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Technical Report No. 6

TYPES OF MUSICAL REFERENCE:

THREE PHILOSOPHICAL ESSAYS

by

Vernon A. Howard

ON MUSICAL EXPRESSION, reprinted by permission of the British Society of Aesthetics from the British Journal of Aesthetics, Vol. 11, No. 3 (Summer 1971), pp. 268-280.

ON MUSICAL DENOTING

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The opinions expressed herein, however, do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of these agencies and no official endorsement by these agencies should be inferred.

HARVARD PROJECT ZERO

Basic Research in Art Education

Project Zero is a basic research program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education conducting a theoretical and experimental investigation of creation and comprehension in the arts and of means toward better education for artists and audiences. A brief explanation of the Project's development and current work, along with a list of Project members and of other Technical Reports, can be found at the end of this report.

FOREWORD

Though written for publication separately, the three papers collected here converge on the topic of musical reference, which is to say, the use of music to refer in various ways either to itself or to extra-musical things. The purpose of these essays is to outline the symbol relations involved in such "programme devices" as expression, description, naming, quotation, and representation. Throughout the extensive literature on opera, oratorio, and programme music, little attention is given to the syntactic and semantic conditions of the referential uses of music. In other words, we are still without clear answers to such questions as: How does music express? Can music describe like sentences or represent like pictures? How does musical quotation compare with quotation in linguistic systems? Or, are such terms as "quotation," "description," and "representation" metaphors imported from non-musical realms? Are they entirely without literal significance when applied to music? All these questions are dealt with in the following pages in some detail.

The first paper, "On Musical Expression", focuses upon the exemplificational and expressive aspects of music. The second, "On Musical Denoting", and the third, "On Representational Music" primarily deal with denoting uses of music, particularly description, quotation, and representation.

Because each essay is self-contained and the topics overlap, some points are rehearsed more than once. Seldom, however, is the redundancy mere repetition and so may be instructive. For this reason, it seemed preferable to leave the essays intact rather than try to rewrite them solely for the sake of stylistic elegance.

Although emphasis is upon musical symbolism, expression is ubiquitous in art, while description and quotation in music are analogues of language and representation the analogue of painting, sculpture, and dance. Hopefully, therefore, these discussions will contribute something to the general understanding of symbolic reference in a variety of symbol systems.

Vernon A. Howard
June, 1972

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Dr. Howard has published articles on anthropological theory, philosophy of education, and musical aesthetics. He is also a lieder and opera singer.

ON MUSICAL DENOTING

ABSTRACT

Western composers have long considered their works to refer in various ways including expression, representation, naming, description, and quotation. Though each type of reference differs from the others, they all involve denotation of or by music. This paper attempts to analyse musical denoting in the context of programme music and opera. Having dealt with expression in the preceding paper and representation in the one that follows, primary attention herein is given to (1) the syntactic and semantic features of musical names and descriptions; (2) the status of semi-fictional compliants of naming motifs in opera (i.e., the actor "in character"); (3) analysis of the expressive and descriptive aspects of programme music; and (4) the mechanisms of musical allusion and quotation. In each instance, the symbol relations involved are analysed in the context of music and by comparison to the linguistic analogue as well as to other arts.

ON MUSICAL DENOTING

What Music Can Do[1]

Besides just being and expressing, music can, under certain conditions, name, represent, or describe things, or quote other pieces of music. The latter are types of denotation characteristic of programme music and opera. This paper stakes out some analyses of the varieties of musical denoting from the standpoint of the general theory of symbols. The aim is neither to promote nor proscribe programmatic devices but rather to understand them better in terms of the symbol relations involved in their use. Not in spite of me will critics continue to say what they like and composers to do as they please.

In Languages of Art (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1968),[2] Nelson Goodman remarks as follows on musical denoting: "Here [in music] no more than in painting does representation require imitation. But if a performance of a work defined by a standard score denotes at all, it still does not represent; for as a performance of such a work it belongs to an articulate set. The same sound-event, taken as belonging to a dense set of auditory symbols, may represent. Thus electronic music without any notation or language properly so-called may be representational, while music under standard notation, if denotative at all, is descriptive." (p.232)[3]

Whether any art, including music, imitates or iconically signifies when it denotes is a question we may profitably defer for the sake of focus.[4]

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[1]The research for this paper was pursuant to a Canada Council Grant (no. 69-0905) and conducted under the auspices of Harvard Project Zero. Personal thanks are due to Professor Nelson Goodman, Director, Harvard Project Zero and to Messrs. T. Graham Roupas, David N. Perkins, and George A. Graham for helpful criticisms during the writing.

[2]Further references to this work appear in the text as "LA".

[3]Goodman's technical definitions of such words as representation, description, and expression, while reflecting and illuminating their common meanings, distinguish different symbol relations more sharply than do their ambiguous or vague uses in ordinary discourse. Providing certain symbol relations remain constant, one may speak (as is fairly common) of musical as well as pictorial representation, or (as is less common) of musical as well as linguistic description.

[4]For Goodman's arguments against imitation or "iconic similarity" as the basis of realistic pictorial representation, see LA, Ch. 1, passim. I have dealt with the same topic in the context of musical expression in "On Musical Expression".

