



OXFORD JOURNALS
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

"Sympathy with Death": Narcissism and Nostalgia in the Post-Wagnerian Orchestra

Author(s): Christopher Morris

Source: *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 85, No. 1 (Spring, 2001), pp. 85-116

Published by: Oxford University Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3600944>

Accessed: 20-08-2019 11:52 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

Oxford University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Musical Quarterly*

“Sympathy with Death”: Narcissism and Nostalgia in the Post-Wagnerian Orchestra

Christopher Morris

In *Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man* Thomas Mann relates a conversation with Hans Pfitzner between performances of *Palestrina* at its Munich premiere in 1917. He quotes Pfitzner as saying, “[I]n *Palestrina* everything tends toward the past; it is dominated by sympathy with death [*Sympathie mit dem Tode*].” The phrase “sympathy with death,” writes Mann, had a striking effect on him:

It was my expression. Before the war I had begun to write a little novel, a type of *Bildungsroman*, in which a young person, landed in a morally dangerous locale, found himself between two equally quaint educators, between an Italian literary man, humanist, rhetorician and man of progress, and a somewhat disreputable mystic, reactionary, and advocate of antireason—he had the choice, the good youngster, between the powers of virtue and of seduction, between duty and service to life and the fascination of decay, for which he was not unresponsive.¹

Written during the war, *Reflections* is Mann’s attempt to come to terms with nationalism, the threat to German culture, and the question of taking a political stand in Germany’s defense. At times a fierce indictment of the democratic, liberal values Mann associated with his brother Heinrich, at others a warning against Germany’s infatuation with potent leader images and conservative militarism, the work unevenly, at times bafflingly, juxtaposes philosophy, political insight, literary criticism, and cultural analysis in an ambivalent and often tortured dialogue. In his discussion of Pfitzner, it is the conservative Mann who speaks, and here he resigns himself to “sympathy with death” almost affectionately. Here he could well identify with his hero’s fascination for decay. If the idea of democracy and progress, equated by Germany’s enemies with “health” and “virtue,” meant renouncing pessimism and the past, then he could have no part of it: “Not everyone is suited by nature for the blessed pact with the times and with progress; democratic health is not exactly for everyone.”²

Palestrina and its composer presented Mann with a particularly vivid image of something he detected in himself, something he saw as integral to German culture. It is an attitude that emerges equally clearly in a number of operatic scenarios that, while thematizing death and the past on a quite literal level, seem to offer a gloss on the wider implications of Mann's (and Pfitzner's) phrase. In Berg's *Wozzeck* (1925) and Pfitzner's own earlier *Die Rose vom Liebesgarten* (1901), the death of the hero-protagonist is followed by an orchestral interlude that, like the *Trauermarsch* in *Götterdämmerung*, laments and eulogizes. Death here becomes an invitation to reconstruct a life, to revisit the past, but in a way that deliberately undermines any comfortable assumptions about the source of the eulogy. Who sings, speaks, and writes these orchestral tributes? The answer seems shrouded in a calculated ambiguity that is not without its ideological implications. Drawing on psychoanalytic theories of identification, I intend to read these interludes as sites in which the listener might be persuaded to imagine himself or herself as the source, an internalization that depends both on the theatrical effect of the hidden orchestra and on the remolding of memory through music. It is within this disorientation, this sleight of hand, that a mere sympathy with the dead begins to touch on the broader and more ominous political implications of a "sympathy with death."

Images of Mourning

Four years after their collaboration on *Der arme Heinrich* (1894), Pfitzner persuaded James Grun to write a second libretto for him. At one time a student with Pfitzner at the Frankfurt Conservatory, Grun had become a poet and mystic philosopher described by Pfitzner as a "sectarian, a penitent, a wandering monk [who] followed his trade of a world reformer and benefactor."³ Grun drew his initial ideas for the text from the paintings of Hans Thoma, a close family friend who had painted Grun and illustrated a collection of his poems. The most obvious source is *Der Wächter vor dem Liebesgarten* (1890), which, with its idealistic, chivalric imagery, suggests parallels with Symbolist painting. In her memoirs, Grun's sister described it as "very well known and of richly coloured beauty. Before the dark columns of the entrance stands tall and solemn the armour-clad figure of the guardian, a mighty lion lying near him in the shadows."⁴ Thoma's image finds theatrical form in a series of tableaux contrasting the Eden of the *Liebesgarten*—Pfitzner repeatedly referred to it as a "Germanic paradise"⁵—with an outside world of mountains, dark forests, and deep caves. Populated by a *Parsifal*-esque religious order dedicated to a

Star Maiden and Sun Child (virgin and child figures), the *Liebesgarten* is surrounded by a wall that protects it from an assortment of dwarfs, giants, and forest dwellers familiar from nineteenth-century German folk tales. Both the settings and the plot that they threaten to overshadow represent a rather incongruous mixture of Wagnerian and biblical themes, of Rosicrucian mysticism and *Märchen* imagery.

In a lengthy prologue consisting of little more than a static series of visually sumptuous rituals, we are introduced to the inhabitants of the *Liebesgarten*. The purpose of the ceremonies is to choose a guardian of the gate to the *Liebesgarten*, and it is ultimately the young knight Siegnot who is chosen and granted the rose that symbolizes the reign of love in the garden. No sooner does he take up his responsibilities, however, than he finds himself smitten by Minneleide, an Undine-like creature who reigns over the forest outside the gate. Certain that she will be happier in the paradise of the *Liebesgarten*, he accompanies Minneleide through the gate, but she is blinded by the light in the garden and flees in terror. At that moment she is abducted by the Night Sorcerer—a demonic creature who seems to personify the otherness of the world outside the wall—and taken to his subterranean domain. Act 2 chronicles Siegnot's heroic attempt at rescue as he journeys, rose in hand, to the cave of the Night Sorcerer. But his plan is thwarted by Minneleide herself; as much as she loves Siegnot, she fears reentering the *Liebesgarten* and hesitates to go with him. Siegnot's response is to assume responsibility, Christ-like, for the sins of Minneleide and win her soul for the *Liebesgarten*. He calls upon the Star Maiden and brings down the cave around him, killing the Night Sorcerer and himself. Minneleide is grief stricken, but Siegnot's sacrifice has given her courage, and she sets out to return Siegnot's lifeless body and the rose itself to the *Liebesgarten*, even if her role in Siegnot's death puts her life in danger there. In the opera's epilogue the new guardian confronts her at the gate, but Minneleide calls on the Star Maiden, and before the guardian can strike her, she falls lifeless to the ground. Minneleide's renunciation of life redeems her, and both she and Siegnot are raised to the Star Maiden's side as the walls of the garden collapse and spring reigns over the world outside.

The central themes of the plot—the noble hero who harbors a death wish, the temptation of “woman,” redemption through renunciation—are familiar enough from Wagner, but it is the central role of visual imagery that ultimately defines the opera. Peppered throughout the score are detailed scenic descriptions that fuse typically transparent Symbolist imagery with contemporary, naturalistic concepts of stage design. Thus, within realistically depicted nineteenth-century operatic settings—caves, forests, and idyllic pastoral surroundings—we find scenic features

that seem to conjure a different aesthetic: the white marble balustrade that dominates the *Liebesgarten* in the opening scene; the *Liebesgarten*'s "blue-steel walls towering toward the sky"; a gloriously kitschy shower of white blossoms (the so-called *Blütenwunder* that celebrates Siegnot's selection); and the twilight of the Night Sorcerer's cave, "illuminated by thousands of glittering, many-coloured precious stones." Reviewing the opera in 1910, the critic Paul Bekker suggested that, although Pfitzner had avoided "naturalistic tone-painting" and "illustration of the text" on an immediate level,⁶ in a larger sense he had in fact given his music over to visual imagery: "To these [images] he lends the strongest, most profound music that resounds in him; for them he exhausts the sources of his creative power."⁷ Pfitzner later regarded *Die Rose vom Liebesgarten* as something of an oddity in his operatic output. Writing to a stage manager prior to a 1937 production of the work, he observed that "in the *Rose* the stage picture and the scenic as a whole play a very important role, much more important than in all my other operas."⁸ The observation, on the surface relatively innocuous, actually touches on one of the central polemics of Pfitzner's extensive theoretical writings. For this self-professed disciple of Schopenhauer, the visual belongs to the "world of appearances" and therefore fails to meet music on its own terms, as an immediate copy of the will itself.⁹ In opera, he writes, music cannot be forced "to serve another art or non-art through illustration or accompaniment."¹⁰ The alternative, demonstrated repeatedly in opera and lied, is what he calls "illustrative non-music."¹¹ He traces the origins of this tendency in Wagner's *Ring*, and its culmination in the "cinema style" of Strauss and other post-Wagnerians: "For what is the cinema other than a theater that highlights the visual, while the displayed proceedings are accompanied by music to which we scarcely listen, if at all, but which we don't want to be without."¹² In his own operas, by contrast, he sees the triumph of music that is genuinely dramatic without sacrificing its independence, its "self-justification."¹³ Here, in what he calls "musicalized opera," is music whose material is generated from within itself, whose origins lie only in "musical inspiration, a theme, a musical idea."¹⁴

