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Altered States: Musical and Psychological Processes in Wagner

by

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Abstract

This study reconstructs the early development of modern psychological thought as a context for understanding Wagner's artistic practices. It opens by considering the evolution of psychological thought in German-speaking regions in the late eighteenth century and the growing recognition of unconscious psychological states. By the time that Wagner's career as an opera composer was underway, aesthetic theory and practices had changed to reflect implications of the model of the mind that absorbed early scientific and medical accounts of the unconscious. The application of these psychological ideas in Wagner's works is the focus of the analytical sections of the present work.

Der fliegende Holländer (1841) is the first opera in which Wagner systematically coordinated issues of musical-dramatic structure with psychological principles; this process merits detailed analysis. In *Der fliegende Holländer*, and all of his subsequent works, Wagner distinguished between phenomenal and noumenal music. Beginning with *Tannhäuser*, he experimented with the invisible fringes of the stage as performance space that could allude to the noumenal world. After surveying the evolution of Wagner's use of "unseen voices," examples from *Parsifal* are assessed. Close examination of its second scene gives attention to this practice as well as to a vivid somnambulistic episode. The scene as a whole is shown to be a sophisticated manipulation of the Kantian notions of time and space

that yields a tonal plan or framework coordinated with a differentiated conception of consciousness.

The final two chapters are devoted to the musical and psychological representation of two of Wagner's most important pairs of characters: Siegfried and Brünnhilde, and Tristan and Isolde. Analyses of *Siegfried*, Act I, and *Götterdämmerung*, Act III, as well as *Tristan und Isolde* illustrate how Wagner's large-scale tonal planning and associative tonalities are employed in the service of evolving psychological processes. Schopenhauer's theory of allegorical dream states is shown to be particularly relevant to a re-evaluation of the Wagnerian practice of the "double-tonic complex" much discussed in recent scholarship.

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iv
List of Figures.....	v
List of Examples.....	vi
Acknowledgments.....	vii
Dedication.....	viii
Preface.....	ix
Chapter 1	
Wagner's Position in the History of Psychological Thought.....	1
Chapter 2	
<i>Der fliegende Holländer</i> : a case study.....	73
Chapter 3	
Part I - Unseen Voices.....	137
Part II - <i>Parsifal</i> : Act I, scene 2.....	156
Chapter 4	
<i>Der Ring des Nibelungen</i>	
Part I - Siegfried the Hero?.....	188
Part II - Siegfried's Legacy.....	225
Chapter 5	
Part I - Tonality, Form and Psychology.....	267
Part II - Associative Tonalities in <i>Tristan und Isolde</i>	287
Selected Bibliography.....	301

List of Figures

3.1	<i>Parsifal</i> , Act I, scene 2.....	161
4.1	<i>Siegfried</i> , Act I, scene 3, Forging Songs.....	197
5.1	<i>Der fliegende Holländer</i> , overview of tonal framework.....	272
5.2	<i>Tristan und Isolde</i> , tonal plan and associative significance.....	295

List of Examples

2.1	<i>Der fliegende Holländer</i> , Act I, no.2.....	84
2.2	<i>Der fliegende Holländer</i> , Act I, no.2.....	86
2.3	<i>Der fliegende Holländer</i> , Act I, no.2.....	89
2.4	<i>Der fliegende Holländer</i> , Act I, no.2.....	93
2.5	<i>Der fliegende Holländer</i> , Act II, Senta's <i>Ballade</i>	102
2.6	<i>Der fliegende Holländer</i> , Act II, Senta's <i>Ballade</i>	104
2.7	<i>Der fliegende Holländer</i> , Act II, Senta's <i>Ballade</i>	106
2.8	<i>Der fliegende Holländer</i> , Act II, no. 5.....	111
2.9	<i>Der fliegende Holländer</i> , Act II, Erik's dream narration.....	127
2.10	<i>Der fliegende Holländer</i> , Act I, no. 1.....	134
4.1	<i>Siegfried</i> , Act I, scene 3, Forging Song I.....	194
4.2	<i>Siegfried</i> , Act I, scene 3, Forging Song II.....	210
4.3	<i>Götterdämmerung</i> , Act III, scene 2.....	256
4.4	<i>Götterdämmerung</i> , Act III, scene 2.....	259
4.5	<i>Götterdämmerung</i> , Act III, scene 3.....	261
5.1	<i>Tristan und Isolde</i> , Act II, scene 2.....	297

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To my parents,

Bruce and Jacqueline Syer

Preface

Wagner's preoccupation with psychological states and processes is a dimension of his work that rewards detailed critical scrutiny. Thomas Mann certainly thought so in his famous 1933 essay "The Sorrows and Grandeur of Richard Wagner," in which he stated that a whole book could be written about the psychological art of Wagner's music and poetry. For Mann, the psychological dimension of Wagner's operas was complemented by their mythical dimension; these forces, in combination, spoke beyond the perspectives characteristic of Wagner's time, setting his works apart. In his essay, Mann also observed that the predominant attitude towards psychology and mythology regarded them as antithetical. He sought to take steps, following Wagner, to counter this view. Mann was sensitive to the contexts from which works spring. In turn, we should recognize that he wrote his essay when Freudian thought dominated the horizon of psychological perspectives. In hindsight, we can see how then-emerging branches of psychology were addressing some of the interrelationships with mythology that Mann felt deserved attention, not only in Wagner but also more generally. In the simplest sense, the Freudian focus on the individual unconscious was being expanded into the Jungian realm of the collective unconscious.

What Mann saw as progressive artistic strategies in Wagner's works—his motivic handling and the psychological complexity of his characters—he explicitly aligned with Freudian psychoanalysis. In the late Wagnerian character of Kundry, Mann noted the remarkable marriage of an intricately delineated psyche and a broader, more universal sense of time and space; in Mann's terms, this was an example of mythological pathology. Obscured from Mann's vantage point was the rich pre-history of twentieth-century psychology that informed Wagner's own artistic outlook. Only in the last few decades has the history of modern psychology as a specialized line of inquiry been re-written to embrace relevant developments that first took shape in the latter part of the eighteenth century. What is fascinating about this earlier period is that the roots of both Freudian and Jungian psychological perspectives were intertwined. In the broad context, the Freudian movement appears as a reductive phase while the Jungian movement seems restorative. More narrowly

speaking, Freud's work was also restorative in light of the positivistic thrust towards the natural sciences in German-speaking regions in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Freud was of course aware of his predecessors, but he was not keen to elaborate upon these connections as he drew forth ideas in a highly selective manner. The history of psychology is not simply teleological. Vicissitudes in perspective are interesting reflections of different times and places, and capture the evolution and reincarnation of ideas.

Not surprisingly, many Freudian- and Jungian- oriented writers have been attracted to Wagner's works and found their psychological and mythological dimensions full of implications. This dissertation does not align Wagner's brand of psychology with a particular system. It is an attempt to reconstruct the early development of modern psychological thought as a context for understanding Wagner's artistic practices. I hope that this approach will demonstrate the nature of psychological thought at the time and how a vast collection of inter-related ideas influenced Wagner's aesthetic strategies in ways that have not yet been appreciated. One analytical issue that bears re-evaluation from this approach may come as a surprise to some readers: Wagner's handling of tonality. It is the author's belief that Wagner's motivic handling, development of character types and the typically discussed 'psychological' aspects of his works remain important but are less innovative when viewed against this historical backdrop. Wagner's large-scale musical and dramatic structures draw together the full range of his psychologically-oriented ideas.

The first chapter traces various political, social, philosophical, medical, and scientific developments in the generations before Wagner that influenced interest in the unconscious and ideas about how it worked. Issues as seemingly disparate as the study of electricity and the exploration of uncharted lands are part of this history. These efforts to better understand unknown or invisible realms mirrored the quest to understand the inner dimension of the individual. They also provided apt metaphors for that quest and its artistic embodiment. The concept of contrasting forces, influencing each other and sometimes held in balance, ripples throughout the rejection of absolute dualism which characterized Enlightenment thought. However misguidedly, Anton Mesmer believed that this basic principle helped explain why he could cure illness through his practice known as animal magnetism. This precursor of

hypnosis rapidly enabled the first systematic efforts to examine unconscious mental functioning, or mentation. The altered states of consciousness of somnambulists and madmen lay bare the mind unchained from reason. Gradually, attitudes towards this strange inner world became less fearful and it was recognized as an important, enriching part of life. This general idea of an expanded and continuous spectrum of consciousness radically transformed the way the world was understood to work and the way artists sought to represent it. E.T.A. Hoffmann was both Wagner's most important early influence in this regard and one of the most informed figures in the psychological arena in his day.

Wagner's first unqualified masterpiece is the focus of the second chapter. *Der fliegende Holländer* (1841) features a somnambulist as its heroine and the drama is a rendering of central philosophical issues that arose in response to early discussions of the unconscious. Through close study of the work's structure, organizational strategies which Wagner developed to co-ordinate its many musical and dramatic levels are shown to pertain to the different psychological states and perspectives of its characters. Through the somnambulistically ecstatic character of Senta, Wagner drew the normally invisible and unsounding world of the unconscious into the centre of the work.

Another important artistic strategy in Wagner's depiction of inner psychological phenomena is his use of invisible sources of sound. Beginning with *Tannhäuser*, Wagner experimented with the fringes of the stage as performance space. Precisely because of their invisibility, unseen locations for sound could allude convincingly to the noumenal world. The third chapter considers several ways in which Wagner used such "unseen voices" but it pays most detailed attention to their role in his last opera, *Parsifal*.

In psychological terms, Siegfried is the conceptual antithesis to the pre-*Ring* characters that Wagner had represented as privileged through their sensitivity to the non-rational level of experience. He is the embodiment of a very particular form of consciousness, one purer than that traditionally associated with rationalistic thought. As such, Siegfried is naïve and vulnerable to vice. He is also the ideal counterpart to Brünnhilde, the symbolic agent of will. Chapter four examines the career of this couple and considers the genesis of the *Ring* cycle with them in mind. Analysis of the first act of *Siegfried* reveals Wagner's masterful

handling of multiple perspectives, layers of consciousness, and organically evolving musical forms, all of which are closely bound up with the supporting tonal structure. A revisionist approach to the oft-maligned relationship between Mime and Siegfried is offered in the process. The second part of this chapter is concerned with Siegfried's death, the altered state of consciousness he experiences in his final moments, and its implications for Brünnhilde and the conclusion of the drama.

The concluding chapter of this study opens with a discussion of the concept of associative tonality that has gained currency in recent analytical approaches to Wagner's works. Through several examples, the symbolic nature of Wagner's large-scale tonal planning is re-assessed. The belief that he conceived different tonal and psychological states as metaphorically inter-related is tested against the case of *Tristan und Isolde*, completed in 1859. In this work, Wagner's evolving compositional skill enabled him to express his conception of mental functioning with unprecedented subtlety and clarity. Ironically, his more chromatic musical language has often been understood to mark a celebration of unfettered subjectivity. The model advanced in this analysis suggests a more differentiated view. While acknowledging a generally more chromatic style, the main hypothesis is that the distinctive chromaticism of *Tristan und Isolde* charts the uneasy navigations between the conscious and the unconscious realms at the level of the characters' experience. The moments of repose or harmonic stability are reflections of transitional or mediating states which broadly distinguish the conscious and unconscious, as well as several dream-related stages associated with somnambulism. Wagner's more rarified approach to the thresholds of conscious perception is a culminating point in his *oeuvre* and a fitting testimony to an age that had striven so hard to understand the relationship between the known and the unknown.

Chapter 1

Wagner's Position in the History of Psychological Thought

Since the time of Freud, the idea that our lives are powerfully influenced by the unconscious has gained acceptance as a reality. That idea was not new, as evidenced by Lancelot Law Whyte's *The Unconscious Before Freud* (1960) which re-shaped psychological history to include the significant thinkers antedating Freud.¹ It served to remind us that popular and fashionable concepts can assume an air of novelty, obscuring their origins. In 1970, Henri F. Ellenberger carefully traced the roots of dynamic psychiatry in his comprehensive study, *The Discovery of the Unconscious*.² Ellenberger illuminated the importance of ideas now typically regarded as unscientific, ideas which nevertheless were indispensable to 20th-century theories of the mind and the unconscious. German Romantic thinkers, those whom Freud and two world wars have obscured, figure prominently in his survey. Richard Wagner engaged fully with their ideas, and added to a tradition of psychologically-oriented thought whose aesthetic implications had reached an early phase of maturity by the time he was born.

The seeds of modern psychology had taken root in Germany before the end of the eighteenth century. Within Europe, the German regions were uniquely inclined to support the development and dissemination of psychologically-oriented ideas. In part because of its decentralized socio-political condition, Germany had far more universities than any other European country. They assumed primary roles as vehicles of culture, enjoying considerable academic freedom, given the lack of a unified church or, before 1870, any effective central government.³ Changes in curricula reflected this promising situation. From "the eighteenth-

¹ Lancelot Law Whyte, *The Unconscious Before Freud* (New York: Basic Books, 1960.)

² Henri F. Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and the Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry* (New York: Basic Books, 1970).

³ L.S. Hearnshaw, *The Shaping of Modern Psychology* (London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987), 124. In 1800 there were more than 30 universities in

century development of the faculty of philosophy, to supplement the traditional faculties of theology, law and medicine, arose the idea of a comprehensive and encyclopedic ‘*Wissenschaft*’, embracing all knowledge, humanistic and scientific.”⁴ This philosophical/academic foundation had methodological implications for the study of the human mind. In practical terms, it created a fertile training-ground. “The majority of eighteenth-century German psychological writers after Leibniz (a diplomat-cum-librarian) were university based, and continued to be so (although non-university based thinkers such as Goethe could be highly important).”⁵ The university system offered many benefits: “opportunities for full-time intellectual work, networks of professional influence, university-centred publication, ongoing debate, and continuous teacher-student lineages of thought.”⁶ Given the far-reaching span of the academic infrastructure, the benefits also extended into the sphere of general public influence. Consequently, the “sophisticated conceptual repertoire for construing the psychological”⁷ which German philosophers had developed before the beginning of the nineteenth century was not restricted to these specialists; it became the property of society at large.

Germany and Austria. At the time, England had two and the French university system was completely dysfunctional. The German system had its share of problems. Concerns about discipline and the educational needs of society were coupled to the fact that the large number of universities was an immense budgetary burden. Twenty-two of them disappeared or were temporarily closed during the Napoleonic era. Academic freedom was sometimes threatened, but remained generally greater than in England and France. The relationship between the evolving academic system and Romantic thought is explored later in the present chapter.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Graham Richards, *Mental Machinery: The Origins and Consequences of Psychological Ideas, Part I: 1600-1850* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1992), 291.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

The ties between psychology and philosophy remained intact well into the twentieth century, by which time psychology had made strides towards disciplinary autonomy. “In 1910, for example, German psychology was firmly established as an intellectual discipline, with three specialized journals, well-defined research schools, and a series of authoritative texts.” But, at the same time, “only four psychologists of the day listed themselves officially as ‘psychologist’ rather than as ‘philosopher,’ and only six of 21 universities had institutes or seminars for psychology.”⁸ Impetus for this shift came from several developments of the late 1850s: precedents were established in the disciplines of physiology, organic chemistry, and modern history, which, facilitated by rising enrollments and funding, broke free from parent disciplines; the explosion in physiological understanding of the sense organs enriched the domain of sensory psychology and pointed towards more experimental approaches as well as a more intimate relationship between psychology and physiology; and Gustav Fechner’s invention of the techniques of psychophysics in the early 1860s underscored an emphasis on experimental techniques and promised “hard”, quantitative results. Empiricism, experiment, and a materialistic orientation thus challenged the philosophically-oriented psychological tradition in both intellectual and scientific prestige.⁹ The debates that emerged in the latter part of the nineteenth century between these disparate approaches to psychological inquiry are not absent from the discipline today.

Progressive changes in early nineteenth-century Germany included Baron von Stein’s educational reforms, the abolition of serfdom and the caste system, and the extensive modernization of the Prussian state. This growing concern for the status and development of the individual encouraged efforts to better understand the human condition. At the University of Berlin, founded in 1810, an emphasis on research as well as teaching soon became a model rapidly emulated throughout the German regions. The promotion of research included

⁸ R. Steven Turner, “Helmholtz, Sensory Physiology, and the Disciplinary Development of German Psychology,” in *The Problematic Science: Psychology in Nineteenth-Century Thought*, ed. William R. Woodward and Mitchell G. Ash (New York: Praeger, 1982), 150.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 149.

generous grants for well-furnished scientific laboratories, stimulating the mid-century positivistic trend in several academic fields. In these circumstances, as L.S. Hearnshaw claims, it was no accident that scientific psychology was born in German universities.¹⁰ Wilhelm Wundt's experimental laboratory, established in Leipzig in 1879, has traditionally been identified as its birthplace. But what Wundt's "physiological psychology" did not represent was victory in the custody case between philosophy and science. Wundt himself did not advocate disciplinary autonomy. The academic chair awarded to him in 1875 was in philosophy, and the journal he founded was *Philosophische Studien* (not psychological studies).¹¹ The explanation is less paradoxical than ontological. Wundt's intellectual heritage derived from the idealist philosophers' stress on the unity of all knowledge. This perspective, which dominated the first half of the nineteenth century, acknowledged psychology as one of many individual empirical sciences whose data were to be "overcome" (*aufgehoben*), by means of dialectical reasoning, as part of a total scientific quest for over-arching truths. "Thus philosophy was synonymous with Science, or Knowledge, and the empirical sciences were conceived to be a part of philosophy, though clearly its most rudimentary part."¹² This conviction lingered. "In the formative period between 1850 and 1879 there was no necessary conflict between science and philosophy, particularly as regards psychology, even though as a matter of fact there were scientists and philosophers who rejected each other's enterprises. Wundt was not one of these."¹³ The new psychology that Wundt represented was clearly "the joint offspring of the older philosophical psychology and the newer experimental life

¹⁰ Hearnshaw, *The Shaping of Modern Psychology*, 124.

¹¹ William R. Woodward, "Wundt's Program for the New Psychology: Vicissitudes of Experiment, Theory, and System," in *The Problematic Science*, 168-9.

¹² David E. Leary, "Wundt and After: Psychology's Shifting Relations with the Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, and Philosophy," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 15 (1979): 232.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 233.

sciences.”¹⁴ The particular role that Wundt envisioned for psychology, as he argued in 1874 in an inaugural lecture in Zurich, was as a mediator between the natural and cultural sciences.¹⁵

The idealistic and humanistic dimensions of Wundt’s work did not have an immediate impact. His own students—the Americans in particular—pursued the experimental, natural scientific orientation.¹⁶ Wundt spoke out frequently against positivism and empiricism, as in his *System der Philosophie* of 1899. In 1913, in an article entitled “Psychology in a Struggle for Existence”, he vehemently opposed the split from philosophy, “arguing that both disciplines would suffer from such a divorce. Neither empirical experiment nor rational analysis alone, he emphasized, could constitute true, complete science.”¹⁷ Wundt continued teaching in Leipzig until 1917. In the last years he added a new course to his pre-existing wide range, one concerning the philosophy of Kant. By this time, however, modern experimental psychology was already experiencing a shift of leadership from German to Anglo-American universities, and German mentalistic psychology was giving way to the American behaviourist movement. As Arthur L. Blumenthal has noted, “those changes were brutally punctuated by the horrors of two wars that further divided Anglo-American from German cultural traditions.

¹⁴ Hearnshaw, *The Shaping of Modern Psychology*, 125.

¹⁵ Rom Harré, Horst U.K. Gundlach et al., “Antagonism and Interaction: The Relations of Philosophy to Psychology,” in *Points of View in the Modern History of Psychology*, ed. Claude E. Buxton (Orlando: Academic Press Inc., 1985), 385.

¹⁶ Hearnshaw, *The Shaping of Modern Psychology*, 137.

¹⁷ Leary, “Wundt and After,” 236. Leary also points out that Wundt addressed economic factors of the debate in the same article. Many philosophers encouraged the disciplinary autonomy of psychology in part as a response to the competition for chairs in their own faculty. “Wundt recommended the establishment of new chairs in philosophy specifically designated for psychologists.”

For two or more generations, emotional polemic interfered with attempts at dispassionate examination of experimental psychology's German roots."¹⁸

In 1979, reflecting upon a century of scientific psychology, David E. Leary observed that psychologists found themselves once again in a position like Wundt's. From a heavy emphasis upon psychology as a natural science, and then a similarly concentrated emphasis on psychology as a social science, a vibrant commitment to multiple orientations has re-emerged. This commitment supports a renewed interest in the philosophical analysis of psychology's findings and conceptual frameworks.¹⁹ Related to these trends is a reassessment of the broader early phase of modern psychology of which Wundt was a part. The ideas of German philosophers, first rejected during the heyday of positivism and then clouded by the evils of National Socialism, have been reassessed in terms of their positive, ongoing psychological significance. Central to this reconsideration is the work of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), for the range of approaches to psychological phenomena and concepts of the last two centuries, and the tensions between them, can be viewed collectively as attempts to respond to problems to which he drew unprecedented attention.

Kant was indebted more than most to the publication opportunities afforded by affiliation with a university. He was "born into narrow straits" and spent his entire life in Königsberg, "a small city virtually at the outermost limits of European civilization."²⁰ Its university had a student enrollment of about 300²¹ and was "barely more than a glorified high school." Kant struggled financially until he finally was appointed to a proper chair in

¹⁸ Arthur L. Blumenthal, "Wilhelm Wundt: Psychology as the Propaedeutic Science," *Points of View in the Modern History of Psychology*, 19.

¹⁹ Leary, "Wundt and After," 238.

²⁰ Paul Guyer, "Introduction: The Starry Heavens and the Moral Law," *The Cambridge Companion to Kant*, ed. Paul Guyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 3.

²¹ Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Metaphysics*, trans. and ed. Karl Ameriks and Steve Naragon, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), xx.

metaphysics in 1770, at the age of forty-six. Yet he had already published many works and after a period of silence re-entered the publishing world with unprecedented fervor. Beginning in 1781, he contributed a major work almost every year, together with other writings, for over a decade.²² Throughout, he had several pupil/advocates, like Herder, who facilitated the publication of his lectures. As a result, his ideas rippled freely to the world outside Königsberg.

While he did not invent the major problem which he bequeathed to posterity, Kant did give it poignant and abiding expression. “Simply stated, it is the problem of the place of the will in a deterministic world. In broader terms, this is the traditional problem of ‘man’s place in nature’; in psychological terms it is the problem of the accommodation of ‘consciousness’ to scientific method. Kant himself saw an irreconcilable difference between these pairs of concepts—between will and world, ‘man’ and nature, mind and science. Later psychologists sought to reconcile these differences either by eliminating or changing the definition of one of these terms...or by devising a practical compromise between them.”²³ In setting forth this problematic space, Kant carefully considered psychological concepts and approaches already in circulation.

Gottfried W. Leibniz (1646-1716) was one of the most noteworthy figures in Kant’s own heritage. In addition to paying considerable attention to unconscious mental processes—Nicolas de Malebranche (1638-1715) and his disciple John Norris (1632-1704) had already speculated extensively in this vein—Leibniz’s approach was quasi-quantitative.²⁴ While his idea of measuring a threshold of consciousness proved untenable, his more systematic approach to the unconscious already suggested a shift away from pure speculation. The influence of Leibniz’s ideas was largely posthumous, in part because most of his writings were only published after his lifetime. But “his direct and indirect contributions to psychology

²² Guyer, “Introduction: The Starry Heavens and the Moral Law,” 3-4.

²³ David E. Leary, “Immanuel Kant and the Development of Modern Psychology,” in *The Problematic Science*, 28.

²⁴ Whyte, *The Unconscious Before Freud*, 96-99.

were considerable, in particular his stress on the active nature of the mind, the role of innate powers, and the importance of unconscious processes.”²⁵ The legacy of Leibniz was not an easy one, but the stage had been set for an “active, holistic concept of the mind, as opposed to the more passive reductionist, atomistic British and French doctrines stemming from Locke...German philosophers were required to identify and address the nature of mental processes which Lockean philosophers barely acknowledged, or saw as unproblematical products of a simple aggregative process.”²⁶

Christian Wolff (1679-1754) pursued Leibniz’s ideas, but his ambitions in the direction of quantitative analysis were no more successful. He nevertheless brought back into circulation an account of the human mind which, in different forms, stimulated the discussion of a wide range of psychological issues amongst writers like Moses Mendelssohn, Baumgarten, Lessing, and Lambert. In his own theories of cognition, Kant turned less towards Wolff than to J.N. Tetens (1736-1807) and his tripartite model of Knowing, Willing and Feeling.²⁷ “Tetens was a key figure in the transition from rationalism to idealism, and in the endowment of the imagination with the central role accorded to it in the post-Kantian philosophy of men like Fichte and Schelling.”²⁸ Christian Wolff and his followers “treated psychology as the rational and empirical study of an immaterial, substantial soul; Kant began with this conception, but he ultimately supported a conception of psychology as a natural science, according to which all mental phenomena are subject to natural law.”²⁹ In refuting

²⁵ Hearnshaw, *The Shaping of Modern Psychology*, 81.

²⁶ Graham Richards, *Mental Machinery*, 292.

²⁷ Richards, *Mental Machinery*, 293-4.

²⁸ Hearnshaw, *The Shaping of Modern Psychology*, 103.

²⁹ Gary Hatfield, “Empirical, Rational, and Transcendental Psychology: Psychology as Science and as Philosophy,” *The Cambridge Companion to Kant*, ed. Paul Guyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 201.

rational psychology, Kant entered something of a no-man's-land, in that the scientific kind of psychology which he envisioned did not exist in his lifetime.

Kant's more immediately responsive audience concerned itself with his acknowledgment of the complexity of consciousness, a central theme in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781/1787). Significant in this respect is his consideration of the concept of the soul as a simple substance in the Paralogisms of the "Transcendental Dialectic." The basic argument from the soul's simplicity to its incorruptibility and immortality was popular in contemporary rational psychology, and earlier versions had been discussed by Descartes and Leibniz.³⁰ The root problem, for Kant, lay in the "the formal proposition of apperception, I think," which he considered to be "the sole ground on which rational psychology ventures to undertake the extension of its knowledge." Kant contended that the proposition entails a "purely subjective condition, having reference to a possible experience only, but by no means the condition of the possibility of the knowledge of objects, and by no means necessary to the concept of a thinking being in general...The proposition *I am simple* must be considered as the immediate expression of apperception, and the so-called syllogism of Cartesius, *cogito, ergo sum*, is in reality tautological, because *cogito (sum cogitans)* predicates reality immediately. *I am simple* means no more than that this representation of I does not contain the smallest trace of manifoldness, but is absolute (although merely logical) unity."³¹ For Kant, such logical unity did not lead analytically to substantial simplicity, but pointed up the elusiveness of the subjective, inner dimension of mental activity. In that Kant treated seriously the rich, noumenal realm which he delineated, he lent respect to other thinkers keen to emancipate the "self" from the Enlightenment's obscurity.

Post-French Revolutionary society had of course many reasons to focus on the liberated self. The inwardness that characterized emergent Romanticism was undoubtedly part of "a movement of protest and escape from a world that was losing its simplicity and charm;

³⁰ Ibid., 202-203.

³¹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. F. Max Müller (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1966), 255.

from the 'dark satanic mills', and from 'the mind-forged manacles' of the scientific age; from the greedy pursuit of wealth, the formality of education, and the dominance of reason."³² One tendency of generations framing and overlapping with the various waves of Romanticism was to regard intense preoccupation with the self as a largely negative phenomenon, a more dangerous form of dualism. But as L.S. Hearnshaw and others have stressed, the paradoxes of Romanticism cannot be reduced to a nihilistic retreat from the external world. Attention to the seemingly chaotic and irrational, including "the abnormal, the bizarre, the sadistic and the insane," was only part of a broader Romantic programme to investigate expanded conceptions of human consciousness and experience. Efforts to probe the inner depths of human feeling and the importance of the imagination, as well as the glorification of nature, can be cast on the positive side of the balance sheet.³³

It is not surprising that various solutions to the problems of the Enlightenment would share considerable momentum while remaining highly individualistic. The electrifying intellectual atmosphere that developed in the closing years of the eighteenth century in Jena—"the *locus amoenus* in the mythic universe of German Romanticism"³⁴—was destined to be brief. However, ideas developed at this time had a far-reaching impact. The unusual degree of academic freedom in Jena encouraged new directions in thought. Due to historical circumstances, the university was answerable to four different state authorities, or so-called *Nutritoren*. Poorly coordinated supervision meant that professors were quite free to do as

³² Hearnshaw, *The Shaping of Modern Psychology*, 103.

³³ *Ibid.*, 104.

³⁴ Theodore Ziolkowski, *German Romanticism and Its Institutions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 220. The following synopsis of the situation in Jena and other German universities around the turn of the century is drawn primarily from Theodore Ziolkowski's study, chapter 5, "The University: Model of the Mind", particularly pp. 218-270. Also see Charles E. McClelland's *State, Society, and University in Germany: 1700-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

they wished, “since official decisions required the agreement of all four courts.”³⁵ Hiring practices at Jena favoured scholars with new ideas, often at the beginning of their careers, due to their uncompetitive faculty salaries. When Schiller and then Fichte joined the faculty, they found that the freedom which they enjoyed as scholars had less positive implications for the teaching environment; in the years from the French Revolution to 1795, Jena was notorious for its student disorders and the inadequacies of those students. Beginning in 1796, the university entered a period of active reform. At the same time, it was protected under the Treaty of Basel from disruptive Napoleonic measures. Goethe, and the spirit of Weimar humanism that he embodied, played a significant role in the reshaping of the university. Brilliant younger scholars reinvigorated the traditional faculties, and chairs were established in chemistry, botany, and mineralogy. But above all, it was in the field of philosophy that Jena became noteworthy. Its markedly Kantian school fostered three of the most significant phases of German philosophical idealism: Fichte’s theory of knowledge, Schelling’s philosophy of nature, and Hegel’s phenomenology of mind.

Jena’s need of academic reform stimulated these new philosophical directions. In inaugural lectures and lecture series throughout the 1790s, Schiller, Fichte and Schelling each argued that a new role accorded to philosophy and the arts could restore meaning to the sometimes floundering institution. The group of promising German critics, scholars, poets and novelists that gathered in Jena towards the end of the decade were bound by this conception of the university and its parallels to other Romantic ideals. They expressed their views publicly in the *Athenäum*, first published in May of 1798. Under the editorship of the Schlegel brothers, contributors included Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg), Tieck and Schleiermacher, in addition to Fichte and Schelling.³⁶ Often highly poetic, their writings stand as examples of applied Romantic aesthetics, in turn conceived as applied Romantic

³⁵ Ziolkowski, *German Romanticism and Its Institutions*, 234.

³⁶ Peter Gay, *The Naked Heart* (New York and London, W.W. Norton & Company, 1995), 38-9. Important Romantic figures attracted to this core group as students include Clemens Brentano and Friedrich Hölderlin.

philosophy. But the group quickly realized how many divergent paths could be pursued en route from a shared, expansive vision to specific practical application. They disbanded amidst conflicting religious commitments, disagreements over literary questions, clashes of temperament, erotic rivalries, and the pursuit of better appointments. “The culmination of Jena Romanticism in the autumn of 1799 was followed within a year by its almost total disintegration.”³⁷ While these early Romantics failed to establish a homogeneous movement, they lent force to a profound shift in perspective. “One common element dominated their work: in powerful, often programmatic ways, they turned towards the interior.”³⁸ This heightened intellectual focus on self-awareness characterized Romantic models of the mind, anchoring their general prioritization of aesthetics and the new aesthetic paths they endorsed. The Romantic model of the university, a microcosmic plan for broader conceptions of community, embraced these rethinkings. The literary profile of the early Romantics in Jena thus assumed the utmost importance, as both message and medium. The *Athenäum* extended a tradition—Schiller founded his journal *Die Horen* in 1793—in which the case for an aesthetic state in a compelling form was offered to the reading public.³⁹

The inability of Romantic ideals to be fully realized in Jena did not destroy the convictions which had initially encouraged them. As reform sympathizers became aware of increasingly prohibitive administrative intervention, such as Fichte’s forced resignation following controversy about his atheism in 1799, they soon left Jena: the jurist Feuerbach and both Schlegels in 1802; the professor of medicine J.C. Loder (along with his important collections), the classical philologist Christian Gottlieb Schütz (along with his influential journal, the *Allgemeine Litteratur-Zeitung*), Schelling, the theologian Paulus, the philosopher

³⁷ Ziolkowski, *German Romanticism and Its Institutions*, 268.

³⁸ Gay, *The Naked Heart*, 37.

³⁹ For an expansive discussion of aesthetic-political relations in the writings of Schiller and the transition from Weimar classical humanism to post-French Revolution idealism see Josef Chytrý, *The Aesthetic State: A Quest in Modern German Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), particularly Chapter 3 “Schiller: The Theory of the Aesthetic State,” pp. 70-105.

Neithammer, and the jurist Gottlieb Hufeland in 1803–4 alone. In 1806, Hegel temporarily gave up his academic career to become editor of a newspaper in Bamberg. Meanwhile the academic situation elsewhere showed signs of improvement. Much of the intellectual force of Jena resurfaced in Halle, including the theologian Schleiermacher and Henrich Steffens, who represented natural science and *Naturphilosophie*. This short-lived phase of distinguished Halle scholarship also featured the classical philologist F.A. Wolf and the physician J.C. Reil, recently famous for his *Rhapsodien über die Anwendung der psychischen Curmethode auf Geisteszerrüttungen* (*Rhapsodies on the Application of Psychic Therapy to Mental Disturbances*). The inter-disciplinary manifestation of Romantic ideals, and the students' engagement with them, was stronger than it had been in Jena. According to Eichendorff's nostalgic account of this time, his posthumously published "Halle und Heidelberg," Napoleon sensed in student sentiments the first "symptom of a more serious people's will."⁴⁰ On account of these fearful signs, the liberator turned tyrant of 1806 "suspended the university and drove the students ruthlessly out of town, robbed even of the most necessary clothing."⁴¹ By contrast, the French troops that descended upon the university in Jena encountered an institution already depleted from within. At Goethe's pleading, it was spared from total collapse. But as the first, tumultuous decade of the new century drew to a close, another academic centre enlivened the interests and hopes of Romantic thinkers—the university in Berlin, which was just coming into being.

The new university at Berlin arose like a phoenix out of the ashes of the fateful battle of Jena-Auerstadt—the defeat of the Prussian monarchy—and the forced closure of the university in Halle. In the fall of 1807, Friedrich Wilhelm III placed his cabinet minister Karl Friedrich Beyme in charge of plans, and statements were solicited from various scholars on the nature of the new institution. Early in 1809, after some political reshuffling, Wilhelm von Humboldt took over the project. As might be expected, much debate surrounded the creation of the new institution. The Rationalist/Romantic tensions that emerged in the aftermath of the

⁴⁰ Quoted in Ziolkowski, *German Romanticism and Its Institutions*, 274.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

French Revolution had been seriously exacerbated by Napoleon's hostile intrusions. Germany was no longer buffered from the physical devastation of political events, but had to face the reality that the image of Napoleon as liberator was false. The changing nature of these tensions, as they were played out in the academic world, was registered at the small university in Heidelberg as it continued operating through the events of 1806. In 1807, Otto Heinrich von Leoben arrived there and soon after met the Eichendorff brothers, who had come from Halle. The trio's poems about their year of friendship helped to shape the "myth of Romantic student life" and the image of Heidelberg as an idyllic, academic oasis. But it was not these poems that projected Heidelberg into contemporary German Romantic literary consciousness, but rather the more scholarly works of its older generation of writers, such as Arnim and Brentano's *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (1805-8) and Johann Joseph von Görres' *Die deutschen Volksbücher* (1807). German Romantics and Rationalists reacted to the vulnerability which their direct involvement in the revolutionary age had entailed. Romantic thinkers increasingly concerned themselves with various historical and cultural issues which raised self-awareness on the community level amongst a people struggling to define their nationhood. The Rationalists' response, which was strong in Heidelberg, was entrenched opposition to that which did not demonstrate an immediate, tangible and above all practical contribution to an improved political situation. They favoured the development of specialized professional schools. By 1808, nearly all of the Romantics had departed from Heidelberg. Many of them headed for Berlin.

Of the many philosophical and pedagogic writings that contributed to the establishment of the new university in Berlin, the most influential came from Schleiermacher. "*Gelegentliche Gedanken über Universitäten im deutschen Sinn*" (Opportune thoughts on universities in the German sense) was published in 1808, after which it was widely read and eagerly discussed.⁴² Along with Fichte, the historian Barthold Georg Niebuhr and the jurist

⁴² Although unsolicited by Beyme, Schleiermacher's essay is one of the five founding documents of the university in Berlin, which together with statements by Schelling (originally lectures that he gave in 1802 in Jena), Fichte, Steffens, and Humboldt, are found in Ernst Anrich (ed.), *Die idee der deutschen Universität. Die fünf Grundschriften aus der Zeit ihrer Neubegründung durch klassischen Idealismus und romantischen Realismus* (Darmstadt,

Friedrich Savigny, Schleiermacher was among the first faculty appointees to the university. His integral role in the new university was further underscored by the important policy-making decisions that he was entrusted with as Humboldt was disentangling himself from the enterprise. Humboldt spent only sixteen months as an educational reformer in Berlin. During that time, he brought about important changes in the secondary level of education by establishing the *Gymnasium* as its cornerstone and in symbiotic relationship to the university. But as regards the new university, “there is little to suggest that he did much more than synthesize and bring to fruition, through competent management within the government bureaucracy, an idea developed in large measure by others.”⁴³ Schleiermacher was of great assistance to Humboldt, and their harmonious working relationship had much to do with the fact that their respective academic theories both emulated the Jena ideal. Humboldt had spent much of the time between 1794 and 1797 in Jena, in close contact with Goethe, Schiller, Fichte, the Schlegels, Schleiermacher and the other leading figures during the very years when the Jena ideal of the university was being shaped. In sum, the educational views that he maintained in shaping the new university combined the Weimar conception of *Bildung* with the Jena spirit of the university.⁴⁴ Schleiermacher’s publication of his essay prior to Humboldt’s arrival in Berlin was, in hindsight, good public relations. He had stressed the importance of the relationship between teacher and student. “Hermeneutics and dialectics

1956). Elinor S. Shaffer surveys these documents, save that by Steffens, which Humboldt did not employ in his plans, in her “Romantic Philosophy and the Organization of the Disciplines: The Founding of the Humboldt University of Berlin,” *Romanticism and the Sciences*, ed. Andrew Cunningham and Nicholas Jardine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 38-54.

⁴³ Daniel Fallon, *The German University: A Heroic Ideal in Conflict with the Modern World* (Boulder: Colorado Associated University Press, 1980), 11. The university was named the Humboldt Universität only in 1949, by German communists, after the Freie Universität had been established in the western sector. Fallon cites an East German text which suggests that Humboldt’s philosophical premises—the creation of a unity of teaching, research, and cultivation of character in the service of historical progress—were deliberately connected to the socialist programme through this renaming. See p. 11, n.3.

⁴⁴ Zielkowski, *German Romanticism and Its Institutions*, 291.

were closely linked in the Socratic tradition he reinterpreted as the model for the circle of question and answer that led to new knowledge.”⁴⁵ And he had prioritized aesthetics, according to the Kantian contention that the ideas of reason can only be realized in art. In 1798, Kant himself wrote an essay, the *Streit der Fakultäten (Conflict of the Faculties)*, which contains two fundamentals of his academic theory that were also of the utmost importance to Schleiermacher, Humboldt, and others involved in planning the new university: the importance of academic freedom for teachers and students, with the university operating independently from state control and censorship; and the primacy of the Faculty of Philosophy, based on the principle that it most fully mirrors the organization of all knowledge.⁴⁶

Neo-humanist academic theory guided the new university to its opening in the fall of 1810. The ideals of its founders did not prevail, yet they “left a certain residue in the University of Berlin, to be sure, and a vast impression on the rhetoric of all German universities—indeed, on the entire modern ideology of higher education everywhere.”⁴⁷ One mistake made along the way was Humboldt’s trust in the state as a moral entity. The state and university were closely enmeshed, and his goals concerning academic freedom proved unattainable. The Karlsbad Decrees of 1819 created further setbacks for the neo-humanists, Schleiermacher included, who were often harassed throughout the 1820s.⁴⁸ Meanwhile, the utilitarian Rationalists were beginning to realize some of their own initially unsatisfied goals. The university quickly became a highly specialized institution more than a seat of general knowledge integrated by universal philosophy. But, if anything, the commitment to research was a noteworthy remnant of the Jena ideal. Neo-humanist and Romantic thinkers of all brands profited from the university’s widespread emphasis on the evolving nature of

⁴⁵ Shaffer, “Romantic Philosophy and the Organization of the Disciplines,” 39.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁴⁷ McClelland, *State, Society, and University in Germany*, 127.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 147.

knowledge. Hegel arrived in 1818 and major publications soon followed. Schelling was appointed to the faculty in 1843. And as the various arts and sciences under the umbrella of philosophy and other fields, particularly medicine, moved towards specialization, it was clear that the Romantic focus on the inner realm of human experience had had a profound impact, which divergent methodologies and the rise of positivism could not conceal.

The political upheaval which German-speaking people experienced in the revolutionary age promoted the expansion of increased self-awareness to include concerns about the collective dimension of psychological life. There were other cues for developmental and comparative studies of humanity. Public awareness of the diversity of human cultures and institutions had been raised through the efforts of explorers and colonizers, and disseminated by historians like Gibbon, Montesquieu and Vico. The ideas of Herder, a major figure in German historico-romantic revolt who stressed the organic conception of man and culture, percolated through to Hegel and were reshaped into a rationale for *Völkerpsychologie*, an important stepping stone for Social Psychology. On the more conservative side, *Naturforschung* (literally: investigators of nature) advocated “the integration of the objective and subjective dimensions of historical consciousness, that is to say the integration of the temporalization of nature and the temporalization of knowledge about nature - a view opposed both to the parallelism of these dimensions of the Objective (nature) and the Subjective (knowledge) in the era of the Enlightenment, and their separation during the Renaissance and the age of Positivism.”⁴⁹ The more idealistic and metaphysically-oriented *Naturphilosophen*, such as Schelling and Oken, developed this anti-dualistic position even further, encouraged by “conceptual developments in physiology and a growing body of geological and palaeontological information.”⁵⁰ Their task was primarily historical. They set out “to demonstrate how the universe originated, and to reconstruct its development or *Entwicklung* from the original Idea thought by God to its highest manifestation as man...aided

⁴⁹ Dietrich von Engelhardt, “Historical Consciousness in the German Romantic *Naturforschung*,” in *Romanticism and the Sciences*, 56.

⁵⁰ Richards, *Mental Machinery*, 299.

by the essential parallel between man's individual history, or gestation, and the universal history."⁵¹ Spinoza's earlier protests against Cartesian dualism and his unorthodox treatment of God enjoyed considerable revival in the development of this pantheistic vitalistic perspective, and its call for a hierarchical reorganization of the world. For the *Naturphilosophen*, unconscious mental processes of the individual were connected to a collective unconscious—Schelling's *Weltseele* and Hegel's unitary Absolute—which they accorded a position of unprecedented and fundamental power within an organically unified system.

The metaphysical orientation of the *Naturphilosophen* has rarely been applauded as enabling real progress in the natural sciences or medicine. H.G. Schenk reluctantly granted that he admired Schelling's "attempt, however, quixotic, at counteracting the atomization of knowledge, and secondly his realization of the fact that the loss of metaphysical reflection would be an unmitigated disaster." But he ultimately asserted that "Schelling's own high-handed and pseudo-prophetic use of metaphysics was largely responsible for producing an intellectual climate in which metaphysical systems have become suspect if, indeed, they are not held in utter disrepute."⁵² Critics of metaphysics can find evidence to support the view that the speculative, idealistic thrust of *Naturphilosophie* blinded its proponents from truths, in tangibly negative ways. The most skeptical critics of Romantic metaphysical thought have concentrated less on its religious, scientific or poetic influences than on its political ones. Peter Viereck, writing in 1941, summed up the early Romantics' organic traditionalism as the sophisticated product of "starved and self-dissatisfied intellectualism, desperate disillusionment, and awareness of the danger to society of their own undue rootlessness."⁵³

⁵¹ Evelleen Richards, "'Metaphorical mystifications': the Romantic Gestation of Nature in British Biology," in *Romanticism and the Sciences*, 132.

⁵² H.G. Schenk, *The Mind of the European Romantics: An Essay in Cultural History* (London: Constable and Co. Ltd., 1966), 184.

⁵³ Peter Viereck, *Metapolitics: From the Romantics to Hitler* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941), 22.

He perceived their attitudes towards the individual and society, or the state, as bound by a “philosophy of ceaseless lawless expansion and of self-justified self-worship.”⁵⁴ And it was to this lawlessness that he retraced the steps of history to propose a cyclical connection between the original Romantic school and modern Nazism: “Both were welcomed by many as a synthesizing counter-poison to the alleged disintegrating effects of an aggressive rationalism. The French and Russian world-revolutions were the respective *bêtes noires*. The French and the Jews were the respective bogey men.”⁵⁵ More recently, Graham Richards has reminded us of the positive initial intent, and benefits, of the Romantics’ desire to increase self-understanding in a social context. “Ideologically, the idea of a national ‘Spirit’, vehicle of a progressively striving collective Will, would eventually prove calamitous to German culture, but the immediate effect was less noxious and had a number of subsidiary pay-offs for Psychology. It brought into focus the nature of the individual Ego and its developments, and more generally raised the issues of personality and Will.”⁵⁶ A stream of philosophical treatises on psychology poured out of German universities between 1830 and 1860.⁵⁷ As in their lectures devoted to psychology, philosophers typically developed their psychological views and systems through logical, metaphysical, introspective and experiential considerations, while incorporating experimental and physiological results that came to their attention.⁵⁸ These lectures and treatises are now largely forgotten.

Better known is the Romantic artistic legacy, whose striking, explicitly psychological characters and themes began to captivate public attention by the end of the eighteenth century: one thinks of the eccentrics—the embodiment of the *Sonderling* in the modern sense

⁵⁴ Ibid., 19.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 29-30.

⁵⁶ Richards, *Mental Machinery*, 298.

⁵⁷ Hearnshaw, *The Shaping of Modern Psychology*, 126.

⁵⁸ Turner, “Helmholtz and German Psychology”, 149.

of the word—who populated the literary scene in the 1790s; the supernatural figures of Gothic and other fantastic tales; the fascination with death in Novalis’s poems; the lonely figures gazing wistfully over vast landscapes in Caspar David Friedrich’s paintings; the interplay of reality and imagination in Hoffmann’s short stories; the Promethean struggle embodied in Beethoven’s “middle period” compositions. Colourful biographies of these artists have encouraged us to merge the lives of their vividly psychological and often challenged protagonists with those of their everyday realities. The fact is that many leading artistic representatives of German Romanticism worked for a living, as university professors, librarians, civil servants, doctors, lawyers, clerics, journalists, scientists, and a multitude of other professions from which they derived satisfaction. They were not typically men of leisure with the time and means to disengage from and reject the world around them. Their artworks embody hopes, aspirations, and beliefs, whose aesthetic realization was intended not as a substitution for external reality, but as its complement. The absolute polarization of life and art, the bourgeois and the artist, the *vita activa* and the *vita contemplativa*, was a widely accepted topos that gained currency in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century literary scholarship. It was not the overriding tenet of early Romanticism.⁵⁹

The aesthetic revolution which began in the late 1700s was deeply bound up to the complexities of reality; the coordination of artistic strategies with the changing model of the human mind. Conceptual frameworks which promoted serious, systematic studies of inner experiences, and gave rise to a body of relevant terminology, stressed the dynamic interrelationship between different forces and states. The physician and philosopher E. Platner (1744-1818) maintained that “conscious and unconscious states follow one another in a ceaseless alternation.”⁶⁰ According to Lancelot Law Whyte, Platner was the first, in 1776, to use the German terms *bewusstlos* (unconscious) and *Unbewusstsein* (unconsciousness) in meanings close to those now current, and “these or similar terms were made popular by Goethe, Schiller, and Schelling between 1780 and 1820...By 1850 both adjective and noun

⁵⁹ Zielkowski, *German Romanticism and its Institutions*, 4-5.

⁶⁰ Whyte, *The Unconscious Before Freud*, 116.

were extensively used in Germany.”⁶¹ Platner’s concept of mental functioning, as a continual shift between different states of consciousness, was central to Romantic thinkers. This process allowed for the possibility of tension, in the initial juxtaposition of contrasting realms. But sometimes—and this is the point that was further developed—apparent differences could be harmoniously synthesized through an awareness of more fundamental similarities, en route to an enhanced understanding of the totality. In many of the artworks around the turn of the century, tensions between subjective and objective realms were not resolved so optimistically. This is hardly surprising, as the rise of Romantic thought entailed a confrontation with much that had been ignored and misunderstood. Trepidation, skepticism, and even the much-questioned voice of reason would necessarily linger as the mysteries of the unconscious were opened up for closer examination. Many of the stridently polar artistic representations of subjective and objective realms which surfaced in this transitional phase were grounded, in part, in a dualistic, rationalist orientation. These cases contained a critique of subjectivity, and a response to some of the unsettling issues that early navigations of the unconscious brought to light.

Lancelot Law Whyte’s attempt to outline the scope of the pre-Freudian investigation of the unconscious deserves to be quoted here in full, as he captures its tremendous breadth. “All that it is safe to conclude is that between 1680 and 1880 a large number of thinkers, some of them with little apparent influence, considered one or more of the following aspects of unconscious mental processes: memory and its pathology; perception, images, ideas; reasoning, inference; selection, judgement, diagnosis; imagination, invention, creation, inspiration; ecstasies, premonition, visions; vital impulses, volition, motive, interest, sympathy, aversion, falling in love; conflict, inhibition, dissociation, hysteria, obsession, perversions; mental therapeutics for physical and mental pathology; dreams, hallucinations, somnambulism, suggestion, hypnotism; alcohol, drugs, diseases; collective myths, religions; personal and social rationalizations. No one considered all known aspects in a scientific and comprehensive

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 66.

manner.”⁶² In this period of exploration and debate, one phenomenon in particular drew public, medical and artistic attentions to the unconscious mind: madness.

Throughout the seventeenth and much of the eighteenth century, the mentally ill in England and on the Continent generally came from a broad group of people differentiated and sequestered from the narrowly reason-circumscribed norm. Initially set up to deal with the problems of the poor, workhouses and correctional houses in England, *Zuchthäuser* in Germany, and French *hôpitaux généraux* came to house a wide range of asocial and socially deviant people: “the poor, the orphaned, the elderly, the insane, the criminal, and the many other derelicts that the Age of Reason preferred to keep hidden away out of sight.”⁶³ The saying “out of sight, out of mind” takes on multiple meanings here, embracing the then normatively-defined belief that those “out of mind” should be kept “out of sight.” Socio-economic conditions accompanying England’s industrialization gave rise, early on, to a conflicting agenda concerning the mentally ill and the identification of different degrees of madness. Growing masses of “pauper lunatics”, including displaced farmers and the lower-middle class, were needed as manpower at the same time that their lack of reason was perceived as a threat to bourgeois society. Economic agendas thus cast a dark shadow over the alleged liberation of the poor and the mad and their integration into civil society. Threatened in their jurisdiction over morality, churches responded by broadening their welfare and pastoral programmes. “Medicine in particular was caught in the web of these disparate and conflicting economic needs, political demands, social and scientific objectifications, and humanitarian promises, from which it could perhaps disengage itself ideologically, but not in fact.”⁶⁴ Gradually, this social visibility of unreason prompted the development of psychiatry and efforts to treat mental illness. Asylums, for the most part, became increasingly regressive.

⁶² Ibid., 67-8.

⁶³ Zielkowski, *German Romanticism and its Institutions*, 141.

⁶⁴ Klaus Doerner, *Madmen and the Bourgeoisie: A Social History of Insanity and Psychiatry*, trans. Joachim Neugroschel and Jean Steinberg (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), 36-7.

There was little impetus to understand, let alone treat, kinds of insanity characterized by relatively severe forms of socially unacceptable behaviour. The mad lived in conditions which illustrate how general and medical ignorance, fueling fear and horror, encouraged various inhumane kinds of treatment. Lillian Feder has noted that the major British medical, philosophical and literary figures from the late seventeenth up to the mid-eighteenth century avoided “any empathic exploration of the mind designated as mad...whether serious, comic, or satiric, all seemed to have one end in view: inhibition of the personal feelings and the individual transformations of experience that were manifested in what they deemed anti-social conduct.”⁶⁵ Mechanistic models of the mind, which prevailed most of all in England, left little positive room for imagination, or the passions, on account of their potential to distort reason-dominated conceptions of reality. The figures who more sensitively considered the complex psychological factors of mental functioning had little contemporary influence.

William Hogarth’s eighth and final plate of *A Rake’s Progress* (1735/1763) became the eighteenth century’s most familiar portrait of the confinement of madness. It depicted the cast of stereotypes in the notorious Bedlam, London’s Bethlem asylum, that Jonathan Swift had biting sketch in his “Digression on Madness” in *A Tale of a Tub* (1710). Swift was elected governor of London’s Bethlem asylum in 1714. Hogarth knew the asylum through his charitable work. His series of engravings chart the path to insanity of an individual, Rakewell. They strikingly link madness in Bedlam to the madness of society at large. Society is implicated in Rakewell’s degeneration and his chaining in the final plate. Sander L. Gilman, in his survey of the iconography of madness, observed that satiric illustrations of the world as Bedlam, including political lampoons, were the dominant images of the asylum in the latter

⁶⁵ Lillian Feder, *Madness in Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 152-3. The presence and importance of philosophical and medical counter-perspectives has been retrospectively traced. See Ida Macalpine and Richard Hunter, *Three Hundred Years of Psychiatry: 1535-1860* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963). Feder considers the poetic counter-perspectives of Anne Finch, Matthew Green and William Cowper in her chapter entitled “The Spleen, the Vapors, and the God Within,” pp. 147-202.

part of the eighteenth century.⁶⁶ Issues centered around madness and the sequestered mad intensified when King George III suffered a temporary depressive psychosis in 1788. There was a distinct lack of medical understanding of the causes of madness, or the possibility of treatments. The primary goal of asylums to render the insane harmless to society, at all costs, became a focus of critique. The force leading to reform was a religious and moral one. In 1792, the Quaker tea merchant William Tuke founded the York Retreat, following the ideas and humanitarian spirit of Phillippe Pinel.⁶⁷

At the height of the French Revolution, Pinel symbolically unchained the mentally ill at the Bicêtre and Salpêtrière in Paris and drew them within the sphere of the individual's call for freedom. Pinel's understanding of the role of the asylum physician was novel. He advocated that observers should "live among the insane to be able to study their habits and personalities and follow the course of their diseases day and night."⁶⁸ Pinel's emphasis on hard clinical observation resulted in detailed description of symptoms, but little speculation or investigation as to their causes. His classification of different kinds of insanity retained the traditional divisions of melancholia, mania, idiocy and dementia. In addition, however, he introduced new categories of partial and affective insanity. His preferred *traitement moral* ('moral treatment') was directed largely at the emotions, which he viewed as the primary source of partial insanity. Pinel was far from being a specialist psychiatrist and had picked up some of his ideas from folk wisdom.⁶⁹ In stressing mental over physical causes of insanity, and

⁶⁶ Sander L. Gilman, *Seeing the Insane* (New York, John Wiley, 1982), 56-7.

⁶⁷ Franz G. Alexander and Sheldon T. Selesnick, *The History of Psychiatry: An Evaluation of Psychiatric Thought and Practice from Prehistoric Times to the Present* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 119-20. Attitudes towards care of the mad were slow to change in England. Excessive and brutal restraining methods remained standard for some time. In 1814, the case of John Norris at the Bethlem asylum was made public, provoking a more widespread call for reform.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 113.

⁶⁹ Roy Porter, *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind: A Medical History of Humanity* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1997), 495.

by identifying some forms of insanity as treatable, Pinel introduced an element of optimism at a time that insanity seemed to be on the increase. His classification system did little to advance understanding of the causes of insanity, in part because his idea of mental functioning was dependent on the somatic accounts then dominant in France.⁷⁰ But Pinel was an important impetus for specialized studies of mental phenomena. In Germany, where a psychosomatic medical tradition was taking shape, the absorption of the work of Pinel and other French pioneers contributed to the development of more therapeutic forms of psychiatry.

Henri F. Ellenberger dates the emergence of dynamic psychiatry to 1775, the time of the clash between the physician Anton Mesmer and Father Johann Joseph Gassner.⁷¹ Gassner was a famous healer who performed exorcisms under the banner of organized religion. With the support of the Prince Bishop of Regensburg, he moved to the small Württemberg town of Ellwangen in November of 1774. Mesmer was known for his therapeutic method called animal magnetism, which also enjoyed some success. An Enlightenment advocate of science, he eschewed concerns with demons, possession, exorcism and the like. In November of 1775, Mesmer offered a report on Gassner to the inquiry commission set up by the Prince-Elector Max Joseph of Bavaria. "Mesmer declared that Gassner was undoubtedly an honest man, but that he was curing patients through animal magnetism without being aware of it."⁷² Ironically,

⁷⁰ Illustrations in Pinel's *Traité médico-philosophique sur l'aliénation mentale ou la manie* (Medico-philosophical Treatise on Mental Alienation), published in 1801, included a comparison of the skulls of a normal person, an idiot and a maniac. The controversial and fundamentally organic phrenological doctrines of Franz Joseph Gall (1758-1828) were well-suited to French clinical psychiatrists. Innate psychological traits were correlated with contours of the skull, but there was enough flexibility in its concept of human nature to allow a role for education in developing the faculties.

⁷¹ Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious*, 53ff. For other discussions of Mesmer's career, animal magnetism and its offshoots see Alan Gauld, *A History of Hypnotism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), Maria M. Tatar, *Spellbound: Studies on Mesmerism and Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), and Adam Crabtree, *Animal Magnetism, Early Hypnotism, and Psychical Research, 1766-1925: An Annotated Bibliography* (White Plains, New York: Kraus International Publications), 1988.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 57.

Mesmer's understanding of the curative aspects of his own techniques was somewhat misguided. He maintained that a subtle physical fluid connected everything in the universe and that disease, its bodily disequilibrium, could be cured through reorganizing magnetic forces. He was right to identify similarities with exorcist techniques. Mesmer provoked "crises" in his patients, an intensification of their unhealthy symptoms, before restoring balance. His notion of a unifying fluid was of course untenable. What remained of interest was Mesmer's focus on the relationship, the "rapport", between magnetizer and patient.

The Marquis de Puységur, a student of Mesmer, replaced the pseudo-physical theory of the "fluid" with the insight that unknown psychological forces were at work. Puységur's departure from Mesmer's approach was prompted by his treatment of Victor Race, a twenty-three-year-old peasant, who experienced non-convulsive "crisis" states in which he seemed to be more lucid than usual. While in these states, he would converse freely, respond to un verbalized thoughts of Puységur, and diagnose and prescribe treatments for his own mild respiratory problems. He also discussed private concerns that he would not normally discuss with Puységur, and carried out his magnetizer's suggestions when awake while otherwise displaying complete amnesia of all that had occurred in the unusual state.⁷³ Race's treatment and behaviour were well documented, as were thousands of cases which began to be published in the late 1780s as the practice of animal magnetism spread. Comparison of different cases from a variety of appreciably different cultural and geographical settings soon yielded similarities which suggested that mesmeric phenomena reflected "features of man's psychological constitution, which function independently, not perhaps of all his belief-systems, but of his beliefs as to his own constitution."⁷⁴ Puységur's clinical discovery of "magnetic sleep," or "artificial somnambulism," proved to be a condition similar to spontaneous somnambulism, except that its occurrence was more controlled and could thereby be used to

⁷³ Ibid., 70-72.

⁷⁴ Gauld, *A History of Hypnotism*, 246.

explore unknown psychic functions as well as for therapy.⁷⁵ Artificial somnambulism was given the name of hypnotism by James Braid, in 1843, and remained the chief method of gaining access into the unconscious mind until the last decades of the nineteenth century.⁷⁶

In Germany, the arrival of animal magnetism brought unconscious mental processes decisively within the ambit of medicine.⁷⁷ The philosophical groundwork had already been laid in support of psychologically-oriented investigations. As in France, an initial path for the spread of animal magnetism in Germany was probably the masonic network, but overt progress occurred along more orthodox academic avenues. The Zurich pastor and physiognomist J.C. Lavater was trained in Puységurian methods in the summer of 1785.⁷⁸ His German contacts included Charles Frederick, Margrave of Baden, through whom he stimulated interest in animal magnetism in Karlsruhe. On Lavater's suggestion, Charles Frederick sent people to the Strasbourg Harmonic Society to receive instruction. One of them, the physicist J.L. Böckmann, established the *Archiv für Magnetismus und Somnambulismus* in 1787. Lavater himself visited Bremen in 1786 and convinced the physicians A. Weinholt and H.W.M. Olbers of the value of the method. Weinholt later documented fifty-nine case studies in one of the most impressive books in the entire literature of animal magnetism, his *Heilkraft des thierischen Magnetismus* published in three volumes from 1802-1806. Through the Württemberg physician, Eberhard Gmelin, animal magnetism reached Berlin and the court of Frederick William II in the late 1780s.⁷⁹ Unlike the French, many Germans who became keenly interested in animal magnetism were intellectually

⁷⁵ Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious*, 102.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 112.

⁷⁷ Hearnshaw, *The Shaping of Modern Psychology*, 150.

⁷⁸ Gauld, *A History of Hypnotism*, 75-76.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 78-81.

distinguished, and pockets of supporters tended to grow around academic institutions. From 1806 to 1820, Berlin remained the most important scene of events.

From a modern scientific vantage point, Mesmer's ideas and practices seem peculiar. The magnetizer-patient "rapport" may claim some legitimacy through its connections to more modern practices like hypnosis and Freudian psychoanalysis, but the notion of a subtle universal fluid is vexing. So is the image of high fee-paying patients gathered around a container, Mesmer's *baquet* filled with magnetized water, with many distinguished ladies falling into nervous crises. For contemporary society, the basic concept of a charged universal fluid was not beyond grasp. Newton's postulates about a pervasive "subtle spirit" or "aether", frequently described as having electrical characteristics, are but a prominent example of an idea that pre-dates and post-dates him.⁸⁰ In 1747, in the early stages of formulating his theory of electricity, Benjamin Franklin explained that a body shows signs of electricity when it contains more or less than its normal quantity of electrical fluid. He distinguished the two possible states of electrification as "+" and "-", or positive and negative respectively.⁸¹ Mesmer certainly shaped his physical theory in imitation of then current theories of electricity, and hence the notion of the rapport and of the chain formed by patients through whom the fluid supposedly ran.⁸² Mesmer was not oblivious to the psychological dimension of his treatments, which often relieved wealthy men and women suffering from fashionable neuroses like hypochondrias and the *vapeurs*. But in seeking acceptance and acclaim in the serious scientific communities of Vienna and then Paris, he emphasized a magnetic universal fluid as the tangible basis of his cures. Official inquiries into his methods also served as publicity, but Mesmer was increasingly surrounded by controversy. In 1784, after members of the Académie des Sciences, the Académie de Médecine and the Société Royale discredited his claim to have

⁸⁰ See R.W. Home, "Newton on Electricity and the Aether," *Contemporary Newtonian Research*, ed. Zev Bechler (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1982), 191-213.

⁸¹ R.W. Home, "Franklin's Electrical Atmospheres," *British Journal for the History of Science*, London, 6 (1972), 132.

⁸² Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious*, 186-7.

discovered a universal fluid, Mesmer withdrew from public life and Paris.⁸³ However, in the new century, as animal magnetism attracted lively interest in Berlin and Puysegurian methods were widely practiced in Germany, Mesmer's idea of a universal fluid was not ignored.

Ongoing scientific developments in the area of electricity and magnetism helped keep the idea in circulation, and even enhanced its attractiveness. The fascination with electricity had been sparked in the 1740s and 1750s by the experiments of Ewald Georg von Kleist and Peter van Musschenbroek, independent discoverers of the capacitor known as the Leyden jar, and Benjamin Franklin. Through them, attention was focused on the omnipresence and power of electricity, as well as man's ability to harness and control it. At the beginning of the 17th century, when William Gilbert experimented with magnetism and frictional electricity, magnetism had been understood as a sympathetic force, aligning objects relative to each other. Unlike electric force, it was not greatly affected by matter separating the objects under observation. However, it was the similarities between the two forces that stimulated further experimentation. Luigi Galvani and Alessandro Volta engaged in debates about the chemical nature of electricity. In his famous experiments connecting frog limbs to two metals, Galvani argued that electric currents exist in living organisms. Volta countered with the view that galvanic action was the result of the contact between three conductors, two of which were metallic, one liquid, and that the biological matter was just an electroscope. "Galvani's orientation was physiological; he wanted to prove the electric nature of whatever was the fluid in nerves. Volta's orientation was that of a physicist who saw in Galvani's combination of metals and organic matter a new form of electricity: contact-electricity between materials with an organic electrolyte as a conductor."⁸⁴ The development of the Voltaic pile, or battery, soon followed.

⁸³ Ibid., 65. Benjamin Franklin was one of the scientists who reported unfavourably to the commissions. Mesmer returned to Paris in 1798 to regain funds sequestered during the Revolution. He campaigned vigorously for academic recognition and published his latest *Mémoire*, but again left when his pension was secured.

⁸⁴ Walter D. Wetzels, "Johann Wilhelm Ritter: Romantic Physics in Germany," in *Romanticism and the Sciences*, 201.

Galvani was in fact dealing with the bio-electricity of muscles, which he could neither interpret nor measure. His ideas were pursued by thinkers for whom the existence of a powerful force in both organic and inorganic matter was a viable concept. Alexander von Humboldt believed that Galvani had uncovered two genuine phenomena: bimetallic electricity and intrinsic animal electricity. Johann Wilhelm Ritter began experimenting with galvanic circuits when he enrolled at the University of Jena in 1796 and was soon known for his work on “animal” and “contact” electricity.⁸⁵ He was the obvious person to whom the young Humboldt turned for assistance in preparing his paper “Versuche über die gereizte Muskel- und Nervenfasern nebst Vermuthungen über den chemischen Process des Lebens in der Thier und Pflanzwelt” (“Experiments about the Irritated Fibres of Muscles and Nerves, along with Conjectures on the Chemical Process of Life in the Animal and Plant Kingdoms”).⁸⁶ This critical cooperation steered Ritter into a search for the principle of life in nature, and he began to view living organisms as complex systems of galvanic circuits. In 1798, he advanced the speculation, consistent with existent experimental evidence, that dead body parts might be revived through the application of an outside source of galvanic power.⁸⁷ This notion exerted widespread fascination. In the 1818 and 1831 prefaces to her *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*, Mary Shelley acknowledged that, in addition to Darwin, German physiologists and their studies of galvanism had suggested the events which she elaborated in her work of fiction. As Maria M. Tatar has noted, Shelley never explicitly defined the “spark of being” in her tale as electricity, but her account of Dr. Frankenstein’s adolescence is modeled on the experiments of Benjamin Franklin, whose name he partly shares.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Ritter’s mixed career included pioneering work in electrochemistry and the discovery of ultraviolet rays. In 1810, he died as a result of many self-experiments in which he endured and recorded the physiological effects of electricity on parts of his own body. See Wetzels “Johann Wilhelm Ritter.”

⁸⁶ Wetzels, “Johann Wilhelm Ritter,” 200.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 202.

⁸⁸ Tatar, *Spellbound*, 60-61.

In 1801 and 1802, H.C. Oersted worked with Ritter and was much impressed by his belief in the connection between electricity and magnetism. Oersted was partially influenced by the speculative *Naturphilosophie*. The idea of unity and polarity in nature, which he had first absorbed through Ritter, remained a prominent feature of his philosophy throughout his career. In the spring of 1820, he discovered that an electric charge caused a compass needle to move, and he became the founding father of electro-magnetism.⁸⁹ André-Marie Ampère quickly followed up on Oersted's findings and discovered that the fundamental nature of magnetism was associated with electric currents; naturally-occurring magnetism was thus shown to be more prevalent than previous scientists had thought.

Eighteenth-century medicine was slow in realizing the full implications of these developments in the physical and chemical sciences. General scientific concepts were employed, but the hodge-podge of different medical theories attests to a lack of experimental evidence about how the body functioned. As attention shifted increasingly away from the vascular system and towards the nervous system, more dynamic life-force physiologies began to challenge mechanistic models. Galvani's work on inherent animal electricity emerged in this vein. The concept of a tangible and powerful substance mediating between mind and body was appealing to thinkers working within dualistic and materialistic traditions. But it failed to address important questions about how mankind is distinguished from other animate and inanimate entities: how the mind as soul manifests itself in relationship to the living human body. The staunchest opponent of the reductive chemico-mechanistic approach was Georg Ernst Stahl, a contemporary of Leibniz and Boerhaave. Stahl maintained a gestalt approach to the body and proposed that the *anima* was a purposive immaterial power, the agent of consciousness and physiological regulations. His animism made medical sense, but its theological roots made it unpalatable in most scientific and medical circles.⁹⁰ The teleological

⁸⁹ H.A.M. Snelders, "Oersted's Discovery of Electromagnetism," *Romanticism and the Sciences*, 231.

⁹⁰ Porter, *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind*, 247.

dimension of Stahl's model became characteristic of psycho-somatic medical theories as they gained ground, particularly in Germany, in the latter part of the eighteenth century.⁹¹

In Berlin, in the first decades of the new century, vitalists and animists showed keen interest in animal magnetism. In 1800, C. W. Hufeland became director of the medico-surgical college, doctor in charge of the Charité, and full member of the Academy of Sciences. A critic of Mesmer in the French Royal Commissions of 1784,⁹² Hufeland became Berlin's leading proponent and practitioner of animal magnetism prior to the establishment of the university. His highly influential *Journal der practischen Arzneykunde und Wundarzneykunst* included serious articles and case studies. One case which Hufeland contributed in 1809 concerned treatments performed by C.A.F. Kluge and was prefaced by the author's explanation of his converted opinions about magnetic cures. Because of compelling investigations linking the phenomena of animal magnetism to the range of higher natural powers of electricity and galvanism and principles of nervous activity, he had become more confident that these cures had a physical basis. J.C. Reil, who moved to Berlin in 1810 and became the centrepiece of the university's medical faculty, invited Mesmer to demonstrate his techniques. The invitation came to nothing, but in 1812 the physician Karl C. Wolfart was sent to spend a few weeks with Mesmer. Wolfart was highly enthusiastic upon his return and suggested that the practice of animal magnetism be referred to as mesmerism. In 1816, the Prussian government published favourable reports from its commission of inquiry, and the universities of Berlin and Bonn instituted chairs in Mesmerism.⁹³

⁹¹ For a representative sampling of psycho-somatic medical theory in Germany in the eighteenth century, see Kenneth Dewhurst and Nigel Reeves, *Friedrich Schiller: Medicine, Psychology and Literature* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978), Chapter 6, "The Emergence of the Psychological Sciences," 109-144. The material concentrates on the theories with which Schiller engaged while a medical student at the Ducal Military Academy in Württemberg. Also see Schiller's dissertation "Essay on the Connection Between the Animal and the Spiritual Nature of Man," included in translation in the last section of this book.

⁹² Gauld, *A History of Hypnotism*, 87.

⁹³ Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious*, 77.

Reil, one of the great heroes of the mesmerists, was himself not a devotee of the practice. As was the case with most physicians, mesmerism was primarily interesting to him as one of many therapeutic techniques which were particularly interesting in cases of mental illness. An expert in brain anatomy, Reil specialized in insanity. Famous for his enlightened approach to psychiatry, a term he coined in 1808, Reil had no comprehensive new theory of insanity.⁹⁴ But in recognizing the psychic nature of mental illness, he moved beyond the Enlightenment's tendency to identify madness as caused by cerebral lesions, and hence view it as incurable. In the introduction to *Rhapsodien* (1803), generally regarded as the inception of German psychiatry, he presented insanity as a disequilibrium of three essential powers of the soul: *Selbstbewußtsein*, the self-awareness which unifies consciousness; *Besonnenheit*, the presence of mind that guarantees continuity in self-awareness and enables the soul to distinguish between itself and external reality; *Aufmerksamkeit*, the attentiveness which allows the mind to grasp onto that which has been raised into consciousness.⁹⁵

Reil, like Pinel, was socially and politically involved. His medical ideas were coupled with proposals to overhaul mental institutions and to introduce more humane types of treatment. Unlike Pinel, Reil was primarily an academic and a theoretician. He was also sympathetic to some of the ideas of the *Naturphilosophen*.⁹⁶ His calls for institutional reform, like those of the Romantics in Jena, were voiced in print more than in practice. He also closely linked the development of individuals to an improved situation for society.

The first modern German mental asylum, the Psychische Heilanstalt für Geisterkranke in Bayreuth, was authorized in 1805. It was "a typically Prussian institution that represented a compromise between Pinel's Gallic empiricism and Reil's Romantic idealism."⁹⁷ Johann Gottfried Langermann, the asylum's first director, rejected the traditional Christian belief in

⁹⁴ Doerner, *Madmen and the Bourgeoisie*, 199.

⁹⁵ Zielkowski, *German Romanticism and its Institutions*, 185.

⁹⁶ Doerner, *Madmen and the Bourgeoisie*, 200.

⁹⁷ Zielkowski, *German Romanticism and its Institutions*, 203.

insanity as sin, stressing instead the moral responsibility of the patient and the belief that some forms of insanity were curable. The Bayreuth asylum, and Langermann's practices, provided the model for thirty mental hospitals established in following years. Until mid-century, such institutions were the main centres of psychiatric research in the German regions.

University-based theoretical psychiatry and mesmerism intersected on several planes. An informative account of the ways that mesmerism was bringing the unconscious more into focus is Kluge's comprehensive *Versuch einer Darstellung des animalischen Magnetismus als Heilmittel* (1811). As was the case in the early German psychiatric literature, theory and historiography played an important role in publications focusing on animal magnetism. Kluge's theoretical section covers the history of animal magnetism, a survey of its phenomena and an attempt to elucidate them. In describing the phenomena associated with the magnetized state, he identifies six different grades or stages.⁹⁸ He characterizes the first two as having some physical sensations and possible feelings of drowsiness. The third stage is that of magnetic sleep. Stages four to six are somnambulistic. Kluge adds that the "inner awakening" which begins with the crucial transition from stages three to four develops gradually over many mesmeric sessions. The subject "awakens" within the magnetic sleep, and demonstrates increasingly higher degrees of a kind of awareness not mediated through ordinary sense perception. Subjects may be hyper-sensitive to their actual surroundings and may also converse with the magnetizer. Usually the eyes remain closed. If open, the pupils will be wide and unresponsive to light. Subjects may also be hyper-sensitive with regards to their own body and may prescribe treatments for improving their health. Progressing to higher stages, similar phenomena occur but with fewer time/space restrictions. In the sixth stage, subjects enter a new and higher relationship with nature and their "rapport" with the magnetizer becomes exceptionally strong. Kluge notes that once stage four has been reached, patients can pass in or out of it very quickly and by various means.

