

**Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem
Bölcsészettudományi Kar**

DOKTORI DISSZERTÁCIÓ

WIESENMAYER ANITA TEODÓRA

WORDS EMBEDDED IN MUSIC

**A Musical Approach to Some Representative Twentieth-Century
Literary Texts**

**(Zenébe foglalt szavak: Néhány reprezentatív huszadik századi
irodalmi szöveg zenei megközelítése)**

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Budapest, 2011

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Aladár Sarbu, who has given me guidance and assistance from my undergraduate years to the completion of this dissertation. His lectures and seminars contributed to a large extent to my interest in and love of modernism. I am indebted to the reviewers of my dissertation for a preliminary discussion, Dr Judit Friedrich and Dr Péter Benedek Tóta. I am grateful for their valuable comments and suggestions. I would also like to show my gratitude to Dr Ákos Farkas for his ideas that inspired several topics of my research. It is a pleasure to thank Dr Ágnes Péter for all the support she has given me during my work and study at ELTE.

I am deeply indebted to those teachers and colleagues who have contributed to my musical development, especially to József Kasznár, and the Maestro, Dr. Allan Remsen. I would also like to thank Dr. Walter Bernhart for the access to works that were essential to this study but unavailable in Hungary, and all the members of WMA Forum for the inspiring discussions on intermediality. I am grateful to all members of the Anthony Burgess Centre, especially to Paul Phillips who made me acquainted with Burgess's musical compositions. I would like to thank Dr. Mara Kalnins for making me feel at home at Cambridge University, and Riccardo Cepach at Joyce Museum Trieste for the musical scores.

My dissertation would not have been complete without the financial support of the Hungarian State, whose grant enabled me to do research in Cambridge University Library. The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the support of the TÁMOP project (grant agreement no. TAMOP 4.2.1/B-09/1/KMR-2010-0003).

Last but not least, my thanks go to my family and my fiancé, József Takács, for all their love, support, patience and understanding.

1. INTRODUCTION

“Nun, und eben dies, diese Zweistimmigkeit und ewig schreitende Antithese, diese Doppellinie möchte ich mit meinem Material, mit Worten, zum Ausdruck bringen und arbeite mich wund daran, und es geht nicht. [...] Die beiden Pole des Lebens zueinander zu biegen, die Zweistimmigkeit der Lebensmelodie niederzuschreiben, wird mir nie gelingen. Dennoch werde ich dem dunklen Befehl in meinem Innern folgen und werde wieder und wieder den Versuch unternehmen müssen. Dies ist die Feder, die mein Uhrlein treibt.”¹

(Hermann Hesse, *Kurgast*)

Music can appear in various forms in a literary text. In most cases this presence is obvious, for instance when the author describes a musical piece and its effect on the characters, but there might also be other musical features in the background of a text or in the music it describes, features that the readers are not familiar with, or just fail to recognise. Once these hidden musical attributes come to the surface, new possibilities will open in the interpretation of a literary text.

By invoking St. Cecilia the author undoubtedly has an intention, a specific reason for his decision to weave musical threads into the texture of his material. The first aim of this study is to provide a musical analysis for several literary works, revealing the various musical forms or compositions beneath or within these texts, while discovering the role of

¹ “Well, this double-voiced melody and eternally moving antithesis, this double line I would like to express with my own material, with words, but despite all my efforts, it does not work. [...] I shall never be able to bend the two poles of life together, nor to note down the double-voiced melody of life. Still, I will follow this obscure commandment of my soul, and try again and again. This little spring keeps moving the clockwork of my life.” (translation mine)

these musical tools. The second chapter of the study concentrates on finding the musical structural elements beneath some representative works, including James Joyce's "Sirens" episode from *Ulysses*, Aldous Huxley's *Point Counter Point*, Anthony Burgess's *Napoleon Symphony: A Novel in Four Movements*, and Richard Powers's *The Gold Bug Variations*. The research will not be restricted to narratives. Poetry will be represented by T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* in an analysis demonstrating how musical leitmotiv works in a literary text.

The role of music within a text goes beyond authorial intention. We should not forget that a musical composition and – strange as it may sound – even musical forms can have a referential content. This idea leads to the second aim of the study, namely, to see how this semantic element of music affects the interpretation of the text. At this stage the author will not be considered as the only source of meaning, rather, it will be assumed that the musical features by themselves also contribute to our understanding of the text, and thus music becomes a co-author. The third chapter of the thesis concentrates on musical compositions mentioned or described in novels. The demonstrated compositions were created either by Johann Sebastian Bach, or Ludwig van Beethoven. Since these works originate from two different periods, it can be assumed that they were applied by the authors with various purposes. If we go deeper into the compositions described in *Point Counter Point*, *The Gold Bug Variations* and some representative novels by Burgess, we will find some connections between Bach's music and science in Powers's novel, we will understand why Burgess had to invoke Prometheus in *Napoleon Symphony*, moreover, the study will also try to discover whether Beethoven's music can be related in any ways to the behaviour of Alex, the rebellious youngster of *A Clockwork Orange*, or to Spandrell's suicide in Huxley's novel.

The musical interpretation of the above-mentioned texts is only one of their numerous possible interpretations. This study intends to present several, for the most part well-known texts from a different perspective. Although this kind of analysis can be applied to a limited number of texts, the author of this paper still hopes that after reading this study her readers will not fail to recognise the importance of musical presence in other relevant works they will encounter.

1.1. The origins of intermediality

The simultaneous presence of features attributed to different media can be found within any work of art from the very beginning of our cultural history. Still, the term “intermediality” emerged in cultural criticism only during the past few decades. This late emergence is only partly due to the radical experimentation in the twentieth century when authors, composers, or painters started to cross medial boundaries in a more intricate manner instead of just alloying two media, like poetry with music in the *lied*.

The development of intermediality into a field of study is rather the result of the more recent, rapid changes in our culture and our views. Werner Wolf places the roots of this development in the cultural context of our times, including “a stress on processes which involve a plurality of discourses, an emphasis on discursive exchanges and contacts rather than on essential qualities and logocentric differences, as well as a concern with various kinds of ‘Others’ with regard to what traditionally had been in focus”.² Indeed, with an intermedial analysis a new approach needs to be taken, an approach involving the attributes of a different medium. Since the present study interprets literary works by means of musical tools or characteristics, its field of investigation can be further narrowed down into the sub-category of musico-literary intermediality.

² Werner Wolf, *The Musicalization of Fiction: A Study in the Theory and History of Intermediality* (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1999), 2.

1.2. Possible approaches to musicalized texts

There are various ways to musicalize a literary text, therefore, the analysis needs to be done according to the possibilities this musicalization offers. The concept of musicality can refer to diverse musical aspects in a literary text, which often depend on the text's genre, or its period of genesis. For Philip Quarles, the writer character in Huxley's *Point Counter Point*, the musicalization of fiction needs to be done "on a large scale, in the construction",³ and not the way the symbolists do it, "by subordinating sense to sound".⁴ These examples offer two possible approaches, namely the analyses on the acoustic and on the structural level. However, there is another fertile ground for musico-literary investigation, so far relatively unexploited by literary critics. The effect of musical content on literary meaning is a wider and more ambiguous area than the two previous ones, and it mostly depends on the musical features, or on the composition within or beneath the text.⁵ Before going into details, specifying what can be considered as musical content, a brief description of the three approaches will follow, which aim at revealing the manifold nature of musico-literary intermediality.

Considerable research has been done in the field of acoustic features. The musical sound of language can be connected to all literary genres; still, the outcome would be different concerning the musicality of a symbolist poem like Paul Verlaine's "Chanson d'automne", a play written by Samuel Beckett or a novel by James Joyce, especially *Finnegans Wake*, where the acoustic features of prose culminate. This approach concentrates on "word music",⁶ the acoustic similarities between verbal and musical signifiers. Wolf points out that in such cases the verbal signifiers of a literary text "do not

³ Aldous Huxley, *Point Counter Point* (Hammersmith, London: Flamingo, 1994), 295.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 295.

⁵ In the latter case music can be treated as a "sub-text".

⁶ Wolf reminds us that the term was coined by Steven Paul Scher, who defined it as "[aiming] at poetic imitation of musical sound" (*Musicalization of Fiction*, 58).

become but only imitate music”.⁷ This imitation may include any acoustic aspect that has a counterpart in music, from pitch and timbre to the rhythm⁸ of musical sounds. Some acoustic approaches include a wider range of musical features, such as harmony or dissonance.⁹ These attributes have a metaphorical reference as well, but if we consider them literally, as acoustic features, they can be related only to a performance where more readers are involved at the same time. As far as onomatopoeia is concerned, it is an acoustic, but not a musical feature.

Another possible approach to musicalized literary texts is to trace the musical presence on the structural level. There are many structural elements of music which have a counterpart in literature. The largest element is musical form, including the sonata form, the fugue, and the rondo. These are originally rigid forms applied more or less consistently by composers.¹⁰ Many writers and poets experimented with these established musical forms, using them as the structure of their literary works. Beyond trying to follow the musical pattern, such as the internal structure of various movements, these authors also tried to include other aspects of that certain form. Similarly to a symphony or a sonata, where in most cases the slow movement is followed by a quick one, the tempo of different chapters, or the tempo within a chapter can also vary. Apart from musical form structural elements may include various techniques, like the counterpoint and the leitmotiv, which are frequently used in literature.

Such structural experiments affect the meaning of the text, too. There are some musical devices within a form, such as the repetition, which can be transposed to literature on the semantic level as well. This applies to the variations to an even greater extent, especially in experimental works where authors relate several variants of the same story.

⁷ Ibid., 58.

⁸ Rhythm is not only an acoustic feature, it is also a component of the composition’s structure.

⁹ Ibid., 58.

¹⁰ With the emergence of romanticism the confines expanded, and the composers started to alter especially the sonata form according to their own tastes. Moreover, some forms may also have variants.

Another musical device, the counterpoint is based on contrasting themes, or on “the abrupt transitions”,¹¹ “the modulations [...] from mood to mood”.¹² The leitmotiv also refers to an aspect of meaning; by its reappearance it makes the reader remember earlier situations, resulting in a kind of simultaneity taking place in the reader’s mind. The imitation of a musical form also affects meaning on a wide scale. For instance, the main objective of the writers resorting to the fugal form is again to find a way to express simultaneity, similarly to the polyphonic fugue whose parts (or voices) of equal value are intertwined. Beyond the effect that a musical device produces on meaning the musical content should not be neglected. The “aboutness” of a composition can be particularly revealing within a literary work.

1.3. The ambiguous nature of musical structure within a literary text

There are numerous texts that include the words “quartet”, “variations”, “fugue”, “symphony”, “counterpoint” or similar musical terms in their titles, yet such titles can be misleading, and it is possible that no traces of the suggested musical form or technique can be found in the following text. One of the most popular examples is the third section of Thomas De Quincey’s *The English Mail-Coach* entitled “Dream Fugue”, which contains some musical analogies, but it does not follow the structure of the fugue. There are also examples where it is intimated to the reader by external sources that a specific literary text was written according to the rules of a musical form which is either very difficult or impossible to recognise. In his letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver,¹³ James Joyce claims to have written “Sirens”, or some parts of it,¹⁴ according to the rules of *fuga per canonem*. The term itself as well as the whole structure of the episode has been interpreted in various

¹¹ Huxley, *Point Counter Point*, 295.

¹² *Ibid.*, 296.

¹³ Richard Ellmann, ed., *Selected Letters of James Joyce* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), 242.

¹⁴ As Wolf observes, the letter does not indicate clearly whether Joyce talks about the whole episode or only some parts of it (*Musicalization of Fiction*, 130).

ways. Many critics agree on some kind of musical presence, but their views vary tremendously, from 16th-century fugal structure to Schönberg's music. On the other hand, Jean-Michel Rabaté interprets the episode discarding its musicality, since if there is no agreement on the musical term, its arbitrariness is no secure ground for such an approach.¹⁵

There are many texts where readers are not aware of any musical presence at all. When musical form appears implicitly within a literary text, the question is whether in such cases music is able to act like a “catalyst”, inducing semantic “play”. If we take Joyce's “Sirens” again as an example, we find that it is difficult for most readers to notice any kind of musical form, and even some musicologists are sceptical of its presence, yet there is some kind of structuring element within the text that makes readers perceive simultaneity. In music several voices can be sounded at the same time, while in a narrative the voice of only one speaker can be heard. Wolf observes that while in music simultaneity is an acoustic reality, in literature it is only imaginary, relying on concepts, and the synopsis takes place in the reader's mind.¹⁶ Therefore, in the “Sirens” episode the reader is made aware of the simultaneous activities or dialogues, which are indicated by typical sounds or words inherent in the structure, thus reminding the reader what is going on in various places at a given time.

In lyrical works, due to their inclination to repetition, structural elements like the rondo form, the variations or the return to the beginning followed by verbatim repetition (*da capo*) are more probable. Lawrence Kramer, trying to find a common ground for comparing poetry and music, draws attention to their dual aspect. He calls the formal

¹⁵ Jean-Michel Rabaté, “The Silence of the Sirens”, in *James Joyce: the Centennial Symposium*, ed. Morris Beja *et al.* (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 82.

¹⁶ Wolf, *Musicalization of Fiction*, 20-21.

aspect the combinatory dimension, “[relating] the parts of the work to each other alone”,¹⁷ whereas the mimetic is called the connotative dimension, dealing with “realities or fictions outside the work of art”.¹⁸ By stating that “each art makes explicit the dimension that the other art leaves tacit”,¹⁹ he attributes the explicit formal aspect to music, and the explicit meaning to poetry. From this it follows that music has tacit connotations, and a poem’s structure is experienced tacitly. The second and the third chapter of this study will prove that both dimensions are equally important in both media, even if meaning in a musical piece may seem of secondary importance or nonexistent.

1.4. Musical content

Musical content is a highly debated topic, including views that focus on meaning inherent in a musical form or a musical composition. Wolf denies the existence of a referential content in instrumental music; he claims that in literature it appears in terms of an imaginary content. He supports his views with Huxley’s description of Bach’s music in *Point Counter Point*, where the narrator paraphrases the effect the music has on him.²⁰ Wolf mentions the ability of music to trigger visual images, saying that “these imaginary ‘pictures’ are on the one hand culturally conditioned but on the other hand also highly idiosyncratic and difficult to decipher as a transposition of music”.²¹ Therefore, he suggests classifying the translation of music into literature as “a technical form of intermedial ‘imitation’ and indentifying it as ‘imaginary content analogy’ ”²² supplying the lacking referential content.

¹⁷ Lawrence Kramer, *Music and Poetry: The Nineteenth Century and After* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1984), 5.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁰ Wolf, *Musicalization of Fiction*, 63.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 63.

²² *Ibid.*, 63.

On the other hand, Lawrence Kramer views the problem of meaning as a historical phenomenon revealing that “the character of modern Western music regularly turns on the question of whether the music takes on context-related meaning in particular cases”.²³ He adds: “the question of whether music has meaning becomes, precisely, the meaning of music”.²⁴ Kramer states that music has generally operated on the basis of contradictory tendencies: “on the one hand toward the projection of autonomy, universality, self-presence, and the sublime transcendence of specific meaning, and on the other hand toward intimations of contingency, historical concreteness, constructed and divided selfhood, and the intelligible production of specific meanings”.²⁵

Wolf and Kramer consider musical meaning from either a literary or a social perspective, concentrating on what music means to a literary character, narrator or to people experiencing it in a given historical context. Alan Shockley takes the musicologist’s approach, stating that “[t]he whole field of musicology is founded upon using words to understand music”.²⁶ He views the same problem from the other direction, arguing that the verbal analogues are necessary in order to explain musical content, to understand music. He supports his statement as follows:

All listeners link words with music, and much instrumental music encourages such combinations – we call it program music. If there is no program, if no one tells you what the piece is about, your mind will still link that listening experience with analogs – a story, a description. The impulse to link words with music is irresistible.²⁷

²³ Lawrence Kramer, *Musical Meaning: Toward a Critical History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 2.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

²⁶ Alan Shockley, *Music in the Words: Musical Form and Counterpoint in the Twentieth-Century Novel* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 1.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

While for Wolf the musical effect upon the listener is an unintentional phenomenon, triggering visual images, Shockley emphasizes the listener's need to explain music; however, in certain compositions this field of interpretation can be somewhat narrowed by the title specifying the theme. On the whole, Shockley's views are similar to Wolf's, since he also refers to imaginary content analogies when talking about the need for musical interpretation.

Although in his criticism Edward W. Said concentrates primarily on literary texts, some of his views can be applied to music as well. His placement of texts into a historical situation has found its musical correspondence in Kramer's views on the context-related meaning of music. The creator of the work of art, who is another source of meaning, can also be considered as part of this context. Said believes that:

the best kind of interpretation [...] would be to regard the text as the result of a series of decisions made by the composer, writer, or the poet, the result of which we get. And therefore, to read it, one must try to understand the process by which these notes or these words have gained a presence on the paper.²⁸

On the other hand, the reader and the listener also belong to a particular historical context, which leaves its mark on their perception and interpretation of an artefact. The concept of interpretation is a twofold activity when talking about the performative arts, where the role of the musician and the actor should not be neglected. The audience's interpretation of a performative work of art depends to a great extent on the performance itself, on the artist's interpretation of the piece. Each great musician has his own, unique style, hence the diverse, though in some cases extreme interpretations of the same composition.

²⁸ Daniel Barenboim and Edward W. Said, *Parallels and Paradoxes: Explorations in Music and Society* (London: Bloomsbury, 2002), 116.

Even if the reader is aware (or is made aware by external sources) of authorial intentions concerning the use of a musical element, understanding the author's "series of decisions"²⁹ is not sufficient in itself. Although novelists resorted deliberately to musical forms or to specific musical pieces in order to shape their texts and to enrich the meaning, there might be layers of meaning inherent in the music itself suggesting a new dimension in the interpretation of the literary work.³⁰ The choice is made by the author, still, the musical form or artefact is a separate entity outside the literary text, functioning as a co-author as well.

Musical presence in a literary text induces a semantic play, accordingly, it may contribute to our deeper understanding of the words. Thus, the reverse of Shockley's statement ("using words to understand music"³¹) is also valid: we can use music to understand words. Since music may be present in literature in various forms – as an acoustic, structural or purely semantic element – its interrelation with literary meaning should be examined according to these specific functions. Wolf examines the relation between the two media from a semiotic point of view, defining the methods of musical imitation in literature with the signifier and the signified. He claims that word music makes use of verbal signifiers only, "structural analogies can employ both dimensions of the verbal sign for the suggestion of formal similarities with music",³² and "imaginary content analogies only make use of the literary signifieds, usually in the form of 'poetic' imagery but also in the choice of other, narrative correlatives of music".³³ Wolf treats this musical presence as an instance of literary imitation; his focus is on literature, the medial dominant. In my research I will provide a more detailed description of the musical elements, in the

²⁹ Ibid., 116.

³⁰ Intermediality functions similarly to intertextuality. However, it affects meaning in a broader sense, since the features of the new medium will also become part of the text.

³¹ Shockley, *Music in the Words*, 1.

³² Wolf, *Musicalization of Fiction*, 63.

³³ Ibid., 63.

first place considering them as sources of meaning in themselves, and only afterwards in a literary context.

The most intricate case of the interrelationship between literary and musical meaning is when the text includes the structural and semantic aspects of purely instrumental music. If it is a case of program music, where it is quite easy to trace a narrative potential, the subject inherent in the title and expressed by the music can be related to the literary text. However, there are instances when authors resort to musical forms only, which have no specific referential content outside themselves. In such cases musical content is defined by the form and the emotions evoked by the music. When an author builds his work upon a musical form, he does that with a specific purpose. The choice of the musical form is defined by that purpose, since every musical form has its own characteristics, and can be used as a tool for various reasons. Nevertheless, non-referential musical forms may have external, verbal meanings, too. At first hearing it may sound strange that there is a narrative potential even in a sonata – as Wolf reminds us, “during the nineteenth century sonata form was frequently ‘read’ as a story of contrast, conflict and resolution engaging a ‘male’ and a ‘female’ subject”.³⁴ The exposition of the sonata form contains a main and a secondary subject which can be related to male and female characters and to their alternating speech carrying different characteristics.

As already mentioned, the musically purer fugal form is a good means to express simultaneity, to describe conversations where several voices are sounded at the same time. As far as the narrative reading of the fugal form is concerned, Shockley informs us that they “are often likened to conversations”,³⁵ where “[t]he theme of a fugue, just as in the field of rhetoric, is called its *subject*; the individual parts are *voices*, and each one states its

³⁴ Wolf, *Musicalization of Fiction*, 30.

³⁵ Shockley, *Music in the Words*, 16.

version of the subject”.³⁶ Then “an altered form of the subject *answers* it within the fugue’s opening *exposition*”.³⁷ It is important to note that there is a difference between thematic or narrative possibilities within a musical form and the theme or plot of a specific musical piece. In the latter example the theme may be an abstract idea, a human being, a geographic place (e.g. the music of Bedřich Smetana’s *The Moldau* depicts the river) or even an activity, like the “Peasants’ merrymaking” movement of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 6 called *Pastoral*. In any case, the more specific the musical content is, the more strongly it will affect the literary meaning.

1.5. The musical analysis of experimental texts

The present study focuses primarily on narratives written in the twentieth century, when novelists frequently resorted to musical forms, techniques, allusions to or descriptions of musical compositions. By borrowing elements from another medium they extended the means of literary expression. The aims and results of literary experiments with musical features were various. Although traces of musicality can be found already in eighteenth-century narratives, the most remarkable experiments began with the modernist stream of consciousness technique. The extension or the abolishment of syntactic confines made it possible for language to approach musical expressivity, thus to become more suitable to reflect mental processes. In his discussion of some representative experimental texts of modernism, Alex Aronson considers music to be “an esthetic equivalent for the interior monologue”,³⁸ the musical experience being “an objective correlative used by the novelist to portray states of mind or a particular emotional setting which everyday language [is]

³⁶ Ibid., 16.

³⁷ Ibid., 16.

³⁸ Alex Aronson, *Music and the Novel: A Study in Twentieth-Century Fiction* (Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1980), 22.

unable to convey”.³⁹ These experiments can be regarded as the continuation of the expressive theories dominant in the nineteenth century. The stream of consciousness technique, prominent in the first half of the twentieth century, strives after the expressivity of music, imitating its free flow.

Expressivity was not the only musical feature attracting the experimenting modernists’ attention; a more objective aspect, namely musical form, or in some cases musical techniques were applied as shaping elements to control the fluidity of the text. T. S. Eliot’s mythic method elaborated in “*Ulysses, Order, and Myth*” may be applied to music, since – as will be demonstrated later – in novels as well as in poems musical form (like myth) serves as a frame, as an ordering element to shape a text. The structural presence of music is more tangible, opposed to the stream of consciousness technique, which despite borrowing acoustic and structural features from music, appears primarily as a means of expressing human thoughts and feelings, thus making any objective analysis impossible. Structural elements like specific forms or techniques contain aspects of meaning in themselves, but the mere presence of a musical structure within a text is also a device affecting meaning.

At the beginning of our research a pure, structural approach will be taken, examining the signifiers of literary texts within a musical system. If this system is a musical form, such as the fugal or the sonata form, the signifiers of language can be directly related to the signifiers of the musical form.⁴⁰ By specifying the parts of the fugue or the themes of the sonata it is possible to reveal how language operates within a musical frame. If the frame of the narrative is a musical piece, like Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 3 (Eroica)* in Anthony Burgess’s *Napoleon Symphony*, even more musical features – such as

³⁹ Ibid., 21-22.

⁴⁰ Wolf points out that – despite the obvious correspondence between larger units, such as a movement and a chapter, a musical phrase and a sentence – the correspondence on lower levels becomes arbitrary (*Musicalization of Fiction*, 15). The present study focuses primarily on larger, structural units; however, there will be cases when it examines lower levels, e.g., when words are adjusted to an already existing melody.

tempo, rhythm, shift of keys, pitch – can be involved into this frame. At this point only the structural elements are relevant, the system is placed above reference. The only point of reference is the musical structure itself; the pure form becomes the content. Since it is a static approach, it concentrates primarily on spatial elements, even if both literature and music are considered to be temporal arts. Despite the fact that the latter is mainly performed, not read, in this structural analysis the two media will be compared as static, written musical and literary texts. Here musical form is only a shaping element, but in some cases it is also a means to express simultaneity.

After defining the musical form of the literary texts, the focus will be shifted to the relation between the signifier and the signified. Wolf compares the “typically hetero-referential verbal signs”⁴¹ to the “more often auto-referential”⁴² musical signs, the latter being “much more dependent in their very quality as signs on the internal context of the composition in which they occur”.⁴³ He adds: “[i]f musical units have a meaning, it tends to be a formal or a functional one with reference to intrinsic relations, not a conceptual and extrinsic one”.⁴⁴ As mentioned earlier, in literary texts Wolf restricts musical meaning to imaginary content analogies. However, my approach will be taken from a more extended aspect of musical meaning, where a musical piece may have an external point of reference, like in all instances of program music where there is a signified or a referent outside the musical context. There will be cases when music refers to another musical composition; in such cases it includes or is written upon a theme borrowed from another composition. Still another example of musical reference is when the letters of musical notation form a word,

⁴¹ Wolf, *Musicalization of Fiction*, 24.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 24.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 24.

conveying a meaning outside the composition. A well-known example is the B-A-C-H motif in the composer's fugue.⁴⁵

But the question is whether there is meaning in music comparable to literary meaning, regardless of the musical genre, and whether it is able to affect our understanding of the text it is connected to. John Neubauer claims that the history of music theory is constituted by the alternation and coexistence of verbal and mathematical approaches to music, depending on the period's preference of representational or non-representational music.⁴⁶ His categorisation suggests that non-representational music is more amenable to the mathematical approach, focussing on the combinatory aspects. As will be demonstrated, verbal approaches to non-representational music are possible.

If we consider (musico-literary) intermediality as an extension of intertextuality,⁴⁷ then it follows that it refers to a medium outside the literary text which is also embedded into the literary work of art. Therefore, intermedial presence and influence implies the presence and influence of attributes of another medium within and at the same time outside the target medium. When we speak about literary presence in a musical piece, the meanings inherent in music become multiplied by literary meanings. Similarly, musical meaning, or any other musical attributes strongly affect literary texts, but in such instances only the traces of musical features can be found within the text, and the implicit features are outside. These musical signifieds are not only self-referential: as soon as they begin to participate in the signification of an artefact, they generate an endless range of meanings.

⁴⁵ This motif was later used by other composers as well, thus extending the range of references. By implementing his own name into the fugue, J. S. Bach alluded to the composer, i.e., himself, but when this motif appears in Franz Liszt's or other composers' pieces, they allude to the fugue, too. Therefore, it also becomes an allusion to an external musical piece. Anthony Burgess also hid his name in some of his musical pieces. He plays the same game in his novels, too. For instance, in *The Pianoplayers* (London: Arrow Books Limited, 1986) the pianist makes up a tune using the notes C A B B A G E F A C E.

⁴⁶ John Neubauer, *The Emancipation of Music from Language: Departure from Mimesis in Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986), 7-8.

⁴⁷ Wolf, *Musicalization of Fiction*, 1-2.

In order to demonstrate the process of constant “deferral of meaning” generated by the musical structure, a dynamic approach needs to be taken. So far critics were concerned mainly with the structural aspects of musicalized novels, focussing on the rigid structure as the frame of the narratives. Many of them agree on the existence of musical features; however, they are quite sceptical about their outcome. Shockley goes as far as claiming that “[a] prose work that actually approaches music fails as a narrative”.⁴⁸ Most of these musical novels are considered to be deficient in their plot if we consider the term from a traditional perspective. But part of the plot might be outside the novel, inherent in the musical piece. In such cases the reader has to regard the narrative as part of a bigger structure. He needs to be familiar with the musical form and especially with the musical piece in the background in order to be able to attribute new layers of meaning to the literary work.

Hermann Hesse’s words quoted at the beginning of the “Introduction” suggest that musical polyphony cannot be expressed by literary means. This study will consider other novelists’ experiments in order to examine the validity of Hesse’s opinion: that is, to see whether it is possible in literature to note down the “double-voiced melody of life”. First the study will explore musical presence on the structural level, examining how it affects the literary text. Then a few examples will be taken from twentieth-century narratives where the semantic aspects of music are also present. These cases will demonstrate the interrelationship between musical and literary meaning, how their mutual presence induces a semantic play. Since the present study is concerned with the effect of musical structures and meaning on literary texts, the structural and semantic features and functions of music will be discussed in detail.

⁴⁸ Shockley, *Music in the Words*, 17.

2. MUSICAL STRUCTURE AND SPATIALITY IN NARRATIVES

“The novel, like the symphony, is meant to be heard, but it is also meant to be seen. [...] No one can judge a piece of music by merely hearing it; no one can judge a novel just by reading it.”

(Anthony Burgess, *This Man and Music*)

Authorial attitudes towards music changed considerably with the emergence of modernism. Whereas the romantics admired and strove for the expressivity and the acoustic properties of music, the attention of modernists turned towards music as a structuring device. Similarly to the mythic method, music was used to shape the chaotic contemporary experience. For T. S. Eliot the use of myth means a technique to provide “a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity”.⁴⁹ In this case myth is not only a structural device, but also a point of reference. A musical frame can also serve both functions: if the musical frame is a specific musical piece with a referential content, it may serve as a point of reference, enabling readers to compare it with the semantic content of the literary text embedded in the composition. On the other hand, music may be present as

⁴⁹ T. S. Eliot, “*Ulysses*, Order, and Myth”, in Frank Kermode, ed., *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot* (Orlando, FL: Harvest Books, 1975), 177.

structure, being applied by authors either as macroform,⁵⁰ or on a smaller scale as leitmotiv, counterpoint, or polyphony. The former case includes literary works in which a musical form gives shape to the literary text, or works that simply follow the structure of a musical piece, the way *Napoleon Symphony* is based on Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony, or *The Gold Bug Variations* on Bach's *Goldberg Variations*. In these novels the division of the narrative is made according to the specific structure of that certain musical composition. The other category includes smaller musical elements, techniques or compositional devices which do not function as a framework, but still affect several aspects of the literary work.

The structural aspect of music can be related to the spatial dimension of narratives. Joseph Frank observes that modern authors are "moving in the direction of spatial form",⁵¹ but he relates the extension of spatiality in narrative literature to the plastic arts. In literature the tendency to resemble the plastic arts, which are inherently spatial, means the diminishing of the time-elements. But if we consider that by increasing spatiality Frank means that authors "intend the reader to apprehend their work spatially, in a moment of time, rather than as a sequence",⁵² his theory is valid for the use of musical forms or techniques, too, since these also increase the spatial dimension of narratives, and enable readers to synthesize sequential plots in their minds.

Although there is an agreement about the fact that both literature and music have spatial dimensions as well, literary and musical space are rather general terms, covering different aspects. Among the various definitions of space there are approaches that can be

⁵⁰ In *The Musicalization of Fiction: A Study in the Theory and History of Intermediality*, (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1999) Wolf makes a distinction between macroforms (such as the fugue or the sonata) and microforms (such as echo, modulation, polyphony), and places both in the category of 'formal and structural analogies'. He adds that these technical forms, along with word music, "may not be the only relevant forms, [and] it is clear that, as with musical thematization, a literary imitation of music may also be analyzed in **terms of reference**". (58-59) (bold in the original)

⁵¹ Joseph Frank, *The Idea of Spatial Form* (New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 1991), 10.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 10.

applied to both literature and music; they provide a new ground for the comparison of the two media, and at the same time justify the use of musical structures within a narrative text. Before demonstrating how these forms or techniques borrowed from music increase the spatiality of certain narratives, an outline of possible approaches to literary and musical space will be provided, and musical structures will be classified according to their spatial dimension.

2.1. Literary and musical space

Despite the manifold nature of literary space, which provides various aspects for its definition, it is easier to define the concept of spatiality in literature than in music. Still, it would be impossible to enumerate all theories resulting in various categorizations of literary space. Therefore, only the most prominent approaches will be presented, and only those aspects will be discussed in detail which can be related to the function of musical structure in narratives.

Frank's influential study, *The Idea of Spatial Form* interprets the idea of space from a phenomenological perspective. He claims that Lessing's attempt to limit time and space in literature and in the plastic arts to the laws of sensuous perception has become "a dead issue".⁵³ In his comparison of the two media Lessing focussed on their means and symbols: the plastic arts apply form and colour in space, and literature makes use of articulated sounds in time, from which it follows that "symbols arranged in juxtaposition can only express subjects of which the wholes or parts exist in juxtaposition; while consecutive symbols can only express subjects of which the wholes or parts are themselves consecutive".⁵⁴ Lessing's argumentation favours Greek culture, which respects the limits imposed on artistic products by human perception, and rejects intermedial genres such as pictorial poetry and allegorical painting.

⁵³ Ibid., 5.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 7.

Frank's approach is similar to Lessing's, but he adapts the idea of space and time to modern thinking. He defines the spatial aspect of modern literature in comparison with its temporality, supporting his views with works written by T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Marcel Proust, James Joyce and other modernists. He claims that modern literature attempts "to rival the spatial apprehension of the plastic arts in a moment of time".⁵⁵ In this case the reader takes an active role, since it is his task to relate the different parts, the internal references and relationships to each other, which do not occur in sequence. Frank relies on Wilhelm Worringer and T. E. Hulme when he tries to define the influence of the plastic arts on literature, supporting his arguments with Worringer's thoughts on the disappearance of depth. According to the latter's views, it is the three-dimensional space, the depth, that includes the time-value of objects because, as Frank puts it, "it places them in the real world in which events occur".⁵⁶ He adds that "time is the very condition of that flux and change from which, as we have seen, man wishes to escape [...]; hence nonnaturalistic styles shun the dimension of depth and prefer the plane".⁵⁷

J. J. van Baak does not wholly accept Frank's theory of spatial form. In order to explain its drawbacks, he makes a distinction between Frank's concept of space and narrative space. The former suggests that "spatial form dominates wherever time is eliminated or reduced in its informative power",⁵⁸ while the latter is defined as "space involved in the construction of the fictional world strictly speaking".⁵⁹ Van Baak's approach to the narrative text supposes a varying hierarchy between textual constituents (that include space and time as well); "thus, structural prominence of descriptions, whether of the narrative world, or of mental processes and their contents, will result in the

⁵⁵ Ibid., 61.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 60.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 60.

⁵⁸ J. J. van Baak, *The Place of Space in Narration: A Semiotic Approach to the Problem of Literary Space. With an Analysis of the Role of the Space in I. E. Babel's Konarmija* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1983), 3.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 3.

suppression of the plot and its dynamic manifestations, or in the retardation of its development”.⁶⁰ At the same time, the elimination of chronology will not lead automatically to the prominence of the structural category of narrative space. Van Baak proves this with stream-of-consciousness texts where the coherence and motivation of both narrative space and time may be equally suppressed, “reflecting the achronicity and atopicity of random mental processes in which implicit associations, values and attitudes take precedence”.⁶¹ Another deficiency of “spatial form” criticism is that it does not make any (textual and semiotic) distinction between “the space *in* the text (especially narrative text) and the space *of* the text”⁶² (by which van Baak means the text’s page volume and its compositional extensiveness), “and further between the consciousness of the reader and the mental space of literary characters in the text”.⁶³

Kestner founds his theory of literary spatiality on the concept of secondary illusion. He states that in temporal arts “the concept of *spatial secondary illusion* evolves from the idea that [they] use spatial qualities like simultaneity for their realization, extension, and development”,⁶⁴ whereas in spatial arts *temporal secondary illusion* derives from a temporal element like succession.⁶⁵ By spatial secondary illusion Kestner means methods of spatial properties, “the exercise of spatial elements to extend the essential temporal nature of the novel”.⁶⁶ Taking into consideration the two approaches of spatial poetics, namely the use of space as a formal construct in the text and spatiality as a critical method of reading a text, he distinguishes three kinds of spatiality in the novel: geometric, virtual and genidentific. The first one includes Euclidean elements like point, plane, and line

⁶⁰ Ibid., 3.

