

## Musical semantic exercises: understanding music and the search for a plausible hypothesis

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**Abstract:** How could be evaluated the contents that an articulated musical structure contains and expression? In a first moment, the answer causes a “scrolling” in at least three models of representation distributed between the composer, the performer and the audience. But all three performers are part of a larger whole that is society. But this, in turn, “defoliates” into three entities that define its evolutionary dynamics: the past (history), the present (the realization of inherited values and the formulation of one's own values) and the future (perspective goals), after which follow the historical types of organizing large human groups, each with its own imagination, values and goals. Next come the institutions specialized in the formulation and maintenance of musical life, but also in the conservation of representative works and names as a canon. And some (the composer and the performer) and the others (the public) will exist in a specific, temporal-historical and spatial-geographical pool of the collective imaginary, which will first of all define what is the social command, with which willy-nilly the musician will comply, but will also try to reformulate its contents. And in the European space, one with an intensely evolutionary history, there will be ceaseless grateful battles for the adjustment of music to the new consensual states of the collective consciousness. And every time, the music will represent a faithful emulation as content of the convergence of all actants, states and conjunctures, evolving together with them and thus advancing towards a new and new music every time. In the end, the sacramental question *What is music?* he will not find an answer other than a partial one. An honest answer, formulated exactly in the spirit of Bach's obedience, in the word *übung*, which means *exercise*. In the *mysterious* questions of Pascal Bentoiu. As well as in the text of this study.

**Keywords:** semantics, imaginary, expression, structure, archetype, nature, culture.

### Part I

#### A. Music Contents and Musical Contents

There is no doubt that titles such as *Embryons Déssechés*, *Pithoprakta* or *Psappha*, and *Phonemena*, *Roaratorio* or *Gran Concerto Futuristico*, the music-loving public will always prefer something, however, intelligible such as *Love of the poet*, *Scheherazade*, *Symphony of Toys* and *Domestic, Pastoral* or

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*Fantastica*, and in any case, he will enthusiastically welcome the *Paintings from an Exhibition* in Ravel's Orchestration<sup>1</sup>.

It would be difficult to presume whether listening to music also involves an adequate understanding of what is heard and what the audible presents as a phenomenon and event. That is, what happens in and with the sonority. Because the word understanding is strongly anchored in the notional. It becomes visible that in the case of music, comprehension is slower than the development of articulated sonority. And so, the audience “runs” for the ever-increasing sounds and increasingly crowded image of the work.

One can admit the fixation on a more clearly audible component – the melody, and that against the general background of a harmonious sonority. That is, a consonant one, the audience's reaction being a purely sensory one, of observation – strong (dynamics), slow (tempo), high (height), rarefied (writing). Hence a second post-reaction – like/dislike. And already with some emotional deductive consequences. Preferably pleasant. Although “healing” states are also admitted, such as the dramatic moments of Tchaikovsky's 6th Symphony, the horror of the 7th Symphony and the tragedy of Shostakovich's 8th, the anxiety of Schönberg's *Pierrot Lunnair*e and *Erwartung*, or an authentic horror of *Bluebeard's Castle* by Bartók. And consequently, the image of the contents of the music is not obtained, but only the image of the psycho-affective dynamism of the audience. Inoperative from an evaluative point of view.

In any case, the existing confusion between the imagistic-emotional state of the audience and the sound of the music can be ascertained. Because music, as Hanslick very rightly puts it, is nothing more than *mobile sonic arabesque*. Nothing else. Sounds and, sonority organized as a set of articulated structures do not diffuse emotions and feelings. Because a musical composition remains in its essence an acoustic fact. Organized sonority communicates differently and communicates something else, that is, in a way other than what is possible to homologate with the “transmissible” meanings of words. From here and the first conclusion is that musical meanings are not transmissible, and this is because each time the configuration of the received contents will be strictly individual, or it will be approximable as a consequence of a collective consensus, but in an image much too coarse

Differentiating between the phrase *music contents* and *musical contents*, it is easy to see the existence of a second layer of contents. The contents of music represent an undifferentiated set of attributive contents, i.e. “borrowed” from poetry, theatre, painting, and literature, and thus explicit. Or as properly musical contents could serve the set of structural means with purely technical

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<sup>1</sup> This listing includes works by (in order of succession) Eric Satie, Iannis Xenakis, Milton Babbitt, John Cage and Luigi Russolo, followed by Schumann, Rimsky-Korsakov, Leopold Mozart, Richard Strauss, Ludwig van Beethoven, Hector Berlioz, and Modest P. Mussorgsky.

utility, i.e. a compositional one, carefully selected over a considerable historical period: the invention over centuries of musical sound, of sound organization systems, of typologies of form schemes, of genre taxonomy, all standardized as normative through their canonical particular meaning and acceptance.

It is about the contents noted by the famous Viennese music critic – the “arabesques”, i.e. the dynamic structures that present themselves as an (intentionally) organized sonority. It is a second type of content for which emotional codes are not possible. Because it would be difficult to imagine an accompanying emotional string for the contrapuntal syntactic organization or the modal tonal organization, the form of ornamental variations or rondo-sonata, or for the quartet, instrumental concert or mass, oratorio, and cantata.

But even here it would be difficult to distinguish between the implicit musicality<sup>2</sup> of the means and the explicit logic of their organization in dynamic-evolutionary entities. Intentionality remains without a plausible solution, one transcendental to structures and processes. Already here there is the intuition of a possible answer, because these “arabesques” are not autonomous structures, and the intentionality of their organization in specific structural-processual configurations suggests a different purpose and is located beyond structurality. In other words, the composer's purpose is not entirely anchored in the structure, which rather presents itself as a simple vehicle.

## **B. The mysterious questions of Pascal Bentoiu**

But despite this contradiction between the emotional and the acoustic-structural, between the receiver and the musical work, the articulation of a transfer phenomenon that happens during the audition can be noted. So, sonority contains information intelligible to the public and which can only be transmitted in the organized framework of a public (or individual) audition. And that's because the audience is visibly moved by the received music. Moreover, the audience consists of people who insist on repeatedly attending the performance of a favorite piece of music. And they even insist on listening to some still unknown musical works to complete their horizons by experiencing new emotional states, but also with new contents. And that's because, as a musicologist, Marc Aranovski observes:

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<sup>2</sup> In the space of our text, the meaning of the term *musicality* holds a romantic meaning. In the opinion of the undersigned, this term is equally a euphemism and an inoperable fiction except in the context of “philological” music, in which musicality refers not so much to the acoustic-processual aspect, but to the expressivism rather of vocal substance, i.e. a singable musicality, and, at the same time, to a beautiful sonority, even if impregnated to the point of refusal by extramusical elements (“crutches”). In other words, the term musicality lends itself to understanding in both Kantian senses – both beauty and the sublime. With one clarification: only music producing beautiful or sublime feelings could be considered beautiful or sublime.

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... the language of music provides the composer with the principles of corroborating the elements and structuring the text, and at the same time forms the auditor's reception system, providing him with the necessary means to interpret this text. (Aranovski, 1974, p. 92)

But it is still not clear: how do the acoustic-processual structures manage to convey a meaning to the receiving audience, they understand? Only the author of the structure does not accompany his score with a leaflet that would contain instructions for the use or understanding of the musical composition.

And thus we arrive at Pascal Bentoiu's mysterious questions. Two questions that the Romanian composer formulates in the volume entitled *Image and Meaning*:

“First: ... by what mechanism does this sound flow determine in the receiving subject the intuition of which meaning?” (Bentoiu, 1971, p. 78)

“Second: ...how can a meaning come to be embedded in a physical (acoustic) structure?” (Bentoiu, 1971, p. 79)

They are two simple questions, which must, however, be deciphered through several concatenated assertions. In other words, (1) how can meaning be inserted into a structure? (2) how can this meaning be oriented and moved to the public? or (2bis) under what structural form can the displacement of meaning to the public be achieved, and (3) how does this meaning come to be assimilated by the public as an intelligible one? Or else, (4) how can this meaning contained in the structure be presented to the public for their understanding?

A basic observation would be that the organized sonority of music, like any sound phenomenon, functions as a *signal* and in this sense represents a sensory *impulse*. The difference between *natural* and *cultural* can be found in the *signal-symbol* binomial, as an expression of the *sensorial-imaginary* relationship. Thus, in terms of culture, the *signal* acquires the acceptance, the role, and the *impulse* function of *symbolic* substance. Both in the composition of the music and, especially, in the reception situation, the actual *sensory* moment has a completely secondary role, having the function of a vehicle between the *acoustic* and the *psychological*<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Unlike notional language, where acoustics is a simple vehicle for lexical semantics (“passengers”), in music the sonic element is the very material from which both the architecture of musical composition and the actual meanings that it conveys are built the latter expresses them. But despite this difference from an apparent antagonism, both in the first case and in the second, regardless of any and however specific the differences, acoustics exercises the same role of instrument and vehicle. A construction site “truck” in the case of spoken language, and a “living organism” in the case of music. In both situations, the associative imagination of the human receiver serves as the absolute reference.

The organized sonority of music functions as a substitute, presenting itself as a symbolic substitute for an absent entity that the sonority presents in a mediated form. This negates any postulation of music as absolute music, pure music, music in itself, or autonomous music. One cannot imagine music as a self-referential (autonomous) object, even though as cultural code and language, music is non-objective and non-referential. At the same time, the quality of program music must be recognized as explicitly tautological, because in this situation a double coding takes place, both through the resources of the logical organization of sonority and through the involvement of mimetic coding, one pushed to the point of onomatopoeia (King of the Forest by Franz Schubert).

In its ontological form as a phenomenon, music exists primarily as a mediator as signified, guaranteeing the movement (transmission) of meaning between the composer and the audience. Second, music exists at the fertile point of intersection between intuitive intention (the will to expression) and the listener's cognitive-heuristic need (the will to meaning).

A second characteristic of sonority, after that of signal-symbol, first as a signal, is its dynamic and, at the same time, symbolic character, indicating (1) the location in space, (2) the identity of the transmitter and equally (3) the behaviour profile. Extrapolating to the cultural context, the organized sonority takes the place of a fictional object and situation, but one that functions as a complete description of the 'participants', the 'relationships' as well as the entire 'habitat'. It is precisely this dynamic quality of sonority in impulse mode that determines the instantly invasive character that sonority has in both its qualities – first as a signal (sonic shock) and only later as a symbol (awareness). Articulating into two sequences, the sonic (acoustic) shock precedes awareness, completely “invading” perception and establishing itself in consciousness. Here the convening character of the sound must be ascertained, either in a coercive sense (the signal of a factory or factory, the signal of the military wake-up call or before a cavalry charge) or an entertaining one (disco or club) and equally cognitive (concert in a church, philharmonic or performance at an opera house).

And again Pascal Bentoiu's intervention is opportune:

“The question becomes essential: what does music invite us to do? To fun, to contemplation, to meditation, to movement, to share a feeling of one kind or another (pain, joy, nostalgia, exuberance, tenderness, anger, resignation, excitement, etc.), to trying to visualize external images, to feeling in front of external images, to derision, too blasé or simply to go through a material?” (Bentoiu, 1971, p. 96)

The question remains as to how music is in a state of unconditional summoning, or, in other words, what music is offered in this negotiation of control over attention, such that the “negotiation” takes the form of unconditional acceptance.