⁹⁸ Gauld identifies five other classification systems, published between 1786 to 1826, which identify between four and twelve stages. See *A History of Hypnotism*, 101, n.2. in his excellent synopsis of Kluge's study.

Kluge's characterization of mesmeric phenomena is typical of other accounts from this period. He cites many cases which seem to demonstrate the presence of psychic powers, ranging from a sixth sense to highly unusual kinds of clairvoyance.⁹⁹ Often, mesmeric states relate readily to normal kinds of experience. The third mesmeric stage, for instance, is akin to regular sleep in that it is largely uneventful and the outer senses are shut off. The fourth, fifth and sixth stages can be likened to dreaming, which can involve various types of experiences, including some very unusual ones. Kluge notes that memories of experiences that take place during somnambulistic episodes are usually only accessible when the subject is mesmerized. Once awake, such memories are typically non-existent. Sometimes, some vague recall is possible: "In only two instances is a transference of obscure ideas into the waking state made possible, when either the magnetic sleep has lost intensity after a successful healing process, or when the ideas [from the magnetic sleep] were of such exemplary liveliness and strength that they are reproduced in the dream of the following night and thereby, as memories of a dream, are taken over into the waking state."¹⁰⁰ Abundant links between the realms of artificial somnambulism, spontaneous somnambulism and the variegated spectrum of human experience suggested that mesmerism could offer revealing clues to the workings of the unconscious mind and a way of seeing order in a realm often thought of as chaotic.

⁹⁹ When Wolfart visited Mesmer, the latter spoke of an inner, or sixth sense, as he had occasionally done before. In 1812, Wolfart's journal *Askläpieion* featured several articles by Mesmer which address the relationship between somnambulism and animal magnetism and attempt to remove any superstitious or religious elements in the explanation of these phenomena. Mesmer's explanation, as before, rests on a mechanical theory of physiology and the action of the magnetic fluid. He also gives a physical explanation of the nature of animal magnetism by describing it as "invisible fire", which he distinguishes from animal electricity, which had by this time attracted much interest.

¹⁰⁰ Carl Alexander Ferdinand Kluge, *Versuch einer Darstellung des animalischen Magnetismus als Heilmittel* (Berlin: C. Salfeld, 1811), 186-187. "Nur in den beiden Fällen wird ein Übertragen dunkler Ideen in das Wachen möglich, wenn entweder der magnetische Schlaf, bei schon erfolgtem Übergange in die Gesundheit, bereits an Intensität verloren hat c.), oder wenn die während desselben statt gehabten Ideen von vorzüglicher Lebhaftigkeit und Stärke waren, so dass sie in dem Traum der darauf folgenden Nacht reproduziert und von hieraus, als Traumerinnerungen, in den wachenden Zustand mit herüber genommen werden."

Somnambules who reached the higher mesmeric stages were rare and were prized for their ability to diagnose illnesses and prescribe treatments.¹⁰¹ Patients who did not pass beyond the third stage, that of magnetic sleep, nevertheless seemed to benefit from the process. Since Puységur's early investigations, this therapeutic dimension was the primary focus of magnetism in France. Later in his career, Puységur examined more complex psychological issues. Published in three instalments in 1812 and 1813, his *Appel aux savants observateurs* concerned a young boy who suffered from paroxysms of rage and underwent a relatively complete cure, with only certain memory problems remaining. The magnetic treatment involved long conversations, revelations of secrets in the state of magnetic somnambulism, and dream analysis. Through this experience, and an earlier one involving an artillery soldier, Puységur developed a theory of mental illness. Believing insanity to be a kind of disordered somnambulism, he identified the cause as the absence of a person with whom the disturbed person is caught in a magnetic rapport (in the youth's case, his mother). Puységur believed that cures were effected by replacing the disturbing rapport with a healthier one involving a magnetizer.¹⁰² In the case study, dreams play a significant role in the way that Puységur perceived a relationship between somnambulism and mental illness. He believed that dreams were brief disturbances of the brain, a kind of nocturnal madness, and that madness was but a wild dream maintained in the waking life. Artificial somnambulism as a glimpse of a kind of dream state and madness, enabled a magnetizer to enter that space and to play a healing or controlling role that could extend to the patient's waking state.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ The French magnetist J.P.F. Deleuze estimated that one in twenty patients is a potential somnambule.

¹⁰² Crabtree, *Animal Magnetism, Early Hypnotism, and Psychological Research*, 66. This belief is similar to those of modern "transference" oriented theories of psychotherapy.

¹⁰³ Gauld, *A History of Hypnotism*, 114. The analogy between dreams and madness has a long history. In this case, it figures as both clinical observation and speculative medical theory. In 1783, C.P. Moritz founded the journal *Magazin zur Erfahrungsseelenkunde*, which ran for ten years. The journal's contributors were physicians, who paid considerable attention to the pathology of consciousness in articles such as "Waking Dream", "Strange Behaviour Without Consciousness".

Puységur died in 1824. The magnetic movement which he had somewhat revived in France was carried on by men like the Abbé Faria, J.P.F. Deleuze, and Alexandre Bertrand. Practitioners used a variety of methods to induce somnambulism, and some of the physical trappings of animal magnetism were abandoned. Some practiced “fascination”, which tested the powers of suggestion on subjects who were awake. What had become clearer by this time was that the central phenomena in magnetism and somnambulism was the rapport, and that its influence extended far beyond the somnambulistic state.¹⁰⁴ Several concerns accompanied this knowledge. A thriving industry involving charlatans on both sides of the relationship suggested that the desire to believe in somnambulistic phenomena could sometimes cloud critical assessment. But even in cases where the persons involved were more genuinely motivated, moral and practical questions arose. Early magnetizers had warned of the danger inherent in the powerful inter-personal attraction issuing from the rapport. And the nature of post-hypnotic suggestion was not always clearly understood. Both the ways that it was exercised and the extent to which its powers were tested involved careful decisions, the outcome of which was not completely certain. These questions remained as magnetism branched off along several different paths. In France, what had remained on the fringes of science and medicine slowly moved towards a more respectable position. The sober publications of James Braid, such as his *Neurypnology: or, the Rationale of Nervous Sleep* (1843), had considerable influence on the emergent hypnosis movement. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, dynamic psychiatry received university acknowledgment for the first time in France. Two schools of hypnosis, led by Jean-Martin Charcot and Hippolyte Bernheim respectively, influenced Sigmund Freud’s ideas about hypnosis and illness.

Interest in artificial somnambulism as a bold kind of experimental metaphysics was a German specialty, well established by the 1820s. For those inclined towards *Naturphilosophie*, extra-lucid or clairvoyant somnambules illuminated the individual and collective unconscious in ways that resonated with a multi-leveled, organic conception of the universe. They interpreted the rapport rather philosophically. Friedrich Hufeland, for example,

¹⁰⁴ Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious*, 75-76.

employed a prototypically Romantic metaphor of procreation: he likened the magnetizer and his subject to a pregnant woman and her fetus, and the stages of the magnetic treatment as those experienced by a fetus up to its birth.¹⁰⁵ Such an interpretation emphasized the interdependence characteristic of rapport, and the process of liberation enabled by the magnetizer. In cases of extraordinary clairvoyance, however, the privileged position was more often that of the somnambule. The mystical branch of magnetism which actively explored clairvoyance traveled the fuzzy boundaries between madness and mysticism, medicine and religion, art and life. The somnambule who revealed thoughts and ideas concealed from others was not an outcast. Rather she was a liberating figure in the quest to understand the broader horizons of the mind.

Friedericke Hauffe, also known as the Seeress of Prevorst, was one of the most famous clairvoyants in Germany. Her magnetizer was Justinus Kerner, a writer, poet, physical investigator, and district medical officer for Weinsberg in Württemberg. Hauffe had suffered from violent spasms of the chest, and sometimes had visions. Magnetic treatments offered her some relief, and she developed the ability to fall into a somnambulistic state spontaneously. Kerner's treatment involved a mixture of exorcism and magnetism. While in Kerner's care, Hauffe spent most of her time in a semi-waking state. Many particulars of her case are typical. Her tendency to expound, in a highly detailed manner, on complex psychological, cosmological and theological issues are less characteristic. But it is the broader picture of the case, rather than her teachings, which gives a sense of the role which magnetism played in German investigations of the unconscious. Kerner was seriously involved in several practical, artistic and intellectual spheres. So were his friends, including A.C.A. von Eschenmayer, Schelling, G.H. Schubert, Schleiermacher, F.X. von Baader, and Görres and others who gathered to hear Hauffe's pronouncements. That milieu as a whole represents the intense interplay of animal magnetism, medicine, literary romanticism, nature philosophy, and theology.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 77.

¹⁰⁶ Gauld, *A History of Hypnotism*, 149-152

Kerner has often been discounted as a credulous mystic, overly eager to find evidence of the mythopoetic functions of the unconscious. He certainly displayed a keen interest in the mysterious and the occult. But, as his friend David Strauss asserted, Kerner did not lack critical objectivity in his attitude toward possession, magnetic somnambulism, and allegedly supranormal manifestations. His desire to believe in such matters did not automatically lead to his conviction that they were true.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, “if he believed somewhat naïvely in certain startling instances of supposedly paranormal phenomena, he had none the less a rather better notion of evidence than most of his contemporaries.”¹⁰⁸ Kerner demonstrated a marked respect for documentation and his pioneering description of the kind of food-poisoning now known as botulism offers ample evidence of his own analytical and experimental skills. His detailed notes concerning Hauffe were accompanied, in 1830, by a theoretical essay by Eschenmeyer. The case naturally prompted skepticism on account of its extraordinary nature. At the same time, it was “indirectly responsible for the most lucid, almost classical statement of the conception of all of nature’s phenomena as metamorphic variations of one basic polarity in the Goethean sense. It is a Goethean statement also in the manner in which it defines the subconscious as the realm to which the normally heliotropic human soul strives to return only when in illness or despair.”¹⁰⁹ Already in circulation for over three decades, the speculative view of an organically unified universe teleologically shaped from the unconscious had evolved into a more rational and even quasi-scientific form. The infinite vastness of the unconscious was “no longer an ocean into the dark expanse of which the ridiculously weak beacon of human consciousness tries to penetrate.”¹¹⁰ Scientific and philosophical attention to the problematical gap between mind and matter had contributed to the idea of a

¹⁰⁷ Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious*, 79.

¹⁰⁸ Gauld, *A History of Hypnotism*, 150.

¹⁰⁹ Alexander Gode-von Aesch, *Natural Science in German Romanticism* (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1966), 165, originally published in 1941.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 170.

fundamental polarity linking the forces of chemistry, magnetism, galvanism, electricity, and animation.

The systematic breakdown of absolute dualism cleared room for a more positive interpretation of the unconscious and the unique human ability to realize that potential. Animal magnetism, in its earlier stages, had revealed the human capacity for self-healing, with the assistance of a mediator. Through a focus on extraordinary clairvoyance, the role of self-healing expanded to include humanity's breach with nature. The course of animal magnetism in Germany thus pursued the possible truths in the redemptive hypotheses of Schelling, Hölderlin and Novalis. This organic model of a powerful and integrated unconscious still accommodated a sense of awe and mystery, but left less room for the helplessness and fear that resulted from rationalistic approaches. Around the turn of the nineteenth century, the artistic implications of this organic view were etched among the cross-currents of dualistic thought.

The project of conceptualizing the unconscious drew upon a range of geographical and exploratory metaphors. Leibniz maintained that ordinary perceptions are the summation of countless smaller ones which lie below the threshold of awareness: "our clear concepts are like islands which rise above the ocean of obscure ones."¹¹¹ In 1758, the English poet Edward Young encouraged creative plunges into the unconscious: "dive deep into thy bosom; learn the depth, extent, bias, and full fort of thy mind; contract full intimacy with the Stranger within thee; excite, and cherish every spark of Intellectual light and heat, however smothered under former negligence, or scattered through the dull, dark mass of common thoughts; and collecting them into a body, let thy Genius rise (if a Genius thou hast) as the sun from Chaos."¹¹² Young stood apart from the influential aesthetics of Joseph Addison and the rationalist view of imagination as mechanically re-creative fancy. He looked forward to the Romantic celebration of originality, and shared with Leibniz a positive respect for the

¹¹¹ Quoted in Whyte, *The Unconscious Before Freud*, 99.

¹¹² Edward Young, *Conjectures on Original Composition. In a Letter to the Author of Sir Charles Grandison* (London: A. Millar and R. and J. Dodsley, 1759), 53.

procreative forces of an unfathomable unconscious, aqueously embodied. As a largely uncharted and wild infinity, the unconscious became the seat of a powerful aesthetic concept: the notion of the sublime.¹¹³

Addison's concept of the sublime focused on nature's "rude kind of magnificence," as opposed to her novelty or beauty: a "pleasing astonishment and amazement" as our imagination tries to grasp something which exceeds its capacity. "An open champaign country", "a vast uncultivated desert", and "a wide expanse of waters" serve as illustrations and contribute to an image of the sublime as the dwarfing of humanity by the magnitude of nature.¹¹⁴ For Edmund Burke, Young's contemporary, terror was more the ruling principle of the sublime than pleasure was. He sharpened that distinction through a physiological explanation that the pleasure of beauty has a relaxing effect on the body's fibers, whereas the pain of the sublime tightens them. In dwelling on the painful and horrifying dimensions of the sublime, Burke developed a negative theory of the passions. However, they "are delightful when we have an idea of pain and danger, without being actually in such circumstances; this delight I have not called pleasure, because it turns on pain, and because it is different enough

¹¹³ Chemical, aesthetic and psychological terminology derived from the medieval Latin verb *sublimare*, to refine, concern changes of state involving processes of rarification. In the chemical sense, a solid substance sublimates when it becomes gaseous without passing through a liquid phase. In the psychological sense, sublimation concerns the modification of natural impulses or instincts, especially sexual or aggressive ones, into more socially acceptable kinds of behaviour. The straightforward physical manifestation of these forces is denied, and the impulses are reshaped so as to emerge in different forms. This concept developed alongside scientific theories of energy and assumed great importance in the work of Freud, who understood all culturally valued activities— art, literature, science, religion, etc.— as ultimately energized by displaced or sublimated libido. Freud believed that the innovative and original features of creativity were the result of the unusual, even bizarre, associations in the thought patterns that characterized the unconscious portions of mind. The creative person, then, is one who is in closer touch with their unconscious mind than the average person.

¹¹⁴ Joseph Addison, *Spectator*, No. 412 (Monday June 23, 1712).

from any idea of positive pleasure. Whatever excites this delight, I call sublime."¹¹⁵ Positive pleasure, which Burke links to the passion of love, is capable of being mixed with uneasiness, the result of both pain and pleasure. It is in this respect that he considers the passion of sympathy, as a form of substitution.¹¹⁶

Burke's mixed modes of pleasure and pain come closest to Kant's theory of the sublime. "The mind feels itself moved in the representation of the Sublime in nature; whilst in aesthetical judgements about the Beautiful it is in restful contemplation. This movement may (especially in its beginnings) be compared to a vibration, *i.e.* to a quickly alternating attraction towards, and repulsion from, the same Object. The transcendent (towards which the Imagination is impelled in its apprehension of intuition) is for the Imagination like an abyss in which it fears to lose itself; but for the rational Idea of the supersensible it is not transcendent but in conformity with law to bring about such an effort of the Imagination, and consequently here there is the same amount of attraction as there was of repulsion for the mere Sensibility."¹¹⁷ Galvanic and fundamental polar principles bear on Kant's interpretation. The sublime does not reside in an object in nature, but is the dynamic, electrolytic process of subjectively engaging with it. For Kant, estimation of the unconscious also enters into the sublime: "The field of our sense perceptions and sensations, of which we are not conscious, though we can undoubtedly infer that we possess them, that is, the dark ideas in Man (and so

¹¹⁵ Edmund Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, 2nd edition, 1759, Section VIII.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Sections XIII and XIV.

¹¹⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urtheilskraft* (II, §28). "Das Gemüt fühlt sich in der Vorstellung des Erhabenen in der Natur bewegt: da es in dem ästhetischen Urtheile über das Schöne derselben in ruhiger Kontemplation ist. Diese Bewegung kann (vornehmlich in ihrem Anfange) mit einer Erschütterung verglichen werden, d.i. mit einem schnellwechselnden Abstoßen und Anziehen eben desselben Objekts. Das überschwengliche für die Einbildungskraft (bis zu welchem sie in der Auffassung der Anschauung getrieben wird) ist gleichsam ein Abgrund, worin sie sich selbst zu verlieren fürchtet; aber doch auch für die Idee der Vernunft vom Übersinnlichen nicht überschwenglich, sondern gesetzmäßig, eine solche Bestrebung der Einbildungskraft hervorzubringen: mithin in eben dem Maße wiederum anziehend, als es für die bloße Sinnlichkeit abstoßend war."

also in animals), is immeasurable. The clear ones in contrast cover infinitely few points which lie open to consciousness; that in fact on the great map of our spirit only a few points are illuminated: this can lead us to marvel regarding our own nature."¹¹⁸ Kant echoes Leibniz's topographical conceptualization and the idea that we are only aware of a minuscule portion of our inner nature. But in that his formulation of the opposing forces of attraction and repulsion involves a narrowly-defined balance, Kant displays an uncomfortable ambivalence to that which lies beyond the tenuous threshold of reason. Lacking the balancing force of reason, the insane mind plunges into the fearful abyss. There is no hope of return, for Kant's roots in the Enlightenment strengthen his belief that insanity is hereditary and incurable. As an artistic subject, however, and with Burke's requisite minute degree of distance from reality, this perspective of madness drew it within the scope of the fearful and terrifying sublime.

Burke suggested that a healthy, happy and rational position is only tenuously self-sustaining. Through a consideration of the relation between the individual and society, he developed the proposition that the ideas of pain make a more powerful impression than pleasurable ones. It follows that pleasure in one's own life and health is less effective in promoting self-preservation than threats of self-negation. Burke acknowledged that human beings can derive pleasure from contemplative solitude as well as social interaction, but claimed that the pleasures of belonging to society are ineffective compared to the prospect of total exclusion.¹¹⁹ This conspicuous employment of extremes and absolutes in the area of pain, while discounting simple pleasure, casts a gap too wide to allow the individual and society to be anything but weak self-regulators. This void is distinctly anti-Rousseau, and cleared space for writers like the Marquis de Sade. Camille Paglia suggests that Sade, properly read as a point by point satire of Rousseau, is funny.¹²⁰ One could also say that the

¹¹⁸ Quoted in Whyte, 115 (from Kant's *Anthropologie* [I. §5]).

¹¹⁹ Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, Sections VI and XI.

¹²⁰ Camille Paglia, *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 235.

excessive collective violence of his sexual scenarios, in surpassing the thresholds of pain recognizable by reason and/or the imagination, surpasses that which can be considered sublime and enters into the ridiculous. Such a judgement is a secondary stage of response to Sade's works, which feature patterns of co-mingling attractive and repulsive elements. At the primary moment-by-moment level, we encounter stages in which this kind of tension has not yet crossed thresholds of tolerance and our sympathies may be more fully engaged.

Sade's literary techniques were similar to those of the Gothic and *Schauerroman* literary traditions, the grand intersection of the sublime and the bourgeoisie. Characters with whom the reading masses could identify were placed in extraordinary situations involving the supernatural and the terrifying. Many works exploited the macabre and the grotesque as simple forms of horror. As with Sade and sex, there were thresholds beyond which lay uncomfortable improbabilities. Ann Radcliffe, responding to Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story* (1764), deemphasized what she felt to be excessively violent and supernatural. In 1794, her *The Mysteries of Udolpho* "marked the high-water of the movement in England"¹²¹ and her style influenced writers into the nineteenth century. Ingredients natural to the genre could both attract and repel its readers. The suggestion of the possibility that the otherworldly could at any moment become a reality to the humblest of men was fascinating, while at the same time the demands of reason and Christian teachings would yield at least a modicum of contempt for such unintellectual and superstitious possibilities.¹²² Radcliffe placed great emphasis on the feeling of suspense, itself a form of ambivalence and thus a cousin of the sublime. For Radcliffe, ambivalence was not appropriate at the end of a novel so she tended to "explain" the supernatural, through late-in-the-game rationalizations of the irrational. A similar technique was employed by Goethe in his *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795-6), belying his post-*Sturm und Drang* Kantian retrenchment.

¹²¹ James Trainer, *Ludwig Tieck: From Gothic to Romantic* (The Hague: Mouton, 1964), 14.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 16-17.

Goethe's interest in medicine and psychiatric care peaked when he revised the early draft of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* and the intricate, otherworldly psychological dimension of the novel came into being. Shortly before the novel was published, his friendship with Schiller intensified. In his seven years of medical training and practice, from 1775-1782, Schiller had written a bold dissertation concerning psycho-somatic relations and psychological theory.¹²³ As the field of psychiatry crystallized and mesmerism became more widely practiced, the interchange between artists, physicians devoted to mental health, and mesmerists increased dramatically, with many prominent figures assuming multiple roles. Mesmerism was never a predominant medical practice, but it was more than a fringe alternative, recognized as a healing method by physicians at the university level and by psychiatrists operating specialized institutions.¹²⁴ Goethe never showed much interest in mesmerism, but he did study Kluge's book. In his own scientific endeavours and aesthetic practices Goethe nevertheless explored principles that, as we have already seen, contributed to mesmerism's viability in German academic psychological thought in the first half of the nineteenth-century.

After his return from his 1786-7 visit to Italy, Goethe strengthened his alliance with the *Naturforschung* and devoted considerable attention to the study of anatomy, plants and

¹²³ Dewhurst and Reeves have traced the influence of Schiller's training in medicine and psychology to his later aesthetic theories. In *Über Ahnmut und Würde (On Grace and Dignity)*, for instance, Schiller considers beauty as "freedom in appearance"; beauty has a civilizing function. Freedom, of noumenal origin as it was for Kant, is inner harmony rendered tangible as beauty through psycho-somatic unity. See their *Schiller*, Chapter VII, "The Intellectual Legacy of Medicine and Psychology", section v, "The Sublime and the Beautiful".

¹²⁴ Mesmerism remained a viable form of treating psychological illnesses. Bettina Brentano, who had been friends with Hölderlin when he became mentally ill, visited Robert Schumann at the Edenich asylum in 1854. She argued for his release, claiming that his basic mental state was not seriously in jeopardy but that he was being treated unsympathetically. Johannes Brahms suggested magnetism as a better form of therapy. These plans were blocked, by the attending physician and Robert's wife Clara, and Schumann died shortly thereafter. See Eric Frederick Jensens, "Buried Alive," *The Musical Times*, 139 (April 1998), 14-18.

optics. He advocated a harmonious relationship between the natural sciences, human nature and the arts. His 1809 novel *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* (*Elective Affinities*) employs a grand chemical metaphor. Two married couples who come into contact with each other realign themselves so as to maximize the potential affinities of the four people involved. They swap partners. Goethe's humanistic science emphasized that the way we understand the world must be connected to the way that we experience it. His doctrine of colour was essentially a study in aesthetics, spanning "immediate sensation, through perception, recognition and emotional affects, to symbolic overtones and ultimately intelligent reflection on all the preceding."¹²⁵ Attracted to some of the beliefs of the early Romantics in Jena, Goethe never fully embraced Schelling's metaphysical brand of *Naturphilosophie*. He could admire Ritter, whose inductive and respectably empirical scientific approach grounded evidence of general principles in nature that had the power to challenge Newton's mechanistic design of reality.¹²⁶ Goethe adhered to the idea of a dynamically unified cosmos, but he was not prepared to expand his faith to that which lay beyond the thresholds of rationalization. In a sense, he contributed to the positivistic movement in psychological thought at the same time that ideas which had contributed to the Romantic model of the mind were converging in more provocative ways.

Systematic studies of the relationships between madness, somnambulism and more common experiences in which the conscious mind was less active, such as dreams, underscored the prevalence of irrational forces in normal human life. The truly radical ingredient in this evolving formula was the prioritization of the unconscious as the seat of a reality more fundamental than that which could be perceived objectively. Aesthetically speaking, emphasizing the power of the unconscious was not simply a means to sanction wild flights of the imagination or wanton formlessness, or to shroud their works in a mysterious aura of genius. Rather, artists were keen to understand the nature of different psychological

¹²⁵ Dennis L. Sepper, "Goethe, Colour and the Science of Seeing," in *Romanticism and the Sciences*, 194.

¹²⁶ Wetzels, "Johann Wilhem Ritter," 201.

states so as to develop apt metaphors through which complex mental processes and the richness of human experience could be rendered intelligible and meaningful.

Reil's influential *Rhapsodien* offered a textbook guide for the post-Enlightenment view of madness as primarily psychic disturbance. But his greater contribution lay in his discussion of powers of the mind that usually enable us to cope with the chaotic realm of the irrational as a part of the totality of experience: the self-awareness that unifies consciousness; the presence of mind that guarantees continuity in self-awareness and enables it to distinguish between itself and external reality; the attentiveness which allows the mind to grasp onto that which has been raised into consciousness. At the onset of the new century. Reil's ideas marked a coming of age in understanding the nature of the psyche and unconscious mental functions. In stressing that many forms of madness were indeed curable, his message was optimistic. Some of his ideas about psychotherapeutic treatment were naïve and crude.¹²⁷ But if his treatments amounted to an imaginative use of common sense, they were accessible to non-specialists and removed some of the fearful mystique which had precluded sober, meaningful analysis of the unconscious mind. Reil's vision of the psychiatrist's role was not unlike that of the mesmerist: a sympathetic specialist who would help patients restore their inherent ability to engage with the totality of experience and to successfully negotiate between the conscious and the unconscious. He advocated the use of occupational therapy, music therapy and drama therapy. His rationale for drama therapy was that the patient would become psychologically involved with a plot in which characters became vulnerable or were endangered. Sympathetic engagement would stimulate feelings and intellect that promoted a sense of individual self-preservation and an overall increase of self-awareness.¹²⁸ These views resonated strongly with the theories of the sublime of Burke and Kant but Reil's concept of mental functioning was substantially more subtle. Madness and reason, like the asylum and society, are brought so close as to overlap. Furthermore, Reil's psychotherapeutics underscored a positive tendency within that fluid system. His view of the

¹²⁷ Alexander and Selesnick, *The History of Psychiatry*, 136.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

mind as a meta-processor naturally empowered to cope with the different forms and shaping forces pertaining to various psychic states supported profound developments in aesthetics.

In his *Vorschule der Ästhetik* (*Preparatory School for Aesthetics*) of 1804, Jean Paul rejected Kant's and Schiller's emphasis on despair as the predominant effect of the tension between reason and the imagination in grasping the sublime. He was also unwilling to emphasize magnitude and force, and the sense of danger, as primary criteria for the sublime. For Jean Paul, certain value judgments could also involve the infinitely small in our estimation of the sublime: "the aesthetic sublimity of the action thus always stands in inverse relationship to the importance of the sensuous sign; and only the very smallest is the most sublime. Jupiter's eyebrows move much more sublimely than his arm or than he himself."¹²⁹ Like Goethe and Rousseau, Jean Paul made room for the positive value of simple pleasures which Burke had discounted. Intimately familiar with Reil's *Rhapsodien*, he endorsed the view that the psyche was both subtly attuned to the immediate as well as the far-reaching. He proposed that the finer gradations of experience should not be erased by subjectivity or reason. With regards to Kant's divisions of the "mathematical" and "dynamic" sublime, what Schiller had distinguished as that which merely surpasses our comprehension and that which threatens our life, Jean Paul proposed classifications of the quantitative and the qualitative, or external and the internal. For him, sensibility—the senses working together with the imagination—was heterogeneous. Considering vision, he thought that the eye perceives the quantitative sublime and only through an induction from experiences is the visual image translated into the dynamic sublime. Jean Paul's concept of the sublime also embraced the world of sound, a

¹²⁹ Jean Paul Richter, *School for Aesthetics*, in *Horn of Oberon*, trans. Margaret R. Hale (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1973), 73. Jean Paul, *Vorschule der Ästhetik*, ed. Norbert Miller (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1963), 106 (VI, §27). "So steht ästhetische Erhabenheit des Handelns stets im umgekehrten Verhältnis mit dem Gewichte des sinnlichen Zeichens, und nur das kleinste ist das erhabenste; Jupiters Augenbraunen bewegen sich weit erhabener in diesem Falle als sein Arm oder er selber." For a discussion of the evolving concept of the sublime, and the contributions of the obscure writer Karl Grosse, antedating and anticipating Kant and Schiller, see Robert Ignatius le Tellier's *Kindred Spirits: Interrelations and Affinities Between the Romantic Novels of England and Germany* (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 1982).

sensual domain privileged by many Romantic thinkers. To the question of how the dynamic sublime is perceived, Jean Paul answers, “*Acoustically*. The ear is the immediate messenger of power and fear, as in the thunder of clouds, of the sea, of waterfalls, or of lions. Without any experience a novice of a man trembles before audible magnitude; but every visible magnitude only exalts and broadens him.”¹³⁰ Just as Jean Paul had balanced the visual spectrum of the perceptible sublime with the infinitely small, he places silence within the audible realm of possibilities.

The waterfalls and lions (aural), obelisks and pyramids (visual) which figure in Jean Paul’s discussion of the sublime seem to have a bearing on his depiction of the unconscious, as expressed in 1804: “The unconscious is really the largest realm in our minds, and just on account of this unconsciousness is an inner Africa, whose unknown boundaries may extend far away. Why should everything come to consciousness that lies in the mind since, for example, that of which it has already been aware, the whole great realm of memory, only appears to it illuminated in small areas while the entire remaining world stays invisible in the shadows? And may there not be a second half world of our mental moon which never turns towards consciousness.”¹³¹ Jean Paul’s specific geographical and cosmic metaphors encompass many layers of literal and symbolic meaning. Until the last third of the nineteenth century, Africa remained a largely uncharted territory. Like the unconscious, the dark continent of Africa was a land full of promise and peril for its explorers. Alongside the pursuit of wealth and power existed the desire to understand nature’s greatest mysteries. As personifications of the wild land which they inhabited, Native Africans were drawn into the European confrontation with the unconscious. On the one hand, black Africans seemed uncivilized and even barbaric. On the other, their exotic otherness embraced a lively

¹³⁰ Jean Paul Richter, *School for Aesthetics*, in *Horn of Oberon*, 73. “*Akustisch*: das Ohr ist der unmittelbare Gesandte der Kraft und des Schreckens, man denke an den Donner der Wolken, der Meere, der Wasserfälle, der Löwen etc. Ohne alle Erfahrung wird ein Neuling von Mensch vor der hörbaren Größe zittern; aber jede sichtbare würde ihn nur heben und erweitern.”

¹³¹ Quoted in Whyte, *The Unconscious Before Freud*, 133.

mythology as the foundation of religion and symbolic forms of artistic expression. Archeological evidence found by early colonizers in Zimbabwe suggested that Africans maintained a unique link to ancient civilization. African cultural otherness could thus be viewed as both repellent and attractive: as a crude form of society which Europeans within the historicist notion of progress had overcome, and as an important link in the history of human development which had been broken in the process of European advancement. The first view fostered the notion of European superiority, and encouraged efforts to enlighten and dominate aboriginals. The latter view placed more positive value on aboriginal culture, as evidence of belief systems and modes of understanding which were unquestionably part of human nature but had been discounted and unnaturally suppressed in the process of civilization.

In many respects, the treatment of native Africans in the nineteenth century echoed the treatment of the insane and other devalued groups in Europe in the eighteenth century. The slave trade was a variation on the labour abuses which accompanied British industrialization, when membership in the labouring masses did not coincide with full membership in society. In the area of phrenology and comparative anatomy, the Medieval association of blackness and madness could be seen as a tangible reality. In a series of lectures in 1829, Carl Gustav Carus, a friend of Goethe's, likened the skull of a twenty-four-year-old idiotic girl to the skull of a native African, claiming "it is evident that decadent structures among civilized people are often similar to the typologies of uncivilized people."¹³² This view was bolstered by lingering recourse to medical humoral theory: the concept of black bile.

Such views do not mark a weakening of the shift towards more sympathetic approaches to insanity. Nor does it negate the real advancement in knowledge which this trend encouraged and to which Carus himself contributed. Major treatises were devoted to the primary power of the unconscious and the ways its powers were translated into consciousness. Gotthilf von Schubert's frequently reprinted *Ansichten von der Nachtseite der Naturwissenschaft* first appeared in 1808, followed by his *Die Symbolik des Traumes* (*The*

¹³² Quoted in Gilman, *Seeing the Insane*, 111.

Symbolism of Dreams) in 1814. Ignaz Troxler's *Blicke in das Wesen des Menschen* and *Naturlehre des menschlichen Erkennens oder Metaphysik* were published in 1812 and 1818 respectively. Carl Gustav Carus' *Psyche* of 1846 stands out as an attempt to offer a complete and objective theory on unconscious psychological life.¹³³ In the same vein, Schopenhauer's *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (*The World as Will and Representation*) came to public attention in the 1850s, although in print by 1819. And two-thirds of a century of psychological investigation culminated in Eduard von Hartmann's famous *Philosophie des Unbewussten* (*Philosophy of the Unconscious*) in 1869. The investigations of Charcot, Bernheim, Janet and Freud would soon grant even greater attention to the unconscious, and those hypnotic and dream states which paved paths to its normally hidden terrains. Yet, in 1899, the physician Alfred T. Schofield still felt that the unconscious psychic processes which influence conscious mental life were not recognized widely or fully enough.¹³⁴

At the beginning of the century, Reil had proposed that "the mentally deranged person differs from us only in the degree of his alienation; the mirror of the madhouse may be distorted, but it is no less a mirror of a mankind that comprises all extremes of personality."¹³⁵ Constructions of mad otherness evidence the difficulty with which society accepted the view that all men have the potential for madness, and that the hidden unconscious exerts itself in our lives in positive and negative ways. The black madman, a particularly easily configured other, could absorb misunderstandings in the analysis of facts which perpetuated culturally-based ignorance and fear. The myth of the mad native African continued well into the latter part of the nineteenth century, as debates about slavery and freedom raged on both sides of the Atlantic. The increase of enslaved Africans in the mid-eighteenth century in America followed a decline in European immigration, addressing needs in the agricultural labour system previously met by indigent whites. It is not coincidental that this reassignment of the

¹³³ Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious*, 207.

¹³⁴ Alfred T. Schofield, *The Unconscious Mind* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1899).

¹³⁵ Zielkowski, *German Romanticism and its Institutions*, 184-5.

practical and symbolic function of denigrated otherness paralleled the struggle for equality and liberty amongst white Europeans. The broadening definition of the European individual accepted some of society's evils within its folds. But instead of coming fully to terms with human nature, the native African relieved Europeans from facing less comfortable realities and the kind of self-understanding which Reil and other psychological writers tried to advance. It also does not seem coincidental that the stereotype of the white degenerate again gained prominence towards the latter part of the nineteenth century, as black slaves were gradually moving into the sphere of the right-bearing individual.

Like Africa in the early nineteenth century, North and South America were expansive territories still in the process of being explored by Europeans. Their native inhabitants and terrain, offering material, natural and cultural riches, were similarly a combination of promise and peril. Between 1799 and 1804, the consummate explorer and scientist Alexander von Humboldt traveled through Central and South America. Published between 1804 and 1827, his astoundingly detailed and insightful accounts include a study of Andean volcanoes, travels along the Amazon River and numerous mountain climbing expeditions, accompanied by discussions of vegetation and animal life. He pursued his interest in electricity and magnetism, which had been stimulated by Ritter in the late 1790s, in groundbreaking investigations of magnetic storms. Previously, Humboldt had studied mineralogy and geology with the eminent lecturer Abraham Gottlob Werner in Freiberg before obtaining an appointment with the Prussian government to supervise all mining activities in 1792. During the 1780's, Werner had formulated a Neptunist view of the earth's history: from an initial situation in which the earth was enveloped by a universal ocean, chemical precipitation yielded the older crystalline rocks such as granite and others resulted from mechanical erosion as more of the earth's surface was exposed to air. Werner saw the earth as continually evolving according to a combination of progressive and degenerative forces.¹³⁶ His students also included Novalis, Gotthilf von Schubert, and Steffens. Together with Clemens Brentano, a one-time student of mining, other writers such as Tieck, Wackenroder, Savigny and Eichendorff rapturously

¹³⁶ Nicholas A. Rupke, "Caves, fossils, and the History of the Earth" in *Romanticism and the Sciences*, 249.

explored caves and descended mines in the pursuit of nature's inner treasures and secrets.¹³⁷ As with visits to asylums and knowledge of psychological theories, mining became a means of understanding aspects of nature normally hidden from view. In works such as Novalis's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1802), Tieck's *Kaiser Oktavianus* (1804), Clemens Brentano's poem "Frühlingsschrei eines Knechtes aus der Tiefe" (1816), and E.T.A. Hoffmann's "Die Bergwerke zu Falun" (1819), mining figured as a metaphor for humanity's quest for fundamental historical, religious and sexual meaningfulness, and the struggle between good and evil that this search entailed. In the 1820s, the adoption of technological developments transformed mining in Germany into a dirty and noisy affair. However, a more romantic view of mining was in part furthered by reports of abundant treasures in distant, less industrialized lands. Humboldt had commented on the silver mines of Mexico. And in 1848, when James Marshall discovered gold in Colona, California, the motherlode in the Sierra foothills beckoned thousands to the Wild West.

Jean Paul was not so much addressing these complicated unfoldings as much as he was encouraging an awareness that all of humanity possesses an inner realm. Like the Africa to which metaphorically referred, the unconscious was full of promise and danger and largely unknown. He did not reject the project of exploring the unconscious, nor did he believe that its partial elusiveness was a problem. He promoted the creative use of the imagination, both liberally and in the vein of what Meyer Abrams has called the "natural supernatural." His skepticism concerned the futility or perhaps more precisely the deluded agenda of attempting to conquer such territories completely. By extending his metaphor to include a mental moon, Jean Paul brought his thoughts once again around to the sublime. When we see the moon, we perceive one half which reflects the invisible sun of our waking consciousness and illuminates the night, while the another half, which neither our eye nor the sun can reach, remains in the silently sublime darkness.

Ironically, there is much that links Jean Paul with E.T.A. Hoffmann. In Jean Paul's opinion, the latter furthered the veneration of madness, an exclusive and negative form of

¹³⁷ Zielkowski, *German Romanticism and its Institutions*, 26.

subjectivity that he had cautioned against in 1804. By 1821, he felt compelled to intensify his warning as a response to literary developments. Hoffmann's *oeuvre* was largely complete by this time. He died the next year. In a characteristically sarcastic fashion, Jean Paul presented his view of madness in art in the preface to the second edition of his *Die unsichtbare Loge*: "This Romantic Art-Madness is confined to laughter, whether regarded as humour or mood. For reasons of space and presentation I shall confine myself here not only to the insightful Friedrich [sic] Hoffmann, whose *Fantasies* according to Callot I have already especially highly praised and recommended, since he is less pretentious and stands closer to me. Recently, he has elevated to a Romantic level his humorous characters—chiefly in the unsettled vicinity of his morning-, midday-, evening- and nightspirits, who can tolerate no pure light and no soiled earth—so that their humour truly attains a genuine Art-Madness, one that Aristophanes and Rabelais and Shakespeare have not achieved. The gay Tieck made some happy leaps in his early works toward these humorous nightshades, but later deserted them like a fox and lingered instead at the select wine of the Bacchus-berries of pleasure."¹³⁸ *Die unsichtbare Loge* is not an unambiguous snapshot of happiness and humorous imaginative adventures; its self-professed "idyllic" nature frequently turns towards themes of death. According to Jean Paul, Hoffmann's forays into the dark side of nature lost touch with the art of ambiguity.

Hoffmann's literary career initially took shape in the world of music, to which he devoted much time as a composer and critic alongside his professional career as a judge.

¹³⁸ Jean Paul, Vorrede zur zweiten Auflage (1821), *Die unsichtbare Loge*, "Dieser romantische Kunst-Wahnwitz schränkt sich glücklicherweise nicht auf das Weinen ein, sondern erstreckt sich auch auf das Lachen, was man Humor oder auch Laune nennt. Ich will hier der Vorreden-Kürze wegen mich bloß auf den kraftvollen Friedrich Hoffmann berufen, dessen Callotische Phantasien ich früher in einer besondern Vorrede schon empfohlen und gepriesen, als er bei weitem weniger hoch, und mir viel näher stand. Neuerer Zeit nun weiß er allerdings die humoristischen Charaktere - zumal in der zerrüttenden Nachbarschaft seiner Morgen-, Mittag-, Abend- und Nachtgespenster, welche kein reines Taglicht und keinen festen Erdboden mehr gestatten - zu einer romantischen Höhe hinaufzutreiben, daß der Humor wirklich den echten Wahnwitz erreicht; was einem Aristophanes und Rabelais und Shakespeare nie gelingen wollen. Auch der heitere Tieck tat in frühern Werken nach diesen humoristischen Tollbeeren einige glückliche Sprünge, ließ aber als Fuchs sie später hangen und hielt sich an die Weinlese der Bacchusbeeren der Lust. - -"

When his appointment was suspended in the wake of Napoleon's 1806 defeat of Prussia, he departed for Warsaw with his family and composed prolifically. In 1808, his prospects brightened and he became composer, conductor and stage designer for the theatre in Bamberg. Several features of Hoffmann's later literary works congealed in these years and the period which followed, from 1813-1814, when he conducted theatre orchestras in Leipzig and Dresden. In Bamberg, Hoffmann had become friends with the director of the general hospital, Adalbert Friedrich Marcus, whose affinity for the arts included playing an active role in the operation of the theatre. The Schlegel brothers, Schelling, C.W. Hufeland, Steffens and von Schubert also came to see the well-known physician and mesmerist in Bamberg. Marcus directly introduced Hoffmann to mesmerist treatments and the writings of Reil.¹³⁹ Not immediately convinced of somnambulist phenomena, Hoffmann considered matters very seriously, studying Reil's works and learning more from another friend, the mesmerist and physician David Ferdinand Koreff. Hoffmann was interested in von Schubert's work and especially in his study of dreams, which posited relationships between various altered states of consciousness such as magnetic trances, poetic inspiration, the lucid intervals of madmen and visionary moments preceding death.¹⁴⁰ More so than any other artist of this period, Hoffmann explored mesmerism, together with contemporary psychiatry, in aesthetic and practical terms.

Through the literary persona of the Kapellmeister Kreisler, Hoffmann quickly rose to fame in the pages of the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, which included his justly famous review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony (1810). Like Jean Paul, Tieck and Wackenroder, Hoffmann prioritized the acoustic world as that through which we most immediately perceive a dynamic, qualitative, and internal sense of the sublime. In his analysis of Beethoven's symphony, he paid special attention to the so-called "fate motive", the motive which opens

¹³⁹ Uwe Henrik Peters, *Studies in German Romantic Psychiatry: Justinus Kerner as a Psychiatric Practitioner, E.T.A. Hoffmann as a Psychiatric Theorist* (Leeds: Institute of Germanic Studies, University of London, 1988), 15.

¹⁴⁰ Maria M. Tatar, *Spellbound*, 123.

the work as a repeated eighth-note triplet figure, played fortissimo by strings and clarinets, and landing a major third below on the half note E \flat suspended by a fermata. Hoffmann charted the many manifestations of this musical idea to clarify the relationship between the listener's spiritual engagement, through which a sense of the sublime and underlying unity is intuited, and the inspired craftsmanship with which Beethoven created an organically unified work.

In a recent study building on the critical perspectives of Robin Wallace and Peter Schnaus, Stephen Rumph contends that Hoffmann's approach fails to recognize the work's most obvious features. "The sheer materiality of the Fifth Symphony—its insistent rhythms, its triumphal marches, its cathartic release into the major—threaten to expose Hoffmann's review as a critical *Phantasiestück*."¹⁴¹ Rumph sees the conflict between Hoffmann's analysis and Beethoven's score as rooted in interconnected aesthetic and political priorities that must "dissolve all disturbing surface details" and divert attention away from the work's self-evident, anarchic energy and will in the formation of a muted and subversive political statement.¹⁴² Particularly disturbing for Rumph is what he sees as Hoffmann's fascination, even obsession, with harmony, with a concomitant neglect of individual melodic expression, an "attempt at countering a humanistic, individualizing expression with the appeal to a sacred, totalizing whole—an aesthetic program with obvious parallels to Romantic political theory."¹⁴³ His argument that Hoffmann was politically involved and rejected French domination in the era of Prussian reform is not without merit, but he fails to grasp what Hoffmann was driving at in claiming that purely instrumental music "unlocks for man an unfamiliar world having nothing in common with the external material world which surrounds

¹⁴¹ Stephen Rumph, "A Kingdom Not of this World: The Political Context of E.T.A. Hoffmann's Beethoven Criticism," *19th-Century Music* 19,1 (summer 1995), 66.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 62-63.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 63.

him.”¹⁴⁴ For this cannot be reduced to Rumph’s political formulae or to what he describes as the work’s occasional evocations of a ghostly, supernatural sphere.¹⁴⁵

Regarding Beethoven as a self-assured navigator of an intangible inner realm, Hoffmann ascribed to him the essential powers of the mind posited by Reil in his *Rhapsodien* as the means by which he makes this journey intelligible to his audience. Hoffmann claims that the four movements “seem to be linked together in a fantastic way” and that “for many people, the whole work rushes by like an ingenious rhapsody.”¹⁴⁶ Reil, in his “rhapsody”, presents abnormal mental states as related, in a distorted way, to the extremes of personality which make up humankind. They constitute the subjective, fantastic realms of his survey, emerging as improvisatory passages which are sympathetically woven into a whole through Reil’s balanced, knowledgeable and insightful guidance. In qualifying the ingenious nature of Beethoven’s “rhapsody”, Hoffmann singles out the quality of *Besonnenheit*, that presence of mind that enables the soul to distinguish between itself and external reality. Concentrating on the deployment of the central musical idea, his analysis pays attention to the syntactical parameters of tonal stability and motion, rhythmic shape, orchestration and dynamics. He demonstrates how individually and in conjunction with each other Beethoven explores the possible ranges of these parameters across a differentiated spectrum ranging from silence, through the ambiguous, amorphous and only vaguely perceptible to that which has a readily grasped and clear physical shape. The extreme regions of character are highly distinguished, as in the work’s opening gesture containing fortissimo statements of the central motive which fade into silence. The mental powers of *Selbstbewußtsein*, the self-awareness which unifies consciousness, and *Aufmerksamkeit*, the attentiveness which allows the mind to grasp that

¹⁴⁴ E.T.A. Hoffmann, “Review of the Fifth Symphony,” *Ludwig van Beethoven: Symphony No. 5 in C Minor*, trans. F. John Adams and ed. by Elliot Forbes (New York: Norton, 1971), 151, originally published in *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, 12/40, 41 (July 4 and 11, 1810), 630-42 and 652-59.

¹⁴⁵ Rumph, “A Kingdom Not of this World,” 51.

¹⁴⁶ Hoffmann, “Review of the Fifth Symphony,” 162.

which has been raised into consciousness, are not mentioned specifically. However, they are recognizable in Hoffmann's discussion of the four movements and the ways that Beethoven varies the initial musical idea to address the problem space which the opening presents.

In the flow of musical events, similarly employed parameters lend a sense of continuity while degrees of alteration correlate to degrees of contrast. Beethoven explores the spectrum of possibilities in bridging the tangible and the intangible, sometimes through smooth processes and sometimes with startling broad leaps. Smooth processes can be those in which an idea gradually assumes a more sharply defined physical shape, raising an idea increasingly into consciousness, or the reverse. Hoffmann's marked attention to tonal syntax reflects his belief that this parameter profoundly reflects the nature of the continuous journey between conscious and unconscious realms. Beethoven's varied rhythmic treatment of the central idea, he notes, is a mediating element which also serves to organically unify the work as a whole.

In short, Hoffmann's lasting impression of the work was not the immediate impact of its "sheer materiality." He was more intrigued by how its unfolding emotionally engaged the listener along a path in which the material and immaterial worlds interact. For Hoffmann, this effect was not enclosed within the work's formal framework. The ending, by way of integrated musical ideas that affirm tonal stability, collapses the musical material to the single sonority of C major. While Hoffmann charts this process as one which moves towards calmness, the repeated chords and rests of the closing bars reintroduce, for him, an anxious feeling, "like a fire which again and again shoots high its bright, blazing flames after one had believed it extinguished."¹⁴⁷ Instead of a static and complacent close, the dynamic path of the sublime is projected into the ensuing silence and the listener's ongoing reflection upon the aesthetic experience. Hoffmann also used figurative language to describe an effect akin to light with regards to the beginning of the last movement, the tutti statement of the C-major theme: "It is like radiant, blinding sunlight which suddenly illuminates the dark night."¹⁴⁸ Such phrases specifically remind of us Hoffmann's study of mesmerist practices and new

¹⁴⁷ Hoffmann, "Review of the Fifth Symphony," 162.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 161.

psychological theories in which the unconscious was coming to be recognized as a powerful, omnipresent force that informs consciousness; a different inner light that supercedes that which we consciously perceive as reality in the waking world of daylight. The seeds of the last movement's tutti lie in barely perceptible, eerie strokes on the kettledrum, whose otherworldly utterances from the inner infinite are to reach full consciousness transformed into strong affirmations of hope. By working with small germinal cells in such far-reaching and even shocking ways, Beethoven created musical processes which Hoffmann could readily identify as conscious manifestations of the unconscious. These processes are not teleological in a simple linear sense. Rather the dialectical pattern retains a sense of its origins and its ongoing potential for other manifestations. For Hoffmann, these broader layers of diachronic meaning were more important than the "sheer materiality" of individual moments. Beethoven's musical world resonated against his views about the primary importance of the unconscious in shaping that which becomes obvious to the conscious mind.

Wagner was born in 1813. The same year, Hoffmann changed his third name, Wilhelm, to Amadeus and wrote the story "Der goldne Topf" ("The Golden Flower Pot"), which remained a favourite of Wagner's throughout his life. In his youth, Wagner was much impressed by living artists such as Carl Maria von Weber, who was personally acquainted with his step-father, Ludwig Geyer, and whose works played an important part in his daily life. Wagner's early years were much defined by Geyer's theatre-oriented activities. After Geyer's death in 1821, Wagner became a student at the Kreuzschule in Dresden where he developed a keen interest in Greek history and mythology. In the winter of 1826, he undertook his first real travel adventure. This and subsequent trips to Prague and Bohemia exercised a poetic charm on the young man whose eyes were opened to a different sense of culture and history. Of the private social gatherings in Prague, Wagner remembered many discussions of Hoffmann's tales "which were then still fairly new and of great interest. I got my first, rather superficial impression of this master of fantasy at the time and conceived an interest which over the years grew to a mania and caused me to adopt the most eccentric way

of looking at the world.”¹⁴⁹ Back in Leipzig in 1827, Wagner’s classical interests expanded through the influence of his uncle, a noteworthy aesthetic thinker and literary figure in his own right. Adolf Wagner’s major work, *Parnasso italiano*, included texts by Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto and Tasso. Wagner began to express himself artistically between 1826 and 1828. His five-act tragedy, *Leubald und Adelaide*, is heavily indebted to another of his life-long artistic stimuli: Shakespeare.

After the reopening of the Leipzig theatre in August 1829, and exposure to Beethoven and the performance of Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient, Wagner’s attentions re-focused on music and opera.¹⁵⁰ In his sixteenth year, anxious to learn the art of composition, Wagner’s ideal instructors were none other than Kapellmeister Kreisler and Krespel, since he was “on fire with the maddest mysticism” from his readings of Hoffmann’s works.¹⁵¹ Already leaning towards a career in music, Wagner decided to attend lectures in philosophy and aesthetics at the university in Leipzig. Sensitive to political matters in the wake of the July Revolution of 1830, he felt a duty to be politically aware and that engagement with philosophy would be of benefit. Whenever he sought to explore philosophical issues, there were specific problems at hand that such a pursuit, he believed, would help to solve. His enrollment in the university was the first such case. According to Wagner’s own account, his university experience was a case of ideals gone awry: it was brief, academically unfruitful, and marked by a tendency to

¹⁴⁹ Richard Wagner, *My Life*, trans. Andrew Gray, ed. Mary Whittall (New York: Da Capo Press, 1992), 17. Wagner’s eccentric perspective of the world is reflected in the importance which he attached to altered states of consciousness. For a psychologist’s account of the ways that this prioritization figured in his youth and later career as an artist, see Jerome R. Schulster, “The Role of Altered States of Consciousness in the Life, Theater, and Theories of Richard Wagner,” *Journal of Altered States of Consciousness* 5,3 (1979/80): 235-258.

¹⁵⁰ Wagner was particularly moved by Schröder-Devrient’s interpretation of Leonore, in addition to her performances of Romeo, in Bellini’s *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*. See Klaus Kropfinger, *Wagner and Beethoven: Richard Wagner’s Reception of Beethoven*, trans. Peter Palmer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 32-33.

¹⁵¹ Richard Wagner, “Autobiographic Sketch,” *The Art-Work of the Future and Other Works*, trans. William Ashton Ellis (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 6.

indulge in the “excesses of life.”¹⁵² It nevertheless had a decided impact on his perspective. Responding to the congruent forces of his political awakening and his coming of age as a young man, he eschewed the mystical supernaturalism which had earlier delighted and terrified. Informally, he embraced a kind of sensuous materialism which made him feel politically and personally engaged with the world. After a few months, his education was directed along more practical avenues, including musical studies with Christian Thomas Weinlig, a cantor of the Thomaskirche.¹⁵³

Over the next few years, Wagner’s personal and professional experiences unfolded in Prague, Würzburg, Magdeburg, Königsberg, Riga and Paris. He undertook work on his first opera, *Die Hochzeit*, while in Prague in 1832. “This blackest nocturnal epic, through which echoed *Leubald und Adelaïde* from my distant youth in a somewhat more refined strain, was executed in black on black, with disdain for any ray of light and in particular for any operatic embellishments.”¹⁵⁴ Abandoning the project, Wagner turned through Hoffmann to Gozzi’s *La donna serpente* for his next libretto, mixing in reminiscences of Marschner’s *Hans Heiling*, Kleist’s *Kätchen von Heilbronn*, Schiller’s *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*, Kotzebue’s *Spiegelritter*, and Schikaneder’s *Die Zauberflöte*.¹⁵⁵ Completed in Würzburg in early 1833, *Die Feen* marks a shift in Wagner’s attitude regarding the potential treatment and meaning of the supernatural, and a rethinking of the childhood experiences and tastes from which he had set out to distance himself in 1830. The world of Hoffmann—notably his opera *Undine* and its de la Motte Fouqué origins—entered Wagner’s artistic consciousness in a new light. The struggle of Ada and Arindal, the lovers whose desire to be united must overcome the gap

¹⁵² Wagner, “An Autobiographic Sketch,” 7.

¹⁵³ Westernhagen, *Wagner*, 27-9.

¹⁵⁴ Wagner, *My Life*, 69.

¹⁵⁵ Peter Branscombe, “The Dramatic Texts,” in *Wagner Handbook*, ed. Ulrich Müller and Peter Wapnewski, trans. ed. John Deathridge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 270-1.

between their respective immortal and mortal realms, speaks beyond simple dualism. Arindal is a psychologically complex character who earnestly attempts to discern meaning from his wide-ranging experiences, with their seemingly chaotic intermingling of illusion and reality. He is tortured by his compulsion to rationalize the irrational, since that precludes his love from being sustained. When Arindal recognizes that the value of his subjective experiences is indeed great, despite their inaccessibility to reason, he is guided by faith and courage to his reunion with Ada.

While on holiday in Bohemia in June of 1834, and stirred by the young Hegelians in the wake of the political upheavals of 1830, Wagner pursued different means and ends as he began his next opera.¹⁵⁶ In 1843, he reflected on *Das Liebesverbot* and his treatment of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*: "I robbed it of its prevailing earnestness, and thus remoulded it after the pattern of *Das Junge Europa*; free and frank physicalism (*Sinnlichkeit*) gained, of its own sheer strength, the victory over Puritanical hypocrisy."¹⁵⁷ *Das Liebesverbot* consciously appealed to prevailing Italian operatic styles and seemed a surer vehicle with which Wagner could reach the stage and reap financial rewards. For *Die Feen* remained unperformed in Wagner's lifetime.

Years later, in "A Communication to my Friends" written at Zürich in 1851, Wagner took time to discuss this obscure early work. After much difficulty, *Lohengrin* had finally reached the stage through the efforts of Liszt in August of 1850. The plot of *Lohengrin* strongly resembles that of *Die Feen*; in both operas, mortal protagonists break their promise not to question the identity of their immortal partners. At this juncture in Wagner's life, *Die Feen* seemed to him "a weighty factor in his whole development."¹⁵⁸ Despite his tendency to

¹⁵⁶ For a discussion of Wagner's attraction to the ideas of the young Hegelians at this time, see L.J. Rather's *Reading Wagner: A Study in the History of Ideas* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), Chapter 6 and pp. 231-238.

¹⁵⁷ Wagner, "An Autobiographic Sketch," 10.

¹⁵⁸ Richard Wagner, "A Communication to my Friends," *The Art-Work of the Future and Other Works*, trans. William Ashton Ellis (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 294.

project his artistic maturity backwards onto earlier works, his comment does raise a significant point. The complex psychological dimension of *Die Feen* is strikingly different from the more direct, superficial appeal to the senses which characterize Wagner's earlier works, including *Das Liebesverbot*. He identifies these contrasting tendencies as those which he sought to balance in his artistic development.¹⁵⁹ Some balancing effort is in evidence in *Rienzi*, but he was then still coming to terms with the advantages and disadvantages of a sense-oriented aesthetic. After his mixed experiences in Paris, he relocated to Meudon in the spring of 1841 and set about completing *Der fliegende Holländer*. Only at this point was he able to reincarnate his early, unfettered childhood fascination with mythology and the supernatural in a sophisticated philosophical, aesthetic and psychologically-determined framework. In the 1851 essay, Wagner's discussions of *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Tannhäuser*, and especially *Lohengrin* explicitly use psychological terminology and concepts. Both their plots and his own artistic creativity are presented as processes of negotiation between the unconscious and the conscious through which initially obscure ideas emerge compellingly into tangible forms.

Der fliegende Holländer is the first of Wagner's operas in which this concept of mental functioning permeated all levels of his creative strategies. His revised understanding of Hoffmann contributed substantially to this important shift in his development. To the maturer Wagner, works like "Der Einsiedler Serapion", which stands at the beginning of the *Serapionbrüder* collection (1819-1821), offered a virtual compendium of contemporary psychological theory. Notably, Wagner would have also grasped that Hoffmann did not fully endorse contemporary psychotherapeutic practices—they rarely succeed in his works. The physical trappings of psychiatry, such as asylums, appear infrequently. His mad characters are more or less at liberty and are often in the care of family or friends if they are under any supervision. Some of his melancholics die in the pursuit of "ideés fixes", while others live out their lives in tranquility.¹⁶⁰ Hoffmann's implied critique is that the scope of madness, that

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 296.

¹⁶⁰ Zielkowski, *German Romanticism and its Institutions*, 211.

which psychiatrists and mesmerists set out to cure, had appropriated some of the meanderings of the mind which were essential, in a positive way, to a full experience of life.

Many of Hoffmann's "mad" characters who are shown the way to a heightened form of awareness—experiencing aspects of nature and their surroundings in a spiritualistically and fantastically enhanced way—quit their earthly existences by plunging into subaqueous or subterranean realms. In "Der goldne Topf" (1814), Anselmus rejects the mortal woman Veronika and jumps into the Elbe, so as to be united with the immortal Serpentina in Atlantis. The central character in "Die Bergwerke zu Falun", published in 1819 in the *Serapionbrüder* collection, is Elis Fröhbm. Beginning the tale as a melancholic sailor he is encouraged to become a miner and dies in search of nature's deepest secrets. During Hoffmann's time, there were of course real life examples of mad artists who seem to have followed such paths.

In November of 1811, Heinrich von Kleist murdered his lover and then committed suicide, acting out the murder/suicide scenes he had depicted at the end of *Penthesilea* (1808) and "The Betrothal in Santo Domingo" (1811). Influenced by Wieland's *Sympathien* and the early *Naturphilosophie* of the physicist Christian Ersnt Wünsch, Kleist had maintained an optimistic personal philosophy until his unsettling visit to the Würzburg Julius-Spital asylum in 1800. Months later, he was shaken by his reading of the *Critique of Judgement*. Kant's rejection of divine causes and a teleological explanation of Nature weakened Kleist's faith in the ability of individuals to influence their own destiny. This period of crisis marked the beginning of Kleist's creative literary phase. Encountering Reil's ideas shortly thereafter, he interpreted these views on the similarities between the insane and the normal mind as confirmation that madness was omnipresent and imminent. In the winter months of 1807 and 1808, Kleist was part of a group including von Schubert that gathered to discuss literary, philosophical and scientific issues.¹⁶¹ Some of von Schubert's optimism—the view that insanity is not always a state of sickness but can sometimes be a heightened perception inspired by transcendental cosmic reality—surfaces in "Kätchen von Heilbronn", which Kleist wrote between 1808 and 1810. Kleist called it the reverse side of his *Penthesilea*, a work

¹⁶¹ Tatar, *Spellbound*, 104.

which brutally inverts traditional mythology, power structures and symbols of gender.¹⁶² As Maria M. Tatar has noted, Kleist's metaphorical language was still predominantly electrical and energy-related in that work. In "Kätchen", the metaphorical language is predominantly mesmeric. Unlike most writers concerned with mesmerist ideas, Kleist did not immediately link electricity and mesmerism.¹⁶³ The integration of the two was a pessimistic turn. For Kleist, nature ruled mightily and cruelly over man. In "Die Verlobung in St. Domingo" ("The Betrothal in Santa Domingo"), he returned to the dark lands on the other side of the Atlantic, this time in a contemporary setting, the years of struggle between the French and Spanish.¹⁶⁴ Heinrich Kleist, more than Hoffmann, belongs "to that rare strain [of German Romanticism] that eschews any ultimate vision of a higher existence, that cannot explain the mysterious and horrifying by reference to any metaphysical and indeed quasi-Manichaeian framework, and cannot find solace in the beauty or power of Nature."¹⁶⁵

Hoffmann's intense interest in psychology reveals his desire to understand the unconscious and the ways that its power influences our lives and actions. As a judge, he dealt with psychopathological problems. He was the first to distinguish between murder and manslaughter in the modern sense, an important development in forensic psychiatry. In a case concerning Daniel Schmolling's murder of his girlfriend in 1817, the psychiatrist Dr. Merzdorff offered a report stating that the deed was committed in a fit of "amentia occulta" (an outwardly undetectable mental disorder).¹⁶⁶ Hoffmann examined the report and responded

¹⁶² Nigel Reeves, "Kleist's Bedlam: Abnormal Psychology and Psychiatry in the Works of Heinrich von Kleist," *Romanticism and the Sciences*, 287.

¹⁶³ Tatar, *Spellbound*, 84-85.

¹⁶⁴ This short story also features an African character, named Congo Hoango, and explores issues concerning slavery. One of Kleist's earliest short stories "The Earthquake in Chile", also takes place in the wild, distant Americas.

¹⁶⁵ Reeves, "Kleist's Bedlam," 280.

¹⁶⁶ Peters, *Studies in German Romantic Psychiatry*, 12.

with a brief in 1818, the same year that he wrote “Der Einsiedler Serapion.” Finding evidence of premeditation and Schmolling’s capacity to distinguish between good and evil, he rejected the plea of temporary insanity. The unconscious, which Hoffmann treasured as an artist, was also something that he respected. His understanding of contemporary psychiatric and mesmeric theories was far from superficial. Madmen and mesmerists lent exotic and sometimes dark shades to his works, but it was his insights into the human psyche and their aesthetic realization that made claims to modernity.

As Henri Ellenberger has observed, the first dynamic psychiatry emerged from efforts to understand the conditions of natural and artificial somnambulism. Conditions similar to somnambulism were quickly drawn into the sphere of investigation. These “magnetic diseases” included lethargy, a deep, prolonged kind of sleep in which the subject could even appear dead, and catalepsy, a trancelike state with loss of voluntary motion and failure to react to external stimuli. In 1835, James Prichard added the conditions of “maniacal ecstasy”, an incoherent hypnotic state, and “ecstatic visions”. The latter he described as a transient condition where a vivid daydream, connected with external reality and remembered by the dreamer, is blended with the events of normal life.¹⁶⁷ Dynamic psychiatry in the latter part of the nineteenth century concentrated on the affinity between these conditions and hysteria.¹⁶⁸ Of considerable interest to early nineteenth-century thinkers was the similarity of these conditions to less extraordinary kinds of sleep, dreaming and reflection. The idea of the fragmented psyche emerged in conjunction with mesmeric practices and the unveiling of normally concealed personalities and mental capacities. Uwe Henrik Peters attributes the creation of modern schizophrenia theory to Hoffmann. She has traced what he himself referred to as “chronic dualism” through explicit accounts in the *Serapionbrüder* to more metaphorical renderings in works such as *Das Sanctus* (1817) and *Prinzessin Brambilla*

¹⁶⁷ Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious*, 123.

¹⁶⁸ For an insightful study of hysteria-based psychiatry in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the blurred distinctions between mysticism and insanity, and the relationship between psychological theory and art, see Cristina Mazzoni, *Saint Hysteria: Neurosis, Mysticism, and Gender* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996).

(1820).¹⁶⁹ As the states associated with somnambulism were considered variants of those experienced by normal people, Hoffmann regarded mental fragmentation and distortion associated with insanity as variants of normal mental processes. He did not depict the mind or the world as governed by degenerative processes exclusively. His tales abound with procreative, regenerative and synthesizing processes, in which the unconscious also plays a productive, positive role.

“The Mines of Falun” was the Hoffmann short story closest in Wagner’s mind to *Der fliegende Holländer*. Shortly after Wagner had finished his prose sketch for *Holländer*, he was asked to draft a similar plot for a man named Dessauer, a musician and composer best known to his friends for his hypochondria. “I rummaged around in my recollections of Hoffmann and easily came upon the idea of adapting his *Die Bergwerke von Falun*.”¹⁷⁰ Wagner proceeded to make a prose sketch, but the project never went any further.¹⁷¹ An abundance of similarities between Hoffmann’s short story and *Der fliegende Holländer* suggests how eagerly Wagner must have turned to this work. Nevertheless, Wagner’s main source for his opera was Heinrich Heine’s *Aus den Memoiren des Herren vom Schnabelewopski* (1834). It cannot escape notice how profoundly Heine’s telling of the legend differs from Wagner’s version: “It is an ironic, detached retelling; ostensibly of a play seen by the author in a theatre in Amsterdam; he deliberately interrupts the narrative (in order to debunk it) with a recital of his adventures with an admirer in the theatre.”¹⁷² Wagner

¹⁶⁹ Peters, *Studies in German Romantic Psychiatry*, 15-17.

¹⁷⁰ Wagner, *My Life*, 213.

¹⁷¹ One of the few authors to pay much attention to this sketch is Marc A. Weiner. Unfortunately, his analysis of Wagner’s handling of the short story is unsympathetic to his aesthetic goals and his discussion of broader relations between Hoffmann and Wagner suffers as a result. Some valuable information remains, including a translation of the sketch. See Marc A. Weiner, “Richard Wagner’s Use of E.T.A. Hoffmann’s ‘The Mines of Falun’.” *19th-Century Music* 5,3 (1982), 201-209.

¹⁷² Barry Millington, *Wagner* (London: J.M. Dent, 1984), 157.

treated the whole matter much more seriously, particularly the role that the faithful woman plays in the fate of the Dutchman. The plot of Hoffmann's story gives several clues as to Wagner's treatment of the tale. It would be misleading to suggest that "The Mines of Falun" was Wagner's primary source; its themes are not unique, in Hoffmann's *oeuvre* or elsewhere. The parallel nonetheless resonates strongly. Hoffmann's tale embodies aesthetic, philosophical and psychological ideas that Wagner prioritized in all of his subsequent operas.

In Hoffmann, Elis Fröhbom's first thoughts about a career change are prompted by a mysterious old miner named Torbern who is sympathetic to the young man's dissatisfactions and sorrows. Torbern suggests that mining would be a more suitable and rewarding career for him than a life at sea. He elaborates on the wonders of mining in a vividly descriptive way that much impresses Elis. That night in his dreams, Elis returns to this marvelous subterranean world with images of a bejewelled aqueous expanse and of incredibly vital plants that grow from the hearts of innumerable maidens dancing in the water's depths. The experience awakens Elis's passionate longing and he stretches himself out on what appears to be solid crystal only to find himself floating in shimmering ether. Torbern suddenly appears in the dream in a distorted metallic shape just before a brilliant flash of light gives way to the earnest face of a grand, majestic woman. Identifying the image as the queen, Torbern cautions Elis not to look at it for the moment. When Elis looks again, further transformations have occurred, and a starry night now shines above. The voice of his dead mother beckons him from high up on a cleft. He thinks he sees her form only to realize that it is a beautiful young woman who is calling him with outstretched arms. Elis becomes a miner and discovers happiness in the friendly hard-working community of Falun. He is reminded of his dream when he meets Ulla, the daughter of the mineowner Perhson Dahljoe. He devotes himself to mining, marvelling at the discovery of nature's treasures amidst the hazards of the job and hoping to earn respect in the community, and possibly Ulla's hand in marriage. At the same time, he cannot completely trust or act otherwise upon the love he has only intuited. Elis does not directly voice his feelings and is occasionally tortured by feelings of inferiority and doubts that she could ever love him fully.

While deep in the mine one day, Torbern appears to Elis. Questioning his motivation—his love of mining has weakened and it is now a means for other ends—Torbern casts doubt on the possibility that his plan of action will help him succeed in winning Ulla's hand. Soon after, Elis is misled into believing that Ulla has been betrothed to another; he remains silent. More greedily and dangerously, he descends into the mine. Pehrson has recognized the love between Ulla and Elis and blesses their union, but Elis is wracked by anxiety as he has become obsessed with his quest to discover the queen's treasures. He dies on the eve of his wedding, trapped in the mine while trying to secure what he believes is a jewel containing the secrets of his soon to be realized love, as a gift for Ulla. Discovered in a subterranean pool of water fifty years later, his body appears perfectly preserved.¹⁷³ As the aged Ulla embraces him, the body crumbles to dust and she dies. Her love for him had always been of the highest order, and the theme of fidelity is reiterated in the closing lines of the story: "In the church of Kopparberg, where they were to have been married fifty years earlier, the miners laid in the earth the ashes of Elis Fröhbom, and with them the body of her who had been thus faithful unto death."¹⁷⁴ The tragic nature of the tale lies in Elis's consistent inability to recognize the value of Ulla's love. The tragedy is clear enough to the other characters and to readers. Torbern does not lead Elis to his deluded end. On the contrary, the inner senses which Torbern awakens in Elis enable him to engage more meaningfully with life. Torbern never advocates mining as a sure way to unlock nature's secrets and even warns against material wealth. The joys of mining of which he speaks are those that come from a loving, exploratory relationship with Nature. Elis's fateful mistake is his failure to trust his intuitive love for Ulla enough to explore those feelings while preserving love's mysterious nature. This

¹⁷³ A source for Hoffmann's story was the reportedly true event, mentioned in von Schubert's *Ansichten*, of a perfectly preserved body dressed in archaic garments discovered when a new tunnel was opened at the mine complex at Falun.

¹⁷⁴ E.T.A. Hoffmann, "The Mines of Falun," *The Best Tales of Hoffmann*, trans. and ed. E.F. Bleiler (New York: Dover, 1967), 307. "In der Kopparbergskirche, dort, wo vor fünfzig Jahren das Paar getraut werden sollte, wurde die Asche des Jünglings beigesetzt und mit ihr die Leiche der bis in den bitteren Tod getreuen Braut."

failure is mirrored in his desperate need to concretely grasp the cherry-coloured sparkling almandine deep in the mine. Torbern revealed several paths by which Elis might strengthen his connection to the secrets and power of the unconscious, but Elis chose the path to the queen because he fears Ulla will marry another man. It is Pehrson who presents this misinformation as fact, in an attempt to provoke Elis to confirm his love for Ulla. However, Pehrson does not subject him to extended agony and soon after reveals his little scheme and his intentions.

Torbern's literary ancestry includes the folkloric demons associated with chthonic powers and the ability to lead and mislead men. In Hoffmann's tale, he also assumes the role of a mesmerist, enabling Elis to enter a rich inner world. Through his interest in mesmerism as a means of accessing the unconscious as a fundamental source of vitality, Hoffmann had considered the different ways that mesmerists could exercise power. Using the characters of Cyprian and Lothar in the *Serapionbrüder*, he presented the contrasting view of mesmerism as a tool for divining nature's secrets and as a dangerous instrument in that quest. The relationship between the poet and the mesmerist is part of their debate and recurs elsewhere in Hoffmann. Mesmeric power is used in positive ways when those who attain a heightened inner awareness can translate that awareness into compelling and inspiring visions. The "authentic poet" is such a figure, and the authentic artwork results from individual poetic inspiration realized in such a way that it is collectively inspiring. The artist's mesmerist is Nature herself. She stimulates the inner senses which, loosened from the tendency to rationalize, enable her treasures to be grasped more fully and clearly. In the creation of an artwork, the poet assumes the role of the mesmerist. The ability to perceive the individual artist's vision is intimately connected to the shared experience of the processes of inspiration and creation. True or good mesmerists help their subjects to reforge connections to their inner resources and to draw upon them in ways which enhance a conscious waking existence. False mesmerists lack the inherent capacity to perceive inner truths. Motivated by base, selfish intentions, they prey upon others who are inwardly more sensitive. Rather than enabling subjects to explore their inner realm in positive ways, they guide them into a highly receptive state where they are more vulnerable to ideas which they might rightfully reject in a normal

state of mind. At this level, false mesmerists abuse their powers of suggestion to exert ideas into a level of the human psyche which informs the subject's waking thoughts and actions. These ideas may emerge as convictions whose fundamental truth or moral value the subject cannot easily question.