⁶¹ Ibid., 3.

⁶² Ibid., 5. (italics in the original)

⁶³ Ibid., 5.

⁶⁴ Joseph A. Kestner, *The Spatiality of the Novel* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1978), 9. (italics in the original)

⁶⁵ Ibid., 9. (italics in the original)

⁶⁶ Ibid., 9.

in the novel, and concerns the inner structure of narratives. The second deals with the relation of the novel to the spatial arts like painting and sculpture, concentrating on obvious similarities of novelistic structure with architectural principles such as encadrement, ekphrasis or gradation. The third category, the genidentic type of spatiality “involves both a theory of text generation and a method of reading any text”.⁶⁷ It concerns the author’s and the reader’s mind, the latter’s role being the interpretation of the text. Although Kestner’s spatial form appears in architectural phenomena like (‘pictorial’) framing, juxtaposition, or parallelism, he does not connect these notions to the space of narrative situations. Moreover, as van Baak observes, in his comparison between spatial arts and spatial illusion in literature, “[Kestner] fails to distinguish between formal structural concepts of space [...] and *thematicized* space as a literary, i.e., verbal image or metaphor”.⁶⁸

Jeffrey R. Smitten defines spatial form along the same lines as Kestner does, saying that “[it] includes not only objective features of narrative but also subjective processes of aesthetic perception”,⁶⁹ therefore “it embraces both a set of narrative techniques and the reading process itself”.⁷⁰ These techniques aim at subverting the successive feature (the *Nacheinander*) of narratives, and imply “the creation of an effect in the reader’s mind”.⁷¹ A writer may use devices like image patterns, leitmotifs, analogy and contrast to connect various parts of the narrative without regard to chronology.⁷² Among these devices the leitmotiv and the contrast (comparable to musical counterpoint) are borrowed from music in order to expand the spatiality of a literary text. Wolf considers simultaneity in the process of aesthetic perception from the perspective of musicalized

⁶⁷ Ibid., 11.

⁶⁸ van Baak, *Place of Space*, 4. (italics in the original)

⁶⁹ Jeffrey R. Smitten, “Introduction: Spatial Form and Narrative Theory”, in *Spatial Form in Narrative*, ed. J. R. Smitten and A. Daghistani (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1981), 13.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 14.

⁷¹ Ibid., 13.

⁷² Ibid., 13.

texts. He opposes the illusion of musical simultaneity in literature to the acoustic reality of musical polyphony.⁷³ In literature imaginary simultaneity relies on concepts, and the synopsis happens only in the reader's mind. For Wolf the only kind of musical polyphony that can be imitated by literature is the "fragmented" polyphony, where the elements follow each other in rapid succession giving the impression of simultaneity.⁷⁴

The changing concept of spatiality (and temporality) is due to the radical changes in modernist thinking. In the philosophical and psychological theories of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth century a movement from the absolute towards the relative, from the external to the internal is observable. Similarly, in literature there is a growing tendency to concentrate on the perception of time and space rather than to consider them as elements of the artistic product. Henri Bergson's new concept of time, first elaborated in his essay on *Time and Free Will*,⁷⁵ had a great influence on the spatial aspect of literature. Although Bergson insisted that ideas of space must be kept separate of concepts of time, his focus on psychological time, where past and present co-exist, on duration instead of chronological time, extends the spatial aspect in many modernist literary works. If time exists as duration within the self, and the present cannot be detached from past experiences, then mental space is also extended by this duality of temporality.

In literature these relativist theories apply both to the characters' mental experience and to the reader's perception. Still, it is necessary to separate the reader's consciousness from the mental space of literary characters. While Smitten states that Frank attributes to the reader "the key to spatial form – reflexive reference",⁷⁶ van Baak draws our attention to the states of mind of characters. He says that their contents, such as reminiscences, fantasies, dreams, soliloquies "by the very spatial characteristics of their

⁷³ Wolf, *Musicalization of Fiction*, 20-21.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁷⁵ Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness* (transl. by F. L. Pogson). Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc.: 2001.

⁷⁶ Smitten *et al.*, eds., *Spatial Form in Narrative*, 20.

textual construction can be very effective in literature as ‘embedded worlds’ and vehicles of literary significance”.⁷⁷ Teresa Bridgeman also emphasizes the importance of the characters’ psychological space beyond the topographical space. Apart from these concepts of space she also considers the characters’ social space. She makes a distinction between spaces in the nineteenth-century realist novels, in modernist and in postmodernist fiction. In the realist novels space “emerges as a concrete and stable phenomenon, while in modernist fiction it is filtered, like time, through the perceptions of protagonists”.⁷⁸ She adds that “[i]n postmodernist fiction, the idea of a ‘world’ is itself destabilized and different spaces multiply and merge”.⁷⁹ It follows that in each period new aspects of space come into the foreground, therefore analyzing a narrative from a spatial point of view strongly depends on the work itself, its style and period of origin, since these will determine the dominating spatial aspects.

Randall Stevenson also connects the spatial aspect to views prevailing in certain periods. He considers modernist vision to be “deprived of external space, finding the mirror of nature broken,”⁸⁰ and turning to “inner space as a dimension in which to console and make significant the self”.⁸¹ Because of their transformation in the modern industrial world, nature and landscape failed to fulfil their consoling role that was so central in the romantic period. The outside world became hostile, and one had to look within for consolation. This shift from external space to inner space is present also in the music of the modernist period. Instead of the grand compositions depicting beautiful geographical places, the emerging atonality and the twelve-tone technique in music aimed at reflecting the anxieties of contemporary men, their fear of the hostilities of the external world. Space

⁷⁷ van Baak, *Place of Space*, 4.

⁷⁸ Teresa Bridgeman, “Time and Space”, in *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, ed. David Herman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 56.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁸⁰ Randall Stevenson, *Modernist Fiction: An Introduction* (Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), 80.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 80.

acquires yet another form and meaning in postmodern thinking. Julian Murphet observes that in postmodern space “not depths but surfaces dominate”,⁸² and by quoting David Harvey, he draws our attention to the postmodernists’ view of space “as something independent and autonomous”.⁸³ These descriptions of postmodern space apply to some musical trends dominating in the second half of the twentieth century. For instance, the aleatory (or chance) music of John Cage may well be described as autonomous, favouring surfaces to depths.

Apart from the style of a literary work, the art to which it is compared has an important role in its spatial analysis. Frank’s and Kestner’s ideas of literary space are based on its comparison with the plastic arts. On the other hand, van Baak suggests a semiotic approach to literary space, which makes structural analogies and distinctions between the arts possible. However, he concentrates on the spatial properties of literary texts only, avoiding non-literary spatial codes. Since our concern is the comparison of spatiality in literature and music, it is essential to find spatial aspects in music comparable to these aspects of literary space.

From the above-mentioned approaches to literary space it appears that there are some spatial aspects that apply to music, too. Musical space may refer to structural devices, to the subject of the composition, or to the listener’s perception of a musical piece. The formal construction of a composition involves both its overall structure, including the division of the musical piece into parts or movements, and the simultaneous presence of different voices. The consecutively played musical notes are presented in linear succession, but the musical score has a vertical aspect as well. The conductor of an orchestra has to read both dimensions, and he has to hear not only the horizontal musical lines played by

⁸² Julian Murphet, “Postmodernism and Space”, in *Cambridge Companions Online* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 118.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 125.

various instruments, but also the harmony these voices produce. This approach is somewhat similar to the “two-dimensional pitch-time space”⁸⁴ that Maja Trochimczyk opposes with “the space of performance”.⁸⁵

The idea of space as structuring device is strongly connected to the third category, the mental space of simultaneous perception. In music the structural aspect of space can be related to the homophonic and polyphonic compositions, where the presence of several voices increases the spatial dimension of the musical piece, as opposed to the monodic music, where only one voice is sounded at a time. While the structural aspect of homophonic and polyphonic music is an inherent feature, the category of mental space can be related mainly to musical performance, where the listener perceives the parts of several instruments at the same time (assuming it is not monodic music). Even if music is a performative art it is important to mention that the process of reading a score vertically, perceiving the harmony played by several instruments, is also an activity where the perceived spatial dimension is extended.

The subject matter of musical compositions also offers analogies with literature. Similarly to writers, composers also experimented with the fusion of form and semantic content. In the nineteenth century music was admired because its form and matter could not be separated; however, “matter” may refer both to the musical matter, which is indeed inseparable from the form, and to the subject matter of the musical piece. Topographical space may occur as the theme of a piece of program music, where music attempts to depict the sounds or the atmosphere of a certain place or geographical element. While nineteenth- and early twentieth-century composers chose geographical places as the theme of their program music (e.g., Mendelssohn’s *The Hebrides* and symphonies like *The Scottish* or

⁸⁴ Maja Trochimczyk, “From Circles to Nets: On the Signification of Spatial Round Imagery in New Music”, in *Computer Music Journal* 25.4 (2001), 39.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 39.

The Italian, Schumann's *Rhenish* symphony, or Debussy's *La Mer*), composers of the neo-avantgard chose abstract notions as the theme of their works.

In her essay on spatial sound imagery Trochimczyk deals with composed spaces that are “integral to the compositions themselves”.⁸⁶ These are present in late twentieth-century experimental compositions, called concrete music, which “draw[s] from the acoustic physicality of human life and from the exploration of spatial dimensions of sounds possible in acousmatic projection”.⁸⁷ This aspect is connected to our third category, namely, the listener's perception, which is further connected to sound location. Trochimczyk classifies spatial designs based on sound location “on the basis of principles borrowed from the mathematical theory of dimensions”.⁸⁸ Although experiments with sound location are quite recent, emphasizing the spatial aspect of music from an acoustic point of view, music always had an acoustic spatial dimension, even if it was not subject of such experimentation. The classical orchestra has been gradually extended with new (groups of) instruments, but its basic organisation, with various sections of instruments having their given place on the stage, has not changed. Still, this acoustic aspect of musical space is as important as the reader's perception of a literary work. Daniel Barenboim gives Horowitz's performance, which is full of extremes, as an example of the perception of distance in music.⁸⁹ The listener has the feeling that some notes sound right in front of him, while others come from a great distance. According to Barenboim, everything played on a piano is an illusion: the illusion of a *crescendo* or a *diminuendo*.⁹⁰ Such dynamic tools indeed help the listener to perceive music spatially, like in a literary description, where

⁸⁶ Ibid., 39.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 39.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 41.

⁸⁹ Daniel Barenboim and Edward W. Said, *Parallels and Paradoxes: Explorations in Music and Society* (London: Bloomsbury, 2002), 75.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 76.

approaching or moving away from a certain object emphasizes the spatial aspect. A similar effect is the musical echo, when a theme presented loudly (*forte*) is repeated softly (*piano*).

When musical structure is present in a literary text, it affects both the structure and the perception of that text. This structural presence may be apparent on several levels, from the word to the whole text. Ákos I. Farkas, reflecting on Burgess's ideas on spatiality, notes that only music enriched with harmony has the inherent quality of spatiality, and "literature is not *always*, in any form, capable of sharing in this peculiar type of *musical spatiality*".⁹¹ He adds that "by stretching the potentials of language, literature's medium, to the limit, as it is frequently done by Joyce, fiction can acquire the (quasi-)spatial modality attributable to harmony".⁹² Burgess believes that the spatial limits of language can be expanded by exploiting polysemy in paronomasia and telescoping, referring the reader to *Finnegans Wake*, a text abounding in examples of such semantic "enchording".⁹³ Since the present paper is concerned with larger musical devices and not with the homophony of a single chord/word resulting in semantic polyphony, the focus will be shifted to Burgess's other suggestion for expanding the spatial aspect of literature, namely, the juxtaposition of passages to create *counterpoint-like* effects.⁹⁴ Counterpoint is a musical compositional device characteristically inherent in the fugue. Apart from this device the use of leitmotiv also results in the extension of literary space. A brief analysis of some musical forms and techniques will enable us to decide which is the most "spatial", and how its presence affects the form and meaning of a literary text.

2.2. Polyphony and simultaneity: music and the spatial aspect of narratives

⁹¹ Ákos I. Farkas, *Will's Son and Jake's Peer: Anthony Burgess's Joycean Negotiations* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 2002), 44. (italics in the original)

⁹² *Ibid.*, 44. (italics in the original)

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 44.

Nearly all musical forms and compositional devices can be related in some way or other to the spatial aspect of a musicalized narrative. Among them the fugue and the sonata form are the most favoured ones because they offer the most complex musical means for literary expression. Polyphony and counterpoint, the musical tools for expressing simultaneity, are the inherent features of the fugue; however, these features can appear in other musical forms as well. Since musical terminology is essential in understanding the role of musical structural elements within a literary text, a brief overview of these terms will introduce the discussion of their effect on the spatial aspect of narratives.

Monophony, homophony and polyphony are related terms. The first one is the simplest texture, since it consists of melody without any accompanying harmonies. If there are several voices in a musical piece, which move together in harmony and thus create chords that are not independent in rhythm and pitch, the music is homophonic. Johann Sebastian Bach's chorales are among the most popular examples of homophony (see figure 1).



Fig. 1.: Johann Sebastian Bach, "Christus, der ist mein Leben", BWV 281

In this chorale all four voices move together. The score is read vertically and horizontally at the same time. The notes written vertically are sounded together by the organist who perceives the four notes or voices as a single chord: the notes of the first chord from bottom to top are *f*, *a*, *c* and *f*, together forming one chord, the F major. These voices are played and perceived together, therefore there is no space for the movement of individual voices, making this musical tool insufficient for literary experiments striving for the more intricate polyphonic structures. Before describing musical polyphony it is important to

mention the melody-dominated homophony, which differs from the above-mentioned example in that it has an individual leading voice supported by chords.



Fig. 2.: Frédéric Chopin, “Valse”, Op. 69, No. 2

In Frédéric Chopin’s Waltz in b minor (see figure 2) the upper line (played by the right hand) contains the melody which is supported by chords in the bottom line (played by the left hand). The free movement of the melody is similar to the movement of voices in polyphonic pieces, but in the latter case all voices have a melody line, not only one, accompanied by chords.

Polyphonic music includes several independent voices or parts that are combined contrapuntally. Polyphony and counterpoint are related terms: polyphonic music makes use of counterpoint as a structural and compositional device. Counterpoint refers to independent musical lines that are sounded simultaneously. According to the definition of *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music* “counterpoint is the ability, unique to music, to say two things at once comprehensibly. The term derives from the expression *punctus contra punctum*, i.e. ‘point against point’ or ‘note against note’. A single ‘part’ or ‘voice’ added to another is called ‘a counterpoint’ to that other, but the more common use of the word is that of the combination of simultaneous parts or *vice versa*, each of significance in itself and the whole resulting in a coherent texture”.⁹⁵ The following example is “Fugue in G Minor” by J. S. Bach (figure 3). The musical score demonstrates clearly that it is polyphonic, contrapuntal music where the voices move independently and simultaneously,

⁹⁵ Michael Kennedy, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 151.

beginning with the same tune or melody (one time starting on the tonic, the note *g*, then on the dominant, the note *d*, respectively). Although the voices are independent, neither of them dominates. The entrance of these voices is marked in bars no. 1, 6, 12 and 17: always the same theme, starting on different notes.

Fugue in G Minor
(BWV 578) J.S. Bach.

Fig. 3.: Johann Sebastian Bach, “Fugue in G Minor” (“The Little”), BWV 578

The fugue is often compared to a conversation where each voice (or part) presents its version of the subject (or theme), and an “altered form of the subject *answers* it within the fugue’s opening *exposition*”.⁹⁶ While this answer is being played, the first voice begins a

⁹⁶ Alan Shockley, *Music in the Words: Musical Form and Counterpoint in the Twentieth-Century Novel* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 16. (italics in the original)

new material, which is called the *countersubject*, but only if it appears again in the fugue; if it does not appear anymore, it is called *free counterpoint*. As far as literature is concerned, the most important features of the fugue are that there are 3, 4 or even more voices “talking” simultaneously about the same “subject”.

The sonata form is a type of musical construction used in the first movement of a sonata, symphony, concerto, or other pieces which have several movements. Sometimes the sonata form may be applied in other movements as well. Usually it is made up of four sections: the Exposition of the theme, its Development, the Recapitulation and the Coda. The Exposition contains the first subject, in tonic key, the second subject, in dominant (i. e. a fifth higher than the first subject), and sometimes further subjects. It is often repeated, and then followed by the Development in which the material of the Exposition is worked out in a kind of free fantasia. In the Recapitulation the Exposition is repeated, though often with modification, and with the second subject now in the tonic. The Recapitulation has a Coda of moderate length though some composers, including Beethoven, extend it into what amounts to a second Development section.⁹⁷ In literature the themes of the sonata may be interpreted as characters. There are usually two themes in a sonata, which contrast in mood (the first theme is related to the male character and the secondary to the female). The Exposition contains the presentation of the themes, while the Development presents the conflict, where there are modulations and departures from the original key. In the Recapitulation there is a resolution, usually with a variation. The Coda is the conclusion of the story, where everything is settled. The sonata form is a musical structure that, beyond providing a frame, affects the semantic aspects of literary texts. A composition written in sonata form may also include a fugal passage where the polyphonic voices counterpoint each other.

⁹⁷ Based on the definition of the *Oxford Dictionary of Music*. (609)

Another musical technique often used in literature is the leitmotiv. The term refers to a short constantly recurring musical phrase or theme which may be associated with a person, a place or an abstract idea. According to the dictionary 'Representative theme' is a good English alternative.⁹⁸ This short melody or rhythm, which keeps recurring within a composition (usually in an opera), reminds the listeners of the situation in which it was heard earlier. The leitmotiv reappears in new contexts, making the audience compare it to other scenes where it was played, thus resulting in an imaginary simultaneity in the listener's mind. In literature a recurring word or expression may also initiate a kind of synthesis in the reader's mind, since these leitmotifs make them juxtapose the scenes in which they occur.

The most intriguing example is the case where a leitmotiv from a popular opera is used in a literary artefact. In *The Waste Land* T. S. Eliot quotes several lines from Richard Wagner's opera, *Tristan und Isolde*. The melody of these lines appears as leitmotiv in various contexts of the opera, bringing new layers of meaning into the poem. These additional semantic layers are brought into the poem by the leitmotiv of an external work of art, which belongs to another medium at the same time. Since Eliot alludes to a fragment of another text which is used as a leitmotiv in a musical (or rather multi-medial) artefact, the passage framed by Wagner's lines is an example of both intertextuality and intermediality. The use of the musical composition in the poem results in an imaginary simultaneity, making readers familiar with the opera connect the relevant scenes.

Variation is another musical technique which can be connected to spatiality. It means the repetition of musical material in an altered form. In literature it is a device used mainly by postmodernist writers who relate the same story in various ways. One of the most notable examples is *The French Lieutenant's Woman* by John Fowles, which has

⁹⁸ Kennedy, *Oxford Dictionary of Music*, 366.

three endings. The theme is the same in all three cases, and even if there are common elements in the plotlines, they all take different directions. As far as plotlines are concerned, it is also possible to relate various versions of a theme throughout a whole novel, or a sequence of novels, like Agota Kristof's trilogy: *The Notebook*, *The Proof* and *The Third Lie*. There can also be smaller units within a narrative which keep recurring in different forms. The recurrence of the same theme as a variant⁹⁹ – whether it happens in literature or in music – produces a similar effect as the leitmotiv. If we take a look at the three endings of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* or the three novels of Kristof's trilogy we shall see that one cannot ignore the earlier endings or plotlines while reading the new ones, therefore they produce an imaginary simultaneity in the reader's mind.

Richard Powers uses J. S. Bach's *Goldberg Variations* as the basis of his novel. Owing to the structure of Bach's composition, it is not such an intricate literary experiment as it may sound at first hearing. Bach's variations do not follow the melody of the aria, and since the melody of a piece can usually be related to the plotline of a narrative, Powers does not have to repeat its variants. In the *Goldberg Variations* the bass line and the chord progression keep reappearing in various forms. These two segments of the musical composition provide the basis, the outline of its structure.¹⁰⁰ *The Gold Bug Variations* strictly follows the structure of Bach's piece: it begins with an "Aria" containing the main motifs and the basic bass line (do, ti, la, sol) followed by the 30 "variations" concluded by the "Aria" which appears in the same form as at the beginning. However, Powers does not repeat the "Aria" again, but he writes "Da capo e fine" instead of "Da capo al fine", the difference being that he asks the reader to read the novel again, not only to a certain point where "Fine" is indicated, but to the very end. Furthermore, he gives the reader the following instructions: "What could be simpler? In rough translation: Once more with

⁹⁹ Cf. the leitmotiv reappears in the same form but in new contexts.

¹⁰⁰ David Schulenberg, *The Keyboard Music of J. S. Bach* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1992), 320-337.

feeling”.¹⁰¹ The question “What could be simpler?” is a leitmotiv reappearing in various contexts within the novel, thus juxtaposing the situations in which it appears.

In a literary context two spatial aspects of these musical forms or devices can be considered: space as a formal construct, and mental space in the reading process. The second aspect is based on the previous one, since the (musical) structure of a literary work influences the reader’s perception of it. Jean Boase-Beier attributes these roles only to the critical perception of musicalized literature. He claims that music has a different role when it serves as a model in the creative work of art or in the critical work.¹⁰² In a creative work of art “music can add its own voice to the voices already in the text, whether through musical settings [...], or through the sorts of combinations of music and words”.¹⁰³ In the case of the critical work music “can serve to demonstrate issues of form, the search for meaning within and beyond the text, and above all to highlight the task of the reader, who is always simultaneously both listener and singer”.¹⁰⁴ Considering musical forms and compositional devices used deliberately by writers to extend the spatiality of their narratives, Boase-Beier’s standpoint is not sustainable. Musical form and its effect on meaning is a model not only in the critical work, but in the creative work as well. Novelists resorted deliberately to the polyphonic feature of music, trying to implement it within the confines of literature in order to express simultaneity. Twentieth-century novelists applied the polyphonic structure of the fugue, the intricate structure of the sonata form, the leitmotiv and the variation (both of them promoting association), and the technique of counterpointing, which contrasts two or more voices. Frank’s statement about the apprehension of a modern literary work “spatially, in a moment of time, rather than as a

¹⁰¹ Richard Powers, *The Gold Bug Variations* (New York, NY: Harper Perennial, 1991), 639.

¹⁰² Jean Boase-Beier, “Introduction”, in *Comparative Critical Studies* 5.1 (2008), 1-3.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

sequence”¹⁰⁵ is also valid for the use of all these devices. This method suppresses temporality, since we are referred to more material than the one presented to us at that certain moment.

Many examples of leitmotiv can be found in Joyce’s *Ulysses*, whereas the most extensive instance of the use of musical counterpointing can be found in Huxley’s *Point Counter Point*. Although the use of these techniques is strongly related to the spatial aspect of a narrative work, the sonata form and the fugue contribute the most to the spatial extension of narratives. Regarding the movement of the voices we can state that the polyphonic fugue has the widest spatial aspect, therefore it is the most suitable for expressing simultaneity.

Anthony Burgess, who was preoccupied with the spatial dimension of literature and music, claims in his study entitled *This Man and Music* that music has a spatial element only in a metaphorical sense; he refers to the score which has temporal and spatial coordinates. He adds that “when notes are sounded simultaneously (i.e. the music is polyphonic), it is not possible to speak of a simple temporal relation, and so the sister (spatial) dimension has to be invoked”.¹⁰⁶ In Beethoven’s *Eroica* Symphony, on which Burgess “composed” a novel, the voices and themes are moving in different directions – even the listener who does not follow the score can hear the “broadening” or “narrowing” of a chord, the different voices going “up” and “down”. Moreover, the listener in a concert hall (or listening to music from stereo speakers) can hear the different voices coming from different directions. In Burgess’s *Napoleon Symphony*, which has the same structure as Beethoven’s symphony (Burgess mentioned his writing the novel with the score of the symphony in front of him), the voices of the main characters can be related to the main themes. In the symphony’s first movement two themes appear, a major and a minor one.

¹⁰⁵ Frank, *Spatial Form*, 10.

¹⁰⁶ Anthony Burgess, *This Man and Music* (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1982), 47-48.

The main characters of the first chapter (or movement) of *Napoleon Symphony*, Napoleon and Josephine appear in the same way as the themes in the symphony. These alternations of themes also trigger changes of scenes which counterpoint each other in mood and tone. The reader is constantly reminded of the simultaneity of these alternating scenes – Napoleon looking at Josephine’s picture and thinking of her on the battlefield, while Josephine being reminded of Napoleon by her lover. Even if the reader follows the story in a linear way, he is thinking simultaneously about two scenes.

In forms like the sonata or the symphony a certain melodic line is supported by harmonic structures which do not have so much “space” for movement as the voices of a fugue have. Joyce based the “Sirens” episode of *Ulysses* on fugal structure, constantly changing the point of observation, in order to avoid “any narrow, single-minded or, literally, one-eyed view of reality”.¹⁰⁷ With the help of the fugal form and polyphony Joyce presents simultaneity very successfully. In the “Sirens” episode of *Ulysses* many things occur in a certain span of time, which are signalled by a typical sound (e.g., the jingling of the jaunting car, the piano-tuner’s tapping), this way indicating to the reader that there is not only one theme appearing in a linear way, but many things happen in that moment. Burgess praises Joyce’s “ability of the musical composer to work in time and space at the same time (or space)”.¹⁰⁸ In polyphonic music many voices are present in the same span of time. Since in a fugue these voices move independently from each other, often in opposing directions, the fugue gives the listener a feeling of space; the vertical axis is present beside the horizontal one. In the “Sirens” episode it is the reader’s role to juxtapose in his imagination the scenes that are presented in a linear way by the author. Apart from its musical structure, the use of alliteration and onomatopoeia in the “Sirens” episode served as an example for many neo-avantgard writers, who considered it “an ideal

¹⁰⁷ Stevenson, *Modernist Fiction*, 52.

¹⁰⁸ Burgess, *This Man and Music*, 83.

borderline between literature and music, a dynamic and deceptive play with quotations, in which linguistic meaning fades and finally dissolves into musical sound”.¹⁰⁹ Further experiments lead to the growth of semantic indeterminacy, and the priority of form over reference,¹¹⁰ granting the reader an increasing role in the interpretation of these “open works”.

Simultaneity refers to activities happening at the same time, and to the synthesis of these situations in the reader’s mind. Novelists’ experiments with polyphony and other musical devices aim at indicating that several activities or dialogues are happening during an interval; on the other hand, there can be tools that make the reader juxtapose scenes which do not necessarily happen at the same time. Polyphony is a device used to express simultaneity, whereas the leitmotiv refers the reader to situations happening in a different span of time. Even if the readers do not recognize in a narrative the exact underlying musical structure, its covert presence will help them to perceive simultaneous actions, or to juxtapose scenes.

2.3. The polyphonic song of “Sirens”

Ulysses, and in fact all of Joyce’s writings, are repertoires of all cases of musico-literary intermediality. The acoustic features of his poems, of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, the musical sound of his words and the rhythm of his sentences inspire composers even today.¹¹¹ Joyce’s works are interwoven with allusions to musical pieces, from opera arias to contemporary songs. The importance of these musical references is tremendous, since they function as leitmotifs in many instances. Joyce makes use of this musical technique

¹⁰⁹ Florian Mussnug, “Writing Like Music: Luciano Berio, Umberto Eco and the New Avant-Garde”, in *Comparative Critical Studies* 5.1 (2008), 85.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 83.

¹¹¹ Luciano Berio in his electronic work *Omaggio a Joyce* experimented with the sound effects of *Ulysses*. Anthony Burgess’s composition *The Blooms of Dublin* embeds the most revealing passages of the novel in a musical setting. Stanley Bate set to music some of Joyce’s poems – to name but a few.

on a purely literary level, when certain words reappear in the original or distorted forms, thus recalling characters, ideas and situations from the same novel. Then again, the leitmotiv can be a musical fragment which does not only connect the present scene to others where the same music had already been alluded to, but also connects the scene to the meaning inherent in the musical piece.¹¹²

One such example of musical leitmotiv is the fragment from Don Giovanni and Zerlina's duet in Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni*. Interestingly, Joyce quotes the lines erroneously; instead of "vorrei e non vorrei" he makes Bloom meditate on the pronunciation of "voglio e non vorrei".¹¹³ This line, sung by Zerlina intends to describe her uncertainty, whether to accept Don Giovanni's advances or not: on one hand she does not know whether to trust him (he may deceive her), on the other hand, she feels sorry for her betrothed, Masetto.¹¹⁴ The words "voglio e non vorrei", or its fragments, come to Bloom's mind when he thinks of Molly and Boylan's affair – in fact, it is also the duet they have to rehearse – but also when he is meditating about his relationship with Martha, whether he should write to her or not. While Bloom's uncertainty is comparable to Zerlina's, it seems that both Molly and Boylan have chosen the more definite "voglio".

The novel abounds in such allusions, demanding that the reader be familiar with the musical pieces Joyce refers to. This use of the musical leitmotiv¹¹⁵ goes beyond the confines of the semantic space of the novel. There are also purely literary leitmotifs,¹¹⁶ referring to situations only within the text. In the "Sirens" episode the "jingle jaunted jingling" sequence reminds the reader of Boylan approaching Molly's home, similarly to

¹¹² Zack Bowen, in *Bloom's Old Sweet Song: Essays on Joyce and Music* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995) devotes a whole chapter to the musical allusions in the "Sirens" episode, illustrating their relevance to the novel.

¹¹³ "Voglio" means "I want", and it is more definite than the conditional "vorrei", meaning "I would like".

¹¹⁴ The lines referred to are "Ma può burlarmi ancor" and "Mi fa pietà Masetto".

¹¹⁵ By musical leitmotiv here I mean a frequently recurring line in the novel taken from a musical piece.

¹¹⁶ By literary leitmotiv in this case I mean words or phrases present and reappearing in the target literary text.

the “tap” sounds that mark the approach of the blind piano tuner. In order to decide whether the latter examples, which appear only in the text (and do not refer to any musical pieces), are really leitmotifs or rather the sounds of a polyphonic fugue, both of them producing simultaneity in the reader’s mind, the highly debated problem of the text’s musical form needs to be settled.

The “Sirens” episode of *Ulysses* is the turning point of the novel, where Joyce begins to experiment with various techniques. From this chapter onward the language is deliberately deconstructed; there is a growing distance between the signifier and the signified. The episode is a bridge towards further stylistic experiments to follow later in the novel (each chapter being experimental in a different manner), and culminating in the stream-of-consciousness narrative mode of the final episode, where the language imitates the natural flow of the mind. Although critics have been dealing for decades with the “Sirens” chapter of *Ulysses*, there does not seem to be an agreement on its form. Some critics regard the introductory pages to be an overture, others opt for its being a prelude, and there are also some who claim it to be written according to the rules of a “traditional” or a double fugue. As far as the main body is concerned, it is analysed either as a fugue, or as a *fuga per canonem*, but – as will be demonstrated – several critics consider it to be a canon. This confusion originates partly in Joyce’s inconsistent use of the terms fugue and *fuga per canonem*, and from his mentioning “eight regular parts”.¹¹⁷ It is also dubious whether Joyce applied these forms to the introduction, to the main part, or to the whole episode. Even if there are debates over the exact form, the majority of critics agree that the episode follows a polyphonic, fugal structure, which is an old, traditional form. Wolf remarks that “twentieth-century authors who have experimented with the musicalization of fiction refer to **old**, ‘harmonious’ music and traditional forms, such as the fugue, rather

¹¹⁷ Cf. Joyce’s letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver, in *Selected Letters of James Joyce*, ed. Richard Ellmann (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), 242.

than to the innovative forms and the more disharmonious music typical of contemporary avant-garde composers”.¹¹⁸ His explanation of this choice is similar to T. S. Eliot’s: the modernist loss of meaning requires an aesthetic order. Wolf remarks that “in ‘Sirens’ the function fulfilled by the musicalization as an aesthetic(ist) compensation for the loss of traditional narrative order is rather a symptom of the decentredness of meaning in the modern world”.¹¹⁹ In this episode aesthetic coherence is provided by the polyphonic complexity of a traditional musical form which is a proper base for a many-voiced narrative to be built upon.

Every fugue has a certain theme which re-appears in different places, on different notes (first on the tonic, then on the dominant). Therefore, in “Sirens” there has to be one single theme, appearing in different ways. Wolf claims that this fugal subject is a semantic, and not a formal one – the theme of “desire” and its variations appear throughout the whole episode.¹²⁰ He sees a correspondence between the three parts or voices of a fugue and the three (groups of) characters, namely the barmaids (treble), Bloom (tenor) and Blazes Boylan (bass),¹²¹ who have a major part in the play of desire. Even the characters that do not belong to the three main parts of the fugue are somehow related to the theme: Simon Dedalus, Lenihan or George Lidwell also show their attraction towards the two barmaids, the tempting “sirens” of the episode. The theme of the episode takes on different forms as well. The inverted form, i.e., “dislike”, appears as a variation of the “desire” theme in Bloom’s dislike of Boylan, as well as in his frustration and loneliness, as the effect of unfulfilled desire can be viewed as a counterpoint.¹²² Shockley disputes Wolf’s suggestion to define the fugal subject in terms of signifieds. He claims that “desire” is a broad term, which can be found in almost any novel, and in the episode it would mean “to prove that

¹¹⁸ Wolf, *Musicalization of Fiction*, 142-143. (bold in the original)

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 143.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 133.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 133.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 133.

[it] is thematically present throughout each of the fugue's thematic presentations, *and* to prove that it is present *polyphonically* in each of these positions".¹²³ But even if Wolf has to admit that "Joyce does not manage to sustain the impression of polyphony throughout the entire chapter",¹²⁴ he claims that the writer achieved at least a "partial suggestion of polyphony".¹²⁵

As far as the form of "Sirens" is concerned, most critics agree that it is some kind of polyphonic, fugal form, but whether the term can be applied only to the main part, or to the whole episode, it is still debated. In order to clear up this confusion the relevant features of the above-mentioned musical forms need to be taken into account and applied to the introduction and the main part of the episode.

