Hearing “les plaintes de la Pologne”: Impressions of a Nationalist Narrative in Selected Nocturnes of Frédéric Chopin

by

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B.Mus., University of Victoria, 2004

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ABSTRACT

Chopin's artistic philosophies were heavily indebted to his love of vocal music and his staunch belief that vocal expression represented the supreme essence of musical declamation. To his contemporaries in the Parisian salons, his veneration of the vocal ideal illuminated the expressive significance of Chopin's musical language. Influenced by the dramatic function of operatic and vocal works, and by interpretive trends that associated literary programs with instrumental (textless) music, Chopin's contemporaries searched for concealed narratives within his piano nocturnes. This thesis considers the narrative function of Chopin's late nocturnes within the sociopolitical and musical culture of the Parisian salons, and utilizes a modern approach to narratology that resonates with a prominent facet of historical interpretation. The study reveals a specific reception in which audiences, influenced by the philosophies of Polish messianism, heard national narratives, sung pronouncements of his Polish nationality, and political support for the Polish nation in Chopin's nocturnes.

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INTRODUCTION

TOWARDS A NARRATIVE INTERPRETATION OF SELECTED NOCTURNES OF FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN

In a concert review that appeared in 1841 in *La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris*, Liszt wrote: "Poland's laments lent [Chopin's] tones…[a] mysterious poetry which, for all those who truly felt it, cannot be compared to anything else."[1] Two years later, an article appeared in the same journal that stated: "Blessed are the nations that have poets like Thomas Moore and Chopin; they keep alive with their songs the traditions and love of the home country, cradling it with a gentle and noble hope of liberation."[2] These observations are revealing with regard to the reception and interpretation of Chopin's music in nineteenth-century Paris. The central tenets of Romanticism certainly influenced contemporary writings on the composer, as seen in the metaphorical language of the reviews of his compositions and performances, and in the poetic and impassioned analyses that focused largely on the emotional content of the works. However, by the mid-1830s, reviews increasingly began to conflate the plight of the Polish nation with the composer and his music. The identification of a Polish national character in Chopin's compositions was not limited to the traces of Polish folk music that audiences perceived

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[1]"Les plaintes de la Pologne empruntaient à ses accents…[une] poésie mystérieuse qui, pour tous ceux qui l'ont véritablement sentie, ne saurait être comparée à rien." F. Liszt, "Concert de Chopin," *La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* (henceforth referred to as *RGMP*), 8e année, n° 31 (2 mai 1841). Unless otherwise indicated, all translations in this thesis are mine. Chopin's concert included his preludes, études, nocturnes and mazurkas.

[2]"Heureuses les nations qui ont des poëtes comme Thomas Moore et Chopin; ils entretiennent par leurs chants les traditions et l'amour du pays où ils sont nés, et le bercent d'un doux et noble espoir d'affranchissement." H. Blanchard, "Revue Critique," *RGMP*, 10ème année, n° 21 (21 mai 1843).

in his music upon his arrival in Paris; rather, the changing sociopolitical atmosphere incited the listener to associate his music "with a specific sphere of meaning" drawn from the political and social currents.[3] For contemporary listeners, French and Polish alike, Chopin became the *wieszcz*, the Polish prophet-bard-musician of his "homeless motherland…that suffers and sings with sweet melancholy."[4] Thus, the spirit of melancholy became for many the embodiment of the national character in Chopin's music, "a kind of specific expressive climate permeating all his compositions; an elusive mood so characteristic of his fellow-countrymen's psyche."[5]

The association of Chopin's music with poetry may also have been influenced by Chopin's aesthetics, through which he "saw latent word in the tone."[6] Chopin's sketches for his *Projet de méthode* reveal such an aesthetic in his text: "word is born of sound — sound before word," and "word [:] a certain modification of sound."[7] Chopin's contemporaries in the Parisian salon world, many of whom were his students, were well aware of Chopin's aesthetic beliefs. According to Jean Kleczyński:

> All the theory of the style which Chopin taught to his pupils rested on this analogy between music and language, on the necessity for separating the various phrases, on

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[3]Olgierd Pisarenko, "Chopin and His Contemporaries: Paris 1832 – 1860," in *Studies in Chopin*, ed. Dariusz Żebrowski, trans. Halina Oszcaygieł (Warsaw: The Chopin Society, 1973), 42.

[4]"C'est la patrie errante…qui souffre et chante avec une douce mélancolie." H. Blanchard, "Galerie de la Gazette musicale, No. 2, Pianistes célèbres," *RGMP*, 10ème année, n° 11 (12 mars 1843).

[5]Pisarenko, 43. It is this element of sorrow that Liszt identified in Chopin's music, a pervading expressive element, which incited him to refer to Chopin as "essentially a Polish poet." See Pisarenko, 42-43.

[6]David Kasunic, "Chopin's Operas," in *Chopin and His Work in the Context of Culture: Studies,* ed. Zofia Chechlinska (Warsaw: Musica Iagellonica Kraków, 2003), 399.

[7]Cited and translated in Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher as Seen by his Pupils* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 195.

> the necessity for pointing and for modifying the power of the voice and its rapidity of articulation….[8]

Chopin's integrative aesthetic stressed the primacy of vocal expression and rhetorically coherent execution; thus his repeated instruction to his students, "il faut chanter avec les doigts!,"[9] reveals the expressive potential that Chopin found in modeling pianistic technique on vocal performance. In turn, this penchant for vocal technique and concern for the relationship between music and language may have contributed to Chopin's reception as poet. Perhaps this perception of Chopin as poet influenced the growing tendency in the nineteenth century to interpret Chopin's music in terms of narrative. I argue that, for Chopin's contemporaries in the Parisian salons, a narrative mode of understanding of his music grew out of the historical, sociopolitical and musical context of the time. Both the vocal background of the piano nocturne and the reception of the works as poetic expressions of a nationalist composer suggest a narrative unfolding that resonates with the contemporary reception of his late works and with concepts of Polish political messianism prominent in the salons. Such a mode of understanding stressed the national character of his works and contributed to the perception of Chopin as Poland's *wieszcz.*

The suggestion of a nationalist narrative in Chopin's music is certainly not a new current in musicology: analyses of this sort have circulated since the early 1840s, when Robert Schumann first claimed, in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, that Chopin drew

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[8]Jean Kelczyński, cited and translated in Eigeldinger, 42.

[9]Emilie von Gretsch, a student of Chopin's (c.1842-1844), as reported to and published by her niece, Maria von Grewingk, in *Eine Tochter Alt-Rigas, Schülerin Chopins* (Riga: Löffler, 1928), 20; cited and translated in Eigeldinger, 45.

inspiration for his Ballade, Op. 38 from Adam Mickiewicz's literary ballads.[10] However, most narrative analyses of Chopin's music in general have focused attention on the four Ballades, and on the Polonaise-fantaisie, Op. 61, with narrative analyses of a political focus directed mainly towards the Ballade, Op. 38.[11] Aside from Jeffrey Kallberg's informative study of the Nocturne in G Minor, Op. 15, no.3, the nocturnes have largely evaded political readings in favor of traditional analyses that focus on the lyrical associations of the genre.[12] Most studies of the nocturne genre have focused on aspects of the feminine (including studies related to demography and consumption of piano music, gendered responses to the genre, and feminine imagery associated with the nocturne),[13] or aspects of poetry and the voice associated with the genre.[14] However, as I

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[10]*Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, Band XV, N° 36, 2 November 1841. Many scholars have cited Schumann's review as a highly influential source in the numerous writings on Chopin's ballades that have been published since the mid-nineteenth century. See, for example, Kasunic, "Chopin's Operas," esp. 387–391, and Jonathan Bellman, *Chopin's Polish Ballade: Op. 38 as Narrative of National Martyrdom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[11]Narrative analyses of the ballades include Michael Klein, "Chopin's Fourth Ballade as Musical Narrative," *Music Theory Spectrum* 26, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 23-55; Karol Berger, "The Form of Chopin's *Ballade*, Op. 23," *19th-Century Music* 20 (Summer 1996): 46-71; and Eero Tarasti, "A Narrative Grammar of Chopin's G minor Ballade," in *Chopin Studies* 5 (1995): 38-63. Analyses that invoke a political narrative include Kasunic, "Chopin's Operas," and Bellman, *Chopin's Polish Ballade*. Halina Goldberg additionally offers an interpretation of a political narrative in selected works of Chopin, including the *Fantasy*, Op. 49, in "'Remembering that tale of grief': The Prophetic Voice in Chopin's Music," in *The Age of Chopin: Interdisciplinary Inquiries*, ed. Halina Goldberg (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 54-92, while Jeffrey Kallberg offers a narrative interpretation of the Nocturne in G Minor, Op. 15, no. 3 that focuses on aspects of Polish Romantic messianism in "The Rhetoric of Genre: Chopin's Nocturne in G Minor," in *Chopin at the Boundaries: Sex, History, and Musical Genre* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996), 3-29, and in "Hearing Poland: Chopin and Nationalism," in *Nineteenth-Century Piano Music*, ed. R. Larry Todd (New York: Schirmer, 1990), 221-257.

[12]Kallberg, "The Rhetoric of Genre," and "Hearing Poland." Halina Goldberg offers a brief discussion of a political narrative in the Nocturne in C Minor, Op. 48, no. 1, in "Remembering that tale of grief."

[13]See Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries*.

[14]See Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries*, James Parakilas, "'Nuit plus belle qu'un beau jour': Poetry, Song, and the Voice in the Piano Nocturne," in *The Age of Chopin*, 203-223, and Jeffrey Kallberg, "'Voice' and the Nocturne," in *Pianist, Scholar, Connoisseur: Essays in Honor of Jacob Lateiner*, ed. Bruce Brubaker and Jane Gottlieb (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 2000), 1-46.

demonstrate, the expressive logic of the late nocturnes can also be further elucidated through a reinterpretation of the works as manifestations of a lyric impulse (the traditional view) that transcended the confines of salon music, and garnered responses of narrative interpretation related to aspects of Polish political messianism (a revisionary perspective). The late nocturnes demonstrate the lyrical, operatic-style melodic utterances characteristic of the genre, but the expressive potential of these works is revealed in the nineteenth-century reception of the nocturnes as pronouncements of Polish nationalism. This study analyses those nineteenth-century reviews that offered interpretations of embedded nationalist narratives within the works,[15] and utilizes modern narrative theory and musical analysis to uncover the syntactic and semantic function of the musical events as consistent with contemporary perspectives. At the semantic level at which the musical events function, I suggest the reasoning by which contemporary Parisian salon audiences may have related certain musical ideas or topographical features with extramusical concepts.[16] Though much scholarly analysis has viewed the nocturnes as lyrical and innovative, the expressive potential of the works has only been examined within the confines of salon and vocal music; few readings (other than Kallberg's analysis of Op. 15, no. 3) have analyzed the larger political and Polish national significance of these works according to contemporary interpretation and the politicized context of the Parisian salon. My analysis realigns the late nocturnes with the larger

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[15]The reviews are taken from the music periodicals *La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* (*RGMP*), *La Rénovateur*, *Le Ménestrel*, and *La France musicale*, and span the years 1833-1860. Additional reviews are taken from Polish periodicals of the 1840s, including *Tygodnik literacki*.

[16]In this way my methodology is aligned with Vera Micznik's. See Micznik, "Music and Narrative Revisited: Degrees of Narrativity in Beethoven and Mahler," in *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 126.2 (2001): 193-249.

works of the 1840s (especially the ballades), in an interpretation that places the nocturnes in the sociopolitical context of late nineteenth-century Paris.

This study analyses selected nocturnes of Chopin's late period, chosen for the stylistic features characteristic of Chopin's "last style"[17] that set these works apart from the earlier nocturnes: these include increased use of counterpoint and canonic writing, restrained use of ornamentation, the use of rhythm to generate tension over large sections, and the use of highly chromatic harmony.[18] Such stylistic features contribute to the semantic content of the works when analyzed according to a modern narratological approach, revealing "topical" content and contributing to the temporal unfolding of the works. This thesis analyses Chopin's Nocturnes Op. 48, nos. 1 and 2, and the Nocturnes Op. 55, no. 1 and Op. 62, no. 1 within the sociopolitical and musical atmosphere of Paris in the 1840s, as set against the political strife of the Polish exiles in Paris; additionally, it is a study of the late nocturnes as an outgrowth and transcendence of vocal salon repertoire (romances and nocturnes), and of Chopin's improvisations on operatic themes and Polish folk songs. I offer a narrative interpretation of the late nocturnes that is influenced by the lyrical associations of the nocturne genre and informed by modern narratology, yet grounded in the historical context and in the contemporary reception of Chopin's works as expressions of Polish nationalist narratives. While I do not propose that Chopin intended such a program, I do contend that a historically informed narrative

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[17]On the stylistic innovations and musical changes that point to a change in artistic direction and thus a "last style" in Chopin's career, see Jeffrey Kallberg, "Chopin's Last Style" in *Chopin at the Boundaries*, 89-134. Kallberg identifies the shift in Chopin's musical style beginning in 1842. Though the Nocturnes, Op. 48, date from 1841, I have included them in this study due to the formal properties that align these works with the late nocturnes, Op. 55 and Op. 62 (in particular, the restrained use of ornamentation, and the use of rhythm to increase tension over large sections of the works).

[18]On these stylistic elements in Chopin's late works, see Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries*, 90-91.

analysis may resonate with contemporary interpretations of Chopin's music. My approach is developed in four chapters. The first chapter outlines the social, historical and musical (aesthetic) context within which the works are analyzed, and presents a discussion of the Parisian salon culture in three sections. The first section of Chapter 1 discusses politics and philosophy in the Parisian salon (aspects that informed contemporary narrative interpretations of the nocturnes); the second section deals with the prominence of vocal nocturne repertoire in the Parisian salons (aspects that influenced the lyrical characteristics of the piano nocturne as well as the perception of "voice" within the piano nocturne); the third section discusses musical improvisation within the salons and the issue of Polish national opera (aspects that affected the view of Chopin as the Polish *wieszcz*). The second chapter provides evidence of the tendency towards narrative interpretations of Chopin's works in the nineteenth century, and introduces both the modern narratological methodology that informs this study as well as the select historical treatises on melody and harmony that offer contemporary perspectives of musical structure throughout my analyses. The third chapter comprises the narrative analyses of the nocturnes, and the fourth chapter draws the conclusions of the thesis.

CHAPTER 1

THE COMPOSER'S VOICE IN THE SALON CULTURE OF CHOPIN'S PARIS

During lessons Chopin would repeat indefatigably: '*Il faut chanter avec les doigts!*'[1]

Chopin's conviction that vocal technique should act as a model for tone and declamation is as familiar to scholars today as it was to his contemporaries and students in Paris. What is more, perceptions of "voice" and "poetry" permeate contemporary reviews of Chopin's works, particularly of his piano nocturnes.[2] Several studies have emerged that stress the connection between Chopin's piano nocturnes and vocal repertoire written for the salon, notably the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Parisian vocal nocturne and romance, seen as models for Chopin's nocturnes.[3] Such studies emphasize the concept of "voice" as a "figural trope" in the reception history of the nocturne. As Jeffrey Kallberg explains: "Associations with this earlier genre plainly affected the way composers and listeners understood the piano nocturne: what we might call the 'generic contracts' for the two types of nocturnes significantly

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[1]Emilie von Gretsch to Maria von Grewingk, cited and translated in Eigeldinger, 45.

[2]This is not to say that poetic interpretations of Chopin's music were limited to the nineteenth century; indeed, such descriptions continued well into the twentieth century. The enduring tendency to associate literary narrative with Chopin's work is evident in David Carew's study on Chopin reception, as he cites a passage from the 1909 publication, *Well-Known Piano Solos: How to Play Them With Understanding, Expression and Effect*, which offers a narrative description of the 'Raindrop' prelude. See Carew, "Victorian Attitudes to Chopin," in *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 222-245, esp. 230.

[3]James Parakilas and Jeffrey Kallberg have written thorough studies of the association between the Parisian vocal nocturne and Chopin's piano nocturnes. See Parakilas, "'Nuit plus belle qu'un beau jour,'" 203-223 and Kallberg, "'Voice' and the Nocturne," 1-46. For further information on the development of the nocturne genre, see David Rowland, "The Nocturne: Development of a New Style," in *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 32-49.

overlapped."[4] Kallberg's concept of the term "generic contracts" stems from the observation that genre acts as a social phenomenon, connected to conventions that composer, performer, and listener associate with a particular generic category, which "sheds light on the characteristic uses of a particular term as opposed to others that are available."[5] If we view genre as a social construct, as a mode of communication between composer and listener, we are faced with a multitude of questions that arise about communication and communities, many of which are grounded in semiological discourse. That is, we must investigate culturally defined codes, the values those codes represent and the meaning the codes carry during the process of communication. What did Chopin's listeners *hear* or *expect* when confronted with the title "nocturne" (a vocal genre) in a textless instrumental setting? Conversely, which elements of the music might have been considered foreign to the genre, garnering response to the music's "strangeness"? It is the latter question in particular that will receive the most focus in this study, for it is particularly the foreign elements (musical features that audiences associated with Polish culture and the plight of the Polish nation) that contributed to the identification of a nationalist narrative in the late nocturnes. On 15 December 1833, Berlioz wrote in *Le Rénovateur*:

> As interpreter and composer, Chopin is an artist apart, bearing no point of resemblance to any other musician I know. His melodies, all impregnated with Polish elements, have something naively untamed about them that charms and captivates by its very strangeness….[6]

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[4]Kallberg, "Voice and the Nocturne," 1-2.

[5]Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries*, 5. For more information on genre as a social phenomenon, see Jim Samson, "Chopin and Genre," *Music Analysis* 8, no. 3 (1989): 213-231.

[6]Hector Berlioz, "Concerts," *Le Rénovateur*, 15 December 1833, 345; cited and translated in Eigeldinger, 272.

The striking and fascinating qualities that Berlioz identifies in the Polish elements demonstrates a common response by Parisian audiences to the foreign sound of certain aspects of Chopin's music, through which they heard Poland and the Polish struggle for political freedom and cultural independence. Similarly, it was the identification of these Polish elements (including references to Polish musical forms such as the mazurka) that inspired nationalistic sentiments and a sense of Polish cultural vitality and community amongst Polish exiles, evoking memories of their homeland and providing strength in their struggle for freedom. While I do not argue that Chopin intended to convey political meaning through conscious design, nationalist responses to the late nocturnes emphasize that for Chopin's fellow countrymen, the Polish elements of the music (features that Berlioz and fellow Parisian identified in terms of "strangeness") provided a source of inspiration to the Polish people who sought to express and to perceive the existence and vitality of their culture through artistic expression.[7]

The aim of the present chapter is not to reiterate the arguments of those scholars who have already astutely outlined the connection between the vocal and piano nocturne, but rather to examine the larger role that the vocal model of expression and declamation played in Chopin's musical sphere, and consider how this model may have affected his audience's understanding of his piano nocturnes. While a definitive analysis of the signification and communication involved in the "rhetoric of genre"[8] (in this case, the nocturne genre) is outside the scope of the present study, I would like to address the latter question, for it is specifically the element of

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[7]See Jeffrey Kallberg, "Hearing Poland," esp. 222 and 247.

[8]Here I borrow Kallberg's terminology, in which "genre acts as a persuasive force." See Kallberg, "The Rhetoric of Genre" (esp. 4-11), in *Chopin at the Boundaries*, 3-29.

"strangeness," or as the first review of the Op. 62 Nocturnes stated, the work's "teinte mélancolique, exhalent de mystérieux parfums de poésie,"[9] that is significant to our understanding of the contemporary reception of Chopin's late nocturnes. I contend that Chopin's late nocturnes, including the Nocturnes Op. 48, nos. 1 and 2, Op. 55, no. 1, and Op. 62, no. 1, were understood in a specific hermeneutical context — that the vocal model of expression and declamation familiar to Parisian salon audiences through the vocal nocturne facilitated a narrative framework, one that engaged listeners through formal and melodic conventions and enabled a poetic, and particularly, a Polish nationalistic interpretation.

The present chapter examines the social and aesthetic context of this thesis. Salon society in Chopin's Paris represents the varied social milieu whose understanding of the composer's works is vital to this study, for it is to these audiences that Chopin played his compositions or improvised on given themes (particularly on Polish national themes and folk songs).[10] Concepts of philosophical and political discourse figured heavily in the intellectual debate found within the salons that Chopin attended. A central component of this discourse was Polish Romantic nationalism, the ethos of which infiltrated not only the salons of Polish expatriates in Paris, but also those of contemporary French Romantic artists and literary figures. The spirit of universalism[11] that pervaded Romantic socialism (supported by prominent French Romantic literary and musical figures in the salons, such as George Sand, Victor Hugo, Marie d'Agoult

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[9] *RGMP*, 14e année, nº 3 (17 janvier 1847).

[10] Halina Goldberg, "Remembering that tale of grief," 63.

[11] "Universalism" here refers to the application of religious and philosophical concepts to all. As William G. Atwood explains, Romantic socialists "viewed themselves as apostles of freedom, concerned not just with their own personal liberty but with that of humanity at large." See Atwood, *The Parisian Worlds of Frédéric Chopin* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 249.

and Franz Liszt[12]) was also a central tenet of Polish Romantic nationalism. These universal concepts influenced the Romantic socialists' efforts "to adapt a Christian-based morality to an industrial economy" in which it was assumed that "man was capable of lifting himself up" and achieving "moral progress in the realm of human behaviour."[13] Such beliefs found a counterpart in the universal principles of Polish Romantic nationalism that heavily influenced the Christian angle of Polish politics known as Polish messianism, which "refers…to a belief that the calling of one's nation would lead uniquely to the salvation of mankind."[14] The salons of Chopin's Paris were particularly rich in messianic philosophies and concepts of Polish Romantic nationalism. However, the salons were equally rich in musical activity and in recitations and discussions of poetry and literature, including Polish Romantic literature. As I explore the background to the social and musical life of the salons Chopin attended, I will identify those features — political, philosophical and musical — that may have exerted a persuasive force with regard to his listeners' understanding of his late nocturnes. Two distinct musical genres are crucial to understanding the hermeneutical context within which the nocturnes were created. The first is the vocal nocturne, a genre of some significance in both the Polish and French aristocratic salons that Chopin attended, and the point of departure in my discussion of the concept of "voice" as it pertains not only to the piano nocturne but also to Chopin's personal aesthetic beliefs. The second genre is that of opera, or more specifically, Polish national opera. The strong requests on the part of Chopin's Polish contemporaries and mentors that he compose an

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[12]Ibid., 61.

[13]Ibid., 364.

[14]Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries*, 27.

opera on a Polish national subject illustrate the prominence of nationalist concerns with regard to Chopin's art. That his Polish audiences greatly desired a work by Chopin in the genre of opera points to their enthusiasm for musical narrative. Chopin's audiences in these salons looked to their national artistic figures for inspiration. As I demonstrate in this chapter, the prominence of Polish poetry (particularly that of Adam Mickiewicz) and articulations of Polish political messianism in the salon culture encouraged audiences to search for a nationalist narrative in the works of one of their foremost national artists, the gifted pianist from Warsaw.

Salon Culture and Signification: Politics and Philosophy

> I have found my way into the very best society; I have my place among ambassadors, princes, ministers — I don't know by what miracle it has come about for I have not pushed myself forward. But today all that sort of thing is indispensible to me: those circles are supposed to be the fountain-head of good taste. You at once have more talent if you have been heard at the English or Austrian embassies; you at once play better if Princess Vaudemont has patronized you.[15]

Chopin's interaction within the salons of Parisian society tells us much about the political, philosophical and musical cultures to which he was exposed. As Halina Goldberg attests, "after his arrival in Paris, Chopin moved with apparent ease among diverse social groups, which included Polish and foreign aristocrats, artists, and intelligentsia, as well as the local upper bourgeoisie."[16] From Goldberg's statement, and from supporting documentation in Chopin's

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[15]Chopin to Dominic Dziewanowski, mid-January 1833, in *Selected Correspondence of Fryderyk Chopin*, ed. Bronislaw Edward Sydow; trans. and ed. Arthur Hedley (London, Melbourne and Toronto: Heinemann 1962), 114-115.

[16]Goldberg, "Remembering that tale of grief," 60.

correspondence, music periodicals, and the archival work of William G. Atwood, we find evidence to identify two distinct types of salons that Chopin attended: aristocratic and literary. Significantly, both the aristocratic and literary salons were heavily infiltrated by the closely related French philosophical and Polish political messianic trends. As I demonstrate in this chapter, the musical, political and ideological atmospheres of these salons created a context that enabled a narrative interpretation of the late nocturnes that resonated with concepts of Polish cultural nationalism.

Salons represented a vital part of nineteenth-century Parisian cultural and musical life.[17] But the diversity of the salons — the range of hosts and hostesses, guests, entertainment, politics and culture — make the phenomenon of the salon both a fascinating and an elusive topic.[18] Private salons in nineteenth-century Paris attracted society through the charm of entertainment: conversation, musical performance, refreshments, and above all, interaction within fashionable society represented an enticing way to fill leisure time. Of the countless Parisian salons of the 1830s, many belonged to the small, largely displaced aristocracy following the overthrow of the Bourbon monarchy during the July revolution of 1830.[19] A liberalized middle class rose to supersede — or, to the consternation of many of the ancien régime, intermingle with — the high

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[17]David Tunley notes that "the significance of the salons to music in Paris in the years leading up to 1830 may be gauged by the *Revue musicale*," which claimed: "Les soirées de salon que la mode a substituée aux concerts d'apparat ont commencé leurs cours" (jeudi 29, *Revue musicale* [undated], 453). See Tunley, *Salons, Singers and Songs: A Background to Romantic French Song 1830-1870* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2002), 3 and 14, n. 10.

[18]As Andreas Ballstaedt explains, "whenever the term 'salon' is used, one must, strictly speaking, explain precisely what is meant, for 'salon' (and related compound forms such as 'salon atmosphere,' 'salon music,' 'salon culture,' etc.) is an extraordinarily imprecise and permeable concept, employed in most cases not merely to describe but to impose a value judgment." See Ballstaedt, "Chopin as 'Salon Composer' in Nineteenth-Century German Criticism," in *Chopin Studies 2*, ed. John Rink and Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 19.

[19]Atwood, *The Parisian Worlds of Frédéric Chopin*, 101.

society of the country's old nobility. Thus it happened that the salon world of the new monarchy found many aristocrats interacting with members of the bourgeois public (including notable Romantic artists and writers); to some of the old nobility, this "signaled the demise of civilized society."[20] According to Atwood, "because Parisian society was inextricably bound up with politics, which determined who was 'in' and who was 'out,' the old nobility [the Carlists]…now found themselves 'out' of the new 'in' world of rich middle-class *arrivistes*."[21] In the aforementioned letter to Dziewanowski in mid-January 1833, Chopin writes, "I am all for the Carlists, I hate the Louis-Philippe crowd; I'm a revolutionary myself so I care nothing for money, only for friendship, which I entreat you to give to me."[22] This frequently cited statement has often been used to support arguments regarding Chopin's political stance. However, as Jolanta Pekacz observes, though Chopin's remark seems to "suggest his prolegitimistic sympathies," it might actually reveal more about his social network than his political leanings. Pekacz continues:

> In the early 1830s…it was fashionable in some circles of the Parisian *monde* to declare sympathy for the restoration of the older branch of the Bourbon monarchy. Chopin's declaration may have spoken for nothing else but his being up-to-date. Such interpretation is supported by his choice to socialize with the circles, such as the Czartoryski coterie [Polish aristocrats], known as decidedly antilegitimist.[23]

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[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Chopin to Dziewanowski, in *Selected Correspondence*, 115. The Carlists, or "Legitimists," were supporters of Charles X, King of France during the latter years of the Bourbon Restoration. Following the July Revolution of 1830, Charles the X abdicated, and Louis-Philippe, his cousin from the House of Orléans, ascended the throne, marking the beginning of what became known as the July Monarchy.

[23]Jolanta Pekacz, "Deconstructing a 'National Composer': Chopin and Polish Exiles in Paris, 1831-49," in *19th-Century Music* 24, no. 2 (Autumn, 2000): 170.

As Pekacz shrewdly observes, and as I shall demonstrate below, Chopin attended salons of different political leanings, and also performed at the salon of Louis-Philippe himself; it is therefore difficult to ascertain whether the above statement refers to a political or social stance. Regardless of the composer's personal politics, his music did not escape political interpretation. According to Atwood:

> Through his association with the large emigré population in Paris, Chopin inevitably became involved in their mutual efforts to sustain each other in those days of adversity. According to many sources, his compositions provided a great source of inspiration for his displaced countrymen.[24]

Numerous salons existed in the political circles of Chopin's "displaced countrymen," the exiled Polish communities in Paris. Following the Russian defeat of Warsaw in the November Uprising of 1831, a vast number of Polish refugees fled to France, many settling in the French capital.[25] These communities were split into two separate opposing political factions: a conservative group of monarchists, who were mainly aristocratic and united chiefly by their hope of regaining independence for Poland through diplomatic means, and a more radical group of young republicans, made up of individuals from the lower social class who supported a military effort against Russia and other dictatorial regimes in order to reestablish Polish autonomy.[26] However, the two groups were united to one another by their devotion to the cause of Polish independence; additionally, they were bound to each other and to their French hosts through the

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[24]In "Deconstructing a 'National Composer,'" Pekacz argues against Chopin's political involvement with the Polish community. For an interesting rebuttal to some of Pekacz's suggestions, see Goldberg, "Remembering that tale of grief," 88, n. 19.

[25]Following the Russian overthrow of Warsaw, roughly 7,000 Polish refugees fled their homeland, 5,000 of whom immigrated to France. See Pekacz, 164.

[26]Pekacz, 165, and Atwood, 48.

Roman Catholic faith. As Atwood explains, "for both, the Russian Orthodox Church was a form of apostasy."[27] Thus, the Polish communities found the support of Abbé Lamennais and Abbé Lacordaire, who "condemned the anticlericalism of the July government and saw the Poles as defenders of religion as well as liberty."[28] Lacordaire viewed Roman Catholic Poland as "the altar on which that liberty had been sacrificed in 1831."[29] This spirit of political martyrdom pervaded Polish political messianism, the principles of which infiltrated almost every Polish Romantic work.[30] Examples can be found in many musical compositions and poetic works — especially works by Adam Mickiewicz, Juliusz Słowacki and Zygmunt Krasiński — that figured prominently in the Polish salons in Paris.[31]

The philosophy of Polish political messianism was closely connected to French philosophical trends, particularly the messianic trends of religious Romantic socialists, such as Charles Fourier, Abbé Lamennais, Pierre Leroux, Etienne Cabet and Auguste Comte, as well as Henri de Saint-Simon, Joseph de Maistre, and Pierre-Simon Ballanche.[32] At the heart of Polish political messianism was a Christian-based morality that interpreted politics and political strife according to universal principles common to Romantic socialism. Polish messianists viewed

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[27]Atwood, 48.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Ibid.

[30]As Goldberg explains, "At the heart of Polish messianism was the belief that the country was an innocent victim crucified by foreign powers: Christ among the nations; a sacrifice which would serve as expiation for the world's sins and would bring about universal salvation and rebirth." See Goldberg, 56-57.

[31]Ibid.

[32]See, for example, Atwood, esp. 356-383, and Goldberg, esp. 56-57.

Poland as a sacrificial victim of oppression, and felt that "Poland's struggles would lead to the redemption of mankind."[33] This quest for collective salvation found common ground with the more pragmatic aspects of the collectivism of French Romantic socialism. Just as Polish messianic concepts permeated the writings of Polish poets such as Mickiewicz, Słowacki and Krasiński, so did French messianic ideology infiltrate the works of leading French Romantic literary figures such as George Sand, Victor Hugo, Alphonse de Lamartine and Eugene Sue.[34]

The philosophical connection between the Polish and French literary figures is of particular import to the study of the salon culture to which Chopin was exposed, for the literary salons of George Sand and Victor Hugo included Chopin among the guests.[35] These salons did not attract the aristocratic crowd that flocked to the salons of the embassies, but rather "a scruffy assortment of actors, bohemians, militant socialists and boorish provincials who spat on the floor."[36] The primary entertainment in these salons involved recitations of poetry and dramatic readings to a somber gathering of artists. It is highly likely that the works of Sand, Hugo and Sue were featured in these readings and recitations, and engaged audiences with theories of universalism and social reform. As we shall see, these concepts are significant with regard to the reception of Chopin's nocturnes by his Parisian salon audiences due to their alliance with the ideologies of Polish political messianism; the widespread appeal and support of Polish messianic works

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[33]Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries*, 26.

[34]Goldberg, 56 and Atwood, 249.

[35]Atwood, 135. Atwood explains that Hugo's salon in particular represented an important entryway into the literary world for many young Romantic writers. See Atwood, 135.

[36]Ibid., 134.

inevitably factored into the reception of Chopin's works and contributed to the perception of his role as an exponent of Polish messianic ideology.[37] Regardless of the composer's intentions, public support and demand for works of Polish messianic ideology garnered a reception of the late works as reflective of nationalist concern.

