her consort, the earth-god Hem, and was married to his own twin sister Isis. Osiris, locked in a sarcophagus and thrown in the river by his brother Set, dies, and is eventually found by Isis, who conceives a son, Horus, by her dead husband. Set finds the body of Osiris and tears it into pieces, which he scatters across the country, causing the rising of the Nile, whereby Osiris becomes the most potent regenerative force in Egypt. In a battle with Set, Horus loses an eye, and by this sacrifice, Osiris is resurrected as the god of the dead, with whom all who die must become united, or be eaten by monsters. Jesus, only son of God, was born, lived on earth as a man, died on the cross, lay in the tomb, rose on the third day, and by His resurrection, freed man from sin and death, promising eternal life to those who believed in Him.

The obvious corollary to these types of stories is the paradoxical notion that in order to achieve bliss, some type of sacrifice, renunciation, or suffering is necessary first, both for leaders and their followers, an idea which finds further expression in various mythologies. The Koran, for instance, says, "Do you think that you shall enter the Garden of Bliss without such trials as came to those who passed before you?"[34] Buddhism rejects both self-indulgence and self-torture, and opts for the Middle Way to enlightenment along the Holy Eightfold Path of right views, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. Recognition of this path is the fourth of the Four Holy Truths; the first three are realization that all experience of life involves suffering, that the source of this suffering is the thirst for sensual pleasure, and that suffering ceases only when this thirst for pleasure ceases through "dispassion, renunciation, and nondependence."[35] Positive happiness is thus possible only when the desire for happiness, or, indeed, for continued existence, is entirely renounced.

Also related to the death-rebirth cycle of the god-king and the idea of the necessity of suffering or renunciation as a means to a higher end is the archetypal myth

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[34]Cited in Joseph Campbell, *The Power of Myth* (New York: Doubleday, 1988), p. 126.

[35]Richard H. Robinson and Willard L. Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion: A Historical Introduction*, third edition (Belmont, California: Wadsworth, 1982), p. 24.

of the hero's quest. Seeking knowledge, a magical object, healing, revelation, initiation, or simply recognition of heroic status, one goes on a quest, frequently involving a descent into the underworld, faces various trials, and emerges successful (usually, albeit not always, or at least not unmixedly so) in one's quest. A classic example of this cycle of departure, fulfillment, and return is the story of the quest for the Holy Grail. In Wolfram von Eschenbach's version of the tale, the hero's name is Parzival (Perceval, Parsival, Parsifal), and the Grail is a stone vessel which has been brought down from Heaven.[36] Parzival, son of Gahmuret and Herzeloyde, goes to King Arthur's court in hopes of becoming a knight. After killing the Red Knight, who had challenged Arthur, Parzival is sent to be instructed in all the ways of knighthood by an old man, Gurnemanz. He next travels to the castle of the orphan queen Condwiramurs, whom he marries. On a journey, Parzival encounters Amfortas, the Fisher-King, who has a wound which will not heal. (Amfortas is the chief of an order of knights, chosen by God and sworn to chastity, who undertake dangerous missions; his wound was the result of a spiritual failure.) Parzival, remembering Gurnemanz's teaching and thinking it unchivalrous to inquire after the King's health, keeps silent and is banished. After many trials, Parzival gains wisdom, the Grail is restored to the Grail castle, the King is healed after Parzival shows him compassion and touches him with the holy lance, and Parzival becomes the new Grail King. Thus, only when the hero follows his natural inclinations, as opposed to his idea of what society expects of him, does he become capable of redeeming the Waste Land, of which Amfortas is a vivid symbol. The Grail legend is an integral part of Western religious history; it is interesting in that context to note the synthesis of Christian and Hermetic symbols, and the fact that Wolfram drew upon Oriental traditions and beliefs, behind which "one detects the profound disillusionment aroused by the Crusades, the aspiration for a

[36]Joseph Campbell notes that Wolfram interprets the name of Parzival as *perce à val*, "the one piercing through the middle of the valley, going between the pair of opposites....the metaphysical mystery is to go past all opposites..." in *Transformations of Myth through Time* (New York: Harper & Row, 1990), p.247.

religious tolerance that would have encouraged a rapprochement with Islam, and the nostalgia for a 'spiritual chivalry'."[37]

Common, too, are myths dealing with paradise or a golden age. Many mythologies promise eventual bliss, and offer themselves as means to that end, or, are nostalgic about some previous happy time which they seek to re-create or re-discover. Paradise myths, then, invoke a human yearning for something superior to that which one is currently experiencing. This desire is made manifest most powerfully in the experiences of mystics in various traditions. The details vary, but the following pattern is common to most mystical phenomena: some type of ritual purification or cleansing is a prerequisite, after which one eventually achieves some type of reunion between the human and the divine (often through an ascent, either symbolic or actual), during which time seems suspended. Allied to these myth-types are myths and rituals dealing with initiation; the aspirant is reborn into a new life by participating in initiatory rites either physical *and* spiritual in nature (e.g. circumcision, subincision, animal sacrifice, fasting, etc.), or more purely symbolic (e.g. baptism).[38] The aim of all of these rituals is to make the candidate fit for membership in the group and more able to achieve a union with the divine, that is, to go back to a time of non-duality, before the separation between earth and heaven, man and the deity, became complete.

Archetypes of sacred marriage (that is, the ultimate union of the universal male and female principles) abound in mythology. Numerous myths assert in various ways that the concept of divinity is above all distinctions of gender or other tendencies toward opposition. The Gnostics, for instance, believed in Sophia, the female counterpart to God, who had shared His life and been a partner in His creation from the beginning of time (similarly, medieval Jewish Kabbalistic teachings, which bore some relationship to Gnosticism, regarded the Creator as androgynous). She was the personification of Divine Wisdom, and was the means through whom God the Father became whole and

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[37]Mircea Eliade, *A History of Religious Ideas, vol. 3, From Muhammad to the Age of Reforms*, trans. Alf Hiltebeitel and Diane Apostolos-Cappadona (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1985), p. 107.

[38]For detailed discussion of these and numerous other such rituals, see Mircea Eliade, *Rites and Symbols of Initiation*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper & Row, 1958).

complete. The Gnostics regarded Sophia as the *anima mundi*, the World Soul, a messenger of grace and redemption. The early Christian church dismissed Gnosticism as heresy, but included a feminine presence in Christianity in the special role assigned to the person of Mary, the Mother of God and Queen of Heaven, and expressed a form of mystical marriage in the doctrine or the union of Christ and His bride, the Church. Christian doctrine also defines the nature of the third person of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit, as the personification of the love of God the Father and God the Son for each other, and thus as the perfect expression of a sacred union. The Tao, which "underlies the cosmos" and "inhabits every created thing" is constituted of the Yang, "the light, active, masculine principle," and the Yin, "the dark, passive and feminine," whose combination and interaction make manifest "the source and law of being...the way or course of nature, destiny, cosmic order, the Absolute."[39] The chief deity of the Zuni religion, Awonawilona, is also both male and female, as is the Greek god(dess) Eros, the divinity of love. So too the Hindu god Shiva, in his incarnation as Ardhanarisha, in which he is represented as united in a single body with his spouse Shakti.

Alchemy, like myth, was an attempt by its adherents to discover universal truths, and to reach some understanding of the meaning and purpose of human existence.[40] It had its beginnings in ancient Egypt in a text attributed to Hermes Trismegistus (the Egyptian god Tehuti, Lord of Wisdom), which was said to have been given by him to Miriam, sister of Moses. It flourished in Alexandria, whence it spread via itinerant scholars throughout Europe and even to parts of the Orient. The practice

[39]Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Bollingen, 1968), p. 152.

[40]For a good, detailed history of the origins and practice of alchemy, see C.A. Burland, *The Arts of the Alchemists* (New York: Macmillan, 1968); a more philosophical introduction can be found in Titus Burckhardt, *Alchemy: Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul* (London: Stuart & Watkins, 1967). Stanislas Klossowski de Rola in *Alchemy: The Secret Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973) offers an excellent pictorial anthology of illustrations from Renaissance alchemical treatises. A compendium of studies by present-day alchemists (as well as a few translations of primary materials by Zosimos and Paracelsus) can be found in *The Alchemical Tradition in the Late Twentieth Century*, ed. Richard Grossinger, *Io* 31 (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 1983).

and study of alchemy was common in western Europe throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, faltered after the Reformation, and had largely died out by the eighteenth century. Contrary to popular opinion, alchemy was not merely attempted experimentation in the transmutation of base metals into gold by the naïve forerunners of modern chemists. Rather, the alchemists were attempting to come to terms with a fundamental problem of religious thought: the co-existence of good and evil, and how one might transmute all that is unworthy into that which is perfection. They believed that there was a divine spirit which informed all of creation, and their alchemical activities were intended to bring them into harmony with that life force.[41] They posited the fundamental unity of substances, which therefore had the innate capacity to be mutually interchangeable.[42] Gold, because of its purity and other physical characteristics, was viewed as an emblem, and the lengthy process by which the Philosopher's Stone was first produced and then used to change metal (usually lead or mercury) into gold was symbolic of the soul's journey toward a state of blessedness. Some alchemists, like Paracelsus, were not interested in making gold, but did produce elixirs for medical uses, seeking to restore the unity and balance of elements within an individual, and thus restore him to health. Alchemy did, then, have its spiritual side; it was, in a common alchemical aphorism, "tam ethice quam physice" (as much ethical as physical).[43] The liquid form of the Philosopher's Stone was called also the Elixir Vitae, which could grant a long, perhaps endless, life, while the achievement of gold was viewed as a token of divine approbation, denoting the perfection of the soul. The final goal of alchemy, therefore, was the paradox of the reconciliation of supreme opposites within oneself, generally symbolized by the unity of the male and female

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[41]Despite this seemingly benign program, the alchemists did suffer some persecution; in addition, they did not want to cheapen the knowledge they had so painstakingly acquired by giving it away to those they considered unworthy. For these reasons, alchemy was a secret art, whose texts are notably cryptic, making use of esoteric steganographic and spagyric symbols.

[42]The four elements which constituted the makeup of the material universe according to the alchemists were air, earth, fire, and water. A corollary to this viewpoint was the belief in a fifth, spiritual, element: the quintessence, that is, the Philosopher's Stone.

[43]Aniela Jaffé, *From the Life and Work of C.G. Jung*, trans. R.F.C. Hull (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 58.

aspects of an individual, called the chymical marriage (hence the pervasive use of hermaphroditic imagery and illustrations in alchemical writings).[44] Paradoxes suffused both the language and the substance of alchemy.[45]

After over two hundred years of neglect by all but a handful of students and a smaller handful of adepts, alchemy captured the imagination of one of the great thinkers of the twentieth century, Carl Jung. Jung became interested in the subject in 1928. Engaged in an ongoing study of the unconscious, he had spent the previous decade perusing Gnostic texts. In a translation of *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, a Chinese alchemical treatise of Taoist origin from the T'ang dynasty, Jung found a link between the older Gnostic beliefs and his own theories concerning mind and personality. This discovery led to Jung's collecting an extensive library of medieval and Renaissance books and manuscripts by various (mostly European) alchemists. In order to understand their cryptic language, he patiently compiled a lexicon of seemingly important words and phrases with cross references, and by applying philological methodology, eventually came to discover the key to their meanings. He was not much interested in transmuting base metals into gold, but did find in the more spiritual aspects of alchemy ideas which were to prove most fruitful in furthering his own work. Many of his books deal to some extent with alchemical beliefs, and three are concerned specifically with the subject: *Psychology and Alchemy*, *Alchemical Studies*, and *Mysterium Coniunctionis*.[46]

To the four elements of earth, air, fire, and water, the alchemists had added a fifth, the quintessence, or matter which was also spirit, the *lapis* or Philosopher's Stone. In a striking parallel, Jung outlined the four basic instinctual drives: hunger,

[44]One may also note incidentally that many alchemists considered that completing the final stages of their work was impossible without a female assistant, known as a *soror mystica*.

[45]Alchemical works typically exploit such dichotomies as cold/warm, dry/humid, north/south, east/west, green/red, volatile/fixed, light/dark, white/black, sun/moon, sulphur/mercury, dissolution/coagulation, spirit/matter, male/female. As in the Tao doctrine of Yin and Yang, each principle also contains its opposite, and the soul itself is a microcosm of this harmonious conjunction of opposed elements.

[46]*The Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, vols. 12, 13, and 14, respectively (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul).

sexuality, activity, and reflection, to which he added a fifth, distinctively and essentially human, that is, creativity. "The urge to wholeness, the urge toward individuation or personality development, the spiritual drive, the symbol-making transcendent function, the natural religious function, or, in short, the drive of the self to be realized" are the stuff of *the* ultimate creative human task, self-discovery, a psychological analogue to the alchemists' *magnum opus*.[47]

In alchemy's arcane substance, the spirit present in every created thing, Jung found a symbol for the unconscious. After fifteen years of practice, he had come to the conclusion that the development of the unconscious in pursuit of the wholeness of the personality was a universal human attribute. "This process...frequently depicts itself in the form of images from the unconscious representing the circumambulation of a center. Also the goal of the process, man's psychic totality or the 'self,' embracing both conscious and unconscious, often appears as a circle, a static mandala."[48] Jung felt that his intuition about the importance of the circle in symbolizing the unconscious was borne out by corresponding beliefs in the fields of both alchemy and mythology. A basic alchemical image, the Ouroboros, a dragon, half green (the color of beginning) and half red (the color of completion), feeding on its own tail, is "an emblem of the eternal, cyclic nature of the universe," and was widely used in various ancient, medieval and Renaissance texts.[49] To the alchemists, the circle is also regarded as a sign of the world spirit, or what Jung came to call the collective unconscious; it also signified the Philosopher's Stone and the desired gold. Appearing divided into four, or squared, the circle to the alchemists was an allegory of God. The circle has been a sacred symbol or important aspect of religious art in numerous cultures, from the rose windows of Gothic cathedrals, to Northwest Coast Indian masks, to Hindu mandalas,

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[47]James Hillman, *The Myth of Analysis: Three Essays in Archetypal Psychology* (New York: Harper Colophon, 1972), p. 34.

[48]Jaffé, p. 49.

[49]Klossowski de Rola, p. 32. It is interesting to note that, in the course of research into the molecular structure of benzene, the nineteenth-century German chemist Kekule repeatedly dreamed of an Ouroboros figure. This led him to conjecture, correctly, that the structure of benzene was a closed carbon ring. See Carl G. Jung, "Approaching the Unconscious," in *Man and His Symbols*, ed. Carl G. Jung (New York: Dell Books, 1973), p. 26.

to the disks of sun-worshippers.[50] One thinks in this context also of Stonehenge, Communion wafers, the Grail, and Arthur's Round Table as powerful mythic images.

Self-realization, in Jung's view, had as its goal the wholeness of the person, and necessitated the integration of the figures in the unconscious: the Persona, or conscious ego, the Shadow, the sides of the self deemed undesirable and/or unacknowledged by the Persona, and the Anima (feminine aspects of a man) or Animus (masculine aspects of a woman). Jung sometimes used the figure of the Shadow to connote everything in one's psychological makeup outside of the purview of consciousness, thus including both the collective and the personal unconscious (which therefore also encompassed the Anima/Animus figure). Alchemy's notion of the chymical marriage is an allegory of the individuation process, in which opposing elements of the self, the Shadow (in its larger sense) and the Persona, are brought together (types of unions similar to the chymical marriage also occur in the context of various mythologies, as was noted earlier). This *coincidentia oppositorum*, like the chymical marriage, is not achieved without hard work, struggle, and some personal sacrifice--in the field of psychology, generally played out over the course of therapy.[51]

Jung, who became engaged with the age-old problem of the existence of evil (in his case, on both moral and therapeutic grounds), finally postulated that God (or whatever one chooses to call the Deity) also has a Shadow, that the ultimate good and evil co-exist in one Being, and that this "inner instability of Yahweh is the prime cause not only of the creation of the world, but also of the pleromatic drama for which mankind serves as a tragic chorus. The encounter with the creature changes the

[50]See the illustrations in Joseph Campbell, with Bill Moyers, *The Power of Myth* , ed. Betty Sue Flowers (New York: Doubleday, 1988), between pp. 108-9.

[51]Jung likened the special relationship which often develops between analyst and patient, transference, to an exemplar of the chymical marriage, which in turn could help the patient achieve this psychic unity on his own. "In the world of consciousness the transpersonal, paradoxical unity of the self, the alchemical conjunction of sun and moon, is experienced as a synthesis of 'I and Thou.' In so far as 'Thou' is projected upon (i.e. transferred to) another person--in psychotherapeutic treatment, the analyst--the transference relationship at least gives the patient an anticipatory experience of wholeness and the possibility of realizing it by withdrawing the projection. The stages of the transference thus become a way of psychic development and so create the basis for a cure." See Jaffé, p. 67.

creator."[52] "The paradoxical nature of his God-image splits the individual human being and all of Western mankind into...opposites, thus constellating apparently insoluble conflicts," but in the quest for the self, an individual's "unconscious produces symbols...which *unite the opposites and symbolize the essence of the individuation process.*"[53] Therefore the paradoxical aspects of creation reflect the central paradox of the nature of the Creator, and human efforts to overcome the ambivalence and duality found in our selves require both a recognition of such disunities, and an advocate, such as "the divine Sophia or the Holy Ghost--that is, the paradoxical *unity* of the Self--which can lead us toward a higher level of consciousness, the gentle but unyielding inner voice of truth which pushes us in the direction of individuation and permits no self-deception."[54] What is sought in the *hieros gamos*, or sacred marriage, is a paradigm of wholeness, a lost state of perfection: Adam in Eden, before Eve was created from his rib and they were made separate creatures; or at least Adam and Eve before they ate the apple from the Tree of Knowledge, when they discovered their separateness from each other and from other forms of life.

[52]Jung, *Answer to Job*, par. 686, cited in Marie-Louise von Franz, *C.G. Jung: His Myth in Our Time*, trans. William H. Kennedy (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1972), p. 164.

[53]von Franz, p. 165. Jung also explored these ideas in a special study, "The Spirit Mercurius" (Jung, *Complete Works* XIII, par. 256 ff.). Mercurius was a central alchemical image, the personification and source of all opposites, also known as "Mercurius duplex" and "*utriusque capax*" (capable of both). Encompassing attributes such as masculine/feminine, light/dark, human/divine, good/evil, he was identified by some alchemists with God Himself, by others as a person standing in a compensatory relationship to Christ, by still others as Lucifer. Jung saw in the Mercurius figure a symbol of the unity of all things, which he likened both to his ideas about God, and to the unconscious, an "objective spirit which...is refractory-like matter, mysterious and elusive" ("The Spirit Mercurius," par. 284, cited in von Franz, p. 210). Mercurius can be benevolent, but Jung warns that "that two-faced god comes as the *lumen naturae*...only to those whose reason strives toward the highest light ever received by man....For those who are unmindful of this light, the *lumen naturae* turns into a perilous *ignis fatuus*, and the psychopomp into a diabolical seducer"("The Spirit Mercurius," par. 303, cited in von Franz, p. 213. Mercurius figures are familiar in mythology as well, the most familiar example to Western readers being perhaps the character of Merlin in the Arthurian sagas.

[54]Ibid., pp. 166-67.

The sacred marriage is an archetype of wholeness. In alchemical and mythical imagery, Jung found supporting evidence for and numerous manifestations of his theory of archetypes, symbols arising from the collective unconscious, that is, "that part of the psyche which retains and transmits the common psychological inheritance of mankind."[55] The collective unconscious "has contents that are more or less the same everywhere and in all individuals. It is, in other words, identical in all men and thus constitutes a common psychic substrate of a supra-personal nature which is present in every one of us."[56] Archetypes are pre-existent or original forms which "are the unconscious images of...instincts themselves...they are *patterns of instinctual behavior.*"[57] It is in myth that many expressions of archetypal forms are to be found because myth is the language of the psyche; "it is the primordial language natural to these psychic processes, and no intellectual formulation comes anywhere near the richness and expressiveness of mythical imagery."[58] Jung identified various archetypal figures and situations (such as the hero's quest, the wise man, the witch, the seasons, and so on), which have proved to be important in therapeutic situations, and have also served as a basis for an interesting body of scholarship pertaining to the fine arts, including, for example, the works in aesthetics by Susanne Langer and Ernst Cassirer, literary criticism by Northrop Frye, and studies in a narrative approach to music by Anthony Newcomb.[59]

Examples of common rites familiar to our culture which have archetypal significance are events such as initiation rituals (that is, baptism, confirmation, bar mitzvahs, weddings, and so on), and celebrations of rebirth, as in the Christian commemoration of Easter, in pagan rituals marking the solstices, or simply through

[55]Joseph L. Henderson, "Ancient Myths and Modern Man," in *Man and His Symbols*, ed. Carl G. Jung, p. 98.

[56]Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, cited in E.A. Bennet, *What Jung Really Said* (New York: Schocken Books, 1967), p. 66.

[57]Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, cited in Bennet, p. 66.

[58]Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy*, par. 11, cited in von Franz, p. 217.

[59]For example, Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key* and *Feeling and Form*; Ernst Cassirer, *Language and Myth*, trans. Susanne Langer (New York: Harper, 1946); Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957); Anthony Newcomb, "Once More 'Between Absolute and Program Music': Schumann's Second Symphony," *Nineteenth-Century Music* 7 (1984): 233-50.

observation of the cyclic change of seasons. The purposes of these things are attempts to make a connection to something which is timeless and universally meaningful: "ritual is the most primitive reflection of serious thought, a slow deposit, as it were, of people's imaginative insight into life."[60] However, according to Jungians, apparent paradoxes can arise when, due to advanced civilization's cultivation of the conscious and rational at the expense of familiarity with the unconscious and archetypal, messages from the unconscious are experienced on other than such set occasions. Events having no logical, rational explanation are often dismissed as meaningless dreams, sheer coincidences, or unfortunate hallucinations. Jung asserted that the acausal concurrence of a psychic and a physical event (such as a dream or premonition which comes true; or the feeling of *déja-vu*) is very frequently meaningful, and that the connecting link between them is a single archetype in the unconscious which underlies both events and correlates them. He found that these phenomena were attended by intense emotion (most frequently associated with impending or feared death, "an archetypal situation of intense numinosity"), which lowered the threshold of consciousness and permitted the perception of the unconscious archetypes.[61] Jung called the principle behind such occurrences "synchronicity," and likened it to the alchemists' theory of the *unus mundus*, the antinomian world where everything that was unknowable and paradoxical resided, forming a neutral background reality beyond the microcosm and macrocosm.[62] In this dimension, the duality of soul and matter become one, and time ceases meaningfully to exist; in the *archetypus mundus*, "things which are not simultaneous in time exist simultaneously outside time....temporal succession is without time in the eternal wisdom of God."[63]

It is interesting to note that Jungian psychology has at the core of many of its most fundamental concepts some degree of opposition, duality, or contradiction: for example, conscious and unconscious, extravert and introvert, animus and anima, and

[60]Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key*, p. 157.
[61]Jaffé, pp. 34-35.
[62]See the excellent discussions of synchronicity and the *unus mundus* in Jaffé, pp. 17-45, and in von Franz, pp. 235-52.
[63]Prosper of Aquitaine, *Sententiae ex Augustino delibatae* XLI and LVII, cited in von Franz, p. 248.

so on. Like the alchemists and creators of myth, Jung too saw paradox as a key to understanding matters too great to be grasped by rational, conscious thought: "Unequivocal statements can be made only in regard to immanent objects; transcendental ones can be expressed only by paradox."[64]

Other fields of study, such as literature, provide ample support for Jung's thesis. In a classic essay entitled "The Language of Paradox," Cleanth Brooks states that "the language of poetry is the language of paradox....apparently the truth which the poet utters can be approached only in terms of paradox....paradoxes spring from the very nature of the poet's language: it is a language in which the connotations play as great a part as the denotations....the poet, within limits, has to make up his language as he goes."[65] He notes further that it is important to view paradox as a serious rhetorical device, not as a piece of cheap trickery; it is designed not to trap the unwary, but to provide illumination, in a manner both concise and precise, of emotional states or attitudes too subtle and complex to admit of straightforward description. Brooks argues that the use of paradox, "with its twin concomitants of irony and wonder," empowers poets by enabling them to deal with these types of large issues, without having to "enfeeble and distort what is to be said," and that "almost any insight important enough to warrant a great poem apparently has to be stated in such terms."[66] Paradox permits the poet to keep a multiplicity of meanings and possibilities in play at once, to stay in constant sight of "that perpetual slight alteration of language, words perpetually juxtaposed in new and sudden combinations" which occurs in poetry, and thus adds a new, richer dimension to the work of art.[67]

While paradox exists in varying degrees in the literature of all eras, Renaissance writers found the paradox to be a particularly congenial device, and examples of its use abound in their works. Rosalie Colie attributes this profusion of paradox to the climate of intense intellectual activity in the period, the return by the humanists to classical texts as models for both life and art, and their mastery of the *trivium* (whose arts included

[64]Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, par. 715, cited in Jaffé, p. 61.
[65]Brooks, "The Language of Paradox," in *The Well-Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry*, second edition (London: Dennis Dobson), 1968, pp. 1, 5-6.
[66]Ibid., p. 13.
[67]The quoted phrase is T.S. Eliot's, cited in Brooks, "The Language of Paradox," p. 6.

rhetoric, grammar, and logic), which thus gave the humanists the equipment to perform "the linguistic acrobatics required by paradoxy."[68] One might also credit the *Zeitgeist* for this literary trend, as authors struggled to come to terms with, as well as to exploit, "a divided sensibility and a fragmented worldview."[69] Of particular interest among Renaissance writers in this context are the group of seventeenth-century poets known as the metaphysical school (usually understood to include Donne, Carew, Herbert, Crashaw, Vaughan, Marvell, Cleveland, and Cowley).[70] Samuel Johnson originally coined the term "metaphysical" as a pejorative description of the type of rhetoric favored by these poets, when he defined metaphysical conceits as "heterogeneous ideas...yoked by violence together."[71] Although largely fallen from critical favor in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, metaphysical poetry has been rehabilitated in our own, by scholars such as T.S. Eliot, Rosemond Tuve, Helen Gardner, and Cleanth Brooks. It is characterized by its normally dialectic structure, complexity of style, plain diction, a preference for knotty syntax and asymmetrical rhythms over smoothness and regularity, ingenuity and agility of expression, abrupt shifts in tone, extended analogies between things seemingly dissimilar, and a great fondness for paradox. These paradoxes were both rhetorical and psychological, and dealt with enduring and difficult themes.

The contradictions of love provided fit fodder for paradoxical poetry. Not only is it a nearly universal experience, its nature is almost impossible to define: "love encourages that state of nescience so congenial to paradoxes."[72] The psychology of

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[68]Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica*, p. 33.

[69]John M. Steadman, *Redefining a Period Style: "Renaissance," "Mannerism," and "Baroque" in literature* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1990), p. 137.

[70]There is the usual difficulty here with labels; this group of poets cannot really be considered a "school," *per se*, as there was not a recognized leader, and as considerable differences between the works of all of these men exist. Enough similarities remain, however, to make possible observations about general characteristics of the poetry, so I will use the standard term "metaphysical poets" as a serviceable shorthand label, without meaning to imply any all-embracing homogeneity of style, purpose, or content.

[71]Samuel Johnson, *Lives of the Poets* (1779-81), cited in J.A. Cuddon, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*, rev. ed. (London: Penguin, 1979), p. 392.

[72]Colie, p. 96.

love, like that of religion, is transcendent, and thus lends itself in this sense to a language of negatives. With regard to the nature of the deity, the tradition of negative theology, or "learned ignorance," (a paradoxical *topos* which had its origin in the *Parmenides* of Socrates and further development in the writings of St. Paul and other Christians, notably Nicholas of Cusa, in his *De docta ignorantia* and *Idiota*) attempted to express an idea of God in terms of what He is not (i.e. incomprehensible, immutable, infinite, etc.), and identified the Many with the One, and in the One. That is, anything and everything was identified as being in and of the Divine, which resulted in many paradoxical formulations; only by radical antitheses was an idea of God's transcendence available to humans. Similarly, earthbound love was often described by poets in such terms: "To enter in these bonds, is to be free;" as John Donne put it.[73] Love also invites an identification of the One, if not with the Many, at least with One other, thereby both transcending the self, and gaining knowledge of the self, as well as transcending the opposition of male and female in a perfect union. That, being mortal and fallible, our unions do not often remain perfect, is the foundation of another of the great paradoxes of love: its bittersweetness, the fact that love is often mixed with pain, whether of separation, or of faithlessness. In "Woman's Constancy," Donne writes to his lady that she can only be true to herself by being false to him; since her nature is untruth, she does right only by doing wrong. Donne deals further with the *odi et amo* dilemma in "The Prohibition," in which he warns his love to "take heed of loving me" since "so great joy, our life at once outwears" and her love might "by my death, frustrate be." On the other hand, neither should you hate me, Donne says, since "thou wilt lose the style of conqueror,/If I, thy conquest, perish by thy hate./Then, lest my being nothing lessen thee,/If thou hate me, take heed of hating me." This clash of contrary exhortations can be resolved only by a sort of balancing act in the final stanza: "Yet, love and hate me too,/So, these extremes shall neither's office do;/Love me, that I may die the gentler way;/Hate me, because thy love's too great for me;/Or let these two, themselves, not me decay;/So shall I live thy stage, not triumph be;/Lest thou thy love

[73]John Donne, "Elegy XIX," *The Complete English Poems*, ed. A. J. Smith (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), p. 125.

and hate and me undo,/*To let me live, Oh love and hate me too.*"[74] The paradox here is life-affirming; the antithesis does not annihilate, but rather creates.[75]

Donne's love poetry also exploits paradoxes regarding time and totality. For instance, in "The Computation," time spent away from the beloved is both thousands of years and but a single moment, while in "The Anniversary," "Only our love hath no decay;/This, no tomorrow hath, nor yesterday,/Running it never runs from us away,/But truly keeps his first, last, everlasting day."[76] In other poems, Donne employs various paradoxes to convey the idea that love can both seem complete and yet continue to grow, as in "Love's Growth": "Methinks I lied all winter, when I swore,/My love was infinite, if spring make it more."[77] Love can create infinity *ex nihilo*, Donne asserts in "A Valediction: Of Weeping": "On a round ball/A workman that hath copies by, can lay/An Europe, Afric, and an Asia,/And quickly make that, which was nothing, all," or, even more vividly, in "A Nocturnal upon St. Lucy's Day," "For I am every dead thing,/In whom love wrought new alchemy./For his art did express/A quintessence even from nothingness,/From dull privations, and lean emptiness/He ruined me, and I am re-begot/Of absence, darkness, death; things which are not."[78]

Like various mythic and alchemical symbols, many of Donne's paradoxes of love involve circular imagery, among the most famous of which is the comparison of lovers' souls to the twin legs of a compass, in "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning," which also employs sex as a metaphor for wholeness. Although we two must be apart, Donne says, we are irrevocably joined, and in you I have my beginning and my ending: "If they be two, they are two so/As stiff twin compasses are two,/Thy soul the fixed foot, makes no show to move, but doth, if th'other do./And though it in the centre sit,/Yet when the other far doth roam,/It leans, and hearkens after it,/And grows erect, as that comes home./Such wilt thou be to me, who must/Like th'other foot, obliquely

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[74]Ibid., p. 75.
[75]See Colie, p. 112.
[76]*The Complete English Poems*, p. 42.
[77]Ibid., p. 69.
[78]Ibid., pp. 89, 72.

run;/Thy firmness makes my circle just,/And makes me end where I begun."[79] The poem itself is circular, returning at the end to the tone of quiet contemplation and conjunction with the beloved present at its beginning.

Love poetry frequently employs the genre and rhetoric of paradox because "it exists, like love, in order to conjoin disjunctive elements and states of being, and to elicit the wonder appropriate to such states of being."[80] Such linguistic manipulations are equally, if not more, suited to expressing experiences of God and sacred love, themselves experiences both meaningful and intense. Religious writings of all sorts, from collections of sermons to devotional guides to polemical tracts, flourished in seventeenth-century England, and in this atmosphere, a great deal of religious poetry was written also, an emphasis found in varying degrees in the works of the metaphysical poets. Thomas Traherne wrote poems which evinced a particularly personal approach to mysticism, and which are frequently concerned with man's progress through the stages of innocence, sin, redemption through Christ, and ultimate glory. He believed that man is a creature of infinite wants, and can only be happy in the infinite being of love that is God; his fundamental attitude is truly joyful. These characteristics are evident in his poem, "The Return," which also exhibits nicely the use by Traherne of paradox in a religious context: "To infancy, O Lord, again I come,/That I my manhood may improve:/My early tutor is the womb;/I still my cradle love,/'Tis strange that I should wisest be,/When least I could an error see....My God, thy bounty then did ravish me!/Before I learned to be poor, I always did thy riches see,/And thankfully adore:/Thy glory and thy goodness were/My sweet companions all the year."[81]

Religious paradox is perhaps even more evident in the poetry of George Herbert. A quintessential example is "Bitter-sweet," given here in its entirety: "Ah my dear angry Lord,/Since thou dost love, yet strike,/Cast down, yet help afford,/Sure I will do the like./I will complain, yet praise;/I will bewail, approve;/And all my sour-

[79]Ibid., pp. 84-5.
[80]Colie, p. 141.
[81]*George Herbert and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Poets*, ed. Mario di Cesare (New York: Norton, 1978), p. 195.

sweet days/I will lament, and love."[82] "Bitter-sweet" is from Herbert's collection *The Temple*, which appeared in 1633. Herbert sent the manuscript to a publisher, describing it as "a picture of the many spiritual conflicts that have passed betwixt God and my soul," and as such, it is particularly rich in paradoxical constructs, as the poet works out on paper his spiritual struggles.[83] A central aspect of Herbert's writing is the notion of the divine *logos*, that is, the inherently paradoxical idea of God the Word, as described in the first chapter of the Gospel of John. *Logos* is "the ultimately self-sufficient idea, the idea of ideas which, if understood, satisfies, suffices, fills, makes content. All other ideas, all other words, can be separately dispensed with, since all of them are implied, are folded into, and can be explicated from, that ultimate Word for word that was from the beginning, is now, and ever shall be."[84] Herbert reflects the *logos* concept in his continual evocations of Scripture, his persistent use of "verse" or "rhyme" as metaphors for divine Creation, and his marriage of form to content. These concerns are manifest on a simple level in the pattern-poems "The Altar" and "Easter-wings," and also in the triple triads of "Trinity Sunday," whose rhythms are an emblem of three-in-one. In "A Wreath," phrases repeated from one line to the next "twine the matter into a plaited crown."[85] In more sophisticated poetic structures, Herbert's inner state is reflected in the forms of the poems, as in "Denial," where the poet's spiritual distress is symbolized by the nonrhyming last line in each of the first five stanzas: "When my devotions could not pierce/Thy silent ears:/Then was my heart broke, as was my verse:/My breast was full of fears/And disorder....," a situation not relieved until the final stanza, in which God shows His grace, and helps the poet with his creation, an action constituting a "denial" of the spiritual disorder that was the origin of the poem: "O cheer and tune my heartless breast,/Defer no time;/That so thy favours granting my request,/They and my mind may chime,/And mend my rhyme."[86] Something similar obtains in "The Collar," in which anarchic patterns of measure and rhyme symbolize anger and reckless self-will, an undisciplined tirade restored to peace

[82]Ibid., p. 61.
[83]Ibid., p. 242.
[84]Colie, p. 193.
[85]Colie, p. 195.
[86]Colie, pp. 198-99.

by one gentle word from God: "I struck the board, and cried, No more./I will abroad./What? shall I ever sigh and pine?/My lines and life are free; free as the road,/Loose as the wind, as large as store....But I raved and grew more fierce and wild/At every word,/Me thoughts I heard one calling, *Child*:/And I replied, *My Lord*."[87] All human words are meaningless without, and can be subsumed into, the Word, without Which there is indeed anarchy; freedom is not found by being "loose as the wind," but, paradoxically, is found where and with Whom one belongs.

The all-importance of *logos* is found expressed ever more deeply, in "The Quiddity," in which, "in the scholastic fashion, [the poem itself] sets a riddle and never tells the answer, never tells what *what* is....because only the logos knows itself;" in "Providence," in which the homely coconut is used as a metaphor for *logos*, in that from it, many things can be drawn ("The Indian nut alone/Is clothing, meat and trencher, drink and can,/Boat, cable, sail and needle, all in one"); and, most pithily of all, in "The Flower," Herbert writes that "Thy word is all, if we could spell."[88]

Arguably most fascinating of all paradoxes found in literature are those of self-reference (such as the Liar, for instance). Artists of all sorts insert themselves into their own works in order to comment upon the nature of art itself, and the relationship between imitation and actuality. Such a procedure is available in various media; one thinks of M.C. Escher's "Drawing Hands," Jan van Eyck's "Arnolfini Marriage," and Alfred Hitchcock's practice of giving himself a brief appearance in all of the films under his direction. Poetry, of course, is frequently and essentially personal, but a greater measure of self-reference can be achieved by various means; an interesting example is Donne's "A Hymn to God the Father," in which he puns on both "Sun" and "Son," and "done" and "Donne": "....Wilt thou forgive those sins through which I run,/And do run still: though still I do deplore?/When thou hast done, thou hast not done,/For, I have more....I have a sin of fear, that when I have spun/My last thread, I shall perish on the shore;/Swear by thy self, that at my death thy Sun/Shall shine as it shines now, and heretofore:/And, having done that, thou hast done,/I have no more."[89]

[87]di Cesare, *George Herbert*, pp. 55, 56.
[88]Colie, pp. 208, 211, 214.
[89]*The Complete English Poems*, p. 666.

Authorial presence is not, however, the only means to self-reference. Reflexivity can be attained by any method which draws attention to the fact that the object concerned is a "created" object, which makes no attempt to divert one from the observation of its formalistic qualities. In order that audience perception may be revitalized, the work's nature as a piece of art is brought firmly into the foreground of the aesthetic experience. In his essay "Art as Device" of 1917, the influential Russian formalist critic Victor Shklovsky argued that such patent artfulness was central to the nature and function of art itself, writing that

> art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone stony. The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects "unfamiliar," to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. *Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not important.*[90]

The poems of George Herbert discussed above in which form is equated with matter are self-referential in this way. Reflexive paradoxes, those infinitely regressive enigmas, will concern us more later, particularly in Chapter Two.

Beethoven's late music has a great deal in common with metaphysical poetry, both in terms of technique and content. The applicability, for instance, of the following summary of characteristics of the writing of the metaphysical poets to the late music of Beethoven is striking:

> arresting and original images and conceits (showing a preoccupation with analogies between macrocosm and microcosm), wit, ingenuity, dexterous use of colloquial speech, considerable flexibility of rhythm and meter, complex themes (both sacred and profane), a liking for paradox and dialectical argument, a direct manner, a caustic humour, a keenly felt awareness of mortality, and a distinguished capacity for elliptical thought and compact expression....But for all their intellectual robustness, [the Metaphysical poets] were also capable of refined delicacy, gracefulness and deep feeling; passion as well as wit.[91]

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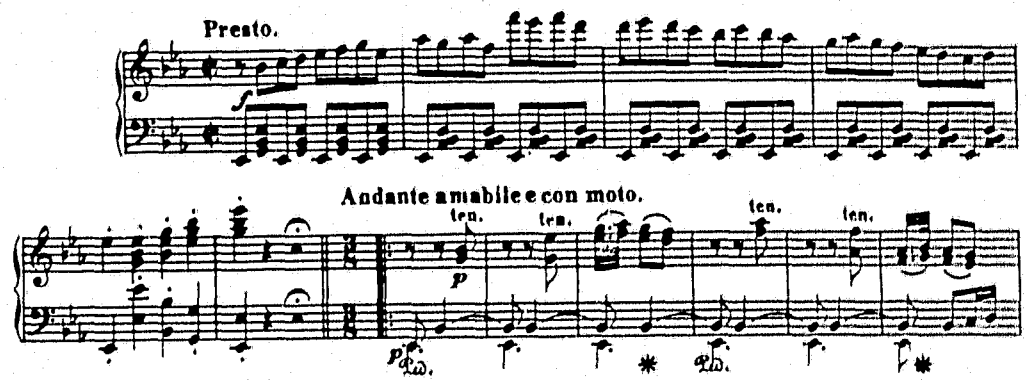
[90]Cited in Fowler, p. 101.

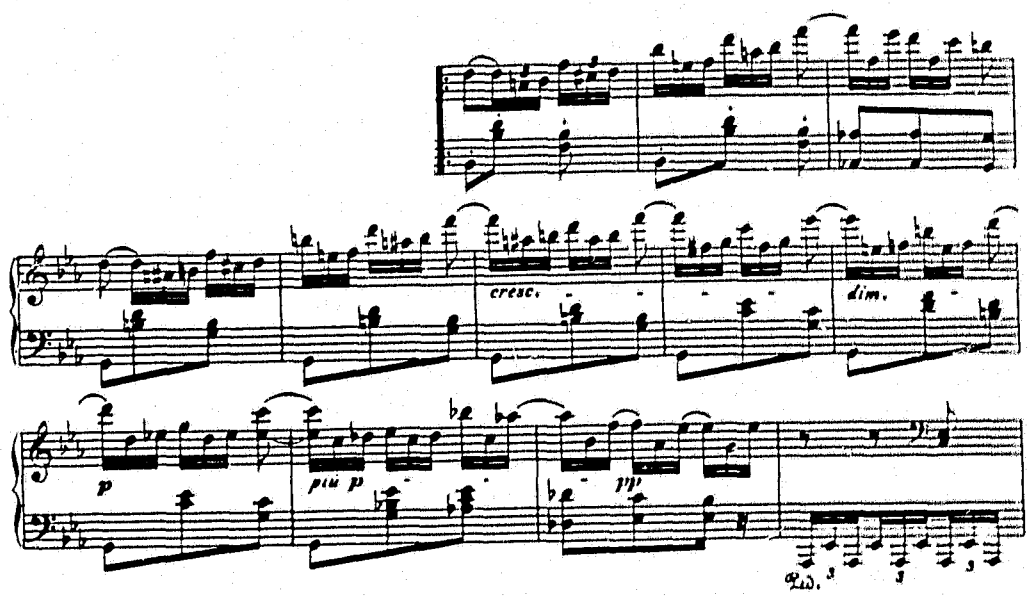
[91]Cuddon, p. 392.

In one brief example, Beethoven can be seen to exhibit many of these same characteristics. We circle back now to the Bagatelle for piano opus 126, no. 6 in E-flat major, in which a bravura passage in six measures of cut time at a *Presto* tempo is used as a framing device, enclosing a gently lyrical *Andante amabile con moto* in 3/8 time. Apart from their shared tonality, what do these sections of such markedly different character have to do with each other? Do they even belong together, or is Beethoven merely making an ironic, almost contemptuous, throwaway gesture toward his audience? Beethoven the performer liked occasionally to shock his listeners, as we know from Czerny's anecdotes, but Beethoven the composer seldom indulged in such terrorist tactics without good reason, and so it seems that there must be more afoot in this bagatelle than might appear on first examination. There are, for instance, interesting compositional parallels between the two sections. The E-flat--B-flat pedal in the *Andante amabile*'s first six measures, and the general idea of the use of a pedal in the whole section, are derived from the continuous left-hand tremolo figure in the *Presto*. The *Presto* descent from F to E-flat is mirrored in the second section of the *Andante*, which prolongs a similar descent of a ninth over the course of mm. 23-32. Here, this melodic progression has been altered in an interesting way; unlike the *Presto* descent, the *Andante* omits the expected G from the primary melodic line, but it does appear twice in other places: once before it should, in the pedal, and once after it should, in the inner, alto voice. This manipulation of G is perhaps reflective of a somewhat similar situation in the *Presto*, in which the G above the E-flat pedal in m. 1 is replaced in m. 2 by a more unexpected A-flat; G does not reappear in the bass until the penultimate chord of the *Presto*, in the cadential reiteration after the main work of this section has already been accomplished. Another point of similarity involves range: the *Andante*, until the modulation to A-flat in measure 33, remains within the registral extremes defined by the *Presto* (that is, E-flat in the left hand and high F in the right hand), breaking through these boundaries only when the texture and the key change also. To smoothe over these changes, a slower version of the *Presto*'s scalar patterns is introduced in this passage (measures 39-43) in the right hand, over a rocking figure of two pitches in a triplet rhythm, whose subtly shifting pattern of accents recalls the larger-scale juxtaposition of duple (in the *Presto*) and triple (in the *Andante*) in this

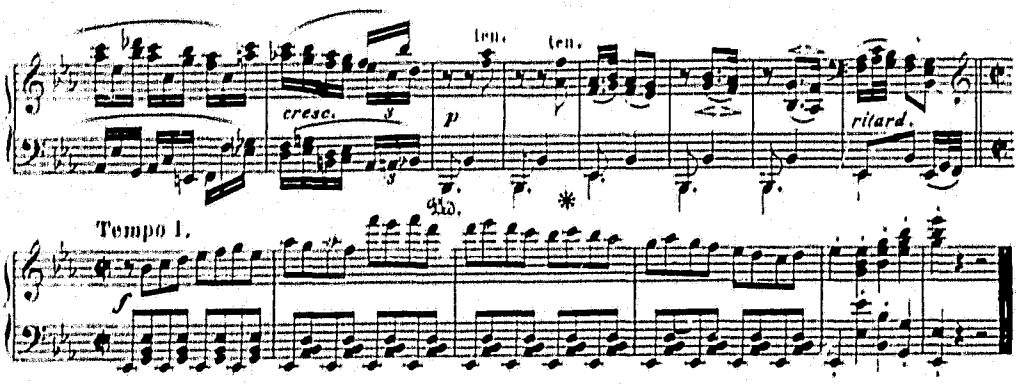
piece. In preparation for the return to the conditions of the opening, the internal development of the *Andante* theme is stripped away, as the melody now is heard in a form corresponding to its first appearance (mm. 63-65 are the same as mm. 10-12, except for the initial replacement of the tonic pedal with the dominant). Finally, the return of the *Presto* restores the closing-as-opening gesture to its proper temporal position--the end--thereby making the form circular.



op. 126, no. 6, opening



op. 126, no. 6, mm. 22-33



op. 126, no. 6, conclusion

Even more important than these points of structural similarity, however, is the purposeful placement of this paired paradoxical *Presto--Andante amabile* at the end of this opus. More than Beethoven's earlier groups of bagatelles, opus 126 was planned as a coherent cycle and was extensively sketched.[92] Although the dimensions of these bagatelles are trifling in comparison to the compositions immediately preceding them, the Ninth Symphony and the Missa Solemnis, it is evident that Beethoven expended considerable energy and artistry on them. The juxtaposition of the virtuosic, extrovert *Presto* with the *cantabile, gemütlich Andante* drives home Beethoven's point that miniatures (*Kleinigkeiten*) too can be masterpieces (and vice versa). The sixth bagatelle thus not only provides a fitting conclusion to the opus, but also, in symbolizing the possibility of greatness on a small scale, recreates the underlying idea of the entire cycle in microcosm, a procedure analogous to the inclusion in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century German novels of *Märchen*, that is, legends or myths, which mirror symbolically and in miniature the structure and themes of the entire book, as in, for example, Novalis's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (paradox is a fundamental trope of Romantic literature; Beethoven's connections with this tradition will be considered in more detail in the final chapter). The bagatelle, like metaphysical poetry, is sublimely witty in its capacity "to recognize similarity in disparity...to combine playfulness with

[92]The sketches for op. 126 have been published in facsimile and transcription, edited by Sieghard Brandenburg (Bonn: Beethovenhaus, 1984).

seriousness," and in its "awareness of the multiplicity of possible attitudes to be taken towards a given situation."[93]

This bagatelle's paradox behaves as paradox in general behaves: "mocking formal limitation and insisting on the continuity between thought and experience, [it] formally observes the decorum of its content."[94] By commenting on its own form, it reveals itself as a paradox of self-reference, and "though paradoxes are in one sense entirely self-sufficient in their self-reference, in another (and paradoxical) sense, they are also unalterably dependent upon society, upon what E.H. Gombrich has called the 'beholder's share;'" the artistic dividends of employing such a trope rely on a social setting, because "in reality, paradox requires an audience, demands attention, solicits reactions on the part of hearers or readers, and, if successful, elicits specifically admiration, amazement, and wonder."[95] Beethoven's musical paradoxes are not merely intellectual games; rather, as in the examples drawn from poetic, mythic, alchemical, and psychological contexts considered in this chapter, his use of paradox shows him to be deeply concerned with addressing lasting issues of human significance and communicating with his audience. Paradox is extremely common in Beethoven's late works in particular, in the culmination of a trend in his music that began in the 1790s, but such an approach to composition was not entirely unprecedented. One composer before Beethoven excelled in writing music dependent upon audience perceptions of the relationship between thought and experience (or the expected and the actual), music which was characterized by paradoxes of self-reference through ingenious play with formal limitations and cultural norms; this composer, truly Beethoven's teacher in the fine and radical art of paradoxical reflexivity in music, was Joseph Haydn.

[93]Roger Fowler, ed., *A Dictionary of Modern Critical Terms*, rev. and enlarged (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987), p. 147, and Cleanth Brooks, *The Well-Wrought Urn*, cited in Fowler, p. 261.
[94]Colie, p. 21.
[95]Colie, pp. 35, 134.

Chapter Two

Scholars and other writers on music have long been divided on the subject of what Beethoven actually did or did not learn from Haydn. Beethoven had intended at first to study with Mozart, and had gone to Vienna for this purpose in 1787. His leave from the electoral court in Bonn was too brief to achieve this end, however, and by the time he was able to return in late 1792, Mozart was already dead, and Beethoven thus chose to study with Haydn. At that time, Beethoven's patron Count Waldstein enjoined him to "receive Mozart's spirit from Haydn's hands,"[1] but both Haydn's role in Beethoven's musical development and the personal relationship of the two composers have been regarded with a certain amount of ambiguity. For instance, Maynard Solomon describes their relationship as one that "took on a complex and tangled character from the very start," and that Beethoven "felt the weight of Haydn's influence...as an impediment to the growth of his own musical individuality," while Haydn was unable "to comprehend Beethoven's greater achievements." Similarly, Alan Tyson remarks that "temperamentally...they were set for conflict....[Beethoven] was bound to feel the genius of 'Papa' Haydn standing in his way, one more father to be defied or circumvented," while H.C. Robbins Landon writes of their "mutual distrust which was to take on extremely nasty overtones," and of "direct confrontations" in both music and in the course of daily life in Vienna.[2] Traditionally, it has been believed that Haydn's instruction was somewhat haphazard, with Beethoven having to obtain additional instruction from Albrechtsberger, among others, and that either as cause or effect of this lacklustre teaching, the personal relationship itself of Beethoven and Haydn was strained.

Recently, however, these traditional views have been challenged on a number of different fronts. James Webster, in a thoughtful and meticulous re-examination of

[1]Anton Felix Schindler, *Beethoven as I Knew Him*, ed. Donald W. MacArdle, trans Constance S. Jolly (New York, 1972), p. 48.

[2]Maynard Solomon, *Beethoven* (New York: Schirmer, 1977), pp. 68, 74-75, 77. Alan Tyson and Joseph Kerman, "Beethoven," *New Grove* II, 357. H.C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works*, 5 vols. (London and Bloomington: Thames & Hudson, 1976-80), III, 224; IV, 502-8; V, 256-59.

this tradition of "bad press" concludes that much of it may be hearsay.[3] In particular, Webster studies the sources which deal with the supposedly acrimonious relationship between Haydn and Beethoven and finds, in brief, that "no direct word or action of Haydn's or Beethoven's, and few reliable contemporary observers, document any falling-out or feeling of artistic incompatibility between the two. The tradition to this effect depends chiefly on anecdotal accounts, of which almost all originated after Beethoven's death, and many seem marked by special pleading."[4] The tradition consists of various actions, attitudes, and remarks attributed to one or the other of the composers, namely, that Beethoven deceived Haydn in 1793 about the amount of music he had written and about the salary he was receiving in Bonn; that Beethoven had secretly used Schenk to correct his counterpoint exercises because he was dissatisified with Haydn's instruction; that Beethoven thought that Haydn's music was trivial and not on his high level; that Beethoven thought that Haydn did not understand his music (especially op. 1, no. 3), and that Haydn was envious of Beethoven; that Beethoven did not sufficiently appreciate Haydn's *Creation*; that Haydn altered previous plans to take Beethoven with him back to London; that Haydn found Beethoven excessively proud, ungrateful, and arrogant; and that Beethoven refused to print "pupil of Haydn" on the title page of one of his compositions. As Webster points out, most of this "evidence" of bad feeling can be refuted on one or several grounds; first, of the thirteen nineteenth-century authors responsible for the promulgation of this tradition (Carpani, Czerny, Dolezalek, Drouet, Fuchs, Griesinger, Marx, Moscheles, Ries, Schenk, Schindler, and Lorenz), only one certainly knew Haydn (Griesinger), two probably did (Carpani and Schenk), and two may have (Ries and Seyfried), while nine had personal contact with Beethoven. Marx certainly did not have any contact with Beethoven, Fuchs and Lorenz almost certainly did not, and Drouet probably did not. Furthermore, many of the purported events could not have been witnessed by those who reported on them. In addition, all of the accounts, except for those of Carpani and Griesinger, originated long after the events in question, and indeed, after Beethoven's death. Some

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[3]James Webster, "The Falling-out Between Haydn and Beethoven: The Evidence of the Sources," *Beethoven Essays: Studies in Honor of Elliot Forbes*, ed. Lewis Lockwood and Phyllis Benjamin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), pp. 3-45.

[4]Webster, p. 4.

of the writers have been known to be not entirely credible with regard to other issues more readily verifiable (Schindler, for instance). Certain described events are chronologically impossible (such as Schenk's supposed correction of Beethoven's counterpoint exercises). Likewise, various statements (such as Schindler's assertion that Haydn and Beethoven never got along after 1793) are demonstrably false, while others are almost certainly so.[5] Rather than there being unrelieved animosity between the two men, especially during the 1790s, there is in fact "clear evidence of productive professional association and positive feelings on both sides."[6]

Some of the tradition is, on the other hand, supportable by existing evidence. Certainly, in the approximate period between 1800 and 1804, there was a degree of well-documented friction between the two composers, with attitudes of mutual distrust and ambivalence existing between "Haydn...strong-minded, jealous of his stature as the greatest living composer, and proud of his pupils" and the increasingly prominent "Beethoven...strong-minded...paranoid, disrespectful of authority, eager to supplant Haydn as greatest living composer and perhaps frustrated by Haydn's continual forestalling of this event through the production of new masterworks." However, "the nineteenth century made more of this than was warranted; and some modern interpretations have not distinguished with sufficient care between credible and dubious sources, and have extrapolated the relatively limited well-documented difficulties...into a generalized portrait of conflict and ambiguity that is not supported in the record."[7]

Beethoven's exercises in counterpoint for Haydn have been a notable focus of scholarly attention because of their intrinsic interest, and for their documentary value. Much has been written, as noted above, about Haydn's supposedly deficient instruction

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[5]Webster mentions, for example, that Haydn almost certainly knew that the pieces he sent to the Elector in 1793 were not new compositions by Beethoven, and that he may well have assigned the revisions of Bonn works to his pupil as exercises in free composition. He further notes that there is very little evidence to support the notion that Haydn ever intended Beethoven to return with him to England, and also cites Landon's hypothesis that Haydn's own travel plans had changed, with the result that Haydn left a year later than he had originally planned, and that thus, even if Beethoven had initially been meant to come along, the fact that he did not was more likely simply circumstantial than the result of a badly deteriorating relationship. See ibid., pp. 21-22.

[6]Webster, p. 28.

[7]Webster, pp. 28-9.

of Beethoven; however, in a series of studies, culminating in the 1987 book *Theory and Practice*, Alfred Mann demonstrates not only the adequacy, but the subtlety, of Haydn's counterpoint instruction. The manuscript of the exercises is fifty-four pages in length, is entitled *Übungen im Contrapunkt*, and consists of a coherent sequence of examples of modal counterpoint, arranged into groups of exercises in each of the six church modes, in each of the five species, in two, three, and four parts, with each part serving in turn as the *cantus firmus* in each species. The booklet was at one time sewn together, although it is so no longer, and some pages have obviously gone missing. Most interestingly, it is clearly "a fair copy in which [Beethoven] gathered groups of already existing exercises from a number that may have been considerably larger," and not the day-to-day assignments which he took along to his lessons.[8] Given its nature as "a summary that must have been preceded by more detailed studies and that was summarily reviewed--possibly in no more than two or three sessions,"[9] it is not surprising that many of the errors were not corrected on the pages themselves (though oral corrections might well have been made).

The fact that there were uncorrected mistakes troubled some of those into whose hands the manuscript eventually fell. After Beethoven's death, the *Übungen im Contrapunkt* was sold in a group of other autographs to his Viennese publisher, Tobias Haslinger. Haslinger turned them over to Seyfried for editing; Seyfried prepared a monograph dealing with all of Beethoven's studies with various teachers, which was published by Haslinger in 1832. Subsequently, Gustav Nottebohm (in *Beethoveniana*, Leipzig, 1872) showed that Seyfried's edition was worthless, as the editor had forged the book, mixing and altering and falsifying portions of a diverse group of manuscripts, in order to make it appear as though he himself had been largely responsible for teaching Beethoven everything he knew. In sorting out Seyfried's fraud, Nottebohm distinguished six distinct groups of manuscripts and restored the original organization of Beethoven's collection of theoretical material: 1) Beethoven's studies in counterpoint with Haydn; 2) Beethoven's studies with Albrechtsberger, with whom Beethoven began working after Haydn's departure for England in 1794; 3) teaching materials on thorough-bass and counterpoint compiled by Beethoven,

[8]*Theory and Practice* (New York: Norton, 1987), p. 65.
[9]Ibid., p. 68.

evidently in 1809, for the instruction of Archduke Rudolph; 4) Beethoven's copies of works by other composers and notes regarding fugue, dating from various periods; 5) a set of studies in counterpoint by another Albrechtsberger student (possibly Seyfried?) and corrected by Albrechtsberger; and 6) Beethoven's studies with Salieri in vocal writing and Italian opera (excluded from Seyfried's edition).

Subsequently, Nottebohm published a comprehensive examination of Beethoven's student work, in *Beethovens Studien* (Leipzig and Winterthur, 1873), which contains the first detailed discussion of Haydn's counterpoint instruction of Beethoven. Nottebohm concluded that Haydn had been "hasty, careless, and inconsistent" in his teaching and "not fully familiar with the requirements and peculiarities of strict counterpoint."[10] The latter judgment is not, of course, accurate, given the exhaustively detailed annotations, made over the course of at least twenty years, found in Haydn's own copy of Fux's *Gradus ad Parnassum*, as well as the instructional digest of Fux that Haydn prepared for his students, and which exists in a fragmentary copy by F.C. Magnus as the *Elementarbuch der verschiedenen Gattungen des Contrapunkts aus den grösseren Werken des Kappm. Fux, von Joseph Haydn zusammengezogen*, not to mention the obvious contrapuntal skill evident in Haydn's compositions. While haste is indeed evident, given the number of elementary mistakes which have gone uncorrected (although Haydn may have felt that Beethoven could deal with those on his own), a carefully chosen selection of more sophisticated problems of part-writing are dealt with in detail. Haydn paid consistent attention to the difficulties Beethoven encountered in these exercises with the intricacies of the Phrygian cadence, the introduction of suspensions into a texture of four independently moving parts, and the problem of hidden fifths, and concentrated above all on two larger issues involved in composing in strict counterpoint: "the improvement of the melodic line in quarter note motion and the clarity of four-part sound obtained by avoiding anticipation and duplication of chord tones in the resolution of tied dissonances."[11] In faulting Haydn for not correcting every last parallel octave written by Beethoven, it seems that Nottebohm misunderstood the summatory nature of the document, as well as the value

[10]Alfred Mann, "Beethoven's Contrapuntal Studies with Haydn," *Musical Quarterly* 56 (1970), p. 713, and *Theory and Practice*, p. 68.
[11]*Theory and Practice*, p. 73.

of the instruction which Haydn had to offer. His comments are, in fact, altogether careful and consistent, and treat in the main those questions which are least readily addressed by recourse to a textbook or a lesser teacher.

More important to Beethoven in the long term than this relatively brief course of formal instruction with Haydn was the enduring example of the older composer's works. Jan LaRue suggests that Beethoven was indebted to Mozart for his sense of "the immensely complex balances of activity among all musical elements and at every structural level from cell to final growth," and to Haydn for some quite different approaches to composition, such as "the fascination of movement by motivic and dimensional exploration, the quest for new meanings and new timings in thematic ideas...pursued to remote and unsuspected destinations," and, most significantly of all, "the idea of basing much of the material for a movement on a single point of departure," which LaRue terms "multistage variance."[12] He argues that the more traditional term, "monothematicism," wrongly suggests limitation, when, in actuality, the effective use of such a technique evokes an experience of great variety and interest. Haydn frequently derives all thematic functions from his primary material in a sophisticated procedure that "evolves contrasting derivatives that give a polythematic effect," even though all of this material is genetically related. Rather than a miscellaneous series of variants on original material, Haydn typically creates a tight generational network of variants on variants on variants, and so on (while three generations are common, fourth- and fifth-generation variants also exist). LaRue notes that Haydn's approach to variance, generally speaking, was structural, while Mozart's was ornamental, and regards Beethoven's own ideas as being closer to Haydn's, based on his examination of various works, particularly the Piano Sonata Op. 2, No. 1 and the Fifth Symphony. He concludes that "the prototypes of every strand in Beethoven's complex web [of multistage variance] can be found somewhere in Haydn--but nowhere all in one movement," and that Beethoven went further in some respects than Haydn in that he also incorporated Mozartean ornamental variance, as well as making use of "'throwbacks' [which tighten the variant network]...[and are] a particularly effective

[12]Jan LaRue, "Multistage Variance: Haydn's Legacy to Beethoven," *Journal of Musicology* 1 (1982), p. 265.

technique for a long, highly evolved piece in which the exploration of fourth- and fifth-stage variants might seriously weaken the broader unities."[13]

Douglas Johnson also regards the example of Haydn's music as pedagogically important for Beethoven early in his career, and credits Beethoven's newfound skills in strict counterpoint as one tool which enabled him to realize more fully, albeit incompletely, compositional goals he had set himself after having become more sensitive to particular qualities in the late music of Haydn. In a 1982 article, Johnson convincingly postulates Haydn influences in Beethoven's music of 1794-95, citing four specific areas in which he sees the adoption by Beethoven of an approach or technique typical of Haydn:

> 1. The distribution of thematic material throughout the texture and the natural and easy use of polyphony anywhere in a movement;
>
> 2. control in the handling of remote key relationships, especially those of the mediant and submediant in both modes;
>
> 3. concern with the organic relationships among the parts of a movement and among the movements of a work;
>
> 4. the creation of instability within thematic statements as a way of sustaining momentum.[14]

Johnson argues that it was these characteristics which set Haydn and Mozart apart from their lesser contemporaries, and that thus it was the mastery of these things that Beethoven had to achieve in order to come to terms with the most sophisticated advances of the Classical style, and to take his place alongside Haydn and Mozart as one of the three great composers of the period. After examining various compositions from 1794-95, most notably the Piano Trios in G major and C minor Op. 1 Nos. 2 and 3, the Sonatas in A major and C major Op. 2 Nos. 2 and 3, and the C-major Piano Concerto Op. 15, as well as the String Quintet Op. 4, and the songs "Adelaide" Op. 46

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[13]LaRue, pp. 273-74.

[14]Douglas Johnson, "1794-1795: Decisive Years in Beethoven's Early Development," *Beethoven Studies* 3, ed. Alan Tyson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 2.

and "Seufzer eines Ungeliebten" WoO 118, Johnson concludes that Beethoven at that time began to make considerable headway toward realizing this ambition.

Greater skill in polyphonic development, and, even more interestingly, the conception of thematic material as a contrapuntal complex is evident, particularly in the Piano Sonata in A major Op. 2 No. 2. Use of remote tonal relationships and colorful modulations are found throughout the works of these years. Both the keys chosen for slow movements and those found in development sections of sonata-form movements are considerably more adventurous than those used in works previous to 1794, with frequent recourse to bIII and bVI, as well as instances of bVII and vii, among others. A greater sensitivity to organic construction can be glimpsed in Beethoven's attempt to provide tighter structural control over his music by supplying micro-causes for subsequent macro-effects. In the C-major Piano Concerto, for example, Eb, the first goal of the development section, is prepared by three references to the key of Eb over the course of the double exposition. The larger tonal scheme of the development (Eb to F minor to the dominant of C major) is presaged by the threefold statement of the second theme in the orchestral exposition.[15] Johnson notes further that there is an effort to utilize this type of unifying scheme on a larger scale in the G-major Piano Trio Op. 1 No.2, in the second and third movements of which Beethoven exchanges G major and E major as secondary keys respectively. Beethoven's interest in Haydn's symphonic style resulted in his attempts to make use of specific compositional devices found in the first six London symphonies in his own chamber music. Johnson discusses the exploitation of a local ambiguity to create a large-scale structural event in two works, the first movements of Haydn's Symphony No. 95 in C minor and Beethoven's Piano Trio Op. 1 No.3, in the same key, and finds an interesting parallel in their usages of separable first theme groups, the opening gesture of which is used to generate modulatory motion at various points of the movement. A further similarity can be found in the subsequent reordering of thematic material in the recapitulation section, which extends the development and sustains the momentum from the development to the second theme group when it is recapitulated, to astonishing effect, a procedure which Beethoven repeats in the final movement of his trio as well.

[15]See Johnson, p. 16.

All of these accomplishments, although imperfectly realized in some instances (Johnson calls the works of 1794-95 "overweight and long-winded" copies of Haydn's "lean and taut" models), represent a commitment to Haydn's symphonic ideal and a concomitant attempt to create a relationship between "expressive detail and large-scale form."[16] What the works of these years indicate is "a conflict between ambitious compositional technique, reflected in complex textures, wider tonal schemes, and original approaches to form, and not altogether suitable material," a conflict which eventually resolved itself as Beethoven became more experienced in composition.[17]

Another important feature of Haydn's music which came to play a role in Beethoven's works was reflexivity, a self-referential approach to art that emphasizes art's artifice, a hallmark of Haydn's mature compositional style.[18] A reflexive artwork calls attention to its own form as well as to the conventions underlying that form, and draws the audience in to take a more active part in the aesthetic experience. Expectations are defeated, conventions are subverted, the familiar is made strange, all

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[16]Johnson, pp. 26, 24. It is important to recognize, however, that Johnson's remarks, taken here from a general summary of his arguments, do not apply equally to all of the music from the years 1794-95. He himself acknowledges later in the paragraph that the sonatas are more successful than the trios, and singles out Op. 2 No. 3 as the most impressive of this group of compositions. It should be noted that Op. 2 No. 2 is also very skillfully composed.

