

## Schenkerian Analysis and Existential Semiotics

One of the attractions of Eero Tarasti's *A Theory of Musical Semiotics* (1994) is its capacity to embrace a wide range of analytical approaches. Tarasti's adaptation of the Greimasian generative course – in particular the concept of modalities – presented a way in which traditional analytical approaches might be revitalized as part of an attempt to understand more fully the processes of musical signification. From a Schenkerian perspective, it offered a framework within which to reshape analytical insights and address some of the problematic epistemological assumptions that Schenker's theories entail.

Over the last decade, Tarasti's basic theoretical model has undergone significant re-orientation in order that semiosis may be understood in terms of acts. His conception of semiotic acts involves three different types of sign, the pre-sign (or enunciant), act-sign and post-sign (or interpretant). He states that 'a semiotic act occurs as the production of an act sign by means of the help of a pre-sign or enunciant/utterant; or the act takes place as the interpretation of the act sign by means of the post-sign or interpretant' (Tarasti 2000: 32) If this seems a little like Nattiez's tripartite model – with the enunciant taking the place of poietic level and the interpretant standing for the aesthesic level – the resemblance is superficial and misleading. Tarasti's model suggests not that the activity of the composer and listener can be related to a stable and neutral level, but that 'the sign itself proves to be a rather ephemeral entity lying between these two "transcendences" [of pre and post signs]' (2000: 32).

The models from the 'classical' semiotics of Greimas and Peirce on which Tarasti's earlier theory draws find a place within this new 'existential semiotics' as a descrip-

tion of 'the world in which our "semiotic subject" lives, acts and reacts' (2000: 18). If classical semiotics is basically content to attend to the conditions of signification *within* this world (for which Tarasti borrows the Heideggerian term *Dasein*), 'existential semiotics' focuses theoretical inquiry onto the way in which individual subjects in particular situations might transcend their *Dasein*. This transcendence 'occurs amidst the world of *Dasein* as its unexpected illumination... through negation or affirmation... an experience is either reduced to the essentials... or a more profound meaning is added to it, which the everyday sign unexpectedly starts to convey' (2000: 21). Through the concept of transcendence, Tarasti thus seeks new ways to account for that which is absent yet filters through into the musical situation from outside – an important problem for Schenkerian analysis with its reliance (with varying degrees of explicitness) on such notions as *Tonwille*, organic coherence and genius.

This increased focus on the individual subject makes even more acute the problem of where a musical subject might be located. Tarasti has posited a model of the whole musical situation in which the relationships between agents (the acting subject) and patients (the subject being acted upon) within the musical text itself are multiply embedded in relationships between composer/listener and implied composer/implied listener (1998: 48). There are, in other words, distinct differences between discussing a subject within the work (for instance, a theme finds itself in a new context), the actions of an implied composer (for instance, the composer does something surprising that an implied listener will presumably recognize as such) and the subjectivity of the actual composer (for instance, the composer was contemplating suicide when he wrote this work).

Schenker's own analytical commentaries frequently imply a narrative subject within the musical text that we apprehend from without, as in the following extract from an analysis of the seventh of Bach's Twelve Little Preludes (BWV 941), in which Schenker graphically describes how a musical subject emerges out of the composer's consciousness:

Somehow, the initial third progression sprang up fully formed in bars 1-3, a creature of flesh and blood that came into being in the deepest recesses of the master's tonal imagination. Undaunted, as if striding over chords and voices, it moves relentlessly towards its goal. The mysterious implacability of this third-progression is one of the noble hallmarks of Bach's genius (1994: 60)

The communication of meaning from composer to listener in this case is achieved by the creation of a semi-autonomous musical subject onto which is projected various anthropomorphic features. If Schenker's more extravagant metaphors were often ignored by scholarship of the seventies and eighties in favour of graphic self-sufficiency, they have increasingly provided a starting point when Schenkerian analysis is employed with hermeneutic intent. From the perspective of Tarasti's recent theorizing, the sort of metaphorical writing exemplified above involves the apparent existential choices of the somewhat shadowy and ill-defined musical subjects within the musical text and, behind them, those of their implied creators.

In this article I investigate what Tarasti's theories might tell us about the analytical results yielded by Schenkerian analysis, making some more general points in the first part of the article, and responding on a more specific level to Tarasti's analysis of Beethoven's Op. 7 Pianoforte Sonata in the second.