“When we assumed that music invites us to share a feeling and possibly named the feeling (say joy), that still doesn't say much. Because a piece invites us to a certain kind of joy, to a certain VITAL TONE (e. n.), which is only its own and which in its essence cannot be caught in the net of explanatory words.” (Bentoiu, 1971, p. 97)<sup>4</sup>

At the level of direct flow, the sonic impulse produces the effect of vital toning using several possibilities that the organized sonority possesses starting from the level of the four parameters of the musical sound: height, duration, intensity, and timbre, in obvious synchrony. A single note, for example, *E* (minor octave *E*) provides a cumulative impulse with the duration of a second, in a *mezzo-forte* intensity played on the tenor saxophone. But it will be an invigorating impulse of a completely different nature, a *b*<sup>1</sup> (*B flat* first octave) “hummed” in short durations (*pizzicato*), in *pp* (*piano-pianissimo*) of the group of violins. The typology library of tonic impulses can be subtended from the perception of major and minor scales to the affective ethos of each of the twenty-four tonalities. Meta-sensory extrapolations such as the synaesthetic perception of sounds as colours (Rimski-Korsakov), light (Scriabin), or visual compositions (Čiurlionis) should not be excluded from here. Also, impulses of a completely different nature provide *consonance-dissonance*, from the intervallic relation of two sounds to triads, seventh, ninth, and eleventh chords with finality in the cluster structure (Elliott Carter's favourite).

The dynamics of sound articulation amplify the power of the sonic shock, because beyond durability (a single prolonged duration), the impulse is not singular, but always presents itself as a multiple, global phenomenon, and at the same time an evolutionary one, ensuring its durability through the processual form of manifestation. As the musicologist Leo Mazel states, only in this way does the organized sonority of music exert *multiple and concentrated influences* on the receiver. (Mazel, 1978, p. 167) This joins in a parallelism of inter-conditioning with the processual functioning of the human psyche, all the more so as both processes are manifested fluctuating. And the compositional organization of sound processability will have to be conceived in very strict dependence on the fluctuating character of attention, as well as on the fictionalization mechanisms of memory.

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<sup>4</sup> In terms of explaining, with a very effective subtlety, the influence of music on consciousness, the volume *Image and meaning* becomes a referential source with unique value in a formative sense.

Unlike the elemental quality of the signal emitted by a car, train, bicycle, or ocean liner, the barking of a dog, or the “singing” of a nightingale, the sound impulse acquires the quality of a symbol in the case of stylistically suggestive specificity. A composition “symbolizes” Baroque, Classicism, or the Middle Ages through a set of means “filtered” through the two cognitive grids mentioned above – the will of expression and the will of meaning. Whether each historical period – theocratic (Middle Ages and Renaissance), aristocratic (Baroque and Viennese Classicism/Haydn-Mozart), democratic (Viennese Classicism/Beethoven and Romanticism), or chaotic (Third Modernity and Postmodernism) – developed its interpretation conceptual of the generative convergence between expression and meaning such as the genres of the mass and the motet with the madrigal, the opera with the oratorio and the passions and the symphony with the quartet and the instrumental concerto.

As it emerges from the whole line of arguments, the last logical criterion, in its capacity as a bridge between structure and reception, is an analogy – a broad symbolic structure with a biunivocal function.

## Part II

### C. Expanding the semantic field: analogy and the universe of music contents

#### c.1. *The extreme of mimetic<sup>5</sup> mobilization of musical thought: object analogies (I)*

Indeed, the simplest form of analogy is onomatopoeia, whose normative models of phonological order are *quack-quack*, *meow*, *cock-a-doodle-doo*, *cuckoo*, *cluck-cluck*, or *buf* (dropping down), *poc* (beat), *trosc* (wood), *tic-tac* (clock), *pleosc* (water), or *pâș-pâș* (steps). Through such imitations, the producers of these sounds or various sound effects are presented. And the procedure has a wide spread in musical practice: the piece *La poule* (*The Chicken*, 1728) by Rameau, the “imitative” symphonies of Haydn – *The Echo* (No. 38, 1765), *The Chicken* (No. 83, 1785), *The Bear* (no. 82, 1786), *The Clock* (no. 101, 1794) and up to the two programmatic cycles with various degrees of mimicry (in some pieces including onomatopoeia) such as Mussorgsky's *Pictures from an Exhibition* (1874) and, for example, the suite *Peter and the Wolf*, op. 67 (1936) by Prokofiev. Similarly, that is, explicitly onomatopoeic, the symphonic painting *Pacific 231<sup>6</sup>* (1923) by Arthur

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<sup>5</sup> A very detailed and coherent philosophical argumentation of the problem of *mimesis* in art is offered by the Polish researcher Piotr Jaroszynski in the monograph entitled *Metaphysics and Art*. New York: P. Lang, 2002.

<sup>6</sup> By onomatopoeic it is intended to reduce the differentiation, implicit in the case of a musical work, between the actual musical expression (of pure sonority and, therefore, of the articulated sound structure) and the intentionally expressed content of the title or program. In this case the pressure will be exerted by the notional title or program. This is a land conflict in the case of

Honegger is presented. Given the dynamic-evolutionary character of the music, it is obvious that the specific behaviour of the referential characters is rather captured since music is forbidden concrete figurative representation. The mimetic situation represents, in any case, the attempt to force, even in a mechanical way, the censorship of the image with the obvious limitation to the only possibility of dynamic reproduction of the behaviour.

Or, the possibility of “onomatopoeia” of a higher order must also be admitted, with a visible shift towards mediation through the program, in which case the *Catalog d’oiseaux* (*Catalog of Birds*, thirteen pieces for piano) by Olivier Messiaen would serve as an example. The opening towards ornithological representations could be exemplified by the *La gazza ladra* (melodrama in two acts) by Rossini, *Vogel als Prophet* (no. 7 from the cycle *Waldszenen*, op. 82) by Schumann, the character Papageno (singspiel *The Enchanted Flute*) by Mozart, the “birds” from Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony* (flute-nightingale, oboe-quail, clarinet-cuckoo), the “nightingale” from *The Pines of Rome* by Respighi or *Cantus Arcticus: Concerto for birds and orchestra* by Einojuhani Rautavaara.

**c.2. The explicit suggestion by genre: object analogies (2)** of the reference would be found, for example, in *Symphony No. 11, 1905*, by Dmitri Shostakovich – the suggestion through the relevant repertoire –, where Russian revolutionary songs are quoted that directly indicate the revolted proletarian masses. Tchaikovsky does the same in *Overture 1812*, where the differentiation between the belligerent groups is achieved through the relevant musical repertoire – *Le Marseillaise* presenting Napoleon's soldiers, and *Kamarinskaya* (Kamarinskaiia) and the hymn *Боже, Царя храни* (Lord, protect him on the Tsar) on the victorious fighters of Kutuzov. Prokofiev does the same in the cantata *Alexandr Nevsky* in the scene of the battle on Lake Chudsk between the Teutonic knights and the retinue of the Russian prince. Genre suggestion also works in *Symphony no. 7, Of Leningrad*, where through the march genre and hyperbolized cadenced exposition (the military meaning of the genre, suggested by relevant conduct) it reproduces the advance of the Nazi troops. But unlike Tchaikovsky and Prokofiev, the process of differentiation (conceptually identical) has a much greater extension and depth, describing in much more detail the genocidal confrontation between the two dictatorships – Nazi Germany and the Stalinist USSR.

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any musical work with a program. Even in works with titles of the most suggestive generality – the *Symphony of the Alps* or the *Domestic Symphony*, both by Richard Strauss – the intention will be to voluntarily reduce the difference between the two contents as much as possible.



### c.3. Program mediation procedure: object analogies (3)

Without intending an exhaustive exposition of the problem of musical programming, a few representative models of the realization of this principle can be cited. In this regard, three procedures of programmatic “encoding” could be mentioned.

The first procedure: explicit intentional programming – consists of the formulation of a notional title with a referential function regarding the “content” (expressive and expression<sup>7</sup>) of a musical work. This typological group includes works such as the *Carnaval* cycle, *op. 9* (1834-35), by Schumann, the *Carnival of the Animals* suite (1885-86) by Camille Saïnt-Saens, the symphonic suite *Scheherazade, op. 35* (1888) by Rimsky-Korsakov and the cycle of twelve character pieces *The Seasons*<sup>8</sup>, *op. 37a* (1875-76), by P. I. Tchaikovsky. Here we are talking about double programming because, in addition to the (normative) name of the month of the year, each piece also has a “subtitle” related to specific situations developed in each respective period: no. 6. *June/Barcarola*, no. 9. *September/Hunting*, no. 11. *November/Troika* et al. This string could be concluded with M. P. Mussorgsky's ten-piece piano suite *Pictures from the Exhibition* (1874), followed by M. Ravel's famous orchestral transcription (1922), which in turn was succeeded by at least three notable paraphrases: the album *The Picture at the Exhibition* (1971) by the *progressive rock* group *Emerson, Lake & Palmer*, the 1975 electronic adaptation by the Japanese composer Isao Tomita, and the 1997 group and orchestra formula by the band *Mekong Delta*. The list also includes famous titles such as *Symphony No. 3, Heroica*, or the *Pastoral* (no. 6) by Beethoven, the *Fantastic Symphony* by Berlioz, as well as Liszt's symphonic poems (*Hungary, Mazeppa, Tasso, Preludes, Prometheus, Orpheus, Hamlet*, etc.) and by Richard Strauss (*Don*

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<sup>7</sup> The specific difference between these two meanings lies, on the one hand, in the purely *emotional-affective* referentiality for the *expressive* (in the romantic sense of the word) and the purely *imagistic-thematic* referentiality for the expression of a *programmatic* content.

<sup>8</sup> In order not to burden the priority development of the text, we post here several titles of programmatic works related to the seasons: the cycle of instrumental concerts *The Seasons* by Antonio Vivaldi and the paraphrase of Jacques Loussier in swing style (1997), the oratorio *The Seasons* (1801) by Haydn, the *Seasons* cycle (1838) and 49 sketches *op. 63* (the Hebrew calendar, 4 notebooks, 1861) by Charles Alkan, the cycle for piano *The Seasons* (1875-76) by Tchaikovsky, the allegorical ballet *The Seasons, op. 67* (1900) by Alexander Glazunov, the ballet *The Seasons* by John Cage (1947), twelve character pieces *Календарь природы* (*Nature's calendar*, 1962) by Lucian Prigojin, the vocal cycle *The Seasons* (1969) by Valeri Gavrilin, *Estaciones Porteñas (Four Seasons in Buenos-Aires)*, 1970) by Astor Piazzolla, *Paraphrase after Estor Piazzola* for violin and string orchestra and *Russian Seasons* for soprano, violin and chamber orchestra (2000) by Leonid Desiatnikov, choreographic version by Roland Petit accompanied by *I Musici* (1984), the ballet *The Seasons* (2013) by Vladimir Mart'nov. Also, after Rachmaninoff's *Spring* cantata and as a response to Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, there is Leonid Desiatnikov's 1949 symphony for soloists, choir, orchestra and organ *Sacred Winter*.