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Neither will much be said about literal, structural properties of music (e.g., being in sonata form) or expression of metaphorical ones (e.g., sad, joyous, rollicking). What a particular piece or phrase of music denotes is logically independent of the literal or metaphorical properties it may also exemplify. Exemplified properties depend upon what predicates denote the music rather than what things or events are denoted by the music (See LA, pp. 52-57).

In the quoted passage, Goodman distinguishes two kinds of musical denoting: representation by a system that is syntactically dense, and description by one that is syntactically disjoint and articulate. For the moment, it is sufficient to mark the difference by whether the durations of pitches and silences of a performance are assignable to and identified by a score in standard notation.[5] If pitches and durations are so notated, then score and performance are mutually recoverable: score from performance and conversely (LA, p. 178). In neither representation nor description is the music uniquely recoverable from the object(s) denoted (e.g., a waterfall, battle, etc.), so that both are semantically dense, or inarticulate, or both. Though representation and description refer here to musical sound-events, the one (unscored musical denoting of a waterfall) shares symbol features in common with pictorial systems, while the other (scored musical denoting of a waterfall) shares symbol features in common with linguistic systems. Usually, pictures are both syntactically and semantically dense, whereas linguistic systems are syntactically disjoint and tend to be semantically dense.[6] Since most denoting music is scored description and naming are far more common than representation, though they are seldom distinguished from one another or from expression in discussions of programme music and opera.

2. Naming Motifs: Syntactic Features

A paradigm of conventionally scored musical denoting is the Wagnerian leitmotiv which functions as a musical label of characters, objects, recurrent ideas, situations, and even feelings.[7] To take a familiar example, Figure 1 is "Siegfrieds Hornruf" from Der Ring des Nibelungen.[8]

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[5] It is necessary to say "a score in standard music notation", because many modern scoring methods fall short of strict notationality which implies both syntactic and semantic disjointness and articulateness. Not even standard music notation is entirely "notational" inasmuch as it incorporates ambiguous symbols, some linguistic some not (See LA, pp. 183-185). Hereafter, score will be taken to mean a score in standard music notation unless otherwise specified.

[6] For an account of syntactic and semantic disjointness, articulateness, and density of symbol systems, the reader is referred to LA, pp. 130-157.

[7] There is of course a difference in music as in language between denoting and expressing a feeling. In music, as with all things which do not literally have feelings, expression is a matter of the metaphorical exemplification of labels, linguistic or otherwise, properly denoting the music. See LA, pp. 83-95; also "On Musical Expression".

[8] Kurt Overhoff, Die Musikdramen Richard Wagners (Salzburg: Verlagsbuchhandlung Anton Pustet, 1967), p. 235.

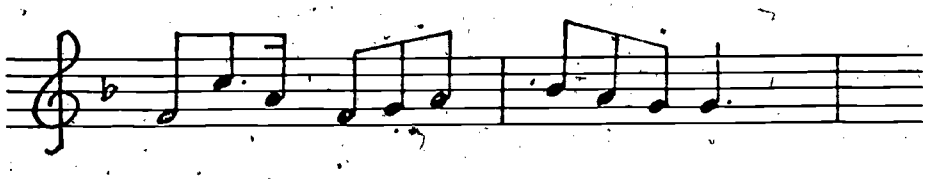

FIGURE 1

More than a mere label, however, a leitmotiv "accumulates significance as it recurs in new contexts; it may serve to recall the thought of its object in situations where the object itself is not present; it may be varied or developed in accord with the development of the plot; similarity of motifs may suggest an underlying connection between objects to which they refer; motifs may be contrapuntally combined; and, finally, repetition of motifs is an effective means of musical unity, as is repetition of themes in a smyphony".[9] In short, besides denoting or labelling things, a leitmotiv may also exemplify different literal (formal) and metaphorical (expressed) properties varying with musical and dramatic context. In this way, some motifs are like proper names uttered with different vocal inflections and located in different grammatical positions. For instance, Figure 2, the "Siegfried-als-Mann-Motiv", while recognizable as a variation of Figure 1, nevertheless differs both in its literal musical structure and expressive qualities.[10]

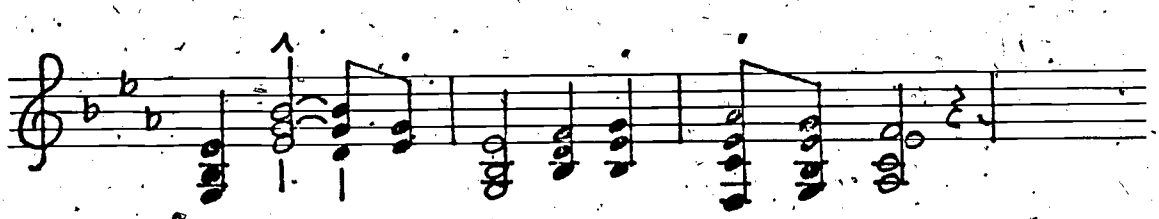

FIGURE 2

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[9] Donald Jay Grout, A History of Western Music (New York: W. W. Norton, 1960), p. 564.

[10] Overhoff, p. 235.