In describing what a passage of music does (let alone what it means) we unavoidably project onto it metaphors and ideologies that are extramusical in that they are not expressed in (or confined to) the language of music itself; there is no neutral, 'purely musical' description of music. Raymond Monelle writes:

The notorious difficulty of *segmentation* in music analysis is only to be expected, for segmentation in language ... is based on pertinence, that is, *meaning*. Without a theory of signification, music becomes merely an infinitely ramified continuum, impossible to divide into smaller units. A grasp of signification enables us to find meaningful terms in this continuum and thus to begin the process of analysis (2000: 10-11)

To put it more provocatively, music analysis cannot even properly begin without the notion of musical meaning, which itself stretches beyond the capabilities of language and its associated descriptive and narrative structures. This clearly presents an epistemological challenge for Schenkerian analysis, and it is from this perspective that I am interested in a semiotic re-configuration of what Schenker has to offer.

The seeds of my semiotic approach to Schenkerian structure can be found in Tarasti's analysis of Fauré's 'Après un rêve', in which he offers a brief interpretation of a descending fifth-progression from  $\Delta^5$  in terms of Greimasian modalities (1994: 202). This progression appears with various harmonizations throughout the song, and Tarasti suggests that the listener will only accept it 'as the definitive solution with the final  $\Delta^1$  (in the original register) accompanied by a tonic chord in root position' (: 202). He uses the modalities of 'being' and 'seeming' to draw a parallel with his analysis of the text in terms of truth (which is 'seeming' and 'being') and illusion (which is 'seeming' but 'non-being'). This idea of employing Greimasian modalities to describe a Schenkerian insight is my starting point.

Tarasti's treatment of modalities is another example of his comparatively 'soft' and pragmatic approach. In *A Theory of Musical Semiotics* (1994) they arise from articulations of space and time and through the establishment of musical actors. This is not a mechanistic process, however, but a rather intuitive one. An example might be in his analysis of Beethoven's *Waldstein* Sonata, where an actor is described as having a high degree of 'can' due to 'the sudden shift of register that produces a feeling of surprise' (1994: 126). Tarasti has since suggested that modalities might in fact run throughout the entire generative course – that they are fundamental to the way in which music unfolds, its 'becoming'<sup>1</sup>. The table in Example 1 shows Tarasti's definitions of Greimas's modalities for the purposes of musical analysis. As discussed below, 'will', 'know', 'can' and 'must' – are understood as 'surmodalizations' of the more basic modalities of being and doing (1994: 60).

Like all the components of Tarasti's generative course, modality is flexible in that it can operate on almost any scale from a single note to a whole piece, a feature that additionally makes Tarasti's methodology attractive from a Schenkerian point of view. The return of a tonic at a given formal juncture in the same Beethoven sonata, for

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<sup>1</sup> Private correspondence, 2 June 2003.

example, is described as projecting the modality of ‘must be’ (1994: 132) – the music is expected to (and in this case does) conform to a formal expectation.

‘will’	the so-called kinetic energy of music, the tendency to move toward something
‘know’	musical information, the cognitive moment of music
‘can’	the power and efficiency of music, its technical resources, particularly in performance
‘must’	the relation of a musical work to stylistic and normative categories

Example 1: Tarasti’s musical adaptation of Greimasian modalities  
(all definitions verbatim from 1994: 49)

Example 2 shows these same modalities in a more familiar Greimasian presentation, dividing them into competence and performance, which constitute what Greimas calls the ‘pragmatic act’. Modalities such as seeming and believing can also be used to describe how the pragmatic act is judged after the fact, but it is the modalities involved in the description of the act itself that are most immediately relevant to Schenker’s analytical insights into tonal structure.

<b>competence</b>	virtualizing	<i>must</i>	<i>will</i>
	actualizing	<i>can</i>	<i>know</i>
performance	realizing	<i>doing</i>	<i>being</i>

Example 2: Table of modalities involved in competence and performance  
(after Greimas and Courtés 1982: 195 and Greimas 1987: 132)

In *On Meaning*, Greimas suggests that the categories of virtual, actual and real can ‘articulate pragmatic competence as *levels of existence*’ (1987: 132). Schenker himself creates a virtual model of tonal space in which tensions are created and resolved in normative ways and this, along with his notion of *Tonwille*, can be understood in terms of the modalities of ‘will’ and ‘must’. The process of composing tonal music – from Schenker’s point of view, of setting these models within a compositional context – might be understood in terms of actualization, represented on Example 2 by the modalities of ‘can’ and ‘know’. The virtualizing and actualizing modalities that constitute Greimasian competence are presupposed by performance – the modal description in terms of being and doing of the subject/object junctions themselves. In order to flesh out the ideas outlined in this paragraph, it will be necessary to look at the fundamental question of how musical narratives can be understood in terms of the conjunction of subjects and objects.

