

an terms, how the subjective inner life is transformed into the medium of music. In any event, the demand set by Hegelian aesthetics is unrealized to this very day: "For insofar as it is the subjective inner life itself that aims to give the music meaning, not as outward form nor as objective work, but to reveal itself as subjective inwardness, the utterance must also immediately reveal itself to be the communication of a living subject, in which the latter invests all his individual inner life."

The claims raised by such composers take us a long way from the backwaters. In view of the complexity of our contemporary life, the appeal that we should shun the small-scale, specialized artistic solutions and face the totality of all that is possible today has been received worldwide. Only one who has analyzed history and who is firmly rooted in his own tradition can survive nowadays, as an artist.

NOTES

* A version of this paper was read at the German Academic Exchange Service Conference in Bloomington, Indiana, October 19–22, 1983 (see the conference report elsewhere in this issue).

¹ Carl Dahlhaus, "Vom Einfachen, vom Schönen, und vom einfach Schönen," *Darmstädter Beiträge zur Neuen Musik* 17 (1978): 33.

² Wolfgang Rihm, "Ins eigene Fleisch . . . (Lose Blätter über das Jungerkomponistsein)," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 140, no. 1 (January–February 1979): 6–8.

³ *Ibid.*, 176.

⁴ Hans-Jürgen von Bose, "Suche nach einem neuen Schönheitsideal," *Darmstädter Beiträge zur Neuen Musik* 17 (1978): 35.

⁵ Hans-Jürgen von Bose, "Versuch einer Bestimmung meines momentanen Standortes," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 140, no. 1 (January–February 1979): 10.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Wolfgang von Schweinitz, "Standort," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 140, no. 1 (January–February 1979): 19.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁹ Wolfgang Rihm, "Der geschockte Komponist," *Darmstädter Beiträge zur Neuen Musik* 17 (1978): 46.

Transformational Analysis: An Essay Toward an Analytic Model*

By James L. Zychowicz

One of the best statements about present-day ideologies in musical analysis is offered by Leo Treitler.¹ Identifying the general characteristics of contemporary analysis, Treitler first describes a certain prerequisite order based

upon the perception of the whole. He continues by describing the following: a concentration upon melodic and harmonic features to the exclusion of other factors in a work such as timbre, rhythm, and text; a stratified or retrospective concept of musical analysis which does not account for the progressive nature of musical experience; a concentration upon the *a priori*—the composer's sketches or intentions or some generalized historical perspective—rather than the experience *a posteriori* of the listener; and the avoidance of any historical considerations in an attempt at rationalist description, even though such considerations underlie and are thus inseparable from analytic method.

First, the point of view is holistic and unitarian. The work must be explicable in terms of a single principle, and every detail must be derivable from the idea of the whole. Second, the focus is mainly on pitch structures. . . . Third, the analytical perspective tends to be from the inside out, or from back to front, rather than from beginning to end. . . . Fourth, analysis seems to be of an *a priori*, rationalist nature. It proceeds from universals about how music works, more than it seeks to discover how musics work. . . . Finally, prevailing modes of structural analysis are anti-historical in two respects: they decontextualize their objects in their rationalistic treatment of them; and they are taught and practiced without notice of their historicity, or in general, of the role that particular models play in organization of understanding.

The goal of this paper is to briefly review some contemporary modes of analysis in light of Treitler's remarks and to suggest, again briefly, a new perspective on analysis, which I term "transformational."

Several current approaches to music analysis are founded on the concept of a single basic shape as the underlying source for a given composition. It is from such a basic shape that a work might be recomposed in analysis in order to provide some understanding of the inner workings of the music. This approach is found in the works of Heinrich Schenker and Arnold Schoenberg, among others.²

Any approach based upon the concept of a single shape seems, however, to create a system which inevitably becomes holistic, as Treitler describes it. Such a methodology demands that a structure be devised to show how the basic shape pervades the music. In doing so, it inevitably demonstrates how the various factors involved in the work combine as a whole to produce a single effect.

One means for studying music—a means that does not rely to as great a degree upon holistic concepts—is what I term componential analysis, a method of accounting for the various features of a work by organizing its parts according to some predetermined mold, according to traditional formal designations for example. Componential analysis involves separating the particular elements of a work, as if it were being catalogued. Such analysis

employs a formal-descriptive approach: it lists what is involved in the music without necessarily explaining its integration into the musical experience.

Analysis along these lines contributes information about the music, but it does not serve as a basis for a thorough understanding of the processes involved in the art. In some respects, componential analysis deals with the "what" of music but never allows for a full exploration of the "how." It seems necessary to move away from the form-and-content framework of the componential approach and establish some basis for discussing the processes of music.

An exploration of the processes which operate in a musical work would reveal more about how the various elements of music work together to produce a certain effect. Since none of the factors involved with the music operate independently of each other, an understanding of the processes would reveal the way these factors are fused and blended in the music. The study of process need not suppose, however, a holistic frame of reference.

Schenkerian analysis explores the processes of a musical work, albeit from just such a holistic perspective. In a similar way, Arnold Schoenberg posits an approach based upon a *Grundgestalt*, a concept which resembles Schenker's idea of the *Ursatz* to a degree. According to Schoenberg, an initial generative musical thought pervades a work. The *Grundgestalt* is not limited to melodic or harmonic dimensions; the rhythmic, timbral, and textural aspects of this basic shape may also be traced throughout the musical composition.

Interpreting this concept in *Beyond Orpheus*, David Epstein states that the parameters of the *Grundgestalt* encompass every aspect of music.³ Any of the qualities peculiar to the basic shape are open to analysis. These qualities become a generating force in the perception of the work, and they may be analyzed according to an inherent dynamic process.

