

Musical Structure, Narrative, and Gender in Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé*

by

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## Declaration of Authorship

I, Russell Millard, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

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ABSTRACT: This thesis seeks to contribute towards the emerging discourse in Ravel studies concerning gender, as well as adding to the ongoing work in musical narratology, especially as regards ballet, to which very little narratological attention has been given. Employing a combination of narratological and Schenkerian analysis, this thesis argues that there are significant moments of divergence between the gendered narratives outlined by the libretto and the music in Ravel's ballet *Daphnis et Chloé*. These 'meaning gaps' are freighted with the hermeneutic potential of Riffaterre's 'ungrammaticalities', constituting a 'guideline to semiosis'. The work is examined as an example of transvaluation, in which the musical score is understood to call into question the gendered cultural values inscribed in the libretto.

Five scenes from the ballet are considered in detail. An examination of the dance contest between Daphnis and Dorcon (Chapter 3) explores isomorphisms between narrative and voice-leading structures, and processes of tonicisation are investigated as instances of transvaluation. This scene is also considered from a broader cultural and historical context, informed by fin-de-siècle constructions of masculinity. The examination of masculinity is developed in an analysis of the 'War Dance' (Chapter 4), which also considers the broader significance of the god Pan.

Lyceion's dance is contextualised as part of the contemporary 'Salome craze', and a close analytical reading of the 'Pantomime' (Chapter 5) draws out some of the more significant divorces between the narratives of the libretto and the music. Chloé emerges as a narrative subject in her own right, with Daphnis posited as narrative antisubject. Finally (Chapter 6), an analysis of Chloé's 'Danse suppliante' examines the gendered connotations of the waltz. The readings proposed by these analyses suggest an emergent function for the music in *Daphnis et Chloé*, acting as a counter-discourse to the doxical narrative outlined by the libretto.

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# 1 Introduction

It is the central argument of this thesis that a reading of the narrative outlined by the music of Ravel's ballet *Daphnis et Chloé* (1912) – alongside, or even against the plot of the libretto – yields hermeneutic potential untapped by existing studies of the work. Moreover, when brought into contact with the cultural values of the time and place of the ballet's creation, this potential leads to new avenues of investigation into the broader contexts of the work.<sup>1</sup>

A number of recent scholars have sought to develop new approaches to Ravel's work, and are thus important points of contact with the ideas contained within this thesis, including Michael J. Puri and Lloyd Whitesell's investigations into the composer's music and sexuality (Puri 2004, 2007, 2011b, Whitesell 2002, 2010); Jessie Fillerup's examination of Ravel's engagement with grotesque aesthetics; and Deborah Mawer and Gurminder Kaur Bhogal's work on gender, in relation to dance and ornament respectively (Mawer 2006a, Bhogal 2006, 2008, 2013). Also related are two narrative-style analyses of the first movement of Ravel's String Quartet, both contained within larger works – Almén (2008, Chapter 9) and Heinzelmann (2008, 160-161) – alongside two essays that employ narratological devices in the investigation of other genres: Kaminsky (2008) and Suurpää (2011).<sup>2</sup> However, there has, as yet, been no attempt to apply specifically narratological methodologies to the

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this thesis, Ravel's ballet is referred to in French (*Daphnis et Chloé*), with Longus's novel rendered in English (*Daphnis and Chloe*). The character's name, Chloe, is given in English, without an accent, except in citations, which always preserve the original orthography.

<sup>2</sup> See also Helbing (2012) for an analysis of the third movement of Ravel's Sonata for Violin and Cello that loosely employs some concepts from Aristotelian dramaturgy.



composer's three largest compositions – *Daphnis*, and his two operas, *L'heure espagnole* (1911) and *L'enfant et les sortilèges* (1926) – despite the appropriateness of such approaches to dramatic works.<sup>3</sup>

In his essay on Ravel's 'programmatic impulse' in the composer's 'Les Entretiens de la Belle et de la Bête' from *Ma mère l'Oye*, Peter Kaminsky draws attention to what he calls 'meaning gaps' – 'the potential difference in meaning or signification between, on the one hand, music's representation of a narrative, text, title, idea, etc.; and, on the other hand, music's ability to generate and connote its own meaning(s)' (2008, 31). This idea is compatible with Nicholas Cook's suggestion that, 'whenever one medium appears to have a relationship of primacy over another – whether in terms of production or reception – *inversion* of the relationship becomes a useful heuristic procedure' (1998, 135). This model is the basis of the approach taken in this thesis: rather than seeing the music as by necessity an expression of the text, the narrative analyses contained within the following chapters invert the relationship to consider how meaning may in fact emerge from the musical narrative, or, rather, from the interaction between music and libretto/dance (see below, section 1.1 for a discussion of the libretto/dance relationship).<sup>4</sup>

A full methodology for this approach will be outlined in Chapter 2, alongside a review of literature relating to musical narratology. Chapters 3 and 4 examine the manner in which masculinity is constructed within the ballet's narrative, considering its significance from the perspective of contemporary culture. Chapter 5 turns its

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<sup>3</sup> See Kilpatrick (2015) for an excellent recent study of the operas.

<sup>4</sup> In her extensive study of Ravel's ballets, Deborah Mawer points out that Ravel sought 'an artistic synaesthesia' (2006b, 1), which would appear to run counter to the methodology adopted in this thesis. However, the focus in the present study is on the 'esthetic process', rather than the poietic, and, as Nattiez points out, 'The esthetic process and the poietic process do not necessarily correspond' (1990b, 17). Issues relating to 'authorial' (poietic) and interpreted (esthetic) meaning are explored in more detail in Chapter 2, section 2.3.1.

attention to the portrayal and performance of femininity in the ballet, using the libretto's alterations to the original novel's narrative as one of a number of hermeneutic contexts for the examination of gender, and the manner in which it colours the perception of the ballet's narrative trajectory. Alongside an analysis of Chloe's 'Danse suppliante', Chapter 6 reflects on these issues from a broader perspective, considering the possible significance of the waltz to the ballet's narrative. Finally, a new relationship between dance and music in *Daphnis* is proposed, based on opposing narrative structures, with the patriarchal values of the libretto undercut by something more in tune with the contemporary figure of the *femme nouvelle*, the musical narrative thus forming a counter-discourse to that of the libretto.

The present chapter provides a context for the later discussions, looking first at the general scholarly and critical reception of the ballet, followed by an account of the libretto's composition. Finally, an outline and brief analysis of the libretto's narrative, a summary of the large-scale tonal structure, and a discussion of the basic thematic material acts both as an introduction to the score and as a reference point for later discussions.

## **1.1 Scholarly reception**

In his 2004 thesis on the work, Michael J. Puri observes that *Daphnis et Chloé* is 'Ravel's most ambitious accomplishment, a monument of musical modernism that has gone virtually unremarked by scholars' (2004, prefatory statement). Although the situation regarding scholarly interest in the work has improved somewhat since Puri's dissertation, it is still striking that this substantial work by a composer central to the classical repertory has merited only a handful of in-depth studies. Granted, as we have

seen, the more critically-focused literature that has appeared since 2000 has begun to broaden the scope of the discourse concerning Ravel's ballet (see, for example, Mawer 2000a, 2006b, Morrison 2004, Fillerup 2009, Puri 2011b, Bhogal 2013), but the more general commentary on the work tends to focus on a small number of recurring subjects. Above all, the manifold beauties of the score are a common refrain, with praise for its 'voluptuous scene-painting' and 'range of tonal sensations' (Cooper 1961, 178, 179); 'its rhythmic diversity, its supreme lyricism, and its magical evocations of nature' (Orenstein 1975, 177); its 'magically atmospheric' sunrise sequence (Larner 1996, 132); and the 'opulent scoring, the rhythmic drive and the memorable tunes' (Nichols 2011, 146).<sup>5</sup> Even Stravinsky – who later demonstrated a certain coolness to Ravel's music<sup>6</sup> – described the score as 'one of Ravel's greatest achievements, [...] one of the most beautiful products in all of French music' (Stravinsky [1935] 1936, 65), a sentiment echoed three years later – and in almost identical terms – by the critic Émile Vuillermoz (1939, 86).<sup>7</sup>

However, as if to counter any suspicion that the splendour of the score is only skin deep, it is just as common for writers to pick up on the assertion made in Ravel's autobiographical sketch that *Daphnis* is in fact a 'choreographic symphony', 'constructed symphonically according to a very strict tonal scheme by means of a few motifs; their development ensures the work's symphonic homogeneity' (in Orenstein 2003, 31).<sup>8</sup> It may be that the emphasis on musical structure in this description reflects

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<sup>5</sup> For a more poetic rhapsody on the score's orchestrational and harmonic brilliance, see Cohen-Levinas (1987), especially 90-91.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, this comment from his conversations with Robert Craft: 'Ravel? When I think of him, for example in relation to Satie, he appears quite ordinary' (Stravinsky 1960, 76).

<sup>7</sup> The citation given here is for the translated English edition, which renders the original as 'one of the finest things in all French music' (Stravinsky [1935] 1936, 65). However, Stravinsky's French – '*une des plus belles productions de la musique française*' – is more commonly translated as given. See, for example, Kramer (1995, 201) and Zank (2009, 149).

<sup>8</sup> See Orenstein (2003, 29) for an account of the genesis of the autobiographical sketch in English.

the aesthetic values of inter-war modernism, and is thus a disavowal of the pre-World War I ‘impressionism’ or post-Romanticism conjured up by the highlighting of the work’s ‘opulence’ elsewhere.<sup>9</sup> This idea may be borne out by the description by Ravel’s pupil – and amanuensis for the autobiographical sketch – Alexis Roland-Manuel, who described the ballet somewhat prosaically in 1928 as a ‘symphony in A major with modulations to surrounding keys’ (1928, 102; my translation).<sup>10</sup> In his later biography of the composer, Roland-Manuel goes on to argue that ‘*Daphnis* is supremely appropriate for large symphony concerts. The two orchestral suites which the composer made from the score contain [...] the essential and best-written part of the work’ ([1938] 1947, 69). In his 1983 study of *Daphnis*, the German writer Gerd Sannemüller takes Roland-Manuel at his word, focusing his investigation solely on the two orchestral suites, arguing that the ‘consistent integrity and coherence’ of the score is ‘clearer in the concentrated concert version than the ballet’ (Sannemüller 1983, 16; my translation).

Despite this emphasis on symphonic ‘integrity and coherence’, the highly ‘consumable’ nature of this lavish score has more recently been developed by Lawrence Kramer in his well-known essay on the ballet, in which he argues that the work represents ‘a translation of conspicuous consumption from the sphere of commerce to the sphere of art’ (1995, 204). Kramer goes on to suggest that the cultural work the ballet undertakes is to undergird fin-de-siècle European attitudes towards the exotic, non-European Other (ibid., passim). Significantly, despite the criticism implied by the terms of Kramer’s argument, the focus of his musical discussion remains the

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<sup>9</sup> For example, Marcel Marnat hears the influence of Wagner and Richard Strauss in the work, alongside inspiration from Debussy’s impressionism and Russian music (1986, 338).

<sup>10</sup> Original French: ‘une symphonie en *la majeur* qui comporte des modulations aux tons circonvoisins’. Roy Howat suggests that ‘Ravel arguably produced several of them [symphonies] in disguise, the largest being the ballet *Daphnis et Chloé*’ (2006, 216).

same as that of many other writers on the work, underlining the sensuous beauty of the score. However, for Kramer, this is ‘a beauty sensuous, urgent, and hypnotic’, but also ‘artificial’ (ibid., 202), in which the ‘symphonic homogeneity’ described by the autobiographical sketch serves to subsume ‘non-European pleasures and energies’ beneath ‘European order’ (ibid., 213).<sup>11</sup>

Yet, although Kramer’s essay is an important early attempt at contextualising the work from a cultural standpoint, his argument still focuses on the music as separate from the ballet as a whole, wherein music is just one aspect of a larger art work. As such, his essay is arguably of a piece with Sannemüller’s study, even if their aims are at odds. Such a focus on the purely musical aspects of the work – melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and orchestrational features, alongside symphonic structure – is perhaps to be expected given the success the work has had in the concert hall over the last one hundred years, both in the form of the symphonic suites and the complete ballet (see Roland-Manuel [1938] 1947, 69, and also Vuillermoz 1939, 86-87, Sannemüller 1983, 14, and Nichols 2011, 148). Yet, contemporary responses to the work were as a ballet first and foremost, and opinions differed as to the success of the music in relation to the overall spectacle. Marcel Marnat has suggested that the ‘reserve’ that many felt towards the work was expressed clearly by the critic Louis Vuillermoz, who suggested that ‘without actors, staging, or lighting, *Daphnis* would have been interminable’

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<sup>11</sup> In this assessment of the work’s ‘artificiality’, Kramer is echoing similar responses to Ravel’s music from his contemporaries. Famously, Debussy described Ravel’s *Histoires naturelles* as ‘artificial and chimerical’, criticising Ravel’s ‘posture as a “trickster”’ (cited in Orenstein 1975, 53). Ravel was aware of such commentary, writing to the critic Georges Jean-Aubry that ‘people strive so much [...] to prove that I am deceiving myself, or better, that I am attempting to deceive others! At times I cannot help but feel a certain annoyance at this’ (letter to George Jean-Aubry, 23 March 1907, in Orenstein 2003, 88). Deborah Mawer explores the supposedly ‘artificial’ side of Ravel’s compositional make up with greater sympathy in her essay ‘Musical Objects and Machines’ (2000b).

(*Comoedia illustré* [9 June 1912], cited in Marnat 1986, 347; my translation).<sup>12</sup>

Against this, one may place Roland-Manuel's very different spin on the relationship between spectacle and music in the ballet, criticising Fokine's 'miscalculated choreography, which made the reproduction of the most worn and stereotyped actions of choreographic repertory inevitable' ([1938] 1947, 67).

An alternative point of view is that of Ravel's friend, the critic Émile Vuillermoz, whose much-cited early review of the work compares *Daphnis* favourably to Nijinsky's choreography for Debussy's *Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un faune*, arguing that 'the synthesis of [music and dance in] *Daphnis et Chloé* was, by contrast [with *Faune*], absolutely complete' (1912, 66: 'La synthèse de *Daphnis et Chloé* fut, au contraire, très complète'; my translation). Vuillermoz repeated this assessment of the intermedial nature of the work in his later writings on Ravel, including his essay in the collection *Maurice Ravel par quelques-uns de ses familiers*, published two years after the composer's death. In this important early overview of the composer's output, Vuillermoz suggests that, not only were the 'literary artifices, transpositions, and stylisations' fundamental to Ravel's conception of the work, but that 'never had a poet and painter in sound pushed so far the sentiment and virtuosity of the written word' (1939, 86-87: 'Les artifices littéraires, les transpositions et les stylisations n'étaient pas, en effet, pour déplaire à cet esprit subtil qui redoutait par-dessus tout la banalité et le lieu commun [...] Jamais un poète et un peintre des sons n'avait poussé plus loin le sentiment de la poésie et la virtuosité de plume'; my translation).

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<sup>12</sup> Original French: 'Sans acteurs ni décors ni lumière, *Daphnis* ne pourrait que sembler interminable.' There is a typographical error in Marnat, resulting in the ascription of the comment to Ravel's friend Émile Vuillermoz, rather than Louis Vuillermoz. The source is correctly cited in Zank (2005), which provides a slightly less literal translation than mine: 'without dance, stage or spectacle it would have been interminable' (ibid., 262).

Unfortunately, very few clues to the choreographic nature of the work survive, making adjudication between the various viewpoints impossible (see Morrison 2004, 50, Mawer 2006b, 80).<sup>13</sup> However, whether or not we feel inclined to agree with Vuillermin's negative assessment of the music – and, despite its popularity as a concert piece, Nichols suggests that *Daphnis* has 'sometimes been felt to be an over-extended score' (2011, 144) – such remarks do serve to remind us that the work was conceived and first experienced as a ballet, with a danced libretto that outlines a dramatic narrative, based on the well-known novel by Longus.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the ballet scholar Edward Nye has argued that, in the absence of explicit choreographic information one may take a ballet's libretto as a fundamental 'choreodramatic document', for it may 'identify the characters' passions, their movements on stage, their overtly pantomimic moments, as well as general principles of staging. In essence, they tell us a great deal about *what* happens, even if they tell us little about *how*' (2008, 50; original emphasis). So even if it impossible to develop a secure understanding of the relationship between dance and music in *Daphnis*, we may at least examine the interaction between Ravel's 'poetry in sound' and the 'virtuosity of the written word' that Vuillermoz views as central to the composer's achievement.

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<sup>13</sup> In particular, see Mawer's citation of the dance scholar, Lynn Garafola: '*Daphnis et Chloé* is a most mysterious ballet. We know a certain amount about it, mainly related to Ravel, but very little about what it looked like choreographically or how it was danced' (in Mawer 2006b, 80). Moreover, as Mawer observes, 'in the absence of much choreographic notation [...] the researcher is more reliant upon potentially coloured memoirs and reviews, both of which tend to reveal little about the precise steps or use of dance space' (ibid., 25). Hanna Järvinen makes a similar point regarding the dancing and choreography of Nijinsky (2014, 3).

<sup>14</sup> Järvinen notes the importance given to narrative elements in Fokine's commentary on his choreographic practice (2014, 102).

## 1.2 Genesis of the libretto

Like many of his contemporaries, Ravel was familiar with Longus's text through the popular sixteenth-century French translation by Jacques Amyot (see Morrison 2004, 64).<sup>15</sup> By the time he came to collaborate with Ravel in 1909,<sup>16</sup> Michel Fokine – the ballet's choreographer – had already produced a libretto based on the novel, which he had submitted to the Director of the Imperial Theatres while still a member of the Russian Imperial Ballet in 1907 (*ibid.*, 52).<sup>17</sup> Fokine's original conception was in two acts, and was intended as 'an experiment in producing a Greek ballet in the spirit of the [Hellenic] age', which would 'avoid the constant error in productions based on subjects from Ancient Greece', whereby 'Greeks dance the French way' (cited in Garafola 1989, 8). Fundamentally, Fokine sought to advance an aesthetic where dance 'should express the whole epoch to which the subject of the ballet belongs' (cited in Beaumont [1935] 1996, 23)

Yet Fokine's desire to create a ballet with 'complete unity of expression, [...] made up of a harmonious blending of the three elements – music, painting, and plastic art' (*ibid.*) was to run up against the problematic nature of artistic collaboration. Although Deborah Mawer is surely correct in suggesting that there were a number of correspondences between the aesthetic aims of Fokine and Ravel – especially the idea that 'music and dance must coexist as equal partners within a supportive complex' (Mawer 2006b, 86) – the language barrier was not the only obstacle faced by their

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<sup>15</sup> See Roland-Manuel's comment that 'Longus's fable is known by everyone' (1928, 97: 'La fable de Longus est dans toutes les mémoires'; my translation).

<sup>16</sup> Ravel's autobiographical sketch claims that work begun on the ballet in 1907, but this date is much disputed, and the ballet's genesis is more commonly dated to June 1909 (see Orenstein 2003, 31 and 36 n22).

<sup>17</sup> Following Fokine's autobiography (1961), some sources, including Garafola (1989, 8), state the year as 1904. However, Vera Krasovskaya argues that the more likely year is 1907, a suggestion accepted by both Scholl (1994, 47-48) and Morrison (2004, 52).



association.<sup>18</sup> Whereas Fokine sought an ‘authentic’ ancient Greece, according to Ravel’s autobiographical sketch the composer’s conception was ‘less concerned with archaism than with faithfulness to the Greece of my dreams’ (in Orenstein 2003, 31), dreams which were inspired by the images of ancient Greece created by eighteenth-century French artists. Indeed, Marcel Marnat suggests that ‘there is nothing less Greek’ than *Daphnis* (1986, 337; my translation), and most commentators blame Ravel for the ballet’s ‘reduced physicality – dramatic violence and overt sexuality’ (Mawer 2006b, 84, see also Marnat 1986, 336). Fokine himself complained of the music’s ‘lack of virility which, in my opinion was necessary for a projection of the world of antiquity’ (1961, 200). Whether or not the accusation that ‘erotic passion’ was ‘alien to [Ravel] and his music’ (Larner 1996, 131) is a fair one, it should be noted that it is likely that it was not only Fokine and Ravel who were responsible for the libretto’s creation, with commentators suggesting that that a number of other collaborators may have had a hand in drafting the scenario, including Diaghilev, *Daphnis*’s designer Leon Bakst, Alexander Benois, and Michel D. Calvocoressi (Puri 2011b, 62). Despite this, Marnat is among those scholars who are persuaded that responsibility for the final libretto rests principally with Ravel (1986, 336).

### 1.3 Plotting *Daphnis*

Whatever the precise circumstances of its creation, it is certainly true that the libretto makes a number of changes to Longus’s tale, conflating some episodes, reducing others, altering the order of events, and transferring the name of the Methymnean

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<sup>18</sup> ‘What complicates things is that Fokine doesn’t know a word of French, and I only know how to swear in Russian. Despite the interpreters, you can imagine the flavor of these discussions’ (Letter to René de Saint-Marceaux, 27 June 1909, in Orenstein 2003, 107). See also Fokine (1961, 199).

general, Bryaxis, to the Pirate Chief (see Chapter 5, section 5.2 for a detailed discussion of some of the alterations and their consequences to the narrative). Gerald Lerner is likely correct to suggest that ‘those members of the audience who were familiar with Longus’s pastoral romance must have been amazed by what they saw’ (1996, 128), although Amyot’s French version was itself bowdlerised (Turner 1989, 10).<sup>19</sup> Indeed, Amyot went so far as to remove the scene with Lyceion, which is retained in the ballet, although its position within the narrative is altered (see Chapter 5, section 5.2).

A straightforward reading of the basic plot as presented by the ballet’s libretto suggests a classic romantic quest-narrative, with Chloe the passive object of the hero Daphnis’s quest. Sally Banes suggests that such narratives were common at the time, observing that ‘over and over again, women characters on the dance stage are enmeshed in what I call “the marriage plot,” in both ballet and dance’ (1998, 5), a point to which the final chapter of this thesis will return (see Chapter 6, section 8). An outline of the ballet’s libretto is given below (adapted from Ravel [1913] 1989, ii):

### Part I

1. ‘Introduction’ and ‘Religious Dance’: a young pastoral couple, Daphnis and Chloe, pay their respects to the Nymphs during a sacred dance.
2. ‘Dances of the Youths’: the young women start a wild dance, in which they ‘entice’ Daphnis, making Chloe jealous; in turn, the young men sweep Chloe into their own dance, with Dorcon proving ‘especially bold’, upsetting Daphnis.

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<sup>19</sup> A corrected version of Amyot’s translation was published in the early 1800s by Paul-Louis Courier (Turner 1989, 11).

3. 'Dance Contest': Dorcon attempts to embrace Chloe, who 'innocently offers her cheek'; Daphnis pushes Dorcon aside with a 'brusque gesture'; a dance contest is proposed, with a kiss from Chloe as prize; Daphnis wins the contest and receives his reward.
4. 'Lyceion's Dance': left alone, Daphnis is approached by Lyceion, who attempts – unsuccessfully – to seduce him; Daphnis is left feeling 'very disturbed' by the encounter.
5. Chloe's abduction: a group of pirates burst onto the scene and abduct Chloe; 'mad with despair', Daphnis passes out; in a dream sequence, the statues of the Nymphs come to life, revive Daphnis, and invoke the god Pan, to whom Daphnis bows 'in supplication'.

## Part II

6. 'War Dance' and 'Chloe's Dance of Supplication': the Pirate Chief, Bryaxis, orders that the captive Chloe dance for him; during her dance she twice tries to escape, but each time is 'brought back violently'; at the moment that Bryaxis carries her off, the earth opens, and 'the fearsome shadow of Pan is outlined on the hills', causing everyone to flee in horror.

## Part III

7. 'Daybreak': as the sun rises, Daphnis is still passed out before the grotto of the Nymphs; he wakes and anxiously looks for Chloe; Chloe appears and the couple embrace; Daphnis realises that 'his dream was a prophetic vision', and that Pan has rescued Chloe.
8. 'Pantomime': Daphnis and Chloe act out the story of Pan and Syrinx.

9. Daphnis pledges his love in front of the altar of the Nymphs.
10. ‘Bacchanal’: the scene is interrupted by the appearance of bacchantes, who lead a riotous bacchanal.

A great deal of the critical focus on Fokine’s work – and that of the Ballets Russes as a whole – has been on its ‘revolutionary’ qualities, with little emphasis on what remains from the inheritance of Romantic ballet (see, for example, Garafola 1989, 2003). Indeed, it has become customary to credit the Ballets Russes as dispensing with conventional ‘story’ ballets, leading to a new synthesis of dance, drama and music, inspired by the Wagnerian concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk* (Banes 1998, 94). Echoing Ravel’s comments about *Daphnis* in his autobiographical sketch, Stephanie Jordan observes that, ‘in the early Ballets Russes, the structuring of ballet scores was altogether different, more continuous and symphonic’ (2000, 6). That said, Davinia Caddy has recently catalogued a number of scholars who have begun to question this paradigm of ‘newness’ (2012, 15-18), and an examination of the libretto for *Daphnis et Chloé* suggests a great deal that is familiar from the narrative structures of nineteenth-century ballets.<sup>20</sup>

Whereas classical mythology had been a popular source for plot material with earlier ballet, for the nineteenth century the supernatural increasingly came to be seen as the natural realm for ballet – the so-called *ballet fantastique*. The most famous example of the new supernatural plot was Adolphe Adam’s *Giselle* (1841), in which a girl dies of a broken heart, only to become a ‘wili’, ‘young brides-to-be who die

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<sup>20</sup> Tim Scholl makes a similar point about that most archetypally ‘modern’ of ballets, *The Rite of Spring*, arguing that the ‘source for the ballet’s female sacrifice’ was nineteenth-century ballet repertory such as *Giselle*, concluding that ‘Stravinsky and Roerich turned to the romantic ballet’s basic plot for the structure of their first ballet libretto’ (1994, 57).

before their wedding day’, and who, at midnight, ‘rise out their graves, gather together in troupes on the roadside’, and force any young man who comes across them to dance until he dies (Smith 2000, 229). Such preternatural tales allowed for oppositions between the supernatural characters and ‘their antithetical alternates – the robust, earthy, vivacious foreigners [who] revitalized the comic tradition’ (Foster 1996b, 200).

Although later examples of successful French Romantic ballets exist in the form of Léo Delibes’s *Coppélia* (1870) and *Sylvia* (1876), by the end of the century, the true home of the Romantic ballet was Russia (Scholl 1994, 13). The presiding genius of Russian ballet in the late nineteenth century was the ballet-master Marius Petipa, who headed the company at the Maryinski Theatre from 1869 to 1910 (Taruskin 2005, 139). The works he produced during this time built on the French tradition:

the martyred sylphs of the 1830s and 1840s are replicated endlessly in Petipa’s ballets. [...] The prevalence of theatricalized female sacrifice in Petipa’s works gave rise to a standard plot structure. The typical Petipa work has a mad scene, a vision scene, and a scene of reconciliation in which the male protagonist and heroine are rejoined  
(Scholl 1994, 4).

Thanks to Petipa’s influence – in particular the three ballets he developed with Tchaikovsky – narrative ballet was given new life in Russia, and would be the presiding form of ballet with which a new generation of dancers and choreographers would grow up, including Michel Fokine, the choreographer of Ravel’s *Daphnis et Chloé*. As Tim Scholl points out, ‘a careful look at Fokine and his innovations reveals

enormous debts to his predecessors’; moreover, the Russian was ‘a clever packager of other choreographer’s ideas’ (2007, 218), so we should perhaps not be surprised to discover resonances with the Romantic ballet in his work.

#### **1.4 *Daphnis*, narrative, and the Romantic ballet**

In order to examine in further detail the correspondences between *Daphnis*’s libretto and the narrative characteristics of the Romantic ballet, it is necessary at this point to outline some basic narratological principles; a proper narratological methodology will be developed in full in Chapter 2. Despite the reliance on narrative in the Romantic ballet – and regardless of the ever-growing narratological literature available (see Phelan and Rabinowitz 2008 for a sampling of the field’s breadth) – there have been surprisingly few attempts to apply narrative theory to ballet. In part, this may be due to the perception that modern dance turned its back on narrativity (see above, section 1.4), but, even were this to be true, it still leaves a large repertoire of narrative dance unexplored from the perspective of narrative theory. As dance scholar Astrid Bernkopf has noted, ‘although dance analysis has developed research tools to study various elements, there is a lack of dance specific theory relating to danced narratives’ (2006, 55). Bernkopf appears to be alone in her attempt to develop a systematic narratological methodology for ballet, arguing that the lack of narratological perspectives on ballet is the result of ‘a dogmatic and ideological attitude towards research topics and their treatment’ within dance studies, which tend to privilege ‘movement and choreography [...], followed by the body and issues relating to the performer’ (2011, 1).<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Although Bernkopf is seemingly the only dance scholar to have developed a specifically narratological methodology for ballet, an article by Ryota Kadera employs elements of narrative theory in an analysis of Kenneth MacMillan’s *Winter Dreams* (2012).

Bernkopf's approach derives its theoretical basis from the method of folktale analysis developed by the Russian Formalist, Vladimir Propp in his *Morphology of the Folktale* (1968; see Chapter 2, sections 2.1, 2.2.1 and 2.4.1 for more on Propp's theories). Observing that 'a tale often attributes identical actions to various personages' (Propp 1968, 50), Propp's method of narrative analysis focuses on the identification of 'functions' – the 'recurrent constants of the tale' (ibid.). Propp identified thirty-one narrative functions in the corpus of Russian folk literature that formed the basis of his research, from 'absentation' to 'wedding', which can occur individually or in groups (e.g. 'villainy, dispatch, decision for counteraction, and departure from home') (ibid., 101).

Bernkopf finds a similarity between the plots of nineteenth-century ballet and the folktales studied by Propp, arguing that the Romantic '*ballet fantastique* can be seen as close to the magic tale, since it confronts its audience with the same features' (2006, 56-57). Acknowledging the theatrical background of ballet, Bernkopf extends her methodological reach beyond Propp's functions, to consider the classical roots of the theatrical tradition through the lens of Aristotle's *Poetics* (2013). Combining Proppian functions and Aristotelian dramatic structure, Bernkopf outlines the basic form of the two-act Romantic ballet:<sup>22</sup>

- Exposition: introduces the fictional world and important characters, about whom background information is conveyed. A 'whole set of functions is used to set up the future conflict between the characters.'

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<sup>22</sup> Paul Turner observes that Longus's *Daphnis and Chloe* combines the fantastic aspects of the traditional Greek novel – 'pirates, dreams, and supernatural aids' – with Aristotle's unities of place and time (1989, 7-8), which suggests a further link between the source of the ballet's libretto and the Romantic ballet.

- Entanglement: conflict intensifies and the main characters are ‘caught in a web of intrigues’. A range of different functions serve to develop the plot.
- Peripeteia: a ‘sudden and surprising reversal of action [...] all seems lost and the evil forces of the plot appear to win’.
- Denouement: ‘the knot is untied’, providing resolution of the plot’s conflicts. ‘The fictional social order that has been subverted in the course of the plot is re-established’.

(Adapted from Bernkopf 2011, 6)

In addition to this outline, Bernkopf identifies ‘narrative links’ that ‘bridge the acts and scenes and ensure a continuous flow of information. Usually repetitions of functions serve as narrative links that establish connections by reminding the audience of events, facts or plans’ (2011, 7).<sup>23</sup> Onto this fundamental structure, Bernkopf maps the various conventions of choreographic expression, including the essential dichotomy between dance and pantomime, solo and ensemble dances, and divertissements, or sections for the *corps de ballet* – all of which are still observable in *Daphnis et Chloé*. As Bernkopf points out, despite the usual association of divertissements with a pause in the narrative development, the dances of the *corps de ballet* can serve to heighten tension by delaying the outbreak of conflict, creating suspense (ibid., 8). Although the function is different – serving to advance rather than delay conflict – given that the first signs of discord in *Daphnis* arise during the ‘Dances of the Youths’ (the ‘forewarning’ – see below), this section of the ballet illustrates Bernkopf’s observation of the potential for such general dances to carry narrative weight.

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<sup>23</sup> These ‘links’ are similar in concept to Roland Barthes’s ‘catalysing functions’: see Chapter 2, section 2.1.



Having provided a theoretical outline for the basic narrative structures of Romantic ballet, Bernkopf turns her attention to the characters that inhabit the plots. The writer Théophile Gautier drew a famous distinction between the two most famous ballerinas of his day, contrasting Marie Taglioni's 'Christian ethereality' with Fanny Essler's 'pagan earthliness' (cited in Cordova 2007, 118). Such a dichotomy serves as a useful model for the essential opposition of character types in Romantic ballet, even extending to the common division of the acts into 'worldly and otherworldly [...where] the borders between reality and dream are blurred, and the plot is transferred to the realm of the unconscious' (Bernkopf 2011, 8). Building on this oppositional approach to characterisation, Bernkopf outlines five basic character types:

1. The Hero: 'who yearns for a partner and has to prove himself worthy of his lover'.
2. The Unthreatening Woman: 'a shy, industrious girl who does not indulge in sensual pleasures' and is the correct choice as lover for the Hero.
3. The Threatening Woman: the opposite of the Unthreatening Woman, who 'lives an active and sensual life by hunting men on moonlit forest clearings'. Her overt sexuality leads to her separation from the Hero.
4. Parental Figures: seek to protect the principal figures from harm, sometimes acting as the catalyst for the unification of the lovers.
5. Trickster Figures: the antagonists of the lovers, but also the opposite of the Parental Figures, 'these mischievous characters, be they male or female, are the ones who through their evil deeds and intrigues drive the lovers into the catastrophe. Thus, without the constant interferences of the Trickster Figures, the plot would lose momentum.'

(Adapted from Bernkopf 2011, 9-10)

Such oppositional pairings have been noted by both Morrison (2004, 54) and Mawer (2006b, 103-109) in relation to *Daphnis*. Indeed, although the eventual version of the ballet contained just the one act, Bernkopf's opposition between natural/supernatural and reality/dream can be observed between the outer tableaux and the central scene in the pirate camp (see Chapter 4, section 4.1.4).

These oppositions are also reflected in the characterisation of the *dramatis personae*, permitting coordination with the outlines of Bernkopf's five character types:

1. The Hero: Daphnis, who yearns for Chloe and has to prove himself worthy in the dance contest with Dorcon.
2. The Unthreatening Woman: Chloe, a shy girl who is not overtly sexual.
3. The Threatening Woman: Lyceion, the opposite of Chloe, who attempts to seduce Daphnis, and whose overt sexuality leads to Chloe's separation from him.
4. Parental Figures: Pan and the Nymphs, who seek to protect Daphnis and Chloe from harm, and act as the catalyst for the unification of the lovers.
5. Trickster Figures: Dorcon acts as the initial antagonist, although the character is more pitiable than evil, and, given his momentary pairing with Chloe, is perhaps better described as a Proppian 'False Hero' (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.2), and therefore dichotomous with the Hero (Propp 1968).<sup>24</sup> A more obvious candidate for Trickster is Bryaxis, the Pirate Chief whose evil deeds drive the narrative into the 'catastrophe' phase.

Moreover, in Chloe and Lyceion one observes Gautier's dichotomy of 'Christian etherealness' and 'pagan earthiness' (see Cordova 2007, 118). Interestingly, such a comparison can also be drawn between Daphnis and Dorcon; one of the innovations

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<sup>24</sup> This is the equivalent of the 'Antisubject' of the narrative theory of A.J. Greimas: see Chapter 3, section 3.6 and Chapter 5, section 5.7.5.

of the Ballets Russes was the focus on the *danseur* as centre of attention, and the adoption of Gautier's feminine opposition for male characters raises interesting questions of gender that are echoed elsewhere in the ballet, such as the scene of Lyceion's attempted seduction of Daphnis, during which the female character demonstrates a stereotypically 'male' sexuality. (These gendered oppositions will be developed further in Chapters 3 and 5.)

Turning to the structure of the plot, one finds further resonances with Bernkopf's description of nineteenth-century ballet narratives. The opening portion of the libretto presents what Propp defines as the 'initial situation', containing the 'temporal-spatial determination' ('A meadow at the edge of a sacred wood...'), introducing the 'composition of the family' and 'Future Hero' ('Daphnis is seen following his flock. Chloe joins him...'), as well as the 'False Hero' ('Dorcon proves to be especially bold...'), a 'forewarning' (Chloe and Daphnis's jealousy), and the 'argument of brothers over primacy' (the 'Dance Contest') (Propp 1968, 165-166).<sup>25</sup>

To use Bernkopf's terminology, these functions combine to form the 'exposition' of the plot, introducing the fictional world and principal characters, and setting up the potential for future conflict. One can also observe how the different functions are articulated by music and dance: the 'temporal-spatial determination' is encompassed by the 'Introduction', whereas the 'composition of the family' is achieved by the 'Danse religieuse', which provides a musical-visual association between the two principal characters and their recurring musical theme (see below, section 1.6). The 'forewarning' and introduction of the 'False Hero' both occur in the 'Dances of the Youths', whereas the 'Dance Contest' provides the opportunity to

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<sup>25</sup> All citations from *Daphnis*'s libretto are from Ravel ([1913] 1989, ii).

contrast Daphnis and Dorcon during ‘the argument of the brothers over primacy’. The narrative’s exposition ends with Daphnis and Chloe apparently safely united.

The ‘entanglement’ begins with Daphnis alone on the stage, Chloe’s absence corresponding to Propp’s first function, ‘one of the members of a family absents himself from home’ (ibid., 57); as Propp explains ‘the very absentation [...] prepares for the misfortune, creating an opportune moment for it’ (ibid., 58). The misfortune comes in the form of the ‘Threatening Woman’, Lyceion, whose licentiousness disrupts the Edenic conclusion of the exposition, resulting in the arrival of the Pirates and the abduction of Chloe, corresponding to Propp’s eighth function, ‘the villain causes harm or injury to a member of the family’ (ibid., 62). This sudden reversal in fortunes – and it is extremely sudden, with the abduction taking just three quick bars of music<sup>26</sup> – functions as the ‘peripeteia’. ‘Mad with despair’ (libretto), Daphnis collapses; the statues of the three Nymphs come to life and care for Daphnis, drying his tears and leading him to Pan, fulfilling the roles of Bernkopf’s ‘parental figures’.<sup>27</sup> This sequence also corresponds to Propp’s twelfth function, ‘the hero is tested, attacked, etc., which prepares the way for his receiving either a magical agent or helper’ (1968, 72), although it is notable that it is Chloe who suffers the attack (see Chapter 5, section 5.2 for a development of this point). This section could also be thought of as a mini *ballet blanc*, the Nymphs being Grecian versions of the Romantic sylphides.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> The brevity of this section was the source of disagreement between Fokine and Ravel, with the composer eventually getting his own way (Mawer 2006b, 87).

<sup>27</sup> Although Daphnis and Chloe are revealed in Longus’s original tale to be the children of noblemen, parent figures of any sort are notably absent in the balletic version, save for Pan and the Nymphs.

<sup>28</sup> Mawer points out similar resonances in Ravel’s second opera, suggesting that ‘the supernatural story staples of French Romantic ballet, with their simulated flights of fairies and sylphs, are at some level echoed in Ravel’s *L’enfant et les sortilèges*’ (2006b, 6).

The dance of the Nymphs and the appearance of Pan closes the first tableau, although the ‘knot’ will remain tied for the whole of Part II. Although it is a purely musical passage with no dancing, the otherworldly section for unaccompanied wordless chorus that links Parts I and II performs a similar function to that suggested by Bernkopf for a *divertissement*: to suspend the narrative development, delaying conflict and creating suspense. It also functions as a ‘journey’ from the sacred wood to the rugged coastline of the second tableau, akin to the transitional music between the parts of *Rheingold*, during which the drama travels from the depths of the Rhine to Valhalla, and from Valhalla to Niebelheim, before returning to the gods in Valhalla. As such, it partly fulfils Propp’s fifteenth function, ‘the hero is transferred, delivered, or led to the whereabouts of an object of search’ (ibid., 84).

However, although the scene of the drama is transferred, Daphnis himself remains in the place of the first tableau. This also means that Daphnis is not present for any of the functions in which the Hero, in Propp’s morphology, enters into combat with, and eventually defeats the villain. In fact, following Part II’s ‘War Dance’, which arguably serves a similar scene-setting function for the second tableau as the ‘Introduction’ does for the first,<sup>29</sup> it is arguably Chloe who enters into ‘combat’ with Bryaxis, when she attempts to flee from him during her ‘Danse suppliante’. However, it is Pan who is responsible for defeating Bryaxis and saving Chloe, a *deus ex machina* who also serves as a parental figure. The lack of agency demonstrated by Daphnis over the matter of Chloe’s abduction and rescue is striking, and a genuine divergence from the archetypal plots studied by Bernkopf and Propp. It is also somewhat at odds with

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<sup>29</sup> There are actually no stage directions at all in the libretto for the duration of the ‘War Dance’. See Chapter 4, section 4.1 for an analysis of this section.

the Ballets Russes' move to place the *danseur* centre stage, denying, as it does, Daphnis the possibility of heroic action (see Karthas 2012, 966).

The 'Lever du jour' that opens the third tableau audibly returns us to the meadow of Part I, setting the scene and suggesting a new beginning, the climax of which is the reuniting of Daphnis and Chloe, corresponding to Propp's nineteenth function, 'the initial misfortune or lack is liquidated' (ibid., 87). From a Proppian perspective, there can be no twentieth function – 'the hero returns' (ibid., 90) – unless one views Chloe as the Hero in this instance, as Daphnis has apparently remained asleep throughout the whole event.<sup>30</sup> Following the reunion there is a complete mime sequence – a rather old-fashioned 'narrative' episode for a modernist ballet – during which Daphnis and Chloe enact the story of Pan and Syrinx. However, despite its designation as pantomime, it quickly develops into music for dance (see Chapter 5, section 5.7). At its climax, Chloe falls into Daphnis's arms, following which he pledges his love to her before the altar of the nymphs. A group of bacchantes enter, and everything ends in a joyful tumult, forming the dénouement of the drama.

This brief narrative analysis of the libretto has a number of flaws. For one, as Bernkopf acknowledges, Propp's morphology was constructed for a specific repertory of folk tales, and was not intended as a general theory of narrative (although it did form the basis of later narrative theories, such as that of A.J. Greimas). Moreover, the overview fails to take account of the music at all, approaching the libretto as if it is a literary text, rather than as one component of a larger artistic whole. What it does establish, however, are a number of resonances between the libretto of *Daphnis et*

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<sup>30</sup> In some ways Chloe is consistent with Propp's concept of the 'victimized hero', although the early focus on Daphnis in both the dance contest and his scene with Lyceion appears to figure him as a 'seeker hero' (Propp 1968, 69). This ambiguity concerning heroic function will be explored in more detail in Chapters 5 and 6.

*Chloé* and ballets of the preceding epoch – connections that arguably reach back to Longus’s original novel. Following Deborah Mawer’s suggestion that, sometimes, ‘Ravel’s handling of the Greek subject matter involves [...] a notable literalism or close correspondence in projecting the scenario through musical narrative’ (2006b, 94-95), it also provides a framework for the examination of the relationship between libretto and musical narrative that sits at the heart of this thesis. These contexts – and others – will be developed over the coming chapters. As for the methodological issue of the over-specificity of Propp’s theory, Chapter 2 will introduce a general theory of narrative based on the work of A.J. Greimas, whose generative model of narrative represents a sophisticated abstraction of Propp’s basic concepts, allowing for a coordination and comparison of the narrative structures of the libretto and music that employs the same theoretical construct (see Chapter 2, section 2.4). However, as a preliminary move in this direction, this chapter concludes with a summary of the principal points of narrative articulation in Ravel’s score, followed by an overview of the *dramatis personae* of the musical narrative – in other words the ‘few motifs’ described by Ravel in his autobiographical sketch.

## **1.5 Tonal overview**

At the most basic level, Ravel’s score divides neatly into three sections, the second and third of which together last approximately the same amount of time as the first on its own. This is arguably a result of the fact that Part I has more work to do setting up the narrative, establishing setting and characterisation at the level of the libretto, but also exposing all the necessary material for musical development (see below, section 1.6). As Roland-Manuel’s description of the work’s ‘modulations to neighbouring

keys' (1928, 102) suggests, the three parts of the ballet coordinate with the large-scale tonal articulation: A-C, B-C, and D-A (see figure 1.1).

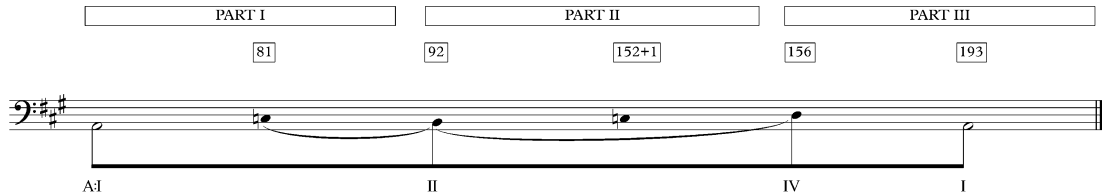


Figure 1.1: bass-line sketch, Parts I-III

The six keys that bookend the three tableaux correspond to: the opening of the ballet (A); Pan's appearance to Daphnis (C – R81); the 'War Dance' (B – R92); Pan's rescuing of Chloe (C – R151<sup>+1</sup>); the 'Daybreak' sequence, during which Daphnis and Chloe are reunited (D – R156); and Daphnis's pledge of love in front of the altar of the Nymphs (A – R193). Moreover, each key articulates a significant narrative event: the establishment of time and place in the 'exposition' (A); the two *deus ex machina*-like interventions of the Parental Figure, the god Pan (C – RR81 and 152<sup>+1</sup>); the 'peripeteia' (B – R92); the 'return' (D – R156); and 'denouement' (A – R193).

Within this broad harmonic outline, a number of other important narrative events are articulated by tonal centre. As an illustration, figure 1.2 gives a bass-line sketch of Part I. The initial incidents of this tableau – the 'Dances of the Youths' ('the forewarning'), the 'Dance Contest', and Daphnis and Chloe's kiss – form a symmetrical tonal system around the tonic.<sup>31</sup> However, as the narrative enters its 'entanglement' phase, this symmetrical orbit of the tonic is knocked off its axis, and the key of 'Lyceion's Dance' acts as a dominant to the manifestation of Pan (see figure

<sup>31</sup> Row Howat describes this as an example 'of Ravel's geometric, almost visual use of tonal form' (2006, 216).



1.2). It is interesting to note which moments in the plot are given tonal articulation, and which are assigned a prolonging function (see Chapter 2, section 2.2.2 for a discussion of the narrative significance of tonal and contrapuntal patterns). Strikingly, Daphnis and Chloe’s kiss is a fleeting moment (R53), and appears as part of a passing motion from the F of Daphnis’s ‘Danse légère’ (R43) to the C# that accompanies Lyceion’s arrival (R55). Moreover, the keys assigned to the events following ‘Lyceion’s Dance’ (R57) – including Chloe’s abduction (RR64-67) and the ‘Dance of the Nymphs’ (R74) – serve to prolong the dominant of the key of Pan’s arrival (R81), with Lyceion’s attempted seduction of Daphnis given a more fundamental tonal articulation than Chloe’s abduction, the brevity of which was a bone of contention between composer and choreographer (see above, n26): we will return to this point in Chapter 5.

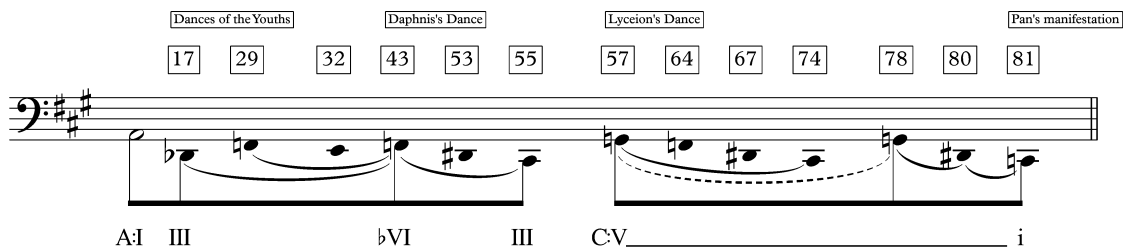


Figure 1.2: Part I, bass-line sketch

## 1.6 ‘Theme-actors’

Although Ravel stated in his autobiographical sketch that the development of a ‘few motifs’ in *Daphnis* ‘ensures the work’s symphonic homogeneity’ (in Orenstein 2003, 31), the thematic content of the work also has a clearly dramatic/narrative role within

the unfolding of the plot.<sup>32</sup> Borrowing a term from Eero Tarasti, we may designate these as ‘theme-actors’ (Tarasti 1994, 48), operating not ‘merely’ as musical motifs ensuring structural coherence, but as characters in an unfolding musical narrative.<sup>33</sup> The ‘Introduction’ presents three such theme-actors, all of which play a significant role throughout. Following the designations given in the concert guide published a day before the first time any music from *Daphnis* was heard in public – the premiere of the First Symphonic Suite April 2, 1911 – Michael Puri labels the three themes APPEL (‘Le theme d’invocation’), NYMPHES (‘le motif des Nymphes’) and DC (‘Daphnis et Chloé’) (2011b, 64, 212 n9).<sup>34</sup> Although other commentators differ in their designation of these themes – for example, Gurinder K. Bhogal designates NYMPHES as ‘Pan’, and associates DC with Daphnis alone (2013, 190-194) – I agree with Michael Puri that the information in the concert guide likely comes from Ravel (2011b, 212 n9).<sup>35</sup>

The first of these themes, APPEL, is described by Marcel Marnat as acting as the ‘generative motif’ of the whole work, whilst also performing the task of scene-setting, ‘suggesting an immense landscape’ (1986, 339 my translation). A simple neighbour-note motif, its harmonisation in parallel fourths leads to it appearing to grow out of the stacked fifths that precede it (figure 1.3). It is first heard played by a trio of stopped horns (R0<sup>+5</sup>), before being taken up by the wordless choir, which is placed backstage, enhancing the *ex nihilo* effect, the music gradually assembling itself,

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<sup>32</sup> Ironically, the ballet’s choreographer, Michel Fokine claimed to have been ‘apprehensive about the scarcity of thematic material’ (1961, 200).

<sup>33</sup> Such concepts will be developed more fully in the next chapter (see Chapter 2, section 2.4.4.2).

<sup>34</sup> Puri’s convention of employing uppercase letters to indicate recurring themes is maintained in this thesis.

<sup>35</sup> Although I agree with Puri’s argument that Ravel was likely the source for the concert guide, his suggestion that ‘nothing of *Daphnis* had been published by April 1911’ (2011b, 212 n9) is not quite accurate: as Deborah Mawer explains, ‘in 1910, Durand released prematurely some uncorrected proofs’ (2006b, 89 n36), making them the earliest published material concerning *Daphnis*.

as if conjuring ‘an immense landscape’ into being. As Puri points out, this harmonisation gives the motif an air of ‘tonal irresolution’ (2011b, 68), as each time the upper-voice B resolves to A –  $\hat{2}-\hat{1}$  in the prevailing A tonality – the lowest voice moves from C# to B ( $\hat{3}-\hat{2}$ ), and therefore to a note dissonant with the tonic harmony. Thus, in this initial presentation, the motif appears to be suspended between two states, hovering between dissonance and resolution.<sup>36</sup>

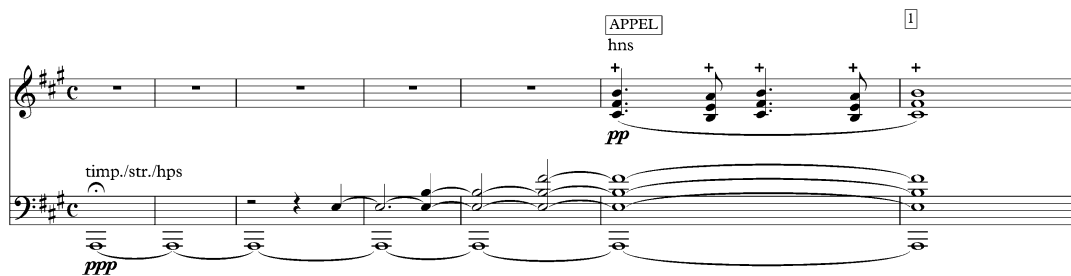


Figure 1.3: first presentation of APPEL

It is partly the somewhat vestigial nature of APPEL that allows it to generate so much material throughout the work, as well as enabling its frequent presence at the rear of the stage, so to speak, acting somewhat like an aural backcloth. NYMPHES – the next theme that is presented, directly on the completion of APPEL at R1 – is much more elaborate, an extravagant arabesque on the flute, which Bhogal suggests is ‘written very much within the tradition of Faun/Pan melodies laid down by Debussy’, and is ‘emblematic of divinity’ (2013, 193-194). Its appearance halts the ascending stack of fifths in the strings and harps, with the theme’s initial D# completing the sequence a tritone away from its starting point of A: along with the stacked fifths, this

<sup>36</sup> Later, APPEL forms the basis of motifs with a decidedly different effect, such as the main theme of the ‘War Dance’, WD1 (see Chapter 4, section 4.1.1).

pitch also exhausts the Lydian mode on A (Morrison 2004, 59, Mawer 2006b, 94). Although the D $\sharp$  initially resolves upwards to an E ( $\hat{5}$ ), the first note is immediately returned to, and the melody as a whole emphasises the notes of a B major triad, which are highlighted through repetition and both metrical and agogic stress (figure 1.4). NYMPHES thus develops the features of APPEL: an outgrowth of the extending stack of perfect fifths coupled with an air of ‘tonal irresolution’, its unresolving dissonances generate a feeling of ‘hovering’ similar to that of the earlier motif. This effect is enhanced by the metrical displacement of the theme, which starts on an offbeat and frequently emphasises weak beats with longer note values.