[17]Johnson, pp. 26, 27.

[18]This may be the place to note that my emphasis on the relationship between the music of Haydn and Beethoven is not intended to discount the importance for Beethoven of Mozart. Indeed, the study of the impact of Mozart's music on Beethoven's would be a fascinating and very important one; it is not, however, especially germane to the topic at hand, in that, in my judgment, Mozart's approach to form was not as subversive as Haydn's, and his comedy arose from different sources. According to Charles Rosen, Haydn's fascination with irregularities and asymmetry partakes of the tradition of eccentricity associated with C.P.E. Bach, while J.S. Bach is the model for Mozart's less frequent excursions into that territory; between the two Bachs is a world of aesthetic difference. In noting that Mozart's greatest successes were in the genres in which Haydn was a relative failure, the dramatic forms of the opera and concerto, Rosen remarks that the composers had a much different sense for the dramatic, Mozart's characterized by its complex equilibrium with a sense of stability, and Haydn's for its integration of irregularity into a larger structure in such a way that the most dramatic effects became essential to the form; it is this sort of self-reference, relating detail to structure, which will form the basis for discussion of Haydn and Beethoven in the present context. See Rosen, *The Classical Style* (New York: Norton, 1972), pp. 112, 185.

in order to make patent the artfulness at work in art, to revivify its perception, and to heighten, too, perhaps, one's appreciation of living. Shklovsky wrote that "art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things."[19] A reflexive artwork is process made visible (or, frequently, process made risible!)

Although the use of reflexivity as a critical concept is common in other fields, particularly literature and the visual arts, it has not been in general use in a musical context, so discussion of a few examples from other media will work to establish an understanding of the nature of the reflexive, and to provide a basis for interdisciplinary comparison. Examples of reflexive art abound in many different art forms. For instance, the logical paradoxes such as "The Liar" discussed in the first chapter are reflexive paradoxes, as are Herbert's cited pattern poems. Art such as M.C. Escher's continually challenges the boundaries between the expected and the actual, in works such as "Drawing Hands" and "Reptiles," in which abstract structures become animated. In Buster Keaton's 1924 silent picture, *Sherlock Jr.*, which has been called "a piece of native American surrealism," Keaton plays a projectionist who, while running a movie ("Hearts and Pearls"), enters the screen and becomes involved with the characters.[20] A similarly reflexive work is Woody Allen's 1985 film *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, which also involves a blending of the cinematic and the "real" in a movie-within-a-movie format; however, in this instance, the "movie-within-the-movie" character comes down off the screen into the "real" movie, the opposite of Keaton's procedure.

Yet another good example is supplied by the Looney Tune cartoon "Rabbit Rampage" of 1955, directed by Chuck Jones, which opens with a depiction of a cartoon script lying on an animator's desk. The animator enters, picks up a brush, and paints the scene as described on the first page of the script, with one devastating change: a rabbit hole, to have been painted in the foreground of a woodland scene, appears in the sky. Thus, when Bugs Bunny emerges from the hole, he falls down and is understandably upset. The animator's brush re-enters the picture, painting Bugs's back yellow, putting picket signs into his hands and a series of funny hats on his head. Increasingly annoyed, the rabbit tries to walk away, but the background has now been

[19]Viktor Shklovsky, op. cit.
[20]Pauline Kael, *The New Yorker*, December 30, 1991, p. 21.

drawn upside down, causing him to fall onto a highway when he climbs back in his hole, and finally, out of the artwork altogether, onto a blank white page. The artist then plays all sorts of tricks on Bugs, erasing his head and replacing it with a pumpkin, substituting ears of different sizes and species, and redrawing the rabbit as a stick figure. Bugs demands to see the Warner Bros. studio head, whereupon the animator draws a speeding locomotive bearing down upon him. Bugs avails himself of his only escape route, pulling down a "The End" title card from above; as he does so, the camera pulls back, revealing the animator to be none other than Elmer Fudd, taking revenge on the "scwewy wabbit" for past misdeeds in other cartoons.[21] Thus, not only is the line between human reality and the cartoon world blurred, but boundaries within that world itself are challenged.

In a somewhat similar fashion, Miguel de Cervantes manipulates the reader of *Don Quixote* by juggling various levels of fiction within his narrative.[22] The chronicle of the Don's exploits, brought to us by Cervantes, is mediated by the narrator Cid Hamete, a Moorish translator, and an unnamed second narrator, as well as by reports of the characters' reactions to ostensibly previously published accounts of their adventures. Frequently, the identity of the teller of any given part of the story is difficult or impossible to establish. There is a wealth of interpolated tales, role-playing and reversals, and collisions between the expected and the actual (the irony of setting down in book form the tale of a man driven mad by books also does not go unexploited), thus imposing a continual cycle of self-reference. The Cervantes scholar Robert B. Alter regards this complicated structure, which calls into question the fictional status of fiction, as a novel that may be imagined "as a series of *trompe l'oeil* panels that slide open consecutively to reveal the author peeping out at the end of the

[21]For further discussion of this cartoon, see Jerry Beck and Will Friedwald, *Looney Tunes and Merrie Melodies: A Complete Illustrated Guide to the Warner Bros. Cartoons* (New York: Henry Holt, 1989), pp.274-75.

[22]For a detailed discussion of this point, see John J. Allen, "Levels of Fiction in *Don Quixote*," in Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, trans. John Ormsby, rev. and ed. by Joseph R. Jones and Kenneth Douglas (New York and London: Norton, 1981), pp. 919-27.

series."[23] Such emphasis on the process over the product is an essentially modernist attitude toward the act of artistic creation, and modernist writers such as James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, T.S. Eliot, and John Fowles have been among reflexivity's most ardent exponents.

Reflexivity has paradoxical aspects, namely in its twin urges to both self-containment and dependence on its audience. Because it comments on itself, the reflexive artwork internalizes its own critical context, but it requires an audience to participate in its act of creation, as Linda Hutcheon points out in her 1980 monograph on metafiction: "the point of metafiction is that it constitutes its own first critical commentary, and in so doing, it will be argued, sets up the theoretical frame of reference in which it must be considered....metafiction has two major focuses: the first is on its linguistic and narrative structures, and the second is on the role of the reader."[24] First discussed theoretically by the Russian Formalists in the early years of our own century, the notion of reflexivity in art has emerged as a powerful critical tool in the hands of a number of important writers. Roland Barthes, for instance, in his *S/Z* of 1970, draws a distinction between texts that are readerly (*lisible*) or writerly (*scriptible*), a distinction based on the relative degree of conformity to convention and expectation observed by the text in question. Readerly texts offer a maximized comfort level to the reader, in their reassuringly familiar adoption of attributes arising from assumptions, based on past experiences, common to a particular community of readers. As extreme examples, one thinks of formulaic series of novels, such as Harlequin romances, which, although written by numerous different authors, conform to specific guidelines for the genre in general and the series in particular, on pain of non-publication. The implications for art of such restrictions can also be seen in the pernicious effect on the increasingly standardized product of the film industry of Syd Field's influential self-help manuals for would-be screenplay writers, in which, based on analysis of a very few successful films of the past, the author develops a structural

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[23]Robert B. Alter, "Mirror of Knighthood, World of Mirrors," in Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, trans. John Ormsby, rev. and ed. by Joseph R. Jones and Kenneth Douglas (New York and London: Norton, 1981), p. 964.

[24]Linda Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1980), p. 6.

paradigm which dictates that screenplays be a certain number of pages long, that plot points occur on specific pages, and so on.[25]

Writerly texts, on the other hand, by deliberately employing ambiguities which can only be resolved by audience interpretation and reconstruction of meaning, force the reader to relinquish his passivity and become an active co-creator of the work at hand. The ambiguities in writerly texts are frequently reflexive ones, paradoxes which call attention to the nature of the text and to any underlying assumptions about what is normative for that type of text. Laurence Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* of 1759-67 is the classic example of such a work. The author makes his intentions explicit when he writes: "The truest respect which you can pay to the reader's understanding, is to halve this matter amicably, and leave him something to imagine, in his turn, as well as yourself. For my own part, I am eternally paying him compliments of this kind, and do all that lies in my power to keep his imagination as busy as my own."[26] Sterne indeed keeps his readers busy in the process of co-creation of his remarkable book. The reader is frequently addressed directly in what purport to be confidential asides; some readers are made to feel that they have entered the inner circle by Sterne's division of his audience into those unworthy of the author's time (such as critics, nobles, pedants, church dignitaries and so on, who are sarcastically called "Your Worships" or "Your Reverences," as well as scandal-seeking prudes, addressed most often as "Madam"), and those who may be welcomed as kindred spirits, given the appellations of "Jenny," "Garrick," or "Eugenius."[27] Audience imagination is called for as Sterne frequently interrupts the narrative progress of his novel, most obviously by his seemingly capricious use of typographical oddities--dashes, asterisks, blank, black and marbled pages, blank spaces, and so on--which in reality serve as Sterne's comments on certain novelistic or social conventions. The blank spaces or asterisks, for instance, used in place of swearing or in situations with sexual implications, frequently mock false modesty. The title of the book would seem to suggest that it is a fairly straightforward autobiographical account, but it is in fact no

[25]Syd Field, *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting*, expanded edition (New York: Dell, 1982), and *The Screenwriter's Workbook* (New York: Dell, 1984).
[26]Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, ed. Ian Watt (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), p.83.
[27]See further discussion of this point in ibid., p. xxix.

such thing. For example, the titular hero does not achieve birth until Volume 3, at which time the author is also getting around to his preface (the dedication was only slightly less tardy, having arrived in the eighth chapter of the first volume). Such manipulations of time are among the most important structural aspects of *Tristram Shandy*. Long, splendidly complicated digressions continually challenge one's preconceptions of how a story ought to be told. Pages and chapters are left out altogether, or omitted and later reintroduced (with their original numbering) in a different section of the work. Similarly, Sterne frequently promises to deal with certain subjects or even begins to do so, but fails to get around to them, or gives up in the middle. There are numerous references to the time it takes both to read and to write the novel, causing the reader to realize that

> two somewhat freakish conceptions of temporal realism have been introduced which subvert the regular linear progression to which we are accustomed in fiction and history alike. First, Sterne suggests that there should be a direct correspondence between the time taken by events in the narrative, such as Obadiah's going to fetch Dr. Slop, and the time which the relating of these events takes in the reader's experience. This transfers the clock, as it were, from Shandy's world into the reader's. Another clock, the writer's, is also introduced to confuse matters further, when Tristram reminds us that since it takes him much longer to fill up his pages with the description of the events, than the time actually occupied by the events themselves, he is inevitably fighting a losing battle; as he lives on, the more he writes about his life, the further behind in narrating it he will get, and the more of it will have to remain unwritten.[28]

This sort of temporal trickery draws attention to the very real problem of how to treat time realistically in fiction. More importantly, it highlights the author's relationship with his reader, and insists upon the artifice inherent in art. So do passages in which Sterne questions the notion of authorial originality by inserting blatant parodies of the work or style of other writers, and comments which underscore the physicality of the book as object. Sterne's reflexive treatment of his material offers him an opportunity to critique the conventional, as well as exponentially increasing the humorous and artistic potential of his story.

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[28]Ibid., p. xxv.

Joseph Haydn received his first real appointment, as music director to Count Morzin, in 1759, the year Sterne began writing his *Tristram Shandy*, and by the time Sterne had finished this book, Haydn was ensconced in the employ of Prince Nikolaus Esterházy, well embarked upon a period (covering approximately the years 1766-75) of "impressive stylistic synthesis," writing music which partook of "a new approach, a happy merging of apparently disparate traditions," which resulted in a "remarkable expansion of expression and compositional technique."[29] This period (sometimes known as his *Sturm und Drang* period, but also known as his period of expansion) in Haydn's career marks the advent of his explorations of a reflexive approach to composition.[30] Such a "composerly" attitude toward his music often had witty, ironic, or humorous results, similar in some respects to the effects of Sterne's own authorial manipulations, a comparison not lost on contemporary critics:

> The quintessence of [Haydn's greatness] seems to me to be in the exceptionally easy treatment of the rhythm, in which no one approaches him, and in that which the English call "humour" and for which the German word "*Laune*" is not quite the same. From this latter characteristic may be explained his penchant for the comic turn and the fact that he is more successful therein than in a serious vein. If one would wish to draw a parallel with other famous men, J. Haydn, in the richness of his fantasy, might be compared to our Jean Paul--except for the latter's chaotic order, of course, for clear presentation (*lucidus ordo*) is one of Haydn's no small accomplishments--and as far as the humour is concerned, his original caprice (*vis comica*), with Lor. [Laurence] Sterne. If one wanted to describe the character of Haydn's compositions with two words, they would be, I think, *artful popularity* or *popular* (meaning easily understood, penetrating) *artistry*.[31]

The explicit use of humor becomes more pronounced in Haydn's music after the 1780s, in his integration of techniques learned from prolonged exposure to comic opera

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[29]Jens Peter Larsen, *The New Grove Haydn* (New York and London: Norton, 1980), pp. 90-91.

[30]For further discussion of this point, see Imeson, "*Ridentem dicere verum*": Reflexive Aspects of Haydn's Instrumental Style, c. 1768-72," *Canadian University Music Review* 11 (1991), pp. 50-67.

[31]From "Remarks Concerning the Development of Music in Germany in the Eighteenth Century," *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* (1800), cited in H.C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works*, vol. 4 (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), p. 590.

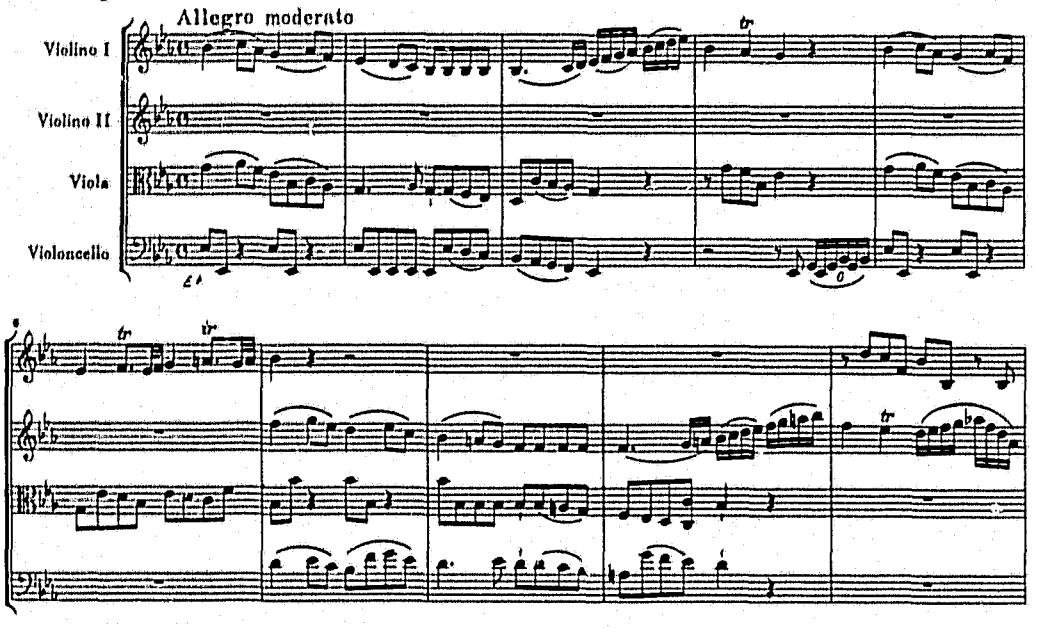
and adoption of an unabashedly popular style.[32] However, the artfully reflexive craftsmanship that is a necessary precondition for a certain type of humor, an important new aspect of Haydn's style, was evident as early as the late 1760s, as Wilfred Mellers has noted:

> The tempestuous features in these works [of the late 1760s and early 1770s] strike one's attention immediately; one should not overlook the fact that they also represent a significant development in Haydn's humor. The funny elements in his earlier works were in the main a simple *buffo* frivolity. Such comic elements as occur in the *Sturm und Drang* works tend--in an abrupt contrast of key, a melodic ellipsis, a sudden pause or concentration of rhythm--to startle as much as to amuse. Procedures that may in some contexts be drama are in other contexts wit: an intense levity that entails a recognition of 'other modes of experience that are possible,' and therefore an awareness of instability.[33]

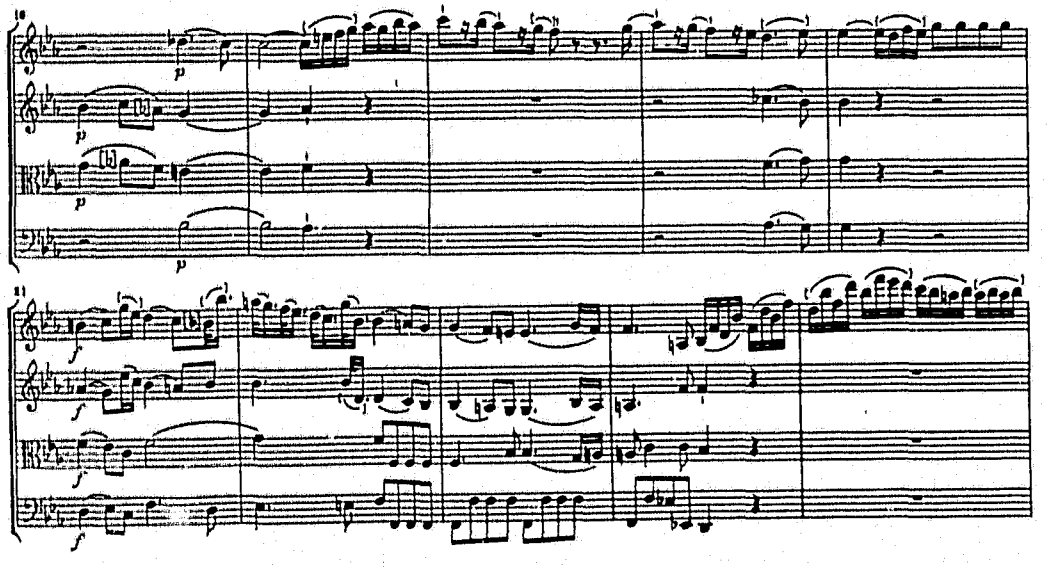
Haydn's String Quartet opus 20, no. 1, written in 1772, is an excellent example of a composition from this period which makes use of reflexive techniques, a work, incidentally, which Beethoven copied out by hand in 1793 or 1794 for study purposes. Famous for the fugal finales in three of them, the six so-called "Sun" quartets in fact experiment with a wide range of structural and expressive possibilities: new approaches to texture, distribution of weight among movements, length of phrases and periods, thematic character, idiom, and the long-range ramifications of small-scale gestures are all found, as is a sophisticated, witty play on preconceptions of regularity. In the first movement of the E-flat quartet, for instance, the realization of quartet texture is markedly more mature than in Haydn's earlier quartet *opera*; here, all four voices share quite equally in melodic and accompanimental material. Even here, though, in a movement that seems distinguished by its square and solid thematic material, more is at work than at first meets the ear. The first theme begins with a four-measure phrase solidly in E-flat, but in what begins as a literal repeat of the phrase turns prematurely toward the dominant in measure 7. Obviously, it is not yet time to be in B-flat, but Haydn teases us with the new key for a few measures before resuming the tonic key

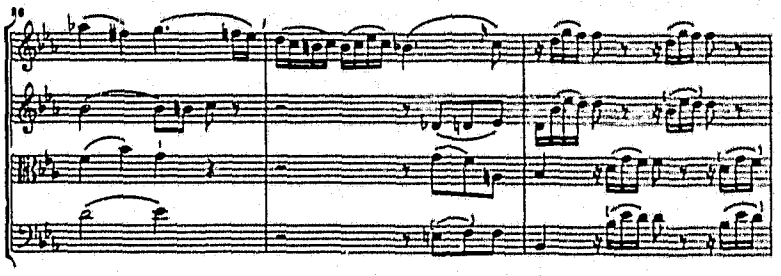
[32]See Rosen, *The Classical Style*, pp. 329-50.
[33]Mellers, *The Sonata Principle* (1957), p. 22.

proper to this stage of a sonata-form movement. The composer has planned the "real" arrival in the dominant to be an event; its *forte* advent is heralded by a *piano* gesture in the solo first violin, whose texture and hesitantly hopscotch-like rhythm are unique in the movement. This music recurs in the other dramatically significant spot expected in a sonata structure: this time prolonged, pianissimo, and partially accompanied by the second violin, the tentative little motive sets up the recapitulation, sending a child to do a man's job, as it were.

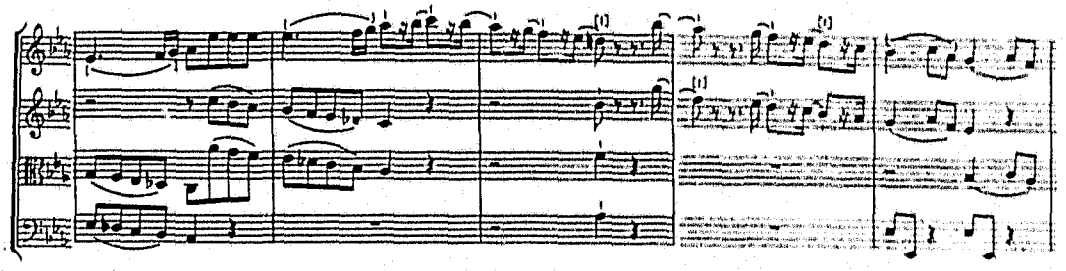


op. 20, no. 1, i, mm. 1-10



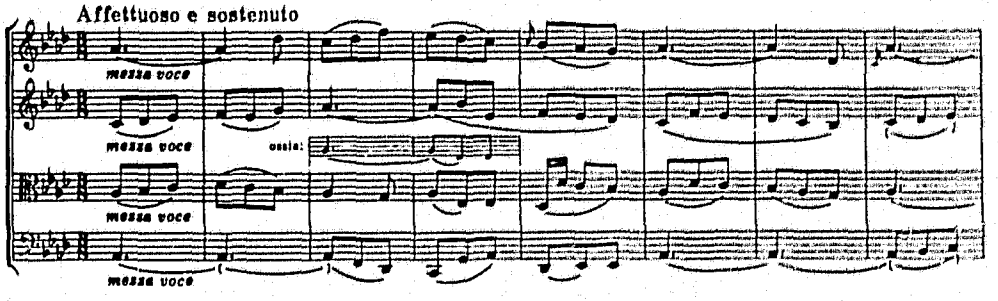


op. 20, no. 1, i, mm. 16-28 (continued from previous page)



op. 20, no. 1, i, mm. 68-72

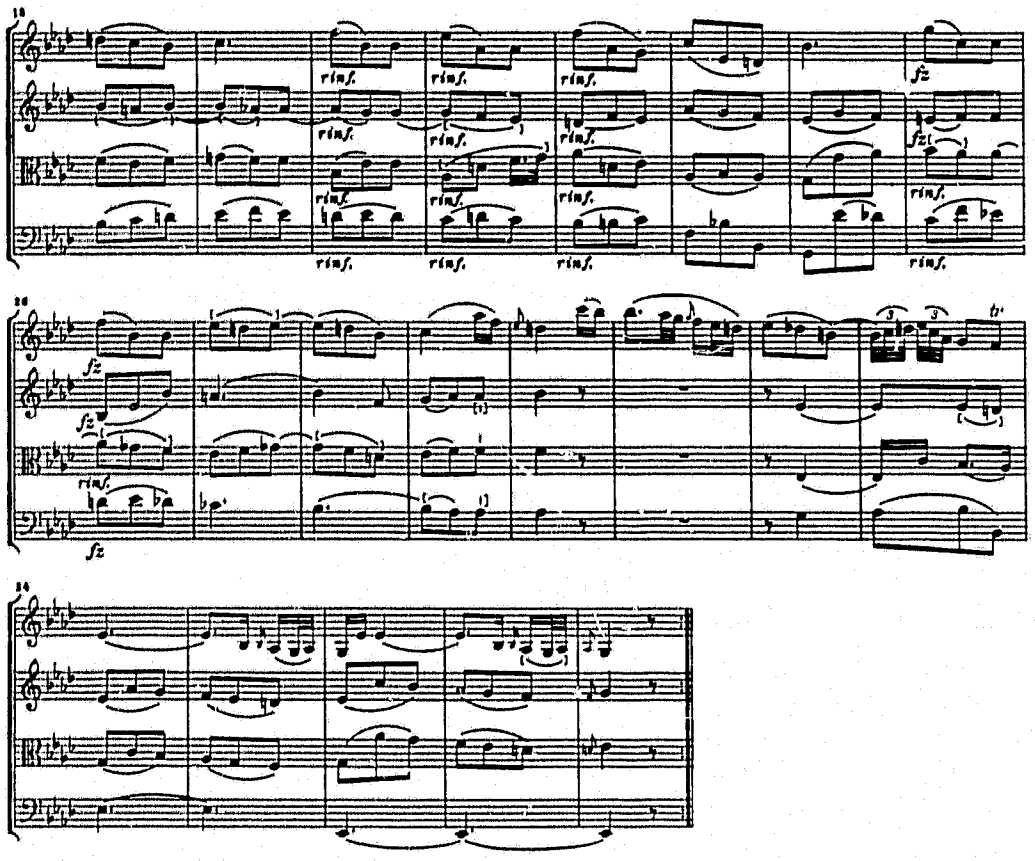
Haydn also uses music of a seemingly anomalous character as a tool for structural demarcation in the third movement. Entitled "Affettuoso e sostenuto," this A-flat major song-form movement is the only truly serious one in the quartet. Its lyrical melody in a gently rocking simple triple metre is played *mezza voce* in all four parts.



op. 20, no. 1, iii, opening

The surface is smooth and unsurprising until *sforzando* trespassers throw rocks in the water (mm.20-22, 25-6, as well as the corresponding point in the return of the A section, mm.78-80, 83-4), at which point the first violin takes it upon itself to break into song, in an overtly operatic, cadenza-like solo, which exhibits a complete

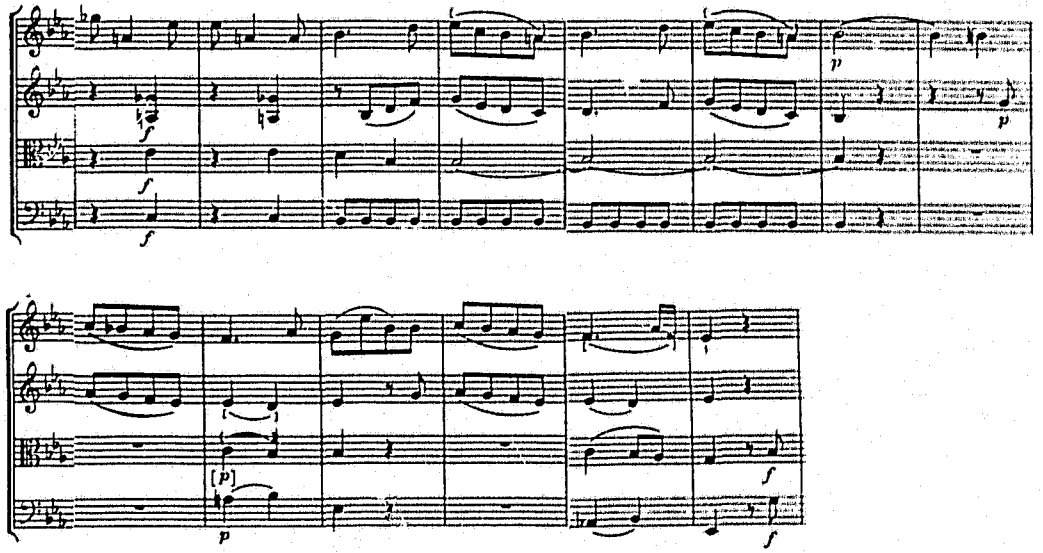
discontinuity in terms of rhythm, texture and character with the rest of the piece so far. Similar outbursts also clearly define the end of the B section and prepare for the final cadence in the return of A.



op. 20, no. 1, iii, mm. 18-38

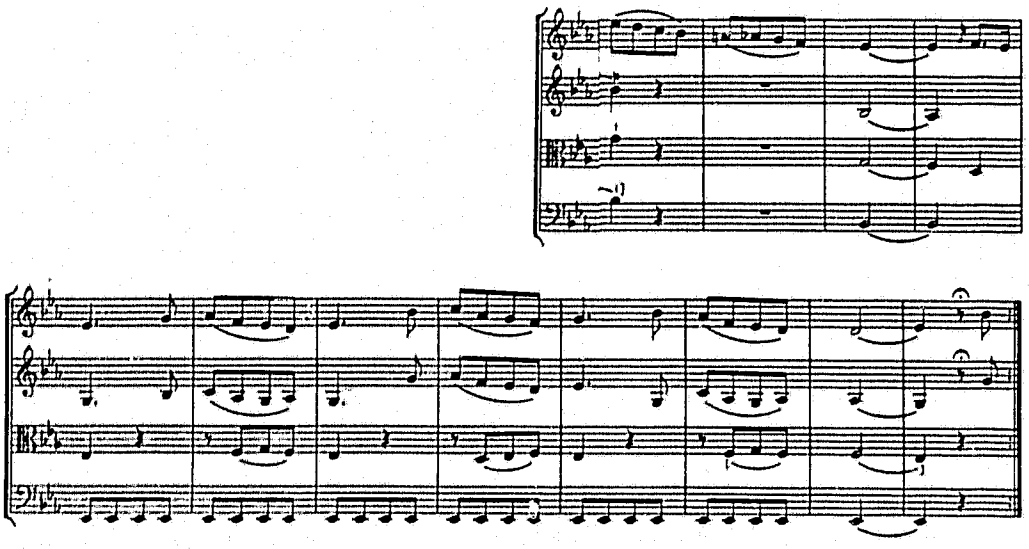
Both of these movements make use of incongruities specific to their given materials: highly contrasting material seemingly at odds with the rest of each movement's music is introduced for a particular purpose, in these instances, to delineate structurally significant moments. Haydn frequently utilizes these kinds of abnormalities, but also incorporates incongruities arising from expectations about form or convention. Such procedures are evident in both of the other two movements of op. 20 no. 1. The finale, a *presto* sonata form in simple duple time, opens very quietly with what sounds like a consequent phrase--we feel as though we have entered in the middle of a conversation, whose subject matter, however, seems to be of very little

consequence. As if upset at not being taken more seriously, the quartet reiterates its point more forcefully, engages in an extended syncopated sequence followed by nearly two octaves of ascending scales, and then proceeds to hammer the theme home three more times (now accompanied by throbbing repeated eighth notes) before the end of the exposition. The theatrical pitch continues in the development, as one might expect, with abundant chromaticism and wide-ranging syncopated gestures. All this bombast over something so inconsequential has results that are vastly amusing. The masterstroke of comedy has, however, yet to occur; Haydn has saved something really clever for the recapitulation. As the development reaches m. 99 or 100, we feel that its arrival is imminent, and lo and behold, the initial theme returns in m. 101. The music is still in the dominant at this point, however, and th theme's appearance has been subtly altered, which allows Haydn to move from this brief false recapitulation into the real one very easily: the theme is repeated, remaining for rather too long on its final B-flat, which, at last, shifts gently up a semitone, and slides very quietly back into the first theme in the home key.



op. 20, no. 1, iv, mm. 99-112

The movement finally dissolves in a typically Haydnesque fashion, disappearing after gradually decreasing the dynamic level; the quartet bows out, blushing, after so much ado about (almost) nothing.



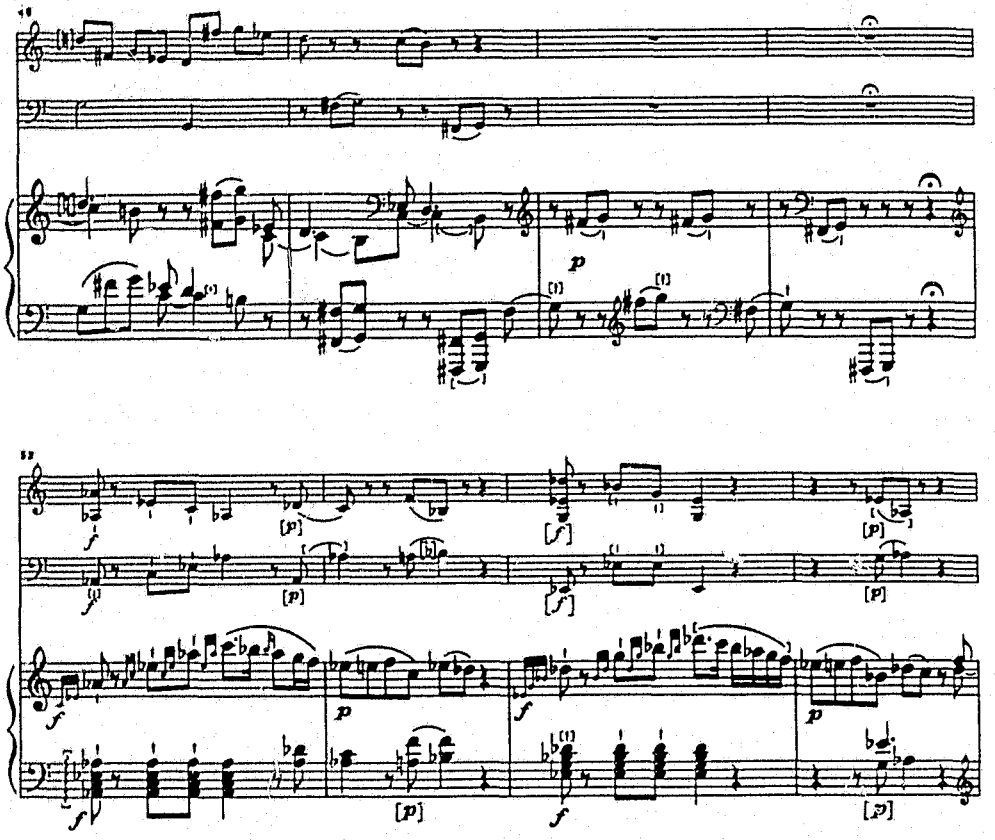
op. 20, no. 1, iv, conclusion

In this quartet, as so often, Haydn has reserved his most truly manipulative procedures for the minuet movement. As the only movement in the standard plan of Classical cyclic works to have been taken over from a category of music reserved for a specific use, it is particularly vulnerable to violations of decorum. Haydn's minuets often subvert their courtly roots in a ceremonial dance, practised by members of the highest classes, which was characterized by its formality, stateliness, and standardized accompanying music. In op. 20 no. 1, the dotted rhythms and staccatos of the A section of the minuet import a whiff of rusticity into the ballroom. The B section is much longer than A (such a disproportionate structure is no longer suitable for dancing), and moves from B-flat major unexpectedly to its parallel minor, thus expanding the form. B-flat major returns, soon to be followed by the return of the A theme. The repeat of A is interrupted by a dramatically deceptive diminished seventh chord in m. 36, at a sforzando dynamic level out of character with the rest of the minuet. A four-measure tag re-establishes E-flat major, and the minuet closes. The trio, with its soloistic first violin and accompanying figures much more thinly textured than the minuet, opens clearly enough in A-flat major, but soon begins to sound extremely perplexing. Harmonic ambiguity is paired with, or is perhaps a result of, metric ambiguity; not until m. 52 do all the instruments get to play a downbeat together. The B section of the trio removes even the semblance of order by eliminating the theme;

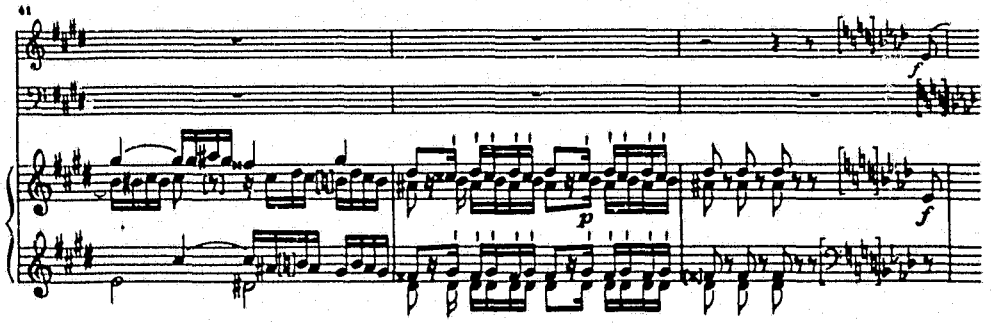
for seven measures, there is nothing but harmonic and metric meandering. Minuet material returns after the fermata in m. 61, this time in F minor, coming to a half cadence on a dominant seventh chord in that key. Surprisingly, no resolution is granted, and after four beats of silence, we simply return *da capo* to the minuet.

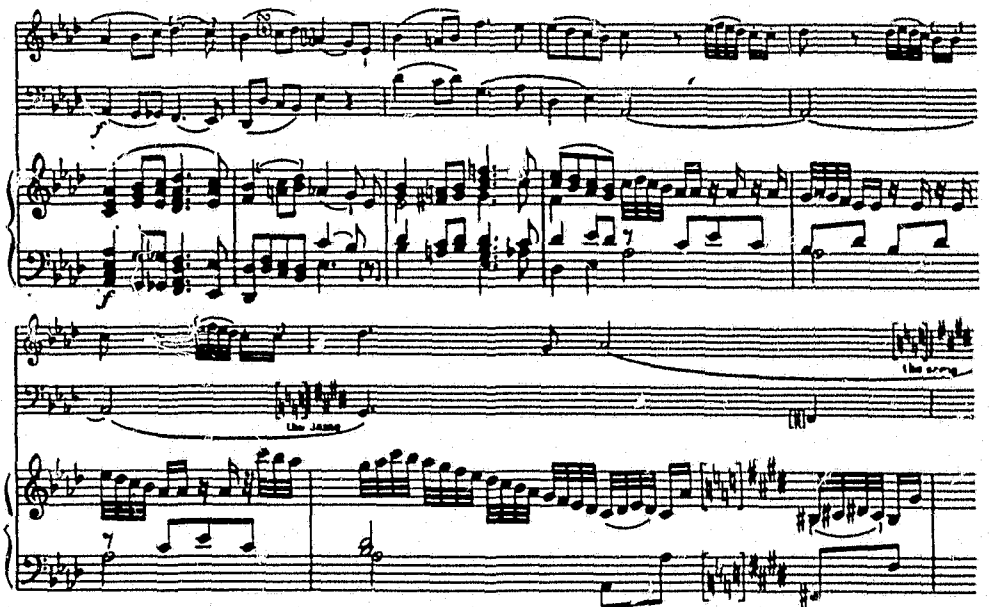
By the 1790s, Haydn's self-conscious approach to musical structure was fully integrated with the popular style, and his reflexive techniques had by this time evolved to express humor more often than not. This is perhaps most evident, while at the same time most subtly achieved, in the private genres, that is, in music written primarily for use at home by amateurs, rather than in the forum of the public concert. One such genre that occupied a good deal of the composer's attention during the last part of his active career was the trio for piano, violin, and cello, of which there are fourteen from the 1790s. Called "some of the greatest music ever written," these masterpieces of Haydn's late style are unfortunately not particularly well known, but contain some of his most imaginative and expressive writing.[34] Rosen remarks that "many of the eccentricities of the compositions of this period may be considered a return to an earlier style, and affinities with the mannerist qualities of 1750 to 1775 can be found above all in the late trios."[35] Haydn's interest in irregularity and self-reference, here frequently leavened by a sense of the high comic, is indeed manifest in the trios, as can be seen, for instance, in the C and E major trios Hob. XV:27 and 28 (two of the three of those that were dedicated to Theresa Jansen Bartolozzi; the third, Hob. XV:29, is in E-flat major), written c. 1795 and published in 1797. Dramatic use of silence is once again a favorite tool of Haydn: in the first movement of the C major work, silence interrupts the chromatic contrapuntal labyrinth of the opening of the development section in m. 51 (the only such check of overwhelmingly forward motion in the movement), halting a line of thought seemingly out of character with the sprightly exposition, and introducing development based on the first theme, now in A-flat major. In the development of the E major trio's first movement, the climax of the movement, a short passage employing the main theme, in the distant key of A-flat major and played *forte, arco*, and with full harmony for the very first time, is dramatically prepared by the effective and surprising use of silence.

[34]Rosen, p. 354.
[35]Rosen, p. 359.



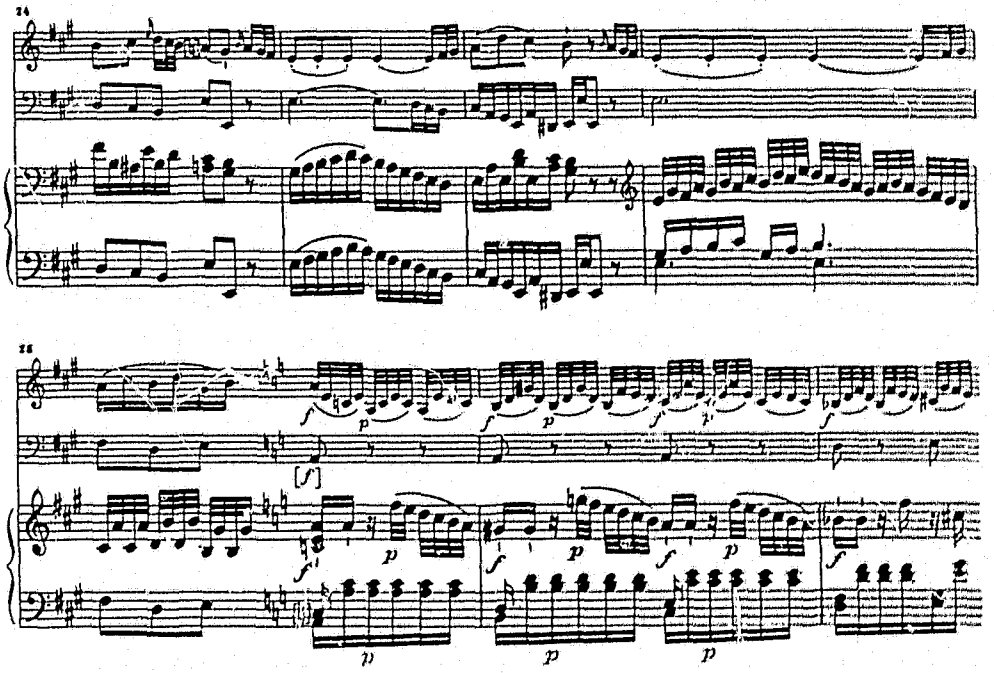
Hob. XV:27, i, mm. 48-55





Hob. XV:28, i, mm. 41-49 (continued from previous page)

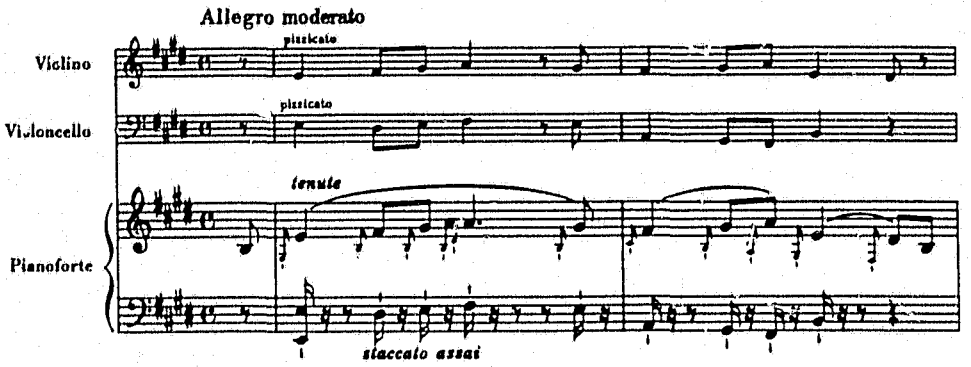
This type of startling event is sometimes not set up with silence, but starkly juxtaposed with highly contrasting material, as in the slow movement of the C major trio, an A major *Andante.* An abrupt shift to the parallel minor in the midst of m. 28 cuts off the elaborate, lyrical opening section, and replaces it with music of a much more forceful character, emphasizing extreme contrasts of register and dynamic level.



Hob. XV:27, ii, mm.24-30

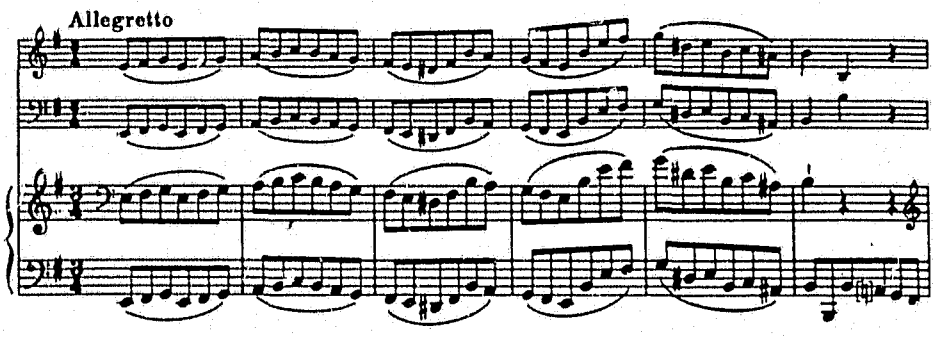
The return to the material of the first section and original key is prepared more gently, however, in a fade to *pianissimo* and a pause before resuming in m. 52.

Haydn also experiments with surprising effects of sonority, particularly in the E major trio. The first movement is scored for violin and cello nearly always *pizzicato*; the piano, too, seems to have a *pizzicato* feeling, with its short, dry single pitches in the left hand, and a right-hand melody imaginatively embellished with grace notes.



Hob. XV:28, i, mm. 1-2

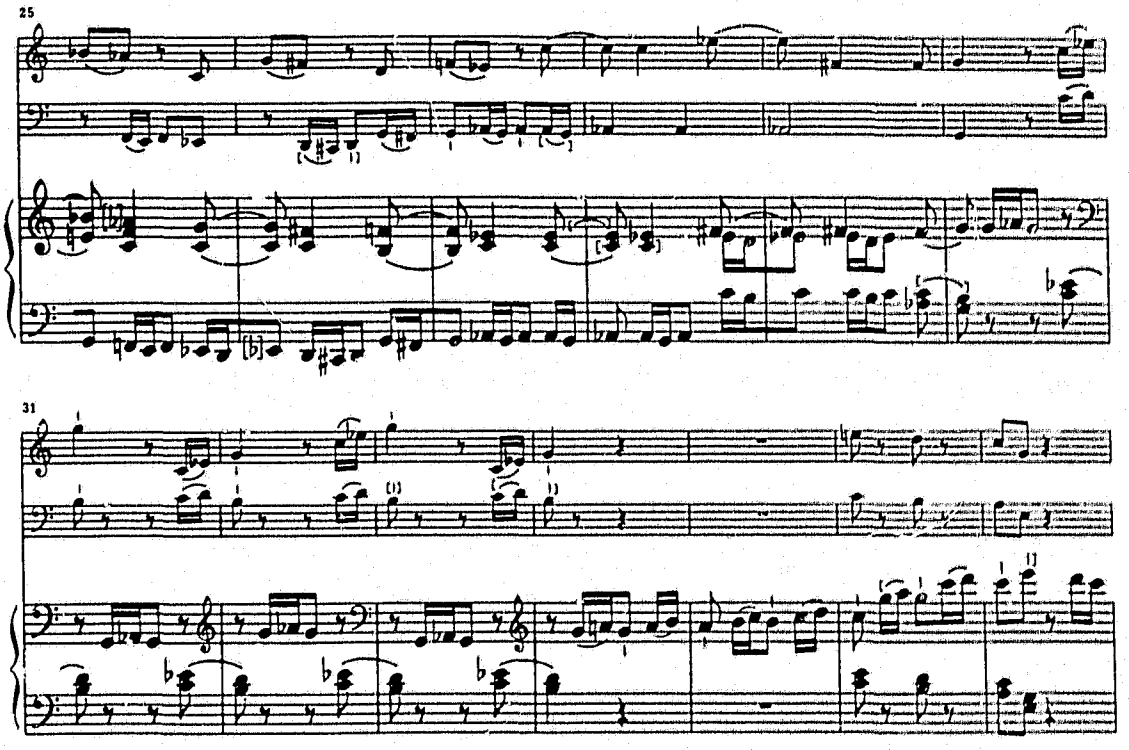
The two-part contrapuntal texture of the E minor *Allegretto* which follows is spartan and remarkably open in texture, with the voices sometimes as much as four octaves apart. The stark sonic effect serves to reinforce the tension Haydn seeks to build into the structure, with the relentless rhythmic pattern, steadily increasing dynamic level, and sequential generation of material that builds a sense of nearly utter frustration, relieved only by the final chord.[36]



Hob. XV:28, ii, mm. 1-6

[36]See Rosen, p. 360.

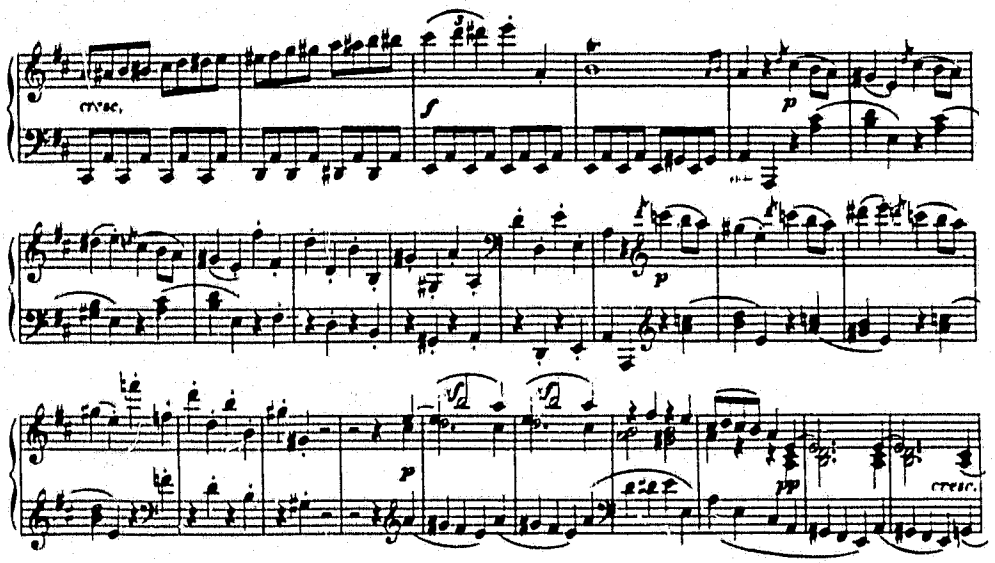
One of Haydn's favorite types of manipulations continues to be the exploitation of the potential inherent in his thematic material. In the lightning-fast *Presto* finale of the C major trio, the opening theme, basically a broken chord with decorations followed by a descending scale and a cadence, is simple enough to be bent to whatever purpose the composer chooses. The theme is subjected to registral displacement, as well as to temporal trickery, such as offbeat harmonic supports, which skew the listener's sense of the metric pattern; fragmentation, and stubbornly repeating fragments, which delay the continuation of the theme; and masking the re-entry of the theme, for instance with sequential treatment of the opening motive, so that one is not aware it has started until it is partly over.



Hob. XV:27, iii, mm. 25-37

In the works of his first period, Beethoven was already exploiting similar techniques, and exploring what further manner of compositional dividends might accrue from adopting and adapting Haydn's reflexive approach to structure. For example, in the Piano Sonata in D opus 10, no. 3, written in 1798, Beethoven exhibits

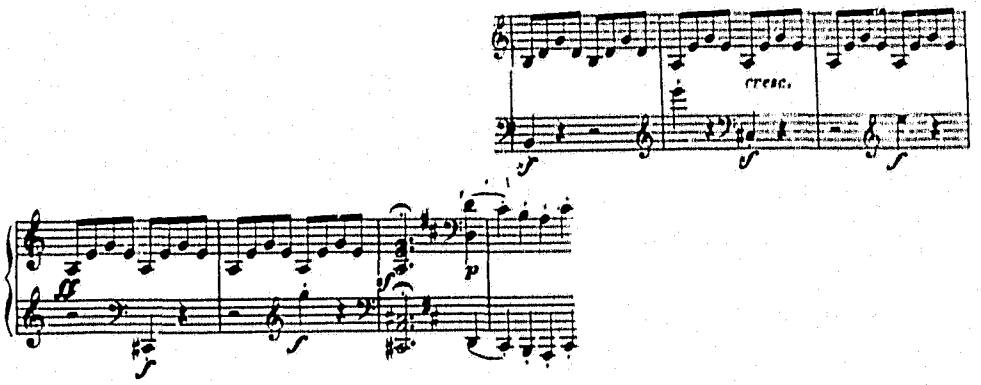
a sure and individual hand in shaping his musical materials for his own purposes. The first movement, marked *Presto*, is in sonata form, but given a few twists. In keeping with the composer's experimentation at this time with the expansion of sonata form, a thirty-measure excursion in the key of the submediant is inserted between the first theme and the arrival of the dominant in measure 53. This passage both delays and dramatizes the anticipated formal articulation (it is interesting to note that although the exposition has been greatly expanded by passages such as this one, the development in this movement is concise). Five beats of silence are incorporated between the first part of the second theme, derived from the opening gesture, and its consequent, similarly utilizing a prominent descending fourth, but also characterized by offbeat *sforzati*.



op. 10, no. 3, i, mm. 49-72

In fact, such dramatic rhythmic gestures are part and parcel of the movement as a whole: effects including silence, fermatas, syncopations and cross-rhythms demarcate nearly every major point of the sonata structure. For example, in m. 22, a fermata closes the first theme; in mm. 49-53, use of cross-rhythm sets up the first strong cadence in the key of the dominant; syncopation closes the second theme in mm. 91-2; the codetta, itself in a new rhythmic pattern, is prepared by a rest in m. 105; in m. 124, a rest concludes the exposition and introduces the development section; a fermata in m. 132 sets up an abrupt modulation in the development; in mm. 178-83, a pattern of three

beats' rest in the left hand is twice reduced to one beat, which is then followed by a fermata, ultimately preparing for the recapitulation.



op. 10, no. 3, i, mm. 178-84

The result of these manipulations is a rhythmic and metric tension that creates enormous forward momentum, particularly at this tempo, and pushes the envelope of the form.

The highly rhetorical *Largo e mesto*, in the tonic minor, incorporates the ambiguity inherent in a transfer of idiom. The very expressive melody is completely vocal in quality, and evokes the sort of recitative found in a funeral cantata or tragic opera. It is generally juxtaposed with heavy chordal structures, often in a fairly low register. As in the first movement, Beethoven here makes use of rhythmic effects as structural signposts, but not as frequently, and with greater emotional effect. The most vivid instance of this technique occurs at the end of the development, after "the mood of brightness and hope at the beginning of the F-major development [has been] negated by the fortissimo diminished-seventh chords of measure 35," which pulled the music back into the minor mode while using motives reminiscent of the opening theme.[37] A three-note figure tries, and fails, to ascend, ultimately falling nearly three octaves. At the end of this descent, the thirty-second rest between each group of three pitches is prolonged by two additional eighth rests (mm. 41-3), as the music's breath seems to falter, and the piece finally sinks back into the recapitulation. There is, then, to be no escape from the tragedy of the exposition, a fact brought home to the listener even more forcefully at the end of the coda, where the music finally, resignedly, fades away into silence.

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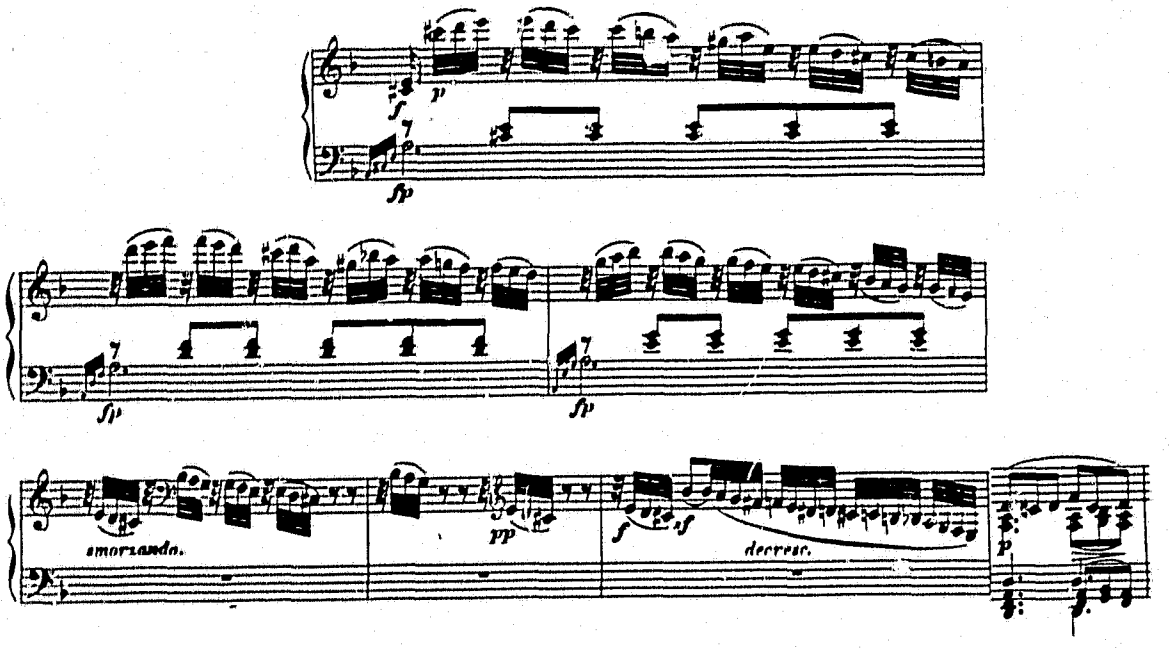
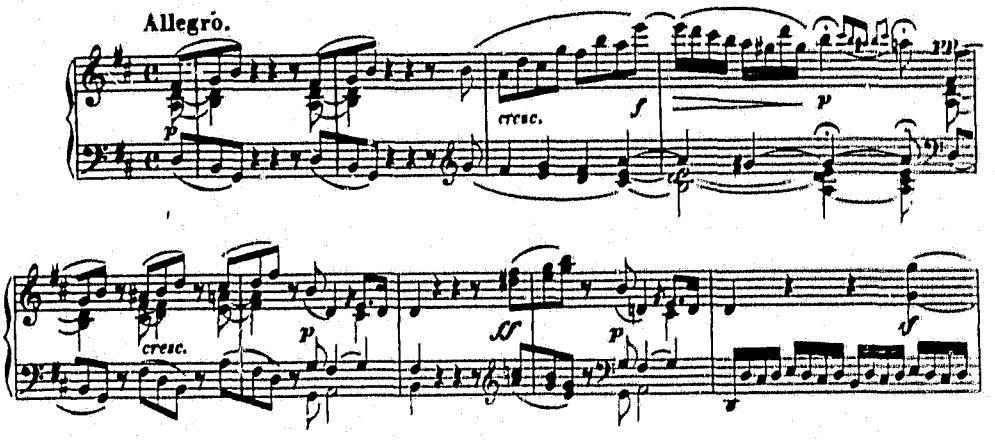
[37]William Kinderman, "Beethoven," in *Nineteenth-Century Piano Music*, ed. R. Larry Todd (New York: Schirmer, 1990), p. 57.



op. 10, no. 3, ii, mm. 38-44

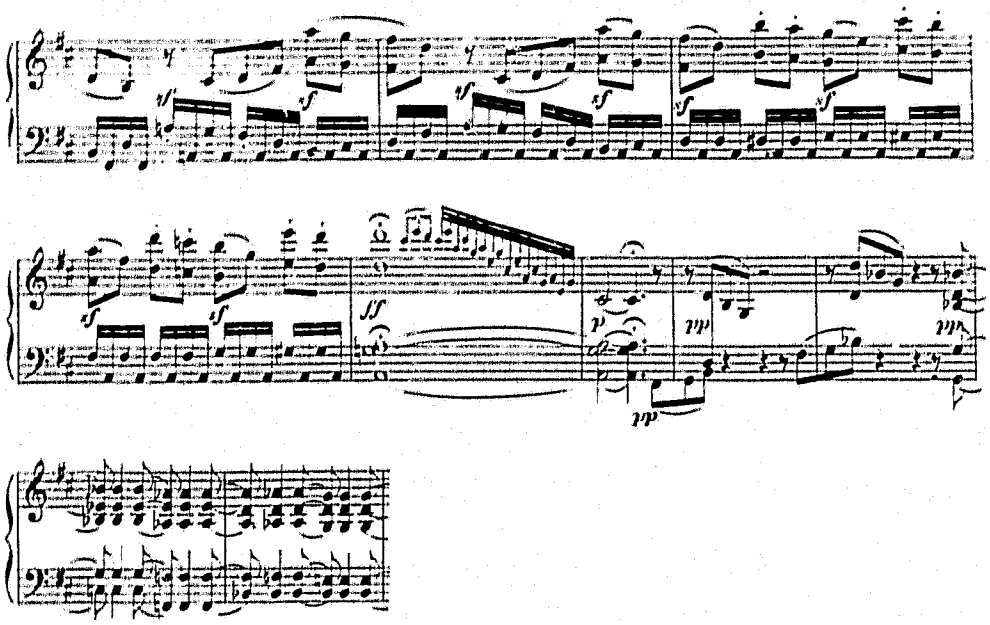
In the minuet movement of op. 10, no. 3, Beethoven has strayed far from the world of the eighteenth-century courtly dance. Beginning on a weak beat and tied across the bar, this movement would have caused a run on the refreshment table before it even got under way. The B strain of the minuet opens with a quasi-fugal procedure of four imitative entries around the descending circle of fifths, wittily bringing the dry academic world of learned counterpoint incongruously onto the dance floor, and into a movement type that generally had little use for such techniques. As a countersubject to the final entry, Beethoven prolongs the one-beat anticipation of the opening theme into five repeated "A"s, and extends it further by then trilling on that pitch. Underneath the trill, the opening theme returns, now embellished and varied somewhat. A fortissimo re-entry of the theme is answered, piano, in stretto. Subsequent appearances of the theme are fragmented, and they gradually dissipate into the concluding pianissimo. The jaunty trio offers a couple of surprises, in its use of extremely wide registral displacement in the left-hand melody, and its conclusion on an unresolved (at any rate, until the da capo) dominant seventh chord, followed by four beats of silence, thus prolonging a certain sense of ambiguity.

The finale, an *allegro* rondo, sparkles with wit. As though not quite sure of its welcome, the hesitant three-note opening motive enters softly, pauses for breath, tries again, and stops. The theme gathers strength, but lets it trickle away. One more attempt at making its point in three repetitions of the motive, on different pitch levels with briefer rests between each, also fails, as it resolves weakly with a deceptive cadence.



op. 10, no. 3, iv, mm. 1-9

It seems that the shy theme cannot quite bring itself to say what it really wants. The whole form, with its rather improvisatory quality, numerous abrupt transitions, and continual reassertion of the tentative motive, seems like an ongoing effort by the music to find itself. The deceptive cadence on a B minor chord that had thwarted the motive's efforts to continue in m. 7 returns to haunt the motive; it recurs in the guise of an even more strikingly deceptive resolution in m. 33 on B-flat, followed by an episode in that key, which strips the motive not only of its dignity but also of its own tonal centre. Finally, after more frustrating stops and starts, the theme has its say in an ascending sequence followed by a brief, *fortissimo* cadenza, but, perhaps regretting its boldness, the three-note motive returns in its soft, questioning form, before disappearing into a rhythmic accompaniment for the closing scalar and arpeggiated passagework in the right hand.



op. 10, no. 3, iv, mm. 94-102

The rondo finale of op. 10, no. 3 is music that embodies an ongoing process; as such it foreshadows even more provocative experiments in Beethoven's later works. Especially interesting are those works in which Beethoven makes use of themes whose components are gradually assembled, as in the Eroica variations op. 35, and the Scherzando movement of op. 59, no. 1, to be discussed in the next chapter.

In Beethoven's op. 10 no. 3 can be seen clearly his interest in the compositional techniques of self-reference, and to a certain extent, the roots of those procedures in the reflexive approach to musical structure taken by Haydn. A special type of reflexivity, the paradox, came increasingly to occupy Beethoven; that which had been a witty means of introducing drama, surprise, or humor into his musical fabric for Haydn became a more powerful and expressive instrument in Beethoven's hands. The various circumstances in which Beethoven used musical paradox as a structural tool in different works dating from throughout his career, and the aesthetic uses to which he put it, are the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter Three

Beethoven's use of paradox, rooted in the reflexive procedures characteristic of Haydn's mature instrumental music, was from the beginning a means used toward different ends than Haydn's. The older composer's musical reflexivity jousted, in a spirit of raillery, with eighteenth-century conventions that were culturally and musically normative, often with comic or high comic results. Although they are musical and intellectual structures of the highest integrity, his works do not essay the depth of introspection and breadth of exploration of the personal and universal psyche that were to become increasingly important aspects of Beethoven's compositions, particularly after 1818. A critical apparatus based on the underlying idea of reflexivity, but regarding artworks from a rather different vantage point, thus will be useful in illuminating the compositional strategies of paradox employed by Beethoven. William Empson's *Seven Types of Ambiguity* of 1930 is a classic landmark of literary criticism, whose insights into the techniques of individual authors and poetic practice in general have been highly influential; Empson's analytical framework can be adapted for musical purposes without doing violence to his theory, although the term "paradox" is preferable in this case (and will be used henceforward, except in direct references or quotations, in this chapter) to "ambiguity," since music's essence (in comparison to that of language) is arguably ambiguous by definition.[1] Empson uses "ambiguity" in an extended sense, regarding as relevant to his subject "any verbal nuance, however slight, which gives room for alternative reactions to the same piece of language;"[2] I shall use "paradox" in a similarly extended sense, covering musical phenomena in which some sort of reflexive device, internal contradiction, contrast, ambiguity, or multiple meaning is employed in order to add a particular richness of detail or

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[1]William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, 3rd ed. (London: Chatto, 1953, repr. London: Hogarth, 1984). Since formulating these ideas initially, I have found that I have not been the only writer to discover the usefulness of Empson's book for analysis of music (see Kenneth DeLong, "Roads Taken and Retaken: Foreground Ambiguity In Chopin's Prelude In A-flat Op. 28, No. 17," *Canadian University Music Review* 11 (1991), 34-49, in which the discussion of Empson's types is fairly incidental to the author's larger point, however), and of course ambiguity as a general aesthetic resource in music has been analyzed from a number of different viewpoints [see, for instance, David Epstein, *Beyond Orpheus* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1979)].