Directed motion is central to Schenker’s conception of the *Urlinie*: <sup>^3</sup> embodies ‘striving toward a goal’ (1979: 4) and arrival on <sup>^1</sup> means that ‘all tensions in a musical work cease’ (1979: 13). This sort of goal-directed tension is understood to operate right through the Schenkerian generative course, and my suggestion is that the interplay of these tensions is open to semiotic interpretation.

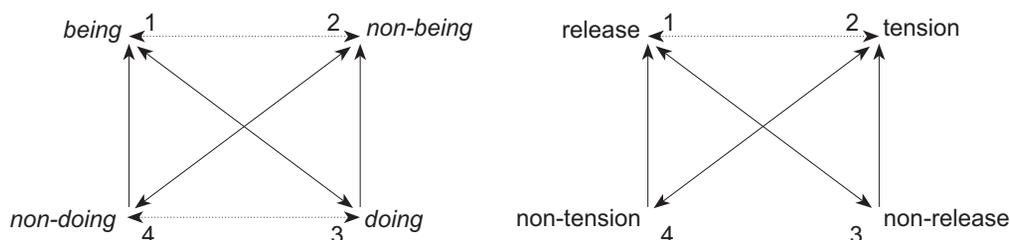
In his *Theory of Musical Semiotics* (1994), Tarasti points out that the junction between subjects and objects is hard to distinguish in the realm of musical ‘being’ which he equates with consonance:

It is rather in dissonance, 'doing' [or 'doing'], that we feel music lacking something and that its energy leaves us unsatisfied ... Would it thus not be more appropriate to speak of the way a subject appears in the music's kinetic energy, which from dissonance strives for a state of rest? (1994: 104)

As early as *Harmony*, Schenker suggests that an 'inferior degree of satisfaction' (1954: 217) is offered if the melody finishes on the third or fifth degree constituting an 'imperfect' full close. When he introduces the *Anstieg* or initial ascent to the first note of an *Urlinie*, Schenker stresses that the 'goal tones  $\wedge^3$  and  $\wedge^5$  prevent the effect of a complete close' (1979: 46); only arrival on  $\wedge^1$  – the fundamental note of the tonic – brings tension-releasing closure.  $\wedge^3$  is therefore a relative tension compared to  $\wedge^1$ ; the tension span of the *Urlinie* might even be understood as a move away from relative dissonance in the sense that the movement is from an imperfect consonance to a perfect one.

In Tarasti's terms, a move from relative dissonance to consonance can therefore be described in terms of being: a move towards the conjunction between the notional musical subject and its object – the state of rest for which it strives. This sort of background progression is not, however, a fully realized conjunction; it represents only one of many parameters involved in a musical event. If, for Schenker, it inscribes 'striving' into the structure of a work, it could be understood in Greimasian terms as a virtualization: a conjunction (the goal of a tension span) is brought into virtual existence by the desire for such a conjunction. More concisely, 'being' is surmodalized by 'will', so the progression projects the modality of 'will-to-be'.

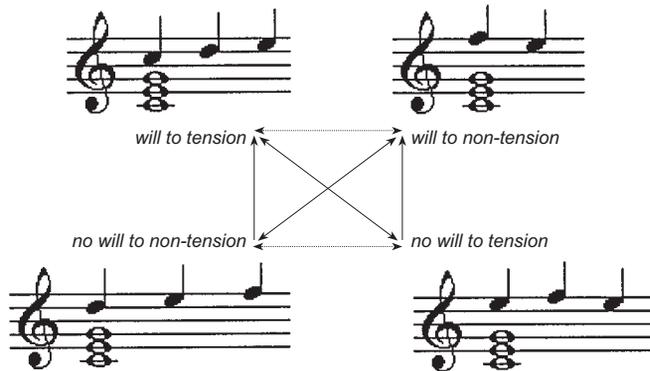
I have already equated, after Tarasti, the tension of dissonance with 'doing', and the release of consonance with 'being'; this idea – the description of tonal forces in terms of Greimas's modalities – can be clarified and formalized with reference to the semiotic square. In Greimasian semiotics, these sorts of modal descriptions are made with reference to the semiotic square, which allows analysts both to describe a given situation more precisely and to show how narratives progress from one term of an opposition to another through the negation of the first. My purpose in introducing semiotic squares is to help clarify the description of tonal tension (dissonance) and resolution (consonance). Example 3 shows a semiotic square of resolution/tension alongside one of 'being'/'doing'.



