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Form and Work in Music: A Comparison

Forma e obra musical: uma comparação

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Abstract: The two major categories, musical form and musical work have been in the center of attention for generations of theorists. Their relationship has been rather dramatic, as seen in the cases that took place in German, Russian and North American traditions. It is not, however, for the minute interest or for the satisfaction of the appetite for sensation that a historian of music theory may be interested in contemplation on this issue. The comparison of form to work does not generate a binary opposition. Rather, it is a natural phenomenon: things happen this way and the two schools of theorists emerged and kept maintaining strong beliefs in either form or work. With the necessary references to philosophy, to the questions of ontology and epistemology of these fundamental categories, the author presents the history of debates of formalists and integralists in both dimensions of research and pedagogy. In the end of the article, the author attempts to summarize this antinomy and to find a possible common ground for its evaluation within a single frame of thought.

Keywords: Form. Work. Analysis. Syntax. Harmony.

Resumo: As duas categorias principais, forma musical e obra musical, têm estado no centro das atenções por gerações de teóricos. A relação entre elas tem sido bastante dramática, como visto nos casos ocorridos nas tradições alemãs, russas e norte-americanas. Não é, no entanto, pelo interesse minucioso ou pela satisfação do apetite pela sensação que um historiador da teoria musical pode estar interessado em contemplar essa questão. A comparação da forma com a obra não gera uma oposição binária. Em vez disso, é um fenômeno natural: as coisas acontecem dessa maneira e as duas escolas de teóricos surgiram e continuaram mantendo fortes crenças na forma ou na obra. Com as necessárias referências à filosofia, às questões de ontologia e epistemologia dessas categorias fundamentais, o autor apresenta a história dos debates de formalistas e integralistas em ambas as dimensões da pesquisa e da pedagogia. No final do artigo, o autor tenta resumir essa antinomia e encontrar um possível lugar comum para sua avaliação dentro de um único quadro de pensamento.

Palavras-chave: Forma. Obra. Análise. Sintaxe. Harmonia.

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1. Introduction

1.1. A Philosophical Preamble

The relationship of musical form and musical work presents a major division in music theory and analysis, today in the United States as it was for centuries before and in a wide range of stylistic periods and national traditions. Each category supports itself on a solid heritage. Thus, musical form is derived from the Greek elaborations on philosophical categories of *morphe*, *eidos*, and *idea*. It is Platonic in origin and relates to Plato's theory of ideas, the faculty of mind to rise to the universals through the category of kind. Musical form went through a powerful evolution. Plotinus introduced the idea of emanation in the *Enneads*, book 5, treatise 8,[1] which in Augustinian interpretation in *Confessions* became a guide to musical creativity and this attitude lingers even today as a background for theoretical discussions. For example, Yuri Kholopov viewed musical form as a vessel into which all other musical components emanate (Kholopov 1982). Immanuel Kant's transcendental aesthetics[2] raised the status of form to the unreachable heights. In the course of emancipation of music from the service to church and court, an independent teaching of form, first *Formenlehre*, then *Kompositionslehre*, absorbed all these important preliminaries.

The concept of musical work is as fundamental and rooted in history as form. In contrast with form, it is derived from Aristotelian term *ergon*[3] and relies heavily on practice. The pragmatic character of musical work can be both its advantage and disadvantage, depending on an angle. In the nineteenth century, music starts functioning differently from the previous era. It played a more active and inclusive role in the lives of wider circles of listeners: from the chambers of

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[1] "In its character as Life, as emanation, as containing all things in their precise forms and not merely in the agglomerate mass—for this would be to contain them imperfectly and inarticulately—it must of necessity derive from some other Being, from one that does not emanate but is the Principle of Emanation, of Life, of Intellect and of the Universe," *The Six Enneads by Plotinus*, Translated by Stephen Mackenna and B. S. Page. (Available at: <https://classics.mit.edu/Plotinus/enneads.5.fifth.html >).

[2] "The science of all the principles of sensibility à priori I call transcendental aesthetic." Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Translator: J. M. D. Meiklejohn. (Available at: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/4280/4280-h/4280-h.htm#linknoteref-10>).

[3] *Ergon*—Greek for "function, work." For "ergon argument" in *Nicomachean Ethics*, see "The Concept of Ergon: Towards an Achievement Interpretation of Aristotle's "Function Argument" (Baker 2015, p. 227–266)

aristocrats to the streets and squares of middle class and proletariat. Consequently, the Marxist component has become prominent in musicology and music theory in the twentieth century. The post-WWII generation of French philosophers, such as Levinas, Foucault, Deleuze, and Derrida, promoted a modified version of Marxism that strongly influenced American New Musicology. The common denominator for all events in history and in life is social practice. The product of such practice is work. Notable is the title of the book by Gérard Genette *The Work of Art. Immanence and Transcendence*. In this trend, musical form was countered by the idea of genre as social function of music and its ultimate embodiment—musical work. Theorists actively rejected this idea. However, the existence of musical work is undeniable, and its function is substantial. Musical work, unlike Platonic form, participates in the life of society, organized into the state. It is also part of everyone's life. Musical work connects narrow professional technical views to the wide extramusical domain. Listeners participate in the creation of musical works; form, on the other hand, remains either completely unavailable for general audiences or hidden from sight and working on a subconscious level.

These two paragraphs introduce the idea of this article, providing a general background for further discussion. The history of music theory is filled with manifestations of the antinomy of form vs. work. It is remarkable how it persists and survives through the limits of periods and styles. It also unites traditions that otherwise appear to be non-correlative. The recurring collisions of form and work in history of music theory point to their essential role in music analysis and research.

1.2. Historical Evidence of Theories of Form and Work in Their Interaction

Cases of debates between supporters of musical form (who can be labeled as formalists) and musical work (one way to word this would be "integralists") are numerous. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Hanslick and Wagner went on a collision course. Their struggle was echoed in many national traditions of music theory. Thus, in the nineteenth-century Russia, Alexander Serov derided formalism in its Hanslickian version:

> That instrumental music is not a game, a simple exchange of positions of sounds, or something like crystallization of melodic, harmonic and rhythmic

> values, interwoven into beautiful forms or arabesques—despite the sophisms of Herr Hanslick—is an already answered question for anybody who, in 1861, seriously understands music.
>
> Music is the language of the soul; it is the domain of feelings and moods; it is the life of the soul expressed in sound (Serov 1954, p. 3).