With regard to music's ambiguous essence, see chapter four, which discusses the relationship between language and music in detail.

[2]Empson, p. 1.

complexity of overall structure and symbolism. Unlike ambiguity, implicit in the idea of paradox is the notion of resolution; the self-contradiction is only apparent, which permits a structure capable of expressing meaning that would be difficult or impossible to express in any other way.[3] It is important at this point to note that I am interested in using Empson's types simply as a preliminary means of approaching the many different sorts of paradox present in Beethoven's music, not as the basis for any rigid framework of utterly exclusive musical categories. Empson himself acknowledges some blurring between his types when he discusses certain complex poetic and dramatic examples, but reminds his readers, as I remind mine, that he intended his types to represent a scale of increasing logical disorder; therefore, in instances where it might seem that an example could belong to one of two adjacent types, this criterion has been the decisive one. I might also add the disclaimer here that it is, of course, always difficult to import critical theory from one field to another, and that for some of these types it has been difficult to draw direct musical analogies; however, I believe that the essence of Empson's types and the relationships between them have been faithfully observed, and that they can be extremely useful in an initial approach to the wide range of paradoxical effects in the works of Beethoven.

Empson has traditionally been regarded as aligned with the New Critics; it is interesting to note in his defense of his extension of the meaning of "ambiguity" for his own critical purposes, however, a position relying on what could be described as the mythic power of great writing. Asserting that all good poetry is ambiguous, he goes on to say:

> As I understand it, there is always in great poetry a feeling of generalisation from a case which has been presented definitely; there is always an appeal to a background of human experience which is all the more present when it cannot be named. I do not have to deny that the narrower chisel may cut more deeply into the heart. What I would suppose is that, whenever a receiver of poetry is seriously moved by an apparently simple line, what are moving in him are the traces of a great part of his past experience and of the structure of his past judgments. Considering what it feels like to take real pleasure in verse, I should think it surprising, and on the whole rather disagreeable, if even the most searching criticism of such lines of verse could find nothing

[3]It is this aspect of paradox that, I think, separates it from Kerman's notions of contrast and dissociation (regarding which see Chapter Five), as well as from the more general idea of musical ambiguity.

> whatever in their implications to be the cause of so straddling a commotion and so broad a calm.[4]

His analytical method of discovering and dealing with these implications consists of "teasing out the meanings of the text" in situations where "a piece of writing is felt to offer hidden riches [in which] one phrase after another lights up and appears as the heart of it,"[5] and evaluating and separating the ambiguities therein, according to their intricacy. Empson divides poetic ambiguities into seven broad and flexible categories:

> There are three possible scales or dimensions, that seem of reliable importance, along which ambiguities may be spread out: the degree of logical or grammatical disorder, the degree to which the apprehension of the ambiguity must be conscious, and the degree of psychological complexity concerned. Of these, the first seems the one about which there is least danger of talking nonsense, the one it is most important to be clear about, and the one to which least critical attention has so far been paid. My seven types, so far as they are not merely a convenient framework, are intended as stages of advancing logical disorder.[6]

Although Empson does make reference to the other two scales of measurement of ambiguity mentioned, he is indeed concerned for the most part with logical and grammatical disorder, and it is to similar classes of musical paradox that the current discussion is primarily addressed, leaving aside a more detailed discussion of the provocative questions of reception and import for later chapters.

Empson's ambiguities of the first type, those he regards as the simplest, are those in which a detail (a word or grammatical structure, for instance) is effective in several ways at once (for example, by the use of comparisons with several points of likeness, antitheses with several points of difference, comparative adjectives, subdued metaphors, rhythms which suggest extra meanings, or dramatic irony).[7] While they are perhaps simplest of the types in essence, Empson acknowledges them as the most difficult to define; obviously the net has been of necessity cast very wide here, and the ambiguities involved are subtle ones.[8] Despite the frequent delicacy of the effects produced, Empson argues that in these small things often is found the fingerprint of an

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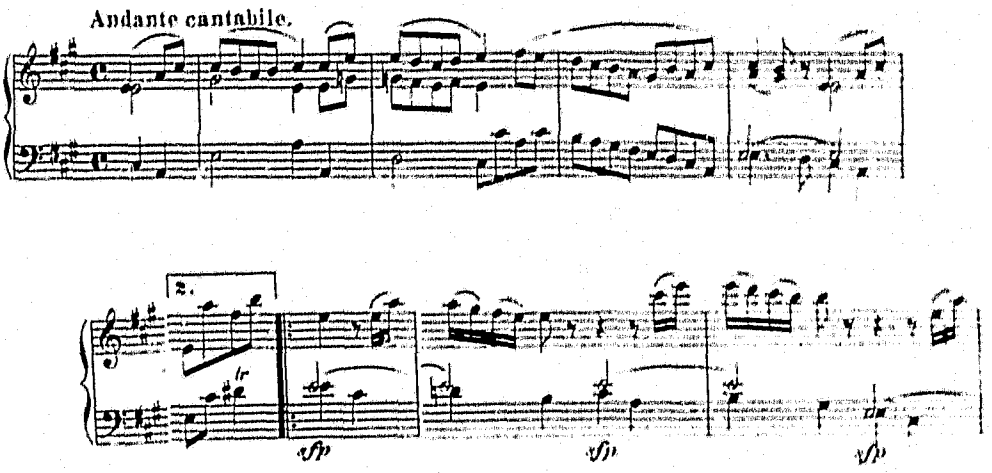
[4]Empson, p. xv.
[5]Empson, pp. x, xi.
[6]Empson, p. 48.
[7]See Empson, p. v.
[8]Empson, p. 3.

author's unique style: "it is because of the wealth of implication which must be carried by sentences in poetry, because they must start from scratch and put the reader in possession of the entire attitude they assume, that the notion of 'sincerity' is important, and that it is so hard to imitate a style."[9] Different types of small paradoxes in Beethoven's music of various periods seem characteristic of him, and may be regarded as belonging to this category. Perhaps the most famous of these is the achievement of modulation, frequently to unexpected tonal areas, by the use of a single, unharmonized, and therefore mysterious note, repeated in isolation, followed by a new section in a new key, which only then explains the function of the paradoxical pitch. A good example can be found between the third and fourth movements of the Piano Sonata in B-flat major op. 106 (*Hammerklavier*). The sonata, which exploits both on the surface and over the long range the tonal tension between B-flat and B, has four movements, in B-flat major, B-flat major, F-sharp minor, and B-flat major, respectively. The *Adagio* third movement cadences clearly in F-sharp major, after a long series of soft tonic chords, and is followed without any break by the *Largo* introduction to the fugal finale. It begins with "a soft arpeggio, dolce, of every F-natural on Beethoven's keyboard....[in which] a hint is given of what is to come, without a complete resolution into the new tonality."[10] Before resolving into B-flat, however, Beethoven first returns to F-sharp major (spelled as G-flat), moves to B major followed by A major. Repeated A major chords gradually drop their third and fifth members, and we are left with bare octaves. The lowest A then drops down a third (descending thirds are extremely important in the work as a whole) to F natural, and Beethoven is ready at last to introduce the B-flat fugue (whose subject is born of the F-A interval, not incidentally).

Empson further makes the point in his first chapter that "ambiguity is a phenomenon of compression."[11] As such, first-type paradoxes might be considered to be present, if we extend Empson's metaphor a bit, in Beethoven works which employ foreshortening, which includes not only those cases of motivic diminution, such as is found in Op. 119, no. 4, but also situations in which pitches, chords, or

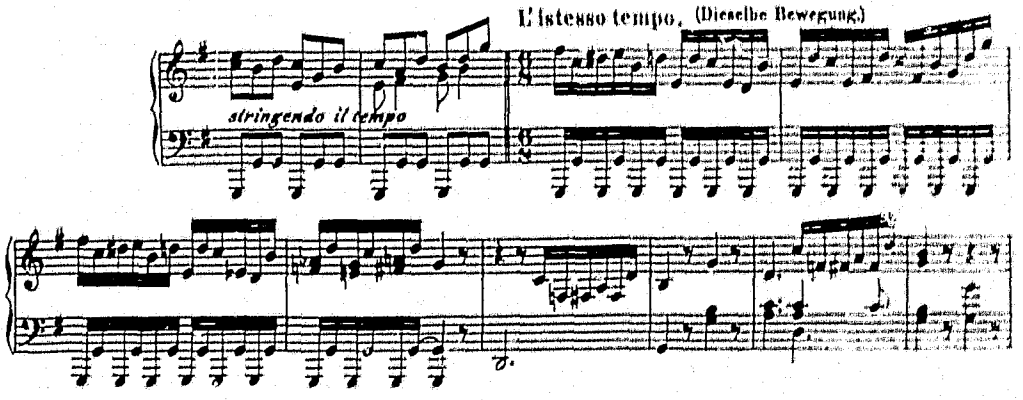
[9]Empson, p. 29.
[10]Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven* (New York and London: Norton, 1972), pp. 426-27.
[11]Empson, p. 31.

motives are capable of reinterpretation in a new context (a circumstance which obviously has a bearing on the *Hammerklavier* example just noted).



op. 119, no. 4, mm. 1-4, 9-11

An example can be found in the same set of bagatelles, in no. 6, in which the closing tonic chord in the feminine cadence that marks the end of one phrase, also serves as the upbeat to the next phrase.[12]



op. 119, no. 6, mm. 38-47

In a like manner, in the fugue of the Piano Sonata op. 110, a tonic pitch at a cadence serves double duty by also acting as an upbeat to the final statement of the subject, in mm. 200-1. Beethoven frequently made use of this sort of foreshortening to provide

[12]Edward T. Cone, "Beethoven's Experiments in Composition: The Late Bagatelles," *Beethoven Studies* 2, ed. Alan Tyson (London, 1977), p. 95.

links between the penultimate and final movements of multi-movement works, for example, in the Piano Sonatas opp. 53, 57, and 81a, and in the Fourth and Fifth Piano Concertos. Similar phenomena of compression are evident in works which employ other kinds of ellipsis, such as sonata forms which merge the traditional divisions of exposition and development, or development and recapitulation, into one.

Compression is also evident, in a different way, in the proliferation of tiny movements in many of the late works, the most conspicuous example of which, the B-flat String Quartet, op. 130, contains two bagatelle-like movements, the second, *Presto*, and the fourth, *Alla danza tedesca.* Beethoven's interest in such short compositions in the latter part of his career is reflected further in his return to brief character pieces for piano in the cycles of Bagatelles op. 119 and op. 126, as well as in lesser-known individual works such as the Allegretto in B minor WoO 61 (1821), Waltz in E-flat major WoO 84 (1824), and the Ecossaise in E-flat major WoO 86, Waltz in D major WoO 85, and Allegretto quasi andante in G minor WoO 61a, all of 1825. In this period, even the most gigantic compositions were sometimes built out of a constellation of many small structural units, as is the case in Beethoven's largest-scale work for piano, the Diabelli Variations op. 120.

Second-type ambiguities are those in which two or more meanings, associated with either word or syntax, are resolved into one. As opposed to the first type, which is characterized by different emphases, the second type genuinely presents alternatives, which do, however, finally yield only one result.[13] Empson states that "ambiguities of this sort may be divided into those which, once understood, remain an intelligible unit in the mind; those in which the pleasure belongs to the act of working out and understanding, which must at each reading, though with less labour, be repeated; and those in which the ambiguity works best if it is never discovered."[14] In reference to a specific example, but clearly applicable to the type as a whole, ambiguity of this kind is said to give a general sense "of compacted intellectual wealth, of an elaborate balance of variously associated feeling."[15] Good examples of this sort of thing in Beethoven's music occur in compositions which employ a paradoxical juxtaposition of two groups of sharply contrasting material, which gradually influence each other in the course of the movement or work, and end finally by combining and becoming far more than the

[13]See Empson, p. 48.
[14]Empson, p. 57.
[15]Empson, p. 57, in a discussion of Shakespeare's Sonnet XVI.

sum of their original parts. In this connection, it may be helpful to consider the following:

> In so far as it is valuable for a poet to include several rhythms, grammatical forms, or shades of meaning in a single phrase, those linguistic forms are likely to be most convenient which insist on no definite form of connection between words and allow you simply to pass on from one to the other. Thus the word 'and' will be convenient if you are bringing forward two elements of a situation, conceived as of the same logical type; consider the word 'and' in my last sentence; it could have been 'so that they' or 'but.' The word 'of' will be convenient if the two elements are related to the situation differently, and stand in some asymmetrical relation to one another....The reader may be forced to give ['and'] an extended meaning when it connects two words which are mutually exclusive unless applied in different ways....I propose to consider a linguistic form...in which two, often apparently quite different, words are flung together, followed by a word which seems to be intended to qualify both of them. This implies that they are both early attempts (the result of two casual shots) at saying the same thing...and hence their main meaning, it is implied, is a sort of highest common factor of the two of them....since this form demands that the reader should find a highest common factor of its first two nouns, it implies that he must open his mind to all their associations, so that the common factor may be as high as possible.[16]

The first movement of the Piano Sonata in F major opus 54 is a dance parody of sorts. The minuet was the most highly conventionalized form of all of the standard movements of cyclic works in the Classical period. While Haydn frequently played with listeners' expectations arising from accepted conventions in the minuet, he did so from within, subverting the spirit of the form while more or less following its letter. Here, conventions are not so much subverted as shattered, as the graceful, piano, gently rocking first section is followed, where one would normally expect the trio, by a violent outburst of forte, staccato, accented triplets in octaves. The sense of logical connection (that is, the sense of "and") is extended, in that these different passages are in a sense "flung together," followed by a gradual movement toward a statement which "qualifies both of them." Each of these groups of contrasting material progressively insinuates itself into the other over the course of the movement. Observe, for example, the adoption in the triplet theme of the characteristic major third/half-step interval pattern of the first theme, starting in m. 55; or the incorporation into the first theme of the staccato accent of the triplet theme, now in duple time, however, in m. 117, followed

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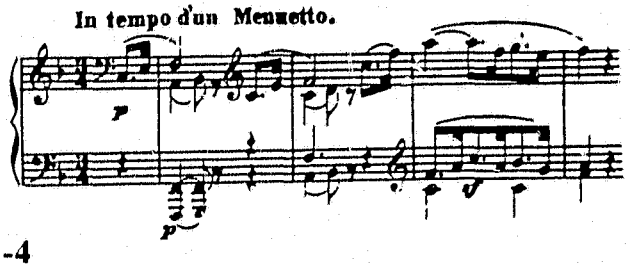
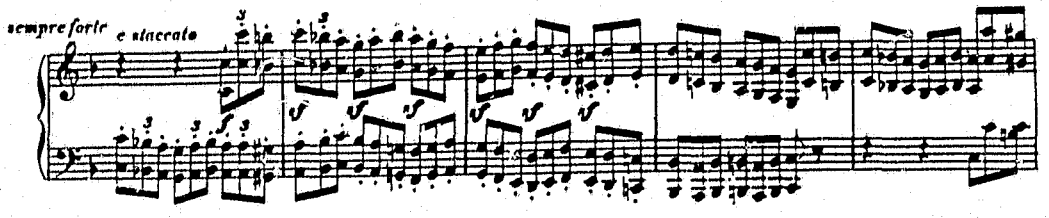
[16]Empson, pp. 88, 89, 90, 91.

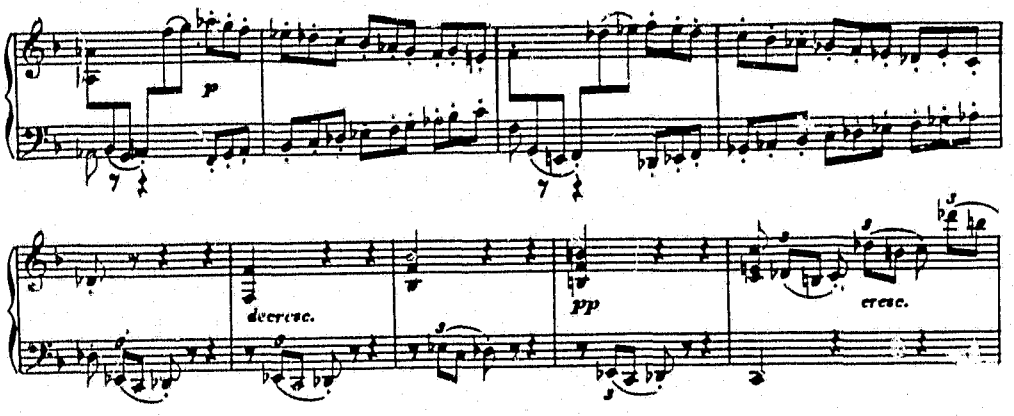
by chromatic sextuplets used as a counterpoint to the first theme beginning in m. 125. Finally, after a series of cadential trills, and a short, recitative-like cadenza, the two groups of material become fused in a complete and complex thematic union (their "highest common factor"), at once resolving and reaffirming the tension between them.



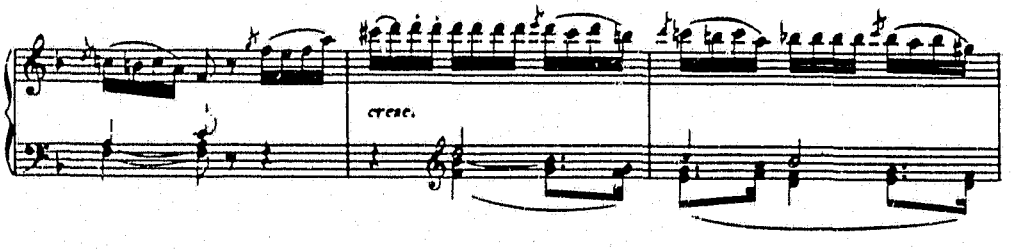
op. 54, mm. 1-4

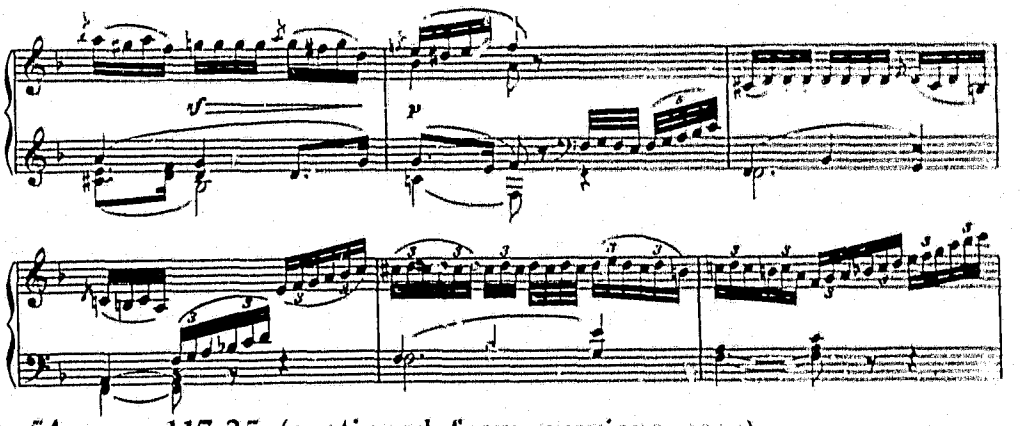


op. 54, mm. 25-29

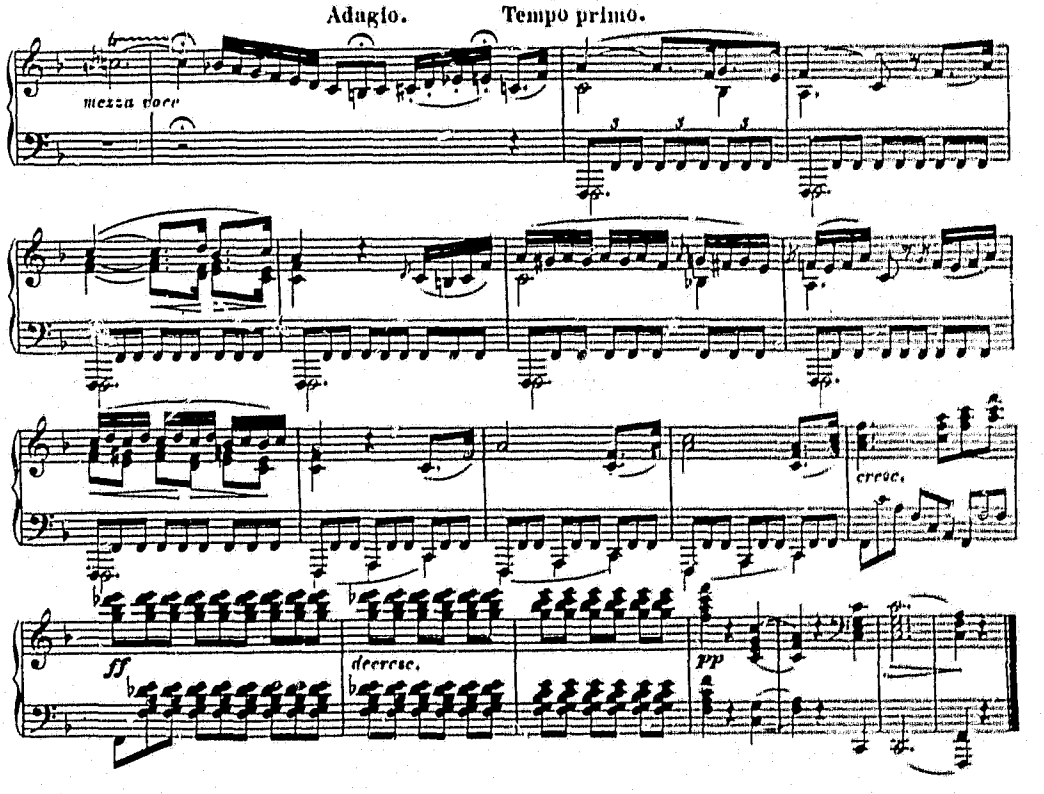


op. 54, mm. 54-62





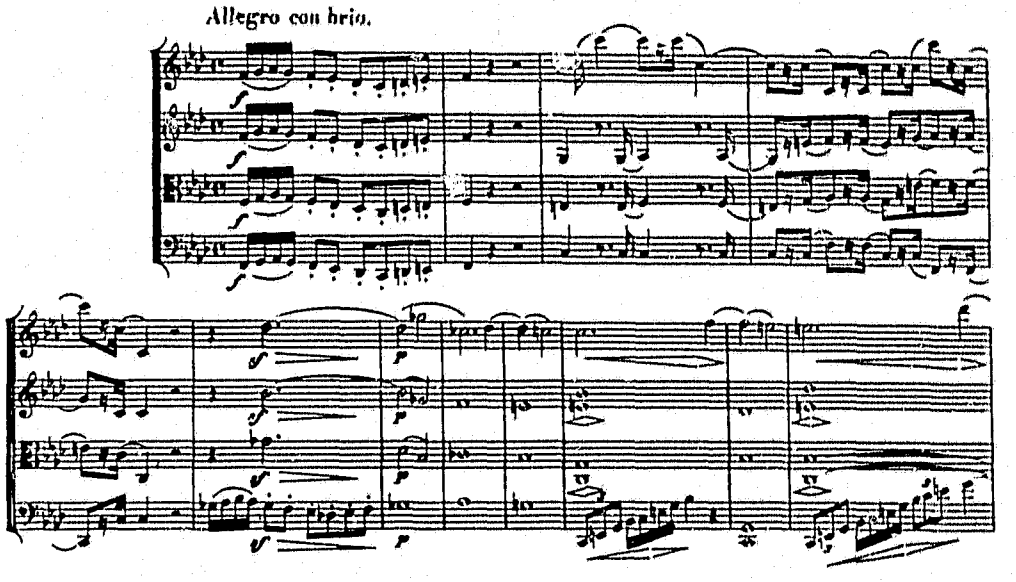
op. 54, mm. 117-25 (continued from previous page)



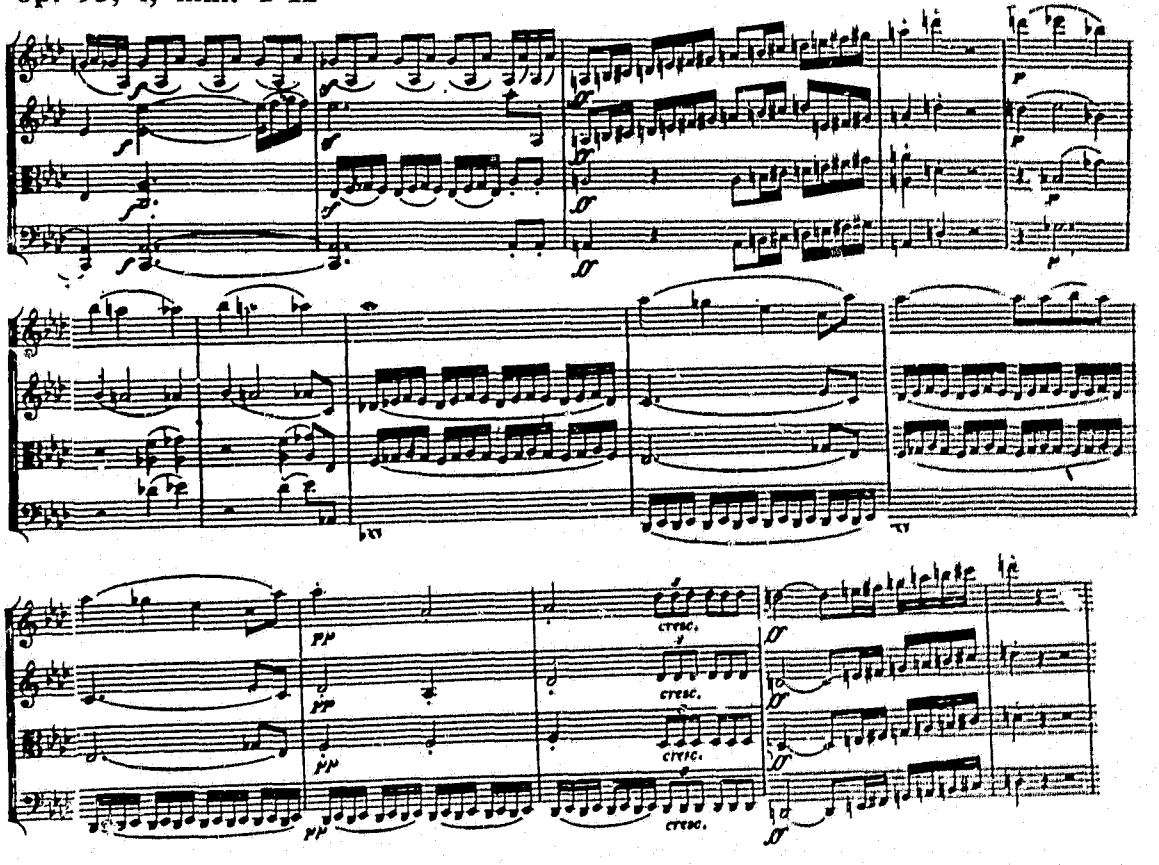
op. 54, closing

Further paradox is evident in this sonata when one moves from the first to the second, final movement. The constant cadential gestures of the opening movement, so halting and hesitant in quality, build up a degree of tension only really dissipated with the arrival of the brisk, *perpetuum mobile* finale. Overall progression from slow or halting motion to perpetuum mobile is a characteristic of others of Beethoven's keyboard works, for instance, op. 26 and the fantasy sonatas of op. 27.

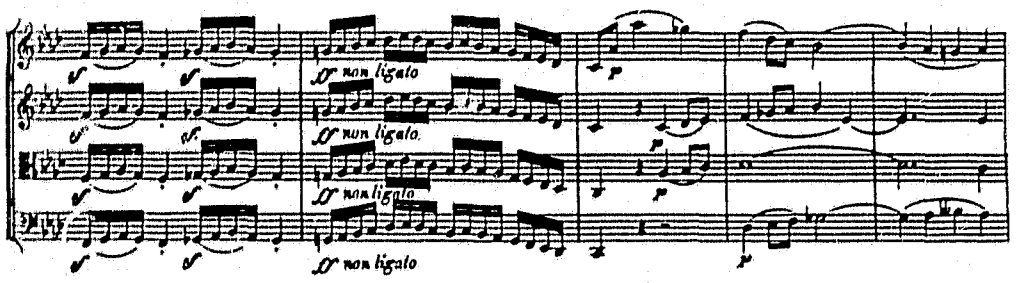
The String Quartet in F minor, opus 95 (*Quartetto serioso*) employs a more violently realized extension of the principles of logical conjunction in its first movement, a terse, furious sonata form. The first theme erupts in unison and octaves in the opening two measures. Silence interrupts its ferocious progress, and a new, sharply contrasting thematic idea of three measures length is introduced. In a new key (G-flat, the Neapolitan), the cello attempts to resurrect the opening theme, but is quelled by a lyrical effusion in the first violin, which turns the music back toward tonic, while at the same time emphasizing the half-step between C and D-flat, a reflection of the original Neapolitan relationship. These two intervals (F-G-flat; C-D-flat), as well as the tritone between C and G-flat (first heard between mm. 5-6) and the progression F to G-flat to G (found in mm. 18-20) are significant in this movement, and in the structure of the quartet as a whole. After a passage of vehement restatements of the opening figure, modulation to D-flat, foreshadowed by the emphasis on this pitch in the earlier lyrical section, occurs abruptly; the most characteristic feature of this brusque second theme is its cadence, which recalls both the opening gesture of the movement and its lyrical answer. The harmonies here, involving cadential motions from A-flat to A natural (really B-double flat), and from D-flat to D natural (really E-double flat), further affirm the importance of Neapolitan relationships in the movement (see mm. 38-49). The development section is brief, a 22-measure explosion of instrumental and dynamic effects back in the tonic key, which foregoes the more normal extended exploration of themes through various keys, while continuing to emphasize familiar intervals (F-G-flat-G; D-flat-C; D-flat-E). In recapitulating, Beethoven picks up his first theme where it had been used in the exposition as transition, and omits the lyrical passage which had been used to prepare the unexpected modulation (to flat VI) in the exposition. Although there is now no need for this theme or this key, Beethoven moves to D-flat in m. 87 anyway, which in this case feels fresh and unsettling. This short tonal excursion is followed by a move to F major in m. 93, after the second theme is already under way, and, at the point at which the exposition turned toward the Neapolitan, the music now goes briefly to the ordinary supertonic, G major, in an astonishing stroke of color (mm. 107-112), before returning to tonic. A coda nearly the same length as the development section makes up for the abbreviation of the recapitulation, and recalls in miniature most of the material of the movement: the opening gesture, the harmonic motion to flat VI, and the stubborn insistence on semitone motives (D-flat and C, E and F).



op. 95, i, mm. 1-12



op. 95, i, mm. 36-50



op. 95, i, mm. 84-88

In this movement, the listener's sense of "and" may seem to be all but obliterated by the incredibly sharp juxtapositions of material, the remote modulations, and the fantastically elliptical approach to form; Joseph Kerman notes that, "all through the Quartet in F minor one senses Beethoven's impatience (or fury) with conventional bridge and cadential passages of every kind--the more or less neutral padding material of the classic style....Now he will simply do without them."[17] What qualifies and resolves the disjunctions are a range of associations to which the audience must be alive in order to make "the highest common factor" between them "as high as possible": the Neapolitan relationships throughout, the second theme cadence which recalled both parts of the first theme, the use of the lyrical theme to introduce a new key in the exposition and the subsequent surprising omission of the theme and more surprising retention of the modulation in the recapitulation, and so on. The compression of thought here is both radical and difficult, and results in a "formal scheme...as ingenious as it is original."[18] Overall, this procedure represents a trend "that will become more and more pronounced in his later music...away from traditional development procedures toward more flexible and more gnomic expression."[19]

Empson's third type of ambiguity obtains when two apparently unconnected meanings are manifest at the same time, as when "two ideas, which are connected only by being both relevant in the context, can be given in one word simultaneously."[20] Thus, the third type may include those sorts of verbal ingenuities defined as puns, but the author asserts that simple semantic games are not his main concern. The point of

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[17]Joseph Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets* (New York and London: Norton, 1979), p. 171.
[18]Kerman, p. 173.
[19]Kerman, p. 174.
[20]Empson, p. 102.

these ambiguities is to enhance the sharp distinction between the two ideas involved; the fact that the two meanings are rolled into one word is an effect of concentration, and forces the reader to focus mainly on the ingenuity of the device, and less so on its consequences. Although a pun may involve ideas so different that "their clash in a single word will mirror the tension of the whole situation," it is more usual to find those of a kind which "demand an attention which is not absorbed into the attention demanded by the rest of the poem, and are a separate ornament on their own."[21]

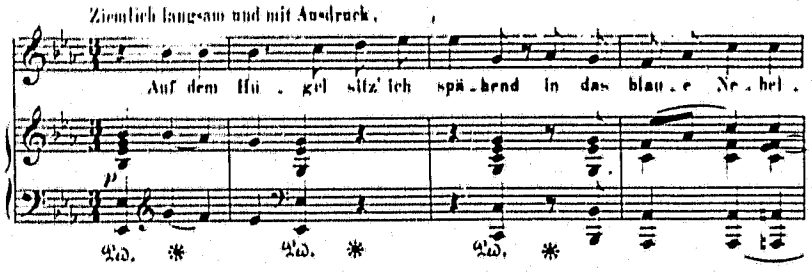
This type of paradox may occur musically when old material recurs in a new context: the original meaning of the passage is altered by what has intervened, and by the new function it is forced to serve in its new position; that is, the two ideas involved are the intrinsic and the retrospective implications of the material in question. An excellent example of such a musical paradox can be found in Beethoven's only song cycle, *An die ferne Geliebte*, op. 98, of 1816. A setting of six poems by Alois Jeitteles, the cycle employs a folklike approach to song composition, within an overall structure marked by artful connections in the form of carefully planned keys and subtle transitions between songs, as well as motivic transformations which ultimately serve to derive the melodic material of the last five songs from the first.[22] The whole cycle is a seminal essay in Romanticism, as Charles Rosen has noted, but for the present purpose, the final song is most interesting.[23] The lonely singer is sitting on a hillside at the beginning of the cycle, longing for his beloved, who is far away. The first song describes his unhappiness, the second, the mountains and valleys that separate him from his dear one. In the third song, he begs the brook to take messages for him to her, while in the fourth, he appeals to the clouds to take him with them. Spring and the reunion of lovers is the subject of the fifth song. The final song urges the loved one to "take these songs," and to "sing what I sang," which will mean that "then what has

[21]Empson, p. 104.

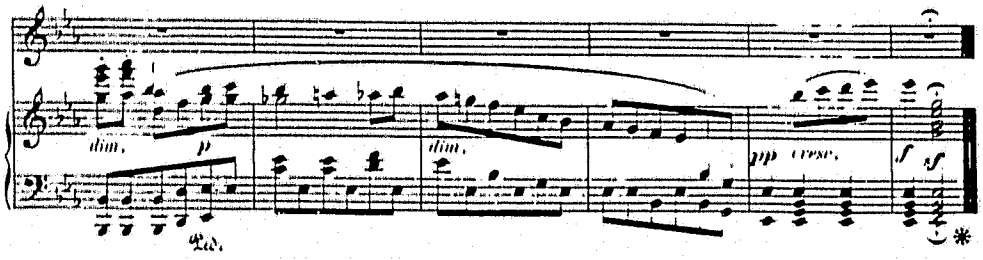
[22]See Christopher Reynolds, "The Representational Impulse in Late Beethoven, I: *An die ferne Geliebte*," *Acta Musicologica* 60 (1988), pp. 44-5. Reynolds (see pp. 47-8) also notes that the derivation of much of the motivic material of all the remaining songs from the first one is essentially a theme and variations procedure, an observation borne out by the sketch situation (the first song, like the theme in many of Beethoven's theme and variation movements, is sketched much more thoroughly and extensively than are any of the other songs).

[23]Rosen's discussion of the cycle as a work more in tune with the generation following Beethoven is found in *The Classical Style*, pp. 402-404.

kept us far apart, must give way before these songs."[24] Motives kept separated in the first song are finally presented in a synthesis in the coda of the sixth song, representing the hope for spiritual and physical union with the beloved. That this synthesis connotes only the hope for this union and not the union itself is perhaps suggested by the final gesture of the cycle. The last phrase of the cycle, in the piano alone, is also its first phrase; the form has been made circular (mirroring the circular tonal plan of the cycle), in a gesture which may imply that the singer's hopes are to remain just that, and that natural forces will not or cannot help the singer to regain his distant beloved. Harmonically and melodically, the cadence is inconclusive; emotionally, it is tentative, indicating that completion lies outside of the bounds of the music as it stands, a telling comment on the text.



op. 98, no. 1, opening

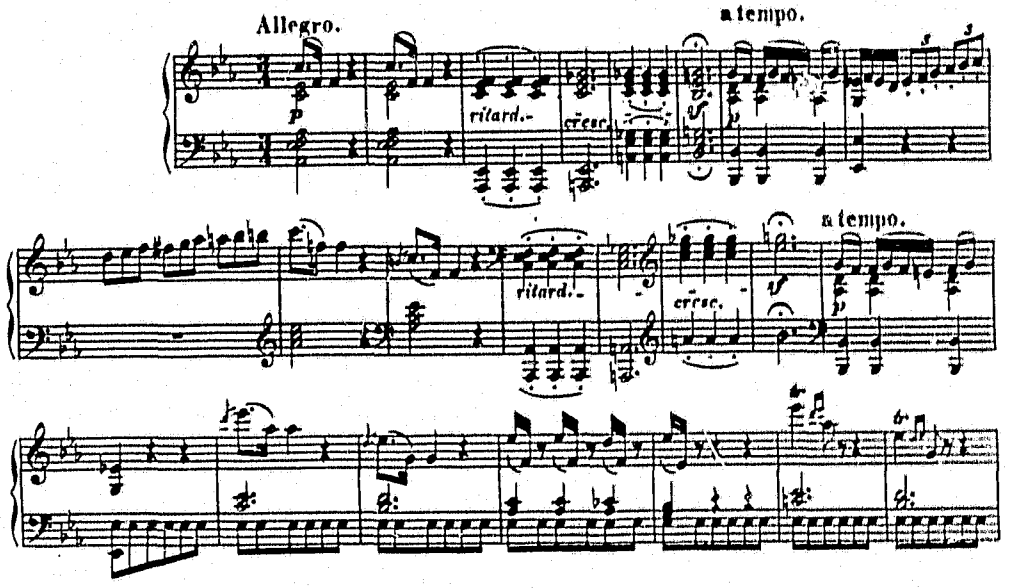


op. 98, no. 6, conclusion

Other musical paradoxical puns occur when a gesture with an accepted conventional function is used out of context, as when a cadential figure is used for an

[24]Reynolds, p. 52. Although I find his explanation of the structure of the cycle as a subtly realized variation work to be convincing, I part company with Reynolds when it comes to the final atmosphere of the cycle; he believes that total symbolic union is achieved, while I cannot hear the final gesture as anything other than an undermining of that conclusion.

opening motion, or when a sense of closure is undercut by various details of construction, or when a work begins in a harmonically mysterious fashion. For example, the first movement of the Piano Sonata in E-flat, opus 31, no. 3, begins off tonic, on a supertonic seventh chord in first inversion, and the tonic harmony is not heard until m. 8, at which point it is again undercut by moves toward the subdominant, moving finally to dominant. E-flat is only clearly established with the restatement of the first theme beginning in m. 16, this time hammered home by the ostinato eighth-note insistence on the tonic pitch in the bass.



op. 31, no. 3, i, mm. 1-23

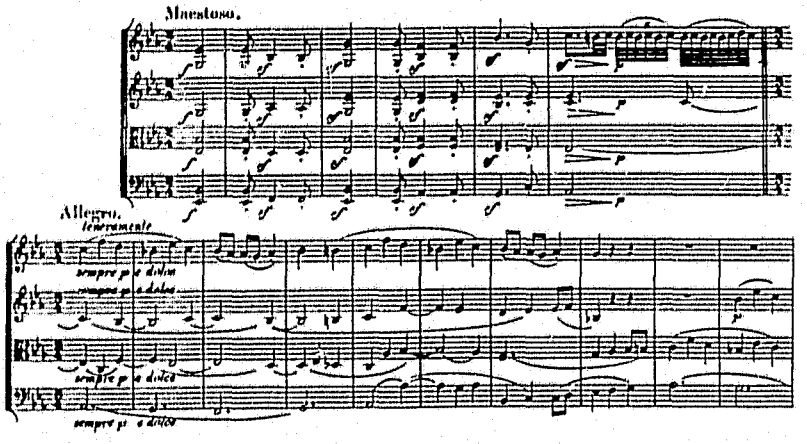
The end of the development section prepares not E-flat, then, but the off-tonic sonority (i.e., supertonic) with which the movement began, so the tonic key returns only a few measures into the recapitulation, rather than at the beginning of it, as is usual.

The third type also takes on a more generalized form where there is reference to more than one universe of discourse. This sort of ambiguity, which occurs when "what is said is valid in, refers to, several different topics...several modes of judgment or of feeling," may be constructed in one of two main ways:

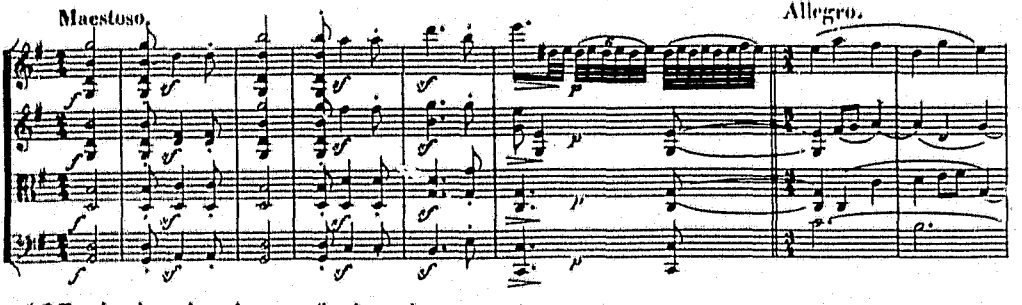
> It may make a single statement and imply various situations to which it is relevant; thus I should call it an ambiguity of this type when an allegory is felt to have many levels of interpretation; or it may describe two situations and leave the reader to infer various things which can be said about both of them; thus I should call it an ambiguity of this type when an ornamental comparison is not merely using one thing to

> illustrate another, but is interested in two things at once, and is making them illustrate one another mutually.[25]

Musical paradoxes involving reference to more than one universe of discourse are extremely common in Beethoven. For instance, there is the continuing interest in the juxtaposition of public and private gestures within a work, movement, or thematic complex, as in the first movement of the String Quartet in E-flat, op. 127. The fanfare-like *Maestoso* opening is completely self-possessed, facing determinedly outward. It soon softens, however, and dissolves into its *teneramente, sempre piano e dolce Allegro* consequent, a mellifluous song that permits the return of the *Maestoso* theme only twice more. It occurs once in introducing the development section, while its final appearance, in a compressed form, is as an episode within that section. The episode is, in fact, a false reprise, in which the *Maestoso* theme is answered by a threefold statement of the cadential portion of the original *Allegro* period, the repetition having been necessitated by the omission of the main part of the theme. The private outpouring of song thus overpowers the grander public flourish.

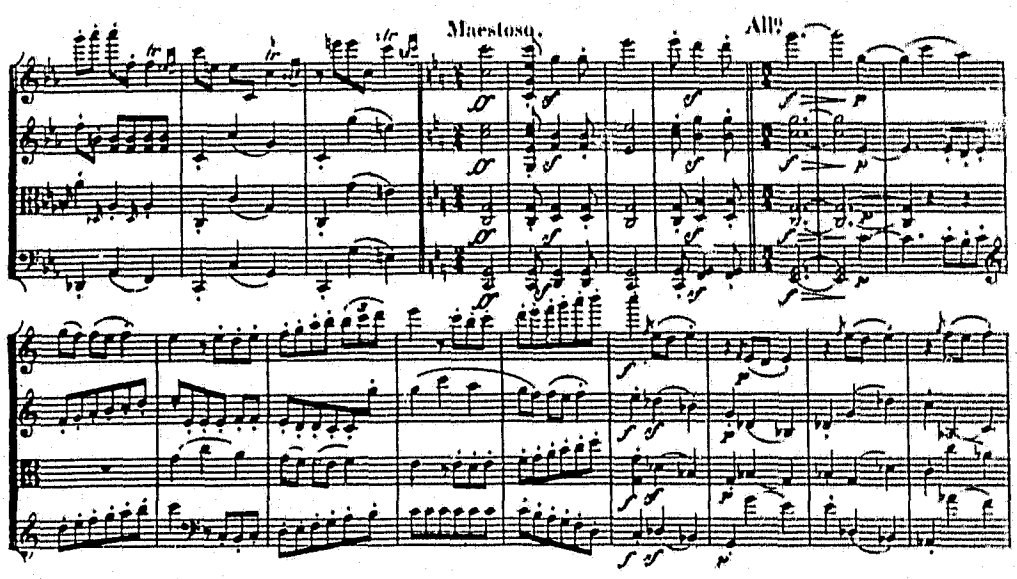


op. 127, i, opening



op. 127, i, beginning of development

[25]Empson, pp. 111-12.



op. 127, i, false reprise

However, remnants of the public theme resonate in the private one: the *Maestoso*'s off-beat *sforzandi* are echoed in the suspensions and anticipations found in the interior parts of the *Allegro*; also, the final two melodic intervals, apart from the ornament, of the fanfare (descending third followed by an ascending fourth) prefigure the ascending fourth/descending third pattern that is most characteristic of the song theme. This example might be regarded as, in Empson's terms, an "ambiguity which talks about one thing and implies several ways of judging or feeling about it."[26]

"Ambiguities of [the] type which talks about several things at once"[27] are found in other generalized third-type musical paradoxes. These occur, for example, in the use of instrumental recitative, a reference to the world of opera in a purely instrumental sphere, a frequently used procedure in Beethoven's music, especially in the late works; instrumental recitative, appears, for instance, in the Piano Sonata in D minor op. 31, no. 2 (the "Tempest"), in the Ninth Symphony, and in the Piano Sonata in A-flat major op. 110. The recitative passage in the Tempest sonata's first movement, a single voice speaking over a wash of dissonance created by the pedal, was foreshadowed from the very first chord, a very soft, *Largo* unveiling of the dominant chord in first inversion, the harmony which normally would presage a passage of recitative in an operatic setting. While the theme which follows the opening gesture is fluid, melodic, and fast,

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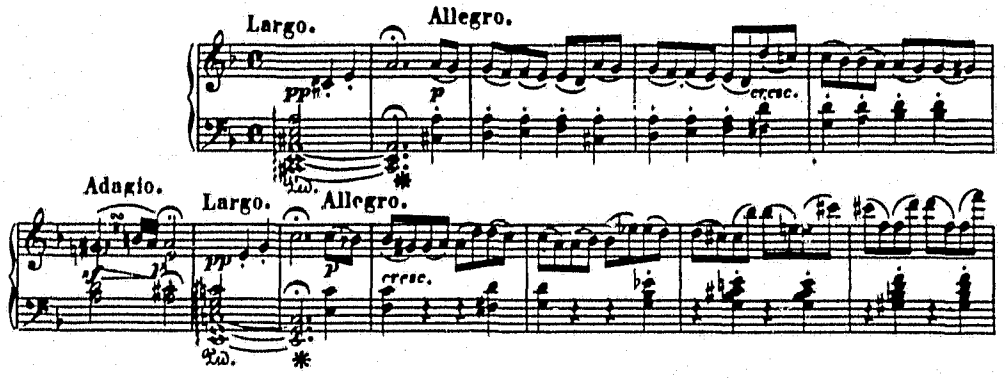
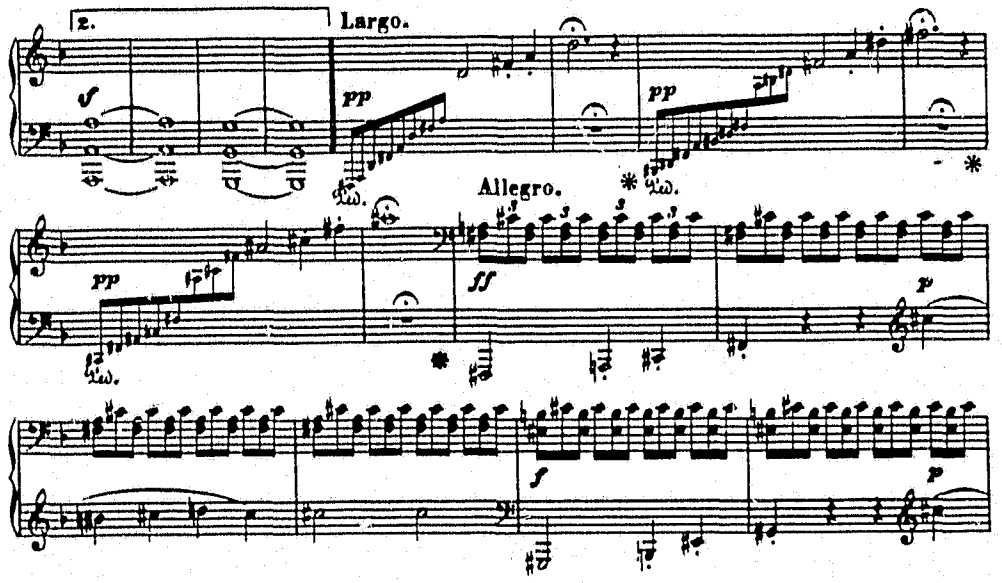
[26]Empson, p. 125.
[27]Empson, p. 125.

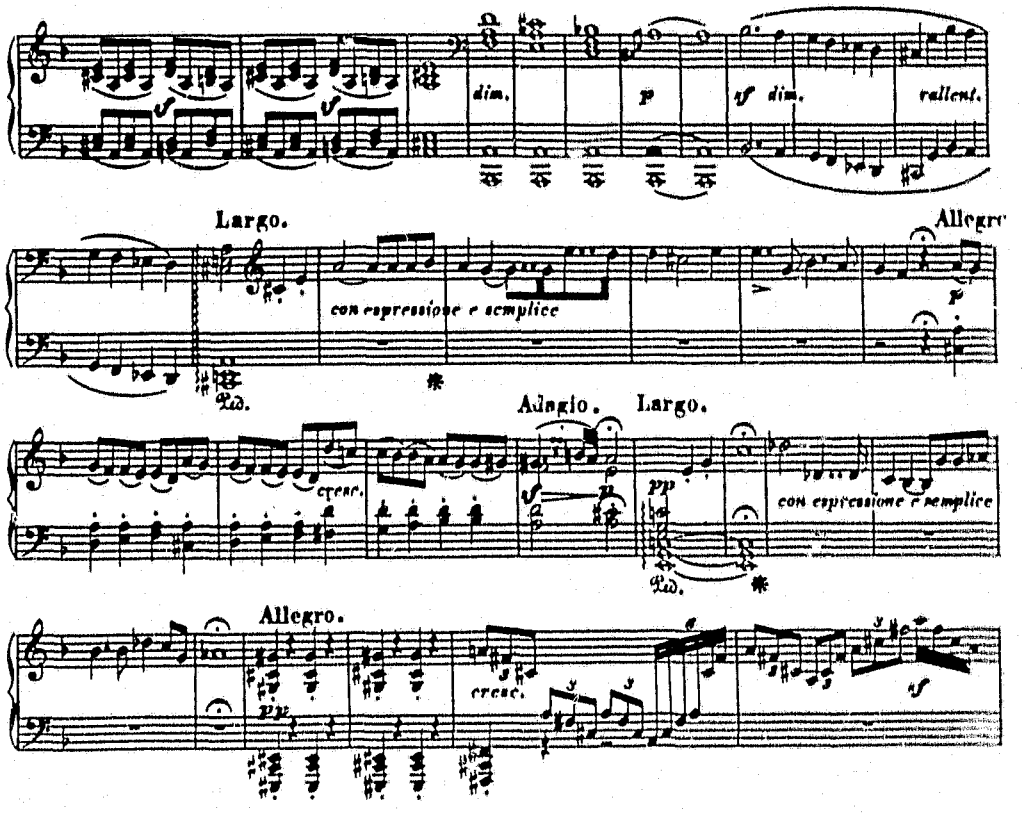
not to mention distinctly un-vocal in quality, it does recast the initial arpeggiated figure in the transition following the first theme. This arpeggio is also made much of in the development section. The *Largo* gesture reappears, each time revealing a little more of itself, and finally (in the recapitulation) grants short statements of recitative on its last two entrances.



op. 31, no. 2, i, opening



op. 31, no. 2, i, mm. 89*bis*-104



op. 31, no. 2, i, mm. 131-63

The recitative in op. 110 functions in a sense as the crux of the sonata, turning away from the comical second movement, and setting up the paired *Arioso dolente* and fugue which conclude the work.[28] As in opera or oratorio, the sonata's recitative is characterized by the inflections of speech, serves to advance the musical action from one set piece to the next, as well as to herald the expressive quality of what is to come. In addition, this passage also foreshadows (in mm. 2-3) a motive that will prove to be

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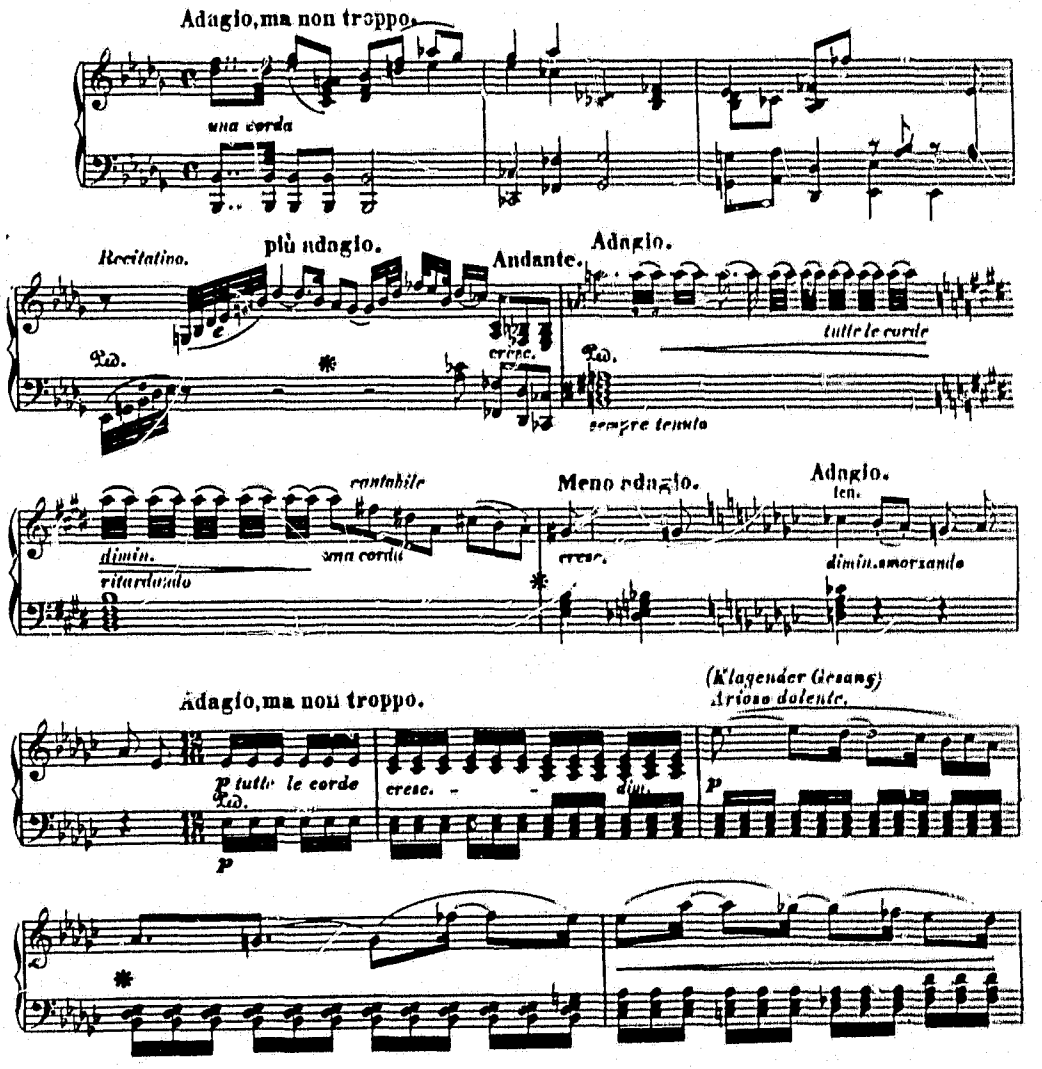
[28]The coupling in op. 110 of a song of lamentation and a fugue offering quiet consolation, held in a complex structural and emotional balance, is itself a fourth-type paradox, although the transfer of idiom involved in the recitative which precedes it, in the operatic arioso itself, and indeed, in the more subtle vocal qualities of the opening movement, must be considered as paradoxical encounters of the third kind.

of great importance in the *Arioso* (in mm. 10-11, 14-15, 18-19, and 21-24), the F-flat-E-flat half-step.[29]



op. 110, iii, opening

Still more highly operatic is the incorporation into the String Quartet in B-flat major op. 130 of a movement entitled "*Cavatina*," a symptom of Beethoven's increased interest in a vocal impulse in an instrumental idiom in his late years. A cavatina, an opera song modest in scale and varying in character, is depicted in the quartet with the

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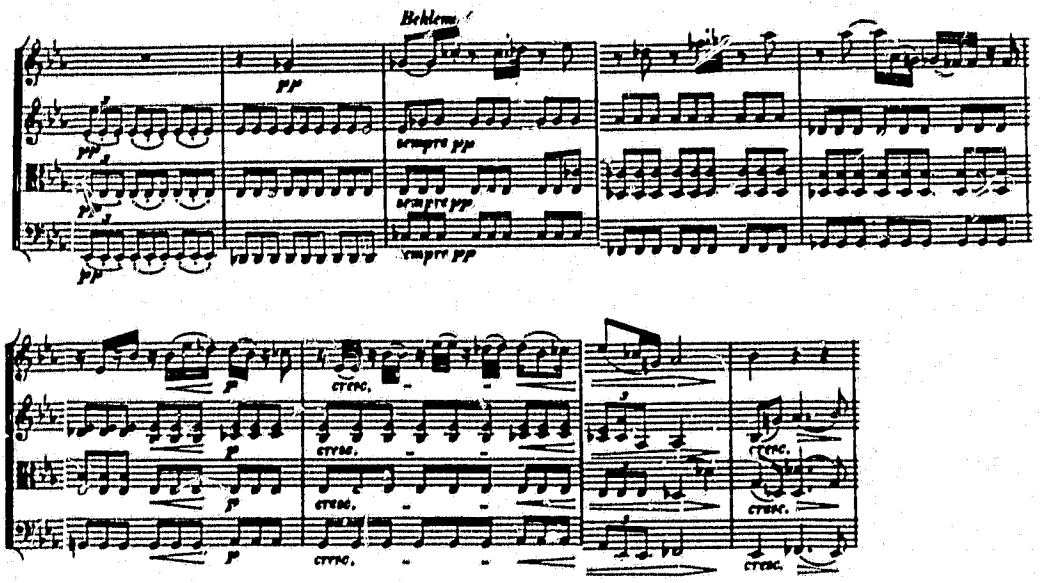
[29]See Kevin Korsyn, "Integration in Works of Beethoven's Final Period," Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1983, pp. 80-84.

first violin assuming the role of the soloist, and the other three instruments serving as the orchestra. Structured in the same way as the *Andante* of Florestan's aria in *Fidelio*, Beethoven's quartet *Cavatina* "assumes a thoroughly operatic stance. Vocality is more than evoked. It is practically transcribed."[30] The most extraordinary passage is the famous "*Beklemmt*" section, whose remote harmonies and halting, sob-like declamation evoke a mood of painful intimacy.



op. 130, v, "Beklemmt" section

Kerman believes that "Beethoven's wish, in transcribing for quartet an unwritten opera song, must have been to make the most immediate kind of emotional overture,"[31] an effort in which most listeners would concede that the composer had succeeded, and a clear instance of the use of a third-type musical paradox for reasons which go beyond the merely structural.

A special example of this category is a situation in which two matrices of association collide: "it is this (in some sense conscious) clash between different modes of feeling which is the normal source of pleasure in pastoral," for instance.[32] There is an element of wit involved when the rustic is celebrated in a learned form, such as in the *Ländler* in Haydn's symphonies and quartets, as well as in dance movements using canonic or fugal techniques, or in Beethoven's use of the country dance in various

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[30]Kerman, p. 196.
[31]Kerman, p. 199.
[32]Empson, p. 114.

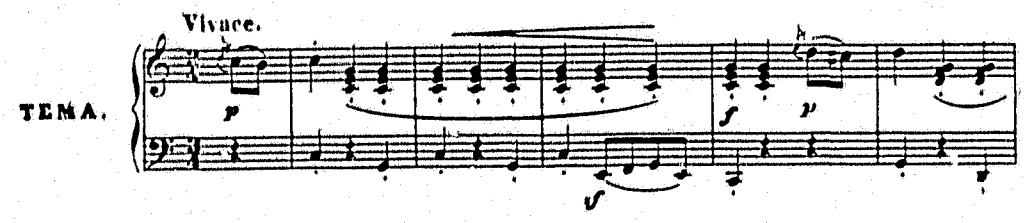
works otherwise sophisticated in tone, such as the *Alla danza Tedesca* in the B-flat Quartet, op. 130. The opposite case also pertains, as in examples discussed in the previous chapter, when subversive rustic elements intrude into the courtly, refined atmosphere of minuet movements. Other musical puns appear when there is reference to something outside the sphere of a particular opus, that is, to another work (by the same or another composer), a separate genre, or a different convention, style, or form, as in the incorporation in the second movement of op. 110 of themes based on two popular songs, "*Unsa Kätz häd Katz'ln g'habt* " ("Our cat has had kittens"), and "*Ich bin lüderlich, Du bist lüderlich*"("I'm a slob, you're a slob"), a tactic with explicitly comic results, not least because of the unlikely juxtaposition of such trivial material in an exalted medium. The richest source of this kind of third-type paradox in any single work of Beethoven is found in the *Thirty-three Variations on a Waltz by Diabelli*, op. 120, about which it has been noted, "paradox lies at the heart of this composition -- Beethoven's sublime transformations of a theme he disdained as a 'cobbler's patch' -- and its psychological complexity as well as its huge dimensions seem to stand in the way of lucid appreciation."[33] A massive work, complex in terms of both structure and affect, it employs a network of significant internal and external references as an important aspect of its overall design. Although for a complete appreciation of the composition a comprehensive study is necessary, for the purposes at hand, it will be sufficient to note briefly the existence of some of these references, and the uses to which they are put.

Beethoven began work on the Diabelli Variations in 1819, when the Viennese music publisher Anton Diabelli sent a theme of his own composition to fifty prominent composers, requesting one variation of the rather trivial waltz theme from each. Beethoven wrote not one, but twenty-three, set them aside for some time, and returned to the work in 1822-23, adding ten more variations and expanding the conclusion of the set. There are allusions to the works or style of other composers in several of the variations, for example, to Mozart's "Notte e giorno faticar" from *Don Giovanni* in variation 22, to the type of virtuoso pianism espoused by J.B. Cramer's *Pianoforte Method* in variation 23, and to the atmosphere and idiom of Bach's *Clavierübung* in variation 24, the Fughetta. Variation 31 is reminiscent of Bach's *Goldberg Variations* (especially variation 25), while the Fugue which follows evokes at its beginning a

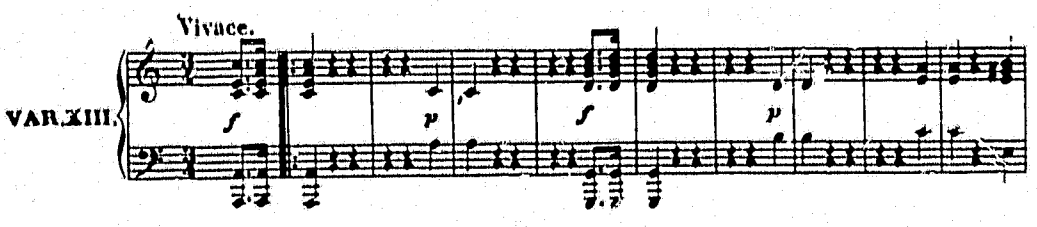
[33]William Kinderman, *Beethoven's Diabelli Variations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press of the Oxford University Press, 1987), p. xv.

Handelian approach to fugal texture. The finale begins with a classically graceful, Mozartean minuet, while Beethoven's own Piano Sonata in C minor, op. 111, is taken up as the subject-matter of the coda. This structure of reference to other composers followed by self-reference is itself a parody of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, in which at the beginning of the second act finale, quotations from Martín y Soler's *Una Cosa Rara* and Sarti's *I due Litiganti* are followed by a tune from his own *Le nozze di Figaro* (which Leporello amusingly points out as familiar).[34]

Beethoven also parodies Diabelli's theme in variations which mock the inadequate features of the theme itself. In variation 13, for example, "the harmonically static bars of Diabelli's opening theme are suppressed altogether, obliterated into the silence behind rhythmically charged chords....The humour of the variation consists in its expressive use of silence: our expectations are alternatively strained by the menacing gesture of the chords, and then dissipated into nothing."[35] Variation 21's opening four bars exaggerate the waltz's pattern of repeated chords and conventional turn motive; in the variation, "the chords repeat each harmony sixteen times, the turns multiply themselves down three octaves."[36]



op. 120, theme, opening



op. 120, variation 13, opening

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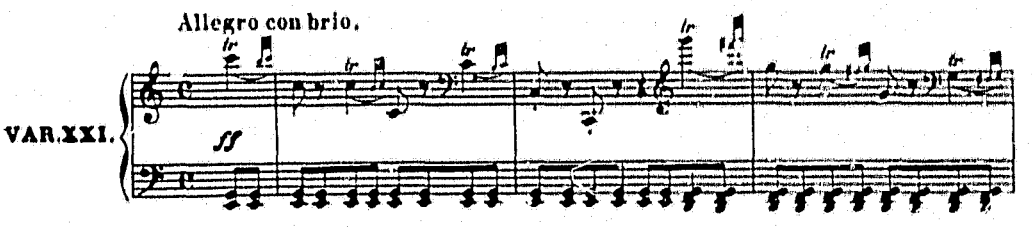
[34]Kinderman, p. 126.
[35]Kinderman, p. 70.
[36]Kinderman, p. 70.



op. 120, variation 21, opening

In a different and more important type of travesty of the theme, Beethoven "harps on the actual substance of the waltz itself--specifically those features of it which are particularly trite--and reproduces them in exaggerated form so that they become insufferably so in the parody."[37] Three parody variations, numbers 1, 15, and 25, were added in 1823, when Beethoven returned to this composition. The series of variations which make explicit reference to the waltz enabled Beethoven to impose "a larger scaffolding over the whole set, and established a significant relation between the theme and the huge edifice of variations."[38] Variation 1 is a march, which contains the waltz's descending fourth and fifth in the bass, accompanied by accented dissonances in the treble line. The fifteenth variation, a capricious, "elusive caricature,"[39] is the shortest in the set, and is characterized by its startling contrasts with the variations that immediately precede and follow it. In variation 25, the theme reappears, this time in the guise of a humorous and distorted version of a naïve German dance. The final parody variation introduces a series of interconnected variations which annihilate and transfigure the theme, leaving Diabelli's original conception far behind.

