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# STRAVINSKY: IDEOLOGY ↔ LANGUAGE*

## CÉLESTIN DELIÈGE

If there is still a Stravinsky problem, it lies in the complex relationship that gradually developed between the composer's musical ideology, so strongly marked by his philosophical position, and the musical language itself, particularly with respect to the balance between rational and irrational factors. My purpose here is to explore several stages in the relationship between ideology and language as it developed in Stravinsky's work.

From the moment of its inception, Stravinsky's work was undeniably a source of difficulty for him. The successive revisions of his language are indicative, if not of unease or discomfort, then at least of his rejection of total and

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unconditional self-approval. To recognize *The Rite of Spring* as a work of historical dimensions, indeed to agree to provide guidelines for its performance, but then to refuse explicitly to reproduce its syntax, even after the work had attained such a degree of fame that it symbolized the name of its composer, at least implies reservations about it.

But the composer was also a witness, not only to the hasty interpretations of critics whose abilities he denied, but also to the opinion held of him in smaller and much more credible circles. Did not Schönberg, for example, speak of a "blind alley" with reference to *The Rite*, and later was he not shameless in the bitter sarcasm that he poured on the head of poor "little Modernsky," the unwilling hero of one of the *Satires* (Opus 28) by his Viennese colleague? Publicly, Stravinsky would make no mention of T.W. Adorno's criticism, but it is highly improbable that it could have left him indifferent, even if he was conscious of the weak points in the argument and disagreed with a philosophical approach whose materialistic tendencies could only disturb him; for Stravinsky was a person who had come to terms with the pseudoscholastic but hyper-spiritualistic utterances of Jacques Maritain. It has often been remarked that Stravinsky was very open to influence—at least, until he stepped into his study—and could not remain indifferent to a well-formulated argument. The acuity of his judgment warned him when the alarm really sounded. In this essay, I will attempt to evaluate the extent of the composer's revisionism and to suggest reasons for its motivation, doing so with whatever small degree of historical detachment is possible.

What could the twenty-five-year-old Stravinsky do in 1906, just prior to writing his first great compositions, if he refused to fall back on the academicism of St. Petersburg? He had the choice of turning to Vienna or Paris. But Vienna was the heir of a technical and intellectual tradition with which the young musician had little or no contact, and the musical models that were to strike him much later were still developing at the time. So it was inevitably Paris that imposed its values when, during the composition of his First Symphony, the inspiration of his immediate environment ran dry. It could be argued that any artist conscious of his abilities was bound to look upon events in Paris as his only means of salvation—that is, unless he found himself in Schönberg's immediate entourage where research was being actively pursued in another vortex of cultural life, the intensity of whose potential influence could only be experienced by an active elite. Stravinsky realized full well he was a composer. In other words, he had an accurate estimate of his abilities; and, despite the reservations he may have had about his family, he came from a privileged circle. From its periphery he peered toward France, where he found an art not only flourishing but, perhaps for the first time in its history, attaining a state of real autonomy.

When he came into contact with Debussy's music, Stravinsky discovered an art that not only had a self-contained purpose, but above all had endowed itself with the means of achieving autonomy by establishing itself outside of a series of constraints which were *de rigueur* practically since Monteverdi, and which since the time of Corelli, Handel, and C.P.E. Bach were reinforced by the technique Schönberg called *Grundgestalt*.

In October 1902, while answering a question in *Musica* on the future of French music, Debussy immediately plumped for harmony—the principle of writing that could best guarantee the norm and discourage stylistic liberty. "What I would wish for French music is to see the dropping of the study of harmony as it is taught in the Academies. After all, it is the most completely ridiculous method of bringing sounds together and its study has the serious disadvantage that it standardizes composition to such an extent that, with few exceptions, musicians all harmonize in the same way."[1] And, in the journal *S.I.M.* (15 January 1913), recalling his impressions upon coming into contact with Eastern music, he exclaimed, "Whatever we do, let us keep away from systems that are simply traps for dilettantes."[2] The principles of system and harmony are interlinked, and Debussy feared them both since they lead straight to academicism. Whatever the terms in which the problem was couched, he knew these principles were the major supports of anamnesis. Compositional norms had to be dropped if art was to retain the autonomy with which its symbolic nature had endowed it.

The problem here does not consist in knowing whether art in itself is to be saved by sacrificing the norms which had determined its structures over the years. History has proved Debussy's argument was valid for him, and music has reached new heights by disregarding norms. As soon as discourse moved away from the functional norms which had insured a high degree of stability in the language and action of writing, neither the *Grundgestalt* nor its variational development could survive, and the ultimate result was the appearance of a new temporal structure in music.

This temporal type of structure was the most important consequence of autonomy in music. But there was another, almost equally significant. The attempt to move away from system called for a reinforcement of the material means of expression. In poetry and painting the ability to stretch a literal image toward a wider use of its metaphors makes this reinforcement possible. In music, the situation is perhaps no different, but the relationship between music and image has always been infinitely complex. Subtly introduced mediatory factors were needed to guide it toward certain paths of realization. Timbre became such a device. For the first time, it became fully integrated into the morphology of a piece and so into its syntax. In 1902, when Debussy was attempting to answer the question "Why I wrote *Pelléas*?" and to show that the major problem of his aesthetic was to discover the "mysterious links between nature and imagination," he referred to his music as "orchestral decoration" which served to prolong the "sensitivity" of Maeterlinck's "suggestive language."[3] Berlioz, of course, was also leaning toward this type of ideal.

Whatever the extent to which his grammar differed from the great tonal tradition, it remained wholly subordinate to this tradition and was unable either to break away from the motivic structure imposed by Beethoven or to endow his music with a sufficiently flexible temporal structure to allow the dominance of parameters other than those which organize the prosodic structure of a tonal, monophonic work. Rameau too could be mentioned as providing a foretaste of the function and organic value of timbre, but the foretaste he provided was no doubt fostered by the preference he accorded to the local harmonies, creating a touch of color which no contrapuntalist could hope to emulate. These views were neatly summarized by Pierre Boulez: "If there is a characteristic that has to be picked out rather than a tradition, it is a preoccupation with sound itself which, since the eighteenth century, has been one of the constants of competently handled French musical expression."[4] Boulez' point of view can be compared with that of André Souris[5] who, unlike Boulez, is resolutely partisan. Comparing Debussy's approach with tradition, Souris writes, "Guided by an extraordinary intuitive genius, he [Debussy] undertook to do no more and no less than to reinvest sound with the organic unity that had been shattered by the ideas of the logicians during the history of European music." Noting the immediate consequences, Souris adds, "It will be obvious that the new concept of timbre created by Debussy consists in the fact that it is no longer possible to discuss it because it has become an inseparable part of the universality of the sound phenomenon."[6] Now the profile of Stravinsky is immediately present. "With a kind of polemical fury, Stravinsky set about reversing the old functional order. With him, timbre became the very heart of music. His aim was to invent typically instrumental structures."