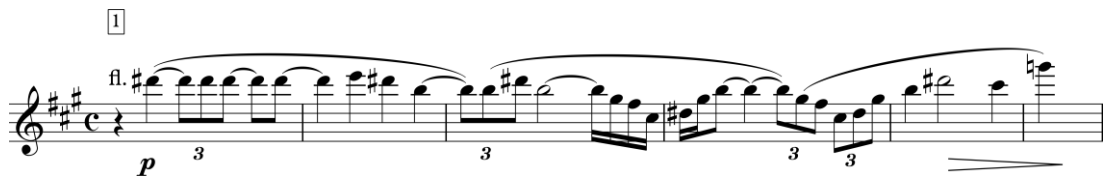


Figure 1.4: first appearance of NYMPHES

The terminal note of the first presentation of NYMPHES is somewhat of a surprise, the melody apparently wanting to drop to a B, rather than leaping up to an out-of-collection G $\sharp$ . The mild sense of shock is compounded by the sudden change of harmony, which is no longer comprised of stacked fifths, but which abruptly forms itself into an apparent half-diminished seventh on A (see figure 1.5). I say ‘apparent’, since the upper cello line moves to an F $\sharp$ , which arguably makes the chord a dominant-ninth chord of F in first inversion. However, a number of Ravel scholars have observed that bass notes in the composer’s music appear to function harmonically normatively (see, for example, Russom 1985, 32, and Heinzelmann 2008, 23), and this chord certainly seems to bear this out, sounding much more like a half-diminished seventh

on A than a dominant ninth on F.<sup>37</sup> This is certainly due in part to the position of A at the bottom of the chord, but is also down to the fact that the solitary F is buried within the chordal texture. Nonetheless, one might say that it is a chord whose character is somewhat ambiguous.<sup>38</sup>

Thus is the theme associated with Daphnis and Chloe introduced, designated by Puri as DC (see above). This theme, still arabesque in nature, but metrically more stable, appears initially on solo horn, which Bhogal hears as reinforcing ‘the shepherd’s association with the tangible world of nature, as opposed to the intangible realm in which Pan resides’ (2013, 194), but which also links back to the initial horn sonority of APPEL, although this time individualised, and performed *très expressif*. It is also based around the perfect fifths that formed the original sonic panorama, which are now horizontalised and embellished with neighbour-note figures that perhaps recall APPEL, lending an expressive contour to a landscape now ‘peopled’ with thematic content (figure 1.5). Deborah Mawer has suggested that ‘the lower fifth C-G may be associated with Daphnis and the higher G-D with Chloé’ (2006b, 94). This thesis is strengthened by the fact that the theme is truncated during Chloe’s capture – failing to progress beyond its sixth note (figure 1.6) – as if her perfect fifth has literally been abducted from the theme she shares with Daphnis, which is a rather precise equivalence between music and drama, supporting Mawer’s suggestion that there is, here, ‘a notable literalism or close correspondence in projecting the scenario through musical narrative’ (ibid., 94-95).<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Curiously, Gurminder Bhogal identifies the chord as a ‘dominant seventh on F’ (2013, 193).

<sup>38</sup> As Simon Morrison points out, the pitches of this chord also exhaust the full chromatic scale (a D $\sharp$  is sounded in a violin harmonic alongside the flute’s D $\sharp$  at R1) (2004, 59).

<sup>39</sup> As will become clear, however, this is not a view to which I wholly subscribe.

2

Hn  
*pp très expressif*

Str

Figure 1.5: first presentation of DC

69

Alto fl./Cor a.      Bsn

*p très expressif*      *p très expressif*

Figure 1.6: truncated DC following Chloe's abduction

Although the presentation of these three theme-actors at the opening of the work – and also their immediate repetition in the ‘Introduction’ – lends a certain prominence to APPEL, NYMPHES, and DC, there are a number of other recurring themes that serve an important function in the unfolding narrative. For the time being, these theme-actors will be named and briefly described: their full significance will be explored in the following chapters. The first of these is the sad, waltz-like melody that is introduced following Daphnis’s ‘brusque gesture’ (*geste brusque*) towards Dorcon, whose musical depiction forms the basis of the new theme-actor (figure 1.7). Given the melancholic nature of the theme, I designate it VALSE TRISTE, although most commentators understand it as being ‘*le motif de Chloé*’ (Roland-Manuel 1928, 105). Puri, however, argues that it is a ‘secondary love theme’, noting that ‘it is quite natural

for a waltz theme to represent the desire that binds a couple in love, given the sexual threat that this dance held during its history’ (2011b, 88). My own understanding of the significance of the theme will be developed in Chapter 3, section 3.2.2, and the more general implications of the waltz as a genre will be explored in Chapter 6.

29

The image shows a musical score for two pieces. The first piece, 'Geste brusque', is marked 'Vif' and 'Bsns/vc/cb' (Bassoons, Violoncello, and Contrabass). It begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and features a sharp, rhythmic motif. The second piece, 'Valse Triste', is marked 'Moins vite' and 'Solo vln' (Solo Violin). It begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and is marked 'espressif' (expressive). The score is written in 3/4 time and includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Figure 1.7: first appearance of VALSE TRISTE, preceded by geste brusque

The next two theme-actors are rather more straightforward in their designation. During the dance contest between Dorcon and Daphnis, the efforts of the combatants are represented by two very distinct themes, both of which return to signify the characters later in the ballet (see Chapter 3, sections 3.3 and 3.4 for an in-depth discussion of these theme-actors). Dorcon’s theme (DORCON) is rather gruff and four-square, characterised by an inelegant trio of bassoons, and depicts him as buffoonish and ridiculous (figure 1.8). Daphnis’s theme (DAPHNIS), on the other hand, is a ‘*contraste vivement*’ (Roland-Manuel 1928, 106) with DORCON, being in a lilting  $\frac{6}{8}$  metre and emphasising the lyrical qualities of the flute trio (figure 1.9). One might put the ‘sharp contrast’ between these two theme-actors simply: whatever one is, the other is not, and vice versa. Where DAPHNIS is graceful, DORCON is inelegant; where DORCON emphasises low, rumbling sonorities, DAPHNIS is characterised by higher, lighter, more elegant instrumentation; where DORCON is chromatic and dissonant, DAPHNIS is diatonic and consonant; where DAPHNIS is

pithy and concise, DORCON is prolix and diffuse. As such, the two themes are a neat example of Deborah Mawer’s catalogue of ‘antitheses of emotion and character’ in the ballet (2006b, 103-109); moreover, the high-pitched/low-pitched, light-sonority/dark-sonority dichotomies involved arguably play into Gautier’s distinction between ‘Christian etherealness’ and ‘pagan earthiness’ (see above, section 1.4).



Figure 1.8: first presentation of DORCON (‘Danse grotesque’)



Figure 1.9: first presentation of DAPHNIS (‘Danse légère’)

There are two more recurring theme-actors in the ballet. The first is the fanfare first heard as the Pirates approach (PIRATES, figure 1.10). Its martial character finds its true place as part of the Pirates’ ‘War Dance’ in Part II (see Chapter 4, section 4.1). The final theme-actor signifies a character who is not represented onstage by a dancer. As the libretto describes the setting of the opening of the ballet, ‘somewhat toward the background, to the left, a large rock vaguely resembles the form of the god Pan’ (libretto), and in a similar way the figure of the pastoral, goat-legged god frequently appears to be hovering in the background of the plot (as will be explored in Chapter 4, section 4.3). On two occasions, the god is made manifest. Each time, his motif is heard, just as it is on the two further occasions that he is evoked in the libretto – once directly, once indirectly. As appropriate for such a mysterious figure, his theme is obscure sounding, just four notes long, and somewhat vague in its harmonic outline,



played by low trombones and tuba, sounding as if from the depths of the underworld (PAN, figure 1.11).

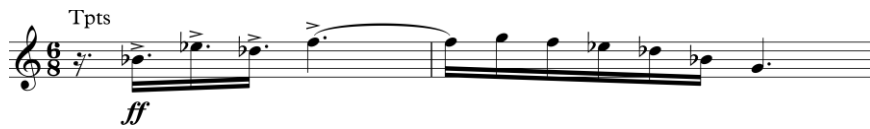


Figure 1.10: first complete appearance of PIRATES

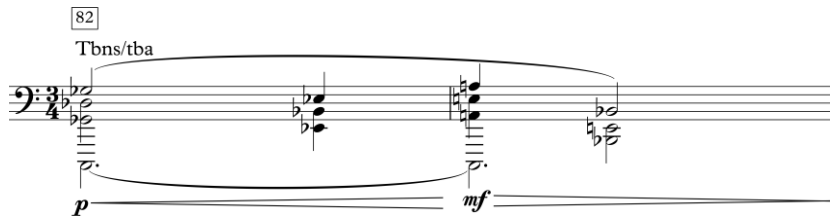


Figure 1.11: first presentation of PAN

Although these eight theme-actors have distinct identities within the score, before we complete our discussion of the musical *dramatis personae*, some of the correspondences between motifs should be pointed out. Broadly speaking, the gamut of theme-actors can be divided into two separate groups, based on ‘circling’ and ‘descending’ gestural types (in Chapter 5 I propose the term ‘gesture-actor’; see section 5.7.2). The ‘circling’ group is characterised by motion around a fixed point: a characteristic of arabesque melodies, which ‘typically [...] begin and end on the same note, or a slightly lower note’, and are characterised by a ‘constant and largely step-wise departure from and return to the same melodic motif’ (Bhogal 2013, 103). To this group belong NYMPHES, DC, and DAPHNIS, with APPEL as almost a caricature of this gestural type, rocking back and forth between two pitches. The other,

‘descending’ group is characterised by a general downwards contour, as in the case of VALSE TRISTE, DORCON, and PIRATES.<sup>40</sup>

Perhaps fittingly for a character who appears only ‘virtually’, PAN does not quite fit either gestural type, the motif finishing a major sixth lower than it started, but exhibiting a ‘balanced’ down-up-down motion that is similar to the sort of contour found in the ‘circling’ group, close to the general outline of DC, for example. However, it does have a more direct link with other theme-actors: along with its pedal C, the notes of PAN spell out a half-diminished seventh chord, C-E $\flat$ -G $\flat$ -B $\flat$ , with the A lower neighbour to the final B $\flat$  by octave displacement (see figure 1.12). This replicates one of the principal harmonisations of DC, which is harmonised in the main by a half-diminished seventh chord. Indeed, the same can be said of PIRATES, whose unfolding of the perfect fifth B $\flat$ -F also replicates the ascending ‘Chloe’ portion of DC (see figure 1.13). Given that it is the Pirates who abduct Chloe, leading to the truncation of the DC theme discussed above, it is fitting that her ascending fifth is transferred to the Pirates, who will soon hold her in their grasp.

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<sup>40</sup> In her analysis of the ballet, Bhogal draws a distinction between thematic content based on levels of rhythmic and metric (in)stability, noting that thematic material associated with supernatural characters (Pan and the Nymphs) is the most complex, whereas, at the other end of the spectrum, the music of Chloe, Dorcon, and the Pirates is the most ‘rhythmically and metrically consonant’. This leads to some curious pairings between characters, with Lyceion and Daphnis grouped in the middle of the spectrum, and Chloe (via VALSE TRISTE, which Bhogal ascribes to Chloe alone) associated with the Pirates and Dorcon, although Bhogal argues that ‘it is not feasible to bring the music of Dorcon and the pirates into alignment with that of Chloé’. That said, the association between Chloe and ‘negative’ characters does suggest a variety of possible interpretations: on one level, one might understand this as a ‘relegation’ to a subordinate status within the narrative hierarchy; alternatively, the placement of Chloe’s music within the Pirates’ sphere might suggest an analogue with the manner in which she is captured by them in Part II of the ballet. See Bhogal (2013, 207).



Figure 1.12: analysis of PAN

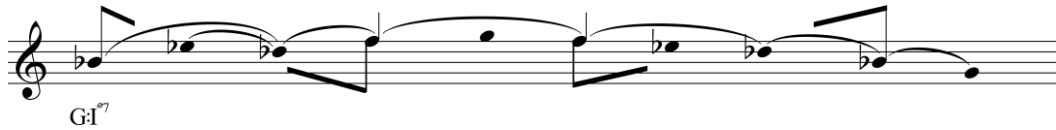


Figure 1.13: analysis of PIRATES

There is another link between DC and one of its fellow theme-actors: despite the importance of perfect intervals in the ‘Introduction’, the only two themes that highlight such intervallic material are DC and VALSE TRISTE, both of which start with a prominent descending fifth. However, whereas DC sticks to the ‘pure’ interval, VALSE TRISTE immediately diminishes it to a tritone. Tritonal deformation of theme-actors is an important developmental strategy during the ‘War Dance’ of Part II, and it is tempting to see a causal link between the perfect fifths of DC, the diminishing of the interval in VALSE TRISTE, and the more extensive tritonal activity in the ‘War Dance’, particularly given the conventionally negative associations of the interval: this is a point to which we will return in Chapter 4 (section 4.1.4).

\*

The foregoing overview of *Daphnis et Chloé* is necessarily underdeveloped, and has left a great deal to unpack and expand in the following chapters. However, before it is

possible to pursue in earnest a narrative analysis of the work, it is crucial to have a methodology in place for doing so – one that is sufficiently flexible to allow for a dual examination of narrative within both the libretto and the musical score. The following chapter will outline some general principles of narrative theory, before reviewing the relevant music-analytical literature on narrative; the final part of the chapter will outline the narratological methodology to be used in this thesis.

## 2 Telling Tales

One of the central arguments of the present thesis is that much of the hermeneutic potential of *Daphnis et Chloé* lies in the investigation of its narrative structure, in particular, the relationship between the narrative trajectories outlined by the libretto and the music. Following an initial discussion of narrative theory and narratological approaches to music, this chapter will outline a methodology for investigating the ballet's narrativity, one that draws on the work of narrative theorists such as Barthes, Greimas, and Frye, and the analytical approaches of the musicologists Byron Almén, Nicholas Reyland, and Eero Tarasti.

### 2.1 Essentials of narrative theory

One of the main projects of narratology (narrative theory) is to investigate the form and function of narratives, examining the essential structure of narrative as manifested across a range of media. Modern narratology divides narratives into at least two levels: the *story* level and the level of *discourse*.<sup>1</sup> The story level (also known as *histoire* or *fabula*) establishes the chain of events, as well as the basic actorial functions: in other words, the *content* of the narrative. The level of discourse (*discours* or *sjuzet*) is the

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<sup>1</sup> There are, however, theorists who question the division of narrative into two layers. See Micznik (2001), especially 193-195.

level of narration, the ‘structure of narrative transmission’ (Chatman 1978, 26), or the *expression* of the narrative.<sup>2</sup>

At the level of content (story), narratology has sought to account for the minimal units of narrative, or *narremes*, often dividing the story level in two, in order to describe a level of narrative deep structure. One of the most influential formulations of this fundamental narrative level is that of Vladimir Propp, who defined minimal narrative units as *functions*, ‘understood as an act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action’ ([1928] 1968, 21; see also Chapter 1, section 1.4). Roland Barthes makes a further distinction at the level of the narreme, distinguishing between functions and *indices*, which are ‘truly semantic units: unlike “functions” [...] they refer to a signified, not to an “operation”’ ([1966] 1977, 93); we may understand this as a distinction between ‘doing’ (functions) and ‘being’ (indices). Seymour Chatman makes a similar distinction, between ‘events’ and ‘existents’ (1978, 19).<sup>3</sup>

Barthes divides functions into two types: *cardinal* and *catalysing* functions.<sup>4</sup> Cardinal functions ‘constitute real hinge-points of the narrative’, whereas catalysing functions ‘merely “fill in” the narrative space separating the hinge functions’ ([1966] 1977, 93). As Chatman explains, cardinal functions are ‘nodes or hinges in the structure, branching points which force a movement into one of two (or more) possible paths’ (1978, 53). Cardinal and catalysing functions are thus arranged hierarchically:

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<sup>2</sup> The dichotomy between content and expression corresponds to similar distinctions made by a variety of writers, such as Saussure’s *langue* (linguistic system) and *parole* (manifest speech) and Kristeva’s ‘genotext’ (textual deep structure) and ‘phenotext’ (textual surface structure). See Nöth (1990, 62-63; 323; 369).

<sup>3</sup> Greimas makes an analogous distinction, between functional events and their modal expression. See below, section 2.4.4.3.

<sup>4</sup> Chatman prefers the terms ‘kernels’ and ‘satellites’, but his model is nonetheless derived from Barthes (1978, 53-54).

to remove a cardinal function is to alter the story fundamentally, whereas catalysers can be deleted ‘without disturbing the logic of the plot’ (ibid., 54). However, although the removal of a catalyser may not affect the *story*, it will alter the *discourse*; the deletion of a catalyser will ‘impoverish the narrative aesthetically’ (ibid.).

Barthesian indices also come in two forms:

*indices* proper, referring to the character of a narrative agent, a feeling, an atmosphere (for example suspicion) or a philosophy, and *informants*, serving to identify, to locate in time and space.

(Barthes [1966] 1977, 96; original emphasis)

Chatman maintains the distinction, but prefers *characters* and *setting* (1978, 19). However, it is important to understand that he does not mean ‘characters’ in the conventional sense, as specific manifestations or *actors* (for example, ‘Jane Eyre’), which occur at the level of discourse. Chatman’s characters are rather abstractions (e.g. ‘Hero’), or, to use the term employed by Greimas, *actants*, ‘that which accomplishes or undergoes an act’ (Greimas and Courtés [1979] 1982, 5): the distinction between actant and actor is homologous to that between story and discourse. As functional units of narrative, actantial roles may be fulfilled by more than one actor, or one actor might account for more than one actant: indeed, one actor could be ‘responsible for all of the necessary actants and actantial roles (giving rise to absolute interior dramatization)’ (Greimas 1987, 112-13).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Contrary to the models proposed by Barthes and Chatman, Greimas conceives of actants functioning at a deeper structural level than Chatman’s settings/Barthes’s informants, which Greimas divides into *temporalisation* and *spatialisation*, and places at the same level as *actorialisation*. Greimas’s complete model, which he called the *generative trajectory* is discussed below (see section 2.4).

For Barthes and Chatman, then, the syntax of the story level is structured by sequences of cardinal functions. The cardinal functions may be expanded by catalysing functions (a *syntagmatic* relationship), or they may be elaborated by actants and informants (a *paradigmatic* relationship). These relationships are given expression at the level of discourse through a series of narrative statements or *programmes*, which are ‘independent of and more abstract than any particular manifestation’ (Chatman 1978, 146); in other words, independent of the media in which they are presented. Greimas uses the term *discoursivisation* to describe the manifestation of story structures at the discourse level, and articulates three forms of discoursivisation: *actorialisation* (the actualisation of an actant), *temporalisation* and *spatialisation* (both of which are actualisations of settings) (Greimas and Courtés [1979] 1982, 85-86). In other words, the process of discoursivisation localises ‘narrative *actors* in *time* and *space*’ (Nöth 1990, 316; my emphasis).

It is also at the level of discourse that one finds the distinction between direct and mediated presentation, or the classical distinction between *mimesis* and *diegesis* (see below, 2.3.3). Thus, the discourse level is *also* the level of *narration*. The narrator may take many forms, but should not be confused with the author, whether ‘real’ or ‘implied’.<sup>6</sup> Unlike the narrator, the implied author ‘does not recount situations and events (but is taken to be accountable for their selection, distribution, and combination)’ (Prince 2003, 43).<sup>7</sup> Chatman outlines a spectrum from *nonnarration* (‘a narrative that is not explicitly told’ (1978, 34), or an *absent narrator*), to *covert narration* (‘we hear a voice speaking of events, characters, and setting, but its owner

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<sup>6</sup> The implied author is the authorial persona ‘as reconstructed from the text’ (Prince 2003, 42), and is thus ontologically separate from the real author. For Chatman, this stricture is ‘a commonplace of literary theory’ (1978, 147)

<sup>7</sup> Just as there is an implied author, there is also an implied reader, ‘the audience presupposed by the narrative itself’ (Chatman 1978, 150).



remains hidden in the discursive shadows' *ibid.*, 197), and *overt narration* ('a narrator presenting situations and events with more than a minimum of narrational mediation' Prince 2003, 69). Chatman suggests that 'The narrator's presence derives from the audience's sense of some demonstrable communication. If it feels it is being told something, it presumes a teller', and distinguishes this from 'a direct witnessing' of the action, or *mimesis* (1978, 147). This is an important point, and one to which we will return (see below, sections 2.3.3 and 2.4.4.5; see also Chapter 5, section 5.7).

To summarise, modern narratology supports a division of narrative into two basic levels, *story* and *discourse*. The story level organises itself according to hierarchically related events: *cardinal functions* – nodal points of the narrative – and *catalysing functions*, which extend and connect the cardinal functions. Functions are elaborated by abstract characters (*actants/indices*) and settings (*informants*). These structures are made manifest at the level of discourse, which expresses the story through a series of narrative statements or *programmes*. These programmes are mediated via a *narrator* who may be overt, covert, or even 'absent'. In outlining these essential narratological concepts I have deliberately focused on the work of Barthes and Greimas; this is because it is their theories that have informed many of the more subtle musicological approaches to narratology.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, Chatman's elaboration of Barthes's approach is especially useful in its discussion of a variety of narratorial functions, as will become clear from my discussion of the Narrator Argument (see below, 2.3.3).

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<sup>8</sup> Propp ([1928] 1968) is also frequently cited in musicological literature (see e.g. Maus 1991, Karl 1997). However, Greimas's actantial grammar is based on – and is a significant refinement of – Propp's theory of functions, so I have chosen Greimas to represent this particular strand of narrative theory. Greimas's work also has greater implications for my own approach (see below 2.4).

## 2.2 Approaches to musical narrative

In his 2005 thesis, Nicholas Reyland discusses two waves of musical-narratological engagement: a first wave ‘including significant contributions from Maus, McCreless and Anthony Newcombe [*sic*]’, which was ‘soon followed by the work of a second wave of scholars less persuaded of music’s narrative propensities’ (ibid., 139). Reyland himself, along with scholars such as Byron Almén and Michael Klein, represents a recent third wave of musical narratologists, who have sought to engage with the debates of the second wave, seeking ‘invigorated synthesis, new propositions and further debate’ (ibid.).<sup>9</sup> The following review of musicological applications of narrative theory will consider the first and third waves first, before turning to the objections raised by the second wave in section 2.3.<sup>10</sup>

### 2.2.1 *Propp and archetypal plots*

In his now classic article on Schumann’s Second Symphony, Anthony Newcomb argues that ‘The concept of music as composed novel, as a psychologically true course of ideas, was and is an important avenue to the understanding of much nineteenth-century music’ (1984, 234). In this and a later essay on Schumann (1987), Newcomb suggests that the composer’s music is in a dialectical relationship with plot archetypes derived from his predecessors. Around the same time, Susan McClary was developing narrative approaches to the concerto, articulating plots that reflect on social norms,

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<sup>9</sup> Of course, concepts of musical narrativity go back earlier than the 1980s. One may cite Arnold Schering’s delineation of the ‘secret’ programmes of Beethoven’s music, based on narratives by Goethe or Schiller (see Tarasti 2002, 8), or, even earlier, Jérôme-Joseph de Momigny’s analytical practice (see Le Huray 1990, 113-122, Almén 2008, 16-23).

<sup>10</sup> What follows is not intended to be an exhaustive review of the musical-narratological literature, but an outline of some of the main strands of thought, especially those which are significant for my own approach.

society and the individual (1986, [1987] 2007).<sup>11</sup> Both these authors, then, employ notions of normative plot structures, against which they read the musical discourse. Newcomb makes an explicit link between the idea of paradigmatic musical discourse and plot archetypes in literary narratives: ‘Much Classical and Romantic music [...] depends in some way on the musical analogue to paradigmatic plots’ (1987, 165). Newcomb returned to plot archetypes with his essay on Mahler’s Ninth Symphony (1992), in which he argues that such narratives are best understood as ‘paradigmatic temporal procedures, operations, or transformational sequences’, the comprehension of which ‘is part of a person’s narrative competence in a given culture. Mastery of this (culture-specific) typology of plots is part of any narrative understanding’ (ibid., 119). This dual emphasis on the temporal, sequential nature of narrative and the significance of ‘narrative competence’ is an important component of the arguments of later musical narratologists (see below, section 2.2.3; see also section 2.3.3).

A similar approach is taken by Fred Everett Maus in his essay ‘Music and Drama’ (1988), which seeks to read musical structure as dramatic narrative, arguing that ‘For at least some music, a satisfactory account of structure must already be an aesthetically oriented account of dramatic action’ (ibid., 73; see below, 2.3.5 for a discussion of some of the implications of this argument). Maus continues this argument in his later essay ‘Music as Narrative’ (1991), giving it a more distinctly narratological spin by invoking the work of Propp and the Russian Formalists: ‘tonal music, as depicted by conventional analysis, resembles narrative, as depicted by Formalist and Structuralist writings, in that individual texts consist of identifiable kinds of object arranged in partially predictable patterns’ (ibid., 3). In his analysis of

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<sup>11</sup> For another narrative approach to the concerto, see Kerman (1999).

the last movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata Op. 14, no 1 Maus makes a crucial distinction between his concept of musical narrativity and the programme-music inspired fantasy of a writer such as Schering, arguing that the movement

does not encode a story about something completely nonmusical, in the manner of program music. Rather these goals, actions, and problems of the story are musical ones, and they share only rather general descriptions (for instance, 'trying to return to a position of stability') with everyday actions.

(1991, 14)

For Maus, then, it is the sense of a homology between the syntactical aspects of musical discourse and Propp's emphasis on the succession of events, rather than the individualised characters (Greimas's *actors*) in a narrative, that suggests the possibility of musical narrativity. The observation of a similarity between music and literary theory, which 'abstracts from individual narratives in somewhat the same way that instrumental music abstracts from everyday human action' (ibid., 15), leads him to suggest that 'One could almost claim that music is more like narrative *theory* than it is like narrative' (ibid., 15 n17). This emphasis on the theoretical study of narrative as *structure* is what makes the work of Maus and others genuinely narratological in approach, rather than the somewhat tenuous – and scholarly questionable – employment of narrative discourses borrowed direct from specific literature in the work of a writer like Schering.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> This distinction sometimes appears lost in the debates surrounding musical narrativity. See below, section 2.3.

### 2.2.2 Barthes, Greimas, and Schenker

Around the same time that Maus was developing his approach to musical narratology, Patrick McCreless was investigating the possibilities of applying Barthes's theories to music. In his essay, 'Roland Barthes's *S/Z* from a Musical Point of View' (1988), McCreless considers the structuralist aspects of Barthes's narratological approach as analogous to Schenker's system of tonal analysis.<sup>13</sup> Of the five narrative *codes* Barthes develops in his discussion of Balzac's novella *Sarrazine* ([1970] 1993), McCreless is principally concerned with three:

- 1) the *proairetic*: which McCreless views as equivalent to the rules of voice-leading and harmony (1988, 12);
- 2) the *hermeneutic*: comparable to Schenker's description of the 'obstacles, reverses, disappointments' of goal-directed motion (Schenker [1956] 1979, 5, McCreless 1988, 15);
- 3) the *semic*: 'the most crucial of the three with respect to tonal music, for it exhibits clear parallels to thematic and motivic structure' (McCreless 1988, 11).

Barthes's aim is to establish a 'readerly' approach to the text – as opposed to a 'writerly' methodology that seeks to reduce the analysed work to 'a final great ensemble, to an ultimate structure' ([1970] 1993, 12) – and is therefore conceptually

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<sup>13</sup> As McCreless points out, the foundation of Barthes's structuralist approach to narrative is his 'Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives' ([1966] 1977). Although *S/Z* ([1970] 1993) develops aspects of the earlier work, it shows signs of moving in a 'poststructuralist or even deconstructionist' direction (McCreless 1988, 4). It is for this reason that Reyland prefers Barthes's earlier approach to narrative theory, arguing that 'the aims of Barthes's "Introduction" essay are arguably more closely aligned to the analysis of musical plot' (2005, 187).

at odds with Schenker's own philosophy. Nonetheless, McCreless argues that 'By performing what we might now call the deconstruction of a classic text, Barthes uncovers very much the same kind of depth of meaning that Schenker does in his analyses, despite taking precisely the opposite theoretical premise' (1988, 13-14).

While acknowledging that Barthes's hermeneutic code can be observed in a variety of tonal contexts, McCreless asserts that 'the code works best, in my opinion, in a limited class of tonal pieces: those works of the late eighteenth century to the nineteenth century that employ the technique of expanding a chromatic detail into a structural issue at deeper levels' (ibid., 16). The reason for this particular stricture is that chromatic details are 'recuperated into the background structure' (ibid., 21), and thus operate in a manner similar to Barthes's description of 'the units whose function it is to articulate in various ways a question, its response, and the variety of chance events which can either formulate the question or delay its answer' ([1970] 1993, 17). Furthermore, such chromatic 'enigmas' are not only hermeneutic, but, 'at the same time, they constitute a seme – a discrete event, a character, as it were, an entity whose development can be followed across a piece' (McCreless 1988, 24). In his analytical example, drawn from the first movement of Beethoven's *Ghost* Trio, McCreless identifies a chromatic feature introduced in the opening bars – the  $F\sharp/b\hat{3}$  in bar 5 – as an enigma whose resolution is a necessary condition of the story's completion. As such, his development of the hermeneutic and semic codes reveals similarities to Schenker's outlining of the 'story of  $\hat{5}$ ' in his analysis of the first movement of Mozart's Symphony No 40 ([1926] 2014, 61; see also below, 2.4.3).

In his later paper employing Barthesian concepts (1991, published alongside Maus's article on narrative), McCreless turns his attention to what Barthes terms the

*hermeneutic sentence*, which employs the notion of a ‘well-made sentence’ as a metaphor for the structure of a narrative:

The proposition of truth is a ‘well-made’ sentence; it contains a subject (theme of the enigma), its question mark (proposal of the enigma), various subordinate and interpolated clauses and catalysers (delays in the answer), all of which precede the ultimate predicate (disclosure).  
(Barthes [1970] 1993, 84)

As McCreless put it, ‘Barthes’s hermeneutic sentence thus provides for a syntax of narrative, one that metaphorically carries the notion of “subject-predicate” to the broadest level of a narrative’ (1991, 37). McCreless sees this as bearing ‘remarkable similarities’ to Schenker’s *Ursatz*, for, ‘Like Barthes, Schenker in effect creates a “sentence” out of an entire discourse; that is, he defines the syntax of a tonal piece in categories appropriate to a single musical-grammatical sentence (a phrase)’ (ibid., 37).

Like McCreless’s approach, Littlefield and Neumeier’s article ‘Rewriting Schenker’ (1992) begins with Barthes’s narrative theories, but with the focus on one of the codes that McCreless disregards, the *cultural code*.<sup>14</sup> This code refers to ‘a body of knowledge’ (Barthes [1970] 1993, 20), and therefore places ‘narrative events into a context “in the world”’ (Littlefield and Neumeier 1992, 44). Specifically, the authors seek to situate Schenker’s work within the Aristotelian genres of epic and drama, drawing on a passage from Schenker that is frequently cited in discussions of musical narrativity:

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<sup>14</sup> As will become clear, the cultural code is also important to the approach adopted in this thesis.

In the art of music, as in life, motion toward the goal encounters obstacles, reverses, disappointments [...] Thus we hear in the middleground and foreground an almost dramatic course of events.

(Schenker [1956] 1979, 5)

Littlefield and Neumeyer trace ‘this recipe for drama as motion toward a goal’ (ibid., 45) to Aristotle’s *Poetics* (2013), specifically the ‘beginning-middle-end’ paradigm that has been drawn on elsewhere by V. Kofi Agawu (1991, 2009).<sup>15</sup> Littlefield and Neumeyer are explicit in creating links between the analytical tools of Schenker and Greimas’s generative trajectory:

Schenker [...] populates his semantic universe with actants (to use Greimas’s term) or functional types. Appealing to the first few intervals in the series, he creates the *Bassbrechung*, the scale-step succession I-V-I. Appealing to traditional notions of the priority of step in melody, and asserting priority of the passing tone in strict counterpoint, diatony, and descending motion through an interval of the tonic chord down to  $\hat{1}$ , he creates the *Urlinie*. The counterpoint of the *Urlinie* and the *Bassbrechung* is the *Ursatz*, the sole actantial content of the background.

(1992, 47)

In the formulation of Littlefield and Neumeyer, then, as one works through the levels of a Schenkerian reading, one moves from the functional aspects of musical narrative (story) to their surface manifestations (discourse), from the background *actantial* level to the foreground *actorial* layer: ‘The actors [...] are tones and constructs of tones’ (ibid.).

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<sup>15</sup> Littlefield and Neumeyer also draw an intriguing link between the ethical concerns of Aristotle and Schenker, arguing that, ‘If the telos of Aristotle’s beginning-middle-end recipe is to create good citizens through catharsis by inuring them to the possibility of tragedy in their own lives, its role for Schenker is to create the proper listener, one who appreciates the “creative mind” that “can derive content that is ever new”’ (1992, 45).



The most thorough-going and systematic exploration of the implications of Greimas's generative model for music is that of Eero Tarasti (1979, 1991, 1994, 2002), who has constructed an entire musico-semiotic analytical praxis based on Greimas. Tarasti's analytical method – his version of Greimas's generative course, through which texts are generated from a *fundamental syntax* – involves four stages (from Tarasti 1994, 48-49):

- 1) The segmentation of the work into *isotopies*, comparable to the *narreme*, or Barthes's functions (see above, 2.1);
- 2) the articulation of isotopies in terms of *spatiality* (tonality, pitch), *temporality* (syntagmatic arrangement, rhythm and metre), and *actoriality* (motives, themes and other 'anthropomorphic' elements);
- 3) the categorization of isotopies by *modalisation* (discussed below);
- 4) the examination of the signification generated by the previous stages.

Perhaps the most unique aspect of Tarasti's thinking involves his application of Greimas's concept of *modalities*, which 'denote all the intentions by which the person who voices (*énonciateur*) an utterance may color his or her "speech"' (Tarasti 1994, 38). It is possible to introduce a further layer of modalisation, in which different modalities inflect or *surmodalise* each other; thus, the basic modalities of *être* (being) and *faire* (doing) can be surmodalised by *vouloir* (wanting), to become *vouloir être* or *vouloir faire* (wanting to be/do).<sup>16</sup> Modalisation can also be heard to function at the isotopic level, in which the equivalent of Barthes's catalyzing functions can be divided

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<sup>16</sup> The issue of surmodalisation and its methodological application will be expanded below, section 2.4.3.

into the categories of *premodal* (preparing) and *postmodal* (reacting) (see Almén 2008, 58). One of the most valuable aspects of the theory of modalities is that it coordinates structural and ‘humanistic’ approaches, similar to the procedure advocated by Maus (1988), linking analytical detail to the listener’s emotional experience of a musical work.

### 2.2.3 *The ‘third wave’: Almén, Klein, and Reyland*

This last point is a crucial aspect of Byron Almén’s *Theory of Musical Narrative* (2008), the most extensive and ambitious attempt to provide a theoretical framework for the examination of musical narrativity. Discussing the prevalence of narrative structures in temporal media, Almén notes the ‘powerful psychological impact’ that narratives can have on their audience, suggesting this as a motivating factor in humanity’s desire to narrativise personal experience through the media of autobiography and biography, as well as the ‘pervasiveness and significance of narrative organization in cultural artefacts with a temporal orientation’ (ibid., 41). Almén sees the ‘core properties of narrative’ as existing in the factors of ‘temporality, hierarchy, conflict, and the observer’s perspective’ (ibid., 40). In particular, Almén understands narrative as a process of *transvaluation*, a term he borrows from *The Semiotic of Myth* by James Jakób Liszka (1989). Almén describes transvaluation thus:

a hierarchy set up within a *system of signs* is subjected to change over time; this change, filtered through an observer’s design or purpose, is interpreted as being isomorphic to a change applied to a *cultural* hierarchy (whether social or psychological).

(2008, 40; original emphasis)

Crucially, this places the observer at the centre of narrative experience; for transvaluation to occur, it requires more than the presence of hierarchical change over time, demanding an observer's perception of that change: 'narrative tracks the effect of transgressive shifts or conflicts on a prevailing cultural system, as inflected by that which is important to the observer' (ibid., 40; also, see below, section 2.3.4). Following Liszka, Almén divides the level of discourse in two – into the *agential* and *narrative* levels – with transvaluation occurring at the latter level, 'within which the narrative actions are coordinated' (ibid., 230).<sup>17</sup>

As Almén notes, the notion of transvaluation identifies musical narrative as part of a semiotic system (ibid., 41-43). Although individual sounds may be meaningless in and of themselves, it is the organisation of these sounds into larger musical units, and the *relations* between these units *within a cultural sign-system*, that allows for the emergence of meaning (see below, section 2.3.4). Almén develops his theory along the lines of Peircean semiotics, identifying a triangular relationship between *sign* (signifier; Peirce's term is 'representamen'), *object* (signified), and *interpretant*.<sup>18</sup> This last category has no analogue in Saussurean terminology,<sup>19</sup> but may be defined as the effect of the sign on an observer, which can itself be thought of as a new sign, consistent with Peirce's view of interpretation as an ongoing process of semiosis. As Almén puts it, 'there is no simple one-to-one relationship between sign and object. [...] In order to know what a sign signifies, one has to see how that sign fits into the larger network of signifying relations' (ibid., 42). Importantly, this

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<sup>17</sup> Similar to Greimas, Liszka and Almén call the story level the 'actantial' level.

<sup>18</sup> Peirce's semiotics have found fertile ground in musicology, influencing the approaches of Jean-Jacques Nattiez (1990b), Raymond Monelle (1991, 2006), Robert Hatten (1994, 2004), Eero Tarasti (1994, 2002), and Naomi Cumming (2000), among others.

<sup>19</sup> Although David Lidov suggests that the 'The formula which we repeated by rote [...] that Saussure's sign has two parts, *signified* and *signifier*, and Peirce's three, *sign*, *object*, and *interpretant* [...] is a bit wrong on both counts' as Saussure's system 'makes four elements that produce two signs' (2005, 82).

network of signification reflects communal consensus, the significance of a sign being arbitrary and culturally determined. Almén argues that this lends a ‘political and rhetorical component to interpretation’ (ibid.), which is also central to the functioning of narrative. In Almén’s model, narrative and semiotic analysis is fundamentally hermeneutic, rather than principally structural: this resonates with Maus’s contention that ‘a satisfactory account of structure must already be an aesthetically oriented account of dramatic action’ (1988, 73).

Almén’s *Theory* also introduces to music the narrative archetypes or *mythoi* developed by Northrop Frye in his *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957). Frye conceives of the archetypes as a cyclical model; thinking in terms of a clock face, we may imagine the archetypes moving from a state of ‘innocence’ at twelve o’clock, to ‘experience’ at six o’clock: ‘(1) *romance*, the narrative of innocence, at the top; (2) *tragedy*, the narrative of the fall, moving downward from innocence to experience; (3) *irony*, the narrative of experience, at the bottom; and (4) *comedy*, the narrative of renewal, moving upward from experience to recovered happiness’ (Almén 2008, 65). Adapting Frye’s archetypes to his concept of transvaluation, Liszka identifies the *mythoi* as embodiments of the binary oppositions *order/transgression* and *victory/defeat*:

*Romance*: the victory of an order-imposing hierarchy over its transgression (*victory + order*)

*Tragedy*: the defeat of a transgression by an order-imposing hierarchy (*defeat + transgression*)

*Irony*: the defeat of an order-imposing hierarchy by a transgression (*defeat + order*)

*Comedy*: the victory of a transgression over an order-imposing hierarchy (*victory + transgression*).

(Almén 2008, 66; original emphasis).

The employment of narrative archetypes is at least a partial return to the beginnings of the serious investigation of musical narrative, but with a greater level of abstraction. For example, the Beethovenian *per aspera ad astra* paradigm that Newcomb discusses in relation to Schumann's Second Symphony can be understood as a form of comic narrative, 'moving upward from experience to recovered happiness', and thus belonging to a much broader species of narrative than the narrower category of 'heroic struggle'. This is precisely the approach to narrative initiated by Propp: an investigation of the constants of narrative, rather than the variants, a model that Greimas refined by reducing it to a level of greater abstraction. One might argue that Almén has performed a similar refinement with the work of his predecessors, through his employment of Frye's archetypes and Liszka's concept of transvaluation.

Although much of the musicological literature dealing with narrative has tended to focus on music of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the analytical examples in Almén's book include works by Debussy, Schoenberg, Ravel, and Benjamin Britten. Nicholas Reyland has extended this reach yet further, and has been prominent among the select group of musicologists concentrating on music and narrative after 1900, from his thesis on Lutosławski and musical plot (2005), to a recent essay on music in narrative film (2012), and the edited volume *Music and Narrative Since 1900* (Klein and Reyland 2013). Reyland's focus on narrative was in part a response to his investigation of Lutosławski's concept of *ackja*, translated as 'action' or 'plot'. However, although some modernist composers have discussed their music in terms of narrative, as Reyland observes, 'modernism's presence is often defined through the assertion of a notable absence: the desire (of composers) or ability

(of post-tonal instrumental music) to represent narrative' (2013, 29; see also Chapter 6, section 6.12).

Yet, as Reyland implies, this is to conceive of narrative in terms too circumscribed to deal adequately with observable narrative forms in other modernist media. For example, parallels can be drawn between the use of montage in narrative cinema and Stravinsky's block-like juxtapositions; such an approach to structure highlights 'narrativity's ability to intensify rather than collapse at moments of rupture' (ibid., 32): indeed, as Reyland argues, such breaches in the course of a narrative are to be expected, for 'Plot, after all, is always an experience of discontinuity; stories are disunity over time' (ibid.). Additionally, Reyland points to Brian Richardson's exploration of 'nonplot-based' (ibid., 36) forms of modernist literature, in which Richardson's observation of the influence of musical structures in writers such as Proust (Wagnerian opera), Strindberg (sonata), Gide (symphony), Mann and Joyce (fugue) suggests that musical structure has in fact been one of the models adopted by modernist literary narratives (Richardson 2006, 171).

Exploring the different paths that musical narrative has taken in the twentieth century, Michael Klein defines two non-traditional narrative forms: (1) *neo-narrative*, 'music in search of new ways to tell stories', and (2) *anti-narrative*, 'music that serves as the critique of nineteenth-century narrative discourse' (Klein 2013, 5-6). Proposing a link with Frye's *mythoi*, Klein associates neo-narrative with the comic archetype, and anti-narrative with the ironic (2013, 9).<sup>20</sup> Reyland – building on the work of Gerald

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<sup>20</sup> Klein also discusses *non-narrative*: 'music with no tonality, no themes, no sense of causality or transformation, no organizing principle whatsoever' (2013, 4), which he equates with the tragic archetype (ibid., 9). However, it is not clear how music with 'no organizing principle whatsoever' could be considered narrative in any sense, let alone an embodiment of a tragic narrative. Such music could not be considered an extension of or comment on narrative in the manner of the other narrative frameworks Klein puts forward.

Prince, Martin Fitzpatrick, and Alan Soldofsky – offers four categories of ‘narrative negation’: (1) *disnarration*; (2) *denarration*; (3) *subjunctive narration*; (4) *bifurcated narration*. Disnarration offers a glimpse of ‘the possibility of an alternative fictional reality’, although ‘One never questions [...] that there is a single *fabula* governing the whole and that the disnarration is not actually part of it’ (Reyland 2013, 37). Given that the story level (*fabula*) remains intact, disnarration may be aligned with Klein’s neo-narrative, which he views as falling ‘on the side of a confirmation that upholds narrative discourse [...] (a confirmation through new means)’ (Klein 2013, 8-9). *Denarrations*, on the other hand, ‘are altogether more severe. Their destabilizations call the “reality” of a fiction into question’ (Reyland 2013, 39), and thus, to adopt Klein’s terminology, ‘fall on the side of a denial that questions or abolishes musical narrative discourse [...] an anti-narrative is ironic (to use one discourse while meaning another)’ (Klein 2013, 8-9; see also Chapter 6, section 6.12).

Subjunctive and bifurcated narrations can also be grouped within Klein’s anti-narrative category, as they also ‘fall on the side of denial’: subjunctive narration is identified by Martin Fitzpatrick as ‘uncertain narrative, marked by an inherent unknowability . . . in which significant information is not epistemologically secure’ (quoted in Reyland 2013, 40). Subjunctive narratives might tempt the analyst to ‘explain away’ narrative aporias, yet an investigation based on the acceptance of such lacunae may identify features missing from a more traditional analysis: as Michael Klein puts it, arguing from the perspective of gender, ‘analyses that are intent on presenting unified, single structures collaborate with meta-narratives that marginalize the feminine characteristics of composing music’ (2005, 49). Narrative ambiguity takes a different form in bifurcated narratives, in which ‘a second, seemingly tangential narrative intrudes upon the first, generating a range of relationships between

them' (Solodofsky, quoted in Reyland 2013, 41). Thus, Klein's ironic anti-narrative divides into Reyland's denarration, subjunctive narrative, and bifurcated narrative.

Such an examination of the narrative mode adopted by the work forms part of Reyland's final interpretative stage, similar to Almén's application of Frye's archetypes at the narrative level of analysis. There are also links with Almén's adoption of Tarastian isotopic segmentation in the initial stage of Reyland's analytical method, which involves a Barthesian 'starring' of the text, a subdivision of narrative events which, following Lutosławski, are categorised as *static* and *dynamic*. Static events are the key points in a musical narrative, linked together by complementary dynamic sections, which act as transitions between static areas of music, similar to Barthes's notion of cardinal and catalysing functions (Reyland 2005, 185). Like Barthes's model, once the functions have been defined, these can be linked into functional sequences, which can then be examined 'for the presence of enigmatic "key ideas" and their developments at "static" moments of intense significance' (ibid.). This provides the material for an 'analytical narrative' that leads to the final interpretative stage of Reyland's analytical model (ibid., 188-189).

Following the foregoing survey of approaches to musical narrativity, we may now define some of the constants of the theory of musical narrative:

- 1) Music and narrative are both temporal forms;
- 2) Music and narrative both depend on a deep structure that is elaborated at higher levels;
- 3) The patterns outlined by these deep structures belong to a limited set of archetypal patterns;



- 4) Music and narrative are both semiotic structures;
- 5) As semiotic structures, both music and narrative permit hermeneutic approaches.

On this last point Reyland sounds a note of caution. Addressing some of the more outlandish readings that might tempt the budding musical narratologist, he suggests that

Where things begin to go wrong, perhaps, is when those responsible for musical narrativizations claim that the music is doing the bulk of the representing or narrating. The second wave of musical narratology puts paid to such readings. It should, however, be possible to plot a course towards rich and provocative readings which respect the semiological limitations of music's narrative propensities as well as the imaginative role of the independently 'active' perceiver. (2005, 181-182)

In order to examine what might be music's 'semiological limitations' we now turn to the objections made by Reyland's second wave, particularly those of Jean-Jacques Nattiez, whose article, 'Can One Speak of Narrativity in Music' (1990a) Reyland describes as 'the most notable contribution' to the arguments against music's narrativity (2005, 139).

### **2.3 Nattiez and the objections to musical narrativity**

Despite the general acceptance of music's ability to enhance narrative and dramatic elements in opera, ballet, song, and other texted music, the argument that one may understand the syntactical structure of music in terms of narrative has been contentious, no more so in than in the early 1990s, which is the period Reyland defines

as the second wave of investigations into musical narrativity. Despite this, narratological approaches to musical analysis have proved tenacious, as the work of Reyland, Almén, and others attests. In his *Theory of Musical Narrative*, Almén identifies five arguments that have been levelled against the concept of musical narrativity: (1) the Verbal Cue Argument; (2) the Causality Argument; (3) the Narrator Argument; (4) the Referentiality Argument; (5) the Drama Argument (2008, 29-37). Each of these arguments will be addressed below; given the similar background to the Verbal Cue and Referentiality arguments – both of which rest on the question of immanent and emergent qualities – they will be dealt with together.

### 2.3.1 *The Verbal Cue and Referentiality Arguments*

Jean-Jacques Nattiez's article, 'Can One Speak of Narrativity in Music?' (1990a), remains the most high-profile rebuttal of the claims of those who would seek to divine narrative in non-texted music; more recently Nattiez has returned to the debates of his original paper in the journal *Cahiers de Narratologie* (2011).<sup>21</sup> Whilst Nattiez is happy for narrative to be 'just another metaphor to which human language, with its meagre means, has to resort in order to attempt to define the specificity of the unfolding of music in time', he sees narrative as too 'bound up with verbal practices' to function convincingly as a model of musical discourse (1990a, 241). He argues that a narrative interpretation *may* be prompted by a verbal cue, but this is essentially an external, rather than an immanent musical feature. As Nattiez explains, 'I obviously do not have a problem in principle with the interest of narratological musicologists in explicitly narrative music from the poietic perspective' (2011, §37), but 'when I hear

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<sup>21</sup> All translations of Nattiez (2011) are my own.

the opening of *L'apprenti sorcier*, I need to know that it is a symphonic poem in order to approach the work in a narrative frame of mind' (1990a, 242). Against this, Almén argues that there are non-verbal cues that can encourage a narrative mode of listening, such as the dialogic musical elements found in sonata form. Furthermore, given the historical origins of instrumental music in vocal music, and our frequent exposure to the narrative use of music in film, television, and advertising today, listeners are primed to approach music narratively through acculturation (2008, 29).

In fact, following the experiments of Delalande, Nattiez has recently accepted that narrative listening is 'one of the possible modes of perception for hearing an instrumental work' (2011, §47). Indeed, he goes so far to admit that 'the human being is, in his anthropological essence, not only a *Homo symbolicus* or *Homo ludens*, but also a *Homo fabulator*, always ready to integrate into a narrative objects or actions that are available to our senses in a linear succession' (ibid., §2). However, Nattiez maintains that one needs to consider music a narrative art *a priori* for a narrative mode of listening to be activated: 'narrative, strictly speaking, is not *in* the music, but *in the plot imagined and constructed by the listeners* from functional objects' (1990a, 249; original emphasis). Nattiez's objection is that any sense of referentiality is merely in the ear of the listener, and not musically immanent. He does not oppose the narratological investigation of music that can be identified as *explicitly* narrative at the poietic level (that is, programme music), but is concerned over 'the methods used to reconstruct the underlying narrative intention' (2011, §38): essentially, Nattiez insists on maintaining a strict distinction between 'absolute' and 'programme' music. Byron Almén approaches the argument in the terms of Nattiez's own analytical tripartition (see Nattiez 1990b): narrative need not exist in 'the musical trace, but in our willingness to intend (on the poietic level) or hear (on the esthetic level) a narrative'

(Almén 2008, 36). Nattiez freely admits that some listeners will *want* to hear a narrative on the esthetic level, but his language makes his views of such listeners clear; they demonstrate ‘the capacity of human beings to invent fictions reflecting a greater or lesser degree of fantasizing’ (2011, §48).

In a recent essay, James Hepokoski writes witheringly of ‘the now stale argument that untexted music [...] is *ipso facto* incapable of pointing toward recognizable external referents or affects with cultural connotations’ (2014, 70). Moreover, against Nattiez’s enthusiasm for the distinction between absolute and programme music, Hepokoski has previously argued that this ‘supposed opposition [...] is a false dichotomy, one forged in the heat of nineteenth-century polemics’:

The seemingly mutually exclusive extremes – absolute versus programmatic understandings – are not our only choices. Between them lies a flexible middle ground, a vast zone of nuanced implication that may be tapped in various ways, depending on the desired point of view.

(2001, 434-435)

As an alternative, Hepokoski offers the concept of the *hermeneutic genre*, ‘a familiar, pre-established category of (actual or anticipated) apprehension concerned with the interpretation of meaning’ (2014, 64), in which the interaction between artwork and interpreter is crucial in producing ‘a *reading* (not a solution once and for all) [...] a viable rhetorical analogue to what is presented within any such individual piece’ (ibid., 79).

A similar point is made by Nicholas Cook, who suggests that musical meaning is ‘neither immanent or arbitrary, but rather negotiated and emergent’:

[Music] is always received in a discursive context, and that it is through the interaction of music and interpreter, text and context, that meaning is constructed [...]. In this way it is wrong to speak of music *having* particular meanings; rather it has the potential for specific meanings to emerge under specific circumstances.

(2001, 180)

Naomi Cumming tackles the argument from a different perspective, remarking on the dangers of allowing the poietic level of (assumed) authorial intention to restrict interpretation:

A composer's explicitly stated or implied judgments of what a work signifies may then become part of the available data in understanding what could be relevant interpretive codes. They are not, however, the source and justification of signified meanings. [...] Intentions read from textual contexts may provide a clue to the potential kinds of signification that might be found musically realized, but they cannot ultimately arbitrate in questions of how the music does, in fact, function semiotically. If they could do so, it would be impossible to give an adequate account of occasions when tensions occurred between texts and their musical setting.

(2000, 262)

Despite the centrality of the referentiality argument to debates about musical meaning, Raymond Monelle argues that referentiality is 'not really a semiotic idea at all' (2006, 20):

The meaning of the musical sign is not to be sought in the world at all. It is to be sought within the system: the semantic web of language, or other signifying system including music, lies back-to-back with the phonological and syntactic pattern.

(2006, 22).

In fact, many of the principal theorists of narrative have identified the relationships between narrative elements (the story level) as fundamental to narrativity, rather than the specifics of individual plots (the level of discourse): as Gregory Karl puts it, ‘the meaning of any particular unit is determined primarily by its relation to other units in a system and not by its intrinsic characteristics’ (1997, 17). This is the nature of Vladimir Propp’s project to classify the ‘functions’ of narratives, which he describes as ‘stable, constant elements in a tale, independent of how and by whom they are fulfilled’ ([1928] 1968, 21); it is also the basis of A.J. Greimas’s analysis of the *actantial level* (see below, section 2.4). Chatman views this ‘transposibility of the story’ as ‘the strongest reason for arguing that narratives are indeed structures independent of any medium’ (1978, 20). Thus, for Propp, Greimas, Chatman, and others, the implication that narrative is principally activated on the level of discourse misses the point, by emphasising what Propp calls the ‘variables’ of narrative over the ‘constants’ ([1928] 1968, 20). As Tarasti puts it, ‘narrativity is a *structural* phenomenon’ (1994, 290; my emphasis). Again, this is essential to understanding the root of Nattiez’s objections, and we shall return to the point at the end of the section.

### 2.3.2 *The Causality Argument*

Turning to the issue of causality, in his earlier article Nattiez claims that temporal sequences do not in themselves constitute narratives, as a narrative requires the demonstration of causal relationships between elements (1990a, 244). However, against Aristotle’s distinction between ‘something happening *after* certain events and happening *because of* those events’ (2013, 29-30), Roland Barthes views the reader’s (and we can add the listener’s) ability to *infer* causality as central to the narrative

experience, arguing that ‘the mainspring of narrative is precisely the confusion of consecution and consequence, what comes *after* being read in narrative as what is *caused by*’ ([1966] 1977, 94; original emphasis). In other words, once a listener has adopted a narrative mode of listening, later musical events are heard as being the consequence of earlier features; one only has to think of the famous C# in the opening phrase of the *Eroica* Symphony for evidence of the way in which listeners may infer causality from stylistically marked musical events: indeed, such contextually marked moments can act as cues to the adoption of a narrative mode of listening.