Hoffmann's false mesmerist is thus a kind of parasite or vampire. To stave off decay, in a perverted quest for immortality, he must constantly drain the vitality of others but is unable to use it to develop his own inner renewable power. The evil side of mesmerism fits in well with the evolving Gothic and *Schauerroman* traditions and the concept of the sublime as a predominantly terrifying effect. Mesmerism was a subject of interest in Mary and Percy Bysshe Shelley's circle of friends, which included Dr. Polidori. In 1819, while Hoffmann's *Serapionbrüder* was appearing, Polidori's *The Vampyre* was published in the *New Monthly Magazine*, mistakenly attributed to Byron by the journal's editor. Polidori's vampire was Byronic, while at the same time a caricature of Byron, and the legendary predator assumed a strikingly new form; he was a conscious human being, an aristocrat, a wanderer and a seducer.¹⁷⁵ As early as Puységur, it was noted that the moral compass of somnambulists remained fairly constant between their waking and mesmeric states. The disturbing questions which arose about evil magnetizers and vampires centred on the possible perversion of their somnambulist/victims and of nature as a whole.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ John William Polidori, *The Vampyre and Ernestus Berchtold; or, The Modern Oedipus*, ed. and intro. by D.L. Macdonald and Kathleen Scherf (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 1-4. See also Mario Praz's *The Romantic Agony*, trans. Angus Davidson (Cleveland and New York: Meridian Books, The World Publishing Company, 1967), Chapter 2, "The Metamorphoses of Satan", 51-92. In 1820, Charles Maturin blended the figure of the Wandering Jew and the Byronic vampire in his *Melmoth the Wanderer*. Goethe was the first to treat as a literary subject the fearsome vampire legends which arose in Illyria in the eighteenth century. His *Braut von Korinth* (1797) features a female vampire.

¹⁷⁶ Somnambulists could also exploit the rapport with their magnetizer so as to challenge normally maintained moral standards. See the case discussed by Lisa Feurzeig in her "Heroines in Perversity: Marie Schmith, Animal Magnetism, and the Schubert Circle," *19th-Century Music*, 21,2 (1997), 223-243. Friedrich Schlegel, then based in Vienna, was initially in charge of Schmith's treatment. The case was taken over by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld, whose son Ludwig created the role of Wagner's Tristan in 1865.

When Wagner fleshed out the libretto of *Holländer*, unconscious mental processes and mesmeric phenomena were fixed firmly in his mind as central aesthetic premises. Senta, a true poet in the Hoffmannesque sense, develops a heightened awareness that she shares with others in the central scene of the opera as she sings the Ballad outlining the Dutchman's fate. Senta's mesmerist appears to be the Dutchman, on account of her obsessive attraction to his portrait, as well as to the legend and song, and all the effects these exert on her. The Dutchman, like Torbern, is elusive, embodying the ambiguities of mesmerism itself—its potential revelatory yet also dangerous nature. As expressed through the contrasting perspectives of Senta and the other Norwegians, the Dutchman both encourages extraordinary sensibility and wields evil power in a vampiric way. This clash in understanding specifically recaptures the conflict in psychological history between Gassner and Mesmer. Precisely when Erik tries to save Senta, the different beliefs yet similar techniques associated with exorcism and mesmerism come together just as Senta's gifts as a somnambulist reach their peak. The Dutchman's actual arrival in Senta's life makes it clear that he is not a true poet or mesmerist. His counterpart turns out to be Hoffmann's Elis. The Dutchman intuits Senta's love but fails to embrace it fully. At the end of the opera, he sheds the vampiric associations which have accrued through the perspectives of others. Misguided, and planning to return to his life at sea, he releases Senta from sharing his fate; he does not want to consume or destroy an innocent victim. Ultimately, Wagner's case relies on the mesmeric power of artistic representation and makes the implicit plea that the artwork-audience relationship needed resuscitation. For above all, it is the artistic embodiment of the legendary Dutchman which awakens Senta's inner sensibility, enabling her to envision a supreme kind of love and to commit fully to its actualization. Wagner's first bold claim of this kind, *Der fliegende Holländer* marks the point at which he synthesized various strands of contemporary psychological thought and saw how they could form the foundation of new directions for the operatic genre.

Chapter 2

Der fliegende Holländer: A Case Study

The legend of the Flying Dutchman is by no means unknown to the Norwegians of Wagner's opera. Through the different ways it is invoked, it serves a range of needs and underscores a divergence of beliefs. Each of the opera's three acts opens with the typical behaviour of a particular sub-set of the community. In each case, those attitudes allow the legend to emerge, prompted by atypical aspects of the individual scenarios—the storm, Senta's professed sympathy for the Dutchman, and the foreign ship in the harbour respectively—but never with any real knowledge that the time has come for the Dutchman's every septennial visit or that his destination is their very own shores. The ways in which the legend figures initially in each scenario establish frames of reference into which evidence of the Dutchman's actual presence is introduced. This evidence, however, does not clearly link the foreigner to the legendary man; its tendency to flirt with thresholds of perception, cognition and consciousness resists such straightforward identification. These thresholds mark key points of skepticism and superstition in the coastal community and illuminate the boundaries within which the Norwegians are able to understand extraordinary phenomena. They also delineate the crux of Wagner's argument, in its psychological, philosophical and aesthetic dimensions.

As the opera unfolds, signs of the Dutchman's collective identity accumulate unevenly. Throughout, the audience is privy to relevant events and utterances to which many of the operatic characters, either on-stage or off, are not. The Dutchman's arrival and opening monologue, for instance, connect him to the unusual cursed realm of his legendary persona but he does not explicitly and publicly admit this affiliation until his parting words. Senta and Daland are the only characters who engage directly in conversation with the mortal Dutchman yet Senta alone grasps the dual nature of the Dutchman's existence. The rest of the Norwegians negotiate not with the human foreigner in their midst but with signs of the legendary sailor's presence amongst them. They are compelled to exclude him from their lives to maintain the kind of order which defines their society and its purported ideals. The

transformation of the legend of the cursed Dutchman from passive story into active forces and tangible entities threatens this order. It does not, however, create the vulnerabilities it exposes. Like the Dutchman, the Norwegians move between private and public modes of expression. They too illuminate layers of concealed thoughts and feelings which are socially subordinated. Normal everyday reality confirms that this process of compliance with social norms is not completely satisfactory but the Norwegians do not feel empowered to find ways of reconciling these separate planes. It is through the fusion of Senta's private and public worlds that the legendary and mortal Dutchman are brought together for the on-stage audience. This union openly challenges social order. It also engenders a transformational potential which is misunderstood by everyone around her, including the Dutchman. To all of them, Senta's behaviour only affirms ideas central to the legend of the Flying Dutchman as it was originally created.

The forms in which the Flying Dutchman legend has long existed are inherently static. Pictorially, verbally and musically, they all concern a distanced and controlled narrative. The legend has an ostensible point of initiation and reaches vaguely into the past to the moment when the Dutchman's curse began. The protagonist is a foreigner and the locale in which he underwent his curse is generically remote. Geographically and temporally, the tale remains distant in that it never reconnects with real moments in time or space. This type of treatment emphasizes the legend's fictional status and in some ways renders the basic material suitable for general entertainment or other casual uses. But the tale is also very dark and has no ending. The Dutchman's suffering, once set into motion, never changes. His redemption, as part of that fate, is never realized. The stasis of this never-ending cycle of suffering is contained in closed forms which preclude his release and, paradoxically, any resolution of the legend's plot. The possible intersection of the legend of the Flying Dutchman with the lives of the Norwegians is as inconceivable as it is undesirable.

The legend reflects fixed moral-religious ideas concerning irrational phenomena in a somewhat creative and deliberately terrifying way. The Dutchman's fate stands as a fire-and-brimstone kind of warning of what the Norwegians themselves should avoid. Its message is strongest if the Satanic forces always prevail and the Dutchman is forever punished and

denied re-acceptance into society in general, whose norms—the Norwegians' own—he disregarded. His terrible fate and exclusion from society—their community—also fosters a helpless and fearful attitude concerning the unknown. The Dutchman is stigmatized by his curse as if he had a contagious disease. The rationally and materially oriented Norwegians can regard the legend as a spurious tale when they are confident that their own situations are secure. But in less confident moments, the moral-religious sphere to which the legend belongs conveniently fills gaps in understanding which their rationalistic perspective cannot bridge. At the same time, however, this mode of explanation demands that the Norwegians accept a position of helplessness and vulnerability. As Senta and the Dutchman's visit draw attention to the legend, these problematical issues are brought into focus. Regarded from different angles, the attitudes towards the legend and its many forms highlight gendered stereotypes which are consistent with the ways the Norwegian men and women make sense of all their lives as a whole. The male members of the community are its most staunch rationalists, a perspective which their female counterparts dutifully but less consistently emulate.

In the opening all-male act, none of the Norwegians specifically mentions the Flying Dutchman legend. Nevertheless, Daland's early unguarded comments refer to it in a self-referential, oblique way: "Senta mein Kind, glaubt'ich schon zu umarmern! — Da bläst es aus dem Teufelsloch heraus... Wer baut auf Wind, baut auf Satans Erbarmen!"¹ Like Daland, the legendary Dutchman is a sea captain and hypothetically subject to unpredictable and sometimes destructive changes in the weather. His fate arose from an unfortunate tangle with the wind and Satan, when he uttered words which may not have been intended to be taken at face value but he nonetheless was forced to honour. It is easy to sympathize with the Dutchman as a victim of a predatorial kind of evil—the role that Daland claims for himself as he is anxious to absolve himself of responsibility for his wishes not being realized as planned. But the Dutchman's innocence is questionable in that the motivation for his verbal transgression of mortal limitations is unclear and his implied crime is a moral one. Daland

¹ This and subsequent quotations from *Der fliegende Holländer* are drawn from the version of the libretto published in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Julius Knapp, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Hesse & Becker, 1911).

distinguishes himself from the legendary Captain in three key respects: he anchors his boat to wait out the storm, he defends his moral propriety and innocence in proclaiming his wish to be reunited with his daughter and he does not let his unreasoned words stand unchecked. From this position he can rationalize the storm as a random, non-permanent form of bad luck. Daland's behaviour takes the legendary Dutchman's as its cues, as examples of what not to do.

After his references to Satan, Daland professes a change in attitude as he steps aboard his ship and utters within earshot of its crew: "Was hilft's! Geduld, der Sturm läßt nach; wenn so er tobt, dann währt's nicht lang". His earlier outburst is overridden by this corrective as is the steersman's later impulsive comment towards the strange ship, "Zum Teufel auch!", with its follow-up "Verzeiht mir, Kapitän!". These loopholes into superstitious territory remain open only briefly and, like the storm that cannot rage forever, soon yield to more ordered states. The voice of reason is that of normatively defined truth amongst the Norwegians and is the cornerstone of all endorsed modes of behaviour, expression and interpretation. The inability of this rigid system to accommodate multiple levels of truthful meaning promotes deception as well as self-deception, allowing some partial truths to claim the status of comprehensive truths while other partial truths pass unnoticed.

The strange man that Daland encounters on the shores of Sandwike offers many visual and verbal clues which could easily align him with the legendary Dutchman. But these clues pass unacknowledged by Daland for whom the fictional character is not conceivable in human form. Any perceived similarities would be written off to mere coincidence, considered meaningless in terms of understanding the identity of the tangible Dutchman, and not even worthy of expression. In fact, mentioning any perceived similarities would be inherently discouraged, because it would publicly reveal an inability to clearly distinguish between fiction and reality. Daland assesses the stranger in relation to himself. Because he can easily grasp similarities—the stranger's occupation and wishes for a home and family are similar to his own—he engages sympathetically with him. He admits that the story he hears outlining the Dutchman's decidedly more unfortunate circumstances is bizarre, but offers him a more continuous variant of the explanation he earlier offered to himself: momentary bad luck

becomes “Ein Unstern, scheint’s, hat dich bis jetzt verfolgt”. Both Daland and the Dutchman are thus bound in their innocence, and a foundation is laid upon which a more complementary, interactive relationship can evolve.

Their interaction rapidly unfolds to the point that the Dutchman willingly offers Daland a sizable treasure in exchange for a night’s rest in his home. While unable to rationally conceptualize such wealth, Daland can instantly see a monetary benefit to the arrangement. The Dutchman goes a step further when he offers all of his wealth for a new home. The link which could bring this about is Senta. The extension of the arrangement to include her hand in marriage precipitates the duet between the two men, in which they share private and public thoughts about this marvelous potential turn of events. Daland quenches his curiosity about how and why a wealthy son-in-law is being offered to him by invoking a positive form of luck. He must quickly take advantage of it because like bad luck it cannot last forever: “Wüßt’ ich, ob ich wach’ oder träume! Kann ein Eidam willkommener sein? Ein Thor, wenn das Glück ich versäume!”. He only utters these thoughts privately in an extended aside which formally begins the duet. The Dutchman’s entry in this opening *Allegro giusto* section commands the orchestral accompaniment and introduces a more conventionally lyrical theme in contrast to Daland’s simple, quirky optimism. As Daland’s words recede to the background, emerging intermittently as counterpoint, the Dutchman’s characteristically more ponderous and troubled tone emerges. Daland partakes in this modally mixed landscape, which for him is not one of despair but one of awe and fascination. The two characters become more musically integrated with the repetition of their texts, achieving a tonally rounded and conventional close in G major. In the transitional aftermath, the music turns towards C minor, drawing forward minor subdominant colouring already exposed in the first section. Its flattened third, the flattened sixth of G major, is also profiled as the highest pitch of the diminished sonority which, together with C minor, catalyzes the modulation to E \flat major which opens the subsequent *Animato* section. Only now does Daland communicate directly with the Dutchman and the text setting temporarily returns to dialogue form. As Daland cements his commitment of Senta’s hand, the Dutchman’s hopes increase but are still mixed with trepidation; his personal history of failed attempts to find a woman capable of redeeming him continues to filter

musically into the duet as contrast to the ostensibly jubilant milieu. Daland, whose enthusiasm cannot be reduced solely to his anticipation of wealth, is influenced by the Dutchman's solemn tone. He enters the Dutchman's musical plane as his blessing of the union takes into account his compassion and respect for the fellow mariner's pride. Also fuelled by his pride and genuine fatherly love of Senta, he reaches an enthusiastically synthesized and confirmational cadence in E♭ major.

The transition to the concluding section of the duet looks forward to the return of the favourable Southwind, which will enable them to reach Daland's port and pursue their arrangement. The anticipation involves F major and moves towards B♭, the tonal centre of the song that opened the act, was later sung alone by the Steersman, and will be resumed when Daland's crew finally sets sail for home. For now, everyone must wait. The third and final section of the duet is similar to the first, except that it is the Dutchman who begins and whose text is an aside. Daland's naive optimism effects returns to G major as he reinterprets what initially seemed to be bad luck as its opposite. The Dutchman begins, however, and his choice of G minor revisits the minor inflections associated with the immediately preceding section. His thoughtful probing reaches even further into his operatic and personal past as his growing hope of redemption stirs painful memories of unsuccessful attempts. The G-major/minor contrast recalls the dialogue between the two men prior to their duet; the Dutchman's extended passage in G minor outlining his terrible existence is modally altered by Daland as he points to bad luck as the cause. The Dutchman's initiating musical language also recalls frustrated redemption-related ideas from his earlier monologue before he meets Daland on more common and hopeful ground. Their final vocal cadence in G major is sealed with good luck, harmonized by the motivating dominant seventh of the returning Southwind, C-E-G-B♭, which redirects the musical arguments in the direction of F major and B♭ major. The reintroduction of the flattened mediant favoured earlier by the Dutchman suggests further structurally interlocking harmonic relationships involving G minor as the act-opening song is resumed. The song's refrain initially features G minor—vi, the relative minor of the song's tonic B♭ major—and even temporarily camouflages the fundamental tonality until strong dominant-tonic forces exert themselves. The submediant pitch, in an oscillating pattern with

the dominant is also characteristic of the refrain. As a harmonic and melodic force, the submediant plays important roles throughout the opera, contributing to musico-dramatic gestures which concern extraordinary matters and specifically the Dutchman's redemption. Significantly, here, the submediant is weak. The weather becomes favourable and bad luck seems to disappear as everyone looks forward to an exchange of "Schätzen"; the subject of the act-closing song.

The Dutchman's unearthly nature passes unrecognized throughout the first act. Only the off-stage audience is awake to perceive the uncanny speed with which his ship travels, its unusual appearance, the extraordinarily loud crash—*furchtbarer Klang*—as it anchors, the Dutchman's awkward re-adjustment to solid ground and his frank discussion of his cursed state. Only the audience seated in the opera house see and hear the Dutchman's arrival and the first version of his story, the sole version in the opera which profiles his loss of faith in the possibility of redemption and his frustrated efforts to end his own life. He begins this most recent venture onto land unwilling to actively participate in the search for redemption and preferring to passively endure his futile existence until the Day of Judgement. Daland hears the second version. The Dutchman does not lie to him, but he avoids mentioning his curse as the cause of his extreme suffering. The Dutchman does not wish to harm the people he encounters; he simply wants to avoid outright rejection so that he can perhaps rest, in a comfortable home, until he returns to his restless existence roving the sea. His fear of rejection remains when he hears that Daland has a daughter. Not surprisingly, the Dutchman chooses to sail from Sandwike after Daland has departed, so that his ship's supernatural qualities will remain unnoticed by the Norwegians.

If the Dutchman seems guilty of manipulating the truth, Daland seems predisposed to overlook it. But the Dutchman is also a victim of selective disclosure, literal interpretation and narrow perspectives. When Daland describes his daughter as "ein treues Kind", the Dutchman immediately latches onto the singularly important criterion of faithfulness and bursts out "Sie sei mein Weib!". He abandons his disinterest in the possibility of redemption although Daland's concept of his daughter's fidelity cannot possibly take into consideration the kind of faithfulness which the Dutchman requires. When the Dutchman meets Senta directly, he

remains convinced that his full identity is undetectable. He does not understand her clues to the contrary and therefore fails to recognize that her pledge of fidelity to him does indeed fulfill all his redemption needs. This self-deception and tendency towards misinterpretation compounds when the Dutchman overhears Erik's words in the last act and takes them as a confirmation that Senta cannot be his redeemer. Before the Dutchman tells Senta about his curse, he releases her from her verbal commitment to him and offers her a kind of absolution that she does not need. It is the sort of forgiveness that would have prevented him from befalling his curse in the first place. He believes that Senta would not have pledged fidelity to him had she known how strictly she would have to honour her words and the consequences should she fail to do so; in short, if she had known about his curse. The Dutchman claims responsibility for not revealing the whole truth about his situation and proactively rejects his Bluebeard tendency to draw innocent women into his cursed world. He boards his ship unenlightened. Senta's final self-annihilating gesture renders her words truthful, at the extraordinary level upon which they were thought and uttered. As redeemer and "woman of the future", Senta thus frees the Dutchman from his real curse, his enslavement to a flawed ontological system.

As Michael Tanner has observed, the Dutchman is an example of a type of character which typically interested Wagner: "someone who has done something frightful but not straightforwardly evil—which is to say that he himself suffers more than anyone else on account of his situation. The Dutchman's oath to round the Cape at all costs is a blasphemy for which Satan punishes him. It is, again characteristically, an assertion of will taken with no regard to consequences."² Within the opera, only Senta recalls the fateful moment, in the second verse of the Ballad:

“Bei bösem Wind und Sturmes Wut, umsegeln wollt' er einst ein Kap;
 er flucht' und schwur mit tollem Mut: 'In Ewigkeit laß ich's nicht ab!'
 Hui!—Und Satan hörts—Johohe!—Johohe!
 Hui!—nahm ihn beim Wort!—Johohe!—Johohe!
 Hui!—und verdammt zieht er nun durch das Meer, ohne Rast, ohne Ruh'.”

² Michael Tanner, *Wagner* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 67.

What do the Dutchman's words mean? Even if "Ewigkeit" (eternity) is understood as that which follows the end of his mortal life, it is not plausible that he could constantly battle the winds through day and night, without rest until that point. Perhaps what he really meant was "I will never let up, within reason of course". The Dutchman was verbally careless in a moment of extreme frustration, uttering words which he could not realize if literally interpreted. His crime is an abuse of language as a carrier of unreasoned and unreasonable thoughts. Who is not guilty of such carelessness? The Dutchman's curse enslaves him to a system of communication and interpretation which is unable to accommodate multiple perspectives, let alone multiple levels and kinds of meaning. Satan interprets his words not only literally but also narrowly. Satan neither sleeps nor dies. "Ewigkeit" means nothing to him. Constant striving, however, he can understand as truly constant. The Dutchman is therefore removed from the realm of humanity to endure his curse and satisfy Satan's interpretation.

When we first encounter the Dutchman, he is not so much concerned about his original curse as he is about the possibility of redemption that was subsequently offered to him. This possibility has not been realized. The soliloquy version of the Dutchman's story is remarkable in the ways that he consistently exposes as hollow—through inversion and negation—traditionally meaningful concepts and gestures. Like many of Wagner's characters who arrive at a state of utter despair, the Dutchman willingly unpacks in his aria proper the unique experiences which have led him to that point. He has lost his faith in objective reality and the hope it once seemed to support. His aria justifies his philosophical shift as the outcome of his personal experiences and offers a logical explanation for the statements in his *arioso*/recitative which, by themselves, are rather puzzling. When he steps onto land, he swears fidelity unto death to the ocean, a vow of marriage to an unhuman and less faithful entity. It is as if the ocean has come to symbolize his never found home and all of his would-be brides, for whom the extraordinary level of fidelity necessary to guarantee his redemption is beyond reach. His vow is an anti-vow; his promise to not actively seek a potentially better partner on land is a renunciation of will, not an exertion of it. Furthermore, because he believes redemption impossible, his renunciation has no impact on an external state of affairs.

All that he can achieve is the lessening of his own frustration and a small degree of revenge because he will no longer satisfy what he imagines to be the delight of evil and divine forces alike at his vain striving.

The Dutchman's unusual experiences and state emphasize his isolation from the natural world, an isolation which, as Arthur Groos points out, is both temporally and spatially distinct. "The entire recitative introduces the curse as a supernatural dislocation in space and time, trapping the hero in what science fiction would call a time warp, represented visually by his anachronistic *schwarze spanische Tracht* (black Spanish outfit) and emphasized by his illusions to time...The ocean, a spatial counterpart to this temporal imprisonment, casts him up on land to seek redemption, only to reclaim him again in a never ending cycle until the tide of time itself has run its course."³ The Dutchman's plea for "ew'ge Vernichtung" at the end of his aria is a call for the permanent obliteration of time, space and cycles. As he arrives on shore, his initial references to time seem to convey a sense of imminence—as potentially a begetter of change—but the Dutchman's argument quickly points to its inconsequentiality. His cycle of suffering contains two distinct time/space segments: the seven years which he spends at sea and the brief period in which he is allowed to seek salvation on land. The latter segment changed his constant cursed state to a differentiated cycle, which, albeit polarized, involves the search for a freely given and positive kind of constancy, to be judged by God, in order to be released from a negative one, enforced by Satan. While redemption seemed plausible, the longer segment had some value as a waiting period in which hope could be maintained. But the Dutchman has endured an untold number of fruitless cycles. To read the Dutchman's past efforts on land as a critique of women as generally unfaithful would be excessively harsh. General attitudes towards curses—such as those demonstrated by the Norwegians—have likely played a role in pledges of fidelity being broken. The devaluation of the shorter segment encouraged the Dutchman to hope for death while at sea as a possible end to his suffering. That too proved unattainable. His call for total destruction is the logical outcome of a process of devaluation and revaluation of both of these time/space segments.

³ Arthur Groos, "Back to the Future: Hermeneutic Fantasies in *Der fliegende Holländer*," *19th-Century Music* 19, no.2 (fall 1995): 195-7.

The Dutchman leaves his time warp and enters more structured space to tell his story. In the first of his aria's three sections, he describes his futile efforts to end his life. The transition from the recitative more than hints at a primary musical argument to be pursued: faint timpani tremolos on G, dominant preparation for the aria's principal key of C minor, swell as two consecutive A \flat -major triads proclaim their presence in the musical fabric. As the ritornello first emerges in the introduction, A \flat is carried forth atop a diminished sonority that intersects with G but also exerts its independence; the semi-tonal relationship between the dominant and flattened sixth is thus cast across a dominant ninth with multi-functional inner parts (see example 2.1). The diminished sonority forcefully cascades two octaves before reconnecting and oscillating with G, the dominant trigger for the restatement of the ritornello, now diatonically rooted and in a regular two-bar shape. After this call to order, the Dutchman begins his narrative. The climactic A \flat is now harmonized within an F-minor sonority which flavours but does not disturb its C-minor environment. But the modulatory hint of F \sharp , in the direction of the dominant, draws forth another capping diminished sonority which features the flattened sixth, and leading-tone, of the new localized tonic G. The G-minor passage which follows is the first recognizable post-Overture intimation of the so-called redemption theme. It is a frustrated gesture in that the Dutchman is here concerned with the ways that he has tried, in vain, to end his suffering through death. He has lost his faith in the possibility of being redeemed but neither has he found another solution to end his struggle. The prevalent tonality, in the minor mode, is not diatonically integrated into its surroundings. It lacks the leading-tone of C minor and is not entered smoothly, but through a diminished sonority whose self-assertive brass voices mark a change in tempo as well as in orchestration and harmonic orientation. The phrase-ending repeated dominant pitches, as horn calls, again trigger the ritornello. The pattern repeats except that the E \flat atop the diminished sonority is reinterpreted as the diatonic sixth of a different modulatory goal, one based on a pitch which participates directly in the harmonic pivot: G \flat major. The musical idea of redemption is again fragmented and frustrated; the Dutchman remains unharmed by the cliffs that would normally destroy many ships and sailors.

Hammered out by the trombones, $G\flat$ does not function immediately as a dominant, as G had earlier. Nevertheless, it prevails in the ensuing struggle between the diminished sonority of which it is a part and D major, as the Dutchman recounts his attempt to find death through the hands of pirates. Semi-tonal tension is registered vocally between $E\flat$ and D . Internally, $G\flat$ enharmonically aids in the establishment of D major, through which G minor, and a more conventional kind of harmonic syntax, is restored. The initial modulation from i to v (C minor to G minor), skewered by $G\flat$ to effect $i-V\flat$ in its repeat, is further varied by $G\flat/F\sharp$ as dialogue between D major and G minor ambiguously play up $i-V$ so as to also evoke its inversion, $iv-I$. The Dutchman's even greater hopes are again dashed. Even at the tremendous prospect of a ship brimming with treasures, "des Meer's barbar'scher Sohn schlägt bang das Kreuz und flieht dävon". These words are immediately preceded by the second sounding, within the main body of the opera, of the bisected octave horn-call motive which opens the Overture (see example 2.2). Earlier, it heralded the Dutchman's arrival; he took his first step onto land out of and away from the motive's lingering last note and its base tonality of B minor. In this section of the aria, as with all other occurrences, the motive signals a deviation from normal reality and the expectations it begets. Outlining a D triad, as it had in the Overture, it stamps the Dutchman's treasure-laden ship with the curse that repels his potential killers. The Dutchman's deflated hopes are musically inscribed as the bass line descends to timpani tremolos, harmonized by the trombones as B major. In revealing the crux of the problem, the $G\flat$ trombone calls are finally realized as a substitute or alternate dominant. The Dutchman vocally traces diminished sonorities which extend from the mediant and dominant pitches of B major before everything compresses to the single pitch B . The curse motive reappears, outlining a B triad. While its modal qualities are now less certain, it is not inert. The motive dovetails with signs of a recapitulation: the characteristic ritornello figure, embodying the oceanic locale of the Dutchman's curse, coupled with the return of the opening text: "Wie oft in Meeres tiefsten Schlund".

At the beginning of the section, four-bar ritornello-based phrases alternated with the four-bar frustrated redemption idea. In the quasi-recapitulation, the first phrase of text is

stretched over four statements of the two-bar flowing string pattern, no longer diatonically grounded but governed by successive diminished sonorities. The first is the diminished sonority of the introduction (A \flat -B-D-F), which rises a semi-tone to reach the same diminished sonority which ended the opening four-bar phrase and served as a pivot to G minor. Here, the ritornello is carried forward by (A-C-E \flat -F \sharp), and a parallel shift up a

Example 2.2: *Der fliegende Holländer*, Act 1, no. 2

h. Schät - - zen voll ist Schiff und Boot! Doch ach! - des

h. Meers bar - bar'scher Sohn schlägt bang das Kreuz und flieht da - von!

ii. Wie oft in Mee - - - res

ii. tief - - - sten Schlund stürzt ich voll Seh - - - sucht

cresc. poco a poco

semitone attains the last diminished sonority. The frustrated redemption idea is still not forthcoming; its textual parts are deferred, while its diatonic G-minor harmonic basis is prematurely absorbed within the ritornello texture and subordinated to more influential diminished sonorities. Reaching the trumpet calls on E \flat , and recalling earlier structural markers, the Dutchman side-steps its modulatory potential, rising by semitone through successive diminished sonorities to proclaim the impossibility of resolving his cycle of suffering through death: “nirgends ein Grab! niemals der Tod!” The curse, a destabilizing influence, has forced the Dutchman to seek different ways to end his suffering, but the result is always the same. C minor returns with his closing words “dies der Verdammniss Schreckgebote!”

The return of C minor and the re-stabilization of the ritornello figure hints on one hand towards strophic continuation and on the other hand towards closure. In either case, the Dutchman’s personal momentum has petered out with decrescendi and a slackening of tempo. There is no point in offering another verse about other thwarted attempts to end his life. When the curse motive, chameleon-like, outlines a C triad superimposed upon the ritornello, the Dutchman turns his attention in a different direction, towards the more distant past. Tremolo violins assume and suspend the ritornello on its C-minor mediant, E \flat . The feeling of suspension continues throughout the *Maestoso*. The homogenous string milieu is faintly streaked with individual colour—clarinets and bassoons at first. It is shorn of much of the metrical and rhythmical propulsion of the *Allegro molto agitato*. A \flat , the submediant of C minor, was already harmonically and melodically profiled in the first section. Here, it assumes a more integral but also ambiguous role in relation to E \flat major, a typical candidate for larger-scale tonal motion. The interplay thrives upon their potential reciprocal subdominant and dominant relationships and begins as the transitional E \flat tremolo, passed from the strings to the timpani, is resumed by the violas as the dominant of A \flat minor. In the guise of string tremolos, which were part of the frustrated redemption idea, the potential dominant nature of the earlier E \flat trumpet pronouncements is realized as the Dutchman considers the cause of his inability to end his suffering through redemption. The precedent and parallel

construction concerning the G \flat trombone calls involved resolution to B major/minor as the curse was revealed as the primary obstacle to ending his suffering through death.

In the four extant draft versions of the libretto, Wagner's treatment of the Dutchman's monologue included stage directions concerning his appearance before and after he sings. When he set the text to music, he added the note "Er richtet seinen Blick gen Himmel" at the transition to the aria's second section. In his 1852 essay "Bemerkungen zur Aufführung der Oper 'Der fliegende Holländer'" ("Remarks on Performing the Opera *The Flying Dutchman*"), Wagner offered more detailed commentary concerning the Dutchman's manner of delivery throughout the aria. He wanted the Dutchman's physical gestures to be unusually restricted during the first section of the aria. "Even the words: '*Niemals der Tod, nirgends ein Grab!*', which are certainly to be sung with the greatest vehemence, belong rather to the *description* of his sufferings than to a direct, an actual outburst of his despair".⁴ Wagner wanted neither conventional operatic modes of gesturing that might call attention to the singer but have little to do with what is being sung nor a mimic representation of the textual or musical anguish. The Dutchman is more than just physically weary. He is unwilling to engage fully with life anymore and his gestural inactivity extends beyond a naturalistic representation of inability. The original curse/redemption framework of his existence no longer holds any value. Like the Norwegians on the whole, the Dutchman has no evidence that this framework connects to a rational and ideal kind of reality.

Although the story that the Dutchman tells is his own, he spiritually and corporeally resists identification with its subject. As he turns away from the physically aggressive music and events of the first section, his narrative mode of interpretation becomes more complex and subjective. He reaches further into the past to the moment when redemption became a possibility. He does not narrate this moment directly. Nor does he recount it within a chain of action as an initially viable potentiality, as he did regarding his efforts to end his life.

⁴ This and subsequent quotations from the essay are from *Richard Wagner's Prose Works*, trans. William Ashton Ellis, vol. 3 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1892-1899).

Tremendous schismatic friction precedes this reclamation, as Wagner emphasized through his stage directions. At the transition to the second section, the Eb string tremolo, “he raises his face to heaven, his body still bent low; with the entry of the muffled roll of the kettle-drum at the ninth bar of the postlude he begins to shudder, the down-held fists are clenched convulsively, the lips commence to move, and at last (with eyes fixed heavenward throughout) he starts the phrase: ‘*Dich frage ich*’ etc. This whole, almost direct address to ‘God’s angel’, for all the terrible expression with which it is to be sung, must yet be delivered in the pose just indicated”. While the Dutchman remains partially detached, his frustration perforates the physical surface of his performance. His address is a question: “war ich Unsel’ger Spielwerk deines Spottes, als die Erlösung du mir zeigtest an?”. It is clothed in the musical aura of a prayer, but the question is rhetorical and underscores the Dutchman’s lack of faith. He allows no space for a response which he assumes, like redemption, will not be forthcoming. At this time in his career, Wagner still observed conventional practices of textual repetition. However, in repeating his question, the Dutchman also answers himself. He moves melodically and harmonically, but like the Dutchman’s roving search for death, his search for redemption has never been satisfied.

Example 2.3: *Der fliegende Holländer*, Act 1, no. 2

Maestoso. (♩ = 66.)

Dich fra-ge ich, ge-pries-ner En-gel Got--tes, der mei-nes

Kl.
Br.

Vel. Kb. trem.
Fag. gehalten

Hells Be-dingung mir ge-wann, war ich Un-sel'-ger Spiel-werk dei-nes

u. Kl.
sempre pp
Fag.

(example 2.3 continued)

Spot-tes, als die Er - lö - sung du mir zeig-test an? Dich fra - ge

ich, ge - pries-ner En - gel Got - tes, der mei-nes Heils Be - dingung mir ge-

wann, — war ich Un - sel'-ger Spielwerk dei - nes Spot-tes, als die Er -

lö - sung du mir zeigtest an? —

Pos. Pk. *resc.*

The two-part structure of this second section is marked by the repetition of its text (see example 2.3). In the first part, the repeated phrase-long movement from A \flat minor to E \flat major is plausible as i-V, but the punctuating major mode sonority is relatively stable. In the previous section, plagal colouring involved A \flat , climactically harmonized within motion-arresting F-minor sonorities in the C-minor ritornello, and was later developed in a modally

mixed variant involving G minor and D major. As the *Maestoso* opens, potential subdominant emphasis again involves A \flat , this time as a root pitch, and involves the more chromatic iv-I form of the relationship. The opening A \flat -minor sonority, extended for five measures, is underpinned throughout by C \flat , the flattened sixth and hence deviant pitch with regards to E \flat major. Tension between the flattened sixth and dominant is registered through the vocal appoggiatura at “meines Heils” as the bass relaxes to B \flat and prepares, via a dominant seventh, the shift to E \flat major. Unlike in the earlier section, the subdominant is now less clearly subordinated by dominant-tonic relations. Also, the dominant ninth and its forceful diminished seventh sub-chord is absent. Here, A \flat is already an element in the basic dominant seventh of E \flat , whose function it preempts by reclaiming the minor subdominant sonority and articulating a iv-I cadence. The tonic qualities which E \flat increasingly assumes in the first half of this section are, in turn, adopted by A \flat in the second half. Through modal fluctuations, A \flat attracts its own minor subdominant through which the iv-I cadence is restated and closes the section as a whole. The net effect is the cyclical re-inscription of what initially seemed a progressive modulation of a fourth—one which weakens the overall role of E \flat —back within an expanded tonal sphere of A \flat minor-major.⁵

⁵ For recent discussions of Wagner’s use of this and related cadential formulae, see Hermann Danuser, “Musical Manifestations of the End in Wagner and Post-Wagnerian *Weltanschauungsmusik*,” *19th-Century Music* 18, no.1 (summer 1992): 64-82, and Gerhard J. Winkler, “Wagners ‘Erlösungsmotiv’: Versuch über eine musikalische Schlußformel: Eine Stilübung,” *Musiktheorie* 5 (1990): 3-25. Both authors concentrate on “ultimate” cadences. Winkler points out Wagner’s use of this iv-I cadential formula at the end of his *Faust* Overture (1839/40) and, within *Der fliegende Holländer*, at the sounding of the motive associated with the Dutchman’s curse, in F-minor, within the context of C-major at the soloist’s vocal close of the monologue. But Winkler, echoed by Danuser, regards Wagner’s use of the trope in the 1860 revised endings to the Overture and last act of the opera as attaching a musical symbol of redemption which Wagner only fully developed later on and hence was not initially an integral part of the work. As discussed here, the harmonic pattern is already a significant element in the Dutchman’s monologue and in other parts of *Der fliegende Holländer* in which the concept of redemption is paramount. Other harmonic-dramatic precursors can also be found in Wagner’s preceding opera *Rienzi*. For example, subdominant colouring (IV-1) is characteristic of the invisible double chorus of monks and priests singing a capella within the church in the Act I finale. The extended cadential gesture of their organ introduction includes iv-I. At the beginning to the next act, the oft-repeated V-I

The Dutchman refuses to continue this cycle and he rejects its network of religious-redemptive associations. His solution at this point does not concern God's angel, as the crucial transition to his last section makes clear. Despite and because of the middle section of his aria, the Dutchman's redefinition of hope uses the iv-I trope and the flattened submediant remains a potent musical element. The trope returns in a less perverted fashion in the Dutchman's duet with Daland, as Senta's candidacy for redemptress is first considered, and in the private portions of the Dutchman's first meeting with Senta. The Dutchman is predisposed to doubt Senta's ability to redeem him and indeed releases her from even trying, but G minor returns as a minor subdominant to harmonize Senta's last word in the opera—"Tod"—and serves as jumping-off point for her self-sacrificing redemptive act. As she falls to the sea below, the diminished sonority B-D-F, underpinned by A \flat in the bass, peals through the chromatic diatonic before reaching the dominant A, spread across several octaves, and the sounding of the redemption theme in D major. Wagner's revised ending(s) of 1860 is a cadential extension profiling the so-called redemption theme and this crucial G-minor/D-major relationship. While Tristanesque in its over-reaching melodic line, it represents a concentrated version of the musical process of Senta's redemptive act and is at the same time a final recapitulation of a prominent musical idea associated with redemption throughout the work.

Within the Dutchman's monologue, we encounter the iv-I trope in its most negative forms as the Dutchman does not maintain a shred of hope in redemption. His forecast of the future is accordingly bleak. "With the words: '*Vergeb 'ne Hoffnung*' etc. the full force of his despair finds vent: furious, he stands erect, his eyes still gazing heavenwards, and, with utmost energy of grief he casts all 'futile hopes' behind: no more will he hear of promised ransom, and finally (at entry of the kettle-drum and basses) he falls into a heap, as though undone and defeated. With the opening of the allegro-ritornel his features kindle to a new, a horrible last

pattern towards the end of the introduction, turns to repeated iv-I motion immediately prior to the sounding of the chorus of Friedensboten, a capella and still off-stage at this point. Their message combines religious gestures with those concerning freedom from struggle and hierarchically features the major mode subdominant.

hope—the hope of World’s-upheaval, in which he too must pass away. This closing Allegro requires the most terrible energy, not only in the vocal phrasing, but also in the mimetic action; for everything here is unmasked passion”. In this closing section, the Dutchman fully fuses his own role as narrator with that of the subject as he glances towards the future. Before that happens, his frustration peaks and he musically rejects his prayer with aggressive diminished sonorities and A-minor/major tonal anchors which negate the earlier presence of $A\flat$. He collapses. His return to full consciousness is initially a return to C minor and to a kind of musical order. Central and related keys from his prayer recur as secondary harmonic areas against which he imposes a tonic modal shift, entailing a naturalization of both $A\flat$ and $E\flat$, and a temporarily compelling close. His last vocal phrase unfolds 1-2-3 \flat , 6 \flat -5-3 \natural (see example 2.4). The flattened third is denied any defining harmonic presence and is subsumed within a series of diminished seventh sonorities. The naturalized, modifying third is spotlighted at the phrase’s end, within a hope-laden *tierce de picardie* shift to C major circumscribing the Dutchman’s call for eternal destruction.

Example 2.4: *Der fliegende Holländer*, Act 1, no. 2

The image displays a musical score for two systems. The first system features a vocal line (H) and piano accompaniment (p). The vocal line includes the lyrics "en - det eu - -ren Lauf! Ew' -". The piano accompaniment includes markings for "string.", "vi.", "Hr.", "f string.", and "str.". The second system features a vocal line (H) and piano accompaniment (p). The vocal line includes the lyrics "ge Ver - nich - - tung, nimm mich". The piano accompaniment includes markings for "f" and "b".

(example 2.4 continued)

Er bleibt in großer Stellung, fast wie eine Bildsäule, stehen.

auf!

ff

Picc. Trp. *ff*

Vel. *ff*

Allmählich löst er in der Kraft der

dim.

piu p

pp

Fig. Vel.

Chor der Mannschaft des Holländers (im Schiffsraum)

Tenor.

Bass.

Sw. - - - ge Ver - nich - - - tung, nimm

Stellung nach; die Arme sinken ihm.

uns auf!

Der Holländer senkt matt das Haupt, er wankt nach der Felsenwand zur Sei-

p

espress.

pp

Vi.

Vel.

Fig. Vel.

te hin; hier lehnt er sich mit den Rücken an, und verbleibt nun, die Arme auf der Brust verschränkt, lange in dieser Stellung.

L.Hr.

p

pp

The Dutchman relaxes as C major yields to A minor then E major. His invisible crew echo his cadential phrase “Ew’ge Vernichtung, nimm uns auf!”, *pianissimo*, stripped of supporting harmonies and harmonically at a distance. Suspended almost a capella above E string tremolos, they unfold 1-2-3 \flat , 1-2-3 \sharp , the *tierce de picardie* gesture in E minor/major. Their voices are dislocated from the body of the Dutchman’s monologue and reach him supposedly from the ship which houses them. The Dutchman’s arrival at his terrible last hope and his negation of the possibility of divine redemption enables their message. His redefinition of hope purges C minor of its flattened submediant and mediant, substituting harmonic networks involving A and E as significant pitches and harmonic centres for those involving A \flat and E \flat . His crew approach him via the relative minor, A minor, and from a major third above, E major—the inversion of the Dutchman’s earlier foray into the realm of redemption a major third below. The crew’s tonal sphere of E also reaches back to the Dutchman’s *arioso/recitative* in which the Dutchman was awkwardly released from his B-minor curse, taking his first three steps on land on E \sharp before taking the last on E. While the curse is rarely perceptible directly, it always lingers a step away. Its B-minor origins do not immediately follow because the Dutchman, for now, is stuck on land. This framing gesture complements other arch-like patterns which underscore the Dutchman’s narrative as a retrospective explanation of an already acquired perspective, as reaching a destination for the second time. Its apparently hopeful and teleological casts into the future are highly unstable; the major mode shifts they effect cannot be sustained and are vulnerable to minor mode inflections. Viscous cycles underlie and help to define the broader symmetrical shape. Enharmonically embedded within the ghostly crew’s E major is the flattened submediant of C and the premise for the modal collapse or undoing of the Dutchman’s C major close. As their voices fade, E is passed from the celli to the violins and to E \flat as C minor quietly returns before being reduced to a timpani tremolo on C. As the Captain further deflates, the haunting bisected octaves, as at the end of the aria’s first section, descend upon him.

The Dutchman's monologue emphasizes personal experiences and aspects of his character which are not part of and even contradict the basic stuff of his legend. The off-stage audience is privileged up front with this contradiction. The noisy and bizarre arrival of the Dutchman's ship is a musical and visual intrusion into the sleepy world of the Norwegians. The last of the Norwegian crew to fall asleep, the Steersman fails in his task of keeping watch while the remainder of his colleagues rest. His sleep renders that of all of the Norwegian crew a potentially vulnerable state. The Steersman's wavering consciousness is musically manifested through his solo performance of the song which his fellow sailors sing at the beginning and end of the act. His performance is the only one which includes both of the song's verses and hence underscores the simple predictable pattern which its strophic form implies and which, increasingly drowsy, he cannot properly realize. The Flying Dutchman anchors as he drifts in and out of waking consciousness and like the storm which occasionally flares up, it wedges itself into his performance. No longer externally aware, the Steersman's song breaks off mid-strophe and the Dutchman steps ashore. Like the Spinning Song and the Norwegian Sailors' song of the last act, the sailors' song of the first act is associated with a specific kind of activity. Although the steersman is not involved with rigging the ship, he does have a job that requires physical alertness. The failure of his job and song go hand in hand. When he is later awakened by Daland, the Steersman reclaims his phrase which broke off into sleep but is prevented from continuing. There is no reason to sing when a strange ship stands before them. The Steersman's phrase is later reclaimed and the song continued only when order has been restored at the end of the act.

The Dutchman's arrival may seem to take advantage of the sleeping Norwegians and may suggest that the Dutchman is a predatorial agent of Satan, but the demonic-divine contract governing his cyclical existence allows for another richer interpretation. The Dutchman's redemption clause is divinely governed. The kind of woman who can redeem him is exceptionally rare—and the Dutchman's curse has thus far seemed to extend Satan's destructive power through him on past visits to land—but this trip does in fact bring him into contact with his redemptress. As we meet the Dutchman for the first time, his faith in redemption falls to its lowest ebb. He has not chosen to come ashore and is not anxious,

initially, to interact with the Norwegians. Even in his eventual departure he confirms that he does not want to negatively impact their lives. Believing that Senta's fidelity has already been offered to Erik, he willingly retreats from the community and makes no claim for her hand. But the tentative, well-wishing mortal Dutchman is largely obscured by his legendary persona. Ironically, it is Senta herself who fosters fears of an intrusive, demonic force and Erik, not surprisingly, who is uniquely predisposed to maintaining such an attitude in connection to the foreign man who has come to their shores.

Like the Dutchman, Erik stands out for his "otherness". While many differences exist between them, they also share some character traits as Wagner emphasized in his staging notes: "Auch Erik soll kein sentimentalischer Winsler sein; er ist im Gegenteile stürmisch, heftig und düster, wie der Einsame (namentlich der nordischen Hochlande)" ("Nor must Erik be a sentimental whiner: on the contrary, he is stormy, impulsive and sombre, like every man who lives alone, particularly in the Northern highlands"). These similarities stem from their joint natural tendency to contemplate the irrational. What might seem as their lack of reason is actually their greater need of it and frustration with its limitations. They are both essentially rationalists. Erik becomes part of the opera in the second act, in which he is the first man to appear. Before he arrives, he is the subject of considerable mockery which spins in the direction of exaggeration but nevertheless hints at the impression the women have of him: he is an impoverished hunter and not an ideal sweetheart. His supposed inadequacy is magnified when Senta, whose attention is focused on the portrait of the Dutchman, sighs. The women shout "Sie ist verliebt!" and project how hot-blooded Erik would handle Senta's lover: "Er schießt sonst wutenbrannt den Nebenbuhler von der Wand!". Erik's behavior later does prove him to be sensitive about his poverty, no doubt a socially fostered insecurity. He is indeed distraught about Senta's attention to the legendary Dutchman, but he does not rashly leap to conclusions. The women's incessant mockery and laughter finally prompts Senta to turn away from the portrait, and it is she, not Erik, whose emotions flare angrily: "O schweigt! Mit eurem tollen Lachen wollt ihr mich ernstlich böse machen?".

The painting of the legendary Dutchman which Daland keeps in his home is, or at least probably was, a symbolic reminder of potential occupational and moral pitfalls. Now,

nobody but Senta freely pays attention to it. More typically, the picture fulfills the superficial function of occupying or decorating blank space, just as does the Ballad with blank time. Reinhold Brinkmann has pointed out that these two forms of the legend allow several kinds of the unreal to exist within a particular brand of reality: “Bild und Ballade...repräsentieren in der bürgerlichen Realität, in der guten Stube des wohlbehüteten Daland-Hauses, das Unbehauste. Ferne, das Abenteuerliche und Fremde, an das sich eine Fantasie, die in ihrer Umwelt nicht befriedigt wird, heften kann.”⁶ But the painting does not offer a readily attractive image of otherness. It freezes the Dutchman in his legendary curse, locking within its frame the lifelessness, evil and the irrational with which he can be associated. On its two-dimensional canvas lies his likeness, whose unusual pallor and ancient costume render visible those disturbing, even eerie descriptive details which figure in the legend’s verbal forms. The grim fantastical image thus primarily hangs as a negative form of reassurance that the Norwegians lead a good, happy and comfortable life. However, like much fiction and non-truths, it is not intended to be an object of sustained contemplation.

Sympathy for the Dutchman as a fictional character is an exclusively female attitude in the opera. Senta alone readily proclaims and defends her sympathies for him and initiates a performance of the Ballad outlining his fate. In this respect, coupled with her unwillingness to be like the other women, Senta is inscribed within her own sphere of otherness. By the time of the opera’s premiere in 1843, Wagner had changed the opera’s setting from its original Scotland to Norway. He also changed the names of the primary characters save those of Senta and Mary, which Isolde Vetter describes as “adequately polyglot.”⁷ Curt von Westernhagen considers Senta’s name to be “something of a mystery: there is no trace whatever of its existence before he used it, even in Scandinavia. Hans von Wolzogen thought that the girl who waited on Wagner in the house of a Norwegian captain in Sandviken may

⁶ Reinhold Brinkmann, “Sentas Traumerzählung,” in *Die Programmhefte der Bayreuther Festspiele* (1984), 8.

⁷ Isolde Vetter, “Der ‘Ahasverus des Ozeans’ — Musikalisch unerlöst? Der fliegende Holländer und seine Revisionen,” and translated as “The ‘Ahasverus of the Oceans’—Musically Unredeemed?: The Flying Dutchman and its Revisions,” in *Die Programmhefte der Bayreuther Festspiele* (1979), 29.

have been introduced to him as ‘tjenta’ (‘servant’), which he took to be her name and later remembered inexactly as Senta.”⁸ Much more persuasive, given Wagner’s penchant for meaningful names, is Susanne Vill’s recent suggestion that the name “recalls the Latin verb *sentire*, meaning “to hear or feel”, in other words, to perceive external reality, utterances emanating from, and relating to, others.”⁹ This relationship, coupled with Wagner’s description of Senta’s dreamy nature as “kerniges” and “naive” and not of a “modernen, krankhaften Sentimentalität” hints towards a Schillerian aesthetic agenda in a restorative as well as complementary sense. Senta’s deeply felt and genuine sentimentality is enhanced by her naively direct engagement with the world around her. She transcends what had become conventional—banal and sickly types of sentimentality—through her vivid performance of the Ballad.

Senta learned the Ballad from Mary, who no longer endorses its performance and even withdraws from the other women and spins as Senta prepares to sing it. By spinning, Mary not only registers her lack of support for the performance, she also deliberately diverts her attention towards a more sanctioned kind of activity. Her gesture implies that she is not indifferent to the singing of the Ballad. Ironically, her isolated spinning emphasizes her characterization of a traditional spinster. Earlier in Act II, spinning was advocated as a productive way to secure a sweetheart and gifts, but Mary is apparently unmarried. Her yesteryear performances of the Ballad might be something of a sore point in her own personal history. Her attempts to persuade Senta to behave like the other women might be motivated by her wish that she not replicate her own situation. Mary chastises her: “Da seht ihr’s! Immer vor dem Bild! — Wirst du dein ganzes junges Leben verträumen vor dem Konterfei?”. But there is yet another dimension to Mary’s behaviour and she introduces a superstitious tone, one which was briefly and more generically present in the first act but is now more directly focused on the legendary stuff and its presence in their lives. Mary refuses

⁸ Curt von Westernhagen, *Wagner: A Biography*, trans. by Mary Whittall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 65.

⁹ Susanne Vill “Von wilden Jägern, Vampiren und dem Fliegenden Holländer”, and translated as “On Wild Huntsmen, Vampires and the Flying Dutchman” in *Die Programmhefte der Bayreuther Festspiele* (1990) 23.

to comply with Senta's request to sing the Ballad herself: "Bewahre Gott, das fehlte mir! Den fliegende Holländer laßt in Ruh'!". Superstitious attitudes grow stronger when Senta finishes her performance of the Ballad and, later, when she responds to Erik's dream, and the Norwegian Sailors hear and see the Flying Dutchman's crew. They peak at the end of the opera when Erik sees the Dutchman with his own eyes. Not Mary, but the other women do share some of Senta's naivety and they welcome what she promises to be a better song than their own. It is possible that it is the first time that they hear the Ballad themselves. Nevertheless, they gradually join Senta in singing its refrains. While fiction does not thrive of its own accord, it proves itself somewhat attractive when attention is paid its way. We can assume the Ballad is never sung seriously by any male character.

Prior to the arrival of the Dutchman in her home, and during her moments of normal waking consciousness, Senta consistently and genuinely maintains the legend as fiction. But today is not an ordinary day. Senta's singing of the Ballad is extraordinary in the sense that it does not seem to be something she does publicly on a regular basis. It is even more extraordinary in that she experiences an altered state of consciousness during which she offers words suggesting that she confuses fiction with reality, rendering her expressions of sympathy for the Dutchman more suspect and nonsensical than they usually are. The premise upon which all of her behaviour, typical or otherwise, is judged and criticized is that the Dutchman is not real. If the object of her sympathy is not concrete and her sympathy thus only intuited, it is incomprehensible how either can be sustained in the rational physically-determined world. Senta's blasphemous outburst at the end of the Ballad confuses and instills fear in those that hear it. The ensuing pandemonium is short-lived as the rest of the women's attentions, save Mary's, are abruptly redirected to their own needs by Erik's announcement that Daland and his ship have returned home. Erik's words "der Vater kommt" have a marked impact on Senta's state of consciousness: "die in ihrer letzten Stellung verblieben und von allem nichts vernommen hatte, wie erwachend und freudig auffahrend". With this shift, Senta's preoccupation with the Dutchman disappears and she rationally engages with the external world; seeing her father is now her highest priority.

Once alone with Senta, Erik is evidently troubled but conceals the events and thoughts which fuel his anxiety. Although Erik's pleas detain her from leaving the house to greet her father, she is not unsympathetic to his obvious distress. In this situation, one of many which involve different perspectives and gaps in understanding, Senta does not gloss over or completely reject incongruities but tries to develop a basis for mutual understanding.¹⁰ Nothing, however, can bridge their different attitudes towards the legendary Dutchman, the factor which ultimately divides their lives. What Wagner identified as the duet No. 5 is unusual in that it is entirely dialogic, a feature that can be understood as generally emphasizing incompatibility. The duet also spans structural extremes which include Erik's strophic supplication and his freer form dream narration. Important throughlines connect the apparently fragmented surface. Of particular significance is the harmonic syntax throughout the scene and its symbolic representation of perspective differentiation which, paradoxically, stems from the same source: the close of Senta's Ballad which Erik overheard when he arrived at the house.

We never hear the version of the Ballad that Mary used to sing. It is obviously strophic in form and modulates away from the tonic in its narrative-oriented portions and reaches tonal closure by the end of its refrain. Mary would likely have ended the vocal part of her version with a fairly regular statement of the refrain.¹¹ Such an ending may even have

¹⁰ This is also true in the case of Senta's interchanges with the other women earlier in the scene. Senta's desire to share the Ballad with them is an attempt to awaken their own sympathies for the plight of the legendary Dutchman and hence understand her own.

¹¹ The two preceding phenomenal songs sung by the Norwegians within the opera—the Sailors'/Steersman's song and the spinning song—both satisfy these conditions. Mary, like the rest of the Norwegians, is uncomfortable with musically and textually unconventional song forms. While all five of the opera's phenomenal songs are creatively deployed within the opera so that none of them is a virtual performance, it is not surprising that Wagner first conceived their basic units and forms as "straight" performances. His first setting of the Ballad in 1840 was excised from the rest of the opera, not least of all because the libretto had yet to be developed by that time. He worked the basic musical strophic unit out and the French prose draft from which he worked, dated May 6 1840, indicates a fairly regular multiplication of this unit times three. Senta's solo stretta-like close is unique to the operatic versions, whose dramatic context renders the Ballad's formal deviations viable. Wagner preserved, or rather returned to the less varied format when he again separated the

somewhat strengthened. What is unimaginable is that it would offer within itself a specific solution to his plight and that it would close in a tonal area other than that with which the Ballad began. The nature of the legend prevents the Dutchman from not returning to his cursed sea-bound state because his existence is set out as one which is controlled by supra-human evil and divine forces. None of the women, except Senta, feels at liberty to imagine a concrete change of his state and song, both of which would involve an over-extension of individual human will and thereby replicate the Dutchman's original sin. Senta's transformation of the Ballad's last refrain frees the Dutchman from the cyclical state to which he is normally bound. In doing so, her version achieves a kind of musical and dramatic logic that the original version could not achieve and which is unintelligible to her on-stage audience. They cannot recognize that Senta's renunciation of the Ballad's conventional framework transcendentally transforms weaknesses peculiar to its basic strophic unit and realizes potent kernels therein, effecting a close that involves musical and dramatic satisfaction on many levels.

The Ballad's orchestral introduction moves from tonic to dominant. Each sonority is differentiated melodically, rhythmically and instrumentally and, furthermore, is separated in time by a sliding series of diminished seventh chords (see example 2.5). Senta restores the

Example 2.5: *Der fliegende Holländer*, Act II, Senta's Ballade

Allegro non troppo (♩. = 68)

Bässe
Tub. Pt. *molto marcato*

Senta im Großvaterstuhl.

Jo ho hoe! Jo ho ho hoe! Ho ho hoe!

Pes.

tonic and its characteristic melody of modally undefined bisected octaves with her unaccompanied opening cries of “Jo ho hoe”; the dominant’s prominent role is emphasized by fermatae. Senta’s cry lacks an upper appoggiatura to the dominant that is characteristic of other linguistically primitive outbursts in the opera’s other phenomenal songs. She is the only Norwegian to extensively use the minor mode, which could involve the flattened sixth if she chose to be stylistically similar, but her cry is unadorned.¹² The first two phrases of her text are set to a pattern of i-V, i-V/V, whose repetition emphasizes the relative strength of the dominant sonority. Even though G minor has now been fleshed out with its mediant, it plays a weak role as tonic in the first half of the verse and suggests a possible inversion of the traditional tonic-dominant relationship. Semi-tonal slippage dominates the second half as the dominant, now a localized tonic, becomes engaged in a struggle with its leading-tone, in an alteration of diminished and more chromatic sonorities. Shedding its diminished colouring as the Dutchman is securely shackled to his curse, D major emerges triumphantly, *forte*, with its characteristic string texture resounding for four measures.

The refrain is set apart from the main body of each verse by a fermata (see example 2.6). It is precarious, its concept of hope only tentatively and softly uttered by a subset of the orchestra, the woodwinds. While its opening key of B♭ major is the relative major of the Ballad’s primary tonality of G minor, the closeness of the harmonic relationship is overshadowed by the strong presence of D major, both in the immediately preceding passages and within the refrain itself as preparation for the return to G minor. Nevertheless, the refrain’s first musical phrase, which is repeated, climbs triadically through the localized tonic sonority of B♭-major to its dominant which is briefly decorated as 5-6-5, touching the tonic of the relative minor in this context. Both of the consequential phrases also begin in B♭-major. The first is a question, which is followed by a call for prayer referring to the

¹² A parallel yet expanded cry is featured as the Dutchman’s crew open their Act III song in B minor. It features the flattened sixth appoggiatura to the dominant. Within the Ballad’s narrative portions, this melodic feature is conspicuously absent because of the many naturalized Es that occur in Senta’s vocal line in accordance with the dominance of D major. It emerges in the Ballad’s refrain, however, and plays a powerful and symbolic role which is developed in Senta’s *stretta* close.

Example 2.6: *Der fliegende Holländer*, Act II, Senta's Ballade

s. Ziel, ohne Rast, ohne Ruh!

alle Str. *p.* *dim.*
Pkwrbl.

Più lento. (♩ = 100)

s. Doch kann dem blei-chen Man-ne Er - lö - sung ein-stens noch wer - den,

nur Bl. *p.* *pp* *pp*

s. fänd er ein Weib, das bis in den Tod ge-treu ihm auf Er - - den.

p *pp* *pp*

s. Ach! wann wirst du, blei-cher See - mann, es fin-den? Be - tet zum

Ob. *pp* *piu p*
Str.

Tempo I.

s. Himmel, daß bald ein Weib Treu-e ihm halt!

Kl. *p* *cresc.* *dim.*
Str. *Ad.* *Ad.* *Ad.* *Ad.*
Bl. *Ad.* *Ad.* *Ad.* *Ad.*
Vol. *Ad.* *Ad.* *Ad.* *Ad.*
Tub. *Ad.* *Ad.* *Ad.* *Ad.*
Pk. *marc.*

Picc. *dim.*

Gegen das Ende der Strophe kehrt Senta sich gegen das Bild. Die Mädchen hören teilnahmvoll zu. Mary hat aufgehört zu spinnen.

perennially elusive “Weib Treue”. B \flat major is drained of its self-sustaining and self-realizing potential as D major claims the end of the first phrase and then steers the last, the refrain’s close, back to G minor. The notion of redemption which is featured in the refrain is coupled to an implied admission of helplessness in being able to directly shape the Dutchman’s future, yielding a regressive harmonic pattern which preserves the cyclical structure of his fate and the Ballad. The arch-like pattern G minor - D major - B \flat major - D major - G minor emphasizes important structural moments in the strophic unit as a whole and binds the verse and refrain together in a tonally rounded framework. While the two primary harmonic relations i-V and i-III are highly conventional independently and in certain combinations, they are arranged here so as to highlight gaps and tensions within the inner segments of the arch. The notion of redemption is inscribed, from its first appearance, at its weakest point. Within the refrain, however, lie important keys to a solution that Senta alone can unlock.

Unconventionally, the refrain is different each time it is sung, offering the premise for continued evolution. Senta sings the first refrain herself. Its final cadence in G minor allows, for the first time, the flattened sixth appoggiatura to the dominant at the words “Weib Treue”. This loaded cadential gesture marks the sympathetic peak of the refrain as a whole and contains the crucial element that can enable the Dutchman’s possible redemption. The powerful bisected G minor octaves of the orchestral introduction and Senta’s prefatory call are revived within the cadence and harmonize the close of the V-i cadence at the words “ihm halt!” Towards the end of the first verse’s refrain, Senta looks at the portrait of the Dutchman, the women listen more attentively and Mary stops spinning, all physical signs of their deepening engagement with the legend and shared sympathy for the fate of its protagonist. During the second refrain, the women join Senta in singing its second half. But they only perform part of its last phrase. Senta alone sings the text “daß bald ein Weib Treue ihm hält” and its cadential decoration. After her more intense performance of the third verse’s narrative portion, Senta and her orchestral music collapse. The women sing the refrain’s first half without her, a capella. The text of the refrain changes each time it is sung. The first refrain asks “when” the Dutchman will find a “Weib Treue”; the second, “if” he can

find the path to redemption laid out to him by God's angel. The last refrain intensifies the questioning as the women ask "where" is the promised one. Senta's revival and stretta continuation answers their question, celebrating the refrain's opening B \flat major throughout.

Example 2.7: *Der fliegende Holländer*, Act II, Senta's Ballade

The image shows a musical score for Senta's Ballade from *Der fliegende Holländer*, Act II. It consists of two systems of vocal line and piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked "a tempo". The first system shows the vocal line starting with "Heil" and the piano accompaniment. The second system shows the vocal line continuing with "-chen, das Heil" and the piano accompaniment. The score is in B-flat major and 3/4 time.

In her stretta, Senta modifies the original refrain's conclusion in the process, but it is not beyond recognition. The pitch E \flat is no longer tenuous and altered by the overpowering force of D major, as was usually the case within the ostensible G-minor landscape. The new dominant F, a strong barrier against the return of either G minor or D major, is melodically highlighted throughout. Senta's phrase "Heil er reichen", vocally bare as an F octave, seals the moment at which complete tonal security is achieved and restores what was missing from the other women's performance of the first half of the refrain version—instrumental accompaniment and real faith in redemption—as symbolically-laden orchestral coloratura (see example 2.7). The normalization of the flattened sixth within the melodic complex 1-5-6 \flat helps to secure the flattened mediant—the pitch whose presence was delayed in the establishment of G minor as the initial tonic of each verse—as a final tonic which hierarchically reinterprets the original harmonic plan. Senta's enactment of the only compelling and wholly conventional cadence in the song seals the redefinition of the

usual i-V-III-V-i framework as vi-III-I, and the transformation of original weaknesses into transcendent strengths. As has already been briefly discussed, the 5-6 \flat relationship that is developed in Senta's Ballad has already been treated as a gateway into unusual territory. Senta's realization of this melodic-harmonic kernel is not too unusual in that it involves relative major/minor keys. Nevertheless, her audaciously elated proclamation to be the Dutchman's redemptress alienates her immediate audience. They spring up and cry for help as diminished seventh sonorities crash down upon Senta's final vocal tonic B \flat .

The normative 5-6 relationship, that is to say the one that is established in each of the three phenomenal songs performed by the other Norwegians, involves the major sixth above the tonic. Either as a single appoggiatura or, as is characteristic of in each of their refrains, in oscillation with the dominant in dotted rhythms, the non-triadic tone is only briefly accommodated within melodic lines. Even when repeated several times, the major second does not strongly influence larger-scale harmonic and tonal shaping; dominant-tonic relations predominate. The minor second, 5-6 \flat , is diatonically at home within minor-mode passages. Whenever it is prevalent, the Dutchman is a factor, tonic-dominant relations (i-V) are unstable, and more adventurous tonal relations are involved. Each of the Norwegians' act-opening phenomenal songs is followed by another less conventionally-shaped song which is mostly grounded in the minor mode and which significantly exploits the flattened sixth within itself and in relation to the song that precedes it. None of the songs is mutually exclusive, either musically or in terms of real time, and in each case these pairs are involved in some type of extra-performance interplay or overlap. The Spinning Song/Ballad of the second act is like the Norwegian Sailors' song/ the Flying Dutchman's crew's song of the third in that both songs are phenomenal songs.

The Steerman's song of the first act is paired with the Dutchman's aria, which, while not phenomenal song, is a recognizable operatic song-type shape all the same. This pair presents the starkest musico-dramatic contrast, but links still exist. The latter emerges during a suspension in performance time of the former. The Steerman's tiredness, which ultimately interrupts his performance for a considerable stretch, is marked by yawns that symbolize his diminishing ability to sing his song properly. His first yawn, before he begins his song, is a

G that crowns a diminished seventh and is also a major sixth above his chosen tonic of B \flat . His second yawn is more severe: a G \flat atop the dominant ninth that enables the start of his second verse which is doubly fragmented by his wavering consciousness and gusts of the storm. His second refrain breaks off prematurely as he falls fast asleep and the swelling storm enharmonically reinterprets G \flat as the dominant of B minor which gains strength and itself adopts a minor second upper neighbour note to the dominant just before the Dutchman steps onto land. The Dutchman's chosen initial tonic for his on-land monologue is C minor. The flattened sixth is influential as a generative link to expanded tonal palettes, here often involving major thirds. The Dutchman's aria contrasts A \flat major/minor within its C minor/major frame. Later, in his duet with Daland, his minor inflections of the overall tonic G major are in association with internal modulations to E \flat major.

Erik, like the Dutchman and Daland, does not sing in a phenomenal sense but he does move beyond recitative into the area of recognizable structured musical forms. Arthur Groos, in his reading of *Der fliegende Holländer* as Wagner's critique of contemporary popular operatic genres, has illuminated Erik's unique musical and dramatic role. "Musically, Erik's two solos—the first embedded in the duet No. 8 ("Bleib', Senta!"), the second his cavatina in No. 15 ("Willst jenes Tag's du nicht mehr entsinnen)—remain within the orbit of the German Romantic love lyric."¹³ Groos sees Erik as a necessary addition to the music and drama because the relationship between the Dutchman and Senta, which connects and subsumes the "genre expectations of *Schaueroper* and the rescue opera" in a way that "leads toward an apparent resolution at the end of act II", cannot intensify itself or achieve a "higher synthesis pointing to the post-Romantic opera of the future" without a third genre referent.¹⁴ While Groos is keen to demonstrate Wagner's unique handling of different genre models in the cases of the Dutchman's aria and Senta's Ballad, Erik's contributions and much of the rest of the opera are interpreted rather differently. He acknowledges that Erik's "Romantic

¹³ Arthur Groos, "Back to the Future," 208. Groos's identification of numbers 8 and 15 are those of numbers 5 and 8 in the piano-vocal scores of Breitkopf & Härtel and Peters and Isolde Vetter's edition of *Der fliegende Holländer* in *Richard Wagner: Sämtliche Werke* (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1970 -).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 206-7.

origins and concerns” are a “vehicle for intensifying the drama’s focus on the Dutchman” and that they suggest that “this ‘romantische Oper’ is itself heavily invested in transcending the traditions of Romantic opera.”¹⁵ But he does not consider Erik to contribute positively to the hermeneutic argument; his two solos are located completely within conventional boundaries that only highlight his faults and his impotence. Erik’s failure is thus interpreted as Wagner’s failure; the operatic genres that Wagner had drawn together are neither reconciled nor transcended within the opera. Thus, according to Groos, we should regard Wagner’s post-1842 revisions and claims concerning the opera’s genesis and the teleological narratives he professed it to embody, such as those in “Eine Mitteilung an Meine Freunde” (1851) and *Mein Leben* (1865-80), as fanciful but unsuccessful attempts to inscribe the original work within a later sphere of artistic strategies and achievements.

Groos’s analysis extends, by peeling away another layer, the myth de-bunking work of scholars like John Deathridge, Carl Dahlhaus and Isolde Vetter who especially scrutinize the claims in “Eine Mitteilung” as stretching the truth to the point of mistruth and draw upon Wagner’s other writings and analyses of the work, its sketches and revisions, as evidence. Dieter Borchmeyer’s contribution to this discussion takes Dahlhaus’s assessment as his starting point, accepting the view that Wagner’s identification of the Ballad as the organic kernel of the entire work cannot be reconciled with its musical syntax but is “correct in terms of its poetical design”¹⁶. Borchmeyer mines well the fields he chooses, in part because Dahlhaus’s correction of Wagner’s words encourages non-musical interpretive freedom. “It is in fact a major exaggeration, or even a mistake, to speak of the ‘thematic image’ of Senta’s Ballad spreading out ‘over the entire drama’—unless we are to interpret ‘thematic image’ and ‘thematic germs’ not so much as specific, clearly outlined complex of musical motives

¹⁵ Ibid., 209.

¹⁶ Dieter Borchmeyer, *Das Theater Richard Wagners* (Stuttgart, 1982); translated by Stewart Spencer as *Richard Wagner, Theory and Theatre* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 191. Reinhold Brinkmann, in his essay “Sentas Traumerzählung”. pursues this argument from different angles, pointing to the Ballad’s importance in relation to the tone of the work as a whole, and some of the ways its musical elements and syntax inform the most central moments of opera.

but rather as a vague, though pervasive, poetico-musical mood, which is depicted in the course of the work in constantly, altering melodic shapes, the inner relationship of which can be sensed, even though it is not necessarily discernible in the notes on the page.”¹⁷ The notes on the page indicate to Dahlhaus that “the Dutchman’s monologue, Erik’s dream, some sections of the Dutchman’s and Senta’s duet and the finale of the whole work” are the only passages which can be considered as “at least coloured by the basic motives assembled in the ballad” but that these relationships are superficial because the motives are “not really essential to the musical structure.”¹⁸ As I have already attempted to demonstrate, some dramatically and structurally significant musical gestures which can be related to Senta’s Ballad do recur beyond the few instances that Dahlhaus is willing to grant. In returning to this thread, I will examine Erik’s crucial role in its unraveling and the way that he does engage directly with the hermeneutic argument that Groos identifies, and even adds another layer to the network of organic ideas explored within the work.

Like Senta’s Ballad, and the other phenomenal songs in the opera, Erik’s first solo readily makes a claim to conventionality in its regular strophic form. Its basic unit modulates away from the tonic in its first half and reaches tonal closure through its refrain. Like the Norwegian sailors in the first act, Erik chooses B \flat major as his tonic and his text reflects his wish to overcome separation from his sweetheart. Erik of course is not like the sailors, in that he does not have a secure commitment from Senta. This is precisely what he anxiously seeks from her through his song. Initially, his major-mode launching pad represents his rationally-oriented optimism that she will respond favourably to his appeal. His second solo, in the last act, directly conveys the rational basis—his personal experience and history involving Senta—of his expectations. Within the basic musical framework of his first solo, his anxiety is mapped out as he modulates from B \flat major to D major, I-III (see example 2.8). The chromatically and vocally enhancing enharmonic flattened sixth anarchically denies the dominant neighbour note and conventional harmonic hierarchies. This musical symbol of

¹⁷ Carl Dahlhaus, *Richard Wagners Musikdramen* (Velber, 1971), 22-3; translated by Mary Whittall as *Richard Wagner’s Music Dramas* (Cambridge, 1979), 18.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Example 2.8: *Der fliegende Holländer*, Act II, no.5

a tempo, ma un poco riten. (♩ = 68)

Mein Herz voll Treue bis zum Sterben, mein
dürftig Gut, mein Jägerglück, darf so um
deine Hand ich werben? Stößt mich dein Vater
nicht zurück? Wenn dann mein Herz im Jammer

p *vi.* *Br.* *Str.* *solos* *vel.* *Kl.* *Ob.* *Bl.* *cresc.* *Rr.* *Pag.* *mf*

Erik's fear that Senta's departure from the house could lead to a greater physical and emotional absence is, of course, cued by her own earlier performance and her ecstatic closing outburst in the mediant major mode. Erik believes that he is communicating with Senta in a way that she can understand. But Senta is now consciously awake and genuinely unaware of her somnambulistic performance of the end of the Ballad. She is also unaware that Erik

has had a relevant dream and that someone is accompanying Daland back to the house. How could Erik's needs possibly compete, let alone be problematized by her dutiful and well-meaning wish to greet her father? Erik's path is excessively remote and seems unmotivated to Senta and she makes no effort to engage with him in her reaction to his first verse: "O, Schweige, Erik, jetzt!". There is no clear basis for furthering the discussion and she steers away from Erik's B♭ major in the direction of flatter keys until, increasingly impatient, she repeatedly strikes at the dominant of B♭ as she cries out "Ich muß zum Bord! Ach, laß mich fort!". Her vocal leaps upward of a fourth, from C to F,¹⁹ take on negative sonorous force with *forte* woodwind chords in B♭ minor.

