Cyclic Structure and Dramatic Recapitulation in Richard Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*

by

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To my parents

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Abstract

The present work explores Wagner's four-opera *Der Ring des Nibelungen* cycle from the perspective of the term "recapitulation," usually reserved for the study of sonata-allegro form but nonetheless frequently used by writers to describe large-scale repetitions in Wagner's music dramas. First, the dissertation performs a survey of music-theoretical usage of the term within the context of sonata-form to develop a general working definition for it and then explores the implications of applying it to operatic works. By demonstrating the similarity in function of the different parts of sonata form with the formal divisions of drama outlined in pyramid form by Gustav Freytag, the dissertation concludes that it is acceptable to roughly correlate the concept of musical recapitulation with dramatic *dénouement*.

Having laid the groundwork for the discussion of recapitulation in Wagner, the dissertation then particularizes the term within the context of a specific type of recapitulation. By demonstrating that both musical and dramatic themes throughout the tetralogy are repeated according to a "ring structure," the study presents an organizational framework to manage the analysis of a vast amount of music, thus offering a model for solving a problem long faced by Wagner scholars while at the same time uncovering an as-yet unnoticed structural pattern governing the cycle. The ring structure resembles an arch form, with an initial exposition of material balanced with a palindromic repetition.

The remainder of the dissertation provides musical and dramatic analysis of the different correspondences across the central divide of the ring structure with two central foci. The first is the pair of love relationships between Siegmund and Sieglinde on the one hand and Siegfried and Brünnhilde on the other; and the second is the Immolation of Valhalla, which brings to a close a myriad of unresolved threads from earlier parts of the drama while providing a latch to connect the end back to the beginning. Finally, the conclusion begins from the premise that the ring structure can highlight obscure and unexpected relationships between scenes and suggests the potential profitability of research into "negative recapitulations," which function not through actual repetition but rather through significant absence.

Chapter 1

Introduction

This dissertation is a study of Wagner's technique of recapitulation in *Der Ring des Nibelungen.* Although the volume of existing commentary makes the decision to enter the discourse a daunting one, it is a testament to the richness and depth of Wagner's art that after all that has already been argued, discussed, analyzed, and dissected, the conversation shows no signs of waning. If there is nothing else remarkable about Wagner's impact on music, theatre, literature, and politics—and there is plenty else remarkable—we can marvel that there is still plenty to be said.

Being a study of recapitulation means, among other things, that this is a dissertation about repetition. It might be argued that any dissertation about music is a dissertation about repetition, because, as many writers have noted, it is through repetition that musical structures—from the briefest motive to the grandest form—become comprehensible. As will be addressed in Chapter 2, Leonard Meyer discerns two types of "conformant relationships," which describe distinctions between processive and structural types of repetitions. William Rothstein's theory of phrase rhythm depends upon an abstract sense of rhythmic and melodic recurrence to determine sections between phrases and hypermetrical units.[1] Arnold Schoenberg argues that repetition is one of

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[1] William Rothstein, *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music* (Schirmer, 1989), 12.

many elements without which music would be incomprehensible.[2] Likewise, Heinrich

Schenker contends that a series of tones can only be considered a motive if they are

followed by an immediate repetition, concluding that "Repetition thus is the basis of

music as an art."[3] Finally, philosopher Peter Kivy even titled one of his many books on

music *The Fine Art of Repetition.*

To clarify the kind of recapitulations this dissertation will address, consider the

passage in Act III, Scene 3 of *Götterdämmerung* in which Brünnhilde finally agrees to

return the ring to the Rhinemaidens. It is by uttering the words, "Ruhe, ruhe, du Gott!"

that she offers Wotan the peace for which he has longed since Act II of *Die Walküre*. But

it is the orchestra that offers peace to a musical matter left unresolved since Waltraute's

visit in Act I. Waltraute had relayed to Brünnhilde that Wotan no longer acts in his

capacity as leader of the gods, but simply waits in Valhalla for oblivion. Only if the

golden ring on her hand were returned to the Rhinemaidens would the weight of its curse

be lifted from both god and world. Waltraute's plea, rejected by Brünnhilde, enjoys no

musical resolution; the plagal cadence onto $\hat{3}$ provides no rest for her melodic line. The

Db major of the fragmented Valhalla motive is approached by what might be called its

dominant in second inversion, but the downward resolution of the Eb in the bass, which

had been sustaining for a full twelve measures, overshadows a strong sense of dominant-

tonic resolution. Neither does the Db, which does receive some confirming alternations

with its dominant, rest for very long. It is quickly recontextualized as the dominant to F#

minor. (See Example 1.1). By contrast, when Brünnhilde later sings, "Ruhe, ruhe, du

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[2] Arnold Schoenberg, "Brahms the Progressive," in *Style and Idea,* trans. Dika Newlin (New York: Philosophical Library, 1950), 53.
[3] Heinrich Schenker, *Harmony,* ed. Oswald Jones, trans. Elisabeth Mann Borgese (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1954), 4-5.

Gott," she does so to the same music, but *her* melody is allowed to fall to $\hat{1}$. The Db major is here prolonged by plagal motion before being confirmed by its dominant, which lingers with the assistance of two fermatas before continuing in Db major. (See Example 1.2).

Example 1.1 *Götterdämmerung,* **Act I, Sc. 3 (105/3/1ff.)**[4]

Example 1.2 *Götterdämmerung,* **Act III, Sc. 3 (326/1/1ff.)**

Chapter 2 explores theorists' usages of the term *recapitulation* within the context of Wagnerian scholarship as well as its more normative usage within the study of sonata-allegro forms with the goal of determining its legitimacy, because at present, music scholarship has not yet offered a unanimous, well-defined sense of what the word means. In addition, if we are to import the term *recapitulation* into operatic study from that of an abstract instrumental form, then we must do so to a certain degree metaphorically. If we argue that a particular passage in Wagner is a recapitulation, does it necessarily imply that the passage is engaged in a process by which music previously heard in the dominant is brought to the tonic key?

This becomes even more pertinent when we consider that many scholars do not consider Wagner's operas to be monotonal. In an act governed by a tonal pairing—that between E and C in Act III of *Siegfried*, as Kinderman has argued—it would be difficult to determine which key would be considered "correct" for the return of a theme. Furthermore, this line of questioning assumes that the concept of recapitulation is extrinsic to opera, which may not be the case. These issues will be considered over the course of this dissertation. For now, I offer a naïve definition of a Wagnerian recapitulation: a passage which restates a dramatic or musical theme (often both simultaneously) in a manner which brings it to closure or resolution which it did not previously enjoy.

By repeating the earlier music, Brünnhilde's "Ruhe, ruhe du Gott" connects the dramatic situation of *Götterdämmerung,* Act III, Scene 3 with Act I, Scene 3. By altering the earlier music, allowing it to come to a conclusive cadence, the later passage emphasizes the differences in the dramatic situations of the two moments. The later

passage offers the closure and resolution that the weakened cadence of the first passage

lacked. It is in this respect that the later passage recapitulates the former. It not only

repeats the musical content, but also resolves it.

While the above pair of passages exemplify the general philosophical approach

that this dissertation takes to recapitulations, it also highlights one of the fundamental

problems of excising passages for analysis: given the size and scope of the work in

question, it is not feasible in a single monograph to tackle every instance of repetition

throughout the cycle. Artificial boundaries must be drawn between passages of interest

that necessarily do a certain amount of violence to the continuity of the musical texture. It

is therefore important to be judicious in the means by which sections are excised from the

whole for the purposes of analysis. Therefore, what criteria ought we to use to select

passages for analysis? Moreover, are all appearances of a particular theme created equal?

Are they granted the same structural weight regardless of their placement within the cycle

or the thematic problems they develop or resolve? If they are not, then a framework is

necessary for understanding their functions and relative importance in the fabric as a

whole.

I have approached these problems of excision in two ways, which may be

expressed through two metaphors. The first considers the entire *Ring* as a large tapestry.

Though it may be too large to experience in its fullness, the viewer might select one

detail, such as a border of flowers, and explore how the flowers are alike and different in

their appearances along the edge. We might further imagine that one thing that all of the

flowers have in common is a particular shade of blue, and that this color comes from a

thread which emerges only to create the detail of the flower and submerges beneath the

other threads which make up the texture of the space which intervenes between the flowers. Although there may be important detail in the areas of the tapestry behind which the blue thread hides, the viewer may nonetheless bracket those parts off during his or her contemplation of the piece's smaller details.

The pattern that this dissertation highlights and extracts for study of the *Ring's* structure of recapitulation is, aptly enough, through what Mary Douglas has called "ring structure." It will be through explication of the ring structure itself and its application to *Der Ring des Nibelungen* which will concern the remainder of this dissertation. Although the structure will be explained in-depth in Chapter 3, it is worth lingering on a short example of what the structure entails.

After tasting the dragon's blood in Act II of *Siegfried,* the hero is surprised to learn that he can suddenly understand the song of the forest bird, who advises him that he may find a sleeping bride on a rock surrounded by fire. After crossing through the fire, Siegfried discovers a sleeping warrior constricted by armor. He removes the armor to discover that the warrior is a woman, who he awakens with a kiss. Brünnhilde, who had with Wotan intended that Siegfried be the hero to find her, is afraid to give herself to him completely, but Siegfried convinces her to love him, and the opera ends with the couple in rapturous love. Siegfried and Brünnhilde's story continues during the Prologue of *Götterdämmerung.* Siegfried leaves the rock to seek further adventures, but gives to Brünnhilde the ring as a token of his love. She praises the gods for bringing her happiness, and they say farewell.

Unfortunately, their story does not remain a happy one. By the end of the act, Siegfried will return disguised as Gunther to abduct Brünnhilde to be the bride of his new

blood-brother. Surprisingly, the events of Siegfried's second visit correspond with those of his first visit, but in reverse order. Brünnhilde, seeing the flames surge, prepares to greet Siegfried, but meets a strange man claiming that he has won her as his bride. Brünnhilde curses Wotan, believing she now understands the meaning of his punishment. Siegfried demands that Brünnhilde give him the ring as a dowry. She resists, but is overpowered. Siegfried sends her to sleep, and as a symbol of his chaste wooing, places the sword between them for the duration of their bridal night.

The mirroring in the tale suggests a chiasmatic structure, something like an arch form, or a Lorenzian *Bogen* form, but with important distinguishing details which will be explored later. The above plot elements may charted to highlight the relationships of the later events to the earlier, as appears in Figure 1.1. The plot events are laid out in a counterclockwise fashion, with the beginning of *Das Rheingold* in the semicircle at the top of the diagram, moving down the left side to the events of Acts I and II of *Siegfried,* in the semicircle at the bottom of the diagram, and back up the right side, where the end of the cycle "latches" to its beginning. A crucial feature of the ring is that the elements on the left side of the diagram are matched by those on the right side, just as the lower semicircle matches the upper one.
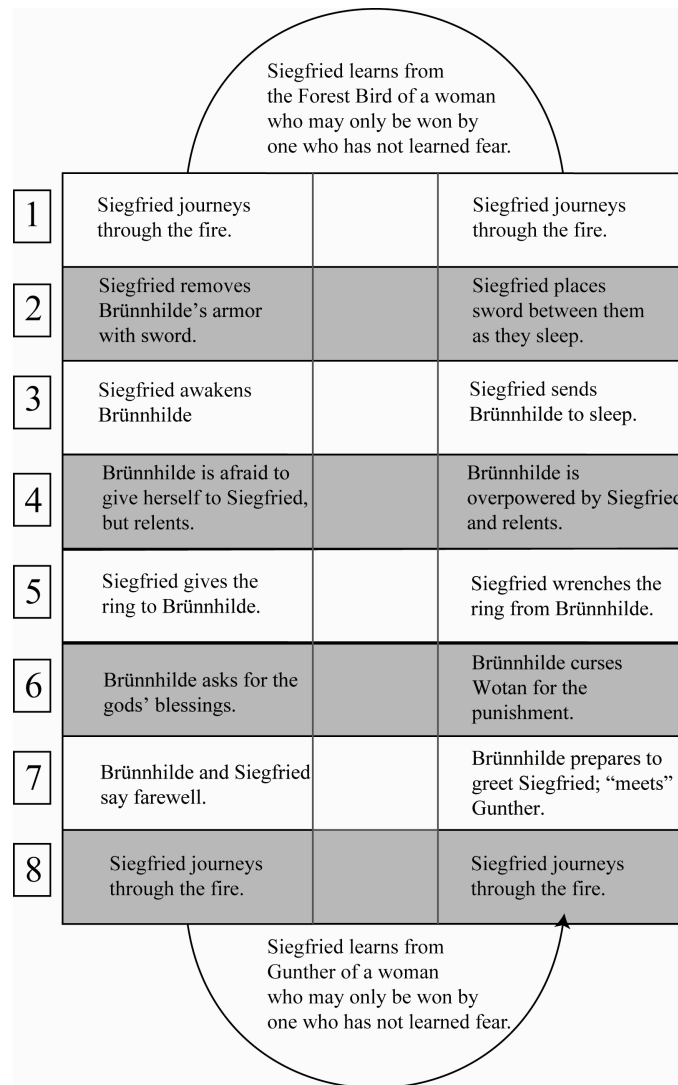
Figure 1.1 Siegfried's two arrivals on Brünnhilde's rock as a ring structure.

The power of the ring as an organizing structure is manifold. First, the *Ring* is so enormous and so full of musical and dramatic references that it is barely an exaggeration to say that one might conceivably compare any scene to any other scene. While it might prove informative to explore relationships between randomly selected pairs of scenes, the lack of a compelling framework for study means that there can be no deeper or larger scale implications for those relationships. Second, once an organizational framework

such as a ring structure is found to apply generally, it can then provide grounding for highlighting unexpected, inconspicuous, and sometimes surprising formal relationships. For example, while the relationship between Wotan breaking the sword and Siegfried breaking the spear has a very clear dramatic significance as well as a clear musical relationship, it might be less immediately apparent that there is a structural significance to Siegfried's funeral music as a recall of Wotan's Grand Idea from *Das Rheingold.* Similarly, the appearance of the Rhinemaidens at the beginning of Act III of *Götterdämmerung* might be somewhat perplexing, given that it had been many hours since we had last heard or seen them. Noting that there is a structural significance in the two appearances of these plaints elevates the latter in the closing act from mere episode to an embodying of Siegfried's personal story within the history of the mythic world he inhabits. His refusal to grant the ring to the Rhinemaidens highlights his relationship to Wotan, the fact that he is the free hero for whom Wotan set the entire plans of the *Ring* in motion, and also signals that he is subject to the same curse, and therefore doomed to the same downfall as Wotan.

My chosen methodology, analysis of recapitulation through the framework of ring structure, does not imply that it is the only structure governing the *Ring,* nor that it is able to account for all of its structural repetitions, which leads to the second guiding metaphor of this dissertation: the geometrical situation which occurs when a 3-dimensional object, such as a sphere, intersects with a 2-dimensional object, a plane. An observer from the two-dimensional space will not experience the sphere as a three-dimensional object. Rather, as the sphere moves through the plane, the observer will first see a point, then a circle which expands until it reaches the same diameter as the sphere, then it will shrink

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again, become a point, and vanish.[5] According to this metaphor, the *Ring* is a three-

dimensional object, and any written account of it must necessarily reduce its scope, to

flatten it to two dimensions. None, I would contend, can explain it in all its fullness. I

therefore do not submit that my chosen methodology for analyzing the *Ring* can even

come close to explaining it in its three-dimensional entirety. Instead, I offer my

viewpoint as an observer in two-dimensional space, describing one moment of

intersection—one ring!—that caught my interest.

Both metaphors—the tapestry and the sphere—reflect an intended attitude of

analytic pluralism. Both offer room for competing, complementary, and even

contradictory approaches to the music. The very act of excising the moments discussed

here affirms the many important features and details of the *Ring* that my approach leaves

unexplored. The metaphor of 3-dimensional space leaves room for many other analytic

methodologies, because the amount of points of intersection between a plane and a

sphere, in a mathematical sense, is infinite. Because of the 2-dimensional vantage point

of the analytic observer, what on the surface might appear to be a contradictory and

incompatible set of observations about the *Ring* may simply result from the fact that we

are not able to perceive more than one moment of intersection at a time. I therefore

welcome a multiplicity of analytic approaches, so long as they are sufficiently rigorous.

The bulk of this dissertation will explore recapitulation through the lens of ring

structure. Chapter 3 provides the general background for the structure, by explaining its

derivation from Mary Douglas's work and analyzing what I consider to be the minor

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[5] For an entertaining and accessible explanation of this concept, see Rob Bryanton's animated video "Imagining the Tenth Dimension," http://www.tenthdimension.com/medialinks.php (2006), accessed January 8, 2009.

recapitulations across its central divide. In addition, it provides theoretical grounding for

positing the existence of such a structure in the *Ring*. While ring forms offer the analyst a

powerful hermeneutic tool, there is of course a flipside: the danger of begging the

question. If the ring is able to highlight unexpected and unobvious relationships between

scenes, it is imperative that those relationships can be understood beyond the context of

their appearance within it. The structure is of no analytical use if the relationships it

uncovers only serve to assert its existence. After setting the groundwork for the analysis

of ring structure, Chapter 4 offers a study of the *Ring'*s primary love stories, both because

they feature as more complicated elements of the overall ring, but also because their tonal

organizations point toward a more refined understanding of recapitulation that operates in

music with more than one tonal center. Chapter 5 is a recapitulatory analysis of the

Immolation scene from *Götterdämmerung* from three perspectives. First, it completes

the analysis of the tonal background begun in Chapter 4; second, it studies the scene as a

closing gesture in the overall ring; third, it positions the scene as an overdetermined

recapitulation of the entire cycle. Finally, Chapter 6 offers concluding remarks and

suggestions new directions for research on recapitulation as it pertains to Wagnerian

opera. Beginning from the premise that the ring structure can highlight obscure and

unexpected relationships between scenes, the chapter suggests the potential profitability

of research into "negative recapitulations," which function not through actual repetition

but rather through significant absence.

Before we turn to the operas themselves, however, it will be important to explore

the concept of recapitulation. Not only will it be important to construct a working

definition for the term in a general sense, but the legitamacy of applying a term that is

generally associated with instrumental forms to operatic works needs to be established.

Thus, we turn to Chapter 2, which explores the discourse surrounding the term both in the

realm of Sonata-form analysis and with respect to Wagner.

Chapter 2

Groundwork for a Theory of Dramatic Recapitulation

Approximately four hours after the lights of the opera hall first dimmed, not counting intermissions, Isolde and her orchestral accompaniment give the audience a resolution for which they have been waiting more than a full act. About a minute or two later, the orchestra offers the audience a resolution for which they have been waiting since the orchestra played its first notes. Both the frenzy of the end of the love duet in Act II and its prominent prolongation of an F# dominant-seventh chord heighten expectations for resolution on B. Just at the moment of climax a B°7 chord intrudes—it has been called a musical "coitus interruptus"—and with it Marke and Melot, dooming the couple and denying the consummation of their love.[6] When the passage repeats itself at the end of the opera, there is no such interruption. While the passage does not immediately resolve to B major, it does lead to an E major triad with a C# appoggiatura[7],

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[6] Slavoj Žižek has argued that Brangaene's scream is a displacement of Isolde's orgasm where the pleasure of *jouissance* morphs into traumatic pain. See Slavoj Žižek and Mladen Dolar, *Opera's Second Death,* (Routledge, 2002), 125.

[7] The resulting combination of pitches, E, G#, B, and C# is related both to Robert Bailey's interpretation of the Tristan chord in particular and to his theory of the double-tonic complex in general. Bailey argues that a mm7 chord obtained by fusing relative major and minor triads functions as the "tonic chord" of a double-tonic complex centered on the roots of those two triads. Because Wagner's harmony is often mode-independent, major and minor triads built on those roots can serve equally well as a local instantiation of the complex. Bailey reads the Tristan chord as a minor-inflected version of an Ab triad with added sixth spelled with the F in the bass, and demonstrates how later appearances of opening motive actually substitute an Ab major triad for the Tristan chord (and also a B major triad for repetitions of the second phrase). See Robert Bailey, "Analytical Study" in *Prelude and Transfiguration from* Tristan and Isolde (Norton, 1985): 118-23.

allowing the closing passage of the opera to prolong the subdominant in preparation for the last appearance of the Tristan chord. And whereas appearances of the Tristan chord throughout the opera generally lead to Mm7 chords, here it has been modified first by placing it in inversion so that the B is in the bass and secondarily by altering the chord to which it leads by omitting the D and lowering the G. Instead of a EMm7 chord, then, we hear an E minor chord in second inversion with strong expectations of a plagal resolution to B, which is exactly what we hear. Five hours after its first appearance, the Tristan chord is finally allowed to bring rest and resolution.

As a result, the *Liebestod* can be described as a large-scale restatement of earlier musical material which finds the resolution which had been previously avoided, and this fact invites comparison to the processes of sonata-allegro movements. Indeed, an abundance of such comparisons exist. If recapitulations are characterized by restatements of melodic material from the expositions of sonata-allegro movements, but reinterpreted so that they end in the tonic and thereby find resolution which they did not have earlier, is it legitimate to consider the *Liebestod* a recapitulation?

The purpose of this chapter is to explore our theoretical understanding of the concept of recapitulation to determine whether it is valid to import the term into the discourse of opera study rather than maintaining a safer position by using a less theoretically loaded term, such as "reiteration," "repetition," or "return." After exploring our common scholarly usage of the term as it is used in relationship to sonata-allegro form, the chapter considers the relationship between music and drama, what might constitute a *dramatic recapitulation,* why we might wish to discuss non-musical events

with the terminology of musical analysis and what we might stand to gain or lose by doing so.

1. Is a Neutral Alternative to *Recapitulation* Preferable?

When we speak of *recapitulations,* generally we are referring to a feature of sonata form whereby the themes of the exposition are repeated, but are tonally altered in order to bring them the harmonic closure that they did not attain in the exposition. If we decide to use the term to refer to opera, does this imply that the tonality of the recapitulation in question ought to follow the models of the Classical or Romantic sonata movement? In other words, must the closure enacted by an operatic recapitulation be tonal? Several of William Kinderman's studies on dramatic recapitulations on Wagner consider passages which are governed by "tonal pairings." Yet, the very principle that closure may be attained through repeating in the tonic themes previously heard in the dominant assumes that the work in question is monotonal. Would a similar harmonic approach even be possible in music that is heard as polytonal? Consider, too, that we are speaking not just of operatic recapitulations, that is, recapitulations which occur in the music of an opera, but *dramatic* recapitulations, which implies a recapitulation not just of the musical texture, but also the dramatic structure. Allowing the possibility that a dramatic feature of a work might be recapitulated might raise bizarre questions such as, "Did the earlier dramatic action end in 'dominant' and does the later one end in 'tonic?'" Suddenly our understanding of the term—and any metaphors we may rely on to do so—get stretched dangerously close to their breaking point. Lastly, if a dramatic recapitulation refers to a moment that repeats and brings closure to an earlier one, what of

moments which resolve some issues while opening new ones? Or moments which do not

repeat earlier ones only to bring them closure but also to further develop them?

If we were to decide that *recapitulation* is too theoretically loaded to be usefully

or unproblematically applied to opera, there do exist alternative, more generalized models

of musical restatement. In *Explaining Music,* Leonard Meyer presents such a model

which differentiates between two types of "conformant relationships": repetition and

return. A return usually occurs after a significant amount of time has passed and brings

familiarity, a sense that the music has come back to where it had been earlier.[8] Therefore,

generally speaking they are considered to be purely formal devices which delineate

sections. While a repetition can theoretically also do that, it is primarily distinguished as

being part of a process and not a structure. In addition, repetitions usually occur within

close proximity of one another, and in contrast to a return, the repetition has a quality of

development and intensification. As an example, both the antecedent and consequent

phrases of a period and the exposition and recapitulation of a sonata are conformant

relationships, but the former would be an instance of repetition, and the latter an instance

of return. More concretely, the third and fourth measures of the *Liebestod* constitute a

repetition of measures 1 and 2 transposed up by third, whereas the *Liebestod* as a whole

would constitute a return of the love duet from Act II.

The utility of Meyer's model is that it comfortably handles instances of repetition

and return in any musical genre. Both a standard sonata recapitulation and Isolde's

Liebestod can be considered returns because both are restatements of distant musical

passages and both function to delineate formal structures. These terms, repetition and

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[8] Leonard B. Meyer, *Explaining Music: Essays and Explorations* (University of California Press, 1973),
44-51.

return, are generic and therefore do not bring any inaccurate or misleading analytical connotations to bear.

Another possible alternative to recapitulation is found in Joseph Kerman's work on Beethoven's codas. Kerman argues that the purpose of most normative codas by Mozart and Haydn is to reinforce tonic as the movement is brought to cadence because the task of resolving the harmonic and melodic materials left open in the exposition already occurred in the recapitulation. By contrast, many Beethoven sonatas leave their primary themes unresolved until the coda. Kerman rejects terms like 'terminal development' or 'second development' because the role of a coda is emphatically not to develop, but to close a movement, and 'recapitulation' is not even considered, since the structure with that name has already come and gone. The term Kerman settles on is 'thematic completion.'[9]

Kerman has approached a similar issue in a different way in his article on Bach's late fugues. A common feature of these fugues is what he calls "thematic returns," which are countersubjects which disappear for most of the duration of the fugue. When one reappears at the end, it provides a sense of rhetorical return, which is heightened by the large temporal distance from its earlier statement. What is relevant to the present issue, however, is that Kerman explicitly addresses the possibility of referring to them as recapitulations, and even highlights two writers who have: David Ledbetter, who argues that they serve to provide the fugue with the same sort of closure found in a rounded binary form, and Roger Bullivant, who explicitly describes them as "structural recapitulations." Kerman, on the other hand, rejects the term so as to avoid its heavy

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[9] Joseph Kerman, "Notes on Beethoven's Codas," in *Beethoven Studies 3,* ed. Alan Tyson (Cambridge, 1982), 151-2.

connotations with sonata form, but he does suggest that the sense of order governed by Bach's returns is a historical glimpse forward to the styles that would proliferate in the next few generations of composers.[10] Should we reject the term for analysis of opera as well?

Although Kerman is writing about sonatas and fugues, adapting the terminology of "thematic completion" or "thematic return" does not suffer the same hazards as "recapitulation" for two reasons. First, they are idiosyncratic terms, in the sense that they do not carry heavy discursive weight behind it. We can conceptualize an idea such as thematic completion without immediately associating it to sonata form. Second, Kerman is already discussing compositional details which fall outside of the norms of standard sonata form and fugal composition. He is not positing a new generalized model for either of them, but rather accounting for additional musical events. Neither are being pitched as aspects of their respective genres; they are simply means by which musical ideas can find resolution and as such there is no reason to exclude them from music dramas.

