

Reading Conventions, Interpreting Habits: Peircian Semiotics in Music

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Abstract

The influence of Peircian semiotics on the study of music has grown during the last two decades due to the recognition of Robert Hatten's achievements, a major study by Naomi Cumming, the prolific final years of Raymond Monelle and the continued success of Eero Tarasti's work with the International Association of Semiotic Studies.

Peirce's thought is extraordinarily rich and rigorous but this thesis identifies a tendency amongst musicologists deploying Peircian thought to reinscribe a number of ideological convictions. In broad terms these convictions can be described as the reification and legitimization of a body of music, and more specifically as an attempt to stabilize musical meanings whilst locating them within a 'music-in-itself'. It is in this sense that Peircian semiotics has been used to resist developments in popular and new musicologies. The role of Peirce's theory in this discourse needs careful re-examination.

The work of Robert Hatten in its search for meaning through and around the contextual (or intertextual) relations of a 'work' represents the most successful application, to date, of Peircian semiotics to music. But Hatten's emphasis upon

composers, structure and stylistic contexts, and his relative neglect of listeners, subjectivity and social forces renders his project incomplete.

Through a detailed explanation of some of the central insights offered by Peirce's philosophical project this thesis develops a theory of musical meaning which has listening processes and the formation of identity/subjectivity at its centre. A key tool in developing this theory concerns the dimensions of time and their coordination with Peirce's universal categories.

The possibility of informing and developing the close-reading practices that still dominate the tradition of musical analysis will be explored through a discussion and analysis of the Allegro of Mozart's 'Prague' Symphony in the light of the theories developed in earlier chapters, with particular reference to Peirce's concept of valency.

Note on Sources

In referring to Peirce's own writings this thesis follows a set of standard abbreviations:

- CP Peirce, C. S. (1931-58), *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, 8 vols., ed. Charles Hartshorne, Paul Weiss, & Arthur W. Burks. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Reference is by volume and paragraph number.
- LW Peirce, C. S. (1977), *Semiotics and Significs: The Correspondence between Charles S. Peirce and Victoria Lady Welby*, ed. Charles S. Hardwick. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. Reference is by page number.
- EP Peirce, C. S. (1992-98), *The Essential Peirce*, 2 vols., ed. Houser et al. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. Reference is by volume and page number.

Contents

| | | |
|------------------|---|-----|
| Acknowledgements | i | |
| Abstract | iii | |
| Note on Sources | v | |
| | | |
| I | The Theories of Charles Sanders Peirce | 1 |
| | 1 <i>Introduction</i> | 1 |
| | 2 <i>Categories</i> | 3 |
| | 3 <i>Semiotics</i> | 14 |
| | 4 <i>Wider system</i> | 38 |
| | | |
| II | Peircian Semiotics and Musicology: Application and Ideology | 42 |
| | 1 <i>Introduction</i> | 42 |
| | 2 <i>Music and iconism</i> | 50 |
| | 3 <i>Nattiez and the neutral level</i> | 65 |
| | 4 <i>Music and indexicality</i> | 83 |
| | 5 <i>Music and symbolism</i> | 96 |
| | 6 <i>Music and Peirce's later typologies</i> | 112 |
| | 7 <i>Conclusion</i> | 118 |
| | | |
| III | Semiosis in the Search for a Subject: Naomi Cumming's <i>The Sonic Self</i> | 120 |
| | 1 <i>Introduction</i> | 120 |
| | 2 <i>'The Subjectivities': orientation and influences</i> | 121 |
| | 3 <i>The argument of 'The Subjectivities'</i> | 132 |

| | | |
|----|---|-----|
| 4 | <i>Peirce in The Sonic Self: the qualisign and the components of the sign complex</i> | 138 |
| 5 | <i>Peircian ambiguities in The Sonic Self</i> | 150 |
| 6 | <i>The Peircian categories explored: the central three chapters of The Sonic Self</i> | 156 |
| 7 | <i>Conclusion</i> | 176 |
| IV | Cultural Iconism and the Appeal to the Stylistic: Robert Hatten's Music Semiotics | 180 |
| 1 | <i>Introduction</i> | 180 |
| 2 | <i>The token and the type</i> | 182 |
| 3 | <i>Markedness and correlation</i> | 194 |
| 4 | <i>Markedness and iconism</i> | 206 |
| 5 | <i>The sign complex and the categories</i> | 214 |
| 6 | <i>Conclusion: Hatten and context</i> | 223 |
| V | Towards an Understanding of Peircian Semiotics in Music | 226 |
| 1 | <i>Introduction</i> | 226 |
| 2 | <i>The 1903 typology</i> | 229 |
| 3 | <i>Rethinking the Peircian sign complex in music</i> | 240 |
| 4 | <i>Rethinking the application of the trichotomies to music</i> | 247 |
| 5 | <i>Hatten's reading of the slow movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in B\flat Op. 106 (Hammerklavier)</i> | 258 |
| 6 | <i>Temporality and the categories</i> | 267 |
| 7 | <i>The importance of the symbolic</i> | 276 |
| 8 | <i>Conclusion</i> | 278 |
| VI | On Hearing the Allegro of Mozart's 'Prague' Symphony | 281 |
| 1 | <i>Introduction</i> | 281 |
| 2 | <i>Approaching the Allegro of the 'Prague' Symphony</i> | 286 |
| 3 | <i>Valency in music</i> | 304 |
| 4 | <i>Valency in the Allegro of the 'Prague' Symphony</i> | 311 |
| 5 | <i>Valency and climax in the Allegro of the 'Prague' Symphony</i> | 327 |
| 6 | <i>Conclusion</i> | 339 |
| | Conclusion | 343 |
| | Bibliography | 347 |

I

The Theories of Charles Sanders Peirce

1 Introduction

Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914) was a genuine polymath and a triple thinker. His thought is extraordinarily rich, but its oscillation between rigorous logic and metaphysical speculation can lead the most determined reader to lose heart. Some sense of the scope and rigour of Peirce’s thought, as well as the centrality of ‘triple thinking’, can be gleaned from a passage in the ‘Minute Logic’, an unfinished project of 1902.

It would scarcely be an exaggeration to say that the whole of mathematics is enwrapped in ... trichotomic graphs; and they will be found extremely pertinent to logic. So prolific is the triad in forms that one may easily conceive that all the variety and multiplicity of the universe springs from it, though each of the thousand corpuscles of which an atom of hydrogen consists be as multiple as all the telescopic heavens, and though all our heavens be but such a corpuscle which

goes with a thousand others to make an atom of hydrogen of a single molecule of a single cell of a being gazing through a telescope at a heaven as stupendous to him as ours to us. All that springs from the



— an emblem of fertility in comparison with which the holy phallus of religion's youth is a poor stick indeed.

(CP 4.310)

But whilst the apparently conflicting tendencies for rigorous, critical thought and metaphysical speculation in Peirce have produced a degree of ambivalence amongst some commentators on the success of his project (see, for example, Murphey ([1961] 1993) and Goudge (1950)), some more recent scholarship has conceived Peirce's thinking as not only systematic and consistent but also highly important for modern philosophy (see, for example, Hookway (1985) and Corrington (1993)). This thesis, whilst acknowledging certain difficulties with Peirce's thought, is closely allied to the latter position and draws upon Hookway's account of Peirce in particular. More specifically, Peircian thought is held to be both insightful and fecund in pursuing difficult questions of musical meaning and, because of its immense scope but quite simple foundations, allows a systematic music analysis to be developed that takes account of wider philosophical questions.

This chapter carries out some of the groundwork for a consideration of Peircian thought in relation to music. It looks first at the key concepts that articulate Peirce's triple thinking – his universal categories usually termed firstness, secondness and thirdness – before going on to give a detailed account of the central focus of Peirce's philosophical inquiries: the process of semiosis. Peirce conceived the study of this area

as the proper concern of logic (expanded considerably beyond its traditional confines), and termed this enormous field of study semeiotic (the study of semeiosis). This thesis employs the now more common term semiotic following Hookway and Corrington, despite the practice of adhering more closely to Peirce's favoured terminology that persists amongst some senior Peirce scholars (see, for example, Hausman (1993) and Liszka (1996)).¹

2 Categories

Peirce's categories were inspired, most directly, by those of Kant.² They can be deployed to analyze the fundamental structure of all experience. In particular, Peirce conceives of and develops his categories in addressing reasoning, general formal relations, experience as a phenomenon and, perhaps most importantly, the sign. Peirce also subdivided divisions within some areas and this is particularly extensive in the case of the sign. We see this most clearly in the 1903 typology (or interim typology (Liszka 1996, 34)) where, to simplify a little, the sign is divided into three distinct relations (each corresponding to a category) and then divided again to give nine components in total. This is shown in Figure 1.1.

¹ For a fuller account of Peirce's spelling and pronunciation of key terms see Fisch (1986, 321-2).

² This is seen in one of Peirce's early and most celebrated essays, 'On a List Of New Categories', which Hookway describes as doubly Kantian because it 'exploits a Kantian view of the function of conceptual activity – to unify the manifold of sense. And it also links the categories to logic' (Hookway 1985, 97). For an introduction to Kant's thought see Scruton (1982).

| | Firstness: As the sign in itself | Secondness: As the relation of the sign to its object | Thirdness: As the sign's interpretant represents it |
|--------|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| First | Qualisign | Icon | Rheme/Term |
| Second | Sinsign | Index | Dicent/Proposition |
| Third | Legisign | Symbol | Argument |

Figure 1.1: The three trichotomies of 1903 or 'interim' typology

The most common terms associated with each category are quality, possibility and chance in the case of a first; actuality, occurrence and particularity in the case of the second; and law, habit and rule in the case of the third. One of the greatest obstacles (but also a vital key) to comprehending the categories is found in Peirce's assertion that firsts can only be prescinded from seconds and, similarly, seconds can only be prescinded from thirds. One way to look at this is to consider that all concepts are thirds because in order to conceptualize we must generalize in some sense and thereby employ rule or habit. We might also consider that intelligibility is only possible through interpretation, and interpretation is always a third. A consequence of this aspect of the categories is described by Liszka as the first or *composition* rule (there are five rules in total) in the classification of the sign; he writes:

Since a sign in order to be a sign must retain a triadic relation among sign [first], object [second] and interpretant [third], that is its presentative, representative, and

interpretative character, then every sign in the classification will exhibit one of the divisions within each of the trichotomies [each of which corresponds to a category as shown in Figure 1.1].

(Liszka 1996, 45)

The notion of precision in making fundamental distinctions is not new in Peirce and is derived in part from scholastic philosophy and Aristotle (see Hookway 1985, 95). The most commonly cited example, with regard to precision, is that of colour, which cannot be found apart from its embodiment in an object. For example, redness has no existence outside its occurrence in relation to things that are red. But, by the process of abstraction or precision, we can consider red as a separate entity, a quality that can be brought to cognition apart from the objects that embody it. Divorced from the multitude of its instances, a quality may be conceived as unified and monadic, but without actuality it is a pure possibility. Like firsts, seconds, although existent, cannot be experienced apart from the process of interpretation; it is a third. Thus we again need to employ a process of abstraction to distinguish that which we conceptualize (thirds) from what we might term the obstinate facticity of existence (seconds). The separation of an objective reality from an interpretation of that reality is not a particularly difficult concept and may be familiar to readers from Kant's notions of noumena and phenomena. But Peirce's notion of thirds and seconds does not follow this pattern. Seconds are not the unknowable noumena of Kant; they are the brute reality we come up against in experience. They must, however, be separated from the rules and habits employed in their interpretation if we are to understand them as seconds. The difficulty in

understanding this is not so much the distinction of law from reality but the mental contortions involved in distinguishing the abstract notion of law (thirdness) from the already abstracted notion of quality (firstness), as both seem to exhibit the characteristics of universal form. There is, then, a degree of ambiguity between firstness and thirdness, which will be discussed at various points in this thesis.

Having introduced the process by which we are able to distinguish between the categories, each of them will be considered in turn before considering the central role they occupy in Peirce's semiotics.

(a) Firstness

Firstness is monadic and is closely bound up with the notion of a quality that an object may possess. But, as we have seen, it would be wrong to construe firstness as a concept or predicate, e.g. the concept of redness. Firstness, in a sense, precedes the conceptualization of quality; it is the unitary sensation experienced when perceiving redness. Thus Peirce presents firstness not as the concept red but as a 'feeling' of red. The word feeling can be misleading here, however, as it implies a degree of certitude that is already too great. In 'A Guess at the Riddle' (1887–88) Peirce writes of firstness:

It cannot be articulately thought: assert it, and it has lost its characteristic innocence; for assertion always implies a denial of something else. Stop to think of it, and it has flown! What the world was to Adam on the day he opened his eyes to it, before he had drawn any distinctions, or had become conscious of his

own existence – that is first, present, immediate, fresh, new, initiative, original, spontaneous, free, vivid, conscious, and evanescent. Only, remember that every description of it must be false to it.

(CP 1.357)

Firstness can be applied to reasonably complex situations despite its slipperiness as a phenomenological category. Because the categories can be applied on different experiential levels, firstness is found in interpretative relations and even at the level of complex reasoning. In the case of interpretative relations, it is helpful to consider Peirce's formal classification of the categories as monadic, dyadic and triadic, which he developed around 1885. At the level of interpretation, terms or rhema³ (singular: rheme) are firsts because they involve only one component. Abstract or common nouns viewed from a particular perspective can exemplify this. Such cases exhibit firstness to the extent that they form a *single* concept that focuses the attention of any interpretation on the *qualitative* aspect of the sign in question. It is only when they are employed to form a proposition (a second) that rhema refer with some specificity. For example, cat as a rheme, when used to form a proposition, moves from being the characteristics that constitute what we might term 'catness' to an actual specific cat in the case of a proposition such as 'my cat chased the bird'.

Firstness at the level of complex reasoning is of particular interest, as much of Peirce's work was focused upon the development of logical categories in relation to their role in the process of inquiry. It is also arguably the area in which he has had the most

³ See Figure 1.1 for the place of the rheme in the interim typology.

influence (with perhaps the exception of the relatively young subject of semiotics), since he independently developed, in the United States, many of the central ideas of modern quantificational logic at the same time as Frege in Germany. Firstness is exemplified in reasoning by the following syllogism:

| | | |
|--------------------|----|--------|
| All men are mortal | | M is P |
| Socrates is mortal | or | S is P |
| <i>therefore</i> | | |
| Socrates is a man | | S is M |

If a syllogism of this form is true (and the example above happens to be so) it is because the character or predicate (P) in both premises holds as a means of connecting M and S. Clearly the character or predicate (P) above is unlikely to yield reliable results (the syllogism is, of course, invalid) but if it were to be extended (giving say: is mortal, uses tools, employs language etc.) then it becomes more reliable. Crucially, it is the character or predicate in the syllogism that has this grounding role. Thus this syllogism represents firstness on the level of reasoning and is labelled *abductive*. We can also say of this syllogism that its premises are an *icon* of its conclusion.

(b) *Secondness*

Secondness is dyadic and is closely bound up with the concept of actuality and the object. As we have seen, it must, like firstness, be prescinded. Thirdness is the only category to engender conception proper. Secondness is prior to conception, is relatively unmediated and can be conceived as the raw or 'brute reaction' between object and consciousness. Secondness is experienced in the way in which we knock against the brute reality of objects, which in some sense resist our will.

These points are brought together in Peirce's example of 'putting your shoulder to a door and trying to force it open against an unknown, unseen and silent existence' (CP 1.24). As the door resists our will we are aware of both the *effort* employed and the *resistance* encountered, and in this sense the experience is dyadic. We may, from this experience of secondness, infer a rule, i.e. a third, but through the process of prescinding, Peirce asserts, we can consider the simpler dyadic relation of self and other (or door in this case), which is a second. Similarly, causal relations, once prescinded from the interpretation that makes them intelligible, are seconds. One of the most commonly cited examples here is that of a bullet hole, which can be conceived through precision as a direct, unmediated relationship between bullet hole and bullet. Thus we have a dyad: bullet and bullet hole, grounded in the brute reaction of one and the other. On this Peirce writes:

The idea of second is predominant in the ideas of causation and of statical force.

For cause and effect are two; and statical forces always occur between pairs.

Constraint is a Secondness. In the flow of time in the mind, the past appears to act directly upon the future, its effect being called memory, while the future only acts upon the past through the medium of thirds ... In the idea of reality, Secondness is predominant; for the real is that which insists upon forcing its way to recognition as something *other* than the mind's creation. (Remember that before the French word, *second*, was adopted into our language, *other* was merely the ordinal numeral corresponding to *two*.) The real is active; we acknowledge it, in calling it the *actual*.

(CP 1.325)

A notable point, touched upon here, concerns the way in which the categories correspond to the dimensions of time, with secondness in this case corresponding to the past (firstness relates to the present and thirdness the future). This aspect of Peircian thought forms a cornerstone for the theories of listening developed in this thesis (see Chapter 5).

Secondness is also found in interpretative relations and at the level of complex reasoning. At the level of interpretation, seconds are called dicent signs, dicisigns or propositions and involve two components, as for example in the formula 'a hits b' or in the sentence 'my cat is black'.⁴ Furthermore, they exhibit secondness because they focus the attention of any interpretation on an actual existent object, through the correlation of the object with a character (or attribute in the case of hitting). In both cases ('a hits b' and 'my cat is black') there is a sense of bringing together breadth (secondness) and

⁴ It is important to note here that each of these dicents have a different valency – a point of considerable importance later in this thesis. They both involve the meeting of two sign types. In the case of 'a hits b' the sign types are '() hits ()', which is an icon and 'a' and 'b' which are indices. The point that there are two slots for indices in the icon means that the valency of this dicent or dicisign is two. In the case of 'my cat is black', we again have two sign types: the icon '() is black' and the index 'my cat'. Here, however, the valency of the dicisign is one as there is only one slot in the icon for a single index. See chapter 5 and 6 for a further explanation of these points.

depth (firstness), and this is done in relation to, or by focusing our attention upon, an actuality: 'I define a dicent as a sign represented in its signified interpretant as if it were in a Real Relation to its Object' (LW 34).

The syllogism exemplifying secondness is that of the inductive syllogism:

| | | |
|--------------------|----|--------|
| Socrates is mortal | | S is P |
| Socrates is a man | or | S is M |
| <i>therefore</i> | | |
| All men are mortal | | M is P |

In this case, if this form is true it is because the sample of men, Socrates (S), is representative of the wider class, men (M), with regard to mortality (P). In the same way that extending the characteristic or predicate (P) in the abductive syllogism gave a more reliable connection between S and M, so the statistical augmentation of the sample (S) will give a more reliable connection between M and P. The reliability of the inductive syllogism rests then with the sample (S) and its actual or real connection to the wider class or population represented by M. It is the actuality of this connection that marks it out as a second. We can say of this syllogism that its premises are an *index* of its conclusion.

(c) *Thirdness*

Thirdness is triadic and is closely bound up with notions of mediation, rule and habit. It is the only genuine sign as it does not need to be prescinded. Thirds, then, are themselves intelligible, unlike firsts and seconds, which, as we have seen, can only be prescinded. In genuine thirds there is a mediating component that makes intelligibility possible, as it allows one thing to be related to another by means of a third. This mediating component can, in some sense, be abstracted as a generalizing principle or, to look at it another way, it is the act of generalizing that makes mediation possible and generates thirdness. Hausman puts this succinctly:

On the basis of mediating connections, phenomena can be given predicates, which are identifiable through general terms that express the repeatable mediating connections among phenomena.

(Hausman 1993, 12)

Thirdness, then, is in some sense the very act of cognition. By virtue of it we make predictions (although these can never be identical with actual occurrence) and abstract rules. Thirdness allows us to make predictions because it exemplifies law-governed transformational processes. It is here that we begin to see some indication of the scope of Peirce's categories, for it is through these transformational processes that we attain an understanding of reality, and even the process of evolution is an exemplification of thirdness. However, it must be emphasized that thirdness, like firstness, is an

abstraction. It does not simply apply to the process of evolution up to the present; it is the abstracted rule of evolution and can be recognized in a multitude of other processes which are bound by rule or habit.

As well as considering the vast scope of thirdness it will also be helpful, as with firstness and secondness, to examine its manifestation in interpretative relations and at the level of complex reasoning. Peirce labels thirdness in interpretative relations *arguments*, and the paradigm case is that of the syllogism. All syllogisms, then, exemplify thirdness as they involve an extractable rule which we have observed in both the abductive and inductive syllogisms. The syllogism that demonstrates thirdness most fully, however, is the deductive syllogism:

| | | |
|--------------------|----|--------|
| All men are mortal | | M is P |
| Socrates is a man | or | S is M |
| <i>therefore</i> | | |
| Socrates is mortal | | S is P |

This syllogism relies for its accuracy upon the truth of the premises. S and P are connected in the premises by the concept man (M), and if we accept the application of certain rules to M in relation to reality – that it contain the subclass Socrates and always possess the character of mortality – then the syllogism will be accurate. It is the rules inherent in the connecting concept man (M) that are key here, and the central importance

of rule or law to the deductive syllogism marks it out as the syllogism that most adequately demonstrates thirdness.⁵

3 *Semiotics*

The categories permeate all of Peirce's thought, but his semiotics can be allocated a similarly foundational role, for there cannot, in Peirce's view, be thought without signs. The importance attached to semiotics is clearly articulated in his correspondence with Lady Victoria Welby:

Know that from the day when at the age of 12 or 13 I took up, in my elder brother's room a copy of Whately's "*Logic*," and asked him what Logic was, and getting some simple answer, flung myself on the floor and buried myself in it, it has never been in my power to study anything, – mathematics, ethics, metaphysics, gravitation, thermodynamics, optics, chemistry, comparative anatomy, astronomy, psychology, economic, the history of science, whist, men and women, wine, metrology, except as a study of semeiotic ...

(LW 85-86)

⁵ We have noted that the categories are manifest as rheme, dicent sign and argument at the level of interpretative relations. Some focus has been placed here upon the subdivision of the argument in accordance with the categories to give abductive, inductive and deductive arguments. This means of introducing the categories is also employed by Savan (1988), and this can be justified by the importance of the syllogism in the development of Peirce's theory of the categories (see Fisch 1986, 115). But it is notable that the rheme and dicent sign can also be subdivided in accordance with the categories. Rhema can be classed as iconic, indexical or symbolic, and dicent signs can be classed as having a valency of one, two or three.

We acquire from this passage some sense of the intimate relation between logic and semiotics (or semeiotic) in Peircian thought. The connection between the two is most marked in Peirce's work, such that the distinguished Peirce scholar Max Fisch has asserted that by 1903 Peirce conceived logic and semiotics as synonymous (Fisch 1986, 339).⁶ It should be emphasized, then, that Peirce's idea of the sign is bound up with logical considerations and conforms to his theory of the categories.

(a) *The sign-complex*

The sign, for Peirce, consists of a tripartite relationship between three components each corresponding to one of the categories: the sign or representamen (sometimes called a ground, although the definition of a ground is subtly different and potentially the source of considerable debate), which is a first; the object, which is a second; and the interpretant, which is a third. At different points in his work Peirce emphasizes different aspects of the relations within the sign. For example, the interpretant is commonly described as mediating between sign and object,⁷ but the first and second are also allocated a mediating role at other points. Thus Savan's portrayal of Peirce's position with regard to this matter is probably the safest:

⁶ In Peirce's early theory logic is a subspecies of semiotics (Fisch 1986, 338–9).

⁷ On this point Murphey cites what he takes to be the fourth draft of Peirce's 'On a New List of Categories': 'It will be found that every comparison requires, besides the related thing, the ground and the correlate, also a *mediating representation which represents the relate to be a representation of the same correlate which this mediating representation itself represent*. Such a mediating representation, I call an *interpretant*...' (in Murphey [1961] 1993, 83). Savan also cites this passage in defining the interpretant (Ibid., 1988, 44)

[A] sign is a First-mediating-between-a-Second-and-a-Third. ... [I]t would also be correct to say, in another sense, that in a sign the Third mediates between First and Second; and yet another sense, the Second mediates between First and Third.

(Savan 1988, 16-17)

If mediation is not peculiar to any single component of the sign-complex, the question arises as to what distinguishes the different components from one another. But just as the categories cannot be easily separated from one another (they have to be prescinded) so the components of the sign-complex are interwoven in such a way that their recognition is a complex and subtle process. In attempting to understand Peirce in this important area we might start with one of his better-known descriptions of the sign, or sign-complex, from 'Sundry Logical Conceptions' (1903):

A Sign, or Representamen, is a First which stands in such a genuine triadic relation to a Second, called its Object, as to be capable of determining a Third, called its Interpretant, to assume the same triadic relation to its [the First's] Object in which it stands itself to the same Object. The triadic relationship is genuine, that is its three members are bound together by it in a way that does not consist in any complexus of dyadic relations.

(CP 2.274)

It is already possible here to detect something of the tensions encountered in analysing the sign-complex as Peirce conceived it. This is detectable in the apparent

reference to two dyadic relations in the first sentence (i.e. representamen to object and interpretant to object), followed by the assertion that these relations are triadic and cannot therefore be framed in dyadic terms. This tension between the insistence upon the triadic and yet the seemingly unavoidable implication of the dyadic when attempting to describe the sign-complex highlights the problems encountered when looking to schematize the Peircian sign as a 'semiotic triangle', an example of which can be seen in Figure 1.2. The implication here is that each line represents a relationship. Thus we have three relationships between three different entities and each of these relationships is dyadic.

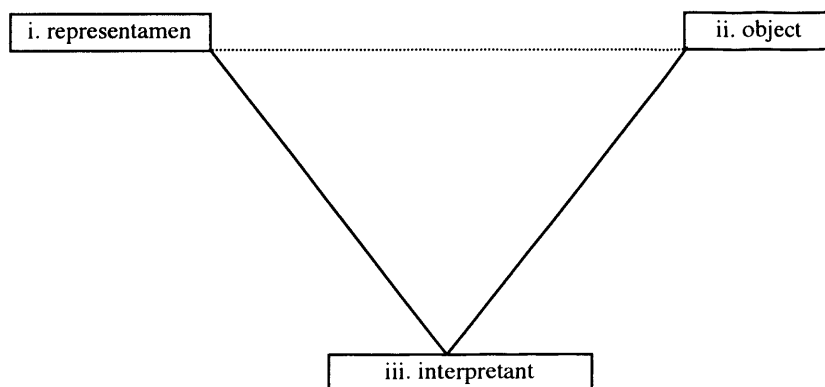


Figure 1.2: The Peircian sign as a 'semiotic triangle'

This interpretation of the scheme is further emphasized by the use of the dotted line between i and ii to indicate that these two components are not necessarily observably or directly related. By contrasting the relationship of i to ii with those of i to iii and ii to iii the sense of three distinguishable dyads would seem unavoidable. Furthermore, the dotted line within the triangular scheme would also seem particularly ill-suited to the

passage from ‘Sundry Logical Conceptions’ quoted above, as it seems to contradict Peirce’s emphasis upon the relation of i to ii as that which ‘determines’ the interpretant.

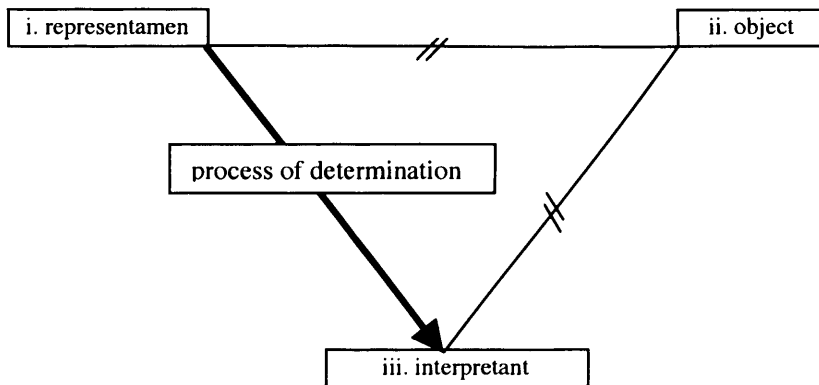


Figure 1.3: The Peircian sign as a ‘semiotic triangle’ with process of determination indicated

By this account, Figure 1.3 might be a more successful schematization of Peirce’s words. Furthermore, if we are to add the proviso that ii will determine i. Such a scheme holds reasonably well for another of Peirce’s pithy descriptions of the sign-complex given later in his life:

I ... define a sign as anything which is on the one hand so determined (or specialized) by an object and on the other hand so determines the mind of an interpreter of it that the latter [the mind of an interpreter] is thereby determined mediately, or indirectly, by that real object that determines the sign.

(LW 80-81)

Figure 1.3, however, still does little to resolve the difficulty of conceiving all relations within the complex as exclusively triadic. By retaining the triangular scheme we still

have the implication of three dyadic relations within a tripartite structure, a view of the sign which Peirce specifically rules out.

In order to clarify this difficulty we might consider Savan's explanation of Peirce's use of the term genuine in relation to the triadic nature of the sign-complex. Savan writes that the triad 'is genuine because no one of its three members can be understood or defined without reference to the other two' (Savan 1988, 16).

To grasp this principle it is useful to consider a simple example employed by Hookway in his book *Peirce*, a book that has been recognized as one of the most successful general accounts of Peirce's philosophy (Hausman 1993, xvi). Hookway gives an example of what might be called a natural sign – an index in Peircian terminology:

We observe freshly stripped bark on a tree, and we treat it as a sign of the recent presence of deer. We observe the bark, and we learn of the presence of deer from this observation ... The stripped bark, here, is the sign; as its object we can take the deer or fact that there have been deer nearby; and the interpretant is our thought that there are deer nearby.

(Hookway 1985, 122)

Hookway's example is a good starting point, as each component of the sign is clearly associated with one of three different entities: the stripped bark, the deer and our thought of deer. But how can we rule out dyadic relations in this sign situation? Surely the deer and the bark have a straightforward dyadic relation rather like the example of a person who puts their shoulder to a door discussed in relation to secondness. This is, I

think, undeniable, but we might begin to approach Peirce's understanding of this situation if we consider again the notion of prescinding so crucial to the categories. The deer and stripped bark do, for Peirce, have a dyadic relation, but this can only be prescinded from the sign situation, which must involve the interpretation of this relationship in order to function as a sign. Or, to look at it slightly differently, signs are only signs by virtue of the potential for their interpretation, and because all dyadic relations have the potential to be interpreted they must always entail a third and thereby a triad (cf. Hookway 1985, 123). Bear in mind that of the categories only thirds are intelligible, with all thoughts being classed as signs. So, if we look again at Savan's definition of a genuine triad, we might assert that the nearby deer and stripped bark cannot be 'understood or defined' apart from one another and, furthermore, that this dyadic relation is only conceivable when prescinded from its interpretation, that is from a genuine triadic relation.

Returning to the schematization of the sign-complex, one possible improvement upon the variations of the semiotic triangle employed so far is offered by Carl Hausman in his book *Charles S. Peirce's Evolutionary Philosophy*. Here Hausman avoids some of what we might term the over suggestion of dyadic relations by conceiving the sign 'as a whole unit that has three tails, or places for subjects that are related' (Hausman 1993, 72) to give the altogether different scheme in Figure 1.4.⁸

⁸ Note the resemblance of this scheme to the example of a 'trichotomic graph' cited from Peirce's 'Minute Logic' at the beginning of this chapter.

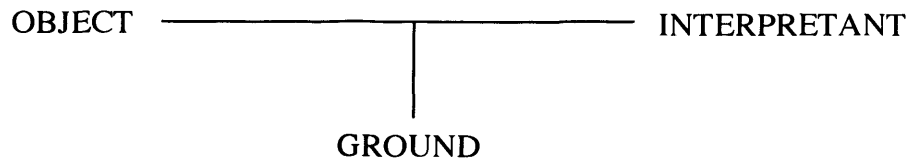


Figure 1.4: The Peircian sign as a ‘whole unit’ with ‘three tails’

‘Ground’ in this scheme refers to another key concept in Peirce’s conception of the sign. The ground is most easily understood in negative terms. Take, for instance, the example of a child’s game where one child is chased through the woods by a group of other children with the first child constructing arrows or pointers to show the direction of their route. The arrows are made from whatever is to hand: twigs, fallen leaves, stones etc. In this case the specific material from which the arrows are constructed is not relevant to the group of children doing the chasing: it is the shape made from them and the direction thereby signified. It is these more significant aspects of the arrow that form the ground of the sign. The ground, then, is that aspect of a sign-complex by virtue of which an object may be related to a representamen in the creation of an interpretant.⁹

We might usefully read Hausman’s scheme, I think, in two ways. Firstly, we might consider the sign to be constituted by the intersection of the three named components: ground, object and interpretant. The disadvantage of such a reading is that the ground then appears less as an ‘aspect’ (or respect to use Peirce’s favoured term)

⁹ Hookway’s definition of the ground differs considerably from that given by Savan, Hausman and Liszka. This is seen most clearly when Liszka and Savan assert that the tripartition of the ground gives us the qualisign, sinsign and legisign; whereas Hookway suggests the same division gives us the icon, index and symbol – rather than suggest that Hookway has got it wrong I would put this discrepancy down to the ambiguity in Peirce’s position over the distinction between the first and second trichotomies of the 1903 typology.

through which object and sign (and thereby interpretant) may be related. The ground appears instead more as an entity with its own relation to the sign.

The second reading, and the one that Hausman seems to favour, is one in which all three components and their relation to one another constitute the sign. This has the advantage of encouraging a concept of the sign as process, which seems to be Hausman's intention, whilst avoiding any real implication of dyadic relationships. The disadvantage with such a reading is that each component appears to have no identity apart from its participation in the sign. This is particularly problematic in the case of the object.

Peirce's thought is often summarized as progressing from nominalism to realism (Fisch 1986, 184). Whatever one's interpretation of this he is rarely characterized an absolute idealist, although some of his more esoteric claims might be construed in such terms (see, for example, Hookway 1985, 2). Furthermore this reading seems at odds with Peirce's repeated reference to the sign (or representamen) in relation to its interpretant and in relation to its object. This does not exclude its usefulness, however, for, as we saw earlier, Peirce's references to such relations (thereby implying some dyadic aspect in the sign-complex) causes, I would suggest, much of the tension from which this discussion springs.

On balance, however, I would suggest that Hausman's scheme throws up as many problems as it resolves, and the scheme in Figure 1.3 is, I think, more useful. It does need to be qualified, however, by the point that any dyadic relations implied are not genuine and can only be prescinded from the triad as a whole.¹⁰ There are two further points that need to be considered before looking at how Peirce further subdivides the

¹⁰ It will also be remembered that the process of prescinding only allows seconds and firsts to be prescinded from thirds and firsts to be prescinded from seconds.

components of the sign-complex. The first concerns the generality of the sign and the second its commutability.

In his essay 'Just How General is Peirce's General Theory of Signs' Max Fisch asserts that 'whatever anything else may be it is also a sign' (Fisch 1986, 357). This leads to the rather surprising conclusion that for Peirce all thoughts are signs. This at first seems counterintuitive, for the process of interpretation would seem to require more than just a single mind. To take one of Hausman's examples, if we have the thought of Abraham Lincoln the sign or representamen would be the thought and the once existent object Abraham Lincoln would be the object. But what is there to interpret here, since representamen and interpretant would seem to be inseparable? The difficulty of separating firsts and thirds is a common criticism of Peirce's thought,¹¹ but we might better understand Peirce if we consider the example employed by Hookway following his discussion of the stripped bark:

Suppose that I wish to communicate to someone that Peirce was an American philosopher ... I wish to produce something that he [another person] will interpret as a sign of Peirce's nationality, something that will lead him to have thoughts about Peirce. Therefore, I produce a sign that will produce further interpreting signs with the same object: if it did not produce signs with the same object, I would revise my practice and try a different sign. We have here the triadic production of a sign which will produce an interpretant in the same triadic fashion ...

¹¹ See, in particular, Murphey ([1961] 1993, 308) and Savan (1988, 24). See also Chapter 3, section 5 of this thesis.

(Hookway 1985, 124)

This example is more useful here than the indexical stripped bark, as both sign and interpretant are thoughts. It does not entirely explain, however, how a thought in itself can be a sign. In Hookway's example we have two minds: that of the sign utterer and that of the sign interpreter. To understand how all thoughts can be signs, then, it must be possible for these two minds to be one. It is precisely this that Peirce proposes in his dialogical conception of thought:

[S]igns require at least two *Quasi-minds*; a *Quasi-utterer* and a *Quasi-Interpreter*; and although these two are at one (i.e. are one mind) in the sign itself, they must nevertheless be distinct. In the Sign they are, so to say, *welded*. Accordingly, it is not merely a fact of human Psychology, but a necessity of Logic, that every logical evolution of thought should be dialogic.¹²

(CP 4.551)

Once this is clear, Hausman's example of the thought of Abraham Lincoln can be construed in itself as a sign. Thus Hausman writes:

The interpretant that the sign [the thought of Abraham Lincoln] determines is the thought, human being, which stands for Abraham Lincoln just as the interpretant

¹² The notion quasi-mind is employed because Peirce conceived semiosis as a process operating throughout the universe not just in relation to the human mind. He described his restriction of his definition of the sign to those processes involving minds as a 'sop to Cerberus, because I despair of making my own broader conception understood' (LW 80–1); see also Fisch (1986, 342–4).

thought of being a president does. The interpretant, being human, may be further developed into another interpretant, the thought of being male, and in turn this may be further developed by the thought of being a believer in the abolition of slavery. Thus the first interpretant and the further interpretants assume the triadic relation to the object of the determining interpretant as did the first.

(Hausman 1993, 68)

This explanation of the generality of the Peircian sign also introduces the notion of the sign's commutability. All thoughts are signs because they may be 'developed' by interpretants that are themselves also signs (note again the ambiguity between firstness (the sign) and thirdness (the interpretant)). In order for a sign to function as a sign it must be capable of producing an interpretant, which will produce a further interpretant and so on. One of Peirce's clearest explanations of this is given in the latter part of the paragraph from 'Sundry Logical Conceptions' quoted earlier:

The Third [the interpretant] must indeed stand in ... a [genuine triadic] relation, and thus must be capable of determining a Third of its own; but besides that, it must have a second triadic relation in which the Representamen, or rather the relation thereof to its Object, shall be its own (the Third's) Object, and must be capable of determining a Third to this relation. All this must be true of the Third's Third and so on endlessly...

(CP 2.274)

Although the status of the object in the second sign complex is not entirely clear in this quotation, at other points Peirce is quite clear that it is the same object that partakes of both sign complexes. This has led to schematizations such as that given by Savan (1988, 47) in Figure 1.5 and that of G.-G. Granger (reproduced in Monelle (1992, 194)) given in Figure 1.6.

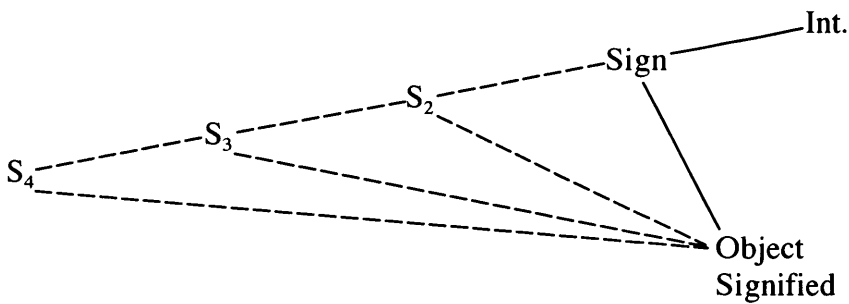


Figure 1.5: Savan's scheme showing the commutability of the sign

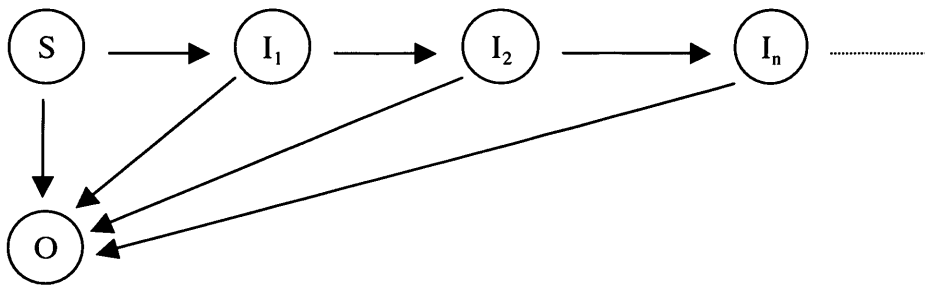


Figure 1.6: G.-G. Granger's diagram showing the commutability of the sign

In Figure 1.5 Savan emphasizes the flip side of the commutability of the sign: that is, the point that just as each interpretant develops another interpretant/sign, so each sign must be developed from another sign. Savan is schematizing an infinite regressus rather than an infinite progressus; in both cases the object is fixed.

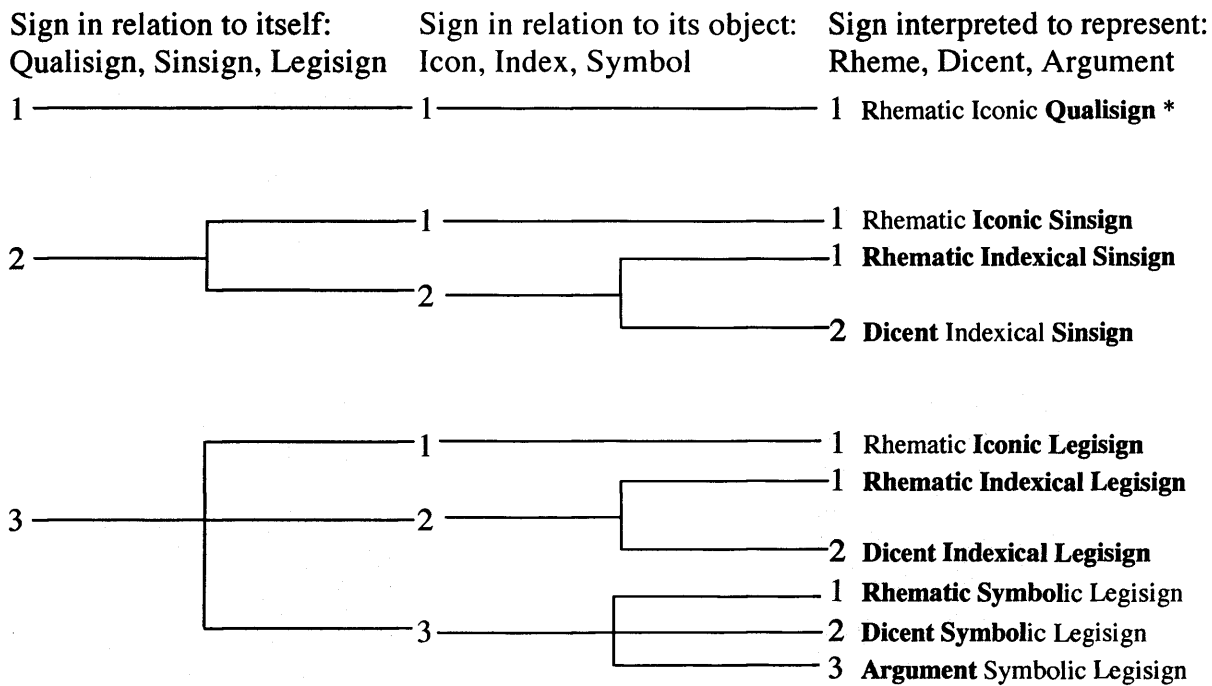
In certain respects Peirce seems to have been unhappy with the way in which his semiotics embraced the infinite regress, and his development of the idea of secondness (haeccity) was one means by which he was able to address this issue (see Murphey 1961, 301–11). The presentation of the object as fixed in both schemes would seem, in part, to be derived from this later development where the process of ‘semeiosis’ is, given the right conditions, capable of fully explicating reality.¹³

(b) Typologies of the sign

Peirce’s theory of the sign became more and more complex as his thought developed. All his theory is routed in the categories, but from this he develops four typologies, which Liszka terms the original, the interim or 1903, the expanded and the final. The original typology posits the three types of sign (corresponding, of course, to each of the categories): icon, index and symbol. These have remained the most commonly cited and adopted terms in Peircian semiotics: Hookway, for example, discusses only these in his summary of Peircian thought (Hookway 1985). The 1903 typology, discussed briefly earlier in this chapter (see Figure 1.1), also receives considerable attention and involves trichotomizing firstness (in terms of the sign in relation to itself), secondness (in terms of the sign in relation to its object) and thirdness (in terms of how the sign’s interpretant represents it).

¹³ For a full discussion of this area see Short (2004).

The three trichotomies of this 1903 typology engender ten signs. These are produced by applying the notion of degeneration, a notion bound up with that of prescinding. Just as secondness and firstness can be prescinded from thirdness, and firstness from secondness, so thirds have two degenerate forms and seconds have one degenerate form. This can be schematized using the table in Figure 1.7.



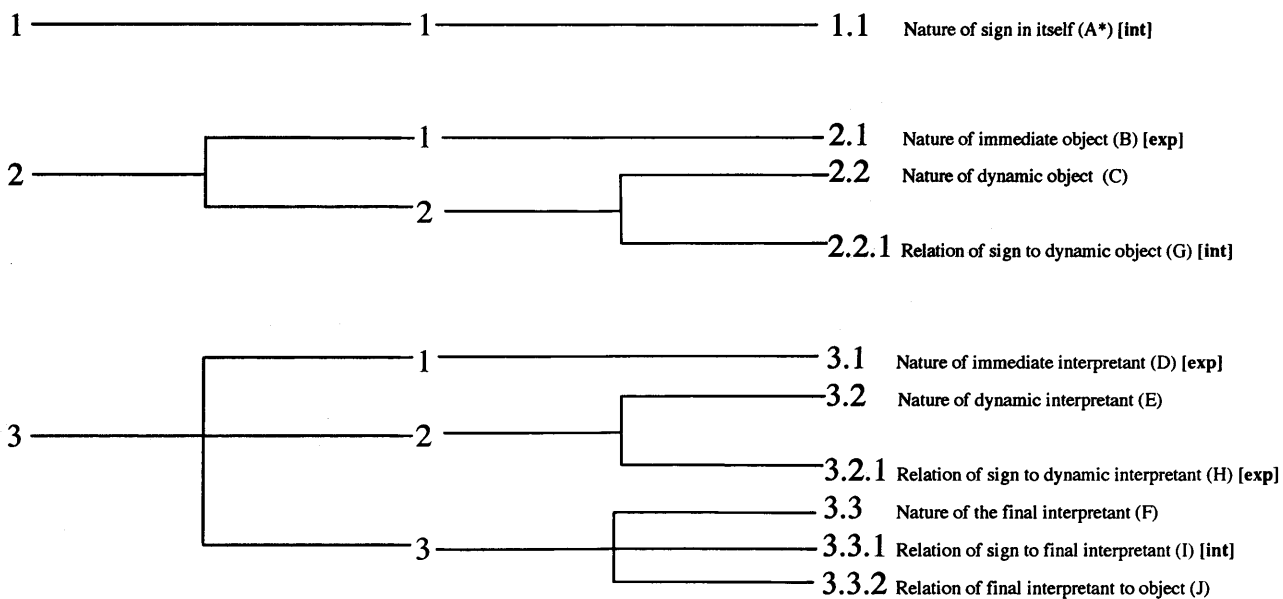
*When deploying this typology, Peirce uses only those words in bold to designate each type of sign.

Figure 1.7: Schematic account of the 1903 typology developed from Savan (1988, 13)

We see here that a first can determine only a first. A second can determine a first and a second (degenerately). A third can determine a third, a second (degenerately) and a first (degenerately).

The expanded typology is developed from Peirce's theory that objects can be immediate or dynamic and interpretants can be immediate, dynamic or final. This leads

to the addition of three more trichotomies to give six in total: one stemming from firstness (the sign in itself), two stemming from secondness (the immediate object and the dynamic object), and three stemming from thirdness (the immediate interpretant, the dynamic interpretant and the final interpretant). The final typology expands the number of trichotomies to ten. The rationale for the ten trichotomies can be mapped onto that employed in distinguishing between the ten signs of the 1903 typology shown in Figure 1.7 to give the table in Figure 1.8. This final typology yields sixty-six signs, which are not labelled or discussed at any length by Peirce. Weiss and Burks do provide a schema, however, in their 1945 article *Peirce's Sixty-Six Signs*, and Lieb provides a similar outline in LW (162–6).



*The capitalized letters refer to the annotations employed by Weiss and Burks (Weiss 1945, 386); it has been included here as it shows another means of ordering the ten trichotomies. Mine is given some legitimacy by the point that Peirce himself appears to employ it in a letter to Victoria Welby dated December 1908 (EP 2.483ff). The suffixes 'int' and 'exp' indicate which trichotomies appear in the interim or 1903 typology and which were then added to form the expanded typology.

Figure 1.8: The ten trichotomies of the final typology

The mapping of the rationale for deriving the ten trichotomies onto that of the ten-fold classification of the sign is, I think, informative, but it does not appear elsewhere in the Peirce literature. Liszka and Weiss et al. frame the development in Peirce's thought in terms of simply adding four trichotomies to the six in the expanded typology. This reluctance to draw, as I have, the clear parallel between the ten-fold classification of the sign and the ten trichotomies (indicated by relating the tables in Figures 1.7 and 1.8) is understandable, as there are certain anomalies in Figure 1.8. Most notably the division of each component in the final column is not realized by clearly applying firstness, secondness and thirdness to each. We have instead a situation where some divisions made in the second column are left undivided in the final column (labelled with two digits, e.g. 1.1, 1.2, 2.2 etc), whereas other components (labelled with three digits) are considered in relation to firstness (e.g. relation of *sign* (a first) to immediate object) and another in relation to secondness (e.g. relation of final interpretant to object (a second)). There is clearly a pattern here, albeit a different one from that which might be expected from Peirce's other typologies. But in spite of this degree of inconsistency I think it implausible that Peirce did not consider the 'degenerative' process indicated in Figure 1.8 in developing the final typology and suggest, therefore, that the comparison of Figure 1.7 and Figure 1.8 is both instructive and of considerable interest.

Further anomalies in the final typology are discussed by Liszka (Liszka 1996, 35, n. 29), and as a result he suggests that 'although the final typology is an interesting experiment, it is rather undeveloped and tentative in Peirce'. He therefore proposes that, 'focus on the 1903 typology might be the most fruitful' (Liszka 1996, 35). I will follow Liszka in this respect, to the extent that I will not look at the ten trichotomies in detail. I

will look instead at the 1903 typology and then consider the distinctions between immediate and dynamic objects along with those between immediate, dynamic and final interpretants, as these have gained some currency in the application of semiotics to music.

(c) The 1903 typology

Chapter 5 gives a detailed account of how the 1903 typology develops out of the initial typology. These points will not be fully rehearsed here. Instead a general account of the 1903 typology is given, with some anticipation of the more complex discussion in Chapter 5. An outline of the 1903 typology is given in Figure 1.1.

The first trichotomy of the 1903 typology is the main aspect that distinguishes that typology from the initial typology. The three signs in this trichotomy are labelled qualisign, sinsign and legisign, but at other points after 1903 Peirce also uses the labels tone, token and type (for example, in 'Prolegomena to an Apology for Pragmaticism' of 1906 (CP 4.537)). The trichotomy is described when it appears in 'Nomenclature and Divisions of Triadic Relations, as far as They Are Determined' of 1903 as a division 'according as the sign in itself is a mere quality, is an actual existent, or is a general law' (EP 2.291). One way to approach this, then, is to consider again the sign situation of the stripped bark in the woods that brings to mind the presence of deer. We can then prescind from this sign situation the interpreting idea of a deer and the actual deer to leave just the stripped bark. We might then reduce further so as to leave only that aspect of the sign by virtue of which it can act as a sign. The precise length and depth of the stripped area, or the colour of the wood, can be seen to be of less significance than the existence of that stripped bark at that particular time and place. In this instance, then, the

sign best exemplifies a sinsign because it is its actual existence that is of primary importance in the functioning of the sign in itself when prescinded from the sign complex. If we were to conceive this sign in more general terms, apart from any particular instantiation, it would best exemplify a legisign, because the sign is serving as a general rule – we are thinking now not of a particular tree with stripped bark but the generalized idea of stripped bark.

Explaining the qualisign in these terms is rather more difficult. Savan gives the example of a colour chip, which is used to indicate the paint I wish to buy. Here the most important aspect of the sign in itself in functioning as a sign is its quality – its colour. Clearly, though, the showing of a colour chip to a paint seller at a particular time is also important to the functioning of the sign, and Savan goes on to highlight certain difficulties with the notion of the qualisign when he asserts that ‘a qualisign is sharply distinct from a sinsign only if the quality is taken as a non-occurrence’ (Savan 1988,23). Savan certainly has a point here, and his subsequent argument that qualisigns and legisigns are scarcely distinguishable again suggests an ambiguity between firstness and thirdness in Peirce’s system. But Peirce is mindful of the status of the qualisign as a non-occurrence, stating that the qualisign has to be embodied (by a sinsign) in order to act as a sign (EP 2.291). The notion of prescinding is again useful here: we may not encounter a qualisign apart from occurrences (i.e. sinsigns), but we might be able to prescind that occurrence so as to gain some sense of the quality that is the most important aspect of its functioning as a sign in itself.

Another approach to conceiving qualisign, sinsign and legisign is to consider their role in a document probably written in 1904 soon after the formulation of the 1903

typology. In this essay entitled ‘New Elements’ Peirce refocuses his attention on the central trichotomy of the initial typology: icon, index, symbol. Peirce takes the dicisign ‘Socrates is Wise’ and analyzes it in terms of an icon: ‘() is wise’, and an index: ‘Socrates’.¹⁴ In order to differentiate these signs as generalized ideas from a specific instance of their deployment *hic et nunc*, Peirce appeals to the distinction between legisign and sinsign (or the closely related replica).¹⁵ Through the part played by the first trichotomy in forming the ten sign types, Peirce is able to construe three different sinsigns (the rhematic-iconic-sinsign, the rhematic-indexical-sinsign and the dicent-indexical-sinsign), the first two of which can be theorized as instantiating the central trichotomy of the initial typology icon, index and symbol (now termed rhematic-iconic-legisign, rhematic-indexical-legisign and rhematic-symbolic-legisign) – see Figure 5.4. The qualisign is again best conceived as a further abstraction – as the quality that must inhere in a rhematic-iconic-sinsign but which can only be made out through precision.

The trichotomy of the sign in relation to its object is that retained from the original typology, which gives the classes icon, index and symbol. These have proved particularly useful in the study of sign relations, and they continue to be widely employed. An icon exhibits firstness in that its representamen is connected to its object

¹⁴ This simplifies Peirce in line with the account of Peirce’s semiotics given in Hookway (1985) and the ideas developed in this thesis. Peirce’s conception of his system is so integrated that he will conceive a dicisign or proposition as an index (both seconds) or a rhema as an icon (both firsts) without clearly marking one out from the other. Thus what I term here an icon Peirce calls, at one point in ‘New Elements’, a rheme, and in ‘Sundry Logical Conceptions’ Peirce states that ‘a Dicisign necessarily represents itself to be a genuine Index, and to be nothing more’. (EP 2.276). In ‘New Elements’ the more complex account of this area given by Peirce seems to be that the joining of the rheme ‘() is wise’ with the indexical symbol ‘Socrates’ (or a symbol functioning as an index – see Chapters 5 and 6) is an index, but that this connection or joining is signified by an icon (EP 2.309–10).

¹⁵ A sinsign is conceived as different from a replica in that it is entirely individualized whereas a replica is an instantiation of a legisign. For Peirce ‘the replica is a sinsign ... But these are not ordinary sinsigns, such as are peculiar occurrences that are regarded as significant. Nor would the replica be significant if it were not for the law which renders it so’ (EP 2.291).

by shared qualities (e.g. a figurative painting); an index exhibits secondness in that its representamen is connected to its object by a casual or existent link (e.g. the stripped bark discussed earlier); and a symbol exhibits thirdness in that its representamen is connected to its object by a rule or law (e.g. a common noun). As with all examples of firstness, secondness and thirdness, all classifications will always be to some extent present (recall the notion of prescinding) but the examples given exhibit one of the categories more clearly than the others. In this thesis some consideration is given to the kinds of examples discussed here in relation to the icon, index and symbol, but greater emphasis will be placed upon the role these signs play in constituting propositions or dicisigns. An icon in this instance is still conceived in terms of its qualitative aspect, such as that found in a painting or a diagram, but it will be considered most often in its guise as a rhematic-iconic-legisign (usually simply called an icon) which brings indexes into a diagrammatic relation with one another. An example of this is the formulation '() is wise'. Similarly, discussion of the index will focus upon rhematic-indexical-legisigns (or indices), which make reference to the actual world, as in the word 'Socrates', and can *saturate* the icon to give the dicisign 'Socrates is wise'. Both of these examples of icons and indices are symbolic, as they rely upon rule to operate as signs. Thus the theories developed in the thesis draw heavily upon the notion of the symbol, but some symbols will function as icons and others as indices.

The third trichotomy in the interim or 1903 typology is derived from considering the sign in relation to its interpretant. This gives the classes rheme (or term), dicent (or dicisign, or proposition) and argument. These were discussed at some length in defining the categories, so I will only summarize them briefly here. When a sign is interpreted in

such a way as to draw attention to the qualities of the object in question it is a rheme (e.g. a cat or some cat). When a sign is interpreted in such a way as to draw attention to the actual existence of the object in question it is a dicent (e.g. my cat or this cat). When a sign is interpreted in such a way as to draw attention to the generality or regulative rule of the object in question it is an argument (e.g. a syllogism).

(d) Immediate and dynamic objects

The bipartite division of objects can be explained in terms of Peirce's notion of degenerate forms. That is that a first has no degenerate forms, a second has one and a third has two (see Figures 1.7 and 1.8). Thus objects (which it will be recalled are seconds) can be divided into two types: dynamic (active, or real) objects and immediate (or passive) objects.¹⁶ One way in which Peirce distinguishes between immediate and dynamic objects is by referring to a sign's 'object as it is represented and its object in itself' (CP 8.333). The immediate object then involves representation but not interpretation, for then it would be a third.

Immediate objects are often discussed in relation to intellectual signs or signs that have abstract objects. Thus Peirce discusses increases in temperature as a sign (an indexical sign to be more precise) of fever in his explanation of immediate objects (CP 5.473). The object of such a sign – fever – is a mental entity, which is produced in the mind of the interpreter and understood as an index. It is this that forms the immediate

¹⁶ Both of these types of object have a trichotomy associated with it in the final trichotomy. For the immediate object the trichotomy consists of the descriptive, denominative and copulative, and the dynamic object consists of the abstractive, concretive and collective. The division of the sign into icon, index and symbol in the 1903 typology is labelled in the final typology as the *relation of the sign to its dynamic object*.

object. This sounds remarkably similar to an interpretant, but the difference here is that the immediate object is considered to be uninterpreted or, as Savan puts it, ‘apart from any critical appraisal or critical interpretation’ (Savan 1980, 31). It is, in the case of the fever, the representation of the index, which is necessary for an interpreter, say a physician, to make a subsequent interpretation. Some kind of mental entity has to be posited (a positing caused by both the real or dynamic object and the mind of the interpreter), which can then serve as an object for interpretation. It is only when interpretation takes place that a tripartite relation is produced (immediate object, indexical sign and interpretant), and thus a genuine sign or sign-complex comes into play.

The notion of an immediate object allows Peirce to account for signs whose objects are falsely construed. Thus if I take the stripped bark discussed earlier to be a sign of humans vandalizing the forest or the rise in someone’s temperature as a sign of a ghostly presence I may well be mistaken. The immediate object may well not correspond in any real way with the dynamic or real object, but a genuine sign has been produced nonetheless. In this way Peirce is able to assert that the ‘real is that which is not whatever we happen to think it, but is unaffected by what we may think of it’ (CP 8.12). The real does, however, exert an influence upon ‘whatever we think it is’ because the dynamic object plays a part in causing the immediate object. This real or dynamic object is defined by Peirce as that referred to by the final interpretant, which will be arrived at by a community of investigators if they follow a proper line of inquiry: ‘the opinion which is fated to be agreed to by all those who investigate, is what we mean by the truth, and the object represented in this opinion is the real’ (CP 5.407).

The distinction between immediate and dynamic objects, then, plays a considerable role in articulating Peirce's wider philosophical project of understanding how knowledge can progress towards the truth.¹⁷ As we will now see it is also intimately tied to his tripartite division of the interpretant.

(e) Immediate, dynamic and final interpretants

Just as the notion of degenerate forms or the 'qualification rule' entails a bipartite division of the object (a second), this same rule entails a tripartite division of the interpretant (a third). Each division corresponds to one of the categories.

In any particular sign situation the immediate interpretant is the initial understanding of a sign before further interpretation or development of that sign takes place. If we think again of the stripped bark, the immediate interpretant in such a situation might be the presence of deer and all the complex of signs involved in such a conception: that is, all the sign-complexes that are contained in our understanding of the sign-complex deer—ruminant quadrupeds with deciduous branching horns or antlers etc. We may then recall that *red* deer are commonly sighted roaming the forest in which we are walking, and thus our initial interpretation of the stripped bark is developed. The interpreting thought that produces this more developed sign is the dynamic interpretant

¹⁷ Peirce's view in this area is opposed to that of Locke and others in the British empiricist tradition who argued that any organizing of sense data involves interpretation. For Peirce, sense data such as colours are qualities that can only be prescinded from the objects of signs. They are not like building blocks that are pieced together in the process of cognition but abstractions that are established by intellectual means.

(recall that all signs are interpretants: the label chosen depends entirely upon perspective, as shown in Figures 1.5 and 1.6).¹⁸

The immediate interpretant in this example needs to be viewed as an uncritical, unanalyzed impression. Once the process of critical reflection is recognized the interpretant is thereby developed and should be understood as a dynamic interpretant. The final interpretant, as mentioned earlier, is the understanding that would occur should the process of dynamic reflection continue whilst adhering to proper rules of inquiry. If this process of inquiry continues, it would come to correspond to the real or dynamic object *in the long run*. We can and do attain final interpretants, but we can never be sure that we have because further experience might always refute our conclusions, engendering further inquiry. This final interpretant is, Peirce insists, that which is meant by the word 'truth'.

3 Wider system

It should be clear from these discussions that Peirce's theory of the categories and his semiotics are intimately bound together. The categories inform the structure and character of Peirce's various sign typologies at every juncture. But the scope of the categories is in no way restricted to the details of sign interaction; Peirce's thought can be seen to expand in such a way as to posit a universe governed by the categories and, in that sense, semiotic relations. Constant reference to the categories allows Peirce to develop a

¹⁸ Savan neatly explains this by considering the concept uncle. I am an uncle and I have an uncle who also has an uncle. The label uncle applies to different individuals in this chain depending upon the subject we choose to consider as a nephew. The same is true of signs and interpretants.

highly systematic approach through which he traces, in Corrington's words, 'the process of judgement and reasoning from the most simple forms of sensation to the most elaborate forms of semiotic musement' (Corrington 1993, 44). The more elaborate forms of semiotic musement concern the deployment of arguments which can be abductive, inductive or deductive.

Deductive arguments allow us to check propositions in relation to others. If we are convinced of one proposition, it must be consistent with others. I cannot hold that Socrates is immortal if I accept that Socrates is a man and that all men are mortal.

Inductive arguments allow us to check propositions in relation to actual experience. I can observe men in the world and see whether the statistical tendency is to exhibit mortality or immortality. Peirce recognizes something extraordinary in abductive arguments. They can be conceived as sophisticated guessing and introduce thereby an element of chance into the process of reasoning. By connecting qualities such as the quality of mortality prescind from any rule or instance we are somehow able to make progress in our understanding of the universe. The extraordinary point for Peirce is that despite the enormity of possible guesses humans somehow have the ability to guess correctly.

This last point begins to indicate Peirce's expansion of his categories beyond human reasoning. For Peirce the *chance* aspect of reasoning is a reflection of the world of nature that is external to the arguments we employ when we interact with that world. In much the same way the aspect of *rule* that dominates the deductive syllogism is not limited to human thought but a part of the very universe our thoughts engage. Such expansive treatment of the categories also allows Peirce to map his categories onto key areas of philosophical inquiry, with aesthetics exemplifying firstness, ethics secondness

and logic (or semiotics) thirdness. Something of the interconnection of these points is found in one of Peirce's 1903 Lowell Lectures (the same series from which the 1903 typology is derived):

unless a man had a tendency to guess right, unless his guesses are better than tossing up a copper, no truth that he does not already virtually possess could ever be disclosed to him, so that he might as well give up all attempt to reason; while if he has any decided tendency to guess right, as he may have, then no matter how often he guesses wrong, he will get at the truth at last. These considerations certainly do take into account the man's inward nature as well as his outward relations; so that the ideals of good logic are truly of the same general nature as ideals of fine conduct.

(CP 1.608)

There is clearly an idealist dimension in Peirce's system and this has led some scholars either to regard his project as ill-advised or to disregard his wider system in favour of the more easily defended work on first principles. But much can be lost by ignoring the broader sweep of Peircian thought, and Corrington clearly shows concern for this point when he asserts that Peirce's system 'can gain greater strength and resourcefulness when it develops a grounding in metaphysics' (Corrington 1993, 169).