At an apparent standstill, Erik tentatively ventures his second verse. His wavering hope and the impact of Senta's first non-response manifests itself at the end of his refrain which is varied and ends insecurely on the flattened mediant, vocally internalizing the earlier allusions to the tonic minor. At the same time, his dampened faith in trying to reason with Senta loosens his self-control and allows a less processed musical sign of his fears to decorate his closing cadence with G♭; the flattened sixth is no longer chromatic in the minor mode milieu. This musical and emotional transformation does seem to reach Senta—it reaches back to the "normal" part of the Ballad—and enables her to engage more directly with him. Erik's modally distorting flattened mediant is anchored to the flattened sixth as his cadential appeal is orchestrally harmonized not as B♭ minor but as G♭ major. This deceptive cadence dovetails with what sounds orchestrally like the beginning of yet another verse of the song—Senta's verse—with a return to the major mode but without the plaintive clarinet or oboe introductions of Erik's two strophes. Senta's response opens with a series of rhetorical questions that draw limits to her ability to understand the nature of Erik's despair, let alone denature it: "Wie? Zweifelst du an meinem Herzen? Du zweifelst, ob ich gut dir bin?". She does want to understand and comfort him. For her last two questions, "Doch sag', was weckt dir solche Schmerzen? was trübt mit Argwohn deinen Sinn?", she adopts his

¹⁹ In her waking state, Senta's ascending fourths attempt to leave Erik so that she can see her father. In her non-waking states, such as in Erik's dream narration and her two strettas, the Dutchman is the goal of similar break-away gestures.

characteristic vocal melody. Harmonically parallel to Erik's verses, Senta's questions end a third higher from where they started, in Erik's original key of B \flat major. Her apparently deviant starting point thus counterbalances Erik's I-III with VI-I motion. Having come full circle, she does not continue with the refrain. In order for their discussion to continue, she needs straightforward answers to her questions.

Erik has trouble spelling out the issues at hand, in part because he thinks they should be obvious to Senta. The string of comments which he immediately offers does not readily betray a musical or textual logic. They do, however, come closer to identifying the insecurities which have been recently intensified through Erik's dream experience and events he has since witnessed. The events depicted in Erik's dream derive from pre-existing anxieties and realize his greatest fears: rejection and loneliness. In his dream, Daland offers Senta to someone other than Erik. She accepts the stranger and departs from Erik's world. Two key areas of insecurity are featured in his dream: his inability to satisfy Daland's wishes for a wealthy son-in-law and Senta's tendency to direct attention and sympathy away from him and towards the legendary subject of the painting. The image of the painting that appears in his dream connects these fears. Awake, Erik has seen that Daland is bringing another man to the house and he has heard Senta's unusual performance of the Ballad; both, apparently, are unprecedented events. They encourage Erik to pay attention to his dream as a fearful harbinger of potential realities and to proactively attempt to short-circuit them. Erik never discounts his dream as purely fantastical or trivial, but his way of understanding its content and message betrays his rationalistic dependency on knowledge gained in the waking world. All of the characters in his dream, save the Dutchman, are real people he can identify. The legendary Dutchman is inconceivable to Erik as a real man, and thus he symbolizes all men that could prevent him from being united with Senta.

The only fear that Senta attempts to denature directly is her interest in the legendary Dutchman. The interpretation of his dream that Erik has maintained since arriving at Daland's house pivots when she claims "Ich bin ein Kind, und weiß nicht, was ich singe...O sag', wie? Fürchtest du ein Lied, ein Bild?". Senta's profession of ignorance and argument that the legend is fictional and harmless cannot be reconciled with what Erik heard her sing

just minutes before. Carolyn Abbate wants us to approach Senta's apparent changes of attitude to the legend with skepticism: "Senta of course represents the legend as fiction only to deny its fictional status...In confirming her identity as the Ballad's heroine...she paradoxically rejects the Ballad as ballad. Yet how firm is her conviction? A few moments later, she denies her denial...Into the Ballad, its denial, and its reconfirmation (as the child's fairy tale) Wagner wove his representation of Senta's hysteria and spiritual chaos."²⁰ Erik does reach the understanding that Senta is unwell. In his response "Du bist so bleich, sag, sollte ich's nicht fürchten?", he shows concern for her lack of healthy colouring. Pallor is a characteristic of several stereotyped degenerates that have flourished in different times and cultures and have often extended to include a complex of physical, mental, spiritual and moral disorders. They typically interconnect in and collectively mark realms of otherness in relation to a proscribed, idealized norm. Popular pallid but predominantly human stereotypes in Wagner's time include those drained of vital fluids by vampires, demons, masturbation, homosexual intercourse, syphilis, and cholera.²¹ Such stereotypes reflect cultural attitudes and fears and sometimes also naive and even grossly deliberate misunderstandings of mental and physical states.

Senta is a somnambule and fits into the systematic investigations of naturally occurring and induced forms of somnambulism that attracted considerable attention beginning in the late eighteenth century. Holistic approaches to somnambulism were frequently met with resistance buoyed by dualistic rationalism and moral-religious accounts of unusual phenomena. Erik's psycho-somatic lexicon limits him to these latter paths of

²⁰ Carolyn Abbate, "Erik's Dream and Tannhäuser's Journey" in *Reading Opera*, ed. Arthur Groos and Roger Parker (Princeton, Princeton University Press: 1988), 138-9.

²¹ Marc A. Weiner considers several of these stereotypes in connection with that of the Jew in his exploration of corporeally inscribed signs of degeneracy in Wagner's operas: *Richard Wagner and the Anti-Semitic Imagination* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1995). The vampire stereotype is the central but not limiting focus of David Huckvale's "Wagner and Vampires," in *Wagner*, no.3 (September 1997): 127-141 and Susanne Vill's "Von wilden Jägern, Vampiren und dem Fliegenden Holländer". In *Opera: Desire, Disease, Death* (Lincoln and London, 1996?), Linda and Michael Hutcheons probe the rationale behind different attitudes towards disease and their operatic significance.

understanding, along which Senta's otherness is associated with an intrusive evil force. After all, Senta is a prominent member of the small isolated Norwegian community—the daughter of the local Captain—and she is also the object of Erik's affections. The root cause of her disorders must be external. The trace of the cause that Erik identifies—her pallid appearance—specifically connects her unhealthiness to the image of the legendary seafarer. Erik anchors a crucial position in Wagner's dialectical argument for a different understanding—Senta's understanding—of the individual and collective unconscious. Erik's position is shared by the Dutchman, and he serves to voice these conceptual barriers when the cursed seafarer is not present on stage. In his approach to irrational phenomena, Erik shares space with the protagonist in the teleological narratives which Wagner employed in his "Mitteilung an meine Freunde." Like Odysseus of Homeric and Hellenistic times, he tends to rely on simple allegories, reason and concrete knowledge in understanding his finite world. Faced with increased chaos and uncertainty, like the Wandering Jew of vaster horizons, his conceptual repertoire expands to include the demons which sprang up in huge numbers in the Middle Ages.

Senta's genuine disclaimer regarding her performance of the Ballad is a classic case of post-somnambulist amnesia. Erik recognizes that she is genuine, and he is troubled. When she asks him "Kennst jenes Unglücksel'gen Schicksal du?" and directs his attention to the portrait, she continues with an expression of her sympathy for the fate of its image. She does so in a logically structured musical form which is disturbingly familiar. Senta's counter-appeal is in the relative minor of his own B♭ major and, like the second verse of his song, is prefaced with an oboe solo. Her song is also a compressed single-unit variant of the Ballad's strophic harmonic structure, permeated throughout with a sympathetic tone characteristic of the refrain but here intensified through her dotted rhythms and more prevalent minor mode.²² Senta's text betraying her direct and subjective identification with

²² Neither Erik nor Senta are consciously aware that this Ballad variant also refers back to the Dutchman's music in the first act, particularly to the despair-laden passages in his conversation and duet with Daland. Wagner had sketched this passage of Senta's in A minor, the original key of her Ballad, but settled on G minor, the key of the Dutchman's relevant passages in No. 3. This decision was made before Wagner completed the full score.

the image in the portrait more specifically recalls her last unusual refrain. Shorn of the verse's usual horrifying and chaotic aura and her final refrain's obvious and ecstatic deviant tendencies, her outpouring makes a dangerously strong claim to reality and truthfulness. Senta's unusual states and appearance, and her inability to connect with him emotionally and rationally converge upon Erik, and his response "Satan hat dich umgarnt!" sums up his assessment of the situation.

Erik realizes that Senta's attraction to the Dutchman's image is a central feature of his dream. For him, the Dutchman is always an image, in both the waking and dreaming worlds. All of the real people in his dream can now be understood as innocent victims of Satan, who manipulates the minds and bodies of susceptible but innocent people to suit his own needs. The legendary Dutchman is Satan's agent. The portrait and Ballad of which he is the subject are hence the mediums through which Satan is attempting to claim Senta as his next victim. Earlier, Erik saw himself as a victim in need of Senta's confirmed reciprocated love to battle the forces of materialism. Now, he claims the role of exorcist and healer for Senta. Erik's revised interpretation of his dream, and what he has perceived in the waking world, is admittedly self-consoling. His earlier personal sense of inadequacy is no longer a primary motivating factor in the events that he has envisioned unfolding and he can now externally attribute Senta's alienating words and actions to the will of the devil. His hopes to secure Senta's affection are revived, so long as she can be liberated from the evil force. Erik takes his place as the Dutchman's antithesis. His dream, which he now understands as divinely empowering, has allowed him to grasp the devil's horrible goal to completely possess Senta. He believes its visual images to be the superior but correlative medium to the Dutchman's portrait and that he can vividly re-create the Dutchman of his dream, as he is brought to life in the Ballad, to offer Senta the knowledge that she needs to resist the evil force and secure divine protection. Erik's unique and pivotal role concerns his belief that Senta is demonically possessed. Unbeknownst to him, his efforts to exorcise her are significantly related to the practices of animal magnetism and hypnotism, as are their effects.

Erik's dream narration draws heavily on musical ideas which have accumulated considerable significance since his arrival at the house. Before he begins, he focuses

repeatedly on the 5-6 \flat nexus which he has already used as an anarchic symbol of his fears concerning Senta's alienation and her sympathies for the legendary Dutchman. As he prepares to try to restore order, it marks his text "Es mahnt mich mein unsel'ger Traum. Gott schütze dich!" in a fashion that subordinates, in turn, the flattened sixth to the dominant and the tonic. It recurs as he mentions his dream again, now in a solemn and direct address: "Senta, laß dir vertraun: — ein Traum ist's! Hör und sie durch ihn gewarnt!". Erik's dream is thus drawn into the musical sphere of demonic possession and irrationality as a musically restorative force. Senta repeatedly recapitulates and transforms musical gestures germane to the Ballad throughout this scene. Erik picks up some of the same threads in order to retrace but ultimately undo some of her transformations. He wants to reach back to the Ballad and to reattach the legendary Dutchman to his terrifying musical ambience and his other world and then, Orpheus-like, safely restore Senta to the real world. In approaching his dream, Erik guides the discussion back to B \flat -minor, the key which last prompted Senta to engage with him somewhat directly.²³ He returns specifically to the B \flat -minor/G \flat -major hinge between their song verses, as a pair of thirds. The bifurcated scoring of the two sonorities for bassoons and clarinets respectively differentiates the two tonal spheres, the latter encouraged by viola tremolos as Erik mentions his dream. Erik's voice mediates between the two, providing a strong dominant anchor from which the flattened sixth can safely emerge and attract the clarinet thirds. As he vocally returns to the dominant, the clarinets harmoniously fall a semitone. Senta's role as a responsive and willing listener is musically inscribed from the onset.

Erik's preface to his dream turns and hangs, in anticipation, on faint timpani tremolos, the dominant pitch harmonically secured through "muffled hunting-horns, a sonic

²³ Erik's strophic supplication and dream narration can also be considered as a pair of songs, along the lines of the three pairs previously discussed. Like the Dutchman's monologue, Senta's Ballad and the Flying Dutchman's crew's Song, his dream narration begins in the minor mode and is less conventional than the "song" which precedes it. Also like these three songs, but for different reasons, Erik's narration drives towards a modal shift—his intention is to restore B \flat major. But Senta is the only character in the opera who can carry out such teleological feats and sustain them for any significant length of time. Her particular transformation is not exactly what Erik had in mind.

reference to Erik-as-hunter, as a man set him apart by this profession from the briny individuals that otherwise populate the opera. The hunting horns define the narrator's presence at the opening of the dream, which begins with Erik himself, watching and hearing the sea, the world set apart, from the high cliff that is his own domain."²⁴ Erik's role as narrator of his dream is complex. He must render tangibly perceptible and intelligible his private experience so that Senta can re-experience it herself, as a dream. He must also allow her to recognize, as he has, that his dream's message is a warning of the deceptively and excessively destructive powers of evil. Erik anticipates that this revelation, which involves conjuring up the evil force and exposing its intentions, might be traumatic for Senta. Because he is also her friend, he wants to offer her a comfortable foundation from which she can grasp this horrible truth and to which she can safely return. Erik's hunting horns beckon to her to follow him into his dream. They call her to the cliff, his private dream perch above the sea, where his dream experience took place. His cliff is also a secure footing, between the heavens and the sea, from which she can safely observe the dream's evil intruder. Erik's horns no longer represent his earlier financial insecurities; they invite her to share his privileged vantage point. Senta, who has never validated his occupational anxieties, prepares to listen to him.

Erik's dream narration parallels Senta's performance of the Ballad in several ways. Senta's singing of the Ballad was intended to beget a sympathetic response through re-creating an experience—Mary's singing of the Ballad—that tremendously affected her when she was once its audience. As narrator, Senta solemnly urged her audience to listen keenly before she began: "Merkt auf die Wort'!" They respond by drawing nearer to her. As narrator, Senta strove to render her re-creation so that it was both vivid and accessible to her audience, so that they could perhaps acquire a perspective similar to her own but without feeling directly threatened by the terrible content of the narrative itself. Her audience was drawn increasingly into her performance and eventually undertook a participatory role that even involved furthering the narrative without her. The two performances converge.

²⁴ Carolyn Abbate, "Erik's Dream and Tannhäuser's Journey," 146.

however, because in *both* cases Senta re-routes the implied ending of each narrative into a *stretta* which overrides the narrative premise shared by both the Ballad and Erik's dream: they claim not to represent reality itself but to bear an important message which, if interpreted correctly, would influence reality. These relationships between Senta's Ballad and Erik's narration were present in Wagner's versions of the libretto and the first complete orchestral score. In preparing the piano-vocal score for publication in 1844, he further clarified them.

After Erik's call for Senta to listen to his dream and its warning, Wagner replaced the stage direction "Senta nähert sich Georg" with "Senta setzt sich erschöpft in den Lehnstuhl nieder; bei dem Beginn von Eriks Erzählung versinkt sie wie in magnetischen Schlaf, sodaß es scheint als träume sie den von ihm erzählten Traum ebenfalls."²⁵ This change has attracted attention in recent scholarship because of Wagner's mention of "magnetic sleep." Reinhold Brinkmann's 1984 essay "*Sentas* Traumerzählung" remains the fullest treatment of the significance of Wagner's revised stage direction in relation to contemporary ideas. Brinkmann rightly points out that Wagner's choice of terminology, in this stage direction and later writings about the opera, points outside the work to the "arsenal of romantic science, psychology, and medicine: and from the contemporary theories of "animal magnetism" and their occurrence in romantic literature."²⁶ In exploring Wagner's actual dramaturgy, Brinkmann aligns the ways that these ideas are manifested in the work with the concept of "magnetic sleep" as it figured in popular scientific writings and romantic literature.

²⁵ Isolde Vetter's '*Der fliegende Holländer*' von Richard Wagner: *Entstehung, Bearbeitung, Überlieferung* (diss. Technical University, Berlin, 1982) includes, in full, the text and stage directions of the four extant draft versions of the libretto, together with those of the first completed orchestral score, the piano-vocal score, and those published in *Drei Operndichtungen nebst einer Mitteilung an seine Freunde* and the *Gesammelte Schriften*. Vetter's work is invaluable for comparative analyses of these various sources and consideration of the variances in stage directions in the present study are drawn from Vetter's compilation.

²⁶ "Arsenal der romantischen Naturwissenschaft, Psychologie und Medizin: auf die zeitgenössischen Theorien eines "animalischen Magnetismus" und deren Niederschlag in der romantischen Dichtung." Reinhold Brinkmann, "*Sentas* Traumerzählung", 11.

particularly in the works of Heinrich von Kleist and E.T.A. Hoffmann. Brinkmann cannot reconcile Wagner's approach with more systematic ones like those of Alexander Kluge and Gotthilf Heinrich Schubert, which dominated the scientific literature; according to systems like Kluge's, which differentiated several stages within the mesmerized state, Wagner's description of Senta's state, "wie in magnetsichen Schlaf", is technically incorrect; "she would be a somnambulist in a state of 'ecstasy' on account of her over clear awareness of her visions."²⁷ With this correction, Brinkmann outlines how many aspects of Senta's physiognomy do locate her within a network of then popular artistic notions about animal magnetism. He interprets the path that Wagner ultimately pursued as characteristically romantic and, hence, flawed to modern sensibilities: "In his work the idea of redemption is finally to exalt the 'mortal sickness' at the end and make it understandable as a sacrifice in the positive sense. Given that the historical perspective and that the work itself are brought into harmony, the theatre of today can make this evident—taking him seriously but interpreting him with critical distance."²⁸

As has been already discussed in Chapter 1, Wagner's lack of formal study and engagement with scientific literature did not preclude him from obtaining more than a vague understanding of systematic studies of psychologically-oriented phenomena. In the writings of E.T.A. Hoffmann, for example, Wagner encountered an overview of specialist medical and scientific approaches, including accurate details about mesmeric practices, their observable effects and relevant problematic issues. The extraordinary nature of case studies involving animal magnetism naturally stimulated general curiosity in a sensationalistic way, and their influence on the themes of contemporary artistic genres is not surprising. More

²⁷ "wäre sie wegen der überhellen Bewußtheit ihrer Visionen eine Somnambule, wohl gar im Zustand der 'Ecstase'." Ibid., 12.

²⁸ "Bei ihm soll der Erlösungsgedanke am Ende die Krankheit zum Tode überhöhen und als Opfer positiv verstehbar machen. Wenn aber Werkperspektive und historische Perspektive einander vermittelt werden, kann die Bühne von heute, Wagner ganz ernst nehmend und ihn doch aus der Distanz interpretierend, auch dieses "soll" sichtbar machen." Ibid., 17.

significantly influential, however, were less dualistic approaches which highlighted the ways mesmeric phenomena and states related to more naturally occurring kinds of human experiences: those which could not easily be reconciled with the state of rational waking consciousness. Like Hoffmann, Wagner dwelt extensively on these correlations and their aesthetic and philosophical implications. Wagner's plan for *Der fliegende Holländer*, evident in the first version of the libretto, dated May 18, 1841, was to probe this non-rational spectrum systematically throughout the work, involving every character in an amalgam of realistic, simple levels and more complex, extraordinary ones. Senta's somnambulism takes us to the edges of this spectrum, whose continuity, as well as range, was of the utmost importance to Wagner. Hence the fantastical trappings of magnetic practices were not of much interest to him and he concentrated more on relationships between processes and experiences whose expansive yet shared backdrop was a naturalistic one.

Wagner decided early on that strophic phenomenal songs would be realistically viable—for his choral-singing Norwegians—points of reference from which he could illuminate the non-rational. His earliest approaches to the musical side of the work concerned, in turn, Senta's Ballad, the Norwegian sailors' chorus and the Dutchman's sailors' chorus, which were already set by the end of July, 1840. In the days just before he completed the continuous composition draft of the opera's three acts, written from July 11 to August 22, 1841, he set the remaining two phenomenal songs: the Steersman's Song and the Spinning Song.²⁹ The performances of these five songs in the opera are virtual; none of

²⁹ This chronology of Wagner's attention to the musical settings of these five songs is advanced by Carl Dahlhaus, John Deathridge and Isolde Vetter and supported by sketch and other source studies. Wagner's accounts in his "Autobiographischen Skizze", "Eine Mitteilung an meine Freunde" and "Mein Leben" are not problematical in this respect. His claim in "Eine Mitteilung" to have turned his musical attention to Senta's Ballad first of all is correct. In his letter to Anders of July 10, 1841, Wagner referred to having completed the "Spinnerlied und ein kleines Matrosenlied". In his "Autobiographischen Skizze", he claimed that after the unfortunate handling of his French sketch for the opera he completed the German libretto and, after nine musically unproductive months, returned to composition and set the "Matrosenchor" and the Spinnerlied. He did not claim that these were his first compositional efforts regarding the opera, but his first efforts during the Meudon period. The "Steuermannslied" is, like the Spinning Song and the two phenomenal songs of the last act,

their original versions is ever realized as an uninterrupted, uncomplicated, self-contained number. The various versions of these songs are dramatically logical in and of themselves, and collectively yield a basic complex of musico-dramatic relationships concerning a similar, simple musical form. The centrality of this form, and its permutability, is underscored by the varied ways and sheer number of times it is deployed throughout the work. Accordingly, the main tonalities of each of the songs influence substantial sections of the opera. Some of Wagner's early compositional choices focused on his treatment of the minor mode as both the backdrop to the terrible, irrational and stormy world of the Dutchman's curse and the channels by which his suffering and sympathy for him are expressed most intensely.

The first "pair" of songs that Wagner composed, the songs of the two crews in the last act, highlights the contrasting aesthetics of the modally distinguished realms. As Wagner developed the scenarios of the libretto, he laid out the premises upon which the phenomenal songs would become more dramatically sophisticated, variable, and inter-related. The ghostly crew's song makes several direct claims to the narrative portions of Senta's Ballad, but not its refrains. Their two verses specifically expand Senta's narration, in her third verse, of the Dutchman's arrival on land, failure to find a suitably faithful bride, and return to sea. The tone of the Ballad's refrain is not altogether absent from the music or drama of the number, but it is introduced earlier on the scene, during the first hiatus of the Norwegian sailors' own performance. Unsympathetic to the silent and invisible crew of the Flying Dutchman, and the women who have turned their attention to the spooky ship, reminiscences of the Ballad's refrain and related musical ideas are initially introduced in a mocking way, hence emphasizing a lack of sympathy on the part of the Norwegian sailors. This extended series

a choral song, as Wagner had set it out in the libretto framing the first act. It is a solo song, a "Steuermannslied", only when the chorus is asleep. "Matrosenlied", "Matrosenchor", and "Steuermannslied" all refer to the same material. The last term avoids confusion with the third act songs performed by different groups of sailors. In his account of the composition of this material and the Spinning Song in "Mein Leben", Wagner overcorrected what continues to cause some confusion by referring to the "Lied des Steuermanns im ersten Akt." Furthermore, the different terms concerning to the song of the first act requires and receives no clarification of nationality, unlike when Wagner referred to either of the later sailors' choral songs.

of utterances, alternating between the men and the women, does an about face half-way through. The women give up on their efforts to get a response from the foreign crew and consider seriously the Norwegian's sailors' earlier comments—not intended seriously—that the ship could be the legendary Flying Dutchman. When Wagner wrote out the libretto several weeks before he composed this part of the scene, but after his composition of its two phenomenal songs, the importance of modal contrast in the non-song parts was already foremost in his mind. He included circled markings of “dur” and “moll”, alternating between the men and women and marking the point of inversion with an exchange of modes.³⁰ Only the women use the minor mode genuinely. When Wagner composed this scene, he painted the whole using harmonic networks and modal tinting derived from the two songs to delineate the conflicting perspectives of the men and women. The women's entrance became the first marker of this contrast, with their exclusion from the festivities and disappointment registered through their reinterpretation of the opening song's C-major instrumental postlude in E minor, as they harmonically and physically approach the Dutch ship. This alienation recasts the act II situation in which news of the returned sailors prompted an impulsive reaction from the women to rush off immediately to see their sweethearts. Mary had rerouted them to attend first to their duty of preparing food; the sailors' hunger must be quelled before the women's curiosities and passions. The women's dutiful compliance was enacted verbally but their asides suggested emotional non-congruence. However, neither their dutiful behaviour nor their more passionate leanings are rewarded when they reach the shore. Their recourse to the major mode before their departure is again dutiful but not convincing; it is a cautious, helpless retreat rather than an affirmation that all is well and stable. The sailors again resume their song until the spectral crew break their silence.

Neither Daland nor Mary sing in the act-opening phenomenal songs of the first and second acts respectively. Their non-participation, like that of the women in the third act, is

³⁰ These markings are included in Isolde Vetter's *'Der fliegende Holländer' von Richard Wagner* and can also be seen in the facsimile reproduction of a page from the 1841 manuscript of the libretto in Houston Stewart Chamberlain's *Richard Wagner*, trans. G. Ainslie Hight (London: J.M. Dent, 1900), 252.

a form of silence and the thoughts which divert their attentions away from the performances emerge verbally and interrupt the straightforward continuation of the songs. When the first-act song is resumed as a solo by the Steersman, it is again silenced by diverted attention, this time the performer's own, as he falls asleep. The Dutchman's monologue fills his silence. At the beginning of the second act, the Spinning Song is only briefly derailed by Mary's interruption. Her words are uttered at a relative point of closure within the song, after the instrumental conclusion of its first strophe, and encourage the women's spinning for which they will be duly rewarded with treasures. She foreshadows the spinning-"Schatz" connection of the second strophe but also preempts and frustrates the women who were about to unfold this notion in song. But Mary's words are also something of a misplaced postlude, as if she thought the end of the first strophe was the end of the second, as if she was urging them to continue their work after the song had ended. Before the song's second strophe gets underway, Mary indeed reveals that her own attentions are not focused exclusively on the performance: "Du aber, Senta, schweigst dazu?". After the song is finished, Senta's silence becomes the subject of concern, speculation and mockery. When she finally does speak up, the women begin their song again, this time more aggressively, in an effort to block her out and hence return her to silence. After their refrain, Senta interrupts them and shortly thereafter her performance of the Ballad fills the silence. In the last act, the Norwegian sailors' resume their singing after the women depart. Their alcohol-enhanced performance is more self-assured and obnoxious than before. As the mocking spinners had roused Senta from her silence, the crew of the Flying Dutchman emerge from their unusual sleepy silence and offer a song of their own. Like the women's attempts to block out Senta, the Norwegians resume singing to mask a song that they do not want to hear. Unlike Senta, the ghostly crew do not remain silent during the Norwegians' refrain and chaos temporarily ensues.

The chaos is a strange sort of song contest. The spectral crew intrude into the Norwegians' refrain with the diminished sonorities and hollow fifths characteristic of their own, but no longer anchored to their original central tonality of B minor. They sing so as to harmonically and modally disturb the Norwegians. Several times the Norwegians react by adjusting their phrases so that they map onto the relatively dissonant sounds and fill in the

foreign fifths with their typically major sonorities. Yet they cannot keep up with their more harmonically flexible competitors and abandon efforts to do so after arriving at E major. The Norwegians remain on stage, silent, while the spectral crew sings the narrative portion of their second verse. Like the refrain it follows, it varies considerably from their first verse, deliberately negotiating with the aesthetic norms of the Norwegians' song in a musically sophisticated form of mockery. Fearful and unable to respond to what has emerged from the silence, the Norwegians retreat from the scene behind signs of the cross.

Sleep-induced silence became an important feature of Senta's Ballad as Wagner revised the libretto en route to composing its operatic version. In the first three of the four extant versions of the libretto, Senta's consecutive performance of the Ballad's three strophes, and her audience's engagement, progressively intensified until Senta sang the last lines alone "mit zunehmender Exaltation." In the fourth version and the musical settings of the Ballad, Wagner integrated a characteristic of Senta's behaviour that he had developed extensively outside her performance of the Ballad and which, as discussed above, figures in all of the phenomenal song performances: silence. In the fourth version of the libretto, Wagner's textual revisions to Senta's Ballad imply two climaxes, as opposed to the progressive intensification he used earlier. The first wave peaks just before the last refrain, at which point "Senta hält vor Erschöpfung an" and the chorus of women sing by themselves, but now "leise weiter" than they did in the previous refrain. This crucial introduction of different degrees of silence inscribes Senta's passage into a kind of somnambulistic sleep in which she grasps the women's voices and progresses to a state of waking in sleep in which she responds to their questions in her closing stretta. These textual revisions drew the Ballad in the direction of Erik's dream, which from the onset was created as a more extraordinary somnambulistic experience and whose text directly concerns images and ideas drawn from the world of sleep.

In forging links with Erik's dream, Wagner's musical and dramatic refinements can also be understood as psychological ones that nod very much in the direction of systematic psychological studies. Kluge's observations (summarized on pp.35-37 in Chapter 1) emphasize the processive nature of somnambulistic episodes and how different episodes

inter-relate. Of the six magnetic stages which Kluge identifies, the third is that of magnetic sleep and is like that of normal sleep in that outer senses are shut off. Already in the second version of the libretto, the performance direction “mit gedämpfter Stimme” appears at the beginning of Erik’s dream narration. Erik’s voice, like those of the women, pertains to a sleep-related state. Senta’s somnambulistic experience during the narration is more advanced than during the Ballad, but she still enters it through a sleep-like phase. Only gradually is she able to interact verbally with Erik. She ultimately achieves, in her stretta, the highest level of ecstasy recognized in systematic studies of the mesmeric phenomena. By the time that Wagner composed the full score, Erik’s dream was clearly laid out as an intensified version of Senta’s experience during the third refrain of the Ballad. Wagner’s revised stage directions in the piano-vocal score further underscored this relationship. His reference to magnetic sleep is couched within an extended stage direction whose framing comments specifically refer to an element which figures in the Ballad: “Senta setzt sich erschöpft in den Lehnstuhl nieder; bei dem Beginn von Eriks Erzählung versinkt sie wie in magnetischen Schlaf, so daß es scheint, als träume sie den von ihm erzählten Traum ebenfalls. -Erik steht an den Stuhl gelehnt zur Seite.” Wagner did not equip the women or Erik with a magnetic wand or some other unusual contraption. Instead, he used the chair in which Senta began her own narrative, the Ballad, as a conductor. Wagner’s stage directions for the Ballad were also modified for the piano-vocal version of the score. Senta, as had been the case before, began her narration seated in the chair with the women drawn in closely around her. During the second verse, the directions call for her to stand up and only return to the chair after her exhausting third verse, before the refrain. This sleep-related collapse into the chair is repeated at the beginning of Erik’s dream narration, as is her somnambulistic empowerment whereby a repeated story becomes a prophetic one.

Initially, Erik commands the role of narrator of his dream. The journey into his dream begins in earnest as his horns reveal their dominant nature, accommodating the flattened sixth as a minor ninth and then resolving to B \flat minor (see beginning of example 2.9). As Erik the hunter becomes Erik the dreamer, his horns lose their initial persona but they never leave the instrumental fold, until the bassoon thirds return almost at the end of the dream.

Example 2.9: *Der fliegende Holländer*, Act II, Erik's dream narration

Fel - sen lag ich trü-mend, sah un-ter mir des Mee-res Flut, die Brandung hört ich, wie sich
 schäu-mend am U - fer brach der Wo-gen Wut! Ein fremdes Schiff am nahen Stran-de erblickt ich,
 seit-sam, wun-der - bar; zwei Män-ner nah-ten sich dem Lan-de, der ein', ich
 Senta mit geschlossenen Augen.
 Der andre? Erik.
 sah's, dein Va - ter war! Wohl erkannt' ich ihn... mit schwarzem Wams,
 wie zuvor.
 der düst-re Blick... auf das Bild deutend. Und ich?
 die blei-che Mien'... der See-mann, er i- Du kamst vom
 Horn dolce

Fag. Vol. pizz.
 Hr. Fac.
 Hr.
 Senta mit geschlossenen Augen.
 Der andre? Erik.
 Hr. Fac.
 Hr.
 wie zuvor.
 u. Kb. pizz.
 pp Fac.
 Horn dolce

(example 2.9 continued)

accelerando

Hau-se her, du flogst den Vater zu be - grüßen. Doch kaum noch sah ich

accelerando

p cresc. *fp cresc.*

Hr. Vcl.

an dich langen, du stürztest zu des Frem - den Fü - - Ben, ich sah dich sei - ne

Hr. Vcl.

mf *dim.* *mf*

Senta mit steigender Spannung.

S. Er hub mich auf...

accelerando

E. Knie umfassen... An sei - ne Brust, voll Inbrunst hingst du dich an

accelerando

cresc. *dim.* *mf*

Hr.

S. Und dann?

Lento.

E. ihn, du küß-test ihn mit heißer Lust... Sah ich aufs Meer euch fliehn.

cresc. *Hr.* *pp*

Fag.

Erik's opening lines depict his dark yet sensually stimulating dream environment. They expand the i-V argument of his preface into two four-bar phrases, retaining the initial G \flat colouring. The viola tremolo thirds B \flat /D \flat are drawn forth, with a variegated bass line featuring bassoons and horns. Lower strings are added to the texture, with the celli providing a brief countermelody which peaks on G \flat in alternate measures, when they are not part of Erik's vocal melody. The arching bass line is arrested by the cadence of the second phrase which closes, as the first began, with a B \flat -minor six-four chord. Erik's last note is the flattened mediant, making its first vocal appearance within the narrative and highlighted by violin octave tremolos. As D \flat had earlier enabled the opening out of Erik's strophic song into Senta's verse beginning in G \flat major, it now marks the expansion of his dream narration into a description of what he saw on the shores of the sea as he attempts to respond to the closing question of her verse "Was trübt mit Argwohn deinen Sinn?".

The D \flat gateway again enables Senta to engage more fully with Erik. This time, however, she is reconnected to her earlier altered state of consciousness and is no longer an unknowing audience. She does not usurp him completely, but she does encroach upon his role as narrator by steering his account in particular directions and anticipating what he has to say. In doing so, Erik unwittingly fills in the gaps left open at the end of her Ballad. While she had unconsciously grasped that she would be the Dutchman's redeemer, she had not grasped how this would be achieved. Erik exerts himself as a rational observer within his dream as he reveals its content: "“Ein fremdes Schiff am nahen Strande erblickt ich, seltsam, wunderbar; zwei Männer nahten sich dem Lande, der ein', ich sah's, dein Vater war!” His perceptive and cognitive framing pillars mark a shift from D \flat major to A \flat major, a transposition of his earlier tonic to dominant motion. Mention of the foreign ship triggers a response from the clarinets, which sound chromatically on C \flat but then converge with Erik's vocal twist at "wunderbar" which lands on the flattened sixth, B \flat \flat . The sudden modal inflection at "wunderbar" attaches the minor mode to the unusual foreign ship and also attracts Senta's sympathies; her unconscious mentation is registered musically in a recognizable shape, as the first statement of the Dutchman's motive, within the narration, in G \flat minor. It is intuited from Erik's own will and is but a subtle reshaping of the earlier

arched bass line of the bassoons and celli. As Erik approaches the dominant sonority of A \flat and identifies her father as one of the two men, Senta's intuition again emerges spontaneously. This time she also speaks, prompting verbal confirmation of the other man's identity. Her question "Der andre?", posed as A \flat -C \flat , reinstates the minor inflection of "wunderbar". Erik's response enharmonically subsumes her minor third within a rationally stable E major. It prevails statically as he describes the man that he recognizes until Senta's own descriptive contribution pulls C \flat , now as the dominant B, up a semi-tone to C. The Dutchman's motive now sounds after her words, harmonizing her C as the flattened mediant of an A-minor frame, reinforced by woodwinds and, for the first time, trombones. The Dutchman is now liberated from Erik's will and his identification of the man in the portrait as the Seaman in his dream is certified by his v-I cadence. This identification is redundant, but not without further meaning as the descending horn line of the cadence slips down to the flattened third as Senta asks her role in all of this: "Und ich?".

Again Erik pivots away from Senta's minor third by reinterpreting it within a major sonority, drawing her E minor forward to C major. As he unravels the next faster paced stage of the dream, he slides vocally through D \flat , D, E \flat and E until settling, once again, at F. The Dutchman's motive rings out for the first time solidly in the major mode, F major, as he tells Senta how he saw her drop at the stranger's feet. Erik has come full circle to the point from which he must expose how the stranger poses a very real threat to Senta: he could overtake her will, compromise her morally and even threaten her very existence. As he tells her "ich sah dich seine Knie umfangen", he revives the 5-6 \flat vocal argument, with the flattened sixth harmonized initially within a diminished seventh (shot through with an F by the horns) that resolves to F major. Senta is undisturbed and contributes "Er hub mich auf...", as C-F. Erik continues "An seine Brust, voll Inbrust hingst du dich an ihn, du kußtest ihn mit heißer Lust..." skewering the melodic tension up to G \flat , as the Dutchman's motive rings out for the last time, in G \flat major. Erik forces a correction of the flattened sixth as he peaks on G at "Lust" and remains determined to restore reason and his major mode. To his terrible surprise, Senta embraces the G and wants to know more: "Und dann?"

Realizing that he has failed to instil fear in Senta, the opening B \flat -minor/G \flat -major thirds return, but now as a strikingly compact gesture uttered only by the bassoons. Erik is left where he began, but this time much more alone. He looks at Senta “mit unheimlicher Verwunderung” as he tells the close of the dream, “Sah ich aufs Meer euch fliehn”, a capella and helplessly lingering, at its end on F. Senta awakens, seizing his F which she projects even higher to A as she breaks away into her stretta, reinterpreting her closing note within the dream, the naturalized sixth, as a dominant that secures her distant tonal territory of C major. Erik makes a hasty retreat from Senta’s irrational outburst, clinging firmly to his B \flat -minor 6 \flat -5-1 musical cross as he passes his last judgement: “Sie ist dahin! Mein Traum sprach wahr!” The B \flat -minor/C-major schism as Erik flees the scene is replayed as Senta “nach dem Ausbruche ihrer Begeisterung in stummes Sinnen versunken, verbliebt in ihrer Stellung, den Blick auf das Bild geheftet” (GS 1.277). The Dutchman’s motive sounds once more, this time gently in C major, before she turns her gaze one final time to the portrait and sings a final version of the Ballad’s refrain.

Before the Ballad was transposed to G minor to accommodate Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient, the creator of the role of Senta, this reminiscent refrain began in C major and ended in A minor. The specific large-scale and contextual tonal relationships of the Ballad were of course disturbed by its transposition. As Reinhold Brinkmann has pointed out, Wagner’s analogous transposition of the reminiscent refrain at the end of No. 5 “emphasizes even more the inner relationships of the keys”.³¹ The important function of reminiscent sections of the Ballad in No.5 does suggest that contextual relationships within the number could have been a factor in Wagner’s choice of G minor for the Ballad’s transposition. The more varied reminiscence of the Ballad just prior to Erik’s dream narration was originally set in G minor. It underscores Senta’s minor mode attempt to convey her identification with the Dutchman’s fate in a relation to Erik’s primary key of B \flat major, a key which strongly influences the tonal organization of the entire number while he is present. As mentioned earlier, the choice of G minor also relates to specific sections of the Dutchman’s music in the first act.

³¹“die Bedeutung der tonalen Binnenbeziehungen zusätzlich unterstreicht,” Reinhold Brinkmann, “Sentas Traumerzählung,” 10.

The two references to the *Ballad* that Wagner did not transpose analogously would both have yielded problems had he done so. Senta's stretta conclusion to Erik's dream narration, a relative of her stretta at the end of the *Ballad*, would have been in B \flat major. Such concordance with Erik after the dream narration would have neutralized the dramatic conflict. The stretta's peaks on high A are thankfully both strongly supported by the orchestra. The refrain section which is hummed—Senta "singt leise für sich"—prior to her performance of the *Ballad* is framed by the women's mockery of Erik and Mary's reprimands concerning her unproductiveness. The latter is a marked schism, with Mary's agitated strings disrupting the serene mood; a transposition would not have had much impact here. However, the women's descending strings and laughter land on a diminished sonority which is only partially separated by a fermata from the refrain segment. The lower register wind chords sound throughout the higher register silence and blend into the refrain music with its characteristic wind timbres. The resolution of F \sharp -A-C-D \sharp upwards to C major yields an uplifting and enlightening effect that the transition to B \flat major simply does not. Contextual musical and dramatic relationships thus seem to be significant in Wagner's decision to preserve the original tonal scheme of the *Ballad* fragments and variants where he did.

The reminiscent refrain at the end of No.5 is separated from the preceding B \flat -minor/C-major juxtapositions by five measures which outline diminished sonorities before resolution to the dominant. A diminished sonority also harmonizes Senta's last note of the reminiscence and is followed by a long pause before the timpani enters at the beginning of the next number. This version of the refrain is the only time within No.5 that its closing and now (because of the Dutchman's imminent arrival) even more crucial cadence, with its reference to "ein Weib Treue" descending from the pitch necessitating transposition, is clearly exposed since Senta first sang it within the *Ballad*. An unsatisfactory rendering of this cadence would detract from its musical and dramatic significance. This reminiscence gains importance because it is the only time that Senta is alone on stage. The refrain fragment that she sings is, as usual, different from all other versions of it. But Senta's only textual modification is her introduction of "möchtest" in the always variable phrase "Ah, _____ du, bleicher Seeman, sie finden!" Her reminiscence is very different from her earlier stretta

variants and seems to restore precisely the portion of the refrain that she was prone to boldly altering. The original refrain's characteristic woodwind timbres are not restored, however, and the string tremolo accompaniment here refers back to Erik's dream narration, her G-minor reminiscence of the Ballad and, above all, to the Dutchman's middle section of his monologue. This solo moment privileges only the off-stage audience, revealing that in a more normal, albeit contemplative waking state, Senta is keenly intuitive and sensitive but she does not confuse the real with the unreal. Only when she perceives the Dutchman standing before her is she prompted to reconcile her different states of consciousness. Even then, she, like the Dutchman, pauses to doubt if her dreams are really being realized.

Once face to face, the path along which the unconscious world of the Dutchman and Senta is consciously manifested is carefully traced as one that begins in silence, riveting gazes and occasional orchestral gestures that differentiate themselves from Daland's more conventional ones.³² Once alone, each soliloquizes their recognition of the other's image as that of their dreams. Senta's entry into this first section of their duet is prefaced by the introduction of solo on-stage oboes, positioned on either side of the stage. The Dutchman, temporarily quiet, rejoins the texture with a repeat of his opening text and the introduction of another pair of on-stage instruments—horns—similarly placed. Their invisible instrumental voices appeal and respond to each other before their words do. Senta's oboes greet the Dutchman's cadence in E major and initially outline an E triad. Harmonized by the horns of the orchestra pit as E major and A minor, they recall the redemptive trope first deployed in the Dutchman's monologue. Momentary doubt—"Was ich erblicke, ist's ein Wahn?"—juxtaposes perceived reality and illusion with a turn to C major the flattened sixth, and then a dominant seventh on C#. The on-stage horns respond to her question and integrate her search into alternating E minor and B major sonorities as the Dutchman soliloquizes alongside Senta. The network of interlocking redemptive fourths, hinging on E

³² Wagner's use of silence here and elsewhere is considered by Ernst Bloch in his essay "The Question of the Paradoxes," in *Essays on the Philosophy of Music*, trans. by Peter Palmer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985): 151-168, originally published as *Zur Philosophie der Musik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1974).

major/minor and advanced through the call and response gestures of their invisible instrumentalists, links Senta's sympathy with the Dutchman's real need for redemption. The connection enables the reentrance of her oboes in a broad, upward-reaching C-major sweep which articulates the relative major/minor anchors of her Ballad. Embracing B at her phrase end and shifting to a more rationally-oriented position, the on-stage instruments become silent. Senta's commitment to a redemptive redefinition of reality has been enabled; the flattened sixths' interdependent stepping-stones of the redemptive fourth and transformational minor third have been connected.

Example 2.10: *Der fliegende Holländer*, Act I, no. 1

Matrosen während der Arbeit.

Tenor.
Ho - jo - - - hel Hal-lo - jo!

Baß.
Ho - jo - - - hel Hal-lo - jo!

Hr. auf d. Bühne.
(Erstes Echo.) (Zweites Echo.)

mf *cresc.* *dim.* *pp.* *Picc.* *Try. Pos.*

Ho - jo - - - hel Hal-lo - jo!

Hr. a. d. Bühne

In *Rienzi*, Wagner had already explored the use of on-stage invisible instruments and other unusual acoustical configurations so as to co-mingle gestures of phenomenal verisimilitude with those of noumenal truth.³³ In *Der fliegende Holländer*, this expansive and ambiguous territory is inscribed from the very beginning as a mystical realm in which all of nature, from its most obviously similar elements to its apparently most incompatible ones, share common ground. Through his use of echo patterns and other call and response structures, Wagner set forth the related idea that we naturally seek out harmonious links with the world around us. Even Wagner's mundane sailors take up this idea. In the opening moments of the opera's first scene, they cry out in the dark as they labour against the raging orchestral storm (see example 2.10). Two groups of on-stage horns reply.

The sailors' vocal line starts with an octave leap, after which the sonority of G minor is fleshed out by stepwise descent from D-B \flat . A timpani tremolo on F is introduced underneath and remains during the next two measures as two groups of on-stage horns echo the closing gesture in turn. The storm in the pit flares up temporarily before the sailors' outburst and the echoes are repeated. This time, the timpani and the B \flat sonority they support are reinforced by the horns in the pit, which remain in the texture as the three-measure echo pattern is repeated immediately thereafter. Two more cycles of echoes follow with the sailors and on-stage horns starting a semitone higher and yielding the dominant seventh of B \flat . Several changes now occur at once. The implied resolution in B \flat is only vaguely granted as the sailors sing the later ubiquitous 5-6 motive. At the same time, the storm of the strings weakly reasserts itself with a more limited range before being arrested, along with the oscillating pattern, by the stepwise descending vocal gesture. The echo is now compressed as all the stage horns sound together, without a delay in time. The orchestra, including the horns in the pit, joins in. The strings' out-of-control ascending chromatic figures from the stormier moments earlier on are now inverted and reinforced by the woodwinds. The oscillating vocal pattern which starts up again is now also granted an echo. But the responses of the on-stage horns, while staggered, sound in unison with the vocal source and with each

³³ Of course, Wagner's early experimentation with invisibility was to be played out on a much larger scale with his hidden Bayreuth orchestra.

other; the time lag is congruent with the periodic nature of the vocal pattern. Furthermore the first violins join in the echo/unison texture, abandoning their earlier hostile presence and drawing into the expanding musico-dramatic collective the larger orchestra of which they are a part. The oscillating figure is not retarded, as it was earlier, by the descending stepwise gesture, but rather by enthusiastically liberating ascending fourths, echoed first by the on-stage horns in unison and then fully harmonized by an orchestral tutti. The mediating function of the on-stage horns fulfilled, it is two pit horns which yield the repeated dominant post-cadential residue and the premise for a dramatic shift.

In the first few moments of the opera, an important process of mediation takes place. As the storm calms, the sailors finish anchoring their ship and they achieve a temporarily harmonious balance with nature. The naturalistic and operatic worlds are fused as the noumenal dimension of their phenomenal voices is enabled, and resounds throughout the entire orchestra. Only Senta embraces this expansive noumenal world as a part of her everyday life. Everyone else in the opera feels unsure and fearful of that which they cannot tangibly perceive. Senta's noumenal and phenomenal worlds are joined from the moment she meets the Dutchman in person. She is confident and content to live out her pledge of fidelity to him. Nobody else, not even the Dutchman, can recognize that her silence is profound and that it does hold the key to the Dutchman's redemption. Through her self-sacrificing redemptive act, she proves her fidelity unto death and becomes the Dutchman's informed guide into the noumenal, a dimension he has yet to explore.

Chapter 3

Part I - Unseen Voices

Regardless of how we value the ideas about the unconscious that sprang up around the practice of animal magnetism, the phenomenon of somnambulism is itself not spurious and continues to be the focus of serious investigation. While explanations of somnambulistic behaviour vary, and extreme cases still produce skepticism, the idea that someone may seem to be conscious and unconscious at the same time is not generally contentious. It is hardly surprising that in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the figure of the somnambulist would leave its mark on the dramatic stage. Precisely because somnambulists appear differently than characters who are either more normally asleep or awake, their characteristic deportment has a natural theatrical dimension. We want to see for ourselves what we might not believe if learned secondhand. As privileged witnesses, we are also voyeurs, for it is a normally private realm that the somnambulist promises to reveal and we as privileged onlookers and onlisteners hope to share.

The somnambulistic revelation is a distant cousin of the aside, a personal thought voiced out loud but not delivered with the conscious intention that it fall within the scope of awareness of other characters on stage. An aside typically reveals something truthful that somehow contradicts characters' public behavior, and would be disruptive if introduced "into" the dramatic scenario at hand, but augments the off-stage audience's understanding of their real nature. We may not be altogether surprised by what the characters say, but the fact that they utter these words themselves verifies for us that this is what they really think and feel. Similarly, we ascribe greater weight to the words of a somnambulist when we see the character uttering them. But two features of the somnambulistic revelation stand apart: it usually becomes the centre of on-stage attention, thrusting what normally would not be heard into a spotlight where it must also be seen; and it lacks the self-awareness which helps us to locate the somnambulist that we know as a conscious person as the source of apparently atypical words and actions.

In terms of aesthetics, the obvious sensationalistic dimension of somnambulism was not as influential as the clearer picture of the unconscious that it helped to reveal. Treatises such as Kluge's *Versuch einer Darstellung des animalischen Magnetismus als Heilmittel* invariably emphasized that somnambulism was not a singular and peculiar state, but that it encompassed several inter-related psychological stages. Consecutive stages were characterized by a slightly different balance of mental and physical activity typically associated with either waking or sleeping. What was most fascinating about this series of states was that it challenged the view that unconscious mentation could not be considered to partake in the organizing forces of time and space, within the domain of rational thought. Increasingly intense stages of somnambulism demonstrated that the unconscious could assume several consciously perceptible forms. In the sphere of aesthetics, this reevaluation influenced developments in perspectivism¹, whereby a wider range of differentiated viewpoints accommodated unconscious mentation as a potentially positive contributor to a far-reaching awareness of reality. The weakened position of empirical rationalism as the measure of truth or reality necessarily brought the classical principle of the unity of time and space into question. As understood through the study of somnambulism, the unconscious mind enables us to diachronically and synchronically transcend such narrow delimiters of meaning.

Many somnambulists that populate the artworks of this path-breaking period in psychological thought continue to command our attention. In the sphere of musical dramatic works, somnambulist characters readily opened up opportunities for imaginative musical treatment at an experimental time in the development of instrumental timbre and harmony. In addition to Wagner, Bellini and Verdi set operatic scenes of somnambulism that remain well known to present-day audiences. Cosima's diaries include references to *La Sonnambula* (1831), but Wagner likely was already acquainted with Bellini's work in the later 1830s. His lifelong interest in Shakespeare probably always eclipsed his familiarity with Verdi's version

¹ For a recent and perceptive discussion or related issues, see Hilde Meldrum Brown, *Leitmotiv and Drama: Wagner, Brecht, and the Limits of Epic Theatre* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

of *Macbeth* (1847, later substantially revised). Piave's libretto does not include most of the discussion of psychological troubles that partners Lady Macbeth's sleep-walking scene, but Verdi's "mad scene" ripely evokes what these lost words convey.²

In both Bellini's opera and Shakespeare's play, the occurrences of somnambulism are explicitly acknowledged as such. They are observed by a figure who is invested with some authority, is familiar with that rare phenomenon, and verifies the truthful nature of the behaviour which perplexes others. The plot of *La Sonnambula* pivots on its two sleep-walking scenes. In the first, Amina climbs through a window into a room at an inn occupied by a Count, whose recently expressed interest in her has led to tension between her and Elvino, her fiancé. In her sleep, she proclaims her fidelity to Elvino. The Count recognizes that she is telling the truth and he removes himself from the scene (as his passions threaten to incite him to act inappropriately around the vulnerable woman). Amina lies down in the Count's bed, where she is discovered by townspeople and Elvino. Predictably, they can only surmise that she has truly been unfaithful. The Count tries to defend Amina's virtue, but Elvino finds his story incredible. The misunderstanding fosters considerable strife before being resolved when everyone witnesses Amina sleep-walking. She emerges from a window of the local mill, crosses the roof while miraculously avoiding being crushed by the millwheel, and safely crosses a rafter which threatens to collapse. With an aura of divine protection, her reiterated professions of love for Elvino finally ring true for all. *La Sonnambula* is hardly a heavy-going work, rippling with psychological complexities. Nonetheless, Amina's somnambulism serves several dramatic purposes. In both somnambulistic episodes, Amina's

² The text is not merely streamlined though, as it is the waiting-woman who seems to better understand Lady Macbeth's behaviour than the Doctor, a reversal of the roles in Shakespeare's play. Piave did retain an important line of Lady Macbeth's, which in her deluded state is directed at Macbeth: "Banquo is dead and no-one has ever come back from the grave." Macbeth of course has already suffered severe hallucinations, including visions of Banquo's ghost. The irony is riper though, as Lady Macbeth is haunted by her own bloodied hands as she chastizes Macbeth's psychological frailty. Furthermore, in the subsequent scene in Shakespeare, Macbeth scarcely gives weight to his wife's condition as reported by the Doctor and suggests that she be given a purgative to rid her mind of the cause of her troubles. When the Doctor suggests that only she can cure herself, Macbeth responds: "Throw psychic to the dogs; I'll none of it."

words and actions are recapitulatory in that they obviously stem from and refer back to earlier events. At the same time, they serve an expository function by asserting an unequivocal statement of her fidelity to Elvino as a corrective to her ambiguous exchanges with the Count. She also describes a vision of the future in which her planned wedding to Elvino tragically unravels. Bellini's musical treatment is largely atmospheric, suspending the usual flow of musical events to underscore her angelic innocence and to emphasize tension and suspense in the closing scene.

Lady Macbeth's famous sleep-walking scene is of course a confession of guilt rather than a profession of innocence and it is less pivotal in a dramatic framework saturated with madness and bizarre happenings. Whereas Macbeth's tortured hallucinations are his own private misery, witnessed only by the audience, Lady Macbeth's behaviour is publicly acknowledged and documented by a Doctor of Physic who professes her disease lies beyond his worldly practice: "More needs she the divine than the physician." What he does with his notes afterwards is open to speculation, but the murderous couple are both soon dead. Despite the different tone of these two works, their somnambulistic episodes share the function of revealing truths previously unacknowledged by other characters, requalifying past events so as to unify the level of awareness within the drama. For the off-stage audience, they are not so much revelations as commentaries on the psychological state of each of the women whose distress is genuine and contextually logical, given the events it follows. Lady Macbeth's case is more disturbing and disturbed, a glimpse of a mind tortured by the truth and on the verge of collapse. Amina, while fearful of further tragedies, is more firmly grounded by her knowledge of truth. While Verdi's opera is admittedly a later work, his use of harmony is appropriately more "strange" than Bellini's. And while both deliberately underdeveloped their motivic material, Verdi's is also suitably more fractured.

In writing the libretto for *Der fliegende Holländer*, as we have seen, Wagner integrated the phenomenon of somnambulism more thoroughly into dramatic structure, in ways which had implications for musical relationships. He developed the first half of the drama around a series of sleep-related states, experienced by different characters, that reveal a whole spectrum of unconsciousness similar to that described by Kluge. The series involves

progressively more complex and eventful kinds of sleep, climaxing with Senta's ecstatic outbursts. The starting point is the Steersman, whom we witness falling asleep exhausted from the journey through the storm. Without signs to the contrary, his sleep is merely restful and leaves no lasting impressions on his consciousness when he awakens. During the non-eventful sleep of the entire Norwegian crew, the Dutchman arrives. At the end of his monologue, he falls unconscious, and we can surmise that he is spiritually as well as physically overwhelmed. While unconscious, his ghostly crew utter their plea for salvation. The Dutchman subsequently rises and seemingly involuntarily goes through the motions of another earthly visit, although he had earlier resisted enduring what he expects can only be another failed effort to find salvation. Erik's dream of losing Senta to a strange man occurs around the time that Daland and the Dutchman reach the home harbour.³ When he wakes from his dream, he sees the two men and immediately rushes to Daland's house. Meanwhile, Senta has been preoccupied with the portrait of the Dutchman and has hummed the Ballad's refrain, increasingly expressing her sympathy for the legendary man's plight all the while that the Dutchman's hopes in finding redemption are being renewed with news of her. Senta sings the Ballad as the two captains make their way to the house, and Erik arrives just in time to hear its daring conclusion.

Erik's dream narration is the first pause in the dramatic continuum of time that reaches back specifically to a moment passed within the opera. Amina and Lady Macbeth's somnambulistic concerns are much like Erik's, sharing his relatively localized focus on events and timeframes spanned by the opera. By contrast, the Dutchman's monologue and Senta's Ballad both extend outside the opera, sweeping from the indefinite past to an indefinite future.

³ It is tempting, given the carefully superimposed layers of events, to ascribe the time of Erik's dream to the moment at which he is introduced in the drama, when, in Act II, the women mock him *in absentia* and suggest that he will become jealous and angry on account of Senta's attentions to the portrait. With regards to the stretch of time just prior, the original through-performed version of the opera draws attention to the complementary nature of the Norwegian sailors' song and the Spinning Song; the former blends into or rather becomes the latter during the scene change to the interior setting. In other words, they are being performed at the same time and the Spinning Song could be considered to end when the men arrive at the home harbour.

Erik is the only character in the opera who dreams within the opera, remembers something of his unconscious experience afterwards, and is immediately prompted to interpret his dream in relation to events in the waking world. He is also the only character to share his dream with another person. In his effort to help Senta, he scratches at the surface of the somnambulistic layer of the opera, drawing it closer to the present. The exigencies of Senta's psychological dichotomy are soon met when the Dutchman appears before her. Potentialities and abstract conceptions of time are reconciled with real time just as Senta's subjective and objective worlds fuse and she offers the Dutchman her love. Both the Dutchman and Senta connect their images of each other with images that have appeared to them in dreams, but these connections are only presented as asides.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Senta's *Ballad* is structurally and motivically centred as the hinge pin of the phenomenal and noumenal realms. It is allied with both through the phenomenal work songs of the Norwegian choruses and the more noumenally-oriented performances of the Dutchman and Erik. She is the only character in the opera who proves capable of negotiating between these realms without recourse to a brand of rationalism certain to ripple with dissatisfaction. Her private thoughts and her unconsciously reckoned relationship with the Dutchman are rendered publicly only in her altered states of consciousness. Notably, this deeply felt association emerges as phenomenal song, emphasizing its exertion into the public layer of awareness while calling attention to its violation of conventional norms of expression. Senta does not sing in a phenomenal sense after she meets the Dutchman. Her genuine commitment to him is buried back within the realm of unspoken truths, consistently misunderstood but sustained unflaggingly until the drama's close.

Senta's female successor is remarkably better understood and supported by her community.⁴ She is not, however, a somnambulist of the same order. Like Senta, Elsa is also silent at first, yet expressive through her physical gestures and musical accompaniment, and

⁴ For a discussion of Elsa's graduated stages of expressiveness, her psychological transformation as she publicly recounts her dream, and the role that sound plays in her various appeals to defend her honour, see Berthold Hoeckner's "Elsa Screams, or The birth of music drama," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 9,2 (1997): 97-132.

only gradually reveals herself and her concerns through sung text.⁵ Elsa too is beckoned to defend herself, but not through mockery. When she publicly recounts her dream and its vision of a knight who will defend her honour, she enters an altered state of consciousness as if she were re-experiencing her dream. In this sense, she singlehandedly surveys the ground covered by Erik and Senta together in the dream narration scene, save the ecstatic coda. Once she has shared her dream, Elsa's psychological health is not widely condemned: skepticism is in the minority. The crowd of onlookers waits with her for the promised knight and regales him when he finally arrives. Like Senta, Elsa unconsciously perceives an alliance with a man unknown to her and confidently commits herself to him when he actually appears. Unlike Senta, Elsa has the benefit of a more benevolent theory of justice: she is innocent until proven guilty. From the onset, Elsa is less audacious than Senta as she is in a needier position. She is to Lohengrin what the Dutchman is to Senta (although both halves of each couple admittedly stand to benefit from the liaisons). Elsa does not start off like the Dutchman, doubtful that his vision of a divine redeemer would ever be realized. But, via Ortrud, she becomes increasingly similar to him to the point that she forces a break with Lohengrin, despite his repeated efforts to resist this development. In *Parsifal*, Wagner created his last and most extensively worked somnambulistic vision of redemption, with Amfortas firmly in place as the Dutchman's true heir.

Wagner's interest in somnambulism, dream-related states and all aspects of the unconscious left its mark on each of his major operas. *Der fliegende Holländer* was his first major aesthetic experiment, and demonstrates the extent to which his interest in surveying the full scope of the psyche could influence all aspects of his artistic strategies. The *Ring* offers two interesting cases of somnambulism. Sieglinde's nightmare in *Die Walküre* is a cataclysmic resurrection of past traumas, buried beyond her conscious awareness, offered only for the off-

⁵ Carl Maria von Weber's early opera *Das Waldmädchen* (1800), reworked as *Silvana* (1810), features a mute girl who is drawn from her home in nature into society and learns to express herself through language. As a mute, she is naive and vulnerable, but also highly sensitive and expressive without the use of spoken language. Better known is the mute character Fenella in Auber's *La Muette de Portici* (1828), a work intimately familiar to Wagner.

stage audience at the moment that similar but more tragic events seem imminent.⁶ Where Wagner had painted the Dutchman's legendary association with demonic forces ambiguously close to Senta's somnambulistic inclinations—close enough that many commentators wish to ascribe her normatively deviant behaviour to his manipulations—he made a clearer statement on this sort of relationship in Act II, scene 1 of *Götterdämmerung*. Alberich is unquestionably guilty of seeking out Hagen precisely at a time when the latter is susceptible to his persuasive techniques. Alberich is the vampiric character that the Dutchman is not. Hagen is Alberich's agent, agreeing to secure a ring he does not consciously value in the same way and freely exploiting others for his own personal gain.⁷ Siegfried's noumenally-charged moments are of a different kind, enriching life rather than draining it. He is not enslaved to anyone, but to values such as honesty and fidelity—those values that Hagen temporarily re-routes but does not denature. Wagner specifically inscribed Siegfried's psychological transformations and deepened understanding of the worlds within and around him in the realm of phenomenal music. Like Senta he is moved by song, first the wood-bird's and later Brünnhilde's. His ecstatic grasp of the intersection between the phenomenal and noumenal, between the individual and the universal realms, is less aggressively asserted than Senta's but similarly emerges as an aesthetically triumphant coda to the one song that he consciously sets out to sing. The connection between phenomenal song and somnambulism—both ends of the spectrum of performance conventions—warrants close attention as Wagner developed further ways of negotiating the same issues.

⁶ Christopher Wintle presents an insightful discussion of the relationship between psychological processes and musical form in this scene in his essay "Analysis and Psychoanalysis: Wagner's Musical Metaphors" *Companion to Contemporary Musical Thought*, ed. John Paynter, Tim Howell, Richard Orton and Peter Seymour, vol.2. (London and New York: Routledge, 1992): 650-691.

⁷ The quintessential and horrific Wagnerian vampiric chain is headed by Klingsor. While Kundry is driven to try to make new links, she desires someone who can resist joining, and does not pursue destructive paths when she is temporarily free from Klingsor. Hagen enjoys his hateful way of life too much.

All of Wagner's characters for whom unconscious mentation positively informs an unselfish and greater overall level of awareness demonstrate a special relationship to sound. They hear differently what others hear as mere two-dimensional signals, bearing singular surface types of meaning. The dramatic profile Wagner gave to aesthetic sensitivity and the world of sound was part of his response to what he saw as the weaknesses of nineteenth-century operatic practices. In her book *Unsung Voices*, Carolyn Abbate notes that "in early Romantic opera, the noumenal music seldom breaks through to the stage-world, remaining most often strictly unheard; the phenomenal music (songs, stage-band marches, fanfares, and the like) seem more precisely located. This more careful separation probably reflects Romantic concerns with the notion of 'unheard music,' and a view of music (alone among the arts) as a higher form that originates in a transcendental and inaccessible space."⁸ In certain Baroque and Mozartean operas, as Abbate points out, some opera characters partake in the self-reflexive, self-conscious kind of music-making that involves them in the act of performance and hence allows them to assert themselves in ways that operatic music usually does not allow. These moments, for Abbate, are the rare noumenal moments of narrativity, precisely because the "voice" of the performer contributes to and comments on its own milieu. Abbate's caution that we should be critical listeners and be aware of these moments of noumenal disruption is worth reiterating. They demand attention.

Abbate's tendency to read disruptions as signposts of lies and deception, as proof that the performative voice has borrowed phenomenal conventions only to discard them and twist their implications, seems unnecessarily critical. Nietzsche's later-life attacks on Wagner were not dissimilar, but some of his jabs became back-handed compliments. His image of Wagner as an evil hypnotist seducing his audience into believing terrible things yields up the compliment that Wagner was a persuasive debater. The real critique is leveled not so much at Wagner as at his audiences, who fit into the metaphor as weak-willed somnambulists, lacking the consciousness and critical abilities to reject the decadent Wagnerian programme.

⁸ Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 120. Her consideration of the relation between phenomenal and noumenal music is elaborated throughout her book, in discussions of several operatic and instrumental works.

Neither Abbate nor Nietzsche grants much space to a critically engaged audience that does not revile the deceit by withdrawing from the arena of Wagnerian debate, smug with greater wisdom. But perhaps Wagner was inviting us to participate at a higher level within the debate, to weigh the different sides for ourselves, and to realize that all sides have their strengths and weaknesses.

In a recent essay entitled “Debussy’s Phantom Sounds,” Abbate opens a discussion about two fascinating moments in the Wagnerian *oeuvre*: the Shepherd in Act I, scene 3 of *Tannhäuser* and the Sailor who begins *Tristan und Isolde*.⁹ Abbate comments that both characters sing *a capella*, an unusual thing for a self-conscious song in an opera at the time, but frankly more realistic as sailors don’t usually sing with orchestras. She thus refers to them as “hyper-realistic.” Abbate views the Shepherd as the Sailor’s forerunner also in the sense that this hyper-realism is “joined with harmonic oddities and textual riddles, gently verbal *non sequiturs*.”¹⁰ The Sailor is different in a crucial respect—he is invisible—and it is this dimension which Abbate finds an “originating and a summary gesture,” one which questions the “custom that defined divinity or authority,” and one which catches “up with an insight present much earlier, as early as 1800, in Romantic literature and German Idealist philosophy. Disembodied voice, mediumistic speech could also be uncanny.”¹¹

As the present study has tried to show, somnambulism was interesting to psychologically-oriented thinkers on account of the traces of the unconscious that it seemed to offer. These signs that what was invisible, intangible and infinite was not completely beyond our grasp also suggested that the unconscious appealed to us in forms that would and would not belong to this world, forms that would both imply and deny its otherness. One thing they could never have was a single specific source. A practice which binds all of Wagner’s major works is the use of off-stage voices, both human or instrumental. Off-stage

⁹ Carolyn Abbate, “Debussy’s Phantom Sounds” *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 10, 1 (1998): 67-96. The discussion of Wagner is promised continuation in a forthcoming book.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 75.

can of course mean a realistic space, simply extending beyond the framed stage, with realistic sounds. But if the source of a sound is suppressed and gently hints at not being realistic, the gesture draws us away from the stage but not to a fixed place, even an imaginary one. This kind of gesture and its effect are remarkably unoperatic, denying the performer the conventional right to be seen as well as heard. Artists who undoubtedly stimulated Wagner's use of invisible voices included Pedro Calderón de la Barca and Carl Maria von Weber, two figures who played a commanding role in the development of German Romantic opera.

Weber's predilection for off-stage instruments and voices stretches back to his early, lesser-known works. The ghostly chorus in the Wolf Glen's scene in his popular opera *Der Freischütz* is a classic example of the invisible supernatural. One passage for which Wagner repeatedly expressed enthusiasm was the on-stage horn exchanges leading into the *Jägerchor* (No. 18) in *Euryanthe*.¹² The opera was in the Dresden repertory between 1824 and the composer's death in 1826, the time when Wagner, who later claimed to hear it under Weber's direction, must have become familiar with *Euryanthe*. The section that elicited his praise is in the third Act. After her cavatina, Euryanthe lies by a brook in despair while a cello and double bass motive sounds underneath pulsing strings. Horns (in E♭ and B♭) and bassoons emerge, calling out and responding to each other. The invisible hunting parties seemingly accounted for and united, the bassoons and strings drop out, while the trombones join in. However brief, the seventeen measures which follow contain delightful flurries of sound, in two-measure bursts followed by pauses and echos. While the echo gesture is conventional, as is the horn passage in conjunction with the hunter's chorus, the soundscape is highly animated and even more "musical" than might be expected of a regular hunting party. The obvious or realistic source of the sound becomes subsumed in an evocation of animated Nature.

¹² Michael C. Tusa has examined the structural similarity of extended sections of *Euryanthe* with those in *Die Hochzeit*, *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*, including some discussion of musical and dramatic relationships. See his "Richard Wagner and Weber's *Euryanthe*," *19th-Century Music* 9, 3 (Spring 1986): 206-221.

When the hunters begin to sing, they vocalize the instrumental melody, similarly harmonized. They are not visible during their first strophe, but their text obliquely refers to the distressed woman on-stage. The hunters sing *a capella* at first. Meanwhile, the horns and trombone adopt a more conventional type of fanfare which sounds after the first two vocal phrases. When the hunters begin their third phrase, the horns continue but reclaim their earlier more musical gesture as they become the vocal accompaniment. No other instruments participate in the chorus. The hunters appear for their second choral strophe, but their mountaintop perch is still at some remove from the dramatically central figure, however silent she may be. The King subsequently arrives and sings unaccompanied recitative in alternation with the again *a capella* chorus, curiously commenting on the sad unknown woman. Semitonal motion in the strings accompanies her gesture of looking towards them, and all of the men recognize her immediately. Astonished, they sing her name aloud.

Weber's side-stepping of the normal operatic milieu into the realm of nature is quintessentially Romantic, both in its symbolic interplay—the horns as a conventional symbol of the hunt and a more vibrant symbol of the natural environs—and the chorus's progression from off-stage to the mountaintop. In contrast with Euryanthe's solo plaints, both isolated and expressive of her state of alienation, the chorus are communally bound through their shared text and harmonious nature. The subtle play on meaning during their first strophe is not uninteresting, particularly if we think forward to Wagner's Sailor in *Tristan*. Here, too, the invisible song seems on the one hand like a generic folk-like song, "hyper-realistically" *a capella* at first. But we cannot know whether or not the singers actually see the woman on stage. Do they perceive her state of despair? Or is it mere coincidence that their song seems to comment on her? Although the Sailor remains invisible in *Tristan*, his second strophe is like the Hunters' in that the perceptible connection of his song to the operatic plot and its musical realm becomes stronger; this process integrates the natural but unoperatic sphere into the world of Romantic musical drama.

The world of the seventeenth-century playwright Calderón, the Spanish world of Christian honour and chivalry in the Counter Reformation, may superficially seem at odds

with German Romantic opera.¹³ But as Henry T. Sullivan has richly demonstrated, Calderón's plays were attractive because of the high quality of the writing, their lyric and romantic substance, their obvious musical opportunities, and their grandly conceived experiments in staging.¹⁴ The eight volumes of Calderón's plays in Wagner's Dresden library were in the translation of J.D. Gries,¹⁵ an acquaintance of Goethe and Schiller when each was enthusiastically reading Calderón. The unrivalled dominance of European stages by Calderonian drama began in the mid-seventeenth century, but the hundreds of translators and liberal adaptors were usually thought to be the original author. Carlo Gozzi's indebtedness to Calderón was suppressed. His works entered the German repertoire via southern cities in the 1780s.¹⁶ As Calderón's dramas were enjoying much success, under various names, a serious scholarly approach to his works took root amongst the growing number of Hispanists. None was more influential than G. E. Lessing in drawing Calderón's works into the critical revolution, continued by Herder and the Schlegel brothers, that stimulated the growth of a

¹³ Based on examination of the comments about Calderón's works scattered throughout Cosima Wagner's diaries, Alexander Coleman considers Wagner's understanding of Calderón as largely a misunderstanding. He ascribes what he regards as an inappropriate nineteenth-century perspective to Schopenhauer's own interpretations, filtered through his philosophy of the will. The most important connection for Coleman resides in Calderón's *autos sacramentales*, whose bearing on *Parsifal* has often been noted. Coleman contributes thoughtful remarks in this regard. See his "Calderón/Schopenhauer/Wagner: The Story of a Misunderstanding," *The Musical Quarterly*, 69, 2 (Spring 1983): 227-243. Coleman fails to recognize the greater significance of Calderonian dramatic theory, not a primary concern of Schopenhauer's but certainly a high-point of interest in the German aesthetic revolution whose influence extended to Wagner in his youth.

¹⁴ Henry T. Sullivan, *Calderón in the German Lands and the Low Countries: his reception and influence, 1654-1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983): 286.

¹⁵ L.J. Rather, *Reading Wagner: A Study in the History of Ideas* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1990): 8. The *Calderón* volumes were accompanied by writings of August Wilhelm von Schlegel and Friedrich von Schack on the Spanish theatre.

¹⁶ Sullivan, *Calderón in the German Lands and the Low Countries*, 160-1. Wagner turned to Gozzi, a favourite of E.T.A. Hoffmann, for the libretto of his early opera *Die Feen*.

German national drama. Looking to the stages of England as well as Spain, Lessing followed up on a line of thought initiated by Voltaire. In his 1760 abridged translation of *Julius Caesar*, Lessing drew the works of Lopé, Calderón and Shakespeare together as strange mixtures of beauties and irregularities.¹⁷ A particular idiosyncrasy of Calderón's literary style was how he differentiated his multiplicity of character types by poetic metre. Language alone could signal a difference between his vulgar comic types, more elevated characters, supernatural entities, and divine ones, but Calderón also underscored their sonorous particularities through rhythm. This heightened manner of differentiation extended in turn to Calderón's use of the stage, transcending the fringes of visibility in both realistic and symbolic ways. Clearly, musicians would recognize in Calderón's works the opportunity to explore stylistic variety within a single work.