Although Nattiez, applying classical logic to the problem, may hesitate to deduce causality from temporal structures – fearful perhaps of committing the fallacy of *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*, that is, Barthes’s ‘confusion of consecution and consequence’ – such extrapolations are intrinsic to the narrative experience. To ignore this would appear to remove the role of the reader/listener from the narrative process, and reduce narrative to what Barthes elsewhere calls a ‘readerly’ text, in which the reader/listener is merely interested in the perception of the diachronic unfolding of plot, and ‘is thereby plunged into a kind of idleness’ ([1970] 1993, 4). Against this Barthes places the ‘writerly’ text, in which the reader/listener is ‘no longer a consumer, but a producer of the text’ (ibid.), playing an active role in the semiotic process. Similar to the Verbal Cue Argument, then, one may object to the Causality Argument on the grounds that the perception of musical causality is very much in the ear of the listener: as Naomi Cumming suggests, ‘it is a basic psychological proclivity *not* to hear sound as an uninterpreted quality, but to hear it as bearing information that is adaptively useful’ (2000, 118; original emphasis).

This is in fact not far from Nattiez's own position in his *Music and Discourse* (1990b), where he explains that listeners 'construct meaning, in the course of an active perceptual process' (ibid., 12; original emphasis). Moreover, in his discussion of musical meaning in the same work, he clearly states that

Having reached moment *y* in a musical work, we tend to establish a connection with an *x* that has already been heard.

(116; original emphasis)

In his earlier article on narrative Nattiez contends that such connections are 'situated at the level of the discourse, rather than the level of the story' (1990a, 244). However, it is the diachronic organisation of the succession of musical events (the story level) that gives rise to the level of discourse: as Barthes puts it, 'to read (to listen to) a narrative is not merely to move from one word to the next, it is also to move from one level to the next' ([1966] 1977, 87). We may also quote Chatman regarding the relationship between discourse and story: 'From the surface or manifestation level of reading, one works through to the deeper narrative level' (1978, 41).<sup>22</sup> The act of interpretative listening, of active engagement with a musical work, involves this same attention to the manifest and immanent levels. In narrative terms this means an interaction with both musical story and discourse, an attention to musical syntax alongside the syntagmatic dimension, a movement 'from one level to the next'. As Tarasti puts it, 'To understand is to move from "surface" to "deep" structures' (2002, 22).

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<sup>22</sup> Chatman refers to this process as 'reading out' (1978, 41).



### 2.3.3 *The Narrator Argument*

In her essay on Dukas's *L'apprenti sorcier*, Carolyn Abbate views the Narrator Argument as the ultimate test of musical narrative:

what we call narrative [...] is a tale told later, by one who escaped to the outside of the tale, for which he builds a frame to control its dangerous energy. Music's distinction is fundamental and terrible; it is not chiefly diegetic but mimetic. Like any form of theatre, any temporal art, it traps the listener in present experience and the beat of passing time, from which he or she cannot escape.<sup>23</sup>

(1991, 53)

There are a number of issues with this argument. In particular, Abbate's stricture that the listener is trapped 'in present experience and the beat of passing time' could surely only hold true for an initial hearing of a musical work; as Edward T. Cone describes, in a subsequent hearing 'the trajectory of thought' may be 'zigzag, or even discontinuous, constantly shifting back and forth between the planes of memory and experience' ([1977] 1989, 80).

But it is not only in the case of later hearings that one may disagree with Abbate's contention that 'music's existence as a temporal art precludes its speaking "in the past tense"' (1991, 53). As Cone argues elsewhere,

music is filled with commitments to the future – the expectations on whose satisfaction, immediate or delayed, its continuity depends. And although the listener is denied the power of

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<sup>23</sup> Between its first appearance as an article in *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music*, and the version quoted here, from her book *Unsung Voices*, Abbate decided to qualify her argument, from 'music is fundamentally different, not diegetic but mimetic' (1989, 228) to 'not *chiefly* diegetic but mimetic' (1991; my emphasis). For citations below, where Abbate's language is unchanged between the two versions of her essay, I provide references for both.

prediction, he is nevertheless granted the pleasure of anticipation and also, if the ears of his memory are long enough, the joy of recognition when a long-postponed fulfilment arrives.

([1984] 1989, 201)

Cone's description is supported by Nattiez's 2011 comment that

The 'discourse' of music is inscribed in time. It is made of repetitions, recalls, preparations, expectations, resolutions. If one is tempted to speak of musical narrative it is due, not to its intrinsic and immanent content, but because of the effects of syntactic organization of music, the narrative course that orders the music thanks to the games of implications and realisations that Meyer has described so well[.]

(2011, §9)

Abbate's conception of the listener trapped 'in present experience and the beat of passing time' is only one of her objections to those musicologists seeking to extend the scope of musical narrativity. Later in her essay she argues that '*The Sorcerer's Apprentice* is not a retelling of events, but rather a *depiction* of events, happening as we listen' (1989, 230, 1991, 57). Abbate's distinction is based on the classical conception of a dichotomy between diegesis ('retelling') and mimesis ('depiction'). Plato introduced the distinction in *The Republic*, where he describes mimesis as 'entirely representational' and diegesis as 'in the poet's own voice' (1993, 89). Aristotle has a similar distinction: 'Narrative [diegesis] may be borne throughout by a single narrator, or with variation as in Homer. In dramatization [mimesis] all the personages play their parts as active agents' (2013, 19).

In his *Theory of Art* (2000) Karol Berger argues that this distinction is not one of genre, but rather of mode, placing both modes under the banner of narrative, which he opposes to the 'lyric', arguing that

narrative and drama are modes of representation of human action, while lyric does not represent actions at all, but rather mental states, thoughts, emotions, situations. The difference, then, between narrative and drama is in the mode of presentation while the difference between both these and lyric is in the presented object.

(2000, 191)

Not all writers are convinced of the need to maintain the diegetic-mimetic distinction.

Citing Paul Cobley, Michael Klein argues that

a telling [i.e. diegesis] is also a showing [mimesis], because the creator of a narrative in any medium chooses to reveal some events, while hiding others [...] Under this definition, music's failure of the diegesis test ceases to impact its status as a narrative artform.

(2005, 26).

Almén develops this idea, and goes as far as to suggest that 'we cannot [...] convincingly argue that the narrator is a prerequisite for narrative with respect to music or to literature' (2008, 35), pointing out that there are occasions in literary narratives where the ungrammatical use of tenses or mixture of the different discourses of narrator and narrative actor (so-called free indirect speech) obscures narrational function.<sup>24</sup> However, alongside Chatman (1978) and others I would argue that such instances may demonstrate the presence of a 'covert', or even an 'absent' narrator, 'a

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<sup>24</sup> See Bal (2009, 51-56) for a discussion of free indirect speech in relation to narrative.

narrator presenting situations and events with minimum narratorial mediation and in no way referring to a narrating self or narrating activity' (Prince 2003, 1).

This seems to me to be a good model for any putative musical narrator, and one that allows us to maintain the distinction between diegesis and mimesis, a distinction I find theoretically useful for distinguishing moments of diegesis within an apparently mimetic work, such as a ballet (see below, 2.4.4.5). However, the question remains as to how we might recognise this covert or absent narrator, or distinguish the activation of the diegetic mode in a musical work. Karol Berger has suggested that the diachronic unfolding of music is fundamental to the establishment of something akin to the diegetic mode, arguing that

Even the simplest immediate repetition of a statement (whether in music or literature, no matter) differs fundamentally from the original statement in that, while the latter calls only for the recognition that something is said in the 'now' of the present speaker, the former additionally requires that we recognize that this something has already been said before in the 'now' of the then-speaker [...] Because the practices of repetition, recapitulation, and elaboration are so widespread in music, musical voices very frequently acquire the narrating character.

(2000, 178-179)

Berger elaborates his point by suggesting that the fulfilment of formal requirements, such as the generically-motivated return of thematic material in the recapitulation of sonata form, 'is expected and hence does not advertise its diegetic character' (ibid., 179). He goes on to suggest that thematic recall that lacks formal or generic motivation may in fact be understood as the activation of the diegetic mode. Robert S. Hatten makes a similar point when he describes 'a *compositional* play with musical events or their temporal sequence or relationship, inflecting their significance, or proposing a

certain attitude toward them’, which he suggests provides a “‘point of view” or filtered perspective’, that is to say, a narrative voice (2004, 225-226; original emphasis).<sup>25</sup>

In an earlier essay Hatten identifies shifts in the level of musical discourse as possible cues for the diegetic mode (1991). Hatten explains that, ‘Levels of discourse are created in literature by shifting from direct to indirect discourse or narration’ (1994, 174), and identifies analogous shifts in music as ‘*any event that disrupts the unmarked flow of a musical discourse*’ (2004, 135; original emphasis). What Hatten describes is related to Nicholas Cook’s discussion of ‘points of musical incoherence, breakdowns of hierarchical organization’, discontinuities that ‘might be seen as reflecting or performing the intrusion of meaning’ (2001, 190-191). In fact, what Cook refers to as ‘aporias and points of slippage’ (ibid., 191) are admitted as containing diegetic potential by Abbate; discussing the epilogue of *L’Apprenti sorcier* she notes that ‘The last ten measures pass over to the other world, speaking in the past tense of what has happened, in an orchestral “*he said*”’ (1991, 60; original emphasis). Thus, although she might question the extent to which music may be heard to activate a narrative ‘voice’ – arguing that ‘Musical works [...] *rarely* have the capacity to present themselves as the voice of the teller’ (ibid., 56; my emphasis) – Abbate is not only

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<sup>25</sup> In studies of literary narrative, competing points of view are possible, articulated by the concept of *focalization*, the perspective from which the elements of the story level are perceived. For example, in the sentence ‘Susan was disgusted by Pete’s eating habits’, Susan is the focalizer and Pete the focalized, and both are distinct from the narrator who describes Susan’s disgust. As readers, we do not need to agree with Susan’s perspective, but we are able to experience her subjectivity through the act of focalization. The subject of focalization is not one that has attracted much musicological speculation – the issue with distinguishing multiple viewpoints in music rather militates against it – although Vincent Meelberg has identified the function of focalization in music as fulfilled by the performer, as a musical work ‘does not receive its final appearance when the musical score is written by the composer, but only during performance’ (2006, 68). It strikes me that the identification of the performer as focalizer is an unsatisfactory conclusion – should an actor in a drama be included among the list of focalizers in a play? – and arguably seeks to shoehorn the concept of focalization into musical narrative for the sake of finding musical equivalents for the features of a narratology based in other media. A more convincing perspective on focalization is offered by Michele Cabrini, who co-opts Cone’s notion of the ‘composer’s voice’ to fulfil a focalizing role, although it is difficult to see how this differs from New Criticism’s ‘implied author’ (2012, 14). See Rink (2001) for a discussion of the performer as narrator.

open to the *possibility* of a diegetic mode in music, but is in fact in agreement with a number of scholars concerning the mode of its activation. As will become clear below, Cook's 'aporias and points of slippage' are key to developing a methodology for investigating musical narrativity (see below, section 2.4.4.5).

### 2.3.4 *The Drama Argument*

The emphasis on the diachronic and syntagmatic that emerges during discussions of narrativity is equally applicable to the notion of music as drama, of course. In fact, Almén notes that the Drama Argument is sometimes invoked in order to dispense with the Narrator Argument, as mimesis requires neither past tense nor narrator (2008, 36). However, the Drama Argument need not necessarily be incompatible with the notion of musical narrative. As we have seen, Almén argues that the idea that narrative is necessarily diegetic is conceptually unsound, suggesting that it rests on a theory of narrative derived from an oral tradition of story-telling, where a physical narrator is a prerequisite. Moreover, as Barthes explicitly states, 'Narrative is first and foremost a prodigious variety of genres, themselves distributed amongst different substances – as though any material were fit to receive man's stories' ([1966] 1977, 79). Similarly, Almén argues for

a *sibling* model rather than a *descendant* model for articulating the relationship between musical and literary narratives [...] the *sibling model* distinguishes between a set of foundational principles common to all narrative media and principles unique to each medium.

(2008, 12; original emphasis)

Thus, for Almén, music is as much drama as it is narrative, as music shares the inherent transvaluative principles that make drama a narrative medium.<sup>26</sup> Narrative media differ principally in their modes of presentation. For example, narrative agents are ‘visually and audibly present’ in drama, ‘constructed through verbal description and dialogue’ in literature, psychologically constructed in personal narratives, and indeterminate in music (ibid., 38). This is similar to Berger’s argument that narrative and drama, diegesis and mimesis, are both modalities of the same poetic form (2000, 190-191; see above, 2.3.3).

This also has a bearing on the root of Nattiez’s objection to the concept of music’s narrativity. Nicholas Reyland argues that Nattiez’s position is essentially the same as that advocated by the majority of musical narratologists: not that music is capable of ‘telling a story’, a narrative, but that it demonstrates *narrativity*, that is to say, that there is a fundamental structural homology between the syntactical components of narrative and music (see Reyland 2005, 149, 2014, 210).<sup>27</sup> With the benefit of Nattiez’s 2011 article – which was published after the completion of Reyland’s thesis – I am not so sure. What is apparent from Nattiez’s later discussion of musical narrative is that he sees narrative *not* as an ‘unfolding in time and making something become something else’ (Tarasti 1994, 290) – a syntagmatic arrangement of functional sequences, or as an abstract process of transvaluation – but as a concrete referential form at the level of discourse. In other words, whilst musical narratologists – and the literary and linguistic scholars who have influenced them – understand narrativity as activated by the story level, Nattiez emphasises the level of discourse,

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<sup>26</sup> In fact, many of Frye’s examples of narrative *mythoi* are derived from drama (Frye 1957).

<sup>27</sup> See also Vera Micznik’s assertion that ‘since literary narratological theories are just as much interpretative critical extrapolations about texts as are our attempts to talk about music in narrative or cultural terms, the demonstration of music’s narrativity though analogy with literary narrative is legitimate’ (2001, 198)

or as Propp would have it, the variables over the constants. This is explicit in Nattiez's complaint that meaning cannot exist in syntagmatic organisation, and that musicological narratologists are merely employing literary narratological concepts as a metalanguage (2011, §41).

Instead, Nattiez offers the concept of 'proto-narrative' as an alternative.<sup>28</sup> Nattiez will allow for music to be described as *proto-narrative* for precisely the same reasons that a writer such as Tarasti argues that it is *narrative*: music demonstrates the same fundamental structural properties as the story level of narrative. The reason Nattiez will not go further than *proto-narrative*, however, is to do with a differing conceptualisation of the ontology of narrative. As Reyland notes, Nattiez actually accepts the structural homology between music and narrative, but, as is clear from his 2011 article, this homology is insufficient for Nattiez to categorise music as a narrative art; for Nattiez, narrative *must* have a referential quality, a clearly semantic level, it must 'be able, by itself, to tell us: "I am the Guardian Angel, the Muse and the Madonna!"' (Nattiez 2011, §41). For Nattiez, the distinction between narrative and *proto-narrative* is crucial: 'If one might think that this nuance is tenuous, it is in fact essential' (ibid., §35). Due to the failure of music to possess any strong denotative qualities, music must be restricted to the status of *proto-narrative*: any stronger claims for music's narrativity must necessarily demonstrate 'a greater or lesser degree of fantasizing' (ibid., §48).<sup>29</sup>

However, the definition of narrative as an explicitly semantic construct is not without its problems. As Marie Laure Ryan points out:

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<sup>28</sup> The term is derived from Daniel Stern's *The Interpersonal World of the Infant*; Imberty (2008) discusses the concept from a specifically musical perspective.

<sup>29</sup> Nicholas Reyland suggests that 'this is not so much a theoretical problem as an analytical opportunity' (2014, 207).



In semiotic theory, semantics is the study of the relation between material signs and the states of affairs to which they can refer. But since we cannot isolate a group of properly 'narrative' signs distinct from the signs (or sign) of the supporting medium, the standard conception of semantics does not apply to the case of narrative. Or rather, the semantic system that underlies narrative texts cannot be distinguished from the system of the supporting medium: it is because we know what words mean that we can make sense of written or oral stories, and it is because we know what images represent that we can make sense of a comic strip or a silent movie. This is not to say that narrative cannot be defined through conditions pertaining to meaning; I believe indeed that semantics is the most promising avenue for a definition; but for the concept to be operational, it must be redefined as 'the type of mental image that a text must evoke as a whole to be accepted as narrative,' regardless of the nature of its individual signs. 'Narrative semantics,' in other words, is not a fixed relation between so-called 'narrative signs' and their meanings, but the description of a certain type of cognitive construct.

(2007, 26)

In other words, the sort of specific semantic constructs that Nattiez demands for narrative – a fixed relationship between sign and meaning – does not pertain to narrative, as it is impossible to strip meaning away from the underlying narrative structure: as suggested above, it is in the interaction between narrative levels that meaning resides, not at a semantic level of referentiality. That is, because the semantic component of narrative lies within the structural operations of the narrative itself – their place within the syntagmatic unfolding, their role within paradigmatic plot functions – any 'surface' referentiality carries a significantly reduced semantic weight.

This is what Barthes understands when he introduces the concept of the hermeneutic code:

the units whose function it is to articulate in various ways a question, its response, and the variety of chance events which can either formulate the question or delay its answer; or even, constitute an enigma and lead to its solution.

([1970] 1993, 17)

In his earlier essay, 'The Structural Analysis of Narrative', Barthes gives a number of examples of such enigmas – the owning of a parrot, the purchase of a gun – narrative functions whose ratification 'is always "further on", is a syntagmatic ratification' ([1966] 1977, 93). As Cone understands in his description of music's 'commitments to the future' ([1984] 1989, 201); as McCreless demonstrates with his discussion of chromatic entities 'whose development can be followed across a piece' (1988, 24); as, in fact, *Nattiez* argues, such teleologically charged units are an overriding characteristic of music: 'The "discourse" of music is inscribed in time. It is made of repetitions, recalls, preparations, expectations, resolutions' (Nattiez 2011, §9). It is such syntagmatic structures that form the story level of narrative, and, as Ryan argues, the definition of narrative 'should focus on story':<sup>30</sup>

As a mental representation, story is not tied to any particular medium, and it is independent of the distinction between fiction and non-fiction. A definition of narrative should therefore work for different media [...] and it should not privilege literary forms.

(2007, 26)

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<sup>30</sup> Gregory Karl makes a similar point, suggesting that a musical work's 'abstract dramatic plan possesses an inner logic capable of suggesting any number of stories of a particular type [...] this suggestive ability, I maintain, is the essence not only of the work's expressive coherence, but of its formal coherence as well' (1997, 32).

*Pace* Nattiez's argument for the 'essentialness' of the distinction between proto-narrative and narrative proper, whether we choose to refer to music's proto- or actual narrativity is less important for the present thesis than the recognition of the structural homology between literary and musical narratives:<sup>31</sup> as stated at the start of the chapter, one of the central arguments of the thesis is that the study of the interaction of musical and literary narratives in *Daphnis et Chloé* is rich in hermeneutic potential, and it is in the coordination and comparison of the two narrative structures that something like a semantic level can be seen to emerge. It is this reading of the connotative narrative values of the music alongside and against the denotative values of the libretto that forms the basis of my methodology.

## 2.4 Methodological considerations

### 2.4.1 Actantial analysis

Derived from the narratological paradigm proposed by Propp in *Morphology of the Folk Tale* ([1928] 1968), the actantial model developed by Greimas offers an extremely simple yet sophisticated template for the analysis of fundamental narrative structures.<sup>32</sup> *Actants* are 'fundamental roles at the level of deep structure' (Prince 2003, 1), similar to the 'dramatis personae' of Propp's model (Propp [1928] 1968, 79-83), and are concretised at the level of the surface structure by *actors*. Greimas's original actantial model reduced Propp's seven dramatis personae to six actants: *Subject* (S),

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<sup>31</sup> Although, to be clear, I agree with Reyland's assertion that 'Sensuous, extrageneric and congeneric signifiers braid together in a musical discourse, and once one begins to attend to how the ideas they articulate follow and relate to one another – particularly if one is then moved to consider the structure thus emplotted in terms of its potential revelation of an overarching pattern – one may swiftly find oneself tingling all over in response to music that can profitably be investigated as narrative because, put boldly, aspects of that music *are* narrative' (2014, 213; original emphasis).

<sup>32</sup> For a musical application of Propp's model see Karl (1997).

*Object (O), Sender (Sndr), Receiver (R), Helper (H), and Opponent (Opp)*. Originally, Greimas placed the actants into three binary oppositions: Subject vs Object; Sender vs Receiver; Helper vs Opponent. Employing this model, a basic narrative syntagm (*narrative programme*) or functional sequence can be described as follows (adapted from Nöth 1990, 372):

- (1) S wants O →
- (2) S encounters Opp →
- (3) S finds H →
- (4) S obtains O from Sndr →
- (5) S gives O to R

*Figure 2.1: narrative programme based on Greimas's original actantial model*

Each term of figure 2.1 denotes an individual functional unit, which together form a complete functional sequence. Such a functional sequence could represent the fundamental level of an entire narrative, or the analysis of just one section of a story. For example, the second and third volumes (the 'marriage plot'; see Chapter 6, section 6.8) of Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre* ([1847] 1991) could be analysed along the following lines (for clarity, the actorial elaboration of each actantial role is given in uppercase in figure 2.2):

- (1) JANE (S) and Mr Rochester wish to MARRY (O) →
- (2) JANE (S) discovers that he is ALREADY MARRIED (Opp) →
- (3) JANE (S) learns that she is to INHERIT £20 000 (H) →
- (4) JANE (S) and Mr Rochester rebuild their relationship as equals, after he has LOST HIS SIGHT (Sndr) →
- (5) JANE (S) MARRIES (O) MR ROCHESTER (R)

*Figure 2.2: possible narrative programme of Jane Eyre, books II and III*

As will be noted from figure 2.2, the actorial concretisation of actantial roles need not be fulfilled by ‘anthropomorphic beings’ (characters) (Prince 2003, 3). In fact, an actantial role may be fulfilled by more than one actor, or two or more actantial roles may be elaborated by one actor, as in the alternative analysis of *Jane Eyre* given in figure 2.3:

- (1) The orphan JANE (S) wants to be part of a FAMILY (O<sup>1</sup>) by marrying MR ROCHESTER (O<sup>2</sup>) →
- (2) JANE (S) discovers that he is ALREADY MARRIED (Opp<sup>1</sup>) to BERTHA MASON (Opp<sup>2</sup>) →
- (3) JANE (S) is taken in by her COUSIN (H<sup>1</sup>), from whom she learns that she is to INHERIT £20 000 (H<sup>2</sup>) →
- (4) JANE (S) and Mr Rochester rebuild their relationship as equals, after he has LOST HIS SIGHT (Sndr<sup>1</sup>) in a fire started by BERTHA MASON (Sndr<sup>2</sup>) →
- (5) JANE (S/R) starts a FAMILY (O<sup>1</sup>) with MR ROCHESTER (O<sup>2</sup>)

*Figure 2.3: alternative analysis of Jane Eyre, books II and III*

In the alternative analysis given in figure 2.3, the object of Jane's quest is represented both by the desire to be part of a family and the character of Rochester. Similarly, the Opponent actant is concretised in both the character of Bertha Mason and the situation of Rochester's marriage to her. On the other hand, Jane represents both Subject and Receiver, an analysis that interprets the narrative as one of self-actualisation. The fact that both analyses are possible readings of the text demonstrates an important point: despite the notional generation of the discourse level from the story structure, its analysis is always a hermeneutic act, a *reading* of discursive features in coordination with the underlying structure.

In his later formulation of the actantial model, Greimas reduced the number of actants to four – *Subject*, *Object*, *Sender* and *Receiver* – although he retained the Helper and Opponent as auxiliary actants, or *auxiliants*. His later model also articulates fundamental narrative units as relations of *conjunction* and *disjunction* between two actants, represented by the symbolic notation  $\cap$  and  $\cup$ , respectively. Claude Brémond has proposed a cyclical model of narrative, in which 'the development of an action [...] goes through phases of degradation and improvement according to a continuous cycle', beginning either with a 'state of deficiency' or a 'satisfactory state' (1970, 251). Figure 2.4 applies this paradigm to Greimas's disjunct/conjunct states to provide a basic narrative model.

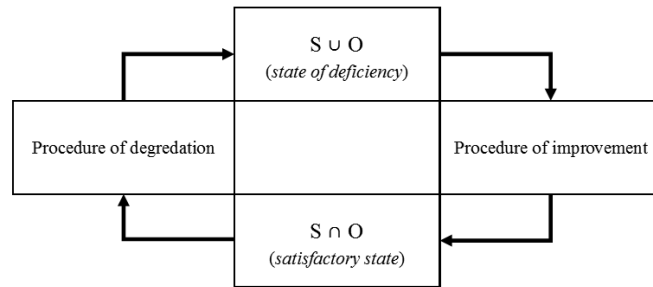


Figure 2.4: Brémond's narrative cycle, adapted from 1970, 251

Brémond notes that three narrative paradigms might be constructed from this cycle, which are given in figure 2.5.

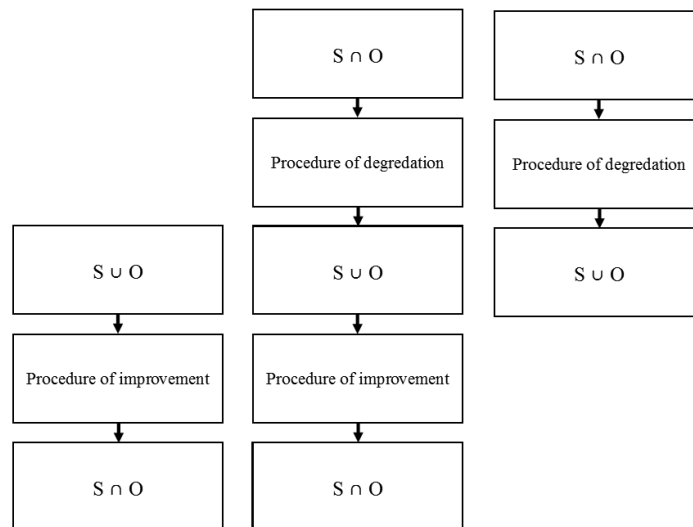


Figure 2.5: Brémond's three narrative paradigms, adapted from 1970, 251

Of the three paradigms, the first two – whose terminal value is  $S \cap O$  (conjunction) – may be described as *euphoric* sequences; the third paradigm – whose final functional unit is  $S \cup O$  (disjunction) – is a *dysphoric* sequence: the opposition euphoric vs

dysphoric is thus homologous to that of  $S \cap O$  vs  $S \cup O$ . As before, these models may represent entire narratives, or sections of a larger whole; this is clear from the arrangement of the paradigms in figure 2.5, demonstrating that the second sequence is effectively a conjoining of the first and third. Applying Brémond's cycle to our earlier example, it is clear that *Jane Eyre* constitutes a euphoric narrative. One possible way of mapping the narrative onto Brémond's paradigms is given in figure 2.6.

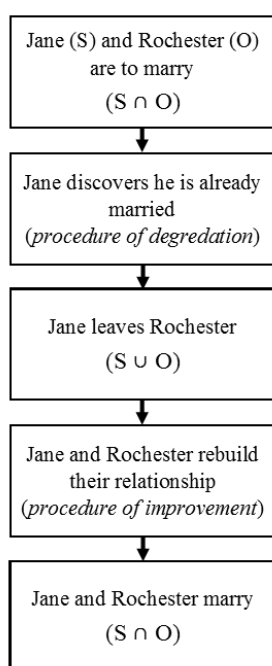


Figure 2.6: *Jane Eyre* mapped onto Brémond's second paradigm

In Barthesian terms, we may make a distinction between two types of narrative unit in figure 2.6. The 'real hinge points' – the cardinal functions – are clearly the points of conjunction and disjunction, which suggests that the procedures of degradation and improvement can be seen to function as catalysers, 'filling-in' the space between cardinal functions (see above, section 2.1). Thus, we may reduce the functional sequence to a yet simpler structure, given in figure 2.7.



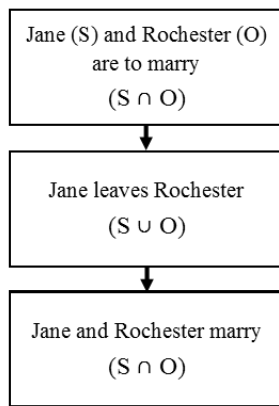


Figure 2.7: reduction of functional sequence of Jane Eyre

Therefore, although Brémond’s model is conceptually circular, in that one may begin and end a narrative at any point of the cycle, in terms of ‘actual’ narratives, the underlying syntax is always one of change over time, which, in the words of Jann Pasler, ‘is probably the narrative’s most important and most illusive characteristic’ ([1989] 2008, 34).

#### 2.4.2 *The generative trajectory and the case for a Schenkerian narratology*

Stripped of its semantic content, the sequence shown in figure 2.7 can be seen to represent a ‘background’ or deep-level narrative structure. Greimas’s actantial model sits as part of a larger theory, that of the *generative trajectory*, which, as Winfried Nöth explains, ‘begins at the deep level, with elementary structures and extends over more complex structures at the higher levels’ (1990, 315). To those of a Schenkerian persuasion, Greimas’s generative trajectory bears obvious similarities with Schenker’s concept of tonal music as the successive elaboration of a perfect cadence over multiple levels: Greimas theorizes a *deep level* (read ‘background’) of fundamental syntax and semantics and *surface levels* (read ‘middleground’) of narrative structure; it is at this level that one encounters the *actantial grammar*, establishing binary relations between

actants. The final level, that of the *discursive structures* (read ‘foreground’), is ‘the process of localizing narrative actors in time and space’ (ibid., 316).<sup>33</sup> It is at the level of discourse that the actantial Subject of our *Jane Eyre* example is actorialised as Jane herself, where the spatialisation (e.g. Thornfield) and temporalization – ‘the to-ing and fro-ing through time’ (Pankhurst 2004, 57) – of the narrative are established.

Although Greimas’s model, like Schenker’s, works conceptually from the lowest level upwards, in terms of practical analysis one may conceive of a reduction of the narrative surface (actors) to functional attributes (actants), which are further reduced to more general units of signification at the deep level, a process strikingly similar to a Schenkerian analysis. At the very deepest level of the Greimasian generative trajectory one finds the *semiotic square*, ‘the deep structure from which springs all successive levels’ (Littlefield and Neumeyer 1992, 49), and thus analogous to Schenker’s *Ursatz*. However, in order to make this similarity more than one of conceptual location within the model, one must introduce Greimas’s concept of *modalities*, which ‘denote all the intentions by which the person who voices (*énonciateur*) an utterance may color his or her ‘speech’; i.e., modalities convey evaluative attitudes (such as will, belief, wishes) towards the content of an utterance’ (Tarasti 1994, 38; see also below, section 2.4.4.3).

In figure 2.2, the Subject actant of *Jane Eyre* was described as wanting an Object, marriage; this desire for conjunction between S and O can be expressed by the modality *vouloir* (‘desiring’). The action that enables S to achieve O (e.g. returning to

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<sup>33</sup> Tarasti notes something similar: ‘Greimas’s entire system is applicable to music, and has strong parallels with Heinrich Schenker’s music-analytic model, a similarly “axiomatic” and generative system’ (2002, 15). For a Ravellian examination of Greimas and Schenker (as a methodology for divining text-music relationships in song), see Suurpää (2011); see also his *Death in Winterresise* (2014) for a fuller exploration of his approach.

Rochester to rebuild their relationship) is the modality *faire* ('doing'). In *Jane Eyre*, one of the reasons that Jane is able to achieve her goal is because she has the 'ability' (*pouvoir*) to do so, thanks to the financial independence conferred on her by her inheritance; she also has the 'knowledge' (*savoir*) of Bertha's death. Once married, (in Greimasian terms,  $S \cap O$ ), Jane can be understood to express the modality *être* ('being') – the famous statement, 'Reader, I married him', and the explanation that 'I have now been married ten years', perfectly capture the sense of stasis inherent in the modality ([1847] 1991, 279, 281). Conceptually, *être* and *faire* are the fundamental modalities, describing the states of conjunction and disjunction, respectively. 'These basic modalities are "surmodalized" by the further categories of *vouloir*, *savoir*, *pouvoir* and *devoir*, which modify "doing" and "being" with desire, knowledge, ability and obligation' (Pankhurst 2004, 63).

Tom Pankhurst has adapted this model to tonal patterns of dissonance and resolution: 'a move from relative dissonance to consonance can [...] be described in terms of *être*: a move towards the conjunction between the notional musical subject and its object – the state of rest for which it strives' (ibid., 63). This is the pattern that the fundamental level of Schenker's model of tonality, the *Ursatz*, replicates: motion towards  $\hat{1}_1$ . The fundamental syntax of Greimas's generative trajectory is the semiotic square (see figure 2.8), which, as Littlefield and Neumeyer point out, 'is none other than that magical box, the "square of oppositions," once wielded by the political and intellectual elite of the Middle Ages, the clergy' (Littlefield and Neumeyer 1992, 49). The four terms of the square are understood in terms of three types of relation: *contradiction* ('the relation which exists between two terms of the binary category *assertion/negation*', e.g. 'white' is contradicted by 'not-white'); *contrariety* ('Two semes of a semantic axis are contrary if each of them implies the contrary of the other',

e.g. ‘black’ is the contrary of ‘white’); and *complementarity* (i.e. a term implied as the complement to another, such as ‘white’ implies ‘non-black’) (Nöth 1990, 318).

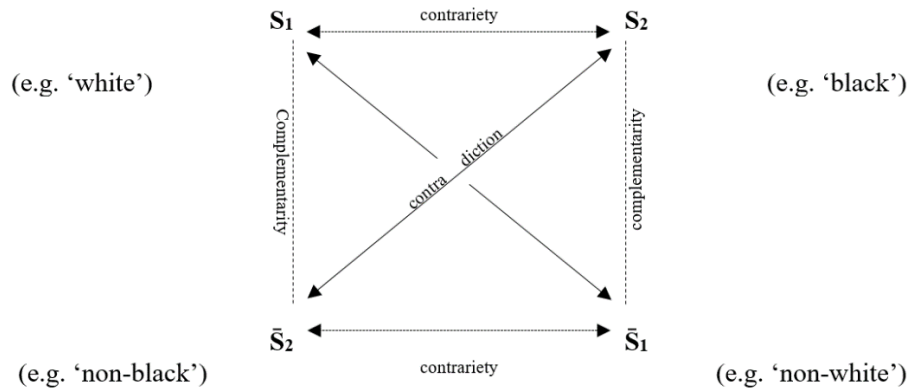


Figure 2.8: Greimas’s semiotic square (adapted from Nöth 1990, 319).

Pankhurst juxtaposes semiotic squares of *être-faire* and tension-release, describing tonal forces as Greimasian modalities (figure 2.9).

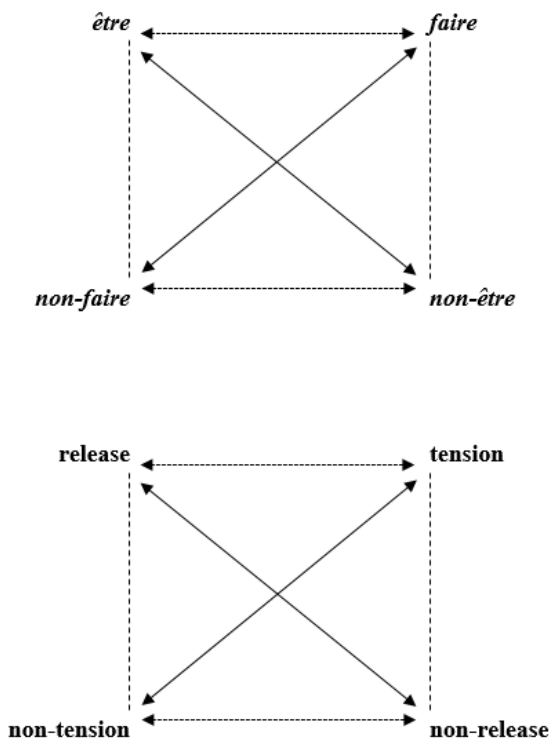


Figure 2.9: semiotic squares of *être-faire* and tension-release (adapted from Pankhurst 2004, 65).

If we now reintroduce the concept of *surmodalization*, it is clear that a Schenkerian *Ursatz* may be understood in terms of Greimas's modalities as possessing a desire for complete consonance, or *vouloir être*, a desire to 'be'. However, Pankhurst goes further in his semiotic description of Schenkerian fundamental structure, pointing out that, in tonal music

There is an obligation to resolve given tensions in particular normative ways, and this can be described in terms of the virtualizing modality of *devoir*. Unlike the *vouloir être* of the *Ursatz*, which, at least for Schenker, strives for the specific resolution of descent to  $\hat{1}$  [...], this *devoir* is not an obligation for movement towards complete consonance (*être*) but for movement away from dissonance (*faire*). This can be expressed by its negation, represented on the semiotic square as *non-faire*. Tonal space in general, and Schenker's deep-level structures in particular, can thus be said to be governed by *devoir non-faire*.

(2004, 65)

The implications for the application of Schenkerian methods in the narrative analysis of tonal music should be clear. However, the relevance of such analytical tools to the music of Ravel is not without controversy, given the composer's frequent use of non-diatonic elements. Moreover, the work of Gurinder Kaur Bhogal has recently made a strong case for emphasising the musical surface in the search for meaning in Ravel's music (Bhogal 2013). Nonetheless, numerous scholars have achieved convincing results with Schenkerian approaches to the composer (see, for example, Chong 2002, Heinzelmann 2008, Suurpää 2011, Fillerup 2013), and the following excursus will justify the use of such methods in the analysis of Ravel's pre-war music.

### 2.4.3 Schenkerian approaches to the music of Ravel

One of the earliest published analyses of Ravel's music is to be found in René Lenormand's *Étude sur l'harmonie moderne* ([1913] 1976). As Arbie Orenstein explains, 'on the basis of an unpublished manuscript, it turns out that many of the analyses are by Ravel himself' (2003, 517), and thus offer a valuable poietic perspective. The analysis that has attracted most attention in the Ravel literature is that of a section of the seventh waltz from *Valses nobles et sentimentales* (the trio section, starting 18/2/5 of the Durand edition), which appears in Lenormand's book as an example of an unresolved appoggiatura (Lenormand [1913] 1976, 62-63). Of particular interest is Ravel's suggestion that the whole passage 'is based upon a single chord' (cited in Orenstein 2003, 520), and thus a prolongation of a *sixte ajoutée* on F.<sup>34</sup> Not only does this provide sustenance for the on-going debate about the viability of extending Schenkerian methods to encompass dissonant prolongations (to be discussed below), but, as Peter Kaminsky argues, 'a composer's *technical commentary* on his or her composition may not only be useful to the analyst, but may also bring together in a fruitful way [...] "compositional premise" and analysis' (2003, 161; original emphasis).

Thanks to the wide dissemination of Ravel's analysis through Lenormand's book, the notion of an essentially functional language elaborated with unresolved dissonances has become fairly commonplace in Ravel studies.<sup>35</sup> However, a number of analysts have proposed alternative theories of Ravel's harmonic language. Perhaps

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<sup>34</sup> Ravel points out that such a chord 'was already used by Beethoven, without preparation, at the beginning of a sonata [opus 31 no. 3]' (cited in Orenstein 2003, 520); despite Ravel's frequently disparaging comments about Beethoven, he appears to have been quite happy to cite him as a precedent in this instance.

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, DeVoto (2000), Girard (2005), Goubault (2005), Howat (2000), Orenstein (1975), and Otto (2005).

the most thoroughgoing of these is that offered by Philip Wade Russom in his thesis, 'A Theory of Pitch Organization for the Early Works of Maurice Ravel' (1985), in which he argues that 'Ravel's music shares many of the structural attributes of traditional tonal music, and yet it is distinct enough to be considered as a separate, nontonal style of composition' (ibid., 2). Although he admits a close similarity between Ravel's music and tonal procedures, Russom suggests that Ravel's employment of scales other than diatonic major, such as octatonic, whole-tone and pentatonic formations, is 'alien to tonal music' (ibid., 3). Russom proposes that Ravel's language should be understood as being formed out of 'referential scale collections' (RSCs), which are composed out at various structural levels; Russom's methodology is adapted from Schenkerian practice, and his analytical graphs will be familiar to any reader conversant with Schenkerian methods. However, as the terminology of RSCs suggests, Russom also draws on set theory in his understanding of scales as referential collections, rather than simply as sets of purely linear relations.

Yet, for all his use of Schenkerian concepts and application of Schenker-style graphing techniques, Russom's focus on RSCs is in direct opposition to an essential Schenkerian concept, described by Matthew Brown as 'The Myth of Scales':

Schenker's objection to 'The Myth of Scales' is clear enough: since scales can at best describe only purely linear relationships, they are incapable of explaining how voice leading and harmony interact in functional monotonal contexts. In other words, scales may describe what pitches are present in a given context, they do not explain why these pitches are related in some ways and not others. Whatever value they may have as 'descriptive tools' for classifying melodic patterns, scales have little power to explain the behavior of specific notes or chords.

(Brown 2006, 146)

For Schenker, the diatonic scale arose from the composing out of the diatonic triad, the ‘Chord of Nature’, in his well-known phrase. Accordingly, deviations from diatony come about via mixture and tonicization. Schenker outlined three types of mixture: *simple mixture*, where triads are swapped between parallel keys (e.g. the diatonic major iii exchanged for the diatonic minor bIII); *secondary mixture*, where the quality of II, III, VI, and VII are altered (e.g. the diatonic major iii altered to III); and *double mixture*, which both borrows triads from the parallel key and alters their quality (e.g. the diatonic major iii is exchanged for the diatonic minor bIII and altered to biii) (Brown 2006, 43-44). As Eddy Chong has noted, one may find alterations to  $\hat{2}$ ,  $\hat{3}$ , and  $\hat{6}$  even at the deep middleground in Ravel’s music; despite this, there is no need to evoke non-diatonic RSCs, as ‘The background remains unquestionably diatonic because the chromaticism is eventually rectified in one way or another’ (Chong 2002, 196-197).<sup>36</sup>

Although mixture alone is a pretty comprehensive method for deriving non-diatonic pitches, and thus removing the necessity of invoking other theories of pitch organisation, the remaining triads can be derived by shifting to another diatonic system at the local level, that is, tonicization. In particular, neither #IV nor bV can be derived by mixture from the tonic in Schenkerian theory; one justification for the appearance of such chords is as a tonicization of V, which is most obviously the case when they appear as a diminished chord (i.e. vii<sup>o</sup>/V). However, in other situations #IV or bV may

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<sup>36</sup> Kip Wile (1995, 37-40) makes a similar argument in critiquing Allen Forte’s analysis of Debussy’s *Beau soir* (Forte 1991), demonstrating that Forte’s evocation of octatonic subsets is unnecessary when diatonic mixture is taken into account.



appear as  $\flat\text{II}/\text{IV}$ ,  $\text{II}/\text{III}$ ,  $\flat\text{III}/\flat\text{III}$ ,  $\text{III}/\text{II}$ ,  $\text{IV}/\flat\text{II}$ ,  $\text{V}/\text{VII}$ ,  $\flat\text{VI}/\flat\text{VII}$ ,  $\text{VI}/\text{VI}$ , or  $\flat\text{VII}/\flat\text{VI}$  (Brown, Dempster, and Headlam 1997, 168).<sup>37</sup>

Turning to prolongational procedures in Ravel, Sigrun B. Heinzelmann has outlined five premises for extending Schenkerian theory for Ravel's music (2008, 22-23):<sup>38</sup>

1. Given that the background structures of Ravel's pre-war music tend to resemble Schenkerian *Ursätze*, the closer a prolongation is to the background, the closer it resembles tonal practice.
2. Although dissonant prolongations can be found nearer the music's surface, they reduce out at the deeper structural levels.
3. Pitch formations that outline non-diatonic collections are subordinate to diatonic structures.
4. Ravel's favoured octatonic and enneatonic collections are capable of fulfilling three of Straus's four conditions of prolongation: the scale-degree condition is provided by the diatonic framework.
5. The bass commonly functions as harmonically normative.

Thus, 'dissonant or non-diatonic prolongations even within the middleground are ultimately subordinate to and controlled by diatonic *Stufen* [...which] superimpose their hierarchical and functional relationships onto the lower-level dissonant

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<sup>37</sup> In fact, so crucial do Brown *et al* consider this aspect of Schenkerian theory, they argue that it 'provides us with a well-defined boundary for the model; since direct relationships between I and  $\sharp\text{IV}$  or  $\flat\text{V}$  cannot occur in normal tonal contexts, the theory implies that they can be used to create atonal environments' (1997, 182); in other words, the presence of such relationships in a work will tend to suggest that it should be heard as non-tonal.

<sup>38</sup> Heinzelmann is building on Josef N. Straus's four conditions for prolongation (Straus 1987).

prolongations' (ibid., 25). None of this is to deny the importance of non-diatonic collections in Ravel's music; as Heinzemann points out, 'He uses sonorities based on different collections to delineate formal sections, non-diatonic linear progressions to lead to climaxes, long-range whole-tone progressions in the bass to shape transitions, changing referential collections to transform motives, and, especially in his songs and two operas, octatonic passages to represent the odd, scary, or unfamiliar' (26-27):<sup>39</sup> the significant point, though, is that these pitch collections remain *subordinate to the diatonic framework that underpins them*.<sup>40</sup>

#### 2.4.4 *Towards an analytical strategy*

As should now be clear, my approach to the analysis of both narrative and Ravel's music (at least in its pre-war incarnation) is multi-level: fundamental structures are understood to be elaborated at successive levels, from background to foreground.<sup>41</sup> My narratological analysis of *Daphnis et Chloé* follows a five-stage process, similar in outline to those advocated by Tarasti (1994) and Reyland (2005), and thus comparable to the narratological systems of Greimas and Barthes, from whom Tarasti and Reyland derive their analytical praxes. Table 2.1 coordinates the analytical stages with a standard multi-level narrative model.

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<sup>39</sup> An extensive and compelling exploration of Ravel's use of octatonicism is provided by Steven Baur in his article 'Ravel's "Russian" Period' (Baur 1999).

<sup>40</sup> Volker Helbing appears to suggest a similar thing with his comment on the third movement of Ravel's Sonata for Violin and Cello: 'a harmonic skeleton shimmers through that reminds us of late-nineteenth-century harmony' (2012, 182).

<sup>41</sup> I am not suggesting that this represents a poietic process – that this is how texts are produced – but rather it is a theoretical construct that allows me to examine the manner in which we may experience narrative and music. As Chong puts it, 'Schenkerian voice-leading structures do not inhere in the music, independent of both the composer and the analyst, but are the (re-)creations of an interpreter' (2002, 221).

Analytical stage	Description	Narrative level	Analytical mode
1	An initial segmentation into units of signification (narremes/functions/isotopies), coordinated with a voice-leading reduction of the score.	Story level.	'Structural' analysis
2	A consideration of the manner in which the functions are articulated, according to Tarasti's Greimasian categories of <i>spatiality</i> , <i>temporality</i> ... ...and <i>actorality</i> .		
3	An analysis of the expressive (modal) trajectory of each functional sequence, via analytical close reading.	Discourse level	
4	Analysis of transvaluative course; juxtaposition of musical and literary narratives.		
5	A final hermeneutic stage, a consideration of contexts and intertexts.	'Hermeneutic level'	

Table 2.1: outline of analytical method

It will be noted that I have added a third level, which I have described as 'hermeneutic'. In Barthes's essay 'The Struggle with the Angel', he draws a distinction between 'structural analysis', which concerns itself with the structure of the text, and 'textual analysis', which 'is founded on *reading*' ([1971] 1977, 131; original emphasis); another way of putting it might be to oppose the structural analysis of Chatman's 'reading out' (1978, 41) to a 'reading in' of textual analysis. Both these ideas correspond to my distinction between structural and hermeneutic analysis. It also relates to Michael Riffaterre's distinction between 'heuristic' and 'retroactive' reading. The former 'goes on from beginning to end of the text, from top to bottom of the page, and follows the syntagmatic unfolding.' This is also 'where the first

interpretation takes place'.<sup>42</sup> The latter reading is 'the time for a second interpretation, for the truly *hermeneutic* reading. As he progresses through the text, the reader remembers what he has just read and modifies his understanding of it in the light of what he is now decoding' (all citations 1978, 5; original emphasis).<sup>43</sup> The hermeneutic level should be understood conceptually, existing in the interaction between story/discourse and the analyst, during which the text is read within a given context, and in relation to its possible intertexts.

#### 2.4.4.1 Stage 1: functional segmentation

Tarasti (1994) and Reyland (2005) both employ the analytical gambit of segmentation into what Roland Barthes calls 'blocks of signification' ([1970] 1993, 13). This procedure resembles the division of narratives into *isotopies*,<sup>44</sup> defined by a 'shared collection of common characteristics, allowing them to serve as fundamental narrative units' (Almén 2008, 57), originating in Greimas's theory of narrative grammar.<sup>45</sup> Isotopies may be divided into the categories of *cardinal* (static) and *catalysing* (dynamic) functions (Barthes [1966] 1977, 93-95, Reyland 2005, 187); to this division one may add a further distinction, between *pre-* and *post-modalising* catalysers, or between preparation for and reaction to a cardinal function (Almén 2008, 58). Reyland notes that segmentation into functional units 'should prove valuable [...], by forcibly "slowing down" one's reading and thereby focussing one's attention on the potential implications of each moment, rather than encouraging one to rush ahead to emplot the most obvious turning points in a piece' (2005, 185); similarly, Almén points out that

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<sup>42</sup> See Chapter 6, section 6.10 for an elaboration of this concept as regards *Daphnis et Chloé*.

<sup>43</sup> See Cone ([1977] 1989) for a discussion of 're-readings' in music.

<sup>44</sup> The term is Tarasti's via Greimas; Reyland, borrowing from Barthes ([1970] 1993) instead refers to the principal of 'starring' the text.

<sup>45</sup> See Monelle (1992, 233-234) for a discussion.

isotopic segmentation will not necessarily conform to formal musical divisions (2008, 58).

#### 2.4.4.2 Stage 2: functional articulation

In his *Theory of Musical Semiotics* (1994) Tarasti provides musical analogues for Greimas's three categories of *discoursivisation*:

##### 1. *Spatiality*:

For Tarasti, musical space is not confined to the categories of horizontal, vertical and depth, but includes a 'fourth dimension' – that which distinguishes between centre and margin. For example, 'Some musical element [...] pushes itself to the fore, while the rest of the texture "surrounds" or envelops it' (Tarasti 1994, 80).

##### 2. *Temporality*

Alongside rhythmic and metrical features, 'temporality' includes the more 'narrative' aspects of time, such as memory and expectation. Tarasti divides the latter into two forms: a sense of expectancy, where 'the listener does not know what will follow', and 'passages where the listener has a strong presentiment of, yet passionately anticipates, what will follow' (ibid., 64).

##### 3. *Actuality*

Actorial articulation is provided by themes, motives and other 'anthropomorphic' or apparently agential features at the narrative surface. Actorial ascriptions provide discourse-level actualisations of more fundamental functional or actantial roles. It

is through actoralisation that, for example, the Subject actant becomes a specified Actor (e.g. ‘Jane Eyre’).

The three elements of what Greimas terms *discursive syntax* can be understood as operating at different levels of musical structure: the achronic articulation of tonal space is at the deepest structural level; once tonal events are placed within a syntagmatic structure, their arrangement becomes temporal; finally, at the level of musical discourse, the presence of identifiable motivic/thematic material produces actorial elements, ‘which through modalizations make this the “anthropomorphic” level of music’ (ibid., 34).

#### 2.4.4.3 Stage 3: modal trajectory

*Modality* is an important component of Greimas’s theory; Tarasti suggests that ‘the invention of modalities in the 1970s radically transformed semiotic study in the Greimasian school’ (ibid., 39), and Ronald Schleifer describes the concept of modalities as part of Greimas’s project ‘to discover a way to account for the phenomenally felt meaningful whole of human discourse’ (1987, 131). As we have seen, Tarasti explains that the Greimasian modalities ‘denote all the intentions by which the person who voices (*énonciateur*) an utterance may color his or her “speech”; i.e., modalities convey evaluative attitudes (such as will, belief, wishes) towards the content of an utterance’ (1994, 38). In other words, modalisation ‘is a semantic investment of actantial classes insofar as it invests an action with a meaning from the point of view of an agent of language: *it modifies a “doing” by interpreting it*’ (Schleifer 1987, 101; my emphasis). This is the distinction between content and mode of expression; for example, the statements (1) ‘Jane wants to marry Rochester’,

(2) ‘Jane must marry Rochester’, and (3) ‘Jane can marry Rochester’ contain the same content (Jane marries Rochester), but differ modally: (1) desire, (2) obligation, and (3) ability.<sup>46</sup>

In simple terms, one might understand the modalities as affective states experienced by a notional musical subject. The three basic modalities are *being* (‘state of rest, stability, consonance’), *doing* (‘musical action, event, dynamism, dissonance’), and *becoming* (‘the “normal” temporal process of music’). These in turn can be inflected or *surmodalized* by *will* (‘the tendency to move toward something, musical direction’), *know* (‘musical information’), *can* (‘the power and efficiency of music, its technical resources’), and *must* ‘the relation of a musical work to stylistic and normative categories’ (all quotations Tarasti 1994, 49). For example, as we have seen, Tom Pankhurst explains that the Schenkerian ‘will’ for a move from dissonance to consonance can be described as *being* surmodalized by *will*, or *will to be* (2004, 64; see above, section 2.4.2). Or, to return to the *Jane Eyre* example used above, the essential modality of each statement is *doing* – Jane marries Rochester – which is surmodalised by (1) *will*, (2) *must*, and (3) *can*: thus, (1) *will to do*, (2) *must do*, and (3) *can do*. Once Jane is married, her modal state is *being*.