Seemingly more in keeping with Pfitzner's stance is the *Trauermarsch* that links act II with the epilogue. Here an orchestral eulogy for the dead hero, Siegnot, is presented in the context of traditional musical images of a funeral (a minor-mode march, muffled percussion, heavy, chorale-like textures). It is a realm in which a scene is presented without scenery, in which a funeral passes with an invisible procession, in which death is mirrored by total darkness. Bekker observed: "All the images are shadowy, the characters delicate children of a fantasy, who cannot endure the glaring light of day and only let their fire glow in the darkness

of night.”¹⁵ The *Trauermarsch* seems to exemplify Bekker’s words, as though here at the moment of greatest emotional intensity, these “delicate” creatures retreat into the comforting darkness of the orchestra’s invisible theater.

Acoustic Hallucinations

With its fantasy and darkness, Bekker’s description recalls Wagner’s account of the interior design of the Festspielhaus at Bayreuth. Describing its proposed features to his supporters, Wagner enthused that the auditorium would generate in the spectator a “retuning of the whole sensorium” [*Umstimmung des ganzen Sensoriums*]: “Between him and the image on view there is nothing plainly visible, merely a floating atmosphere of distance. . . . The scene is removed, as it were, to the inaccessible world of dreams, while the ghostly music sounding from the ‘mystic abyss,’ like vapors rising from the holy womb of Gaia beneath the Pythia’s tripod, inspires him with that clairvoyance in which the stage image seems to become the truest image of life.”¹⁶ It is toward this regressive condition, this twilight state between waking and sleeping, that the Bayreuth theater, with its invisible orchestra and darkened auditorium, directs itself. The listener is to enter a state in which theater resembles reality, paradoxically, because it is rendered dream-like. It is the same “impression of reality”¹⁷ that Metz identifies in cinema when the spectator “hallucinate[s] what was already there, what at the same time he in fact perceived: the images and sounds of the film.”¹⁸

As Friedrich Kittler has pointed out, it is above all the “acoustic hallucination”¹⁹ that comes to the fore in Wagner, a world, as Nietzsche puts it, in which all things animate and inanimate desire an “existence in sound” and listening becomes paramount.²⁰ “I hear you,” sings Hagen, as Alberich appears to him in his sleep. “Do I alone hear this tune?” asks Isolde as the dead Tristan’s “voice” wells up from the orchestra pit. And when Isolde imagines that the sound of King Marke’s horns has given way to a “murmuring spring,” the orchestral sound transforms magically, while the stage direction indicates that “Isolde listens.” In a sense Wagner’s orchestral interludes represent the apex of this world of hearing, totalizing it, absorbing the verbal and visual discourses of the stage into sound. The “floating atmosphere of distance” Wagner sought for the Bayreuth stage is pushed one step further into darkness itself. Now the visual gives way entirely to hallucination, brought to life in sympathetic surroundings by an almost equally fantasmatic music. It is this tradition of acoustic illusion from which Pfitzner’s *Trauermarsch* stems. Here a hidden music transposes a visual image—an image of

mourning—into a disembodied, sightless realm. It is an image that is both represented and not represented at the same time; it is given shape in the darkness by music, and yet the music itself seems to come from nowhere. The source of music and image seems both “outside” and “inside,” real and imagined.

Analyzed in terms of psychoanalytic theory, the *Trauermarsch* would seem, like the cinema, to reenact the conditions of the Lacanian imaginary, that prelinguistic state in which the child is captivated by the illusory immediacy of the objects around it, in which fantasy and image as yet prevail over discourse and word. The child identifies with the images and sounds around it—the mother’s voice, its own image in the mirror—forming an identity, an ego, by misrecognizing the alien, external nature of these objects and incorporating them as its “self.” In this sense the ego is a fictive identity molded on the basis of a series of identifications.²¹ More than a developmental stage, however, Lacan’s imaginary order stands for a way of engaging with the world and with the self; the imaginary continues to assert itself within the subject even when the entry into language, sexuality, and society—what Lacan calls the symbolic order—challenges illusory immediacy with the knowledge of lack and difference. The symbolic confronts the subject with an awareness that its identity is based on its separation and distinction from other subjects, that its access to objects is mediated by linguistic signifiers that stand in for those objects in their absence. But we continue to form imaginary identifications, holding on to the sense of plenitude that the imaginary represents. Environments like the cinema can be seen to encourage and capitalize on that process. Cinema provides a fantasy space in which the symbolically mandated subject is immersed in the imaginary realm of ego formation.

How might this apply to Pfitzner’s *Trauermarsch*? What are the fantasies to which it might give rise? Bekker provides a starting point when he suggests that Pfitzner “distract[s] the listener’s attention from the progress of the action itself with . . . interspersed lyrical intermezzi.”²² Bekker’s words evoke Pfitzner’s appeal to the tradition of the lied and pre-Wagnerian romantic opera as a model for the revitalization of opera. The opening theme in the *Trauermarsch*, an extended solo for the appropriately funereal trombone, does indeed suggest a song, a *Klagegesang* (Ex.1). The suggestion is made explicit after the rise of the curtain when Minneleide takes up the theme, in toto, as her own expression of grief: “He who died for you, / Whose blood won you peace, / Carry him now to the gateway of his homeland.” The effect is, in a sense, to mirror Pfitzner’s own aesthetic of the lied with its *Wort-Ton-Verhältnis*, which seeks to distance music from any dependence on poetic imagery: “[the music] is not born wearily from the spirit of the poem; it must come from

Sehr langsam
sehr ausdrucksvoll

Trombone *p*

molto cresc. *p*

Example 1. Pfitzner, *Die Rose vom Liebesgarten*, *Trauermarsch*.

its own domain and in its own way independently conjure up the same atmosphere which the poem expresses; this can happen *entirely* independently, *before* knowledge of the poem, or gently touched by it, as with a divining rod.”²³ Minneleide’s song is almost an afterthought, heard only as an echo of the shattering climax of grief that preceded it. It is the wordless, invisible song of the *Trauermarsch* that takes precedence. If Minneleide can be heard in retrospect as the “singer” of the *Trauermarsch*, it is only as a ghost that sings wordlessly through the lamenting trombone, itself carefully concealed in the orchestra pit. Here Minneleide truly becomes one of Bekker’s “children of the night”; her fear of the light in the *Liebesgarten* finds a mirror in this song sung in the darkness.

But if this opening portion is a wordless song, it is a short-lived one. As soon as the trombone gives way to full orchestra, the *Klagegesang* is dispersed, never again heard in the *Trauermarsch* as a complete entity in one voice; it is reduced to fragments, abbreviated, passed among instrumental groups (Ex. 2), and merged with already familiar material, including leitmotifs. From 1 m. before rehearsal A a series of fluid scalar passages in the woodwinds recalls the *Blütenwunder* scene of the prologue, but built into the upper melodic line (flute) and echoed by strings and bassoons (4 mm. after rehearsal letter A) is the opening triad of the *Klagegesang*, a melodic pattern not found in the *Blütenwunder* form of the passage. From 10 mm. after rehearsal letter A (Ex. 3) violins seem to break the *Klagegesang* down into characteristic melodic intervals, isolating them rhythmically and drawing attention to them. The ascending minor sixth at the climax of the *Klagegesang* is presented 12 mm. after rehearsal letter A, but it is the motion from major third to minor third that is emphasized, dramatizing its relationship with the falling minor-second motif associated with Siegnot’s name (Ex. 4, prologue, 4 mm. after rehearsal number 50). At 8 mm. after rehearsal letter C a motif—or, rather, a theme—first heard as Siegnot pledged his life to the service of *die Minne* (prologue: 8 mm. after rehearsal number 7) is shown to

Example 2. Pfitzner, *Die Rose vom Liebesgarten*, Trauermarsch.

The score shows two staves. The top staff is for Horn, starting with a box labeled 'B +3' and '(Sehr langsam)'. It contains notes with accents and a dynamic marking 'p'. A section is marked 'espr.'. The bottom staff is for Violin, marked 'cresc.', with notes and slurs.