The complete works of Lessing were also part of Wagner's Dresden library. At the peak of his aesthetic theorizing, Wagner drew attention to Lessing's *Laoköon in Oper und Drama* while discussing the relationship between the individual arts in relation to the mixed genre of opera. While generally well-known for its comparison of the poetic and visual arts, chapter XII of *Laoköon* offers a not insignificant discussion of the artistic representation of the invisible. Wagner's comments about invisible performers in *Oper und Drama* point to the *Ring*, which was still brewing and growing as a libretto at the time. Retrospectively, we recognize the wood-bird of *Siegfried* when we read Wagner's description of man's first emotional language as like the tone-speech of birds: a melodious free-play of a wide array of inner feelings. With the constructs of linguistic and rhythmic articulation—consonants and gesture—peeled away, the tone-speech Wagner associates with birds is not unlike the giddier invisible horn calls that echo and resonate through Weber and Wagner. Perhaps it is only indirectly, through other Lessing-influenced artists to whom Wagner turned early on, that *Laoköon* impacted on the creation of *Tannhäuser*. Regardless, that work marks a milestone in creative strategies that evolved, strikingly, through the rest of Wagner's career.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 133.

Tannhäuser is the opera that Wagner revised the most, and he entertained the thought of further revisions right into his twilight years. As soon as the work premiered, he felt he had made a mistake in the final scene by *not* showing, but rather evoking the images of Venus and Elisabeth, who is by this point dead.¹⁸ This left three other scenes, the first three of the opera, with moments of invisibility that test our confidence in what we think we see and hear. As Wagner initially conceived them, the off-stage Sirens sing three times in the opening two scenes: part-way through the *Bacchanale*, at the close of that scene, and during Venus's attempts to detain Tannhäuser in scene 2. Each time they "echo" orchestral figures; which prompt their beckoning cry "Naht euch dem Strande!", whose recurrences are similar enough to serve a refrain-like function. In Wagner's later versions of the score, those intended for the Paris stage, this orchestral gesture and its echo occur first as purely orchestral music in the expanded *Bacchanale*. Wagner not only "prepared" the gesture, he also made it more distinct.

Originally, a harp and two on-stage bands (one on either side of the stage) had become associated with the Sirens in scene 2. These on-stage instruments became markers for each of the Sirens' singing moments. Harp was featured in the first, purely orchestral gesture. This on-stage orchestra consists of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns and harp. Only the horn and lower strings sound from the pit during these segments, yielding pedals, so the effect is virtually *a cappella*. The pit instruments slightly overlap, on their entries, with the ends of phrases from the on-stage band. For the more elaborate opening, Wagner also created another on-stage band featuring castanets, tambourine and small drum. These instruments are the realistic counterpart to the Venusberg dancers, and are predominantly percussive (as opposed to melodic). They add a dash of realism to the orchestral music emanating from the pit, while also extending its conventional range of timbres.

Wagner's dramaturgical reworking of the first scene also included directions for Venus and Tannhäuser to become visible *before* the first sounding of the Sirens. As a result, the attention of Venus (but not Tannhäuser, who is asleep), as well as that of the dancers, is

¹⁸ For an authoritative overview and analysis of the opera's many revisions, see Carolyn Abbate's *The "Parisian" 'Tannhäuser'* (Princeton University: Ph.D. Dissertation, 1984).

commanded by their singing. The Sirens seem to belong to the world of the Venusberg, although they are not visibly part of it. They inspire Venus's gang of lascivious loiterers into action which seems an enhanced but wholly natural kind of behaviour for them. The Sirens also seem to prompt the awakening of Tannhäuser from his dreams of the Wartburg. In scene 2, they sing during Venus's attempt to detain Tannhäuser in the Venusberg. But why are they always invisible? Are they by the water's edge? If so, they seem to be calling their listeners away from where they are actually situated, which, for Tannhäuser, would mean out of Venus's lap. Such a literal reading seems to confuse rather than clarify their role. It should be noted that Wagner's revisions included mythological imagery or tableaux to be staged during the Sirens' singing in scene 1. While verging on camp to modern sensibilities, the enactment of two rape scenes—Europa and the bull, Leda and the swan—are evidence of a deliberate reference to a mythological realm, distant and universally familiar at the same time.

The Sirens' distinction from the tangible albeit extraordinary realm of the Venusberg is signalled by their harmonically disruptive entrances and their own sonic instrumental force. By selecting normal orchestral instruments but dislocating them acoustically, Wagner suggests that the Sirens' world is not completely foreign to the Venusberg, but an extension of it, with their harmonic otherness conveying something of a sonic time-warp. A curious feature of their vocal otherness is that their closest counterparts are the chorale-singing pilgrims. But these sustained contradictions are not to be resolved. Just as Tannhäuser's early life vacillates between the mutually exclusive worlds of the Wartburg and the Venusberg, he comes to realize that neither is autonomously sufficient.

After much struggle, Tannhäuser is released from Venus's grasp and magically awakens in the valley of the Wartburg. The Shepherd's English horn melody starts as an "echo" of the clarinet melody and then extends in a somewhat improvisatory nature. Wagner tinkered with the harmonic breadth and length of this solo in its earlier versions. Eventually he opted for a relatively short version, which lends more weight to the part of the scene involving the Pilgrims. The Shepherd's solo still bears some affinity to the more extended "*Alte Weise*" in Act III of *Tristan*. Both are aural signposts of a shift of locale, from a non-realistic realm to a more "natural" environment and are sort of aural cleansers, representing

the barest of musical textures (a single musical instrument). Albeit in a different milieu, the Shepherd's song and piping revisit ideas which Tannhäuser already put forth in the previous scene. The English horn solos are a more tangible reworking of these ideas, of the artistic inspiration of dreams and nature. The related English horn material in *Tristan und Isolde* tends to be more expository in nature, and more individually potent. It is almost as if Wagner disentangled parts of the *Tannhäuser* scene to yield the *a capella* Sailor's Song and the Shepherd's English horn solo in *Tristan und Isolde*.

Separated by brief silences, the shepherd's "Dame Holda" song is framed by contrasting English horn solos, the latter of which is more evidently "inspired". It is more rhythmically and melodically structured, more diatonic and vibrant; the realization of the revitalizing experience which is both narrated and vocalized within his song. Wagner's revisions also worked a brief English horn solo into the midst of the song, after an unstable harmonic twist in a generally stable G-major framework. This shift to F# major initiates the recounting of the virtual narrator's dream within the song. Wagner's revisions call for an elaboration of this foreign sonority, reinforcing the dream as a harmonically different world. While the content of the dream is itself unexplained, it acts as a pivot point between the idea of unrequited love expressed in the opening and the positive inspiration of nature, particularly the regenerative time of May, which closes the song. Musically, this inspiration is expressed in the more florid melodic figuration which is first hinted at when the dream (not nature) is the focus of the text. The text of this brief song is loaded. As with the sailor's song of *Tristan*, it is in no way just an arbitrary folk song. The shepherd's song reinforces ideas from the preceding Venusberg scene, but in the context of a more "real" world.

A series of overlapping musical statements follows the folk song whereby the revitalized sounds of the English horn are harmonically dovetailed with the sounds of the approaching pilgrims. Both Shepherd and chorus are initially unaccompanied, but contrast to each other as solo vs. chorus. The English horn solos are more rhythmically energized and are supposed to be played at a faster tempo. They always (both here and later in the scene) begin *forte*. The dovetailing with the choral segments is not only achieved harmonically; the English horn solos always involve a *ritardando* and *diminuendo* at the end. It is almost as if the

shepherd temporarily loses steam as the melody loses its definition. In a naturalistic sense, a sort of mental drifting would not be unusual for someone who thinks he is alone, without an audience of any sort. There is no suggestion that the shepherd and Tannhäuser are aware of each other in this scene. Regardless, the petering out of the English horn facilitates the temporary co-existence of two different soundscapes by gently leading into the more relaxed tempo of the Pilgrims' quiet chanting. When the English horn solo begins afresh, *forte*, the jolt makes us feel the Shepherd as an interruption, but also alerts us that he is unaware that anything else is going on.

Considering this sequence as a totality, the semblance of real time is not straightforward. If one were to disentangle and compress the music emanating from the Shepherd and from off-stage, two musically coherent units would be formed. As an oscillating sequence, unnaturally long pauses are required during each performance. Neither performing party is aware of the other. That is, the suspension of time during each "performance" is not realistic. It is not because of mutual respect. As Wagner composed them, the soundscapes are drawn into an intimate relationship with one another while remaining distinct. The privileged perspective is that of the audience, guided back and forth in something of a split-screen sequence with a pause function operating so that we don't miss anything. The Shepherd eventually acknowledges that he hears the pilgrim's chanting, initially through a physical gesture of listening. His sustained interest is demonstrated by the fact that he temporarily stops his own music-making (as the dancers stop dancing for the Sirens in the previous scene) and listens to the Pilgrims singing an extended, uninterrupted choral segment.

There are many gestures which can be understood as realistic in this scene, as in the previous two scenes. Oddly enough, the Pilgrims' initial invisibility is not wholly convincing in this respect. Louder dynamic levels are exclusively used by the chorus when they are visible. Their first *forte* coincides with their first appearance on-stage. But the dynamics for the chorus are not graduated so as to approximate a gradual approach. They sing consistently *piano* until the shepherd acknowledges their approach. Both here and in Act III, the pilgrims are typically on the move. Interpreting Wagner's setting from an acoustically realistic perspective would involve us imagining one of two scenarios to explain a constant dynamic

level while they are unacknowledged by the Shepherd: either the pilgrims actually sing a gradual *decrescendo*, or they sing at a fixed dynamic in a fixed spot just out of sight or in the far distance (the latter of which would require them being magically transported over a vast space in just a few seconds). The best explanation here, as elsewhere in Wagner, is to consider the perspectives of different listeners rather than of performers. The passage unfolds as two kinds of “coming into focus.” One level of recognition is established through our own hearing, another level by the Shepherd’s actions. The Shepherd can see off-stage, into the wings, and glimpse the Pilgrims. His piping and demeanor suggest that, once the pilgrims have gone on their way, their presence has had no effect on him. He wishes them well but they mean little to him personally. At the same time, however, we experience an aural disturbance from the orchestra pit. Tannhäuser, absorbed and inactive through all of this, suddenly reawakens to his environs with a nervous semitone twitch on the violas. The Pilgrims’ song of redemption has meant something to him. He reiterates its central section, personally invested with the overwrought emotions that have welled up inside him, invisibly, throughout the scene.

Part II - *Parsifal*: Act I, scene 2

Of all of Wagner's operas, it is *Parsifal* that profiles invisible voices most extensively. An offstage thunder machine underscores the disintegration of Klingsor's *Zaubergarten* at the end of Act II. In the framing acts, offstage voices function as integral elements of the drama. Six trumpets, six trombones, tenor drum and bells signal moments of religious ceremony from the wings, and multiple groups of vocalists sing in the communion service scenes but are never seen by the audience. Titurel sings from the extreme background of the stage area, as if below ground, and two choruses sing from above the stage, at different heights. These spatial distinctions are coordinated with their different vocal registers and states of being. Titurel, a bass, is physically near death. Neither of the choruses which sing from the dome has a specific physical identity: the youths' chorus which is to sound from its mid-height is comprised of altos and tenors; the boys' chorus of sopranos and altos sings as if from the top of the dome. The visible earth-bound Knights, tenors and basses, flesh out a graduated spectrum of vocal registers in the vertical disposition of singers.

The association between these invisible voices and the Grail is first intimated in the opera's opening scene. The curtain rises after the Prelude has ended *ppp* with a gently-repeating anticipatory dominant seventh of A \flat . It is dawn and Gurnemanz and two Esquires are seen sleeping. The first sound of the opera is a *forte* F \flat , played by offstage trombones in the direction of the grail temple. They perform the incipit of the communion theme, beginning as a triadic ascent in F \flat major. Harmonic otherness calls attention to their spatial differentiation before the continued motion rises through the octave pivot to settle on E \flat . Briefly spanning semitonally related sonorities, the arrival point of E \flat is strengthened by offstage trumpets. Gurnemanz has woken during this harmonic shift and E \flat is his point of entry, with the regular orchestra making its first contribution as his string pizzicati reinforcement. The dominant seventh sonority from the close of the Prelude has momentarily lost its motion-propelling element. However, the implied resolution is still forthcoming. Gurnemanz wakes the Esquires, and they spring up as trombones and trumpets sound the grail motive in A \flat major. As Gurnemanz identifies the offstage sounds as a call to prayer,

woodwinds in the pit orchestra sequence the rising tail gesture of the grail motive and draw it into E \flat major. The three characters kneel to pray as offstage trombones and trumpets sound the faith motive, with its characteristic plagal progression from A \flat major to E \flat major. Muted strings echo the motive, extending it sequentially until its close in A \flat major overlaps with another offstage brass statement of the grail motive. It is again echoed by the woodwinds, but this time in full and with an additional concluding plagal cadence in A \flat major. The gesture rises into the highest register as Gurnemanz and the Esquires slowly stand up.

The trio of brass themes of this morning prayer are already familiar from the Prelude, where they appear in the same order. Not surprisingly, they are sequenced and otherwise varied as the purely instrumental section unfolds. A \flat major is tonally prominent in their initial presentation and at structurally important moments such as the beginning and the close of the expository section. The Prelude's developmental section beginning in m.78 concerns itself with various reworkings of the communion theme, the most differentiated and complex of the three. It is never stated in full here and the Prelude ends without any recapitulation. The trombone variant which opens the opera and returns in the *Verwandlungsmusik*, the transformation music linking the first and second scenes, begs anticipation of such a conclusion while its harmonic twist and inconclusiveness signal its momentary denial. Retrospectively, it can be heard as reaching into the E \flat major which Gurnemanz claimed as a natural sonic milieu. In the Prelude, the second and third brass entries readily offer close interaction between A \flat major and E \flat major, and even render their harmonic relation ambiguous in terms of a single tonic. Through the sequencing of the faith motive—the actual moment of prayer—A \flat major emerges as the more prominent sonority. Both the closing echoed statement of the basic tonally-rounded unit of the grail motive and the added plagal cadence clearly favour A \flat major, which envelopes all in the aftermath of the prayer. The serenity of the moment and its aura of solemn reflection changes abruptly when Gurnemanz orders the youths to note that it is time to prepare for the King's bath. E major (F \flat major) sounds again, but this time as a pivot to new melodic, harmonic and rhythmic space, and different dramatic matter.

The act's second and final scene again concerns the actual performance of a ceremony concerning the Grail. References to time signal the retransition. Kundry is the first to note that time demands a change. Her "Die Zeit ist da!" of mm. 1067-8 anticipates Klingsor's first line in the second act. Gurnemanz, stating that the King's bath is finished and that the sun is reaching its peak, notes that it will soon be time for the communion meal. Kundry will not be partaking in this meal and has fallen asleep and disappeared. New musical material introduced with Gurnemanz's announcement includes the gesture associated with procession. Twice referring to the grail motive cadence, first in E major and then in E \flat major (mm. 1077 and 1083 respectively), the semitonal relations which led into the morning prayer mark a return to its musico-dramatic concerns. This sense of return is reiterated more pointedly and with greater force in the ensuing *Verwandlungsmusik*, when the offstage trombones again intone the incipit of the communion theme (m. 1140), beginning on F \flat , as Gurnemanz and Parsifal are drawn closer to their acoustical source, the Grail temple.

Of the three brass themes involved in the opening prayer, the communion theme is treated differently. Unlike the other two themes, it does not sound as first heard in the Prelude. Nor is it repeated or sequenced in any way. In fact, the theme as it opens the Prelude does not recur until the beginning of the communion service, where it unmistakably leads off a much delayed recapitulation. This return is part of a larger series of recapitulations which draw upon instrumental and harmonic associations concerning the Grail presented in the opening scene and in Gurnemanz's narrative. The series starts with the incipit of the communion theme towards the end of the *Verwandlungsmusik*. It occurs in a wave of climaxes, the first three of which trigger sequences of the so-called *Heilandsklage*. The incipit which begins at the E major (F \flat major) climax in m. 1140 emulates the first climax by leading into a moment of relative peace.¹⁹ This time, however, the incipit of the communion theme

¹⁹ As William Kinderman has recently shown, Wagner expanded the original *Verwandlungsmusik* in March 1881, in reluctant response to requirements of the staging. See his "Die Entstehung der *Parsifal*-Musik," *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 52, 1 (1995): 66-97; and 52, 2 (1995): 145-65. As originally conceived, the anti-climax following the *fortissimo* D \flat minor sonority at the beginning of m. 1123 lasted for five measures and then switched to the processional music, marked F-dur in the sketches. Rising up through the grail motive

displaces the *Heilandsklage*. Sounded by the full complement of six offstage trombones, with earthshaking offstage bass drum tremolos, the theme is barely audible amidst the terrible tutti *fortissimo* (see chart below for an overview of the sections from this moment to the end of the act.)²⁰ Becoming clear as the orchestra recedes, the trombones rest on E \flat and the processional music begins in E \flat major. The response recalls the simplicity with which the journey began and refocuses attention on its physical objective. The incipit of the communion theme begins again at m. 1148, spanning from D \flat major to C. With the addition of six offstage trumpets, its entry is recognizable from the onset. Even more so than its antecedent, this awful sound is a striking embodiment of the fearful, infinitely great sublime to which the ensuing plodding and human-scale music seems to respond with humility. The net effect of this double juxtaposition is a sort of split screen between the spiritual and physical planes of the drama. As the music guides the focus back and forth, an aesthetic response is bound up with the transition.²¹

tail to B \flat , the previous climax and diminuendo aftermath was then sequenced a whole tone higher. Again passing into the processional music, Gurnemanz's entry, varied only in its starting pitch, occurred in the first bar featuring its characteristic dotted rhythm. The subsequent music remained the same, as a variant of the previous processional stretch (with voice) that reaches up through the grail motive tail to a C major cadence, the beginning of expansive diatonic section featuring the off-stage bells. The off-stage trombones, trumpets and bells prior to Gurnemanz's entry were part of the revisions/extensions. Throughlines between these conceptions of the transformation's ending include: the juxtaposition of fearful climaxes with the more mundane motion-oriented music; the penultimate climax is embedded in music associated with pain and sin; the final climax is reached through a grail-like ascent, a gesture which aligns with the end of Gurnemanz's introductory comments and the end of the journey, reached as C major is firmly established with a full statement of the grail motive.

²⁰ Off-stage voices and instruments are indicated in italics in the second column of figure 3.1.

²¹ A similar process occurs near the end of the scene as Amfortas's suffering, sharing its musical embodiment with the first three climaxes of the *Verwandlungsmusik*, exists in alternation with the processional music as the Esquires remove him from the Grail temple.

Before the orchestral processional response to the D \flat major/C variant of the communion theme, another offstage instrument is introduced. The bells that begin ringing in m. 1150 introduce a new sonic timbre, but their descending interlocking fourths have been familiar since Gurnemanz noted the approaching time of the communion service. The processional gesture, much varied throughout the *Verwandlungsmusik*, now sounds in its most fundamental form: single-rhythm fixed pitches of C/G.A/E. After the offstage brass disappear, the bells ring solo for four measures before the orchestra rejoins the texture, with strings supplying the dotted rhythm characteristic of the gesture's orchestral forms. The bells resume after Gurnemanz's obscure introductory remarks to Parsifal close with the grail motive in full, in C major. Preparations for the service have begun and continue as three choral groups sing in succession, in ever-higher locations and registers. Each chorus is harmonically and spatially distinct, yet bears relations to that which precedes and follows it. The grail motive and bells which lead into the Knights' chorus mark the beginning of the longest stretch of diatonic music in the entire act. Initially, the bells partake in the instrumental passages between their phrases, as Esquires move briskly across the stage. Their fixed pitches support harmonic motion towards A minor, but they drop out at the turn to E \flat major in m. 1183. The modulatory nature of the rest of the chorus mirrors the Knights' praise of the transformational and regenerative powers of the grail. E \flat major thus serves as a doorway to this more adventurous path, which eventually returns to C major at its end. The dual focus on E \flat major and C major—tonal spaces differentiated by instrumentation, harmonic language and textual context—recalls the two preceding brass statements of the communion theme which rested in these keys. The grail motive and bells return to frame the chorus as a whole, extending the Knights' *fortissimo* C-major cadence while they arrange themselves at the feast table.

The bells drop out in m. 1203 and the tempo slackens. C major turns to C minor at the third beat, and E \flat minor is reached at the downbeat of m. 1204. These twists signal two changes: Amfortas is carried on-stage as the first offstage chorus begins to sing. Cross-referencing each other, the youths' first phrase "Den sündigen Welten, mit tausend

Figure 3.1: *Parsifal*, Act I, scene 2

m. 1140	<i>trumpets</i> <i>trombones</i>	Trumpets sound the head of the communion theme sounds first at m.1440 and again at m. 1148, joined by trombones.	E+-Eb+ Db+-C+
1150	<i>bells</i> Gurnemanz	This first sounding of the bells dovetails with the long-held final C of the trumpets and trombones. They then ring out for four measures a capella, before orchestral accompaniment harmonizes the pair of fourths as C+ and A-. They fade out as Gurnemanz and Parsifal enter the main hall of the Grail Castle, and Gurnemanz queries what the boy will learn from what he is about to see.	C+
1160	<i>bells</i>	The grail theme and the resumption of the bells (m.1162) restore the tonality of C+.	C+
1168	Grail Knights <i>bells</i>	As before, the bells sound between but not during vocal passages. They ring out after each of the first two vocal phrases, and support harmonic motion towards A-. The third and fourth vocal phrases modulate towards flatter keys, Eb+/Bb+, and Gb+/Db+. An augmented fourth pivot in m.1991 leads further afield through sharp keys, en route back to the final cadence in C+.	C+
1198	<i>bells</i>	The grail theme and bells reenter, affirming C+, and frame the passage involving the Knights, who have now reached their places at the feast-table.	C+
1203		As Amfortas is carried into the hall, modal inflection of the C+cadence leads into Ab' sonority.	C-Eb-
1204	<i>youths</i>	Altos and tenors sing from the mid-height of the dome, recalling the original act of self-sacrifice and its ongoing redemptive potential. Each of the four vocal phrases plays out harmonic semi-tonal relations between Eb and E. With both initially in the minor mode, the harmonic areas concerning E move first into the major mode, while those concerning Eb involve the major mode in the tonally rounding close: Eb--E-, Eb--B+, Eb--E+, E+-Eb+.	Eb-/+
1226		A varied statement of the grail theme serves as the bridging passage between the two choruses.	-(Ab+)
1229	<i>boys</i>	Sopranos and altos sing from the top of the dome, sequencing the faith theme, a capella. Their closing cadence in Ab+ overlaps with the re-entry of the orchestra and its statement of the faith theme cadencing in Eb+.	Ab+- Eb+
1246	<i>Titirel</i>	A capella, Titirel poses three questions to Amfortas. Each emphasizes Db-, but closes with a gesture which moves towards pitches of the triad of Eb+ and is followed by Eb triplet figures on the timpani. After the first two questions, the timpani figures are followed by long silences, eerily affirming Titirel's doubts about Amfortas's willingness to perform the grail service again.	(Db-)/Eb
1259	Amfortas/ <i>Titirel</i>		Eb/E

1281	Amfortas	<p>The <i>Amfortasklage</i> is the only extended solo in this scene. It is also the most tonally and motivically complex passage, the details of which are discussed in the prose commentary below. The general framework involves three principal sections and a concluding passage. Each main section features a change in Amfortas's psychological state that involves the tonal area of C and steers the transition to the next section. The solo technically ends in m. 1404, when Amfortas "sinks back as though unconscious, but can be understood as continuously extending through the entries of the choruses and Titirel, reaching a more palpable level of closure at m. 1421.</p> <p>mm. 1297-1322 mm. 1322-1356 mm. 1356-1392 mm. 1393-1404.</p>	E- Eb+/- Eb-/ E- (- D-)
1405	<i>boys/ youths</i> Knights <i>Titirel</i>	<p>Altos and tenors from the dome's mid-height assume Amfortas's last sonority, A⁷, as the starting point of their a capella harmonization of the so-called <i>Thorenspruch</i> motive. Their consequential phrases "harre sein, den ich erkor!" yield the awaited cadence in D, with the overlapping Knights' entrance in m. 1410 reinforcing its G+ plagal preparation. At the cadence of the offstage chorus, orchestral accompaniment resumes. The Knights' varied form of the grail theme reroutes the harmonic emphasis towards Eb+, secured through a tonally-rounded instrumental resounding of the grail theme and Titirel's softly sung "Enthüllet den Gral!".</p>	~ (Eb+) ~ D-/+- Eb+
1422		<p>As Amfortas rises, slowly and with difficulty, the central gesture of the communion theme gradually takes shape in the celli. Initially drawing attention to A, an augmented fourth above the otherwise bare Eb timpani pedal, the gesture is reoriented towards Ab beginning in m. 1432. The pedal, taken over by lower string tremolos, migrates downwards as the whole moves through Ab-, E- and C-, to Ab+.</p>	Eb+- Ab+
1440	<i>boys and youths</i>	<p>Altos and 1st tenors sing the communion theme in its fullest and most basic form, <i>pianissimo</i>. Simultaneously personifying the grail and the original saviour, they command the communion to be received, underscored by lower string and timpani tremolos. After their cadence in m. 1445, "Amfortas bows devoutly in silent prayer before the chalice; the light in the Hall gradually wanes to a mere dusky glimmer." A luxurious orchestral tutti expands Ab+, emulating the vocal passage it follows through a shift of focus to upper registers: predominantly triplet figures in the woodwinds and thirty-second-note arpeggiation in the upper strings. Trumpet, three oboes and the second half of divisi violins enter at m. 1448 with the communion theme melody, reaching an internal <i>forte</i> climax at the C- portion. Ab+ sounds from the theme's close at m. 1453 to 1458 and the stage becomes completely dark as the orchestral texture thins to woodwinds and brass and the rhythmic pulse slackens.</p>	Ab+

1574	<i>bells</i>	The extended instrumental passage which emerges out the woodwind sounding of the grail theme involves a deceptive turn from E \flat ⁷ to F-, fusion with the faith theme and momentary reassertion of E \flat as tonic. C+ soon vies for tonal prominence in the sequence and caps a climax at m. 1585. Meanwhile, the Esquires' attention has turned towards their leader: "Amfortas, who has taken no part in the meal, has gradually sunk down from his state of inspired exaltation; he bows his head, and presses his hand to his wound." The Esquires attend to his freshly opened wound and prepare to depart. The <i>Heilandsklage</i> motive recurs at m. 1588. This turn towards B \flat - leads into the music familiar from the processional, in E \flat +, which now serves for the recession. Two further musical allusions to Amfortas's suffering emerge at mm. 1597 and 1603, both times emphasizing E \flat -. With Amfortas's disappearance at m. 1606, the E \flat colouring gives way. The lighting on-stage diminishes. C+ quietly assumes tonal stability, and is the fundamental sonority for the grail theme which begins in m. 1612. At its close, the on-stage bells reenter and continue to sound as the other Esquires and Knights depart from the Hall.	E \flat + C+
1634	Gurnemanz	The bells fade to silence as Gurnemanz questions Parsifal. The <i>Thorenspruch</i> motive accompanies his first question, and is treated in a quirky fashion after Parsifal does not respond. While "Parsifal presses his heart convulsively and slightly shakes his head," a chromatically descending passage in the strings emphasizes E-, before resting on A \flat . Gurnemanz's music vacillates between D and B \flat + in orientation, but no clear tonal stability is sustained. In mocking the boy, he briefly employs music associated with his first encounter with Parsifal (mm. 1645-6). He abruptly dismisses Parsifal and himself takes leave in the direction of the departed Knights.	
1653	<i>alto solo, youths, boys</i> <i>bells</i>	Prepared by an F \sharp viola tremolo, an alto soloist restores the <i>Thorenspruch</i> motive, and its text, in its basic form. The vocal closing in E- is harmonized as C+ as the overlapping entry of the youths' chorus begins the grail theme. Also praising faith, the boys' chorus enters at m. 1659 to sing the theme's concluding ascent. The bells re-enter at m. 1661, during their suspended last pitch, which ceases as woodwinds and brass confirm the Act's closure in the thrice-repeated sounding of C+.	C+

Schmerzen,” refers obliquely to Amfortas. The orchestra is drastically reduced as the offstage chorus enters and their first vocal phrase dwindles to *piano*. Both of the chorus’s first two phrases begin in E \flat minor and invoke the unstable *Heilandsklage* motive of the *Verwandlungsmusik*. Throughout, the youths’ chorus dwells upon the semitonal relation of E \flat /E, the same relation embodied by the earlier first entry of the offstage trombones. In the textual context of the chorus, the tonal duality embraced in each of their phrases accrues meaning which also involves the modal quality of each key area. As in the Knights’ chorus, E \flat as a springboard for unconventional modulations co-exists with a text which dwells on the idea of transformation. The Knights focused on the grail and the communion. The youths begin by referring to what these symbols represent, the original act of self-sacrifice which redeemed the sinning world. The idea of transformation is thus underpinned by an act of substitution. Assuming a more subjective mode in their second phrase, the chorus offers redemption to its audience as if it were Christ offering his own blood, shifting from E \flat minor to V/E major in the process.²² Both central keys are in the major mode by the conclusion. As the blood of the original sacrifice is reinterpreted as the blood of present-moment life and redemption, the opening E \flat minor of the “Den sündigen Welten” is modally altered at “seinen Tod!” The two contrasting key areas and their modal qualities render palpable the differences between sin and sacrifice, suffering and healing, death and life, as well as themes of transformation relating to the act of communion. The E \flat -major close reconciles these differences in its final reading of Christ’s death as our life, a perspective in line with that of the Knights.

²² Christ’s name never appears in the libretto, but the many allusions are clear enough. Deliberate withholding of a singularly specific name is wholly in keeping with Wagner’s de-emphasis on traditional signs of identity for elements which have a universal level of meaning transcending isolated moments in time and space. In *Das Liebesmahl der Apostel* (1843), Wagner introduced an invisible choir that personifies a divine entity. They only sing once in the half-hour oratorio-style work: “Be of good cheer, for I am near you and my Spirit is with you./ Rouse yourselves! Joyfully speak the word/ that will never pass away in eternity.” *A capella*, their diatonic C major sets them apart from the chorus of youths and 12 Apostles, the latter of which have several anguished chromatic passages that contrast with the F major realm of the youths.

The youths' final cadence overlaps with a varied statement of the grail motive. Pit trombones and trumpets absent from their choral passage begin the theme's initial pattern of I-vi-IV. An ensuing F-minor sonority strengthened by woodwinds leads off a chain of secondary dominants, F minor/B \flat ⁷/E \flat ⁷. This digression moves further abreast with the metrical shift and syncopations introduced in m. 1229. Within this measure, E \flat now appears as a dominant seventh sonority at the height of a chromatically-charged dynamic swell. In inner voices, first bassoon, trumpet and trombone descend to D \flat . At the same time, appoggiaturas occur in the scalar ascent carried by the upper woodwinds as sixths. E \flat moves to F \flat under C, before shifting to F under D \flat . Contrary motion in inner voices continues, with the lines featuring D \flat and F \flat implying that they would reach A \flat as tonic at the point that the orchestral transition breaks off. The fleeting initial minor orientation of this D \flat colouring emphasizes distance from the lingering context of E \flat major while reducing the predictability of its potential modulatory force. This striking moment signals the temporal and spatial shift as well as the shift of perspective which accompanies the modulation to A \flat major which gradually relieves uncertainty.

The transition between the knights' chorus and the first offstage chorus had taken place during a full and powerful instrumental passage, after which the orchestra gradually assumed a less substantial role. After the transition to the second offstage chorus, the orchestra becomes silent. The eleven and a half measures of the boys' chorus support a reading of either E \flat major or A \flat major as tonic. When the orchestra returns at the vocal cadence, it resumes the harmonic figuration of the previous transition. The instrumental gesture is a single *pianissimo* brass statement of the faith motive which the boys' chorus had continuously sequenced. Interpreting the closing vocal sonority of A \flat as F minor, before yielding A \flat and a cadentially tonicized E \flat major, the harmonic progression of the previous transition is reversed. Retrospectively, E \flat has again functioned as a gateway, but this time to a fluidly diatonic subdominant area. The return to E \flat major draws with it the boys' A \flat -major message. As the voice of the grail and its related symbolic network of regeneration, they urge their audience to partake of the sacrament. Marked *immer noch langsamer werdend*, energy curiously abates at the instrumental conclusion. Dampened strings repeat the

plagal cadence with horns emulating the bell motive, *weich*, but the cadence dissipates further. Silence, gradually introduced since the introduction of the first offstage chorus, becomes absolute. Motion on-stage has drawn to a halt, and all are in place waiting for the service to begin. It does not.

The voice which breaks the silence is Titurel's. Up until this point, there has been no reason to suppose that the communion service would not continue as planned, rejuvenating all. It is safe to assume that the trio of choruses have sung as they normally would for any service. Titurel is the only mortal with authority over Amfortas. From Gurnemanz, we know that Titurel bears a special relationship with divine forces and that he entrusted Amfortas with his job of protecting the relics only when he himself was physically unable to do so. When he speaks, he does so on behalf of his original responsibility to the Grail as well as all those who are waiting for the service to begin. But he also speaks more specifically on his own behalf in an effort to remain alive. As the eldest in the community and near death, Titurel is the most sensitive to the possibility that the rejuvenating qualities of the grail might not be offered. These many facets of his voice co-exist through his invisibility, as he sings a capella from behind and perhaps even below the visible stage area, "as if from a tomb."²³

Titurel poses three questions to Amfortas. Each dwells on D \flat minor but closes with a gesture which moves towards pitches of the triad of E \flat major, followed by E \flat triplet figures on the timpani. After the first two questions, the timpani figures are followed by further long silences. His use of D \flat minor and much emphasized F \flat refers back to the dissonance of the transition between the two choruses and beyond, to the semitonal relations of the youths' chorus and the incipit of the communion theme in the *Verwandlungsmusik*. In a more immediate sense, Titurel's harmonic otherness also embodies his spatial distance from the stage, while manifesting the uncertainty which all waiting in E \flat major feel due to

²³ As the voice of moral consciousness and religious responsibility, Titurel's ancestors include the Commendatore of *Don Giovanni*—whose "back-up" includes an off-stage chorus—as well as the Pope who is never seen but is quoted in Tannhäuser's "Rome Narration". Wagner bypassed the trope of a predominantly monotone vocal line for Titurel, as that style soon serves a more important psychological purpose at the beginning of Amfortas's vision, in the central portion of the *Amfortasklage*.

Amfortas's inactivity. After Titurel's third question, E \flat is harmonically realized as E \flat minor in a momentous orchestral climax, as his son finally rises to respond.

The so-called *Amfortasklage* is exceptional within this scene; it is the only extended solo sung by a character onstage. Within the symmetrical construct of the procession, the communion service and recession, the *Amfortasklage* occurs just before the central activity and even threatens to displace it by occupying roughly one quarter of the scene. Amfortas initially resists the forward flow of events, but the communion service becomes inevitable by the time he collapses, as if unconscious. The turning point between suspense and anticipation occurs in the middle section of his solo. The communion theme, which has not been heard for some time, sounds as Amfortas's eyes fix on the Grail. He experiences an intense vision which is drawn from his own memory of previous services. Specifically referring back to the music of the developmental section of the Prelude, Amfortas also draws on the memory of the audience. This dual memory recall is a crucial element in the gradual reclamation of the beginning of the Prelude and the beginning of the communion service that it signals. Before Amfortas begins his solo proper, however, he engages in dialogue with Titurel and attempts to stave off these recurrences.

Amfortas first responds to Titurel with anguished outbursts (m. 1259 ff.), plunging an augmented fourth, from E \flat to A \natural , before traversing a D \flat -minor sonority which resolves to E major.²⁴ The idea of substitution, developed in the youths' chorus, bears ongoing

²⁴ The augmented fourth is featured in many vocal expressions embodying pain throughout the work. As a rising interval, it ends Titurel's first question here. Earlier in Act I, it surfaces as Gurnemanz announces the arrival of their sick and suffering leader. Paradoxically, Amfortas is more peaceful than predicted and seems to be enjoying a reprieve from terrible pain. His arrival on-stage had been accompanied by a motive featuring an augmented triad. It resounds at the beginning of his phrases concerning his "Schmerzennacht" and "Morgensprach" (mm. 264-273) and the contrast between the two is effected by a diatonicization of the augmented sonority F-A-C \sharp . Yielding to a glorious unfolding of B \flat major, Amfortas looks forward to further relief from his customary bath. The augmented sonority returns as Amfortas refers to his "weh", the woe his bath will relieve; F 7 is deceptively skewered, with the anticipated third of B \flat -D underpinned by G \flat . His "Schmerzennacht" and the augmented triad are relieved conjointly, as G \flat ^x is relaxed to G \flat just before the cadential gesture A \flat minor/D \flat major/G \flat major. Gurnemanz's prediction of Amfortas's state is verified indirectly, when a knight announces that Gawain has ventured in

significance here. Amfortas avoids responding directly to his father's questions. Instead, he proposes to swap roles with him: Titurel would perform the service and live, and Amfortas, presumably not partaking of the communion, would die. He turns from E \flat minor towards E-related sonorities as he appeals to his father, and then closes with a perfect cadence in A \flat minor. In the previous A \flat -major section, the boys' chorus had praised the harmonizing and healing power of the sacrament. Amfortas's turn towards A \flat reinterprets this solution: he perceives that denying life and the sacrament is the only answer to his suffering. The F \flat prominent in Titurel's preceding passage recurs vocally and instrumentally in m. 1260, as part of D \flat minor which then turns to E major. Then in m.1263, it is part of an augmented fourth and a diminished sonority which yields to A \flat minor. At the phrase's close, F \flat recurs as part of the cadential dominant seventh. It even lingers in the cadential aftermath, as violas and celli descend through an augmented A \flat triad. Titurel reclaims this F \flat as his starting point in m. 1267.

Rephrasing his earlier questions as statements and with some added urgency, Titurel expresses his dependency on the Redeemer's grace. Trombones and bass tuba sound the opening gesture of the grail motive, moving from A \flat major to D \flat major. Titurel's remark on his own feebleness as a servant, in other words his dependency on Amfortas, tilts the D \flat -sonority turns towards the minor, and the grail motive loses sustenance and evaporates. Moving towards A \flat minor, Titurel implores Amfortas to atone for his guilt. An E \flat timpani tremolo at the word "Schuld" is enharmonically reinterpreted in the context of B major and

search of a healing balm more potent than the last that he had acquired. Amfortas's response "Ohn' Urlaub!" (m.298) begins with an augmented fourth which recurs as he voices his fear that Gawain could befall a fate similar to his own. This potential fate is rendered as a projection of Amfortas's own woe, "Oh wehe ihm", with the vocally traced augmented fourth as part of a diminished sonority. Amfortas is obviously anxious not to let his own misdeeds cause the suffering of others. Professing to wait for the redeemer which he has been promised, he intones the *Thorenspruch* motive with the descending leap at "Mitleid," an augmented fourth, again harmonized as a diminished seventh. The chromaticized G minor resolution of the motive is followed by the first indication that Amfortas's earlier optimism does not extend to his belief in a redeemer. Within what could have unfolded as an unremarkable iv-V-i cadence in D minor, the Tristan chord is substituted for the dominant sonority as Amfortas names the saviour Death, to the vocal augmented fourth E \flat -A.

trombones and bass tuba sound the beginning of the grail motive again. Titirel commands Amfortas to uncover the Grail as the theme climbs to E major. Unable to accept Amfortas's suggestion, he transfers the role of carrying out the service back to his son, employing harmonic strategies similar to those of Amfortas's proposal.

After Titirel's command, strings and woodwinds sound another variant of the grail motive, from E major to an implied cadence in D major. Amfortas's blatant refusal overrides the cadence and he rises to stop the Esquires from preparing the service. His "Nein!" sounds a C atop a diminished sonority, which the violins continue in the rapid chromatically descending gesture often associated with Kundry. Augmented fourths abound as Amfortas orders the grail, and his pain, to remain concealed. The general idea of concealment permeates Amfortas's allusion to the paradox that the same sight that gives joy to others causes him pain. There is another hidden reality that Amfortas experiences in relation to the Grail. The paradoxes accumulate. Amfortas's wish to isolate his suffering from those who have not sinned has fueled his various appeals to death, the only solution he can envision because he has lost faith in the arrival of a redeemer. However, his suffering would instantly and universally spread since his death would leave the Grail community without someone to carry out the communion service. Rhetorically he asks, "Was ist die Wunde, ihrer Schmerzen Wuth gegen die Noth, die Höllenpein, zu diesem Amt - verdammt zu sein!" ("What is the wound and its torments compared to the pain, the hellish hurt of being condemned to serve the Grail?"). It is his role in leading the service, more than the physical pain of his wound, which troubles him so deeply. Amfortas has moved awkwardly towards a cadence in E in raising issues which he must now explain, as a direct response to Titirel's questions and indirectly to the Knights who wait perplexed.

Tension abates somewhat in the *Lebhaft* section beginning in m. 1297 and a sense of regular structure emerges. The orchestra assumes a more integrated and uncharacteristically conventional role. Mm. 1297-1301 present something akin to a ritornello, loosely establishing E, both in the minor mode and within a diminished sonority, together with the syncopated melody and accompaniment with which Amfortas makes his reentry in m. 1306. The tonal orientation towards E refers back to Titirel's command to uncover the grail, as Amfortas

attempts to explain why that responsibility troubles him. His initial emotional response had been unclear on many levels. He begins his explanation with a more objectively-oriented mode of narration. But he has difficulty sustaining this mode. Several changes occur at m. 1309, following Amfortas's self-identification as the only sinner in his community, and preceding mention of his duty to the grail and his purer brethren. This gross irony—that a sinner should enable the blessing of non-sinners—is Amfortas's insurmountable problem. As he outlines his responsibility, the phrase beginning “des höchsten Heligthum's zu pflegen,” trombones and bass tuba register its weight. Their *pianissimo* C-major sonority has a dual referential quality. On the individual plane of filial duty, the brass timbres reverberate from his father's command. The C-major sonority also alludes to his duty as a community leader. C major has not had a significant presence since it distinguished the Knights' choral passage and its statements of the grail motive with bell reinforcement. The sounding of the *pianissimo* brass sonority here leads into a much-distorted and chromatic string version of the grail motive ascent, arresting the heretofore regular rhythmic pattern. The irony which Amfortas perceives in his situation is further musically manifested as the gesture climaxes in m. 1312 at the word “Reine” with a negating chromatic descent akin to his entry in m. 1281. With momentary and unconvincing recourse to the earlier more stable music-rhythmic patterns, his phrase closes with an E⁷ sonority. Its conventional resolution to A minor brings further paradoxical regressions. With full orchestral accompaniment, Amfortas reverts to emotional but obscure kinds of statements as he refers to his burden of serving the Grail. He draws forth the *Heilandsklage* motive, which opened in E♭ minor in his first response to Titurel and in the first youths' chorus. Now the motive is incorporated in a passage which makes a conventional claim to functional harmony as a modulation to the subdominant of E minor. Amfortas is unable to satisfy the concomitant expectation of logically furthering his explanation and a chromatic descent like that of m. 1312 occurs in m. 1320. The breakdown of formal/narrative expectations continues as an implied return to E is absorbed within the diminished sonority of mm. 1320-1322.

Syncopated string chords run through the instrumental introduction that anticipates Amfortas's next entry in m. 1326. Formally similar to the beginning of the *Lebhaft* section at

m.1297, the character of the moment is wholly different. The tempo is relaxed, *Langsamer werdend*, and earlier dynamic flux gives way to a restrained *pianissimo*. The diminished sonorities and their destabilizing influence fade from prominence. C # lingers quietly in the lower strings after the last texted measure (m. 1322), but the upper strings' chords discard their diminished identity and restore E minor, with the second violins shifting from B b to B # (m. 1322-3). Semitonal alterations in both string groups yield C major in the following measure. In the preceding section, C major had appeared as a single deep brass chord, atypical in its immediate context and fleeting. It triggered an unusual variant of the grail motive tail, distorted by diminished sonorities throughout. In m.1324, C major is again not sustained, but it takes shape in a more subtly evolving environment. Flutes and bassoons strengthen its entry and continue the head of the grail motive, in a rhythmically augmented form. Moving from C major through E b x to A b, the treble line of the grail motive traces the central augmented harmony. This realignment towards E b/A b re-engages with the divine realm of the two offstage choruses. The aura of a prayer enshrouds Amfortas's entry and his professed desire for divine redemption. His second phrase resumes the grail motive opening of mm. 1224-6, beginning in A b minor and reaching D major in m.1332. Neither the augmented sonority of the theme's head nor motion here through the augmented fourth convey strain. On the contrary, both lend a gentle otherworldly quality to the harmonic palette. D major melts into D x and E b minor. The *Heilandsklage* motive returns, sounding unusually relaxed as Amfortas rephrases his humble plea for forgiveness. A syncopated variant of the grail motive ends his phrase in G major (m. 1339), featuring the trombones and bass tuba which have not sounded since the first appearance of the grail motive in the solo. m. 1309. They continue to sound G major, underpinned by timpani tremolos, in the augmented rhythmic pattern of the grail motive opening as Amfortas turns his attention to the impending commencement of the communion. His reference to time, "Die Stunde naht." marks a turning point in the solo, after which he begins to imagine events associated with the communion service although it has not in fact begun.

Amfortas's vision is undoubtedly drawn from his memory, at the same time that it offers an anticipation of what is scheduled to happen again very soon. The last service pre-

dates the time line covered by the opera, thus there is no dramatically realized precedent. However, two moments in Gurnemanz's narrative relate specifically to visionary experiences and the grail. The first involves Titurel in his battle against the evil forces of Klingsor. The only near full statements of the communion theme in the first scene occur in this passage.²⁵ Beginning in G \flat major (m.581 ff.), the theme begins after Gurnemanz relates how divine messengers came to Titurel's aid. As Gurnemanz describes the chalice offered to Titurel as the same one used at the original *Liebesmahl*, the theme unfolds through the *Schmerzensfigur* and returns to its initial key. Instead of cadencing, it dovetails with another statement of the theme beginning in C \flat major. Gurnemanz again enters at the *Schmerzensfigur*, and further describes the chalice as consecrated. The communion theme again does not close, but dovetails this time with the head of the grail motive. The explanation of the consecrated nature of the chalice—it caught the blood of the dying Saviour on the cross, from the wound inflicted by the spear—involves expanded treatment of the *Schmerzensfigur*, now isolated from the rest of the communion theme. Gurnemanz's narrative closes with a passage even more relevant to Amfortas and his vision in the second scene.

When Amfortas lost the spear to Klingsor, he prayed for a sign that salvation would be forthcoming. The grail's animation was the sign that was offered. The musical presentation of this information associates the shimmering of the Grail with ascending A \flat -major sonorities that evolve into the grail motive's opening, reaching D \flat major. From this point, a full statement of the grail motive unfolds as Gurnemanz relates that Amfortas then received a divine dream-like image. The incipit of the communion theme begins in D \flat major and peaks on its tonic, reinterpreted as the mediant of A major at the mid-point of Gurnemanz's text "durch hell erschanter, Wortezeichen Male." A major hovers radiantly for three measures

²⁵ The first time that the theme sounds in conjunction with a texted vocal line is earlier, in association with Kundry and Gurnemanz's defence of her against the Esquires' mockery (p.27). The theme's incipit sounds twice, both time in support of his interpretation of her as a repentant individual deserving of their tolerance. The first time, the theme begins in D \flat major. The second time it starts in A minor and dovetails with the *Thorenspruch* as Gurnemanz recognizes goodness in her deeds. This A minor statement is the only time that the beginning of the communion theme sounds in the minor mode in the first scene.

before opening into the image's message. The *Thorenspruch* motive sounds in full and cadences in D major, with Gurnemanz supplying its original text. This passage spanning from the grail's glowing to the divine command to wait for the "reine Thor" unfolds semitonally related progressions of a fourth: A \flat major–D \flat major/A major–D major. As Patrick McCreless has noted, it prefigures the "A \flat -D relationship made explicit by the relationship of the *Thorenspruch* to the opera as a whole."²⁶

Amfortas's shared vision initially partakes of the motivic-harmonic framework of the vision related by Gurnemanz. At Amfortas's mention of time, G major is released to the woodwinds, who climb to C major through the opening of the grail motive. String tremolos join the texture as Amfortas begins to imagine that the grail is being illuminated. A fuller sounding of the complete grail motive in C major reaches further upwards. He imagines that the covering falls from the grail, and as he stares at the *covered* Grail in front of him, the luminescent C major darkens mysteriously towards the minor. English horn and clarinet 1 begin the communion theme in C minor. Gurnemanz's passage concerned the first time that the grail glowed as a sign whose meaning was increasingly clarified by the ensuing divine apparition and its message. Amfortas's vision concerns the communion service, which is a reenactment of his initial prayer and plea, with the grail providing blessed sustenance for all

²⁶ Patrick McCreless, "Motive and Magic: A Referential Dyad in *Parsifal*." *Music Analysis* 9, no.3 (October 1990): 239. Amfortas's solo in Act III ends with his wish to die, and the thought that the Grail's sacrament might afterwards be offered to the Knights without his acting as intermediary. A rhythmically augmented form of the grail motive overlaps with the close of his appeal for death in D minor. The head of the theme moves through F \sharp minor, D minor and rests on B \flat major, with the ascending gesture reaching F major as he voices his wish for the Knights' future. His cadence in F major cadence is the springboard for another statement of the grail motive. Like the version it follows, the initial third progression involves a major third and the theme embraces a semitonal relation between its starting and ending points. F major thus moves to D \flat major and then A major, *molto rallentando*, with Parsifal's entry in A major marked *sforzando* (m.1030) before the theme rises to E major. Parsifal, of course, has returned with the spear and touches Amfortas's side. The *Heilandsklage* begins in E \flat minor in m. 1033, and shifts from A \flat major to A major as "Amfortas's face shines with holy rapture." Parsifal's arrival and Amfortas's transfiguration are both realized through harmonic-motivic logic related to Gurnemanz's narration as double perspective of the miraculous nature of the fulfilment of the prophecy.

waiting for the “reine Thor.” The glowing grail, the sacrament, is a tangible symbol of the apparition’s message of hope and a substitute for the prophecy until it is fulfilled. Amfortas’s vision is preceded by a prayer in his own solo.²⁷ His first digression from the reality on-stage is his remark that a light is streaming down upon the grail (m. 1341-1345). This light takes the place of the appearance of the holy dream-image (mm. 721-723) in Gurnemanz’s account. The covering falling from the grail and the revelation of its glowing contents take the place of the dream-image’s visual and verbal clarification. The significant point of divergence between these two accounts concerns the emergence of the communion theme. In Gurnemanz’s narrative, it is not the theme so much as the subsequent modulation to A major that calls attention to itself. In Amfortas’s solo, the communion theme beginning in C minor quietly marks a moment of harmonic surprise. The theme’s minor mode version has been heard only rarely. Its unfamiliarity underscores the uncanniness evoked by the modal shift at its entry, as Amfortas enters an unusual state of consciousness. In this state, he shares his remembered experience of the communion service as a vividly present reality. Gurnemanz’s narrative has prepared us to accept dream-like states as a rare but possible kind of experience. The C-minor communion theme itself even claims some authenticity; it is the first time in the entire act that we hear the theme begin on either of the theme’s tonics as heard in the exposition of the Prelude. What follows this emergence of the theme is an account of the communion service which simultaneously embraces distinctions of time and perspective unique to Amfortas in the drama. However, in referring to the Prelude, this moment also draws on the memory of the audience.

The full tonally-rounded version of the communion theme begins the Prelude, in A \flat major and then in C minor. In the major mode version, the minor sonority of the *Schmerzensfigur* is a concentrated moment of tension. Dynamically highlighted and rhythmically differentiated, it emerges as a surprise amidst the more fluid opening and closing A \flat -major gestures. The theme’s closure on the mediant nonetheless hints at potential

²⁷ In Amfortas’s first plea of the prayer (mm. 1326-1332), the focus on A \flat , and the grail motive variant traversing A \flat -D major could be further explored vis-à-vis the relationship between the *Thorenspruch* and the opera as a whole.

sequential significance. The ensuing statement in C minor is different in several respects. The modally adjusted incipit features an augmented second. In the closing section, the melody is altered to end on the tonic. In the major mode version, the tonic is triadically affirmed in the continuous diminuendo of the closing section, with an allusion to the subdominant preceding rest on the mediant. In the minor mode version, the restorative tonic triad emulates the rhythm of the *Schmerzensfigur* and then sinks stepwise to the leading-tone before rising to rest. A second climax is introduced, peaking on the leading-tone like the first climax within the *Schmerzensfigur*. The overall effect of this alternate basic version of the theme is an unpacking of the tension initially isolated.²⁸ The *Schmerzensfigur* itself is unchanged in the minor mode form and remains a major third above the tonic. While no longer modally contrasting, it is contextually a more chromatic harmonic relation.

In his vision, Amfortas begins to describe the glowing grail as the C-minor communion theme unfolds into the *Schmerzensfigur*. His transfixed nature is made manifest through his monotone vocal line, with the repeated pitch of F emphasizing an augmented fourth against the *Schmerzensfigur*'s climax on B. The *Schmerzensfigur* itself is atypical. Instead of the expected E minor sonority, the melody descends from B to F then rises A \flat , contributing to the diminished harmony including the aforementioned augmented fourth. At m. 1349, the communion theme seems to get stuck as the *Schmerzensfigur* is repeated. Both the treatment of the theme and the form of the *Schmerzensfigur* specifically orient the listener to the developmental section of the Prelude, not its beginning. With B shifting to B \flat at Amfortas's word "erglüht" (m.1350), a propelling dominant seventh emerges; the *Schmerzensfigur* disappears, Amfortas's vocal line rises to G \flat , and B \flat ⁷ resolves to E \flat minor as the communion theme begins again (m.1351). At this point, Amfortas offers details

²⁸ David Lewin has discussed the difference of these versions in terms of Riemann functions. He notes that the minor mode version frequently involves *Leittonwechsel* transformations, the most characteristic harmonic feature of the *Schmerzensfigur* as it is first heard. See his, "Some Notes on Analyzing Wagner: The *Ring* and *Parsifal*," *19th-Century Music* 16, no.1 (Summer 1992): 49-57. For a discussion of musico-dramatic substitutions in Act III, see his "Amfortas's Prayer to Titirel and the Role of D in *Parsifal*: The Tonal Spaces of the Drama and the Enharmonic C \flat /B," *19th-Century Music* 7, no.3 (April 1984): 336-49.

about his personal experience during the communion service. Retrospectively, it differs greatly from that of the Knights. This pre-presentation thus affords a glimpse of Amfortas's reality which is not presented when the Grail service actually takes place, when the dominant perspective is that of joyous rejuvenation. Its non-representation during the communion service is in fact justified by the *Amfortasklage*, which explains why Amfortas does not himself partake of the sacrament when he eventually offers it to his brethren. The success of this argument—a sympathetic response which would involve agreement with Amfortas's choice—hinges on the full and realistic opening up of his world of pain and suffering.

Amfortas's visionary passage prompts a sharp self-critique that explicitly works together several ideas that have converged earlier in the scene in the harmonic-dramatic space of E♭ minor: his sin and suffering, the sinning world, and the anguish endured by the Saviour. Psychological and musical processes hang together as Amfortas draws relationships between himself and Christ and then polarizes the scenario by offering a self-conceptualization of inferiority and corruption.²⁹ The first co-mingling of identities takes place as the communion theme begins in E♭ minor. It is identified with the reanimation of Christ's redemptive blood, which Amfortas feels within his own body. The theme's cadence in E♭ minor marks the beginning of Amfortas's response, in which he describes the reawakening of the sinful lust of his own blood. A regular stream of motivic ideas carries the narrative, which gathers energy at the marking *Allmählich etwas belebter* (m. 1356). In contrast with the preceding passage beginning at m. 1332, disruptive chromatic sonorities and dynamic vicissitudes recall the anxiety of the initial section of the solo. Amfortas's characteristic augmented triad motive and figures associated with Klingsor undermine the sense of harmonic order. In m. 1364, Amfortas's altered state has completely overridden his normal physically

²⁹ Amfortas is preoccupied with establishing the reality that he is unlike Christ because he proved weak to evil forces. The case for Amfortas's intentions as Christ-like can be found earlier in the opera. Through Amfortas and Gurnemanz, we learn that many Grail knights had failed to resist temptations in Klingsor's land and that Amfortas had set out with the idea of overcoming this force in order to protect his community. Unused to such encounters, Amfortas also succumbed. The notion of leadership attained through birthright or merit is a major issue in the work, and an important factor in Amfortas's shame. It is through merit that Parsifal assumes Titurel's position.

restricted state and he jumps up. The diminished, repeated form of the *Schmerzensfigur* that earlier interrupted the communion theme in C minor returns with great force. Amfortas now links his wound to that of Christ, as inflicted by the same spear. He describes Christ's wound as the embodiment of the suffering he bore for humanity's shame. Christ's act of substitution is outlined through sequences of the *Heilandsklage* motive, beginning in E \flat minor and E minor at m. 1369 and m. 1372 respectively. The tempo continues to intensify, *wieder belebend* (m. 1375), but the orchestration thins as Amfortas juxtaposes his role with Christ's. The Grail motive opens in C major and collapses just before its climactic cadence; the theme begins again, but in C minor. Modally and thematically, this schism recalls two earlier points in the *Amfortasklage*. The relation to the moment at which Amfortas became entranced is highlighted by the present return to his normal physical position (m. 1377). The pivot occurs after Amfortas has referred to his role, "An heiligster Stelle". The woodwind Grail motive begins in C minor and reaches E major and B major as his text continues: "dem Pfleger göttlichster Güter, des Erlösungsbalsams Hüter". The phrase end is negated with a diminished sonority and the Kundry motive. The first sounding of the grail motive in the solo, at m. 1309, had been similarly treated, and the textual parallels are obvious: "des höchsten Heiligthum's zu Plegen, auf Reine herabzuflehen seinen Segen!" Thematic distortion again signifies Amfortas's struggle and his perception that he is not suited to his role. Gestures associated with Kundry and Klingsor further the chaos which peaks at Amfortas's cries of "Erbarmen!". first as a descending augmented fourth and then as a descending major sixth, both within the diminished seventh sonority sustained through mm. 1386-1392.

The closing section of the *Amfortasklage* is an intensified and desperate version of his prayer. In m. 1393, the diminished harmonic standstill changes and the orchestra gradually becomes more chamber-like. Amfortas takes his place as a sinner needing Christ's forgiveness: "Du Allerbarmer! Ach, Erbarmen! Nimm mir mein Erbe, schliesse die Wunde, dass heilig ich sterbe, rein Dir gesunde!" Each of Amfortas's three phrases features a chromatically descending vocal line whose contours mark an interval of a fourth; the first two, a perfect fourth, mirroring the rising fourths in the orchestral gestures emulating the close of the communion theme (mm. 1394-1399). Tristanesque colouring and diminished sonorities

enshroud motion from B major–D major–A minor (mm.1394-1399) and D minor–G minor–E \flat –A 7 –D minor–A 7 (mm.1400-1404), while the dynamic level is reduced to *ppp*. Amfortas does not reach his implied goal of D. As “er sinkt wie bewusstlos zurück” (“he sinks back as if unconscious”), his orchestral accompaniment also passes into silence, save for an A which lingers on the two horns for two measures.

The melodic contour outlining an augmented fourth and the harmonic nature of Amfortas’s final phrase refer obscurely to the *Thorenspruch* motive.³⁰ Altos and tenors from both of the offstage choruses assume Amfortas’s unrealized A 7 sonority as the starting point of a full statement of the motive opening with the B \flat –E just traced by Amfortas. Two different sonorities overlap momentarily: a diminished sonority embracing the augmented fourth, and A major, which furthers the lingering A in the horns. The gesture continues through F major, G minor and E \flat major, after which the awaited D cadence is supplied with the consequential command “harre sein, den ich erkor!”. Initially ambiguous, and inclined towards the minor mode, D is ultimately confirmed in the major mode.

The overall structure of the *Amfortasklage* can be regarded as unfolding in three main parts and a concluding section whose boundaries are felt as moments involving the greatest degree of change in all of the musical-dramatic parameters. None of these sections is formally closed. The first part commences after the dialogic passages, and begins as an explanation as to why the expectations voiced by Titurel are problematic. The most crucial insights are not immediately forthcoming but come to light as Amfortas undergoes a psychological transformation and relives the physical and spiritual suffering normally concealed from those around him. Formally conventional strategies are altered in the process. The monologue’s subjective dimension is developed through a network of motivic and tonal references which increasingly integrate it with earlier moments in the opera and have dramatic and formal implications in their recurrence. As discussed above, the semitonally related key areas of E

³⁰ As with Amfortas’s first reference to the divine prophecy and the *Thorenspruch* motive (mm.320-330), he is incapable of realizing the gesture in a continuous and full form. In this earlier passage, fragmentation of the motive’s first phrase occurs when he seeks validation from Gurnemanz. The consequential phrase is more distorted, closing in D minor as Amfortas reinterprets the Saviour he is awaiting and names him Death.

and E \flat figure prominently in the three main sections of the solo. In each, the key area of C emerges in conjunction with the grail motive and marks a shift in Amfortas's psychological state. These shifts inform transitions to the ensuing section which coincide with a momentarily stable yet differentiated psychological level than that which opened the previous section.

In the first section of Amfortas's solo (mm. 1297-1322), the presence of C in m. 1309 is subtle yet nonetheless triggers a subjective layer which challenges the autonomy of formal strategies already set in motion. This signal gains strength in the second section (mm. 1322-1356), but occurs similarly at a moment in which we are reminded of Amfortas's responsibilities and the C-dominated earlier parts of this scene when the Knights were preparing for the grail ceremony. It is through this reference that the reflective state in which Amfortas began his prayer leads into a trance or dream-like state. Amfortas does not immediately return to a conscious state concerned with the phenomenal world around him but rather arrives at a somnambulistic kind of waking in sleep. It is in this third section beginning in m. 1356 that Amfortas's noumenal realm of experience is publicly revealed. In this state, Amfortas is acutely aware of his inner bodily functions and psychological drives and acquires an extraordinary amount of energy which enables him to overcome his physical weakness. He can even perceive links with the divine and the universal. But the emergence of C and the grail motive in m. 1376 signals that Amfortas will not delve further into this realm; he lies down again, in a state of despair, dwelling on his own physical and spiritual weaknesses. His return to the state in which he began is a compressed and varied recapitulatory gesture within the solo, as are his closing phrases in relation to the prayer. Amfortas's desperate plea triggers yet another psychological shift. This time he does not serve as an intermediary communicator but is unconscious while the audience experiences the prophecy as Amfortas once did.

The end of Amfortas's solo emphasizes semitonal relations between E \flat and D. Most succinctly embodied in the *Thorenspruch* motive, this alternate focus is anticipated in the opening of the prayer and the version of the grail motive spanning A \flat minor and D major. In both the prayer and the conclusion, Amfortas directly seeks divine absolution for his individual sin. The dramatic implication of D points towards a singular future moment in which Amfortas will be relieved by a new Christ-like form of redeemer. Co-mingling with the

theme of death which figured in the dialogue preceding the solo, the imperfect allusion to the *Thorenspruch* motive reminds us that Amfortas's faith in the possibility of redemption is weak. His differentiated perspective is made tangible through the recapitulatory dimension of his closing section. As noted above, his vision begins similarly to his original apparition as described by Gurnemanz. Following the mysterious modulation from the communion theme's D \flat major to A major, Gurnemanz concluded his narrative in D major with the *Thorenspruch* motive. The Esquires echoed the first portion of the motive, cadencing in E \flat major. After a lengthy personal digression, Amfortas's narrative makes its way back to continuing the recapitulation. The confirmation of this return is supplied by the offstage chorus. The Knights validate the invisible chorus's message as a restatement of the original message of salvation and paraphrase it so as to reflect their own needs, urging Amfortas to wait, in faith, and to continue to carry out his office. Musically realized as a variation of the gesture which led into Amfortas's vision, the grail motive opens with the G-minor- E \flat -major progression of the *Thorenspruch* motive. A full statement of the theme then moves from C minor to E \flat major. The theme sounds a further time, tonally rounded in E \flat major, with Titurel uttering once more the command "Enthüllet den Gral!" (mm.1416-1418).

The most obvious prototype for Amfortas's lament is the Dutchman's monologue. When Wagner was completing the final version of the first act of *Parsifal*, he also worked closely with the conductor Anton Seidl. On the evening of October 27, 1877, they went through the first act of *Der fliegende Holländer*. Cosima's diaries include the following comments: "from *Holländer* to *Parsifal*—how long the path and yet how similar the character! — Following the music, R. talks about the influence of the 'cosmos,' the outside world, on characters who, though basically good, do not perhaps possess the strength to resist it, and who then become quite exceptionally bad, indeed perverse. 'Nothing from the outside world is of benefit to such characters!'"³¹ Like the Dutchman, Amfortas befell his fate in ignorance of the consequences of his actions. He also shares with his early forerunner a

³¹ *Cosima Wagner's Diaries*, ed. and annotated by Martin Gregor-Dellin and Dietrich Mack, trans. and with an intro. by Geoffrey Skelton, vol. 1 (London: Collins, 1978-1980), 990.

double cycle of suffering: nights of endless pain are followed by brief respites but no real solutions. He too has been offered the hope of salvation, but has lost faith with the passing of time and wishes for death by the time we encounter him in the opera. In *Holländer*, faith in the divine prophecy is singularly concentrated in the somnabulistic and socially deviant character of Senta. In *Parsifal*, however, faith is maintained on a community level and privileged apparitions are not a cause for widespread scrutiny. The Dutchman's monologue is only shared with the off-stage audience and his invisible crew, who echo his closing appeal once he has passed into an unconscious state. In Wagner's essay elaborating on the staging of *Holländer*, he noted that the Dutchman's return to consciousness did not involve an active wilful engagement with the world around him but more of an automaton-like submission to a flow of events over which he has no control. He does not exercise the resistance which he voiced in his monologue by refusing to stay on land, but neither does he have any hope that redemption might be forthcoming when he first meets Daland. Although there is no communion service in *Holländer*, the pattern whereby the Dutchman arrives on land and engages with women who might be his redeemer is a similarly ritualistic process orchestrated by divine forces. The ritual does not specify when redemption will actually occur but places the sinner in a situation in which it is at least a possibility. Even when it is only an imperfect substitute that is gleaned, some hope in a real redeemer may be revived which, however ephemeral, is not likely to be manifested otherwise. With both the Dutchman and Amfortas, the waiting game has taken its toll by the time that we meet them; imperfect substitutes have become undesirable. After the chorus and Titirel have sung, Amfortas slowly re-engages with the external world. He no longer refuses to carry out the service, which seems to have an independent source of momentum, but he resists participation.

With Amfortas in a predominantly passive state, Titirel virtually reassumes leadership with his command. The Esquires duly uncover the grail and Amfortas slowly rises, doubly signified by the *Schmerzensfigur* that gradually takes shape in the celli. Initially drawing attention to A, an augmented fourth above the E \flat timpani pedal, the motive assumes its upper semitone pivot in m. 1429 and is further highlighted through a dynamic swell within the *ppp* milieu. Reoriented towards A \flat in m.1432, the gesture unfolds sequentially in a pattern

of descending thirds. The pedal is taken over by lower string tremolos and migrates downwards as the melody passes through A \flat minor, E minor and C minor, resting in A \flat major. The earlier frustrated expectation that E \flat would function as a gateway to A \flat major and the beginning of the ceremony is now granted.

The long-awaited recapitulation of the opening of the Prelude is varied in the sense that it involves singers and text, as well as visual changes in the dramatic scenario. Wagner had specific ideas about the effect he wanted to achieve here. According to Cosima's diary entry on June 27, 1880, she and Wagner had a conversation about different visual representations of Christ and their gender orientation: "He then plays the first theme of *Parsifal* to himself and, returning, says that he gave the words to a chorus so that the effect would be neither masculine nor feminine, Christ must be entirely sexless, neither man nor woman."³² In the earlier part of the scene, when preparations for the ceremony were underway, the two offstage choruses were distinguished. While invisible, their respective locations correspond to the physical height of the dome, a realistic gesture which aligns with the tradition of chorus balconies in houses of worship, as does the use of young male voices for higher registers. The pre-pubescent voice is also ostensibly pre-sexual and the closest natural form of gender ambiguity. Ambiguity concerning the source or identity of these invisible voices was already broached at the first sounding of both choruses. Notably, it was the youth's chorus that spoke as if it were Christ, offering Christ's blood. The boys' chorus spoke as if it were the grail, offering the grail's wine. Wagner combined the two choruses, shorn of their lowest and highest vocal ranges, for the divine prophecy at the end of the *Amfortasklage* and the texted A \flat -major version of the communion theme. The previously differentiated voices of Christ and the Grail come together as the symbolic act of the communion service is reinvested with the literal meaning once attributed to it by Christ.³³

³² *Cosima Wagner's Diaries*, vol. 2, 498-9.

³³ Curiously, Jean-Jacques Nattiez cites the aforementioned diary entry in support of his argument that *Parsifal* is extremely misogynistic. Nattiez's assumption that Wagner was referring to the end of the work is erroneous but is obviously guided by his intention to critique Kundry's death: "This final chorus is the only mixed chorus in the entire work and

Altos and 1st tenors assume the roles of the Prelude's bassoons, clarinets and English horn as they sing the communion theme in A \flat major. For the first time, the offstage voices sing not as a chorus, in part-harmony, but in unison as the singular voice of Christ. Atypically, they are continuously accompanied by the orchestra. A luxurious orchestral tutti expands their A \flat -major cadence and emulates the vocal passage it follows through a shift of focus to upper registers: predominantly triplet figures in the woodwinds and thirty-second-note arpeggiation in the upper strings. Only after the command to partake in communion is invested with the authority of Christ does Amfortas begin to fulfil his role in the service. He prays and the stage starts to darken. Trumpet, three oboes and the second half of divisi violins enter at m. 1448 with the communion theme melody, which again unfolds in full, reaching an internal *forte* climax at the C-minor portion. A \flat major sounds from the theme's close at m. 1453 to 1458 and the stage becomes completely dark. The orchestral texture thins to woodwinds and brass, the rhythmic pulse slackens, and a pause of silence ensues.

Unlike the schismatic transitions between choruses earlier in the scene, sopranos and altos from both offstage choruses smoothly begin the communion theme in C minor. The higher invisible voices had earlier embodied the symbolic plane of the grail. Now uttering a subtly altered form of Christ's words just sung, the transformational power of the grail is

Kundry dies on a sustained A \flat sung by the sopranos." Both of the invisible choruses qualify as "mixed choruses" each time they sing. And following the communion service, before the Knights embrace each other, all three choruses share text and sing together in a tiered fashion (mm. 1562-1573) similar to that at the end of the work. As in the beginning of the communion service in Act I, the last choral passage in the opera contains both the *Thorenspruch* and the communion theme. The latter is significantly different from its original form, in keeping with the dramatic change that has finally occurred. With respect to the comments made in June of 1880, Wagner was clearly referring to the passage, beginning in m. 1440 of Act I. These texted versions of the theme in A \flat major and C minor are the only times in the entire opera that words possibly emanating from Christ are indicated in quotation. Furthermore, Kundry does not die while the sopranos are singing. Their sustained high A \flat drops an octave in m. 1123 and then the stage directions indicate that "Kundry, with her gaze uplifted to Parsifal, sinks slowly lifeless to the ground." This is a purely instrumental passage and her death coincides with the semitonal swell from D \flat to A minor and back. This gesture is foreshadowed in mm. 1484-5 of Act I, when, after the sacrament has been blessed, the grail's glow slowly fades and natural daylight returns, preceding the ascent to the cadence in A \flat major.

enabled. During the serene instrumental expansion of the local tonic, C minor, the communion theme reaches the expected dynamic climax at the inner third-related minor triad. Instead of serving as a digression en route to the theme's regular conclusion, the E- minor sonority pivots towards a series of emphasized modulations which correlate to changes in the dramatic scenario. At m. 1469, the stage directions indicate that: "A dazzling ray of light falls from above upon the crystal cup, which now glows, ever-deeper, a shining wine-purple colour, shedding a soft light on all around."³⁴ And at m. 1471: "Amfortas, with a transfigured expression raises the Grail, and waves it slowly to every side, thus consecrating the bread and wine. All are kneeling."³⁵ As these gestures are realized, the E minor section of the communion theme is followed by a melodic descent to C #, rather than C, with rising stepwise motion yielding D minor instead of C minor. The climax at E minor extends through to this D-minor sonority halfway through m. 1470. The modulatory passage then inclines towards A b -related keys before veering momentarily in the direction of E minor at Titurel's entrance. Tutti orchestration is reduced to primarily string accompaniment as Titurel's quiet expression of exaltation effects a V⁷-I cadence in C major. This cadence modally transforms the second version of the communion theme and correlates to the C-major passages earlier in the scene, and to the Knights' anticipation of the renewal which the communion service entails. At the same time, Titurel's cadence is not a strong moment of closure, as it overlaps with a strikingly different variant of the communion theme. The theme's rising opening triadic ascent reaches over to the sixth, at m. 1479, a major sixth in keeping with the modal shift to C major. At this divergence, "Amfortas sets the Grail down, and the glow slowly fades, as the darkness lightens; hereupon the Esquires enclose the vessel in its shrine, and cover it as before."³⁶ The

³⁴ "hier dringt ein blendender Lichtstrahl von oben auf die Krystallschale herab; diese erglüht sodann immer stärker in leuchtender Purperfarbe, Alles sanft bestrahlend."

³⁵ "Amfortas, mit verklärter Miene, erhebt den "Gral" hoch und schwebt ihn sanft nach allen Seiten, worauf er dann Brod und Wein segnet. Alles ist auf Knieen."

³⁶ "Amfortas setzt den "Gral" wieder nieder, welcher nun, während die tiefe Dämmerung wieder entweicht, immer mehr erblasst: hierauf schliessen die Knaben das Gefäss wieder in den Schrein und bedecken diesen wie zuvor."

communion theme's usual harmonic third-related inner modulation is bypassed and the A-minor sonority begins an ascent of a fourth characteristic of the tail of the grail motive, reaching G major. Semitonal swells embrace E♭ major then E♭ minor, before another grail motive-like ascent reaches D♭ minor, and a semitonal swell to A minor and back.³⁷ A final ascent rests in A♭ major. Daylight has been restored and the interlocking fourths of the bell motive sound in the lower strings and timpani. A♭ major gradually settles in middle registers in the woodwinds.