This thesis does not pursue Peirce's metaphysics at length, but it does attempt throughout to remain sensitive to the broad sweep of Peircian thought by returning continually to the implications of the categories and their rigorous definition alongside their wider application. This sensitivity to Peirce's broader system, it is hoped, will fuel a

thorough critique of the main applications of Peirce to music. It will also inform the theories developed in Chapters 5 and 6 with particular focus upon the tight correspondence between the categories and the dimensions of time.

II

Peircian Semiotics and Musicology: Application and Ideology

1 Introduction

Two aspects of Peirce's thought, in particular, tend to be pursued by musicologists and are, at times, explicitly emphasized as advantageous to musical study.¹ The first aspect concerns the trichotomy of the sign and the dynamic series (or web) of interpretants it generates, and the second concerns the conception of the categories as a hierarchical means to model musical structure and/or meaning.

¹ The terms musicology and musicologist are used here in a broad sense simply to mean the study of, or one who studies, music. As Cook and Dibben note, such a definition of musicology 'is still common British parlance' but, partly due to its narrower definition in American usage, there remains 'no single, universally accepted definition of the discipline's scope' (Cook and Dibben 2001, 45). Other difficulties in defining the term musicology are historical, because the notion of a musicology before about 1800 is problematic, and political, in the sense that the scope of the term, particularly in relation to a perceived high-art/low-art divide, is contested. The focus in this thesis upon applications of Peircian semiotics to music means that the problem of defining musicology in historical terms is not directly encountered. In relation to the political dimension outlined here, this thesis insists upon a broader definition of musicology and addresses critically those applications of Peirce that appear to reinscribe assumptions regarding the inherent worth of particular musics and their transcendence of social forces. The writings of Kerman in this area are generally considered a key factor in recognizing and intensifying the contested nature of the term musicology. His book *Musicology* (published in the US as *Contemplating Music* (1985)) remains an important summary of certain key arguments. See also Beard and Gloag (2005), Hooper (2006), Kramer (1990 and 2002), McClary and Walser (1990), Tagg (2003), and Tomlinson (1993).

Both Jean-Jacques Nattiez and Robert Hatten specifically extol the virtues of Peirce's dynamic conception of the sign, suggesting certain advantages over Saussure's more static model of signifier and signified.² Nattiez's focus is upon the interpretant in the sign complex and the infinite series this entails. Nattiez chooses to ignore Peirce's theory of the final interpretant in his later work and is criticized on this point by Dougherty (1994, 171 and 1997, 36). For Nattiez, the infinite nature of Peircian semiosis 'leads us to conclude that the object of the sign is actually a *virtual* object, that does not exist except within and through the infinite multiplicity of interpretants, by means of which the person *using* the sign seeks to *allude to* the object' (Nattiez 1990, 7). This may seem a reasonably fair take on Peirce's notion of the sign (at least when considering his earlier work), but Nattiez's next move is to suggest that the object to which this infinite multiplicity 'alludes' is the form of the music. The infinite series, thereby, appears to underline the importance of music conceived as form.

Hatten too sees the tripartite conception of the sign in Peirce as advantageous. He gives three advantages: (1) the avoidance of behaviouristic models and psychological reduction, (2) the promotion of attention towards 'the way a sign is "meant to be taken"' and (3) the avoidance of the one-to-one correspondence implied in the Saussurian model (Hatten 1994, 244). The first two points clearly allow Hatten to suggest a more stable musical meaning related to intention and severed from behavioural and psychological

² Saussure's semiotic theories have influenced the work of Nattiez and have had a significant impact upon the field of musicology, often via their importance in the writings of Roland Barthes. But Saussure's thought developed without reference to or knowledge of Peircian semiotics and will not be dealt with in this thesis.

factors.³ The third point Hatten relates to style, again looking to stabilize musical meaning by appealing to stylistic (which are in effect formal) moorings.

The conception of Peirce's categories as a hierarchical means to model musical structure and meaning tends to be pursued at greater length by music semioticians. This approach is usually employed to achieve one of two theoretical ends: (1) to suggest a process by which to discern lesser and greater sophistication in listening practices and (2) as a means of theorizing musical form as point of origin for musical meaning.⁴

The first of these is particularly clearly demonstrated by part of Tarasti's summary of Peircian semiotics in music in his book *Signs of Music* (2002):

When we hear a melody as a primal impression at an emotive, perhaps even chaotic level, without recognizing what piece it is or who composed it, and so on – that is Firstness. In Secondness, we might go on to identify the piece. In Thirdness, which involves the most ratiocination, we might draw inferences about its style and structure, what other pieces it resembles, and so on.

(Tarasti 2002,10)

Here the categories serve to identify different phases of listening to music, which, according to Tarasti (invoking Peirce), correspond to 'three phases through which we apprehend reality' (Ibid.). There is a clear sense of progression from the more ignorant to

³ On this point Hatten seems in part to be distancing himself from Meyer's earlier theories expounded in *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (1956), especially in his reference to 'stimulus and response' models, but more relevant here, I would suggest, is Hatten's attempt to distance questions of musical meaning from how a person or indeed large number of people might tend to respond to a given piece of music.

⁴ These two approaches are potentially contradictory because sophistication tends to be allied to thirdness and origin to firstness. Thus firstness can seem both valued as the source of meaning and yet devalued as a phase of least sophistication.

the better informed, and the information in question is the type of information we expect students of music to remember from history and analysis classes. The progression is given weight by the relationship drawn with Peirce's fundamental or universal categories. This rather crude mapping is comparable to Lidov's idea of a correspondence between the categories and the musicological concepts of transient, motive and ordering of motives (see Chapter 3). Martinez too appears to adopt something resembling Tarasti's ideas, although for him firstness is deemed a more (if not the most) sophisticated mode of listening – a view derived, in part, from his focus upon Indian music and its religio-cultural context (Martinez 1997).

Perhaps the most common use made of Peircian theory is found in attempts to establish a stable point of origin for meaning at the level of the sign itself (or in itself). This is usually executed by positing firstness as a point of origin (Osmond-Smith, Martinez and Cumming), but also by positing secondness (Lidov, Karbusicky, Tarasti) or both firstness and secondness (Hatten).

The theoretical uses to which Peirce's notions (of the dynamic series of interpretants and the relationship of the categories) have been put can be related to certain patterns of thought that dominate musicological discourse. These patterns can be described as ideological on account of their tendency to reify and legitimize a particular body of music and a particular set of related listening and discursive practices (Green 1988 and 1999).

The apparent fluidity of an infinite series of interpretants is taken by Nattiez to reaffirm the idea of an abstract (musical) entity towards which scholarship should be aimed. In Hatten this same aspect of Peircian thought is taken up as a means to theorize

an *intended* meaning or a notion of ‘the way a sign is “meant to be taken”’ (Hatten 1994, 244). Both stances reify musical practices by reaffirming the work-concept⁵ and by suggesting a musical object/meaning that is ‘universal ... eternal, unchangeable, and [of] natural appeal [and value] to human beings regardless of who they are’ (Green 1999, 6). Similarly both stances present their viewpoint as transparently legitimate. In Nattiez this is achieved by developing the notion of a neutral level that simply *is* and therefore quite rightly becomes the focus of inquiry. Hatten’s more sophisticated approach assumes legitimacy by insisting that his interpretations reflect the context of the historical period during which a style developed. This may seem to avoid any accusation of proclaimed universality. However, in the notion of ‘style competency’ he looks to reify the principles of ‘correlation’ that characterize that historical context, thereby inferring the possibility (and inherent value – due to their relationship with stylistic origins) of the transferral of those principles to the present day or, indeed, any time and place.⁶ Nattiez and Hatten claim objectivity for (and thereby legitimate) their interpretations by appealing to ontological neutrality (in the case of Nattiez) and historical origins (in the case of Hatten) – personal interests, it seems, are irrelevant.

The same ideological tendencies can be perceived in those approaches that focus upon a hierarchical conception of the categories. Tarasti’s application of the categories in *Signs of Music* is consistent with those bodies of thought that conceive the value of classical music’s listening practices as derived from the training that allows greater complexity to be perceived (and, by inference, written into works). Greater complexity

⁵ See Goehr (1992) for a detailed account of the work-concept in musicology.

⁶ Indeed Hatten’s notion of stylistic development or style growth is dominated by a theory of subdivision whereby meanings become more refined and specific. His theories are ill suited to understanding more pronounced cultural differences (see Chapters 4 and 5).

(in part through its association with unequivocal knowledge of names) is presented as more valuable, and by mapping successive phases of complexity and knowledge to Peirce's categories they appear as natural universal states whose legitimacy is self-evident.

The tendency towards reification is most apparent in those applications of Peirce that deploy the categories to theorize form as a point of origin for musical meaning. Some argue that this point of origin lies in the relationships between notes, i.e. directly in the form of a work (and/or works associated with it, primarily through formal but also historical considerations), whilst others argue that a necessary causal relationship between work and listener constitutes an origin for musical meaning. Because the connection is necessary, however, such arguments also tend to lead back (by a causal route) to form as a point of origin. Such arguments reinforce notions of a reified autonomous artwork that appears to be properly studied in relative (or even complete) isolation from social context. The universality of Peirce's categories is again invoked here to legitimate such ideas: Peirce's categories set out the fundamental relationships of the universe. If their relationship is hierarchical and form is at the centre or the base of that hierarchy then the notion of an autonomous artwork needs no defence; it again appears as a self-evident truth.

The writing of Peirce does not directly discuss ideology. But neither does his thought serve to justify the patterns of argument framed above as ideological. Peirce's approach to questions of meaning and knowledge is rigorously logical and, I would suggest, specifically rejects, the kinds of reasoning these arguments exhibit. Peirce identifies four methods of developing established beliefs in 'The Fixation of Belief'

(1877, in EP 1.109ff): the methods of tenacity, the method of authority, the a priori method and the method of science. The arguments deployed in music semiotics, I would suggest, fall most clearly within the a priori method, which ‘secures opinion through an appeal to propositions that are held to be necessary and universal’ (Corrington 1993, 32). Corrington’s account of Peirce on this matter is worth quoting at length:

There is a sense in which the a priori method is merely an elitist version of the method of tenacity insofar as it does not allow for social external critique. Peirce advances an argument that today would go by the name ‘hermeneutics of suspicion,’ which asserts that all fundamental knowledge claims are actually structures of personal preference or moves toward control and power that belie the surface and seemingly innocent claims of so-called ‘pure’ reason.

All three methods [tenacity, authority and a priori] have their own role to play in personal and collective history, but they fail to point to anything truly external to the self or the community. In this sense, these methods are intrapsychic and do not reveal anything about the structures of nature. Peirce argues that a fourth method must be developed that is open to external structures and powers. He calls this final method the method of science.

(Corrington 1993, 32)

I suggest that musicology, in its tendency to uphold a particular body of musical practices and ‘works’, can be usefully understood as upholding just such ‘personal preferences’ and even a tendency to move ‘toward control and power’. It follows from

this that if Peirce's view of methods is consistent with the details of his system⁷ then applications of Peirce that reaffirm musicology's ideological habits (those that tend to reify and legitimize) will distort the details of Peirce's system. The subsequent stages of this chapter take a detailed look at how Peirce has been applied to musicology, identifying possible inconsistencies and returning continually to those aspects of musicology that can be linked to an ideological tendency such as formalism, autonomy and a focus upon notated music.

The remainder of this chapter is structured around the sign types icon, index and symbol, which have a loose correspondence to the chronology of the musicological projects discussed. This structure allows a certain clarity in attempting to understand how Peirce's thought might be seen to have guided different approaches to his semiotics in music, but it also highlights the tendency to return to formalist habits despite more sophisticated and careful applications of his ideas. This is partly because there is a tendency in the writings of musicologists to conceive the trichotomies as interchangeable. This is, I think, not altogether inconsistent with Peirce's thought. One way to approach this is to consider that Peirce clearly articulates his theory of the categories for the first time in 'On a New List of Categories'. In this paper the categories are termed quality, relation and representation, but they are clearly bound up with the sign-types icon (denoted here as likenesses), index and symbol, which Peirce defines thus:

1st. Those whose relation to their objects is a mere community in some quality, and these representations may be termed *Likenesses*.

⁷ This thesis conceives Peirce as consistent on this point and more takes Peirce's wider project, following Hookway, as generally consistent despite certain important developments in his thought.

2d. Those whose relation to their objects consists in a correspondence in fact, and these may be termed *Indices* or *Signs*.⁸

3d. Those the ground of whose relation to their objects is an imputed character, which are the same as *general signs*, and these may be termed *Symbols*.

(EP 1.7)

Although Peirce also introduces the trichotomy rheme, dicent, argument in this paper it is that of icon, index, symbol which remained the most readily employed in Peirce's subsequent work on semiotics, and for this reason the tendency to equate the icon with firstness, the index with secondness and symbol with thirdness is generally adopted here. The terms iconism, indexicality and symbolism make clear this connection between the more general categories and more specific sign-types, and they are adopted in subheadings.

2 *Music and Iconism*

The first attempts to apply the initial typology appear in the early 1970s and concentrate upon the notion of the icon. This seems unsurprising, since attempts to assign 'extra-musical' meaning to musical utterance in terms of resemblance, likeness or isomorphism have circulated musicological discourse for many years. Monelle traces such theorizing back to Batteux in the eighteenth century and notes points of contact between iconism

⁸ The term sign was, of course, given a much wider meaning by Peirce in later work.

and Hanslick's theory of dynamic properties. The latter point is of particular interest when we consider that Hanslick is often assumed to typify a formalist perspective where music is, first and foremost, an autonomous art form. Monelle's point is not ill-founded, however, as Hanslick clearly did point to the potential correspondence between musical and emotional experience:

Which of the elements inherent in these ideas [of love, wrath and fear] ... does music turn to account so effectually? Only the element of motion – in the wider sense, of course, according to which the increasing and decreasing force of a single note or chord is 'motion' also. This is the element which has in common with our emotions, and which, with creative power, it contrives to exhibit an endless variety of forms and contrasts.

(in Cook 1998, 88)

Wilson Coker's early application of iconism to music (Coker 1972) bears a remarkable resemblance to Hanslickian aesthetics. In his chapter on extrageneric (as opposed to congeneric⁹) meaning, for example, Coker at first shows some sympathy for 'autonomistically oriented theorists'¹⁰ (Coker 1972, 146) but clearly asserts that in his study 'music is regarded as extragenrically significant and meaningful'. Coker goes on to explore his notion of the musical metaphor, which, for him, involves the analogy

⁹ These terms are comparable to the more common notions of extra-musical and musical or purely musical. They concern music referring outside itself and establishing its own internal relations.

¹⁰ At this point we assume that Hanslick is regarded as one such theorist since Coker quotes one of his clearest dismissals of music's relation to emotion.

between congeneric (i.e. entirely musical) relationships and extrageneric (i.e. non-musical) relationships:

[C]ongeneric sign complexes may be regarded as metaphors for extrageneric meaning, the *primary* dimension of reference necessarily being congeneric and the *secondary* dimension being extrageneric. In this way of thinking, we would say that music is a metaphor for life values and extrageneric meanings.

(Ibid., 152)

The italicized demarcation of congeneric meaning as primary and extrageneric meaning as secondary begins to indicate the formalist leanings of Coker's analysis. Furthermore, Coker's extrageneric meanings begin to seem less and less clearly detached from music itself. That is to say, although 'a fundamental objective of a musical work is, in general, its extrageneric reference to the attitudes and responsive behaviour of listeners and performers' (Ibid., 153), these attitudes and responsive behaviours seem somehow intimately bound to music's congeneric relations. The relation to Hanslick is then made clear when Coker employs him to underline his point that the 'means that music has for expressing metaphors are the *inherent* [my emphasis] properties of sound, rhythm and sonorous motion especially' (Ibid., 154). This point is made more emphatically later when he asserts that 'the properties we find expressive and iconically significant are *in* the music itself' (Ibid., 158, Coker's emphasis).

The iconicism in Coker's theory of extrageneric meaning, then, is not quite a simple case of one set of musical relations having 'a mere community in some quality', to use Peirce's phrase in the 'New List', with a set of non-musical objects or concepts.¹¹ The icon for Coker in this instance involves a far more intimate connection between music and extrageneric meaning in which the 'musical organism directly presents us with expressive behaviour through the properties of its sonorous motion' (Ibid., 167). It is in this way that Coker's theory of the icon may be allied to the formalist tradition of Hanslick and, arguably, Meyer.¹²

Peirce's understanding of the icon and the iconic is a complex matter. One of the first problems encountered concerns the way in which Peirce's description of the iconic or firstness in the 'New List' is different from those descriptions given after about 1885. One of the principal points of the 'New List' is to demonstrate how a conception of quality (e.g. blackness) that can be ascribed to a substance (e.g. a stove) is a more mediate conception which is not simply a conceptual given but the product of a process. This process involves comparison (or relation) and transformation (or representation). Although Peirce reworked this paper around 1893, and in 1905 described it as 'my one contribution to philosophy' (CP 8.213), his definition of the categories differs in later work in that firstness is no longer the more mediate category but the most immediate. In Chapter 1 we noted Peirce's conception of firstness as 'present immediate, fresh, new, initiative, original, spontaneous, free, vivid, conscious, and evanescent' in 'A Guess at the Riddle' (1887–8). In the first part of 'On the Algebra of Logic' published in 1885,

¹¹ For a recent elaboration of this argument see Burkholder 2006.

¹² Wayne Bowman in *Philosophical Approaches to Music* deals with Hanslick and Meyer under the same chapter heading: 'formalism'. In Meyer's work, according to Bowman, '[w]hat started as a defence of "absolute expressionism" ends in formalism' (Bowman 1998, 190).

Peirce gives a description of the icon which perhaps goes furthest in warranting the kind of theoretical work to which it is put by Coker:

I call a sign which stands for something merely because it resembles it, an *icon*.

Icons are so completely substituted for their objects as hardly to be distinguished from them. Such are the diagrams of geometry. A diagram, indeed, so far as it has a general signification, is not a pure icon; but in the middle part of our reasonings we forget that abstractness in great measure, and the diagram is for us the very thing. So in contemplating a painting, there is a moment when we lose the consciousness that it is not the thing, the distinction of the real and the copy disappears, and it is for the moment a pure dream – not any particular existence, and yet not general. At that moment we are contemplating an *icon*.

(EP 1.226)

Peirce was, I would suggest, convinced of the importance of firstness in the process of reasoning, and we find him in such passages at pains to show the applicability of the icon to fundamental aspects of the process of understanding. But even in this passage we have a clear indication of the difficulty of conceiving of the iconic. In trying to describe the icon in simple phenomenological terms he appeals to the idea of somehow dropping the process of signification, allowing us to contemplate something that does not exist and cannot be generalized. This allows Peirce to retain the notion of a singularity where one thing does not relate to another but simply is. There is a contradiction here, however, because the painting (in this instance) still appears to represent the thing it copies. Peirce

is fully aware of this contradiction and for this reason comes to define firstness more in terms of possibility:

An Icon is a Representamen whose Representative Quality is a Firstness of it as a First. That is, a quality that it has *qua* thing renders it fit to be a representamen. Thus, anything is fit to be a *Substitute* for anything that it is like. (The conception of 'substitute' involves that of a purpose, and thus of genuine thirdness.) A Representamen by Firstness alone can only have a similar Object. Thus, a Sign by Contrast denotes its object only by virtue of a contrast, or Secondness, between two qualities. A sign by Firstness is an image of its object and, more strictly speaking, can only be an *idea*. For it must produce an Interpretant idea; and an external object excites an idea by a reaction upon the brain. But most strictly speaking, even an idea, except in the sense of a possibility, or Firstness, cannot be an Icon. A possibility alone is an Icon purely by virtue of its quality; and its object can only be a Firstness.

(EP 2.276)

In this passage from 'Sundry Logical Conceptions' of 1903 we find Peirce having to continually back track in order to qualify the point that a pure icon cannot properly function as a sign. Two points may help to clarify this complex point. The first is that Peirce derives his categories primarily by logical means. However, after around 1885 Peirce also looks to conceive and explain the categories phenomenologically, but this often gives a sense of his trying to make himself understood and relying, as a result, upon

simplifications which can be misleading. The second point is that when the categories are derived by stricter logical means we get a clearer sense that firstness is an aspect of the reasoning process that is available to conception through the process of precision. What needs to be underlined here is that icons are not sufficient to explain a process of signification. Therefore, although Peirce's statement in 'On the Algebra of Logic' may seem to warrant the role for the icon developed by Coker, a fuller understanding of Peirce's conception of the icon renders it problematic. What Coker is actually discussing should properly be termed a hypoicon. The quotation above continues thus:

But a sign may be iconic, that is, may represent its object mainly by its similarity, no matter what its mode of being. If a substantive be wanted, an iconic representamen may be termed a hypoicon. Any material image, as a painting, is largely conventional in its mode of representation; but in itself, without legend or label it may be called a hypoicon.

Hypoicons may be roughly divided according to the mode of Firstness of which they partake. Those which partake of simple qualities, or First Firstnesses, are *images*; those which represent the relations, mainly dyadic, or so regarded, of the parts of one thing by analogous relations in their own parts, are *diagrams*; those which represent the representative character of a representamen by representing a parallelism in something else, are *metaphors*.

(CP 2.276-7)

The process by which music's internal relations can be said to signify 'life, values and extrageneric meanings' (Coker 1972, 152), then, cannot be explained by a simple

appeal to iconism. A more thorough understanding of Peirce, I would suggest, leads us to take a far more considered approach to the icon and to note in particular the importance of the symbolic in any sign situation. Hookway gives a clear account of how the icon and index are ‘normally’ conceived as subclassifications of the symbol:

[I]t is arguable that it is only because there is a general practice of using them that we are able to apply colour samples; the colour chart is a sort of conventional symbol The convention instructs us *how* to use the patch as an icon; we do not need a specific convention to determine the meaning of each patch, but a general convention which enable us to use the patch as an icon Similarly, it is a familiar point that we require conventions [i.e. symbols] to be able to interpret indices such as a pointing finger – we need to know what route to take from the end of the finger to find the object indicated Although Peirce is not wholly clear on the matter, there are passages that suggest that he thinks there are no pure icons or indices; and his normal usage of the three terms [icon, index, symbol] reflects the subclassification of symbols just alluded to.

(Hookway 1985, 126)

Coker’s use of the icon to theorize a direct, immediate and transparent connection between music and meaning is not surprising when we consider musicology’s formalist tradition. The apparent contradiction that Peirce is at pains to explain (a contradiction resolved, I would suggest, in Hookway’s account) is uncritically adopted by Coker to suggest a situation in which musical form can both refer beyond itself and yet embody

‘meanings’ in a way that requires nothing beyond itself. And this contradictory idea allows, by the same token, a side stepping of the role of convention. This process provides a particularly clear example of how Peirce’s work has been used to reify musical meaning as a transcendent immutable entity. The point that it is derived from tensions in Peirce’s work is particularly interesting and points, perhaps, to the way in which notions of unmediated, pure entities are difficult to avoid in any theoretical system. Peirce is particularly insightful, I would suggest, in this area, and his work is an outstanding contribution to its study.

Criticisms of iconism in music have been derived not so much from a more careful reading of Peirce but instead with reference to the work of Eco. This is the case with Monelle’s account of Coker’s ideas (Monelle 1992). Referring to Eco, Monelle draws a distinction between iconic signs and intrinsically encoded acts. The latter occur when a relation is founded in identity (i.e. something approaching pure iconism, it would seem). Thus the red in a drawing of a red flag does not signify the red of the flag: it is the same red and is thus an intrinsically coded act, not an iconic sign.

Monelle employs this distinction to point out problems with Coker’s notion of congeneric meaning – the process where one musical unit refers to another through resemblance:

It is doubtful that musical repetitions can be regarded as signs of each other, whether iconic or no, though *variants* may be considered signs; for as Eco makes clear, a relation of *identity* is not a sign relation.

(Monelle 1992, 206)

Monelle's critique of Coker's notion of congeneric meaning is, I think, significant and is relevant also to the paradigmatic musical analysis developed by Nattiez, discussed below. It will suffice, at this point, to suggest that Monelle's critique leads to a number of further questions about the extent to which one musical utterance can ever be said to be identical with another and the further difficulty of maintaining any notion of iconism once Eco's idea of intrinsically coded acts in particular, and his wider critique of iconism in general, has been assimilated.

Monelle also hints at a misguided conflation of the extrageneric and the congeneric in Coker: 'sensory isomorphism and signs of "value" would have to be classed as extrageneric, though Coker presents them as though they were integral to his theory of congeneric meaning' (Monelle 1992, 206). At this point, Coker's alignment with earlier theorists is again apparent. Coker's definition of the iconic process posits the notion of an abstract quality. This quality is so abstract that it may be shared not only by differing musical ideas but also by experiences that involve different senses – the most pertinent instances being emotional sensation and musical response. Thus musical experience, like Eco's flag, may contain the exact same quality of any extrageneric meaning.¹³ The music does not refer to this meaning: it embodies it. A music's extrageneric meaning, in this sense, is derived (somewhat paradoxically) from that which is entirely musical, although analogies may be drawn with emotional experience in itself.

¹³ Eco places considerable emphasis on the point that what might be taken to be signs that function by taking up, or mimicking, the qualities of that which are taken to be iconically signified actually embody those qualities. Thus Eco notes that 'the red that appears in the drawing of a flag is not "similar" to the red of the real flag: it is the same red' (Eco 1976, 210).

In his article titled 'The Iconic Process in Musical Communication', published in the same year as Coker's *Music and Meaning*, David Osmond-Smith presents a similar theory by drawing upon research into brain processes in relation to musical experience (Osmond-Smith cites McLaughlin's *Music and Communication* as a summary (see Osmond-Smith 1972, 39)). Here the abstracted quality (encountered in Coker) is actually named: 'a sort of synthetic "Urgestalt"' (Osmond-Smith 1972, 40) which, because shared by both music and emotional experience,¹⁴ might cause it to be related to one or more of 'a wide variety of conscious and unconscious experience-patterns'. This 'abstract form', according to Osmond-Smith, 'may be regarded as an "unconscious icon"' (Ibid.) as opposed to a (conscious) iconic sign.

Osmond-Smith's conclusions are more successful than Coker's for two reasons. Firstly, he avoids the implication that these synthetic Urgestalten or unconscious icons are in some sense entirely musical – they are abstractions, which coincide with, or may be identical to, other abstractions and can thereby bring about signification whilst remaining subject to different readings (albeit within a limited field). Secondly, he avoids the assumption that iconicity (an example of firstness) is separable from the symbolic (an example of thirdness). This is achieved with reference to Eco's reformulation of the iconic (which is not that far removed from the formulation with which Hookway credits Peirce). This reformulation is worth consideration.

¹⁴ Osmond-Smith, following Meyer suggests the term mood rather than emotion is more appropriate here because that to which the music refers is too stable and permanent to be an emotion. This distinction between immediate emotion and rationalized mediated mood, I would suggest, is indicative of the mobile ever-changing degree of perceived conventionality at work in any sign situation.

Eco's semiotics, as outlined in his *A Theory of Semiotics*,¹⁵ is underpinned by his theory of codes. These codes establish, by convention, correlations between an expression and a content, and it is this that constitutes a sign-function (the term Eco favours over sign). Iconism (conceived in simple terms) is rejected by Eco:

So-called iconism in fact covers many semiotic procedures, many ways of producing signals ordered to a sign-function, and we will see that, even though there is something different between the word /dog/ and the image of a dog, this difference is not the trivial one between iconic and arbitrary (or 'symbolic') signs. It is rather a matter of a complex and continuously gradated array of different modes of producing signs and texts, every sign-function (sign-unit or text) being in turn the result of many of these modes of production.

(Eco 1976, 190)

Eco, in one sense, provides a possible explanation for and means to negotiate this ambiguity by positing a complex field of sign production, insisting upon a more 'flexible and prudent' (Ibid., 192) understanding of the (related/interchangeable) terms arbitrary and conventional (presumed characteristics of symbols in particular and thirdness in general) – that is, a definition of the symbolic that does not preclude the possibility of shared characteristics. Similarly convention is no longer precluded from definitions of iconism.

¹⁵ Although Osmond-Smith refers to three articles by Eco published in 1968, 1971 and 1972, it is generally accepted that the definitive statement of Eco's semiotics is presented in this book published in 1976. It is the discussion of iconism in this work that will be discussed here.

Osmond-Smith makes clear his familiarity with these issues when he cites Eco in defining iconic signs as ‘configurations that reproduce such pertinent features of an original perceptual model as will serve for its recognition according to conventionally established codes’ (Osmond-Smith 1972, 32). Here, then, we see a clear recognition that iconism is reliant upon convention (or, in relation to the Peircian categories, firstness is penetrated or underpinned by thirdness). And yet there is, in part, a suggestion here and in Osmond-Smith’s subsequent argument that features are somehow reproduced in the iconic sign. This seems at odds with Eco’s critique of iconism. Two points are of particular importance.

Firstly, it should be noted that Osmond-Smith’s reference to an ‘original perceptual model’ seems to be confusing what Eco sometimes calls (following Morris) the denotata (for example a real glass of beer – to use Eco’s example) with the ‘models, or codes that rule both perceptual coordinations’ (Eco 1976, 193), the perceptual coordinations here being the perception of a real glass of beer and the perception of a printed advertisement containing a glass of beer. Thus Osmond-Smith is implying the same (relatively) direct link between sign and denotata as between sign and underpinning codes or models. Now perhaps the term model is just an unfortunate choice of term here, but even if we concede this point, the mediate nature of iconism is somehow de-emphasized in Osmond-Smith’s formulation.

A second, related point is that Eco explicitly rejects the idea that features are reproduced in ‘so-called iconism’. Rather he maintains only that the same ‘perceptual sense’ (Ibid.) is possessed by say a glass of beer and a picture of a glass of beer, which is a very different assertion. With reference to this glass-of-beer example Eco’s position is

neatly summed up when he asks whether it is ‘not better to assume that on the basis of *previous learning*, I view as one and the same perceptual result what are in fact two different perceptual results?’ (Ibid.).

Although Osmond-Smith has clearly engaged with Eco’s theories of iconism, then, some of Eco’s key assertions seem a little lost. This has quite serious consequences for the notion of Urgestalten with which Osmond-Smith concludes his 1972 article. The Urgestalten posited by Osmond-Smith are, if you like, doubly iconic, in that they imply two relationships based on similarity or shared properties: sign to Urgestalten and Urgestalten to denotata. Iconism is, in a sense, compounded here, in that the process of abstraction that allows us to establish these Urgestalten assumes the possibility of the natural, unmediated reproduction of essential or (as Osmond Smith has it) pertinent features in the Urgestalten that were already present in the sign. This might be represented as shown in Figure 2.1.

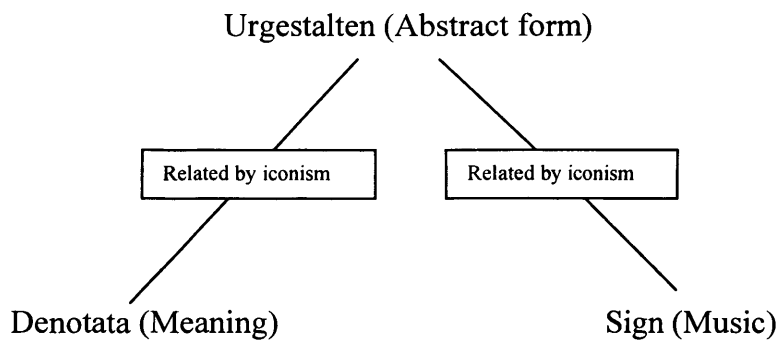


Figure 2.1: Representation of key relations in Osmond-Smith’s account of iconism in music

Another way of looking at this problematic is to consider the temporal process involved in establishing such relations. If we accept Eco’s point that sign and denotata

do not actually share properties (a page with a picture of a glass of beer on it has neither glass nor beer on it, nor is there a damp and icy film) then we must accept also that there is no compulsion when encountering a sign to abstract particular features as pertinent without a set of conventions to guide us. Without these conventions the number of possible connections between any feature of the sign and an abstract form to which it might seem analogous are endless. Conventions are all that can establish a workable system of signification. But if this is accepted then Uergestalten can only come into play once the conventions guiding or, perhaps more accurately, determining, the process of signification have already been established. Uergestalten, then, cannot play a part in establishing meaning; they can only be posited once conventions for signification have been established. In short, if we accept Eco's critique of iconism, Uergestalten cannot be the holy grail of musical meaning: they are simply post-facto rationalizations.

Despite these inconsistencies in relation to Eco's semiotic theory, Osmond-Smith made considerable advances in his articles on iconism, not least because he highlighted the need for a more careful engagement with the notion of iconic signs and because he pointed to the need to theorize what had previously been assumed in relation to music and its potential for structural analogy. Nevertheless Osmond-Smith's work again highlights the tendency for musicologists to resist the role of convention in signification and to search for more or less transparent processes that allow reification of music and its meaning.

3 *Nattiez and the Neutral Level*

The role of Peirce in the work of Jean-Jacques Nattiez is most easily detected through Nattiez's adoption of the Peircian sign complex (Nattiez 1990, 5ff) and his regular use of the term interpretant. Iconism, however, is also an important aspect of Nattiez's semiotics both in theory and, more notably, in practice, and this will be discussed towards the end of this section. Much insight can be gained into Nattiez's theories by exploring the apparent correspondence between Nattiez's neutral level and the more generalized notion of iconism: firstness. This point is not theorized by Nattiez but will be considered at some length here before attention is turned to an alternative conception of his project as focused upon music (or more accurately the score) as object or second rather than sign or first. Before this, however, Nattiez's employment of the Peircian sign complex will be considered.

On first impressions Peircian semiotics could not be more important to Nattiez's thought:

If I make his [Peirce's] idea axiomatic to accommodate my conception of musical semiology, I do so because every component of this volume – whether the basic theory of the tripartition ... my critique of other concepts of musical semiology, or my music-analytical propositions – is grounded in the Peircian notion of the infinite and dynamic interpretant.

(Nattiez 1990, 8)

But Nattiez's definition of the sign is developed from a very narrow reading (or misreading even) of Peirce's system. This is indicated in the quotation above by Nattiez's reference to a dynamic interpretant and the exclusion of the sister term *final* interpretant. Nattiez is clearly sensitive to this omission and includes a footnote to explain that '[o]ne can find elsewhere in Peirce's writing a much more static conception of the sign and the interpretant', but Nattiez defends his position by suggesting that 'one has the option of choosing from among his [Peirce's] definitions' (Ibid., n.8) and elsewhere that Peirce's thought is 'complex, and so often contradictory' (Ibid., 7).

Nattiez's view is not surprising, because Peirce's ideas are indeed complex and still poorly documented in published form (although the chronological edition of his work is improving this situation). But to describe Peirce's thought as often contradictory misses the very real coherence in his thought after a perceptible shift around 1885 (see Murphey 1961, 301ff and Hookway 1985, 113ff and Chapter 5 of this thesis), and even then the sense of continuity in position is arguably strong before and after this date.

The quotation from Peirce, cited by Nattiez to back up his notion of the infinite character of the interpretant, is from 'Minute Logic', written in 1902. In Chapter 1 of this planned book Peirce does refer to the way in which an interpretant will 'bring a Fourth into relation to that Object in the same form, *ad infinitum*' (CP 2.92), but such a statement needs to be read in the context of earlier statements in the same chapter where Peirce points to the regulative principle that acts upon the process of semiosis, allowing us to gain a more and more accurate understanding of the world:

[W]e guess out the laws [of nature] bit by bit. We ask, What [*sic*] if we were to vary our procedure a little? Would the result be the same? We try it. If we are on the wrong track, an emphatic negative soon gets put upon the guess, and so our conceptions gradually get nearer and nearer right. The improvements of our inventions are made in the same manner.

(CP 2.86)

In much the same spirit Peirce rejects the idea that ‘there are no final causes, or ends’ because ‘[t]he organic world is full of refutations of that position’ (CP 2.86). Having taken these earlier statements in Chapter 1 of *Minute Logic* into account, we might then reflect upon the statement that directly follows the passage Nattiez cites. Having stated that an interpretant will ‘bring a Fourth into relation to that Object in the same form, *ad infinitum*’ Peirce continues: ‘If the series is broken off, the Sign, in so far, falls short of the perfect significant character’ (CP 2.92). This suggests firstly that semiosis can be broken off (and is not necessarily infinite in a given case) but also that a perfect significant character is, in principle, obtainable.

That such questions are difficult is clearly acknowledged by Peirce in *Minute Logic* when he asks how it is possible that inquirers seem to have an extraordinary power to guess correctly when the possible hypotheses are so vast:

Two alternatives only are open. On the one hand, we may say that there is a direct power of Reason to know how Reason will act; and that Nature is ruled by a Reasonable Power. On the other hand, we may say that the tendency to guess

nearly right is itself the result of a similar experimental procedure. This involves a deeply interesting difficulty (not the mere stumbling over a *regressus ad infinitum*) ...

(CP 2.86)

But despite the recognition of the difficulty of such matters, we again have a clear indication that Peirce did not embrace an infinite regressus or progressus after about 1885 and was arguably uncomfortable with it before that date. On this subject Murphey asks why Peirce having ‘lived happily with this infinite *regressus ad infinitum* for eighteen years ... suddenly abandoned it in 1885?’ (Murphey [1961] 1993, 301). The central thrust of Murphey’s explanation concerns Peirce’s attempt to theorize reality; Peirce could not accept a position that ‘degenerates into an extreme form of subjectivism in which we are lost in a phantasmagoric maze of our own concepts. For one who called himself a realist, such a development was intolerable’ (Ibid.). But by insisting upon an unbounded semiosis Nattiez seems to characterize Peirce as embracing just such a ‘phantasmagoric maze’,¹⁶ which is clearly contrary to some of Peirce’s most fundamental tenets.

Nattiez’s conception of semiosis as infinite (even random) is, as the quotation from *Music and Discourse* (Nattiez 1990) above indicates, closely related to his development of Molino’s tripartition and the subsequent emphasis upon and analysis of the neutral

¹⁶ Consider for example Nattiez’s comparison of semiosis (following Molino) to the parlour game where terms are chosen at ‘random’ to complete sentences of the form A is to be B as X is to Y (Nattiez 1990, 11) or the way in which Nattiez allies himself to Pirandello’s sceptical statement that through the use of language ‘we believed we understood one another’ when ‘we have not understood one another at all’ (in Nattiez 1990, 11).

level, which is conceived as the physical embodiment of the sign.¹⁷ For Nattiez the idea that interpretants are infinite leads him to conceive the sign as a relative point of stability, which can be characterized as an essentially formal entity:

[A] sign, or a collection of signs, to which an infinite complex of interpretants is linked, can be called A SYMBOLIC FORM.

(Nattiez 1990, 8)

One problem that emerges here, from a Peircian perspective, concerns Peirce's belief that the object rather than the sign is the point of greater stability, and it is this object that ultimately determines a series or network of interpretants. A sign has no particular stability beyond an interpretant because it is, in one sense, just another interpretant, viewed from a particular perspective. But this move from the infinity of the interpretant to the relative fixity of the sign is key in understanding Nattiez's project. The realization and insistence upon the constructedness of musical meaning (a key achievement in Nattiez's work, in my view) leads Nattiez to conceive musical meaning as a web of interpretants. But in order to ground this otherwise radically untempered web, Nattiez looks to the notion of 'form' as some kind of constant and defines meaning as 'the *constructive* assignment of a web of interpretants to a particular *form*' (Nattiez 1990, 11).

¹⁷ In defining the neutral level Nattiez also uses the term 'trace'. The notion of trace one might expect to be abstract and particularly resistant to analysis, especially in the light of its deployment in post-structuralist thought. For Nattiez, however, the trace is 'accessible to the five senses' and an 'objective description' of it 'can always be proposed' (Nattiez 1990, 12). In practice the neutral level corresponds to that information derived from a score.

Nattiez's appeal to form as a foundational entity in the semiotic process contrasts strongly, I would suggest, with Peirce's understanding of these matters. If there is a foundational entity in Peirce's semiotic system it is existence and the brute force of secondness. It is the object (or dynamic object) that is the point of relative fixity from which our thoughts proliferate, because it is the object that is 'in a sense the cause, or determinant, of the sign even if the sign represents its object falsely' (CP 6.347).¹⁸

Form is not a brute fact. Form is an abstraction that is probably best understood as a third. Thus the physical sound of music has a secondness at the time of its sounding, in that it exists at that point in time but, once conceived as a form through comparison to other sounds, whether heard recently (i.e. in the same work) or some time before (i.e. in other works), it becomes a third: an interpretant or series of interpretants. These interpretants allow us to conceive of notions such as sonata form, or indeed any structural pattern from a simple interval to a multi-movement complex, through the regulative principle or rule that characterizes thirdness.

There is a possible objection here that I have conceived form too narrowly. Form, one might object, could also be conceived as that aspect of the music that is 'in itself', that is, extracted from the interpretations we bring to it. We might find greater consistency with Peircian thought, then, if we take Nattiez's notion of 'form' as exemplifying firstness. Certain aspects of Nattiez's work do seem to indicate this.

¹⁸ Notable here is the point that Peirce's position can be considered Kantian but without the notion of things-in-themselves as it is usually conceived in relation to Kant. For Peirce knowledge stems from that which *is* or *exists*: '[n]othing can be more completely false than that we can experience only our own ideas. That is indeed without exaggeration the very epitome of all falsity. Our knowledge of things in themselves is entirely relative, it is true; but all experience and all knowledge is knowledge of that which is, independently of being represented' (CP 6.95).

Consider for example an early statement in his first important book, *Fondements d'une Sémiologie de la Musique* (1975), which suggests that:

Certain configurations of the neutral level will be poietic, others will be esthetic, or both: one can know only by means of external information, which is not given by the text itself. Others will be neither poietic nor esthetic, which well proves that the musical message possesses an autonomous level of organisation.

(in Dunsby 1983, 30)

We encounter here, then, an apparent correspondence between the neutral level and firstness. The poietic concerns the process of creation and the esthetic the process of reading (the construction of meaning), while the neutral level is the text itself, sometimes termed a trace. The neutral level corresponds to a Peircian first, in that it can be conceived by extracting or, to use Peirce's term, *prescinding* the interpretative and causal factors of a sign complex.

This correspondence between firstness and the neutral level can be approached in another way. Peirce maps his categories clearly onto the dimensions of time, with firstness, secondness and thirdness corresponding with the present, the past and the future respectively (see LW (27 ff.) for a clear account and Chapter 5 of this thesis). Such a mapping sits reasonably neatly with Nattiez's tripartition. The trace or neutral level is somehow unmediated and exists as a present entity, with the poietic process being in the past; the esthetic must belong at least partly in the future, for it is defined by an infinite process of interpretation (a process that will never be past). At the very least, this

correspondence holds to the extent that the temporal sequence of the dimensions of the tripartition mirrors that of the dimensions of time:

| | Poietic Process | Esthetic Process | |
|------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------|
| Producer | Trace | | Receiver |
| Past | Present | | Future |
| Secondness | Firstness | | Thirdness |

This mirroring of Peircian categories in Nattiez’s adoption of the tripartition might point to a deep embrace of Peircian thought. Not only does Nattiez seem to have made the theory of the interpretant axiomatic, but the framework of the categories, upon which the notion of the interpretant rests, appears also to have been assimilated.

There are difficulties with understanding the trace or neutral level as a first, however. The most important concerns Nattiez’s conception of the neutral level as a symbolic form or object – or ‘objects that, to somebody, refer to something’ (Nattiez 1990, 9) – which can be submitted to analysis.¹⁹

An objective description of the neutral level can always be proposed – in other words, an *analysis* of its immanent and recurrent properties.

(Ibid., 12)

¹⁹ Notable also is Nattiez’s support of Imberty’s description of the neutral level as ‘the level of the work, as object, considered independently of its conception or execution’ (in Nattiez 1990, 12 n. 12).

For Peirce, firstness cannot be subjected to analysis for it is *sui generis* and unsusceptible to dissection of any kind. This is made clear in an untitled manuscript from around 1900 in which the categories are now labelled Feeling, Altersense, and Medisense:

[R]eflection cannot be performed instantaneously; and the evidence is quite satisfactory that the feeling of a moment cannot be at all analyzed in that moment. I trust then that I have made clear what I mean ... by Feeling. It is the consciousness of a moment as it is in its singleness, without regard to its relations whether to its own elements or to anything else.

(CP 7.540)

This untitled manuscript may seem a marginal text upon which to rely, but the position stated is entirely consistent with Peirce's published definitions of firstness after around 1885. The following is from 'A Guess at the Riddle' of 1887–8:

The idea of the absolutely first must be entirely separated from all conception of or reference to anything else; for what involves a second is itself a second to that second. The first must therefore be present and immediate, so as not to be second to a representation. It must be fresh and new, for if old it is second to its former state. It must be initiative, original, spontaneous, and free; otherwise it is second to a determining cause. It is also something vivid and conscious; so only it avoids being the object of some sensation. It precedes all synthesis and all differentiation; it has no unity and no parts.

To conceive the neutral level as a sign or firstness, then, leads to inconsistencies with Peirce's theories. Nattiez, by implying that the neutral level is a 'sign, to which an infinite complex of interpretants is linked', theorizes an object for analysis apart from interpretation or 'the level of the work, as object, considered independently of its conception or execution' (Imberty quoted in Nattiez 1990, 12 n.12). But such an object (or, more accurately, sign) is not analyzable and thus Peirce's conception of semiosis, exploited by Nattiez in attempting to establish a robust theory of 'the analysis of the neutral level', also works to undermine that theory.

The alternative approach to Nattiez's work, mentioned in the introduction to this section, will now be considered before discussing the role of iconism in his theories. As we have seen, Nattiez often refers to the neutral level or (revealingly) the material level as an object. One way to understand Nattiez's theory, from a Peircian perspective, then, might be to conceive his method as one that treats music not as a sign or interpretant but as an object in the sign complex. Already we are in need of some qualification here because the object that Nattiez's analyses scrutinize is, in practice, the musical score²⁰ and recognition of this, as we will see, is important. That Nattiez seems to consider the entity analysis examines in these terms is also suggested by his concern to follow a method that is in some sense scientific. For although Nattiez consistently asserts that semiology is not the science of communication (Ibid., ix and 15 – on the penultimate page of *Music and Discourse* this assertion is changed somewhat to 'semiology is not

²⁰ Spitzer dubs it 'a kind of glorified motive-spotting' (Spitzer 2004, 14).

necessarily the science of communication' (Ibid., 237)), he does seem to regard his endeavour as in some sense scientific. In a footnote in Chapter 4, for example, he comments that Schaeffer 'rightly says [that] "linguistics is not a science of communication, it is a science of the thing we call language"' (Ibid., 98). Nattiez also refers to his dealing with 'the musical fact' (Ibid., 133) and his approach to the neutral level as allowing us 'to define *the musical facts or musical units under consideration* in an unambiguous way' (Ibid., 80). Nattiez's conception of the neutral level, it seems, is bound up with the idea of an objective, mechanistic (to use Dunsby's description) and, of course, neutral method of inquiry:

What makes this descriptive level neutral is that the tools used for the segmentation of phenomena ... are systematically exploited to their furthest consequences, and are replaced only when new hypotheses or new difficulties lead to the proposal of new ones. "Neutral" signifies here that one pursues a given procedure to its end, independently from the results obtained.

(in Dunsby 1983, 31)

Monelle similarly characterizes Nattiez's neutral level in terms of an impulse towards a more scientific perspective. To understand Nattiez's approach, Monelle suggests:

we need to approach the concept of the *neutral level*, for Nattiez considers that the systematic comparison of motives implies a certain theoretical stance. Things like

composer's 'intentions' [the poietic] and the accidents of listening ... [the esthetic] must be eliminated for scientific music analysis to make sense.

(Monelle 1992, 90)

From a Peircian perspective, then, I am suggesting that considerable insights into Nattiez's work can be gained by conceiving his approach, like Schenker's, as one which treats music as an object and not a sign. Nattiez's tendency to think of music as an actuality, a given, that embodies particular qualities is consistent with Peirce's conception of the object and secondness. That such an object stands at the centre or as the initial cause of a web or series of interpretants is also consistent with Peircian thought. The neutral level becomes, in this way, the object of inquiry. It is an actual or real object the nature of which we pursue through neutral analysis.

This approach to conceiving Nattiez's work also seems, at first, to be consistent with Peirce's theory of scientific inquiry. The music as sound is the actual, physical object into which we inquire through a series of interpretants, each of which functions as sign to the interpretant that succeeds it. The neatest sign complex might be that of the score as a sign (showing segmentations perhaps), the sound it notates as object, and the idea of the sound as segmented as the interpretant. Through Nattiez's (seemingly exhaustive) approach to inventorizing all potential segmentations we might seem to approach a final interpretant, i.e. a full and complete understanding of the reality of the music as sound.

But to conceive Nattiez's project as consistent with a Peircian conception of inquiry in this manner leads to problems. These difficulties are bound up with the point

that Nattiez’s object of inquiry tends not to be the music as sound but the music as score. And it is here that the scientific rigour that Nattiez seems so concerned to achieve is undermined. To explain this point it is useful to first consider the relationships that Nattiez looks to lay plain when carrying out an ‘analysis of the neutral level’. In one of his most extensive and well known analyses – ‘Varèse’s *Density 21.5*: A Study in Semiological Analysis’ (1982) – Nattiez describes this process as grouping together ‘identical or equivalent units from an explicitly stated point of view’ (Nattiez 1982, 245). He goes on to examine the many ways in which Varèse’s monody can be segmented and related. An example of this is given in Example 2.1.

The image shows a musical score for three staves, labeled I, II, and III. Each staff contains a sequence of notes with various annotations. Staff I has a first measure labeled [1] with dynamics *mf* and *f*, and a bracketed group of three notes. It is followed by a section labeled A [2a] with dynamics *mf* and *p*, and a section labeled B [2b] with dynamics *mf* and *f*. Staff II has a first measure labeled [3] with dynamics *mf* and a bracketed group of three notes. It is followed by a section labeled [4a] and a section labeled [4b]. Staff III has a first measure labeled [5] with dynamics *mf* and a bracketed group of three notes. It is followed by a section labeled [6a] and a section labeled [6b]. Vertical dashed lines connect the measures across the staves, indicating relationships between them. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Example 2.1: Nattiez’s analysis of the opening bars of Varèse’s *Density 25.1*, A and B show two different ways of conceiving the relationship between bars 2, 4 and 6

But the notions of identity or equivalence here derive not from the physicality of sound but rather from its conception through the lens of western systems of notation. No two notes played on a flute on different occasions can be identical or equivalent as actualities; they will always differ in the detail of their sound and the context of their instantiation. In order to be considered identical or equivalent they must be abstracted and considered in relation to abstract ideas such as pitch and duration.

The object of Nattiez's inquiries, then, is not musical sound but its representation in scores. These scores do, of course, have a physical existence, an actuality, which can be studied, but it is not the actuality of the score that concerns Nattiez. His interest is in the representation of sound (primarily pitch and rhythm) that the score offers. The object of Nattiez's inquiry is, then, not an object in the Peircian sense at all, for it best exemplifies thirdness not secondness – it is fundamentally representational not actual.

It is this aspect of Nattiez's analysis that renders it inconsistent with Peirce's notion of the sign complex in the process of scientific inquiry. Nattiez's approach does not entail hypothesis (firstness), testing findings in relation to actuality (secondness) and checking findings in relation to other conclusions (thirdness), because he does not confront music as an actuality. Instead he concerns himself almost exclusively with the already abstracted ideas of pitch and duration. It is for this reason that, as Monelle has suggested, Nattiez's analyses provide results of 'limited scope' (Monelle 1992, 126). In the pursuit of scientific rigour Nattiez abandons an analysis of music as sign, which might point beyond itself, and favours an approach whereby analysis is aimed at some kind of neutral object. This object, however, is not the dynamic actuality of music as sound but its conception through the lens of western notation – more a third than a second. This limitation is intensified by Nattiez's tendency to consider only monodies and to give little or no consideration to dynamic markings. We are left with a methodology that is unnecessarily shackled; if Nattiez's work were to be compared to that of a scientist, it might be to that of a scientist who insists on examining anatomy through two-dimensional, monochrome drawings and who refuses to engage the multi-dimensional, polychrome bodies he professes to study.

This last analogy is, admittedly, rather extreme and arguably overlooks the importance of isolating parameters in scientific enquiry and the rather special role of notation in the generation of certain musical actualities. The score of *Density 25.1*, one might insist, does not just represent the sound but is a central component of its genesis: it is the *sine qua non* of much Western music. But just because a representational entity plays a part in the genesis of an actuality its representational aspects do not become any more actual. The analogy of the two-dimensional drawings is employed to bring home the point that there are fundamental problems with the restrictiveness of Nattiez's methodology and its theoretical justifications. These problems arise because a transparent relationship between score and music is assumed. As a result Nattiez claims to be objectively analyzing a neutral or material entity when, in fact, he is working with a set of abstracted parameters that are never challenged or developed in relation to the actualities (the action involved in music generation and listening) to which they are assumed to correspond.

Such accusations may, of course, be thrown at most musical analyses, including those in this thesis. My point, then, is not that Nattiez's analyses should be more scientific but that his pursuit of scientific rigour is ill conceived when considered from a Peircian perspective. Furthermore, by confusing the object in the Peircian sign complex for the sign Nattiez claims an engagement with semiotics that does not actually take place. Nattiez's analyses in this sense can scarcely be classed as semiotic because they do not consider the way in which music can function as a sign that throws up a set of interpretants in relation to an object. They are concerned only with an object of enquiry conceived through the traditionally privileged parameters of pitch and rhythm.

It is in Nattiez's engagement of these parameters that we see the role of iconism. This iconism is comparable to Coker's congeneric meaning. The considerable advance in Nattiez, however, is that a stable (albeit metaphoric) connection between the congeneric and extrageneric relations is specifically rejected; unfortunately, as I have discussed, there is little or nothing to take its place.²¹ Having segmented a musical score, Nattiez draws up possible connections between segments. Because Nattiez considers only relationships between the segments and not their connection to non-musical entities these relationships seem entirely unproblematic. They appear on Nattiez's neutral level and their connection seems unequivocal, natural and transparent.

In Example 2.1 the relationship of the first two notes of [1] (F to E) to the first two notes of [3] seems utterly transparent. Nattiez seems to be pointing out a relationship of, in his words, 'identity and equivalence'. I have already noted the limitations of such a view, in that it overlooks the detail and context of each unit when it is actualized in a performance. Another approach to this issue is worth consideration, however, and this approach points to a connection between Nattiez and the work of Coker and Osmond-Smith before him, through the notion of the iconic in music.

Nattiez does not use the term iconism to describe the relationship between units, but the notion of iconism seems to underpin his thinking in two respects. Firstly, these relationships occur on a level that is divorced from all interpretation and from the forces which caused it – the neutral level, as we have seen, appears as a first. Secondly the notions of equivalence and identity are not theorized, which, I would suggest, implies a

²¹ One might take Nattiez's discussion of the esthetic level to indicate a consideration of extrageneric meanings but in his analysis of *Density 25.1* for example, he chooses to inventorize the discrepancies between different performances of the work and the discrepancies between his work and that of other analysts. The process of listening in which music might be taken as a sign referring to something other than itself seems altogether absent.

transparent connection in need of no argument. Such a self-evident connection is surely that of iconism or community in quality.

We saw in considering Monelle's critique of Coker the way in which a relation founded in identity might better be considered an intrinsically encoded act rather than an icon.

We can gain further insight into the general question of iconism in music by considering the somewhat simpler relationships analyzed by Nattiez and recognizing the sophisticated qualifications needed to bring them in line with Peircian thought. This allows us to confront certain limitations in Eco's criticism of iconism. Eco is, of course, absolutely right to highlight the difficulties surrounding iconism. But such criticism when applied to Peircian thought as a whole only holds if we take that position to be one in which a pure iconic relationship can exist as anything other than a possibility. Peirce's system, I would suggest, recognizes the importance of understanding the difference between the iconic, the indexical and the symbolic, but these functions are always working simultaneously whenever humans engage in conception. Nattiez's apparently simple grouping of units is a useful means of demonstrating this point.

There is clearly something logical about the grouping of the units in Example 2.1. Each unit exemplifies *qualities* (firsts) which it shares with other units in its group. But these qualities, if they are to be considered firsts, must be conceived not as existing but as hypotheses, as possibilities which we prescind from conception. Such a conception clearly involves thirdness, habit or rule, in that we have to abstract notions of measurable pitch and rhythm from the comparison of sounds (a convention established early in Western music history) in order to perform the grouping process. But the connection

between units in Nattiez's groups also involves secondness. This secondness is in one sense the most foundational of all relations; it derives from the actual connection of units by their existence in the same work. In terms of the score, these units have an actual existence on the same, or physically connected, pages, and in terms of the music as sound they are actually connected by their spatiotemporal proximity. This secondness, it should be noted, is again subject to rule and thirdness: it is rule or habit that leads to the physical connection of units in a score or the tendency to sound them close to one another.

We begin to see here the complexity required when analysing even the simplest of musical relations in Peircian terms. This complexity is, I would suggest, overlooked by Nattiez despite his attempt to clarify with rigour the application of semiotics to music. There can be little doubt that Nattiez's insistence upon the impossibility of straightforward communication through music, and the need for clarity of purpose in analysis has been invaluable in the development of semiotics. But although Nattiez's theoretical stance is insightful and revisionary, his analytical practice ultimately, like Coker's and to some extent Osmond-Smith's, leads back to a type of formalism and produces results that seem quite at odds with the promises of applying semiotics to music. Instead of rigorous insights into the process of musical meaning Nattiez has produced an exhaustive demonstration of long-held assumptions about Western music's internal relationships. Such outcomes are, in part, explained by the attempt to apply or address the notion of iconism and the category of firstness in isolation. To apply Peirce in this manner leads to misunderstandings and a tendency to return to assumptions that have underpinned Western music practice for much of its history.

4 *Music and Indexicality*

Attempts to theorize music in terms of Peircian indexicality have also exhibited a tendency towards formalism. This tendency can be observed in a somewhat different set of discursive patterns. Iconism served to explain meaning in musical form as a sharing of formal essences (Coker and Osmond-Smith) or as the materiality that, alone, can support an inquiry into ‘fact’ (Nattiez). Indexicality has served a similar purpose to that of iconism in Coker and Osmond-Smith, but the means of embedding meaning within form is achieved not through the sharing of essences but through an appeal to causality. In the instance of David Lidov’s influential article ‘Mind and Body in Music’ ([1987] 2005) this embedding is articulated via the body. Lidov asserts that the ‘connection of the body to music is direct and immediate’ but that ‘[t]he body becomes or acquires mind to the extent that it identifies with or ... “dwells in” abstract formal systems of articulation such as those of music’ (Lidov [1987] 2005, 145–6). Lidov’s appeal to a causal relationship between music and the body as the basis for musical meaning as thought (as well as less ‘transcendent’ physiological values) leads to a certain reordering of the categories. The index is immediate, the icon is less so, and the symbol, through ‘a further substitution of formal relations’, is most mediate of all. Lidov’s approach is particularly important in understanding the work of Naomi Cumming and will, therefore, be looked at in greater detail in Chapter 3, but his appeal to the index, as the basis for an immediate musical meaning, is not isolated.

Vladimir Karbusicky, for example, writing in relation to music, does not specifically suggest a reordering of icon, index and symbol but does allocate a similar sense of immediacy to the idea of indexicality:

The countless observations and literary descriptions of music's expressive power actually embrace those sign qualities that, according to Peirce's typology, belong to the index The transfer of meanings in music is then, really in the sense of Peirce's concept, direct, *synergistic*. 'The music places me suddenly, instantly in the same spiritual state in which the creator of the music found himself. Our souls merge and I float with him from one state to another' (narrator Pozdnyshev in Tolstoi's *Kreutzer Sonata*).

(Karbusicky 1987, 23)

For Karbusicky the index in music accounts for notions of affect and expression in our understanding of musical meaning, terms that have been prevalent in discussions of music since the eighteenth century (Ibid., 26). And in so doing he appears to allocate an importance to indexicality that is not afforded the musical icon or symbol.

Peirce's mention of a piece of music in the class of Firstness proceeds from one of the possibilities of the means-relation, based on the *adequacy of perception*.

Otherwise, the class of Secondness is more characteristic of music – the indexical quality Music cannot be measured with systems that are built communicatively

on symbols Neither can music be reduced to its iconic qualities, which is implied in the representationalist theory of arts.

(Karbusicky 1987, 26)

Music can function as icon and symbol, in Karbusicky's view, but these functions appear less 'naturally suitable'.²² Recognition of the index as the immediate bond (*unmittelbar Bindung* (1986, 59)) between music and its effect upon the listening subject is central to understanding musical meaning. This does not simply lead back to formalism but, for Karbusicky, is a key factor in explaining the success of formalist theories of music:

Hanslick already saw that the indexical quality – again, of course, not so named – was contained in the *material* of the music itself: in the nature of the tone qualities. With this, he was the first to stumble upon the essential secret of the psychological effect of musical structure.

(Karbusicky 1987, 28)

²² Karbusicky's special emphasis upon the indexicality of musical meaning has been influential on subsequent music semioticians. His ideas are in part derived from Coker's theory of indexicality in music in *Music and Meaning* (1972, 89ff) a point highlighted in Karbusicky's brief account of Coker's work on indexicality (Karbusicky 1986, 67). In discussing indexicality Coker enacts a similar manoeuvre as that found in his treatment of iconism: he suggests an immediacy of connection between music and response now framed in terms of causality. Causality is then used to suggest a hierarchy between pitches and groups of pitches, because the striking effect of some musical ideas is deemed somehow more causal than others. This leads Coker back to a straightforward formalism with his analysis of the 'Indexical structure of pitch-classes in Haydn's String Quartet in G Major, Op 17, No. 5, III, mm.1–8', which closely resembles a Schenker graph. It is this more obvious return to formalism in Coker's application of the index that has perhaps enabled Karbusicky's work to gain greater recognition and why it is dealt with in more detail here.

Karbusicky, then, like Lidov, takes little account of Nattiez's problematization of determined interpretation and transparent communication. His application of Peirce is such that a natural and necessary link is formed not only between musical form and response (although we might repress certain bodily responses through socialization (Ibid., 31)) but also between a composer's experiences (transparently encoded into the music) and the effortless immediacy of a listener's decoding. The idea of coding, however, needs some qualification because, for Karbusicky, there appears to be the possibility of conceiving musical reception as entirely free of coding of any sort. Coding implies a thirdness, a mental process, but Peirce's notion of the index as a direct causal link is employed to avoid the complexities of thirdness altogether.

Karbusicky and Lidov's approach to Peircian theory has been particularly influential (perhaps surprisingly given its apparent naivety) for a number of prominent music semioticians.²³ In his article on 'Music and the Peircian Trichotomies' of 1991 Raymond Monelle is cautiously deferent towards Karbusicky's application of the index to music:

We may reflect that the naive interpretation of music – 'the widely popular doctrine that every work of art takes rise from an emotion which agitates the artist, and which is directly "expressed" in the work' (Langer, 1953, 176) represents music as an *indexical* sign, like a spontaneous cry. This view is open to much criticism, but there is nevertheless some cause to find indexic functions in music. Indeed, Karbusicky argues that most traditional views of music treat it as

²³ This influence is partly indicated and partly explained by the translation of a key section of Karbusicky's book *Grundriss der Musikalischen Semantik* in a special issue of *Semiotica* (1987) titled *Semiotics of Music*. It was edited by Eero Tarasti. Karbusicky's article was titled 'The Index Sign in Music'.

an index; quoting Rousseau, Hanslick, Kretzschmar, Hans Engel and many others he shows that the accepted idea was that music was *synergistic*, moving in dynamic contact with feeling (rather than merely expressing a particular feeling in a static way).

(Monelle 1991, 102)

Despite this caution Monelle gives considerable emphasis to the possibility of indexical musical meaning in the manner of Karbusicky in the remainder of his article. In Monelle's book-length survey of *Linguistics and Semiotics in Music* published in the following year his adoption of Karbusicky's application of indexicality is more decisive:

This sort of 'dynamic index' is *synergistic*, based not merely on contiguity but contiguity-in-motion, like a chain of rafts floating on the sea which are bound to conform to the moving shapes of the waves ...

Music and the passions are both the 'work of nature'. Music is a sign of a natural order. The relation of music and feeling is metonymic rather than metaphoric, indexical rather than iconic.

(Monelle 1992, 212-3)

Eero Tarasti, writing in 1994, takes a lead from Karbusicky similar to that of Monelle:

According to Karbusicky – and in what follows I shall take his definition as my starting point – *index* refers to the state of the object. It includes all that belongs to

the area of musical expression ...

(Tarasti 1994, 54)

From this starting point Tarasti develops his application of the interim typology, but his commitment to Karbusicky's application of the index to music is indicated by his suggestion that 'the recitativo octave theme in the third section of Liszt's *Vallée d'Obermann* can be regarded as 'undeniably an index of, say, a passionate emotion' (Ibid., 58).