It is significant to the study of Chopin's salon culture that George Sand met the Polish messianic poet Adam Mickiewicz in late 1836, the latter having settled in Paris in 1832. Mickiewicz, a Polish-Lithuanian poet and one of the most prominent figures of Polish Romantic literature, was the leading figure in the "literary tribune of embattled Poland."[38] His works were deeply infused with the concepts of Polish messianism even before the November Uprising of 1831, and he was regarded "by the sympathetic Europeans as something of a standard-bearer for Polish national aspirations."[39] According to Pekacz, "Sand…was one of few French writers who did not limit themselves to conventional contacts with [Mickiewicz] but also read and appreciated his writings."[40] In 1839, upon return from her sojourn in Majorca with Chopin, Sand became immersed in Mickiewicz's works, and published an essay in the *Revue des deux mondes*, praising his drama *Dziady* (Forefathers' Eve) and comparing him with Goethe and Byron.[41] Written in 1823, *Dziady* was an epic poetic drama that communicated a messianic vision and

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[37]This argument is substantiated by Goldberg's article: among the works that she attests utilize "musical topoi which would have been readily understood by [Chopin's] compatriots" are the Polonaise Op. 44, *Allegro de Concert* Op. 46, Ballade Op. 47, Nocturnes Op. 48, and the F Minor Fantasy Op. 49.

[38] Bellman, *Chopin's Polish Ballade*, 20.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Pekacz, 171.

[41]"Essai sur le drame fantastique: Goethe, Byron, Mickiewicz," *Revue des deux mondes* (December 1839), 593-645, as cited by Pekacz, 171.

foretold the coming of a great man who would alleviate the suffering of Poland, freeing the Polish people and all afflicted mankind from oppression. This man was the *guślarz* (or *wieszcz*),[42] a Polish prophet-bard-musician, who was the embodiment of the Romantic view of the artist as transcendental subject, and who, as "an intermediary between the two realms, human and spiritual, acquired priestly characteristics."[43] As Atwood explains,

> This messianic vision [of *Dziady*] was a grandiose concept, at once a luminous revelation and a shadowy enigma. As such it appealed to the Romantic mood of the times that perceived Poland — on the misty reaches of eastern Europe — as a land shrouded in Oriental exoticism and peopled by a race of Tartars whose ancestors rode across the steppes of Asia with Genghis Khan and Tamerlane.[44]

Atwood's observation is of twofold importance to the present study: firstly, the widespread appeal of messianic philosophy to both Polish and French Romantics indicates the prevalence of this ideology in the social and intellectual circles of Paris; secondly, the appeal of the exoticism associated with the Romantic imagery of Poland[45] sheds light on certain topoi that society in

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[42]Goldberg explains that *wieszcz* was the term used by Romantics in reference to their messianic prophet, drawn from the word *wieszczba*, "the old-Polish term denoting the art of poetry." *Guślarz*, while similar in meaning, was "derived from the same root as the old-Polish word *gędźba*, the art of tones." See Goldberg, "Remembering that tale of grief," 59.

[43]Halina Goldberg, *Music in Chopin's Warsaw* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 175.

[44]Atwood, 58.

[45]My use of the term "exoticism" throughout this study is drawn from Ralph Locke's explication of the term; in reference to Chopin's music (particularly the mazurkas), Locke explains the ways in which "a work that evokes the composer's homeland and its music…easily gain in exotic fascination when performed abroad." For Parisians (and for many people outside of Poland), the "strange and foreign (hence exotic) features of Chopin's works in the Polish style" were not only striking in a purely musical context, but in an extramusical context these features were evocative of both Poland's struggle for political and cultural independence, and of "East Europe itself — and its internal struggles — [which] must often have seemed exotic and nearly incomprehensible to many Parisians or Londoners." Parisians' knowledge of the political climate of Poland and the Polish aspiration to assert the vitality of the Polish culture within Europe "conditioned the ways that they responded to various strikingly folklike or exotic" features of the works. See Ralphe Locke, *Musical Exoticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), esp. pages 7, 12, 75-77 and 134. Jeremy Day O'Connell additionally comments on exoticism and the folklike features of Chopin's music (including the "Lydian fourths, drone fifths, dance rhythms, and occasional pentatonicism"), stating that although scholars may disagree on whether such features are drawn from Polish folk traditions, these elements

Paris would have associated with Poland and the plight of the Polish people (a point that will be further explored in the ensuing chapters).

Chopin's letter to Wojciech Grzymala, dated 27 March 1839, testifies to the composer's belief in the warm reception that Sand's essay would be given by Parisian audiences; it also suggests his conviction of the universal appeal of Mickiewicz's drama. He writes:

> My own one has just finished a most excellent article about Goethe, Byron and Mickiewicz. You must read it: it will rejoice your heart — I can see you enjoying it. It is all so true, so deeply penetrating, so wide-ranging, written from the heart without distortion or the desire merely to praise. Let me know who has translated it. If only Mickiewicz himself would lend a hand, she would be delighted to revise it and her article could be printed along with the translation [of *Dziady*] to which it would form a preface. Everyone would read it and lots of copies would be sold. She will be writing you or Mickiewicz on the matter.[46]

The ubiquitous appeal that Chopin identifies in Mickiewicz's drama is highly suggestive with regard to the contemporary reception of Chopin's own works by his Parisian audiences, for beginning in the early 1840s, implications began to arise that Mickiewicz's poetry was the inspiration for certain works by Chopin.[47] This was largely due to Schumann's statement made in 1841 regarding Chopin's comment that "certain poems of Mickiewicz had suggested his *Ballades* to him."[48] The statement, and arguments with regard to its authenticity, can be found throughout the literature on Chopin;[49] however, the present study is not intended to examine the

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"delimit the beginnings of exoticism *cum* nationalism." See Jeremy Day-O'Connell, *Pentatonicism from the Eighteenth Century to Debussy* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2007), 91.

[46]Chopin to Wojciech Grzymala, 27 March 1839, in Sydow, *Selected Correspondence*, 174.

[47]Bellman, *Chopin's Polish Ballade*, 20.

[48]Ibid.

[49]As Bellman attests, "until 1900 sources suggesting a connection between Mickiewicz and Chopin's ballades were fragmentary and inconclusive." See Bellman, *Chopin's Polish Ballade*, 20.

validity of the statement, but rather the willingness of Chopin's audiences to accept it as truth. The association of Chopin with Mickiewicz contributed to the image of the composer as the Polish musical *wieszcz*.[50]

In 1834, Mickiewicz published one of his most celebrated epic poems, *Pan Tadeusz*. In it, the Polish bard Jankiel, a "Jewish innkeeper, a patriot, and a master dulcimer player" tells of the tragedy of the 1794 Kościuszko Uprising in a musical narrative entitled the "Concert of Concerts."[51] It is during this musical narrative that Jankiel "undergoes a spiritual transformation, an apotheosis, the becoming of a *wieszcz*."[52] It is significant, as Goldberg points out, that Jankiel's musical improvisation in the "Concert of Concerts" is an improvisation on Polish folk music.[53] Jankiel's audience clearly understands his musical narrative. The music *speaks* to them: their moods change with the music as they respond to the instrumental refrains both in recognition of the familiar folk tunes and in awe of the virtuoso's mastery. After Jankiel plays a quotation from "The Wandering Soldier" (a seventeenth-century Polish folk song), there follows a moment of mourning. Jankiel's listeners then respond to the final strains of his performance:

> But soon they lifted up their heads again,
> The master raised the pitch and changed the strain.

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[50]See Goldberg, "Remembering that tale of grief," 54-89; Goldberg, *Music in Chopin's Warsaw*, 175 and 200; and Bellman, *Chopin's Polish Ballade*, esp. 125-127, and 139.

[51]Goldberg, 54-55. As Goldberg explains, "at the end of the eighteenth century, in a series of three partitions, the sovereign state of Poland was dismembered by its neighbors — destined to be absent from the maps of Europe for more than a century. The doomed nation had some glimpses of hope," one of which was the Kościuszko Uprising. The 1794 battle witnessed the "massacre of thousands of civilians in the Warsaw suburb of Praga by Aleksandr Suvorov's Russian forces." As Goldberg attests, these glimpses of hope for sovereignty were quelled following the November Uprising of 1831. See Goldberg, "Remembering that tale of grief," 54-55.

[52]Ibid., 55.

[53]Ibid., 59.

> He, looking down once more, the strings surveyed,
> And, joining hands, with both the hammers played:
> Each blow was struck so deftly and so hard,
> That all the strings like brazen trumpets blared,
> And from the trumpets to the heavens sped
> That march of triumph: *Poland is not dead!*
> *Dąbrowski, march to Poland!* With one accord,
> They clapped their hands, and "March, Dąbrowski!" roared.[54]

Given the enthusiasm for Mickiewicz's works, it is highly likely that recitations of his works and discussions of his aesthetic and political ideology arose both in the Polish aristocratic salons and the literary salons that Chopin attended. And since Sand (occasionally accompanied by Chopin) began attending and writing reviews of Mickiewicz's lectures at the Collège de France in 1840, where he was appointed chair of Slavonic Literature, we might safely surmise that her respect for the poet resulted in much discussion of his works in her literary salon in particular. In turn, such discussion, heavily steeped in the elements of Polish messianic philosophy, would have affected the way the Polish composer's music was viewed by his contemporaries.[55] Relevant to our understanding of Chopin's reception by his contemporaries in the salons of Paris is the following connection that Halina Goldberg draws between Mickiewicz's folk-musician and the Polish pianist:

> Jankiel's famous dulcimer improvisation related directly to this ostensible folk model but went a step further, for Jankiel no longer needed words to reach his audience: he spoke to them and was clearly understood through purely instrumental idiom [*sic*]. In light of this tradition, it was therefore natural, perhaps even more ideal, for a great musician, a great instrumental improviser, one who spoke in a native musical language, to be cast in the role of the *wieszcz*. The path was already chosen for Chopin.[56]

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[54]Adam Mickiewicz, from "Concert of Concerts," *Pan Tadeusz*, trans. Kenneth R. Mackenzie (New York: Hippocrene, 1992), 562-68; cited in Bellman, 129.

[55]This is particularly true of Chopin's mazurkas and polonaises, drawn from Polish dance and folk music.

[56]Goldberg, "Remembering that tale of grief," 59.

The contemporary understanding of Chopin's music was influenced by the sociopolitical atmosphere of nineteenth-century Paris and philosophical currents in the salon culture. In order to contend that a narrative mode of understanding of the late nocturnes grew out of this specific hermeneutical context, however, it is necessary to examine the music, musicians and generic models that influenced the perception and reception of Chopin's nocturnes.

Salon Culture and Signification: Music, Musicians and the Parisian Nocturne

> Chopin played me four Nocturnes I had not heard before — what enchantment! — it was unbelievably beautiful. His playing is entirely based on the vocal style of Rubini, Malibran and Grisi, etc.; he says so himself. But it's a purely pianistic 'voice' that he uses to recreate the particular style of each of these artists, while they have other means at their disposal.[57]

The impression of "voice" emerges consistently throughout the literature on Chopin, and figures prominently in contemporary recollections and reviews of his playing. This impression tells us much about the early reception of his works and the expectations of his audiences, since, as we shall see, the interpretation of his music in the salons by his contemporaries (many of whom were his students) was clearly grounded in the primary importance of "voice" in Chopin's aesthetic concerns. Furthermore, due to the relation of the instrumental nocturne to the Parisian vocal nocturne, the genre garnered its own distinct connection with "voice," which was well established by the time Chopin's late nocturnes were published. Through the study of the musical culture of the Parisian salons, and through examination of Chopin's aesthetics as

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[57]Von Gretsch to Von Grewingk, in *Eine Tochter Alt-Rigas,* 9-10; cited and translated in Eigeldinger, 45. Rubini (1794-1854), la Malibran (1808-36) and Grisi (1811-1869) were renowned vocalists of the Théâtre-Italien who performed in many of the bel canto operas of Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti.

understood by his contemporaries in the salons, it becomes clear that the late nocturnes were created in a specific hermeneutical context of the voice.

It is well known today, as it was in Chopin's Paris, that the composer preferred the intimate setting of the salon to the concert stage. According to his pupil, Karol Mikuli (1821-97), "Chopin played rarely and only reluctantly in public: to 'exhibit himself' was absolutely against his nature."[58] And in Berlioz's opinion, "Chopin's talent is of an entirely different nature [from Liszt's]. In order to appreciate him fully, I believe he has to be heard from close by, in the salon rather than the concert hall."[59] Chopin's interaction with the salons of the aristocracy is documented in his correspondence, and gives glimpses of the musical life of the salon culture.[60] The import of music in the Parisian salons is demonstrated by an editorial that appeared in 1838 in the Parisian music journal, *Le dilettante des salons*, which claimed that "it is a fact worthy of note that music has in the past few years invaded nearly all the salons of the fashionable world, and…is becoming almost a necessity by virtue of the charm that it exerts and the reward that it gives to those who cultivate it successfully."[61] Though many fashionable salons offered music only as part of the entertainment of the soiree, some private salons featured music as the main

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[58]Karol Mikuli, in the preface to his edition of Chopin's collected works, published in January 1880 (Leipzig: Kistner, 17 vols.), 2-3; quoted in Eigeldinger, 275.

[59]Hector Berlioz, "Concerts," *Le Rénovateur* (15 décembre 1833), 345; cited and translated in Eigeldinger, 272.

[60]In the aforementioned letter to Dominic Dziewanowski of January 1833, Chopin writes that he "enjoy[s] the friendship and esteem of the other musicians" such as Kalkbrenner, Moscheles, and Herz. See Sydow, *Selected Correspondence*, 114-115.

[61]*Le dilettante des salons*, ed. Henri Romagnesi (janvier 1838); cited and translated in David Tunley, *Music in the 19-Century Parisian Salon*, Gordon Athol Anderson Memorial Lecture Series, no. 13 (New England and New South Wales: Publications Office, University of New England Armidale, 1997), 5.

attraction. These included salons hosted by musicians and several of the aristocratic salons of the Faubourg Saint-Germain to which Chopin was invited.[62]

Of the salons frequented by the composer, those of the Comtesse d'Apponyi at the Austrian embassy, Lady Granville at the English embassy, and the Baronne de Rothschild (who was also a pupil of Chopin's) were among the most popular in Paris during the 1830s.[63] All three salons featured musically talented aristocratic guests, composers and performers. Ferdinand Paër, Frederick Kalkbrenner and Liszt appeared at the salon gatherings of the Comtesse d'Apponyi, as did Rossini, who often performed at the piano with singers of the Théâtre-Italien, such as Antonio Tamburini, Giovanni Rubini, and Giulia Grisi.[64] Meanwhile, salons devoted solely to music could be found in the private residences of professional musicians such as Rossini, Pauline Viardot, and the pianists Pierre Zimmerman and Princess Cristina Belgiojoso.[65] Zimmerman's salon in particular was "almost Parnassian in status…to have achieved success there, claimed the *Revue et Gazette musicale*, meant that an artist could tour Europe with head held high."[66] Musical guests included Meyerbeer, Halévy, Donizetti, Pauline

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[62]Tunley, *Music in the 19th-Century Parisian Salon*, 9-13.

[63]The salons of the Comtesse d'Apponyi and Lady Granville featured aristocratic guest lists, while the attendees of the Baronne de Rothschild's salon included both aristocrats and the more liberal and eager members of the bourgeoisie – the "heterogeneous *juste milieu* society, united chiefly by the upwardly mobile goals of its adherents." See Atwood, 116.

[64]Ibid., 117.

[65]An accomplished pianist, Princess Belgiojoso was raised in Milan by her mother, also a gifted musician and a close friend of both Rossini and Bellini. While still young, she married Prince Emilio Belgiojoso, a gifted tenor whom "Rossini tried, unsuccessfully, to tempt…into a professional career." After the marriage ended, she left Italy for Paris, where she lived as a political exile and worked to aid other Italian exiles in the city. See Tunley, 29.

[66]Tunley, 24.

Garcia [Viardot], Duprez, and Clara Wieck.[67] Princess Belgiojoso's salon was one of the most famous of the July Monarchy, renowned for its rich assembly of fine musicians and intellectuals, which included Bellini, Liszt, Chopin and the writers Heinrich Heine, Alfred de Musset, Jules Janin and Honoré de Balzac.[68]

But there was another aristocratic salon attended by Chopin, whose ties with the exiled Polish community in Paris are of particular import to the present study. This was the salon of Prince Adam Czartoryski, "formerly a Russian statesman and a friend of Alexander I,"[69] who headed the monarchists, the conservative wing of the Polish political factions. There, "the Polish aristocracy tended to feel more at home, and [Chopin] didn't have to feign sympathy for radical solutions and could indulge his taste for elegance and occupy himself with matters of art."[70] Chopin gained entry to the Czartoryski's salon shortly after his arrival in Paris;[71] here he shared the company of the Polish Romantic poets Stefan Witwicki, Bohdan Zaleski, and Mickiewicz.[72] In 1843, Prince and Princess Czartoryski relocated to the lavish Hôtel Lambert (the exquisite restoration of which featured the work of Eugène Delacroix) and held their salons in the Galerie

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[67]Ibid., 25. Atwood notes that it was likely in Zimmerman's salon that Chopin and Charles Henri Valentin Alkan (Chopin's friend and a pupil of Zimmerman), along with Zimmerman and Johann Peter Pixis, first worked on an eight-hand arrangement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 7, which was later featured in a concert program of Alkan. The concert program was published in the *RGMP* on 25 February 1838, and a review of the concert followed on 11 March 1838. See William G. Atwood, *Fryderyk Chopin: Pianist from Warsaw* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 118 and 228-229.

[68]While reports of specific musical events in Princess Belgiojoso's salon are scarce, there are accounts of performances of vocal arrangements from *Lucia di Lammermoor* and of Mozart's Requiem. See Tunley, 29.

[69]Pekacz, 165.

[70]Bellman, *Chopin's Polish Ballade*, 123.

[71]Pekacz, 167.

[72]Bellman, *Chopin's Polish Ballade*, 124.

LeBrun, where Chopin and his pupils often performed.[73] Significantly, Halina Goldberg indicates that the collection of the Czartoryski Library contains a number of Parisian romances and vocal nocturnes, including the Parisian vocal nocturnes of Felice Blangini and Auguste Panséron (the most significant composers of Parisian salon songs, whose vocal nocturnes were a prominent feature of many Parisian salons), some of which were actually published in Poland and presented to Polish dedicatees.[74] Also contained within the Czartoryski Library are "the periodicals *Journal hebdomadaire* and *Journal d'Euterpe*, dedicated to such vocal pieces and containing numerous works by Blangini, Panséron, and [Antoine-Joseph] Romagnesi." The large number of vocal romances and nocturnes in the Czartoryski collection is indicative not only of the appeal of such pieces to Parisian society, but also of the high regard that Chopin's Polish contemporaries had for such works. In turn, the immense popularity of these vocal works suggests that for Chopin's audiences in these salons, the nocturne genre was clearly set in a specific hermeneutic context of vocal music.

The universal appeal of such vocal pieces becomes increasingly clear through examination of contemporary music periodicals, including the *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris*, *Le*

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[73]Atwood, 52. One such pupil was the Princess Marcellina Czartoryska (formerly Radziwiłł), a frequent guest at the Hôtel Lambert, who was married to the Prince's nephew, Alexander. Renowned for her authentic interpretation of Chopin's music, Princess Marcellina Czartoryska was with Chopin during his final hours, playing for him some of his favorite works by Mozart. See Atwood, *The Parisian Worlds of Frédéric Chopin*, 56-57.

[74]Goldberg, *Music in Chopin's Warsaw*, 96. It is worthy of note that French salon songs in the style of the Parisian nocturne and romance were also written by Polish composers and performed in Warsaw's salons. Though romances were primarily written by amateur composers, the *Six romances* written by the professional composer Maria Szymanowska and published by Breitkopf and Härtel around 1820 serve as an example of the popularity of French salon songs with the music-consuming public of Polish salons. The favour given to French salon songs by members of Warsaw's salons is highly suggestive with regard to the reception of Chopin's nocturnes by his Polish contemporaries, since the Polish émigrés would have been familiar with vocal nocturnes and romances as part of the repertoire of Warsaw's salons, and thus would have associated the piano nocturne with the vocal genre. See Goldberg, *Music in Chopin's Warsaw*, 96-99.

Ménestrel, and *Le Monde musical*, which indicate that vocalists and vocal works figured prominently in the musical life of the Parisian salon.[75] Vocal repertoire included operatic excerpts as well as a variety of vocal nocturnes, romances and mélodies.[76] Significantly, vocal nocturnes became so firmly established as part of the recitals given in the salons that "they became symbols of the Paris salon throughout Europe."[77] Based on this information, it seems likely that Parisian salon audiences (the musically educated public) would have expected a vocal piece when confronted with the title "Nocturne." This conjecture finds support in contemporary definitions of the nocturne. François Henri Castil-Blaze, in the *Dictionnaire de musique moderne* (published in Paris in 1825), offers one of the most comprehensive descriptions:

> NOCTURNE, n.m. Piece of music destined to be performed at night in serenade. The vocal *nocturne* is written in two, three or four voices; sometimes they are disposed in such a manner that they might be sung without accompaniment. The *nocturne* being made to add to the charms of a beautiful night, and not to disturb the tranquility of it, its character turns as much away from lively and loud gaiety as from sadness and the impetuous movement of grand passions. A gracious and suave, tender and mysterious melody, simple phrases, harmony not highly elaborate, but full, unctuous, and without trivialities; these are the qualities that one should encounter in the *nocturne*, and if it is performed by good singers, alone or supported by a trained guitarist, its effect will be delicious. The two-voice nocturne is written for soprano…and tenor or two sopranos; sometimes one adds a baritone if it is in three parts, and a bass if it is in four parts. Asioli and Blangini have composed charming *nocturnes.*
>
> One also gives the name of *nocturne* to certain operatic pieces that have the character of a *nocturne*, and are sung in a night scene. Thus one will speak of the duo *nocturne*, or the *nocturne* of [Cimarosa's] *Il matrimonio segreto* to designate the duo *Deh ti conforta, ô cara!* The *nocturne* from the tomb scene in *Sémiramis* by Borghi is of great beauty.
>
> *Nocturne* is also an instrumental piece written for harp and horn, oboe and piano, flute and piano. Properly speaking, these *nocturnes* are only fantasies in dialogue

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[75]For a list of singers and performances in salons published in the above periodicals, see Tunley, 144-229.

[76]Ibid., 13.

[77]Parakilas, 205. In fact, Chopin would have become familiar with Parisian vocal nocturnes in Warsaw's salons during his youth, since they were published in Poland as early as 1818. See Parakilas, 205 and 223, n. 8

> [*fantaisies dialoguées*]. One ordinarily composes them with a known air that one varies with the two instruments, preceding it with an introduction, and following it with a coda. This genre, to which the absence of talent and the incapability of creating a good duo could only grant credibility for a certain time, is now little esteemed and does not merit existence.[78]

The definition outlines what can be called the canonical script[79] of the nocturne genre in the early nineteenth century, and illustrates the expectations of Parisian audiences with regard to generic properties of the nocturne. According to Castil-Blaze, the most common type of nocturne was a vocal piece meant to be performed at night (composed either for multiple voices, with or without accompaniment, or written for an operatic night scene), while a less common (and according to Castil-Blaze, "little esteemed") type of nocturne was an instrumental duet, composed with "a known air," and set in variation form with an introduction and coda. Castil-Blaze's definition of the nocturne suggests that the vocal genre was admired to a greater extent than the instrumental version, and therefore retained popularity in contemporary Parisian society. Thus, if we view the genre of the nocturne as a social construct and a mode of communication, the nocturne genre, according to the above sources, communicated a vocal piece to listeners in 1825. This interpretation is strengthened by consideration of nocturne definitions written by nineteenth-century French lexicographers who illustrate the connection between the vocal romance and the nocturne. In his *Dictionnaire des mots* of 1834, François-Joseph Fétis writes: "the type of the

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[78]François Henri Castil-Blaze, *Dictionnaire de musique moderne*, 2d ed., 2 vols. (Paris, 1825), 2:85-86; cited and translated in Kallberg, "'Voice' and the Nocturne," 4-5.

[79]As Anthony Newcomb explains, "the canonical script into which the listener, following subtle generic and stylistic signs, fits the action places some limits on what is permissible in that kind of action. The breaches challenge the listener's ability to bring this succession into harmony with these limits in order to produce…a 'coherent' series, which means one whose parts can be accommodated to this whole." See Anthony Newcomb, "The Polonaise-Fantasy and Issues of Musical Narrative," in *Chopin Studies 2*, 88-89.

nocturne is like that of the romance, soft and gentle."[80] R. Hippolyte Colet's definition, written in 1837, offers another brief description: "the Nocturne is a Romance sung by two, three, or four voices; this piece is ordinarily destined for Serenades."[81] The close association between the vocal romance and the vocal nocturne is worthy of note and important with regard to the reception of the piano nocturne, since some of the early piano nocturnes of John Field — often pointed to as the first attempts by a composer to translate the vocal genre to the keyboard — were published abroad as "romances."[82]

Consideration of the "romance" sheds further light on the expressive characteristics that Parisian audiences associated with the nocturne genre. With the gifted array of musicians within the salons and the popularity of poetic recitations at the salon gatherings, it seems natural that the French vocal romance — "an intimate art which at its best combines fine poetry with fine music"[83] — would flourish in such an atmosphere. Charmingly simple and captivatingly

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[80]François-Joseph Fétis, 'Nocturne,' *Dictionnaire de mots* (Paris, 1834); quoted in Kallberg, "'Voice' and the Nocturne," 6.

[81]*La panharmonie musicale, ou cours complet de composition théorique et pratique* (Paris, 1837), 302; quoted in Kallberg, "'Voice' and the Nocturne," 6.

[82]Patrick Piggott has, in fact, credited Field with the invention of the nocturne genre; however, as Jeffrey Kallberg has argued, the vocal origins of the nocturne and its translation to a purely instrumental genre undermine the term "invention" as applied to Field's use of the title "nocturne." As can be seen from the publication history of Field's nocturnes, a strong argument can be made for a vocal model since his Eighth Nocturne was also published as a romance and later as a pastorale; following the publication of his Eighth and Ninth Nocturnes, the two pieces were published in Leipzig in 1835 by Hofmeister as "Deux Nocturnes ou Romances." See Piggott, "John Field and the Nocturne," in *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 95th Session (1968-69): 55-65; Piggott, *The Life and Music and Music of John Field, 1732-1837: Creator of the Nocturne* (London: Faber and Faber, 1973), esp. 115-144; and Kallberg, "'Voice' and the Nocturne." Other 19th-century composers of piano nocturnes include J. B. Cramer, A. A. Klengel, C. Mayer, H. Herz, M. Glinka, H. Bertini, C. Chauliue, C. Czerny, F. Kalkbrenner, I. Moscheles, C. Schumann, and S. Thalberg, though none revealed such devotion to or made such developments in the genre as Chopin (save, perhaps, Gabriel Fauré in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, who is often cited as Chopin's successor as composer of the piano nocturne).

[83]Tunley, 55.

intimate, the vocal romance was well suited to the atmosphere of the private salon, and the sophisticated members of the soirées made the romance an enduring feature of their musical gatherings. The popularity of such works is evident in the number of romances that flooded the growing Parisian market for sheet music; one writer estimated that between 1830 and 1845, five hundred new romances were published annually.[84] Most poetic narratives of these romances dealt with the subject of love, often in a melancholy tone, emphasizing the pain of love lost or love spurned. These emotions were reflected on the frontispieces of the sheet music, which showed "pensive young ladies, weeping muses, and dying poets, most of whom cradled a lyre in arms."[85] But the poetry (by such French Romantic poets as Lamartine, Hugo and Gautier) determined the classification of the romance; 'pastorales' evoked a rustic scene, while 'barcarolles' dealt with water imagery. Both were written in compound metre, while 'tyroliennes' (romances set in a mountainous scene) were written in triple meter. A fourth category was the 'orientale,' a romance with poetic text evoking scenes of the exotic Middle East.[86] According to Tunley, "the great majority of romances were for solo voice, but there was also much call for romances composed for two equal voices, in which case they were invariably

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[84]J. A. Delaire, *Histoire de la romance considérée comme oeuvre littéraire et musicale* (Paris, 1845), 21; quoted in Tunley, 68.

[85]Atwood, *The Parisian Worlds of Frédéric Chopin*, 170.

[86]Tunley, 59-60. Tunley, Atwood and Jeffrey Kallberg note the nineteenth-century French obsession with "Oriental" culture ("Oriental" invariably referred to the lands and culture of the Middle East). "Oriental" décor (in the form of Turkish water pipes, stained glass windows, and velvet tapestries) filled the salons of young Romantics, while performances of "exotic" music became more frequent in Paris in the 1830s and 1840s. Additionally, music critics and historians began to publish articles on exotic music in periodicals. For more information, see Tunley, 60, Atwood, *The Parisian Worlds of Frédéric Chopin*, 108, and Kallberg, "Arabian Nights: Chopin and Orientalism," in *Chopin and his Works in the Context of Culture*, ed. Irena Poniatowska (Warsaw: Musica Iagellonica Kraków, 2003), 176.

called nocturnes."[87] Tunley's classification resonates with Castil-Blaze's definition of the nocturne as "written in two, three or four voices;" but a connection can be made between the vocal romance and the nocturne that lies beyond the surface detail, a connection that allows greater insight into listeners' comprehension of the nocturne genre. This connection lies in the poetic narrative of the vocal romance: since the nocturne was a type of romance, the poetic narrative would have decidedly influenced the melancholy yet gentle character of the nocturne. Consideration of the poetic voice (that is, the text) of the vocal nocturne therefore unveils another layer of meaning in Castil-Blaze's characteristic description of the "gracious and suave, tender and mysterious melody" of the nocturne, since the melody would have reflected the tone of the poetic narrative.

In 1839, almost fifteen years after Castil-Blaze's definition of the nocturnes was published, Carl Czerny published a treatise in which we find the first reference to a nocturne for piano solo. Czerny's definition further illustrates the connection of the piano nocturne to a vocal genre with poetic narrative on the subject of love. Czerny writes:

> Of the Notturno:
> We devote a particular chapter to this kind of composition, because in respect to its character it forms a distinct species.
>
> The *Notturno* for the Pianoforte is really an imitation of those vocal pieces which are termed *Serenades*, and the peculiar object of such works — that of being performed at night, before the dwelling of an esteemed individual — must always exercise an influence upon its character. The notturno, therefore, must be calculated to create an impression of a soft, fanciful, gracefully-romantic, or even passionate kind, but never harsh or strange.

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[87]Tunley, 61. It might be surmised from the above description of categories that the poetry of the nocturne would evoke a nocturnal scene, separate and distinct from the other types of romances; however, as James Parakilas explains, the fact that the nocturne was written for two voices "seems to be the sole distinction that the different titles [nocturne and romance] convey: the texts of romances usually have nocturnal settings, just as those of nocturnes do, while the texts of nocturnes are generally about romantic love, just as those of romances are." See Parakilas, 206.

> The construction of it is nearly that of a short Andante in a Sonata, or of an extended theme; and a slow degree of movement is most suitable to the same.[88]

Both Castil-Blaze and Czerny contend that most audiences associated the piano nocturne with the vocal nocturne. It thus seems likely that Chopin's audiences would have associated his piano nocturnes with the vocal counterpart so often featured in the repertoire of the salons, and perhaps with a "voice" or persona drawn from the generic contract of the vocal nocturne, and from the poetic narratives that shaped the character of vocal nocturne.[89]

The style and structure of the Parisian vocal nocturne further elucidates the connections between the piano nocturne and its Parisian vocal counterpart. The vocal nocturne, according to contemporary sources, was "a convivial genre" meant for amateur performers, and as such, most examples are characterized by a "tender and touching simplicity," devoid of complexity.[90] Typical of the majority of nineteenth-century nocturnes are Blangini's early nocturnes, which are in binary form and are characterized by controlled melodic writing (very limited in range), which moves in "stolid, stepwise motion in regular downbeat-oriented rhythms."[91] The texture is also simple in nature, featuring "homorhythmic doubling in thirds and sixths."[92] Despite the definitions of vocal and instrumental nocturnes as rather conservative in style, however, certain vocal nocturnes of the period, such as the late nocturnes of Blangini and a few by Louis Jadin,

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[88]Carl Czerny, *School of Practical Composition: Complete Treatise on the Composition of All Kinds of Music, Opus 600,* vol. 1, trans. John Bishop (London, 1848; German Original, 1839; reprint New York: Da Capo Press, 1979), 97-98.

[89]See Kallberg, "'Voice' and the Nocturne," 27.

[90]Kallberg, "'Voice' and the Nocturne," 8.

[91]Ibid.

[92]Ibid.

strayed from formal generic conventions by incorporating vocal flourishes and more complex melodic writing, thus demanding a greater level of skill on the part of the performers. For example, Blangini's late nocturnes reveal the occasional *fioriture*, and the "vocal parts unfold in the context of longer and more complex formal structures."[93] A few of Louis Jadin's nocturnes also feature a "more fluid melodic style in the *fioriture* and arpeggios" as well as the occasional opening recitative[94] (two features that appear in Chopin's late piano nocturnes).