*Juan, Macbeth, Death and Transfiguration, Till Eulenspiegel, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Don Quixote*) and many others.

The second procedure: is veiled intentional programming – it consists in positioning the titles at the end of each piece in order not to produce interference between the expression of the musical text and the content to be expressed in the title. It is about the piano cycle Preludes (in two notebooks of twelve pieces each) by Debussy: the first notebook – between 1909-1910 and the second notebook – between 1912-1913.

The third – “encrypted” intentional programmatism (with the meaning of confusing, confusing, paradoxical, conceptual frond): Erik Satie's programmatic works with titles such as *Pièces froides* (The Cold Pieces, 1897), *Trois morceaux en forme de poire* (The Three pear-shaped pieces, 1903), *Préludes flasques (pour un chien)* (The Flaccid Preludes (for a dog), 1912), *Désespoir agréable* (The Pleasant despair, 1908), *Cinq grimaces pour Le songe d'une nuit d'été* (The Five Funny Faces for A Midsummer Night's Dream, 1915) or *Sonatine bureaucratique* (The Bureaucratic sonatina, 1917)

But music is first of all *invisible*, and it could be said that this organic appropriation of music would offer a real opening toward the relevant analogies (that is, without forcing the limits of the ontological condition of music as a phenomenon). Music can also be considered to be non-objective in its descriptive capacity. And then, *what exactly* was the music made to represent? And, at the same time, *what kind* of objectivity is referential for music? Or, if emotional analogies were to be invoked, it is obvious that they would be of a completely different order, given the non-objective referentiality.

#### **c.4. Transcendental analogies of religious substance: non-objective analogies (I)**

The *onomatopoeic-imitative* origins of *sonic* manipulations are to be identified at the level of the animist traditions of the peoples of nature, namely in the system of rituals (war, hunting, healing, journeys between worlds, and the invocation of spirits). The sound approach finds its meaning and function as a *practice of representing the unrepresentable*, an active metaphor either through tabooing or lexical censorship. That is, by censoring the image and concept. The cause is one because the transcendental reference is the Sacred (animated and personalized Nature), so long as the latter is identified with the *roots of life itself*.

Within articulated (institutionalized) poly- or monotheistic religions (theocratic societies), already in the pose of actual music, the references are anchored in *transcendental ontologies* as worlds beyond. For the ancient Greeks, it is about the deities of *Olympus*, for the Scandinavian peoples about *Asgard* with *Walhalla*, in the Abrahamic religions (Judaism and Islam), as well as in Christianity – *Eden* and the worlds of spiritual entities (angels, cherubs,

seraphim, archangels), which are part of God's entourage. All three spaces are, obviously, *forbidden* both to access and, above all, to adequate representation. As compensation, anthropomorphic (compromise) representations as possible analogies of divine entities and spaces abound in the visual arts.

In this sense, the typology of the liturgical service of the Catholic Church, which is the *mass*, is representative. It can equally be about the funeral service which is the *requiem*. A focus on the evangelical subject is provided by the *passions*. And the last genre would be the *oratory* (from the Latin *orare* – to pray). The musical creation of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Baroque – a real musical universe, made up of “planets” such as Guillaume de Machaut, Josquin des Prez, Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, Orlando di Lasso, Gesualdo di Venosa, Georg Friedrich Händel, Johann Sebastian Bach, et al. – offers as many analogies in this regard.

An oriental meaning with a sense of analogy is given by the practice and genre of Indian music called *raga* (*rag* in North India and *ragam* in South India, meaning colour and passion). Both the modal organization and especially the improvisational technique, are articulated in very strict relation to the referentiality of sacredness, but with symbolic applications in terms of seasons, periods of the day, and emotional states. The latter should be understood as the result of divine grace producing enlightenment and thus filling (colouring, since *raga* = colour) the spirits with joy and pleasure. An important feature of this music is that in addition to a pleasant atmosphere and enlightenment, the performance of a *raga* (possibly accompanied by a choreographic performance) aims at liberation (the concept of *moksha*, with the meaning of salvation).

But these are all transcendental analogies for the human sensory and thus sacred, difficult to incorporate as codes for reading music. As a sound expression of the unrepresentable, music could equally be understood as a metaphorically mediated expression of the Sacred. In other words, as a possibility to express contents inaccessible to notional language, but existing as emotional and imaginary content. Because in the beginning, music could not be other than sacred, that is religious music. In other words, music is about a transcendental ontology of the human and earthly. In the end, the music itself is built as a second ontology, euphemistically considered to be art.

And in addition to onomatopoeia and programmatic comes the analogy of music thinking with apophatic thinking as the justification and legitimization of knowledge through the negation of God. A final argument in this regard is presented by Dionysius the Areopagite who, in his famous treatises *Divine Names* and *Mystical Theology* (only five short chapters), formulates the dichotomy of *cataphatic* knowledge (positive, by speaking the divine name) and *apophatic* knowledge (negative, by not speaking). Or, precisely this

*apophaticism* (darkness, invisibility, unknowability) also functions as an explanation of the role that music had in the divine service: (a) invisibility and (b) object non-referentiality as *unspoken* and thus as an analogy of *immateriality*, in the exact terms of Emil Cioran:

“Only by hearing unsuspected things become clear in the soul. He does not have God who has not heard him. Without voices from beyond (music from beyond – n.n.), there is no mysticism, just as there is no final ecstasy, without the echoes of songs further from beyond.”<sup>9</sup>

### **c.5. Transcendent analogies of cosmological substance: non-objective analogies (2)**

Another interpretation of the Sacred resides in the *sacred order of the Universe*<sup>10</sup>. This state of reality is captured by Pythagoras (540-495 BC), an acoustician, mathematician, and mystic rather than a philosopher of Classical Antiquity, who through the fractional *analogy* of intervals elaborates the possibility of postulating *universal harmony*, which finds its ultimate expression in syntagma *musica universalis*: advancing on its orbit, each planet emits a specific sonority of a certain frequency which, interfering with the “music” of the other orbits, produces a true “syn-phonos” (*syn* – together, *phonos* – sounds), i.e. “symphony” of celestial bodies in the entire solar system. For example, the Platonic dialogue *Timaeus* represents a coherent exposition of the teachings of Pythagoras.

A second conception belongs to Martianus Minneus Felix Capella (360-428 AD), a Carthaginian jurist and polymath of Late Antiquity, to whom belongs the elaboration of the system of the *Septem artes liberales*. In the encyclopedic collection of didactic allegories entitled *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* (The marriage between Philology and the god Mercury, also called *De septem disciplinis*). Situated between architecture and medicine as applied arts (of lower status) and philosophy together with theology (the highest arts), these seven disciplines are divided into two groups (according to the structure already enshrined by tradition in the education of the Middle Ages):

- the first, the *trivium*, located immediately above the applied arts, and consisting of grammar, logic (dialectic), and rhetoric (arts of learning to

<sup>9</sup> \*\*\*. (1996). *Cioran și muzica* [Cioran and music], București: Humanitas, p. 63 (in: *Book of delusions*, București: Humanitas, 1994, p. 142).

<sup>10</sup> Both understandings – the sacred roots of life and the sacred order of the Universe – are presented in the text entitled *Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite, and Art* (1942), authored by the American philosopher Susan Katherina Langer. Other works such as *Language and Myth* (1946), *Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art* (1953), *Problems of Art: Ten Philosophical Lectures* (1957) or *Reflections on Art* (1961) can also be mentioned.

think and speak coherently), with a preparatory-introductory role to access the superior group;

- the second, is the *quadrivium*, consisting of arithmetic (pure number), geometry (number in space), music (harmony<sup>11</sup> in Martianus Capella, number in time), and astronomy (number in time and space). It is noticeable that music was part of the numerical-cosmological sciences, and thus with the potential to represent the structure and order of the planetary system.

A third conception belongs to Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius (480-524 AD), Roman senator, consul, historian, and philosopher of the early Middle Ages. At least two “treatises” (translations adapted from Nichomachus of Gerasa) are known concerning arithmetic (*De arithmetica*, ca. 500 AD) and to music (*De institutione musica*, ca. 510 AD)<sup>12</sup>. This time it is about a trimorphic system composed of *musica humana*, *musica instrumentalis* and *musica mundana*. The meaning of the term *musica* is synonymous with the harmony between the constituent components: *humana* – between the constituent parts of the body and with the soul, *instrumentalis* – rather associated with audible music, and *universalis* – between the heavenly bodies. A lucrative analogy is provided by the Boethian idea of consolation expounded in his last treatise *Consolatio Philosophiae*<sup>13</sup>.

Next comes the astronomer (also mathematician, astrologer, natural philosopher, and music theorist) Johannes Kepler (1571-1630). In the treatise entitled *Harmonice mundi* (1619) the concept of *musica universalis* (music of the spheres) is presented, using *musica* as a tool in assessing the proportions of the natural world, especially in astronomical and astrological aspects. Or, the evaluation of the velocity and the gravitational attraction between the planets, as well as between the planetary group and the Sun, leads to the thought of Rameau's future tonal-functional theory, involving here the analogy with the absolutist monarchy (with the Tonic function) and the “gravity” of all to the

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<sup>11</sup> In the context of Late Antiquity, the acceptance of the concept *harmonia* should be made explicit through a double meaning. The first, a symbolic one, of harmony, i.e. *understanding*, between sounds – *harmonious sonority*. The second meaning would be one deduced from the first – *universal harmony* as *the ultimate harmony and fundamental lawfulness of nature*.

<sup>12</sup> Even in the form of adapted translations, it could be a matter of a “treatise” for each category of the quadrivium: *De arithmetica* and *De institutione Musica* (translations from Nicomachus of Gerasa), followed by *De geometria* (adaptations from fragments left after Euclid (323-285 BC), Marcus Terentius Varro (116-27 BC), especially from *Disciplinarum libri*, nine books, and from Flavius Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus (485-585 AD), from *De artibus ac disciplinis liberalium litterarum*), and *De astronomia* (translations from Claudio Ptolemy (87-125 AD).

<sup>13</sup> As a source of reading for this last treatise of Boethius, the following recommendation can serve: Henry Chadwick (1981). *Boethius: The consolations of music, logic, theology and philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

other constituents of the social group around the Sun-king (first-ballerina with the meaning “I am the State”).

A last associative block represents the parallel between the neural system and, on the one hand, the Bachian free counterpoint, and on the other hand, the image of the Universe. Russian musicologist Hristofor Kušnariov posits that the polyphonic organization system emulates the workings of brain processes<sup>14</sup>. Given five types of brain waves – gamma/concentration (35 Hz), beta/active state (12-35 Hz), alpha/relaxation (8-12 Hz), theta/deep relaxation (4-8 Hz), and delta/ sleep (0.5-4 Hz) –, there is only an approximation to be made concerning the constitutive “voices” of the contrapuntal writing, as well as with the affective states. And beyond all analogy and mimicry, it is obvious that a consonant harmonizing connection can be established between two elements: the ethos of organized sonority and the wavelength of the psyche.

In any case, the relationship is biunivocal, as it is either about the action of invoking (from the point of view of the sonority of a musical work), or about the action of *reclaiming* a certain type of expression (from the point of view of the receiving psyche).