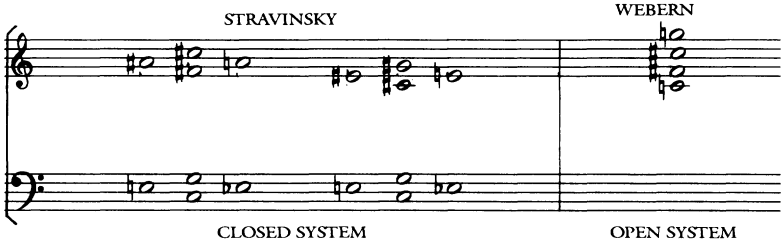
Questioning as it did the compositional process, its time-honored norms, and—dare we mention it?—even its morals, while, at the same time, granting absolute priority to sound, such a profound change inevitably had to take place at the cost of another notion of form. And, in fact, what happened was that some very rational concepts based on real, but rarely or badly explained, logical categories rapidly lost their *raison d'etre* and were no longer passed on as part of the organization of musical rhetoric and syntax. Although not many people today would admit to a belief in progress in the arts, there may be a trace of it hidden away at the back of people's minds which fulfills certain desires. While admitting to the importance of French musical thought in his principal attachment to the quality of sound, Boulez turns to the German tradition to satisfy his needs, on the understanding that he will never be able to accept the consequences when its logical principles lead to academicism of style. Souris—a disciple of Stravinsky from the very first—cannot hide his pleasure at the dismissal of the old principles of grammar dictated by old logical concepts. As we shall see, Adorno's thought developed within the same context though with a certain desire to preserve traditional values.

This is the same internal controversy that took place, less consciously, during Stravinsky's early years when his faith in the primacy of the substance of sound was supported by a feeling of greater liberty and by the prospect of the disintegration of form making way for unconventional temporal and spatial structures. Stravinsky's faith in invention did not last long. In fact, it would not survive the death of Debussy, who perhaps had been its guarantor, and hardly extended beyond the demise of cubism. Being unable, initially for historical, then for ideological and religious reasons, to take upon himself the full autonomy of art, Stravinsky reendowed it with a teleological function. From that point, he came up against the very dilemma whose symptoms Debussy himself, in all probability, had been close to experiencing when he composed the Sonatas, but which had caused him little or no distress. The crux of this dilemma was to know just how far to go toward discarding convention in order to promote invention, without depriving it of the rational support without which its emancipation could be no more than a passing fancy. The compromises Stravinsky arrived at provide a dramatic illustration of experience in relation to his historical position and philosophical (i.e. Thomist) principles. What really took place was a debate between his sense of spontaneity and his intuition of the necessity of logic, and, in his music after 1920, this debate produced a constant instability in the temporal structure of his musical processes—an indication of decisions arising from these compromises. The paradox was that he, who of all historical composers heard the sound of his music with the greatest assurance and clarity as he wrote it finished by allowing "hesitations" to be perceived in the development of the forms he constructed, hesitations which we transfer metaphorically to the temporal structure of the works.

Beginning with *Petrushka*, Stravinsky was perfectly conscious of the conditions that favored the birth of a new organization of musical architecture in terms of time and space, and he was to waste no time in pursuing a large number of implications that would breathe life into the new processes. As a musician, he was in love with his materials. No doubt his frequenting of Rimsky-Korsakov's studio contributed toward the reinforcement of a tendency already encouraged by musical experiences in his childhood—and all this despite the feeble status of Debussy's music in these circles. If instead of realizing his own destiny around 1910, Stravinsky had succumbed to the Viennese atmosphere, he would have learned that to create a satisfactory structural logic, music should be composed at a desk. But how could such an intellectual approach have forced itself on a musician whose very thinking was associated with immediate sound results and whose imagination saw timbre as an area well worth investigating? Stravinsky composed at the piano—he said so on more than one occasion. Yet it is remarkable that his piano versions never came before his orchestral versions. Broadly speaking, he helped to discredit the typically nineteenth-century idea of separating composition as such from orchestration. However, there are large numbers of compositions that come straight from the piano. Eric W. White[7] was quite right when he derived the composer's habitual method of working from the characteristic structure of the music at rehearsal number 49 in *Petrushka* (number 95 in the 1947 revision). The musical figure there takes a perfect triad on the white keys and sets it off against a corresponding triad on the black keys. The man in love with his materials was surrendering to a childhood reflex in response to the pleasure of exploring an instrument and, for the purpose of imagery, consciously extended this pleasure in the same way as Ravel had done a few years earlier in the *Jeux d'eau*, that is, with the same repeated chords in the form of a very rapid cadenza. But what took place in *Petrushka* acquired a much greater importance as the result of the conclusions that Stravinsky would draw from it and his subsequent well-known generalization of this type of structure. But if his initial impulse can be explained by the piano keyboard, this discovery is evidently insufficient to account for its use throughout the piece. One extrinsic determining factor may have been the cubist perception of reality, contrasting as it does the details of an object with the simultaneous perception of its component parts. Another may have been the need to safeguard some of the realism inherent in the imaginary world of symbolism. Among the intrinsic determining factors there is the fusion of harmony and timbre directly implied by Debussy's works and the need to pursue the expansion of the chord within the harmonic field.

On this latter point, another contemporary discovery (in 1910)—the opening of the harmonic structure to the chromatic relation of an augmented fourth—was made by composers who continued to think in terms of consonance and dissonance (since, regardless of their distance from tonality, they continued, like Debussy, to conceive music diatonically). But Stravinsky would go further and transform this augmented fourth into a fundamental second. And what could be done for an augmented fourth could, in all probability, be done for the immediate chromatic relation of a semitone. This interval would also be contrasted as a fundamental second in a vertical superposition of chords. A rational explanation of the phenomenon that critics and musicologists would incorrectly call polytonality can be obtained from the fundamental grammatical system of tonality, i.e., from the generation of harmony by successive fifths from any sound taken as an initial fundamental. Beyond the fifth fifth, which occurs in a diatonic relation with the initial tone, the sixth and seventh fifths give intervals of an augmented fourth and an augmented octave respectively. It was these intervals that would allow Stravinsky the double chromatic polorizations which characterize the harmony of *The Rite of Spring* and the other works written in Switzerland during World War I.

In suggesting this explanation of the origins of Stravinsky's harmony, we almost simultaneously explain what Schönberg must have meant when he spoke of a "blind alley" with reference to *The Rite*. During the same period, Webern also discovered the effectiveness of a sixth and a seventh fifth, but at that time he did not think of these relations in terms of consonance and dissonance within a diatonic system. He imagined his harmonic field outside the triadic system and in an integral chromatic space. Schematically, the harmony of the two musicians in 1913 can be represented as in Example 1.