In such a way, a whole, a unity may be seen to proceed from the *Grundgestalt*. It is as if the basic shape is constantly translated as the details of the music unfold according to the creative will of the composer. This sense of wholeness and unity need not restrict itself to issues of harmony and melody. Much broader ideas of style may be inferred from the way a basic shape is extrapolated throughout the work.

This interpretation of the concept of *Grundgestalt* suggests a shift from the *a priori* to the *a posteriori* experience of music, to the perception of the listener, which Treitler alludes to. Rather than treat artworks as the product of the composer alone, the music becomes an entity that exists just as crucially in the perception of the listener, in the process of listening. The application of the *Grundgestalt* idea to analysis provides a model of the artwork as a continuously transformed entity limited only by the nature of the basic shape.

Analysis based on the idea of the *Grundgestalt* would offer an investigative tool that is not so stratified as the Schenkerian model. An analytical model based on such a concept would be restricted only by the nature of the basic shape inherent in the composition being studied. As such, the exploration of

the music need not result in a structure entirely governed by a harmonic-melodic bias; analysis instead allows for a much broader representation of musical experience.

With analysis founded on the concept of a basic shape, it is important to specify precisely just what is involved in the musical structure. This approach being more open-ended than those of other methodologies, the necessary terminology must be made extremely clear. In this respect, the basic shape itself must be regarded as something directly related to the remembered image of the music. Instead of a chronology of what happens with the elements of the piece, the structure derived from the *Grundgestalt* should represent the overall effect of the music. Such an effect would be synchronous—a byproduct of, rather than equal to, a diachronic representation of the events involved with the work.

Analysis proceeding from the concept of the basic shape would be something other than a list of events, as exemplified by approaches such as the “implication-realization” model of Eugene Narmour.⁴ Instead, if it were viewed as a network of causes and effects applicable to a given composition, analysis based on the *Grundgestalt* would be integrally bound to the context of the piece, a context which shapes and determines such a network. Ultimately, the manner in which a basic shape pervades a work would illustrate the context. In this sense, the basic shape cannot be isolated from the experience of the music, as often occurs in more stratified approaches.

Rather than content itself with the identification of elements involved in the basic shape and in the perception of the music, a transformational analysis would attempt to describe those elements by examining the ways in which the basic shape is manipulated by the composer. The basic shape may exist as an abstraction, but as such, it lacks specificity. The analyst must consider how the shape is borne out in the work itself.

In this respect, specific rules of transformation would emerge for a given piece. These rules may, for example, elucidate some pattern in the repetition of a musical idea throughout a work. The pattern derived need not conform to more traditional formal structures: it may be peculiar to the work itself, and thereby offer insights which would not have been found if a more traditional approach were used.

When studied through transformational analysis a musical work would not become bound to *a priori* expectations. The work would provide its own context instead of relying upon the dictates of a generalized historical-analytical perspective. Treating analysis in such a way, of course, does not remove historical considerations from formal study; it would, however, remove those historical considerations which posit an external or artificial *a priori*.

Several concepts seem crucial to an analytical framework based upon the transformation of a basic shape: the concept of wholeness, the idea of a transformational process operant within a work, and some self-regulatory rules of transformation which elucidate the context of the music. In such a way, a transformational approach has the potential for treating each piece as a self-

contained system.⁵

In transformational analysis, the delineation of the basic shape would require synthesizing many diverse aspects of musical experience, and such a synthesis would involve different kinds of musical knowledge. The perception of a basic shape requires not only a technical knowledge of the work, but also an understanding of its affective and interpretive dimensions. It is not desirable to describe or analyze the basic shape solely in technical terms, because the affective and interpretive as well as the technical domains—although they may be separated in principle—influence the basic shape in a combined fashion. One cannot discuss the affective dimension of music, for example, without venturing into the interpretive; at the same time, the interpretive cannot be always removed from the technical. A discussion of the technical aspects of music which does not contain any reference to the interpretive and affective domains would seem to deny the complete experience involved in a work of art. Analysis founded upon the idea of a basic shape should reflect both the technical details of the work and the experience of the listener. Such an approach should identify both the details peculiar to a given piece and the processes which fuse those details into the musical whole.

By analyzing on levels of understanding other than the sheerly technical, transformational analysis would provide a means for expressing the individuality of the music. Such an approach would provide a means for departing from an expression of, as Treitler states, the “universals of how music works,” and provide a means “to discover how music work.”

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*The term, transformational, as it is used in this essay, bears no intentional resemblance to Noam Chomsky's linguistic theories of a transformational grammar. This article represents some aspects of a study in style analysis made with Dr. Ruth K. Inglefield at the College of Musical Arts of Bowling Green State University (Bowling Green, Ohio) between 1979 and 1982. While the essay offers several points of arrival, it is by no means a final statement.

¹Leo Treitler, “Structural and Critical Analysis,” in *Musicology in the 1980s*, ed. D. Kern Holoman and Claude Palisca (New York: Da Capo Press, 1982), 73–74.

²In my unpublished master's thesis I summarize several related approaches to analysis. James L. Zychowicz, “Style Analysis: Critique and Methodology,” (Master's thesis, Bowling Green State University, 1981), 22–57.

³David Epstein, *Beyond Orpheus: Studies in Music Structure* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1980), 17–21.

⁴Eugene Narmour, *Beyond Schenkerism: The Need for Alternatives in Music Analysis* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), 122–26.

⁵These are conditions that Jean Piaget sets forth in his definition of structuralism in *Structuralism*, Chananah Maschler, trans. and ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 3–16.