The definitions of Castil-Blaze and Czerny are also consistent with the formal and melodic structure of the piano nocturnes of John Field, demonstrating that Field's nocturnes strongly resemble the nineteenth-century vocal nocturne; however, the definitions also point to the fact that the vocal nocturne was surpassed in scope and complexity by Chopin's piano nocturnes.[95] Czerny's description of the form of instrumental nocturnes ("nearly that of a short Andante in a Sonata") suggests that an ABA, simple rondo, or sonatina form was considered typical of the genre. Field's nocturnes are generally in either simple ternary or A-B-A-B form, and feature an uncomplicated melody unfolding in two- to four-bar phrases, with broken chord accompaniment patterns that rarely exceed the span of an octave or venture outside conservative diatonic relations. Though Field's nocturnes were not published in Poland, it is possible that they were imported to the country and thus Chopin may have become familiar with them in Warsaw's

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[93]Ibid., 12.

[94]Ibid.,12-15.

[95]Though a number of Chopin's nocturnes employ a two-voice texture in the soprano line (in particular, the Nocturne in D♭ Major, Op. 27, no. 2, the middle section of the Nocturne in A♭ Major, Op. 32, no. 2, and the Nocturne in G Major, Op. 37, no. 2), and thus suggest a duet or dialogue in keeping with the canonical script outlined in Castil-Blaze's description, Chopin's innovations in the piano nocturne transcend this early definition of the nocturne genre.

salons;[96] this is significant, as Field's influence can be seen in Chopin's early nocturnes.[97] Yet even in these early works, Chopin favoured more harmonically complex and sophisticated musical expression than his predecessor. Additionally, Chopin's nocturnes feature innovative and extensive ornamentation, an intense contrast of tempi and musical style between sections, and prominent episodes of dialogue. However, the innovations made by Blangini and Jadin in their late vocal nocturnes may be viewed as advancements in the genre that Chopin enhanced in unique and novel ways in his piano nocturnes. Thus, it is possible to identify certain stylistic and formal similarities between the vocal nocturne and the piano nocturnes of Chopin and Field. Furthermore, as Parakilas has pointed out, the locality of both composers is further evidence of the ability of the title "nocturne" to evoke the Parisian vocal genre, since Field wrote and published most of his piano nocturnes in St. Petersburg, "a city where the upper classes were French in language and culture" and Chopin composed most of his nocturnes in Paris.[98] But perhaps the most convincing account of the affinity between the piano nocturnes of Chopin and Field and the Parisian vocal nocturne comes from Chopin's student Mikuli, regarding the pedagogical use the nocturnes and the vocal style of the nocturne genre:

> Field's and [Chopin's] own Nocturnes also figured to some extent as *Etudes*, for through them the pupil would learn — partly from Chopin's explanations, partly from observing

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[96]Goldberg, *Music in Chopin's Warsaw*, 99.

[97]Compare, for example, the opening measures of Field's Fifth Nocturne in B-flat major (1817) and Chopin's Nocturne in D-flat major, Op. 27, no. 2 (1833-36). Similarities are discernable in the opening melodic gesture: both begin with a wandering melody beginning on f'', supported by a broken chord accompaniment pattern on the tonic; both are written in compound metre and both feature expressive markings redolent of vocal music (Field's is marked "dolce cantabile" and Chopin's "dolce").

[98]Parakilas, 205.

> and imitating Chopin, who played them indefatigably to the pupil — to recognize, love and produce the beautiful 'bound' [*gebunden*] vocal tone and the *legato*.[99]

Mikuli's statement attests to the expressive potential that Chopin found in modeling pianistic technique on vocal tone; it also demonstrates the central role the vocal model of expression played in Chopin's instructions for performance, as he utilized the piano nocturnes as studies for his students in order to develop their ability to produce beautiful tone and legato.

Chopin's penchant for the art of vocal performance — a proclivity that is highly suggestive of his preference for the salon as a venue for artistic expression, given the prominence of vocal repertoire within the salons — resonates with the aesthetic concerns discernible in his pedagogical instructions. Of all the available documents concerning Chopin's aesthetics, perhaps the most valuable sources are the statements of his students. His own correspondence reveals surprisingly little of his artistic intent; comments made with regard to his compositional process often appear jocular or self-deprecating, such as that made to Auguste Franchomme on 8 July 1846: "Dear friend, I am doing my best to work – but I am stuck – and if it goes on like that, my new productions will neither give the impression of warbling birds nor even of broken china. I must accept my lot."[100] The significance of Chopin's aesthetic concern with vocal expression can be seen in the revelatory nature of his pedagogical instructions. The vocal model of tone, declamation and technique runs like an *idée fixe* throughout his students' recollections. Wilhelm von Lenz (1808-83), a student of Chopin's whose "lessons were as much an occasion for

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[99]Mikuli, 4; cited and translated in Eigeldinger, 77.

[100]Letter to Auguste Franchomme (8 July 1846), quoted in Sydow, *Selected Correspondence,* 264. Sydow suggests that the "new productions" to which Chopin alludes include the Nocturne in B Major, Op. 62, no. 1.

aesthetic conversation as for pianistic improvement,"[101] remarked of Chopin's Nocturne Op. 9, No. 2, "As regards style, one should follow that of Pasta, of the great Italian school of singing."[102] Chopin advised the talented Vera Rubio (1816-1880) that "you must sing if you wish to play,"[103] and according to Emilie von Gretsch:

> True to his principle of imitating great singers in one's playing, Chopin drew from the instrument the secret of how to express breathing. At every point where a singer would take a breath, the accomplished pianist […] should take care to raise the wrist so as to let it fall again on the singing note with the greatest suppleness imaginable.[104]

Additionally, in a collection of Chopin's autograph notes on a piano method, we find his own definition of "the wrist: respiration in the voice."[105]

It is not difficult to discern Chopin's captivation with vocal technique from the passages above. However, the prominence of vocal repertoire in the musical life of the salons is noteworthy with regard to Chopin's preference for salon musical life and his choice of the evocative title "nocturne" for piano works performed within the musical sphere of the salon. Given the large number of vocal nocturnes that scholars have identified in the collections of salon hosts, it is not surprising that contemporary reviews of Chopin's nocturnes clearly place

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[101]Eigeldinger, 169.

[102]Wilhelm von Lenz, "Übersichtliche Beurtheilung der Pianoforte-Kompositionen von Chopin," *Neue Berliner Musikzeitung* XXVI/36, 37, 38 (1872), 297, quoted in Eigeldinger, 44. La Pasta (1797-1865) was a soprano of the Théâtre-Italien who performed several roles in the bel canto operas of Bellini and Donizetti.

[103]Vera Rubio as recounted to Frederick Niecks and published in *Frederick Chopin as a Man and Musician* (London: Novello, 1902), 3rd ed., vol. 2, 187; quoted in Eigeldinger, 45. Niecks maintained that Chopin then had Rubio take up voice lessons. See Eigeldinger, 45 and 178-79.

[104]Gretsch to Grewingk in *Eine Tochter*, 9-10; quoted in Eigeldinger, 45.

[105]Chopin, *Projet de Méthode* (a compilation of the composer's notes on a piano method), quoted in Eigeldinger, 45. For an explanation and history of the manuscript, see Eigeldinger, 90.

the works within the aesthetic context of the Parisian salon. However, it is clear that such reviews did not just identify a vocal presence in the nocturnes, but further associated these works with an *operatic* vocal presence. An example from an 1838 review of Chopin's Nocturne in B Major, op. 32, no. 1, serves to demonstrate:

> "Il Lamento" [subtitle given to the work by Wessel, Chopin's English publisher], an *andante sostenuto*, is a *morceau* in the style of Bellini's graceful and pathetic melodies; and may, without much stretch of imagination, be taken as a faithful portraiture of a heart pouring forth its feelings of "sweet sorrow," in strains of intense feeling and affection.[106]

The reviewer evidently identifies certain characteristics of Chopin's nocturne that he associates with the arias of Bellini. According to Jonathan Bellman, "the clear operatic influences in Chopin's nocturnes" were of particular import to Chopin's contemporaries.[107] Chopin's musical advancements in the piano nocturne genre, his "lush melodies adorned with shimmering *fioriture* of the sort that real-life bel canto singers could only dream of, " contributed to the identification of a narrating vocal presence in his piano nocturnes;[108] however, his achievements in this genre also contributed to the view of Chopin as "uniquely positioned to compose the Great Polish Opera."[109] In order to understand the full (narrative) implication of the contemporary association of Chopin's nocturnes with a vocal presence, it is necessary to transcend the confines of the salon and examine the Polish national implications of an operatic narrative. We have already seen how the vocal background of the piano nocturne contributed to the hermeneutical context

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[106]*Musical World*, 23 February 1838, p.120; cited in Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries*, 35. See n. 9 in Chapter 2 of this thesis regarding Chopin's disapproval of the descriptive titles given to his nocturnes by Wessel.

[107]Bellman, *Chopin's Polish Ballade*, 134.

[108]Ibid.

[109]Ibid, 135.

within which Chopin's nocturnes were created and performed in the salons; in order to fully comprehend how the musical aspects of Parisian salon life strengthened the impression of a Polish political narrative in Chopin's late works, it is necessary to examine Chopin's musical improvisations in the Parisian salons and his role as the musical *wieszcz*, expected to compose the great national Polish opera.

Salons and Signification: Musical Improvisation and a Nation's Operatic Need

> Mr. Elsner doesn't wish to see you merely as a concert-giver, a composer for piano and a famous executant — that is the easy way and is far less significant than writing operas. He wants to see you in the role Nature intended and fitted you for. Your place must be with Rossini, Mozart, etc. Your genius should not cling to the piano and to concert-giving; *operas* must make you immortal.[110]

The above letter to Chopin from his sister, Ludwika, in Warsaw, written shortly after Chopin arrived in Paris, was a gentle recommendation that the composer begin work on an opera. However, her words reflect an even stronger desire on the part of Chopin's Polish contemporaries that he take up the project of composing a national opera. The Polish émigrés in Paris desired the powerful and affecting genre of opera to portray the history of their nation, attracting audiences with the grandeur of the music and the stage. At a time when French grand opera illustrated historical struggles for freedom, as in Rossini's *Guillaume Tell* of 1829, and the tragedies of war, as in Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots* of 1836, sentiments regarding the political narrative power of opera were well founded. Though inspired by Chopin's piano works and the

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[110]Ludwika Chopin to Fryderyk in Paris, 27 November 1831; cited and translated in Sydow, *Selected Correspondence*, 96. Josef Elsner, with whom Chopin studied in Warsaw beginning around 1822, was one of Poland's foremost composers during his day.

national elements within them, Chopin's countrymen desired a work in *the* narrative musical form — opera — and entreated him to create a work that would carry the weight of their national plight to the fullest. This request stemmed from Chopin's fame as a renowned musician and composer and his known commitment to his homeland. And, as Bellman argues, Chopin's "playing [was] evocative of an almost mystically powerful nationalism, and his involvement with operatic music…obvious to anyone who knew his works and knew him."[111] From the time he was a youth, Chopin frequently improvised in Warsaw's salons on operatic themes and in 1833, began publishing compositions based on these operatic improvisations. These publications included the *Grand duo concertant* for cello and piano (written with August Franchomme) based on themes from Meyerbeer's French Grand Opera, *Robert le diable*, and the *Variations brillantes*, Op. 12 based on the aria "Je vends des scapulaires," from the opera *Ludovic*, by Hérold and Halévy.[112] Renowned for his improvisations while still a youth in Warsaw, Chopin soon acquired a reputation in Paris as a virtuoso whose improvisational skill was highly anticipated in the musical soirees. But according to Halina Goldberg, in the salons of Paris Chopin "improvised most often on Polish national tunes, preferably among friends, typically in émigré circles."[113] For the Romantics of the Parisian salons, "an improvisation, as a moment of spontaneous outpouring, took on the function of a mystic revelation."[114] Chopin's

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[111]Bellman, *Chopin's Polish Ballade*, 135.

[112]Ibid, 133. Additional works that Chopin based on operatic themes include the B-flat Minor Polonaise of 1826, the middle section of which is based on a theme from Rossini's *La gazza ladra*, and the Etude in G-sharp Minor, op. 25, no.7, which, as Bellman asserts, "bears close resemblances to "Tenere figli," a melody from [Chopin's] friend Vincenzo Bellini's opera *Norma*." See Bellman, 134.

[113]Goldberg, "'Remembering that tale of grief,'" 63.

[114]Goldberg, *Music in Chopin's Warsaw*, 200.

improvisations on both operatic repertoire and Polish folk music may thus have contributed to his fellow countrymen's conviction that he must compose the great Polish national opera.

As Goldberg argues, contemporary accounts of Chopin's improvisations and performances characterize "the particularly Polish perception of Chopin as the nation's spiritual guide, whose music carried the weight of prophecy."[115] A testimony by Ferdynand Dworzaczek, a renowned doctor from Warsaw, emphasizes the evocative power of Chopin's improvisations on Polish melodies. According to Dworzaczek:

> One day Chopin was improvising. I was lying on the sofa; I was in ecstasy, listening to him and day-dreaming. All of a sudden his music rang out with a song which went to the heart of my soul…a well known song…a song from the homeland…beloved…from the family home…from childhood years…My heart throbbed with yearning, tears sprang to my eyes — I leapt up: 'Fryderyczku!' I cried, 'I know that song from the cradle…my mother used to sing it…I have it in my soul, and you just played it!' He looked round with a strange expression. His eyes shone; his fingers were moving delicately over the keys; 'You never heard this tune before!' he declared. 'But I have it here, here, in my soul!' I cried, pressing my hand to my breast. 'Oh!' — he rose and embraced me — 'you have just made me indescribably happy, there are no words for it! You never knew this song…only its spirit: the spirit of the Polish melody! And I am so happy to have been able to grasp and reveal it.'[116]

Dworzaczek's account is notable as it suggests the listener's conviction in the composer's passion for "the spirit of the Polish melody," and the power of such melody to stir the emotions of his audiences. Admiring Chopin as the Polish Bard, it is not surprising that his Polish mentors and contemporary Polish artists urged him to compose a national opera.

Given the universal scope of Polish political messianism, that is, the belief in collective salvation, it is not surprising that the Polish exiles in Paris desired an operatic work depicting the

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[115]Ibid.

[116]Ferdynand Dworzaczek, quoted in Eigeldinger, 284.

tragedy of their nation's struggles. According to Bellman, "the Poles cherished their sense of chosenness and exulted in their national musical style, and many at least conceived their national tragedy as something that should speak to a universal sensibility — that the word should go forth and be spread amongst the nations."[117] Of central importance to understanding a nationalist narrative in Chopin's nocturnes is the significance to Chopin's contemporaries of "the clear operatic influences in Chopin's nocturnes."[118] The genre of the nocturne, as we have seen, was largely understood within the canonical script of the vocal nocturne (which was also an operatic piece); additionally, Chopin's *fioriture* and bel-canto inspired melodic writing in his nocturnes drew association with the melodies of Bellini (recall the review of 1838 cited above, as well as Mikuli's observation). Furthermore, Chopin's nocturnes were composed during the golden age of French grand opera, and during a time when "indications of opera's cultural impact" were manifest not only in arrangements of operatic excerpts, but in books devoted to the histories of the nations and of the revolutions portrayed in the operas.[119] Many of Chopin's late nocturnes feature sections that, as I discuss in Chapter 3, resemble operatic-style writing; for Chopin's audiences in the politicized context of the Parisian salons, I argue that a narrative mode of understanding grew out of heightened political awareness, the operatic and vocal context of the nocturnes and the improvisational features of the pieces. Therefore, in order to fully grasp the

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[117]Bellman, *Chopin's Polish Ballade*, 135.

[118]Ibid., 134. Bellman further elaborates that Chopin's nocturnes, "are in large part (excepting perhaps the anomalous op. 15 no. 3 in G Minor) idealized, pianistically reimagined arias and duets…." See Bellman, *Chopin's Polish Ballade*, 134.

[119]Ibid., 132.

readiness of Chopin's audience to interpret his late nocturnes as nationalist narrative, it is necessary to examine the Polish operatic imperative.

While it is generally conceded that Chopin avoided the political activism of the Polish émigrés,[120] it is known that he remained committed to his homeland and to "expressions of cultural nationalism."[121] Contemporary responses to his music reveal an awareness of Polish elements in his music, an awareness that was doubtless heightened by the "nationalist tunes [Chopin played] to the great appreciation of the Polish community."[122] One such nationalistic piece was the anthem *Dąbrowski Mazurka* ("Poland Has Not Yet Perished"), an incomplete arrangement of which survives in Chopin's hand among his manuscripts.[123] The poet Bohdan Zaleski described an improvisation of Chopin's at a salon gathering in 1844, which included the *Dąbrowski Mazurka*. Zaleski's diary entry, dated 2 February 1844, reads:

> Finally, in my honor, [Chopin played] an improvisation in which he evoked all the sweet and sorrowful voices of the past. He sang the tears of the *dumkas* and finished with the national anthem, 'Poland is not [yet] dead,' in a whole gamut of different forms and voices, from that of the warrior to those of the children and angels. I could have written a whole book about this improvisation.[124]

In order to understand the significance of Zaleski's illustration, we must recall Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz*, and the masterful improvisation of his bard, Jankiel:

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[120]See, for example, Jeffrey Kallberg, "Hearing Poland," 246; Pekacz, "Deconstructing a 'National Composer,'" esp. 169 and 172; Goldberg, "'Remembering that tale of grief,'" esp. 61 and 88, n. 19; and Bellman, *Chopin's Polish Ballade*, esp. 124.

[121]Kallberg, "Hearing Poland," 246.

[122]Bellman, *Chopin's Polish Ballade*, 47.

[123]Józef Michał Chomiński and Teresa Dalila Turło, *A Catalogue of the Works of Frederick Chopin* (Krákow: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1960), 239; cited in Bellman, 47.

[124]Bohdan Zaleski, diary entry dated 2 February 1844, quoted in Eigeldinger, 283-84.

> And from the trumpets to the heavens sped
> That march of triumph: *Poland is not dead!*
> *Dąbrowski, march to Poland!* With one accord,
> They clapped their hands, and "March Dąbrowski!" roared.

According to Jonathan Bellman, "Dąbrowski's mazurka, also known as 'The Marching Song of the Polish Legions,' is the most famous patriotic song of all — the national anthem, in fact — with its line of 'Poland is not [yet] dead!'"[125] The resemblance of Zaleski's description to Mickiewicz's poetic depiction of the improvisation by his musical *wieszcz* is striking. It is clear that Zaleski understood a national narrative, as Chopin "sang the tears of the *dumkas*" and the national anthem "in a whole gamut of different forms and voices." The willingness of Chopin's Polish compatriots to hear a national narrative in his music may have stemmed partly from their desire that he compose a national opera, a request with which Chopin had been confronted for more than a decade by the time of Zaleski's account. During an era of such political unrest, Chopin's contemporaries were well aware of the power of opera's political narrative, and the ability of the genre to inspire national support. Bellman relates the incident that occurred in Brussels on 25 August 1830, in which "an operatic performance…sparked the revolution: following the duet 'Amour sacré de la patrie' from Daniel Auber's *Muette de Portici*, the inflamed audience hit the streets and took over government buildings, and eventually Belgium successfully seceded from the Netherlands."[126] He continues, "To the Poles, of course, these revolutions were very hopeful developments, and particularly the operatic angle of the [Brussels

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[125]Bellman, *Chopin's Polish Ballade*, 130.

[126]Ibid., 115.

revolution] would have struck the national imagination."[127] The political significance of the opera (and other French grand operas, such as Rossini's *Guillaume Tell*, written in 1829), would not have escaped Chopin's countrymen. In a concert at Breslau in November 1830, Chopin in fact improvised on themes from *La Muette de Portici*.[128] Given Chopin's affinity for improvisations on operatic themes, it is possible that Chopin performed similar improvisations on Auber's opera in the Parisian salons. In light of the Brussels revolt incited by the opera's productions, such improvisations would carry a heavy weight for the Polish exiles due to the political ramifications of *La Muette*.

In the wake of the event in Brussels, it is perhaps not surprising that the exiled Polish communities desired a national opera from their foremost Polish composer. Elsner himself approached the subject in at least four letters to Chopin. Writing to Chopin on 13 November 1832, Elsner states:

> I cannot forbear mentioning that my work on *The Metre and Rhythm of the Polish Language* in three volumes (containing my dissertation on Melody, which you already partly know) is now finished. However, it cannot be published just yet, since the question of *Nationalism* obviously occupies the most important place in it, apart from the discussion of the present trend of music.
>
> Nationalism, although it may be dressed up in the most moderate and restrained language, is like a beautiful woman whose very attractions may prevent her from being exhibited in the market-place, even when heavily veiled.
>
> My third volume deals with the close connection between poetry and music, and to convince you — *Sapienti pauca* [a hint for a wise man] — of how far the development of my thoughts on this topic might be of use, not only to Polish opera-composers but also to

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[127]Ibid. Written in 1828, Auber's *La Muette de Portici* centered on the 1647 revolt against Spanish rule in Naples, led by Masaniello, a Neapolitan fisherman. *Muette*, regarded as one the earliest French grand operas, was a work that, according to Bellman, Chopin saw numerous times. See Bellman, 132-133.

[128]Atwood, *Fryderyk Chopin: Pianist from Warsaw*, 40; this concert is described by Chopin in a letter to his family dated 9 November 1830, in Sydow, *Selected Correspondence*, 62.

> those who write German, French and Italian operas, allow me to quote one short passage from the preface:
>
> "Having carefully considered all this, one must recognize that opera as a stage-spectacle is still far from having reached the peak of its true possibilities, especially from the aesthetic standpoint, wherein it still has to be brought to perfection. To this perfection it must be brought by the combined efforts of the poets and composers of all civilised nations."
>
> What a pity that I cannot debate all this with you and your colleagues — people like Mickiewicz![129]

Elsner's letter reveals his high regard for poetic structure, his conviction of the magnitude of the "close connection between poetry and music," and his belief in the value of this connection for composers of national opera. It is important to note the significance of the aesthetic currents of Elsner's letter, which lie in his poetic depiction of nationalism and in his conviction that opera could only be brought to perfection "by the combined efforts of poets and composers from all civilised nations." Clearly, Elsner identifies Mickiewicz as the poet who could aid in bringing Polish opera to perfection, for he follows this statement with the proclamation, "What a pity that I cannot debate all this with you and your colleagues — people like Mickiewicz!" Elsner evidently felt that Mickiewicz, perhaps the most fervently articulate poet of Polish messianism, would be a receptive and supportive collaborator in the project of a Polish national opera. However, Elsner's description of nationalism suggests the provocative nature of national sentiment, though "it may be dressed up in the most moderate and restrained language." It is likely that Elsner's poetic depiction of nationalism, "like a beautiful woman whose very attractions may prevent her from being exhibited in the market-place, even when heavily veiled," refers to the increasing censorship composers of opera and art song faced in Poland after the year

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[129]Elsner to Chopin, 13 November 1832, in Sydow, *Selected Correspondence*, 113-114.

1825.[130] The oppressive political climate in Poland at this time led to increasingly strict censorship laws with regard to patriotic verse.[131] Here, perhaps, lay part of the impetus behind the wish that Chopin should compose a national Polish opera, since the composer and Mickiewicz resided in Paris, outside the repressive climate of Poland.

In 1834, Elsner again stressed the importance of an opera — more specifically, a national opera — to the composer's *oeuvre*. He wrote:

> Everything I read or hear about our dear Fryderyk fills my heart with joy, but forgive my frankness — it is still not enough for me, your fortunate (though of little merit) teacher of harmony and counterpoint, who will always be your true friend and admirer. As I journey through this "vale of tears" I would like to live to see an opera of your composition, which would not only increase your fame but benefit the art of music in general, especially if the subject of such an opera were drawn from Polish national history. I am not exaggerating when I say this. Firstly, you know me, you know that I cannot flatter; secondly, I recognize in addition to your genius the *nature* of your gifts. As the critic of your Mazurkas stated, only an opera can show your talent in a true light and win for it eternal life.[132]

Almost a decade later, Chopin's former teacher wrote once again, urging him to write a Polish national opera:

> Having yet another opportunity to write to you, I enclose herewith a few items from my treatise, which I believe might interest you, particularly a copy of the Introduction to the second part of my dissertation on The Meters and Rhythms of the Polish Language. I have two reasons for doing so: one is a purely private one — your musical genius simply seems to compel me to do it; and the other more general reason is to encourage and ask you to write music for an opera, if possible based on Polish history.[133]

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[130]Anne Swartz, "Elsner, Chopin, and Musical Narrative as Symbols of Nation," *The Polish Review* 39, no. 4 (1994): 451. According to Swartz, "the repressive political climate in Warsaw following the Decembrist revolt of 1825 created an increasingly difficult situation for Elsner and Chopin, as the censors strongly discouraged patriotic sentiment in the art song." See Swartz, 451.

[131]Ibid., 452.

[132]Elsner to Chopin, 14 September 1834, in Sydow, *Selected Correspondence*, 124.

[133]Elsner to Chopin, 17 [?] May 1843, cited and translated in Pierre Azoury, *Chopin Through His Contemporaries: Friends, Lovers, and Rivals* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 65

Elsner was not the only Polish figure to insist on a national opera from Chopin's hand. As Bellman argues, "by far the most authoritative voice calling for an opera by Chopin was that of the poetic *wieszcz* himself, Adam Mickiewicz."[134] According to accounts by Chopin's contemporaries, this happened on at least two occasions. Teofil Kwiatowski, a Polish painter, recounted the first incident. He explains:

> Calling one day on Chopin [I] found him and Mickiewicz in the midst of a very excited discussion. The poet urged the composer to undertake a great work, and not to fritter away his power on trifles; the composer, on the other hand, maintained that he was not in possession of the qualities requisite for what he was advised to undertake.[135]

The second incident occurred in 1848, and reveals a more agitated picture of Mickiewicz. Antoine Dessus, a friend of Mickiewicz's secretary, described the confrontation in a letter to Mickiewicz's son, Władysław. He writes:

> Upon coming to visit your father, I found Chopin in the living room.[…] On the request of your mother he sat at the piano and played with great feeling. When he finished, your father ran his hand through his hair, gave a deep sigh, and started to reprimand Chopin with such ferocity that I did not know what to do. "How come, instead of developing in yourself the gift of touching souls, you prance around the Faubourg St. Germain! You could stir crowds, but instead you only exert yourself to tickle the nerves of aristocrats!"[…] Finally, Mickiewicz fell silent, and Chopin started to play folk songs. Your father's brow lightened, and when Chopin stood up, they talked as if nothing had ever happened.[136]

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[134]Bellman, *Chopin's Polish Ballade*, 139.

[135]Teofil Kwiatowski, cited and translated in Frederick Niecks, *Frederick Chopin as a Man and Musician*, vol. 1 (London: Novello, 1902; reprint, New York: Cooper Square, 1973), 277.

[136]Antione Dessus to Władysław Mickiewicz, from *Zywot Adama Mickiewicz*, trans. Felicia Wertz, 255; quoted in Bellman, *Chopin's Polish Ballade*, 140. The same letter is quoted in Pekacz, 171, but differs slightly in translation.

The pressure for Chopin to compose a national opera stemmed from a long-standing identification of Polish elements in his music. His countrymen offered resounding praise of such elements while the composer was in his youth. From Warsaw, 1830:

> His compositions which contain themes from various national songs especially enchanted his listeners, since M. Chopin is able to blend the lovely simplicity of these folk songs with his exquisite playing and ingenious composition so that every note fills the ear with pleasure, stirs the heart, and speaks directly to the soul.[137]

Another review from Warsaw that same year lauded Chopin's performance, stating, "It is also pleasing to the Polish people when reflecting on such a magnificent talent, nay even genius, to remember that in the greater part of his compositions as well as in his performance the spirit of the nation was evident."[138]

The insistence that Chopin write a national opera could not have gone unnoticed by his non-Polish contemporaries in the Parisian salons. For Chopin's fellow Parisians, who were well aware of the concepts of Polish political messianism, the Polish elements in Chopin's music surely suggested the plight of the Polish nation (recall the comment made by Berlioz in *Le Rénovateur* of 15 December 1833 regarding the Polish elements of Chopin's music that "charms and captivates by its very strangeness").

Chopin never wrote the narrative that the Polish exiles so greatly desired to appear in the form of an opera. His music, however, infused with Polish national elements, suggested a highly charged political vocabulary to his contemporaries. His improvisations on Polish songs were a distinguished addition to salon musical life, one that garnered a perception of the composer as

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[137]From *Pamiętnik dla Płci Pięknej*, Warsaw (1830); cited and translated in Atwood, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 207.

[138]From *Powszechny Dziennik Krajowy*, Warsaw, 19 March 1830; cited and translated in Atwood, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 209.

Poland's musical *wieszcz*. The Polish operatic imperative, so keenly expressed to Chopin by his contemporaries, communicated his countrymen's desire that he compose a politically inspired musical narrative. As I demonstrate in Chapter 3, the musical elements of Chopin's nocturnes that engaged with the musical context of operatic and vocal music, as well as the improvisational features of the works, enabled his music to be understood as narrative; furthermore, Chopin's ability to capture the spirit of the Polish nation through the melancholy character of his nocturnes and through subtle references to Polish folk music garnered a perception of a messianic character and thus a political narrative in the works.

Summary: The Composer's Voice in the Salons

"We use sounds to make music just as we use words to make a language."[139]

Chopin's connection of music and language elucidates one of his key aesthetic convictions, which he passed along to his students. According to Goldberg, "Chopin's students repeatedly said that their master thought of music in rhetorical terms; for him it was a language following the rules of punctuation and elocution."[140] Chopin's aesthetic concerns with language and voice, concerns that were vital to his students' interpretation of his works, undoubtedly reached the salons of Paris. These aesthetic concerns were manifest in Chopin's nocturnes, and due to the prominence of the vocal nocturne in the Parisian salons, Chopin's concern with the model of vocal declamation was heightened by the suggestion of a vocal presence in the nocturne. Due to

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[139]Chopin, *Projet de méthode*, cited and translated in Eigeldinger, 42.

[140]Goldberg, *Music in Chopin's Warsaw*, 124.

the plight of the Polish exiles in Paris, expressed most fervently and prominently in terms of Polish political messianism in the Parisian salons, the popularity of Polish national music and the demand for a Polish national opera grew stronger. Chopin, cast in the role of the nation's musical *wieszcz*, was strongly urged to compose such an opera for his countrymen. Though he never did, his music and the national elements identified therein were understood in terms of Poland's history. With the political, philosophical and musical aspects of the salon culture of Chopin's Paris in mind, we can thus examine such a narrative in these nocturnes, and look with renewed interest at Chopin's instruction: "*Il faut chanter avec les doigts!*"

CHAPTER 2

CHOPIN RECEPTION AND NARRATIVE INTERPRETATION IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Contemporaries of Chopin often described his music in terms of poetry, or in terms of otherworldly metaphors, reflecting the Romantic ideal and view of the artist as transcendental subject. Thus, Chopin was hailed as the "Ariel of pianists,"[1] compared to "Queen Mab,"[2] and described by Berlioz (among others) as "the *Trilby* of pianists."[3] These literary associations were accentuated through descriptions such as Léon Escudier's, who wrote of the composer as "a poet, and a tender poet above all," who "makes poetry predominate."[4] Another reviewer wrote that "to hear Chopin is to read a strophe of Lamartine,"[5] while an additional critic described Chopin's music as "poetry perfectly rendered in tones."[6] While the above metaphorical descriptions are in keeping with Romantic impressions of the artist, it is noteworthy that his contemporaries received Chopin as poet, and his music as poetry, to a greater extent than any

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[1]*RGMP*, 15e année, nº8 (20 février 1848); cited and translated in William G. Atwood, *Fryderyk Chopin: Pianist from Warsaw* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 244.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Hector Berlioz, *La Rénovateur* (15 décembre 1833); cited and translated in Eigeldinger, 272. Trilby was the main character of Charles Nodier's *Trilby ou le Lutin d'Argail*, published in 1822.

[4]Léon Escudier, *La France musicale* (27 février 1842); cited and translated in Eigeldinger, 293 – 294.

[5]*Le Ménestrel* (2 mai 1841).

[6]*Le Ménestrel* (27 février 1842).

other musician of the era.[7] The literary associations, while not denoting a specific literary program or literary model, suggest that his contemporaries drew literary connections with his music, thus pointing to a narrative mode of understanding. Furthermore, Chopin's music became for his audiences a poetry imbued with national sentiment, drawn not only from elements of Polish folk music, but also from the sorrowful mood of many of his compositions, expressing to many the plight of the Polish nation. Thus Liszt wrote that:

> Because the heart of that nation has found expression in all forms in which he has written, [Chopin] is entitled to be considered essentially a Polish poet. His preludes, nocturnes, scherzos and concertos…are all full of national sensibility expressed perhaps in differing degrees, and in a thousand ways varied and modified, but always bearing the same character.[8]

I therefore suggest that a narrative analysis of the late nocturnes in the context of the sociopolitical atmosphere may resonate with contemporary interpretations of Chopin's music. Such analysis reconsiders the genre, hitherto thought of as a simple lyric form by such as Castil-Blaze and Czerny, and situates the late nocturnes amongst the larger works such as the ballades and polonaises, considering the semantic weight and extramusical connotations that can be drawn from analysis of the temporal unfolding of the works in the historical context of nineteenth-century Parisian salon culture.