All three choruses sing while the sacrament is shared amongst the Knights. As the wine and bread has been blessed, the presence of divine forces is deemphasized. The process of transferral is mirrored in the succession of choruses: the boys are followed by the youths and then the Knights. No longer speaking as Christ, the invisible choruses comment on the transformation of blood and body into wine and bread. As the boys and youths sing varied forms of the communion theme, their more objective role and E♭-major orientation suggests that they are now more closely affiliated with the Knights. When the first group of Knights enter in m.1528, they have absorbed the divine voice and urge each other to gain strength through the sacrament. For the first time, the Knights sing as two different groups though they are primarily undifferentiated. When they come together in m. 1551, the layering effect realizes the strengthening powers which they praise in song. The varied handling of the communion theme in this extended choral passage attains the quality of an anthem with the entries of the Knights. The tension-laden features of the communion theme are absent in their celebration of renewal. Although the presence of four choral groups might imply individuation, the overriding musical and dramatic processes move steadily towards a sense of community, divinely empowered. The Knights' vocal cadence in E♭ major (m. 1560) segues orchestrally into a tiered coda-like passage in A♭ major featuring the grail motive. The Knights are now divided according to vocal type, and four choral entries with shared text praising faith and love embrace ever higher registers. The grail motive sounds on trombones

³⁷ The musical-dramatic precedent of these swells, as an expanded treatment of the *Schmerzensfigur*, occurs in Gurnemanz's narrative when he describes the chalice as once having caught the blood of Christ on the Cross (mm.592-595).

as the basses enter (m. 1562-4) and in the woodwinds in the sopranos' extended cadence. This is the only point in the scene where the Knights freely occupy the tonal area of A \flat major, which is momentarily within their grasp before is it released to the invisible choruses. Achieved through E \flat major, and the consumption of the sacrament, this passage recalls the first section involving the highest offstage chorus as it evolves into a sequence of the faith motive. However, the offstage choruses have fulfilled their role and thus the sopranos are absorbed with their cadence into the grail motive ascent.

The sequenced faith motive is a purely instrumental passage. As it begins, the Knights embrace each other and the service has clearly ended. In the modulation towards C major, a gradual registral descent mirrors the restoration of normal reality and also the dampening spirits of Amfortas. Since he has not partaken of the sacrament himself, the transfigured state of exaltation which he had attained when the grail was brilliantly illuminated quickly fades and his wound causes him pain. Amfortas's otherness is distinguished through E \flat minor and the *Heilandsklage* motive in alternation with the Knights' recession and C major. The split musical-dramatic plane is resolved in favour of C major once Amfortas is carried off the stage.

The bells fade as the focus shifts to Gurnemanz and Parsifal. The latter is unable to express in words his reaction to what he has seen. Parsifal's silence is understood by Gurnemanz to mean that the young fool is not a candidate for the redeemer. The *Thorenspruch* motive becomes quirky as he mocks the boy in frustration. The need for a redeemer has certainly increased, but Gurnemanz is of course abrupt in ruling out Parsifal. Gurnemanz's weakened faith induces a response similar to the "corrected" version of the prophecy offered after the *Amfortasklage*. Prepared by an F \sharp viola tremolo, an invisible alto soloist sings the *Thorenspruch* motive and text, in its basic form yet harmonically transposed so as to lead into C major. The soloist's vocal close in E minor overlaps with the youths' chorus who sing the grail motive in C major joined by the boys' chorus. The bells re-emerge at m. 1161, continuing while woodwinds and brass close the act with a thrice-repeated C-major sonority. This closing repetition of the messages of hope and faith is the last time that unseen human voices are heard until the end of the opera. Unbeknownst to Gurnemanz, Parsifal has gleaned just enough so he will succeed in the real challenges which still lie ahead.

Chapter 4

Der Ring des Nibelungen
Part I - Siegfried the Hero?

For much of the third opera of the *Ring* cycle, the eponymous character is on a personal quest. Siegfried's main goal is met when he finally meets Brünnhilde, a companion who seems to be his perfect match. Along the way, Siegfried achieves the feats that earn him his heroic status. Because of his fearlessness, he is able to bypass Loge, the sleeping woman's guardian. Heroic and personal dimensions of his quest are clearly inter-related, at least to the audience. While other characters from the earlier dramas weave in and around these events, the story of Siegfried's adventures displays a simple symmetry. His forging of the sword Nothung becomes the climactic conclusion of the first act, as is his winning of Brünnhilde of the third. He slays Fafner at the mid-point of it all. Siegfried's encounter with the giant *Lindwurm* is a complex turning point. It is not a conventional fairy-tale hero-beast battle and thus fails as a heroic episode. Siegfried himself does not revel in his achievement and sees the anticipated moment of climax and resolution as a failure. Like Don Quixote's, Siegfried's deeds entail a critique of traditional heroism. Unlike Don Quixote, Siegfried himself sees things at face value and the hollowness of his supposed victory. His self-critique is nevertheless short-sighted, for in killing Fafner he has in fact qualified himself to reach his own and higher goals. The flawed, anti-climactic nature of Siegfried's encounter with Fafner is "corrected" through the redirection of his fearlessness. Siegfried will be united with a companion, and the curse he has just furthered will be broken, eventually. The woodbird helps him to fulfill two important prerequisites in this chain of events: he retrieves the ring and the tarnhelm from the hoard and prevents them from falling into evil hands.

The first half of the drama is primarily concerned with the relationship between Siegfried and his caretaker Mime, the only person the youth has known since birth. We encounter the dwarf smith first, and find him still obsessed with his experiences in *Das Rheingold*. The shame and humility that he felt through the tyranny of his brother Alberich have festered into a desire for revenge. Alberich similarly exists within a cycle of shame and revenge. When he quickly lost the power of the gold that he stole and wielded so terribly, he

cursed the ring that embodies its power. The curse itself has proven powerful. Fafner, once a simple giant with no interest in unearned wealth or power, has greedily slain his brother for the hoard and removed himself to Neidhöhle. Mime unwittingly played a role in Alberich's loss of the gold through his fashioning of the tarnhelm. Ironically, its transformational properties have been used by Fafner to assume a form which Mime is helpless to overcome. But overcome it he must, if he wants to avenge his original sense of shame which has multiplied several times over since he has been at Neidhöhle. His young charge easily intimidates and humiliates him. But the youth is unlike his brother and indeed unlike anyone Mime has ever encountered. He is precisely the sort of person who could kill Fafner.

When we first meet Mime, the old maimed dwarf envies the brute strength of the able-bodied Siegfried and envisions him as the agent of his revenge against Alberich. Mime has skills of his own—he is cunning and crafty in his smith-work—but they do not enable him to realize his aspirations single-handedly. Siegfried does not share Mime's goals, nor does he envy him. He does not know where to find what he is looking for, but knows it does not lie in Mime's direction. The drama of the first act turns on Siegfried's forcing an issue. He suspects that Mime's claim to be his parent is false. Mime very reluctantly admits this reality, but comes to see that the little information he does have in this regard might be useful in furthering his own cause. As one layer of truth is revealed, Mime's false pretenses escalate till he finally sees that he can obtain the hoard through Siegfried, and at his expense. The central Fafner episode triggers the collapse of Mime's plotting and his death. Mime would undoubtedly have been murdered had he succeeded. Siegfried's intervention short-circuits that path, yielding the same immediate result concerning Mime but steering the future of the ring in a different direction.

The killing of Mime rather than of Fafner is the defining moment at which Siegfried becomes free to pursue what compels him on an inner level. Nothung too is freed. At this turning point, Siegfried and Nothung become markedly unheroic; they become champions of the purely human. This evolution reenacts salient features of the life of Siegfried's own father, and reinvigorates the Wälzung legacy. The crucial link here between past and future is the recreation of Nothung. It is the only one of Siegfried's extraordinary feats which cannot

be easily explained. There is no woodbird to guide him in this task. Mime, the only onstage witness to the event, is himself well-versed in forging techniques but amazed by what he sees. It is not brute strength alone that enables Siegfried to succeed where Mime had failed. Throughout the act, Wagner laid out the various forces and layers of meaning that eventually converge in the musical-dramatic recreation of Nothung. Siegfried's extraordinary feat is his ability to discover the basic nature of these forces, which he does in a systematic and clear fashion. There is never any hint as to precisely how this will be achieved, and Siegfried himself surely has no idea until he actually does it.

At the beginning of the act, we learn from Mime that Fafner could fall if Siegfried were armed with Nothung, but the sword remains in fragments. By the end of the scene, Mime shows the broken pieces to the youth for the first time, as evidence of his account of Siegfried's parents. Siegfried demands that Mime forge this particular sword while he bounds off into the forest. In the second scene, Wotan makes his first appearance as the Wanderer. Mime learns that the fearless one will forge Nothung and will kill Fafner and himself. The earlier problem of forging Nothung is solved, but another graver problem has arisen. The first half of the third scene concerns Mime's vain attempt to teach Siegfried fear. He had returned from the forest with the expectation that his father's sword had been re-forged. Mime's "fear lesson" is a digression that nevertheless intensifies Siegfried's desire to wield the sword. The lesson itself has also been prepared. Fearful Mime, plagued by the Wanderer's message, broods over his problems, as he had at the beginning of the first act, that are now more serious and perplexing. Staring at the sunlit forest, he becomes deluded into thinking that the light and the sounds of nature emanate from Fafner lurking nearby.¹ Mime replicates this fearful experience in the hopes that Siegfried will readily feel it himself.

¹ The confusion between daylight and fire in this semi-comic interlude recurs in the serious Norns' opening scene of *Götterdämmerung*. In the midst of night, the Norns see a bright light emanating from Brünnhilde's rock and initially mistake it for daylight. Assuring themselves that it is simply Loge's fire and that it is still night, they begin their nocturnal weaving and singing. This confusion occurs again before they begin their second round of singing. By contrast, their third round begins with a confirmation that daylight is returning. As the night wanes, so do their prophetic powers. In Mime's scene, it is bright daylight that he mistakes for the fiery breath of Fafner.

Mime evokes terrible sounds and sensations, with fire-flicking augmented sonorities that reach a triple *fortissimo* climax of nonsensical diminished sonorities and collapsing chromatic sonorities. Siegfried hears more diatonic melodies which he finds inviting.² Mime realizes that his representation of fear has not been successful and decides to expose the child to Fafner directly.

At this point in the drama, Mime's concern for his own life is the only factor that drives his suggestion to lead Siegfried to Fafner. Wagner surveyed important aesthetic issues in portraying Mime's experience of fear, his failure to convey his experience in a way that Siegfried sympathetically identifies with, and his decision to take Siegfried to Fafner. A primary reason that Wagner expanded the *Ring* into a multi-part work—an expansion that initially involved only the creation of *Der junge Siegfried* as an extension of *Siegfrieds Tod*—was his concern about the extensive amount of pre-history that would need to be narrated in a single drama. In presenting some of this pre-history in *Siegfried*, Wagner emphasized musical-dramatic events which the audience could later recall in the subsequent drama. Furthermore, Mime's experience of fear makes a witty commentary on the power of imagination and the nature of dramatic truth. Mime's imagination experiences nature itself as an embodiment of fear.

Siegfried is freer and stronger than Mime and has a rapport with nature that prevents him from sharing the dwarf's apprehensions. He does, however, extract the core of Mime's experience; he employs fire in the re-creation of Nothung. Fire is literally a central form of energy in different stages of the forging process but it also symbolically enlarges Siegfried's inspiration. While forging, he offers a commentary which surveys the nature of fire and its ability to enkindle antithetical feelings. In fact, Siegfried's personal identification with the

² Mime and Siegfried “hear” different things, although they are ostensibly talking about the same concept. The audience is privy to their different audio experiences and thus also hears their different perspectives. The shared motivic material is the music associated with Loge and fire. Mime hears Fafner's music amidst the fearful fire, while Siegfried hears that of the sleeping Brünnhilde. Of course Siegfried does not know of Brünnhilde yet, but her musical embodiment is pleasing and inviting. This part of the scene foreshadows that at the beginning of Act II of *Tristan und Isolde*. Brangäne hears the hunting horns and fears their import while Isolde hears them as sounds of nature and welcomes them.

sword's previous owner lends as much to his forging technique as any logical thought about how a strong sword might be made. Through simple strophic Lied forms, his emotionally driven re-creation of Nothung takes on a straightforward and conventional appearance that outwardly emphasizes his physical activities. Wagner's handling of strophic form is not completely conventional, however, and neither is Siegfried's forging. For a brief time in the protracted genesis of the *Ring*, the opening act of Siegfried was the opening act of the whole *Nibelung* drama. The libretto was certainly conceived with this and other portions of act one to be set to simple song forms. The various uses of this and other simple structures throughout the first half of *Siegfried* remind us how much the *Nibelung* drama became a back-to-basics project in the course of its expansion. Siegfried himself is a back-to-basics kind of figure. He certainly is not a masterful singer, but his extraordinary forging abilities are inscribed in a masterful handling of song.

In his detailed study of the opera, Patrick McCreless has discussed how each of the act's three scenes is clearly bi-partite and how the listener is cued to the internal divisions through changes in dramatic concerns and musical forms. In addition to that cumulative shape, an arch-like pattern is effected through relationships between scenes 1 and scene 3. The clear contours of the first part of scene 1 give way to a more freely organized second part. The reverse is true of the two parts of scene 3. In both scenes, strophic song plays a significant role in the parts with the most readily tangible formal shapes.³ This arch-like pattern is extensively developed and underscores the complementarity of the act's framing passages. Scene 1 opens with Mime considering his "problem": Siegfried and Nothung are the ideal human-weapon pair to kill Fafner, but Nothung seemingly cannot be re-forged. Scene 3 closes with Siegfried in action, forging the sword with which, we are now certain, he will slay Fafner.⁴ The relationship between Mime and Siegfried is inscribed in the

³ This simple overview is developed extensively and with much insight throughout McCreless's study of the act as a whole. See his *Wagner's Siegfried: Its Drama, History, and Music* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1982): 112-151.

⁴ Although not the primary concern of the present study, the middle scene and its relationship between the act as a whole is a rich field for analysis. See McCreless's

handling of strophic song in these exterior passages and gains its clearest profile at the end of the act. The issue that binds both the dramatic and musical concerns of the first and third scenes is the re-forging of Nothung.

Siegfried initiates the first phase of Nothung's recreation by filing the sword's fragments. The roaming augmented sonorities from his fear lesson return in 6/8 time with repetitive dotted rhythms: a chromaticized version of the previously unchanneled energy of Siegfried's horn-call. He briefly fans the fire and returns to filing until all that is left is fine splinters. Mime becomes dizzy with the prospect that Siegfried might succeed in his task. As the splinters lie in a crucible, Siegfried demands to know the name of the former sword. In naming Nothung, Mime passes to Siegfried the last and most crucial piece of information that he has to reveal about the boy's past. For Siegfried, that name is a locus of identity which serves as the springboard for his act of re-creation and whose meaning becomes ever clearer throughout that process.

Siegfried's so-called Forging Songs frankly emulate a conventional song form (the passages organized around the two songs are outlined on the left and right sides of figure 4.1 below). Siegfried's re-creation of Nothung, rather than his singing, is his primary activity.⁵ To the audience, the effect is of a kind of work song whose basic expressions and patterns

aforementioned study, Reinhold Brinkmann's "'Drei der Fragen stell' ich mir frei;' zur Wanderer-Szene im 1. Akt von Wagners *Siegfried*." *Jahrbuch des Staatlichen Instituts für Musikforschung*, V (1972), 120-162 and Anthony Newcomb's "Ritornello Ritornato: Wagnerian Refrain Form," in *Analyzing Opera: Verdi and Wagner*, ed. Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1989): 202-221.

⁵ Jeffrey L. Buller discusses Siegfried's forging in terms of the many instances of "awakening" in *Siegfried*, in contrast with the repeated pattern of falling asleep (naturally or artificially) in *Die Walküre*. See his "Sleep in the *Ring*" *Opera Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (winter 1995-6): 3-22. Buller's claim that Wagner read Schopenhauer's writings "extensively throughout the 1850s" is imprecise, but does not detract from the core of his essay demonstrating Wagner's interest in different states of consciousness and mental processes, and their symbolic layers of meaning. Schopenhauer had no monopoly on these basic ideas, which figure prominently in Wagner's pre-*Ring* operas and were ingrained in the *Ring* libretti before Wagner began reading Schopenhauer directly.

reflect the work itself. The end of Mime's phrase naming Nothung signals the beginning of the first Forging Song, formally distinguished by the shift to the song's triple metre.

Example 4.1: *Siegfried*, Act I, scene 3, Forging Song I

Mime.

No - thung nennt sich das neid - li - che Schwert, deine Mut - ter gab mir die

(Unter dem folgenden Gesänge nährt Siegfried die Glut mit dem Blasebalg.)

Mär. [120]
Kräftig, doch nicht zu schnell.

Siegfried.

No - thung! No - thung! Neid - li - ches Schwert! Was muß - test du zer -
poco riten.
poco riten.

atempo Belebt.

sprin - gen? Zu Spreu nun schuf ich die schar - - fe

Belebt.

sehr wuchtig und gehalten

s. Pracht, im Tie - gel brat ich die Spä - - - no. Ebl.

Tr. Pos.

s. Ho - ho! Ho - - ho! Ho - - hei!

s. Ho - hei! Ho - - ho! Bla - - - so,

s. Balg! Bla - - - so die Glut!

p *cresc.* *ff* *p* *cresc.* *str.*

Er. Pf. Er. Ve. Kb.

piu *sehr gehalten und sehr stark*

The introduction to the song presents its basic musical ideas (see example 4.1, second system). The opening four measures are instrumental, featuring a dotted rhythm pattern, and with a Bb^x sonority embedded within tonic-dominant oscillations in D minor. Mime's claim to have learned the name of the conquering sword from Sieglinde is granted authority in Siegfried's opening text. As he twice cries out the name Nothung, he reiterates Mime's downward octave leap on F and his progression from an $F\sharp^x$ sonority to Bb major. Siegfried's text continues, however, to pose a question about how it came to be broken: "Nothung! Nothung! Neidliche Schwert! Was musstest du zerspringen?" Next is the song's basic melodic unit, with upward leaping accompanimental octaves on A. Siegfried proclaims the current state of the sword; he has shredded it and melted it. The idea which opened the introduction now returns slightly varied and with an elemental kind of text. Siegfried repeatedly cries Ho-Ho and other related gestures, closing with "Blase Balg! Blase die Gluth!," as he encourages the fire. The introduction thus comprises three essential ideas: one refrain refers to Nothung and another to the air which fuels the fire (labeled RN and RHo respectively); the melodic idea (labeled T^A) carries Siegfried's account of his technique.

Amidst the introduction's overall tonic orientation to D minor, strengthened by modulations to the dominant, there are unusual harmonic elements. The two refrains feature augmented triads.⁶ In the framing Ho-ho refrain, which helps to define the overall tonic, the Bb^x sonority contains D and the two pitches which are its strongest contrasting modal markers. The basic melodic unit also expresses a modal ambiguity at its end. The Nothung refrain claims a connection to D minor through Bb major, but again is chromaticized through an augmented sonority. Furthermore, its questioning close makes outward gestures towards a cadence in A-, though harboring a diminished sonority at the last minute. While these

⁶ The augmented triad was a neglected orphan of traditional harmonic theory that was being employed as a sonority in its own right, and influencing larger formal shapes, by Liszt and Wagner during the 1850s. See R. Larry Todd's "Franz Liszt, Carl Friedrich Weitzmann, and the Augmented Triad," *The Second Practice of Nineteenth-Century Tonality*, ed. William Kinderman and Harald Krebs (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1995): 152-177.

Figure 4.1 *Siegfried*: Act I, scene 3, Forging Songs

Intro		Forging Song I		Forging Song II	
2430	RHo, D/Bb ^x	Siegfried tends the fire and melts the splintered sword.			
2434	RN, F ^x , Bb ⁺ - A ⁷				
2440	T ^A , A-- D+/-				
2447	RHo, D/Bb ^x - A				
A				B	
2457	RHo, D-			2692	RHo - C+/F+/ C+
2461	T ^A , D-- E-, - D+/-			2705	T ^B - D-, - A-
2475	RHo, D/Bb ^x - A			2712	RHo, ² 7
				2716	T ^{B2} - C-, D+, F+
				2724	RHo/H - C+
A					
2485	closes in D-				
2512	<i>t</i> , D- - ^{o7} , A- - E ⁹	<i>Mime's aside:</i> <i>notes Siegfried's success</i>		2728	<i>t</i> , - Bb ⁺ , - C+
2529	<i>rnb</i> , - E-			2736	<i>r</i> , - F+
I'				B	
2533	RHo, E- - B-	<i>hatches own plan</i>		2741	closes in C+
2538	- E+, - C+				
2565	RN, F ^x , Bb ⁺ - A (D-)				
2572	T ^A , D-- A+ (<i>rnb</i> , A+- D-)	molten into mould			
2579	RHo/T, D+	raises it high			swings the blade
I/A'		plunges into water		B'	
2582	RN/T ^A (D)-E ⁷ -F+			2782	<i>r^{nb}</i> , A+- E-
2603	RH/T ^A , Db, A+/D+			2795	RHo/H, ² 7
2613	T ^A , D-- A+			2799	<i>r^{nb2}</i> - A+
2622	RN, D ^x - D+	mould into fire		2812	RHo/H, ² 7
				2816	<i>r^{nb}</i> + <i>coda</i> , ^{o7} / ^{o7}
I/A''		" <i>Mime's verse</i> "		B''	
2627	RH-mock heroic			2836	RN, F ^x -D--F+
2641	"T ^x ", D-- D+			2851	RHo/H, ² 7
2651	"RH", D+- A+			2856	T ^A , F+- C-
2661	RH-mock heroic	(<i>Mime cooks</i>)		2866	RHo/H, ² 7 - G-
		Siegfried's aside:		2870	T ^A -RHo/H, -C--F+
trans		rejects Mime, draws		2892	RHo/H/nb, ^{o7} / ^{o7}
2678	- A	out mold and breaks it open		2899	RN, F ^x -D+
			Coda		
			2908	- A+	<i>Mime envisions</i>
			2926	(A+ - F ² 7)	<i>victory. Siegfried</i>
			2929	- C+	<i>swings the sword</i>
			2941	E+-A+-D+	<i>and splits anvil.</i>

R, r = refrain section (H=Ho-ho, N=Nothung, H=Heroic, nb = Nibelung)

T, t = thematic or primarily melodic material

chromatic elements might suggest some instability in the unit as a whole, the various sections bypass these potentially dislocating signals and readily embrace each other through over-arching and rather conventional kinds of musical logic.

With the introduction and the two first strophes of the song, the basic units undergo only slight variation. Throughout, Siegfried's primary activity is tending the fire as it grows hotter. The variations are all means of intensification which relate metaphorically to the fire. A few suggest a pictorial relation to the leaping flames, such as the rapid triplets through the octave introduced in the Ho-Ho refrain at m. 2485 and the staccato spikes through an octave and a half, mm. 2512 ff., following the close of the second strophe. Already in the introduction, the text added to the opening instrumental gesture pertains to the fire; at the same time, thirty-second scalar passages open up the original unison octaves. This particular kind of variation is then absorbed, along with the Ho-Ho refrain's flickering trills, into the melodic unit of the first strophe, at m. 2461. The technique of variation is generally handled in this way, with specific ideas projected forward into subsequent sub-sections as well as separate strophes. Thus the musical processes not only emulate the intensification of the fire, but also the process of melting or fusing separate parts.

Notably, the augmented colouring of the introduction is less emphasized in the two strophes since the Nothung idea, so chromatic in other ways, is absent. The melodic theme becomes more prominent through sequencing and becomes a means of internal modulation. In both strophes, Siegfried's "new" texts in the melodic passages concern the special ingredient he has used in making the fire. He has felled an Ashtree in the forest. In the first strophe, his second modulatory phrase reflects its physical transformation from a living tree to charcoal. In the second strophe, the charcoal burns brightly in the fire and showers spark in the second phrase. The tree has become a generator of fire, and the Ho-ho outbursts, previously isolated in a refrain idea, are spliced into the second phrase. At the end of the second strophe, Siegfried continues to tend the fire. He is completely focused on his task and pays no attention to Mime.

Sitting at a distance, Mime has been watching everything. In an aside, he verifies Siegfried's success in forging, foresees him winning the treasures, and resolves to devise a

plot that will save his own life.⁷ Like Siegfried's strophes, Mime's aside features both a thematic idea that is varied in sequence and bracketed by a refrain-like gesture. The aside is effected through a gradual transition that acts like a spotlight which then shifts to another dramatic point of focus. Mime's first phrase begins while the musical accompaniment supports the fiery elements of Siegfried's strophe. In m. 2518, the accompaniment changes to a diminished sonority underpinned by chromatic descents. His most characteristic idea, the Nibelung motive, is part of his refrain. At m. 2533, a sudden shift of focus back to Siegfried takes place at his closing words, "my head" ("mein Haupt"). The spiky figures following the Forging Song's second strophe resurface. Siegfried has been working continuously and suddenly returns to the musical fold with a variant of the Ho-ho refrain. These stark juxtapositions between the two characters continue. Mime, now in the foreground, quietly hatches his own plot. Siegfried is still completely unaware of Mime's presence. He loudly overrides Mime's cadence at m. 2565 with the Nothung refrain, not heard since the introduction. With Mime gloating underneath Siegfried's phrases, the superimposition reinforces the fact that Siegfried simply does not hear the dwarf.

Wagner's handling of the passage including Mime accommodates two different yet co-existing musical-dramatic planes. Siegfried's ongoing performance sounds like an "interruption" of Mime's aside because to the audience Mime holds the stage at this point. Siegfried carries his rightful accompaniment with him, but it is Mime's E minor which governs the entry. Minor sixths underpin Siegfried's modulations from E minor to B major. Lurking beneath as Siegfried goes about his business, the G octaves are deepened at Mime's re-entry and creep upwards, stepwise, as he begins the longest and most important part of his private drama. In many ways, Mime's sub-plot emulates Siegfried's and has the effect of a delayed imitative entry in terms of its dramatic function. As the most extended of Mime's

⁷ In figure 4.1, Mime's participation is italicized and the musical ideas of his differentiated asides are in lower case.

solos in this part of the scene, it temporarily suspends time in the main layer of musical and dramatic events and serves the function of drawing in new motivic material.⁸

Unlike Siegfried, Mime spells out his whole plan before he actually does anything: Siegfried will slay the dragon and Mime will brew a potion from flower roots to quench his thirst. His accompaniment becomes softer and evolves from augmented sonorities into a more diatonic chordal progression which recalls the music of the Wanderer and the motive associated with magical sleep. Mime's potion will put Siegfried to sleep. The emergence of C major in conjunction with these associations culminates with the sword motive, *forte* at m. 2557, as Mime's planning concludes with his idea to kill the sleeping Siegfried with Nothung and steal the hoard for himself. Siegfried's reclamation of the spotlight with the Nothung refrain prevents Mime from reaching a satisfactory cadence. Unaware that Mime has been thinking out loud, Siegfried nevertheless foreshadows his thwarting of Mime's plot when he does become aware of it. Mime too has offered a foreshadowing, with more immediate consequences. His concluding phrase, imagining a moment in which he will wield Nothung against the defenseless Siegfried, invokes the musical symbol of the sword in C major. Soon there will be another version of that motive in D major, as Siegfried envisions wielding the finished sword. Mime's vision never comes true, but the motive's C major form nevertheless relates to the sword as an individual and powerful object and assumes prominence when Siegfried hammers the new blade into shape.

Siegfried's Nothung refrain beginning in m. 2565 attracts attention, in part because of its particular musical rendering but also because it has not been heard since the introduction. If we separate the interlocking planes of activity concerning Mime and Siegfried, we find that Siegfried has begun a new part of his Forging song and that his

⁸ Patrick McCreless's analysis of scene 3 primarily concerns the first part and is an illuminating account of its analytical riches and its interesting relationship to the work's genesis. I do not agree with McCreless's implication that the forging part of the scene is straightforward, although the presence of strophic song obviously provides some strong structural markers. McCreless's structural delineation of the passages involving Mime does not satisfactorily acknowledge the public/private distinction in the musical and dramatic layers and leads to an unclear recognition of the varied versions of each forging song. See his *Siegfried*, pp. 131-150.

“interruption” signaled its onset. Siegfried’s passages from measures 2533 and 2582 constitute a variation of the introduction. More radical techniques of variation are employed than in his two strophes and they coordinate with the changes in his physical activities. The Nothung refrain now ends with the bold statement: “Nun schmolz deines Stahles Spreu.” The diminished sonority of the earlier uncertain close is accordingly removed, leaving a decisive cadence in A. The ensuing melodic idea begins in m.2572 as Siegfried proclaims the sword’s liquid status as pure molten essence: “Im eig’nen Schweisse schwimm’st du nun.” The melody breaks off prematurely at m.2575 and Siegfried pours the molten steel into a mold. The degree of variation escalates as the Ho-ho refrain gains a new text and absorbs the sword motive at its end. For the first time in the entire passage, D major is steadily profiled for four measures as Siegfried announces: “Bald schwing’ ich dich als mein Schwert.” As in the introduction, Siegfried recounts the previous stage in the re-forging process and closes with a glance to what is coming next. The Ho-ho refrain has lost its association with fire, as the subsequent step does not involve further liquifying the sword but hardening it into a sword-like shape. Siegfried plunges the mold into a pail of water and the purely diatonic D major steams and hisses with diminished sonorities and chromatic descents.

While the mold is cooling, Siegfried begins an extended passage that represents another and more freely varied version of Forging Song I. For the first time since he began filing the sword’s fragments, Siegfried is not working but waiting. From mm. 2588-2622, Siegfried’s commentary is shaped with ideas and structural elements which refer to both the song’s introductory and main strophic units. The general shape outwardly aligns itself with that of the introduction. An initial idea, which returns to frame the section, is followed by an idea which is notably different and then a melodic idea (RN, RH, T[^], RN in comparison to RHo, RN, T[^], RHo). The opening idea recalls the Nothung refrain with its F octaves, and it is F major that is gradually confirmed in the vocal line with accompanying contrary streams of chromaticism. This extended variation of the Nothung refrain has a new descriptive text and assumes properties previously characteristic of the song’s melodic unit. Siegfried outlines what he has done to the sword and describes its transitional state as an admixture of the contrasting elements of fire and water. He has submerged the melted sword, a

“Feuerfluss”, into water. The resultant steam and hissing he attributes to the sword purging its “grimmiger Zorn.” In the closing phrase, Siegfried confirms the sword’s change of state as the water stops the molten metal from flowing. The generally chromatic nature of the Nothung refrain is projected into the accompaniment. Its originally profiled F^x sonority is projected forward into the subsequent new idea. The heroic refrain emerges at m. 2602 and reroutes the vocal close in F^+ into D^b major before a further re-routing to A major. The diatonic and rhythmic arrest of the fluid chromaticism accompanies Siegfried’s statements that the steel is now hard. The linear unfolding of the augmented sonority $F-D^b-A$ reaches a conventional dominant-tonic resolution in m.2610 with the resounding of the sword motive in D major. Siegfried forecasts the new sword as an active weapon, as he had at the earlier slightly less defined statement of the motive in mm. 2579-2582.

Both the Nothung refrain variant and the new heroic refrain are more textually expressive than earlier refrains. The opening perfect fourth in the vocal line of the heroic idea suggests the song’s basic melody, and that melody subsequently comes more clearly to the forefront in m.2617. The opening refrain’s intimations of the Nothung idea similarly gain confirmation as the text and harmonic profile of that idea are restored in m.2622. The overall effect is of familiar ideas contributing to something new and then gradually reclaiming their original form. The mid-point of the section is the point at which their original nature attracts more attention than that which seemed new. It is at this point that Siegfried returns the steel, now in its mold, to the fire. To the opening of the restored melodic idea, he explains his actions as necessary to making the steel malleable enough that he can shape the sword. Through the return of the steel to the fire, Siegfried reclaims musical ideas from the initial melting process; recapitulatory musical processes and Siegfried’s technique of re-creating Nothung work together. These backward glancing gestures do not suggest a perfect return. Both the melodic idea and the Nothung refrain are adumbrated. The refrain does not feature its usual augmented sonority, F^x , but D^x , which resolves via the sword motive to D major and affirms a change that has lurked as modal ambiguity since the song’s beginning and had earlier asserted itself when Siegfried poured the molten steel into the mold. The state of the sword is the overriding shaping influence of Siegfried’s song.

Siegfried's job is not done. The sense of an interim climax and resolution has been reached through recapitulatory gestures and a strong cadence, during which Siegfried exerted great energy in thrusting the mold into the fire and pulling the bellows. Meanwhile, Mime started into action on his own plan. While continuing to tend the fire, Siegfried becomes aware of Mime for the first time since the song began. Mime comes into his scope of consciousness as he tends his own fire on the other side of the shared hearth. This change of focus is not a hiatus of the first Forging song, but rather an extension of it. Mime willingly asserts his sub-plot as a lesser form of Siegfried's. Siegfried himself sets the stage for the general character of this variation. The new refrain idea introduced at m. 2603 re-emerges at m. 2627, dovetailed with a fussy upward-hopping staccato idea that quickly assumes dotted rhythms. Where the refrain had initially rung heroic, as the sword hardened into shape, its meaning is now inverted into a mock heroic gesture as Siegfried questions Mime on his activities. Previously, Mime had expressed himself directly. Publicly, he must camouflage his goal and he readily assumes Siegfried's condescending questioning as the introductory material for his reply.

The double-play of mockery and humility which ensues is not new to the opera and is reinforced by explicit musical associations with the first scene of the act. The game of inverted meanings begins when Siegfried notices Mime. The tone of the heroic refrain changes when it passes from the initially solemn and proud bass trumpets and trombones to the woodwinds. The gesture that emerges out of the heroic gesture is a melodically inverted form of the most frequently recurring and varied musical idea in the first series of exchanges between Mime and Siegfried in the first scene of the act. In its different versions, it encapsulates Siegfried's free-wheeling energy, frustration and even anger, which Mime hears with fear and shame. It is heard in its most characteristic form—interlocking descending fourths in steady eighth notes—when Siegfried breaks the sword that Mime has forged (m. 342). Mime's varied use of the idea is a deliberate attempt to seek mercy and sympathy. At the same time, Mime desires a more thankful attitude because he wishes to placate the boy whose strength he wants to use for own means. A similar pattern unfolds in scene 3. The difference is that Siegfried is now on the verge of successfully forging Nothung, something

Mime only imperfectly imagined at the beginning of the act. Thus Mime has more reason to avoid any unpleasantness. Siegfried, for his part, has less reason to be unpleasant in a harsh way, for freedom from Mime seems within grasp.

Mime's explanation of his activities absorbs Siegfried's lightly mocking introduction and even draws in its weightier associations through a shift to its characteristic duple metre form in scene 1. Professing to be rightfully shamed by a better smith, he humbly responds that he will serve the child who makes broth of steel by making a broth of eggs. Further underscoring his offer as a feigned direct appeal is Mime's use of Siegfried's melodic idea from the first Forging Song. Siegfried knows that soon he will not be dependent on Mime for anything. He swiftly rejects Mime's offer and goes back to work. Taken together, Siegfried's framing passages and Mime's comments form another variation of the Forging Song's introduction. Mime, however, has attempted to offer a variation of the main strophe. He has failed to emulate that structure because he has changed the tone of the opening refrain to suggest his humility. A lie motivates his reinterpretation. Furthermore, Mime's use of the strophe is dramatically untruthful in relation to the already established association of the song's strophic unit with work. Mime is not working but talking about the work he is about to do. Siegfried both corrects and rejects Mime's misuse of the strophic unit and its refrain in an aside that Mime, who has then started to cook, does not hear. Contrasting perspectives and intents of the two characters differentiate their similar refrain material. The four-part structure of the introduction prevails as a result.

This passage is comic on the whole, lightly scored, and offers a reprieve from Siegfried's heavy toil. It is readily dismissed by Siegfried as insignificant. As an extension of his song, it is negated. But as "Mime's verse," it kicks off a sub-plot of activity that begins similarly to the main layer of activity. He heats up the ingredients for his weapon and continues working during Siegfried's response and beginning of his next song. Mime's confidence in his own plan produces moments of seeming role reversal which in his mind are allowed to develop in part because he does not listen to Siegfried's negative reply. Siegfried's response restores a more serious tone and he does the tasks necessary before the

second song can begin. He withdraws the mold, breaks it open and lays out the glowing steel as he looks forward to finding a better teacher than Mime.

Siegfried has no need of the fire in the second Forging Song. The steel is ready to be strengthened through hammering. All of the processes leading up to this point have been destructive in the sense that the sword had to be reduced to its base material and pass through different states in order to be reshaped into a stronger whole. Forging Song I similarly lost its initial form, although some connection with its basic nature carried through. Forging Song II spans the processes whereby the new identity of Nothung will gradually become clearer. Siegfried is not only performing different tasks at this stage; he is further along in the process as a whole. The basic structure of Forging Song II is a compound form of Forging Song I.⁹ The interdependence of the two sub-strophes is established through a tonally open internal refrain. The new song is generally more integrated and expressively subtle, despite the blunt effects of the duple metre and the hammering itself. Contributing to the musical accompaniment, Siegfried hammers in regular rhythmical patterns with three different levels of intensity of accent. The musical idea that explicitly connects the two Forging songs is the Ho-ho refrain. Where it earlier had referred to the air that fueled the fire, it is now identified more directly with Siegfried's own breath as he is the central source of energy. In the first Forging Song, the refrain included two expressions: "ho-ho" and "ho-hei." The additional human element is laughter, "ha-hei," as Siegfried revels in his success and envisions the sword laughing as it overcomes defeat. The new refrain is more diverse and is woven

⁹ Alfred Lorenz's analysis of this part of scene 3 rightly points out the importance of Forging Song I as a "potenzierte Rondoform," a sort of rondo whose separate parts generate their own little forms. However, Lorenz's identification of mm. 2627-2691 and 2692-2781 as Bogen forms undermines his own point and obscures the interconnectedness of the variations each song undergoes in conjunction with Mime's contributions and changes in the forging process. The importance which Lorenz attaches to the refrain ideas as structural markers does not allow for much consideration of the evolutionary nature of the overall shape and the musical-dramatic subtleties which drive it. See his *Der Musikalische Aufbau des Bühnenfestspiels Der Ring des Nibelungen*, Band 1 of *Das Geheimnis der Form bei Richard Wagner* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1966).

throughout. The rondo structure accommodates two relatively distinct melodic units which contribute to the increased lyricism of this song.¹⁰

In the first Forging song, the single tonic D was palpable despite several chromatic gestures. As mentioned above, chromaticism assumes a more structural role in I/A', Siegfried's last version of Forging Song I (mm.2582-2626). The parodistic shared version of the song, I/A'', is a reminder of the more conventional tonal structure. Siegfried rejected that regressive digression and it is *his* last version of Forging Song I that informs his next song. The heroic refrain that had substituted for the usual Ho-ho refrain in I/A' emerges as a fusion of the two ideas in the conclusion of each strophe of Forging Song II. Salient features of his new harmonic language also refer back to I/A', to the distillation of F major and D major from the two prominently featured augmented sonorities F-A-C# (RN) and Bb-D-F# (RHo) respectively. The first sonority has been allied with Bb major as an altered dominant, which influenced the possible hearing of the second sonority as an altered submediant of D minor. The pitch Bb naturally loses prominence in the modal tonic shift towards D major. In I/A', Bb is no longer a supporter of either augmented sonority. The loosened diatonic identities of F major and D major both figure in Forging Song II. The modal ambiguities and shifting nature of D continue to be played out, as D major was introduced as a glance towards the moment when the sword would be finished and would serve Siegfried. The finishing work that still needs to be done draws in a new primary tonality, C major, with which F and D both interact.

The melodic portions of Forging Song II are richly symbolic and underscore the personal import of Siegfried's re-forging of the sword. Siegfried learned from Mime that

¹⁰ The treatment of the refrain unit in Forging Song II emphasizes its general consistency and regular pattern of return. In Forging Song I, the two refrain ideas RHo and RN share the symbolic musical idea of the augmented sonority yet demand to be heard individually. Both the level of variety which the refrains contribute to the basic sections of Forging Song I and the transformations they undergo in the varied versions of the song suggest an allegiance with the ancestors of classical rondo form. See Anthony Newcomb's "Ritornello Ritornato." I use the term rondo here and subsequently not in terms of the classical tradition but as an evolutionary form which is Wagnerian in its dramatic function.

Nothing was broken in the battle that ended his father's life. Already in Forging Song I he assumed that specific emotions were bound up with that event. As he strengthens the new blade, his re-creation of the fateful event becomes more vivid. Siegfried is not aware that his father's death was the result of intervention. Siegmund could very well have defeated Hunding, had Wotan not put his own spear in between them. We might expect an orphaned son to wish to avenge his father's death. But as these sentiments stir in Siegfried, it is as if he senses the paradox that a man likely to kill his opponent has fallen. Siegfried had already invoked paradoxical language in his account of the sword's changing states in Forging Song I. Paradoxes of a more human character heighten the textual sophistication of Forging Song II. In his first strophe, Siegfried comments on the sword and its laughter as cooled by warm blood. Now red again from heat, the sword releases its anger in sparks as its damaged pride is tamed by Siegfried's hammer. Although C major articulates structural cadences and tonally rounds the strophe, internal chromaticism is prevalent. Intermittently, the tonal area of F major lends subdominant colour to C. It begins Siegfried's first melodic unit and returns at the end of his second as he asserts himself as the tamer of the sword. The expansive Nothing refrain (mm. 2582 ff.) that had earlier offered up F major was the locus of textual paradoxes in the first Forging Song. Both key and poetic style spring from this moment. Throughout Forging Song II, his large hammer pitched in F repeatedly strikes these associations.

The fused heroic and Ho-ho refrains accompany Siegfried's delight in his success and a variant of the sword motive follows his C-major cadence.¹¹ As before, the lighter version of the heroic idea serves as a pivot to actions concerning Mime. Back in the world of asides, Mime does not take up this idea. Rather, Siegfried continues working, and his opening musical refrain idea, sequenced, accompanies both of them. This split screen effect favours

¹¹ The introduction and first two strophes of Forging Song I are bound together as an uninterrupted group as Siegfried tends the fire. The first two sections remain harmonically poised for continuation on the dominant of the unequivocal tonic D. The two first strophes of Forging Song II are more formally closed and are separated by the episode involving Mime. In contrast with the analyses of McCreless and Alfred Lorenz, I understand the more chromatic harmonic language of Forging Song II to suggest an overall tonic of C major. As is clear from my own analysis, I agree with their recognition of the importance of F major but interpret it as helping to define C major, as Siegfried helps to define the sword.

Mime—thinner scoring and emphasis on woodwinds instead of brass—and serves his dramatic purpose as he envisions himself succeeding in his plan just as Siegfried is succeeding with his. Specifically, he envisions wielding Nothung, which involves a turn towards C major as when he hatched his plan (m.2538 ff.). As in his first aside, he is “interrupted” by Siegfried’s outbursts (all the while interrupted/accompanied by his hammering) which signal the beginning of another installment of his song.

Mime’s aside has provided a freely varied interlude and Siegfried’s second strophe is nearly identical to his first. The hammering continues and a doubling of instruments yields weightier refrains. His commentary continues to concern paradoxes. The sword’s angry sparks cheer Siegfried. What would look menacing to others seems to laugh to him. Proclaiming his role in making the blade fulfilled, he asks it to overcome its shame and to become hard. Siegfried swings the blade high and plunges it again into the cold water. The closing refrain expands and dovetails with the chromatic descents that followed action the first time, except that Siegfried’s laughter now accompanies the hissing.

His poison brewed and bottled, Mime reveals his truer colours in his last solo aside. His rondo features a melodic idea that grows out of the Nibelung motive. His refrain, assuming the inner positions of Siegfried melodic units, is a delayed acceptance of the lighter version of the heroic idea fully blended with Forging Song II’s Ho-ho refrain. Mime’s refrains are untexted and provide the moments at which Siegfried uses his little hammer in the finishing stages of his work. His E works in well with Mime’s orientation towards A major, and his hammered Nibelung rhythm is more than appropriate. Full of himself, Mime takes the opportunity for a cadenza. Although engrossed in his own tasks, Siegfried’s continuous hammering seems to beg for an end to something that has already overstated its case. He completes his sword in time to swamp Mime’s last bit of textual and harmonic nonsense with the Nothung refrain, *fortissimo*.

The last variant of the rondo form of Forging Song II begins with Siegfried again in the spotlight. As with I/A", it is a shared strophe to which Mime and Siegfried contribute different musical elements. This time, Mime is not acknowledged by Siegfried. Nevertheless, a similar structural rivalry unfolds. The rondo structure Mime helps to suggest is superceded

by another form that develops in Siegfried's layer of the strophe. From Siegfried's perspective, Mime's preceding aside was another working interlude during which he finished his hammering and the last few steps needed to complete the sword. Forging Song II remained viable as a work song on the level of the strophe and on a larger-scale level as Siegfried worked throughout the strophic units alternating with interludes (B/interlude/B/interlude). The structural implications of the basic strophe for a larger-scale rondo is that a conclusion would have both attributes of the opening refrain (B itself on this level) and more locally distinct features. The conclusion of the basic strophe entails the fusion of the opening refrain idea, RHO, and the heroic idea introduced in I/A'. Siegfried's larger-scale conclusion to the rondo begins by reconnecting with strophe I/A'. With its harmonic, melodic and textual style developed in Forging Song II, I/A' is retrospectively a nodal point of intersection between the two songs. Notably, Siegfried was not working for much of I/A' and the cooling of the sword afforded him a few moments of deeper thought that brought forth these influential elements. Again in B", he is not working but reflecting on what he has achieved.

Mime's tasks are now finished too, although he started working only part-way through the forging scene. His conclusion largely refers back to the strophe in which he began his work, I/A". There Mime had distinguished himself by his shift to duple metre (indirectly preparing for the metre of Siegfried's physical labour in forging Song II), while Siegfried had continued in the triple metre of Forging Song I. In their shared recapitulation, this difference is recaptured with the hyper-metrical marking of *Dreitaktig* for Siegfried's music and *Zweitaktig* for Mime's. Metrical distinction gives way when Siegfried openly acknowledges Mime for the first time since I/A". His private and personal rejection of the dwarf which concluded that strophe is transformed into a public coda celebrating the sword's new status as a defender of truth.

The long absent F^x sonority of the Nothung refrain rings for six measures at the beginning of the concluding strophe B" (see example 4.2). Its two possible diatonic sub-sonorities are subsequently extracted. A major becomes the dominant seventh preparation for a cadence in D minor, which in turn opens out into F major. The latter phrase allies itself

Example 4.2: *Siegfried*, Act I, scene 3, Forging Song II

Siegfried.

S. No - - - - thung! No - - - - thung! neid - -

M. hin!

Dreitaktig.

ff *ff* *dim.*

S. - li - ches Schwert! — Jetzt haf - test du wie - der im

M. Heft. Mims. Warst du ent-

Zweitaktig.

Dann wahr - lich müht sich Mi - menicht mehr: -

p *Kl. Str.* *cresc.* *stacc.* *dim.*

with the lighter version of the heroic idea, which gains more concrete definition at Mime's entry. Siegfried's next contribution further develops the implications of his initial refrain: the old sword (D minor) has become a new sword through Siegfried (F major). Once broken, the sword is now whole and never will be shattered again. F major serves as sub-dominant cadential preparation for C major, the tonality of the unbreakable heroic sword. Siegfried's role as the agent who reunified and redefined the sword's status entails the inversion of the upward-hopping idea that lightened the original heroic gesture at the beginning of I/A". This inversion reclaims the contour of the idea as it first appeared in scene I, when Siegfried broke the sword Mime had made. It now stamps his success in making Nothung, while obliquely re-engaging with Mime's asides and the musical dichotomy of the two characters in I/A". Mime's continuation disregards this inversion as he further imagines his omnipotence. Siegfried too extends his train of thought, by repeating his contrast between the old sword and its new identity. He continues to play out the descending melodic pattern characteristic of T^A and its inversion. The heroic idea as he first asserted it becomes more sharply defined and articulates C major in m. 2881. The lustrous laughing sword triggers oboes, English horn, horns 1 and 2, and 1st violins asserting C major up through familiar hissing chromatic descents. The first time that Siegfried plunged the hot steel into the water prefaced his Nothung refrain profiling F major. The second time, this gesture was accompanied by his laughter and led into his Nibelung-like hammering which Mime simultaneously appropriated for his aside. These consequential ideas that have accrued around the act of cooling the steel resurface after the varied recapitulation of the laughing steam; Mime emerges underneath Siegfried's F-major cadence with the Nibelung figure grafted onto his ongoing refrain and vision of power. Mime and Siegfried are at musical-dramatic loggerheads.

Mime's tendency to overinflate his self-importance has led him to think of himself as the primary contributor to a rondo, with Siegfried as the lesser contributor of refrains. Already in B', Mime claimed for himself the more frequently recurring positions of the refrain pattern established by Siegfried. He disregarded Siegfried's involvement in the internal refrains and ignored the Nothung refrain which to everyone else is the most commanding gesture in the whole forging process. When Mime enters in m. 2851, his sense

of authority is more mistaken than before. His entrance at m. 2892, which in his own mind concludes another one of *his* rondos, stretches the viability of the rondo form to its breaking point. Mime, lord of the Nibelungen, is a deluded dream. The expansiveness of his dream has also touched on larger-scale issues of form. In B', Mime asserted himself as a strophic contributor, effectively demoting Siegfried's earlier strophes as episodes or interludes between his more important units. This is a point of no return, and Mime himself subsequently violates the form he has shaped in his mind as he tries to claim the spotlight in another rondo strophe. The Nibelung motive he misappropriated (m.2832) as a conclusion to his rondo aside was more truthfully linked to Siegfried's use of the little hammer as he finished the sword. The misappropriation is less ambiguous and more severe in m. 2892. Again Siegfried proclaims the Nothung refrain, ending the Nibelung idea and Mime's false rondo(s) at the same time.

Of course Siegfried is not consciously paying attention to Mime, actively policing his evil thoughts or their aesthetic realization. Rather Wagner the dramatist is making far-reaching points that privilege the audience as they elude both characters on stage. Yet Siegfried is not totally inactive in all of this, and a general explanation that mysterious unconscious forces are at work is unnecessary. Siegfried was already finished with the rondo form of Forging Song II when he finished hammering. His recapitulatory recourse to I/A', the origins of Forging Song II, entails specifically recapturing a feature which was not carried through to the subsequent song: its formal layout. Siegfried's layer of the concluding strophe, without Mime's asides, takes the form of RN, T^A, T^A - RHo/H, RN in comparison with RN/T, RH/T^A, T^A, RN. The critical aspect of this reclamation concerns the variation of I/A', the mixed strophe I/A". Siegfried's conclusion weights the internal contrasting refrain towards the end, the same configuration as Mime's misused heroic refrain in I/A". As Siegfried had corrected Mime's refrain in I/A", his entry at m.2870 in B" develops into the truly heroic form of the refrain Mime has again been misusing. Siegfried has not been listening to Mime, but he doesn't have to because Mime predictably is still dwelling on the same idea. Siegfried's correction places the more legitimate form of the heroic idea within the strophe, after which the sword promptly "laughs" and Siegfried professes his

empowerment. The structural conflict—Mime’s subsequent profession of power over the Nibelungs, with the Nibelung’s motive—involves a musical *faux pas* already typical of Mime. At the end of B', his ongoing gloating involved the tonally inconclusive oscillation of half diminished and diminished sevenths. His tendency towards egotistical diarrhea and harmonic stasis recurs at *his* end in B". Again Siegfried’s Nothung refrain markedly firms up the musical form, this time as preparation for the last and most important stage of his musical-dramatic objectives.

In the last Nothung refrain, the sword’s name rings out as A octaves for the first time. As in the conclusion of I/A', this phrase cadences in D major. The ensuing expansive version of the sword motive in D major dovetails smoothly into the coda. Siegfried proclaims himself as the one who has awakened the once dead sword to life and that it now shines defiantly. Since the beginning of Forging Song II, he has celebrated his active role in the sword’s re-forging in F major and the sword’s individual vitality in C major. Now he wishes to unite the two forces and test their shared identity. Siegfried’s association with F major as an individual recedes into the background. The name Nothung is no longer expressed through him, and through F, but through A. F major is not granted in relation to the augmented F^x at the opening of the Nothung refrain; A emerges and realizes its harmonic potential in the D major cadence. Siegfried’s final recapitulatory gestures in his text embrace and unravel a potent harmonic symbol. When the molten steel had assumed its first signs of a new form, in the mold, the outlines of the sword motive in D major substituted for D^x in the Ho-ho refrain at the end of I'. Projected forth into the Nothung refrain at the end of I/A', after the mold was returned to the fire, D^x substituted for F^x and resolved to D major via A major. The Janus-like Nothung refrain which serves both the final strophe and coda opens with F^x, the sonority most frequently profiled within this refrain in Forging Song I. This is the starting point for retracing these developments which led to I/A', the final sweep of his recapitulation. D major is altered in the coda so as to reawaken the D^x sonority at “Zum Leben weckt” and “Todt”. The early associations of D^x were worked through the Ho-ho refrain, linking it to the air which fed the fire and the source of energy which has brought Nothung to life again. Siegfried has given the sword a specific shape and breathed some life

into it, but it is the internal fiery energy that he now wants the sword to demonstrate. When he restores the coda's dominant pedal A in m. 2923, he returns to the triple metre of Forging Song I and the processes involving fire.

Mime offers two last phrases, expressing incredulity at his supposed success. In between, Siegfried hails the sword as an avenger of "Schächern" and "Falschen." This affords a penultimate digression, including a hint of B minor that captures *in nuce* Mime's delusion and his cursed end. But these are forecasts for the future, when Siegfried realizes that Mime falls within his sweeping categorizations of the sword's enemies. Now, Siegfried wants the sword to serve him. He veers towards C major to proclaim the sword's strength before the metrical shift to *Viertaktig* and his call to Mime to be his audience. The steps towards the final cadence are strong and sure: E major-A⁷-D major. From the harmonic space of E+ to that of D+, Siegfried's recapitulation stretches back to the energy and roving augmented sonorities with which he shredded the sword's fragments. Brandishing what he now calls "Siegfrieds Schwert," the rhythm of the augmented sonorities recurs in the linearly contoured sword motive in D major. The joint energy of Siegfried and the sword split the anvil which crashes apart as Siegfried's joyous horn call rings out in D major, co-mingling with the sword motive at the curtain's close.

Nothing is Siegfried's first "friend," a counterpart that has not shuddered at his own outpouring of energy but has yielded a complementary response. It is still a somewhat sad state of affairs, because Siegfried is lonely in an inter-personal plane. Intra-personally, he has come to terms with some of his heritage, the parts that he has learned, and his spirit has gained strength and definition as a result. He tests his own newfound potential as well as that of the sword when they slice the anvil in two. While this action seems to negate the past, by destroying an object which helped in the re-creation of the sword, it does not signal its complete rejection. The same holds true for the forging process as a whole. In the discussion leading up to the Forging Songs, Mime had commented that he had never witnessed technique like Siegfried's. He was specifically referring to Siegfried's filing of the sword into splinters, in contrast to Mime's suggestion that solder should be used. Siegfried uses Mime's own file, usually a sharpening tool, to shred the fragments. Watching this activity involving

huge amounts of energy, Mime fears the file will also be destroyed. But he soon sees that Siegfried is succeeding despite his unusual approach. Once the blade has been molded, Siegfried's technique is less noteworthy and he uses Mime's tools to finish his job.¹² Siegfried straightens and sharpens the blade, hammering and filing it much as Mime would had he the strength. Their different approaches to smith-work hinge on their attitudes about the blade. Siegfried feels it should be not only sharp, but as strong as possible. While the melting process itself renders the metal into a more fundamental form than soldering, Siegfried's initial splintering of the fragments draws attention to the reductive phase. This action obviously involves strength that Mime does not have. More importantly, it vividly profiles Siegfried's energy and will as initiating the re-forging process, with the scene's conclusion providing a complementary gesture as Siegfried tries out his might with the newly forged sword.

Siegfried's re-creation of Nothung reanimates the salient dimension of his past, its spirit, and gives it a stronger form which will enable it to become part of the future. He has created truthful and dynamic musical forms in the process. Metaphorically worked out through his forging technique, Siegfried's act of liberation is a negotiation with the aesthetic medium of concealed truth: Mime's song. In the first part of scene one, Mime sings two songs which while related are crucially distinguished by their truth content. He opens the first scene with his song "Zwangvolle Plage," a non-productive account of his equally non-productive work and sense of shame. He pauses between its nearly identical strophes to reflect on possible solutions to his situation. These frankly voiced ideas percolate through

¹² In *Der Nibelungensage (Mythus)*, the prose sketch for the *Ring*, Siegfried forged the sword completely under Mime's direction. Siegfried's strength alone enabled him to forge what Mime could not. The general idea of incredible strength pertaining to both Siegfried and the sword was subsequently maintained in the prose sketch for *Siegfried* (then called *Der junge Siegfried*) and after, though now Mime only watched Siegfried's forging. The idea that Siegfried's technique would be different from Mime's and would involve shredding the sword fragments only emerged at the libretto stage. In all stages of the work's genesis, Siegfried employed at least some of Mime's own methods. The precedent for the shredding part of Siegfried's technique is Wieland's smithing in Wagner's incomplete dramatic project *Wieland der Schmied*.

his later behaviour. The song Mime delivers for Siegfried is ostensibly about parenting and is an attempt to counter Siegfried's tendency to humiliate him. The darker underlying motive is of course that he wants Siegfried as an ally in the hopes that he will one day help him to secure Fafner's hoard. Mime has done several things for the boy while he was growing up and he makes sure to point this out in his song. These are facts. The dishonest side of his song concerns the premise that Mime has all the while done these things as a loving parent. On this count, the general tone of the song rings false, from its lullaby-like beginning to its drawn out sobbing end. Siegfried's "endearing" reply in kind offers a punch-line that rejects the premise of a bond between them and leads into an dichotomized account of supposedly lovingly intended deeds and their effect.

Siegfried eventually dubs Mime's song an "*alten Staarenlied*," a pointed criticism in several ways.¹³ He names the song as he asks Mime to quit it. The song, already sung in full, was subsequently quoted by Siegfried in his efforts to question the relationship Mime assumes as its singer. Siegfried uses different tactics, but Mime still reverts to his song. Finally, after Mime has released news about Siegfried's mother, he again takes refuge in his song. This version beginning in m. 1018 is fragmented. Its phrases are spliced into Siegfried's probing questions about his father and Mime's responses, which are metrically differentiated from the song proper. Siegfried arrests the song because it is interruptive and tells the same old misleading story, another needless time. It contains no new information about himself, and that is all he wants to know at this point. In terms of the overall handling of the first scene, the different versions of Mime's song contribute unifying elements which are treated malleably so as to support different perspectives and layers of meaning. Mime's monotonous version eventually oversteps its welcome.¹⁴ Banishing it, Siegfried demands something more

¹³The starling is commonly considered a pest, although it has sometimes been kept as a pet. In the same family as the myna bird, the starling is possibly the best mimic/talker among birds. Thus Siegfried's critique can imply that Mime is a mimic and unoriginal. I am grateful to Patrick McCreless for clarification of these points.

¹⁴ The G-minor melody associated with Siegfried's breaking of Mime's sword is a more prominently recurring thematic idea than that of Mime's song, and, as we have seen,

meaningful, proof of what he has been told about his real heritage. He then learns about his father's fragmented sword for the first time. Siegfried's joyous departure into the forest incorporates the Starling song theme, thankfully transformed.¹⁵

Siegfried returns to Mime, in scene 3, with the same spirit and music as when he left. Things have changed for Mime, and his song is not well suited to his immediate objective to teach Siegfried fear. When Siegfried takes up the job of forging Nothung, the medium of strophic song is again viable. Both the general form of his songs and some of their melodic components refer back to Mime's Starling Song. Siegfried's progress in renewing the sword entails overcoming Mime's song and finding better ones of his own. The final showdown comes when Mime again takes up his Starling Song in Act II/scene 2 as a desperate last measure to conceal his real intentions. Aided by the woodbird, Siegfried clearly hears Mime's plan to kill him. Mime's phrases begin normally, but become distorted as he outlines his murderous plan and cackles in delight, glaringly contradicting both his music and his gestures; Mime and his song die as a result.

Wagner handled the relationship between Mime and Siegfried as an aesthetic argument writ large, supporting a survey of the characters' feelings and thoughts and a plot that develops through waves of tension and resolution. The differences between these characters have attracted more comment than any perceived similarities and have supported the view that the pair provides one of the most potent examples of Wagner's anti-Semitic

is also reworked in the third scene.

¹⁵ Siegfried is simply too happy with the knowledge that Mime is not his parent for us to consider this ebullient form of the theme as a kind of mockery. More persuasive is a reading that he is spirited by bits of self-knowledge. He sings in triple time, a metre previously only associated with the Starling song, but the expression is clearly his and fuses ideas from his initial appearance as well as the G-minor theme with which he distanced himself from Mime. See Heinrich Porges account of the character of Siegfried in this scene in his *Wagner Rehearsing the 'Ring'* trans. Robert L. Jacobs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983): 79-86.

prejudices.¹⁶ The Jewish stereotype of Wagner's time and his own prose works is certainly not absent in Wagner's operas. Glancing across his operatic *oeuvre*, Mime and Siegfried are one of dozens of pairs of characters that Wagner pitted against each other in a dialectical fashion. This kind of debate naturally involves moments of conflict in which contradictory factions try to exert their superiority and prevail. This can produce strong methods of critique, which may be unsympathetic and even based on ignorance of why difference exists. Ultimately, these differences boil down to the value systems which individuals prioritize in their view of reality and knowledge. A considerable gap exists between the conviction which may encourage one to demonstrate the validity of a perspective and the motivation of fear and hatred that seeks only to destroy difference.¹⁷

¹⁶ The relationship is a rich object of study in such investigations. Attempts to streamline its significance unfortunately smooth over some of the complexities of its musical-dramatic rendering and seem to lose ground as over-arching arguments as a result. Two recent writers keen to demonstrate the anti-Semitic aspects of *Siegfried* have noted the importance of the incomplete operatic project *Wieland der Schmied*. In its various versions, *Wieland* alludes to themes worked out in several Wagner operas but *Siegfried* in particular. Marc Weiner reads *Wieland* as Mime's Jewish prototype, whereas Jean-Jacques Nattiez sees him as Siegfried's anti-Semitic/Teutonic model. See Weiner's *Richard Wagner and the Anti-Semitic Imagination* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1995): 267-70, and Nattiez's *Wagner Androgyne: A Study in Interpretation*: 43-52.

¹⁷ Examples of unsympathetic mockery with a tendency towards negating the "other" abound in *Der fliegende Holländer*, including the women's chorus vs. Senta; the Norwegian sailors' chorus vs. the women's chorus and vs. the Dutch sailors' chorus. In Act II of *Tannhäuser*, the song contest serves as an arena for a lack of tolerance of difference. In both these operas, phenomenal song is a central dialectical medium. In *Lohengrin*, phenomenal song or music is significant but functions in a more complex way that looks forward to *Tristan und Isolde*. The different views of reality are set out in the scene of Elsa's arrival, and the community is allied to her position. The debate is subsequently worked out in several subordinate arguments—those between Ortrud and Friedrich are the locus of mockery and negation—whereby Elsa eventually switches sides. The debate reaches a head in the third act admonition scene, in the only private conversation between Elsa and Lohengrin. Elsa argues Ortrud's case against her own former position, maintained by Lohengrin. Biting conflicts in the other works include Hagen vs. Siegfried, Isolde vs. Tristan (Act I), Hans Sachs vs. Beckmesser, Gurnemanz vs. Parsifal (end of Act I), and Klingsor vs. Kundry. Neither a culturally-defined nor gender-specific other can be persuasively argued as defining a denigrated Wagnerian other. The over-riding issues are more philosophically-oriented,

Throughout the course of interaction between Mime and Siegfried, each tries to assert his position. Mime's misleading behaviour is explained by his knowledge that Siegfried does not share his experiences and thus share his desire to exact revenge. Siegfried senses the weaknesses in Mime's arguments and intermittently shows a marked lack of tolerance as he systematically engages with its flaws. However, he also relaxes his attack to allow room for negotiation and the introduction of evidence that prevents him from accepting Mime's premises. This pattern of friction followed by a more reasonably proposed alternative is the way that Wagner steered the aesthetic argument along a path which evolves in Siegfried's favour. The path entails the reworking of a few musical ideas—a survey of their potential dramatic meanings—and the introduction of new material that regenerates many aspects of the debate towards more expansive horizons. Siegfried and Mime can only deal with information which is accessible to them. Siegfried's knowledge is very much determined by his bent towards simple observation and deductive reasoning. He allows his intuition to participate in this mix only with respect to his personal quest to discover his origins, but not in terms of trying to unravel Mime's motivation for concealing the truth. Mime similarly has no interest as to why Siegfried might not engage sympathetically with him and limits his more subjective, feeling-oriented level of experience to his own goals. Mime's inner level of truth is only projected in private, whereas Siegfried has no reason to conceal his. The audience is the only benefactor of the entire dialectical framework and the planes of inner truth which Wagner intertwined. The musical and dramatic points of intersection are as important, if not more so, than the unique contributions of each character to a highly differentiated overall spectrum. They do not support a reduction of the characters' differences to absolute antitheses, but demonstrate how each character engages with similar information and material in different ways.

In scene 1, Siegfried's path of self-discovery entails using Mime's song to poke holes in its veneer. In an otherwise interesting consideration of the dialectical nature of the Mime-Siegfried relationship and its relation to philosophical ideas of Wagner's time, Sandra Corse

accommodating such prejudices yet not consistently enough to interfere with broader and more important issues.

suggests that Siegfried “internalizes Mime’s music in order to reject it” and that “the music shows how completely Siegfried has learned, even unconsciously, the lessons Mime has to teach.” Corse thus concludes that the musical handling of Mime’s song and Wagner’s philosophical objectives do not work together, that the music “undercuts Wagner’s apparent intention that Siegfried be pictured as developing a consciousness independent of the influence of Mime and Mime’s culture.”¹⁸ While Siegfried rejects part of Mime and his song in scene 1, a complete rejection is only effected when Siegfried is aware that Mime has absolutely no regard for his life after Fafner has been killed. Siegfried is hardly resistant to using some of what he has learned from Mime, as long as it leads to more fruitful paths of self-awareness. The unconscious lessons which help him shape this path are not from Mime but from nature. Mime’s grasp of the miracles of nature is corrupted and he can only offer a few details to verify what Siegfried comes to learn on his own. In the climactic re-forging of Nothung, when Siegfried again negotiates with Mime’s song, he displays a more sophisticated sensitivity to the processes of evolution. Above all, it is Siegfried’s harmonic language which testifies to his higher level of self-mastery. Throughout his two forging songs, he successfully negotiates multiple tonics which metaphorically embody autonomous identities. Superimposed, or loosely organized side by side, these tonal areas and identities have contributed to different types of chromaticism throughout the act. Siegfried’s forging extracts the diatonic foundations of this chromaticism, while re-organizing them according to a different kind of dramatic logic that solves some of the chromatic “problems” of the act as a whole. The central problem which Siegfried tackles in his re-forging is that of the augmented sonority.

The pre-history of the augmented sonority in the opera stretches back to the Prelude, and its consequential dramatic relevance to the opening scene and Mime’s ruminations. The musical conflict requiring resolution manifests itself in localized semitonal tensions, most notably G^b/F. These tensions, brought forth primarily by ideas associated with Fafner, often also involve vertical tritones, a basic element of the tritone composite diminished seventh

¹⁸ Sandra Corse, *Wagner and the New Consciousness: Language and Love in the Ring* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1990): 140-141.

which rears its ugly head with the evil power of the curse. Before the curse seizes Fafner as its next victim, and Mime more indirectly, the semitone $G\flat/F$ gains prominence as Mime tries to figure out how Siegfried and Nothung will act on his behalf and steal the hoard from Fafner. This is Mime's problem in the opening scene.

At m.51 of the Prelude, $B\flat$ minor congeals with the Nibelung motive. $G\flat$ becomes a nagging upper appoggiatura to the dominant in m. 68, persisting until the crescendo at m.92 which leads into the first climax. The semi-tone migrates through the swell which peaks on the diminished sonority $E-G-B\flat-D\flat$ and relaxes slightly to $G\flat$ major, with the semi-tone $G-G\flat$ capping the Rhinemaidens' lament. As the pronounced Nibelung figure disappears in the aftermath, *Allmählich bewegter*, a different diminished sonority takes over, $B-D-F-A\flat$. However, the G of the first diminished sonority lingers throughout and soon suggests a double-tonic complex at work. One can hear these few measures (m. 104 ff) as a diminished sonority with an additional non-chord tone G , or as a G^7 which coexists and overlaps with the diminished sonority in alternating measures. As another swell gets underway, two contradictory tonal forces are emphasized *f*, *più f*, and then *ff*. The resolution is not clean, involves a change in orchestration, and produces another set of contradictions at m.116, *Sogleich das erst Zeitmass*. The B° sonority settles on a *fortissimo* $B\flat$ trill in the lower strings over which the G or G^7 produces a cymbal tremolo on C . The sword motive, new to the motivic complex, emerges on the bass trumpet, initially *pianissimo* and *forte* by its end. The underlying trills embodying the tensional space between $B\flat$ and C give way to a descent to F , whose harmonic realization in the Prelude has been as both a dominant and subdominant to $B\flat$ and C respectively. C major holds sway and takes hold of the returning Nibelung rhythmic pattern before yielding it back to $B\flat$ minor at the *forte* pivot at m. 128, influenced by the return of the first diminished sonority. The stage is set for Mime's opening solo and we see him hammering away as the curtain rises.

Mime's "Zwangvolle Plage" is not a work song and he stops his $B\flat$ hammering as he begins. It is almost an anti-work song because—this is the main reason why he expresses himself—his attempts to forge a sword for Siegfried have long been unsuccessful. When the hammering of his introduction disappears, it removes the sense of a $B\flat$ grounding. The point

of departure and return for Mime's deliberation on his frustration and shame is the diminished sonority featured at the first climax of the Prelude, E-G-B \flat -D \flat . His lack of harmonic purpose and his fruitless labouring go hand in hand. Reflecting a little more, Mime begins the internal contrasting section of his song. The first new idea brings forth C major, in association with his description of Nothung as a sword that Siegfried could not break, as well as the unsettling G \flat /F from the Prelude. Once again Mime collapses into his diminished sonority as he admits he cannot forge Nothung and overcome his shame. Further reflection leads him to think about Fafner, and the frequently recurring semitone unfolds his associative melody, evoking F minor that is linked to the B \flat minor of the Nibelung treasure that he hoards. These different ideas co-mingle as Mime sees how everything could fit together. Siegfried and Nothung together could kill Fafner for Mime. The ideal combination of the boy and the sword produces a modulating form of the sword motive which moves through C minor/ A \flat ⁷, D \flat minor/A⁷ and lands on D major, the first purely diatonic and firmly shaped sonority since the opera began. It explodes as B \flat ^x, before Mime's confession that he cannot forge Nothung. Mime has clearly seen his problem but is helpless to do anything. His position, B \flat minor, and that of the conquering boy with the conquering sword, D major, span an augmented abyss which he cannot cross. The renegade semi-tone G \flat /F puts his wishes out of reach. Mime's problems gnaw at him through his cadence in B \flat minor. Hammering in frustration, his hammer is now pitched in C, while G \flat further undermines his B \flat minor efforts before motion towards the dominant leads him to his concluding section.

Siegfried's own problem intersects initially with Mime's around the issue of an unbreakable sword and the tonality of C major. His arrival in G major freely lets him roam in C major, where he has a good laugh after taunting fearful Mime with the bear. Siegfried then explains how he came to be involved with the bear in the first place. He was seeking a companion and called out into the forest with his horn; the bear responded. Siegfried's explanation reaches D major at the sonic embodiment of his horn call for friendship. The bear has not solved his loneliness, and D major re-routes to G major and then G minor, as a relation to the tonal area of B \flat , when he breaks Mime's sword. His passions mounting, Siegfried imagines throwing Mime and his work into the fire. His fuming augmented

sonorities peak on B \flat^x before he collapses back to G minor. For both Mime and Siegfried, B \flat^x represents a critical threshold. Mime steps a fifth away from his real key when he begins his Starling Song in F minor. Siegfried stays on his track when he responds by systematically critiquing the things Mime claims he does lovingly. He polarizes their supposed intent and effect by oscillating between the tonal areas of D and B \flat . The incompatibility that Siegfried senses continues to confound him, but he clearly grasps the nature of the dichotomy.

Siegfried's description of his encounter with the bear is the first of three episodes in which he introduces information about his experiences in the forest. Each is devoid of mockery and is an even humble account of his search for his own identity. Each focuses on the tonal area of D. The first two involve harmonic motion from C to D. The second episode begins when Siegfried asks for an explanation as to why he keeps returning to Mime (m 715 ff.). Siegfried is open to an honest response, and a new idea sounds in the strings in C major. According to Porges's commentary on the 1876 rehearsals, the melody intimates an ideal not yet realized, a melody that Wagner said should sound "as though out of a dream."¹⁹ Siegfried cannot accept the response that he keeps returning to Mime because he loves his caretaker. The B \flat^x sonority returns to punctuate his turn to his observations on parents he has seen in nature, a lyrical account which begins in a dream-like string melody, now with added horn and in D major. After Mime's ludicrous claim that he is Siegfried's mother and father in one, Siegfried reveals the pivotal experience that has confirmed his lack of relation to Mime. He has seen his image in the stream. The dream-like melody gains instrumental and melodic definition, first with clarinets (m.858) that lead into oscillating harmonies of E \flat and A \flat major, and then with oboes (866). D major/G major oscillations pivot to G minor in the near silence as Siegfried, in his story, is glancing in the stream. The revelation of his image unfolds harmonically from E \flat to B \flat major before C minor opens into a heroically triumphant statement of D major (m.880), the full realization of the dream-like intimations.