The fact that there are differently scored variations of the "same" motif raises syntactic and semantic difficulties about musical naming. I just compared Siegfried's Motif to a linguistic proper name the separate occurrences of which may be written in different script, have different pronounciations, and occupy different grammatical positions. Actually that is not quite accurate. I should add that it is as if the separate occurrences of the name were also spelled differently (like Heraclitus and Heraklitos); that is, Figures 1 and 2 amount to different scorings of Siegfried's Motif.[11] It will not do, therefore, to treat the Siegfried Motif as a single character consisting of the class of all notational inscriptions and sound-events denoting Siegfried -- in other words, as including the different scores and performances corresponding to each of its variations; for that would result in one character being a proper subclass of another character. That is to say, one character (the Siegfried Motif) would than have several proper subclasses (the variations), each having a different notational spelling. The result is loss of disjointness and hence of notationality in the scoring system.

The question before us could be put this way: "What is the Siegfried Motif — a motif character-class or a class of motif characters?" The former would sacrifice syntactic disjointness between variations. If all variations are assigned to the same character, supposedly they are syntactically equivalent so that a score inscription and performance of one variation could be assigned to any other. Being variations, however, they are notated differently — are not syntactically equivalent — and cannot belong to the same motif character anymore than a b-inscription can belong to the character "A". In other words, militating against interpreting "variations of the same motif" or "the Siegfried Motif" as a character-class of variations is the fact that any subset of a series of syntactically disjoint characters will also be disjoint. Each variation, being such a subset, will thus be disjoint and so cannot be a proper subset of another character. It is required, therefore, to treat each variation as a separate name (or sound-character), differently spelled, and most likely expressively different as well.

How than account for the fact that each name is a variation of the same motif? The answer seems to lie in two characteristics of a variation: first, its recognizable thematic similarity[12] to every other variation of a given

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[11] See Goodman's discussions of sameness of spelling and syntactic equivalence, LA; pp. 115-117 and 131-133.

[12] "Thematic similarity" is of course a highly relative and variable notion: relative to conventions of tonality, mode, pitch, harmony, and rhythm and variable from one scale, style, or musical era to another. It is not enough merely to say that two melodies are similar without stipulating in what respects. In one respect, two melodies of equal length played simultaneously are similar in occupying the same time interval, or, perhaps, in being contrapuntal, though they may differ radically in the pattern and relative durations of pitches.

motif (in spite of its not being an exact replica of any one of them); and second, its denoting the same unique compliant as every other variation of that motif. All variations of the Siegfried Motif are coextensive; similar in melodic or other musical pattern; different, sometimes, in their expressive qualities but most importantly in being spelled (notated) differently. The variations of the Siegfried Motif amount to a redundant system of naming motifs; which is to say, a set of syntactically different motifs denoting the same compliant. The Siegfried Motif is not itself a character including others. It is a class of motif-characters all of which denote Siegfried as well as sharing some other musical properties. Of course, the phrase "the Siegfried Motif" may be used to refer to either the class or to any of its members. But the class of all Siegfried motif-characters is not itself a motif-character anymore than the class of all opera lovers is itself an opera lover. Thus by a redundancy of names, we may preserve disjointness of motif characters as a necessary condition of naming without sacrificing the "sameness" of the different variations.

3. Naming Motifs: Semantic Features

The purpose of naming motif, just so far as it is denotational, is to preserve identity of its compliant. This holds for both unit classes (The Sword Motif) or multiple classes (the Meistersinger Motif) with special restrictions on the latter.[13] This is also the purpose of characters in a notational system such as a score which, among other things, serves to identify a work from one performance to another (LA, p. 128). In addition, I have construed the Siegfried Motif, for instance, as a set of coextensive motif characters denoting Siegfried -- like a system of redundant proper names. This simply means that several different score inscriptions plus performances, including Figures 1 and 2, correspond to Siegfried, but only Siegfried complies with all of them. Standard music notation is similarly redundant with more than one character denoting the same sounded pitch ($C^{\#}$, D^{b}). There is that much parallel between the notational naming use of music and notational scoring methods.

Redundancy is a departure from strict notationality inasmuch as characters in a notation constitute ". . . a peculiar and priviledged definition without competitors" of their compliance classes (LA, p.178). Unlike discursive definitions, given a compliant in a notation, exactly the same character should be recoverable as denotes that compliant. From a sounded $C^{\#}$ one should get a $C^{\#}$- inscription back, though in fact one might get a D^{b}- inscription instead. What sort of threat does redundancy pose to notationality? "The net effect [says Goodman] is that in a chain of the sort described [from inscription to compliant to inscription], the score-inscriptions may not all be true copies

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[13] A multiple class motif functions as a name when it is used to denote, say, the Meistersinger group. It functions descriptively when it is used to indicate membership of individuals in the Meistersinger group; for example, by sounding the motif when certain persona appear on stage, or, perhaps, by combining a multiple class motif with a naming motif to indicate that so-and-so is a Meistersinger.

of one another; yet all will be semantically equivalent — all performances will be of the same work. Work-preservation but not score-preservation is ensured; and insofar as work-preservation is paramount, and score-preservation incidental, redundancy is tolerable" (LA, p. 178).[14] Though strict notationality requires both syntactic and semantic disjointness, characters in a redundant system are semantically but not syntactically equivalent:

Naming motifs are parts of a work denoting extramusical things. Consider such motif characters, for a moment, as coextensive sound-segments taken from various locations in a complete work; that is, consider them as semantically equivalent work-segments. What is paramount here is object-identity rather than work or score preservation. Any such work-segment denotes, say, Siegfried, and given the latter, any one of the coextensive set of motif characters is recoverable though which one is arbitrary. This situation might initially appear as a threat to the structure and identity of the whole work, since one could well get an Act I motif-character in return for an Act III compliant. But work-preservation, which in this instance refers, inter alia, to a particular distribution of the motif-characters throughout the work, is ensured by the complete score including of course all motif variations in proper sequence. However else naming motifs may function in a work, denotatively they serve mainly to identify and signalize their compliants. As such, they constitute a redundant notational subsystem within a larger descriptive system of motifs. More on description after an extensional interlude on fictional compliants.

4. Siegfried as Fictional (?) Compliant

I have spoken of musical naming as if it applied to ordinary objects and events. However, the persons, events, and some of the objects (e.g., Wotan's Spear, the Holy Grail) in opera are extraordinary and fictional. But neither can we treat them in the same way as fictional characters and events in a novel. The relation between a naming motif and an actor in his role as Siegfried is not even an ordinary fictive relationship. While we may talk of Pickwick-names or Pickwick-descriptions having null extension (See LA, pp. 21-26), this is not quite true of musical names and descriptions for which there may be compliants before us on stage. What, then, does the music denote? I raise the question without having a very satisfactory answer.

Suppose we said that the Siegfried naming motif denotes the character Siegfried. This will not do; for there is no such character just as there is no Pickwick or flying horse corresponding to Pickwick and Pegasus names. The actor on stage is not Siegfried nor is there anyone who is. Perhaps then we should say that Siegfried's naming motif denotes the actor. Surely he exists. But this will not do either, because the actor may vary from one performance to another, and it is not our aim in naming Siegfried to label all past, present, and future players of the role. Either way, there is nothing unique corresponding to the name.

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[14] See also LA, pp. 151-152 on the benignancy of redundancy in notational systems.

Another tack might be to treat the name as denoting the actor-in-his-role-as-Siegfried; that is, the actor considered as himself a Siegfried-symbol. The classification of symbols as Siegfried-symbols whether actors or snatches of music no more commits us to the existence of any real compliant in re than does the classification of names and descriptions as Pickwick-names and Pickwick-descriptions. The trouble here is in taking a Siegfried-symbol to denote, not Siegfried, but another Siegfried-symbol. Naming or describing Siegfried is obviously different from naming or describing a Siegfried-symbol. This interpretation comes close to the first mentioned above where we said that the Siegfried naming motif denoted the character Siegfried except that we now recognize the phrase "character of Siegfried" to be ambiguous between indicating Siegfried-symbols in fictional contexts and the (putative) non-fictional Siegfried, that is, between the actor-in-his-role-as-Siegfried and simply Siegfried. The obvious advantages of taking the denotation to be of another Siegfried symbol — the actor as Siegfried — are that it is consistent with what we ordinarily say without committing us to Meinongian Siegfrieds as well as allowing for different actors appearing in the role without sacrificing the naming function of some motifs. The broad features of this alternative might be diagrammed as follows. The broken lines indicate null denotation.