A second analogy is presented by researchers F. Vazza and A. Feletti in their study entitled *The Quantitative Comparison Between the Neuronal Network and the Cosmic Web*<sup>15</sup>. The human psyche is seen as both a system and a network of interconnected neural cells. At the same time, the entire Universe is considered to be a network of galaxies, also interconnected. And the very idea of this parallelism resides in the idea that if the self-organization of both structures takes the form of a network, this fact is sufficient to determine similar principles of procedural “behaviour”. And this is regardless of the scale at which both systems manifest.

### **c.6. Mediation through conceptions of philosophical substance: non-objective analogies (3)**

It is a third sphere of *non-objective* (albeit referential) contents that serve as functional analogies in the field of musical thought. But with the transcendental acceptance censored.

c.6.1. The statement of the Russian musicologist Ivan I. Sollertinski regarding the *Beethovenocentrism* of European musical culture can be accepted as a legitimate starting point. Thus, Beethoven's creation adopts the image of balance between two states of musical culture, already at the limit of the second modernity, which was the Enlightenment: the first, pre-Beethovenian

<sup>14</sup> Hristofor S. Kušnariov (1971). О полифонии [On polyphony]. Moskva: Muzika.

<sup>15</sup> The text of the study is posted on the Internet and can be viewed at: <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsy.2020.525731/full>

(aristocratic culture of the musical Baroque) and, respectively, the second – post-Beethovenian (democratic Romanticism). Positioned by Romantic composers as a liminal figure, Beethoven embodied in his music – especially in the invariant Allegro of the sonata – the Hegelian dialectical principle of the struggle and unity of opposites. The very structure of the first part of an instrumental sonata cycle reproduces faithfully, *grosso modo*, through the consequence of the affirmation (thesis, Theme 1, main, in the main key), this followed by negation (antithesis, Theme 2, second thematic block, in a different tonality), the presentation of the antipoles constituting the content of the Exhibition section. After an antagonistic “distillation” of the two themes (the Treatise section), everything ends with the negation of the negation, which represents the synthesis (the Reprise section), albeit under the tonal auspices of the victorious Main Theme.

Being considered the last systematic philosophy and structured as an encyclopaedia of sciences, Hegel's project can be associated with Beethoven's thinking only on the segment of dialectics and, implicitly, on that of logic<sup>16</sup> in terms of both the organization of the structure and the procedural articulation. The analogy with the changes in the plan of the administrative structure of Europe – the fall of traditional monarchies and the abolition of borders following the Napoleonic wars – is a functional analogy, but a weak one in its quality as an antagonistic content of the sonata *Allegro* by the confusion between the dialectical acceptance and the acceptance of political-military reference (*Symphony III, Eroica*). The ideal of a unified Europe finds its ultimate fulfillment perhaps only in the Ninth Symphony, especially in the IV movement, *Ode to Joy*, with Schiller's (partially censored) text.

c.6.2. Continuing with analogies of philosophical substance, around the referential epicentre of the figure of Beethoven (Hegel/Napoleon) a first pair of symmetrical entities can be admitted: a. in the immediate anteriority – the figure and creation of Mozart, and in posterity – b. the figure and creation of R. Wagner.

c.6.2.1. In the case of the first, the rationalist philosophy of Immanuel Kant serves as a reference, especially the three criticisms, to which the "three Mozartian criticisms" correspond: (1) of pure reason – pure music in the three poses that are the quartet, the instrumental concert and the symphony, (2) of practical reason – the oratorical genres, and (3) of the power of judgment – the opera genre.

A somewhat more careful functional distribution presents a different picture: (1) the critique of pure reason – the chamber genres, especially the

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<sup>16</sup> These two concepts are presented as synonymous as constituent elements of the trivium and occupying the position mediated between grammar and rhetoric.

quartet (the 6 “Haydnian” quartets), (2) the critique of practical reason – the instrumental concerto (27 piano concertos and 5 for the violin), (3) criticism of the power of judgment – the symphonic genre (41 symphonies), and the opera (22 operas) would present itself as a corollary of the whole system, as a “fourth criticism”.

Precisely in this sense, in Mozart's creation, the dominant genres are built as habitats of typified hypostasis of rationality and thus of the human. With one observation: as a reading key, each master genre will correspond to one work. For example, (1) chamber music corresponds to the *ratio essendi* analogy with the “commentary” *dramma per musica Don Giovanni*, (2) the concert genre – *ratio agendi* with the “commentary” opera buffa *The Marriage of Figaro*, (3) the symphonic genre – *ratio fiendi* with the “commentary” that includes four Baroque tribute works, which are the opera seria *Mithridate re di Ponto*, the opera seria *Lucio Silla*, *dramma per musica Idomeneo re di Creta* and the opera seria *Clemenza di Tito*, but also the *Requiem* together with the *Coronation Mass*; (4) the *ratio cognoscendi* thus ends up being represented by the esotericism of the substance in the singspiel *The Enchanted Flute*, work with a very complex relationship between the initiatory-symbolic and, respectively, between the *infans-morbis* (not and without, again, a stream of tributary allegorical thought Baroque)<sup>17</sup>.

c.6.2.2. In the case of Wagner's creation, three representative philosophers of German romanticism are drawn as analogies, and who can rightfully be considered Wagner's philosophers: Feuerbach, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche. The philosophical concepts that each of the latter formulates can be attributed as analogies for the substance of the contents conveyed in Wagnerian's works. Each of the three brings a conceptual boost, which in the “still” of Wagner's thought and creation enters into an antagonism of dialectical substance. Feuerbach's rationalistic pantheism and earthy humanism find its antithesis in pessimism and, in particular, in Schopenhauer's irrationalism, and the criticism of tradition (especially Christianity) serves as an explanation of Wagner's critical attitude towards both the artistic establishment (the existential drama of the artist romantic), but also for the orientation towards pre-Christian

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<sup>17</sup> In an obvious parallelism with these four types of rationality, there are also the four types of human, which the Russian musicologist Marc Aranovski (1979) attributes to each component part of the symphonic cycle. Part I (*Sonata Allegro* form, fast tempo) is *Homo agens*, Part II (large tritrophic form or *variations*, slow tempo) – *Homo sapiens*, Part III (tritrophic form) – *Homo ludens* and Part IV (*rondo* or *rondo-sonata* form, fast tempo) – *Homo communitius*. The systematization is presented in the volume *Симфонические искания, проблемы жанра симфонии в советской музыке 1960-1975 годов* [Symphonic incursions: problems of the symphony genre in Soviet music of the years 1960-1975]. Leningrad: Sovetski Kompozitor, p. 27.



paganism of mythological substance. The three philosophical analogies find a differentiated manifestation: (1) pantheism – in *The Flying Dutchman* and, above all, in the *Ring of the Nibelung* tetralogy, (2) transcendentalist irrationalism – in *Tristan and Isolde* (work adored by Nietzsche), the return to pantheism (and reason for Nietzsche to break with Wagner) – *bühnenfestspiel Parsifal*.

c.6.3. The second pair of conceptual symmetries is constituted by the pairs – of anteriority, Bach-Leibniz, and of posteriority, on the one hand, Debussy-Valéry, but also Bergson, and, on the other hand, Schönberg-Kierkegaard, the latter followed by Freud, Einstein, Marx, and Orgeta-Gasset.

c.6.3.1. Already described by Giordano Bruno (in *De Monade, numero et figura liber*, 1591) as being of three types – God, soul, and atoms, the monad concept is popularized by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716, in the writing entitled *Monadologia*, 1714), by which the German philosopher understands the unique, immaterial and indestructible elementary substances of which the Universe is constituted. The analogy with Bach's creation is made possible by the ancient Greek meaning *monas* (unity). As a reference, the musical works in the fugue genre, in its monothematic standard, are presented. The overwhelming majority of the monothematic fugues in both notebooks of *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier* appear as normative models. The ultimate model is, however, the masterpiece called *Die Kunst der Fuge*, an authentic encyclopedia of Bach's contrapuntal techniques consisting of seventeen counterpoints (and a beginning of the eighteenth), all “springing” from a single theme d-a-f-d // cis-d-e-f // g-f-e-d. The explicit “monadic” character gives it the absence of indications regarding the instrumental ensemble (or vocal ensemble, suitable by presenting a variant of the musical text notated in three C keys and one F bass key). And last but not least, the counterpoint structure should be mentioned in its algorithmizable aspect, which points directly to the monadic and equally abstract immateriality of Bach's polyphony in its double quality: of counterpoint as a harmonious sound fact and as an absolute equivalence of a mathematical fact (numerable).

c.6.3.2. Rejecting the identification of his musical thought as Impressionist, Debussy considers himself rather Symbolist. As an explicit and at the same time pertinent analogy, the latter interpretation places the composer firmly between Mallarmé – the poem *L'après midi d'un faune* (1876) and the symphonic tableau *Prélude à l'après midi d'un faune* (1894) –, and Maeterlinck – the symbolist play *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1892) and the opera *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1902). As an implicit analogy, we should also admit the joining of the thought of Paul Valéry, considered to be the last Symbolist, but whose intellectualism, with complementary attributes such as refinement, elevation, rigorous delicacy (as attention to acceptances and in general to

detail) and even enclaving esotericism with purist accents, brings him “methodologically” closer to Debussy's creative attitude. Both interpretations – poetic (the poems *Le cimètiere marin* and *L'Ébauche d'un serpent*) and reflexive-prosaic (the famous *Cahiers*) – confirm Valery as a lucrative analogy in understanding Debussy's music. And pantheism together with the implicit an-historicism – the images of a mythological, bucolic, idyllic, and animistic Antiquity at the same time – reveal the philosophical thinking of Henri Bergson, especially through the conceptualization of time, also ahistorical, as *temps-espace* (time-space) and *temps-durée* (time-duration). In other words, an internal differentiation of temporality, without reference to a historical or chronological, mechanical time.

As a weak analogy, the connection between Debussy's music and impressionist painting (Monet, Pissaro, Manet, Monet) is presented, Debussy's preferences being specifically oriented towards Turner (marine art) and Whistler (symphonies in white)<sup>18</sup>. A surprising juxtaposition, which confirms the symbolist acceptance of Debussy, is the conception of visual music (case of synaesthesia) practiced by the Lithuanian painter and composer Mikalojus Čiurlionis with the cycle of seven paintings entitled *Sonatas*<sup>19</sup>. And the “descriptive” references to the images of Nature position Debussy's musical thought rather as pantheistic (strong understanding – Nature itself as mysterious) and not just impressionistic (functional but weak understanding). Unlike Debussy's music, Impressionist painting functions as a functional and thus explicit reference to impressions (as strong reference), these caused by images of Nature (and not Nature itself as in Debussy, weak causal reference).

c.6.3.3. Unlike Debussy, rather recuperative-oriented and equally ahistorical<sup>20</sup>, Schönberg's revolutionary-reactionary creation turns out to be the

<sup>18</sup> Whistler's visual “scores” shows, in turn, an adherence to both the Pre-Raphaelite and, implicitly, to the Symbolist: *Harmony in Green and Rose: The Music Room* (1860-61), *Symphony in white No. 1: The White Girl* (1861-63), *Caprice in Purple and Gold: The Golden Screen* (1864), *Harmony in Blue and Silver: Trouville* (1865), *Symphony in White No. 3* (1865-67), *Symphony in Gray and Green: The Ocean* (1866), *Arrangement in Gray and Black, No. 1* (1871), *Symphony in Flesh Color and Pink: Portrait of Mrs. Frances Leyland* (1871-74), *Harmony in Gray and Green: Miss Cicely Alexander* (1872-74), *Arrangement in Gray and Black, No. 2: Thomas Carlyle* (1872-73), *Nocturne: Blue and Gold – Old Battersea Bridge* (ca. 1872-75), *Nocturne in Black and Gold, The Falling Rocket* (1875), *Harmony in Blue and Gold: The Peacock Room* (1876-77), *Symphony in White No. 2: The Little White Girl* (1864), *Variations in Flesh Color and Green: The Balcony* (1864-73), etc. symphonies, harmonies, variations and nocturnes.