Some further discussion of the place of Peircian music semiotics within the wider field of musicology will, I think, be useful here to inform the issues outlined in the introduction to this chapter. The adoption of what is (by Monelle's own admission) an apparently naive conception of indexicality in music is a key factor in positioning the 'mainstream'²⁴ of music semiotics within this wider field. The influence of Karbusicky's application of indexicality to music and the lineage constructed in relation to thinkers such as Rousseau and Hanslick can be usefully contrasted with the call of other musicologists for a recognition of, and theoretical engagement with, mediation in musical 'expression'. Soon after the publication of Karbusicky's article 'The Index Sign in Music' two figures to be closely associated with the 'new musicology', Susan McClary and Robert Walser, clearly rejected the idea that music can or should be understood as

²⁴ It is interesting to note that in 2004 Spitzer refers to a music-semiotic mainstream in relation to Nattiez's approach (Spitzer 2004). At the time of writing, however, I would suggest that the works of Tarasti, Monelle and Hatten have become more dominant forces in the study of music semiotics.

acting directly upon listening subjects.²⁵ Although their article focuses upon rock music their arguments here are aimed at all writings on music:

Music appears to create its effects directly, without any mediation whatsoever.

Listeners are usually not aware of any interpretation on their part, of any cognitive processes that contribute to their understanding of a piece of music. The music plays, the body moves. No cultural code required thank you very much.

Moreover, it is precisely this illusion that one experiences one's own subjectivity or a collective subjectivity that is most prized. Music's ability to conceal its processes and to communicate nothing/everything 'directly' is largely responsible for its peculiar power and prestige in society.

The sociologists who deal with music tend rightly to be suspicious of mystifications of this sort. They can feel the seductive pull of the music and witness its widespread impact on groups of listeners, but they cannot always explain how it is that this medium accomplishes its effects.

(McClary and Walser 1990, 278)

This statement is representative, I would suggest, of key arguments within much new-musicological work, for it is not simply the rejection of formalism or the embrace of 'post-modern' theory that characterizes new musicology. The insistence upon the

²⁵ Beard and Gloag point out that 'there can be no sense in which new musicology ever existed as an integrated movement'; they suggest describing it instead as 'a loose amalgam of ideas' (Beard and Gloag 2005, 122). Notable also is the sense of disjunction in new musicological thought issuing from the debate between Lawrence Kramer and Gary Tomlinson. Beard and Gloag suggest a number of common factors in the work of writers allied to the new musicology (Ibid.). In this thesis I emphasize the embrace of social forces in attempting to understand musical practices as a key characteristic of new musicological thought. For a fuller discussion of new musicology see Beard and Gloag (2005) and Hooper (2006).

importance of culture and, more importantly, social forces in the construction of musical meaning is one of its central tenets.²⁶ And it is this insistence that marks it out against those music semioticians who have applied the theory of figures such as Saussure and Peirce (as well as Hjelmslev, Griemas and Jakobson) in such a manner that avoids the disruption of long-standing methodological approaches, approaches which emphasize a discussion of composers and works and de-emphasize listeners and contexts. This dimension of music-semiotic discourse is considered further in relation to the work of Naomi Cumming in Chapter 3. A more pressing issue at this point concerns the extent to which Peircian semiotics might serve as a basis for the theory of the musical index proposed by Karbusicky and Lidov and adopted (at least in part) by Monelle and Tarasti. There are, I suggest, a number of problems.

One of the most obvious difficulties with presenting the index in music as an immediate emotional response is that the icon rather than the index is the most immediate of signs. This causes particular problems for Lidov's application of Peirce in 'Mind and Body in Music' and his reordering of the categories (see Chapter 3), but it is not necessarily a problem for Karbusicky's theory if we ignore any implication that the index has a more foundational role than the icon in the act of listening. In this way we might

²⁶ It is notable here that McClary often makes reference to the field of semiotics and the article cited above: 'Start Making Sense: Musicology Wrestles with Rock' is published in *On Record* (Frith and Goodwin 1990) in a section titled 'Musicology and Semiotics'. McClary tends to conceive semiotics as self-evidently pertaining to convention. In *Feminine Endings*, for example, she defines a musical semiotics of gender as 'a set of conventions for constructing "masculinity" and "femininity" in music' (McClary 1991, 7). Those interested in Peircian semiotics have often seen Peirce as a means to sideline such thinking, as it appears to ignore Peirce's categories of firstness and secondness and reflect only on thirdness. McClary's position (and that of Walser as elaborated in Walser 1993) is not, in my view, so incompatible with Peirce's, however. Peirce posits firstness and secondness as categories that can be prescinded from thirdness – a sign situation involving thought will always be governed by thirdness. Furthermore, Peirce's notion of actuality as the initial cause of semiosis sits comfortably with McClary's and Walser's attempts to develop explanations for music grounded in social realities rather than abstract relationships.

recognize the immediate physical response to music as indexical and from this we might prescind the qualities that inhere in the sign regardless of any effects caused.

The difficulty that now confronts us, however, is that Karbusicky and Lidov when they attempt to theorize the indexical in music are not satisfied with the notion of immediate physical effects. As has already been mentioned, Lidov, by asserting that ‘[t]he body becomes or acquires mind to the extent that it identifies with or ... “dwells in” abstract formal systems of articulation such as those of music’ (Lidov [1987] 2005, 146), looks to connect the index to the mind without the introduction of the symbolic; this sits poorly with Peirce’s conception of the categories. Peircian sign situations (involving all the categories) may be conceived as indicative of indexicality (they may exemplify indexicality because of a strong causal aspect), but they will be considered indexical only to the extent that any thought associated with the sign situation could be removed without undermining the sign’s connection to its object. To remove interpreting thoughts from Lidov’s model would remove the very musical meaning he is attempting to theorize. To put this another way, we cannot explain our thoughts as directly derived from causal processes; we can only explain direct causal processes by employing the thoughts we have. Lidov might well assert, then, that there must be some direct physical connection between sound and listener (which of course there is: I would afford indexical status to the vibration of membranes and fluids in the ear, for example), but even this is derived from a network of interpreting thoughts. To understand even simple gestural responses to music as primarily indexical, then, seems far-fetched. And to marginalize (exclude, even) the importance of the symbolic in such responses indicates a misunderstanding of Peirce’s sign categories.

Lidov and Karbusicky, however, are not merely suggesting that some gestures may derive from a direct response to music. They suggest that interpreting thoughts are directly derived from such responses, and furthermore that such responses can be traced to a composer's intentions. One difficulty Karbusicky encounters with the first of these relationships is the question of how to explain the fact that the music he is concerned to explain (Western classical music) is characterized by habits of listening that involve little or no (corresponding) physical movement. At public concerts, at least, it is generally only the conductor who is allowed to gesticulate; any audience movement is restricted to chin stroking and other relatively slight bodily movements.

Karbusicky's solution has been mentioned in passing, but its significance warrants further discussion. To the notion of affect, Karbusicky asserts, 'belongs, in our imagination, the experienced bodily movement that we repress in the course of our socialization; it becomes the kinetically felt impulse (*motorisch empfundener Antrieb*) of inner-life' (Karbusicky 1987, 31). Thus, in order to explain the physical responses of listeners to classical music, Karbusicky has to draw upon social conventions which inhibit more direct responses, and yet (somewhat contradictorily) these social forces still remain somehow excluded from the direct action of music upon our inner life. Try as Karbusicky might to exclude the role of social forces and conventions (clearly thirds, in Peircian terms), they continue to make their presence felt in any logical account of musical meaning.

Like iconism, then, indexicality has proved attractive in attempts to construct a semiotics of music because it appears to provide a means of theorizing musical meaning as immediate. Just as the sharing of qualities seems to warrant a direct connection

between music and response, so causality seems to allow an exclusion of music's 'external' trappings. In the case of iconism we saw how such a theory could be deployed as an apology for formalism – if meaning concerns essential qualities, those qualities can be located squarely *in* the music as a *discrete entity*. In the case of indexicality a similar argument is found in the work of Tarasti.

Like Coker and Osmond-Smith, Tarasti distinguishes between internal reference (one part of music to another) and external reference (music to extra-musical entity). Tarasti replaces the terms congeneric and extrageneric with similar ones – interoceptive and exteroceptive that carry broadly the same meaning. The definition of interoceptive iconism follows Coker's in that it concerns 'the principle of repetition in the broadest sense' (Tarasti cites Osmond Smith on this point) and includes the relationship between a theme and its variations (Tarasti 1994, 57). Interoceptive indexicality is framed in different terms. Indexicality, in this context, refers to 'the coherence of a musical piece, its moving and passing from one section or motif to another. The more its indexicality the more music is experienced as a flowing forward' (Ibid.).

Tarasti's application of indexicality is, I think, instructive here because it again exhibits an attempt to naturalize musical meaning. Tarasti is now proposing a causal relationship between the sound events that succeed one another in music. The movement from chord V⁷ to I in a perfect cadence is thereby understood as a necessary process, not a conventional one. But this is clearly problematic, as one of the most common twelve-bar blues patterns, despite its relatively close relationship to Western classical traditions,²⁷ involves a move from V⁷ to IV⁷ (between bars 9 and 10) without any sense of

²⁷ This close relationship is indicated, perhaps most clearly, by the sharing of tuning system conventions. Despite the tendency in blues (and some post-tonal music) to extend or partially disrupt the equal-

interruption, only a sense of moving towards close. Furthermore if we attempt to remove the (conventional) relationships already involved by the use of roman numeral annotation, and think of V⁷ as a sonority or harmonic quality apart from its relation to notions of key (what is sometimes called a dominant seventh or a major minor seventh chord in post-tonal contexts), we see that a twelve-bar blues will often end with just such a sonority without any need of resolution (such a chord is often theorized as I^{b7}). The apparently natural pull of the tritone, either outwards or inwards depending on the context of key must therefore be conventional, because in the context of a different but overlapping musical tradition it can be treated as a more static entity which requires no resolution.

It is not surprising, then, that Tarasti runs into difficulties when theorizing the interoceptive index. When Tarasti mentions the perfect cadence he shows an awareness that even within the confines of the tonal Western classical music, dominant-seventh chords can move to a number of different chord-types. As a consequence he proposes the notion of the anti-index, which is exemplified by the pause (and, we assume, the interrupted cadence). At this point we cannot fail to notice the distance travelled from Peircian thought. Peirce's index is always defined in terms of a necessary and actual connection between sign and object. Actuality, the brute force of physical action and reaction, the irreversibility of past action, cannot be obstructed – there is no possibility of choice or option in secondness, only necessity.²⁸ Tarasti's indices and anti-indices have

temperament system, this tuning system generally forms a basic organizing principle in classical, blues and jazz practices.

²⁸ One example of an index Peirce often cites may be difficult to understand given this explanation: the pointing finger. Some brief explanation is useful on this point: the pointing finger's indexical status derives not from the option we have to point at a particular thing, nor the conventions involved in understanding what the act of pointing means. Its indexical status derives from the physical actuality involved in

no necessary connection to one another beyond the necessary connection all things have to one another when they have occurred in close proximity. The rules of tonal progression to which Tarasti refers are just that: rules, abstractions that are likely to influence future behaviour – they are best understood as thirds.

One of the most interesting points about Tarasti's notion of interoceptive indexicality is that, in conjunction with interoceptive iconism, it leads him to reassert the possibility of a listening practice that concerns only formal relations:

[O]ne might study icons, indexes, symbols, rhemes, arguments, etc. *within* a musical work. Internalized, signs start to form a purely inner network, their own 'language game', in which the outer reality little by little loses importance.²⁹

(Tarasti 1994, 56)

Like Coker, Osmond-Smith, Nattiez (at least in practice), Lidov and Karbusicky, then, Tarasti brings semiotics back to an emphasis on musical form. Here form is conceived as an inner network that sheds the (unnecessary) trappings of non-musical entities and relationships. It seems that for Tarasti, as for many before him, listening practices that exclude all but the music are not only possible but desirable. For Tarasti, music can be experienced as pure form, but music without an emphasis on internal structure is liable to be of lesser value:

connecting idea to object. It allows Peirce to theorize the connection between propositions and the secondness we constantly come up against.

²⁹ In a footnote Tarasti suggests that he is 'slightly transforming Peirce's theory and its epistemological "realism," bringing it closer to Greimas' "nominalism" (Tarasti 1994, 306 n.23). There are clearly issues here, because to divorce Peirce from realism is to drastically undermine the integrity of his later system. A more obvious difficulty for Tarasti here is that he defines rhema, dicent signs and arguments (albeit very briefly) as aspects of reception, which it is hard to conceive as an aspect of the music in itself.

[M]usic that exploits only exteroceptivity and neglects inner structural implications does not create a lasting effect, and remains program music in the pejorative sense of the term.

(Tarasti 1994, 58)

Tarasti's statement is perhaps the strongest evaluative conclusion drawn from the application of Peirce we have encountered thus far. As such it underlines more firmly the point that Peircian theories have been taken up so as to address key issues in musicology. Peircian semiotics in music, then, can be understood not simply as a body of theory but, like the phenomenon it is employed to theorize, as a contested site.

5 Music and Symbolism

Tarasti does not attach particular importance to the role of the symbolic in music. In relation to exteroceptive signification he mentions (perhaps too simplistically when considering Tagg (1979, 114 ff.)) national anthems, which he generally suggests have no iconic relation to the country they represent. Tarasti seems even more unconvinced as to the importance of symbolism at the interoceptive level and gives examples of works that have parts that can be construed as representing the whole: the final chords of Liszt's B minor sonata or the main motif at the end of the Adagio movement of Sibelius's Fourth Symphony. Such sections exemplify symbolism because they 'seem to condense into a

single phrase the essential structural content of the piece or movement' (Tarasti 1994, 58).

The symbolic for Tarasti, then, is encountered as a particular strategy employed by composers or when a musical structure is heavily popularized with clear extra-musical significance. Six years after the publication of *A Theory of Semiotics* (1994), however, we find a new emphasis upon the importance of the symbol in the work of Raymond Monelle. In *The Sense of Music* (2000), Monelle retains his interest in the role of the icon and the index in musical signification, but his work on topics leads him to understand the symbolic not as a special, and somewhat unusual, case in musical signification but rather as one of the most important and powerful forces in the development of musical meaning. With regard to the *pianto* (the falling minor third), Monelle notes:

It is very doubtful that modern listeners recall the association of the *pianto* with actual weeping; indeed, the later assumption that this figure signified sighing, not weeping, suggests that its origin was forgotten. It is now heard with all the force of an arbitrary symbol, which in culture is the greatest force of all.

(Monelle 2000, 73)

Monelle's new emphasis on the symbolic is not without precedence. He cites Karbusicky's account of the sigh moving from index to symbol as an important source for his thinking (Ibid., 66) and, as will become evident later, Hatten's work exhibits a similar means of conceiving the role of the categories in which the indexical and the iconic motivate (to use Hatten's term) connections between signifiers and signifieds, and

once this has occurred the symbolic may come to concretizes them.³⁰ Monelle generally follows this line of reasoning, as was the case in his earlier book (Monelle 1992, 214), but his open celebration of the role of convention in *The Sense of Music*, not as interference in a more genuine and direct mode of expression but as a powerful force for musical meaning, is, I think, significant. It suggests a more open recognition of the extent to which thought and expression are encultured and a growing movement away from the assumption that music (and ‘great’ music, in particular) needs to be explained as equally potent and important regardless of cultural context.

Monelle’s reference to an *arbitrary* symbol is particularly significant and needs careful consideration. It is generally assumed by music semioticians that the symbol is arbitrary and, similarly, that the icon is more natural and the index causal. It is true that Peirce does (on one occasion only in the *Collected Papers*, it seems)³¹ define the symbol as ‘for the most part conventional or arbitrary’ (CP3.360), but he uses the term arbitrary more commonly to suggest secondness,³² as in the following:

Insistence on being in some arbitrary way is Secondness, which is the characteristic of the actually existing thing. It is its self-willedness.

(CP 3.488)

³⁰ As is discussed in Chapter 4, Hatten understands this concretizing process as, at least in part, iconic. His adoption of the notion of marked oppositions leads him to conceive structural iconism as the key factor in the establishment of musical meaning.

³¹ This conclusion is drawn from my own search of the electronic version of the *Collected Papers*.

³² Consider also 6.192 and 1.328, in which Peirce states that ‘pure dyadism is an act of arbitrary will or of blind force; for if there is any reason, or law, governing it, that mediates between the two subjects and brings about their connection. The dyad is an individual fact, as it existentially is; and it has no generality in it. The being of a monadic quality is a mere potentiality, without existence. Existence is purely dyadic.’

Peirce also uses the term arbitrary in connection with the idea of chance or spontaneity, suggesting a possible application to the category of firstness:³³

The truth is, the mind is not subject to "law" in the same rigid sense that matter is. It only experiences gentle forces which merely render it more likely to act in a given way than it otherwise would be. There always remains a certain amount of arbitrary spontaneity in its action, without which it would be dead.

(6.147)

Here as in other places Peirce seems to define Thirdness, in part, as not involving that which is arbitrary. This is quite logical when we consider that the terms most commonly used by Peirce to describe thirdness are generality, rule/law and reason. At regular points in his output, Peirce attacks the belief that general terms such as words just happen to be that way. General terms are thirds, and future events tend to conform to them and in that sense are not arbitrary at all. Peirce's comments on this area in one of his Lowell lectures are worth quoting at length:

Now for Thirdness. Five minutes of our waking life will hardly pass without our making some kind of prediction; and in the majority of cases these predictions are fulfilled in the event. Yet a prediction is essentially of a general nature, and cannot

³³ Another useful indication of this is found in Peirce's statement that 'the general principle that every thing to which such and such a sensation belongs, has such and such a complicated series of predicates, is not one determined by reason (as we have seen), but is of an arbitrary nature. Hence, the class of hypothetical inferences which the arising of a sensation resembles, is that of reasoning from definition to definitum [abductive reasoning exemplifying firstness], in which the major premiss [e.g. All men are mortal] is of an arbitrary nature' (CP 2.291).

ever be completely fulfilled. To say that a prediction has a decided tendency to be fulfilled, is to say that the future events are in a measure really governed by a law. If a pair of dice turns up sixes five times running, that is a mere uniformity. The dice might happen fortuitously to turn up sixes a thousand times running. But that would not afford the slightest security for a prediction that they would turn up sixes the next time. If the prediction has a tendency to be fulfilled, it must be that future events have a tendency to conform to a general rule. 'Oh,' but say the nominalists, 'this general rule is nothing but a mere word or couple of words!' I reply, 'Nobody ever dreamed of denying that what is general is of the nature of a general sign; but the question is whether future events will conform to it or not. If they will, your adjective "mere" seems to be ill-placed.' A rule to which future events have a tendency to conform is *ipso facto* an important thing, an important element in the happening of those events. This mode of being which *consists*, mind my word if you please, the mode of being which *consists* in the fact that future facts of Secondness will take on a determinate general character, I call a Thirdness.

(CP 1.26)

Although we must accept, then, that there is something arbitrary about the symbol, in that the sign complex exemplifying it requires a mind for any connection to occur between object and sign, that is, to enact the generalizing that defines it as a symbol, we must also remain sensitive to the point that the generalization that a symbol articulates is not arrived at arbitrarily but through reason. It is on points such as these that we begin to see the importance of placing Peircian semiotics within the broader sweep of his philosophy.

For Peirce, ‘we ought to say that we are in thought and not that thoughts are in us’ (CP 5.289n1).³⁴ Thus it is misleading to conceive Peirce’s symbol as fulfilling the same function as the Saussurian sign. The symbol must be understood in relation to thirdness, which is characterized by rule and reason.

To rethink the symbol in this manner is to begin to recognize the way in which Peirce’s categories are integrated. To conceive the symbol as arbitrary and thereby opposed to the icon and index, which are respectively natural and necessary, is to overlook certain subtleties in Peircian thought. The iconic and the indexical as first and second can be prescinded from the symbolic as thirdness. We always approach these matters from the standpoint of interpretation (thirdness) but from this we can prescind actuality (secondness) and from actuality we can prescind quality or possibility (firstness).

Monelle appears sensitive to this in much of his discussion of icons, indices and symbols. This, it seems to me, is partly a result of the careful attention he pays to Douglas Greenlee’s *Peirce’s Concept of Sign* (1973).³⁵ Early in this study Greenlee states that he has ‘laid heavy emphasis on the notion that all signs are symbolic’, with the important parenthesized qualification that ‘this is not to say, [all signs] “are symbols”’³⁶ (Greenlee 1973, 9). Citing Greenlee in *The Sense of Music*, Monelle indicates his understanding of this point in stating that ‘Peirce believed that most signification depends on habit’ (Monelle 2000, 14).³⁷ Similarly Monelle’s later work in his book titled *The*

³⁴ This note is misquoted in Liszka as ‘thought thinks in us rather than we in it’ (Liszka 1996, ix).

³⁵ Similarly instructive discussions are found in Hookway (1985, 126ff).

³⁶ The point here is that all signs involve all three categories but that some signs are called icons or indices because firstness or secondness function prominently in each case.

³⁷ Such sensitivity is less apparent later in Monelle’s study when he states that for ‘Peirce ... symbol is opposed to icon and index in a trichotomy of signs’ (Monelle 2002, 196).

Musical Topic (2006) shows an awareness of, and extensive research into, the way in which interpretation (thirdness) is bound up with actuality (secondness). Defining the index now less in terms of immediacy but rather as a sign whose signifier ‘was normally a component of the social world of its day’ (Monelle 2006, 30), Monelle asserts, under the heading ‘Interpretation and Culture’, that:

The musical topic locates music in history and in culture. Its study is a corrective to the ‘abstract’ analysis of music, which tends to deculturize this most social of arts. At every point in the study of topics there is a need to seek historical reality. Both signifier and signified have their roots in the social, cultural and technological world.

(Monelle 2006, 29-30)

Here we find, I believe, a position that sits comfortably with Peircian thought. Meaning is recognized as fundamentally interpretative (indicating thirdness), but if there are underpinnings for such interpretation they are to be found in actuality (what Monelle terms historical reality) – the brute existence against which all reason is measured. This brings Monelle, in my view, into closer accord with the position taken by Walser and McClary mentioned earlier and his position can further be fruitfully compared with that found in the works of Philip Tagg.³⁸

³⁸ It is notable that Monelle is one of the few music semioticians to engage with the work of Philip Tagg (see, in particular, Monelle 1992, 285–94). In Tarasti (1994) there is mention of Tagg in the bibliography but little or no discussion of his ideas and method. Lidov, Hatten and Cumming do not refer to Tagg in their major studies.

The model for understanding musical meaning proposed by Tagg as early as 1979 bears a remarkable resemblance to that of Robert Hatten that will be discussed at length in Chapter 4. The components of what Tagg comes later to describe as a model of ‘hermeneutic correspondence by means of interobjective comparison’ (Tagg 2000, 84) map with considerable ease onto Hatten’s model for ‘historical and theoretical reconstruction of stylistic and strategic competencies’ (Hatten 1994, 30). When first presented in 1979 Tagg’s model took the following form (Tagg 1979, 242):

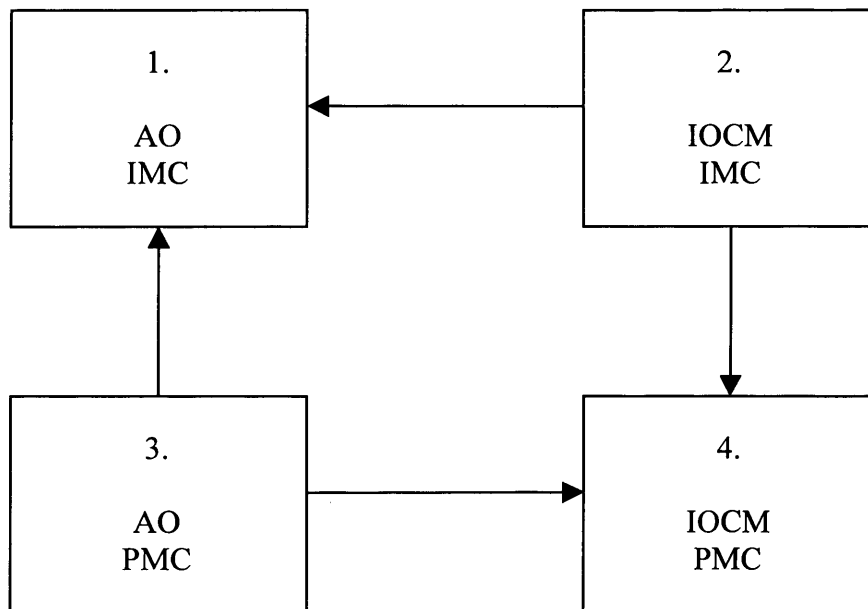


Figure 2.2: Tagg’s model for historical and theoretical reconstruction of stylistic and strategic competencies.

Boxes in Figure 2.2 are labelled as follows:

1. Items of Musical Code in the Analysis Object
2. Items of Musical Code in the Interobjective Comparison Material
3. Paramusical Connotations in the Analysis Object
4. Paramusical Connotations in the Interobjective Comparison Material

If boxes 1 and 2 and boxes 3 and 4 are swapped this model maps onto the four parenthesized components of Hatten’s model shown in Figure 2.3:

The mapping of Figures 2.2 and 2.3 can be made explicit as follows:

- Items of musical code in the analysis object = tokens in a work
- Items of musical code in the interobjective comparison material = style types
- Paramusical connotations in the analysis object = further articulations
- Paramusical connotations in the interobjective comparison material = cultural units

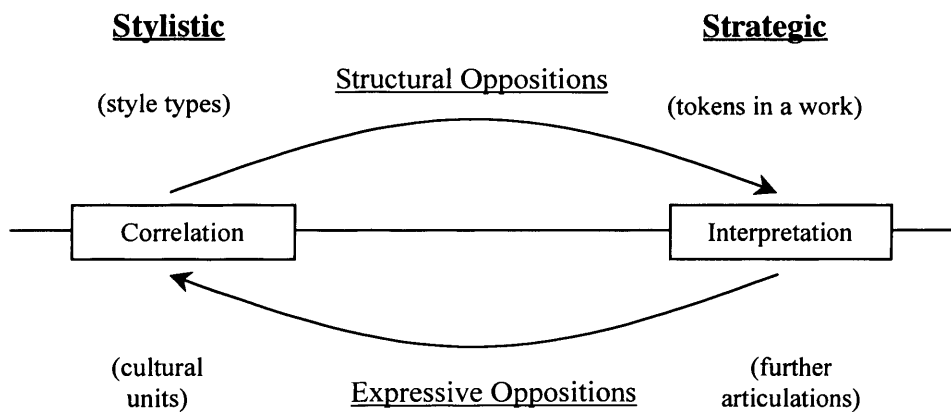


Figure 2.3: Hatten's basic model for the interaction between stylistic correlations and strategic interpretations, with respect to expressive meaning in music

The most fundamental similarity between these schemes is that they both deploy dual oppositions of musical work vs. other musical works (made more abstract in Hatten's case) and work(s) vs. meaning(s) (made more concrete in Tagg's case). There are, of course, also numerous differences. Most notably Tagg presents an outline of methodological process for investigating meaning, whereas Hatten looks to explicate the development of meaning within a particular style. Similarly important is the way in which Tagg groups musical experiences together primarily by means of paramusical or

extramusical concomitants (such as the images experienced with the music), whereas Hatten appeals instead to the traditional musicological notion of style (which implies something related to Tagg's idea of contextual identity but with the added implication of shared structural characteristics).

This last point is particularly significant for this discussion because it highlights Tagg's tendency to explain interpretation in terms of actuality. For Tagg the convention of connecting a rising octave played by a horn acquires its meaning through the actuality of experiencing (or coming up against) such a sound in the context of a postal delivery on horseback, amongst other experiences. Hatten, as we will see, tends to emphasize structural characteristics or qualities as the initiator of meaning and is less interested in the explanatory force of actuality.³⁹

Tagg does not ignore the notion of qualities, however, and in his earlier work, in particular there is at times a tendency to assume identity between musicologically identical entities (although Tagg goes to some lengths to explain why, for example, a B \flat 13 chord in a work by Offenbach needs to be treated as a different entity from the same chord within an example of bebop (Tagg 1979, 113)). Like Monelle, though, Tagg in his later writings becomes more sensitive to the need to avoid the assumption that musical meaning can be traced back to structural characteristics or qualities, particularly in relation to obvious examples of iconism. In *Ten Little Tunes: Towards a Musicology of the Mass Media* (2003), Tagg looks at the processes by which musical material is understood to be significant in the case of ten musical works (some would prefer

³⁹ It is notable that when Hatten does invoke the notion of indexicality (exemplifying secondness and actuality) to explain musical meanings he chooses to emphasize ideas that are easily applied to structural analysis such as dynamical connection (Hatten 1994, 259), part-to-whole (Ibid., 243) "showing" of a token to convey its type' (Ibid., 290). The way in which the index connects thought to actuality is not discussed.

‘pieces’) composed to accompany title sequences for TV programmes. The analysis of the music for *The Virginian* (a section co-authored with Bob Clarida) is particularly noteworthy, as Tagg goes to considerable lengths to demonstrate the inadequacy of iconism in explaining the significance of sounds taken to represent horse hooves.⁴⁰ The authors assert that ‘Percy Faith’s gallop music [for *The Virginian*], like Rossini’s [for *William Tell*], is bound not so much by the iconic logic of anaphones as by indexical expressive convention It is also a matter of musical context and stylistic convention because it is doubtful whether any of the anaphonic connections mentioned so far would have any validity without the support of each other’ (Tagg 2003, 296).

Tagg’s use of the term index in conjunction with the notion of convention is significant and suggests an understanding of the index in terms of ‘picking out’ or ‘pointing to’, which makes explicit the notion of actuality so important to understanding Peirce’s category of secondness. The further reference to convention as necessary to the co-operation of sign-types is also of interest and shows a growing awareness in Tagg’s work of the simultaneous functioning of the categories in any sign situation – an idea to be developed at some length in this thesis. More specifically Tagg’s discussion of *The Virginian* shows a recognition of the role of the symbolic in all sign situations even those that seem straight-forwardly iconic such as the representation of horses via the sound of their hooves.

All the work discussed in any detail thus far overtly deploys one or more of Peirce’s most tried and tested sign types: icon, index, symbol. They also tend, I have argued, to emphasize one sign type as more central to the process of musical meaning (although

⁴⁰ Tagg’s analysis of *The Virginian* also plays a key role in the discussion of musical meaning in Frith (1996, 101).

Monelle and Tagg come closest to integrating them). A possible exception was found in the work of Nattiez, which discusses the notion of the interpretant in detail but pays little attention to other Peircian concepts. I have suggested further points of contact between Peirce and Nattiez, however, particularly with regard to the tripartition, the neutral level as a first and in a concern to understand and deploy a method that can be considered scientific. Similar connections can be made between the work of Spitzer and Peirce. Spitzer's work on metaphor warrants closer attention than is possible in this thesis, but some discussion of points of contact with Peircian theory will, I think, be productive, particularly with regard to current and possible future developments in the application of Peirce to music.

Spitzer conceives metaphor far more broadly than Peirce. The term is theorized by Peirce in 'Sundry Logical Conceptions' of 1903, where icon (better termed 'hypoicon' in order to highlight its impurity – a pure icon cannot be actualized) is trichotomized to give three further sign types: images (first firstnesses), diagrams (second firstnesses) and metaphors (third firstnesses). The metaphor is rather awkwardly defined as a hypoicon which represents 'the representative character of a representamen by representing a parallelism in something else'. In contrast, images 'partake of simple qualities' and diagrams 'represent the relations, mainly dyadic, or so regarded, of the parts of one thing by analogous relations in their own parts' (CP 2.277).

The difference here between a 'parallelism' in a metaphor and 'analogous relation between parts' in a diagram is not particularly clear⁴¹ – Peirce gives no examples and others who have attempted to provide examples do little, in my view, to clarify the matter

⁴¹ The importance of dyadic relations in the diagram gives us some clue here, dyadic relations are not given as a necessary condition, however.

(see, for example, Liszka 1996, 37–8). But it is perhaps notable that Peirce detects thirdness in the notion of metaphor whilst categorizing it as a form of icon or hypoicon.

Spitzer's broader conception of metaphor is made clear early in *Metaphor and Musical Thought*:

I am aware that in my use of the word 'metaphor' I am conflating a range of terms that have traditionally been given individual names: simile, analogy, model, trope, figure, metonym, image, allegory, myth, symbol, schema, and probably many more.

(Spitzer 2004, 3)

But it is through his very broad conception of metaphor that Spitzer may be seen to approach some fundamental tenets of Peircian thought. This (perhaps ironically) becomes detectable when Spitzer highlights the way in which the theoretical discourse from which his proposals are derived (cognitive semantics after Lakoff and Johnson) differ from those of semiotics:

The cognitive theory of metaphor, then, questions the conventionally posited gap between nature and culture, and between the signifier and the signified. Its central beliefs are that (cultural) knowledge is (biologically) embodied, and that knowledge shapes perception.

(Spitzer 2004, 15)

In one sense, this blurring of key distinctions in semiotics is at odds with Peircian

thought. Peirce does not speak of signifiers and signifieds, but a comparable distinction between objects and interpretants is clearly upheld in ‘Prolegomena to an Apology for Pragmatism’ (1906) when he asserts that ‘[n]othing is more indispensable to a sound epistemology than a crystal-clear discrimination between the Object and the Interpretant of knowledge’ (CP 4.539). But this discrimination, I would suggest, is not the same as the gap to which Spitzer alludes. For Peirce the discrimination between object and interpretant is vital, because it allows us to recognize that the real is ‘that whose characters are independent of what anybody may think them to be’ (CP 5.405). But the real is not independent of the processes by which we develop understanding of the world. Reason in the hands of a community of inquirers is fated, in the long run, to lead to an understanding of the real – truth.⁴² It is here that we begin to gain further insight into Peirce’s statement that ‘we ought to say that we are in thought and not that thoughts are in us’ (CP 5.289 n.1). And it is here that we begin to see clear points of contact with Spitzer’s rethinking of musical meaning in the light of cognitive semantics. Just as Spitzer comes to see metaphor as the process by which thought is made possible and therefore the very stuff of understanding, reason in Peirce is understood as ubiquitous to the extent that its processes characterize the universe, not just human activity. This point relates to Peirce’s pansemioticism and panpsychism and is effectively summarized and defended by Corrington:

We have referred Peirce’s perspective as that of a ‘pansemioticism’ in which, using his 1905 phrase, ‘the world is perfused with signs.’ Sign activity is tied to

⁴² This may seem a stark claim to modern sensibilities but it is important to bear in mind Peirce’s further qualification that we can never know for certain that we have reached the truth. All understanding, therefore, needs to be treated as potentially provisional.

mentality and it follows that nature must be perfused with mentality. There is a direct correspondence between Peirce's pansemioticism and his panpsychism (the doctrine that matter is 'effete mind'). Some scholars have been vexed by the panpsychist elements in Peirce, seeing them as a late aberration that shows a flaw either in his metaphysics or in his very thought processes. These views betray more about the lack of philosophical elasticity in Peirce's interlocutors than about Peirce's semiotic and metaphysical theories.

(Corrington 1993, 141)

Notable also when comparing Spitzer and Peirce is the role of the physical (in Spitzer) and the actual (in Peirce) as the underpinning of thought. Spitzer draws on Lakoff's theory that image-schemata derived from biological aspects of human experience – our physicality can explain our modes of understanding.⁴³ In Peirce the category of secondness or actuality has a similarly foundational role. Secondness is often explained with similar reference to human experience (such as the resistance encountered in putting a shoulder to a door) and is the category of existence which gives grounding to our inquiries.

There are, of course, many differences between Peircian and cognitive-semantic models. But Spitzer's adoption of the latter is, I think, indicative of a certain dissatisfaction with distinctions drawn by musical semiotics in its simpler guise. These distinctions, however, derive more from Saussurian than Peircian models. In certain core

⁴³ It is notable, however, that Spitzer is critical of those musicologists who have accepted Lakoff and Johnson uncritically and suggests that the work of other theorists has exhibited an alarming trend to presume 'mappings from a notional bodily structure onto a musical structure with an unacceptable degree of immediacy' (Spitzer 2004, 62).

aspects of Spitzer's work, there is a move to construct a system that like Peirce's can supersede simplistic notions of the natural vs. the cultural or the world as it is vs. the world as it is known. In this sense Spitzer's models approach those of Peirce.

This correspondence between Spitzer's take on cognitive semantics and Peircian models should not be overstated, however. One area, in particular, in which superficial similarity belies incompatibility concerns Spitzer's basic categories of musical structure (harmony/counterpoint, rhythm and melody), which 'line up with' the cross-domain metaphors of painting, language and life. These tripartitions might seem at first to correspond to those in Peirce, especially when we note that harmony involves attending 'more to the qualities of its [music's] materials than to the logic of its structure' (Ibid., 11). These interrelated classes are in some respects exhaustive, in that 'the number of cultural metaphors in the European common-practice period is closed: they number precisely three' (Ibid., 66). But the foundational status of Peirce's categories is not matched by Spitzer's metaphor types. Peirce's categories are derived from a set of logical arguments whereas Spitzer's appear to rely, at least in part, on two habits of musicology: the tripartition of the 'common-practice' era into Baroque, Classical and Romantic eras and the carving up of music into elements that are subsequently classed as more and less significant (an approach made explicit in Gurney's notion of primary and secondary elements). The parameters Spitzer favours (harmony/counterpoint, rhythm and melody) are derived, almost exclusively, from these 'primary' elements (pitch and duration/rhythm). Spitzer's tripartition, then, although extraordinarily compelling and potentially useful to an understanding of musical practices, does not claim for itself the necessity nor the ubiquity of Peirce's categories. However important these discrepancies

may be, there is something Peircian in Spitzer's search for foundational entities, and more importantly his approach, in attempting to devise a theory that brings the processes of meaning into a generalized conception of human thought and understanding, exhibits a thorough engagement with many of the issues and concerns that confronted Peirce.⁴⁴

6 Music and Peirce's later typologies

In 1991 Raymond Monelle published a paper titled 'Music and the Peircian Trichotomies'. It was one of the first attempts by a musicologist to engage with the more complicated sign systems developed by Peirce from 1903 onwards. In this paper (and in a chapter that closely matches it (Monelle 1992)) Monelle discusses the categories in general terms before discussing each of the three trichotomies of the 1903 typology in turn. Some of Monelle's key points have already been discussed, but at this point it is simply notable that Monelle discusses each of the nine sign types in Figure 2.4 individually, considering their relevance to music. There is little consideration of the ten sign types derived from this table (see Figure 1.7) nor of the way in which sign-types

⁴⁴ One area of interest here is Spitzer's engagement with the notion of prototypical categories taken from cognitive semantics. Spitzer allies himself to Rosch in his rejection of 'the traditional view ... that categories are classified according to shared properties' (Spitzer 2004, 20). Although this seems at odds with Peirce's notion of iconism it should be noted that Peirce's first important work, 'On a New List of Categories', addressed a similar problem. His findings were not altogether dissimilar in that qualities or properties are understood as derived from the processes of comparison and transformation, not as unanalyzable givens. Spitzer notes that the notion of 'individual models radiating around a central prototypical category' (Ibid., 21) does not involve a transformational relation between model and prototype which again marks his ideas (or those of his theoretical models) out from Peirce's but the concern to replace the notion of quality or property with a more complex relational principle is again comparable and in some ways brings Spitzer closer to Peirce than writers such as Hatten and Cumming who have embraced Peirce more openly but relied heavily upon simplifications of Peirce's conception of quality. It should be noted also that Spitzer, perhaps like Peirce, still tends to rely on the notion of qualities or properties, such as in his argument that 'with cross-domain metaphors in music ... mappings are motivated and selected by properties of musical material (Ibid., 66).

contain one another.

| | Firstness: As the sign in itself | Secondness: As the relation of the sign to its object | Thirdness: As the sign's interpretant represents it |
|--------|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| First | Qualisign | Icon | Rheme/Term |
| Second | Sinsign | Index | Dicent/Proposition |
| Third | Legisign | Symbol | Argument |

Figure 2.4: The three trichotomies of 1903 or 'interim' typology.

In *A Theory of Musical Semiotics* (1994), Eero Tarasti again used the 1903 typology suggesting (albeit briefly) a process by which it might be applied to the analysis of music. Tarasti's approach shows considerable misunderstanding of the categories, however, and does little to build on the more careful and tentative work of Monelle.

José Luiz Martinez's published PhD thesis exhibits an unprecedented rigour in the engagement of Peircian thought in relation to music. Martinez worked closely with Tarasti to produce this work, publishing it under the title *Semiosis in Hindustani Music* (1997). The thesis, then, not only has a firm foot in both musicological and Peirce studies, but it is also concerned primarily with non-Western music.

There has been a tendency for musicologists in applying Peirce to start from a traditional musicological perspective and to deploy Peirce in order to address the many ideas and issues such a perspective entails. This is true of the work of Hatten in particular (see Chapter 4) but also Monelle and Tarasti, I would suggest. This approach tends to be reversed in the work of Martinez. Martinez shows an exceptional grasp of the

complexities of Peirce's sign system within the context of Peirce's wider philosophical project, and he tends to move from a strong grasp of Peircian ideas to their possible application to music. This approach is admirable and renders Martinez's thesis a worthwhile contribution to the study of Peirce in music. However, for much of *Semiosis in Hindustani Music* there is a strong sense of Martinez becoming lost amongst (or at least waylaid by) the trees that are Peirce's sign types and losing track of the woods that allow key insights. As a result many of the issues that continue to dominate the study of music are scarcely opened up. To adopt a rather more elaborate metaphor, one might almost characterize Martinez as taking hold of the tool kit of Peircian semiotics but, rather than wielding some of the sharpest knives and using them to dissect musical practices, spending his time trying to get the tools in order and ending up simply hinting at how different tools might be relevant to musical study.

As a result I read Martinez's work as a series of missed opportunities. Martinez understands music extremely well, and his understanding of Peirce is exceptional amongst musicologists, but these two areas are fruitfully synthesized in his work. This point is perhaps best demonstrated by Martinez's discussion of the Peircian index – a concept that I consider key in successfully applying Peirce to music (see Chapter 5). When Martinez addresses this area he rightly allies indices and secondness in general to actuality. Rather than confront the role of actuality within those processes traditionally conceived as indicative of musical meaning, however, Martinez embarks on an exploration of a plethora of (somewhat self-evident) examples of musicians and locations being connected to music by causal connection (e.g. the sound of a horn indicating the

musical instrument called a ‘horn’).⁴⁵ The key issue as to how music might be read as a sign that relates to the actual world beyond the obvious context of its generation is not considered.

Martinez soon moves on to consider further partitions of the index. Such partitions can scarcely be ignored or dismissed as they are ubiquitous in Peirce, and Martinez is reflecting Peirce’s own habit. Unfortunately, however, these partitions are again allied to musical concepts in a way that has little bearing upon complex processes of musical meaning. Furthermore, there appears to be no sense of a system that is relevant to music as we have come to conceive it; whereas Hatten begins with a systematic notion of musical development informed (albeit rather loosely) by Peirce, Martinez goes to the opposite extreme and presents a more or less rigorous adherence to Peircian thought but only a loose collection of musical applications, which I would suggest explains Hatten’s greater influence amongst music semioticians. Having divided indices into genuine and degenerate forms, then, Martinez applies the label genuine index to musical concepts such as works, styles, genres, systems, instruments and performance styles, some, if not all of which, I would suggest, are better considered thirds. And, in dealing with the degenerate index (the index which I claim is key to understanding musical signification), Martinez takes the step of subdividing further this time into three in accordance with the categories – a step not taken, it would seem, by Peirce. By way of this tripartition we are then given (1) ideas traditionally considered iconic (e.g. the ubiquitous cuckoo) and those exhibiting obvious iconicity and indexicality (e.g. recordings), (2) functional music, as in that music that has strong connotations of occasion or ritual (again these are surely thirds

⁴⁵ In the terminology of the 1903 typology Martinez is discussing the dicent, indexical legisign. This sign is of limited significance, I would suggest, in comparison to the far more extensively theorized dicent, symbolic legisign, also termed a proposition or dicisign – see Chapter 6.

not seconds, unless taken as particular rather than general occurrences) and (3) part-to-whole relations (obliquely connected to sinsign-legisign relations), where certain notes in a rāga can signify the rāga as a whole (Martinez 1997, 137-140).

Through the process of subdividing, cross referencing and labelling (which at times is surprisingly shaky given Martinez's intimate knowledge of Peirce) Martinez scarcely approaches what is surely one of the key questions concerning indexicality or secondness in relation to questions of musical meaning: in what sense, if at all, is there a relationship between actuality and the ways in which people find music meaningful?

Despite these points Martinez's achievements need to be underlined. His study introduced a new rigour to the engagement of Peircian philosophy and brought home the extent of Peirce's vast but (in accordance with the universal categories) unified theories. Martinez also highlighted the ways in which Peircian thought developed primarily from a consideration of science rather than aesthetics, and this may go some way to explaining why he did not manage to employ Peirce sufficiently flexibly to address those questions more central to the study of musical meaning in particular and musicology in general.⁴⁶

Martinez broadly follows the outlines of the 1903 typology in structuring the second part of his thesis, which specifically applies Peircian concepts to music (the first part is basically a literature review and the third part looks in more detail at Indian music before relating findings to Peircian thought.⁴⁷ There are a number of references to the

⁴⁶ Martinez does clearly discuss the role of aesthetics in Peirce, but my point here is that he fails to apply Peirce's semiotics in a way that takes a full account of the very different patterns of semiosis that characterize artistic rather than scientific practice.

⁴⁷ This third part, as I suggest, is primarily an account of the Rasa theory and its relationship to Hindustani music. The final chapter of part three, however, does begin to bring Peirce to bear upon musical considerations with some sophistication. This engenders some tantalizing insights, such as the point that 'musical semiosis is suggestive (*abhivyajyante*, in Abhinavagupta's [a Kashmirian theorist born c.960] terminology), and its interpretants are developed imaginatively by the listener' (Ibid., 357). But such insights are not systematically pursued and, although Martinez develops a useful notion of thirdness aimed

ten-fold classification of the sign derived from the 1903 typology, but such references occur in passing (the interrelation of these sign types, discussed in Chapter 5, for example, is not pursued). Martinez does touch upon aspects of the final typology pointing out the trichotomy of the interpretant (immediate, dynamic and final) and the dichotomy of the object (immediate and dynamic) but again his application of them to music is piecemeal. Martinez does look in more detail at a trichotomy that is placed rather ambiguously in Peirce's system (along with a number of his own).⁴⁸ It is generally understood as the trichotomy of the dynamic interpretant, although others suggest it is identical with the trichotomy of the interpretant already mentioned (see, for example, Greenlee 1973, 117 n.8 and Weiss and Burks 1945), and gives the classes emotional, energetic and logical. A more systematic (but undeveloped) application of both interpretant trichotomies is proposed by William Dougherty (1997), an approach which may prove fruitful in developing the ideas of Hatten. At the time of writing, however, Dougherty is yet to publish his monograph in this area and his articles, by his own admission, give an insufficient framework for extended critical discussion. The other semiotician to discuss Peirce's later typologies in detail is Naomi Cumming, whose work is discussed at length in the chapter that follows.

towards firstness, they draw rather heavily upon a religio-cultural metaphysics that remain drastically undertheorized.

⁴⁸ Musical interpretation is trichotomized to give perception, performance and (a 'double third') musical intelligence and composition. Each of these is then trichotomized twice to give nine terms in each case. Here again we are given the sense that elaborate (pseudo-)Peircian system building is taken up at the expense of insightful analysis.

7 Conclusion

Towards the end of their article on popular music and musicology (1990) McClary and Walser issue a challenge: ‘Most Bach scholars’ they assert ‘would profit from studying how Elvis Presley is dealt with sociologically and musically’ (Ibid., 285). This is because, in their view, musicologists of popular music have not been ‘struggling to catch up to the standard of scholarship typical of traditional musicology’; for McClary and Walser ‘the reverse is rather more the case – because their area of study has required the exploration of a whole new set of issues and the development of a whole new set of methods, they are far beyond their conventional colleagues in sophistication’ (Ibid.). This statement and others like it are clearly polemical and likely to sting a little if you have devoted much of your life to ‘conventional’ musicological enquiry. Whatever one’s position here the tension it describes (between musicologists of ‘older’ and ‘newer’ persuasion) is instructive in understanding the application of Peirce to music. Peirce has been taken up enthusiastically by a good number of musicologists because his ideas appear to plug the theoretical gap highlighted in McClary and Walser’s account of traditional musicology. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that Peirce has been repeatedly employed in an attempt to engage with the problems faced by those musicologists keen to keep pace with developments in scholarship (particularly those that characterize cultural studies with the complexities of post-structuralism, post-modernity and the many other ‘posties’ bearing down) whilst keeping hold of the methods and approaches that rely upon conceptions of music as a canon of notated (quasi-)autonomous works.

It is interesting, then, that when José Luiz Martinez looks to formulate a unifying

point of argumentation in *Semiosis in Hindustani Music* he turns to the question of absolute music (a term used here interchangeably with autonomous music). The conclusion of his thesis begins '[i]n view of the richness of musical meaning in Hindustani music ... there is no evidence for any conception of it as being absolute' (Martinez 1997, 369). And yet throughout his thesis Martinez admits the possibility of some sort of absolute music (even, it would seem, in the experience of Hindustani music – as long as a listener has 'minimal acquaintance with Indian culture' (Ibid.)), and again in his conclusion he asserts that 'there is a mode of musical reference that generates pure icons' and that 'these are likely to be interpreted as pure music' (Ibid., 372). Martinez's ideas are a particularly simple example of music semiotics' attempt to account for and espouse the formalism that still dominates much musicological discourse. We saw a similar tendency in the work of Coker, Osmond-Smith and Nattiez, and in the theories of Karbusicky we encountered a notion of immediacy in musical semiosis that tends to reinscribe the reification of musical meaning as originating in formal processes. Monelle, Tagg and Spitzer begin to suggest ways in which musical meaning can be dialogical and inseparable from wider cultural forces, but the problems of conceiving of musical qualities that must still somehow be mediated remains a stumbling block, as does the need to theorize a role for subjectivity in the process of musical meaning. The remainder of this thesis examines and addresses these issues further, first by looking in detail at the two most extensive attempted applications of Peirce to music (Naomi Cumming's *The Sonic Self* and Robert Hatten's *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*) and then by developing and applying my own understanding of Peircian semiotics to music.

III

Semiosis in the Search for a Subject: Naomi Cumming's *The Sonic Self*

1 Introduction

Naomi Cumming's *The Sonic Self* contains an afterword by Robert Hatten. In this commentary on Cumming's work Hatten states that 'Naomi's philosophical arguments promise to help bridge the gap between old and new musicologies in situating (and grounding) both stylistic and cultural interpretations as they affect our various cognitions of quality, dynamism and convention in music' (Cumming 2000, 307).

This sense of bridging a gap between opposing theoretical positions goes a long way toward explaining the patterns of argumentation that dominate Cumming's book. This is particularly evident in the central three chapters, to which Hatten alludes in terms of quality (or vocality), dynamism (or gesture) and convention (or wilfulness) in music. The correspondence of such notions to the Peircian categories is no accident, and it is Peircian thought that provides the theoretical framework for Cumming's attempts to offer

a balanced alternative position to those found amongst musicologists of older and newer persuasions.

The point that Cumming does not always succeed in this task is perhaps both inevitable and eminently forgivable. However, there are points in Cumming's discussions that suggest not so much 'a bridge between old and new musicologies' (Ibid.) as a reassertion of traditional musicological epistemes whilst, paying only very limited attention to the ramifications of the problems and issues raised by the new musicology.¹ In this chapter I will explicate this process of looking to supersede old and new musicologies, whilst evaluating Cumming's attempt to deploy Peirce so as to overcome established oppositions (entrenched or otherwise) in musicology. Furthermore, I will assess the extent to which Peircian frameworks may have certain ambiguities or possible limitations that can play a part in restricting efforts to resolve long-standing theoretical difficulties in our understanding of music. I will begin by looking in some detail at the article Cumming published three years prior to *The Sonic Self*.

2 *'The Subjectivities': orientation and influences*

In her award-winning article on J.S. Bach's 'Erbarne Dich', Cumming is concerned to theorize and thereby stabilize a *persona* for the introduction to Bach's aria without resorting to problematic assumptions of an authorial voice. 'Instead of seeking an

¹ The problems and issues referred to here are taken, in this thesis, to concern the enormous importance of social forces in understanding musical practices. See Chapter 2, especially sections 1 and 4 and footnotes 1 and 25.

authorial presence in the text,' she suggests, 'it is necessary to seek out those qualities of the text itself that are heard as possessing subjectivity' (Cumming 1997, 16).

We can detect in this article a comparable position to that highlighted by Hatten in his afterword to *The Sonic Self* wherein a bridge, or compromise position, is sought between old and new musicologies; and indeed Cumming's work on 'Erbarne Dich' clearly acted as a precursor to the monograph that followed. *The Sonic Self* is in many ways an elaboration of 'The Subjectivities of Erbarne Dich', and the article offers key insights into the theoretical influences and objectives of the book. It is for this reason that we will take some time to look at the article and its influences. Cumming gives these influences as two theoretical stances that have been helpful in addressing questions of a 'listener's subject-positioning' (Cumming 1997, 6) or, more straightforwardly, theoretical stances that are helpful in looking to locate a subject or meaning *in* the music. The first of these positions is the hermeneutics of Gadamer; the second is the semiotics of Peirce as taken up by Lidov (with some comparison to the work of Tarasti).

(a) *Gadamer in 'The Subjectivities'*

Cumming's interest in Gadamerian thought focuses upon the way it might allow us to 'avoid the conclusion that responding to art is a purely personal matter'. For Cumming the 'individuality of an interpreting subject's experience cannot be denied, but neither is it to be dislodged from the social context of a learned tradition' (Cumming 1997, 6). The social context to which Cumming refers is exemplified by the 'conventions for performing a historical style, such as those of the high Baroque'. Again it is useful to

consider Hatten's point here that a bridge is being constructed (or at least promised) between old and new musicologies. By admitting a degree of individuality in responses to artworks Cumming acknowledges new musicological debates concerning the plurality of interpretation and the need to resist discursive practices that suggest fixed meanings. This acknowledgement is quickly countered, however, by a reassertion of more traditional musicological epistemes concerning period performance practice and historically-informed readings of style.

Although, as Bowie asserts, 'Gadamer belongs to the conservative side of the political spectrum' (Bowie 2003, 252), his insistence upon the importance of the artwork in itself needs to be placed in the context of more progressive aspects of his thought, namely the point that '[u]nderstanding of art comes about by being affected by a work and having one's horizons altered, rather than being able to state definitively what the work means' (Ibid., 253). Cumming's emphasis upon those Gadamerian ideas that might reassert traditional musicological practices is telling but also a little misleading. This is most clearly demonstrated by Gadamer's explicit warning against the type of period performance practices Cumming is legitimating with reference to the conventions of high-Baroque music.

In a certain sense interpretation probably is re-creation, but this is a re-creation not of the created act but of the created work, which has to be brought to representation in accord with the meaning the interpreter finds in it. Thus, for example, historicizing presentations – e.g., of music played on old instruments – are not as

faithful as they seem. Rather they are an imitation of an imitation and are thus in danger 'of standing at a third remove from the truth' (Plato).

(Gadamer [1960] 2004, 118)

Thus although it may be asserted that Gadamer, somewhat contentiously,² reifies the artwork, it is also true that, for Gadamer, the artwork can only be understood through a set of prejudices. Thus the kind of historically-informed approach to it that Cumming refers to is not straightforwardly available to us. The point that Cumming not only avoids this complexity in Gadamerian thought but also does not draw out the problematics associated with the reifying tendencies of his hermeneutics might lead us to question the extent to which Cumming is really looking to bridge the gap between old and new musicologies. The sense gained from looking in some detail at her adoption of Gadamer is not of a bridge but of a refusal to address critically those ideas (the reification of the artwork being a case in point) that have been a primary concern for new musicologists such as Susan McClary and Lawrence Kramer.³

Cumming's appeal to Gadamerian thought, as well as being rather uncritical, is also surprising when we consider its relation to the Peircian philosophy which forms the bulk of her theoretical discussion. Gadamer and Peirce can be said to have fundamentally opposing epistemologies in that Gadamer's primary concern is to transcend and problematize the 'methodological ideal of science' (Gadamer [1960] 2004, xx) whereas Peirce's is to theorize its infallibility in progressing towards truth. As well as this wider

² See Bowie (2003: 254) for an account of these issues.

³ Clear examples of this concern are found in McClary's 'Feminine Endings in Retrospect' (2002) and Kramer's 'Ghost Stories' in *Musical Meaning: Toward a Critical History* (2002). See also Chapter 2 of this thesis.

tension we might also highlight the consequent contrast between Gadamer's reified artwork that acts like 'play' (Gadamer (1960] 2004: 102ff.) and Peirce's distinction between secondness and thirdness. Gadamer's notion of play, for Peirce, would have a reality but would lack the brute existence of the players or audience which instantiate it. Gadamer's favouring of the artwork as somehow transcending its brute existence does not sit well with Peircian thought. It is perhaps for these reasons that Cumming reduces her use of Gadamer in *The Sonic Self* and, to her credit, gives a more rounded account, albeit in passing, of his hermeneutics. But it is instructive to recognize these inconsistencies in 'The Subjectivities', as they do offer insight into the theoretical aims of Cumming's later project. This is even clearer in the adoption of Peirce through Lidov in 'Erbarme Dich', and it is to this that we now turn.

(b) Peirce via Lidov in 'The Subjectivities'

In 'The Subjectivities', we have already noted, Cumming is concerned to theorize and thereby stabilize a persona for the introduction of Bach's 'Erbarme Dich'. The persona or subject Cumming seeks in this music is a synthesis. It draws together three subordinate 'subjectivities' each of which correspond to one of the Peircian categories of firstness, secondness and thirdness. 'What is being proposed' Cumming tells us 'is that a musical "subject" can emerge in time as an integration of various "subjectivities" in the work' (Cumming 1997, 11). The relation of these subjectivities to Peirce's categories is derived from Lidov's article 'Mind and Body in Music', which will now be considered in some detail as it forms the principal means by which Cumming engages with Peircian

semiotics in ‘The Subjectivities’. It is also worth emphasizing at this point that Lidov’s article remains an important consideration in Cumming’s later work as it left a mark on her theoretical discussions despite some fundamental repositioning between ‘The Subjectivities’ and *The Sonic Self*.

Lidov’s article was published in 1987 and employs Peirce’s initial typology – icon, index and symbol – to theorize the process by which musical aspects can acquire some stability in their function as signs. Lidov’s trisection of music appears, in part, to be predicated on traditional musico-temporal considerations, although he does not make such an approach explicit. Smaller-scale aspects such as the distance between beats or tempo, nuance and articulation are contrasted with medium-scale aspects such as motives and short musical ideas. These smaller- and medium-scale aspects contrast with larger-scale aspects, the (re)ordering (and perhaps transformation) of these ideas. The mapping of these features onto the Peircian categories is shown in Figure 3.1:

| Aspect | Category | Sign type | Mediacy |
|---------------------------------------|------------|-----------|----------------|
| Smaller-scale e.g. initial transient | Firstness | Index | Most immediate |
| Medium-scale e.g. motive (gesture) | Secondness | Icon | Medium mediacy |
| Larger-scale e.g. ordering of motives | Thirdness | Symbol | Most mediate |

Figure 3.1: Lidov’s application of icon, index, index and symbol to music

One of the most striking points about this application of Peirce to music is the reversal of firstness and secondness. The index is chosen as the most immediate or

‘transparent’ sign in music whereas the icon is, as Hatten puts it, ‘already once removed’ (Hatten 2004, 122). Lidov does address the possible ambiguity between icon and index in his monograph *Elements of Semiotics* (1999), but in this earlier article such ambiguities are not discussed.

The reason for choosing the index as the most immediate sign in ‘Mind and Body in Music’ appears to have been to do with its attributes of contiguity and causation, which serve as a more stable basis for Lidov’s theory of the somatic in music than would the icon. Amongst a number of qualifications, Lidov asks us not to ‘reject the raw facts of somatic investiture in sound’ (Lidov [1987] 2005, 153). In this way, the idea of an indexical connection between the body and smaller-scale aspect of music provides a theoretical cornerstone for a discourse that aims to place musical meaning within the music itself as much as in any non-musical context – this is an aim carried over by Cumming.

As demonstrated in Chapter 2, this employment of the index so as to theorize immediacy in musical meaning is encountered in Karbusicky (1987), Monelle (1992) and Tarasti (1994). It is also important to note that the appeal to the notion of causation is consistent with Peircian thought. However, this does not account for the considerable inconsistency in Lidov’s application of the categories as set out in Figure 3.1. The confusion of degrees of immediacy is clearly relevant here; a similarly important and related point (and one upon which Peirce is, within his own work, more consistent) concerns the principle of precision and its vital role in discerning the functioning of the categories and corresponding signs. In as early a work as the ‘New List’, Peirce establishes his categories by explaining the way in which secondness can be prescinded

from thirdness and firstness prescind from secondness but not vice versa.⁴ Peirce retains this theoretical basis for the categories throughout his career. Lidov's reliance on traditional musico-temporal distinctions means that this process of prescinding can be applied with some success to his 'aspects' of music; motives or gestures can be prescinded from longer passages and from these motives we can prescind nuance or tempo but the reverse is not possible in either case. The success of this application makes the reversal of secondness and firstness all the more problematic; an index that is prescindable from an icon is surely out of the question.

These points may, of course, indicate problems or ambiguities in the Peircian categories, and in *Elements of Semiotics* Lidov accuses Peirce of conflating three types of analysis in defining icon, index and symbol. He goes on to suggest that icon and index, in particular, are difficult to distinguish, and cites examples such as photographs which relate to their objects by means of both similarity (i.e. iconically) and contiguity (i.e. indexically). However, Lidov does then supply what he considers the most tenable definition of icon, index and symbol written by Peirce for Baldwin's *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology* of 1901 (CP 2.304):

'An *icon* is a sign [with a representamen] which would possess the character which renders it significant even though its object had no existence.' 'An *index* is a sign [of which the representamen] would, at once, lose the character which makes it a sign if its object were removed, but would not lose that character if its

⁴ In the 'New List' the categories are termed quality, relation and representation.

interpretant were removed.’ ‘A *symbol* is a sign which would lose the character which renders it a sign if there were no interpretant.’

(in Lidov 2000, 93)

This highly systematic definition does not sit particularly well, however, with Lidov’s application of icon, index and symbol in ‘Mind and Body in Music’. Assuming music to be the sign or representamen in the indexical sign complex (a point implicit but not clearly theorized in Lidov’s discussions),⁵ its object would be either the somatic response it ‘directly’ causes (note the reversal of the causal relationship between sign and object) or some intentional object that caused this response via the sign (e.g. a composer’s and/or performer’s thought or expressive impulse). If the former, represented in Figure 3.2a, is the case we encounter the problem that removing the object would not lead the sign to ‘lose the character that makes it a sign’ – a piece of music does not lose its character because people stop moving to it, whether that movement be external or internal, a problem in line with the causal anomalies already discussed (highlighted in Figure 3.2a by the question mark).

If instead we adopt the latter scheme shown in Figure 3.2b, Lidov’s theory of the musical index seems to hold; the sign does perhaps lose its signifying qualities (or ground) when the object (an expressive impulse) is removed. If this were the case, however, the same would surely be true of the musical icon. Just as any nuance would

⁵ Lidov does, however, briefly discuss the idea that movement in music is not a meaning but an ‘intrinsic property’ (Lidov [1987] 2005: 146). In Peircian terms, then, this is surely best understood as a firstness, a potential to produce an interpretant determined by a quality – Lidov, however, emphasizes the causal aspects or secondness of such movement in music.

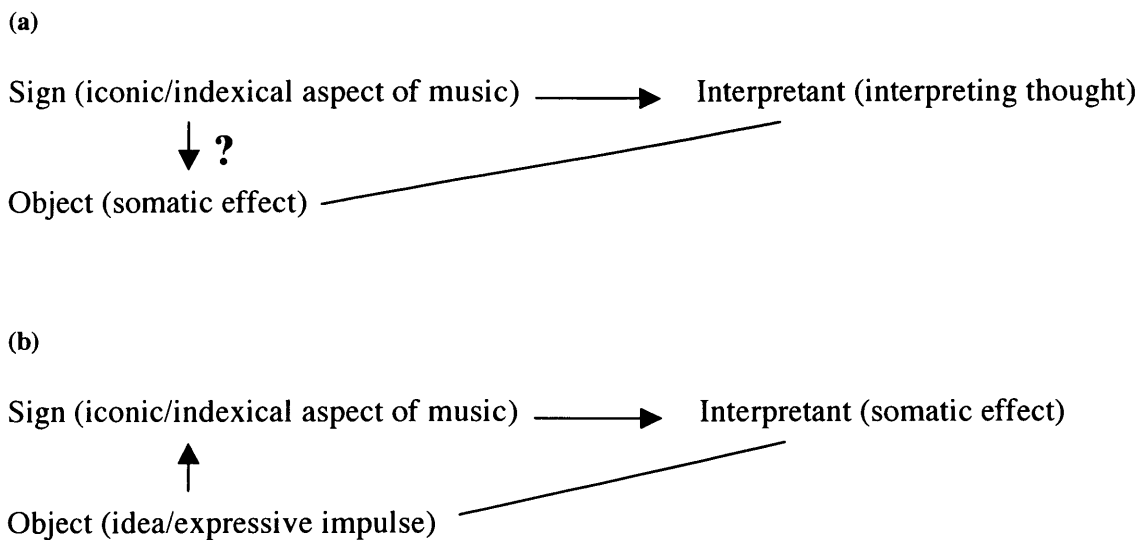


Figure 3.2: Possible schemes for the sign complex in music.

lose the character that makes it a sign if there were no impulse to create it, a musical gesture (as an icon of an extra-musical idea) would be similarly apt to lose its signifying qualities should the expressive impulse that caused it be removed.⁶ Of course we might assert that a musical motive or gesture can have qualities with the potential to signify quite apart from any expressive impulse, but the same would surely be true of the index as Lidov conceives it. Thus Lidov's musical icon and index are scarcely distinguishable by the Peircian criteria Lidov himself came to favour.