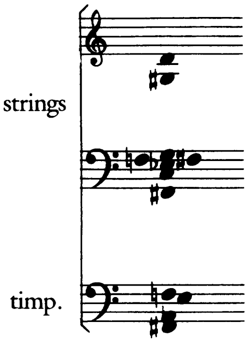


EXAMPLE 1

It is not difficult to see that, within the framework of such different harmonic systems, one completely under the control of the traditional triad, and the other totally unaffected by it, the methods used by Stravinsky and the Viennese to develop a discourse can in no way be compared. Yet the paradox was that the very person who had turned into a blind alley by imagining such a thing as vertical chromaticism within a diatonic context succeeded in producing a number of sophisticated works, while what seemed to be an infinitely more rational concept with everything thought out inside the same space could only find expression in a "sigh," as Schönberg put it. Giving this interpretation of historical facts is no doubt tantamount to glossing over them because, if Stravinsky had no difficulty in prolonging his discourse, he did have difficulty in creating true mobility or continuity in the world he had created. Webern, in contrast, had at his disposal a satisfactory principle of mobility, but sometimes experienced, painfully, it seems, the limits of his space of development. This way of putting it, however, must be modified slightly since Stravinsky never embarked upon long works without splitting them up. Continuity was only possible for him with a sung text as a support, as in *Renard* or *Les Noces* (The Wedding).

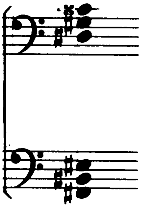
Stravinsky was not aware of Webern's works when, in 1913, the latter was completing his Opus 10, *Five Pieces for Orchestra*. He continued to claim the need for the triadic system even later, despite the great acuity of his judgment. He did so directly in *Memories and Commentaries* where, in discussing the classicism of the interwar years, he says, "The Schönberg," or, as it is now called, the dodecaphonic school, for all its merits, was obsessed by an artifical need to abnegate any suggestion of triadic 'tonality'—a very difficult thing to do."[8] This remark is all the more curious since, by the time he made it, the composer had become very familiar with Webern's work, from which all trace of the triad had been absent since Opus 9. But this remark can be interpreted in another way, and in saying that dispensing with the triad was a "very difficult thing to do," Stravinsky implicitly acknowledged the full importance of the matter.

The fusion of harmony and timbre was also a factor which exercised great influence on the organization of the temporal structure of Stravinsky's works at the time of *The Rite* and the years thereafter. The mobility of expression could be restrained by the harmonies which acquired a complementary acoustic function the moment they became timbres. Timbre integrated with structure did not attain such a level of osmosis in Debussy's works. With Webern, in whose works this integration was also present, timbre remained a distinct value, a parameter enabling the composer to operate in the same way as upon the others, but with the extra intention of weaving it into the fabric of structural relations. Among the chords in *The Rite* which have caused eyebrows to rise, our attention is drawn to the one immediately preceding 104 in the score (see Example 2). It is played eleven times of equal duration in a measure of 1¼ (d = 120), marked *forte ben marcato e pesante*.



EXAMPLE 2

Such a chord clearly makes its effect by its timbre, and imposes a static structure. It occurs at the moment when the chosen maiden, just then designated by Fate, freezes. Such a harmony is inconceivable in a temporally progressing structure where it would have to fit into a series of connections. It can be read within an enlarged triadic framework. The harmonic structure can be divided into two parts with, on the one hand, F♯, C, E♭, and G and, on the other, A, E, F, G♯, and D, with the emergence of two fundamentals, G (a tonic with a diminished seventh chord) and A (a tonic with a dominant ninth chord). But what use is such an analysis when it allocates the functions of a tonic to notes which, as the context clearly shows, have no such significance? We can only speak of such an issue in terms of an outdated grammatical norm. This theoretical logic implies voice leading. But who would want to suggest such an idea in a structural framework of this type, where the harmony is isolated and is heard for its own value, where its expressive force derives from the halt imposed by its frenzied repetition, and from the specific timbre produced by the central cluster of the chord bounded by the tritone D/G♯, and from the addition of the percussion to the strings? Taking as our basis the transcription for two pianos which reduce the chord from nine to six sounds, we can also examine the symmetries which then appear, i.e., a tritone plus a fourth, one adjacent to the other in reverse perspective (see Example 3).



EXAMPLE 3

The triad thus was dropped, but we have every reason to speculate on the selection made by Stravinsky inside his harmonic structure. Surely what interested him most was the timbre of this chord or, to put it more simply, its sound. In brief, the challenge to traditional methods of analysis in such a case is absolute. No option is guaranteed. In a less limited analysis,[9] I attempted a description of the harmonic context of the "Introduction" to the second tableau of *The Rite*. I concluded that no method used to grasp one sequence could be used in the study of any other and that, very often, the conclusions arrived at in examining local structures were not watertight. It is now clear why the idea of "polytonality" was advanced. When all rational explanation failed, what remained was that a chromatic relation between triads made such an interpretation plausible. But things cannot be clarified simply by associating them with a term, if it is not backed by a correctly defined idea. For there to be polytonality, what is needed is a parallel or relatively parallel progression of at least two clearly defined systems which cut across their individual progressions. It is on this idea of necessary progression that emphasis must be placed the moment the question of tonality comes up. In Stravinsky's so-called neoclassical period there are one or two examples of very localized double progressions, but in these cases the fundamentals are often close together on the circle of fifths and do not betray any sign of a shared chromatic relation. In many cases, the idea of polymodality is better justified without any attempted wordplay since Stravinsky's music had been modal since *The Rite*. The truly polymodal sections of *The Rite* are extremely localized and appear where the writing is very linear, as in the "Introduction" to the first tableau. But the harmonic conditions most characteristic of this work occur where a preponderant, modality-fixing fundamental is emphasized by a second fundamental to which it is chromatically related.

How did the composer actually experience these various characteristics of his language? When writing, it was with wild enthusiasm; however, as his detachment grew, he became prone to second thoughts brought about by the evident need to fit regulative norms into his new works and by his increasing attention to what music was becoming because of the Viennese. First, there was his repeated refusal to return to the aesthetic of the great ballets. "I will never be seen sacrificing what pleases me and what I aspire to in order to satisfy the demands of people who, blind as they are, do not realize that they are simply asking me to go into reverse. They must understand that, for me, what they ask is outdated."[10] There was also this conclusion in *Expositions and Developments*: "I was guided by no system whatever in *Le Sacre du Printemps*. When I think of other composers of that time who interest me—Berg, who is synthetic (in the best sense), Webern, who is analytic, and Schönberg, who is both—how much more theoretical their music seems than *Le Sacre*; and these composers were supported by a great tradition, whereas very little tradition lies behind *Le Sacre du Printemps*. I had only my ear to help me. I heard, and I wrote what I heard. I am the vessel through which *Le Sacre* passed."[11]

In the face of declarations so fraught with consequences as this preemption of language and technique and this absence of system—truths which nevertheless require mediation—must we really accept the idea, with all its negative connotations, that is contained in the word "aporia" which we find simultaneously in the writings of Souvtchinsky[12] and Adorno?[13] It is true that the word is weighted differently in the works of the two. It may be that Souvtchinsky intends the meaning to be given to life, while Adorno speaks quite unequivocally of creation. But, in both instances, the idea of aporia is suggested by the fear that the composer and the man may have felt in the face of manifestations of irrationality. As far as their metaphysical content is concerned, musicology can only remain silent; its task is to note witnesses' declarations in the sure knowledge that it will have to interpret them with many reservations. But musicology does normally investigate the creative phenomenon.