On the one hand, adopting Meyer's or Kerman's terminology to describe important musical restatements in Wagner could neutralize concerns about misappropriating terminology. On the other hand, insisting on a neutral description of these moments ignores the long discursive precedent for calling them recapitulations: the first having been set by Wagner himself. In a diary entry dated September 9, 1876, Cosima records that Wagner considered *Götterdämmerung* "a recapitulation of the whole [*Ring*]: a prelude and three pieces."[11]

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[10] Joseph Kerman, "Thematic Return in Late Bach Fugues," *Music & Letters* 87/4 (November, 2006), 522.
[11] Entry dated September 9, 1876. "Somit wäre die Götterdämmerung eine Wiederholung des Ganzen, ein Vorspiel und 3 Stücke." Cosima Wagner, *Die Tagebücher,* ed. Martin Gregor-Dellin and Dietrich Mack,

Donald Tovey, whose work forms the basis for much of our modern theory of sonata form, had no compunctions about applying "recapitulation" to the music drama. In fact, he actually includes the *Liebestod* as an example of a recapitulation in his *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article on Sonata Forms in order to normalize the recapitulation of the Eroica, which presents an exact repetition of a large part of the second theme without transposing it to the tonic.[12] It is quite remarkable that Tovey, from whom we inherit our modern understanding of sonata form, not only believed that recapitulations can occur in works that are not sonatas, but that such occurrences are normative enough that they can be used to establish the basic criteria for what constitutes a recapitulation in the first place. Yet this is fully in keeping with Tovey's understanding of recapitulation as a musical process. It is not just a feature of sonata form, but "is as

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(Munich: R. Piper & Co. Verlag, 1976), vol. 1, pg. 1002. Although the German *Reprise* is more typically used to describe the recapitulation section of a sonata, I follow Bailey's lead in translating it thusly for several reasons. First, several reputable dictionaries translate the musical usage of the term *Wiederholung* as recapitulation and Wagner himself uses the terms *Wiederholung* and *Wiederkehr* to refer to structural repetitions as they occur within sonata movements. See Richard Wagner, "Über Franz Listzs Symphonische Dichtungen," *Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen* Vol. 5 (Leipzig: Verlag, 1872), 245. In addition, A.B. Marx the word *Wiederholung* throughout to describe the repetition of the *Hauptsatz* in Rondo form, from which he derives the Sonatina and Sonata forms. See *Die Lehre von der musikalischen Komposition,* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1868), 98ff. Second, our modern tripartite description of sonata form into exposition-development-recapitulation has its roots in a more recent account of sonata form than was in force when Wagner would have spoken these words. Therefore, it would be anachronistic to assume that Wagner's usage of the words *Wiederholung* or *Reprise* would carry the same connotations that they do now. Third, and this point will become clearer below, regardless of the noun-sense in which the term is used, the verb-sense is in force and is of primary interest here. In a translation of the same passage, John Daverio translates the word as "repetition," but immediately treats it as a synonym for "recapitulation." See "Brünnhilde's Immolation Scene and Wagner's 'Conquest of the Reprise,'" *Journal of Musicological Research* 11 (1991): 33.

[12] Donald Francis Tovey, *The Forms of Music* (New York: Meridian Books: 1957), 220. To my ears, the passage that Tovey considers to be the start of the second group, beginning in m. 57, is very much part of the transition. Indeed, this appears in Bb major in both the exposition and the development. However, I do not hear the second group beginning until m. 83 for two reasons. First, the passage in m. 57 carries a stable melody for no more than eight measures before beginning a series of sequences and modulations very characteristic of transition passages. Second, the key areas in which the theme beginning in m. 83 appear in both the exposition and recapitulation are as expected: V, then I. It is possible that this dispute weakens the claim that transposition is not a necessary feature of recapitulation, but the primary issue of this chapter is writers' presumptions of what "recapitulation" means, and this is still very much in force, even if this particular analysis is problematic. For Tovey's analysis see *Essays in Musical Analysis* Vol. 1 (London: Oxford University Press, 1935): 29-34.

inveterate in musical form as symmetry is in architecture."[13] Beyond merely using the

term to describe the *Liebestod,* Tovey argues that it is a supremely important aspect of

Wagner's musical organization—more so than the use of leitmotives.[14]

Kerman's project in *Opera and Drama* is to problematize the oft-used

formulation of Wagnerian "opera as symphonic poem," which he uses as the title of the

chapter on Wagner. He argues that Wagner's music dramas are not symphonic poems,

even if they approach that genre.[15] Interestingly, while for Kerman, the leitmotivic

organization and formal construction are important reasons for the artistic success of

Tristan, he considers the closure afforded by the *Liebestod* to be "unlike any effect

obtainable by the use of leitmotives. It is more like the recapitulation of a Beethoven

symphony movement…"[16] Thus, regardless of how problematic the metaphor "opera as

symphonic poem" might be, and how firm his refusal to apply "recapitulation" to Bach's

fugues was, Kerman nonetheless still seems comfortable relating Wagner's works with

sonata procedure.

Carolyn Abbate maintains a similar, if more strongly worded, position as Kerman.

In "Opera as Symphony, a Wagnerian Myth," Abbate argues at length against

simplistically referring to Wagner's music dramas as symphonic, a practice which is so

prevalent that it has become conventional wisdom. She argues that by "symphonic,"

Wagner only meant to signify an interwoven and unified texture of thematic material, and

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[13] Tovey, *The Forms of Music*, 220.
[14] "[A] far more important aspect of Wagner's musical organization than any details of leitmotive is the matter of recapitulation. A leitmotive may be short enough to please the early official commentators on whom Wagner smiled playfully; but no classical symphony has larger slabs of exact recapitulation than those that hold Wagner's immense works together." Tovey, "A Note on Opera" in *The Main Stream of Music and other Essays,* (New York: Meridian Books, 1959), 359.
[15] Joseph Kerman, *Opera and Drama* (New York: Vintage Books, 1959), 207.
[16] Ibid., 212.

conceptual problems often result from the fact that modern music scholarship carries

many connotations of "symphonic" that he would not have intended, including

assumptions about form, instrumentation, and, more problematically, a particular value

judgment stemming from the symphony's prestige as a genre. The problem is not so

much in the term "symphonic" as it is in the difficulty of disentangling it from modern

assumptions and connotations associated with the form. In addition, Wagner's own

conception of "symphonic" is complicated and problematic, which is generally not

acknowledged in accounts of his music which take the term at face value.[17] Therefore,

Abbate warns against distorting Wagner's own meaning of the term without

acknowledging it and urges us to consider that "we need not explain as symphonic what

Wagner readily understood as operatic."[18]

Notwithstanding her caveat, Abbate, like Kerman, has described various passages

in Wagner as recapitulations. She writes that "the many narrators in the *Ring* seem to

recapitulate accurately events that we ourselves have witnessed on the stage"[19] and reads

the Immolation Scene as a "large-scale musical recapitulation, created by the final return

of the hieratic, half-dissonant march music that had first been heard in the

Götterdämmerung prologue."[20] Both of these passages use *recapitulate* and

recapitulation without comment or acknowledgment of the connotations and associations

of the terms with sonata form. These associations can actually reinforce the simplistic

understanding of these operas as symphonic.

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[17] Carolyn Abbate, "Opera as Symphony, a Wagnerian Myth" in *Analyzing Opera: Verdi and Wagner,* ed.
Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 93-5. Some of the
complications will be addressed later in this chapter.
[18] Ibid., 104, 124.
[19] Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices* (Princeton, 1991), 222.
[20] Ibid., 238

The term "dramatic recapitulation" is William Kinderman's, and appears prominently within the title of two articles by him. It should be pointed out that Kinderman's usage of *recapitulation* is heavily influenced by Tovey's. This is made explicit when he begins his article with the same reference to the *Encylopaedia Brittanica* article that appears in footnote 7 above. Following Bailey's theory of the double-tonic complex, Kinderman treats the two passages within the context of what he calls "tonal pairings." In the first, Siegfried's funeral music, a pairing is established between E and C and in the second, the redeemed Grail ceremony at the end of *Parsifal,* the pairing consists of Ab and C. Kinderman, like Bailey, does not insist on a particular mode for either member of the pairing, but they are nonetheless frequently found in pairs of relative major and minor. Nor does a tonal pairing necessarily prioritize either member; for example, both E and C serve equally as tonic where they occur in Siegfried's funeral music or the scene which it recapitulates.

In "Dramatic Recapitulation in Wagner's 'Götterdämmerung,'" Kinderman characterizes Siegfried's Funeral Music as a recapitulation through three primary features: a shift in centricity from E to C which mirrors the same tonal progression in *Siegfried*, repetition of musical material, and Siegfried's "awakening" from the effects of the potion of forgetfulness to remember (and retell of) Brünnhilde and the events that unfolded on the rock. Kinderman's language is particularly notable for its explicit comparison of Wagner's recapitulation here to a similar process found in sonata form:

> The most striking change in the recapitulation of this tonal framework is its new emphasis on A, the subdominant of E. … This cadence weakens the E side of the tonal pairing by turning E into the dominant of A. Yet of course emphasis on the subdominant in a recapitulation is a familiar feature of the symphonic 'drama' of the Classical style. Its effect here is

analogous to that in a Classical symphony: the resulting softening of contrast presents the restatement in a new and superior light.[21]

In the other article, Kinderman seeks to demonstrate that, contrary to the arguments of Carl Dahlhaus and Carolyn Abbate, Wagner used recapitulation as "an architectural principle" in his later music-dramas.[22] Kinderman argues that the end of *Tristan*—not just the *Liebestod,* but also the passages preceding it—functions as a "recapitulatory synthesis," as it brings themes from throughout the opera—the *Tristan* chord, the death motive, and the love duet—to full closure.[23] Similarly, Kinderman describes Parsifal's response to Kundry's kiss in Act II of *Parsifal* as a "varied recapitulation of several passages from Amfortas's lament in Act I" that shifts the dramatic attention from Amfortas to Parsifal as the hero undergoes a repetition of Amfortas's seduction, culminating in Kundry's kiss.[24] The major recapitulation of *Parsifal,* however, is the redeemed grail ceremony at the end of Act III. In Act I, the tonal pairing of Ab and C is played out in a small scale in the opening Communion theme, which begins in Ab major, but moves to C minor when the melody turns back and descends from the upper Ab to the G.[25]
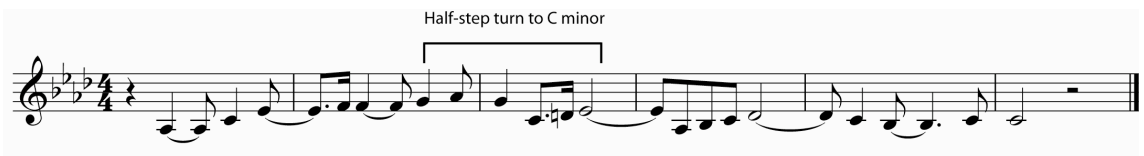
Example 2.1 Opening measures of *Parsifal*, Act I

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[21] William Kinderman, "Dramatic Recapitulation in Wagner's 'Götterdämmerung,'" *19th-Century Music* 4:2 (Autumn, 1980): 104.

[22] William Kinderman, "Dramatic Recapitulation and Tonal Pairing in Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* and *Parsifal*" in *The Second Practice of Nineteenth Century Tonality,* ed. William Kinderman and Harald Krebs (University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 179.

[23] See especially the chart on ibid., 184.

[24] Ibid., 202-3.

[25] Ibid., 196.

In contrast to *Götterdämmerung,* which recapitulated by repeating the motion from one member of the pairing to the other, *Parsifal* finds closure when "the tonal pairing is eliminated in favor of a symphonic synthesis and resolution of the motives of the Grail in Ab."[26] The resolution is enacted by the removal of the semitone between Ab and G which marked the turn to C minor at the beginning of the Act I prelude. Recall that for Bailey the triad with added-sixth is a chordal expression of the double-tonic complex as it contains all of the pitches of two triads related by a third. By removing the semitone here, Wagner also removes one member of the double-tonic complex entirely.
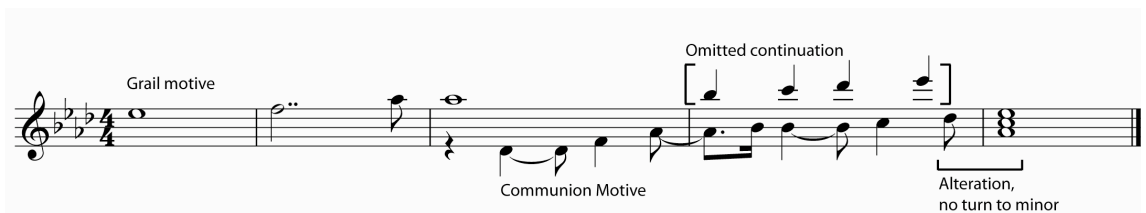
Example 2.2 Kinderman's analysis of motivic synthesis at the end of *Parsifal*[27]

In its apotheosis at the end of the opera, the communion motive is appended to the first half of the grail motive, and its newly-found ascending fourth substitutes for the same fourth from the grail motive. In this way, the close affinity between the Grail, Communion, Faith, and Spear motives is revealed, and it is on this note that the drama ends.[28]

A weakness of Kinderman's work is that neither of these articles clearly state what he means by recapitulation. He provides its terminological lineage—from Tovey,

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[26] Ibid., 206.
[27] Ibid., 209.
[28] Ibid., 208-9.

through Kerman and Abbate—but takes its meaning for granted, and it is presented only obliquely. When he describes passages as recapitulations, the reader might notice that he often also uses terms such as "synthesis," "resolution," "completion," "conclusion," and "transformation."[29] The words which orbit "recapitulation" allow one to infer its meaning, but the closest Kinderman comes to providing a definition is his remark that "[a] recapitulation, because it represents the turning-back of a form onto itself, tends to collapse one time into the recollection of another."[30]

John Daverio picks up Kinderman's thread. In addition to referencing Kinderman and Tovey, he also cites both Wagner's description of *Götterdämmerung* as a *Wiederholung* of the whole and his theories of the symphony, highlighting Wagner's opinion that Beethoven made an error in composing the Leonore overture by allowing not the dramatic arc of the work's program but rather an abstract symphonic form to govern its composition. Although Daverio translates *Wiederholung* as repetition, in his very next sentence, he immediately begins using "recapitulation" synonymously, asking the question of whether *Götterdämmerung* can truly be heard as one.[31]

Daverio teases out three structural layers of recapitulation in *Götterdämmerung*. On the first level are three shorter passages in each act which server to recapitulate passages from earlier acts. Thus, he describes the Waltraute scene in Act I as recapitulating the passages in Acts II and III of *Die Walküre* concerned with Wotan's desire for *das Ende*; Alberich's appearance during Hagen's watch as recapitulating Alberich's monologue upon being released in Scene 2 of *Das Rheingold*; and the scene

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[29] Ibid., 180 and 187 for the first instances of these terms, although they are found throughout the article.
[30] Kinderman, "*Götterdämmerung*," 109.
[31] John Daverio, "Brunnhilde's Immolation Scene and Wagner's 'Conquest of the Reprise," *Journal of Musicological Research* 11/1-2 (1991): 33.

leading up to Siegfried's death as recapitulating virtually the entirety of *Siegfried.* On a second level, there are two passages which constitute a series of what he calls "centers of attraction" of the previous dramas. By "center of attraction," he means points in which the musical texture is focused on the presentation and/or development of the cycle's motives. In contrast with the recapitulations of the first level, which recall longer passages in the previous operas, second-level recapitulations draw together points which had earlier appeared distantly from one another. Lastly, he considers the Immolation Scene to be on the third level; significantly more compressed than a second-level recapitulation, the Immolation Scene is a small-scale summation of the cycle in its entirety.[32]

Although he acknowledges the architectural purpose that the dramatic text can serve in delineating sections for analysis, Daverio focuses primarily on the musical dimension to determine moments of recapitulation—his is not a theory of "dramatic recapitulation." His rationale is that because the texts were written with the foreknowledge of their musical setting, the structural landmarks of the text already correspond to those of the music. This oversimplifies things somewhat, as there are many situations throughout the *Ring* in which there is not only a conflict between the dramatic situation and its musical expression, but often that conflict is entirely the point. A famous example of this is the triumphant musical rhetoric of the fanfare at the end of *Das Rheingold* that relies entirely on the complications of the dramatic story to communicate its irony. Ultimately, Daverio's article does not go far beyond telling us what we already know: some moments in the ring recollect music from earlier ones; and

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[32] Ibid., 41-3.

it certainly does not clarify why he adopts "recapitulation" to describe these events instead of "repetition." These omissions are particularly surprising since he began the essay with a nod toward Wagner's theories of the symphony, and therefore the symphonic heritage of the term.

Joseph Jones uses the concept of recapitulation to explain the puzzling discrepancies between the woodbird's song in Act II of *Siegfried* and Siegfried's retelling of the song in Act III of *Götterdämmerung.* It has been noted, and often assumed to be a result of a blunder or lack of attention to detail, that Siegfried's tale to Gunther and the vassals is not accurate with respect to what the audience has already seen on stage. For example, in *Siegfried,* the woodbird advises the hero to pay careful attention to Mime's words, because the dragon's blood will reveal their true intentions. In Siegfried's version of the tale, the woodbird advised him specifically that Mime intended to kill him.

Far from being an accidental oversight, Jones argues, altering the presentation of the tale was actually part of Wagner's recapitulatory strategy. Jones provides a reproduction of the manuscript of Wagner's poem for *Siegfried* showing that Wagner initially copied the text of the poem from *Götterdämmerung* exactly, but changed his mind and altered the ending. Jones's position very much recalls one of Tovey's observations of sonata form: one of the characteristic features of a recapitulation is to offer a "stereographic" perspective on the music. What might have been a simple half-cadence in the exposition and thereby dismissed as an unimportant detail there, for example, might in the recapitulation have enormous consequences, such as facilitating the return to tonic at the end of the transition.[33] Noting that the orchestration is only

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[33] Tovey, *The Forms of Music,* 215.

slightly changed from *Siegfried* to *Götterdämmerung,* Jones suggests that there is a change in perspective, but it is offered not by the music, which might be the expected parameter, but by the poetic text itself. Jones's approach demonstrates one subtle way that the dramatic aspect of the work may participate in a recapitulation.[34]

This survey of seven writers' usages of the term *recapitulation* in reference to passages in Wagner suggests that our understanding of it remains amorphous. Yet it also highlights the long-standing precedent for using the term, which therefore demands a close look. There is good reason not to expunge a term whose applicability has seemed obvious to many writers provided that it can be shown to be valid. The first step toward determining its validity in the realm of opera is coming to a thorough understanding of the meaning of the term when it is used within the context of sonata study.

2. Recapitulation and Sonata Form

Theoretical writing on the form of first movements of sonatas was concurrent with the genre's emergence, mostly taking the form of treatises on composition. Bathia Churgin argues that early theories of sonata form tend to emphasize the bipartite, harmonic structure whereas more recent accounts tend to highlight the tripartite, thematic structure. Her impetus for translating Francesco Galeazzi's eighteenth-century discussion of the sonata was because it is forward-looking in its treatment of both the harmonic structure of the form as well as its treatment of contrasting themes.[35] Galeazzi also divides the sonata movement into two parts, since in practice (particularly in a movement

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[34] Joseph Jones, "The Woodbird's Song in Act III of *Götterdämmerung*: Recapitulatory Transformations of the Simply Wondrous," unpublished manuscript, received May 14, 2008.
[35] Bathia Churgin, "Francesco Galeazzi's Description (1796) of Sonata Form" *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 21:2 (Summer, 1968), 182.

with repeats) the development and recapitulation merge to form one large section. Yet

his account of the two parts is governed not by an overall harmonic structure, though in

his description of the themes themselves he accounts for the typical key areas in which

they occur. Instead, his overall description of the form is focused on its thematic

structure:

> The first part is usually composed of the following members: 1. Introduction, 2. Principal Motive, 3. Second Motive, 4. Departure to the most closely related keys, 5. Characteristic Passage or Intermediate Passage, 6. Cadential Period, and 7. Coda. The second part is then composed of these members: 1. Motive, 2. Modulation, 3. Reprise, 4. Repetition of the Characteristic Passage, 5. Repetition of the Cadential Period, and 6. Repetition of the Coda.[36]

Where the "Principal Motive" would occur in the second part, Galeazzi uses the word

ripresa, and clarifies it later in the essay as being a repetition of the first motive of the

movement in the key in which it first occurred.[37]

Interestingly, Heinrich Koch's *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Composition,* written

from 1782-1793, treats the form of first movements of symphonies as the model and only

then extrapolates it to (solo) sonatas, duets, trios, quartets and concerti, all of which he

considers individually. Like Galeazzi's, Koch's theory also models the concept of the

sonata-allegro as being both binary and ternary in conception. The primary formal

division is understood as binary, with two large sections which may be repeated. The

first section contains one period while the second contains two, a description which

corresponds to our exposition-development-recapitulation structure; however, Koch does

not use any of these terms, nor does he label the sections with names at all. Even without

section labels, Koch's description rings familiar: he writes that the final period usually

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[36] Ibid., 190.
[37] Ibid., 195.

begins with the opening theme in the main key of the movement followed by the second

half of the first period, which had initially appeared in the key of fifth scale-degree, now

transposed back to the main key bringing the movement to a close.[38]

A. B. Marx is generally considered to have coined the term "Sonata Form" in *Die*

Lehre von der musikalischen Komposition. Volume 3, which appeared in 1845, contains

a narrative of formal evolution, beginning with simple period structures, moving through

rondos, sonatinas, and finally reaching sonata form, which he posits as a synthesis of the

cohesion of a sonatina movement with the richness of content of the rondo.[39] Marx

breaks the form into three sections, and provides a thematic diagram:[40]

Part 1	Part 2	Part 3
HS SS G SZ	-- -- --	HS SS G SZ
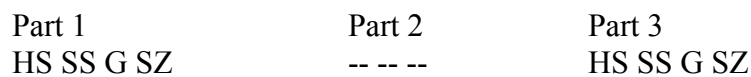
Marx continues to specify that, like Part 2 of the Sonatina form, Part 3 of the

Sonata form repeats the *Seitensatz* in tonic while in Part 1 it had appeared in the key of

the dominant.[41] Although in the diagram Part 2 is left structurally undefined, Marx is

emphatic that if it is not entirely related to the themes of Part 1, it must be at least

primarily related to them, otherwise the sonata movement will lack necessary overall

unity, and he includes a lengthy account of the various ways that these themes may be

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[38] Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Introductory Essay on Composition: The Mechanical Rules of Melody*, Sections 3 and 4, trans. Nancy Kovaleff Baker (Yale, 1983), 199-201.

[39] A. B. Marx, *Die Lehre von der musikalischen Komposition,* vol. 3 (Leipzig : Breitkopf und Härtel, 1868), 220. For an English overview of the evolutionary account of the development of musical composition, see Scott Burnham, "The Role of Sonata Form in A. B. Marx's Theory of Form" *Journal of Music Theory* 33:2 (Autumn, 1989), 247-71. In addition, note that on page 248, Burnham begins his article by contradicting the assumption that Marx intended his treatise to provide a "textboox schema" for the form.

[40] Marx, *Die Lehre,* 221. HS = Hauptsatz, or primary theme; SS = Seitensatz, or secondary theme; G = Gang, or an incomplete, i.e. unresolving melody; and SZ = Schlusssatz, or closing theme. For detailed English descriptions of these terms, see Burnham, "Role of Sonata Form," 6-13.

[41] Ibid., 249.

composed-out.[42] Marx's theory of Sonata form is primarily a thematic one, placing

emphasis on the tripartite division of the form and treats the harmonic structure as a

secondary feature. This is entirely in keeping with the very foundations of Marx's theory

of composition, which begins with the primacy of melody and only later derives its

harmonic underpinnings.[43]

        At approximately the same time, estimated to be 1848, Carl Czerny wrote his

treatise, *Die Schule der praktischen Tonsetzkunst oder vollständiges Lehrbuch der

Composition.* The treatise emphasizes the thematic aspects of sonata form, although it

discusses harmonic considerations as well. Czerny divides the form into two parts, the

first of which contains a primary theme and its amplification, a middle theme and its

continuation, and a closing theme, while the second part begins with a modulating

development of the themes from the first part and is followed once again by the primary

theme and the middle theme (which now appears in the original key).[44]

        After outlining the thematic content of the movement, Czerny moves on to an

account of the most common modulations for a sonata, which are familiar: in a major

key, we expect the first part to modulate to the key of the dominant; while in a minor key

we expect the first part to modulate to the key of the relative major, or, secondarily, the

key of the minor dominant.[45]

        Czerny wrote his treatise as a handbook for students of musical composition, and

he intends that they will begin by writing numerous model sonatas and, once the

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[42] Ibid., 225-248.
[43] Burnham, "Role of Sonata Form," 249.
[44] Carl Czerny, *School of Practical Composition,* trans. John Bishop Vol. 1 (London: Robert Cocks & Co., 1848), Reprinted by Da Capo Press, 1979, 33-4.
[45] Ibid., 34.

techniques have been fully internalized, only begin to cultivate a personal style. In addition to including a written analysis of a sonatina by Mozart, he also presents another sonatina that he composed in imitation of the former. Therefore, although he begins his discussion of the sonata with a list of necessary features, it is clear that those features alone do not provide sufficient information for the composition of satisfactory sonatas. It is only after study and modeling of numerous actual works that the composer will achieve mastery of the form.[46]

As noted above, it is Donald Tovey's work that sets the groundwork for much of the later English-language discourse on sonata form, particularly his usage of the terms exposition, development, and recapitulation. His *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article on the subject is entitled "Sonata Forms," and the usage of the plural has been noted by scholars, with good reason: it stakes an immediate position against a monolithic conception of "a" or "the" sonata form. After clarifying that there are many variations among sonata-allegro movements in practice, he goes on to describe the archetypal form, which I cite at length because his usage of *recapitulation* has important implications which will be explored later in the chapter:

> There is a first [theme] group in the tonic, followed by a transition to another key, where there is a second group that usually ends with a neat little cadence-theme. These groups constitute the exposition, which may be repeated. Then follows the development, the function of which is to put the previous materials into new lights, regrouping the figures into new types of phrase, modulating freely, and settling, if at all, only in new keys. Eventually a return is made to the tonic, and so to the recapitulation. This recapitulates the exposition, but it gives the second group in the tonic, and so completes the design. The development and recapitulation may be repeated; a coda may follow the recapitulation.[47]

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[46] Ibid., 42-52.
[47] Donald Francis Tovey, *The Forms of Music* (New York: Meridian Books: 1957), 214.

He emphasizes that the length of his description should not imply that it is anything more than a cursory outline, since among the sonatas we might study in the interest of determining a model form—those of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven—there is great variance in actual practice.[48] Indeed, he expresses his very distaste for the idea of a prescriptive model of sonata form when he decries "the perky generalizations of text-books by writers who regarded the great masters as dangerous, and who deduced their rules from the uniform procedures of lesser composers."[49] Thus, while Tovey finds a general understanding of sonata form to be useful, the concept of a definitive model for it is entirely foreign to Tovey's formulation of first movements. A formulaic approach to the composition of sonatas might be appropriate for second-rate composers, but it cannot describe the music written by those he really cares about.