Example 3: Semiotic squares of 'being' and 'doing'; release and tension

If we equate tension with doing, Example 4 shows one of many possible more detailed articulations of musical tension-space that one might posit. In this square, the word tension itself is used in the place of 'doing' in order to make the relationships

clearer (i.e. tension could be replaced by the words 'to do' and non-tension by 'not-to-do').



Example 4: semiotic square of will and tension

- in the first position on the square, the linear progression entails a will to the relative tension of  $\wedge^3$  (the Greimasian modality of 'will-to-do')
- in the second position, an appoggiatura descending onto  $\wedge^3$  projects a desire for relative non-tension – from dissonance to consonance ('will-not-to-do')
- in the third position (no will to tension) a neighbour note motion beginning and ending on  $\wedge^3$  is understood as a net lack of desire for tension ('non-will-to-do')
- in the fourth position, which as the negation of the negation often explodes the assumption of the oppositional system in force, a progression from one dissonant note to another entails no will to non-tension – something incomprehensible or at least incoherent in Schenkerian terms ('non-will-not-to-do').

In the rising third progression, for example, the 'will' for tension is one of Greimas's virtualizing modalities (see discussion of Example 2 above), and the extent to which it is emphasized or undermined in a given compositional context can be described in terms of the actualizing modalities of 'can' and 'know'. Similarly, the modality of 'must' stands for virtual properties of tonal space that may or may not be actualized in a piece of music – the obligation to resolve dissonances in a certain way, for example, or the more specifically Schenkerian requirement for the *Urlinie* to end in its proper register.

The actualizing modality of 'know', Greimas suggests, 'opens up ... the possibility of a cognitive rationalization of the universe of meaning' (Greimas & Fontanille: 12). As outlined above, Tarasti interprets 'know' as being concerned with the 'informational value' of music, 'its cognitive moment' (1994: 90). In this general sense, 'know' increases in a piece when more (new) information is offered to the listener. As a modalization of 'being', 'know' 'signifies that some point of the musical space exists and at the same time offers us new information about the piece', and Tarasti suggests that an example might be 'to start a composition with the main theme in its proper register' (1994: 90). Tarasti is focusing on the listener's apprehension of formal events, a focus my discussion of 'know-how-to-be' changes in two main ways: firstly, by concentrating on tonal structure; and, secondly, by shifting the point of view away from the composer

or listener and towards that of a notional narrative subject situated *within* the musical discourse. The most general expression of 'know-how-to-be', therefore, might be the capacity of a musical subject to rationalize material within a tonally closed structure. Closer to the foreground, this capacity might find expression in the ability to assimilate, for example, a high level of chromaticism into a tonally coherent progression.

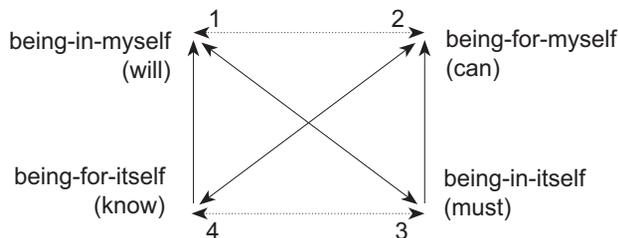
The other actualizing modality of 'can' is defined by Tarasti in terms of the 'technical rendering, virtuosity, power and efficiency [of music]' (1994: 90); something loud or technically demanding, for example, has a greater level of 'can' than something quiet and simple. A slightly different employment of this modality might be to describe the ability of a progression to realize its potential modal content within a given context; harmonically or rhythmically the virtual will to closure of a descending third to  $\hat{1}$  might be reinforced or subverted, engendering different levels of 'can' in relation to the desired decrease of tension.