Since Levin takes it for granted that the main part of the episode is written in fugal form, for him it is obvious that a fugue can be preceded only by a prelude (not an overture), taking as a precedent Bach's *Das wohltemperierte Klavier*.¹²⁶ Furthermore, Levin claims that Joyce combines the prelude with Wagner's *Vorspiel*,¹²⁷ which he considers to be a kind of prelude. Although he is right to some extent in that the two introductory pages are a combination of the two forms, the prelude does not stand as close to the *Vorspiel* as the overture does. Both the overture and Wagner's *Vorspiel* precede an opera and include the major motifs of the following tunes in a condensed form. Similarly, in the introduction of "Sirens" the major themes prop up in a saturated manner. Levin supports his choice of the term prelude instead of an overture by saying that "[s]tructurally, the prelude is more closely knit than an overture".¹²⁸ This is true; still, a "conventional" prelude from Bach's period does not contain any of the following fugue's elements. In

¹²³ Shockley, *Music in the Words*, 61. (italics in the original)

¹²⁴ Wolf, *Musicalization of Fiction*, 136.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 136.

¹²⁶ Lawrence L. Levin, "The Sirens Episode as Music: Joyce's Experiment in Prose Polyphony", in *James Joyce Quarterly* 3.1 (1965), 14.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

most cases their keys are identical, but they do not have any common thematic or rhythmic patterns.

The only proof in favour of the possibility of the introduction being a prelude instead of an overture might be its cyclic nature. Although in *Finnegans Wake* this cyclicity is more overt – the two half-sentences at the beginning and the end of the book belong together, references are made to cyclic movements in nature, etc. – there are traces of cyclicity in *Ulysses*, too. The introductory part of “Sirens” ends with the words “Done. / Begin!”. The imperative “Begin!” may refer either to the following part, or to the introduction itself, which was probably intended to be read several times by the reader in order to perceive the major themes. In the first case, when the reader (or the listener) is referred to the following section, one is reminded of Bach’s preludes, which can be played as self-contained pieces as well; however, the listener’s musical appetite is not satisfied with the light, introductory-type of music, and he feels that something more substantial (or, to be more specific: a fugue) is to come. In this case a linear movement is suggested by the composer or the writer. On the other hand, one can also compare Joyce’s prelude to musical works composed in a later period, such as Chopin’s *Preludes*, which are self-contained pieces, and are not followed by fugues. Chopin’s *24 Preludes* are held together by cyclicity, each of them being written in a different key. They are placed in the order of the circle of fifths,¹²⁹ which means that the original key (C-major) will return at the end [C-G-D-A-E-B-F#(=Gb)-C#(=Db)-G#(=Ab)-D#(=Eb)-A#(=Bb)-E#(=F)-C, or the other way around]. The keys of Chopin’s compositions follow the order of the circle of fifths; the above mentioned key order defines the placement of the preludes. Since each major key has a minor counterpart, there are 24 pieces instead of 12 in Chopin’s cycle of

¹²⁹ The *Oxford Dictionary of Music* explains it as follows: “Starting from C, the keynotes of the sharp keys rise five notes (a perfect 5th) each remove, and the keynotes of the flat keys fall five notes (a perfect 5th) each remove. [...] The order of the sharps in the signatures is by rising 5ths, and the order of the flats by falling 5ths”. (343)

preludes. Similarly, the pieces themselves are cyclical, beginning in a certain key, and after numerous drastic shifts in tonality, the original key returns. From this point of view Joyce's imperative "Begin!" refers to the introduction, thus – following Chopin's method – suggesting a cyclical movement to the reader.

All in all, this introductory nature (tuning up, setting the mood) and the cyclical element are the only features that may serve as an explanation for its being a prelude. In turn, the leitmotiv-like presentation of themes seems to be a much stronger feature, thus it is advisable to treat the introductory part of "Sirens" as an overture. Moreover, the length of the two parts also tends to support this view, since a prelude is approximately as long as the following fugue, whereas an overture is rather a short introduction, a condensation of the following, major work.

Although Zack Bowen notices the importance of the main leitmotifs composing the overture of the chapter, the "bits and snatches of songs [used] to suggest circumstances or characters",¹³⁰ he does not consider the chapter to be comparable to an opera. Even if there are hints in the overture at forthcoming events or subjects, "[t]he fundamental operatic plot elements of the Sirens episode existed long before the chapter started, and their resolution does not take place in this chapter".¹³¹ Still, the structure of the introductory part containing the melodic and thematic fragments and the development of these themes in the main body of the chapter relate to each other the way an overture relates to the opera.

So far the problem of the introductory part seems to be solved, but we still cannot ignore Joyce's reference to *fuga per canonem*. There are critics who apply the term only to the main chapter; for Lawrence L. Levin the *fuga per canonem* begins only after "Joyce has introduced his audience to the episode's main motifs and to a highly abbreviated

¹³⁰ Bowen, *Bloom's Old Sweet Song*, 26.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

outline of the narrative progression (both of which [...] serve to familiarize the reader with central themes and voices which recur throughout the ensuing action)".¹³² On the other hand, David W. Cole¹³³ and Heath Lees¹³⁴ examine the whole episode as a *fuga per canonem*. Lees agrees with Cole in taking into consideration the 16th-century meaning of the term *canon*, which was used to give verbal directions either before or within the music itself.¹³⁵ But Lees goes further – he states that the introduction to “Sirens” does not only give the directions necessary to perform (or understand) the main chapter, but the introduction itself shows “the form of the music too, because when it is read with a musical ear, it becomes apparent that it embodies the shape of a fugue and that it alludes to specific works written in fugal style”.¹³⁶ As far as the “shape” of the fugue is concerned, the division of the introduction into three parts (Exposition, Middle Section, Closing Section) is quite arbitrary. The themes (or leitmotifs) of the introductory part may be viewed as the parts (or voices) of a fugue; however, if we do not take into consideration Aldous Huxley’s “human fugue” of eighteen hundred million parts,¹³⁷ a fugue usually contains 3, 4 or 5 voices, which is far less than the voices appearing in the introductory section. The last part of the statement is not tenable at all, since none of the songs mentioned is written in fugal style.

It is not indifferent whether we call the introductory part an overture, or we look at it as the directions for the following part. Although both have similar purposes, they are intended for different people: the overture makes the listener’s job easier by familiarizing him in advance with the main themes, while the 16th-century directions for the *fuga per*

¹³² Levin, “Sirens Episode as Music”, 16.

¹³³ David W. Cole, “Fugal Structure in the Sirens Episode of *Ulysses*”, in *Modern Fiction Studies* 19 (1973), 221-26.

¹³⁴ Heath Lees, “The Introduction to ‘Sirens’ and the *Fuga per Canonem*”, in *James Joyce Quarterly* 22.1 (1984), 39-54.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹³⁷ Cf. Aldous Huxley, *Point Counter Point* (London: Vintage, 1994).

canonem were given to the performer to help him perform the work according to the composer's intentions.

Going back to the combinatory (or formal) features of the introduction, Lees states that the three main parts of the fugue – i.e. Exposition, Middle Section and Closing Section – are discernible in the introduction.¹³⁸ In a regular fugue the Exposition and the Closing Section comprise about one quarter of the whole fugue, respectively, while the Middle Section, the most complex one, contains the other half of the fugue. The Exposition introduces the main themes of the fugue which return in the original form or with variations in the Closing Section. The Middle Section develops several fragments from the Exposition which reappear in different keys, and it also includes some freely-devised music. Lees divides the introduction to “Sirens” into these three major parts of the fugue – since it contains 57 statements, he regards the first 14 statements (“Bronze by gold Sweetheart, goodbye!”) as the Exposition, the statements between 15 and 42 (“Jingle. Bloo. A baton cool protruding.”) as the Middle Section, and the statements from 43 to 57 (“Bronzelydia by Minagold. Done. Begin!”) as the Closing Section.¹³⁹ The returning of the themes in the Closing Section in a varied form is evident (e.g. “Bronze by gold” becomes “Bronzelydia by Minagold”; “A jumping rose on satiny breasts of satin, rose of Castille” becomes “Last rose Castille of summer...”). Still, Lees fails to explain why the Middle Section begins with the 15th statement. Apart from explanations regarding fugal symmetry, the themes of these two pages cannot readily be divided into any sections – only the recurrence of several themes present at the beginning reminds one of fugal form.

Although Lees has some remarkable findings, his overall analysis of the introductory pages is vague. He entitles his study “The Introduction to ‘Sirens’ and the

¹³⁸ Lees, “Introduction to ‘Sirens’ ”, 44.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 44.

Fuga per Canonem”, but proves that “the introduction itself embodies the *canon*”¹⁴⁰ in spite of the fact that “it embodies the shape of a fugue”.¹⁴¹ Even if it is true that the canon is similar to a fugue in that it is also a contrapuntal composition,¹⁴² the structure of the two forms cannot be confused. Moreover, the *fuga per canonem* is a separate musical form originating from the sixteenth century, where the term *canon* refers to the directions given to performers.

Lees goes still further by trying to prove that the introduction alludes to certain fugues written by Bach.¹⁴³ He bases his statement on the similarity between the rhythmic pattern of Bach’s fugues and Joyce’s word-pattern. While it is true that some rhythmic patterns are favoured by composers or writers, and the rhythm of musical and literary works can be compared, moreover, the main subject used in Bach’s *The Art of Fugue* may fit the introduction to “Sirens”, there are hundreds of fugues written by other composers which have the same rhythmic pattern in their subject. Lees’s explanation of why Joyce seems to have used Bach’s pieces as a model for these two pages is that Joyce must have been familiar with many of Bach’s works, and that Joyce even included the initial letters of the composer’s name into the first four statements:¹⁴⁴

Bronze by gold heard the hoofirons, steelyringing Imperthnthn thnthnthn.

Chips, picking chips off rocky thumbnail, chips.

Horrid! And gold flushed more.

A husky fifenote blew.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 41.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 42.

¹⁴² The canon is often referred to as the strictest type of fugue.

¹⁴³ Lees, “Introduction to ‘Sirens’”, 41-52.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 47.

¹⁴⁵ James Joyce, *Ulysses*. Annotated Student Edition with an Introduction and Notes by Declan Kiberd (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1992), 328-329.

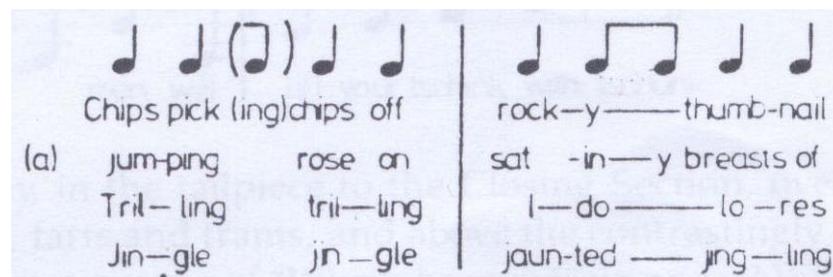
In the introduction two rhythmic patterns dominate, one of them including half-, quarter- and eighth-notes, which, according to Lees, correspond to fragments like “Bronze by gold heard the hoof irons steely ringing” and the other including mainly quarter-notes, attributed to fragments like “Chips pick(ing) chips off rock-y thumb-nail” or “(a) jum-ping rose on sat-in(y) breasts of”.¹⁴⁶ The rhythmic pattern of the main subject along with the specific quotations from “Sirens” can be illustrated as follows (figure 4):¹⁴⁷



Bronze by gold heard (the) hoof i - rons steel - y ringing

Fig. 4: Johann Sebastian Bach, *The Art of the Fugue*, BWV 1080

According to Lees the rhythmic pattern of the secondary subject is:¹⁴⁸



If these rhythms really dominate the first two pages of the episode, it may be compared to a double fugue with a subject and a countersubject. These two subjects or rhythmic patterns appearing four times each in the Exposition might explain Joyce’s mentioning of “eight regular parts”.¹⁴⁹ In this case, by “parts” Joyce might have meant similar “rhythmic patterns”.

¹⁴⁶ Lees, “Introduction to ‘Sirens’ ”, 48-49.

¹⁴⁷ The score taken from J. S. Bach’s *The Art of the Fugue* is compared by Lees to the subject of J. S. Bach’s “Fugue in G minor” (figure 3). However, the latter fugue is presented by Lees with a double tempo and transposed into d minor.

¹⁴⁸ Lees, “Introduction to ‘Sirens’ ”, 49.

¹⁴⁹ Lees, “Introduction to ‘Sirens’ ”, 46.

Levin interprets Joyce's "parts" as voices, and "according to frequency and placement in the narrative, these voices would be those of Miss Douce and Miss Kennedy (the sirens), Bloom, Simon Dedalus, Lenehan, Boylan, the piano tuner, Dollard, and Pat the waiter, with Cowley, Lidwell, Kernan, and Goulding functioning as free counterpoint".¹⁵⁰ Lees considers this list to be arbitrary, since Levin omits (from the list of "subjects") the "ultra-musical" Father Cowley, but includes the blind, non-speaking piano-tuner.¹⁵¹ For me Lees's approach of considering the eight parts to be rhythmic patterns makes more sense, since there are more than eight voices appearing in the introduction, and they do not appear in a proportionate, regular manner. As far as the rhythmic patterns are concerned, they appear more regularly, though sometimes Lees seems to have forced several statements into one of the above-mentioned rhythmic patterns (for instance, in some cases he tried to create a correspondence between the words or syllables containing short vowels and the half-notes).

On the whole, we can conclude that the introduction is a kind of overture presenting the major themes that follow later in the chapter, making use of some formal elements of the fugue like the three major parts, the presence of several voices, the similar rhythmic patterns, and so forth. But this introduction can also be viewed as a part that gives directions for the forthcoming chapter.

The terms fugue, *fuga per canonem* and canon are used inconsistently in reference to the main body of the episode, too. Although they use different terms to denote the form of "Sirens", critics like Burgess and Levin agree in defining its structure. As opposed to Wolf, who claims that the subject of the fugue is "desire", played by three voices (the barmaids, Bloom and Boylan), they take characters as fugal subjects. Burgess finds that the Sirens (Mina and Lydia) represent the subject of the fugue, "the theme on which the whole

¹⁵⁰ Levin, "Sirens Episode as Music", 14.

¹⁵¹ Lees, "Introduction to 'Sirens'", 46.

fugue is based”,¹⁵² and Bloom represents the fugal answer, “which is technically the subject re-stated in another voice, a fifth higher or a fourth lower”.¹⁵³ In this scheme Boylan is the countersubject, “the contrapuntal accompaniment to the answer and, from then on, to every re-statement of the subject”.¹⁵⁴ These views of Burgess on the fugal structure (written in 1973) seem to have changed considerably after his attempt to compose a musical novel, *Napoleon Symphony*. Nine years later, in his critical work *This Man and Music* he states that “[t]he noble structure of the fugue is, finally, mocked, as is the whole heavenly art of music”.¹⁵⁵ He concludes by saying that “Joyce knew all along that he could not reproduce the form of fugue”.¹⁵⁶

Levin, similarly to Burgess, also takes the Sirens as the subject and Bloom as the answer of a fugue, but he analyses this part as a *fuga per canonem*, which in his interpretation means that there are many voices that move independently, as in a canon.¹⁵⁷ He adds that “there is not word-for-word imitation, but the voices have polyphonically followed one another at fugal distances, and thematic material from the subject has been imitated consistently, with slight modulations, by the answer”.¹⁵⁸ As more and more characters enter the Ormond Bar, so does the fugue become more and more complex. This way the characters can be compared to the voices of a fugue entering, re-appearing, speaking simultaneously and finally leaving the piece. In the bar sometimes voices of more people can be heard, but – as in a fugue – one voice always dominates over the others.

Although this explanation is similar to Wolf’s, it seems that the latter critic’s statements are more accurate. Wolf, being a church organist as well, takes into

¹⁵² Anthony Burgess, *Joysprick: An Introduction to the Language of James Joyce* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1973), 84.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 84.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 84.

¹⁵⁵ Burgess, *This Man and Music*, 141.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 141-42.

¹⁵⁷ Levin, “Sirens Episode as Music”, 17.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 17.

consideration the fact that a fugue has one theme appearing in different voices. This particular melody re-appears on different pitches, similarly to the theme of “desire” voiced by different characters on a different pitch. Moreover, he makes a comparison between the “fragmented” polyphony Bach uses in some of his works and the polyphonic simultaneity of a narrative (see figure 5).



Fig. 5.: Johann Sebastian Bach, *Partita for Flute Solo in A minor*, BWV 1013

Wolf observes that in some of Bach’s compositions, like the *Partita for Flute Solo in A minor*, which can also be transcribed as a three-part passage, “one continuous melody (similar to the one ongoing text) repeatedly creates the impression of polyphony by constantly leaping between different pitches, thus outlining passages which the listeners will attribute to different parts, but whose ‘complete’ melodies are only formed in their minds”.¹⁵⁹ Therefore, this is the only point where music and literature are completely comparable: “the juxtaposition of ‘contrapuntal’ elements in rapid succession in order to simulate a (polyphonic) simultaneity of parts” in literature is similar to the ‘fragmented’ polyphony where musical instruments play only one part, and create the impression of simultaneity.¹⁶⁰ In this case simultaneity is created on the levels of signifiers and signifieds, but “all other literary means of suggesting simultaneity rely even more heavily on the level of signifieds and hence on concepts rather than on audible (or visible) signifiers”.¹⁶¹ Since the reading process is inevitably linear, simultaneity must be an

¹⁵⁹ Wolf, *Musicalization of Fiction*, 21.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

imaginary one. Thus we may conclude that in the “Sirens” episode Joyce applies a ‘fragmented’ polyphony, where the reader imagines the characters speaking and acting at the same time.

Shockley calls this phenomenon “implied polyphony”, which in literature means “horizontal, linear presentations of implied verticality”.¹⁶² He refers to Fischer labelling such passages as “cut up” technique,¹⁶³ which in music is “an unfolding – the simultaneities (stacked vertically in musical space) have been sliced into separate horizontal lines, and then laid out alternating in a resultant single horizontal line (a succession)”.¹⁶⁴ Shockley gives two readings of the same musical passage (see figure 6). In the first reading only one note is present at a time, whereas the second reading proves that there are three lines present simultaneously.

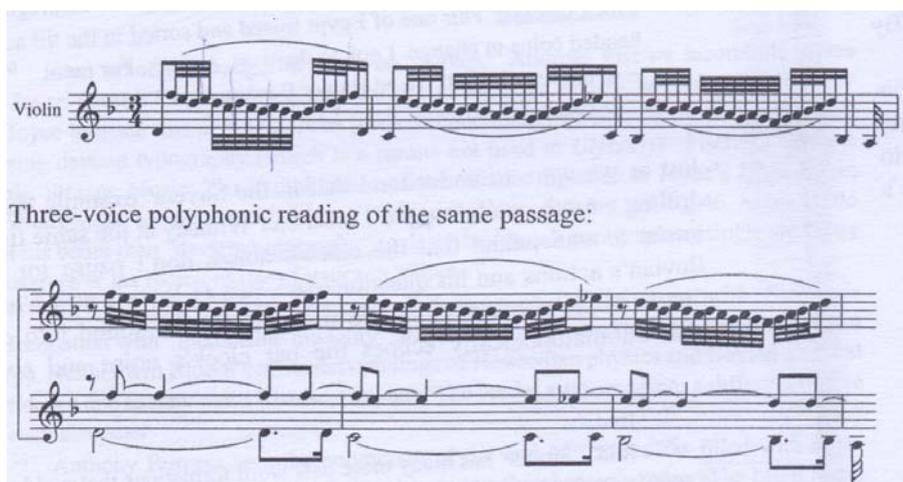


Fig. 6.: Johann Sebastian Bach, “Chaconne” from *Partita No. 2 in D Minor*, BWV 1004¹⁶⁵

Another similarity between the structure of “Sirens” and the structure of a fugue is that in the former the space between the entries of different voices is filled with episodes, similarly to the freely-devised material of the fugue. Characters enter and leave the bar,

¹⁶² Shockley, *Music in the Words*, 58.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 58.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 58.

¹⁶⁵ Figure 6 taken from Shockley’s *Music in the Words*, 58.

their voices can be heard sometimes in a dominant manner, sometimes from the background, and during the appearances of these voices the plot goes on continually, like the freely-devised material of a fugue fills up the remaining space among the multiplicity of voices, and keeps the fugue going.

Burgess makes an interesting remark on the names of the two sirens; he considers the name Mina to refer to the minor scale, and the name Lydia to the ancient Lydian mode, which is an F major scale with a B natural.¹⁶⁶ He also gives an appropriate rhythm to the musical letters of their names (minA kEnnEDy lyDiA DouCE).¹⁶⁷ This idea seems a little far-fetched, since if Joyce wanted his readers to hear a melody while pronouncing these names, he would have done so with other names, too.

Most studies written on the “Sirens” episode of *Ulysses* draw analogies only with classical forms and elements of music. As a contrast, Shockley finds resemblances between the form of this chapter and the symphonic form used by the composer Witold Lutosławski. Shockley defines the composer’s symphonic form as “a brief ‘Introductory Movement’ that presents all the ideas for the piece (a sort of stand-alone exposition removed from any subsequent working out of the material), followed by a brief pause, and finally a larger, constantly developing ‘Main Movement’ ”.¹⁶⁸ This description applies to the “Sirens” episode, where the second, more substantial part “never restates the introductory material intact [...], but instead polyphonically develops it”.¹⁶⁹ Shockley believes that this analogy is also valid for the relationship between the chapter and the novel as a whole.¹⁷⁰

David Herman approaches this chapter from a completely new perspective – in his study “ ‘Sirens’ after Schönberg” he ascribes language an equally important role, viewing

¹⁶⁶ Burgess, *Joysprick*, 84.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 84.

¹⁶⁸ Shockley, *Music in the Words*, 72.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 72.

the musical techniques and effects structuring “Sirens” as “instrumental to reflection on, and re-evaluation of, the structures and functions of language itself”.¹⁷¹ This approach is based on the discovery and the formalization of rules which make the (re-)combination of elements possible. At the same time, the rules – “an apparatus for reconciling space and time”, since it allows items to be linearized or combined – constitute the object of the syntactic analysis.¹⁷² From this it follows that “ ‘Sirens’ (self-reflexively) exploits the formal or constructional devices common to both musical and linguistic structures – devices or rules necessarily belonging to the syntactic or combinatory versus the semantic or referential dimension of those structures”.¹⁷³ The language of “Sirens” may be compared with Schönberg’s music on the ground that both are innovative and they search for a universal grammar.

Drawing a parallel between “Sirens” and modern music instead of the classical fugue or canon might seem rewarding. One way to explore this possibility would be to compare these works according to their polyphony and spatial features. It has already been mentioned that among the classical forms the fugue is the most complex one from a spatial point of view, since its voices move independently from each other, in many cases in opposing directions. Still, these voices support each other, and according to Palestrina’s compositional rules (formed in the Renaissance period) they have to harmonize, and are forced into the confines of a tonal system. On the other hand, in spite of the underlying rules, the voices of Schönberg’s composition have more freedom, and thus they constitute a bigger space, pushing tonality and temporality into the background. Schönberg’s twelve-note scale allows a greater space for the movement of the different voices than the traditional scale consisting only of seven notes, which can occasionally be modulated. In modern music the augmentation of the tonal system results in a greater musical space, not

¹⁷¹ David Herman, “ ‘Sirens’ after Schönberg”, in *James Joyce Quarterly* 31.4 (1994), 475.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 475.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 476.

to mention the frequent abandoning of rhythmic confines which diminishes the role of temporality, thus placing space into the foreground.

Another technique that expands the spatial aspect of a musical composition is the use of polymodality,¹⁷⁴ the simultaneous use of more than one key in different contrapuntal strands. This technique is most often found in compositions by Béla Bartók, Gustav Holst, or Darius Milhaud. Polymodality can be applied to “Sirens”, too, if we consider the register of each voice speaking in the bar to be comparable to a musical key. In this sense, attributing each character a different key (as Burgess connects Mina to the minor scale, or Lydia to the Lydian mode), the juxtaposition of these voices results in an effect somewhat similar to polymodal music. But the reader can only juxtapose, or at best synthesize, these voices in his mind, therefore, polymodality in literature meets the same obstacles as polyphony does.

As Herman observes, in “Sirens” “the narrative [...] compels us to juxtapose two differently linearized versions of the episode”.¹⁷⁵ In the introductory part we are presented with the outline of the plot, which is elaborated later on. The reader needs to read back and forth in order to be able to perceive the simultaneity of the narrative. This pairing or grouping of motifs along a vertical or associative axis resembles the act of listening to a fugue, “in the split temporality of a double awareness, the subtle schizophrenia of modern music appreciation, resolving every sequential or ‘melodic’ development back into the stasis of its ‘harmonic’ situation, the totality of its associative chains”.¹⁷⁶ Herman adds that this duality of “narrative sequences exploited by ‘Sirens’ reproduces the polyphonic technique of a specifically modern music”.¹⁷⁷ The need to think associatively while reading the chapter (or the whole novel) diminishes temporality and gives space a greater

¹⁷⁴ Hereby I would like to thank Péter Benedek Tóta for drawing my attention to this aspect of modern music and to Béla Bartók’s “Harvard Lectures”, in *Essays*, ed. Benjamin Suchoff (London: Faber and Faber, 1976).

¹⁷⁵ Herman, “‘Sirens’ after Schönberg”, 483.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 484.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 484.

role. In “Sirens” there are two separate planes of syntagmatic or successive structure on which the narrative unfolds: the structure of the (anticipating) repertoire, and the structure of the (anticipated) realization of the repertoire, and the association of these elements happens along an atemporal axis.¹⁷⁸

With the help of this technique the reader becomes aware of the fact that the different activities in – and outside – the Ormond Bar (singing, talking, Bloom’s writing a letter while thinking and talking, the piano-tuner’s progression, Boylan’s approach to Molly, and so on) happen simultaneously. The leitmotifs or the typical sounds belonging to a certain character indicate the presence of or the actions done by different people at a given time. While the time span is relatively short in the “Sirens” chapter, the plot is presented in a quite detailed manner, giving great importance to minor characters and events as well.

In my opinion, the musical episode of *Ulysses* may be compared to a traditional form as well as to the works of avant-garde composers. The elements of the fugal form are evident: the voices of the characters entering the Ormond Bar remind one of the entering themes of the fugue, each on a different note. Moreover, this musical technique serves as the frame of the episode, an ordering structure which gives unity to the episode. The abandoning of traditionalism and comparing the episode to modern musical structures represents a different approach: first of all, it emphasizes the role of signifiers instead of the signifieds; secondly, it suggests a new kind of simultaneity, comparable to the polyphonic and polymodal technique of modern music. This latter explanation of the “Sirens” episode focuses on constructional devices (both musical and linguistic), on the spatial dimension, and on the reader’s role in juxtaposing elements in order to perceive simultaneity.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 485.

2.4. *Napoleon Symphony*: musical structure or just “elephantine fun”?

Among the many novelists experimenting with musical structures Anthony Burgess was musically the most trained. Although he is mainly known and appreciated by his literary works, he was also a professional and prolific composer, his musical productivity being proved by over 175 compositions. There is a strong relation between his compositional and his literary work: the composer Burgess is always present in the background of his novels, and a major part of his compositions is based on a literary subject (for instance the incidental music for *Murder in the Cathedral* by T. S. Eliot and for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare, the *Blooms of Dublin*, a musical written upon Joyce's *Ulysses*, or the music for poems by D. H. Lawrence, Thomas Hardy, or John Dryden. Since the products of the two genres always influence each other, it is essential to devote a few words to Burgess, the composer.

Burgess's compositions include various genres: symphony, concerto, sonata, opera, ballet, prelude and fugue, to name but a few. Paul Schuyler Phillips notes that despite his fondness of experimentation as a writer, Burgess was essentially conservative as a composer, resorting to conventional musical forms.¹⁷⁹ He adds that Burgess “tended to write traditionally structured works such as four-movement symphonies and three-movement concertos”,¹⁸⁰ besides, “[he] had a deep love of polyphony and composed untold amounts of counterpoint”.¹⁸¹

After having composed so many pieces in traditional musical forms, Burgess decided to build a narrative on the structure of Beethoven's *Eroica* symphony. By following the score during the writing process, he tried to find a literary equivalent for each

¹⁷⁹ Paul Schuyler Phillips, “The Music of Anthony Burgess”, in *Anthony Burgess Newsletter 1* (1999), 9.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

musical feature. Critics did not appreciate his experimentation, neither did they recognise the majority of underlying structural elements. Eight years after publishing *Napoleon Symphony*, in *This Man and Music* Burgess explains his intentions, thus setting in motion another wave of criticism based on his explanations. It would be to no purpose to repeat Burgess's interpretation of the novel, while following the pages of the book and the musical score. Therefore, I will present only the most remarkable musico-literary achievements, in certain cases in comparison with similar experiments.

Napoleon Symphony is related to Beethoven's symphony both thematically and structurally. The musical composition was originally dedicated to Napoleon, but Beethoven – after being disappointed by his idol who had himself crowned emperor – chose the heroic will as the subject of his symphony. As it turns out towards the end of the story, Napoleon is not the real hero of Burgess's novel, either.¹⁸² Although the novel follows the historical figure's life from his marriage with Josephine to his exile and death on St Helena, presenting his military (as well as domestic) victories and defeats, the idea of the heroic will, similarly to Beethoven, is of greater importance to Burgess than his central character.

As far as the structural aspect of the symphony is concerned, Burgess had to force his literary composition into four chapters in order to strictly follow the musical composition. He called the chapters of his novel movements, and made them correspond in structure, mood and theme to the symphony's relevant parts. Burgess decided to follow the sonata form of the first movement (the Exposition, the Development, the Recapitulation, and the Coda), the loose rondo form of the second, the much stricter ABA' rondo form of the third, and the theme and variations structure of the fourth movement. Beyond the structure of the symphony Burgess had to find literary equivalents for other musical

¹⁸² Chapter 3.4. contains a detailed analysis of the subject of the two works.

features inherent in the symphony, such as counterpoint, tempo, dynamics, or shifts of keys.

In terms of literary imitation, probably the most demanding musical devices are polyphony and counterpoint. As has been discussed earlier, both features are inherent in the fugue; however, they can be present in other musical genres as well. Joyce managed to imitate polyphony and counterpoint in various ways in the “Sirens” episode, even if the chapter does not contain all the structural requirements of a fugue. The reader is made aware of simultaneous activities by the characters’ utterances or Bloom’s interior monologue (his inner voice reflecting on external voices). Although simultaneity of action is referred to in many cases, the dialogues are not presented simultaneously. The reader may synthesise the various voices in his mind, the voices of speaking, flirting, singing, thinking, eating, tapping, jingling, but they rather refer to activities than to conversations. The space of these activities is extensive, since mental space is also involved when Bloom is reflecting on present and past situations. Most of the time Joyce refers to simultaneity by using word fragments (or leitmotifs) recalling other scenes, or by simply describing simultaneous occupations:

Bloom ungyved his crisscrossed hands and with slack fingers plucked the slender catgut thong. He drew and plucked. It buzzed, it twanged. While Goulding talked of Barraclough’s voice production, while Tom Kernan, harking back in a retrospective sort of arrangement, talked to listening Father Cowley who played a voluntary, who nodded as he played. While big Ben Dollard talked with Simon Dedalus lighting, who nodded as he smoked, who smoked.¹⁸³

¹⁸³ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 357.

Even if all the activities produce some kind of sound, the polyphony of voices is not presented directly. On the other hand, Burgess's solution for expressing simultaneity is more closely related to the performative arts, where the simultaneous voices themselves are presented, and not the description of activities. The following quotation is taken from the first movement of *Napoleon Symphony* corresponding to the *fugato* part of Beethoven's composition, a short fugal passage within the first movement. In this section Burgess gets as close to fugal structure as it is possible in a literary artefact. There are three voices, all of them sounding the same theme: Napoleon should forgive Josephine's infidelity. Burgess differentiates between the speakers (or voices) with the use of different typeface: Napoleon's voice is written with all-caps, Josephine's in lowercase, and the children's voice in italics.

O GOD TO THINK THAT ONE TO WHOM I ENTRUSTED MY VERY
INNERMOST HEART IN KEEPING but I swear it is all long over it was foolish but it
is long done I have lived a life of solitary virtue there is evidence talk to Madame
Gohier your whole family is against me they will say anything I WOULD HAVE
DONE BETTER TO LISTEN TO MY FAMILY A MAN CAN TRUST ONLY HIS
KIND O GOD GOD THE TREACHERY LET ME NEVER TRUST ANY WOMAN
AGAIN I WHO SPENT SUCH TRUST ON A WORTHLESS WORTHLESS *let us*
speaks for our mother let us speak for ourselves let us be a happy and united family she
loves you we love you you love her YES EUGENE YOU ARE A BRAVE A FINE
YOUNG MAN AND YOU HORTENSE ARE O GOD GOD GOD I was foolish God
knows I was foolish but I learned my lesson long before these calumnies spread IF
ONLY I HAD NOT but you were bound to be KNOWN KNOWN *think of us think of*
lied to since MY ISLAND BREEDS OTHELLOS your family hates me BUT I LACK
THE they will do anything to KILLING SPIRIT blacken me in your I AM A MAN eyes
and as for black they talk of the tarbrush which is more WHO SEEKS BUT calumny

PEACE PEACE and out of a mere peccadillo *oh you are breaking our* AND LOVE
they wish to break all our AND A FAMILY OF LOVING *hearts* hearts HEARTS.¹⁸⁴

The musical fragment Burgess imitates is a contrapuntal passage (see the upper two lines of figure 7). There is a voice played by the group of first violins (uppermost line), counterpointed by the second violins (the second line from the top). The melody played by the first violins may be referred to Napoleon, while the second group of instruments is Josephine and the children's voice singing the same tune (begging for forgiveness). It is not a regular three-part fugal passage: the second violins counterpoint the melody of the first violins; however, the former group of instruments (that is, the second violins) occasionally divides into two voices (in the musical fragment below there is only one such instance, in the third measure).



Fig. 7.: Ludwig van Beethoven, *Eroica Symphony*, Op. 55, I. Allegro con brio¹⁸⁵

Burgess's literary solution is more complex than the fugal passage of the symphony. By its three voices of equal importance, sounded simultaneously on the same theme, it resembles a real fugue comparable to Bach's works discussed earlier. Shockley observes that Beethoven's model is imitative polyphony, and "Burgess makes little attempt to mimic

¹⁸⁴ Anthony Burgess, *Napoleon Symphony* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1974), 66-67.

¹⁸⁵ The score is not complete – for reasons of simplicity only the score of the strings is presented here.

such a composerly counterpoint".¹⁸⁶ In fact, Burgess managed to compose an even more intricate literary fugue which is more polyphonic than Beethoven's fugato, and where there is a theme and three voices of equal importance meeting in harmony at the end.