This new comprehensive aesthetics that absorbs socialist ideas was a key point for many Russian intellectuals. The group of progressive artists decided to part with the Academy of Fine Arts and to go into the fields and villages. They called themselves *Peredvizhniki*, "The Movers." The "Mighty Five," with Mili Balakirev as the ideological leader of the group, dealt with musical works and denied musical form as the product of academicism. In the twentieth century, the Soviet Union housed and maintained integralism in all its aspects and applications. The strong and dominant current of wholistic analysis [Russ. *tselostnyi analiz*] initiated by theorists in 1920–30 (Viktor Belyayev, Viktor Tsukkerman) has become a thoroughfare on the musical landscape of Eastern Europe. Nicole Grimes emphasized the influence of Marxism on musicians in East Germany:

> Broadly speaking, musicology in the West Germany in the Cold War years can be understood as identifying certain modes of thought (such as sociopolitical readings of musical works) as extramusicological and thereby outside the concerns of musicological discussion. In this climate, the music was considered to be a "socially functionless, non-authoritarian discourse." East German musicology during this period can be understood as "theorizing music as social discourse. (Grimes 2013, p. 31)

Daniel Zavlunov named one of his publications on Soviet integralist tradition "Defining and Defending Analysis" (Zavlunov 2020, p. 1–18). It, indeed, brought a wave of interest and sympathy among American musicologists and historians of music theory. Richard Taruskin—if we consider him a theorist which he isn't—was influenced by the teaching of Victor Tsukkerman while studying in the Soviet Union in 1972. Compare the holistic title of Tsukkerman's book *Kamarinskaya and the Russian Traditions* with Taruskin's *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*. Both treatises are similar in titles, content and the layout of chapters. They both implement a total description of musical work, inclusive to the point that the discussion of the form proper takes a relatively modest place.

In contrast with that, Sergei Taneyev, a representative of views of most professors of music theory at Moscow and St. Peterburg conservatories, abstained from communication with this trend. Even Rimsky-Korsakov, being a member of the "Mighty Five," in his role as the professor of music theory proved to be a formalist to the core. His textbook in harmony develops the leading Western ideas on harmony, modulation, and harmonization of a given melody. His collection of folk songs is an exercise in music theory applied to exotic materials. Tchaikovsky forwarded the idea of Classical form, phrasal structure, harmony, motive, and meter—all the topics of the formalist trend. In 1937 and 1948, when the differences evolved to the level of social conflict at the Moscow Conservatory and Composer's Union, formalists, such as Alexey Ogolevets, staged a return for the old teaching of form. That led to the most dramatic and violent collision of the supporters of form and work in history. Here is what Sergei Skrebkov had to say in response to Ogolevets:

> A very symptomatic case is presented by the alliance of the Moscow Conservatory with the creator of a formalist theory Alexey Ogolevets. You could have seen this for yourselves upon listening to the awkward appeal of Ogolevets to cancel the course in analysis of musical works. This course has not reached a state of perfection yet. However, it reaches far beyond the craftsmen-formalist teaching methods of Moscow Conservatory. (1948, p. 82)

From the topic of speculation and purely theoretical abstract exchange of ideas it turned into what Levinas would have labeled as *lutte pour vivre*, the fight for survival. Its smoldering ashes kept burning well into the 1980s and even later.

There was no possibility of reconciliation. The disagreements were so drastic that they exceeded normative binary opposition and presented unsolvable antinomy. The problem, if one looks at it from a close distance, is that form and work do not constitute a binary opposition; there is no common ground for negation within the general agreement. The origins of each of these categories are so unique that the observer must accept them as such, as a kind of natural or historic formation. They manifest difference as such, without the hope of its resolution.

2. The Theoretical Concept of Musical Form

The following section of this article presents an elaboration on the main aspects of form and of work introduced consecutively. Thus, I begin with the discussion of category of musical form.

2.1. Form as a Scheme and as a Process

Apparent from the long and uninterrupted tradition, from say A. B. Marx through Riemann, Bussler, Schoenberg, Ratz, and Caplin, is that musical form is both a scheme and a process. The very idea of form may be interpreted as the articulation of the flow of music into segments and sections. At the same time, form points to a goal; it is teleological and dynamic in nature.

a) Form as a scheme is a valid and useful idea; it is not trivial and works well in both analytical and practical applications. It also resonates with the psychological concept of schema, introduced by Frederic Bartlet in 1932 as "a visual pattern that at once matches the preexistent pattern that has to be regarded as operative" (Bartlet 1932, p. 32) and developed further for music by Peter Westergaard in his *An Introduction to Tonal Theory* (1975). The form-as-a-scheme points at the atemporal aspect and emphasizes the essential, Platonic modelling of music. The letter schemes, such as *aa'ba*, *aa'baa* or *ABA* are meaningful in themselves (as descriptions of segmentation of music) and as the references to the extramusical aesthetic ideas. For example, the difference between rounded binary (*aa'ba'*) and simple ternary (*aa'baa'*) schematically is the size of the recapitulation (truncated period or a full period). This important distinction has been completely ignored and abandoned in the recent Anglo-American music theory while it is prominent in many sources from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, from the teaching of A. B. Marx to treatises of Hugo Riemann and, well into the twentieth century, in textbooks of Igor Sposobin and Yuri Kholopov. Current views are based upon Schenkerian concept that seems to disregard or reduce temporal proportions of form. In this context what matters in separation of segments is only a double bar line. However, in composer's practical choices these two forms are used for different purposes. The rounded binary form is truncated and asymmetrical. Its skewed weight distribution (a short and light right side) propels the form, making round binary an ideal choice for a theme of

a larger work, such as the exposition of large ternary form, a theme of variations, or a strophic form for a vocal genre. In contrast, the small ternary form, distinguished from the round binary by the size of its recapitulation, is symmetrical and balanced. As such, it is self-sufficient: it is used primarily as a form of instrumental miniatures and preludes. Its static and symmetrical character allows us to associate this form with the conditions of the still image or a landscape. The presence of exposition and recapitulation of the same size creates a curve that begins and comes to a full stop. Thus, the form does not have a strong forward impetus. This distinction has been abandoned in new *Formenlehre* by Caplin, Darcy and Hepokoski. However, it matters more for composers than for theorists. All formal schemes in Classic-Romantic period reveal similarity in principle. A. B. Marx labeled it as *Ruhe – Bewegung – Ruhe* principle:

> Thus, the second part shows itself in advance to be the seat of variety and movement, and once again the original opposites, the fundamental law of all musical education, appear before our eyes: rest, movement, rest in the three parts of the sonata form.[4] (Marx 1858/III, p. 226)

Therefore, the scheme of form leads to the concept of formal function.

b) Form as a process has been discussed in at least two sources: in Boris Asafiev's opus magnum *Musical Form as a Process* (1930–1947) and in Janet Schmalfeldt's book *In the Process of Becoming* (2017). This view of form is expressed in the language specific for the nineteenth century with references to Hegelian dialectic and Nietzschean ideas of *becoming* and eternal return. Asafiev compares form as a crystal and as a process in *Musical Form as a Process*. Arnold Schoenberg's *developing variation* and Wilhelm Fisher's *Fortspinnung* come to mind in this regard. Ernst Kurth's idea of the linear and harmonic tension contributes to this prominent reading of musical form. If viewed this way, musical form contains two elements: impetus and unfolding, in Sergei Taneyev's terms, *yadro i rasvyortyvanie* (literally, "nucleus and unwinding"). Since Taneyev, Viktor Bobrovsky, Viktor Tsukkerman and the majority of Soviet music analysts have