Under threat, Mime reveals the truth about Siegfried's birth (D major) and later presents him with the sword fragments (C major), information which helps to fill the void

¹⁹ Porges, *Wagner Rehearsing the 'Ring'*: 82-3.

that has prevailed for so long.²⁰ The chromatic problem that Siegfried must solve is how to loosen the potential harmonic energy from B b^x. The last crucial ingredient of this equation is the naming of Nothung with its F^x sonority. In re-forging the sword, Siegfried unlocks and discovers his natural tonal area of F. In scene 1, he desperately defined himself in relation to other things and felt a kinship to the tonal areas of C major and more strikingly D major. In this first real test of his energy and will, Siegfried develops a stronger sense of who he is as an individual. His liberation of D major from the B b^x sonority is motivated by his desire to emphasize the correct relation with a key in which he has seen his likeness, and hence senses an extended affinity, instead of the false relation with Mime and B b. In untangling the F^x sonority, he uses his F major to make the new sword a reality in C major, while A major is the potent dominant force for D major. Siegfried is not a fearful skeptic but an honestly motivated problem solver, sizing up issues as they are and tackling them in a matter of fact kind of way. Finesse is not his forte, but his clear-sightedness affords him a few discoveries. He learns to see past superficial harmonic differences through to deeper relations between individual diatonic tonal areas and to coordinate them in new and meaningful ways.²¹ Mime's public diatonicism is for the most part meaningless, but so is his private chromatic world in which he has no sense of control. He who held all of the keys all along could not solve the puzzle of forging Nothung. At the end of the act, Mime still does not understand what the extraordinary force of D major—the combined force of Siegfried and Nothung—is all about.

²⁰The sword fragments and C major are repeatedly treated as important to understanding these harmonic problems, but not as solutions in and of themselves. The Wanderer's role in the middle scene reinforces the catalytic nature of both.

²¹ Like names, geographical settings in the *Ring* bear significance in relation to their human counterparts. Mime's questions to the Wanderer in *Siegfried* I/ii concern the domains of Nibelheim, Riesenheim and Walhall. Notably, at the time of these questions, a representative of each of the domains is in Neidhöhle. (The Wanderer and Alberich visit on day passes.) A sort of no man's land, Neidhöhle is a remote forested area to which troubled souls remove themselves from society (and its troubles). It ripely evokes the sort of place where conventional hierarchies, together with notions of knowledge and power, might be called into question. Siegfried seems to be its only native human inhabitant.

Part II - Siegfried's Legacy

As is well known, *Der Ring des Nibelungen* underwent several transformations in its long genesis, and Wagner considered various ways the work might end. The prose scenario for the project followed on the heels of *Lohengrin*, completed in May of 1848. *Der Nibelungensage (Mythus)* was completed by October 4, and a prose draft entitled *Siegfried's Tod (Oper in Drei Akten)* by October 20. Wagner then drafted a Prologue, and the four sections of the drama became the libretto *Siegfried's Tod: Eine grosse Heldenoper in drei Akten* by November 28.²² The structure of this single work in turn served as a model as Wagner later expanded the drama into four operas, a trilogy and introduction.²³ With regards to the *Ring* in its completed form—the order in which it is intended to be experienced—this structure is first set forth in *Das Rheingold* and frames the interior three-part drama with its return in *Götterdämmerung*. When Wagner first created the prologue to *Siegfried's Tod* he did not yet have in mind the final shape of the *Ring*. Nevertheless, he was addressing issues which led to its creation.

In relation to the *Nibelungensage* prose sketch, *Siegfried's Tod* realized roughly half of the material as dramatic events unfolding in the present, namely the life of Siegfried the hero as an adult, in the vicinity of the Gibichung community, and his death. The pre-history of these events was compressed into narratives. With the addition of the prologue, Wagner

²² This brief summary is indebted to Warren Darcy's recently published account of the genesis of the *Ring* libretti. Darcy has been able to explain the non-congruencies and correct derivation of the different versions of the sources relating to the earliest stages, notably the prose scenario and libretto of *Siegfried's Tod* published in Wagner's *Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen*. See his *Wagner's 'Das Rheingold'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993): 6-43. *Der Nibelungensage (Mythus)* and the first version of *Siegfried's Tod* are conveniently included with other prose and verse versions of the *Ring* libretti in Otto Strobel's *Skizzen und Entwürfe zur Ring-Dichtung* (Munich: Bruckmann, 1930). Following Darcy, *Siegfried's Tod* is here spelt with an apostrophe, as it appeared in all the textual manuscripts and the 1853 private imprint, but not the version of the poem in the 1871 *Gesammelte Schriften*.

²³ For a lucid discussion of this process, see Robert Bailey, "The Structure of the *Ring* and its Evolution," *19th-Century Music* 1 (July 1977), 50.

lent weight to some of the prior stages of the drama and a broader conceptualization of time and space. This tendency was bound up with Wagner's increasing attention to the nature of myth rather than historical drama, and it was carried to its logical conclusion in the primordial Prelude to *Das Rheingold*.

The history vs. myth debate occupied Wagner throughout the pre-*Ring* years as a continuation of his love-hate relationship with the Parisian operatic world. In exile and needing to consider possibilities involving non-German stages, this debate became more urgent. While he composed *Lohengrin*, two ideas for future projects seemed viable. The historical one about Friedrich I was shelved, while the other concerning the pagan-mythological Siegfried made tentative steps to becoming a reality. Considered by itself, the 1848 libretto of *Siegfried's Tod* leans in the direction of historical grand opera, with a few twists. Wagner initially thought of it as a private project. It was not until 1850 that his connection with Liszt, who premiered *Lohengrin* in August, suggested that the work might reach the stage in Weimar.²⁴ Regarding the years leading up to and around 1851, Wagner's theoretical writings are an open book on the issues that influenced his dramatization of *Der junge Siegfried*. So are two dramatic works which Wagner began but did not finish: *Jesus von Nazareth* and *Wieland der Schmied*. "From the conflation of material from the discarded *Jesus von Nazareth* arose the symmetrical ordering of concepts—fearlessness, freedom and love versus fearfulness, lack of freedom and lovelessness—that is one of the most conspicuous features of the text of the *Ring* poems as they stood after their 1852 revisions."²⁵ Wagner lingered longer on *Wieland der Schmied* (1849-50). While openly relating to no less than six of his finished operas, the different versions of *Wieland* read like studies for *Der junge Siegfried*. It is hardly a work one might have expected to see in Paris at this time.

²⁴ Patrick McCreless, *Siegfried: Its Drama, History, and Music* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1982), 57. Also see Ernest Newman's account of the Wagner-Liszt relationship during this period in his *The Life of Richard Wagner*, vol. 2, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1937), chapter 13.

²⁵ Roger Hollinrake, "Religious Beliefs" *The Wagner Compendium: A Guide to Wagner's Life and Music*, ed. Barry Millington (New York: Schirmer Books, 1992), 147.

Robert Gutman has summed it up: “Ironically, Wagner’s so-called ‘Paris libretto’ was a declaration that he would never again seek terms with the commercial world of art.”²⁶

With regards to composition, it would seem that Wagner was all theory and no practice during these years. Yet it cannot be overlooked that the prose and verse versions of the *Ring* project bore implications for its eventual composition. Even if Wagner’s prose works reveal that he was wrestling with aesthetic issues with an eye towards change, they also show him thinking about how artistic strategies he had already developed in his earlier three operas would be part of this newer style. Musical details may not readily spring forth from the printed libretti, but some aspects of form do. Particularly when one sees the reworking of similar dramatic themes, it is difficult to imagine Wagner not developing his practice of recurring motives and associative tonalities. He did make a few musical sketches for *Siegfried’s Tod* in the summer of 1850, for the scenes concerning the Norns and the Valkyries.²⁷ The texts for both scenes were later substantially re-written, after the single drama had become a four-part work. The group Valkyries’ scene in *Siegfried’s Tod* was changed to concern only Brünnhilde and Waltraute. The early Valkyrie sketches remain important, but in relation to the prelude to act III of *Die Walküre*. When the text of the Norns’ scene was altered, the musical setting retained three features of the early sketches: the key of E \flat -, the principal 6/4 metre, and the rondo form of their question-answer exchanges.²⁸ In his persuasive reconstructive detective work, Robert Bailey has shown how these and other early ideas influenced the large network of associative tonalities that came to be deployed

²⁶ Robert W. Gutman, *Richard Wagner: The Man, his Mind, and his Music* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanich, Inc., 1986): 133.

²⁷ Robert Bailey has convincingly demonstrated that the earliest music conceived for the *Ring* in its final poetic are 1851 sketches for the Prelude of *Siegfried*. See his “The Structure of the *Ring* and its Evolution,” 53-4.

²⁸ See Curt von Westernhagen’s *Die Entstehung des “Ring”*: *Dargestellt an den Kompositionsskizzen Richard Wagners* (Zürich: Atlantis, 1973): 181. See also Bailey’s aforementioned article and his “Wagner’s Musical Sketches for *Siegfried’s Tod*,” *Studies in Music History: Essays for Oliver Strunk*, ed. Harold Powers (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968): 459-494.

through the work as a whole.²⁹ Wagner's choice of a rondo-like structure for the Norns' scene also seems important retrospectively.

In the first verse version of *Siegfried's Tod*, three scenarios readily suggest a musical form of dialogue in which one side would function as a refrain that would initially recur with little change but evolve later, while the other side would be more episodic. The first scenario concerns the beginning of Act I, scene 3. Brünnhilde is approached by all of her Valkyrie sisters, whose collective appeals are frequently prefaced by their cries of "Brünnhilde! Brünnhilde!" The second scenario also concerns a solo vs. ensemble, with the group of singers in the refrain role: Gunther and the male chorus at the beginning of Act II, scene 4. The same holds true for Siegfried vs. the Rhinemaidens in Act III. As in the final version of *Götterdämmerung*, the early Rhinemaidens *sang* their warning to Siegfried. And Siegfried in the subsequent scene *sang* his tale of his youth for Gunther. These were the only two instances of singing in a phenomenal sense.³⁰ When Wagner extended the drama to include the Prologue, the Norns had yet to acquire their status as singers. They were nevertheless privileged as providing a moral framework to the ultimate achievements of Siegfried and Brünnhilde. The Norns, with their rondo-like form, were for a brief period the beginning of the drama.

Wagner's second fair copy of the libretto of *Siegfried's Tod* reflects the first revisions to impact the drama's end.³¹ The Gods would not be simply forgiven, with Brünnhilde

²⁹ Robert Bailey, "The Structure of the *Ring* and its Evolution."

³⁰ As in the final version, these scenes were then also hinged by the exchange of horn calls between Siegfried and Hagen's hunting party; Siegfried and Hagen are the only main characters in the work to have phenomenal instrumental counterparts. There are many instances in *Siegfried's Tod* where different types of voice such as cries or laments are explicitly acknowledged. These two scenes were initially created as the locus of phenomenal musical performances and the climax of tragic irony. After rejecting the Rhinemaidens' song of warning, Siegfried's horn call is naively confident and his heroic song of course brings about his death.

³¹ These changes include the addition of the 'Hagen's Watch' episode at the end of Act I, scene 2. Two marginal additions to Brünnhilde's closing monologue, written at

returning the ring, resuming her Valkyrie function and delivering Siegfried the slain hero to Walhall. In the new version, the Gods would experience a blissful redemption and release from their fears through death. L.J Rather has aligned this change with Wagner's infamous essay "Das Judentum in der Musik" ("Judaism in Music"), published in September of 1850. Rather is keen to point out that Wagner's prescription for salvation through self-destruction was directed at sinning Gentiles, and sinning Jews who wish to join them. Wagner did not prescribe a Nazi kind of destruction of Jewish otherness, but a form of assimilation along the lines of Schopenhauer, Marx and Weininger.³² In a round-about way, Rather's view that Wagner's anti-Semitic beliefs have often been misinterpreted gains strength from Ernest Newman's discussion of the revisions of the end of the *Ring*. Newman's caution is that Wagner's aesthetic concerns prevailed over his thoughts about people and things—Jews, women, politics and the like.³³ A co-relation between the idea of salvation through death in "Judaism in Music" and *Siegfried's Tod* is not in question, but the hierarchy of metaphors is. Wagner's solution is not a literal pan-holocaust that subsequently becomes disguised as art. The chain of embedded messages is quite the reverse. The symbolic holocaust as aesthetic regeneration is the key to the regeneration of humanity, and all of its subsidiary "problems". The sense of regeneration as a kind of awakening is underscored in the closing words of Wagner's letter of August 24, 1851 to August Röckel, who was serving a life sentence for his part in the Dresden uprising. In the letter, Wagner professes to be through with theorizing and explains that he has been inspired by Liszt to write the poem for a new work, *Der junge Siegfried*. After outlining some of the plot, he turns to one of his favourite metaphors for

different times, concerned a different fate for the Gods: their loss of power and blissful "selige Todeserlösung" ("blessed redemption in death"). Because of the German script of these marginal additions, Darcy suggests that they were written before 18 December 1848, the date that Wagner began to use Latin script. See his *Wagner's 'Das Rheingold'*, 9.

³² L.J. Rather, *The Dream of Self-Destruction: Wagner's Ring and the Modern World* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1979): 102.

³³ Ernest Newman, *The Life of Richard Wagner*, vol. 2, 356-358.

music: “we shall not become what we can and must be until such time as—*womankind* has been *wakened*.”³⁴

The first version of the libretto for *Der junge Siegfried* was finished in June of 1851. The life of Wagner’s hero was now nearly fully traced. Prose sketches for *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* followed in the fall, and their libretti were completed the following year. With the realms of Siegfried’s ancestors more fully fleshed out and intertwined with his own, the earlier written libretti required some revisions. Some of the narrated pre-history was no longer needed and passages pertaining to the different ending had to be newly written. In November of 1853, Wagner began the first complete composition draft of *Das Rheingold*, working more quickly than when he approached *Die Walküre*. Finishing the full score in March of 1856, Wagner then changed the names of the last two dramas to *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* respectively and turned his attentions to his hero in the fall.

Of all of the *Ring* dramas, *Siegfried* was the least straightforward in its genesis, involving six different periods of creative activity as opposed to three or four. “Both the textual and musical stages of its creation led Wagner into dilemmas that necessitated either reworking or simply giving up for a time and proceeding to another work.”³⁵ These dilemmas most significantly concerned the stages of composition when Wagner felt the need to create other works more likely to earn him money. At the same time, he was aware that later portions of the *Siegfried* drama and *Götterdämmerung* would benefit from a more masterfully complex harmonic and motivic treatment than he had hitherto attempted. This latter concern was in part stimulated by his growing familiarity with Liszt’s recently composed music. During a visit from Liszt in July of 1853, Wagner heard parts of the *Faust* Symphony and several of the symphonic poems. Wagner began composition of *Das Rheingold* in November. By the summer of 1856—Wagner began the composition draft of *Siegfried* in September—he

³⁴ Letter 124 (Zurich, 24 August 1851) *Selected Letters of Richard Wagner*, trans. and ed. Stewart Spencer and Barry Millington (London and Melbourne: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1987), 228.

³⁵ McCreless, *Siegfried*, 53.

had heard Liszt's Sonata in B minor and received the scores of six of the symphonic poems. Liszt's *Dante* Symphony was a focal point during his visit with Wagner in October and November.³⁶ Wagner was still working on the first scene of *Siegfried* at the time, but was becoming increasingly preoccupied with the idea of writing an opera on the legend of Tristan. When he finally switched his full attention to the new work in August 1857, he had finished two draft levels of the second act of *Siegfried*. He had orchestrated the first act, but only done the fair copy for its first scene.³⁷ Wagner returned to and completed *Siegfried* during 1864-5 and 1869-71. It is hardly surprising that the latter parts of the work reveal the influence of Liszt, Schopenhauer, and the experience of completing *Tristan und Isolde* and *Die Meistersinger*. With such a long gap in composition, and earlier breaks involving crucial developments, it is fitting to ask what the character of Siegfried meant to Wagner across all these years. A useful starting point is to consider Siegfried as he was in the libretto of *Siegfried's Tod*.

Before Siegfried arrives in the Hall of the Gibichung, the Norns and Brünnhilde accord him the title of hero. Before learning about Siegfried, Gunther identifies Hagen as a hero in the opening of the first act. In a comparison of their relative talents, each envies the other. Gunther is older and a purebred Gibichung; Hagen is wise and has widespread knowledge. But Hagen is quick to point out that they are both inferior and that alliances with those greater than they will ensure the future wealth and glory of the Gibichungs. Hagen specifies the ideal alliances as involving Brünnhilde and Siegfried, both considered superior in a superlative sense. Brünnhilde is "das herrlichste der Welt." Siegfried's heroic reputation—"der streitlichste Mann" (Gunther), "herrlichster Held" (Gutrune) and "der stärkste Held" (Hagen)—is validated through Hagen's account of the killing of Fafner. While Gunther rightly sees these two special people as a likely pair, Hagen begins his path of

³⁶ In his analysis of the ritornello structure of *Siegfried* Act I, scene 2, Anthony Newcomb suggests that the sequential central section of the Wanderer's theme is "so close to the important section beginning at measure 38 of Liszt's *Orpheus* as explicitly to allude to and emulate that section." See note 15 in his "Ritornello Ritornato", 212.

³⁷ McCreless, *Siegfried*, 66.

deception by suppressing the fact that Siegfried has already been united with Brünnhilde. Siegfried arrives and soon after drinks the potion, losing his memory of Brünnhilde before he can fully reveal it.

Siegfried is easily convinced to carry out acts that continue to be perceived as heroic from the perspective of Gunther and Gutrune. In relation to Brünnhilde, however, he becomes a person she does not know, literally. The audience is privy to the two scenes involving Brünnhilde and Siegfried which devastatingly highlight his change in behaviour. Confused and helpless, Brünnhilde is eventually driven to enable the plot which will lead to Siegfried's death.³⁸ A final glimpse of Siegfried's not-so-nice "other side" is offered in his scene with the Rhinemaidens. While out of touch with nature and on the cusp of disaster, he is committed to his blood-brother. Siegfried attempts to cheer up Gunther with his song outlining the adventures of his youth. His tale is full of bravado, revenge, murder and theft.³⁹ With his memory reinstated, his narrative extends in time through to the woodbird's third message guiding him to Brünnhilde and her wakening through Siegfried's kiss. Hagen seizes the moment to murder Siegfried, hoping it would seem justified to others. All along, Gunther felt something not quite right about the supposed need to kill Siegfried. In his final moments, the dying hero vividly envisions Brünnhilde. The entire hunting party realizes that Siegfried has been a victim of deception and his heroic status is untarnished. Amidst communal heartfelt lament, they bear his body to the Hall of the Gibichung. Gutrune and all of the Gibichungs bear witness to Brünnhilde's more elaborate revelation of the truth. The Gibichungs (save Hagen) willingly assist in preparing for the funeral.

From at least 1850 on, several elements of the drama's close are consistent in all of the versions of *Siegfried's Tod/Götterdämmerung*. The penultimate dramatic scenario concerns Hagen's murder of Sigfried. When the truth of the situation is revealed, Siegfried

³⁸ This alliance turned sour strongly resembles that between Alberich and Mime.

³⁹ Remarkably, he does not leave out mention of the treasures he obtained from the dead Fafner's hoard. When he first arrived in the Gibichung Hall, he had "forgotten" these same treasures, because he did not value them, only remembering them through Hagen's prompts.

and Brünnhilde are honoured by the broader community. Brünnhilde comprehends the need to return the ring and carries out that act. The so-called Feuerbach (1852) and Schopenhauer (1856) ending of the *Ring* are often cited as evidence of Wagner's shifting and perhaps confused philosophical outlook on the ultimate meaning of his by then expansive saga. Regardless, the fate of the gods and Walhall remains the same: they burn. The 1852 revisions which took place after the libretti for *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* were completed had to address this change. The gods and their worlds had been dramatically realized, with Wotan (originally Wodan) now a complex figure of great importance. So how would Wagner approach the revisions of *Der junge Siegfried*, the drama in which these two characters interact?

Der junge Siegfried was written quickly, and Wagner was much inspired to create "the lad who sets out to learn fear, but who is so dumb that he is not able to succeed."⁴⁰ Siegfried's dramatized early life and heroic exploits are basically the same as those outlined in the *Nibelungensage*. As Daniel Coren has noted, Siegfried's desire to learn fear—his pursuit of the unknown—is a psychologically weighty addition: "Siegfried's deeds are now not as important as his motivation in performing them."⁴¹ The concept of fear of course relates to the idea of the fearless hero. In *Siegfried's Tod*, the memory-loss potion renders Siegfried fearless but also naive, helplessly unable to recognize what he should fear. The tragedy of the last drama rests on the audience's ability to gauge the full significance of Siegfried's memory loss, and to sympathize with his vulnerability. It requires some recognition that Siegfried is something more than a hero through his partnership with Brünnhilde. Wagner initially conceived the drama of Siegfried's youth as an inversion of the drama it precedes. Siegfried's fearless heroic exploits in forging Nothung and killing Fafner readily betray his vulnerability to vice. The woodbird miraculously helps him avoid an early

⁴⁰ Letter 121 to Theodor Uhlig (Zurich, 10 May 1851) *Selected Letters of Richard Wagner*, 223.

⁴¹ Daniel Coren, "The Texts of Wagner's *Der junge Siegfried* and *Siegfried*," *19th-Century Music*, 1982, 18.

demise and guides him to Brünnhilde. In revising the libretto, Siegfried remained as Wagner had initially conceived him: “Siegfried’s words and actions are transposed directly from *Der junge Siegfried* with virtually no significant changes.”⁴²

The most important revisions to *Der junge Siegfried* concern Wotan (as Wanderer), initially a rather shapeless character. Much of his added focus aligns with the new ending of the work as a whole. As his revised scene with Erda shows, Wotan learned to *not* fear the destruction of his realm and even accepts the necessity of this event. Other revisions concern refinements to the dramatic structure and effectiveness. For instance, Wotan tells Mime that the fearless killer of Fafner will kill him too. Mime’s need to protect his own life was not initially part of his efforts to teach Siegfried fear.

The fact that Siegfried remained the same while important changes were made to the last two dramas might prompt the following question: did Wagner’s attitude to Siegfried also remain unchanged? Coren’s approach to this issue is a popular one and focuses on the major role that Wotan came to play. He rightly observes that Wotan was first tentatively introduced in *Der junge Siegfried* (but does not interact with Siegfried in the *Nibelungensage* prose sketch) and that Wagner was spurred on by this libretto to begin work on the last (first) two. The implied hypothesis is that the Wotan of *Der junge Siegfried* triggered the evolution of the *Nibelungensage* and that Wotan’s evolution embodied a radical phase of Wagner’s intellectual development. Thus when Wagner returned to the libretto featuring his young hero, he could no longer sympathize with him and he concerned himself with the character of Wotan. The protracted composition of *Siegfried*, punctuated by long breaks, can be interpreted as a further widening of the gap between the composer and his early character.⁴³ If we consider Wagner’s young Siegfried more closely, an alternate reading seems to lie in the text and eventual score, suggesting that it was actually Siegfried, not Wotan, who guided the evolution of the *Ring*.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 19.

It cannot be overlooked that of all of the main characters in the *Ring*, Siegfried is the one who seems to least fit his supposed dramatic role. As mentioned above, he is less than admirable for most of *Siegfried's Tod*, albeit unwittingly. Having worked out the four poems and already composing *Das Rheingold*, Wagner wrote to Röckel: "In Siegfried I have tried to depict what I understand to be the most perfect human, whose highest consciousness expresses itself in the fact that all consciousness manifests itself solely in the most immediate vitality and action."⁴⁴ The young Siegfried undoubtedly embodies Wagner's ideal of the "most perfect human being", in the sense that he is Rousseau's child of nature.⁴⁵ Aside from the most basic of care-taking from Mime, nature is Siegfried's teacher. Wagner's references to his "highest consciousness," which expresses itself exclusively in the tangible, living present, qualify and limit Siegfried's mental processes. The emphasis is on Siegfried's simple make-up. Wagner did not privilege conscious mental functioning to the exclusion of the unconsciousness realm. He is endorsing Siegfried's straightforward mindset that allows the unconscious to express itself fully and directly in the conscious phenomenal world.⁴⁶ Siegfried does not lack sensitivity, but he primarily gauges his experiences in a sense-oriented way. In short, he is noumenally challenged. Siegfried was never conceived as a great solo hero, for

⁴⁴ Letter 171 to August Röckel (Zurich, 25/26 January 1854) *Selected Letters of Richard Wagner*, 309.

⁴⁵ In prose, Wagner often discussed this *reinemenschlich* type as the most natural human state, hence that of the *Volk*. From this period, see especially his *Kunst und Klima* (1850) and *A Communication to my Friends* (completed fall of 1851).

⁴⁶ Earlier *reinemenschlich* characters include Senta, Tannhäuser and Elsa. Their mix of basic naiveté and special extrasensory talents challenges the tolerance of other characters. In *Lohengrin*, Ortrud is Elsa's pointed antithesis. By introducing a rationalistically-oriented kind of doubt, Ortrud prompts Elsa to lose faith in that which she had at first intuitively accepted. This character type shares with the somnambulist the tendency for the unconscious to emerge unmediated and unquestioningly.

Brünnhilde was always in place to realize consciously what Siegfried could not and the only one who could fully understand his special gifts.⁴⁷

Michael Tanner advances the view that Wagner miscalculated a sympathetic response, when he “was sufficiently enamoured of his ‘stupid hero’ to paint him in unflinching primary colours.”⁴⁸ Siegfried “is routinely described as a young storm-trooper, a monster of ingratitude (Schopenhauer’s reaction), an overgrown boy-scout (Ernest Newman, usually amongst the most sympathetic of commentators). It is easy to refute those charges, but a problem will still remain.”⁴⁹ As Tanner sees it, Siegfried’s objectionable behaviour towards Mime can be justified. Mime is not only a less than ideal companion, his preoccupation with avenging his brother’s abuse of power leads him to disregard Siegfried’s own life while exploiting him. The remaining problem is that Mime is drawn too sympathetically; no matter how unattractive he is, his misery is three-dimensional and can elicit our protectiveness.⁵⁰ Ultimately, Tanner asserts that Mime’s “misery is hateful and hate-begetting,” but that Siegfried is not a fully satisfactory alternative. As the “man of the future,” Siegfried stands at odds with the men of the past, and we the audience more readily identify with the representatives of the old order. Wagner’s delineation encourages us to rationalize their misery (Mime) or tragic grandeur (Wotan).⁵¹

In these politically correct times, Siegfried should elicit more sympathy than he does. He is something of an *idiot savant*, inherently naive and even challenged, yet at the same time

⁴⁷ For multi-leveled discussions of Wagner’s metaphors concerning male-female unions, see Thomas S. Grey’s *Wagner’s Musical Prose: Texts and Contexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge university Press, 1995) and Jean-Jacques Nattiez’s *Wagner Androgyne: A Study in Interpretation*, trans. Stewart Spencer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

⁴⁸ Michael Tanner, *Wagner* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996): 135.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ And we have already witnessed Alberich’s needlessly unpleasant treatment of him.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 136.

gifted.⁵² The Romantic idea of genius overlaps with the characteristics of prodigious savants, notably in the prioritization of involuntary forces and selective obsessive modes of engagement.⁵³ Prodigious savants typically display a special kind of memory, very narrow but exceedingly deep. This memory is a type of “unconscious reckoning”—habit or procedural memory—which relies on more basic mental processes than higher level cognitive or associative memory. It can be perfect in its limited scope and secured with little repetition. The most frequent memory of this kind involves musical works, usually for the piano. Less frequently, but notably, savants demonstrate such qualities as extrasensory perception, unusual sensory discrimination such as enhanced sense of touch and smell, perfect pitch or the perfect appreciation of the passing of time without a clock. These rarer kinds of “unconscious reckoning” are quite in line with the Romantic genius’s typical affinity with fundamental aspects of nature. The true or prodigious savant is rare—fewer than 100 identified in the literature—as their gifts are assessed not in relation to other handicaps but

⁵² The term “idiot savant” is not used loosely here. Now more commonly referred to as Savant Syndrome, the condition was first named Idiot Savant in 1887 by Dr. J. Langdon Down (better known for having named Down's Syndrome). See Darold A. Treffert, *Extraordinary People: Understanding “Idiot Savant”* (New York: Harper and Row, 1989) and Neil Smith and Ianthi-Maria Tsimpli, *The Mind of a Savant: Language, Learning and Modularity* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1995).

⁵³ As Penelope Murray notes, “By the end of the eighteenth century the genius, and in particular the artistic genius, comes to be thought of as the highest human type, replacing such earlier ideal types as the hero, the saint, the *uomo universale* and so on.” See her introduction in *Genius: The History of an Idea*, ed. Penelope Murray (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 2. In early 19th-century approaches to the mind, the general compartmentalization of mental functioning was a prominent feature of phrenology. Franz-Joseph Gall’s (1758-1828) studies of genius and idiocy led him to the conclusion that the mind/brain was modular in character. His correlation of the shape of the skull with mental attributes was not tenable. However, his assertion that exceptional ability in one or some areas of cognition or talent did not inevitably imply a similar ability in other areas had far-reaching influence.

despite them.⁵⁴ A noteworthy difference between the savant and the Romantic genius is the element of creative originality.

Siegfried's mental capacity is limited in many ways. We frequently observe him driven by such single-mindedness that he fails to register available information that would broaden his understanding of the world and his experiences. When he is able to perceive hidden layers of meaning or subconscious forces, it is only a temporary state enabled by a special combination of factors: an atypically reflective mood, a natural milieu, and Fafner's blood. All these conditions are required for Siegfried to derive meaning from or "translate" the woodbird's song. Only the first two conditions are satisfied when Siegfried first hears the woodbird. He can neither make sense of its song nor imitate it. Unable to grasp its essence, he cannot shape it himself. Fafner's blood is the key factor. Why does it play such a positive role?

Fafner is no magical dragon. He is a simple giant who has become greedy and paranoid, assuming a prohibitive form by means of the tarnhelm in order to instill fear in those who might want his hoard. Through his own experience and impending death, Fafner has become aware of the destructive nature of the power of the ring and the lack of freedom it actually entails. Siegfried has relieved him from a lonely, unsatisfactory life. Fafner wishes the path of the curse to end but is unable to bring that about directly. He undoubtedly sees before him a fearless murderer much like himself when he killed Fasolt, as well as the strong but naive giant he once used to be.⁵⁵ In her survey of the literary sources that influenced *Der junge Siegfried*, Elizabeth Magee points out that the Grimm brothers singled out the tale "Der junge Reise" ("The Young Giant") as most typifying Siegfried. Magee adds that "the Young

⁵⁴ See M.H. Abrams classic discussion of this debate, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960).

⁵⁵ Wagner underscores their affinity through their shared F major. A relation with Siegfried's Act I, scene 1 account of finding something of a friend in the bear is inscribed in this scene. Siegfried is joyously blowing his horn in his newfound natural key of F major and wakes Fafner, whom Siegfried greets as a friend but then kills. Fafner is more like Siegfried than the boy can know and turns out to be his dearest friend to date as he dies.

Giant displays an unmistakable affinity with the Siegfried of the *Thidreks saga* and *Das Lied von Hürnen Seyfrid*.⁵⁶ The Grimm brothers' *Märchen* also presented Wagner with the figure of the youth who sets out to learn fear in conventional heroic adventures, but fails, and the greater value of trials or lessons involving female partners. The association between Brünnhilde and Sleeping Beauty is also found in the *Märchen*.⁵⁷ The waking of Brünnhilde, surrounded by fire, was already part of the drama as sketched in *Der Nibelungensage (Mythus)*. The close relation between Fafner and Siegfried had not been developed at that stage, nor when Wagner wrote the libretto *Siegfried's Tod*. In fact, mention of the Giants only served to underscore Wotan's poor treatment of a strong but simple race and the passing of the ring as payment for the building of Walhall. Fafner and Fasolt did not exist as individuals, and the powers of the tarnhelm were not associated with the Wurm slain by Siegfried. As these connections became part of *Der junge Siegfried*, they in turn affected the shaping of *Das Rheingold*.

In the creation of *Das Rheingold*, three pairs came into being for the first time: Wotan/Fricka, Fafner/Fasolt, and Donner/Froh. The path of the gold already worked out in *Der Nibelungensage (Mythus)*—from Rhine to Alberich, to Wotan and then to the Giants—now featured another dimension, the intersection of the three new partnerships through the personification of love and regeneration, Freia. The seeds of this development lie in the young Siegfried seeking love without interest in money or power. His obvious counterpart in Fasolt, whose murderer he meets and slays in *Der junge Siegfried*. The Fafner/Fasolt side of the story turns on the introduction of Freia as a substitute for monetary wealth. Fasolt comes to value her love, but Fafner values her as ransom and as a means of gaining power over the Gods. This conflicting perspective leads both of them to want the ring, but for different reasons. Their battle graphically verifies that the ring's power is cursed enough that its owner will slay his own kin. More importantly, it is the scene which introduces

⁵⁶ Elizabeth Magee, *Richard Wagner and the Nibelungs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990): 120.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 119-121.

fear as an emotional response to terrifying crimes committed amongst brethren and results in self-protective actions: the creation of a heroic ideal.

The Giants and the Gods have heard Loge's tale about the marvelous gold that has been stolen by Alberich, and the appeal for its return that he relayed on behalf of the Rhinemaidens. Each has fancied what wonders the gold could mean to them and nobody takes up Loge's central message seriously. He offers Wotan the chance to be a compassionate, moral and heroic figure if he should return the gold to its rightful owners. As we all know, Wotan bypasses this chance but later hears a more desperate version of this message from Erda forecasting doom should he not comply. The Giants are getting restless, and again Wotan attends to his immediate needs. He reluctantly passes over the ring to the Giants and Fasolt promptly kills Fasolt with his staff. Wotan is instantly fearful and plagued by forebodings. The air heavy with greed and hate, Donner asserts himself. He is strong but a dullard. His sense of right and wrong is based on his priorities of love and peace, but he is prepared to use his unwieldy strength in uncontrolled ways in the process. He now beckons his storm clouds. Atop a high rock, Donner's great cries "Heda! Hedo!" ring through the air. As he swings his hammer, *fortissimo* horns bear the striving contours of his cries. Tubas, trombones and trumpets strengthen the gesture while the skies become dark with thick thunderclouds. The terrible episode peaks at Donner's strike of his hammer; lighting shoots from the clouds followed by rumbles of thunder. The image gradually transforms and the Gods now see the rainbow bridge and its destination, Walhall.

Donner's intentions are well-meaning and he employs all of his power to purge the scene of the hateful emotions and wrong-doings just witnessed. Together with his hammer, elemental expressions, incredible strength, rain and lightening, Wagner was surely casting Siegfried in another anticipatory form.⁵⁸ Fasolt's death and Donner's response play out the drama's conflict of forces on a massive scale, and they both inform Wotan's emerging

⁵⁸ Although beyond the scope of the present study, the harmonic representation of Donner in this passage allies him with Siegfried's Forging scene, which similarly shares a network of associations from *Das Rheingold*. These include the associations of B \flat and F with the Nibelungs and Giants and the contrastingly bright D major associated with the realm of the wonderfully marvelous.

thoughts as he is eager to forget his own recent past. The origin of the sword motive as a sudden idea of Wotan's has often been denigrated as ineffectively implanted with too many dramatic loose ends. It is well known that it was during the 1876 stage rehearsals that Wagner added the stage direction that Wotan should pick up a sword left behind from the treasure by Fafner. Both Donington and Deryck Cooke consider this "piece of stage-business" best forgotten and consider the moment as an undefined musical symbol which hints at something of tremendous import. For Donington, it is the first appearance in Wotan's imagination of the hero archetype which is so important in the subsequent dramas, but is also "one of the few significant moments in the *Ring* which are almost bound to be missed unless the musical symbolism has been examined beforehand."⁵⁹ Cooke considers the possibility that Wagner may have intended us to consider Nothung, linked at its appearance in *Die Walküre* to Wotan's grand yet vague idea., as originating from Fafner and the Nibelungs, which is the case in many versions of the legends. But in terms of *Das Rheingold*, Cooke feels we are presented with a "completely new musical idea introduced by the trumpet" whose actual meaning cannot be determined.⁶⁰ Rather than looking forward for meaning, it seems that Wagner was preparing Wotan's moment of inspiration and his conception of a heroic ideal since scene 1.

The precedent for the sword motive is found in the motive associated with the gold, illuminated and shining up from the depths of the Rhine. The contour of the two motives, with their upward-reaching line and clear rhythmic shapes, are palpably similar. Each is first introduced at a moment of enlightenment and revelation. The gold motive is initially warmly clothed, scored for horns. Dramatic complexity accrues as the gold is considered from multiple perspectives and for different purposes. Related motives emerge which comment on the gold as a symbol of wealth and power, with tubas, trombones and trumpets lending

⁵⁹ Robert Donington, *Wagner's 'Ring' and its Symbols: The Music and the Myth* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969): 100.

⁶⁰ Deryck Cooke, *I Saw the World End: A Study of Wagner's Ring* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979): 237-238.

more particular colouring. From the beginning of scene 2, the Walhall motive is part of this group and is involved more specifically when the Nibelung hoard serves as payment for its construction. Meanwhile, the gold motive assumes its most lustrous form with trumpets in Loge's narrative at the end of that scene, when he suggests that Wotan act heroically and respond to the distressed cry of the helpless Rhinemaidens.⁶¹ In the consecutive scenarios concerning the murder of Fasolt, Donner's storm and the glimpse of Walhall, the plot tightly re-works the collection of brass-related motives.

The ominous curse marks Fafner's actions with trombones and tubas. Donner's response is a positive exertion of energy against this evil force; his motive is rhythmically energetic and personally driven. The instrumental form of his cry mirrors an unspoken narrative of battle that is metaphorically played out in the storm. As the sky darkens, trombones take over. At the peak of the storm, the heroic and cursed extremes of trumpets and trombones combine. The *fortissimo* storm music is abruptly cut off, leaving a gap which is filled by a far-reaching chromatic ascent crescendoing to Donner's hammer stroke and lightning. The growling thunder gradually subsides as Froh's rainbow graces the scene. The whole creates a sense of the numinous or a positive higher force, not as an external agency acting through grace, but as one which emanates from a uniquely strong and fearless source. Regardless of the dramatic irony that Loge and the Rhinemaidens' lament cast on this closing scene, Wotan's introduction of the sword motive makes its own comment. For all of the nobility and grandeur which the Valhall motive can suggest, it is a basically passive musical idea. The medium and message of Wotan's sudden flash of inspiration is the same. He simply cannot accept a complacent position in his new home. Donner's dynamic vitalism, his fearless strength against dark forces, and the lightening all converge into Wotan's heroic ideal. As a model, Donner shares with the other Gods the inability to dissociate himself from a conception of power or wealth that is tangibly manifested. All of the Gods proceed over the

⁶¹ These two statements in C major and then D major are the two principal tonalities of the sword motive in the drama as a whole.

rainbow bridge to Walhall.⁶² Wotan knows that his heroic ideal must be human, but that it can take shape in his image. Similarly, his musical idea of heroism is initially shaped like the heroic idea he deferred but will assume yet a further more human form.⁶³

Returning to *Der Junge Siegfried*, we can see that the main difference between the fearless youth and his counterparts in *Das Rheingold* is that his actions are neither intended to obtain the gold nor challenge the power of the curse. Fafner sees some hope in the fearless lad but at the same time knows that hidden dangers must be lurking nearby. His only recourse is to try to help Siegfried avoid death. Fafner's warning that Siegfried's life is endangered falls on deaf ears. So do his cryptic words: "Merk' wie's endet! Acht' auf mich!" ("Note how it ends! Look at me!") Siegfried unwittingly becomes the recipient of Fafner's wisdom when he absorbs his victim's blood—his vital fluid and will combined. It burns his fingers and he puts them into his mouth. This co-mingling of blood overcomes bodily or physical individuation and hence overcomes Siegfried's cognitive limitations. The physical demise of Fafner comes to offer a glimmer of hope of regeneration—burning, quenched and absorbed, his blood enables Siegfried to understand the woodbird.

As is often noted, the woodbird is affiliated with the Rhinedaughters as well as Brünnhilde, motivically and through their shared medium of song. While the symbolism is obviously rich and multi-faceted, Wagner developed it with an eye towards large-scale dramatic coherence. Birds are a key point of reference in young Siegfried's education. He instinctively gives them priority as singers and teachers. The woodbird that Siegfried comes to understand tells him three important things. Firstly, it instructs him to fetch the tarnhelm and ring from the hoard. Siegfried responds but openly admits he knows not their use and thinks them trinkets or trophies of his heroic deed. Having complied, he receives a second

⁶² The legendary figure of Donner is usually restricted from such ephemeral paths by his tremendous size and weight.

⁶³ This motive also emerges as a presentiment of a heroic ideal, this time Brünnhilde's, in her final scene with Sieglinde in *Die Walküre*. Like Wotan's idea, it is shaped from her own recent experiences and gives a slightly new form to something already familiar.

message. In a cryptic reworking of Fafner's warning, Siegfried is told that he will be able to perceive Mime's secret intentions. After saving his own life, Siegfried receives the message about Brünnhilde. The first two of these messages pertain to Fafner's dying wish that the tragic curse be broken and the immediate steps to keeping open that possibility have been taken. A friendly protective dimension that arose from Fafner's self-identification with Siegfried connects the first two messages to the third. To Siegfried, only this last message bears direct meaning and it displaces the others in his consciousness. He responds with elation: "O holder Sang! Süßter Hauch!" as their meaning pierces his breast like fire, kindling his heart. The effect of Fafner's blood has worn off as Siegfried feels stronger flames within.

The woodbird is on Siegfried's side, but flies from his sight after indicating the appropriate path. When we encounter Siegfried again, in Act III, scene 2, he picks up the threads of his part of the drama by noting that he can no longer see the woodbird. In between, the Wanderer has communed with Erda and willingly renounced control to Siegfried. While Wotan can predict that Brünnhilde will play an important role in what follows, and that the era of the gods is coming to an end, he has no clear and detailed idea of the future. He is no longer omniscient when he encounters his grandson. Without the woodbird near at hand, Siegfried is again single-minded and somewhat obtuse. He has no patience for the old Wanderer who only seems to hinder him from reaching his goal. Wotan is warmed and even amused by Siegfried's accounts of his heroic deeds, but becomes increasingly confused by the youth's claim to have understood the language of birds.

The crux of the conversation comes when Siegfried demands that the Wanderer tell him something meaningful, or be pushed aside. Wotan alludes to his love of Siegfried's people and Siegfried himself, amidst veiled references to his own importance. This does not satisfy Siegfried's definition of meaningful and he demands that the Wanderer step aside, proclaiming to know from the woodbird that the blocked path leads to the sleeping woman. Wotan's composure is broken and his all-too-human reaction is revealing. It is one of Wotan's ravens that has helped Siegfried and it will be punished. The parallel with Brünnhilde is clear. Wotan's anger embodies the uneasiness with which he experiences the transference of power and also becomes a crucial force in pushing the action forward. He knows the youth will reach

Brünnhilde but proceeds to bar his way, fearfully describes the challenges ahead, orders him to retreat and finally identifies his spear as the one which shattered Nothung. This climax is Wotan's last stroke, a piece of information new to Siegfried and certain to provoke him. Siegfried needs to break Wotan's spear and he does.

Brünnhilde has not been inert while asleep. The woodbird/raven has enflamed the passions of her hero and guides him to her.⁶⁴ United at last with Brünnhilde, Siegfried's dialogue begins to resemble that with the Wanderer.⁶⁵ Siegfried has quickly overcome his fear and feels no need to check his involuntary response system. Initially fearless, Brünnhilde shares her broader wisdom in song, echoing Wotan's proclamations of familiarity with Siegfried's ancestors and love for him, although they have never before met. Siegfried is again perplexed by these notions. As their different perspectives clash, Brünnhilde becomes fearful. Their ultimate union is a hard-won battle, but the celebration is brief and does not proclaim a strong steady-state as the curtain closes.⁶⁶ Wagner surely created this scene with their subsequent scene in the Prologue of *Siegfried's Tod* in mind. The pair is clearly free from strife when we encounter them again, but there is something curiously unstable about the situation. Siegfried is about to dash off on another heroic adventure and unabashedly professes to have not learned much from Brünnhilde. She repeatedly reminds him to retain

⁶⁴ The unconscious cry and response as a redemptive partnership achieved through a negotiation across time and space, motivically formed and harmonically far-reaching, is a feature of all of Wagner's mature operas. Its most sophisticated musical-dramatic handling is in *Tristan und Isolde* and *Parsifal*. For an interesting discussion of this feature of *Lohengrin* see Berthold Hoeckner's essay "Elsa Screams, or The birth of music drama".

⁶⁵ The additional information which Brünnhilde provided in *Der junge Siegfried* that was subsequently removed because unnecessary does not impact this general overview.

⁶⁶ The beginning of Act II/ii of *Tristan und Isolde* unfolds an inverse process, with the gender of the roles reversed. Tristan and Isolde unite in a frenzy in which they are enthralled with each other's physical presence. This gives way to the extended dialogue section in which they do not see eye to eye. Tristan advances a metaphysical argument while Isolde is more rationally-oriented and hence has difficulty understanding him. Their resolution in duet is the first significant step towards their embracing a love not of this world. See the discussion of *Tristan und Isolde* in the following section of the present study.

his memories of heroic deeds and their love. Brünnhilde knows Siegfried very well at this point. She does not chastize him for his weaknesses, but lovingly tries to compensate for them.

Having introduced birds at several key moments in *Der junge Siegfried*, Wagner worked in two additional references when revising *Siegfried's Tod*. The first occurs in Act I, scene 3, as Brünnhilde is waiting for Siegfried to return. Waltraute tells Brünnhilde that the Valkyries are no longer sent on their regular missions, but that Wotan sends out his ravens to bring him the news he awaits. These ravens are present at Siegfried's death. Robert Donington asserts that the ravens figure not just as Wotan's news-gatherers but to help bring about the hero's death; they "are as black as Hagen."⁶⁷ Siegfried's death is the culmination of a dramatic scenario which begins innocuously enough as his tale of past adventures. Twice, birds try to warn him of danger. Before he begins his song, he recounts the immediate past and confesses that he has not been as successful in hunting as Hagen's party. He tells Hagen that he came across not game but waterbirds ("Wasservögel") whose song told him that he would be killed that day.⁶⁸ The darker undertones of reality are introduced by Siegfried himself.

Of the trio of murderous plotters, Gunther's commitment to kill his blood-brother was the weakest. He is disturbed when he hears the message of the "waterbirds". As the moment of the deed seems to draw near, Gunther's unwillingness to believe that Siegfried is guilty of betrayal is ironically strengthened. It was Gunther who proposed an oath with Siegfried in Act

⁶⁷ Donington, *Wagner's 'Ring' and its Symbols*, 239.

⁶⁸ Siegfried's identification of the Rhinemaidens with birds relates to his childhood experiences and his memory of birds as nature's instrument of song. In the scene with them, he refers to them first as "lustigen Frauen" and then "Wasserminnen", as he can then see that they are women and that they live in the water. When he asks them to sing what they know, they prophecy his death through the curse. He denigrates them as "listigen Frauen", recalling Fafner's prophecy of his death and its apparent meaninglessness. The Rhinemaidens' prophecy is similar to that of Fafner in that they do not have knowledge of Siegfried's specific killer but a general knowledge of how the curse works. They can see that Siegfried covets the Ring and that he has become something other than the boy who encountered Fafner.

I, scene 2 as testimony to their verbal willingness to satisfy their shared agenda. Siegfried and Gunther have both been falsely manipulated by Hagen, and there is no conscious falseness in their pact. Hagen does not partake in the oath, as his blood would freely reveal the truth he conceals. In the penultimate scene, Siegfried offers his horn of wine, from which he has already drunk, to Gunther. The connection with their original oath comes with Gunther's observation that its contents seem "matt und bleich", which he gloomily likens to Siegfried's blood. Gunther refuses the horn, no doubt fearing that the fate of its owner taints its contents. Siegfried reenacts the oath alone, mixes Gunther's wine with his own, and immediately perceives something unsettling. In an aside to Hagen, he says that Brünnhilde pains Gunther. Hagen, barely able to conceal his premature gloating and love of irony, notes that Brünnhilde is more difficult for him to understand than the birds. Siegfried claims to have completely forgotten the birds since he heard the song of women. This reminder of birds and song gives him the idea of singing for Gunther.

Donington notwithstanding, the ravens at Siegfried's death seem to have little to do with Hagen except that they are part of a series of objects for his exploitation.⁶⁹ Broadly speaking, the main demarcation in Siegfried's tale of his past is his drinking of the potion which restores all of his memory of Brünnhilde. The first part of his narration covers events up to and including his killing of Mime. Notably, Siegfried quotes the woodbird's first two messages as part of his explanation of how things came about. As discussed above, these two messages are a mediation of Fafner's wishes, enabled through his blood. Through the antidote potion, Siegfried remembers the woodbird's third message, its embodiment of Brünnhilde's spirit and voice calling to him from the distance. He impassionately recalls his crossing of the flames and his reward, the flames of love as Brünnhilde's arms enfolded him. Two ravens fly

⁶⁹ The ravens like their Valkyrie relatives can also be omens of death to those that see them. Wagner surely had this in mind when he first conceived this scenario. However, these ravens do not appear to Siegfried. Only Hagen sees them. The ravens are no longer in sight when Siegfried looks up for them. They have already flown to deliver a message to Brünnhilde.

up out of a nearby bush, circle over Siegfried and fly away.⁷⁰ Ever the opportunist, Hagen prompts Siegfried to look after the vanished ravens and expose his vulnerable back.⁷¹ That Wagner was keen not to specify the function or master of these two ravens is suggested by changes he made to Hagen's text at this fateful moment. Initially Hagen's question/answer was "Verstehst du auch dieser Raben Spruch? Ich verstand sie: sie eilen, Wotan dich anzumelden!" ("Do you also understand the language of these Ravens? I understand them: they hurry, to report news of you to Wotan"). The revised text both emphasizes that the ravens have already flown away and does not suggest where they are headed: "Errätst du auch dieser Raben Geraun'? Rache rieten sie mir! ("And can you tell what those ravens have said? They cry to me to seek vengeance!") What Hagen does not know is that Siegfried's death is not the end of things and the ravens have not flown back to Wotan.

When Brünnhilde arrives on stage at the end of the opera, she has been "missing" for some time. At the beginning of the scene, Guttrune's brief and profoundly unsettled narration explains that she was awoken from evil dreams by Brünnhilde's laughter. She then saw a woman by the shore. Checking Brünnhilde's empty room, she verifies that the woman by the shore was Brünnhilde. The whole passage is as uncanny as its silences, which point to vistas of the fearful unknown.⁷² The import of her dream quickly becomes clear as the funeral march makes its way into the hall. Grief and terror soon erupt. Just before Brünnhilde arrives, the

⁷⁰ It must be significant that where there was one woodbird/raven, there now are two. Cooke notes that the two ravens are named "Thought" and "Memory" in the *Prose Edda*. See his *I Saw the World End*, 145. Given Wotan's anger at the solo birds's renegade activities, it seems likely that its punishment includes a supervising partner, a limiting force on its expression of individual will. This is in line with Wotan's willingness to partner Brünnhilde with a fearless hero. With respect to the two ravens, the analogical partnership is that of Brünnhilde and Wotan himself. As Waltraute mentions, their job is to bring news of the end of things and Wotan already knows that Brünnhilde will preside at that moment.

⁷¹ Hagen thus employs a perverted version of the age-old trick, "look, it's a bird!"

⁷² See Heinrich Porges' *Wagner Rehearsing the 'Ring'*, 136-142, and Christopher Wintle's "The Numinous in *Götterdämmerung*," *Reading Opera*, ed. Arthur Groos and Roger Parker (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988): 200-234.

uncanny silence returns. Hagen has killed Gunther and attempted to steal the ring, but Siegfried's hand has miraculously risen.

The revisions to the end of *Siegfried's Tod* that prevailed until the final version of the end of *Götterdämmerung* weave together elements from the newly-written passages earlier in the opera with ideas presented in *Der junge Siegfried*. Brünnhilde makes her way from the back of the stage and introduces herself as Siegfried's wife. Her first orders of business are to claim her rightful status and to criticize the laments of Gibichungs as impoverished. Gutrune relinquishes her claim on Siegfried and collapses on Gunther's corpse. Brünnhilde lingers in contemplation of Siegfried's body for some time. When she breaks her silence, she commands vassals to build a fire by the shore of the Rhine, to kindle a fire and to bring Grane, with whom she will join Siegfried in the fire. The first part of the funeral preparations are in place. Brünnhilde's monologue begins with her outline of how the drama will end, a set of instructions that imply a clearly conceived plan. After contemplating Siegfried's image again, she begins an oration which opens as praise to the embodiment of light and purity before embracing the paradoxes of his behaviour. Her survey of love and betrayal concludes not with a command but a question: "Wißt ihr, wie das ward?" ("Do you know how that was?") In a humble lament directed to the Gods, she answers her own question. The betrayal enabled her to gain wisdom. Another rhetorical question yields her claim to have indeed gained this wisdom. The funeral preparations continue with Brünnhilde's sign for Siegfried's body to be raised onto the pyre while she removes the ring from his finger. The next section of her monologue is directed at the Rhinemaidens and she thanks them for their wise counsel. She explains further details of her plan that will satisfy their wishes. The ring will be cleansed in the fire, the Rhine will flood the pyre, and the Rhinemaidens can retrieve the Ring themselves. Preparations continue. Now wearing the ring, Brünnhilde takes a fire-brand in hand, waves it towards the background and commands the ravens to return with her message. She adds that they must fetch Loge atop her mountain and take him along to Walhall. The chain of

commands is in place and she lights Siegfried's pyre with words which speak of the end: "So—werf ich den Brand in Walhalls prangende Burg." The two ravens fly away.⁷³

The difference between the revenge-driven Brünnhilde of Act II and the funeral mistress of Act III could hardly be greater. What happened to her in between? It is usually assumed that Brünnhilde had encountered the Rhinemaidens in the interim and came to understand everything as a result of this visit. The evidence supporting this view is Guttrune's account of seeing her by the shore and Brünnhilde's acknowledgment of the Rhinemaidens' counsel in her monologue. While it is clear that Brünnhilde has come to realize that the ring must be returned to the Rhine to end the curse, does it necessarily follow that she has been enlightened by the Rhinemaidens?

We already know the Rhinemaidens' wishes, which they tried in vain to communicate to Siegfried. Siegfried's visit with the waterbirds serves two purposes: to show that he has become truly unsuitable as a candidate to break the curse and to show what the Rhinemaidens know. As Wagner wrote the libretto for *Das Rheingold*, he underscored the Rhinemaidens as Siegfried's equivalent in terms of their nature-based naiveté and inherent perspective on the world.⁷⁴ They are equally vulnerable to vice, and the theft of the gold and its misuse is dramatically parallel to the theft and abuse of Siegfried's heroism. It is not the main purpose of this scene to demonstrate these similarities, but to point up the tragic irony of how far Siegfried has departed from his basic nature. Not surprisingly, he has come to resemble Alberich/Mime in relation to his real self. The Rhinemaidens give Siegfried the chance to end the cyclical curse. Insensitive to their pleas, he promptly becomes its next victim. They predict this event as well and that Brünnhilde will hear them better. The dramatic precedent for this scene is that between Brünnhilde and her messenger-sister Waltraute. Here, too, Brünnhilde demonstrates that she has lost her ability to hear her natural basic self and consequently refuses to return the ring. While not coveting the ring for wealth or world power, both

⁷³ Curiously, Donington makes no mention of the ravens in the final scene.

⁷⁴ I agree, but for slightly different reasons, with Donington's view to the cycle as nearly starting over again in *Siegfried*, which provides a second beginning to the drama.

Brünnhilde and Siegfried fail to see its role in the larger scope of things. They have reduced its significance to a symbol of their union whose strength is thought to reside in part in the physical object. The tragic irony of Brünnhilde's unwillingness to part with the ring is also immediately revealed. After Waltraute departs, Siegfried arrives in the form of Gunther, and Brünnhilde dies symbolically.

Waltraute's appeal to Brünnhilde is not restricted to news about the ring or Wotan's ravens. She offers a sweeping account of what she has observed since Brünnhilde was separated from her sisters. The message concerning the ring is set apart in her narration and presented as a direct quotation. Apparently, Waltraute lay weeping at Wotan's side in grief over the state of the gods and Walhall. Wotan fondly remembered Brünnhilde and whispered as if in a dream that her return of the ring would end the curse and redeem "Gott und die Welt!" (God and the world!). The oft-repeated message that Wotan tried not to hear has finally lodged in his consciousness as a necessity. His utterance as a joint reclamation of the memory of Brünnhilde and the appeals to return the ring inspire Waltraute to seek out her sister. Brünnhilde finds her sister's narration strange and unintelligible, as if it were an evil dream: "Welch banger Träume Mären meldest du Traurige mir!" Each thinks the other is mad. Brünnhilde initially greeted her sister assuming she had come to share her joy in being united with Siegfried. She sums up her existence: "In seiner Liebe leucht und lach ich heut auf." Waltraute is amazed that the humanized Brünnhilde does not sense the grief that plagues her sisters and Walhall. Having disobeyed Wotan by flying to Brünnhilde, Waltraute assumes a position alongside the raven in *Siegfried* and the pre-Siegfried Brünnhilde, who no longer seems to exist. Brünnhilde now foreshadows Guttrune. It is precisely during Brünnhilde's eventual acquisition of wisdom that Guttrune's peace is disturbed by evil dreams.

From Brünnhilde's closing monologue we know that she has learned far more than the Rhinemaidens could teach her. The limits on prophetic knowledge have already been drawn. Wotan superseded Erda. Soon after, the Norns confessed their waning vision of the future. It is unlikely that the Rhinemaidens could elaborate on what they shared with Siegfried. In fact, their quasi-prophetic powers have the same constraints as Wotan's and the

Norns'; none can quite predict what will happen to the ring. The Rhinemaidens and Wotan know that Brünnhilde will play an important role, but not its particulars.

The Norns sing only for themselves and the audience. In *Siegfried's Tod*, the three main topics of their woven tale concerned, in turn, Alberich's theft of the gold; the Gods' theft of the ring and subsequent use of it to pay the Giants; the Giants creation of a Worm to safeguard the ring and Siegfried's slaying of the Worm. Each section was developed through the different perspectives of each Norn. The first Norn presented a fact from the past, the second Norn qualified it with a moral assessment or corrective, and the third Norn wished freedom for each of the curse's victims.⁷⁵ The third Norn's last wish included the prediction that Siegfried the hero will also fall and that Brünnhilde will be able to make sense of this. The Norns disappeared submitting to Wotan, who has drunk from the fount of wisdom. The re-written scene does not mention Brünnhilde's role in the course of events. The Norns' rope breaks when they try to foretell news of the ring. The most important news that comes to light is that Walhall will burn. Their shared narration is repeatedly concerned with fire. It is night, yet they enter in turn and seem momentarily uncertain about this fact: "Welch' Licht leuchtet dort? Dämmert der Tag schon auf? Loge's Heer lodert feurigum den Fels. Noch ist's Nacht," ("What light is shining there? Is it already dawn? Loge's host glows in flame around the Fell.")). In the moments between Waltraute's departure and Siegfried's arrival, Wagner's newly-written text also featured this uncertainty about the fire surrounding Brünnhilde's rock. Where Brünnhilde had gladly severed her ties with Walhall and placed all of her confidence in Siegfried, she became unsettled as the flames licked higher into the air at the approach of Siegfried/Gunther.

The salient information of the Norn's new tale are as follows: Wotan once robbed the World Ashtree of a branch which became his spear of debased runes; the ruins of the spear

⁷⁵ Wagner continued to distinguish the three Norns' perspectives when he re-wrote this scene. Furthermore, he continued to shape the text and musical composition with a refrain or rondo-like form based on the metaphor of weaving. For a perceptive analysis of the musical manifestation of this metaphor see Patrick McCreless's "Schenker and the Norns," in *Analyzing Opera: Verdi and Wagner*, ed. Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California Press, 1989): 276-297.

and Ashtree now surround Wotan and his heroes in Walhall; Loge, punished and confined to the mountain-top with Brünnhilde, will set Walhall aflame. The increasing role of fire in their narrative is explicitly tied to the decreased significance of water. We learn in the first section of the woven tale that Wotan stole part of the World Ashtree after he had drunk from the fount of wisdom, and that the spring subsequently dried up. The theft of the gold is here doubled with the theft of the branch, while symbolically juxtaposing the elements of water and fire. Both the Norns and their scene were demoted as they were integrated into a more expansive drama. Where they initially provided a privileged perspective, they came to offer a perspective which is corrected in the course of the drama's end. In the expanded *Ring*, Wagner strove to suggest the continuous co-existence of different musical-dramatic planes, calling attention to their moments of intersection through the variation of characteristic musical ideas. The revised Norns' scene comments on another scene which is happening at the same time, but has happened just before in the sequence of operatic events. The opening of the Prelude to *Götterdämmerung* is a disturbing revisit of the music of Brünnhilde's awakening and is followed by references to an unusually bright light atop Brünnhilde's rock. While only able to profess doom and destruction, and hence serving as a glance to the future temporary turn towards darkness, their forecast and their musical borrowings are eventually reinterpreted more hopefully in the final scenes of the drama.

The first step in this re-interpretation comes from Waltraute, whose narrative seems to present considerable substance relating to the end of the drama, offered as her own observations of the state of things and not as some mystical kind of wisdom. Wotan is waiting in Walhall with the other Gods, surrounded by the remnants of the World Ash tree and his spear. Could Brünnhilde too have reflected on these words she heard but did not engage with? By the time Brünnhilde dismisses the ravens and sets the funeral pyre afire, she has laid plans for a grand funeral fire and a flood near the banks of the Rhine and another fire in Walhall. If we consider Waltraute a potentially significant mediator of wisdom, she has provided instructive information about the non-ring parts of Brünnhilde's finale. Ingredients for the recipe of destruction include the intimation of a funeral pyre not unlike the one planned by Brünnhilde. As already mentioned by the Norns, Wotan is also surrounded by his

dead heroes. Waltraute adds that the Valkyries are there too. Two principal elements of the funeral orchestrated by Brünnhilde have been prescribed.

If we are to assume that Brünnhilde could have re-heard Waltraute's narration and unlocked its meaning from her memory, some requisite conditions would have to be met. Given the fact that she initially resisted hearing Waltraute because of her passionate union with Siegfried, it is reasonable that she would reconsider her sister's words after her betrayal. But in the final scene, Brünnhilde has also grasped the paradoxes of Siegfried's behaviour and fully absolved him. How could she look so favourably on him at this point? The Rhinemaidens seem an unlikely trio to have encouraged this change in perspective.

Gutrune offered another other clue to Brünnhilde's invisible activities. She mentioned that she was awoken by Brünnhilde's laughter. Carolyn Abbate and Christopher Wintle have each explored the literary history of the legend and discussed many of the fascinating aspects of Brünnhilde's laughter—its different meanings in various forms of the legend—as well as her relationship with Gutrune.⁷⁶ A myriad of approaches can be employed to probe the possible significance of Brünnhilde's laughter, which invariably occurs in the legends as her response to news of Siegfried's death. As she is not physically present at his death in Wagner's drama, it is important to examine those places in the score where her laughter occurs. According to Gutrune's brief monologue, Brünnhilde's laughter was heard *before* she was seen walking by the Rhine. In addition to creating an eerily empty atmosphere, Gutrune reminds us that different dramatic levels have been occurring simultaneously and that the order of events in each space is particular. Going back in time, we can assume that Brünnhilde has been down by the Rhine for at least part of the time that the funeral procession has been going on. When, earlier, did she laugh? Just as Siegfried was dying.

⁷⁶ See Carolyn Abbate, "Brünnhilde Walks by Night" *Unsung Voices* (Princeton University Press, 1991):206-249 and Wintle's "The Numinous in *Götterdämmerung*." The strength of Wintle's essay lies in his argument outlining the accrued significance of the sword motive and its role in creating a sense of the "numinous" in the drama's close. Abbate, on the other hand, is too determined to advance the thesis that Brünnhilde is dubiously authoritative because her meeting with the Rhinemaidens is invisible. She thus fails to realize the limited role that this meeting actually plays. Furthermore, she does not consider how Brünnhilde's laughter actually plays a role in the closing scenes, except for Gutrune's reference.

The answer to this puzzle is bound up once more with the feathered messengers. The ravens flew off after Siegfried declared his love for Brünnhilde. These are the same ravens that approach her in the final scene and respond to her command. Any news they might have carried to her would at least include mention of Siegfried's love. This would undoubtedly be the most telling message for Brünnhilde, whose struggle with the perverted image of reality has been arduous. It is the one thing she would need to know if she were to restore or even further elevate her esteem for him. To know that he had been duped is not enough. With the ravens out of sight, Hagen plunged his spear into Siegfried's back. From *Siegfried's Tod* on, Wagner intended the hero's dying moments to be a revelation which looked forward to the end of the drama. His hero of "highest consciousness" would in his final moments be enlightened somnambulistically, sharing his experience for all to hear. The first Siegfried was to be carried off to Walhall. When he first met Brünnhilde, Siegfried had been told about Wotan and Walhall and her former life there. In his dying vision he saw Brünnhilde as Wotan's child, a restored Valkyrie laughing astride her horse. He greeted her joyfully, looking forward to joining Wotan's band of heroes. In both the one- and two-part versions of the *Nibelungen* drama, this vision capped an extended passage for Siegfried that began as a simple song and evolved through his death into a wondrous moment of fearless anticipation of a better life. The passage traced a linear timeline, with his last moments anticipating Brünnhilde's final actions. In re-writing Siegfried's vision, Wagner created a more complex psychological state of consciousness. Most striking of all, it involved Brünnhilde in a process of transformation herself.

The vision we are familiar with in *Götterdämmerung* begins with Siegfried seeing Brünnhilde much as he did when he first wakened her (see example 4.3). If there is a lasting statement of Wagner's attitudes toward Siegfried and his role in the *Ring*, it is the end of the drama and its musical setting, completed roughly twenty years after the rough-and-tumble hero became a dramatic entity (1869-1872). Siegfried's song in *Götterdämmerung* is a sweeping recall of material from the preceding opera and is the most impressive and complex

Example 4.3: *Götterdämmerung*, Act III, scene 2

Siegfried, (von zwei Männern sitzend erhalten, schlägt die Augen glanzvoll auf).

Brünnhil - de!
Sehr langsam und feierlich.

Hei-li-ge Braut!

recapitulation in all of Wagner's operas.⁷⁷ His tale of the past does not end at Hagen's hateful act but becomes a song of the future through the re-awakening of Brünnhilde. Wagner accorded the most serenely sublime and luminescent music of the entire *Ring* to the awakening of Brünnhilde. This is not the music that will re-awaken her. For at the moment Hagen's spear pierces Siegfried's back, the simple recapitulatory processes of the past give way to musical and dramatic re-interpretations of unprecedented complexity.

⁷⁷ For a discussion of the formal structure of this vision in relation to the scenes of Siegfried's death, the Norns, and the last scene of *Siegfried*, see William Kinderman's "Dramatic Recapitulation in Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*," *19th-Century Music*, 4 (1981/1): 101-112.

Gunther and the hunting party are stunned at what has happened. Their solemn grief draws in the music that will accompany them as they bear Siegfried's body back to the Hall of the Gibichung. The intensity of Gunther's grief is individually profiled as a reminiscence of the so-called fate motive, drawn originally from the *Todesverkündigung* (the "Annunciation of Death" scene—Act II, scene 4 of *Die Walküre*). A musical idea of mysterious profundity, its doom-laden deep brass timbres are harmonically suggestive of transformation and capable of giving rise to a luscious melody. Its very particular deployment in the opera draws attention to its presence in the following scenes: the *Todesverkündigung* and end of *Die Walküre*; the Wotan/Erda scene and Brünnhilde's awakening in *Siegfried*; the Norns' scene, Brünnhilde with Siegfried as Gunther, Siegfried's death and the final scene in *Götterdämmerung*. As Siegfried's death is acknowledged by Gunther, the fate motive in conjunction with the intimations of the funeral music acts as a "commentary on the external, visible level of action" which frames Siegfried's vision when the funeral music unfolds in full. The fate motive recalls its original symbolic function as the omen of Siegmund's death but at the same time serves as a pivot to the "internal, or spiritual, plane of action."⁷⁸ The motive's timpani figures, pregnant with anticipation, lead directly into the awakening trope from the last scene of *Siegfried* as the dying hero is awakened on a higher metaphysical plane. This re-thinking of the motive has been prepared since the *Todesverkündigung*. Siegmund refused the hero's death that this motive announced; his love for Sieglinde outweighed any glories that another life in Walhall could offer. Save one of the scenes in which it reappears, the motive symbolizes a yet-to-be determined and elusive future, calling attention to the weakening of the pre-determined course of events.

The recapitulation of the awakening trope suspends the sense of time as Siegfried gladly greets Brünnhilde. The recall initially suggests that Siegfried is re-living a memory and has traveled back in time to the moment when he first awakened Brünnhilde. The first sign that this is not the case occurs when he begins the gesture all over again and urges her to awaken, speaking to her in the present tense. The recapitulation reaches the fate motive and

⁷⁸ Ibid., 110.

punctuates his questions as to how she could be asleep *again*. He now sees the woman whose spirit waned when she was betrayed that terrible night by the man wearing the tarnhelm, the night that the fate motive as a progenitive idea was struck mute when Siegfried drew his sword. Explaining that he again has come to awaken her, his appeal rings as magically as the woodbird's trilling and his call is answered as he proclaims that Brünnhilde is laughing to him in delight. The woodbird/raven has again served as a mediator between Siegfried and Brünnhilde. The moment of reckoning comes as this E major cry and response opens into A major and Siegfried cries "Ach!" amidst a powerful climax (see example 4.4). Once before, Siegfried uttered a pitched cry, in his first duet with Brünnhilde. After much strife and resistance to his expressions of passion, Brünnhilde finally released her energy and found that she did not destroy the hero before her as she had as a Valkyrie. Siegfried's "Ah!" of joyful surprise marked their union and Brünnhilde's fearless awakening to the delights of a human kind of love. This time, a higher shared plane of understanding has been reached, through a fearless awakening of a different kind. Siegfried is guided by Brünnhilde's pleasing invitation to join her in eternity. He responds in the affirmative: "Brünnhild' bietet mir Gruss!" ("Brünnhilde offers me greetings!") The fate motive underscoring these last words anticipates their spiritual reunion and again pivots back to the surrounding scene.

Brünnhilde's laughter of love and death is only intelligible to Siegfried but resounds through him to us. Between her laughter and Siegfried's "Ach!" lies the infinite expanse of their unspoken exchanges and their shared awareness of all that has and will transpire. Bidding farewell to the physical world, they overcome the barriers which constrained their "hearing" and Brünnhilde becomes the beneficiary of rescued knowledge, information once heard but not consciously registered. In her closing scene, she assumes Siegfried's role as the embodiment of "highest consciousness" and carries out what he can no longer do.

Brünnhilde's final monologue repeatedly seems to draw from their shared spiritual plane of understanding and voice some of what remained concealed during the vision. Her claim to be his wife ushers forth the fate motive and she corrects its external commentating function as a sign of grief. The motive returns as she gazes at Siegfried's body. As it had

Example 4.4: *Götterdämmerung*, Act III, scene 2

s. der Braut bricht er die Ban - de -

da lacht ihm Brünnhil - des

Lust - Ach!

Dieses Au - ge

e - - - wig nun of - fen! Ach, dieses

pp

cresc. .

p

piu f.

str. Hr.

dim.

piu p espressivo

pp

p

Hr. Fk. Basse.

Hrfe.

Vc.

accompanied Siegfried's questions to the sleeping woman in his vision, it is now as if she is silently communing with Siegfried, the result being her first series of commands that set the funeral preparations in motion. She lingers climactically at "hehresten Helden" ("most sublime hero"), as the motive associated with Siegfried's heroic nature unleashes a triumphant trumpet free-play in D major. This motive asserted itself in the vision in the moments before Brünnhilde's re-awakening. The heroic ideal now freed, Brünnhilde now responds with her own Valkyrie motive. More tenderly, she contemplates Siegfried before she begins his oration. At its close, her summation of paradoxes—"trog Keiner wie Er!" ("None falsier than he!")—recalls the oath-bound sword motive as Siegfried drew Nothung in Gunther's name. At this juncture, Brünnhilde restores the fate motive that gesture arrested and grants it its more lyrical expansive form. She claims it as her own as it underscores the first of her rhetorical questions and recurs throughout her answer and her second rhetorical question/answer to the proclamation "Alles, Alles, Alles weiss ich," ("All, All, All, I know"). The motive will not be heard again in its open-ended form. The Norns' questions had invoked the fate motive as a refrain, which broke off when they could not foretell the future of the ring. Brünnhilde invokes this structure but is prepared to fill in the answers.

A remarkable yet simple transformation unfolds. Shed of its last chord, the fate motive reveals itself as a version of the Rhinemaidens two-chord lament and Brünnhilde begins her message to the ravens. The strain of its descending semitone appeal gradually disappears. The curse motive emerges, but with less force than usual and is supplanted at its close by a gentler form of the two-chord fate motive now featuring a descending major second on top. Rich brass sonorities continue as Brünnhilde sings the most calming phrase of her monologue, "Ruhe, Ruhe, du Gott". At the heart of these words, the two-chord version of the fate motive oscillates and then yields a resolution. D \flat major embraces G \flat minor, a remarkable shift of colour that ushers forth a sense of the sublime, hushed and replete with otherworldly awe that tames the once proud Valhalla theme. The ur-redemptive Wagnerian trope of iv-I seals the phrase back in D \flat major, the same cadence that closes the work as a whole. Brünnhilde's negotiation with her connection to the Gods absorbs her ability to reckon with the turning point of the entire drama and her first encounter with human love. The F \sharp /G \flat minor of the

Annunciation Scene returns to heal her breach with her past as she has finally come to understand the Wälsung spirit, the choice of love over fear in the face of death, and Sieg'inde's farewell message.

Example 4.5: *Götterdämmerung*, Act III, scene 3

Trp.
Pos. marc.

poco dim. *poco f cresc.*

* *rit.* * *rit.* * *rit.* * *rit.* * *rit.* * *rit.* *

(Helle Flammen scheinen in dem Saale der Götter aufzuschlagen.)

V. Orch.

* *rit.* * *rit.* * *rit.* *

(Als die Götter von den Flammen gänzlich verhüllt sind, fällt der Vorhang.)

Etwas zurückhaltend.

VI.

cresc. *poco f* *dim.* *più p*

* *rit.* * *rit.* * *rit.* * *rit.* * *rit.* * *rit.* * *rit.* *

Im Zeitmaß.

V. Orch.

p *cresc.* *ff* *dim.*

* *rit.* *

In the closing instrumental measures of the opera (see example 4.5), Brünnhilde's central role as a liberator of the heroic ideal is manifested in a telling motivic unfolding. Siegfried's heroic motive, with trumpets and trombones in G \flat minor, carries the redemptive minor subdominant for the final cadence but turns to D major, *fortissimo*, reaching up at the moment the flames seize Walhall. Sieglinde's farewell theme, which became Brünnhilde's own in her farewell, emerges into the D \flat realm and grants the implied cadence as a calm and familiar gesture.