Shockley remarks that the various speakers also sound different, thus the passage is comparable to Joyce's polyphony.¹⁸⁷ Burgess's voices would have been discernible even without changes of typeface, similarly to the voice of Joyce's characters, which are marked by their style. Throughout the first chapter Napoleon and Josephine's voice can also be related to the first and the second theme of the symphony, which keep reappearing in the first movement. The alternation of the two characters' voices concerns the spatial dimension of the novel, since it is attached to alternations of scenes as well, counterpointing each other in theme, mood and tone. As in the traditional sonata form there is a major and a minor theme presented in the exposition of the first movement. In *Napoleon Symphony* the first theme is sounded by the firm, commanding voice of Napoleon giving orders to his generals. Then, as a contrast, Burgess shifts the scene, and presents us with the soft, feminine voice of Josephine. The masculine theme sounded on the battlefield is related to war (however, Napoleon's thoughts are with his wife), whereas the scene of the feminine theme of love is Josephine's bed, where she is talking softly to her lover. The contrapuntal themes and voices always appear in different contexts and locations, similarly to the themes in Beethoven's symphony, which (i.e., the themes or their variations) are played by various instruments in various keys. The reappearance of themes (in the novel as well as in the symphony) refers back to earlier events (musical as well as literary), thus the sudden shifts of location enlarge the spatial dimension. Interestingly, the major theme in Beethoven's symphony is not only more dominant (played frequently *fortissimo* or *sforzato* by several groups of instruments at the same

¹⁸⁶ Shockley, *Music in the Words*, 88.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 87.

time), but its melodic line goes upwards. The descending line of the minor theme is played *piano, dolce* by one group of instruments at a time (usually by flutes, oboes, clarinets), handing the melody-line to each other. At the end of the movement one can hear the gradual strengthening of the triumphant major theme which by the end appears in its full strength; it corresponds to the coronation ceremony in Notre Dame, where Napoleon reaches the peak of his political career and becomes emperor.

The rapid shifts of scene and character is a technique borrowed from Huxley, rather than Joyce. Huxley builds a whole novel on contrapuntal plots, alternating without any transition. Philip Quarles, the novelist character of *Point Counter Point* believes that in order to realize the abrupt transitions “[a]ll you need is a sufficiency of characters and parallel, contrapuntal plots”.¹⁸⁸ In Burgess’s novel the abrupt transitions do not concern as many scenes and characters as in Huxley’s novel, since Burgess’s aim was to follow the structure of the symphony (which has few contrapuntal passages), whereas Huxley wanted to find a literary equivalent for the polyphonic and contrapuntal features of the fugue. In the “Sirens” episode the activities are presented simultaneously; Joyce does not alternate the scenes rapidly but uses leitmotifs to refer to other scenes. However, there is a strong semantic counterpoint at the end of the chapter. After the reader has visualized the simultaneous activities in his mind, an “unseeing stripling” enters the scene, and:

He saw not bronze. He saw not gold. Nor Ben nor Bob nor Tom nor Si
nor George nor tanks nor Richie nor Pat. Hee hee hee hee. He did not
see.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁸ Huxley, *Point Counter Point*, 296.

¹⁸⁹ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 375.

Beyond being a contrapuntal element, this passage has another musical aspect. The *staccatos* of the syllables remind the reader not only of the tapping sound of the blind stripling's stick, but of other monosyllabic passages like "Pat took plate dish knife fork. Pat went."¹⁹⁰ or "Will? You? I. Want. You. To."¹⁹¹

Apart from the alternating scenes there are other cases of counterpoint in *Napoleon Symphony*; many of them cannot be related to the structure of the symphony. In most cases it is a counterpoint applied in different forms in order to expand the spatial aspect of the novel or of the reading process. Among these experiments, Shockley lists the rapid changes from poetry to prose by which Burgess implies simultaneity.¹⁹² He says that the villanelle interrupted by the fugato passage, and its conclusion afterwards (poetry framing a narrative passage) "duplicates some of the information in the prose" producing a second level of polyphony.¹⁹³ Another experiment to extend the spatial dimension of the reading process is providing some of the verse's words with footnotes which do not appear in order. After the verse lines Burgess presents the explanation of these footnotes in order, but since the footnote numbers in the verse are not placed consecutively, the reader needs to search for their equivalent in the forthcoming explanatory section.

The greatest problem a writer encounters when building a narrative text upon a musical form is repetition. Since the structure of the sonata form used in the first movement requires the repetition of the Exposition, Burgess had to do the same or something similar in his novel, even if "repetition is what neither fictional nor historical narrative can accommodate – at least, not in the literal manner of music".¹⁹⁴ Burgess claims that in literature the structural repetition of music restating the material of the Exposition with alterations has to be achieved by "giving the *effect* of repetition [...] by

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 359.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 369.

¹⁹² Shockley, *Music in the Words*, 86.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 86.

¹⁹⁴ Burgess, *This Man and Music*, 182.

echoing situations, phrases, preoccupations and structures already encountered, but in a new context of action”.¹⁹⁵ The Exposition of the first chapter begins with the sentence “Germinal in the Year Four”,¹⁹⁶ and it returns as “Germinal in the Year Seven”¹⁹⁷ in the recapitulation. One of the central themes of the two sections is Napoleon’s love for Josephine, the change in the recapitulation being his discovery of her infidelity. Another example of the recapitulation of a theme with changes is the passage where Burgess enumerates the soldiers. In the Exposition the names appear in their original form (Carné, Thiriet, Blondy and Tireux), whereas they are combined in the recapitulation (Thiré, Carniet, Blondaux and Tiry).

The most often quoted part of the second movement of the novel is revealing from both musical and spatial perspectives. Burgess begins the chapter with verse written on the melody commencing the second movement of Beethoven’s symphony:

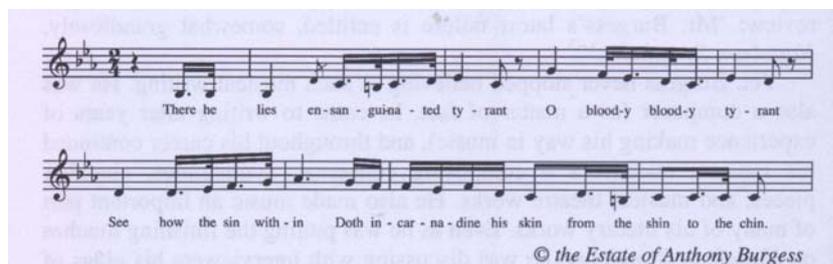


Fig. 8.: Ludwig van Beethoven, *Eroica Symphony*, Op. 55, II. Adagio assai, with Burgess’s lyrics

The score is not written in the text; the reader either recognises its rhythmic analogy with the symphony’s rhythm, or, more likely, knows in advance from Burgess’s comments on his novel that he is supposed to recall the melody of the symphony while reading the verse. The verse keeps returning throughout the chapter (similarly to the melody in the

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 182. (italics in the original)

¹⁹⁶ Burgess, *Napoleon Symphony*, 15.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 78.

symphony); however, in the novel it is not always attached to meaningful sounds: sometimes it appears as a melody hummed by Napoleon, sometimes as a tuneless rhythm.

La la laaaah	(There he lies
la la la la LAH LAH	en – san – gui – na – ted ty – rant
LAAAAH	Oooo
Lilla lilla LAH LAH ¹⁹⁸	bloo – dy bloo – dy ty – rant)
Dumdy DUM	(There he lies
dee dum dee dumdy	en – san – gui – na ted
DUM	ty –
DUM	rant
DUM diddum diddum	Oooo bloo – dy bloo – dy
DUM	ty –
DUM ¹⁹⁹	rant)

By connecting the words to Beethoven’s melody Burgess wants his readers to remember the tune to which these words are attached, like a leitmotiv reappearing in various contexts (in some cases only as a rhythmic pattern). Therefore, whenever the leitmotiv returns, the reader will juxtapose the present scene to the one recalled by the leitmotiv. Since there is a melody attached to these lines it suffices to present its rhythm in order to remind the reader of its earlier appearance, thus recalling “imaginary content analogies”.²⁰⁰

The spatial dimension of the chapter is further expanded by juxtaposing the verses appearing in Napoleon and Josephine’s dream. In the introductory part Burgess presents

¹⁹⁸ Burgess, *Napoleon Symphony*, 175.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 193.

²⁰⁰ Cf. Wolf, *Musicalization of Fiction*.

the two simultaneous activities similarly to Joyce;²⁰¹ then he goes on with his experimentation and places the two verses next to each other, thus providing another solution for the extension of the spatial dimension by literary polyphony and counterpoint.

But now he was back in that dream again, bound, but now she was back in that dream again, bound for the enemy water, what time the sneering bands played, what time the loving choirs sang:

There he lies	See the re-
Ensanguinated tyrant	Incarnate Cleopatra
O bloody bloody tyrant	Barge burning on the water
See	Bare
How the sin within	Rowers row in rows.
Doth incarn	Posied rose ²⁰²

The two dreams occur at the same time, but in different places – in the mind of Napoleon and Josephine. The two voices are sounded simultaneously, like a chord, which is made up of only two voices. Although Mowat considers it as duplication of time,²⁰³ it is also a duplication of space.

The second movement of the symphony has a loose rondo²⁰⁴ structure, where the two passages in c minor frame 36 measures in C major. Since this movement is a funeral march (*Marcia Funebre*), Burgess frames his chapter with two funeral scenes corresponding in mood to the symphony's music. While the first scene turns out to be only a nightmare, Napoleon dreaming about his own funeral, the one towards the end of the

²⁰¹ Cf. the quotation describing the simultaneous activities in the Ormond bar (“Bloom ungyved his crisscrossed hands...”).

²⁰² Burgess, *Napoleon Symphony*, 155.

²⁰³ John Mowat, “Joyce’s Contemporary: A Study of Anthony Burgess’ *Napoleon Symphony*”, in *Contemporary Literature* 19 (1978), 191.

²⁰⁴ Rondo is a form of composition in which one section intermittently recurs. Its frequent pattern is A B A C A D A, etc. A being the recurring rondo theme and B, C, and D contrasting episodes. Definition based on *Oxford Dictionary of Music*. (541)

chapter is the funeral of a man called Laval, which is the pseudonym of Napoleon. As the music of Beethoven's second movement becomes denser after the return of the c minor passage, so does Napoleon's returning dream vision of his funeral become more complex. He dreams again the same dream, but this time "[t]he dream did not possess the tones of terror or misery, for the dreamer knew it was a dream within a dream".²⁰⁵ In accordance with the symphony, where the first section ends in a minor key and the corresponding part of the musical frame in a major key, Burgess's two corresponding scenes differ in mood. The mood of the second one is not so frightening since Napoleon knows the funeral is only a dream. By repeating the dream vision and the funeral theme Burgess managed to overcome the problem of literary repetition and to stick to the structure of the symphony.

The reader is constantly reminded of the main theme of the second movement by the appearance of the words: "There he lies / Ensanguinated tyrant / O bloody bloody tyrant...". The slow pace of the whole movement is in harmony with the slow movement, the "funeral march" of the defeated Great Army through the cruel winter of Russia. Aggeler remarks that the crossing of the Berezina (where two bridges – named after Napoleon and Josephine – are built) is an exact double fugue, corresponding to the one in *Marcia Funebre*.²⁰⁶ The two themes of this double fugue may be related again to Napoleon and Josephine. As far as the middle section of the second movement is concerned, Aggeler finds that Burgess changes the minor key into major with an intentional error. Stapps, the German student refers to the Germans as *Der Volk* instead of *Das Volk*, which means that the "s" has disappeared from the text as well as from music. Since "Es" (meaning E flat) has been resolved, the key has changed from c minor to C major,²⁰⁷ resulting in a more lively and optimistic musical passage.

²⁰⁵ Burgess, *Napoleon Symphony*, 236.

²⁰⁶ Geoffrey Aggeler, *Anthony Burgess: The Artist as Novelist* (Alabama: Alabama University Press, 1979), 220.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 221.

The third movement of the symphony (*Scherzo*) is light and playful, written in E flat major. Burgess also begins his third chapter (or movement) with joy, namely with the celebration of the 10th anniversary of Napoleon's crowning. In the novel the musical *scherzo*²⁰⁸ appears as a play watched by Napoleon in the theatre. As most musical *Scherzos* contain sadness as well, Napoleon has to face the mocking of the actors and the audience. Beethoven's music follows the ABA structure; therefore, Burgess had to meet the challenge of literary repetition once more. This time he places the play itself in the middle, making it correspond to the trio of the symphony's third movement. As for the beginning and the concluding scenes, which, according to the music, are supposed to be similar, Burgess introduces them with similar structures: "From bivouac to bivouac to bivouac to bivouac to bivouac ..."²⁰⁹ and "From Cannes (has kissed the soil of France) to Grasse to Séranon to Digne ...".²¹⁰ In addition, there are some similar phrases in the two sections, like "Thank You Thank You" or "God Bless You My Children". Shockley remarks that "Burgess brings back a little text to remind us of the opening of the chapter, but the return is less about actual quotation of the opening than it is about return of ideas and characters".²¹¹ The central character of the framing sections is Napoleon; however, the protagonist of the play in the middle section is another hero, Prometheus.

In spite of the musical density of the theme and variations of the fourth movement, Burgess writes that "I felt on safer ground with the finale".²¹² He makes literary parodies or pastiches correspond to the musical variations, and takes "English literature" as his theme.²¹³ As this section of the symphony reuses some of Beethoven's

²⁰⁸ In Italian it means "joke" or "fun".

²⁰⁹ Burgess, *Napoleon Symphony*, 241.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 261.

²¹¹ Shockley, *Music in the Words*, 93.

²¹² Burgess, *This Man and Music*, 188.

²¹³ Shockley, *Music in the Words*, 97.

earlier compositions,²¹⁴ thus broadening musical space, Burgess imitates the style of a number of English writers and poets. This technique also results in the extension of mental space, since by imitating the style of various writers Burgess reminds the reader of specific works written by the imitated author. The authors include Sir Walter Scott, William Wordsworth, Charles Dickens, Jane Austen and Henry James. These parodies also remind the reader of the “Oxen of the Sun” episode of *Ulysses*, thus heralding the conclusion written in Joycean language and the pun on the writer’s name.²¹⁵

Rejoice. And again I say rejoice. And I say aga INRI ng bells bells bells bells and rejoice.
Rejoice.²¹⁶

The INRI motif is present throughout the fourth chapter, and not only in the concluding sentence as part of the words “agaIN” and “RIng”. The scene of the final chapter is St Helena, the island of Napoleon’s exile. The reappearance of INRI from the cross is justified by Burgess as follows:

His island of exile is named for the Romano-British saint who found the true cross. Christ died, but Christ lives. N is removed from the worldly scene but his charisma cannot be quelled. Christ had INRI on the titulus of his cross. INRI can stand for *Imperatorem Napoleonem Regem Interfeciamus*. The initials and the whole phrase can be brokenly sung to the theme of Beethoven’s variations (which, you will remember, comes straight from his *Prometheus* ballet music).²¹⁷

²¹⁴ The pieces reused are *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus*, Op. 43, the seventh piece of the *Twelve Contredanses* WoO 14 and the *Prometheus* Variations, Op. 35. (Shockley, *Music in the Words*, 94.)

²¹⁵ *ReJoyce* is the title of one of Burgess’s books on Joyce.

²¹⁶ Burgess, *Napoleon Symphony*, 343.

²¹⁷ Burgess, *This Man and Music*, 188.

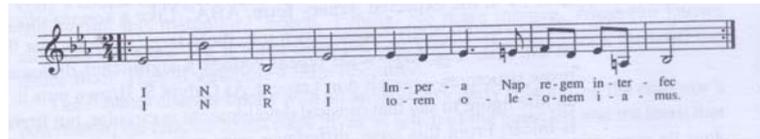


Fig. 9.: Ludwig van Beethoven, *Eroica Symphony*, Op. 55, IV. Allegro molto (Finale), with Anthony Burgess's words

The movement of the first four half-notes (the melody of the letters I N R I), which can be clearly seen in the score, can be read as corresponding to the cross. As this theme keeps reappearing in Beethoven's music, INRI is also presented in various verses as an acrostic:

Impunity – I marked the word
 Negate the fires of human dawn,
 Ring out above the sleeves of lawn
 In pomp but pity uninferred.²¹⁸

Or:

IN such encounters may we find
 RRight contact between mind and mind.
 INhuman to the larger sense,
 RIch, though, in human innocence,
 INto the little zone of light
 RIdes the Archruler of the Night.²¹⁹

²¹⁸ Burgess, *Napoleon Symphony*, 323.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 286.

Shockley observes that since the acrostics require reading a text both from left-to-right and top-to-bottom, these examples may serve as another type of text polyphony.²²⁰ The “cross” also appears as a symbol (the # of the F sharp) in the final movement of the symphony, when the music modulates into g minor scale.

The variations in Beethoven’s music can also be transposed into the variations of Napoleon’s dreams. Through his dreams Napoleon re-lives some phases of his life, but in different contexts. The main themes of his life (the battles, women) appear as variations in the nightmares. Another theme or “fragment” from his life is symbolised by the Polish words “Kleba? Niema. Vota? Sana.”, meaning “Some bread? There is none. Some water? We will go and fetch it.”²²¹ In his feverish dream Napoleon recalls his stay in Poland, and the Polish words become mixed with the INRI motif:

K. N. V. S.

K L E B A ?

N I E M A.

V O T A ?

S A N A.

I. N. R. I.

Is there any bread?

None whatsoever.

River water, spring water, stagnant water, any water?

If there is, it must be looked for.

K I. N N. V.R. SI.²²²

²²⁰ Shockley, *Music in the Words*, 97.

²²¹ Louis Antoine Fauvelet de Bourrienne in *The Life of Napoleon Bonaparte*, Vol. III (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1831) quotes that “The French troops used to say that the four following words constituted the whole language of the Poles: – *Kleba? niema; vota? sana.*” (54)

²²² Burgess, *Napoleon Symphony*, 302.

The scenes merge in Napoleon's mind similarly to the motifs and acrostics appearing in the verse:

[H]e lay and transported himself to Poland. He lay naked in snow and kicked about in it until he shivered for sheer healthy animal want of heat: O let me be taken to some such torrid clime as that of the island of the cross that is named after the great woman who found the cross.²²³

The simultaneous appearance of various themes does not apply only to Napoleon's dreams, but the same process happens in the reader's mind. By the reappearance of leitmotifs as melodies, rhythms, acrostics, or any other tools the reader will connect (or counterpoint) present scenes with earlier ones, thus expanding mental space.

There is a correspondence also between the time of the symphony and of the novel. Time can be accelerated or retarded in the novel,²²⁴ just as the tempo of the music may change. Beethoven's indications of tempo for each movement of his symphony can be applied to the chapters of Burgess's novel. The first movement (and chapter) is *Allegro con brio*, which is suitable for presenting the battle scenes. Most of the movement is made up of quarter- or eighth-notes, and is written in $\frac{3}{4}$, the rhythm of the waltz. Napoleon exclaims at the beginning of the novel that: " 'The days of minuet are over. These are the days of the waltz.' ",²²⁵ marking the correspondence with the rhythmic pattern of the symphony. The extended quarter-notes of the minor (the "feminine" theme) give the listener the impression of slowing down and retarding the tempo. In the novel Burgess often points out that Napoleon is "quick" in his battles, his manner of eating or making love. This "rush" is expressed by the eighth-notes throughout the movement; however, there is a halt by the

²²³ Ibid., 302.

²²⁴ Mowat, "Joyce's Contemporary", 191.

²²⁵ Burgess, *Napoleon Symphony*, 18.

end expressed with the pathetic half- and quarter-notes equalling in mood the majestic crowning scene.

The tempo of the second movement slows down (*Adagio assai*) in the symphony as well as in the novel. Napoleon, instead of rushing forward, becomes more reflective, and the reader gets to know many events retrospectively, through his dreams or his thoughts. His defeated army trudges in the hard winter of Russia, thousands of soldiers dying on the way home, the mournful and sorrowful mood resembling a funeral march (*Marcia funebre*).

The third movement is light and playful, a real *Scherzo* with the indication *Allegro vivace*. The *staccato* quarter-notes rush through the movement, with a temporary halt towards the middle marked by the half-notes and *legatos* of the Trio. The repetition of tri-syllabic words like “bivouac” also echoes the *staccatos* of the quarter-notes written in $\frac{3}{4}$ (see figure 10).



Fig. 10.: Ludwig van Beethoven, *Eroica Symphony*, Op. 55, III. *Allegro vivace* (Scherzo)

The novel also becomes more playful, with Prometheus (first introduced in the play Napoleon watches on the anniversary of his crowning) gradually becoming the hero of the book. As in the first chapter, there is a lot of celebration, balls and dancing (“Dance dance dance! The orchestra struck up another waltz”²²⁶), but there are battles as well, ending with the final defeat at Waterloo. Napoleon compares fighting to dancing the waltz, which is

²²⁶ Ibid., 243.

quicker than the minuets of the old times. As already mentioned, the rondo structure of the movement (ABA) is preserved in the novel, too. The first and last “quicker” parts frame the passive middle one, when Napoleon watches a play mocking him. He does not like stasis, he considers it comic – he believes that if there is a chair on the stage, then the play is a comedy.

The short, polyphonic and contrapuntal notes of the movement are reflected in the simultaneous conversations of the guests at the ceremony, who talk superficially of light topics (as light as the music of the *Scherzo*):

The talk was not of art nor of delicate amours but of how best to salt money and that bastard there has done well for himself I remember when he was a snotnosed ensign and Jesus what a pair she has on her and no no no you have it wrong it was just after Wagram he got this dose his prick so on fire you could see it in the dark anyway I could tell the husband guessed what was going on so I got the message to him that I'd had something shot off at Austerlitz and say what you like some spuds and onions fried in train-oil on a bivouac fire tastes better than all that muck they serve up at Nicalas's and charge you the earth for and Good Christ I could have sworn that that bint over there was the one in the knocking-shop at Vicenza.²²⁷

The quick alternations of the short words or fragments of the conversations sound like the *staccatos* in Beethoven's music. Similarly, the polyphony of voices is reflected by the quick shifts from one speaker and topic to the other.

Although the last movement is marked as *Allegro molto*, the quick tempo can be felt only in the parts dominated by sixteenth-notes. There is also an *Andante* section towards the end, but the music accelerates afterwards. The equivalent of this acceleration is

²²⁷ Ibid., 242.

the quickening shift of the scenes and themes, and also of the shift between Napoleon's dreams and reality.

In "An Epistle to the Reader", the concluding section of the novel, Burgess explains in verse form some details of his novel, including its origin and the literary counterparts of several musical features. He also invokes earlier literary experiments like the "comic-pedantic fugal" "Sirens" episode, claiming that "this is / Really a piece of elephantine fun / Designed to show the thing cannot be done".²²⁸ Burgess is aware of the difficulty or impossibility of his attempt to give "Symphonic shape to verbal narrative, / Impose on life, though nerves scream and resist, / The abstract patterns of the symphonist".²²⁹ Nevertheless, he went as far as possible in representing "the Napoleonic presence / And, *contra punctum*, music's formal essence".²³⁰ Shockley, referring to Bakhtin and other critics claiming that the novel is a dialectic between genre and structure, observes that "this book plays with the dialogue between genre and structure, just borrowing its structure from Beethoven".²³¹ I think Shockley uses the proper term when he talks of "play". Burgess admits in the epistle that his original aim was to write *The Napoleon Comic Symphony*, where the play with words and musical structure is more essential than narration. Shockley claims that with this novel Burgess failed as a writer, since "this book is just missing a narrative".²³² Most probably Burgess never intended to relate the most remarkable moments of Napoleon's life. The theme of the novel is rather playing with words and music.

Despite the fact that his contemporaries considered the novel to be a failure, Burgess did not give up his experimentation with musical forms. More than fifteen years

²²⁸ Ibid., 349.

²²⁹ Ibid., 348.

²³⁰ Ibid., 350.

²³¹ Alan Shockley, "Failing as a Writer: Musical Techniques in *Napoleon Symphony*", in *Anthony Burgess: Music in Literature and Literature in Music*, ed. Marc Jeannin (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 78.

²³² Ibid., 78.

later, in his *Mozart and the Wolf Gang* another symphony is invoked – it is of no surprise that it is a piece written by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, namely, his *Symphony No. 40 in G Minor*. The narrative follows the structure of a comic opera (*opera buffa*), an ABA structure, and only the orchestral interlude is based on the symphony.²³³ Burgess makes use of the musical piece on several levels, going as far as writing some passages upon the most popular melody of the symphony (see figure 14).



Fig. 11.: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Symphony No. 40 in G Minor*, K. 550

The words corresponding to the musical theme are sounded by Burgess as: “He himself, he himself, he himself trod”.²³⁴ This type of “musicalization of fiction” has already appeared in *Napoleon Symphony*, where Burgess wrote lyrics upon the musical motif of the second movement of *Eroica* Symphony. Such attributes are hardly recognizable even by readers familiar with the musical compositions without being informed in advance of the rhythmic analogies which make it possible to connect these lines to a particular melody. Nevertheless, *Mozart and the Wolf Gang*, along with *Napoleon Symphony* and Joyce’s “Sirens” episode, is not merely “a piece of elephantine fun”. All works have the merit of applying musical techniques in order to expand the confines of traditional narration, to convey polyphony and simultaneity in a literary text.

²³³ Daniel G. Geldenhuys in “The Wolf Gang as Structural Exercise in Mozart Writing”, in *Anthony Burgess: Music in Literature and Literature in Music*, ed. Marc Jeannin (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), provides an analysis of musical structure on the macro-level.

²³⁴ Anthony Burgess, *Mozart and the Wolf Gang* (London: Vintage, 1991), 81.

2.5. Counterpoint and variations as metaphor and musical device in *Point Counter Point* and *The Gold Bug Variations*

From the texts discussed in detail we can conclude that both in Joyce's "Sirens" episode and Burgess's *Napoleon Symphony* – beyond the obvious musical references – there is some underlying musical structural element necessary to convey something that cannot be expressed by traditional literary means. If that were a requirement for a "musicalized" novel, then the term would not apply to Aldous Huxley's *Point Counter Point*. Even if its title refers to a musical device, and it contains the "programme" of musicalizing fiction delivered by Huxley's novelistic counterpart, Philip Quarles, the novel's comparability on a structural level with any musical form or technique is still questionable. The novel includes some techniques inherent in music as well, but these tools and the way they are applied in the novel are not purely musical. The musical title might be misleading if the reader interprets it as a musical term, as is shown by the various analyses going as far as proving that the novel is built on fugal structure.²³⁵ In fact, it seems more rewarding to treat the title as a musical metaphor for "contrast", and to look for musical affinities from this point of view. Since Quarles's metareferential diary contains the theoretical background of the novel's composition, quoting its relevant lines should be the ideal starting-point for a musical comparison:

The musicalization of fiction. Not in the symbolist way, by subordinating sense to sound. [...] But on a large scale, in the construction. Meditate on Beethoven. The changes of moods, the abrupt transitions. (Majesty alternating with a joke, for example, in the first movement of the B flat major quartet. Comedy suddenly hinting at prodigious and tragic solemnities in the scherzo of the C sharp minor quartet.) More interesting still the modulations, not merely from one key to another, but from mood to

²³⁵ Cf. the "*Point Counter Point* Special Edition" of *Studies in the Novel* 9.4 (1977), especially Donald Watt's study on "The Fugal Construction of *Point Counter Point*". (509-517)

mood. A theme is stated, then developed, pushed out of shape, imperceptibly deformed, until, though still recognizably the same, it has become quite different. [...] Get this into a novel. How? The abrupt transitions are easy enough. All you need is a sufficiency of characters and parallel, contrapuntal plots. [...] You alternate the themes. More interesting, the modulations and variations are also more difficult. A novelist modulates by reduplicating situations and characters. He shows several people falling in love, or dying, or praying in different ways – dissimilars solving the same problem. Or, *vice versa*, similar people confronted with dissimilar problems. In this way you can modulate through all the aspects of your theme, you can write variations in any number of different moods.²³⁶

The first statement, referring to the acoustic features of music, is clearly applicable to Huxley's novel, since none of its words or sentences aims at imitating musical sound. On the other hand, there is confusion in the novelist's references to "construction". The examples include changes of mood and abrupt transitions in the imaginary content analogies of Beethoven's music,²³⁷ which have more to do with the narrative potentials inherent in the composer's music than with purely structural considerations. Furthermore, "majesty" and "joke", "comedy" and "tragic solemnities" are semantic elements that can be related to both literature and music, regardless of any interrelationship between the two media.

Another confusion derives from Huxley's use of the terms "key" and "mood", which are interchangeable in music. The writer probably means that the abrupt transitions of scenes and the alternation of themes have the same effect as the modulations in music. But a few lines below Huxley uses the same term as the synonym of variations, when there are "dissimilars solving the same problem" or "similar people confronted with dissimilar

²³⁶ Huxley, *Point Counter Point*, 295-296.

²³⁷ Musical content and meaning will be discussed in detail in chapter 3.

problems". All these techniques are inherent in music, but not only in music. In fact, the abrupt transitions requiring parallel, contrapuntal (or contrasting) plots, the modulations affecting the mood, and the variations presenting the same theme from different angles can be the inherent features of any literary text, regardless of its musical affinities. Thus, the polyphony of voices and the contrasted themes are not sufficient in themselves to produce a musical effect. It needs to be examined whether they point towards some sort of simultaneity, which is primarily a musical characteristic.

Peter Firchow considers *Point Counter Point* to be the first real approximation to a truly systematic aesthetics of simultaneity among works written in English.²³⁸ However, Firchow's concept of simultaneity refers rather to the multiplicity of perspectives, as Philip Quarles defines the role of contemporary fiction ("the essence of the new way of looking is multiplicity"; "[m]ultiplicity of eyes and multiplicity of aspects seen"²³⁹). Although he observes that "Huxley's aesthetic of simultaneity in this novel involves the introduction of musical analogies, especially that of counterpoint, which may be defined as the simultaneous performance in harmony of two sets of musical notation",²⁴⁰ he connects it to the way human nature is presented by the writer, to the multiple personality, the simultaneous existence of a variety of selves.²⁴¹ Firchow claims that in such cases Huxley's "aesthetic of simultaneity is virtually equivalent to a Hegelian aesthetic of the totality of objects, incorporating both space and time; or to Friedrich Schlegel's notion of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* [...] which proposes that the novel should embody all experience and art simultaneously".²⁴² He supports his statement with the scene where Huxley

²³⁸ Peter Edgerly Firchow, "The Aesthetics of Simultaneity", in *Reluctant Modernists: Aldous Huxley and Some Contemporaries – A Collection of Essays by Peter Edgerly Firchow*, ed. Evelyn S. Firchow and Bernfried Nügel (Münster-Hamburg-London: LIT Verlag, 2002), 181.

²³⁹ Huxley, *Point Counter Point*, 193.

²⁴⁰ Firchow, "Aesthetics of Simultaneity", 181.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 181.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, 182.

juxtaposes the music of Bach to the vivisection of tadpoles and the trivial chatter of a party, and a passage enumerating various events that can happen within two hours:

In two hours the muscles of the heart contract and relax, contract again and relax only eight thousand times. The earth travels less than an eighth of a million miles along its orbit. ... Two hours are as nothing. The time to listen to the Ninth Symphony and a couple of the posthumous quartets, to fly from London to Paris, to transfer a luncheon from the stomach to the small intestine, to read *Macbeth*, to die of snake bite or earn one-and-eight-pence as a charwoman. No more. But to Illidge, as he sat waiting, with the dead body lying there behind the screen, waiting for the darkness, they seemed unending.²⁴³

This latter case of aesthetic simultaneity can be connected to modern scientific developments, especially to the relativity theory of Einstein.²⁴⁴ Huxley enumerates various activities that can happen within a period of time – activities which do not necessarily happen simultaneously. They are only placed in an ironic contrast with Illidge's present situation. Considering it from a musical perspective, the passage cannot be compared to the simultaneous voices of a fugue. Even if the various juxtaposed scenes can be considered to resemble the voices of a polyphonic fugue, not all of these events happen within the same span of time, only their duration is equal. Therefore, it is an example rather of the multiple perspectives of the same subject (a two hours' interval) than of simultaneity.

On the other hand, there are passages in the novel comparable to musical simultaneity. In the following quotation Huxley presents the individual voices of the members of a party. Since the dialogues are not connected thematically, the reader may assume that several voices are sounded at the same time, like the voices of a fugue. As

²⁴³ Huxley, *Point Counter Point*, 391.

²⁴⁴ Firchow, "Aesthetics of Simultaneity", 183.

opposed to Burgess's fugato passage in *Napoleon Symphony*, where one theme was sounded by three equal voices, this part has almost as many themes as voices. Still, it gets much closer to musical simultaneity than the above-quoted lines.

'Stertorous what?' asked Lucy. 'Do remember that I've never been educated.'

'Warbling your native woodnotes wild!' said Willie. 'May I help myself to some of that noble brandy? The blushful Hippocrene.'

'She treated me badly, extremely badly.' Peter Slipe was plaintive. 'But I don't want her to think that I bear her any grudge.'

Willie Weaver smacked his lips over the brandy. 'Solid joys and liquid pleasures none but Zion's children know,' he misquoted and repeated his little cough of self-satisfaction.

'The trouble with Cuthbert,' Spandrell was saying, 'is that he's never quite learnt to distinguish art from pornography.'

'Of course,' continued Peter Slipe, 'she had a perfect right to do what she liked with her own house. But to turn me out at such short notice.'²⁴⁵

The novel as a whole may also suggest simultaneity. Philip Quarles's writing a novel on the same theoretical foundation as the one on which *Point Counter Point* is based is "a situation which is simultaneously fact and fiction".²⁴⁶ In this case simultaneity refers to the association taking place in the reader's mind. Moreover, other associations are triggered by recurring themes, such as love, illness and death. As the variations upon these themes appear, the reader reflects upon earlier situations.

All in all, in *Point Counter Point* simultaneity may refer either to the treatment of a subject from multiple perspectives, or to the synthesis in the reader's mind. Nevertheless, there are attempts to imitate fugal polyphony in several passages; however, these

²⁴⁵ Huxley, *Point Counter Point*, 124.

²⁴⁶ Firchow, "Aesthetics of Simultaneity", 185.

experiments do not approximate musical features the way some of Joyce's and Burgess's texts do. The novel is built upon contrasting themes, situations and characters, the author's choice being justified by Spandrell's statement towards the end on the novel, claiming that "[t]hings exist only in terms of their opposites".²⁴⁷

Even if the novel's structure cannot be considered to be musical, it is experimental in other ways. As we know it from Philip Quarles's diary, Huxley's aim is "to depart from traditional linear storytelling, which is centred on one or two 'heroes' or 'heroines', in favour of a multiplication of characters, plots and plot-situations and to treat these in a formalist way that is more reminiscent of musical variations than of mimetic narrative".²⁴⁸ The formalist treatment of such vast material is indispensable: such a great number of characters and situations cannot be presented as a single, coherent text. These fragments of life are juxtaposed and connected by general themes. Still, this structuring cannot be considered as musical variations, either. On the one hand, in music, variations are written upon only one theme, and its application in literature produces texts comparable to the various endings of *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. On the other hand, the themes of *Point Counter Point* are rather general, occurring in many other novels as well. Wolf's thematic inventory includes Fietz's central thematic opposition of sensuality and intellectualism, the numerous thematic unities in the field of moral positions or world views, the different attitudes towards art, love, illness and death.²⁴⁹ Although the development of the themes and their variations may have affinities with musical variations, moreover, the contrapuntal structure (involving various independent voices of equal importance and independence resulting in a simultaneity in the reader's mind) is an inherent feature of the polyphonic fugue, the number of these voices and the variety of the

²⁴⁷ Huxley, *Point Counter Point*, 408.