[4] In the original: "So zeigt sich shon im Voraus der zweite Theil vorzugsweis als Sitz der Mannigfaltigkeit und Bewegung, und abermals treten uns die ursprünglichen Gegensätze, das Grundgesetz aller musikalischen Bildung: Ruhe—Bewegung—Ruhe in den drei Theilen der Sonatenform vor Augen" (Marx 1858/III, p. 226).

used this ultimately important category. Noteworthy is that the Western idea of *Fortspinnung* does not include the nucleus; Russian scholars related a theory that describes the initial gesture that gives an impetus to the form[5] This view is based upon both ancient Greek trend—Heraclitean flow of rhythm, noun *rhythmos* derived from the verb *rheo*—and on Christian eschatological perception of time, Creation—movement toward the Advent. This type of form is most prominent in Baroque (fugue, Baroque binary) and in Romanticism (in proper Romantic forms, such as ballade, rhapsody, and poème). Viewing musical form as a process may lead to a larger problem of movement in music. The scope of the latter may include the studies in mathematics and physics of the time of Gottfried Leibniz (theory of infinitesimals), the idea of movement implied by the theory of harmony of Jean-Philippe Rameau, return to the question of movement bypassing harmony in the end of the nineteenth century by Vincent d'Indy and in the first third of the twentieth century by Ernst Kurth, and further, the problem of movement in post-tonal music.

2.2. Motive as the Beginning of Form

The form *begins* with the motive. This postulate, irrefutable for A. B. Marx, Riemann and Schoenberg, has been challenged by Heinrich Schenker, who suggested that "the real artist envisions the long-range structure before writing the motive, theme or melody" (Schenker 1979, p. 26). Both approaches are valid. However, for practical and pragmatic purposes, a composer must start with something and somewhere. Nobody can call Beethoven's four-note motif in the opening of the Fifth symphony *inconsequential*. This motive contains the whole symphony just as a large tree grows from the seed. A. B. Marx likens the motive to *Keim oder Trieb* (Germ. germ or shoot). His definition of motive is inscribed into the idea of teleology. Earlier in the same chapter of Volume I, he offers a *Maxim*, an idea that a scalar progression, once started, must be completed. This is the simplest case of musical teleology. He then continues with the idea of motive:

[5] For more detailed discussion of this, see Tatiana Kyuregyan's article "About the Principle of *Fortspinnung* in Musical Science and Practice" (Kyuregyan 2021, p. 86). Taneyev also used in his pedagogic vocabulary the term prorastaniye ("growing through").

> Such a tonal form—a group of two, one or more tones—in order to form a larger series of tones after its model, which is, as it were, a germ or shoot from which the larger series of tones grows, is called a motif.[6] (Marx 1858/I, p. 33)

And the teleology—an ideal projection toward the end—cannot exist without the starting point.

2.3. Heterogeneous Nature of Form

Form does not exist in itself and by itself. It is the result—or one may say the pre-existent condition—of a number of heterogenous components, such as a) harmonic progression, b) metric grid, c) rhythmic process, d) motivic-thematic development (*motivische Arbeit* and motivic subtraction) and e) melodic fluency (counterpoint in polyphonic cases).

a) Harmonic progression is in itself a sovereign, functional, and self-sufficient element of music. There are some harmonic progressions, given as exercises or created by the composer or performer as the spur of a moment, which are strikingly eloquent and convincing. A good harmonic progression carries the element of form well before placed into the real context of a musical composition. Three subdivisions play an important role in harmonic progression. The most important and substantial is the flow of functional syntax. As with languages that we learn, it makes sense to begin with recognition of functions (subject, predicate, object) followed by morphology of each word, and only in the last stage vocabulary meanings. This can be the first stage in learning harmony and in composing a meaningful musical statement. It is advisable at this junction to refer to Hugo Riemann's treatise *Harmony Simplified*, to its first statement:

> The theory of harmony is that of the logically rational and technically correct connections of chords. […] The natural laws for such connection can be indicated with certainty only if the notes of single chords be regarded not as isolated phenomena, but rather as resulting from the motions of the parts; chord successions arise from simultaneous melodic motion of several parts. (Riemann 1892, p. 1)

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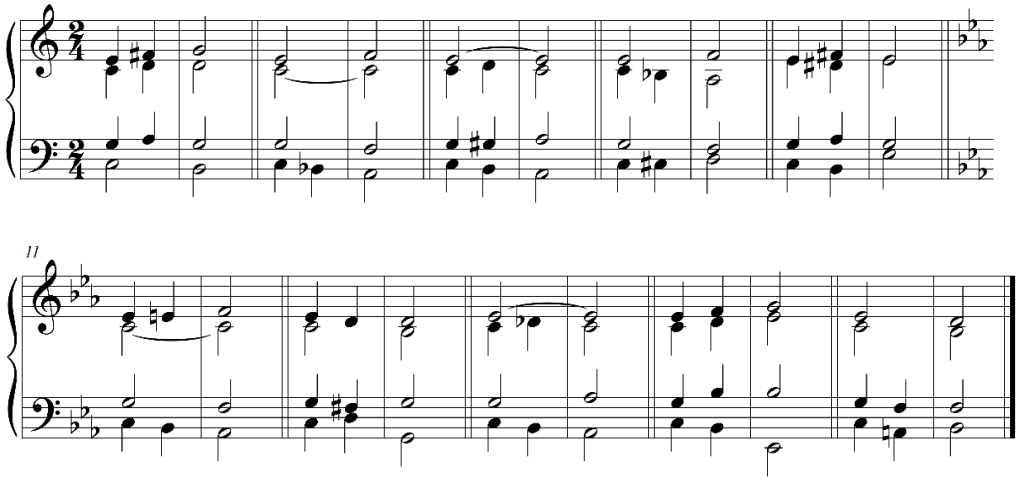
[6] In the original: "Eine solche Tongestalt,—eine Gruppe von zwei, drei oder mehr Tönen,—um eine grössere Tonreihe nach ihrem Vorbilde zu gestalten, die gleichsam ein Keim oder Trieb ist, aus dem die grössere Tonreihe erwächst, nennen vir Motiv" (Marx 1858/I, p. 33).

Riemann's underlying melodic character of harmony may fence away the all-too common critique of his concept as "chopping music into chords." Careful reading of Riemann's text may solve this issue. Another comment: one can draw patterns, collections, geometries using notational signs. How to make music *logically rational* is a more challenging task. Riemann and his supporters, including Yuri Kholopov, search for the method of creating dynamic musical meaning. Composing chord progression using the tonal-functional cycle is the first substantial stage in this way.