Tovey's work highly influenced that of Charles Rosen. Even the title of his monograph on the subject, *Sonata Forms,* echoes the title of Tovey's article. *Sonata Forms* contains a detailed account of the structure of sonatas including possible deviations. The account builds on a similar description which appeared in his earlier book, *The Classical Style*[50] and is significantly longer and more detailed due to the inclusions of possible variations. Though lengthier than Tovey's description, the overall structure is described in mostly the same way. Like Tovey, Rosen emphasizes that its length and resemblance to a textbook model should not imply that he intends for it to be one. The length of the description is mostly accounted for by the inclusion of the

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[48] Ibid., 215. It is ironic that many later descriptions of the form absolutely dwarf this passage, and yet also carry a similar warning that they are not presumed to be exhaustive accounts of the form.
[49] Ibid., 125.
[50] See Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven,* expanded edition (Norton, 1997), 30.

variable details, but bracketing those, the terrain is still very familiar: the exposition

includes the main themes of the movement, one in the tonic, one in the dominant, and

ends with closing themes. The development usually involves quick and unpredictable

changes of key and fragmentation of the themes from the exposition, and ends with a

retransition, which brings the tonality back to the tonic for the recapitulation. Finally,

the recapitulation repeats the themes of the exposition, but brings the second theme group

and the closing themes into tonic to allow the movement to cadence with tonal closure.[51]

In outlining this definition, Rosen, like Tovey, is cautious about the hazard of

presenting an overly rigid model which would imply a uniformity among sonata

movements which simply does not exist. Rosen's warning and reservations about

treating the form as a rigid model is subtly different than Tovey's. Whereas Tovey was

concerned that his account implied a much more universal approach to the form than that

actually taken by Classical-era composers in practice, Rosen's reservations stem not from

a sense that his model is inaccurate as a description of the actual music, but from a sense

that it might imply that composers treated the form as a "recipe," with all of the necessary

information that a composer would need to write a sonata from the ground up.[52]

Leonard Ratner's work on the sonata in the Classic period, written during the

intervening years between Tovey's and Rosen's, differs from their approaches in two

respects. Rather than deriving the principles of his theories wholly on the study of

Classical-era sonatas, he also derives many of his ideas from primary source-reading. As

a result, Ratner's theories on sonata form resemble those written in the 18th Century

because he is attempting to understand them as contemporary audiences and composers

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[51] Charles Rosen, *Sonata Forms,* (Norton, 1980), 1.
[52] Rosen, The Classical Style, 31.

would have. Similar to Galeazzi and Koch, for example, he acknowledges a dual

principle to the form: a two-part harmonic structure (the rounded-binary) "interlocked"

with the three-part thematic structure (exposition-development-recapitulation).[53] Yet

Ratner is primarily interested in the harmonic organization of the form, writing in the

early part of his career that "it cannot be said that the generating factor of sonata-form is

a fixed relationship of themes."[54]

Ratner is invested in the predominance of the two-part harmonic reading of sonata

form, and he even derives it from the principle of periodic phrase structure. Like a pair

of parallel phrases, both parts are closely related to one another, with the primary

difference being that the first ends in V (a structural half-cadence) while the second ends

in I (a structural perfect authentic cadence). This is particularly evident in his book

Harmony: Structure and Style, which foregoes specific discussion of sonata form and

simply folds discussion of it into a generalized theory of "Two-Reprise Form."[55] The

generalized harmonic plan of the periodic reading of sonata form (and two-reprise forms

in general) can be expressed as:

$$\text{I-V (III), X-I}^{56}$$

The harmonic, periodic reading takes precedence over the thematic one, which is

divisible into the three familiar parts based on how they treat the thematic material.

Ratner considers the harmonic reading to be "dynamic" as it is the polarity between I and

V that creates the tonal demand for resolution to I at the end of the movement, while the

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[53] Leonard G. Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style,* (Schirmer, 1980), 221.
[54] Leonard G. Ratner, "Harmonic Aspects of Classic Form," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* II/3 (Fall, 1949): 160.
[55] Leonard G. Ratner, "Two-reprise Form" in *Harmony: Structure and Style* (McGraw-Hill, 1962), 232-48.
[56] Ratner, *Classic Music*, 218.

thematic reading is "static" as it is simply concerned with labeling themes.[57] It is for this reason that Ratner has emphasized that the resolution brought about at the end of a sonata movement can only be in the realm of harmony. Without considering the tonal changes, there is nothing in the thematic realm which could raise expectations for resolution.[58]

Although Ratner's primary focus in his study of sonata form, the harmonic construction, differs from Tovey and Rosen, who engage the thematic and harmonic aspects of the form in a much more symbiotic manner, he nonetheless includes the same warnings about reading the structure as a prescriptive model that composers would have adopted. The similarities and variations among Classical-era sonata movements most likely resulted from "paraphrase and parody" rather than reliance on an archetypal model.[59]

It is the tendency to accompany a theoretical outline of sonata form with the caveat that it should not be taken to be either prescriptive or comprehensive to which James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy humorously refer as "The War against the Textbooks,"[60] at the beginning of *Elements of Sonata Theory:* "One prominent feature of the study of the sonata form in recent decades—very much in the wake of Tovey's similar assertions—has been the repeated declaration that the 'textbook' view of sonata form is inadequate to deal with the actual musical structures at hand."[61]

To a certain degree, Hepokoski and Darcy agree with that sentiment, arguing that any account of Sonata form does not decree fixed rules for composition, but rather that it

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[57] Ibid., 220.
[58] Ratner, "Harmonic Aspects of Classic Form," 161.
[59] Ratner, *Classic Music,* 219.
[60] James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late-Eighteenth-Century Sonata (Oxford, 2006), 6.
[61] Ibid.

represents the distillation and tabulation of sonata practice in aggregate.[62] Yet, they are

less willing than other writers to completely dismiss a prescriptive theory of the sonata.

Although it is certainly true that brief, generalized descriptions of the form do not give an

accurate picture of the diversity of sonata practice, their project seeks to create a

systematic and comprehensive account of the many variations among all the specimens of

actual Classical-era sonatas. Thus, in a sense, Hepokoski and Darcy actually do intend to

outline a prescriptive, textbook-model theory of sonata form. Critical to their argument is

that they do not maintain the two-part/three-part model of the form, but instead argue that

the rounded-binary form found expression in five fundamentally different ways, and so

theirs is a theory of types: Type 1 describes sonatas without development; Type 2

sonatas are characterized by having what would by other authors be called the

recapitulation beginning not with P but with S. Type 3 describes "textbook sonatas";

Type 4 sonata-rondos; and Type 5 concerto forms. Their intention in labeling the

different forms only with numbers is to completely divorce their sonata theory from the

connotations of the ones that came before.[63] This likely explains why the most normative

sonata form is enumerated third on the list even though the book begins with an overview

of that form that strongly resembles Ratner's—a rounded binary which is divisible into a

tripartite thematic structure—even if their terminology is new, as in referring to the

exposition, development, and recapitulation as "action-spaces."[64]

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[62] Ibid., 15.

[63] Ibid., 344. P and S are their formalizations for what are elsewhere called "Primary Groups" and "Secondary Groups," respectively.

[64] Ibid., 16. While their attempt to level the ground among the various forms is appreciated, their effort spent denying long-established hierarchical superiority to the Type 3 sonata through its label is radically undermined by establishing its normativity so early in the book.

Yet if Ratner is concerned primarily with the binary aspect of the form, Hepokoski and Darcy are most definitely concerned with the tripartite division. Instead of reading the harmonic trajectory of the movements as being governed by a large-scale period, Hepokoski and Darcy attribute to each action-space both *harmonic* and *rhetorical* functions. The rhetorical purpose of the exposition is to present the groundwork of thematic material to which the material of the other action spaces may be compared while the harmonic purpose is to establish the home key and subsequently move away from it, thereby raising expectations both for the return of the thematic material as well as the initial tonic. In their words, the exposition represents a "structure of promise." The development is governed by rhetorical and harmonic fluidity, which is to say that themes from the exposition may appear in a myriad of ways, or may not appear at all, and they are not tied to the order or harmonic approach used in the exposition. The development not only immediately follows the large-scale structural half-cadence with which the exposition ends, but actually prolongs the structural dissonance that occurs there. Although they do not offer any terms to summarize the section as they do for the recapitulation and exposition, we might suggest that they intend the development to be a "structure of interruption." Finally, the harmonic purpose of the recapitulation is to resolve the tonal departures in the exposition and the development by confirming the governing thematic material and therefore is a "structure of accomplishment."[65]

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[65] Ibid., 16-9. The phrase "structure of interruption" recalls Schenkerian terminology which is very much present in their argument. They argue that the end of the development is the key point at which the division caused by a Schenkerian interruption would occur, and they explicitly contrast this placement with that which is found in the typical two-part, harmonic division of sonata form that was common in the Eighteenth century and finds a modern revival in Ratner's approach.

While such a taxonomic approach to the discussion of the Classical sonata might imply that they believe composers maintained a similarly static approach to the form, Hepokoski and Darcy argue that it is simply a means to an end; a necessary first step in the process of articulating the cultural and historical placement of a musical practice is to develop a workable understanding of the practice in question, even one that "seems almost exclusively formalistic."[66] So rather than maintaining a rigidly formal standpoint, Hepokoski and Darcy position their formalism as a first step toward an understanding of sonata form as a cultural touchstone. In writing a sonata, a composer engages with a received tradition of customs and norms. The sonata does not need to rigidly conform to those norms, but rather is set into a dialogue them.[67] They therefore contend that the strictness with which they approach analytic methodology should not be confused with a strictness with which an eighteenth-century composer would have approached composition. Textbooks are fine, they seem to be saying, as long as we do not assume that composers read them.

3. The Valences of "Recapitulation"

This chapter began with the goal of exploring our theoretical understanding of the concept of *recapitulation.* At present, no concrete, comprehensive theory of the recapitulation exists. Although music scholars have a working understanding of the term, problems arise because exponents of different theories often do not approach it with the same set of associations and therefore argue past one another. For example, Hepokoski and Darcy deride the practice of claiming that the recapitulation of Type 2 sonatas begins

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[66] Ibid., 603.
[67] Ibid., 11.

with S on the grounds that it ignores important thematic issues in the sonata in favor of purely harmonic ones.[68] Their position is fundamentally at odds with the sort of approach that Ratner would take, who is profoundly more interested in the dynamic properties of the periodic structure of the sonata form than in the static activity of theme-labeling. Lacking agreement on the very foundational principles of sonata form, it is virtually impossible to imagine that much productive debate could arise between their disagreements.

One fundamental misunderstanding stems from the generally unacknowledged fact that "recapitulation" has a two-fold syntactical meaning. On the one hand, there is a nominal valence which describes a static formal section, as in the phrase "the recapitulation begins in m. 300 and ends at the beginning of the coda in m. 400." On the other hand, there is a verbal valence, which describes a dynamic process, as in "the melody appearing in m. 300 is a recapitulation of the primary theme." Fundamental to my argument is the importance of the verbal valence, because it is that one, not the nominal one, underlying the concept of dramatic recapitulation. It is this misunderstanding or lack of acknowledge of the distinction between two which may be at the root of theoretical disagreements over sonata form.

Galeazzi engaged both of these meanings by using different words. He used *ripresa* to describe the nominal valence, and only used *ricapitolare* as a verb: "A most beautiful artiface is [often practiced] here, and this is to recapitulate in the Coda the

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[68] Ibid., 354.

motive of the first part, or the Introduction, if there was one, or some other passage that is both remarkable and well suited to end [with]…"[69]

Recall that Marx derives Sonata form from Sonatina form, and Sonatina form from small rondo forms (in modern parlance, Marx's "small rondos" would be called "simple ternary forms"). The term that Marx uses to refer to the return of the *Hauptsatz* after the intermediary *Gang* is *Wiederholung.*[70] *Wiederholung* is itself a gerund, and when he uses it, he is not referring to the section in which it appears, but the actual reappearance of the thematic material of the *Hauptsatz.* Interestingly, in his account of Sonata form, the term *Wiederholung* does not appear in connection with his description of Part 3. The name for that section is "*dritte Theil,*" and he simply names the appearances of the themes in that section.   Where he *does* use *Wiederholung* is in his account of Part 2, to describe the ways in which the primary thematic material of the form is stated there.[71] Thus it is clear that Marx does not use the term to refer to a section but rather to a musical process, thus, *Wiederholung* is entirely verbally valenced.

As noted about, Czerny compares the different parts of the sonata form to the dramatic action of a novel or poem. He does not use the term *Reprise* or *Wiederholung* as a section label, but his term that most closely approaches "recapitulation" is *Befriedigung.* This word does not by itself carry implications of repetition, but only refers to the closure that the movement attains. His actual wording reads "die Wiederkehr des ersten Theils in der Grundtonart bewirkt endlich jene wohlthuende und

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[69] Churgin, "Francesco Galeazzi," 196.
[70] Marx, *Die Lehre,* 101.
[71] Ibid., 222.

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klare Befriedigung, welche von jedem Kunstwerke mit Recht gefordert wird."[72] It is

clear that neither *Wiederkehr* nor *Befriedigung* are intended to delineate sectional

divisions. The former refers to an action performed upon the original themes and the

latter describes the function and purpose of that action and thus are verbally valenced.

Tovey appears to exclusively engage the verbal valence when discussing

recapitulations, and therefore seems to think of the recapitulation as processive, rather

than structural. Looking once again at the above-cited description of sonata form, "a

return is made to the tonic, and so to the recapitulation. This recapitulates the exposition,

but it gives the second group in the tonic, and so completes the design." This formulation

suggests that in considering sonata form, the noun selected to describe the section is

derived from the verb describing its purpose, not the other way around. Notice, too, that

Tovey pulls the process of repeating the themes—recapitulating the exposition—apart

from the harmonic structure of the section. This is consistent with his treatment of the

recapitulation of the 'Eroica.' For Tovey, "recapitulation" seems to refer primarily to the

process of repeating thematic material and only secondarily to the harmonic treatment of

that material.

Rosen, following Tovey, generally uses the term in its verbal sense as well,

although he occasionally uses the term in its nominal sense, as in his remark, "I use

'recapitulation' here to mean everything that follows the final reintroduction of the tonic,

including what is generally called a coda, if there is one."[73] However, Rosen's prose

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[72] "The repetition of the first part in the original key finally brings the very pleasant and clear satisfaction demanded of every proper artwork." Czerny, *Die Schule,* 29.
[73] Rosen, *The Classical Style,* 74n. It is noteworthy that Rosen is comfortable with labeling the coda as part of the recapitulation, while Kerman was compelled to introduce the term "thematic completion" in order to avoid doing so.

tends much more toward a conception of the term as a process, as in his extended

definition referred to above and reproduced here: "The *recapitulation* starts with the

return of the first theme in the tonic. The rest of this section 'recapitulates' the exposition

as it was first played, except that the second group and closing theme appear in the tonic,

with the bridge passage suitably altered so that it no longer leads to the dominant but

prepares what follows in the tonic."[74] Similarly, in *The Classical Style,* Rosen argues that

a piece lacking complete thematic resolution might find it elsewhere. Extracting from his

discussion of Haydn's Op. 64, No. 3 quartet: "The repeated four-measure phrase does

not, as I said, reappear in the recapitulation, but it does, however, reappear *in its full form*

in the development section, *and on the tonic.* This time the phrase is played twice in the

minor. In this way the theme is satisfactorily recapitulated."[75] Thus, in this example, the

verb-function of recapitulation is fulfilled, even if its noun-function is not.

For Rosen, the dual-usage of recapitulation does not pose an enormous problem,

because Rosen's primary interest is not formal. Although recapitulation has a formal

meaning for Rosen, he is significantly more interested in the purpose it serves, which is

to bring the sonata movement to closure. He writes, "The principle of *recapitulation as*

resolution may be considered the most fundamental and radical innovation of the sonata

style."[76] There is a fair amount of flexibility as to how the resolution may occur, but

critical to the rhetorical success of a sonata is bringing closure to both the harmonic and

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[74] Charles Rosen, *Sonata Forms,* (Norton, 1980), 1.
[75] Ibid., 73.
[76] Rosen, *Sonata Forms,* 272.

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thematic material of the exposition, in other words, repeating the themes so that they both

end conclusively in tonic.[77]

What Rosen's theory of overall sonata structure points to is a generalized concept

of consonance and dissonance. On a deep structural level, Rosen considers the

appearance of the second theme group in the key of the dominant to be dissonant with

respect to the overall key of the movement and the dissonance demands resolution to the

tonic, which occurs in the recapitulation of a normative sonata form. In another passage

articulating classical sonata form's historical contingency, Rosen writes, "The real

distinction between the sonata forms and the earlier forms of the Baroque is this new and

radically heightened conception of *dissonance,* raised from the level of the interval and

the phrase to that of the whole structure."[78]

In contrast to Tovey and Rosen, Hepokoski and Darcy are firmly committed to the

nominal valence of *recapitulation,* and this is evident from the very beginning of the

chapter concerned with it. It begins with the question: "What Qualifies as a

Recapitulation?" and they provide the following answer:

> [T]he recapitulation provides another complete rotation through the
> action-zone layout initially set forth in the exposition (P TR ' S / C). We
> refer to this restatement of the layout as the *recapitulatory rotation.* Its
> expanse begins with the layout's first module (P^1) and continues until the
> last one has been sounded. Anything following this is rhetorical *coda-
> space.* … The designation *recapitulatory space* is especially appropriate
> when dealing with non-normative complete rotations whose outer
> boundaries do not coincide with the customary (tonic) expectations of
> more standard recapitulations.
>
> On the other hand, if we confront what we at first presume is a
> recapitulation that begins significantly after the P^1 module (and especially
> after the first TR-module), thereby producing a space that seems to omit

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[77] Ibid., 150.
[78] Ibid., 25.

the early portions of the rotation, we should not label that space as a recapitulation at all. … A 'recapitulation' cannot begin with a TR$^{1.2}$ or S-module. To assume that one can leads to such erroneous concepts as 'partial,' 'incomplete,' or 'reversed' ('mirror') recapitulations, which are definitional contradictions to be avoided.[79]

Hepokoski and Darcy's taxonomic language tends strongly toward words like "module," "space," and "zone." These are sectional designations and give the impression of sonata form as an ordered set of self-contained chunks of music. While the end of a Type 2 sonata can be a *resolution* of the movement's thematic material, for Hepokoski and Darcy it cannot be a *recapitulation,* and nowhere in their language is there room for the possibility that it might *recapitulate* them nonetheless.

Ratner, whose work is primarily a history of the theory of form, also seems to assume the nominal valence when using the term, such as when he writes, "The recapitulation … secures the unity of the form by a broad and final confirmation of the tonic and by *recall* and *rhyme* of the melodic material of part I."[80] What distinguishes Ratner, however, is that he is less interested in the thematic return at the end of a sonata movement than the harmonic return, whereas "recapitulation" implies both a harmonic return and a thematic one. Because he positions the form within an expanded theory of period structure, he uses "sonata form" and its component parts, "exposition, development, and recapitulation" simply as conventional labels.[81] In fact, he is so committed to the harmonic process of the binary form that his entire account of the sonata as a particularized example of a two-reprise form never even uses the word

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[79] Hepokoski and Darcy, 231-2. This point is emphatically reiterated on pages 353-4.
[80] Ratner, *Classic Music,* 229.
[81] Ratner, *Music: The Listener's Art* (McGraw-Hill, 1957), 191-4.

"recapitulation."[82]   Thus, while in a literal sense, Ratner's usage is nominal and not verbal, it is irrelevant because his theory is primarily concerned with the dynamic process of harmonic resolution, and only secondarily with thematic structure. One might therefore say his theory is verbally-valenced, even if his language is not.

Figure 2.1 is an abstraction of the four generalized conceptual approaches that a theorist might take to understanding "recapitulation," with the organizational axis governed by theme vs. harmony and the linguistic axis governed by verbal vs. nominal, on which the theorists studied here are plotted relative to one another. Although Czerny and Koch do not use appear "recapitulation" per se, their description of the form clearly treats the repetition of the exposition material as part of a process and not a structure.
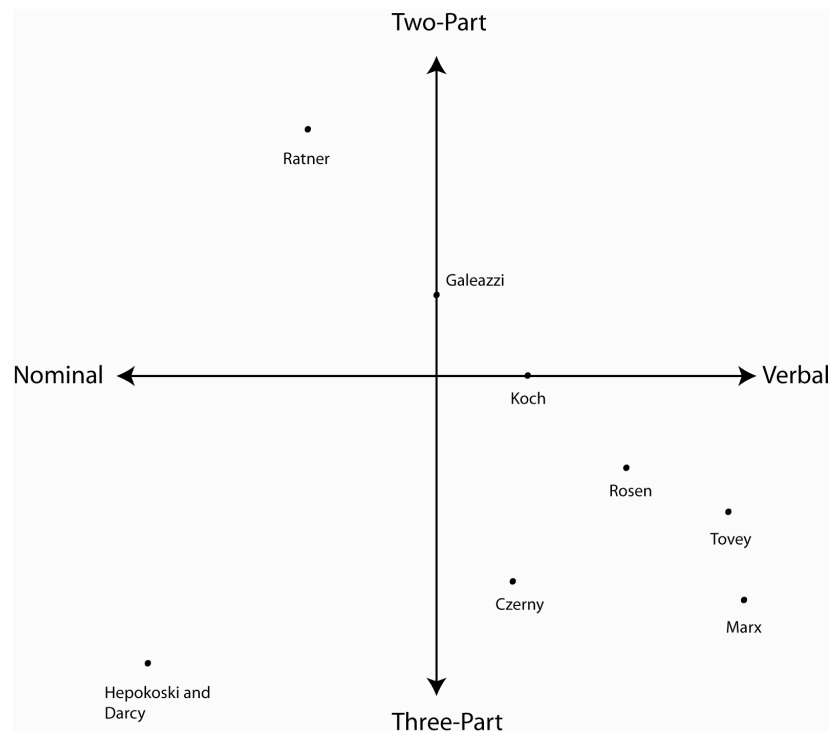
Figure 2.1 Plotting theoretical approaches in "sonata-form space"

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[82] Ratner, "Two-reprise Form," 232-48.

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Galeazzi appears on an axis because he uses two different words to describe the repetition itself and the section in which it appears. Ratner, although he sometimes discusses sonata movements in terms of the tripartite division into exposition, development, and recapitulation, is placed in the upper half because for him, the dynamic harmonic processes of the form are paramout. Conversely, and although they are comfortable deriving sonata form from a generic rounded binary model, Hepokoski and Darcy are fully committed to the primacy of the thematic content of the form, specifically how themes are used to fill the three action spaces, and so they appear on the lower half of the diagram.

One thing that becomes immediately obvious when looking at the chart is that it that none of the theorists fit firmly in the upper-right quadrant. It is often the case, but not exclusively so, that bipartite models of the form are concerned with the harmonic structure (as in the case of Ratner) while the tripartite model is concerned with thematic content. It is difficult to imagine a theoretical position which would interpret a passage to be a verbally-valenced recapitulation only because it cadenced in tonic but was thematically unrelated to a corresponding cadence in dominant. Conversely, it is much easier to imagine a nominally-valenced recapitulation which, as a section, is concerned primarily with the resolution of the movement's large-scale harmonic pattern.

Tovey's position in the lower-right quadrant remains in force even when he is speaking of Wagnerian recapitulation (although the labels "Three-Part" and "Two-Part" no longer apply). It is the same quadrant occupied by Abbate, Kinderman, Kerman, Daverio, and even Wagner himself when the idea of "recapitulation" is applied to his

music. These writers do not, and could not, be referring to static formal structures, but rather to dynamic processes, which, through repetition (or return) bring resolution and closure to musical and dramatic themes.

While it is possible to consider "recapitulation" as a noun describing a static structure or section, more flexibility is offered by thinking of it as describing an action. Therefore, with the intent of using the term in an operatic, non-sonata-oriented genre, we might formulate a definition of recapitulation as "the process by which musical materials are restated to afford them closure." But while this formulation releases the term from the confines of sonata form, it does not yet address the problem of applying it to dramatic structures. Although conceptualizing it as a verb, "to recapitulate," dissolves to a great extent the overwhelming musical connotations to the word and frees it from many of the expectations of sonata form, dramatic events are not developed and advanced in exactly the same way as musical ones. It is not clear that the term has freed itself enough from the musical implications to be useful or is even appropriate to use to describe dramatic events. One fundamental objection might be that unlike music, dramatic texts rarely contain long stretches of exact repetition; the *Liebestod,* for example, only repeats the musical content of the love duet, and does not reflect a large-scale repetition of the dramatic events from Act II. Do we not fundamentally expect dramatic events to change over time? If we do decide that an opera can have a dramatic recapitulation, does this imply that there need to be corresponding expositions and developments in these works?

The fact that the lower-right quadrant of Figure 2.1 places a priority on the resolution of themes over resolution of harmonic structure weakens some of the possible

objections to the application of "recapitulation" to operatic music. This is precisely

Tovey's point when he writes of the 'Eroica':

> Anybody inclined to cavil at the exact recapitulation of no less than one hundred bars comprising the transition and second group may be surprised to learn that this is, by the clock, precisely the same length as Isolde's Liebestod, and that in the Liebestod Wagner exactly recapitulates, without transposition, the last movement of the love-duet in the previous act. Recapitulation is as inveterate in musical form as symmetry is in architecture; and nobody understood this better than the first and most uncompromising realist in the application of music to drama.[83]

So too does the snag of demanding proper resolution to I in a bitonal texture dissipate as

long as there is sufficient thematic resolution and the tongue-in-cheek objection that a

"dramatic recapitulation" ought to repeat dramatic events "in tonic" evaporates

completely. It is in this respect that demanding too close an affinity between artworks of

different media proves to be short-sighted. A dramatic text might not recapitulate in the

manner we would expect a musical one to. The remainder of this chapter will explore the

long-standing discourse of the relationship between music and drama. Then, it will turn

to the concept of *dramatic recapitulation* specifically, to determine the processes of

musical and dramatic closure at work in Wagner's music dramas and how they interact.

4. The Relationship between Music and Drama

We might begin with a question: "Is music dramatic?" From the standpoint of

music scholarship, the short answer is decidedly "yes," or at the very least "it can be." A

particularly noteworthy element of Czerny's work is that he presents a characterization of

the different parts of the movement as they might be related to dramatic forms. A novel

might begin with "an exposition of the principal idea and of the different characters, then

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[83] Tovey, *The Forms of Music*, 220.

the protracted complication of events, and lastly the surprising catastrophe and the

satisfactory conclusion." The unified sonata movement is similar, and begins with an

Exposition, is followed by a complication (*Verwicklung)* and the repetition of the

beginning themes in the third part brings the movement satisfaction (*Befriedigung).*[84]

For Tovey, the Classical period was specifically defined by the dramatic quality

of the music. He considers Gluck, both for his approaches to orchestration as well as his

operatic reforms, to be the catalyst of change from the ornate play of pattern

characteristic of the Baroque era.[85] Drama became the overriding factor in virtually every

parameter of music. Harmonic structure in the classical period traded in the intellectual

complexity of music of the previous generation for dramatic significance. He compares

the long preparation and prolongation of the dominant, as might occur at the end of a

rondo episode anticipating the return of the primary theme, with the introduction and

arrival of a key character in a drama.[86] He argues that it was the introduction in the

Classical era of dramatic effects in masses, such as Beethoven's second, which brought

them out of the church and into the concert hall.[87] Tovey unquestionably conceives of the

Classical sonata as a dramatic genre, and this is evidenced by the frequency with which

he uses phrases such as "the dramatic sonata style" and "the sonata style of Haydn and

Mozart irrevocably brought the dramatic element into music."[88]

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[84] Czerny, 34. See also the original German: *Die Schule der praktischen Tonsetzkunst oder vollständiges Lehrbuch der Composition,* Vol. 1 (Bonn, N. Simrock, ?1849), 29. It is a curiosity that scholars' best estimate for the date of publication of the original German edition is one or two years later than the publication date of the English translation, which was 1848.
[85] Tovey, *The Forms of Music*, 77-8 and 124.
[86] Ibid., 59.
[87] Ibid., 87.
[88] Ibid., 15, 6. Examples of this usage abound throughout *The Forms of Music,* such as the top of pg. 130.

Rosen concurs fully and in many ways fleshes out the metaphor. He writes in a passage very reminiscent of Tovey that the Classical style began when "Haydn and Mozart, separately and together, created a style in which a dramatic effect seemed at once surprising and logically motivated, in which the expressive and the elegant could join hands."[89] One way in which Rosen's account differs from that of Tovey is that he presents a narrative wherein drama develops out of tendencies and characteristics already latent in earlier music. While Baroque music could adorn itself with the trappings of dramatic feeling, it was the move toward symmetry in the Rococo style which carved a space for the dramatic aspects of the music to occupy and allowed it to be infused with dramatic energy.[90]

This narrative, wherein static expression of Baroque styles gives way to a sense of dramatic action in Classical styles, is evident throughout both *The Classical Style* and *Sonata Forms.* He compares the "static" design of ternary form giving way to "a more dramatic structure, in which exposition, contrast, and reexposition function as *opposition, intensification,* and *resolution.*"[91] Similarly, "The advantage of the sonata forms over earlier musical forms might be termed a dramatized clarity" which does not need words to be expressed.[92] For Rosen, the recapitulation itself is a "dramatic reinterpretation of the exposition," which replaces the decorative ornaments of a Baroque or Rococo aesthetic by serving their function of changing the expressive meaning of the underlying melody.[93]

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[89] Rosen, *The Classic Style*, 44.
[90] Ibid., 43.
[91] Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, 17.
[92] Ibid., 12.
[93] Rosen, *The Classical Style*, 100-1.