<sup>19</sup> The titles of Čiurlionis' paintings are relevant in a suggestive parallelism with Whistler's pictorial “symphonies”: Sonata I (Sun Sonata), Sonata II (Spring Sonata), Sonata III (Snake Sonata), Sonata IV (Summer Sonata), Sonata V (Sea Sonata), Sonata VI (Star Sonata) and Sonata VII (Pyramid Sonata).

<sup>20</sup> By elaborating the contents in the symbolist, pantheistic and explicitly ahistorical meanings, Debussy's music reveals a strong conceptual opponent. It is about Eric Satie (by the way, a

musical expression of an extremely heterogeneous and immediately topical conceptual multiple. Contemporary with Debussy and “doubling” his impressionist work *Pelléas et Mélisande* with the post-romantic symphonic poem *Pelleas und Melisande*, the activation of the multiplicity of complementary analogies occurs only with the formulation of the atonal conception (with the proper atonal, dodecaphonic and serial typologies). And the latter proves to be of extremely high demand through direct analogies.

Compared to the tonal-functional sound organization system, atonal structuring presents itself as an atomized one, with all autonomous sounds and no functional identity. And this is an exact analogy with the social atomization following a galloping industrialization that covers Europe towards the end of the 19th century. In this case, as a strong analogy, there is the image of the atomized urban masses and, implicitly, the de-individualized proletarian masses together with the idea of the proletarian revolution (Marx). The idea of the uprising of the masses (revolutionary) of the Spanish philosopher Ortega-y-Gasset can be deduced from here, as well as the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the jurist and Bolshevik ideologue Lenin.

The following interpretation – a psychoanalytic one, in a perfect analogy with the opening of Pandora's Box – can be found in works such as the monodrama *Erwartung* (Waiting), *op. 17*, and the melodrama *Pierrot Lunnair*, *op. 21*, both by Schönberg. Initiated such a parallel with Freudian imagology, the thematization continues through the works of Alban Berg – the opera *Wozzeck*, *op. 7*, and *Lulu* (incomplete opera), following the expressionist works *Salome* and *Electra* by Richard Strauss, and the pantomime ballet *The Wooden Prince*, the ballet *The Miraculous Mandarin* together with Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle*. Themes of repressed or promiscuous-obscene instinctuality as constants of relations between the sexes, attitudinal and physical violence, criminogenic environment, etc.

The functional relativism of sounds finds its analogy in Einstein's relativistic theory in opposition to Newton's mechanistic determinism. This extrapolation works as a biunivocal one, because the tonal-functional system (the centrality of the Tonic) presents itself as an extrapolation in musical thought of the idea of the absolutist monarchy (the centrality of the Sun-King) and equally of Newtonian celestial mechanics (the heliocentric image of our planetary system). Or, as a theme and subject involved in music, the idea of relativism refers to the negativist problematization of the human from an

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friend of Debussy) whose frond mannerism (anti-romantic and anti-impressionist) presents him as an exponent of conceptual reaction and at the same time as a typical representative of urban substance culture (anchor exclusive in actuality), in a parallelism (and frond, and urbanity, and actuality) explicitly with the aesthetics and imagery of Toulouse-Lautrec's paintings.

ethical and moral aspect in a hyper-secularized context with all values (including Christian ones) suspended.

One of the strongest acceptances of Schoenbergian expressionism is anxiety, and irony (Kierkegaard), with continuity through depressive states, ubiquitous morbidity, as well as consequences of Nietzschean nihilism (censorship of religion and, implicitly, of the Sacred).

### **c.7. Provisional conclusions**

All three situations (c.4., c.5. and c.6.) confirm and reaffirm, depending on the determinant of invisibility, the organic non-objectivity of music and the placement of expressible contents at the same level of irrationality at which the processes in the psyche work human. Thus, all three typologies of references – the spirit worlds of the peoples of nature and the higher world of Eden and the Christian heavenly Jerusalem, the quantifiable world of the system of heavenly bodies, as well as the maximum generality of the depth and abstraction of fundamental philosophical problems – are equally images and structures of the ethos accessible to music as accessible structures of the reproducible imaginary in the form of organized sonority.

## **Part III**

### **D. Cioran and the conversion of natural elements into codes of musical expression:**

Returning from the applied (social, philosophical, and psychoanalytical) understanding of Schönberg's music, it is worth noting, however, the persistence of the identification of music as a sound ontology, which by a genealogically explicable transcendental censorship (the representation of the unrepresentable) is forbidden objectivity and thus direct referentiality. Psycho-affective refers to anthropological specificity, subjectivity, and equally to the singularity of individual perception – weak evaluative arguments. In its turn, the structural argument sins through the technicality of the logic applied to the relation of indivisible units in structures (i.e. organization), together with the logic of animation (processing, i.e. control) and evolutionary transformation. In the middle would be analogies as close as possible to the specifics of the identity and manifestation of music. In other words, only entities that are equally ontological and dynamic in their manifestation can serve as analogies here. Furthermore, these entities should possess semantic contents decipherable as archetypal.

The Romanian-born French philosopher Emil Cioran offers a possible solution to the set of *pertinent analogies*, and he does so through elliptical borrowing — exclusively through “behavioral” attributes—from the ancient Greek philosopher Empedocles. He formulates them as descriptive codes located, however, both outside the musical structure and outside the human

psycho-affective contents, anchoring them firmly in an intermediate area of contents and expression, but preserving a possible hermeneutic openness towards both.

It is about the constituent elements of Nature which in ancient philosophical thought are Air, Fire, Water, and Earth. The system of elements may also include Ether. And in ancient Chinese thought, two additional elements appear – Wood and Metal (both sensitive to Water and Fire, but both share the relationship with Air and Earth). In this situation, the similarity between the character of the *dynamic-evolutionary* manifestation of natural elements and organized sound structures should be postulated: the volatility of Air (invisible!), the mobility of Fire, the fluidity of Water, and the tectonic, mineral, and heavy dynamics of the Earth. Only these four elements generate a multitude of accompanying analogies: *colors* – white-red-blue-black (visual perception), *seasons* – spring-summer-autumn-winter (representations of natural cyclicality), *temporal states* – morning-noon-evening-night (day-night cycle), and, importantly, already in the human area, both *temperaments* – sanguine-choleric-phlegmatic-melancholic, as well as *ages* – childhood, youth, maturity, old age. Thus a bridge between archetype (content) and invariant (structure) becomes possible.

Namely, through this procedural quality, the possibility of analogy with human psycho-affectiveness appears, in turn, dynamic-processual. In his descriptions of the reactions caused by the sound of music, Emil Cioran proceeds in exactly this way:

The Air. the flight. Ascension: “In Mozart’s music, airy, light, transparent and immaterial to the point of illusion, contractions, sufficiency, and death disappear; [...] You love Mozart in the moments when you suppress the direction of life when you convert momentum into the flight when wings carry fate...”; “This music for angels revealed to us the category of the glider.”; “The symbols of happiness: undulation, transparency, purity, serenity... Undulation: The formal scheme of happiness. (Mozartian revelation.)”.

The Water. The flow. Fluidity: “All that I believed in myself individuated, isolated in a material solitude, fixed in a physical consistency and determined in a rigid structure, seems to have resolved itself into a rhythm of seductive fascination and imperceptible fluidity.”; “In these moments when you echo in space and when space echoes in you, in these moments of sound torrent [...]”; “You can’t identify your music, can’t you manage between sound waves, delicate and tender? [...] “His sonorous frolicking secretly intervenes between us and the world...”

From Water to Earth and Air: “All that is imperceptible fluidity, endless flow, starting to break up and temptation of the abyss, all that is soaring and irresistible [...] The musical in us is our great temptation.”

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Fire and Earth: "... the harmonies and ascensions of inner melodies melt me."<sup>21</sup>

On the actual archetypal side, there are at least two names that confirm, complete, and thus legitimize Cioran's imaginary: Gaston Bachelard and Gilbert Durand.

The first is known through a series of titles that include all four elements<sup>22</sup>, as if in symmetry with Boethius's four compilations about the constituents of the quadrivium: arithmetic (pure number, Air), geometry (number in space, Earth), music (number in time, Water) and astronomy (number in time and space, Fire).

The second is the author of a masterful volume entitled *Anthropological Structures of the Imaginary*, which provides additional analogies by postulating the diurnal regime and the nocturnal regime (both of the images). The latter are hypothesized as habitats of the masculine (diurnal, image, visible, concrete, rational, Air and Fire) and feminine (nocturnal, sightless, invisible, abstract, irrational-mystical, Water and Earth).

### **E. Models of practical realization of elements in compositional conceptions**

After stringing together the elemental states of Emil Cioran's sensibility and imagination, legitimately the curiosity arises if the image and attributes of the elements really exist as works and even musical repertoires that would be dedicated to them.

Two early examples of musical transcription of the imagology of the elements can serve as an introduction here: (1) Jean-Fery Rebel (1666-1747): *Les Elements*, an orchestral suite from ballet music and Andre Cardinal Destouches (1672-1749): *Les Elements*, ballet suite for string orchestra. And three interpretations of the philosophy of nature formulated by Richard Wagner, Nikolai Andreievich Rimsky-Korsakov, and Claude Debussy serve here as a peak realization of the natural imaginary. The joining is a legitimate one both by the substance of each compositional conception, and especially by the specifics of the "genealogical" relationship between the three composers. Disguised in pan-Germanic mythology (including here Scandinavian roots),

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<sup>21</sup> The quotes are extracted from the volume \*\*\*. (1996). *Cioran si muzica* [Cioran and Music]. București: Humanitas.

<sup>22</sup> The following volumes about natural elements have been translated into Romanian: *Psihanaliza focului* [Psychoanalysis of Fire, București: Editura Univers, 1989], *Apa și visele* [Water and Dreams, București: Editura Univers, 1995], *Aerul și visele* [Air and Dreams, București: Editura Univers, 1997], *Pământul și reveriile voinței* [Earth and Reveries of Will, București: Editura Univers, 1998] and *Pământul și reveriile odihnei* [Earth and reveries of rest, București: Editura Univers, 1999].

Wagner's music is rather tributary to Feuerbach's pantheism, with which the list of the Bayreuth canon begins (The Flying Dutchman) and ends (Parsifal). And in the same sense, but through the resources of the Russian fantastic fairy tale, Rimsky-Korsakov builds his pantheism, a pan-Slavist one. Corroboration with the creation of the Czechs Smetana and Dvořák is obvious.