This, by any means, is not the last stage. The next operation—and it is ultimately important to articulate these two in pedagogy and in acquisition of harmonic skills—is the work on the design of a chord. Here, doubling, spacing and *position*—the latter indicating which chord member is used in soprano—must become an intuitive and subconscious way of harmonic thinking. The third stage is very important, as a rule, but not without exceptions. It is the level of voice leading. This term was known to teachers of harmony long before Schenker. Fr. *Conduite de voix*, It. *condotta delle parti*, Ger. *Stimmführung*, Russ. *golosovedeniye*—are common words in the textbooks and teaching methods at the conservatories since their inception. Voice leading does not generate harmonic progression (this is probably a fundamental error in Schenker's thinking). All traditional teachings of harmony suggest that voice leading is the "icing on a cake" or the finish product. Voice leading is individual—every composer adds something after working on it for decades. There are stylistic differences in voice leading of periods and geographic areas. In the Classical style, the optimal voice leading was summarized and catalogued. Hence the classical arrangement of half and perfect authentic cadence, voice exchange and "10–10–10," specific connections of Subdominant and Dominant seventh chords, ii7 to V7 and a number of optimal standard solutions for digressions and modulations:



Example 1: Standard voice leading for digressions to all diatonic scale steps

These standard chord progressions (one may liken them to *partimenti* or just call them "golden nuggets") are built in steps. The first necessary and irreplaceable step is the design of tonal-functional cycle. A student must understand that three chords follow the logic of a functional cycle. Not to hear the second chord as a dominant and the third as its resolution will be a block for any further discussion. The next step after understanding the syntactic principle is the design of the chord. This step cannot be omitted; chords must have appropriate structure; verticality cannot be disregarded. Only the next, third step, separate and independent, is the choice of appropriate connections following the criterion of melodic fluency. It is in this sense that voice leading is secondary to the syntactic principles and chord design. Good voice leading does not exist by itself: it is contingent upon good selection of inversions of chords. If inversions are selected incorrectly, then voice leading will be corrupted. Such is, for example, as shown in Fig. 1 below, the rule of a circle for connecting the inversions of ii7 to V7:

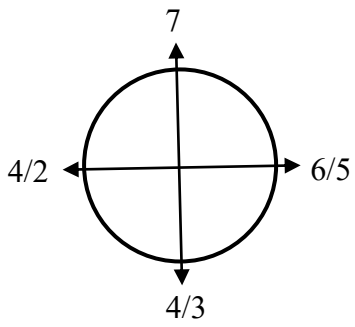
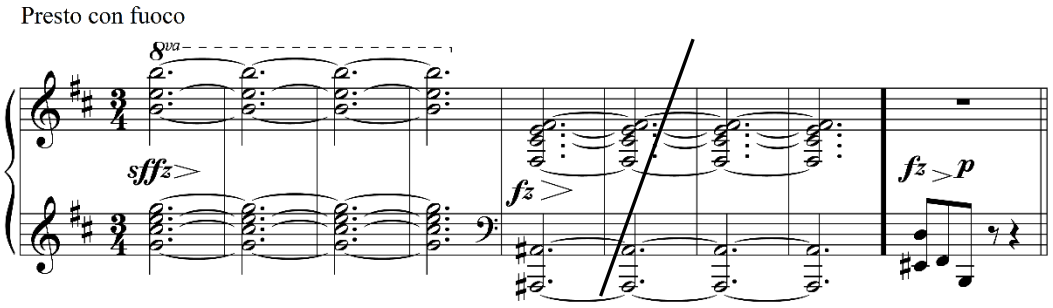


Figure 1: Schematics for connecting ii7 and V7 with optimal voice leading

As a rule, for good parsimonious voice leading, the 7th connects to 4/3, the 6/5 to 4/2, and vice versa. Chopin, in the opening three chords of his Scherzo no. 1, op. 38 in Ex. 2 below, intentionally breaks this voice-leading logic but retains the clear functional syntax of S – D – T:



Example 2: Lack of voice-leading continuity and presence of tonal-functional cycle

The fifth stage in creating a good harmonic progression is its embellishment. And again, just as in other arts—compare, for example, the architectural style of Rococo with that of Bauhaus—an artist choses whether to cover the structure with decoration or lay it barren. Still, for most cases, melodic fluency of harmony involves, besides optimal voice leading, the additional activity of diminution. It is especially effective when applied to all voices evenly, as a kind of their activation. Here, Schenkerian theory adds an important facet to our understanding of harmony and composition. Music is embellished par excellence. Here the discussion of harmony gradually slides into the study of a different parameter, that of texture (Lat. *factura*). Notably, in 1975, Yuri Tyulin published a treatise *Ucheniye o Muzykal'noi Fakture i Melodicheskoi Figuratsii. Muzykal'naya Faktura* [The Teaching on Musical Texture and Melodic Figuration. Musical Texture]. It seems to be advanced well ahead of his time and probably needs a reevaluation today.

b) Theories of meter for Classical music are thoroughly discussed by William Caplin in his chapter "Theories of Musical Rhythm in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries" in *Cambridge History of Western Music Theory* (Caplin 2002, p. 682). He refers to a number of approaches in German scholarship and emphasizes that of Hugo Riemann. Meter by itself is an exciting topic. However, it becomes ultimately significant when it is coupled with harmonic progression.

Here, the meter established the grid, a place for all events of musical form. Riemann's contribution is hard to overestimate. He was the first to explain the synthesis of meter and harmony as a constitutive event for musical form. Everything begins with the initial cell—a place for the opening motive. Following Riemann's logic, one can suggest that a single beat cannot be either heavy or light. Therefore, since the listener perceives music linearly and in real time, the first beat remains neutral. One may refer from this evidence, following a hard syllogism, that the second beat is heavy by default. This is, in a nutshell, the generation of the nucleus of musical form, its iambic element. From there, humans express two desires: to repeat and to create a hierarchy. The biological urge to repeat, mentioned by Schenker in his *Harmonielehre*, is indeed a primordial call. However, when repeating, a human (unlike the post-human discussed thoroughly today) reveals a tendency to create hierarchy. So, in a pair of iambs, the first iamb becomes weak and the second—strong. The nature of iamb contributes to this generative impetus. If we accept the idea of relationship of the weak and strong beats not as of two discrete whole numbers but rather as a graph of *Schattierung* (Riemann's term from *Musikalische Agogik und Rhythmik* (quoted in Caplin's chapter "Theories of Musical Rhythm in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries" mentioned earlier), we can see on the graph that iamb generates the excess of energy and it spills into the next iambic cell, so that it begins from the higher level of energy:

Figure 2: Riemann's rhythmic shading[7]

As the result of these objective musical forces, a complete paradigm of metric period (*metrische achttaktige Periodeform*) appears in music of wide range of styles and geographies:

[7] From Hugo Riemann's *Musikalische Dynamik und Metrik* quoted in Caplin (Caplin 2002, p. 684).