Many literary connections that contemporaries drew from Chopin's music were revealed in programmatic references and interpretations of his works. While it is known that Chopin was

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[7]Pisarenko, 34.

[8]Franz Liszt, *Frédéric Chopin*, cited and translated in Pisarenko, 42-43.

opposed to mimesis and "music which illustrates,"[9] interpretive trends in the European tradition (made current by the French *symphonies à programme* of Berlioz and earlier composers) predisposed audiences to this type of interpretation.[10] Such a trend further points to a type of interpretation that resonates with a narrative mode of understanding. Zofia Chechlińska's study of Chopin reception in Polish periodicals is illuminating in this regard as she notes the direct connection between programmatic interpretations of Chopin's works in Poland and "the interpretive legends already established in the larger European tradition."[11] According to Chechlińska, "in the second half of the nineteenth century programmatic readings of Chopin's works were rather common." She notes, however, that this type of reception was far from common in the first half of the nineteenth century, "perhaps…because of Chopin's well-known dislike of every kind of programmatic interpretation of music."[12] However, she argues that the general absence of programmatic interpretations of the works in the first half of the nineteenth

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[9]Karol Berger, "Chopin's Ballade Op. 23 and the Revolution of the Intellectuals," in John Rink and Jim Samson, eds., *Chopin Studies 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 77. Berger cites Ludwik Bronarski, "Chopin et la littérature," in Bronarski, *Etudes sur Chopin*, 2 vols. (Lausanne 1944), vol. 1, 19-76. Also, in a letter to Julian Fontana dated 9 October 1841, Chopin criticized the subtitles given to his works by Wessel, stating "Tell him [Wessel] that if he has lost money over my compositions it is certainly on account of the ridiculous titles he has given them, in spite of my prohibition and my repeated rows with Mr. Stapleton." In addition to the above-mentioned "Il Lamento" (Chapter 1 of this thesis), Wessel labelled the Nocturnes Op. 37, "The Sighs," and the Nocturnes, Op. 9, "Murmurs of the Seine." See Sydow, *Selected Correspondence*, 208-209.

[10]According to Mark Evan Bonds, "The idea of program music — instrumental music that attempts to depict or narrate an extra-musical object or event — was a well-established tradition by the beginning of the eigthteenth century." See Bonds, *Wordless Rhetoric: Musical Form and the Metaphor of Oration* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1991), 169.

[11]Zofia Chechlińska, "Chopin's Reception as Reflected in Nineteenth-Century Polish Periodicals: General Remarks," in Goldberg, ed., *The Age of Chopin*, 253. For example, Chechlińska examines certain Polish readings that clearly accept the association of the Ballade in A flat Major with "the story of Loreley." This, she states, was "a tradition apparently born in the circle of Chopin's intimate association." See Chechlińska, 253.

[12]Ibid., 252.

century "was [probably] owing to the general changes in attitude toward music under way at the time." As Chechlińska notes, it became more common towards the mid-nineteenth century for composers to attach specific programs to their works, and this tendency "in a certain sense familiarized the listeners with the reception of music in precisely such terms." Thus, audiences often searched for programs regardless of a composer's intentions.[13]

Vera Micznik offers additional information on the change in attitude towards musical meaning in the nineteenth century, locating as the foundation for this transformation changes in the music itself. Accordingly she states, "In nineteenth-century instrumental music the role played in the production of meaning by the local surface detail becomes gradually more important than that of the underlying tonal argument."[14] Citing Rose Subotnik, Micznik explains that the change in perception of musical meaning placed greater weight on the overall structure, "or total, concrete configurations," which helped "to obscure the temporal connections of tonal argument and to limit the latter as a source of meaning."[15] Micznik locates "this shift of emphasis" in the "changes in two main musical domains: the nature of the thematic materials and the ways in which they are combined to form a musical discourse."[16] Thus, Romantic composers tended towards a greater variety of thematic and motivic materials in a given composition; such a tendency revealed the structural import created by the connection of such thematic and motivic

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[13]Ibid.

[14]Micznik, 200.

[15]Rose Rosengard Subotnik, "Romantic Music as Post-Kantian Critique: Classicism, Romanticism, and the Concept of Semiotic Universe," in *On Criticizing Music: Five Philosophical Perspectives*, ed. Kingsley Price (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1981), 74-98 (pp. 84-5); cited in Micznik, 200.

[16]Micznik, 200.

materials, and this in turn "[took] over some of the structural role played in Classical music by the tonal syntax."[17] This tendency is revealed in many works of Chopin's oeuvre; for example, Chopin's ballades employ a variety of thematic and motivic material, incorporating material from different genres, including the waltz, berceuse, and pastorale.[18] This integration produces "multiple levels of referentiality,"[19] which stimulate narrative interest on the part of the listener.

Many programs that arose around Chopin's works in the nineteenth century served to highlight a national interpretation of a given work; this was particularly common with regard to interpretations of the ballades, mazurkas and polonaises. Marceli Antoni Szulc, an early Chopin biographer, interpreted the Polonaise, Op. 53 in A flat Major "as an image of a national procession of hetmans and voivodas, colorfully costumed in the precious garb of Polish seventeenth-century noblemen."[20] Additionally, Stanisław Tarnowski (1837–1871) searched for an association between Chopin's works (including the Preludes Op. 24 and the Funeral March from the Sonata in B flat Minor) and Polish poetry, and deemed the Sonata to be a "funereal conduct of the whole nation watching its own funeral."[21]

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[17]Ibid.

[18]See Michael Klein's analysis of structural and topical features of Chopin's First and Fourth Ballades in his article, "Chopin's Fourth Ballade as Musical Narrative," 31.

[19]Here, I borrow Micznik's terminology. See Micznik, 200.

[20]Maja Trochimczyk, "Chopin and the 'Polish Race': On National Ideologies and the Chopin Reception," in Goldberg, ed., *The Age of Chopin*, 284. Hetmans and voivodas were Polish military commanders. The title 'hetman' was given to the second highest military commander in Poland from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century.

[21]Stanisław Tarnowski, *Chopin i Grottger. Dwa szkice* (Kraków: Księgarnia Spółki Wydawniczej Polskiej, 1892; reprinted in *Przegląd polski*, April 1971; cited and translated in Trochimczyk, 284.

This attempt to associate Chopin's music with Polish poetry was not isolated; as late as 1882, Maurycy Karasowski "emphasized the saturation of Chopin's music with sorrow and nostalgia," two features that the writer asserted were of primary importance in Polish Romantic poetry.[22] To Chopin's contemporaries in Paris — Polish and Parisian alike — this mood of pathos was associated with a distinct Polish national mood, identified as *żal* [sorrow] by the Chopin devotee Zygmunt Noskowski (1846–1909), who cited Liszt as the source of this insight.[23] Thus, the melancholic and sorrowful mood of many of Chopin's works was viewed as "the purposeful and self-defined aspect of the expression of the Polish spirit in Chopin's music."[24]

In addition to Chechlińska's theory on the tendency to associate programs with instrumental music, Jeffrey Kallberg argues that "programs tended to be attached to compositions whose musical structures resisted understanding by audiences grounded in 'classical' works."[25] This tendency, he suggests, accounts in part for the tale that emerged in the musical literature around 1880, which stated "that Chopin had written the Nocturne in G Minor [Op. 15, no. 3] while influenced by a recent performance of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*."[26] Kallberg argues that although the story remains doubtful, "the stylistic trends of the 1880s suggest why the story still bears repeating," for the anecdote was associated specifically with the Nocturne in G

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[22]Trochimczyk, 288.

[23]Zygmunt Noskowski, *Istota utworów Chopina*, in Maja Trochimczyk, *After Chopin: Essays in Polish Music* (Los Angeles: Polish Music Center at the University of Southern California, 2000), 28-29.

[24]Trochimczyk, "Chopin and the 'Polish Race,'" 289.

[25]Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries*, 25.

[26]Ibid., 24.

Minor alone — a composition that strayed from the generic models put forth by Chopin and by his predecessor, John Field, and eluded early audiences through formal irregularities, idiosyncratic phrase structure, and the juxtaposition of generic styles.[27] Kallberg's informative study of genre and interpretation in Chopin's Nocturne in G Minor, Op. 15, no. 3 (to which he refers as an "idiosyncratic composition" that "sits as few other nocturnes do on the edge of its class"[28]) is informative in that he not only reveals the ways in which the piece strayed from formal conventions, but he also draws a connection between this nocturne and Chopin's early reception in terms of Polish Romantic nationalism.[29] I argue that the late nocturnes by Chopin additionally resonate with the ideology outlined by Kallberg, and that the familiar topoi employed by Chopin, embedded in works with clear operatic references, suggest a strong patriotic sentiment.

The operatic influences in Chopin's nocturnes, so important to his contemporaries, help to reveal the ways in which audiences might have understood a narrative framework in the late nocturnes. Jonathan Bellman observes the operatic model in Chopin's melodies in the "singable interval structure," and the operatic-style arias and *fioriture*.[30] Unlike the accompaniment in Field's nocturnes, "composed of stock figures, arpeggios and expanded alberti bass," Chopin's

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[27]Ibid., 25. For a detailed discussion of the versions of this anecdote, see Kallberg, 24-25, as well as Eigeldinger, 153, n. 187.

[28]Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries*, 10-11.

[29]Ibid., esp. 21-29.

[30]Jonathan Bellman, "Improvisation in Chopin's Nocturnes: Some Suggested Parameters" (DMA, Stanford University, 1990), 15.

accompaniments might be thought of as "full-scale orchestrations."[31] According to Bellman, "the integrity of the voice-leading [in Chopin's nocturnes] is always of primary concern…and registral changes are coherent and substantive, not inconsequential and coincidental, in the manner of a Herz or Field."[32] Examples of this type of voice-leading can be seen in the nocturnes Op. 9, no. 3 and Op. 27, no. 2; in the latter work, the "voice-leading is maintained from harmony to harmony, so that from a wide-ranging arpeggio figuration a tapestry of voices emerges."[33] Additional operatic influences can be seen in the contrasting middle sections of most of Chopin's nocturnes, which amount to a dramatic section more akin to a *scena* rather than an aria; Bellman cites, as examples, the "storm scene" of Op. 15, no. 1, the "chorus" that emerges in Op. 37, no. 1, and the "heroic confrontation" of Op. 55, no. 1.[34] To Bellman's examples I add the middle section of Op. 48, no. 1, and Op. 48, no. 2, which I explore in Chapter 3. Additionally, Chopin's *fioriture*, which appear more abundantly in the nocturnes than in any other genre, have an improvisational quality, drawn from the *cantabile* aria of the Romantic *bel canto scena*.[35] As a composer, Chopin was known for meticulously working out melodic segments and painstakingly rewriting a single bar several times; however, as Bellman points out, a *fioritura* in Chopin's nocturnes often gives the impression of an inspired melodic outburst, a moment of improvisation rather than a careful working out of a musical problem.[36] According to

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[31]Ibid.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Ibid., 15-16.

[35]Eigeldinger, 123, n.106.

Chopin's pupil, Wilhelm von Lenz, "if [Chopin] happened to improvise a *fioritura* — a rare occurrence — it was always somehow a miracle of good taste."[37] The improvisational quality of the *fiorriture* thus further suggests an affinity with an operatic model.

The operatic model can therefore clearly be discerned in many of Chopin's nocturnes. Could this affinity with the narrative musical form of opera thus account for the identification, in many reviews of Chopin's nocturnes, of a distinct narrative presence? This tendency towards identification of a human presence within the works seems to foreground the image of the composer in the melodic and formal construction of the works. For example, the melodies of his nocturnes enable him, in the eyes of one reviewer, to address "himself to society rather than the public, [where] he could, with impunity, reveal his true nature, that of elegiac poet, profound, pure, and pensive."[38] The author additionally discerns in Chopin's music a distinct national pathos; he elaborates:

> As with that other great poet Mickiewicz, his compatriot and friend, the muse of his homeland dictates his songs, and the anguished cries of Poland lend to his art a mysterious, indefinable poetry which, for all those who have truly experienced it, cannot be compared to anything else.[39]

Another review of a performance of Chopin's Nocturne in D flat, Op. 27, no. 2 identifies within the work "the ardent and suppressed passion, the anxious reverie that was the muse of the Polish

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[36]Bellman, "Improvisation in Chopin's Nocturnes," 12.

[37]Lenz, cited and translated in Eigeldinger, 52.

[38]*RGMP*, 8e année, n° 31 (2 mai 1841); cited and translated in Atwood, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 233. Additional pieces referred to in the review include preludes, etudes and mazurkas.

[39]Ibid., 231.

master and the secret of his originality."[40] But one of the most telling examples of the association of the nocturne with a human and narrative presence comes not from a review of a nocturne, but from Wilhelm von Lenz's analytical review of the Barcarolle Op. 60.[41] For Lenz, the Barcarolle represented the epitome of the nocturne, a pictorial piece into which was written the story of the composer himself. Evocative, descriptive and above all a love song, the Barcarolle appeared to Lenz as the essence of "le style du Nocturne."[42]

Further support for a rhetorical interpretation of the late nocturnes that resonates with aspects of a narrative unfolding comes from the contemporary pianist and composer Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829-1869). Gottschalk's *Ricordati* (1855-56, published in 1857), a work that has been classified as a nocturne and in which "Chopinesque traits abound," tells us much about the contemporary interpretation of Chopin's nocturnes.[43] The gestures of the piece that suggest a modeling on Chopin's nocturnes include the *bel canto*-inspired "Italianate melodic writing," the *pianissimo* dynamic level, and the chromatic *fioriture*;[44] however, the most striking characteristics of Gottschalk's piece are the indications for "rhetorically coherent execution."[45]

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[40]"La passion ardente et contenue, la rêverie inquiète qui fut la muse du maître polonais et le secret de son originalité," *RGMP*, 27e année, n° 8 (19 février 1860), 58.

[41]The article appeared in *RGMP*, 40e année, nº 33 (17 août 1873).

[42]Ibid.

[43]Jonathan Bellman, "Chopin and His Imitators: Notated Emulations of the 'True Style' of Performance," *19th-Century Music* 24, no. 2 (Autumn, 2000): 153.

[44]Ibid. Bellman asserts that "Gottschalk's *fioriture* are far closer to Chopin's ornamental language than those of almost any other imitator." See Bellman, 153.

[45]Ibid. Gottschalk's instructions are indicative of dramatic effect and, combined with the Italianate melodies and "scintillating" *fioriture* (the indication *scintillante* is written under one such *fioritura* in measure 12 of his *Ricordati*), suggest a level of drama and narrative akin to opera. Such rhetorical indications include *melinconico*, *parlando*, *piangendo* ("weeping"), *con lagrime* ("with tears"), and *con amore* as well as *con dolore* ("with pain").

There is strong evidence to suggest that Gottschalk's piece reveals a level of representation on the composer's part of what he heard and understood in Chopin's nocturnes, and that the piece was intended to reflect the ideals of rhetorically coherent execution that he perceived in Chopin's nocturnes. Accounts from Chopin's students also tell us that the rhetorical model of phrasing was closely associated with Chopin's aesthetic ideals. According to Mikuli:

> Chopin insisted above all on the importance of correct phrasing. Wrong phrasing would provoke the apt analogy that it seemed to him as if someone were reciting a laboriously memorized speech in an unfamiliar language, not merely failing to observe the right quantity of syllables, perhaps even making full stops in the middle of words. Similarly, by his illiterate phrasing the pseudo-musician reveals that music is not his mother tongue but something foreign and unintelligible to him; and so, like that orator, he must relinquish all hope of his speech having any effect on the listener.[46]

Chopin's focus on the connection between music and language not only reflects his own aesthetic ideal, but it also reflects a larger trend in nineteenth-century analysis and interpretation of textless instrumental music. This trend in analysis conflated the tradition of rhetoric and use of rhetorical imagery prominent in the eighteenth century with a "predominantly expressive critical orientation toward the arts" and a "growing view of art primarily as a vehicle of self-expression" that began to take hold in the early nineteenth century.[47] According to Bonds, "the

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Moreover, the specific indications in Gottschalk's score resonate with ideologies of a Polish messianic consciousness, strongly suggesting grief, melancholy and sorrow – emotions aligned with the Polish *żal*. In later years Gottschalk would write about the inspiration he drew from Chopin, and indeed, Gottschalk's contemporaries in Paris often compared his style of playing to Chopin's. See Bellman, "Chopin and His Imitators," esp. 153, and S. Frederick Starr, *Bamboula!: The Life and Times of Louis Moreau Gottschalk* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

[46]Mikuli, cited and translated in Eigeldinger, 42. Bellman further argues that the recording of the Op. 62 nocturnes by Raoul von Koczalski, a student of Karol Mikuli's "whose pianistic lineage instilled in him a coherent, rhetorical, creative, and dramatic (but not exaggerated) approach to phrasing," demonstrates a "clear correspondence [with] contemporary accounts of Chopin's playing." According to Bellman, in Koczalski's recording, "one hears singing, 'speaking' quarters and eighth notes, intensified repetitions, and rhythmic subtleties resulting from the privileging of the integrity of the line over the beat." See Bellman, "Chopin and His Imitators," 154.

[47]Bonds, 133.

use of rhetorical imagery in dealing with the problem of form continued unabated [in the nineteenth century] not only in contemporary dictionaries of music and manuals of composition, but in broader, more aesthetically oriented treatises as well."[48] Although the idea of rhetoric "lost its central role" in musical analysis in the mid-nineteenth century, writers of this period "were members of a generation whose formal education included a thorough grounding in rhetoric, and their writings [such as those of A. B. Marx] frequently introduced rhetorical concepts outside an overtly rhetorical framework or under the guise of nonrhetorical terminology."[49] Thus, many traditional categories of rhetoric are sustained in nineteenth-century analyses of instrumental music: a central idea, followed by "derivative secondary and connective ideas;" the logical ordering of these ideas; and "attention to the listener's ability to grasp the trajectory of the musical argument."[50] These categories are preserved in the growing number of analyses that emerged in the early nineteenth century that attempted to "explicate instrumental music...[through] programmatic and quasi-programmatic analyses," which varied in scope and ranged from the association of a poetic text with a given work, to the "underlaying of a specific literary text," to the application of a narrative plot to a specific composition.[51] The writings of nineteenth-century music critics therefore emerged in two very different yet interrelated approaches to musical analysis. The first (and by far the most common) approach tended to interpret a given instrumental composition by means of a program of some kind, while the

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[48]Ibid.

[49]Ibid., 177.

[50]Ibid., 169 and 178.

[51]Ibid., 170.

second approach reveals a more technical analysis of the components of a composition and of the formal function of the components within the work as a whole.[52] While the two approaches are seemingly dissimilar, they are unified by the underlying concept of thematic elaboration,[53] and the shared conviction that a given composition is capable of communicating "a meaning of some kind, and that intrinsically musical events, including the elaboration of the work's central idea…can be related to extra-musical scenarios."[54] For the purposes of this study, the historical treatises which will be referenced in the next chapter include those by the German theorist A. B. Marx, whose theoretical writings form much of the basis of modern theoretical understanding, and whose writings reveal some degree of narrative interpretation in his aesthetic outlook;[55] the writings of François-Joseph Fétis, whose numerous publications enjoyed extraordinary popularity in Paris and abroad and which elucidate historical notions of melodic detail and tonal structure, further inform my technical analysis in Chapter 3.[56]

Consideration of such contemporary analysis can elucidate the value of narrative analysis in the context of nineteenth-century production of meaning. The importance of such analysis lies in the relationship between the music and audience; that is, such analysis stresses the importance

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[52]Bonds, 169.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid., 170.

[55]See Bonds, 171-172.

[56]The treatises consulted include A. B. Marx, *Die Lehre von der musikalische Komposition*, 1st and 2nd ed. (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1841); A. B. Marx, *Musical Form in the Age of Beethoven: Selected Writings on Theory and Method* , ed. and trans. Scott Burnham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); and François-Joseph Fétis, *Traité complet de la théorie et de la pratique de l'harmonie*, trans. Peter M. Landey (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2008).

of the listener's ability to understand the formal logic of a musical work, and to understand the succession of musical elements in and of themselves and in relation to the whole. Therefore, analytical consideration of narrative elements in Chopin's late nocturnes, in the context of nineteenth-century production of meaning, may resonate with contemporary interpretations of Chopin's music.

The Nocturnes Op. 48, written during a period of increasing political awareness and during a time in which there occurred "changes that placed Chopin at the center of a Polish political eschatology,"[57] were, for Chopin's Parisian salon audiences, clearly set in a specific hermeneutic context. I argue that, for these particular audiences, a narrative understanding grew out of the musical topoi, the melodic detail and the tonal structure of the works, which evaded formal expectations and surpassed audiences notion of the nocturne as simple salon music; additionally, I analyze the musical units and function of the units within the work as whole according to syntactic and semantic function, and consider the national associations of the operatic context and improvisational features of the works. The musical topoi of the funeral march and the chorale set the Nocturne in C Minor, Op. 48, no. 1, apart from Chopin's previous nocturnes and engage with the patriotic concerns of Polish messianism. Additionally, the clear operatic references of this nocturne and the Nocturne in F sharp Minor, Op. 48, no. 2, would likely have suggested a narrative unfolding to those who wished for Chopin to compose a Polish national opera.

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[57]Goldberg, "Remembering that tale of grief," 62.

Chopin's Nocturne in B Major, Op. 62, no. 1 reveals many innovations of phrase rhythm, metre and melodic and tonal structure, and was among the late works (including the Polonaise-Fantaisie, Op. 61) that "were not understood in Europe in general."[58] However, the narrative mode of interpretation outlined in the analysis of the Op. 48 and Op. 55 nocturnes may assist an understanding of the Nocturne Op. 62, no. 1, a narrative understanding facilitated by the hints of exoticism that locate this nocturne in the exotic world of the Parisian salon. For the purposes of this study, it is important to keep in mind the first review of the Nocturne, Op. 62, no. 1, which praised the work's "teinte mélancolique, exhalent de mystérieux parfums de poésie." The spirit of melancholy, as explained earlier, signaled to many the spirit of the Polish nation. But the above review also reads like a Polish nationalist interpretation when read in the context of the writings of two Polish music critics. Józef Ignacy Kraszewski (1812-1887) linked Chopin with his Polish native countryside, describing the composer as a "phenomenon, as it were, straight from our fields and meadows, those of old, those that blessed our evenings with a marvelous fragrance with the breath of our beloved soil."[59] Zygmunt Noskowski associated the Polish folk song with field flowers of his native countryside, stating that "Chopin entered the salons holding a bouquet of wild flowers in his hands, he brought a breeze of fresh air, unknown to that

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[58]Chechlińska, 254. For a discussion of phrase rhythm in the Op. 62 Nocturnes, see William Rothstein, "Phrase Rhythm in Chopin's Nocturnes and Mazurkas," in *Chopin Studies*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 115-142.

[59]Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, review of Maurycy Karasowski, *Friedrich Chopin — Sein Leben, seine Werke und Briefe* (Dresden 1877), *Bluszcz*, no. 12 (1877). Reprinted in Stefan Świerzewski, ed., *J. I. Kraszewski i polskie życie muzycyne XIX wieku* (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1963), 289; cited and translated in Trochimczyk, 286.

atmosphere of exotic fragrances."[60] Thus, the elements of melancholy and the "mystérieux parfums de poésie" may be interpreted as an association of the music with Polish nationalism and the Romantic salon. One additional comment further suggests the narrative implications that arose in contemporary responses to Chopin's music in the Romantic salon. The following description is offered in George Sand's writings and is dated Paris, January 1841.[61] Sand recounts a conversation on aesthetics with Eugène Delacroix that occurred at the dinner table in the company of Sand's son, Maurice, and Chopin. Following dinner, Chopin moved from the table to the piano, where he proceeded to improvise. Sand then began to speak, in eloquent terms, of Chopin's aesthetic (I quote only a portion of the text). Though she does not make explicit reference to the genre of the nocturne, one can, without too much stretch of the imagination, understand that Sand refers implicitly to the genre through familiar tropes reflecting the imagery of the night and through reference to the human voice singing. Sand to Delacroix:

> The master [Chopin] knows very well what he is doing. He laughs at those who claim to make beings and things speak by means of imitative harmony. This silliness is not for him. He knows that music is a human impression and human manifestation. It is a human mind that thinks, it is a human voice that expresses itself. It is man in the presence of the emotions he experiences, translating them by the feeling he has of them, without trying to reproduce their causes by the sound. Music would not know how to be able to speak in prose.
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> When the nightingale sings in the starry night, the master will not make you guess or sense by a ridiculous notation the warbling of the bird. He will make the human voice sing in a particular feeling which one experiences listening to the nightingale, and if you do not

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[60]Zygmunt Noskowski, *Istota utworów Chopina*, in Trochimczyk, *After Chopin*, 32. According to Zofia Chechlińska, "the Polish environment and the conditions in which Chopin grew up supposedly influenced his psyche and likewise found immediate reflection in his works, which some writers treated as illustrations of landscapes from Kujawy and Mazowsze, the regions of Poland where the young Chopin most often spent his vacations." Though such association is most ardently expressed in the writings of Noskowski, Chechlińska asserts that "this theme appears as early as the mid-nineteenth century," discernible in the works of such writers as M.A. Szulc, Chopin's early biographer. See Chechlińska, 251.

[61]The writings were published much later, as *Impressions et souvenirs* (Paris 1873), 72-90.

> dream of the nightingale while listening to the man, that matters hardly at all. You will, nevertheless, derive from it an impression of delight which will put your mind in the disposition where it will be, if you fall into a sweet ecstasy for a beautiful summer night, cradled by all the harmonies of the happy and meditative nature.
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> It will be so with all the musical thoughts whose design stands out against the effects of harmony. Sung word is needed to specify their intention. Where the instruments alone take charge of translating it, the musical drama flies on its own wings and does not claim to be translated by the listener. It expresses itself by a state of mind it induces in you by force or gently….The beauty of musical language consists in taking hold of the heart or imagination, without being condemned to pedestrian reasoning. It maintains itself in an ideal sphere where the listener who is not musically educated still delights in the vagueness, while the musician savours this great logic that presides over the masters' [*sic*] magnificent issue of thought.[62]

Sand's interpretation hints at the imagery and feeling that the listener may find embedded in the musical works. According to Sand, the expressive gestures of the musical work exists in an "ideal sphere" where listeners of varying degrees of musicality may delight in the impressions made upon them by the interaction of the music with their own experiences, musical and otherwise. A narrative may thus suggest itself to a listener based on the canonical script into which the listener fits the gestures of a musical work.[63] If, as Kallberg proposes, programmatic interpretations tended to arise around compositions whose "musical structures resisted understanding by audiences grounded in 'classical' works," then a narrative interpretation may resonate with contemporary interpretations of the works. The above evidence serves to demonstrate, I believe, that a narrative approach to analysis can assist an interpretation of the Nocturnes Op. 48, the Nocturne Op. 55, no. 1, and the Nocturne Op. 62, no. 1, an understanding that resonates with a historical consciousness.

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[62]George Sand, *Impression et souvenirs*, 86ff; cited and translated in Berger, "Chopin's Ballade Op. 23," 78.

[63]Newcomb, 88-89.

It is known that Chopin was opposed to mimesis and "music which illustrates."[64] Thus, the narrative analysis of the late nocturnes in this thesis is not meant to act as a program for the work, or to imply that Chopin intended such a program. The present analysis will identify characteristics of the work that evade expectation, and offer a narrative interpretation based on the musical, political and philosophical context of the works, taking into consideration contemporary responses to this and other nocturnes by Chopin. My narrative analysis locates meaning in the formal structure, which highlights moments of potentially "othering" expression. Thus, the methodology utilized in the present study is aligned with narrativists who understand narrativity as the unfolding of a musical plot interpreted through a sequence of expressive states, with musical plot being defined as the totality of musical elements patterned into a comprehensible series of events. In a larger intertextual connection, such events can be seen as referents to sentient states[65] (rather than denoting actors/actions or characters/actions), which will be analyzed within the larger hermeneutic context of the sociopolitical and musical atmosphere.

The methodology of this study therefore involves narratology and aspects of intertextuality.[66] The vast amount of literature on both subjects necessitates a very specific and

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[64]Karol Berger, "Chopin's Ballade Op. 23 and the Revolution of the Intellectuals," in John Rink and Jim Samson, eds., *Chopin Studies 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 77. Berger cites Ludwik Bronarski, "Chopin et la littérature," in Bronarski, *Etudes sur Chopin*, 2 vols. (Lausanne 1944), vol. 1, 19-76. See also n. 205 in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

[65]By invoking this terminology, I do not intend to borrow Gregory Karl's invocation of "quasi-sentient agents and their actions" (Gregory Karl, "Structuralism and Musical Plot," *Music Theory Spectrum* 19, no. 1 [Spring, 1997]: 15-16, esp. 16 n. 13). Rather, I wish to offer an interpretation of the ability of a musical event to refer to or produce a heightened sense of awareness among listeners.

[66]Here, I borrow Michael Klein's definition of the term, based on concepts of Julia Kristeva and Roland Barthes; Klein refers to intertextuality as "a conception of the text as the site of allusions, citations, and transformation of other texts," and defines text as "any cultural artifact: a work of art, a piece of music, a novel, a scholarly publication, an historical document, a calendar, or even that composer whom we imagine, whose name is the same as the historical figure called 'Chopin.'" See Klein, 29.

cautionary approach to narrative and intertextual analysis, with clearly delineated parameters. My analysis is not modeled on a singular approach, but incorporates various narratological concepts derived from prominent narrative theorists and is heavily influenced by the work of Michael Klein, Vera Micznik, Eero Tarasti, Raymond Monelle, Karol Berger and Byron Almén.[67] Rather than appropriating a theory of analysis intended to uncover literary narrative, I adopt Almén's proposal of a sibling model of narrative analysis, which "distinguishes between a set of foundational principles common to all narrative media and principles unique to each medium," as opposed to the descendant model, which "presupposes a conceptual priority for literary narrative."[68] Like Almén, I propose a narrative reading based on the articulation of contrasting and interacting musical elements, suggesting a logical temporal unfolding of a series of musical events, and a narrative trajectory of the work as a whole. Almén's suggestion that the "core properties" of traditional literary narrative subjects are recognizable in their most essential forms in musical narrative represents a fundamental principle of my analysis.[69]

Additionally, my methodology draws upon Micznik's narratological models of "story" and "discourse."[70] In her concept of "story," Micznik isolates and analyses the musical events

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[67]Klein, "Chopin's Fourth Ballade as Musical Narrative;" Micznik, "Music and Narrative Revisited;" Eero Tarasti, *A Theory of Musical Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994); Raymond Monelle, *The Sense of Music: Semiotic Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Karol Berger, "Narrative and Lyric: Fundamental Poetic Forms of Composition," in *Musical Humanism and its Legacy: Essays in Honor of Claude V. Palisca*, ed. Nancy Kovaleff Baker and Barbara Russano Hanning (Stuyvesant: Pendragon Press, 1992); and Byron Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2008).

[68]Almén, 12.

[69]Almén suggests "character, setting, point of view, and so on" as traditional subjects of narrative. According to Almén, "if such concepts are stripped away to reveal the core properties of narrative, what remains are a few irreducible factors – temporality, hierarchy, conflict, and the observer's perspective." See Almén, 40.

[70]Micznik, 199.

according to three increasingly complex semiotic levels (morphological, syntactic and semantic). At the morphological level, Micznik analyses the musical events, the relationships between the events, and outlines aspects that make the events stable or unstable. At the syntactic level, Micznik suggests the meanings that can be drawn from the syntactical function of the musical units, their "mode of unfolding."[71] At the semantic level, Micznik suggests meanings that can be identified as "more or less recognized codes according to which both composers and listeners associate by convention certain musical ideas with extramusical concepts."[72] In her concept of "discourse," Micznik analyses

> the particular mode of unfolding (the presentation) of these events within the 'musical formal discourse' of the respective movements and the capabilities of the 'discourse' itself to produce meanings through 'gestural and intertextual connotations' and through 'temporal manipulation.'[73]

The import and influence of Micznik's study lies in her aim (convincingly carried out) to "allow musical works to reach the hermeneutic textual opening that will better inscribe them among other cultural discourses of their time."[74]

Drawing on approaches by Eero Tarasti and Michael Klein, I propose to read the Nocturnes, Op. 48, nos. 1 and 2, Op. 55, no. 1 and Op. 62, no. 1 intertextually with one another, with Chopin's larger oeuvre, and with the wider musical culture of opera and vocal music. Such readings interpret musical gestures in the ways they refer to, are derived from, or represent

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[71]Ibid., 201.