There can be no doubt that Stravinsky changed direction quite irrevocably just after World War I. There exists a pre- and post-*Pulcinella* language and aesthetic. If three works from the 1920 period, *Concertino*, *Symphonies of Wind Instruments*, and *Les Cinq Doigts* (Eight Very Easy Pieces on Five Notes), transformed this aesthetic, they more or less escaped the great divide. But it is quite clear that within *Mavra*, Stravinsky's homage to Pushkin and Glinka, this new emergence of a Russian theme could no longer be included in what had lately been the composer's great Russian inspiration, except by a reification of certain features and a sort of crystallization of their form. *Mavra* was already a work involving compromise. Beginning with this first stage in his change of direction, the composer's creative behavior can be analyzed and interpreted and arguments found that justify a ratification of his judgment independently of any philosophical options. However, the fact remains that after *Mavra*, neither the public nor many enlightened musicians in their midst saw in Stravinsky a power or a brilliance comparable with that of the works falling between *The Firebird* and the *Symphonies of Wind Instruments*. Might this contemporary judgment imply a victory for irrational categories in musical poetics over Stravinsky and his stated intentions?

This question is vital. It was posed for the first time in this century by Stravinsky's works. It came up again with even greater force in the fifties when Cage challenged the total serialization project with his chance works. Although Cage was unable to furnish proof through the production of true equivalents, information theory has provided a reasonably satisfactory answer to the problem by showing that a surfeit of input goes against the elementary laws of perception and leads to the destruction by rational phenomena of their own potential semantic value. In the case of Stravinsky, and even Debussy, the conflict resulting from the incidence of rational and irrational facts is much more mysterious. How can we evaluate Stravinsky's works and creative approaches on the basis of criteria that illustrate this conflict?

A discussion of approaches is no doubt of minor interest in comparison with what the works themselves tell us. However, in view of the fact that it coincided with a change of direction in his poetics, it seems to me that emphasis must be placed on a historical fact whose significance Stravinsky himself underlined. I am referring to the trauma caused by the Peace of Brest-Litovsk. When a military or a class defeat is thought to be reversible by the community undergoing it, it provokes a spirit of resistance, and guerrilla activity is organized. But in the case in point, no illusions were possible. The collapse of the ruling class in Russia had long seemed inevitable, and no patriotism could arise from the ashes of the power that had been destroyed. Humiliation was the lot of those who could not share in the ideals of the revolution. In his *Autobiography*,[14] Stravinsky confessed he and Diaghilev experienced that same feeling—it was only natural. At that juncture, the policy of the Ballets Russes changed. Diaghilev undertook the rehearsal of *The Good-natured Ladies* after Scarlatti, and Stravinsky replaced the popular music of his country with the recent offerings of the jazz world (*Ragtime*, *Piano Rag-Music*)—a substitute form of popular expression that came just at the right moment. This period in Stravinsky's career translates the greatest level of irrationality ever reached in his works. In discussing the works from his Russian period, he had mentioned the absence of any system and referred to his ear as the final arbiter. However, this was only part of the truth, and a biased part at that. The retention of the triadic system, the continued presence of a chromatic relation in the case of simultaneously occurring phenomena, the opening out of diatonic relations in successions, and the organization of the temporal structure into autonomous moments that give predominance to one modality, all go to make up the many underlying elements of a suggested but not fully codified grammar which nevertheless remains accessible to a certain level of description and therefore to a certain level of rationality. But what stability can a piece like *Piano Rag-Music* offer for analysis? What criteria can an observer use to explain its coherence?

On the basis of what the composer says, it seems that the form of this piece was not only dictated by the treatment of the piano as a percussion instrument, but also by the digital pleasure that the music affords. "What excited me most in it was that the different rhythmic episodes of this piece were dictated to me by my fingers alone."[15] But, all other considerations aside, a reading of the piece reveals the grammatical instabilities characterizing his conception of the work. Throughout the piece, the primacy of the triad is unequivocally confirmed. It begins in G; the key rapidly becomes distorted, but a temporally progressing tonal-type structure, not really classical because of its detours, leads to the dominant (measure 10). This dominant is prolonged to measure 13, after which a return to the tonic is speedily initiated by means of a double melodic ligature of the classical type. The temporal structure of the tonality is thus partially restored. However, it is unlikely that this structure will be perceived as such, given the importance of the intermediate harmonies, the caesura preceding the 6/8, and the change in writing in the *piano staccato* passage during which the harmonic base of the counterpoint is attenuated. An underlying tonal progression is nevertheless present.

Another progression is perhaps more audible: the one in F# minor in the second sequence in 2/4 *piano subito*. But here we find ostinatos and small repeated sequences, the most frequent passages in his Russian period, superimposed on this progression. After the statement of a third passage in E which prepares the return to the initial key of G and contains the reappearance of the constituents of the first sequence, there begins a long episode which is not divided into bars for the greater part of its length. From this point, the temporally progressing forms of the first part of the piece give way to a playful exercise involving the superimposition of triads with different fundamentals and the large-scale replacement of the figures by ostinatos and repeated sequences.

So, prompted by his model, the rag, and certainly by his own personal development, Stravinsky brought together in the same piece two temporal structures—one progressing according to the rules of tonality and the other static, constructed on the basis of the modal norms established by the composer in his previous works. This coexistence of contrasting temporal structures became more and more characteristic of Stravinsky's work, particularly after he arrived at what he termed, *à propos Oedipus Rex*, his "officially recognized language" ("language homologue"). The approval which Stravinsky accorded at one point to his language was the natural result of a status which, if not actually promulgated, was at least implicitly discernible in his work in the form of clear and easily definable syntactical relations to which works like *Piano Rag-Music* had no claim. His 1918 works such as *L'Histoire du Soldat* (*The Soldier's Tale*) can no doubt be defined on the basis of their very obvious morphologies and linear relations, but these are mostly based on reified structures grouped together in collage form. By this, I mean structures which, by their very repetition, even from one work to another, have lost some of their expressive force and are used for their cliché value in an order of succession that implies compartmentalization. The use of the so-called "officially recognized language" incorporated clichés in the task of "putting into an order," to use the author's favorite expression in his *Poetics of Music* to describe his conscious approach to composition at the time.