We might hope to find a solution by simply swapping the terms icon and index in Figure 3.1. The problem then, however, is that there seems to be little community in

⁶ I will argue in chapters 7 and 8 that these problems can be addressed by recognizing two key considerations. Firstly, that music can be conceived as an object rather than a sign in the Peircian sign complex. And secondly, that the conventions (or symbolic aspects), which must always underpin the index and icon, are such that indexical relations tend to be contested or problematized allowing the listener some freedom in positing an object. Thus when music is read in terms of an indexical sign complex, this index is not genuine as the causal connection between object and sign is, in part, imagined. It is the reading conventions underpinning the index that bring about this distinction, and the reason why weathercocks and music are read differently.

quality between say the rough attack of a harpsichord (to use one of Lidov's examples) and a 'raw' reaction to it. Furthermore, Lidov's central tenet, that an immediate causal relation between music and somatic response forms the basis of music's significance, is altogether lost because the icon cannot be predicated on causality without entirely rethinking the initial typology and the categories that underpin it.

Does Cumming show an awareness of these problems with Lidov's application of Peirce? The answer to this question is no in the case of the 'The Subjectivities of Erbarne Dich' and yes in the case of *The Sonic Self*. In the latter Cumming recategorizes icon, index and symbol as different types of icon, employing the interim typology to give: iconic qualisign, iconic sinsign and iconic legisign (Cumming 2000, 88). The problem of applying the Peircian sign complex to music indicated in Figure 3.2 is addressed by collapsing the musical sign and object into a single entity, a move of considerable ideological import as well as entailing some technical shortcomings, all of which will be considered in detail later.

At this point it is important simply to note that Cumming's engagement with Peircian semiotics came first through Lidov and, although she later found it necessary to rethink this application of Peirce, much of the initial engagement through Lidov is evident in *The Sonic Self*. Later we will be able to consider the way in which 'The Subjectivities of "Erbarne Dich"' gives some indication of the way in which problems in *The Sonic Self* were, in part, carried over from problems in the theoretical models Cumming adopted, and, furthermore, how a careful reading of 'The Subjectivities' can help us understand how the process of addressing these problems determined the particular shape of Cumming's Peircian theory of musical semiotics.

3 *The argument of 'The Subjectivities'*

In 'The Subjectivities' Cumming retains Lidov's mapping of the initial typology onto music as shown in Figure 3.1. She also brings a new emphasis to this model, however, in her segmentation of music according to notions of voice, gesture and acts of agency or will. These correspond to index (secondness), icon (firstness) and symbol (thirdness) respectively (firstness and secondness, remember, are reversed in *The Sonic Self* returning them to the order Peirce always employs). Despite Cumming's new emphasis, the notions of voice, gesture and will coincide reasonably closely to Lidov's nuance, gesture and ordering, which, in Figure 3.1, I have generalized as small, medium and large-scale aspects of music.

Having established the discernment of voice, gesture and agency, Cumming then focuses upon their synthesis in music. The act of drawing these signs together is a compelling move, as it allows Cumming to suggest that the 'sense of a "subject" emerges from these things, but is not reducible to them' (Cumming 1997, 12). Moreover, the necessity of drawing the categories together into a kind of symbiotic whole is undoubtedly Peircian in spirit. After all, in Peirce's thought (particularly his earlier thought), any separation of the categories can only be accomplished by prescind; no thought is possible without thirdness from which the other categories may be ascertained. What is problematic in Cumming's synthesis, however, is its location *within* the music. This is made clearest when Cumming opposes her theory to those that seek an authorial voice, stating that '[b]y locating the qualities "in the music" there is no need to make any presumptions about the composer's subjective state' (Ibid., 16). It is here that

Cumming's adherence to Gadamerian notions of the reified artwork are clearest as she maintains that 'it is possible to find an increased sensitivity to the musical content as inseparable from its presentation' (Ibid., 16). This theory pre-empts that of *The Sonic Self*, in which the Peircian sign-complex in music is collapsed so as to render object and sign inseparable.⁷ In 'The Subjectivities' Cumming is clearly sensitive to the possible accusations of assuming music's autonomy, however, and constructs quite a complex argument to sustain her position. This warrants careful attention.

The key Peircian notion of the interpretant forms a pivotal concept in Cumming's argument for what might be termed music's (quasi-)autonomous persona. In 'The Subjectivities' the interpretant is defined as a link between expressive content and structure. In the case of a gesture, it is 'a link between melodic figure and a particularly shaped expressive movement' (Cumming 1997, 9). At this point it is important to note that such a link is better understood as a ground in the sense asserted by Hookway,⁸ as it is that aspect of the sign which allows it to signify its object; the interpretant does, of course, draw upon the ground but it is usually understood as an idea in a person's mind:

I define a Sign as anything which on the one hand is so determined by an Object and on the other hand so determines an idea in a person's mind, that this latter determination, which I term the Interpretant of the sign, is thereby mediately determined by that Object.

(CP 8.343)

⁷ We will see that this contradicts Peirce's assertion that the sign is determined by 'something other than itself' (CP 8.177). Hausman is also clear on this point (1993: 68).

⁸ See Chapter 1 for a discussion of Peirce's concept of ground.

However, as Hookway notes, the claim that the interpretant is a state of a person is, in Peirce's words, 'a sop to Cerberus because I despair of making my own broader conception understood' (in Hookway 1985, 121).⁹

The idea that the interpretant can act as a link¹⁰ as well as the possibility of expanding its definition beyond a person's mind is employed by Cumming as a means of locating 'vocality, gesture and various forms of agency' as signs (or sign complexes) complete with interpretants in the music itself. This idea forms the cornerstone of Cumming's theory of musical semiotics and allows her to further legitimate various musicological practices and assumptions of epistemic authority because the signs of music can, to some extent, be detached from their reception. But there are problems in the use of Peirce here.

Cumming's theory is that interpretants in the music, which may be understood in terms of vocality, gesture or will, take the role of 'connecting things which are represented with things that are absent' (Cumming 1997,15). In the same way that a listener will synthesize these aspects of music to form an interpretant, these aspects themselves are already interpretants, but interpretants formed prior to their reception by a person. Figure 3.3 gives a schematization of Cumming's conception of the relationship between signs, music and listener.

⁹ An authoritative discussion of the 'sop to Cerberus' is given by Fisch in *Peirce, Semiotic, and Pragmatism: Essays by Max H. Fisch* (1986: 342).

¹⁰ The interpretant as a link between two entities also seems problematic from a Peircian perspective as it suggests a dyadic relation that is specifically precluded by Peirce in defining the sign (CP 2.274). It is particularly incompatible with the interpretant because the interpretant is a third that cannot be reduced to a second.

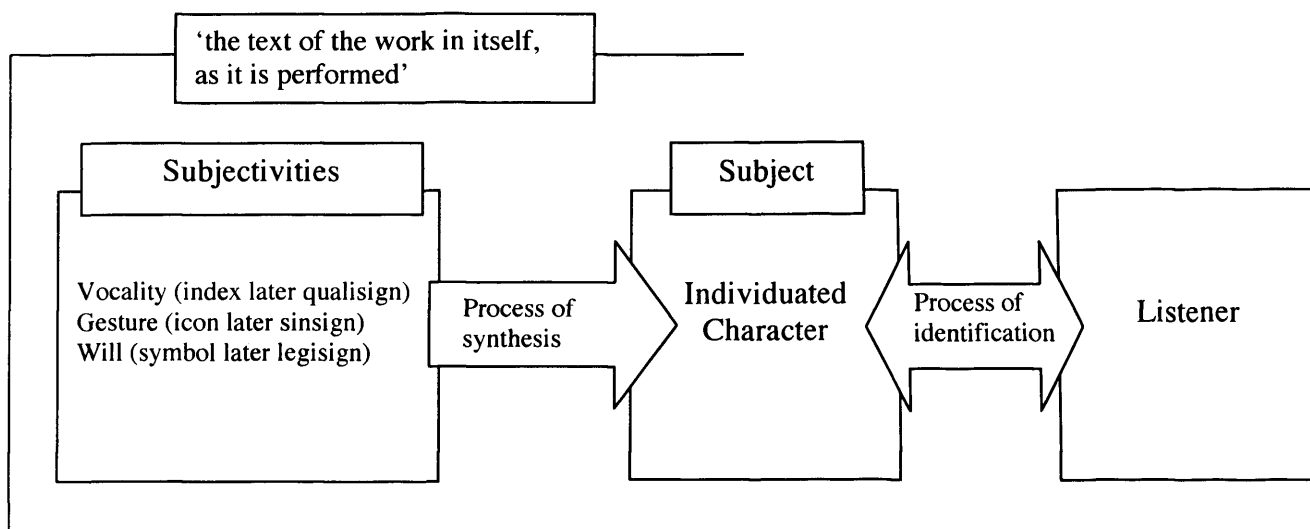


Figure 3.3: A schematization of Cumming's semiotic model based on the text of 'The Subjectivities'

As we saw in the case of gesture, '[t]he "gesture" is an interpretant, a link between a melodic figure and a particularly shaped expressive movement', (Ibid., 9) but Cumming goes on to suggest that this interpretant is precognitive in stating that this link is 'recognized during listening by an impulse toward bodily response or by the desire to entertain a kinaesthetic image in the mind' (Cumming 1997, 9). For Cumming vocality, for example, does not 'simply emanate from timbral characteristics by evoking associations with human vocality' but instead can be understood 'in [its] own right as [a] sig[n]' (Cumming 1997, 12).

Much hangs here on what Cumming means by the phrase 'in their own right'. If what is being suggested is that vocality, gesture and will in music do not have to be interpreted in order to be understood as signs then this is consistent with Peircian semiotics to the extent that Peirce suggests, on a number of occasions, that an interpretant is not simply an interpreter and that it may relate to a potential rather than an actual mind (see Hausman 1993, 69 and Fisch 1986, 342-4). It is also clear, however, that such

uninterpreted signs are not genuine signs, for as Hausman asserts, '[s]uch things in themselves are not, strictly, genuine signs, because ... they are not things that represent something for an interpretant – their status is to be potentially, not actually, interpreted' (Hausman 1993, 70). But in 'The Subjectivities' Cumming seems to be suggesting not that vocality, gesture and will are potential signs but signs that are no different (but for a degree of tangibility) from those interpreted by a listening subject:

As a synthetic 'interpretant' of other signs, those which disclose various forms of subjectivity in the music [namely vocality, gesture and will], the subject is formed through the active participation of the listener. Yet this participation is no different from that which constitutes the signs for vocality, gesture and various forms of agency. All have an 'interpretant'. None are entirely secure in their 'existence'. The difference in the position of the 'subject' is only that it relies on other, more tangible signs as its representata.

(Cumming 1997, 15)

A more sympathetic reading of this passage might point to the notion of less tangible signs as recognition that vocality, gesture and will are not genuine signs. The further difficulty still presents itself, however, that Cumming builds the theory of a synthesized, genuine (in that it is actually interpreted) subject (in the music but – necessarily it would seem – interpreted by a listener) upon a set of signs that are always somehow uninterpreted. The point here is that the non-genuine unsynthesized signs (vocality, gesture and will) would surely become genuine signs once they have formed a

component part of the more elaborate sign situation Cumming describes. The idea of signs that are not interpreted by a listening subject and yet form a key component in the process of musical meaning is highly questionable. Cumming appears to have become aware of such potential criticisms by the time of writing *The Sonic Self* and consequently reconfigures her application of Peircian semiotics so that all of the subjectivities outlined (vocality, gesture and will) are presented as firsts, thereby emphasizing their potentiality. This process of reconfiguration, however, does not resolve all the problems discussed thus far and suggests an approach whereby theory is employed to conform to interpretative assumptions rather than vice versa. The notion of a hermeneutic circle, through which theory and interpretation develop symbiotically, also seems inapplicable here. Instead Cumming's concern to retain a place for traditional musicological epistemes, such as the artwork's autonomy and the transcendent potential of musical expression, dominates her treatment of Peircian theory and renders his philosophy a legitimizing tool as much as a means to develop understanding. In *The Sonic Self*, Cumming shows an awareness of certain inconsistencies in her treatment of Peirce in 'The Subjectivities' but, in addressing these problems, does not lose sight of her wider concern to reassert the validity of older musicological traditions.

4 Peirce in *The Sonic Self: The qualisign and the components of the sign complex*

In *The Sonic Self*, Cumming retains, from Lidov's article of 1987, the idea of a tripartition of music along the lines of the categories. We encounter again, then, the notions of quality, gesture and will which, as in Lidov's scheme, correspond more or less closely to smaller, medium and larger-scale structural units – timbre, melodic figure and tonal structure. It is worth noting here that there is no real precedence for such a tripartition of small-to-large scale temporal factors in Peirce's work; Peirce does point to a correspondence between his categories and the dimensions of time – past, present and future – but never to the type of temporal concerns that have dominated much music analysis and which are implicitly adopted by Lidov and Cumming.¹¹

Cumming resolves, in part, the problem of the positioning of firstness and secondness in Lidov's scheme (shown in Figure 3.1) by reversing them as shown in Figure 3.4.

| Aspect | Category | Sign type | Mediaey |
|--------------------|------------|------------------|----------------|
| Quality – Vocality | Firstness | Iconic Qualisign | Most immediate |
| Gesture | Secondness | Iconic Sinsign | Medium mediaey |
| Will – Tonality | Thirdness | Iconic Legisign | Most mediate |

Figure 3.4: Cumming's reconfiguration of Lidov's application of icon, index and symbol to music (cf. Figure 3.1)

¹¹ This thesis will explore at length the potential insights offered by the mapping of the categories onto the dimensions of time in relation to music; see Chapters 5 and 6.

The potentially controversial notions of degrees of immediacy are generally avoided in *The Sonic Self* (hence the strike-through font) although they are often suggested, and the signs in the first trichotomy of the interim typology (qualisign, sinsign and legisign)¹² replace those from the initial typology (icon, index and symbol).

The reversal of firstness and secondness brings the scheme more fully in line with Peirce's sign categories but it does remove the causal underpinning of Lidov's scheme. The idea of a direct casual connection between musical sounds and somatic response cannot serve a foundational role for Cumming's scheme as it did for Lidov, and Cumming's notion of vocality (its firstness rather than its secondness now emphasized) develops greater importance. The strike-through font indicates how the idea of more or less immediate signs is avoided in *The Sonic Self*, with Cumming even voicing criticisms of Lidov's employment of such ideas:

Lidov's gesture theory could, for example, be simplified as saying that 'if a performer reproduces the appropriate expressive shapes as precisely as possible, while executing short melodic fragments which take a congruent form, a personal expression is achieved.' This summary understates the influence of stylistic convention on the form a gesture may take, and it downplays also the fact that every melodic fragment with gestural potentiality is, as a 'sign,' at one stage

¹² There is a degree of ambiguity in Cumming's adoption of the interim typology. Strictly speaking the first trichotomy of the interim typology (qualisign, sinsign and legisign) is not the same as the three sign types implied by the terms iconic qualisign, iconic sinsign and iconic legisign (111, 211 and 311 in Figure 1.7). This ambiguity seems, in part, to have been carried over from Peirce himself, however.

removed from gesture as an unmediated (physiologically driven) gestural expression in a human body.

(Cumming 2000, 157)

Thus Cumming does, to her credit, provide some recognition of the problems surrounding any idea of immediacy in musical meaning and even cites Derrida's rejection of 'the notion of a subjective "presence"' (Ibid.) in doing so. But the quotation above also points to Cumming's strategy for reinstating a meaning that inheres in the text, which whilst not labelled immediate is still somehow present apart from its interpretation. This is achieved by deploying the first trichotomy of the 1903 typology – qualisign, sinsign and legisign – and the notion of potentiality upon which it relies.

While Cumming does not label qualisign, sinsign and legisign as somehow immediate, they are terms introduced in Peirce's 1903 Syllabus – a supplement for his Lowell lectures given in November and December that year. By this time Peirce was defining firstness as completely immediate, a point demonstrated by the quotation from 'A Guess at the Riddle' in Chapter 1, section 2a of this thesis. This was a reversal of the position taken in the 'New List', where firstness is the most mediate of the categories.¹³

¹³ Murphey is particularly useful on this point, and is worth quoting at length: 'In the "New List," Firstness was presented as the most abstract of the categories, and is in fact the embodiment of a pure abstraction. All qualities are Firsts, but the emphasis in the "New List" is on quality as conception – as referring to abstraction. This is partly owing to the fact that Peirce then regarded the proposition as joining an abstract property to a thing, and partly to his desire to stress the conceptual, non-intuitional nature of quality. He did not therefore concern himself with quality as pure sensation – it is quality as predicate determining a class that he is concerned with. But in the 1885 formulation, the emphasis is reversed, and it is precisely the sensory aspect which now comes to the fore. Indeed pure firstness in this later, sensory sense does not occur in the "New List" at all. Thus in 1890 Peirce wrote: "The idea of the absolutely first must be entirely separated from all conception of or reference to anything else" (1.357) while in the "New List" the first is that which refers to a ground, and it is the reference to the ground that makes it a First. "The first must therefore be present and immediate ..." (1.357). But in the "New List" it is the mediate character of

This revision in the categories was necessitated by Peirce's movement away from the argument in the 'New List' towards one based on the logic of relations. Peirce develops this logic of relations using purely formal arguments based on the number of correlates any relation might involve but, in Murphey's words, 'in order to give empirical content to these logical schemata, the data of experience are required' (Murphey [1961] 1993,306). This leads to a fundamental rethinking of the nature of firstness neatly summarized by Murphey:

[In the 'New List' Peirce] did not ... concern himself with quality as pure sensation – it is quality as predicate determining a class that he is concerned with. But in the 1885 formulation, the emphasis is reversed, and it is precisely the sensory aspect that comes to the fore.

(Ibid.)

Thus a first, Murphey asserts, in this later period of Peirce's thought:

is a simple, unanalyzable, and independent sensation which is immediately perceived – indeed its most prominent trait is its lack of mediacy ...

(Ibid., 307)

Cumming, then, despite appearing to avoid the notion of immediacy as a component of her semiotic scheme takes up the trichotomy of the sign 'in itself' – a

Firstness that is emphasized ...' (Murphey [1961] 1993: 306-07). A shift in Peirce's philosophy around 1885 is also noted by Hookway (1985: 115) and Apel (1981: 134ff.).

trichotomized first – as her principal tool in applying Peircian thought. Firstness in this context can only be understood as the utterly immediate category Murphey describes, especially in the case of the qualisign, a first's first; and it is in the case of the qualisign that Cumming's system seems most at odds with Peircian semiotics. Notable here is the point that this inconsistency is considered important because it results from Cumming's attempt to use Peirce as a means to address implicitly the criticism of the new musicology and theorize musical meaning as somehow inhering in the musical work itself as signs.¹⁴ The critique of Cumming's use of the qualisign that follows, then, is not motivated by a belief that Peirce should always be applied with utter consistency. Such a position would be both untenable (due to the many developments in Peirce's thought) and stifling to theoretical discursive practices. The critique that follows is intended, instead, to highlight the way in which Peircian semiotics will not yield to the kind of theoretical outcomes Cumming is pursuing. This inevitably places a question mark over the arguments Cumming posits.

In 'Nomenclature and Divisions' Peirce defines the qualisign as 'a quality which is a sign. It cannot actually act as a sign until it is embodied; but the embodiment has nothing to do with its character as a sign' (CP 2.244). There is clearly the potential for confusion here – how can something need to be embodied to be a sign when this embodiment is irrelevant to its character as a sign? The solution is to consider again the notion of prescinding. The qualisign is that aspect of the sign that we conceive of when we separate off all other aspects of the sign including its object (so that it is a potentiality

¹⁴ Note the ambiguity of the term sign here. In Peirce sign can mean the sign in itself or the sign as a component of the sign complex. Cumming is consistent in her application of (the later) Peirce when suggesting that signs in themselves inhere in music. But these signs would be precognitive signs without any interpretative agenda. Cumming exploits the ambiguity of the term sign in Peirce and suggests a sign complex, or something resembling one, when she has limited herself to the notion of a sign in itself.

rather than actuality); any interpretant (also so that it is a potentiality); any conformance to a rule (such as those involved in reading a map – legisign); or any instantiation of such a rule (such as those instantiated by an example of a map – sinsign). As all thought is in signs, a qualisign cannot be thought because it is defined as removed from the object and interpretant of the sign. It is precognitive; it can only be prescinded from sign situations. We should also note again here Savan’s point that the qualisign, as well as not being thought, can only be clearly differentiated from a sinsign if it is defined as not occurring.

If Peirce is right, only qualities can be qualisigns, and in fact all qualities are qualisigns. But to make this equation of quality with qualisign Peirce must do two things. First he must take quality as a possibility, abstracted from its actual occurrence in space and time. And second, he must speak of a sign where both the object of the sign and its interpretant are only virtual, potential or possible ... the occurrence of a quality in space and time renders the quality at least in some measure a sinsign So that a qualisign is sharply distinct from a sinsign only if the quality is taken as a non-occurrence.

(Savan 1988, 23)

This somewhat obscure status of the qualisign does cause some serious problems, for as Savan points out they led Peirce to adopt ‘the hypothesis of synaesthesia, that all sensory qualities form one continuum of qualities’ when it ‘ought to have led him to ask whether the notion of a qualisign was in any significant way different from that of a legisign’ (Ibid., 24). But quite aside from these difficulties (with which Cumming makes

no critical engagement), Cumming's application of the qualisign to music seems to take little account of the qualisign as that which is prescinded from sign situations nor its status as only potential and as a non-occurrence. This is in spite of Cumming's regular employment of the terms potential and virtual.

Given the definition of the qualisign above, its application to music would seem reasonably obvious. The qualisign in music would be the sound made in itself. In order to be a qualisign that sound must be considered apart from any occurrence and any thought concerning it – we must 'drop out of account' its perception (LW 24). It would be conceived of by taking a musical sign situation and prescinding from it any comparison to other timbres, any actually considered object or any act of hearing or thought whatsoever. The qualisign would be a pure sound, considered in itself, considered as, to use Peirce words, 'a mere logical possibility' for 'it can only be interpreted as a sign of essence' (CP 2.254).

Cumming, however, having retained the basic model for mapping the categories onto music employed by Lidov (with index and icon reversed and substituted for qualisign and sinsign), must now theorize vocality as a qualisign. This would seem an impossible task, for the notion of a musical sign of vocality is surely predicated on a comparison between instrumental sound (the example with which Cumming concerns herself) and the sound of a voice. There is surely some kind of simile or metaphor in the notion of musical qualities as vocality, which Savan specifically excludes from the definition of the qualisign (Savan 1988, 21). Furthermore, in 'The Subjectivities' Cumming actually defines vocality (at this point an index, remember) not as a potentiality but as a process of hearing reliant on a listener's experience and skill:

Only a listener's sensitivity to nuance can allow instrumental sounds to be heard as embodying these vocal qualities. A physical description would not be adequate to explain them. Hearing these qualities in sounds is hearing them as 'signs'. It is hearing something in the sounds that goes beyond their physical description.

(Cumming 1997, 7–8)

Cumming is clearly aware of the theoretical problems encountered by substituting index (in 'The Subjectivities') for the qualisign (in *The Sonic Self*) and looks to resolve it with a two-stage process. Firstly, building upon ideas introduced in 'The Subjectivities', the sign is collapsed into the object; and secondly, the idea of the object and interpretant as merely potential or virtual is carefully manipulated in order to give them a foundational role whilst avoiding any need to prove their existence outside the music.¹⁵ Problems with the first point – the collapsing of the object into the sign – are discussed by Cumming under the subheading 'Skepticism about Absent Objects and an Answer from Peirce' (Cumming 2000, 76). One of the answers from Peirce is worth giving in some detail:

For a sign to have an 'object,' in a Peircian view, does not require 'reference' to a concrete thing. It is true to say that the sound-as-signifying is heard as one thing, its 'object' wrapped in its presenting form, but the unity of a moment in

¹⁵ One questionable approach in developing this second stage is Cumming's tendency to attack the idea that musical meanings are entirely private affairs (Cumming 2000: 77, 79). Few scholars (if any) would suggest such a thing – the question is rather whether musical meanings can be said to exist in the music itself without recourse to the conventions that can be separated from it as physical sound.

perception need not imply a confusion between different attributes of the sign in reflective thought. The sound, in its potential to signify, has many attributes which a practitioner needs to be able to discriminate in order to correct for poor sound production: scratchiness, unevenness, lack of resonance through being ‘forced,’ and so on. That quality which it actually signifies, its metaphorically described ‘object,’ is an emergent property of the sound-as-heard, irreducible to any of its individual characteristics. As seen in chapter I, a performer cannot create that ‘object’ except by attention to the medium of the sound, and any over-involvement with an idealized image of what is to emerge can actually be detrimental to its production. Recognizing signification is not, furthermore, a private act, reflecting merely psychological projections, but a realization of ways of hearing established within a speech (and performance) community ...

(Ibid., 77)

This style of argument is representative of Cumming’s work and therefore requires closer attention. Cumming begins by dismissing the idea that an object in a sign situation need be a concrete thing. This is an accurate account of Peirce (certainly the later Peirce) but it is a different point from the one that the sign is separate from its object. The dubious metaphor of the object being wrapped in its presenting form (the sign)¹⁶ partially reasserts (but also partially contradicts) her statement that the sign’s object ‘is that quality which is pointed at in the metaphoric description, but not fully

¹⁶ There is, I believe, no precedence in Peirce for this wrapping metaphor, it is certainly not one used anywhere in the collected papers and is, in my view, at odds with his assertions in CP2.231 which will be discussed below.

grasped by it, or made separable from its sounding form' (Ibid., 76) – if it is wrapped in it, it is surely, at least in some way, separable from it. Cumming then opposes the idea of 'a unity of a moment in perception' with 'a confusion between different aspects of the sign in reflective thought'. She asserts that the former does not imply the latter, but there is again no argument to substantiate the possibility of the sign's object being inseparable from it. When Cumming begins to get to the crux of the matter by considering the *mere* potentiality of the sign, she reverts to listing the many considerations involved in avoiding 'poor sound production' when playing the violin. This is not simply a smokescreen, as it seems that these matters (which are surely conventions, as Irish fiddle players will tend to seek a different tone from classical players which is different again from that sought in much Indian music for the violin) seem to suggest to Cumming a sense of immediacy between the sound of the violin and the idea of vocalicity that is so strong that it leaves her assuming a situation in which the sound embodies vocal qualities which are then intuited by the performer or listener. One might attempt to construct some kind of phenomenological argument for this, but Cumming does not do so. Furthermore the evidence to contradict this position seems overwhelming when we consider the contrasting approaches to and associations with a violin's timbre in different cultural contexts.

Cumming then introduces the notion of an emergent metaphorically described object. A footnote here suggests that this emergent object is that defined as the subject in 'The subjectivities', i.e. the synthesis of index, icon and symbol or, in the case of *The Sonic Self*, the synthesis of iconic qualisign, sinsign and legisign. If this is the case, then, Cumming has jumped to substantiating the sign built upon a sign she is yet to

successfully theorize. If this emergent object is vocality (the footnote suggesting otherwise) it seems strange that she should now admit the metaphor it implies, for a qualisign that is somehow metaphorical is utterly inconsistent with Peirce's interim typology.

In the penultimate sentence Cumming appeals again to her experience as a performer, but her line of argument is not entirely clear, and in the final sentence she attacks the idea that signification is a private act. The implication here is that if the music's object is not contained in the music itself (its 'sounding form') then it must be deemed a private matter, utterly subjective without inter-subjective overlap. This, it seems to me, is not the case at all; music may well be devoid of meaning (or lack an object of reference of any kind) when its cultural context is (hypothetically) removed. If or when music functions as a sign (or is in anyway a sign) it may indeed necessarily involve an object that is separate from its sounding form, an object which the music as a sign 'cannot furnish acquaintance with or recognition of' (CP 2.231). The point that meanings are shared and not private can be more easily explained by the cultural conventions in which musical utterances take place. Furthermore, the point that these meanings seem so utterly context dependent – it is surely the case that the more pronounced is any cultural recontextualization the more pronounced is the reduction in inter-subjective overlap – suggests that they are quite separable from music's sounding form.

Perhaps the most thorough problematization of Cumming's claim – that Peirce can be used to support her theory that certain signs in music are inseparable from its sounding form – comes from a passage from the *Collected Papers* (CP 2.230-2) entitled 'Signs and

their Objects' from 1910, only four years before Peirce's death.¹⁷ Although this passage has already been partially quoted, I have given the passage in full here because in it Peirce quite clearly excludes Cumming's proposal of a sign that is not clearly differentiated from its object, a fundamental tenet for Cumming's musical semiotic project.

The Sign can only represent the Object and tell about it. It cannot furnish acquaintance with or recognition of that object; for that is what is meant in this volume by the Object of a Sign; namely, that with which it presupposes an acquaintance in order to convey some further information concerning it. No doubt there will be readers who will say they cannot comprehend this. They think a Sign need not relate to anything otherwise known, and can make neither head nor tail of the statement that every Sign must relate to such an Object. But if there be anything that conveys information and yet has absolutely no relation nor reference to anything with which the person to whom it conveys the information has, when he comprehends that information, the slightest acquaintance, direct or indirect – and very strange sort of information that would be – the vehicle of that sort of information is not in this volume, called a Sign.

(CP 2.231)

One response Cumming might have to this quotation is to assert that its closing word 'Sign' refers to a sign complex and not the sign in itself (the sign in itself being

¹⁷ Similar assertion on this point can also be found in Peirce's earlier published papers. In 'Some Consequences of Four Incapacities' (1868), Peirce asserts that 'a sign is not identical with the thing signified but differs from the latter in some respects' (CP 5.287).

what she means by the signs of vocality, gesture and will). A response to this, however, is that signs in themselves have no meaning and can therefore not determine, in any way, the subsequent interpretations that Cumming cites with the interpretants of warmth and innocence nor the complex synthetic subject she is at pains to theorize (see Figure 3.3). In short, vocality, gesture and will are notions already loaded with meaning and cannot therefore be considered signs in themselves.

This divergence from Peircian semiotics in the *Sonic Self* is not particularly surprising when we consider how Cumming arrived at her model, as evidenced by her work in 'The Subjectivities'. As we have seen, Cumming at first adhered closely to Lidov's scheme and then adapted it to overcome its fundamental inconsistencies with Peircian semiotics whilst attempting to hang on to the fundamental idea that musical signs can be located within music itself and thereby assume a role as the primary drivers of interpretation.

5 *Peircian ambiguities in The Sonic Self*

The inconsistencies in Cumming's account of Peirce should lead us, I think, to have certain reservations with regard to a number of her central claims. It will also be useful, however, to consider how certain ambiguities in Peircian thought might have played a part in the formation of these claims. These ambiguities may have allowed Cumming 'space to manoeuvre' in pursuing the possibility of meanings located *in* music. There are two key points here. The first has already been addressed to some degree but is worth

emphasizing. Peirce's later thought, as we saw in Murphey's account of his development around 1885, came to rely on the idea of an immediate firstness that could give empirical content to his logical schemata (i.e. the categories argued from the logic of relations) (Murphey [1961] 1993, 306). This does lead to considerable difficulties and ambiguities in Peirce's thought that help explain some of Cumming's conclusions. But there can be no doubt that Peirce is never so simplistic as to suggest that firstness can determine meaning. On the contrary it is the functioning of all the categories that makes meaning possible, and if one were pressed to nominate a category that is at the root of this meaning it would surely be secondness – the brute existence we knock against: the object towards which all inquiry is pointed.

The second related point, again taken up by Cumming (see 2000, 79 and 113 in particular), relates to a wider philosophical consideration. A key concern for Peirce was that of overcoming the realist/idealist opposition in philosophy by proposing a somewhat Hegelian state of affairs¹⁸ in which the categories and thought are not simply determined by the human mind (see Corrington 1993, 43ff and 168ff). Cumming exploits the idea that a separation between subject and object can be overcome by suggesting that cultural meanings are not external to the music itself (although for much of *The Sonic Self* she implies such a distinction). My view here is that such an implication fails to recognize the fundamental distinction between thirdness (convention) and secondness (existence) in Peirce's thought. There is added complexity here, however, because at times Cumming combines this ambiguity with a further recourse to the firstness/thirdness ambiguity, discussed in Chapter 1.

¹⁸ See Fisch (1986: 261–82) for a detailed discussion of the relationship between the two philosophers.

Significations found in non-texted instrumental music may be taken, in accordance with this scheme, as belonging to a class whose objects are not 'actual' [secondness] but more of a 'May-be [firstness] or Would-be [thirdness]. They belong, that is to a class where both signs and their objects display more of the characteristics of Peirce's 'first' and 'third' categories than they do of his 'second' one. Certain qualities seem to have 'immediate' content (in the phenomenological sense), though it is interpreted (firsts). Conditionally established stylistic codes (thirds) also present contents known to those familiar with the style. Possibilities of content, understood either as seeming immediacies, or as conventions, take precedence over reference to actualities, which may be stated as 'fact.'

(Cumming 2000, 79-80)

In this passage Cumming overlooks the fundamental secondness of the object in the sign complex to emphasize firstness and thirdness in musical objects. The implicit reference here to Peirce's wider philosophical concern to overcome the idealist/realist divide (which Cumming discusses more explicitly in her appendix (pp. 309–23)) appears in a statement four paragraphs earlier which asserts that any idea of vocality being created by a perceiving mind leads into 'an idealist trap' (Ibid., 77). Cumming's point here is that if we assert the need to recognize an object of reference as in some way dependent upon how humans perceive them then we become rigidly idealist in our thinking – a position Peirce rejected. But to suggest that the object of the sign is

separable from the sign itself is entirely Peircian and, furthermore, a key distinction upon which his attempts to overcome the idealist/realist divide rest. On a more basic level, although Peirce, in his later thought (Cumming quotes an unpublished manuscript from 1911), trichotomizes the object, it seems misleading to suggest that, for Peirce, objects are not always fundamentally seconds in the sign complex. The reading of a musical sound as referencing a cuckoo that you once heard is not necessarily less likely than a reading of a musical sound as the feelings once experienced on hearing a cuckoo. The precedence of one reading over another is established through reading conventions (in this case potentially influenced by Beethoven's much cited statement on the meanings of his *Pastoral Symphony*) and not by any necessary condition of musical signification. More to the point, any object in a musical sign complex, whether abstractive, concreative or collective (or even descriptive, denominative or copulative),¹⁹ will be separable from the sign itself and fundamentally a second in the sign complex.

In the last three sentences of the quotation above Cumming discusses the immediate content of certain qualities. We then encounter the further exploitation of an ambiguity in Peirce – that between firstness and thirdness. Here Cumming takes the line that firsts are seemingly immediate but somehow interpreted. Now although there is ambiguity between firstness and thirdness in Peirce, this does not entitle Cumming to simply have it both ways in this manner. If Cumming is drawing on the later Peirce (and there is little clear indication of her doing anything but this) firsts are not interpreted: they are immediate. Cumming not only refuses to engage the problems presented by what Murphey terms 'one of the most ubiquitous sources of confusion in Peirce's writing'

¹⁹ These are two of the trichotomies concerning the object in the final typology labelled B and C in Figure 1.8.

(Murphey [1961] 1993, 308), but she carefully relies upon it to cover up a fundamental inconsistency that Peirce, I feel sure, would not have tolerated.

In the last two sentences Cumming draws in yet another potentially confusing point. Thirdness is equated exclusively with stylistic codes. Thus the role of cultural conventions in establishing meaning is reduced to the shared patterns and traits of different musical conventions. The implication again is that meanings are contained within musical works and, additionally, their inter-relationships. Of course there is a thirdness about stylistic conventions, but these are different from the conventions that establish references or content (although Hatten is almost certainly right that they do interact with them). One way to demonstrate this, ironically, is through the use of Peirce's interim typology. When music acts as a sign the reference to stylistic conventions is instantiated by the relationship of the legisign (rule) to a sinsign (instantiation). But we are concerned, in these points, with signs in themselves, that is, non-genuine signs. To function as a sign music must refer to an object that is other than itself. The conventions are then the symbolic aspects of this reference (which will always be in operation to some degree even in the case of an index or icon). It is the fundamental importance of these conventions that make any meaning context dependent (but not entirely private). Stylistic conventions (legisigns instantiated as sinsigns) are in themselves as powerless as qualisigns to refer to anything whatsoever – they have no content.

Despite these shortcomings in Cumming's theory, her discussion allows us to gain further insight into key aspects of Peircian thought and the possible ambiguities they entail. Peirce attempts to overcome the idealist/realist dichotomy, in part, through the

idea that thirdness exists in nature. This means that conventions as thirds are not arbitrary; they may even have a certain necessity about them or be somehow tied up with things in themselves (in a non-Kantian sense that is – Peirce’s position is that we can know these things in themselves). Of course, not all conventions and rules are true or real, but Peirce’s way around this problem is to assert that those rules that are retained in the long run are right and true. Another way to think of this point is to consider that thirds are habits; now habits seem in one sense arbitrary and utterly mutable, but they are also that through which understanding is made possible. They do not, therefore, obscure reality but are our only means of understanding it. The possible limitation of such thinking, especially in the study of the arts, is that it may leave us ill equipped to address the possibility of ideologically motivated conventions. If conventions are either right and true or part of the process of moving towards what is right and true then any thoughts of resisting the hegemony of convention seem misconstrued. Viewed from a certain perspective, then, there may be little place in Peircian philosophy for the kind of systematic untruths of ideology. It seems to me, however, that Peircian theory still has an important place in any search for resistance because, when applied rigorously, it allows us to theorize the distinction between fundamental knowledge claims that belie the pursuit of personal interest or power and claims derived from sound reasoning.²⁰ Bringing such thoughts to bear upon Cumming’s project, it seems to me that it is her marginalization of secondness (actuality) in music, above all, that enables her to pursue a more conservative agenda whilst claiming adherence to Peirce’s conception of semiosis.

²⁰ Cf. the quotation from Corrington on page 48 of this thesis.

Cumming's theory of the Peircian sign in music as it is presented in the first third of her book have been looked at in considerable detail, and this will explain many of the difficulties encountered in later parts of the book. The processes by which Cumming develops her application of the categories further in the central three chapters will now be discussed. Each of these central three chapters corresponds to one of Peirce's categories.

6 Peircian categories explored:

the central three chapters of The Sonic Self

(a) The first of the central three chapters

The central three chapters of *The Sonic Self* are entitled 'Naming Qualities; Hearing Signs', which deals with firstness – primarily the qualisign; 'Gesturing', which deals with secondness – primarily the iconic sinsign or token of a type;²¹ and 'Framing Willfulness in Tonal Law', which deals with thirdness – primarily the legisign.

Cumming's theory of the qualisign has already been discussed at length, and the first of these chapters will only be discussed briefly. Cumming begins 'Naming Qualities' with a definition of the qualisign that again suppresses Hausman's point that they 'are not, strictly, genuine signs, because ... they are not things that represent

²¹ It is noteworthy here that Savan insists upon the difference between sinsign/legisign and token/type as it is generally employed in semiotics, token/type corresponding to Peirce's legisign/replica not legisign/sinsign (Savan 1988: 22). Cumming appears to use the terms sinsign and token interchangeably, however.

something for an interpretant' (Hausman 1993, 70). She gives a definition of the qualisign that is clearly more applicable to the icon:

A quality (a 'first'), however measured by objective instruments, becomes in Peirce's parlance a 'qualisign' when it is interpreted as representing some 'object,' according to an identifiable ground of 'likeness' or association. (Cumming 2000, 105)

The defence for such a definition is that it corresponds more closely to the first sign type of the interim typology, the rhematic, iconic qualisign abbreviated to the qualisign. In the context of the interim typology, however, there is still the problem that this definition is so selective (suppressing as it does the non-genuine aspects of the qualisign) that it could just as well be applied to the iconic sinsign or iconic legisign.

Having set up this ambiguity between qualisign and icon Cumming attacks the notion of a 'skepticism' that denies shared experiences of quality, in this case colour. Colour is not, she asserts, 'an entirely arbitrary construction, able to be organized in any way according to cultural conventions, unlimited by psycho-physiology' (Ibid., 106). This is, of course, true. But the question Cumming fails to address is whether the meanings or 'objects of reference' that colours might have are established primarily through conventions that are separable from the colours in themselves. Any icon (as sign complex) will require some guidance apart from the internal qualities of its sign (in itself) from conventions, i.e. the symbolic – every icon will be, in part, a symbol. It is this that Cumming seems to be at pains to suppress.

In the section that follows Cumming enters into one of her most impressive discussions thus far. She finally addresses, head on, the question as to how qualities in themselves can be said to signify another aspect of experience. Armed with Peirce's peculiar reference to synesthesia, already mentioned in relation to Savan's criticism of it,²² Cumming explores the possibility of a precognitive metaphoric interchange between colour and sound. We at last encounter a straightforward attempt to theorize the possibility of reading a sound as vocality without a clear process of interpretation. Cumming's argument this time is a relativist one, which denies the distinction between an interpreted and an uninterpreted perception:

It could not be said that any perception was just 'given' uninterpreted to consciousness (as if consciousness were an entity capable of receiving gifts, or observing the arrival of items from the input process), because each perception is based on representing. An interpretation, or lower-order inference, would always be implicit, even if it were not available to introspection.

(Ibid., 111)

Such an assertion, as with all relativist arguments, is difficult to counter (other than by pointing out the infinite regress it posits), but it does of course fly in the face of Peirce's later theory (post c.1885), as we saw with reference to Murphey's discussion of his development. Thus Cumming is, to some extent, now arguing against the later theory of Peirce, from which she drew her theoretical foundation of the qualisign. Cumming now

²² It is perhaps also notable that Peirce left out a discussion of this problematic conception in his fourth Harvard lecture of 1903 (EP2: 192 n.26).

cites not the later Peirce but the Peirce of the 'New List' of 1868. There is surely a serious problem here: Cumming has employed the qualisign as the quality of the sign in itself in order to posit vocality *in* music, but when pushed to explain how the analogy to the voice is possible from within the sign in itself she undermines this very notion (of the sign in itself), cutting off the branch upon which she is sitting. Cumming now seems to assert unequivocally that all signs are interpreted despite the point that it undermines the semiotic scheme upon which she has based her arguments thus far. It seems to me that Cumming is clearly pursuing a position that is contradictory: she wants to assert the immediacy of particular readings of music but if any such reading is to have content she must admit a degree of mediation. This gives Cumming's the awkward formulation that 'a comparative interpretive act is contained in the perception itself.'²³ Though close to an uninterpreted sensation, it is nonetheless interpreted' (Ibid., 111).

(b) The second of the central three chapters

Having defined the qualisign as vocality in music, Cumming looks to define gesture as a sinsign. This she does in the second of the central three chapters, entitled 'Gesturing'. Cumming now looks again to embrace Lidov's ideas and after a brief reorientation of his labelling toward the iconic sinsign rather than the icon and a summary of Clyne's ideas, she gives the following formulation.

²³ This is the position of Peirce in 'The New List' and explains why firstness at this point in his career is the most mediate of the categories. Cumming's apparent combination of this theory with that of the later Peirce is not clearly rationalized. The reversal in position on certain key points is explained in Murphey ([1961] 1993: 306-7).

Sinsigns and legisigns mark two points on a scale of events with varying degrees of conventionality. The 'singular' depends on a particular enactment, while the purely 'conventional' can be identified readily as a repeated pattern with an assigned connotative range. A performed inflection is a singular event, and an *appoggiatura* is a conventional ornament, with gestural potentiality, but between them come many degrees of stylistic determination.

(Cumming 2000, 142)

At first this seems out of step with Peirce's notion of the sinsign and the legisign. This is because sinsigns cannot be simply opposed to legisigns. They can in fact instantiate them, as in the case of replicas. A little revision of Peirce will help here. A sinsign is a singular event – an actual existent event or thing, which is a sign. A legisign is a law that is a sign, which is instantiated by replicas but (and this is the problem with Cumming's scheme) replicas are themselves sinsigns.

If there is a sense of opposition between these signs (sinsigns, legisigns and replicas) in the manner Cumming is proposing, it is between what we might term an ordinary sinsign (i.e. not a replica) and a replica – an instantiation of a legisign. This goes some way towards rescuing Cumming's use of Peirce. The sinsign would be that aspect of a musical figure in itself (suggested by the term *inflection*) that does not refer to a general type and the replica, that aspect of a figure (suggested by the term *pattern*) that does refer to a general idea such as '*appoggiatura*'.

However, rather than carefully negotiate this distinction between ordinary sinsign and replica, Cumming seems to actively employ the possible ambiguity between sinsigns

as singular events (not necessarily, or even ordinarily, replicas, according to Peirce) and sinsigns as replicas. Thus for Cumming an ornament in a (good) performance appears to be simultaneously an ordinary sinsign (not a replica) and a replica:

... gestures can become standardized as replicable 'symbols' or 'topoi' within a style. To jump to the conventional aspect of ornaments [replicas], as expressive devices which take a familiar form, could, however, be a maneuver that overlooks an aspect of spontaneity or freedom in their execution [ordinary sinsigns], made possible through a momentary breaking off from the more formal purposes, or regular tempo, of a phrase. The precise timing of an ornament in performance [ordinary sinsign] is as crucial to its expressive success as is the conventionalized form [replica and/or legisign?] it may take.

(Cumming 2000, 143)

Here, then, Cumming seems to be suggesting that, although sinsign and legisign (or ordinary sinsign and replicas) are at opposing ends of a continuum, a performance of an ornament (or indeed any conventionalized figure) can be analyzed in terms of both. The conventionalized aspects of a figure will bring meaning (such as pathos in the case of the *appoggiatura*) whereas the particular nuancing of that figure, unique to that performance, will suggest further 'personalized' meanings rather like, Cumming adds, the novel *War and Peace*, 'where grand themes of war are personalized with intimate moments of love and tragedy' (Ibid., 145).

This comparison to Russian literature is, no doubt, partly inspired by the Tchaikovsky example employed. When Cumming then employs Brahms to illustrate her theory she goes considerably further by suggesting this application of sinsign/legisign can underpin the kind of metaphoric descriptions of music (in itself) that have been a mainstay of traditional forms of musicological thought.

Cumming now defines ordinary sinsigns as melodic figures or ornaments that 'are inflected to become "gestural"' (Ibid., 145). Thus although an ornament may be a replica, it is somehow rendered an ordinary sinsign by its inflection in performance. This seems to intensify the difficulty already discussed, because now the replica does not seem to be simultaneously operating with the ordinary sinsign but somehow superseded by it. Having subtly altered the status of the gestural as that which figures or ornaments *become* in performance, Cumming now makes a final decisive move. The gestural is redefined not necessarily as the particular nuance that occurs uniquely in a performance but as a *potentiality*. This now allows Cumming to assert that such gestural potentiality can be found in the score, which in turn allows a move towards formalism:

Even the notated organization of the figure has a gestural potentiality, and to describe it, it is necessary to examine various structural features that contribute to the formation of its distinctive shape.

(Ibid., 146)

Furthermore, because all sinsigns are now, in some sense, ordinary sinsigns (because they have been inflected to become gestural) they cannot be described by common labels and

must be approached via 'an alternative route'. This route is through the use of adverbial terms and metaphor, allowing Cumming to describe the opening figure in Brahms's G major Violin Sonata in terms of eagerness, persuasiveness and hesitancy. These attributes Cumming insists emerge 'from the qualities of its [the music's] own motion'²⁴ (Ibid., 147).

Cumming, then, has again managed to employ Peirce to reassert traditional assumptions and practices in the study of music that have been repeatedly problematized by new musicologists. But again there are some serious inconsistencies in the application of Peirce. Some of the contradictions in Cumming's scheme have already been suggested with reference to the replica. It will now be informative to draw parallels between such contradictions and those found when discussing vocality.

In theorizing vocality Cumming looks to imbue music in itself with meanings that are both immediate and interpreted. Similarly, in theorizing gesture as a sinsign, Cumming looks to establish a meaning in the music itself whilst (for it is inescapable) drawing upon aspects of convention and interpretation as the conduit of meaning. The ambiguity between replica and ordinary sinsign in Cumming's discussion is a key component of this contradictory position. This is perhaps clearest in one of the later examples Cumming gives.

The opening two notes in the violin part of Brahms's G major Violin Sonata are said by Cumming to give a sense of 'eagerness' (Ibid., 147). Cumming describes these as an anacrusis, indicating their status as replicas of the legisign 'anacrusis'. This conformance to the type anacrusis and all this entails (e.g. the establishment of a regular

²⁴ The apparent reference to Hanslick's 'tönend bewegte Formen' or 'tonally moving forms' is surely significant here.

pulse and hierarchical rhythmic relations), despite its indisputable role in guiding our experience and understanding of this work, is then suppressed by Cumming in order to claim this figure as a *sinsign* (a unique inflection) and assert that the eagerness it signifies is contained in the work itself as a potentiality. Of course, one might suggest that the work sets up these rules itself without reference to other music, but this would surely only be possible if a substantial part of the work is heard, at which point the opening figure in the violin would become a replica of the first time it was experienced, and the 'work' will have set up its own points of reference, including the necessary context to allow any anacrusic figure to be understood as such. The point here is that music cannot articulate notions of anticipation, let alone eagerness or hesitancy, without reference to convention and type which are always culture-specific and not wholly embodied by music's sound. Furthermore, the terms eagerness and hesitancy do not provide an alternative to common labels or category names in the way Cumming suggests – they are category names, and like music are meaningless without convention.

Given the almost Hanslickian conclusions drawn from her application of the *sinsign*, one might wonder why Cumming could be described by Hatten as helping to bridge the gap between old and new musicologies. The remainder of the chapter on 'Gesturing', on the other hand, with its explicit reference to Derridian thought, does appear to be quite clearly engaged with such an agenda. Again, however, Peircian thought tends to be applied so as to reassert music's autonomy, and any reference to post-structuralist thought tends to be done in such a way as to avoid progressive and/or critical modes of thought.

Early in this section Cumming offers a number of compromises for oppositions that might appear to correspond to the old/new divide in musicology. These oppositions are articulated in various ways: sensitivity to the particular and awareness of convention (Cumming 2000, 156); spontaneous and contrived behaviour (Ibid., 155); to “feel” a movement as gesture’ and to be aware of its conventional standing (Ibid., 156) and, with reference to Derrida, ‘the individuated physicality of enactments, or the identity of the “self” as a “subject” who is present in the body that moves’ in opposition to the play of language or convention (Ibid., 157).

The Peircian notions employed to reappraise these oppositions are the active interpretant (usually called the energetic interpretant) and the logical interpretant.²⁵ The active or dynamic interpretant corresponds to the natural, immediate side of each pairing (given first in the list above); the logical or final interpretant corresponds to the mediated conventional side (given second). According to Cumming our response to a passage of music may involve ‘an active interpretant mirroring the gesture as a uniquely performed event, and ... a logical interpretant, contextualizing it as a token of a type’ (Ibid., 156).

Cumming seems to understand the terms active and logical interpretants as subspecies of the dynamic interpretant.²⁶ However, the dynamic interpretant is not well

²⁵ There is some debate within Peirce scholarship as to whether emotional, energetic and logical interpretants are synonymous with immediate, dynamic and final interpretants. Weiss and Burks and Greenlee suggest they are. Others, however, such as Savan (1988: 55) and Shapiro (1983: 49), suggest they are a subspecies of dynamic interpretants. The fullest discussion of this point is in Greenlee (1973:117 n. 8). Cumming appears unaware of this disagreement, as she does not indicate how she means the terms to be taken. Her use of the term active interpretant suggests a passage in CP 8.315, which divides the logical interpretant into active and passive forms. Why Cumming sees fit to substitute passive for logical is not explained and seems inconsistent, as Peirce tends to refer to the energetic interpretant as part of a trichotomy not a dichotomy.

²⁶ The most serious problem here, I would suggest, would concern the final interpretant. It is surely unsatisfactory to propose that harmonic and melodic conventions might constitute a final interpretant (that which we call the truth) because placing music in a primarily musical/stylistic context (ignoring other wider

suiting to the theoretical role she assigns it because the dynamic interpretant designates a thought that develops the interpretant preceding it. Thus in the series of interpretants that will in the long run reach a final interpretant, there will be many dynamic interpretants. But Cumming's use of terms such as 'feel' and spontaneity invokes again a sense of immediacy that would be better conceived in terms of firstness. There is then, I would suggest, an awkwardness in Cumming's argument with regard to these subspecies of the dynamic interpretant. Dynamic interpretants are thirds: they are reasoned from the interpretants that precede them in the series (see Figures 1.5 and 1.6). It is difficult to justify their employment, therefore, so as to affirm a degree of immediacy or naturalness in musical utterance. Peirce's notion of a first, a third's first (an immediate interpretant) or even a third's second's first (an emotional interpretant) would seem a more appropriate choice here. The difficulty with the immediate interpretant, however, is that its precognitive aspects define it, and Cumming, to her credit, recognizes the necessity of cognition in any interpretation of musical gesture. She opts therefore to theorize gesture as a second (or a third's second's second),²⁷ but in doing so asserts an awkward correspondence between the reasoned dynamic interpretant and notions of spontaneity, feeling (albeit placed within quotes), and 'the identity of self as subject who is present in the body that moves' (Ibid., 159).²⁸

contextual matters such as the social and ideological) is woefully insufficient in attempting to reference a dynamic object (reality, that is).

²⁷ Why Cumming did not opt for the emotional interpretant (a third's second's first) here is not entirely clear. My suspicion is that it would suggest theoretical opportunism, as she would be returning to firstness when her general discussion of gesturing is supposed to be focused on secondness.

²⁸ The repeated references to physicality muddy the water somewhat, because secondness and actuality can clearly be allied to physicality but Peircian thought is entirely dependent upon a fundamental distinction between physicality and the immediacy to which Cumming alludes. The conflating of the two in the analysis of gesture seems more than a little inconsistent.

The use of the token/type distinction²⁹ as a firm point of reference in elaborating this opposition is also of particular interest in Cumming's argument, and parallels can be drawn with Hatten's theoretical writing in which the token/type constitutes the stylistic side of his stylistic/strategic dialectic that allows us to see beyond the 'peephole of subjectivity' (Hatten 2004, 34). The idea in Cumming's theory of gesture is that the seemingly firm relationship between a musical utterance (token) and its stylistic context (type) corresponds to the relationship between the immediate physicality of a performance (which allows some kind of genuine heart-felt expression) and the conventions embodied by its stylistic context (an historically-informed, formalistic context, that is). There is, I would suggest, something of a sleight of hand here. The problematic immediacy of gestural expression to which Cumming constantly alludes and, at times, partially rejects (only to reinstate it later),³⁰ is substituted in the token/type opposition by the token. But surely such a substitution should not be permitted. There is no actuality, no brute reality about gestural expression. There is of course a brute reality about the physical activity of a performer, but this physicality is entirely different from what Cumming tentatively refers to as the 'gesturally "expressive"' (Ibid., 159). We see again, then, the conflation of brute reality with immediate gestural expression, and it is this that leads me to suspect that Cumming's theory of gesture is bound up with an ideologically motivated attempt to reinstate (albeit with extensive qualification) a theoretically viable degree of immediacy in the performance of classical music.

²⁹ Notable also is the point that the token/type distinction corresponds closely to Peirce's distinction between legisign and replica. Cumming now avoids the Peircian terms. This is surely because Peirce does not relate legisign/replica to dynamic/final interpretant in the manner Cumming suggests. A change of terminology here makes such an inconsistency less noticeable. If Cumming were to use the term replica rather than token she would have also to recognize the replica's status as a sinsign and this would undermine her earlier definitions.

³⁰ This is clearest in the discussion of 'Derrida's anti-metaphysical injunctions' (Cumming 2000, 157–9).

Furthermore Cumming's argument also takes up Peircian thirdness in a particularly advanced semiotic stage: the logical interpretant (which is close to if not synonymous with the final interpretant – that which we mean by truth (CP 5.491)). This advanced point of understanding, it seems to me, is then equated with aspects of the tradition of formalist analysis. By conceiving 'the shaping of gesture' as a less developed interpretant and its context within 'the continuity of the phrase' as a more developed interpretant, Cumming is reinscribing the formalist habit of equating larger-scale structural listening with fuller understanding (Cumming 2000, 156). Perhaps more tellingly, any suggestion of meaning is restricted to structural concerns and the notion of context applies to the context of the work itself and not to any social or political forces.

Thus despite repeated reference to Derridian post-structuralism and even a conclusion that summarizes her ideas in relation to Derrida's *parerga*, Cumming's focus throughout this chapter has been to reassert two of the most ideologically loaded concepts in musicology: the immediacy of musical expression and the autonomy of musical contexts and conventions.³¹

(c) The last of the central three chapters

Having located the qualisign (a first's first) and the sinsign (a first's second) *in* the music itself, Cumming now has the daunting task of arguing a positioning for the legisign (a first's third). The legisign, Peirce makes clear, is a type, which is significant due to an agreement, usually established by humans – it is a conventional sign (EP 2.291). If a

³¹ For an insightful summary of the ideological status of these concepts see Tagg (2003: 24–6).

legisign is an agreed law or convention for signification it will surely always require a context of agreeing minds in order to be significant. Thus any meaning of a musical legisign will be governed, in part, by a non-musical set of conditions. Cumming cannot concede this straightforward point, for it would undermine the scheme devised in 'The Subjectivities' and retained in *The Sonic Self* (see Figure 3.4). Her avoidance of it, which entails what I consider to be a misreading of Peirce, will now be looked at in some detail.

Cumming's strategy can be summarized as a two-stage process. The first stage involves limiting the conventions that surround music to the 'rules for harmony or counterpoint' (Ibid., 169). This limitation has been standard practice in conventional European (old) musicology and purposely excludes what Tagg has termed the contextual metadiscourse (as opposed to musical metadiscourse) of a more progressive (new) musicology.³² The second stage is to then locate such rules within the music itself. The first stage is scarcely theorized while the second is achieved by an appeal to the theory of Leonard B. Meyer and Heinrich Schenker in particular. Schenker's highly contentious assertion that his analyses somehow uncover the reality of music is reasserted by Cumming but in a somewhat softened form. This reassertion again relies upon Peircian semiotics.

Why should Cumming need to employ Schenkerian notions of the immutability of the *Ursatz*? Even after limiting music's conventional context to the rules of harmony and counterpoint, a number of questions about the location of such rules still remain. If these rules are primarily derived from conventions and discursive practices that are separable from the music, they can hardly be claimed as part of the music in itself. If Cumming

³² Tagg makes the point that contextual metadiscourse has traditionally been the concern of humanities or social science departments and has been largely avoided by conventional music(ology) departments (Tagg 2003: 9).

reasserts (or partially reasserts) Schenkerian ideas that the rules of harmony and counterpoint are not derived from conventions that could be otherwise (and are, in this sense, immutable) and have instead a reality involving a ‘real power to shape compositions in a tonal style’ (Ibid., 312), then such conventions appear utterly divorced from any social practice or discourse and entirely reducible to the concept of music in itself.

Cumming begins this stage of her argument by employing the notion of iconicity to analyze the means by which Schenker graphs can be said to accurately ‘reflect a “feel” for the shape of an experienced thing’ (Ibid., 172). Jairo Moreno in his review of *The Sonic Self* suggests that Cumming, at this point, comes dangerously close to positing an unmediated relationship between two relata along the lines of x stands (iconically) for y (Moreno 2002, 292). Moreno is right to point out this problem, but it is a necessary step for Cumming if she is to define the legisign in music as a set of rules governing harmonic and contrapuntal practice located within the music itself.

However, Cumming does not want to simply locate these laws within the music; she is concerned to make them nameable. The feel for shape provided by Schenker becomes ‘generalized “feelings” for passing and continuity [which] may be described further as a generalized “instability”, “willfulness”, “desire”, “propulsion”, “necessity”, “incompleteness”, or “openness”’ (Cumming 2000, 174). The problem that confronts Cumming here is that such qualities would seem more consistently defined as firsts in Peircian semiotics, not thirds (such as are legisigns), especially in the light of Cumming’s insistence upon the firstness of vocality. At this point, therefore, Cumming seems to be exploiting the ubiquitous ambiguity between firstness and thirdness in Peirce’s thought

and frames this difficulty as the ‘complementarity of qualitative possibility and structural indeterminacy’, which is ‘most helpful in understanding the potentially emerging qualities of a structure’ (Ibid., 175)

Despite this play of theoretical ideas Cumming is yet to clearly address how Schenkerian graphs can uncover the reality of the music (in itself) they analyze. In order to do so Cumming makes the following assertion:

[T]he Schenkerian linear descent need not be reified as entities that have their own Platonic reality as ideal forms, even though Schenker might sometimes be read as inclined towards a claim for their necessity. Instead, if a Peircian view of legisigns as real aspects of the world (exemplifying thirdness) is taken to hold, these patterns can be viewed as semiotically ‘real’ in a pragmatic sense, insofar as they can be demonstrated to be part of stylistic organization, and to direct listeners’ attention at some level at least. (Ibid., 176)

Cumming’s emphasis is again upon the possibility of conventions that are entirely musical and able to direct listeners’ attention – the conventions surrounding music are reduced to stylistic, i.e. musical, conventions and these are then located within the music. The possibility of non-musical factors affecting stylistic habits is judiciously avoided. The move to locate conventions within the music as ‘style’ requires the assertion that any rules governing style are not simply ‘interpretative props’ but are instead ‘some aspect of an independently ordered style’, leading Cumming to assert the reality of Schenkerian rules in governing musical conventions. It is here and in the associated appendix (Ibid.,

309ff) that Cumming, in her claims that Peirce's notion of the real can support an argument for the reality of Schenker's *Ursatz*, is most at odds with fundamental tenets of Peircian philosophy. This can be demonstrated by considering Peirce's definition of the real.

For Peirce '[t]he real ... is that which, sooner or later, information and reasoning would finally result in, and which is therefore independent of the vagaries of you and me' or, for that matter, Heinrich Schenker, for 'the very origin of the conception of reality shows that this conception involves the notion of an unlimited COMMUNITY, without definite limits and capable of a definite increase of knowledge' (CP 5.311). In order for Schenkerian rules to be real in this sense, 'no attribute could vary between being true and being false, according to what any plural or single men could *think about that thing*.' If this were the case, 'though it were accordingly not *external* but *mental*, it would nevertheless be *real*' (CP 6.328).

Schenkerian conceptions of tonal law cannot be termed real in a Peircian sense because they are entirely grounded on what is thought in response to musical stimuli. Responses to musical stimuli, even if they could be accurately measured, can never be independent of what any 'single or plural of men' might think about them, for what is being thought is itself what is being measured. In attempting to get around this difficulty Cumming looks to stabilize what is being measured by appealing to the (somewhat conflated) ideas of what listeners 'hear' in music and what listeners can learn to hear with appropriate instruction (Ibid., 311). The notion of 'what listeners hear' seems to accord with Peirce because such listening is a 'would be'. But it still seems rather nebulous and unusable by Peircian criteria. Therefore, Cumming qualifies the notion of 'what listeners

hear' with that of 'appropriate instruction'; this is clearly very different from the Peircian notion of the appropriate or proper approach to inquiry, leaving it hopelessly at odds with his epistemology. To approach this issue from a slightly different angle, we might consider that a community of inquirers cannot straightforwardly substantiate the mental responses that constitute Schenker's tonal laws because the training needed in order to inquire into Schenker's theory will invalidate the objectivity called for in that inquiring process. An inquirer can never be sure whether they have discovered a real law or come to assume what Peirce terms a figment, an object about which 'possible true assertions ... could vary according to the way in which you or I or any man or actual body of single men, living at any time or times, might think *about that object*' (CP 6.328). In short, any attempt to underpin Schenker's theory by employing Peirce's understanding of reality cannot avoid a high degree of circularity.

This circularity is not encountered in all areas of inquiry. In the sciences, for example, such circularity is avoided by the objectivity of measurement and the repeatability of experimentation. Neither of these is possible, in the same way, in the study of music. We might concede that the former has the possibility of becoming established through developments in music psychology, but the latter can certainly never be established in relation to the causal mechanisms Cumming posits, i.e. the process by which tonal laws might shape compositions in a tonal style. Firstly, such a process can never be repeated (especially when such processes are only acting upon composers who are no longer alive). Secondly, as already pointed out, any attempt to recognize such a mechanism will contaminate the sample (i.e. the response(s) to the music in question) through the very act of examination.