[72]Ibid., 210.

[73]Ibid., 199.

[74]Ibid.

transformations of gestures from other musical genres or styles. Like Klein's and Monelle's, my methodology is also influenced by Karol Berger's delineations of narrative (temporal) forms and lyric (atemporal) forms. According to Berger, narrative forms involve cause-and-effect temporal relations, in which the (musical) events occur as the outcome of earlier (musical) events; lyric constructions, however, do not involve such regularly correlated phenomena, though relations between musical events may exist. Correspondingly, Monelle identifies narrative time in music "as signified in those sections in which harmonic and phrase structures become complex, and in which there is generally an increase in rhythmic activity."[75] Lyric time, on the other hand, "is signified in those presentational sections in which melody comes to the fore, and in which harmonic and phrase structures are relatively stable."[76] Monelle's identification of narrative and lyric structures thus informs my analysis of lyric and narrative time in Chopin's nocturnes.

My methodology is also informed by Anthony Newcomb's employment of the concept of 'breach of canonicity,' borrowed from narrative theorists Jerome Bruner and Hayden White.[77] According to this concept, a narrative construction must challenge "an implicit canonical script."[78] As listeners interpret a series of unfolding events, "following subtle generic and stylistic signs," their sense of the limits of a particular genre or style restricts the acceptability of

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[75]Klein, 37.

[76]Ibid.

[77]Jerome Bruner, "The Narrative Construction of Reality," in *Critical Inquiry* 18 (1991): 1-21; Hayden White, "The Value of Narrativity in the Representations of Reality," *Critical Inquiry* 7 (1980): 5-28. Like Klein's article, Newcomb's interpretation of narrative construction and interpretation is influenced by Paul Ricoeur's work, *Time and Narrative*, 3 vols, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983-1984).

[78]Bruner, quoted in Newcomb, 88.

certain modes of action. Hermeneutic analysis should therefore "provide an intuitively convincing account of the meaning of the text as a whole in the light of the constituent parts that make it up."[79] Newcomb's analysis identifies "a shifting series of 'canonical scripts,' whose transformation across time is conveyed to the listener by…functional puns.'"[80] It is this aspect of Newcomb's methodology that I find highly convincing: his interpretation of "a phrase or passage whose function as part of a series we thought would be one thing as we entered it, but whose function as the section continues turns out to be another."[81] Newcomb concludes, "the result threatens the stability of the canonical script,"[82] – an interpretation which may influence the narrative interpretation of Chopin's nocturnes in light of the formal conventions to which Parisian audiences were accustomed in vocal nocturnes.

The above methodology will be underscored in this study by a discussion of contemporary reviews of Chopin's nocturnes, and consideration of treatises on melody and harmony published in Paris and abroad in the nineteenth century. Like Almén's, my methodology is based on the observation that "a listener's perception of narrative requires both musical activity that supports a fundamental opposition and the listener's openness to recognize and interpret this activity as narrative."[83] Contemporary reviews of Chopin's works point to varying degrees of acceptance

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[79]Ibid, 89.

[80]Newcomb, 89.

[81]Ibid.

[82]Ibid.

[83]Almén, 76.

among critics, thus outlining a response to formal disturbances in the music or even recognition of "culturally coded" musical topics.[84]

Throughout my analysis I locate meaning in the relationship between the formal structure and the semantic content of the work, and my analysis examines the functions of the motives from the simplest level to the more complex. Thus, I examine how the motives function in and of themselves, in isolation from subsequent motives (simple level), and I examine how the motives contribute to the temporal unfolding of the work as a whole, and thus to the larger level of discourse seen through "gestural and intertextual connotations"[85] (complex level). The above methodology emphasizes the interaction of intertextuality and narratology in the analysis of Chopin's nocturnes. The intent with such an interpretation is not to map a "story" onto a critical analysis, but to suggest a narrative unfolding and temporal logic of the work that resonates with Chopin's late style and the styles with which Parisian audiences were familiar. The findings of the analysis offer an interpretation that reflects the reception of the works as politicized statements of national sentiment, an interpretation that challenges the notion of the nocturne genre as simple salon music, and realigns it with the epic ballade and the national polonaise and mazurka.

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[84]Almén asserts that recognition of such "culturally coded" musical topics "will of course be more problematic for listeners who approach the music as outsiders with respect to culture or time period, but in general, since topics are simpler in constitution, they are less subject to varying interpretation than are narrative structures." See Almén, 77. Such identification of musical topics, and topical analysis, additionally draws upon the work of Micznik, Monelle and Klein.

[85]Micznik, 199.

CHAPTER 3

SELECTED NOCTURNES OF FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN IN THE CONTEXT OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY PRODUCTION OF MEANING

The musical, political and philosophical aspects of Parisian salon culture worked to shape the specific hermeneutical context in which Chopin's late nocturnes were created and performed. In turn, this context influenced the reception of Chopin's works — a reception that, as I have demonstrated, tended to narrativize many of Chopin's works in the latter half of the nineteenth century. I have already explored the contemporary understanding of the vocal and operatic influences of Chopin's melodies in Chapter 1, and the tendency towards narrative interpretation in nineteenth-century analysis in Chapter 2; this chapter considers the narrative function of the late nocturnes in the politicized context of the Parisian salon culture and utilizes formal musical analysis as a methodology to uncover the ways in which the harmony, texture, rhythm and the performance practice of the late nocturnes may have contributed to interpretations of embedded nationalist narratives within the works.

The Nocturnes Op. 48, written during a period of increasing political awareness and during a time in which there occurred "changes that placed Chopin at the center of a Polish political eschatology,"[1] were, for Chopin's Parisian salon audiences, clearly set in a specific hermeneutic context. For these particular audiences, a narrative understanding grew out of the musical topoi, the operatic context, and improvisational features of the works. The musical topoi of the funeral

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[1]Goldberg, "Remembering that tale of grief," 62.

march and the chorale set the Nocturne in C Minor, Op. 48, no. 1 apart from Chopin's previous nocturnes and engage with the patriotic concerns of Polish messianism. Additionally, the clear operatic references of this nocturne and the Nocturne in F sharp Minor, Op. 48, no. 2, would likely have suggested a narrative unfolding to those who urged Chopin to compose a Polish national opera.

The atmosphere of Paris in the summer of 1840 resulted in an intensification of political awareness in both the Parisian and the Polish émigré circles. The commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the July 1830 revolution influenced both the political and musical atmosphere of Paris in July 1840[2] and the political turmoil that resulted in a police raid a few week later heightened the intensity of political anxiety in the communities.[3] Additionally, it was in 1840 that Sand and Chopin began attending Mickiewicz's lectures at the Collège de France, lectures concerning "the essence of messianic historiosophy" seen in Slavonic literature.[4] It was also during this year that Sand and fellow utopian socialist Pierre Leroux began to publish the journal *La Revue indépendent*, a journal which reflected traits of messianic philosophy in its content.[5] According to Halina Goldberg, "this growing political awareness was timely," since the following year brought about significant changes in the Polish messianic circles that shifted the

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[2]Ibid., 62. According to Goldberg, "on 26 July 1840 Chopin and Sand attended the dress rehearsal of Berlioz's *Symphonie funèbre et triomphale*, composed to commemorate the victims of the July 1830 French revolution on the tenth anniversary of the event." See Goldberg, "Remembering that tale of grief," 88, n. 23.

[3]Ibid., 62. As Goldberg explains, "in 1840 the increased protests and demands for electoral reform and suffrage for the National Guard were repressed by Thiers." She argues that this was likely what George Sand referred to when she commented to her son, Maurice, "Chopin, who did not want to believe anything, finally got the certainty and evidence." See Goldberg, "Remembering that tale of grief," 62 and 88, n., 24.

[4]Goldberg, "Remembering that tale of grief," 61.

[5]Ibid.

focus onto Chopin as the nation's *wieszcz*. On 21 May 1841, the acclaimed Polish writer, poet and politician, Ursyn Niemcewicz, died. Niemcewicz was a coauthor of the Constitution of May 3, 1791[6] and the poet of the *Historical Chants*.[7] His death marked the loss of "a generation that remembered independent Poland."[8] It was also during this time that Mickiewicz began to lose favor as the national bard of Poland due to his increasing involvement with the mystic philosopher Andrzej Tomasz Towiański, "who critiqued all philosophy based on reason and, after his second revelation of 1839, unconditionally rejected an institutionalized Church."[9] It was Mickiewicz's involvement with the cult of Towiański that ultimately resulted in his suspension from the Collège de France.[10]

The Nocturnes Op. 48 (1841), written during this period, would likely have received attention that was increasingly focused on elements of Polish nationalism, and on Chopin's role as the nation's *wieszcz.* Thus, Antoni Marceli Szulc's 1842 review of Chopin's opp. 44 – 49 addresses just such an awareness:

> Given our present situation, Mr. Chopin's position is more distinguished than anyone else [*sic*]. Our warrior [Mickiewicz], who until now led our *wieszcz* hosts, trampled his *guśle* and remains persistently mute. Chopin inherited his power, and he keeps alive in our hearts the torch of nationhood. He translates most expressively the thoughts of the nation; his works are a holy shrine, the ark, as Mickiewicz said, in which the treasure of native

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[6]The Constitution of May 3, 1791 gave political equity to the Polish bourgeoisie and nobility, and gave peasants protection under the Polish government. The Constitution sought to abolish certain anarchist tendencies of the nobility, instead introducing a more democratic constitutional monarchy. The Constitution remained in effect for one year, until the Russo-Polish War of 1792.

[7]Goldberg, "Remembering that tale of grief," 62.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid.

> music is kept. In it is hidden the most noble, beautiful, and exalted that reverberates in the Polish heart: the thread of popular thought, the legacy and the heritage of several centuries, the proud testimony of the poetic aspirations of our nation.[11]

Szulc's review speaks to the elements of Polish nationalism that he perceives in Chopin's compositions; additionally, he suggests that the ethos of Polish nationalism is to be found embedded within the works. His reference to poetry, to the translation of nationalist thought, suggests an interpretation of a narrative unfolding of the works. As I discuss a possible narrative for the nocturnes, I shall highlight the elements and topoi that engage with the tenets of Polish nationalism, and suggest the ways in which analysis of musical narrative resonates with the ideologies outlined by contemporaries such as Szulc.

In order to contend that Chopin's contemporaries could have understood an expressive logic and narrative framework in the Op. 48 nocturnes, it is necessary to identify a temporal unfolding of the work as a whole. Raymond Monelle posits two distinct types of time in music of the nineteenth century that contribute to the temporal image of the musical work: lyric time and narrative time. Lyric time is suggested in sections characterized by harmonic stability and regular phrase structure in which emphasis is placed on the melody; narrative time is suggested in sections that are characterized by unstable harmony or shifting tonality, irregular phrase structure and complex rhythmic design. According to Monelle, narrative time is often associated with transitions "from one temporality to another."[12] Monelle cites A. B. Marx's 1841 edition of his treatise on structure (*Die Lehre von der musikalischen Komposition*, from which, according

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[11]Antoni Marceli Szulc, "Przegląd ostatnich dzieł Chopina," in *Tygodnik literacki*, no. 10 (7 March 1842): 76; cited and translated in Goldberg, "Remembering that tale of grief," 84.

[12]Monelle, 100-101.

to Monelle "most of our basic notions of Classical form" are drawn) in order to illustrate the historical basis of lyric and narrative time.[13] Marx uses the terms *Gang* and *Satz* throughout his treatise to illustrate basic form, and defines the terms as follows:

> The *Satz*: A simple tone pattern, complete in itself, decisively closed, which however is not a Period and does not consist of antecedent and consequent, we call a "Satz"…The Satz, just as much as the Period, contains a definite close, even if the former is less satisfying than the latter.
> The *Gang*. A tone pattern, that is deprived of such a close…we call a "Gang."[14]

Marx's treatise of 1841 contains a wealth of information on the structural principle of rondo form (which he uses as an all-encompassing term to describe ABA ternary form, simple rondo form and sonata-rondo form), and he assigns the basic rondo form the model *Satz—Gang—Satz*.[15] This model, according to Marx, is associated with movement or activity: rest—motion—rest.[16] For Monelle, Marx's theory of musical structure and motion allows for "the same formal paradigm [to] be mapped onto a temporal metaphor where the *Satz* (lyric time) is time arrested, and the *Gang* (narrative time) is time passing."[17]

Monelle's insight facilitates an interpretation of the temporal dimensions of the Nocturne in C Minor, Op. 48, no. 1, written in ternary form. As I demonstrate through the utilization of

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[13]Ibid., 104.

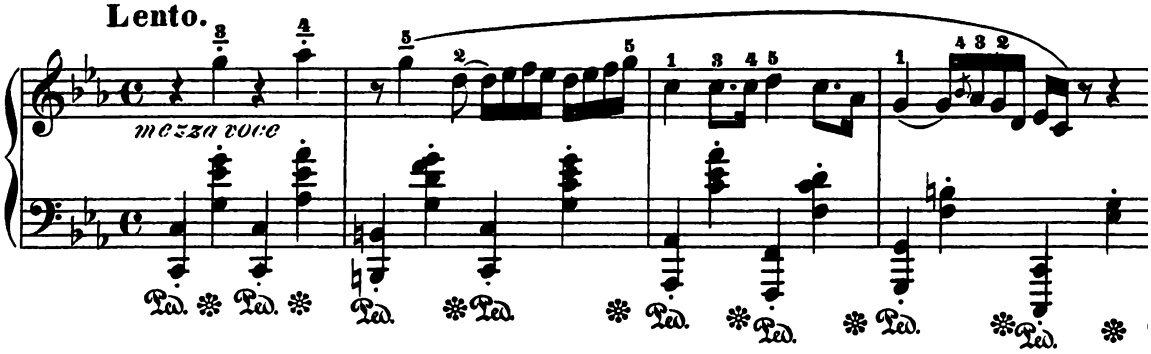
[14]A.B. Marx, *Die Lehre von der musikalischen Komposition*, 1st ed., 2 vols. (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1837), 24; cited and translated in Monelle, 104-105. Monelle cites the first edition of the treatise for the definition of these terms, which he states remain unchanged in the 1841 edition in which Marx expands his notions of Classical form. For another translation (and discussion) of Marx's theories, see A. B. Marx, *Musical Form in the Age of Beethoven: Selected Writings on Theory and Method*, edited and translated by Scott Burnham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), esp. 42-45.

[15]Marx, *Musical Form in the Age of Beethoven*, 78.

[16]Marx, *Die Lehre von der musikalischen Komposition*, 2nd enlarged ed., 4 vols. (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1841), vol. 3, 99; cited and translated in Monelle, 105.

[17]Klein, 38.

Monelle's temporal metaphor and analysis of thematic transformation and musical topoi, a narrative unfolding can be discerned in the Nocturne Op. 48, no. 1 that resonates with the central tenets of Polish messianic philosophy. Several popular genres in the nineteenth century embody distinct thematic groups (or "topics") that engaged the patriotic concerns of audiences. These include the funeral processional, the military and triumphal marches, and religious hymns[18] — topics that particularly contribute to the unfolding of a Polish messianic narrative. Elements of the funeral processional and the religious chorale topos can be discerned in the Nocturne in C Minor, Op. 48, no. 1, and may have contributed to an interpretation of a nationalist narrative within the work. The nocturne opens with a slow recitative-like melody[19], characterized by downward-moving melodic phrases, and underscored by a descending bass line reminiscent of a



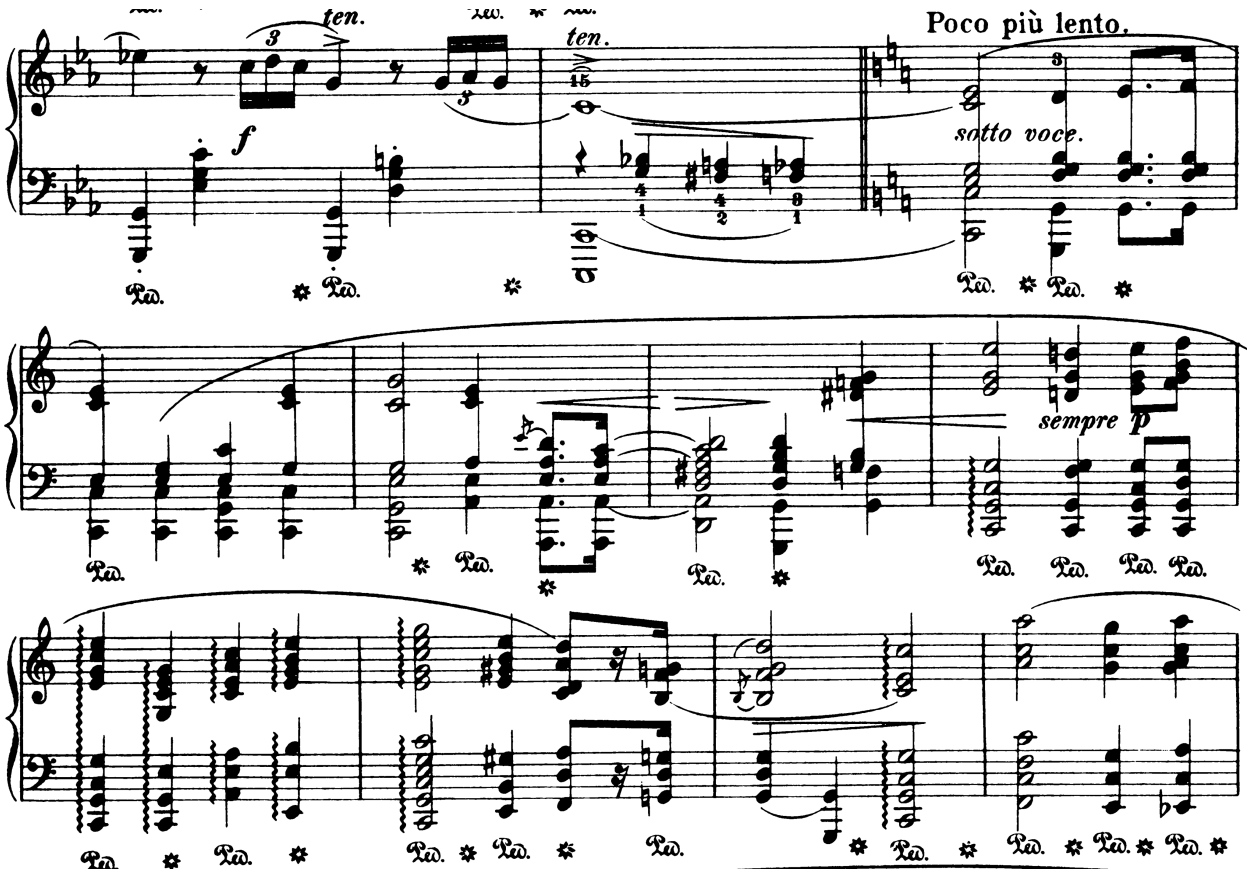
Example 1: Nocturne in C Minor, Op. 48, no.1, mm. 1 – 4.[20]

[18]Goldberg, "Remembering that tale of grief," 67.

[19]Ibid., 70. My identification of the recitative-like qualities of the opening is further informed by Chopin's explanation of the dialogue in the opening phrase: according to Lenz, Chopin "wanted a *question* on the G-C [bars 2-3], a *response* in the C [bar 4]." See Eigeldinger, 81.

[20]All musical examples in this chapter are reproduced from scores in public domain from the International Music Score Library Project (IMSLP).

lament.[21] Chopin marked the opening *mezza voce*, literally "half voice," significant in its evocation of vocal technique, and of the hushed tones of a funereal lament (Example 1). The narrative quality of the nocturne is heightened as the close of the recitative shifts, by chromatically descending inner voices,[22] into a major mode chorale, marked *sotto voce* (Example 2), which marks the beginning of the B section of the nocturne. The



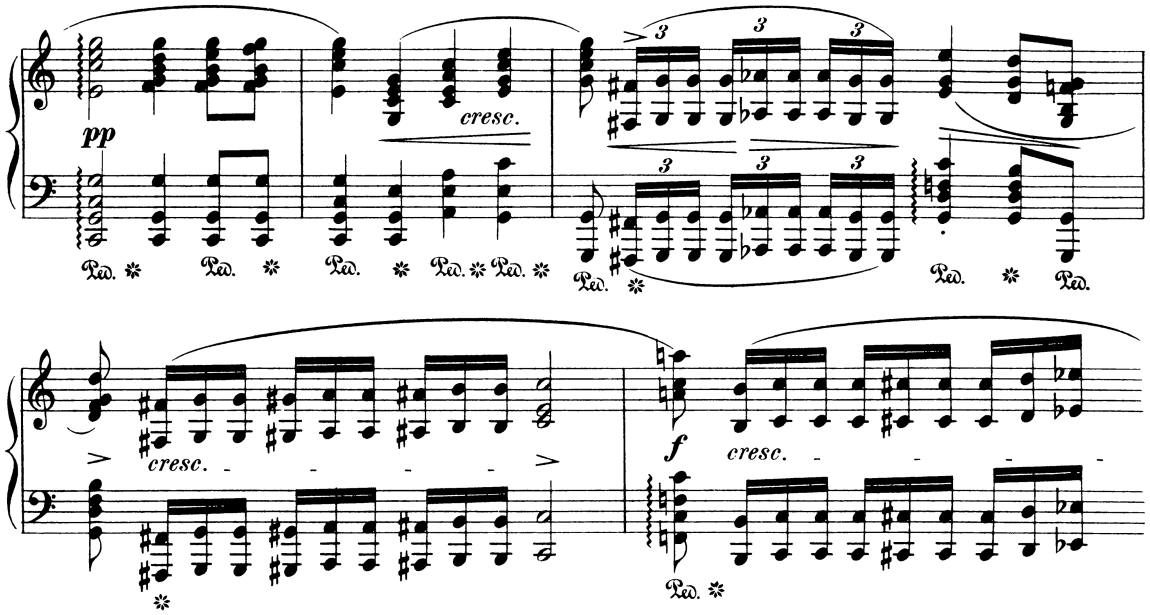
Example 2: Nocturne in C Minor, Op. 48, no. 1, mm. 23 – 33.

[21]According to Goldberg, "funereal tones…echo in the...opening of the C Minor Nocturne op. 48. The jagged, sobbing, recitative-like melodies of the Nocturne's opening…recall most effectively the narrative qualities of a lament: an elegy on the death of a hero and the nation." See Goldberg, "Remembering that tale of grief," 70.

[22]The descending inner voices suggest a vocal character, since the doubling in thirds is reminiscent of the texture of nineteenth-century vocal nocturnes written by composers such as Blangini, which often featured doubling in thirds or sixths. See Chapter 2, p. 33 of this thesis.

religious and patriotic undertones of the hymn-like setting are significant when analyzed within the historiosophic framework. The fanfare topic perceptible in measure 26 carries a hopeful, triumphant tone, while the chorale setting suggests a religious hymn. Given the prominence of chorale settings in the nineteenth century and "the patriotic connotations of religious hymns" (for example, many of the *Historical Chants* utilize chorale-like settings),[23] the chorale topos can be interpreted within the historical and politicized context of nineteenth-century Paris, conveying musical connotations of messianic and patriotic significance to contemporary audiences.[24]

The strength of the narrative quality is heightened through consideration of the temporal



Example 3: Nocturne in C Minor, Op. 48, no.1, mm. 37 – 41.

dimensions of the nocturne. The opening A section (the funereal lament) can be understood as lyric time (time arrested); while the *Poco più lento* section also suggests lyric time because of the

[23]Goldberg, "Remembering that tale of grief," 68.

[24]Ibid.

harmonic stability and regular phrase structure of the chorale (note the strong V7 – I cadence in measure 32), the underlying *Gang* becomes apparent when, in measure 39, the chorale melody is broken by the ominous intrusion of chromatically-moving octaves, set in triplets to sharply contrast the centered, serene rhythmic character of the chorale (Example 3). The extramusical associations of the funereal lament and the chorale could hardly have been missed by Chopin's contemporaries; but the intrusion of the octaves further resonates with Polish national concerns, both in terms of invasion, and in terms of the operatic reference of the storm topic. According to Jonathan Bellman, "the equation of storm music with military assault was…a tradition" by the mid-1830s.[25] He continues, "for proof of this we need look no further than the dulcimer playing of Mickiewicz's Jankiel in *Pan Tadeusz*" as he depicts the massacre of Praga:

> And ever louder grew the music's roar,
> And you could hear the tramp of marching, war,
> Attack, a storm, the boom of guns, the moans
> Of children, and a weeping mother's groans.[26]

Storm scenes often featured "blistering scales" and "rapid changes of direction," both of which are characteristics of the octave scales of this middle section. Particularly noteworthy is the insistence of the chorale melody, which appears in fragmented form (broken by the intrusion of the octaves) throughout the remainder of this section, heard above the attack, the storm, similar to way the voices of children and mothers are heard above the assault in Jankiel's improvisation. Here, however, the melody seems to symbolize hope in the face of conflict, rather than lament: despite the forceful invasion (the storm topic, which could be seen as the military assault), the chorale hymn prevails: the melody of measures 29 – 32 is repeated in measures 45 – 48

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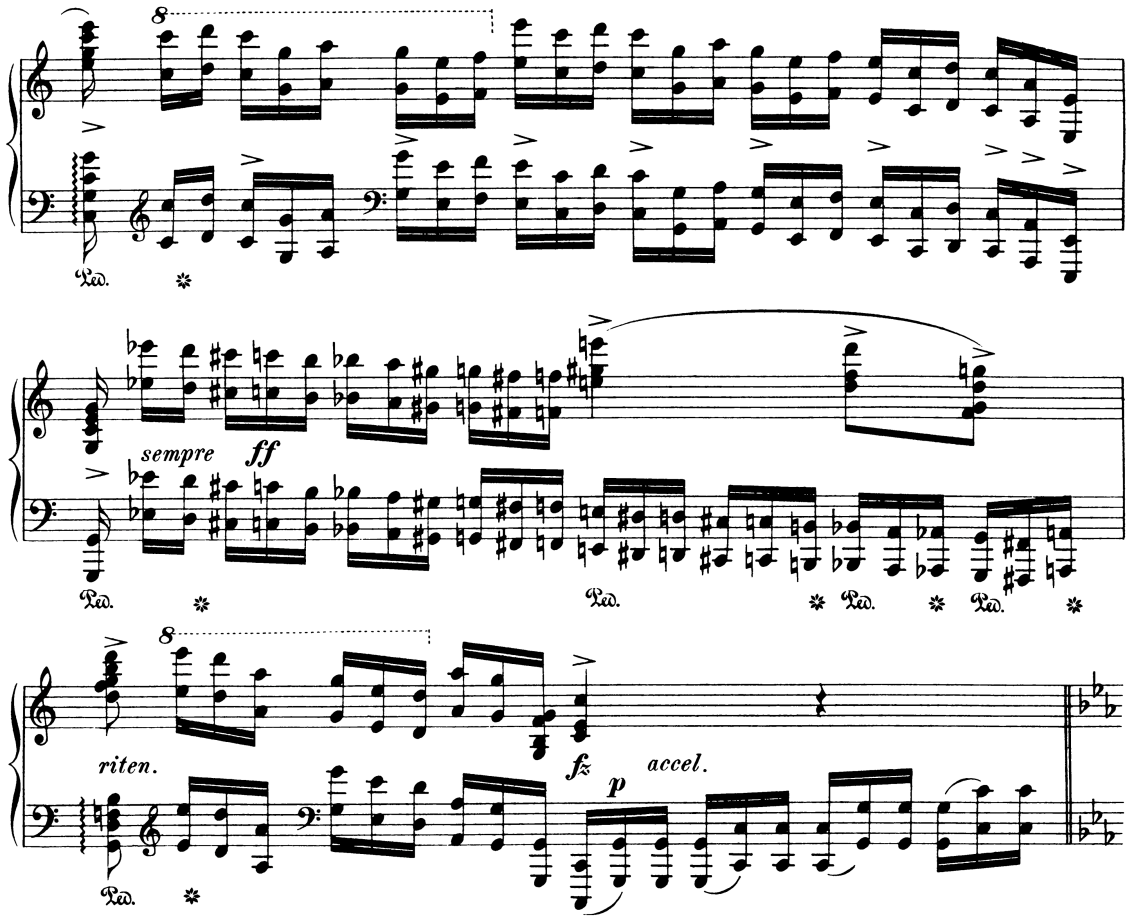
[25] Bellman, *Chopin's Polish Ballade,* 153.

[26] Ibid., 153 and 128.

(Example 4). The chorale chords are transposed an octave higher in the restatement; accented notes in measure 46 highlight an embellished inversion of the fanfare of measure 30, while the accented melodic chords in measure 47 emphasize the triumphant persistence of the melodic close above the driving chromatic descent in the bass. The final tonic *sforzando* chord in measure 48 marks the end of the chorale melody; the dynamic quickly changes to *piano*, and the octave triplets in the bass begin an ascent (marked *accelerando*), suggestive of a distant fanfare.



Example 4: Nocturne in C Minor, Op. 48, no. 1, mm. 46 – 48.

Perhaps the persistence of the chorale melody is what Szulc referred to in his 1842 review when he said of the *Poco più lento* section: "[It is] poised, vigorous, proud, like a man of iron will, who stubbornly resists dangers and obstacles. He is attacked by hordes of devils, a thousand monsters, but he stands unshaken, invincible, immaculate."[27] Szulc's observation is significant, for the literature on the nocturne genre has tended to focus on feminine imagery or imagery of the night in contemporary reviews of such works; reviews that have emphasized the political or heroic elements of Chopin's nocturnes have largely been overlooked.[28] As such, reviews that reflected a tendency to interpret nocturnes within the larger musical and historiosophic framework have appeared rarely throughout the literature. Szulc's review reveals one such interpretation, and offers a construal of a metaphorical narrative; his description reads like an operatic program, perhaps influenced by the elements of the nocturne that are more reminiscent of operatic writing than of the simple instrumental nocturnes described by Castil-Blaze and Czerny. For Szulc, and perhaps for many of his contemporaries, the chorale resisted the "dangers and obstacles" represented by the foray of the octaves. Thus, one can see the referent of the chorale topic (religious chorale, patriotic hymn) as well as the larger intertextual connection of the topic; that is, the function of the topic can be interpreted within the specific hermeneutical context of the sociopolitical atmosphere of 1840s Paris. The chorale can be seen to overcome the conflict that is represented by the forceful octave triplets; it emerges at the end stronger, victorious.

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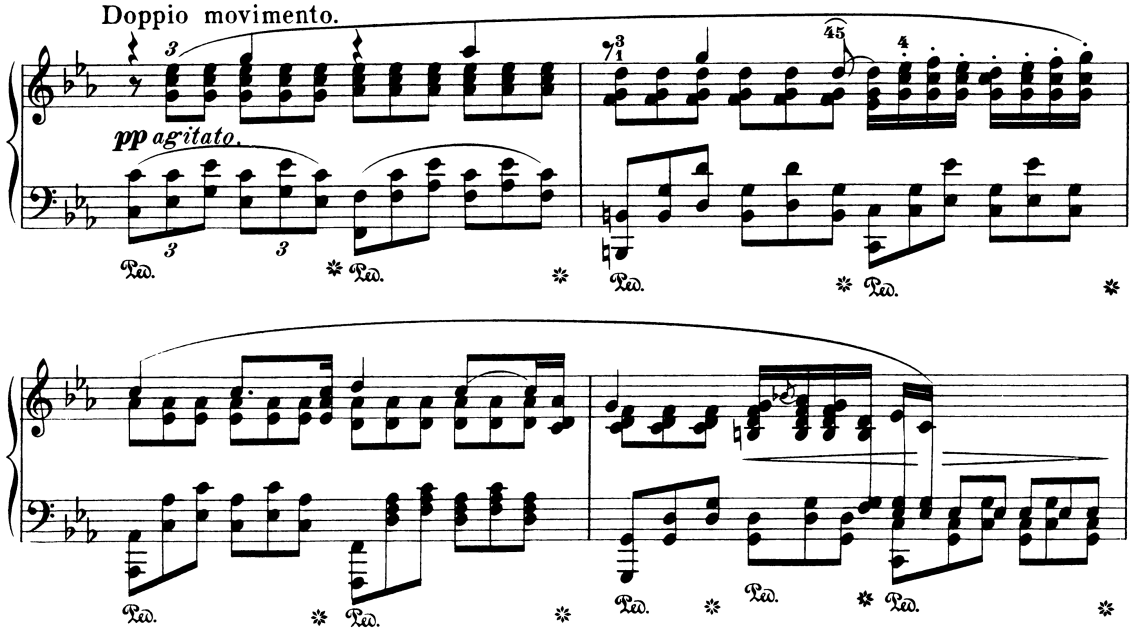
[27]Cited and translated in Goldberg, op. cit., 68.

[28]See, for example, Kallberg, "The Harmony of the Tea Table: Gender and Ideology in the Piano Nocturne," in *Chopin at the Boundaries*.