²⁴⁸ Wolf, *Musicalization of Fiction*, 166.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 170.

themes make the novel incompatible with any musical structure. Firchow's description of the musical techniques of the novel, comparing it with Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain* includes characteristics that may be applicable to a vast number of other novels: "both contain full orchestras of characters, but with no conductor, except for the usually remote author; both make much of the different intellectual tonalities of their character-instruments; both use contrapuntal technique on a small and a vast scale, either by juxtaposing word and thought, or idea-complex; both focus on a limited number of universal themes – love, disease, death – and variously modulate these themes".²⁵⁰

Firchow considers music as a structuring device in the novel,²⁵¹ as a frame embedding the ideas Huxley wants to convey. On the other hand, as we shall see in the following chapter, music may also enrich literary meaning by its narrative potentials or content analogies. In fact, the semantic aspects of music are more dominant in *Point Counter Point* than its structural features. Regarding the structural elements, the novel might be compared to other forms of art as well. Farkas points out its resemblance with visual arts, first of all with the jump-cut and montage techniques of the art of cinematography,²⁵² but he adds that "[t]he juxtaposition of contrary or parallel plotlines highlighted in the title will be no less familiar to compulsive viewers of television serials now routinely exploiting the quasi-musical technique referred to in the novel's title".²⁵³

Richard Powers's *The Gold Bug Variations* has more affinities with musical variations and counterpoint than Huxley's *Point Counter Point* does. The novel does not only follow the structure of the composition it was written on,²⁵⁴ but it also presents its musical features on

²⁵⁰ Peter E. Firchow, "Mental Music", in *Reluctant Modernists*, 204.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 203.

²⁵² Ákos I. Farkas, "Canon and Canonicity in Huxley's *Point Counter Point*", in *Publicationes Universitatis Miskolcensis*, Sectio Philosophica 15.2 (2010), 118.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 118.

²⁵⁴ J. S. Bach's *Goldberg Variations*.

several levels. *The Gold Bug Variations* is more than an example of musico-literary intermediality; it is “a dense contrapuntal rope consisting of such narrative threads as music, genetics, literature, northern Renaissance art, computer science, and love relationships and friendship among the main characters”.²⁵⁵

The introductory part, the “Aria” presents the central topics of the novel, all of them evolving around the number 4. In fact, this number connects all the topics, namely, music, genetics, the characters and nature. The “Aria” contains 4 poems, each including 4 stanzas – there are altogether 64 lines in the introductory part, similarly to the “Aria” of Bach’s piece which contains twice 32 measures. The first poem introduces the musical theme of the variations, 4 notes descending from *do*:

I.

What could be simpler? Four
scale-steps descend from Do.

Four such measures carry over

The course of four phrases, then home. [...]

What could be simpler? Not even music
yet, but only counting: Do, ti, la, sol.

Believing their own pulse, four tones

break into combinations, uncountable.²⁵⁶ [...]

As the theme of the musical piece, that is, the four notes of the bass line may “break into combinations, uncountable”, so do the four bases of DNA form an indefinite range of variations:

²⁵⁵ Kiyoko Magome, *The Influence of Music on American Literature Since 1890: A History of Aesthetic Counterpoint* (Lewiston-Queenston-Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2008), 206.

²⁵⁶ Powers, *Gold Bug Variations*, 7.

II.

From language to life is just four letters.

How can that awful fecundity come
from four semaphores, shorthand and dumb,
nothing in themselves but everything?

Gene-raining cascade, proliferating green
tints, varieties senseless except for their own
runaway joy in the explosion. Fresh phloem-
pipes, palisades, leaves ripe for insect-aping.²⁵⁷ [...]

The four letters of the DNA's four bases change into another image. Four people are presented, whose fates become intertwined like the double helix of DNA:

III.

Two men, two women, their requisite friends,
acquaintances, strangers and impediments,
two couples at arm's length of thirty years bend
in ascending spiral dance around each other.²⁵⁸ [...]

The fourth poem introduces the largest element of the variations: nature, or life itself, including all the elements presented before. Number 4 is of central importance for this element, too:

IV.

[...]

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 8.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 8.

Everything that ever summered forth starts
in identical springs, or four-note var-
iations on that repeated theme: four seasons,
four winds, four corners, four-chambered heart²⁵⁹ [...]

The common theme of these topics is decoding. Jan O’Deigh and Franklin Todd, two friends involved in human sciences (one of them being a librarian, the other a PhD candidate in arts) begin to explore their deceased friend’s, Stuart Ressler’s field of study, molecular biology, in order to learn more about his personality. Their method is the exact counterpoint of the deceased scientist’s learning process in the past, when he started to get involved in music so that he could better understand the recording of Bach’s *Goldberg Variations* he received from his love.

Bach’s contrapuntal music appears in the contrast between disciplines, past and present, text and sub-texts, musical and genetic terminology, to name but a few. Among these the relation between text and its sub-texts is the most intriguing. The musical sub-text does not only include the *Goldberg Variations*; the key for decoding may be found in other musical pieces, too. As the familiarity with Bach’s composition gives the reader a clue to understand the allusions and the novel’s structure, so does a spiritual, “Jacob’s Ladder” give an impetus to Dr. Ressler in decoding some mysteries of DNA structure:

Jacob’s Ladder, the two-lane highway to higher kingdoms. Angels are caught descending and ascending in two solemn, frozen, opposing columns. In his soporific reverie, four kinds of angels twist along the golden stairs. Bright angels and dark, of both sexes. Four angel varieties freeze in two adjacent queues up and down the case, each stuck on a step that it shares with its exact counterpart. Every bright man opposite a dark woman. Every bright woman, a dark man. [...] Four angel varieties to signify

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 9.

DNA's four bases: thymine, cytosine, adenine, and guanine. Jacob's helical staircase ladder conjured out of a single strand of nucleic acid.²⁶⁰

The colour of gold does not only refer to the golden staircase. It is also included in the title of the literary sub-text, namely in Edgar Allan Poe's mystery story, "The Gold-Bug". The short story is another clue for Dr. Ressler in his research. He realises that "[t]he treasure in Poe's tale is not the buried gold but the cryptographer's flicker of insight, the trick, the linguistic key to unlocking not just the map at hand but any secret writing".²⁶¹ In terms of molecular biology it means that the research team should not look for what a particular string of DNA says, but they should try to find out how it says it, since "[t]he heart of the code must lie hidden in its grammar".²⁶² They must "latch onto a language that can articulate its own axioms, a technique that can generate – in the effortless idiom it models – endlessly extensible four-letter synonyms for Life".²⁶³

Poe's short story is heralded by the theme of cryptography early in the novel, when Dr. Ressler has to decode a message including the exact date of a party. The reader is reminded of the tale by the leitmotiv-like reappearance of the word "gold" in expressions like "genetic gold bugs", "golden stairs", "*Goldberg Variations*". In fact, the sub-texts are present simultaneously, counterpointing each other like the voices of a fugue. They are individual, independent voices playing the same theme, reinforcing each other throughout the novel. The simultaneous presence of these sub-texts is symbolised by the DNA structure, the allusions to contrapuntal music, cryptography, or even such trivial things as Eva's taking simultaneous dictation. All sub-texts can also be considered as variations of "gold bug", each having a code which has to be broken. Moreover, the sub-texts

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 74.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 77.

²⁶² Ibid., 76.

²⁶³ Ibid., 77.

themselves are also polyphonic, the most evident example being Bach’s contrapuntal music, but it is not hard to imagine the spatial aspect of the DNA with the simultaneous presence of its four bases or the two-voiced cryptography in Poe’s short story, where meaning is hidden below the surface. For those readers who have seen scores from the Baroque or earlier periods the numbers (and signs) of cryptography in Poe’s short story recall the figured bass lines,²⁶⁴ where the notes or chords are represented by numbers. As in “The Gold-Bug” the numbers and signs can be related to letters, in figured bass lines the numbers and signs stand for musical notes. The following figure is the bass line of *Goldberg Variations* which is the basis of the “Aria” and the 30 variations (note the number of its measures: 2 x 32, or, to represent number 4 more recognizably, 4 x 16). The numbers indicate the chord; in those cases where there are several numbers separated by commas, they mark the different options taken in the variations:



he hopes to get closer to his love. While listening to the composition he also understands some mysteries of life:

Dr. Ressler [...] must have loved discovering in Bach two paired strands, four phrase-building blocks, a sixty-four-codon catalog. Bach had a habit of imbedding mystic numbers in his compositions; these ones happen to correspond to the number-game nature imbeds in its own. But this coincidence was the least of the qualities that made this music Ressler's best metaphor for the living gene.²⁶⁵

The main similarity between the numbers of the musical composition and the mystic numbers of molecular biology is that both of them can be reduced to four elements. The first four notes in the bass line of *Goldberg Variations* appear already at the beginning of the novel. Jan recalls the tune of these notes, the “pattern-matching analog”²⁶⁶ Ressler was looking for, initiating the reader into their importance: “We all derive from the same four notes”.²⁶⁷ The fragments of Jan’s memory are decoded for the reader later on, when he learns how the musical piece is related to the DNA molecule. Powers discovers other numerical analogies, like the number of measures (64) and the triplet triads in music corresponding to the sixty-four possible combinations of the three nucleotide bases, thus making Bach’s composition provide structure not only for the novel, but also for a segment of molecular biology. However, *Goldberg Variations* does not only mean structure for the scientist. He is impressed by its beautiful melody, too, the proper metaphor for life.

Magome calls Powers’s interdisciplinary counterpoint an encyclopedic counterpoint which “strongly stimulates not just our intellectual interests but also our

²⁶⁵ Powers, *Gold Bug Variations*, 579.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 24.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 25.

emotions”.²⁶⁸ While reading the novel the reader is involved in several texts, and his task is not only to read a narrative in a linear way, but also to synthesize the variations provided by the voices, that is, the contrapuntal interdisciplinary sub-texts.

2.6. The musical leitmotiv in *The Waste Land*

In his critical writings, as well as in some of his poems, T. S. Eliot considers all three levels – the acoustic, the structural and the semantic – on which music can affect a literary artefact. He is concerned primarily with lyrical and dramatic works but most of his views may equally be applied to narrative genres. The presence of music on the acoustic and structural levels is more evident (and also more recognizable) in poetry than in narratives; still, the use of some structural elements, such as the leitmotiv, affects the semantic level of all kinds of literary texts in the same way.

In the essay “The Music of Poetry” T. S. Eliot claims that “the properties in which music concerns the poet most nearly [...] are the sense of rhythm and the sense of structure”.²⁶⁹ In fact, rhythm and structure are closely related: even if rhythm is primarily an acoustic feature, it has an important role in a poem’s structure. Moreover, Eliot believes that it also affects the semantic aspects of a poem. In some cases “a poem, or a passage of a poem, may tend to realize itself first as a particular rhythm before it reaches expression in words, and that this rhythm may bring to birth the idea and the image”.²⁷⁰ In his essay on “Matthew Arnold” Eliot calls this relation between rhythm and thought ‘auditory imagination’, and defines it as “the feeling for syllable and rhythm, penetrating far below the conscious levels of thought and feeling, invigorating every word; sinking to the most primitive and forgotten, returning to the origin and bringing something back, seeking the

²⁶⁸ Magome, *Influence of Music*, 204.

²⁶⁹ T. S. Eliot, “The Music of Poetry”, in *On Poetry and Poets* (London, Boston: Faber and Faber, 1957), 38.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 38.

beginning and the end”.²⁷¹ He adds that “it works through meanings, certainly, or not without meanings in the ordinary sense, and fuses the old and obliterated and the trite, the current, and the new and surprising, the most ancient and the most civilised mentality”.²⁷² Eliot’s thoughts on musical features and meaning reappear and are further developed in “The Music of Poetry”. He discusses the musical features of a word according to its relation to the words in its context, and according to the relation of its immediate meaning to all the meanings it has had in other contexts, concluding that in a musical poem sound and sense are indissoluble. Eliot claims that the music of poetry “must be a music latent in the common speech of its time”,²⁷³ emphasizing the importance of poetry’s contact with the constantly changing everyday language besides the influences from the past or other languages. The comparison of past and present is a frequently returning topic in the Eliot-œuvre.

Beyond rhythm, structure and meaning, Eliot took into consideration other analogies and ways in which music may affect a literary work:

The use of recurrent themes is as natural to poetry as to music. There are possibilities for verse which bear some analogy to the development of a theme by different groups of instruments; there are possibilities of transitions in a poem comparable to the different movements of a symphony or a quartet; there are possibilities of contrapuntal arrangement of subject-matter.²⁷⁴

These ideas can be well supported by some of Eliot’s representative poetry. In *Four Quartets*, for instance, one can find examples for all the above-mentioned musical

²⁷¹ T. S. Eliot, “Matthew Arnold”, in *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism: Studies in the Relation of Criticism to Poetry in England* (London, Boston: Faber and Faber, 1933), 118-119.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 119.

²⁷³ Eliot, “Music of Poetry”, 31.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 38.

analogies. Although the title suggests the presence of music on a structural level, music appears also as theme in the poem. Apart from music, there are several other, more often recurring themes throughout the poem, reappearing as a leitmotiv in various contexts, adding new layers of meaning to the same concept. The central theme of “Burnt Norton” is time, appearing as “Time present and time past” and as “Time past and time future”, these aspects of time being presented as indivisible. But time is not only a recurring theme, which is further developed in new contexts, it also appears in a contrapuntal arrangement, for instance, when time is placed in contrast with the timeless, the temporal world with eternity (representing movement and stasis), or the hypothetical past with the actual (“What might have been and what has been”).

The most problematic musical aspect of *Four Quartets* is its overall structure, which is still debated by critics. R. W. Flint and F. O. Matthiessen connect the poem to Beethoven’s late string quartets. Flint remarks that the familiarity with the musical form, and the knowledge that for the mature Beethoven it was a means “to express his ultimate ‘wisdom’ ”²⁷⁵ does not bring the reader closer to the enjoyment of Eliot’s poems built upon the “recurrent structural pattern of five ‘movements’ of alternated lyric and discourse”.²⁷⁶ In considering the musical form of Beethoven’s late string quartets, Matthiessen does not go into details, either.²⁷⁷ The general statements of these two critics ignore the fact that, in contrast with the five movements of Eliot’s each quartet, the number of movements in Beethoven’s late string quartets varies. Among the late quartets only Quartet in A Minor, Op. 132²⁷⁸ has five movements, the others may have four, six or even seven. Hugh Kenner provides us with the information that T. S. Eliot “is reported to have said that he was

²⁷⁵ R. W. Flint, “The *Four Quartets* Reconsidered”, in *T. S. Eliot: Four Quartets*, ed. Bernard Bergonzi (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1969), 113.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 113.

²⁷⁷ F. O. Matthiessen, “The *Quartets*”, in *T. S. Eliot: Four Quartets*, ed. Bernard Bergonzi (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1969), 93.

²⁷⁸ The third movement of the quartet will be discussed in detail in chapter 3.3.

paying attention chiefly to Bartók's Quartets, numbers 2-6",²⁷⁹ but a brief formal comparison will immediately reveal that, according to their structure, only String Quartets No. 4 and 5 are comparable to Eliot's quartets, since among the ones mentioned above only these two are in five movements. Paul Chancellor considers Eliot's music from another perspective, and in connection with another major poem. He believes that Eliot's music is rather comparable to the music of 20th-century composers. He supports his views as follows: "Eliot's sensibility as it is felt in *The Waste Land* is not Beethoven's. It is as distinctly a twentieth century sensibility as Stravinsky's or Schönberg's and, in 1922 at least, as new and startling".²⁸⁰ *The Waste Land* is a repository of various kinds of music, as diverse as ragtime and Wagner's music. Considering the musicality of the poem from Chancellor's perspective would mean treading on uncertain ground. Eliot's use of a structural element such as the leitmotiv offers a deeper and more tangible analysis of probably the most revealing musical aspect of the poem.

In "The Music of Poetry" T. S. Eliot names the rhythmic and structural features of music as the attributes most essential for a poet, but it seems that the allusions to music or to specific compositions are equally important in his poetry, especially in *The Waste Land*. In this poem the structural and semantic aspects of music affect literary meaning; since these allusions include multi-media art forms such as opera, where musical meaning is primarily defined by literary meaning, it would be rewarding to examine the lines framed by quotations taken from Richard Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, thus demonstrating the ways in which a musical structural element like the leitmotiv affects the meaning of the whole poem. Moreover, in this case the acoustic features of music, namely the melody, tempo and rhythm enrich the perception of these lines for those who are familiar with the

²⁷⁹ Hugh Kenner, "Into Our First World", in *T. S. Eliot: Four Quartets*, ed. Bernard Bergonzi (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1969), 182.

²⁸⁰ Paul Chancellor, "The Music of *The Waste Land*", in *Comparative Literature Studies* 6.1 (1969), 29.

opera; the language of the quotation does not imitate musical sound, its acoustic features are due to its melody in the opera. Helen Williams asserts that “the quotations from Wagner’s libretto surely add to a purely lyrical sound effect to the poem. [...] Eliot seems here to be aspiring almost to ‘poésie pure’, to sound above sense, hence perhaps his willingness to leave the fragments in German”.²⁸¹ Bernard Harris is unconvinced about translating *poésie pure* as ‘sound above sense’ but he believes that the fragments were left by Eliot in the original, German language because that is the only way to recall the music of the leitmotiv.²⁸² Along with the melody the reader will also remember the situations in which it appears in Wagner’s opera.

In the fragment including the quotations from the opera two contexts are present at the same time. Even if the reading (or listening) process of the poem is linear, the reader will be able to juxtapose the two texts in his mind, achieving simultaneity in his imagination. In “The Music of Poetry” Eliot emphasizes the importance of the context in which a word occurs, since it may enlarge its wealth of association.²⁸³ In the following quotation the two musical allusions framing the modern text might be considered to be examples of the values, attitudes and beliefs of the past, providing a contrast to the present state of mankind:

*Frisch weht der Wind
Der Heimat zu.
Mein Irisch Kind,
Wo weilest du?*

‘You gave me hyacinths first a year ago;
‘They called me the hyacinth girl.’
- Yet when we came back, late, from the hyacinth

²⁸¹ Helen Williams, *T.S. Eliot: The Waste Land* (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), 70.

²⁸² Bernard Harris, “‘This music crept by me’: Shakespeare and Wagner”, in *The Waste Land in Different Voices*, ed. A. D. Moody (London: Edward Arnold, 1974), 109.

²⁸³ Eliot, “Music of Poetry”, 33.

garden,
Your arms full, and your hair wet, I could not
Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither
Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,
Looking into the heart of light, the silence.
Oed' und leer das Meer.

In the opera the leitmotiv, the melody of the quotation used by T. S. Eliot recurs in different situations. When the melody is played again (without the words attached to them), the listener connects it to the words and the situation in which it was heard earlier. The situation evoked by the melody can be placed in a new context, thus making listeners recall that certain situation and connect it to the new one, resulting in an imaginary simultaneity. Harriet Davidson states that allusions in *The Waste Land* may be considered as a metaphoric device, where similarities can be found between the present text and the text alluded to, or as a figure “multiplying contexts for both the present work and the text alluded to and suggesting a cultural, historical dimension of difference”.²⁸⁴ The quotations from Wagner’s opera in the passage cited above fulfil both functions. First of all, there are many common thematic elements that link the poem with *Tristan und Isolde*: for instance, both works concentrate on unfulfilled loves; Tristan’s sword wounds remind the reader of the legend of the wounded Fisher King inherent in *The Waste Land*; and the sword and the cup from which the love-potion was drunk in the *Tristan* story “take up the sexual symbolism of the Grail lance and cup”.²⁸⁵ Secondly, beyond the thematic similarity of the opera and the poem, there are images inherent in both scenes of the quoted passage, for instance, images of fresh wind, watery images, or the garden as the meeting place of

²⁸⁴ Harriet Davidson, “Improper desire: Reading *The Waste Land*”, in *The Cambridge Companion to T. S. Eliot*, ed. A. D. Moody (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 128.

²⁸⁵ Williams, *T. S. Eliot: The Waste Land*, 69-70. Cf. Jessie L. Weston related the legend of the Grail to the myth of the Fisher King in *From Ritual to Romance*, a book mentioned by Eliot in the notes to *The Waste Land*.

lovers. The allusion to the empty and wide sea of silence echoes the silence and paralysis of Eliot's lovers; in Eliot's terms, "the image of the sea is an objective correlative for the desolate silence of the speaker".²⁸⁶ Finally, the sad tone of the melody also seems to support the sadness of the scene; as Williams observes, the second quotation is "both verbally and musically evocative of desolation".²⁸⁷

Beyond its function as a metaphoric device, where the textual parallelisms reinforce each other, the quotation from Wagner also expands our understanding of Eliot's poem by suggesting other contexts. Eliot's characters – as opposed to Wagner's characters – are paralysed, empty and void of strong emotions. In fact, in both works there is a lack of communication between the lovers, which adds to the tragic outcome of their love. According to Williams's view, "Eliot's incorporation of Wagner's atmosphere into his text serves as a reverberating reminder of what 'might have been' ",²⁸⁸ so the garden scene (as well as the other love-scenes of the poem) gains a fuller meaning when placed in different contexts. Davidson notes the difference between the speaker's sense of emptiness and the cultural plenitude offered by the opera, dispersing the reader's attention from clear themes.²⁸⁹ The boundaries between texts become vague, and the musical allusions enrich the meaning of the text.

Jewel Spears Brooker and Joseph Bentley draw our attention to the fact that Eliot originally inserted only the first four lines from the first act of the opera into the poem, and the last line, taken from the third act of the opera, was added later.²⁹⁰ They argue that this addition results in a radical structural change, i.e., in a frame instead of juxtaposition.²⁹¹ The aim of using a frame is to draw attention to the subject it encloses: in this case

²⁸⁶ Davidson, "Improper desire", 128.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 70.

²⁸⁸ Williams, *T. S. Eliot: The Waste Land*, 71.

²⁸⁹ Davidson, "Improper desire", 128.

²⁹⁰ Jewel Spears Brooker and Joseph Bentley, *Reading The Waste Land: Modernism and the Limits of Interpretation* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990), 69.

²⁹¹ Ibid., 69.

contemporary life is put into the centre and myth to the periphery. Similarly, Harris claims that “Eliot uses Wagner, as he does Shakespeare, to intensify or dilate the substance of his own text” and this way we should expect development from the text.²⁹² He agrees with Williams in that the quotations “frame the garden scene and pin-point the two moods of expectation undermined by fear and desperate yearning and desolation which mark [Eliot’s] own love episode”,²⁹³ thus indicating development, but rejects F. R. Leavis’s view of the Wagner quotation as a positive contrast to the garden scene, showing romantic love as opposed to contemporary love.²⁹⁴ While Harris finds that the quotations “intensify or dilate” Eliot’s text,²⁹⁵ Brooker and Bentley think that the *Tristan* story “resists its designation as a frame,”²⁹⁶ namely, the stabilization of the picture, since the frame is more powerful than the picture.²⁹⁷ As a contrast, Grover Smith states that the quotations from Wagner “have to be called thematic adjuncts, not keys to concealed avenues of allegory”.²⁹⁸ In order to decide the debate over the role of the two musical leitmotifs, one should recall Eliot’s mythic method elaborated in “*Ulysses, Order, and Myth*”. We may consider the quoted lines as a case of intertextuality (which is a case of intermediality at the same time), where a medieval story instead of a myth is paralleled or contrasted to a contemporary scene. These two allusions to the legend are structural devices, giving a frame, or, in Eliot’s words, “a shape and a significance” to the chaotic contemporary experience.²⁹⁹ Thus, at the same time, they are points of reference, affecting the meaning of the poem. It is important to note that it is a case of double intertextuality, since Wagner himself relied on a medieval legend when he was composing the opera.

²⁹² Harris, “ ‘This music crept by me’ , 109.

²⁹³ Williams, *T. S. Eliot: The Waste Land*, 70.

²⁹⁴ Harris, “ ‘This music crept by me’ , 109.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 109.

²⁹⁶ Brooker and Bentley, *Reading The Waste Land*, 70.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 70.

²⁹⁸ Grover Smith, *The Waste Land* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983), 130.

²⁹⁹ Eliot, “*Ulysses, Order, and Myth*”, 177.

The first Wagner quotation comes from the first scene of the opera. It is a song sung by a young sailor who misses his sweetheart, but Isolde believes he is mocking her, and becomes angry. The ship takes Isolde from Ireland to King Mark's land, where she has to marry him in spite of her will. The melody reappears as a leitmotiv during the first act of the opera, reminding the listener of Isolde's loneliness, desolation and fear of the future. She is already in love with Tristan but she does not let him know about her feelings. This lack of communication is present in the garden scene of *The Waste Land* as well. The paralysis and silence of contemporary lovers resemble Tristan and Isolde's *Liebestod* (love-in-death).³⁰⁰ In Wagner's opera the lovers can be happy only in the Night world, where their feelings are concealed by darkness. As Cleanth Brooks observes, the same situation appears in Eliot's poem: life devoid of meaning resembles death, while sacrificial death may be life-giving.³⁰¹ In the passage cited above the recollections of the Hyacinth girl – Hyacinth being one of the fertility gods – show that life at its highest moments of meaning and intensity may resemble death.³⁰² The major contrast between *Tristan und Isolde* and *The Waste Land* is that while in the former sacrificial death is life-giving, the outcome of the latter is uncertain. Tristan and Isolde's love can only exist in the Night world; their love is eternal, and it cannot die when the lovers leave the world of the Day. Although the contemporary scene does not reject the possibility of gaining spiritual and emotional fertility for the people (which can be interpreted as an awakening to life), it suggests that there will always be a danger of relapse. As John T. Mayer argues, Eliot associates the Hyacinth garden with death and nothingness,³⁰³ which will be echoed by the second quotation from Wagner. These words come from the third act of the opera, when a piper is watching the empty sea, waiting for Isolde's arrival to heal the dying Tristan. A

³⁰⁰ Cf. "I was neither living nor dead" in *The Waste Land*.

³⁰¹ Cleanth Brooks, "The Waste Land: Critique of the Myth", in *A Collection of Critical Essays on The Waste Land*, ed. Jay Martin (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1968), 60.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 63.

³⁰³ John T. Mayer, *T. S. Eliot's Silent Voices* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 256.

sad tune is associated by Wagner to this scene, which will eventually change into a happy one, with the arrival of Isolde. The act of waiting, along with the emptiness and desolation of the sea, reinforces Eliot's theme, since in *The Waste Land* desolation (of the land and of the people's lives) and waiting for redemption are also central topics. The first and the second quotation from Wagner are thematically connected. When the piper watches the empty sea ("Oed' und leer das Meer."), and Isolde is not seen yet, the question arises: "Mein Irisch kind, wo weilest du?" – this may be Tristan's question as well, waiting for Isolde's arrival. This frame strongly holds Eliot's passage together, strengthening the effect of the characters' feeling of yearning and desolation.

On the whole, the lines taken from Wagner add to the meaning of *The Waste Land*, not only by complementing it with parallel elements, but also by offering a contrast. The characters of the romantic opera sense the intensity of love in its sufferings and delights, but Eliot's characters, when approaching this feeling, miss the moment.³⁰⁴ This way the past becomes an essential element in the poem, giving meaning to the chaotic experience of the present.

If we related T. S. Eliot's poem only to the libretto of Wagner's opera, it would be a case of intertextuality, where the meaning of the text alluded to affects the meaning of the text which contains the allusion. Since the opera has musical aspects affecting the poem's meaning, this should be considered as an example of intermediality as well. Most critics are concerned only with the opera's textual features; however, if we know the role of the musical leitmotiv (or representative musical theme) in *Tristan und Isolde*, the contexts in which it reappears, we shall see that the melody has referential meaning even without words.

³⁰⁴ Williams, *T. S. Eliot: The Waste Land*, 71.

3. MUSIC AND MEANING: MUSIC AS CO-AUTHOR OF LITERARY TEXTS

‘You can’t understand anything until you have heard it’

(Aldous Huxley: *Point Counter Point*)

Both the structural and semantic presence of music strongly affects the perception and interpretation of the text. When the author resorts to a musical form, a technique or a composition as an organizing or aesthetic device his aim is to shape the multiplicity of aspects, or to convey simultaneity. It is the reader’s task to recognise the underlying structure and to take an active role in the reading process by constantly connecting, juxtaposing, re-evaluating the new layers of meaning. On the other hand, the semantic possibilities inherent in music demand that the reader take an even more active role, since in this case music is not only a stable structure used as a tool, but it also carries semantic elements which affect the interpretation of the text. In such cases music does not establish meaning; rather, it provides a wider field of play for semantic elements, opening a new perspective to the reader in the interpretation of the text. Since in a musicalized text two art forms are present, each of them carrying an infinite range of meanings, the number of its

possible interpretations is multiplied. The author of the text resorts deliberately to the use of these musical pieces, forms or techniques when he wants to affect the meaning of the literary text by searching for new layers of meaning within the specific musical piece, or even within the musical form itself.

The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate the way these musical tools change meaning and provide an external source of interpretation by carrying various layers of meaning on their own. Paradoxically, in such cases music is not only within the literary work, but outside it, carrying meanings seemingly independent from the text, but as these meanings are discovered, they might influence the interpretation of the whole narrative to a large extent. Lawrence Kramer makes a distinction between pure and applied music, the latter's role being to surround, accompany, or mix with virtually anything,³⁰⁵ including literature. He says: "To make anything more itself, or more anything, just add music".³⁰⁶

The author of the musically enriched literary text usually makes use of some kind of musical presence in order to affect meaning according to his intentions. However, there are layers of meaning within the musical piece or form not discovered by the author, thus the reader may interpret the text in a way not intended by him. Therefore, beyond the intentional musical meanings (being obvious for the readers familiar with that certain piece or musical form) affecting the interpretation of the literary text, there are quite a number of unintentional ones, working according to the rules of the other medium (i.e., music).

There are many novels or short stories where long passages are devoted to describing a musical piece or its effects; however, our field of investigation will be restricted to narratives where other musical aspects, such as form or technique, are also present, thus enabling us to reveal the multiplicity of meanings from various angles. Most

³⁰⁵ Lawrence Kramer, *Musical Meaning: Toward a Critical History* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2002), 3.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

narratives chosen to demonstrate musical influence on the interpretation of the literary text have been examined from a structural perspective in the previous chapter. As far as meaning is concerned, one cannot expect a definite outcome (e.g., a precise description of what the text is “about” before and after becoming familiar with the musical form or piece in the narrative); the analysis will rather show the (infinite) process itself, how music affects meaning, which will hopefully open new prospects of interpretation to readers who were not aware so far of the presence of the semantic layers of another medium within the text.

3.1. The polyphony of meaning

The multiplicity of meanings and the interpretation of literary texts have been the main concern of various schools of criticism. The object of debates among schools is primarily the source of meaning and the interpreter’s role in establishing meaning. Taking into account all these schools would result in diverting the attention from the established field of investigation of this chapter, which focusses on the influence of musical presence on the interpretation of narratives, or, to be more specific, on the role of musical meaning in the multiplication of the layers of literary meaning. Still, mentioning some relevant theories is necessary in order to support the analysis of specific literary texts. Since the views concerning meaning and interpretation vary within schools, their classification will be done according to the elements involved in establishing meaning.

Firstly, there are advocates of the view that the author is the primary source of meaning. Both Friedrich Schleiermacher and E. D. Hirsch claim that the author controls the meaning, he determines the horizon of the interpretation. Schleiermacher, who lay the foundations of modern general hermeneutics in the early nineteenth century, argued that “all understanding of speech consists of two elements [...] – understanding the speech as it

derives from the language and as it derives from the mind of the thinker”.³⁰⁷ Grammatical and psychological interpretation are equally important for Schleiermacher. He connects both to the author, thus, by objective reconstruction he means “a knowledge of the language as the author used it”,³⁰⁸ while the term subjective reconstruction covers “the knowledge of the author’s inner and outer life”.³⁰⁹ Therefore, it is equally essential to become familiar with the author’s vocabulary, character and circumstances. More than a century later, the American critic, Hirsch, basing his principles on traditional literary scholarship, still insisted that the source of meaning does not derive from the reader, but from the consciousness and intentions of the “speaking subject”,³¹⁰ who is not wholly identical with the person of the writer. The term relates only to the voice in that specific writing, regardless of the author’s attitudes or beliefs in other circumstances (be it another writing or in his personal life). Hirsch also makes a distinction between the meaning and the relevance of the meaning: he relates the former to the author, and the latter to the reader. Even if the reader’s perception changes, the object of perception remains the same, therefore, only the relevance of meaning changes, and not the meaning itself intended by the author.³¹¹ As a conclusion, it means that authorial intention is permanent, but it is dependent on the readers’ interpretation and on its relation to other, external meanings.

If we want to adopt these views to the interpretation of the intermedial aspects of a literary text, we have to consider the author’s role from the perspective of the musical element. We will come to the conclusion that authorial contribution cannot be neglected as far as the choice and the application of the musical piece, form or technique is concerned. The author chooses the musical element with a specific purpose, to structure the text, and

³⁰⁷ Friedrich Schleiermacher, “Outline of the 1819 Lectures”, in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent B. Leitch *et al.* (New York: Norton, 2001), 615.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 621.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 621.

³¹⁰ E. D. Hirsch, “Objective Interpretation”, in *Contexts for Criticism*, ed. Donald Keesey (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1998), 26.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, 17-18.

to affect its meaning (mostly by adding new layers to the process of perception and interpretation). If the musical element within a literary text is a composition, we should not neglect the composer, either. His “language” includes the various musical tools, the means to achieve the intended effect, while his “mind” or personality is the source of the effects he wants to achieve by those tools. His “voice” varies with each composition, but the object of perception will always be the same despite the fact that each listener may interpret it in a different way, and external meanings may also influence this interpretation. Moreover, as we shall see later, the sources of meaning in a musicalized text are not only the author, who chooses the musical device, or the composer of the musical piece.

Intention might be related to the percipient as well. Edmund Husserl accentuates the multiplicity of perceptions, since “[t]he manner in which the object is given within each of the single intuitions belonging to this continuous consciousness may vary constantly”.³¹² By stating that consciousness has a role in the act of perception, the reader is placed in the centre of interpretation. The same applies to the process of listening to music perceived differently by each listener. Both Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer’s views concerning expectations of meaning may also be applied to music. Heidegger asserts that before reading a text the reader already has some concepts or prejudices about it, which will affect the meaning acquired during the reading process.³¹³ The hermeneutic circle, the idea of constantly revising meaning induced by discovering new meaning in the text, was further developed by Gadamer. He makes a distinction between written texts and spoken language. Gadamer considers writing a secondary phenomenon because here meaning is “completely detached from all emotional elements

³¹² Edmund Husserl, *Pure Phenomenology, Its Method and Its Field of Investigation* (Inaugural Lecture at Freiburg im Breisgau, 1917).

³¹³ Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings from Being and Time to The Task of Thinking*, ed. David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge, 1993).

of expression and communication”.³¹⁴ He argues that there is a gulf between the language of the text and the language of the interpreter, which means that “[a]ll understanding is interpretation, and all interpretation takes place in the medium of a language which would allow the object to come into words and yet is at the same time the interpreter’s own language”.³¹⁵

A listener may also have certain expectations or prior experience concerning the musical piece he is about to listen to, such as pieces by the same composer or from the same period, so his neutrality to the new piece is questionable. This fore-knowledge may also concern biographical information about the composer or the origins of the composition.³¹⁶ In addition, a musical piece has more interpreters: the performer(s) and the listener. The musical score, similarly to the written text, is a secondary phenomenon, “detached from all emotional elements”.³¹⁷ Both the performer’s and the perceiver’s different approaches may induce a constant change in the interpretation of the subject. Thus, the meaning of a composition changes not only with the performer and the listener, but also with each occasion he performs or listens to that certain piece.