*Pulcinella* was, without a doubt, the work that led most directly toward the rehabilitation of temporally progressing tonal structures in Stravinsky's works. Basing himself on Pergolesi's material, the type of conjectural speculation in which he could indulge afforded him the pleasure of making the most of dissonant relations in a context that had not produced them historically, but which could grasp and embrace them. This new state of affairs would have a profound effect on everything that would be described as neoclassical. In *Pulcinella*, there are many passages which exhibit this new form of conjectural design acknowledged by the composer. I will limit myself to mentioning a single example—a passage that is not, perhaps, the most striking for the listener because of its particular closeness to the conventions of the eighteenth century, but one that lends itself to grafting because of the stereotyped structure of its progression (Example 4).

A passage of this type simply reproduces the most regular pattern of transitory tonal progression, and it is by means of this device and other similar structures that the unfolding of the tonal form is fully reintegrated. The passage could have been written in the eighteenth century by Pergolesi, or by another musician of any other school. As such, it represents the standard divertissement formula—one of the purest fetishes of the age. The openness or emptiness that this formula offered to a twentieth-century composer allowed him the possibility of increasing its dissonance through the introduction of a ninth. In this respect, the only thing that Pergolesi could not have written was the pedal viola sections. When these sections occur, they endow the Overture with a new dimension that is much more effective than the division into two orchestras that the eighteenth century could already use.

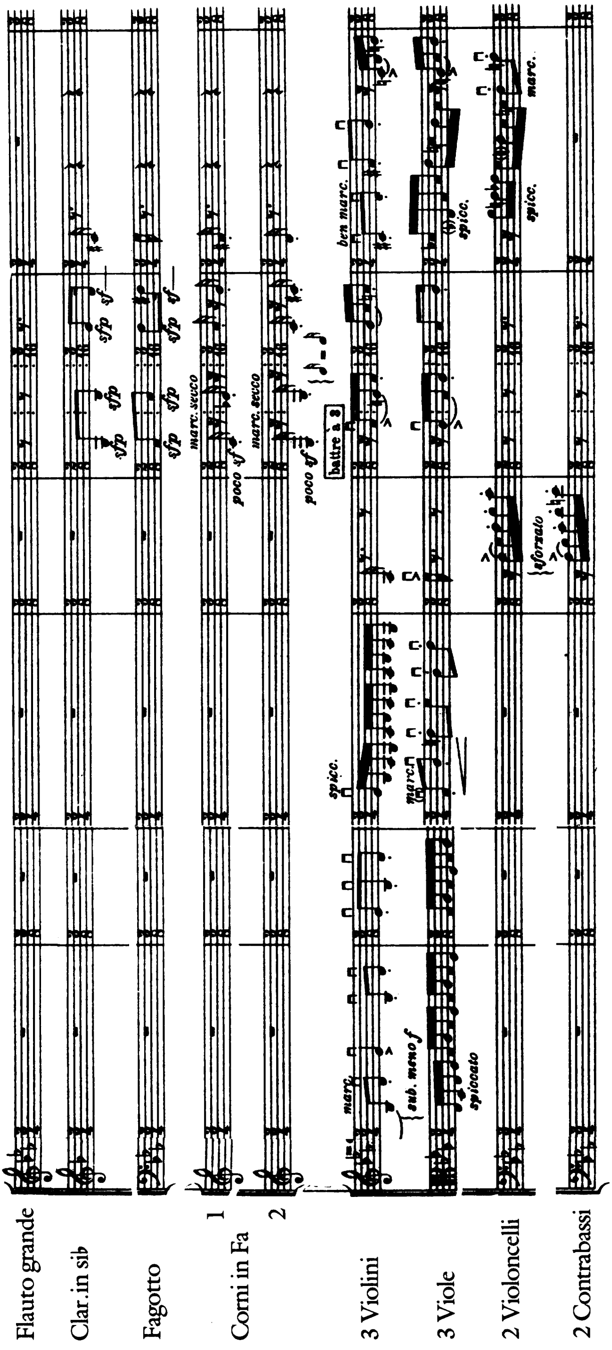
Having reappropriated part of the experience of the past, Stravinsky had to realize that, even if he concentrated the bulk of his innovative work on the timbre, as in the case of *Pulcinella*, he could not repeat his previous speculative games. He could not turn his back on his own experience without endangering his invention. A few years later when, in *The Fairy's Kiss*, he once again returned to his beloved Tchaikovsky, he proceeded differently and associated the unfolding of the progressing linear structure with the static structures of his own processes. So the forms of *The Fairy's Kiss* were defined as structures with a constantly interrupted progression. But time had passed between the two works, and it enabled the composer to discover a compromise between the two temporal structures that would act as the basis of the neoclassicism that his philosophical development called for.

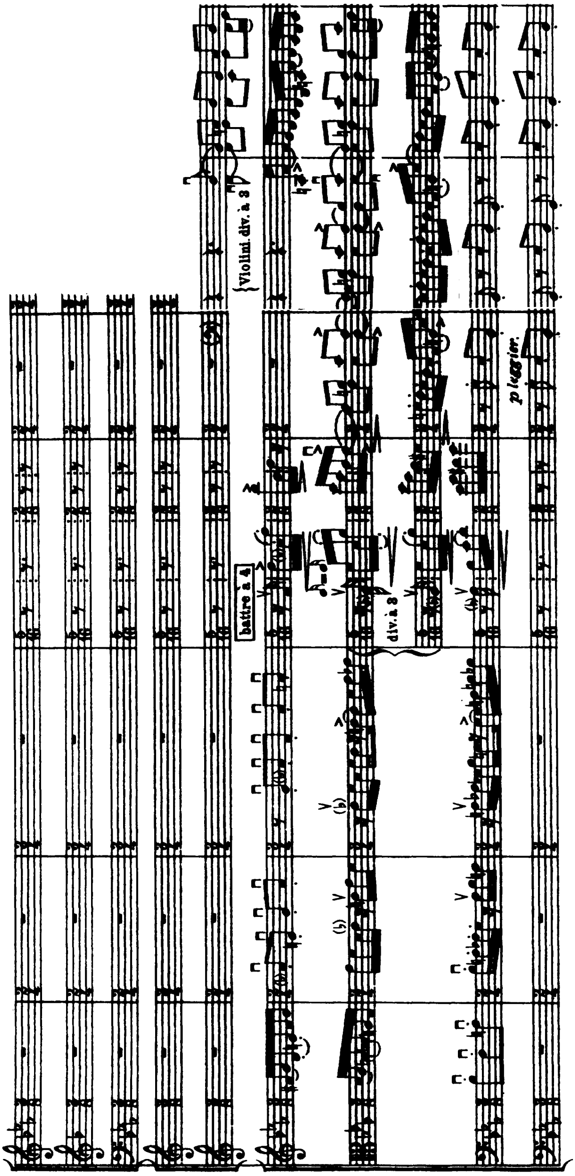
I believe that the first signs of this compromise can be found in *Mavra*. In its melodic structures this work admits of local linear progressions, but these progressions are constantly blocked either by a harmonic immobility created by ostinatos or by successions of chords in the modal space. The whole opera is constructed on the basis of this model, in which the developmental framework of the melody is little more than that of song—a factor which facilitated the establishment of a modal harmonic process. The compromise does not always follow these lines. Here and there, a local harmonic progression appears but cannot develop because of the melodic polarities which are always very powerful thanks to the repetition of the melodic cells. The writing of *The Rite* never contradicted this point.