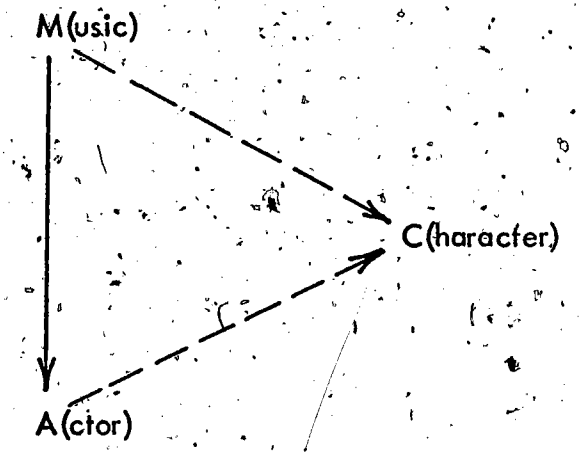

FIGURE 3

In other words, since neither the naming motif nor the actor as Siegfried-symbols can denote the non-existent Siegfried, perhaps M denotes A when and only when A is "in character". If for some reason this is objectionable, a fourth alternative is to consider both M and A as coeval Siegfried-symbols having null extension (and therefore coextensive) within the context of the work -- that is, as "parallel" Siegfried-symbols. On this view, both Siegfried-symbols have null extension, neither one denoting the non-existent Siegfried nor each other, but merely accompany each other in the drama. To say that the naming motif "accompanies" the actor in character leaves open whether or which one denotes the other. Labelling, after all, is one of our freest acts. (See LA, pp. 58-59) Rather than the musical Siegfried-symbol denoting the dramatic Siegfried-symbol, just the opposite is equally possible: perhaps the actor could be construed as labelling the music. In any event, four ways of construing naming motifs relative to a fictional compliant S plus some of their consequences have been sketched. We may think of naming motifs as (1) S-denoting symbols; (2) S-symbols denoting the actor; (3) S-symbols denoting other S-symbols (i.e., the actor "in character"); or (4) S-symbols coeval and coextensive with (but not denoting) the actor taken also as an S-symbol. (4) is perhaps the closest parallel to linguistic symbolization where both written and verbal terms, as coeval and coextensive inscriptions of a single character, refer to the same thing -- like the written or spoken word 'cat'. Just as verbal cat-inscriptions are not part of the extension of written cat-inscriptions, the actor in character may not be included in the extension of a naming motif as he is in (3). Rather, as in (4), the Siegfried Motif and the actor in his Seigfried role could be construed as coextensive, simultaneous S-symbols. If (3) conforms to what audiences and people at rehersal ordinarily (and loosely) say, (4) corresponds to the familiar phenomenon of inscriptional equivalence in language and has the advantage of eliminating reference to transient actors in or out of character.

5. Naming and Describing With Music

Sometimes motifs having different compliants are combined contrapuntally to denote a single event. For instance, two naming motifs A and B having x and y as compliants respectively may be combined to form a third character AB having neither x nor y as compliant but rather some combination of x and y, say, xy. Denoting the event xy in this way is not description, because the new character AB is notational relative to xy. Typical of the combinatory-notational use of naming motifs is Wagner's handling of the theme for Wotan's Spear " . . . by making it break and fail, cut through, as it were, by the tearing sound of the theme identified with the swords, when Siegfried shivers the spear with the stroke of Nothung".[15] Such labelling of unique events by combined labels meets all the conditions of naming and illustrates the point that simple combination of atomic terms in music as elsewhere does not automatically produce a description.

The descriptive use of motifs is commonly a matter of class inclusion or predication as in natural languages. If, for instance, a love motif is combined with a naming motif to indicate that so-and-so is in love, the result is non-disjoint class inclusion or a musical description. Again, as with linguistic naming and description, one can distinguish between description,

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[15] George Bernard Shaw, The Perfect Wagnerite (New York: Dover, 1967 reprint), p. 107.

"Eva is in love", and naming the event of Eva's being in love. One such example of the latter, and there are many in Wagner's operas, is the "Liebes-Motiv" from Die Walküre denoting the incestuous love of Siegmund and Sieglinde and later transformed into the "Flucht-Motiv" associated with the flight of the lovers.[16] The mere fact that a motif may be called by a descriptive predicate does not imply that it functions as a musical description, inasmuch as events or emotions can be named quite as easily as persons or objects. If, on the other hand, a love motif were projected over a number of different characters and situations, it would thereby achieve generality through having multiple compliants and, hence, descriptive status. The "Sturm-und-Drang-Motiv" in Die Meistersinger appears to operate in that way.

If combining motifs does not inevitably lead to description, single naming motifs may nevertheless become descriptive by shifting their denotation from the original compliants to properties of their compliants. The transformation takes place in stages: naming motifs usually begin their lives as expressive names metaphorically exemplifying properties belonging literally to the character or object denoted. "Mimmy, being a quaint, weird old creature, has a quaint, weird theme of two thin chords that creep down eerily one to the other. Gutrune's theme is pretty and caressing: Gunther's bold, rough, and commonplace".[17] Thereafter, however, by capitalizing on the pre-established unique reference, Wagner may alter naming motifs in such way as to describe something happening to their compliants. As Shaw observes, "It is a favorite trick of Wagner's, when one of his characters is killed on stage, to make the theme attached to that character weaken, fail, and fade away with a broken echo into silence".[18] What might initially appear to be another redundant variation of a naming motif becomes a semantically inarticulate (and therefore descriptive) "sliding scale" of death. A similar device is the use of fluctuating dynamics to indicate the nearness, remoteness, approach or recession of moving objects — a favorite technique of silent film accompanists. Thus by suitable changes, a single motif may on separate occasions exhibit all three functions of leitmotivs: naming, expression, and description.

As a symbol system Wagnerian leitmotives[19] constitute a descriptive system containing a notational subsystem consisting of all naming motifs. Compliants and the musical labels denoting them are mutually recoverable within the notational subsystem of naming motifs. However, combined with descriptive

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[16] Overhoff, p. 219.

[17] Shaw, p. 106.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Similar denotative devices are rather commonplace, for example, in the operas of Mozart, Haydn's oratorios, and in the programmatic works of Debussy, Prokofiev, Ives, and many others.

motifs, or altered in such ways as object identity is no longer their sole denotative function, naming motifs either belong to the larger descriptive system or may themselves be transformed into descriptions.[20]

6. Describing and Expressing with Music

By definition, programme music is music having reference to something extra-musical -- ideas, feelings, stories, historical events, and so on. One need not take sides in the controversy over the merits of programmatic composition in order to analyse the types of reference that may be involved in music with a "subject matter". Generally, to say what a piece of music expresses is to say what metaphorical labels both denote and are exemplified by the music.[21] Description depends on what music under standard notation is taken to denote. Part of the difference, then, between expression and description is the difference between being denoted and denoting. Given that difference, expression is a matter of the metaphorical exemplification of properties belonging to the music solely as music.[22] Description, on the other hand, is a function of the music's belonging to a system that is syntactically disjoint and articulate (i.e., the score) while denoting ambiguously, non-disjointly, or inarticulately.[23]