Perhaps the most interesting of all of Beethoven's referential procedures in the work is the self-reference in the final variation. The relationships between this variation and the Arietta of op. 111 are melodic, rhythmic, structural, and affective. The Arietta's variations proceed by a system of rhythmic diminutions, a technique reflected in the Minuet of variation 33 and the coda, though in a rather different form; the rhythmic figures in op. 120 are somewhat simpler than in the sonata movement. Motivic similarities are evident between the opening three-note gesture of the Minuet

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[37]Kinderman, p. 71.
[38]Kinderman, p. 129.
[39]Kinderman, p. 100.

and the Arietta theme, a parallel made much more striking when the figure recurs in an imitative texture in the coda. Structural affinities exist between the coda of the variations and the fourth variation of the Arietta movement, particularly in the use of off-beat dissonance and syncopations to delay cadence points, thus providing an immense sense of release and rhythmic animation when the cadence is finally reached. And finally, like the sonata, the end of the variations seems to reverberate beyond its close, with implications that extend into the silence waiting after the final chord.

An ambiguity of the fourth type occurs, Empson says, "when two or more meanings of a statement do not agree among themselves, but combine to make clear a more complicated state of mind in the author."[40] This definition is obviously broad enough to subsume that of the third type, but Empson points out that he intended the third type to cover only those examples which caused the reader to be mainly conscious of the verbal subtlety, while in the fourth type, "the subtlety may be as great, the pun as distinct, the mixture of modes of judgment as puzzling, but they are not in the main focus of consciousness because the stress of the situation absorbs them, and they are felt to be natural under the circumstances."[41] In the third type, two sharply differentiated moods or ideas are laid next to each other, and made relevant by a generalization, whereas in the fourth type, "they react with one another to produce something different from either."[42] This category in practice helps an author to express feelings fruitfully when his mind is mixed, enabling a "variety of irrelevant, incompatible ways of feeling...to modify, enrich, leave their mark upon [something] plain...to make it something more memorable."[43] Empson believes that "these meanings are only worth detaching in so far as they are dissolved into the single mood of the poem," and that analysis of fourth-type ambiguities "can only be offered as another mode of approaching...a mysterious...totality."[44] What is expressed in the fourth type is complex, deeply rooted, necessary, and perhaps not entirely conscious.

Paradoxes in which a complicated authorial attitude is expressed in the combination of possible alternative meanings occur in Beethoven's music in instances of foreshadowing, in parenthetical enclosures, and perhaps most clearly in cases of texted music where emotions expressed by the text and the music are in conflict. The

[40]Empson, p. 133.
[41]Empson, p. 133.
[42]Empson, p. 150.
[43]Empson, p. 145.
[44]Empson, p. 138.

most striking example of the last point is to be found in the "Dona nobis pacem" of the Missa solemnis, op. 123. Beethoven's attitude throughout the entire "Agnus Dei," in fact, seems complicated. Although the theory of key characteristics is in disrepute in most quarters now, it had great currency at least until the end of the eighteenth century, and we know from the conversation notebooks that Beethoven himself had some interest in the subject.[45] Robert Winter notes that Beethoven remarked on one of his late sketch leaves for the Mass that B minor was a "black key," a possible reason for his choice of that tonality for the "Agnus Dei."[46] The bass solo which begins this plea for mercy seems to personalize the need for forgiveness, and the tritone interval on the word "peccata" (sins) invokes the shade of this old "diabolus in musica." "Miserere" is repeated over and over again in the setting of the first two lines of the text; a more usual treatment of the "Agnus Dei" typically involved some invocation of tenderness or consolation, but Beethoven's conception seems weighed down by the oppressive recognition of sinfulness.[47]

Inscribed at its head by Beethoven, "Bitte um inneren und äusseren Frieden" (prayer for inner and outer peace), the "Dona nobis pacem" provides a complex commentary on the text by the incorporation of martial music (characterized by military trumpet and drums, agitated strings, and vocal parts filled with tension and anguish), evoking the horrors of conflict and war, juxtaposed with the simple, pastoral main theme. An entirely instrumental interlude of a Presto double fugue breaks into the midst of the movement, suggesting "the ordered activity, the bustle and inhumanity rather than the horror of war," followed by the re-entry of the martial music.[48] Peace is re-established. disturbingly interrupted one last time by a distant timpani roll, before

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[45]For eighteenth-century views of key characteristics, see Rita Steblin, *A History of Key Characteristics in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1983). Beethoven's interest in these matters is reported by Maynard Solomon, in *Beethoven* (New York: Schirmer, 1977), p. 261: "Kanne and Beethoven, until they ultimately tired of endless disputation, engaged in heated debates about musical keys, with the former insisting that no one key had a special psychological quality, while Beethoven urged that each had unique emotional characteristics, which were destroyed by transposition."

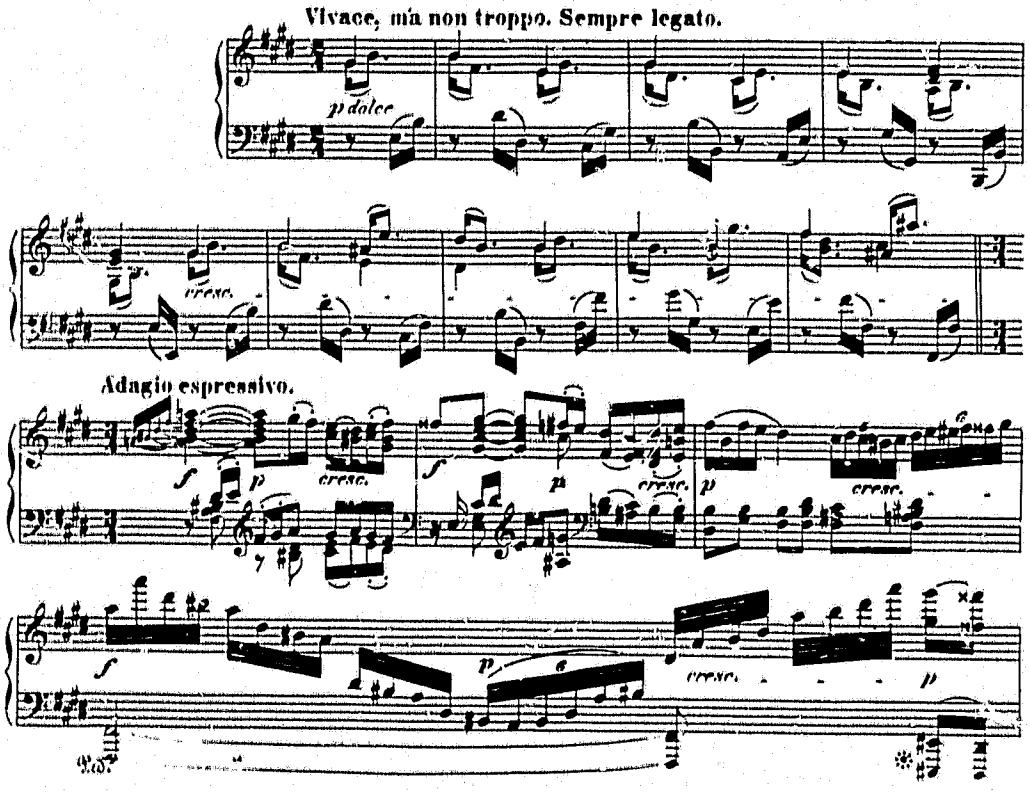
[46]Robert Winter, "Beethoven: Missa Solemnis; 'The Greatest Work Which I Have Composed,'" notes for recording (Lella Cuberli, Trudeliese Schmidt, Vinson Cole, José van Dam, Wiener Singverein, Berliner Philharmoniker, dir. Herbert von Karajan), Deutsche Grammophon, 1986.

[47]See Martin Cooper, *Beethoven: The Last Decade, 1817-1827* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p.269.

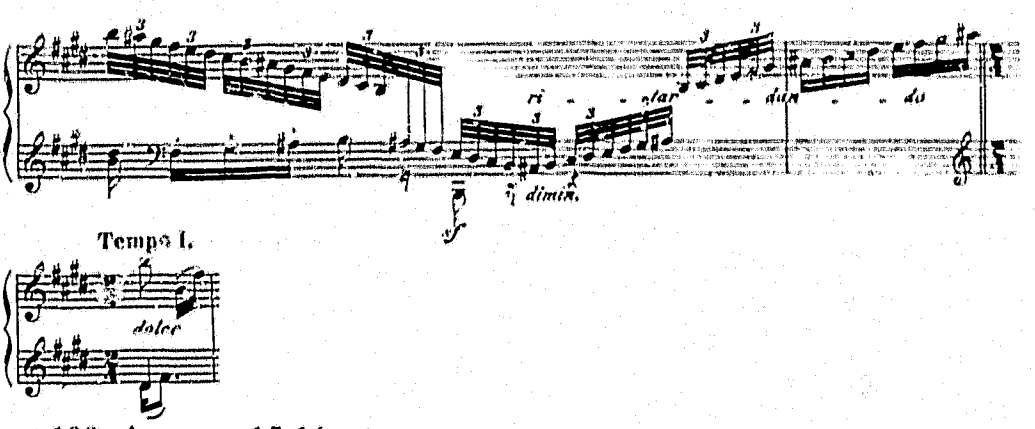
[48]Cooper, p. 272.

the movement ends triumphantly in D major. Joyous the ending may be, but it is insufficient to obliterate completely the extremely unsettling mood engendered by the conflicting implications of the earlier music and the text.

Parenthetical enclosure occurs when a theme ceases, contrasting material is interpolated, and the original theme then picks up where it left off. This case is more complex than the simple juxtaposition, of the kind examined in the second type, of sharply contrasting themes which eventually influence one another and reach some sort of resolution, in that, in this instance, one theme stands in this parenthetical relationship to the other, and resolution of their differences is not necessary or perhaps even desirable. Exemplary of this type of musical paradox is the first movement of the Piano Sonata in E major, op. 109. After an opening eight and one-half measures of a *Vivace, ma non troppo, sempre legato* theme breaks off in mid-phrase on the dominant of the dominant, a fantasy-like section in a new metre (3/4) and tempo (*Adagio espressivo*) asserts itself, suddenly *forte*. The simple, sunny, broken-chord-textured opening is stopped in its tracks by this new, rhapsodic, highly ornamented quasi-cadenza.



op. 109, i, opening



op. 109, i, mm. 15-16

The opposition of materials of such disparate character is not as perverse as it may initially seem here, although efforts to shoehorn this movement into a textbook mold of sonata form are bound to fall short of the more interesting musical realities. Regarding the *Adagio* section simply as a highly chromatic second theme (which frequently postpones or thwarts the expected modulation to the dominant), or as a premature development section, for instance, only serves to cloud Beethoven's mode of operation here. The cadence whose resolution was denied at the end of m. 8 is granted its resting place, in the proper register, when the original material is allowed to return in m. 16. Due to the much slower tempo, the *Adagio espressivo* interruption is a great deal longer than the primary theme, thus expanding from within a form that seemed at first as though it were going to rely on material too slight to sustain an entire opening movement of a sonata.[49] Beethoven maneuvers in exactly the same fashion when, after a much longer (and this time, developmental) treatment of the first theme, a cadence is again withheld by the *Adagio espressivo* passage, with a dominant harmony left suspended in mid-air in m. 58. Closure occurs, once again in the right octave, in m. 68, when the first theme returns. A nine-measure recapitulation of the primary material is interrupted one final time, now by a simple, *cantabile* chorale-like passage, in tempo, which serves as a sort of coda, bringing together aspects of the contrasting themes, and whose essence is such that "only the pure in heart can tread without stumbling,"[50] before the first theme softly takes over, and brings the movement to its close.

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[49]See Kinderman, pp. 63-4. See also his article "Thematic Contrast and Parenthetical Enclosure in Beethoven's Piano Sonatas op. 109 and op. 111," in *Zu Beethoven*, ed. Harry Goldschmidt (Berlin, 1988).

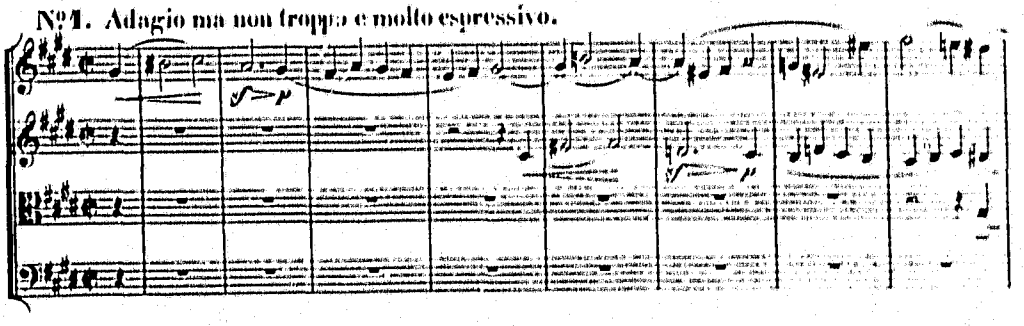
[50]Cooper, p. 179.

Foreshadowing was not a technique unknown to Beethoven's predecessors (Haydn and Mozart, for instance, frequently gave hints of the movement to come in slow introductions to sonata-form compositions), but in his hands, it took on new power. In what is perhaps the most famous example, the "Eroica" Symphony op. 55 of 1803, Beethoven uses the microcosmic potential of a theme to forecast or symbolize its eventual working out in the macrocosm of form, exhibiting a firm grasp of long-range control and expressive force. Possibly the richest example of this principle is found in the String Quartet in C-sharp minor, op. 131, of 1825-26. Its structure consists of seven continuous movements, the first of which is a fugue, the implications of whose harmonic and melodic materials have a resonance in the larger structure of the quartet as a whole; they are spelled out, as it were, in the course of the work. Not only are the keys visited by the opening fugue the keys of the subsequent movements, but there is an actual quotation of the fugue's main theme in the sonata-form finale. The exposition and concluding stretto section of the fugue involve subdominant answers, resulting in a large-scale tonal ambiguity, which also finds its reflection in the last movement. Emphasis on the Neapolitan degree in the opening movement is continually recalled at various points throughout the quartet. The continuous flow between movements is accentuated by the fact that the first strong cadence in the tonic key is reserved for the opening of the seventh and final movement. Resolution of the musical ramifications of the first six movements is thus only achieved in the finale. The extremely contrasting characters of the first and last movements should be mentioned, as should the paradoxical role reversal of their forms, the first movement being a fugue, and the seventh a sonata form. That Beethoven had the finale in mind from the earliest stages of work on this quartet is evident from the surviving sketches, as are the number and variety of ideas he considered for this movement.[51] His eventual solution "crowns the composition in practically every way: in force of expression, intellectual intensity, breadth of action, and integrative power over the composition as a whole."[52]

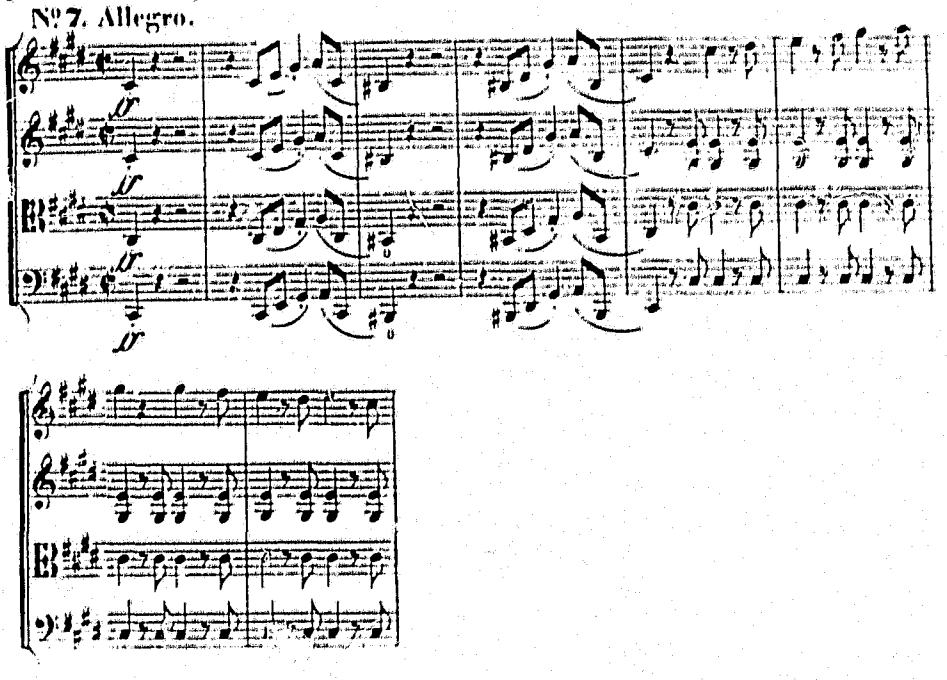
[51]See Robert Winter, *Compositional Origins of Beethoven's Opus 131* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1982), especially pp. 135-210. Winter notes that also present from a very early stage of the musical conception were the substitution in the first movement of an adagio fugue, instead of the more usual sonata-allegro form, the use of a continuous structure connecting the movements, as well as the main lines of the overall tonal plan (see p. 115).

[52]Kerman, pp. 340-41. For another interesting discussion of this quartet, See John Crotty, "Design and Harmonic Organization in Beethoven's String Quartet Op. 131," Ph.D. dissertation, Eastman School of Music, 1986.

In contrast to the more restrained profile of the earlier movements, the finale is extremely aggressive and dramatic (although this violence had been briefly presaged by the link between the fifth and sixth movements). The opening motive contains the pitches of the fugue subject, reordered and in a new rhythm. This motive, as well as the first and third of the four four-measure phrases which follow the opening, all stress the sixth degree and the interval from A to G-sharp, which had been explicitly employed in the fourth, fifth, and sixth movements. The second of the four consequent phrases abruptly modulates to the dominant, while the fourth of them just as abruptly turns toward the Neapolitan, a reminiscence of the first movement. This recollection is given fleshly substance when a new theme is introduced, which, while not being an exact copy of it, makes more specific reference to the fugue theme.



op. 131, i, fugue theme



op. 131, vii, opening

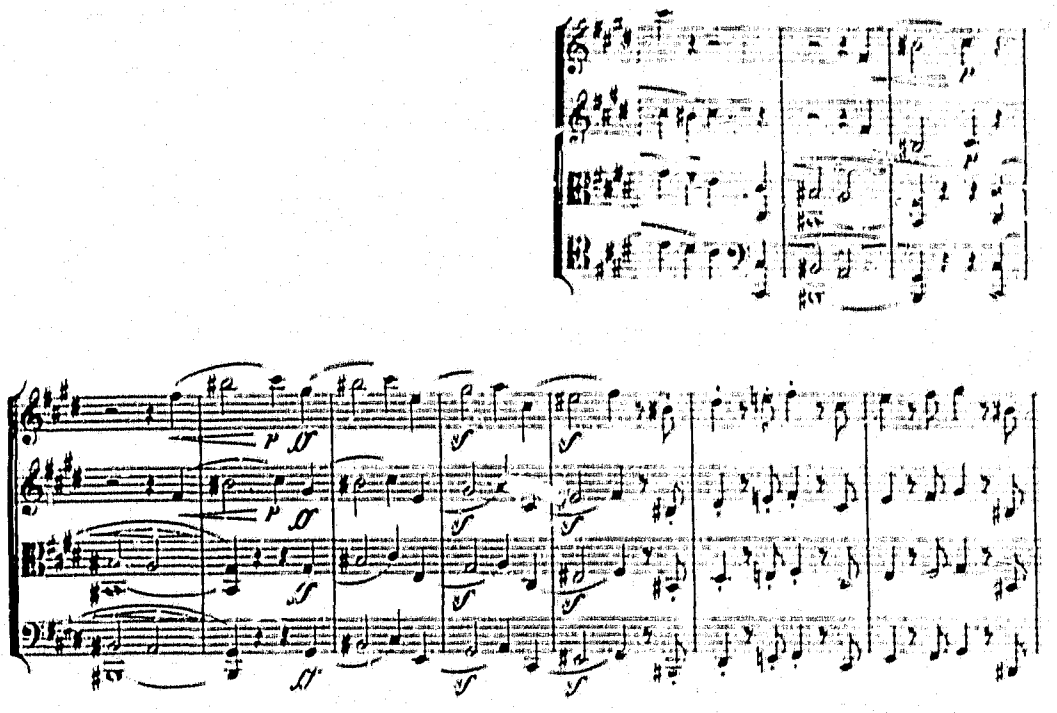
After a compressed restatement of the opening theme group, the second tonal area of E major is reached with an exposition of a sharply contrasting, very lyrical theme. A sudden, unexpected modulation to F-sharp minor brings to mind the emphasis on the key of the subdominant in the first movement, and forecasts the use of this key in the development section soon to come. First, though, there is a return of the opening material in the subdominant, which would sound like a false recapitulation if the section were placed later in the movement, but, since the sonata is still in the exposition, sounds surprising and somewhat ambiguous.

The development contains a double fugato utilizing a subdominant answer, also characteristic of the opening fugue. Sounding over an ascending *cantus firmus* in whole notes, the fugato moves to B minor after four entries. After two more entries, the *cantus firmus* arrives on the Neapolitan degree, D, which is soon established as a temporary tonic. Next, the opening motive is developed, modulating through the circle of fifths from B down eventually to G-sharp, a modulation pattern that mirrors one of those in the fugue.

After a lengthy dominant preparation (also analogous to a similar place in the fugue), the recapitulation begins, employing a drastically altered version of the material of the exposition. The second and fourth of the original four four-bar phrases are omitted, due to their modulatory quality, which is not wanted in this spot. The theme which recalled the first movement now appears in the subdominant, while the second theme is recapitulated, not in the tonic, but in the key of the Neapolitan (which Beethoven loses no time in juxtaposing with C-sharp major), drawing together in unity all the threads of the C-sharp-D relationship present in the quartet: the Neapolitan implications of the fugue theme, the modulation in the fugue to D, the juxtaposition of the C-sharp first movement with the immediately subsequent D major second movement, and the recollections of the Neapolitan sonority in the fifth and sixth movements. The fugue-like theme recurs, now in C-sharp minor, and is presented in such a way that the resemblance to the subject of the first movement has become clearer (see the example on the next page).

The coda, among other things taken up with a presentation of the fugato inverted and descending, makes a final move toward the Neapolitan with two D major scales. The ambiguity of the subdominant harmony so important in both the first and seventh movements is emphasized here one last time as well, before the closing six

measures assert a conclusion on the tonic, although, according to Winter, the sense of tonic-subdominant ambiguity is not totally resolved.[53]



op. 131, vii, mm. 285-294

Beethoven's achievement in creating a work so closely, so tautly integrated, in which the ramifications of the opening and subsequent movements (which have of necessity just been touched upon here) only become completely realized in the final one, is the ultimate exemplar of his search for a new dynamic in multi-movement works, whose beginning lies in some of the works of the 1790s (such as the String Quartet op. 18, no. 6). Thematic and tonal processes work hand in hand to move the weight of the quartet to the end, and to put the onus of their interpretation squarely on the shoulders of the finale. In a very special way, op. 131 is directional in nature,

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[53]Winter, p. 118. Winter also notes that Beethoven's sketches indicate that the theme which eventually became the basis for the *Lento assai* movement of op. 135 was initially conceived in connection with the coda for op. 131's final movement. Beethoven described this melody as a "sweet song of peace," and its use at the end of op. 131 might indeed have provided a more completely peaceful resolution, in that the C-sharp-B-sharp-A-G-sharp configuration would be superseded by D-flat-C-B-flat-A-flat. See Winter, pp. 121-24, 167-74, 206-209.

paradoxically requiring the listener to hold in mind what is heard early, and to understand it fully only in retrospect.

When an author is discovering his idea in the act of writing, or not holding it all in mind at once, or by happenstance finds his point in a fortunate confusion, the ambiguity is held to be of the fifth type, with the following *caveat*:

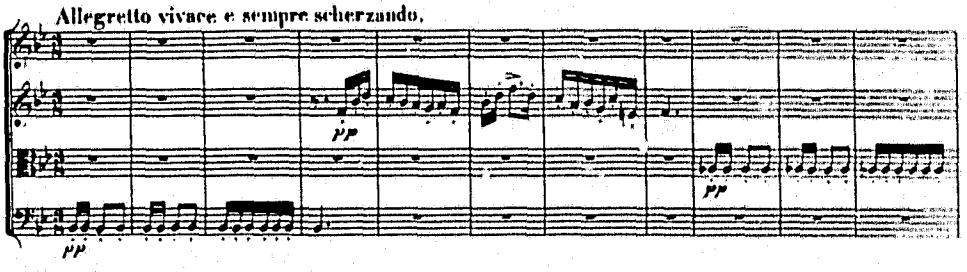
> In so far as an ambiguity sustains intricacy, delicacy, or compression of thought, or is an opportunism devoted to saying quickly what the reader already understands, it is to be respected....It is not to be respected in so far as it is due to weakness or thinness of thought, obscures the matter in hand unnecessarily...or, when the interest of the passage is not focussed upon it, so that it is merely an opportunism in the handling of material, if the reader will not easily understand the ideas which are being shuffled, and will be given a general impression of incoherence....The question here is one of focus; and it is...when the range of ideas is great and the difficulty of holding the right ones in the mind becomes acute, that we discover examples of the most advanced types of this series, and that ambiguity is most misused.[54]

In poetry, a fifth-type ambiguity may make itself felt in "a simile which applies to nothing exactly, but lies half-way between two things when the author is moving from one to the other," a "short-circuited comparison," a mutual comparison which is more interested in the connections between the things (and their stock associations) than in the things themselves, subdued conceits, or in a mental association which "gains strength because it has been crystallised into a pun elsewhere," for instance.[55] It may also lie in what seems to be a simple, successful conceit, but which in reality contains "crowding at its back [a] multitude of associations, taking effect in a different way, which are almost as strong as the main conceit and threaten to displace it in the mind or at least make it unnecessary," or where the conceit is in fact "only one element in the total effect, may indeed be no more than the façade which holds the effect together and makes it seem sensible; the ambiguities are to be discovered in more or less disorderly reactions between the words themselves."[56]

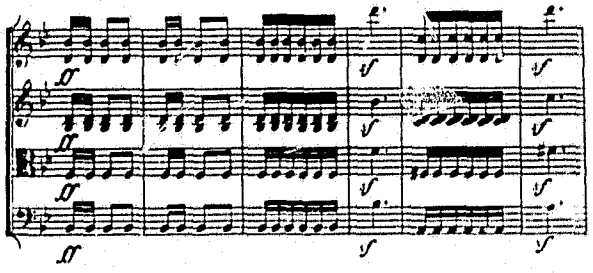
A particularly glorious example of Beethoven seemingly discovering his idea in the act of writing occurs in the *Allegretto vivace e sempre scherzando* movement of the String Quartet in F major, op. 59, no. 1. The movement begins with a bare, *pianissimo* rhythmic statement, monotone, in the cello, answered by a modulatory

[54]Empson, p. 160.
[55]Empson, pp. 155, 161, 163, 165, 166.
[56]Empson, pp. 173, 174.

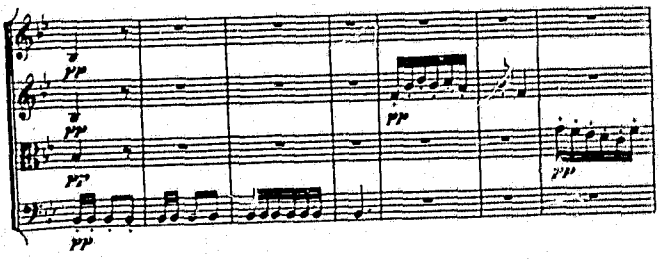
consequent phrase. Gradually, the rhythmic skeleton puts some meat on its bones. First, in m 29, the rhythm fills out harmonically and dynamically, in a fortissimo appearance in all four voices (the violins play double stops, so six parts are heard) on a B-flat major chord. The repeat of the bare rhythmic figure in mm. 68-71 is answered by a fragmented version of a melody, derived at least in contour from the original consequent phrase, that will use the rhythm as its underpinning. At last, in m. 101, the harmonized rhythmic figure acquires its accompanying melody.

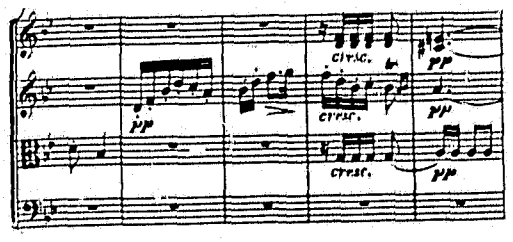


op. 59, no. 1, ii, opening

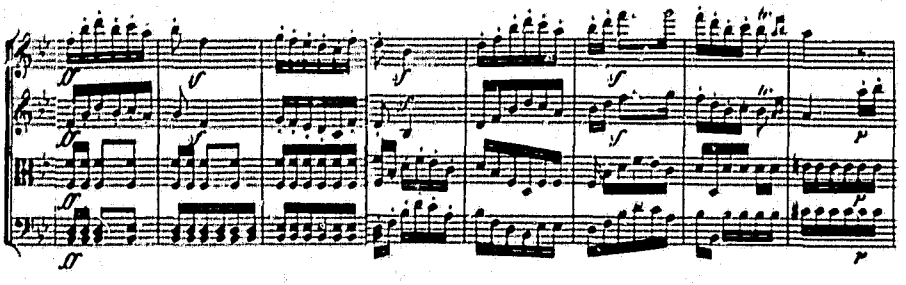


op. 59, no. 1, ii, mm. 29-34





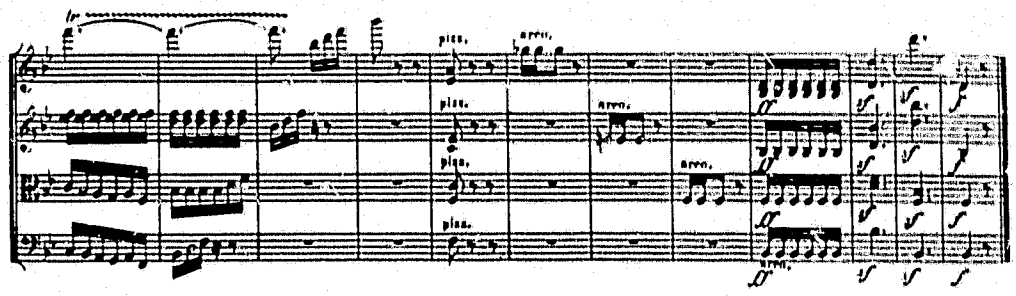
op.59, no. 1, ii, mm. 68-79



op. 59, no. 1, ii, mm. 101-108

The theme (rhythm plus harmony plus melody), which now can be explicitly regarded as a sonata-form first theme, is subject to all sorts of delightfully playful exercises in self-examination.[57] It is transformed by all means of contrapuntal device, such as canon, combination with new countersubjects, use of those countersubjects in inversion accompanied by canon, and so on, and by modulatory means as well. Our newly embodied theme is also treated to a variety of dynamic and registral garments, which serve further to vary its appearance and explore its potential. Finally, the theme, whose first glimmerings were so tentative and mysterious, is welcomed fully into the world of the whole quartet, in the sly reminiscence in the first violin, near the final cadence of the movement, of the G-flat that had loomed so large in the first movement.

[57]There is considerable lack of agreement about the form of this movement. Kerman asserts emphatically that it is not a sonata-form movement, but a scherzo-trio structure incorporating aspects of variation form, with three appearances of the scherzando, two of the trio, and a developmental section inserted between the first trio and the second scherzando (see Kerman, p. 106). Dave Headlam, on harmonic grounds, states equally emphatically that the movement is indeed a sonata form (see Headlam, "A Rhythmic Study of the Exposition in the Second Movement of Beethoven's Quartet Op. 59, No. 1," *Music Theory Spectrum* 7 (1985), p. 119). William Kinderman agrees that the movement is in sonata form (see program notes, Beethoven: String Quartets op. 59, Guarneri Quartet, unpublished at the time of this writing). The harmonic motion certainly is that of a sonata-form movement, which should, for all intents and purposes, settle the issue (although it does exhibit features of variation movements as well, as Kerman suggests). Being able to put the movement in a nominal box, though, seems to me to be less important than recognizing the radical experiment Beethoven was conducting here, with the process of seeming to find his theme as he went along. As Charles Rosen has noted, in reference to an innovative formal procedure in the finale of Haydn's Piano Trio Hob. XV:18, "if there were a few more examples we should have a name for it" (Rosen, *The Classical Style*, p. 358)!



op. 59, no. 1, ii, conclusion

This paradoxical sort of structure, in which the composer "finds" his theme in the progress of his composition, has only one near-precedent in Beethoven's output, namely the Fifteen Variations and Fugue op. 35 of 1802, based on the Prometheus theme that he later developed in the finale of the Third Symphony (thus, the usual nomenclature, "Eroica" Variations). The *Tema* is preceded by a *Basso del Tema* (presenting just the bass line of the theme), and by what could be considered three pre-variations, contrapuntal treatments of the bass line in two, three, and four voices (*a due, a tre, a quattro*). Christopher Reynolds, however, prefers to view these introductory variations, together with the bass theme and the theme proper, as a five-part, segmented thematic complex, an opinion which seems convincing in light of the derivation of many of the variations not from the main theme itself, but from its so-called pre-variations.[58] Variations 1, 6, and 15, in fact, are the only ones based directly on the *Tema*. Variation 2 is connected with material from both the *a tre* and *a quattro*, variations 3 and 4 are based on the *a quattro*, while variations 5 and 6 are both rooted in the *a due*. Variation 8 uses material from the *a tre*. Beginning with variation 9, the segmented theme is recalled in order (number 9 recalls the *Basso del Tema*, while variations 10, 11, and 12 are based on the *a due*, *a tre*, and *a quattro*, respectively). Variation 13, comically emphasizing a B-flat pedal throughout, also alludes to the Basso del Tema. The fourteenth variation is a set of double variations, based on the material of the *a due* and *a tre*, while the fifteenth, as noted, varies the *Tema* itself, completing the sequence begun in variation 9, but interrupted by numbers 14 and 15. After the fugue, all of the unnumbered variations in the Andante finale are variants of the *Tema*.[59]

[58]Reynolds, "The Representational Impulse in Late Beethoven I," pp. 57-9.
[59]Reynolds, pp. 58-9.

Most interesting of all with regard to op. 35 is the fact that Beethoven literally did discover his theme in the act of writing. Sketches indicate that only the *Tema* and its bass were composed before work on the variations began, and the two-, three-, and four-voice contrapuntal elaborations of the bass constituting segments of the thematic complex only emerged after a significant number of variations (seven, to be exact) had been drafted. Work on the thematic complex went through at least four preliminary stages, and continued at the same time that variations were being composed.[60]

Although there is no other work by Beethoven constructed quite like the scherzando of the first Razumovsky quartet, one could argue that other fifth-type paradoxes exist in works where the potential of a theme only gradually becomes apparent. Variation-form movements are perhaps the most obvious examples of this phenomenon, as in, for instance, Beethoven's measured process of transfiguration and transcendence of Diabelli's theme in op. 120. While not a variation form, the *Grosse Fuge* (the original finale of the String Quartet in B-flat major, op. 130, also separately published as op. 133) does operate in a way that makes its meanings clear only as the movement progresses. In its *Overtura*, the entire melodic material of the movement is exposed in rapid succession, hurling "all the thematic versions at the listener's head like a handful of rocks."[61] (Please see the example on the next page.) This "cinematic trailer of coming events," "behaves less like a book's introduction than like a table of contents...[and] looks like a mnemonic sheet out of a sketchbook, a random series of jottings for a 'functional analysis.'"[62] Although the fugue's opening seems to have some similarities to the beginning of the Ninth Symphony finale, their differences are actually more striking: the themes in the symphony movement, heard in recitative, are quotations of previously heard material, while in the quartet, utterly unfamiliar tunes are thrown together in a way that maximizes their contrast (although all of the themes can be derived from the same set of pitches). The four thematic groups are characterized by Kerman as "lumbering," "simple, dancelike," "self-abnegating," and "strange, gapped" versions of the same primary material, descriptions that will be adopted here for their aptness, and for the sake of convenience.[63] Each two of these themes are separated by

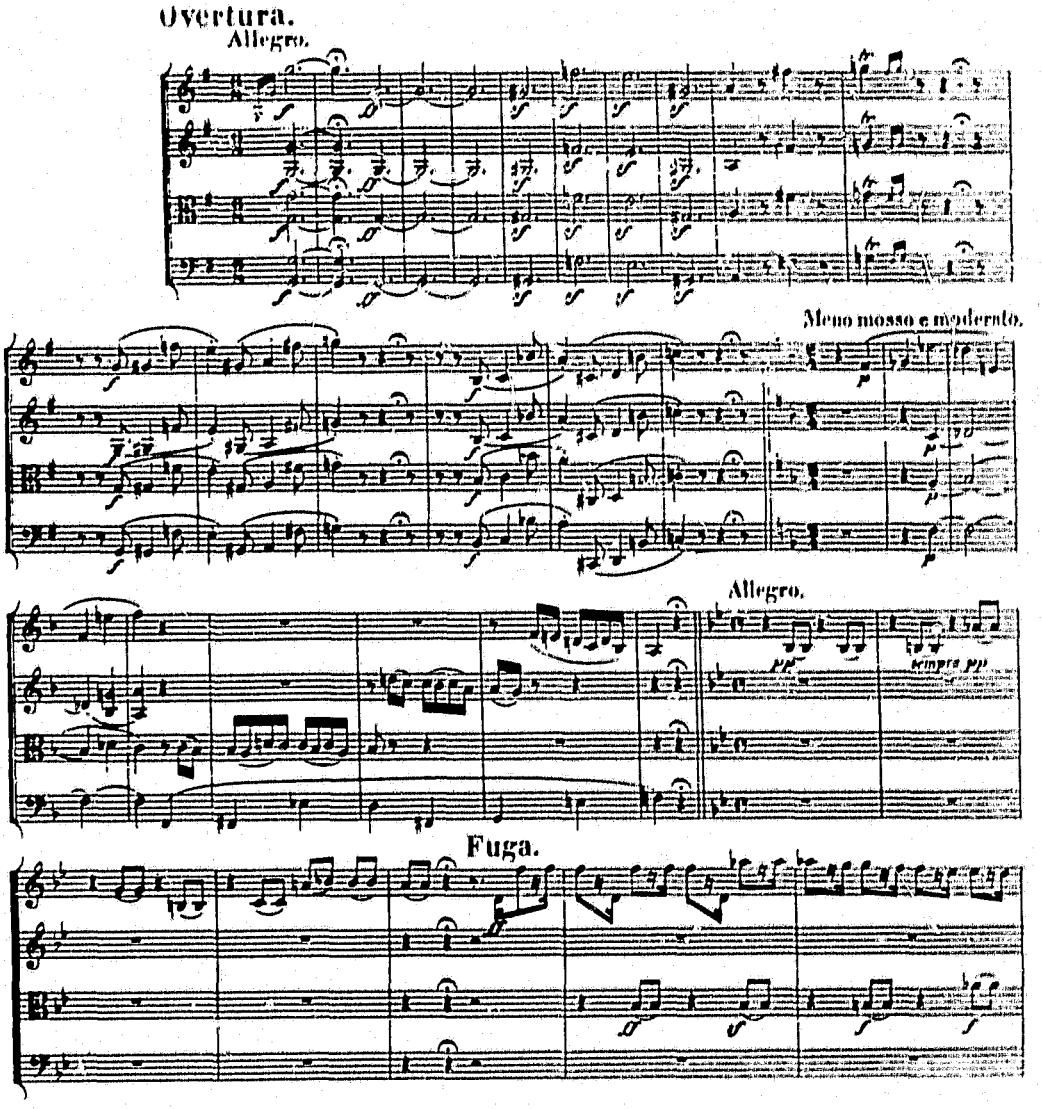
[60]See Reynolds, p. 57. Sketches for op. 35 appear in the Kessler sketchbook, which has been transcribed and published by Sieghard Brandenburg, *Kesslerisches Skizzenbuch*, 2 vols., (Bonn, 1976, 1978).

[61]Kerman, p. 277.

[62]Cooper, p. 382, and Kerman, pp. 277-78, respectively.

[63]Kerman, p. 277.

a fermata in the overture; the overall harmonic motion takes place around the circle of fifths from G to C to F to B-flat, which, significantly, foreshadows the primary tonal thrust of the motives underlying the whole movement.[64]



op. 130, vii, opening

The fugue proper (or rather, the first in a series of related fugues, based on a primary idea subjected to intense thematic transformation) begins in m. 30, utilizing an

[64]See Kerman, p. 277.

"inimitably aggressive, leaping theme...[of] characteristically jerky rhythm," accompanied by the gapped version of the *ur*-subject, here used as the countersubject, the new subject's antithesis in every way.[65] It is a double fugue in B-flat, comprising an exposition and three episodes, and is marked especially by its rhythmic vigor and relentless sense of forward motion. The second major section of the movement is a lyric fugato section in G-flat, taking as its *cantus firmus* the self-abnegating version of the primary thematic complex. Here, Beethoven seems less interested than in the opening fugue in traditional procedures of contrapuntal manipulation and exploitation of fugal devices. Its essential purpose is to enrich the primary material harmonically, according to Kerman.[66] A return to B-flat comes with the introduction of a section built on the simple, dancelike version of the theme. Incongruous in tone and harmonically static, it forms the greatest possible contrast with the A-flat fugue which follows (although some aspects of this dance section, notably the trill and the iambic rhythmic pattern, also resonate in the fugue). Built on the lumbering version of the theme, the fugue's primary dynamic is modulatory, moving through numerous keys. Concomitantly, it is also much more contrapuntally complex than the B-flat fugue, engaging more seriously with the primary theme, that is, pursuing to its logical conclusion the extensive chromaticism of the subject.[67] The subject is heard nearly exclusively in a fragmented state after the exposition; the one exception is a statement of it over a G-flat (treated as a heightened dominant of B-flat minor, reached after a lengthy and far-ranging series of modulations). B-flat is, of course, the key of the first fugue, and G-flat that of the fugato, and only here is the A-flat fugue able to restate its subject, providing important links back to the rest of the movement, as does the subsequent inclusion of fragments of the B-flat fugue and dance themes as countersubject material and cadential extension, respectively.

The lengthy concluding section returns at first to the dancelike material of the third section. All segments of the theme appear, in various transformations. In the coda, Beethoven recapitulates his *Overtura*, in a less dissociated manner. Now, the four versions of the main theme all appear in the tonic; the version which was fourth is first, that which was third is second, the first is third, and the second is now fourth. The intense process of thematic transformation to which all of the themes had been

[65]Cooper, p. 382.
[66]Kerman, p. 287.
[67]See Kerman, p. 289.

subjected throughout the course of the movement, now leans back into some sort of release. The paradox has not disappeared yet, however: "the themes have all been pulled together--fantastically different as they can still be heard to be. They have provided material for an extraordinary, coherent structure--grotesque as they still sound in bare juxtaposition."[68] A final resting point, and thematic conciliation, is reached only at the end of the movement, when the rhythmic contour of the B-flat fugue joins the basic theme in half-notes, running into the G-flat fugato's serene cadential extension.[69]

The sixth type of ambiguity is operative when a statement says nothing, "by tautology, by contradiction, or by irrelevant statements; so that the reader is forced to invent statements of his own and they are liable to conflict with one another."[70] In works employing such ambiguities, it is not obvious what the audience is meant to believe as a result, although a conflict in the author's own mind is not necessarily to be assumed. "The reader is not so much conscious of the contradiction as of the way it fails to have meaning," in complex cases of the sixth type, "thus the contradictions are likely to be well embedded in their setting."[71] Contradictions may be statements of the sort which cause the reader to reflect that they are false, or that they conflict with the implications of a passage, "in part as a compensation mechanism which holds in mind an untruth in order to find energy to recognise a truth;" or they may be questions to which the answer is both "yes" and "no," when an author "wants to say things of greater logical complexity than his method will allow."[72] Ambiguity by tautology tends to use a pun twice, once in each sense, "and the massive fog of the complete ambiguity will then arise from a doubt as to which meaning goes with which word."[73] Ambiguity achieved by irrelevant statements is a special sort of the sixth type. Unlike the first type, which is simply a case of statements with various implications, here, there are various implications, and they conflict.[74] Neither is it like the seventh type,

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[68]Kerman, pp. 278-79.

[69]For further discussion of this example, please see Chapter Six.

[70]Empson, p. 176.

[71]Empson, p. 178.

[72]Empson, p. 182.

[73]Empson, pp. 182-83.

[74]Although one might think so at first, there is not always conflict when a variety of implications is at work. Consider the word "apple;" to one person it might imply "fruit, juicy, healthy," a variety of implications which do not conflict. To another

soon to be discussed, which is an essential contradiction; in this sub-type, the contradiction deals with "matters not central to the writer's interests at the moment, or [is] a contradiction which is thought of as capable of being resolved."[75]

The sixth type frequently works through vagueness (which allows of secret ambiguity) and evasion, which does not, however, imply weakness or muddy thinking; it can be energetic and memorable when "the opposites left open are tied round a single strong idea."[76] An indirect mode of statement is usually used because the device results in compactness, and permits the author to express an attitude that might be impossible to convey in a more forthright fashion. This type of ambiguity demands a good deal of participation and sympathy on the part of its audience in order to be effective.

Musical paradoxes of this baffling nature can be found in Beethoven, most frequently in the form of seemingly irrelevant gestures for which the listener is obliged to find or invent some sort of interpretation if it is to make any sense whatsoever. For instance, the paradoxical use of the framing device in the Bagatelle op. 126, no. 6, as discussed in the first chapter, does require a certain degree of breadth and imagination in an attempt at an analysis of its meaning and purpose. Similarly perplexing examples include a puzzling interpolation in the scherzando of the String Quartet op. 127, and the final coda of the String Quartet op. 95.

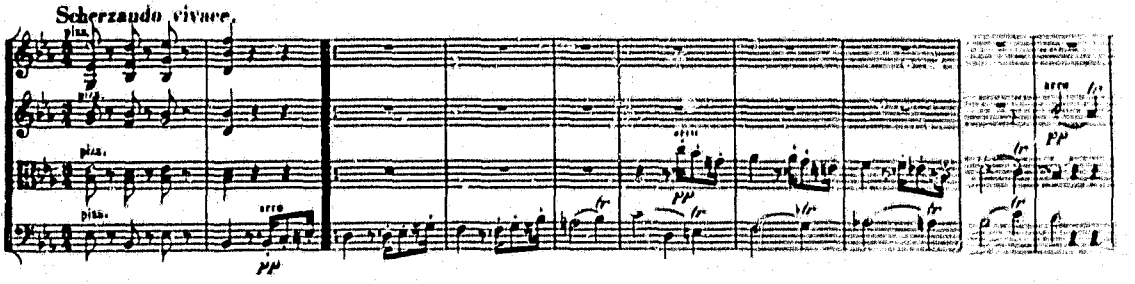
The E-flat quartet, the first of the late group to be written, was completed in 1824. Primarily a work grounded in lyricism, the centre of tension rests in the third movement, the *Scherzando vivace*. As such, it bears the responsibility of providing a sense of contrast within the quartet as a whole; contrast with the other three movements, as well as internal contrast are, in fact, maximized in this movement. The movement is in dance form, but also makes use of contrapuntal techniques in general, and fugal texture in particular. A two-measure pizzicato introduction heralds the curious, jerky subject, treated to a strict fugal exposition, with an interpolated six-measure episode between the second and third entries. The emphasis in the subject on the third beat of the bar, juxtaposed in the third and fourth entries with a countersubject that puts the weight on the second beat, paves the way for a metrical complication in mm. 27-32, a passage similar to the "*ritmo di tre battute*" section in the Ninth

person, however, "apple" might imply "red, yellow, green," obviously quite a different kettle of fish (bushel of Jonathans?).

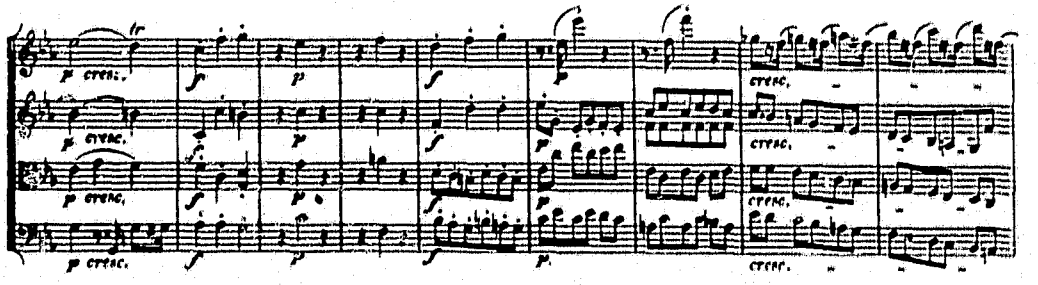
[75]Empson, p. 184.

[76]Empson, p. 190.

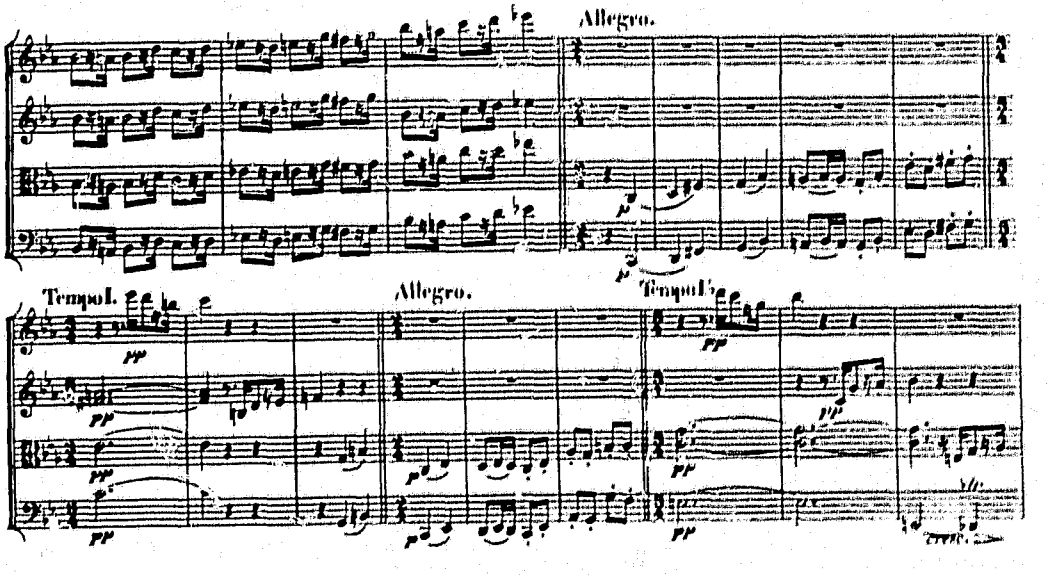
Symphony. After the double bar, the B section stacks up a "whole series of madly contrasting ideas," in particular, becoming obsessed with the rhythmic gesture of the fugue subject, until "a fragmentary, hushed, grinning 2/4 Allegro free-associates its way in."[77]



op. 127, iii, opening



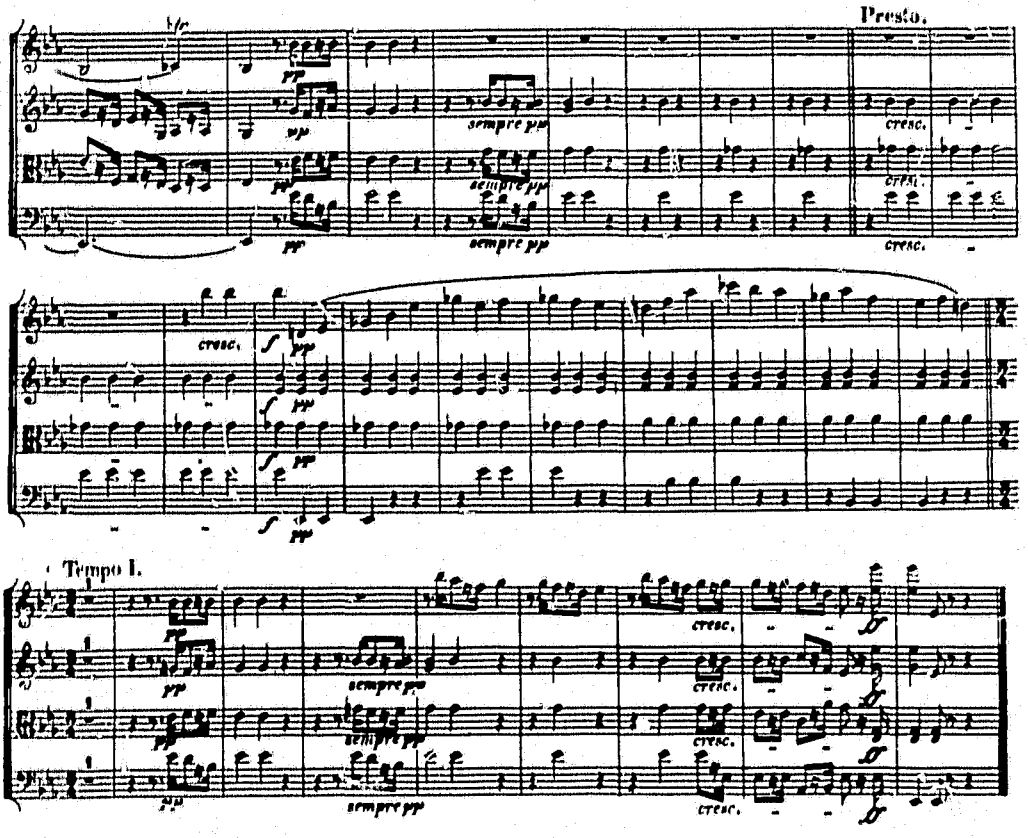
op. 127, iii, mm. 26-34



op. 127, iii, mm. 67-83

[77]Kerman, p. 232.

The metric shock has been prepared by, and serves to explain. the earlier effects of dislocation. This interruption breaks the compulsive rhythmic pattern and brings the harmonic motion (which had been growing rather wild) back to earth; paradoxically, this shock functions to settle things down. The metric displacement continues in the wittily conceived coda to the scherzando section, which once again stresses the second beat of its motivic pattern; the pattern, accelerated, assists as well in the transition to the trio section, a re-use that in itself is a first-type paradox. After the trio, the scherzando (with attendant interruption) is repeated, as are, subsequently, the first eight measures of the trio. This restatement is broken off, however, and replaced with a short tag that enhances the joke about the second beat.



op. 127, iii, conclusion

Although the *Allegro* interpolation does seem puzzling at first, it can be heard as pointing both backward and forward, its opposition with the scherzando theme "tied round a single strong idea," metric displacement, which informs the whole movement.

and which is capable of serving, if the listener is so inclined, as a resolution of the logical and musical conflict between the theme and its shocking interruption.

Written in 1810, the F minor Quartet op. 95 is frequently considered to be a harbinger of the late style. Remarkably characterized as "*serioso*" by the composer, its problematic nature is evident in every movement. It "takes its point of departure not in availability but in introspection....With this work, the quartet becomes for the first time Beethoven's private workshop."[78] Eccentric, difficult, and turned resolutely inward, the quartet explores and exploits various facets of musical structure and expression, particularly succinct, compressed forms and melodic contours, as well as brusque juxtapositions of themes and harmonies. The first movement is characterized by "fury,... radical ellipsis....and sheer ferocity," the second by an unprecedented "level of psychological intensity," due in part to a catastrophic interior crisis of structure, and the third movement is a "serious, three-legged, tough little quick-march....crotchety [and] asthmatic."[79] The formidable task of dissipating the resulting accumulation of tension falls to the finale. Opening with an eight-measure slow introduction (*Larghetto espressivo*), a more relaxed atmosphere is introduced for the first time in the quartet. It does not last long however, as the entry of the *Allegretto agitato* soon arrives, and gets on with the real business of the finale, a resumption of the pathos of the opening movement, in a more normalized context. Although there remain "some distinctly stormlike effects" in this movement, it is less harsh and more accessible than the first movement.[80] The 6/8 movement is in a form which combines aspects of sonata with rondo features, and proceeds fairly normally for the greater part of it (vigorous first subject, innocent second subject, reasonably tame development section, false recapitulation in the subdominant, and so on).

It is in the coda that something extraordinary happens. Having worked itself up to a climax of register, texture, dynamic, and gesture in mm. 94-103, the movement suddenly is drastically scaled back on all of those fronts. Motives are presented only in fragments, harmonic rhythm slows, volume dies away, and finally, the quartet inches up from F minor, and seems to get stuck on an F major chord (a Picardy third) in a low tessitura, at a *ppp* dynamic level. A quicksilver, major mode, *alla breve* theme of rushing scales, repeated notes, and reiterated cadential figures breaks in upon this hush,

[78]Kerman. p. 157.
[79]Kerman, pp. 171, 176, 181.
[80]Kerman, p. 182.

in "a fantastic evocation of an *opera buffa* finale in which all the agitation and pathos and tautness and violence of the quartet seem to fly up and be lost like dust in the sunlight....A perfectly astonishing conclusion."[81] The effect is indeed rather disturbing; the *Allegro* tag is so flippant and dismissive that it is hard to know what to make of its use as a closing gesture, particularly in the context of this quartet. It is certainly not very "*serioso.*" Perhaps it is a joke, Beethoven's game with his listeners, reminding them not to take anything too seriously. More likely, though, is a possible interpretation which regards the tag as an attempt to turn the quartet back outward toward its audience, and let light and air in upon the hermetically sealed introspection of the rest of the work. Whether or not Beethoven has been entirely successful here in incorporating an element of play to balance and resolve a problematic work is open to question, but it is a sixth-type paradox, rather than a full contradiction, because this interpretation does remain in the background as a means by which the listener can make sense of this seeming irrelevance if he chooses to do so.

Empson's seventh type of ambiguity, the most ambiguous that he could conceive, marks a full contradiction, "when the two meanings of the word, the two values of the ambiguity, are the two opposite meanings defined by the context, so that the total effect is to show a fundamental division in the author's mind."[82] The author admits that, by this point, his criterion has become more psychological than logical or grammatical, "in that the crucial point of the definition has become the idea of a context, and the total attitude to that context of the individual."[83] Full contradictions may be ultimately meaningless (i.e., incapable of satisfactory resolution), but they state their subjects with intensity, and are the fruit of a "rather sophisticated state of language and of feeling."[84] The yoking together of diametrically opposed ideas may have the power to define each term with more precision than a simple statement of either one, and thus may serve a powerful literary function. If the opposites are yet somehow quite similar, "so that the contradiction expresses both the need for and the difficulty of separating them," the ambiguity is especially effective.[85] Seventh-type ambiguity "involves both

[81]Kerman, pp. 182-83.
[82]Empson, p. 192.
[83]Empson, p. 192.
[84]Empson, p. 195.
[85]Empson, p. 196.

the anthropological idea of opposite and the psychological idea of context, so that it must be approached warily."[86]

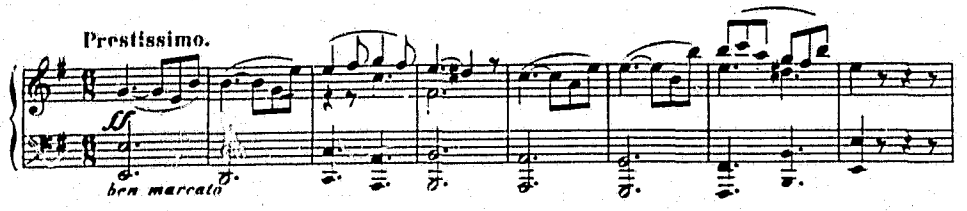
Such contradictions may serve to "convey a dissolution of normal experience into intensity of sensation," or, in a larger sense, deal, "on the scale and by the methods [that is, speed, isolation, and compactness] necessary to it, with the most complicated and deeply-rooted notion of the human mind."[87] Thus, they are tools perhaps uniquely capable of the expression of complex ideas in a number of different fields: "the way in which opposites can be stated so as to satisfy a wide variety of people, for a great number of degrees of interpretation, is the most important thing about the communication of the arts."[88]

Irresolvable paradoxes in Beethoven's music are more difficult to define than more straightforward anomalies of structure, but music's unique temporal aspect provides an interesting avenue for investigation. Of all of the arts, only music by definition moves inexorably forward in time, and subversions of the unidirectional nature of that flow must then be ultimately contradictory. In both of the Piano Sonatas op. 106 and op. 109, Beethoven introduces retrograde gestures, which, taken in context, have the temporary effect of seeming to reverse the prevailing temporal direction.