Example 2. Pfitzner, *Die Rose vom Liebesgarten*, Trauermarsch.

Example 3. Pfitzner, *Die Rose vom Liebesgarten*, Trauermarsch.

The score shows two staves. The top staff is for Violin, marked 'Vln.', with dynamics 'dim.' and 'pp'. The bottom staff is for Harp, marked 'Harp', with dynamics 'pp' and 'Horn'. A box labeled 'B' is present at the end of the Harp part.

Example 3. Pfitzner, *Die Rose vom Liebesgarten*, Trauermarsch.

have a strong melodic affinity with the ascending sequence of the *Klagegesang*. And in the final bars of the *Trauermarsch* (Ex. 5, 5 mm. before rehearsal letter F), a theme that had accompanied the bestowal of the guardian's sword on Siegnot (Ex. 4, mm. 1–4) is presented almost unaltered. Now the triad of its opening bar turns out to be merely a retrograde version of the opening triad of the *Klagegesang*, a connection reinforced by the accompanying rolled percussion and string tremolo that characterized the opening of the *Klagegesang*. At 2 mm. after rehearsal letter F, too, we find the minor-sixth leap that forms the climax of the *Klagegesang*.

Langsamer
(feierlich) Der Sangesmeister

Der du durch Not zum Sie - ge gehst, Sieg - not
sei uns be - nannt.

51

Example 4. Pfitzner, *Die Rose vom Liebesgarten*, prologue.

In the context of the *Trauermarsch* these interconnections might be interpreted in terms of the impact of the *Klagegesang* on the opera's leitmotifs, as if nothing could remain the same after Siegnot's death. Yet, for all the clarity with which fragments of the *Klagegesang* seem to resurface in this material, their impact on the motifs is almost negligible. The effect, rather, is to suggest that the *Klagegesang* evolved from the motifs, that it represents a synthesis of musical fragments drawn from the opera's past. In a sense it has always been there, fragmented and concealed in Siegnot's motifs like a premonition of death. Its refragmentation during the *Trauermarsch*, then, suggests that the synthesis is a fragile one, quickly dismantled and dispersed. It is as if the *Klagegesang* dissolved back into the motivic material from which it emerged and can now only be heard, as it were, in proxy. Only with the physical reappearance of Minneleide—only with her reembodiment—is it restored to its original form.

The musical score is divided into two main sections. The first section is a piano introduction marked "Sehr langsam." (Very slow). It features a complex texture with multiple layers of chords and moving lines in both hands. Dynamics include *pp espr.*, *molto cresc.*, *ff*, *dim.*, and *p*. The second section, marked with a box containing the letter "F", is the vocal entry. It consists of four staves: Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Bass (B.). The vocal parts enter with the lyrics "Weh' uns, weh!". The piano accompaniment continues with chords, marked with *p* and *pp*. The Tenor staff is labeled "Chorus behind the scene".

Example 5. Pfitzner, *Die Rose vom Liebesgarten*, *Trauermarsch*.

A song broken into fragments and a singer dispersed through an orchestra: the *Trauermarsch* speaks of nothing if not the Lacanian fantasy of the fragmented body, a fantasy illustrated in Lacan's account of one of the key moments in ego formation, the so-called mirror stage. Here the child catches sight of its reflection and identifies with this gratifying image of completeness in contrast to its uncoordinated body. But identification with a pleasing reflected image is only the final outcome of a series of potential fantasies: "The mirror stage is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation—and which manufactures for the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality that I shall call orthopaedic."²⁴ The fantasy of fragmentation presents the child with a dispersal rather than a consolidation of body parts, a failure to coordinate and control limbs and extremities,

which seem to detach themselves and erode any sense of a single, centered subjectivity. Lacan presents his mirror stage as a specular drama, but, as Guy Rosolato has argued, it is equally applicable to sound: “The voice has the property of being at the same time emitted and heard, sent and received, and by the subject himself, as if, in comparison with the look, an ‘acoustic’ mirror were always in effect. Thus the images of entry and departure to the body are narrowly articulated. They can come to be confounded, inverted, to prevail one over the other.”²⁵ What Rosolato identifies in the voice is its ability to transgress the borders between subject and object. For Kaja Silverman this slippage “violates the bodily limits upon which classic subjectivity depends” and thus paves the way for both the subversion and (re)formation of identity.²⁶ This acoustic mirror, Silverman argues, can be understood as the basis of the operations of sound in cinema, where voice-overs and nonsynchronization repeatedly break down the connection between body and voice. Yet we need not restrict our understanding of the acoustic mirror literally to the voice. Instrumental music, too, can be separated from its source so that it seems simply to be “there” (around us and inside us), and here we might consider the classic film score, that latter-day invisible orchestra that seems to envelop us in a sound that comes from nowhere. Indeed, Rosolato likens the maternal voice, the original acoustic mirror, to a “sonorous womb,” an image that suggests the darkened auditorium of cinema or opera.

Pfitzner’s *Trauermarsch* presents the listener with a double image of fragmentation, an acoustic hallucination of dispersal. On the one hand, a song is sung not by an embodied voice, but by a hidden, apparently disembodied source. And on the other, the song itself is dispersed through the orchestra, as if divided up among the fragmented body parts of the singer. It is an auditory image that decenters the subject, that threatens to break down the fragile fortifications of the ego. But there is another image here too—that of Siegnot himself. For the *Trauermarsch* is above all a musical eulogy, and as such, sets itself the task of “remembering” the dead hero.

Rose-colored Glass

The taboo of insulting the memory of the dead is nowhere more strongly manifest than in the inherently uncritical assessment of a life that is the eulogy. Obviously, since eulogies are delivered by those who feel affection and loyalty toward the deceased, criticism will never be high on the agenda. Yet there remains a falsifying aspect here, an unwritten law that frowns even on negative thoughts, not to mention public criticism. The

eulogy, on one level simply an appreciation, is also a shared lie. It seeks to remake the image of the deceased in a way that knowingly suppresses the truth of that individual, omitting or glossing over attributes and deeds that are not remembered with affection. It is as if the collective memory of the individual, as it stands, will not do. It must be reconstructed publicly, so that an official, and homogenized, version prevails. It must steer a course between complete fiction on the one hand and the harsh truth on the other. Meanwhile the audience for the eulogy, subject to the social norms of mourning, believe and invest in that version, partly as a reflection of their own affectionate feelings, but perhaps also as a means of keeping criticism at bay.

It is this eulogistic shaping of memory that underlies Mann's characterization of the *Götterdämmerung Trauermarsch*. For Mann the traditional "operatic *pompe funèbre*" would never have sufficed to mourn what Wagner called "the most noble hero in the world." But by drawing on the history acquired by his web of leitmotifs, Wagner would be able to transform the lament into "a veritable feast of associations, a whole universe of brilliant and profound allusions, a structure of musical remembrance so magnificent that nobody would be able to hold back tears of enthusiasm—the same enthusiasm that he himself felt at the very idea of it all. It would be an overwhelming celebration of thought and remembrance."²⁷ Mann then proceeds to list a series of "sublime reminders," just as Wagner had done in conversation with Cosima. According to Cosima's diaries, Wagner compared his orchestral eulogy to the chorus in Greek tragedy, "but a chorus which will be sung, so to speak, by the orchestra; after Siegfried's death, while the scene is being changed, the Siegmund theme will be played, as if the chorus were saying: 'This was his father'; then the sword motif; and finally his own theme; then the curtain goes up."²⁸ Wagner's appeal to the Greek chorus is a familiar theme in his own writings, an analogy that seeks to incorporate into the orchestral role the idea of the chorus as representative of the polis: the orchestra comments on the action on behalf of the people. Mann undermines this notion when he relates the audience's "tears of enthusiasm" to Wagner's own reaction to his work. The implication here is of a sleight of hand in which a response built into the work is presented as though it belonged to the audience.

At the same time, Mann echoes Wagner when he suggests that the impact of the *Trauermarsch* is a result of its conjunction of *pompe funèbre* with memory, with a leitmotivic "feast of associations." Like Wagner in Cosima's quotation, he reads the *Trauermarsch* as a parade of leitmotifs with definite and stable references to the past. For Adorno the linear presentation of the leitmotif represents one of the contradictions at the core of the music drama: "Beneath the thin veil of continuous progress

Wagner has fragmented the composition into allegorical leitmotifs juxtaposed like discrete objects.”²⁹ For all Wagner’s appeal to symphonic continuity, Adorno argues, the leitmotif “calls a halt to the sheer flow,” replacing continuity with a thoroughly undynamic series of moments.³⁰ It is a criticism that applies only too well to the *Trauermarsch*, as Wagner and Mann implicitly concede. Here, above all, the orchestral discourse bases itself on the linear succession that is at the heart of Adorno’s criticism. Here the process becomes a caricature of itself. Like self-contained musical units, the leitmotifs parade before us, reviewing aspects of Siegfried’s life like some badly written biography (or eulogy): these were his parents . . . and this was his sword . . . and this was his beloved.