Among many others, a good example of Stravinsky's view of progression can be found in the first movement of the Concerto in E♭ ("Dumbarton Oaks"), between 4 and 6. This is a progression taking place inside a process constructed in circular form since the progression begins with a tonic that returns at the end. What is reinstated here is a procedure used quite commonly in the eighteenth century in the construction of internal transitions. But the difficulty in referring to harmonic patterns is evident in such cases, since these patterns are literally submerged by the contrapuntal writing that the "officially recognized language" often reincorporates into the fabric of the work. In this sense, people were right at the time when they talked of a "return to Bach"—not because the chosen model in our example was the Third Brandenberg Concerto, but because the composer aimed for an uninterrupted discourse, like that of the Baroque era, in each of his works where an academic style was the object of games and speculation.

As everybody knows, Stravinsky was extremely fond of melody and did not want it to be confused with the concept of theme.[16] This helps to explain why he remained unconcerned with Viennese classicism and, *a fortiori*, Schönberg's *Grundgestalt*. Stravinsky's counterpoint is very linear and is organized between well-developed melodies. In this case, and even in cases where the procedure is less deliberate than in the "Dumbarton Oaks" Concerto, this period of his interest in academic formulas re-established voice-leading, an idea and practice which had suffered badly during his previous Russian period.

The small number of examples either quoted or alluded to could be expanded upon. But here their sole purpose is to get to the bottom of Stravinsky's thought, to understand its content at crucial moments, and to isolate the occasions when a model appeared. They show how he liked kneading


Flauto grande
Clar. in sib
Fagotto
Corni in Fa
1
2
3 Violini
3 Viole
2 Violoncelli
2 Contrabassi
marc.
sub. meno f
spiccato
spicc.
marc.
sforzato
poco sf
marc. secco
battre à 8
sfp
sf
ben marc.
spicc.
marc.


Violini div. à 3
battere à 4
div. à 3
p leggiero

EXAMPLE 4

his material. Indeed, for him, all material was like a divine gift. We have only to remember to what extent this trait struck Ramuz on the day of their first meeting. Prompted by this particular sensitivity and a living faith in his own inventive abilities, Stravinsky cast his material in a language and in forms that were totally new. This done, he was apparently overcome by vertigo, and perhaps by fear. Driven on by the scholastic philosophy to which he subscribed as well as by a nostalgia for the Middle Ages, which he saw as a Paradise Lost, he felt the need to justify his faith by constructing his newest inventions on more and more clearly defined foundations. From this point on there is an increasing tendency in his work for two temporal structures to exist side by side—one static and made up of repetitions and breaks, the other progressing and reusing some of the syntactic features of tonal language and, later, of serialism.

Of all the studies, including the *Poetics of Music*, that link Stravinsky's language and ideology, the most interesting are unquestionably those of Adorno, excesses and errors of judgment notwithstanding. Their profundity of thought makes these studies of the highest order. With their methodology, however, they frequently move away from their ostensible topics. I do not propose to embark on a discussion of dialectical methodology and will limit myself to noting its usefulness in the study of historical, sociological, and even psychological processes. But I believe it is dangerous to make systematic use of this methodology when inquiring into matters connected with synchronic analysis. Adorno takes systematization as far as he can in his search for contradiction and is constantly anxious to evoke it, while affording it every protection against tautology. His idea is that theory should inevitably lead to the adoption of a partisan attitude based on the observation of the contradictions that unite two opposites. Yet, despite the impeccable dialectic of his thought, his conclusions remain resolutely one-sided. This one-sidedness in the philosopher's works also derives from the fact that he anticipates his conclusions. It is generally agreed that, in the works or series of works that he has studied, Adorno's gaze has always encompassed the essential and has even penetrated farther than the essential. This is what makes his comments particularly rich and attractive. However, the conclusions which he draws from his most pertinent remarks often precede the remarks themselves and subtle remarks that require explanation are often given in the context of these conclusions.

Adorno recognizes three periods in Stravinsky's work, periods which he names the "child-like," the "neoclassical" and the "serial." As he sees it, all three use the same type of time which can be called *regressive*. This unique time structure emerges in an expression of opinion that acknowledges the facts, but inflates some and belittles others to the point of caricature. Adorno writes: "[Stravinsky's music] seems to be stifled. The idea of a future without prospects is unbearable for it, especially when its fabric is richer."[17] He continues, "Sometimes, his works create an impression of progression, an impression that is followed by disappointment. On other occasions . . . his works submit to the temporal order of things but with the diabolic suggestion that their music does not move forward, but has abolished time, that they are music of Being [*de l'être*]." In other words, what is mobile in them emerges, only to be swallowed up again. For Adorno, Stravinsky's music is no more than a "flight from time" and a dominating authoritarian structure, no more than repetition, which he condemns: "It is constantly presenting what is in fact the same thing as though it were 'something different.' There is a farcical and clownish element in it. It is always giving itself airs when in fact it is ridiculous. It is always straining without anything happening."[18] How far can such proposals be taken? And, if we tarry on Adorno's territory at least for a few more moments, surely we can argue just as reasonably that Stravinsky's repetitions offer one thing that turns into something else each time that it is repeated? Little matter. We must leave behind this kind of evaluation.

Adorno's standpoint is one of feeling. To begin with, the temporal structure of Stravinsky's works cannot be reduced to its repetitions, however striking this phenomenon may be. In addition, the weight of the repetitions changes from work to work and from period to period. Their profile in the March from *Renard*, for example, has nothing in common with the type of repetition that appeared after Stravinsky started compromising, something we have already discussed and that dominates his "academic" or so-called neoclassic period. Even when repetitions once again came to the fore, as in the *Symphony in Three Movements*, they sound nothing like they had sounded thirty years before. The profile of the repetitions is, in itself, a function of the general structure in which they are integrated. In fact, apart from very rare occasions, repetition has never been absent from Western music. (This point could no doubt be extended to cover music throughout the world.) Each type of process integrates what is repeated according to its own way of being and the particular laws that govern it. The repetition that is very much present in the works of Baroque composers and Viennese classical composers (perhaps more in the works of Haydn and Beethoven than in those of Mozart or Schubert, where the melodic spread dilutes rather than concentrates the repetition) is less audible than in the case of Debussy or Stravinsky because it is supported by a harmonic and melodic progression that reduces its harshness. In the linear developments of tonal music, repetitions appear more clearly than in the context of variations whose power may destroy this clarity.