Hepokoski and Darcy certainly address the dramatic qualities of the sonata form in their writing. In fact, their stated criteria for a successful analysis is "one that seeks to reawaken or re-energize the latent drama, power, wit, and wonder within individual compositions."[94] At their most general, they discuss the goal-oriented motion of the form, whereby the recapitulation provides the closure toward which the entire structure is oriented.[95] They admit in their theory both a belief that the late-Eighteenth century sonata is characterized by drama, and the plausibility of understanding the form as engaging a type of narrative, even describing it as a "dramatized musical activity."[96]

Fred Maus has provided a précis of the theoretical discourse of the dramatic possibilities of music in his article "Music as Drama," mentioning both Schoenberg's conception of pitches and harmonies as having "agency" and Tovey's position on the matter which we explored above. His article takes the form of an analytical narrative as and tells the story of an emotional response to the expressively dramatic elements of Beethoven's String Quartet, Op. 95.[97]

Crucially, if the rise of the sonata is the rise of dramatic music, then the idea of a recapitulation was never foreign to drama at all, and to suggest that applying such a musical term to a dramatic structure is wrongheaded misses the point that musical practice has for a long time been related to the concept of drama. In fact, Tovey actually connects the rise of the sonata form with the fundamental change of opera that occurred in the Classical period, arguing that the rise of the sonata forms created the very

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[94] Ibid., 11-2.
[95] Ibid., 232.
[96] Ibid., 250-1.
[97] Fred Everett Maus, "Music as Drama," *Music Theory Spectrum* 10 (Spring, 1988), 56-73.

possibility for Gluck's reform of opera.[98] Specifically, Tovey reads a close kinship

between the workings of sonata form and what Wagner set out to do with music drama.

He argues that sonata form itself was unable to lengthen the time-scale of musical

expression, so a complete sonata might consist of several movements, each of which

would be about ten minutes long. The ten-minute limitation also implied a limitation on

emotional content of the work that might feasibly be explored. It was Wagner who, by

creating the music-drama, created a work with a time-scale that could match the deep

emotional content of drama which music could not otherwise attain.[99]

The connection between sonata form and opera brings us to a point where it is

worthwhile to consider Wagner's own positions on the role of drama in music, because

he spends much time expounding upon the dramatic potential of Beethoven in his

symphonic writing and considers the extent to which the structural expectations of the

form limited that dramatic potential. As a preliminary, it is important to note that

Wagner's theories cannot be relied upon to give a thorough window into his

compositional practice. Not only are there contradictions among his different theoretical

treatises, but there even seem to be contradictions between his theories about how to

compose and his actual compositions. Wagner addresses this point in "A

Communication with My Friends," arguing that his ideas have changed and evolved over

time, and therefore the critics who deride him for inconsistency are misunderstanding

(either intentionally or not) the nature of what he is trying to communicate. It is for this

reason that the essay is addressed to his "Friends," defined as those who are willing to

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[98] Ibid., 208.
[99] Ibid., 130.

make the effort to understand and appreciate what he has attempted to do with his art, as distinct from the critics, who are simply out for blood.[100]

If Wagner's theories are not wholly consistent either with each other or his art, then what is the value of studying them? Literary theory does not place a priority on authorial intention in criticizing works of art. Nonetheless, we may treat Wagner's theories as one of many conflicting or complementary frameworks for understanding the *Ring*. The fact that we cannot derive a complete reading from his theories or intentions alone does not negate the fact that it is useful to have a sense for how Wagner conceived of the process of creation. Specifically, Wagner's understanding of the relationship between his music and his poetry is enormously consequential with regard to the actual composition of both.

In theorizing about what constitutes the ideal art, Wagner begins by describing the Greek drama as its last golden age. When Wagner uses the term "Drama" he does so meaning something distinctly different from "theater" or "play." For Wagner, Drama is a unified art form, as it was in ancient Greece, which brings together poetry and music. Drama is a profoundly public and universal art, as it constituted an expression of the consciousness of the Greek populace and was freely accessible to that same public. After the Greeks, Drama declined and was divided into its constituent parts, each of which was treated as an independent medium of art. Whereas there had once been a unified Drama, now theater can be divided into "play" and "opera," where the former bars music from the stage, while the latter bars poetry, but merely uses text to serve as a vehicle for the

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[100] Richard Wagner, "A Communication to My Friends" (1851), in *Richard Wagner's Prose Works*, Vol. 1, trans. William Ashton Ellis, 2d edition (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd, 1895), 270. All English translations of Wagner are by Ellis, and will henceforth be identified by year of initial publication, volume and page number.

music. Furthermore, the works no longer speak for, or to, the public. Rather, both plays and operas are written as entertaining trifles for the upper class. They thereby lose their claim to the status of art and are considered to be mere handiworks. [101]

Wagner's intention for art, his "Art-work for the Future," is that it should return to the Greek ideals for Drama, a reunification of poetry and music not in the sense of contemporaneous opera, which errs insofar as, "a Means of expression (Music) has been made the end, while the End of expression (the Drama) has been made a means…."[102] The problem may be fixed by recognizing that music is only capable of communicating Feeling but that it cannot communicate the cause of the Feeling, only the poetry may do that. The ideal drama will utilize both music and poetry in service of what they are already most adept at, with the poetry providing the object of study with the music providing emotional commentary on the object. Wagner insists that by doing so, Drama can once again be realized, and may once again rise above handiwork and become Art as it was intended. "Who," Wagner asks, "will be the *Artist of the Future?* The Poet? The Performer? The Musician? The Plastician?—Let us say it in one word: the *Folk. That selfsame Folk to whom we owe the only genuine Artwork, still living even in our modern memory, however much distorted by our restorations; to whom alone we owe all Art itself.*"[103]

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[101] Richard Wagner, "Art and Revolution" (1849), Vol. 1, 43-8.

[102] Richard Wagner, "Opera and Drama" (1851), Vol. 2, 17.

[103] Richard Wagner, "Art-Work of the Future" (1851), Vol. 1, 204-5. The importance of *das Volk* is underscored in his anxieties about *Tannhäuser.* He wanted to make his artistic intentions clear to the public so that they would join him in demanding their proper realization by the opera performers. Yet the spectator was accustomed to a much more passive role, wanting nothing more from a performance than his or her own entertainment. Thus he finds himself in a precarious situation: needing to convince the public that what they really want is different than one they think they want and finds his words being received as those of a madman. See "A Communication to My Friends" (1851), Vol. 1, 337-8.

A common narrative in many of Wagner's writings is a claim that in his youth he was primarily interested in poetry and theater, having been heavily influenced by Goethe, and only secondarily interested in music. In his studies, he had learned the various forms in which instrumental music is usually written, but theater was his first love, and his early plays were either entirely spoken, or, if they incorporated music at all, the music was written concurrently with the poetry. It was only later in his life that he came to a greater appreciation of music.[104] It would be hard to verify conclusively the historical accuracy of his account of his youthful artistic engagements, but that consideration is ultimately less important and less interesting than the implications that the biography has on his aesthetic ideas. Indeed, the progression from poet to musician, which is implicit in that account, recurs in his account of his progression from opera composer in *Rienzi* to music-dramatist in the *Ring*. Wagner explains that his initial experiences with music were similar to someone learning a foreign language. At first, the speaker is extremely conscious of each word that they speak, and over time he or she begins to acquire familiarity with certain formulas and idioms. After an extended period of time speaking the language, however, he or she no longer needs to think about the words they are using, but they come naturally as the person communicates their ideas. Thus, his initial attempts at opera—*Die Feen, Das Liebesverbot,* and *Rienzi,* were composed as a person speaking a foreign language, with careful attention paid to convention and operatic formulae. It was with *Der fliegende Höllander* that Wagner for the first time believed himself to be a poet. When he attained the status of poet, suddenly he found he had gained fluency in music, so that he could express himself musically without needing to be think through or

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[104] This narrative appears in "A Communication to My Friends," 291ff. and again in "Zukunftsmusik," 303ff.

be overly conscious of its grammar. Paradoxically, Wagner realized that music was the language through which his poetry could be best expressed.[105] It is not coincidental that after explaining this progression from poet to musician that Wagner turns to a discussion of his plans for *Die Meistersinger von Nürnburg*. Although he would not begin his composition of the poetry or the music for many years after publishing "A Communication to my Friends," the dramatic sketch that appears therein almost entirely corresponds to the eventual plot. At the center of the dramatic sketch is the singing contest. Beckmesser, having stolen the poetry of Walther's song, is nonetheless unable to find the appropriate musical setting for the words, which is subsequently sung by Walther. Once again, the poetry is written first and only afterwards is the music composed. Furthermore, the sketch makes it clear that the poetry requires an appropriate, masterful musical setting to succeed. The point is that Beckmesser fails not because he gets the words wrong (which he does, to great comedic effect), but because he would not be able to compose a fitting tune even if he had gotten them right.

The music drama fixes the problem of opera whereby the librettos were treated as empty vehicles for the presentation of the aria tune. Indeed, the opera composer is at liberty to break apart, refigure, and repeat portions of the libretto at will in order to fit the needs of the melody and its structure, such as in a typical *da capo* aria, for example.[106] By contrast, in the music drama once the poetry is settled upon, it is treated as fixed and it is therefore the job of the composer to find the appropriate musical expression for the poem. It would seem to follow that because the poetry enjoys both a temporal and

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[105] Wagner makes this point in several places. See "A Communication to My Friends" (1851), Vol. 1, 365; and throughout "Beethoven" (1870), Vol. 5, such as pp. 62-3, 104, and 122-3.
[106] Richard Wagner, "On Operatic Poetry and Composition" (1879), Vol. 6, 154.

hierarchical priority over the music, the music must be considered subservient to and therefore inferior to the poetry, but Wagner's position is more complicated than that.

In fact, he has elsewhere argued that vocal music has made it clear that because a multitude of poetic texts can be set to a single melody (as in a strophic song), "[t]he Union of Music and Poetry must … always end in such a subordination of the latter that we can only wonder above all at our great German poets returning again and again to the problem, to say nothing of the attempt."[107] Consider, too, that Wagner's term for the artwork of the future is "music drama" and not "music poetry." It is an important distinction because the drama refers not to the poetic text which is set to the music, but the actual performance itself. Music drama does not mean "a drama set to music," but something more like "the enacting of drama through music."[108] While it is clear that the poetry contributes to the drama, insofar as it provides the framework for the action, it is decidedly not the relationship between the music and the poetry which primarily interests Wagner, but that between the music and the drama.[109]

Yet this formulation creates theoretical as well as practical problems. The position that the drama is born from a union of the music and the poetry does not mesh with the more idealistic claim that "it is not the verses of a text-writer … that can determine Music. *Drama* alone can do that; and not the dramatic poem, but the drama that moves before our very eyes, the visible counterpart of Music, where word and speech

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[107] Richard Wagner, "Beethoven" (1870), Vol. 5, 104.
[108] Richard Wagner, "On the Name 'Musikdrama'" (1872), Vol. 5, 299-302.
[109] In this essay, Wagner repeats the metaphor of music as a woman from whose womb the drama is born. He also explores this idea at length in "Opera and Drama," revealing that the paternity of the drama is the poem. It is a colorful and provocative metaphor indeed. Given that Wagner spends the bulk of his theoretical writing on the drama and the music but not the poetry, I am inclined to extend the metaphor somewhat and imagine the poetry as something of a dead-beat dad, who skips town after hearing the results of his DNA test on some form of aesthetic Jerry Springer show.

belong no more to the poet's thought, but solely to the action."[110] From a practical

consideration, it is hard to imagine what, if not the poetic text, could determine the action

of a drama at any given moment such that a fitting musical expression could be

composed.

And yet the alternate formulation is also problematic: the idea that the musical

texture depends wholly on the Feeling that needs to be expressed with the words, the idea

that the melody takes its cue from the text alone. If we wish to consider the *Liebestod* as

any form of recapitulation, as we have at the beginning of this chapter, this formulation

might lead us to the uncomfortable conclusion that the long stretch of repeated music

from Act II is a result of the two different texts coincidentally implying the same musical

expression. On the other hand, it is much more reasonable to imagine that the dramatic

situation at the end of *Tristan und Isolde* called for a repetition of the music from Act II.

In practice, there is a much more nuanced interrelationship between the text, the music,

and the dramatic situation that unfolds in Wagner's scores than appears in his theorizing.

There are occasions when the text of the poetry implies particular forms of musical

realization; there are times when the dramatic situation of a scene implies both the poetry

and its musical realization. There are also occasions, though they seem to be rarer, when

the music implies the text or the dramatic situation, yet this does occur. Both the Prelude

to Act III of *Tristan und Isolde* as well as parts of the love duet in Act II first appeared as

two of the *Wesendonk Lieder,* implying that the music cannot be wholly understood as a

spontaneous outpouring of the Feeling latent in either the drama or the text of *Tristan.*

This is also the case with the appearance of the utterly unrelated music of the *Siegfried*

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[110] Richard Wagner, "Beethoven" (1870), Vol. 5, 112.

Idyll in Act III of *Siegfried.* The simplest and thus most likely explanation—that

Wagner's approach to writing his operas was a much more fluid process than his

theorizing would suggest—is borne out by Robert Bailey's detailed studies of the

compositional sketches and drafts.[111]

As Abbate has argued, the question of whether Wagner's artworks are

"symphonic" is difficult to answer.   To a great extent, this is because Wagner's own idea

of what "symphonic" means developed and changed over time. On the one hand,

Wagner argues that the typical symphony movement is an elaboration and development

of a dance form.[112] His major complaint about the *Leonora* overture is not that is

programmatic, but that the constraints of the symphonic movement, which demanded

repetition, clashed with the needs of the program's dramatic development. Given the

conflicting needs of the idea and the form, Wagner considers it a weakness that

Beethoven sacrificed the former for the latter. To fix the problem would mean

abandoning repetition and thereby inventing a new form. That form is whatever is

demanded by the subject for its portrayal and development. In short: it means writing

program music.[113] As a close friend, Wagner had a personal interest in praising Franz

Liszt's symphonic poems, but he had a professional one as well: because Liszt's music

functions as an expression of the dramatic action of the program, it is not far removed at

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[111] Robert Bailey, *The Genesis of Tristan und Isolde: and a Study of Wagner's Sketches and Drafts for the First Act,* Ph.D. dissertation (Princeton University, 1969): 11-2. Bailey observes that for the most part, the composition of the poems long preceded the composition of the music, yet that it was fair to say that Wagner's initial conception of the works often involved both a particular dramatic situation and a possible type of musical setting.
[112] As one of many places where Wagner makes this argument, see "On the Application of Music to the Drama" (1879), Vol. 6, 176.
[113] Richard Wagner, "On Franz Listz's Symphonic Poems" (1857), Vol. 3, 234-6.

all from Wagner's project of writing texted music which accomplishes the same goal, possibly quite closer than Kerman's argument would suggest.

Wagner would later return to the matter of the dramatic potential of the symphony. He begins from the same point: the symphony is derived from the dance forms, but also argues that traditional opera also derives its formal organization from dance forms, which explains the similarity between a da capo aria and a minuet and trio, for example. In an otherwise abstract sonata form movement, dance forms function reasonably well, but they falter when they are implemented in opera, which purports to carry a poetic text rather than focus on musical development. Bringing the symphonic technique to opera would thus require that the poetic text be constructed in advance with the intention of fitting it to a symphonic form, which is why Beethoven was more successful in the realm of choral music than opera.

"Yet," Wagner continues, "there must remain open the possibility of obtaining in the dramatic poem itself a poetic counterpart to the Symphonic form, which, while completely filling out that ample form, should at like time answer best the inmost statutes of *dramatic* form." How might this work? Since the symphony is an elaboration of a dance form, Wagner posits that the expression of the ideal dance is the role of the ideal symphony. By further positing that the ideal dance is Drama, Wagner can conclude that the ideal symphony is therefore the music drama.[114]

We arrive at more or less the point at which we began: Wagner's compositional practice does not always follow his theoretical frameworks, and his theoretical perspectives developed and changed over time anyway. It is not the intention of this

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[114] Richard Wagner, "Zukunftsmusik" (1861), Vol. 3, 333-7.

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exegesis to function as an apologetics for the consistency between Wagner's theories and

his music. Rather, it is sufficient to have explored whether Wagner invites us to compare

his compositional practice with the symphony as well as whether he believed that

symphonic music—both Beethoven's symphonies as well as Liszt's symphonic poems—

could be described as dramatic. In both cases, the answer would seem to overwhelmingly

be "yes."

The notion of sonata form as dramatic is ubiquitous and is relevant in both

directions. Not only have many of the writers explored in this chapter either used sonata

models as a basis for discussion of Wagnerian operas or else appealed to drama to

explain the dynamic qualities of sonata form, but Wagner himself draws the comparison

to explain the relationship of his work to Beethoven's. Although Rosen's account of

sonata form contrasts very sharply with Hepokoski and Darcy's, they share a belief that

the form is a dramatic one, and this commonality may be sublimated onto a single word

that both of their theories adopt: dénoument. For Rosen, sonata form is "a closed form,

without the static frame of ternary form; it has dynamic closure analogous to the

denouement of eighteenth-century drama, in which everything is resolved, all loose ends

are tied up, and the work rounded off."[115] Hepokoski and Darcy posit that sonata form

"dramatizes a purely musical plot," one that has very much in common with a

Schenkerian middleground or foreground, which "is generically expected to lead to a

characteristic, foreordained denouement."[116]

Dénouement might be described as the term corresponding to "recapitulation" in

the study of drama, because both terms refer to activity toward the end of their respective

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[115] Rosen, *Sonata Forms,* 9.
[116] Hepokoski and Darcy, 251.

works that brings resolution to what has occurred before. Similarly, speaking of a "musical dénouement" relies on the same distortion and metaphorical treatment of the term as does "dramatic recapitulation." It is worth comparing the structure of a sonata form to the "pyramidal structure" of drama, developed by Gustav Freytag at about the same time Wagner was completing *The Ring*. Freytag's work is inspired by Lessing's *Hamburg Dramaturgie*—a work which was also read and admired by Wagner. Both Freytag's and Lessing's dramatic theories are rooted in Aristotle's *Poetics*. Of interest here is Freytag's retuning of Aristotle's attumbration of drama's formal design: it consists of an exposition, a rising action, a climax, a falling action, and a dénouement. The exposition introduces the setting for the drama; the rising action builds tension toward the climax, which is the emotional high point and where the *peripeteia,* or reversal, occurs; then the falling action functions as a "return" and unravels the tension, leading to the dénouement, where the drama finds closure.[117]

If Rosen's theory of sonata form "points to a generalized concept of consonance and dissonance," as observed above, then that concept can be even further generalized to describe "dramatic dissonance," or the emotional intensity of a drama as it approaches and reaches the *peripeteia,* and "dramatic consonance," or the satisfactory sense of closure when the complications are resolved. Although the means are different, there is therefore a striking correlation between the functions of the various parts of the sonata form and Freytag's schema of dramatic form. Example 2.2 is a mapping of the two structures as being derived from a more generalized structure of tension and release. By mapping the two structures from a more generalized form, this model avoids the

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[117] Marvin Carlson, *Theories of the Theatre: A Historical and Critical Survey, from the Greeks to the Present,* (Cornell, 1984), 258.
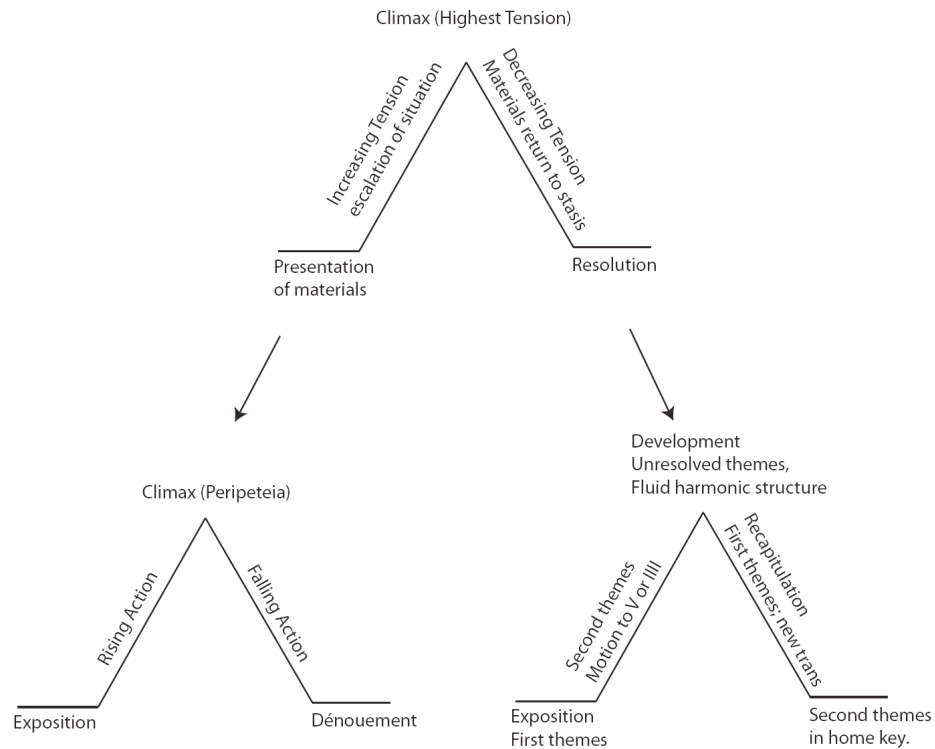
Figure 2.2 Freytag's Pyramid of Dramatic Structure and its Musical Counterpart

hazard of implying a priority or hierarchical superiority to either art form, but it also

highlights the fact that as media which are experienced temporally, both music and drama

rely on related organizational strategies at the most abstract level. As a result, *dramatic*

recapitulation can be understood as a process by which the *dénouement* of a drama is

treated as roughly isomorphic with the recapitulation of a sonata and in the case of the

music drama engages both of these functions simultaneously. This formulation applies in

both a literal sense and an abstract sense. Although a drama generally has one

dénouement and a sonata one recapitulation, the formulation can apply abstractly to a

myriad of moments which both recall musical and dramatic themes and bring them to

closure. What we stand to gain from such a formulation is twofold. First, it

acknowledges the fact that the two media are not entirely distinct from one another—not just in the Wagnerian sense that their origins stemmed from one unified work of art but in the more general sense that their overall trajectories are similar enough that numerous theorists of both have not hesitated or even questioned whether "recapitulation" can apply to drama or "dénouement" can apply to music. Second, it frees the theorist from objections stemming from a literal interpretation of either term because it allows the musical and dramatic processes to be understood and interpreted within their own their own contextual paradigms.

Having now provided a framework for theorizing about the existence, role, and function of the "dramatic recapitulation," it is now time to turn to the *Ring* itself. While many theorists of Wagner have explored recapitulations as backward-looking features of the work, I take a slightly different path. By widening my usage of recapitulation to interpret moments of repetition and resolution which occur at all points of the work, a surprising and yet wholly appropriate organizational structure emerges: the *Ring* is structured like a Ring! The remainder of this dissertation explicates and analyzes the tetralogy from the perspective of cyclic structure in which pairs of scenes, related by both their dramatic and musical contents, tie the *Ring* even closer to its roots in the Greek ideal of art than we might have ever imagined.

Chapter 3

Cyclic Structure in *The Ring*

At the end of Chapter 2, I offered a working theoretical definition of *dramatic recapitulation*: a passage which repeats a musical texture in a way which brings it closure while the text resolves a related dramatic complication. The present chapter concerns a particular type of dramatic recapitulation—one that functions in the context of a large-scale cyclic structure that can describe major organizational features of Wagner's *Ring* cycle. Whereas a typical play or sonata would have only one *dénouement* or *recapitulation,* this chapter particularizes my usage of the term while loosening it from the implication that the works ought to contain only one. This is because the *Ring* contains numerous moments that serve as dramatic recapitulations, even some moments which recapitulate earlier material while providing new exposition that will itself later be recapitulated. All of the recapitulations perform the task of resolving musical and dramatic situations left open in their earlier iterations, where resolution implies a *perfection* and *completion* of that which was previously imperfect and incomplete.

My treatment of perfection and completion through repetition carries an intended psychoanalytic flavor, which relates to Lacan's concept of "repetition automatism."[118] Lacan explicates the concept through an analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's story, "The Purloined Letter," that relates the scenes of the two primary actions of the story. The

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[118] Jacques Lacan, "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter,'" *Écrits,* trans. Bruce Fink (Norton, 2006), 6.

first, which Lacan refers to as the "primal" scene, is the initial theft: the crafty Minister, who deduces the sensitive nature of the Queen's letter, steals it while she watches, knowing that the presence of the King prevents her from stopping him. After the Prefect makes many unsuccessful searches of the Ministerial hotel to find the letter, Dupin is able to recover it by realizing that the Minister, by turning it inside-out and writing a new address on it, hid it in plain view, placing it directly in front of while at the same time above the gaze of the police as they searched the premises.

Lacan argues that Dupin is only able to recover the letter through repeating the structure of the initial theft. The primal scene incorporated three figures: the King, metaphorically blind to the fact that anything has occurred; the second is the Queen, who incorrectly believes that King's blindness renders the letter sufficiently concealed; and the Minister, who can take advantage of both the King's blindness and the Queen's mistaken assumption to snatch the letter with impunity. Dupin recovers the letter by repeating the primal scene, and placing himself in the role that was occupied by the Minister in the earlier scene. Thus, in the later scene, the Prefect is blind to the letter in plain view; the Minister mistakenly assumes that the letter is therefore sufficiently hidden, and Dupin can take advantage of the Minister's mistaken assumption to recover the letter.[119] Recapitulated events in the *Ring,* most importantly the love relationship between Siegfried and Brünnhilde, which perfects that between Siegmund and Sieglinde, operate according to a similar process.

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[119] Ibid., 10.