These theories gave rise to more radical schools of criticism. Before applying the reader-centred approaches of literary interpretation to musicalized texts, the relevant findings of two central figures of reader-response criticism, Wolfgang Iser and Stanley Fish, should be presented. Iser regards the reader as a virtual co-author of the text, because of his indispensable and central role in the sense-making process. He adds that the author cannot include everything in the text; therefore, the reader’s imagination is needed to

³¹⁴ Hans-Georg Gadamer, “From *Truth and Method*”, in *Critical Theory Since 1965*, ed. Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1986), 848.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 846-847.

³¹⁶ E.g. the second movement of J. S. Bach’s *Italian Concerto* (BWV 971) acquires new meaning to the listener who relates the composition to Bach’s sorrows for losing ten of his children in their infancy. Listeners with this fore-knowledge often interpret this movement as Bach’s saddest musical piece.

³¹⁷ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 848.

“uncover the unformulated part of the text”.³¹⁸ Due to the polysemantic nature of texts, the reader chooses one of the meanings consistent with his or her illusion of the work, and constantly revises it according to the change of this illusion initiated by “alien associations”.³¹⁹ The idea of the constant revision of meaning is rooted in Heidegger’s and Gadamer’s theories. Fish widens the scope, and sees the reader as educated by a shared tradition, to which he refers as interpretive communities. These shared interpretive strategies enable readers belonging to that certain group to produce relatively similar interpretations.³²⁰ He places meaning outside the text, and by stating that it needs to be discovered, he attributes an active role to readers, who do not extract, but make meanings.³²¹

The above-mentioned theories can be applied to pure music as well as to musicalized texts; however, in the latter case these theories have to be shaped according to the special features of such intermedial works. The idea of multiplicity of perception and the hermeneutic circle may easily be adapted to our needs, since the reader of the musicalized text might very well change the interpretation along the musical axis. If we take as an example a reader who – at first reading – is not aware of the musical aspect of the text, he will most probably perceive and interpret it differently after considering the musical aspects as well. The case is further complicated if the reader has a deep knowledge of the musical element: it will modify the interpretation to a considerable extent. Since there are two media involved, the process of interpretation is twofold: on one hand, it means discovering the meanings of the musical element, on the other, interpreting the literary text from this perspective. Obviously, the interpretation of a text does not depend only on its musical aspect; it only adds to the multiplicity of perceptions. As the reader

³¹⁸ Wolfgang Iser, “The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach”, in *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*, ed. David Lodge (London: Longman, 1988), 222.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 221.

³²⁰ Stanley Fish, “Interpreting the *Variorum*”, in *Modern Criticism and Theory*, 328.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, 328.

discovers new layers of meaning within the musical element involved in the literary text, he will keep on revising the former interpretation according to the new experience. Similarly, if the reader is informed in advance (by the title, for instance) that the literary text contains a musical piece or structure he is familiar with, he will have certain expectations. The role of the reader as co-author is expanded by the fact that he has to supply the unwritten elements of the text also with the meaning carried by the musical aspect. As far as the notion of interpretive communities is concerned, it can be adopted for our purposes by specifying that they are constituted by readers who share the same musical tradition, and are familiar with the major aspects inherent in the musical element necessary for the interpretation of the literary text.

The most rewarding way to analyse how musical content affects meaning would be to apply structuralist and poststructuralist methods. The previous chapter has already made use of structuralist terminology in discussing music as a shaping device, and due to the interconnection between the system of form and the system of meaning it could not avoid the partial discussion of meaning, as the outcome of experimentation with musical forms and techniques. According to Tzvetan Todorov's views, meaning has to be established in relation to the other elements of the work.³²² Likewise, the reader has to relate a text to earlier and contemporary works, moreover, to the works by the same author, which will comment on or clarify it. Todorov likened narrative structures to grammatical ones, claiming that the static components of the text have adjectival characteristics, while the ones conveying movement can be related to verbs. As demonstrated earlier, even a listener can relate the piece to other compositions, both by another or by the same composer. Todorov's statements concerning the static and active aspects of meaning are applicable to music within a musicalized text as well, in cases when musical meaning is

³²² Tzvetan Todorov, *The Poetics of Prose*, transl. by Richard Howard (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977).

considered in its relations to “static” characterization and “active” plot. As mentioned earlier, music can describe a geographic, static place, like Mendelssohn’s *The Hebrides*, or an activity like “Peasants’ merrymaking” in Beethoven’s *Pastorale* Symphony. Similarly to writers, the composers also resort to structural tools within the grammar of their medium in order to convey these aspects. Moreover, the use of such compositions within a musicalized text might reinforce the effect achieved by grammatical means.

It is also possible to take a poststructuralist approach to musicalized texts, and to consider the text as an autonomous unit, with no regard to its author. The different readings would be related to the musical elements which are within and at the same time outside the structure. The familiarity with the musical piece, an autonomous unit outside the literary text, expands the field of play, thus opening new horizons in discovering new meanings. If the textual signifier refers to a musical signified, then the signified (music), made up of musical signifiers in turn points to an unlimited number of signifieds. To put it plainly: if someone reads a literary text whose signifiers refer to a musical element – be it either a piece or a form carrying any aspect of meaning – the musical element, its covert signifiers (which are in those readers’ mind who are familiar with it) trigger a new range of signifieds. Then the musical signifieds are associated with various signifieds inherent in the text, thus inducing an endless play of the elements. Full meaning cannot be achieved, since these elements combine with each other, producing new meanings, and in this process, meaning is deferred, leaving a signifying trace. If we consider meaning from a musico-literary perspective, the process can be interpreted in Derridean³²³ terms: there is no centre within the literary texts, only a function, an infinite play induced by the musical elements. The plurality or, using a more proper, musical term, the polyphony of meaning induced by the musical context enlarges the spatial aspect of perception. Obviously, there

³²³ Based on Jacques Derrida’s theory elaborated in his famous essay entitled “Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences”, transl. by Alan Bass, in *Modern Criticism and Theory*.

are many other elements widening the field of play of the reading process, but this study aims at the musical interpretation of texts, the influence of music on meaning. As far as the relation between the literary text and the musical device is concerned, J. Hillis Miller's "parasite" metaphor from his essay "The Critic as Host" might also be relevant. Miller rejects the common view that the deconstructive reading of a poem is parasitical on the original, obvious reading. He says that "[e]ach contains, necessarily, its enemy within itself, is itself both host and parasite".³²⁴ For Miller all readings of a poem are valid, there is no difference between them. Talking about an intermedial work, where two art forms are present, one can conclude that the literary and the musical reading reinforce each other, and they behave like hosts and parasites in a positive sense. The literary interpretation "feeds" on musical meaning, and at the same time the musical reading offers a new interpretation of its "host". (The statement is also valid the other way around.)

As a conclusion, it would be rewarding to turn back to the author as one of the several sources of meaning. If we consider Roland Barthes's views claiming that "[to] give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, [...] to close the writing"³²⁵ in an intermedial context, we shall see that the author cannot be neglected at all. By his decision to include a composition into his text he expands the horizon of the interpretation. At the same time he invites a co-author, the composer of the musical piece, who will be another possible source of meaning. And finally, since the musical text itself is still another source of meaning, it can also become the co-author of a musicalized text. The above-mentioned schools of literary criticism have opposing views regarding the interpretation of a literary text. In my analysis I will take an intermedial approach, which includes the most relevant elements of these theories for the interpretation of musicalized texts.

³²⁴ J. Hillis Miller, "The Critic as Host", in *Critical Theory Since 1965*, 456.

³²⁵ Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author", in *Modern Criticism and Theory*, 171.

As has been demonstrated, meaning cannot be defined as a single, definite, finite entity; only the process itself – how the different elements constantly defer meaning – can be presented. In regard of musicalized texts the approach is more complex, since there is an additional factor, namely music, which further multiplies the polyphony of meaning. The involvement of another medium into a literary text does not only multiply the number of its interpretations, but it also activates the elements of the other media in the text. Music can be considered as a sub-text, an unfixed referent, or a co-author of musicalized texts, affecting the reader's perception according to his awareness of musical presence and the meaning inherent in the musical features. The reader's understanding of a text depends on internal and external factors, the former including how the artefact filtered through their "thick wall of personality",³²⁶ their "sensations and ideas",³²⁷ the perception changing each time the reader meets the given text. The latter group includes various elements – in our case features or pieces borrowed from music. The musicality of a text influences the reader's understanding according to the proportion of his awareness of the musical features present in the text. These features can be formal, technical or semantic, out of which the latter is the most influential, since it is inherent in the first two aspects.³²⁸

The meaning of a text cannot be determined as a single and isolated feature; only the process itself – the interaction of various factors affecting meaning – can be demonstrated. Resorting to mathematical terminology, meaning can be considered as a

³²⁶ Walter Pater, "Conclusion", in *The Renaissance* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). Pater's expression refers to the individual nature of reflection upon objects (including works of art). In the essay, which dates back to 1868, he writes that "the whole scope of observation is dwarfed into the narrow chamber of the individual mind. Experience [...] is ringed round for each one of us by that thick wall of personality." The impressions are individual, "each mind keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world." (151)

³²⁷ The expression, to be found in the subtitle of Walter Pater's novel, *Marius the Epicurean*, published in 1885, (London: Penguin Books, 1985), refers to the idea of unified sensibility which influenced many poets and philosophers.

³²⁸ In "The School of Giorgione", an essay written in 1877 and included in the third edition of *The Renaissance*, Pater claims that "[a]ll art constantly aspires towards the condition of music" because in music matter (content) and form cannot be divided. (86) However, as will be demonstrated, music has content analogies and a narrative potential outside its form.

dependent variable, depending on factors that are also dependent, thus generating an endless range of meanings. One can never talk about *the* meaning of a literary text, rather, about the plurality – or the *polyphony* – of meaning. It is impossible to take into consideration all factors that influence meaning, not to mention the infinite number of readers interpreting it. The following part of the study is concerned only with some elements of the musical factor, how they influence and constantly change literary meaning, how they induce the interaction or the play among the constituents of the text.

3.2. Musical meaning and self-reference

Musical structures as well as compositions may have semantic aspects, for this reason, their presence will add a further semantic element to the literary text. Before examining the interaction between the various aspects of meaning of the two media, it is essential to clarify the concept of musical meaning, and demonstrate how it may appear on different musical levels. As has been mentioned in the “Introduction”, Wolf considers musical units to have a formal or functional meaning, and not a conceptual one.³²⁹ Thus, music is “more often auto-referential”³³⁰ referring to intrinsic relations, rather than to external concepts. The self-referentiality of music is a fertile ground for research, and has drawn many critics’ attention recently.³³¹ Discussing instrumental ‘metamusic’ as a special case of self-reference, Wolf comes to the conclusion that “[s]ince music as such cannot make explicit semantic statements, let alone make truth claims or lie, the *explicit* as well as the *truth-*

³²⁹ Werner Wolf, *The Musicalization of Fiction: A Study in the Theory and History of Intermediality* (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1999), p. 24.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, 24.

³³¹ The book series *Word and Music Studies* has devoted its latest issue, *Self-Reference in Literature and Other Media* (ed. Walter Bernhart and Werner Wolf, Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2010), to this topic.

/fiction-centred variant of metareference cannot be realized in instrumental music”.³³² He adds, “[a]ll instrumental metamusic – if it indeed exists – must therefore not only be *implicit* but must also refer to *general medial or generic musical concerns* only”.³³³ Wolf is right in claiming that instrumental music cannot refer directly to concepts, as words can do, but music may still evoke a range of concepts. In the case of program music, the range of concepts evoked by the music is narrowed by the title, for instance in Chopin’s “Raindrop” Prelude we know in advance that music is going to imitate the falling raindrops. The more verbal elements the music contains, the narrower the field of possible interpretations becomes, but it does not exclude the possibility that even non-referential music carries a wide range of interpretations. Before presenting the various shades of meaning that can be inherent in music, including the slightest informational value, the expressive value and concrete reference, it is important to clarify that – similarly to the reader of a literary text – the listener has a significant role in attributing meaning to a musical piece. The following range of examples is far from being complete; moreover, it mainly presents musical elements in isolation. Our concern will be how their implied meaning affects the meaning of literary texts of which they are an organic part.

Already the simplest sign, the rest sign has an informational value, namely, that there is suspension in the music, and nothing happens. The pitch and the length of a note also carry meanings which can be defined within a context. The instructions concerning the tempo, the dynamics, the mode of playing, and also their realization during a performance, constitute the adjectives and adverbs of music. Going towards the larger structural elements one can perceive the expressive value of various scales. Their referential value lies within the mood they convey; the same tune sounds differently when it is played in

³³² Werner Wolf, “Metamusic? Potentials and Limits of ‘Metareference’ in Instrumental Music: Theoretical Reflections and a Case Study (Mozart’s *Ein musikalischer Spaß*)”, in *Self-Reference in Literature*, 14. (italics in the original)

³³³ *Ibid.*, 14. (italics in the original)

various scales. If we take as an example the two most popular scales, the ones most widely used in Western music, then everyone can perceive the difference conveyed by the mood of the major or the minor key (the latter making the same tune sound softer and sadder). The pianist in Burgess's *The Pianoplayers* explains the difference between modes (including the ancient Greek ones) to his daughter as follows:

‘Now try doing *do rey me fa so lah ti do* on the note D. Weird, isn't it, but it's nice. They called that the Dorian mode. The one on E they called the Phrygian mode perhaps because it sounds a bit frigid, you know cold, and the one on F they called the Lydian mode. [...] They had seven modes, one for each of the white notes of the piano, not that the poor primitive buggers had pianos of course, and each one was supposed to like have like a different sort of feeling and be used for one occasion and not another, if you see my meaning. [...] The one on C is called the major mode, and the other that starts on A is called the minor mode. Sad, that is, useful for funeral marches.’³³⁴

If we examine more complex structures, such as chords, the result will be the same. Some chords are used to demonstrate uneasiness, others resolution. In *The Pianoplayers* they are used as emotive support (for the silent films of the early twentieth century) provided by the pianist. The daughter is taught how to use various chords to express emotions and to accompany various images and plots. The F sharp major chord played by the left hand while the right hand keeps “zooming up and down the black notes” results in a “nice watery sound, dark water somehow, though”.³³⁵ “[F]or fights, burst dams, thunderstorms, the voice of the Lord God, a wife telling her old man to bugger off out of the house and not come back never no more” one should use the following string of notes:

³³⁴ Anthony Burgess, *The Pianoplayers* (London: Arrow Books Limited, 1986), 33.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 28.

“C E flat G flat A”, or “F G sharp B D,” or “E G B flat C sharp”.³³⁶ “Always the same like dangerous sound, [...] as if something terrible’s going to happen or is happening (soft for going to happen, loud for happening)”,³³⁷ and one can “arpeggio them to make them like very mysterious”.³³⁸ Burgess also lets his readers know that augmented chords made on any note are “good for ghost music, Frankenstein, that sort of thing”.³³⁹

The quotations above refer to music as accompaniment to a visual experience. At the same time, notes, chords, scales and other components have a narrative value in themselves, without being attached to another medium. These eclectic examples were used to demonstrate musical meaning on lower levels. Our concern, however, is musical meaning on a higher level, namely in its structure and in the musical piece as a whole. As has been mentioned in the introduction, there can be a narrative potential even in musical structures. Werner Wolf mentions the sonata form, which can be “ ‘read’ as a story of contrast, conflict and resolution engaging a ‘male’ and a ‘female’ subject”,³⁴⁰ and Alan Shockley reminds us of the comparability of fugue to a conversation.³⁴¹ It is even possible to inquire and to answer in a musical period: when the melody goes upwards, ending in a suspension, then to be certainly followed by a resolution, the music resting on the tonic. This case can be applied only to tonal music. The atonal music has a different system, where there is no such hierarchy among grades as in the old system, thus the notes are independent and of equal value. As far as a musical piece is concerned, both referential and non-referential music may carry aspects of meaning. In program music the listener’s understanding of the musical piece is guided and somewhat narrowed by its title. If we take as an example Beethoven’s Symphony No. 6 *Pastoral*, the subtitles will inform us in

³³⁶ Ibid., 28.

³³⁷ Ibid., 28.

³³⁸ Ibid., 28.

³³⁹ Ibid., 28.

³⁴⁰ Wolf, *Musicalization of Fiction*, 30.

³⁴¹ Alan Shockley, *Music in the Words: Musical Form and Counterpoint in the Twentieth-Century Novel* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 16.

advance of the “Awakening of happy feelings on arriving in the country”, the “Peasants’ merrymaking”, “The Storm”, and so forth. Still, even in this case the meaning is not fixed, the listener is welcome to add any narrative content to the music, which is usually related to the topic. On the other hand, when there is no title, the listener has more freedom to narrativize the piece, to attach meanings to the various emotions evoked by music. The meaning of a literary text including any musical forms, elements or pieces depends on the infinite number of readers (including their variable interpretations) multiplied by various factors among which musicality is only one, incorporating an infinite number of meanings in itself. The forthcoming analyses focus on the interaction of musical meaning with the text. It will be demonstrated how a musical structure, technique or piece behind/within/outside a text affects its meaning. Since it is impossible to take into account all musical meanings, the following examples will present only a demonstration of the way in which a musical factor may induce the play of semantic elements in a literary text.

3.3. Death, vigour or freedom? Beethoven’s music in some representative works by Huxley and Burgess

Ludwig van Beethoven’s music – due to its abundance in semantic elements – attracted many writers’ attention. With its experimental nature it represents the transition from classicism to romanticism. Since it tried to break through the boundaries, and to erase the established order, it was considered to be the embodiment of freedom and revolution. As a result of the experiments with form, melody, harmony and dynamics, Beethoven’s music is very expressive. Beyond personal feelings it can evoke scenes, stories and even ideas.

Aldous Huxley is one of the many writers resorting to Beethoven’s music to enrich the meaning of his fiction. In the final section of *Point Counter Point* the third movement of Beethoven’s String Quartet No. 15 in A minor, the “Heiliger Dankgesang

eines Genesenen an die Gottheit, in der lydischen Tonart”,³⁴² is presented to the reader. Huxley describes the music played by Spandrell to the Rampions, so that readers not familiar with the piece can have an idea of its content. Nevertheless, becoming familiar with the movement and gaining some knowledge of the circumstances of its composition greatly contributes to our understanding of the final section, and retrospectively, also the other parts of the novel. Before revealing how the musical elements contribute to our understanding of the narrative it would be rewarding to examine some of Huxley’s passages in themselves. This way we can see whether the knowledge of the musical piece really adds anything to the meaning of the novel. Huxley describes as follows the first section of Beethoven’s *Heiliger Dankgesang*, the music which expresses the composer’s “inmost thoughts and feelings”, his “convictions and emotions”.³⁴³

Slowly, slowly, the melody unfolded itself. The archaic Lydian harmonies hung on the air. It was an unimpassioned music, transparent, pure and crystalline, like a tropical sea, an Alpine lake. Water on water, calm sliding over calm; the according of level horizons and waveless expanses, a counterpoint of serenities. And everything clear and bright; no mists, no vague twilights. It was the calm of still and rapturous contemplation, not of drowsiness or sleep. It was the serenity of the convalescent who wakes from fever and finds himself born again into a realm of beauty. But the fever was ‘the fever called living’ and the rebirth was not into this world; the beauty was unearthly, the convalescent serenity was the piece of God. The interweaving of Lydian melodies was heaven.³⁴⁴

Huxley does not devote such a detailed description to the second part of the movement. The reader is briefly informed that the music “became more modern”, “[t]he

³⁴² “Holy Song of Thanksgiving by a Convalescent to the Divinity, in the Lydian Mode”

³⁴³ Aldous Huxley, *Point Counter Point* (Hammersmith, London: Flamingo, 1994), 434.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 434.

Lydian harmonies were replaced by those of the corresponding major key”, “[t]he time quickened” and “[a] new melody leapt and bounded, but over earthly mountains, not among those of paradise”.³⁴⁵ Spandrell refers to this section as “lively stuff”.³⁴⁶ The two contrasting sections alternate, then the piece is concluded with the Lydian part, “getting better and better all the time”.³⁴⁷

Spandrell and Rampion interpret the same music somewhat differently. Spandrell wants the Rampions to listen to this music in order to prove God’s existence. For him it is the beatific vision, heaven itself. Rampion finally agrees with Spandrell; however, for him spirituality is a negative term, and he connects it with eunuchism and sick men. He compares the abstract soul to “a kind of cancer, eating up the real, human, natural reality”,³⁴⁸ and believes that real and natural things, the beauty of the body should not be replaced by this “spiritual cancer”.³⁴⁹ The motif of “cancer” or, as Ákos Farkas denotes it, *tumor cancrizans* “is certainly one of the governing metaphors in *Point Counter Point*”.³⁵⁰ It recurs in various forms; in its literal meaning as old Bidlake’s illness, and also as the name of a musical form used by Bach. This refers us back to Bach’s music, to the *canon cancrizans*, and adds more parts to the polyphony of meaning.³⁵¹

The two opinions on these pages of the novel alternate as the slow and livelier parts of the music do. Before demonstrating how this change of mood is realized in the musical piece, Huxley’s interpretation of the final, concluding section will be presented:

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 434.

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 434.

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 434.

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 435.

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 435.

³⁵⁰ Ákos I. Farkas, “Canon and Canonicity in Huxley’s *Point Counter Point*”, in *Publicationes Universitatis Miskolcensis*, Sectio Philosophica 15.2 (2010), 124.

³⁵¹ The sub-chapter 3.5. of this study will provide a detailed analysis of Bach’s music and the crab canon in *Point Counter Point*. The meaning of the latter musical form will be related to the literal and metaphorical meaning of “cancer”, and will be extended to the passages on Beethoven’s music, presented in this unit.

The music began again. But something new and marvellous had happened in its Lydian heaven. The speed of the slow melody was doubled; its outlines became clearer and more definite; an inner part began to harp insistently on a throbbing phrase. It was as though heaven had suddenly and impossibly become more heavenly, had passed from achieved perfection into perfection yet more deeper and more absolute. The ineffable peace persisted; but it was no longer the peace of convalescence and passivity. It quivered, it was alive, it seemed to grow and intensify itself, it became an active calm, an almost passionate serenity. The miraculous paradox of eternal life and eternal repose was musically realized.³⁵²

The final sentence of the quotation contains the essence of Spandrell and Rampion's debate. They are the advocates of two opposed attitudes towards life. In fact, the whole novel is built upon contrasts in ideology, view or belief. The personalities and the activities have their own counterpart, similarly to the subject of the fugue which is supported by its countersubject. In the novel these opposed elements are juxtaposed, emphasizing their message in this way. In the final part of Beethoven's music the two contrasting themes, the spiritual and the physical, repose and life, appear together. A deeper knowledge of the musical piece will answer the questions whether the two opposed themes can be blended, and also whether Spandrell's conviction is true: "It proves all kinds of things – God, the soul, goodness – unescapably. It's the only real proof that exists; the only one, because Beethoven was the only man who could get his knowledge over into expression".³⁵³ Furthermore, if the music can add anything to the interpretation of the text, another of Spandrell's beliefs will be proven, namely, that music is not without meaning.

The autobiographical title, "Holy Song of Thanksgiving by a Convalescent to the Divinity, in the Lydian Mode", refers to Beethoven's gratefulness for recovering from a

³⁵² *Point Counter Point*, 436.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, 431.

serious disease, and it is meant to express the passage from illness to health. The movement is made up of five alternating sections: the first, the third and the fifth being holy prayer, divided by two intersecting preludes. The hymn phrases, with their agonizingly slow tempo and the Lydian mode represent a mystical, spiritual world. Its half and whole notes suspend time, and give a feeling of eternity to the listener. These are the moments of contemplation, when thoughts and feelings are the most essential. The two interludes are more vigorous, their lively tempo and melodic lines – in opposition to the long, choir-like notes of the hymn phrases – represent a new strength (“Neue Kraft fühlend”).³⁵⁴ Similarly to Huxley’s novel, the alternations of contrasting elements are meant to emphasize their features. In Beethoven’s music the ethereal feeling is much stronger after a lively part, and the same applies to the expression of wellness when it is contrasted with the memory of illness, the contemplating moments of convalescence. The most interesting part is the fifth section, where the two separate worlds are merged. The hymn phrase is shortened into the subject of the fugue, and the decorated version of the prelude becomes the countersubject. Even if the two themes are merged, one becomes dominant, determining the mood of the concluding fifth part. The dominating theme is the hymn phrase, the holy prayer, thus expressing the dominance of the spiritual over physical strength. With its ethereal, eternal mood it symbolizes death, which is inevitable.

The String Quartet was completed in July, 1825. About two months earlier, while still working on the piece, Beethoven wrote a letter to his doctor, saying: “Doctor bar[s] the door to death. A note helps too in time of need”.³⁵⁵ The last word of this statement also

³⁵⁴ Joseph Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 253-261.

³⁵⁵ William Kinderman, *Beethoven* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 336. Kinderman mentions that there is a variant of this idea in a conversation book: “My doctor helped me, for I could write no more notes [Noten], but now I write notes [Noten] which help me out of my need [Nöthen].” He also draws our attention to the pun on the German words: *Note* refers to the musical note, whereas *Noth* means “need”.

refers to his impending death.³⁵⁶ In Beethoven's Symphony No. 5, written about twenty years earlier, menacing fate is knocking at the door. In his last years Beethoven's music and attitude towards life changed considerably. The slow passages of the String Quartet reflect the composer's certitude that death is behind the door, and despite the vigorous moments of life, the ethereal motive wins at the end.

The presence of Beethoven's music affects meaning in several ways. Firstly, it contributes to the description of characters. Wolf claims that "[t]he experience of music, when it is transmitted through characters such as Lord Everard or Spandrell, [...] helps to grasp fictional personalities".³⁵⁷ The way Spandrell and Rampion comment on the same music reveals a lot of their character. Spandrell is attracted by the spiritual content of the music, but for Rampion it is too heavenly, and therefore "too good". He wants to find beauty in the real, human world, not in an abstraction. Wolf remarks that "[t]he positivity is paradoxically linked with the perspective of the cynical nihilist Spandrell, who is obsessed with an eternal – and ever failing – quest for God".³⁵⁸ Spandrell is disappointed with this world, he does not believe in people, so he is looking for a different world, which is best represented by Beethoven's music. He knows that death will soon knock on the door, and similarly to Beethoven, he resorts to music as consolation before his impending death.

The duality of living and dying, inherent in Beethoven's music, is present almost everywhere in the novel. In the structure of *Heiliger Dankgesang* the composer alternates the two states, then in the fifth section he intertwines them; however, the heavenly, spiritual mood will dominate the last part. The coexistence of both states is best revealed in

³⁵⁶ Ibid., 336.

³⁵⁷ Wolf, *Musicalization of Fiction*, 174.

³⁵⁸ Ibid., 179.

Old Bidlake's state, his cancer being "a new life growing and growing in his belly".³⁵⁹ "The one thing fresh and active in his old body, the one thing exuberantly and increasingly alive was death".³⁶⁰ And as the Lydian, spiritual motif overcomes the motif of life and vigour, so will death overcome John Bidlake. The final musical motif played by the gramophone heralds Spandrell's death as well. In a way music intimates Rampion of Spandrell's fate (which will soon be knocking at the door), for he says that the music is not human, and if it lasted, one would "cease to be a man",³⁶¹ meaning that one would die. The Rampions are confused about the change that music produced in Spandrell's thinking. The nihilist finds in music the proof of God's existence, and of other positive ideas, such as goodness and soul, which cannot be found in real life. But this proof can be found only as long as music is played. Wolf implies that the cacophonous scratching of the needle at the end of the music (and at the end of Spandrell's life) might suggest that "the positivity of music in *Point Counter Point* is really no more than a mere illusion in an endlessly rotating world without meaning".³⁶²

The musical pieces in the novel have a strong effect on meaning; they trigger thoughts and images in the characters' and the readers' minds. Music can fulfill this role because it is "an art rich with philosophical connotations that play a role in the world view of the novel".³⁶³ The descriptions (of Beethoven and Bach's compositions) containing verbal-music provide a frame for the novel. Yet these descriptions reveal only the narrator's ideas evoked by these musical pieces. The reflections on beauty, goodness and unity triggered by Bach's music are made by the narrator, and present one aspect of meaning in the interpretation of the narrative. Even if both musical pieces are described in detail, they merely reflect the narrator's (or the author's) ideas about it. Music has the

³⁵⁹ Huxley, *Point Counter Point*, 313.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 313.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 436.

³⁶² Wolf, *Musicalization of Fiction*, 180.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, 176.

ability to evoke ideas, but these thoughts differ with every listener. Wolf's interpretation of the role of music as "a centre of meaning"³⁶⁴ is arguable, since if we consider it as a centre, it will convey only the interpretation of the narrator-author of it, that is, in *Point Counter Point* Huxley's feelings and ideas evoked by certain musical pieces. Such an analysis would suggest the musical piece to be inside the novel, in the form of a subjective interpretation. On the other hand, if we consider the given musical piece as a separate entity outside the novel, it would be impossible to attach a definite meaning (ideas or emotions) to it. Not only do the ideas attached to the musical pieces vary with each reader/listener, but also their notions about the characters with whom the composition is connected. Moreover, there might be some external facts related to the musical piece applied by the novelist, who was not necessarily familiar with them. Still, if the reader is aware of those facts, they will affect his interpretation of the text.

Another of Beethoven's numerous compositions, the "Ode to Joy", is a melody that many people are familiar with; however, it can mean or evoke different things for everyone. Most people know it as the last part of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, or as the "Anthem of Europe", still for others it evokes memories of the celebration of the fall of the Berlin Wall. During the latter occasion, the word "joy" was substituted with "freedom" by the conductor, Leonard Bernstein. Then again, in *A Clockwork Orange* this well-known melody appears in a very different context, thus acquiring new layers of meaning, and also adding to the interpretation of the novel.

The "Ode to Joy" is not the only melody in Burgess's novel, and apart from the specific pieces referred to there are other prominent musical features, which appear emphatically in the language, style and the key of the novel. Among the few structural

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 176.

features the leitmotiv is the most apparent, the sentence “What’s it going to be then, eh?” reappearing 12 times during the novel. The carefully devised structure of the novel cannot be compared to any specific musical form. Samuel Coale observed the cyclical nature of the structure, where in the first part Alex has victims, in the second he becomes a victim, and at the end the beginning returns.³⁶⁵ At first sight it may be compared to the *da capo* form, with two endings (*prima volta* and *seconda volta*), the second resting on the final tonic, in a major key suggesting positivity. Coale compares the recurring actions and themes to the repeated motifs of the symphonies, for “each first chapter in each of the three parts begins with Alex’s going somewhere [...], [t]here is a fight scene in each of the second chapters [...], [l]oneliness is the motif in the third chapters [...], [d]reams and nightmares haunt Alex in each of the fifth chapters”.³⁶⁶ Even if there are recurring major and minor themes in a symphony, the structure of the novel does not resemble at all any structural element of a symphony. They are rather themes recurring as variations, and these semantic elements provide the basis for structural divisions. These structures might have a musical counterpart (as the *da capo* form of the three major parts), but finding further musical forms would not add too much to the interpretation of the novel. Before examining the effect of musical meaning upon the meaning of Burgess’s most widely-known novel, a short detour must be made into its language, which also has some affinities with music.

In *This Man and Music* Burgess informs us that he invented the “juvenile argot with a heavy Slav vocabulary”³⁶⁷ in order to avoid the direct representation of violence, “to obscure what it described”.³⁶⁸ The Slavic words may be interpreted as alterations, as notes that do not belong to the key of the work, producing a dissonant effect upon the reader. The foreign linguistic elements based on a Slav vocabulary sound like alterations in the

³⁶⁵ Samuel Coale, *Anthony Burgess* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1981), 88.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 88.

³⁶⁷ Anthony Burgess, *This Man and Music* (London: Hutchinson & Co. (Publishers) Ltd., 1982), 157.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 157.

original key of the musical piece, and beyond the modulations in the key they also define the style of the novel, and give the reader a feeling of uncertainty, alienation and chaos. Coale observes that “[t]o the Western ear, the Slavic roots provide a strange and alien sound, and the Russian flavour of the vocabulary connects subliminally with the Westerner’s fear of repressive governments and state authority”.³⁶⁹ The emphasis on sound instead of visual description does not apply only to the violent scenes. Burgess resorts to various sound effects in all of his novels, comparing them to the sound of diverse musical instruments. The musicality is present in the sound effects of the language as well as in the musical metaphors. The emphasis on auditory experience in the Burgess-œuvre is primarily due to the fact that he was a composer as well. Yet it is of no secondary importance that Burgess was also colour-blind, thus an analogy can be found with other writers who had a weakness of sight and wrote musicalized texts (e.g. Joyce or Huxley).

Although music is not the central theme of *A Clockwork Orange*, it is indispensable in the interpretation of the novel, since the novel explores its effect on the main character, Alex. Interestingly, Burgess, who admired classical music and despised the simplistic popular music emerging in the fifties,³⁷⁰ made his protagonist commit crimes under the effect of classical music, most prominently Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy”. This is how Alex describes the fourth movement of the symphony, including the “Ode to Joy”, and the effect this music made on him:

There it was then, the bass strings like govoreeting away from under my bed at the rest of the orchestra, and then the male human goloss coming in and telling them all to be joyful, and then the lovely blissful tune all about Joy being a glorious spark like of

³⁶⁹ Coale, *Anthony Burgess*, 89.

³⁷⁰ Note that the novel was first published in 1962, when beat music already induced a great change in the lifestyle and thinking of the youth. Burgess finds an excuse in almost every novel to ridicule the pop stars of his age, but the lengthiest and maybe the most satirical passages are found in *Enderby Outside* (*Enderby: Inside Mr Enderby, Enderby Outside, The Clockwork Testament*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982).

heaven, and then I felt the old tigers leap in me and then I leapt on these two young ptisas. This time they thought nothing fun and stopped creeching with high mirth, and had to submit to the strange and weird desires of Alexander the Large which, what with the Ninth and the hypo jab, were choodessny and zammechat and very demanding, O my brothers. But they were both very very drunken and could hardly feel very much.³⁷¹

After the poetic description of Beethoven's music (and its effect on listeners) in *Point Counter Point* it is difficult to believe that the music described above was written by the same composer. Is it the music itself that is so different from Beethoven's other composition, or does the difference lie only in the interpretation, the effect made upon diverse characters?

The slow parts of *Heiliger Dankgesang* express a calm and meditative mood, the state of convalescence, when the slowly passing time is devoted to reflection, to spirituality. Although the intervening two parts focus on physical activity, the "new strength" expressed by the quickening tempo and the change in tone, they are played by the same four instruments (the string quartet), which – due to their limitations of sound – are not able to compete with the sound of a full symphonic orchestra further enlarged by a choir. Beyond the meaning inherent in the sound, the "Ode to Joy" has textual elements as well, which expands the field of interpretation. Most probably Burgess did not choose this musical piece by coincidence as Alex's favourite. According to some interpretations of Friedrich Schiller's ode, its original title was "An die Freiheit",³⁷² but later he changed the word *Freiheit* (freedom) to *Freude* (joy). Some critics doubt that an "Ode to Freedom" ever existed by Schiller, but even if it was not written at the end of the eighteenth century, it was performed 200 years later in Berlin. Regardless of its title, all three ideals of the Enlightenment (and of the forthcoming French Revolution) – liberty, equality and

³⁷¹ Anthony Burgess, *A Clockwork Orange* (London: Penguin Books, 1962), 39.