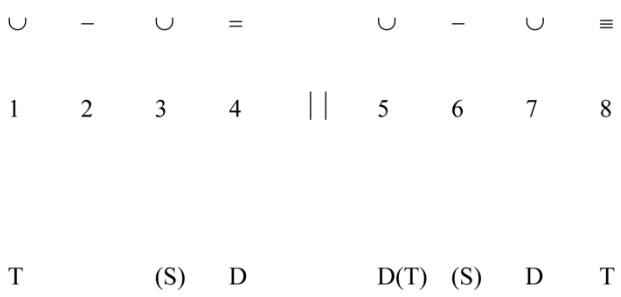
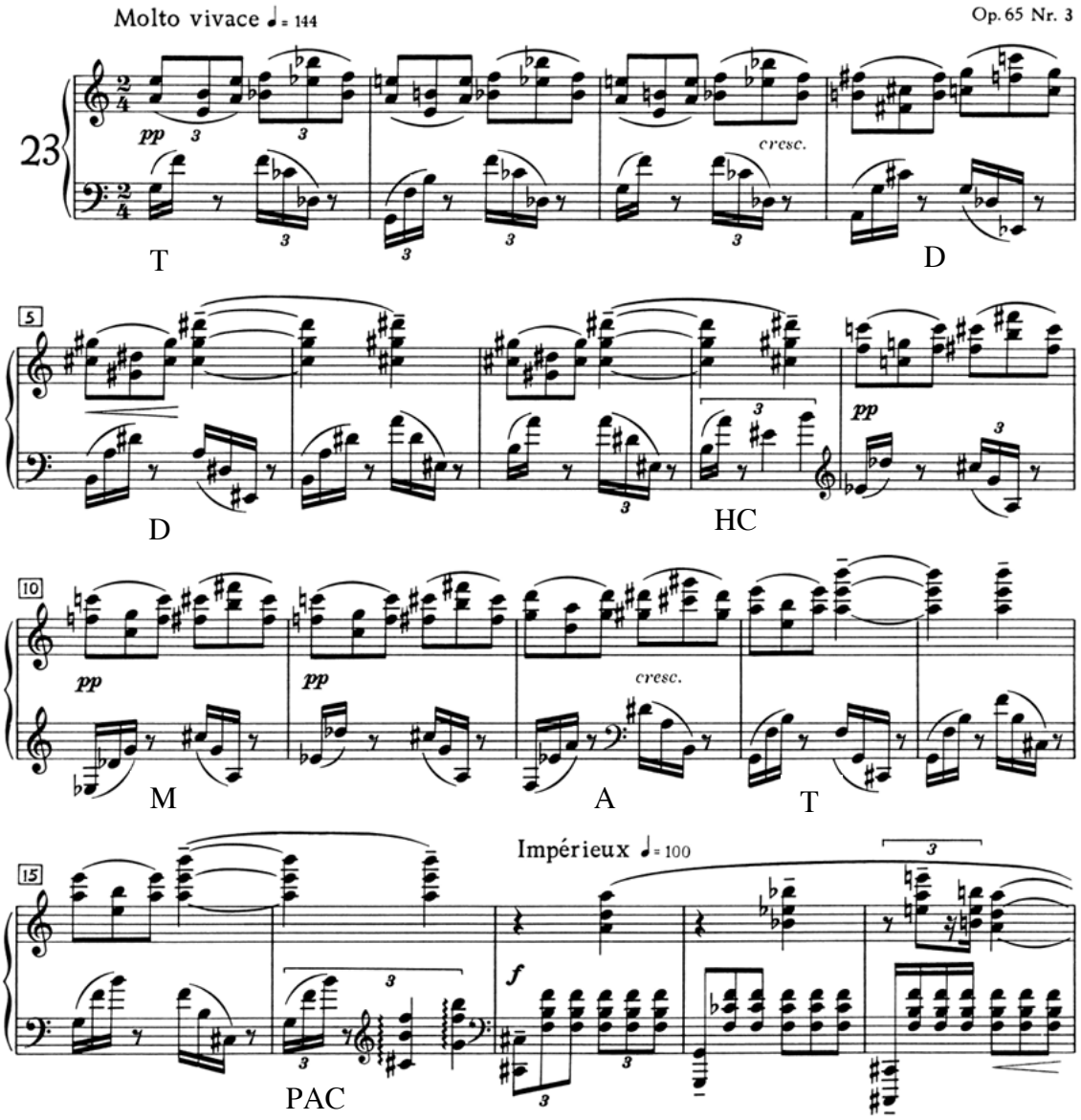


Figure 3: Riemann's metric period[8]

This model in Fig. 3 is arguably one of the greatest achievements of music theory. It explains music form as a meaning-bearing phenomenon of heterogeneous origin. It also allows us to create new compositions with new materials, using the metric period as a general guideline. Examples of using period form in a new context are numerous. Scriabin's Etude op. 65, no. 3 is in small ternary form. Its exposition presents the layout of a period (Ex. 3).

The first three measures in Ex. 3 expose what Yuri Kholopov calls the dissonant tonic. The tritonal oscillation of the dominant seventh chord and its tritonal substitution have become isolated in the middle and late music of Scriabin. Their static and stable characters have led theorists to conclude that it substitutes for older versions of tonic. Then, in measure 3, there is a transposition of this sonority, after which the next transposition reaches the high point and is completed by a kind of a half cadence in measure 8 (written measure 8 and real measure 4, as appropriate for an HC). The rest is the replication of the same progression in transposition that brings the last pronouncement of the tritonal oscillation to the original level. This may as well be perceived as a PAC, while two preceding functions can be labeled as medianta (M) and atakta (A). The latter is explained in Kholopov's *Theoretical Course in Harmony* as a new "applied" function (Kholopov 2003, p. 435), with the fundamental tone a step below or above tonic. In general, we witness a form of a theme—the exposition of a smaller form—with a distinct caesura in the middle. The form follows harmonic cyclical structure of the Classic-Romantic period and conforms to its metric design.

[8] This is Yuri Kholopov's reconstruction of Riemann's concept of metric period (Kholopov 1984).