Less convincing, at least in the context of Wagner’s orchestral eulogy, is Adorno’s characterization of the leitmotif as a static, rigid “picture,” a “particle of congealed meaning” that refuses to adapt itself to new contexts.³¹ Whereas Mann invests the leitmotif with a stability that allows it to become a “sublime reminder,” Adorno sees total inflexibility in which “the supposed psychological variations” of the leitmotifs “involve only a change of lighting.”³² Although Mann makes some attempt to characterize the presentation of the leitmotifs in the *Trauermarsch*—the “vast rhythmic cadences” of Siegfried’s horn call, for example—it is ultimately their role as triggers of memory that he values, an approach that lends weight to Adorno’s “change of lighting” charge. Yet, for all the linear, paradelike quality of their presentation in the *Trauermarsch*, many of the leitmotifs are transformed here in a manner that finds no precedent throughout their long history in the *Ring*. They are recognizably linked to the past, and yet they are, in a sense, radically reconstructed. It is as if all their previous incarnations were merely stages in an evolution toward this triumphant form. Now they assert their presence with overwhelming force, demanding attention that was previously shared with the stage. If their effect is to construct an image of Siegfried, then it is not the bullying lout of *Siegfried* or the all-too-gullible hero of *Götterdämmerung*. In the *Trauermarsch* Siegfried truly becomes the “greatest hero in the world,” a figure who exceeds all doubt, all resistance. The eulogy that is the *Trauermarsch* has served the memory of Siegfried well; we might even call it the greatest eulogy in the world. But perhaps Wagner’s music glorifies too much. Perhaps, in the blatant contrast between what we know of the living Siegfried and what Wagner’s eulogy attempts to reconstruct, there emerges a sense of doubt and an unwillingness to identify with what we perceive as false. In that case the *Trauermarsch* merely throws light on the contribution of the figure who delivers the eulogy, a virtual author figure who now attracts unwelcome attention. Here the Greek chorus potentially loses its mandate to represent the people.

In contrast to the ecstatic glorification of Siegfried's memory, Pfitzner's Siegnot is mourned in terms of nostalgia. Far from reconstructing Siegnot's image, the *Trauermarsch* seems to maintain it intact, as though eager to bring time to a standstill and revive the past. If the *Klagegesang* suggests a fragmented body, the leitmotifs which ultimately absorb it preserve Siegnot with an antithetical wholeness. Here Adorno's characterization of the leitmotif as a static picture takes on a new relevance. In fact, what Bekker and others have labeled "motifs" in *Die Rose vom Liebesgarten* might be better described as themes, restated as complete musical entities with harmonic setting, rhythm and phrasing intact. Beginning six measures after rehearsal letter D (Ex. 6), Pfitzner quotes almost verbatim from a passage in the Prologue (one m. before rehearsal number 7) in which Siegnot pledges his life to the service of love, promising to "rise victorious, be it through suffering and death." Even the fortissimo setting for full orchestra in the *Trauermarsch* is merely an echo of the past, in this case 11 mm. after rehearsal number 10 of the prologue, where the opening portion of the theme was presented (in the major mode) in a similarly full texture. Likewise, the closing bars of the *Trauermarsch* (see Ex. 5) merely represent a transposed and very slightly modified version of a passage in the prologue (beginning 7 mm. after rehearsal number 53) based on the "Siegnot" motif. Thus, in its final gesture before the human voice returns in the form of the invisible chorus of mourners, the orchestra seems to call out Siegnot's name, vainly summoning the hero from beyond death. There is no triumph here, no transfiguring celebration of his redeeming sacrifice—merely a morbid nostalgia that negates time, seemingly in an effort to disavow Siegnot's death.

This attitude of nostalgia is presaged in the *Klagegesang* portion of the *Trauermarsch*, when the fragmented portions of the song are presented in a setting strongly reminiscent of the *Blütenwunder* scene. Typical of the decorative, visual quality emphasized by Bekker, the gentle rain of blossoms had been characterized musically by arpeggiated harp and winds organized into contrasting sonorities that suggest a *Klangfarbenmelodie*. Superimposed on these shifting sonorities is a flowing ostinato pattern of parallel thirds in strings, orchestrated in a way that surrounds the winds with a halo of sweet, high violins and magisterial organ pedals in the cellos and basses. It is a musical image of pleasurable immersion in a static nature, reflected in a kaleidoscope of musical color, an unhurried harmonic rhythm, and an emphasis on harmonic drift rather than goal directedness (Ex. 7). This texture and sonority return one measure before rehearsal letter B in the *Trauermarsch* (Ex. 8) in an echo reinforced with a modulation to E-flat minor, an appropriately fu-

Example 6. Pfitzner, *Die Rose vom Liebesgarten*, Trauermarsch.

Example 7. Pfitzner, *Die Rose vom Liebesgarten*, prologue.

nerreal reflection of the G-flat major of the *Blütenwunder*. As woodwinds and horns exchange fragments of the *Klagegesang*, the upper woodwinds recall the interlocking arpeggios of the *Blütenwunder* scene, while the first violins provide a thin, somewhat halfhearted echo of the string halo. It is as though the orchestra were attempting to call forth the rain of blossoms as a symbol of happier times.

With its emphasis on a nostalgic recall of the past, the *Trauermarsch* avoids the alienating exaggeration of Wagner's interlude. The image of

(Sehr langsam)

Fl. 1
pp

Ob. 1
Cor. ang.
pp

Cl. 1
pp

Hn. 1
pp

Harp
pp

Vn. 1
pp

B

gva

Example 8. Pfitzner, *Die Rose vom Liebesgarten*, *Trauermarsch*.

Siegnot it presents rings true because it appears to be one with the living Siegnot we saw and heard on the stage. It is an image, too, that is possessed of an impressive wholeness in contrast to the fragmented subjectivity that dominates the first half of the *Trauermarsch*. While the identity of the *Klagegesang* becomes increasingly precarious, the leitmotifs emerge as something complete, barely altered from their original form. The contrast is illuminated by the drama of dispersal in which the last vestiges of the *Klagegesang* seem to resound in the leitmotifs, as if absorbed into them. And if Minneleide is the imagined singer of the *Klagegesang*, then the fragmentation of her song, and its absorption by the image of Siegnot, represents the redefinition of her self within Siegnot's image.

For Lacan, the process that leads away from the fantasy of fragmentation and toward the unified ego rests on a fundamental narcissism. The "lure" Lacan ascribes to the mirror image depends on a misrecognition (*méconnaissance*) in which the subject sees in or projects onto the image an identity more satisfying and complete than that which it experiences in its own body. Reflected back upon the subject, that image provides a flood of narcissistic pleasure. It is precisely this narcissistic drive from "insufficiency to anticipation" that is captured in the drama of subjectiv-

ity at the heart of the *Trauermarsch*.³³ On the one hand it engages with fantasies of fragmentation and decentering, but it simultaneously holds up the mirror image that offers the possibility of reformation. The subject discovers in this acoustic image an ideal ego that, reintroduced onto the subject, satisfies its narcissistic drive toward completion. In *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, Freud theorizes the ideal ego as an object of desire that corresponds to a position of imagined superiority within the ego that he terms the ego ideal: “[T]he object serves as a substitute for some unattained ego ideal of our own. We love it on account of the perfections which we have striven to reach for our own ego, and which we should now like to procure in this roundabout way as a means of satisfying our narcissism.”³⁴ Introjection, in other words, is a process in which “the object has been put in place of the ego ideal.”³⁵ In the *Trauermarsch* this “idealization” is magnified by the fantasmatic juxtaposition of a fragmented subjectivity with a wholeness and perfection that offers to heal the wound.