Evolving in approximate parallelism, both compositional conceptions display a strong ethnocentric orientation: in Wagner's case, it is about the unification of the German territories into a Second Reich through the efforts of Chancellor Bismark, while in Rimsky-Korsakov's orientation is visible *norodnik* – by returning to the mythological roots of Russian culture (Vladimir Stasov and Alexandr Afanasiev), by resorting to the images of the people's life (the *Peredvijniki* movement of plastic artists), both attitudes being decisive for the composers of the Group of Five, of which Rimsky-Korsakov was a part. The third interpretation of pantheism, this time French, is presented by Claude Debussy. Without being motivated by the ethnocentric element, the musical symbolism of an impressionistic substance is positioned, on the one hand, as a reaction to the thesis of the German variant of late romanticism (anti-Wagnerism), on the other hand, however, it could be interpreted as a tributary to the variant of Russian pantheism, an organic one. Debussy's music certainly tends towards a pure hypostatization of nature, without needing mediation either through the symbolism of the myth (Wagner) or through the imaginary of the fantastic fairy tale (Rimski-Korsakov).

### **(1) Richard Wagner: Naturphilosophie in the *Ring of the Nibelung* Tetralogy**

**THE WATER.** The action of the entire cycle begins with a rather long Prologue and the first scene of the *Gold of the Rhine*, where in the tonality of *E-flat major* the aquatic element – the Rhine – is presented, in which the sacramental treasure lies. The water is not represented from the outside, as an image of a surface, but on the contrary, from the inside, the whole atmosphere is aquatic, because the action takes place in the depths of the Rhine. We find the water at the end of the tetralogy – the purifying outpouring of water (act III of *Twilight of the Gods*, W. W. V. 86D, *Götterdämmerung*, 1876), the daughters of the Rhine regaining their lost gold together with the Ring, and thus purifying them from the evil of sin. After the apocalyptic Ragnarökr, the end of the gods, a new cycle of existence can begin.

Another image of water is blood, as a vital fluid, but one endowed with magical powers. When in Act II of the opera *Siegfried* (W. W. V. 86C, 1876), the hero kills the dragon Fafner and tastes its blood, and he becomes able to understand the speech of the forest creatures. Then Siegfried bathes in the blood of the dragon – the symbolism of baptism and rebirth, the revelation of the complete hero, through the acquisition of invulnerability. The blood water,

as the water of life, provides him with both the wisdom and the power to possess the treasure and the Ring.

The drowning of the schemer Hagen, son of the Nibelung Alberich, in the waters of the Rhine, at the end of the fourth opera, represents cumulatively a series of images with a symbolic character: the atonement of the deeds committed, the return, thus, to a maternal, intrauterine space, and last but not least, the Ophelian archetype of suicide by drowning could be invoked.

**THE FIRE.** In the entire tetralogy, Fire is also presented as a multi-functional element. Thus, for the first time, the element appears in the Conjunction of Fire scene at the end of the *Valkyrie* opera (W. W. V. 86B, *Die Walküre*, 1870), in which Wotan punishes his daughter, the valkyrie Brünnhilde, by stripping her of her divine powers, putting her to sleep, and with Loke's help surrounding her with a wall of fire that only a hero will be able to break through to wake her up. The fire appears as a symbol of isolation and, at the same time, of safeguarding, but also as a test – the test of fire, for Siegfried.

As a symbol of creative energy, Fire appears at the end of Act I of the third opera – *Siegfried* – the scene of the forging of the Nothung sword, in obvious opposition to the forging of the Ring of power by Alberich: the promise of the Nibelung to forge the Ring (Scene I) and ascertaining the existence of the ring (Scene II from *The Gold of the Rhine*).

The last pose of the Fire (in the *Twilight of the Gods*, the end of act III) is both sacrificial and purifying – Brünnhilde throws herself into the huge funeral pyre of Siegfried, wearing the Ring of the Nibelungs on her finger and thus cleansing him of the sin of the evil produced. The flames of the pyre ascend to the heavens, consuming the fortress of Walhalla along with all the gods.

**THE EARTH.** In the Ring of the Nibelungs, this element is represented by the mother deity Erda (*Earth, Erde, Terra*), who stands as a sign both for the earth and for the whole of nature – the *Yggdrasil* tree with the nine worlds strung along it or, towards for example, the earth as a bed for water and support for vegetation that supports the air.

As a space of action, the earth is divided between two groups of images: (1) the underground of Nibelheim (Alberich's kingdom), the land of the Nibelung miners and blacksmiths (Mime, Alberich's brother), where Siegfried grows up, and, for example, the cave of the dragon Fafner, and (2) the actual surface of the earth on which the mundane portions of the narrative take place (the forest where Siegmund and Sieglinda meet or Wotan's wanderings). We are dealing here with two images that are opposite in meaning and, implicitly, in content. The first is the image of the dark and miserable underground labyrinths, in which the Nibelungs live and work, extracting and processing from the body of the earth (*Erdei*), thus serving to accumulate the wealth of Alberich, the Nibelung-tyrant who renounced love in favour of power. It is an



analogy of the rising industrial world, an inhuman, mechanical force based on the consumption of nature, exhausting it to accumulate as much power as possible. Fafner's Cavern is, unlike Nibelheim, a place of concealment and concealment, safe from the world, in which lie the treasure of the Rhine and the Ring of Power. The terrestrial surface can be associated, on the contrary, with a place of natural vegetation and animals, spaces of life and living, representative of Siegfried – the model of pure man, organically linked to mother nature.

**THE AIR.** It is the least present element in the tetralogy, this being concretely suggested by the famous Flight of the Valkyries (*Walkürenritt* or *Ritt der Valküren*, known, rather, by the no less famous scene of the helicopter attack in the film *Apocalypse now* by Francis Ford Coppola (1979), from the Prelude to Act III of the opera *Valkyria*.

(1.1.) The meaning of the elements in the Wagnerian musical-dramatic mythology. Begun in 1853 and completed in 1876 with the mountings of the last two works, the cycle composed of four works is organized and articulated around the two elements – water and, respectively, fire – which appear in at least three meanings: (a) in the form of energies, elements, and attributes of the natural environment in general (together with the earth and, respectively, the air), (b) in the form of referents of original purity, (c) but also with the function of archetypes (water as the original environment of life and fire as creative and passionate energy). Both elements have several specific functions, one being common, such as, for example, purification – the primordial purity and purifying power of water, but also purification from the sins of the world through fire.

All four elements are presented in an explicit way from the beginning of the first work – *The Gold of the Rhine* (WWV 86A, *Das Rheingold*, 1869). It is about Creation in the terms of Nordic mythology, and to be born and evolve, the Universe needs air, earth, water, and fire. The parallel with the thought of the Pre-Socratics is as obvious as possible.

A second aspect of the elements is a symbolic one, impregnated in the very main characters of the tetralogy. Thus, Wotan is air, Erda is earth (*Der Erde* in German, *Earth* in English, *Terre* in French), the Rhine (with his three daughters) is water and Loke is fire.

The symbolism of the spaces is, in a third sense, distributed among the four elements: the celestial fortress Walhalla (*Valhöll*), stands under the sign of air, the underground of the Nibelungs – under the sign of the earth, the Rhine – under the sign of water, fire finding an interstitial place, between earth and air.

In a fourth sense, the four works of the tetralogy could stand as a sign for each element. The *Gold of the Rhine* can be symbolized by water (the Rhine), *Valkyrie* – by air (where Wotan is one of the central characters), *Siegfried* – by earth (the human of a tragic destiny, the action taking place in the earthly

reality of human relations) and the *Twilight of the Gods* – through fire (apocalyptic, sacrificial and purifying purpose alike).

The fifth meaning of the ensemble of elements can be noted by organizing the characters in polarized groups, each representing an element as a symbol of its habitat or substance. Earth is the only element represented by its two dimensions: (1) the underground space, the Nibelheim empire of Nibelung dwarves, miners, and smiths alike, ruled by the tyrannical Alberich, along with his brother, Mime, and (2) the space of the mountain heights, suggested, through the opposition, through the giant brothers this time – Fafner and Fasolt, the builders of Wallhala. Water, in an obvious way, is represented by the three daughters of the Rhine: Woglinde, Wellgunde, and Flosshilde. Air, in turn, is the element of Wotan's daughters, the Valkyries, nine in number: Brünnhilde, Gerhilde, Ortlinde, Waltraute, Schwertleite, Helmwige, Siegrune, Grimgerde, and Roßweiße. Fire, with a very important role in the tetralogy, in opposition to water, is represented only by the god-Trixter Loke.

A deducible meaning from here (somewhat meaning 5a) relates to the image of feminine (water-air) versus masculine (earth-fire) opposition, where earth, even divided into two groups of characters (two dwarfs versus two giants) together with fire (Loke), is dominated, at least quantitatively, by the twelve female characters (three Nereids versus nine Valkyries). And all these characters are, in turn, grouped and interfering in a convergent way towards the epicentre occupied by the hero Siegfried.

## **(2) The Russian alternative: the philosophy of nature in Nikolai Andreevich Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908)**

The emergence of water as dominant imagery finds a possible explanation through the composer's service in the Russian navy.

Started in 1862, the three-year voyage around the world carried out on board the ship *Almaz* (in Russian – Diamond), can be considered a landmark event for Nikolai Andreevich Rimsky-Korsakov, decisive in terms of the strong anchoring of the conceptual option for aquatics. Images of the sea permeate his first orchestral work – *Symphony no. 1*<sup>23</sup>, in *E minor*, *op. 1* (1861-1865), a symphony begun in Saint-Petersburg, continued and finalized at sea<sup>24</sup>, being only the second part:

<sup>23</sup> Another symphony, under the same number one, *op. 1*, was written by Igor Stravinsky still during his apprenticeship with Rimsky-Korsakov. Noteworthy is the tonality of the symphony – *E flat major* (Es-dur), which in Rimsky-Korsakov's opinion corresponds to the blue-turquoise color and, consequently, stands as a sign of the aquatic. Later, Stravinsky would complete the string by referring to Fire in the ballet *Жар-птица* (*The Firebird*) and, respectively, to Earth in the ballet *Весна священная* (*Sacred Spring*).

<sup>24</sup> Extrapolating this situation, one could imagine that musical works with themes of air should be written by pilots during flight, on board airships, of fire – by blacksmiths while forging

(a) the symphonic poem *Sadko* (Садко), *op. 5* (1867), from which the opera (in seven paintings) of the same name will be born (1898): the subject was taken from a Russian fairy tale (bilina) about the singer Sadko and his meeting with the princess Volhovna, the daughter of the sea tsar Ocean. The narrative plot is articulated in an obvious parallel with the opera *Tannhäuser* by Richard Wagner: the same love triangle – Liubava (Wagner's Elisabeth) – Sadko (*Tannhäuser*, the knight-singer) and Volhovna (Venus), the same fantastic subject, but with an equally of obvious ethnic difference of the subject, imagery, and melos.

(b) The string is continued by the symphonic suite *Шехерезада* (*Scheherazade*), *op. 35* (1888), in four parts, based on the Arabic fairy tales from the collection *One Thousand and One Nights*. An explicit realization of the aquatic can be observed in the first parts – *The Sea and Sindbad's ship*, and the fourth – *Feast in Baghdad. The sea (the shipwreck)*.