1. Overview of Ring Composition

The title of the second opera of the tetralogy, *Die Walküre,* implies that it is primarily the story of Brünnhilde. While she is an important focus of the end of the opera, the tragic love between Siegmund and Sieglinde occupies the major balance of the work's attention. Wotan intended that Siegmund act as a free agent who could recover the ring from Fafner, unfettered by the contract between the gods and the giants. Wotan's error is quickly identified by Fricka. During their exchange in Act II of *Die Walküre,* Wotan paid no heed to any of the arguments Fricka put forth concerning the sanctity of Hunding and Sieglinde's marriage. It was only by teasing out the flaw in Wotan's plan that Fricka convinces him to withdraw his protection:

> Wer hauchte Menschen ihn ein?
> Wer hellte dem Blöden den Blick?
> In deinem Schutz scheinen sie stark,
> durch deinen Stachel streben sie auf:
> du reizest sie einzig,
> die so mir Ew'gen du rühmst.[120]

Because Siegmund was raised, guided, and shielded by Wotan, he is not free to carry out Wotan's task, and so the drama cannot end with *Die Walküre;* the remaining two operas are therefore necessary to present the history of the hero who can. Like "The Purloined Letter," Siegfried and Brünnhilde fill the spaces previously held by Siegmund and Sieglinde. Siegmund was unable to complete the task set before him or realize his love for Sieglinde; fulfillment of both comes with the stories of Siegfried and Brünnhilde. Siegfried is free both to recover the ring and to love Brünnhilde with a fervor that no

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[120] "Who breathed humanity into them? Who brightened the dullness of their gaze? Under your protection they appear strong, through your spurring they emerged: you alone provoke them, they who you endlessly praise to me" (97-8). All translations are by the author unless otherwise specified. Cited poetry is identified by page number in the score, as specified in Footnote 129 below.

other characters have known except for Siegmund and Sieglinde. Yet their story is more than a simplistic, exact repetition of the earlier one—the narratives contain similar events which do not occur in the same order in the two relationships. Close inspection of the love narratives reveals an intricately-wrought structure resembling those about which Mary Douglas theorizes in *Thinking in Circles,* a book suggested to me by Kevin Korsyn, who correctly believed that Douglas's theories could shed important light on Wagner's *Ring.*[121] The cyclic structure of the love relationships between Siegmund and Sieglinde on the one hand and Siegfried and Brünnhilde on the other are explored in detail in Chapter 4. However, the small-scale ring structures which govern their marriages reflect a much deeper background ring structure at work in the tetralogy as a whole into which are embedded a number of other smaller rings. The central focus of this dissertation is the exploration of cyclic structure in the *Ring* as it occurs on both large and small scales.

Douglas, a classicist, posits that the construction of stories and poetry into ring forms is an ancient practice which has gone unnoticed and unrecognized for centuries. She argues that it is a lack of understanding of the cyclic nature of the form that for a long time caused readers to consider ancient texts "difficult" whereas their contemporary audiences would have experienced little trouble understanding them.[122] Douglas draws many biblical examples, such as the book of Numbers and the stories of the binding of Isaac and the Garden of Eden to demonstrate the overall conventions of the structure. According to Douglas, a well-formed ring will include the features outlined in Figure 3.1.

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[121] Kevin Korsyn, personal discussion, July 24, 2007.
[122] Mary Douglas, *Thinking in Circles: An Essay in Ring Composition* (Yale, 2007): 1.

1. A Prologue
2. A division into two halves
3. Parallel sections mirrored across the division from one another
4. "Indicators," which are things like key words whose repetition helps identify its relationship with its mirrored section.
5. An emphasized midpoint, which is usually developed at length and parallels the prologue
6. Often, a section will itself be constructed as a subring, so that the large-scale structure can be found embedded in its constituent parts
7 A "latch," which connects the ending of the story back to the Prologue

Figure 3.1 Douglas's criteria for a well-formed ring structure[123]

After discovering that the model applies to the study of other ancient poems, such as the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid,* she turns to a more modern literary work to test for ring structure there. Her analysis of Tristram Shandy reveals that it is a "not-quite ring." Although it includes many of the key features of classical ring design, its primary deviation from a strong form is that it lacks a well-defined midpoint.[124] For this reason, Douglas argues that Lawrence Sterne was probably not modeling the book on ancient structures, but that the layout of the work arose *ad hoc* as a means of organizing a voluminous and meandering story. It is likely that it "originated as a structure in the mind of a brilliant author, without his necessarily being aware of all the details of Hebrew poetic structures or meaning to adopt them."[125]

Similarly, my analysis of a quasi-ring structure in *The Ring* does not necessarily imply that Wagner was modeling the design on ancient structures (although he certainly may have been, given that his goal for the music drama was that it would be a revival of Greek ideals of art). It is worth considering to what extent the central object of the

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[123] Ibid,. 36-8.
[124] Ibid., 87.
[125] Ibid., 88.

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drama—the Ring—may have contributed to Wagner's formal construction. Also, because Tristram Shandy was written serially over many years, Douglas suggests that its reversal may have arisen because the simplest way for Sterne to proceed may have been to backtrack until he reached the beginning again.[126] Similarly, a ring structure might have arisen as a natural consequence of Wagner's construction of the tetralogy. As is well known, Wagner wrote the texts of the dramas before he began work composing the music and in reverse order. Thus, even the creation of *The Ring* can be organized into a ring form:

Libretti		Scores
Götterdämmerung		*Götterdämmerung*
Siegfried		*Siegfried*
Die Walküre		*Die Walküre*
Das Rheingold		*Das Rheingold*
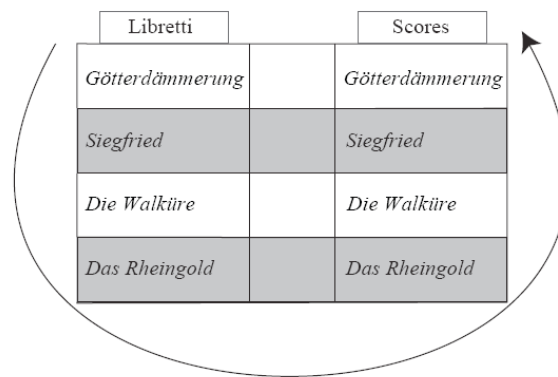
Figure 3.2 Order of composition of *The Ring* laid out in a cyclic form.[127]

Like Douglas's study of *Tristram Shandy,* the *Ring* may be found to be organized according to a ring structure which deviates from those of ancient texts, but which nonetheless demonstrates a remarkable level of organization control on the part of its creator.

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[126] Ibid., 96.
[127] Bailey points out that the composition of the texts was not entirely backward, as Wagner wrote the prose sketch of *Das Rheingold* before that of *Die Walküre,* but that he nonetheless did complete the poetic text of *Die Walküre* first. See "The Structure of the *Ring,"* 50. J. Peter Burkholder drew my attention to a similar diagram in Richard Taruskin's *Oxford History of Western Music*, Vol. 3 (Oxford University Press, 2005), 498. Although remarkably similar, Taruskin does not use his within the context of a discussion of ring structure.

Figure 3.3 outlines key events which feature Siegfried's acts as recapitulations of those of his ancestors, as well as those taken by Brünnhilde in response to his death. The chronology of dramatic events begins at the top of the diagram, runs down the left side, across the bottom, then back up the right side. Each moment on the right half of the ring structure serves as a dramatic recapitulation of the corresponding moment on the left half. The diagram includes two balanced sets of chiasmi, which is to say that the later events do not occur in exactly the reverse order as the original ones (Douglas's chart of *Tristram Shandy* incorporates similar chiasmi).
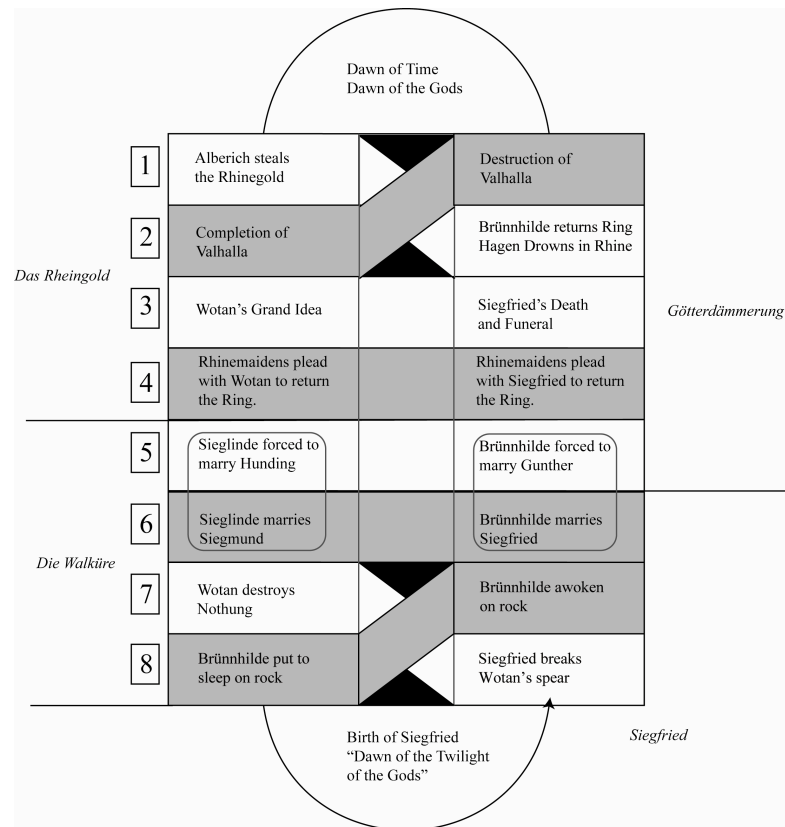
Figure 3.3 Overall ring structure centered on Siegfried's acts as recapitulations of those of his ancestors.

The ring structure of Figure 3.3 may resemble certain ideas about Wagner's form developed by Alfred Lorenz, often considered to be a controversial figure in the literature, but my project differs from Lorenz's in several ways. First, although he divides Wagner's music dramas into basic units called *dichterisch-musikalische Perioden,* and his overall formal diagrams of the *Ring* are labeled with both the musical and poetic contents each period, *Der Geheimnis* is concerned primarily with determining the purely musical forms which combine to create the music dramas.[128] In practice, he is more concerned with sectioning the music, not the poetry, into discrete parts which neatly divide the fabric of the entire music dramas. By contrast, the ring structure is designed to strike a balance between the musical and the dramatic situations it describes. Second, his structural designations are of a relatively small scale, using measures as the basic metric, and his form diagrams seek to account for every measure as it serves a single period. The moments listed in Figure 3.3 function more as nodal points, thematic ideas to which the actual dramatic and musical elements of the *Ring* are attracted. In addition, the ring diagram does not claim to be encyclopedic in scope; there are many dramatic and musical themes that are not accounted for on the diagram. Most importantly, my diagram is intended to serve a hermeneutic function in service of one piece of musical criticism; it is not designed to be a detailed formal outline of the nuts-and-bolts workings of the construction of the music dramas.

Moreover, although the structure might resemble a Lorenzian *Bogen* form, and both Warren Darcy and John Daverio have noted small scale arch forms in Wagner's music, Douglas's ring structure features organizational control beyond a simple harmonic

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[128] Alfred Lorenz, *Der Geheimnis der Form bei Richard Wagner,* Vol. 1 (Verlagt, 1966), 10.

or thematic reversal, many of which are found in the *Ring.* A prologue is balanced with an emphasized midpoint, and a parallelism of structure exists across the central division. A "latch" brings the end of the cycle—the twilight of the gods—back to the beginning where the dawn and creation of the world is portrayed in the prelude to *Das Rheingold.* Finally, several of the bands constitute rings within rings, which Douglas argues is a characteristic feature of ring composition. I call bands 5 and 6, which contain rings within rings, "major bands" and the others "minor bands."

An organizing framework such as a ring structure is a powerful tool for many reasons. First, it solves to a great extent the problem of selecting scenes in Wagner for analytic comparison. Without some sort of framework, analysts can easily find themselves in the position of being able to compare any scene with virtually any other scene. Without a guiding methodology for such analyses, they can be of only the most limited usefulness toward developing our understanding of larger-scale relationships in the *Ring.* Secondly, the analytic framework itself can open the door to exploring possible relationships between moments whose relationship would otherwise remain obscure and inconspicuous. Yet these advantages to ring structure as a methodology contain potential hazards as well. To a structure which guides an analyst's decisions about which passages to extract for comparison might be leveled the charge of cherry-picking moments which best suit the structure. To the ability of the structure to draw comparisons between material that otherwise seems disparate might be leveled the charge of begging the question—arguing that a relationship exists between scenes that has no basis other than appearing in the structural framework.

In the case of the more problematic or unobvious relationships, I struggled to do no violence to the way the drama unfolds on the stage—I did not want the ring structure

to become a Procrustean bed, and so I modified it when necessary, such as by incorporating the necessary chiasmi, rather than forcing Wagner's work into a structure into which it did not fit. At all times I sought to insure that the pairs of scenes have an inherent musical and dramatic relationship that could exist without a cyclic framework, even if the relationship was one that I would not have noticed without the framework's assistance. Although there are doubtless many moments of the *Ring* which would not fit comfortably within a cyclic structure, and many of those moments do not appear in Figure 3.3, I am overwhelmingly more interested in the manner in which rings can be embedded within themselves than whether the deepest level of the structure addresses all moments of the tetralogy equally well.

Although the "central place" figures into Douglas's theory as an important feature of the form, I have set aside discussion of Siegfried's youth in this dissertation. It is an important part of the ring structure as well as the overall story of the *Ring* as a whole, and certainly deserves exploration in its own right, as the birth of Siegfried serves as a symbol for the dawn of the new order which will succeed the downfall of the gods. Yet, although that symbol mirrors to a certain extent the dawn of the world itself in the beginning of *Das Rheingold*, I would not argue that it functions as a recapitulation of the opening of the tetralogy. Therefore, discussion of Acts I and II of Siegfried, although important with respect to the ring structure studied here, nonetheless falls outside the scope of this dissertation.

Because the end of *Götterdämmerung* recapitulates many issues of the cycle beyond simply those with which it is paired in Figure 3.3, I set aside discussion of bands 1 and 2 until Chapter 5, which is a study of how the end of *Götterdämmerung* brings closure to the *Ring* as a whole. I also set aside discussion of the major bands until

Chapter 4, as they require more detailed study and analysis than the minor bands. The remainder of this chapter, then, explores the smaller-scale recapitulations of Figure 3.3 as they find instantiation across the minor bands, offering a sketch of the types of relationships that a ring structure can clarify.

2. Analysis of the Minor Bands

In addition to shedding light on the organizational design of the repeated stories, the ring structure provides a framework for understanding the structure of musical repetition across bands. By demonstrating that there is a significant correspondence over time between dramatic and musical themes and that the correspondence is so intricately wrought, musical repetitions and developments across the bands are afforded a quality of structural weight which mere reminiscences do not enjoy.

Band 3 highlights a relationship between events that is not entirely obvious: Siegfried's death and funeral music in Act III of *Götterdämmerung* recapitulates Wotan's Grand Idea at the end of *Das Rheingold.* On the surface, both moments are related by one musical detail—the appearance of the sword motive in each. In fact, the two passages in question constitute the first and the last time the Sword motive is heard in its primary key of C major. Additionally, in both cases, the sword motive moves to a high G which is harmonized by the local dominant. This causes the appearance of the motive to have a cadential quality. Contrast this with another key moment involving the sword; when Siegmund removes it from the tree, it merely arpeggiates C major with no change of underlying harmony (See Example 3.1).
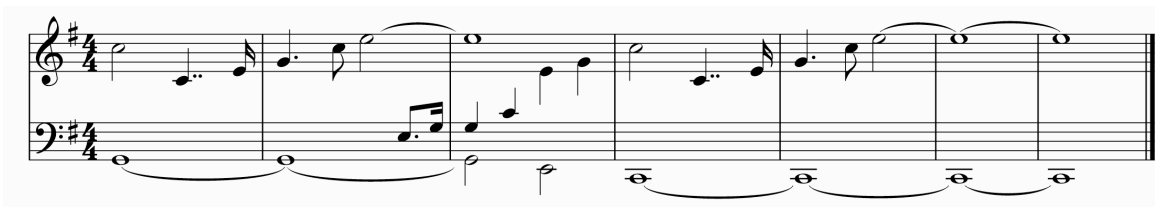
Example 3.1 Sword Motive in *Die Walküre,* Act I, Scene 3 (72/4/1)

At the end of *Das Rheingold,* bringing the music into C major requires some harmonic sleight of hand, as the opera closes with a repetition of the Db Valhalla music which opened Scene 2. The entire passage is reproduced and annotated as Example 3.2. Figure 3.4 is a voice-leading analysis from the beginning of the passage up to its arrival on V at m. 212/1/3, which establishes the local tonal center that the C major Sword motive interrupts.

Figure 3.4 First half of Valhalla period toward the end of *Das Rheingold*

Once the passage arrives on V, it moves to its parallel minor and prolongs it with its own dominant: first a V^9, then a vii^{o4}_3. The diminished chord is enharmonically recontextualized as vii^{o4}_2 of F minor, and C major makes its first appearance as the dominant to F. It is then tonicized by its own dominant to complete the modulation for the appearance of the Sword motive. After the Grand Idea, Wagner returns to Db by moving directly from C to a Bb minor chord. One way to interpret the Bb minor chord

Example 3.2 *Das Rheingold*, Scene 4[129]

Example 3.2 *Das Rheingold,* **Scene 4 cont.**

Example 3.2 cont.

Example 3.2 cont.

functionally is to hear it as the subdominant of F minor, allowing the passage to backtrack along the same tonal path it took to get to C major. Once it arrives in Db, the progression proceeds through a small-scale repetition of the middleground harmonic structure which appears in Figure 3.4: vi – IV – V – I. A harmonic reduction of the move to and from C major appears in Figure 3.5.

Figure 3.5 Harmonic reduction of modulation to C for the Sword motive in *Das Rheingold*, Scene 4

By contrast, the appearance of the Sword motive during the funeral music appears as a modal shift in a passage primarily centered on C minor, so that no chromatic finagling is required beyond a simple move to the parallel key. As will be explored in significant depth below and in the following chapter, the key of C in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* is often treated as marked, as signifying an absence which will be fulfilled in the later two operas. In a sense, the later statement of the sword motive in C major amidst a passage in C minor in *Götterdämmerung* fixes its marked chromatic appearance in a very distant key area at the end of *Das Rheingold.*

The appearance of the Sword motive during Siegfried's funeral music is not its last occurrence in the *Ring.* It is sounded again when Hagen attempts to take the ring from Siegfried's corpse and Siegfried's hand magically rises, warding him away. In the

same way that a Schenkerian would maintain that the structural descent of an *Urlinie* to

$\hat{1}$ may occur before the last literal appearance of that $\hat{1}$ in a particular piece, there are two

reasons for interpreting this repetition as non-structural. First, it does not occur in C

major, and while Bailey notes that the Sword motive eventually becomes associated with

D major as well as C major when Siegfried reforges it,[130] D major is nonetheless a

secondary associative key area. Second, like the Sword statement in Example 3.1, this

appearance does not include dominant-tonic cadential motion but simply arpeggiates D

major with no change of harmony.

From a dramatic standpoint, the connection between Siegfried's funeral music

and Wotan's grand idea is less obvious. Deryck Cooke explored various possible

interpretations of the appearance of the Sword motive at the end of *Das Rheingold,* which

ranged from the literal—during the rehearsals of the original Bayreuth staging of the

Ring, Wagner made a decision that Wotan would take a sword from the Nibelung's

horde, which he would brandish as the Sword motive is played—to a more figurative

interpretation, one which is much more in line with his original intent. As Cooke puts it,

"Wotan should be merely 'struck by a grand idea', and that this idea should later

materialize in the heroism of Siegmund, symbolized by the sword Wotan provides for

him."[131] Labeling this moment "Wotan's Grand Idea" highlights the fact that this

statement has much deeper dramatic meaning than a simple musical label for a sword.

Wotan's plans extend far beyond the act of placing the sword in the tree to his entire idea

to sire the race of the Wälsungs to retrieve the ring for him. The statement of the Sword

motive at the end of *Das Rheingold* is thus a synecdoche for the totality of his idea. The

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[130] Robert Bailey, "The Structure of the *Ring,"* 55.
[131] Deryck Cooke, *I Saw the World End,* 234-5.

point is confirmed when Wotan names the fortress "Walhall," a name that Fricka has never heard before and that Wotan refuses to clarify. He simply sings, "Was mächtig der Furcht mein Muth mir erfand wenn siegend es lebt, leg' es den Sinn dir dar."[132] It is the race of Wälsungs that Wotan has devised, and it is for the race of Wälsungs that Wotan names his fortress Walhall.

Kinderman has argued that Siegfried's funeral music constitutes one of the grandest recapitulations in Wagner: it retells the whole story of Siegfried, beginning with his lineage as a Wälsung, continuing through his heroic deeds, and comes to an emphatic climax with the sword.[133] The ring structure suggests that the funeral march commemorates more than just Siegfried's life. It signals the passing of the entire Wälsung race and marks the final consequence of the plan Wotan set in motion with his Grand Idea in *Das Rheingold.* These two key appearances of the Sword motive, far from being contextually unrelated, thus serve as bookends for the part of the story played by the Wälsungs and therefore provide dramatic as well as musical correspondence across Band 3 of Figure 3.3.

Band 4 correlates the Rhinemaidens' plea for Wotan to return the ring to them just before *Das Rheingold* ends with their similar plaint to Siegfried at the beginning of Act III of *Götterdämmerung.* While Band 3 highlighted an obvious musical repetition that invited inspection of a dramatic one, in Band 4 the dramatic elements of return are clearer than the musical connections, and so here the drama invites us to compare the musical passages. From a dramatic standpoint, the similarity of the purpose of their complaint is

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[132] "How my courage has devised to triumph over my powerful fear will clarify its meaning for you." *Das Rheingold,* 214.
[133] William Kinderman, "Richard Wagner: Music and Drama, Aesthetics, Politics," Seminar led in Bayreuth, Germany, August 14, 2007.

obvious, and the strategies they use in both attempts are similar as well. Both songs

contain two attempts, one alluring and one threatening, and both songs aim to contrast the

purity of the Rhine's depths with the corruption above.

In *Das Rheingold*, they first sing:

> Rheingold! Rheingold! reines Gold!
> wie lauter und hell leuchtetest hold du uns!
> Um dich, du klares, wir nun klagen:
> gebt uns das Gold, gebt uns das Gold!
> O gebt uns das reine zurück! …

When Loge rebuffs them, saying that Wotan has decreed that the gold will shine on them

no more, their tone changes and becomes more sinister:

> Rheingold! Rheingold! reines Gold!
> O leuchtete noch in der Tiefe dein laut'rer Tand!
> Traulich und treu ist's nur in der Tiefe:
> falsch und feig ist was dort oben sich freut![134]

The structure of the plaint in *Götterdämmerung* is similar. It begins with the

Rhinemaidens using flattery, as they chide him for being stingy with women, and sing

that he is handsome, strong, and worthy.[135] When this approach fails, they threaten that

the ring is cursed:

> Siegfried! Schlimmes wissen wir dir.
> Zu deinem Unheil wahr'st du den Ring.
> Aus des Rheines Gold ist der Ring geglüht:
> der ihn listig geschmiedet und schmächlich verlor,
> der verfluchte ihn, in fernster Zeit
> zu zeugen den Tod dem der ihn trüg'.
> Wie den Wurm du fälltest, So fällst auch du, Und heute noch:

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[134] "Rhinegold! Rhinegold! Pure gold! How clear and bright your loveliness glows to us! Of you, and your brightness we lament: give us the gold, give us the gold! O give us its purity back! … Rhinegold! Rhinegold! Pure gold! Oh if only your fair treasure still gleamed in the depths! It is trustworthy and true only in the depths: false and cowardly is what rejoices above." (216-8)

[135] Fredric Jameson translates *gehrenswerth* as "worthy love"; whereas Nico Castel translates it as "desirable."

> so heissen wir's dir, tauschest den Ring du uns nicht,
> im tiefen Rhein ihn zu bergen.
> Nur seine Fluth sühnet den Fluch!¹³⁶

Their plaint in *Götterdämmerung* is more ominous than the one in *Das Rheingold*. It is concerned not just with falsehood above the depths, but death and destruction.

The musical connections between the two scenes are less obvious than the dramatic ones. On the surface, the music in the two scenes seems mostly disparate. This is particularly true given that the plaints in *Das Rheingold* are very brief, whereas the scene in *Götterdämmerung* lasts quite a while. Their first song in *Das Rheingold* is in Ab major serving as a prolongation of the dominant of Db and their second is in Gb major/minor as a prolongation of the subdominant. Conversely, the scene in *Götterdämmerung* is centered on an F major refrain with excursions to various key areas both remote and close. Both passages are in compound triple meter but the one in *Götterdämmerung* is based around a completely new melody.

The latter delineates its form through the use of a refrain to which the intervening episodes of the scene return. The refrain is first heard as the instrumental introduction to the scene. The Rhinemaidens' initial song consists of a variation of the refrain followed by the refrain itself. They sing both parts twice before Siegfried's entrance with an

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¹³⁶ "Siegfried! We prophesize your doom. You keep the ring to your own disaster. From the pure Rhine's gold was that ring tempered: he who cunningly forged it and shamefully lost it cursed it for all time to bear witness to the death of he who holds it. As you slew the dragon, so will you be slain—and today: this we foretell, if you do not exchange the ring to us to return to the depths of the Rhine. Only this course will cleanse the curse!" (254-7). Several points of interest in the German: the line "Aus des Rheines Gold" is homophonous with "reines Gold," a connection which was made explicit in the text at the end of *Das Rheingold*. In addition, the word "Fluch" in the final line translates literally to "flood" and thus evokes the imagery of a flowing river to describe the course of events necessary to forestall the curse.

interrupted cadence at the end of the first one and an authentic cadence at the end of the

second, creating an overall period structure for the entire passage.[137]

The first motivic reference to *Das Rheingold* occurs at the beginning of their

variation, when the music abruptly moves from F major to Ab major and the melody

repeats—at the same pitch level and virtually identical rhythm—the music to which the

Rhinemaidens sang "Traulich und treu ist's nur in der Tiefe." The new text recalls the

old: "Nacht liegt in der Tiefe." (See Example 3.3 and Example 3.4). The variation

continues, and as the Rhinemaidens sing "Rheingold, klares Gold," they recall the

beginnings of the two strains from *Das Rheingold* in which they sang "Rheingold! reines

Gold." The leap from G to A in Woglinde's line recalls the descending octave Gb's in the

second strain, and her descending A to E tetrachord on "klares Gold" recalls her

descending A to Eb tetrachord on "reines Gold" (See Example 3.5 and Example 3.6)

These two passages have slightly different harmonizations; the "Rheingold" beginning in

Das Rheingold (219/1/4) is harmonized by a Cb minor chord followed by a Gb chord (iv

– I in Gb major), whereas the latter is harmonized using an F^9 (in inversion) followed by

an $F\#^{o4}_3$. The 9th chord of the Rheingold motive, which generally resolves as a dominant,

instead moves by stepwise voice-leading to a vii^{o7} of V of F. Similarly, the earlier "reines

Gold" features a motion from Db major to Ab major (which sounds like IV-I over a local

Ab major), whereas the "klares Gold" is harmonized by a GMm^7 to Amm^7 (which sounds

like a deceptive cadence in the key of the dominant, C). The later harmonizations are

certainly representative of Wagner's more developed,

[137] By contrast, Lorenz separates the introduction into its own period, and reads my period structure as constituting the two *Stollen* of a larger Bar form. I am unconvinced, however, because subsequent appearances of the refrain have a strong sense of return which is weakened when they are divided among various sections of various periods. See Lorenz, 238-45.

Example 3.3 *Das Rheingold,* **Scene 4**

Example 3.4 *Götterdämmerung,* **Act III, Sc. 1**

post-Tristan harmonic style. It is in keeping with Bailey's description of the style, for

example, to hear the Amm⁷ of the deceptive cadence as a fusion of the relative major and

minors.[138]

Although the harmonic idiom has changed vastly between *Das Rheingold* and

Götterdämmerung, Wagner's compositional approaches in differentiating between the

two strains (we may call these the *Schmeichelsgesang* and *Schreckensgesang* after

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[138] See Footnote 142 below.

Example 3.5 *Das Rheingold,* **Scene 4**

Example 3.6 *Götterdämmerung,* **Act III, Scene 1**

Siegfried's line: "wer nicht ihrem Schmeicheln traut, den schrecken sie mit Drohen"[139])

are similar, though considerably more complex in the later opera. In *Das Rheingold,* both

strains serve to prolong Db major, the key of the surrounding music and the one in which

the opera will cadence. The *Schmeichelsgesang* is a simple prolongation of Ab Major,

the dominant:

$$\text{Ab:} \quad \text{V}^9 - \text{I} - \text{V} - \text{I} - \text{IV} - \text{I}$$

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[139] "He who mistrusts their charms they frighten with threats." *Götterdämmerung,* 269-70.