It is notable also that there is an insistence in Peirce's thought upon the timeless validity of reality – to be real a possible true assertion about an object must not vary with time. Real laws, then, cannot, as Cumming suggests, be asserted when they are clearly dependent upon time (and culture in general for that matter). The 'additional factor of historical change' cannot be simply 'taken into account' (Cumming 2000, 310) in the way Cumming suggests, as it completely undermines the application of the Peircian arguments to which Cumming is appealing.

Another difficulty with Cumming's position is that it confuses compulsion to behave or do things in a particular way with the kind of immutable laws to which Peirce ascribes the notion of reality. One way to consider this is to think of a country that passes a law obliging all people to paint their houses a particular colour. This law will undoubtedly have 'real power' to shape people's behaviour, but the reality of such a law is very different from the reality of, say, laws governing the movement of objects in space. There may, of course, be very good reasons why the colour chosen by the lawmakers is appropriate. Perhaps it helps conserve energy or ensures lighter streets in the evening. There might, in the same way, be arguments for the appropriateness of Schenker's rules. But the very fact that in the long run such laws about painting houses will be abandoned is testament to the point that they are figments and not real. Of course, to uncover the legislation regarding these houses might help explain the actions of house owners in that country for a certain period, but such laws are nevertheless not 'real' in the way Peirce understands the term.

The type of reasoning involved in establishing Schenkerian practice, I would suggest, actually differs fundamentally from the type of reasoning Peirce advocates. In

his account of the history of thought Peirce distinguishes between four approaches to establishing communally agreed ideas. The first (the method of tenacity) is through adherence to scripture or such like, the second (the method of authority) is by deference to the authority of the church or such like, the third (the a priori method) is one in which agreement is established by ‘conversing together and regarding matters in different lights’, thereby gradually developing ‘beliefs in harmony with natural causes’ (CP 5.382), and the fourth (the method of science) is through experimentation and engagement with actuality and existence. Schenker’s theories are more applicable to the third and to some extent the second of these four approaches, Peirce, needless to say, advocates the fourth.

On the question of the reality of Schenker’s *Ursatz*, we are left, if we accept Peirce’s philosophy, with two possible conclusions. Either we claim that a community of inquirers will finally decide the reality of ‘tonal law’ (but have to concede that the current and previous centuries suggest them to be figments, not realities). Or we concede that questions surrounding the idea of a ‘would be’ – i.e. a discernible law or habit in relation to that which we conceive of as music – are ultimately unanswerable and what Peirce would dismiss as improper questions. Again we can note the possible limitations of Peircian analysis in that the ability to lay plain the ideological constructs of musical signifying practice and analysis is not clearly theorized. What is clear, however, is that to claim Schenker’s *Ursatz* as real, in a Peircian sense, is to overlook the method of inquiry upon which Peirce insists and to ignore that evidence which suggests that the *Ursatz* is a figment.

This argument for a very different status for the *Ursatz* is not to deny the relevance of habit and law in the composition of tonal music but to emphasize the extent

to which such habits are entirely enculturated and context-dependent. They are not comparable to natural laws such as gravity because they could so easily have been otherwise. In contrast, Schenker's position asserts the immutability of such laws, and it is for this reason that Cumming's move to ally Peirce and herself with Schenker is so disturbing. Disturbing because such a position tends to lead to the view that rules and habits currently circulating cannot be challenged or undermined because they have an existence comparable to the laws of nature. Cumming is reasserting the idea of such rules as a law-like necessity and asking us to rethink their status as ideological. The laws or rules of tonal music clearly do have a reality, but these laws are confined to a historical context and thereby inseparable from the social circumstances (that actually existed)³³ of their genesis.

7 Conclusion

The final section of this chapter makes reference to Philip Tagg's *Ten Little Tunes: Towards a Musicology of the Mass Media* (2003). As mentioned, Tagg draws a distinction in this work between two types of metamusical knowledge. These are termed 'metatextual discourse' and 'metacontextual discourse'. The former is concerned with analyzing and identifying elements and patterns in music and is usually taught in departments of music or musicology within universities. The latter, on the other hand, is concerned with how musical practices relate to culture and society and 'is generally associated with social science disciplines' (Tagg 2003, 10). The distinction, I am

³³ For an account of Peirce's distinction between existence and reality see CP. 6.349.

arguing, is key to understanding the opposition between old and new musicologies.

Whereas older musicologies have been limited to metatextual discourse, new musicology has actively engaged with metacontextual discourse and its relationship with metatextual discourse. If we define old and new musicology in these terms and take account of the arguments in this chapter, Hatten's claim that 'Naomi's philosophical arguments promise to help bridge the gap between old and new musicologies' (Cumming 2000, 307) seems doubtful. As I have repeatedly asserted, Cumming does not engage with contextual metadiscourse because the cultural and social context of music is continually avoided. The rhetoric employed, however, often suggests a consideration of context (and is at times accompanied by excursions into poststructuralist thought), but the context posited is entirely musical and fits squarely into the area Tagg defines as metatextual discourse. In this sense Cumming's work can be read not as an absorption and movement beyond old and new musicological ideas but rather as the construction of an alibi for the continuation of old musicological practices – an alibi because such arguments allow writers to counter claims that they are relying on problematized assumptions and suppressing contextual metadiscourse, we weren't in one place: adhering to older musicological principles; we were in another: moving beyond old and new musicologies in the manner proposed in *The Sonic Self*. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the reversion to Schenkerian practices, in the last of the central three chapters, and the inevitable ideological import they entail.³⁴

³⁴ Cumming does herself acknowledge this when she states that a 'point to watch ... in any attempt to employ Schenker's interpretive practices without strong commitment to his organicism, is that the wrenching apart of procedure from ideology can lead to a misunderstanding even of his account of tonal continuities' (Ibid., 178).

Cumming established this commitment to Schenkerian practice in 'The Subjectivities' and is committed to the idea that the *Ursatz* has a necessary reality because she is committed to the scheme she devised for 'The Subjectivities'. This, as we have seen, entails locating the Peircian categories within the music in such a way that they guide (when properly attended to) the experience of music. In contrast, Peirce's semiotics, despite possible limitations in addressing questions of ideology, shows a thorough understanding of the necessity of conventions agreed by communities in the process of signification. Cumming, therefore, distorts this aspect of Peircian semiotics, relying on judicial exclusions and partial definitions in order to reassert music's meaning as embodied by the music itself. Peirce's central belief is that an evidence-driven, highly systematic approach to inquiry will enable a community to understand what actually exists. This final interpretant that corresponds to the dynamic object is surely best suited to the establishment of acoustical laws and, to some extent, addressing what is actually thought and done in creating and/or responding to music. Cumming shows little sign of embracing such a view of inquiry; her approach instead is to pursue an agenda concerning the possibility of a self-contained musical meaning that will legitimize the kind of score-based analyses that have dominated musicology for most of its history. Cumming does refer to new musicological ideas and criticisms, but such ideas are always carefully side stepped or negated so that the central idea of music's subject as a fusion of subjectivities within the music itself can be consistently reaffirmed.

There is still much we can learn from Cumming, however, and the following points will be developed in the chapters that follow. Firstly Cumming's idea of synthesizing the categories in a complex interaction at any one point is a powerful

concept, which contrasts with Tarasti's more linear conception of their applicability and sits well with Peirce's conception of the categories in the majority of his writings.

Secondly, despite the emphasis upon reasserting the idea of embedded meaning,

Cumming does engage quite successfully with the idea of a 'subject' that is somehow negotiated in relation to the listener. This relates to a final point regarding the notion of emergence. Cumming, like Cook in *Analysing Musical Multimedia* (1998), draws on the idea of emergent meaning that Cone proposes in his analysis of music and words in *The Composer's Voice* (1974). Cook, however, seeks to clarify Cone's position because it might suggest 'that meanings already exists in the music; if only latently' which 'contradicts the premise that meaning in multimedia is emergent'³⁵ (Cook 1998, 96).

Although Cumming tends towards the opposite conclusion by theorizing a process in which meaning emerges from 'the text of the work in itself, as it is performed' (Cumming 1998, 17) her allusion to emergent meaning as, at least in part, negotiated is a useful idea, which, after considerable reorientation, will be pursued in this thesis by engaging the notions of habit and subjectivity.

These points inform the theories developed in Chapters 5 and 6, in particular. The next chapter looks in detail at the work of another scholar who has perhaps done more than any other musicologist to highlight the potential for Peircian thought to inform musicological discourse. Robert Hatten's *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation and Interpretation* remains one of the most influential books on musical meaning to have been written in the last twenty years. Its heavy debt to Peircian theory, therefore, warrants extensive consideration in this thesis.

³⁵ Note also that Cook suggests, correctly in my view, that all music is in some way multimedia by proposing a negative answer to the question 'do we *ever* hear music alone ...?' (Cook 1998: 91).

IV

Cultural Iconism and the Appeal to the Stylistic: Robert Hatten's Music Semiotics

1 Introduction

In his review of Robert Hatten's *Musical Meaning in Beethoven* (1994), Kofi Agawu criticizes Hatten for overemphasizing or reasserting the dichotomy of the structural and the expressive in music. For the 'structural and the expressive', Agawu suggests, 'are interdependent, if not ultimately identical' (Agawu 1996, 159). Thus Hatten's hope to break through the entrenched dualities of music and meaning, structure and significance, signifier and signified is confronted by a recurring question: If a music's meaning is dependent upon that music's structure, how can it be separated from it?

Agawu's criticism is not simply the result of misreading Hatten. It points to a key tension in Hatten's work and one that his elaborate theoretical framework, which draws quite extensively upon Peircian semiotics, is designed to elucidate. But despite an elaborate deployment of theoretical models, Hatten's exploration of the structural–expressive dichotomy remains somehow unsatisfying not simply because, as

Agawu suggests, the dichotomy is underargued, but because the importance of context in understanding this opposition is only selectively examined. In this thesis the contextual issues pertaining to the social and political forces that determine reading habits are conceived as fundamental factors in the process of semiosis. The apparent neglect of this aspect of context in Hatten's work both explains some of the difficulties that concern Agawu and provides a means to identify ways in which Hatten's achievements can still be recognized and built upon.

This chapter argues that Agawu is, in one sense, quite wrong to suggest that the structural and the expressive may be identical. If we employ Peirce's categories, for example, to the extent that structure is a second (an existence), it is quite independent of what it is taken to express; that is, what you, I or anyone else might take it to be or mean (an aspect of thirdness).¹ But although Agawu may be challenged on this point, he does draw out an ambiguity in Hatten's position on such matters. This position is apparent when we consider an early passage in *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*:

Since I believe that expressive meanings, and the stylistic competency they presuppose, were a part of Beethoven's compositional process (whether consciously or tacitly), I maintain that expressive meanings are as purely musical as the forms and structures that serve to distinguish them.

(Hatten 1994, 2)

¹ Consider, again, Peirce's assertion that 'nothing is more indispensable to a sound epistemology than a crystal-clear discrimination between the Object and the Interpretant of knowledge (CP 4.539).

This, perhaps, sits awkwardly with large portions of the book, in which Hatten clearly delineates language which refers to sounds (e.g. minor and major) and language which refers to non-sonic ideas (e.g. tragic and non-tragic).² This ambiguity is central to Hatten's project and criticisms of it.³ Through a detailed examination of Hatten's arguments and claims this chapter looks to elucidate such ambiguities and explain the ways in which Peircian semiotics are employed to both address and perpetuate the uncertainties they entail. Some of the arguments will point again to ambiguities in Peircian thought but there will also be an attempt to apply those ideas upon which Peirce is clear and insightful in order to open up possible theoretical problems in Hatten's work. It is this that will, in part, provide an indication as to how Hatten's achievements can be consolidated and developed.

2 *The token and the type*

Whereas the work of Naomi Cumming tends to gravitate inwards, towards the idea of the 'music in itself', Hatten's work has a greater tendency to move outwards towards the idea of style and style growth. Cumming, as we saw in Chapter 3, focuses much of her effort

² The statement from the introduction also sits awkwardly with Hatten's assertion at the end of Chapter 2 that Schenker, Schoenberg 'and their disciples ... have dealt with "purely musical" relationships almost exclusively', whereas 'what is proposed by a semiotic theory of markedness is the grounding of musical relationships in the cultural universes of their conception' (Hatten 1994, 66). One might argue that this cultural universe is entirely musical, but such an argument, I would suggest, is comparable to that dismissed by Davies when he states that insisting upon music's expressiveness as 'of its own kind' is 'not offering a theory but rejecting the philosophical enterprise that seeks one' (Davies 2001, 28). In this sense, although one might argue that tragic and non-tragic are, in the context of Hatten's work, defined by musical utterance and in that sense sonic, the terms must be, at least in part, non-sonic in order to hold any degree of explanatory power. The extent to which the terms tragic and non-tragic refer to extra-musical concepts is the extent to which they can be afforded an explanatory role in addressing questions of music's meanings.

³ See also Whittall (1996).

upon theorizing the concept of the qualisign in relation to music, a first's first. Hatten, on the other hand, is more concerned with the idea of emergent (stylistic) constraints that act to limit music's meaning. These appear to be seconds for Hatten in that they exhibit correlational (relation being a second in the 'New List') rather than interpretational (clearly a third in Peircian terms) mappings and appear to be studied by structuralist rather than hermeneutic approaches to analysis.⁴ However, Hatten is clear at other points that 'stylistic types' are generals (e.g. Hatten 1994, 30 and 44) and that their subsequent status, in Peircian categorical terms, should be one of thirdness (Ibid., 259). When viewing Hatten's work from a Peircian perspective, this ambiguity points to a difficulty with his notion of style and the token-type relationship he deploys to theorize it.⁵ This difficulty will now be looked at in some detail.

In Peirce's writings the concepts tone, token and type are interchangeable with those pursued at length by Naomi Cumming, qualisign, sinsign and legisign.⁶ Or, more accurately, qualisign, replica and legisign, because, for Peirce, '[i]n order that a Type may be used, it has to be embodied in a Token which shall be a sign of the Type, and thereby of the object the Type signifies' (CP 4.537). Like the replica, then, a token simply instantiates a type and it therefore shares the same object of reference. Any opposition in significance between token and type is problematic because the type and

⁴ See also Hatten 1994, 288. In this glossary Hatten designates three forms of constraint, the psychological (affordant), the emergent (stylistic) and the historical (resulting from a particular time, its technology, aesthetics, ideology etc.). Considering the extensive use of Peirce in Hatten's theoretical work it seems unlikely that a connection with firstness, secondness and thirdness is not intended.

⁵ This is despite the fact that Hatten cites Peirce's theory of token and type when he first examines the distinction in detail (Ibid., 44).

⁶ Potisign, actisign and famisign which again are interchangeable are encountered in Peirce's letters to Lady Welby (see, for example, EP 2.488).

token signify the same object – the type ‘does not exist, it only determines things which do exist’ (CP 4.537).

For Hatten, however, the token-type distinction exhibits an opposition (this opposition is marked, a concept explored in detail in the following section). Not only are token and type in some way opposed, but they signify different objects, which are opposed in the same manner. One example Hatten gives concerns the diminished seventh chord. For Hatten the diminished seventh chord can be conceived as a type, but different tokens of this type can have different meanings:⁷

the [tonally] ambiguous use of the type [diminished seventh chord] can ... suggest a more distinctive expressive interpretation than one would give to a diminished seventh chord unambiguously preceded by its tonic triad.

(Hatten 1994, 50)

The point here is that any sign is a token of a type only to the extent that it instantiates the signifying function of the type – i.e. to the extent that it has the same object. If it signifies something subtly different Peirce would theorize it, I think, as another sign. It would not then be a token of the same type but a token of a different (albeit related) type.

⁷ There is also an issue here in that Hatten may tend to confuse the token–type relation used in technical language with the token–type relation in the music it is used to denote. The word ‘diminished seventh chord’ does exemplify a token–type relationship in that the word appears a number of times in this thesis (tokens) but in one sense there is only one word ‘diminished seventh chord’ (the type). It does not follow, however, that a diminished seventh chord sounded on one day in a piece of Beethoven and a diminished seventh chord sounded on another day in a piece of Mozart are both tokens of the same type. They may be construed as closely related signs but they are only tokens of the same type when taken as signs of precisely the same object such as the word ‘diminished seventh chord’ or compliance with the analytical process that allows them to be labelled as the ‘same’ chord. They are certainly not tokens of the same type if one is taken as signifying ‘human *angst*’ (Ibid., 49) and another as the first part of a satisfying sigh. This point is discussed further later in this chapter.

In Peircian thought tokens do not merely have the ‘constraint of remaining true to type’ (Ibid., 30); they instantiate a type, and their significance is entirely determined by that type. In Hatten’s notion of ‘constraint’, however, we begin to see how he might construe type more as a second than a third. Hatten appears to conceive style and stylistic types as a *body* of connections (or correlations) that actually exist (hence secondness), even if they do ‘not exist at the level of perception’ (Ibid., 45). ‘[T]he decoding and interpretation of many of the oppositions in this book [*Musical Meaning in Beethoven*]’, Hatten asserts, ‘would seem to require a fine-grained perceptual and cognitive capacity for interpreting uniqueness against a backdrop of the familiar’ (Ibid., 277). Here we see more clearly a reversal in the Peircian categories. The ‘backdrop’ appears to provide the certainty of secondness with the unique occurrence appearing less stable, a third whose meaning is determined by the actuality of style. The unique occurrence requires interpretation (thirdness) whereas the backdrop consists of more stable correlative oppositions (secondness). In Peirce, however, a unique occurrence is a second and generalizations such as style are thirds.

This wider role of the categories in recognizing discrepancies between Hatten and Peirce’s uses of the token–type distinction is important but in order to pursue the case for such discrepancies it will be helpful to consider two slightly simpler approaches. The first approach focuses more upon the object in the sign complex,⁸ the second upon the interpretant. It is important to emphasize here that Hatten’s arguments are not rendered invalid by discrepancies with Peirce (although Hatten does claim to develop a theory compatible with Peircian semiotic theory (Ibid., 3), and later talks of applying Peirce’s

⁸ Recall that the sign complex is comprised of sign (first), object (second) and interpretant (third).

categories to musical meaning (Ibid., 246)). It is my suggestion, however, that addressing these discrepancies may form an important step in developing a different and equally compelling approach to questions of musical meaning.

In Peirce tone, token and type refer to the trichotomy of the sign in itself: that is, a sign prescinded from its object (particularly relevant to the argument below) and its interpretant (particularly relevant to the subsequent argument). If we then consider one of Peirce's most common examples, the written word 'the', in order to conceive it as a sign in itself we must detach it from the information it signifies in its function as a definite article, i.e. detach it from its object. We may then discern that we still have two kinds of 'the', the actual singular instantiations of the word 'the', of which there are many, and the type 'the', of which there is only one.⁹

There will ordinarily be about twenty the's [*sic*] on a page, and of course they count as twenty words. In another sense of the word 'word,' however, there is but one word 'the' in the English language; and it is impossible that this word should lie visibly on a page or be heard in any voice, for the reason that it is not a Single thing or Single event. It does not exist; it only determines things that do exist.

(CP 4.537)

If now we consider a musical sound¹⁰ apart from any significance it might have (its object) or any thought that might develop from it (its interpretant), can we still consider

⁹ The tone in this example would be the quality of an individual instance of the word 'the', which would be subtly different from other instances of 'the' – imagine looking at two printed instances under a microscope and noticing the subtle differences in shape for example.

¹⁰ The assumption is made here that a musical sound is acting as a sign. Later I argue that music can also function as an object or even an interpretant in the Peircian sign complex.

two kinds of musical sounds, one a token and one a type? Well, the differences between words and music prevent the answer to this question from being a straightforward one, but there are a number of plausible examples to support an affirmative answer. When working within the tradition of Western ‘art’ music, for example, the distinction between a work and a performance of a work might be successfully theorized as a token–type relationship (Monelle 1991), although a more satisfactory example, taking into account Hatten’s point about the practicality of dealing with smaller components of works (Hatten 1994, 45), might be to consider the sounding of a phrase or idea as a token (say the opening idea of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony) and that opening idea as the type represented in the many scores of it in existence and held in the mind of a relatively large section of the world’s population and often simply referred to as ‘the opening gesture of Beethoven’s Fifth’. In popular music the notion of type might be better deployed with reference to a recording. A token would then be an instantiation of a recording as heard sound – the opening chord of ‘A Hard Day’s Night’ serves as a good example.

These examples have some success because there is some agreement amongst a community of listeners that the first two bars of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony and the first sonority of The Beatles’ 1964 recording of ‘A Hard Day’s Night’ can be considered as entities which are commonly instantiated as sounding objects, in much the same way as the word ‘the’ is agreed to have a single ‘dictionary definition’ which applies whenever it is instantiated.¹¹ The key point in this argument is that, to the extent that the word ‘the’ can be held as having the same object whenever it is instantiated (as Peirce

¹¹ There are still difficulties with these examples, including that of Peirce’s. Such difficulties derive, I would suggest, from the notion of a sign in itself. The trichotomization of this concept did not occur until relatively late in Peirce’s career (1903) and it remains, in my view, a problematic development in Peirce’s system.

suggests), the tokens and types in both the Beethoven and The Beatles examples may be considered as signifying the same object.¹²

The same degree of clarity in identifying the object of the type and, thereby, the object of the token is not apparent in Hatten's work. For example, one of the first cases discussed is that of the tonic triad which, for Hatten, is a functional type that is usually defined in terms of certain features (Ibid., 45). This definition points, already, to certain discrepancies between Hatten's and Peirce's notion of type. For Peirce qualities are not the defining feature of a type (for then they would be tones or qualisigns); types are defined by their function as a *rule* and this rule concerns the uniformity of reference between tokens in relation to a type.¹³ Is this uniformity of reference applicable to the idea of a tonic triad? I would suggest not, firstly because, as Hatten himself points out, there is a range of variation permissible in defining a tonic triad and whilst this may be true of the word 'the' (Peirce's token–type example), the range of variation is far greater and more significant in the case of a tonic triad.¹⁴ The second related point is that the reference of a tonic triad is so context driven that any 'definition' such as that found for

¹² The debates surrounding this point are, I believe, central to understanding Hatten's project and its limitations; they will be addressed in the course of this chapter. One useful point to note here is that the clarity of these examples is, in part, derived from the fact that they do not call for a connection between musical and extramusical entities.

¹³ Peirce's notion of a rhematic iconic legisign (or rhematic iconic type) can be confusing here, as he defines it as a 'general law or type, in so far as it requires each instance of it to embody a definite quality which renders it fit to call up the mind the idea of a like Object' (EP 2.294). The important point to remember here is that it is the type or legisign which is functioning as a rule (thirdness) and it is the iconic aspect of the sign that entails reference through shared qualities (consider the example of the map of the London underground given in Chapter 1). If we were to render Hatten's work more consistent with Peircian theory, then, we might suggest that his reference to 'certain features' indicates that such types are rhematic iconic types. Hatten often avoids iconism, however, and appears to conceive the token-type distinction without direct reference to it. The possible role of the rheme or proposition, touched upon here, is important to the theories I propose later.

¹⁴ One useful way to conceive of this difference is to consider how a change to the qualities of the printed word 'the' would have only a marginal impact on meaning (consider a change of font, for example), whereas changes in timbre, dynamic, doubling etc. would tend to be considered more important to any musical reference (cf. Monelle 1991b, 78 on the notion of pertinence).

the word 'the' is made impossible. Even within the same 'work' the tonic triad would scarcely be considered to have the same object or significance at the beginning and at the end of a work – even the most formalist analysis would contrast their respective senses of departure/establishment of key and return.¹⁵ In Schenkerian analysis, for example (a practice to which Hatten alludes), there is clearly a quite fundamental difference between the sounding of the tonic triad when the Kopfton is $\hat{3}$ and the sounding of the tonic triad when this Kopfton is $\hat{1}$. Even starker differences between objects of reference are encountered if we consider tonic triads in different works within the same style. Can the D minor tonic triad that begins *Don Giovanni* be said to have the same object or reference as the tonic chord at the end of Act II of *Le nozze di Figaro*?¹⁶ Of course, neither I nor Hatten would suggest that it could, but such anomalies point to a difficulty with Hatten's conception of tokens and types when pursued from a more rigorously Peircian perspective.¹⁷

Further aspects of the discrepancy between Hatten's and Peirce's conception of token and type can be pursued in relation to the interpretant (in contrast to the argument

¹⁵ Whittall (1996) makes a similar point in his review of Hatten (1994) with regard to the significance of the minor mode. Decisiveness about the meaning of the minor mode, Whittall argues, is 'surely of interpretative value only as a provocation to readings that play with the multiple shades and nuances of individual response, depending on (for example) whether the "minority" is stable or unstable, brief or sustained, explicit or ambiguous' (Whittall 1996, 123). Hatten's theories get around this problem by allocating a token a high degree of flexibility in its relation to type – a token for Hatten can even, in some sense, *go against* type – but in allowing this degree of flexibility Hatten undermines key aspects of the Peircian token–type distinction.

¹⁶ One answer to this question might be that the object of reference *is* the same to the extent that they both refer to the object-type tonic triad. But this would sit poorly with Hatten's assertion that the object of the Peircian sign complex in music is a cultural unit, which suggests something beyond the categories of formalist music theory.

¹⁷ As this last point suggests, Hatten's conception of the token-type distinction is far more subtle and malleable than its strict Peircian namesake. It is, in fact, Hatten's careful development of the token-type distinction which is so fruitful in developing a semiotic model for the analysis of music, but it will be instructive to investigate how Hatten's work might be construed within a more elaborate Peircian framework. Such an investigation, as we will see later in this chapter, may provide certain insights as to the limitations of Hatten's model and how they might be successfully developed.

above which focused upon the object). As we have seen, Peirce's tone, token, type distinction is derived from the trichotomy of the sign in itself, and the sign in itself is conceived by prescind-ing the object and the interpretant from a sign situation. In the above argument the object of the sign still needed consideration, in that the sign in itself can have only one object (prior to the precision of that object) and token and type must therefore relate to just one object (which is not the case for Hatten's tokens and types). In the argument that follows we see how Hatten's notion of type corresponds more closely to Peirce's concept of the interpretant (i.e. an interpreting thought). This interpretant is not simply a necessary occurrence in the conception and definition of type (as was the case with the object) but the Peircian concept that, in part, embodies Hatten's very conception of type.

Hatten equates type with style or, more accurately, 'determinable entities within a style' (Ibid., 45). One approach to the difficulties this engenders can be found by considering Monelle's article of 1991, 'Music and the Peircian Trichotomies.' Monelle points out that Tarasti (1994, 54) has tended to regard style as a legisign (i.e. a type) and the musical work as a sinsign. This, Monelle suggests, is 'partly due to its [the musical work's] functioning as a manifestation of style, as though it were a single event related to a category of events; and partly to its pervasive odour of Firstness' (Monelle 1991, 107).¹⁸ But, as Monelle makes clear, although it 'is easy to imagine that the *work* (rather than the individual performance) is a sinsign, interpreted by the legisign of style, as though the work were a unique and actual event or thing', it is, in fact, 'a class of events or things'

¹⁸ Clearly a sinsign is a second not a first but, Monelle's point is that by being considered a sinsign rather than a legisign the musical work comes one step closer to firstness – its performances then being considered firsts: 'the sonorous object – the material reality of a performance – would become a qualisign' (Monelle 1991, 104).

(Ibid., 104). Monelle is categorical in his rejection of the musical work as a sinsign (or token) but he does class style as a legisign (or type), suggesting that there are legisigns that are works and stylistic legisigns, with each of these signs having an interpretant-relation to the next.

Although Hatten does not class the work as a sinsign he does (1) class components of a work as sinsigns or tokens and (2) class the corresponding components of a style as types. On point (2) Hatten is generally in accord with Monelle (he is not on point (1)) in that he too regards style as a type. The difficulty with Monelle's (and Hatten's) position on point (2) is that in order to explain the relationship of work (or component of a work) to a style he needs to appeal to the notion of a series of interpretants relating 'work-type' to 'style-type'. But Peirce's notion of type is applicable to the sign in itself and has therefore been prescindend from any notion of the interpretant – the notion of an interpretant series comprising signs in themselves is contradictory. Monelle's conclusions remain insightful, however, and in conjunction with Hatten's instructive models may point to a more elaborate means of addressing these theoretical difficulties.

These possible developments will be discussed in detail later. At this point, it is useful to simply consider the way in which Monelle's introduction of the interpretant is instructive in theorizing style because it highlights the need for the act of interpretation in any affirmation of stylistic relationship. Further, these interpretations are surely rather sophisticated as they entail predicating musical objects with those qualities that have been reasoned to exemplify that style. In Peircian terms to assert that a musical sound experienced is in a certain style would surely be to assert that that musical sound has all

the attributes common to every manifestation of that style (CP 2.415).¹⁹

Where does this leave Hatten's token? In answering this we might consider the point that just as Hatten's style types seem too complex – suggesting an interpretant (or series of them) rather than a sign in itself – so his tokens appear not as individual existent entities but as classes of entities. For example, in Hatten's reading of the third movement of Beethoven's Op. 106 (which despite certain theoretical reservations, I find both compelling and insightful), we encounter the following tokens: thick chordal texture at bar 2 ff; contrary motion in bars 3 to 5 and a diminished seventh chord at bar 5, beat 2 (Example 4.1). All of these tokens are actually types, in the Peircian sense, in that they only exist through their instantiation as sound.²⁰

Adagio sostenuto. (♩=92.)
Appassionato e con molto sentimento

Una corda
mezza voce

Ped.

Example 4.1: Beethoven, Piano Sonata in Bb, Op. 106 (*Hammerklavier*), third movement, bars 1-5

I feel compelled here to reassert the point that these arguments do not undermine Hatten's theories. Hatten is, of course, entitled to deviate from Peircian thought. After all, he does not claim strong theoretical allegiance to Peirce despite the clear influence of Peirce's ideas upon his own. But such inconsistencies with Peircian thought do, I think,

¹⁹ This is not the same as suggesting that features (or attributes) define a type in the way Hatten suggests. What defines a type is the rule that draws together features not the features themselves prescinded from such generalizing acts. The difference is admittedly subtle and again points to the ambiguity between firstness and thirdness.

²⁰ Or perhaps in a copy of the score although the score tends to be considered less complete in its account of a 'work' than say a printed copy of a novel and is arguably not an instantiation of the 'work' at all.

point to certain wider difficulties, perhaps even misconceptions in Hatten's theoretical models. I will raise two of these at this point, each relating to one of the arguments above. Firstly, with regard to the object, Hatten's use of the token-type distinction at times suggests a high degree of certainty in the process of signification, and the means by which music refers to certain objects/ideas. This certainty, it is sometimes implied, is comparable to that found in the operation of token and type in Peircian models, but as we have seen Peirce's and Hatten's conception of the token-type distinction are quite different. This criticism, I would suggest, is closely related to Michael Klein's suggestion that the 'announced goal'²¹ of Hatten's work of 'recovering the competency of the past can be an attempt to hypostatize interpretation' (Klein 2004, 28–9). Secondly, with regard to the interpretant, Hatten's model can, at times, suggest that interpretation is determined solely by musical texts and their stylistic contexts. The reliance on token-type distinctions is perhaps indicative of a strategy in which interpretants can be somehow sidelined in favour of those meanings determined by a 'music in itself.' This difficulty in Hatten's work is neatly summarized towards the end of the book, where he asserts that 'structures and meanings arrive in a single package, wrapped by a symbol system (style) and unwrapped by a series of interpretive acts (presumably guided by style)' (Hatten 1994, 279). This suggests not only, as Whittall claims, that Hatten is at heart an 'organicizing hermeneuticist' (Whittall 1996, 120), but also that interpretation is determined by the sign (or, for Hatten, the music) in itself. This selectivity with regard to context is a key difficulty in Hatten's work and warrants some comparison with the work

²¹ Klein cites the following passage from *Musical Meaning in Beethoven* to back up this point: 'I am developing a modern theory of meaning compatible with Peircian semiotic theory, and applying that theory to the historical reconstruction of an interpretative competency adequate to the understanding of Beethoven's work in his time' (Hatten 1993, 3, in Klein 2004, 28).

of Cumming.

Although Hatten's interpretations have a greater tendency to move outwards towards the context of a work, by tending to limit context to the notion of 'style types', they come to share with Cumming's work a tendency to reassert the idea of an autonomous musical work (or set of works) with decipherable meanings.²² Like Cumming, Hatten achieves this reassertion by deploying ideas pertaining to Peirce's somewhat problematic notion of the sign in itself and, again like Cumming, he strays considerably from strict Peircian conceptions in the process.

3 Markedness and correlation

Because Hatten conceives the token–type distinction quite differently from Peirce, he is able to class it as a species of markedness. As a result markedness is a key factor in explaining not only the interconnection between the realms of structure and expression (as we will see) but also in explaining those relations manifest within each realm. These realms can be schematized in the manner of Figure 4.1.

Whereas Hatten often underemphasizes the distinction between the musical and the extra-musical,²³ the slight adaptation of his basic model in Figure 4.1 draws attention to the fundamental distinction between the musical (on the plane of expression) and the

²² This criticism of Hatten's work is comparable to the reservations expressed by Michael Klein in his award-winning article 'Chopin's Fourth Ballade as Musical Narrative'. Although Klein draws extensively on Hatten's work he notes that 'recovering the competency of the past [which, for Hatten, primarily concerns the recognition of style types] can be an attempt to hypostatize interpretation' (Klein 2004, 28–9).

²³ See, for example, Hatten's discussion of the 'expressive (not referential) possibilities' in music (Hatten 1994, 235).

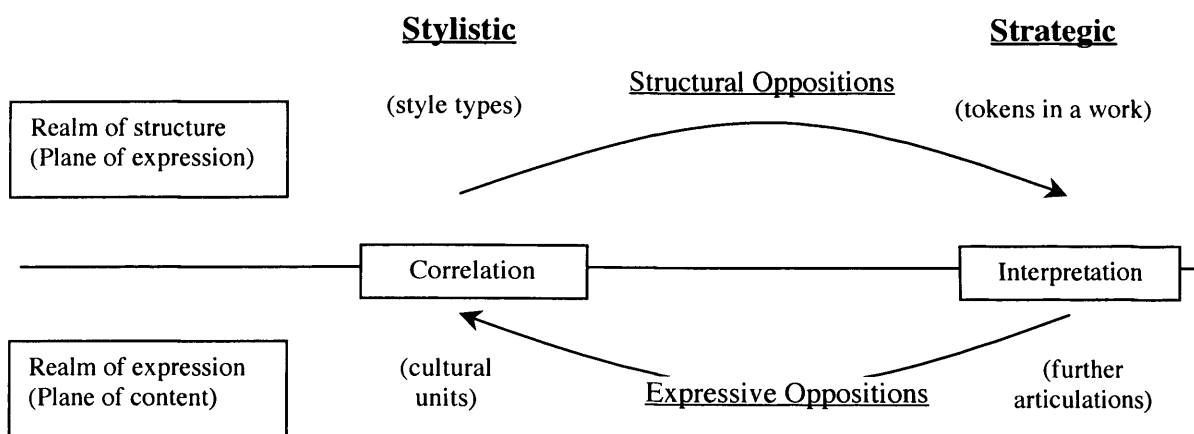


Figure 4.1: Hatten's basic model (taken from Hatten 1994, 30), labelling of realms/planes on the left hand side has been added here to clarify the distinction between musical and extramusical entities – a distinction Hatten tends to blur.

extra-musical (on the plane of content).²⁴ Markedness is most important, it would seem, in explaining the relationship between style types and cultural units but Hatten also applies this concept across the plane of expression (and we assume the plane of content) by suggesting that the relationship of type to token is that of the unmarked to the marked. This further application of markedness leads to some technical questions with Hatten's model that will be discussed once the notion of markedness has been explained.

Hatten's use of markedness theory is derived from the work of Michael Shapiro. This theory, as with much semiotic theory, is couched in oppositions. The novelty of markedness theory is that these oppositions have a particular asymmetry. Hatten cites the example of the opposition between 'cow' and 'bull'. Cow in this opposition is unmarked

²⁴ I favour the terms in parenthesis here, which are taken from Hjelmslev, because they actively undermine the blurring of the musical and the extra-musical. To use the term expression for that which might be thought in response to the experience of music is to align oneself with a tradition that has continually looked to reassert the autonomy of music and 'musical expression.' There is considerable danger of confusion here because Hatten uses the term expression for those entities on the plane of content, despite this potential for confusion I consider such a reorientation in vocabulary useful and instructive. Notable also is the point that Shapiro (Hatten's source for the notion of markedness) follows Hjelmslev in deploying the notions of expression and content along the lines I suggest (Shapiro 1983, 16).

because the term can be used to specify the creature in question regardless of sex – the word ‘cow’ can refer to the whole species. ‘Bull’ on the other hand can only refer to the male of this species and once employed will create a context in which cow will probably refer specifically to the female. The opposition between cow and bull is a particular type of marked opposition termed ‘privative’ in that the unmarked term can, in some sense, be employed to indicate the whole field of reference. Not all of Hatten’s marked oppositions are clearly privative: many of them simply have a narrower range of meaning than their unmarked counterparts and occur less often.²⁵

Hatten’s most readily cited example of markedness in music is an example of this latter category where the unmarked simply occurs more often and has a wider field of reference. This opposition is found between the major and minor modes within the context of the classical style and correlates respectively with the meanings non-tragic and tragic (although Hatten suggests that this too might be considered a privative opposition in that the major can signify the tragic in certain contexts (Hatten 1994, 36)).

The correlation between major-to-minor and nontragic-to-tragic is the means by which Hatten relates the ‘style types’ and ‘cultural units’ in Figure 4.1. This is made explicit in Figure 4.2.

One of the first technical questions we might pose here concerns the way in which a token can be both marked (by the simple fact that it is a token and therefore opposed to its unmarked type) and unmarked if it happens to be a token of an unmarked type (e.g. a

²⁵ Hatten qualifies this point further by describing marked entities as having a ‘narrower distribution’ meaning that they appear in fewer contexts (Ibid., 63, 291-2).

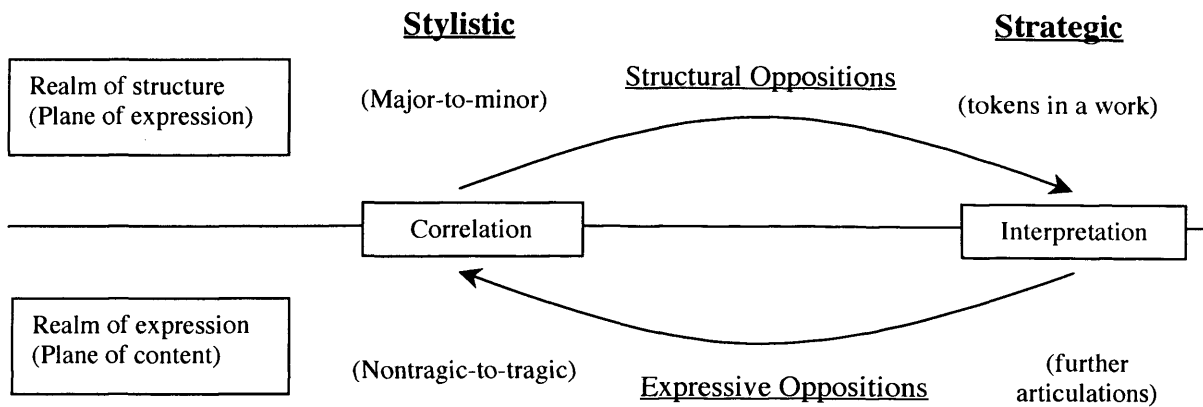


Figure 4.2: Hatten's basic model applied to the major minor system.

major chord). Surely a musical entity cannot be both marked and unmarked simultaneously.

In Hatten's later work *Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics and Tropes* (2004) he seems to get around this question by generally avoiding the complexities of suggesting that tokens are marked in opposition to types. In his analysis of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* he posits again his notion of a stylistic opposition between major and minor and then looks at how instances of major and minor have a tendency to map onto a positive/negative opposition (albeit with some qualification). The apparent contradiction between a major key being both a marked token whilst implementing an unmarked type does not appear to demand theorization in this discursive context.

In *Musical Meaning in Beethoven* however, Hatten seems to conceive these two aspects of markedness as integrated, thus (1) the markedness oppositions within, and correlation between, the different realms or planes in Figure 4.1 and (2) the markedness opposition of the stylistic (type) vs. the strategic (token) within a single realm, have a degree of interchangeability or at least ambiguity. At times we might even suggest that

the functioning of (1) and (2) are interdependent (which in turn relates to the circularity of Hatten's model as indicated by the arrows in Figures 4.1 and 4.2).

Ambiguity is probably the most useful term in relation to this problem because Hatten does not clearly theorize how these two levels of markedness can be distinguished in the application of his model. For example, Hatten's first detailed explanation of tokens and types in relation to markedness theory concerns the doublings of different pitch classes within the (functional) type tonic triad; this example can be summarized as follows:

- The type 'tonic triad' we can assume has certain invariant features that define it.
- Doublings and omissions (i.e. the doubling or omission of root, third or fifth) are not classes of invariant feature; they are free variants.
- However, because Beethoven uses, with some frequency, the open-fifth tonic triad and the doubled-third tonic triad we can posit two types 'stable enough to govern their own range of meaning' (Hatten 1994, 53).
- The genesis of these new types is bound up with the marking of the tokens 'open-fifth tonic triad' or 'doubled-third tonic triad' in opposition to the unmarked tonic triads, which have 'normal doubling' (Ibid.).

In this example it appears to be the usage or 'tokenization' (and thereby marking in opposition to generalized type) of open-fifth tonic triads and doubled-third tonic triads that gives them their status as stylistically marked as opposed to stylistically unmarked. The marking of token (MM, i.e. marked/marked) in opposition to type (UM, i.e.

unmarked/marked) and the marking of marked type (UM which MM implements) in opposition to unmarked type (UU) appear to be one and the same.

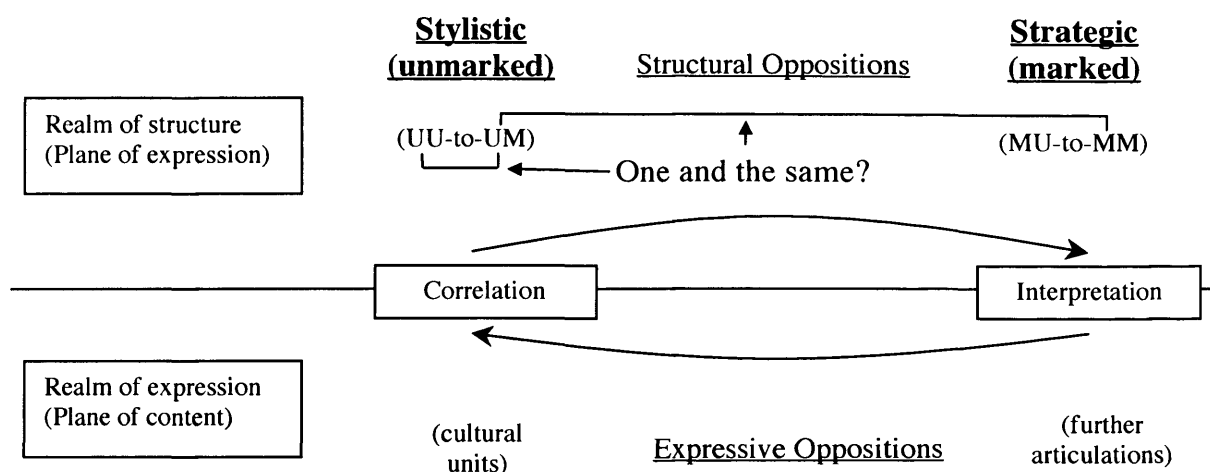


Figure 4.3: Ambiguities in markedness oppositions in Hatten's basic model.

But if the marking of MM and the marking of UM are inseparable, even identical, we have no means to resolve the contradictory idea that a musical entity can be both marked and unmarked at the same time. Hatten's blurring of the distinction between markedness and token-type distinction makes the theorization of two distinct levels of markedness problematic. Why then, we might ask, does Hatten blur these levels of markedness? Would it not be preferable to clearly delineate the token-type distinction and the marked-to-unmarked distinction giving Type/Marked – Type/Unmarked and Token/Marked – Token/Unmarked and avoiding the contradiction of an Unmarked/Marked (UM) or a Marked/Unmarked (UM)? I would suggest that Hatten avoids this clarity because blurring these levels of markedness is important in providing a suitably complex basis for his conception of style growth. If tokens and types were not construed as marked and unmarked, style growth would be far too simplistic an affair

whereby stylistic oppositions are static and are only subject to subdivision. The plane of expression for such a simple process could be represented thus:

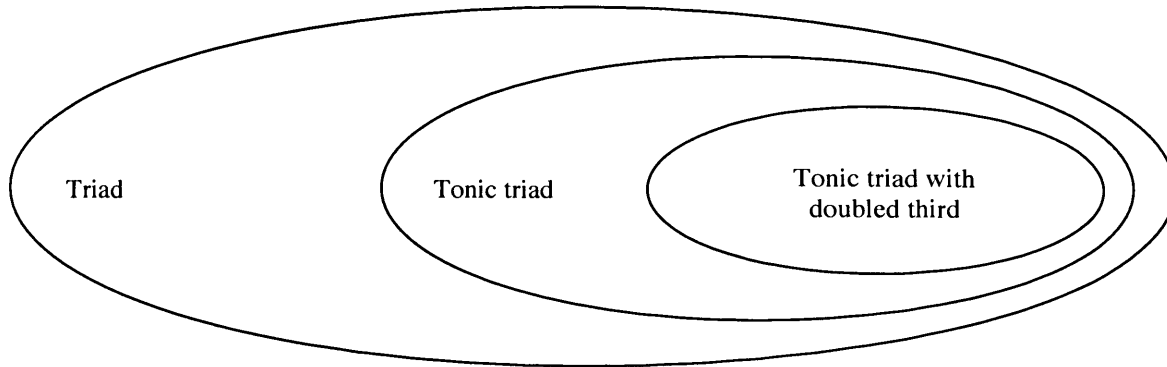


Figure 4.4 Each entity is marked in relation to the entity on its left and unmarked in relation to the entity on its right. There is now no particular need for an opposition between token and type because one is simply the instantiation of the other. Because there is no sense of opposition between token and type, types remain static and simply become extended by subdivision in line with usage.

Hatten needs the ambiguities caused by ‘extending’ the notion of markedness to ‘the (privative) opposition between token and type’ (Ibid., 44) in to order bring sufficient sophistication and flexibility to his model. It is the looping back between the strategic and the stylistic, the structural/correlative and the interpretative, that brings a sense of flexibility, subtlety and plausibility to Hatten’s theory. This point is clearest in Hatten’s response to Scruton’s scepticism about theories of musical meaning in which ‘the experience of expression’ is reduced to ‘a recognitional capacity’ (in Hatten 1994, 32). Hatten’s response to Scruton is to claim that the ‘interactive levels of understanding ... the stylistic level of types and their correlations, and the strategic level of individual tokens and their interpretations in actual works – involve far more than mere recognition’ (Ibid., 32). In this point and in the list of processes that Hatten then offers (Ibid., 32–3), we can detect this need for an oppositional relationship between token and type that is somehow synonymous with the oppositional relationship between marked and unmarked

type. This synonymy gives the sense that tokens have the potential to radically alter types over longer periods of time and do more than simply initiate further subdivision of (static) oppositions of type. Furthermore, this synonymy apparently warrants greater freedom in interpretation because the opposition of token to type and the interchange of this opposition with oppositions of type gives the sense that interpretations are not slavishly bound by type oppositions but have the freedom to develop, disrupt or even reverse them. Towards the end of his book Hatten refers to how a ‘subset’ of an ‘original type, may escape from its original categorization and may become independent of any implied subordination to the original type’ (Ibid., 263) – to my mind this process is not clearly theorized but I think he conceives it in the ambiguous relationship of token/type to marked/unmarked correlation. However, attractive as the theoretical contortions provided by this interchange might be, the synonymy it implies (as we have seen) causes problems of ambiguity, even contradiction.

This problem should also be related to those points made regarding Hatten’s deviation from Peirce’s token-type distinction. Hatten does not seem to be entirely clear in his model as to whether a token instantiates a type, and cannot thereby be distinguished from it in terms of reference or an appeal to qualities or features (as is the case in Peirce), or whether a token is somehow opposed to type with regard to the ‘free variants’ it ‘possesses’. Hatten seems to rely on both conceptions, leading to confusion in the application of markedness whilst somehow making the process of style growth appear more plausible.²⁶

²⁶ From a Peircian perspective, it is also notable here that Hatten appears to be drawing on ambiguities between firstness and thirdness in that types (thirds) are construed as collections of invariant qualities (firsts).

A related difficulty deriving from the extension of markedness to token–type distinctions can be conceived in more simple terms. It concerns the way in which occurrence (tokenization) entails an entity being marked whilst this very same occurrence also contributes to that entity being unmarked. This presents difficulties for Hatten when he turns to the question of themes.

The thematic level of a work, for Hatten, is the strategic level; it includes ‘tonal and harmonic as well as melodic and rhythmic events’. Consequently ‘that which is thematic in a work is by definition strategically marked’ (Ibid., 113). Although Hatten seems unconcerned with the difficulties caused by defining the strategic as marked and the stylistic as unmarked, a newly introduced set of markedness values do lead him to pursue more explicitly the notion of different levels of markedness.

These markedness values apply to the three-fold division of thematic material into the thematic/presentational, the transitional/developmental and the cadential/closural. Each of these divisions has greater or lesser markedness with respect to periodicity, tonality and conventionality vs. distinctiveness of material.²⁷ Hatten is now sensitive to the point that if a theme is by definition marked we need some explanation as to how its constituents can be simultaneously more or less marked in three different ways.²⁸ He achieves this explanation by appealing to the stylistic and the strategic invoking ‘the crucial distinction between stylistic and strategic markedness’ (Ibid., 117).

²⁷ Note that markedness now appears to be a scaling term. Thematic material is not simply marked or unmarked at this level. There appears instead to be a scale between the fully marked and the fully unmarked.

²⁸ Further questions that arise here concern (1) the way in which the opposition of markedness seems now to be defined as a scaling opposition which leaves the idea of its asymmetry unclear or at least under-theorized and (2) the way in which thematic and transitional material can be classed as marked, in opposition to cadential material, with respect to conventionality vs. distinctiveness when thematic and transitional material will tend to be more common/have a ‘wider distribution’ within a work and thereby across a style.

‘Foregrounding or salience [resulting from thematicization]’, Hatten asserts, ‘yields a markedness at the level of strategy for material that may not have been marked at the level of style’ (Ibid.). What is still lacking here, however, is an explanation of why the looping back of the strategic to determine the generalized notion of style does not undermine the distinction between these levels. Or, to put this a different way, if the markedness values of the stylistic and strategic levels are independent of one another, how does the marking of entities on the strategic level influence the stylistic level? If, however, markedness at the stylistic level is defined and redefined by usage (the strategic level), would not the salience of a stylistically unmarked entity in a work warrant (at least in part) a new contradictory status as stylistically marked, particularly if that work were to receive extensive listening?

Yet another approach to these difficulties can be conceived by considering the inevitable ‘imbalance’ in any conception of style. If, for example, one’s conception of the classical style is dominated by the piano sonatas of Mozart (which happens to be the case for me at the time of writing) it is quite likely that the accented chromatic appoggiatura (of which there appear to be a disproportionately large number in this body of works)²⁹ would be considered to typify the classical style and for that reason to be unmarked. But Hatten would surely consider such features distinctive and tonally less stable and thereby marked. More simply, if a particular work comes to dominate a generalized conception of style, perhaps in the way Beethoven’s Sixth Symphony

²⁹ A simple comparison of the first movements of Haydn’s and Mozart’s piano sonatas gives some indication of the validity of this assumption: there are about nine prominent uses of chromatic appoggiaturas in Haydn’s (mostly in transition sections) – around twenty-five percent; and about twelve in Mozart’s (mostly in the first or second subject-group area) – over fifty percent. Also of interest on this point is Ratner’s assertion that ‘Mozart’s music has a high saturation of appoggiaturas; they constitute one of the key ingredients of his musical speech and show specifically the degree of Italian influence in his music’ (Ratner 1980, 62).

dominates conceptions of the pastoral, would the thematic constituents of that work lose (at least some of) their potential to be perceived as marked? ‘Only for the incompetent listener’, might be Hatten’s response, but such questions point not only to the difficulties with the opposition of the stylistic and strategic in Hatten’s model but also to the related tendency of assuming the autonomy of works and their stylistic ‘backdrop’, to which only the competent listener has access, and the evenly weighted significance of any particular work in defining that backdrop. Ultimately, such questions might also lead us to question whether a reconstruction of style, as Hatten conceives it, is possible when our musical perception is so coloured by discourses, musics and events of which Beethoven and his contemporaries would have known little or nothing.

These problems with Hatten’s application of markedness to the concept of theme are perhaps most neatly summed up by his concept of the ‘unmarked theme’. Hatten asserts that the theme of the second key area (G major) in Beethoven’s String Quartet in E minor, Op. 59, no. 2 should be considered unmarked because of its brevity (it is played by the first violin over two bars at which point it is taken up with slight variation by the second violin).

The image shows a musical score for Beethoven's String Quartet in E minor, Op. 59, no. 2, first movement, bars 39-42. The score is written for four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. A bracket labeled "unmarked theme" spans bars 39 and 40. The first violin part has a melodic line with a trill (tr) in bar 40. The second violin part has a similar melodic line with a trill in bar 40. The viola and cello/bass parts have a rhythmic accompaniment. Dynamics include [p] and p.

Example 4.2: Beethoven, String Quartet in E minor, Op. 59, no. 2, first movement, bars 39-42

Here Hatten seems to foresee criticism by suggesting that ‘one could stretch a point and argue that it is marked with respect to its brevity’ (Ibid., 128).³⁰ But such an aside does little to resolve the problem that a less frequently occurring entity can be, by that same measure, both unmarked and marked.

One response to these arguments might be to suggest that Hatten, by theorizing the paradoxical independence/interdependence of the stylistic and the strategic, provides a key insight into the process of musical meaning.³¹ Whether one finds such a theory compelling or not, there can be little doubt that Hatten’s circular model provides a high degree of autonomy for the meaning and historical development of music. Once extra-musical association has been established in Hatten’s model (and Hatten seems to conceive this primarily as a (natural) iconic process): the development of meanings is achieved through entirely musical processes. Whilst the process of interpretation may seem to allow extra-musical ideas and processes an influence upon meaning, the ‘constraining’ power of the stylistic appears to secure the ability of musical structures to articulate with some precision a set of (non-musical) cultural units. The apparent stability (hence apparent secondness) of the stylistic suggests that the meaning of musical structures is primarily determined by the meaning of other (stylistically equivalent) musical structures. Interpretation, then, becomes a decoding process that uncovers meaning with reference to the stylistic ‘backdrop’ with any new nuancing of meaning

³⁰ This theme is perhaps less isolated than Hatten implies since it is arguably derived from the cello and first violin exchange that immediately precedes it.

³¹ Notable here is Hatten’s reflection upon his model toward the end of *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*: ‘[r]emarkably, it is this inherently dynamic form of opposition [that is markedness] that characterizes a stable correlation in a style and enables the incorporation of unstable novelties’ (Hatten 1994, 257).

apparently stemming from the musical structures themselves.³² Social circumstances that may cause interpretations to stray more or less radically from the correlations of the stylistic can be discounted as incompetent.

4 *Markedness and iconism*

Token and type are not the only Peircian conceptions to be picked up by Hatten. The theory of correlation mediated by markedness is explicitly theorized in relation to the Peircian icon.

Iconism is important to Hatten's theory in two ways. Firstly it explains the means by which correlations occur, since it is the *shared quality* of asymmetrical opposition that allows style types to connect with cultural units. Secondly iconism (along with indexicality) is posited as the initial motivation in the formation of correlations which may subsequently 'have been lost' (Ibid., 38), which is to say that a cultural unit may share the quality of the corresponding style type but this shared quality has become redundant in instigating a connection of the two. Iconism, then, may both establish a correlation and ensure that that correlation remains in the style because the iconic mapping of asymmetrical qualities entails the more 'systematic motivation' (Ibid., 292) of markedness.

³² When Hatten outlines his argument for the development of meanings in relation to tonic triad doublings he asserts that 'consistent usage provides strong evidence that the doubled third ... was a stylistic type for Beethoven' (Ibid., 53). It therefore seems that, for Hatten, the process of interpretation is, at least in part, tied up with the process of establishing a composer's intended meanings.

This systematically motivated mapping of asymmetrical relationships Hatten calls structural iconism, isomorphism or diagrammaticism (motivation based on structure) and that which is more likely to act as an initial motivation is termed immediate iconism (motivation based on similarity of properties). These appear to map with some consistency onto the notions of affordance and emergence adapted by Hatten from Gibson (see Hatten 1994: 287–9). Affordance involves the more basic, ‘default’ level of processing (recognition of gestalts and, we might assume, their qualities) whereas emergence transcends this level allowing ‘cognitive acquisitions, such as the competency of a style’ (Ibid., 287).³³

Although Hatten makes no reference to the third section of Peirce’s 1903 Syllabus, ‘Sundry Logical Conceptions’ (EP2 267–88) (preferring instead to cite six chapters from Book 2 of Volume 4 of the *Collected Papers* that deal with ‘existential graphs’),³⁴ it is in this paper that we encounter Peirce’s clear division of the icon or hypoicon. The term hypoicon is deployed here to distinguish it from the stricter sense of icon, which can be defined as ‘a possibility alone’ (EP 2.273). This distinction is also alluded to in the fourth of the chapters Hatten cites (Hatten 1994, 167):

[An icon] is of the nature of an appearance, and as such, strictly speaking, exists only in consciousness, although for convenience in ordinary parlance and when extreme precision is not called for, we extend the term icon [and in so doing

³³ Hatten does not make this mapping explicit but he alludes to it on a number of occasions (Ibid., 167, 288)

³⁴ See Peirce (1931–58) or the Note on Sources in this thesis.

might now employ the term hypoicon] to the outward objects which excite in consciousness the image itself.

(CP 4.447)

In 'Sundry Logical Conceptions', Peirce, having asserted this possible conception of the hypoicon offers a tripartition of it:

Hypoicons may be roughly divided according to the mode of Firstness of which they partake. Those which partake of simple qualities, or First Firstnesses, are *images*; those which represent the relations, mainly dyadic, or so regarded, of the parts of one thing by analogous relations in their own parts, are *diagrams*; those which represent the representative character of a representamen by representing a parallelism in something else, are *metaphors*.

(CP 2.277)

Hatten's two types of iconism correspond reasonably closely to Peirce's images and diagrams. There is, I would suggest, a subtle difference, however. Peirce refers to hypoicons as substantives. They are things (supplied in part for the sake of explanation) that exhibit the iconic functioning of a sign that may be *roughly* differentiated along the lines of the categories.³⁵ Hatten's two different forms of iconism on the other hand are presented as processes rather than types of substantive, which have a more fundamental distinction.

³⁵ As well as using the term 'roughly' to suggest an uncharacteristic lack of precision in Peirce's assertions (a lack of precision made explicit in the previous quotation from CP 4.447) it is also notable that Peirce does not appear to trichotomize the icon or hypoicon anywhere else in the Collected Papers (1931).

These differences from Peircian models allow Hatten to establish a number of key mechanisms in his theory of musical meaning. Firstly, the generalization of different forms of iconism as process (rather than substantives) allows him to claim the dual functioning of these forms to imply a weightier connection between music (style) and cultural unit. Secondly, the more fundamental distinction between these forms of iconism (rather than the rough division based on the categories in Peirce) allows Hatten to elevate the second form of iconism (structural iconism) to a status somehow unmarred by extensive problematization of iconism in general (particularly by Eco (1972) – a point not mentioned by Hatten despite extensive reference to Eco’s work). As a result Hatten can refer to structural iconism as ‘stronger’ (Ibid., 291) and ‘more sophisticated’ (Ibid., 167) than its ‘immediate’ counterpart. Thirdly, and this is perhaps the most complex point, Hatten designates only two forms of iconism (apparently excluding thirdness) because it allows him to suggest that convention (especially in the connotations of arbitrariness it can carry) has very little part to play in the iconic relation of entities. And similarly he is able to exploit the ambiguity between firstness and thirdness in Peirce’s categories (see Chapter 1) by suggesting that cultural forces are bound up with immediate iconism. Each of these points will now be considered in turn.

At key points in *Musical Meaning in Beethoven* Hatten draws together immediate iconism and structural iconism or isomorphism. When first explaining the mechanisms of markedness in music Hatten implies that whilst markedness (and thereby structural iconism) provides a ‘*systematic motivation* that establishes the way stylistic meanings are encoded’ (Ibid., 38), ‘original motivations’ that may have been lost will also play a part in the formation of associations between oppositional pairs. These motivations are not

generally discussed in detail, but iconism and indexicality are clearly the two explanatory mechanisms favoured by Hatten with symbolism regarded as ‘perhaps the least efficient means of encoding meaning’ and as offering ‘little of explanatory value’ (Ibid., 292).³⁶ When Hatten does venture into the discussion of these motivations we are given the sense that ‘immediate’ iconism can constrain structural iconism (here termed isomorphism), suggesting a deep bond between music and meaning, which Hatten labels a ‘deeply embedded cultural iconism’ (Ibid., 167). Thus different forms of iconism, for Hatten, can work both to establish and to sustain correlations between stylistic features and cultural units. The series of problematics surrounding iconism (see Chapter 2) are, in part, evaded by this move, because the idea of simply sharing qualities can be located primarily in the functioning of immediate iconism. Structural iconism can then seem, at least in part, purged of the difficulties surrounding qualitative immediacy and can be given a more central explanatory status.

This possible sleight of hand is most noticeable in relation to the concept of analogy. Correlations (which are underpinned by structural iconism), Hatten claims, ‘should not be equated with analogies, despite their obvious similarities’ (Ibid., 38). This is a somewhat surprising claim. Liszka, for example, states that analogies ‘would be good examples of diagrams’ (which clearly correspond to Hatten’s structural iconism or the diagrammatic), ‘since they show a parallel between relations in one thing to relations in another: A is to B as C is to D’ (Liszka 1996, 37).³⁷ Hatten, however, claims for

³⁶ The tendency to suppress symbol is found in (and perhaps derives from) Lidov: ‘The symbol for Peirce is the sign which bears conventional meaning. I shall retain only the negative aspect. The symbol is a sign loosened from its *natural* meaning (cause or similarity)’ [my emphasis] (Lidov [1987] 2005, 148).

³⁷ Hatten defines iconism in almost exactly these terms: ‘A is to B as X is to Y’ (Hatten 1994, 38). Notable also is Shapiro’s account of how markedness first developed in part from ‘the first recognition (Hjelmslev

structural iconism a theoretical status untainted by the term analogy and the iconism it implies. Thus analogy is consigned a less important role in Hatten's work as 'one of the motivations underlying the mapping of a correlation' (Ibid., 38), i.e. as 'immediate' iconism, thereby allowing the elevation of structural iconism as a theoretical premise.

Hatten's notion of 'cultural iconism' (Ibid., 167) is a particularly interesting construction as it appears to draw together terms from different Peircian categories. Iconism is clearly a first; Peirce does not employ the word cultural, but the closely associated term convention (closely associated within the general field of semiotics at least) is employed to define thirdness (CP 4.431, 5.447, 8.335). In this construction Hatten appears to be engaging with the ambiguity of firstness and thirdness in the categories, but with a strong tendency to favour firstness over thirdness. This issue is encountered again towards the end of *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, when Hatten explores the status of his conception of style.

In the strictest sense, stylistic meaning is by definition conventional, since it is based on a semiotic system of correlations. But conventions are not arbitrary, in that they have generally been motivated by iconic or indexical associations ...

(Ibid., 259)

Hatten thereby construes convention (and it seems the cultural) as determined by the more immediate (natural even) processes of iconism and indexicality. For Hatten, it would seem, thirdness, habit and convention can be 'constrained' by (cultural) iconism

1938) of the pervasiveness and perfectness of the analogy between the structure of the expression plane and that of the content plane' (Shapiro 1983, 75).

(Ibid., 167) and thereby iconism somehow remains important even once a sign's functioning has become symbolic (i.e. exhibiting thirdness). This conception of an important iconic (or indexical) underpinning for symbolic sign situations is quite different, I would suggest, from Peirce's and indeed that of Shapiro, who asserts that 'a theory of grammar is not a theory of knowledge but a theory of *habit* [i.e. thirdness]' (Shapiro 1983, 21).³⁸ In relation to language, Peirce construes any lost iconic or indexical functioning of signs as redundant and unimportant.

If the sounds [of any speech utterance] were originally in part iconic, in part indexical, those characters have long since lost their importance. The words only stand for the objects they do, and signify the qualities they do, because they will determine, in the mind of the auditor, corresponding signs.