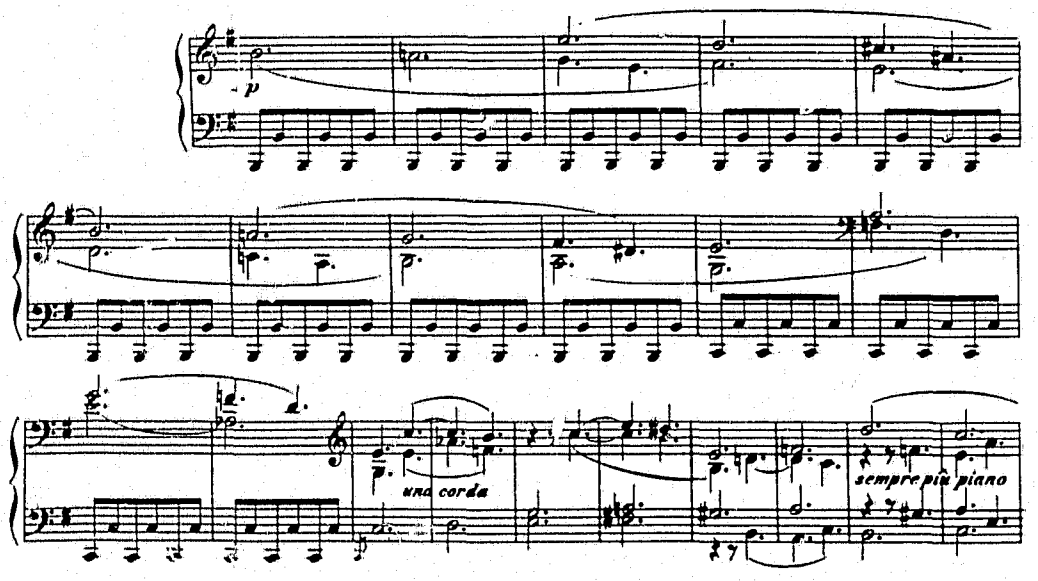
The *Prestissimo* middle movement of the E major Sonata op. 109 is a concentrated, contrapuntal sonata-form scherzo in E minor. The opening bass motive (two descending whole steps, a descending minor third, and an ascending whole step), marked *ben marcato*, serves a thematic function at least equal in importance to that of the treble. Reminiscences of the motive, with rhythmic alterations or in slightly truncated form, are found in both voices in mm. 25-32, and in the right hand in mm. 43-48. A two-part canon (mm. 70-82) near the beginning of the development section takes the motive for its basic material, accompanied by rocking octaves in the bass. In the middle of m. 83, the timbre changes to *una corda*, and the canon breaks off. The motive does not disappear, however, but recurs in fragmented form, until m. 89, where it appears whole twice in the outer voices (in mm. 89-92 in normal form in the upper voice and inverted in the lower part; and in mm. 93-96, with the final two intervals inverted, that is, normal form but with an ascending third followed by a descending

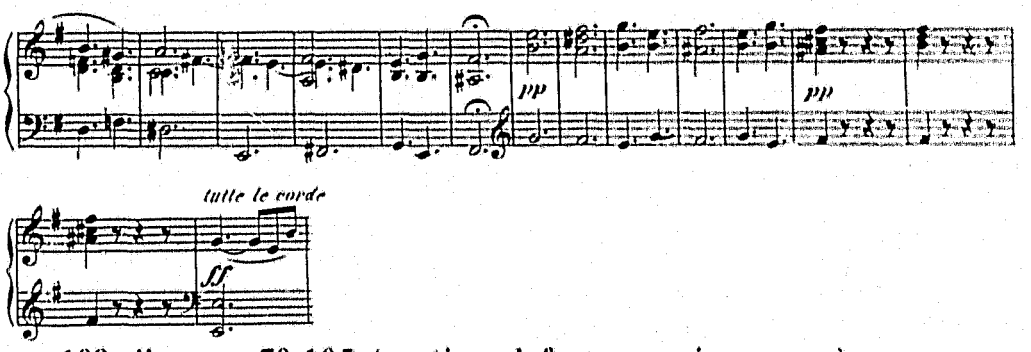
[86]Empson, p. 197.
[87]Empson, pp. 214, 231, 233.
[88]Empson, p. 221.

second in the upper part, and in inversion but with a descending third followed by an ascending second in the bottom voice). The music halts on a fermata, and tentatively resumes very softly, repeating the pitches of the preceding four measures. The F-sharps in m. 100, which would usually serve as the cadential pitch of the motive in both voices, here function as a pivot of sorts, turning the motive back on itself in retrograde, giving a sense of temporal reversal. Appropriately, this radical gesture is followed by silence. Then, two *pianissimo* chords mysteriously pointing toward B minor are heard, and at last, in m. 105, the triumphant *fortissimo* return of the opening material in the tonic key reasserts itself and reestablishes time's forward momentum. The tonic paradoxically, however, sounds like the subdominant, thus magnifying on the harmonic level the effect of the rhythmic paradox.



op. 109, ii, opening





op. 109, ii, mm. 70-105 (continued from previous page)

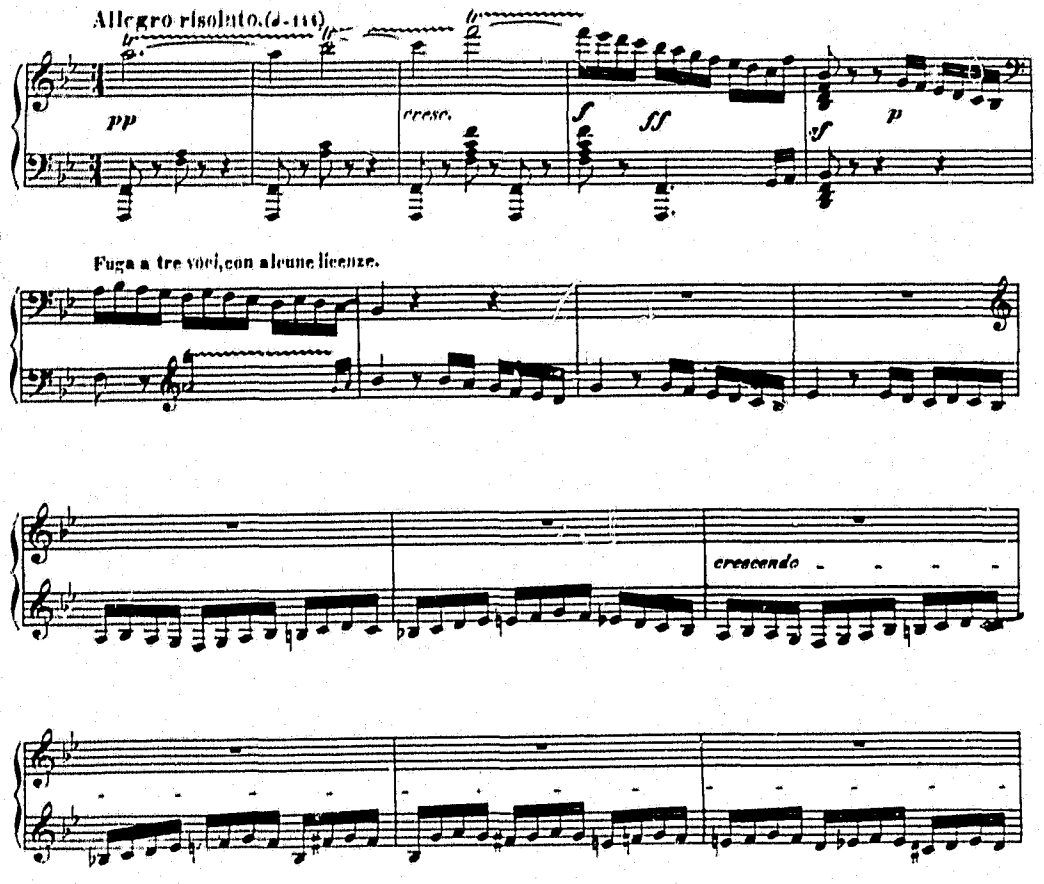
The fugue of the *Hammerklavier* sonata contains a temporal manipulation of an even bolder sort. Fugue, a Baroque form, is given a Classical sense of direction and climax here by Beethoven; each new form of the theme is conceived as a dramatic event. The movement's structure has been summarized (by Rosen) as follows:

1. B-flat major	Exposition; re-exposition with a shift of accent (D-flat major)
2. G-flat minor	Episode (variant of the theme)
3. E-flat minor	Theme in augmentation; return of episode (A-flat major)
4. B minor	Theme in contrary motion with new counter-theme; return of original form of theme (D major)
5. G major	Theme in the inversion
6. E-flat major	Short development and stretto ending with a brilliant cascade built from the opening tenth leap and descending harmonically by thirds
7. D major	Second episode (variant of the theme)
8. Establishment of B-flat	Transition: combination of second episode with fragments of the main theme
9. B-flat major	Theme inverted and in original form simultaneously, followed by stretto and coda.[89]

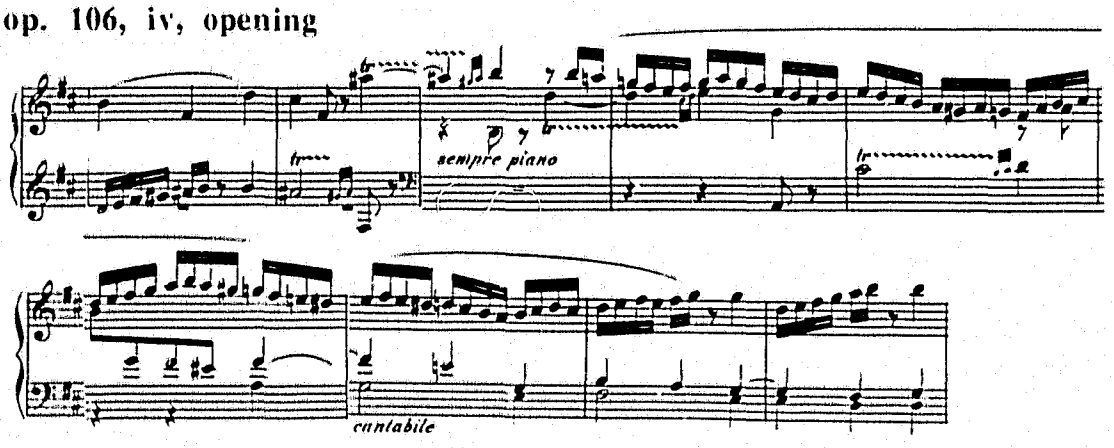
Perhaps no event is more dramatic in this movement than the episode in B minor (whose key further serves to emphasize the tonal dichotomy between B-flat and B which is insisted upon throughout the work). Each *cancrizans* appearance of the fugue theme (e.g., in the left hand, mm. 143-48, mm. 152-57 in the right hand, mm. 159-64

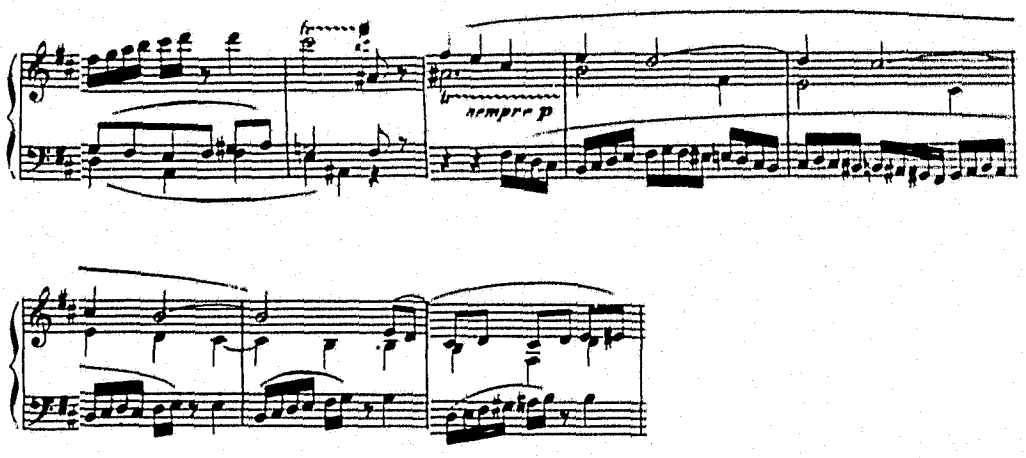
[89]Rosen, pp. 430-33.

in the left hand) is made recognizable (as retrogression often is not) by the device of always answering the final backwards trill and downward leap with the original upward leap and trill. This episode is both quirky and unsettling, in a sense reversing time, as well as questioning all that has gone before.



op. 106, iv, opening





op. 106, iv, mm. 142-158 (continued from previous page)

The return to the original form of the theme in D major in this section foreshadows the lyrical episode in that key later in the movement; the modulation by half-step from E-flat to D is a shortcut back to the tonic, toward which the fugue has otherwise been moving by descending thirds, and is also reflective of the more general importance of the half-step relationship in the entire sonata, not least in the prevalent B-flat--B tonal tension, and also at other structurally significant points.

What to make of all of these paradoxical manifestations? These are not isolated instances of Beethoven's musical paradoxes; for nearly every example examined, a number of others could have been chosen. Most of the features of specific compositions in the preceding discussion have been noted before; not a great deal of fresh analytical ground has been broken here in terms of discovering previously unknown technical aspects of these works (although those same aspects have been examined from a new angle). What this broad survey does bring to light is the extent to which paradox was a vital, far-reaching, and unifying aspect of Beethoven's style. Compositional techniques perhaps previously regarded as dissimilar can now be regarded as having commonalities with the larger family of musical paradoxes, spread across a qualitative scale, measuring the type and degree of logical disorder created by the effect in question. An attitude which takes into account paradox as a fundamental artistic principle embraced by Beethoven permits a new outlook on his entire *œuvre*, and facilitates the recognition of such connections, both of procedure and of essence, between and among different pieces of music. It brings closer to the surface, indeed, insists upon the intimate relation that exists between the spiritual and the material in Beethoven's works; analysis of his musical paradoxes therefore requires that form and

structure be seen as bound together in an aesthetic field. By so doing, the analyst is forced to consider questions of import.

Musical paradox in this chapter has been studied largely from a logical and musico-grammatical point of view, but obviously these phenomena have consequences of meaning, as many of the examples adduced made clear. If we accept for our own field of inquiry Empson's claim (cited above) that the kinds of oppositions under investigation here are the most important factors in the communication of the arts, then we must accept not only that Beethoven's paradoxes possess meaningful content, but that music itself, at least in certain particular instances, is capable, to some extent, of communicating that content. Questions of music, language, and meaning have always been controversial; the tantalizing task of peeping inside this particular Pandora's box is the burden of Chapter Four.

Chapter Four

Questions of what and how music means have engaged philosophers and musicians for centuries; the resonance of a variety of historical attitudes and ideas continues to be felt in many current discussions of the same problems. A brief overview of previously traversed terrain will furnish a contextual framework within which then to consider first the recent and ongoing, sometimes controversial, work in the field of music and narrative, and second, the possibility of enriching or amplifying such types of study by means of incorporating analytical techniques based on the interrelated notions of paradox and myth, specifically with regard to the music of Beethoven.[1]

Broadly speaking, modern musical aesthetics has been most concerned with music's relationship to the human senses and to the human intellect.[2] The nature of music, its meaning, its quality, its relationship to the individual and society, its historical place, and its relationship to the other fine arts are all areas of study that have fallen under this general rubric. While aesthetic inquiries into music have historically been diverse in focus, most can be considered as being based on one of three general categories of assumption regarding the essential nature of music: music is either "an object of a certain sort, an achieved reality which, once made, may be understood and enjoyed for whatever it is," or "a partial manifestation of some cosmic force or principle through which the forces of the world may be understood or even controlled," or "a sample of a means of communcation among men."[3] The second of these attitudes was a prevalent one among the ancient Greeks and in the Middle Ages, while the first, preoccupied with the description and classification of musically and formally significant characteristics of sounds and groups of sounds, was an object of study in the past, but has found its most rigorous applications in the work of those twentieth-century theorists and analysts whose points of departure have been a firmly held conviction in music's objectivity, and a commitment to a structuralist, formalist approach. The last

[1]My overview makes no claims to being a comprehensive history of developments in musical aesthetics, but consists, rather, of a survey of those ideas that seems to me to be potentially most useful in considering whether or not music has meaning, and if it does, how it communicates that meaning.

[2]See Willi Apel, *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1972), s.v. "Aesthetics of music."

[3]*The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (New York and London: Macmillan, 1980), s.v. "Aesthetics of music," pp. 120-21.

of these viewpoints, that music is a phenomenon capable in some fashion of communicating something, has tended to capture the lion's share of philosophical attention, particularly in the last three centuries. Whether or not any or all music does communicate at all, whether it communicates thoughts or feelings, whether it does so naturally or by appeal to convention, whether communication lies at the heart of a musical work or is an incidental feature of it, whether it arouses feelings or depicts them, whether it communicates something autonomous to the work or something outside of it, whether music appeals primarily to the emotions or to reason, are all issues that have been grappled with in various ways, and that have tended to bisect the work of musical thinkers along these several fault lines, with a number of interesting attempts made at some sort of a compromise position.

Related to this dichotomous view of music's nature and goals is the ancient idea of a duality of musical origin: not only does music serve as expression (though how and of what is open for argument), but it has the foundation of its physical manifestation in mathematics. For Pythagoras, music was the expression of a universal harmony which also was reflected in arithmetic and astronomy. Pythagoras and his followers did not see these aspects of expression and physical properties as mutually exclusive opposites, but mediated between them by the belief that the same proportions which regulate the movements of the soul also regulate the movements of tones. These proportions, in the Pythagorean view, served to make complementary music's subjective and objective characteristics.[4] As a more or less accidental manifestation of the ratios underlying the distances between planets and other aspects of cosmic order, however, music had no autonomous meaning, and was important, not in and for itself, but only as an audible reflection of the order inherent in the physical and spiritual universe.

Derived from Pythagorean notions of music was the view, propounded by Damon of Athens and expanded upon by Plato, that national music reflects national character, the Greek doctrine of *ethos*. Damon considered that national styles could be considered as scale systems, or modes, "whose intervals are generated by ratios characteristic of the personality types and behavior patterns of their users;"[5] thus the Dorian mode was considered manly and strong, while the Phrygian mode was thought

[4]See Ruth Katz and Carl Dahlhaus, *Contemplating Music: Source Readings in the Aesthetics of Music, vol. 2: Import* (Stuyvestant, New York: Pendragon Press, 1989), p. 3.

[5]*The New Grove*, s.v. "Aesthetics of Music," p. 122.

to be lascivious. Music then was thought to be capable of serving as a means of moral indoctrination. In Plato's version of the idea of *ethos*, music's expressiveness relies on the perception and reflection of an actual or possible poetic text. One's character becomes evident when the characteristic patterns of one's thought are expressed in formal, poetic language, and the music which may evoke such character must be in keeping with the qualities of that language.

Aristotle's student Aristoxenus has left us the earliest considerable body of theoretical writing on music. He rejected both the Pythagorean emphasis on mathematics and the *ethos* theory, noting that the ratios which generate intervals are inaudible, while music's distinguishing characteristic is its audibility. The ear, then, is much more important than the mind; it is the only and final arbiter of aesthetic perception. "Music is thus a self-contained phenomenological system, and the significant form of any work is not derived from its relation to any other reality but is identical with the principle of its own organization."[6] Such an endeavor is by its nature pleasing, but any meaning clinging to music is acquired only by association, and is not a vital aspect of it.

Ptolemy broached a middle way between the Pythagorean appeal to reason and the Aristoxenian claim on the senses, asserting that the ear's function is to establish the musical facts, while the mind is responsible for their interpretation. Those who would explain music must not emphasize logic at the expense of ignoring the empirically obvious, nor must they abandon any attempt at rational explanation in order to rely solely on what their ears tell them. Ptolemy's general attitude of reconciliation of the Pythagorean and Aristoxenian positions is evident in his approach to their discussion of harmonics, consonance, and dissonance.[7]

Also originating in antiquity was the belief that music consisted of three elements, in Plato's terms, *harmonia*, *rhythmos*, and *logos*, consisting of, respectively, "regular, rationally systematized relationships among tones," "the system of musical time, which in ancient times included dance and organized motion," and "language as the expression of human reason."[8] Thus, from the earliest recorded philosophizing about music, language was regarded as inextricably linked with musical essence.

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[6]*The New Grove*, s.v. "Aesthetics of music," p. 123.

[7]See, for instance, Ptolemy's discussion of the Pythagorean and Aristoxenian theories of intervals in his *Harmonics*, in Katz and Dahlhaus, pp. 271-80.

[8]Carl Dahlhaus, *The Idea of Absolute Music*; trans. Roger Lustig (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 8.

Indeed, for centuries after Plato, purely instrumental music was thought to be somehow deficient, lacking in something very important about and characteristic of music itself. Such an attitude has had numerous reverberations, even after instrumental music began to be composed as much as or more than vocal music. The whole purpose behind program music, for instance, is an attempt to reintegrate a poetic element into instrumental compositions, while analytical methods based on literary methodology and models, or on linguistic structures, such as musical hermeneutics, semiology, and narratology, all seek to restore the place of language, in some fashion, into theoretical discourse about so-called "pure" music. Even Romantic ideas about music's being a higher level of language above the mere spoken or written word (not to mention pious platitudes about music as a universal language) are reflections of this same impulse. This impulse is not universal, of course, finding little sympathy among those analysts or composers who want no truck with anything that might have subjective aspects. The implications of this notion of the interrelatedness of music and language will be explored in greater detail later in the chapter.

The attitude of the leaders of the early Christian church regarding music [illegible] in large measure, derived from the Stoics' belief that music, while an amusing diversion, was not relevant to the life of reason. Consisting of the relationships between tones, which themselves had no reality, music could not therefore be an object of knowledge, since it is fundamentally unreal.[9] Similarly, although music was an important part of the Christian liturgy, it was not viewed as something relevant to salvation; indeed, it may play a part in inhibiting one's salvation, if one surrenders to its sensuousness. St. Augustine, in his writings about music, considers that in its most sublime form, it may embody the cosmic order, but also acknowledges music's sensual power, which, when it is detached from a sacred text, may lead men astray. In his *De Musica*, he then requires that music be subservient to a religious text, in order that that which is a gift from God may be used properly in praise of God. However, Augustine accepts that wordless music in a sacred context, such as Alleluias, may also be appropriate, if undertaken in the right spirit:

> ...singing well to God means, in fact, just this: singing in jubilation. what does singing in jubilation signify? It is to realize that words cannot communicate the song of the heart. Just so singers in the harvest, or the vineyard, or at some other arduous toil express their rapture to begin

[9]See *The New Grove*, s.v. "Aesthetics of music," p. 123.

> with in songs set to words; then as if bursting with a joy so full that they cannot give vent to it in set syllables, they drop actual words and break into the free melody of pure jubilation. The *jubilus* is a melody which conveys that the heart is in travail over something it cannot bring forth in words. And to whom does that jubilation rightly ascend, if not to God the ineffable? Truly is He ineffable whom you cannot tell forth in speech; and if you cannot tell Him forth in speech, yet ought not to remain silent, what else can you do but jubilate? In this way the heart rejoices without words and the boundless expanse of rapture is not circumscribed by syllables.[10]

The Pythagorean idea of a universal harmony was expanded upon by the sixth-century philosopher Boethius, who, with Bryennius, transmitted ancient Greek music theory to medieval culture. Boethius regarded what he termed *musica mundana* as one of three fields in which music was operative, the other two being *musica humana*, the harmonious order of the human soul and body, and *musica instrumentalis*, audible music made by man, the tripartite division of music corresponding to the trinitarian nature of the deity. (In a similar development of the idea of the music of the spheres, Johannes Kepler in 1619 proposed a correlation between pitches and intervals, and the movements and astrological functions of the planets.) Man aspires to the highest level of music, but has often to be content with expressing that aspiration by means of participation in the lowest level. Included in a certain sense in the category of *musica humana*, and thus of a more exalted type than mere *musica instrumentalis*, was vocal music. In classifying areas of study, Boethius included music with mathematics as a quadrivial science, which gave rise to the emphasis, prevalent for many centuries thereafter, on examining the mathematical mysteries underlying the everyday practice of music, and on formulating allegorical interpretations of musical facts as evidence of the cosmic order. Such an attitude, together with the religious notion that music was best expressed with the accompaniment of a sacred text, accounted for the division of music into two categories, the first being lowly, secular, and mainly instrumental, while the other, more important type of music (from a medieval theorist's point of view) was high, sacred, and vocal. Notation systems evolved for sacred music, particularly after the rise of polyphony (whose existence and value were explained in the ninth century by Eriugena, who noted that the cosmic order itself is characterized by simultaneous complexity) and polyrhythm; thus was greater complexity tacitly accepted and

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[10]St. Augustine, "Second Discourse on Psalm 32," from the *Ennarationes in Psalmos*, in Katz and Dahlhaus, pp. 32-3.

encouraged, while the fact of music as an art form, rather than an audible manifestation of mathematical principles, began thereby to be acknowledged.

This attitude is exemplified in the work of the important Renaissance theorist, Johannes Tinctoris (1435-1511). In his *Complexus vigniti effectuum nobilis artis musices* of 1473, in which he cites Classical, Christian, and Renaissance humanist authorities, Tinctoris draws upon philosophy, theology, and poetry as he explains what, to his mind, are the most important effects and functions of music:

> To delight God
> To embellish God's praises
> To increase the joy of the blessed
> To make the Militant Church similar to the Church Triumphant
> To prepare for the acceptance of divine benediction
> To stimulate the mind to piety
> To dispel sorrow
> To soften the hardening of the heart
> To chase away the devil
> To cause ecstasy
> To lift up the earthbound mind
> To revoke evil intent
> To give cheer to mankind
> To heal the sick
> To temper toil
> To instil the courage to do battle
> To entice love
> To add to the conviviality of a banquet
> To glorify those skilled in it
> To make the soul blessed.[11]

Many of the items on Tinctoris's list would have raised no monkish eyebrows in the centuries preceding, but some of his ideas about music's purpose are more radical. That music entices love and adds to the conviviality of a banquet, for instance, expands the realm of "officially" recognized spheres of music into the secular world, legitimizing practices already widely in use. His thirteenth point, that music gives cheer to mankind, also posits another, usually secular use for music, and mediates the ancient argument as to whether an understanding of music rests primarily on properties discernible by the ear or by the mind:

> For, as Artistotle reports in the eighth book of his *Politics*: "Musaeus says that the sweetest thing for mortals is singing. That is why in banquets and as a pastime they make use of it, with good reason, as

[11]Tinctoris, *Complexus effectuum*, in Katz and Dahlhaus, pp. 38-9.

> something that can give them cheer." And it gives cheer to some more than others, for the more one is perfect in this art, the more one is delighted by it, because one apprehends its nature from within and from without. From within, by virtue of one's intelligence, which makes one understand the apposite composition and performance; from without, by virtue of one's hearing, through which one perceives the sweetness of the harmonies. It is only such people who can truly pass judgment on music and find delight in it; therefore the Philosopher, in the eighth book of his *Politics*, advises the young to study music in a practical way, so as to be able not only to find delight in the sound alone, that is by external means, but also, when they have grown old, to pass judgment on it correctly, after they have given up practical music-making. Music indeed gives less cheer to those who perceive in it nothing deeper than sound, because they find delight only from external sense perception....Therefore the perfection of the delight in music consists in perfect knowledge of it.[12]

Tinctoris also finds an important place in his scheme of things for instrumental music; many of the examples he cites in support of his twenty points have to do with explicitly and exclusively instrumental works or effects, as in his discussion of music chasing away the devil ("That is why it is written in the first book of Samuel: 'Daniel [*recte*: David] took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him'"), as well as his example for music revoking evil intent ("For as Cicero says in his book *De Consiliis*, and as Quintilian repeats in the first book of his *Institutiones*: 'When a bunch of unruly youths were on the point of encroaching upon an honorable house, Pythagoras returned them to composure by commanding a flute-playing maiden to change her tune into the spondaic mode'"), and in support of his belief that music causes ecstasy (as in "the case [cited by Quintilian] of the flautist 'who had accompanied a priest during his sacrifice in the Phrygian mode and who, when the priest went insane and fell into an abyss, was accused of having caused his death'").[13]

Gioseffo Zarlino (1517-90), a student of Willaert and later *maestro di capella* at San Marco in Venice, wrote a number of influential theoretical treatises, the most important of which, the *Istitutioni harmoniche*, is a systematic presentation of the state of musical knowledge to 1558, the year of its publication. Zarlino reviews the traditional view of musical proportions, the knowledge of which he regards as

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[12]Tinctoris, in Katz and Dahlhaus, p. 45.

[13]Tinctoris, in Katz and Dahlhaus, pp. 44-5. As a flute-playing maiden myself, I must protest that I find this last example rather slanderous! We are an exceptionally mild-mannered bunch.

fundamental to a proper understanding of music in both theory and practice, before proceeding to a survey of Greek tonal theory, and then, in the more practically oriented part of his book, discusses rules of composition grounded on this theoretical firmament. Zarlino's rules for counterpoint are based on his interpretation (following those of the earlier theorists Spataro and Fogliano) of proportional unity, deducing the consonances in such a way that both the major and minor third are now to be included as consonant intervals. Taking this expanded notion of musical proportions as a starting point, he sets out guidelines for composers which take into account the basic aesthetic requirements of musical unity and variety, proposing rules which regulate the combination of intervals, the carefully controlled treatment of dissonance, the independence of voices, and the balanced flow of rhythm. All of these aspects of music, Zarlino says, can be judged by the ear to be pleasing, but the knowledge of correct compositional procedure must be based upon reason. In its most perfect realizations (that is, according to rules based on reason and founded on natural principles), music might achieve its fundamental objective, "which in Zarlino's Renaissance view was to elevate the human spirit."[14]

Vincenzo Galilei (1520-91), later a central figure in the Florentine *camerata*, was a student of Zarlino's, and, for a time, his friend. He developed an aesthetic position different from that of Zarlino, and eventually published books which parted company with Zarlino's ideas, particularly the *Compendio nella theoretica della musica*, *Dialogo della musica antica e della moderna*, and *Discorso intorno all'opere di messer Gioseffo Zarlino*, the last two of which, especially, amount to rather violent attacks on Zarlino's teachings. Galilei begins with the idea that music's function is to serve as a vehicle for the expression of emotions, which he bases partially on the Greek notion of *ethos*. Seeking to return to what he believed to be the achievement of the Greeks, a union of music and text in such a way that the text's meaning is enhanced and clarified by the music itself, evoking an emotional response among its audience, Galilei and the other members of his circle advocated the adoption of monody, regarding vocal polyphony as often too complex, because it resulted in the obscuring of the text; instrumental polyphony was, however, still seen as acceptable. In addition, Galilei believed polyphonic vocal music to be frequently too sensuous, distracting the listener from music's essentially ethical nature. Thus, the fundamental difference between Zarlino and his student rested on Zarlino's reliance on reason and natural law as the

[14]Katz and Dahlhaus, p. 299.

bases of correct and beautiful musical expression, while Galilei argues that music theory must be built on experience, not reason alone, and that experience is historically and culturally conditioned. Therefore, in Galilei's view, the aesthetic values of music have to do with its influence on its listeners and the effects which it kindled in them. In realizing the ultimate aims of music, a means for the effective pairing of music and text must be utilized, a means which Galilei claims can be found in the "musical elements present in affective speech";

> I shall show...them [those who would learn to write expressive music] how and from whom they can learn with little pain and trouble and with the greatest pleasure, and it will be thus: when they go for their amusement to the tragedies and comedies that the mummers act, let them a few times leave off their immoderate laughing, and instead be so good as to observe, when one quiet gentleman speaks with another, in what manner he speaks, how high or low his voice is pitched, with what volume of sound, with what sort of accents and gestures, and with what rapidity or slowness his words are uttered. Let them mark a little what difference obtains in all these things when one of them speaks with one of his servants, or one of these with another; let them observe the prince when with the petitioner who is entreating his favor; how the man infuriated or excited speaks; the married woman, the girl, the mere child, the clever harlot, the lover speaking to his mistress as he seeks to persuade her to grant his wishes, the man who laments, the one who cries out, the timid man, and the man exultant with joy. From these variations of circumstance, if they observe them attentively and examine them with care, they will be able to select the norm of what is fitting for the expression of any other conception whatever that can call for their handling.[15]

From here, it was but a short step to the adoption in Baroque thought (already present, to a lesser extent, in the work of late Renaissance theorists) of the art of rhetoric as a structural and aesthetic paradigm for music, including instrumental music, which, lacking text, seemed to many theorists (such as Quantz) to require an injection of some humanistically based language element in order to deal with its capacity for expression and meaning. Rhetoric was part of the intellectual equipment of every educated man, part of the curricula of elementary schools and universities in Europe, from the fifteenth century onward. The classical texts concerning the art of oratory, the rediscovery of which, especially of Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria* in 1416, helped to fuel the popularity of study of rhetoric, all had the same goal: "to instruct the orator in

[15]Katz and Dahlhaus, p. 53; Galilei, *Dialogo della musica antica e della moderna*, in Katz and Dahlhaus, pp. 70-1.

the means of controlling and directing the emotional responses of his audience," an aim which rhetoricians, such as Quintilian and Aristotle, and numerous Baroque musicians, such as Mattheson, Kircher, and Heinichen, alike regarded as having important similarities to that of music.[16] A particularly compelling reason for composers to draw upon the traditions of rhetoric was the fact that "it afforded the only actual model for the articulation of temporally extended forms on a large scale."[17]

In Gallus Dressler's *Praecepta musicae poeticae* of 1563, and in Joachim Burmeister's *Musica poetica* of 1606, the adaptation of rhetorical terminology and procedures for musical purposes was first formally proposed, suggesting the divisions of an oration, the *exordium* (opening), *medium*, and *finis*, as applicable to musical structure. Johann Mattheson, in his 1739 treatise *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, expanded this flexible framework to include the following sections, forming a more comprehensive outline of the task of creating a piece of music, which was intended not as a rigorous prescription, but rather as a helpful set of guidelines for a composer: *inventio* (invention of an idea), *dispositio* (arrangement of the idea into the parts of an oration), *decoratio* (the decoration or elaboration of the idea), and *pronuntiatio* (the performance or delivery of the oration, or in this case, musical composition). The *dispositio* itself was arranged into six different parts in Mattheson's (and the classical rhetoricians') scheme: the *exordium*, *narratio* (statement of facts), *divisio* or *propositio* (forecast of the main points in an orator's favor), *confirmatio* (proofs of the speaker's points), *confutatio* (rebuttal of the points on the other side of the question), and *peroratio* (conclusion).[18]

One of the most interesting, and certainly the most systematic, of the applications of rhetorical concepts to musical thinking was the doctrine of musical figures. Based on the figures of speech used by orators in elaborating their idea and arousing their audience in the course of the *decoratio*, composers embellished their initial musical ideas by means of various figures (i.e. figures of melodic repetition, figures based on fugal imitation, figures formed by dissonance structures, figures formed by silence, and interval, hypotyposis, and sound figures). In Renaissance music, composers such as Josquin and Lassus used musical-rhetorical means to heighten the meaning and imagery of their texts, but the figures they employed were not

[16]*The New Grove*, s.v. "Rhetoric and music," p. 793.
[17]*The New Grove*, s.v. "Aesthetics of music," p. 125.
[18]See The New Grove, s.v. "Rhetoric and music," p. 794.

codified and given names until the arrival of the great spate of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century textbooks treating music and rhetorical figures, in which not only were musical figures analogous to those of classical rhetoric discussed, but new ones were invented.[19] Interestingly, the names given to many of the figures in some of the earliest of these treatises, especially that by Christoph Bernhard, began as attempts to explain writing that was outside the bounds of strict counterpoint. Although such passages did not operate strictly within the law as laid down by Zarlino and other codifiers of contrapuntal practice, they were found to be expressive and dramatic; these effects had to be justified or explicated in some fashion, and a convenient and methodical manner for doing so was found in the doctrine of musical figures.

The most important result for Baroque music in general of the conceptual linking of music and rhetoric was its adoption of the *Affektenlehre* as its primary aesthetic purpose. The doctrine of affections stipulated that human emotions or passions be reflected rationally in music (in both vocal and instrumental pieces), and required that only one affect be associated with each composition (or movement or section of a larger work). The successful achievement of this objective expression of idealized feeling, with its concomitant stylistic unity, was the goal of every skilled composer. Despite the orderly classification of musical figures in existence, these were never stereotyped as associated with specific affects; rather, any of the figures could be used in the elaboration of a composer's musical subject, no matter which affect was being evoked.

The notions behind the *Affektenlehre* lay not only in rhetoric, but, in part, in the work of natural philosophers, including Bacon, Leibniz, and Descartes, the last of whom believed that he had discovered a scientific, physiological explanation for the emotions, which thus were capable of being rationally objectified. The affect in a Baroque work served as a powerful unifying force, while the emotion it represented served to make the music intelligible to the listener. Enlightenment writers on music subverted (or superseded, depending on one's point of view) the doctrine of the affections by expanding the notion of intelligibility to include implications of language,

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[19]Most of the treatises dealing with the doctrine of musical figures were German; for an excellent bibliography of sources regarding music and rhetoric, see George J. Buelow, "Music, Rhetoric and the Concept of the Affections: a Selective Bibliography," *Notes* 30 (1973-4), p. 250. See also H.H. Unger, *Die Beziehungen zwischen Musik und Rhetorik im 16.-18. Jahrhundert* (Würzburg, 1941, 2nd ed. 1969).

as in the formulation of Batteux, who, in theorizing that all art exists in order to depict nature in an ideal form, postulated that music is a natural language of the heart that uniquely precedes human convention. Batteux expressed this theory in *Les beaux-arts reduits à un même principe* (Paris,1746); he was anticipated by Marin Mersenne, who wrote in 1636, in considering "whether the musician can invent a language superior to all those in which spiritual conceptions can be expressed," that music will be sufficient for this purpose "if it expresses with greatest possible clarity and brevity the thoughts of the spirit and the desires of the will....[a table of basic melodic patterns] could serve to establish a universal language which would be the best of all possible ones, if one knew the order of God's ideas about all things."[20] Batteux's belief that music was a natural and therefore superior language of feeling was taken up by Rousseau, whose theory of language development placed the origins of language in primitive chants which expressed both thought and feeling. Civilized verbal language expresses only thought, according to Rousseau, leaving the communication of feeling to music, best realized in its primeval forms of song, since modern developments such as counterpoint and harmony obscure the expression of emotion and are unnatural, in Rousseau's theory.

Rousseau's idea of the primeval origins of music carried with it the notion of sublimity, an aesthetic concept enlarged upon by many other writers, most notably Immanuel Kant. In his *Analytic of the Beautiful*, Kant remarked that the sublime causes "us to fear that in comparison with it, we are like nothing in our own estimation. We collect our forces to take in and apprehend the whole vision and we fear at the same time that we shall not be able to attain its greatness....The sublime, then, is not an object for taste but for emotion. Yet its artistic presentation...can and must be beautiful, for otherwise it is wild, rough, and repulsive, and thus offensive to taste."[21] He continued, "the sublime is that, the mere capacity of thinking which evidences a faculty of mind transcending every standard of sense."[22] Thus, the sublime was difficult to reconcile with an aesthetic theory grounded on reason, and any link between sublimity and an artistic object is treated by Kant as of secondary importance, because a

[20]Mersenne, *Harmonie universelle*, in Katz and Dahlhaus, pp. 98-9.
[21]Immanuel Kant, *Analytic of the Beautiful*, from *The Critique of Judgment*, with excerpts from *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Viewpoint*, trans. Walter Cerf (Indianapolis and New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963), pp. 67-8.
[22]Kant, *Analytic of the Sublime*, trans. J.C. Meredith, in *Immanuel Kant: Philosophical Writings*, ed. Ernst Behler (New York: Continuum, 1986), p. 207.

judgement made on that basis lacks purity of aesthetic status. Kant assigns to beauty the role of arbiter of judgement on artistic works. Beauty has ethical aspects, according to Kant, which accounts for our being drawn toward that which is beautiful: "beauty carries with it the invitation to the innermost union with the object, that is, to an unmediated, direct enjoyment....beauty of soul concerns the pure form under which all purposes must be unifiable. Hence, beauty of soul...[is] *primordially creative*."[23] Beauty for Kant, as well as for Hegel and many later thinkers, is a medium of reconciliation.

Although Kant himself may have seen only a limited application for the idea of the sublime in the context of art, others found such a notion aesthetically provocative. Jean Paul Richter, in his *School for Aesthetics* of 1804, includes lengthy discussions of the sublime and its inverse, humor, which latter particularly is central to his aesthetic position; "through humor Jean Paul gives individualized art a broad metaphysical justification."[24] As is well known, contemporary critics regarded Beethoven's music as sublime also, especially the instrumental works; perhaps most famous is E.T.A. Hoffmann's review of the Fifth Symphony, which draws on Jean Paul's theories, and in which the critic remarks that "Beethoven's instrumental music unveils before us the realm of the mighty and the immeasurable....Beethoven's music sets in motion the machinery of awe, of fear, of terror, of pain, and awakens that infinite yearning which is the essence of romanticism. Beethoven is a purely romantic, and therefore truly musical composer."[25]

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[23]Kant, *Analytic of the Beautiful*, p. 66.

[24]Margaret R. Hale, ed. and trans., *Horn of Oberon: Jean Paul Richter's School for Aesthetics* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1973), p. xxxii.

[25]David Charlton, ed., *E.T.A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings: Kreisleriana, The Poet and the Composer, Music Criticism*, trans. Martyn Clarke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 238. It is interesting to note that Beethoven kept under glass on the desk in his study the text cited by Kant as perhaps the most sublime utterance possible, the inscription on the Temple of Isis ("I am all that is, and that was, and that ever shall be, and no mortal hath raised the veil from my face"). See Paul Crowther, *The Kantian Sublime: From Morality to Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 154, and Maynard Solomon, "The Quest for Faith," in *Beethoven Essays* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1988), pp.225-26. It is perhaps also interesting for our purposes to note that within a certain body of recent criticism of the arts that, while Kant's ideas about beauty are considered *passé*, the idea of sublimity has become fashionable. Crowther (pp. 2-3) cites in this regard Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, trans. G. Bennington (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Paul de Man, "Phenomenality and Materiality in Kant," in *Hermeneutics: Questions and Prospects*, ed. G. Schapiro and

Union with the musical work of art is seen by Kant as more readily available in music with a text; Kant "placed instrumental music low in the hierarchy of the arts because of its lack of *geistiger Gehalt*--that is, because of its lack of a clear relation to the word."[26] Apart from Hegel, who, with Kant, continued to make a case for the aesthetic superiority of vocal music, most of the German writing about aesthetics from c. 1790-1830 took the opposite position as its starting point, that is, that it was precisely the lack of specific verbal content that gave absolute music its peculiar power, enabling it to deal with "the sublime, the metaphysical, the world beyond the threadbare and weary world of words."[27] Writers such as Wackenroder, Tieck, Novalis, Schlegel, and Hoffmann all asserted that instrumental music embodied a higher, transcendental language. Form was seen as the unfolding of the work's central idea, a concept clearly traceable back to the rhetorical analyses of music common in the Baroque period. In this way, paradoxically, textless music in a sense creates its own text. This notion found one kind of manifestation in what seems to us today to be the rather odd practice of analyzing non-programmatic music programmatically, as in the association of a particular musical work with a specific poem, or in the actual addition of a text underlay to an instrumental work.[28] This type of analysis, ironically, is the

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A. Sica (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984); and Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. G. Bennington and B. Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984). While acknowledging the relevance of the general idea of the sublime to such postmodernist studies, however, Crowther makes the important point that these works appropriate a notion of the sublime that can longer be considered specifically Kantian (Crowther, p. 3).

[26]Anthony Newcomb, "Those Images That Yet Fresh Images Beget," *Journal of Musicology* 2 (1983), p. 228.

[27]Newcomb, "Those Images," p. 228.

[28]Examples include August Apel's 1806 analysis of Mozart's Symphony in E-flat, K. 543, in which he equates the slow introduction as a "transposition" into sound of the following poem: "Praise, honor and renown to the immortal/First children of the old, chaotic night!/Eternally begotten and begetting, birth and bearer,/Never separated, each calling forth the other;/Praise to thee, Eros, and to thee, Anteros, praise!/You bring the gifts of the gods/to humans below," and so on. In 1767, Heinrich Gerstenberg provided C.P.E. Bach's C minor Fantasia with two different text underlays, Hamlet's "To be or not to be" monologue, and an original text based on Socrates's last words. For a fascinating discussion of the development of German Romantic musical aesthetics, and its relation to the rhetorical tradition, see Mark Evan Bonds, *Wordless Rhetoric: Musical Form and the Metaphor of the Oration* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1991), especially chapters 3 and 4 (the Apel poem noted above is found on p.170).

antithesis in some respects of the Romantics' belief in music's transcendental power, a fact noted, for instance, in these excerpts from the writings of Tieck and Wackenroder:

> Pure vocal music should move within its own force, without any accompaniment of instruments; it should breathe its own unique element, just as instrumental music follows its own path, without concerning itself about any text, about any underlaid poetry. It poeticizes for itself, it comments upon its own self poetically. Both kinds [of music] can exist pure and separate from each other.
>
> What do they want, these timorous and doubting sophists, who ask to have hundreds and hundreds of musical works elucidated in words and yet who cannot acknowledge that not every one of these works has a nameable meaning like a painting? Do they strive to measure the richer language by means of the weaker and solve with words that which disdains words? Or have they never felt without words? Have they stuffed their hollow hearts with only descriptions of emotions? Have they never perceived in their souls the mute singing, the mummer's dance of unseen spirits? Or do they not believe in fairy tales?[29]

Implicit in this view and in the idea of thematic elaboration, which underlies analyses such as Hoffmann's reviews of Beethoven (of a more traditional cast than the programmatic interpretations cited above), is an unspoken rhetorical framework. Hoffmann, whose criticism rested in part upon his distinction between *Besonnenheit* and *Genie*, the rational and irrational aspects of music, respectively, emphasized "the effect of an idea upon the listener...the central importance of intelligibility...and the understanding of form as a succession of events unified by the unfolding of a central idea," a view of the purpose and structure of the musical work of art closely allied to rhetoricians' ideas about effective oration.[30]

Such resonances of rhetoric are also found in Eduard Hanslick's *Vom musikalischen Schönen* (1854), the "supreme mid-nineteenth-century manifesto of absolute music," especially in his acceptance of the traditional view that music is a language, and that a musical composition involves an intelligible elaboration of musical ideas.[31] Hanslick's position was a more sophisticated attempt than that of his Romantic predecessors to assert the hegemony of absolute music over texted music,

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[29]Ludwig Tieck, "Symphonien" (1799), and Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, "Das eigentümliche innere Wesen der Tonkunst und die Seelenlehre der heutigen Instrumentalmusik" (1799), cited in Bonds, *Wordless Rhetoric*, pp. 176-77.

[30]Bonds, *Wordless Rhetoric*, p. 180.

[31]Bonds, *Wordless Rhetoric*, p. 180.

and to define the sources of its meaning. He found the most important source of music's meaning to lie in a network of "precise and differentiated internal relationships--a kind of musical logic or syntax," which he "explicitly raised...to the old position of *logos*." In contrast to the emphasis on the themes themselves, the site of meaning for the doctrine of the affections, Hanslick pointed out the importance of "their transformations, their juxtapositions, their combinations, and their place in the overall formal structure," which in themselves "might be heard as a source of musical meaning and musical beauty, of *Geist in der Musik*."[32] This meaning could be empirically defined and systematically described, unlike the vaguer, more "poetic" interpretations common in the earlier nineteenth century. Thus, music's form, in Hanslick's view, is "the untrammeled creation of the intellect in intellectual material," and music's object and content is "forms set in motion by sound."[33]

Hanslick's pragmatic approach to musical aesthetics was co-opted by those twentieth-century analysts who sought to divorce form from expression. Such a formalistic attitude, which has resulted in numerous analyses of structure with no reference to music's content, is, however, a misinterpretation of Hanslick, which misses the point that "he never sought to deny the expressivity of music." His proposal of the elevation of internal syntactical or structural relations to a primary (but not solitary) position, was part of an *aesthetic* position, which "he did not presume to apply...in the individual instance, as a piece of practical criticism....What he did was to defend lucidly the idea that the aesthetic value of music (*das musikalische Schöne*) lay in its formal relations, not in any (undefinable) expressive content."[34] Analytical alternatives to the positivistic orientation of the formalists attempt to restore the place of music's meaning in a consideration of its structure. Such alternative approaches can be found in the work of, among others, Susanne Langer and Claude Lévi-Strauss (both discussed briefly in Chapter One), as well as Leonard Meyer. Meyer has attempted to bridge the gap between the absolutists and the referentialists in developing a theory of musical meaning which draws upon Gestalt psychology and information theory. In examining music strictly on its own terms, Meyer argues that it is possible to find a capacity for meaning in music's ability to arouse and inhibit expectations in the

[32]Newcomb, "Those Images," pp. 228-29.
[33]Hanslick, *The Beautiful in Music*, cited in Newcomb, "Those Images," p. 228, and in Bonds, *Wordless Rhetoric*, p. 180.
[34]Newcomb, "Those Images," pp. 228, 231.

interaction and interdependency of various musical parameters. Expectations are both cultural (that is, learned responses) as well as unique to each individual composition. That which is culturally unknown will be meaningless until enough relevant musical experiences are accumulated, forming a basis for understanding.[35]

Of late, there have been attempts to effect a reconciliation between the division in music criticism between form and meaning, or structure and expression, by means of a narrative approach to analysis, a critical orientation that has become increasingly common during the past decade. Narrative in this instance is not to be considered as an old-fashioned equation of the tone and structure of a particular work with its underlying, explicit idea or story, as in the case of program music, but as a more sophisticated sub-field of the area defined by the intersection of musical hermeneutics and criticism. According to Lawrence Kramer, one of the most widely published scholars in this relatively new field of endeavor, studies in musical narratology are of three types, first, those concentrating on emplotment, "the configuring of event-sequences into coherent wholes," next, those dealing in the identification of hidden, or less frequently, overt agendas (as exemplified in the feminist musicology of Susan McClary), in an attempt to discover "the implicit epistemological or ideological purposes served by both narrative per se and by particular narrative types...[which] entails the recognition of narrative as a vehicle of acculturation," and finally, those which are primarily concerned with the production or enunciation of the narrative, "the question of who performs and/or controls the telling of the tale...[without a consideration of which] it is impossible to assess the significance of either a plot or an implicit purpose."[36] As is apparent from the language used here, Kramer considers the third of these areas the most important, a field of study to which, in his opinion, only he and Carolyn Abbate have significantly contributed in contemporary terms. Kramer makes the qualification "contemporary" in order to exclude the most extensive previous treatment of the idea of voice, Edward T. Cone's *The Composer's Voice*, with which Kramer and Abbate disagree on many counts. Cone posits an enunciatory musical persona which serves as "a projection of [the composer's] intelligence,

[35]See Leonard Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956).

[36]Lawrence Kramer, "Song and Story" (review of Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century*), *Nineteenth-Century Music* 15 (1992), pp. 235-6.

constituting the mind, so to speak of the composition."[37] Such a view would certainly seem in tune with the experience of many listeners with much instrumental music, in which "various elements of an instrumental piece may confront [the] presiding subject with agencies but not with agents, with personifications but not with persons," as Kramer admits. Although "characteristic motives, rhythms, or styles....may even harbor the deconstructive potential to claim or displace an independent subject-position," in their normative role, "even the most distinctive musical 'characters' appear as objects rather than subjects."[38] However, both Kramer and Abbate seek to discover other voices in music behind this monological surface, in "what is plural, disconcerting, even uncanny (in the full Freudian sense) about narrative effects in music."[39] Kramer proposes that one deconstruct the musical experience in search of these other voices, which may most readily be found in "the use of intruded or displaced acts of narration...a primary means, perhaps the means *primus inter pares*, for catalyzing other-voicedness....Where there is other-voicedness...the critical uncertainty of ideal subject matter becomes, or provokes a productive agency: productive of meaning, and productive of openness of meaning." He further suggests that this approach is a nineteenth-century cultural practice, "a practice that resists as well as pursues, challenges as well as embraces, the nineteenth-century ideology of organic unity and subjective wholeness. In aspiring to unity of being, the Romantic subject also aspires to plurality of being, each term forming the necessary and necessarily unstable horizon of the other."[40]

In her recent book, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century*, Carolyn Abbate addresses the issue of narrative voice by reviving two classical literary concepts, mimesis (re-enactment in imitation of phenomenal events), and diegesis (distanced recounting of phenomenal events).[41] "Diegetic distance is both temporal and moral," and while Abbate claims that music normally has no past tense, she suggests that certain (rare) musical moments have narrative meaning, "moments in which the diegetic effects of pastness and distance break disconcertingly

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[37]Edward T. Cone, *The Composer's Voice* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), p. 57.

[38]Lawrence Kramer, *Music as Cultural Practice, 1800-1900* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), p.187.

[39]Kramer, "Song and Story," p. 236.

[40]Kramer, *Music as Cultural Practice*, pp. 183, 212-13.

[41]Abbate, *Unsung Voices* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

into the immediacy of music's 'unscrolling.'" These moments disrupt music by means of narrative, and "evoke the figure of the 'numinous intruder.'"[42] The immediacy of music's mimesis is broken into, disrupted, by these intruders, which, in many cases, not only "disrupt the flux of the piece about them," but also "decenter our sense of a single originating speaker."[43] Her viewpoint, does of course, rest on her contentions that music is basically mimetic, in that "it traps the listener in present experience and the beat of passing time, from which he or she cannot escape," an opinion with which not everyone interested in musical narratology would agree.[44]

Although somewhat summarily dismissed by Kramer as popular "musical reading-for-the-plot," the methodology involved in finding musical analogues to plot paradigms, as practised by Anthony Newcomb in his work on the music of Schumann, in fact seems to possess a very substantial degree of analytical power.[45] Newcomb suggests that the question of musical meaning can be substantively addressed by this sort of narratological approach to music, which takes into account not only the work on its own terms but also its historical and cultural contexts. Drawing on work by Vladimir Propp, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Roland Barthes, Jonathan Culler, and Paul Ricoeur, among others, Newcomb formulates a persuasive and flexible notion of musical narrative.

A conception of music which supposes that it has meaning, in the sense of a "psychologically true course of ideas," is central to Newcomb's theory of narrative, and is particularly important for an understanding of nineteenth-century music. Narrative in music may be likened to the sort of plot archetypes underlying many folk tales, novels, or myths, which in turn generate a set of expectations as to the course the structure will take. "The composer may then play off these expectations against the series of events in the standard musical forms, against the succession of such forms in a larger work, and against the motives and syntax of his own specific design in order to create meaning." Thus, the recognition of the archetype is vital to the communicative enterprise. The means by which the archetype may be communicated and elaborated are several, and need not be extra-musical, but may arise from "the musical form of the individual work--'form' meaning everything from the manner of building themes and

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[42]Kramer, "Song and Story," p. 237.
[43]Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, p. 251.
[44]Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, p. 53.
[45]Kramer, "Song and Story," pp. 235-6.

periods out of motives, cadences, and standard harmonic successions, to the manner of building multi-movement works out of a succession of individual movement types."[46] Form need not be conventional, but can be understood as unique to the individual artwork: "By formal process I do not mean the schemas of traditional *Formenlehre*, but rather form as the sense we make out of the individual phrase, the individual section, finally even the individual piece--the formal interpretation we place upon the music as it unfolds in time."[47] (The question of time is an aspect of emplotment particularly interesting in music, to which we shall return shortly.)

Newcomb regards a certain type of musical meaning, which is derived from and recognizable by the deviations in a musical work from expected, normative procedures, as a peculiarly nineteenth-century phenomenon, exemplified in the works of Schumann, Liszt, Wagner, and Mahler, as well as in the late works of Beethoven. The primary narrative device by which these composers achieve this result, according to Newcomb, is "by standing...conventional situations on their heads....[which] involves what the Romantic novelists called *Witz*--the faculty by which subtle underlying connections are discovered (or revealed) in a surface of apparent incoherence and extreme discontinuity." [48] While I would agree that musical meaning is inherent in witty subversions of convention and in juxtapositions of material of sharply contrasting character, such late eighteenth-century literary devices are found in late eighteenth-century music as well, as in the explicitly comic and otherwise reflexive works written by Haydn dating from the 1770s and after, and in Beethoven's music from the 1790s onward, as discussed in Chapter Two. Rather than being a device that "marks one of the deepest differences between eighteenth- and nineteenth-century music," in fact, the self-conscious play with musical form was assiduously (and, I think, more successfully) cultivated by both Haydn and Beethoven.[49] The essential difference between the periods may lie in the fact that the expectations of form and procedure were much more universal in the eighteenth century than in the nineteenth, so that such reflexive play by Haydn and Beethoven frequently had comic results (although there are

[46]These three quotations are all found in Anthony Newcomb, "Once More 'Between Absolute and Program Music': Schumann's Second Symphony," *Nineteenth-Century Music* 7 (1984), p. 234.

[47]Anthony Newcomb, "Those Images That Yet Fresh Images Beget," *Journal of Musicology* 2 (1983), p. 232.

[48]Anthony Newcomb, "Schumann and Late Eighteenth-Century Narrative Strategies," *Nineteenth-Century Music* 11 (1987), p. 169.

[49]Newcomb, "Narrative Strategies," p. 174.

other aesthetic possibilities, as we have seen in Chapter Three), while, in the absence of such a context of order, "the only excuse for the Romantic composer to write funny music seems to have been the use of a funny text, in opera or song."[50]

Music's unique temporal aspect is taken into consideration in Newcomb's theory of musical narrative by drawing upon Ricoeur's formulation of dimensions of narratological perception: "Every narrative combines two dimensions in various proportions, one chronological, and the other non-chronological. The first may be called the episodic dimension, which characterizes the story as made out of events. The second is the configurational dimesion, according to which the plot construes significant wholes out of scattered events."[51] Therefore, in following a story, the fundamental aesthetic activity "variously confronts and combines both sequence and pattern in a temporal dialectic that not only reckons with time but recollects it....[causing] the listener...to shift frequently back and forth between...the actions, incidents, or events that he perceives as he reckons with passing time and...a fund of patterns or configurations into which these events could fit."[52]

The nexus of prospective and retrospective aspects of consciousness, together with the experience of duration and the temporal unfolding of musical progression, has been dealt with in an interesting way in the musical phenomenology of Gisèle Brelet. Music both creates and is a creation of time, and the problem of expression in music is intimately linked with the problem of musical time: "Is it not in effect through the intermediary of time that all the psychological contents of the soul are introduced into music if it is true that time renders the soul and music commensurate and even consubstantial with one another?" At the same time, music does not express something external to itself, but realizes its full potential in the free play of consciousness in its forms: "In art life is no longer a given to which we submit, but a free creation: art does not imitate life to the very extent that it creates it...musical expression is not...the

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[50]Alfred Brendel, "Must Classical Music be Entirely Serious?" *Music Sounded Out* (New York: Farrar Strauss Giroux, 1990), p. 35. Brendel notes in the same paragraph that of all of the Romantic composers, Schumann (Newcomb's primary interest) was indeed the only one whose music sometimes aspires to be comical, having been influenced by German Romantic writers concerned with humor and irony; however, he considers that Schumann succeeded in being good-humored or capricious, but not in being actually comical.

[51]Paul Ricoeur, "Narrative Time," *Critical Inquiry* 7 (1980), p. 178, cited in Newcomb, "Narrative Strategies," p. 166.

[52]Newcomb, "Narrative Strategies," p. 166.

expression of feelings, of particular modalities of the soul, but the expression of its acts, of its very power to discover itself, to create for itself its proper forms."[53] Musical time is not necessarily uni-directional. In fact, it transcends literal time and partakes of eternal timelessness in its ability to involve the listener in its past, present, and future: "musical time above all, perhaps the essence of time, is close to that eternity in which time simultaneously abolishes itself and completes itself," and finds therein the key to its identity: "how could the musical work live and subsist if it was not eternal?" Any given manifestation of musical time is unique to the individual work, in that the work "creates a stable duration, a time that depends on the work because it is adequate to its form. Like intelligence, the work fashions its own duration that it contains and dominates. And that duration...possesses a power of eternal return, of perpetual renaissance."[54] Meaning in music is ultimately pure and ultimately expressive, because music alone takes place in the time defined by the opposition of intelligible form and lived duration, in which we find "the meeting point of the two poles of being: of its affectivity and its spirituality, of its impetuous vitality and its schematizing and constructive activity....the fusion of an experience and a form, a fusion defining that specific temporal experience which, enclosed in sonority, is the very ideal of the tonal form, and in which psychological duration rises above itself in order to fulfill itself."[55]

That musical time has this sort of retrospective as well as a linear aspect has been disputed recently by Carolyn Abbate and Jean-Jacques Nattiez. Abbate regards the recurrence of musical events not as part of a "story," but as part of the static artifice of discourse. This contention is given the lie by such works as Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, which, as Maynard Solomon has shown, relies on such devices as the recitative passages and recall of the earlier movements at the beginning of the finale for crucial contributions to its "dynamically open" quality, and the generation of its symbolic meaning. Such gestures have both immanent and teleological aspects, which "affirm the continuing, valid presence of the earlier modalities of the symphony at the threshold of the finale," while at the same time, they "underscore the role of the choral

[53]Gisèle Brelet, *Le temps musical: Essai d'une esthétique nouvelle de la musique* (1949), in Edward A. Lippmann, ed., *Musical Aesthetics: A Historical Reader, vol. 3: The Twentieth Century* (Stuyvestant, New York: Pendragon Press, 1990), pp. 340-1.

[54]Brelet, *Le temps musical*, in *Musical Aesthetics*, p. 347.

[55]Brelet, *Le temps musical*, in *Musical Aesthetics*, pp. 348-9.

finale as a transcendence of the preceding movements."[56] Roman Ingarden regards this bifocal conception of time to be utterly essential to the perception of a musical work, particularly with regard to the listener's apprehension of the relationships of completion (either of complementarity, continuation, or contrast) which may exist between two or more musical events separated in time, which he considers to be the only means by which unity may be perceived. Unity is a "nonsounding" aspect of music, "although sounding products form its basis." The process of active listening, by which unity may be discerned, "does not consist in a simple hearing of constantly new sounds. It is much more complicated, demanding not only auditory retention and protention, but also grasping of the after-sounds of already heard phases of the work. It requires a 'living memory,' through which the phases that have passed but are not too distant from the current phase, are present as reminiscences, at least in their final synthetic sounding." Only the reminiscent present of a past event provides a phenomenal basis for understanding the relationship between that event and related ones.[57]

Abbate has also written that "literary theories of narrative suggest ways in which music *cannot* narrate, and how our metaphor of narration collapses and lies empty," because, for her, music has no past tense and is mimetic. But, she continues, "this incapability cannot be said to impoverish music; rather it lends music a terrible force to move us by catching us in played-out time. When music ends, it ends absolutely, in the cessation of passing time and movement, in death."[58] Such a view seems to be limited by a restrictive vision of the identity of a work of music. When a performance of a work is over, the music does not end "absolutely," one would think, unless all of the extant copies of the composition were instantly burned, and everyone who had ever heard any single performance of it suffered a sudden, irreversible attack of selective amnesia. Even under these (extremely unlikely) conditions, it seems wrong

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[56]See Maynard Solomon, "The Ninth Symphony: A Search for Order," *Beethoven Essays* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1988), pp. 20-21, 32, and William Kinderman, "Integration and Narrative Design in Beethoven's Piano Sonata in A flat Major, Opus 110," *The Beethoven Forum* I (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), p.

[57]Roman Ingarden, *The Work of Music and the Problem of Its Identity*, trans. Adam Czerniawski, ed. Jean G. Harrell (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 130-31.

[58]Carolyn Abbate, "What the Sorcerer Said," *Nineteenth-Century Music* 12 (1989), pp. 228, 230.

to think that some once-created thing would not still enjoy some phenomenal existence, or that it could not somehow, sometime, be re-created. The performance is not the work itself, but the work itself can be made manifest by means of a successful performance, which is an "unveiling of the truth of the work," in Adorno's conception. An authentic work "contains an irreducible configuration of moments, and its performance is not merely a rendering of the text according to general rules, but a philosophic experience." The successful interpretation of the idea of the work "presents a 'copy of a non-existent original,' for paradoxically, there is no work as such--it must become. The true artwork crystallizes into a unique synthesis, which is given its 'name' in sound by the authentic interpretation."[59]

That the identity of a work of art, although dependent for its apprehension on instances of successful performance, is not completely defined by any single performance is discussed in detail by Jeanne Vial:

> Between the concept and the idea are situated the sonorous executions or the singular incarnations of the idea. The clarification of the relationships between the idea and the sensible presence will permit us to accomplish the description of the ontological structure of musical being and of the three levels of thought that apprehend it: sensation, concept, idea. It has seemed to us that what characterized conceptual thought was not at all the total absence of incarnation...but the imperfection of the acts serving *as analoga*. That imperfection results either from the indetermination of the movements, or...from their inexactness....One may thus extend in some way beyond the objective limits of the body the capacity of things to serve as analogon; one may make use of tones to reflect on a work, just as one makes use of a photograph or drawing to think of an absent thing, and without doubt, this possibility of extension reveals what for the rest we live through in every act of attention, that is to say, the absence of ontological frontiers between the thought, the body and the other....[Music] is present only if the incarnation attains a certain degree of perfection....If we reflect again on the experience of the idea...it seems indeed that the different incarnations are as though controlled by a limit which they tend to approach and which is precisely the essence in its perfection....when we are enjoying the presence we lose the consciousness of a possible plurality of incarnations. That possibility presents itself only in the absence, when we objectify the experience....It seems that [in the communion with the inner meanings in the musical work] consciousness displaces itself, if I may venture to say so, outside the limits of the body, towards something that transcends it....approaching...extremely varied presences: all the forms of

[59]See William Kinderman, review of Jürgen Uhde and Renate Wieland, *Denken und Spielen: Studien zu einer Theorie der musikalischen Darstellung*, in *Nineteenth-Century Music* 15 (1991), p. 67.

> contemplation (hedonistic, aesthetic, mystical). Which implies...that we know only parceled durations more or less rich, more or less complete, but not participation in integral Being, which would lift us free from temporality.[60]

In Vial's formulation, time is, if the reader will pardon the pun, of the essence. Nattiez, however, like Abbate, has an overly restrictive idea of musical time, believing, for instance, that music has no past tense, and that musical narrative does not exist except as a virtual object:

> Literary narrative is an invention, a lie. Music cannot lie. The responsibility for joining character-phantoms with action-shadows lies with me, the listener, since it does not lie within *music's* semiological capabilities to join subject and predicate. If the listener, in hearing music, experiences the suasions of what I would like to call the narrative impulse, this is because he or she hears (on the level of strictly musical discourse) recollections, expectations, and resolutions, but does not know what is expected, what resolved. The listener will be seized by a desire to complete, in words, what music does not say, because music is incapable of saying it....Music is not a narrative, but an incitement to make a narrative, to comment, to analyze. We could never overemphasize the difference between music, and music as the object of metalanguages to which it gives rise.[61]

However, as William Kinderman has rightly pointed out, narrative design in works such as Beethoven's Op. 110 does not arise from the listener's imagination, "but involves instead the recognition of a configuration of audible elements inherent in the work of art, a configuration whose relations are to a great extent empirically verifiable, and which need to be assessed in context." Nattiez's position "is an evasion of the central critical task: to confront the work of art on its own terms."[62]

To confront the work of art on its own terms would seem to require an examination of the interaction of content and structure, or a consideration of structure in an aesthetic field, from which exercise its meaning may be inferred. Different scholars naturally advocate different ways or achieving this goal; one such method, related to his ideas of musical narrative, is Anthony Newcomb's interesting application to music of

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[60]Jeanne Vial, *De l'Etre musical* (1952), in *Musical Aesthetics*, vol. 3, pp. 364-66.

[61]Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music*, trans. Carolyn Abbate (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 128.

[62]William Kinderman, "Integration and Narrative Design in Beethoven's Piano Sonata in A flat Major, Opus 110," *The Beethoven Forum* 1 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), p.

the textual codes defined by Roland Barthes. Newcomb considers the process by which the listener apprehends individual units of musical meaning and gradually relates them, both immediately and retrospectively, to an overall plot paradigm, as analogous to Barthes's discussion of *lexies* (units of code), and the means by which those units are grouped together into patterns of code. In his *S/Z*, Barthes postulates the existence of five different ways in which meaning is encoded in a text, the semic, symbolic, cultural/referential, proairetic, and hermeneutic codes. The first three of these codes are atemporal, while the final two depend on a notion of the irreversible flow, in one direction only, of time. "The semic code provides models which enable the reader to collect semantic features that relate to persons and develop characters, and the symbolic code guides extrapolation from text to symbolic and thematic readings....the referential code [is] constituted by the cultural background to which the text refers."[63] The proairetic code, which dominates in readerly works, and thus is something of a bogeyman for Barthes, controls the linear sequence of events, while the hermeneutic code depends upon the posing and resolution of enigmas or puzzles.

In a provocative 1988 article, Patrick McCreless proposes one interpretation of Barthes's codes from a musical point of view. He regards the semic code as having clear parallels to thematic and motivic structure, although themes and motives in themselves are not attached to specific semantic content. Nonetheless, they share characteristics with Barthes's semes in that "they arise through repetition and association, they are products of combinations of elements (intervals, rhythms), and over the course of the work they evolve in a quasi-biographical manner, through changes in harmonization, dynamics, rhythmic structure, instrumentation, and the like."[64] The cultural code involves our expectations about a musical work, in terms of its genre, its period, or other conventions. McCreless envisions musical proairesis not in Newcomb's broad terms of a succession of events within a composition, but in a more narrowly defined way, encompassing Heinrich Schenker's theories of goal-directed voice leading, melodic linearity, and harmonic progression. Although Barthes and Schenker have opposite theoretical orientations (Schenker privileges and systematizes irreversible linearity, while Barthes deplores the straightforward linearity

[63]Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), p. 203.