Whether or just how a piece of music describes is a matter of case analysis, and so must be approached piecemeal. Some compositions like Beethoven's Wellingtons Sieg, Smetana's The Moldau, or Prokofiev's Peter and the Wolf appear to denote particular things or events. Others seem to denote not unique things but the several members of a class like the dictionary sketch of "The Herring Gull". (Cf. LA, p. 21) Imagine a composition by that title

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[20] For Goodman, the term 'descriptive' ". . . is not confined to what are called definite descriptions in logic but covers all predicates from proper names through purple passages, whether with singular, multiple, or null denotation" (LA, p. 30, fn). It might appear from this that all names, including naming motifs, are descriptive by definition and never notational. But that stretches the relevant point which is that not all names are notational. There can be overlapping names (e.g., Plato, Plato-Smith, and Smith where Plato or Plato-Smith denote X and Plato-Smith or Smith denote Y), explicitly descriptive names like Standing Bear, or, if we believe Russell, names that are truncated descriptions. In the present context, names are distinguished from descriptions by their notationality; which is to say that with the exception of "transformed" naming motifs only notational names are considered.

[21] See LA, pp. 85-95; also my "On Musical Expression".

[22] Ibid.

[23] Unlike musical names which are semantically unambiguous, disjoint, and articulate.

(Rameau might have composed it) filled with onomatopoeic gull screeches, sea roarings, and soaring passages describing the life and times not necessarily of this herring gull (named Choker) but any herring gull. The denotation here is distributive, neither collective nor unique, referring to herring gulls in general including Choker. It is in this distributive sense that Munday's Faire Wether or Debussy's La Mer might be construed as not only expressing bucolic or nautical qualities but as also denoting a sunny day or the sea. In all this, I am merely suggesting first, that if any music is descriptive or interpreted as such, it will have to meet some of the aforementioned conditions and may meet others; second, that these conditions are not absurd even if musically gratuitous; and third, that description is conspicuous among the types of reference possible to programme music.

It frequently happens that programmatic works are denotative only in part or not at all. Beethoven characterized his Pastoral Symphony as "expression of feeling rather than painting"[24] — the point being that it was in no way intended to describe or depict any actual or generalized scene. The same could be said of most nineteenth century romantic music: that it is metaphorically exemplificational (expressive) rather than descriptively denotational. Setting aside naming motifs, two types of reference cover most programme music. A piece may be uniquely or distributively descriptive and hence denotative. Or, more commonly, music may metaphorically exemplify many of the labels literally applicable to, say, a love scene (e.g., tender, pleading, yielding, passionate) and thereby expressively underscore a dramatic action without necessarily denoting anything. Much programme music which seems prima facie descriptive, actually belongs in the second category of expressive music; which is to say that the music exemplifies literally or metaphorically many of the same labels as denote the dramatic action or whatever is mentioned in the title. Of course descriptive music is usually also expressive, but the reverse generalization is less likely to hold.

Under standard notation, denotation is the key to musical description, but frequently we are at a loss to decide whether a piece is denotational. A proper performance of Debussy's La Mer, for instance, may not so much describe the sea as express qualities of it, many of which belong literally to the sea and metaphorically to the music, e.g., shimmering, swirling, heaving, swelling, ebbing, flowing, gurgling. However, any number of other things might exhibit the same or similar properties. Had the title of Debussy's work been Mal de Mer, most of the same labels would continue to apply, including even the titles of the subsections (e.g., "De L'Aube à Midi sur la Mer") transformed thereby into hideous jokes! There are of course as many similarities between the sea, Debussy's music, and nausea as there are labels applicable to all three; but

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[24] Willi Apel, Harvard Dictionary of Music, 2nd. ed. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press, 1969), p. 649, "Pastoral Symphony", column 2.

it requires no attention to what, if anything, the music denotes to discover any of them.[25] On the other hand, there is nothing to prevent anyone from taking Debussy's piece as descriptive of the sea, and there are characteristics of the work which encourage that interpretation. The subtitles of each symphonic poem not only set an expressive mood but delimit specific aspects of the sea: "Juex de Vagues", "Dialogue du Vent et de la Mer". Moreover, that the music expresses qualities of the sea in no way prohibits its also describing the sea provided certain syntactic and semantic conditions are met. The point is that the music can be so construed, and if La Mer denotes, it does so descriptively.

The prolixity and specificity of titles, though sometimes a clue, is no sure indication that a particular piece is or can be denotational. The most that can be said is that titles may indicate what the music is "about" by setting an expressive mood or labelling things described by the music or both. Neither should one assume that a piece was intended to denote just because it could meet the syntactic and semantic conditions of description (e.g., La Mer), still less because it is known to be expressive (e.g., the Pastoral Symphony).