#### 2.4.4.4 Stage 4: transvaluation and plot archetypes

Liszka identifies *markedness* and *rank* as essential feature of transvaluation (1989, 70-73). Markedness refers to a semiotic opposition, consisting of an unmarked term opposed to a marked term. The unmarked term is ‘genetically earlier, the more natural and often the more frequent one’, whereas ‘the marked term has an additional and

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<sup>46</sup> See Schleifer (1987, 101-102) for a concise and insightful account of modalisation.

more specific morphological feature' (Nöth 1990, 76). One of the common examples given to illustrate this asymmetrical relationship is that of gendered oppositions, such as 'cow' and 'bull', in which 'cow' – the unmarked term – is 'more frequent' as it can refer to the species as a whole, whereas 'bull' – the marked term – is 'more specific', referring only to adult male cows (Hatten 1994, 34). Rank relations, on the other hand, are hierarchical 'valuations of relative importance or subordination in a system' (Almén 2008, 41). Transvaluation, then, can be understood as the change in rank or markedness relations across the course of a narrative. *Jane Eyre* provides a fairly straightforward example, in that Jane's rank relative to Rochester is altered upwards following her inheritance and Rochester's disability. As described above (section 2.2.3), Liszka sees transvaluation as the essential structural property underlying Northrop Frye's four narrative archetypes, each of which can be understood as 'playing out the tensions between the violence of a hierarchy that imposes order and the violence that results from its transgression' (Liszka 1989, 133). For example, the comic archetype can be understood to represent the victory of transgression over an order-imposing hierarchy, whereas the romance archetype represents the victory of order over transgression: in terms of Brémond's narrative cycles, both these archetypes would be classified as *euphoric* (see above, section 2.4.1).

As Almén argues, 'Liszka's generalized notion of narrative allows for the connection of Frye's theory with musical narrative' (2003, 16). For example, it is not much of an imaginative leap to analyse the 'narrative' of sonata form as representing an initial emphasis on a primary tonal area, a 'transgressive' move towards a secondary key, and the eventual 'victory of order over transgression' – therefore a romance archetype. Such a relatively straightforward case may be inflected in various ways, however. Although Frye lists only four narrative species, he sees these as



possessing the ability to ‘blend’ into adjacent archetypes; for example, comedy may inflected by romance or irony (1957, 177). In musical terms, we might interpret a minor-mode eighteenth-century sonata with a major-mode second group as inflecting the romance archetype with an element of tragedy, given the marked quality of minor-mode music during the Classical period, and the higher rank value placed on the major mode. Such a situation, then, may lead to the interpretation of the work as a *romantic tragedy* (that is, tragedy modified by romance), which ‘contains transgressive elements that become associated with a high rank value’ (Almén 2008, 167).

#### 2.4.4.5 Stage 5: hermeneutic considerations

As should be clear from the foregoing discussion, the concept of transvaluation allows for the ‘reading’ of musical structures as isomorphic to Frye’s narrative archetypes and their associated phases, which in turn opens up a great deal of hermeneutic potential. Alongside this, one may also follow the path laid out by Robert S. Hatten, in drawing hermeneutic hypotheses ‘from any part of the contemporaneous cultural universe’ (1994, 228). *Daphnis et Chloé* was created in an especially rich cultural environment, and during a period in which French musical culture was ‘occupied’ by political culture (Fulcher 1999, 3). In particular, gender ideologies were hotly contested, with the ‘masculinised but man-hating’ *femme nouvelle* a cause of special concern, representing ‘not only an abdication of women’s natural role but as a threat to the security of the state itself’ (McMillan 2000, 143, 141). Such contextual elements may serve as valuable grist to the hermeneutic mill.

Important though context undoubtedly is to our interpretation of the significance of a work, there are other reasons or causes to look outwards in our

‘reading in’. Riffaterre has argued against the referential reading of texts, the assumption that meaning is a manifest surface phenomenon, what he calls the ‘referential fallacy’ (1978, 5). His concept of two readings – a referential *heuristic reading*, and a second, *hermeneutic reading* – encourages us to ‘surmount the mimesis hurdle’, and seek meaning elsewhere than the textual surface. Riffaterre’s theory, then, opposes a direct relationship between surface and deep structure, and proposes that ambiguities at the surface level of discourse act as Peircean *interpretants*, signs that establish relationships between other signs, offering hermeneutic windows into the text.<sup>47</sup> Crucial to this is our recognising a text’s *ungrammaticalities*, ‘aspects of the text which are contradictory on a referential reading but resolved when we reread the text in terms of its underlying sign structures’ (Allen 2011, 113). As Riffaterre explains, an ungrammaticality is ‘the obstacle that threatens meaning when seen in isolation at first reading’, but is also ‘the guideline to semiosis, the key to significance in the higher system, where the reader perceives it as part of a complex network’ (1978, 6; see Chapter 6, section 6.10, for a refinement of Riffaterre’s concept).

This ‘complex network’ includes, of course, other texts, and thus an ungrammaticality is often interpreted as an indication of an intertext. However, I propose to take the concept further, and understand ungrammaticalities as a rupturing of the apparently mimetic surface of a discourse, exposing a *diegetic* substructure: in other words, I understand the ungrammatical as a possible manifestation of narrativity, even potentially signalling the presence of a narratorial function. That is, aporias, meaning gaps, slippages – ungrammaticalities – *mediate* our reception of the discourse in a manner similar to that of a narrator, placing us in a dialogic relationship with a

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<sup>47</sup> See Monelle 1992 for a most succinct explanation of Peirce’s interpretant: a symbol (signifier) means an object (sign) ‘by virtue of’ an interpretant (193-194).

text. However, the complex relationship between dance (libretto) and musical narratives in *Daphnis et Chloé* suggests a further dialogism, that between narratives that are *seen* and *heard*. This suggests a truly heteroglot text, one that contains a polyphony of discourses: it is the elucidation of these competing or contradictory voices that is the principal function of the methodology that has been outlined in this chapter, and will serve as the basis of the hermeneutic reading of Ravel's ballet contained in the following chapters.

## 3 Un point d'honneur

### 3.1 A matter of honour

In his book, *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honour in Modern France* (1998), the social historian Robert Nye describes ‘One of the most celebrated duels of the [Third-Republic] era’, the Olivier-Feuilerade duel, in which the veteran dueller Olivier ‘provoked the inexperienced Feuilerade to a duel when his ex-mistress took up with the younger man’ (ibid., 201). In some ways, the circumstances of the ‘Dance Contest’ between Daphnis and Dorcon in Ravel’s ballet *Daphnis et Chloé* bear striking similarities to this classic of French duelling history: at the end of the previous dance Dorcon kissed Chloe, resulting in a furious response from Daphnis; at the behest of their friends, the two rivals engage in a ‘Dance Contest’, the winner of which will receive the honour of a kiss from Chloe. Moreover, the imbalance in status between the combatants is common to both the historical and balletic duels, with the experience and maturity of Olivier matching Daphnis’s more elevated position within the narrative hierarchy. As Nye comments, one of the fundamental principles of duelling culture was that, no matter how inconsequential the cause, ‘a man in the upper reaches of society who believed himself to have been insulted – especially in the presence of witnesses – was required to take up weapons in his defence’ (ibid., 211).

Up to the point of Dorcon’s embrace of Chloe, the ballet’s focus has been on the larger society (the ‘Danse religieuse’ and the ‘Dances of the Youths’); the sudden shift to individual action signalled by Daphnis’s violent response is indicative of the

destabilising effect of Dorcon's act (Chloe carries no blame for the kiss, as the libretto is emphatic that she offers her cheek '*innocemment*'). The 'Dance Contest', then, is representative of what Nye terms 'gallant' duels, involving perceived slights to the honour of a woman, and thus to the honour of any man who considered himself to be responsible for her, whether they be husband, son, father, brother or lover. Nye notes that this variety of duel appears to have been 'the most deadly (*ibid.*, 200).<sup>1</sup> However, although Dorcon's embrace of Chloe is nominally the foundation of the disagreement with Daphnis, there is more at stake at this point in the ballet; this was often the case in real life, when the fundamental motivation for a duel might be different to the ostensible cause. As a challenger to Daphnis's position within the narrative hierarchy – a threat to Daphnis's rank as narrative subject – Dorcon represents an obstacle that must be overcome in order to reassert the status quo. In this there is a precise correlation between the requirement that fin-de-siècle French males maintain their honour – and thus affirm their status within society – and the necessity for Daphnis to demonstrate his superiority over Dorcon for the narrative to continue its trajectory.

The sequence of dances that constitute the contest between Daphnis and Dorcon is formally a rondo, with the material presented in the initial section acting as a ritornello. The scene is divided into five discrete sections, which together comprise a complete narrative programme. This chapter will analyse each section independently, employing the analytical methodology outlined in Chapter 2. The sequence will then be studied as a complete narrative programme, moving onto more fundamental

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<sup>1</sup> Nye points out that 'few of the serious duels we know about were the results of an open competition for the favours of a woman, as in the popular melodramas [...] Much more common were situations in which an able-bodied male who was the legal guardian, husband, or closest relation of an offended woman was obliged to challenge her offender' (1998, 200-201). However, no matter the apparent reason for conflict, as Nye makes clear, it was always the honour of the dueller that was fundamentally at stake: 'the dangers of a fight [were] preferable to the circulation of rumors about [...] cowardice, the one thing a duel could lay to rest once and for all' (*ibid.*, 212).

narrative levels, drawing out the semiotic implications of the contest as a whole. The contest will then be examined through the lens of Robert Nye's 'male codes of honour', which 'worked to both shape and reflect male identity and ideals of masculine behavior [...] by providing a basis for adjudicating private disputes' (ibid., 8); this will serve to introduce various fin-de-siècle discourses of masculinity that will be developed further in Chapter 4.

### 3.2 *Geste brusque & valse triste*

Isotopy	Rehearsal figure	Functional type	Modality
1	29-29 <sup>+3</sup>	Cardinal	<i>Doing</i>
2	29 <sup>+3</sup> -30	Catalysing (post-modal)	<i>Will to be</i>
3	30-31	Catalysing (post-modal)	
4	31-31 <sup>+5</sup>	Catalysing (post-modal)	
5	31 <sup>+6</sup> -32	Catalysing (pre-modal)	<i>Must be (will to do?)</i>

Table 3.1: isotopic segmentation RR29-32

#### 3.2.1 *Isotopy 1: RR29-29<sup>+3</sup>*

The sequence opens violently with the 'abrupt gesture' (*geste brusque*) with which Daphnis pushes aside Dorcon. The gesture is clearly set apart from the surrounding music, both registrally and timbrally; the expressive violas and charming flutes that represent Chloe and Dorcon's embrace are replaced by a stark horn chord and rasping bassoons, which sound a dissonant C and C<sub>b</sub> against the horns' hollow interpretation of the flutes' D<sub>b</sub>-F major third that concludes Dorcon and Chloe's moment of intimacy. The shock of the gesture is sufficient to silence the music momentarily; the general pause at R29<sup>+2</sup> is the first moment of silence in the entire score: up to this

point, each dance has been linked by continuous music. Yet there is continuity between the embrace and the *geste brusque*; just as Daphnis's violent action is a reaction to Dorcon's moment with Chloe, its musical form is the result of a chromatic descent through a minor third in the bass, from the D $\flat$  of Dorcon and Chloe's clinch to the B $\flat$  that initiates the '*valse triste*' transformation of the *geste brusque* at R29<sup>+3</sup> (see figure 3.1). Despite this voice-leading connection, however, the *geste brusque* is experienced as a jolt, a rupture in the narrative flow, a branching point 'forcing a movement into one of two (or more) possible paths' (Chatman 1978, 53): in other words, the *geste brusque* exhibits narrative cardinality (see Chapter 2, section 2.1).

Figure 3.1 shows a musical score with three systems. The first system is for flutes and horns, with a tempo change from 2/4 to 3/4. The second system is for violin/viola pizzicato and bassoon/viola/contrabass, with a dynamic change from forte (f) to piano (p) and a tempo change from 3/4 to 2/4. The third system is for the piano, with a tempo change from 2/4 to 3/4. The score includes markings for 'Vif' and 'Moins vite', and a dynamic marking of 'p espressif'.

Figure 3.1: voice-leading connection between Dorcon and Chloe's embrace, Daphnis's *Geste brusque* and the *valse triste*, RR28<sup>+8</sup>-29<sup>+3</sup>

### 3.2.2 Isotopy 2: RR29<sup>+3</sup>-30

The reinterpretation of the *geste brusque* as a waltz at this point is a matter of interpretative controversy in the ballet's literature. As Michael Puri notes, 'Roland-

Manuel, Vladimir Jankélévitch, and Deborah Mawer are among those to have proposed that we assign the waltz theme to Chloe' (2011b, 88). Puri disagrees with this, arguing that 75% of its appearances involve both Daphnis and Chloe, and therefore assigns it the status of 'secondary love theme', going on to suggest that 'it is quite natural for a waltz theme to represent the desire that binds a couple in love, given the sexual threat that this dance held during its history' (ibid.). While I concur with Puri that the theme is in some way related to the couple, not solely to Chloe, and acknowledge the sexualised nature of the waltz as a genre, I find it difficult to hear the theme as anything other than dysphoric, a markedly dejected waltz, a *valse triste*, or *valse mélancolique*.<sup>2</sup> Not only does the theme contain some painful dissonances – Cb, B and A against the Bb pedal in the bass, all of which are emphasised dynamically, agogically and/or metrically – but its characteristic chromatic descent suggests the Baroque topic of *lamento*, the *passus duriusculus*.<sup>3</sup> There is also something diffident about the manner in which the melodic line reverses direction at the end of the phrase, as if turning away from its destination. As Sevin Yaraman explains in her study of the dance, 'waltzing was erotic, lustful, highly romantic' (2002, 42): in a word, the *opposite* of the melancholic, plaintive waltz that is presented here.

This suggests that Puri's interpretation of the waltz theme is incomplete; rather than a straightforward 'secondary love theme', the *valse triste* (hereafter VALSE TRISTE, to indicate its status as a recurring motif) perhaps represents something more similar to '*Liebesnot*', Rudolf Sabor's designation of one of the principal leitmotifs of

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<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 6 for a more extended discussion of the waltz.

<sup>3</sup> For a recent discussion of the lament see Caplin (2014). Although Caplin points out that 'the lament topic is defined by the lament schema and the lament schema is defined by its bass' (ibid., 416), he also notes that the '*passus duriusculus* [...] could appear in upper voices of the musical texture as well as the bass' (ibid., 417). Of course, the classic version of the lament is a filled-in descending fourth, whereas VALSE TRISTE is one semitone short; nonetheless, the melancholy aspect of the motif is perfectly congruent with the expressive effect of *lamento*.



Wagner's *Ring*. First heard two bars before Freia's initial vocal entry in *Das Rheingold*, the motif saturates the music of Siegmund and Sieglinde in *Die Walküre*.

As Sabor explains:

[it] has variously been named the Love, Flight or Fear motif. [However, it] symbolizes in fact a rather more complex emotion, the distress which is often caused by and fused with love. [...]

The German term for this aspect of the human condition is 'Liebesnot' (love's distress).

(1997, 19)

Similar to *VALSE TRISTE*, *Liebesnot* evokes melancholy in its descending contour – although the descent is diatonic here – and is also organised in a triple-time, two-bar, weak-strong hypermetre, frequently over a pedal point, as in its first appearance in *Die Walküre* (see figure 3.2).

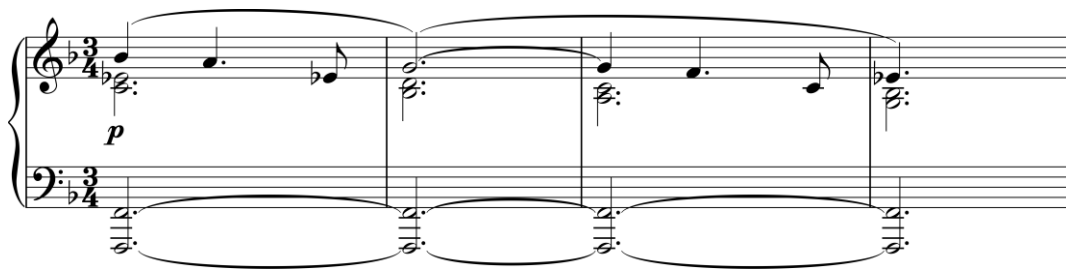


Figure 3.2: First appearance of *Liebesnot* in Wagner's *Die Walküre* (Schirmer vocal score: 9/2/3-6)

I do not intend to suggest any direct link between Wagner and Ravel here, but I nonetheless hear a kindred form of expression in the two themes; as Sabor puts it, a 'distress which is often caused by and fused with love'. What makes *VALSE TRISTE* particularly bittersweet, however, is the idiosyncratic

combination of waltz and lament styles. In this it calls to mind Robert Hatten's concept of *troping*, 'the bringing together of two otherwise incompatible style types in a single location to produce a unique expressive meaning from their collision or fusion' (Hatten 2004, 68). It is the incompatibility of these two 'style types' – waltz and lament – that marks the *VALSE TRISTE* as particularly suggestive. As Yaraman writes, a 'composer's choice of a waltz for a specific (often crucial) moment in the plot or in association with a certain character is [...] a sign for the audience, conveying an established, conventional meaning' (2002, 44), and that 'one is often struck by the composer's use of a waltz and by the questions its presence raises' (ibid., 45). The troping of the waltz with elements of lament conventions raises more questions about the significance of this moment to the narrative: this is not merely a conventional waltz, but a specific type of waltz, a *valse triste*.

Indeed, rather than suggesting a link with Wagner, we might look closer to home for antecedents for *VALSE TRISTE*, for Ravel had a particular penchant for waltzes: in an interview published in the Viennese *Neue freie Presse*, 29 October 1920, he described his fondness for Johann Strauss, explaining that 'I admire and love his waltzes, which everyone in our country knows' (in Orenstein 2003, 420). Of course, this enthusiasm for the waltz extended to his own composition, most famously in *La Valse* (1920) and the earlier set of *Valses nobles et sentimentales* (1911).<sup>4</sup> The second waltz of the latter work exhibits a number of similarities with *VALSE TRISTE* (see figure 3.3). Aside from the identical rhythm, its slow tempo, chromaticism, and semitonal clashes contribute towards the *expression intense* that

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<sup>4</sup> Ravel's fondness for the waltz we will be explored more fully in Chapter 6 section 6.1.

Ravel marks on the score: all that is missing is the chromatic descent, although the general melodic tendency is downwards.

Originally written for piano, the *Valses nobles* were orchestrated and turned into a ballet to a scenario by Ravel himself in 1912, called *Adélaïde, ou le langage des fleurs*. Deborah Mawer describes the ballet as presenting ‘a classic romance with a clichéd love triangle’ (2006b, 129), in which the courtesan Adélaïde is wooed by both the melancholic poet Lorédan and the aristocratic Duke. Despite the fact that Adélaïde chooses Lorédan over the Duke, the ballet ends with Lorédan holding a revolver to his head, an ending that Mawer finds ambiguous – ‘is the couple ultimately united in life or death?’ (ibid., 130) – although the presence of the revolver and the lack of a clear resolution would appear to point in the less positive direction. While the *Valses nobles* were written before the ballet’s scenario, Mawer notes that the music ‘matches the fine detail of Ravel’s scenario so well that one might almost imagine it to be word-painting, even though the process has been worked in reverse’ (ibid., 134). Given our discussion of the expressive content of the VALSE TRISTE, it is interesting to observe that, in the scenario published in the 1954 catalogue of Ravel’s works, the opening of the second waltz in the scenario portrays the entrance of Lorédan, who is described as ‘sombre and melancholic’ (cited in Mawer 2006b, 130) – a description that I find fits equally the similar music of VALSE TRISTE.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> It is also worth noting that the scenario for *Adélaïde* involves a love triangle, which is precisely the situation of the love contest in *Daphnis*.



Figure 3.3: opening of Waltz II from Valses nobles et sentimentales

To return to *Daphnis*, the chromatic descent of VALSE TRISTE – its *passus duriusculus* – is derived from the chromatic bass that connects Dorcon and Chloe’s embrace, Daphnis’s violent response and the waltz theme (see figure 3.1). This reflects the surface connection between the *geste brusque* and VALSE TRISTE, with the former transformed into the latter by registral displacement and extension. Puri takes up this point, posing the question ‘Upon hearing the violent and discordant musical “geste brusque,” who would have anticipated its sudden translation into a waltz?’ (2011b, 89). Whilst the tropological aspect of this transformation is clearly significant, the presentation of material in fragmentary form is not an unusual strategy for a composer of this period: there are numerous examples in Stravinsky’s contemporary ballets, such as the initially partial quotation of the ‘Song of the Volochnoloiki’ at R2 in *Petrouchka*, or the fragmentary statements of the principal theme of ‘Mystic Circles’ in the introduction to Part II of *Le Sacre*. Furthermore, this is not an isolated incident in *Daphnis et Chloé*: the Pirates’ fanfare (PIRATES; see Chapter 1, section 1.6) is first heard as a fragment at R62, as is the main theme of ‘Lever du jour’, the first section of which ascends through the strings from R156, before developing into a fully-fledged theme at R158.

What all these fragment-complete thematic statements have in common is an emphasis on *process*: the examples from Stravinsky foreground the constructivist nature of the formula; the use of the procedure during the abduction sequence in *Daphnis* represents the approaching Pirates; the ‘Lever du jour’ is a reformulation of the *ex nihilo* opening of the work as an organic process, both representing the gradual rise of the sun, and apparently functioning as a symbol of renewal within the ballet’s narrative unfolding. Thus, the use of the fragment-complete pattern with the *geste brusque* and VALSE TRISTE emphasises the causal relationship between Daphnis’s violence and the damage done to his bond with Chloe. In the same way, the median term in the chromatic descent from embrace to VALSE TRISTE is the *geste brusque*, underscoring both the link between the three incidents and the dysphoric nature of the turn of events. It is this causal link between isotopies 1 and 2 that marks the latter as fulfilling a post-modal catalysing function.

Although easily missed, one particularly unusual feature of VALSE TRISTE is the manner in which the strings are instructed to bow against the grain: the ‘natural’ way to bow the passage would be to start the phrase on an up bow. This would have the advantage of providing a strong down bow at the peak of each hairpin, as well as allowing the strings to decrescendo whilst travelling away from the balance-point of the bow, an appreciably easier proposition than what is marked. Ravel’s bowings – essentially an inversion of conventional practice – make the passage significantly more awkward to play. This is especially true of the end of the phrase, demanding that

the performers work against both their instrument and their training: string players will habitually aim for an up bow on crescendos and a down bow for decrescendos, as the weight of the bow lies in the lower half, making it easier to crescendo towards – and decrescendo away from – the heavier part of the bow.<sup>6</sup> The effect of such ‘unreasonable’ bowing on the performer – and thus the sound that they create – underscores the dysphoric nature of VALSE TRISTE, creating a gestural awkwardness that is compounded by the gentle pianissimo dynamic.<sup>7</sup>

### 3.2.3 *Isotopy 3: RR30-31*

The repeat of VALSE TRISTE at R30 presents an intensification of the theme. Introduced by a rapid, four-octave harp glissando, flutes, oboes, bassoons, and horns flesh out the texture, as the strings move to a higher tessitura, accompanied by a shift from  $v^7/Eb$  to  $V^7/C$ .<sup>8</sup> There is also a change in the voice-leading accompanying the repeat of the VALSE TRISTE. The chromatic descent at R29<sup>+3</sup> occurs in a contrapuntal inner voice; the main soprano pitch is an F, which initiates the next

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<sup>6</sup> At a recent performance of *Daphnis* given by the Philharmonia Orchestra, conducted by Esa-Pekka Salonen (Festival Hall, London, Sunday 19 February 2017), the strings were observed to have reversed Ravel’s performance indication, ‘correcting’ the awkward bowing notated in the score.

<sup>7</sup> Such ‘unreasonable’ bowing is also a feature of Elgar’s late chamber music for strings. For example, the marked bowing for the ‘big tune’ of the final movement of his Piano Quintet appears designed to undermine the possibility of performing it in the *noblimente* style associated with his earlier music, as if emphasising the darker, more pessimistic tone of his later work.

<sup>8</sup> There is initially no  $\hat{5}$ , just as  $\hat{3}$  is missing from the previous  $Bb^7$  chord: in both instances the missing pitch is a D. I am inclined to hear the surface harmony at R30 as  $V^7$ , turning to  $V^{\circ 7}$  once the  $Db$  and  $Bb$  appear in the melodic descent. However, as can be seen in figure 3.4, the  $Db$  remains as an implied pitch at a more fundamental level, finally resolving to C just before R32, the whole passage prolonging  $bvii^{\circ 7}$  of A.

presentation of VALSE TRISTE at R30. The next chromatic descent expands the original span of a perfect fourth (D $\flat$ -A $\flat$ ) to a tritone (F-B), and then a perfect fifth (F-B $\flat$ ), as the B $\natural$ / $\natural\hat{3}$  at R30<sup>+3</sup> becomes B $\flat$ / $\flat\hat{3}$  one bar before R31, turning G major into G minor, V<sup>7</sup> of C reinterpreted as an altered vii<sup>o7</sup> of A. Of course, the half-diminished seventh is one of the principal harmonisations of Daphnis and Chloe's love theme, DC (see Chapter 1, section 1.6), and its presence here behind the scenes, as it were, emphasises the manner in which DC has been replaced by VALSE TRISTE at this point, the euphoric love theme substituted by the unhappy waltz (see figure 3.4). Not only does this last-minute turn from  $\natural\hat{3}$  to  $\flat\hat{3}$  suggest a further dysphoric move, but the transposition of the chromatic descent from contrapuntal inner voice to soprano suggests a move from interior to exterior expression, like an outburst of emotion, an effect heightened by the orchestrational and registral intensification discussed above. This continuation of the process set in motion by the *geste brusque* indicates that isotopy 3 fulfils the same post-modal catalysing function as isotopy 2.

Figure 3.4: voice-leading reduction RR28<sup>+8</sup>-32

### 3.2.4 Isotopies 4 & 5: RR31-31<sup>+5</sup> & 31<sup>+6</sup>-32

R31 presents new material: a courtly-sounding dotted figure – reminiscent of the formality of the French overture – an appropriately ceremonial gesture for the terpsichorean duel that is proposed by an onlooker; by the time of the Third Republic duelling was a well-established and strictly regulated procedure, a crucial aspect of the *honneur* that a Frenchman was expected to display; however, as Nye points out, the modern duel had its origins in the honour codes of the *Ancien regime* (1998, 15-46). This figure is answered by the tail end of *VALSE TRISTE* – still with its inverted bowing – which combines with the dotted figure to contribute to a continuation of the chromatic descent of the previous isotopies. However, rather than appearing in only one contrapuntal voice, all four voices are infected with lament-like descents, moving at different rates, as if a chorus is responding to Chloe’s earlier sad waltz. The fact of this connection, as well as the isotopy’s role in a larger-scale prolongation of  $bvii^{\circ 7}$  of



A, mark it as a continuation of the sequence of reactive, post-modal catalysing isotopies set in motion by the *geste brusque*.<sup>9</sup> The proliferating chromatic descents and the gradual clarification of the half-diminished seventh chord appear constantly to seek resolution, with the whole passage following the *geste brusque* in a state of constant transition. Isotopies 2-4 thus demonstrate the modality of *will to be*, a search for consonance or stability (*being*) triggered by the violence of the *geste brusque*.

Isotopy 5, articulated by alterations in timbre, register and harmony, sets up the ensuing ‘Danse grotesque de Dorcon’ with a German-sixth chord on F,  $\flat VIGer^6$  of A. The conventional requirement of an augmented-sixth chord to resolve potentially lends an impression of *must be* to the isotopy: as Eero Tarasti puts it, the modality of *must* refers to ‘the relation of a musical work to stylistic and normative categories’ (1994, 49), such as the expectation that a German sixth will resolve either to V or  $I_4^6$ . However, given the extension of the lack of resolution into subsequent isotopies, the modality of *will* is also appropriate, as the sense created by the extended failure to resolve generates an impression of an increasing desire for closure, rather than just the fulfilment of conventional syntactical requirements. Given the convoluted manner in which closure is implied and finally achieved – after a fashion – in the ‘Danse grotesque’, I interpret the basic modality that is surmodalised by *will* as *do*: a desire for the ability to resolve, rather than necessarily a desire for the state of resolution itself, hence *will to do*.

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<sup>9</sup> Of course, it is unusual in conventional harmonic practice for a half-diminished seventh to appear on the flattened leading note, although it is extremely common for Ravel to lower  $\hat{7}$  (see, for example, Roland-Manuel [1938] 1947, 112, Jankélévitch [1939] 1959, 108). Another interpretation of the chord would be to hear it as functioning as a virtual augmented-sixth chord resolving to F $\sharp$ , implying the relative minor of A: as will be seen, these two keys, A and F $\sharp$  are highly significant for the tonal narrative of the entire ‘Dance Contest’.

### 3.3 ‘Danse grotesque de Dorcon’

Although Jessie Fillerup notes Dorcon’s ‘Danse grotesque’ has attracted little attention, ‘perhaps because it lacks the sensuous melodic curves and lush orchestral palette more typical of *Daphnis et Chloé*’ (2009, 225), the three studies that do give consideration to the dance – Mawer (2006), Puri (2011), and Fillerup’s own – all emphasise the deliberate clumsiness of Dorcon’s portrayal, full of ‘mismatched’ and ‘disjointed’ harmonies, ‘heavy-footed’ and ‘relentless’ rhythms, and ‘vulgar’ effects, such as the ‘loud off-beat belches’ first heard at R32<sup>+7</sup> (Mawer 2006b, 106, Fillerup 2009, 228). However, in her examination of Dorcon’s dance, Fillerup goes beyond the binary opposition that places Dorcon and Daphnis on opposing aesthetic poles – one grotesque, the other sublime – to suggest that the ‘Dance Contest’ ‘reveals affinities that belie their musical and choreographic opposition’ (ibid., 248). I will pick up on this when drawing out the hermeneutic potential of the ‘Dance Contest’, both at the end of this chapter, and in the next.

Isotopy	Rehearsal figure	Functional type	Modality
1	32-33 <sup>+4</sup>	Catalysing (pre-modal)	<i>Will to be (can be?)</i>
2	33 <sup>+4</sup> -34	Catalysing (pre-modal)	<i>Will to be</i>
3	34-36	Cardinal	<i>Will to be</i>
4	36-37	Catalysing (pre-modal)	<i>Will to be</i>
5	37-38	Catalysing (pre-modal)	<i>Will to be</i>
6	38-39	Catalysing (pre-modal)	<i>Will to be</i>
7	39-39 <sup>+1</sup>	Cardinal	<i>Can be</i>
8	39 <sup>+2</sup> -39 <sup>+3</sup>	Catalysing (post-modal)	<i>Cannot be</i>
9	39 <sup>+4</sup> -39 <sup>+6</sup>	Catalysing (pre-modal)	<i>Will to be</i>
10	39 <sup>+7</sup>	Cardinal	<i>Cannot be</i>
11	40-40 <sup>+1</sup>	Cardinal	<i>Being</i>
12	40 <sup>+2</sup> -40 <sup>+3</sup>	Catalysing (post-modal)	<i>Cannot be</i>
13	40 <sup>+4</sup> -40 <sup>+6</sup>	Catalysing (pre-modal)	<i>Will to be</i>
14	40 <sup>+7</sup>	Cardinal	<i>Cannot be</i>
15	41-42	Catalysing (post-modal)	<i>Cannot be</i>

Table 3.2: isotopic segmentation RR32-42

### 3.3.1 *Isotopy 1: RR32-33*

The unresolved German-sixth chord heard one bar before R32 continues to sound in the strings, despite one of the resolution notes, E, being present in the bass at R32. Indeed, the pitches of the German sixth are picked up by the trio of bassoons when they enter at R32<sup>+2</sup>, setting in motion a particularly tortuous passage of voice-leading, in which the bassoons routinely swap contrapuntal voices, obscuring what is essentially a descending three-note line ( $\hat{5}-\hat{\#4}-\hat{3}$  in E major) that prolongs a dominant-seventh chord. In other words, although the surface feels close to collapse under the burden of disorder, the underlying pitch structure is entirely conventional, a normative cadential progression that employs the German-sixth chord as predominant preparation for V (see figure 3.5). The dominant pedal and deferment of the tonic (A) maintains the pre-modal catalysing function of the previous section. This function is sustained until R39, along with the modality of *will to be*, although the resolution of the German sixth and the prolongation of the dominant – though bizarre and not immediately clear – does inflect *will* with an element of *can*. While its effect is attenuated by the profusion of confusing surface features, the music has demonstrated the ability to progress normatively along a syntactical chain, from  $\flat\text{VIGer}^6$  to V, suggesting at least the possibility of achieving tonic closure.

Figure 3.5: voice-leading analysis RR32-33

The dance's  $\frac{2}{4}$  metre and bass ostinato – the first beat of which is given accentual and registral emphasis – have variously been described as 'artless', 'stomping', and 'crassly, conventionally square' (Mawer 2006b, 106, Puri 2011b, 91, Fillerup 2009, 245). Puri hears the dance as 'a piece of Turkish janissary music', pointing to the combination of 'bass, military, and snare drums, tambourines, cymbals, a triangle, and a wind band [...and] various uses of the of the stereotypical short-short-long *usul* rhythm' (2011b, 92-93). Such instrumentation does indeed recall eighteenth-century evocations of janissary bands, although this combination of instruments occurs elsewhere in *Daphnis*, at points where the society as a whole are depicted, such as during the final 'Bacchanal', which does not tally with Puri's suggestion that the 'Danse grotesque' 'fulfills a similar Orientalist purpose of caricaturing the Other' (ibid., 92), thus placing Dorcon outside of the society depicted in *Daphnis*.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> The description of 'the stereotypical short-short-long *usul* rhythm' also needs to be treated with caution. Eric Rice makes the point that in authentic janissary music it is 'weaker beats [that] are often

I do not raise this point to dismiss Puri's arguments out of hand. Rather, following Fillerup's lead, I want to shift Puri's binary opposition in the direction of a spectrum-based model. Rather than viewing Dorcon's dance as an example of 'bad' music, in opposition to the 'sublime' music of Daphnis's 'Danse légère', I believe the two dances are more profitably viewed as points on a continuum, with aspects in common. The more productive approach is to acknowledge that the 'Danse grotesque' sits in a liminal space, in which its musical elements are more polyvalent and open to a wider range of interpretative possibility (this potential will be explored further in Chapter 4, section 4.2).

### 3.3.2 *Isotopy 2: RR33<sup>+4</sup>-34*

In her discussion of the 'Danse grotesque', Deborah Mawer notes 'The old chestnut of comic, gruff bassoons' (2006b, 106), a sonority that characterises the beginning and end of Dorcon's dance. Yet the bookending of the dance with this facetious timbre can deafen us to the fact that there are two occasions in the dance that the bassoons' material is presented by other instruments, both times creating a very different effect. In isotopy 2 the bassoons are replaced by a trio of horns (R34<sup>+4</sup>). In terms of the traditional instrumental class system, this is a move towards a significantly more

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punctuated by faster subdivisions of the basic pulse' (1999, 53; my emphasis), suggesting instead a characteristic long-short-short rhythm. To be fair, Puri is careful to couch his observation in terms of the stereotypical, suggesting that it is not genuine Turkish music that is being referenced, but a Europeanised janissary style derived from 'the repertory of Gluck, Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven' (2011b, 92). However, I have been unable to identify any piece of Turkish-style music by those composers that features a short-short-long rhythmic ostinato, nor are there any to be found in the broader repertoire investigated by Eric Rice (1999) and Mary Hunter (1998) in their essays on janissary music. The most commonly encountered effect is a pulse articulated by four equal short notes, with an accentual or registral emphasis given to the first beat of each bar, as in Mozart's Rondo *alla Turca* from the Piano Sonata K. 331. In fact, despite these examples, Hunter points out that 'the most striking aspect of the European version of Turkish music was its general avoidance of the *usul*' (1998, 48).

elevated, even aristocratic timbre, one that Charles-Marie Widor describes as possessing a ‘rich and poetic quality’ in his *Technique of the Modern Orchestra* ([1904] 1906, 58), a manual ‘frequently consulted’ by Ravel ‘for its useful technical data’ (Orenstein 1975, 136; see also Marnat 1986, 154). On the other hand, the bassoon, although praised for its ability to ‘perform acrobatic feats’ – ironically, not much in evidence in Dorcon’s dance, despite the need for such a display in the contest – is described by Widor as being ‘an instrument of very uneven quality’ ([1904] 1906, 42, 39). Berlioz, in his *Grande traité d’instrumentation* – which was also ‘thoroughly assimilated’ by Ravel (Orenstein 1975, 136) – describes the bassoon in even starker terms: ‘Its sonority is not very great, and its quality of tone, absolutely devoid of brilliancy or nobleness, has a tendency towards the grotesque’ ([1855] 1882, 101), whereas the horn is a ‘noble and melancholy instrument’ (ibid., 140).

The horn timbre might also bring to mind its traditional use for hunting, an expressly noble pursuit.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, as Raymond Monelle writes

hunting was connected to courtly love. There was an erotic side to hunting. The quarry, after capture, might be presented to a lady, the hunting field might become a setting for lovemaking, and the courtly love tradition often portrayed love as a hunt.

(2006, 67)

It is as if – growing in confidence, having navigated the progression from pre-dominant to dominant tonality (even if via a bizarre route) – Dorcon (that is, his

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<sup>11</sup> Raymond Monelle has suggested that timbre may activate topicicity independent of other musical factors. See Monelle (2006, 5).

musical depiction) demonstrates a greater sense of confidence and self-worth by projecting a more aristocratic instrumental bearing, one in keeping with the *point d'honneur* at contest, the 'gallant' duel for the love of Chloe. Yet the adoption of a noble pose proves hubristic, suggesting a more ironic interpretation of the horn sonority: if the plan was to resolve the prolonged dominant by cadencing in the tonic, the move is undermined by the bass dropping to D# at R33<sup>+4</sup>, the ground shifting under the music's feet, which sabotages any chance of imminent closure on I. Any hint of *can be* created by the previous isotopy is undercut by the failure to control musical syntax, exposing a gap between ambition (noble horns, dominant preparation) and achievement.

### 3.3.3 *Isotopy 3: RR34-36*

The third isotopy introduces a new element, a martial theme presented by high woodwind instruments, as if in imitation of a fife band. The theme emphasises  $\hat{1}$  and  $\hat{5}$  in E, supported by an E<sup>7</sup> chord in most of the orchestra. However, the sense of this prolonged dominant is undercut by the enduring D# in the bass, as well as the  $b\hat{6}$  (C $\flat$ ) in the theme itself, which creates a curiously mixed-modal inflection, even if played with an E in the bass. This mismatch between the harmony implied by the melody and supplied bass note continues throughout the isotopy, weakening what would otherwise be a normative V<sup>7</sup>-ii-V<sup>7</sup>-I progression between RR34 and 35. In fact, had the bass provided functional support for the melody, R35 would have been a significant moment of arrival, the long-delayed PAC in A, part of a larger arpeggiation of I (see figure 3.6). The manner in which the second presentation of the 'fife' theme at R35

reduces the dynamic to *mf* further deemphasises the moment, as if the musical subject is losing confidence, having ceded control of the bass line. In reality, this is no moment of arrival at all, as is clear from the reduction of the whole dance provided as figure 3.10 below.

Figure 3.6: RR34-36 with Ravel's bass line (*ossia* stave), proposed functional bass line and voice-leading reduction of functional version

Given the important function of the bass line in supporting the harmony since the development of the tonal system, this is a significant failure of control. It also represents an inversion of Ravel's usual practice, in which strongly functional basses provide the bedrock for melodies and harmonies that frequently employ various types of modal mixture and unresolved dissonances, as Ravel himself suggested in the analyses he provided to René Lenormand for his *Etude sur l'harmonie moderne* ([1913] 1976; see also Chapter 2, section 2.4.3). The gradual loosening of tonal control across the first three isotopies of the dance represents an important arc in the narrative trajectory of the 'Danse grotesque', as Dorcon progressively loses command of one of the most fundamental features of Ravel's compositional technique, the harmonically normative bass.



If the attainment of I via normative harmonic procedures can be understood to represent the object of the notional musical subject here, the likelihood of conjunction between subject and object ( $S \cap O$ ) has become increasingly unlikely. I stress *normative* closure, as the  $\flat V I \text{Ger}^6 - V^7$  progression, prolonged dominant and failed ii- $V^7 - I$  cadence encountered thus far are all examples of conventional, even old-fashioned harmonic syntax. The concept of the normative is also important when considering the dance from a hermeneutic perspective, as normativity implies conformity with a set of generally accepted conventions. A desire for conformity might therefore imply an aspiration towards belonging to a group: as suggested above, possession of Chloe is arguably only a symbolic consideration here; the 'real' import of the contest is the hierarchical position of Daphnis and Dorcon, and therefore their status within the social group. The continued disjunction between subject and object ( $S \cup O$ ) in isotopy 3 thus maintains the modality of *will to do*, although the obscured sense of (failed) arrival does suggest a cardinal function for this isotopy. The mismatch between the expectation of resolution implied by a cardinal function and the undercutting of the possibility of resolution by the dysfunctional bass helps create the mood of peculiar insecurity to this isotopy: the rhetoric of cardinality is at odds with the lack of syntactical resolution.

#### 3.3.4 *Isotopy 4: RR36-38*

After the syntactical failures of isotopy 3, isotopy 4 secures a return to the dominant, as if preparing for another attempt at tonic closure. The opening theme reappears in an altered form that outlines a dominant ninth in conjunction with the bass, with the

leading note placed strategically at the end of the third bar, preparing for a PAC on A in the fourth bar. Twice the strategy is foiled, however, and on each occasion A major is replaced by F# minor (see figure 3.7), a key that is to play a significant role at the end of the dance, and elsewhere in the ‘Dance Contest’. The failure of  $\hat{7}$  to resolve to  $\hat{1}$  is emphasised by what Deborah Mawer describes as ‘unseemly semiquaver scuttling’ (2006b, 106) in the woodwinds, as the music seeks to right itself after the two interrupted cadences.

This passage is also the second of the two alternative instrumental presentations of the opening theme, which is here given by the strings. In his characteristically mauve-tinted prose, Berlioz’s *Traité* describes the violin as ‘a voice at once passionate and chaste, heart-rending, yet soft’ ([1855] 1882, 25), attributes that are emphasised here by the instruction to bow the second bar *sur la touche* (over the fingerboard). Thinking introversively, the texture of quiet, mid-register, close-position strings is likely to conjure up the similar texture employed during the ‘Dances of the Youths’, specifically the section at R21 where Dorcon makes his appearance, during which he is wryly described by the libretto as being *particulièrement entreprenant* (‘particularly enterprising’) in his pursuit of Chloe.<sup>12</sup> The combination of the string texture with the abrupt curtailment of the theme just as the leading note is to resolve to the tonic recasts the caddish suavity of Dorcon’s first appearance as a sort of erotic failure, as the desiring resolution twice fails to find its mark.<sup>13</sup> Similar to all the previous isotopies, the inability to attain the tonic maintains the modality of *will to be*,

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<sup>12</sup> It is also similar to the timbre of the short passage that bridges into the dance, which closes on the unresolved German-sixth chord, emphasising the renewed attempt at attaining closure by linking it with the original pre-dominant preparation.

<sup>13</sup> Vladimir Jankélévitch suggests that ‘Ravel only sharpens the leading note through irony’ ([1939] 1959, 108).

and the return of the opening theme and the dominant pedal again suggests a pre-modal catalysing function.

The musical score for Figure 3.7 consists of two staves: a treble clef staff for the 2nd violin (2nd vlms) and a bass clef staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. Measure 36 is marked with a box containing the number 36. The 2nd violin part begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and the instruction "sur la touche". The flute/oboe part (fl./ob.) enters in measure 36 with a portamento (*port.*) marking. The bass line is marked with  $V^9$  and  $vi^4$ .

Figure 3.7: interruption of the leading note's resolution by F sharp at R36

### 3.3.5 Isotopies 5 & 6: RR37-38, 38-39

Two short isotopies prepare for a more concerted effort to attain tonic closure. R37 returns to the second phrase from isotopy 3, but this time the music short-cuts the 'fife' theme. This turns what was an answering phrase into a sort of pre-preparation for a climax: the clear V-I in G acts as a subdominant-function inflection before final confirmation of the tonic, similar to the procedure found in many eighteenth-century sonatas, where the recapitulation of the secondary thematic material is often preceded by a 'flat-side tilt' (Hepokoski and Darcy 2006, 235). The curtailment of the third repetition of the gesture one bar before R38 leaves the tonic note, A, suspended over  $V^6_4$ , in the register in which it will finally achieve harmonic support at R39. Before this can happen, however, isotopy 6 slowly unfolds an augmented-sixth chord on  $bII$ , which effects a Phrygian cadence to I (see figure 3.8). Another way one could interpret the  $bII$  harmony here is as a tritone prolongation of V, with the soprano A one bar before R38 an incomplete upper neighbour-note to  $\hat{7}$ : in this reading the cadential manoeuvre returns to the failed leading-note motion of isotopy 4 in order to 'correct'

the error. Not only that, the surface resolution via an augmented sixth returns to and completes the cadential motion set up at the beginning of the dance, although the chord is on the ‘wrong’ scale degree,  $bII$ , rather than  $bVI$ . Thus, the modality of the resolution to I at R39 (isotopy 7) is *being* (stability) surmodalized by *can*, as the notional musical subject demonstrates the ability to correct the errors of the previous failed cadential manoeuvres and finally attain tonic closure.

The musical score for Figure 3.8 is presented in three staves. The top staff is a grand staff (piano and bass clefs) containing a complex melodic line with triplets and dynamic markings: *f*, *ppp subito.*, and *f*. The middle staff is a single treble clef staff with a long melodic line. The bottom staff is a single bass clef staff with a long melodic line. Roman numerals are placed below the bottom staff:  $V_4^6$ ,  $V_7$ ,  $bII^+$ , and  $I$ .

Figure 3.8: phrygian cadence RR38-39

### 3.3.6 Isotopies 7-15: RR39-42

However, the moment of triumph is weakened both by the dynamic level – which is merely *forte*, rather than a louder, more decisively exultant dynamic – and the accompaniment of pizzicato strings, which lend a rather anti-climactic air to the long-deferred cadence. The ‘fife’ theme closes on chord II, apparently setting up an answering phrase that will progress back to I via ii and V (see figure 3.9). However, the music cuts to ‘a glissando in the trombones that reels drunkenly between B-minor and B $\flat$ -major triads’ (Puri 2011b, 91). In fact, the B minor triad is in second inversion, or  $V_4^6/ii$ ; this, coupled with the F $\sharp$ -A $\sharp$  major third in the bass trombone gives the

lurching glissando more than a hint of F# major, so it is again F# that has foiled the music's attempt to securely attain the tonic: the *can* of isotopy 7 becomes *cannot* in isotopy 8.



Figure 3.9: recomposition of R39, showing hypothetical answering phrase

Following a return of what Mawer describes as ‘loud off-beat belches’ (2006b, 106) – not heard since isotopy 2 – the music resets itself, returning to the opening theme and bassoon-trio sonority (isotopy 9). However, this is the recomposed version of the theme presented by the strings in isotopy 4, which is more harmonically secure than the original version, with the soprano and bass voices outlining a clear dominant-ninth chord, with the leading note in its strategic position at the end of the phrase (*will to be*). Yet again, the strategy fails; although the bass drops onto A, the soprano stumbles over the resolution, fumbling the moment (isotopy 10: *cannot be*). The ensuing repeat of R39 at R40 is ironic, and not just because the libretto tells us so: unlike R39 – when what should have been a climactic moment of triumph was undercut by the dynamic level and pizzicato strings – R40 is presented loudly by the full orchestra: this would have been a much more effective move after the crescendo between RR38 and 39; there is no preparatory sense of accumulation before R40, and so the moment lacks logic or motivation. Thus, although isotopy 11 expresses the

modality of *being*, its lack of preparation means that it is no longer surmodalized by *can*.

Isotopies 12-14 repeat isotopies 8-10 almost exactly, but for one small alteration to the end of isotopy 14: here the cadence is interrupted by *vi*, a return of the troublesome  $F\sharp$ , the pitch and key that has served such a disruptive function throughout the dance. As the voice-leading reduction of the dance given in figure 3.10 shows, the dance spends much of its duration working towards the attainment of a *kopfton*, which appears to be finally achieved at R39. Hubristically, the putative *kopfton* is  $\hat{8}$ , meaning the only way down is via an 8-line, the rarest form of structural descent. Moreover, the descent itself appears only at the surface, suggesting a superficiality or lack of depth in the attempt at structural closure: rather than being the surface manifestation of a more fundamental contrapuntal procedure, the dance is essentially all surface, in terms of voice-leading structure. Furthermore, closure is never actually achieved: although  $\hat{1}$  is reached, it is supported by *vi*, rather than *I*, meaning that the whole dance functions as a giant interrupted cadence (figure 3.10).

Figure 3.10: voice-leading reduction of 'Danse grotesque'

Stepping back from the inconclusive ending of Dorcon's dance, it is worth considering the aesthetic effect of the continued deferral of tonic closure throughout the dance. Such a strategy is in fact a common feature of Romantic-period music, where it is frequently aligned with a rhetoric of 'striving', or, more erotically, 'longing'. However, one would be hard pushed to hear the 'Danse grotesque' as embodying the sort of classic *per aspera ad astra* paradigm associated with such repertoire. Rather than pursue an aesthetic of heroic struggle, the dance obsessively focuses on the attainment of the tonic, spending most of its time hovering around the dominant, desperately seeking the opportunity to cadence. By focusing its energy entirely on the one battle, the war is lost;<sup>14</sup> rather than demonstrating tonal mastery, the dance fails to achieve structural closure, undermining the very thing it most desires.

To return to the point made above, the yearning for normative tonal closure suggests an aspiration towards sanctioned, conventional behaviour, rather than the more individualistic aesthetic strategies employed by the Romantics, or, indeed, modernist composers. In this, Dorcon's dance comes across as the diametric opposite of the nineteenth century's 'heroic' narrative trajectory, demonstrating a desire to belong, rather than a celebration of the individual's uniqueness. Because of this, the mocking laughter of the group at R41 is especially cutting, a clear rejection of the aesthetic strategies employed in the dance, and a judgement on Dorcon's lack of 'honour': as *Le Radical* commented on the politician Jules Ferry's failed duel with Georges Boulanger, 'France will forget everything except ridicule' (cited in Nye 1998, 195).<sup>15</sup> As Nye explains, in the Third Republic a man had much to fear 'from the

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<sup>14</sup> The martial language is employed deliberately, reinforcing the reading of the 'Dance Contest' as a duelling narrative.

<sup>15</sup> As Nye makes clear, although both men were at fault over the failure of the duel, 'Ferry was the big loser in the court of public opinion' (1998, 195). As we will see, such an observation has resonances with the situation in the 'Dance Contest'.

judgements of his fellow citizens about the *quality* of his masculinity’, and, ‘in this era assessments about a man’s masculinity took on an unusual importance in social life’ (1998, 107; original emphasis). Thus, according to the social codes of fin-de-siècle France, the aesthetic failure of Dorcon’s dance – his inability to demonstrate sufficient control of musical syntax – is as much a failure of his masculinity: in flunking his chance in the ‘Dance Contest’, Dorcon reveals a lack of that crucial ingredient of normative fin-de-siècle French masculinity: *honneur*.

### 3.4 Daphnis’s ‘Danse légère et gracieuse’

Following the dysfunctional syntax of Dorcon’s dance, the passage that sets up Daphnis’s response is the picture of functionality: a straightforward  $\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$  linear progression over a I-V-I arpeggiation in the bass that takes Dorcon’s sought-after pitch, A, and makes it part of a functional descent to the key of his ensuing dance, F (see figure 3.11). It is almost as if its functional simplicity mocks the failed sophistication of Dorcon’s attempts at closure, showing up Dorcon’s attempted deployment of augmented-sixth chords and a descent from  $\hat{8}$  as unnecessary and over-elaborate. The dominant ninth, just before the dance begins in R43, introduces a new timbral world, quite different from that of Dorcon’s dance, with the introduction of celesta, harp harmonics, and antique cymbals. The delicacy of the orchestration at this point is classically ‘impressionist’, recalling the timbres encountered at the end of Debussy’s *Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune*.<sup>16</sup> Despite the generally practical tenor of his *Technique of the Modern Orchestra*, Widor’s description of such

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<sup>16</sup> See Chapter 5, section 5.6 for more on *Faune* in relation to *Daphnis*. For an alternative viewpoint on the significance of Debussy’s work to Ravel’s ballet, see Puri (2011b, 185-201).



instrumentation inclines towards the impressionistic, describing the celesta as having a ‘delightful veil of mystery’, and harp harmonics as ‘mysterious and poetic like dew-drops glistening in the moonlight’ ([1904] 1906, 123; 138). The effect of this is to remove us from the earth-bound world of Dorcon to the sort of ‘heavenly’ and ‘sublime’ timbres that characterise Daphnis’s ‘light and graceful’ dance: as Jean-Louis Vaudoier described the dancing of Daphnis’s creator in *Le Spectre de la rose*, ‘Nijinsky does not have to leave the earth; when he dances, he seems always to have come straight from the heavens’ (cited in Reiss [1957] 1960, 74).

The image shows a musical score for a voice-leading reduction, labeled RR42-43. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The treble staff contains a melodic line with notes, slurs, and a fermata over measures 42 and 43. Above the treble staff, there are three boxed measure numbers: 42, 43, and 43. Above the treble staff, there are three articulation marks: a ^ 3 above the first measure, a ^ 2 above the second measure, and a ^ 1 above the third measure. The bass staff contains a harmonic line with notes, slurs, and a fermata over measures 42 and 43. Below the bass staff, there are three Roman numerals: I, V<sup>7</sup>, and I, corresponding to the measures.