[64]Patrick McCreless, "Roland Barthes's *S/Z* from a Musical Point of View," *In Theory Only* 10 (1988), p. 12. I would like to thank Dr. Vera Micznik for bringing this article to my attention.

of narrative as a temptation to simplicity that must be resisted, in favor of a plural reading of a text), McCreless considers that they both uncover similar types of deep meanings:

> each writer painstakingly attempts to reveal through his segment-by-segment analyses the very kind of encoding that our inculturation makes us tend to gloss over: whereas in reading narratives we tend to concentrate on the linear unfolding of plot and action, Barthes slows down our reading to hear nonlinear voices as well; and whereas in music we tend to listen to surface motives and themes, Schenker helps us to hear and understand linear continuity, too.[65]

McCreless considers the hermeneutic code, although capable of many other realizations, to be most readily evident in the works of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which compose out, on deep structural levels, a chromatic surface detail, a choice in keeping with his Schenkerian orientation. The enigma is prolonged by "delaying, subverting, and complicating its solution by a host of narrative devices," a kind of code of suspense which deals in the final discovery of truth.[66]

Not treated in any detail in McCreless's formulation is the symbolic code (he calls it "the code least relevant to music"). I, however, believe that this code provides the crucial first step toward what Anthony Newcomb has described as the yet-to-be-attempted task of "establishing the typology of musical plots and musical *lexies*."[67] Defined by Barthes as a type of the referential code that can be structured according to binary oppositions, and regarded by him as the most essential of all five codes because it dominates the structuration of the text, the symbolic code allows us to rediscover in a certain sense our multivalent notion of paradox, as it was described and defined in a cross-disciplinary context in Chapter One. There, in an examination of the numerous nuances of meaning that the idea of paradox has acquired in use and by example over the course of human history, we found that paradox was central in an obligatory and vital sense in myth, alchemy, Jungian psychology, and poetry of the metaphysical school, fields ultimately and intimately concerned with creativity, essence, and meaning. Music equally deals with these fundamental but elusive qualities, qualities that can be a good deal more difficult to discuss with regard to music than in these other fields; hence my co-option of them for analogical purposes. If we accept the utility of

[65]McCreless, "Barthes's *S/Z*," p. 14.
[66]McCreless, "Barthes's *S/Z*," p. 14.
[67]McCreless, "Barthes's *S/Z*," p. 10, Newcomb, "Narrative Strategies," p. 167.

thinking of music in terms of narrative in order to come into closer contact with its meaning, then I suggest that a musical typology of plot paradigms can fruitfully be considered in terms of myth (and myth's manifestations in alchemy, Jungian psychology, and metaphysical poetry), and that many of the most important *lexies*, or units of musical meaning will be found to be paradoxes. As we turn to the final two chapters, critical analyses that attempt to deal with the inseparable linkage of structure and content in the String Quartets in A minor and B-flat major, Opp. 132 and 130, all of the theoretical modalities formulated in the first four chapters will come into play: the not only relevant, but absolutely essential, broad notion of paradox conceived in an interdisciplinary context; the idea of the musically reflexive (necessarily defined in relation to reflexivity in the other arts), in which paradox in the music of Haydn and Beethoven, as well as its aesthetic dividends (which are often comic), can most readily be identified; the identification, categorization, and evaluation of Beethoven's musical paradoxes, considered as local effects, according to a somewhat arbitrary but extremely useful scale of increasing logical disorder, developed in response to William Empson's *Seven Types of Ambiguity*; and the placement of this consideration of music and meaning in its historical and contemporary context, rooting the importance of such a study in terms of philosophical discussions that have not only ranged over millennia, but that have a real and current importance to the way we think about and come to a greater understanding of the music that means the most to us.

Chapter Five

The works under discussion in these last two chapters, the string quartets in A minor, op. 132 and in B-flat major, op. 130, have been called "Beethoven's two most radical and extreme compositions;" in both quartets, the realization of revolutionary conceptions of form and content has significant implications for their musical meaning.[1] The correlation between such original technical means and successfully meaningful ends is perhaps most readily observable in op. 132. Composed between February and mid-July of 1825, it was the second of the three string quartets written under commission to Prince Nikolas Galitzin. Galitzin had written to Beethoven in 1822, requesting that he "compose one, two, or three quartets for which labor I will be glad to pay you what you think proper;" evidence exists that the composer had had string quartets in mind for some time, and thus, the commission was not the sole, or even primary, impetus for their composition.[2] With this work, Beethoven wrote for the first time a string quartet in five movements; also unprecedented is the extent to which paradox plays an essential structural and expressive role in it. Paradoxes in this work will be seen to be of several sorts, as have been those we have encountered previously; in op. 132 we will find melodic surprises, unusual harmonies, atypical sonorities, incongruities of genre, juxtaposition of sharply contrasting musical events, and frustrations of expectations on various levels, among other effects. Paradoxes having to do with musical time are in many ways the most interesting of all in this quartet, and may arguably be said to play the largest role in the shaping of the work, with the other paradox-types acting as supporting characters.

The first movement, *Assai sostenuto/Allegro*, takes as its point of departure the sonata-allegro, here realized as a sonata form of an interesting, unconventional sort. Beethoven plays on expectations of regularity associated with the normative procedures of the form in order to expand the musical and expressive possibilities of the movement. Numerous analysts have written about this movement; the best of them all discuss the great extent to which extreme contrasts mark its character. For instance, Kevin Korsyn regards the quality of the movement to depend upon the harmonic instability brought about by the degree to which correspondence between foreground

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[1]Joseph Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets* (New York: Norton, 1966), p. 267.
[2]Cited in Maynard Solomon, *Beethoven* (New York: Schirmer, 1977), p. 316.

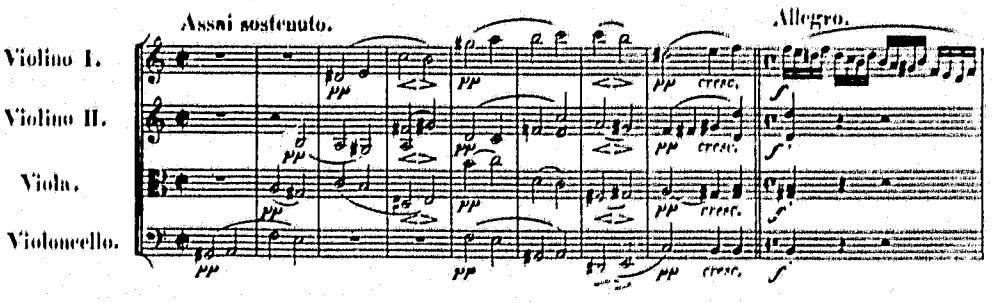
and fundamental structure is lacking.[3] In a fascinating semiotic analysis of the first movement of Op. 132, V. Kofi Agawu points out that it can be heard in reference to a code of stylistic signifiers found in earlier Classical music, here comprising numerous topics (such as learned style, *alla breve*, fantasy, cadenza, march, sensibility, gavotte, aria, and brilliant style), presented simultaneously or successively throughout the movement. Furthermore, in Agawu's view, recognition of the gestural syntax, which includes notions such as plot and structural rhythm, and which is the result of this interplay of signifiers, permits the comprehension of deeper structural properties. Beneath the surface of topics, "the formal and tonal-harmonic processes reveal a persuasive, remarkably continuous operational logic whose coordinates are locatable within the normative Classic style. Not only this higher-level contrast of articulation, but several lower-level comparisons reveal an absence of synchronicity between topic and harmony, and it is this dissonance between the domains that gives the work its unique character."[4] For Joseph Kerman, "the play of extreme contrasts gave Beethoven the technical means" to control an expressive vision, a vision in which "contrast is not rationalized but endured; more than any other experience, frustration sets the mood. Conflict is seen simply as the condition of suffering rather than as a challenge that is likely to be taken up."[5] It is possible, I think, to combine and to expand upon these various viewpoints on the structure and quality of this movement by adapting their guiding premise of contrast by the addition of the notion of paradox to our analytic apparatus.

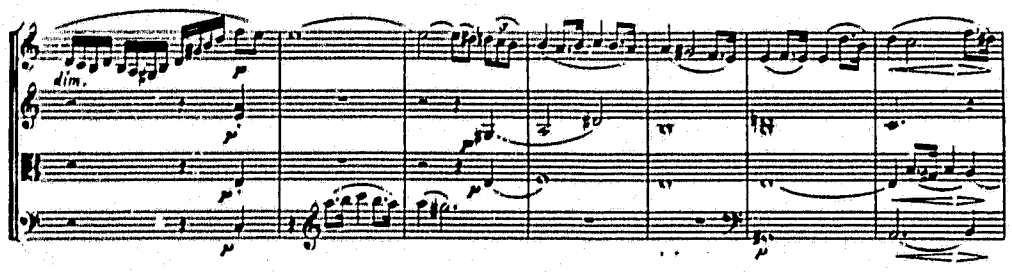
Contrast is, of course, a necessary condition of the Classical sonata form, a dramatic construction depending in general for its effect upon the tension between and resolution of large-scale harmonic and thematic dichotomies. In op. 132, however, contrast is pushed past being a rhetorical technique to the point of pervasive paradox, far beyond anything ever required by Haydn or Mozart for a sonata-form movement. It seems important at this point to reiterate that paradox, in the multifaceted sense in which we have agreed to define it, is different in essence from the common idea of mere contrast, or from Kerman's more probing notion of dissociation. Implicit in a paradox is the possibility of its resolution; both halves of an idea, seemingly at irreconcilable

[3]Kevin Korsyn, "Integration in Works of Beethoven's Final Period," (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1983), pp. 214-16.
[4]V. Kofi Agawu, *Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classic Music* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 125.
[5]Joseph Kerman, p. 243.

odds with each other, are held together in a tensional synthesis in order to say something that cannot be expressed in any other way. At some point, there is a moment of epiphany, when the meaning of an expression such as "X *and* not-X" is clearly communicated, and is found to be richer than the acceptance of only one or the other. At some higher level, we hope to find that all of these small epiphanies, or fragments of meaning arising from local paradoxes, will exhibit a converging pattern of structural and expressive significance, a pattern that does, in fact, become apparent in the A-minor quartet.

Particularly prominent in the opening movement are the numerous discontinuities which break up both the surface and the mood of the music, the dialectical relationship created between the major and minor modes of A (and concomitant tension between C-sharp and C), the extreme contrasts between themes, and the unusual recapitulatory scheme. These paradoxes have expressive consequences; dichotomies of register, texture, articulation, and dynamics contribute to the overall tone of insecurity and pain, as does the emphasis placed on ambiguity of mode. Disjunction between the *Assai sostenuto* introductory gesture and the *Allegro* preface to the first theme is set up in terms of tempo, rhythm, texture, and dynamics. The slow introduction, which uses a pathotype theme that begins like a rather funereal and archaic fugue exposition, what with its imitative entries of a chromatic motive in hushed half notes and its prevailing harmonic sonority of the diminished seventh chord, is abruptly interrupted by an outburst in sixteenth notes in mm. 9-10. This flourish of highly contrasting character leads to the statement of the first theme. The flourish elaborates F, then the countermelody to the first theme sustains E for some time, a composing out of the F-E progression prominent in the *Assai sostenuto* motive.





op. 132, i, mm. 1-16 (continued from previous page)

The two-measure *Allegro* flourish is a parenthetical enclosure, delaying the point of arrival on E until the arrival of the actual first theme; thus Beethoven has dovetailed the joint between the two large sections by indulging in a thematic configuration that could absorb their very sharp contrasts. This gesture, as well as the repeated return to the introductory material and the emphasis on several levels of the characteristic motivic contour of that material within the *Allegro* section, give a sense of continuation of the slower music into the rest of the movement.

Particularly interesting in the first theme is its unusual rhythmic construction; the march motive is missing its downbeat, not a usual characteristic of marches, which tend to be square and straightforward.[6] According to Nottebohm, Beethoven labored long over the rhythmic articulation of this theme, which had previous incarnations beginning on beat one and beat four.[7] The highly chromatic first theme is itself interrupted by a one-measure *Adagio* gesture over an unstable cadential six-four chord, which recalls something of the feeling of the slow introduction, and serves to hold back the progress of the form. After more scuttling sixteenths, the first theme re-enters, this time in more fragmented form, as Beethoven takes advantage of the separability of his theme, and tosses its basic motive back and forth among all four voices. The music takes a surprising turn from A minor toward B-flat (although B-flat is not actually established as a key); then the expected resolution in F major is delayed by a surprising excursion, beginning in m. 39, in D minor.

A still stronger contrast occurs with the arrival in m. 48 of the lyrical, beautifully simple second theme (marked *dolce* and *teneramente*), vocal in quality like

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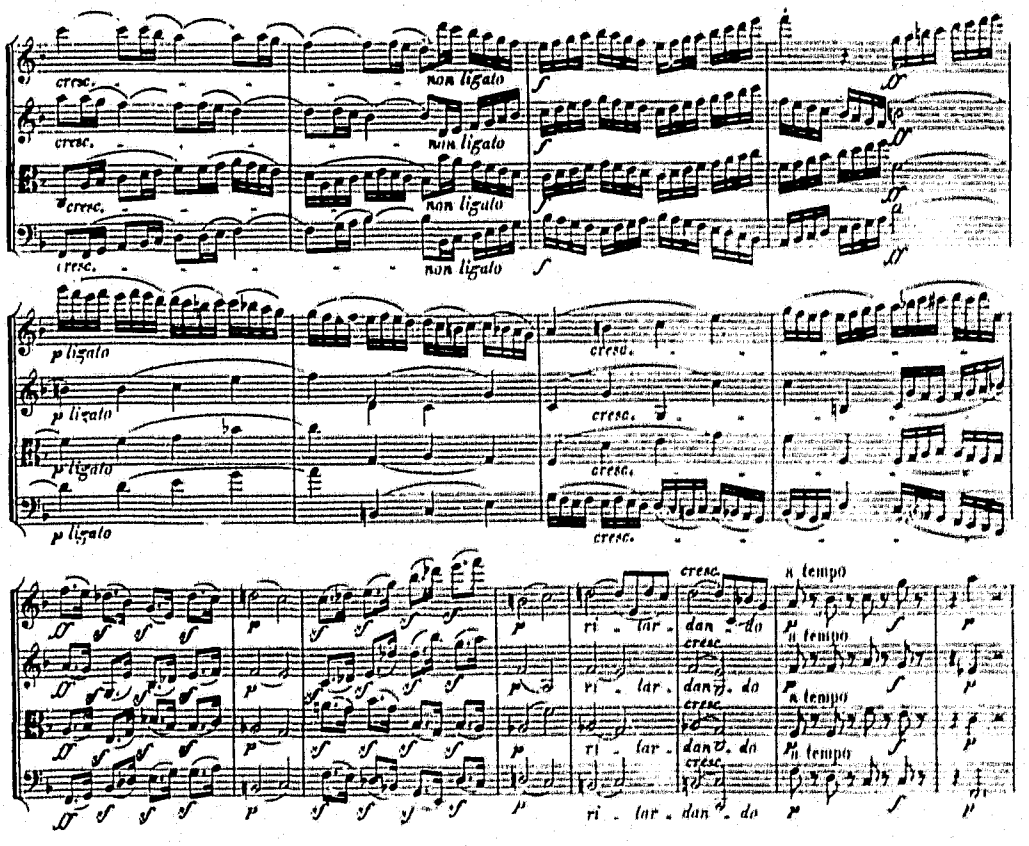
[6]This movement is not, of course, a march movement, but the topical reference of the motive is obvious.

[7]Cited in Martin Cooper, *Beethoven: The Last Decade, 1817-1827* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 359.

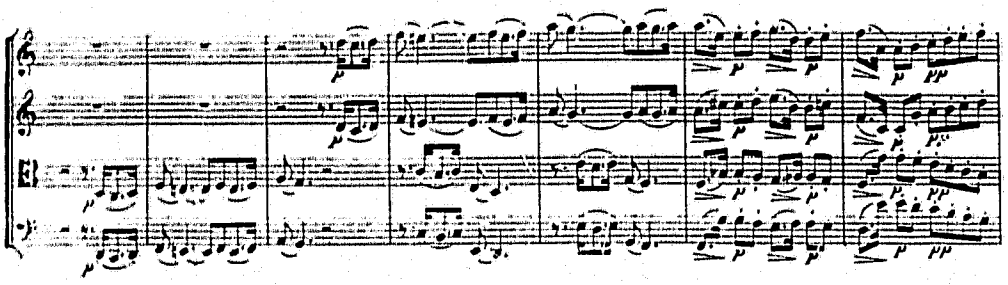
nothing else to this point in the movement. In F major, and accompanied by a gently vamping ostinato figure, the theme introduces here for the first time an atmosphere of genuine relaxation that is all the more mysterious for being tied to all of the effects of frustrated forward motion that preceded it. The shift to steady sixteenth-note motion in m. 60 and the forceful return in m. 67 to the dotted eighth-sixteenth pattern, here coupled with fragments of the introductory material, bring together in close conjunction the three major ideas of the exposition. This deliberate juxtaposition of seemingly disparate musical elements offers support for the idea that Beethoven was exploring the "expression of music's potential for diversity rather than organic coherence;"[8] that these themes can be brought together in this way implies an element of reconcilability, and thus is paradoxical, rather than merely ambiguous. The exposition comes to a cadence in m. 73 in F major, surprisingly undercut by the E-flat in the second violin, and pauses.



op. 132, i, mm. 59-73

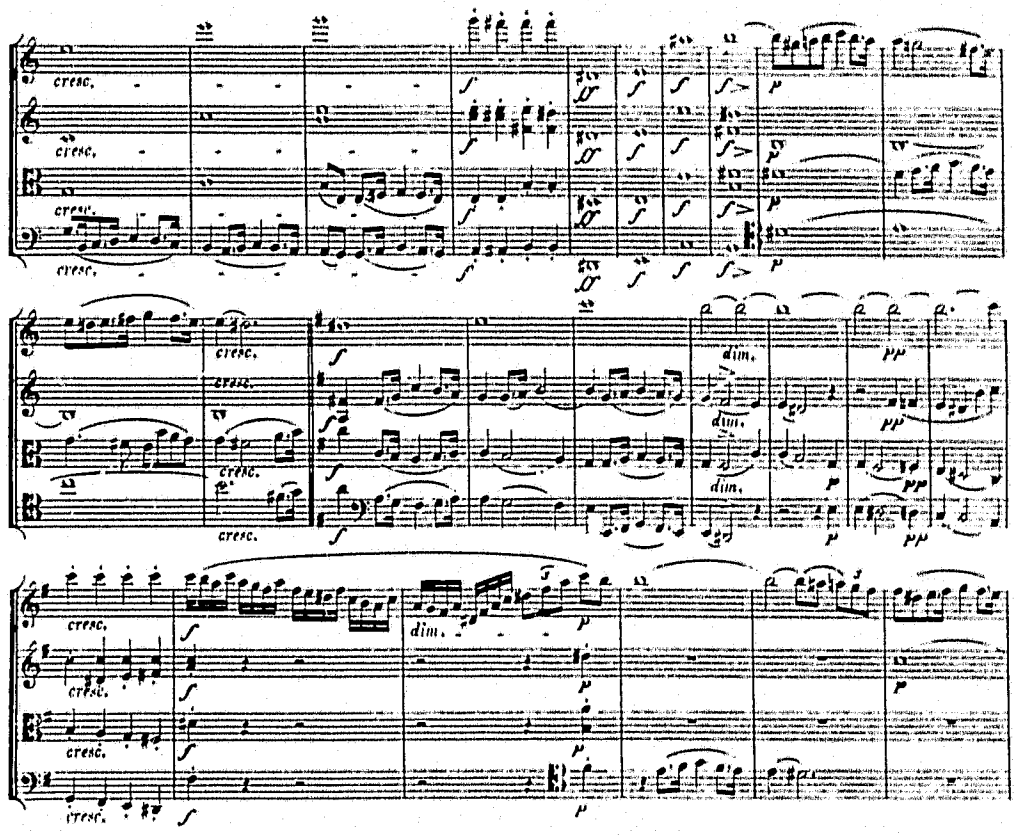
[8]Robin Wallace, "Background and Expression in the First Movement of Beethoven's Op. 132," *Journal of Musicology* 7 (1989), p. 5.

The development section begins with a restatement of the material of the slow introduction, rather than of the first theme, but given the extent to which the material of that introduction colored the exposition, this gesture sounds fairly normal. Soon, however, we find that something more is amiss. So restless has the exposition been that the role of the development becomes paradoxically rather less developmental. The musical surface has been to this point so laden with contrast that the conception of form can become more schematic. That there is little development is compensated for by the unusual exposition that preceded it, and the varied recapitulation that is still to come; the equation of function with formal sections in the movement is very fluid, in fact. The musical progress seems to stagnate, until it is interrupted by a gesture--a sudden shift after a pause to a thinly textured, diatonic canon, beginning in m. 92--that effectively negates all the previous material of the development, and permits a renewal of forward motion.



op. 132, i, mm. 92-98

What follows, beginning in m. 103, is what seems to be the recapitulation, somewhat prematurely, as the development section has been so brief. The first theme reappears in tandem with the slow introduction's cantus firmus, and the themes proceed as if this section were indeed the recapitulation. However, we are in the wrong key, E minor, and compared to the parallel passage in the exposition, the bars are half as long, the tempo is twice as fast, and new ornamentation is added to the main theme. E minor might perhaps be heard as the resolution of the F major section in the exposition, in a further composing out, this time on a larger temporal scale, of the F-E motive so prominent in the introduction. The music moves toward A minor in m. 151, which, however, proves to be only a stepping-stone to the arrival in C major, in which key we hear the second theme.



op. 132, i, mm. 99-123

In m. 193, Beethoven finally works his way back toward A minor, where he embarks upon a second recapitulation, at last in the home key, but the sense of relaxation or stability that might be expected here is completely subverted by the absence of harmonization of the main theme with a structurally significant tonic triad, and hence, the lack of a convincing sense of closure. The second theme is heard in A major, not in A minor, thus further undercutting the sense of a home key, and denying the return at any point of the second-theme material in A minor. When A minor finally returns, it seems very provisional, having been challenged on so many fronts throughout the movement. This second reprise feels more like a coda than a genuine recapitulation, because we hear it after the completion of the material that had concluded the exposition. Beethoven is here playing on the listener's notions of return by not aligning the moments of thematic and tonal recapitulation, thereby blurring the boundaries between the formal divisions of a sonata movement, perhaps "in order to impress the listener with the possibility of divergent expressive interpretations."[9]

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[9]Wallace, p. 9.

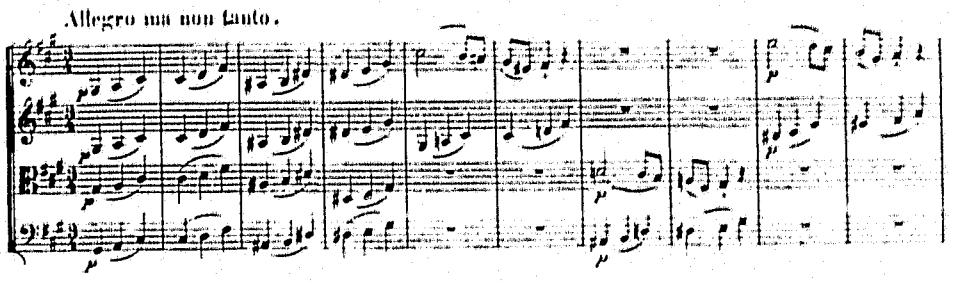
In an interesting interpretation of this movement, David Greene sees the underlying dichotomy of the first movement to reside in the co-existence of two non-coincident temporal processes. He argues that the musical events can be separated into two groups, one group which contributes to the end-directed shape, and the other which contributes to a more unusual centre-controlled shape. Such manipulations of musical time serve to create several futures at once, in Greene's theory, and permit the listener to experience the work in more than one way at once; "past and present events summon a particular future, but this future both does and does not happen. The lack of clear differentiation makes each new present seem not to fulfill its past and not to be the future summoned by the past."[10] Greene regards the centre-controlled shape as relatively stable, while the end-directed shape, which is a more normal way for us to perceive the passage of musical time (i.e., beginning leads to middle leads to end, with the end results serving as a resolution of earlier events), is made unfamiliar. The unconventional nature of this shape is due to the fact that it "risks unprecedented discontinuities, establishes fundamentally new goals, and achieves its objectives progressively in the altogether unique double recapitculation," thereby sustaining its own temporal process, while the centre-controlled shape contradicts it and attenuates it.[11] In Beethoven's formal manipulations, the temporal process associated with Classical sonata-allegro form "is not clearly articulated, nor is it completely abrogated." which may account, to some extent, for the certain sense of frustration which permeates the movement.[12]

Several critics, Kerman and Solomon, for example, see the subject of this movement as pain or suffering of some sort, a view supported by the use of the pathotype theme in particular and the tortuous surface and structure of the movement in general. Considering what is yet to come in the quartet, that is, the visionary central movement, this critical assertion is also buttressed by the mythically shaped narrative of the piece as a whole. The first movement represents an absolutely archetypal descent, necessarily undertaken in order to gain wisdom or access to creativity; the world below in myth is frequently the world of the dream or imagination, and hence of the creative, but to get there usually entails suffering or struggle. The quartet is on a vision-quest,

[10]David B. Greene, *Temporal Processes in Beethoven's Music* (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1982), p. 168.
[11]Greene, p. 173.
[12]Greene, p. 168.

whose goal becomes visible in the third movement, which vision then informs the journey of the rest of the composition back to its starting-point, which can then be experienced differently. Time is, in a sense, heard in both directions, with the central movement as the crux. The fourth and fifth movements while moving forward in time will also point back to the second and first, respectively, offering less conflict ridden versions of the previous musical experiences.

Although many excellent analyses of the first movement have been offered, the other movements have received far less attention. Kerman states that "of the five movements of the Quartet in A minor, the second and fourth are experienced in a curious and unique way as subsidiary."[13] On some levels, it is difficult to argue with this assertion, but it is important to recognize that the paradox-saturated tone of the first movement continues to be felt in both of these smaller movements, as we shall see. The second movement is an *Allegro ma non tanto* dance movement. Here, Beethoven transforms the simplest of musical elements (six-note ascending gestures spanning a seventh, and a descending-fifth figure consisting of a half-note, four eighths, and a quarter note) into a substantial structure that delights, in Haydnesque fashion, in witty play with its own materials.



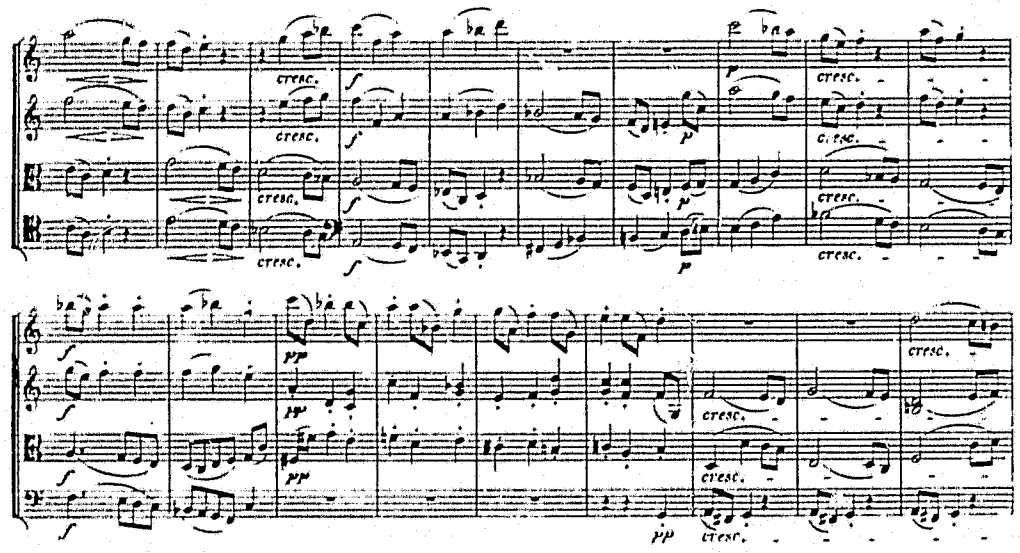
op. 132, ii, opening

Characteristic of the opening motive is the off-tonic downbeat; the first, diatonic, sextet begins on the leading tone, while the second, more chromatic, group of six pitches begins with the raised tonic, and also features the raised fourth scale degree, creating a subtle level of tonal tension which finds reflection in unexpected harmonic manipulations present in the movement as a whole; modulations within the dance are to the fairly remote keys of F and C major, while the trio, curiously, is in the tonic key of A major. Also important in the contour of the opening melodic material is the placement of the eighth-note pairs on beats three and one. As will be shown, the

[13]Kerman, p. 250.

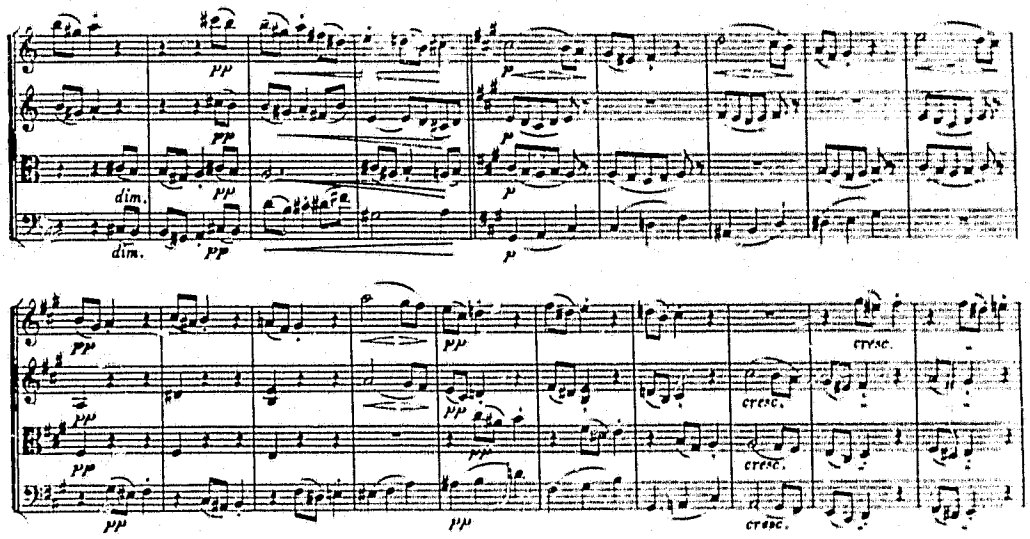
source of much of the compositional humor in this movement is the attempt by the quartet to shift the placement of an eighth-note pair to beat two, and the concomitant duple/triple dichotomy. One last attribute of the movement's basic musical material to be considered is its vitally viable variability: the two-measure motivic segments can be combined contrapuntally, overlapped rhythmically, and extended or foreshortened at will, creating an enormously flexible system for generating phrases.

The eighth-note pair at the tail of the Allegro theme becomes detached from its context and repeated as a free-standing fragment as early as mm. 11-12. Thereafter, it returns to its position at the end of the longer motive until m. 38, where its newly fragmented appearance heralds a clandestine, pianissimo shift to a duple pattern within the larger triple metre complex, in mm. 41-44.



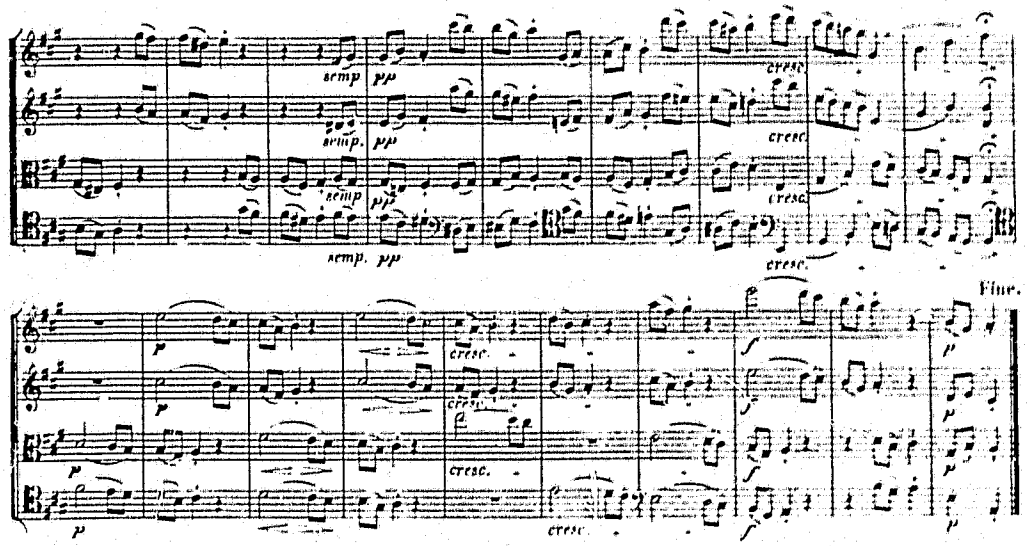
op. 132, ii, mm. 29-47

The re-establishment of the triple feel is accompanied by stubbornly repeated eighth-note fragments, first in the cello, and then in the first violin. At last, all four instruments take up the insistent harping on the eighth-note pairs. The prevailing pattern is foreshortened just before the double bar marking the return to the opening theme in A major (which itself arrived four measures earlier), and, in m. 70, for the first time since the shift to duple time, the eighth-note pair appears on beat two. This disruption prepares for the witty counterpoint in the next section (mm. 76-86), where the instruments in turn pass fragments of the motive back and forth, one beginning with the eighth-note pair on beat one, answered by the other, beginning on beat two.



op. 132, ii, mm. 67-85

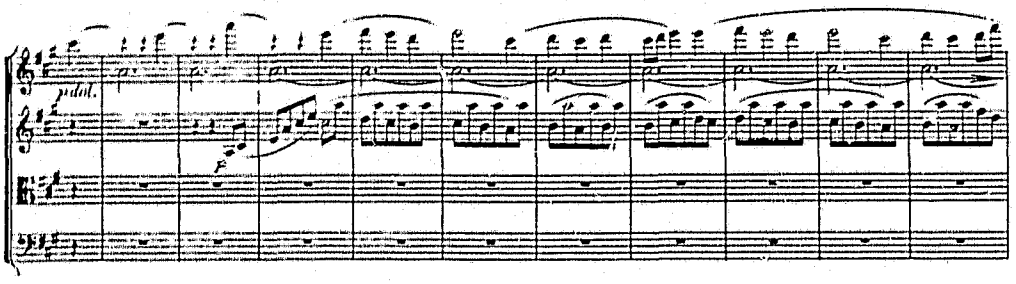
The final section of the dance carries the permutation one step further, as the voices now repeat the motives in contrary motion (mm. 103-108), eighth-note pairs only occurring on the first and third beats until m. 108, at which point the melodic sequence of descending eighth notes is extended over one more beat (the second), dramatizing the half cadence on the leading tone seventh chord in the next measure.



op. 132, ii, mm. 101-119

A similar phenomenon appears in the approach to the final cadence. The eighth-note pair/quarter-note fragment is delayed by one beat of rest in m. 118, and resumes its position in m. 119, creating a humorous rhythmic compression, and an effective, if somewhat comically abrupt, cadence.

Such reflexive rhythmic play, particularly devastating in a dance-form movement, is reminiscent of Haydn, as is the seemingly rustic, *Ländler*-like trio that follows the dance proper, with its bagpipesque drones in the three lower voices accompanying a simple pentatonic song in the first violin.[14]



op. 132, ii, mm. 120-129

The texture is utterly Beethovenian, however, with four octaves separating the lowest voice from the highest, an effect the composer frequently used in this period of his life to represent the boundless or celestial, as in the Ninth Symphony, the Missa Solemnis, the Piano Sonata Op. 110, the String Quartet Op. 127, and *Meeresstille und glückliche Fahrt*.[15] The psychological result of this clash of opposing matrices of association (a close paradoxical encounter of the third Empsonian kind, as we will recall) is to tip off the listener that this trio is going to move in mysterious and unexpected ways its

[14]The similarities of affect in the second movement of Op. 132 to that produced by the reflexive compositional procedures of Haydn and early Beethoven seem more pointed when one considers the fact that "the passage in eighth-notes in the second part of the second movement is practically a quotation from one of the German dances [WoO 13, no. 11] written at least twenty-five years before, with the bar lines shifted so that the change of harmony occurs on the up-beats of the measures." *Thayer's Life of Beethoven*, revised and edited by Elliot Forbes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 957.

[15]Maynard Solomon, "The Ninth Symphony: A Search for Order," *Beethoven Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 25. See also Leo Treitler, "'To Worship That Celestial Sound': Motives for Analysis," in *Music and the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), pp. 64-5, and William Kinderman, "Beethoven's Symbol for the Deity in the *Missa solemnis* and the Ninth Symphony," *Nineteenth-Century Music* 9 (1985), pp. 102-18.

wonders to perform, a suspicion soon borne out by subsequent musical events. In m. 141, the texture changes: the first violin is brought back down to earth, the bagpipe breathes its last, and the four instruments take up in turn a sinuous scale fragment, and a *sempre staccato* block chord accompaniment. This accompaniment pattern is based primarily on groups of three repeated pitches, beginning on beat three, which here sounds like a downbeat. Occasionally, a metric spanner is thrown into the works.[16] For instance, in the cello in mm. 145-46, F-sharp appears four times, throwing the first of the three Bs of m. 148 onto beat one, necessitating the reduction of the appearances of E in m. 149 to two from three, so that the regular pattern can be re-established. Similar metric manipulation occurs in mm. 169-70, the pattern's re-alignment now being reinforced by the use of rests and octave leaps in the bass line. As these rhythmic-metric shifts have been occurring, the first violin has gradually gained a monopoly on the scalar melodic pattern, which it now takes at even greater lengths and to ever greater heights; the dynamic level also increases (see mm. 188-205). Frustrated with their subordinate lot in life, the cello and viola puncture the musical fabric with a stamping figure of *sforzato* chords in octaves, utilizing D-sharp and B-sharp, contradicting the prevailing diatonic A-major mood and effecting a modulation to C-sharp minor. The first violin re-enters with a dramatic and emphatic sweep up a C-sharp minor triad in mm. 212-14, attempting to assert its dominance in a position five and four octaves above the cello and viola, respectively. At this, the second violin, a silent partner until now, chooses sides and joins the lower two instruments. The three then make a last-ditch attempt at sovereignty in a startling four-measure interpolation of cut-time (in C-sharp minor), a surprising effect that is, nonetheless, the logical culmination of the subtly nagging rhythmic-metric incongruences underlying both the dance and the trio.[17] (Please see the example on the next page.) The ethereal violin tune returns with the re-establishment of 3/4 time in m. 222, this time to a slightly thickened accompaniment, and, before the D.C., cadences wistfully with three C-sharps, each one a beat longer than the one before, in a delicious final recollection of the movement's pervasive temporal play.

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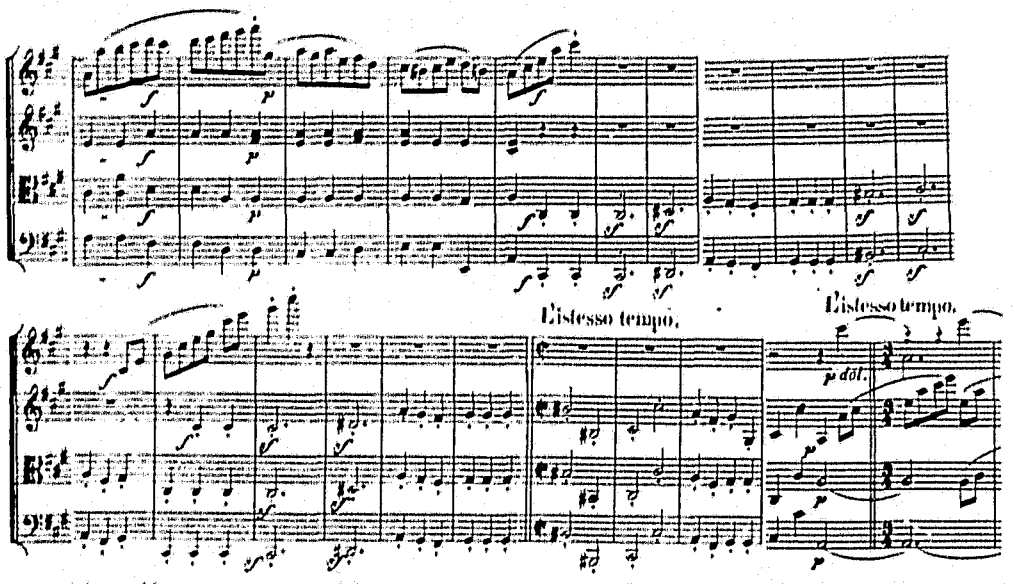
[16]Of course, given the time and place in which Beethoven composed the quartet, the monkey-wrench could be regarded as Imperial as well as metric, but in Canada today, alas! no more.

[17]Foreshadowing is a fourth-type paradox, as will be remembered from Chapter Three.

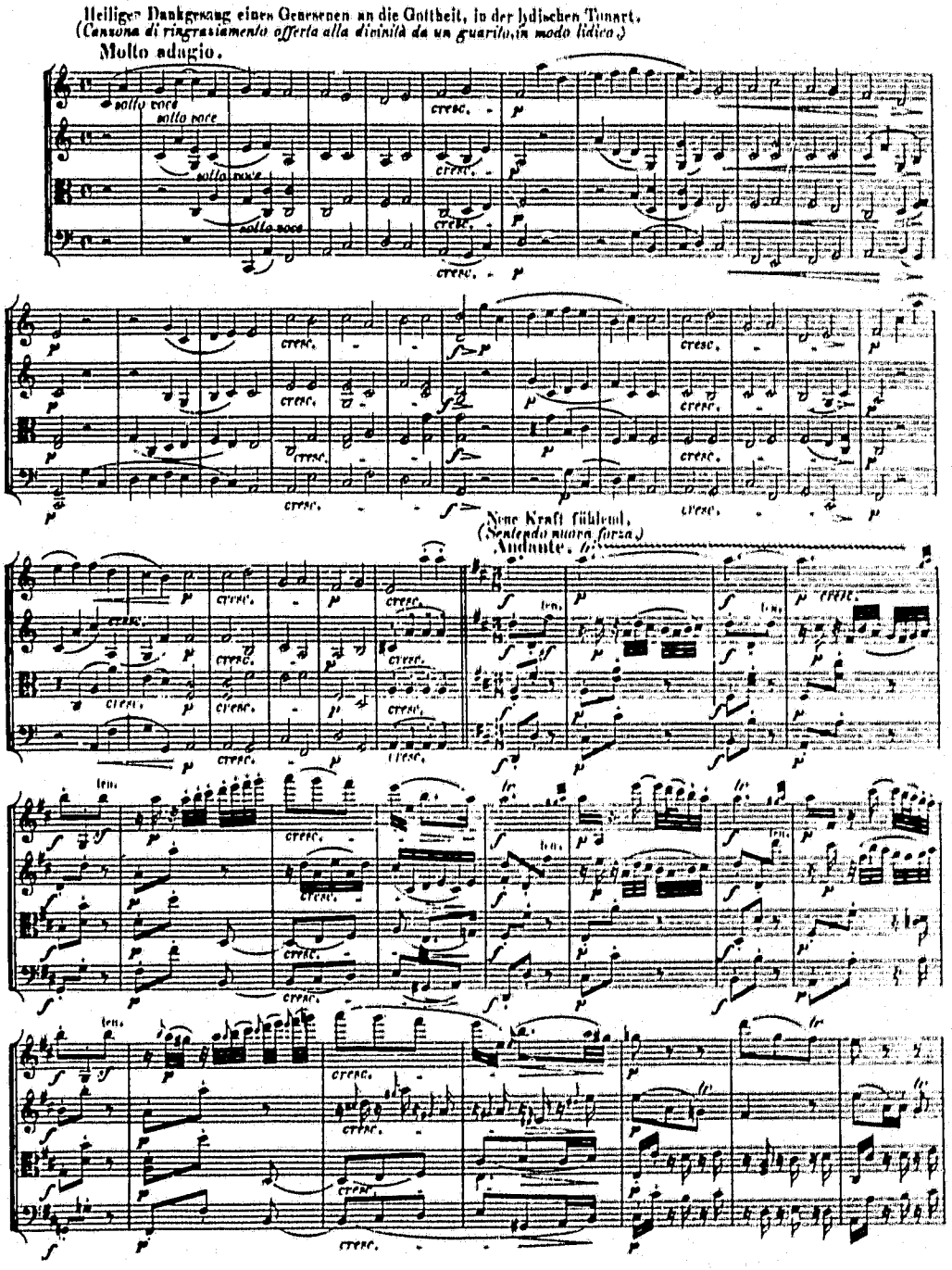


Op. 132, ii, mm. 201-222

Work on the quartet was interrupted by a serious illness in April and May; in May or June, Beethoven wrote in a conversation notebook "*Dankhimne eines Kranken an Gott bei seiner Genesung Gefühl neuer Kraft und wiedererwachtes Gefühl*" (Hymn of Thanksgiving to God of an Invalid on his Convalescence. Feeling of new strength and reawakened feeling), which, in somewhat altered form, became the title of the newly planned third movement.[18] This central slow movement of the quartet employs contrasts as stark as any Beethoven ever used. The differences between the two themes in this five-part double variation formal scheme (ABA'B'A") are extreme, and involve nearly every conceivable musical parameter. Characterized by a slow (*Molto adagio*) tempo, narrow ambitus, uniformity of rhythmic values and dynamics, harmonic austerity, conjunct motion, and strictness of contrapuntal writing, the hymn tune proper has a solemn, vulnerable, and archaic quality, which could not be more different from the intensely lyrical dance section which follows it. The hugely paradoxical construction, juxtaposing such extremely contrasting material, here assumes extra-musical significance, made explicit by the use of verbal cues, including *Heiliger Dankgesang eines Genesenen an die Gottheit, in der lydischen Tonart, Neue Kraft fühlend*, and *Mit innigster Empfindung*. Such linguistic clues are not really necessary, however, to an apprehension of the musical meaning, whose psychological progress

[18]Cited in *Thayer's Life of Beethoven*, rev. and ed. Elliot Forbes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 947.

seems clear, regardless of whether or not universal agreement can be reached about verbal descriptions of the musical character.



op. 132, iii, mm. 1-49

The hymn makes three appearances, as the first, third, and final sections of the five-part movement. Internal contrast in these sections, particularly the first one, is minimized to the greatest possible degree. In strict plagal hypolydian mode, the hymn utilizes triadic harmony almost exclusively (there is only one seventh chord), and is sparing in its employment of dissonance. Melodic motion is primarily stepwise, and repetition, sequence, or any other sort of elaboration are shunned. The rhythmically simple chorale consists of five four-measure phrases (using only half notes, except for occasional quarter notes at cadences), interspersed with canonic ritornelli (in quarter notes), and is written in strict note-against-note counterpoint. The ritornello entries are exclusively at the rhythmic interval of a half note, and at the melodic interval almost always of the octave or unison. While it has close affinities with contemporary church-music theory and practice, as Sieghard Brandenburg has pointed out, the structure of Beethoven's chorale, especially in its initial appearance in the movement, is also reminiscent of Renaissance sacred composition (which the composer was studying at the time).[19]

Beethoven's self-imposed restrictions on his musical materials in the A section are responsible in large part for the quality of simplicity inherent in the hymn. The austerity carries overtones of acceptance of things as they are, a sort of quiet gratitude both for and in a song stripped down to its bare essentials, a musical analogue to the prayer of the contemplative. The archaic qualities of the chorale, especially the use of modality and uniform rhythmic values, evoke pastness, as well as creating a feeling of stasis, which may be construed as a commentary on human perception of that which is past; since we can experience time in only one direction, life and energy belong not to memory, but only to the present. The rhythmic opposition between the hymn and the dance is a temporal tension between the past and the immediate, between a moment frozen in time and a succession of moments progressing through time; a similar effect is present in the juxtaposition of the *Assai sostenuto* and the *Allegro* of the first

[19]Sieghard Brandenburg, "The Historical Background to the 'Heiliger Dankgesang' in Beethoven's A-minor Quartet Op. 132," *Beethoven Studies* 3, ed. Alan Tyson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 161-91. Warren Kirkendale notes with regard to Beethoven's studies of earlier music that the composer had access to selected works by Obrecht, Ockeghem, Josquin, Agricola, de la Rue, Brumel, Finck, Walther, Isaac, Palestrina, Gesualdo, Marenzio, Monteverdi, Victoria, Willaert, Byrd, Fux, Handel, Bach, among others, as well as theoretical works by Glarean, Fux, Zarlino, and others. See Kirkendale, *Fugue and Fugato in Rococo and Classical Chamber Music*, 2nd ed., trans Margaret Bent and Warren Kirkendale (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1979), pp. 139, 206-19.

movement. Perhaps in a curious way, the static representation of time in the *Heiliger Dankgesang* may also bring to mind eternity, since we can no more experience the future as progressive than we can the past. If there is a life beyond that on earth, we have no way of knowing whether its inhabitants are limited to an existence in the fourth dimension as we perceive it.

The D major "Feeling new strength" section, in 3/8 metre, springs off from the a2 registral ceiling of the hymn. Kinesthetically delightful, this B section exudes joy, ecstasy, immediacy, and vitality, drawing energy and spontaneity from its freer, more florid counterpoint, bountiful ornamentation, daring use of wide leaps, broader and generally louder dynamic range, use of rhythmic effects such as rests and syncopation, and exultant trills. The restrictions on register are dropped, as the tessitura of the first violin soars up to a3. Phrase lengths are more varied than in the hymn, and phrase repetition is no longer suppressed. The quicker tempo is accompanied by a much greater variety in the rhythmic values employed. Members of the quartet are invited to play *cantabile espressivo*. The sense of liberation and release felt here is evocative of the dance, especially dance in its earliest manifestation as an ecstatic ritual of worship, as described by Susanne Langer:

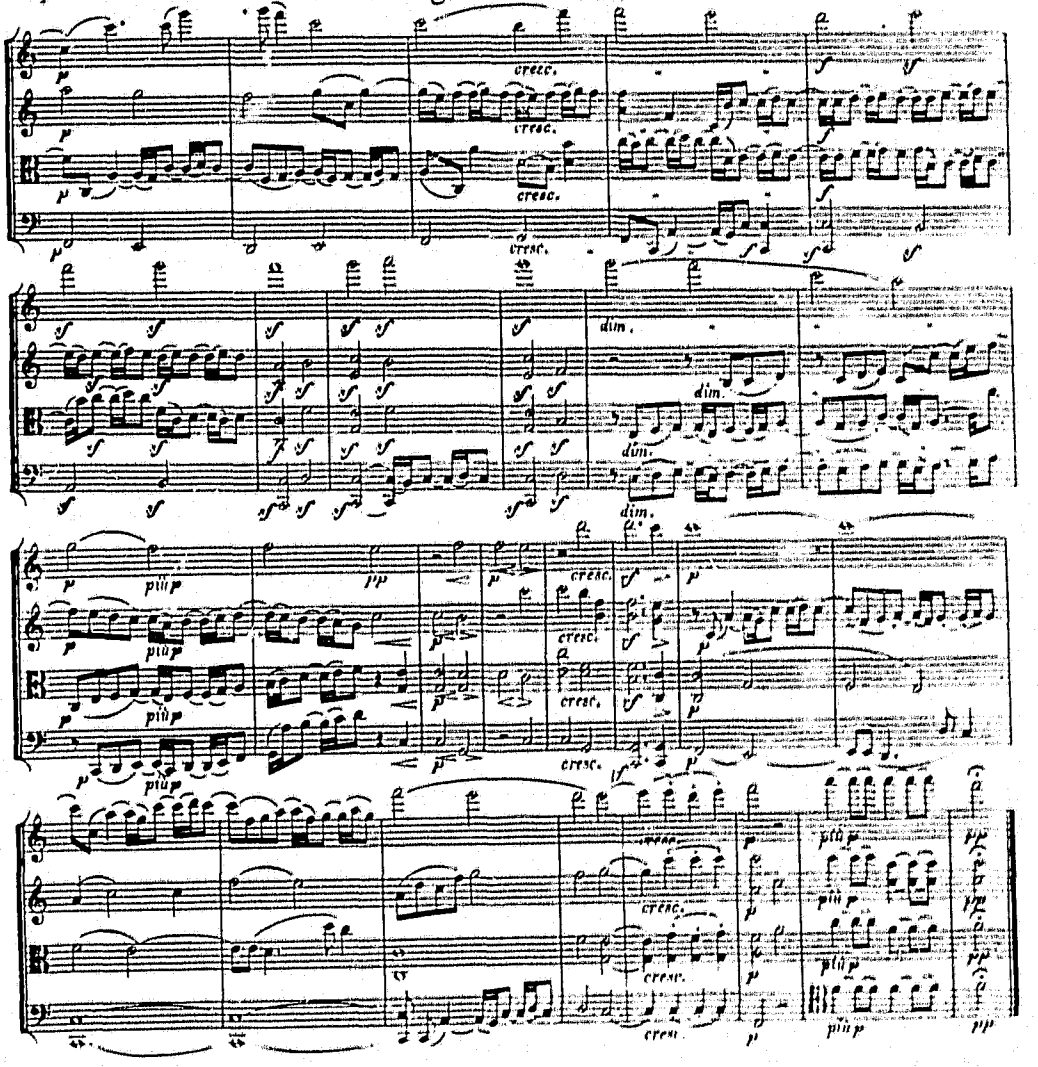
> But in the first stages of imagination, no such definite forms embody the terrible and fecund Powers that surround humanity. The first recognition of them is through the feeling of personal power and will in the human body and their first representation is through a bodily activity which abstracts the sense of power from the practical experiences in which that sense is usually an obscure factor. This activity is known as "dancing." The dance creates an image of nameless and even bodiless Powers filling a complete, autonomous realm, a "world." It is the first presentation of the world as a realm of mystic forces. This explains the early development of dance as a complete and even sophisticated art form....Dance is, in fact, the most serious intellectual business of savage life: it is the envisagement of a world beyond the spot and the moment of one's animal existence, the first conception of life as a whole--continuous, superpersonal life, punctuated by birth and death, surrounded and fed by the rest of nature....[The prehistoric evolution of dance] is the very process of religious thinking, which begets the conception of "Powers" as it symbolizes them. To the "mythic consciousness" these creations are realities, not symbols; they are not felt to be created by the dance at all, but to be invoked, adjured, challenged, or placated, as the case may be. The symbol of the world, the balletic realm of forces, *is* the world, and dancing is the human spirit's participation in it.[20]

[20]Susanne K. Langer, *Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 190.

The return of the A section presents the hymn tune's cantus firmus intact, with a new accompaniment, variations based on the ritornello figure used in the interludes between phrases of the cantus firmus in the opening section of the movement. Now an octave higher (and thus reaching a summit of d3), the hymn tune in the first violin floats over the other voices, which repeat the original harmonies. The greater rhythmic freedom of the accompaniment, the higher register of the cantus firmus, and the octave leaps in the cello all point toward an intrusion of contrasting elements into the tranquil world of the hymn from the more active sphere of the *Neue Kraft fühlend.* The end of A' repeats the move to an A major triad, before embarking upon the repeat of B, which is varied only ornamentally, with redistribution of material among the voices and increased rhythmic subdivision, and which is this time even more lush and brilliant.

By this time, the double variation scheme will have become apparent even to the uninitiated listener, and a second variation of A is expected at this point in the movement. This expectation is thwarted, however, as the return of A beginning in m. 168 is not a true variation, but an expanded treatment of the first phrase only, a gently reflexive play on the presuppositions of the audience. By so doing, Beethoven also avoids the implied move toward D in the second phrase of the cantus firmus, and the explicit move to A in the final phrase of the hymn in its original version, permitting in this last section a decisive close in the tonic. Now marked "with the deepest, most intimate feeling," the section begins with a newly rhythmically elaborated version of the prefatory figure, treated canonically, before the first phrase of the hymn tune enters. It is cut short, and treated imitatively in various registers, no longer harmonized by block chords, but intermingled with the material of the ritornello figures, a process which had only been hinted at in the second A section. These are presented in strict double counterpoint in a fugal exposition and truncated stretto. The phrasing is now much freer than in the initial A section. At m. 182, the prefatory motif reappears, succeeded by the entire first hymn phrase, first in the cello, then in the first violin, and then in the cello once again. At the climax of the movement, the registral ceiling is lifted dramatically, to the a3 that played so prominent a part in the *Neue Kraft fühlend.* Nearly five octaves separate the outer voices, and each pitch of the chorale (present in the first violin, and in stretto in the cello) is played *sforzando.* The levels of both dissonance and rhythmic tension increase as well. A relaxation follows, as in m. 202 a third development of the first hymn phrase, this time of just its first two pitches, ensues. This process is carried up through four octaves, until, in mm. 206-209, the

rest of the phrase is finally granted. The final two measures contain the cadence, falling a third to the tonic from the important pitch a3. Martin Cooper regards this passage as reflective of contemplative ecstasy, which "communicates an extraordinary feeling of space, of an immobility that is nevertheless intensely active and alive," while Kerman has called this gradual dissociation and refinement of the hymn tune to its basic materials "a process of increasing spiritualization but also one of enrichment, a confrontation of inherent complexities," a process that would not have had nearly so vivid or affecting a result had Beethoven not deliberately created this paradoxical juxtaposition of music of such divergent characters.[21]



op. 132, iii, mm. 185-211

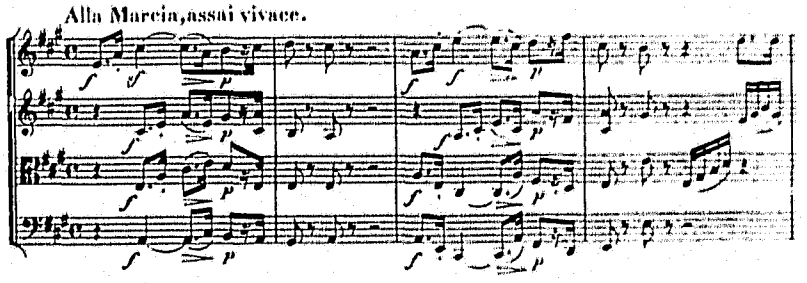
[21]Martin Cooper, *Beethoven: The Last Decade, 1817-1827* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 365; Kerman, p. 260.

How do two such contrasting bodies of material co-exist in peace, let alone to such obvious artistic success? Kerman notes that "the two do not mix, they do not understand one another, and it is only by a sort of miracle that they do not wipe each other out or simply collapse."[22] Brandenburg remarks that the use of contrasting interludes of this sort does not have any *specific* prototype in contemporary church music, but that "although they do not lie entirely outside a tradition of alternatim performance in church music, it has to be accepted that the introduction of a free and livelier interlude between the extremely slow lines of the chorale is a musical and psychological necessity that carries its own justification."[23] Korsyn, in his excellent dissertation, asserts that the extreme contrasts are, in fact, synthesized in the third appearance of A, by the incorporation into the hymn of aspects of the B theme, as noted above, such as greater rhythmic freedom, expanded range, increased variety of phrase length, and more phrase repetition, and, more particularly, by similarities in the deep voice-leading structure of each theme, as well as by the composing out, in the background of the second theme, of an important foreground motive (DGAD) of the first theme.[24] Cooper posits the co-existence of such contrasting states as evidence that they are two aspects of the same feeling: "it is as though Beethoven were aware of two aspects of his recovery; the feeling of objective gratitude, which he found it natural to express in a hymn to the God whom he always instinctively envisaged as a father, and the subjective physical and emotional sensations of a *retour à la vie*."[25] Of these remarks, Cooper's statement in particular seems to get at something important about how this movement is constructed and perceived. The paradox here is a complex one, in which the contradiction is so total that, based strictly on the objectively verifiable facts, the percipient is forced to find or invent an interpretation to account for the work's coherence. That the integrity of the movement is indeed self-evident would seem to indicate that the paradox involved is of a fundamental or metaphysical sort, like many of those examined in the first chapter, and in truth, the two themes do seem to rely on each other, and to be held together in some sort of alchemical reaction. The world of prayer and mystic contemplation is opposed to, but nevertheless related to, the world of activity and service; Mary and Martha were sisters, after all. Each section of

[22]Kerman, p. 254.
[23]Brandenburg, p. 191.
[24]Kevin Ernest Korsyn, "Integration in Works of Beethoven's Final Period," Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1983, pp. 149-69.
[25]Cooper, p. 362.

the movement derives part of its meaning from the juxtaposition with the other, and the meaning of the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. It is interesting to note in this regard the similar sort of symbolic intent associated with juxtaposed music of extremely contrasting character present in the *Credo* of the *Missa solemnis*. All of the music from the *Incarnatus* to the *Resurrexit*, comprising the years of Christ's life as a man on earth, is set apart from from the rest of the music of the *Credo* by its much different texture, thematic material, register, and key. Perhaps it is also worth remembering that Beethoven wrote this movement after recovering from an illness that brought him near death. At such times, as was noted in Chapter One's discussion of Jung's theory of synchronicity, the individual's threshold of consciousness is lowered and perception of unconscious archetypes becomes more available. Entry into the dimension where soul and matter are one, and where the human sense of time does not exist, permits events to occur which outside of that dimension can only seem paradoxical. Such a theory may account in part for our sense that the movement does seem unified despite the undeniable discontinuities present in it--the seemingly dissimilar musical events are bound together by an archetype.

The *Heiliger Dankgesang* was preceded by a witty take on a conventionalized movement type, and it is followed by one as well (in the same key, not coincidentally), creating the effect of a framing device, enclosing the central slow movement in a world of its own. The fourth movement, *Alla Marcia, assai vivace/Più allegro/Presto*, begins as a jolly, no-nonsense march in A major, although the accent on beat two of mm. 1 and 3 creates a sense of metric ambiguity, in a harbinger of interesting things to come.

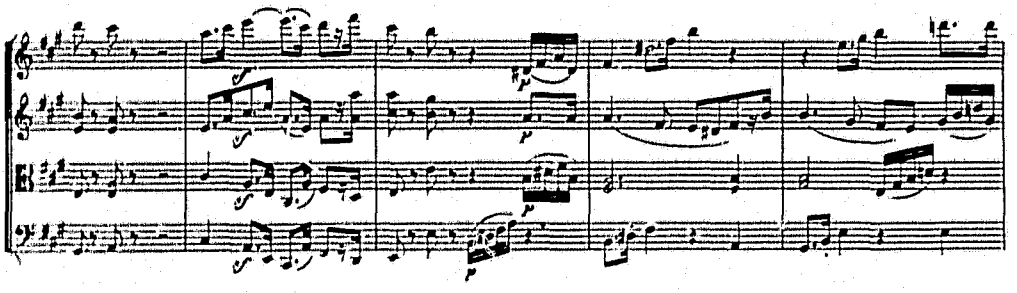


op. 132, iv, mm. 1-4

More nonsense, albeit of a serious sort, soon intervenes. The square, clearly articulated phrases of the opening period are answered in the B section of the march by a variant of the second phrase of the A section, here presented in imitative entries, which somewhat obscure the demarcation of phrases. This process takes on an interesting twist in mm. 12-13, where the violins extend the tail of their phrase by two

beats, while the lower strings curtail theirs by one measure, and take up material derived from the first phrase of the A section. Its characteristic ascending dotted eighth-sixteenth motive subsequently (mm. 13-15) appears *sforzando* in all voices in overlapping entries, before the first violin breaks out of the rhythmic rut into which the movement has temporarily fallen. As in the second movement, rhythmic disruptions are a particularly effective composerly manipulation of musical materials; in a march, as in a dance, the (implied) participants rely upon a regular temporal context in order to take part in the action.

From mm. 15-24, the material of the opening period is recapitulated nearly verbatim, allowing for the expected tonal changes and some alterations in the accompanimental voices, with one exception. A two-measure interruption from the middle of m. 18 to the middle of m. 20 is interpolated into the period structure, creating a tiny episode of false recapitulation, with the main theme of the second phrase appearing in the "wrong" voice and key (second violin and dominant, respectively), before all is set to rights at the end of m. 20.



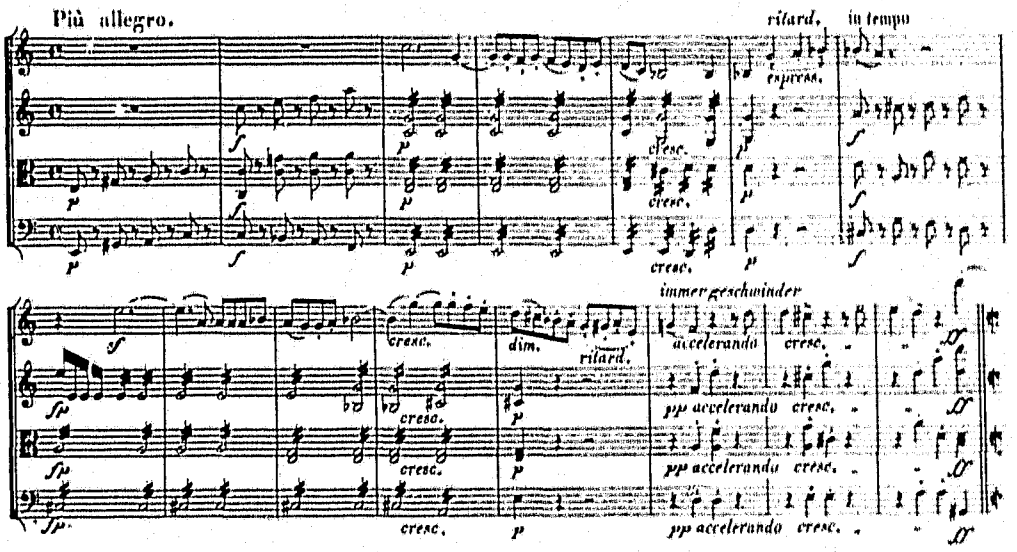
op. 132, iv, mm. 16-20

The march ends as innocently as it had begun, its naïveté undercut somewhat by the few sly winks encountered along the way.

Manipulation of expectations within the march itself takes place on a small scale, involving tiny, interesting adjustments of phrase length, arrangement, and demarcation. However, such subtle subversions are scorned by what purports to be (in fact, replaces) the trio, the *Più allegro/Presto*. The limited palette of effects used in the march is discarded in favor of a polychromatic, vividly operatic recitative, which, following hard on the heels of the march, "ambush[es], annihilat[es]" it.[26] Paradoxical is the clash between the march and recitative topics, as well as the use of recitative, an explicitly vocal idiom, in an instrumental context (both third-type paradoxes). Over a

[26]Joseph Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets* (New York: Norton, 1966), p. 262.

tremolando accompaniment in the lower strings, the first violin cries out in utter abandon. The A major of the march is rejected, replaced by F major, D minor, and A minor.



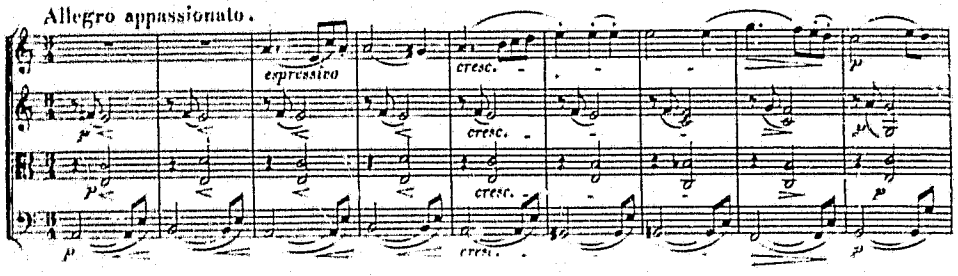
op. 132, iv, mm. 25-39

Nottebohm discovered that the finale which this recitative introduces was first sketched at the same time as the Ninth Symphony finale; this recitative, less concretely than that introducing the finale of the Ninth, also alludes to or comments upon the preceding movements in some fashion (it also has something of the feeling of the "Schreckensfanfare" from that symphony). The accompanimental stepping eighth-note figure grows out of the conclusion of the march, while mm. 25-26 and m. 31 are clearly related to the opening of the second movement. The emphasis on F recalls the *Heiliger Dankgesang*. The numerous tempo changes within a short span recall the shifting tempi of the opening movement; other hints of the first movement are found in the prolongation of F by the three-octave arpeggio in the violin, and in the derivative of the *Assai sostenuto* motive found in mm. 44-46 of the recitative.