Example 3: Scriabin Etude op. 65/3. Allusion to Classical period form

c) As distinguished by Lerdahl and Jackendoff in *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music*, rhythmic elements in music belong to a category separate from meter. So, metric grouping must be discussed in a different category. Grouping melodic elements into rhythmic patterns is in itself a marvel of music. The most recognizable aspect of motive or a theme is its rhythmic design. Again, from a bird's view, one can suggest that the musically significant proto element, which begins the unfolding of the form, is an event of physical change in direct motion with constant speed. To borrow the terms from physics: an object that moves

through vacuum in a straight line will move indefinitely in time and no additional expense of energy is needed for such movement. However, if such an object changes direction, this causes generation and consumption of energy. Musical rhythmic grouping does exactly that: it isolates rhythmic energy from the flow of the meter by sudden change of regular metric in acceleration and deceleration. Superimposed on the change of direction of melodic line, the rhythmic collision with meter (fight against the bar line and monometric pulse) creates an excess of energy, a musical exposition of the motive. This phenomenon was known to composers and folk musicians for ages; Igor Stravinsky has made a struggle of rhythmic grouping with the metric grid, the main principle and technique of his composition. Valentina Kholopova in her seminal treatise *Problemy Ritma v Proizvedemiyakh Kompozitorov Dvadtsatogo Veka* [Questions of Rhythm in Music of the Composers of the Twentieth Century] published in 1971 called his method *meter-accent-length* variant technique. Pieter C. Van den Toorn in his books on music of Stravinsky[9] labeled it as *metric displacement* and *rebarring*.
d) The hierarchy of motive–theme, on the one hand and motive–phrase–period, on the other, is a rich field for discussion. It was in the nineteenth century, and it remains in the core of research and pedagogy today. There is an old interpretation of the form as based upon themes. Riemann, Bussler and Kholopov share it. The theme should not be disregarded as hastily as it has been done in post-WWII theory. Yuri Kholopov, in contrast, maintains the validity of thematic principle of form:

> It is commonly known that the true basis of musical composition is the well-formed theme—the bearer of musical images. When listening to or performing a musical work, we perceive its form mainly as the exposition and the development of musical themes (and not as periods or other structural units). A composer does not write periods, but themes, independently of whether these themes acquire the shape of a period or any larger form. Therefore, the classification of form based on periods contradicts the actual form building. (Kholopov 1971, p. 67)

Thema (Greek *thesisis*) is a substantial element of expression in writing, music and other temporal arts. It matters what the theme of an article, a book, a dissertation, and by analogy, of a sonata or a symphony. What is obvious—yet

[9] See, for example, his The Music of Igor Stravinsky (1983), and Stravinsky and "The Rite of Spring" (1987).

often evades the sight of music theorists—is that motive has a dual ontological status. On the one hand, motive is a structural element of musical composition, together with the phrase (Ger. *Satz*), period (Ger. *Periode*), and next in hierarchy smaller and larger forms. On the other hand, motive is a kind of a switchboard that allows us to connect musical structure with extramusical events and ideas. Therefore, we talk about the motive of love or sigh motive. These metaphors are not insignificant and any attempt to analyze music will become a futile exercises in the style of Beckmesser from *Die Meistersinger*, if one fails to acknowledge that, for example, Mozart's G-minor symphony begins with a sigh motive, and Ariadne's Lament from Purcell's opera *Dido and Aeneus* lines several of such motives in descending order, which allowed Raymond Monelle to label this impressive move as *pianto*. So, motive is the place for a fork, one of the endings of which moves in the direction of a theme, and further toward musical dramaturgy.

e) Melodic fluency of musical form is so important that, since *Formenlehre* normally bypasses its thorough discussion, the very project of music analysis seems to need complete overhaul. Music theory should have begun with melody. Evidently, it did not do this. By our time, music theory may have concluded by returning to melody; that did not happen either. The early linguistic intuitions in Greek pre-Socratic period have left us some hints on melody. Meli+ *odia* means "sweet (mellifluous) poetic verse." It literally means that and carries no references to "music" (the latter was not developed yet to what we understand by music today). There is a strong allusion of *odia* [ᾠδία] with *odos* [ὀδός]. Following it we can retranslate the melody as a *sweet journey*. Anyways, an *ode* is a kind of a journey, like the travel of Odysseus and his crew. This brief analysis of etymology of the term melody probably does not clarify the situation in music theory today. However, it makes sense to investigate the categorial meaning of the term since we have been using it. Schenker's reduction of the sweet journey to a straight line on Euclidian (Cartesian) two-dimensional plane does not make much sense in this regard. As in nature, in music there are no straight lines.

The phenomenon of melodic step—the fact that each step erases the previous one—remains also understudied. In a nutshell, the interval of a second (major or minor) is specific in a way that in harmonic presentation it sounds as a harsh dissonance while in melodic form it generates the most fluent and

euphonous combination of tones, also known as melody. Melodic step is also specific in a way that each second tone erases from the cognitive apparatus the memory of the first (perhaps, due to a dissonant quality of the two taken together). In contrast with perfect fourth and fifth, the tones of which attention and memory can hold together in one temporal context, the tones of the step appeared to be non-compatible in a single field of attention. This phenomenon was noticed by Aristoxenus, who in *Harmonika Stoikheia* (Aristoxenos 1902) divided intervals into *diaphona* (smaller than the fourth and incapable of sounding together) and *synphona* (the fourth, the fifth and the octave capable of creating a single combination in time and space of attention and memory).

3. Theoretical Concept of Musical Work

This concept does not exist as an opposition to the form. It is self-sufficient and holistic. The Hegelian dialectic of art produced the binary opposition of form vs. content, which is based upon negation, but its parts are correlative. In contrast with that, work and form do not mesh this way. What is work, and why are there musical works? From a historic point of view, the era of musical works begins with the emancipation of instrumental composition and performance from both the church and social rituals, namely, with the birth of absolute music. It apparently completed its life cycle by the end of WWII, together with the death of the author according to Rolan Barthes. Umberto Eco detected the end of artwork in his *Opera aperta* (1976). An artwork used to be something finished and limited in time and space (following Aristotle's postulate in his *Poetics* for all temporal works to have "the beginning, the middle and the end"), while today there are many examples of the open structure in contemporary music, as well in theater and architecture. Although limited in time, the period of musical works has left us a voluminous corpus of unprecedented masterpieces.

The supporters of musical work and the opponents of musical form constantly promote their main argument: music does not exist in the lab in a Petri dish. It lives and breathes in society and history. Music serves a variety of functions. In this sense, it is not an "organized noise." Neither is it a self-referential object. Musical referentiality is unstoppable; it is initiated automatically and continues for as long as we use the works. It takes two notes, written in the score and sounded, for someone to start associating them with

something beyond and outside music. All a theorist is left with is to investigate and to follow the already existent leads.

Any artwork is a particular manifestation of the elements of being. Is it a *phenomenon*, or is it a *noumenon*, to use Kantian opposition? How the work exists in history—the question pondered by Roman Ingarden. In other words, there is a problem of 1) ontology and phenomenology of a work, its constitution, generation and the form of existence, 2) its sociology, relation to social, historic and political entourage, opposition of genre to form, 3) psychology and cognition of a work, 4) epistemology of a work, i. e., the problem of a language of description of an artwork, and 5) relationship of musical work to verbal communication, the problems of semantics, rhetoric and of logos in music.