But there is a price to be paid. To identify with that wholeness is to surrender, like Minneleide, to an impossibly preserved fragment of time. The leitmotifs in the *Trauermarsch* represent a preoccupation with images of the past, preserved like relics. Writing on Wagnerian narratives, Adorno observes that they “call a halt to the action and hence, too, to the life process of society. They cause it to stand still so as to accompany it down into the kingdom of death.”³⁶ Pfitzner’s *Trauermarsch*, too, turns its glance backward, exempting itself, as Bekker points out, from the “progress of the action.” In the wake of Siegnot’s death, Minneleide renounces her desire for life. Accompanied by echoes of the *Trauermarsch*, she reveals herself to be a worthy successor to Isolde: “O agony of longing, o painful wound! / Never will my heart’s remorse end! / In death my love submerges into you!” Like the phantom Tristan of Isolde’s *Liebeshod*, who lives only as a fantasy projected in the orchestra, Siegnot lives on in music. And like Tristan, he offers fulfillment only in death. The fetishistic preservation of Siegnot is an expression of the death drive, for death is the object around which this fantasy revolves: it is the “highest bliss” toward which the negation of time points. To follow Minneleide is to attain wholeness only through self-annihilation; it is to identify with a nostalgia rooted in the desire for death.

Covering Our Ears

The experience of Pfitzner’s *Trauermarsch* has been characterized in terms of absence and a subsequent compensation for that loss. The combination of Minneleide’s “hidden” body and the dispersal of her *Klagegesang* was seen to stand for a fantasy of fragmentation that was answered

later in the *Trauermarsch*, as Siegnot was eulogized by musical images of consolidation and wholeness. But orchestral interludes can equally center on excess, on an overwhelming flood of musical immediacy. As we saw in Rosolato's and Silverman's account of the "acoustic mirror," sound calls into question the borders of the body. Unlike sight, it penetrates the body, resisting attempts to shut it out. As Friedrich Kittler puts it, "Sound . . . pierces the armor called Ego, for among all of the sensory organs, the ears are the hardest to close."³⁷ Kittler's observation is directed specifically toward the Wagnerian music-drama and what he calls the "amplifier" function of the orchestra. "The all-pervasive power of sound," he argues, "sustains Wagner's artistic imperialism."³⁸ For Kittler, Wagner renounced music as such and replaced it with "pure dynamics and pure acoustics," which have the effect not of persuading but of overwhelming the subject.³⁹ Mann conveys a sense of this quality when he describes an outdoor performance of the *Götterdämmerung Trauermarsch* in Rome:

I shall never forget how the Nothing motif welled up for the second time, amidst the cries of "Evviva!" and "Abbasso!," unfolding its mighty rhythms above the bawling factions, and how, when it reached its climax in that shattering dissonance that precedes the twice-repeated C-major chord, a great howl of triumph broke forth, engulfing the helpless, broken opposition, and cowing them into discomfited silence for some considerable time.⁴⁰

Even without the technical miracle of Bayreuth, the sheer mass of sound has the effect of shock. It presses in upon the body, overwhelming and "shattering" subjectivity.

In Berg's *Wozzeck* acoustic shock reaches a new level of brutality. The whole idea of music as shock is condensed into the interlude that follows the death of Marie in act 3, scene 2. In keeping with the unifying principle of the scene ("Invention on a Tone"), melody is abolished in favor of a sustained B natural that forms the basis for two extraordinary crescendos for full orchestra, the first on a single unison B without percussion, the second in octaves with percussion. Beginning *ppp*, each crescendo adds instruments as it goes, reaching a climax on a terrifying *fff*. Here music becomes sound in the truest sense, a wave of noise that challenges listeners not to cover their ears. And as if the effect needed any heightening, the final *fff* gives way abruptly to the tavern scene, with its out-of-tune piano. The critic Arthur Jacobs wrote of the "tension which suddenly collapses as the out-of-tune piano starts the wild polka on a distorted chord of C major. How much is added by the fact

that the crescendo takes place in the darkened theater, with the curtain down, and that the piano's entry coincides with the raising of the curtain on the populated interior of the shabbily-lit tavern!"⁴¹ Here shock as noise is supplemented by the kind of rapid and unexpected change that Walter Benjamin associated with the shock effect of silent cinema.⁴² The result is arguably an intensification of effect: shock as noise potentially alienates the subject, forcing us to recoil and cover our ears, but shock as rapid bombardment catches the subject unawares, "penetrating the armor called ego."

Respite

It is in the aftermath of this experience, compounded by the rush of events that culminate in Wozzeck's suicide, that the curtain finally descends for what Berg called an "epilogue." To quote the last of the *Altenberg Lieder*, "Here is peace, here I pour out my tears." Here in the lyrical D-minor opening, with its rich post-Wagnerian harmony and string-dominated texture, is a musical trope of mourning, a call to lament the dead. For Berg it represented "a confession of the author who now steps outside the dramatic action on the stage. Indeed, it is, as it were, an appeal to humanity through its representatives, the audience."⁴³ Certainly the epilogue is vividly marked by difference. One of those differences is a sustained and relatively unambiguous tonal center that is only very gradually undermined by a whole-tone orientation (an expansion, perhaps, of the whole-tone references within the D-minor material). Tonality surfaces repeatedly in *Wozzeck*, but only here is a single key clearly stated, departed from, and reestablished (m. 365) so overtly.⁴⁴

Another difference lies in the apparent motivic independence of the opening material of the interlude from the remainder of the opera. The opening of the epilogue is in fact based on an abandoned Piano Sonata in D Minor, one of a series of sketches dating from Berg's apprenticeship with Schoenberg. It is possible, indeed, to align the first seven measures of the epilogue on an almost note-for-note basis with mm. 2–8 of the sonata (Ex. 9). Nor do the opening fifteen measures make any overt leitmotivic reference. In this they stand out, for there are few other passages of similar duration—and certainly none in the interludes—that so pointedly lack leitmotifs. It is as if the opening of the epilogue is advertising its difference: it wants us to believe that it is not one with the diegesis.⁴⁵

Unlike the ambiguous extradiegetic voices that we noted in *Götterdämmerung*, then, Berg's virtual author insists on difference from the

Sonata in D minor

Wozzeck: Epilogue
Adagio

320

Example 9. Berg, Sonata in D Minor and *Wozzeck*, epilogue.

diegesis. It confesses, as Berg put it. And if the effect in *Götterdämmerung* is an unintentional alienation, the epilogue achieves a calculated reversal that, in effect, alienates itself from alienation. In other words, it substitutes the consistently alienating and shocking effect of the opera as a whole with a contrasting position that invites reflection and identification. After the fragmenting experience of shock that has characterized the fourteen cinematically brief scenes, a subject position emerges that seems to take stock of them. Joseph Kerman characterizes the effect in terms of “sanity and relief in warm contrast to the hysterical world of the stage, from which the audience has just been rescued.”⁴⁶ Where the die-

geis had seemed to offer no single, stable subject position, bombarding the spectator, the subject of the epilogue represents a desirable respite from shock and a healing unity. Partly a bystander, partly a mourner, and insistent on its remoteness from the action, this compassionate subject is perfectly placed to encourage identification. From the fragmented position(s) of the exhausted spectator, it amounts to an ideal ego.

Berg's acknowledgement of the audience's "role" in the epilogue seems to affirm, as Christopher Hailey has argued, the importance of effect and communal experience, an issue that was actually deeply problematized within Schoenberg's circle. To "appeal" to the audience was to risk compromising aesthetic principles and standards, to betray the remoteness from popular understanding and audience sympathy by which avant-garde modernism defined itself.⁴⁷ And like Pfitzner, Berg repeatedly expresses reservations about extramusical attempts to come to terms with the "purely musical."⁴⁸ In one brief essay on *Wozzeck* he expresses pride that the spectator might be able to forget its "ingenious" musical planning, its "strict" and "logical" working out, and focus only on the "idea of the opera, which goes far beyond the individual fate of *Wozzeck*."⁴⁹ And yet he is careful in his writings on *Wozzeck* to demonstrate just how thorough that musical planning is, how the drama does not "prejudice the usual absolute (purely musical) justification of such music . . . which may not be hindered by anything extramusical."⁵⁰ The same Berg who plays down the need for any understanding of musical form can also characterize journalistic writing on music as symptomatic of the "general public's lack of musical culture."⁵¹ From this perspective the epilogue occupies an awkward position: its very conscious appeal to the spectator is an appeal to a public that fails to understand, and as a conjunction of purely orchestral climax and *coup de théâtre*, it potentially compromises music's isolation.