The *doppio movimento* section initiates the varied reprise of the A material. Here, it is possible to discern a shift in temporalities, but in this section time is conflated: the opening lament (the *Satz* of the A section) returns, but the character of the section is altered by the *agitato* indication and by the transference of the triplet invasion (the *Gang* of the B section) into this final section of the nocturne. The rhythmic drive of the triplets suggests narrative time (time passing) while the haunting lament, heard in the soprano line, recalls the funereal opening and suggests lyric time (time arrested) (Example 5). In terms of narrative, it is possible to interpret



Example 5: Nocturne in C Minor, Op. 48, no. 1, mm. 49 – 52.

this conflation of temporalities as the recollection of past events; although narrative time (time passing) pushes forward, the superimposition of lyric time (time arrested) recalls the lament, the sorrow of past times. Such an interpretation is assisted by Monelle's elucidation of lyric time and narrative time; though Monelle describes lyric time as time arrested (an extended present), he claims that the temporal dynamic of the nineteenth century was "ontological and

sentimental."[29] He continues, "the extended present of lyric time becomes a space where the remembered and imagined past is reflected;"[30] thus, lyric time often represents nostalgic longings, or yearnings touched with emptiness and regret.[31] The temporal dialectic of the varied reprise of the Nocturne in C Minor may thus be interpreted as progressive (narrative) time in which struggles are touched with (and perhaps reflect) the pain of past time, heard in the haunting funereal lament of past sorrows.[32]

The lament is heard softly and unchanged above the chaos of the triplets, which appear in both the bass and treble. Very gradually the dynamic level swells, until the climax of the recitative returns (measure 69), marked *forte*, as though the *Satz* (the recollection of past sorrow) now comes to the fore, strengthened by the events of the *Gang*. The intensity of the chromatically descending melody is accentuated by the chaotic implications of the polyrhythms that pervade the final measures of the A section (Example 6). Rather than ending on a tonic chord, as did the opening recitative, the melody ends on a reharmonization of $\hat{1}$ as the leading tone of D♭ major in measure 72. This sudden shift into the Neapolitan realm echoes harmonizations used in the opening melody (mm. 9 – 10) and in the return of the A section (mm. 57 – 58); however, the reinterpretation of $\hat{1}$ is significant in terms of a narrative interpretation

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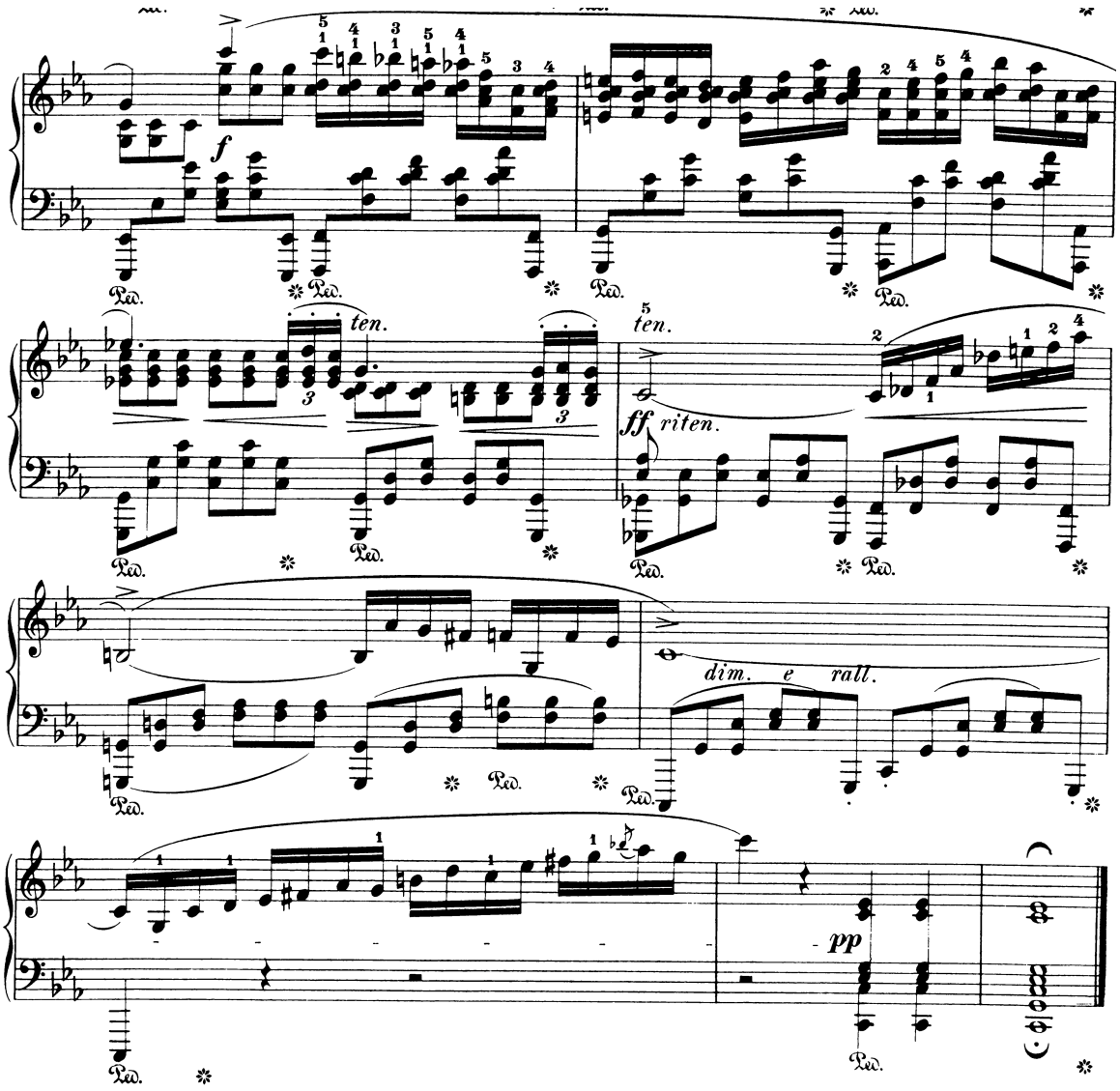
[29]Monelle, 115.

[30]Ibid

[31]According to Monelle, "Lyric time is the present, a present that is always in the present. And for the Romantic, the present is void." See Monelle, 115.

[32]As Monelle states: "Time-in-a-moment and progressive time respectively evoke lostness and struggle; the extended present of lyric time becomes a space where the remembered and imagined past is reflected, while the mobility of progressive time is a forum for individual choice and action that is ultimately doomed." See Monelle, 115.

since time is once again conflated in memories of past conflict. The melody in the soprano signals the final utterances of the funereal lament, but the harmony recalls a different moment in time. The importance of the modulation in measure 72 is underscored by Bellman's elucidation of the tonality in the context of nineteenth-century performance: according to Bellman, "in the unequal piano temperaments of Chopin's time, the most innocent- and naïve-sounding keys were



Example 6: Nocturne in C Minor, Op. 48, no. 1, mm. 69 – 77.

C major [key of the opening of the chorale] and F major; D-flat and G-flat major were among the most misty and highly colored."[33] The shift in tonalities from the dominant of C minor, which pervades the latter half of measure 71, to the dominant of D♭ major would have registered as a remarkably dramatic shift to Chopin's audiences, particularly since the shift lasts merely one measure. The remainder of the coda (mm. 73 – 77) outlines a wandering close to the melody, which is touched by elements of exoticism, as the modal colouring created by the raised fourth scale degree (and the augmented seconds created between this and the third scale degree) suggest Polish folk music. The final two measures recall the chorale style of the C major section; however, the C minor sonority reveals that the chorale has returned in altered form. It is as though the passage of time has altered the material, now infused with and changed by elements of the minor-mode conflict.

A narrative interpretation may also facilitate an understanding of the Nocturne in F♯ minor, Op. 48, no. 2, which resonates with a historical consciousness. Clear operatic references can be discerned in this nocturne, beginning with the opening two measures, in which the melodic progression, in open sixths and then inverted chords, reveals a type of scoring that is highly suggestive of an orchestral reduction, what one might see in a piano-vocal operatic score (Example 7).[34] Furthermore, the repetition of the opening measures in measures 29 – 31

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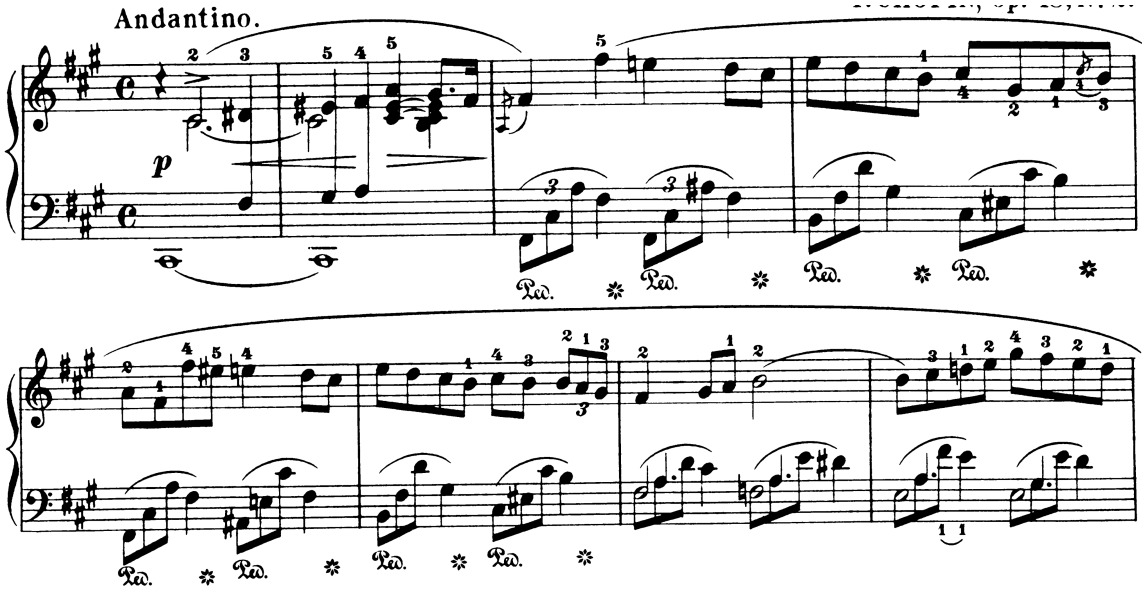
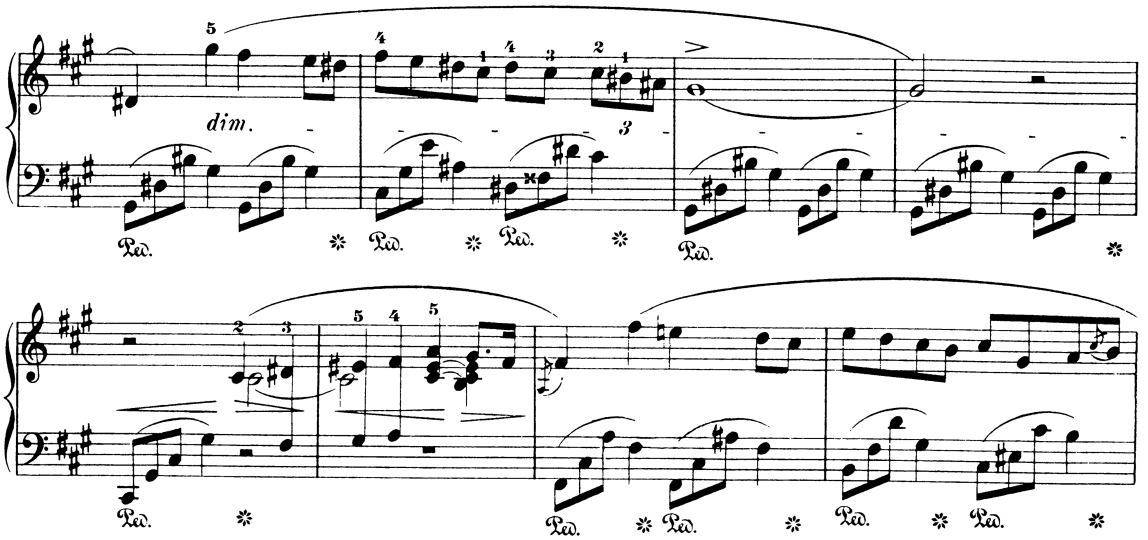
[33] Bellman, *Chopin's Polish Ballade*, 157-158.

[34]Bellman makes a similar point in his discussion of Chopin's ballades, as he notes the important "way Chopin was able to internalize…operatic repertoire." He argues that "we tend to assume, without much reflection, that because Chopin attended certain operas, often more than once, he would set the tunes by ear. However, opera's influence on the greater musical culture was effected not primarily through performances, but rather through home entertainment: piano-vocal scores of popular operas, and also rondos and variation sets on opera themes arranged for piano and other instruments in the popular consumer realms." See Bellman, *Chopin's Polish Ballade*, 134; for a similar argument, see David Kasunic, "Chopin and the Singing Voice: From the Romantic to the Real" (Ph.D. diss.,



Example 7: Nocturne in F♯ minor, Op. 48, no. 2, mm. 1 – 8.



Example 8: Nocturne in F♯ minor, Op. 48, no. 2, mm. 25 – 32.

Princeton University, 2004), 204-20. The open sixths also relate to the texture of the nineteenth-century vocal nocturnes of composers such as Blangini.

suggests that the gesture functions not only as an introduction, but also as a brief interlude (such as a ritornello of an aria or an interlude of a song) between the long-breathed statements of the aria-like melodic phrases (Example 8).

Additional operatic influences can be discerned in the construction of the bass line and cantabile melodic line. Rather than providing the aria with a stolid bass to support the long melodic phrases, Chopin creates a triplet figuration that seems to enter into a dialogue with the melody. The rhythmic independence of the two lines is accentuated by the metric placement of the melodic line, which begins on the second beat of measure 3. This placement heightens the individuality of the soloistic vocal-style soprano line; while the emphasis on the solo voice reflects the traditional lyrical nocturne style characteristic of Parisian vocal salon repertoire, the metric individuality of the soprano and bass highlights the unique complexity of the voice leading, and separates the work from the simple settings of Parisian vocal nocturnes.

The freedom of the soprano and bass remains until the *più lento* section (m. 57) ushers in dramatic changes of character, texture, dynamics and meter. The operatic influences of the latter section are highly suggestive, given the dynamic and textural change between the opening *forte* chords (which bring to mind full orchestral writing) and the *piano* solo melodic line that follows (Example 9). According to Frederick Niecks:

> When Gutmann studied [this] Nocturne with Chopin, the master told him that the middle section (the *più lento* in D flat major) [bars 57-100] should be played as a recitative: 'A tyrant commands' (the first two chords), he said, 'and the other asks for mercy.'[35]

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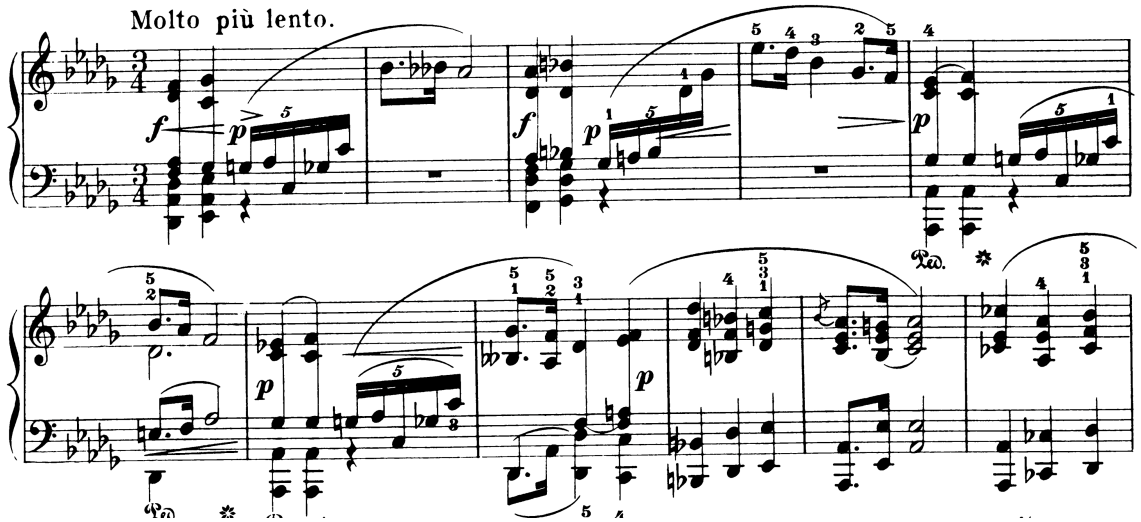
[35]Frederick Niecks, *Frederick Chopin as a Man and Musician*, vol. 2 (London: Novello, 1902), 265; cited in Eigeldinger, 81.

The statement conveys the operatic influences at work in the nocturne, as well as the rhetorical model of phrasing and execution so vital to the interpretation of Chopin's works. Additionally, the statement underscores the dramatic implications of the textural and dynamic changes of this section. Such a heightened change in musical style between sections locates this piece among the nocturnes whose middle sections are more akin to an operatic *scena* than a contrasting middle section of a piece in ternary form. Niecks' statement further suggests that the narrative mode of understanding may elucidate a contemporary interpretation of the work. Seen within the larger hermeneutical context, one may grasp the political implications of the "tyrannical" opening chords, and the plea for mercy represented by the following phrase. The full-voiced texture, and strong downbeat-oriented rhythms of the opening chords (made more prominent



Example 9: Nocturne in F♯ minor, Op. 48, no. 2, mm. 57 – 66.

following the metrically-displaced melodic lines of the A section) supports such an interpretation. Similarly, the embellishing phrases that follow these chords support a dramatic reading as the quintuplet figuration, beginning on a weak beat, and describing a disjunct melodic motion, gives the impression of a plaintive utterance. Furthermore, Chopin's audiences would

likely have understood the dialogue-like qualities of the passage due to the affinity with operatic repertoire.

Not only does *più lento* section suggest an association with operatic repertoire, strengthening the narrative framework of the nocturne, but certain features of this section also suggests a Polish nationalist interpretation, and thus a Polish nationalist narrative. The features of this section that support such an interpretation are the triple meter and accentual structure that suggest a mazurka. Example 9 shows the accent written on the third beat of measure 57 and the durational accent on the second beat measure 58; further durational accents are discernable in numerous measures of this section, with the second beats consistently emphasized due to the persistence of the underlying harmony (for example, the dominant harmony on second beat of measure 57 continues to be heard through to measure 59, creating a durational accent on the second beat of measure 57). Since accentual stress on the second or third beats is common in a mazurka, and occurs rarely in a nocturne,[36] the stylistic elements of this section resonate more clearly with Polish folk music than with the genre of the nocturne. The generic referents of the Polish mazurka suggest a Polish tone to the confrontation of this section; embedded within the nocturne genre, the stylistic traits of the Polish mazurka are set into relief, and evoke a national association in the operatic-style dramatic conflict of tyrant and supplicant.

The affinity with operatic repertoire is strengthened through the level of drama that permeates the remainder of the B section. When the opening measures of the B section return (mm. 73 – 74 and measure 89 – 90), the tonality shifts, moving chromatically from a second-

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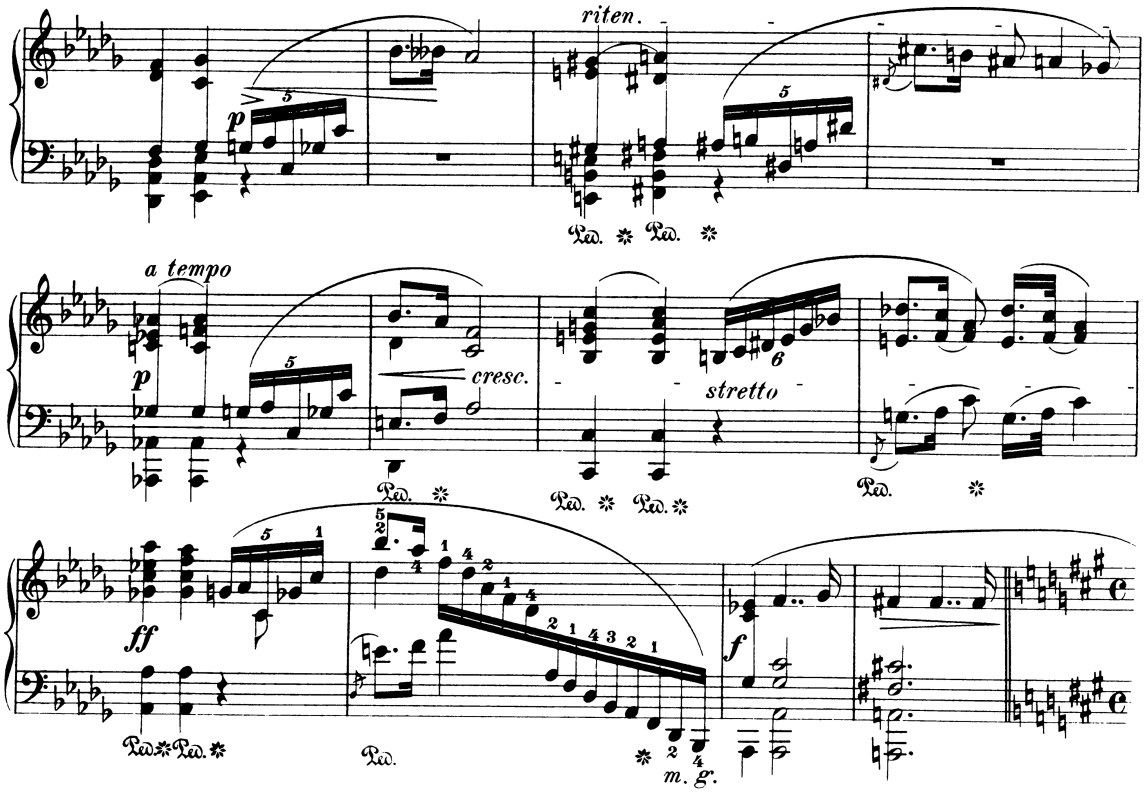
[36]A similar metrical and accentual structure can be seen in Chopin's Nocturne in G Minor, op. 15, no. 3. See Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries*, 13.

inversion dominant chord in D♭ Major (mm. 73 and 89) to a root position dominant chord of E Major (mm. 75 and 91) (Example 10). The chromatic shift emphasizes a change in characterization in the forceful chords,[37] heightening the sense of drama in the confrontation. The dramatic implications of the forceful chords and plaintive statements come to the fore in



Example 10: Nocturne in F♯ minor, Op. 48, no. 2, mm. 89 – 100.

measures 97 – 98, as the quintuplet figuration gives way to an impassioned arpeggiated descent, suggesting the culmination of the dramatic confrontation, leading to a stolid dominant chord,

[37]The suggestion of a change in character is strengthened through consultation of the Wiener Urtext Edition of the Nocturne. The Critical Notes state that *pp* was added by Chopin in bar 75 of a teaching copy of the Nocturne (indicated in parenthesis on the first beat of measure 75 in the Wiener Urtext score) and *p* was added in bar 91 in a separate teaching copy (indicated in parenthesis on the first beat of measure 91 of the Wiener Urtext score). See Frédéric Chopin, *Nocturnes*, ed. Jan Ekier (Vienna: Wiener Urtext Edition, 1980), XLI.

marked *forte*. The chords shift by chromatic movement to a first inversion F♯ minor chord; the repeated tonic in soprano over a decrescendo seem to signal a farewell and shift temporalities as the operatic drama ends and the lyrical style of the salon returns with the melody of the A section. Monelle's temporal metaphor assists such an interpretation of a shift in temporalities, in which narrative time in the B section (the *Gang*) shifts to lyric time with the return of the A section (the *Satz*). If we view lyric time as an extended present, a sentimental temporality in which "the remembered and imagined past is reflected,"[38] a narrative interpretation emerges in which the lyric time in the coda carries the weight of the dramatic confrontation between tyrant and supplicant. Example 11 shows the repetition of the chromatically descending *passus duriusculus*[39] in soprano (mm. 119 – 126), a lyric evocation of lament. Due to the nationalist and dramatic implications of the *Gang* (discernable in the characteristics of the mazurka, and in the dialogue-like qualities of the section), when understood within the historiosophic framework the lament in lyric time can be interpreted in terms of Polish Romantic nationalism, as a lament signifying the sorrow and grief following past conflict. What is more, the shift to F♯ Major beginning in measure 129 culminates in a major-mode ascending scalar *fioritura* marked *smorzando* (dying away). The major mode and scalar ascent suggest a transcendental transfiguration of the tragedy, a quality that resonates with the central tenets of Polish messianism: that suffering would lead to salvation. Here, suffering, heard in the lament, gives way to a descending lyrical melodic line drawn from the opening measure of the piece (mm. 127 – 128; the motive is then repeated an octave lower and with variation in mm. 129 – 130); trills on

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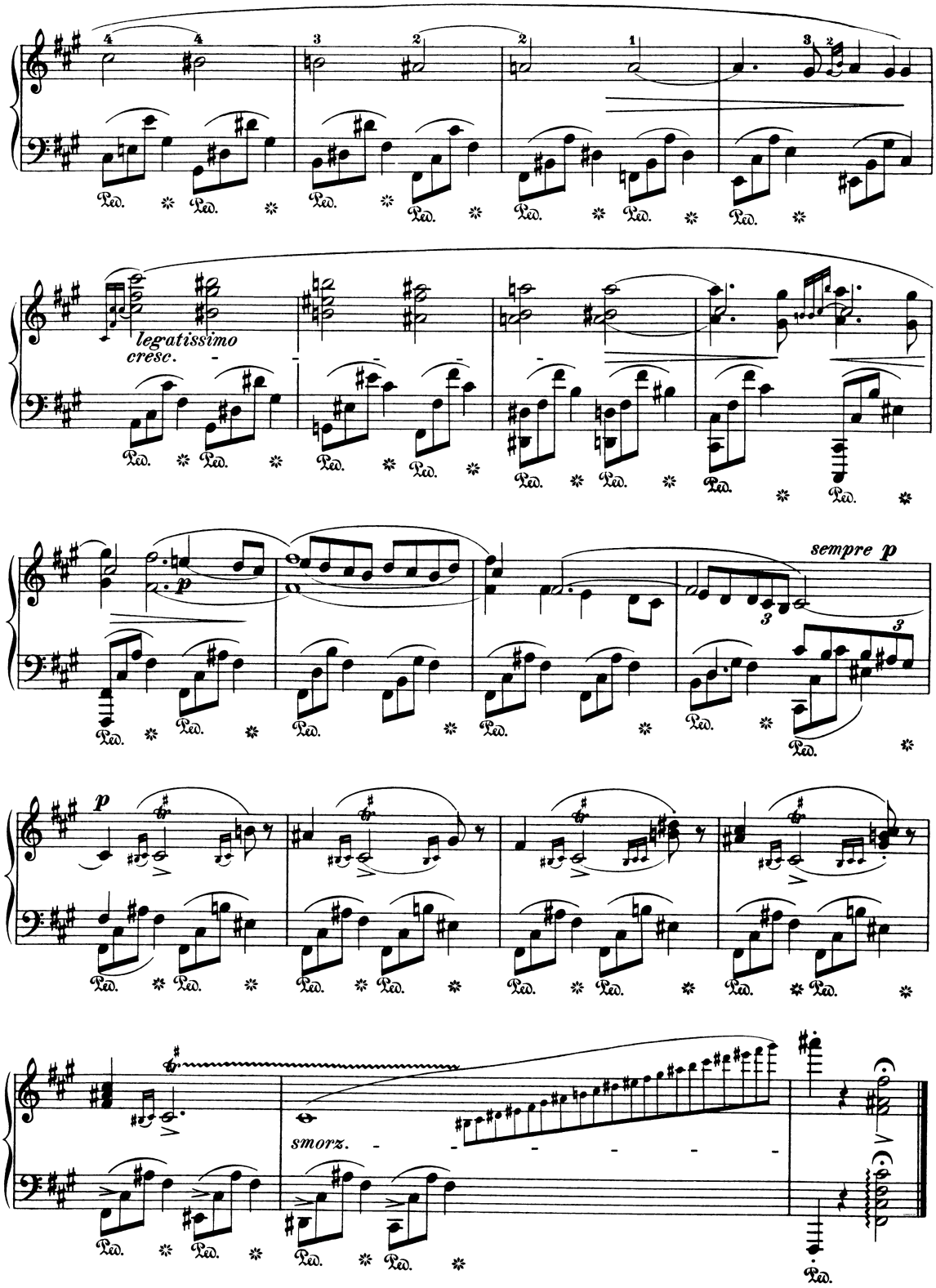
[38]Monelle, 115.

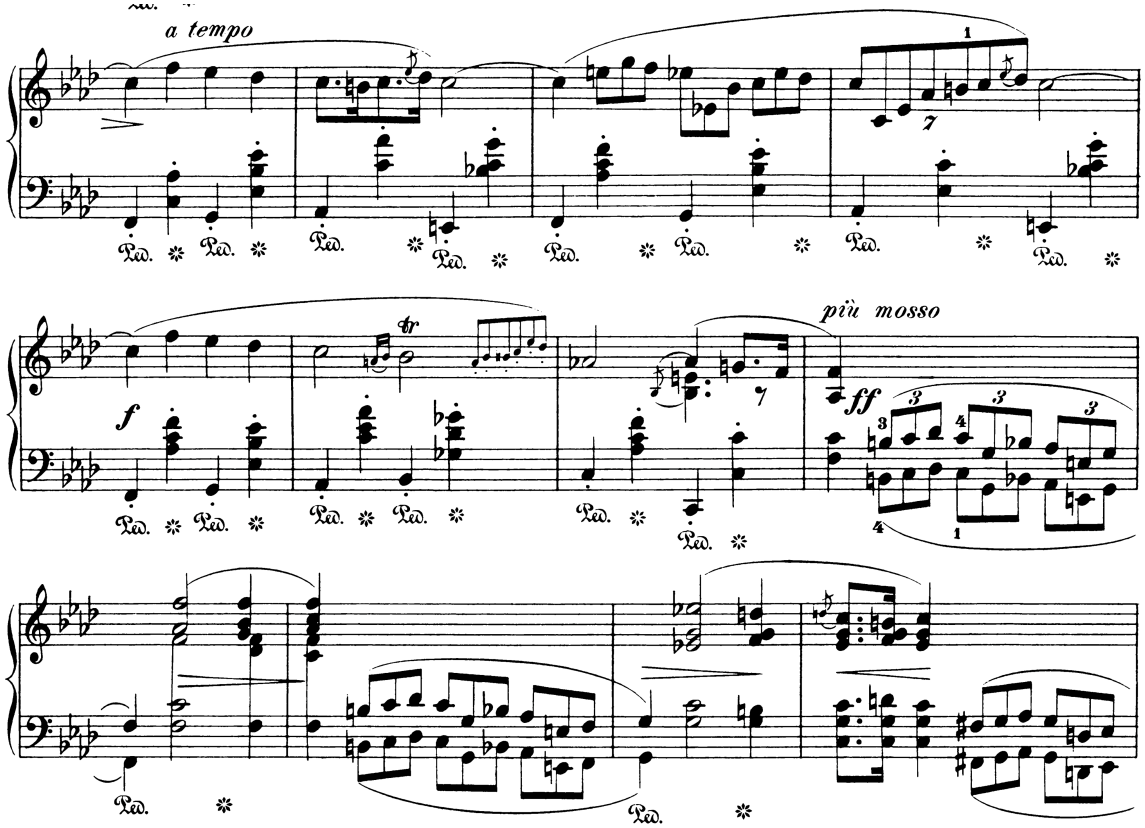
[39]The term *passus duriusculus* refers to a chromatically descending or ascending line.



Example 11: Nocturne in F♯ minor, Op. 48, no. 2, mm. 119 – 137.

the dominant beginning in measure 131 foreshadow the final transfiguration, while the soprano voice begins another descending motive, moving from b^1 (fourth beat of m. 131) to $f\sharp^1$ (first beat of m. 133). On the fourth beat of measure 133 this descending motive begins again, but this time a $d\sharp^2$ in soprano begins to shift the tonality into the major mode. The final dominant trill, complete with crescendo, leads to the transcendent major-mode scalar *fioritura*, dying away in the upper register of the piano before the final tonic chord in F♯ major signals the glorious outcome. The lyric evocation of past suffering has led to a transcendent ending.