The extreme contrasts between sections of this movement--in *topos*, tonality, rhythmic propulsion, character, harmony, and texture--are not without purpose; as we have so often found to be the case, Beethoven's juxtapositions of this sort are not undertaken in a cavalier fashion, but are musically and affectively well-motivated. In Kerman's opinion, what the composer wanted here was "a violent short-circuit to the

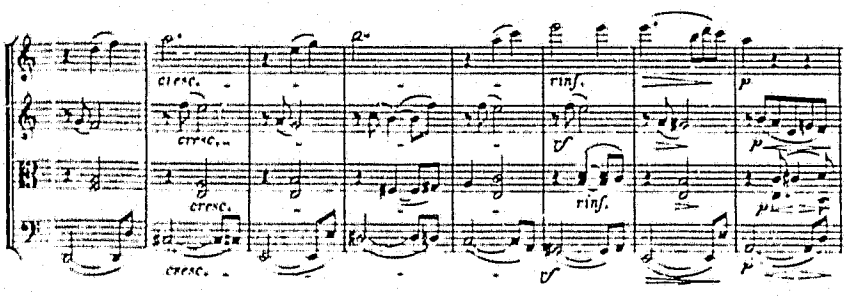
world of pain that was opened up in the first movement and turned away from in the interim."[27] As such, once again, paradox can be seen to be in the service of musical meaning.

The recitative introduces not an aria, but a tuneful rondo theme (after two measures of vamping accompaniment reminiscent of the second theme of the first movement), that could certainly pass for a vocal utterance. The finale, marked *Allegro appassionato/Presto*, is a waltz-like sonata-rondo that serves to pull together many of the disparate threads present in the previous movements. Beginning in A minor, the movement sets up a regularity of context in its presentation of the straightforward theme in four groups of eight measures. The first half of the theme is repeated an octave higher; each phrase cadences on the subtonic, which is heard as V/III; since III is never granted, there is an effect of non-resolution.



op. 132, v, mm. 1-10

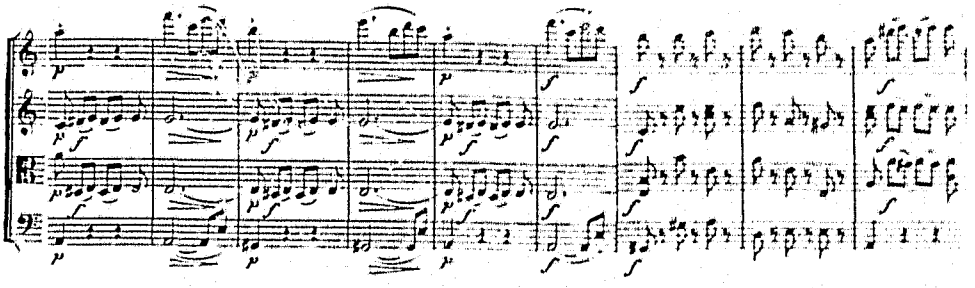
Then, the second half of the theme also appears twice, in the same octave this time, each half coming to a close with an authentic cadence, thus granting in the main rondo theme a secure sense of the tonic closure that was repeatedly denied in the first movement.



op. 132, v, mm. 19-26

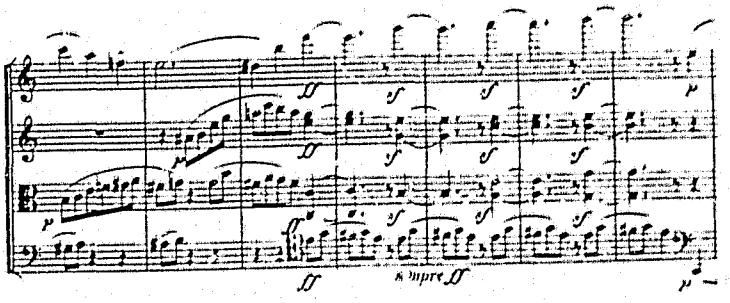
[27]Kerman, p. 262.

At the same time, the strong downbeat and clearly demarcated, regular phrase structure of this A theme is undercut by the cross-rhythms in the accompanying voices, harking back to the rhythmic-metric paradoxes prevalent in other movements, particularly the second and the fourth. The resulting tension has rhythmic ramifications for the episodes to come. For instance, the first episode, which follows hard on the heels of the cadential tonic chord in m. 34, is distinguished by a characteristic upbeat figure of four eighth-notes grouped across the beats, forcing the addition of a fifth note, an anticipation of the following downbeat, the beginning of the episode theme proper. This figure is repeated six times (finally moving toward G major), the off-beat stresses emphasized each time by a *subito forte* indication for the beginning of the motive, after a *piano* downbeat.



op. 132, v, mm. 34-42

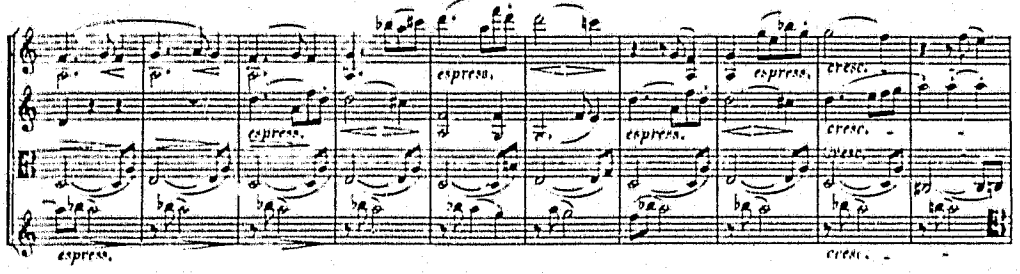
Altogether more brutal is the E minor passage between mm. 63-67, and the parallel passage from m. 71 to m. 75, with its insistent sforzando syncopations in the three upper voices, juxtaposed with a regular ostinato pattern in the cello (an elaboration of the E-F motive of the first movement). The texture, as well as the use of the extreme upper register in the first violin recalls the trio of the second movement; the b3 reached in m. 74 exceeds the registral ceiling of the third movement by a whole step.

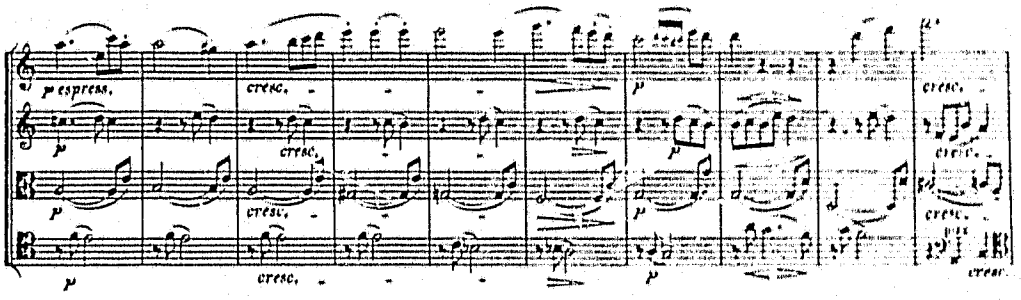


op. 132, v, mm. 69-75

The end of this episode (mm. 82-89) presents another rhetorical topic existing in a paradoxical relationship to the dance associations of the main rondo theme, consisting of a highly chromatic passage in chorale texture, that carries a retrospective suggestion of the *Assai sostenuto* introduction to the opening movement, as well as a more subtle reference to the hymn tune of the slow movement. This clash of associative meanings is brought home forcefully by the return, without any softening transition, of A, here presented virtually unchanged from its first appearance (thus further emphasizing a strong sense of cadential motion to the tonic).

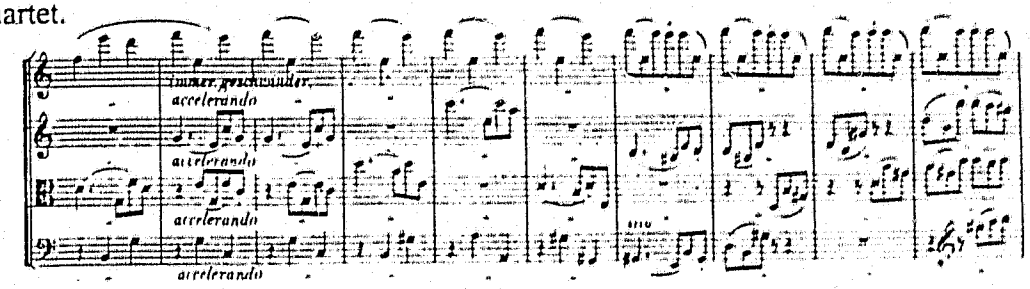
The ensuing episode (beginning in m. 123), while comprising new material, continues the preoccupations of the first episode, with its sinuous chromaticism and constant, *sforzando* emphasis on the second beat of the bar. An intensive developmental treatment of a three-note motive, consisting of an ascending third followed by a descending second, further undercuts both the generic expectations for a rondo-form movement, and the specific expectations arising from this particular movement's primary melodic material, which is simple, diatonic, and dance-like. The return of the main theme holds more surprises in store, as it is presented as a false recapitulation (beginning in m. 166) in D minor. The two-measure head of the theme appears in the second violin, ending on C-sharp, and is passed off to the first violin, which repeats it an octave higher, reinterpreting the final pitch as C natural, a nice *hommage* to the C-sharp/C natural conflict in the opening movement. The C-sharp restored, the second violin tries again, this time with the first four measures of the theme, before the true return of the main theme in A minor in m. 176 interrupts the progress in the subdominant key. With an altered accompaniment, whose cross-rhythms create emphasis on all three beats, the theme now appears in a substantially different guise. Each half of the phrase comes only once, both in the uppermost octave. A significant difference between this version and all previous appearances of the rondo theme is the four grace-note group in m. 182 at the approach to the cadence in the first half of the theme, spontaneous ornamentation which has the effect of releasing a good deal of the pent-up tension accumulated to that point.

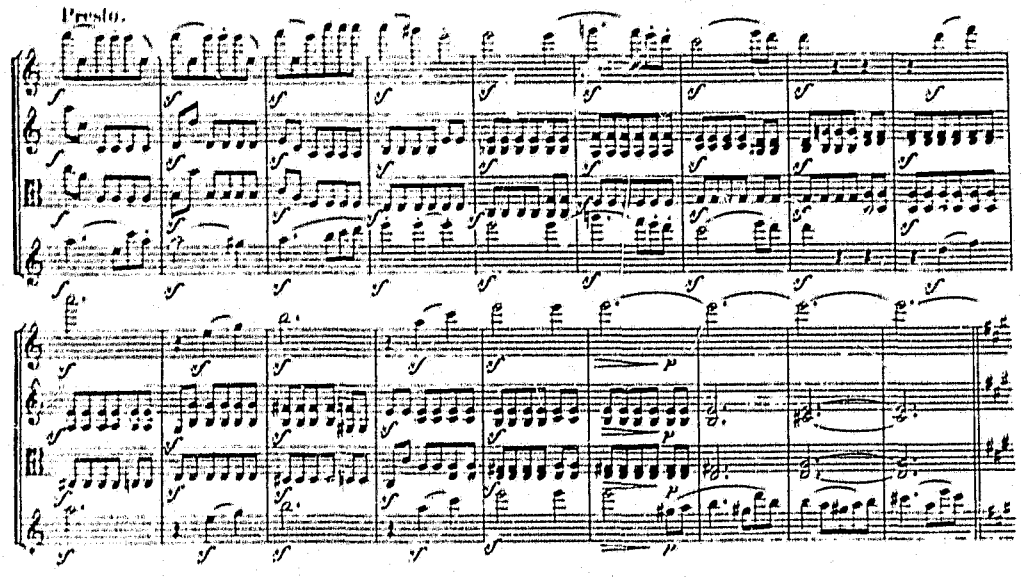




op. 132, v, mm. 166-185 (continued from previous page)

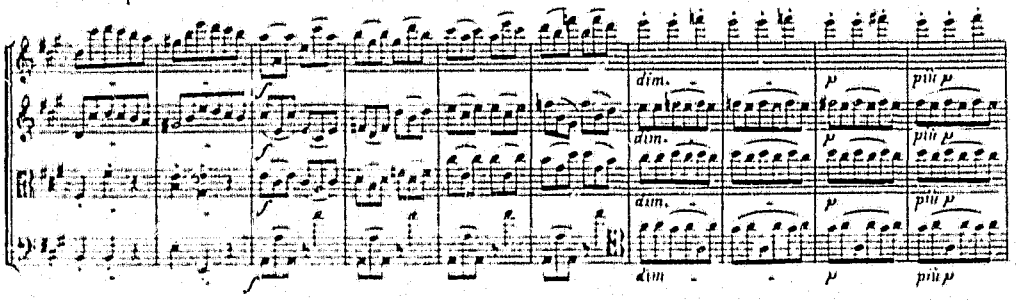
The first episode is recapitulated in the tonic after this shortened presentation of the main theme. A fugato episode follows, beginning in m. 243, which subjects the inversion of the second episode's three-note motive to contrapuntal development, the learned style once again serving as a topical foil to the rondo theme. A connection back to the third movement is found in the entering pitches of the voices in this episode, which begin on D, G, A, and D, the pitches (in order) of the foreground motive of the *Heiliger Dankgesang* that was reflected in the deep voice-leading structure of the *Neue Kraft fühlend* sections. In any case, the imitative treatment recalls the canonic ritornelli between phrases of the hymn tune in the third movement, as well as the hymn's final fugal treatment. This section leads to a rapid exchange of fragments of the main theme, accompanied by a frenzied, disjunct ostinato pattern which asserts the pitches F and E. Gradually increasing in both tempo and dynamic level, the music at last bursts into a *forte, presto* rendition of the main theme heard in the stratosphere of the cello's range, which is soon doubled by the first violin. The theme is hammered home by the relentless *sforzandi* on the first notes of every measure in every voice between mm. 280-93. Suddenly quiet, the music turns toward A major, the key in which the movement and the quartet will conclude, thus finally resolving the modal conflict that so pervaded the opening movement, and retrospectively integrating the A-major movements (the dance and the march) more completely into the overall fabric of the quartet.

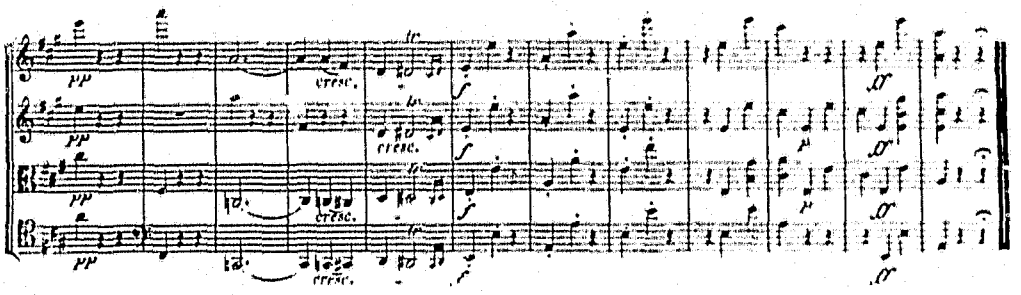




op. 132, v, mm. 270-295 (continued from previous page)

This A-major coda consists largely of new material, and provides a respite from the restlessness so prominent in the rest of the movement, although numerous small quirks remain. For example, the expected cadence in m. 320 is delayed by just a heartbeat of silence, the resolution slipping in pianissimo on beat two, a witticism echoed in the pizzicato punctuations on that beat in mm. 322 and 324. Similarly, the drive to the expected final cadence is subverted by the soft dynamic level, the use of silence and deceptive harmonies, and the immediate segue (in m. 351) into a repetition of the coda. This feint at conclusion provides an opportunity to establish more convincingly a sense of finality, as well as to reinstate the major mode of the tonic key. The real ending cannot resist one final rhythmically reflexive bit of fun, shifting the penultimate cadential notes from beats one and two to beats two and three in m. 401, the extra beat of silence creating a last delicious sense of anticipation, rewarded by a threefold repetition of the final cadence.





op. 132, v, mm. 383-404 (continued from previous page)

The extreme contrasts within and between movements, as well as the syntactic, kinesthetic, and associative incongruities found throughout the work make for a highly paradoxical construction, and yet, the quartet feels in no danger of being perceived as a heterogeneous grab-bag of musical ideas. That this is so is due in no small measure to the various structural connections lying behind the apparently contradictory foreground, some of which have been pointed out in the preceding discussion. On a larger level, we feel that the quartet's *mythos*, in the sense of plot or sequence of events, is gradually shaped into a unique structural unity, despite the many surface discontinuities, a strategy not unlike that employed in literature:

> We are continually, if often unconsciously, attempting to construct a larger pattern of simultaneous significance out of what we have so far read or seen [or heard]. We feel confident that the beginning implies an end....That is, we expect a certain point near the end at which linear suspense is resolved and the unifying shape of the whole design becomes conceptually visible [or audible]. This point was called *anagnorisis* by Aristotle, a term for which "recognition" is a better rendering than "discovery"....What is recognized...is something which has been there all along, and which, by its reappearance or manifestation, brings the end into line with the beginning. Recognition, and the unity of theme which it manifests, is often symbolized by some kind of emblematic object....In any case, the point of recognition seems to be also a point of identification, where a hidden truth about something or somebody emerges into view.[28]

The anagnoritic moment in the A-minor quartet, I would argue, lies near the end of the third movement, in the third appearance of the chorale where the hymn tune is distilled to its pure essence. That this point is nearer the midpoint than the end is interesting and

[28]Northrop Frye, "Myth, Fiction, and Displacement," in *Fables of Identity: Studies in Poetic Mythology* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1963), pp. 25-26

important, because it underlines the numerous kinds of temporal play (of the most serious nature) in which Beethoven has been engaged here, and of which music may well be more capable than other art-forms. The slow movement is central in a deeper sense than its chronological placement; its position at the top of the arch-form is merely an emblem of the mediating purpose it serves within the context of the quartet. The unprecedented structure and expressive quality of the movement render it uniquely capable of retrospective and prospective commentary on other musical events, thus making possible the projection both backward and forward in time of its central, revelatory vision.

In addition to structural connections, also at work are expressive forces that serve to bind the piece together. As Kerman points out, "Beethoven's unique achievement here was the creation of a psychological progress perhaps more arresting that in any other work...which is nonetheless put together out of contrasts that can fairly be called dizzying."[29] Contrast, as this chapter has tried to show, is not the only trope in play here, but Kerman's point is well taken. It would seem to be the paradoxes themselves that provide a higher level of organization in the quartet, in a process analogous to the theory held by some physicists, chemists, and biologists of complexity, and the concomitant idea of self-organization. Certain physical systems when increasingly disrupted sometimes become more highly structured, such as turbulent air becoming a vortex under the right conditions. Thus, systems that are forced away from stability may regain it in a more complexly ordered form. In a similar fashion, one might consider that the contradictory aspects of op. 132 infuse it with energy, thereby causing it to become more highly structured, with the dividend of the capacity to communicate something that might not have been possible otherwise. While defining an explicit program is undesirable, and indeed, unnecessary, the implicit arc of meaning is very real. The ninth-century philosopher Eriugena, last encountered in Chapter Four, believed that complexity in music could be regarded as a symbol of cosmic order. From such a standpoint, one might view the first movement of op. 132 as partaking of the frustrations of the real world, while the second and fourth movements are idealized realizations of a smoothly functioning, socially constructed universe. They enclose the third movement, a world unto itself, set apart from, and raised above, in a certain sense, either the world as individually experienced or the world as elegantly ordered society. The hope implied in the perfect equilibrium of the

[29]Kerman, p. 267.

Heiliger Dankgesang and *Neue Kraft fühlend* touches the finale; the theatrical recitative at the end of the fourth movement permitted a turning away from the social world back to the arena of pain experienced in the first movement, but in the finale, that pain is leavened somewhat through having journeyed through the experience of the intervening movements. In perhaps the most vivid and meaningful paradox surrounding this highly paradoxical quartet, one could argue that after experiencing this work, which deals inescapably with suffering and frustration, the listener is ultimately left with a sense of serenity. The proliferation of paradox has a cathartic effect, turning pain to peace. In this sense, perhaps, the quartet's paradoxes could be regarded as mythopoeic, a symbolic realization of aspects of universal human experience.

Chapter Six

Perhaps no work of Beethoven's is more problematic for critics than the String Quartet in B-flat, op. 130, particularly in its original, "Galitzin" version, with the *Grosse Fuge* finale. From the outset, when the audience at the premiere gave ovations to the *Alla danza tedesca* and the Cavatina (to which Beethoven responded, "Yes, these delicacies, but why not the fugue? Cattle! Asses!"), individual movements have been appreciated and understood to a greater extent than has the quartet as a whole, a situation exacerbated by the unusual circumstances arising from the existence of the substitute finale.[1] This movement, composed by Beethoven in the last year of his life in response to a request from his publisher and the urgings of his friends, and perhaps also in response to a sense on his own part that the issues raised in the quartet were not yet settled to his complete satisfaction (although I think his first solution was the better one), offers an extreme contrast to the original final movement. Beethoven, as was his wont, did not compose the original version of the quartet without a considerable expenditure of time, effort, and sketching; it would seem to be a useful exercise, then, to examine the quartet in the guise in which this most thorough of composers first meant his audience to experience it.

More riven by contradiction than any other composition by Beethoven, the quartet, particularly in its original version, will prove to show forth a pattern of meaning explicable in terms of paradox and wit. These features, though to some extent responsible for the work's having been occasionally misunderstood, are, in fact, the keys to discovering the levels of meaning felt by many listeners below the frequently contradictory surface. Here, indeed, is a prime instance of Beethoven's modernist symbolization of "extreme states" by means of new musical image clusters propounded by Solomon (and mentioned in the Introduction). Faced with a work so rich its susceptibility to progressive critical treatment seems inexhaustible, we may find it helpful to keep in mind the "traditional but still neglected" theory of polysemous meaning. Northrop Frye points out that the idea of polysemous meaning implies "a single process growing in subtlety and comprehensiveness, not different senses, but different intensities or wider contexts of a continuous sense, unfolding like a plant out

[1]Beethoven's remarks cited in Maynard Solomon, *Beethoven* (New York: Schirmer, 1977), p. 323.

of a seed."[2] Dating back to the medieval period, the theory posits four different layers of meaning inherent in deeply serious writing (levels we will cheerfully co-opt for musical purposes): the literal, allegorical, moral, and anagogical senses available in a particular text. Dante notes that the important division is between the first sense and the other three, as he summarizes:

> be it known that the sense of this work is not simple, but on the contrary it may be called polysemous, that is to say, "of more senses than one"; for it is one sense which we get through the letter, and another which we get through the thing the letter signifies; and the first is called literal, but the second allegorical or mystic....And although these mystic senses [that is, the last three types] have each their special denominations, they may all in general be called allegorical, since they differ from the literal and historical.[3]

Such a conception of meaning has similarities with the Hegelian dialectic, a "complex operation of a form of understanding combining with its own otherness or opposite, in a way that negates itself and yet passes through that negation into a new stage, preserving its essence in a broader context, and abandoning the one just completed like the chrysalis of a butterfly or a crustacean's outgrown shell," in Frye's formulation.[4] An openness to consideration of meaning in this sort of context may enable a deeper penetration into the enigma of op. 130, and allow greater access to Beethoven's original vision here.

The quartet must be examined on its own terms, of course, a condition of analysis desirable for any repertoire, but perhaps particularly so for the middle and late music of Beethoven. While one would not wish to separate them in any way from their musical, historical, or cultural contexts, Beethoven's works do seem to invite an appreciation of their uniqueness in a new way, a characteristic feature inspired in no small part by the example of Haydn's use of a reflexive approach to composition. His self-referential works demand that the listener pay attention to the materials and construction of each work as an individual entity, which, in its play with its own structure, is in some senses self-determining. In op. 130, this process is particularly interesting, in that the internal self-commentary of each individual movement on its own

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[2]Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (Toronto: Academic Press Canada, 1982), pp. 220-21.

[3]Dante, *Epistola* X, to Can Grande, cited in Frye, *The Great Code*, pp. 220-21.

[4]Frye, *The Great Code*, p. 222.

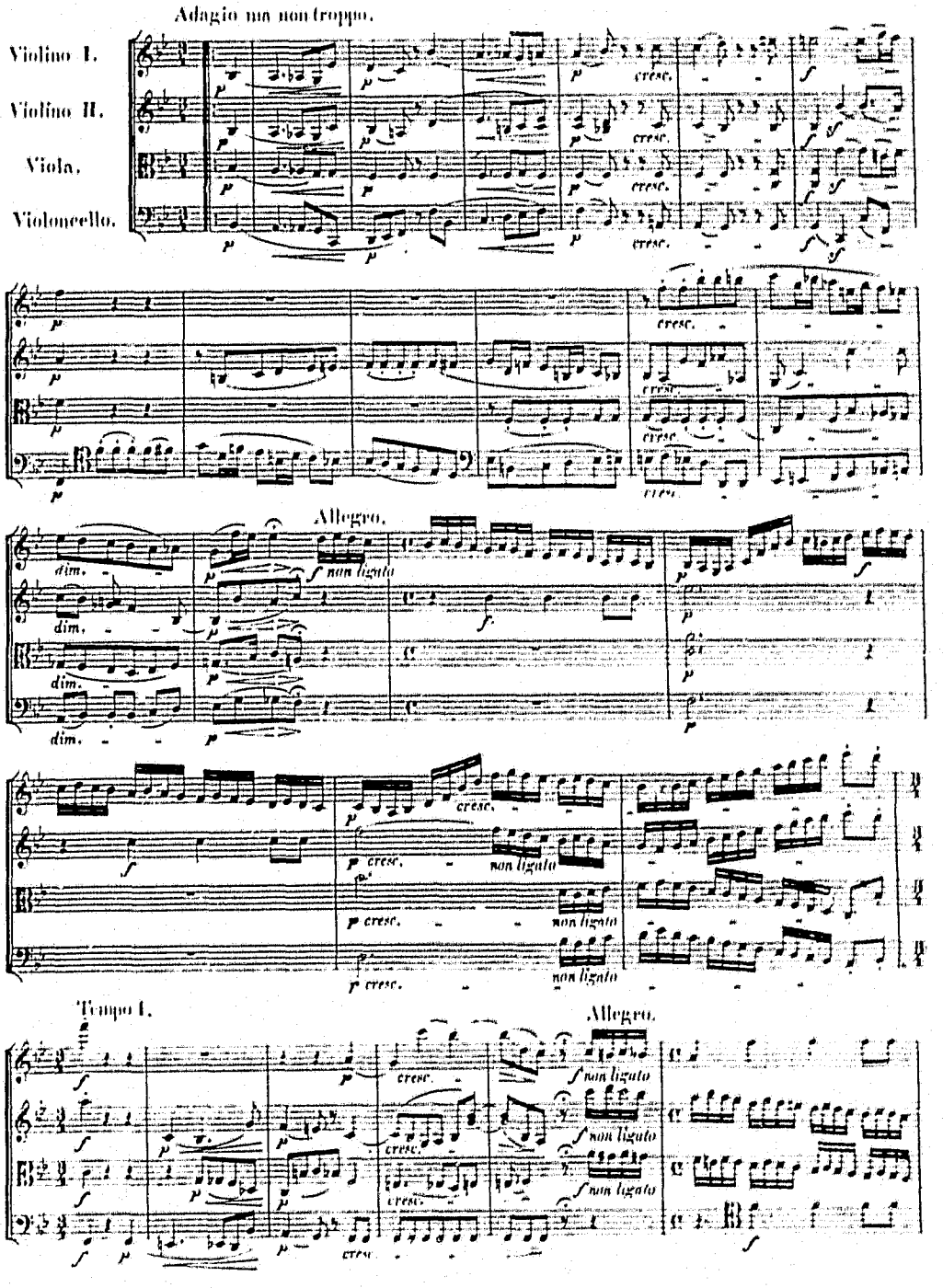
form and material may be seen to be reflected in a larger commentary, undertaken by the fugal finale, on the quartet as a whole.

The opening movement has a problematic structure that proves to set the tone for the quartet as a whole; in a sketch, Beethoven wrote, "last quartet with a serious and arduous introduction."[5] This "arduous introduction" to the quartet is a witty take on traditional sonata-allegro form, manipulating expectations and playing with conventions in a way that would be inimical to more regular incarnations of such a movement type. Beethoven's compositional tactics constantly invite the listener to re-examine his assumptions about the "normal" shape of an opening movement, tactics that are in evidence from the very beginning. The opening *Adagio ma non troppo* sounds as though it is going to serve as a standard sort of slow introduction, but with the entry of the *Allegro* in m. 14, some doubt occurs with regard to the precise nature of the first theme. The *Adagio* theme has a more finely-shaped melodic contour and phrase structure than the frantic sequential *Allegro* passagework. Which is the real theme? And are these two thematic complexes related? Responses to the second question have been numerous and varied; for instance, Kurt von Fischer sees an especially close connection between the introduction and the first theme, while noting in his annotated bibliography that Rudolph von Tobel regards this movement as a battle between the introduction and the main theme.[6] When the *Adagio* material, now in the dominant, returns in m. 20, its status as introductory material must be called seriously into question; it seems inevitable that this material is going to have a larger role to play in the

[5]"Letztes Quartett mit einer ernsthaften und schwergängigen Einleitung," cited in Klaus Kropfinger, "Das Gespaltene Werk: Beethovens Streichquartett Op. 130/133," in *Beiträge zu Beethovens Kammermusik, Symposion Bonn 1984*, ed. Sieghard Brandenburg and Helmut Loos (Munich: Henle, 1987), p. 305.

[6]Fischer, *Die Beziehung von Form und Motiv in Beethovens Instrumentalwerken*, 2nd ed. (Strasbourg and Zurich, 1972), p. 154.. For other discussions of this point (as well as analyses of the quartet), see Erwin Ratz, "Die Originalfassung des Streichquartetts Op 130 von Beethoven," in *Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1975), pp. 68-74, Donald MacArdle, "Beethoven's Quartet in B flat, Op. 130: An Analysis," *Music Review* 8 (1947): 11-24; Deryck Cooke, "The Unity of Beethoven's Late Quartets," *Music Review* 24 (1963): 30-49; Ekkehard Kreft, *Die späten Quartette Beethovens: Substanz und Substanzverarbeitung* (Bonn, 1969); Rudolph Réti, *The Thematic Process in Music* (1951; reprinted Westport, CT, 1978); Klaus Kropfinger, "Zur thematischen Funktion der langsamen Einleitung bei Beethoven," in *Colloquium Amicorum: Joseph Schmidt-Görg zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Siegfried Kross and Hans Schmidt (Bonn, 1967), pp. 197-216; and Mikhail Kopfermann, *Beiträge zur Musikalischen Analyse später Werke Ludwig van Beethovens* (Munich and Salzburg: Emil Katzbichler, 1975), pp. 35-104.

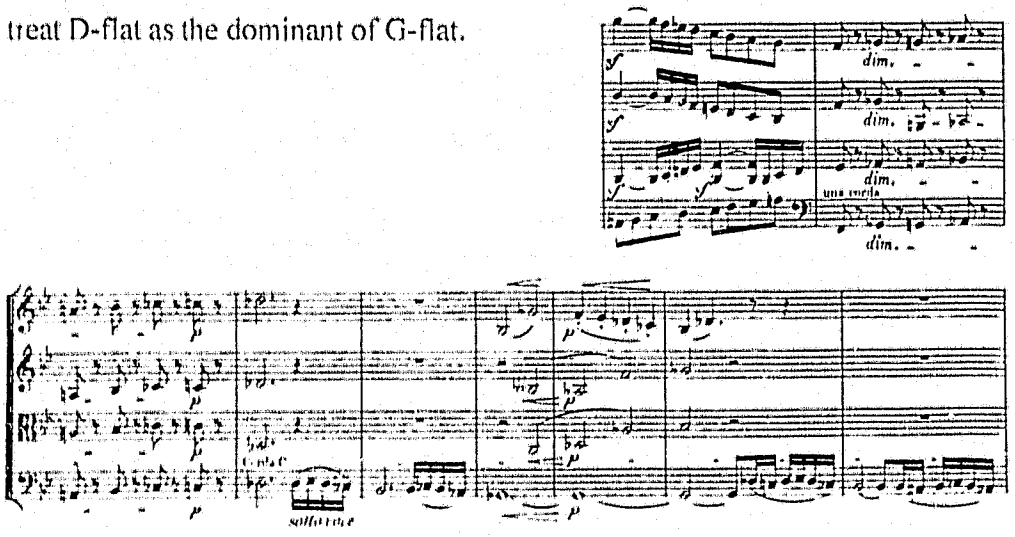
movement than might have been first imagined. The inability of the *Allegro* theme to conclude forces a return of the more regular *Adagio* material, but when the *Allegro* resumes, it finally takes charge of the situation until the development.



op. 130, i, mm. 1-25

Carl Dahlhaus sees connections between the first and (original) final movements of op. 130 in their blending of techniques based on formal conventions, that is, the use of aspects of sonata form in the *Grosse Fuge*, and of fugal technique in the *Allegro*. Dahlhaus regards the threefold statement of the rising fourth motive in its characteristic rhythm as akin to a fugue subject, accompanied by the sequential sixteenth-notes as countersubject. The fugal exposition is interrupted by the return of the *Adagio*, before resuming with the second entry at the interval of a fifth. However, the "subject" is so simple that by the time we hear it in a fragmented form in the development, we realize that it is merely a motive that has now been reduced to its basic form. "In short, in a dialectic of formal principles, fugue technique represents a way of creating a sonata exposition from a thematic idea that is actually only fit to serve the needs of a development passage."[7]

The manipulations of melodic conventions are supplemented by surprising harmonic stratagems. The music feigns a modulation to the dominant in the transition, but moves instead to the key of the lowered sixth scale degree; thus, instead of the expected F major second theme, we get a new theme in G-flat. Although bVI is not an unusual excursion in a sonata movement by Beethoven, the move to G-flat is here accomplished in a surprising fashion. The arrival of the dominant, having been quite convincingly prepared, is thwarted in favor of an inconsequential-seeming little chromatic scale (mm. 51-52) which, when it reaches D-flat, decides to stop there and treat D-flat as the dominant of G-flat.



op. 130, i, mm. 50-58

[7]Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, trans. J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), p. 86.

The modulation to the second key area, normally one of the most important events in a sonata-form movement, is thus treated in a very cavalier manner, which is by no means the last harmonic surprise Beethoven has in store in this movement.

Another such surprise involves the treatment of G-flat as a tonal area; in the second area, there is very little emphasis on the dominant harmony of G-flat, permitting the music to slip back to the tonic when the exposition is repeated with a much less surprising effect than that which occurred when the secondary key area was itself reached. This phenomenon, as well as the unusual way in which G-flat was approached, allows the listener to experience G-flat as "no more than a hugely extended chord, not a believable established tonality at all," thus ensuring that "the return to B flat at the repeat (which includes the introduction) sounds as if B-flat has never been seriously challenged."[8] Although repetition of the exposition in a sonata form movement was by the early nineteenth century no longer an automatic procedure, instances where Beethoven does mark such a repeat should be observed; to omit this repeat (the only one in a sonata-form first movement in the late quartets) deprives the listener of important information about the provisional status of G-flat in the work.

As in the first movement of the A minor quartet, the exposition has held together a composite body of contrasting thematic material in a tensional synthesis to such an extent that there is no need for the development section to play its usual role of increasing the musical tension, which is generally accomplished by developing thematic material while moving through a variety of keys. Rather, here and in op. 132, the development section is of a curiously relaxed character, providing a short period of repose before the tension is renewed in the recapitulation. This reversal of standard procedure is made possible by a schematic concept of sonata form, in which exposition, development, and recapitulation are treated in an elliptical manner, with an overlapping of roles and responsibilities. For all its restful qualities, though, this is a very odd development. Beginning with a threefold alternation between [illegible] both the *Adagio* and *Allegro* themes, which accomplishes another shock of modulation, from G-flat to D major, the development soon settles into a spontaneous, long-breathed melody soaring over a gently rocking accompaniment, the harmony moving around a circle of fifths from D to G to C to F. Although both melody and accompaniment are obviously derived from motives drawn from the exposition, they

[8]Robert Simpson, "The Chamber Music for Strings," in *The Beethoven Companion*, ed. Denis Arnold and Nigel Fortune (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), p. 271.

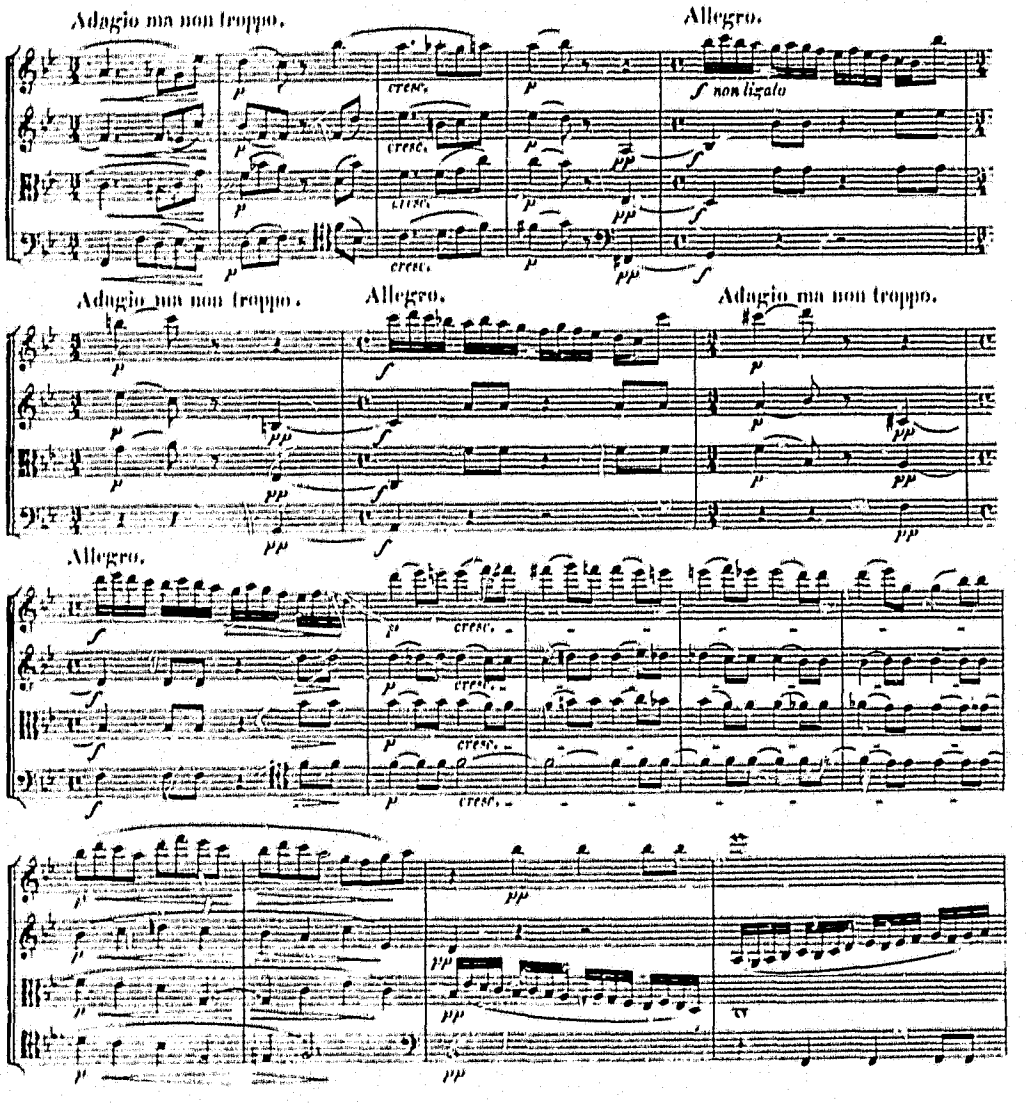
strangely do not sound like they are, now that the context in which they were previously heard is absent; the development contrasts very sharply with the rest of the movement, and almost sounds as though it were part of a different piece. Forward temporal flow is undermined by the irregularity of phrase length, the persistent undercutting of strong beats, and the occasional failure of the melodic line to cadence.

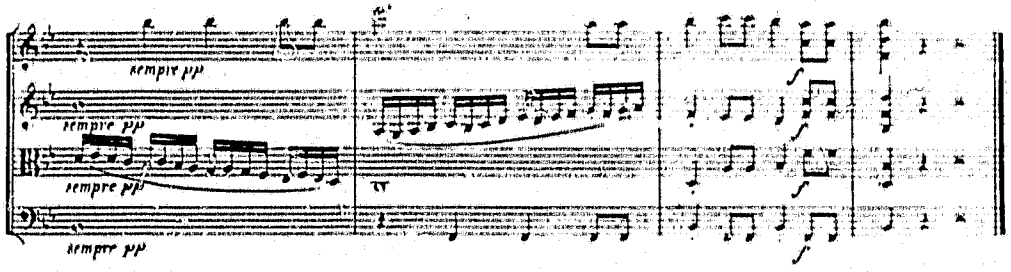
The recapitulation proceeds without reference to the *Adagio* material (which does not reappear until the coda), thereby undercutting the point of return, normally the most dramatic moment in a sonata-form movement. The undermining of the return is heightened by the harmonic manipulations undertaken by the recapitulation as well. After a brief moment back in the tonic key, the music continues its progress through the circle of fifths, moving through E-flat, A-flat, and, for the first statement of the second theme, D-flat. Not until the repetition of the second theme is the home key of B-flat firmly re-established.

The coda forces the point of the co-existence of two contrasting bodies of musical material in different tempi by the rapid-fire alternation between the *Adagio* and *Allegro* sections. The opposition is made more extreme by the dynamic markings, with the juxtaposition of the *pianissimo Adagio* with the *forte Allegro*. Although there can be no denying that the movement continues to make much of its disruptive qualities until its very end, in fact the coda serves a synthesizing function that links the two theme groups even more inextricably together. David Brodbeck and John Platoff have noted some reconciliation of the contrasts between the material of the two sections in the coda, particularly in the closing of the rising fourths that had previously always been left open, reinterpretation of a disjunct melodic figure (i.e. a tonic triad) as a conjunct one (i.e. a scale passage), and assimilation of feminine and masculine cadential patterns characteristic of each section.[9] What is really interesting, though, is the voice-leading and phrase structure, which create much tighter bonds between the two themes in the coda than in the exposition or development. The *Adagio* and *Allegro* sections are presented, in three appearances each, as a set of nested parenthetical enclosures. Beethoven had in the past often used a structure of sharply contrasting material in which one theme was subsidiary, and enclosed within sections of the primary theme, which picked up again after the interruption as though there had been

[9]David L. Brodbeck and John Platoff, "Dissociation and Integration: the First Movement of Beethoven's Opus 130," *Nineteenth-Century Music* 7 (1983), pp. 160-62.

no break. Here, however, the parenthetical material is surrounded by music which is itself parenthesized, in sections which as a whole, seem equally important and basically balance temporally as well. The melodic pitches of the *Adagio* move from A to B-flat, the *Allegro* interrupts, then the *Adagio* states B and C. After another *Allegro* interpolation, the *Adagio* material consists of C-sharp and D, which the *Allegro* then commandeers, continuing the chromatic ascent from D up to G, before descending and finally granting the cadence that had been consistently denied in the exposition.





op. 130, i, coda (continued from the previous page)

Also accomplished in this coda is the logically compelling unveiling of the different time-scales underlying the entire movement. Objective clock-time, measured in equal units of minutes and seconds, is, as Susanne Langer has pointed out, only one type of time; others are possible, perhaps especially in music, leading to enhanced artistic possibilities. Langer says:

> For all its logical virtues, this one-dimensional infinite succession of moments [that is, clock-time] is an abstraction from direct experiences of time, and it is not the only possible one. Its great intellectual and practical advantages are bought at the price of many interesting phases of our time perception that have to be completely ignored. Consequently we have a great deal of temporal experience--that is, intuitive knowledge of time--that is not recognized as "true" because it is not formalized and presented in any symbolic mode; we have only one way--the way of the clock--to think discursively about time at all....If we could experience only single, successive organic strains, perhaps subjective time would be one-dimensional, like the time ticked off by clocks. But life is always a dense fabric of concurrent tensions, and as each of them is a measure of time, the measurements themselves do not coincide.[10]

In a 1973 article regarding similar temporal procedures in the works of Boulez, Stockhausen, and Messiaen with Beethoven's op. 135, Jonathan Kramer asserts that music itself is "a dense fabric of concurrent tensions," and that in order to appreciate fully certain complex musical compositions, one must consider musical time "from a polyphony of viewpoints." Kramer notes that more than any other pre-contemporary music, Beethoven's "deals with subtle and often profound structuring of the listener's time-experience," which lends itself to analysis of time in various terms: objective, linear-subjective, and gestural; these multiple aspects of time are frequently felt to be discontinuous, or non-linear, which does not, however, prevent the perception of "a

[10]Langer, *Feeling and Form*, pp. 111-13.

piece simultaneously as an experience in linear-subjective time and as a subtly restructured experience in gestural time."[11] Linear-subjective time is the time in which we experience music; it is not identical with clock-time because subjective musical factors such as texture, timbre, tempo, density of musical events, and rates of harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic change all color our perception of temporal experience, making purely objective time into something rather differently apprehended. Gestural time depends for its comprehension upon a universe of discourse that recognizes the association of specific musical gestures with standard functions. Although these equations of gesture and function cannot be precisely defined or delimited, we recognize this convention when our analyses discuss opening gestures, cadential figures, transitional material, and so on; there is a general type of musical event that normally plays each of these roles within a given body of compositions.

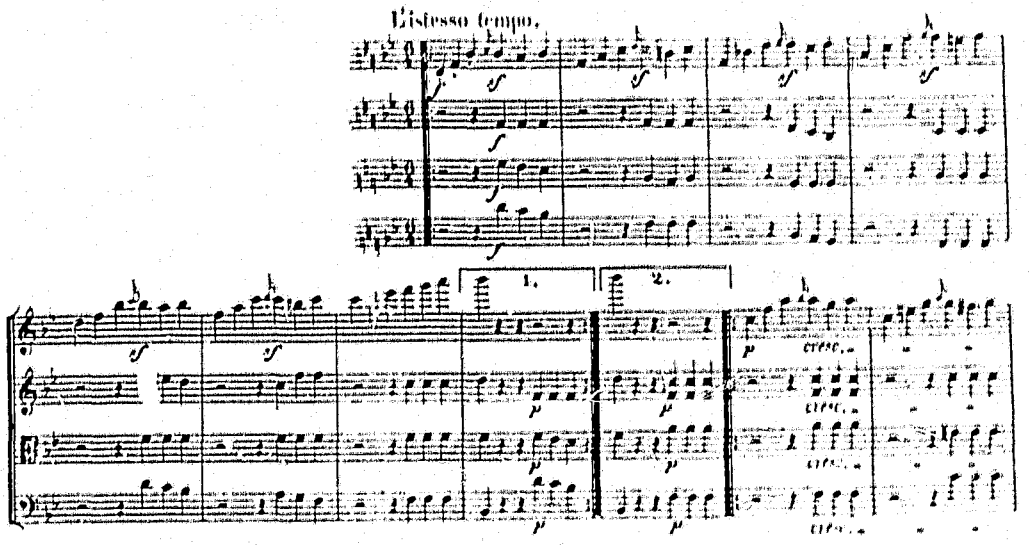
The positioning of events in gestural time may not necessarily coincide with the clock-time (or linear-subjective) placement of those events. For instance, a closing gesture may be heard earlier than the phrase that sounds like its logical antecedent. The use of such a compositional procedure has complex and intriguing consequences for the listener, who must pay simultaneous attention to (at least) two sequences of events, which are unfolding along two different time-scales. This sort of occurrence is common in Beethoven, particularly in the late works, where for an understanding and appreciation of their form and meaning, the listener must have a formidable memory, as well as an ear attuned to Beethoven's vast network of foreshadowings and reminiscences.

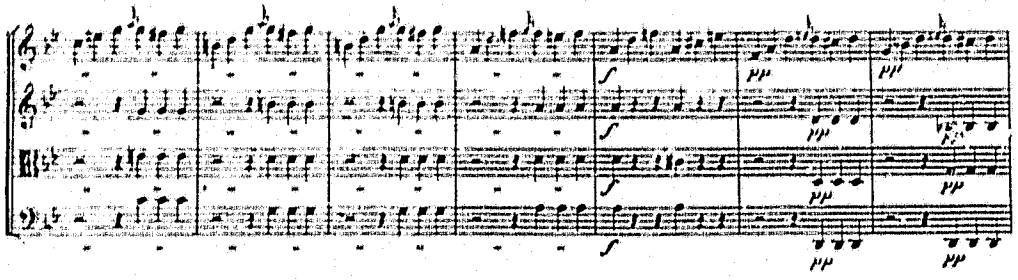
In the first movement of op. 130, the sense of differently unfolding temporal events is brought very much to the fore, underlined by the presence of a thematic complex which encompasses material in two different tempi. The two theme groups, although they share certain motivic relations, are sharply contrasted, and play out their separate courses of action over the span of the whole movement. The Allegro most directly participates in the dynamic of sonata form, while the separated fragments of the Adagio material would, if heard consecutively with the addition of the coda, comprise a small two-reprise form in the style of an aria.[12] Although the *Allegro* tempo and

[11]Jonathan D. Kramer, "Multiple and Non-Linear Time in Beethoven's Opus 135," *Perspectives of New Music* 11 (1973), pp. 124, 122-23, 130, 132.
[12]See Leonard G. Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York: Schirmer, 1980), pp. 234-35.

character of the first theme theme seem to dominate the discourse after the second entry of the *Adagio* material is complete, the *Adagio* in fact shapes the second theme (the first four pitches of the G-flat theme are derived from the end of the *Adagio*'s antecedent phrase), and thus is present in a veiled form to contend with the *Allegro* material throughout the movement. The tension between the two musics introduces the development, but the development itself, as previously noted, is remarkably static, and the slow introduction is not recapitulated, thus delaying the confluence of the non-congruent linear-subjective timelines of the two discrete groups of musical material until the end of the movement. The two halves of the theme finally synchronize their watches in the coda, bringing together the two temporal levels into a finally unified passage of time.

The *Presto* second movement in B-flat minor is a dance-form movement, with a twist (!). The impossibly rapid tempo undercuts any sort of genuine dance character, as does the rather fierce, touch-me-not theme. The trio shifts to the parallel major key, as well as to a new metre (6/4), the first hint that there is temporal play to come. It arrives in the second strain of the trio, when the underlying context of regularity established by the relentless sequence of phrases in multiples of four measures is jarred by the inclusion of a seven-measure phrase (mm. 25-31).



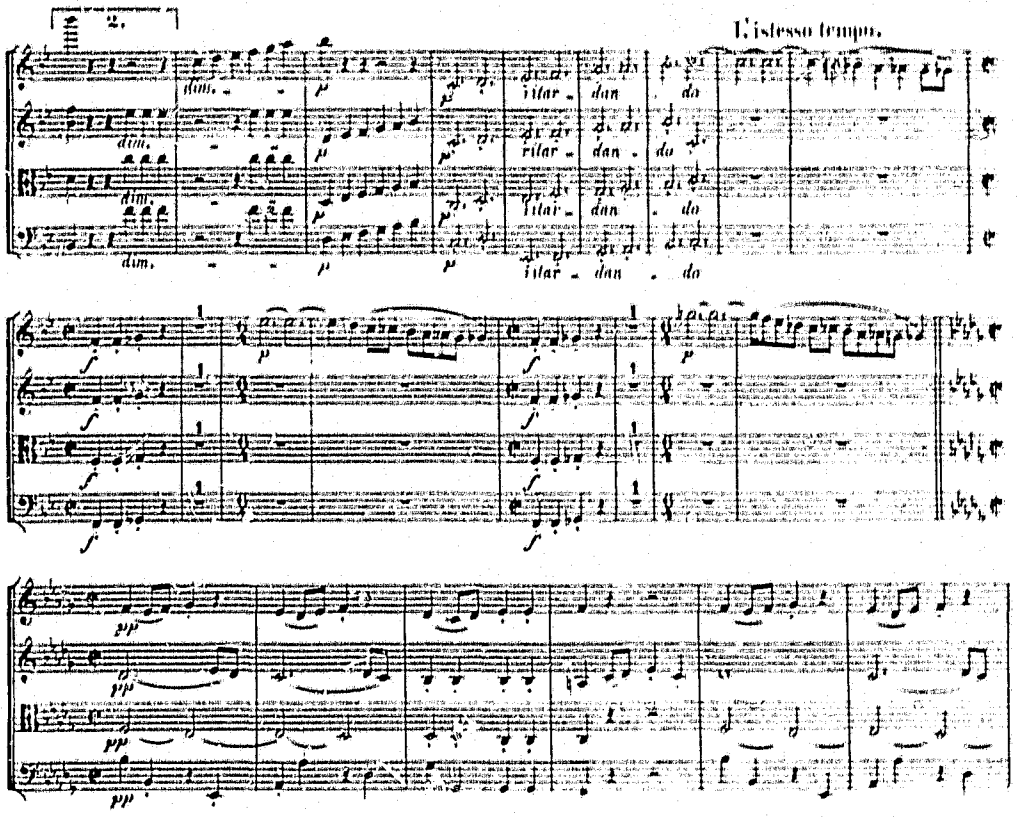


op. 130, ii, mm. 17-33 (continued from the previous page)

There is, in m. 31, a sudden compression of the melodic action of two bars into one, a sort of downshift accomplished by stripping the gears. The melodic pattern that has been established from the beginning of the *L'istesso tempo* section consists of groups of four measures, with each individual measure containing a three quarter-note arpeggio followed by a three quarter-note lower neighboring motion. The *crescendo* from a *piano* in m. 25 to *forte* in m. 31 emphasizes the fact that in m. 31, the expected three-note neighbor pattern is absent, having been replaced by a second arpeggio group. The pattern and the soft dynamic level are then re-established in m. 32. The effect recurs again, but within a more regular context, as the fourth and eighth measures of the next phrase (mm. 32-39).

A more blatant rhythmic riddle comes in the trio's transition back to the scherzo, as the music which has seemed relentlessly governed by the unit of the bar to this point, now has its sense of the bar exploded; perception of metre becomes ambiguous because two different metres are used, and the beats in the 6/4 sections are unclear. Overlapping ascending scales, rising repeatedly to B-flat, are answered by one final ascending scale. This one is different from its predecessors: the fact that the rhythmic values of the scale have tripled in length, coupled with a *ritardando*, interferes with the timing of the expected arrival on B-flat. A further surprise arises when B-flat turns out not to be the terminus of this scale. C instead is its goal, emphasized by its being held for ten full beats, back in tempo. What follows is a rather abandoned glissando, cut short by a three-note staccato outburst (F-F-G-flat) in the original metre. After three beats of silence, the glissando assumes higher ground, starting this time on E-flat, but is similarly interrupted. One final attempt at descent, this time from G-flat, is made by the sinuous chromatic figure, only to have the reins snatched away again, for good this time, as the Presto theme returns in its entirety beginning in m. 64. This emphasis on G-flat, as well as secondary points of harmonic arrival on D-flat and D in the Presto

and trio, respectively, provide important tonal links back to the first movement. It is interesting that G-flat is treated here as an impossible or unreal key, as in the first movement, and, as we will see, as in the fugue also.

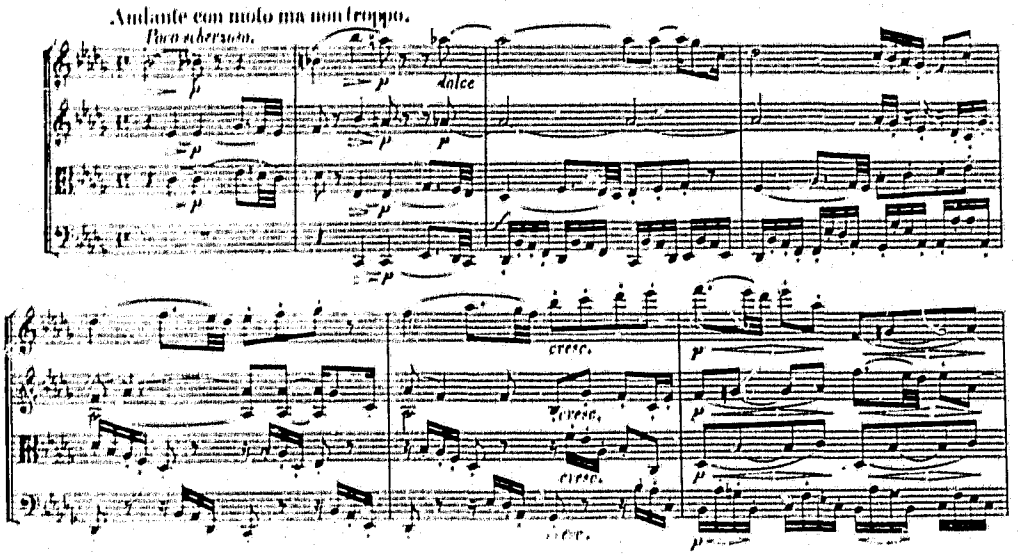


op. 130, ii, mm. 47 *bis*-69

A witty echo of this triple attempt on the part of the forces of rhythmic-metric irregularity and surprise to take over the texture can be found at the end of the movement. The three-fold repetition of the two-measure half-cadence motive of the opening phrase appears pianissimo with a pizzicato accompaniment, and decelerates slightly on its third statement. The tension inherent in such an expectation-raising maneuver is dispelled by an in-tempo, *forte* brusque authentic cadence in mm. 104-105.

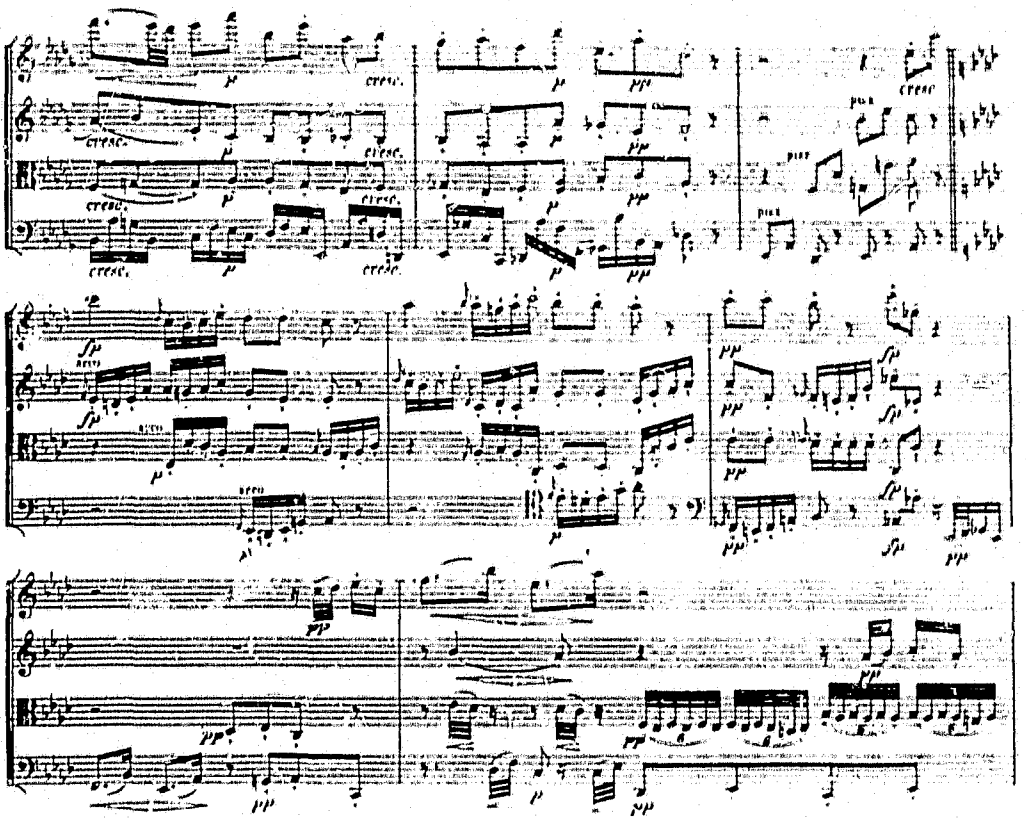
The slow movement that follows, the D-flat major *Andante con moto ma non troppo*, is in sonata-form. Ironically, however, it has a much more convincing quality of dance than the dance-form movement that preceded it. Marked *Poco scherzoso*, the movement as a whole indulges, then, in gentle play with expectations surrounding standard genres and their associated forms. This larger sport is reflected on a very

small scale, too, for example, in the opposition of the first two measures with the beginning of the movement proper in m. 3. A highly wrought, rhetorical flourish, a gesture quite operatic in tone, appears in B-flat minor, but is dovetailed into a *dolce* D-flat melody exuding good cheer, accompanied by a jolly little sewing-machine sort of figure in the bass, in a conjunction that teasingly comments upon the self-conscious theatricality of the opening. The B-flat-A-A-flat melodic progression so prominent in the first two measures also provides an important link back to the first movement.

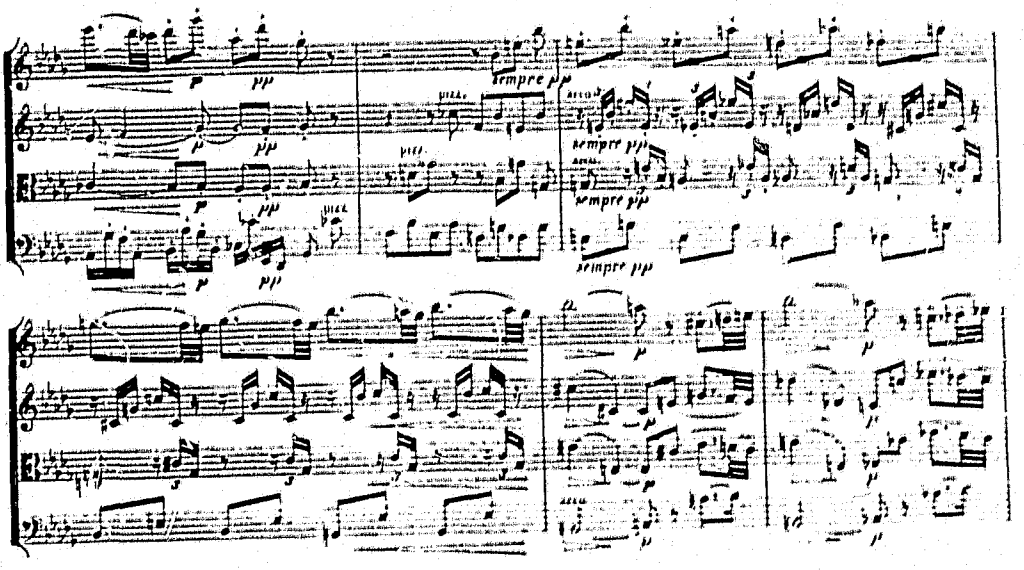


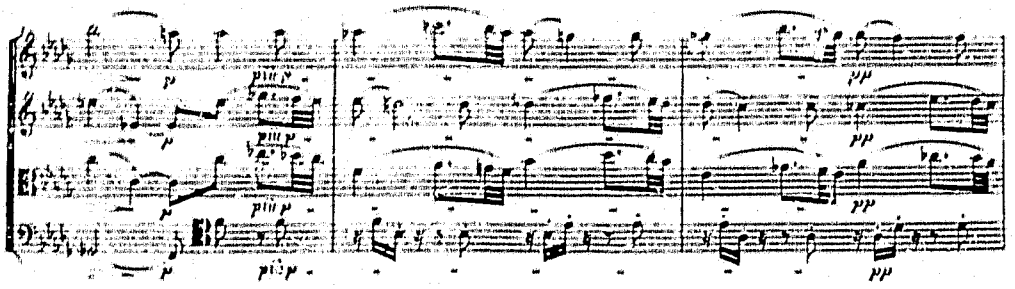
op. 130, iii, mm. 1-7

The relaxed, spacious voice is the prevailing one, but other voices appear occasionally to comment upon the action, usually at points of structural importance, thus serving as agents of formal demarcation. For example, there is a whispering, tentative voice, expressed in pizzicato in the three lowest instruments, which always echoes the figuration of a preceding authentic cadence in preparation for something new. In m. 10, the new thing quietly heralded in this way is the arrival of the dominant, as well as of the second theme. This gesture is replicated in the parallel place in the recapitulation (mm. 45-46), save, naturally, the tonic reinterpretation of the second theme. This still, small voice is heard one last time, now in the coda, where in a lengthier incarnation it introduces a gesture which slows down the musical action considerably, while also making much of the B-flat-A-A-flat relationship mentioned earlier. A similar gesture of deceleration provided the transition into the recapitulation, another instance of a rhetorical demarcation of form.