(CP 2.92)

Furthermore, Hatten's notion of the iconic underpinning the symbolic is arguably in danger of reversing central tenets of Peircian thought.³⁹ By suggesting that an 'immediate iconism' (Ibid., 38) or a connection motivated by a similarity of properties (Ibid., 290) can be employed to explain the connections between music and cultural units, Hatten entertains the possibility of an unanalyzable (in their distinction from structural icons) set of qualities immediately available to cognition (or at least lacking the mediacy of symbols), which subsequently form the basis of meaning. Such a view indicates a

³⁸ Towards the end of Shapiro's text (which is key to Hatten's theory) he maintains that '[g]rowth – a tendency to become determined via interpretation – inheres in the structure of the symbol as its fundamental definiens' (Shapiro 1983, 192).

³⁹ The indexical is also given as a possible motivation. I would suggest here that Hatten, like Lidov and subsequently Cumming, tends to conceive indexicality as a similarly immediate process of signification.

tendency to conceive firstness as a foundation for secondness and thirdness. It is a common feature of Peircian semiotics in music and, I would suggest, sits poorly with Peirce's more integrated conception of the categories. Savan is worth quoting at length in this area:

Philosophical perception theorists, following the tradition established by Locke and British empiricism, have in general maintained that only sensory data can be the uninterpreted elements within perception. Colour patches, auditory and other sensory qualities, on this view, are the immediate and direct presentations of experience. The organizing and structuring of the sense data is the work of interpretation. From his earliest papers to his last, Peirce rejected and attacked this view. Sensory qualities are abstractions, *conceptions* isolated from the perceptual object through intellectual judgement and inferences. Cartesian doubt, for example, is just such a series of inferences. Let us not pretend to doubt, said Peirce, for in that case we shall only be playing with re-arrangements of words. It is the immediate object, that is to say, the dynamic object as it is present to us in signs, which must initiate doubt, inference, and interpretation.

(Savan 1987, 31–2)

Now Hatten's appeal to iconism can perhaps still be read as consistent with Peircian theory, particularly his later theory, in that Hatten could be referring to qualities or properties ascertained through precision. Although Hatten seems to be appealing to a direct, immediate link between music and cultural unit, this appeal might be construed as

an inference which works back to the pure possibility of firstness. But Hatten's rejection of symbols as an equally important aspect of any semiosis (musical or otherwise) is not consistent with Peircian thought. For Peirce symbols are 'essential to reasoning' (CP 3.363) because they are the only general signs,⁴⁰ Hatten's cultural units, the musical examples he cites (as we have seen) and the connections between them are all generalizations and therefore require the explanatory force of symbols.

The lengthy quotation from Savan is also instructive in that its emphasis upon inference suggests a means by which Hatten's rightly, I would suggest, esteemed insights into musical meaning might still be developed in line with what I argue to be a more consistently Peircian model. Such developments are discussed in the final chapters of this thesis but, it is important at this point to consider some of the ways in which Peirce's categories are applied to Hatten's wider model of musical meaning.

5 *The sign complex and the categories*

In the last chapter of *Musical Meaning in Beethoven* Hatten looks in considerable detail at how Peirce's categories can be applied to the models for musical meaning developed earlier in the book. In the penultimate chapter Hatten also considers more closely how

⁴⁰ Notable also here is Peirce's assertion in *New Elements* that 'there can be no reality that has not the life of a symbol' (EP 2.324) and Greenlee's position in stating that: '[s]ince a 'symbol', according to Peirce, is a sign which signifies by virtue of a rule or convention, I have laid heavy emphasis on the notion that all signs are symbolic (this is not to say, 'are symbols') and that symbolism is a dimension of signification – that is, is a sign function that is present wherever something is functioning as a sign, whether potentially or actually (Greenlee 1973, 9).

the Peircian sign complex is applied to music within his model and this section will consider this first before looking at the more complex ideas of the last chapter.

Like other music semioticians Hatten holds that music is the sign (or sign vehicle) within the Peircian sign complex. Hatten appears to consider the object in the sign complex to be discrete – unlike Cumming, who suggests a merging of sign and object – and applies it to his notion of the cultural unit, a key component of his model for stylistic and strategic competencies given in Figure 4.1. The interpretant is then the thought ‘brought forth’ by the relationship of sign and object.

This application of the three components of the sign complex is reasonably straightforward, and although there may be questions as to the status of the cultural units upon which Hatten’s theory relies, this model is, I would suggest, consistent with Peirce’s conception of sign and Hatten’s model as explicated in earlier chapters. When Hatten draws in the further Peircian notion of the ground, however, a number of possible inconsistencies are notable, although these are arguably down to Peircian theory rather than Hatten’s application of it.

The relationship of the ground to the categories, as we saw in Chapter 1, is not entirely clear, and scholars of Peirce tend to conceive it differently (Freadman calls it a ‘notoriously elusive concept’ (Freadman 1996, 145)). Hookway considers the ground to be ‘a relation between sign and its object which is exploited in the interpretation of the sign’ (Hookway 1985, 124): this can be categorized as either icon, index or symbol. In the light of the interim typology, then, Hookway’s conception of the ground seems closest to secondness. Hausman also underlines the secondness of the ground by asserting that it is an aspect of the object but also points to its thirdness by defining it as a

general (Hausman 1993, 9). Greenlee can also be said to emphasize the thirdness of the ground by claiming that the abstraction that constitutes the ground is a reference to an idea and that this idea is conventional (Greenlee 1973, 65). Both Litzka and Savan, however, clearly categorize the ground as a first, but again with some indication of its multifaceted conception: '[i]t is this relevant aspect [the direction of a pointing arrow], abstracted from the other physical features of the object, that Peirce called the *ground*, i.e. the First, of the sign' (Savan 1988, 17). Litzka and Savan are perhaps the closest to Peirce's stated position, in that the 'New List' associates the ground of the sign quite clearly with firstness. There are few other references to the ground in the *Collected Papers*, but the most commonly cited (from an unidentified fragment c. 1897) provides some insight as to why scholars' views might have come to diverge to such an extent. The ground is defined here as a 'sort of' Platonic idea (CP 2.228), which is the *respect* in which the sign relates to the object. The reference to Platonic ideas again suggests the ambiguity of firstness and thirdness, essence and generalization, but the 'respect' to which Peirce refers also seems to invoke secondness, for it is a component or aspect of the actual object that enables signification to occur.

In some sense then the term 'ground' is rather like the term 'sign': it draws together the tripartite operation of semiosis and its ambiguity in relation to the categories is arguably the very key to the insight it offers. However, one point upon which scholars are generally clear is that the notion of ground highlights the way in which the object is only partially represented by the sign, and it is this aspect or partial entity that forms its ground. This is the case whether that partial entity be considered more as an abstract

quality (Savan and Liszka), a component of the object (Hausman), a relational aspect of object and sign (Hookway) or a generalized conception (Greenlee).

When Hatten applies the term ground to music he relates it to the ‘interpretive competencies of both style and strategy’ (Hatten 1994, 243). The central dichotomized process of Hatten’s system (stylistic vs. strategic) is then applied to the notion of ground; which Hatten defines as the ‘rule of interpretation’ that relates sign to object. This definition is closest, I would suggest, to Hookway, in that it conceives the ground more as a relation than an aspect or respect. But there are still a number of difficulties here that need consideration.

Firstly, Hatten’s idea that the ground can be somehow two-fold in the process of signification may point again to difficulties with the token–type distinction as he defines it. If, for example, we take the example of a tonic triad with a doubled third and the ‘positive expressive correlation’ (or ‘positivity’) Hatten discerns for it in Beethoven’s music, the ground in this sign complex would be that aspect which allows the sign (the sound of the doubled-third tonic triad) to be related to the object (the cultural unit ‘positivity’). We could then suggest, albeit slightly awkwardly, that the sign has partially revealed the cultural unit with reference to this ground – positivity as a cultural unit encompasses a vast array of experiences only a small fraction of which will be relevant to the sign situation in question. But the awkwardness of this cultural unit is intensified when we draw in Hatten’s point that the ground of the musical sign is both the stylistic and strategic competencies of interpretation. We must now consider the cultural unit ‘positivity’ as a cultural unit at the level of its type (stylistic) and as a further articulation (of a cultural unit) at the level of the token (strategic). This means that the ground upon

or through which sign and object (music and cultural unit) can be related is potentially different at the stylistic and strategic levels. We are back, then, with the problem of token (strategic) and type (stylistic) being both separate and inseparable, for to have two grounds (two relations between sign and object) is to have two signs. The solution as before for Hatten is to consider the ground at the strategic level as a subdivision of the stylistic level, but this now throws up further difficulties.

As noted, Peirce's idea of ground suggests an object that is partially represented in the sign. If our sign becomes more developed it reveals a further aspect of the sign – the series of interpretants in the context of the proper approach to inquiry will gradually move towards a fuller understanding of the object. This notion of each new ground revealing more of the object seems somehow reversed in Hatten's model. For Hatten the previously established signs that define the stylistic (e.g. tonic triads with normal doublings) represent a broader object than the new strategic sign which represents a narrower object. Whereas Peirce's ground suggests an expansion in signification, Hatten's grounds as proceeding from the stylistic to the strategic suggest a narrowing of it.

More generally, this discussion of the ground points to the awkwardness of Hatten's cultural units as objects within the sign complex. There is something unsatisfactory about the idea that positivity or indeed spirituality or solemnity (Ibid., 14) can be objects which are revealed (and ultimately revealed in full) by the process of semiosis. We begin to see here more fully why Naomi Cumming avoided a clear notion of an object in musical signification. The cultural units Hatten proffers appear better suited to nuancing already established objects. This is particularly clear with the example

of positivity, for there is a certain relativity involved. Thus whilst we might think *more* positively about something, it seems unlikely that a something could ever be simply positivity. Hatten's application of the sign complex to music and the ground, in particular, opens up these difficulties, and these will be addressed later.

Having applied Peirce's sign complex to his model Hatten moves on, in the last chapter, to apply the categories in general to the process of style growth. 'It is possible', Hatten asserts, 'to integrate markedness and Peirce's categories into a model of growth to explain how various kinds of musical (expressive) meanings can be interpreted in a work, and can be established as correlations in a style' (Ibid., 257). Hatten goes on to give an account of the trichotomies in Peirce's 'Nomenclature and Division of Triadic Relations as Far as They Are Determined' which is generally accurate, although the interrelationship of the categories is a little misleading and the third trichotomy is given as sign, object and interpretant instead of rheme, dicent and argument.

In order to explain the most significant part of his application of the categories to style growth Hatten presents the diagram in Figure 4.5. This diagram summarizes

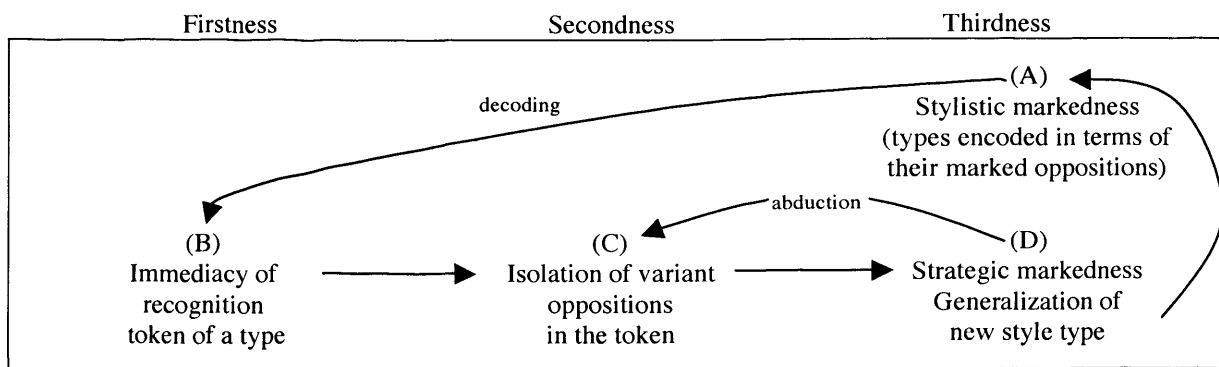


Figure 4.5: Hatten's 'model of growth in a musical style' (Hatten 1994, 260)

Hatten's idea that the reception of a new musical structure can be conceived in terms of a linear, temporal progression through the categories, moving from firstness, through secondness to thirdness and from token to type. Hatten explains this progression with reference to the example of doublings in the tonic triad examined earlier. The summary already given is repeated here with italicized annotations to make the applications of the categories clear:

- The type 'tonic triad' we can assume has certain invariant features that define it.
To recognize these exemplifies firstness (B).
- Doublings and omissions (i.e. the doubling or omission of root, third or fifth) are not classes of invariant feature; they are free variants.
To recognize these variants in opposition to invariant features exemplifies secondness (C).
- However, because Beethoven uses, with some frequency, the open-fifth tonic triad and the doubled-third tonic triad we can posit two types 'stable enough to govern their own range of meaning' (Ibid., 53).
If the variant features have interpretative significance (apparently indicated in this example by their frequent use) then they may form a new type thereby exemplifying thirdness (D).

One of the first inconsistencies to note here is the mismatch at (B) between token (a second) and the category of firstness under which it appears. Similarly, to recognize something as a type is to generalize and to invoke thirdness. Hatten is mindful of this

point, however, and posits stylistic markedness as an additional feature (A) which governs the entity (B), which goes some way to explaining the apparent importance of thirdness at that point. Two additional problems now present themselves, however: firstly, the relation of (B) to (A) is now even more clearly a token to type relationship which should mean secondness-to-thirdness not firstness-to-thirdness. Secondly, the strategic and the stylistic are now both thirds when they have until this point also been synonymous with token-type relations (secondness-to-thirdness).

There is something powerful about the circularity of Hatten's model, however, and it does seem to effectively appropriate the circularity in the categories with regard to the ambiguity between firstness and thirdness. There is perhaps a more successful model for this process, however, which has already been encountered in Chapter 1. It is Peirce's notion of a chain (now more commonly conceived as a web) of signs/interpretants that develop in a sign situation:

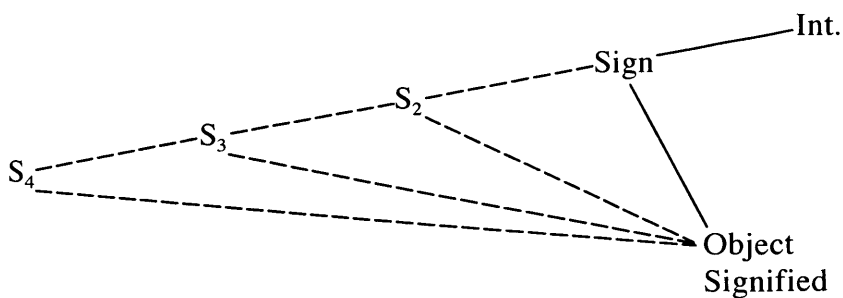


Figure 4.6: The chain of signs that constitute the process of semiosis.

If we were to apply this model to Hatten's doubling instances in Beethoven, we might consider the interpretant the idea of starkness. This might develop from the sign open-fifth tonic triad, which develops from another less developed sign (S₂), 'tonic triad'.

The sign 'tonic triad' would again have developed from a complex web of interpretants concerning the relational systems of the Western tonal system and the many associations they may entail for the listener.

The role of the object in all of this will be discussed at length later, but it is useful to note here that I consider the object most successfully theorized as either the music as physical sound, particularly when reflecting upon the process of musical meaning, or as a constructed persona.⁴¹ I suggest that such a persona is intimately bound up with the conception of self. When music is a sign, then, the object signified by that sign is primarily a conception of ourselves, which may be bound up with ideas pertaining to a historical figure called Beethoven, as tends to be the case in Hatten's readings.

Perhaps the most important difference between this application of the categories and that of Hatten is that we no longer have a clear distinction between entities on a plane of content and entities on a plane of expression. For Hatten open-fifth tonic triad and starkness are somehow opposed, whereas their conception as components in a web of interpretants suggests two points amongst many others that may relate to one another in all manner of complex ways. This way of thinking gives some insight into a potential problem in Hatten's project concerning the use of technical vocabulary. Hatten tends to construe terms like tonic triads not as interpretants, which, through their actions, construct a conception of musical relations, but as a metalanguage, which transparently represents the music in existence. But the notion of a tonic triad is, in fact, another interpretative category that will influence perception just as will the notion of starkness. In the model above 'starkness' and 'open-fifth tonic triad' are not correlated oppositions,

⁴¹ Although my theories are not closely derived from Cone (1974) his theories form a useful point of comparison.

one musical one non-musical/cultural, but interpretants that may develop in relation to one another. This process of development among interpretants, I argue, should be theorized as exemplifying all of the categories in any one instance.

6 Conclusion: Hatten and context

In a useful and insightful survey of theories of musical meaning titled 'Musicological Approaches to Emotion', Cook and Dibben suggest that we might read Hatten's work 'as a sustained argument about how we might fruitfully hear Beethoven's music today' and which '(as a bonus) perhaps recreates something of the manner in which Beethoven's first listeners heard it' (Cook and Dibben 2001, 65). In this way Hatten might be read as drawing together two reception contexts. The first of these is the context of a competent listening that is, at least to some extent, dehistoricized and therefore equally relevant to receptions of the past, present and future. And secondly, reception contexts that indicate those meanings determined by Beethoven's music in his own time (there is arguably a further blur implied by Hatten here between the manner in which early listeners might have heard Beethoven's music and how the composer himself might have heard it).⁴² Cook and Dibben's description of the second context as 'a bonus' is intriguing, but I would suggest that Hatten's work partakes of, and promotes, a more thorough integration of both contemporaneous and universal reception contexts than Cook and Dibben's work suggests.

⁴² With reference to tonic triad doublings, for example, Hatten draws in the idea that 'the doubled third ... was a stylistic type *for Beethoven*' (my emphasis), suggesting an important role for composer intentions in defining style types and their subsequent correlation (Hatten 1994, 53).

Both of these reception contexts are problematic in that one is a conceptual ideal, laden with value judgements about what constitutes a correct listening context (i.e. circumstances of reception and previously acquired skills and knowledges), and the other (especially when we consider the suggestion of the composer's own intentions) is unrecoverable. Faced with such difficulties Hatten deploys a similar strategy to that criticized by Tomlinson in relation to the work of Kramer (Tomlinson 1993, 18-20). Context becomes somehow decipherable from or located within the text itself with only very limited appeal to the conventions that might allow musical-to-extramusical connections to develop.

Cook and Dibben point with confidence to Hatten's achievements in the study of musical meaning and note, in particular, Hatten's success in fusing, at times seamlessly, the vocabulary of structural analysis and that of the emotions. Similarly, I would suggest that, despite the technical difficulties I have highlighted from a Peircian perspective, Hatten's work does represent a number of key achievements: a model for musical meaning that embraces those devices developed for the study of musical structure; an engagement with and development of research into topic theory and musical semiosis in general; an underlining of the constant evolution that characterizes musical styles; and, perhaps most importantly, a set of compelling and enriching accounts of the meaning he derives from Beethoven's music. It is perhaps with an eye to these achievements that Cook and Dibben (in contrast to the arguments at the start of this section) emphasize not the potential for dogma in Hatten's work but its openness in accounting for musical meaning. One way to characterize the approach to hearing advocated by Hatten, they suggest, 'is that it is not simply a matter of hearing emotions out of the music – that is,

hearing the meanings that were always there within it – but, so to speak, of hearing them *into* it’ (Cook and Dibben 2001, 65). My own view is that this aspect of Hatten’s theory is somewhat latent, and in the last two chapters of this thesis I will develop a different approach to the deployment of Peircian semiotics which will, I think, help to draw out and develop this aspect of Hatten’s remarkable achievement. This will be achieved through an extensive rethinking of the Peircian sign complex and the categories in music, and a renewed emphasis upon the role of subjectivity and the dimensions of time in the development of musical meaning.

V

Towards an Application of Peircian Semiotics in Music

1 Introduction

I have described the recognition of subjectivity in Hatten's work as latent (although, his discussion of Mendelssohn's Hebrides Overture comes close to making such recognition overt (Hatten 1994, 255–7). Cook and Dibben in 'Musicological Approaches to Emotion' take a view of Hatten's work that is, perhaps, somewhat different from mine. They seem to regard his work as representing a more thorough engagement with subjectivity, but they also go on to highlight the sense of development and progression beyond Hatten's work in essays by Marion Guck and Charles Fisk. Both Guck and Fisk are far more concerned to lay bare the importance of subjectivity in the listening process and the accounts of music offered by musicologists. Guck, in particular, can be critical of those interpretations that regard the meaning of a musical work as an objectively discernible entity. In the concluding section of 'Analytical Fictions' she gives a clear

outline of her position in relation to the role of subjectivity, or personal *involvement* in analysis:

It is easy to overlook analysts' portrayal of personal relationships with musical works. ... [A]nalysts could make their espousal of particular accounts of involvement more evident, more available for scrutiny and discussion. I think that the practice of analysis would be improved if stories of involvement were less often subliminal, more often ... explicitly stated, because music analysts are not simply communicating the facts by way of a neutral, transparent language.

(Guck 1998, 229)

Like Guck, Fisk brings a new emphasis to the role of the listening subject in determining meanings and brings fresh insight into the problem of a musical meaning that appears both beyond the work and yet contained by it. Cook and Dibben summarize his position thus: 'every listener projects his or her own emotional experiences into the music, which in turn moulds those experiences so that they become in some sense purely musical' (Cook and Dibben 2001, 64).

Musicologists drawing more directly upon musical semiotics have also recognized the need to place new emphasis upon the importance of subjectivity. Melanie Lowe in an important study of music and meaning, *Pleasure and Meaning in the Classical Symphony*, gives a bold (albeit, by her own account, somewhat simplified) position statement:

Does a piece of music have meaning? If 'have' implies some sort of possession, then no. We shall maintain that a piece of music in and of itself does not have meaning. Meaning is constructed by human subjects and therefore resides within us, within human beings, not within inanimate objects, artistic or otherwise. A piece of music may be the most immediate stimulus or the conduit for meaning communicated between human subjects, but the construction of meaning takes place within the mind and body of the individual, animate person.

(Lowe 2007, 20)

These views resonate with the theories of musical meaning outlined in this chapter. The theory I develop is derived from Peirce's semiotics but an aspect of Peircian semiotics that tends to be overlooked by music semioticians despite its importance to those accounts of Peirce that consider his philosophy as a whole (e.g. Murphey 1966, Hookway 1985).¹ It concerns the role of icon, index and symbol in the processes that underpin human understanding through their simultaneous operation in the construction of propositions or dicisigns.

The neglect of this aspect of Peircian semiotics is a consequence, in part, of a tendency to focus upon the 1903 typology and some misunderstanding of the continued emphasis in the 1903 typology upon key processes laid down in the initial typology – processes tied up with the combination of icon, index and symbol in the proposition or dicisign. In order to explain these points the first part of this chapter looks in detail at the

¹ Notable also is the way in which this aspect of Peircian thought is generally considered one of his most important. In relation to these points in the *Oxford Companion to Philosophy* Hookway writes: 'Peirce made major contributions to formal logic (independently of Frege he and his students developed a logic of quantifiers and relations after 1880)' (Hookway 2005).

1903 typology and its context in Peirce's wider system. A rethinking of the Peircian sign-complex in music follows which is underpinned by the view that a more flexible approach to its application to music is necessary. This lays the ground for the theory of the musical *dicisign*, which is then outlined in some detail, again in the context of the broader sweep of Peirce's philosophy. How this theory might lead us to reconsider, and perhaps build upon, Hatten's interpretative method is then discussed at some length. At a number of points in this chapter I refer to the mapping of Peirce's categories onto the dimensions of time, and the penultimate section looks in more detail at this area by exploring its relevance to the functioning of the musical *dicisign*. The chapter concludes by reasserting the importance of the symbolic and begins to outline the relationship between semiosis and ideology this opens up.

2 *The 1903 Typology*

After his dismissal from John Hopkins University in 1884 (arguably one of the most important events in the development of his thought), Peirce had few opportunities to engage with the community of inquiring minds that academic life provided, a sad and bitterly ironic turn of events when one considers the increasing importance Peirce placed upon such a community in his philosophical system. In 1903, however, Peirce was employed to give two lecture series, which afforded him some relief from the intellectual

isolation he then suffered.² The first series is known as the Harvard lectures and the second the Lowell lectures (the third lecture series Peirce gave for the Lowell Institute all of which were intended for a popular audience). The Lowell lectures, unlike those at Harvard, were well received (Brent 1998, 293) and to this day they remain a focus for Peirce scholars, particularly those interested in his theory of sign classes.

To supplement his 1903 Lowell lectures Peirce produced a large document entitled ‘A Syllabus of Certain Topics of Logic’, which is generally referred to as the ‘Syllabus’.

This document comprises six sections:

1. An Outline Classification of the Sciences (EP 2.258–62) (CP 1.180–202)
2. The Ethics of Terminology (EP 2.263–6) (CP 2.219–16)
3. Sundry Logical Conceptions (EP 2.267–88) (CP 2.274–7, 283–4, 292–4 and 309–31)
4. Nomenclature and Division of Dyadic Relations (CP 3.571–608)³
5. Nomenclature and Divisions of Triadic Relations, as Far as They Are Determined (EP 2.289–99) (CP 2.233–72)
6. Existential Graphs: The Conventions (CP 4.394–417)

It is the fifth section of this syllabus – ‘Nomenclature and Divisions of Triadic Relations, as Far as They are Determined’ – that contains one of Peirce’s better known proposals for the study of semiotics: the three-fold trichotomy of the sign which yields

² These lecture series appear to have been confused by the editors of the *Collected Papers*. Compare the note to the first book of volume V and Brent (1998, 293).

³ The *Collected Papers* indicate that this section is the second part of the 1903 Syllabus but the editors of *The Essential Peirce* suggest it is the fourth, as stated here (EP 2.258).

ten classes of sign. As we have seen, the 1903 typology has been the main focus for most of the prominent figures in music semiotics that have applied Peirce (Monelle 1991, Tarasti 1994, Hatten 1994, Cumming 2000 and Martinez 2000). Although Peirce did not present this classification in table form, a version of Figure 5.1 is commonly found in the Peirce literature.⁴

It would be wrong, however, to regard the 1903 typology as the unquestioned, definitive Peircian sign system, nor should it be regarded as supplanting the initial typology. I argue here that the 1903 typology simply extends the initial typology in certain ways. This extension is in some ways rather experimental,⁵ and the key relations of the initial typology remain the most important factors in its construction. I argue, therefore, for a reengagement with those concepts central to Peirce's initial typology (see Figure 5.2) as a rich source for further developments in the application of Peircian thought to music, especially in their guise as components of the system Peirce developed around 1885 after his discovery of the logic of relations, as discussed below. There is some precedence for a renewed focus upon icon, index and symbol in the work of other music semioticians. Monelle, for example, in *The Sense of Music*, appears to abandon the more rigid combinatorial processes of the 1903 typology employed in Monelle (1991) in favour of a more fluid treatment of the most prominent trichotomy of the standard typology – icon, index, symbol.

⁴ See, for example, Weiss and Burks (1944), Lieb (in LW 160) and Freadman (1996).

⁵ Liszka describes the final typology as 'an interesting experiment', such a description is, it seems to me, equally applicable to the 1903 typology.

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| Firstness: | Secondness: | Thirdness: |
| As the sign in itself | As the relation of the sign to its object | As the sign's interpretant represents it |

| | | | |
|--------|-----------|--------|--------------------|
| First | Qualisign | Icon | Rheme/Term |
| Second | Sinsign | Index | Dicent/Proposition |
| Third | Legisign | Symbol | Argument |

Figure 5.1: The three trichotomies of 1903 or 'interim' typology.

SIGN

- {ICON
- {INDEX
 - {Term (or Rheme)
 - {Proposition (or Dicent)
 - {Argument
- {SYMBOL

Figure 5.2: Peirce's initial or standard typology

| | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| 1.1.1 Rhematic Iconic Qualisign | 1.1.3 Rhematic Iconic Legisign | 1.3.3 Rhematic Symbolic Legisign | 3.3.3 Argument Symbolic Legisign |
| 1.1.2 Rhematic Iconic Sinsign | 1.2.3 Rhematic Indexical Legisign | 2.3.3 Dicent Symbolic Legisign | |
| 1.2.2 Rhematic Indexical Sinsign | 2.2.3 Dicent Indexical Legisign | | |
| | 2.2.2 Dicent Indexical Sinsign | | |

Figure 5.3: Peirce's triangular table of the ten sign types of the 1903 typology with numbering added and bold type removed.

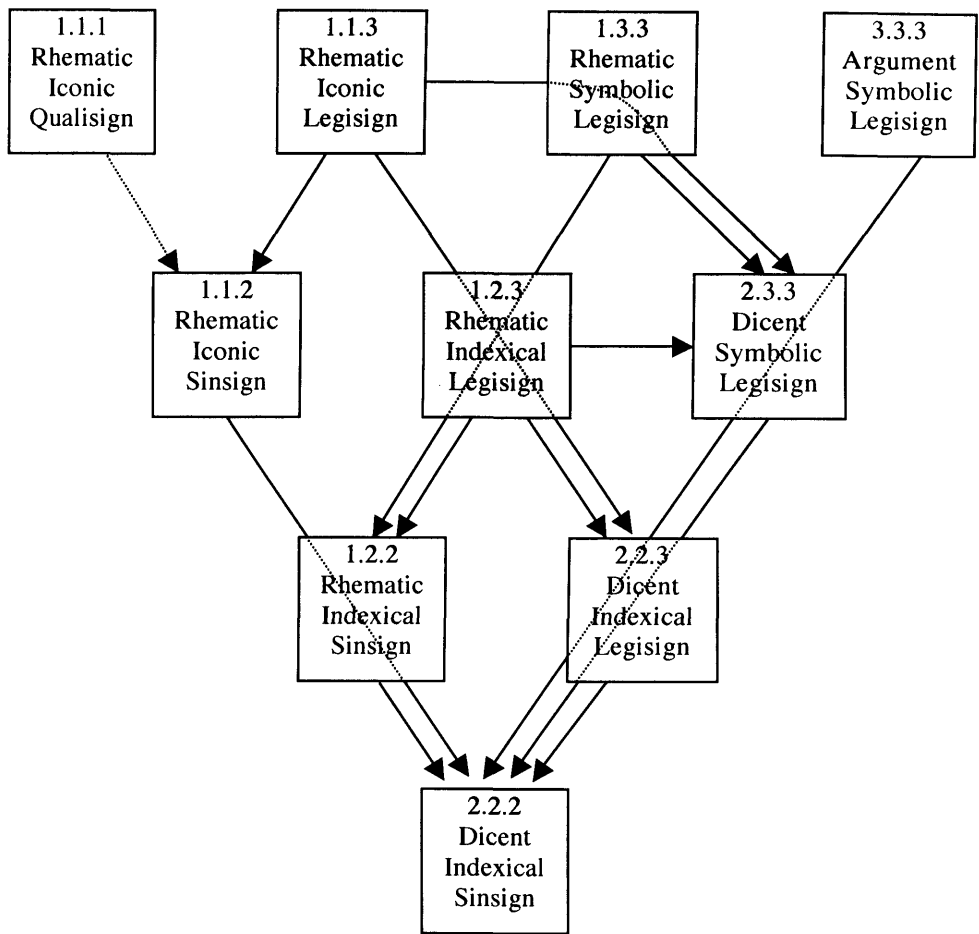


Figure 5.4: Arrows from right to left indicate instantiation or replication. The arrows from left to right indicate composition (In this paper, Peirce usually describes this relationship as the sign to the right *involving* the sign to the left).

Fruitful comparison of the initial and 1903 typologies can be gained by considering the triangular schematization of the 1903 typology Peirce offers in ‘Nomenclature and Divisions’ (Figure 5.3). If we explode the boxes in this schematization arrows can then be used to indicate the interrelationship between the ten sign types. This is done in Figure 5.4 with the arrows running (diagonally) from right to left indicating instantiation or replication – the sign to the right being instantiated by the sign to the left (this is the

token–type or sinsign–legisign relationship). The arrows running from left to right, on the other hand, indicate composition, with the sign to the left being a component of the sign to the right.

As well as adding arrows I have also used shading to highlight the three most prominent signs of the initial typology: icon, index and symbol. This shading will help make clear the close relationship that holds between the initial and the 1903 typology, with the latter best understood as an experiment in extending the core theories of the former.

In beginning to compare the initial and 1903 typologies it is first useful to think of the initial typology as consisting of five sign types. These are the icon, the index and three types of symbol (see Figure 5.2). In the 1903 typology we encounter these five sign-types again. In Figure 5.4 they are represented by the three shaded boxes, which give us the icon (1.1.3), the index (1.2.3) and the rhematic symbol-type (1.3.3). The other two signs are represented by the two unshaded boxes to the right of these, which give us the dicent symbol-type (2.3.3) and the argument symbol-type (3.3.3). These five signs, then, are those shown in Figure 5.2 – three types of symbol, one icon and one index.

The additional signs can be categorized as those deriving from the additional trichotomy of the sign in itself, which produces the qualisign and the three sinsigns and, in addition to this, two further dicent signs (2.2.2 and 2.2.3), one of which is also a sinsign (2.2.2). Of these the qualisign is perhaps the most problematic. It has been comprehensively criticized by senior Peirce scholars such as Douglas Greenlee (1973, 47–9) and David Savan (1988, 23–4) and, as Figure 5.4 suggests, it does not play a clear role in the function of other signs (hence the dotted line connecting it to 1.1.2). The

qualisign is perhaps best understood as a theoretical consequence of Peirce's move to trichotomize his categories in the 1903 typology. The two rhematic sinsigns (1.1.2 and 1.2.2) are again consequences of the theory of the sign-in-itself, but they can be explained by Peirce's apparent need to integrate a theory of the token/type into his theory of signs. However, to the extent that tokens or sinsigns are simply instantiations of types or legisigns, these sign types, it can be argued, are implied by the legisigns they instantiate. For example, if I refer to the map of the London underground I am referring to the legisign and implying thereby a recognition of the many instantiations of it as sinsigns. Thus both of these sinsigns and the qualisign may augment the key signs of the initial typology but they do so in quite a limited sense.

The two additional dicent signs (2.2.2 and 2.2.3) are less easily theorized in terms of the initial typology. However, their experimental status is indicated by the point that when Peirce first defines each sign they receive only a few sentences of explanation (both under 100 words), in contrast to the dicent symbolic legisign (proposition or dicisign), which receives more than twice that (around 230 words) (EP 2.294–6). A further important point concerns the way in which both appear to be derived from the theory of the proposition or dicisign Peirce had developed much earlier. When Peirce comes to discuss some of the signs in a little more detail, for example, the dicent-indexical-legisign, exemplified by a street cry, is distinguished from its symbolic neighbour (the dicent-symbolic-legisign) by the way in which 'its tone and theme identifies the individual [producing the street cry]' (EP 2.297). There is an interesting distinction here, then, between the message and the emitter, and this is not a distinction I would wish to dismiss. Nevertheless the way in which any sign user, through, for example, the

particular manner of their gesture or through the idiosyncrasies of their voice, will signify themselves as an individual quite apart from the gesture made or the words uttered tends to be a secondary concern when engaging with questions of meaning. There is, I think, a case for the importance of the dicent-indexical-legisign in certain musics – in the study of popular music, for example, it may allow us to explain why the idiosyncrasies of Joni Mitchell’s voice carry an aura of authenticity (Moore 2002, 211). But in this example, like others, the dicent-indexical-legisign acts primarily as a missing link (some might say an obvious link) in connecting Joni Mitchell’s music to a complex array of more symbolic signs. The habits of listening that dominate Western-classical-music contexts tend to deemphasize the dicent-indexical-legisign – the difference between two performances of the same ‘work’ being generally considered of limited significance in discerning musical meaning. This situation may well change, not least as a result of the intensification of classical music’s commodification. For example, it is surely a mistake to ignore the complex of non-musical ideas surrounding a prominent media figure like the singer Katherine Jenkins when considering the meaning of her recordings. But again the dicent-indexical-legisign simply provides a link between actual sign emitter and the symbolic meanings that will dominate any investigation of musical meaning. The dicent-indexical-sinsign is a little more easily explained, as it serves to instantiate all other dicent signs and the argument. It too, then, is implied by the sign system in the initial typology and does little to develop its key processes.

These points should lead us, I argue, to view the new signs in the 1903 typology as of limited concern. The sinsigns and additional dicents can be viewed as (commonsense) elaborations of the semiotic processes outlined in the initial typology and

should not detract our attention from the functioning of the icon, index and symbol, a trichotomy which Peirce described in 'Prolegomena to an Apology for Pragmaticism' of 1906 as the 'essence of the sign' (CP 4.531). We may, of course, draw upon the token/type distinction and the different classes of dicent to clarify certain aspects of our thinking when considering meaning, but the signs these distinctions produce need to be understood as aspects of more complex sign situations. The most complex of these will involve the argument, but I will focus upon those signs that will generally constitute the argument; the dicent-symbolic-legisign or dicisign which in turn comprises the 'essence' of semiosis: icon, index, symbol.

A number of other points also suggest that the developments found in the 1903 typology were not of far-reaching significance for Peirce's wider system and that a focus upon the initial typology is a reasonable way to proceed. Firstly, three of the most important monographs on Peirce's philosophy (Murphey 1961, Apel 1981 and Hookway 1985) make little or no mention of the 1903 typology nor its distinguishing feature, the trichotomy of the sign-in-itself, despite extensive discussion of the importance of semiotic theory in Peirce's work. Secondly, the third section of the 'Syllabus' (the 1903 typology appears in the fifth section of the same document), also written in the summer of 1903,⁶ asserts that 'Representamens [or signs] are divided by two trichotomies' (EP 2.273). That this statement has puzzled Peirce scholars is highlighted by its omission from the *Collected Papers* (CP 2.275) and the subsequent crossing out of the word 'second' in favour of 'third' when Peirce comes to discuss each trichotomy in turn (Freadman 1995, 148). This also indicates the more central role Peirce allocates the

⁶ See Brent (1993, 293).

trichotomies of the initial typology. This is backed up further by a third, and perhaps most important, point. After 1903 Peirce did not discuss the 1903 typology in any real detail. In *New Elements* (EP 2, 300–24), which, according to the editors of *The Essential Peirce Volume II*, Peirce probably wrote after the ‘Syllabus’ in 1904 as a preface for an intended book, makes no reference to the first trichotomy of the 1903 typology, despite its considerable discussion of the trichotomy icon, index, symbol and its outlining of the process by which icon and index can be combined in the proposition (a constant concern in Peirce’s semiotics, especially after 1885, and a theory upon which I draw at length in this chapter). The trichotomy of the sign in itself does not appear in print until 1906⁷ in ‘Prolegomena to an Apology for Pragmaticism’ (CP 530-72), and the context of this discussion is worth looking at in a little detail.

‘Prolegomena to an Apology for Pragmaticism’ is a lengthy article, originally published in *The Monist* over 54 pages. Peirce soon (by the second paragraph) gives a quite detailed explanation of the icon–index–symbol trichotomy and introduces his account, as already mentioned, as an analysis of the ‘essence of the sign’ (CP 4.531). Peirce concludes this discussion with the point that deductive arguments involve icons and indices, again suggesting an emphasis upon the integration of entities within a single trichotomy demonstrating key concerns of the standard typology. After a lengthy proof of the icon’s importance to deductive argument, Peirce outlines six divisions of the sign (which would yield 28 classes of sign (LW 84)) before mentioning the ten divisions of the sign (which would yield 66 classes of sign (Ibid.)). Having noted these ten division of the sign we at last have an account of the first trichotomy with the terms qualisign,

⁷ Peirce only published the first two section of the ‘Syllabus’ and part of the sixth. The fifth section, containing the 1903 typology, was not printed (EP 2.258).

sinsign and legisign set aside in favour of tone, token and type. Peirce soon moves on, however, to outline the trichotomy of term, proposition and argument that suggests a widening of the first two concepts, which he relabels seme and pHEME (the terms rheme and dicent of the 1903 typology are now considered inadequate). The token and type are then mentioned very briefly as an introductory aside to a reassertion of the importance of icons and indices as components of the proposition (CP. 4.544) but are not discussed again.

I have given a quite detailed account of this opening section of the 'Apology for Pragmaticism' because I think it representative of Peirce's later concern for signs. That is to say, despite various indications of expanding the standard typology and considerable concern for the two-fold and three-fold division of the object and interpretant respectively⁸ (which lead in later work to the 28 and 66 sign classes), the broader sweep of Peirce's thought remained focused upon the standard typology, in the guise developed after 1885 (discussed in more detail later). Especially important here is the role of icons, indices and symbols which can combine to represent what we term 'truth' as components of terms, propositions and arguments. For these reasons, alongside the problems highlighted regarding the trichotomy of the sign in itself, I argue that music semioticians may find Peircain theory most useful when attention is refocused upon the functioning of icon, index and symbol. The theories that follow also exhibit renewed interest in the trichotomy of term, proposition and argument with particular reference to the possibility of musical propositions or dicisigns that may be understood as combining iconic,

⁸ The most commonly employed labels for these divisions are immediate object and dynamic object and immediate interpretant, dynamic interpretant and final interpretant – for details of the possible distinction between the 'final interpretant' and the other common label, 'logical interpretant', see Greenlee (1973, 117 n.8).

indexical and symbolic operations. Further developments are suggested by considering the relationship between time and Peirce's categories, which has ramifications for how the musical sign is theorized. It is to this area that we now turn.

3 Rethinking the Peircian sign complex in music

When Peirce presented the 'New List' at the age of twenty-seven he had already formulated the basis of his sign complex. At this time its components were labelled relate, correlate and interpretant. In 'On the Algebra of Logic: a Contribution to the Philosophy of Notation' of 1885 (another key text in the development of his semiotics), Peirce adopted the terms sign, object and mind. By the time of the 1903 Lowell lectures, however, Peirce was using those terms we now consider standard: sign, object and interpretant.

Raymond Monelle in his article of 1991 entitled 'Music and the Peircian Trichotomies' gives the following useful summary of the interrelation of these components: 'S means O by virtue of I' (Monelle 1991, 100) and goes on to emphasize the point that the interpretant need not be an interpreting thought in the mind of a person so long as it is interpretative.⁹ Monelle does not explicitly theorize how the Peircian sign-complex relates to music in this article but he appears to conceive music as a sign (e.g. a horn call rising a fifth or octave), which represents an object (e.g. heroism) by virtue of an interpretant (e.g. a listener who associates the two) (Monelle 1991, 102). Like Hatten

⁹ For a more detailed discussion of this more generalized definition of the interpretant see section 11 entitled 'The Sop to Cerberus' of Fisch's essay 'Peirce's General Theory of Signs' (Fisch 1986, 342).

after him, then, Monelle seems to conceive the sign as a musical entity, the object as a cultural unit and the interpretant as an interpretation (Hatten 1994, 243). Naomi Cumming, as we have seen (Chapter 3), takes a slightly different approach, highlighting some of the difficulties associated with identifying the object of a sign complex when music is a sign. Her solution is to suggest a certain inseparability of sign and object. The musical sign's object, she asserts, 'is that quality which is pointed at in the metaphoric description, but not fully grasped by it, or made separable from its sounding form' (Cumming 2000, 76).

Cumming's position is arguably closer to Hatten's and Monelle's than this account might suggest. For although cultural units may appear clearly delineated from their musical counterparts they tend to be defined by them, in some sense, as well as acting to define the musical entities in question. In this way the work of Monelle, Hatten and Cumming might contribute to what Sheinberg has described as a methodology that provides 'an understanding of the various kinds of possible semantic axes, their functions, and the possibilities they open up for musical interpretation' (Sheinberg 2000,12).

The idea that musical signs are somehow inseparable from their objects, however, does not sit particularly well with Peircian thought.¹⁰ In his 'Prolegomena to an Apology for Pragmaticism' (1906), for example, Peirce asserts that '[n]othing is more indispensable to a sound epistemology than a crystal-clear discrimination between the Object and the Interpretant of knowledge' (CP 4.539). When we note, as Monelle does,

¹⁰ But consider also 'in order that anything should be a Sign, it must "represent," as we say, something else, called its Object, although the condition that a Sign must be other than its Object is perhaps arbitrary, since, if we insist upon it we must at least make an exception in the case of a Sign that is a part of a Sign' (CP2.230).

that the 'interpretant is itself a sign' (Monelle 1991, 100), Peirce's statement in the 'Prolegomena' demands some pause for thought.

One possible solution for musical semiotics is to dissociate music from epistemology, a move that Monelle, perhaps, anticipates by squarely placing his discussion of Peirce's 1903 typology within the field of aesthetics and his subsequent distinction between real and seeming dicents. I would make two points in this area, however. Firstly, Peirce's semiotics form a central component of a wider system that he conceived as encompassing all areas of philosophy, a point illustrated by his mapping of his categories firstness, secondness and thirdness onto aesthetics, ethics and logic. Secondly, although we may have some success in dissociating *music* from epistemology, I can see little hope for an argument that claims a clear division between *the study of music* and epistemology. To the extent that epistemology informs us as to what we know and how we know it, there can be little doubt that any understanding of music will draw upon epistemological processes.

One might still insist, however, upon a distinction between *music* and *its study* or between knowledge *in* music and knowledge *about* music.¹¹ But such a distinction can still be maintained (and perhaps clarified) whilst insisting, as Peirce does, upon a clear distinction between the object and the sign/interpretant in music if we reconsider how the Peircian sign complex is applied to music. In this way, the sign complex, rather than becoming redundant in certain aspects of its application (such as those in which sign and object are clearly delineated), may serve as an invaluable means to distinguish different forms of musical understanding and subsequently explore them.

¹¹ This distinction is key to Tagg's account of musical study (see Tagg 2003, 9).

One approach would be to reconceive music as a phenomenon that partakes of the sign complex far more flexibly. That is to consider the possibility that music, in some circumstances, may be better understood as an object or interpretant in the sign complex and not necessarily as a sign.

When we study music it is often an object because it *causes* the signs/interpretants – the network of thoughts that constitute its study. When we inquire into music, reasonable parallels can be drawn with the objects of scientific inquiry (the objects of inquiry with which Peirce tended to be most concerned). We establish (or attempt to establish) facts about the music concerning, for example, relevant dates or sources, compositional models and the social circumstances of composition, performance and reception, as well as those more obviously scientific points regarding acoustic properties such as decibel levels and pitch or frequency content and relations.

This can be contrasted with situations in which music is acting more clearly as sign. In such circumstances we find music meaningful because it produces a series or network of thoughts which appear to represent an object of some sort. Identifying the objects represented by musical signs and interpretants has seemed an endless, almost impossible task (for reasons I hope to demonstrate), but there seems little doubt that music does appear meaningful and to somehow point beyond itself in profound ways, in all sorts of listening situations.

Because sign and interpretant are so closely related (the discernment of one over the other depends on perspective (see Savan 1988, 47)) music can act as both sign and interpretant simultaneously. In listening to a piece of music, many of the thoughts developed will themselves consist of musical sounds, such as those thoughts constituting

anticipated musical outcomes (e.g. I following V⁷) upon which much of Meyer's theories have focused.¹² A similar partaking of the musical sign complex might be discerned in the listening habits Schenker theorized. When listening to a piece of music in accordance with Schenker's ideas, musical interpretants develop that can, in turn, be classified as linear progressions, arpeggiations or neighbour notes; these are in one sense non-musical signs/interpretants, but they tend to develop from and into musical ones. Similarly, if we employ a score to perform a Schenkerian analysis and move from foreground to background, music will be acting primarily as an object of inquiry. But the interpretants we develop will tend to be musical to the extent that the *Ursatz*, in a given key and register, constitutes a musical sound rather than the images we may deploy to represent it.

Both the apparent successes and apparent failures of Schenker's methods can be explained in these terms. When music is object in a Schenkerian context, the emphasis upon interpretants as *also* musical affords Schenkerian analysis an explanatory power that seems unachievable by other means. However, when applied to a listening situation (with music experienced in the present) the tendency to conceive music as a sign can lead to the assumption that the object of the sign complex is the *Ursatz* and/or aspects of the middleground. Music no longer seems to point beyond itself but only to its own mechanisms, somehow robbing it of its power and precluding opportunities for expression – a central idea in Western listening habits (especially since the late eighteenth

¹² Leonard B. Meyer is widely acknowledged as one of the most important music theorists writing in the latter half of the twentieth century. Meyer's engagement of psychological theories concerning the arresting or inhibiting of a tendency to respond is developed in *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (1956). This work forms the basis of Meyer's major contribution to music analysis, *Explaining Music: Essays and Explorations* (1973) in which the key concepts of 'generative event' and 'pattern continuation' are explained in relation to more general concepts such as implication and realization. For a useful summary of Meyer's analytical approach see Cook (1987, 70–89); for a critical account of Meyer's contribution to the wider field of music theory and philosophy see Bowman (1998, 166–193).

century). The construal of music as sign as opposed to object leads, it seems to me, to calls such as Hatten's for the need to 'recover from the repression of expressive discourse among music scholars' (Hatten 1994, 228).

My parenthesized reference to music in the present anticipates a further means of developing our understanding of the Peircian sign complex in music. This concerns the point that Peirce's categories can, in Apel's words, be 'rigidly coordinated with the three dimensions of time' (Apel 1981, 96). The details of this claim will be explored in more detail later, but it is worth briefly exploring, at this point, the way in which present, past and future can be coordinated with sign, object and interpretant by means of the categories.

When music is acting as a sign it exemplifies firstness, but this firstness becomes more readily applicable the more fully we focus our attention upon music at the moment of its inception/perception. When, in this sense, 'operating' in the present, music is a sign which determines an interpretant which corresponds to an object.

As our focus moves to music as a past occurrence it will become more successfully theorized not as a sign but as an object that will throw up a series of interpretants via a sign. When conceived as a past actuality music will not relate to a specific object for it is itself the object of our inquiry; it will instead serve to cause a series of interpretants that may, given sufficient time to inquire and the proper approach to inquiry, yield a final interpretant corresponding to the real or dynamic object.

If we now turn our attention to music in the future, we concern ourselves with the multitude of generalizations, rules and laws that we infer from musical experience. In such cases music is best understood as one or more interpretants in a series of

interpretants. The object into which such interpretants inquire consists of the instances of actual music. Another way to conceive of music as an interpretant is to consider the context of a classroom. If I play a perfect cadence to a group of students so as to demonstrate a structural feature underpinning much common-practice music, we have firstness in the moment of its inception/perception, secondness in the actuality of the sound but the overarching significance is the music's thirdness, that is its function as a generalization identifiable by the future thoughts it determines. In this sense, such a generalization is not static and will form, as such, one interpretant in a series of interpretants that are aimed towards a fuller understanding of the music actualized in common practice. When music is employed primarily as a reasoned conclusion it is a third, which refers therefore to the future:

[T]he conclusion of a Reasoning power must refer to the Future. For its meaning refers to conduct, and since it is a reasoned conclusion must refer to deliberate conduct, which is controllable conduct. But the only controllable conduct is Future conduct.

(CP 5.461)

Such ideas go some way towards freeing up applications of the Peircian sign complex to music, suggesting not only a more fluid and faithful conception of Peirce's categories but also a fuller insight into music's broadness both as an object of inquiry and as an integral component of the inquiring process.

4 Rethinking the application of the trichotomies to music

In discussing Peirce's trichotomies I have made a case for reengaging certain aspects of the initial typology given in Figure 5.2. The key point here is that central aspects of this typology are more central to the broader sweep of Peirce's philosophy and may, therefore, provide a more sophisticated and rigorous set of tools for pursuing questions of musical meaning. The role of icon, index and symbol in Peirce's wider system will now be examined more closely.

By around 1885 Peirce had developed an argument for his categories based on his logic of relations. This asserts that whilst relations with a *valency* of four or more can always be reduced to relations with a valency of three or less, relations with a valency of three will not always be reducible in this manner. This development in Peirce's thought meant a considerable widening of the scope of his categories (in contrast to the 'New List', where their applicability was more narrowly focused upon the process of representation) as demonstrated in 'A Guess at the Riddle' (1887–88)¹³ in which his three categories are now construed as indicating the three elements active in the universe.

This new argument for the categories had considerable impact on Peirce's conception of the initial typology. The notions icon, index and symbol are now defined in terms of the logic of relations, with the first two terms subject to considerable development. In the 'New List', Peirce tends to follow Kant in adopting the traditional logical notion of analyzing a proposition into a single subject and a predicate. The

¹³ In the *Collected Papers* this date is given as c.1890.

predicate (from which Peirce derives the representational category icon or likeness) is the more mediate than the subject to which it is applied:

Take, for example, the proposition, 'This stove is black.' Here the conception of *this stove* is the more immediate, that of *black*, the more mediate, which latter, to be predicted of the former, must be discriminated from it and considered *in itself*.

(EP 1.4)

In 'On the Algebra of Logic' of 1885, however, the icon is considered the most immediate of signs. The singularity of the icon suggested by the logic of relations leads Peirce to conceive of a sign relation so immediate that it is scarcely distinguishable from the object to which it relates.

I call a sign which stands for something merely because it resembles it, an *icon*.

Icons are so completely substituted for their objects as hardly to be distinguished from them. Such are the diagrams of geometry. A diagram, indeed, so far as it has a general signification, is not a pure icon; but in the middle part of our reasonings we forget that abstractness in great measure, and the diagram is for us the very thing.

So in contemplating a painting, there is a moment when we lose the consciousness that it is not the thing, the distinction of the real and the copy disappears, and it is for the moment a pure dream — not any particular existence, and yet not general.

At that moment we are contemplating an *icon*.

(CP 3.362)

The index is perhaps more radically reconceived after 1885. In the 'New List' the subject of a proposition is termed the substance so that '[i]f we say "The stove is black", the stove is the substance' (EP 1.2). Now, in the 'New List', Peirce identifies five categories (the first and last are abandoned by 1885). These are schematized thus:

BEING,

Quality,

Relation,

Representation,

SUBSTANCE.

The most mediate category is on the top, the most immediate on the bottom. The stove, then, as substance is the most immediate category, which can be joined to a predicate (quality) in the proposition. Although substance is the most immediate, it relies upon the other categories: 'the impressions (or more immediate conceptions) cannot be definitely conceived or attended to, to the neglect of an elementary [and more mediate] conception which reduces them to unity' (EP 1.3). As a result an object like a stove is not directly available or identifiable, as it relies on the somewhat complex processes or representation that the 'New List' is at pains to outline. This entails an infinite regress when considering the proposition as informing or misinforming us about the world, for as Murphey puts it 'every atomic sentence would have to be so interpreted and we should never reach any

first sentence which would tell us what we are talking about' (Murphey 1993 [1961], 301).

Partly as a means of resolving this problem¹⁴ Peirce now conceives the index (previously associated with the category of relation, which later becomes secondness) as identifying its object directly; he writes in the 1885 'Algebra of Logic':

Supposing, then, the relation of the sign to its object does not lie in a mental association [as it does in the case of a symbol], there must be a direct dual relation of the sign to its object independent of the mind using it I call such a sign an *index*, a pointing finger being the type of the class.

(EP 1.226)

Notice the reference to a dual relation between sign and object in the index, again underlining the importance of the logic of relations in Peirce's conception of semiotics.

This development of icon and index in Peirce's thought around 1885 has been discussed at some length for two reasons. Firstly, the conception of the categories (in part exemplified by the trichotomy icon–index–symbol) in 1885 is particularly important because Peirce's conception of them did not radically change beyond that date. Murphey is again instructive: 'regardless of whether the categories are based on logic or on phenomenology the description of them in their material aspect undergoes no significant change from 1885 until Peirce's death' (Murphey 1993 [1961], 369). Secondly, and more importantly, the newly developed role of the index in allowing knowledge of the

¹⁴ For a further discussion of possible reasons for these developments see Murphey (1993 [1961] 301ff).

world begins to explain the vital role Peirce's semiotics played in his wider theories of knowledge, truth and reality. A similarly important role, we will see, is also found in the case of the icon and the symbol. Hookway provides a useful summary:

In an 1885 paper 'On the Algebra of Logic' Peirce introduces the thesis that an adequate language for articulating the content of assertions about reality must involve signs of all three kinds: symbols, icons and indices. This paper is fairly early, but Peirce held to this claim, although others of his views changed.

(Hookway 1985, 130)

If we consider, then, that a central aspect of Peirce's philosophy after 1885 entails the simultaneous functioning of icon, index and symbol in language, it is perhaps surprising that music semioticians have done little to pursue a corresponding set of sign-functions in music. Monelle gives some indication as to why this might be the case. Monelle's reservations are, I think, explained in part by key words in Hookway's quotation, that is by the terms 'assertion' and 'reality'. Monelle apparently avoids those aspects of Peircian semiotics that deal with signs that make true or false assertions or deal with reality. How, after all, could musical assertions be deemed true or false? Monelle, therefore distinguishes between a dicent and a seeming dicent, the former – relating to reality or a real object – is not applied to music, the latter – relating to a virtual object – is. This move to reconceive the proposition, dicent or dicisign as a means to explain the functioning of musical meaning is a focus for the arguments that follow, but whereas Monelle structures his points in relation to the interim typology, I will focus, instead,

upon the standard typology and the simultaneous functioning of icon, index and symbol, as I believe it may offer a new coherence to semiotic responses to questions of musical meaning.

In the 1885 'Algebra of Logic' Peirce set out a series of notational tools for the analysis of propositions. All of these signs are 'of the nature of' symbols (here called tokens), indices or icons. Signs of simple propositions such as t for 'He is a taxpayer', for example, are taken to be symbols as is the single operative sign ' \rightarrow ' (CP 3.385).¹⁵ Indices here are those aspects of the notation that indicate connection via juxtaposition, such as the placing of letters next to the operative sign, but also indices of symbols which pick out an *actuality* via a symbol such as x (CP 3.366).¹⁶ Icons are described here as the general formulas themselves and exemplify algebraic proceedings (CP 3.385). By 1895 Peirce's conception of the signs that constitute a proposition are articulated with greater clarity:

It is impossible to find a proposition so simple as to not have references to two signs. Take, for instance, 'it rains.' Here the icon is the mental composite photograph of all the rainy days the thinker has experienced. The index, is all whereby he distinguishes *that day*, as it is placed in his experience. The symbol is the mental act whereby he stamps that day as rainy.¹⁷

(EP 2.20)

¹⁵ Hookway suggests that $A \rightarrow B$, roughly means that A's being the case is a sign that B is the case (Hookway 1985, 136).

¹⁶ On this point Peirce writes '[t]his letter is a token [i.e. a symbol]. There is a general understanding that the actual state of things or some other is referred to. This understanding must have been established by means of an index, and to some extent dispenses with the need of other indices' (CP 3.372).

¹⁷ Note that to predicate a quality of something is to state that the thing has all the attributes common to every instance of the thing.

We see in this statement from ‘Of Reasoning in General’ (the first and only chapter for an intended work entitled *Short Logic*) the basic outline of the theory of propositions laid down in ‘Sundry Logical Conceptions’, the third of Peirce’s Lowell lectures of 1903. Hookway provides a particularly insightful account of this theory in *Peirce* (1985), and it is upon this summary, in particular, that the following arguments draw. As Hookway suggests it is hard to find a settled account of the detail of Peirce’s theory of the proposition or dicisign, a point, in part, illustrated by the discrepancies between the statements above taken from the 1885 ‘Algebra of Logic’ and ‘Of Reasoning in General’. But Hookway provides us with a clear and insightful approach to understanding Peirce’s view of propositions, which proves particularly fruitful when applied to music.

Hookway takes Peirce’s example from ‘Sundry Logical Conceptions’ of the proposition ‘Cain kills Abel’. In one sense this proposition, which we will now term a dicisign, is composed entirely of symbols, for without the generality of understanding upon which words rely it would be meaningless. But as Hookway summarizes ‘among the symbols employed ... there must be some whose meaning fits them to function as indices and some that work like icons’ (Hookway 1985, 131). Borrowing from Hookway’s slight simplification, we can think of Peirce conceiving ‘Cain’ and ‘Abel’ as indices because they pick out actual existing (or once existing) things; they form the *subject* of the dicisign. This is comparable to the algebraic term x , which refers to ‘the actual state of things’ (CP 3.372) discussed in 1885, and the notion of ‘*that day*’ implied in the dicisign ‘it rains’ discussed in 1895. The icon in the dicisign can be represented as ‘() kills ()’. It is the unsaturated *predicate* expression that contains (in this case) two

slots or unsaturated bonds.¹⁸ This icon corresponds to the formulas that ‘exemplify [or diagrammatically represent] algebraic proceedings’ discussed in 1885, or the formula ‘() rains’ which allows ‘*that day*’ to be predicated by ‘raininess’.¹⁹ The dicisign then consists in relating a firstness or a quality (expressed by an icon) and a secondness, an existing thing (indicated by an index).

Now although, as Monelle makes clear, the application of the dicisign to music is not straightforward, because music cannot be either true or false – a characteristic of the dicisign upon which Peirce is quite insistent (EP 2.275) – it seems fair to apply this bringing together of firstness and secondness as predicate and subject, under the guidance of thirdness or generality, to all forms of human thought and communication. For although art and music may have what Monelle terms the ‘odour of firstness’ (1991, 107), any thought associated with it must entail all three categories. With some modifications, then, this theory of the dicisign may serve to elucidate the process of musical meaning. Monelle’s notion of the seeming dicent (or seeming dicisign) can, I think, inform this modification process.

Monelle’s seeming dicisign concerns the way in which art, despite its non-reality, can somehow appear more vivid and real than reality itself. There is clearly a paradox here, but one that might be explained by the indexical components of the dicisign in music. The function of the index (or more precisely the symbol that functions as an

¹⁸ Peirce’s use of the term predicate in relation to this theory is a little wider than this implies. Hookway suggests that Peirce was happy with considering the predicate as any of the following: () kills (); Cain kills (), or () kills Abel (Hookway 1985, 131–2)

¹⁹ Notice how the iconic formula ‘() rains’ has one slot whereas the formula ‘() kills ()’ has two. A three-slot version is also encountered in examples such as ‘() gives () to ()’. We see here, then, the categories reflected in the valency of unsaturated expressions, which function iconically because they *diagram* the relationship between the subjects that fill the slots. These iconic functions can be contrasted with indexical and symbolic functions again reflecting the operation of the three universal categories.

index) in the linguistic dicisign is to pick out actual things which can, by the same stroke, be predicated either in themselves (qualities), in relation to another actual thing or in relation to two other actual things. In order to apply the dicisign to music this indexical function needs to be rethought quite radically, because musical conventions are such that any picking out process is always *contestable*.²⁰ This contestability is discernable from the insights of other music semioticians. Tarasti, for example, notes that whilst the subject of J. S. Bach's Fugue in C sharp minor can be (and would have been) taken to represent (or pick out) the cross (an actuality, we assume, before becoming an abstract sign), it might also be taken to represent the more nebulous concept 'absolute music'. If we accept the argument that the indexicality of music is always contestable, we can explain this conflict between two plausible references (the cross and absolute music) as exemplifying the interpretative practice that has become *habitual* in the West – that is, the practice of contesting what is picked out by the musical index.

This absence of clarity with regards to what is, or should be, picked out by such indices might lead us to suspect that music simply does not have an indexical function in any way comparable to the dicisign in language. But this only leads to further difficult questions such as, why does music, for some listeners, seem to relate with such intensity to the world? (Consider Mendelssohn's much debated idea of music's superiority to words in terms of accuracy.) Why, we ask again, does music seem to point beyond itself? Why does music seem so immediate, that is, in Monelle's words, have such an odour of firstness? And why, we might ask, following Monelle, does music, like other arts, appear

²⁰ Ratner, Agawu, Allanbrook and Monelle's pioneering work on topic theory clearly demonstrates how, despite the contestability of the index, musical meanings can be broadly established, but the recurring debates surrounding this area again indicate the tendency in the West to contest the connection between music and actuality.

more real than reality itself? If we accept that the dicisign can be applied to music and that there is an indexical (or picking out) aspect to this process but, furthermore, that the question as to what is picked out is contestable, we may begin to give a systematic answer to these questions.

Because the index of the musical dicisign is contested, listeners (particularly listeners to Western classical instrumental music) are given far greater freedom than is the habit in linguistic contexts, to bring ideas and experiences to bear upon the sounds they hear. The slots indicated by brackets in the examples below can be filled by ideas and experiences to which we (the listening subjects) attach particular importance. This importance can be so great that the ideas in question may be integral to our subjectivity, defined here as one's conception of oneself. Thus music's immediacy, vitality and apparent reality can be explained as an identity forming process whereby our most intimate memories can be brought into new relations that leave us feeling more in touch with who we are and what we think, or perhaps *how we are through what we think*. To extend Monelle's point regarding the seeming dicisign that the 'emotional trajectory of student compositions is lukewarm and incoherent; but life is often like that, too', we might surmise that listening subjects are fragmented but, through certain listening practices (as with many other creative practices), they can come to feel more coherent and 'composed'.

The new relations into which remembered experiences are drawn function like the iconic components of the dicisign in language. In language these can have a valency of one, two or three. Examples of each in language can be demonstrated by the following:

() is red

() kills ()

() gives () to ().

The tendency for music to be heard as grouped into twos or threes is perhaps significant with regard to this point: consider, for example, Cooper and Meyer's five basic rhythmic groupings which all have either two or three components (Cooper and Meyer 1960, 6); the way musical periods generally divide into two phrases; the way musical sentences can be theorized in terms of three formal functions (Caplin 1998); or the way melodic sequences tend to comprise three component parts. But such an application of the logic of relations is potentially crude and will not be pursued here.