The portions of the Immolation scene concerning the Rhinemaidens are internal and in a sense quite practical. Contemplating the ring she has withdrawn from Siegfried's finger, Brünnhilde knows she must part with the broken symbol of their physical union. She assures the Rhinemaidens that they too can rest. Her message to them contains the long-awaited news about how the ring will be returned. She did not receive guidance from the Rhinemaidens on this count as it is she who spells out her plan as instructions, as to what will happen and what they must do. These instructions diverge from the lilting Rhinemaidens' music and recall the motive of the shining gold, and Brünnhilde describes her own heroic self-sacrifice that will give them the ring they desire. No longer a diatonic motive, it sounds B \flat major and then D major on horns, each time embracing a shared augmented sonority of B \flat -D-F \sharp at the peak of a dynamic swell. The ascent ends with a trumpet statement of the motive in G \flat minor. The last words to the Rhinemaidens are a stern warning to protect what they once allowed to be stolen. Their lilting music returns but is silenced by trombones and the last sounding of the curse motive, in B minor. Bidding the ravens on their way, Brünnhilde lights the fire.

Navigating a tonal spectrum of immense breadth, Brünnhilde's monologue surveys several associative tonalities in the course of her different addresses. Her command of these different musical-dramatic regions implies a meta-narrative as she repeatedly asserts herself as a narrator to supply missing pieces of the puzzle. What she offers is not new, but a synthesis of much that has been misunderstood or forgotten; the restoration of a meta-memory. Much of this memory is her own, but some of it explicitly draws from Siegfried's experiences. Turning to greet Grane, her address—"Grane, mein Ross! Sei mir gegrüsst!"—picks up on Siegfried's last words as she now guides the horse towards the

flames of death. Sieglinde's lyrical and ecstatic blessing, uttered only once before as a fearless celebration of a love transcending death, unfolds as Brünnhilde praises the man they will join in the flames. She specifically re-connects with the central E major section of his vision as she proclaims Siegfried's name. Sieglinde's unforgettable melody returns, sequenced, as Brünnhilde begins a description of the fire and all that it represents. Light, laughter, inspiration and love unfold out of E major; the same enlightened and joyous laughter of Siegfried's vision. Finally, she returns Siegfried's last words with her direct response: "Selig! grüsst dich dein Weib."

In this last section of Brünnhilde's monologue, augmented sonorities articulate her first and last phrases. Her opening phrase to Grane begins with her own Valkyrie motive unfolding the augmented sonority F-A-C# (m.1438). D-F#-B \flat takes over the accompaniment while her motive moves into D major before reaching its natural B- minor orientation (m.1446). The F-A-C# sonority returns at the end of her second phrase, her greeting to Grane, and again at the end of her last phrase, her greeting to Siegfried. Her motive carries this augmented sonority as she and Grane leap into the flames. The augmented sonorities which prepare Brünnhilde's culminating section and mark her last moments are generically reflective of the fire that burns and awaits her in the flickering accompaniment. But this passage also marks a redemptive act of unprecedented scope and an exertion of tremendous energy; her augmented sonorities hearken back to a particular and familiar source of inspiration.

The immediate diatonic reference of D major is to Brünnhilde's entrance in this scene and the unusual force that signalled her presence. Siegfried's upraised arm introduced Brünnhilde and the sword motive, both of which emerged quietly but soon commanded full attention. Defying Hagen from stealing the ring, Siegfried's hand raised in tribute to the woman who could return it to its rightful owners. This final act suggests that Siegfried was not only fully awakened in his vision, but is also spiritually present in the final scene. The sword motive of Brünnhilde's arrival is in D major. The complementary moment is the pivotal climax in the funeral music in which the lamenting C minor is transformed into a heroic paean

through the sword motive sounding in C major.⁷⁹ Throughout the *Ring*, these two principal forms of the sword motive have negotiated with each other like a battle between different heroic ideals. The C major form has routinely failed as an effort to seize physical reality and define its achievements as a conquest of the phenomenal realm. Its death is celebrated in Siegfried's funeral music, as a stepping stone to a better ideal. The only moment in the *Ring* where these two tonal identities of the motive co-exist and contribute to a remarkable act of destruction and renewal is the re-forging of Nothung.

As will be recalled, Siegfried "solved" the two augmented sonorities that Brünnhilde employs in her final scene when he re-forged Nothung. He rightfully claimed D major as his heroic legacy, a legacy which he has now passed to Brünnhilde. The passing of the torch is ritually enacted at the moment of Brünnhilde's arrival in the final scene. As the ritualistic aura presides from this moment until the end, D major's motivic guise of the sword gives way to the motivic expression of Siegfried's heroism as a liberated champion of the purely human. Brünnhilde's willingness to carry out the processes of liberation on a larger scale and Siegfried's guidance in this task is symbolically manifested when she claims his augmented sonorities. In doing so, she relinquishes the B-D#-G augmented sonority that marked her first cry of "Hojo-to-ho" in her entry into the drama in *Die Walküre*. She embraces Siegfried's chromatic complex and, like him, is able to draw forth her own natural tonal identity, B minor, which readily reveals its explicit relation to D major and the heroic ideal.

The battle of heroic ideals that has been worked through the two principal tonal identities of the sword motive—from Wotan's "grand idea" to Siegfried's raised hand—ultimately gives way to manifestations of humanistic heroism in action—from Loge's narrative to Donner's storm through to Siegfried's forging of Nothung and Brünnhilde's Immolation scene. Since the earliest stages in the genesis of the *Ring*, Wagner intended Brünnhilde to reclaim her Valkyrie status at the close of the drama. This basic plan did not change, but the specific part of her Valkyrie past that she would draw forth did. The idea that another dead hero would be delivered to Walhall pales in comparison with the eventual

⁷⁹ For a discussion of these two moments, the two tonal identities of the motive and their development throughout the *Ring*, see Wintle's "The Numinous in *Götterdämmerung*."

conclusion. Instead, Siegfried's death enables Brünnhilde to reclaim her memory of the love between Siegmund and Sieglinde and to clarify what she had then only imperfectly grasped. She had instinctively tried to protect the vulnerable pair, marveling at their bond though unable to understand it through personal experience, and persevered after Siegmund's death in order to protect Sieglinde and her child. What she ultimately reclaims and indeed more fully claims is her own Valkyrie downfall, her self-critique of her role as servant to Walhall, and her resultant initial act which is doubly liberating and heroic. Wagner's handling of the introduction and first scene of the third act of *Die Walküre* firmly aligns it with the humanistic heroic plane, bearing relationships to Donner's storm scene and Siegfried's re-forging of Nothung. In the final section of Brünnhilde's monologue, this double recall and fusion of Siegfried's initial act of heroism and her own yields an integrated recapitulation of compelling force.

In comparison with Siegmund, Siegfried's role in facilitating the redefinition of Brünnhilde's goals is more intimate and complex. Wagner repeatedly worked the interconnectedness between Siegfried's forging scene and Brünnhilde's actions at the end of the drama into the revisions of *Götterdämmerung* and his creation of the earlier parts of the drama. For at heart, Brünnhilde's plan is to re-forge the world. In the earliest versions of the drama, she purged the ring of its curse through fire and water. There was no anticipation of this event and it is difficult to imagine how Wagner could have created a sense of inevitability. With Siegfried's re-forging of Nothung, Wagner laid out a systematic framework for musical and dramatic regeneration that could recur in several guises and prepare the end. The destruction of the Gods was a musical and dramatic necessity which would anticipate and underscore the significance of Siegfried's death. Wagner carefully intertwined these two events, but in such a way that they were quite simple to perceive. Siegfried's melting of the sword's splinters is carried out through his introduction and first two strophes of Forging Song I. The narrative content of the two strophes concerns his account of cutting down an ash-tree and using its charcoal remains to fuel the fire.⁸⁰ Wagner's new texts for the Norns'

⁸⁰ The Nothung refrain of the Forging Songs were textually revised as the sword was previously named Balmung. The original text suggests that the different focal layers

scene similarly dedicated the first two of its three strophes to the decay of the World ash-tree. Waltraute reiterates the image of the splintered tree. She contributes the personal content of the anticipatory bonfire as similarly broken and wrought with fear. The events of *Götterdämmerung* vividly depict how the cursed power of the gold can turn brethren and lovers against each other until the splintering process is pervasive and even self-inflicted.

The idea of fusing, purging and rejuvenating the fragmented spirit of humanism is Siegfried's legacy to Brünnhilde which she puts into action. Her mysterious wanderings by the Rhine are explicitly drawn into her final monologue, once only and not in her address to the Rhinemaidens as is usually assumed. At the beginning of her Immolation scene, she directs the vassals to build a funeral pyre. It is to be located near the banks to facilitate the flooding and return of the Ring. Like Siegfried, Brünnhilde's heroic act is the straightforward application of an ideal that uses available resources in unconventional ways. As the complex structure of Siegfried's Forging Songs shows, destructive and reconstructive processes are not distinct but co-existing processes of an ongoing cycle. The implication of these songs is that an era of hammering will follow the drama. Periodically the cycle of changing states allows the extraordinary to occur, and periodically it entails a convergence of different forces. Considered as a whole, Brünnhilde's monologue optimistically emulates the end of Siegfried's Forging Songs. It is a massive gathering together and resolution of the many refrains which have woven together throughout the *Ring*, ever-evolving but eventually in search of an end.

concerning Mime and Siegfried were less subtly overlaid, a development which took place at the stage of composition. But with regards to the working of elements of the Forging Songs through *Siegfried's Tod*, one obvious textual change seems significant: the generic "Baum" ("tree") in Siegfried's fire became an "Esche" ("ash-tree").

Chapter 5
Part I - Tonality, Form and Psychology

In the third volume of 'Opera and Drama' I demonstrated that harmony becomes something *real* (rather than purely imaginary) only in the polyphonic symphony, i.e. in the orchestra, so that the purely imaginary individuality of tonalities (apologies to Hitzschold) must merge into the reality of the individuality of the different instruments, their manifold colouring and, finally, their style of execution. By clinging to the 'individuality' of tonalities, people were clinging to a chimera which, it must be said, had earlier become just as much as a dogma with us as the Dear Lord above. On the contrary, keys, it is the instruments themselves and, ultimately, the human voice *when singing words* which give a particular character to the tonality and to notes in general; thus, for ex., the characteristic individuality of a key such as E major or E \flat major emerges most distinctly when played on a violin or a wind instrument, and so it would be a case of doing things by halves if I were to use a key for its own sake and thereby ignore the instrument for its own sake alone...—The person who, in judging my music, divorces the harmony from the instrumentation does me as great an injustice as the one who divorces my music from my poem, my vocal line from the words! Yet in all these matters I have committed the error of having communicated my theories prematurely: I still owe the world what really matters, namely the work of art which, I may add, had already matured within me before the theory was ever formulated.

Wagner, in a letter to Theodor Uhlig (31 May 1852)¹

In a study of the genesis of the *Ring*, Robert Bailey has convincingly shown that Wagner's early tonal conceptions of parts of the drama influenced the development of a broad network of tonalities that indelibly affected the musical shape of the four operas.² Bailey's suggestions about how this network grew involves a series of hypotheses intended to demonstrate that Wagner had in mind a tonal plan of the entire work by the time that he was composing at the level of the composition draft. It is just such a plan, Bailey argues, that

¹ Letter 143, *Selected Letters of Richard Wagner*, trans. and ed. Stewart Spencer and Barry Millington (London and Melbourne: J.M. Dent, 1987), 261.

² The reader is again directed to Bailey's essay "The Structure of the *Ring* and its Evolution." The genesis of the *Ring* and the specific relevance of Bailey's findings to that work have been more fully discussed in chapter 4 of the present study.

guided Wagner in the formation of details that would bear relations to larger contexts. This plan remained intact as Wagner's approach to tonality evolved between 1853 to 1870, the period spanned from the time he began the composition drafts for *Das Rheingold* and *Götterdämmerung*.

Not surprisingly, Wagner's tonal practices early in this period are more closely related to those of his pre-*Ring* operas. For instance, Bailey notes Wagner's use of semi-tone or whole-tone shifts, what he calls the "expressive" use of tonality, "an outgrowth of sequential melodic construction" which can convey dramatic intensification or relaxation, such as the four strophic instalments of Tannhäuser's song which shift upward from D \flat to D to E \flat (Act I) and then to E (Act II).³ The latter two key areas of E \flat major and E major also function as "associative" tonalities. The distant tonal relation—the same keys mentioned in the letter to Uhlig—gains a three-dimensional nature throughout the drama that renders an otherwise abstract tonal conflict palpable and meaningful. A similar intersection of the expressive and associative use of tonalities exists in the middle scene of Act I of *Lohengrin*, "from the first appearance of Elsa on the stage (A \flat) up to the arrival of Lohengrin (A)."

Bailey considers associative tonalities to operate in the pre-*Ring* operas in two main ways: through motives whose pitch-specificity implies a certain tonal allegiance; and more broadly as specific key areas related to "particular characters or, in the earlier operas, underlying dramatic themes." The first case is supported by the example of the horn call associated with the Dutchman, which "is heard at its primary B-minor pitch level not only in B-minor sections, but also in others."⁴ Bailey considers the use of associated tonalities in *Tannhäuser* quite different, noting the juxtaposition of "E major for the demonic realm of the Venusberg, and E \flat major for the Pilgrims and the divine realm of which they are earthly representatives." In *Lohengrin*, Wagner "increased his palette of associative tonalities to four. The main ones are F \sharp minor for Ortrud, the demonic figure, A major for Lohengrin, the divine figure, and A \flat major for Elsa, the central protagonist in whom the main conflict between

³ Ibid. The overview on the following few pages is drawn from pp.51-53.

⁴ Ibid., 51.

demonic and divine takes place.” Bailey isolates the use of C major for the on-stage royal trumpeters of King Henry as a special case that looks forward to the “extraordinarily important” relation between particular tonalities of instruments that perform on-stage in Wagner’s later operas: Siegfried’s F-major horn calls; the C-major trumpets and trombones at the end of Act I of *Tristan und Isolde* and, in Act III, the F-minor English horn *Alte Weise*; the single-pitch F♯ of the Watchman’s horn in *Die Meistersinger*; the bells in Acts I and III of *Parsifal* fixed at the pitches of C, G, A and E. Each of these instances belongs to the realm of phenomenal music, which includes phenomenal song and invokes different performative norms than the regular operatic sphere. As this music is always of a natural, amateur and/or ceremonial nature, it triggers a more realistic and restrictive set of expectations concerning, amongst other things, the use of tonality.⁵ We will return to consider some of the particularities of phenomenal music and its relation to larger-scale tonal practices. First, a brief return to Bailey’s overview of the use of associative tonality in the *Ring* will help to illustrate Wagner’s approach as he worked on his largest and most complex project.

The first difference that Bailey notes with regards to the *Ring* is that “motives associated with individual protagonists have no specific tonal association, but instead are left free for transposition so as to fit into the changing dramatic and musical context.” By contrast, groups of characters such as the Valkyries and the Nibelungs have specific tonal associations which are not so much motive-driven, although characteristic motives may play a role, but which govern structural units and scenes in which those characters are primary. Specific tonal associations are also evident in relation to features of the poem other than individuals or groups of characters—“the Curse on the Ring, the Tarnhelm, the Sword, and Valhalla.” In these cases, pitch-specific motives “determine the tonality of the larger structural units in which they appear as main themes.” In summary, Bailey states that “the *Ring* has at least seven elements with fixed tonal association, two of which take on a secondary

⁵ This is also the case when we hear the phenomenal songs of characters in *Tannhäuser* and *Die Meistersinger* who are prized by their peers for their abilities as singers and songwriters. We do not expect their songs to appeal to the same aesthetic as the opera in which they sing.

association in addition.” Siegfried’s horn, when played by an on-stage instrument, is in F major. The Nibelungs are associated with B♭ minor. The Valhalla motive is usually in its initial D♭ major, but later also in E major, as the Sword motive gains an association with D major in addition to its C major form. The other three specific tonal associations all involve B minor: the Valkyries, the Curse on the Ring, and the Tarnhelm. Evidence for three of these associative uses of tonalities survives from early stages in the work’s genesis. The 1850 sketch for the Valkyries as a group employs B minor. The 1851 sketch for the main part of the Prelude to *Der junge Siegfried* includes the Nibelung rhythm in B♭ minor. While working on the preliminary draft for the first scene of *Das Rheingold*, Wagner jotted down: “Walh: Des-dur”.⁶

With regards to the evolution of Wagner’s approach to tonality and his more sophisticated handling of chromaticism, Bailey notes that by the time of *Tristan und Isolde* “the use of both major and minor modes of a given key is characteristic of Wagner’s treatment of tonality, and for purposes of large-scale organization, he worked with twelve ‘chromatic’ keys rather than with twenty-four distinct major and minor ones. In describing the tonality of large sections, it is therefore best simply to refer to the key without specifying its mode, since such a specification would create arbitrary and often false notions of Wagner’s tonal procedure.”⁷ In the later phases of composing the *Ring*, working with tonalities as fully chromatic modes enabled Wagner to work with his initial tonal plan in ways that Bailey claims the composer “himself could not have foreseen”: “the new approach permitted him to control larger structural units than ever before.”⁸ As will be recalled, the 1850 sketches for *Siegfried’s Tod* employed the respective tonalities of E♭ and B for the Norns and the Valkyries. In his analysis of the first act of *Götterdämmerung*, Bailey convincingly shows how these two tonalities came to function as a double-tonic complex governing the tonal structure of the

⁶ Ibid., see n.11, p.54

⁷ Robert Bailey, *The Genesis of ‘Tristan und Isolde’ and a Study of Wagner’s Sketches for the First Act* (Princeton University, Ph.D Dissertation, 1969), 149.

⁸ Bailey, “The Structure of the *Ring* and its Evolution,” 60.

entire act. He had noted a similar tonal-structural principle at work in his earlier analysis of the first act of *Tristan und Isolde*.⁹

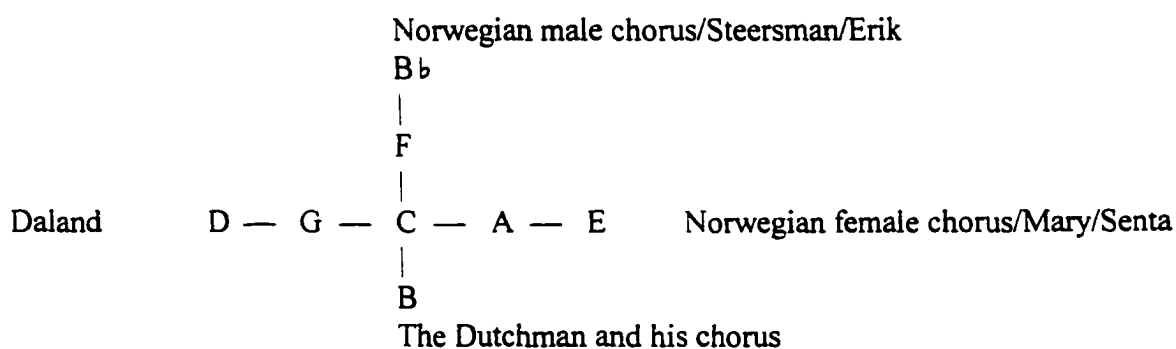
While Wagner's later tonal practices display a more masterful handling of associative tonalities, capable of subtle interaction in accordance with the drama, many of the basic strategies that Bailey highlights in his *Götterdämmerung* analysis were already part of Wagner's repertoire in the early 1840s. These strategies were undoubtedly part of larger-scale tonal planning, including the treatment of an associative tonality as chromatic space; the extension of a primary associative tonality through dominant and subdominant relations to indicate the relative strength of that tonality; the use of conventional harmonic relations to navigate within and between associative tonalities to suggest stability and compatibility in the drama; and the use of less conventional tonal practices as indicators of psychological transformation and unusual states as well as dramatic tension or incompatibility.

In *Der fliegende Holländer*, for example, a basic large-scale tonal plan functions throughout the opera (see figure 5.1). Each arm of the schema below extends a different series of harmonic relations which intersect at the tonality of C. At the risk of making what may seem a bold over-generalization, the tonality of C is set apart as a benchmark of reality. It is a tonal space open to all individuals or groups of people who shape it to express what they perceive to be the reality of the phenomenal world. This space has a general set of rules about form attached to it. Expressions are structured so as to reflect and appeal to the modes of cognition regarded as suitable to the phenomenal realm. They must appeal more to form than formlessness, but also reflect, through form, the nature of the reality that is being

⁹ See Bailey's "The Genesis of *Tristan und Isolde* and a Study of Wagner's Sketches and Drafts for the First Act" (Princeton University, Ph.D. Dissertation, 1969). Numerous other commentators have found the concept of a multiple-tonic complex a viable approach not only to Wagner's works from the mid-1860s on, but to a great deal of nineteenth-century music. For a valuable collection of recent essays that explores analytical approaches along this line, see *The Second Practice of Nineteenth-Century Tonality*, ed. Harald Krebs and William Kinderman (Lincoln and London, University of Nebraska Press, 1996). Also see Harald Krebs' "Alternatives to Monotonicity in Early Nineteenth-Century Music," *Journal of Music Theory* 25 (1981): 1-16, and Christopher Lewis's "Mirrors and Metaphors: Reflections on Schoenberg and Nineteenth-Century Tonality," *19th-Century Music* 9, no.1 (summer 1987): 26-42.

described. Any public use of the tonality may and can be interpreted according to the normatively-defined set of beliefs that reality is rationally and physically determined. The linking harmonic relation of each arm of the framework to the tonality of C establishes the hierarchical order by which the various characters advocate or express faith in the norm of reason; the progression shifts from strongest to weakest as one moves clockwise from Daland round to the Dutchman and his crew. The vertical axis of the basic tonal plan joins the arms which are handled so as to emphasize the sharpest contrasts. The upper arm associated with the Norwegian male chorus and Erik is further contrasted with the entire horizontal axis. On the whole, the horizontal axis is open to more fluid and malleable musical-dramatic handling. Through its major and minor forms, the tonality of A readily opens up possibilities of interaction with C as well as with its dominant-related keys. Furthermore, the scope of possibilities includes harmonious interaction with the tonality of B. By contrast, the entire upper arm of the vertical axis including C is riddled with semi-tonal relations at the level of interaction with B.

Figure 5.1: *Der fliegende Holländer*, overview of tonal framework



At the local level of tonal organization, modality is a primary means for governing harmonic motion within the plan and to other key areas, while serving the obvious dramatic function of qualifying characters' emotional states. Recapitulating a point discussed in Chapter 2, the minor mode's naturally featured flattened sixth is often used as a vehicle for excursions to keys beyond this basic plan. Hence the Dutchman's despairing view of reality, in C minor, draws in A \flat and other flat keys beyond B \flat , as does Erik's use of B \flat minor in

Act II. The flattened sixth and relative major/minor relation that is centrally manifested in the A-C arm of the basic schema is developed into a musical-dramatic idea that recurs in different forms throughout the work.¹⁰ The original link of Senta's Ballad to C major, which is preserved in her response to Erik's dream, symbolically underpins the violent upset to publicly maintained rules of reason and perceptions of reality caused by the evolution of the refrain from a tentative hypothesis to a somnambulistically ecstatic assertion. Erik, twice the audience to Senta's transgression, never expresses his confidence in reality and he keeps the flat side of C in play when he returns in Act III. In both Acts I and II, the B \flat /F area that Erik shares with the other Norwegian men has an association with nature and horns. It is a slightly more vulnerable and less predictable realm, where storms and dreams take place. Once safely back at home, however, the Norwegian male chorus haughtily claims C major. Through the women and the ghostly chorus, the tonalities of A and B are also both worked into the earlier parts of Act III. The B minor of the spectral chorus is freely modulated, violating the formal implications of strophic song, which closes in C major as the last "laugh" of the scene. Senta's final contribution is to relocate B minor to the vertical axis, not to C but to D major, by exerting the relative major of the refrain of the Dutchman's departing chorus.

Neither the open fifths, the deep brass or the B-minor orientation of the so-called Dutchman's motive is associated with the Dutchman we see and hear in the opera. Rather they are all associated with his cursed existence aboard his ship, flying across the stormy seas. It is this association that draws the motive into the Act I Sailors' Song (choral and solo versions), Senta's Ballad and the song of the Dutchman's chorus. Neither in the Dutchman's monologue nor in either version of Senta's Ballad is the motive specifically associated with B. Within the opera, the Dutchman partakes of the horizontal axis of the tonal plan, with some extensions enabled through his minor mode excursions. B minor belongs quite properly

¹⁰ It will be remembered that Senta's command of the specific A minor/C major relation was affected by Wagner's transposition of parts of her role in Act II, including the Ballad. While the A major/A minor relation between the female chorus and Senta was deliberate and serves a symbolic function that explores the tonality of A as a chromatic mode on the broader scale, the harmonic syntax distinguishing each mode preserves the essential nature of the dramatic contrast in the portions that were transposed.

to the fringes of the work, to the Dutchman's arrival and departure. The tonality of B does figure in Act II, first through Mary, who is somewhat fearful of Senta's preoccupation, and then later in the duet between Senta and the Dutchman as redemption seems within grasp. In both cases the associative tonality of B is reached through E, quite naturally, and it loses its minor-mode orientation.

From this brief overview, Wagner's first real aesthetic experiment reveals a tonal plan that is more developed and is a more influential organizing element than is usually assumed. On the broadest level, his deployment of the plan shows that he regarded tonality as chromatic space, capable of being diffracted in different ways that could nevertheless suggest binding relationships. It is important to note that Wagner seems to have aesthetically valued the profiling of multiple parts of the tonal plan within the level of the scene, a practice which naturally harmonizes with dialectical processes. Also noteworthy is the fact that Wagner's associative use of tonality is less specifically representative than is almost always suggested. We may assume points of reference to particular people, places, things, emotions and the like because there is typically an abundance of information, including motives, that point to such ways of explaining the significance of the music that we hear. It is convenient to use labels of this sort, as in the schema above, but they are more misleading than the conventional names of motives. A particular tonality may strike us as noteworthy at a given moment because it claims a form that calls attention to itself, like a motive, and perhaps even through a motive. Distinguishing elements which somehow trigger our memory at instances of recurrence are necessary if we are to sense some relationship that binds discrete passages. But compared to the handling of motives, associative tonalities concern a musical parameter that operates on a different scale and encompasses other parameters in greater scope and variety. *Der fliegende Holländer* is a simple but nevertheless instructive case that shows that Wagner thought about tonalities in terms of perspective and states of being, the main determinants in the ways that he populated and shaped tonalities.

Wagner's handling of the associative tonalities of E and E \flat in *Tannhäuser* continues in the same vein. In Act I, each of Tannhäuser's strophes begins as an acknowledgment of the delights of the Venusberg but becomes an expression of his desire to return to the natural

world. When he begins his song, it is a realistic kind of phenomenal performance with harp accompaniment. The subsequent strophes gain increasingly full accompaniments, but the E \flat major strophe does not approach the rich scoring of the E- major *Bacchanale*. In addition to its textual rejection of the Venusberg, the song's simple structure cannot accommodate its more chromatic idiom and fluid forms. From the moment that Tannhäuser awakens and participates in the opera, he advances an aesthetic argument, first in recounting his dream and then more concretely through his song. He yearns to feel the regenerative cycles of nature whose varied extremes offer different kinds of inspiration than the Venusberg and lend time a different shape. E \flat returns at the beginning of scene 4, also a passage of phenomenal music-making, as an E \flat horn group contributes to the offstage fanfares and echoes. In the complementary horn passage at the end of the scene, the E \flat horn group is dropped and the tonal orientation favours F major.

E reasserts itself through the dominant projection of B major that frames the song contest in Act II and punctuates its preparations. It may seem strange, random or even unsymbolic that the choruses of Wartburgians sing in B major. I would suggest that this relation was intended for the primary reason that this scene is their toned down version of the *Bacchanale*, their own manner of "letting go." As the scene opens, on-stage horns again participate, this time offering a diatonic B- major refrain around which the choruses sing more chromatically. Modulatory digressions are facilitated by the appearance of different groups of attendees, but these are periods of dutiful restraint and social decorum, a sort of counterpart to the *Bacchanale* phases of post-sexual repose. These cycles of natural ebullience and ceremonial order end when the Landgrave establishes a solemn tone for the song contest proper. The structured songs of Wolfram (E \flat) and Walther (B \flat) are expressive but not adventurous and they properly contrast with the more candid and animated expressions of the chorus. The light scoring of the songs manifests this restraint at the same time that it emulates the realistic performance style of Tannhäuser's first strophe. Heard in this context, Tannhäuser's contribution to the contest and the last strophe of his Act I song are hardly restrained. The piece is too richly scored and speaks too familiarly of the Venusberg, in E major, and attempts a deviant close in D major. The ensuing diminished

sevenths and chromatic textures is an expanded form of the response to Senta's close of the Ballad.

The semitonal conflict re-emerges within Tannhäuser's Act III "Rome Narration," a solo containing shifts of perspective that are bound up with his specific pilgrimage. Within the narrated sequence of events, Tannhäuser grants E \flat major with a deep brass accompaniment to the thousands that he saw blessed. E \flat moves to its dominant just before the characteristic motive of the Act III Prelude and the beginning of the "Rome Narration" returns. Whereas the motive's regularity and lack of symbolic import had earlier implied an objective mode of narration, it now undergoes considerable chromatic distortion as Tannhäuser describes his personal appeal for redemption. The motive disintegrates, but leaves behind unstable diminished sonorities which finally rest on the dominant seventh of E \flat in anticipation of the Pope's pronouncement. Tannhäuser's delivery of the Pope's message is monotone, a capella, and the trombones and bass tubas from a few moments earlier return as ominous C-minor chords between the phrases. When the vocal line moves away from E \flat it traces an E \flat -minor sonority before converging with the accompaniment in a *fortissimo* diminished sonority. According to Tannhäuser's account, he then fell unconscious. When he awoke, he heard the Pilgrims' songs of praise and prayer from afar. Both the physical relocation of the Pilgrims and Tannhäuser's disillusionment are realized through the projection of their earlier E \flat onto the more distant G \flat , which serves as the dominant of B. The same projection was effected when the Elder Pilgrims had actually returned in the preceding scene, singing a capella in E \flat major. In despair, because Tannhäuser was not amongst the group, Elisabeth began to pray for her own redemption in G \flat major. She pleaded that, even if she should not be deemed worthy, divine grace might be granted to Tannhäuser. The recapitulation of this local level E \flat -G \flat pairing (the dramatic sequence of events inverts the real time sequence) is tangible and facilitates an important relation that impacts the end of the drama, when E \flat is restored with great force. Elisabeth's prayer is an intensified and individualized form of the Pilgrims' appeal and does bring about Tannhäuser's redemption. Unaware of this potentiality, the recognizable redemptive form of E \flat is weakened throughout his narration before being cast off. His subsequent invocation of Venus and E major relies primarily on the dominant area of B, a

weaker form of the initial association that effects a larger-scale relation to the B tonality in the last scene of Act II. Immediately, the dominant emphasis implies that E is not so much a desired choice but a default position in what Tannhäuser perceives to be a limited sphere of options. The E \flat that immediately follows is a specific and drastic reinterpretation of Tannhäuser's quotation of the Pope. Gone is the unstable chromaticism. The solo voice of denial becomes a group of male soloists singing with the elder Pilgrims, who are initially offstage. The added force of off-stage trombones colours both Wolfram's pronouncement that Tannhäuser has been saved and Elisabeth's funeral procession.

It should be noted that the two groups of Pilgrims are only directly associated with the tonality of E \flat in Act III. Both in Act I, scene 3, and at the end of Act II, the Pilgrims sing in G major. In the first case, the dramatic focus of the scene gradually shifts to the Pilgrims from the Shepherd's dream narration and portrayal of none other than Venus's world—the pagan realm of Dame Holda—as a source of artistic inspiration (see Chapter 4, Part 1). Localized modulations resist the tonic-dominant patterns in G major that set off the scene. The Shepherd's recounting of his dream inflects his solo towards B major. Subsequently, the central portions of the elder Pilgrims' song undergoes tension-laden shifts towards B minor and major as a symbol of the need for redemption, while at the same time further manifesting the latent presence of E in the greater scheme of things. Tannhäuser identifies directly with these E-related portions and participates at this level. As the Pilgrims move further off and closer to Rome, their song breaks off mid-section. The feint of a tonal return and close in G major is overridden by the reality that they are still singing. The intimation of the Pilgrims continuation is realized through the entry of the off-stage horns. They first resolve G to C major but then yield another colour to G: E \flat major. At the close of Act II, the G-B relation in the redemptive form of the Pilgrims emerges in three different forms, first through Elisabeth, then the Landgrave and then the younger group of Pilgrims. Each emergence temporarily calms the enraged male Wartburgians, anchored in B, thus creating a tonal and structural parallel with the beginning of the scene but involving a different dramatic scenario that recapitulates the solo "hearing" of the Pilgrims in Act I on a broader scale.

In Act III, where the Pilgrims have moved beyond their G-B chant to the redeemed state of E \flat , G major is represented by Wolfram. Improvising on his harp after Elisabeth has disappeared from sight, his E \flat major and D major arpeggios doubly forecast the B \flat major of his reflection on past events and his song to the evening star. Both Elisabeth's prayer and Wolfram's solo mark reincarnations of the song forms of the earlier acts. The difference is that both of these songs are private utterances of grief and appeals to higher forces. More fully scored than his first song, Wolfram's second song employs expressive modal shifts within a G major framework. He defends Elisabeth's purity and prays that she will be received in heaven. In the measures before his final cadence, as he sings "wenn sie entschebt dem Thal der Erden, ein sel'ger Engel dort zu werden", the relative minor, E minor, opens into a luminescent *pianissimo* turn towards E major, foreshadowing the tremendous redemptive force that Elisabeth will soon realize.

In Wagner's later operas, associative tonalities which are used as primary structural determinants are usually prefigured at the motivic level.¹¹ In this respect, Werner Breig's reading of the Sirens' music in Act I is provocative and convincing. The Sirens' Tristanesque shading was already conceived for the first version of *Tannhäuser*. In that version, the Sirens are first heard as the transition to the first scene and Tannhäuser's awakening. Using the twelve-tone chromatic scale as a reference, Breig suggests that the suspended dissonance on the first syllable of "Strande" makes sense as two chords with the common note G. Enharmonically speaking, these two chords are E minor and E \flat major.¹² There is a kind of dramatic logic that thrives on this very ambiguity. The Sirens represent the first instance of a *capella* four-part harmony, the textural domain later assumed by the Pilgrims. And whereas Wagner's first revisions included making visible the "invisible" scenes involving Venus and Elisabeth at the end of the opera, he never seems to have thought twice about the Sirens.

¹¹ See William Kinderman's introduction to *The Second Practice of Nineteenth-Century Tonality*, 5-6.

¹² Werner Breig, "The Musical Works," in *Wagner Handbook*, ed. Ulrich Müller and Peter Wapnewski, trans. ed. John Deathridge, trans. Paul Knight and Horst Loeschmann (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press), 425-6.

Unlike the Dutchman's crew, the Sirens are always invisible. In his revisions to the opening sections of *Tannhäuser*, Wagner both unpacked and clarified his original idea as he introduced the Sirens within the *Bacchanale*. The semi-tonal relation is more expansively treated, as the dancers' frenzied climax in E is followed by a relaxed phase in E \flat . The invisible stage band which prompts the Sirens semi-tonally reinterprets the main orchestra's dominant, B \flat , to lead into B major. While the stage band is their primary instrumental counterpart, emerging mostly between phrases, it is a pit horn—horns in E and B are available in the on-stage band—that sounds B during their long-held dissonant sonority. It is, after all, the opera orchestra that is first re-awakened.

In these two earlier operas, Wagner's handling of tonality at all levels of organization is dramaturgically sound and quite obviously the byproduct of coordinated work on the libretto and music. His musical language soon evolved into a more thoroughly chromatic style, opening up new possibilities of working within and between tonalities, but he continued to think of tonality and deploy tonal networks through his drama in basically similar ways. The relative abundance of tonal processes which can be accommodated within a classical diatonic analytical model clouds our ability to recognize the early stage at which his conception of tonality as chromatic musical and dramatic space influenced the structure of his works. But such a model is hard pressed to make musical or dramatic sense of large-scale dimensions of form and resists acknowledging how local-level chromaticism and inter-related tonal areas are connected to these broader levels. It is not satisfactory to explain the digressions from diatonic, monotonal practices in *Der fliegende Holländer* and *Tannhäuser* as collectively pertaining to some common practice of employing chromaticism as a dualistic alternative which creates an effect of otherness but lacks deeper levels of meaning. For as is clear in these two cases, Wagner regarded diatonic space as a subset of chromatic space. He strove to inter-relate a variety of subsets within a chromatic mode and to connect different chromatic modes in dramatically perceptible ways. This must be recognized for Wagner's associative use of tonality and the tonal structure of his works as a whole to be viewed in this context. The questions "why?" and "how?" Wagner drew the Valkyries, the Curse on the Ring, and the Tarnhelm into the sphere of B minor yield convincing and suggestive answers.

Patrick McCreless's discussion of the conceptual framework of chromatic space offers several points worth repeating here in full:

The historical development of chromatic space in the nineteenth century involved a gradual and almost imperceptible progression from a state of affairs where such leaps into chromatic space catered to the inculturated security of global diatonic space by adopting conventional linear-motivic means to rationalize them and by limiting their absolute duration to a state of affairs where the demand to hear chromatic space is so pervasive that we must hear on its terms rather than on the terms of diatonic space. In Wagner's works from the *Ring* on, the historical process becomes complete, and our concept of structural levels is turned upside down with respect to diatonic and chromatic space. Of course, this space can and must be expressed locally, even in long stretches of music, through the prolongation of diatonic space. I might even suggest that, say, at the beginning of a Wagner opera, our internal programming leads us to hear in diatonic space, but only until such time as that space is threatened by chromatic space, thus shifting us into a perceptual mode whereby we hear individual diatonic prolongations in the context of a broader chromatic context. Accordingly, our diatonic space is necessarily foreground with respect to the chromatic space demanded by the whole, which accordingly must be viewed as background. The background is no longer *given* but *chosen*: the background is that scheme of ordered harmonic relations that the composer chooses to shape a particular piece. Each such background is, to quote Benjamin Boretz, a "hypothesis of what can be learned to be heard"; each piece is a composer's hypothesis (and I use this positivistic term fully realizing that nineteenth-century composers probably thought more in terms of expression and originality than in terms of experiment) of how chromatic space can be distributed coherently in event space.¹³

One further example will demonstrate how this conceptual framework bears on associative tonalities before taking a closer look at *Tristan und Isolde*, the Wagner opera that places the greatest demands on us to hear in chromatic space. The Prelude to *Das Rheingold* is generally understood to be in E♭ major, a pure diatonic state that is continuously elaborated. As the first scene opens, diatonic modulations still support E♭ as tonic. Chromatic pitches are not introduced until m. 162 when Flosshilde warns her sisters to guard the slumbering Gold. To understand this stretch of music as "in E♭ major" is not exactly

¹³ Patrick McCreless, "An Evolutionary Perspective on Nineteenth-Century Semitonal Relations," in *The Second Practice of Nineteenth-Century Tonality*, 102-3.

incorrect, but it does not acknowledge how and why the entire section resists a straightforward reading or hearing. From the opening phrases, Wagner chose *not* to establish E \flat as diatonic space in the conventional sense. What he suppressed or excluded, was done for dramatic reasons that become clear in the opening scene, contributing to the expressive impact. The principle of exclusion that he employs threatens the very definition of E \flat major long before Flosshilde alerts us of the vulnerability of the *status quo*.

From a formal standpoint, the Prelude's shape as a theme and variations, with an introduction, is uncontentious: introduction (16 mm.); theme - horn canon (32 mm.); variation I (32 mm.); variation II (16 mm.); variation III (16 mm.); variation IV (16 mm.). The E \flat -major sonority which permeates the Prelude proper does so primarily with the chord tones E \flat -G-B \flat .¹⁴ Only these tones form the horn canon theme (mm. 17-48). Beginning at m. 49, the first variation of the horn canon includes the second and fourth scale degrees, both introduced as passing tones. Sounding together in m.50, F/A \flat do not imply completion of a triad as ii (with C) or as vii $^{\circ}$ (with D); neither of the requisite pitches has yet sounded. The B \flat which occurs in the melody in that measure (along with B \flat sounding in the E \flat /B \flat pedal) suggests the F/A \flat combination as part of an incomplete V 7 /E \flat . The omission of D affects the quality of the chord in several ways. Its lack emphasizes the intervals of a perfect fifth and minor third, but not the major and minor thirds which comprise a B \flat major triad, and the internal $^{\circ}5$ is avoided altogether. Thus B \flat -F/A \flat is an approximation of the structure of a major triad, with the minor third interval sounding at the top of the chord structure and the perfect fifth as a substitute major third. Within the sequential unfoldings of mm. 53-6 and mm. 57-60, transpositions involve the previously unsounded tone D as a passing tone. In both instances (mm. 54 and 57), D completes the harmonization of the dominant chord B \flat /D/F previously implied in m. 49.

The overall structure of the first variation of the horn canon is such that the initial twelve measures, already a three-fold sequential unfolding of the initial four-bar idea, are again sequentially unfolded an octave higher in the ensuing twelve measures, with minor

¹⁴ Here I am considering the Prelude proper as the music which precedes Wagner's directions for the curtain to be raised (mm.1-129 inclusive).

developments in the accompaniment reinforcing rhythmic definition but not suggestive of much harmonic development. The dominant is weakly suggested, as is the linear implication of D completing a iii chord in mm.75 and 78. The last eight measures of the first variation mark a rapid retrenchment in terms of range. The mildly generative forces of melodic sequencing are subsumed in the collapse. The ensuing variations develop rhythmic intensity and denser textures, but harmony, as a shaping force, is rendered inert. Allusions to passing sonorities are increasingly relegated to the rhythmic fringes.

The leading-tone D does not reappear in variations II-IV and the harmonic language does not venture beyond the boundaries established prior to the eight-measure segment concluding Variation I. This includes only the E \flat major triad, an incomplete dominant and an intimation of the dominant seventh which can be understood as a major chord substitute. The two fleeting allusions to a minor triad (mm.75 and 78) in that variation's last eight measures are contained within the diatonic language of E \flat major and represent the only minor mode allusions in the entire Prelude. In conjunction with the albeit more concrete exploration of V, this brief allusion to iii, which also hinges on the appearance of the leading-tone D, limits the harmonic network of the Prelude to chords rooted on tones belonging to the E \flat major triad.

The Prelude flows continuously into the opening scene with an eight-measure transitional section that coincides with the raising of the stage curtain. Wagner's stage directions for what the audience sees at this point are: "Volles Wogen der Wassertiefe" ("The waters in full flood"). This is the first time since the music began that the entire pitch-class set of E \flat major streams forth. It is the first time that we hear the sixth pitch of E \flat , C. Four-fold rising scalar passages maintain the pace of continuous sixteenth notes developed in Variations II-IV amidst the rhythmic punctuation of rising E \flat major chords, passing notes having been foregone in the harmonized melody. The sounding of chords with specific non-chord tones in the scalar figures does not articulate a broader harmonic spectrum and arpeggiated string figures furiously fill the registral range spanned by the chordal and scalar gestures. Within eight brief measures the surface of musical events has become saturated, the entire orchestra participates, and the Rhine has become visible as the playground of the Rhinemaidens. While

the busyness of this transition seems to sketch a polar contrast to the introductory measures of the Prelude, neither the glittering musical surface nor the visual representation before us comments on the identity of the forms which we can now see.

Woglinde's first utterance reshapes the soundscape. By tonal omission, rather than extension (which could only, at this point, mean chromaticism), we hear only five of the seven possible tones we have heard so far. Without either G or D, the resultant pentatonic scale operates within the parameters established by E \flat major to engender a new tonal quality. Above an E \flat pedal point, and A \flat -major arpeggiations, Woglinde weaves through an A \flat -major triad with an added major sixth, F. The pitch C, which had only been introduced in the scalar figures of the transition, becomes a functional contributor to the harmonic language in the vocal line and accompaniment. This contribution enables the opera's first firmly established relation of E \flat as IV, not V, while D is temporarily banished. In m. 144, Wellgunde claims the same pentatonic space as her sister but F-minor arpeggiations create a change in harmonic colour. This first fully developed minor sonority is not granted independence but is tightly allied to Woglinde's relative major. Wellgunde's question to her sister and Woglinde's response are metaphorically apt enough: "Woglinde, wach'st du allein?"; "Mit Wellgunde wär'ich zu zwei" ("Woglinde, do you watch alone?; With Wellgunde, I would be two"). Their co-existing sonorities share diatonic space grounded in E \flat major at the very moment she sings "zwei".

Frolicking about, Wellgunde reaches out to catch her sister, but Woglinde swims away, reaching outside the pentatonic sphere through the pitch G. Dominant cadential preparation re-establishes E \flat major, sufficient for Flosshilde's entry and her conservative nature. This internal cadence initiates a quotation of the melodic and rhythmic figure (similarly orchestrated) first heard in variation II of the Prelude. After two measures, however, the idea breaks down. At m. 158, a shift in sonority entails the most noticeable contrast of harmonic colour heard so far. Oddly enough, it is a relatively normal harmonic relation, a turn to the relative minor. The shift at m. 158 is the first point of harmonic interest in Warren Darcy's analysis of the opera. Darcy comments that it "forms the dramatic crux of the entire section [mm. 1-181 in his analysis], and Wagner clearly wished to highlight it musically. He

accomplished this through a harmonic change to C minor (the first time since the beginning of the opera that the bass has left E \flat) coupled with an augmentation of the vocal rhythms".¹⁵

Other aspects of the pre-history of the arrival of C minor also seem significant and serve to comment on the nature of the E \flat realm. As was already mentioned, C was completely absent from the Prelude and made an innocuous entry in the transition. Its latent harmonic force is felt at the very beginning of the first scene as it enables both F and A \flat to sound as fundamental notes of triads not previously heard. In this relative major/minor pair, A \flat major continues to resound, albeit in the background, as it allows F minor to enter the melody and main level of accompaniment. By contrast, E \flat completely gives way to C minor so that it is the first minor sonority to sound alone. The 'late' and dramatic arrival of C as a harmonic force is neither chance nor unprepared. Flosshilde throws a new curve on the situation. Just as the obvious harmonic relation of C to E \flat is heard, she reminds her sisters of the gold and their equally obvious relation to it as watchmaidens. Her text is a revelation to the audience, because until this point we have had no evidence that a piece of gold even exists in the dark waters or that the Rhinemaidens have a job to do. We have had to wait for Flosshilde to give us clues as to what the C, which has crept into the scene, might mean.

Flosshilde's warning is not trivial and she moves further abreast to avail herself of diminished sonorities and then chromatic pitches, beginning in m.162. Her intimation that negligence in guarding the gold is not without consequence rests on V⁷/B \flat (m. 165). Resolving promptly to B \flat , the other "missing" or suppressed dimension of E \flat comes to the forefront. The playful sisters see no reason to pay heed to Flosshilde, eluding her words and her music as they elude her grasp, and Alberich makes his first appearance. The key areas of B \flat and C both play pivotal associative roles that leave their dramatic mark on the E \flat -major realm. When the gold is illuminated by a ray of sunshine through dominant-tonic motion to C major, it becomes a gleaming reality in the trumpet motive—the most concretely shaped musical idea up to that point. But as Flosshilde had essentially warned us, C is not a stable point within E \flat major. Neither is the C-major triad of the trumpet motive. Wellgunde and

¹⁵ Darcy, *Wagner's 'Das Rheingold'*, 95.

Woglinde reveal the musical details of this weak spot together with news about the power of the gold. Alberich, already poised to seek new means of satisfaction, uses their cues to full advantage.

Darcy relates the large-scale harmonic progression of E \flat major-C major-C minor both to linear E \flat -E \natural -E \flat motion and to the staging progression twilight-light-darkness. Structural cohesion at and between various analytical levels supports his view that the dramatic plan is driven by the associative tonalities of E \flat and C.¹⁶ Meanwhile, the distinctive modal shift that bears the sense of tragedy at the end of the scene will be taken over by Alberich, colouring the B \flat realm as it assumes new relations to other associative tonalities in the unfolding exposition of the drama. Working within the possibilities of a single chromatic mode, Wagner used a subtle strategy to plan a “dramatic crux” that would unlock meaning to all that precedes it and would influence how we hear what follows it. After the C-minor warning, we are suspicious of the dominant-tonic relation when it finally arrives and are repeatedly cued to regard E \flat and B \flat as incompatible.

Wagner indirectly prepares us for Flosshilde’s warning through the harmonic flatness of the preceding music. I would even suggest that if we were not surprised by her announcement (pretending that we do not know the opera beforehand), that suspicion might stem from and reflect back upon the Prelude. At first acquaintance, the variation form of the instrumental Prelude might imply a linear kind of development, increasingly shaping an idea that makes sense as the flowing Rhine. An alternative way of regarding the relation between musical form and dramatic meaning results from reconsidering the harmonic language. The first variation had hinted at diatonic stability in a context where the added richness was held in balance with developments in the melody and rhythm. However, the end of the variation and the ensuing variations emphasized that this level of coordination was retracted. Variations II-IV are developmental in a different way, and the absence of a harmonic foundation goes hand in hand with a shift towards incomprehensibility. The melody that becomes the last vestige of our ability to sense form obliterates itself in giddy glissandi as the curtain rises.

¹⁶ Ibid., 87-8.

Ultimately, the Prelude stands in two parts and Flosshilde directs us to hear it that way. Her warning to her sisters is a warning to us that the twilit realm of E \flat is not what it seems. At her entry, the recall of the Prelude's second variation takes us back to the moment when the illusion started to grow. This recall readily confesses its deception and disappears. Flosshilde gives us a clue to an alternate view of reality, but it is one that only manifests its full impact after the tonality of C has attempted to exert autonomy. The gleaming gold's C-major and trumpet motive also prove to be a chimera, for the waters around it have already turned murky. All along, the theft of the gold and the turn to C minor seem inevitable. E \flat as E \flat major hardly stood a chance from the beginning.

Part II - Associative Tonalities in *Tristan und Isolde*

Wagner's enthusiasm for the philosophy of Schopenhauer during the time that *Tristan und Isolde* came into being is well known. It is tempting, given the seemingly new direction that the musical world of *Tristan* pursued, to seek answers in this philosophical stimulus. The relationship that has most often been suggested is that Wagner shifted his approach to the age-old words vs. music debate. This view advanced by Jack Stein in his influential 1960 book *Richard Wagner and the Synthesis of the Arts* is that music as the language of the unconscious and the Schopenhauerian will gained the upper hand.¹⁷ Stein's position stems from a willingness to excise Schopenhauer's concept of music as the artistic embodiment of the will from his larger philosophical argument, while interpreting Wagner's concept of drama to mean primarily the sung text of the libretto. Overlooked is the fact that Schopenhauer's prioritization of music amongst the arts was motivated by what he perceived as apt artistic analogies to psychological, physiological and philosophical processes. His understanding of compositional strategies was rudimentary at best and his discussion of music *per se* is not an impressive attempt at aesthetics as applied philosophy.

Only once did Wagner publish an essay discussing Schopenhauer's ideas about music. In the introduction to his 1870 essay entitled "Beethoven," Wagner hailed Schopenhauer for privileging music and recognizing its essential differences from the poetic and visual arts. He then set out to succeed where Schopenhauer had failed. In Wagner's view, Schopenhauer's thesis that music naturally pertains to the noumenal realm was not a paradox, defying all manner of explanation. In fact, he found Schopenhauer's own theories about dreams and somnabulistic clairvoyance the perfect vehicle to recast the aesthetic debate, embracing ideas about artistic creation, performance and reception. When Wagner began reading Schopenhauer in the fall of 1854, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* was not a new book. Published in 1819, its pessimistic perspective on the will and the phenomenal world might

¹⁷ Stein, Jack, *Richard Wagner & the Synthesis of the Arts* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1960).

seem proleptic, anticipating the spirit of the later nineteenth century. His notions about the unconscious and dreams were less exceptional. They harmonized with many ideas already in circulation at the turn of the nineteenth century. Over a half century later, when Wagner was at work at *Tristan und Isolde*, these ideas remained viable and continued to form the basis of serious investigation. As noted in the historical survey in the opening chapter of this study, a more positivistic or “scientific” branch of psychological inquiry had already emerged by this time. The abstract or more speculative philosophical foundations of psychological thought necessarily became problematic in the course of these developments, but major figures in the field of “scientific psychology” like Wilhelm Wundt argued against the perceived incompatibility of science and philosophy. Wagner similarly maintained a more holistic approach; he conceptually valued scientific gains in knowledge in terms of their ability to persuasively elucidate basic philosophical questions about the nature of the world and humanity. He was, after all, primarily an artist and was most interested in ideas in which he could readily see some implication for his operatic practices. His limited engagement with the “scientific” literature of his time was matched by his self-styled brand of philosophy, which was inspired by several general concepts drawn from different sources. Wagner did not adhere exclusively to any single philosophical system at any point in his career. Schopenhauer’s writings afforded an accessible mix of theory and supporting explanations of the functional relations between the conscious and the unconscious that rang true empirically for Wagner. Their importance for Wagner was largely a matter of timing. They reinforced a clear conceptual framework at a time when his compositional skills were poised and already moving towards a more powerful convergence of psychological theory and artistic practices.

Schopenhauer is a skeletal figure in Wagner’s “Beethoven” essay. Nevertheless, the attention drawn to his theory of an allegorical dream as the primary mediator between the realms of the conscious and the unconscious underscores a concept to which Wagner devoted much attention in *Tristan und Isolde* and later works. As we have already discovered, early nineteenth-century theories of somnambulism typically posited a framework of many differentiated states of consciousness connected by transitional stages. In *Der fliegende Holländer*, Wagner distinguished his characters in two ways: through the psychological

processes they undergo—the different stages of consciousness that they navigate—and the manner in which each character interprets or responds to a particular set of experiences, which bears the imprint of these psychological states. The experiences of each of the soloists and the groups of characters are not mutually exclusive. In his handling of every musical and dramatic parameter, Wagner coordinated these spheres of experience so as to emphasize the extent to which they overlap, at the same time that they give rise to markedly different perspectives. The audience is privileged through a kind of meta-perspective, rewarded by the work's structure which enables the relations and differences between these perspectives to be more fully registered and assessed than by the characters within the work. In all of his operas from *Der fliegende Holländer* on, Wagner's central characters stand apart from other characters through the complexity of the psychological processes that they experience and through the role which unconscious forces play in the perspectives that they develop. Collectively speaking, they reflect the many ideas that contributed to the evolution of contemporary psychological theory and yielded an intricate model of the mind. Figures like Senta specifically embody the less widely maintained view that the mind was not only capable of different kinds of mentation, but that it could balance these contrasting forces to achieve a productive synthesis and a fuller grasp of reality. Up to and including the *Ring*, Wagner tended to assert this more radical view most strongly at the end of his works. The cases of *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* can even be regarded as negative object lessons, with last minute developments in the drama encouraging the audience to move beyond the tragic limitations of Tannhäuser and Elsa respectively. As we have seen in the case of the *Ring*, Wagner carefully prepared the concluding moments of the drama to bear the weight of Brünnhilde's more active advocating role. In *Tristan und Isolde*, Wagner sought ways of elucidating the processes of negotiation and synthesis more fully within the main body of the work. This entailed a more detailed examination of the inter-personal forces by which Tristan and Isolde influence and enable each other along their journey. Their expansive dialogic sections often emphasize tensional polarities, but their shared dream-like experiences effect profound levels of synthesis that explicitly foreshadow the perspective ultimately advanced at the end of the drama. As we shall see, Wagner regarded Schopenhauer's idea of the allegorical dream as a

means of mapping a tonal framework that could chart this couple's shared journey and their enriching union.

In the introduction to the "Beethoven" essay, Wagner wove together three main lines of thought through a series of analogies and metaphors. One series deals with a variety of different cry and response scenarios. The first two scenarios involve imitative responses, such as a yodeller's cry which resounds as an echo throughout a valley. Wagner then described several types of silent inner cries and physically audible responses, such as a yearning youth who hears a woodbird's mate-call. Cries and responses that differ in their basic form, he asserted, can involve deeper natural connections than cases where they are similar. The next extended metaphor explores the idea that reliance on visual perception and physical detail obscures the path to deeper levels of meaning. Wagner considers the case of an orchestral concert, noting that the eye can easily be distracted by the actions of performers whose physical gestures are related in a causal fashion to the sounds being produced but convey nothing meaningful about the music itself. In more general and philosophical terms, Wagner thus differentiates between a conscious, physically- and visually-defined realm and an unconscious, invisible one. The latter is clearly privileged. Objective contemplation of the phenomenal realm and recognition of one's own relation to it can lead to subjective kinds of self-awareness, but less physically determined relationships that lead to more noumenal levels of understanding.

In the third and final metaphorical passage, Wagner considered how the phenomenal and noumenal realms might be related, for they are essentially incompatible and involve different modes of cognition suited to their distinct environments. The unconscious, for example, is driven to express itself in the conscious realm and often sends up messages which are unintelligible to the conscious mind. Dream theory comes into play here, for Wagner suggests that two realms are bridged by an interface which he calls the allegorical dream, borrowing Schopenhauer's terminology. It is the dream we remember upon waking that translates the inner dream or noumenal depths, delivering it in a form that can be grasped by the conscious waking mind. The allegorical dream is thus a crucial threshold, set Janus-like between the conscious and the unconscious and mediating between the two.

Wagner introduced the figure of the composer as a privileged kind of dreamer, a clairvoyant who has both exceptional access to the noumenal and wide-ranging artistic means that are ideal for expressing manifestations of the unconscious, from vague sensations to disruptive explosions. More so than Jean Paul, Wagner valued sound as the medium of the sublime. The point of privilege in his discussion centres on the intermediary stage of the allegorical dream, a level of expression that could pertain to this world and others at the same time. Wagner's discussion concerns form, not as abstract shapes but in the dynamic sense of formation.¹⁸ He highlights the parameter of rhythmic shape as the primary means by which sound approaches the phenomenal world and can be physically perceived by the senses. Slightly reworking a position he advanced in *Oper und Drama*, Wagner prioritizes harmony (previously a shaping force along with rhythm) as the most inherently noumenal element of music (displacing orchestration). Harmony's noumenality is at its strongest when it is uninhibited by a marked physical shape such as strong rhythmic definition. Thus, he claims, we hear the succession of harmonies in Palestrina's music as a fluctuating ground-colour that is almost as timeless as it is spaceless. Precisely because the music does not exist in forms which prompt us to engage with their physical nature, the inner and harmonic sense of spiritual revelation is allowed to enter our consciousness. Distinctive instrumental timbres appeal, in part, to a physical kind of identity. The noumenality of harmony thus also depends on a kind of formless quality or carrier of sound.

Taken as a whole, Wagner's wide-ranging discussion boils down to an overview of the differences between the phenomenal and the noumenal and their relation to each other. He recognizes that, as each realm is naturally formed in unique ways, we are capable of perceiving a wide range of forms and that varying degrees of apparent formlessness can also be meaningful. With his emphasis on intermediate stages of consciousness and form, Wagner is rigorously anti-dualistic in his employment of the Kantian notions of time and space. He clearly favours the noumenal realm as more truthful than the phenomenal realm and as the

¹⁸ Thomas Grey has discussed the difference between form and formation in relation to the concept of "endless melody." See his *Wagner's Musical Prose* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 270-304.

realm of the essence of things, but the whole system is held together as a differentiated spectrum in which the phenomenal retains value. For it is only by navigating the whole spectrum of possibilities that distinctions can be made between reality and illusion and that the relative assessment of different kinds of reality can dynamically lead to an absolute truth. While a Hegelian dialectic obviously guides this overview, Wagner was not keen to over-regularize these processes. For we do not actively plan our processes of understanding. They take a course that is as irregular as our experiences. As an artist, Wagner cherished these variegations as much as he cherished organizing them so that they beget a kind of logic embracing both the phenomenal and the noumenal.

As discussed in the first section of this chapter, the tonal plan of *Der fliegende Holländer* emulates a diverse spectrum of consciousness and dream-related states. *Lohengrin* proved to be an important stage in Wagner's artistic exploration of an allegorical dream or mediating state, and the more subtle kinds of form that pertain to the rarified noumenal realm. His use of homogenous instrumental timbres and associative tonalities evolved accordingly. The ensuing discussion will explore aspects of the tonal practices in *Tristan und Isolde*, with the hope that the relationship between tonality, psychology and form—as structure and formation—will become better understood and point towards analytical approaches that address how these coordinated forces operate in this landmark opera.

John Daverio and Lawrence Kramer have both found Robert Bailey's analysis of the first act of *Tristan und Isolde* a useful springboard for considering the tonal structure of the opera as a whole. Kramer's main objective has been to explore aspects of libidinal desire in Wagner's musical processes. As such, he has focused on musical gestures which epitomize what he refers to as the "*Lust-trope*," where overlapping interlocutionary forces suggest the fulfilment of desire as well as the deferral of fulfilment.¹⁹ Kramer considers this idea of overlapping forces through an extension of Bailey's concept of the double-tonic complex governing Act I, A/C, to include a shadow complex, namely the semi-tone lower pairing A \flat /B. The shadow complex, he suggests, is latent in Act I but gains force throughout the

¹⁹ Lawrence Kramer, *Music as Cultural Practice, 1800-1900* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 148.

work and ultimately dominates at its close. Daverio, in turn, develops the idea of these two interacting complexes against the backdrop of Friedrich Schlegel's concept of rhetorically dialectal organicism.²⁰ Both scholars agree that the initial and shadow tonic pair overlap for much of the work, with an overall shift in emphasis from A/C to A \flat /B. In addition to pointing out the obvious manifestation of the A \flat /B pair—the latter two duets in Act II, scene 2, and Isolde's closing monologue—they offer substantial analytical evidence to the coexistence of the two pairs throughout the work.

Kramer sees the recurring presence of the A/C pair as Wagner's method of prolonging the deferral of fulfilment of desire. Daverio qualifies the effect of the overlapping double-tonic complexes as yielding a "warped" musical flow, "proceeding in and out of phase for the lovers and for us." "When we perceive the A \flat /B pair, we likewise experience what Tristan and Isolde experience; that is to say the distortion of the 'real,' C/A world from which the lower world emanates."²¹ Daverio traces the "warps" through Act II, scene 2, noting that Wagner sometimes effects smooth transitions and other times juxtaposes the pairs as incompatible and hence chromatic forces. What does not quite work, though, is his idea that the distortion through which we perceive the A \flat /B pair is the musical consequence of the potion which enables the lovers' latent emotions. The ineffectiveness of his explanation seems to stem from his claim that the first part of the duet in Act II, scene 2, which "is built around the A/C pair," "resumes the tonal argument of the scene that concludes Act I."²² Given the extensive warping, are we to assume that the love potion (or the lovers' released emotions) that is consumed at the end of Act I wavers in its effectiveness? And why would the lovers' perspective relate back to the end of the first act?

²⁰ Daverio elaborates on the significance of Schlegel's aesthetics in Chapter 1, "Romantic Ideas and Romantic Music", of his *Nineteenth-Century Music and the German Romantic Ideology* (New York: Schirmer, 1993).

²¹ *Ibid.*, 190.

²² *Ibid.*

There is no doubt that Wagner's tonal spheres are symbolically loaded. Yet the general practice of associating Wagner's use of certain tonal areas with places, things, characters or their emotions cannot comfortably be reconciled with the tonal framework as it functions as a whole. The lingering A/C complex proves particularly problematic in this respect. Daverio's interpretation of this complex as pertaining to the "real world," as the world of those who have not consumed the love potion, is a popular one. The initial part of the lovers' celebratory reunion in Act II strongly emphasizes C major, the key in which Act I closes as the ship arrives in King Marke's harbour. When the second scene of Act II begins, Tristan and Isolde are already under the influence of the potion. Furthermore, their reunion is outside of the "real world," its physical otherness emphasized by the cover of night and by the extinguishing of the torch. If we consider tonality as a core element within a dense symbolic and metaphorical system, while keeping Wagner's earlier tonal practices and the ideas from the "Beethoven" essay in mind, the significance and the overlapping of the tonic complexes is not necessarily problematic (see figure 5.2).

Let us consider some details from the second scene of Act II. It opens with the two lovers reunited onstage for the first time since the close of Act I. They embrace wildly, and are thrilled, above all, by each other's physical presence. Their love is initially physically defined, then becomes a love which resists the phenomenal realm and then one which is beyond the physical world and eternal. This evolution in the text is underscored by a tonal evolution: C is initially strong and diatonically defined before veering towards A and then A b. Increasingly weakened cadential gestures which coincide with climactic moments in the text and melody erode the diatonic and overall prominence of C. However, C is not abolished. Its lingering presence symbolizes the lovers' inability at this stage to fully reach higher levels of understanding. The intense physicality of the section, emphasized through strongly-defined repetitive rhythms and rich orchestration, further underscores their enslavement to the physical world. More importantly, however, it signals their enslavement

Figure 5.2: *Tristan und Isolde*, tonal plan and associative significance

<p>Waking Consciousness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -the phenomenal realm, objective, dependent upon sensuous perception of physical characteristics -rhythmic regularity, heterogenous orchestration, more conventionally diatonic, much surface detail and onstage physical action <p style="text-align: center;">C</p>	<p>Inner Reality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -more subjective, can detect basic kindred relationships, self-consciousness, ego still present, some dependence on physical observation -a hybrid of waking consciousness and allegorical dream <p style="text-align: center;">A</p>
<p>Allegorical Dream State</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -somewhat resembles phenomenal realm yet distinct, may facilitate translation of inner dream, pivotal -explores thresholds of sensuous perception -only leads to inner dream if phenomenal laws relaxed or abandoned -rhythmically amorphous, homogenous orchestration, expanded tonal spheres, little stage action <p style="text-align: center;">A b</p>	<p>Inner Dream=Universal Truth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -the noumenal realm, collective unconscious, generally unintelligible to conscious mind but potentially disruptive in varying degrees Somnambulistic state: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "waking in sleeping" -ego dissolved -embedded within allegorical dream -if accessed somnambulistically, can assume more defined form than allegorical dream <p style="text-align: center;">B</p>

to modes of understanding which prevail in the phenomenal realm, modes which cloud their ability to perceive the noumenal.

In the ensuing dialogic passage comprised of strophe/anti-strophe exchanges, it becomes clear that the tonal pattern of the Act II reunion relates to issues which remained unresolved at the end of Act I. Throughout the first act, Isolde understood Tristan's delivery

of her to King Marke to mean that Tristan did not reciprocate her love. Her unbounded anger disappeared with the drinking of the potion at the end of that act. Wagner could quite logically have included Tristan's explanation of his behaviour at this time. However, he chose to withhold this material until the second section of Act II, scene 2, at which point its presence could be coordinated with larger-scale psychological and tonal processes involving both double-tonic complexes. The associative significance of the tonal network as a whole, and the nature of the shadow complex in particular, necessitated this more expansive kind of treatment.

In Act II, scene 2, as with other dialogic passages of the opera, Wagner set out dialectic patterns where one character serves as a foil to the other. In the Isolde/Brängane and Tristan/Kurwenal exchanges, perspectival differentiation, misunderstanding and confusion prevail. The interaction of Tristan and Isolde is unique in that they work through their differences of perspective, enabling each other to transcend levels of understanding to which they as individuals are restricted. Tristan opens this scene's first section of dialogue by expressing frustration with the torch, the physical embodiment of light which barred their reunion. Isolde responds within the same A/C dominated realm with an echo of Tristan's melody, a whole tone higher, and drives towards a cadence in C as she reminds him that she extinguished the torch. Her cadence is thwarted by the influence of A b, which then persists as a harmonic schism with A as Tristan's reply focuses on the less physical but ever-recurring day which cannot be extinguished as easily as the torch. Isolde then discounts the A b realm and appropriates music similar to that of Kurwenal as she raises her remaining concerns about Tristan's behaviour prior to the drinking of the love potion. The third series of exchanges further emphasizes the divergent allegiances to the two tonic-pair complexes as Isolde becomes increasingly confused. She cannot reconcile Tristan's claim to have had feelings for her with his plan to deliver her to King Marke as bride. Tristan attempts yet again to explain himself, this time introducing a perspective that Isolde has not previously entertained.

In initiating the fourth series of exchanges, Tristan's music moves away from the unproductive chromatic conflict between A b and A. The tonality of A b assumes temporary independence from the A/C realm and functions for the first time as a gateway to B, the other

tonality of the shadow double-tonic complex. In m. 793, several measures into Tristan's fourth strophe, the $A\flat$ realm gains for the first time the musical and dramatic associations that will be further developed in the later $A\flat$ -dominated duet "O sink hernieder." At this point, these particular characteristics establish the contrasting basic nature of this realm in relation to those of the A/C complex which governs the beginning and ends of the strophe. As a whole, the strophe charts a psychological journey that delineates the noumenal realm as a distinguishable element of the larger dialogue. As $A\flat$ assumes independence from A , the brief but rhythmically defined and arresting motive commonly referred to as the day motive becomes acoustically less strident, passing gradually from the upper woodwinds to horn. In addition, the rhythmic environment becomes more amorphous and syncopated.

Example 5.1: *Tristan und Isolde*, Act II, scene 2

T. wacht', was oh-ne Wiss'und Wahn ich dämmernd dort em-pfah'n:
 sight, unknown and un-ex-press'd, I had but dim-ly guess'd,
 p dolce
 più p

T. ein Bild, das meine Au-gen zu schau'n sich nicht ge-
 a vi-sion that I nev-er had dared to gaze on
 pp
 pp dolce

T. trauten, von des Ta-ges Schein be-troffen lag mir's da schimmernd
 ev-er, by the day-light's beams dis-cover'd, blazed forth and lay un-
 p poco cresc.
 Etwas belebend.
 Poco animando

When $A\flat$ ushers in B , as Tristan sings of perceiving previously unrevealed secrets, the mediating role of $A\flat$ is harmonically expressed as a relation that moves through the minor third $C\flat$, smoothly effecting the far-reaching modulation to B (see example 5.1). Through the gradual de-emphasis and denaturing of physically obvious elements such as instrumental timbre, motivic handling and rhythm, the passage emerges as an essentially harmonic idea.

This brief but shared apprehension of the noumenal bears directly on the balance of Tristan's strophe, which reflects upon his complicated position in the phenomenal world. As the music regains its physically-defining characteristics, tonal instability mirrors Tristan's inability to reconcile his inner and outer realms. He even attempts to distance himself from his own actions, by projecting them through music associated with Kurwenal and the sailors' chorus in Act I. The impetus towards a diatonic cadence threatens to overpower Tristan's tonal indecision and harness him to the A/C realm, but the cadence is not convincing. Rather, it emphasizes the problematic burden which he carries in the physical and phenomenal world. Tristan's attempt to explain this conflict requires further revisitation. His first effort challenges beliefs that Isolde has consistently maintained since the beginning of the opera and which have rendered the $A\flat/B$ realm a source of psychological and harmonic conflict up to this point. Relying on information that she gathered from the behaviour of Tristan and Kurwenal, Isolde had come to regard her subjectively felt affinity with Tristan as a chimera. In order to restore her faith in this bond, she must rethink what she has perceived as reality. She thus continues to survey the A/C realm while Tristan occupies that of $A\flat$ and B . When Tristan draws the dialogic section to a close with his "Hymn to Night," he squarely confronts the $A\flat/A$ tension and proposes the solution of relinquishing the inferior form of reality bound up with the world of day and objective consciousness. At this point, Isolde is able at last to follow Tristan into the $A\flat$ -saturated duet "O sink hernieder." Their shared state of hypnotic clairvoyance is slightly disturbed by Brangäne's invisible warning, reminding them of the continuous cycle of night and day which will inevitably force them to engage yet again with the phenomenal realm. Before this happens, Tristan and Isolde continue their exploration of the $A\flat/B$ realm, reaching further levels of "waking within sleep." In these enlightened regions of night and the collective unconscious, they freely probe the implications of their shared perspective, setting

in motion the musical and psychological processes which will ultimately stamp the conclusion of the work.

Various scholars have explored aspects of these musical and psychological processes in their culminating manifestations in Act III. Joseph Kerman, in his classic interpretation of *Tristan und Isolde* as a “religious drama,”²³ has emphasized the tremendous power of the recapitulatory hymn of Isolde’s concluding “Transfiguration,” based as it is on a reshaping of about ninety measures of the climactic B-major passage from the end of the second-act love duet. Isolde’s mystic death in her final monologue brings the most decisive possible release from the phenomenal world, a dramatic event exactly coordinated with the affirmation of a cadence of unprecedented weight in B major. This event “corrects” the shattering deceptive cadence heard when Brangäne’s scream had marked the appearance of King Marke and his men and the dawning of day in the previous act. Ultimately, the teleological drift pointing towards the fulfilment of yearning in Isolde’s ascent into Night relates even to those famous rising chromatic phrases and “Tristan” sonorities that were heard at the outset of the drama, four hours earlier.²⁴ The psychological core of this vast transitional process, however, is lodged in the heart of the love-duet, as embodied in the framework of tonalities shown in figure 5.2, with example 5.1 acting as a crucial moment in this process of growing insight and self-realization.

Tristan und Isolde represents Wagner’s most subtle and concentrated treatment of tonalities as an embodiment of psychological states. As so often with Wagner, it is not the keys in the abstract that matter, but the employment of tonal relations in connection with specific motives, rhythms, texture, and instrumentation that takes on aesthetic meaning: the

²³ Joseph Kerman, “Opera as Symphonic Poem,” in *Opera as Drama* (New York: Knopf, 1956; rev.ed. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), 158-77; reprinted in *Tristan und Isolde: A Casebook*, ed. with an introduction by Joan Tasker Grimbert (New York and London: Garland, 1995), 357-76.

²⁴ See, in this connection, William Kinderman, “Tonal Pairing and Dramatic Recapitulation in Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde* and *Parsifal*,” in *The Second Practice of Nineteenth-Century Tonality*, 180-195; and “Das ‘Geheimnis der Form’ in Wagners *Tristan und Isolde*,” *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 40 (1983): 174-88.

individual tonalities that rest in chromatic space are furnished, or bodied-out, with rich expressive nuances of a psychological cast. These interrelationships remind us, over and over, of the essential bond between music and psychology in Wagner's art.

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