Shifting Terms of Engagement

No sooner has the appeal to the public been established, however, than ambiguity sets in. Beginning at m. 335, references to act 1, scene 2, begin to undermine the emphatic independence of the epilogue's subject. A quotation of Andres's hunting song, "Das ist die schöne Jägerei," repeats almost literally its appearance in the interlude following act 1, scene 2; there, as now, it was scored for two horns "as if in the distance," an obvious reference to the hunting imagery of the song. Now the epilogue seems only too anxious to stress its relationship with—or perhaps knowledge of—the diegesis. Indeed, most of the remainder of the interlude is saturated with motivic reference, a "veritable feast of associations," as

Mann described the *Götterdämmerung Trauermarsch*. Like a eulogy, they review the characters and events of Wozzeck's life "eins nach dem andern": the Captain, the Doctor, the Drum Major, the sexual encounter of Marie and the Drum Major (although not Marie herself), Wozzeck's "Wir arme Leut" motif, and his theme from the triple fugue in act 2, scene 2. And like Pfitzner's *Trauermarsch*, the quotations seem to be based on literal fragments of the past. The canonic treatment of the Captain's motif (m. 349 ff.), for example, recalls its repeated contrapuntal manipulation as the first theme of the triple fugue in act 2, scene 2, but particularly m. 322 of that scene, when the Captain taunts Wozzeck about Marie's infidelity. In both cases the motif is harmonized in thirds and successively imitated canonically at the fourth.

If these literal quotations recall Pfitzner's *Trauermarsch*, with its nostalgic reminiscences, do they then represent a (perverse) nostalgia for the atmosphere of shock in the diegesis? Adorno addresses this question when he characterizes the leitmotif in Berg as an effective "medium for shock absorption."⁵² Citing in particular a thirty-second-note motif associated with Wozzeck himself (see epilogue, m. 345), Adorno argues that "the more openly it appears in the course of the opera, the more willingly does it renounce its claim to be taken literally: it establishes itself as a vehicle of expression, and repetition softens its effect."⁵³ By renouncing the succession of ever-new, ever-unfamiliar material, then, Berg blunts the force of shock. In contrast to the "rapidly revolving pictures" that Adorno perceives in Schoenberg, *Wozzeck* grants musical ideas a history that imparts a comforting familiarity. From this perspective the epilogue's careful imitation of previous motivic incarnations would be indicative of a desire to further distance it from the diegesis. Far from plunging us back into a state of shock, it would permit a second look, a reexamination, as it were, in the light of day.

But perhaps all is not so simple, for there is something here that seems calculated to dispel any complacency. As much as the various motivic quotations carefully preserve the past by imitating pitch and rhythmic values, there is a decided shift in terms of sheer quantity and intensity of sound. These are not fine adjustments of sonority or orchestral balance, but rather, an amplification that suggests Kittler's "pure dynamics and pure acoustics." The Doctor's leitmotif, for all its many appearances in act 2, scene 2, as the second theme of the triple fugue, has been presented almost always with soft dynamics for soloists or small groups of instruments. The only exception was its very first appearance at mm. 562–64 of act 1, scene 4, when it was heard in *forte* first violins. But nothing anticipates its *furioso*, *ff* incarnation for two trumpets at m. 345 of the epilogue.

As for the canonic Captain's motif, in act 2, scene 2, it was presented respectively by solo violin, cellos, violas, and second violins, all *pianissimo*. And an earlier, albeit less closely related, canonic arrangement (mm. 307–9) is scored for *forte* solo trumpet, horn, and bass clarinet. But in the epilogue the canon begins with *forte* full upper strings followed by *fortissimo* horns and trumpets. The real amplification, however, is saved for the “Wir arme Leut” motif. The canonically imitated melodic line, originally presented by Wozzeck (supplemented by three trombones) and first violins, and building dynamically from *piano* to *fortissimo*, is rescored for four trombones and twelve woodwinds that *begin* the motif *fortissimo* and build from there. Meanwhile, the twelve-tone simultaneity that concludes the motif (Ex. 10) threatens to rival the crescendo interlude of act 3 in its effect. In its original form the chord omits trumpets and all percussion except for timpani, while violas and second violins refrain from joining the crescendo, instead holding a C-major triad (*sempre pp*) that spills over into the subsequent episode. In the epilogue they all rejoin, and it is instead the bass-clef instruments that are omitted. The resulting treble-dominated crescendo lacks the sheer power of the full orchestra in the crescendo interlude, but it more than compensates with the dissonance of its pitch content. Even the hexachord that culminated the first crescendo on the unison B at the end of act 3, scene 2 (mm. 114–15), is no match for the epilogue's twelve-tone chord, a simultaneity that is only partly softened by its arrangement as superimposed thirds. And unlike the *fffz* hexachord of the crescendo interlude, this dissonance becomes louder and louder. Thus the threat of continual amplification implicit in the B-natural crescendos is given renewed power in the form of dissonance. Throughout this “B” section, it is as if the potentially comforting effect of familiarity is balanced by a technique of magnification that depends on the shock potential of sound itself.

Perhaps, then, the treatment of Adorno's “Wozzeck” motif at mm. 342–45 represents the inauguration of this process, an attempt to counter the cushioning effect of repetition through successive acceleration and dynamic intensification. Adorno argues that Berg's music ultimately confounds the cushioning effect of familiarity through a process of disintegration: “Wozzeck negates its own point of departure precisely in those moments in which it is developed. The impulses of the composition—alive in its musical atoms—rebel against the work proceeding from them. These impulses do not permit lasting resolution.”⁵⁴ As soon as the leitmotifs form themselves, then, they are subjected to a form of atomization that breaks them down into their constituent parts. But the epilogue suggests quite the reverse. It rebels against the cushioning effect

Example 10. Berg, *Wozzeck*, epilogue.

of the leitmotif not through fragmentation, but through acoustic amplification. The shock effect is restored through an inflation that allows no comfortable terms of engagement.

By restoring the shock atmosphere of the diegesis, the epilogue, as suggested before, risks realienating the spectator. But just when the compassionate subject of the epilogue seems furthest away, it reasserts its presence. As the twelve-tone chord reaches its climax it is cut off, not by a curtain, but by the A–D dyad that opens the D-minor theme, now intoned *fff* by all the bass-clef instruments (Ex. 10). It reminds us—reassures us—that we can identify with this subject, that this is not the alienating world of the diegesis. The moment we feel compelled to turn away, we are drawn back. Now the subject absorbs the accumulated shock energy into its D-minor voice of compassion. *Wozzeck*'s theme from the triple fugue is now given its most overpowering incarnation (mm. 365 ff.), but it is harmonized as a chord stream based on the same ninth chord that accompanied the D-minor theme during its initial presentation. Meanwhile, a rhythmically augmented version of the theme's first four bars is presented as a kind of cantus firmus, dying slowly until it cadences on the ninth chord in its familiar quiet dynamic. Only with the raising of the curtain is the epilogue's subject left behind, as the alienation of the diegesis returns, embodied in the cruel objectivity of children and a cool, remote, *perpetuum mobile* musical setting.

Sleight of Hand

The effect of this final reassertion of the D-minor theme adds a twist to something that Metz has attempted to account for in cinema. Incorporating the psychoanalytic concept of disavowal, he argues that voice-overs represent the “ramparts of disbelief”: “[t]he distance [they] establish between the action and ourselves comforts our feeling that we are not duped by that action: thus reassured (behind the rampart), we can allow ourselves to be duped by it a bit longer.”⁵⁵ In this way the voice-over builds into the film the double quality that is associated with disavowal: the subject both acknowledges and denies what he or she perceives. Although he outlines the Freudian definition of disavowal as a reaction to the castration anxiety invoked in the infant male subject by the sight of the female genitalia, Metz ultimately turns to a Lacanian reading in which disavowal comes to stand for the “splittings of belief” that both characterize and constitute subjectivity even before the establishment of sexual difference.⁵⁶ In this sense disavowal as applied to the cinema revolves around the tension between the fantasmatic plenitude that it foregrounds and an awareness of the underlying lack of the object, a knowledge that originates within the imaginary, but that is fundamental to the symbolic. Disavowal reminds us that the ascendancy of the imaginary in cinema is something that occurs to a subject who has already entered the symbolic order, one who can never fully resubmit to the imaginary.