In order to understand the iconic aspect of a musical design we might consider Peirce's distinction between depth and breadth. Broadly speaking the icon has more depth; it concerns qualitative relation and has no application to the actual world. The index has more breadth; it can be applied to things in the world. Peirce conceives the iconic by using that term more familiar to the discussion of music: form.

The arrangement of the words in the sentence, for instance, must serve as *Icons*, in order that the sentence may be understood. The chief need for the Icons is in order to show the Forms of the synthesis of the elements of thought. For in precision of speech, Icons can represent nothing but Forms and Feelings. That is why Diagrams are indispensable in all Mathematics, from Vulgar Arithmetic up, and in Logic are almost so. For Reasoning, nay, Logic generally, hinges entirely on Forms... No

pure Icons represent anything but Forms; no pure Forms are represented by anything but Icons.

(CP. 4.544)

Music is, in one sense, only depth, or only form. It is only a set of relations on one level because referential conventions have tended to be undermined by the belief that musical meaning should be separated from the actuality of the world.²¹ But for music to be entirely without breadth would render it somehow irrelevant to that world and the subjects that inhabit it, hence the need for the very personal indexical operations described above – without breadth, we might say, there is no meaning. However, music's lack of convention to concretize its indexical function makes identifying the slots and their relations a more difficult process than that associated with language. We will look later at how this process may be elucidated by considering the dimensions of time and their coordination with Peirce's categories, but before exploring this area we will benefit from considering again the most successful application of Peircian semiotics to music to date, that is, the work of Robert Hatten.

5 Hatten's reading of the slow movement of Beethoven's

Piano Sonata in B♭ Op. 106 (Hammerklavier)

As has already been asserted in Chapter 4, Hatten, in his adaption of Peircian thought in

²¹ For a compelling account as to why this might be the case see Tagg (2003, 12–32).

conjunction with markedness theory, has produced a set of interpretative tools and approaches that have proved hugely successful and influential. Hatten's readings of Beethoven's music in *Musical Meaning in Beethoven* are compelling and the first of these, concerning the slow movement of the *Hammerklavier*, is examined here as a means of exploring the theory of the musical dicisign.

Hatten provides an interpretation of the movement as a whole in terms of a transition from 'tragic to transcendent' (Hatten 1994, 26). We will focus, however, upon the detail of the first part of Hatten's reading so as to investigate the operation of the dicisign on a smaller scale. One of the first meanings Hatten discusses in relation to the movement concerns the thick, chordal texture from bar 2ff, which is taken to suggest 'the high *stylistic register* of a hymn' (Ibid., 14). Hatten's reasoning here appears to be that in the stylistic opposition high to low the former can be correlated with notions of religious sentiment (Ibid., 76).²² However, the possible iconic connections (resulting from their markedness values) between high-vs-low and religious-vs-nonreligious are, as I have suggested in Chapter 5, insufficient to generate this correlation, although they may, as Hatten tends to assert, play a part in sustaining them, or keeping them coherent.

The correlation, instead, might appear to be derived from the argument that the thick-chordal texture in question is a token of a textural type identified by its hymnic qualities, for, according to Hatten, it is the qualities or 'invariant features' of the token that identify them as a type (Ibid., 50ff.). Hatten seems to view such a classification as almost self-evident and refers to a 'hymnic texture' in this opening passage (Ibid., 14), suggesting a quality (hymnic) that can be predicated of a texture type (thick-textured

²² Hatten goes on to complicate this opposition by positing the gallant style as an unmarked middle style in opposition to the marked high/tragic and the low/buffa styles.

chords) which is instantiated at bb. 2ff. This might lead us to assume the secure reasoning of the deductive syllogism:

Type is quality²³ thick-textured chordal passages are hymnic
Token is type bb. 2ff of Op. 106 mov. 3 is a thick-textured chordal passage
∴ Token is quality bb. 2ff of Op. 106 mov. 3 is hymnic

(Deductive syllogism)

The validity supplied by the deductive syllogism derives from the security of the middle terms that connect the two premises, in this case ‘thick-textured chordal passages’. As I have suggested, however, such security of reference is not culturally established in music in the way it is in language.²⁴ It can be usefully argued, then, that the reasoning involved in Hatten’s assertion is best considered abductive rather than deductive:

Type is quality hymns are thick-textured chords
Token is quality bar 2ff of Op. 106 mov. 3 is thick-textured chords

²³ Peirce did not, to my knowledge, use the terms quality, token and type in articulating a syllogism in this manner. It has been used here to indicate how such syllogisms might relate to Hatten’s key distinction between token and type.

²⁴ This is indicated by the point that some thick chordal textures in the classical style are not particularly hymnic. Consider the last chorus in the first act of Mozart’s *Le Nozze di Figaro* or the third movement of Mozart’s piano sonata in B flat K. 333, which contains two five-part note-against-note ideas between bars 132–6, neither of which, in the context of the work as a whole, seem particularly likely to engender thoughts of hymns. Hatten appears aware of this uncertainty, as he refers to the passage as ‘quite topical’ (my emphasis). But it is important to note that the connection to the concept hymn is a key means by which Hatten sets up the notions of spirituality and solemnity, which are central to his subsequent interpretation.

∴ Token is type bar 2ff of Op. 106 mov. 3 is a hymn

(Abductive syllogism)

The application of the abductive syllogism makes clear the instability of meaning in this example, a point that can be illustrated by the addition of the parenthesized terms below:

Type is quality (most) hymns are thick-textured chords

Token is quality bar 2ff of Op. 106 is thick-textured chords

∴ Token is type bar 2ff of Op. 106 is (like) (most) hymns

(Abductive syllogism with parenthesized qualifications)

Thus although Hatten's interpretative reference to a hymn is plausible it is not definitive and may be replaced by a listening subject who considers another reference more appropriate or resonant. In this way, we can see that there is not only considerable flexibility in the realm of the index in the musical *dicisign*, but the classification of the icon is also malleable and will relate (perhaps dialectically)²⁵ to those thoughts and experiences picked out by the listening subject to form the index.

To explain this key process a little further we might consider again the simple *dicisign* 'it rains'. The term 'rains' here is a symbol, but it forms part of the iconic aspect

²⁵ This possible connection between Peirce's categories and the Hegelian dialectical triadic process is usefully summarized by Josiah Royce in the second volume of *The Problem of Christianity*, a summary of which Peirce apparently approved. Royce writes: '[t]here is no essential inconsistency between the logical and psychological motives which lie at the basis of Peirce's theory of the triad of interpretation, and the Hegelian interest in the play of thesis, antithesis and higher synthesis. But Peirce's theory, with its explicitly empirical origin and its exact logical working out, promises new light upon matters which Hegel left profoundly problematic' (in Fisch 1986, 275). Peirce was often clear, however, on the discrepancies between his and Hegel's theories. For an authoritative account of this matter see 'Hegel and Peirce' in Fisch (1986).

of the dicisign in that it concerns a quality that can be predicated of the object ('that day') identified by the index. This icon is communicated as a generalization, hence the need for the symbol 'rains'. Similarly in the example from Beethoven's *Hammerklavier*, bar 2ff is predicated by the quality 'thick-textured chords', which is communicated, in this instance, in terms of the generalizing term 'hymn'. But if we concede that it is abductive rather than deductive reasoning that engenders the connection between bar 2ff and 'hymn', it becomes apparent that such a connection is unstable because not all hymns are thick-textured chords (they can be monophonic, for example) and even if all hymns exhibited a thick texture it does not follow that all thickly-textured chords are hymns: all crows may be black but not all black things are necessarily crows.

Having said this, the icon in the musical dicisign is more stable and conventionalized than the index. In the West, we have allowed music to be labelled in qualitative terms, and music education can tend to encourage the description of music by means of words like bright, powerful, innocent etc. For these reason, amongst others, much of the work on musical topics has been highly successful, with Monelle's last monograph (2006) representing one of the most important achievements in this field to date. But the importance of the abductive syllogism in establishing such connections underlines their uncertainty.²⁶ Furthermore, the relative openness of the index (also established by convention) coupled with the interactive relationship between index and

²⁶ Sisman's (1997, 64) and Lowe's (2007, 25) questions regarding the identity of topics stem, I would argue, from this uncertainty of topical reference. Sisman, for example, asks whether 'every tremolo passage in a minor key [is] a "reference" to *Sturm und Drang* or every imitative passage "learned style?" (Sisman 1993, 46). This point is addressed again a little later.

icon ensures a high degree of malleability in the process of conceiving music's qualitative, that is iconic, dimension.²⁷

The introduction of the syllogism also allows us a means of indicating how the index in the musical dicisign might be operating. The syllogisms discussed above tend to suggest a sign situation in which music is object. The reference to the score tends to lead us to think of the music as some kind of consistent object that can be examined scientifically. If we now consider music as a sign we are emphasizing its firstness, and it is then better considered more in terms of the thick-textured chords themselves, or the moment-by-moment experience of those chords, which happen, through abductive reasoning in this instance, to be taken as indicative of the hymn. The reference to the score then appears anomalous, unless the listener thinks primarily of how the conventions of Western notation have been applied to, or were instrumental in the genesis of, what they hear. If we dispense with the reference to the score, we might then indicate the contestability of the object in the sign complex (picked out indexically) by using the context-dependent, demonstrative pronoun 'this'.

Type is quality hymns are thick-textured chords

Token is quality this is thick-textured chords

∴ Token is type this is a hymn

(Abductive syllogism)

²⁷ The relationships permissible by iconic means are extremely broad, as only a sharing of some quality is required. Clearly the more thorough the qualitative interchange, the more likely an iconic connection, but, in many Western listening contexts, this motivation is secondary to the practice of relating musical sounds to remembered and important experiences – an indexical rather than iconic process.

The term 'this' is employed in order to draw our consideration away from the music as a past object and more towards the experience of music in the present. 'This' is the object referred to moment-by-moment in the listening process and begins to give us a fuller sense of the index within the musical design during the listening process.

The predicate of 'this' can, as we have seen, be established by abduction, but deductive reasoning may also be brought to bear on the music both as sign and as object. The clearest example of this provides one of Hatten's strongest examples for his theory of markedness and correlation, but can be fruitfully explained by syllogistic structures. In the case of the minor key:

All minor-key passages are tragic²⁸

This is a minor key

This is tragic

(Deductive syllogism)

The first premise of this syllogism is established by inductive means (this is a minor key; this is tragic; therefore, all minor keys are tragic) but such reasoning does seem to hold fairly consistently if we limit ourselves to 'the classical style' – a key aspect of Hatten's argument.

Because both firstness (exemplified in abduction) and thirdness (exemplified in deduction) rely upon a degree of abstraction²⁹ they readily grow into networks of

²⁸ A premise derived primarily from inductive reasoning, I would suggest, but also from its opposition to major (cf. Hatten 1994, 36) which, according to Hatten, keeps the correlation coherent.

²⁹ For a compelling account of the difficulties presented by the ambiguities this entails see Murphey (1993 [1961], 308ff).

interpretants in the manner of G.-G. Granger's schematization of Peircian semiosis (see Figure 1.6). The deductive processes involved in this proliferation of interpretants tend to be relatively few or are derived from the conclusions of abductive reasoning, with the abductively derived conclusion 'this is a hymn' furnishing the deductive syllogism 'all hymns are spiritual – this is a hymn; therefore, this is spiritual'. When deductive reasoning is more directly involved, such as in the case of the minor key, it may still be subject to contestation for two interrelated reasons. Firstly, Western listening practices have come to favour the idea of a universal musical meaning beyond the contingencies of time and place (the correlation tragic being clearly context-dependent and culture-specific). Secondly, even music of the classical period has been recontextualized during the twentieth century so as to undermine interpretants such as 'tragic'; hence the use of the C minor *Andante con moto* from Schubert's Piano Trio in E flat, D. 929, which appears to be used in Kubrick's film *Barry Lydon* more as a sign of bourgeois respectability than of tragedy. Thus the *depth*, which develops from the network of interpretants in the listening experience, is highly malleable, allowing its marriage with a broad range of indices: the actual events, thoughts, experiences and feelings deemed relevant by the listening subject. All of these will be located in the past and made available through memory. This relevance will, of course, be guided in part by the qualitative, sequential patterning of the musical experience, but the reading of these patterns will be equally reliant upon the musical index, which is contestable and *open* to our subjectivity. This approach to listening is a habit developed in the West and has, it would seem, an intimate connection with the habits of language and reasoning that

prevail therein.³⁰ This explanation of listening practices in terms of an interaction between icon (malleable quality) and index (subjective entities we bring to the music) closely mirrors Fisk's understanding of the listening habits³¹ surrounding Western instrumental music:

Musical feelings and actions are thus feelings and actions that we have allowed music to appropriate, transforming them into music; they are not something outside music that it represents but rather something inside us that we vouchsafe to it.

(Fisk 1997, 182)

In view of these arguments, it could be proposed that Hatten's interpretation of the opening section of the third movement of Beethoven's *Hammerklavier*, which has considerable relevance for the rest of his interpretation, has as much to do with Hatten as a listening subject as any objectively verifiable meanings or codal competencies.³² The production of *depth* by means of the terms spiritual, grieving and solemnity, tell us, perhaps, as much about Hatten at the time of interpretation as it does anything else.³³

³⁰ Marion Guck's ground-breaking essay, 'Analytical Fictions', is useful here. Guck cites Feld's work on how the Kaluli of Papua New Guinea conceptualize music in terms of waterfalls and birdsongs. 'If these sources seem strange or implausible', Guck asserts, 'our inclination to model music in terms of human thought and emotion would likely seem equally odd to the Kaluli' (Guck 1998, 173).

³¹ Fisk highlights the sense of convention and contingency in Western listening practices when he points out that 'students of music have come to accept its [the listening tradition's] contingency, its dependence on outside forces, and to articulate the ways it is embedded in culture' (Fisk 1997, 181).

³² Of interest here is Melanie Lowe's point, following Wimsatt and Beardsley, that 'limiting the study of a work of art to its intrinsic nature ... ironically prohibits all but individual and subjective meanings, no matter how objective such meanings are intended to be' (Lowe 2007, 21).

³³ Hatten discusses the 'great personal sorrow' he felt at the time of writing *Musical Meaning in Beethoven* in the preface (Hatten 1994, xvi). Guck is again useful here in her assertion that 'language conveying a personal involvement with musical works pervades, indeed shapes, even the most technically orientated

When I listen to the passage in question I bring ideas of a lone subject engrossed in reflection, but there is no sense of grief or solemnity, rather only self-affirmation. This, however, is not to deny the effectiveness of Hatten's interpretation. I would even go so far as to suggest that it is this very insight into the intense process of his subjectivity at the time of writing *Musical Meaning in Beethoven* that enabled Hatten to give us such compelling interpretations of Beethoven's music. The theoretical framework I have detailed does differ from that of Hatten, however. It offers, I think, a fuller understanding of the listening process – its uncertainty, but also its potential for intense affect and apparent specificity – by employing a quite different application of Peircian semiotics.

6 *Temporality and the categories*

Distinguishing between icons and indices in the musical dicisign is not entirely straightforward. We have already noted the way in which the iconic in music (the musical equivalent of '() rains' or '() kills ()') can somehow influence those ideas and thoughts selected to form the musical index. And we may well be concerned that what is qualitative (or iconic) and what is actual (indexical) in the musical dicisign is scarcely distinguishable. Matters are perhaps worsened by my assertion that the index is contestable, rendering it, in one sense, more virtual than actual. This section looks at how the dimensions of time might be employed to elucidate these ambiguities and used to form a more stable basis for theorizing the icon and the index in the musical dicisign.

musical prose' (Guck 1998, 158). And later she remarks that it is 'easy to overlook analysts' portrayal of personal relationships with musical works' (Ibid., 174).

The difficulty of distinguishing things from qualities is a long-standing issue in philosophy and is a key problem concerning questions of being and identity. Some of the controversy in this area centres on Leibniz's Identity of Indiscernibles: the principle that if x has all the properties of y and vice versa, then x and y are identical.³⁴ One of Peirce's means of addressing the problems this principle entails is through his concept of indexicality, also called haecceity or thisness. Murphey gives a useful summary:

Haecceity is a *term* derived from Scotus and used by Peirce to designate the peculiar nature of existential things. The *haecceity* of something consists of its *thisness* – its brute insistency on being this particular thing... Peirce does not regard terms such as 'this,' 'that,' 'here,' 'now,' or terms serving as spatiotemporal coordinates as qualities; rather they are regarded as indexes or indicators having a purely denotative role. If this doctrine be granted, it follows that the Identity of Indiscernibles does not hold for *haecceities*; two things may have identical properties yet be distinct in their spatiotemporal properties. Accordingly, Peirce holds that a *haecceity* can never possess a quality per se – a quality in the possession of which its individuality consists – for if it did it would have to be identical with anything also possessing that property, even if this other thing had different spatiotemporal coordinates.

(Murphey 1993 [1961], 275)

³⁴ For a brief summary see Scruton (2004: 143-48)

In giving this summary Murphey cites one of Peirce's reviews of Ernst Schröder's works on the logic of relatives published in 1896 in *The Monist*. This review (reproduced in CP 3.425–55) also gives a useful account of icons indicating how their function is quite different from the denotative function of indices:

[Iconic signs] are supposed to excite in the mind of the receiver familiar images, pictures, or, we might almost say, dreams — that is, reminiscences of sights, sounds, feelings, tastes, smells, or other sensations, now quite detached from the original circumstances of their first occurrence, so that they are free to be attached to new occasions. The deliverer is able to call up these images at will (with more or less effort) in his own mind; and he supposes the receiver can do the same... Not only is the outward significant word or mark a sign, but the image which it is expected to excite in the mind of the receiver will likewise be a sign — a sign by resemblance, or, as we say, an *icon* — of the similar image in the mind of the deliverer, and through that also a sign of the real quality of the thing. This icon is called the predicate of the assertion [or *dicisign*].

(CP 3.434)

Although we have already explored the basic distinction between indices and icons, these quotations begin to indicate the wider significance of such a distinction and the sense in which Peirce's sign categories enabled him to address what Scruton describes as 'deep metaphysical questions' (Scruton 2004, 146). However, they may not at first appear to address the difficulty of distinguishing icon and indices in a musical context. If

indices are actualities considered apart from any qualities and icons are qualities 'detached' from any circumstance or actualization, then my assertion that the musical indices are contestable, and thereby open to some kind of mental insertion, seems to undermine Peirce's fundamental and far-reaching distinction.

This chapter argues, however, that like language music entails a coming together of firstness (the iconic) and secondness (the indexical), and that both of these are also thirds (symbols).³⁵ As has already been suggested, an effective means of distinguishing between the icon and indices in a musical context may be found by appealing to Peirce's connection between his categories and the dimensions of time.

In the long quotation above from CP 3.434 we do have some indication of how firstness (the iconic or qualitative) is tied up with our notion of the present. When Peirce explains iconic signs he admits their connections with past sensations but then qualifies them as detached from their original, i.e. past, circumstances and emphasizes attachment to new, i.e. present, situations. There is clearly a sense of abstraction, rule or thirdness here, but we also gain some notion of a 'present instant' (a formulation Peirce often uses) in which a sensation is excited. This idea of the present as key to an understanding of firstness and thereby the icon is found in Peirce's letter to Victoria Welby dated 12 October 1904 in which he writes that 'the idea of the present instant, which, whether it exists or not, is naturally thought as a point of time in which no thought can take place or any detail be separated, is an idea of Firstness,' (LW 25). Such ideas are more explicitly related to the notion of quality via that of 'feeling'; in a 1907 essay intended for the *Monist*, Peirce writes:

³⁵ The necessity of the symbolic is also neatly explained in Peirce's review of Schröder, when he points out that a sign user 'requires a kind of sign which shall signify a law that to objects of indices an icon appertains as sign of them in a given way' (CP 3.435).

[A]lthough a feeling is immediate consciousness, that is, is whatever of consciousness there may be that is immediately present, yet there is no consciousness in it because it is instantaneous. For we have seen already that feeling is nothing but a quality, and a quality is not conscious: it is a mere possibility.

(CP 1.310)

If, then, firstness can be defined, in part, in terms of that dimension of time we call the present, the icon in music might be understood as that aspect which is immediately present to the listener but which can only be conceived through employing thirdness or the symbol. This last point is extremely important, as it allows us to address the problems so often identified with the notion of the firstness as utterly immediate and somehow accessed or communicated via the icon. Furthermore, seen in the context of Peirce's more general theory of the *dicisign*, we can note that this problem is a fundamental problem for the philosophy of language. Scruton gives a useful account in relation to Frege's closely related quantificational theory (functions are comparable to Peirce's icons):

But what about the general term 'is angry'? [or '() is angry']. Frege says that this refers to a concept, and also that it determines a *function*... Frege says that functions lie 'deep in the nature of things', though he himself is astonished by this since they are peculiarly incomplete (or, as he says, 'unsaturated') entities, which

determine one object only when supplied with another. There are therefore real problems about the identity of functions...

(Scruton 2004, 144)

Such problems, Scruton surmises, are demonstrated by the point that a 'function may lie deep in the nature of things'; but there seems to be no clear answer to the question 'which thing is it?' (Ibid.). If we insist that the iconic and the symbolic are both integral to the functioning of a predicate we might first point out that '() is angry' is a general term only in so far as it is a symbol: we need to understand its function also as an icon. The question as to where this function lies cannot, then, be answered simply, because the question seems to demand an actual location, a secondness, and secondness needs to be distinguished from firstness if we are to understand language and (as I am suggesting) music. More importantly, we need to recognize that meaning is never located in a particular place but instead develops from an interaction between icon, index and symbol. Scruton, like Cumming and to a lesser extent Hatten, is searching for a point of origin that does not exist. Meaning is developmental and never static (although in certain contexts opinion will converge and settle in the long run), and Peirce's theory of the categories and semiosis allows us to recognize this point.

In music, then, the icon can be understood as a quality, but to understand that aspect of the musical icon that can be separated from its function as a symbol (i.e. a conceptualized quality) we need to imagine the 'present instant' of musical experience, the sensation music excites. This is not the 'vocality' of Cumming nor Hatten's 'immediacy of recognition: token of a type', for it is, in itself, utterly meaningless. But

through the interaction of the music's 'present instant' and the musical index (a slot conventionally filled by remembered, subjectively motivated ideas) meaning can be generated. As in language icons and indices are never pure, however, as they will rely upon the symbol to be meaningful, and the connections they make are themselves symbolic. It is worth underlining the importance of the symbolic at this point with another section of Peirce's review of Schröder:

Neither the predicate [or icon], nor the subjects [or indices], nor both together, can make an *assertion*. The assertion represents a compulsion which experience, meaning the course of life, brings upon the deliverer to attach the predicate to the subjects as a sign of them taken in a particular way. This compulsion strikes him at a certain instant; and he remains under it forever after. It is, therefore, different from the temporary force which the hecceities exert upon his attention. This new compulsion may pass out of mind for the time being; but it continues just the same, and will act whenever the occasion arises, that is, whenever those particular hecceities [indices] and that first intention [icon] are called to mind together. It is, therefore, a permanent conditional force, or *law*. The deliverer thus requires a kind of sign which shall signify a law that to objects of indices an icon appertains as sign of them in a given way. Such a sign has been called a *symbol*.

(CP 3.435)

Just as the icon in the musical dicisign can be conceived as a 'present instant' so the index can be broadly distinguished from the icon by the considering it as a past actuality.

In the already cited letter to Lady Welby, dated 12 October 1904, we find a similarly clear connection between secondness and the past to that made between firstness and the present:

[S]ince our idea of the past is precisely the idea of that which is absolutely determinate, fixed, *fait accompli*, and dead, as against the future which is living, plastic and determinable, it appears to me that the idea of one sided action, in so far as it concerns the being of the determinate, is a pure idea of Secondness...

(LW 27)

In language the operation of the index is relatively easy to understand. A pointing finger or the word 'this' can be used to pick out an object that is determined, an object that existed in the past and may or may no continue to exist. This picking out can only be achieved by an *actual* connection between a listening or reading subject and that which is signified:

It is requisite then, in order to show what we are talking or writing about, to put the hearer's or reader's mind into real, active connection with the concatenation of experience or of fiction with which we are dealing, and, further, to draw his attention to, and identify, a certain number of particular points in such concatenation... That the diagrammatisation is one thing and the application of the diagram quite another, is recognised obscurely in the structure of such

languages as I am acquainted with, which distinguishes the *subjects* [indices] and *predicates* [icons] of propositions.

(CP 3.419)

In music, I have suggested, the notion of a determined object that can be picked out indexically is not encountered in the same way. What is picked out by the musical index is contested, leaving it open to the contingencies of an individual's engagement with that music. But these entities picked out by the musical index (which tend in the West to concern an individual's subjectivity, i.e. conception of self) can still be understood as seconds, that is, as indexically signified. This is because such entities will be in the past and thereby determined. Furthermore, their secondness is not necessarily undermined if they are fictional, as Peirce notes in the quotation above.³⁶ The ideas and experiences we habitually bring to music or, as Fisk puts it, vouchsafe to music, are those ideas we consider important to our identity. They are determined in that they have already been considered; they are in the past and held in the memory. But in the present instant these memories are reaffirmed or renegotiated in relation to musical qualities, the icons upon which they are brought to bear.

³⁶ Of interest here again is Monelle's insistence upon the musical *dicisign* as virtual rather than actual. Peirce gives further insight into this point when he explains, in 'Nomenclature and Division of Triadic Relations', that the word 'phoenix' is still in part indexical, for 'although no phoenix really exists, real descriptions of the phoenix are well known to the speaker and his auditor; and thus the word is really affected by the Object denoted' (EP 2.295).

7 *The importance of the symbolic*

A recurring theme of this thesis is the importance of thirdness to all semiosis, and it is important to recognize again that the iconic and indexical mechanisms discussed above rely upon the symbol in order to function. Similarly the whole operation of their interaction is itself a habit and thereby symbolic, for there is no necessary connection between identity-forming ideas/experiences and musical qualities. Western listening practices are characterized by the habit of connecting musical icons and indices in a particular way, but it could, in a sense, have been otherwise, just as it is for the Kaluli of Papua New Guinea who, Feld informs us, conceptualize music in terms of waterfalls and birdsong (in Guck 1998, 173). Further to this, we can note that it is the symbolic aspect of both icons and indices that prevent them from simply meaning anything for anyone at any given time. These symbolic functions are numerous, and I will consider those that seem most important.

Firstly, in the West, we habitually conceive the musical ‘work’ as a unified whole. Thus, once we have inserted ideas and/or experiences pertaining to our own subjectivity into the open slots formed by the contesting of the musical index, we will tend to develop a habit of reinserting those ideas/experiences (and those we group with them) for the duration of the ‘work’. We will also draw on those ideas/experiences when experiencing the ‘work’ on other occasions. Thus I will habitually bring ideas and experiences of unrequited love to the musical experience known as Brahms’ Symphony No. 4, because that is the reading habit I have developed.

This last example suggests a second symbolic functioning. I did not just happen to call up ideas of unrequited love in relation to Brahms' music. Knowing something of Brahms' life and something of the ideas and experiences traditionally associated with nineteenth-century music in general, I have been persuaded to consider certain indices more appropriate when engaging with Brahms' music, despite an apparently contradictory cultural habit to regard Brahms' music as 'absolute'. This process is complex and probably involves all of the categories in intricate interactions, but the most prominent mechanism is that of habit, convention or the symbolic.

This mechanism can be fruitfully compared with those underpinning the topic, discussed in the previous section. Topics are identified in certain musics by a network of traits. The higher the number of characterizing traits perceived by the listener, the more likely it is that a topical reference will be made. These traits involve qualities, but these are not simply firsts. They are abstracted qualities and therefore involve thirdness. The drawing together of these characteristics to form the networks we label minuet, pastorale, Turkish music etc. is also a habit and an instance of thirdness. The further habit of picking out those thoughts and ideas we relate to particular social strata (Ratner relates the minuet amongst other things to 'the elegant world of court and salon' (1980, 9)) is again symbolic. And, lastly, we can note that habitual picking-out mechanisms can lead to the interpretation of topics as commentaries upon social conditions and relations, such as those found in Allanbrook's analyses of Mozart's operas or McClary's and Subotnik's readings of Mozart's symphonies (McClary 1994 and Subotnik 1984).

Topics, then, are shot through with symbolic mechanisms which may help us to respond to Sisman's question as to whether 'every tremolo passage in a minor key [is] a

“reference” to *Sturm und Drang* or every imitative passage “learned style?”” (Sisman 1993, 46). The answer is surely no, because the interpretant ‘*Sturm und Drang*’ or ‘learned style’ will only develop if sufficient traits in addition to those she describes are perceived. Further, we will need to know which of those same traits are conceived and drawn into an appropriate network, such as that engendering the interpretant ‘pastorale’. And lastly, if, for example, the term *Sturm und Drang* is identified, in part, as a network of non-musical ideas, we need to know whether the listening situation exhibits those habits which will entail their development. Put simply, if a listener is unaware of this network it will not develop during the listening experience.³⁷ To stretch the point a little further we might even suggest that the particular understanding of the topic ‘minuet’ which develops into ideas of elegance and charm is very different from that which develops into notions of bourgeois indulgence. That is to say, even if the same topic develops for two different listeners those topics might *mean* (that is, develop further into) very different networks.

8 Conclusion

There is something paradoxical about the operation of thirdness.³⁸ Thirdness or the symbolic allows a degree of uniformity in response and has led to notions, such as

³⁷ As Sisman (1997, 64) and Lowe (2007, 25) have noted, the network of musical and non-musical ideas that form *Sturm und Drang* is particularly interesting, as it only emerged as a literary category in the twentieth century.

³⁸ This point can be related to one of Saussure’s key insights: the linguistic sign is essentially arbitrary. This arbitrariness enables relative stability in meaning, but, by the same stroke, entails contingency. From

intersubjectivity, that suggest a process by which meaning can be stabilized. But thirdness is defined by habit, and whilst habits provide stability for a time, habits can and will change. The exception for Peirce is the final opinion of a community of inquirers who in the long run settle upon the truth. This process of inquiry, however, in order to be successful, must involve a language with indices that directly refer to the world as it exists. In music, this chapter has argued, the index is radically undermined because it is contested. This leaves music open in ways that language is not. As a result it can serve the listening subject in the negotiation of identity, but this act itself and perhaps other comparable mechanisms for the insertion of meaning may best be explained in terms of ideology. A thorough engagement with the questions this throws up is beyond the scope of this thesis, but much of the groundwork concerning how such operations can be theorized has been carried out.

To that end this chapter has looked in some detail at what I have argued are some of the most important and significant aspects of Peircian thought: the functioning of propositions or dicisigns through a complex interaction of different signs. It has also been argued that the differentiation of these signs may best be achieved through a focus upon the dimensions of time. This is, I think, a compelling theory, not least because music's ontology is so tightly bound to temporal experience. Furthermore, some of the difficulties we encounter in conceiving the musical sign complex may be rethought through a consideration of the dimensions of time as arbiters in the conception of music as sign, object or interpretant.

a Peircian perspective we might address this point by referring to 'mere habit' but then double back to explain that the term 'mere' is, in one sense, grossly misplaced, for habit is indispensable to reasoning.

The theory of the musical dicisign is pursued at length in the next chapter, where I begin to look at how it can be deployed to inform the practice of music analysis. The most important Peircian concept to be developed will be that of valency, which is defined as the number of bonds (either one, two or three) an icon exhibits that are able to be saturated by indices. Valency (of either one, two or three) corresponds to the categories. It is again the clear distinction between the categories that poses a theoretical challenge, and it is again the dimensions of time that I deploy to address this challenge.

VI

On Hearing the Allegro of Mozart's 'Prague' Symphony

1 Introduction

In *A Guide to Musical Analysis*, Nicholas Cook draws a distinction between types of analysis that use 'individual pieces of music as a means of discovering the general properties of musical experience *per se*' and those that aim to find out 'more about a particular composition' (Cook 1987, 69). This chapter engages the latter approach whilst attempting to remain sensitive to the theories already developed in relation to the former. To this end the key concepts of time, subjectivity and reading habit are explored further, with a focus upon a particular (but, in a strict Peircian sense, generalized) musical work: the Allegro of Mozart's Symphony no. 38 in D, K. 504, 'The Prague', a work that assumes a canonical place within the discourse of absolute music but which can be seen

to be replete with issues of meaning. Although Peircian ideas are not engaged directly at any length until the conclusion of this chapter, his thought is encountered through the ideas developed in Chapter 5, which are applied here to Mozart's music.

Some revision of the ideas in the previous chapter will be useful here in order to make clear their connection with the development of the notion of valency below. The most important point to grasp in Chapter 5 concerns the simultaneous operation of the iconic, the indexical and the symbolic in the musical dicisign. Musical meaning develops in the listener through the drawing together of musical symbols functioning as icons, which concern *quality*, and musical symbols functioning as indices, which concern *actuality*. This drawing together is comparable to that of the dicisign in language, which is comprised of the same components, for example:

'() is red' (symbol functioning as an icon, *quality*)

'my car' (symbol functioning as an index, *actuality*)

Drawing these two together gives the dicisign 'my car is red', which, like the musical dicisign, predicates a quality of an actuality.

We can distinguish between the musical icon and the musical index by appealing to the dimensions of time, present, past and future, which map onto Peirce's categories of firstness (the iconic), secondness (the indexical) and thirdness (the symbolic) respectively. The musical icon can be conceived as the qualitative experience of music in the present, which is *saturated* by musical indices, conceived as actual memories of the past. Both musical icons and indices are ultimately symbolic and are subject, therefore, to rule and habit. Furthermore, it can be noted that the habits of interpretation within the

Western music tradition are such that we tend to saturate musical icons with those memories (musical indices) considered important in the construction of our subjectivity.

The icon '() is red' has a valency of one. Valencies of two and three are also possible such as '() loves ()' or '() gave () to ()', but valencies of four or more can always be reduced to valencies of one, two or three. In this chapter the concept of valency is deployed in relation to music as an analytical tool. Determining whether a musical icon has a valency of one, two or three is not a simple operation. As with all applications of Peirce's categories we need to consider the point that all the categories are always functioning. Thus, in one sense, all music exhibits a valency of three. But we can discern tendencies for certain musical experiences to be conceived in terms of a single or two-fold valency just as we might reduce the complex developing relationship between two people to the simple two-fold valency '() loves ()'.

In establishing the valency of a musical icon, time is again employed as the primary tool for distinguishing the categories. When a musical experience draws in past musical events it is exhibiting a valency of two. Again this is a matter of degree – all music in the present relates to the past, but some musical ideas posit a clearer relationship with a musical experience that has at that point passed. When a musical experience points to the (immediate) future by way of reference to the past it exhibits a valency of three.¹ Again all musical experiences point forwards but some are conceived more readily as doing so.

¹ The terminology can be a little confusing here, especially when one considers the way in which the term future has been used in relation to long-term stylistic or ideological developments in musical practices (e.g. in the writing of Wagner or Russolo). The notion of future here is bound up with the Peircian category of thirdness. It is that which is partially predictable through the adherence to habit. In music we sense the future on a small scale in the habitual envelope of particular instrumental timbres, a medium scale in the

By theorizing valency distinction in terms of the dimensions of time we risk confusing two key areas of the theory developed in this thesis that are, to some extent, best conceived separately, despite their obvious interconnection. When we hear music and read it as meaningful there are, in a sense, two time dimensions in play. The first is the time of the work, which we tend to conceive as a bound entity (again a habit of Western listening practices). The second is a broader conception of time as that which articulates experience as a whole. Valencies are formed in relation to the former, whereas the saturation of these valencies by indices (the creation of musical meaning) relates to the latter.²

In considering the possible structure of the valencies in a musical ‘work’, it is important not to lose track of the point that the decision as to what type of memory should saturate the musical icon is *contested* in Western listening practices, although within certain contexts tendencies (such as the saturation of minor tonality with ideas of tragedy) can be identified. The contesting of the index at one level is bound up with a wider tendency, at another level, to saturate the musical icon with those ideas with an *identity-forming function*, giving some insight into the paradox of Western identity as both autonomous and free but relational and determined. It is in this sense that subjectivity is formed and developed in relation to musical experience through the manifestation of certain listening habits.

patterns of phrase and cadence, a larger scale in the instantiation of larger-scale forms (e.g. sonata form) and on a still larger scale in the process of stylistic development.

² One possible exception here is found in the habit of reading certain ‘works’ as absolute. This leads to certain questions, such as whether a musical experience from the more distant past can be habitually brought to bear on the music heard or whether only the work itself, in its current manifestation, should act as a point of reference.

The theory of valency in music, it is hoped, will help overcome certain problems with music analysis practices. In particular, it will be developed so as to avoid the assumption that there are correct readings of musical works that transcend whatever listening practices might be in operation at any particular time for any particular person. The aim here is to propose an interpretation that would be possible and which takes it lead from tendencies in reading habits as conceived through the theoretical conclusions of the last chapter. Similarly the tendency to conceive meaning in musical works as a function of the musical work conceived as a whole is avoided. The idea that a symphony can only be understood after the reverb tail of the last note has drifted below the threshold of hearing seems to me absurd. In line with Peircian models, meaning is conceived here as a dynamic process that is only exhausted by arrival at a final interpretant and the contesting of the musical index is one clear means of recognizing that a final interpretant is impossible within Western musical practices. A related concern here is the point that sections of music are, in terms of meaning, never simply serving a wider function. To put this point another way when relating smaller and larger-scale process in music we need to be careful not to distort the former in order to portray the latter as a standardized process. Although the theory of valencies, developed here, does appeal to the hearing of large-scale relations as meaningful this is highlighted, it is hoped, with an eye to the importance of smaller-scale detail in generating meaning.

In order to address these claims as to the benefits of valency analysis in understanding musical meaning we first look in some detail at other, particularly Schenkerian, approaches to Mozart's 'Prague' Symphony. This leads to a general introduction to how Peirce's theory of valency can be used to understand musical

'works'. The analysis that follows looks, in turn, at how each of the valencies (of one, two or three) can be applied to the Allegro of the 'Prague' Symphony, and this involves some use of topic theory as well as novel approaches to analytical diagrams and annotations. The last section of the chapter looks in some detail at a very short section of the symphony in order to offer insights into why it might have seemed particularly significant in my own and, I am hypothesizing, others' experience of the Allegro.

2 *Approaching the Allegro of the 'Prague' Symphony*

Charles Rosen, in his book *Sonata Forms*, suggests that sonata-form movements, including the Allegro of Mozart's 'Prague' Symphony, exhibit 'a general movement from polarization to resolution' (Rosen 1980, 201). Such an understanding of the sonata principle in the Allegro of the 'Prague' is clearly detectable in the work of other commentators. Sisman concludes her discussion of the first movement by characterizing its closing theme as 'the site of transformation from learned counterpoint to classical counterpoint, from metrical displacement to metrical resolution', and it is this, she suggests, that gives the movement 'a profound sense of closure' (Sisman 1997, 73). Lauri Suurpää's analysis of the 'Prague' Symphony is entitled 'The First-Movement Exposition of Mozart's 'Prague' Symphony: Cadences, Form and Voice-Leading Structure'. As one might expect given its reliance upon Schenkerian principles, this article is even more explicit in asserting the importance of a large-scale move towards closure, even though the closure it concerns is that of the exposition rather than the

symphony as a whole. Suurpää contends that none of the perfect authentic cadences heard during the exposition ‘bring an unequivocal closure’, and the music therefore must ‘begin to search for clear closure anew’. For Suurpää the ‘essential expositional closure’ does not come until bars 128 to 129, ‘at the moment when the deep middle ground $\hat{1}$ of A major arrives’ (Suurpää 2006, 176–7). Susan McClary in her groundbreaking essay ‘Narratives of Bourgeois Subjectivity in Mozart’s *Prague* Symphony’ maps the process of resolving the opposition between keys to the process whereby a human subject ‘eventually works through his own potentialities to become fully actualized’ (McClary 1994, 80).

Whilst these accounts of what might broadly be described as *meaning* in the ‘Prague’ Symphony differ in their details, all suggest this same process of opposition moving to synthesis and, more fundamentally, explain the movement in terms of a totalizing narrative, trajectory or process.³ The arguments in this chapter, whilst seeking to recognize, understand and, in part, theorize such interpretations, look also to place a new emphasis upon the process by which meaning might occur without reference to totalizing processes. Such an approach is already identifiable, to some extent, in analyses that look at topical reference. Sisman’s discussion of the ‘Prague’ Symphony contains a number of such references as well as other historical points of reference that tend to focus attention upon localized rather than totalized meanings. This chapter, however, concentrates more acutely on the possibility of localized meanings that are not subsumed under a totalized account. In order to achieve this it deploys the theory developed in the previous chapter to study in more abstract terms the process by which meaning may

³ This is perhaps least true of Sisman’s study. Her emphasis on connections with contemporary sources leads to a more localized approach to explaining the structural details of the symphony.

occur. This degree of abstraction is considered necessary because it allows clearer insight into the instability and contingency of musical meaning whilst maintaining and developing a coherent theory for the processes by which we come to conceive music as meaningful.

(a) Suurpää's analysis

Of the approaches to the 'Prague' already mentioned, the appeal to large-scale structure as the primary arbiter of meaning is most overtly presented in Suurpää's article. His analysis is Schenkerian, and he deploys Schenker's voice-leading principles deftly throughout the article. Through Schenker, Suurpää constructs a compelling argument for an overarching process in the exposition whereby closure is not fully or properly obtained until a cadence fourteen bars from the end of the exposition (bar 129). For Suurpää, it is not primarily such surface features as the bold restatement of the first theme in bars 130 to 132 (Example 6.1) nor the repeated perfect cadences (bars 136 to 138), and subsequent tutti section with boldly arpeggiated A major chord that assert the end of the exposition (Example 6.2).

Example 6.1: Bars 130 to 132 of the first movement of Mozart's 'Prague' Symphony

Example 6.2: Bars 136 to 142 closing bars of the exposition

Such localized features, it seems, are less instrumental in establishing a sense of closure than large-scale voice-leading processes that delay the ‘essential expositional closure’ until bar 129, despite the clear articulation of authentic perfect cadences in the dominant key in bars 96 to 97, 111 to 112 and 120 to 121. We will look at the first of these cadences in some detail in order to explore possible difficulties with such an assertion.

When deploying Schenkerian theory in relation to a sonata-form movement in a major key the second subject area will usually need to elaborate the $\hat{2}$ of the Ursatz. This $\hat{2}$ becomes $\hat{5}$ in the key of the dominant and the second subject is commonly analyzed in terms of a descent from $\hat{5}$ to $\hat{1}$ (Example 6.3).

Example 6.3: Common Ursatz for exposition of a sonata-form exposition with a Kopftou of $\hat{3}$ and $\hat{5}$.

In analyzing the exposition of the 'Prague' Symphony one of the first difficulties to deal with is the apparent move to the dominant through a restatement of the theme (transposed up a fifth with a slight alteration – the E# in bar 72) in bars 71 to 77. The first theme's tonal ambiguity (between subdominant and tonic when first sounded and tonic and dominant in 71 to 77) followed by an assertion of the tonic makes it apt for this modulation up a fifth. But such a modulation seems premature (not enough 'work' to establish the dominant appears to have been done) and the sense of a Mozartian second subject at bar 97 is so strong that Suurpää brackets the tonicization of A (the dominant) until this point.⁴ This bracketing is shown in Suurpää's graph, reproduced here as Example 6.4.

The difficulty now, however, is that the second subject clearly oscillates around A ($\hat{1}$ in the dominant key not the E or $\hat{5}$ that the Schenkerian analyst might look for – see * in Example 6.3). Suurpää's solution is imaginative. In order to deny the full sense of closure provided by an arrival on $\hat{1}$ in the Urlinie at bar 97 he claims that the C# in bar 101 forms the Urlinie component $\hat{3}$ with the A in bar 97 being classed as an inner-voice note. This has the added attraction of allowing the upper pedal D in bars 88 to 93 to be classed as $\hat{4}$. The Urlinie is not then resolved until the move to $\hat{2}$ and then $\hat{1}$ in bars 128 and 129 respectively.

⁴ This unusual formal pattern has led Jens Larsen to conceive the movement in terms of ritornello form (see Sisman 1997, 66).

37 43 62 63 68 69 71 77 80 81 82 88

51

$\hat{3}$

$\hat{2}$

f *p* *f*

(V) A:I VII°/V V [I] V⁷

Example 6.4: Suurpää's voice-leading sketch of bars 37 to 88 (Suurpää 2006, 168)

Despite the ingenuity in Suurpää's application of Schenker, it is important not to overlook the uncomfortable tension here between local events and proposed underlying structure in the characterization of the second subject as prolonging $\hat{3}$. This tension derives from the clear discrepancy between the hierarchical structure of the second theme when conceived more autonomously and the hierarchical structure it is forced to assume when subjected, along with and the exposition as a whole, to Schenkerian principles. If we look at the first statement of the second subject group in its own right, its structure is surely clear. Example 6.5 shows that the phrase structure of this statement divides unquestionably into two longer phrases, which can be divided into four shorter phrases or subphrases.

97 98 99 100 101 102 103 104 105

I V⁷ I (vii°) V⁶ (vii°) iii⁶ I (vii°) V⁶ 3 i

Example 6.5: Analysis of second subject

The graph below the staff in Example 6.5 is Schenkerian, but with unconventional beaming deployed (bringing it closer to Meyerian conventions) to highlight the phrase structure. There is surely little doubt that this subject's general contour is one where the more stable A is left behind in an ascent to C# followed by a return to A at the beginning of the reiteration of the second subject (now in the parallel minor) at bar 105. To suggest that the A is actually an inner voice, with the C# being prolonged throughout, seems utterly at odds with our experience of this theme. The counterargument, of course, is that such an assertion only holds when the second subject is taken out of context.⁵ If we put this subject in its context and place greater emphasis upon the voice-leading structure of the whole, the argument goes, then this section has to be heard as a prolongation of $\hat{3}$ because $\hat{4}$ was so clearly established as a descent from the Kopfton when heard as a pedal in bars 88 to 93 (Example 6.6).

Such arguments are surely performative in that they make the case for a way of hearing the movement and impact upon our perception of it.⁶ This performativity in musical analysis makes a straightforward conclusion on such matters unattainable, but there can surely be little doubt that there is a potential for local events to be distorted, as much as explained, in Schenkerian analysis, and it is this potential for distortion, amongst other things, that the theory of valencies will look to avoid.⁷

⁵ A further point here might be that the A and B in bars 97–8 actually form an ascent to the C#; thus the first A has less structural significance. The problem with such an argument is firstly that this is still at odds with the clear rhythmic hierarchy of the passage and secondly that the C# then clearly descends to the A in bar 105, which should then surely be more structurally significant than the C# from which it descends.

⁶ For a fuller discussion of this complex area of inquiry see Spitzer (2004, 28ff).

⁷ It is notable that Surpää does appeal to local detail to back up his point when he suggests that the overlapping phrase around bar 97 means that the cadence at that point 'does not function as an unequivocal closure' but closes instead once another clear four-bar unit has been articulated, i.e. at bar 101. However, in the light of the clear hierarchy of A over C# shown in Example 6.5 such an appeal to local structure

This potential for distortion at the level of melodic structure is also noticeable in Suurpää's analysis at the level of harmonic progression. If we look in some detail at the section that leads up to the second subject, we again find the tendency for smaller-scale detail to be distorted by the reductive impulses of the Schenkerian method.

The sequence in A major starting in bar 81 can be described as a virtual cycle of fifths, with the root dropping a fifth each bar whilst retaining an entirely diatonic harmonic palette in A. This is outlined in Figure 6.1.

| | | | | | | | | |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Bar | 81 | 82 | 83 | 84 | 85 | 86 | 87 | 88 |
| Root | E | A | D | G# | C# | F# | B | E |

Figure 6.1: Virtual cycle of fifths in the first movement of Mozart's 'Prague' symphony

It seems fair to class this as a spinning out or prolonging of the dominant chord in A (E major), and Suurpää's graph of this section suggests precisely this interpretation. This reductive process is more problematic, however, when it is deployed in relation to bars 88

seems highly selective – inconsistent even. Furthermore, Surpää seems insensitive to the sentential structure of the second theme, despite recognizing it as a component of a 16-bar period, by suggesting that the start of bar 101, which begins a clear continuation function (the least stable process in a sentence), is more stable than bar 97, which begins the first basic idea (the first part of the presentation which has a relatively stable function) (see Caplin 1998). Also notable here is the fact that this point in the Allegro is cited by Hepokoski and Darcy as a 'classic example' of a 'blocked medial caesura', where the expected half close in the key of the dominant (in this case A major) runs into a 'dynamic blockage' (the swerve into F# minor) before an extended filler reduced to *piano* ends with an elision or flush-juxtaposition with the start of the second theme (Hepokoski & Darcy 2006: 47). Hepokoski and Darcy, far from suggesting that this delays a sense of closure, state that 'the expressive impact of the whole is similar to that of observing a projectile cast forth and sailing into an empty space of air in order to land gracefully at its point of destination' (Ibid., 47). Thus the elision at 97 is, for Hepokoski and Darcy, a standard means of 'deforming' the arrival of the second subject and is characterized as an 'exquisite dovetailing', this in no sense lacking closure in the manner Surpää suggests.

to 93. Here a more chromatic palette is again conceived as prolonging dominant harmony.

The image displays three systems of musical notation, labeled a, b, and c. System a is a short score for piano, showing two staves with complex rhythmic patterns and chromatic movement. System b is a middleground analysis of the same passage, featuring a single staff with a '3 Prg' label and Roman numerals V, vii, and I. System c is Suurpää's analysis, also a single staff with a 'A: V' label and Roman numerals I. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and Roman numerals.

Example 6.6: (a) Short score of bars 88 to 94 with (b) my middleground analysis and (c) Suurpää's analysis (extracted from larger graph (Suurpää 2005, 170))

In Example 6.6 we see how the chromatically ascending bass in bars 88 to 91 is conceived as a third progression. The same is true of the bass in bars 92 to 93, which forms chromatically ascending diminished seventh intervals with the first oboe doubling second violin. Both progressions are conceived as elaborating essentially dominant harmony in the key of A. Such an analysis is so neat and consistent with Schenkerian principles that it hardly seems worth further investigation, but I suggest it misrepresents

the way this passage might function in terms of meaning. It passes over the point that prior to the cadence in bars 93 to 94 the harmony suggests a move flatwards and is thereby not simply articulating a prolonged dominant function. Quite the contrary – the majority of this passage pulls away from the dominant key as Example 6.7 demonstrates.

A: V⁷ iv⁶
 d:i⁶
 (v)

g:V⁷ i

dim 7 V⁷ i⁶ vii⁷ I⁶?
 D/d: (vii⁷) V⁶?

Example 6.7: Bars 88 to 94, now with annotations to demonstrate the implication of a move flatwards

If we look in more detail at the harmony of these six bars we notice a clear set of relations that do not simply point to an articulation of dominant harmony. The move to a D minor chord at bar 89 might be heard as an alteration of chord IV in A but also begins to suggest a move flatwards back to the tonic – now with an interchange of mode⁸ in the shift to the minor. This move flatwards is then taken a step further with a shift towards G minor, which is then scarcely undermined (despite Mozart’s spelling the diminished-seventh chord in bar 92 as vii⁷ in A) until the vii⁶ – I⁶ (evaded) cadence in A. This arrival on A, however, is not unambiguous, because the shift flatwards shown in Example 6.7 and the pedal note D throughout these bars both give a strong sense of D as the tonic at

⁸ Ratner demonstrates how a move to the parallel minor (which he terms an interchange of mode) was a common feature of ‘classic music’ (Ratner 1980, 56).

bar 92. The quicker harmonic rhythm leading to a cadence in bars 94 to 95, spelt in such a way as to imply a perfect cadence in F# (but which tends to be heard as an interrupted cadence in A) followed by a ii–I₄⁵–V–I progression, reverses this tendency flatwards and establishes an unambiguous sense of A major.

The tension created by moving flatwards – anticlockwise around the cycle of fifths – followed by a quick reversal of that move by an apparently effortless⁹ move sharpwards, I argue, is a key aspect through which the ‘Prague’ Symphony can be rendered meaningful. The tension between opposing moves around the cycle of fifths is articulated from the outset of the Allegro in the form of the first subject (Example 6.8), and it is notable that the Schenkerian analytical practices can all too easily overlook such a tension in the search for a unified, normalized, large-scale, voice-leading process. As in the example of the second subject discussed above, this search for a univocal process distorts the complexities of local events, in this case suggesting a concerted move to the dominant when a fuller account would point to a move flatwards reversed at the last moment. We will see in the analysis that follows that the uncertainty this engenders for the listener in predicting the future of the music is an important aspect of the Allegro’s potential for meaning generation.



Example 6.8: The first subject of the ‘Prague’

⁹ I have generally avoided adjectives like ‘effortless’ in my analysis of the ‘Prague’ as they suggest an agency – either that of the music or the composer – without theorizing that agency. My use of the term effortless here should be taken to suggest a qualitative/conventionalized relation to which the listener will tend to apply herself as agent.

Despite the drawbacks of Schenkerian analysis discussed here, its concern for abstract musical relations has clearly played a role in informing the theory of musical valencies developed in this thesis. Before looking at the detail of this theory in relation to the ‘Prague’ we will briefly consider two contrasting musicological approaches to Mozart’s symphony. The first might be said to exemplify conventional musicological approaches (including what is sometimes termed historical musicology), the second *new* musicology.

(b) *Sisman’s analysis*

In the last chapter I argued that Schenkerian analysis tends to treat music as an object rather than a sign. Music tends to be conceived as a pre-existent, static or past entity from which we develop a set of interpretants that will correspond to certain elaboration patterns: linear progression, arpeggiation, neighbour note or other more complex derivations of these. If we insist on considering music in the present – as a sign – Schenkerianism still suggests a situation in which meanings that derive from these patterns of musical elaboration are thrown up and a process in which the idea of these patterns, in turn, will gravitate back towards interpretants that are musical sounds – any sense of music’s meaning beyond itself is not theorized. In Elaine Sisman’s comprehensive account of the ‘Prague’ Symphony a similar tendency to conceive music as object can be detected. Music again appears to be conceived as a pre-existent entity, but the patterns or *general* ideas employed to study it are somewhat different. Instead of linear progression, arpeggiation and neighbour note, we encounter notions such as topic,

rhetoric and gesture, and oppositions such as gallant vs. learned, difficulty vs. palpability and Liebhaber vs. Kenner (amateurs vs. connoisseurs). These terms are less clearly delineated than the technical terms that dominate Schenkerian thought, and Sisman spends much of her essay considering their interrelationship in connection with the 'Prague'.

But despite certain points of contact with Schenkerian analysis,¹⁰ Sisman's method has notable differences from Schenkerian analysis. These differences can be usefully explained by considering the notion of the *contested indexicality* developed in the previous chapter; discussing this key area will also allow us to distinguish Sisman's method from that pursued here.

Music's meaning in relation to actualities (established by the index) is continually contested and thereby difficult to ascertain. This leads to a field of inquiry that struggles to point beyond its own descriptive terms, as is the case in Schenkerian analysis. In Sisman's historical method a number of actualities are posited to address this fundamental lack. Historical musicology, in general, tends to engage with a variety of actualities, including autograph scores and period instruments. Focus upon such actualities tends to concern the compositional and performance processes and is less concerned with listening and interpretation in its own right. Historical musicology also deals with other areas of music that appear grounded in actuality, however. Examples here include contemporaneous theoretical treatises, the pedagogical experiences and

¹⁰ These include the tendency, already mentioned in the introduction, to suggest large-scale controlling processes in the symphony. This is particularly evident with Sisman's discussion of the second and third movements, where she posits a 'controlling topic' for each.

sketches of a composer,¹¹ and the recorded responses of composers' and listeners' experiences of music. These areas of historical musicology appear to offer more direct insights into musical meaning and certainly seem to approach actuality more fully than Schenkerian analysis. The actual pedagogical exercises completed by a composer and the linguistic responses to their work recorded in documents seem to have a scientific rigour that is lacking in the Schenkerian principles that can border on the metaphysical.

There is, I believe, a certain validity to the claim that the methods of historical musicology have a firmer grounding in actuality than Schenker's, but there is also a tendency, I think, for historical musicology to miss those actualities most relevant to the processes by which music is rendered meaningful. In the moment of hearing music we tend to read it as a sign not an object, and in so doing approach actuality quite differently from a historian. Music's relation to actuality is contested, so listeners feel a certain freedom in bringing actual memories to bear upon it. A composer's intimations of their own reading (such as Mozart's famous reference to Liebhaber and Kenner (in Sisman 1997, 50)) or the models that may have influenced their work (such as the symphonies of J.C. Bach and Abel on the young Mozart) are not then best understood as actualities (indices) in the listening process. Their impact upon the listening process is instead related to the way in which they influence the habits of characterizing music in qualitative terms – that is, as symbols functioning as icons not symbols functioning as indices.

¹¹ These are, in a sense, also important in Schenkerian theory, but here they are better understood as generalizations which enable abstract models to be developed and reaffirmed.

Sisman perhaps shows an awareness of the need to fill the ‘gap’ in meaning left by the contesting of the index in music. She cites Cone at the end of her introduction, noting that:

[M]usical gestures lack signification, but they can be significant. Like a sigh, a musical gesture has no specific referent, it conveys no specific message. But like a sigh, it can prove appropriate to many occasions; it can fit many contexts, which in turn can explain its significance. The expressive content of the musical gesture, then, depends on its context.

(in Sisman 1997, 29)

It seems to me that Cone is searching in this statement for an understanding of actuality. A sigh becomes meaningful in certain contexts because its location in time and space allows it to function as a predicate to an idea or event established indexically. Thus if I see an athlete fall and I sigh, I am, as such, stating ‘that is saddening’. The index ‘that’ is established through the placement of the sigh directly after the event. The icon ‘() is saddening’ is a symbol functioning as an icon.

Sisman’s comment upon Cone’s words are that ‘[t]he intersection of gesture, topic and figure needs to be explored’ (Sisman 1997, 29). It seems to be Sisman’s view, then, that connections to actuality will become clearer by relating gestural, topical and figurative functions. However, whilst these terms are only loosely defined, none of them serve to point up the role of indexicality in music. Gestures, topics and figures all appear

to be symbols functioning as icons. They can therefore communicate depth but not breadth, and provide only a partial explanation of musical meaning.

To put this argument another way, studies of musical symbols functioning as icons, as we found in Hatten's work, are hugely valuable, but they overlook the key point explored in this thesis that such generalized concepts can only be rendered meaningful through a process in which the listener brings past actualities to bear upon the listening process. Sisman's account of the 'Prague', whilst invaluable in its rigorous pursuit of a range of actualities, does not look to address the vital role of actuality in the listening process and, as a result, is ill suited to an engagement with wider questions of musical meaning.

(c) *McClary's analysis*

A study that engages questions of subjectivity (of listeners not, as is the case in Cumming, of musical works) seems likely to address this indexical aspect of musical meaning that has so often been overlooked. This is generally the case in Susan McClary's extraordinarily insightful essay 'Narratives of Bourgeois Subjectivity in Mozart's *Prague Symphony*' (1994).

McClary's essay suggests a correspondence between the structural features of Mozart's work (once situated in their social context) and the development of bourgeois subjectivity in the late eighteenth century. McClary suggests an intimate relationship between late eighteenth-century forms and the development of an autonomous subject less constrained by centres of power. 'Structure', McClary states, 'was deemed

indispensable to the new art [of the late eighteenth century] and to the new society; yet the structures that made identity viable had to seem now as though they were the result of internal necessity, motivated by ongoing trajectories of becoming rather than of the surrender to outside authority' (McClary 1994, 68). McClary, then, as in much of her other work, begins to suggest an iconic connection between form and wider social significance – the *quality* of being (or seeming) internally necessary is shared by both the musical form under analysis and bourgeois identity. The directness of such an iconic link is, at this early point in her essay, partly played down by the decision to describe structures as *having to seem the result* of internal necessity. There is the suggestion in this choice of words of an apparent causal link, which would not necessarily result in a sharing of qualities.¹² It is not long, however, before the notion of an iconic connection between musical form and social meaning, so common in McClary's work, is explicitly presented when she states that 'the tensions between energy and stasis inherent in the [sonata] procedure remain – just as they remained unreconciled in the social sphere' (McClary 1994, 73).

The connections McClary draws between musical form and meaning are always sophisticated and often subtle, and their apparent accuracy or plausibility is often intensified by compelling references to social structures and tendencies. Table 6.1 arguably distorts some of the subtle interweaving of the musical and the social, that so enlivens McClary's writing, but it is given here so as to point to a tendency in McClary's work to posit an iconic connection between musical features and meanings. The left-hand column gives a summary of the structural feature McClary identifies and the right-

¹² We might recall, however, that direct causal connections can bring about an iconic connection – consider the photograph, the shadow, or even the bullet hole, where the size and shape of the hole is likely to connect iconically with the size and shape of the bullet.

hand column identifies the meanings McClary suggests might be attributed to those structures. I have conceived the relationship between structure and meaning as articulated by single, two-fold (x – y) and three-fold (x – y – z) relations. This anticipates the theory of valencies explored later.

| Entities related in technical terms | Suggested meaning with page number |
|---|--|
| slow intro – Allegro | aristocratic – bourgeois (78) |
| syncopation | quaking uncertainty of the undeveloped bourgeois subject (79) |
| syncopation – repeated quaver figure | uncertain/paralysed bourgeois subject – initial assertion of growth in confidence |
| opening theme – fanfare – opening theme | growing confidence of subject – celebration and encouragement of growth – reassertion of growth (79) |
| opening theme – theme that closes movement | unconfident bourgeois subject – now confident bourgeois subject (80) |
| convention of contrasting material for 2 nd subject – Mozart’s statement (stamping) of dominant with 1 st theme | threatened identity – affirmed identity (81) |
| tonal crisis | crisis of identity (81) |
| sequential assertion of A (Key V) – Disruption of A – Arrival on A | intensification of identity – identity crisis – recovered/reclaimed identity (81) |
| Arrival in A in intro – arrival on A in exposition | (aristocratic) containment – (bourgeois) hard work, success and opening of new terrains (81) |
| weak motives unable to prevail over brass – materials built on foundation of the principal theme | (private) struggle for expression without success – successful expression of tenderness on public foundation of unimpeded subject (82) |
| 2 nd subject in major – 2 nd subject in minor | sentiment – melancholy (82) |
| Motivic construction – lyricism | public self development – subjective interiority/spiritual depth (82) |
| Move sharpwards – move flatwards | confidence – hesitance (83) |

Table 6.1: Summary of McClary’s mapping of form and meaning (McClary 1994)

The connections McClary draws between musical structure and meaning allow her to posit a large-scale narrative for Mozart's Allegro in which the musical and the extramusical are scarcely distinguishable. After the musical/bourgeois subject has made a tentative start, it gradually develops confidence. By the end of the movement it has 'fully emerged . . . , its motives carefully balanced among its central figure's yearning, sensitivity, and confident ability to enact closure. And like the bourgeois individual whose characteristics the movement so closely resembles, it appears to be autonomous – self-reliant and self-generating.' (McClary 1994, 84). Thus the details of the mapping of music and meaning are also justified further by a wider totalizing scheme that reads Mozart's music as bound up with, and a sign of, bourgeois subjectivity.

In the sections that follow I suggest that McClary's insights must be taken very seriously indeed. However, the theory of the valencies developed below avoids the suggestion of an iconic connection between sign and meaning beyond the very abstract correspondence between numerical valencies (i.e. valencies of one, two or three). The important point that bourgeois subjectivity provides a means to understand the reading of Mozart's music is addressed, but it is theorized less as a necessary motivation behind the development of musical forms and more as a reading habit that can be understood in ideological terms.

3 Valency in music

We have seen that valencies of one, two or three in language can be shown by the constructions:

() is red

() killed ()

() gives () to ()

In music we find all three valencies but recall that the saturation of the icon (represented by the constructions above) by the indices (which in language might take form of 'that', 'John' or 'Mary') is not straightforward. In music the saturation of the icon by the index is contested, allowing one person to saturate a musical experience with one set of memories while another will saturate a very similar experience – of, say, the same 'work' at the same time in the same place – with a quite different set of memories.¹³

There is a tendency in music for valencies of one (where a musical experience is characterized in terms of a collection of memories abstracted so as to form a character – as in the statement 'it rains') to be arrived at with a more obvious consideration of a wider cultural field. Topics will often function in this way, so a pastoral topic in exhibiting those features found in other contexts will be stamped (to use Peirce's term) with the idea 'pastoral'. Timbral features of music are relatively straightforward to understand in these terms. Like the statement 'it rains' timbral meanings tend to consist of a single idea (indexically established) being predicated of a qualitative idea derived from memories that share a certain quality. This qualitative idea will be a generalized concept (hence symbol functioning as an icon) like 'rainy'. Examples in music include

¹³ To a certain extent this is true of other art forms such as novels. But whereas in the novel a reference to place is habitually traced to an actuality – as is the case with say the references to early twentieth-century Dublin which appear in the writings of Joyce – references to the countryside in Beethoven's 'Pastoral' Symphony are not traceable in the same way. Any reference to a particular time and place is contested, so that a listener's memory of any area of countryside is considered a more reasonable thought to bring to bear upon the music.

heroism or the countryside (as in the case of certain horn timbres), or war or celebration (as in the case of certain percussion-instrument timbres).