3.1. Ontology and Phenomenology of Musical Work

Musical work presents a problem for philosophical investigation. In contrast with form that is selective, work seems to include and absorb everything that may pertain to music, even the facts and events that do not form systematic relationships. Work is what has happened and what is given. In this sense, a musical work is much less a noumenon (Kantian product of reflection) as it is a phenomenon (Kantian unprocessed event or fact). Outside of Kantian dichotomy, work as a phenomenon has drawn the attention of phenomenologists, Brentano, Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty. For music theory, this means that the way the term musical work is used and discussed is far from being sufficient and thoroughly reflected upon. The pathos of New Musicologists may fade a little if we—or them—could take this into consideration.

One aspect of musical work that distinguishes it from form is its ever-changing limits and content. Musical work is not fixed in space, and it constantly evolves in time. Roman Ingarden writes about the nucleus—a severely limited and reduced (in phenomenological terms) embodiment of the musical work. This nucleus is a notated score. It exists in time, being less affected by the changes than actual performances. By no means does it represent musical work as such. The latter lives in a sequence of interpretations that appear and disappear in a series of performances. The history of Bach's *St. Matthew's Passion* is a notable example. It was virtually unnoticed at the time of the premiere; restored and

revived in 1940s, went to its classical interpretation under Karl Richter and was cancelled and reinterpreted in current early music movement with entirely different tempo, touch and set of instruments (for example, in recordings by Nikolaus Harnoncourt and Philippe Herreweghe, to mention a couple).

3.2. Sociology of Musical Work

The strongest point of integralists is the inclusion of musical work into social milieu. This is what is missing in the discussions of formalists and that makes the finish product of their reasoning less convincing than expected. Formalism in this regard is a sign of creative weakness. In contrast, the integralists absorb the energy of the natural musical process. For them, music is not created by an isolated composer; it takes its powerful roots in the folk tradition. Indeed, there are ubiquitous drawbacks that accompany the work of the composer, such as constant tension in the fight for recognition, struggling with evasive inspiration and working hard on obtaining the skills of the trade. In folk music, a work is simmering on a slow fire and passes through hundreds of hands in generations before it receives a classical, perfect form.

Music viewed from this position cannot be fully revealed in its form and structure. Another category that in composer's music is commonly played down becomes prominent for the integralists: the genre. In Heinrich Bessler's (1959) and Arnold Sokhor's (1968) definitions, genre is a social function of music. Genre does not specify a form. A good example, Italian sonata of the seventeenth century and Viennese sonata of the second half of the eighteenth. The same genre named sonata presupposes a dance suite form in the former and a sonata allegro form in the latter case. Soviet integralist focused on genre and developed an extensive theory that includes the distinction between primary and secondary genre (Ger. *Umgangsmusik und Darbietungsmusik* and— the genres for collective performance and the genres for listening, or literally, the genres of social music and genres of performance music), as well as the ideas of genre transformation and genre synthesis. Examples may include the Funeral march from Chopin's Sonata op. 35 in B flat minor and a "Funeral Waltz" in the middle section of preceding Scherzo, an ominous sign that predicts the Funeral march.

Much has been said about the dangers of social determinism in music. However, this argument has its limits. A good composer should be concerned

about the listener. Examples of successful music rarely support the isolation of a composer from society. Even such technical issues as cadences and modulations must be tested on wide circles of music lovers, so that the composers will do something that works and avoid doing something that he or she "feels like working." Long-range modulations and motivic work are not so much the problems of composing as writing, as they are cognitive tasks that direct the listener's perception, attention, memory, and coordination in the aural space.

3.3. Psychology and Cognition

Psychology was included into the roster of *Grundriss der Musikwissenschaft* (1908) by Hugo Riemann, published as an effort, in collaboration with Guido Adler, to create a cluster of university musical academic disciplines. However, the scarecrow of "psychologization of music theory" hovered above the conservatory tradition of music theory for decades and it is present in it today. Theorists try to avoid the discussions of psychological matters. Theory as a pure (Ger. *reine*) discipline, especially in North American and British neo-positivist versions, tries to stay away from these discomforting subjects. On the other hand, the same scientocentric tradition harnessed cognitive studies and adjusted it to music (Carol Krumhansl is one of the prominent representatives of this trend). There is a more authentic and organic approach carried by European music scholars—the participants of the Music and Emotion group, Michael Spitzer, Robert Hatten, Patrik Juslin, and John Sloboda, to mention a few.

In a sense, general psychology may offer a direct and effective method for analysis of music once a theorist accepts that musical works of various styles and traditions deal with the human psyche. If this is true, then music theorists can benefit from applying the theory of emotions. This includes the knowledge of its hierarchical ladder, from sentiment, to feeling, to mood and, ultimately, to temperament. The latter comes in Greek and Roman versions (from Galen's doctrine) or through Hans Jürgen and Sybil Eysenck late interpretation of temperaments. Emotions can be positive and negative, as well as strong and weak (sthenic and asthenic). There is no reasonable ground to object to the use of these scientific categories in music analysis.

It is remarkable how Riemann who introduced the term function in regard to harmonic and formal syntax in music paid little attention to psychological

evaluation of these phenomena. Today, this deficiency is being corrected by, say, the research of cognitive aspects of predominant function by Jenine Brown (2021, p. 21–40). Perception and cognition of linear phenomena, of rhythm and meter interaction, and of large-scale musical categories, such as form and work as a whole, remain on the wish list for musical cognitive studies.

3.4. Epistemology and the Language of Description

An important facet of dealing with musical work was noticed and thoroughly described by the founders of Soviet integralist analysis Viktor Tsukkerman and Leo Mazel'. They were preoccupied not only with the *analysis of a musical work* (such is the title of their textbook (1967) that has become the staple of music theory pedagogy in the USSR) but also by the language of description:

> What is the best way to present scientific creative results of analysis, the results of perceptions and reflections of a scholar-musician—scientist? Naturally, this is done by means of words. However, not by such words that, being formally correct, are capable to repel that fine idea that they are called to express. To put it differently, words should not present the rough device, which by their intervention destroy or deform the properties of the subject that they intend to describe (as it happens in situations that are all too familiar to physicists). After all, the analysis of the phenomena of art appeals not only to scientific thinking, but also to creative perception, on which it relies and, above all, to which it "refers" (obviously or implicitly). Therefore, even if it is not always possible to demand of a statement of the analysis to present a genuine literary or creative figurativeness, it is possible to avoid such analytical statements that contain something anti-creative, insipid, coming into conflict with the task of studying the phenomenon of art. (Mazel' 1974, p. 6–7)

Indeed, the choice of adequate language for the research of this or that object is of ultimate importance. Scientists from different fields are careful and defensive when it comes to such a choice. The language of microbiology will not work for theoretical astrophysics. In this respect, the way music theorists appropriate the "scientific" language is very problematic, to say the least. They rely upon the metalanguage of sciences, which proved to be non-existent. Philosophy in the period from the 1920s until today produced such a verdict. In general, why a music theorist must speak "mathematical" language when analyzing, say, Haydn's keyboard sonata, remains unknown. Who imposed such

a requirement and what is in it for music understanding? There is a dramatic discrepancy between the language of a musical work, the nonverbal expression that rivals any verbal form in its perfection and detail—and the language theorists choose. Is the metaphor allowed in music theory? Why is it impossible for a music theorist to speak a mixture of poetic prose and strict terminological discourse? The texts of Viktor Tsukkerman stand out in this respect. He managed to harness both a regular horse and a Pegasus, so to speak. His analyses, for example, a small book on Liszt's Sonata in B minor, strike as rigorous and precise, Germanic in style, containing rigorous descriptions of form and harmony. Together with that they manifest highly poetic and profoundly musical prose.