(c) *Сказка о царе Салтане* (*The story about Tsar Saltan*, 1899-1900), after A.S. Pushkin's fairy tale). Aquatics belongs to Act II of the opera, in which the journey of the exiled queen Miltirissa and her son Gvidon in a barrel and their shipwreck on the island of Buian is reproduced. The presence of the aquatic is also highlighted by the magical character Swan Princess, the image of the swan being associated with water rather than air, which is represented by the evil sorcerer incarnated in a hawk, which Prince Guidon kills, saving the Princess. As an antithesis, in Richard Wagner's *Parsifal*, the main character, Parsifal, kills, out of ignorance and perhaps hunger, the sacred swan of the Grail Knights.

The earth, as firm ground, is represented by the island of Buian, the only way of fast movement remaining is the air (the famous *Flight of the Bumblebee* from Act III of the opera).

(d) A true masterpiece is considered to be the penultimate work of the fifteen, *Сказание о невидимом граде Китеже и девице Февронии* (*The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitej and the Maiden Fevronia*, 1904), which narrates a Russian legend about the city of Kitej, which became invisible or sank through the prayers of the population besieged by the Tatars. However, this work is the last in a series of *forest* works, such as *Mlada* and *Pan Voievoda*. And thus it is revealed that the Water element is only one of the natural habitats involved in the Korsakovian philosophy of nature.

(e) *Снегурочка: весенняя сказка* (*The Snow Maiden: A Spring Tale*, 1880-1881), after an eponymous play by Alexandr Ostrovsky, written in 1873, accompanied by incidental music of the same title, *Snegurocika* (*op. 12*) by P. I. Tchaikovsky. The subject narrates a love story: Snegurocika, daughter of the

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metal, of water – by sailors or, possibly, by the firemen, and of the land – by farmers during plowing or by geologists and archaeologists during land prospecting.

Most Fragrant Spring and Frost, withdrawn and lonely, longs to meet people, but fails to understand the meaning of love, a key feeling that animates the fundamental vital energies for both living and all nature. But paradoxically, Rimsky-Korsakov himself labels this work as a work of birds (carriers of the change of seasons), because Snegurochika is, after all, the daughter of Spring, and knowing love, she will melt in the burning rays of the Sun-Yarilo, in the rustle of the resurrected forest, in the song of the birds and the shepherd's whistle of Lel.

In *May Night* appears the magic and even the mysticism of the Ukrainian night, a work of the *Sky and the Stars*, a logical continuation being the Astrologist, the character in *The Golden Rooster*, the composer's last work. The work of *Kaşcei the Deathless* belongs to another typology – the work of the *Storm and the Snowstorm*. In the composer's entire creation, the themes, images, and archetypal references can in no way be grouped into precise periods such as the water period, the forest period, the night, the sky, and the stars. It is rather about a conceptual fabric in which a multitude of images of Russian nature are interwoven and not only. And in the end, even if the totality of Rimsky-Korsakov's creation could be integrated into the phrase *pagan (animist) pantheism*, it cannot be only about that. Just as Verdi formulated the coordinates of his entire creation in the last two operas – the intersection between the Comic (*Falstaff*) and Tragic (*Otello*) categories –, Korsakov's creation finds its peak expression in the meta-idea of the fusion of the Christian mystic (*Kitej*) with the Social ethic (*The Golden Rooster*). Even Wagner's last work – the consecration ritual of the scene *Parsifal* – represents conclusive evidence of the return to pantheism and the Christian religious imaginary, to the total disappointment of his once idolatrous admirer who was Friedrich Nietzsche.

### **(3) Claude Debussy and the Resurrection of Sensory (Mistical) Pantheism**

Compared to the archetypal and equally solemn, quasi-cosmo- and anthropo-genic ethos of the elements in Wagner, the French composer invokes the image of the four elements in a much more direct way, reproducing, one might say, even onomatopoeic, through the real, concrete manifestations of water, air, earth, and fire. More precisely, they are real states of natural phenomena, but these being filtered through the stained glass window of perception and imagination, both objective and equally escaping in an imperceptible way, we could say – delicately, from under the empire of a firm judgment with the status of absolute truth and universal.

Unlike Wagner, who reigns supreme over the four elements and gives them full roles, without any visible imbalance in favour of any element, Debussy appears, at first glance, as the champion of only one element – water.

Given a choice between the waters of Rimsky-Korsakov and the flames of Alexander Scriabin, Debussy opts for the former, the fire remaining only a “trifle” at the end of the *Preludes* for a piano cycle. A second differentiation, between Wagner's total work of art (Gesamtkunstwerk) and Debussy's creation, reveals the monolithic integrity of the first and the “fragmentation” of the second. Moreover, unlike the symphonic-operatic musical drama, Debussy presents himself quite incompletely through the seemingly heterogeneous, if not scattered, options for a programmatic present in almost all his works, regardless of genre, through his explicit preference for the miniature and, in the same sense, for pianistic, although the composer is also convincing enough in orchestral thinking. What is misleading is the absence of a totalizing common denominator, of the Wagnerian type.

In a fourth sense, in the light of the ethnic purity of Wagner's music – the absolute exclusivity of Germanic-Nordic mythology, Debussy's creation appears as a hybrid – a delightfully strange and alien mixture of the Wagnerian world made of Burmese pagodas, of gamelan intonations from Bali, of Hispanic-Andalusian-Moorish passion, of African-American rhythms and intonations, of interest in Renaissance and Mussorgskyian modalism alike, but also in the music of Mussorgsky. Debussy completely lacks Wagnerian ostentatiousness and its explicit domineering and totalitarian character, a fact that we can also observe through the “hidden” titles at the end of each miniature in both notebooks with the twenty-four *Preludes*. And unlike the emphasis with which Wagner asserts his so German and so romantic supremacy, Debussy surprises by denying his definition as an impressionist.

Beyond any comments, Debussy is a composer belonging to the typology of *integrator*, realizing each genre he approaches in its terms and being equally organic either when he calls for the piano miniature or – the orchestral symphony of monumental proportions. In opposition, however, we can note a series of composers specialized by their creative data in certain hegemonic genres, at the expense of other genres, almost overlooked. Thus, the option for the instrumental miniature (piano music) defines the work of Robert Schumann and Frédéric Chopin, even if both have symphonies (Schumann, four symphonies) or instrumental concertos (Chopin, two concertos). Still in favour of the chamber miniature, but with this vocal, the choices that bring Robert Schumann closer (the vocal cycles *The Poet's Love* and *Woman's Love and Life*) to Franz Schubert (over six hundred *lieds*) are chosen. On the other side, of the monumental, is Hector Berlioz, whose work is represented almost exclusively by large-scale symphonic and vocal-symphonic works, Nikolai Andreevich Rimsky-Korsakov, also exclusively orchestral, with a strong anchoring in the opera genre and, finally, Richard Wagner, synthesizing symphony and opera in his musical drama project.

We can use Wagner as a referent in evaluating Debussy only to highlight the otherness of the latter, the fact that he seems to already exist in another world, a modern one, in contrast to the already naive and anachronistic world of the romantics. In essence, and here comes the specific difference between the two composers, Wagner represents the composer belonging to the closed type mentality, focused exclusively on his own Germanness and raising it to the level of absolute virtue, while Debussy achieves much superior performance by the fact of having achieved the model of open mentality through the organic assimilation of the extra-European sound imaginary, and at the same time of having articulated not so much his French identity as the creative particularity of his personality. The discovery and implementation of Renaissance (meeting Liszt), Russian (familiarization with Mussorgsky), and especially Asian (Balinese gamelan) modalism places Debussy light years away from Wagner's autistic (although expansive) localism. Closing himself in the values of the tribe, Wagner seems to reach a certain im-personalization, putting a considerable distance of worship between him and the audience, while through such a spectacular opening, Debussy reveals new, and new facets of his personality, paradoxically, through elements with all the more alien to the European cultural context and thus managing to always remain in a dialogical proximity.

This almost onomatopoeic character of the natural elements in Debussy's music gives them the freedom to be themselves, relieving them of the symbolic and pathos-laden weight in which they are imprisoned in Wagner's music. Debussy's immediacy comes as a restoration of the organicity and naturalness of water, air, earth, and fire, presenting them almost as they are in their manifestation in full nature and thereby cancelling the epic, mythological, and implicitly psychological conventionalism that is their so improperly imagistic, discursive and narrative, in which Wagnerian musical thinking catches them.

**WATER:** *Nuages and Sirènes* (with women's chorus), from the cycle *Nocturnes* for orchestra, L 91 (1897-1899); *La mer* Symphony, L 109 (1903-1905): Part I, *De l'aube à midi sur la mer*, Part II, *Jeux de vagues*; *Jardins sous la pluie*, from the *Estampes* cycle, L 100 (1903); The opera *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1904); *Reflets dans l'eau*, from the cycle *Images I*, L 110 (1905); *Poissons d'or*, from the cycle *Images II*, L 111 (1907); *La cathédrale engloutie*, (no. 4), notebook I, *Préludes* cycle, L 117 (1909-1910); *Ondine* (no. 8), from the cycle *Préludes II* L 123 (1912-1913); *En bateau* (No. 1), from *Petite suite*, for piano four hands, L65 (1886-1889); *Pour remercier la pluie au matin* (no. 6) from *Six épigraphes antiques*, for piano four hands, L 131 (1914); *Barcarolle: Viens! l'heure est propice*, for voice and piano, L 58 (1885); *La mer est plus belle que les cathédrales*, from the *Mélodies* cycle for voice and piano, L 81 (1891); *Sur la mer les crépuscules tombent*, from the cycle *Proses*

lyriques, for voice and piano, L 84 (1892-1893); *Le tombeau des Naiades*, from the cycle *Chansons de Bitilis*, for voice and piano, L 90/(97) (1897-1898); *L'eau pur du bassin* (no. 9), from the music for *Chansons de Bilitis*, for two flutes, two harps and celesta, L 96 ( ); *L'isle joyeuse*, for piano, L 106 (1904); **Intermediate State** (Air and Water): *Dialogue du vent et de la mer*, from the symphony *La Mer* (1903-1905), Part III, L 109; *Brouillards* (Mists), no. 1 from the *Préludes II* cycle, L 123 (1912-1913);

**AIR:** *Voiles* (no. 2), *Le vent dans la plaine* (no. 3), *Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir* (no. 4), *Ce qu'a vu le vent d'ouest* (no. 7), from the cycle of *Préludes*, notebook I, L 117 (1909-1910); *Les parfums de la nuit* (no. 2) from *Iberia* (1905-1908), from the cycle *Images III*, L 122; *Pour invoquer Pan, dieu du vent d'été* (no. 1), from the cycle *Six épigraphes antiques*, for piano four hands, L 131 (1914);

**Intermediate State** (Air and Earth): *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*, Op. 10, L 86 (1893)

**EARTH:** *Les collines d'Anacapri* (no. 5), from the cycle *Préludes I*, L 117 (1909-1910); *La Grotte: Auprès de cette grotte sombre* (no. 2), from the cycle *Chansons de France*, for voice and piano, L 102 (1904);

**FIRE:** *Feux d'artifice* (no. 12), from the cycle *Préludes II*, L 123 (1912-1913);

All three composers can be seen as three stages, periods, or models of representation, oriented towards a stronger approach, until an almost fusion, between man and Nature. The romantic pantheism of Richard Wagner's thought, philosophical and aesthetic alike and of genuine value, turns out to be, however, a thesis, strongly focused on the dominant ideology of the time – pan-Germanism –, and thus quite schematic (including here the system of leitmotif), i.e. a conventional one. The pagan animist pantheism of Nikolai Andreevich Rimsky-Korsakov imposes itself as a “blunt” antithesis to Wagnerism, even if it was difficult overcoming of it. Man is part of Nature, a single “partition” in the symphony of the existing, together with forests (*Mlada*, *Pan Voievoda*, *Kitej*), waters (*Sadko*, *Saltan*, *Şeherezada*), birds and sunrise (*Snow Maiden*), storms (*Kaşcei the Immortal*) and the starry nights (*Night of May*). And as a continuation of the direction of penetration towards the original and equally authentic, appears the pantheistic mysticism of Achille-Claude Debussy, with its almost exclusive focus on sensitivity as a way to absorb the natural irrational. Is a continuation of this streak possible? The synaesthetic syncretism of Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis pushes things to the morphological limit of human consciousness and physicality which cannot become a tree, a stream, a cloud, a flower, or a breeze. But both

paintings and musical works, rather one through the other, and this without scientific or speculative aesthetic-philosophical assertions reveal the very organic meanings of Nature in and through Culture, especially through Art, which in turn proves capable of it absorbs irrationality and mysticism, pantheism and mythology, philosophy, and ideology, assimilating them into forms equally visual and auditory. From the structural culturality of Wagner's thought to the morphological naturalness of Čiurlionis' creation.