The description of tonal tensions in terms of the virtualizing and actualizing modalities of 'will', 'must', 'can' and 'know' is outlined in detail in my doctoral thesis (Pankhurst 2004) and rather than develop this descriptive methodology here, I want to explore Schenkerian analysis within the context of Tarasti's 'existential semiotics'.

An Existential understanding of Schenkerian structures in relation to Beethoven op. 7

It is not my intention in the final part of this essay to give a comprehensive account of existential semiotics but to explore the relevance of a few of its essential concepts to Schenkerian analysis. In order to pursue this exploration, however, it is necessary to summarize some of the salient features of Tarasti's theory.

As outlined at the beginning of this article, existential semiotics takes an interest in the conduct of individual subjects within what Tarasti calls *Dasein*, and their ability to transcend this world. Central to this project is Jean-Paul Sartre's reconfiguration of the Hegelian notion of being, in which 'being-in-itself' (*être-en-soi*) achieves existential self-awareness through the internal negation of 'being-for-itself' (*être-pour-soi*). Tarasti further draws on Jacques Fontanille's discussion of *Moi* and *Soi* in order to refine the distinction between the subject appearing 'as such, as a bundle of sensations' (*Moi*) and 'as observed by others or socially determined' (*Soi*) (2005). His discussion is richly complex but its conclusions can be summarized on a semiotic square as follows:



Example 5 – Tarasti's semiotic square articulating different modes of being (simplified from Tarasti 2005)

In addition to the opposition of the inner 'myself' (*Moi*) and the social 'itself' (*Soi*), Tarasti suggests that, whilst positions two and four are within the remit of classical semiotics (they appear in the world of *Dasein*) the other two are not; 'being-in-myself' represents the unmediated kinetic energy of the bodily ego whilst 'being-in-itself' represents 'norms, ideas and values, which are purely conceptual and virtual' (Tarasti 2005).

The examples used in the discussion below arise from a manuscript copy of Tarasti's study of Beethoven's op. 7 Piano Sonata in Eb (Tarasti 2005). Tarasti describes the opening of the first movement (see Example 6) in terms of 'being-in-myself' – the state in which 'our ego is not yet in anyway conscious of itself but rests in the naïve Firstness of its being' (2005). Whilst this triplet texture at the beginning embodies the 'want-to-do of kinetic energy without stability' (there is very little going on harmonically and melodically other than this pulsation), the more overtly melodic idea that begins in b. 5 represents a move towards 'being-for-myself', which Tarasti has earlier characterized as a state in which 'Ego discovers its identity, reaches a certain kind of stability, permanent corporeality via habit' (2005).

The image displays a musical score for the opening of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in E-flat major, Op. 7. It is divided into two systems. The first system (bars 1-4) features a piano introduction with a triplet texture in the right hand and a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the left hand. The second system (bars 5-13) shows a more melodic passage starting at bar 5, with a '5-prg' annotation indicating a specific rhythmic or melodic structure.

Example 6: op. 7i bb. 1-13

The interplay of tensions and energetic forces within the structures of tonal music is central to my interest in Schenkerian and semiotic approaches. In the first part of this article, I explored the concept of tensions in tonal space as virtual phenomena mediated by the compositional context of rhythm and texture. Tarasti's analysis of the opening of op. 7, however, implies a very different methodology in which rhythmic energy finds stability through the medium of melody; the rhythmic force of the repeated triplets in the first four bars is harnessed as the static leaping motions of the first four bars increasingly give way to stepwise melodic motions. Understanding this change at b. 5 as a shift from one sort of 'being' (being-in-myself) to another (being-for-myself) offers a new theoretical context for a tension found in much tonal music from Beethoven onwards between proliferating musical energy and the pull of tonal closure.

Even a cursory glance at the analytical reduction on the second stave of Example 6 shows an increase in stepwise melodic motions towards the end of the phrase. The notion of the passing note as a sort of primal fertilization of the chord recurs frequently in Schenker's writings and he attributes a foundational role to this diminution at all levels of musical structure, as in his description of the passing motion of the *Urlinie* as 'the beginning of all coherence in a musical composition' (1979: 12).