But Berg’s extradiegetic commentary differs in that it is also the very voice that persuades us to believe. On the one hand it insists on its separation from the diegesis, because only then can it encourage belief or identification. At the same time, however, it attempts to avoid becoming too remote from the action—and thus irrelevant—and so it establishes a relationship to the diegesis with musical reminiscence combined with a revival of its shock atmosphere. But the two attitudes risk becoming two solitudes: a compassionate and inviting subject remote from the action, and a perspective so closely related to the action that it becomes alienating. Kerman, for example, questions the ability of the epilogue’s “emotional” character to “adhere” to the action, viewing it, rather, as “self-indulgence after the shattering experience to which the audience has found itself subjected.”⁵⁷ The solution reveals itself in m. 364, for here the two find a powerful synthesis. By intersecting the shocking effect of the twelve-tone crescendo, the A–D dyad reestablishes the inviting compassion of the epilogue’s subject and its comforting distance from the diegesis. But it does so only by meeting the crescendo on its

own terms; it subdues only by matching its power, by pounding out *fff* dynamics of its own. And it shows, in its presentation of Wozzeck's triple fugue theme, that it can match the amplified motifs of the previous section with some inflation of its own. The implication is far reaching, for it suggests the possibility of a slippage in the gap between compassion and shock, between identification and alienation. The compelling voice of the D-minor subject proves capable of sliding into a shock effect without losing its identity, which is another way of saying that shock can be both unleashed and concealed at the same time. Through a conflation that is as cunning as it is deceptive, Berg's epilogue creates the conditions in which the very force that threatens to fragment the subject presents itself in the guise of an ideal ego. The result is that the subject willingly, yet unwittingly, exposes itself to shock. It is here that we find an echo of Pfitzner's *Trauermarsch*. Just as identification with Pfitzner's ideal ego meant identifying with an impossible, death-rooted nostalgia, so Berg's spectator comes to identify, perversely, with the fragmentation of his or her own subjectivity.

Perhaps from one perspective these perverse reversals could be interpreted as revelatory, even liberating. Both potentially expose the process of subject formation for the *méconnaissance* that it is. They reveal how easily the narcissistic desire for completion can lead the subject into the most paradoxical of identifications, even to the demise of that which it seeks in the first place. But there nevertheless remains a sense of something highly calculated, to the point of manipulation. It is difficult not to see in these clever reversals, conflations, and concealments some trace of the techniques of propaganda. Particularly relevant is the idea of making subjects recognize as their own decision what has actually been dictated to them. This sleight of hand begins with the cultural trope of mourning and its appeal to a community united in grief. For Durkheim, "the foundation of mourning is the impression of loss which the group feels when it loses one of its members. But this very impression results in bringing individuals together, in putting them into closer relations with one another, in associating them all in the same mental state."⁵⁸ Drawing this sense of unity into the theater, these operatic laments equate the dead characters with the lost member of the community, and the audience with the community itself. They are, as Berg describes them, "representatives of humanity."⁵⁹ Positioned as unified mourners, they accede willingly to the orchestral eulogist and identify with his or her image of the deceased (Pfitzner) or with the compassion of the eulogist himself or herself (Berg).

Artificial Regression

But the whole process is given its real potency in the imaginary realm of the darkened theater, with its hidden musicians. Here identification finds fertile ground, and with identification comes the introjection that makes the sleight of hand possible. For it is when the listener has introjected the ideal ego of the music that the decisive move is made. From this point the orchestral eulogy becomes both external and internal. Its subject takes up a position of authority within the ego, standing, as Freud argued, for “the perfections we have striven to reach for our own ego.” And for the ego that has been beset by fantasies of fragmentation, whether engendered by the scattered body images in *Die Rose vom Liebesgarten* or by the shock effects in *Wozzeck*, that subject is sure to appear as a particularly ideal ego. It was to Freud’s theory of group psychology that Adorno turned when he attempted to theorize the mechanisms of fascist propaganda: “What happens when masses are caught by fascist propaganda is not a spontaneous, primary expression of instincts and urges but a quasi-scientific revitalization of their psychology—the artificial regression described by Freud in his discussion of organized groups. The psychology of the masses has been taken over by their leaders and transformed into a means for their domination.”⁶⁰ It is precisely this “artificial regression” that characterizes the strategies encoded in these interludes. If operatic representations of mourning seem a long way from mass indoctrination and fascist leaders, a familiarity nevertheless remains between the manipulative effects that we have detected here and the carefully presented persuasion that lies at the heart of the propaganda deployed by fascism.

In this disguised suppression of the individual will, a sympathy with the dead can be seen to touch on one of the ramifications of a “sympathy with death.” With the 1925 publication of the “little novel”—*The Magic Mountain*, actually Mann’s longest—Mann demonstrated that the ambivalence underlying *Reflections*, if not resolved, had certainly taken another step toward an acceptance of democratic, liberal values. Mann’s stance alienated the conservative nationalists who had once considered him an ally, among them Pfitzner, who signaled his displeasure in a strangely confrontational birthday greeting.⁶¹ Mann responded: “The modest hero of my last novel is occasionally called a ‘problem child of life.’ All of us artists are life’s problem children, but we are children of life all the same, and whatever the romantic license of the musician may be, a literary artist who in such a moment of European history as the

present did not choose the party of life and the future as against the fascination of death would truly be an unprofitable servant.”⁶² Confronting the rise of official fascism, Mann insists that “sympathy with death,” something to which he had once resigned himself, now reveals itself as the seed of a nationalism in which the individual will might find its true antithesis.

Not that *Die Rose vom Liebesgarten* or *Wozzeck* were ever to find an audience under National Socialism (*Götterdämmerung*, of course, is another matter). Even if it had not all but disappeared from the repertory, *Die Rose vom Liebesgarten* surely exemplifies the qualities of “romantic pessimism”⁶³ that ensured Pfitzner would never become a model figure under the terms of Nazi cultural policy, and *Wozzeck*, like all Berg’s music, fell victim first to de facto, then official, suppression. Besides, *Wozzeck* would seem to question the very kinds of authoritarian brutality on which National Socialism was based. The point, rather, is to understand how opera, and specifically music, might reflect and participate in the formation of fascist attitudes, not merely in their overt political form, but, as Jeremy Tambling has persuasively argued, as ideological undercurrents of culture.⁶⁴ It is to understand how these orchestral interludes, because they play a role in the construction and legitimization of identities, might function ideologically in ways that extend and even contradict the values of the drama in which they are embedded.

One of the issues at stake here is the idea of aesthetic autonomy, the perceived ability of art—and above all, music—to transcend the merely fashionable, the material, the contingent, and the political. This is a question raised by the novelist Soma Morgenstern, one of Berg’s closest friends, in his collection of memoirs, *Alban Berg und seine Idole*. Morgenstern describes an exchange with Berg over Schoenberg and what Morgenstern felt was the latter’s outdated and uncritical reverence for the figure of the heroic, misunderstood romantic artist. Morgenstern believed that Schoenberg had held on to the romantic concept of “shocking the bourgeoisie” in an era characterized by “powers more alive and dangerous than the bourgeoisie ever were,”⁶⁵ while his uncompromising modernism had rendered his music not so much shocking as irrelevant.⁶⁶ Berg, he writes, ultimately agreed that his teacher might be out of step, although he had added wryly that he would avoid presenting the argument to Schoenberg himself. What was not discussed, according to Morgenstern, was the broader question of art’s political and social relevance: “In my conversations with Alban I never called into question the holiness of art. I myself had not yet gone that far (or perhaps not yet sunk so low—depending on one’s perspective).”⁶⁷ How much more acute the

problem when the subject is music, with its history of absolutist isolation. Mann articulates the problem when he distinguishes his political responsibilities as “literary artist” from those of Pfitzner “the musician,” as though music might not participate in the struggle of ideas. Perhaps it is this very impression of music’s “romantic license,” of its remoteness from the real world, that allows it to become such a powerful ideological tool in the first place.

Notes

1. Thomas Mann, *Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man*, trans. Walter D. Morris (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1983), 311–12. The novel in question is *The Magic Mountain*, published in 1925. A recent English translation is by John E. Woods (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995).
2. Mann, 314.
3. Hans Pfitzner, *Sämtliche Schriften*, vol. 4 (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1987), 587; trans. in John Williamson, *The Music of Hans Pfitzner* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 13.
4. Walter Kreuzburg, ed., *Hans Thoma und Frances Grun: Lebenserinnerungen von Frances Grun* (Frankfurt am Main, 1957), 26; trans. in Williamson, *The Music of Hans Pfitzner*, 14.
5. Pfitzner, “Die Symbolik in der *Rose vom Liebesgarten*,” in *Gesammelte Schriften*, 3 vols. (Augsburg: Benno Filser, 1926), 2:93.
6. Paul Bekker, “Die *Rose vom Liebesgarten*,” *Neue Musikzeitung* 31 (1910): 249.
7. Bekker, 252.
8. Letter to Erik Wildhagen (27 Jan. 1937), in *Sämtliche Schriften* 4:771.
9. Hans Pfitzner, *Die Oper* (1942), in *Sämtliche Schriften* 4:99.
10. Pfitzner, *Die Oper* (1942), in *Sämtliche Schriften* 4:98.
11. Pfitzner, *Die Oper* (1942), in *Sämtliche Schriften* 4:102.
12. Pfitzner, *Die Oper* (1942), in *Sämtliche Schriften* 4:103.
13. Pfitzner, *Die Oper* (1942), in *Sämtliche Schriften* 4:98.
14. Pfitzner, *Die Oper* (1942), in *Sämtliche Schriften* 4:99.
15. Bekker, 249.
16. Richard Wagner, *Das Bühnenfestspielhaus zu Bayreuth* (1873), in *Sämtliche Schriften und Dichtungen*, ed. Richard Sternfeld and Hans von Wolzogen (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1916), 9:338.
17. Christian Metz, *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and the Cinema*, trans. Celia Britton, Annwyl Williams, Ben Brewster, and Alfred Guzzetti (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), 66.
18. Metz, 104.