The *Schreckensgesang* in *Das Rheingold* is also diatonic, but instead of prolonging Ab Major, it is primarily centered on Gb Major, the subdominant. Whereas the first strain's prolongation of Ab major was relatively simple with no harmonic exploration beyond moving to its dominant or subdominant, the progression in the second strain is more complex in that it uses the subdominant of the parallel minor (Cb minor) and also spends some time in the key of the mediant. The V chord with which it ends is then recontextualized as I in the Db major in which the opera subsequently closes.

<p style="text-align:center">Gb: iv – I – III (I-V) – V – iv – I – V</p>

The *Schmeichelsgesang* is thus characterized by a simple move to the dominant and prolongation via major keys, whereas the *Schreckensgesang* is characterized by a more complicated move to the subdominant with prolongation via minor keys.

The *Schmeichelsgesang* in *Götterdämmerung* is mostly diatonic. When the Rhinemaidens first address Siegfried, it is to a variation of the refrain that appears in Ab Major, the key of the corresponding passage in *Das Rheingold*. As was the case with the interpolated "Nacht liegt in der Tiefe," the appearance of Ab major provides a jarring contrast to the F major which precedes it. The passages which follow modulate wildly, when compared to a *Das Rheingold* standard, but the Rhinemaidens' plaints remain mostly diatonic within themselves, and often return to fragments of the refrain. Thus, the chromatic excursions are grounded by a return to and centricity on a relatively stable key area.

The *Schreckensgesang* in *Götterdämmerung*, by contrast, is a remarkably dissonant and chromatic passage of music that is characterized by prolongations and ascending sequences (a technique which Bailey calls "expressive tonality") of mostly half- and fully-diminished seventh harmonies. Indeed, both Wagner's approach to

tonality and sectional organization in *Götterdämmerung* demonstrate his significant compositional development during the many years and many operas intervening since *Das Rheingold*. Determining local tonality in the earlier opera is usually trivial (though determining a governing tonal center for the work as a whole is a thornier issue) and boundaries between changes in texture, from arioso to recitative for example, can be pinpointed with ease. Conversely, *Götterdämmerung's* approach to tonality is much more complex: key areas are often established through allusion and evaporate before achieving any sort of conclusiveness and there are frequent extended passages of prolonged dissonance that can connect to a tonal center in only the most tangential way. Similarly, the musical foreground is more continuous than that of *Das Rheingold,* so that section divisions become more much unclear and simultaneously more flitting, so that rapidly-changing melodic materials and harmonic structures become the norm.

The *Schreckensgesang* proper begins at (254/1/3) with the Rhinemaidens' angst-ridden cries of "Siegfried! Siegfried!" and has a ternary structure, with the B section of Siegfried's response book-ended by repeated material which begins with the Rhinemaidens' cries of "Siegfried! Siegfried!" Because the text at this moment is dominated by narrative, Siegfried and the Rhinemaidens spend much time retelling the plot and the musical texture supplies recalls of the associated motives. The move from motive to motive contributes to much of the frantic musical changes of the entire passage. I have reproduced just the closing "Siegfried!" refrain as Example 3.7, because although it includes motivic recalls, it does so in a manner much more self-contained and less diverse than the first "Siegfried!" refrain. Figure 3.6 constitutes three analytic readings of the passage.

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Example 3.7 *Götterdämmerung,* **End of** *Schreckensgesang,* **Act III, Scene 1.**

Example 3.7 cont.

Figure 3.6 Three analytic readings of *Götterdämmerung*, Act III, Scene 1 (258/2/1ff.)

Figure 3.6A constitutes a pair of roman numeral/functional analyses. The first is a monotonal reading in F minor, which demonstrates one of the problems with attempting a monotonal functional analysis in late Wagner. The second is a modulating reading which begins by reading the E in the bass as prolonging the dominant of A major before resolving deceptively to F minor. F minor moves to its own dominant which also resolves deceptively to Db major,

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which is then treated as the dominant to Gb major. The F in the bass, then, acts as a

leading tone serving to prolong the dominant, and the final chord of the progression

becomes a vii^{o4}_2 , with the Ebb spelled enharmonically as D$\natural$.

The reading of a tonal progression in A.2 suggests the potential usefulness of a

linear analysis, which appears as Figure 3.6B. The linear reading highlights the

interesting chromatic ascent in the inner voice, a rising 6$^{\text{th}}$ linear intervallic pattern in the

inner voices, and uncovers a third progression as the bass note E moves up through F to

an implied Gb. The F is unfolded to the D$\natural$, once again suggesting that the entire set of

harmonies is a long prolongation of vii^{o7} of Gb.

Each reading is problematic. Reading A.1 cannot be considered a convincing

analysis at all. A.2 and B highlight a compelling modulating progression, but while they

look quite good on the page, do not capture the affect of this passage. The important

dissonance of the shrill cries of "Siegfried!" is overlooked in the reductive analyses, as is

the ominous flavor of the Rhinemaidens' Cb recitation tone which is supported by

diminished harmonies. In fact, the very difficulty that Reading A.1 has in making sense

of most of the harmonies which begin and end the passage allows it to project a sense of

the relative tonal stability of the music at any given moment, as the difficulty of

analyzing the first and last chords contrasts with the strong sense of arrival that occurs on

the F minor chord. Although it functions very poorly as an analysis, what Reading A.1

does do is highlight a very important aural quality of the music missed by Readings A.2

and B.

That quality is also captured in Reading C, which is a pitch-class-set analysis of

the upper voices of the passage. Consonance and dissonance have immediate visual

representation. The triads in the middle of the passage, [037], are bookended by diminished chords, all but the last of which are members of the set [0258] until the final harmony, which changes from half-diminished to fully-diminished.
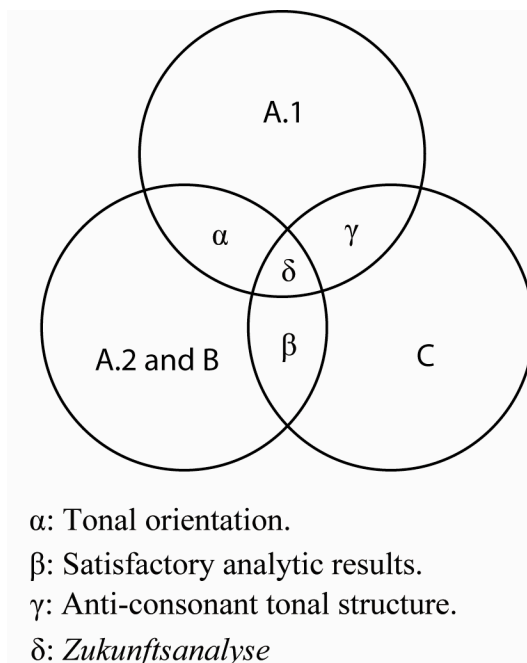
Readings A.1 and C begin to resemble Robert Morgan's analysis of the Prelude to Act III of *Parsifal,* which he argues is governed by dissonant prolongation, which describes a reversal of the typical polarity of consonance and dissonance.[140] Diminished harmonies are prolonged and offer repose most associated with major or minor triads, whereas those harmonies are used primarily as passing chords—dissonances!—between the "stable" ^{o}7 chords. We would expect a typical tonal passage to begin in tonic, lose stability as it moves to the dominant, and then find resolution by returning to and cadencing on tonic. This passage has the opposite effect. It begins and ends with tonal instability and only achieves a fleeting sense of repose in the middle. Yet, while Reading C makes the aural experience immediately visual, it suffers because the abstract notation of pitch-class sets cannot capture the sense that the passage has tonal centers.

Each reading of Figure 3.6 captures two of the three critical musical effects exploited by the *Schreckensgesang* and each has a blind spot. Figure 3.7 is a Venn diagram of the three readings. The areas where they overlap govern a shared musical effect that the two can highlight. Thus, α is the space of tonal function, where Readings A.1, A.2, and B represent the passage's progression through key areas. β refers to the fact that Readings A.2, B, and C utilize analytic methodologies which provide adequate results and satisfactorily describe an overall logic for the entire passage. Finally, γ is the

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[140] See Robert P. Morgan, "Dissonant Prolongation: Theoretical and Compositional Precedents," *Journal of Music Theory* 20/1 (Spring, 1976), pp. 49-91.

space represented by Readings A.1 and C, which highlights the reversal of the typical tonal pattern of consonance-dissonance-consonance.

α: Tonal orientation.
β: Satisfactory analytic results.
γ: Anti-consonant tonal structure.
δ: *Zukunftsanalyse*

Figure 3.7 Venn diagram of the analytic readings in Figure 3.5

Space δ represents the lacunae of the three readings, the space of a *Zukunftsanalyse* which might be able to represent in an independent and self-consistent way both the linear tonal structure of the passage and the aural effect produced by the abstract relationships of its pitch construction. Developing such an analytic system is of course outside the scope of this dissertation. The primary point to be taken from study of this passage is that compared to the related passages in *Das Rheingold* and the *Schmeichelsgesang* which precedes it in *Götterdämmerung*, the use of tonality here is drastically different.

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Nonetheless, while the harmonic treatment of the songs in the two operas is in a particular sense very different, they have in common a more general rhetorical function. Wagner's treatment of chromaticism was still very much in its infancy when he composed *Das Rheingold,* so the change in character between the *Schmeichelsgesang* and the *Schrekensgesang* was subtle. The latter portrayed the corrupted foundation of Valhalla through a turn to the subdominant and the minor mode. In *Götterdämmerung,* the distinction is very pronounced. The lilting tonal music of the *Schmeichelsgesang* gives way to a deep, brooding dissonance. While the degree of change between the songs of *Götterdämmerung* is by orders of magnitude far beyond that which occurred in *Das Rheingold,* one might nonetheless say that the rhetorical turn from diatonicism to dissonance and chromaticism in the later opera is in the same spirit as the rhetorical turn from major-and-dominant to minor-and-plagal in the earlier.

Band 7 connects the destruction of Nothung by Wotan in Act II of *Die Walküre* with the moment when Siegfried shatters the Spear in Act III of *Siegfried*. This is a key dramatic moment: through breaking the Spear, Siegfried destroys the source of Wotan's power. Wotan is left to sing, "Zieh' hin! Ich kann dich nicht halten!"[141] and to return to Walhall as Waltraute describes in Act I of *Götterdämmerung.*

Siegfried thus proves himself a free hero, capable of acting without Wotan's assistance and even acting against Wotan's will with impunity. This marks a remarkable change in Wotan since the events of *Die Walküre.* Although he expressed great love for both Siegmund and Brünnhilde, his love seemed limited according to Siegmund's ability to perform his will and Brünnhilde's willingness to obey him absolutely. Now, Wotan is

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[141] "Go on! I cannot stop you!"

able to accept defeat at the hands of the free hero and is unable to stop him even when he tries. Siegfried thereby fulfills the very role which Wotan intended for Siegmund.

The musical parallel between these two moments is remarkable. Both feature a visual clash between the Spear and the Sword; and both feature a musical clash between the Spear and Sword motives on the same F#^{o7} chord. In *Die Walküre,* the passage begins with an interruption of the B minor Walküre motive by Wotan's entrance which is punctuated by the fully-diminished seventh chord. The Sword motive immediately follows in C minor, a modal distortion which represents the brokenness of the object and the music leads to the Annunciation of Death, music which had already been strongly associated with Siegmund's death in particular. (See Example 3.8).

Example 3.8 *Die Walküre,* Act II, Scene 5

In *Siegfried,* the corresponding passage is approached by an expressive sequence of rising seconds. The sword motive now appears in the correct key of C major[142] and once again it strikes the spear against an $F\#^{o7}$ chord. This time, the sword is victorious, and now it is the Spear motive which is distorted, descending with chromatic notes that obscure a tonal center, eventually landing on A. Whereas the earlier moment transitioned to music related to Siegmund's demise, the Annunciation of Death motive, now the music transitions to music associated with Wotan's end: the Twilight of the Gods motive. (See Example 3.9).

Yet, the musical and visual similarities of the two passages give way to an even deeper symbolism that drives to the root of one of the central ethical debates of the entire *Ring* cycle. The Spear is not just Wotan's weapon; it is a symbol for his rule of law by contract. The Sword is not just Siegmund's or Siegfried's weapon; it is a phallic symbol of their virility and their capability for the transcendent love that the cycle presents as its ideal. The point was not missed by Adrianne Pieczonka who, in her stunning performance as Sieglinde during the 2007 Bayreuth production of *Die Walküre,* shrieked as she fell to the ground, on her back, with her legs wide open when Siegmund finally pulled it from the tree.

And so when Wotan uses the power of his Spear to destroy the Sword in *Die Walküre,* he highlights what has been a prevailing ethic throughout the story up to that

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[142] This account slightly simplifies the musical texture. The Sword motive appears over an A, which might seem to imply a key area of A minor. This strategy is actually quite common in Wagner's later work, and is the basis for Robert Bailey's study of the *Tristan* prelude. According to Bailey, keys which are considered in earlier music to be relative major and minor are synthesized here into a single chord. The relationship between the two keys here is derived not from displacing the root by a third, but simply by raising the 5th of a major triad by a step. Thus, the union of the two chords, a minor-minor seventh chord, can stand in as a "tonic harmony" of a double-tonic complex, wherein either C major or A minor can be understood as the "tonic" of the "key." See Robert Bailey, "An Analytical Study of the Sketches and Drafts," in *Prelude and Transfiguration from Tristan and Isolde,* (Norton, 1985), especially pp. 113-24.

Example 3.9 Siegfried, Act III, Scene 2

point: the rule of law as established through contract. In this case, Sieglinde's forced

wedding oath, though clearly made under duress, trumps her genuine love and passion for

Siegmund. By destroying Wotan's spear, Siegfried actually creates the very possibility

for his love relationship with Brünnhilde, which is unable to be broken even when she is

forced to make her own wedding oath to Gunther. The deep musical, visual, and

symbolic relationships between these two moments is summarized and distilled by the

love triangle diagrams in Figure 3.8. Further discussion of the two love relationships will

be explored in Chapter 4.
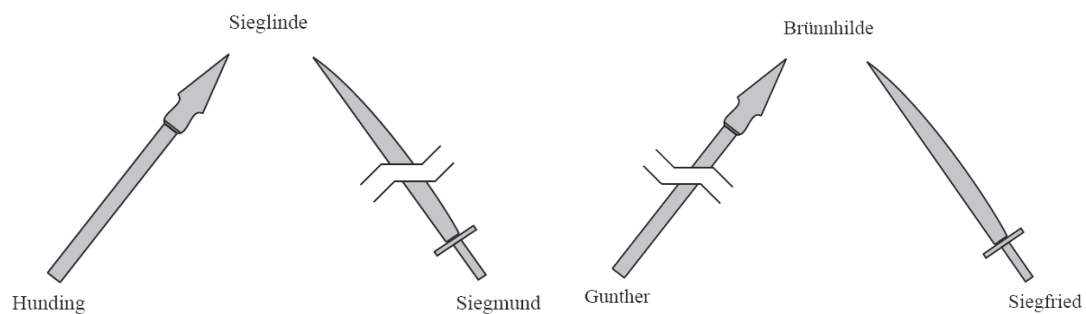
Figure 3.8 Parallel love triangles involving the Sword and Spear

Band 8 centers on Brünnhilde as she is put to sleep on the rock in *Die Walküre*

and awoken by Siegfried in the following opera. The dramatic relationship between these

two events is clear, but it is worth highlighting the fact that Brünnhilde asked Wotan to

surround her rock with fire specifically so that Siegfried could be the only one to

penetrate it and claim her as a bride. In Act III of *Die Walküre,* she sings:

> Soll fesselnder Schlaf fest mich binden,
> dem feigsten Manne zur leichten Beute:
> dies Eine musst du erhören,
> was heil'ge Angst zu dir fleht!
> Die schlafende schütze mit scheuchenden Schrecken,

<div style="text-align: center">

dass nur ein furchtlos freiester Held

hier auf dem Felsen einst mich fänd![143]

</div>

It is Siegfried of whom she sings, and the audience is alerted to this by the appearance of

the Siegfried motive on the words "ein furchtlos freiester Held," previously heard when

Brünnhilde implored Sieglinde to flee for the sake of her unborn child: "den hehrsten

Helden der Welt/hegst du, o Weib, im schirmendes Schooss!"[144] Being awoken by

Siegfried is thus the fruition of plans set forth—both her plans to be to be won as bride by

only the most worthy of heroes, but also as a means by which Wotan's Grand Idea, which

did not succeed with Siegmund, may yet find realization. In other words, the scenes have

a reciprocal relationship. The earlier passage looks forward to the later passage

specifically, while the later looks backward to fulfill the specific foreshadowing of the

earlier one.

The order of musical material and the associated events that occur when Siegfried

comes to Brünnhilde's rock are a reversal of the events and musical material that

occurred when Wotan put Brünnhilde to sleep. The musical construction of the two

passages can thus be laid in a ring form, as shown in Figure 3.9. Because the passage in

Siegfried is not only longer but also incorporates musical and dramatic themes that had

not yet been developed in *Die Walküre,* I have bracketed passages of unrelated music

simply as "interludes." Motives are grouped into "units" and "complexes." Complexes

are groups within the same box and represent motives which are sounded serially but can

be nonetheless sectioned off from each other. Units are motives which are set in

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[143] "Should enchanting sleep bind me to be the easy prize of the cowardly man: this one thing must you hear, with powerful fear I implore you! The sleeping guard with dispersing terrors, that only a fearless, most free hero might find me here on this rock" (285-6).
[144] "You bear the noblest hero in the world, o Woman, in your shielding womb" (226).

counterpoint with one another and cannot be extracted without destroying the musical texture. Units are indicated in the chart as groups of motives joined with braces. For example, the second box on the left-hand side indicates a unit wherein the Sleeping Brünnhilde motive is heard in counterpoint with Wotan's Farewell. By contrast, the box opposite indicates a complex wherein Wotan's Farewell is heard first, and then subsequently the Sleeping Brünnhilde is played (as with all such diagrams, the right side should be read from bottom to top).

Die Walküre		*Siegfried*
Brünnhilde put to sleep in 'not C'/E		Brünnhilde awoken in E/C
{ Sleeping Brünnhilde { Wotan's Farewell		(interlude) Sleeping Brünnhilde (interlude) Wotan's Farewell
Sleeping Brünnhilde		Sleeping Brünnhilde
Annunciation of Death		Annunciation of Death (interlude) Annunciation of Death
Magic Fire Magic Sleep { Sleeping Brünnhilde { Siegfried { Annunciation of Death		Sleeping Brünnhilde Magic Sleep { Siegfried's Horn { Siegfried { Magic Fire

Figure 3.9 Ring construction of related motives in *Die Walküre,* Act III and *Siegfried,* Act III

The diagram begins with the moment when Wotan puts Brünnhilde to sleep. As Wotan sings "so küsst er die Gottheit von dir!" his melody and its musical accompaniment approach a cadence in C major.   While the voice cadences there, the harmony instead creates a deceptive cadence in the parallel minor, moving to Ab major instead. At this point, a rotation of major thirds begins, and the passage ends in E major with the Sleeping Brünnhilde music.

Once she is asleep, Wotan closes her helmet and covers her with her shield. This is accompanied by a reiteration of the farewell music he sang earlier in the act in G# minor and returns to the Sleeping Brünnhilde and the Annunciation of Death motives. Wotan then calls for Loge to surround the rock with fire, and we hear the Magic Fire music in E major. There is another statement of the Magic Sleep music, and then Wotan sings "Wer meines Speeres Spitze fürchtet/durchschreite das Feuer nie!" to the Siegfried motive in counterpoint with the Magic Fire music. The opera ends with recalls of the Annunciation of Death motive before ending in E major to the strains of the Magic Fire and Sleeping Brünnhilde music.

The corresponding passage in *Siegfried* begins after the hero has broken Wotan's spear and heads toward Brünnhilde's rock. We first hear the Magic Fire music in F major in counterpoint with Siegfried's horn, then the Siegfried motive is added. As Siegfried approaches the peak, we hear the Magic Sleep and the Sleeping Brünnhilde motives in E major. The Annunciation of Death sounds just before an interlude of new music unrelated to *Die Walküre* as Siegfried finds Brünnhilde at the top of the rock. After Siegfried notices Brünnhilde's body, we hear Wotan's farewell music as he removes the shield covering her body and the helmet covering her face (in the reverse order that Wotan placed them there). There is new music here as Siegfried removes the

breastplate and learns fear for the first time and feels passion and love for Brünnhilde. Finally, he awakens Brünnhilde with a kiss, and the music begins by juxtaposing E minor and C major, reversing the move from C to E that occurred as Wotan kissed her to sleep. It is a critical point that C was weakened by a deceptive cadence in the parallel minor in the earlier moment. Similar to the discussion of the chromaticized appearance of C major at the end of *Das Rheingold*, the later moment serves to normalize, or fix the earlier one.

Broadly speaking, E is treated as a governing and orienting tonality for the scene as a whole. It begins by prolonging the dominant of E minor and remains in E minor for quite some time. While the scene moves through a number of key areas, it returns to and emphasizes E throughout and finally ends in E major. The music associates E with Brünnhilde: specifically, her love for Wotan, the Wälsungs, and Siegfried, and Wotan's love for her. For example, Wotan sings his farewell to Brünnhilde in a passage which begins with an emphasized E minor. Similarly, when Brünnhilde sings "Der diese Liebe mir in's Herz gehaucht,/dem Willen, der dem Wälsung mich gesellt,/ihm innig vertraut trotzt' ich deinem Gebot,"[145] she does so in a passage with a stunning turn from E minor to E major, to the same music in the same key with which Wotan will agree to surround her with the magic fire (See Example 3.10).

While E plays an important role in expressing Brünnhilde's love in this scene, Wagner's treatment of C is considerably more interesting. Throughout the scene, passages in C fail to cadence conclusively, or else the cadences are quickly undermined. When Brünnhilde sings that it was for Wotan's love for Siegmund that she decided he

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[145] "For he who breathed this love into my heart, for his will which joined me with the Wälsung, for him, with whom I am deeply familiar, that I defied your command." (273-4).

Example 3.10 *Die Walküre,* **Act III, Scene 3**

should be shielded, her melody is allowed to cadence in C, but on a weak plagal cadence, and Wotan immediately brings the music back to E minor. (See Example 3.11).

In a similar passage, when Brünnhilde tells Wotan that Sieglinde carries the sword he made for Siegmund, the sword motive appears in C major and almost cadences

Example 3.11 *Die Walküre,* Act III, Scene 3

when the V^7 chord becomes a vii^{o7} chord which is treated enharmonically to resolve back

to E. (See Example 3.12).

When Wotan first considered his punishment for her transgression, it appeared in

a first-stage of the Magic Sleep motive which prolonged C. Subsequent statements of the

Magic Sleep motive begin in Ab (this point will be explored in detail in Chapter 5), but it

is important that the particular statement of the motive which occurs as Brünnhilde is put

to sleep is approached by an averted cadence in C.

The first statement of the Magic Sleep motive is a mere inkling of Wotan's plans

for Brünnhilde which would eventually be revised and realized in an expanded Magic

Example 3.12 *Die Walküre,* **Act III, Scene 3**

Sleep motive. This first motive prolongs C major, as does the music which follows, but the passage modulates so as to cadence in D. This is especially notable, since that cadence is undermined, and the tonality moves back to C minor for the next passage. It would seem that the move to D was expressly designed to avoid a cadence in C. The music once again modulates away from C for the cadence, this time in G minor. (See Example 3.13).

Another way that C is undermined throughout this scene is through the many appearances of the Siegfried motive. The motive is first heard in C minor in Scene 1 of the same act, when Brünnhilde tells Sieglinde that she carries the world's most glorious hero in her womb. The Siegfried motive will continue to be associated with C minor in

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Example 3.13 *Die Walküre,* Act III, Scene 3

the subsequent operas, however, it only appears once in C minor in Scene 3; during the

passage following the first Magic Sleep motive, which modulates away from C before

cadencing. Otherwise, the Siegfried motive appears once in G minor, twice in A minor,

and twice in E minor. One of the appearances in E minor occurs immediately before the

repetition of the E major music, expressing Wotan's love for Brünnhilde and his decision to grant her wish. The last scene of *Die Walküre,* then, paradoxically draws attention to the importance of C as a key area through denying it. As *Die Walküre* comes to a close, C remains an absent key

As a result, the moment when Brünnhilde is put to sleep on a deceptive cadence to Ab can be profitably understood as expressing both E and 'not C.' While both E and C figure in to this moment, they are certainly not afforded the same prominence. It would be less accurate to say that the motive begins in C than to suggest that the motive begins with an allusion to, or an avoidance of C. But whereas the last scene of *Die Walküre* seems throughout to be concerned with avoiding C as much at is concerned with expressing E as a central tonality, the end of *Siegfried* asserts both. Brünnhilde's awakening by Siegfried both reverses the directionality of the progression and, by offering C as a conclusive key area, completes the tonal pairing. In contrast to a more simplistic strategy, whereby the repetition at the end of *Siegfried* might repeat a tonal pairing from the end of *Die Walküre,* the music realizes the pairing that was earlier only alluded to in order to bring a sense of resolution to Brünnhilde's awakening. Although it adopts a different strategy from a sonata movement, the recapitulation of the moment when Brünnhilde is put to sleep is thus nonetheless treated as a harmonic event. Where a sonata form fixes the tonality of the exposition by bringing the earlier themes into the key of the tonic, this recapitulation fixes the harmonic structure by bringing both members of the tonal pairing into equal prominence.

While this chapter has considered on a smaller-scale some of the basic relationships that the ring structure can highlight, at the same time the examples have pointed toward more complex recapitulatory relationships. Discussion of bands 3 and 4

have introduced reworkings of music related to Valhalla and the Rhinemaidens which is developed in a much deeper way in relation to their functions in the drama as a whole. Discussion of the love triangles involving Sieglinde and Brünnhilde have structural importance in the drama which goes way beyond the moments in which the Spear and Sword are broken. Harmonic implications across these scenes—the polarization between Ab major of the Rhinemaidens and Db major of Valhalla and the importance of E and C as a tonal pairing in the love relationship between Siegfried and Brünnhilde—require closer inspection. The following two chapters will consider the more complicated relationships across the central divide of the ring structure while bringing closure to a study of harmonic relationships that have only begun to be explored.

Chapter 4

Love, Marriage, and the Major Bands

The brief study of the ring structure's minor bands in Chapter 3 demonstrated on a small-scale the sort of relationships it is capable of elucidating. Yet beyond providing fertile ground for analyzing remote, small-scale reminiscences, the ring structure can also govern deeper thematic relationships. The Major Bands are distinguished from the Minor Bands because they not only serve as guideposts for the repetition of major structural points of the drama as a whole, but they also constitute miniature subrings. The present chapter demonstrates that the overall ring structure does not just highlight a mere similarity between the love stories of Siegmund and Sieglinde on the one hand and Siegfried and Brünnhilde on the other, but that those stories are governed by their own smaller-scale rings that provide internal organization while emphasizing the importance of the stories within the overall *Ring*.

Of particular value is that the ring structure provides a methodology for considering later moments of the cycle to be recapitulations of earlier ones, particularly those in which the musical or dramatic relationships are less obvious. Once there is a critical mass of evidence supporting the existence of a ring structure and the pattern of the structure begins to crystalize, the analyst may wish to examine moments of emphasis in the drama and determine whether a potential mirror image—even, or especially, one which on first glance appears to be a brief aside of little importance.