Figure 3.11: voice-leading reduction RR42-43

Isotopy	Rehearsal figure	Functional type	Modality
1	43-43 <sup>+1</sup>	Cardinal	<i>Being (not-being?)</i>
2	43 <sup>+2</sup> -43 <sup>+3</sup>	Cardinal	<i>Doing</i>
3	43 <sup>+4</sup> -43 <sup>+5</sup>	Catalysing (post-modal)	<i>Not-doing</i>
4	44-44 <sup>+1</sup>	Cardinal	<i>Being</i>
5	44 <sup>+2</sup> -44 <sup>+3</sup>	Cardinal	<i>Doing</i>
6	44 <sup>+4</sup> -44 <sup>+5</sup>	Catalysing (post-modal)	<i>Not-doing</i>
7	45	Cardinal	<i>Can do</i>
8	45 <sup>+1</sup> -45 <sup>+2</sup>	Catalysing (post-modal)	<i>Will to be</i>
9	45 <sup>+3</sup>	Cardinal	<i>Will to do</i>
10	45 <sup>+4</sup> -45 <sup>+5</sup>	Catalysing (pre-modal)	<i>Cannot be</i>
11	46-47	Cardinal	
12	47-48	Catalysing (post-modal)	
13	48-48 <sup>+1</sup>	Cardinal	<i>Being</i>
14	48 <sup>+2</sup>	Cardinal	<i>Doing</i>
15	48 <sup>+2</sup> -49	Catalysing (post-modal)	<i>Not-doing</i>
16	49-49 <sup>+1</sup>	Catalysing (pre-modal)	<i>Will to be</i>
17	49 <sup>+2</sup>	Catalysing (pre-modal)	<i>Doing</i>
18	49 <sup>+2</sup> -50	Catalysing (post-modal)	<i>Not-being</i>
19	50-50 <sup>+6</sup>	Catalysing (pre-modal)	<i>Will to be</i>
20	50 <sup>+7</sup> -51	Cardinal	<i>Being</i>

Table 3.3: isotopic segmentation RR43-51

### 3.4.1 Isotopies 1-3: RR43-44

As is clear from a cursory inspection of table 3.3, Daphnis's 'Danse légère' fits a good degree of activity into a fairly short space of time, with a large number of short units, which are principally articulated in terms of thematic actors. Isotopy 1 establishes the initial theme, a wistfully circling gesture that emphasises  $\hat{5}$  and  $\hat{1}$  of F major, pitches that are also picked out by the rising horn. Both Jankélévitch and Puri identify this theme as a barcarolle (Jankélévitch [1939] 1959, 49, Puri 2011b, 94), although, given the subject matter, a more obvious aesthetic background is that of the pastoral. Raymond Monelle identifies a number of components of the pastoral signifier in music that are relevant here, including the use of a 'gentle 12/8 or 6/8 metre', and the deployment of flute trios (2006, 215; 216). Moreover, it is not just the instrumentation

and compound metre that evoke the pastoral; Monelle highlights pastoral melodic and harmonic features that apply equally to the opening of the ‘Danse légère’: the melody does not exceed a fifth and proceeds in principally stepwise motion, and the harmony avoids ‘distant scale degrees’ (ibid., 220). To this we could also add the ‘unfolded drone’ in the horn,<sup>17</sup> and the key of the dance, F major, an emphatically pastoral tonality thanks to works such as Beethoven’s *Pastoral Symphony*, a work Monelle describes as ‘the central pastoral work of our whole tradition’ (ibid., 243).

The pastoral nature of the opening of the dance serves to highlight the comfort and ease with which Daphnis inhabits the bucolic landscape, an effortlessness unavailable to Dorcon, suggesting that the ground chosen for this duel is in Daphnis’s favour: we might recall Tarasti’s comment that ‘a theme-actant must appear in the environment to which it belongs, in its proper isotopy’ (1994, 32), and compare the situation here to that of the ‘Danse grotesque’. Moreover, the instruction *décomposez*, further emphasises Daphnis’s control of the situation, even in a literal sense: the rhythmic freedom suggested by the instruction insinuates that the dancer performing the part of Daphnis is in control of the music, bending it to the will of his physical gestures, the conductor following his movements as a rhythmic guide.<sup>18</sup> All these features contribute to a well-established modality of *being*, creating a sense of absolute stability.

However, just at the end of the isotopy, there is a slight souring of this feeling of ease, created by the flattening of  $\hat{3}$ . At this point, the horn’s rising figure reaches

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<sup>17</sup> See Ratner (1980, 21) on drone effects in pastoral topics.

<sup>18</sup> *Décomposez* literally means ‘to break up’, which I take to imply a sort of extreme rubato: the visual effect of this is to make it look like the dancer is in control of the orchestra, which may have also been a practical consideration, given the ‘wonderful leaps’ required of the dancer. This is quite different to the two dances Chloe performs, the ‘Pantomime’ and ‘Danse suppliante’. For a discussion of these two dances, see Chapters 5 and 6, respectively.

above the third flute, whose D now becomes the bass of the texture, turning the tonic triad into a half-diminished seventh chord on the submediant; it is almost as if the horn overreaches itself, leading to a destabilisation of the pastoral simplicity. Puri makes the connection between this chord and the usual harmonisation of the Daphnis and Chloe theme (DC), linking it back to Wagner's *Tristan*, suggesting that 'the whole romance is born from an arch-Romantic *Sehnsucht*' (2011b, 105), although I find the link hard to hear at this specific point in the score. Regardless of what one might feel about the convention of hearing half-diminished sevenths as *Tristan* chords post-Wagner, I would suggest that, rather than generating a sense of longing, the effect here introduces a dissonant, dysphoric tenor into what has otherwise been an entirely stable environment, which preempts the disruptions of isotopies 7 to 12.<sup>19</sup> This last-minute inflection imbues the very end of isotopy 1 with a sense of *not-being*, an uncertainty that retrospectively taints the initial stability.

If the first theme actor demonstrates an intimate stability, or *being*, the second is all about action, *doing*. This is the gesture supposedly 'inspired by the memory of a wonderful leap sideways' Nijinsky had performed in *Le Pavillon d'Armide* (Calvocoressi, cited in Nichols 1987, 187). This ballet was the first presented by the Ballets Russes in their inaugural season of 1909, and, as Nijinsky's wife recalled, 'The audience burst into an unceasing storm of applause after his first *tour en l'air*' (Nijinsky 1933, 87); the moment has subsequently come to be known as Nijinsky's 'leap to fame'. As Hanna Järvinen explains, 'The "leap to fame" imagery became

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<sup>19</sup> Puri goes further, hearing the whole of the opening theme of the 'Danse légère' as 'a specific clustering of metrical and submetrical dissonances', suggesting that the two bars represent a 'premonition of erotic interruption' (2004, 103-104). The point is well made, although I am more inclined to hear the 'premonition' only at the end of the phrase, at the introduction of the half-diminished seventh, which is highly marked in context.

dominant in all subsequent descriptions of Nijinsky's first appearance, even his entire career' (2014, 110), and the gesture was repeated in later ballets, most notably *Le Spectre de la rose* (1911), cementing Nijinsky's reputation for gravity-defying leaps.<sup>20</sup> The sheer strength required of the gesture has been much commented on: 'Nijinsky's power and athletic technique were legendary; his wife Romola exclaimed that "His legs were so muscular that the hard cords stood out on his thighs like bows"' (Mawer 2006b, 108). Cocteau gives a somewhat more grotesque description of Nijinsky's body, describing how 'The muscles of his thighs and calves stretched the cloth of his trousers and gave him the appearance of having legs curved backwards [...] you could never believe that this little monkey [...] was the public idol' (1957, 53).<sup>21</sup> Yet, for some, there was a disconnection between the lower and upper halves of Nijinsky's body; as Lynn Garafola puts it, Nijinsky was 'Masculine in the power of his leaps, feminine in the curving delicacy of his arms, he emitted a perfume of sexual strangeness; he seemed a living incarnation of the third sex' (1989, 107). These delicate arm movements

flouted the norm that imposed, onto bourgeois men, a strict vocabulary of movement. In contrast with the straightforwardness of flat hands and straight arms, corporeal signs which signify conventional masculinity, Nijinsky clearly enacted a reinscription of the male dancing body through unusually curved arms and fluttering extended fingers, exceeding the ordinary rounded fifth position of ballet.

(Kolb 2009, 159)

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<sup>20</sup> Hanna Järvinen notes the lack of surviving visual evidence of Nijinsky's famous leaps, describing the manner in which their continued fame 'relies on the *imagined* readings of "Nijinsky" by generations who have not seen Nijinsky dance' (2014, 3; original emphasis).

<sup>21</sup> Reiss notes that 'The word monkey without derogatory meaning and also "*grande fauve*" are often used in physical descriptions of Nijinsky by those who met him' ([1957] 1960, 79).

Nijinsky's dancing, therefore, combined a lower body that demonstrated 'masculine' strength and control, and an upper body that emphasised 'feminine' ornament and delicacy, or, as Kevin Kopelson bluntly puts it, 'Feminine arms, masculine legs' (1997, 107). Moreover, there was arguably something decidedly feminine in the manner in which Nijinsky's dancing placed his body on display, and Järvinen argues that *Le Spectre de la rose* was the ballet in which 'Nijinsky finally came to occupy the position that the ballerina had held in nineteenth-century ballet' (2014, 98).<sup>22</sup> Before Nijinsky and the Ballets Russes, it was the ballerina who was the object of the audience's gaze; Nijinsky's 'leap to fame' placed the male *danseur* as the centre of focus (see Chapter 5, section 5.6 for a fuller discussion of this point).<sup>23</sup>

Arguably, this combination of feminine-coded grace and masculine-coded action is expressed by the two principal theme-actors of the 'Danse légère': the graceful, pastoral first theme suggests the 'curving delicacy' of the arms, the second the 'masculine power' of his leaps. In fact, the second isotopy itself consists of two halves, the leaping glissando followed by a drooping, sagging figure, as if in response to the exertions of the leap. This again is suggestive of the discourse surrounding Nijinsky's body: as Kopelson suggests, 'The rarely seen aftermath of the leap [...] is almost as mythic as the leap itself' (1997, 111). Cocteau famously described the scene backstage like that of a boxer between rounds, 'with warm towels, slaps, and water

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<sup>22</sup> Alongside the observation of a certain effeminacy in Daphnis's depiction here (which is explored in the context of dandyism by Michael Puri in a celebrated essay (2007, 2011b, 84-120)), it is worth noting that the instrumental presentation of Daphnis and Chloe's entries suggests a certain ambivalence as concerns gender coding. Whereas traditional instrumental symbolism associates the flute with masculinity and reed instruments with femininity, the order is reversed at Daphnis and Chloe's entrances (RR10 and 10<sup>+5</sup>) (see Caddy 2012, 76, and Chapter 5, section 5.6). This precarious gender divide arguably contributes towards the 'crisis' in masculinity explored elsewhere in this thesis.

<sup>23</sup> As Järvinen notes, '*Le Spectre de la Rose* (1911) was the first ballet in which the male dancer was constantly in focus while the female role was the supportive one' (2014, 98).

which his servant Dimitri threw in his face' (1957, 54). However, another description of the after-effects of the leap sounds a different note:

About a dozen people thronged round him, uselessly waving towels. Diaghilev stood there helpless. Bourman immediately sent for some water and poured some in small quantities between Nijinsky's lips, turning his head sideways to prevent the water escaping and to stop him choking. A quarter of an hour passed before Nijinsky was able to make a sign, and then half carried by Bourman and the faithful Vassily he returned to his dressing-room to try to regain his strength.

(Reiss [1957] 1960, 92)

Kopelson reads such descriptions as 'like a woman in a swoon, surrounded by more or less imaginary lovers. Think Emma Bovary or Blanche DuBois' (1997, 114).

This is perhaps more like the effect of the after-shock to the 'leap' gesture in the *Danse gracieuse*, where the 'limp' three-note descent responds to the 'virile' upwards thrust of the leap. Indeed, the voice-leading of the two gestures supports this reading, as the leaping G-C – emphasised by encompassing two octaves and a fourth – turns back on itself in a descending step-wise motion, as if droopily recoiling from the action of the leap. Indeed, given that the peak of the leap – C – acts as an incomplete upper neighbour to the first note of the 'swoon', one might go so far to read the composite gesture as a failure: the underlying harmony is an Eb<sup>7</sup>, the dominant of the pitch that was responsible for inflecting the *being* of isotopy 1 with its contradictory modality, *not being*. Although the C at the apex of the leaping gesture is straining upwards, as if defying tonal gravity, it is an aspiration in which it fails, for

the C remains an upper neighbour, returning to the initial G via a passing motion from B $\flat$  (see figure 3.12). However, in one sense the gesture is a success, as it at least returns to earth over V/V, ‘correcting’ the V/bIII. Rather than ‘failure’, then, I would instead argue that the ‘leap’ and ‘swoon’ point towards ‘reality’: the truth of a man leaping through the air is that they must always come back down to earth. Indeed, Nijinsky’s famous leaps, though clearly the result of extreme physical endeavour, were also something of an illusion, for

most of the European stages on which the Ballets Russes performed had a rake, and on a raked stage, any leaps towards the audience would have taken on an accelerated quality, whilst in any rapid movements away from the audience, the rake augmented the sense of distance.

(Järvinen 2014, 111)

Thus, not only was the after-shock of Nijinsky’s leap hidden from the audience backstage, but the leaps themselves appeared even more extreme than they in fact were. The composite nature of the isotopy perfectly captures the audaciousness of the leap whilst allowing a peak behind the curtain, so to speak, to view the reality of the gesture.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Järvinen notes that, ‘in the discourse of Nijinsky as genius [...] his physical labour in the rehearsal room as well as on the stage had to remain invisible’ (2014, 107). This was crucial, as ‘the leap was proof that the genius could embody transcendence and defy the laws of nature that limited other dancers’ (ibid., 111).



Figure 3.12: voice-leading of ‘wonderful leap sideways’, R43<sup>+2</sup>

The third isotopy returns to the thematic material of the first, picking up on the exposed F in the second bar of the dance, establishing a registral link between the two isotopies. Indeed, the C-F span of isotopy 1 is answered by its inversion in isotopy 3, as if two halves of one phrase, arching to F from C and ending on a perfect cadence in the dominant, the tonal arc reflecting that of the melody: it is as if the pastoral theme has been continuing while our attention has been diverted by the leap (see figure 3.13). This is crucial to the effect established by the opening isotopic complex of the ‘Danse légère’: the effect is perhaps similar to that encountered in ‘continuity editing’ in cinema, in which transitions between shots are deemphasised in order create an illusion of continuous action. In other words, rather than assuming that isotopies 1-3 constitute a sequential process, the effect is that of a diachronic presentation of a synchronic event: conceptually, isotopies 1-3 occur simultaneously, even though their presentation is sequential.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, it is not that the two separate theme-actors present in these three isotopies represent separate *actants* (see Chapter 2, sections 2.1

<sup>25</sup> My idea here is not dissimilar to Edward T. Cone’s celebrated analysis of Stravinsky’s *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* ([1962] 1989).

and 2.4.1); this is not the case of a ‘shot reverse shot’, where there are two characters discoursing with each other, nor is it an example of a ‘cross cut’, where two separate events are taken to be happening simultaneously. Rather, the two theme actors represent two aspects of the *same* actant: in other words, this is an example of interior dramatization.<sup>26</sup>

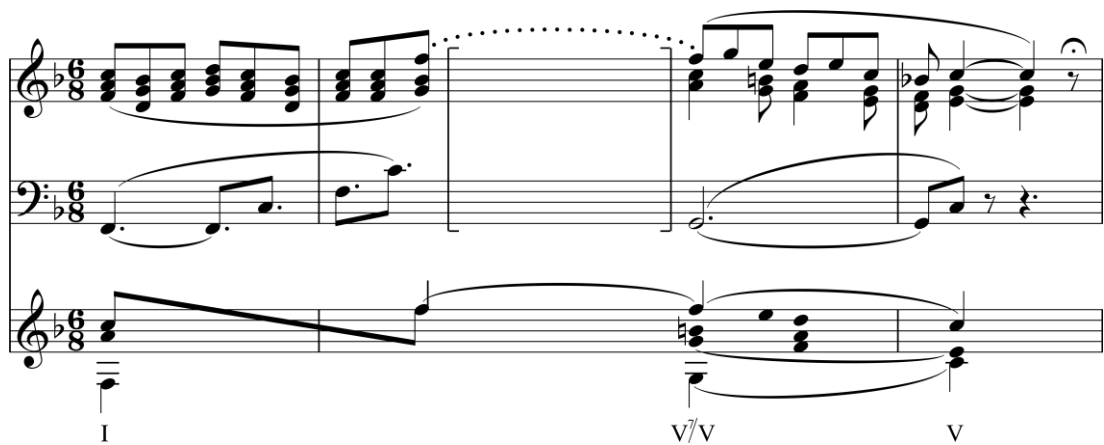


Figure 3.13: voice-leading connections between isotopies 1 & 3

What is expressed here are two aspects of the same personality, which are presented simultaneously, emphasising the fact that the subject of this particular narrative demonstrates complementary actorial features: one aspect is stable (*being*), whereas the other is active (*doing*). Note, however, that both aspects are also inflected by contradictory modalities, *not-being* and *not-doing*. What has developed over the course of the opening six bars of the dance is a picture of a complex character, one who contains complementary and contradictory elements, which can be plotted onto the classic semiotic square (see Chapter 2, section 2.4.2), as shown in figure 3.14. What

<sup>26</sup> For other approaches to analogies between film editing and French music of this period, see Langham Smith (1973) and Leydon (2001). For a rebuttal of such correlations between media, see Paulin (2010).

this shows is that Daphnis in some way inhabits the entire semantic universe of the opposition *being-doing*.<sup>27</sup> this is a point that we will return to in Chapter 4 (section 4.2.4), in consideration of the role played by the aesthetics of the grotesque in the ‘Dance Contest’.

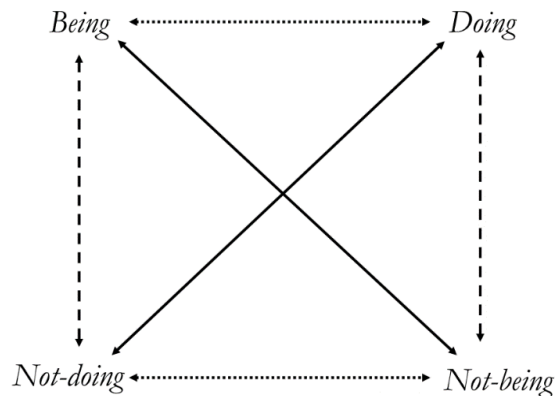


Figure 3.14: semiotic square of being-doing

Puri is therefore right to stress the psychological density that accrues to the character of Daphnis during the ‘Dance Contest’ (2011b, 118): in three short two-bar phrases, the character of Daphnis is imbued with a level of complexity not previously encountered in the ballet, depicting a character who embodies both complementary and contradictory aspects. Such a hybrid portrayal reflects the complex reception of Nijinsky, the first to dance Daphnis, who is routinely discussed in terms that traverse the gender spectrum. Moreover, as Puri points out, ‘it is likely that Ravel’s musical portrayal of Daphnis was influenced by an overall sense of Nijinsky’ similar to that of his contemporaries (ibid., 99).<sup>28</sup> Beyond this, however, it is also crucial to the more general significance of the ‘Dance Contest’, or its broader cultural meaning. The

<sup>27</sup> This point is another that resonates with contemporary discourses regarding Nijinsky, representations of whom ‘conflated suggestions of action with submission and passivity’ (Järvinen 2014, 132).

<sup>28</sup> For a brief commentary by Ravel on Nijinsky as a choreographer, see ‘Nijinsky as Ballet Master’, (in Orenstein 2003, 404-405).

significance of this sequence to the narrative of *Daphnis* is not in its putative portrayal of a specific dancer, but rather in the dialogue it establishes with contemporary cultural concerns: this point will be returned to below (see section 3.7).

### 3.4.2 *Isotopies 4-6: RR44-45*

The next set of isotopies repeat the three-fold complex of the opening of the dance, but with the details altered. Isotopy 4 – which recalls the first two bars of the dance – picks up on the rogue  $A\flat$  from the end of isotopy 1, turning to F minor. Deborah Mawer hears this as balancing the ‘initial F major with its poignant *alter ego*’ suggesting that ‘Daphnis may find happiness with Chloé, yet his intrinsic sadness remains’ (2006b, 108-109), and the change of mode certainly has the effect of suggesting that the narrative has taken a melancholic turn. The theme is also presented an octave higher with flute harmonics, which has the effect of further emphasising the ‘delicate’, ‘graceful’ – and therefore feminine-coded – character of the dance.<sup>29</sup> As if to counteract the influence of the  $A\flat$  – the pitch responsible for the dysphoric turn taken by the music – the returning leap gesture, isotopy 5, is transposed by a tritone onto an A minor-seventh chord. Perhaps ironically, A is also the pitch to which Dorcon’s dance aspired, although it is treated here as an incomplete upper neighbour to an augmented-triad of G, the V/V of isotopy 2 tainted by the raising of its fifth. The sense of increased unease engendered by the turn to the minor mode and the

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<sup>29</sup> In his celebrated reading, Puri interprets the dance as the decadent portrait of a dandy (2007, 2011b, 84-120); connections between this construal and mine will be explored at the end of this chapter.

destabilisation of the secondary dominant is momentarily attenuated by isotopy six, which settles on G via a modally inflected perfect cadence.

A reduction of the first six isotopies – the A section of the dance’s ternary form – reveals more of the dual nature of the musical subject (see figure 3.15). Similar to Dorcon’s ‘Dance grotesque’, despite any local tonal colouration, the underlying tonal structure of the A section remains centred on the tonic and dominant: even the E $\flat$  bass note of the first leap (isotopy 2) is best understood as the beginning of a modally mixed arpeggiation of C. Later in the work, C is a key strongly associated with the god Pan: Pan’s significance in the narrative is complex, and will be explored in Chapter 4 (section 4.3). For the time being, it is sufficient to note the connection, and that the pitch is invoked both times by the leap; first as the beginning of an arpeggiation of that key, then as an upper neighbour to  $\hat{3}$  of its dominant, G. Moreover, the ‘swoon’ twice leads to the ambit of C, turning the end of each three-phrase superisotopy towards the dominant. The association between *doing* and the C-centred tonality – and therefore between *being* and the key of F – further reinforces the sense of the dance as the internal drama of one musical subject. The dichotomy between *being*/F and *doing*/C will be returned to below (section 3.7.2).

The figure shows a musical score reduction of measures 43 and 44. The score is written on a single staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, with some notes beamed together. Above the staff, six boxes labeled 'isotopy 1' through 'isotopy 6' are positioned over specific measures. Below the staff, a harmonic analysis is provided, consisting of Roman numerals and letter-based symbols. The analysis is as follows:

isotopy 1	isotopy 2	isotopy 3	isotopy 4	isotopy 5	isotopy 6
43			44		
F I	Ciii	v	V I	iv	V
	ii		V i	V/V	ii

Figure 3.15: reduction of RR43-45

### 3.4.3 *Isotopies 7-12: RR45-48*

The play of key centres continues in the next set of isotopies, those that occupy the B section of the dance's ternary form. Setting off at a faster speed (*plus animé*), a new 9/8 metre, and *forte* dynamic, the opening of this section is confidently back in F minor, with triple-tongued articulation in the flutes' increasingly mobile melodic line (*can do*). However, the melody's dynamic softens as it descends, inflecting the music with a slight sense of tentativeness, one enhanced by the fact that it immediately veers towards A major; the following E $\flat$  appears to force the music back towards the flat side of the circle of fifths (isotopy 8). A restart is attempted at R45<sup>+3</sup> (isotopy 9), the returning melodic gesture now harmonised by a dominant-ninth chord on F, combining with the E $\flat$  at the end of isotopy 8 to suggest a move towards B $\flat$ . This time the shift towards the sharp side is more emphatic (isotopy 10); A is now followed by C $\sharp$ , which acts as V of F $\sharp$ , establishing the new key that will control the rest of the B section of the dance.

The thematic actor of the opening isotopy returns at R46 (isotopy 11), shorn of its first note and apparently trapped between the bar lines of the constantly changing metre, as if incapable of developing into a longer melodic sentence, a feeling enhanced by the crescendo over the course of the gesture and the shortening of its final note. F $\sharp$  is initially supported by a strong V-I motion in the bass, but the E $\flat$  of isotopy 8 returns, respelled as D $\sharp$ , and once again juxtaposed with A, as if struggling to complete the move towards the flat side attempted earlier. At this point the music fractures (isotopy 12), the melody finally able to break out its confinement to begin a descending

octatonic sequence (OC<sub>0,1,3</sub>), underpinned by an arpeggiation of a diminished seventh in the bass. Although the sense of a local key – already weakened by the tussles between flat- and sharp-side keys earlier – is attenuated by the octatonic environment, the section closes in a clear F $\sharp$  minor, the concluding melodic gesture outlining  $\hat{3}$  and  $\hat{5}$  above the tonic in the bass. This gesture is reminiscent of the tail end of VALSE TRISTE, in the manner in which it reverses the direction of a descending melodic figure whilst tailing off dynamically, as if turning away in resignation.<sup>30</sup>

The whole central section, then, is a battle between competing sides of the circle of fifths. Despite attempts to move flatwards – suggesting an approach to B $\flat$  via E $\flat$  and F $^{\flat 9}$ , which forms part of a four-bar prolongation of V/B $\flat$  from R45 – the music instead finds itself heading towards the sharp side, towards F $\sharp$ , a key that the music struggles to avoid before finally giving in. F $\sharp$  is the same key/pitch that served to disrupt Dorcon’s projected arrival in A during the ‘Danse grotesque’. The manner in which F $\sharp$  is reached via A, as well as the prominent role it plays in clarifying the harmony from R46, emphasises the link between the two dances; although Daphnis manages to bring Dorcon’s A within his tonal ambit in the introduction to his dance, the B section of the ‘Danse légère’ suggests that he is no more capable of utilising it than Dorcon (see figure 3.16). The failure of agency suggested by this is also reflected in the *sans décomposer* indication at the start of the B section. If the *décomposez* marking at the start of the dance suggested that the music follow the movements of

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<sup>30</sup> Puri also hears the link between the end of this section and VALSE TRISTE, although I find it hard to hear the gesture heard in R45<sup>+1ff</sup> similarly as a variant of the earlier theme, ‘which has undergone not only melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic distortion, but also dismemberment into its three two-measure subsets’ (2011b, 109).

the dancer, the opposite is true of the *sans décomposer* instruction: the dancer is now constrained by the music's pulse.

45                      46                      47

$Bb:V^7$                        $F\#III$      $V$      $i$      $V$      $i$      $III$      $i$

Figure 3.16: voice-leading reduction RR45-48

#### 3.4.4 *Isotopies 13-19: RR48-51*

The general pause that separates the end of the central section from the return of the A section gives the opportunity for the music to collect itself, following the recently experienced tonal challenges. The dance restarts with the initial theme actor, transposed up a fifth, although the supporting harmony remains F major. The effect is to emphasise the high-pitched sonorities that characterise the dance, as if seeking to establish more firmly the stable character of the first isotopy. The transposition also has the effect of altering the final chord, which is no longer a half-diminished seventh, but a dominant ninth on F, a more stable, less dissonant sonority in context.<sup>31</sup> Thus

<sup>31</sup> Similarly, *Daphnis and Chloe's* main theme (DC) is principally harmonised by either a half-diminished seventh or a dominant ninth. French harmonic theory, stemming from Rameau, traditionally interpreted the half-diminished seventh as a dominant ninth with a suppressed root (see, for example, Dubois 1889, 82-83), suggesting that, poetically, at least, there is a certain interchangeability between the two chords in Ravel. That said, whether one conceives of a half-diminished seventh as a ninth with a missing root or not, there is an appreciable difference in stability between half-diminished sevenths and dominant-ninth chords.



there is no negative inflection of the modality of *being* in isotopy 13, as if the disturbances experienced in the B section have genuinely been transcended.

Curiously, there is no repeat of the *décomposez* marking found at the start of the dance. In both the orchestral and piano scores the only performance indication provided is *1<sup>er</sup> Mouv<sup>t</sup>*, which *might* imply that the rhythmic freedom of the first A section is repeated here, but it is possible that it refers only to the tempo of the opening of the dance, *assez lent*. If the latter is indeed the case, the lack of agency experienced in the B section – in which the musical subject appeared to be incapable of bending the music to their will – continues to be experienced in the return of the A section, suggesting that the appearance of calm transcendence generated by isotopy 13 is only a façade. A further hint of this might be gleaned from the removal of the second ‘leap’ in isotopy 14 – aside from which, is, along with isotopy 15, unchanged from its earlier incarnation – leading one to speculate whether the effort required to make each leap is starting to take its toll.<sup>32</sup>

Isotopy 16 returns the first theme actor to the pitch level it occupied in isotopy 4, although the harmony has now changed, a reversal of the process observed in isotopy 13: rather than F minor, the theme is now reinterpreted as a B $\flat$  ninth, which allows the A $\flat$  in the second flute to function as a lowered seventh, rather than a minor third, counteracting the dysphoric turn to the minor in isotopy 4. The rising horn fifths are replaced by the unfolding of the first ten notes of the harmonic series on B $\flat$  by a

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<sup>32</sup> Of course, it is not unusual to observe a degree of compression in a repeated section of music; similarly, it is not uncommon for music to hint at the subdominant in a recapitulation, as occurs in isotopy 16. However, these facts need not in themselves remove such matters from hermeneutic consideration, particularly if they chime with other, more marked features.

trombone.<sup>33</sup> This change in sonority matches the altered harmony, but also recalls the drunken-sounding trombone glissandi of the latter part of Dorcon's dance, albeit in a dramatically different context: the orchestrational link serves to highlight the contrast between the comic elements of the 'Danse grotesque' and the elegance of Daphnis's dance. The B $\flat$  harmony here also connects with the key at which the music fainted during the B section, as if returning to and correcting the tonal issues experienced during the central portion of the dance.

This 'flat-side tilt' might also recall the similar procedure employed towards the end of the 'Danse grotesque' (R37) – which sought to prepare for a final attempt at tonic closure – particularly as the ensuing leaping gesture sends the music off in the wrong harmonic direction, the leap taking off from an A $\flat$ <sup>9</sup> and landing on D $\flat$  for the 'swoon', a perfect cadence in the flattened submediant. The harmony has tilted too far towards the flat side, to the point that, rather than achieving a perfect cadence in V – as happened in the corresponding moment in isotopy 6 – the phrase instead heads towards the enharmonic dominant of F $\sharp$ , the key and pitch that has caused so many issues for both Dorcon and Daphnis. This is not the only alteration to the leaping gesture: rather than the elegant, effortless motion that has been heard up to now, the addition of *fortissimo* woodwind lends an air of sudden violence to the proceedings, as if in frustration with the renewed intervention of F $\sharp$ . If isotopy 18 returns the harmony to a V<sup>7</sup>-V<sub>4</sub><sup>6</sup> progression, it is equivocal: not only does the phrase trail off before the cadence, the two flutes sour what should have been an arrival on the second-

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<sup>33</sup> Puri interprets this as 'coextensive with the desire to move among the upper partials, its more refined members' (2011b, 95).

inversion chord by altering the C to a C#, the dominant of F# and enharmonically the same pitch that the final leap lands on.

In a final effort, however, the B-section theme returns the music to F major, although only once a haze of chromatic voice leading clears in R50<sup>+6</sup>: G $\flat$  – enharmonically equivalent to the continually disruptive F# – is particularly prominent, until it is finally resolved via a chromatic passing motion to A, one which closes the dance with a prominent soprano  $\natural\hat{3}$ , emphasised by the measured trill in the horns and then strings, the music emphatically back in the tonic major. Puri hears this final passage as confirming a categorical triumph over of the disruptions of B section, closing the dance on a successful note, which he compares to the interrupted end of the ‘Danse grotesque’:

while Dorcon is unable to end the ‘Danse grotesque’ on his own terms – his prerogative rudely overridden by the mocking crowd – Daphnis offers not only a coda but also a pair of additional ornamental gestures (the trill and glissando of R50<sup>+8-11</sup>) that manifest a certain self-mastery in his ability to lend closure to his performance.

(2011b, 93)

Granted, the passage occupies the space of a coda and functions ‘formally’ as one, but a coda normatively appears *after* the attainment of closure, and in the ‘Dance légère’ the tonic is not achieved until after R50<sup>+6</sup>, *within* the coda itself (see figure 3.17). Moreover, given the generally low incidence of the tonic throughout the dance – F, major or minor, is present in only nineteen percent of the bars between R43 and R50

– I hear the sense of closure here as equivocal, attenuated both by the previous disruptions and the abrupt nature of its attainment. Not only this, but the arrival on A in the soprano essentially reverses the  $\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$  that led the music so elegantly and securely to F major in the passage just before the dance commenced, exchanging a strong structural close for a much weaker motion, an IAC approached via  $V_4^6$ . Whilst this arguably serves to reinforce the manner in which the goal pitch of Dorcon’s dance – A, the musical Subject’s sought-after Object – is brought within Daphnis’s tonality, it nonetheless makes for a weaker close: it is almost as if the music is somehow back to front, a failure of syntax subtler than that of the ‘Danse grotesque’, but a ‘failure’ nonetheless.

49 50

V V/bVI bVI  $V_3^5$   $\frac{6}{4}$   $I^8$   $\frac{b2}{b3}$   $\frac{b3}{\sharp 3}$

V I

Figure 3.17: voice-leading reduction RR48<sup>+</sup>4-51

### 3.5 Superisotopic articulation

So far, the ‘Dance Contest’ has been analysed principally as a sequence of individual components – the *geste brusque* and the two dances – which has treated each section as a relatively discrete entity. The analysis of the scene as a complete functional sequence – as a series of ‘superisotopies’ that encompass the smaller divisions already articulated – allows for a longer-range perspective, moving from narrative foreground to middleground:<sup>34</sup> this will also form the basis of the analysis of the ‘Dance Contest’ as narrative programme in the next section. A comparison of the superisotopic middleground and the isotopic foreground is given in table 3.4; it will be noted that the modality changes in some sections as we move from the foreground to the middleground. Figure 3.18 shows a complete voice-leading reduction of the ‘Dance Contest’, from the cadence at the end of the ‘Dance of the Youths’ just before the *geste brusque* to the close of Daphnis’s ‘Danse légère’.

Having closed the ‘Dance of the Youths’ in a beautifully serene Db, the *geste brusque* immediately pushes the music into a new harmonic area. This aggressive move towards a new tonality can be felt immediately in the F that anchors the *geste brusque* in the bass, snatching the pitch from the top of the texture at R28<sup>+8</sup> – where it is heard as  $\hat{3}$  of Db – and forcing it to become the root of the new tonality. Moreover, the *geste brusque* initiates a voice-leading motion that arpeggiates a half-diminished seventh on G – ii<sup>o7</sup> in F – a move that alters the function of the key-note of the previous tonality, which becomes a chordal component rather than the root of its own tonic. The *geste brusque* thus forces a *transvaluation* of the end of the ‘Dance of the Youths’,

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<sup>34</sup> See Ellis (2003) for a discussion of the articulation of superisotopies.

changing its status within the tonal hierarchy; the D $\flat$  cadence is no longer a goal in itself, but part of a larger motion towards F. Taking the arpeggiation of ii<sup>o7</sup>/F as articulating a larger narrative unit – a ‘superisotopy’ – we can begin to segment the ‘Dance Contest’ as a series of such units (see table 3.4). Thus, although the initial segmentation (table 3.1) identified four isotopies between RR29 and 31<sup>+5</sup> – which exhibited a variety of functional and modal characteristics – at a more fundamental level, the arpeggiation of ii<sup>o7</sup>/F acts as a pre-modal catalysing function, moving towards F, and thus expresses the modality *doing*.

However, that which can transvalue can *itself* be transvalued: a bass F is reached one bar before R32, but its function is altered by the second viola’s D $\sharp$ , turning it into an augmented sixth that resolves to V/A, changing the status of F from tonic to  $\flat$ VI of a new key area, that of the ‘Danse grotesque’. Again, taking larger voice-leading motions as articulating superisotopic units at a more fundamental level, Dorcon’s dance can be divided into a smaller number of larger functional units (see table 3.4). Similar to the *geste brusque*, the emphasis here is on a move to articulate a new key area, with large stretches of the music given over to *will to be*, the desire for closure emphasised by lengthy dominant pedals. Although A major is achieved at R39, it is not a structural close: *being* (closure) is apparently achievable, if not at this point in time (*can be*). However, when the music finally collapses onto an interrupted cadence, the projected articulation of A as tonic proves to be impossible (*cannot be*): the tonal advantage shifts yet again.

Isotopic layer (foreground)	Modality		Will to be		Must be		Will to be		Can be		Cannot be		Will to be		Cannot be																									
	Rehearsal figure	Isotopy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15																							
Supers isotopic layer (middleground)	Modality	Doing	Must be														Will to be	Cannot be																						
			Will to be																																					
Supers isotopic layer (middleground)	Functional type	Catalysing (pre-modal)																																						
		Rehearsal figure	29	31+6		32		39		40+4		41		41		41																								
Supers isotopy	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8																									
	Section		Geste brusque/valse triste																																					
Isotopic layer (foreground)	Modality	Will to be	Being		Doing		Not doing		Being		Doing		Not doing		Can do		Will to be		Will to do		Cannot be		Being		Doing		Not doing		Will to be		Not being									
			Rehearsal figure	42	43	43+2	43+4	44	44+2	44+4	45	45+1	45+3	45+4	46	47	48	48+2	48+2	49	49+2	49+2	50	50+7	50	50+7	50	50+7	50	50+7										
Isotopy	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10		11		12		13		14		15		16		17		18		19		20	
	Modality		Will to be		Must be		Cannot be		Must not be		Being		Not being		Not being		Being		Not being		Not being		Being		Not being		Not being		Being		Not being		Being		Not being					
Supers isotopic layer (middleground)	Functional type	Cardinal																																						
		Rehearsal figure	42	43		44		45		46		47		48		49		50		51		52		53		54		55		56		57		58		59		60		
Supers isotopy	7		8		9		10		11		12		13		14		15		16		17		18		19		20		21		22		23		24		25			
	Section		Bridge																																					
Section		'Danse légère'																A		B		A'		'Coda'																
																										A		B		A'		'Coda'								

Table 3.4: comparison of supers isotopic/middleground segmentation of 'Dance Contest' and isotopic/foreground segmentation

The musical score is divided into three systems, each containing several measures. Superisotopies (SI) are indicated by boxed labels and measure numbers:

- System 1 (measures 28-38): SI1 (28+8), SI2 (29), SI3 (30), SI4 (32), SI5 (34), SI6 (36), SI7 (39), SI8 (40).
- System 2 (measures 39-43): SI9 (41), SI10 (43), SI11 (44), SI12 (45).
- System 3 (measures 44-50): SI13 (46), SI14 (48), SI15 (49), SI16 (50).

Chord reductions and figured bass notation are shown below the notes:

- Measure 28:  $F\#bii$
- Measure 29:  $F\#bii$
- Measure 30:  $F\#bii$
- Measure 32:  $F\#bii$
- Measure 34:  $F\#bii$
- Measure 36:  $F\#bii$
- Measure 39:  $F\#bii$
- Measure 40:  $F\#bii$
- Measure 41:  $F\#bii$
- Measure 43:  $F\#bii$
- Measure 44:  $F\#bii$
- Measure 45:  $F\#bii$
- Measure 46:  $F\#bii$
- Measure 48:  $F\#bii$
- Measure 49:  $F\#bii$
- Measure 50:  $F\#bii$

Figure 3.18: reduction of 'Dance Contest', showing division into superisotopies (SI)



The next superisotopy – RR42-43 – takes the soprano A and turns it into  $\hat{3}$  of F major, initiating a descent to  $\hat{1}$  (*will to be*), re-transvaluing the pitch, and returning F to its original place within the tonal hierarchy created by the *geste brusque*. Thus, retrospectively, the bass F at R31<sup>+6</sup> can be understood to function as I, with the PAC in A at R39 acting as part of a large-scale arpeggiation of F, the completion of which ultimately initiates the much-delayed descent to  $\frac{\hat{1}}{I}$ . This suggests a re-hearing of RR31<sup>+6</sup>-39 as part of an initial ascent to  $\hat{3}$ ; it also explains why the tonicisation of A during the ‘Danse grotesque’ cannot function at a more fundamental level: it is a harmonic feature closer to the music’s surface, and is resolved as part of the arpeggiation of F closer to the background. With hindsight, the transvaluative gambit in Dorcon’s dance was doomed to failure.

Superisotopy 8 (RR43-44) completes the 3-*zug* initiated in the previous section, although  $\hat{1}$  is delayed by F’s transfer to an inner voice, only returning to the soprano register half way through the second bar. This transfer has the effect of reducing the strength of the cadence at R43 somewhat: as will be seen, the temporal dislocation of contrapuntal voices also has implications for closure at the end of the dance. For the time being, the passage completes a move to V, the superisotopy acting as an antecedent phrase, suggesting an answering phrase that returns to I (*must be*). The next superisotopy (RR44-46) requires some justification, as it cuts across two passages that are musically distinct at the foreground. However, as example 3.17 shows, the cadence in G (R44<sup>+5</sup>), and the restart in F at the *plus animé* (R45) are part of a motion to F# minor, G functioning as a tonicisation of V of F#, with F acting as lower neighbour to the G. Thus, rather than functioning as a consequent, superisotopy 9 ends up moving towards F#, negating the modality of the previous section (*cannot*

*be*). Superisotopy 10, although rife with surface disturbance, is actually fundamentally stable from a voice-leading perspective; the tension between foreground and midleground emphasises the sense of struggle here, as if the music cannot remain in F# (*must not be*).

Similar to superisotopy 9, superisotopy 11 encompasses a number of distinct foreground isotopies, and, like superisotopy 10, there is a contrast between a surface agitation (for example, the aggressive ‘leap’ gesture and tilt towards Db in R49<sup>+2</sup>) and a less complex middleground: the whole passage is essentially I-V-I in F, supporting an upwards arpeggiation of the tonic (*being*). However, it is this arpeggiation to  $\hat{3}$  – the final narrative act of the ‘Dance Contest’ – that contradicts the modality of *being*, denying a full structural close, and returning to the *kopfton* established back in the ‘Danse grotesque’. This is the pitch whose status within the tonal hierarchy formed the basis of the transvaluative contest between the two dances, and is thus emblematic of the ‘Dance Contest’ as a whole: attainment of  $\hat{3}$  is structurally meaningful only if it is able to descend to  $\hat{1}$ .

### **3.6 ‘Dance Contest’ as narrative programme**

#### *3.6.1 Articulation of narrative syntagms*

With the superisotopic structure established, it is now possible to move onto an articulation of the narrative programme of the ‘Dance Contest’. As explained in Chapter 2, a basic narrative programme involves relations between a series of actants, abstract character functions at the level of deep structure. At a fundamental level,

narrative units can be understood to articulate processes of value transfer between a narrative Subject (S) and Object (O), a relationship of *conjunction* ( $S \cap O$ ) or *disjunction* ( $S \cup O$ ) (Greimas 1987, 90, Nöth 1990, 372-373). As we have seen, such relationships can be mapped onto harmonic and contrapuntal patterns in music, whereby disjunction and conjunction can be understood as analogous to the cycle of tension and release experienced in tonal music (see Chapter 2, section 2.4.2). With this in mind, the musical-narrative programme of the ‘Dance Contest’ can be delineated by the five narrative syntagms given below, each of which is articulated by the tonal trajectory, as summarised in figure 3.19.

The figure shows a musical score with six syntagms. Above the staff, boxes labeled 'Syntagm 1' through 'Syntagm 6' indicate their respective measures: Syntagm 1 (28+8, 30), Syntagm 2 (32), Syntagm 3 (39), Syntagm 4 (41), Syntagm 5 (43), and Syntagm 6 (48, 50). The score includes a treble clef and a bass clef. Below the staff, harmonic analysis is provided for each syntagm: Syntagm 1 (Db-I, F-II), Syntagm 2 (A♭VI, V, [I]), Syntagm 3 (I, V, vi, bii), Syntagm 4 (I, V, I), Syntagm 5 (F♯V, I, bii), and Syntagm 6 (I, V, I). Below the harmonic analysis, narrative labels are given: Antisubject: (S̄ ∪ O), (S̄ ∩ O), (S̄ ∪ O); Subject: (S ∪ O) \_\_\_\_\_ (S ∩ O) (S ∪ O) \_\_\_\_\_ (S ∩̄ / ∪̄ O).

Figure 3.19: narrative programme of ‘Dance Contest’

1: (S ∪ O) As we have seen, the sequence opens with the *geste brusque* violently forcing the music towards F. We may understand this as the action of a notional musical subject attempting to wrench the music away from Db towards a new, more valued key area. We may therefore take the key of F to represent the desired Object of our musical Subject. The initial state of the narrative programme is thus one of *disjunction* ( $S \cup O$ ).

2: (S ∪ O) The ‘Danse grotesque’ continues this disjunctive state for the Subject, as the status of F within the tonal hierarchy is altered, becoming a gateway to A (bVIGer<sup>6</sup>/A), rather than a goal in its own right, an act of transvaluation. Given this transvaluative act, one that stands in the way of the Subject achieving conjunction with the Object, the ‘Danse grotesque’ may be understood as introducing another, opposing actant, the Antisubject ( $\bar{S}$ ), who, like the Subject, is a ‘quester’: as Gerald Prince explains, ‘narrative is articulated in terms of their conflicting quests’ (2003, 7).<sup>35</sup> Given that the Antisubject’s goal is to shift the music towards the key of A, we may understand this as the Antisubject’s Object. The Antisubject achieves conjunction with its Object ( $\bar{S} \cap O$ ) at R39, but is unable to maintain the conjunctive state. Instead, the ‘Danse grotesque’ ends with the Antisubject disjunct from its Object ( $\bar{S} \cup O$ ), as the projected cadence on I is replaced by an interruption on vi. F# thus acts in a manner similar to the *Opponent*, an ‘auxiliant’ (auxiliary actant) who represents an incidental obstacle to the attainment of conjunction (Greimas and Courtés [1979] 1982, 220). The narrative programme of the Antisubject may therefore be summarised as a *dysphoric* narrative, beginning and ending in a ‘state of deficiency’ (Brémond 1970, 251; see also Chapter 2, section 2.4.1): ( $\bar{S} \cup O$ ) → ( $\bar{S} \cap O$ ) → ( $\bar{S} \cup O$ ).

3-4: (S ∩ O) The link into the ‘Danse légère’ securely establishes F as the key centre, completing the harmonic manoeuvre begun by the *geste brusque*, and interrupted by the ‘Danse grotesque’, firmly replacing A at the top of the tonal hierarchy in an act of transvaluation. This change of rank is emphasised by the  $\frac{\hat{3}}{I} \rightarrow \frac{\hat{2}}{V}$

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<sup>35</sup> The notation  $\bar{S}$  to indicate the Antisubject is Greimas’s own: ‘By S we designate the hero-subject, by  $\bar{S}$  the traitor anti-subject’ (1971, 803).

→  $\frac{\hat{1}}{\text{I}}$  voice-leading, which alters the pitch A from  $\hat{1}$  of A to  $\hat{3}$  of F, before resolving it to  $\hat{1}$  of F, underlining its lower status within the tonal hierarchy. The Subject has now attained conjunction with its Object.

5: (S ∪ O) However, this state of conjunction is lost during the central portion of the dance, during which time F is replaced by F#, the same key that acted as the Opponent of the Antisubject, denying conjunction at the end of the ‘Danse grotesque’. This is precisely the role the key plays in the ‘Danse légère’, moving the music away from F, and therefore placing the Subject in a disjunct relation with the Object (S ∪ O).

6: (S  $\bar{\cap}$ /∪ O) The final narrative syntagm returns F major to the top of the tonal hierarchy, but, as discussed above, without achieving a full structural close, in contradiction to the  $\frac{\hat{3}}{\text{I}} \rightarrow \frac{\hat{2}}{\text{V}} \rightarrow \frac{\hat{1}}{\text{I}}$  voice leading that provided a secure conjunction of Subject and Object in the passage linking the ‘Danse grotesque’ and ‘Danse légère’ (syntagm 3). Given the disparity between the strongly conjunct state at the start of the ‘Danse légère’ and the situation here, it would be incorrect to describe the narrative state at the end of the ‘Dance Contest’ as one of conjunction equal to that of the earlier resolution in F. Moreover, a harmonic analysis would draw a distinction between the two closes, differentiating between the earlier PAC and the later IAC. However, it would be equally incorrect to describe it as a state of complete disjunction: F has clearly succeeded in transvaluing both Db – the key at the end of the ‘Dance of the Youths’, to which the *geste brusque* reacts – and A, the key of the Antisubject. This logical conundrum is perhaps best expressed by the following paradoxical statement:

the Subject is both not-conjunct and not-disjunct with the Object ( $S \bar{\cap}/\bar{\cup} O$ ).<sup>36</sup> Since the narrative state at the end of the ‘Dance Contest’ cannot be established as either fully conjunct or disjunct, a statement of either would be false; by implication, their contradictories must be true (see figure 3.20 for a mapping of the four states onto a semiotic square).<sup>37</sup>

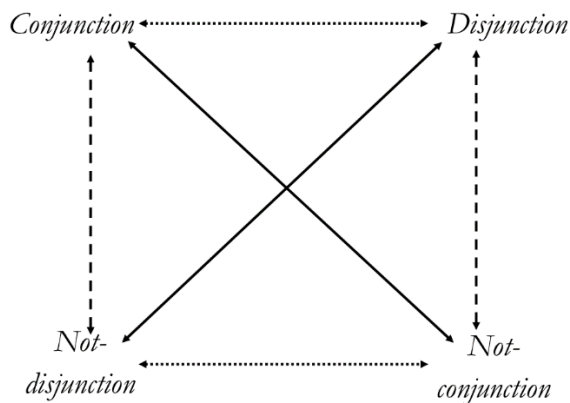


Figure 3.20: semiotic square of conjunction-disjunction

The narrative of the Subject can therefore be summarised thus:

$$(S \cup O) \rightarrow (S \cap O) \rightarrow (S \cup O) \rightarrow (S \bar{\cap}/\bar{\cup} O).$$

### 3.6.2 ‘Dance Contest’ as narrative archetype

This paradoxical ending to the ‘Dance Contest’ has implications for any attempt to apply Frye’s narrative archetypes to the sequence. As Michael Klein suggests – to

<sup>36</sup> ‘Not-conjunct’ and ‘not-disjunct’ are expressed here by the notations  $\bar{\cap}$  and  $\bar{\cup}$ , respectively.

<sup>37</sup> ‘If Socrates doesn’t exist, “Socrates is wise” (*A*) and its contrary “Socrates is not-wise” (*E*) are both automatically false (since nothing – positive or negative – can be truly affirmed of a non-existent subject), while their respective contradictories “Socrates is not wise” (*O*) and “Socrates is not not-wise” (*I*) are both true. Similarly, for any object *x*, either *x* is red or *x* is not red – but *x* may be neither red nor not-red; if, for instance, *x* is a unicorn or a prime number’ (Laurence R. Horn, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, s.v. ‘Contradiction’).

different ends – Frye’s *mythoi* can be mapped onto a semiotic square (2013, 9). To do so, it is necessary to bear in mind James Jakób Liszka’s argument that the archetypes are organised in an opposition between narratives that emphasise victory (romance, comedy), and those that emphasise defeat (tragedy, irony/satire). Liszka understands all narratives as the result of tension between an order-imposing hierarchy and a hierarchy that seeks to disrupt or transgress (1989, 133). These two concepts are combined in table 3.5, which defines the four *mythoi* according to whether they emphasise victory or defeat, and which hierarchy is triumphant.

<i>Archetype</i>	<i>Triumphant hierarchy</i>	<i>Emphasis on</i>
Romance	Order-imposing	Victory
Comedy	Transgressive	
Tragedy	Order-imposing	Defeat
Irony/Satire	Transgressive	

*Table 3.5: Frye’s mythoi organised according to which hierarchy is triumphant, and whether they emphasise victory or defeat, based on Liszka (1989), 133*

Another way of conceptualising the opposition victory/defeat is to employ Greimas’s conjunct/disjunct opposition: victory implies conjunction, and defeat a disjunct state. This allows us to map the values victory/defeat – and therefore Frye’s four *mythoi* – onto the semiotic square of conjunction-disjunction, as is shown in figure 3.21. What this suggests is that the not-disjunct/not-conjunct state at the end of

the ‘Dance Contest’ embodies a comic-ironic narrative paradigm, described by Byron Almén as calling attention to ‘weaknesses or inequities within the prevailing hierarchy’ (2008, 167). This is a good description of one of the functions the ‘Dance Contest’ performs in the ballet’s larger narrative. To put this in context, however, we turn first to a brief overview of the condition of masculinity in France at the fin-de-siècle.

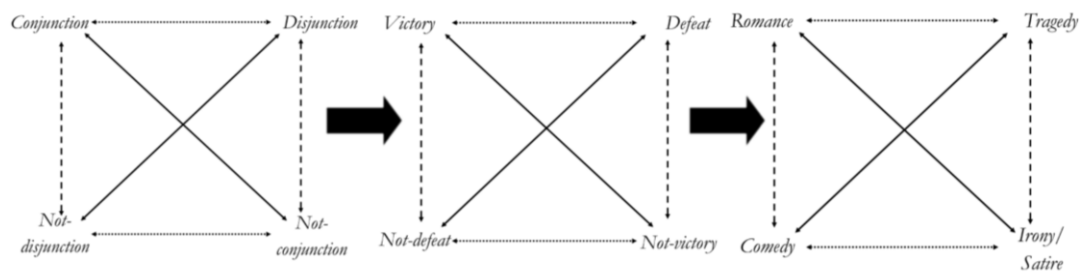


Figure 3.21: semiotic squares of conjunction-disjunction, victory-defeat and Northrop Frye’s mythoi

### 3.7 Narrating masculinity

#### 3.7.1 Masculinity in crisis

Since the publication of Robert Nye’s work on masculinity in modern France (1998), the ‘crisis of masculinity’ experienced by the Third Republic has been an important focus for historians investigating the period of the fin de siècle.<sup>38</sup> Most scholars trace the origins of this crisis to the French defeat at the hands of the Prussians in 1870, which, in the words of Elinor Accampo and Christopher Forth, ‘spawned deep fears

<sup>38</sup> See, for example, Forth (2004), Surkis (2006), Forth and Taithe (2007), and Forth and Accampo (2010).



about the mental and physical state of French citizens' (2010b, 2). Alongside the emasculating effects of the defeat – including the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, 'a blow to France's sense of itself' (Kelly 2008a, 1) – concerns centred on France's plummeting birthrate, 'because it affected so immediately all assessments of the nation's power and vitality' (Nye 1998, 77). From a peak of 32 births per 1000 population in the 1820s, the birthrate slumped to 20/1000 by World War I (ibid.); at the same time, 'across the Rhine, the German birthrate outpaced France by almost six to one during the period from 1872 to 1911' (Reed 2010, 72).