³⁷² Friedrich Schiller, "An die Freiheit", in *Gesammelte Werke* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1955), 147-150.

fraternity – are inherent in Schiller’s ode. Alex does not seem to grasp too much of the poem’s words; he says that the last movement is “all bliss”, “the male human goloss coming in and telling them all to be joyful”.³⁷³ He is rather concerned with the music itself and the orchestration, the sound of the various instruments coming from the speakers placed in different parts of his room. All that Alex knows about the textual “content” of the “Ode to Joy” is that one should be joyful; however, he interprets this term according to his taste, which has nothing to do with the poet’s intention. On the other hand, readers also may find a connection between the term “freedom” and Alex’s deeds, and interpret the novel accordingly. It is worth to dwell upon the relationship between the original title of Schiller’s poem and the message of the novel.

The prominent idea of *A Clockwork Orange* is free will (or the freedom of choice). Alex rebels against the state and conventions by choosing freely his violent deeds, so that – by making choices – he will not become a “clockwork orange”, a mechanical, standardized being deprived of his human features. He says that “the not-self cannot have the bad, meaning they of the government and the judges and the schools cannot allow the bad because they cannot allow the self”.³⁷⁴ He adds: “what I do I do because I like to do”,³⁷⁵ justifying his attitude by saying that our modern history is the story of great men, “brave malenky selves fighting these big machines”.³⁷⁶ F. Alexander, the writer who, along with his wife, falls victim to Alex and his gang’s celebration of free will, has similar ideas to Alex’s (even his surname includes the protagonist’s first name). In his manuscript – which is entitled, with a metafictional touch, *A Clockwork Orange* – he writes that:

³⁷³ Burgess, *Clockwork Orange*, 39.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 34.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 34.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 34.

The attempt to impose upon man, a creature of growth and capable of sweetness, to ooze juicily at the last round the bearded lips of God, to attempt to impose, I say, laws and conditions appropriate to a mechanical creation, against this I raise my sword-pen.³⁷⁷

F. Alexander does not alter his views even after Alex and his gang beat him and rape his wife. Later, not recognising the “new” Alex who had been treated by Ludovico’s Technique, he talks to him about the freedom of choice: “ ‘A man who cannot choose ceases to be a man’ ”.³⁷⁸ He tells Alex that he has been turned “into something other than a human being”³⁷⁹ and he has “no power of choice”.³⁸⁰ He blames the political institutions, saying that “ ‘[t]o turn a decent young man into a piece of clockwork should not, surely, be seen as any triumph for any government, save one that boasts of its repressiveness’ ”.³⁸¹ At the end of the novel, in the 21st chapter (the number being a symbol of human maturation), Alex realises the wickedness of his earlier deeds, and decides to change his life and behaviour by his own will. His musical taste changes, too, he starts “slooshying more like malenky romantic songs, what they call *Lieder*, just a goloss and a piano, very quiet and like yearny, different from when it had been all bolshly orchestras”³⁸² which produce a harsher sound with their trombones and kettledrums. Alex’s attraction towards softer melodies might symbolise the mellowing of his personality.

The Pelagian views of free return in *The Clockwork Testament* in the poet Enderby’s interpretation. He says that people cannot be forced to do good things; they have to choose it by themselves. If only the good existed, they would be deprived of the freedom of choice and of their human character. Besides, “goodness” is relative, and does not

³⁷⁷ Ibid., 21.

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 122.

³⁷⁹ Ibid., 122.

³⁸⁰ Ibid., 122.

³⁸¹ Ibid., 122.

³⁸² Ibid., 144.

always coincide with the things the state forces its members to do; for example, taking part in a war and killing people. Enderby believes that men have two options: “[d]ie with Beethoven’s Ninth howling and crashing away or live in a safe world of silly clockwork music”.³⁸³ Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony refers the reader back to *A Clockwork Orange* by discussing the influence of art upon morals. Enderby’s standpoint is that the arts are neutral, and they are not responsible for the deeds their listeners do. Therefore, even those who devoted their lives to moral corruption are able to enjoy the aesthetic experience provided by the arts. Enderby mentions the example of the commandant of a Nazi concentration camp who “could go home after torturing Jews all day and then weep tears of joy at a Schubert symphony on the radio”.³⁸⁴ If a work of art could encourage anyone to commit evil things, then one should be suspicious about all works of art, including Shakespeare’s works or the Bible. Enderby justifies his ideas about the purity of art by claiming that it provides a kind of “goodness” outside ethics:

[...] there are two kinds of good – one is neutral, outside ethics, purely aesthetic. You get it in music or in a sunset if you like that sort of thing or in a grilled steak or in an apple. If God’s good, if God exists that is, God’s probably good in that way.³⁸⁵

Enderby compares God to an infinite symphony (“a kind of infinite Ninth Symphony”³⁸⁶) whose score is of infinite length and its infinite number of instruments constitute one big unity. It plays itself forever, and enjoys and listens to itself. By being compared to a symphony God represents Eternal Beauty and Goodness, but not Truth.

³⁸³ Burgess, *The Clockwork Testament* (in *Enderby: Inside Mr Enderby, Enderby Outside, The Clockwork Testament*), 453.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 404.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 404.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 403-404.

Classical music usually appears as an aesthetic principle in narratives, and Enderby himself compares it to Goodness and Beauty. Thus, being the induction to violence in *A Clockwork Orange* it becomes even more prominent in establishing – or deferring? – meaning. Providing a definite interpretation of the novel from a musical perspective is impossible, only the process of semantic play can be demonstrated. First of all, it has to be examined how a musical piece affects the character, and what deeds it makes him perform. In both *Point Counter Point* and *A Clockwork Orange* the authors chose musical pieces which contain certain ideas: convalescence, meditation, spirituality, timelessness, vigour, strength, to name but a few in *Heiliger Dankgesang*, and liberty, fraternity, joy in the last movement of Beethoven's symphony. Beyond the textual elements, the pure music also carries some layers of meaning. It usually depends on a range of elements, like key (major, minor, Lydian, etc.), harmonies and their alterations, then on orchestration which determines the number and type of instruments involved (e.g., a big orchestra including brass and percussions produces a different sound effect from a string quartet, and is able to imitate specific sounds), dynamics, tempo, and rhythmic pattern. As the narrative potential of music demonstrates, both instances of Beethoven's music have a range of meanings, which depend on the characters' interpretation. It is clearer in Huxley's novel, since the reader is presented with two interpretations of the same piece of music, having a different meaning for Spandrell and for Rampion. Enderby insists that the arts are neutral, and they cannot be made responsible for the deeds they induce their recipients to do. Even if we try to fix the meaning of a musical piece by saying that the "Ode to Joy" is "about" joy, we will have to take into account the various interpretations, the signifier relating to an endless number of signifieds which can denote very different concepts. But the case becomes more complicated by adding more meanings to the same piece of music which will also multiply with the interpretations. And the

interpretations do not only change with character, but also with time, the same piece of music acquiring new connotations during history (e.g., Wagner's music after Nazism), which gains importance with the recipient's interpretation.

In the second chapter of *A Clockwork Orange* Alex is deprived of his character/self and freedom of choice because he is forced to do the right things. Even the thought of violent acts makes him feel sick, and the same happens when he listens to music. During the therapy he has to watch violent scenes accompanied by classical music, so after the therapy he associates the music he enjoyed earlier with cruelty, feeling the same sickness as when he thinks of violence. Beethoven and Mozart's music acquire new meanings for him through these associations:

It was that these doctor bratchnies had so fixed things that any music that was like for the emotions would make me sick just like viddying or wanting to do violence. It was because all those violence films had music with them. And I remembered especially that horrible Nazi film with the Beethoven Fifth, last movement. And now here was lovely Mozart made horrible.³⁸⁷

Alex cannot endure listening to Otto Skadelig's Third Symphony, and he chooses to throw himself out of the window, rather than to stay in the locked apartment and listen to it. Burgess's decision to invent a fictional composer, whose name means "harmful" in Danish and Norwegian, might be relevant. Burgess refers to existing compositions throughout the novel, relating them to crimes; nevertheless, he would not make any composer responsible for Alex's attempt to commit suicide. Alex's behaviour and hatred for music is due to the conditioning process, a technique which ironically bears the name of his favourite composer, "Ludwig van". After being cured out of the effects of

³⁸⁷ Burgess, *Clockwork Orange*, 110.

Ludovico's Technique, Alex starts listening to a different type of music. The singer accompanied by a piano suggests a music which is much softer than the powerful, triumphant chords of "The Ode to Joy" interpreted by a large orchestra and a chorus. The soft music might be considered as a metaphor of Alex's new personality.

3.4. Prometheus invoked: the presence of the mythological figure in Beethoven's *Eroica* and Burgess's *Napoleon Symphony*

When Burgess devised his novel upon the structure of Beethoven's Symphony No. 3, *Eroica*, he did not fail to take into consideration the symphony's semantic aspects. Burgess tried to find a literary equivalent for almost every musical element in the symphony in order to create a narrative symphony, to make narrative prose "behave like music".³⁸⁸ (The result of this "most ambitious effort"³⁸⁹ has already been discussed in chapter 2.4.) The semantic analogies are even more essential than the structural ones in the interpretation of the novel. In this case the knowledge of the musical piece enables the reader to interpret the novel from a different perspective, since one of the semantic elements of Beethoven's *Eroica*, namely the appearance of Prometheus, affects the whole novel. From the title of Burgess's narrative the reader expects to read a book about Napoleon, whereas Beethoven's title informs us only about some kind of hero or heroism. Even if the composer's title is less revealing, the musical piece discloses a mythical hero by reusing themes and motifs from another musical piece, *The Creatures of Prometheus*. Thus the knowledge of the symphony explains many occurrences of the novel, from Napoleon's funeral in the second movement to the appearance of Prometheus and the symbolism connected to his figure.

³⁸⁸ Burgess, *This Man and Music*, 349.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 349.

The various interpretations of *Napoleon Symphony* have mostly resorted to external sources, including Burgess's own essays explaining his novel and the interviews he has given. If we put aside these external explanatory sources, and analyse the text in itself, at the end of the novel we will still find a strong authorial presence affecting meaning. Most of these authorial explanations (both internal and external) refer to the symphony which means that the interpretation of the novel should be strongly attached to the musical piece. It provides a source of meaning, so Burgess found it necessary to present some elements of the symphony needed for understanding the novel to the readers not familiar with it. The section entitled "An Epistle to the Reader", where Burgess reflects on his writing, is not an organic part of the novel. Burgess must have placed it on purpose at the end of the novel because this way the reader, while reading the book, may have his own interpretations without any external influence. After reading this short explanatory note written in verse form, the reader is given an opportunity to compare his interpretation with the author's intentions. Moreover, the reader may discover new layers of meaning in the composition not mentioned by the writer.

In the "Epistle" Burgess includes some facts about the origins of the symphony, which later on will justify the invocation of Prometheus:

The story is well-known: Count Bernadotte
Met Beethoven and said to him: 'Why not
A Sinfonia Buonaparte?' – 'Yes:
This great First Consul merits nothing less,'
Said Beethoven, and so he wrote the work.
But certain ogreish traits began to irk,
Then deeper disturb, then fire to rage
Ludwig, who ripped the dedication page
To ribbons, crying: 'Hero of the age?'

Ach, nein – another tyrant.³⁹⁰

Beethoven intended to entitle his symphony “Bonaparte”.³⁹¹ Along with Hegel and Goethe he considered Napoleon to be one of the world’s greatest historical men, destined to dominate world history. But by proclaiming himself Emperor Napoleon, he made the leading minds of the age realise that he was – as Beethoven said – “nothing more than an ordinary mortal”, not a hero whose idea is “inseparable from that of working for a liberated humanity”.³⁹² Therefore, the heroic spirit cannot be realized in human life. Although the person of Napoleon prompted the symphony (or rather the false image of Napoleon which Beethoven had in his mind), Beethoven did not replace him with any other historical figure while completing his symphony. He composed a mythic character, Prometheus into the fourth movement by developing and writing variations upon the theme of an earlier ballet of his, *The Creatures of Prometheus*. Burgess relates this fact as follows:

Beethoven smiles: ‘What I propose to do
Is to invoke another noble creature,
No child of Nature, but of Supernature.
The vague historical – that’s finished with;
Now the particularity of myth.’
What myth? What hero? Aaaaah – Prometheus.
Beethoven makes it fiery-clear to us
In his *Finale* who the hero is.
He takes a bass and then a theme from his

³⁹⁰ Anthony Burgess, *Napoleon Symphony* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1974), 349-350.

³⁹¹ The original manuscript of the composition has been lost, but a copy with Beethoven’s corrections has survived with the following comment on the title page: “geschrieben auf Bonaparte”.

³⁹² Stefan Kunze, *On the heroic character of the “Sinfonia Eroica”*, transl. by Martin Cooper (Hamburg: Polydor International GmbH, 1986), 7-8.

Own ballet-music on Prometheus, then
Builds variations till the count of ten.³⁹³

The symphony is more than a programmatic piece, “the growth to an appropriate symphonic form of an impulse inspired by a heroic will”.³⁹⁴ Kinderman points out the symphony’s symbolic and mythic qualities which go beyond single movements, and encompass the whole composition. He adds that the continuity between movements is due to the literal narrative sequence followed by the music, the associations imposed from outside the work. Yet it is more essential to observe that “the music itself embodies these associations in its structure, rhythmic movement, orchestration, and character”,³⁹⁵ thus enabling us “to refer to this phenomenon as an intrinsically musical narrative”.³⁹⁶ The hetero-referentiality of *Eroica* is enriched with intermusical references, its most obvious case being the last movement of the symphony, where Beethoven reused the theme of the *Prometheus* Finale.³⁹⁷ Kinderman also observes rhetorical and formal parallels between the Allegro con brio and the 8th piece of the ballet (“Danza eroica”), and the affinity of the 9th and 10th piece (“Tragica scena” and “Giuocosa scena”) to the symphony’s progression from the Marcia funebre to the Scherzo.³⁹⁸ It is of no secondary importance that the second movement of the symphony, the grave and slow funeral march is followed by the joyous and playful *scherzo*. Even if some critics argued that the *scherzo* should precede the mournful movement, Beethoven made this choice deliberately. He had to bury the hero of his symphony (i.e., Napoleon) so that he could resurrect the idea of heroic will in a mythological figure, or as Burgess wrote in his epistle, he replaced “the vague historical”

³⁹³ Burgess, *Napoleon Symphony*, 350-351.

³⁹⁴ Kunze, *On the heroic character of the “Sinfonia Eroica”*, 8.

³⁹⁵ Kinderman, *Beethoven*, 87.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 87.

³⁹⁷ Ideas from the ballet were elaborated in other pieces, as well, e.g. in the *Fifteen Variations and Fugue in Eb* written for piano.

³⁹⁸ Kinderman, *Beethoven*, 89.

with the “particularity of myth” by invoking a child of “Supernature”. The appearance of Prometheus in the symphony justifies the presence of the mythological figure in the novel. This shift in the symphony affects many semantic elements of the narrative, consequently analysing the musical piece from a semantic point of view will contribute to our interpretation of Burgess’s novel.

The most essential aspect of meaning concerns the protagonist, the “hero” of *Napoleon Symphony*. His interpretation can be limited to the novel; nevertheless it would be more rewarding to take into consideration external sources of meaning. First, the reader is referred to *Eroica* Symphony, but the composition points to another musical piece, *The Creatures of Prometheus*, which originates from a myth. It is not necessary to go as far as the mythical source, since Beethoven (along with Salvatore Viganò, the choreographer of the ballet) adapted it to his ballet “in a manner compatible with the spirit of the Enlightenment”.³⁹⁹ There are several essential differences between Beethoven’s ballet version and the ancient tale. The composer attributes an important role to the beneficiaries of the Promethean sacrifice, indicating it already in the title comprising the *Urmenschen*, the archetypal man and woman (the latter is not present yet in the mythical source). Kinderman observes that “[t]his version of the myth shifts the dramatic emphasis from the defiant martyr to the reception by humankind of the Promethean gift of culture”.⁴⁰⁰ Therefore, the Promethean fire becomes the symbol of culture in the age of Enlightenment. The ballet does not include the agonies Prometheus has to suffer on the rock; his death and rebirth are more decisive. *The Creatures of Prometheus* concludes with the apotheosis of the hero by his creatures who finally realise the importance of his deed, and appreciate the cultural gifts. Prometheus’s rebirth also refers to the great stylistic transition in

³⁹⁹ Ibid., 89.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., 89.

Beethoven's artistic work, resulting in the heroic style of his compositions written in the early years of the 19th century.

The *Eroica* Symphony provides a wider field of interpretation than the ballet. The narrative progression of the four movements (Allegro con brio, Marcia Funebre, Scherzo and Finale) "outlines a sequence – struggle, death, rebirth, apotheosis".⁴⁰¹ The overall impression that the first movement gives to the listener – with the rich orchestration and the majestic tempo – is that something grandiose is being expressed. There is a characteristic, powerful first subject, becoming stronger and stronger towards the end of the movement, and a much softer, brief second subject with a descending melody line played *dolce* by various groups of instruments. Burgess connects the two major voices of his novel to these two themes, saying that "[i]f Bonaparte, or N, as I call him, is the nucleus of the masculine thematic group we may call the first subject, Josephine is the nucleus of the second, or feminine, subject".⁴⁰² He adds that "[h]er appearances in the recapitulation correspond in position to her appearances in the exposition, but N appears most, and it is his themes which receive the more vigorous development".⁴⁰³ The alternations of the musical themes are reflected in the alternations of the scenes in the novel: Napoleon on the battlefield represents war, whereas the second theme, Josephine (in bed with her lover, Lieutenant Hippolyte Charles) stands for love. The final triumphant Eb major chords played *fortissimo* by the whole orchestra are transposed into the novel as a coronation scene. Although Josephine also takes part in the ceremony, the female element becomes represented by France which "is to be regarded as a sort of Blessed Virgin. *La patrie*".⁴⁰⁴ Napoleon is united with the country, constituting a "fathermotherland". Returning to the narrative sequence of the symphony, the first movement presents the

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., 90.

⁴⁰² Burgess, *This Man and Music*, 183.

⁴⁰³ Ibid., 183.

⁴⁰⁴ Burgess, *Napoleon Symphony*, 122.

“struggle” of a dominant first and a brief secondary theme among a multitude of musical motifs. Similarly, Burgess presents the reader with a wide range of characters, among whose voices only Napoleon’s and Josephine’s keep returning, and for this reason become familiar to the reader. The enumeration of characters is a recurring element of the novel, resembling the thousands of musical notes which have only a functional, not a thematic role:

Citizens Carné, Thiriet, Blondy, Tireux, Hubert, Fossard, Teisseire, Carrère (Jacques), Carrère (Alexandre), Trauner, Barsacq, Gabutti, Mayo, Bonin, Borderie, Verne, Chaillot, Barrault, Brasseur, Dupont, Salou, sixteen thousand others, went forward in their washed-out blue rags and old revolutionary caps or rotting shakos, but boots boots, mark that, boots most of them, to engage.⁴⁰⁵

After the victorious feeling expressed by the first movement the beginning of the *Marcia funebre* sounds even more mournful. This is the movement where Beethoven buried his hero, Napoleon, in order to be able to resurrect him, or rather the idea of the “real hero”, in the Scherzo. Bearing in mind the *Prometheus* ballet, this death might refer to the mythical figure as well, but it seems more likely that by composing a funeral theme Beethoven wanted to symbolise the burial of a hero he used to admire. In order to be able to follow the narrative sequence suggested by the symphony, Burgess had to overcome the difficulty of “killing” his hero already in the second chapter of his novel. The funeral march, a song composed upon the already existing theme of the symphony, turns out to be a nightmare, Napoleon dreaming about his own funeral. After a middle section in C major, the main theme in c minor reappears. This time Burgess mentions another funeral, which is in some ways connected to Napoleon. The Emperor is informed about the death of a man

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid., 19.

called Laval, which is the pseudonym used by him when he walks the streets of Paris in disguise. At the end of the chapter the dream of the funeral returns, when Napoleon visits Josephine, and they dream together, each of them their own dreams.

The dominant element of the novel's second chapter is the slow marching of the Great Army towards death, through the ruthlessly cold weather of Russia. The female theme is placed into the background of the novel; Napoleon substitutes his love for Josephine with the affection he feels for his troops. He speaks to the Emperor Alexander about the disinterested nature of love between men, probably suspecting that the Russian emperor agrees with his views:

'You must learn that there is no greater love than that between a general and his troops. It far surpasses the love of man and woman. It is a mystical bond, heavenly, above the vulgarity of the mere flesh. And it is a good thing for a military leader to have known the ecstasy of a relationship with a woman, but much much more to have known the deceitfulness and treachery of a woman, so that he can the better throw all his hot affections into his relationship with the men he leads. [...] But my men. What do I offer them but death or the glory that they themselves have earned? Such love is, how shall I put it, *disinterested*. Men and men. Love. Disinterested.'⁴⁰⁶

The theme of death appears on two levels. The people's contempt in Napoleon's dream shows that they do not consider him to be a hero anymore – they bury him alive. Shockley observes that Burgess turns the “nonsense” of this situation into musical nonsense.⁴⁰⁷ At the beginning of the chapter, where the author realizes that his hero should not be buried, he says that it is “[n]onsense, of course. And this whole situation was, if not exactly nonsense in that sense or nonsense, to be recognized as the perpetration of an error

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., 161-162.

⁴⁰⁷ Shockley, *Music in the Words*, 90.

that he himself would never have perpetrated”.⁴⁰⁸ Then he adds that “[t]he sleeping god should be embowered amid evergreens and then stretch and smile awake with the trumpeting of the violets”.⁴⁰⁹ The musical nonsense appears in Josephine’s dream, too, as “[n]onsense, naturally, but rather charmingly played on flutes and oboes”.⁴¹⁰ She appears as a goddess in her own dream, worshipped by the crowd, “smilingly reclining amid roses and the shrilling from the shore of trumpets and violins”⁴¹¹ (a dream counterpointing N’s nightmare). The “trumpeting of the violets” in N’s dream becomes a more realistic image (cf. “trumpets and violins”) in J’s dream. Shockley also notes that the “trumpeting violets” present the initial version of Beethoven’s funeral march, played by violins, whereas the woodwinds (“flutes and oboes” in the novel) play the succeeding musical material.⁴¹² In Napoleon’s nightmare death appears as a parody with people turning into caricatures of himself, mocking and laughing at him. On the other hand, death is presented more seriously when describing the sufferings the army has to endure in the Russian winter. The narrator converts Napoleon’s idea of “glory” into “murder” when he relates the crossing of the Berezina, how the Bridge J broke down, with the corpses damming the river, then how the two bridges were burnt while there were still people on it, filling the river with corpses. The slow marching of the army is related in verse form, the long diphthongs reflecting the slow tempo of a funeral march inherent in Beethoven’s music:

In snow and snow and growing snow they go
 So slow in woe the glowing snow their foe
 Forego foreshow but oh foreknow the snow
 The snow tableau and flow in vertigo

⁴⁰⁸ Burgess, *Napoleon Symphony*, 127.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 127.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 143.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*, 143.

⁴¹² Shockley, *Music in the Words*, 90.

.....
And throes of snow below and to and fro
And oh so slow to go and know the snow
To sow and hoe and grow and mow the snow
The groaning scarecrows moaning through the snow⁴¹³

The chapter suggests that if there are any real heroes, they are the soldiers marching into death, freezing in the snow for a “death” cause: making the Czar or Tsar support the Continental System. The passage describing Lieutenant Ratiano as he saw his left leg break off from the knee down (“no pain, like a rotten tree-limb, and then wept for it, seeing in the snow: my baby, part of me, I have let you die”⁴¹⁴) foreshadows the real hero, to be elaborated in the final chapter. First the lieutenant was puzzled that God did not interfere “in the huge agony of a dying army, but then he saw the incredibly beautiful subtlety of the whole Universal System, God using the Emperor to bring about undeniable evidence of the immortality of the soul”.⁴¹⁵ Even if the bodies of soldiers were killed by “General Winter”, there is “one part of the Human System that could not break off and lie there in the snow”,⁴¹⁶ and that is the Human Spirit.

This notion leads us to the theme of rebirth in the third movement of the symphony. Burgess writes about Beethoven’s Scherzo that it “seems, with its fiery strings and hunting horns, to be resurrecting the dead hero as Prometheus”.⁴¹⁷ Accordingly, Burgess also had to invoke the mythical figure in the third chapter. Shockley observes that Beethoven had already used some of his *Prometheus* material⁴¹⁸ in the first movement,⁴¹⁹

⁴¹³ Burgess, *Napoleon Symphony*, 184-185.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 185.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 185.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 185.

⁴¹⁷ Burgess, *This Man and Music*, 188.

⁴¹⁸ Apart from *The Creatures of Prometheus* (Op. 43) Beethoven also composed a series of variations inspired by the mythological figure (*Prometheus Variations*, Op. 35).

⁴¹⁹ Shockley, *Music in the Words*, 102.

and similarly, Burgess uses Prometheus imagery from the first chapter onward. Prometheus appears in the fire images scattered throughout the novel: in the “burning heavens”⁴²⁰ of Alexandria, in Napoleon’s heartburn (“stab of fire behind the breastbone”⁴²¹), in his dream (“*Yes yes the fire I know fire I can control fire have I not always had the better of fire*”⁴²²), to mention but a few. Napoleon’s elements are fire and earth, and his enemy is the female element, the treacherous, unnatural water. His dream means that “he had not conquered that woman-element”.⁴²³ Later we learn that it is the English Navy he fears, the “*terror of the seas*”,⁴²⁴ that is why he is dreaming of being thrown into the canal. At the same time, the “female element”, Josephine is dreaming of being Cleopatra, and of a “[b]arge burning on the water”.⁴²⁵ When Napoleon awakes, he decides that he would not have it, “not death by water”.⁴²⁶ Napoleon’s fear of water becomes ironic when he starts to ponder on his final defeat at *Waterloo*, beaten by the troops of *Wellington*. Apart from the fire-images there are many allusions to Napoleon’s liver, especially in the fourth chapter.

From the third chapter onward Prometheus does not appear only in the form of allusions. Celebrating the tenth anniversary of his coronation, Napoleon goes to the theatre to watch a performance which turns out to be a retelling of the Prometheus myth. Soon he realises that he is being ridiculed by the actors:

This Prometheus had taken it upon himself to make living creatures out of chunks of clay (more applause, more smell of danger) and was now teaching them the art of war – his own art, the Martian art, just imagine. [...] No doubt, said Mars, that the Promethean

⁴²⁰ Burgess, *Napoleon Symphony*, 40.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, 131.

⁴²² *Ibid.*, 129.

⁴²³ *Ibid.*, 130.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*, 173.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*, 155. Note the allusion to Shakespeare’s *Anthony and Cleopatra*.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, 173. Note the allusion to T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land*.

aim was to lead an army up the slopes of Olympus itself and do to death the deathless gods, so that he, a mere Titan, with his hand-made soldiers, could take over the rule of the universe.⁴²⁷

This scene is counterpointed at the end of the chapter where Napoleon is asked to send troops against the English. He asks: ‘Where the hell does he think I can find troops? Does he think I can make them out of this damned clay? Does he think I’m fucking Prom –’⁴²⁸ In the break of the performance Napoleon tells Duroc that he does not like the plot of the play and orders the actors to change its ending:

‘Go backstage and tell them to get Prometheus to break his own chains – titanic strength, you see – and take the spell off the eagles. [...] And then he finds that the gods have inadvertently left that fire behind somewhere, so he fights them with it and burns them all up. And then the Imperial Hymn at the end.’

‘Improvise, you mean? They won’t like that.’

‘God damn it, man, I’ve improvised victories, haven’t I? You could go so far as to say that I’ve improvised a whole civilization. Surely they can improvise a last act. Liver.’ He rubbed his own, watching sourly his Empress bite at a kind of Torte. ‘Tell them it’s the Emperor’s command.’⁴²⁹

Although Napoleon is symbolically reborn as Prometheus in the play, his fate takes up a more concrete resemblance with the titan’s, when he is exiled to the rocky island of St. Helena in the fourth chapter. Napoleon thinks about the volcanic granite of the island as “a real rock for Prometheus”.⁴³⁰ Moreover, the Irish doctor said that this was “a bad

⁴²⁷ Ibid., 251.

⁴²⁸ Ibid., 268.

⁴²⁹ Ibid., 256.

⁴³⁰ Ibid., 275.

climate for livers”.⁴³¹ Later on the dying Napoleon is surrounded by people talking about his bad liver:

‘If ever I see the Hand of Death in a man’s face, in his I see it. Liver, I’d say it is, that being first to crumble when it’s starvation. You see the yellow in him as it might be a Eathen Chinee. Liver, that is. Peck peck peck at it, goes Sir Haitch Hell, like any pecking bird that I see.’⁴³²

Napoleon often listens to the song of the strange birds of the island. He finds a similarity between his place of exile and England, the latter also being “ ‘[a] barren land, [...] full of thorn bushes, and with birds with strange cries flying over it’ ”.⁴³³ The doctors around his deathbed are mainly concerned with his liver, their dancing and awful voices quarrelling about the cause of Napoleon’s death reminding the reader of the eagle in the Prometheus myth:

So there it was then: to Dr Antommarchi the imperial liver; to the British medicals the general’s, or general, liver. The liver. And they had a damned good look at the liver.⁴³⁴

The doctors have opposing views concerning the state of Napoleon’s liver. On one side of the argument stands Dr Antommarchi, trying to persuade the others in this manner:

‘Hepatitis. Look at the abnormal enlargement, engorgement, elephantine hypertrophy.’
[...] ‘I know that you know that the Emperor’s father died of a cancerous condition of the stomach, I know that you know that such things can be hereditary, but I know too

⁴³¹ Ibid., 275.

⁴³² Ibid., 301.

⁴³³ Ibid., 277.

⁴³⁴ Ibid., 336.

that there is no cancerous condition here, it is the liver, the liver, he is dead of the liver.’⁴³⁵

On the other hand, Dr Arnott claims just the opposite:

‘Ooooooh [...] what a perfectly lovely liver. So normal, so unenlarged.’ [...] A beautiful liver. A healthy liver. Not a bit, not to make a song and dance of it, enlarged. Dr Antommarchi made a song and dance, and the others watched him.⁴³⁶

The fire element recurs quite frequently in this chapter, too. It can be connected to Napoleon’s bad liver through the mythical character inherent in Beethoven’s symphony as well. The punishment of Prometheus for stealing the fire from Zeus and giving it to the people is that he is bound to a rock and an eagle eats his liver every day, since it grows out again and again. Napoleon feels that he, similarly to Prometheus, has been exiled unjustly – he wanted to bring the fire of Enlightenment to the people. In Beethoven’s ballet, too, fire is the symbol of culture. In the musical piece the creatures of Prometheus appreciate the cultural gift, while Napoleon is punished. The juxtaposition of the two works makes the reader compare the two characters, their purpose and the outcome of their deeds. The fire element appears mainly in Napoleon’s dreams or nightmares. With his body burning with fever and tortured by heat, he is dreaming of campfires, and soldiers holding torches aloft crying “Long Live The Emperor”, “It Is The Anniversary Of His Crowning” and “God Bless You Sire”. These memories of the past reappear in the same fashion as they were presented in the third chapter. When he comes to the bivouacs of the artillery, crying “Thank You Thank You” almost weeping at the soldiers’ “fiery” blessings, with an abrupt change in tone he warns them rudely to keep the torches away from the artillery caissons.

⁴³⁵ Ibid., 336-337.

⁴³⁶ Ibid., 336-337.

The narrative sequence of *Eroica* concludes with the apotheosis of the hero. But the hero himself is an embodiment of an idea; therefore, the focus of the symphony and the novel is on that certain idea. In the case of the symphony Prometheus appears as the symbol of creation, as it is clearly summed up by Kinderman, who says that in the composition Beethoven explores “the universal aspects of heroism, centering on the idea of a confrontation with adversity leading ultimately to a renewal of creative possibilities”.⁴³⁷ The word “creation” may not only refer to humanity; considering it from the perspective of the Enlightenment, it may also suggest artistic creation, thus the light Prometheus brought to men might also be the symbol of knowledge or culture. Napoleon considers himself to be Prometheus in that sense, as well, since he intends to take “fraternity and equality”,⁴³⁸ the achievements of the French Revolution, to the rest of Europe.

Samuel Coale states that *Napoleon Symphony* deals with the heroic ideal, or in a broader sense, with the Human Spirit.⁴³⁹ In his dream Napoleon is talking to a visionary woman about the *métier* of the hero. He describes the hero as “the being of exceptional qualities, the man above men in the intensity and scope of thought and ability”,⁴⁴⁰ and his task as a hero is to disseminate “the word of republican enlightenment”.⁴⁴¹ The argument of the visionary woman is that:

[T]he hero doesn't have to have existed. To nourish the imagination with the heroic image – this can be as well done through some superior (and hence perhaps heroic) imagination. Oh, we don't have to call on the ultimate imaginer, if he may be called that, since all that he can add to the image is the corporeal and the spatial element and the time thing and so on, all of them limitations.⁴⁴²

⁴³⁷ Kinderman, *Beethoven*, 90.

⁴³⁸ Burgess, *Napoleon Symphony*, 17.

⁴³⁹ Coale, *Anthony Burgess*, 134.

⁴⁴⁰ Burgess, *Napoleon Symphony*, 327.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 327.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, 329.

Napoleon replies that this particular image could not have existed without him. The woman makes a distinction between Napoleon's (political) creation and artistic creation. She tells him: "You created, in your own Promethean manner [...] your men out of clay, though to create women you had no power".⁴⁴³ The woman adds that there is a need in Germans to struggle against that "particular imposition, in the name of forests and sunsets and the like, which turned their romantic spirit political".⁴⁴⁴ Yet the essence of the heroic must be made "in words" or "in music", without so many victims. At this point the novel takes a metafictional turn, reflecting both on its own status and on the musical subtext. Napoleon is told that:

'You could have been made, and made rather well, by some master of that kind of artefaction – in words, you know. Then there would not have to have been all that *cauchemar* of flesh and blood spilled about, and that notable cruelty to horses. [...] The essence of the heroic, [...] herology, herography, heropoetics, with no one compelled to rise in the cold morning to go out and die. Or in music.'⁴⁴⁵

In order to reveal the heroic image (that cannot be realized in human life) Burgess turns to two sources: myth and music. Coale finds that in *Napoleon Symphony* Burgess managed to achieve "that synthesis of mythic form and content he has sought in many of his novels".⁴⁴⁶ From the third chapter myth predominates over history, and Napoleon is transformed into Prometheus, "an embodiment of the human spirit".⁴⁴⁷ So what the visionary woman says at the end of the novel, the predominance of the mythic heroic ideal

⁴⁴³ Ibid., 330.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid., 330.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., 331.