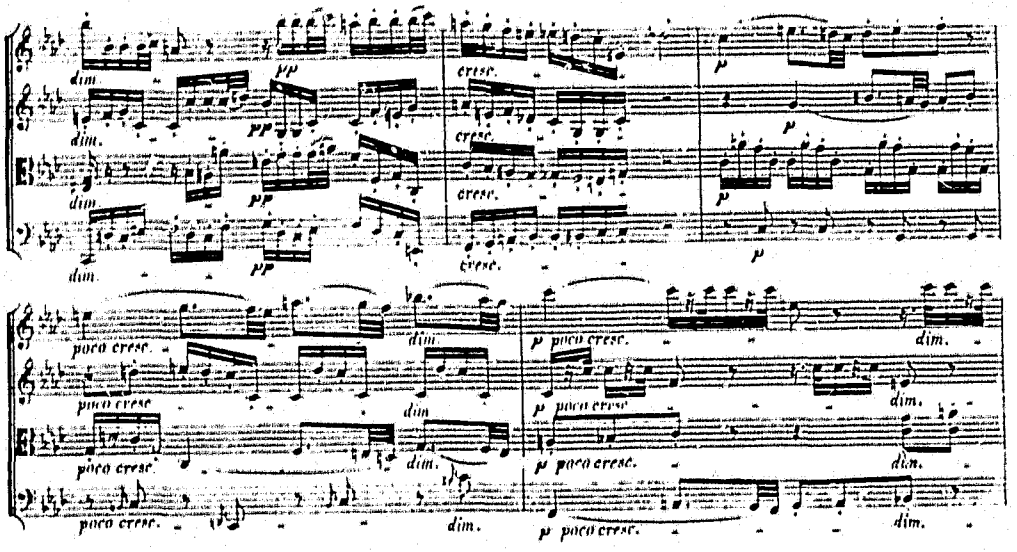
op. 130, iii, mm. 8-15





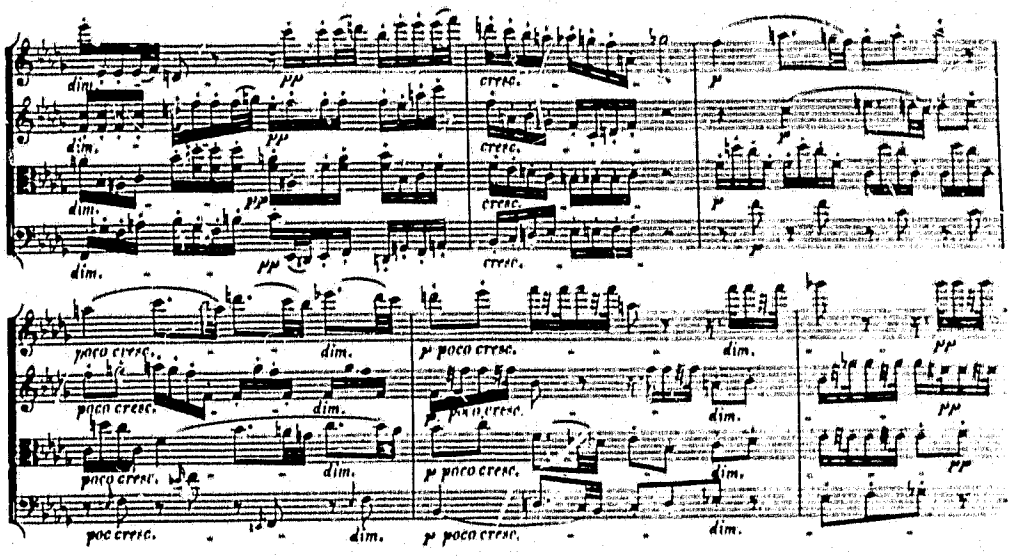
op. 130, iii, mm. 67-75 (continued from the previous page)

Another voice is heard from at important structural points in the movement. This one is querulous and peremptory, interjecting on two occasions an accented pitch (D and G-flat, pitches that will prove to be important in the fugue) a diminished seventh away from the preceding melodic note, and holding up a drive toward cadences in F and B-flat in mm. 19 and 54, respectively.



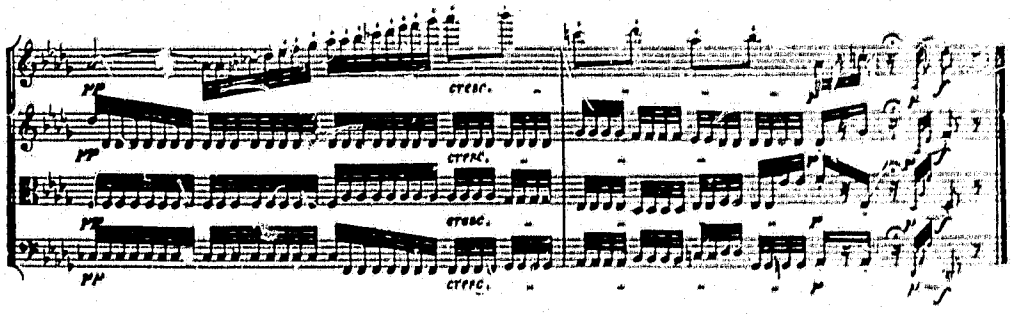
op. 130, iii, mm. 18-22

These delaying tactics are only temporarily successful in each case, however, as can be seen when the thwarted forward motion resumes again two measures after being so rudely interrupted. In both instances, this rather pushy intruder serves to highlight the interesting fact that the second theme-group has modulated to an unusual key, to VI of V in the exposition, and to VI of the home key in the recapitulation, as an alternative to the bVI that would be more usual in both contexts.



op. 130, iii, mm. 53-58

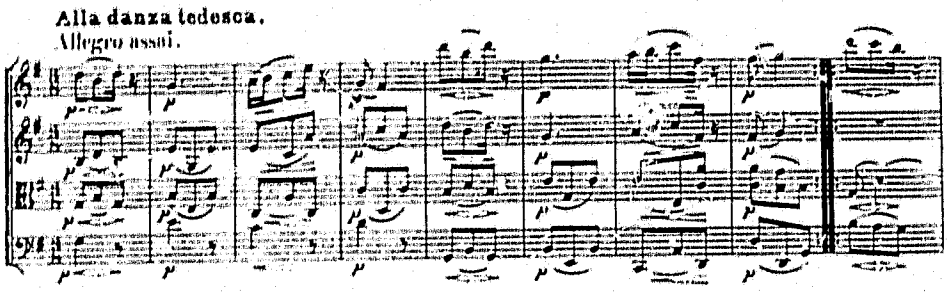
Before the movement closes, this voice makes its presence felt one final time, in a curious way, through its absence. In the drive toward the final cadence, forward motion is again interrupted, and by this time, the listener is surely expecting to hear from this impatient voice. Instead, contrary as ever, it refuses to speak; its place is taken by a funny rest prolonged by a fermata, followed by a *subito forte* cadence, made even more sudden by being preceded by *piano* grace-notes.



op. 130, iii, conclusion

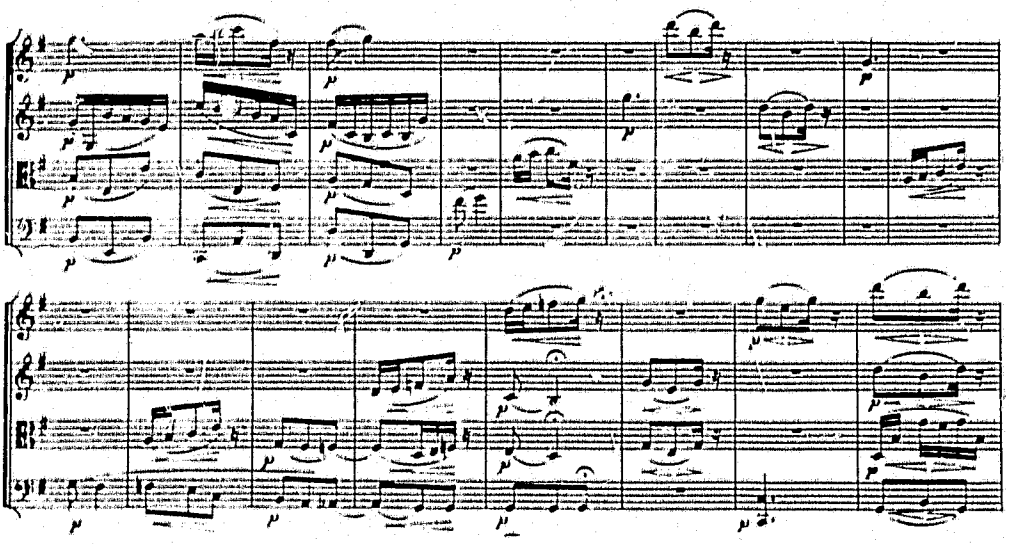
In an unusual harmonic juxtaposition, the dance movement that succeeds the *Andante* is in the most distantly related key possible, a tritone away from D-flat in G major. After the initial shock of the unexpected key, the listener is soothed by the ingenuous melody and the overwhelming regularity of phrase structure of this *Allegro assai, Alla danza tedesca.* All is not as simple as it seems, however, as Beethoven

subtly subverts the rhythmic patterning by the use of accompanimental hemiolas and exaggerated dynamic effects.



op. 130, iv, opening

Most interesting is the charming incorporation of a fragmented, retrograde statement of the second half of the main theme in the coda, in mm. 129-32, followed by a similarly fragmented, but normally ordered appearance of the first half of the theme (mm. 133-36), that is, the eight measures of the theme are now heard in the order 8-7-6-5-1-2-3-4. The fact that we have up until now heard the theme eight times in the "correct" order, each time fully harmonized and conjunct, creates a context of order which this scrambled, unharmonized, and disjunct (almost pointilliistic) presentation of the theme subverts.



op. 130, iv, mm. 126-143

This interpolation creates one of those characteristically quirky moments of temporal confusion in Beethoven's music, where the unidirectional human perception of time is

called into question by a gesture that seems to take one backwards into the experience of the piece, as in the examples found in the piano sonatas op. 106 and 109, touched upon in the third chapter.[13]

The reordering of measures in the movement's main theme seems whimsical, but also provides a logical presentation of a phrase in a way that forces us to reconsider our preconceived notions of gesture and function. The fact that what we thought was a cadential gesture can be reused as an opening motive offers, as in the experience of peripeteia (an Aristotelian concept, literally meaning to fall about), "the interest of having our expectations falsified," which in turn is obviously related to "our wish to reach the discovery or recognition by an unexpected and instructive route....The more daring the peripeteia, the more we may feel that the work respects our sense of reality."[14] The sense of musical reality is perhaps most complacent in dance-form movements, because being derived from a genre designed for use, they were most convention-bound. They were often so standardized that in the eighteenth century, games along the lines of "How to Write a Minuet" were available for purchase by would-be composers; various possible phrases for each section of a standard minuet and trio form were presented, and one constructed one's minuet by throwing dice to select which of the possible musical excerpts were assembled in a given order.[15] In the *Alla danza tedesca*, Beethoven has added considerable wit, interest, and information to this combinatorial game by limiting the number of motives while permitting a daring scrambling of the sequence of events.

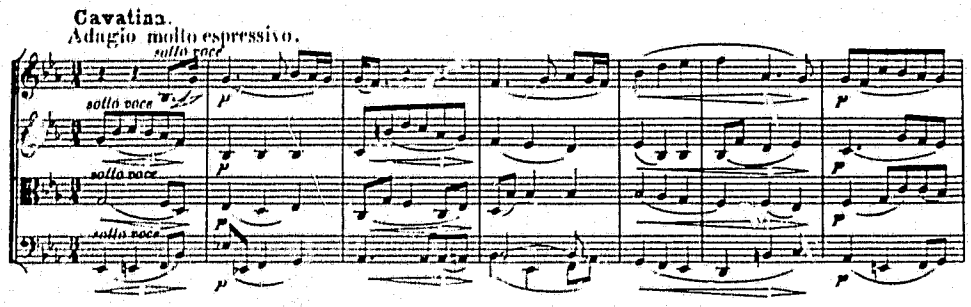
As in op. 132, dance movements frame the central slow movement, but in the B-flat quartet, a second slow movement precedes the finale, and serves, to some extent, a function similar to that of the recitative at the end of the fourth movement in the A

[13]As will be recalled, however, in the piano sonatas, the retrograde gesture is literal, on the level of the pitch, while in this quartet movement, the process involved is at the level of the measure. The measures of the phrase are presented in a permutation that involves hearing some of them in reverse order.

[14]Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 18-19.

[15]A dozen of these games are discussed in Leonard G. Ratner, "*Ars Combinatoria*: Chance and Choice in Eighteenth-Century Music," in *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Music*, ed. H.C. Robbins Landon and Roger E. Chapman (New York: Allen and Unwin, 1970), pp. 343-63. One of the most famous of these games was Johann Philipp Kirnberger's *The Ever-Ready Polonaise- and Minuet-Composer* of 1757, which has the capacity for generating $(11)^{32}$ minuets! See also William S. Newman, "Kirnberger's *Method for Tossing Off Sonatas*," *Musical Quarterly* 47 (1961), pp. 517-25.

minor work (that is, reopening the aesthetic world of the first movement). The E-flat major Cavatina, as has been previously mentioned, involves a transfer of idiom by importing an operatic genre and manner into the realm of the string quartet. In a delicious touch of genius, however, Beethoven turns the mirror back on this genre-mixing by undermining the form he himself chose to borrow. As Lewis Lockwood has pointed out, the texture of solo voice plus instrumental accompaniment that would be expected in an operatic cavatina is called into question in the quartet context by Beethoven's unusual approach to voice-leading, i.e., "he intensifies the interactive role of the voices by unexpected shifts in register, both within instrumental parts and between instruments; by the resolution of dissonances in registers other than those in which they are introduced; and by the avoidance of traditional step and leap motions in the bass part....Attention shifts constantly from the *Hauptstimme* to the other voices, and vice versa, sometimes without our being able to tell which is which."[16]



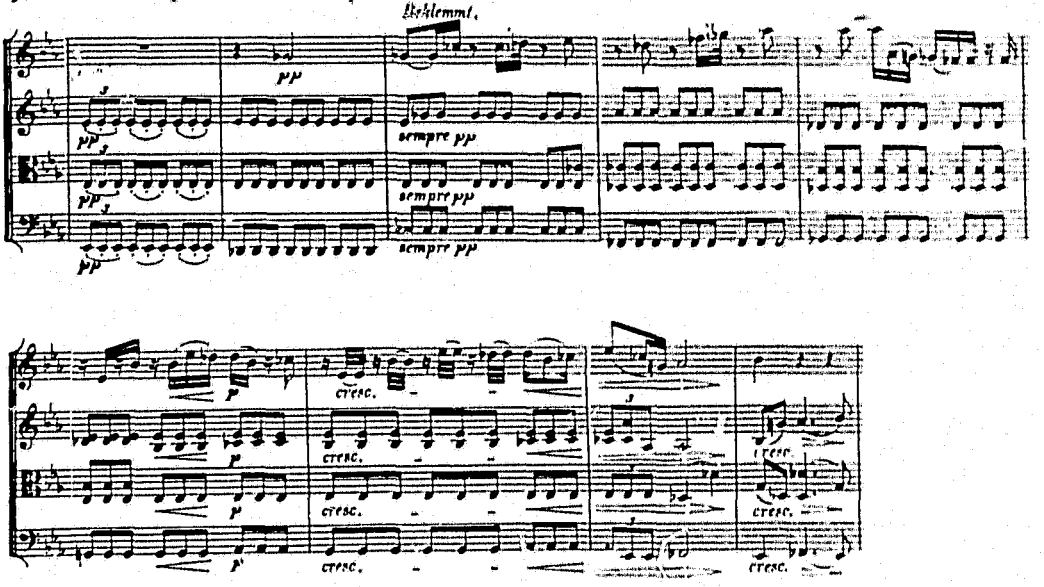
op. 130, v, opening

Furthermore, the *da capo* is so drastically shortened (a nine-measure reprise, compared to the thirty-nine-measure initial statement) as to be for all intents and purposes absolutely useless in a vocal context, where there would be a certain, set amount of text that would have to be repeated in the return of A.

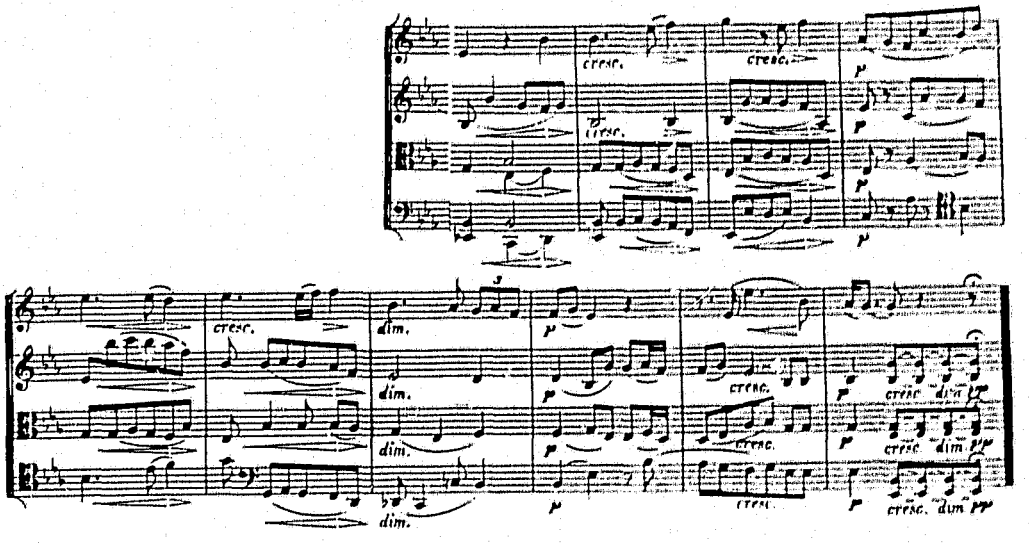
The extremely contrasting middle section is the famous "*beklemmt*" (constricted) passage, just nine measures in C-flat major. The broken melodic line over a pulsating triplet accompaniment evokes a naked human voice, the recitative starkly immediate in contrast to the more formal expression of emotion implied in the A section. The communicative impulse here is as direct and unmediated as can possibly be in a non-texted idiom; perhaps words would have nothing more to say. After a brief

[16]Lewis Lockwood, "On the Cavatina of Beethoven's String Quartet in B-flat Major, Opus 130," in *Beethoven: Studies in the Compositional Process* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 211.

return of A, the coda equally briefly develops motives from A, as well as providing a lyrical reinterpretation of aspects of the *beklemmt* theme.



op. 130, v, "Beklemmt"



op. 130, v, coda

The intense compression engendered by the phrase structure of the Cavatina (A-B-A'-Coda=39+9+9+9 measures), the richness of texture brought about by the method of voice-leading, and the overall musical tone in general all serve to raise the emotional temperature of the quartet by a very considerable margin. In particular, the abbreviation

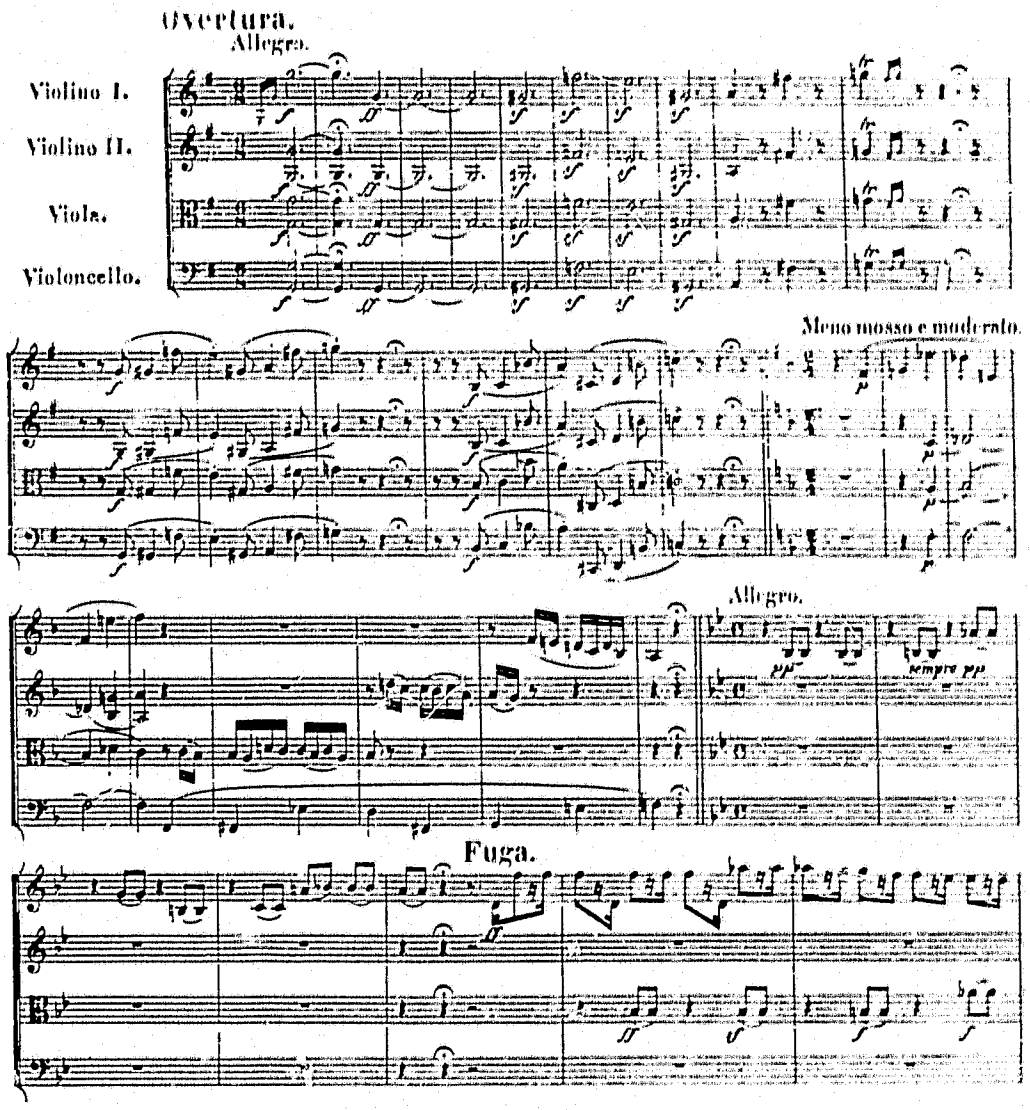
of the final three formal divisions such that, even added together, they fall short of balancing the opening statement serves to increase the tension and hasten the arrival of the denouement. Without such preparation, the monumental fugue that is about to come would be unthinkable. The Cavatina, great with portent throughout, closes with a pregnant pause on G.

Beethoven's original finale, the *Grosse Fuge*, ensues, taking off from the Cavatina's final G, and annihilating it. With this original finale, the B-flat Quartet represents a superb example of the trend in Beethoven's late works toward a reshaping of the overall aesthetic sequence of movements. The structural paradigm shifts from the Classical emphasis on the first movement which is followed by a lighter finale, to a model that frequently utilizes a more hesitant, preparatory, or dissociated first movement, accompanied by a shift in weight to the finale, which often symbolizes culmination or transcendence. Fugues in particular served Beethoven well as summations; for instance, in a work with several similarities to this quartet, the B-flat piano sonata op. 106, there is a striking parallel to op. 130 in the movement plan which uses a slow, personal, lyrical introduction to a huge, objective, intellectual fugal finale. Also like op. 106, which presents in the introduction to its fugue a distillation of the intervallic relationships characteristic of the entire sonata structure, the quartet finale's overture displays a terse summary of its basic melodic material (which is related to that of the first movement) in a short period of time. Similarly, each fugue theme exhibits a clearly audible relationship to the theme of their respective first movements. Most interesting of all is the fact that in the introduction to the finale in op. 106, as in the transition to the choral finale in the Ninth Symphony, there is "a search toward new compositional possibilities, with the clear implication here [by means of interruptions of the descending chains of thirds with brief evocations in remote keys of other music, the last of which has a Bachian quality] that baroque counterpoint is transcended by the creation of a new contrapuntal idiom embodied in the revolutionary fugal finale of the sonata."[17] Richard Kramer notes that "Nicht diese Fugen" is the message, and adds that "the improvisatory nature of the scene only contributes to this phenomenon of the piece contemplating its own evolution."[18] Even more radically in op. 130, in the

[17]William Kinderman, program notes for a recording of the Piano Sonatas Op. 10 and Op. 106, unpublished at this writing, p. 13.

[18]Richard Kramer, "Between Cavatina and Ouverture: Opus 130 and the Voices of Narrative," *Beethoven Forum* 1 (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), p. 172.

Overtura as well as in the fugue itself, there is a clear deconstructive tendency at work, which opens the way for a new concept of compositional order both within an individual movement and in a larger, multi-movement cycle, as will become more clear in the ensuing discussion.



op. 130, vi, opening

Consisting of an Overtura plus several large, primarily fugal sections (B-flat fugue, G-flat fugato, B-flat dance episode, A-flat fugue, short reprises of the fugato and dance) and a coda, the *Grosse Fuge*, which could also be seen as a multi-movement movement, utilizes subjects that are derived from a common group of pitches. Mention has already been made of the menu-like presentation of the four incarnations of the fugue theme in the Overtura, in a sort of advertisement for things to come. In fact, each segment of the theme consists of a development of the previous version, but a development that comprehends several logical steps which have all been left out of this overture. This gnomic utterance once again brings into play different temporal levels of perception; here, gestural time seems brought to the fore, while linear-subjective time, normally the dominant mode of temporal experience, feels pushed into the cognitive background, which accounts to a certain extent for the sense of disorientation that the listener may well undergo during the Overtura. The fermata between each subject represents the elision of these intervening levels, and forces a sharp confrontation between each version of the theme, thus presenting a concise survey of the musical possibilities arising from one set of notes. Another manifestation of quasi-temporal play is the collision, common in Beethoven's music, of the consciously archaic with the unrepentantly avant-garde, seen here in the utterly individual and contemporary (futuristic?) interpretation of a very old form--fugue, "this Anachronismus," in Schindler's words.

Considered in juxtaposition with the preceding Cavatina, however, perhaps a different interpretation may be placed on the Overtura's events. As Lewis Lockwood has provocatively suggested, "the location of the Cavatina as the fifth movement of the quartet implies that the larger movement-plan of the whole work in some way reflects the shape of an operatic structure." He elaborates that the cavatina in many contemporary German operas frequently "provides a serious, deeply felt lyrical utterance by a major character, who comments introspectively upon a dilemma of the plot and thus deepens the emotional seriousness of the dramatic action as it moves toward crisis and resolution."[19] Having drawn this interesting parallel, however, Lockwood fails to follow up on its implications, beyond mentioning that Op. 130's Cavatina is intensely lyrical, and provides a good preparation for either finale. It might not be too far-fetched, though, to consider the broader ramifications of his idea that the Cavatina places the other quartet movements in an operatic context. Although merely

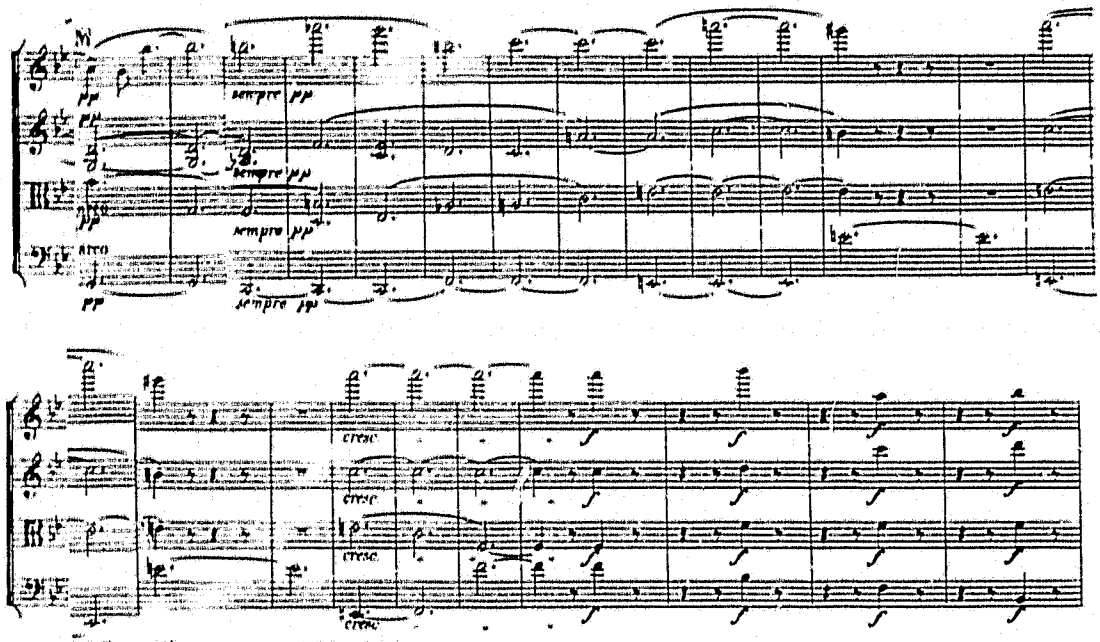
[19]Lockwood, p. 210.

implicit in the first four movements, especially in their self-referential play with form and convention, an immediate, narrative voice is made very explicit in the Cavatina, inviting a consideration of the *Grosse Fuge* in terms of voice as well. Obviously, the analogy can be pushed only so far, but the use of the term "Overtura" is itself an operatic *hommage*, for example, and, as in an operatic ensemble finale, each version of the fugue theme may be thought to represent a particular character, with whom that version is associated throughout. Characters take turns in presenting their own signature tune, while accompanied by other music. Sometimes, different voices sing their characteristic melodies simultaneously, as in the A-flat fugue, which incorporates a derivative of the G-flat fugato theme, and also uses motives from the B-flat fugal subject as a countersubject for a time, or in close juxtaposition, as in the approach to the final section of the movement (e.g. mm. 657-78), where all four voices are present for the only time in the movement after the overture. On a broader canvas, the characters, variants on a characteristic Bachian chromatic *topos*, are introduced in the overture quite baldly, and are in turn developed in the course of several large sections in an exploration of certain of the formal and expressive possibilities inherent in the *ur*-theme. Such an approach, a very modern take on an "Anachronismus," had also been explored by Beethoven in the Diabelli Variations, op. 120.

In a recent article, Richard Kramer makes the interesting point that the premonitory motives "move away from what is clearly the purest statement of the 'theme' (a term used here as the abstraction from which the four 'subjects' are extrapolated) in the direction of the obscure," and that therefore, one must regard "the actual course of events in the movement proper [to be] from the obscure to the coherent;"[20] this view of the course of events is similar to Lockwood's operatic comparison, which moved from crisis toward resolution. This narrative curve is not only melodic, but harmonic as well, in that, in Kramer's view, the harmonic progress of the movement points toward a moment near its conclusion (beginning in m. 609) at which "the artifice of fugue is expunged, and the harmonic implications of the subject are at last realized," in a "realization, an incarnation, finally, of unrealized properties in the theme."[21] This section leads to what sounds like the conclusion in mm. 630-32, but this closing material is reinterpreted as an opening of a new section, the final one, in which the four forms of the theme come together in one last appearance, hammering

[20]Richard Kramer, p. 173.
[21]Richard Kramer, p. 175.

home Beethoven's point that, although these subjects are extremely contrasting, they are in fact all derived from the same set of pitches, and they have furnished the material for "an extraordinary, coherent structure," albeit a highly complex one.[22]



op. 130, vii, mm. 609-632

Kramer's arguments are compelling, both in light of the events in the fugue itself, and the connections back to earlier movements, especially the first one. Kerman has noted the "hard ironic reference" to the downward half-step B-flat-A of the first movement in the constant upward half-step motions in the fugue subject; Simpson suggests that nearly every important theme or its accompaniment in each of the six movements makes prominent use of such semitone figures, a suggestion offered as evidence for his assertion that "thematically Op. 130 is perhaps the most closely integrated of all the late quartets, a tissue of a density to offset the large-scale associative dissociations."[23] The fugue theme itself, while clearly related to the introduction of op. 130, is also similar to the pathotype theme used in op. 132, and was in fact first sketched during Beethoven's work on the opening of the A-minor quartet.[24] Beethoven may well have linked the idea of the fugue with a sonata-form

[22]Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets*, p. 279.

[23]Kerman, p. 324; Simpson, p. 272.

[24]This theme, although present in these two quartets as well as op. 131, should not necessarily be taken as evidence that Beethoven was attempting to create some overall unifying scheme that embraced these three works, as has been proposed by

movement that utilized sharply contrasting material in two different tempi; in the end, of course, the movement found its home in op. 130, whose "arduous" first movement set the stage for the monumental finale. As Klaus Kropfinger has pointed out, Beethoven also sketched the fugue simultaneously with the first movement of the B-flat quartet, indicating that it had become an integral part of his scheme by the time serious work on this composition had started.[25]

The B-flat fugue (mm. 30-158) presents the subject in its most enigmatic rhythmic form (each pitch without exception marked fortissimo, forte, or sforzando), paired with a disjunct countersubject presented in a relentlessly unchanging rhythmic pattern. It is apt, given its material, that the B-flat fugue develops primarily rhythmically; the texture is gradually thickened by the addition of first one, and then two and three voices of countermelody in triplets. At m. 111, the subject is heard in syncopation; later (beginning in m. 139), there is a group of entries with both the subject and countersubject in diminution.

The fugato that follows (mm. 159-232) is in G-flat, which is reached unceremoniously, as we have come to expect of this key in this quartet. After our experiences with G-flat in the first two movements, it comes as no surprise that "with a vengeance the sound of G flat is now associated with a sense of unreality," but in this case it is also associated "with a particular subject, rather than a string of ideas such as emerged in the first movement," or the impotent scale passage in the transition of the Presto.[26] The sweet, lyrical tone of the fugato also seems rather unreal in contrast to the violence of the fugue that preceded it, an interesting dichotomy of affect, given the closely connected thematic material of the two sections. Tonic returns, having not been seriously in question, with the advent of the B-flat dance episode (mm. 233-72). The 6/8 version of the subject is accompanied by a trill-figure as countersubject, a motive that will be used as the subject's cadential gesture in the upcoming A-flat fugue.

The A-flat fugue uses the simplest version of the theme (the augmented form of the B-flat fugue's subject) for its subject, with countersubjects derived from the subjects of the fugato and the dance episode. The choice of A-flat major seems at first a curious one for this movement, it being the one key most likely to undermine B-flat by

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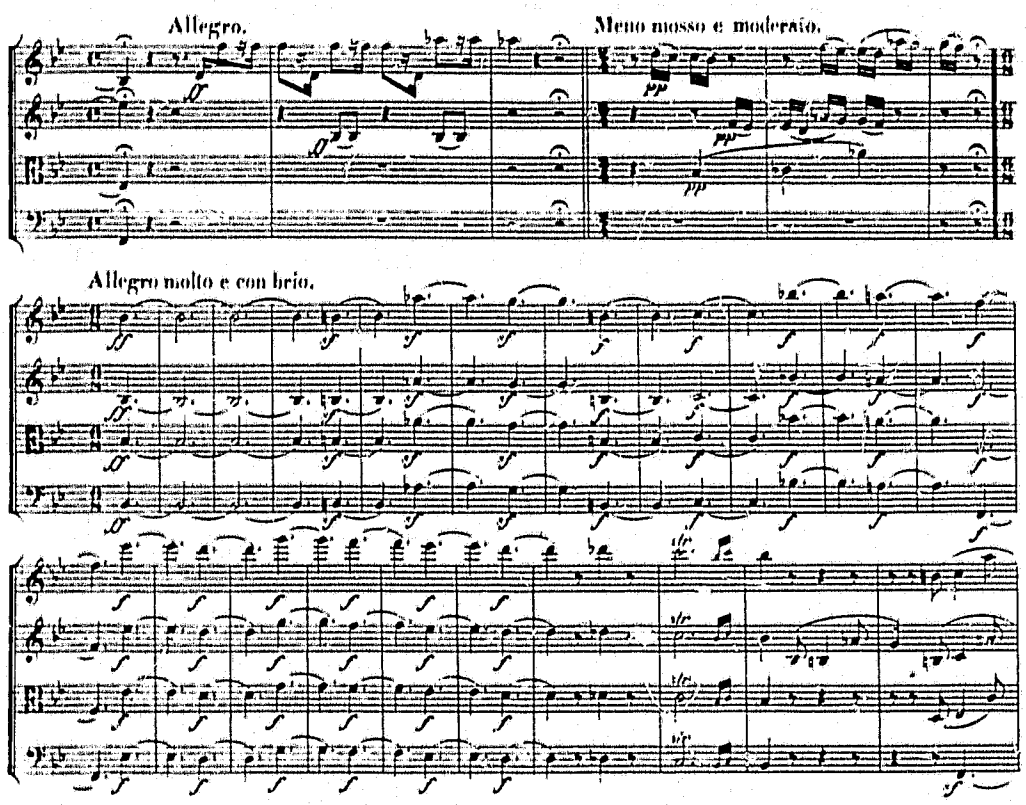
Deryck Cooke, among others; rather, it seems that the purely musical potential of a certain theme intrigued the composer over the course of working on more than one piece, not the first time that that had occurred in Beethoven's career.

[25]See Kropfinger, especially pp. 304-15.

[26]Simpson, p. 271.

making it behave as a secondary dominant. However, when the climactic section of this fugue is finally reached, it is undercut by being immediately followed (mm. 493-510) with the melodic pattern used in the G-flat fugato section. G-flat being the "unreal" key in this work, the status of A-flat is placed in jeopardy. Having been so seriously undercut, A-flat then collapses and the music returns to the tonic and the reprise of the dance section; "this music, associated with stability, settles the matter, and B flat sounds again as if it had never been attacked. So the dissociative use of G flat has an associative long-term meaning, making it possible for Beethoven to erect a giant climax in the 'impossible' key of A flat without destroying or even damaging the real tonic."[27] The reaffirmation of the tonic permits the positive synthesis in the coda of the different versions of the theme, with the exception of one final gesture, the statement in mm. 657-62 of the fourth and third (in overture order) manifestations of the theme, which points out one last time the tension between themes which is what, in the end, is the lifeblood of this movement.



op. 130, vii, mm. 657-682

[27]Simpson, p. 271.

The fugue sums up the sequence of movements, which is by no means as arbitrary as it has sometimes been described. Over the course of the first four movements, the arc of meaning seems to describe a curve that ranges from most to least formally paradoxical; the relative formal innocence of the Tedesca movement, which saves its temporal play for the coda, is nicely counterbalanced by the fact that the most remote key relationship in the work lies between it and the previous movement. To the Cavatina then falls the task of turning the harmonic progression back toward an area that can in the finale return to the tonic, and of enlarging the expressive horizons of the quartet, enabling the gigantic finale to make its statement. In considering the nature of that statement, it is perhaps worth remembering that Beethoven once remarked to Karl Holz that he was more moved by the Cavatina than anything else he had ever written, and was never able to think of it without feeling sad; given that Beethoven's original sketches for the countersubject of the B-flat fugue in the finale were of the Ninth Symphony "Joy" theme, another melody with personal significance for Beethoven (though this was not his eventual solution for the countersubject, of course), we might tentatively advance the idea that the juxtaposition of Cavatina and *Grosse Fuge* had definite meaning for the composer, and that it somehow involved the nexus of both intimate and universal expression of that meaning. The *Grosse Fuge* returns, after a fashion, to the compositional concerns of the first movement, the working out of groups of contrasting musical material in such a way that by the end of the movement, the tension between them is brought into sharper focus and thus seen to be necessary to their continued meaningful coexistence. The circular form that such a return would imply, however, is opened up and out onto a different plane by the monumental scale and paradoxical nature of the fugue, which explodes the conventional formal archetype in favor of something brave and new.

Another point that may be useful to ponder in thinking about this difficult movement is the fact that Op. 130 is the only one of the late quartets without a variation movement, and it is quite conceivable that the fugue is, in a certain sense, serving for Beethoven the purposes to which he frequently put that movement type in the music of his final decade. The exhaustion of the possibilities inherent in a single group of pitches would seem to have similarities with the biblical concept of *kenosis*, or emptying of the self. In imitation of Christ, who denied his divine power in obedient and humble acceptance of a human existence ending in crucifixion, one is invited to forget the self in favor of devotion to God's will or the good of one's neighbor. Only

when one is emptied of the claims of the will can one be filled with the meaning of love. In an analogous sense, Beethoven's late variation procedures distill themes to their essences, revealing meaning finally with great clarity. The fugue with all its disparate sections is held together by the tonal "vise," in Kerman's terms, of B-flat (all the more significant given that the major tonic has been largely neglected since the first movement), the insistent return of the dance material to link some sections, and especially by the sense that the theme is gradually being probed ever more deeply, until the epiphanic final section.[28]

To write the fugue was an extraordinary act of courage on Beethoven's part; he must have known that players would find it difficult to execute, and listeners find it difficult to apprehend. One suspects that the reason that Beethoven sat out in a tavern the premiere performance of the work he once described in a conversation book as his "Leibquartett,"[29] while anxiously awaiting the report of his friends on its reception, was that he feared that that reception might not be all that he had hoped. Like so many of his works, and perhaps more than any of them, this quartet places great demands upon its audience, demands on memory, concentration, and inclination to sympathetic understanding; these demands, however, also pay the listener the tribute of assuming that he can and will understand the work at hand, at least eventually. As we saw in the first chapter, Jung's notion of a fully realized human existence required both a recognition of the disunities and ambiguities within oneself and an advocate, "that is, the paradoxical unity of the Self--which can lead us toward a higher level of consciousness, the gentle but unyielding inner voice of truth which pushes us in the direction of individuation and permits no self-deception."[30] Perhaps the best way to describe the original version of the quartet, and more particularly the fugue, is as something completely truthful; its very honesty and unwillingness to compromise are what make it both so uncomfortable and so admirable.

The substitute finale, a hybrid *Allegro* rondo movement with sonata features, exhibits, as one would expect, various connections back to the previous movements, and is of considerable proportions for a rondo finale. Like the earlier movements, it also indulges in self-referential play with its materials, particularly in its Haydnesque manipulations of the tonal scheme. Beginning on G (i.e. V/ii), it works its way toward

[28]Kerman, p. 294.
[29]Thayer-Forbes, p. 974.
[30]Marie-Louise von Franz, *C.G. Jung*, pp. 166-67.

B-flat via the circle of fifths, arriving there at the end of the first phrase. This gesture is reflected on a larger level, as the tonal progress of the first section repeats that of the first phrase. In the developmental middle section, the harmonies move from C to F, and in the final, recapitulatory section, the circle turns the other direction, moving from D to G to B-flat to E-flat, leaving the tonic in the dust, only to be restored by a repetition of the original motion from G around to B-flat. Despite the connections back to earlier movements, this finale's potential to serve as a fitting conclusion to a work of this magnitude is seriously undercut by its failure to provide a means of mediating or explaining the discontinuities within and between the previous movements, or to deal with the world opened up by the Cavatina on its own terms. Indeed, the return to the divertimento-like character of some of the smaller earlier movements is not at all a unifying force, but in fact permits the ultimate dissociation of the work as a whole.

Why Beethoven chose to write the substitute finale is unclear, and must remain so at our remove from the contemporary circumstances. He was certainly distressed by Karl's suicide attempt, and also may well have needed funds to deal with the subsequent necessary arrangements for his nephew's future. It is also possible that he was disappointed by the public reaction to the fugue, and wanted to make the quartet more accessible, without in any way intending for the simplified version to become the definitive one. Beethoven had done something similar when he gave Ries permission to publish Op. 106 in England in any one of a variety of forms, including reordering and leaving out movements, but no one today would consider any of these options as the correct arrangement of the sonata.[31] Kropfinger notes that it is only a historical accident that Op. 130 has come down to us in such a "disrupted" fashion; he remarks that the quartet in its original version was sent to its dedicatee, Galitzin, without Beethoven ever retracting the fugal finale, and that the quartet was published and circulated in its original version, as well as in the revised version. He notes further that the piano arrangement of the fugue, viewed by some as a concession made to the composer to entice him to write another finale, was in fact to be the first of a planned

[31]The relevant portion of the letter to Ries reads, "Should the sonata not be suitable for London, I could send another one; or you could also omit the Largo and begin straight away with the fugue..., which is the last movement; or you could use the first movement and then the Adagio, and then for the third movement the Scherzo--and omit entirely no. 4 with the Largo and Allegro risoluto. Or you could take just the first movement and the Scherzo and let them form the whole sonata." Emily Anderson, ed. and trans., *The Letters of Beethoven* vol. 2 (London, 1961), pp. 804-805.

series of Beethoven's quartets arranged for keyboard, a plan that never materialized.[32]

It is certainly not out of the question that Beethoven may even have felt that the fugue was not, after all, the best possible finale, but his first choice was here surely the right one. Without the fugue, the quartet has lost its centre--not its physical centre, but the central, revelatory vision that informs the work in retrospect, commenting on the interplay of the preceding movements from the vantage point of the finale. The substitute finale may have better manners than the fugue, but as we noted in the case of Parsifal in Chapter One, it is frequently only by following natural inclinations rather than submitting to social expectations that the heroic goal can be attained.

Paradoxes of various sorts and degrees of magnitude, then, exist within and between movements of the quartet, a situation both magnified and underlined by the original fugal finale. For all of Beethoven's preoccupation with fugue in the last years of his life, there is no question that the *Grosse Fuge* is unique, both in essence, and in its context within the larger quartet structure. In discussing fugues with Karl Holz, Beethoven once said, "To *make* a fugue requires no particular skill; in my study days, I made dozens of them. But the fancy also wishes to assert its privileges, and today a new and really poetic element must be introduced into the old traditional form."[33] Carl Dahlhaus believes that what Beethoven meant by the poetic idea is the way in which "technique and expression interact;"[34] their paradoxical interaction in this quartet seems to suggest that Beethoven was indeed after something new and really poetic here, in terms of both construction and content. Given the extremity of this quartet in Beethoven's output, an early nineteenth-century literary parallel (which has some indirect but interesting connections to Beethoven), briefly examined, may prove to be of some use in dealing with the knotty problem of the finale, as well as with more general questions of musical meaning.

Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* of 1836 has much in common with *Tristram Shandy* and the other reflexive artworks mentioned in the second chapter, as will become clear from a brief summary of its nature and form. The novel has two central protagonists, a philosopher with the rather regrettable name of Diogenes Teufelsdröckh, and his editor, who is writing about him. The former has written a book, called the *Philosophy of Clothes*, and is in the midst of composing a sequel, the

[32]See Kropfinger, "Das gespaltene Werk," passim.
[33]Cited in Thayer-Forbes, p. 692.
[34]Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, p. 82.

Newbirth of Society (his other writings include a mass of disorganized autobiographical data), while the latter is writing a book (*Sartor Resartus*, or *The Tailor Retailored*) about Teufelsdröckh and his thought. In his insightful article about the novel, the critic Peter Allan Dale notes that the clothes philosophy deals with Teufelsdröckh's notion that clothing symbolizes forms of thought and perception, "spun and woven for us from before Birth itself," and that language, as well as social, political, and economic institutions, can be considered as clothes, "in the sense that they give visible shape to an otherwise inchoate experience."[35] Teufelsdröckh pays particular attention to church clothes, which are "'in our vocabulary, the Forms, the *Vestures*, under which men have at various periods embodied and represented for themselves the Religious Principle,'" an indication that he is more interested in the forms and symbols of belief than the actual beliefs themselves.[36] Forms, then, must be viewed as historically and culturally conditioned.

Another important aspect of Teufelsdröckh's philosophy is his guiding principle that humans experience the universe as nothing but chaos and confusion, in response to which we can only "attempt to counteract it or render it tolerable by various intellectual constructions of our own," such as the volumes that Teufelsdröckh has written.[37] Ironically, his attempt to give new form through his writing to the chaos he experiences is a manifest failure, in the view of the Editor, who finds that the philosopher's works are characterized by "an almost total want of arrangement," and that, in consequence, he is forced to "sit...deciphering these unimaginable Documents...endeavouring to evolve printed Creation out of a German printed and written Chaos."[38] Thus the author not only makes a statement about the fictiveness of form, but also, in a delightfully reflexive manner, sets up a continuing mutual commentary between form and content, a tension mirrored by the use of the two different narrative voices in the novel. Humor arises from the clash of Teufelsdröckh's intentions with his lack of success in achieving them, due to the chaotic form and mystifying language he employs in his attempt to construct a new order of thought. The second narrative perspective,

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[35]Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, in *Sartor Resartus and Selected Prose*, ed. Herbert Sussman (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970), p. 238; Peter Allan Dale, "*Sartor Resartus* and the Inverse Sublime: The Art of Humorous Deconstruction," *Allegory, Myth, and Symbol*, ed. Morton W. Bloomfield (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1981), pp. 295-96.

[36]Carlyle, pp. 201-202.

[37]Dale, p. 296.

[38]Carlyle, pp. 59, 96.

afforded by the presence of the Editor, supplies an ironic lens through which the philosopher's work can be examined and found (frequently) to be funny.

Carlyle's novel shows the influence of the aesthetics of comedy of Jean Paul Richter, whose works Carlyle made available to the English-speaking public through translations of and critical commentaries on his writings (more interested than most Britons of his time in German literature, Carlyle was also responsible for a biography of Schiller and translations of Goethe). Known primarily as the foremost humorist of the German Romantic movement, Jean Paul also penned a three-volume work of philosophy, the *Vorschule für Ästhetik* of 1804, in which his theories of the comic are treated in some detail. This opus was known to Beethoven's friend Friedrich August Kanne, the editor of the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*. It also served as a source for E.T.A. Hoffmann's reviews of Beethoven's music, particularly for Hoffmann's use of Jean Paul's notion of *Besonnenheit* (variously translated as self-possession, or rational awareness), which implies an awareness on the part of man that his inner self is a phenomenon separate from the outer world. Jean Paul's aesthetics rely on a dualistic framework of literary theories; he paired the idea of *Besonnenheit* with that of *Instinkt*, or sense of the future, "the realization that this life is but a comic prelude to another life."[39] In the reflexive aspects of such a concept of self-awareness a clear parallel to humor can be seen.

Jean Paul defined humor as *das umgekehrte Erhabene*, or the sublime in reverse. Like the sublime, humor does not play the mediating role of beauty; rather, it is rough and untamed, offering to those courageous enough to use it (or its inverse) expanded aesthetic resources. Humor depends in large measure on a degree of misunderstanding, created through play with the text, either by disrupting normative expectations of form, or by an unusual use of language. Form can be disrupted by self-referential techniques, such as the intrusion of an editorial or other narrative voice, or the insistence upon the artificial nature of the artwork at hand, or the deliberate fostering of confusion in order to heighten the reader's awareness of his expectations and experiences of novelistic form and language. The language of humor employs the "metaphorical sensuous style," which should "overflow with images and with witty and imaginative contrasts."[40] For both Jean Paul and Carlyle, humor extends beyond

[39]Margaret Hale, *Horn of Oberon* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1973), p. xxii.

[40]Jean-Paul Richter, *School for Aesthetics*, trans. Margaret Hale under the title *Horn of Oberon* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1973), pp. 99-100.

matters of style to matters of substance, in that such sport with text underlines the fictiveness and instability, and thus, the limitations of form, thereby permitting the invention of new forms that can be used to express new sorts of ideas. Humor, Jean Paul says, can be considered as negative infinity, which "annihilates...the finite through its contrast with the idea. It recognizes no individual foolishness, no fools, but only folly and a mad world. Humor annihilates both great and small because before infinity everything is equal and nothing."[41] Use of a comic idiom then, is a type of humorous deconstruction which Carlyle employs in order to make "the reader laugh at [old] forms with the intention of freeing him alike from their restraints and the fear of their dissolution," opening the way for society "to advance to a more satisfactory form of spiritual deliverance."[42]

Could a similar sort of ethos be at work in Op. 130? Kerman remarks that "in the B-flat Quartet the play of contrast is pushed...to a point at which the sense of continuity becomes, if not a matter of doubt, at least a recurrent subject of ironic inquiry," and that, in its function as the original finale, "the Fugue runs the danger of trivializing the experience of the other movements."[43] Rather than being negatively perceived attributes of the quartet, might not the substance of Kerman's concerns in fact be the very point of the problematic structure of the quartet and the unprecedentedly difficult nature of the finale? The quintessentially Shandean structure of the work, in which widely disparate movements are yoked together in such a way that "the sense of a central action...seems...deliberately shunned," does indeed support the assertion that "the digressions assume a life of their own, and the life of the whole piece becomes the life of the 'digressions.'"[44] Even more to the point, the first five movements are more or less unconventional presentations of what, in general, had by 1825 become highly conventionalized forms, on a scale of logical disorder ranging from the highly dissociated sonata-form opening movement, to the reasonably straightforward *Alla danza Tedesca*. Disruptions of form and musical language, both within and between the five movements, force consideration of their genres and forms as five individual entities, upon which the final fugue, treated in so unorthodox a fashion as to render any reference to convention practically irrelevant, provides commentary from the point of

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[41]Richter, p. 85.
[42]Dale, p. 311.
[43]Kerman, pp. 304, 374.
[44]Kerman, p. 319.

view of a second, quasi-editorial voice. The tension between chaos and order in the work, as well as the treatment of the movements as discrete, absolutely requires such a diegesis in order to clarify the overall narrative design. Thus, when heard in the context of the quartet, the *Grosse Fuge*, though no thigh-slapper according to anyone's ludic slide-rule, serves a humorous function, in the sense of humor which we have been considering here, Jean Paul's inverse sublime, or negative infinity.

Jean Paul's view of humor derives from his notion of Romanticism, which is an "all-animating religion that breaks down the world of sense by breathing a spirit into it," and seeks freedom and "beauty without limit."[45] In the profoundly paradoxical op. 130, Beethoven, in his never-ceasing invention, wittily deconstructs those Classical forms and conventions that had served him so well (and would continue to do so in the brief time remaining to him), both finding new expressive possibilities in them, and pointing beyond them toward the future. Perhaps the symbolic emptying characteristic of the B-flat quartet made possible the less paradoxical, but truly revolutionary form of the next quartet, op. 131. This play of old and new is possible only at the culmination of a style, and has mythopoeic aspects as well; mythopoeic works tend to arise "*in periods of crisis, of cultural transition,* when faith in the authoritative structure [is] waning. It is at this juncture that our great prophets and artists...redeem the values of the past and present in their *symbolic* form, transposing their historic transitoriness into permanent promises."[46] Beethoven, of course, is considered in most quarters to be a composer whose music straddles the divide between Classical and Romantic. Maynard Solomon believes that the widespread tendency to come down on the Classical side of the equation at the expense of the Romantic in discussing Beethoven's style tends to downplay his modernism and prevent a fuller understanding of his music. While not questioning "Beethoven's devotion to the classical aesthetic and to Enlightenment ideals," Solomon asserts that "it is precisely in his constant questing for these ideals that Beethoven redefines Romanticism as a yearning for a felicitous condition unattainable in actuality but momentarily reachable in the sphere of his own music."[47] With such utopian aspirations, we have reached the realm of myth, approachable most readily, as we saw in Chapter One, in terms of paradox; paradox itself, as Cleanth

[45]Richter, cited in Dale, p. 311.
[46]Harry Slochower, *Mythopoesis: Mythic Patterns in the Literary Classics* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970), p. 15.
[47]Maynard Solomon, *Beethoven Essays* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. x.

Brooks reminds us in *The Well-Wrought Urn*, "represent[s] the basic structure of Romantic thought and [is] far removed from a trivial verbal exercise."[48] Thus, ironically, paradox is not only a historically conditioned (i.e. Romantic) technique for reflexively examining a historically conditioned (i.e. Classical) musical style, it also represents a means by which Beethoven could approach the universal and lasting.

We have examined the multitude of paradoxes in the B-flat Quartet, and have tried to account in some meaningful fashion for their nature and function, both individually and in relation to each other. An examination of these relations is not intended to posit some overarching scheme of unity on a work that fairly bristles with resistance to such an attempt; it is my contention that a fuller appreciation of this profoundly paradoxical composition arises only from adopting a different scale of criteria, based not on unity alone, but which incorporates a broadly based, multi-layered notion of paradox, necessarily defined with reference to a cross-disciplinary context. As Joseph Kerman, Ruth Solie, and Janet Levy have all noted in thoughtful and careful analyses of analysis itself, the notion of organicism is a covert, implicit value we tend to take for granted in the act of judging music's worth. Levy contends that the idea of organic unity spills over into other analytical values considered positive, such as economy, concentration, and naturalness/idiomaticness, and that values such as additive, episodic, and non-developmental characteristics are usually covertly assumed to be negative.[49] Furthermore, "many, if not most, of the covert value judgments in musicological writings are legacies of nineteenth-century thought, passed along in a kind of underground whose pathways have been utilized freely in what seems to be a quasi-automatic and unquestioned way;" these value judgments are frequently "ahistorical," and for the most part, "decidedly ethnocentric in both origin and usage."[50] As Alfred Brendel has recently pointed out, using the same set of aesthetic criteria for all music has given comic music, such as some of Beethoven's early and middle-period piano sonatas, very short shrift.[51] A work like Op. 130, so suffused with contradiction, frequently suffers from a similar kind of misapprehension. A

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[48]Cited in Roger Fowler, ed., *A Dictionary of Modern Critical Terms* (London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987), s.v. "Paradox," by Brian Lee, p. 171.

[49]Janet M. Levy, "Covert and Casual Values in Recent Writings About Music," *Journal of Musicology* 5 (1987), p. 4.

[50]Levy, pp. 3-4, 24, 26.

[51]Alfred Brendel, "Must Classical Music be Entirely Serious?" in *Music Sounded Out* (London: Robson Books, 1990), pp. 12-53, especially p. 28.

presumptive bias toward organicism may obscure not only the meaning and value of additive or whimsical qualities in a work, but also prevent the apprehension of the subtler unities underlying surface discontinuities.

It may be that what is necessary for greater understanding is a new paradigmatic vision of analytic and aesthetic worth, based on factors both timely, such as eighteenth- and nineteenth-century theories of humor, for instance, and timeless. William Blake wrote that the artist continues the act of God, and Nicholas of Cusa, as cited in Chapter One, believed that God could only be approached or described by means of analogies, negatives, or the tension of opposites. God's creation, after all, exhibits no tautological unity, at least not to the human eye; indeed, we celebrate its whimsical nature and manifest diversity. A re-enactment of the original act of creation requires genuine, although not necessarily orthodox, belief in something larger than oneself:

> Traditionally, belief has been connected with religion, and often conceived as an uncritical and unquestioning trust in something unproved or unprovable. But it is hard to see how belief in this sense can be a virtue. Neither does it seem to be the original emphasis in religion. Wherever faith is spoken of approvingly in the New Testament, for example, it seems to have something to do with the concentrating of one's imagination or will power. It is defined in the Epistle to the Hebrews as the *hypostasis*, the substantial reality, of what is hoped for; the *elenchos*, the proof or evidence of unseen things. Belief so defined seems to be much the same thing as creativity, the power of bringing into existence something that was not there before, but which, once there, brings us a little closer to our model vision.[52]

Whatever the B-flat quartet may be, it is certainly a concentration of imagination and will power. In bringing about the possibility of expanded vision through its musical language, which creates something that was not there before, op. 130 makes clear, especially in its difficult, paradoxical aspects, the ultimate paradox of the Creator endowing his creations with the gift of some of His own creative power. The material world and the spiritual world are not in such opposition as we may sometimes believe: "In the Bible the invisible world is not usually thought of as a separate and higher order of reality: it is thought of rather as the medium by which the world becomes visible....The invisible world, like the cyclical machinery of nature, is an opportunity

[52]Northrop Frye, "The Times of the Signs," *Spiritus Mundi: Essays on Literature, Myth, and Society* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1976), p. 90.

for human energy, not a stifling darkness or a concealed revelation."[53] Perhaps for Beethoven, in a particularly poignant way, the inaudible world presented a similar creative opportunity.

And yet, some of his works, such as the quartet under discussion, do seem to conceal some of what they might reveal. Northrop Frye points out that it is an essential aspect of human creativity, a part of the purgatorial vision, that man's creative efforts can only *point toward* the divine, citing Robert Browning, for whom "it was an unanswerable argument for the theistic perspective that all human effort was so partial, it being the role of God to complete what human beings could offer only in part."[54] Such a perspective seems in an even more powerful way to offer a central role in the examination of at least some artistic repertoires, in which class Beethoven's music may be included, for the kind of altered analytical paradigm for which this dissertation has argued. If we may consider with the alchemists that the human soul is a microcosm of the unity of seemingly opposed elements, this quartet, with its juxtaposition of movements so different (some of which, such as the Cavatina, are so intimate), might be considered as an artistic expression analogous to those by allegorical Renaissance artists who painted pictures which made up their souls. In such heartfelt works, individual expression becomes universal. Like op. 132, op. 130 is chaotic, in the particular sense in which the Romantics understood chaos: as something sublime, not as an empty waste, but as "an infinitely rich, undifferentiated, undiversified plasma, out of which universes could be formed."[55] Out of such artistic "plasma," according to Novalis, can arise works that are "like a dream vision...beyond logic...an assembly of wonderful things and happenings."[56] In exploring the universe opened up by Beethoven's late works, the notion of paradox offers greater insight into the music, and makes possible observations about it that could not be made by means of purely structural analysis alone. Although not an analytic panacea, paradox is a valuable critical caduceus.

Jung believed that different people inhabit different centuries. Obviously a citizen of his own time, Beethoven inhabits our century, too, in the enduring power of his music to speak to us. No doubt it will continue to do so in the centuries yet to

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[53]Northrop Frye, *The Great Code* (Toronto: Academic Press Canada, 1982), p. 124.
[54]Northrop Frye, *Words with Power* (New York: Viking, 1990), p. 306.
[55]E.F. Bleiler, in *The Best Tales of Hoffmann* (New York: Dover, 1967), p. xx.
[56]Novalis, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, cited in Bleiler, p. xx.

come, and perhaps a profoundly paradoxical work like op. 130, still problematic in some senses in the twentieth century, will speak more intelligibly to the future.

Afterword

Lionel Trilling once wrote that a poem "is the poem as it has existed in history, as it has lived its life from Then to Now, as it is a thing which submits itself to one kind of perception in one age and another kind of perception in another age, as it exerts in each age a different kind of power."[1] Beethoven's late music has features both timely and timeless. The power that it continues to exert nearly two hundred years after it was written is due, in part, to its richness and difficulty, one aspect of which is paradox. While it can be sometimes difficult to understand, in fact we value great art because of, not in spite of, its complexity; anything that yields its secrets too easily will cease to be of interest or to have the power to move us. The heart-strings do not vibrate to the strains of a gelatin commercial.

That paradox seems to be inseparable from human attempts to deal with complex issues is an attitude that seems to have found a peculiar resonance in our stormy and confusing century, in which both the philosopher and the man on the street seem convinced that the world is composed of contrarieties, discontinuities, and oppositions, and that there are few, if any, simple answers to anything. The critic Patrick Murray has noted, "Paradox is so intrinsic to human nature and life that poetry rich in paradox is valued as the reflection of central truths of human experience;" likewise, a noted chef and theologian, while describing the incongruous techniques necessary to avoid the perils of *pâtisserie*, has asserted that "Paradox is the only basket large enough to hold the truth."[2]

Paradox, then, as fundamental to attempts to explain large, existential questions, is a central aspect of mythical thought. Mythical thought is present outside mythology itself, the most obvious example being its presence in great works of art, which themselves could also be considered as logical models dealing with universal and frequently contradictory human experiences, to borrow the formulation of Lévi-Strauss cited in the first chapter. The process by which actual mythological accounts are transposed from the literal into the symbolic and thereby transformed into unique and unified works of art is known as "mythopoesis." Mythopoeic works, according to

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[1]Lionel Trilling, "The Sense of the Past," in *The Liberal Imagination* (New York, 1950), p. 186.

[2]Patrick Murray, *Literary Criticism: A Glossary of Major Terms* (New York: Longman, 1978), p. 109, and Robert Capon, *The Supper of the Lamb: A Culinary Reflection*, 2nd ed. (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1989), p. 155.

Harry Slochower's study of mythic patterns in literature, tend to arise "*in periods of crisis, of cultural transition,* when faith in the authoritative structure [is] waning. It is at this juncture that our great prophets and artists...redeem the values of the past and present in their *symbolic* form, transposing their historic transitoriness into permanent promises."[3] Such a definition seems apt in the current context. Beethoven's late works in particular were written in the aftermath of an intense personal crisis and during a period of general cultural and artistic transition; they arose, as Solomon has noted, "out of a perpetual tension between archaic sources and utopian possibilities."[4]

A consideration of Beethoven's works as mythic expressions, with paradoxes as the keys to unlocking meaning, may permit enhanced critical insights into both compositional structure and content. While one would not advocate a solitary analytical system for the study of any body of music, such an approach, in terms of Beethoven's late works at least, has several benefits. First, it illumines the relationship between the music of Haydn and Beethoven, as well as allowing the relationship between Beethoven's early and middle music and his late works to be seen more clearly as part of a continuous curve, rather than as disparate entities. In the alliance of paradox with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century aesthetic notions such as Witz, Ingenium, and Besonnenheit, analysis along these lines also takes into consideration the contemporary cultural and historical contexts. The presence of paradox in works written throughout Beethoven's career, as well as the similarities between this musical technique with German Romantic ideas, may shed some light on, or perhaps even mediate, the dichotomy between Classical and Romantic characteristics in Beethoven's music. In addition, recognition that Beethoven's use of paradox has affinities with the paradoxes inherent in other phenomena which attempt to make sense of human experience--myth, alchemical writings, psychological theory, and poetry, for instance--places his music squarely in the midst of the history of ideas, and underlines the perception that Beethoven's late works do seem to be grappling with deep issues of meaning. A consideration of music and meaning undertaken on terms which seek to deal with both structure and content returns music criticism to its historical roots; the division, common in the last two centuries, between analysis that concentrates primarily on either form or expression has begun to be mediated by, among other trends, work in the field

[3]Harry Slochower, *Mythopoesis: Mythic Patterns in the Literary Classics* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970), p. 15.
[4]Solomon, *Beethoven Essays*, p. x.

of musical narrative, to which the notion of paradox can be a useful addition. That many of the paradoxes we have examined are temporal in nature provides an opportunity for increased understanding of musical time, probably the least understood aspect of music in general. Finally, perhaps the study of the paradoxes in Beethoven's music can account to some extent for that music's reception history. Although appreciated to a certain extent in the time and place it was written, there can be no denying that the late music has become more accessible to far more people in the last half-century than it was during the composer's lifetime. It is not surprising that in our paradoxical age this music has become our touchstone of greatness.

In any case, it seems certain that in spite of our changing perceptions Beethoven's late music will continue to exert significant power on our own and subsequent ages, and that it will have lasting resonance with human minds and hearts. In our efforts to identify particular characteristic procedures of Beethoven's art, we would do well to keep Susanne Langer's thoughts about genius firmly in mind:

> genius is not superlative talent, but the power to conceive invisible realities--sentience, vitality, emotion--in a new symbolic projection that reveals something of their nature for the first time....Art is a public possession, because the formulation of "felt life" is the heart of any culture, and molds the objective world for the people. It is...their defense against outer and inner chaos. It is only when nature is organized in imagination along lines congruent with the forms of feeling that we can understand it...then intellect and emotion are unopposed, life is symbolized by its setting, the world seems important and is intuitively "grasped"...Art is indeed the clarification of emotional life.[5]

I think that Beethoven in his late works was extraordinarily successful in "formulating felt life" because he recognized that paradox, the art of expressing the inexpressible, is a central fact of human existence.

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[5]Langer, *Feeling and Form*, p. 409.

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