Except for onomatopoeic sounds, evidence of musical denotation in programme music is likely to be independent of musical structures as such, though the structures themselves may have originated partly in the composer's thoughts of something extra-musical. Whether in any given instance music denotes is a question of its referential use which exclusive attention to musical-cum-auditory structures cannot answer. The internal structure of symbols tells us little or nothing about their compliants or the nature of their reference; for virtually anything may be used to symbolize anything else. Hints or symptoms of denoting can be gleaned from attendant circumstances such as the dramatic context of referential use as in opera, the relative complexity of descriptive titles, the habits of reference peculiar to a type of composition so far as they are known or can be reconstructed, or, perhaps, the composer's stated intentions.

7. Musical Quotation and Allusion

Along with onomatopoeic devices, musical quotations and allusions are among those exceptional cases where reference is detectable primarily from auditory features of the music. Unhappily, space permits drawing only a few basic distinctions. First of all, musical allusion differs from simple repetition of a theme (e.g., ABA) or further development as in a symphony or variations in being an explicit reference, denotational or exemplificational, to another piece or kind of music. One piece may allude denotationally to another by

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[25] Denotative or not, it is a misnomer to label such music as a "musical seascape" or an instance of "impressionist pictorialism" (Apel, Harvard Dictionary of Music, p. 522, "La Mer", column 1.). Nothing pictorial is involved. Under standard notation, La Mer belongs to a disjoint and articulate set -- a crucial disqualification from the realm of the representational. Such characterizations may derive from the tendency to confuse pictorial mental images conjured up by the title (and perhaps the music too) with the symbol features of the music which may itself denote the same things as the title or the mental pictures. Coextensivity of this kind between title, mental picture, and music obviously does not warrant the inference that all three belong to the same sort of symbol system.

"quoting" it, like the snatch of the "Marseillaise" in Tchaikowsky's 1812 Overture or "Dixie" in Ives' Second String Quartet. Or, as in Prokofiev's Classical Symphony, a piece may allude without quotation by literal exemplification of the general features of a musical genre.

The criteria of quotationality in non-linguistic symbol systems vary with the media, and there is the question whether quotation is literal or metaphorical in certain non-linguistic contexts. For instance, can one painting or dance movement quote another? If a painting is autographic, how can it be duplicated in quotation? And if scored dance gestures can be duplicated, what corresponds to the reference-giving quotation marks in language? A stage-wink, perhaps? Assuming for argument's sake that quotation is a literal possibility in music, a stringent suggestion of necessary and sufficient conditions of quotationality drawn from language might run as follows: an allusion is quotational if and only if it literally exemplifies the same score as the original (is spelled the same) and denotes the original.[26] Quotation thus implies replication plus reference.

At best this defines a limiting case in music. Practically, we tend to accept a less rigid standard of quotation in musical contexts to include passages which denote while merely approximating the original. That is, a musical quotation need not be an exact spelling-replica of the original passage. Such laxness may be in compensation for the apparent lack of anything corresponding to indirect discourse in music ("He said that . . ."). Provided certain intervals and relative durations (i.e., the "Melody") remain constant, changes in mode, harmony, or tempo are tolerable within limits without sacrifice of passage identity, just as the "same" motif may undergo various transformations.[27] Since they seldom duplicate the original, many allusions qualify as quotational on this weaker condition.

Just as linguistic quotations are often said to name a sentence, so musical quotations name by denoting a passage having exactly the same or very similar properties. By contrast, non-quotational allusions literally exemplify not specific passages but the more global, ubiquitous features of a musical genre or style. One does not quote a musical style any more than one quotes a grammar.[28] Furthermore, it would be incorrect to speak of the Classical Symphony as denoting the general features of the classical style; for those features can be variously described. All that is required is that correct descriptions of certain prominent characteristics of the classical style both apply to and be exemplified by Prokofiev's symphony. In such cases, the fact

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[26] As a first attempt, formalization of the replication and reference criteria of quotationality might look as follows, where M stands for 'is a musical passage', S for 'is a score in standard notation', E for 'exemplifies', D for 'denotes', and Q for 'quotes'.

$$(x)\,(y)\,(z)\,[(Mx \cdot My \cdot Sz) \supset [(Exz \cdot Eyz) \supset (Dyx \equiv Qyx)]]$$

[27] Benjamin White, "Recognition of Distorted Melodies", The American Journal of Psychology (March 1960), vol. LXIII, pp. 100-107.

[28] Except elliptically by quoting articulated rules of grammar.

that passages out of the Classical Symphony count as allusions to and not merely instances of the classical style is largely a function of their occurrence in a recognizable secondary context. Analysis of the difference between primary and secondary contexts vis-a-vis musical allusions is an intriguing task beyond the scope of this paper.

If not all allusions are quotational, even those which are may or may not differ expressively from the original. Tchaikowsky's "Marseillaise" is quite as chauvinistic as the original, while Ives' quotations of patriotic and religious tunes range from gentle humour and pathos to grim irony. Expressive modifications occur as a result of the contextual influence of the secondary setting and/or modal, rhythmic, and other alterations of the original passage. In fact, a kind of expressive "double entendre" frequently marks a successful musical allusion. Expressive reminiscence of this sort is part and parcel of any system of leitmotivs and, indeed, supplies much of the dramatic continuity of opera.