During the period when Stravinsky appeared a champion of a form of invention that he upheld and experienced unconditionally, his iterative system was qualitatively comparable to that of Debussy. In the latter's work, a short overall statement is generally repeated with little or no variation immediately after its first hearing. This is what Ruwet calls "duplication."[19] Also, it is not rare for Debussy's monodic sequences to be emphasized by means of ostinatos. These procedures were taken over by Stravinsky and greatly intensified. The frequency of the consecutive or closely spaced restatements was increased to such an extent that the term "duplication" was no longer appropriate. As for the ostinato, we are well aware of the extent to which it became one of his characteristic compositional devices. No doubt we should also emphasize the more geometrical nature of Stravinsky's figures, a feature that derives from their greater concentration and from a rhythmic division that is at the same time simpler, more regular, and more segmented.

Even so, Debussy's forms and Stravinsky's elaborations share a number of similar syntactic characteristics which, strangely enough, authors have described as having an absence of system. Yet there is no question of such an absence. There was a movement away from a system that was being abandoned, and a relative absence of any codification of what was emerging during the process of composition. The fact that it was impossible to repeat the figures in an order of progression laid down by the tonal system, particularly on the basis of harmonic progression, transformed the restatement into a repetition of the same thing. In this infinitely more static environment the ostinato, particularly in Stravinsky's works, took the place of the sequential progressions of tonal harmony, in other words, of the system which Schenker labelled "prolongations." It was from this type of compositional structure that Stravinsky withdrew at a certain moment and to a certain extent. In his works written in an academic spirit, he actually attempted to reintroduce prolongations by reordering harmonic progressions, but without readapting the *Grundgestalt* or its variational development. Of course, he did not abandon his faith, but he found it advisable to express it as a well-reasoned position.In so doing, the composer reorganized the first level of expression, that of syntax, by using traditional norms reinterpreted and brought up to date. However, on the second level, that of rhetoric, he strove to maintain as far as possible the new relationships that he invented, many of which were rooted in the world of Debussy. This was probably the profound sense of his compromise.

But can these forms of process, and particularly those dictated by a faith that had nothing to do with dogma, in fact be *regressive*, as Adorno thought? If we adopt this ultimately idealistic point of view, if we take "archaic movement" and "civilization"[20] as being incompatible, if we look upon the sonata as being the meeting place *par excellence* of the "unity of rigor and freedom," the "concept of a musical subject-object" that realizes the "happy identification of the moment with the actual experience of time,"[21] then we will, of course, adopt a historical view of art as a vehicle of progress and decadence. But with due respect for what Adorno says, quite rightly, about the sonata, there may be a view closer to modern anthropology which, in the process of mediation, does not expect that the two types of performance which he suggests—one deriving from *song* and the other from the *beat of the drum*—should be indistinguishable. If we must assume that, in Adorno's view, the beat of the drum has displaced song in the structure of Stravinsky's work, then we will be unable to classify his works as "great music." And what do we do with Debussy, whose shadow Adorno perceives behind Stravinsky's temporal structures, and in whose works the song masking the discreet beat of the drum must be difficult to overlook? While retaining Adorno's ideas, surely it would be fairer in the long run both to sense and to agree that, in great music, the beat of the drum may sometimes predominate over song and that the reverse may happen without placing the world in peril or invention in jeopardy? Seen globally and without any preconceived ideas, Stravinsky's architecture in his Russian period forms part of a development from which all regression seems to be absent, unless in the Freudian sense of the term. A music formed and developed by contact with popular art and taking as its model practices of primitive cultures would only be regressive if it copied its models slavishly. But in the case in point, the model is mediatized or distanced to such an extent that it cannot be located. Despite its offhandedness, Debussy's celebrated definition of *The Rite* as "savage music with all the modern conveniences"—which did not amuse Stravinsky—was perhaps the best way of gathering into one aphorism the underlying sense of this music and of articulating precisely the high level of mediation brought about by the harmony, the timbre, and a melody which largely abondoned voice leading as understood by polyphony to produce from an ancient and vague starting point the most authentic of innovations.

These new forms of architecture eventually began to worry Debussy because of their radicalism. They also began to worry their creator who, realizing that old Western polyphony was inimical to them, began to progressively reintroduce tonal order in a world conceived to submerge it. Because of this invasion into one of his most original creations, the brilliance of his output became progressively dulled. Stravinsky continued to skillfully manipulate the techniques of anamnesis, but this was to the detriment of his work which no longer exposed itself except by surprise to the impulses that had made it so powerful and unusual. The realization of past memories allows a person to maintain his identity in the face of social phenomena. The amount of rationality so introduced is measured out in terms of the effects of social influences. However, in a work of art, the effect of social influences is academicism.

Stravinsky's academicism is no doubt at its strongest in his "music based on other music," ("Musik über Musik") as Adorno puts it, quoting Rudolf Kolisch. But harmony, which for Stravinsky was no longer an area of exploration, is another reference point of no less significance. In 1958, Stravinsky wrote: "Today harmonic novelty is at an end. As a medium of musical construction, harmony offers no further resources in which to inquire and from which to seek profit."[22]

When Stravinsky made this pronouncement, he had entered the serial phase of his work. He had no doubt been able to weigh the effects of the first stage of his academicism, namely the salvaging of certain aspects of tonal harmony treated in a pseudo-modal context. This serial phase, during which the interval took precedence over the chord, did not bring about the change proclaimed by Boris de Schloezer[23] who, in a blaze of optimism, announced that borrowing from the Viennese school would not lead to "second degree" art or art that uses preexisting material, as in the case of borrowings from Bach or Tchaikovsky. In the words of this eminent aesthetician, "[Stravinsky's] only borrowings from the Viennese school were processes of composition—rules that make musical discourse cohesive." In principle, this is true, and it was only normal for a philosopher to interpret Stravinsky's then recent initiative in the light of the most logical consequences that could be expected of it. However, reality reveals another aspect of the matter. If it is true that, in this final phase of Stravinsky's creative activity, there would be no more "music based on other music" in the most literal sense of the term, Webern still makes himself heard, though one looks in vain for traces of Schönberg or Berg. It is mainly the distribution of timbres that accounts for this state of affairs. But if, strictly speaking, there is no "second degree" art, there is no borrowing of rules either, and this could be a cause for rejoicing if we reflect on just how few grammatical rules are shared by the three Viennese protagonists.

Instead of taking serialism as the basis of a new language, Stravinsky subjected it to a new twist. He thought in terms of series but worked in terms of *modes* and, as often as not, cast his harmonies in the form of triads. This was the case even in his most notable works of this period such as *Agon* and *Requiem Canticles*, but it was less so in the *Movements* for piano and orchestra where Webern's shadow assumed disquieting proportions. Serial devices thus joined what remained of the tonal harmony of his preceding creative period in order to prolong his stylistic academicism. However, because of an absence of hierarchically ordered harmonic functions and a retention of numerous modal poles, there is no real linear progression in his serial works and time seems to stand still. This creates a very feeble impression of mobility for the listener and brings about a reduction of the contrasts created, for the most part, by the interplay of timbres and registers. Such stasis in the temporal development of a structure is far removed from that of the Russian period since the poles are not hierarchically ordered in relationship to one another.