#### **F. Proof of relevance: the continuity argument as semantic stability**

Even if the imagery of natural elements turns out to be tender and generous in terms of expression, it is obvious that most of the above examples betray belonging to programmatic and operatic music. That is, to philological music. Hence an understandable interrogative curiosity: how are things outside the programmatic technique and stage performance? The greater is the curiosity regarding the continuity factor, which would demonstrate that the implication of the elemental imaginary works beyond the literary, philosophical, poetic, and, in any case, Cioranian concrete.

In this sense, Händel would be represented with his two suites, *Water and Fire – Wassermusik* and *Feuerwerksmusik*, Stravinsky would be involved with the sacredness of the Earth in the sacred *Spring*, and Rachmaninoff with the cantata *Spring*, op. 20 – the overflow of melted snow. But sufficient proof would be one or more examples from experimentalist or avant-garde orientations, which would not resort to extramusical “crutches”.

Or, a first proof is provided by Luciano Berio himself with the cycle for piano entitled *Six Encores*, in which after the first two pieces – *Brin* (1990) and *Leaf* (1990) – all four elements are strung, but in a different order than the traditional one by privileging the nocturnal/feminine pair – *Wasserklavier* (1965), *Erdenklavier* (1969), *Luftklavier* (1985) and *Feuerklavier* (1989).

The element of Air finds its match in the micropolyphonic technique, with which György Ligeti captures the diaphanous contrapuntal texture in *Atmospheres* (1961), which appears in Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). Through another work, the composer presents Air only as a medium (habitat) for the propagation of Light – the work *Lux Aeterna* (1966) -, taking us with our thoughts towards *Prometheus: the poem of fire*, op. 60 (1910) by Scriabin, for whose performance and grace the inventor Preston Millar designed a light organ called the Chromola.

As a third link of the Scriabin-Ligeti genealogical line, he presents himself as Stockhausen with the monumental *Licht* heptalogy, conceived between 1977-2003. A cycle composed of seven operas, one for each day of the week – *Die Sieben Tage der Woche* (Seven Days of the Week). This time the reference is to the Wagnerian tetralogy *The Ring of the Nibelungs*, where Air, Fire, Water, and Earth appear in a symbolic counterpart to Light.



The evolution of musical thought, as well as the evolution of culture in general, acts to expand the ontological imaginary, and this is an obvious parallelism with the cultural and psychological imaginary, advancing the deepening and enrichment of the content representative of the three typologies of the archetype. In Indian mysticism (ayurveda) it is about five elements – the four elements are joined by the Ether. In the Chinese imagination, the elements of Empedocles are joined by wood and metal. Modernist artistic thinking resorts to Light. And in this sense, as a topical argument, a next element should be introduced, without any irony – that of Electricity, which organically would invoke the omniscient space of Virtuality.

And as a hermeneutic tool, analogy proves to be of maximum efficiency not only in the attempt to “understand” the contents of music, but even more, allowing the recovery of some fundamental and determining meanings regarding both the real identity of the musical phenomenon and, above all, the contents of musical thought as fundamental human contents.

### **G. Terminus. Archetypes as analogies of historical-cultural contents**

Since we are talking about an archetype-mediated coding of the contents of music, it is also possible to extrapolate this procedure to a higher level of generalization: from the coding by the attributes of natural elements – archetypes of ontological substance – of some discrete musical compositions, towards the coding by the attributes of heroes mythological – archetypes of cultural substance – of entire historical periods. The three European Modernities lend themselves to such a codification: Renaissance (first Modernity)-Baroque (second Modernity), Viennese Classicism -Romanticism (three periods or steps), third Modernity (20th century with the three Modernisms) and, as a consequence of all historical accumulations – Postmodernity.

The first two epochs of European culture – Antiquity (Greek and Roman) and the Middle Ages – should be excluded, because they present themselves in their generative quality as two radically different conceptual beginnings. A second argument concerns the static character of these ahistorical periods by their theocratic substance.

The identification can be done using two criteria. The first consists of the nature and quality of transformation processes at the level of the collective imaginary. In other words, the reference here is the reaching of a cultural horizon and its edification as a new pool of structures and contents of the imaginary. The second criterion, however, is of direct relevance through the themes and titles of works approached as representative.

a. According to the first principle, both the Renaissance and the Baroque, both in their musical substance, are carriers of the Orphic archetype. Given the

qualitative difference between these two eras compared to the ahistorical statics and the theocratic substance of the Middle Ages, the nature of the mutations in the plane of the collective imaginary can be associated with the Orpheus-Euridice narrative plot, but with a happy ending. And this is because Eurydice-Europe is brought back to the worldly reality of the anthropocentric.

As a theme, however, the Orphic reveals itself at the border between Renaissance and Baroque, through a series of works with the title Orpheus or Eurydice, the thematic arc being stretched between the Florentine Camerata and Monteverdi (Renaissance) to Gluck (Viennese Classicism). It should also be mentioned a strong emergence of the ancient imaginary both in the Renaissance and especially in the Baroque: (1) the theatrical creation of Corneille and Racine, in the allegorical works of Lully (*tragédie en musique*) and Rameau and, (2) with a reorientation of the thematic register towards the Old Testament, in the oratorios of Carissimi, Charpentier, and Händel. In other words, a much smaller replication of the succession of the two generative ages (Antiquity and the Middle Ages).

b. With the mutation achieved through the emergence of Viennese Classicism and, above all, through the establishment of Beethoven's creation as one with the meaning of a determining cultural epicentre, the place of the Orphic is taken over by the Promethean archetype. If the Orphic archetype signified the humanist exit from the theocratic and theocentric, then the second stands as a sign of the exit from the aristocratic culture towards the affirmation of human value with the meaning of the individual value of the artist and, implicitly, the orientation of the culture towards a pan-European public.

The Promethean substance of this new cultural code is first of all legitimized by a historical prototype that was Napoleon Bonaparte – a symbol of a charismatic hero, but with a tragic destiny. The dramatic meaning of the odd Beethoven symphonies, in turn, is legitimized by the type of funeral march (except for the last one) and the suggestion of the sacrifice assumed by the hero to fulfill an ideal. Even the *9th Symphony* has the role of realizing the ideal and the transformation – the twinning – of all mankind. And the direct approach to the Promethean theme in Beethoven turns out to be surprisingly marginal – the ballet *Creations of Prometheus*, just like the only work in the operatic genre that was *Fidelio*, a thesis work, surprisingly “symphonic” and very little properly operatic.

An ultimate Promethean achievement is found in Scriabin's creation, but in the sense of the demonic, which in the terms of the romantic ideology also has the meaning of fallen hero literally, i.e. expelled from the Heavens, and, implicitly, fallen in the sense of defeated hero. Vrubel's paintings illustrate this understanding in luxurious detail. Another variant of the reflection on the destiny of the romantic artist is undertaken by Wagner in the tetralogy *Ring of*

*the Nibelungs*, but in a completely different approach and positioning as well as content and image.

c. The third modernity firmly holds the Oedipal meaning primarily through its radically critical attitude towards the classical and romantic pasts. It is an anti-systemic and equally anti-traditionalist attitude, foreshadowed already in the second half of the 19th century by orientations such as impressionist painting, expressionist, verist, and naturalist orientation. After the an-historicism of Antiquity and the Middle Ages, after the explicitly historicist and humanistic progressivism of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment of the Baroque, Viennese Classicism and the return of Romanticism to the past, the last Modernity concentrates its efforts exclusively in a futuristic direction, even at the cost of cutting any genealogical roots. The involuntary rejection of parents takes the cultural form of a propensity for novelty. Thus, the Oedipal archetype is explicitly realized in experimental orientations such as Futurism and Dadaism in poetry, Bruitism along with atonal-dodecaphonic-serial atonalism in music, as well as cubism and the idea of non-figurative abstraction.

d. Postmodernity claims a multifaceted identity, preserving the appearances of a modernist era, but one devoid of the metanarrative burnings of the last Modernity. In other words, a kind of (post)Modernity “scared” by the conceptual abuses and ideological-political futurism of the fascist (New Roman Empire), Nazi (Thousand Year Reich), and Bolshevik (establishment of the Bright Future of Realized Communism).

The appropriate dominant archetype would be Proteus, a polymorphous deity, easily frightened (thereby causing an instant transformation) and with the ability to foretell the future. This polymorphism can be associated with the principle of Hybris, both in the sense of transgression and in the sense of hybridization, an implicit quality of this last cultural period. And last but not least, we should also mention Janus, the Roman god of transition, the one with two faces oriented in opposite directions – toward the past and the future.

As ideological-aesthetic constituents of Postmodernity, we should mention distrust (in meta-narratives), fragmentation (avoidance of thesis discourse), and recovery (of all those excluded). Hence the appetite for polystylistic, for collage, pastiche, parody, rewriting, reformulation, re-signification, etc. This age advances with its face turned towards the past. Towards the entire past to be recovered and re-signified in terms of recycling. Or, such an attempt becomes possible only if all temporal (historical) and spatial (geographical) differentiations are suspended and the multitude is accepted as a cumulative entity hyper-tolerant of difference. Berio and Schnittke present themselves as polystylistic composers. At least two representatives of sacred minimalism can be considered recuperative – Pärt and Gubaidullina, but also post-minimalists

like John Adams, Louis Andriessen, or Michael Torke, by returning to traditional expressivism (emotivist) and diatonism, here also adhering to the *Neue Einfachheit* (New Simplicity) orientation.

Here ends a cultural cycle, the last stage of which is still ongoing. According to the conception of the German musicologist Friedrich Blume (one hundred and fifty-year cycles), it would be expected until 2050 – the end of Postmodernity.

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