Certainly not every replica[29] — identically scored segment — in a secondary context is quotational or allusory. The title of Brahms' Variations on a Theme by Haydn identifies the opening theme as Haydn's, but Brahms simply uses the theme without (musical) quotation exactly as one might use another person's words without intending to quote him. Titular mention of a theme's authorship does not imply allusory or quotational use. If mere duplication of someone else's words or melodies by itself constituted quotationality, plagiarism would be equally impossible in language or music -- like stealing in a society without private property. The question for deciding quotationality is whether a secondary occurrence denotes a primary occurrence.

What then distinguishes denoting (quotational) from non-denoting (non-quotational) replicas in secondary contexts, Ives' "Dixie" from Haydn's theme in Brahms' work? Both involve auditory occurrences in primary and secondary settings which exemplify approximately the same score. How can we know that one denotes the original and the other does not? It is unlikely that any generally satisfactory answer can be given. However, one striking difference between the two cases is a widespread familiarity with "Dixie" as compared to Haydn's relatively obscure theme. The same could be said of the "Marseillaise" or any other popular melody. It could be argued that the occurrence of a familiar passage in a recognizable secondary context is the musical analogue of putting a sentence in quotation marks. But immediately one is prompted to ask, "Familiar to whom?" Haydn's theme may be quite as familiar to some listeners as "Dixie" or the "Marseillaise"; but surely its occurrence in Brahms' work does not on that account become quotational solely for musically educated listeners. Nor is it quotational for everybody else just because somebody recognizes its origin independently of the title. Neither does "Dixie" cease to be quotational for some listeners' lack of familiarity with it.

Supposing musical quotation to be a deliberate act of composition, we might consider the composer's (usually correct) assumption of widespread

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[29] Or, in keeping with the weaker condition of quotationality, near replica.

familiarity with a specific melody or musical style as giving it denotational or exemplificational reference to a primary occurrence much like onomatopoeic sounds. Onomatopoeic sounds denote the properties they exemplify and are, to that extent, self-referential (LA, pp. 61n and 81). Musical allusions sometimes (when they are quotational) denote the properties they exemplify. In both cases, familiarity may breed reference in secondary contexts. Again, as with musical names or descriptions, establishing the denotation of what appear to be quotational passages is largely a matter of reasoning from circumstantial evidence. Evidence that Brahms did not assume familiarity with Haydn's theme is his taking the trouble to cite it in the title. Had Haydn's theme been a household tune, quotational use might have substituted for titular mention.

Having said this, it must also be noted that relaxed standards of replication and reference in musical contexts promote a vagueness uncharacteristic of linguistic quotation. For example, excluding syntactic equivalence as a criterion of replicahood, when does a passage cease to be the "same" as the original? This is like asking when does one melody become another — a question for which there is no general answer in lieu of a general standard of replication. And if familiarity is to serve as surrogate for the convention of quotation marks, is a medley or potpourri of familiar tunes ipso facto quotational? The question itself is enough to show that even if a passage did not fail of exact replication, familiarity is not a sufficient criterion of denotational reference. Besides medleys, there are compositions based on folk tunes, which, if not quotational or allusory, neither are they plagiaristic. There is as little reason to force that dichotomy on musical works as on the writings and utterances of people who speak or think alike. Between the contraries of plagiarism and allusion are "influences", "sources", "stylistic resemblances", not to mention "accidents" (like the "I Love Life" finale of Mahler's First Symphony) which, though traceable in a composer's works, are neither explicitly referential nor deliberately covert.

In spite of these counter examples, loose replication and familiarity may serve well enough the purpose of loose characterization of musical passages as quotations. This marks the crucial difference between (1) attempting to explain or explicate how people tend to use the word 'quotation' in musical contexts; and (2) what musical or other sorts of quotation would be if the closest analogue were taken from linguistic systems. Surely, the insertion of quotation marks in the score accompanied by "bleeps" and "un-bleeps" in performance is theoretically possible but aesthetically repugnant. By way of comparison, it can be said that musical and linguistic quotation alike involve replication plus reference, though the specific criteria of replication and reference in music are at least less stringent, probably different, and certainly more vague. Further, unlike the linguistic criteria, the musical ones are more psychological than syntactic. This is shown first by the variety of strategies listeners employ to identify the "same" tune through various transformations, and second, by the highly variable capacities of memory and auditory pattern perception presupposed by the "familiarity" of a musical passage.

If one considers the word 'quotation' as literally applied to characters in a linguistic system, its application to musical passages would then be

metaphorical for two reasons. First, because of the change in realm of application from language to music; and second, because musical quotations comply only by approximation to the criteria of linguistic quotation.[30] To describe a musical passage as a quotation is counter-indicated on both counts by the standard of the linguistic analogue. The shift from syntactic to psychological criteria of replication and reference closes off the possibility that quotation applies literally and generally to music as well as language. This is because the psychological criteria include passages which are neither spelled the same (in the score) nor enclosed within quotation-indicators. Although such conventions could be introduced, a general unconcern for the linguistic uses of music[31] coupled with a maximum concern for auditory nuance count against it.

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[30]This suggestion is based in part upon my construal of some points about theoretical entities made by Nelson Goodman during an undergraduate lecture on the theory of symbols, Harvard University, 10 December 1970.

[31]Notwithstanding the significant exceptions discussed herein.