A narrative interpretation can also be applied to the middle section of the Nocturne in F minor, Op. 55, no. 1, which Bellman understands as expressing "heroic confrontation." The nocturne opens with a melody that unfolds in a mainly stepwise-moving pattern over a simple march-like bass accompaniment. The melody of measures 1 – 3 is repeated, with variation and modification, throughout the opening section. This repetition sets the *più mosso* section into stark relief as the forceful triplets break the serene continuity of the preceding melody (Example 12). The disparity between the preceding cantabile melody and the disjunct triplet line is heightened by the melodic leap of a diminished fifth that marks the end of the cantabile line and the beginning of the triplet theme. Here, the triplets enter into a dialogue with the chords that ensue, and work to change the tonal direction of the section. In the first statement of the triplet theme (m. 48), the melody begins on a non-chord tone and, through exploration of dominant and tonic chord tones, propels the drive to the tonic octave chord that ends the phrase; the chords that follow, built on f (the upper note of the tonic octave), seem to pick up where the triplet theme left off and expand the tonic chord. The triplet theme is then repeated (m. 50), but Chopin alters the last triplet so that the melody ends on g. Once again, the chords that follow begin where the



Example 12: Nocturne in F minor, Op. 55, no. 1, mm. 41 – 52.

triplet melody ended (this time the bass note is g), and outline a progression in C minor (mm. 51 – 52). The triplet theme then returns, truncated, exploring c minor. The final confrontation propels the tonality towards g minor (mm. 54 – 56). Tension is thus created through the tonal drive of the triplets and the chords that follow, and the tension works to heighten the impression of dialogue and confrontation in this section. The sense of drama evokes the operatic influence of the nocturne and invites narrative interpretation of conflict.

The narrative implications of the Op. 48 and 55 nocturnes can, in turn, help elucidate the expressive logic in the Op. 62 nocturnes, pieces that, as previously mentioned, were among the

late works that were not understood in Europe in general. As I demonstrate, the formal structure of the work highlights moments of potentially "othering" expression, and I locate meaning in the semantic content and syntactical function of these highlighted musical instances. Since my analysis interprets Chopin's Nocturne Op. 62, no. 1 in terms of simple rondo form, Monelle's insight facilitates an interpretation of the nocturne in which I locate the temporal dimension of the work through the melodic and tonal design of the formal sections. Additionally, I propose that Chopin's structural reasoning pushes the boundaries of the paradigms that form the canonical script known to his listeners. The esthetic impulse to narrativize music gains strength from the result, which "threatens the stability of the canonical script."[40] The rondo form of the first of the Op. 62 nocturnes suggests a temporal dimension through Chopin's use of thematic transformation and interrelation.[41] Table 1 reveals my interpretation of the structural outline of the Nocturne in B Major, Op. 62, no. 1. I have identified the sections, tonality (the symbol → indicates a modulatory passage), and the narrative "topic" or "gesture" that I propose above the measure numbers in the table.

The opening gesture evokes the nocturne's vocal origins with the initial "strumming" of the broken supertonic seventh chord (recall the frontispieces of early vocal nocturnes and romances, showing "pensive young ladies, weeping muses, and dying poets, most of whom

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[40]Here I borrow Newcomb's phrase and terminology. See Newcomb, "The Polonaise-Fantasy and Issues of Musical Narrative," in *Chopin Studies 2*, 88-89.

[41]Here I again borrow Newcomb's terminology. According to Newcomb, "narrative series are transformational series, as opposed to circular, static or highly symmetrical series. Elements in narrative series emerge at the end recognizable but changed." See Newcomb, 87-88, esp. 87 n. 15.

Theme	Opening Cadence	A	TR	B	RT
Key	B major	B major	g♯ → F♯ → g♯ → d♯	d♯ minor	
"Topic"/ "Gesture"	"Preludial Strumming"	Lyric		"othering"	
mm.	1 – 2	3 – 10	10 – 21	21 – 27	27 – 28

Theme	A^1	C^1	Development of C	C^2	C Coda
Key	B major	A♭ major	→	A♭ major	A♭ major
"Topic"/ "Gesture"	Lyric	Lyric		Lyric variation	Lyric
mm.	28 – 36	37 – 45	45 – 52	52 – 59	59 - 67

Theme	A^2	Cadenza	Coda
Key	B major	→	B major
"Topic"/ "Gesture"	Apotheosis/metrically displaced Aria		"othering"
mm.	68 – 75	76 – 81	81 - 94

Table 1: Structural and Topical Properties of Nocturne in B Major, Op. 62, no. 1

cradled a lyre in arms").[42] The opening cadential motive (ii7 – V7) sets up a degree of tension and expectation: since seventh chords typically intensify the drive towards the tonic, and since

[42]Atwood, *The Parisian Worlds of Frédéric Chopin*, 170. Newcomb identifies a similar gesture in the opening of the Polonaise-Fantasy, which "gives one…the image of the bard's preludial strumming as the singer/improviser descends into his material…." See Newcomb, 90. Newcomb's study of the Polonaise-Fantasy, Op. 61 outlines the narrative qualities of a work composed during the same period as the Nocturnes, Op. 62. What is striking about the two pieces is that they both open with a similar gesture of preludial strumming in the first measures of the work (which occurs in a more elaborate form in the Polonaise-Fantasy). Newcomb notes that such a gesture is rare in Chopin's oeuvre, and that the only other piece that resembles "the Polonaise-Fantasy in its evocation of bardic fingers wandering across the strings of harp or lyre is the opening of the G minor Ballade." (See

the opening tonic is expected in order to establish the tonality, the anticipation created by the opening cadential gesture is twofold. However, the moment of suspense lingers through a rest, and the resolution of the leading tone, which we expect to hear in the tenor voice, is merely hinted at in the opening melody as the soprano, rather than the tenor, articulates a stepwise descent beginning on a "false tonic" (an accented passing tone within the dominant harmony of measures 2 and 3), contributing to the sense of uncertainty about where one is in the opening of the work. When the tonic finally appears in the tenor voice, it enters on a weak beat in measure 4, after an entire measure of rest in the tenor voice (Example 13).

Both the opening gesture and the main theme unsettle us. Chopin seems to begin his melody mid-thought, so to speak, a quality that is made apparent not only by the half rest that follows the opening cadential motive, but also by the initiation of the opening melodic descent b^1 – $f\sharp^1$ on beat 3 of measure 3. Thus, the melodic motive is presented initially as an upbeat; however, the motive appears again in measure 7, displaced to the downbeat and appearing as a melodic phrase end (Example 13). The careful placement of the half rest and the metrical and structural ambiguity of the melodic motive b^1 – $f\sharp^1$ are crucial to an understanding of the temporal unfolding of the work. Consultation of the autograph score of Op. 62, no. 1 reveals the

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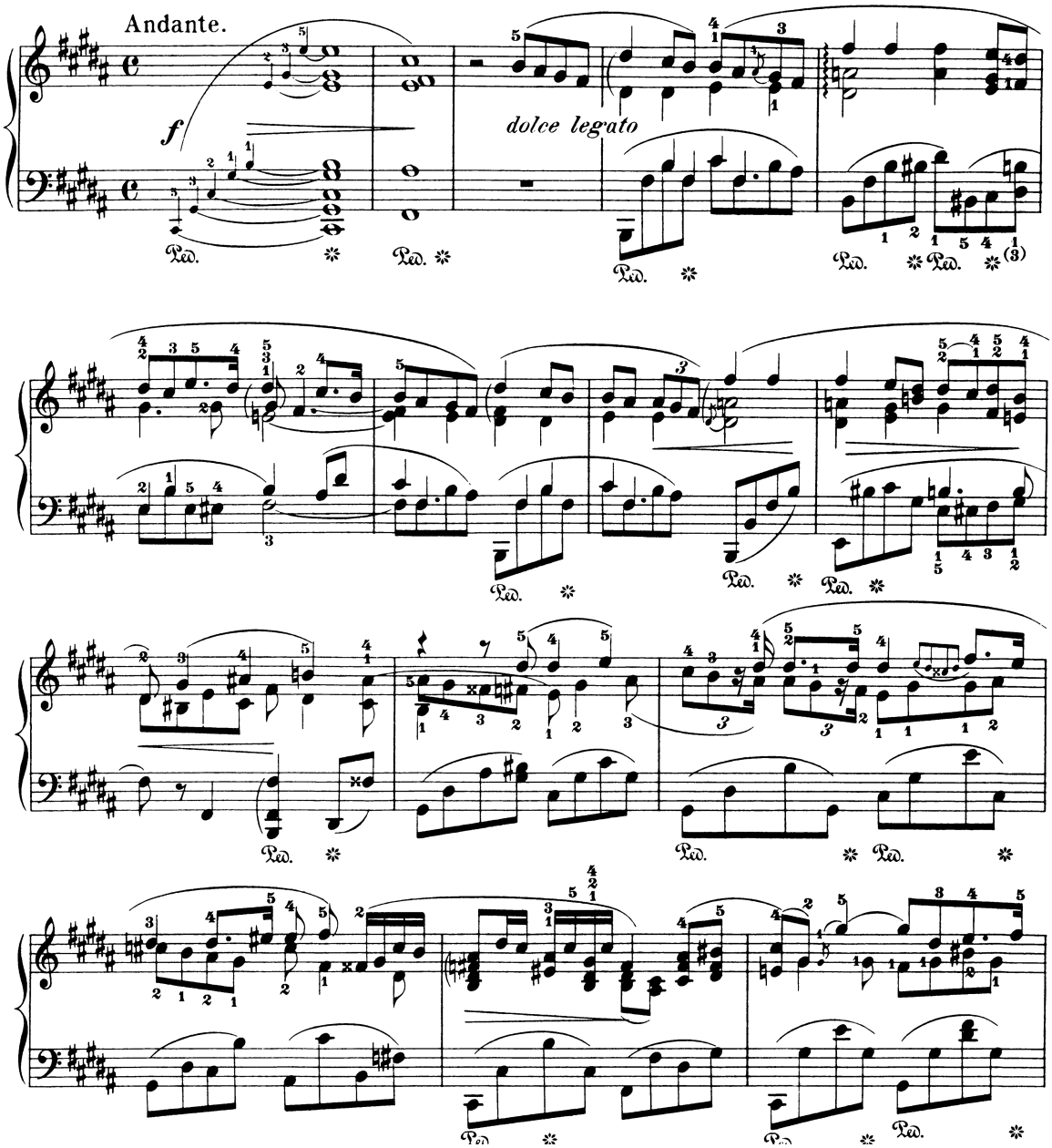
Newcomb, "The Polonaise-Fantasy and Issues of Musical Narrative.") The gesture is particularly striking in the Nocturne, for it is the only instance of its occurrence in Chopin's collected nocturnes. The only other nocturne to open with a slow introductory gesture is the Nocturne in A♭ Major, Op. 32, no. 2; however, the return of the motive at the end of the piece points to its function as a framing device. Thus, the gesture at the opening of the Nocturne in B Major, Op. 62, due to its rare occurrence in the genre, invites interpretive activity on the part of the listener.



Example 13: Nocturne in B Major, Op. 62, no. 1, mm. 1 – 15; contrapuntal reconstruction of opening motive, and emergence of second soprano voice, mm. 10 – 12.

deliberation involved in the placement of the opening motive, and the final decision to follow the introductory gesture with a half rest.[43] The half rest not only heightens the sense of expectation after the cadence, it also places special emphasis on the melodic motive that follows. What on first hearing appears to be a melodic anacrusis (measure 3) turns into a transitional melodic motive (measure 4) and then a melodic phrase end, which is simultaneously the beginning of another phrase (measure 7). The motive thus stimulates narrative interest in the listener by promoting "a heightened sense of contingency within the series of events itself;" that is, by lending the passage a sense of expectation, listeners experience "a greater [sense of] uncertainty about where one is in what kind of series of events, about what will happen next."[44]

As Chopin propels the melodic motion forward through persistent eighth note rhythms, the listener continually expects a moment of respite in the form of a cadence. Chopin's retrograde reconstruction of the motive (measure 10, beats 1 and 2) intensifies this expectation, as a V7 – I cadence (with $\hat{7}$ resolving upward to $\hat{8}$ in the soprano line) appears to complete the first theme. The cadence, however, is displaced, as the tonic and mediant enter in the upper voices half a beat after the tonic chord sounds in the bass. Therefore, the finality of this cadence is destabilized by the metric displacement. Chopin further destabilizes the function of the V7 – I cadence in this measure by following the cadence immediately with an elided cadence that tonicizes G♯ minor,

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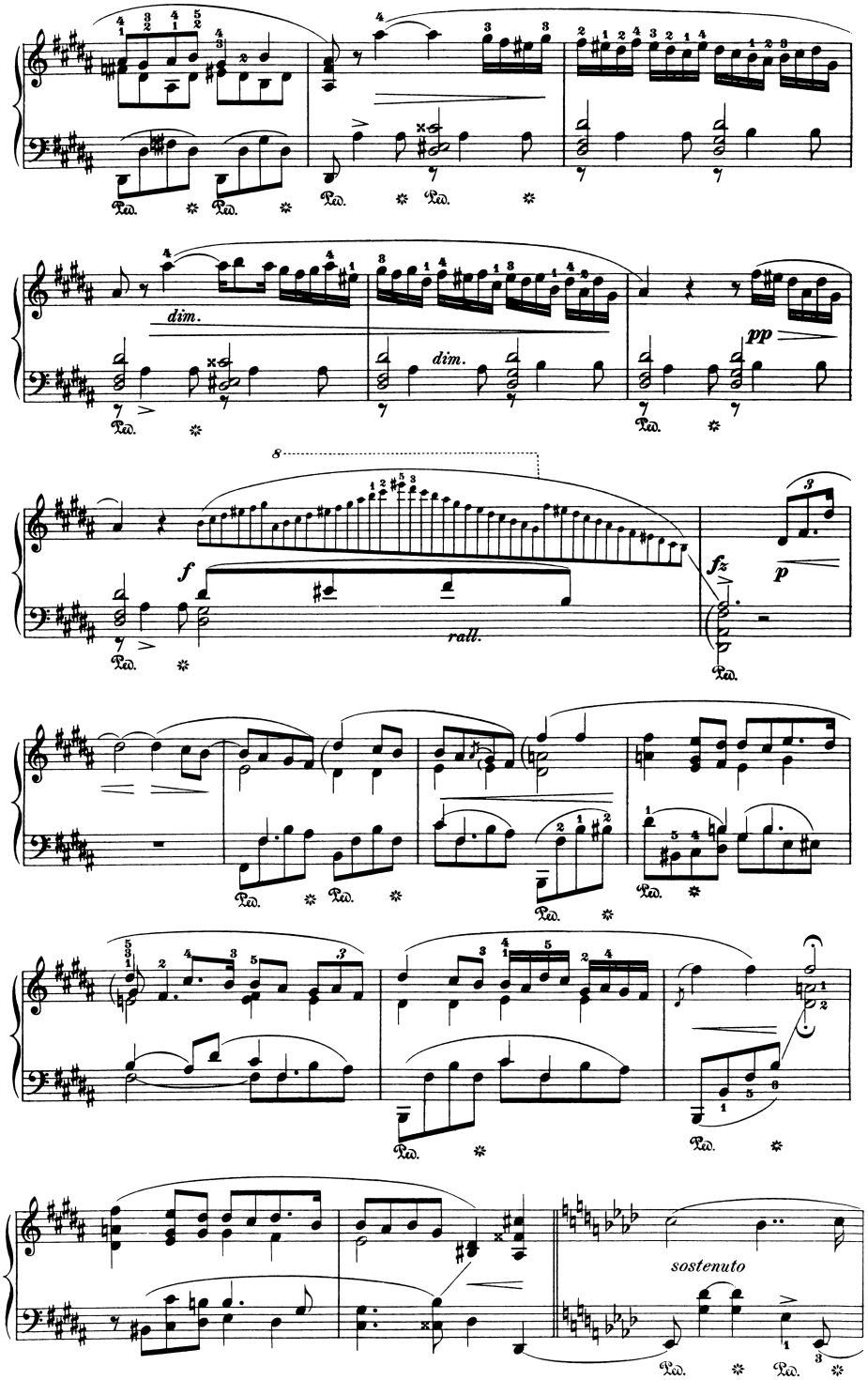
[43]Chopin's modifications to the score show that he began to add notation to the beginning of measure 3, on the downbeat. This notation is crossed out, and the half rest and four-note melodic descent follow. I am grateful to Dr. Michelle Fillion for allowing me to consult her copy of Chopin's autograph score (Frédéric Chopin, Nocturne in B Major, Op. 62, no. 1, score, 1846, Special Collections, The Newberry Library, Chicago; Case MS 7Q 104).

[44]Newcomb, 87. As Newcomb explains, "a heightened degree of narrative activity on the part of the listener" is a crucial component of the narrative mode of understanding for psychologist Jerome Bruner, historical philosopher Paul Ricoeur, and literary theorists such as Tzvetan Todorov, who have all written extensively on the narrative mode of understanding. See Newcomb, esp. 84 n. 2 and 87.

and thus quickly changes the direction of the melody. A sensitive listener would note the blurring of boundaries, so to speak, between theme end and bridge; narrative interest is thus stimulated not only by the direction the melody has taken, but also by the gradual emergence of two distinct voices in the transition, beginning in measure 11. Here, the soprano line — fragmentary, hovering around the dominant of G♯ minor, and entering only on weak beats — is highlighted by its nonconformity to the rhythmic structure that has driven the piece so far. It therefore enters as a separate and distinct voice, guiding the melodic line towards F♯ major, an expected goal of modulation. A beautifully structured cadence in measure 14 solidifies the modulation to F♯ major, but the structural function of the cadence is again destabilized by the metric placement of the tonic chord, displaced by a suspension and falling on the second half of beat three. The modulation to the dominant key is undermined and the resolution of the F♯ major cadence further destabilized by the immediate shift to C♯ minor on the final beat of measure 14, beginning a modulation around the circle of fifths to G♯ minor (measure 17), and finally to D♯ minor (measure 21). Though this transition regains rhythmic regularity, the melodic focus hovers obsessively in the narrow range of $g♯^1$ – $d♯^2$ and leads to the second theme beginning in measure 21 (Example 14), a metrically dissonant theme in the mediant minor. This second theme is significant in its evocation of musical "otherness," which is supported by the



Example 14: Nocturne in B Major, Op. 62, no. 1, mm. 20 – 37; B section, mm. 21 – 27; retransition, mm. 27 – 28; return of A section, m. 28.

predominance of the plagal harmonies of the passage.[45] Texturally drawn from the virtuosic style of Chopin's études, this theme outlines a melodic exploration of $\hat{5}$, unsettled by rhythms that are displaced by accents on metrically weak beats. Supporting the melody, however, is a series of chords that, falling on beat, highlight the plagal quality of the progression (mm. 21 – 27). The plagal quality of the passage is further underscored by the syncopated accompaniment, which hovers around scale degrees $\hat{5}$ and $\hat{6}$.

This leads to a particularly striking moment in this passage: the scalar *fioritura* in measure 26, in which the raised leading tone of D♯ minor is no longer present. Instead, the expressive *fioritura* and the harmonic support provided by a subdominant chord in second inversion illuminate the Aeolian scalar passage at work in this measure. The stress of the plagal progression, created through the regular metrical placement of the chords, combined with the syncopated reiteration of scale degrees $\hat{5}$ and $\hat{6}$, highlights the plagal quality of this section, which is further underscored by the Aeolian scalar fioritura in measure 26.[46] Thus, the harmonic

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[45]Margaret Notley has written a thorough study of the "otherness" associated with plagal systems by positing that the opposition between major and minor modes finds reflection in an attendant opposition between authentic and plagal harmonic systems. Though Notley acknowledges that "the idea of a plagal system seems not to have found widespread acceptance" in twentieth-century notions of tonal theory, which "have tended to construe the subdominant and related chords as serving only subordinate functions to the dominant and tonic" (such as theories influenced by Schenker), Notley nonetheless suggests that an alternative approach that "accepts the validity of what are in effect two subsystems, authentic and plagal, within an overarching dualistic system," reveals the inequality that is inherent in any system of binary pairs, and thus recognizes the "otherness" of the plagal system (92). See Notley, "Plagal Harmony as Other: Asymmetrical Dualism and Instrumental Music by Brahms," in *The Journal of Musicology* 22, no. 1 (Winter, 2005): 90-130.

[46] According to Margaret Notley ,"the expressive power of plagal idioms comes about through their lesser position within the framework that defines them as other, that is, through their difference from "more basic" or "default" idioms. Stated in more concrete terms, the relative infrequency with which plagal harmony plays a nonsubordinate role accounts for its (largely unacknowledged) markedness within the dualistic systems [described by nineteenth and twentieth-century theorists]." Notley further explains, "plagal harmony that is not subsumed at every level by authentic harmony is possible only in passages…that draw on a non-diatonic scale with, in descending order, two whole tones followed by a semitone in the upper tetrachord, or on Phrygian or Aeolian scales. Like the minor-major scale, these two diatonic scales (and no others) include a whole tone between scale degrees 8

dualism created by the asymmetry between this plagal passage and the "authentic" major mode that precedes it (and which ultimately returns throughout the work), contributes to the markedness, the "othering" quality of this section. Combined with the phrases built on sixteenth-note figurations (characteristic of many of the études), the B section reveals aspects of Marx's *Gang* and suggests a narrative weight to the passage. Indeed, support for an interpretation of the "othering" quality of this passage can be found in contemporary treatises on tonality, such as those published by François-Joseph Fétis in the 1830s and 1840s, which enjoyed wide popularity in nineteenth-century Europe and abroad.[47] In his *Traité complet de la théorie et de la pratique de l'harmonie* (1844), Fétis outlines an explanation of tonality, and expands his explanation of harmonic succession by comparing Western European tonality with exotic tonalities. According to Fétis:

> What I call tonality is thus the order of melodic and harmonic features that result from the arrangement of sounds in our major and minor scales: if one of these distances were to be inverted, the tonality would assume another character, and the harmony would have totally different qualities. The immediate consequences of this tonality are to give certain notes a feeling of repose that does not exist in the others, and to assign to these notes the endings of cadences, that is, the perfect chord....[48]

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and 7 and a semitone between 6 and 5, thus allowing the minor subdominant but excluding the major dominant." See Notley, 93 and 105.

[47]The numerous publications in Europe and abroad testify to the popularity of Fétis' monograph, and to the widespread appeal of Fétis' theories. Fétis' first edition of his publication *La musique mise à la portée de tout le monde; exposé succinct de tout ce qui est nécessaire pour juger de cet art, et pour en parler sans l'avoir étudié* originally went on sale in 1829, though it is dated 1830. A second edition appeared in Paris in 1834, and was reprinted in 1836. Following the 1836 reprint, an unauthorized reprint was published in Brussels in 1839. A third edition appeared in Paris in 1847. Fétis' publication was translated and published in Boston in 1842 and 1844, and two versions also appeared in London in 1846. Additionally, German, Russian, Spanish and Italian translations appeared and were published abroad in 1830 (Berlin), 1833 (St. Petersburg), 1840 (Barcelona) and 1858 (Torino). See F.J. Fetis [*sic.*], *Music Explained to the World Or, How to Understand Music and Enjoy Its Performance* (Boston: B. Perkins, 1842; reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1987), V-XIX.

[48]François-Joseph Fétis, *Traité complet de la théorie et de la pratique de l'harmonie* (*Complete Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Harmony*), trans. Peter M. Landey (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2008), 247.

Significant with regard to the present study is Fétis' identification of the different character and qualities associated with exotic tonalities (what one might call "othering" qualities), which he illustrates with a Lydian scale.[49] Thus, Fétis' identification of the exotic element of a modal scale distances the modal tonality from Western tonality, creating an association of an "othering" quality. Futhermore, Fétis highlights "the immediate consequences of this [Western] tonality," which "are to give certain notes a feeling of repose that does not exist in others." In so doing, he additionally illustrates the "othering" quality of tonalities that lack the "feeling of repose" with which Western audiences were familiar.[50] Chopin's use of the Aeolian scale in a melodic embellishment of a plagal passage would likely have struck audiences with the "othering" quality of the musical elements and the lack of repose resulting from the absence of a perfect cadential progression.

We are again unsettled by the retransition (mm. 27 – 28). The arpeggiated triplet that opens the retransition still resonates with the D♯ minor sonority through Chopin's pedal indication (Example 14) and the prolonged $d\sharp^2$ in measure 28 (complete with a crescendo) suspends the anticipatory listener's expectation. However, the arpeggiated triplet is a continuation of the rolled chord in the bass and the attentive listener would note the likeness of the broken chord to the "preludial" strumming of measure 1. Together with the melodic descent $c\sharp^2$ to b^1 that follows, the gestures reorient the listener to the opening A theme, but the metrical

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[49]Fétis introduces "the major scale of the Chinese" with an example of an F major scale with raised $\hat{4}$. See Fétis, 247.

[50]Ibid.

stress has shifted: the melodic descent b^1 to $f\sharp^1$ now begins on the downbeat, as it had in measure 7. The retransition thus serves to prolong the sense of expectation leading to the return of the A material through the suspended $d\sharp^2$, and also displaces the melodic motive that originally served as a melodic anacrusis to the A theme. Again, narrative activity on the listener's part is "stimulated by a heightened sense of contingency within the series of events itself."[51] A fermata on the dominant of E major in measure 34 heightens the sense of expectation on our part as listeners as we expect, yet again, a resolution of the material that has brought us to this point. What follows, however, is not a resolution, but a modulation to the key of the C section. In measure 36, a seventh chord on C♯ (ii7 of B major, which opened the work) acts as a pivot chord, and the harmonies shift to the enharmonically-spelled dominant seventh of A flat major, which ushers in the C section in the enharmonic major submediant key (Example 15).

The C section enhances and develops a significant aspect of the "othering" quality of the B section: the unsettled syncopated rhythms. Texturally reinterpreted, and with the accents shifted to the latter halves of the bars, the rhythmic structure of the bass line of this section is derived from that of the B section (compare mm. 21 – 25 of Example 14 with mm. 37 – 41 of Example 15). Other than the relation of the bass rhythm to the B section, the C section reveals few similarities with the remainder of the work. It is a lyric exploration in its own right, composed in ternary form, ending on a point of relative stability with a type of mode mixture that suggests a Baroque style *tierce de Picardie* (a moment which I shall analyze in greater detail below). The lyric evocation of this section, however, is destabilized by the accompaniment. Opening in an

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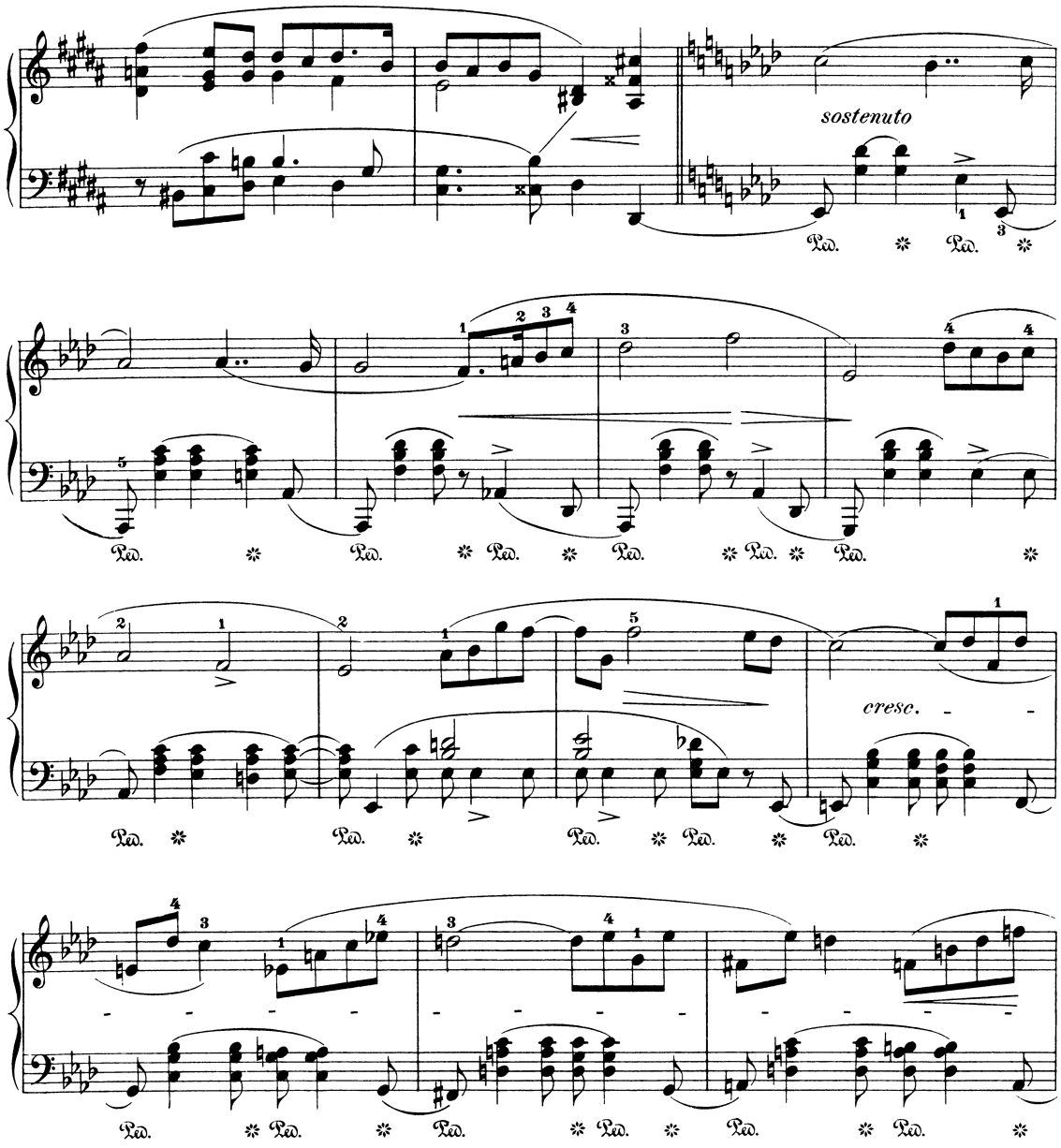
[51]Newcomb, 87.

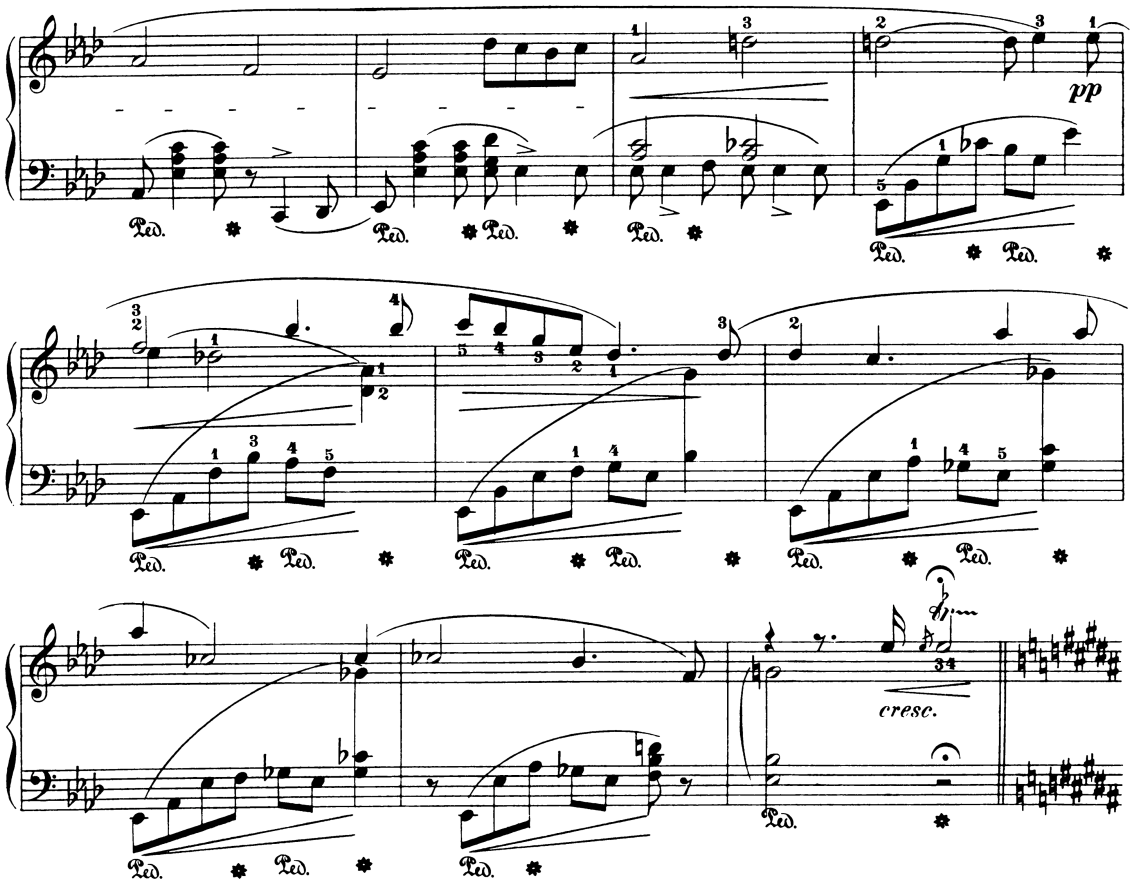


Example 15: Nocturne in B Major, Op. 62, no. 1, mm. 35 – 48; beginning of C section, mm. 37 – 48.

aria style, and moving mainly stepwise in a singable intervallic structure, the melody seems to lose its ease of movement, and becomes more disjunct and modulatory in the transition beginning in measure 43. This destabilization not only disrupts the melodic and rhythmic

structure of the aria, but it also seems to interrupt the tonal movement, as the expected cadence and resolution to the tonic of A♭ major is avoided in measure 45; instead, the bass ascends chromatically to a first inversion dominant chord of F minor. This chromatic movement instigates a modulatory section characterized by chromatically shifting chords and a disjunct melodic line (mm. 45 – 50).