The demographic crisis resulted in 'a marked tendency for fin de siècle observers to conflate problems of population and heredity with problems of masculinity' (Nye 1998, 83-84), and thus anxieties over the quality and potency of French manhood in the wake of the Prussian defeat took on a decidedly biological slant, as fears grew over the potential for degeneracy: 'How could France possibly hope to regain its geopolitical status [...] if it was weak at its very core, enfeebled by its inability to reproduce itself' (Reed 2010, 72)? As Christopher Forth has shown, the concomitant discourse on the proper performance of masculinity led to a deep suspicion of 'passive' men, supported by an 'opposition between heroic men of action (such as knights, explorers, and athletes) and less glorious men of thought (including priests, scholars, artists, Jews, and bourgeois professionals)' (2004, 12). If such 'overcerebralized weakling[s]' (ibid., 205) paled in comparison to the 'traditional ideals of action, bravery, and aggression that continued to circulate throughout the fin de siècle' (Accampo and Forth 2010a, 133), the properly active bourgeois male was expected to demonstrate honour through courageous action, which was regarded as 'indistinguishable from manliness' (Nye 1998, 217). Moreover, the man of action should be capable of demonstrating self-mastery, in terms of 'the art of being strong

without appearing to expend physical force directly' (Forth 2004, 206), the 'civic duty' of sexual self-control (Mansker 2010, 186), and as a demonstration of emotional composure, for, as Anne Vincent-Buffault argues, 'A man wept when he could not act' (cited in Forth 2004, 121). Normative masculinity in the Third Republic was thus constructed around a valorisation of action and self-possession, an honourable athleticism that demonstrated a healthy virility, and a performative heroism that countered the fears of weakness, impotency, and degeneracy that framed the terms of the crisis of manhood at the fin de siècle.

### 3.7.2 *'Dance Contest' as duelling narrative*

Robert Nye argues that it was in duelling narratives that the fin de siècle 'read metaphors of courage or cowardice, self-mastery or fear, qualities that reflected significantly on a man's reputation as a leader, and, by extension, on the worthiness of his cause' (1998., 200). The correspondence between the 'Dance Contest' and duelling has already been noted, and this connection suggests its narrative function is richer than that of a mere obstacle for Daphnis to overcome. Rather, the contest exposes the two contestants to discourses of masculinity that colour, and ultimately divert the narrative trajectory, as will become clear in subsequent chapters. As such, the 'Dance Contest' is experienced as a strong down-beat in the narrative metre, a refocusing of the plot from a generalised comic pastoral to sharper-edged satire.

At first sight, the 'Dance Contest' would seem to embody a straightforward trajectory of the worthy Daphnis besting the inept Dorcon, demonstrating both his superiority and honour in the process. The *geste brusque* is the equivalent of Daphnis

throwing down the gauntlet, challenging Dorcon to a duel to which he is woefully unsuited, given that he is the less ‘honourable’ of the two. Dorcon’s shot misses its target entirely, his long-projected achievement of the tonic deflected by an interrupted cadence. Daphnis, on the other hand, demonstrates greater physical and syntactical control, his ‘wonderful leaps’ the very embodiment of active virility, and the framing cadences in F a manifestation of a more secure handling of tonal grammar.

However, as we have seen, there is much more going on in Daphnis’s dance than might at first be apparent. The ‘Danse légère’ is not as secure as its initial cadence suggests it will be, with a central section that loses control of the tonality and heads in the direction of the same F# that had proved Dorcon’s undoing; neither is its final cadence as convincing as it might be, closing on a weaker IAC, rather than the PAC with which it opened. Alongside this, Daphnis’s leaps are not quite the demonstration of physical superiority that they may appear to be: not only do their deflationary aftermaths underline the physical reality of the gesture – recall the scenes backstage after Nijinsky’s famous leaps – but their modality of *doing* is counterpoised with an opposing *being*, the dominant-key activity of the leap contrasted with the passive interiority of the F major/minor portions of the dance. In other words, not only is the leap gesture shown to have physical consequences – and therefore failing to demonstrate total physical self-mastery – but Daphnis leans dangerously towards embodying the passivity of the *intellectual*, with the ‘problematic gender implications’ (Forth 2004, 205) this implied.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> With regards to Puri’s exploration of decadent aesthetics in the ‘Dance Contest’, it should be noted that ‘sublime’ passivity is also characteristic of the dandy (2007, 2011b, 84-120).

In fact, the association between F and passivity (*being*), and C and action (*doing*) in the ‘Danse légère’ feeds into key-associations elsewhere in the ballet. As was mentioned above, the key of C is associated with Pan during his appearances at the end of Parts I and II. In many ways, the mythological figure of Pan embodies a sort of hypersexual masculinity that is at odds with the notion of self-control that was so fundamental to normative conceptions of masculinity in the Third Republic. However, as will be seen, both of Pan’s appearances in *Daphnis et Chloé* are in the guise of rescuing *deus ex machina*, demonstrating a form of courageous action at odds with Daphnis’s passivity during Chloe’s abduction. As such, the association between C and action in the ‘Danse légère’ engages in a longer-range strategy which calls into question Daphnis’s ability to embody normative masculine values.<sup>40</sup>

In this context, Daphnis’s ‘victory’ in the ‘Dance Contest’ is at best equivocal, as is suggested by the ambivalent nature of the closure at the end of his dance. As such, the nature of Daphnis’s ‘honour’ is in question, at least in the terms implied by the social codes of fin-de-siècle France. Rather than being a direct challenge to a duel, the *geste brusque* is in fact an uncontrolled moment of violence from Daphnis; the suggestion that their differences are settled in a more formal manner comes from a bystander: as Robert Nye observes, ‘in the code of the duel [...] the man who had better command of his emotions, who could coolly adapt his word and actions to whatever the circumstances required, enjoyed a certain edge over a man who readily lost his temper’ (1998, 144). In fact, although he loses the contest, Dorcon arguably does better out of the duel than Daphnis, at least in terms of his comparative status going into and completing the contest. As George Mosse suggests, to be worthy of

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<sup>40</sup> The significance of Pan will be explored in more detail in the Chapter 4, section 4.3.

duelling ‘meant being given the same social status as the adversary’ (1996, 19), and Nye explains the increased significance of duelling to marginalised sections of French society, especially Jewish men: ‘To duel with a man meant to acknowledge his worthiness as a man of honor, so that what anti-Semitic rhetoric denied in principle, anti-Semites acknowledged in practice’ (1998, 206). In other words, by engaging Dorcon in a duel, Daphnis confers on Dorcon a certain legitimacy: as was suggested above in the analysis of the ‘Danse grotesque’, in one sense, being perceived as ‘belonging’ can be understood to be the object of Dorcon’s narrative.<sup>41</sup>

There is little of the conventionally honourable in Daphnis’s behaviour during the contest, from the precipitous action that acts as the catalyst for the duel, to the failure to demonstrate total self-control at the close of the ‘Danse légère’. If it perhaps seems too much to describe his action as ‘*dis*-honourable’, we can at least characterise it as ‘*not*-honourable’, calling into question Daphnis’s suitability for the actantial role of heroic narrative subject, at least to the degree that he deviates from fin-de-siècle notions of heroism.<sup>42</sup> Michael Puri’s (2007, 2011b) characterisation of Daphnis as a decadent figure is significant in this context: as Mosse argues, ‘*degeneration* and *decadence* were often confused; [...] decadence as understood by writers and artist[s] was itself considered degenerate by the defenders of normative society’ (1996, 81; original emphasis). Moreover, ‘The masculine ideal was considered a bulwark against decadence, representing in words, pictures, and stone an image of chaste manhood that had sunk deeply into modern consciousness’ (ibid., 101). The idea of the decadent as

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<sup>41</sup> In this context, it is worth thinking forward to Dorcon’s ‘curtain call’ in the concluding ‘Bacchanal’; his reappearance for a final bow – the only character to be singled out, save for Daphnis and Chloe – suggests a certain hierarchical shift in his favour: Lyceion is denied the same honour. The moment is set in particular relief by the fact that Ravel was advised against a similar ‘curtain call’ sequence in his contemporary ballet, *Ma Mère l’Oye*, by the designer, Jacques Drésa, advice that he took (Mawer 2006b, 57).

<sup>42</sup> Mawer notes that ‘questions remain about Daphnis’s suitability as a mythical hero, an issue recognized early on’ (2006b, 123).

a countertype to normative masculinity will be explored more thoroughly in Chapter 4 (section 4.3.1), but the juxtaposition of a contest of honour with Daphnis's equivocally 'masculine' performance in the 'Dance Contest' is of note in developing an understanding of the role the contest plays in the larger narrative.

In fact, Daphnis's non-honourable actions during the 'Dance Contest' turn out to be not dissimilar to the duelling narrative that opened this chapter, that of the famous Olivier-Feuilerade duel. Not only did the contest between two unequally matched opponents already lend the duel a tone of ambivalent honour, but the supposedly more honourable and successful combatant, Olivier, was found to have 'a broad metal-backed belt around his waist, a reason, no doubt, for [his] notorious alacrity in matters of honor' (Nye 1998, 201): Olivier, the hypermasculine hero of eleven duels proved to be a fraud.<sup>43</sup> Thus, in ballet as in real life, the performance of normative masculinity is revealed as a façade; Daphnis lacks control, Nijinsky leaps on a raked stage and collapses in exhaustion, Olivier is revealed as a cheat. We should probably not be surprised: as Nye observes at the start of his book, 'in a society governed by honor, masculinity is always in the course of construction, but always fixed, a *telos* that men experience as a necessary but permanently unattainable goal' (ibid., 13). The performance of gender norms is – of course – *always* a façade, but perhaps especially so when the cultural stakes are so high. This idea will be pursued in more detail in the following chapter.

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<sup>43</sup> In fact, he also ultimately lost the duel, and was killed by Feuilerade.

## 4 Man and Beast

Having in Chapter 3 examined gender from a very specific viewpoint – that of fin-de-siècle French duelling culture – the business of the present chapter is to provide a broader perspective on the construction of masculinity in *Daphnis*, in the process picking up some of the remaining threads from the previous chapter. Among these strands, the notion that the character of Daphnis can be seen to embody certain traits associated with Decadence – as argued by Michael Puri (2007, 2011b) – will be explored in the context of masculinity amidst the bohemian milieu of fin-de-siècle Paris. The apparent contradiction this raises – between a Daphnis who was seen in Chapter 3 to seek to exemplify normative masculine values and a figure who would be understood as degenerate within those norms – is a crucial element in developing a richer understanding of the character, and in turn the manner in which the ballet develops its presentation of masculinity. As was hinted at in Chapter 3’s description of Daphnis as inhabiting the entire semantic universe of the modal opposition *being-doing* (see Chapter 3, section 3.4.1), contradiction lies at the heart of the character, opening up a connection to the universe of the grotesque that provides a context in which to examine the close connection between Daphnis and Pan in the ballet.

The underlying violence of Pan as a mythological subject will be an important topic in the examination of the ‘Pantomime’ from Part III of the ballet, which will be explored in detail in Chapter 5. For the moment, it is worth noting Pan’s hybridised status, at once bestial and divine. The contradiction between Daphnis’s aspiration to a form of masculine sublime in his ‘Danse légère’ and his inability convincingly to achieve it was explored in the previous chapter. Chapter 3 also noted the symbolic

relationship between this opposition and the contradictions inherent in the discourses surrounding Daphnis's first dancer, Vaslav Nijinsky, who not only had 'Feminine arms, masculine legs' (Kopelson 1997, 107), but was also a 'little monkey' (Cocteau 1957, 53) and '*grande fauve*' (effectively 'wild beast') (Reiss [1957] 1960, 79). This sort of language – not only gendered, but including imagery of the bestial – is reminiscent of earlier conceptions of male ballet dancers, such as the derogatory remarks of Théophile Gautier, who complained that 'a male dancer [...] has always seemed to us a species of monstrosity' (1947, 44). Indeed, as Ilyana Karthas notes, there are examples of nineteenth-century images that portray the male ballet dancer as 'half-human, half-monster' (2015, 230). While the Ballets Russes had on the whole inverted such viewpoints, the language used to describe Nijinsky in particular suggests that the notion of a man dancing still carried with it a sense of grotesque hybridity. This is a resonance picked up in the subject matter of one of Nijinsky's most famous creations, his choreography to Debussy's *Faune*, in which he danced the role of the eponymous creature, half-man, half-goat (see Chapter 5, section 5.6 for a discussion of this ballet).

There is a further contradiction or opposition to consider in relation to the character of Daphnis, however: that between the self-control that was valorised by normative constructions of masculinity contemporary with the ballet's creation and the demonstration of indiscipline, as exhibited by Daphnis's violent reaction to Chloe's embrace with Dorcon. One might map the opposition bestiality/humanity discussed above onto the rage/restraint binary represented by Daphnis's *geste brusque*/'Danse légère', suggesting a further connotative function to Daphnis's hybridity. Michael Puri relates the 'bipolar behavior' of Daphnis in the 'Dance Contest' to 'the opposition between the Religious Dance of part one and the War



Dance of part two’ (2011b, 138), indicating a broader strategy of opposing control and violence in the ballet.<sup>1</sup> As is often noted, the ‘War Dance’ is highly reminiscent of the ‘Polovtsian Dances’ from Borodin’s *Prince Igor* (Mawer 2006b, 99, Puri 2011b, 123), performed by the Ballets Russes in their first season, in which they ‘presented the male dancer in a new way, now as a muscular, athletic and “virile” male’ (Karthas 2015, 232). Given this intertextual link – a connection to the moment that this new form of balletic masculinity thrust its way onto the stage – it is worth considering the connotative value of this ‘virility game’ (Mawer 2006b, 104) to the construction of masculinity in the ballet. It is thus to the ‘War Dance’ that we initially turn in broadening the terms of our investigation.

## 4.1 Analysing the ‘War Dance’

### 4.1.1 *The ‘A’ rotation*

The ‘War Dance’ is one of the more thematically rich sections of the score, presenting seven discrete motivic elements (a summary of the thematic, modal, formal, and isotopic articulation of the dance is given in table 4.1). Three of these are heard elsewhere in the ballet, and the others are derivable from the work’s principal theme/motive actors (see Chapter 1, section 1.6 and Chapter 2, section 2.4.4.2). For example, the first motif that is heard (War Dance 1/WD1) – a gruff, four-square tritone motif that appears mainly in lower pitched instruments – is an embellished form of the theme that Puri identifies as APPEL (2011b, 64-69) (see figure 4.1).<sup>2</sup> A somewhat

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<sup>1</sup> Or ‘idyll’ and ‘bacchanal’, a larger category of opposition which Puri convincingly argues is a recurrent feature in Ravel’s music (2011b, 139).

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that Puri refers to the material prosaically referenced here as WD1-3 rather more evocatively as ‘stomping ostinato’ (WD1), ‘toccata’ (WD2), and ‘galop’ (WD3) (2011b, 123).

more oblique relationship pertains between the second motif (WD2) and the theme Daphnis and Chloe share (DC), or at least its truncated form, mostly heard during Chloe's abduction: as figure 4.2 suggests, it can be heard as a distorted retrograde of this important motif. The motif's registral peak, the upper note of the underlying ascending perfect fifth – the note that connects the 'Chloe' and 'Daphnis' portions of the complete theme (see Mawer 2006b, 94) – is emphasised by the rapid crescendo, off-beat horn chords and string pizzicato, as if the motif is 'grasping' or 'snatching' at the connecting pitch. The presence of these two themes, originally presented in the 'Introduction', invites us to hear the 'War Dance' as a revision of the opening of the ballet: an occupation, or perhaps a perversion, of the previously idyllic landscape by the war-like Pirates. These two motifs articulate the first and second isotopies of the dance, respectively. The highly-charged atmosphere of isotopies 1 and 2 suggests a modality of *doing*, Tarasti's 'musical action, event, dynamism, dissonance' (1994, 49), a fundamental modality that is unsurprisingly present through much of the 'War Dance'. However, the propulsive effect of the frequent rapid hairpins and drawn-out crescendos of isotopy 2 suggest a *doing* that is surmodalised by *will*: *will to do*.

If WD1 and WD2 verge on the gestural, rather than being fully fleshed-out themes, WD3 – first appearing at R94 in the bassoons and trombones – is rather more thematic, presenting a descending chromatic line in martial dotted rhythms (isotopy 3, R94). The sense of cardinality that the more extended thematic statement suggests contributes towards the modality of *can do*, the 'desire to do' replaced by the 'ability to do'. Its chromatic descent is reminiscent of VALSE TRISTE, first heard following Daphnis's *geste brusque* (see Chapter 1, section 1.6 and Chapter 3, section 3.2.2): in fact, its pitch content is nearly identical to the original presentation of VALSE TRISTE, but with the B $\flat$  pedal of the earlier theme altered to a B $\natural$  in the 'War Dance'

(figure 4.3). Indeed, if one hears WD3 as a reference to the earlier theme, the upwards-rushing harp glissandos – reinforced with ascending woodwind scales – might be understood to relate to the harp glissando at R30, which connects the initial two statements of VALSE TRISTE.

a) 92  
bsn/tba/vc/cb  
*ff*

b) 1  
hn  
*pp*

Figure 4.1: derivation of a) WD1 (R92) from b) APPEL (R1)

a) WD2 b) WD2 (retrograde) c) WD2 (retrograde, non-diatonic pitch removed) d) DC (transposed)

Figure 4.2: derivation of a) WD2 (R93) from d) DC (R1<sup>+5</sup>, transposed)

a) WD3 b) *valse triste*

c) melodic reduction of WD3 and *valse triste*

Figure 4.3: a) WD3 (R94), b) VALSE TRISTE (R29<sup>+3</sup>), c) melodic reduction of WD3 (stems up) and VALSE TRISTE (stems down)

Rehearsal figure	92	93	94	95	96	97+2	98	99	101	101+4	102	102+3	103	103+3	104	104+6	105	107	107+4			
Key	Bin			Modulating	F#				C		B		Bin		A							
Motif	1	1/2	1/3/4	1/4	1/4	1/2	1/3/4	1/4	1/4	1/2	1/3	1/3	4	4/Pirates	---	APPEL	APPEL/5	APPEL/1	APPEL/1/Pirates			
Modality	<i>Doing</i>	<i>Will</i>	<i>Can</i>	<i>Will to do</i>	<i>Can</i>	<i>Will</i>	<i>Can</i>	<i>Will to do</i>	<i>Will to do</i>		<i>Can</i>				<i>Being</i>	<i>Will to</i>	<i>Will to</i>	<i>Doing</i>				
Function	X	→	X	→	X	→	X		→		X	→	X			→	X	→	→	→		
Isotopy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19			
Supersotopy	1	2										3			4							
Form	A1	A2										A3			B1							
Rehearsal figure	108	108+4	109	111	111+4	112	112+3	114	115+4	116	118	120	121	122	123	124	125	126	126+4	129	130	
Key	F#			Ebm		C								A#	F#	A#		C#		F#	B	
Motif	---	AP	AP/5	AP/1	AP/1/Pirates	---	AP	AP/5	AP/1	APPEL/Pirates/7/1				1/2	1/2/4		1/2/4/Pirates	AP	APPEL/5	AP/5/1/Pirates		
Modality	<i>Being</i>		<i>Will to do</i>	<i>Doing</i>		<i>Being</i>		<i>Will to do</i>						<i>Will to do</i>			<i>Doing</i>	<i>Will to do</i>			<i>Doing</i>	
Function	→	X	→	→	→	→	X		→	→	→			→	→	X	→	→	→	→	X	
Isotopy	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	
Supersotopy	5	6										7										
Form	B2	B3										B4	B5	B6	A4							B7

Table 4.1: formal, superisotopic, and isotopic structure of 'War Dance' (double lines indicate articulation of supersotopies; X indicates a cardinal function, whereas →/← respectively indicate pre- and post-modal catalysers)

Alongside the presentation of WD3 by the brass, a neighbour-note figure is heard in the strings. This simple gesture is developed into a more significant motif in isotopy 5, and will reappear in the ‘Pantomime’ in Part III (see Chapter 5 for an analysis of this part of the ballet). However, it can also be heard as another reference to APPEL – an inversion of that theme’s descending-ascending contour, and a diminished retrograde of the original ♩.+♩ rhythm –, adding weight to Marcel Marnat’s description of APPEL as the ‘*motif générateur au ballet entier*’ (1986, 339) (see figure 4.4). The fourth isotopy (R95) transfers WD1 to the top of the texture in a short modulatory passage that moves towards the dominant, F♯, returning to the modality of *will to do*. Formally, the first four isotopies function as an initial rotation of a thematic complex, articulated by both thematic repetition and key centre. Each rotation can also be understood to delineate a *superisotopy* (see Chapter 3, section 3.5), but for three moments when the thematic and isotopic structures part ways, to be discussed below.<sup>3</sup>



Figure 4.4: derivation of a) WD4 (R94) from b) APPEL (R1)

Aside from the key change to the dominant, F♯, the second rotation/superisotopy follows much the same course as the first. However, isotopy 5 superimposes a variant of WD4 over WD1, combining two retrograde versions of the

<sup>3</sup> Puri makes a similar observation concerning the rotational structure of the ‘War Dance’, although he hears RR92-122 as forming an initial rotation of two sets of material,  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ , labelling what I refer to as rotations as subrotations (2011b, 124). The difference is principally terminological, and is essentially a result of my focus on the changing relationship between thematic and narrative structure in the dance.

motif – the first also an inversion – which together are suggestive of the principal theme of Daphnis’s ‘Danse légère’ from Part I (DAPHNIS). R96 even replicates the parallel-triad harmonisation and single-instrument sonority of R43, with the pastoral flutes of the earlier dance replaced by martial trumpets (see figure 4.5).<sup>4</sup> This variant also reappears in the ‘Syrinx Dance’ in Part III, RR182-84 (see Chapter 5, section 5.7.4 for an analysis of this dance). The virtuosity required of the brass at this point, alongside the completion of the modulation to the dominant in this isotopy once again surmodalises isotopy 1’s modality of *doing* with ability: *can do*.



Figure 4.5: a) WD4 at R94, b) WD4 variant at R96, c) DAPHNIS: principal theme from Daphnis’s dance (R43)

Aside from the addition of the new variant of WD4 and the new key, the other principal change made to the second thematic rotation is the indication *animez peu à peu* (R100): the *accelerando* continues until R102, cutting across the end of rotation 2 and the beginning of rotation 3, blurring the formal outline. The *plus animé* tempo that is reached at R102 also coincides with a return to the tonic, B; unlike the previous two rotations, there are two keys established in rotation 3, C major (♭II) at R101 and B major (I) at R102. Tonally, ♭II functions as a prolongation of V, a role it assumes over a much larger expanse of time during the central portion of the ‘War Dance’ (see below, section 4.1.2). The combined *accelerando* and dominant-function tonality, both of which prolong the modality of *will to do*, reach their culmination simultaneously at R102, articulating a narrative superisotopy that is asynchronous with the formal design

<sup>4</sup> Puri refers to this variant as ‘brass fanfare’ (2011b, 123).

(see table 4.1, in which the superisotopic structure is indicated by double lines). This decoupling of formal and narrative structures becomes clearer in a voice-leading reduction, where the thematic articulation (A1 – A3) fails to coincide with the tonal/superisotopic structure (SI1 – SI3) (figure 4.6).

Figure 4.6: voice-leading reduction RR92-102, showing formal (A1-3) and superisotopic (SI1-3) articulation

This rift in the formal and narrative structures is celebrated in a violently triumphant rendition of the martial WD3, the distorted variant of VALSE TRISTE. This is the most extensive presentation of the theme heard thus far, stretching to a full eight bars, double the length of both of the previous appearances. It also leads at R103<sup>3</sup> to the introduction of a motif not yet heard in the ‘War Dance’, the fanfare that had warned of the Pirates’ approach at R62 (PIRATES). As was highlighted in the discussion of PIRATE’s initial appearance in Chapter 1 (section 1.6), the motif outlines one of the most prominent harmonies in the ballet, the half-diminished seventh that accompanies the majority of the appearances of Daphnis and Chloe’s theme, DC, and this is equally true of its presentation in the ‘War Dance’ (figure 4.7).

In fact, the resonances of earlier portions of the score do not stop there, as the B-acoustic tonality between RR103-104 is identical to that of the climax of the ‘Introduction’, at R4<sup>+3</sup>; indeed, the manner in which the later passage subsides dynamically from the fortissimo brass statement, with the bass dropping to an A at R104, is highly reminiscent of the transition from the climax of the ‘Introduction’ to the beginning of the ‘Religious Dance’ at R5, as are the trumpet’s contour (prominent A-G-F $\sharp$  descent) and the repetitions of APPEL/WD4 (figure 4.8).

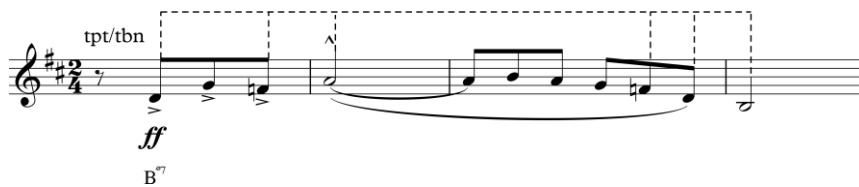


Figure 4.7: presentation of ‘Pirates’ at R103<sup>+3</sup>, indicating half-diminished seventh outline



Figure 4.8: comparison of a) R4<sup>+4</sup> and b) R103<sup>+3</sup>, with shared pitch content shown as c)



#### 4.1.2 The 'B' rotation

Following the asynchronous articulation of thematic rotations and narrative superisotopies between RR101 and 103, the start of a new thematic rotation (B) at R104 sees the thematic and narrative structures back in step. The new rotation is articulated by a significant increase in tempo (from  $\downarrow = 152$  at R102 to  $\downarrow = 184$  at R104), a change of key to A, and six bars of athematic, textural 'dead space' in the strings. The entrance of the muted trumpet at R104<sup>+6</sup> introduces APPEL as the first theme of rotation B, the motif also picked out in viola pizzicato. The upper note of the motif – D $\sharp$  – is a tritone above the bass, an interval that has been heard consistently in the WD1 variant of APPEL: the A-D $\sharp$  tritone was also a prominent interval in the 'Introduction', specifically at the first presentation of NYMPHES, again suggesting that the 'War Dance' is on one level a recomposition of earlier parts of the score (see Chapter 1, section 1.6). However, the tritone is also a significant interval in octatonic environments – famously so in instances such as the coronation scene from Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, or the characteristic sonority of Stravinsky's ballet *Petrouchka*<sup>5</sup> – and the introduction of a new theme (WD5) in the piccolo at R105 expands the pitch content to complete OC<sub>0,1,3</sub>.

Up to this point the dance has emphasised either gravelly bass sonorities (e.g. WD1) or raucous brass, so the introduction of a new theme by a member of the flute family is marked in context. Moreover, flute sonorities have featured at a number of crucial moments in the score, such as Lyceion's dance and the 'Dance of the Nymphs',

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<sup>5</sup> Moreover, octatonic collections can be partitioned into two minor tetrachords a tritone apart, as in the bridge between 'Ritual of the Rival Tribes' and 'Procession of the Sage' in Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* (see van den Toorn 1987, 126, Hill 2000, 48). For a wide-ranging exploration of Ravel's use of octatonic collections see Baur (1999); see also Helbing (2008, 159-160, 162-165).

and the instrument will feature even more prominently in the ‘Pantomime’ in Part III (see Chapter 5). Given the pastoral setting of the ballet, it is to be expected that Pan’s instrument should play such a major role, but its appearance at this point of the ‘War Dance’ is perhaps not as obvious, since the scene is set in the Pirates’ encampment, rather than the pastoral idyll of Parts I and III: this point will be revisited below (see section 4.1.4.3).<sup>6</sup>

Another notable feature of WD5 is its employment of stereotyped ‘Oriental’ features, in particular augmented seconds and a sinuous, arabesque contour; indeed, Puri refers to WD5 as the ‘exotic theme’ (2011b, 124). Although the brutalism of the earlier part of the dance is coded exotic in its primitivism, the cod-Orientalism of WD5 carries a much stronger flavour of the seductive, feminine Other. As Puri notes, the contrast between WD5 and other material in the dance is crucial, essentially ‘staging an agon between [...] the exotic theme [WD5] and the pirate theme [WD1]’ (2011b, 124). However, the octatonic sonorities of WD5 also evoke similar tonal environments in Part I of the ballet: prior to R105, octatonicism appears prominently at three points in *Daphnis*: (1) just after Chloe’s appearance during the ‘Religious Dance’ (R11); (2) in the central section of Daphnis’s ‘Danse légère’ (R47); and (3) the animation of the three Nymphs during the ‘Nocturne’ (R70). Given the ubiquity with which octatonic collections are employed in this period ‘to represent the odd, scary, or unfamiliar’ (Heinzelmann 2008, 27), it is curious to note the specificity of Ravel’s use of

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<sup>6</sup> In case the reader might wonder if the instrument is standing in for a hornpipe, and thus related to the Pirates’ seafaring, it is worth pointing out that the instrument so called was played by *shepherds*, rather than sailors. Equally, the dance of the same name is properly a country dance: although there are two hornpipes in Handel’s *Water Music*, the nautical associations of the dance are more recent, and a result of the popularity of the ‘College’ or ‘Sailors’ Hornpipe’ – best known to those who grew up in the UK as the theme to the BBC TV children’s show, *Blue Peter* – which is not actually a genuine hornpipe (see *Grove Music Online* articles by Baines, Dean-Smith, s.v. ‘Hornpipe (i), ‘Hornpipe (ii)’).

octatonicism in *Daphnis* at these four points in the ballet.<sup>7</sup> For while the Nymphs and the Pirates can reasonably be described as ‘odd, scary, or unfamiliar’, it is not immediately clear what the significance of the octatonic is in relation to Daphnis and Chloe, nor what its function is within the larger narrative. This point will be returned to below (see section 4.1.4.3).

WD5 consists of two halves, a rising four-note figure in dotted crochets and quavers that spans the tritone from  $\flat\hat{7}-\hat{3}$ , and an inverted arch gesture in semiquavers consisting of augmented seconds between  $\flat\hat{2}-\hat{3}$  and  $\flat\hat{5}-\hat{6}$ . Given the prevalence of APPEL variants in the ‘War Dance’, it is notable that this motif is also relatable by inversion to the ‘*motif générateur*’, the registral and metrical placing of the initial G suggesting a hearing of it as a lower appoggiatura to the final A (figure 4.9). However, after a straightforward repetition of the phrase, the melodic fragmentation that occurs disrupts this, stressing instead the initial G-C# ascent. The manner in which the melody is unable to progress beyond these four notes becomes increasingly frantic sounding, as if WD5 has become trapped in its initial four notes and is desperately spinning round, trying to find a way out (*will to do*). The sense of mounting desperation is enhanced by the crescendo and addition of a second piccolo, before the diminuendo suggests that the attempt at escape has been given up (figure 4.10).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> However, Volker Helbing argues for the possibility of an alternative octatonic hermeneutic in the music of Ravel, discussing “immersion in the octatonic field” or octatonic *paradis artificiel*’ (2012, 178).

<sup>8</sup> In his analysis of the ‘War Dance’ from the perspective of his concept of ‘spiral form’, Volker Helbing describes the initial presentation of WD5 as ‘a (three-stage) phase of rhythmic escalation [*Zuspitsung*]’ (2008, 51; my translation).

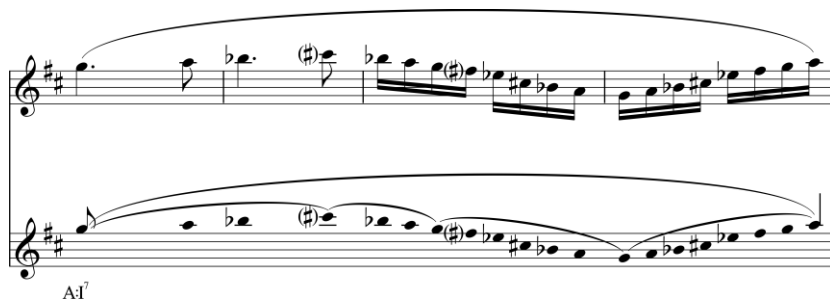


Figure 4.9: WD5 (R105)



Figure 4.10: melodic fragmentation of WD5 (R106)

The reappearance of WD1 and its characteristically gruff bass timbre at R107 – followed by PIRATES five bars later – returns us to the soundworld of the ‘A’ rotation. The contrast with WD5 is stark, the rumbling aggression of WD1 a completely different world to the sinuous exoticism of the piccolo theme, a juxtaposition that lends a sense of particular significance to WD5. The high pitch of the piccolo, the undulating, arabesque contour, and the exotic augmented intervals all appear to point towards the theme’s characterisation as ‘feminine’: Gurminder K. Bhogal has pointed out the encoding of arabesques as feminine in art of the period (2013, 64), and Ralph P. Locke has shown that the same was true of the exotic in music (1998, 115, 118).<sup>9</sup> The fragile sound of the piccolo, isolated high above the rest of the orchestra, the manner in which the melody appears to become ‘trapped’ (discussed above), as well as the enclosure of WD5 with WD1 and the Pirates’ fanfare suggest

<sup>9</sup> Puri makes a nearly identical point: ‘Register, instrumentation, and meter invite us to hear and conceptualize the thematic opposition [between WD5 and WD1] in terms of gender, with the sinuous, “feminine,” exotic theme inciting the “masculine” pirate theme’ (2011b, 124).

that the feminine is in some way under threat. I will return to this point below (see section 4.1.4.3).

The next ‘B’ rotation is virtually identical to the first, but for a key change to F# and the transfer of WD5 to clarinets, instruments that, alongside the flute, feature prominently during Lyceion’s dance in Part I (see Chapter 5, section 5.6). Again APPEL is heard in the trumpets, the upper appoggiatura stressing a tritone against the bass. The harmonic context is also still OC<sub>0,1,3</sub>, although WD5 has not been transposed, so the relationship between melody and harmony has changed, meaning, for example, that both notes of the B $\flat$  (enharmonically A#) to C# augmented second are now consonant with the F# tonality. It also means that the initial G is now a lower appoggiatura to  $\hat{3}$ , rather than  $\hat{1}$ , although the G’s level of dissonance has increased, being a minor ninth above the bass, rather than the flattened seventh. Also intensified is the frantic ‘trapped’ portion of WD5, with the clarinet joined by a second clarinet, piccolo clarinet, cor anglais and oboes. The final alteration to the second ‘B’ rotation is the shift to E $\flat$  minor at R111, which, when completed with the move to C at R112 arpeggiates a diminished seventh (figure 4.11).

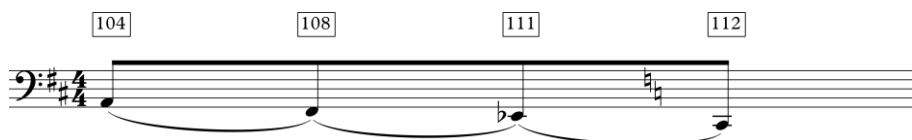


Figure 4.11: diminished-seventh arpeggiation, RR104-112

The arrival in C at R112 begins an extended passage in this key, lasting until R122. Tonally, the passage functions as a prolongation of the dominant, F#, an expansion of the similar function performed by the key between RR101 and 102. The

key change appears to have an enervating effect: although there has been a gradual increase in tempo across the span of the dance (*animez peu à peu* at R100, *plus animé* at R102 and *encore plus animé* at R104), the arrival of C is accompanied by the instruction *un peu moins animé*: from this point, until the very end of the dance, each *animez peu à peu* is closely followed by the countermanding *moins animé*. There are a number of other subtle alterations made in rotation B3. For one, the triplet string accompaniment is moved from the violins/violas to cellos and basses, shifting to the same register as WD1. The scalar placement of APPEL is also changed; in the previous two rotations the motif has been an upper appoggiatura of  $\sharp\hat{4}$  resolving to  $\hat{3}$ : from R112 APPEL is formed from two unresolving appoggiaturas,  $\flat\hat{3}$  and  $\flat\hat{2}$ .

Although the instrumentation of WD5 has again been altered, appearing at R114 in alto flute, as in the previous two rotations the motif retains its pitch-class identity, despite the change of harmony; whereas APPEL has shifted its positioning relative to the harmony, in WD5 the harmony has moved relative to the melody. Borrowing the concept from Deborah Rifkin (2004), Sigrun B. Heinzlmann refers to such instances as ‘pitch-class motives’: ‘quite often, Ravel will alter the scale-degree functions of identical pitch-class motives by changing their harmonic contexts’ (2008, 85). This has the effect of making different notes within WD5 consonant and dissonant with the underlying harmony in each rotation. In B1 (A major) the second and fourth notes of the melody are consonant; in B2 (F $\sharp$  major) it is the third and fourth notes; in B3 (C $^7$ ) it is the first and third notes. In such contexts, the stability of the motivic identity – in which the pitch-class content remains the same – is apparently undermined by the shifting harmonic context, as if such motifs are without a ‘home’, not belonging securely to any one harmonic environment. Such an impression is

highlighted here by the fact that, in the first two presentations of WD5, the long initial note – G – is dissonant with the harmonic context, enhancing the sense that the melody does not ‘fit’; yet, once the G finds a home with the underlying C<sup>7</sup> harmony in rotation 3, the highest note of the phrase – C#/D<sup>b</sup>, previously consonant – is now dissonant, and therefore WD5 remains harmonically ‘other’ (figure 4.12).

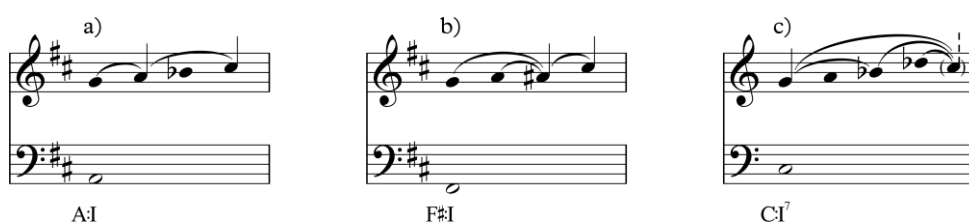


Figure 4.12: changing harmonic context of WD5: a) R104, b) R109, c) R114

Once WD5 begins to fragment at R115<sup>+4</sup> another alteration to the established pattern is heard, with WD1 entering early, underneath the continuing ‘trapped’ WD5 fragment; in the previous two rotations the two motifs have been kept distinct. This overlapping of thematic space continues as the next ‘B’ rotation gets under way, with WD5 entering before PIRATES has completed its statement. The end of WD5 has also been altered: from this point on, rather than the melody turning round in circles – the ‘trapped’ effect described above – the end of WD5 now attempts to break free from its repetition with a short ascending sequence. Each time this occurs it is ‘interrupted’ by PIRATES, a consequence of the overlapping of themes, but having the effect of sounding as if WD5 has had its escape barred by the early arrival of the Pirates’ principal theme.<sup>10</sup> The erasure of clear formal boundaries effected by the overlapping of themes is enhanced by the continuing C pedal – now supporting a C minor six-four chord – which attenuates the sense of harmonic articulation that was a clear formal

<sup>10</sup> Helbing refers to this as a ‘multi-stage stretto’ (2008, 51; my translation).

marker in all previous rotations. Another effect of the pedal is to suggest a larger superisotopic articulation, so that rotations B3-6 are encompassed by one superisotopy: the thematic and narrative-isotopic structure is once again out of step (see table 4.1).

Although APPEL has shifted relative to the harmony again, this time appearing on  $\hat{7}-\hat{6}$ , of greater significance is the transposition of WD5, now beginning on  $\hat{1}$  (C), which lends a greater degree of harmonic stability to the melody, even if the registral high-point of the phrase remains dissonant. The transposition also has the effect of removing WD5 from its octatonic construction: all three previous presentations of the theme have been part of  $OC_{0,1,3}$ , whereas the transposition onto C brings it – mostly – within  $OC_{0,2,3}$ . Only ‘mostly’, though, as the pitch G – heard both in WD5 and in the parallel-third harmonisation of APPEL – is outside of the collection. This is not quite the first non-octatonic pitch since the introduction of WD5, but it is the first time that WD5 has been heard outside its octatonic ‘home’ (the only previous pitch out of collection was the F found in WD1 and PIRATES between RR107 and 108).<sup>11</sup> As if to reinforce the significance of this G, the pitch reappears as the first note of the presentation of WD1 at R117<sup>+4</sup>. Again, there is an overlap between WD5 and WD1, and PIRATES and the start of the new rotation (B5).

Rotation B5 places WD5 yet further from its octatonic origins. Although the first four notes of its new transposition – D $\sharp$ -E $\sharp$ -F $\sharp$ -A – are component pitches of  $OC_{0,2,3}$ , the following semiquaver run completely abandons an alternating semitone-tone pattern, placing it outside the octatonic system. The progressive abandonment of

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<sup>11</sup> There is also a ‘rogue’ E $\sharp$  in the oboes’ semiquavers R110<sup>+2</sup>-111, but its appearance is so fleeting – on the third and eighth semiquaver of each bar, and so buried amidst the emphatically octatonic noise that surrounds it, that it is hard to imagine how a listener might pick up on it.



octatonicism is not the only intervallic process at play, however. As figure 4.13 shows, from RR112-118 the first and fourth notes of WD5 are consistently consonant with the underlying harmony; from R120 it is only the first note of the melody that maintains a consonant link with its supporting harmony, WD5 essentially moving away from its tonal surroundings, until the C<sup>9</sup> harmony is established at R121<sup>+2</sup>, at which point three out of the four main notes of WD5 are consonant. It is almost as if WD5 is struggling to break away from its harmonic context, only to be more conclusively brought back within the tonal framework at R121<sup>+2</sup>.

This sense of mounting desperation is reinforced by the decreasing gap between rotations (shown in the boxes underneath the staff in figure 4.13), and the increase in tempo from R120. The shortening rotations are a result of the increasingly brief statements of WD5, which means that the interruptions from WD1 and PIRATES are becoming gradually more frequent, as if they are progressively restraining WD5's room for manoeuvre. This process reaches its apotheosis RR121-122, during which time triumphant imitative statements of PIRATES in the brass appear to force WD5 into a frantically repetitive trap, the motif first turning in circles around a Db-G tritone, before being restricted to a one-bar iteration, unable to break free (figure 4.14).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Helbing also notes this 'shortening from 30 to thirteen, twelve, and six bars [...] reinforced by a rapid *accelerando*'; for him, this represents the section's 'spiral' (2008, 51; my translation).

Figure 4.13: voice-leading analysis of WD5, RR112-122

Figure 4.14: WD5 and Pirates' fanfare, R121

As is suggested by the additional note-stems in figure 4.14, there is arguably a hint of the DC theme in the antiphonal exchanges from R121, but with the lower fifth distorted into a tritone, forming the so-called ‘atonal triad’ familiar from the contemporaneous works of Schoenberg and Bartók, among others (see Taruskin 2005, 331-333).<sup>13</sup> This tritonal distortion mirrors the manner in which other motifs from the ballet are deformed elsewhere in the ‘War Dance’, such as the embellishment of APPEL’s paired notes with pitches a tritone underneath in WD1. As the passage reaches its climax PIRATES morphs into the variant of WD4 first heard at R96; here,

<sup>13</sup> The stretto effect of the brass exchanges here recalls a similar moment towards the start of Ravel’s first orchestral work, the ‘fairy overture’ *Shéhérazade* (1898); the relevant section starts at R2.

its kinship with the main theme from Daphnis's 'Danse légère' (DAPHNIS) is clarified by its triplet rhythm, reminiscent of the compound time of the earlier dance.

The pattern of progressive diminution of WD5 breaks at R122, with a return to 'A' rotation material: the sense of arrival is emphasised by the long C pedal finally dropping to a B $\flat$ . WD1 is heard first, pointillistically fragmented throughout the brass and pizzicato strings. The effect of the hocket-like texture creates a stereoscopic effect that engenders a sense of being surrounded by the motif, as fragments of it bounce between stage right (horns) and left (trumpets and trombones). An ascending variant of WD2 in the woodwinds and upper strings appears determined to break away (compare with the musical depiction of Chloe's attempts at escape in her 'Danse suppliante' – see Chapter 6, section 6.4), before being cut off by the returning WD1, which forces the bass down to G $\sharp$ , initiating a sequential repetition of the 'escaping' WD2.

#### *4.1.3 The final two rotations*

The bass drops another whole tone to F $\sharp$  at R123, marking an upwards arpeggiation of V (the enharmonic substitution of A $\sharp$  by B $\flat$  is 'corrected' at R125) that is completed by the beginning of a twenty-bar C $\sharp$  (V/V) pedal at R126. In fact, we may retrospectively hear the B $\flat$  at R122 as an enharmonic A $\sharp$  (reflected in the key given in table 4.1), and place the beginning of the dominant arpeggiation at the start of the return of the 'A' rotation. This upwards arpeggiation of V is answered by a downwards arpeggiation of I starting at R129, articulating a larger tonal unit, one that encompasses both of the final thematic rotations; for the third time in the dance, the

formal and superisotopic articulation is out of step. Similar to the second occasion, the superisotopic structure here encompasses two thematic articulations, rather than one breaking free from the other, as occurred between superisotopies 2/3 and rotations A2/A3.

The completion of the arpeggiation of V at R126 also marks the return of WD5, and therefore 'B' rotation material. The version of WD5 heard here represents the culmination of the gradual 'de-octatonicisation' of the theme discussed above. The first three notes of the theme's opening four-note 'tag' have until this point retained a characteristic T-S intervallic structure that allows it at least the potential of existing within an octatonic context. However, the final version of WD5 heard at R126<sup>+4</sup> begins with the pitches B-C#-D#, or T-T, and thus no longer belongs in any of the three octatonic collections, which are, of course, constructed out of alternating whole tones and semitones. Essentially, from R116 the octatonic identity of the theme has gradually been erased.

Underneath this final version of WD5, the harmonies shift between half-diminished seventh and dominant-ninth chords on C#; these two chords are the same two that harmonise DC as it appears in different contexts throughout the ballet. The alternation of these two chords has the effect of making different notes of the theme's four-note tag consonant and dissonant, repeating in miniature the larger-scale process of changing harmonic context described above. The first three notes are consonant with C#<sup>9</sup>, leaving the fourth pitch, G, a non-harmonic note. However, this pitch – along with the initial B – is consonant with the C#<sup>o7</sup> harmony. To put it another way, the half-diminished seventh emphasises the tritonal relationship between the chordal root and the fourth note of the tag – C#-G – the one intervallic relationship that carries a

sense of the octatonic, and therefore the theme's original identity (see above, section 4.1.2, for more on the relationship between tritones and octatonic environments). Of course, tritones have been present throughout the dance, presumably carrying their traditional 'evil' connotations in depicting the Pirates. However, the prominent tritone in the four-note tag of WD5 has been an important component of its octatonic background, and the changing status of  $b\hat{5}$  at this point seems emblematic of the theme's struggle to retain something of its original uniqueness in the face of musical processes that seek to change its identity.

From R126 the texture is gradually assembled, building towards the climax in a manner not dissimilar to the crescendo between RR3 and 5, which leads to the climax of the 'Introduction'. The alternating harmony is outlined in cello appoggiaturas, supported by pianissimo horn chords, over the top of which choral basses intone APPEL on  $\hat{2}-\hat{1}$  of C#. Above the basses, tenors sing a war cry characterised by a Scotch-snap rhythm, giving agogic emphasis to  $b\hat{5}$ . After four bars, WD5 enters in the clarinet, divested of its octatonicism, answered by the cor anglais and bassoon at R127. As the orchestration increases WD5 is passed to flutes and oboes (R127<sup>+4</sup>), quickly turning into a round between flutes/oboes and piccolo/clarinets, the circling nature of the theme emphasised by the imitative presentation. By R129 WD5 has lost its characteristic four-note tag, and has been reduced to its circling tail, which repeats for eight bars, an amplification of the similar process heard before the introduction of WD1 in each of the 'B' rotations. The tension generated by the repetition and textural/orchestrational intensification (by R129<sup>+4</sup> the orchestra has grown to nearly its full complement) finally breaks at R130, as the culmination of the downwards arpeggiation of I is met by an explosion of sound. At this point, the circling tail of

WD5 becomes a mere ostinato accompaniment to WD1 in bassoons/tuba/cellos/basses (and a variant in glockenspiel), APPEL in trombones/timpani/harps/2<sup>nd</sup> violins/violas, and PIRATES, which is played in a round by the trumpets.<sup>14</sup> The manner in which the ‘feminine’ WD5 is submerged beneath the triumphant PIRATES is emphasised by the whooping horns and tenors – note the absence of female voices in the choir at this point, emphasising the prevailing ‘masculinity’ – a terrifyingly jubilant sound that cuts through the melee thanks to the relatively high registral placement of the instruments/voices.

#### 4.1.4 *A narrative hermeneutic of the ‘War Dance’*

Having been provided with significant textual cues in Part I of *Daphnis* – even in the general dances specific actions are described in the libretto, where appropriate – the ‘War Dance’ is given no written directions at all, beyond the scene-setting description of the Pirates’ encampment and its ‘violent’ illumination of torches prior to the dance itself. However, as the foregoing analytical description of the dance suggests, there is a great deal of hermeneutic potential in the ‘War Dance’, beyond its superficial function as a balletic set piece. Although the thematic connections with other parts of the score make sense in connection with the description of the work as a ‘choreographic symphony’ in Ravel’s ‘Autobiographical Sketch’ (see Chapter 1, section 1.1), the narrative and semiotic implications of the dance inflect the motivic links in hermeneutically suggestive ways.

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<sup>14</sup> This is a texture reminiscent of the ‘layered’ orchestration characteristic of Stravinsky in this period, such as the climax of the ‘Procession of the Sage’ in *The Rite*.

#### 4.1.4.1 Motive-actors

As has been noted above, a number of the motifs established in the ‘War Dance’ are derivable from APPEL, ‘the motivic-harmonic theme of invocation’ (Puri 2011b, 64). An obvious reference point for WD4 – and, much more obliquely, WD5’s opening tag – its most telling transformation is into WD1, the ‘stomping ostinato’ (ibid., 124) that serves as the characteristic motif of the whole dance. Gone are the gently rocking stacked fourths of its original presentation; the perfect intervals are here unfolded and distorted into tritones. Moreover, the soft dynamic and middle-register placement are exchanged for fortissimo bass instruments, as if the somewhat androgynous gendering of the motif elsewhere in the score has morphed into something raucously ‘masculine’. This re-rendering of APPEL is particularly significant when its distant relation WD5 is introduced, which, as suggested above, is coded ‘feminine’ (section 4.1.2): the confinement of WD5 between statements of WD1 suggests the former motif-actor is under assault from the latter, especially when WD1 reaches up from its characteristic register to occupy the higher tessitura inhabited by WD5, as happens at the end of each ‘B’ rotation.

As a motif, APPEL appears to belong to everyone and everything in *Daphnis et Chloé*, rather than relate to a specific character or situation, functioning almost as a type of musical backcloth, establishing the setting of the work in a manner similar to those designed for the ballet by Bakst (reproduced in Mawer 2006b, 98, 100). However, the other two themes which provide the basis of new variants in the ‘War Dance’ are more explicitly related to the two main characters, DC and VALSE TRISTE. WD2 retains the circular motion around the lower note of a perfect fifth from DC, the portion of the theme that Deborah Mawer suggests relates specifically to

Daphnis (2006b, 94), a thesis that is supported by the fact that the upper fifth of DC – which Mawer relates to Chloe (ibid.) – is absent during much of Chloe’s abduction, as if her absence has silenced her fragment of the theme (see Chapter 1, section 1.6). However, the retrograde of this fragment of DC has the effect of inverting the original theme’s contour, no longer gently reaching down from a shared pitch, but lunging upwards to the higher register, as if grasping or snatching at something, an effect enhanced by its rapid crescendo and off-beat horn chords on the upper note. In fact, as suggested during the initial analysis of the dance, both of the opening motifs of the ‘War Dance’ – WD1/2 – are strongly gestural in their effect: a violent stamping in WD1 and an intemperate snatching in WD2, neither gesture elegant or measured in the manner of their source motifs.

As mentioned previously, VALSE TRISTE has inspired a number of different ascriptions, but, given its mournful, waltz-like transformation of Daphnis’s *geste brusque*, it strongly suggests Chloe’s sorrowful response to Daphnis’s jealously intemperate action (see Chapter 1, section 1.6 and Chapter 3, section 3.2). Its transformation into the brassy WD3 in the ‘War Dance’ entails a further alteration in expression, the instrumentation and dotted rhythms suggesting a militaristic hauteur. If the transformation of *geste brusque* into VALSE TRISTE suggests causality, the latter a response to the former, one might reasonably infer a similar process at play in the conversion from VALSE TRISTE to WD3, and here one must necessarily touch on the issue of narrative agency in the ‘War Dance’.<sup>15</sup> Although the dance is clearly a general dance performed by the corps de ballet, and despite its superficial function as a set piece, the motivic links with the events of Part I are suggestive of a greater degree

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<sup>15</sup> See Chapter 2, section 2.3.2 for more on the issue of causality in music.



of hermeneutic possibility. As intimated above, the ordering of material in the ‘A’ rotation – a variant of APPEL followed by a variant of DC – is similar to that of the ballet’s introduction; moreover, the end of superisotopy 3 recalls the climax and end of the same passage, just before the beginning of the ‘Religious Dance’. These reminiscences, and the manner in which the source material is distorted, suggest that the ‘War Dance’ represents a perversion of the pastoral idyll of the opening of the ballet, the bucolic calm of ‘*la Grèce de mes rêves*’ (Ravel, cited in Marnat 1986, 338) transformed into a frenzied display of ferocity (ibid., 340).

#### 4.1.4.2 Actorial ascription

So the pastoral scene has changed to one of violence, but who inhabits it? The obvious answer is, of course, the Pirates, but this only leads to further questions: how might one interpret the presence of thematic links to other parts of the score/narrative, in particular those that are associated with specific characters and events? Why is the music here, danced by the Pirates, imbued with subliminal links to Daphnis, Chloe and the youths of the first part of the ballet? Although he does not pose the question himself, Puri provides a possible answer to this question when he suggests that the events of Part II of the ballet represents the ‘Dream of Daphnis’:

Cavorting about in a drunken, chaotic orgy, the pirates figure Daphnis’s liberated sexual drives; the acceleration of the dance at its coda and the resulting collapse of the pirates combine to illustrate an orgasmic release of sexual energy.

(2011b, 128)

In Puri’s reading, the Pirates’ Chief, Bryaxis, acts as a ‘surrogate Daphnis who does not sublimate his desire but rather takes pleasure in subjecting Chloe to his will’ (ibid.,

128). Marcel Marnat interprets the sequence in a similar fashion, suggesting that the sudden aesthetic contrast of Part II is indicative of Daphnis's dream state, arguing that his reverie is brought on by Lyceion's attempted seduction (1986, 341; see also Mawer 2006b, 103).