Moreover, commonalities among a set of points along the ring structure invites the analyst to explore the possibility that they may be governed by a deeper musical or dramatic relationship. While exploring the relationships across the Major bands of Figure 3.3, the present chapter also explores its interaction with and development of a musical thread alluded to at the end of Chapter 3: Siegfried and Brünnhilde's union as expressed through a tonal pairing of E and C and a musical emplotment of the new redemptive ethos of love sparked by Siegmund and Sieglinde and realized by Siegfried and Brünnhilde.

Love is one of many central themes of the cycle as a whole and its importance is underscored by the fact that the *Ring*'s first episodes concern the Rhinemaidens' flirtatious advances toward Alberich and the barren, apparently loveless marriage between Wotan and Fricka. Love is the foremost issue in Act I of *Die Walküre*, as it chronicles the attempts of Siegmund and Sieglinde to realize their passion for one another even as the ugly oaths she had no choice but to make with Hunding prove to be both of their downfalls. Ultimately, the cycle will end with the redemption of love (and marriage) by Siegfried and Brünnhilde, who will realize a bond strong enough to persist through deception, betrayal, and even death.

1. The Prehistory of Love

In the universe of the *Ring,* contractual marriage long predates romantic marriage. Contractual marriage is a social construct, existing without consideration of love, and is a consequence of the world order established by Wotan. Although he is the ruler of the gods, it is only through enacting and honoring agreements that he has any power at all. Therefore, it is fitting that the prototypical contractual marriage is exemplified by the

relationship between Wotan and Fricka—a loveless and barren union which is nonetheless considered to be sacred. The relationships between Sieglinde and Hunding, Brünnhilde and Gunther, and Siegfried and Gutrune are all contractual marriages. The *Ring* treats romantic marriage both as the ideal to which love should aspire and as incompatible with social norms; genuine love between two people seems not to exist within the social world presented in the *Ring.* This is one reason why the prototypical romantic marriage, exemplified by Siegmund and Sieglinde, is doomed; though their relationship is founded on a genuine love for one another, it is not only considered to be incongruent with the societal constructs of marriage but outright illicit.[146] Brünnhilde and Siegfried are the only other couple in the cycle to achieve a romantic marriage, one which will serve as a structural repetition that completes, in the sense of perfecting, the one attempted by Siegmund and Sieglinde.

It was Wagner's intention that the complete *Ring* cycle consist of three operas and a prelude.[147] *Das Rheingold* has a different character than the three nights which will follow. Among the basic distinctions, its brevity and lack of intermissions lie in sharp contrast against the other three operas, each of which contains three distinct, full-length acts. Further differences have been explored by previous writers through the lens of genre. For example, Robert Bailey attributes a classical progression of dramatic modes to the last three operas—he considers *Die Walküre* to be a pathos, *Siegfried* a comedy,

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[146] Fricka makes it clear through her line of argumentation in Act II of *Die Walküre* that the incestuous nature of the relationship, while offensive to her sensibilities, by no means represents the primary reason for her intercession.

[147] More accurately, he considered the cycle a "*Bühnenfestspiel für drei Tage und einen Vorabend,*" a stage festival play for three days and one eve.

and *Götterdämmerung* a tragedy, but he refers to *Das Rheingold* simply as a Prologue.[148]

Peter Conrad suggests instead a Romantic progression of the literary styles each opera of

the cycle represents. According to Conrad, *Götterdämmerung* best exemplifies the Epic,

as the epic is the literary mode which deals with dynastic machinations and the fall of

civilization; *Siegfried* is a Romance, a pastoral mode which focuses on the maturation of

the young hero; *Die Walküre* is a Novel, as it is concerned with the domestic and social

affairs of Hunding and Wotan; and *Das Rheingold* is an "Ibsenite" Drama, a play which

is in its essence a philisophical debate. Conrad argues that the *Ring* "arches across the

history of romanticism," with each opera accounting for a different romantic idiom.[149]

Actually, Bailey's and Conrad's positions are not that far from each other; the differences

between their typologies result not from a disagreement about type but rather a simple

difference in focus. Bailey's "modes" describe generalized plot structures (or in the case

of the pathos, a mere rhetorical strategy) which could be filled in a myriad of ways;

Conrad's descriptions are concerned much less with plot arcs than with the operas'

characters. It is thus easy to synthesize the two: *Götterdämmerung* is a tragedy

concerned with not just the fall of Siegfried but that of civilization as a whole; *Siegfried*

is a comedy whose subject is the maturation and ultimate success of the hero; *Die*

Walküre is a Pathos, leading us to feel emotional sympathies with two households:

Hunding's in Acts I and II and the familial relationship between Brünnhilde and Wotan in

Act III. Finally, *Das Rheingold,* as a prologue, is tasked with providing the necessary

dramatic background which will be later developed by the other operas, and this is

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[148] Robert Bailey, "The Structure of the Ring and its Evolution," *Nineteenth Century Music,* I (July, 1977), 49-50.
[149] Peter Conrad, *Romantic Opera and Literary Form,* (University of California Press, 1977), 35-42.

performed by presenting the philosophical underpinnings of the *Ring's* world when the drama proper begins.

Thematically, *Das Rheingold* is not concerned with heroic acts, as the later operas are, but with petty political machinations. Whereas Siegmund's love for Sieglinde is so transcendent that he is willing to forego the splendor of Valhalla if it means being without her, the gods are wholly selfish, with no interests beyond satiating their desires. If Wotan wants a fortress built, and if Fricka wants a fortress built so that Wotan is less likely to carouse, then the fortress is built with no regard to consequences or cost.

It is therefore in this preliminary evening that the groundwork is set for the ethical debate concerning love relationships that will be enacted throughout the rest of the drama. It is *Das Rheingold* which establishes the pervading ethic of the contractual marriage. The first appearance of such a relationship is the marriage between Wotan and Fricka, a marriage which does not appear to be happy or satisfying for either party. Because the contractual marriage is one of commodity—recall that the cost of marrying Fricka was Wotan's eye—it is in a sense a repetition of the original sin of the *Ring:* Alberich's decision to sacrifice love in order to acquire the Rhinegold, and more importantly (as Alberich is not interested in the glittering trifle), the power to rule the world.

The original sin—sale of love for power—is not borne by Alberich alone. Scene 2 begins on the verge of the troubling possibility that another contractual marriage is soon to happen. Valhalla's construction by the giants, now complete, must be paid for, and the agreed-upon cost of construction is Freia. Deryck Cooke has argued that Freia is more

than just the goddess of youthfulness, but is the goddess of love.[150] Therefore, in

Wotan's contract with the giants, he has both repeated Alberich's original sin by selling

love for power, a point that Fricka underscores when she sings "Um der Macht und

Herrschaft müssigen Tand/verspielst du in lästerndem Spott/Liebe und Weibes Wert?"[151];

while propogating the ethic that treats marriage as a social contract which has absolutely

nothing to do with love. The vulgarity of the sale of Freia to the giants is made explicit

when she is literally measured against the gold, Tarnhelm, and ring which they accept as

an adequate substitute.

This is the state of the world of the *Ring* as *Die Walküre* opens: relationships

between men and women are based not on love but rather ownership and social

contract,[152] and it is the state of affairs that exists in the Hunding household at the

beginning of Act I. Asked by Siegmund whose house he is in, Sieglinde responds, "Diess

Haus und diess Weib sind Hundings Eigen."[153] Sieglinde's introduction establishes

herself as equivalent to the house—merely a piece of Hunding's property. Throughout

the narrative through which we come to learn Sieglinde's and Siegmund's back stories

(and as they become more and more aware that they are brother and sister even as they

become more and more aware of their love for each other), we discover that Sieglinde

was kidnapped as a girl and was forced to marry Hunding. We also learn that Siegmund

has just arrived exhausted and unarmed from a remarkably similar situation, his attempt

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[150] Deryck Cooke, *I Saw the World End: A Study of Wagner's Ring* (Oxford, 1979), 155.
[151] "For the idle baubles of power and lordship would you wager love and woman's worth in slanderous mockery?" (62). Unless otherwise noted, translations are by the author. Page numbers appear in parentheses according to Footnote 4 in Chapter 1.
[152] Even in the time of *Götterdämmerung,* it is an ethic which will continue to exist. When Hagen calls the vassals to arms, announcing that Gunther returns with his bride, their initial assumption as to the dire nature of the call is that perhaps her kinsmen are in angry pursuit.
[153] "This house and this woman belong to Hunding" (10).

to protect a girl who was about to be kidnapped and forced to marry. Immediately, Siegmund is positioned as sympathetic with respect to Sieglinde, as both of their histories share an experience with the fear and inhumanity implicit in the contractual marriage. Through the echoing of their shared experience with contractual marriages will the seeds be sown for an alternative paradigm for love and will serve as a focal point around which a ring structure will be developed. The roots of the new concept of love in the drama, then, begin with Siegmund and Sieglinde.[154]

As Act I ends in a fervor of passion (William Kinderman interprets the penultimate chord of the act—a vii°7 chord over a pedal G—as the moment of Siegfried's conception),[155] the audience's sympathies rest with Sieglinde and Siegmund. There is a problem, however, which arises at the beginning of Act II. After Wotan has told Brünnhilde his plans for Siegmund's battle with Hunding, Fricka arrives according to her role as the goddess of marriage to intercede with Wotan on Hunding's behalf. Fricka eventually wins the argument, demonstrating that although Wotan wishes for Siegmund to be the free hero who will recover the ring from Fafner, he has been guided and aided by Wotan every step of the way. He therefore is still Wotan's agent and thus not able to act freely or independently at all.

It is Fricka's first line of argumentation that reveals the standing ethos of contractual marriage. Her opening gambit, "Wie thörig und taub du dich stellst,/als

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[154] If "true love" begins with Siegmund and Sieglinde, then what is the love that is represented by the Rhinemaidens? In this case, it is a bill of goods. The Rhinemaidens have no intention of making good on their flirtatious advances. They are siren songs, intended entirely to distract nearby adventurers from their gold. Yet if we consider alongside Cooke that Freia is a goddess of love, then it would seem that love must have pre-existed Siegmund and Sieglinde, at least in some capacity. Even if this is true, however, we certainly never witness it within the action of *Das Rheingold,* nor are we given any indication that the meaning of the love that Freia represents is of the same order as that experienced by Siegmund and Sieglinde.

[155] William Kinderman, "Richard Wagner: Music and Drama, Aesthetics, Politics," Seminar led in Bayreuth, Germany, August 10, 2007.

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wüsstest führwahr du nicht,/dass um der Ehe heiligen Eid,/den hart verletzten, ich

klage!"[156] belies a real ethical problem. Fricka ascribes the sanctity of a "holy oath" to

Hunding and Sieglinde's marriage, a brutal, barbaric arrangement that the audience

perceives as anything but holy. Fricka personifies a rigid ontological belief in the law of

marriage. There is no room in her understanding for extenuating circumstances, in this

case the fact that it was a marriage contracted against Sieglinde's will—any oath sworn

by Sieglinde was certainly made under duress. The audience sides with Wotan in this

debate, and continues to do so, even when Fricka raises the objection that, being brother

and sister, their love is unnatural.

Eventually, the crux of Fricka's complaint emerges, and it becomes clear that her

intercession on Hunding's behalf has nothing to do with her professional opinion on his

marriage, but rather that it stands in as a complaint about her own marriage: "O was klag'

ich um Ehe und Eid,/da zuerst du selbst sie versehrt."[157] Fricka's strong position on the

matter is related to her own experience with Wotan's infidelity. She so strongly wants

him to intervene in Hunding's case because in truth it is has been the holy oaths of her

own marriage which had been so bitterly offended by Wotan's carousing.

The emergence of the romantic marriage from the otherwise bleak world order of

the contractual marriage is signified through the use of the word "Braut," which, up to the

point of Wotan and Fricka's dispute, has only been used to describe the position

Sieglinde occupies with respect to Siegmund—Sieglinde is never referred to as

Hunding's *Braut,* and Fricka is never referred to as Wotan's *Braut.* Instead, wives are

referred to only with the words *Frau* and *Weib,* as in Scene 2 of *Das Rheingold* when

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[156] "How oblivious and deaf you present yourself, as though you truly did not know that I complain of the bitter offense of marriage's holy oath" (88).
[157] "Oh, how I complain of marriage and oaths which you yourself broke first" (92).

Wotan sings, "Wolltest du Frau in der Feste mich fangen…" and later, "Um dich zum Weib zu gewinnen."[158] Similarly, Hunding only ever refers to Sieglinde as *Frau.* Siegmund's usage of the word *Braut* connotes a significant intimacy that simply does not exist between Wotan and Fricka or Hunding and Sieglinde.[159] When Siegmund sings of Sieglinde and refers to her as "*bräutliche Schwester"* and later ends the act by singing, "Braut und Schwester bist du dem Bruder," he alerts us to a radical difference in their relationship from any we have yet come across. Their love is presented as ideal, and the term *Braut* ironically signifies their relationship as a kind of marriage above marriage. Furthermore, the change in the meaning of marriage is not simply a subjective experience on the part of Siegmund and Sieglinde, but is treated as an objective reality by Brünnhilde who, when asked by her sister who she protects, responds, "Sieglinde ist es, Siegmunds Schwester und Braut," thereby affirming their relationship.

In *Götterdämmerung,* Brünnhilde will eventually also be referred to as Gunther's *Braut,* a usage which can be read as ironic. The audience knows that Brünnhilde is already Siegfried's bride. Furthermore, we also know that Gunther is simply incapable of winning Brünnhilde for himself—when Brünnhilde is won as Gunther's bride, it is only through Siegfried acting in his stead. Therefore, when Brünnhilde is called Gunther's *Braut*, in reality she is only the *Braut* of the man who twice travelled to the rock to win

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[158] "Would you, wife, trap me in the fortress…" "To win you as wife…" In modern German, the word *Weib* is typically used as moderately pejorative slang for "woman," such as "broad" or "dame," although in archaic usage it was much more neutral, as it is also used throughout *The Ring* to refer to wives and women in general. Siegmund uses it at the beginning of Scene 3 ("ein Weib sah' ich, wonnig und hehr") and Siegfried, when he attempts to awaken Brünnhilde sings "Erwache! Erwache! Heiliges Weib!" In these cases, the context makes it hard to read the words with a pejorative connotation.

[159] When Wotan sings to Fricka: **"**Nichts lerntest du, wollt' ich dich lehren,/was nie du erkennen kannst,/eh' nicht ertagte die Tat" ("Even though I tried to teach you, you've never learned to recognize things until after they actually occur," translation by Nico Castel, *Der Ring des Nibelungen,* ed. Marcie Stapp (New York: Leyerle Publications, 2003), 163.) (95-6), we might note that "marriage grounded in love" is on the list of things of which Fricka has never heard.

her hand. Similarly, Gutrune is never referred to as Siegfried's *Braut;* she could only ever be Siegfried's *Weib.*

Although a significant change in the meaning of marriage is catalyzed in the love between Siegmund and Sieglinde, they are unable to realize it in its fullness; their story only posits the promise of romantic love and serves as an expository point which will be recapitulated as the drama comes to an end. The love of Siegfried and Brünnhilde as it blooms in Act III of *Siegfried* and is threatened over the course of *Götterdämmerung* is treated as a repetition of the primal scene of the love of Siegmund and Sieglinde in the Lacanian sense described in Chapter 3.

Wagner begins articulating parallels between the two couples in Act III of *Die Walküre*, as when Brünnhilde explains to Wotan that she acted in response to witnessing Siegmund's love for Sieglinde:

> Tod kündend trat ich vor ihn,
> gewahrte sein Auge, hörte sein Wort;
> ich vernahm des Helden heilige Not;
> tönend erklang mir des Tapfersten Klage:
> freiester Liebe furchtbares Leid,
> traurigsten Mutes mächtigster Trotz!
> Meinem Ohr erscholl, mein Aug erschaute,
> was tief im Busen das Herz
> zu heil'gem Beben mir traf.[160]

It was this love which moved her to disobey Wotan's command, and it is this love that she will eventually experience with Siegfried. Thus, as Sieglinde was Siegmund's *Braut,* so too will Brünnhilde become Siegfried's *Braut.* In fact, there are many similarities between the love stories of *Die Walküre* on the one hand and *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* on the other. Both involve incestuous relationships between

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[160] "Death's tidings I brought to him, saw his eyes, heard his words; I heard of the hero's holy need; resounding in me his most courageous lament: freest love, most fearsome suffering, saddest courage, most powerful defiance! My ears heard, my eyes saw, what sacred trembles struck deep in my bosom" (271-2).

descendents of Wotan, and in both pairs of relationships, the woman names the man.

Whereas in Act I of *Die Walküre* Sieglinde sings, "Siegmund, so nenn' ich dich!"[161] in

Act III as Brünnhilde sends Sieglinde off to protect her unborn child, she advises:

> Verwahr' ihm die starken Schwertes Stücken;
> seines Vaters Walstatt entführt ich sie glücklich:
> der neugefügt das Schwert einst schwingt,
> den Namen nehm' er von mir:
> Siegfried erfreu' sich des Sieg's!"[162]

As was explored in Chapter 3, the sword also plays a fundamental role in both

marriages. It is through pulling it from the tree in Act I of *Die Walküre* that Siegmund

fulfills his destiny and proves his worth to Sieglinde. Similarly, it is with the sword that

Siegfried slays Fafner, winning the horde and the ability to hear the bird's song, which

advises him to search for Brünnhilde. Lastly, as already described, the encounter in

which Siegfried confronts Wotan and shatters the spear with Nothung is a structural

repetition of Act II of *Die Walküre,* when Wotan had used the power of his spear to

shatter Nothung.

As an echo of Siegmund, it is not only Wotan's task that Siegfried completes, but

he also perfects the love of Siegmund and Sieglinde in his marriage to Brünnhilde, which

persists even through the deception and chicanery of *Götterdämmerung.* Although

Brünnhilde will eventually be forced into a social marriage (and Siegfried will enter into

his own with Gutrune), they are marriages which in the new order of love are utterly

unsustainable. Neither Gutrune nor Gunther are worthy of their new spouses, nor are

they able to hold onto their new marriages. Although they ritualistically call on the gods

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[161] "Siegmund, thusly I name you!" (69-70).
[162] "Keep for him the sword's mighty pieces that I fortunately took from his father's battlefield: for him who will forge and wield the sword anew, take from me the name Siegfried who will rejoice in triumph" (227-8).

to bless the festivities of the wedding, specifically slaughtering a lamb on Fricka's behalf in order to secure her blessing, there is no call for her intercession as there was by Hunding, nor would the gods in there present state of inactivity be likely to answer their plaints anyway. When the cycle ends, it is with Brünnhilde singing, "Siegfried! Siegfried! Sieh! Selig grüsst dich dein Weib."[163] The reality of their marriage is thus articulated, and their love is consecrated by the fire of their funeral pyre.

2. Siegmund and Sieglinde

The unsuccessful love between Siegmund and Sieglinde provides the exposition for the repetition and completion which will be realized by Siegfried and Brünnhilde across the central divide of the overall ring structure. Act I of *Die Walküre* begins *in medias res*, and the love between Siegmund and Sieglinde is sparked immediately and develops over the course of the act. It is the ordering of the events associated with that development which are structured and balanced according to a ring structure, which is laid out in Figure 4.1. While the repetition that features into the organization of Siegfried and Brünnhilde's story approaches Lacan's explication of repetition automism discussed at the beginning of Chapter 3, the repetition in Siegmund and Sieglinde's story would be better described as a formal organization pattern.

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[163] "Siegfried! Siegfried! See! Blessedly your wife greets you!" *Götterdämmerung* (335-6).

	Plot Elements	Key Areas		Plot Elements	Key Areas
1	Siegmund Arrives	Dm→FM→Dm		Siegmund and Sieglinde Flee	Em→GM
2	Siegmund sings of being weaponless	Dm→Am→AM		Siegmund pulls the sword from the tree	CM
3	Siegmund names himself "Wehwalt"	Dm→DM		Sieglinde names Siegmund	DM
4	Hunding notices the resemblance between Sieglinde and Siegmund.	$\dfrac{\mathrm{II}^{\varnothing 7}\ \mathrm{VII}^{o7}}{\mathrm{Ebm}}$		Sieglinde recognizes their resemblance	CM→EM
5	Hunding becomes aware of Sieglinde's intense interest in Siegmund	Gm		Spring enters; love in full bloom	BbM→DbM
6	Siegmund's story	Gm→Am→Cm		Sieglinde's story	Em→EM→ Em→EM→ Am
7	Hunding mocks Siegmund for being weaponless	Cm		Siegmund sings of the promised sword; notices gleam from tree	Fm→CM

Figure 4.1 Ring structure of dramatic events and associated key areas in *Die Walküre*, Act I

Figure 4.1 was developed primarily from study of the dramatic elements of act; this is a result of the fact that Act I is almost entirely driven by recitative which furthers the narrative, with the arioso at the entrance of Spring being the primary exception. The events on the right side of the diagram balance those on the left side quite nicely. Whereas the act begins with Siegmund's arrival during a storm, it ends with him fleeing with Sieglinde in the fresh air of spring. Attention is twice drawn to the fact that Siegmund is unarmed on the left side, initially as one of his first utterances upon arriving, and later with Hunding's mocking advice that he arm himself well, as they will fight in the morning. Once Hunding leaves, Siegmund sings that his father had promised him a

sword when he would need it most, and he notices a glint coming from the ash tree around which the hut is built; he will later find his father's promise kept as well Sieglinde's prophecy fulfilled when he removes the sword from the tree, thereby balancing his initial vulnerability.

Siegmund's name features as an important part of Act I. He initially identifies himself as Wehwalt, and the strophes of his extended story in Scene 2 are punctuated by the names he accepts, "Wehwalt" and "Wölfing," and those he does not, "Friedmund" and "Frohwalt." Sieglinde eventually settles the matter of his name, calling him Siegmund at the end of the act, which balances his self-identification as "Wehwalt" at its beginning.

Bands 4 and 5 involve observational asides by Hunding that are fulfilled at length on the right side. It was Hunding who first noticed the resemblance between Siegmund and Sieglinde, a resemblance about which Sieglinde will sing at length in Scene 3; and it was Hunding who first vocalized Sieglinde's obvious attraction to Siegmund, an attraction which over the course of the act blooms into a deep mutual love that finds its apotheosis in the Spring aria. Band 6 relates Sieglinde's story of her wedding day to Siegmund's story of his upbringing.

The texture of *Die Walküre* is considerably simpler than the music Wagner would compose upon returning from his hiatus and finishing Act III of *Siegfried.* Much of the music is composed in a recitative style, and while it is difficult to determine an overall classical harmonic organization governing the entire act, key areas are relatively well defined. Therefore, with few exceptions, it is a relatively simple task to assign key areas to the plot elements in the above chart, and therefore I have included the associated key areas on the diagram. The first three elements both begin in a minor key, but then move

to a major key as the latent love between Siegmund and Sieglinde becomes more and more apparent: D minor moves to its relative major when Sieglinde brings Siegmund a drink; Siegmund's tale of being weaponless, which began in D minor and moved to A minor as he describes fleeing his foes suddenly bursts into A major now that, in Sieglinde's presence, "die Sonne lacht mir nun neu."[164] Then, when Siegmund names himself, and says that he will stay, he cadences in D minor, but the music immediately moves to major during the transition to Scene 2, during which, according to the stage directions, they both gaze emotionally at each other.

Although it does not include every event, the ring structure tracks Act I from beginning to end. Scenes 1 and 2 constitute the first half of the cycle, whereas Scene 3 constitutes the second half. The most notable musical feature of the second half is that it constitutes a turn from minor to major. Many of the pairings feature relative and parallel mode relations. For example, Hunding mocks Siegmund for being unarmed in C minor, which moves to major when Siegmund notices the glint of the hilt, and is subsequently punctuated by a strong emphasis on C major. Similarly, when Hunding notices Sieglinde's interest in Siegmund, he sings about it in a recitative in G minor. When love comes to fruition, and spring enters the hall, it occurs in the relative major, Bb. When Siegmund names himself "Wehwalt" at the beginning of the act, he does so in D minor; when Sieglinde finally names him at the end of the act, it occurs in the parallel major.

Siegmund's story and its repetition in Sieglinde's are of critical importance in the development of the love theme. Siegmund's story begins with a musical introduction by

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[164] "The sun now smiles upon me anew." (12).

a motive first associated with his sympathy with Sieglinde, as she sang that disaster has made itself at home in Hunding's house (Example 4.1).

Example 4.1 Introduction to Siegmund's tale

Subsequently, he sings a line of prologue in which he offers three possible names for himself, two he rejects and one he accepts. Each name is suggested in its own local key area: Friedmund in C minor, Frohwalt in Bb major, and Wehwalt in G minor, and the prologue ends with a 9-8 suspension (See Example 4.2).

The prologue is a formal device, as the story which follows is similarly broken into three parts, each governed by their own local tonal centers, and each punctuated with self-identifications. Between each part of the story, Hunding and Sieglinde interject with commentary and request that he continue. Because the story is in a recitative style, local harmonies fluctuate rapidly based on the emotional content of the associated dramatic text. Figure 4.2 provides a harmonic analyses of each of the basslines of the three parts of the story with a gloss of his narration appears above the staff. Notice especially that each part of the story ends with a name. As Part 1 ends, Siegmund identifies himself as a Wölfing; as Part 2 ends, he says that his story explains why he must call himself Wehwalt. The final identification comes in the epilogue to the story, which is presented and annotated as Example 4.3. The epilogue repeats the framing motive that began the introduction, and his final line leads to a cadence ending with a 9-8 appoggiatura just as his prologue did.

Example 4.2 Prologue to Siegmund's story: three possible names.

Figure 4.2 Analyses of the three parts of Siegmund's tale.

Furthermore, the tonal centers of each of the three parts of the story reverse the tonal ground presented by the prologue, which moved from C minor to Bb major to G minor. Now, the individual parts of the story reverse the course, beginning in G minor, moving through A minor, and ending in C minor. Although there is an apparent discrepancy between the Bb major in the prologue and A minor within the story, it can be reconciled by noting that Bb major was established almost entirely through its dominant, F major; the turn to its relative minor represents the shift in identification from what he wishes he could be named in the second part of the prologue, Frohwalt, to what he must call himself in part two of the story, Wehwalt. The space of Siegmund's story may be diagrammed as a ring structure as in Figure 4.3. The prologue is represented by the semicircle at the top and along the left side, and the right side constitutes the body of the story. The appearance of the Valhalla motive during Part 2 juts out of the side of the diagram, as the music makes an unexpected modulation to the

Example 4.3 Epilogue to Siegmund's tale
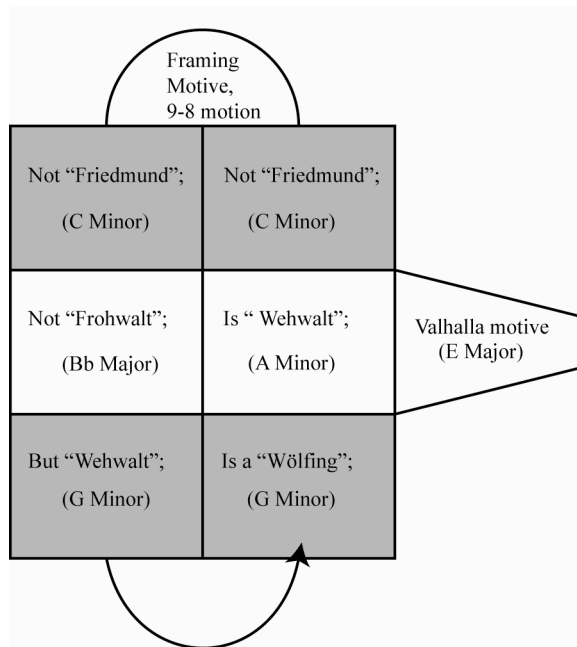
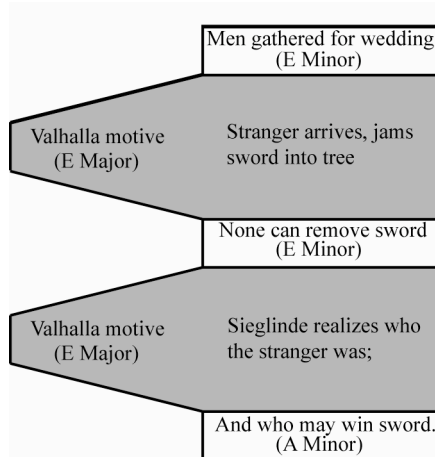**Figure 4.3 Ring diagram of Siegmund's tale**

dominant of A minor. Finally, the framing motive and the 9-8 motion at the cadences of

Siegmund's first and last lines provide a latch, bringing the structure back to where it

began.