It terms of narrative, it seems that the *Satz*, the lyric section, is undermined by the rhythm drawn from the *Gang* of the B section. The listener can perceive two separate and distinct styles at work in this section: a harmonically closed *Satz* (the aria style of the salon nocturne) and the harmonically unstable *Gang*. Furthermore, it appears that the aria of the C section cannot reach its full melodic potential until the bass regains rhythmic and metric regularity in measure 61 (Example 16). With the establishment of a truly nocturne-style accompaniment pattern, the melody soars to a climax (measure 63). Here, too, Chopin's tonal resolution evades the expectations of the listener. Rather than closing in A♭, Chopin recalls the plagal idiom and musical "otherness" of the B section through a plagal cadence in E♭ minor in measures 65 – 66. Chopin's use of mode mixture in the closing measures suggests a narrative contingency by further evading the expectations of the listener: the appearance of a second inversion dominant chord in E♭ minor on the fourth beat of measure 66 establishes a shift to the dominant minor; a resolution on the dominant major chord (an E♭ chord with raised $\hat{3}$) invites narrative interpretation due to the distinct quality of the tonal motion (the use of a major chord following a minor passage). The gesture suggests a narrative unfolding, for it momentarily resonates with the type of mode mixture found in the Baroque gesture of the *tierce de Picardie*, and thus suggests an evocation of the past — a shift in temporality.



Example 16: Nocturne in B Major, Op. 62, no. 1, close of C section, mm. 58 – 67.

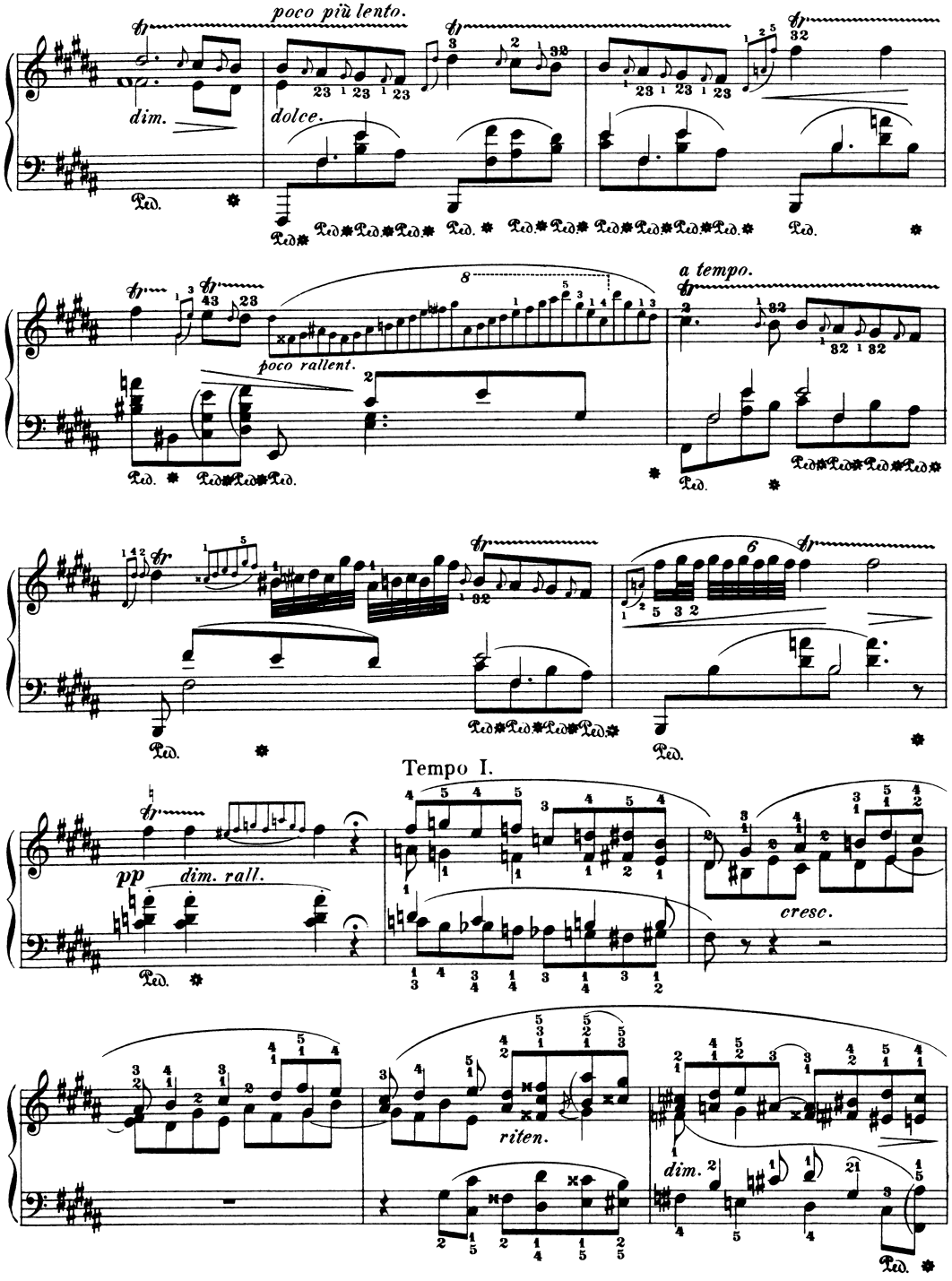
The tonal ambiguity with which this section ends invites narrative interpretation and contributes to the temporal unfolding of the work, for the E♭ minor chord explored in measure 66 is an enharmonic spelling of the key of the B section (D♯ minor). Though the rhythm of the B section has disappeared, the end of the C section yet recalls the "othering" quality of the B section through the minor key of E♭ (D♯) and the plagal sonority of measures 64 – 66, and closes with the suggestion of a Baroque gesture, as though the music is recalling a distant past. These recollections of the B section contribute to the temporal unfolding of the work through subtle stylistic reminiscences of the markedness of the B section.

At the point of the trill (m. 67) the nocturne shifts into a dramatic realm in which action is suspended and a soloist voice enters;[52] the dramatic quality of this gesture is heightened by the fermata and crescendo, as it raises the sense of expectation on the part of the listener. Since Chopin follows the reprise of the A material with a cadenza (a segment to which I will return), and introduces the A material with a soloistic trill (a "cadenza-like gesture"[53] that resonates with the vocal influences of the nocturne genre), the reprise of the A material is framed, illuminated, and set apart from the musical space to which it is no longer bound (Example 17). The cadenza that follows the reprise of the A material (mm. 76 – 80) is a chromatic and contrapuntal prolongation of the dominant.[54] The reprise is framed as a distinct temporal realm, for it is introduced and concluded through two distinct Baroque gestures: the *tierce de Picardie* that closes the C section, and the contrapuntal cadenza that leads to the coda (Example 17). The framing gesture isolates the reprise and distances it from the musical realms that precede and follow. Additionally, the reprise is presented in a heavily ornamented style, completely

[52]Jeffrey Kallberg refers to this moment as an entry into "a theatrical realm" in which "Chopin draws to a stop all forward motion, and, as if with a spotlight (an effect heightened by the fermata and the crescendo), focuses attention on a trilled, solo e♭." He continues, "the rise in tension, to invoke quite precisely the dramatic analogy, sets the stage for the reprise." See Kallberg, "Arabian Nights," 172.

[53]Kallberg refers to the trill as "a 'stage-setting' trill (itself a cadenza-like gesture)." See Kallberg, "Arabian Nights," 172.

[54]Kallberg refers to these measures as a "Bachian" cadenza. See Kallberg, "Arabian Nights," 171.



Example 17: Nocturne in B Major, Op. 62, no. 1, ornamented reprise of A section, mm. 68 – 75, and cadenza, mm. 76 – 80.

contrasting the carefully controlled unadorned simplicity of the earlier entries of the A section. Consultation of the autograph reveals the care Chopin took to restrain the ornamentation of the opening, which sets this scintillating reprise into further relief. We may thus interpret this reprise as an apotheosis of the A theme, dramatically enriched and generously ornamented. Since it is framed with suggestions of baroque gestures and isolated from the musical events that precede and follow, we might interpret the apotheosis as an idealized vision of a distant past, the contemplation and completion of which is interrupted by a surprising harmonic progression. Once again, we are denied the formal closure of this musical section, and instead we are introduced to a contrapuntal and highly chromatic cadenza (mm. 76 – 80). The shift from the apotheosis to the cadenza also signifies a shift in temporal dimension, from lyric to narrative time, or from time arrested (contemplation of an idealized vision) to time passing.

The placement of the cadenza, with its highly charged chromatic language and contrapuntal structure, are of further interest to a narrative interpretation in terms of the canonical script of the nocturne and its form. Since cadenzas were an integrated component of the nocturne genre by 1846, the placement of the cadenza in this nocturne draws further attention to the gesture.[55] Typically, cadenzas were placed "either near or at the end of the coda, or just prior to the reprise of the principal theme." What is more, the contrapuntal texture of the cadenza sets it apart from typical cadenzas in earlier nocturnes, which often underscored a virtuosic solo voice.[56] As a result, both the placement and texture of the cadenza "shift structural

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[55]Kallberg, "Arabian Nights," 172.

[56]Ibid.

weight onto the coda"[57] and thus emphasize the shift in temporal dynamics from the reprise to the coda.

The coda that follows resembles the B material in the dissonant metrical structure and syncopated rhythms of the accompaniment pattern and in the phrase structure and rhythmic pattern of the melody. However, the idiosyncratic placement of the preceding cadenza that shifts weight onto this section also serves to highlight those aspects of the coda that set it apart from the B section. The coda differs from the B material in the melodic exploration of the tonic rather than the dominant of the home key. And what is more, the diatonicism of this section contrasts the plagal idiom of the initial presentation of the B material: though some plagal embellishment still appears (in measure 83 and 87), the on-beat chords outlining a plagal progression are no longer present. The emphasis shifted onto the coda also highlights an exotic chromaticism in mm. 87 – 88, a "chromatic destablization" of the preceding diatonic passage which "makes repeated and prominent use of a tell-tale sign of musical otherness, the interval of the augmented second (heard most prominently here between the sixth and seventh scalar degrees)"[58] (Example 18). The likeness of the coda to the B section thus serves to set the anomalies of the coda into further relief, highlighting the "othering" quality of the mysterious chromaticism and the repeated use of augmented seconds, and inviting narrative interpretation on the part of the listener.

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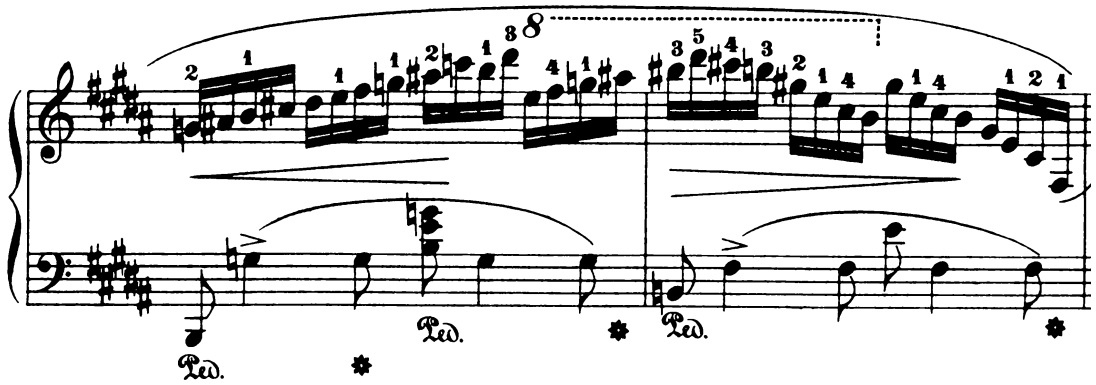
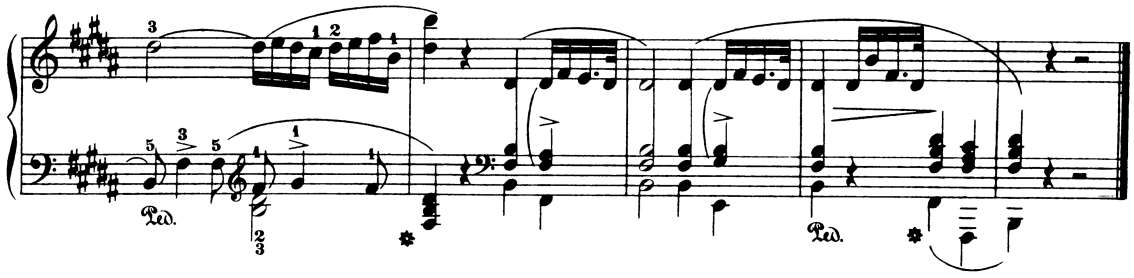
[57]Ibid.

[58]Kallberg, "Arabian Nights," 174-175. Kallberg argues that the structural weight added to the coda by the placement of the cadenza "in turn lends to the mysterious chromaticism of the coda the sensation of an unveiling, as if the move from the more diatonic first version of the passage to its woozy companion phrase were revealing something important about the expressive domain of the piece." See Kallberg, "Arabian Nights," 172.



Example 18: Nocturne in B Major, Op. 62, no. 1, mm. 87 – 88.

The final measures reveal a pointed shift from narrative time (signified in the coda by the syncopated accompaniment pattern and chromatic melody) to lyric time: the accompaniment slows to a regular rhythmic pattern, the melody hovers around the mediant ($d\sharp^2$) in a vague recollection of the opening material, and the chorale style chords in open position create a marked contrast to the exotic chromaticism of the preceding material (Example 19). Chopin has halted all forward motion, and the shift in temporality brings the nocturne to a close.



Example 19: Nocturne in B Major, Op. 62, no. 1, mm. 90 – 94.

The above analysis constitutes what would be classified as the morphological level, in terms of Micznik's analysis and her concepts of 'story' and 'discourse.' The musical events and the relationships between the events have been analyzed, and I have proposed those musical

aspects that make the events stable or unstable, thus stimulating narrative interest. I have also analyzed the syntactic level of the musical events, that is, the meanings that can be drawn from the syntactic function of the musical events, or their "modes of unfolding."[59] I would now like to discuss the semantic level at which the musical events function, that is, the ways in which listeners might "associate by convention certain musical ideas with extramusical concepts."[60] The extramusical concepts that I refer to here are concepts that resonate with concepts of Polish nationalism. The first occurrence that I would propose is presented in the B section, in which the plagal harmonies, dissonant metrical structure and the modal character of the *fioritura* contribute to the "othering" quality of this section. The distinct character of this section is further emphasized by the sense of expectation created in the A section, in which elided cadences and avoidance of formal closure heighten the anticipation on the part of the listener and thus draw the listener in to the intensity of the B section. It can be argued that this section would inspire national sentiment through the sorrowful mood, minor key, and falling melodic motives. Additionally, the modal inflection of the scalar *fioritura* found reflection in many of Chopin's mazurkas, and as such, the modal quality suggested in the *fioritura* could be compared to the national character of such Polish works. Further, with regard to the irregular rhythm and accents of the accompaniment, one could perhaps draw a comparison with the Polish dances of the *mazur* and *kujawiak*, for these dances, though differing from the nocturne in meter (the dances are in triple meter), exhibit metrical irregularity that finds reflection in this section. Irregularly occurring accents on the first, second, or third beat, are a common feature of both dances, and the

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[59]Micznik, "Music and Narrative Revisited," 201.

[60] Ibid., 210.

kujawiak in particular is of a lyrical, sorrowful composition, with accents occurring every four measures.[61] The irregularity of the accompaniment thus heightens the semantic level of this section.

The second occurrence of an instance in which the musical semantic level could resonate with extramusical concepts of nationality occurs in the C section. Again the individuality of this section is heightened by the musical material that precedes it, as a level of anticipation is created through the avoidance of formal closure (mm. 35 – 36), thus highlighting the material that enters at measure 37. In this instance the lyrical quality of the melody is disrupted by the rhythm of the accompaniment pattern and offbeat accents of the B section. Here, a dialectical tension is created through the generic realms involved, for the lyrical quality of the soprano line clearly situates the melody within the canonical script of the nocturne; however, the syncopated rhythms and the structure of the bass line (the low downbeat followed by two or three repeated chords in the tenor range), suggest a derivative accompaniment pattern, one modeled on the dance rhythms of Polish folk music, particularly in the irregular metrical accents that recur throughout this section. But it is an accompaniment pattern whose rhythms are obscured by the quadruple meter, and that ultimately causes the melody to become entangled and increasingly disjunct. The tension finally dissolves in measure 61 as the accompaniment pattern suddenly shifts into the lyrical realm of the nocturne, and enables the melody to soar to new heights. The dialectical tension and its dissolution emphasize the irregularity of the dance rhythms, drawing attention to their unique and foreign quality.

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[61]Zygmunt Noskowski, "The Essence of Chopin's Works," trans. Maja Trochimczyk and Anne Dresler, in *After Chopin: Essays in Polish Music,* ed. Maja Trochimczyk, Polish Music History, no. 6 (Los Angeles: University of Southern California, Polish Music Center, 2000), 36.

The third instance in which the semantic quality of the musical elements could resonate with Polish messianic ideology occurs in the coda, emphasized by the cadenza that has shifted structural weight onto this section of the work. Here, the elements of particular note are the exotic chromaticism of measures 87 – 88, which gives way to a lyrical utterance marked *calando* (mm. 89 – 90) that ends with the entrance of a melodic recollection of the opening material set in a chorale texture.[62] Therefore, these musical elements, significant in the ways in which they are highlighted in the formal structure, can be seen to function in an extramusical sense when analyzed according to semantic weight.

In addition to the semantic quality of the individual sections outlined above, a global narrative can be seen to arise when the "othering" sections are considered in sequence with the "Western" style sections. The Polish national character of the "othering" sections is set into relief by the A material, emphasizing the distinct "othering" quality of these sections, and highlighting the unique rhythmic and harmonic structure of the material. Furthermore, since the nocturne genre lacked "a clearly defined national identity," the "relatively neutral character" of the genre may have contributed to an interpretation of the work as "universal."[63] Similarily, the more traditional and "Western" sections of the work (the A sections), may have garnered an

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[62]Jeffrey Kallberg has proposed an interpretation of the exotic presentation of augmented seconds (mm. 87 – 88) that invokes the cultural resonances of Poland's history and the nineteenth-century sense of 'Orientalism.' According to Kallberg, "it is entirely conceivable, for example, that the attraction of the Oriental tropes to the composer lay primarily in the ways they recalled aspects of the vaunted past of his native Poland — an embrace of Sarmatism, perhaps — and that he meant this personal investment in them further to place his individual stamp on a genre that some still regarded as Field's." If, as Kallberg argues, this section represents some aspect of Polish national history, then the chorale texture that concludes the work could be seen to invoke the religious aspects of Polish messianism. See Kallberg, 181.

[63]Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries*, 27. Kallberg's argument refers to the Nocturne in G minor, Op. 15, no. 3.

interpretation as "universal" or "international" when taken into consideration in sequence with the "othering" sections. Consideration of the sections in sequence may elucidate further support for a Polish nationalist interpretation of the work, one that resonates with the concepts of "nationalism" and "universalism" central to messianic philosophies of Polish Romantic nationalism.

Since audiences in the salons would have been familiar with the musical structure of Chopin's earlier nocturnes, one could argue that the evasion of formal closure and the introduction of musical material of an "othering" quality may have stimulated a narrative interpretation of the work. Perhaps this stimulation of narrative interest is what Noskowski referred to when he stated that it was in the salons that Chopin was "truly misunderstood" since "when listening to his nocturnes and mazurkas one could not remain thoughtless and indifferent, one could not continue quietly to digest a tasty dinner, as one easily can to the sounds of a *Rêverie* or of the *Virgin's Prayer* [*La Prière d'une vierge*.]"[64] Noskowski's statement suggests that Chopin's compositions stimulated thought and interpretive activity on the part of his audiences. By analyzing such responses to Chopin's music, and by considering such responses in the context of the sociopolitical and musical atmosphere of Chopin's Paris, we can make steps towards a modern narratological approach to interpretation that resonates with a historical consciousness. The above analysis has utilized a narrative approach to an interpretation of the Op. 48 nocturnes, an approach steeped in the extramusical connotations of the topical features of the nocturnes. The analysis of the Op. 48 nocturnes and the Nocturne Op. 55, no. 1, has served

[64]Noskowski, 32. Maja Trochimczyk and Anne Desler, the translators of the article, note that the latter piece was composed in 1856 by Tekla Bądarzewska (1834-1861), and became a popular salon piece, produced internationally by 80 publishers and distributed in thousands of copies.

as a point of departure for a narrative approach to the late nocturnes, and has thus facilitated a narrative interpretation of the Nocturne in B Major, Op. 62, no. 1 that incorporates modern narratology yet takes into account the historical context in which the works were created and performed.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

Throughout this study I have attempted to explore the significance of Chopin's late nocturnes in a broader context than has hitherto been examined. It is my contention that modern narratological studies resonate with a prominent kind of nineteenth-century perception of instrumental (textless) music. While I do not claim that Chopin intended to convey a program or "story" through his music, many contemporary responses to his compositions indicate a literary or narrative construal to interpretation that is at once imbued with the ideological notions of the Romantic artist, and permeated with perceptions of Chopin as bard of his Polish motherland. The nocturnes, in particular, garnered a perception of "a living consciousness"[1] within the music, a reaction that was likely influenced by the vocal origins of the music (in which a nocturne was performed at night, before the dwelling of a beloved), and perhaps affected by Chopin's well-known affinity for vocal technique and performance. But, delving further into the responses to Chopin's nocturnes, it is possible to identify a contemporary reaction that viewed these works not as simple salon music, but as strongly national pieces filled with patriotic sentiment, thus realigning them with the larger works that have been analyzed through earlier narrative studies as political music.

This type of interpretation at once challenges the confines normally imposed on genre studies, and interprets the generic contract not as a limiting device, but as a method

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[1]Jeffrey Kallberg insists that the first French review of the Nocturnes, Op. 62 reiterates "a persistent strain in reactions to Chopin's nocturnes, one that asserted a living consciousness behind the notes on the page." See Kallberg, "Arabian Nights," 182.

of understanding the hermeneutic level at which the audience perceived the music, which allows speculation on the intersubjective meaning created by the listener.[2] That is, I have analyzed not only the syntactic function of the musical units, but also the semantic level at which meanings can be drawn through identification of "more or less recognized codes according to which both composers and listeners associate by convention certain musical ideas with extramusical concepts."[3] Furthermore, my narrative analysis has been influenced by theories of contrasting and interacting musical elements in a given work (and the recognition of those elements by listeners), which contribute to identification of a logical temporal unfolding of a series of events, and thus to an overarching narrative trajectory.[4] Through such analysis I aimed to better understand the historical perceptions of the nocturnes within the cultural discourse of nineteenth-century Parisian salons.

This inquiry involved an attempt to reconstruct the context of expression, musical and otherwise, in the 1830s and 1840s, and the scope of the project was therefore limited to Chopin's reception by his Polish and Parisian contemporaries. In order to discuss the hermeneutic level at which the audiences may have understood Chopin's music, it became necessary to study the links between the music and the culture of Chopin's Paris.[5] Such an undertaking necessitated a detailed study of Parisian salon culture, a

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[2]Here, I use the term "intersubjective" to refer to the type of meaning construed by the listener, in which the phenomenon (in this case, music) is interpreted subjectively (personally experienced) but by more than one listener, and in which there exists agreement between listeners on certain conventions of the musical genre, and the limitations imposed by the genre (in other words, there exists a generic contract).

[3]Micznik, 210.

[4]Almén, 40.

[5]As Kallberg maintains, "To speak of the links between sound and culture…is necessarily to view musical meaning as a social phenomenon shared by all participants in the sonic experience, that is, by composers, performers, and listeners alike." See Kallberg, "Hearing Poland," 222.

multifaceted and elusive subject that included prominent yet diverse political and artistic philosophies, and a rich history of fine music. The findings reveal that the history of Poland, a nation in exile, had a significant influence on many aspects of Parisian salon culture.

Chopin's own aesthetic views acted as a point of departure for my discussion of salon culture in Paris of the 1830s and 1840s. While Chopin's correspondence reveals little of his artistic intent, the recollections of his students (many of whom attended the salons that Chopin frequented) point to the primacy of vocal expression and declamation in his art. The import of the composer's aesthetic ideology to the present study was twofold, for the notion of "voice" not only permeated the piano nocturne through knowledge of the genre's vocal origins, but Chopin's well-known affinity for vocal music likely imbued the genre with a particular import to his students and contemporaries in the salons. Chopin's recommendation to his students to follow the Italian school of singing, and his use of piano nocturnes (his own and Field's) as teaching exercises, point to his belief in the expressive potential of modeling pianistic technique on vocal expression. For the purposes of this study, it was necessary to examine the larger role that the vocal model of expression played in Chopin's musical sphere.

It is not difficult to discern the high regard in which members of the Parisian salons held vocal music. Vocal romances and nocturnes were performed frequently at the musical gatherings of the salons, as were operatic excerpts. And it was for the salon audiences that Chopin's compositions were performed. Here, the vocal origins and associations of his piano nocturnes would have been readily recognized. However, national and patriotic associations would likewise have been recognized, since the

political and philosophical discourse that figured prominently in the intellectual debate in the salons echoed the ideologies of Polish Romantic nationalism.

The Polish exiles in Paris found many supporters who were sympathetic to the Polish plight, France having just fought in the July Revolution of 1830. Atwood explains of the Polish, "Their ties to France were further strengthened by the gratitude many felt toward Napoléon for reestablishing a Polish state (the Duchy of Warsaw) in 1807 and the camaraderie established by the participation of Polish troops in Bonaparte's armies."[6] Furthermore, the Poles' preference for France as a country of refuge also stemmed from the fact that "the Polish aristocracy had long regarded the French language and culture as definitive marks of civilized society."[7] But one of the strongest ties between the Polish refugees and the Parisians was the Roman Catholic faith, and because of this, supporters of the Polish cause "saw the Poles as defenders of religion as well as liberty."[8] The theme of Polish martyrdom pervaded the spirit of Polish political messianism, and the ideals of universalism inherent in the Polish messianic belief in their "divine obligation to redeem mankind from the forces of evil"[9] found support in the proponents of social utopianism. The concepts of Polish messianic philosophy not only figured prominently in the salons of the Polish aristocracy in Paris, but also in the salons that featured prominent French Romantic literati and musical artists, such as George Sand, Victor Hugo, Marie d'Agoult and Franz Liszt, all of whom were supporters of social utopianism.

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[6]Atwood, *The Parisian Worlds of Frédéric Chopin*, 45.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid., 48.

[9]Ibid.

In light of the Polish messianic philosophies and universal ideologies circulating in the salons at a time of such political unrest, it is perhaps not surprising that the compositions of Chopin, the foremost Polish composer, were held up as national works — that not only the elements of Polish folk music, but also the expressive character of melancholy, *zål*, that was detected in Chopin's music, engaged the national concerns of his contemporaries. This was especially true of his improvisations, which, according to the Romantic view of the artist, "took on the function of mystic revelation" for his listeners.[10] And since Chopin improvised most often on Polish national themes, these improvisations carried a special weight to his countrymen who viewed him as the "nation's spiritual guide."[11] But Chopin's improvisations on operatic themes were also well known, as was his affinity for operatic repertoire and the art of vocal music. Requests for an opera on a Polish national subject came to Chopin from many of his fellow countrymen, including his former instructor, Elsner. But, as Halina Goldberg points out, the prospect of staging an opera in the Polish language in Paris was impractical, as was the possibility of staging a national opera in Poland, due to the censorship in Warsaw after the November Uprising.[12] Given the dramatic appeal of Chopin's nocturnes, drawn from vocal music and ornamented with operatic-style *fioriture*, Chopin's audiences often searched for national texts embedded within the works. Thus, the theme of heroic resistance in the face of conflict that reverberates through Szulc's 1842 review of the *Poco più lento* chorale of the Nocturne, Op. 48,

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[10]Goldberg, *Music in Chopin's Warsaw*, 200.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Ibid., 253.

demonstrates the operatic association the critic made, for the review reads like a description of an operatic *scena* or chorus. And the statement by Niecks regarding Gutmann's lessons with Chopin additionally points to a dramatic and narrative interpretation of the Nocturne, Op. 48, no. 2, influenced by operatic repertoire (recall the statement regarding the *più lento* section in D flat major, and the associations with a dramatic recitative). Additionally, both Szulc's review and Niecks' statement suggest the elements of conflict and tyranny that contemporaries understood in the Op. 48 Nocturnes; the musical elements expressing conflict, lament, and in the case of the Nocturne Op. 48, no. 2, transcendental transfiguration, that can be discerned in the works can thus be understood within the historiosophic framework and resonate with elements of Polish Romantic nationalism. Furthermore, as Goldberg explains, "instrumental music's metaphoric narrative appealed more directly to Romantic sensibilities and to the composer who seldom expressed his most passionate thoughts in words."[13] Analysis of the narrative implications of the Nocturnes, Op. 48 and 55 assisted an interpretation of the expressive logic and temporal unfolding of the Nocturne Op. 62, no. 1 that was yet grounded in contemporary responses to the music, and in historical treatises of musical form. My modern narratological approach attempted to uncover a significant aspect of nineteenth-century reception. For many Romantics in the Parisian salons, the vocal associations of the nocturne genre provided a narrative and dramatic framework for interpretation, and the works became, for many, expressions of the composer's voice.

Numerous accounts can be found throughout contemporary reviews that support this interpretation. Chopin's art was upheld as national sentiment, and his piano

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[13]Ibid.

compositions praised as "song" and "poetry." He was compared not only with poets such as Thomas Moore and Lamartine, but also with the prominent Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz. Was it Chopin's eminent regard for vocal art, the expressivity he found in vocal elocution, that inspired such association? Contemporary responses to his music suggest that the association with song and poetry amounted to more than mere comparison; audiences searched for embedded national texts and dramatic confrontation within Chopin's instrumental music. His expressions in a genre that some still regarded as primarily vocal thus represented sung pronouncements of national and patriotic sentiment. Through these compositions, audiences perceived the composer's voice.

Support for this interpretation can be found in an additional medium other than literature. Only two of the known portraits of Chopin include the reproduction of a piece of music together with the likeness of the composer. Both of the musical works in these portraits are nocturnes. One portrays the composer holding a manuscript of the Nocturne in G Minor, Op. 37, no. 2 (an anonymous, recently discovered portrait), and the other is a posthumous lithograph obtained from a portrait by Ary Scheffer, with the opening measures of the Nocturne in B Major, Op. 62, no. 1 entered below the likeness.[14] The association specifically of the nocturne genre with the image of the composer suggests the significance of the genre for Chopin's contemporaries — the personal investment they perceived in these compositions. As Kallberg argues, "The portraits conflate the music with the man."[15]

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[14]Kallberg, "Arabian Nights," 182. The portraits are reproduced in Ernst Burger, *Frédéric Chopin: Eine Lebenschronik in Bildern und Dokumenten* (München: Hirmer, 1990), 315 (first portrait, with Nocturne in G Minor, Op. 37, no. 2) and 349 (second portrait, with Nocturne in B Major, Op. 62, no. 1).

[15]Kallberg, "Arabian Nights," 182.

Examination of narrative aspects of the nocturnes within the sociopolitical and musical context of nineteenth-century Parisian salon culture illuminates a fascinating area of reception history. But it also allows us to look in greater detail at this much understudied genre, and examine the relation of the works to the wider musical and social culture, and at the same time, consider those elements of Chopin's nocturnes that make each so unique and extraordinary, for the range of expression and nuance in the nocturnes is exceptionally diverse. The scope of this project demanded that I examine only a small segment of the nocturnes; a more comprehensive study would examine the nocturnes as an entire body of works, and consider Chopin's development in the genre, which spans his compositional career. Additionally, consideration of narrative interpretations would, in a larger project, consider responses in the broader European tradition, particularly those by German music critics, whose responses to Chopin's music feature a prevailing tendency to associate his music with poetry. However, the current study has elucidated the expressive logic that Parisian audiences found embedded within the works, and the narrative analysis has assisted an interpretation that resonates with a contemporary understanding of the dramatic implications of the nocturnes. It is perhaps not surprising to find evidence of narrative interpretations of the nocturnes, given the vocal origins of the genre; but consideration of the wider sociopolitical and musical culture can uncover a specific reception of the genre, in which the narratives were influenced by Chopin's reception as the Polish *wieszcz*. Chopin's aesthetic philosophy of the import of vocal expression imbued his compositions in a vocal genre with a particular weight; his contemporaries heard mystic pronouncements, Polish *zål*, and sung expression in these works: they heard in his music "les plaintes de la Pologne."

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