In the left hand of Example 6, linear progressions appear in increasingly longer spans over the course of the extract: first no progressions (bb. 1-4); then two third-progressions each spanning two bars (bb. 5-8); finally, a fifth progression spanning four bars (bb. 9-12). This last fifth progression binds together a series of harmonies and diminutions into a coherent prolongation of the tonic, demonstrating the integrative and generative power of the linear progression. In the right hand there is a similar progress from leaps in the first four bars to a tentative stepwise progression across the fifth and sixth bars. This continues with a longer octave progression and culminates in a normative stepwise resolution to  $\wedge^1$  at the end of the passage.

The initial energy of the musical subject is thus rationalized and ultimately subsumed into closure in the tonic; the 'will' of the rhythmic energy crystallizes into the 'can' of normative prolongation entailing a shift from the kinetic energy of 'being-in-myself' to the stable musical identity of 'being-for-myself'. The origin of this initial impulse might be understood in Tarasti's existential semiotics as transcendental (defined as something not literally present) – the implied composer's 'will' palpably filters through into the world of the musical work.

If Example 6 involves directing the initial inner energy of the musical subject into normative prolongation and then tonal closure, this is a strategy also often found in Beethoven's music towards the end of formal sections; a cadential figure is emphasized being dramatically delayed, perhaps by a prolongation of a diminished seventh chord or a Neapolitan.

There is an example of this towards the end of second subject when, at b. 79, there is a *fortissimo* hammering out of a diminished seventh that resolves unexpectedly to a second inversion submediant chord with a sharpened third (Example 7 and third bar of incipit A).

Tarasti's analysis of this sonata foregrounds the question of whether *Moi* or *Soi* dominates at given points in the work. As discussed briefly above, these categories, adapted from the work of Jacques Fontanille, represent the body as such (*Moi*) as opposed to the way a subject is socially constituted (*Soi*). Tarasti writes that, 'the *Soi* furnishes the *Moi* with a reflexivity which it needs in order to keep within its limits when it changes... [whilst the] *Moi* resists and forces the *Soi* to meet its own alterity' (Tarasti 2005).

Tarasti characterizes b. 79 as a 'catatonic outburst', identifying it as a 'rebellion of the *Moi*' – this outburst is understood as a negation of the chorale idea with which the second subject begins (2005). Whilst the idea of a chorale appeals to the authority of a well-established topic (*Soi*), the outburst at b. 79 belongs to the domain of *Moi*.

From a Schenkerian point of view bb. 79-89 constitute an emphasis on a 'reaching over' to  $\wedge^2$  (F) over a prolongation of the secondary dominant (the G reaches over the F in order to drop back down onto this note). The *Moi* of the implied composer comes to the fore, then, not only through the pounding of the *fortissimo* chords but also by going against the grain of the normative. As so often in Beethoven's music, the intrusion casts a more generic passage in a new light – in this case the prolongation of  $\wedge^2$  by means of a descending fifth in bb. 90-93 that brings the second subject group to a close. The closure of these bars is more exhilarating because it represents the re-establishment of middleground continuity after an episode of activity (i.e. b. 79) that is both structurally in parentheses and engenders visceral excitement. To recall Tarasti's words from the beginning of this article, transcendence 'occurs amidst the world of

*Dasein* as its unexpected illumination... a more profound meaning is added to it, which the everyday sign unexpectedly starts to convey' (2000: 21).

In the first part of this article I introduced the idea of reshaping Schenkerian analytical insights in terms of the desires, obligations and competencies of narrative subjects in the Greimasian sense. My application of these ideas is outlined elsewhere (Pankhurst 2003 & 2004) but essentially it involves identifying points in a piece of music where the tensions and resolutions implied by voice-leading structures (largely described in terms of the virtualizing modalities of 'will' and 'must') are actualized (or not) by their rhythmic, harmonic, and textural context.

In theory, the tonal tensions and resolutions interpreted in this way may appear at any structural level, with the only constraint being the extent to which the proposed interpretation seems plausible. The issue of plausibility raises the inevitable question of the perceptibility of Schenkerian middleground and background structures and thus of the extent to which these structures are semiotically relevant – relevant that is to the subjects involved in musical communication. The discussion of Tarasti's existential semiotics in the second part of this article has direct relevance to precisely this question of the impact of different Schenkerian levels on a musical situation.