19. Friedrich Kittler, "World-Breath: On Wagner's Media Technology," in *Opera through Other Eyes*, ed. David Levin (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 215–35; 224.
20. Friedrich Nietzsche, "Richard Wagner in Bayreuth," in *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 195–254; 240.
21. Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977), 4.
22. Bekker, 252.
23. Hans Pfitzner, *Die neue Ästhetik der musikalischen Impotenz*, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, 2:212; trans. in Williamson, 214.
24. Lacan, 4.
25. Guy Rosolato, "La voix: entre corps et langage," *Revue française de psychanalyse* 37, no. 1 (1974): 79; trans. in Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 80.
26. Silverman, 80.
27. Thomas Mann, "Richard Wagner and *Der Ring des Nibelungen*," in *Thomas Mann: Pro and Contra Wagner*, trans. Allan Blunden (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), 188.
28. Diary entry for 29 Sept. 1871, in *Cosima Wagner's Diaries: An Abridgement*, ed. Martin Gregor-Dellin and Dietrich Mack, trans. Geoffrey Skelton (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 325.
29. Theodor Adorno, *In Search of Wagner*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Verso, 1981), 48.
30. Adorno, *In Search of Wagner*, 37.
31. Adorno, *In Search of Wagner*, 45.
32. Adorno, *In Search of Wagner*, 45.
33. Lacan, 4.
34. Freud, "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1953), 14:112–13.
35. Freud, 14:113.
36. Adorno, *In Search of Wagner*, 60.
37. Kittler, 222.
38. Kittler, 222.
39. Kittler, 222.
40. Mann, *Reflections*; trans. in Blunden, 57.
41. Arthur Jacobs, "An Expectation Fulfilled," *Musical Times* 93 (March 1952): 127.
42. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hanna Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 238.

43. Alban Berg, "A Lecture on *Wozzeck*" (1929); in *Cambridge Opera Handbooks*, Alban Berg: *Wozzeck*, ed. and trans. Douglas Jarman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 169.
44. When Emil Petschnig suggested in *Die Musik* that "the tonality of the interlude is not up to much" and that "after two pages the flat is completely cancelled (it apparently being unnecessary)," Berg responded, rather defensively, that the interlude is a "three-part structure in D minor . . . the middle section which follows this cancellation leads back to the main key, in which the piece now continues and in which the adagio finishes as clearly as it began." See Emil Petschnig, "Creating Atonal Opera," *Die Musik* 16, no. 5 (Feb. 1924); trans. in Jarman, 146, and Berg, "The Musical Forms in My Opera *Wozzeck*," *Die Musik* 16, no. 8 (May 1924); trans. in Jarman, 151.
45. Allen Forte has extracted from the opening of the epilogue a number of pitch-class sets that function, he claims, as recurring motifs "beneath the surface," each with a specific dramatic association. The implication, then, is that Berg, consciously or unconsciously, developed some of the musical material of the opera out of these measures, and that this development was based on *unordered* collections contained within it. Berg's own analysis, true to Schoenberg's teaching, reveals an acute awareness of motivic pregnancy based on the most minute details of a motif's intervallic content: see, for example, "Die musikalische Impotenz der 'neuen Ästhetik' Hans Pfitzners," *Anbruch* 2, nos. 11–12 (June 1920, 399–408), in which he subjects Schumann's *Kinderszenen* to detailed analysis as a response to the concept of compositional inspiration (*Einfall*) laid out in Pfitzner's *Die neue Ästhetik der musikalischen Impotenz* (Munich: Süddeutsche Monatshefte, 1920). Even if we accept Forte's argument, however, the "surface" independence of the opening remains. Allen Forte, "Berg's Symphonic Epilogue to *Wozzeck*," in *Alban Berg: Historical and Analytical Perspectives*, ed. David Gable and Robert Morgan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 55.
46. Joseph Kerman, *Opera as Drama* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956; rev. ed., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 187.
47. It is an attitude that emerges in Berg's suggestion to Schoenberg that the critical failure of *Friede auf Erden* might reassure him "by way of *negation*: namely that you perceive the true and eternal value of your works by the very distance between their wise message and the stupid, monotonous drivel of the base." Letter of 8 May 1912, in Juliane Brand, Christopher Hailey, and Donald Harris, eds. and trans., *The Berg-Schoenberg Correspondence: Selected Letters* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987), 61. Here Berg's disdain for critical—and implicitly audience—reception suggests that their reaction is irrelevant, and yet the bitterness of tone suggests that disapproval might indeed matter. Adorno captures the tensions and contradictions embodied in this attitude when he writes that Schoenberg envied Berg his successes while Berg envied Schoenberg his failures. Theodor Adorno, *Alban Berg, Master of the Smallest Link*, trans. Juliane Brand and Christopher Hailey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 28–29.
48. Berg, "The Problem of Opera," *Neue Musik-Zeitung* 49, no. 9 (1928); in Willi Reich, *Alban Berg* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1955), 64.
49. Reich, 66.
50. Reich, 64.
51. Berg, "Two Feuilletons" (1920), in Reich, 219. In a 1924 essay on Schoenberg's Quartet in D Minor, Berg declares his intention to avoid addressing Schoenberg's music

“by means of philosophical, literary, or other arguments.” Music analysis, he argues, is the only language adequate to the task: “to follow a piece of music as one follows the words of a poem in a language that one has mastered through and through means the same—for one who possesses the gift of thinking musically—as understanding the work itself.” “Why Is Schönberg’s Music So Difficult to Understand?” *Musikblätter des Anbruch* (13 Sept. 1924); trans. in Reich, 189.

52. Theodor Adorno, *The Philosophy of Modern Music*, trans. Anne G. Mitchell and Wesley V. Blomster (New York: Seabury Press, 1973), 30.
53. Adorno, *The Philosophy of Modern Music*, 31.
54. Adorno, *The Philosophy of Modern Music*.
55. Metz, 73.
56. Silverman welcomes what she perceives as a certain “deconstructive potential” in Metz’s position *vis-à-vis* feminist film theory. By stressing those Lacanian “splittings which precede the Oedipal juncture,” she argues, Metz opens up the possibility of conceiving disavowal beyond the limits of sexual difference, of “dislodging woman from the obligatory acting out of absence and lack.” Silverman, 14.
57. Kerman, 189.
58. Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, trans. Joseph Ward Swain (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1915), 401.
59. Berg, “A Lecture on *Wozzeck*,” in Jarman, 169.
60. Theodor Adorno, “Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda,” in *The Culture Industry*, ed. J. M. Bernstein, trans. Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt (London: Routledge, 1991), 130.
61. Pfitzner wrote: “So I would like to say what you have probably felt for some time, that your recent public ‘political’ (to use a not quite applicable word) declarations have sadly estranged me from you.” Letter to Thomas Mann (18 June 1925), in *Hans Pfitzner: Briefe*, ed. Bernhard Adamy (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1991), 405.
62. Letter to Hans Pfitzner (23 June 1925), in *Letters of Thomas Mann, 1889–1955*, ed. and trans. Richard Winston and Clara Winston (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), 145.
63. Jeremy Tambling uses this phrase of Heidegger’s (originally applied to Wagner) to characterize the Nazi view of Pfitzner. See Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. 1, *The Will to Power as Art*, trans. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), 133; cited in Tambling, *Opera and the Culture of Fascism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 69.
64. Tambling analyzes opera in terms of the “nostalgia for power it can give its listeners” and relates this tendency to fascist attitudes in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century European culture. See Tambling, 5.
65. Soma Morgenstern, *Alban Berg und seine Idole: Erinnerungen und Briefe* (Lüneburg: Klampen, 1995), 321.
66. Morgenstern, 322.
67. Morgenstern, 324. Berg uses the phrase “holiness of art” in the article “Two Feuillets,” in Reich, 219.