This reading not only provides a motivation for the motivic links to earlier sections of the score, but also offers a possible rationale for interpreting their significance. The symbolism of the 'grasping' Chloe-less distortion of DC in WD2 is relatively straightforward to read, but the transformation of VALSE TRISTE into WD3 is more subtle, and part of a larger narrative process, in which the descending motif is heard first as violent jealousy (*geste brusque*), then as disappointed, sorrowful reaction (VALSE TRISTE), and in the 'War Dance' as proud rejoinder to that reaction, blasted out by the brass in military-sounding dotted rhythms. Alongside this we may place the new trumpet-trio version of the opening of Daphnis's 'Danse légère', which imbues an originally gentle passage of music with a similarly strident quality to that of WD3. The larger-scale narrative significance of *geste brusque*-related thematic transformations will be explored further in Chapter 6 (section 6.5).

#### 4.1.4.3 Narrative significance

Taking Daphnis as the protagonist or subject of the 'War Dance' also suggests a possible narrative for the dance as a whole, and a more significant function within the larger narrative than mere exotic set piece in the style of the 'Polovtsian Dances'. The first 'A' rotation establishes Daphnis's newly violent characterisation, with distorted, war-like versions of a variety of previously heard motifs. Significantly, the pastoral landscape which Daphnis inhabited gracefully during his 'Danse légère' is now heard

to be under aggressive occupation, hinted at by the pounding tritonal perversion of APPEL (WD1), alongside other reminiscences of the scene established at the opening of the ballet, as outlined above (sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.4.1). The alteration in characterisation of both Daphnis and the landscape suggests an eruption of a form of masculinity different to that presented (or at least attempted) in the ‘Dance Contest’, a violent transition from *homme d’honneur* to *grande fauve*.

At the close of the first set of ‘A’ rotations a rupture occurs between the articulation of the different narrative strands, with the rotational structure of the thematic content becoming asynchronous with the tonally articulated superisotopic structure. I described this above as a ‘breaking free’, and a clue to what has escaped comes in the ensuing ‘B’ rotations. As Puri has suggested (2011b, 124), a struggle is staged from this point in the dance, that between the ‘feminine’ ‘B’-rotation material, and the ‘masculine’ themes of the ‘A’ rotation. Puri’s ‘agon’ is richer in connotation than a mere ‘battle of the sexes’, however. Gender can be performed in many ways: there is no single ‘feminine’ or ‘masculine’, but a variety of manners in which gender can be constructed, including, of course, non-binary forms of gender. The violent form of masculinity presented in the dance has already been commented on, but the form that the feminine takes in the ‘War Dance’ belongs to a more general semiotics of the Other. This is the function of the octatonicism – and, indeed, the exoticism – in this passage, connoting a femininity that is ‘odd, scary, or unfamiliar’ (Heinzelmann 2011, 27), the conquest and control of which becomes the object of the masculine Subject for the remainder of the dance. Moreover, as noted above, the shifting harmonic contexts of WD5 suggest a lack of belonging to any one tonal space, further contributing to the sense of WD5 as Other.

The gradual subjugation of the feminine ‘B’ material can be observed in the steady ‘de-octatonicisation’ of WD5, its difference chipped away at by the ‘A’ material, until all that is left of its octatonic character is the tritone it already shared with WD1. The decreasing space allotted to WD5 at each presentation also contributes to this, the theme increasingly interrupted by WD1, and undergoing a process of gradual contraction, until it finally becomes a mere swirling ostinato accompaniment to the ‘A’ material. This is a marked change in status for WD5, which becomes subsidiary to the ‘masculine’ music of the ‘A’ rotation, no longer a theme in its own right.

To lay this out in Greimassian terms, we can provisionally parse the narrative programme of the ‘War Dance’ as one where the narrative Object (WD5) breaks free (becomes disjunct:  $\cup$ ) from the narrative Subject (represented actorily by the thematic complex WD1-4 and PIRATES), and is then brought back under control (a return to a conjunct state:  $\cap$ ). Expressed using Greimas’s symbolic notation, the narrative is thus  $(S \cap O) \rightarrow (S \cup O) \rightarrow (S \cap O)$ , a ‘euphoric’ narrative cycle (see Chapter 2, section 2.4.1). However, there are two details of the ‘B’ rotation that still need to be dealt with: 1) the flute-family instrumentation of two presentations of WD5, which inflects the narrative programme just laid out, and will be dealt with here, and 2) the long C pedal, which contributes to the dance’s broader significance, and will be picked up later on in the chapter (see section 4.3.3).

As was noted in section 4.1.2, the initial piccolo sonority of WD5 is contextually marked, given the prevalence of martial brass and stomping bass sounds prior to this point in the dance. As Davina Caddy has recently noted, thanks to the myth of Pan and Syrinx – and of course the actual use of pan pipes by the shepherds

of ancient Greece – the association between pastoral masculinity and the flute is an ancient one (2012, 76), and one that is made explicit in the use of a trio of flutes in Daphnis’s ‘Danse légère’. However, thanks to the Pan-Syrinx association, flute-like sonorities do not just function as iconic panpipes, but point to further, symbolic meanings (see Monelle 1992, 197-200 for a straightforward explanation of C.S. Peirce’s distinction between icon, index, and symbol). As we will have cause to explore later on in this thesis (see Chapter 5), the myth of Pan and Syrinx is strongly connected to the story of Daphnis and Chloe, both in the ballet and in the source novel, and its underlying theme of masculine violence has clear resonances for the ‘War Dance’. It is of great note, therefore, that the feminine Object of the narrative (WD5) is presented initially by a member of the flute family, the piccolo: like a female Prometheus stealing fire from the gods, WD5 has the audacity to usurp Pan’s phallic pipe, symbol of his violent action towards Syrinx, and emblematic of his masculinity. This is Syrinx laying claim to the very symbol of her brutal death.

This is not the first time such an event has occurred in the narrative of *Daphnis et Chloé*. Lyceion’s entrance in Part I is accompanied by a pair of clarinets: Caddy notes that the symbolic association between masculinity and the flute is matched by one between femininity and reed instruments (2012, 76). However, once Lyceion’s dance begins it is to the sound of the flute, the instrument functioning as an analogue to her undermining of sexual norms in attempting to seduce Daphnis (this point will be expanded in Chapter 5, sections 5.4 and 5.6). Following Lyceion’s attempted seduction, Daphnis – the *homme d’honneur* who has just beaten Dorcon in a dance contest – is left feeling ‘very troubled’ (libretto). In the ‘War Dance’, however, the affront has a very different effect, leading to the process of subjugation of the feminine by the masculine outlined above.

Moreover, nested in the larger narrative of  $(S \cap O) \rightarrow (S \cup O) \rightarrow (S \cap O)$  – specifically within the central term,  $(S \cup O)$  – there is a subplot involving control of the flute: having begun with a member of the flute family, the second appearance of WD5 is on clarinet, reversing the process whereby Lyceion exchanges clarinet for flute; the third presentation of the theme is by alto flute; the fourth is on oboe; the fifth clarinet; the sixth a mixture of reed instruments, oboe, cor anglais, and piccolo clarinet. Given that both the ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ musical material desire the same Object, we can assign them the respective actantial functions of Subject (S) and Antisubject ( $\bar{S}$ ) (see Chapter 3, section 3.6.1). Therefore, the nested subplot can be described as that of the feminine Antisubject, and expressed symbolically as  $(\bar{S} \cap O) \rightarrow (\bar{S} \cup O) \rightarrow (\bar{S} \cap O) \rightarrow (\bar{S} \cup O)$ : moments of conjunction ( $\cap$ ) here match presentations of WD5 by a member of the flute family (and therefore  $\bar{S}$  in possession of the masculine symbol), and moments of disjunction ( $\cup$ ) are marked by the appearance of reed instruments (i.e. an absence of the Pan-ic flute).

#### *4.1.4.4 Function within the larger narrative*

It is not just ‘liberated sexual drives’ (Puri 2011b, 128) of which Daphnis dreams in the ‘War Dance’ then: the central agon of the dance represents not just the desire to control the feminine Other, but the concern that a failure to control will result in usurpation of patriarchal authority, vested in the symbol of Pan’s pipe, the flute. There is much to say on this point in relation to the ballet’s narrative in the following chapter; for now, it is sufficient to point out that the ‘War Dance’ has a more important role in the larger narrative than first appearances might suggest: its positioning half way through the ballet’s structure is not the only central thing about it. The dance projects

both backwards and forwards: backwards to Lyceion's dance, representing a replaying of her attempt to usurp masculine authority with a different outcome; forwards to Chloe's 'Danse suppliante', in which Chloe's repeated attempts at escape are met with violent responses from Bryaxis and the Pirates.<sup>16</sup> The 'War Dance' functions as a pivot, around which the fortunes of dancing women shift in the ballet, from Lyceion's confident appropriation of 'masculine' behaviour to Chloe's lack of free agency. The narrative programme and subplot of the 'War Dance' thus enact in microcosm the broader shift in power represented by the contrast between Lyceion's dance and Chloe's 'Danse suppliante'.

Figure 4.15 represents this shift diagrammatically, showing the two competing narrative programmes in play: the Subject's 'patriarchal' plot – in which the Object is the recovery of authority – and the Antisubject's 'feminist' plot, in which the initial assumption of masculine sexual norms – signifying a sense of sexual freedom – is undermined by Chloe's capture and violent subjugation. Given the competing aims of Subject and Antisubject, an increase in value for one will result in a necessary and concomitant decrease in value for the other. In other words, conjunction for the Subject will naturally mean disjunction for the Antisubject, and vice versa.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Puri makes a similar point regarding the 'War Dance' and 'Danse suppliante' (2011b, 125)

<sup>17</sup> The ascription of Subject and Antisubject here reflects the ballet's narrative as conventionally conceived, with Daphnis as the 'heroic' subject, aligning the plot patriarchally. As has been intimated over the course of the last two chapters, however, there are reasons to read the narrative differently, which may change the ascription of actantial functions. This will be taken up again in the final section of Chapter 5, and will be an important point of discussion in the final chapter.

Patriarchal plot	$(S \cup O)$	$\rightarrow$	$(S \cap O)$
Dance	Lyceion's Dance		'Danse suppliante'
Feminist plot	$(\bar{S} \cap O)$	$\rightarrow$	$(\bar{S} \cup O)$

Figure 4.15: 'patriarchal' and 'feminist' narrative programmes between Parts I & II

As intimated at the start of this chapter, the triumph of aggressive masculinity represented by the outcome of the 'patriarchal' narrative of figure 4.15 exemplifies a form of masculinity different to that displayed in the 'Dance Contest', which, feeding on contemporary notions of masculine *honneur*, presented an ideal of masculinity as self-mastery and restraint: 'the art of being strong without appearing to expend physical force directly' (Forth 2004, 206), and the 'civic duty' of sexual self-control (Mansker 2010, 186). If we are to conceptualise the events of Part II of the ballet as related symbolically to Daphnis – and, along with Puri, I believe there are good reasons to do so, not least when we consider how 'the actions and actors of this section fit neatly into a psychosexual narrative' (Puri 2011b, 128) – then we must conceive of Daphnis's character representing a complex of competing forms of masculinity, the *homme d'honneur* and *grande fauve* mentioned above. As such, we might understand Daphnis as representing a form of masculine hybrid, a term that also embraces the figure of Pan, manifestations of whom frame the section of the ballet that Puri terms the 'Dream of Daphnis' (2011b, 127); moreover, the climax of the whole narrative involves an enactment of the myth of Pan and Syrinx by Daphnis and Chloe (see Chapter 5).



Pan, of course, can be understood not merely as a hybrid, but as a grotesque figure, not merely a juxtaposition of bestial and anthropomorphic features, but an admixture, an ‘unresolvable hybrid’ (Sheinberg 2000, 207-208), in which neither man nor beast is given conceptual or ontological priority. It remains to be seen to what extent we might conceptualise Daphnis in the same terms, but to evoke the grotesque is to return us to one of the threads left unfollowed in the previous chapter. As noted in Chapter 3, in her thesis examining Ravel’s music from the perspective of the grotesque, Jessie Fillerup suggests that the apparent grotesque/sublime opposition between Dorcon and Daphnis’s performances in the ‘Dance Contest’ is misleading, arguing that the competition ‘reveals affinities that belie their musical and choreographic opposition’ (2009, 248). Having opened up the possibility of approaching the character of Daphnis from the viewpoint of the grotesque, the next section returns to the ‘Dance Contest’ of Part I, to draw out some of these affinities, and look again at the rival dancers from a specifically grotesque perspective.

## **4.2 Comic and grotesque masculinities**

### *4.2.1 Opposing masculinities*

Superficially at least, the opposition of Dorcon (Antisubject) and Daphnis (Subject) in the ‘Dance Contest’ can be easily mapped onto the grotesque-transcendent binary that the titles of the ‘Danse grotesque’ and ‘Danse légère et gracieuse’ evoke. Such a configuration of opposites recalls the ‘inversional formulation’ Julie Brown observes in Bartók’s *Two Portraits*, which she describes as ‘stressing the opposition but necessary complementation between an ideal and its grotesque’ (2007, 24). In Bartók’s work, the ‘Grotesque Portrait’ is a parody of the ‘Ideal Portrait’, which comes

first in sequence; Brown argues that this relationship ‘serves an obviously critical, in the sense of moral, function’, suggesting ‘the potentiality of grotesque fantasy to turn a critical mirror on an ideal’ (ibid.). Thus, in Bartók’s work the opposition between ideal and grotesque serves to call into question the very notion of the ‘ideal’.

However, the situation is different in the dance contest from *Daphnis*. Rather than one dance parodying the other, the two share no thematic material, unlike Bartók’s work, where the ‘Grotesque Portrait’ distorts the principal theme of the ‘Ideal Portrait’. Moreover, rather than the ‘Danse grotesque’ following on from the ‘ideal’ ‘Danse légère’ as a mocking parody, the actual order is the opposite to that of the Bartók: Daphnis’s dance *replaces* Dorcon’s, mirroring the manner in which Daphnis supplants Dorcon in Chloe’s arms, as is clear from the simple plot summary given in figure 4.16. Thus, it would appear that in the dance contest, rather than the supposedly grotesque figure serving the sort of subversive, carnivalesque function that Bakhtin finds in the work of Rabelais (see Bakhtin [1965] 1984), Dorcon instead functions to *reinscribe* the normative social structures of Daphnis and Chloe’s society, the upstart put back in his place and the ‘ideal’ Daphnis returned to his position within the social-sexual hierarchy. Rather than Daphnis and Dorcon existing in a dialogic relationship, it appears that the discourse here is one-way, univocal, hierarchical. In other words, the opposition between Daphnis and Dorcon, between ‘Danse grotesque’ and ‘Danse légère’, *reinforces* normativity, rather than calling it into question, at least in terms of the social structures of the pastoral world presented in *Daphnis et Chloé*.



Figure 4.16: plot summary of the ‘Dance Contest’ and its outcome

#### 4.2.2 Dorcon: ‘1er danseur bouffe’

Given that Dorcon’s dance appears to have the effect of reinscribing normativity in the society of *Daphnis et Chloé* – which scholars of the grotesque hold to be opposite to the aesthetic’s aims<sup>18</sup> – to what extent can we describe the ‘Danse grotesque’ as ‘grotesque’ with any sort of conviction? As Esti Sheinberg argues, ‘the grotesque not only presents, but actually *embraces*, dysphoric human values: the despised, the ridiculous and the horrifying’ (2000, 210, my emphasis); however, the mocking ‘*rire général*’ at R41 and ‘*rires bruyants*’ before R53 make the rejection of Dorcon’s so-called grotesqueness abundantly clear. For this reason alone, Dorcon’s status as a grotesque deserves interrogation, but there are other features of his dance that should lead us to investigate the matter further. Jessie Fillerup notes that the ‘musical gaffes’ of the ‘Danse grotesque’ ‘offer none of the transgression or disjunction suggestive of the grotesque’ (2009, 229). The metrical regularity of the dance, which obsessively maintains a heavily accented duple metre throughout, is also problematic: regarding rhythm, Julie Brown quotes Charles Seelig’s introductory remarks to Universal Edition’s 1921 *Grotesken-Album*, noting that he appears to suggest ‘that new approaches to rhythm should be important to any general definition of the early

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, Edwards and Graulund (2013, 26): ‘The carnivalesque is an effective critique of society’s norms [...] in which no one voice, no one authority, is able to impose its supremacy upon another.’

twentieth-century musical grotesque' (2007, 134). This is hardly true of Dorcon's dance.

However, Fillerup, who has a keen ear for the temporal games that Ravel plays throughout his oeuvre, suggests that Dorcon's dance is transgressive precisely *due* to its metrical regularity. Noting that Ravel consistently inverts rhythmic norms throughout *Daphnis*, leading the listener to accept rhythmic irregularity as the rule (2009, 243-244), Fillerup suggests that

the 'Danse grotesque' is remarkable precisely because it is, rhythmically and metrically speaking, unremarkable: its rhythms are crassly, conventionally square – almost a parody of excessively danceable ballet music. Just as Ravel's prior grotesque works rely on the transgression of boundaries to evoke their effect, the 'Danse grotesque' operates under the same principle: Ravel merely inverts the technique of its deployment.

(2009, 245-246)

In other words, in a world in which the rules of metrical organisation have been inverted to make rhythmic irregularity the norm, their reinversion – a return to the regular – is marked as transgressive, marginal, and therefore grotesque. This corresponds to the idea that the grotesque 'functions according to its audience expectations in time and place' (Edwards and Graulund 2013, 12). Thus the 'Danse grotesque' demonstrates Dorcon's desire for Chloe 'as an irregular phenomenon that flourishes outside the accepted social order' (Fillerup 2009, 246).

This is in fact not far from Puri's position, although he does not explicitly relate it to an aesthetics of the grotesque. Both scholars view the 'accepted social [musical] order' that is being transgressed as related to Ravel himself. For Puri, Dorcon's dance represents a jibe at the composer Vincent d'Indy and his followers (2011b, 110-113). Fillerup's analysis turns the parody inwards, and hears the overly mimetic depiction of the laughter of the crowd as a parody of a parody: 'when Ravel translates the mocking crowd's mimicry and laughter into music, he satirizes the parodies in Dorcon's dance, creating a reflexive musical commentary on (and perhaps critique of) his own process of caricature' (2009, 263). Fillerup goes on to argue that, in doing so, Ravel is acknowledging the criticism of his sometimes over-literal approach in the opera *L'heure espagnole*, 'when music and text coordinate with perfect literalism' (ibid.). There are certainly instances of what is known in film music as 'micky mouseing'<sup>19</sup> to be found in *Daphnis*, such as the absurdly large 'fall' in the flutes at R187, at which point the libretto describes Chloe falling into Daphnis's arms, and it is easy to level criticism at such literalness, particularly within a modernist context.

However, these points could just as easily be made in relation to comic aesthetics. Indeed, Fillerup observes that the crowd's reaction to Dorcon's exertions (the '*rire général*') 'suggests that they find Dorcon awkward, silly, and clumsy – but not grotesque' (ibid., 262). In fact, Puri notes that the libretto provided to the audience of the premiere of *Daphnis* describes Dorcon as '*1er danseur bouffe*', going on to observe that the critic Émile Vuillermoz referred to the 'Danse grotesque' as a 'buffo dance' (2011b, 91). Indeed, the surface features of Dorcon's dance – with its overly mimetic belches, pratfalls and laughter are more reminiscent of Baudelaire's

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<sup>19</sup> 'A pejorative term obviously derived from music written for animated cartoons where nearly every movement on the screen is "caught" by the music' (Prendergast [1977] 1992, 80 n1).

‘ordinary’ or ‘significant’ comic – which ‘speaks a language that is clearer, easier for the common man to understand’ rather than his category of ‘absolute comic’, with which he designates the grotesque ([1855] 1992, 152). As Fillerup puts it, ‘the dance’s musical mishaps are both dramatically transparent and conventionally unconventional’ (2009, 229); the suggestion is that Dorcon appears more of a slapstick clown than true grotesque.

#### 4.2.3 *Dorcon as satirical grotesque*

So, must we abandon any attempt to view Dorcon from the perspective of the grotesque? As most writers who have tackled the subject admit, the grotesque is an especially slippery concept, and particularly so, perhaps, when it comes to separating it from the comic (see, for example, Baudelaire [1855] 1992). One of the most influential studies of the grotesque, that of Geoffrey Galt Harpham, defines it ‘not as the mediation of oppositions but as the presentation or realization of a contradiction central to art itself’, and describes the grotesque as having ‘the capacity of appearing both marginal and *central*’ (1982, 217; my emphasis). The idea that the grotesque gleefully transgresses boundaries is also central to the valorised grotesque articulated by Bakhtin in his study of Rabelais, in which he explicitly rejects the notion that the grotesque ‘exaggerates and caricatures the negative, the inappropriate’ ([1965] 1984, 306). Instead, for Bakhtin the grotesque ‘is unfinished, outgrows itself, transgresses its own limits’ (ibid., 26). As Esti Sheinberg suggests, Bakhtin views the grotesque as an aesthetic of ‘acceptance’, rather than negation, one which ‘not only presents, but actually embraces, dysphoric human values: the despised, the ridiculous and the horrifying’ (2000, 208, 210). Jessie Fillerup’s study of the grotesque in Ravel’s music

focuses on a specifically French tradition of grotesquery, and observes many of the features outlined by Harpham and Bakhtin, such as the ‘the transgression of boundaries and unity among disjunction’ (2009, 48). Significant also is the suggestion that Ravel ‘valorized the grotesque’ (ibid., 259), again suggesting an affinity with the theories of Bakhtin.

Yet this positive attitude to the grotesque would appear to be contrary to the function of Dorcon within the narrative. As a rival to Daphnis for Chloe’s affections, any ‘euphoric’ narrative paradigm – that is, romantic or comic narrative – demands that Daphnis overcome the obstacle that he represents. This would appear to run counter to the grotesque as understood both by modern theorists such as Harpham, and writers of the French tradition, such as Baudelaire, who discusses the ‘exalted nature of the absolute comic [i.e. grotesque]’ ([1855] 1992, 152). However, Sheinberg’s concept of the ‘satirical grotesque’ suggests a way in which Dorcon’s status as a grotesque can be retrieved. Sheinberg contends that – although the grotesque deals with the ‘unresolvable’ and satire aims to be ‘corrective’ – ‘there is a kind of satire that makes use of the grotesque’, in which ‘the apparently incorrigible physical deformities function as reflections of some other spiritual and behavioral deformities, which are the actual object of the derisive comment’ (2000, 229). Although this perhaps sounds somewhat similar to the mocking laughter that Baudelaire aligns with the ‘significant comic’, in which ‘laughter comes from a man’s idea of his own superiority’ ([1855] 1992, 145), and thus ineligible as a form of the grotesque – at least in the terms established by Baudelaire, Bakhtin, and others – Sheinberg offers an expansion on the initial concept: a grotesque may have two satirical layers, the first directed at the grotesque subject, the second targeting *our* reception:

Laughter caused by repulsion from a stumbling drunkard, for example, is an instance of the first layer: the subject, whose appearance is both ludicrous and frightening, fails to comply with a certain norm, and is thus laughed at. The second layer is more complex, and involves an ironical self-contemplation and awareness of the nature of the reaction itself. If this reaction does not comply with a certain norm, for example the norm of compassion for the wretched drunkard, whose drunkenness is possibly the result of much suffering, then our very laughter, in itself, exposes a deficiency and thus can be satirized. In a satirical grotesque, the shift, in which the accusing finger, which first pointed to some element in the work, turns around to point at the reader, listener or spectator, happens suddenly, at the point at which we not only become aware of our own reaction, but also realize its normative inadequacy.<sup>20</sup>

(2000, 238)

In other words, where Dorcon is concerned, the reinforcement of normative behaviour by the crowd – and by the audience who laughs at his ‘buffo’ dancing, and subsequently enjoys Daphnis’s triumph – is the essence of the satirical grotesque: although the valorisation of the grotesque may not be immediately apparent, it is buried within Sheinberg’s ‘second layer’, at which locus the crowd’s laughter – and our own – is held up to satirical scrutiny, creating the potential for hierarchical inversion. Such laughter was analysed by Ravel’s contemporary, the philosopher Henri Bergson, who argued that ‘our laughter is always the laughter of a group’, implying ‘a kind of secret freemasonry, or even complicity with other laughers, real or imaginary’ ([1900] 2014, 466). Moreover, for Bergson, it is our capacity to dehumanise others that is at the root of our comic sensibility:

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<sup>20</sup> Sheinberg’s comment that the shift happens ‘suddenly’ recalls Byron Almén’s description of ironic narrative, in which the transgressive elements effect a transvaluation ‘as if out of the blue’ (2008, 168).



it is comic in proportion to the clearness, as well as the subtleness, with which it enables us to see a man as a jointed puppet. The suggestion must be a clear one, for inside the person we must distinctly perceive, as though through a glass, a set-up mechanism.<sup>21</sup>

(ibid., 474)

Although the relationship between Ravel's music and the mechanical has been a fruitful locus of exploration for a number of scholars,<sup>22</sup> I am more interested here in the implicit criticism in Bergson's formulation – that we perceive the comic by viewing others as somehow less than human – as it accords with Sheinberg's theory of the satirical grotesque: we may laugh at Dorcon, but in doing so we implicate ourselves in a discourse that supports and reinforces normative social constructs.

Thus, Dorcon is more than just an obstacle in the way of Daphnis's desire for Chloe, Antisubject to Daphnis's Subject. In his attempted transvaluation – his bid to place himself at the centre of his own quest, and divert the narrative (see Chapter 3, section 3.6) – he calls into question the validity of the existing hierarchy, the mocking laughter he receives casting the normative in a negative light.<sup>23</sup> Not only this, but in placing Dorcon so demonstrably *outside* society – hence the derisive laughter directed at him – Daphnis's performance is firmly inscribed as normative within the society presented in the narrative. This reflects an aspect of the argument put forward in Chapter 3 that in some ways Dorcon gains more from his contest with Daphnis than Daphnis does, for in engaging him in competition Daphnis tacitly suggests that the two are in some way equals: if Daphnis begins the 'Dance contest' Dorcon's superior,

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<sup>21</sup> We will return to discussion of human puppets in the next chapter.

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, Abbate (1999) and Mawer (2000b). Additionally, Steven Huebner (2006) explores the mechanical in relation to Bergson's theories of laughter in Ravel's opera *L'heure espagnole*.

<sup>23</sup> This is relevant to the discussion of counter-discourses in Chapter 6 (section 6.7).

the effect of Dorcon's satirical grotesque is to bring Daphnis down to his level – the opposite effect, whereby Dorcon is raised to Daphnis's status seems unlikely given the contemptuous laughter – and thus Daphnis's position is undermined, by attempting to reinforce it.

#### 4.2.4 *Daphnis's danse grotesque*

So much for Dorcon: to what extent might we bring an aesthetics of the grotesque to bear on Daphnis's portrayal in the ballet? As has been noted previously (section 4.2.1), Daphnis and Dorcon appear to be presented as conflicting sides of a binary opposition, but it has also been suggested that the 'Dance contest' functions to erase – at least in part – some of the distinctions between them, particularly from the perspective of social hierarchy (section 4.2.3). As if in reaction to this, Daphnis's portrayal subsequent to his contest with Dorcon presents him in a variety of different lights, none of which are especially honourable. Whilst his reticence during his attempted seduction at the hands of Lyceion is only to be expected from *l'homme d'honneur*, his inaction during Chloe's abduction is not the behaviour of a man capable of courageous action, which, according to Robert Nye, was considered to be 'indistinguishable from manliness' (1998, 217). Indeed, the libretto's description of Daphnis's despairing swoon on discovering Chloe's capture by the Pirates is more reminiscent of Anne Vincent-Buffault's suggestion that, to the French 'a man wept when he could not act' (cited in Forth 2004, 121).<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Recall Mawer's observation that 'questions remain about Daphnis's suitability as a mythical hero, an issue recognized early on' (2006b, 123).

But there is no contradiction between acting the man of valour when faced with an ‘easy’ opponent in the form of Dorcon and fainting in panic when confronted with a more demanding adversary; this does not make Daphnis grotesque. There is nothing unresolvable about such a binary response – quite the opposite – for the inability to act when faced with real adversity merely undercuts his attempt to act ‘manly’ in the ‘Dance contest’. If anything, we would be likely to view such a situation as comic; tragi-comic, perhaps, given the outcome of his inaction, but comic nonetheless, in the way in which the posture of honour in the ‘Dance contest’ is shown up to be a mere façade. Moreover, both emotions – the desire to be courageous, and the inability to be so when facing real danger – are entirely common, rather mundane, too easily resolvable in terms of everyday human experience to qualify as grotesque.

However, the next presentation of Daphnis – during the dream sequence of Part II, in which the Pirate Chief, Bryaxis, appears as ‘a surrogate Daphnis who does not sublimate his desire but rather takes pleasure in subjecting Chloe to his will instead of courting her’ (Puri 2011b, 128) – adds a further dimension to the presentation of the character. This is not the portrayal of a swooning coward, nor is it the depiction of a man of honour and courage: this is rather a portrait of unchecked aggression, as violence as ‘part of a system of domination’ (Connell 2001, 84), in which the feminine is held in brutal check by a belligerently assertive masculinity. This is, if you will, a portrait of a *grande fauve*.

In some ways, we should not be surprised at the apparent volte face that has taken place: we were given an indication of a violent lack of self-control in the *geste brusque* that led to the proposal of a dance contest between Daphnis and Dorcon. As with the swooning Daphnis at the end of Part I, there is not necessarily a contradiction

between presenting oneself as *l'homme d'honneur* and the idea that the façade hides something less honourable, in this case an inability to regulate one's aggression: again, the contradiction is resolvable in terms of everyday experience. However, when all three character traits are considered simultaneously, a portrait of greater complexity emerges, for to maintain the notion that a man might be sophisticated, brutish, cowardly, sadistic, and elegant all in one go requires a leap of imagination: what it requires, in fact, is the concept of the grotesque, in which Daphnis can easily be all these things, without one trait needing to dominate. In fact, I suspect that a grotesque viewpoint is probably required to resuscitate the character of Daphnis, if we are to avoid viewing him as, at root, a sadist, who attempts to hide his brutality behind a façade of elegance.

Of course, there is no sense in resuscitating such a character, if sadist is genuinely what he is perceived to be: quite the opposite. But, I would argue, this is ultimately *not* what the ballet's narrative presents us with. Although Daphnis does appear to be implicated in the violence of Part II, if we are to view it as a dream sequence, then the brutality is virtual. Thus, although his desires may be shown to be objectionable (to say the least), there is no evidence provided within the narrative that Daphnis does, or ever would act on them. Instead, what we are left with is a character of apparently unresolvable contradictions: underneath, in the recesses of his psyche a *grande fauve*, but, outwardly, the elegant-yet-strong, platonic vision of 'feminine arms, masculine legs'; in other words, man and beast in one. There has one been figure who has dominated 'Western' culture in this respect: Pan.

### 4.3 A Pani-ic grotesque

The libretto for *Daphnis et Chloé* opens by describing the pastoral scene of Part I (and Part III), noting that ‘toward the background, to the left, a large rock resembles the form of the god Pan’. Just as the ‘form of the god’ looms large in the background of the ballet’s setting, Pan is a recurrent figure in both Longus’s original novel and Ravel’s ballet. Although this is partly a function of the pastoral setting – Pan being an Arcadian-born god of fertility, and ‘a familiar of herdsmen and nymphs’ (Boardman 1997, 26) – the novel goes to some lengths to create connections between Pan and Daphnis: as R.L. Hunter observes, ‘the general similarities between Daphnis and Pan are indeed too striking for any reader to miss’ (1983, 16).<sup>25</sup> The most obvious link is to Daphnis’s work as a goatherd, for not only is Pan a goat-legged god, but his very name means ‘guardian of flocks’ (Jost 2005); associated with this is the fact that Daphnis plays the syrinx, symbol of the shepherd, but also closely associated with Pan (Hillman [1972] 2007, 58, 61-62). A less immediate, but no less significant link between Daphnis and Pan is their shared experience of parental abandonments: among the many stories of Pan’s parentage, the ‘The Homeric Hymn to Pan’ explains that he was abandoned at birth (ibid., 18), just as Daphnis (and, indeed Chloe) are in Longus’s novel. Perhaps the most telling link between the two figures, however, is that of unsatisfied desire: Daphnis’s overwhelming sexual yearning for Chloe goes unfulfilled for the vast majority of Longus’s text, much in the way Pan’s desire remains unconsummated in the majority of the most prominent myths relating to him.

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<sup>25</sup> Michael Puri suggests something similar concerning Ravel’s ballet: ‘Pan is [...] legible as a surrogate Daphnis: [...] the pantomime episode introduces the myth of Pan and Syrinx as a model for the relationship between Daphnis and Chloe; moreover, as a god of both war and peace, Pan recalls Daphnis in his stark duality of character’ (2011b, 129). Given Puri’s suggestion that Daphnis constitutes a self-portrait of Ravel (ibid., 120) we might recall John Boardman’s observation that, in using Pan, ‘each author and artist commonly reveals more about themselves than about the god’ (1997, 7).

This last point is especially significant in light of the events of Part II of Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé*: specifically, the violence that the dream Daphnis (Bryaxis/Pirates) threatens to visit on the dream Chloe recalls Pan's various destructive reactions on being denied sexual access to Echo, Pitys, and Syrinx. The story of Syrinx is perhaps the best known of the legends concerning Pan (Merivale 1969, 5) – and will be an important topic in the next chapter – but the myth of Pan and Echo has particular resonance for the events of the middle portion of Ravel's ballet. Echo having refused the advances of the goat-legged god, Pan incites his attendant shepherds to tear her to pieces:

Pan grew angry with the girl, partly because he envied her gift for music, and partly because he had failed to enjoy her beauty. So he sent the shepherd and goatherds mad, and they like dogs or wolves tore her to pieces and scattered her limbs about the whole earth – or rather scattered her hymns, for she still went on singing.

(Longus 1989, 84, III.23)

It is not too much of a leap to replace Pan with Bryaxis and shepherds with pirates in the 'War Dance', especially if we consider that Pan was also a god of war (Roscher [1900] 2007, 145). With this resonance in mind, the 'dismembering' of the 'feminine' theme (WD5) becomes much more disturbing (see above, section 4.1.2). Moreover, the fact that manifestations of Pan bookend the sequence only serves to underscore the significance of the god to the psychosexual narrative that unfolds. There are also instrumental associations between Pan and the 'War Dance': although Pan is most commonly associated with panpipes, James Hillman notes that 'Pan's instrument in

many paintings is not a syrinx but more a trumpet' ([1972] 2007, 34), a reference to his status as a god of war. The symbolism of the flute family has already been discussed (see section 4.1.4.3), but Hillman's observation suggests that there is also Pan-ic significance to the prominence of trumpet sonorities in the 'War Dance'.

Yet there are other facets to the mythic Pan that are significant to the portrayal of Daphnis in the ballet. Daphnis's terrified swoon upon discovering Chloe's abduction perhaps recalls another aspect of the god, who was associated with 'sudden, unforeseeable fear' (Jost 2005), and whose name, after all, is the root of the word 'panic'. If Bryaxis and the Pirates are in some way a psychic projection of Daphnis's violent desires, and those desires are in turn related to Pan, it is as if the acknowledgement of these drives, their eruption at the surface of consciousness, leads to a form of breakdown, a panicked response to being confronted with a repressed aspect of his own nature. As Rob Marchesani puts it,

with horns, ears and legs of a goat, this grotesque part-human, part-animal may be the perfect metaphor to describe what happens when we come face to face with what might be a projection of our dual nature, a nature that often repels itself in opposing directions causing one to tremble.

(1999, 2)

The obvious comparison here is that the animal part of Pan represents a violent, bestial side of ourselves, one that repels and alarms us, causing its repression, and our panic at its discovery. However, Marchesani makes a further point, noting that,

his animal half is not fierce. It is only a goat, a docile creature which, if you've ever stood by one, you might find yourself thinking might make a nice pet. However, when mixed with *human* elements, the beast seems to go a bit mad.

(*ibid.*, my emphasis)

What Marchesani appears to suggest is something similar to Shienberg's satirical grotesque, discussed above (section 4.2.3). The first layer of meaning appears to imply that Pan is a figure made up equally of animal parts – conventionally associated with base drives and instinct – and human characteristics, which are commonly identified with features such as culture and reason (see Boardman 1997, 43). If we look again, however, the second layer of the satirical grotesque comes into play: the animal parts of Pan are his lower half; his head, his brain, the sites of reason, are human, yet, significantly unable to control the animal portions, the man unable to tame the beast. Pan's goat's horns, poking through his human head, are perhaps a marker of this: the animal protruding through the human, as if the beast is the reality, the humanity a mere façade.<sup>26</sup> If this is the case, to what extent can the man be said to differ from the beast: is man merely animal after all?

Perhaps this is the real significance of Pan – and the root of Daphnis's panic – that the god represents the fear that human culture can do little to control the animal urges of man, that the compulsions and drives that dwell within have a hold on us that is irresistible.<sup>27</sup> After all, hybrids like Pan have long been a familiar grotesque trope,

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<sup>26</sup> Merivale cites an alternative interpretation of Pan's horns from Bacon's *The Wisdom of the Ancients*, in which 'Pan's horns touch heaven' (cited in Merivale 1969, 11).

<sup>27</sup> Merivale sees this conception of Pan – 'not as a goat-god outside ourselves, but as the goat-god within ourselves' – as the 'most important innovation' in the development of the Pan myth, one owing to the poet Robert Browning, and later taken up by D.H. Lawrence (1969, 90-91).



‘in which the self and the other become enmeshed in an inclusive, heterogeneous, dangerously unstable zone’ (Stallybrass and White 1986, 193). Furthermore, such hybridisation is commonly between the human and the bestial – for example, centaurs, mermaids, harpies, or minotaurs – and frequently acts to express cultural fears surrounding the body, especially an unruly body over which the mind has lost control: not *mens sana in corpore sano*, but *mens fera in corpore ferae* (the mind of a wild beast in a wild beast’s body). Indeed, in some myths Pan appears all too aware of the bodily horror he represents, for ‘according to antiquity it was to disguise his uncouth body that Pan wrapped himself in fleecy white wool when wooing Diana’ (Boardman 1997, 15).<sup>28</sup>

#### 4.3.1 *Degredation and decadence*

With this fear of the failure of mind to regulate body we are in the presence of something very like the concerns discussed at the end of the last chapter, for a fear of the unregulated body in this sense is arguably a concern over the potential for atavism, a reemergence of primitive characteristics, a horror of degeneration. After all, it was the job of the leaders of the Third Republic ‘to project an image of bourgeois rationality, strength, and reassuring moderation’, and the manifold examples of ‘degeneration’, the ‘communards and criminals, alcholics and perverts, hysterics and syphilitics – deviants of all kinds [...] were visible reminders of France’s perceived fragility’ (Reed 2010, 79). Much more terrifying, however, would be the suggestion that the faults these ‘deviants’ display on the surface are actually contained within all

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<sup>28</sup> One might also recall the bestial descriptions of Nijinsky discussed in Chapter 3 (section 3.4.1). Hanna Järvinen notes that ‘Nijinsky’s contemporaries emphasised the ugliness and monstrosity of his body’, as well as ‘the frequent association of the dancer with animals’ (2014, 144, 147).

of humanity, that the degenerate ‘beast’ is not ‘other’, but is rather in us all, just as Pan has his horns protruding through his human skull.

In fact, such concerns over the primitive lurking within humanity were not restricted to France during the *fin de siècle* – although the particular nexus of political and social circumstances discussed in the previous chapter arguably gave these fears a special urgency for the French. As John McNabb observes, following the impact of the development of theories of evolution that placed man among the apes, the period saw ‘an obsession with human origins, which [...] expressed itself in literature as a concern with primitiveness’ (2015, 384). Intriguingly – given Ravel’s frequently expressed respect for the author (see Duchesneau 2005) – J. Alexandra McGhee has recently suggested that Edgar Allan Poe saw in atavism the potential for sublimity, or rather, a ‘negative sublimity’:

For Poe, the body is yet another unknown region, something that lies partially outside our control and thus can become diseased and, ultimately, entropic. [...] Poe’s darker speculations on his particular kind of sublimity make his contribution to the philosophy of the sublime uniquely different from contemporary notions, because it relies on a degeneration of body and mind rather than an affirmation of life [...] it is only by embracing this entropy that true sublimity, which lies beyond death, can be uncovered.

(2013, 68)

This espousal of degeneration as a form of ‘true sublimity’ is reminiscent of the valorisation of the grotesque familiar from Bakhtin, who, it will be recalled, ‘not only presents, but actually embraces, dysphoric human values’ (Sheinberg 2000, 210; see also section 4.2.3).

It also would have been familiar to Ravel, who identified strongly with the image of Poe that featured prominently in the author's early reception in France: 'the myth of a morally depraved and yet genius Poe', who represented a 'social and moral contrast [...] which symbolised an insurrection against established values' (Duchesneau 2005, 11; my translation). Although Poe's first French translator – the poet Baudelaire – chafed against the use of the word to describe the American author, his contemporaries understood this portrayal of Poe as one of a Bohemian (Seigel 1986, 111-113), one which Michel Duchesneau argues 'constituted a fascinating model for a Ravel who belonged to the "Apaches", a small group of young artists who met in the 1900s, and who were considered "proscribed artists" among conservative circles of the time' (2005, 10; my translation). As we saw in the previous chapter, 'decadence as understood by writers and artist[s] was itself considered degenerate by the defenders of normative society' (Mosse 1996, 81), so it is not surprising to discover that which is feared by some as degeneration could be celebrated by others as decadence. Indeed, Patricia Merivale argues that the effect of the Pan figure of Stephen McKenna's novel *The Oldest God* (1926) was to critique the valorisation of decadence, 'as if to say "Look at the consequences in actual society of the conduct you advocate, by your preference for the 'natural' at the expense of the 'civilized' and inhibited"' (1969, 178).

#### 4.3.2 *Destroyer and preserver*

So Pan's significance in *Daphnis et Chloé* is finely balanced between a fearsome savegery and a decadent, 'negative' sublimity, just as Pan is simultaneously a god of war and a god of fertility, representative of the demonic and the erotic, 'both destroyer and preserver' (Hillman [1972] 2007, 19). These two aspects are perhaps suggested in

Pan's framing manifestations during Daphnis's dream. At the end of Part I Pan's presence conceivably appears to summon forth the Pirates and their 'War Dance': although Puri hears the extraordinary wordless choral passage that links Pan's manifestation with the 'War Dance' as a 'threnody for Chloe' (2011b, 128), the manner in which the chorus's overlapping statements of APPEL merge gradually into a transition to the 'War Dance' – in the process transforming the motif into WD1 (see section 4.1) – seems to ape the way in which the darkness at the end of Part I transmutes via a 'dull glimmer' into the 'violent' illumination of the Pirates' dance, as if Pan himself has invoked their violent display.<sup>29</sup> Balancing this is Pan's other aspect, for the dream is brought to a close by Pan's intervention, when his 'fearsome shadow [...] is outlined on the hills in the background, making a threatening gesture' and 'everyone flees in horror'.

Yet the notion of 'balance' is perhaps not one that we readily correlate with a figure who has been repeatedly associated with appetite and instinct; as James Hillman puts it, 'we must remember that the Pan experience is beyond the control of the willing subject and his ego psychology' ([1972] 2007, 19). However, as Hillman argues elsewhere in his essay, to link Pan exclusively with impulse is to oversimplify the figure and his psychological import, to underestimate the 'complexity of opposites in which the moment of inhibition is as strong as the compulsion' (ibid., 41). Thus, in *Daphnis et Chloé*, Pan represents both Daphnis's desire to possess Chloe violently, as well as embodying that which holds him back from doing so, man as both 'destroyer and preserver'. Or, as Patricia Merivale puts it, 'the attributes of malevolence are combined with the essence of benevolence' (1969, 181). Pertinently for the dream

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<sup>29</sup> There is a further reason for this interpretation, which will be discussed below (see section 4.3.3).

sequence in *Daphnis*, W.H. Roscher expressed the Pan dichotomy as one between the god as a bringer of nightmares and a figure who ‘healed the sick through dreams’ ([1900] 2007, 129).

### 4.3.3 *From grotesque to hegemonic masculinities*

It should now be clear that Pan’s grotesque hybridity has a great deal of significance to the plot of *Daphnis et Chloé* – and specifically to the character of Daphnis. However, we have not yet dealt with the suggestion at the start of the chapter that there was a broader relationship between the ‘Dance Contest’ and ‘War Dance’ and the construction of masculinity in the ballet. It will be recalled that the central portion of the ‘War Dance’ contains an extremely lengthy pedal point on C, lasting from RR112-122 (see table. 4.1). This pedal coincides with the process of gradual erasure of identity and constriction of movement of the ‘feminine’ WD5, described in sections 4.1.2 and 4.1.4.3. The beginning of the pedal also results in a slowing of tempo, having an enervating effect on what had been a fast-moving passage, as if the move to C has drained the energy or spirit from WD5.

Prior to this pedal, C has featured as a prominent pitch centre on three occasions: (working backwards) R88<sup>+</sup>, at the point of the first interruption of the wordless chorus by Pirate-related material (PIRATES); R81, at the point of Pan’s first manifestation; and as the prominent dominant key in Daphnis’s ‘Danse légère’. It was observed in the last chapter that the key appeared to be associated with *doing* in the ‘Danse légère’, as opposed to the *being* of F major (see Chapter 3, section 3.4.2): it was also suggested that the modality of *doing* could be linked with Nijinsky’s ‘masculine legs’, and *being* to the dancer’s ‘feminine arms’ (see section 3.4.1). R82 –

within the C pedal that starts at R81 – is the first time that we hear Pan’s leitmotif (see figure 4.17), as well as being the first time that C is heard as a pitch centre in its own right; both key and theme will be heard again at Pan’s manifestation at R151<sup>+1</sup>, as well as during Lammon’s explanation of Pan’s intervention at R170<sup>+1</sup>.<sup>30</sup> Given that three out of the four appearances of Pan’s theme are in C, it seems reasonable to associate the key with the god. (This also means its appearance at the moment that Pirate-related material is heard at R88<sup>+1</sup> strengthens the thesis that the Pirates’ ‘War Dance’ is invoked by Pan, with the Pirates’ first appearance in Part II being in ‘his’ key.<sup>31</sup>)

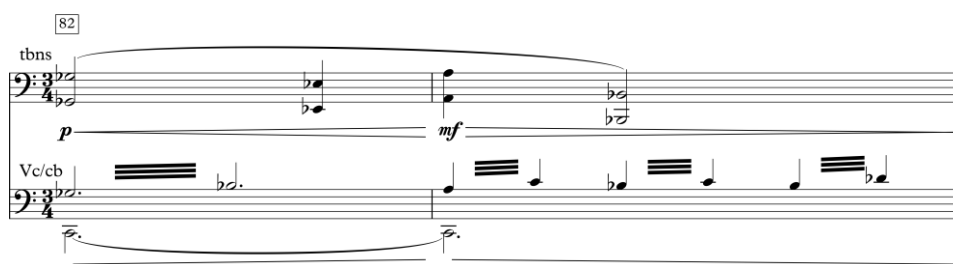


Figure 4.17: first appearance of Pan’s theme, R82

The key thus has two associations – with *doing* and with Pan. As was suggested in Chapter 3, there is a danger in Daphnis’s ‘Danse légère’ that the character leans too far in the direction of *being*, and thus the sort of passive intellectualism that was treated with such suspicion by normative constructions of masculinity in France at the turn of the century (see section 3.7.2). It was also argued that this dichotomy between valorised masculine action (*doing*) and a ‘problematic’, ‘feminine’ passivity (*being*) could be seen in the dichotomous image of Nijinsky’s famous leaps and their

<sup>30</sup> The motif also appears during ‘Daybreak’, at R166, when it becomes clear that Pan has saved Chloe, but mid-modulation to V/D.

<sup>31</sup> One might even go so far to conceive of the C-B-C/Pan-‘War Dance’-Pan bass movement as a large-scale expression of APPEL, as if Pan is calling forth the ‘War Dance’.

‘swooning’ aftermath (see section 3.4.1). The answer might seem simple – as it did to many of Ravel’s contemporaries – more time spent in healthy activity, and a reduction in passive introspection (see, for example, Surkis 2006, 77).

However, as the later addition of Pan to the semiotic constellation around the key of C suggests, without self-control, an emphasis on ‘masculine’ activity may result in something less ‘honourable’, particularly if the hierarchical position of masculinity is challenged, as it is in the central section of ‘War Dance’, and earlier, Lyceion’s attempted seduction of Daphnis. The social construction of gender is neither stable nor monolithic, and, as Pan shows us, there is the possibility that ‘destroyer and preserver’ can exist in a grotesque equilibrium. In this, Pan is perhaps the perfect symbol for the sort of patriarchal formulation that has been sketched over the last two chapters. As will be explored in more detail in the next chapter, the patriarchal structure of Third Republic France advanced a hybrid solution to the weakened situation in which it found itself following the defeat of France during the Franco-Prussian War. On one hand, normative masculinity policed its boundaries through violence directed at other men – the duelling culture explored in Chapter 3 – or what R.W. Connell describes as violence as a ‘transaction’ among men (2001, 83); on the other hand, that violence – whether real or threatened – was turned outwards, to enforce a reactionary gender politics aimed at maintaining an inter-gender status quo in favour of men. And, as we have seen with Pan, the discourse with which this violence justifies itself can be couched in terms of preservation, even if the means of preservation are ‘destruction’, such as the metaphorical ‘destruction’ present in the denial of equal rights in this period.

As James H. McMillan puts it, for the France of the Third Republic, ‘a gender order based on sexual difference rather than on sex equality was still widely considered to be fundamental to the well-being of society’ (2000, 154). Even apparent advances in the status of women – such as the introduction of a law establishing secular secondary education for girls in 1880 – were ultimately designed to ‘contain girls’ ambitions and expectations within the limits set by “difference”’ (Foley 2004, 146); indeed, ‘Camille Sée, architect of the law, saw his task as preparing girls to be “mothers of men”’ (ibid.). Sée’s sentiments were echoed by the republican politician Jules Simon, who outlined a woman’s vocation ‘to be a good wife and a good mother [...] retained for the interior’, in contrast to a man’s role in the outside world (cited in McMillan 2000, 155). Perhaps most illustrative of the destruction of women’s rights in the name of preservation of patriarchal society in this period was the denial of universal suffrage until 1944, which Susan K. Foley sees as ‘highlighting a deep-seated male anxiety over control of women’ (2004, 152):

The image of the citizen remained the self-governing, free-thinking and rational male – a self-image to which even the most lowly and impoverished Republican man could aspire, and which gained force by its contrast to the image of the dependent woman under his authority.

(ibid.)

This ‘anxiety over control of women’ will be examined in more detail in the remaining chapters of this thesis.



## 5 Dancing to her Own Tune

Having explored the signification and narration of masculinity in the previous two chapters, the focus of the present chapter shifts to an examination of the feminine in *Daphnis et Chloé*. The construction of femininity in the ballet is significantly inflected by the changes that were made to Longus's original narrative in its transfer to ballet libretto, and the chapter opens with an examination of Longus's novel from the perspective of Frye's *mythoi*. Following this, femininity is studied in relation to the character of Lyceion, who is placed in the context of the fin-de-siècle 'Salome craze'. The final part of the chapter presents a close narratological reading of Chloe's 'Syrinx Dance' from the 'Pantomime' section of the ballet, examining in particular the manner in which the narratives of the libretto and the music interact. The narrative analysis informs a reinterpretation of the work's significance, exchanging a hackneyed male-perspective boy-gets-girl plot with something more in tune with the contemporary figure of the *femme nouvelle*.

### 5.1 Frye's *mythoi* and Longus's *Daphnis and Chloe*

As discussed in Chapter 2 (section 2.2.3), Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957) articulates four basic narrative paradigms, or *mythoi*: romance, tragedy, comedy, and satire/irony. Frye conceives of the *mythoi* as forming a cycle, in which they are capable of interacting to form subtypes, such as romantic tragedy and ironic comedy. Longus's *Daphnis and Chloe* contains elements of both romantic and comic

genres, as the classicist R. L. Hunter observes in his study of the novel (1983, 63-70). Frye describes romance as the 'nearest of all literary forms to the wish-fulfilment dream', whose essential element 'is adventure, which means that romance is naturally a sequential and processional form' (1957, 186). Frye identifies six *phases* (forms) of the romance archetype (ibid., 198-203); Longus's novel demonstrates aspects of a number of these forms, but it best represents the fifth phase, that of 'a reflective, idyllic view of experience', demonstrating the 'tendency to the moral stratification of characters' (ibid., 202). This is particularly clear in the manner in which the 'innocent' erotic play of Daphnis and Chloe sits at the 'top of a hierarchy of what might be called erotic imitations, going down through the various grades of lust and passion to perversion' (ibid.). Lustfulness is represented by Dorcon in Longus's novel, with Gnathon's unrestrained appetites standing closer to the perverse end of the erotic spectrum; as Hunter writes, 'the character of Gnathon clearly besmirches the pristine purity of the countryside' (1983, 33).

There are also aspects of the third, 'quest' phase to the novel, with marriage and sexual union with Chloe the object of Daphnis's quest. Frye states that the quest phase of the romance narrative has three main stages, 'the *agon* or conflict, the *pathos* or death-struggle, and the *anagnorisis* or discovery, the recognition of the hero, who has clearly proved himself to be a hero' (1957, 187). There are a series of *agones* in Longus's narrative, including Dorcon's pursuit of Chloe, Daphnis's kidnap by pirates, and Chloe's abduction by the Methymneans. Although the latter two events might be thought of as candidates for *pathos*, this is perhaps better represented by Daphnis's inability to have sex with Chloe, as this is the barrier that stands in the way of his quest's successful completion: its resolution also takes up significantly more time in the narrative than the two abductions, and the regular emphasis given to the couple's

lack of sexual knowledge keeps it in the forefront of the reader's mind. The *anagnorisis* is thus represented by Lycaenion, the 'experienced' woman who seduces Daphnis and teaches him about sex, enabling him to prove himself sexually and complete his quest.

Frye's romance archetype emphasises the restitution of the idealised society that exists at the opening of the narrative; comedy, on the other hand, tends towards 'a movement from one kind of society to another' (ibid., 163). There are elements of this in the structure of Longus's novel; the revelations in Book Four concerning the high-status parentage of both Daphnis and Chloe are a classic case of comic discovery, or *cognito*. As Frye explains,

The comic ending is generally manipulated by a twist in the plot. In Roman comedy the heroine, who is usually a slave or courtesan, turns out to be the daughter of somebody respectable, so that the hero can marry her without loss of face. The *cognito* in comedy, in which the characters find out who their relatives are, and who is left of the opposite sex not a relative, and hence available for marriage, is one of the features of comedy that have never changed much [...] Happy endings do not impress us as true, but as desirable, and they are brought about by manipulation.