⁴⁴⁶ Coale, *Anthony Burgess*, 133.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., 133.

over the historic, has in fact already been accomplished by Burgess earlier in his work. As far as music is concerned, it is present in many forms throughout the novel. Beyond the structural analogies with Beethoven's *Eroica*, the novel also follows the symphony's narrative progression, moreover, it alludes to the origins of the musical piece. At the end of their encounter, talking about music, the woman says to Napoleon: "You didn't do well there. [...] It was all set up for you, you know, and he tore up the dedication. You know who I mean, I think".⁴⁴⁸ This makes Napoleon contemplate the melodic counterpart of his own essence, the means "of conveying, of indeed distilling, into the particular fluidity of the form more than the heart or essence of the function".⁴⁴⁹ There are some deeds that can be related to harmonic and contrapuntal expression or order. His aim is to resemble the artistic artefact, where form is more essential than function. Through art Napoleon identifies himself with "the essential essence".⁴⁵⁰ The invocation of Beethoven assigns the composer a Promethean role, who can be considered as a creator who brings culture to humanity. By glorifying the artist as the source of creation Burgess increases his own role as the creator of the literary text. While Hegel considers Napoleon to be the personalization of the heroic ideal, representing the Spirit of his time, many writers see this role to be represented by artists.⁴⁵¹

The end of the novel suggests that the real hero exists only in works of art, as an embodiment of an idea. That is why the real Napoleon cannot be the hero of either the novel, or the symphony. *Eroica* concludes triumphantly in a *forte* major tonic. It would have been difficult for Burgess to make it correspond to the ending of his novel, Napoleon's death, with the sound of the symphony. Even if the idea of artistic supremacy

⁴⁴⁸ Burgess, *Napoleon Symphony*, 332.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 332-333.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 333.

⁴⁵¹ Joyce's *Stephen Hero* is in fact the artist of *A Portrait*. Among others, Thomas Carlyle and R. W. Emerson attributed an essential role to the great men of history, including writers, philosophers, great commanders and statesmen.

is a positive and triumphant notion, Burgess added these lines to the “Epistle” in order to make sure of a triumphant outcome:

Its key E Flat, its form pseudo-symphonic,
Ending upon a *forte* major tonic,
Napoleon triumphant – so he is,
Since, unfulfilled in life, that plan of his
Now operates at last: proud England, cowed
Back into Europe, humbled, silenced, bowed.
Let hell’s or heaven’s belfries clang out loud.⁴⁵²

3.5. The influence of Bach’s music and musical forms on literary meaning

The examples discussed so far include texts which resort to the semantic elements inherent in some kind of program music. The musical examples were Beethoven’s compositions, famous for their referential content and the narrative potential inherent in them. However, our main concern was not pure musical meaning, but the outcome of its interaction with literary meaning. As a result of our analyses we could see that the musical pieces add new layers of meaning to the literary text. But similarly to program music, non-referential music,⁴⁵³ or even pure forms may carry aspects of meaning which might be of importance in the interpretation of a literary work.

In Beethoven’s compositions, *Eroica* and *Heiliger Dankgesang*, the title provides us with a good starting point in the process of examining intermedial semantic influence. On the other hand, many narratives include musical pieces composed in earlier periods, when the semantic or expressive features of instrumental music were of little interest, mainly due to the character of music, and its limited tools of expression compared to the

⁴⁵² Burgess, *Napoleon Symphony*, 352.

⁴⁵³ In my terminology I use this term in contrast with program music. However, as we shall see, even “non-referential” music may have narrative potentials.

orchestra of the romantic period.⁴⁵⁴ John Neubauer remarks that this shift towards “what came to be called musical expression in the later eighteenth century is [...] a move toward greater verisimilitude in representation, for composers were now asked to portray finely shaded, individualized, and personal emotions instead of stock affects”.⁴⁵⁵ The examples of Beethoven’s music have demonstrated that all layers of their content influence literary meaning, from the expressive music of *Heiliger Dankgesang*, relating the contemplative and the vigorous states and personalities of man, to the presentation of heroic will in *Eroica* through musical cross-reference alluding to the myth of Prometheus. Now I will move on from Beethoven to Bach in order to examine whether music written in the baroque period, when musical content did not receive so much attention, can contribute at all to literary meaning and our interpretation of a text.

Due to its elaborate structure, symmetry and predictability, Bach’s music is more often compared to mathematics than to literature or to painting. Form and adjustment to strict compositional rules are of primary importance, therefore the content of baroque music cannot be as finely shaded and individual as romantic music, where the composer enjoys more freedom. Bach’s suites are chains of dances, each of them having a given tempo, following each other in a more or less pre-established order.⁴⁵⁶ In *Point Counter Point* Huxley presents the reader with detailed verbal-music descriptions of several movements of Bach’s *Suite in B Minor* (I. Overture, II. Rondeau, III. Sarabande and VII. Badinerie), focussing on the imaginary content analogies of these pieces. The first movement is written in ABA form, where two slow sections frame a lively, contrapuntal part. Bach’s statement in the introduction is interpreted by Huxley as follows:

⁴⁵⁴ Program music existed already in the baroque period (probably the most famous example is Georg Friedrich Händel’s *Water Music*), but its narrative potential was not so emphasized as it was in Beethoven’s music.

⁴⁵⁵ John Neubauer, *The Emancipation of Music from Language: Departure from Mimesis in Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986), 7.

⁴⁵⁶ The latter statement applies mainly for suites written for solo instruments.

There are grand things in the world, noble things; there are men born kingly; there are real conquerors, intrinsic lords of the earth. But of an earth that is, oh! complex and multitudinous, he had gone on to reflect in the fugal allegro. You seem to have found the truth; clear, definite, unmistakable, it is announced by the violins; you have it, you triumphantly hold it. But it slips out of your grasp to present itself in a new aspect among the 'cellos and yet again in terms of Pongileoni's vibrating air column. The parts live their separate lives; they touch, their paths cross, they combine for a moment to create a seemingly final and perfected harmony, only to break apart again. Each is always alone and separate and individual. 'I am I,' asserts the violin; 'the world revolves round me.' 'Round me,' calls the 'cello. 'Round me,' the flute insists. And all are equally right and equally wrong; and none of them will listen to the others.⁴⁵⁷

While the description of Beethoven's music quoted earlier in this chapter includes many similes ("It was an unimpassioned music, transparent, pure and crystalline, like a tropical sea, an Alpine lake".⁴⁵⁸), and also narrative and characterizing features ("It was the serenity of the convalescent who wakes from fever and finds himself born again into a realm of beauty".⁴⁵⁹), the voices of Bach's music are related to the voices of individuals. The most significant difference between the two descriptions is that Beethoven's music is described as "unearthly" or "heavenly", whereas Bach's earthly music is presented as truth, and later in the novel in terms of mathematics. In the Overture the solemnity and majesty, referred to kings and lords in the novel, are conveyed by the tempo and the dotted notes, where the dots increase the duration of the relevant notes by half of their original value (see figure 12):⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁷ Huxley, *Point Counter Point*, 23.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 434.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 434.

⁴⁶⁰ Note the figured bass line (*basso continuo*) discussed in chapter 2.5.



Fig. 13.: Johann Sebastian Bach, *Suite No. 2 in B Minor*, BWV 1067

The fugal part of the Overture is livelier due to the double tempo and the ceaseless movement of the eighth-notes. This section describes the multitude of people, the individuals whose paths meet occasionally. In the music “Tutti” and “Solo” passages alternate; however, it is essential to note that the flute and the 1st violin are not so individual in the composition: they are in unison throughout the fugal passage, except for the 4 solo sections of the flute.

The Rondeau, as we shall see in its description, is more poetic and contains more narrative potential. Still, the music reflects earthly and not heavenly things, like Beethoven’s music does according to Huxley. The simple rhythmic pattern and the *staccatos* give the music an airy atmosphere, and the catching melody tempts the listener to sing:

The Rondeau begins, exquisitely and simply melodious, almost a folk-song. It is a young girl singing to herself of love, in solitude, tenderly mournful. A young girl singing among the hills, with the clouds drifting overhead. But solitary as one of the floating clouds, a poet had been listening to her song. The thoughts that it provoked in him are the Sarabande that follows the Rondeau.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁶¹ Huxley, *Point Counter Point*, 23-24.

Then Huxley goes on relating the poet's thoughts and feelings expressed by the Sarabande. The music slows down again, and the listener begins to meditate, along with the imaginary protagonist of this movement:

His is a slow and lovely meditation on the beauty (in spite of squalor and stupidity), the profound goodness (in spite of all the evil), the oneness (in spite of such bewildering diversity) of the world. It is a beauty, a goodness, a unity that no intellectual research can discover, that analysis dispels, but of whose reality the spirit is from time to time suddenly and overwhelmingly convinced. A girl singing to herself under the clouds suffices to create the certitude. Even a fine morning is enough. Is it illusion or the revelation of profoundest truth? Who knows?⁴⁶²

The question is whether the beauty and goodness suggested by Bach's music exist at all, or whether they are only illusions. It cannot be answered by intellectual research, even if the spirit is convinced of its existence. The answer to the questions is discovered by Spandrell in Beethoven's music, which

'[...] proves all kinds of things – God, the soul, goodness – unescapably. It's the only real proof that exists; the only one, because Beethoven was the only man who could get his knowledge over into expression'.⁴⁶³

This statement is made towards the end of the novel, thus giving it a musical frame united by a semantic element: the question posed by Bach's music at the beginning is answered by Beethoven's composition at the end of the novel. The two kinds of music

⁴⁶² Ibid., 24.

⁴⁶³ Ibid., 431.

provide another semantic counterpoint, mirroring contrasts between characters, scenes or ideas. Bach's music is earthly, thus it needs to be described in mathematical terms:⁴⁶⁴

Euclidean axioms made holiday with the formulae of elementary statics. Arithmetic held a wild saturnalian kermess; algebra cut capers. The music came to an end in an orgy of mathematical merry-making.⁴⁶⁵

On the other hand, in Rampion's words, "[Beethoven's *Heiliger Dankgesang*] is heaven, it is the life of the soul. It's the most perfect spiritual abstraction from reality I've even known".⁴⁶⁶

The two musical examples have a considerable semantic function in the novel. Both compositions have descriptive and characterizing roles. After or during the musical descriptions Huxley presents us with the reactions of various characters to these compositions, thus revealing a segment of their personalities. In addition, those readers who know the musical pieces have another, external source of meaning. The compositions also reinforce the contrasts within the novel: Bach's suite has structural counterpoints, whereas Beethoven's *Heiliger Dankgesang* is built upon semantic contrasts.

In *Point Counter Point* the semantic function of music is not only revealed in the passages containing musical descriptions: the name of the musical form may also have aspects of meaning. As mentioned in chapter 2.5., the musical term "counterpoint" does not cover the musical structuring of the novel, but it can be interpreted rather as a metaphor. The text offers semantic analogies with other compositional devices applied by the master of counterpoint, J. S. Bach. As Farkas observes, there are semantic as well as

⁴⁶⁴ It is important to mention that numbers have a greater importance in the score of Bach's music (or in Baroque scores in general): cf. the figured bass in chapter 2.5.

⁴⁶⁵ Huxley, *Point Counter Point*, 35.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 435.

structural analogies between passages in the novel and the composer’s “Crab canon”.⁴⁶⁷ The canon is part of a collection of fugues, canons and other pieces, entitled *Musikalisches Opfer*. The crab canon is similar to a palindrome, since it can be played forward and backwards. Moreover, Bach’s canon (see figure 13) includes both retrogression and inversion, because when the first voice (upper line) concludes its melody and starts playing it backwards, it will be the same melody that the second voice plays at the outset. The same applies for the second voice (lower line): when it commences playing the melody backwards, it will be the same tune that the first voice started to play at the beginning. The two voices are sounded simultaneously, thus expanding musical space in all directions. This example is an excellent proof for the mathematical analogies with Bach’s music.



Fig. 14.: Johann Sebastian Bach, *Musikalisches Opfer*, BWV 1079

As Farkas convincingly argues, two “bio-spiritual descriptions” correspond to the structure of the canon: Marjorie’s pregnancy and the decay of Webley’s body.⁴⁶⁸ The scenes are connected by the theme of growth, and even if the growth refers to different things, the descriptions are similar. The second scene recalls the first one in the reader’s

⁴⁶⁷ Farkas, “Canon and Canonicity in Huxley’s *Point Counter Point*”, 123.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 123.

mind, thus resulting in mental simultaneity. Huxley depicts the growth of the baby as follows:

Something that had been a single cell, a cluster of cells, a little sac of tissue, a kind of worm, a potential fish with gills, stirred in her womb and would one day become a man – a grown man, suffering and enjoying, loving and hating, thinking, remembering, imagining. And what had been a blob of jelly within her body would invent a god and worship; what had been a kind of fish would create and, having created, would become the battle-ground of disputing good and evil; what had blindly lived in her as a parasitic worm would look at the stars, would listen to music, would read poetry. A thing would grow into a person, a tiny lump of stuff would become a human body, a human mind. The astounding process of creation was going on within her [...].⁴⁶⁹

Towards the end of the novel Huxley provides the reader with the “inversion of the original ‘voice’”,⁴⁷⁰ the decomposition of Webley’s body:

The hive was dead. But in the lingering warmth many of the component individuals still faintly lived; soon they also would have perished. And meanwhile, from the air, the invisible hosts of saprophytics had already begun their unresisted invasion. They would live among the dead cells, they would grow, and prodigiously multiply and in their growing and procreation all the chemical building of the body would be undone, all the intricacies and complications of its matter would be resolved, till by the time their work was finished a few pounds of carbon, a few quarts of water, some lime, a little phosphorus and sulphur, a pinch of iron and silicon, a handful of mixed salts – all scattered and recombined with the surrounding world – would be all that remained of Everard Webley’s ambition to rule and his love for Elinor, of his thoughts about politics and his recollections of childhood, of his fencing and good horsemanship, of that soft

⁴⁶⁹ Huxley, *Point Counter Point*, 2.

⁴⁷⁰ Farkas, “Canon and Canonicity”, 122.

strong voice and that suddenly illuminating smile, [...] his belief in God, his incapacity to whistle a tune correctly, his unshakeable determinations and his knowledge of Russian.⁴⁷¹

The crab canon is not present only on a structural level. Farkas finds semantic correspondence as well, between the meaning of the musical device and the fatal disease of Old Bidlake, that is between (*canon*) *cancrizans* and *cancer*.⁴⁷² Both expressions derive from the same root: the backward (or, more accurately: sideways) crawling crustacean “lent its name to the crabwise-moving retrograde canon, also known as crab canon, on the one hand and the vaguely crab-shaped tumor, or cancer, [...] on the other”.⁴⁷³ Furthermore, Farkas relates Old Bidlake’s illness to the passages describing Marjorie’s developing baby and Webley’s decaying body.⁴⁷⁴

He was thinking of death; death in the form of a new life growing and growing in his belly, like an embryo in a womb. The one thing fresh and active in his old body, the one thing exuberantly and increasingly alive was death.⁴⁷⁵

As a conclusion, in *Point Counter Point* musical structural devices appear as semantic elements. The above-quoted passage provides one instance of the semantic counterpoint, the contrast between life and death. As far as the crab canon is concerned, the meaning inherent in the name of the musical form appears as a fatal illness. Moreover, Huxley managed to borrow the structural characteristics of the musical form: he wrote a “crab canon” on the theme of life, and played the same process in both directions.

⁴⁷¹ Huxley, *Point Counter Point*, 392-393.

⁴⁷² Farkas, “Canon and Canonicity”, 124.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*, 124.

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 124.

⁴⁷⁵ Huxley, *Point Counter Point*, 313.

Similarly to the term “counterpoint”, which includes the meaning of contrast in literature (and arts), the musical term of “variations” also has aspects of meaning in other disciplines. In *The Gold Bug Variations* Richard Powers resorts to this musical form rather as a semantic element, not as a structuring device. He admits that the musical piece he builds his novel on, the “*Goldbergs* are not even variations in the modern sense, but an imperceptibly vast chaconne, an evolutionary passacaglia built on the repetition and recycling of this Base”.⁴⁷⁶ The novel has formal analogies with Bach’s composition, but none of the two works are variations in a structural sense. Powers resorts to this musical form because of its semantic content: “variations” is the central concept in defining DNA structure. Therefore, “variations” is a semantic element in the novel, referring to the structure of the genetic code.

The musical form related to Joyce’s “Sirens” episode, the *fuga per canonem*, also has semantic aspects. In chapter 2.3. the form of the episode has been compared to various musical forms, including the overture, the prelude, the fugue and the *fuga per canonem*. If we consider Joyce’s intentions, he mentioned only the last musical form in his letter to his benefactress, Harriet Shaw Weaver, initiating a debate among critics and musicologists upon its exact meaning. It has been demonstrated that the structure of “Sirens” has the most affinities with the traditional fugue, but then the question arises: why did not Joyce mention the traditional fugue in his letter? Some critics claim that the novelist wrote *fuga per canonem* instead of “fugue” by chance, thinking that the two terms are interchangeable, others try to impose *fuga per canonem* on Joyce’s text, all of them interpreting the two terms from a musical perspective. Since it seems that they left out of consideration that Joyce was more of a linguist than a musician, it would be worthwhile to examine the term from a semantic point of view, too.

⁴⁷⁶ Richard Powers, *The Gold Bug Variations* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1991), 578.

The term *fuga* means “flight” or “escape” in Italian, and *per canonem* refers to the canon, where various voices sing simultaneously. But a canon does not necessarily have to be sung – in many canons the performers only recite in a given rhythm, which means that it can also be connected to speech. Going back to the expression *fuga per canonem*, where the conjunction “per” means “by means of”, “through”, “across”, Joyce might have chosen this term because of its semantic content. If we think about the “Sirens” episode, we can see (or hear) that there are many voices sounded simultaneously. The majority of the characters either speaks or sings. In the meantime, there is a constant motion going on in the background. This movement is comparable to the meaning of the *fuga*: we can hear the sounds of the jingling car on which Boylan hurries to Molly, we know that Stephen is in search of a father, Bloom is in search of a son. While Molly does not intend to escape Boylan, Stephen and Bloom miss each other several times until they finally meet in the “Oxen of the Sun” episode.

For me the most convincing interpretation of Joyce’s talking about *fuga per canonem* instead of the fugue, despite the fact that he made use of the latter’s characteristics, is simply that the writer loved to play with the sound and meaning of words. He fused the two terms into a polyphony that reflects the most accurately the meaning he wanted to convey, similarly to the way he played throughout the whole chapter (and the novel itself), fusing words to get new layers of meaning. But this interpretation of *fuga per canonem* – as well as the others – is only hypothetical, which means that Joyce does not have to worry that his chances will weaken in keeping the professors busy for a few more centuries.

3.6. The characterizing effect and the descriptive role of music

As it has been demonstrated, Huxley's main achievement is musical description and his exploitation of the characterizing effect of music. He made use of two pieces originating in different periods: he connected Bach's music to earthly, material things, and Beethoven's to heavenly states. The characterizing effect in both cases appears as the audience's reaction to the music: in the first case it presents the polyphony of the characters' attitude, in the second case it is a contrast between Spandrell's and Rampion's tastes and views.

Apart from Huxley there are other novelists of the period who resorted to music; however, the musical presence in their works cannot be related directly to musical structures. Still, it is important to mention a few of them, and the way they embedded music into their novels. In my opinion the most remarkable musical presence in E. M. Forster's oeuvre is to be found in *Howards End*, where Beethoven's music has a strong characterizing role.⁴⁷⁷ The following passage clearly demonstrates how various characters of the audience react to music during the concert.

It will be generally admitted that Beethoven's Fifth Symphony is the most sublime noise that has ever penetrated into the ear of man. All sorts and conditions are satisfied by it. Whether you are like Mrs. Munt, and tap surreptitiously when the tunes come – of course, not so as to disturb the others; or like Helen, who can see heroes and shipwrecks in the music's flood; or like Margaret, who can only see the music; or like Tibby, who is profoundly versed in counterpoint, and holds the full score open on his knee; or like their cousin, Fräulein Mosebach, who remembers all the time that Beethoven is "echt Deutsch"; or like Fräulein Mosebach's young man, who can remember nothing but

⁴⁷⁷ There are many other noteworthy musical aspects in Forster's narratives. The recent study of Michelle Fillion, *Difficult Rhythm: Music and the Word in E. M. Forster* (Illinois: University of Illinois, 2010) provides a thorough analysis of Forster's narratives from a structural as well as semantic perspective.

Fräulein Mosebach: in any case, the passion of your life becomes more vivid, and you are bound to admit that such a noise is cheap at two schillings.⁴⁷⁸

Forster also provides his readers with musical content analogies, but the main difference between his and Huxley's descriptions is that in Forster's novel we are given these narrative descriptions through Helen's eyes, whereas in *Point Counter Point* it is the narrator who describes music.

For the Andante had begun [...] and to Helen's mind, rather disconnecting the heroes and shipwrecks of the first movement from the heroes and goblins of the third. [...] Helen said to her aunt: "Now comes the wonderful movement: first of all the goblins, and then a trio of elephants dancing".⁴⁷⁹

Whereas Helen sees a narrative possibility in music, she realises that there are people for whom the goblins seen by her are "only the phantoms of cowardice and unbelief".⁴⁸⁰ In Huxley's novel the narrative content of music is provided by the author, and only the more static, descriptive features of music and its effect are presented through the characters. For instance, for Mrs Logan it recalls the memory of her deceased husband, along with her feelings for him:

The music was infinitely sad; and yet it consoled. It admitted everything [...] It expressed the whole sadness of the world, and from the depths of that sadness it was able to affirm – deliberately, quietly, without protesting too much – that everything was in some way right, acceptable.⁴⁸¹

⁴⁷⁸ E. M. Forster, *Howards End* (New York: Vintage International, 1989), 32.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁴⁸¹ Huxley, *Point Counter Point*, 25.

On the whole, both Huxley and Forster support their narratives with the semantic aspects of music. In the two representative novels they made use of the characterizing effect of music, and they also provided narrative content analogies; Huxley gave this role to the narrator, and his characters are used only to describe the effect of music.

As far as the latter attribute is concerned, it is important to mention the synaesthetic effect of music in Huxley's oeuvre, which is related to his experiments with mescaline. Its roots can be found as early as Thomas De Quincey's *Dream Fugue*,⁴⁸² where the author tries to fuse sense impressions by eliminating any distinction between aural and visual perceptions, "between actual and imaginative listening, between sight and insight".⁴⁸³ De Quincey places music at the centre of experience; however, "it evokes the response of all the senses simultaneously".⁴⁸⁴ Huxley's own experiments were described in his notorious book, *The Doors of Perception*, but the synaesthetic effect of music appears in his fiction, too, most notably in the *Island*.

Virginia Woolf's impressionistic writing has also several musical analogies. Her style may be related to musical expressivity reflecting mental processes. Her most famous "musical" writing is her short story "The String Quartet". Beyond the narrative potentials inherent in music, it is also a means of escape for her characters from reality.

Flourish, spring, burgeon, burst! The pear tree on the top of the mountain. Fountains jet; drops descend. But the waters of the Rhone flow swift and deep, race under the arches, and sweep the trailing water leaves, washing shadows over the silver fish, the spotted fish rushed down by the swift waters, now swept into an eddy where it's difficult this conglomeration of fish all in a pool; leaping, splashing, scraping sharp fins; and such a boil of current that the yellow pebbles are churned round and round, round and round

⁴⁸² It is the last chapter of his short story "The English Mail-Coach".

⁴⁸³ Alex Aronson, *Music in the Novel: A Study in Twentieth-Century Fiction* (Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1980), 9.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

free now, rushing downwards, or even somehow ascending in exquisite spirals into the air; curled like thin shavings from under a plane, up and up....⁴⁸⁵

The passage reflects the narrator's imagery induced by an early piece by Mozart. Music takes her to an imaginative place, far from reality. Musical description appears around the middle of the story, the imagination being framed by her experiences of reality, counterpointing her musical reveries.

The aim of presenting these random examples was to reveal that it is possible to take a musical approach even when we consider a novel whose structure was not based on a musical form or composition. The descriptive and characterizing role of music widens the horizon of our understanding of texts that are not so closely related to, or not built upon, musical structures.

⁴⁸⁵ Virginia Woolf, "The String Quartet", in *Monday or Tuesday*. (London: Hesperus Classics, 2003), 27.

4. CONCLUSION

“All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music.”

(Walter Pater, *The Renaissance*)

Walter Pater’s statement referring to the perfect condition of music, where form and content are inseparable, influenced many modernist writers. They realised that beyond the acoustic features there are other levels on which literature can be related to music. Many modernists aimed at bringing literature closer to musical perfection by fusing musical form with literary content. Although Hermann Hesse admitted his failure in polyphonic writing,⁴⁸⁶ other writers of the period were more optimistic. The main concern of the present study was to reveal these writers’ experiments: not only their structural innovations, but also the way they resorted to music as a source of meaning. In addition, more recent attempts were also presented, which can serve as a basis for a comparison between the musical aspects of literary texts written in two different periods. My aim was not to enumerate all literary works that are related to music in one form or another, but to demonstrate the way some representative literary works can be analysed from a musical perspective.

The target texts of the present study were musicalized texts, that is, texts in which the musical aspect is a decisive element. When starting to deal with a literary text, our approach depends on the text itself to a large extent. Musicalized texts offer a musical approach in the first place; however, the other essential aspects inherent in these texts should not be neglected, either. My aim was to prove that when dealing with musicalized

⁴⁸⁶ Cf. the quotation from Kurgast at the beginning of the “Introduction”.

texts, the musical approach is an equally valid one among the many other possible interpretations. The musical approach may include an analysis of the acoustic, the structural and the semantic features: the method always depends on the target text. The study focussed on texts where musical presence could be detected on the structural and on the semantic level. The reason for emphasizing these two aspects and neglecting the more obvious, acoustic features is that these attributes were the most suitable for the experimenting modernist writers' aims. Therefore, their results should be evaluated considering their success in using these specific tools in order to achieve their purposes.

Joyce exploited the possibilities inherent in both the structural and semantic elements of music. He turned to polyphonic music for methods to express simultaneity, while also considering the semantic content of a musical form. Although the exact form of the episode is still debated, most critics agree that it is polyphonic writing. Considering authorial intentions, Joyce meant to write a *fuga per canonem*: a musical term which might have attracted the writer because of its sound and the inherent semantic possibilities. Since the characteristics of the musical chapter point towards the main attributes of the fugue, it might mean that Joyce believed the two terms to be interchangeable, or at least very similar in meaning. There are many types of fugue, which were not mentioned in the study because only their common features are relevant for a literary analysis, namely, the polyphony and simultaneity of voices. In most cases all voices sound a single theme, entering consecutively. There can be fugues with two themes, which are called double-fugues, but they are not as frequent as the simpler ones with only one theme. In the "Sirens" episode the most characteristic features of the fugue are applied, as well as the semantic content of the term *fuga per canonem*. The characters play simultaneously the theme of desire, similarly to the voices of the fugue playing one theme. If the musical fugue is played by an organ, due to the instrument's registers the theme can appear in

different timbres, making it comparable to the variety of human voices appearing in the episode. The theme of desire is not only the theme of those who are speaking and singing but also of those who are in motion. These two activities, that is the unceasing speaking (and singing) and moving are inherent in the meaning of *fuga per canonem*, since most characters are speaking or singing, like the performers of a canon, while there is a constant movement going on in the background, that can be related to the meaning of the *fuga*. Although the “Sirens” episode shows mostly the attributes of the fugue, the canon as a musical composition should also be taken into consideration. It is similar to the fugue in that it is also contrapuntal, but in a canon the voices imitate each other in a quite strict manner, not leaving space for freely devised material. The latter attribute makes the fugue more comparable to the “Sirens” episode, where not only the theme of desire is heard, but other, freely devised material is also included. Joyce’s use of *fuga per canonem* implies that apart from analysing the musical structure of “Sirens” one should also take into consideration the meaning inherent in the name of the musical form.

The meaning of a musical form is the most revealing in Huxley’s *Point Counter Point*. The retrograde canon does not only affect the structure of descriptions, that is, presenting the same process from two directions, but the meaning inherent in its Latin name, *canonizans* refers also to Bidlake’s illness.⁴⁸⁷ On the other hand, Huxley’s experiment with musical form on a larger scale seems to be less successful. In *Point Counter Point* he resorted to a musical compositional device in order to provide a structural frame for his vast material, including a great number of characters and themes. There are too many voices of equal value to meet the requirements of any musical form, which means that the juxtaposition of the themes cannot be compared to the traditional

⁴⁸⁷ Ákos I. Farkas, “Canon and Canonicity in Huxley’s *Point Counter Point*”, in *Publicationes Universitatis Miskolcensis*, Sectio Philosophica 15.2 (2010), 124.

fugue: they are rather contrasts than counterpoints. Still, Huxley managed to achieve some kind of simultaneity in the reader's mind by treating the same theme in various ways.

Apart from the fugal structure, Joyce made use of the leitmotiv technique, too. At the beginning of his musical chapter he presents the main motifs of the following part, which keep reappearing during the whole chapter. These motifs are connected to the voices, contributing to the extension of the spatial aspect of the novel. Joyce's greatest achievement is that he could convey simultaneity by applying a polyphonic structure and he could also make use of the possibilities inherent in the leitmotiv technique: in both cases the synthesis happens in the reader's mind. Probably the best musical analogy for Joyce's technique was provided by Werner Wolf, who compared it to "fragmented polyphony" where "one continuous melody (similar to the one ongoing text) repeatedly creates the impression of polyphony".⁴⁸⁸ This technique is more comparable to the linear reading process and the imaginary simultaneity. There are numerous other musical aspects inherent in Joyce's works, from verbal polyphony, where a single word contains several references, to the semantic aspects of the hundreds of musical allusions,⁴⁸⁹ but the present study focussed on musical forms and their meaning within the "Sirens" chapter.

T. S. Eliot, beyond using several recurring themes as leitmotifs, borrowed instances of musical leitmotiv from Wagner's opera, *Tristan und Isolde*. The melody of these lines does not appear in the poem, only the lines from the opera attached to these well-known musical fragments, recalling various situations in the listeners' minds, and further, in those readers' minds who are familiar with the opera.

Although the first prominent experiments with musical writing are related to modernism, it had a great impact on the works of contemporary authors as well. Among

⁴⁸⁸ Werner Wolf, *The Musicalization of Fiction: A Study in the Theory and History of Intermediality* (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1999), 21.

⁴⁸⁹ Zack Bowen has done considerable research in the latter field. The songs and fragments from operas were not analysed in this study, because they are rather examples of intertextuality than intermediality.

them the most noteworthy is Anthony Burgess, who went farthest with musico-literary experimentation. Music is present in some form or other in all of his narratives;⁴⁹⁰ however, musical analogies are the most apparent in *Napoleon Symphony* and *Mozart and the Wolf Gang*. In these novels Burgess was more concerned with pure structure and musical analogies on smaller levels than with imaginary content analogies. Musical structure as an ordering principle connects him to his modernist predecessors,⁴⁹¹ whose experiments he considers unsuccessful in “The Epistle to the Reader” of *Napoleon Symphony*.

The structural analogies of *Napoleon Symphony* with Beethoven’s *Eroica* have been discussed in detail. Beyond the major formal attributes Burgess took into consideration such musical features as tempo, key, or melody. His endeavour to express musical simultaneity in literature is remarkable. His fugato passage, with the three simultaneous voices sounding the same theme comes very close to a three-voiced fugue. On the other hand, Burgess also followed the content of Beethoven’s music, bending his narrative according to the symphony, invoking the mythical character of Prometheus at the point where the music from *Creatures of Prometheus* appears in the composition. Semantic analogies can also be found between Burgess’s *A Clockwork Orange* and Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy”. Beyond the concept of freedom inherent in the latter, the effect of music on the main character, Alex is also essential. The main idea of the novel is the celebration of free will, which can be related to the last part of Beethoven’s symphony. But, as we learn it from a latter novel by Burgess, *The Clockwork Testament*: art is neutral, it cannot be made responsible for its effects on different people. The “Ode to Joy” induced Alex to commit criminal deeds, but he did them by his own free will.

⁴⁹⁰ Paul Schuyler Phillips’s book, *A Clockwork Counterpoint: The Music and Literature of Anthony Burgess* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), provides a thorough analysis of the writer’s œuvre from a musical perspective.

⁴⁹¹ Bényei Tamás, *Az ártatlan ország: Az angol regény 1945 után* (Debrecen: Kossuth Egyetemi Kiadó, 2005), 478.

The effect of Beethoven's music has a dominant role in *Point Counter Point*, too. The alternation of meditative and lively parts in *Heiliger Dankgesang* can be connected to Spandrell and Rampion, this way Beethoven's music adds to the description of their characters and world views. Bach's music appears at the beginning of the novel: the narrative potentialities of this music are presented by the author-narrator. Although Huxley's aim was to make use of musical counterpoint, his novel is more a reservoir of a variety of contrasting themes and characters. His greatest achievements are his descriptions of musical content analogies and relating them to characters. *Point Counter Point* cannot be compared to any specific musical form; still, music is a structural element, since two compositions frame the novel.

Richard Powers built his novel upon the structure of Bach's *Goldberg Variations*. Bach's composition does not contain variations in the strict sense. The thirty pieces have quite different melodies, they are linked only by their bass line and chord progression. Similarly, the structure of Power's novel cannot be related to variations. The name of the musical form refers to the structure of the genetic code. The novel might also be interpreted as the variation of other, literary (Poe's "The Gold-Bug") or non-literary texts (Bach's *Goldberg Variations*), all of them related to a scientific code.

All these literary examples resort to strictly structured classical music: to old forms such as the fugue and the sonata form, or to compositions written according to classical compositional rules. Besides the structural elements, the authors of musicalized texts were also sensitive to the various semantic possibilities, which can be hidden in the form or in the narrative, the descriptive content or the characterizing effect of music. On the other hand, some aspects of these musicalized texts are also comparable to modern music. Schönberg's atonality can be related to the spatial aspect of the voices in the "Sirens" episode. The new system, freeing music from its tonal confines, makes the re-

combination of elements possible. Similarly, a text can also be interpreted in terms of linguistic structures, where the elements can be re-combined again and again. The interpretation of literary elements can be also related to another feature of modern music, namely, polymodality, found mainly in Bartók's compositions. In this case the register of each voice appearing in the text can be corresponded to a different key, thus their simultaneous presence results not only in polyphony, but in polymodality as well.

* * *

Experiments to embed words in a musical form or composition, initiated on a large scale by modernists about a century ago, seem to be in vogue to the present day. There are many other contemporary novels applying musical features in their form as well as content, thus constantly providing new material for critics interested in musico-literary studies. My focus of attention was on the interrelationship between narratives and classical music, but there are other possibilities as well within this field. One of the most popular examples is Toni Morrison's *Jazz*, which turns to jazz music as a structuring and semantic source. Moreover, postcolonial South Asian literature provides a new field of investigation, especially Amit Chaudhuri's novels like *Afternoon Raag* (1994) and *The Immortals*, or Suhayl Saadi's *Psychoraag* (2004),⁴⁹² which involve Indian classical music. The possibilities inherent in this field of investigation are unlimited, since there are still many writers who are attracted by the perfect condition of music.

⁴⁹² "Raga" is a melodic mode used in Indian classical music.

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