Even as Stravinsky adapted the discoveries of the early years to his use of preexisting musical techniques, the musical intelligentsia insisted on reminding him of *The Rite*, *Les Noces*, and *Renard*. Might all this perhaps mean that the irrational could take precedence over the rational in art after all? The question is important and deserves the consideration it has never really received despite the fact that it is being asked today as never before as a result of the many practices that lie outside any code. I do not propose to become engaged in any such discussion here but simply to present some arguments in connection with the topic that we have been discussing. It is interesting to consider the following points.

First, whatever the balance between the rational and the irrational in these works, when Stravinsky composed *The Rite*, *Renard*, and *Les Noces* (among others), he created prototypes which, bursting on the world like the first word of a new Adam, militated in favor of the creation of a new world or sound. But, perhaps because its share of irrationality was too great, this world revealed its limits as soon as it was replicated. The ever-present imitators then rushed in and, as often happens, launched (or tried to launch) a Succession of such works without having experienced the living necessity of the interior of the evolution of the thought and language.

Second, because his impulses were directed by a flair with which he was gifted but which he asserted beyond the bounds of any gift, Stravinsky was unable to commit himself to the Succession, or even to promote it. He had to find other ways of remaining faithful to himself and therefore sought solace in anamnesis. His backward glances fell mainly on the reorganization of the lowest structural level, the smallest units of composition; the highest structural level—the discourse or the formal elements—was less affected by the particular discoveries which had brought him admiration. What is important is that this approach is the very opposite of that used by Schönberg, who reorganized the lowest level of his works by using a discovery which he made after an exploratory period, that is the row of twelve notes, a succession of non-hierarchically ordered elements. At the same time, on the highest structural level, Schönberg endeavored to retain the rational organization of the formal elements of his compositions and that of their development as it is implied by the traditional hierarchical organization of their lowest structural level. So, in both instances, there was a contradiction provoked by a desire to recycle elements, or an inability to do otherwise. And there was a tendency for what was recycled to become inverted.

Third, in the sense that the first level of language forms its basis, and expresses its potentialities, Schönberg's exploratory grammar was much more productive than Stravinsky's retrospection. But care must be taken not to draw a one-way conclusion from this point. In my previously mentioned study, "Le Legs de 1912,"[24] I contrasted the idea of incarnation (or being firmly rooted in one's culture) when discussing Stravinsky's grammar with that of "excarnation" (its opposite, or flight from one's culture) when discussing Schönberg's. These two ideas must be understood in relation to the very basis of our culture. Handed down through Schönberg's heritage, "excarnation" expresses itself in an attempt to serialize all the parameters of expression. This attempt has brought about a surfeit of determination, producing the opposite effect, and at the same time has been coupled with a withdrawal from writing that has gone as far as "happenings," or the use of verbal instructions in place of scores and pure improvisation that revels in its lack of any grammar. There is no equivalent in Stravinsky's heritage. In general he discouraged imitation. Some neorealist schools have appeared that write "music based on other music," either through a return to pseudo-tonality or with quotations. But if they sometimes boast of following in Stravinsky's footsteps, their aesthetic remains independent of his models and their potentiality. As for the repetitive minimalists, it is an insult to Stravinsky's name to mention them in the same breath. Stravinsky's works transmit a message, even though they are unable to serve as the basis of a grammar or an aesthetic. Paradoxical though it may sometimes seem, they profess objectivity when they subordinate themselves to the production in the ballet or, in the absence of pure dance, to an anecdote when the quotation was really literal such as in Schubert's "March" in the *Circus Polka*. But within this very desire for objectivity, the distance between the works and the surrounding world isolates them, protects them, and establishes them on an ontological time-scale which does not represent the physical or psychological time of the works, but the time the works themselves occupy. This is the first stage in the process of becoming rooted in the cultural soil—a process to which neither nineteenth-century romanticism nor any of its aesthetic offshoots can aspire.

Stravinsky's works protect culture against the countercultural tendencies which uphold the values of ephemera or employ them in their own self-defense. But the protagonists of ephemera should note that it is not the bourgeois order of things that is being upheld here; Stravinsky, the scholastic and Thomist, was incapable of such a thing. What we have is an object of civilization presented in its integrity, completely independent of any class culture. Stravinsky's oeuvre teaches us the absolute necessity of "incarnation" in the code, though it does this in a negative way by placing trust in the order of traditional systems. But it also warns us deeply against what Claude Levi-Strauss called "the Utopia of the Century," that is, the elaboration of a work on a single level of articulation. For today's composers, Stravinsky therefore stands out as a landmark in history which is of no use to them unless they see it as a work calling out to them across time, like the *Odyssey* or the *Divine Comedy*, and unless it remains further a summons to vigilance.

—translated by Michaël Lamb

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## NOTES

1. Claude Debussy, *Monsieur Croche et autres écrits*, ed. François Lesure (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), 66.
2. Ibid., 223.
3. Ibid., 61-62.
4. Pierre Boulez, *Par volonté et par hasard*, ed. Célestín Deliège (Paris: Seuil, 1975), 20.
5. André Souris, *Conditions de la musique et autres écrits*, ed. Jean Jacquot (Paris: CNRS; Bruxelles: Université libre, 1976), 209.
6. Ibid., 211.
7. Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Work* (London: Faber & Faber, 1979), 199.
8. Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Memories and Commentaries* (London: Faber & Faber, 1981), 122.
9. Célestin Deliège, "Le Legs de 1912," in *Igor Stravinsky, études et témoignages*, ed. François Lesure (Paris: Lattès, 1982), 149-92.
10. Igor Stravinsky, *Chroniques de ma vie* (Paris: Gallimard, 1935), 2: 190.
11. Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Expositions and Developments* (London: Faber & Faber, 1981), 147-48.
12. Pierre Souvtchinsky, "Stravinsky auprès et au loin," in *Igor Stravinsky, études et témoignages* (see note 9 above), 39.
13. Theodor W. Adorno, *Quasi una Fantasia* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1963), 222.
14. Igor Stravinsky, *Chroniques de ma vie* (see note 10 above), 1: 159 and 171.
15. Ibid., 178.
16. Igor Stravinsky, Letter to *Le Figaro*, 18 May 1922, in *Igor Stravinsky, études et témoignages*, 240.
17. Adorno, *Quasi una Fantasia*, 210-11.
18. Ibid., 211.
19. Nicolas Ruwet, *Langage, Musique, Poésie* (Paris: Seuil, 1972), chap. 3, 70-99.

20. Theodor W. Adorno, *Philosophie der neue Musik* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1958), 157.

21. Ibid., 181-82.

22. Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Conversations with Igor Stravinsky* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), 109.

23. André Boucourechliev, "Stravinsky hier et aujourd'hui," conversation with Boris de Schloezer, *Nouvelle Revue Francaise*, March 1959, 511.

24. Deliège, "Le legs de 1912," 185.