3.5. Rhetoric and Semantics

There had been a period in music theory, in the eighteenth century in Germany, when the ideas of rhetoric permeated the discussions of harmony, form and motivic-thematic development. Today, it seems to fade away completely. However, the strong connections between musical structure and some rhetorical figures remain in the most recent music. A composer and music theorist from the *Université de Sorbonne*, Costin Mireanu, came up with the new classification of rhetorical figures for the atonal music of the twentieth century. Márta Grabócz, a prominent semiotician of music, describes Miereanu's and other new composer's strategies of using the revised rhetorical figures and topics (Grabócz 2023, p. 67–72). Alfred Schnittke and Sofia Gubaidulina consciously used rhetoric as a part of musical expression. Some rhetorical figures pertain to the most abstract music: such are rhetorical figures of motion, *anabasis*, *katabasis* and *circulatio*.

In the twentieth century, the development of semiotics, after its return in Charles Sanders Peirce publications, as well as in Algirdas Greimas and Parisian school, motivated musicologists to apply its terminology to music. Boris Asafiev was one of the first to react to this in the1930s, followed by the publications of Mark Aranovsky of the 1970s. Today, Eero Tarasti and Robert Hatten continue working in this field and it is reflected in the programs of International Congresses on Music Signification (ICMS). Quite obviously their methods are applied primarily to musical works; discussion of musical form in semiotics is limited to specific cases.

On this background, it seems natural to desire to step up the discussion and to bring in the problem of the non-verbal specificity of music. While the musical form is verbalizable—and theorists are successful in formulating its notions and categories—musical work remains non-verbal and unpredictable. Upon reading Ingarden, one may assume that music has a predictable future and an unpredictable past. Most of the arguments in musicology and theory refer to music that has been written and performed a long time ago. Despite that, there is still no agreement on the significance and value of musical works of the past. Take Philip Ewell's statement on Beethoven as "the composer below average." There were many iterations of opinion on music by Tchaikovsky, Mahler, Puccini, and Shostakovich. Beyond the cheap newspaper criticism, these fluctuations reveal a substantial range of interpretations of professional musicians, composers, performers, and theorists.

This elusive quality of the meaning of musical works attests to the fact that music is essentially nonverbal. It avoids and resists verbalization. Formulations of formal structures in this sense are a smoke screen that hides the real abyss of misunderstanding. If one accepts that music is non-verbal, the next step would be to assess just *how* non-verbal it is, to which degree? Poetry is also nonverbal, but there is a verbal core that is fixed in letters, words, and by times in syntactic structures with regular meanings. Music is devoid of even this secondary superstructure. The way out of this antinomy may necessitate challenging both scientific and religious postulate that suggests supremacy, sovereignty, and ubiquitousness of Logos. Gilles Deleuze talked about the situation *au dela du logos* in the 1970s. Musical work and its communicative power exceeds the rule of Logos. This could be the next topic for the theory of musical work.

4. Conclusion

In general, the drive toward understanding musical work in its completeness has been a noticeable element in the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries globally. At times, it managed to overshadow the narrow professional field of musical form, *Formenlehre*, or simply "Form" (Russ. *forma*). Its presence, although not fully acknowledged by formalists, has always been strong. Perhaps, the best way to deal with this problem is to leave it unresolved

by using Husserlian gesture of *epoche*. The beauty of this antinomy and its fruitful outcome that cannot be exhausted lies in the endless dance that will never bring in a perfect authentic cadence. In the process of continuous debates, the third party—the observers of this antinomy—receive the gifts of creativity. In this situation one can maintain that *tertium datur*; here it is true and it keeps surprising us with ever-rising intellectual innovations.

Having said that form and work are incompatible and incomparable, I must withdraw, at least partially, my own argument. It is still possible to compare these two. If not in strict technical terms, the form vs. work antinomy tolerates a general philosophical comparative evaluation. Thus, one can maintain that the work exists in time; it belongs to the historical timeline, and it unfolds in time. It is uniquely a sphere of the signified, the phenomenon—a kind of apparition that eludes generalization. In contrast with that, a musical form is an abstract idea, a mental product that exists outside of time. It is atemporal and noumenal in Kantian terms and presents the universal signifier of music. Work is what Greeks call *hule*—clay, raw material without the essence. It takes a theorist to discern the essence in it, to reveal the *aletheia* or musical *logos*. It was a philosopher, Zeno of Chitteum, who succeeded in uniting these two: "The causes of the whole are two: passive and active. Passive is the feature of clay; active is the attribute of the word of god."[10] Therefore, musical work is unmade and passive; musical form is made up by the humans and is the product of human activity.

The style and the method chosen for this article intentionally overrides the documented specifics. It borrows the tenor of the late-nineteenth century German music scholarship. The statements in this article are systematic and categorial. Only viewing this issue from a substantial philosophical distance can eliminate this endless antinomy, or a *quarrel* in terms of Peter Kivy (2009). Such a position often leads to cutting the corners and generalizing the otherwise unordered facts and events of the history of music theory. Yet, it seems necessary to organize the factual material and to classify and categorize it in an orderly

[10] A more detailed literal translation is possible: "The guilt of the whole is twofold: one is the unmade, another is made. The unmade is the essence of clay; the made one is the word of god" (Arnim 1921/I, p. 24).

form, in a tight-knit hierarchy, a precursor for further substantial discussion of the issue at hand.

* * *

And then there are daily chores of music analysis—not the demand of an abstract theoretical reasoning but an exigency of a procedure aimed at explaining music, its character, meaning and, if possible, structure and process. Analyses are needed in a number of applications beyond the clash of the titans—the high-ranking researchers and fashion givers of musical-theoretical concepts. What is remarkable: even at the height of the battles between integralists and formalists, both had to go to classrooms and teach students; both had to coexist at the conservatories and schools of music. So, besides the distanced philosophical contemplation, a mere praxis of music making succeeds in reconciliation of the sides of the antinomy and brings back harmony to where it belongs.

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