Schenker's understanding of what constitutes great music relies on a constant negotiation between constraints imposed by the universal truth of the *Urlinie* and the inspiration of the individual composer. The following extracts from *Der Tonwille* are representative in this regard:

The *Urlinie* bears in itself the seeds of all the forces that shape tonal life... [it] indicates the paths to all elaboration and so also to the composition of the outer voices, in whose intervals the marriage of strict and free composition is so wonderfully and mysteriously consummated (2004: 21).

The artist's concern is precisely to call forth his own peculiar tensions through a specific number of steps of a second, a particular repetition [etc.]... and thus in every case to progress to what is individual: *semper idem, sed non eodem modo* (2004: 23).

In terms of Tarasti's existential semiotics, the abstract ideas that constitute the concept of *Urlinie* can enter into the musical situation in one of two semiotic acts: in the first, involving the composer, the *Urlinie* is a 'pre-sign', 'a certain transcendental idea... [which serves] as a kind of pre-interpretant (2000: 33); in the second, involving the listener, the *Urlinie* is a 'post-sign' in relation to which the sign itself 'appears to be transparent, since behind it one can perceive the interpretant as a kind of "transcendental idea"' (: 32). In both cases the *Urlinie* is something absent in the realm of 'being-for-itself' and enters into the musical situation only via an act of transcendence; if a composer (or listener) affirms the abstract values of the *Urlinie*, they are realized in the creation (or perception) of normative structures *within* the world of *Dasein* (in the realm of 'being-for-itself').

The notion that palpable long-range linear continuity and large-scale organic unity are not fully properties of the musical text as such but instead shimmer in the background of the musical act seems fairly intuitive; their realization may be relatively concrete – in that they appear as actual notes in a particular relationship to one another – but their significance as a unifying or generative force is clearly much more unstable.

incipit A

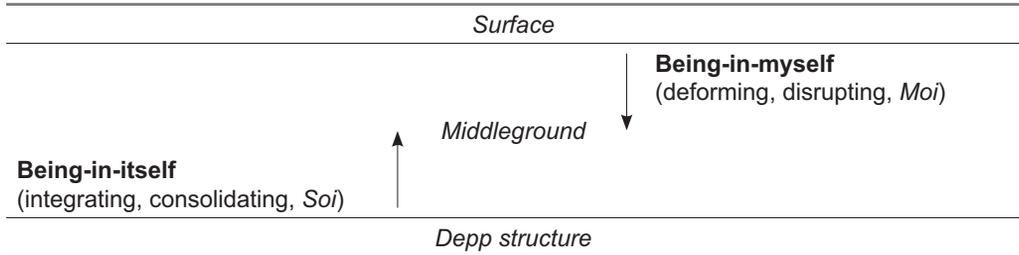
incipit B

Example 7: bb. 67-93

One might presume that, in the context of Tarasti's existential semiotics, the relationship between Schenkerian levels always works in this way, with a movement from the more concrete world closer to the surface, towards the transcendental concepts represented by deeper levels. The analysis of Example 7, however, suggests a more complex situation.

The foreground from bb. 79-89 can ultimately be understood as subsumed by the broad sweep of the descending *Urfinie* through the middleground structure shown in Example 7. 'being-in-itself', one of the two existential positions on the semiotic square from Example 5. The analytical and/or compositional construction of overall unity lies in the domain 'being-in-itself', one of the two existential positions on the semiotic square from Example 5. At the same time, however, the eruption of the *Moi* that this foreground passage entails belongs in the domain of the other existential category from Example

5, 'being-in-myself' or the intrusion of a subject's inner will into the relatively stable *Soi* of the middleground prolongation ('being-for-itself'). The existential journey is, in other words, in the opposite direction; the transcendence relates to a surface rather than a deep level phenomenon. Example 8 shows how the middleground of a piece might be subject to these opposing forces.



Example 8: Existential forces in relation to Schenkerian levels

This understanding of the dynamics of Schenkerian analysis potentially invests the middleground with an interesting status. As we move from the middleground towards the surface of the music, the noise of the composer's will becomes ever louder. In order to explain the foreground we can no longer appeal to normative middleground structures but we enter the realms of the composer as an individual, the realms of Tarasti's existential model. Moving from the middleground to the deep structure of the background, however, the analyst must effect another existential shift in order to subsume the musical text into the complex fantasy of the integrating and unifying *Ursatz*. Exploring these existential moves away from relative stability of the middleground is perhaps the real business of Schenkerian analysis.

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