As outlined in Figure 4.1, Sieglinde's story balances Siegmund's in the act's

overall ring structure. Sieglinde's tale is much briefer than Siegmund's, as it only

narrates one event: Wotan's arrival during her wedding to Hunding. Figure 4.4 is a

harmonic analysis of her tale. Whereas Siegmund's story spanned a number of key areas,

Sieglinde's story primarily centers on E as a tonic and simply shifts modality, before

ending in A minor. Sieglinde's tale also incorporates statements of the Valhalla motive,

and these correspond to the turn from E minor to major. Because of its brevity,

Sieglinde's tale does not contain any formal features of ring construction, but simply tells

its narrative from start to finish. A form diagram for Sieglinde's tale appears as Figure

Sieglinde's tale

Measure:	44/2/2	44/4/2	45/2/2	45/3/1	45/1/1	46/3/1	47/1/1
Context:	Men gathered for Hunding's wedding; she sits sadly	Stranger enters hall (Valhalla!)	All feared his gaze	Except Sieglinde, for whom he had compassion.	Buries sword into tree (Sword motives)	No one could remove the sword	(Valhalla!) Realizes who the stranger was and who can win the sword.

e:

Figure 4.4 Analysis of Sieglinde's tale

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4.4, and emphasizes the appearances of the Valhalla motive to highlight their similarity to to the one that appears during Siegmund's tale.

Figure 4.5 Diagram of Sieglinde's tale

Noting that both Siegmund's and Sieglinde's stories contain appearances of the Valhalla motive raises the question of whether these tales interact in more complex ways than simply balancing each other across the ring—they do. Figure 4.6 brings together the above diagrams of the two stories. The Valhalla motives are not just similarities between these stories, but they serve as a point at which the two nest together. We heard the Valhalla motive during Siegmund's tale when father and son were separated, and the only trace Siegmund could find of his father was an empty wolf pelt. Sieglinde's tale fills in what was missing in Siegmund's story as she tells him where it was his father went. Furthermore, the Valhalla motive, as the point of union of the two stories, appears as a musical symbol for their shared parentage.
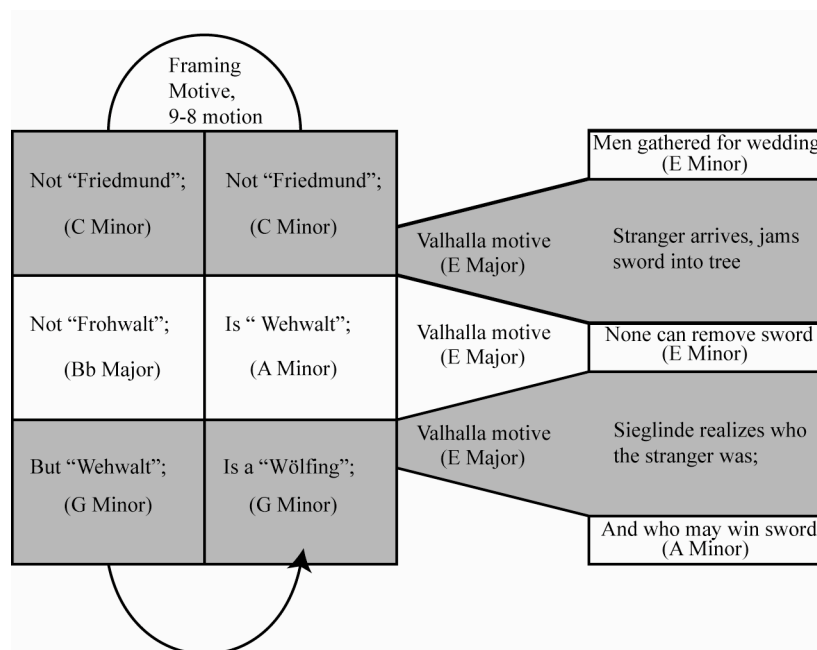
Figure 4.6 Union of Siegmund's and Sieglinde's tales

It is not immediately obvious what might be constitute a governing key structure

for the act as a whole. Robert Bailey follows Lorenz's interpretation: Acts I and II of *Die*

Walküre constitute a unit with D minor as a tonic beginning with Siegmund's arrival at

Hunding's hut and his death at Hunding's hand.[165] However, the turn to major for the

second half of Figure 4.1 would make it difficult to hear D minor as a governing tonality

for Act I in isolation, as does the amount of time it spends in key areas of questionable

relation to D minor. A more interesting possibility is that the act points toward C, as all

of the key areas in the chart have currency in C major-minor (including the Neapolitan)

and the multiple emphasized appearances of the Sword motive in C major further imbue

the key area with a sense of yet-unrealized potential. Not only is this reading contained

within the abstract harmonic structure of the act, but it serves a powerful hermeneutic

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[165] Bailey, "Structure of the *Ring*," 54.

purpose that builds upon the observations in Chapter 3 concerning the chromaticized C major in *Das Rheingold* and the avoidance and weakening of C which will occur in Act III of *Die Walküre,* and their subsequent resolutions in *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung.* In this reading, the G major with which the act ends suggests a half cadence seeking resolution to C. Because Siegmund's story begins and ends in D minor, however, resolution to C will need to wait for Siegfried, who, in his marriage to Brünnhilde, will perfect the love left unresolved for Siegmund and Sieglinde.

Interpretation of Figure 4.6 can be further refined with an underlying orientation toward C major in mind. The Valhalla motive does not just demarcate the point of union between the two stories or their shared parentage, but also functions as a point of sexual union, as the single appearance of the Valhalla motive in Siegmund's tale fits into the opening created by the two appearances in Sieglinde's tale. Finally, E as a tonality governed almost all of Sieglinde's story (the remaining portion of which appears in A minor, the key of Siegmund's identification as "Wehwalt," which appears when she sings that she knows who it is who will win the sword), while Siegmund's story was framed by C minor and G minor. By articulating E as a central tonality, Sieglinde completes the C major triad outlined by these three roots. The two stories thus contain—and through coupling bring together—the genetic code of the tonality of their unborn son.

Crucially, it is this same C major that, as we noted in Chapter 3, will be articulated through avoidance in Act III; the absent C'gfried lies gestating beneath the musical texture in the story of his conception, as well as in the story of his future bride's fall from godhood.

3. Siegfried and Brünnhilde

In contrast to Act I of *Die Walküre,* where Sieglinde's marriage to Hunding was unrelated (at least in a formal sense) to her marriage to Siegmund, the stories of Brünnhilde's wooings in *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* show that Siegfried's abduction of Brünnhilde on Gunther's behalf figures as a corrupted repetition of his first arrival on the rock. This embeds one repetition, Siegfried's two journeys to the rock, within his larger-scale repetition of his parents' stories; across the divide from the story of Sieglinde's marriages to Hunding and Siegmund is the related story of Brünnhilde's marriages to Gunther and Siegfried. As we have seen in Chapter 1, this story also takes the form of a subring, which is reproduced for convenience as Figure 4.7.

This subring in particular highlights the artificiality of excising material for analysis, as it incorporates Brünnhilde's awakening into the left side of its Band 3, whereas the overall ring structure from Figure 3.3 positioned it on the right side of Band 8. It is for reasons such as this that I do not consider the ring structures discussed throughout this dissertation to describe formal divisions, but simply attraction points for the story. At the same time, Brünnhilde's awakening serves as another example of the *Ring's* organizational strategy of embedding recapitulations within recapitulations. The moment of Brünnhilde's awakening brings closure to Wotan's punishment in Act III of *Die Walküre* while simultaneously providing a new expository moment to be recalled later. Brünnhilde's awakening can thus be understood as a sort of fulcrum, balanced not just by the earlier events of *Die Walküre,* but also by the events that will come in *Götterdämmerung.*
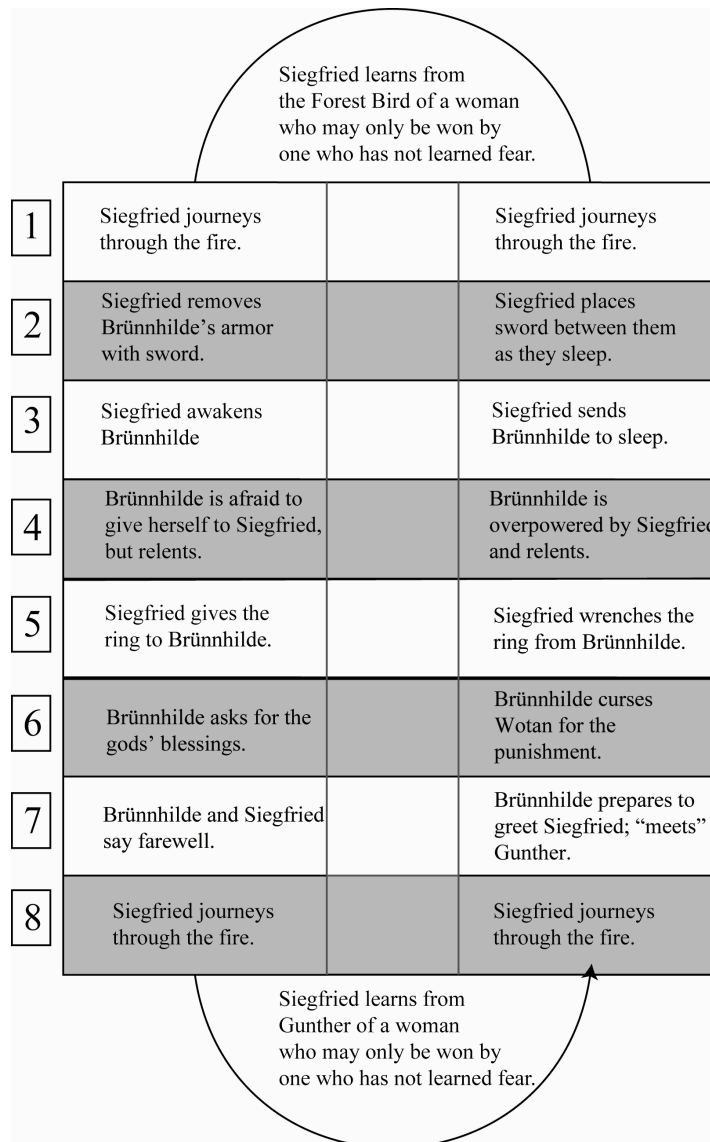
Figure 4.7 Subring of Brünnhilde's marriages to Siegfried and Gunther.

The left side of Figure 4.7 centers on Brünnhilde's marriage to Siegfried (Figure 3.3, Band 6, right side) and is balanced by the right side, concerning Brünnhilde's forced marriage to Gunther (Figure 3.3, Band 5, right side). The subring's prologue occurs in Act II, when the forest bird sings to Siegfried of the woman on the rock that can only be won by one without fear and Siegfried realizes that he is the one without fear and that the woman is therefore for him to win. The central place, which corresponds to the prologue,

is the scheming of Hagen and Gunther. When Gunther explains to Siegfried that he has

no wife, and only one without fear can win the wife he wants, Siegfried realizes that he is

the man without fear and offers to retrieve Brünnhilde for him. The relationship between

the central place and the Prologue is highlighted by a brief statement of the Forest Bird's

motive as Siegfried asks who may penetrate the fire, while the stage directions indicate

that Siegfried is making an effort to remember something.

From a dramatic standpoint, the relationships across the bands are

straightforward. Band 2 balances Siegfried's conquest of Brünnhilde disguised as

Gunther with the symbolic conquest of removing her armor while she slept; Band 3

relates Brünnhilde's awakening by Siegfried to his sending her to sleep; Band 4

highlights the fact that in both wooings, Brünnhilde initially resisted Siegfried's advances

but eventually succumbed (although for very different reasons); in Band 5, Siegfried

reverses his action of giving the ring to Brünnhilde as a gift by wrenching it back through

force; Band 6 balances Brünnhilde's song of praise to the gods for delivering Siegfried to

her with her curse of Wotan for punishing her by sending Gunther; and Band 7 relates

Brünnhilde's joyful farewell to her fearful greeting of Gunther. Finally, Bands 1 and 8

demarcate the four instances in the story in which Siegfried crosses the magic fire.

Because both of Siegfried's journeys to the rock involve wooing Brünnhilde, his

second trip there does double-duty that is implicit in the construction of the subring. The

subring contains two distinct bands of the overall ring structure, so that right half of the

divide of the subring corresponds not only to the left half of the subring, but also to a

point on the other side of the divide of the overall ring. In other words, Siegfried's

second wooing of Brünnhilde repeats his first wooing of Brünnhilde, but since he is

disguised and forcing her to marry Gunther, he also repeats the forced marriage of his

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mother to Hunding. The framing element of both of Siegfried's wooings is the journey

through fire, and the three occasions where we witness him cross the fire are

accompanied by similar music. Because of the symmetrical arrangements of these

framing devices, the music we hear when Siegfried crosses the fire disguised as Gunther

is related to the music we hear when Siegfried leaves Brünnhilde to seek adventure

earlier in Act I, but it is more closely related to the musical passage we hear when he first

crossed the fire to woo Brünnhilde.

All three of these passages include sections in F Major which juxtapose

Siegfried's horn with the Magic Fire music. The music accompanying Siegfried's Rhine

journey during the transition from the Prologue to Scene 1 of *Götterdämmerung*, Act I is

distinct as it is in a compound triple meter with a free-fugato feel. The fire and the horn

motives are treated as mere episodes in the journey; once Siegfried leaves the fire, he

begins to travel up the river and the music changes accordingly. There is no particular

emphasis on the travel through the fire in this instance.

Conversely, Siegfried's second journey into the fire is treated as a repetition of the

first, with an interrupted cadence implying a sense of corrption that was not present in

the earlier journey. The transition between Scenes 2 and 3 of Act III of *Siegfried* begins

in F major with Siegfried's horn played in counterpoint to the Magic Fire music, and the

Siegfried motive enters in A minor. The music continues to alternate sound these

motives in a sequence of ascending steps—first F, then Gb, and finally G—representing

Siegfried scaling the rock. The music finally makes a major arrival on Ab for a repetition

of the Magic Sleep motive, which leads, as it did in *Die Walküre,* to E major for the

Sleeping Brünnhilde motive. The Sleeping Brünnhilde motive now appears in alteration

with the Siegfried motive in sequence through E and C, and eventually the transition

leads to an extended prolongation of V^7 of D, where Scene III begins.

In the corresponding passage toward the end of the first act of *Götterdämmerung,*

when Brünnhilde notices that the flames surrounding her rock swell up, the music is

unstable and chromatic. We hear the Siegfried motive in D minor in the orchestra as

Brünnhilde sings "Siegfried!" and at this point the music begins a strict repetition of the

music from the beginning of the *Siegfried* transition*:* the horn motive appears in

alternation and counterpoint with the Magic Fire music in F major. Brünnhilde sings,

"Siegfried zurück!/Seinen Ruf sendet er her!/Auf! Auf! Ihm entgegen! In meines Gottes

Arm!"[166] We once again hear the Siegfried motive in A minor, but instead of continuing,

as it had in *Siegfried,* the passage is interrupted with a fully-diminished seventh-chord on

F (See Example 4.4).

Although Siegfried crosses the fire a total of four times, only three of these occur

within the action onstage. The fourth instance—when Siegfried brings Brünnhilde

through the fire to Gunther—happens between Act I and Act II, and we only hear about it

when Siegfried relates the events of Brünnhilde's capture to Hagen and Gutrune;

Siegfried's narrative is accompanied musically by fragments of both the Magic Fire

music and his horn, connecting musically his final crossing to the previous three.

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[166] "Siegfried's back! He follows his call here! Up! Up! To meet him! In the arms of my god!" (118).

Example 4.4 *Götterdämmerung,* **Act I, Scene 3**

(Feuerflammen schlagen herauf: aus ihnen springt Siegfried auf einen hochragenden
Felsstein empor, worauf die Flammen sogleich wieder zurückweichen und abermals
nur aus der Tiefe heraufleuchten.)
(*Flames shoot up from them springs Siegfried forward on to a high rock: the
flames immediately draw back and again shed their light only from below.*)

BRÜNNH.

Ver - rath!
Be - trayed!

Example 4.4 cont.

The sword is an important feature of the two scenes. When Siegfried cuts open

Brünnhilde's armor with his sword, it is an act of sexual aggression. The sword was

imbued with phallic significance in Act I of *Die Walküre,* when Siegmund pulled it from

the tree in a display of male vitality. Now, Siegfried uses the sword to penetrate

Brünnhilde's defenses, to literally make a woman of her—he approaches the sleeping

figure with the misunderstanding that it was a man, and is only after he cuts away the

armor that he realizes it is a woman. The symbolic significance of this act is made

explicit later, when Brünnhilde sees her armor lying on the rock. She sings:

> Ich sehe der Brünne prangenden Stahl:
> ein scharfes Schwert schnitt sie entzwei;
> von den maidlichen Leibe löst' es die Wehr:
> ich bin ohne Schutz und Schirm,
> ohne Trutz ein trauriges Weib! …
> Kein Gott nahte mir je!
> Der Jungfrau neigten scheu sich die Helden:
> heilig schied sie aus Walhall.
> Wehe! Wehe! Wehe der Schmach, der schmähligen Noth!

> Verwundet hat mich, der mich erweckt!
> Er erbrach mir Brünne und Helm:
> Brünnhilde bin ich nicht mehr![167]

Thus, when Siegfried removes Brünnhilde's armor, it is a sexual act that will be repeated and thereby completed when Brünnhilde finally gives herself to him a moment or two after the curtain falls.

This symbolic sexual act, which occurs in B, will be repeated in *Götterdämmerung* when Siegfried claims Brünnhilde as Gunther's bride and places the sword between them as they sleep through the bridal night to testify to his oath to Gunther. The significance of the bridal night is clear to Gutrune, who questions Siegfried as to whether he and Brünnhilde lay with one another. The final minutes of the scene have Siegfried swearing an oath to Gutrune in B that the wooing was chaste. Ironically, what was previously a phallic symbol now serves to *prevent* sexual congress. The Sword lay between them for the duration of their sleep ostensibly, but ultimately disingenuously assuring an unconsummated bridal night; disingenuous because Siegfried had already violated Brünnhilde by wrenching the ring from her finger. By removing the ring from her hand—her only possible defense at this point—Siegfried repeats the sexual act of removing her armor in Act III of *Siegfried.*

The sequence during which Brünnhilde and Siegfried struggle over the ring incorporates a number of motives which were heard in *Siegfried* when Brünnhilde attempted to rebuff Siegfried's love for fear that it would destroy her. Her fear culminates beginning in measure 342/2/3, for which a score annotated with the important

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[167] "I see the hauberk's shining steel: a powerful sword cut it in two; from the womanly body it loosed it's protection: without guard or shield I am but a lowly woman! … No god ever came near me: heroes timidly prostrated themselves before my virginity: I parted Valhalla pure. Woe! Woe! Woe the shame, the shameful need. He wounded me, who woke me! He broke my armor and helm: I am Brünnhilde no more." (336-40). As she is named for the armor which protects her, without *Brünne* she is not *Brünnhilde.*

motives appears as Example 4.5. Brünnhilde's fear is expressed in part through the music of Wotan's rage, heard before his arrival in Act III of *Die Walküre*, and the curse motive.

Both motives occur during the struggle at the end of Act I of *Götterdämmerung*, as indicated in Example 4.6. In addition to the diminished harmonies expressing Brünnhilde's fright, there is an incredibly ironic appearance of music associated with Siegfried's heroic deeds (last heard as they said farewell to one another at the end of the Prologue), and once he successfully removes the ring from her finger, she collapses in his arms and looks in his eyes; a brief fragment of music sounds—previously heard at the end of the Idyll in Act III of *Siegfried* when she finally relented to the wooing—both signalling his successful conquest and highlighting the reminiscence of a previous one. Finally, the Glorification of Brünnhilde motive yields to the Tarnhelm motive as Siegfried sings, "Jetzt bist du mein, Brünnhilde, Gunther's Braut—/gönne mir nun dein Gemach!"[168] It is worth lingering on Siegfried's words here. *Gemach* can be translated simply as "room" or "quarters," but in the context here has a literal referent of "cave." The Metropolitan Opera subtitles take a particularly provocative liberty in translating the term as "hole." Thusly translating the line as "grant me access to your hole" has inescapable sexual connotations, and Johannes von Moltke has suggested that it would be difficult to miss those connotations in the German text as well.[169]

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[168] "Now you are mine, Brünnhilde, Gunther's bride—now grant me your quarters." (126).
[169] Johannes von Moltke, personal correspondence, November 25, 2007. Von Moltke also reminded me that Freud's derivation of the term *Das Unheimlich* in his essay of that name relates *Heimlich* to the female genitals in two ways; first, in its secondary definition, *das Heimlich* refers to something is hidden, such as genitalia. Second, he later argues that two experiences that for some are the most uncanny are in relation to the womb. The first is the fear of being buried alive, which is a manifestation of a "lascivious fantasy of intra-uterine existence," and the second is the experience of neurotic men who find the female organs to be uncanny. Because they represent the primal *Heim,* the uterus itself represents the point at which *das Heimlich* meets its own opposite. See Siegmund Freud, "The Uncanny," trans. Alix Strachey, reprinted in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism,* ed. Vincent B. Leitch (Norton, 2001), pp. 933, 946-7. Particularly since the *Gemach* is a cave, Freud's reading seems particularly applicable.

Example 4.5 Brünnhilde's fear in *Siegfried*, Act III

Example 4.5 cont.

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Example 4.6 Brünnhilde's abduction in _Götterdämmerung_, Act I

Example 4.6 cont.

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(Er lässt die Machtlose auf die Steinbank vor
dem Felsengemache niedergleiten.)
(He lets her fainting body slide down on to the
stone bench at the entrance to the cave.)

SIEGF.

Tarnhelm

Sehr mässig.

Jetzt bist du mein. Brünn-hil-de, Gun-ther's
Now art thou mine. Brünnhil-de, Gun-ther's

Example 4.6 cont.

Siegfried overcomes Brünnhilde in four ways; twice per wooing, and the sequences of events are roughly parallel, as outlined in Figure 4.8.

Siegfried	*Götterdämmerung*
Symbolic conquest: Breaking her armor	Brünnhilde's terror
Brünnhilde's terror	Symbolic Conquest: Wrenching the ring
Brünnhilde relents	Brünnhilde relents
Curtain Falls	Curtain Falls
Actual conquest	Repressed conquest

Figure 4.8 Siegfried's conquests of Brünnhilde

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The remaining musical relationships across the sides of Figure 4.7 are less compelling than the dramatic ones. There are few strong motivic connections between the halves, and the tonal structures in the two sections do not seem to be governed by a ring construction. In particular, the material at the end of Act I of *Götterdämmerung* is infused with the Tarnhelm motive, which did not figure into either Act III of *Siegfried* or the *Vorspiel* of *Götterdämmerung*. In this case, it may be safest to simply conclude that, like the story of Siegmund and Sieglinde, the ring structure captures much more compelling facets of the dramatic structure of the stories in question than their musical expression. While there are numerous examples of small-scale arch forms throughout Wagner (many of which are described by Lorenz), here it would seem that the ring structure is relatively inactive at the musical foreground and middleground.

A more productive place to search for a musical relationship between the love stories is through the concept of tonal pairing, as theorized by Robert Bailey and further developed by William Kinderman. Robert Bailey explored the polarity between Eb and B which spans the entire first act of *Götterdämmerung*, demonstrating that Act I of *Götterdämmerung* is divided into three sections, which are further divided into halves. The beginning of the second half of each section is articulated by the appearance of Siegfried: the second half of the Prelude begins with daybreak surround Siegfried and Brünnhilde on the rock; the second half of the second section begins with Scene 2, when Siegfried arrives at Gibichung Hall; and the second half of the third section begins when Waltraute leaves Brünnhilde and Siegfried arrives disguised as Gunther. Part 1 begins in Eb minor and ends in Eb major; Part 2 begins in B minor and ends in Eb minor (which is weakened by an assertion of Bb major; and Part 3 begins and ends in B minor. The

importance of the pairing of B and Eb is expressed at the very outset of the drama, which begins with the juxtaposition of Eb minor and B major (spelled Cb).[170]

As discussed in Chapter 2, William Kinderman adapted Bailey's analytic method in his study of E and C as a tonal pairing in Act III of *Siegfried* and Act III of *Götterdämmerung.* Kinderman argues that the scene leading up to and including Siegfried's death and funeral music is a large-scale recapitulation of his arrival on Brünnhilde's rock. Not only does Siegfried retell the narrative of the earlier scene, but the musical accompaniment repeats the earlier motivic material during the telling, and, crucially, repeats the large-scale motion from E to C.[171]

Yet there is something missing from Kinderman's reading. According to Bailey, a double-tonic complex usually features two key centers related by third, but Bailey also highlights the importance of the fact that both tonics are granted equal importance. The union of triads built from the roots of the double-tonic complex usually results in a minor-minor or half-diminished seventh chord (it is precisely through such a reading that Bailey derives the Tristan chord), which serves as focal sonority—perhaps the true "tonic" chord—highlighting the interdependence of the two local tonics.[172]

However, Kinderman's reading does not imply an equality between C and E, but hinges on E as a central tonality being "superseded" by C.[173] While Kinderman's analysis is otherwise very insightful and convincing, it overlooks the fact that each member of the tonal pairing is related to one member of the love relationship. Although

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[170] Bailey, "Structure of the *Ring,*" 59-61.
[171] William Kinderman, "Dramatic Recapitulation in Wagner's '*Götterdämmerung*'" *19th Century Music* 4/2 (Autumn, 1980), pp. 101-12. See especially the diagrams on pages 104, 106, and 111.
[172] Bailey, "Analytic Study," 122.
[173] Kinderman, 103.

C may find satisfactory resolution in Siegfried's death, Brünnhilde's story—the story of E—still remains incomplete.

The story of the pairing of C and E begins not with the meeting of the lovers at the end of *Siegfried* but in the story of Siegfried's parents, who first brought love into the world. As the story of Siegmund and Sieglinde's love contained within it the seed of C major, and as Wotan's farewell emphasized Brünnhilde's presence through E while implying and undermining C as a symbol for the absence of the hero who will eventually come to awaken her, the end of *Siegfried* brings the pairing of C and E to fruition as the couple destined for transcendent love finally meets.

It seems clear that there is a dramatic relationship between the pure but doomed love of Siegmund and Sieglinde, the pure love of Siegfried and Brünnhilde, and its tainting in the first act of *Götterdämmerung*. And while the love between Siegfried and Brünnhilde will be redeemed as the tetralogy draws to a close, for now it carries the weight of its depression into the murky depths of B minor and, though Siegfried's C will find closure in his funeral music, Brünnhilde's E must wait for the Immolation scene to find resolution.