Musical meanings derived from two-fold valencies tend to develop when separate utterances within a single work are drawn together in opposition. Whereas in language we can easily locate the saturated bonds of the icon (its structure is clarified by the relative strictness of its indexical link to actuality), in music there is greater scope for different readings. Despite this ambiguity we can suggest a number of musical examples that can be plausibly identified as having a two-fold valency and are therefore comparable to constructions in language like 'Brutus killed Caesar'. A particularly clear example is the second movement of Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto, where the contrast between forte, staccato strings and pianissimo, cantabile, solo piano has led some to saturate the indexical bonds with the ideas Orpheus and the Furies.¹⁴ Similarly the first and second subjects of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony are often read as a two-fold valency, which is, in turn, saturated by notions of (ill) fate and hope. Two-fold valencies are also common on a smaller scale: the perfect cadence, for example, is often read as presenting two slots that are saturated by ideas of tension and release or expectation and fulfilment.

Three-fold valencies are less commonly discussed in analytical/interpretive texts and we are perhaps less inclined to search out and/or recognize valencies of three in music. In language they are exemplified by statements such as 'John gives the ball to Mary', which gives the icon () gives () to (); the sign complex also exhibits a valency of three because a sign refers to an object by virtue of an interpretant. In Schenkerian and Riemannian theory the contrasting functions of tonic, dominant and subdominant, or

¹⁴ According to Jander (1985) this link was first 'discovered' by A. B. Marx and not Liszt as is usually assumed.

intermediate harmonic fields, might be read as articulating a three-fold valency, as might those musical utterances Melanie Lowe relates in terms of ‘opening’, ‘closing’ and ‘continuing’ (Lowe 2007, 30–54). The notions of synthesizing or transcending an opposition are commonly deployed in saturating the bonds of a three-fold valency, and notable here is the correspondence of Hegel’s modes of thought (thesis, antithesis and synthesis) and Peirce’s categories (firstness, secondness and thirdness).¹⁵ One such example is found in Hatten’s general account of Beethoven’s later music:

In Beethoven’s third period the tragic-to-triumphant genre appears to be interpretable in terms comparable to the theatrical category of religious drama – namely, tragedy that is transcended through sacrifice at a spiritual level. The pathos of the tragic may be understood as stemming from a kind of Passion music, depicting a personal, spiritual struggle; and the ‘triumph’ is no longer a publicly heroic ‘victory’ but a transcendence or acceptance that goes beyond the conflicts of the work (after having fully faced them).

(Hatten 1994, 79)

On a smaller scale three-fold valencies can be derived from the three stages of the suspension, which might be saturated with ideas of preparation for tension, tensing up and relaxing, or simply anticipation, conflict and resolution.

The means of saturating the bonds of varying valencies discussed here may seem at odds with my assertion that these bonds can only be saturated by indexical means.

¹⁵ See Fisch (1986, 261–82) for a detailed discussion of the relationship between the two philosophers.

References to fate, hope, tension, release, conflict and transcendence, one might argue, are not really indexical at all, as they do not refer to actualities. This is an important, point but it can be addressed by considering how the valencies themselves will combine.

In the dicisign or proposition 'Brutus killed Caesar' we have an icon '() killed ()' saturated by the indices 'Brutus' and 'Caesar'. It is quite easy to see how the indices relate to an actuality: they can ultimately be traced to a physical occurrence to which one could have pointed or physically 'come up against'. Of course, we cannot now point to or physically come up against either of the actualities in question as they are physically unrecoverable, like so much that is in the past. However, the terms 'Brutus' and 'Caesar' are still indices, as they appeal to breadth or a plethora of actual occurrences that are subsequently brought together in the sign 'Brutus' or 'Caesar'. It is also notable that actualities can be rethought so as to allow them to function as icons; thus in the dicisign 'Thatcher loves Reagan' we have an icon '() loves ()', and two indices 'Thatcher' and 'Reagan'. But the index 'Thatcher' can also be rethought to give the icon Thatcherite. This can operate as an icon in dicisigns such as '() is Thatcherite', which might then be saturated by the index 'this action' giving 'this action is Thatcherite'.

In Western listening practices, it seems to me, there is a tendency to deploy a dicisign with a valency of one so as to establish more generalized indexical functions. Thus a musical icon (or a symbol functioning as an icon) comparable to the linguistic icon '() is hope' may initially be posited in listening to the second subject of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.¹⁶ This musical icon will be saturated by the listening subject's memories of actual feelings of hope (the musical index), and these memories will be

¹⁶ The notions of heroism or nobility are established primarily through the symbolic action of the horn figure. For an account of the conventionalized meanings associated with the horn and its idioms see Tagg (1979,186ff) and Monelle (2006, 35ff).

renegotiated in relation to the music’s depth – its apparently qualitative dimension.¹⁷ Part of the process of this renegotiation derives from the way in which the musical dicsign that can be represented by the liguistic dicsign ‘my group of remembered feelings/states is hope’ also forms an index in the larger-scale opposition between first and second subject. This is represented in Figure 6.2.

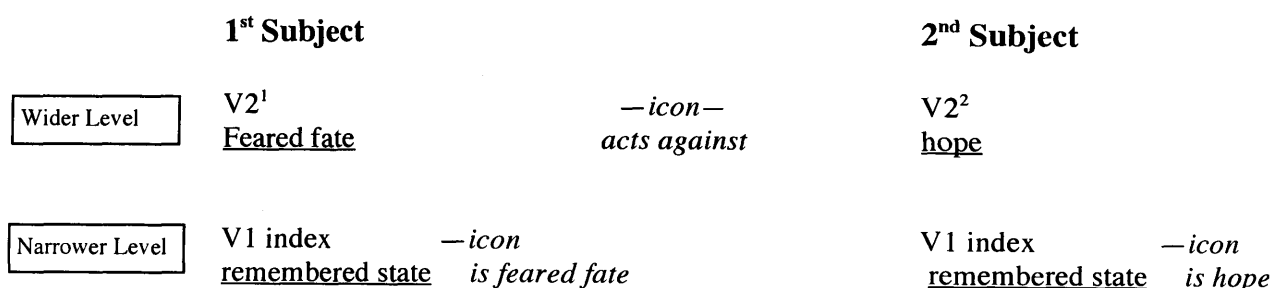


Figure 6.2: Interrelationship of saturated icons of varying valencies on different levels

It is important to note that the development and saturation of narrower-level valencies is not prior to that of wider-level valencies. Furthermore, there is likely to be a sense of dialogue between these levels: just as the concept of self may be renegotiated in relation to hope, so the concept of hope, which can be traced back to the self, will be renegotiated in relation to a feared fate and the quality of that relation articulated in the wider-level icon. Key to understanding Figure 6.2 is the process by which ‘hope’ or ‘feared fate’ can act as an icon on a narrower level and an index on a wider level, just as the index Thatcher can also function as an icon, as is implied by the term ‘Thatcherite’.

Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony is a useful example here because the conventions surrounding the interpretation of the first and second subject of the first movement are

¹⁷ I use the qualifier ‘apparent’ here because it is not possible to isolate firstness (the qualitative) from the other categories. In particular, thirdness will be acting to make qualities conceivable, hence the notion that qualitative signs discussed here are symbols functioning as icons.

reasonably strong. As we have seen in the case of Mozart's 'Prague' Symphony, the conventions surrounding its meanings are less stable and this is partly why it makes such a useful case study. The habits formed in its reception exemplify more clearly the tendency for the index in the musical design to be contested or suppressed.

This theory of musical valencies has a number of advantages over the approaches discussed so far. Whereas the Schenkerian approach had the potential to isolate and, at times, distort the interpretation of local detail by favouring the demands of large-scale structural archetypes, the theory of valencies pays close attention to a dynamic interaction between signs of a wider and narrower timeframe where meaning at one level will be formed in relation to, but not subsumed under, meaning at another level. Whilst Sisman's approach provides much that can be drawn upon in discerning the symbolic aspect of musical meaning, it lacks a means of theorizing the more generalized processes by which musical meanings can develop through different historical periods. It also overlooks the central role of actuality in the listening process, despite a recognition of the need to place a high importance upon the consideration of actuality in the study of music. The theory of valencies is partly anticipated in McClary's analysis of the 'Prague' Symphony. However, some of the possible inconsistencies in McClary's claims for particular meanings can be explained by the instability of musical meaning demonstrated by the theory of valencies. Furthermore, a theory of valencies in music allows us to see how McClary's insight into the role of bourgeois subjectivity in Mozart's symphony is vital to its understanding but also how this understanding must recognize the habits of listening that are articulated around and through musical utterance. We should treat with caution any claim for a direct iconic connection between sound and meaning.

4 *Valency in the Allegro of the 'Prague'*

There are multiple valencies in the Allegro of Mozart's 'Prague' Symphony, the number may even be infinite. But whilst they may be difficult to quantify, identification of key valencies does provide a means of understanding the process by which sections of the Allegro or the Allegro in its entirety might be rendered meaningful.

The analysis that follows looks in turn at each of the valencies and begins to identify specific instances in the 'Prague' that demonstrate each valency. In the discussion that follows, any attempt to give a comprehensive account of the Allegro as a whole is specifically avoided; instead the analysis converges upon a key *moment* in the symphony. This moment is the return of the first subject (bars 283 to 285) in the final bars of the Allegro. The decision to give particular consideration to these few bars is explained by the following three related points. Firstly, there is a clear sense of climax in these bars; secondly, the return of the first subject at the end of the movement creates what is sometimes termed a 'framing device' that appears to give it a particular significance (which is only recognized at this late point if hearing the symphony for the first time) over and above other bars; and thirdly, on first hearing the symphony (and occasionally since) I have had quite an intense response to these few bars, a response that can be described in terms of physiological responses such as goosebumps and tears. By holding these few bars in particular focus I hope to avoid the assumption that local events should be consumed under a theory of the whole but also to recognize the importance of intrawork relationships in generating meaning and, most saliently, the importance of the

contested index and the saturation of that index with one's subjectivity as a dominant reading habit.

(a) *Valencies of one*

Whenever a musical experience is construed as a single qualitative entity it can be usefully classed as exhibiting a valency of one, or as a V1. Topics, as had already been suggested are generally heard and conceived as a V1 despite the fact that they may rely on a set of relations.¹⁸ Some consideration of these relations allows us see how a musical icon can be traced back to actualities or indices.

Agawu gives Opera Buffa as one of his twenty-seven topics (Agawu 1991, 30). This is clearly a particularly complex topic so when considering the melody in the second half of the first theme of the 'Prague' Allegro we might consider the more simple idea of a *buffa patter melody* (see Example 6.8).¹⁹

The buffa patter melody is in the violins (as is often the case) and consists of repeated quaver pitches and some use of semi-quavers to add further contrast. The defining features of this topic are the use of repetition (particularly when in both pitch and rhythm, as is the case here), the allegro tempo²⁰ and the metre of 4/4 or 2/2. Other examples in Mozart include the theme at bar 167 of the finale to Act II of *Le Nozze di*

¹⁸ This has been generally recognized. Rushton, for example, refers to 'Ombre' (one of Agawu's twenty-seven topics (Agawu 1991, 30)) as a 'complex of musical topics' (Rushton 2006, 36).

¹⁹ This term was suggested to me by Allanbrook's reference to 'patter parallel thirds' in the finale of Act II of *Le nozze di Figaro* (Allanbrook 1983, 125). Although Allanbrook's example (bars 191-4) is not characterized by repetition of pitch, it does involve rhythmic repetition. The example from the 'Prague' and others discussed here involve repetition in both elements. The term patter is useful, as it implies repetition, the delivery of words and a certain lightness.

²⁰ Of course, the notion allegro can refer to a range of different tempi just as the notion red can refer to a range of manifest colours.

Figaro,²¹ the fugal subject in the overture to *Die Zauberflöte*; and the theme at bar 101 of the first movement of ‘Jupiter’ Symphony, which is derived from the aria ‘Un bacio di mano’ (K. 541). These are given in Example 6.9.

The image displays three musical staves, each representing a different buffa patter melody. Staff (a) shows a melody in G major, starting at bar 167, with a dynamic marking of *p*. Staff (b) shows a melody in G major, starting at bar 16, with alternating dynamic markings of *p* and *f*. Staff (c) shows a melody in G major, starting at bar 101, with a dynamic marking of *p*.

Example 6.9: Buffa patter melodies: (a) bars 167 to 171 of the Finale of Act II of *Le nozze di Figaro*; (b) bars 16 to 20 of the Overture to *Die Zauberflöte*; (c) bar 101 to 103 of the ‘Jupiter’ Symphony.

When hearing these melodic ideas (i.e. considering them in the present) they function as icons that can be saturated by certain thoughts from past experience. Granted an awareness of some of the conventions surrounding eighteenth-century music there will be a tendency to bring to the unsaturated bond of each melody a memory of light-hearted feeling or playfulness, but because the index sign is contested in music many other interpretations are possible. The insistent repetition, for example, makes saturation by memories of *confident behaviour or gestures* seem reasonable, and this perhaps begins to

²¹ Other examples in *Le nozze* the include third bar of the second subject of the overture, the first of the first duet and Susanna’s melody that opens the Duettino that opens Act II/7.

explain McClary's description of the first subject as 'pulling together enough rhythmic and harmonic momentum to achieve the tiny triumph of a cadence' (McClary 1994, 79).

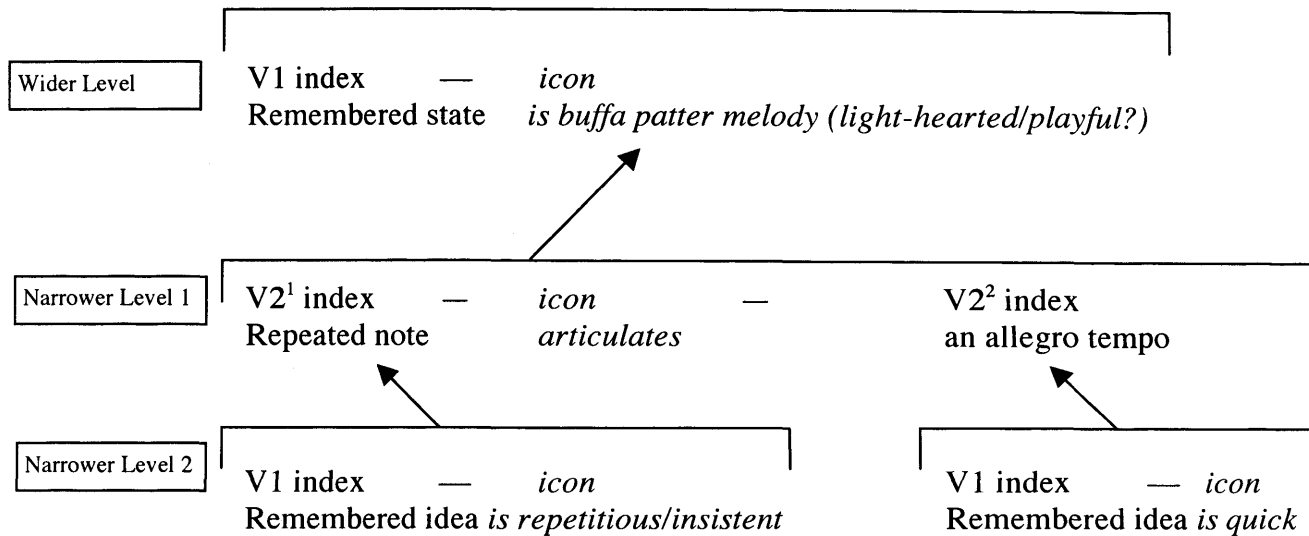


Figure 6.3: Interrelationship of saturated icons of varying valencies on different levels in the first subject of the 'Prague' Allegro

In Figure 6.3 we begin to see how topics can be understood as complexes of qualities each of which might be theorized as an icon, which is saturated by a remembered experience. I identified the *insistent/repetitious* quality of these buffa patter melodies and to this we might add the quality of being *quick* (i.e. within a certain tempo range). These icons, once saturated, can be understood as then forming indices (entities laden with meaning because they have brought together breadth and depth), which relate to one another via a higher level icon. It is this complex (in this case a V2) which then forms the V1 of the topic.

If the convention is to saturate the lowest order index with physical gestures or speech we begin to see why notions of comedy or light-heartedness might be inserted at

‘narrower level 2’ and thereby come into play at the ‘wider level’. The insertion of particular thoughts and memories is never straightforward, however, and the remembered ideas at narrower level 2 will not necessarily correspond with those developing at a wider level. This can be explained by the importance of thirdness at every stage. I might have particular thoughts that I insert when faced with the notions of repetition and quickness (such as certain types of machinery), but they may be suppressed at a wider level of meaning because I have some familiarity with the conventions of eighteenth-century musical interpretation. Having said this, there will be some dialogue between the remembered ideas at level 2 and the remembered state at the wider level. In this sense Mozart’s music will colour my life just as my life colours Mozart’s music.

The topical references in the opening theme of the ‘Prague’ can be theorized as a V1 (although other valencies play a part at a narrower level), but just how this V1 is saturated will depend on the degree of understanding a listener has or chooses to make relevant to their listening experience. However this V1 may be saturated (i.e. whatever the instability of this process), a more stable tendency is identifiable providing further insight into the hearing of this theme. The remembered state at the ‘wider level’ in Figure 6.3 is likely to be dominated by conceptions of self. The bourgeois habits of listening that still dominate the reception of classical music come into force here, making a reading bound up with subjectivity a likely outcome.²² Other sections of the ‘Prague’ that can be successfully understood as demonstrating a valency of one include those already identified by Ratner and taken up (and problematized to a degree) by Sisman.

²² There is, of course, a strong possibility that a listener will be unaware of, or resistant to, these habits and certain reception contexts (such as those identified by Lowe in her discussion of the sounding of *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* in twentieth-century media contexts) will militate against the instantiation of this habit. But in most concert-hall contexts or solitary home-listening contexts, for example, we might reasonably expect bourgeois listening habits to be dominant.

| Bars | Topic/description | Possible saturation by remembered feelings of: |
|---------|--|---|
| 37-40 | Singing style (elements of empfindsamkeit) | Yearning, uncertainty |
| 41-42 | (buffa patter) | Light heartedness, determination |
| 43-44 | Fanfare | Triumph, self confidence |
| 45-50 | Singing style (elements of empfindsamkeit) | Yearning, uncertainty (note nuancing by role in higher valencies) |
| 51- 54 | (Singing style with buffa patter) | Light heartedness inflected by yearning (suspension and appoggiatura) |
| 55-62 | (Noisy orchestral) ²³ (brilliant cadential figure matches that in overture to <i>Le Nozze di Figaro</i>) ²⁴ | Assertiveness |
| 63-65 | (Buffa patter melody) with fanfare | Light heartedness inflected by self confidence |
| 66-70 | Brilliant style and cadence (using buffa patter) | Assertiveness |
| 71-74 | Singing style (elements of empfindsamkeit – intensified by new chromatic E#) | Yearning, uncertainty |
| 75-76 | (Buffa patter) | Light heartedness, determination |
| 77-87 | (Buffa patter with arpeggios – 51-4 – sequence adapted) | Light heartedness inflected by striving |
| 88-94 | Sturm und drang | Struggle |
| 94-96 | (Cadential figures anticipating second subject) | Relief |
| 96-104 | Singing style | Integrity, peace |
| 105-110 | Singing style (elements of empfindsamkeit) | Yearning, uncertainty |
| 110-111 | Learned style | Reflection |
| 112-120 | Singing style | Peace inflected with yearning |
| 121-124 | (Noisy orchestral) | Assertiveness |
| 125-129 | Brilliant style and cadence (using buffa patter) | Assertiveness |
| 130-133 | Complex integration | To be discussed |
| 134-139 | (Buffa patter) with fanfare | Light heartedness inflected by self confidence |
| 139-142 | Cadential figure | Assertiveness |

Table 6.2: Valencies of one in the exposition of the ‘Prague’ with possible habitual saturations

²³ The description of this section as ‘noisy’ orchestral writing is taken from Sisman who asserts that this was a common description in Mozart’s time (Sisman 1997, 58). Ratner labels this passage ‘Brilliant style, modified *stile legato*’ (Ratner 1980,23) and whilst this gives some insight into possible reading or saturation of these bars it is rather a loose description – more helpful is Sisman’s description of this passage as a ‘forceful tutti with sequences, imitations, and an underlying species model’ (Sisman 1997, 64). The use of the term ‘forceful’ anticipates the likely saturation of this passage with memories of assertiveness.

²⁴ This reference is likely to have been noticed, at least by some listeners, at the first performance of the symphony given the popularity of *Le Nozze di Figaro* in Prague at the time.

The clearest and least problematic of these are listed in Table 6.2 along with other additions of my own, which are bracketed.

This table highlights some of the insights offered by topic theory but also demonstrates its limitations. One point discussed by Sisman concerns the way in which quite different material can be described by the same topic label (such as bars 51 to 54 and bars 55 to 62 as 'brilliant style'). Sisman suggests that scoring and dynamics play a part in explaining such anomalies, but from looking in more detail at the table above we can begin to see the way in which the same material might also be read quite differently as a result of the music that precedes it (surely bars 134 to 139 are saturated quite differently from bars 67 to 69 due to their quite different contexts). It is in this area that the theory of valencies of one or two can help us to develop a more plausible model for musical meaning.

(b) Valencies of two

Whenever a musical experience is construed as an opposition between two distinct entities it can be usefully classed as exhibiting a valency of two, or as a V2. A V2 can be either synchronic (each entity is heard simultaneously) or diachronic (entities are separated in time). Synchronic V2s have a greater tendency to be conceived as a V1 on a wider level. The V1 at bars 51 to 54 is likely to be heard not as two distinct opposing entities (singing style melody vs. buffa patter melody) but as a single unit which might be saturated by memories of light-hearted feelings inflected by yearning. Of course, one might argue that light-heartedness and yearning cannot be felt simultaneously, and this is

perhaps true, but the point here is that memories of such experiences are brought together in the present to constitute a single qualitative idea. Here again we gain insight into the way in which the insertion of one's self into the musical experience produces a dialogue where the past is renegotiated in the present to suggest an apparent unity in selfhood. Conflicting emotional states can somehow appear logically connected and integrated within an autonomous whole.

Because synchronic V2s will tend to be conceived as V1s Figure 6.4 focuses upon diachronic V2s. In such cases music is still functioning in the present. We experience an idea that is made sense of in an instant by opposing what is heard with what has just passed. Now we appear to be moving away from the present moment into the recent past, but the important point here is that the musical icon, which consists of two opposable slots or unsaturated bonds, is conceived in the moment-by-moment experience of the music. Thus, depending upon the particular listening behaviour involved, it is likely that any one moment within the experience of bars 94 to 96 will contain within it an icon that is structured through an opposition between bars 94 to 96 (possibly saturated with ideas of relief) and bars 88 to 94 (possibly saturated with ideas of struggle).

As this last example suggests, the saturation of the music by past thoughts, in this case struggle and relief, also affects the way in which particular valencies are construed. Whereas one listener may saturate a slow introduction to a symphony with a myriad of memories (now renegotiated), another may 'switch off' and wait for the 'exciting bit'. The first listener is more likely to conceive the Allegro as a V2 in relation to the introduction, whereas the second listener is unlikely to follow such a pattern. In the same way that attention or concentration will affect the construal of valencies, the resonance, or

what we might term the *identity-forming intensity*, of any particular musical experience will affect the construal of valency. The more resonant an experience the more likely it is to colour further musical experiences.

Despite this indeterminacy of valency we can usefully develop Table 6.2 to highlight a number of V2s – these are shown in Figure 6.4. V2s can result from contrast or variation (i.e. partial contrast/partial repetition) or even apparent repetition,²⁵ and they can be drawn between adjacent or non-adjacent musical ideas. In any instance the V2 will be formed because a particular musical experience will be construed in opposition to another musical experience that is thereby brought to mind and re-experienced in the present.

Figure 6.4 is termed a valency construal hypothesis. It is a hypothesis about how a particular hearing of the exposition of the ‘Prague’ might be construed in terms of two-fold valencies. The hypothetical nature of this analysis needs to be emphasized – different hearings will result in valencies being construed differently. Furthermore, this type of valency analysis will tend to seek out an idealized hearing – idealized in that there is an attempt to posit a high degree of consistency so that, for example, the section from bars 77 to 80 is construed as a V2 in relation to the last statement of the first subject and all that preceded it up to that point (hence the connection of the V2 box and lines to a dashed vertical line covering bars 71 to 76). This is understood to match the analysis of bars 51 to 54. This type of consistency seems reasonable, but it will not necessarily follow that because a section has a valency construal of one sort, a similar section will have the same basic pattern.

²⁵ Of course, repetition in a performance of the ‘Prague’ would not occur: there would always be subtle change in dynamic, timbre and duration.

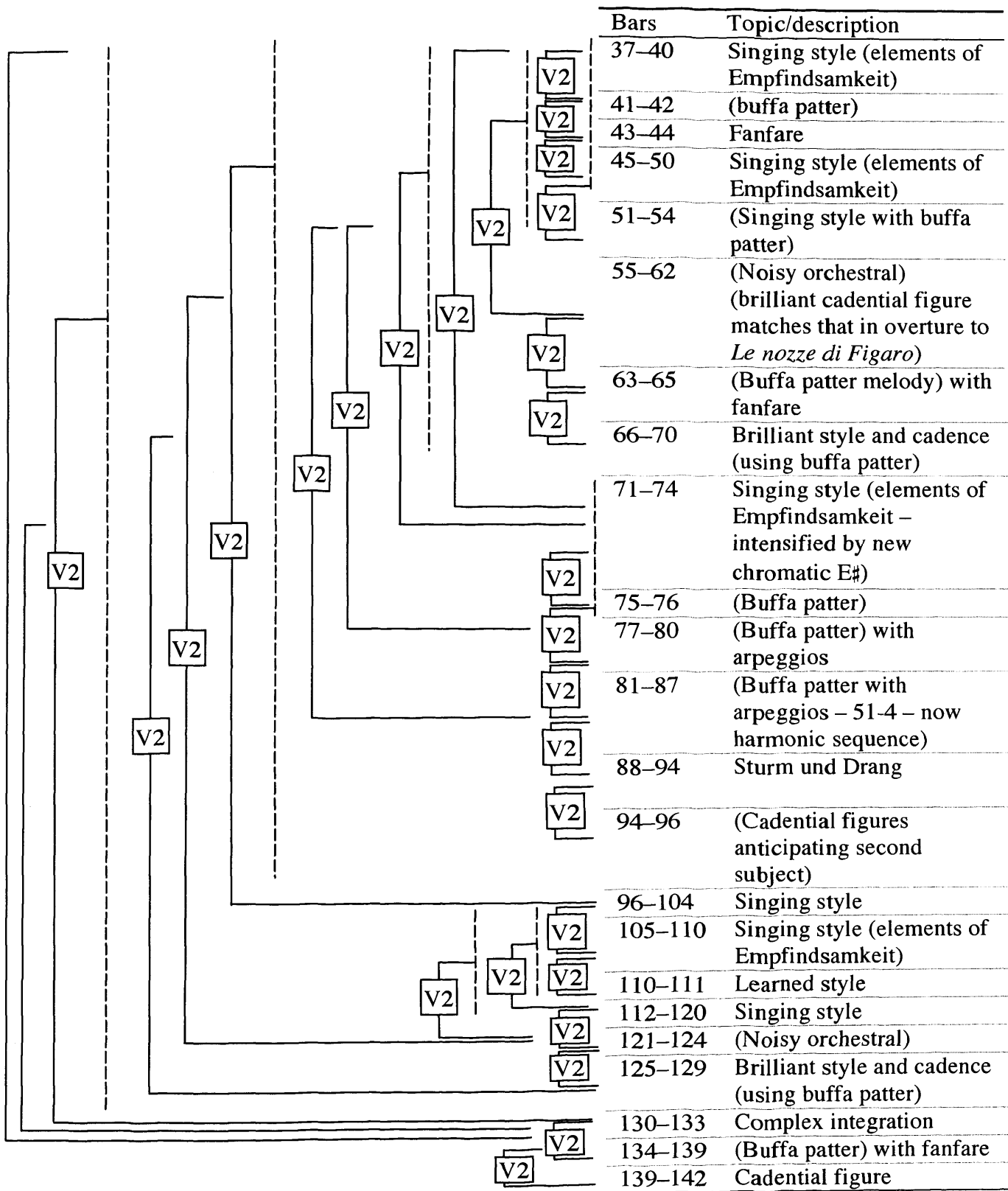


Figure 6.4: Valency construal hypothesis for exposition (V2)

With this qualification in mind it is instructive to notice certain patterns in the valency analysis hypothesized in Figure 6.4: (1) Each section tends to be construed as a V2 in relation to the section that preceded it unless it is construed as a V2 in relation to multiple preceding sections (conceived as a single entity). (2) Sections that are transpositions of a previous section (perhaps with some alteration such as the E# in bars 71 to 74) tend to be construed as a V2 in relation to the section they transpose. (3) Sections which have a significant sense of 'fresh material' and/or which designate, through convention, the beginning of a large new section will tend to be heard as a V2 in relation to multiple preceding sections (again construed as a single entity); this is the case with the second subject in bars 96 to 104.

One of the more obvious criticisms of Figure 6.4 is that it seems to take little account of key structure. I have criticized other methods of analysis for subsuming significant detail under wider tonal relations and thereby distorting the fabric of the music analyzed. The retort following this analysis might be that key relations have been lost altogether. There is something in this criticism, as I have certainly tended to conceive texture, dynamics and phrase structure and theme as equal in importance to key. But we need to recognize here the very important role of key in designating the sectional distinctions I have hypothesized. The occurrence of the second subject at bar 96, for example, is given a clear significance through the hypothesis that it will be heard as a V2 in relation to all of the Allegro music up to that point, and this significance is a result, not of only the textural and dynamic contrast it embodies but also the sense of arrival in a new key with which such contrast is bound up. I want to underline the point, however, that this analysis represents a tendency to place an equal emphasis upon all elements of

music in the articulation of meaning and to move away from a traditional tendency to conceive key structure as the primary arbiter of musical signification. Despite this assertion, there is clearly much to be gained by considering the role of key relations in the generation of musical meaning, and part of the section that follows looks at this area in some detail.

(c) Valencies of three

Whenever a musical experience is construed as a mediating process between two distinct entities it can be usefully classed as exhibiting a valency of three, or as a V3. Just as the sign determines an object via an interpretant, so an experience of music in the present can bring to mind an understanding of an earlier musical experience with reference to the future thoughts towards which it moves. A sign is always pointing forwards towards the series of interpretants it engenders; music, in the same way, is experienced in the present but is always pointing towards the future. In this sense music always exhibits thirdness, and any musical experience can be read as a V3. But certain structures may have a greater tendency to be read as a V3, and this three-fold valency can be saturated by similarly complex ideas and feelings from the listener's past.

Construal of a V3 in music relies to a large degree upon some knowledge of what is likely to happen in the future. Thus the habits of tonal composition are important to the construal of V3s, as is the prior knowledge of musical works and repetition of structures within works. In the case of the 'Prague' Symphony we might hypothesize that the repeat of the exposition is more likely to produce V3s because the listener, especially if

hearing the symphony for the first time, has a much-improved understanding of how the music will develop. This does much to overcome the view that an exposition repeat is a problematic hangover from dance-form habits, which, it is sometimes suggested, has the potential to undermine the drama of sonata-form tonal architecture. It might also explain why composition 'for posterity' tends towards the production of less repetitive structures; repetition will be achieved, it is hoped, through a place within the museum of musical 'masterworks'.

A V3 is most likely to be construed during a musical experience that appears to mediate between two other states. McClary's discussion of the 'Prague' suggests that she hears the fanfare at bars 43 to 44 as celebrating the cadence of the first subject and encouraging its repetition. To draw such a reading in line with the theory of valencies we can surmise that there will be a moment (or succession of moments) in the fanfare that is construed in relation to the first subject that directly precedes it. This produces a V2, but a more complex reading conceives the fanfare as pointing to a future state in which the first subject is reconceived via the fanfare. In this way, music that emphasizes process (through convention) will tend to be read as a V3 because it brings to mind a three-fold structure of itself, its past point of departure and that towards which it moves. This three-fold structure forms a set of bonds that can be saturated by the complex life-processes we remember from the past and bring to bear upon the present.

To take the simple example already mentioned, when the dominant chord sounds in a perfect cadence it reaches a point of most anticipation which simultaneously draws on the preparatory chord that leads up to it and points forward to the tonic chord that will

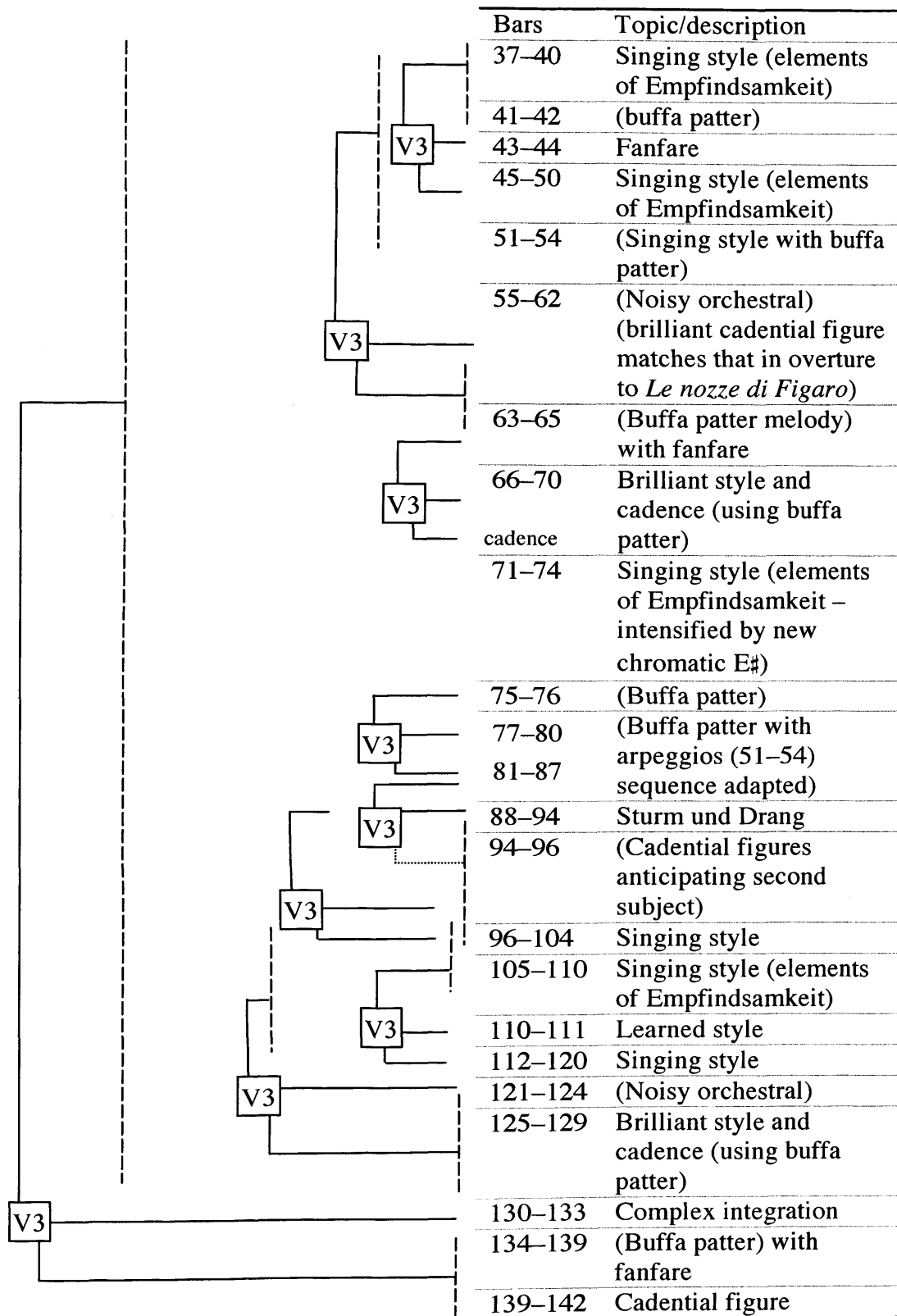


Figure 6.5: Valency construal hypothesis for exposition (V3)

resolve it. The conception of a perfect cadence as a process that relates the past with the future through the present reflects a necessary state of affairs – we are in this sense governed by the dimensions of time (which, recall, correspond to the categories). But the reading of a perfect cadence as indicative of a necessary and unified self is not a necessary act – it is derived from the habit of conceiving the self as an autonomous entity that can be more fully realized through the experience of autonomous works of art. In this sense bourgeois subjectivity is key to understanding the ‘Prague’ but by way of the habits of reading that have developed around and through it. These habits may not be written into the music as such, whereas the possible valencies the music entails may be necessary to its condition as music – more on this at the end of the chapter.

This discussion of the perfect cadence as a V3 underlines the point that any moment of music can be read as exhibiting thirdness in its articulation of the present as related to past and future. Despite this ubiquity of the V3, more prominent larger-scale, processual sections of the ‘Prague’ can be usefully identified and diagrammed as V3s in much the same manner as that laid out for V2s in Figure 6.4. These three-fold valencies are set out in Figure 6.5.

The V3s in Figure 6.5 each consist of three prongs. Each prong can be usefully correlated to one of the categories. The middle prong points to music heard in the present (firstness); the upper prong points to the section that is likely to be brought to mind in relation to that music heard in the present (secondness); the third prong points to that music anticipated by the relationship between the first two prongs (thirdness). All of the V3s in Figure 6.5 extend a V2 already given in Figure 6.4. Some insight into the

relationship between V2s and V3s can be gained by considering their counterpart in language. One of Peirce's examples for a V3 in language is the icon:

() gives () to ()

Peirce does not, to my knowledge, explicitly map the subject, object and indirect object that will saturate this icon to firstness, secondness and thirdness, but I think it may be useful to do so. In which case a V2 could be conceived as:

() gives ()

And a V3 would extend this icon to include a slot for an indirect object:

() gives () to ()

Dicisigns in both music and language, then, contain V3s that can be conceived as more developed V2s. This again can be connected with the way in which an interpretant (third) can be understood as a more developed sign (first), which relates to an object (second). In a V2 we consider a moment in music in relation to a musical experience that preceded it and thereby conceive of a relationship that can be saturated by (possibly non-musical) memories from past experience. In a V3 we consider a moment in music in relation to that which preceded it and, in so doing, conceive of the music that will follow and thereby draw up a more complex relation that can be mapped onto more complex experiences of our past – experiences that might even spill over into a sense of understanding or anticipating our own future.

Two further points need some explanation in relation to Figure 6.5. Firstly, we can note that the third prong of each V3 may connect with a dashed vertical line. In each case this dashed line shows that the musical moment points not simply to the next section but to the remainder of the section in which the moment occurs. All of the examples

where this is the case are sequential. The music heard in these sequences has a high level of predictability, engendering anticipation both in terms of pattern continuation and in terms of foreseeing a conclusion and a subsequent new section. This pointing to the immediate future and the more distant future is shown by the dotted line running alongside both the current section and that which follows. The second point needing some explanation concerns the third prong pointing to bars 94 to 96. This line is dotted to show that although the moment-by-moment experience of bars 88 to 94 might point forward, there is considerable uncertainty as to exactly how the music will develop (especially when hearing the symphony for the first time). There is, of course, a pattern in the chromatically rising bass of bars 88 to 94, but it is still difficult to predict the details of the harmony (and thereby the tonal trajectory), the change in texture and harmonic rhythm at bar 92 and the cadence onto an F# minor chord in bar 95. This annotation will also be useful in this analysis at a smaller scale and will be used to elucidate the most striking feature of Figure 6.5 – the large-scale V3 that connects bars 130 to 133 to the exposition as a whole and the remainder of the exposition.

5 Valency and Climax in the Allegro of the 'Prague' Symphony

I have described the music at bars 130 to 133 (Example 6.10) as a complex integration. This is because the moment-by-moment experience of these three bars seems somehow to draw upon so much of what has preceded it as well as point emphatically to the subsequent cadential passage. In this sense it integrates much of the music of the

Allegro. The notion of integration is also warranted by the point that this section brings together the first part of the first subject, the second part of the first subject and an outline of the countermelody which accompanies the second subject in bars 46 to 49 (Examples 10a–c).

Example 6.10: Bars 130 to 133 with annotations (a, b, c) to show connection with music heard earlier (see Example 6.11)

Example 6.11: Components of the climax at bars 130 to 133

McClary gives a compelling account of this music, when it occurs again at the end of the movement (bars 283 to 286), as a key moment in the narrative she posits for the symphony as a whole. In these final bars, she notes that:

we find that the process [of self-realization] concludes with a victorious apotheosis of this first theme. It has been duly transformed to occupy its role as confident adult: its parts are inverted so that the yearning gesture originally in the lower strings now serves unequivocally as melody, while the stammering syncopations have developed into constant eighth notes that press dynamically forward to the final cadence. This, then, is the telos, the goal toward which the movement strives: the confident coming-to-power/coming-of-age of a subject whose advent can be detected in retrospect in the introduction, who begins his journey unaware of his own resources, and who eventually works through his own potentiality to become fully actualized.

(McClary 1994, 79 to 80)

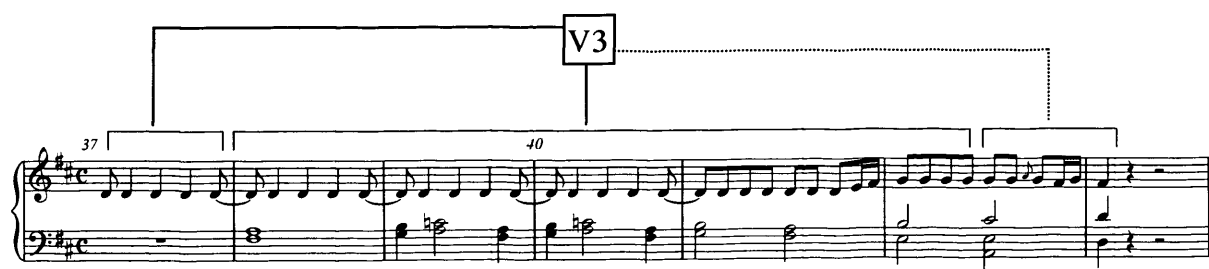
McClary does much to unearth the power of this passage when understood in the context of bourgeois reading practices. My discussion below does not look to undermine the relevance of key issues identified by McClary but it does attempt to place greater emphasis upon the role of reading habits in the formation of meaning in the 'Prague' and to develop a more detailed explanation as to why bars 130 to 133 and (with even greater intensity) bars 283 to 286 might appear so significant.

Bars 130 to 133 clearly relate to the first subject (Example 6.8), and can be said to form a V2 with this opening of the Allegro when experienced at the end of the exposition. One notable feature of the first subject, identified by both Sisman and McClary, is its tendency towards the subdominant. We might even posit an alternative continuation for the first subject which leads without any great sense of ‘wrench’ to the subdominant. This is given in Example 6.12.



Example 6.12: First theme adapted so as to cadence in G

The restructuring of the first subject in Example 6.12 underlines its harmonic ambiguity, which might be usefully conceived in terms of the V3 with dotted third prong introduced in Figure 6.5. This is shown in Example 6.13.



Example 6.13: First subject as V3 with dotted prong

The dotted third prong highlights the unpredictability of the first subject. When we hear bar 37 there seems to be an unambiguous tonal centre D, especially when heard after the slow introduction. Bar 38 begins to create some uncertainty through the sound of an F#

in the bass. Any suspicion that the convention of sounding a clear stable first subject in the tonic will be subverted is then reinforced by the sounding of a $C\sharp$ in bars 39 and 40, suggesting a likely move flatwards to G major. This growing expectation of the establishment of G major, however, is quickly undermined by the perfect cadence in D in bars 42 to 43.

When we hear the second subject again after a cadence on (not in) the dominant at bar 71 we have a far greater expectation for any suggestion of a move flatwards to be thwarted. The re-sounding of the first subject, now starting on A, we might expect to progress as before and land quite securely in A major; this is indeed what happens, but there is a suggestion in bar 72 that this time things might be different. At bar 72 we hear an $E\sharp$ which intensifies the sense of a V–I relationship between bars 72 and 73. The $E\sharp$ suggests a $V^{\#5}$ chord in D major leaving us with some doubt as to whether we will end up back in D major or enact the expected move to the dominant, A major. The $E\sharp$ in this sense is a tool which allows some reinstatement of the uncertainty in pattern continuation that characterizes the first theme. This makes the V3 an appropriate means of annotating bars 71 to 77 (Example 6.14).

Example 6.14: Bars 71 to 77 as V3 with dotted prong

The next time we encounter the first subject is at bars 130 to 133. This section follows a perfect authentic cadence in the now fully established dominant. This gives this section a strong sense of 'new beginning' even though it does not introduce entirely new material. It is for this reason that it is analyzed in Figure 6.4 as a V2 which draws to mind all of the previous material in the Allegro. This claim is made more plausible when we consider the more obvious V2s connecting bars 130 to 133 with the two earlier soundings of the first subject (at bars 37 and 71).²⁶

There are a number of clear differences between bars 130 to 133 and the first subject heard earlier in the movement. It is now played forte instead of piano, and the register of the violins is far higher (they in fact reach in these bars the highest note so far in the movement: E'''). As already noted, we also encounter an integration of a number of ideas relating to the first subject: the buffa patten melody in the basses, a mirror of the first theme (in violin II, viola and bassoon), the first theme itself (in violin I and upper wind). The brass and timpani also play their part in underlining the significance of this section by articulating the harmonic rhythm (♩ ♭) whilst reinforcing the pedal note of the basses.

All of these features contribute to imbuing these bars with a sense of importance. But in order to explain more fully the intense reaction one might have in experiencing these bars we do well to consider the interaction of valencies at this point. Bars 130 to

²⁶ One notable point here is that the three soundings of the first subject in the exposition do not form a V3 between themselves. Crucial to understanding the V3 is the point that it cannot be reduced to two or more V2s. Bar 37ff, 71ff and 133ff form three different V2s between themselves (71 to 37, 133 to 37 and 133 to 71) and this is not the same as their forming a V3. Peirce explains this point by the example of giving: if we say that 'A gives B to C' (a V3) that is not the same as saying that 'A puts B down' (V2) and 'C picks B up' (V2). However, we might add, the statement that 'A loves B and C' is not a V3 because it can be reduced to 'A loves B' and 'A loves C'.

133 give a sense of drawing on the Allegro as a whole, but equally important is the emphatic sense of pointing forward to an (almost) inevitable unambiguous resolution. Where the first subject in earlier guises was always somehow ambiguous, there is little doubt now as to how the future will pan out; we are pointed inexorably to a close in the dominant. Experiencing these relationships again if/when the exposition is repeated is likely to intensify this process of resolving ambiguity. The details of when and how relationships will develop is unlikely to be recalled in detail, and a changing relationship in the predictability/unpredictability can give the experience a freshness so easily overlooked by more static conceptualizations of musical form.

When we reach the end of the movement we have a similar experience. At bar 283 we hear the music of bars 130 to 133 with a number of developments that intensify its apparent significance. Most obviously, we are now back in the tonic – D major – and the sense of impending close is therefore even stronger. Violin I is now in an even higher register and appears almost to condense key relationships in the Allegro to just three notes: G – D – F#. G and D are the contesting tonal centres for much of the work, and their outlining of a fourth, perhaps creates a V2 with the sequential, ‘noisy orchestral’ passages that follow close on the heels of both the first and second subjects. The bassoons play the mirror of the first theme (doubled by oboes) and actually form the bass line. If this is not particularly clear, bars 290 to 292 make the sounding of the mirror theme in the bass explicit, with cellos and basses doubling bassoons. The mirror theme now appearing in its more elaborate guise, first heard as the oboe countermelody in bars 46 to 48.

Bars 43-44

Reduction

Strings

A: I V I V₂ I⁴ IV V IV⁶ V₂ V I
D: V 7 I

Example 6.16: Bars 143 to 151 with V3 annotations

Further insight into the new intensity of bars 280 to 283 can be studied by considering valencies. These bars will clearly draw upon the V2s and V3s in the exposition already discussed. But there is a further set of relations that needs close consideration when analyzing the valencies of bars 280 to 283. After the close of the exposition we experience a series of canons and other imitative textures. These passages tend to be predictable in the short term (with their sequential structure pointing emphatically forwards) but unpredictable in the medium and long term. Thus the first passage of the development section can be annotated along the lines of Example 6.16.

In the music that follows the passage in Example 6.16 we continue to experience a plethora of V3s, and the majority of the medium to large-scale instances would be annotated with dotted third prongs indicating the uncertainty of their longer-term pattern continuation. At bar 189 we appear to be back on more predictable ground: we hear the

first subject starting on A, and because there is no E# this time a cadence in A major seems particularly likely. However, this time the music actually does seem to lead us flatwards (with an interchange of mode) into D minor. The subject now closes with a half cadence: an augmented German sixth to V in D minor (Example 6.17).

189

Wind and brass

Strings

p

p

A:I

d:ii

ivi

V

ii

V

ii

V

VI⁷ - #⁶
(German)

V

Example 6.17: Bars 189 to 195, false recapitulation involving a move flatwards to D minor

When the recapitulation proper begins at bar 208 a move flatwards is again suggested by a V^{#5} chord, but the more likely reassertion of the tonic follows. On the re-sounding of the first subject with countermelody, however, we move quite unexpectedly to B \flat major/F major, the ambiguity again articulated through the first subject. This move flatwards is the most extreme yet, but it is again thwarted by a quick move through D minor to D major via another augmented German sixth in the second half of bar 227.

The first subject, then, is never particularly predictable in its continuation except at the end of the exposition and at the end of the whole movement. Even in the recapitulation we are kept guessing by an extreme move flatwards (three to four steps around the cycle of fifths). This retention of ambiguity makes the emphatic predictability

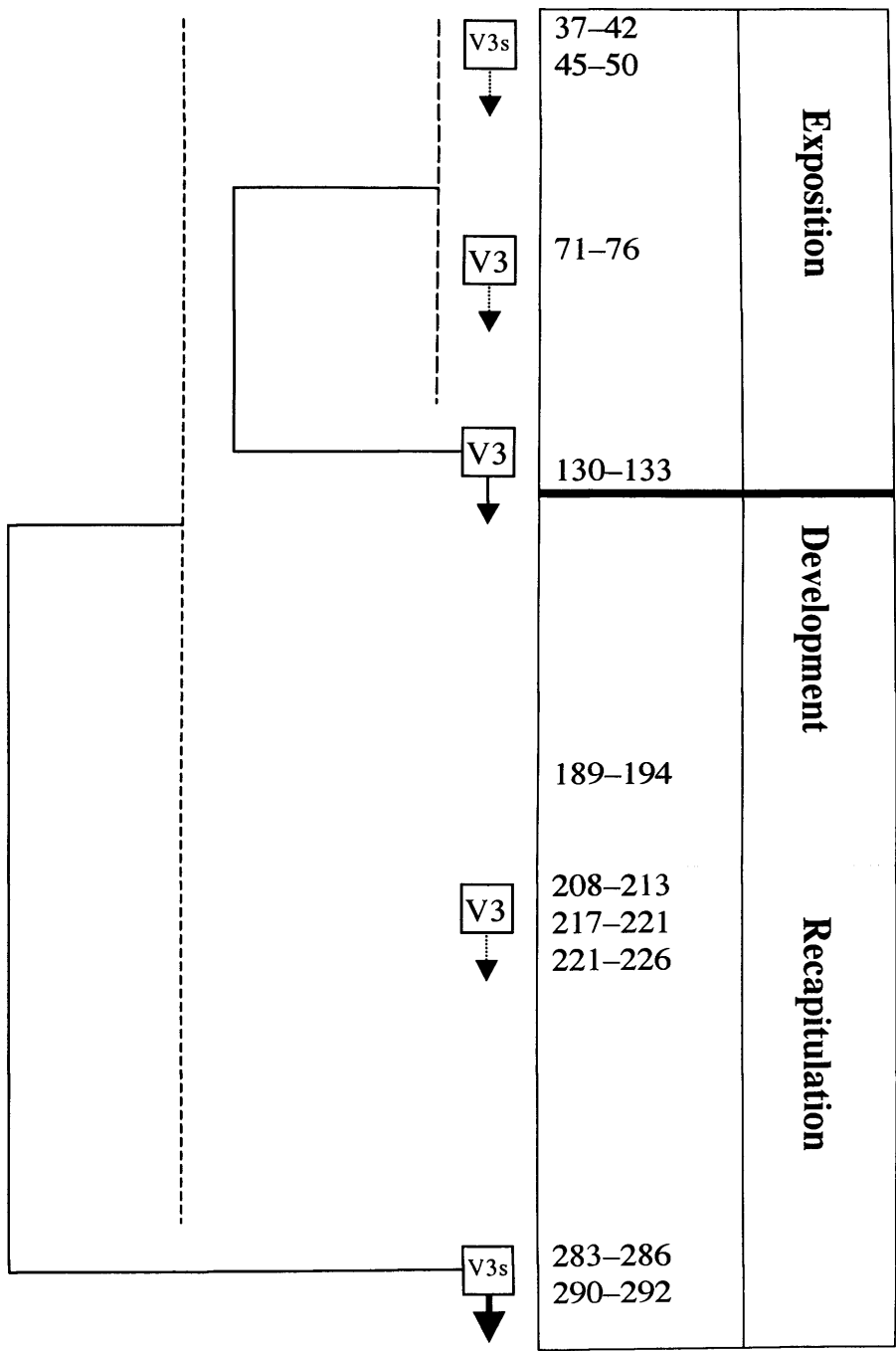


Figure 6.6: Summary of key V3 interrelationships in the Allegro of the ‘Prague’

of bars 283ff. all the more intense. The importance of V3s in relation to the first subject in the movement as a whole is shown in Figure 6.6. The way in which sections point forwards is now shown by an arrow, and uncertainty of continuation is indicated by a dotted-line arrow. For the last V3s the arrow is bolder, to highlight the more emphatic sense of close towards which they point.

The valency of three (V3) encountered in the first subject in its different guises forms a complex of slots. Each V3 can be conceived as an icon, which the listener will saturate with indices (constituted by past memories). McClary's reading of the 'Prague' in terms of bourgeois subjectivity is insightful, because the drawing upon memories rendered significant in the forming of our subjectivity is a fundamental habit of classical music listening practices. On experiencing the V3s above, the tendency is to pick out and bring to bear those memories key to our conception of self. This is consistent with Peirce's tendency to conceive woman/man as a sign. For Peirce, we have no powers of introspection but we reason the self through a dialogue comparable to that of a sign-using community of inquirers: the human subject consists of a sign or a series of interpretants inferred from past occurrence. In the present moment, Peirce insists, 'there is no time for any inference at all', and as a consequence 'the present object must be an external object' (CP 5.462). Thus, when conceived as a series of present moments, music can be seen to provide a particularly successful means to enact the process of identity formation. But noticing the success of music in fulfilling this role is not the same as suggesting that such a role for music is necessary or inevitable. It seems more reasonable to conceive the act of reading the self *into* the music, and certainly the act of reading the music in terms of

autonomous selfhood, as a habit that could be and is otherwise within different musical cultures.

To return to Figure 6.6, it is important to emphasize that some V3s are more stable than others. They are all likely to bring to mind past music, but their development into a V3, in most instances, is not entirely clear. In bringing ideas of self to saturate these valencies we negotiate and reconsider those memories that have a strong identity-forming function. We fit ourselves into the music and the music into ourselves.

6 Conclusion

If the conclusion of the last section is accepted it seems reasonable to suggest that the music *directs* us, through the presentation and re-presentation of connected ideas, to a notion of selfhood that is, by the end of the Allegro, more developed and more secure in recognizing its present, past and future. In such a suggestion, however, we begin to move closer to the theoretical models that underpin much of McClary's position. We are beginning to move from a rigorously logical iconism of corresponding valencies to a more nebulous conception of a transition from two-fold valency to three-fold valency and the correspondence of this transition to a more developed conception of selfhood. Despite the shakier foundations for such a theory it remains an attractive prospect when looking to extend the approach to valency analysis developed here. What is more, it does sit comfortably with Peirce's theory of the categories and the relationship between secondness and thirdness. Recall here that thirdness develops from firstness with

reference to secondness; or, to put this process another way, qualitative experience in relation to actuality allows thought to develop.²⁷

This realignment with McClary's thought can be placed within the wider context of the theories developed in this thesis. I have criticized McClary for suggesting an iconic relationship between musical form and musical meaning. McClary's ideas remain open to criticism because they can seem to ignore the uncertainty and context-dependency of different readings, tending even to construe meaning as an entity rather than a process. But in exploring the role of the valencies and looking to analyze their function within musical experience we cannot avoid the question as to whether particular valency formations can play a role in engendering certain readings over others. If the answer to such a question is yes, then we are left with the logical conclusion that reading habits cannot be divorced from musical form. In this interconnection of reading habit (a third) and form (a first) we again appear to be confronting the ambiguity between firstness and thirdness. Reading habits are clearly thirds, but if they somehow enter into dialogue with (and are thereby manifest in) form, then they may be better conceived as firsts. There may be a certain circularity here, but I would want to emphasize the richness of Peirce's thought in conceiving such theoretical issues: the act of a first (form) determining a third (habit) in relation to a second (object), and the subsequent development of that third so that it acts as a first, is the central mechanism in the

²⁷ This is the point upon which Hatten draws to give theoretical justification to his model of growth in a musical style (Hatten 1994, 260). Hatten quotes a passage from Peirce's notes for the Cambridge Conferences of 1898 reproduced in Fisch (1986, 266): 'the second does not spring out of first directly; but firstness looked at from a second point of view gives birth to a thirdness and the secondness comes out of the thirdness.' Peirce final point here concerns the way in which we come to understand the actual world through the process of inquiry – the development of interpretants. But note that the firstness does not produce thirdness alone but needs to be viewed from a 'second point of view'. This 'second point of view' I understand as a view involving indexicality. Hatten, it seems to me, does not recognize all of these points, hence the inconsistencies discussed at the end of Chapter 4.

ubiquitous process Peirce terms semiosis. It serves, again, here as a fruitful model for understanding the recurring problems encountered in the study of musical meaning. We are able in music neither to trace interpretation back through the series of interpretants to a firstness or formal absolute that acts as a point of origin nor to arrive at a complete account of meaning for a musical 'work'. Peirce's theory of inquiry, as always producing an infinite series of interpretants, was abandoned because he saw that a final interpretant would be achieved in the long run. Such a point of arrival is not possible within Western listening practices, however, because music's indexicality is contested. Indexicality (reference to actuality) is the sine qua non of a proper process of inquiry; Western listening practices ensure music's infinite (re)interpretation by insisting upon the contestability of its index.

It is in the contesting of the index that the ideological status of Western listening practices comes into sharper focus. Attempts to seal off music hermetically from the actual world are, of course, fated to fail. There can be no meaning without actuality, no thought even. But the pursuit of an autonomous, bourgeois selfhood unblemished by the actualities of relative material wealth and past action²⁸ entails the development of listening practices that attempt, at least, to suppress or negate indexical functions. It is this suppression of key components of musical meaning that McClary is seeking to undermine. By presenting a plausible reading of Mozart's music that places social context centre stage, suggesting its inseparability from musical form, she executes a resistive manoeuvre. Of course, McClary simplifies the interaction of form and meaning, (firstness and thirdness) in the process, but this is perhaps an understandable

²⁸ See Tagg's *Ten Little Tunes* on this point (2003, 24ff). This subsection is headed 'Absolute Subjectivity'.

simplification when we consider the impact achieved by McClary through stark rhetorical devices. Furthermore, although I argue that the relationship of form and meaning involves all the categories and cannot be reduced to a simplistic notion of iconism, the ambiguity between firstness and thirdness is a key to the complexities of semiosis, whatever qualification, therefore, we might bring to the simpler iconic model of McClary via the notion of reading habits, we are still left with the logical conclusion that the experience of form and the experience of meaning must exhibit a dialogical relationship.

The suggestion that reading habits are bound up with form, in this sense, is not new. The idea of a dialogical (or dialectical) relationship between form and (social) meaning has been pursued by a number of important musicologists (all working, arguably, in the wake of Adorno). But it is hoped that the theory of reading habit and valency can do much to bring a fresh perspective to this central musicological question, as well as a logical means to explore its complexities. It is further hoped that a theory of valencies in music can help develop an analytical approach that recognizes the indeterminacy of musical meaning, places greater emphasis upon time and process in the musical experience and fosters a growing sensitivity to the localized details of music – all of which should help found further insight into the role of larger-scale relationships in the formation of meanings.

Conclusion

Having introduced the ideas of Charles Sanders Peirce this thesis has been critical of a perceived ideological tendency in the deployment of Peirce in musicological discourse.¹ This tendency has been explained in terms of the reification and legitimization of a particular body of music and an attempt to reassert the possibility of musical meanings that can be explained by the structural relations theorized by traditional methods of musical analysis. Although it has not been possible to explore the fields of popular musicology and new musicology at length, the arguments proffered here clearly indicate a belief that these developments in musicology should be welcomed and assimilated by music semioticians. The suggestion throughout has been that the work of figures such as Tagg and McClary, whilst not devoid of problems, represent a pressing concern to take all musics and listening practices seriously. More to the point it has been suggested that music semiotics and musicology in general will benefit from a rigorous engagement with such claims, and gains little from a refusal to challenge some of its core assumptions.

¹ Although this thesis engages ideology from a Peircian perspective, drawing on the generalized definition in Green (1988, 1998) in particular, it is recognized that the term has different applications in other intellectual discourses. See, for example, Žižek (1994).

This last point needs some qualification. The arguments that dominate this thesis have two broad tendencies: the first is to claim a more rigorous engagement with what are argued to be the more important and consistent aspects of Peircian thought; the second has been to rely on the validity of those theories of ideology that posit reification and legitimization as key indicators of problematic assumption. This, in turn, has been connected to those debates that surround the notion of a ‘music-in-itself’ and the closely related question of music’s (relative) autonomy and the location (or negation) of musical meaning within musical structure. Whilst these arguments are deemed useful in the development of a critical account of musical practice, the second pattern of argument, in particular, is problematized by its own critical assertions. This argument, in relying upon notions of reification and legitimization, can be seen to assume the very objectivity and self-evident legitimacy that it deems so problematic. There is no straightforward solution to such problems, and they derive, in part, from the difficulties imposed by the fundamental tenet that ideology is transparent and ill suited to simple identification and eradication. One partial solution is to provide the kind of self-reflective critique enacted here, but this may (perhaps rightly) be perceived by some to exacerbate the situation.

The rigorous (or what I consider rigorous) pursuit of Peircian thought, it is hoped, has provided another possible means of addressing the infinite regressus to which discussions of ideology can so quickly fall victim. Peirce’s insistence upon an *actual* world – a world that is not coextensive with the vagaries of what you or I may argue – could provide a means of freshly engaging the problematics that continue to dominate musicological discourse. If we adhere closely to the methods of inquiry Peirce espouses,

it seems to me that we will improve our prospects of developing an understanding that is less restricted by the interests of particular individuals and institutions.

It is hoped that one argumentative thread of this thesis, in particular, has contributed something to this process of inquiry: having problematized claims for musical meaning as resident *in* music, it developed a theory that relocated meaning in the listening subject. The listening subject was conceived as a constructed entity or a network of signs in the Peircian manner. This leaves the door fully open to the multitude of social and political forces that act upon and through the listener, and thus reverses the arrow of causation whereby music devolves its meaning to the listener – the listener instead brings meaning to the listening experience. Two important points indicate the extent to which this is an oversimplification, however. The first concerns the way in which music is both a manifestation of thought (sign/interpretant) and an object of inquiry (an object). Because music is itself the result of an engagement with the world (an inquiry of sorts), it will always tend to resist containment within the confines of actuality and differs, in this sense, from the inanimate objects which we knock up against. As a result, music will not simply receive meaning from human subjects because it will always, in part, constitute a practice of meaning generation. The second, related point concerns the reading habits referred to in the title of this thesis. The notion of reading conventions or interpreting habits provides a means of theorizing the tendency for humans to *read themselves into the musical experience*. It is a theory that again opens the door to the important role of social and political forces in the generation of meaning, because habits of listening, like habits of dressing, are shot through with cultural contingency. But again it seems illogical to simply posit a unidirectional arrow of

causation rendering music a product of social and political forces, because reading habits would surely influence the relations and practices that constitute the sounding of musical form. Consequently musical texts, in their reflection of reading conventions/habits, will play a part in forming and reforming them. Furthermore, the pun in the title of this thesis draws attention to the point that such habits are not straightforwardly available to inspection, they must be interpreted, like the music through which they are manifest.

Such a conclusion may seem to reaffirm the widely held view amongst musicologists that music and society should be conceived in terms of a complex interaction. It is hoped that the development of a Peircian approach to music in this thesis has contributed a series of new perspectives and analytical procedures that will help future inquiry comprehend more effectively the interdependency and oscillating hierarchies of music, society and the listening subject.

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