(ibid., 170)

The wedding festivities of Longus's narrative also fits the comic paradigm, signalling the appearance of the new society; as Frye suggests, weddings are the most common form of 'festive ritual' that marks the telos of comedy (ibid., 163). Yet the emphasis on sexual violation that John J. Winkler perceives in his 1991 essay on the novel makes the so-called 'blocking characters' significantly less comic, and more like the acute

threats experienced by the hero of a romantic quest narrative: Dorcon, the Methymneans, and Gnathon present serious physical threats to Chloe or Daphnis at various stages of the narrative. Furthermore, despite the revelation of their high social status, the novel is explicit in returning the characters to the initial pastoral scene for their wedding:

Next day, by common consent they drove back into the country. Daphnis and Chloe were very anxious to do so, as they could not bear living in town. It was their idea too that their wedding should be a pastoral affair.

(Longus 1989, 119-120, IV.37)

As mentioned above, Frye conceives of the four archetypes – each of which is divided into six phases – as existing on a continuum, in which adjacent *mythoi* blend into each other, with three of the six phases of each *mythos* parallel to that of its neighbour. For example, ‘The first three phases of comedy are parallel to the first three phases of satire, and the second three to the second three of romance’ (1957, 177). Thus, neighbouring archetypes are able to inflect each other, producing hybrid forms, with greater or lesser nuance. At the romantic end of the comic spectrum – which is equivalent to the comic end of the romantic *mythos* – ‘we begin to move out of the world of experience into the ideal world of innocence and romance’ (ibid., 181-182). Of the three comic-romantic phases, the sixth – the closest to the romantic archetype – best describes Longus’s *Daphnis*:

In this phase the social units of comedy become small and esoteric [...] Secret and sheltered places, forests in moonlight, secluded valleys, and happy islands become more prominent, as does the *penesero* mood of romance, [...] the sense of individual detachment from routine existence.

(ibid., 185)

This is the situation at the end of the novel, which leaves Daphnis and Chloe alone together, engaging in conventional pastoral pursuits, decorating their cave, and consecrating an altar to Love the Shepherd. Thus, the story of Daphnis and Chloe as told by Longus combines elements of comedy and romance, but with an emphasis on the romantic archetype, and is therefore most accurately conceived of as a comic romance.<sup>1</sup>

## 5.2 The ballet's libretto

The libretto of Ravel's ballet makes a number of changes to Longus's narrative, although the essential characteristics of the romantic archetype remain, even if the comic elements are attenuated. The series of *agones* are reduced in number, and it is only Chloe who is made to endure violence, not Daphnis. Furthermore, Daphnis's interaction with Lyceion is displaced to an earlier point in the narrative, and is presented as *agon*, rather than *anagnorisis*, a function taken over by Pan's rescuing of

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<sup>1</sup> Referring to Frye's archetypes, Byron Almén distinguishes between romantic comedy and comic romance, with the former emphasising the comic, the latter the romantic (2008, 167-168). His simplified version of Frye's system is particularly appropriate when dealing with narrative in untexted instrumental music, in which the story level is necessarily less specific and referential than that of dramatic or literary narratives.

Chloe at the end of Part II (see below, section 5.4). This reflects a change in emphasis for the ballet's narrative, with Chloe's abduction taking on a more significant role than the corresponding passage in Longus's novel: rather than being one of a sequence of life-threatening events, the episode between Chloe and the Pirates is the principal moment of crisis in the ballet, functioning as the *pathos*, the major obstacle that the hero must overcome to attain his or her object. Significantly, the removal of any physical threat to Daphnis in the ballet also means that violence is directed exclusively towards women, rather than affecting both sexes equally. Indeed, not only does Daphnis avoid the threat of violence in Ravel's ballet, but, as we saw in Chapter 3 (section 3.2), he in fact initiates conflict, with his *geste brusque* at R29 introducing aggression into an environment that has previously seen only religious worship and erotic play. Daphnis's violent gesture also shifts the ballet's focus from general to solo dances.

The ballet bookends the main plot with large social scenes, rather than emphasising the lovers as individuals, as occurs in the novel, which finishes with Daphnis and Chloe on their wedding night, conforming to what Frye calls the 'disintegration of the comic society' (1957, 185). Indeed, there is neither wedding nor consummation in the ballet. Instead, once Daphnis and Chloe are reunited following the *pathos* of Chloe's abduction, the couple act out the story of Pan and Syrinx in pantomime. This event also occurs in the novel, but, given the different position of Chloe's kidnapping in Longus's narrative, its significance to the plot is attenuated in comparison to *Daphnis et Chloé*. In the ballet, it opens a sequence that replaces the traditional *pas de deux* danced by the principal couple. It prevents an obvious opportunity for a symbolic consummation, for the pantomime is followed by a solo dance by Chloe, rather than a genuine *pas de deux*: in fact, Daphnis and Chloe are not

given a single dance together; they only appear dancing side by side in group situations, such as their initial appearance during the ‘Religious Dance’ and the concluding ‘Bacchanal’.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, as John J. Winkler has pointed out, the myth of Syrinx is distinctly problematic in context, given that it features the violent actions of Pan, the ‘archenemy of the pastoral woman’, (1991, 23). Michael J. Puri argues that the pantomime enables Daphnis to atone for ‘Pan’s crimes toward Syrinx’ (2011b, 197), but this does not go far in explaining the appearance of a myth whose theme is uncontrollable male lust, resulting in the threat of violence and the transformation of Syrinx from living woman to inanimate object (this point will be returned to below; see section 5.7.5). In fact, although Pan is present in Longus, R. L. Hunter has argued that ‘The god who is clearly in control of the events of the novel is Eros’ (1983, 41), suggesting that the importance given to Pan in the ballet is a further alteration from the original novel.<sup>3</sup> The emphasis on male-on-female violence created by the ballet’s alteration of Longus’s narrative deserves further investigation.

### 5.3 Controlling the feminine in *Daphnis et Chloé*

During the pantomime, Chloe – acting as Syrinx – twice rejects the advances of Daphnis, who plays the role of Pan; each time she does so a descending motive is

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<sup>2</sup> This point is moot: although there is nothing in the libretto to indicate explicitly that the couple dance together, Fillerup suggests that the pantomime ‘achieves the obligatory *pas de deux* for Daphnis and Chloé’ (2009, 269), and Puri describes ‘the re-enactment of the myth as pantomime/pas de deux’ (2011b, 193). If it is assumed that a *pas de deux* is ‘obligatory’, then it is obvious that this section of the ballet is the place it must go. However, the libretto’s silence on the issue certainly opens a space for questioning the extent to which one should expect *Daphnis* to follow the conventions of Romantic ballet uncritically: Mawer appears to imply as much when she notes that Ravel could ‘not countenance a real *pas de deux* for Daphnis and Chloé in *Daphnis*’ (2006a, 104). As will be seen in the final Chapter 6, a reconsideration of the relationship between Ravel’s work and its balletic context suggests the possibility of the ballet existing in a more explicitly critical position regarding its predecessors (in particular, see sections 6.7, 6.8, and 6.11).

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter 4, section 4.3 for more on Pan’s significance.

heard, which we may term REJECTION (figure 5.1). Following Chloe-Syrinx's refusal, the libretto explains that:

[Chloe-Syrinx] disappears into the reeds. In despair, [Daphnis-Pan] picks several stalks to form a flute and plays a melancholy air. Chloe reappears and interprets in her dance the accents of the flute.

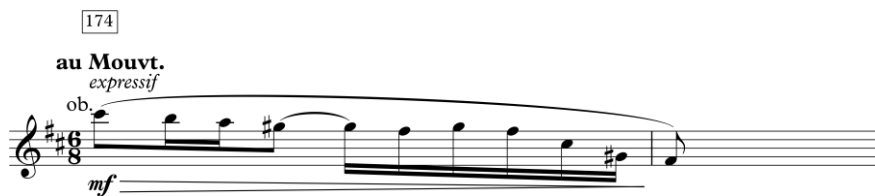


Figure 5.1: REJECTION at R174

In other words, Chloe does not just become reified as a sounding object – that is, pan-pipes – but also as a dancing object: an automaton under the control of Daphnis, who appears to guide her movement with his flute as remote control, or, as Michael Puri puts it, ‘like a doll to the fingers of a marionettist’ (2011b, 196).<sup>4</sup> This striking moment

<sup>4</sup> One might object that the verb ‘interpret’ indicates significantly more agency than Puri’s interpretation allows. However, the relationship indicated – with Daphnis as the musical ‘creator’ and Chloe the ‘interpreter’ – reinscribes the notion of men and women’s ‘proper roles: men create, women recreate’, underpinned by ‘the philosophical tradition of creativity situated in the rationalized subjectivity of man’, leading to an unequal situation regarding gender, in which ‘the female persona is denied legitimacy as a source of creativity’ (Citron 1993, 57). In fact, the original French verb in the libretto is ‘figure’, which may be rendered as ‘represent’, a translation that attenuates the stronger sense of agency implied by ‘interpret’, implying a re-presentation of something already created by Daphnis, a markedly subordinate position. One might also draw attention to the increasingly problematic relationship between composers and performers in this period, with Stravinsky in particular insisting on a literalness in performance that demanded that the ‘re-presenter’ yielded to the creator (see Taruskin 2005, 474-478). Indeed, a similar ‘emphasis on strictness, lack of exaggeration or sentimentality [...] doing just what the notation says’ (Woodley 2000, 214) is found in Perlemuter and Jourdan-Morhange’s book *Ravel According to Ravel*, where tempos are described as ‘strict and without rubato’, rhythms are to be played ‘with great exactitude’, and where the performer is instructed to observe ‘exactly the intransigence of Ravel’ (1989 [2005], 10, 13, 34). With such ‘an aesthetic of “purity”’ (Woodley 2000, 214) in mind, it is not hard to conceive of the relationship between Daphnis and Chloe in this scene as one of puppet-master and marionette. Finally, it should be noted that, unlike the beginning of Daphnis’s



is the culmination of narrative processes set in motion at the very beginning of the plot, which is where we will start our examination of the construction of femininity in the ballet, in order to investigate the narrative patterns that lead to Chloe's automaton-like dance.

The characters of Daphnis and Chloe are introduced during a sacred dance: Daphnis enters first (R10), then Chloe (R10<sup>+5</sup>); with each entrance, the theme associated with the protagonists is heard (DC), played by an oboe and flute, respectively. Up to this point in the ballet, the principal pitch collections employed have been diatonic: the Lydian mode and the acoustic scale. However, the entrance of Chloe ushers in a new collection, the octatonic, leading to an increase in chromaticism and dissonance, which lends a perceptible acerbic turn to the harmony (R11). It is conventional to hear octatonicism as representative of the supernatural, or evil, and, as was noted in the previous chapter, it is a commonplace that composers employ 'octatonic passages to represent the odd, scary, or unfamiliar' (Heinzelmann 2011, 27). Although I am unconvinced that such a straightforward relationship pertains in all cases, I would contend that even a listener unfamiliar with the supposed symbolism of the octatonic will likely acknowledge the effect it creates in this context: the pitch content tips into Octatonic Collection I (OC<sub>1,2,4</sub>) precisely at the moment that Chloe is introduced into the story, a markedly 'othering' or 'exotic' effect (see Chapter 4 for more on gendered connotations of the octatonic, especially section 4.1.2).

This octatonic passage is relatively brief, however; the dance ends with Daphnis and Chloe embracing, and the libretto describes the 'tender emotion on seeing

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'Danse légère', where the '*décomposez*' indication suggests that the orchestra follow the dancer, the situation here implies the opposite, with the dancer 'interpreting' the 'accents' (a rather emphatic idiom) of the orchestral flute.

the couple'. This is followed by the 'Dance of the Youths', in which Daphnis is whisked into a dance with the young girls, leading Chloe to feel jealous. In turn, Chloe dances with the young boys; this ultimately acts as a catalyst to the *geste brusque* and ensuing dance contest, both of which were examined in the preceding two chapters. However, although the outcome of the contest appears to set the narrative back on its romantic trajectory, another disruption is experienced, and this time it is a female character who is the agent. Having beaten Dorcon in the dance contest, and been rewarded with a kiss from Chloe, Daphnis is left alone on the stage. It is at this point that Lyceion enters, 'the Salome of Greece' (Jankélévitch [1939] 1959, 49).

#### **5.4 Lyceion, Lycaenion, Daphnis, and Desire**

In her book on Ravel's ballets, Deborah Mawer suggests that *Daphnis et Chloé* is rich in oppositions of emotion and character. At the end of a list of what she terms 'quasi-symbolist contrasted pairings' one finds a dichotomy between promiscuity and chastity (2006b, 103-104). While in the ballet's literature Chloe is exclusively discussed in relation to the latter term, it is Lyceion who is seen to represent the former; indeed, Ravel himself referred to her as 'the very obliging lady' (letter to Michel D. Calvocoressi, 3 May 1910, in Orenstein 2003, 116). In fact, as described above, the episode between Lyceion and Daphnis is one of the major changes between the source novel by Longus and the ballet's libretto; in the novel Daphnis is a willing student of Lycaenion, as she is known in Longus's version. Having begged her to 'lose no time in teaching him how to do what he wanted to do to Chloe', Daphnis is then described as behaving 'exactly as he if he had been about to receive some great revelation from a god' (Longus 1989, 80, III.18). Following his lesson, the novel's Daphnis is barely

restrained from rushing back to Chloe to put ‘his new knowledge into practice’ (ibid., 81, III.19). This is in marked contrast to his counterpart in the ballet, who demurely replaces Lyceion’s veils at each removal.

The immediate impact of this is to place Daphnis on the side of chastity, with Lyceion representing promiscuity, sister of any number of licentious women in art and myth. Although Lycaenion is certainly an erotic figure in the novel – she is responsible for Daphnis’s sexual initiation, after all – her function within the Greek narrative is very different to that of Lyceion in the ballet’s plot. As the classicist Alfons Wouters argues, in Longus’s novel ‘Lycaenion does not intervene as seducer, at least not primarily, but rather as saviour’, suggesting that her intervention provides Daphnis with the requisite knowledge and experience to become Chloe’s lover (1987, 117). In other words, her seduction has a *positive* impact on the narrative. On the other hand, the Lyceion of the ballet is an unrequited vamp who, despite failing to achieve her sexual object, leaves Daphnis, as the libretto puts it, ‘very troubled’; she is a dangerous, promiscuous, sensual figure, who would steal Daphnis from Chloe and divert the narrative from its telos.

However, it is not only the *nature* of Lyceion’s interaction with Daphnis that has changed, but also its *position* within the narrative, as described above (section 5.2). Lycaenion’s crucial intervention in Daphnis and Chloe’s relationship takes place three-quarters of the way into the novel, in which she delivers the graduating examination of Daphnis’s sexual education. The ballet’s libretto moves the scene to the first third of the work, the midpoint between Daphnis’s success in his dance contest with Dorcon and Chloe’s abduction by pirates. This displacement has two effects: (1) to juxtapose Lyceion’s promiscuous sensuality with the chaste kiss offered by Chloe;

(2) to suggest an element of causality, as if Daphnis's temptation – and thus his temptress – is responsible for Chloe's removal from him. Thus, rather than acting to bring Daphnis and Chloe together, as Lycaenion does in the source novel – *anagnorisis* – Lyceion acts as the catalyst for the rupturing of Daphnis and Chloe's relationship: *agon*.

The displacement of the Lyceion-Daphnis scene also means that Lyceion is the first female figure to dance solo: the two preceding solo dances have been by men, Dorcon and Daphnis. This accords with Diaghilev's move to emphasise male dancers; one may observe this particularly in Daphnis's dance, which casts the 'feminised' male dancer as object of the audience's gaze (see Chapter 3, section 3.4, and Chapter 4, section 4.2.4). Although ballet had originally been an emphatically masculine, aristocratic art, by the end of the nineteenth century it was considered specifically feminine. As Ilyana Karthas explains, male dancers were stigmatised as 'dangerously effeminate and clumsy' (2012, 965). Thus, up to the advent of the Ballets Russes, French dance was centred on the eroticised spectacle of the female dancer; audiences were primarily male, and, as Lenard Berlanstein argues, 'a theatre that was not sexually charged would have been unfamiliar, undesirable and even un-French in the late nineteenth century' (cited in Karthas 2012, 965). However, despite the reforms of the Ballets Russes, following Lyceion's entrance in Ravel's ballet, the only solo dances are those of women. In each instance, the women dance under the scrutiny of male characters; from this point the audience's gaze is aligned with the masculine.

To summarise, the character of Lyceion in Ravel's ballet differs from her literary counterpart in three ways: (1) Lyceion seeks to seduce Daphnis away from Chloe: Lycaenion provides Daphnis with the experience that enables him to become

an appropriate lover; (2) Lyceion is unsuccessful in her seduction, but leaves Daphnis feeling troubled: Lycaenion sleeps with Daphnis, who finds the experience stimulates his desire for Chloe; (3) Lyceion's seduction precedes Daphnis and Chloe's separation: Lycaenion's 'lesson' leads to Daphnis and Chloe's union (table 5.1).

<b>Lyceion (Ravel)</b>	<b>Lycaenion (Longus)</b>
1. Seducer	1. Teacher
2. Negative experience for Daphnis	2. Positive experience for Daphnis
3. Precedes Daphnis and Chloe's separation	3. Leads to Daphnis and Chloe's union

*Table 5.1: comparison of the characters of Lyceion (Ravel) and Lycaenion (Longus)*

## **5.5 The 'Salome of Greece' in Paris**

With these changes Lycaenion became Lyceion, 'the Salome of Greece', as Ravel's friend and biographer Vladimir Jankélévitch named her ([1939] 1959, 49); given the ubiquity of Salome figures across the arts in contemporary France, the designation is more than appropriate. In an often cited but questionable figure, Michel Décaudin draws on Maurice Krafft's claim to have counted 2789 poetic celebrations of the Salome myth by 1912 (1967, 109). A more credible figure, perhaps, is given by Anthony Pym, who counts 388 literary and pictorial versions in the modern period, 72% of which were produced between 1880 and 1920, with a particularly heavy concentration in Paris around the turn of the century (1989, 312-313). As Theodore Ziolkowski explains, by this time 'Salome had come to combine several of the fin-de-

siècle's most compelling interests: the sexuality of the *femme fatale*, the association of love and death, and the power of art (dance)' (2008, 67).

Despite such prominent and influential accounts of Salome's story by writers such as Flaubert, Mallarmé, and Huysmans, Megan Becker-Leckrone is surely right to emphasise the important contribution made by Wilde's play *Salomé*, specifically its invention of one of the most evocative features of the myth, the Dance of the Seven Veils. As she explains, '[in] neither of the "original" gospel texts do we have [...] veils of any kind, seven of anything' (1995, 250). Furthermore, '*it is Wilde himself who names the "famous" dance of the seven veils*. Its appellation simply did not exist in relation to Salome's dance before his play' (ibid., 254; original emphasis). However, as is frequently pointed out,<sup>5</sup> Wilde's act was simply to name the dance, not to describe it: in the text of his play the moment is restricted to the laconic stage instruction, 'Salomé dances the dance of the seven veils' (Wilde [1894] 1967 54). In doing so, Wilde opened up a space eagerly filled by any number of fin-de-siècle dancers, leading to what has been described as 'Salomania' (Dierkes-Thrun 2011, 94). Udo Kultermann points to the significance of the music halls in this respect, which exposed the general public

to an enormous number of works that were not done by actresses or singers but by female performers who exploited their bodily appearances especially in various forms of *deshabillies* or undressings. The *Dance of the Seven Veils* became [-] with or without references to the biblical topic [-] a general attraction.

(2006, 205)

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<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Bucknell (1993, 522), Bentley (2002, 31).

Davinia Caddy also picks up on the significance of the popular theatre in promoting Salomania, observing that

Before the outbreak of World War I, variations on the Dance had appeared at the Théâtre du Chatelet, the Comédie-Parisienne, the Théâtre des Arts, even the Moulin Rouge. Every vaudeville show seemed to include a Dance of the Seven Veils; every hootchy-kootchy dancer wiggling without underwear in some vaguely Eastern outfit was a Salome in spirit.

(2005, 37)

It would be easy to write off the fascination with the Dance of the Seven Veils as a fixation on the supposedly free sensuality of the Oriental Other – and as an excuse for what was essentially a striptease, lent dubious high-art prestige by Wilde’s play and Strauss’s opera. However, one might also view the prevalence of vamp-like Salome figures as iconically feminist: strong, independent female figures who claim for themselves the right to masculine sexual behaviour. As Caddy suggests, in this respect Salome can be viewed as a mythical counterpart to the contemporary phenomenon of the *femme nouvelle*.<sup>6</sup> Toni Bentley argues that ‘Salome became feminist through Wilde, achieving her emancipation by embracing her own exploitation’ (2002, 30),

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<sup>6</sup> It might be objected that to dance naked is to occupy a subordinate position to the spectator, and that there is little that is emancipatory about placing oneself on view as a sexual object. However, the crucial issue here is the exercise of agency, the choice to dance as one wishes. Colette dramatizes the debate between these two positions in her story ‘A Letter’, in which a (semi?) fictionalised Colette argues with her demure friend Valentine over performing undressed: “It’s beyond me! When I think that you stand there, in front of the whole world . . . oh . . . !” Seized by an irresistible shudder of modesty, you covered your face with your hands and your whole body cringed, so that your dress, clinging to you, outlined you for an instant worse than naked: your little breasts crushed by the maillot corset, your stomach elongated and flat, ending in a mysterious fold, your round thighs pressed together, your delicate knees, bent slightly [. . .] There’s one thing, Valentine my friend, that you will never teach me, and that is that the skin on my lower back or my hips can be more tempting and more secret than the skin on my hand or my calf’ (1983, 48-49). See Chapter 6, section 6.3 for a further examination of issues of agency in dancing.

and there were numerous Salomes danced by unmarried, financially independent women. These modern dancers had eschewed the bodily ‘deformation’ of full turn out and dancing on pointe, which was required of traditional ballet dancers: the dancer Loie Fuller was emphatic in her rejection of such ‘barbaric and inhuman’ customs:

Anything which deforms the body an iota should not, cannot be justifiable as an art. When a system of dance depends for its accomplishments upon torture and disfigurement [...] nothing can justify it, except the past ages which gave it birth and to which it belongs.

(Cited in Garelick 2007, 120)

Not all these Salomes follow Wilde’s model: as Rhonda K. Garelick observes, Fuller’s 1895 *Salome* – with music by Gabriel Pierné – ignored ‘the usual “femme fatale” connotations’, choosing to portray Salome ‘as a chaste and frightened child’ although her later version of the tale, 1907’s *La Tragédie de Salomé* with music by Florent Schmitt, undid ‘nearly every artistic decision she had made twelve years earlier’ (2007, 95).

Given the lack of success that Fuller experienced with her earlier ‘chaste’ *Salome*, 1907 may be seen as a sort of Year Zero for *Salome* in Paris: not only did this year see Fuller’s second attempt at representing the dancing princess, but Strauss’s opera was given its French premiere – with *The Dance of the Seven Veils* performed by Natalia Trouhanowa<sup>7</sup> – and Maud Allan arrived in Paris to present her notorious

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<sup>7</sup> Trouhanowa later danced Schmitt’s symphonic poem derived from his *Salome* in 1912, alongside the orchestrated ballet version of Ravel’s *Valses nobles et sentimentales*, called *Adélaïde, ou le langage de fleurs* (Rowden 2013, 76). She also danced *Salome* in the 1910 Paris premiere of Mariotte’s opera based



take on Salome (Rowden 2013, 72). Catherine Hindson has argued that ‘Maud Allan the star, and Maud Allan the performer, had a significant influence on ideas about fin-de-siècle women’ (2007, 53). Such was the provocative nature of Allan’s *The Vision of Salomé* that it was identified by contemporaries ‘with the suffragettes’ calls for women’s greater social, cultural, and political independence’:

*The Vision of Salomé* was understood as gender rebellion against women’s traditional morality and modesty, especially since it was put forth by a financially, legally and sexually independent woman. Contemporaries also feared that Allan’s popularity would corrupt her enthusiastic female audiences.

(Dierkes-Thrun 2011, 83-84)

Although Wilde may have given Salome’s dance its name, it was arguably Maud Allan who furnished the dance with many of its distinctive features, offering ‘a completely independent solution both in terms of its dramaturgical concept and in its composition of patterns of femininity’ (Brandstetter [1995] 2015, 191); indeed, her Salome costume became the model for a number of later dancers. Such was the power of Allan’s Salome that it provoked intense reactions, both adulatory and aggressively negative. Of the latter, the most extreme was that of the British right-wing newspaper, *The Vigilante*, who implied in 1918 that Allan ‘sought to spread homosexual and moral corruption in Britain in order to aid the German enemy from within’ (Dierkes-Thrun 2011, 109). So inflammatory was the article – entitled ‘The Cult of the Clitoris’ – that

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on Wilde’s play; Mariotte’s work was to have been premiered in Lyon in 1907, adding to the tally of French Salomes that year, but legal wrangles with Strauss and his publisher over the rights to Wilde’s play led to its postponement to 1908 (Rowden 2011, 172; 164).

Allan brought legal action against the paper's owner, Noel Pemberton-Billington. The ensuing trial found Pemberton-Billington not guilty, humiliating Allan and destroying her career.

Two of Ravel's own circle performed Salome dances, Colette,<sup>8</sup> librettist of his second opera, *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, and Ida Rubinstein, who commissioned and danced *Boléro*.<sup>9</sup> Rubinstein so identified with the character that her initial performance as Salome was achieved despite numerous obstacles: at the age of 21 she was committed to an asylum by her brother-in-law, who was concerned that her determination to perform Wilde's play would shame the family. Having negotiated her release, Rubinstein eventually performed the play in mime, in order to circumvent censorship banning the performance of the play in Russia. Rubinstein later 'out-Salomed' Salome by performing a twelve-veil dance in *Cléopâtre*, a notable success of Diaghilev's first season in 1909 (Montesquiou 1909, Batson 2005, 20-21). Clair Rowden identifies Rubinstein as crucial to the development of Salome as an icon of modernity, suggesting that she was able to 'cast off the mantle of Flaubert, Moreau and Huysmans to drag Wilde's *Salomé* kicking and screaming into the twentieth century' (2013, 96). Described by Elizabeth Brody as 'An intense, domineering woman with inimitable panache' (1985, 502), Rubinstein was among a number of dancers who understood Salome as a symbol of female strength and independence. We will revisit Rubinstein's significance in this regard in Chapter 6 (section 6.10).

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<sup>8</sup> See Bentley (2002) for a discussion of Colette's Salome.

<sup>9</sup> See Chapter 6, section 6.10 for more on Rubinstein's *Boléro*.

## 5.6 Lyceion and Daphnis

Returning to *Daphnis and Chloe*, Lyceion arrives on stage unnoticed by Daphnis, who is lying face down, with his head in his hands. This moment is a pivotal instant, representing a shift in focus from male to female dancers: as the audience's gaze transfers from Daphnis and fixes on Lyceion, Lyceion is caught in the act of contemplating Daphnis, a double perspective that uncomfortably emphasises the act of viewing as voyeurism: 'A gaze surprises him in the function of voyeur, disturbs him, overwhelms him and reduces him to a feeling of shame' (Lacan [1973] 1977, 84). The effect is enhanced by the sense of time suspended evoked by the arabesques languorously unfolded by a pair of clarinets (see figure 5.2); as Gurminder K. Bhogal suggests, Debussy and Ravel employed arabesque as a way of arresting the flow of musical time (2006, 179).<sup>10</sup> This suspended moment encourages the audience's focus on Lyceion, as if her very presence is sufficient to interrupt temporal flow. Later on in the dance the clarinet arabesques return each time Lyceion removes a veil, not only acting as signals for Lyceion's yearning, but also recalling the moment of her entrance, when the sense of timelessness concentrates the audience's gaze, implicating the spectator-listener in the game of desire. Lyceion's arabesques invoke an aural 'gaze' every bit as concentrated as that conjured by her movements, compelling the audience into listening with the same intensity with which they watch.

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<sup>10</sup> Bhogal also proposes that, 'From the outset, Ravel relies on the decorative excess of Lyceion's music to warn the listener that she is not to be trusted' (2013, 197).



Figure 5.2: clarinet arabesques at R55

These florid clarinet figures also evoke the archetypal arabesque of the opening of Debussy's *Faune*, casting Lyceion in the role of erotic pursuer.<sup>11</sup> In her recent examination of Nijinsky's choreography for Debussy's score, Davinia Caddy notes that there is an association between reed instruments and the nymphs, with the faun represented by the flute: 'Debussy's music is thus accorded timbral significance, and along traditionally gendered lines: man's association with the flute, and woman's with reed instruments, goes back at least to the classical tales of Pan, his "syrinx" and the mythological sirens' (2012, 76). Although Lyceion (and Salome) might be understood as performing a siren-like function – using dance as seduction, just as the sirens use song – the situation is complicated here by the power politics in play. Lyceion has not only usurped the masculine position by taking the sexual initiative, but she has also taken control of the male-gendered flute: I will return to this point below.<sup>12</sup>

These arabesques also suggest other intertextual links, most obviously with the clarinet-duet cadenzas of the first movement of Ravel's own *Raspsodie espagnole*,

<sup>11</sup> For a brief critical comment by Ravel on Nijinsky's *Faune*, see 'Nijinsky as Ballet Master', in Orenstein (2003, 404). Mawer also notes a certain choreographic debt to *Daphnis* in Nijinsky's *Faune* (2006b, 101).

<sup>12</sup> The appropriation of masculine codes by Lyceion is emphasised by a number of links between her dance and Daphnis's 'Danse légère', the dance with which he won Chloe's favour, just as Lyceion seeks to do here with Daphnis. As Bhogal observes, Lyceion's 'trademark rapidly ascending flourish' is 'a gesture analogous to the vibrant sweeping motifs of Daphnis's "Danse légère"'; additionally, 'her music approximates the shimmering timbre of the dance he performed for Chloé' (2013, 197).

‘Prelude à la nuit’ (1907-08). Although the harmonic content is different – octatonic in ‘Prelude à la nuit’, acoustic in *Daphnis* – the freely undulating, metrically ambiguous, close-position clarinet-duo arabesques betray a high degree of similarity, as does the heavily erotic, orientalist atmosphere they create (see figure 5.3). The self-quotation here associates Lyceion with one of Ravel’s most successful recent works, and one that had special personal significance. Ravel identified strongly with Spanish culture, being Basque by birth and descent, and the son of parents who had met in Spain. The *Rapsodie* also reworked a significant piece from Ravel’s youth, the ‘Habanera’ from his *Sites auriculaires* for two pianos, the first of his works to be performed in public. Indeed, the early date of this work – 1895 – is proudly appended to the title of the corresponding movement in the *Rapsodie*. This self-quotation may lead us to recall Lawrence Kramer’s provocative suggestion that Salome ‘would seem to form a self-portrait of the artist as a woman – perverse, desirous and castrated’ (1990, 279).



Figure 5.3: clarinet arabesques in *Rapsodie espagnole*, ‘Prelude à la nuit’, R6

At first, Daphnis is unaware of who has flirtatiously covered his eyes, assuming it is Chloe playing games; the key shifts momentarily into D# at this point (R56), the key in which Daphnis had received his kiss from Chloe. The abrupt curtailment of the theme he shares with Chloe (DC) – emphasised by the solo cello’s

liquidating glissando to a harmonic – represents his shock at discovering it to be Lyceion (figure 5.4). However, this also points towards the imminent abduction of Chloe; this is the first of six instances of the abridged form of the theme, all but two of which occur during Chloe’s absence, and, significantly, it is Chloe’s half of the theme that is missing here (see Chapter 1, section 1.6). The arabesque gesture that follows subtly moves the music to V of C, as if tempting Daphnis away from the sharp-side orientation he had shared with Chloe before Lyceion’s appearance. Daphnis’s response is indicated by a return of the opening theme from his earlier dance. This not only recalls the moment that he won Chloe’s kiss – now in Lyceion’s harmonic territory – but its diatonic purity and stable step-wise motion is contextually marked. The contrast with the excessive, chromatic swoons of Lyceion’s arabesques further emphasises the opposition between Daphnis and Lyceion, chastity and promiscuity.

The figure shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is for Clarinet Solo (cls) and the bottom staff is for Trumpets with Sordani (tpts con sord.). The top staff includes a triplet of eighth notes, a glissando, and a section marked '56' with 'DC' above it. The bottom staff includes a section marked 'DAPHNIS' and a 'cls' marking above the final measure.

Figure 5.4: RR55<sup>+3</sup>-56<sup>+5</sup>

In contrast to the metrical suspension performed by these arabesques, once Lyceion’s dance gets underway it depends on a strong sense of marked time for its various rhythmic effects, such as the opening figure’s swinging feel and gently rocking harmonic motion. The wide melodic intervals here, emphasising perfect fifths, potentially recall Daphnis and Chloe’s own theme (see figure 5.5). This is juxtaposed

with a hemiola figure featuring pungent diminished octaves, a stereotypically ‘exotic’ harmony that connects with the reminiscence of the Iberian-flavoured *Rapsodie espagnole*. Such Spanish-tinged music may also bring to mind one of the most prominent and most ‘exotic’ of late nineteenth-century femmes fatales, Carmen.<sup>13</sup> Susan McClary has noted ‘the time-honored association between “Orient” and “Woman”’ (1992, 54), and the importance of dance rhythms to the European perception of the exotic:<sup>14</sup>

Orientalist music tends to be animated through dance rhythms – not rhythms that could be mistaken for European genres, but rhythms calculated to engage the body in a very particular set of physical responses. In describing the stereotypical gestures of ‘exotic dance,’ Gautier wrote, ‘Swinging of the hips, twisting of the body, head jerks and arm développés, a succession of voluptuous and swooning attitudes, such are the foundations of dance in the Orient.’

(1992, 55)

There is at least a hint of the hip swing to the rocking motion of Lyceion’s music, and the returning arabesques give more than a flavour of the ‘voluptuous and swooning attitudes’ that Gautier mentions.

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<sup>13</sup> For an examination of the character of Carmen from the perspective of Ravel’s opera, *L’heure espagnole*, see Kilpatrick (2015, 172-196).

<sup>14</sup> Puri hears Lyceion’s dance as a waltz (2011b, 229 n1): the waltz as a genre is explored in detail in Chapter 6.

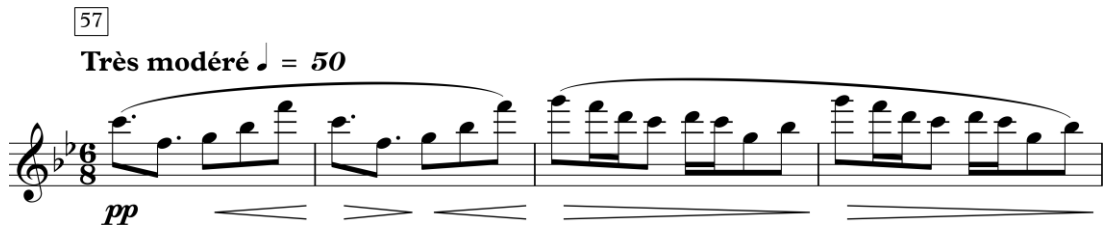


Figure 5.5: opening of Lyceion's dance, R57

As the dance reaches its climax, Bhogal hears the increasing metrical instability between the first and second veil removals as indicative of Lyceion's 'increasingly daring' attempts at seducing Daphnis (2006, 190). However, if one considers the way that the rhythm locks into a regular pulsation – and the sense of impending climax as the rising melody reaches a pitch-ceiling against which it throbs, culminating in climactic release – one might come to the conclusion that Daphnis is not a physically necessary component in Lyceion's erotic games (figure 5.6). Her final, throwaway arabesque almost seems to give the finger to the 'troubled' Daphnis, enhancing the sense of Lyceion as not only sexually independent, but even sexually self-sufficient.<sup>15</sup> It also suggests that a sense of humiliation, of failure represented by his erotic redundancy, might be a contributory factor in Daphnis's troubled feelings in the wake of Lyceion's dance.

<sup>15</sup> Bhogal notes that this final gesture 'seems to signal her defiant resilience' (2013, 197).



59

Ac - cé - lé - rez

*p* *mf*

Retenu très légèrement

1er Mouvt

*ff*

60

Plus lent

*pp* *pp* *pp*

*rapide*

6 6

Figure 5.6: RR59-60<sup>+3</sup>

I am well aware that my suggestion of Lyceion’s autoeroticism runs the risk of being accused of erroneously reading stereotypically ‘phallic’ musical gestures as emblematic of female sexual climax. However, quite apart from the fact that it is the cultural encoding of erotics that is at stake here, rather than a necessarily ‘literal’ representation, I would argue that the confusion of male and female sensuality in the passage is significant. As stated earlier, Lyceion is the first instance of a solo dance

for a female character; up to her entrance it has been male dancers who have submitted to the gaze of the audience, for whom the *corps de ballet* act as onstage surrogates. It had only recently become acceptable for Parisian audiences, especially male audiences, to view a man dancing in ballet.<sup>16</sup> As Ilyana Karthas explains, ‘Modern attitudes about the body and gender brought about a situation in which it seemed “unnatural” to look at the male body and “problematic” for men to enjoy looking at men dancing’ (2012, 963). However, as noted earlier, the Ballets Russes had begun to shift the emphasis from female to male dancers. As Karthas continues:

This Russian male body (associated with manliness, primitivity, and virility) opened a space for the male dancer upon the French ballet stage. However novel, these Russian males still occupied an inherently feminine environment, but they occupied it as ‘outsiders.’ Their presence marked a steady acceptance of the male dancing body even though a stigma of effeminacy endured. This was acceptable to French audiences and critics in that the Russian male dancer was a foreign body.

(ibid., 966)

Thus, although it was becoming more acceptable for men to watch men dancing, it was only on the condition that the attitude was that of an anthropologist, viewing the primitive exertions of the foreign male with detached, maybe even scientific – certainly not sexual – interest.<sup>17</sup> However, at the point of Lyceion’s entrance – the timeless moment wreathed in sensuous arabesques, with Lyceion seen in the act of sensually appreciating the prone Daphnis, who lies face down, buttocks up – at this

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<sup>16</sup> As Hanna Järvinen notes, ‘*Le Spectre de la Rose* (1911) was the first ballet in which the male dancer was constantly in focus while the female role was the supportive one’ (2014, 98).

<sup>17</sup> One might suggest that, for French audiences of the time, Russian men were ‘gendered’ Other. In relation to this, one can also note Järvinen’s comment that ‘Nijinsky would have also been perceived as feminine because of his own Orientality’ (2014, 126).

point the façade of detached curiosity is perhaps shown up for what the audience might fear it to be: an erotic focus on the male form. Emphasising this is the fact that the onstage viewer, or audience-surrogate, is a lone woman; unlike the two earlier solo dances – both of which occur in the stereotypically masculine world of competition – here the association of viewing audience and onstage character is emphatically specific, accentuating the act of gazing on the male form as feminine and desiring. If Daphnis is left feeling troubled by his encounter with Lyceion, then, it is easy to imagine his audience feeling similarly.<sup>18</sup>

My suggestion of autoeroticism may evoke further resonances. Nijinsky's choreography for Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* has already been mentioned above in connection with the arabesque. First performed on 29 May 1912, Nijinsky's creation was controversial from the start. As Hanna Järvinen explains, 'Perhaps the most curious aspect of the scandal was that what exactly offended in the work went largely unsaid', with *Le Gaulois* of 30 April announcing that no review would be published until the end of the work was altered, 'without actually describing what offended' (2009, 31). The 'action' of the choreography can be parsed simply: the principal nymph discards a series of veils, the last of which is retrieved by the faun, who lays it on the ground, before lowering himself on top of it: '[a] first "ting" on the cymbals signals a moment of climax (b. 108): the faun raises his torso in ecstasy, then lies on his front' (Caddy 2012, 94). The similarities with Lyceion's scene in *Daphnis* are striking, but no more so than the obvious, but crucial difference: in *Daphnis* it is Lyceion – the veiled woman – who indulges in autoerotic fantasy, not the male viewer. The intertextual link also provides an interesting gloss on the later pantomime

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<sup>18</sup> As Žižek puts it, 'There is something extremely unpleasant and obscene in the experience of our gaze as already the gaze of the other' (1992, 108).

sequence, in which Chloe dances as Syrinx to Daphnis's Pan; during Lyceion's dance, the goat-legged god suffers a subversion of erotic authority at the hands of one of his nymphs, symbolised instrumentally through Lyceion's seditious use of Pan's phallic flute.<sup>19</sup>

Despite this, Lyceion's attempted seduction of Daphnis is unsuccessful, and the narrative moves on. From this point, it will only be women that dance for the contemplation of male characters, regendering the gaze as safely masculine. Yet the aftershocks of Lyceion's entrance can still be felt. In the first of the three female solo dances Lyceion dances freely, of her own accord. In the second dance Chloe dances against her will, with frequent attempts at escape (see Chapter 6, section 6.4). In the third dance Chloe enacts the role of Syrinx in a retelling of the story of Pan and Syrinx. She is indicated in the libretto as dancing to 'the accents' of Daphnis's flute, and thus under his control. There is a pattern here, one of increasing male domination of a dancing woman, triggered by the need to wrest back phallic jurisdiction following the subversion represented by Lyceion. Thus, in revising the character of Lyceion and the position of her encounter with Daphnis within the narrative, the nature of the lesson that Daphnis learns from Lyceion has also been modified. In Longus's novel *Lycaenion* aims to teach Daphnis to be a more experienced and sympathetic lover. In the ballet Lyceion inadvertently communicates the problematic message that a sexually free woman is dangerous. Daphnis's manipulation of Chloe's dance appears

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<sup>19</sup> Given the discussion of Hoffmann's 'Sandman' below (section 5.7), it is worth noting that Offenbach's depiction of Hoffmann's Olympia also involves a contested flute. As Heather Hadlock describes, 'Olympia's manic final performance [...] begins with a solo flute theme to which her father's guests are waltzing. She and Hoffmann begin to dance, but the girl suddenly refuses to follow [...] and she takes up the waltz theme, *replacing the solo flute with her voice*' (Hadlock 2000, 81, my emphasis). Not only does she supplant the phallic flute *with her own voice*, but she subverts that archetypal romantic dance, the waltz (see Chapter 6, section 6.2). As Hadlock concludes, 'Ultimately, the opera implies, the construction of Olympia was only another futile attempt at the repression of the prima donna's spirit' (ibid.).

to suggest that such a woman must be made to submit to masculine control. More disturbingly, the enactment of the story of Pan and Syrinx during the dance suggests that she be made to suffer violence, as Syrinx does at the hands of Pan.<sup>20</sup>

If Daphnis is left feeling troubled by his encounter with Lyceion, then, it is easy to imagine his audience feeling similarly. However, Lyceion's attempted seduction of Daphnis is unsuccessful, and the narrative swiftly moves on to other issues. Yet the aftershocks of Lyceion's entrance can still be felt. To recall Abbate's formulation, Salome's crime is to attempt to subvert gender roles. As Lawrence Kramer suggests, 'Salome assumes her power by subverting a fundamental patriarchal institution, that of the gaze' (1990, 272). Later in the same essay Kramer elaborates on the significance of this subversion: 'the man who gazes can also be seen to gaze. The visibility of the gazing eye is also its vulnerability' (ibid., 274).

Lyceion's dance, then, is a complex moment, in which her erotic appreciation of the prone Daphnis represents a radical regendering of the traditional male gaze. On two occasions prior to Lyceion's introduction femininity is portrayed as a destabilising element. On the first occasion – the entrance of Chloe – the disrupted diatonic stability is regained after a short time with little trouble and the narrative continues. On the second occasion – when the girls whisk Daphnis away from Chloe in a wild dance – the moment represents a genuine threat to narrative stability, in that it jeopardises the security of the protagonists' relationship, and causes Chloe to feel jealous of the girls who dance with Daphnis. Lyceion continues this pattern, actively pursuing Daphnis and thus subverting traditional gender roles, symbolically equivalent to the *femme*

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<sup>20</sup> Although the lesson Lycaenion teaches in Longus is to encourage Daphnis to be gentle with Chloe, there is still an undertone of increasing aggression felt in the three interpolated myths. See Hunter (1983, 53) and below, section 5.7.5.

*nouvelle* contemporary with Ravel's ballet.<sup>21</sup> In this she is the mirror image of Chloe, who appears exclusively in the conventional sexual roles of either prey or prize.

The subversive effect of Lyceion's behaviour has an analogue in the tonal structure of the ballet's first part. The first two major key changes in the ballet define a symmetrical system, being four semitones either side of the ballet's tonic, A; Dorcon, in his attempt to win a kiss from Chloe diverts towards E as dominant of A. However, Daphnis, in his successful dance, reasserts the primacy of a symmetrical system, one that culminates with a kiss from Chloe in D#, which then returns the music to C#, enharmonically equivalent to the earlier D $\flat$ . C# is the key of Lyceion's entrance.<sup>22</sup> However, the start of her dance diverts towards G, which acts as a dominant to the final tonality of the first tableau, C. It is almost as if Lyceion's entrance is of such seismic significance as to reroute the tonal trajectory of the work (figure 5.7).

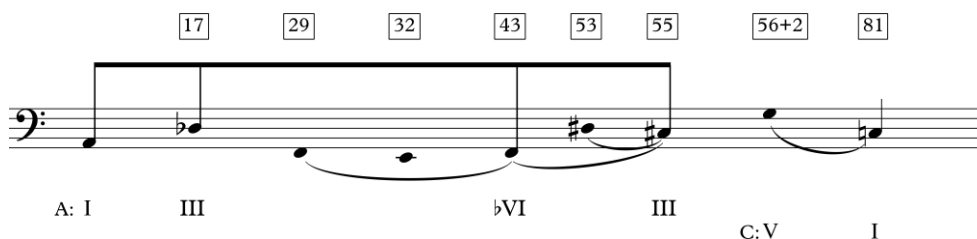


Figure 5.7: Part I, bass-line graph

Despite the fact that Daphnis ignores Lyceion's advances, he is left 'very troubled' by the encounter, as the libretto puts it, the ramifications of her adoption of male-gendered

<sup>21</sup> As Järvinen suggests, in France at the time of *Daphnis*'s creation, 'the articulation of desire by a woman [...] was dangerous to the way society was ordered' (2014, 136).

<sup>22</sup> It is also, incidentally, the key identified with Salome in Strauss's opera. Another, rather subtle link between Lyceion and Wilde's character may also be picked up in her original name, Lycaenion ('little wolf'): Salome is associated with lunar symbolism throughout Wilde's play, and the linking of lycanthropy with menstruation and therefore female sexuality is a common trope. See Epstein (1995) and Bucknell (1993). My thanks to Michael Graham for suggesting this connection to me.

behaviour projecting forward into the development of the plot. Lyceion's G continues to sound as a pedal note as the narrative strands tying Daphnis and Chloe together start to unravel: as suggested above, it is almost as if Lyceion is in some way responsible for Chloe's abduction. Indeed, if one follows Puri's suggestion that Chloe's kidnapping and the events of the second part of the ballet are a dream sequence – one in which Daphnis's sublimated sexual desires run wild – one can put Lyceion squarely in the frame for the events of the middle part of the ballet (2011b, 128). Arguably, it is the 'troubled' feelings she invokes in Daphnis that lead to his sadistic fantasy, in which he asserts sexual dominance by fear and brute force. In fact, as we have seen, Lyceion represents a climax of 'troubling' women in the ballet, from Chloe's entrance to the girls' dance with Daphnis. Following these two earlier events, Lyceion's subversion of gender roles unleashes in Daphnis a powerful desire to reinforce the patriarchal formulation of his masculinity at any cost, one that is initially satisfied through the fantasy of her abduction. This returns us to our starting point, the automaton-like dance of Chloe in Part III, in which she is 'controlled' by Daphnis's flute.

### **5.7 'Pantomime': Dancing to his tune?**

The pantomime sequence in the ballet is particularly striking, given that it replaces the traditional *pas de deux*, in which the principal couple would dance together (although see above, n2). Here it is Chloe that dances alone, with Daphnis as puppet master in the background. The image of a female automaton evokes memories of E.T.A. Hoffmann's tale 'The Sandman' ([1817] 1982), which served as the basis for the popular ballet *Coppélia*, by Delibes, as well as Act I of Offenbach's opera *Les Contes*

*d'Hoffmann* (see above, n19). Hoffmann's story was also the subject of Freud's famous study of the uncanny ([1919] 2003), and has since become a classic text for discussions of the topic, one that both Carolyn Abbate and Deborah Mawer have taken up with relation to Ravel, touching on the composer's love of automata (Abbate 1999, Mawer 2000b). Indeed, Ravel planned an operatic treatment of Hoffmann's tale, recycling some of the music in his first completed opera, *L'heure espagnole* (Marnat 1986, 90, Lerner 1996, 101).

Gwen Bergner and Nicole Plett's study of *Coppélia* notes that the ballet engages a host of cultural anxieties, including 'the threat posed by unregulated male desire' (1996, 159). Although Puri situates unfettered desires with Bryaxis in Part II, it is the pantomime that represents a fulfilment of those desires. In fact, as table 5.2 shows, the three solo dances by women in the ballet exhibit increasing control over them by male characters: (1) Lyceion dances freely and without intervention; (2) Chloe's dance for Bryaxis is against her will, with frequent attempts at escape; (3) in the pantomime Chloe is under the control of Daphnis, who directs her dance with his flute. Conversely, as the female characters are apparently brought under the increasing command of male characters, there is in fact a *decrease* in regulation of male desire: (1) Daphnis exhibits erotic control in rejecting Lyceion; (2) Bryaxis is thwarted in his desires by the appearance of Pan, who Puri argues functions as a 'Freudian dream censor' (2011b, 129); (3) Daphnis appears able to fulfil his desires and have Chloe 'dance to his tune'.



	1	2	3
<b>Dancer</b>	Lyceion	Chloe	Chloe
<b>Spectator</b>	Daphnis	Bryaxis	Daphnis
<b>Dancer's condition</b>	Dances by choice	→ Dances against her will	→ Dances under control
<b>Spectator's desire</b>	Desire under control	← Desire thwarted	← Desire fulfilled

Table 5.2: comparison of solo dances by female dancers

The tune in question belongs to one of the most complex portions of Ravel's score, one that raises a number of questions about the relationship between musical and literary/danced narratives, in particular the issue of whether the relationship is one of mimesis or diegesis (in the Platonic sense),<sup>23</sup> and the ascription of agency in the analysis of the musical score. The issues are further complicated by the fragmentary, stop-start nature of the music, which eschews a sense of abstract musical form for an apparently mimetic tracking of dramatic action.<sup>24</sup> (I will argue below that the distinction between formally-sanctioned thematic recall – such as in the clear ternary form of Daphnis's dance in Part I – and the situation in Chloe's 'Syrinx Dance' is a significant hermeneutic clue: if there is no formal reason for a theme's reappearance, it might lead us to consider the connotative value of its return.) The discussion that follows employs the five-stage analytical strategy outlined in Chapter 2 (section 2.4.4) in an investigation of these problems.

<sup>23</sup> I make the point as the term 'diegetic' is used in a slightly different way in film-music studies (see below, n26). See Berger (2000, 165-188) for further discussion of the classical distinction; see also Chapter 2, section 2.3.3.

<sup>24</sup> Although it does not follow a 'conventional' formal model (although see below, n25), the sequence does share some features with Volker Helbing's concept of 'spiral' form, as will be pointed out at relevant points in my analysis (see Chapter 4, section 4.1.2 for references to Helbing's concept in relation to the 'War Dance').

### 5.7.1 *Functional segmentation*

An initial segmentation of the dance into narrative units yields the division given in table 5.3, which also provides the criteria of catalysing (pre- and post-modal) and cardinal functions (see Chapter 2, section 2.4.4.1). Almén is concerned to point out that isotopic segmentation will not necessarily conform to formal musical divisions (2008, 58); given the unusually fragmentary, stop-start form of Chloe's dance, criteria of segmentation based on principles of definition other than the formal is a useful gambit.<sup>25</sup> For example, segmentation along thematic lines would likely collapse multiple isotopies into single units (for example, 1-3, 4-6, 7-9, 10-11 and 12-14); however, this would be to miss some of the more puzzling – and hermeneutically suggestive – features of the dance, such as the passage RR185-192 (isotopies 8-13): as can be seen from the third column in table 1, the sequence of six catalysing functions without once achieving a cardinal function suggests a high degree of narrative activity, or music in a constant state of flux.

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<sup>25</sup> That said, Michael Puri argues that the dance forms the B and A' sections of a ternary form, with the Pantomime acting as the initial A, but does not offer any justification for this analysis (2011b, 193). Presumably he views the return of the rejection motive at R191 as a recapitulation of R174, but there is no recall of the equally prominent thematic material from RR172 and 173. Moreover, the tonal structure of the passage in question argues against Puri's reading, with the recapitulation of the A section returning in midst of a modulation from F# to B, rather than a moment of strong tonal articulation; the fact that the first A section is in C#, the second in B also creates problems for Puri's reading.

Isotopy	Rehearsal figure	Functional type
1	176-177 <sup>+8</sup>	Cardinal
2	177 <sup>+8</sup> -178	Catalysing (pre-modal)
3	178-179	Catalysing (post-modal)
4	179-180	Catalysing (pre-modal)
5	180-182	Cardinal
6	182-184	Catalysing (pre-modal)
7	184-185	Cardinal
8	185-186	Catalysing (pre-modal)
9	187-188	Catalysing (post-modal)
10	188-189	Catalysing (pre-modal)
11	189-191	Catalysing (pre-modal)
12	191-191 <sup>+3</sup>	Catalysing (post-modal)
13	191 <sup>+4</sup> -192	Catalysing (pre-modal)
14	192-193	Cardinal

Table 5.3: functional segmentation of Chloe's dance

### 5.7.2 Functional articulation: spatiality, temporality, and actuality

Before proceeding further in our close reading of the dance, the articulation of each isotopy requires consideration, from the perspective of spatiality (tonal organisation), temporality (rhythmic organisation) and actuality (theme- and motive-actors and other 'anthropomorphic' features) (Tarasti 1994, 46; see also Chapter 2, section 2.4.4.2, Almén 2008, 59). In general, cardinal isotopies in the dance are defined by relatively stable medium-scale tonal organisation, such as the F# pedal of isotopy 1, or the regular root movement via minor third of isotopy 5 (despite a good degree of surface excitement) and the V-I progressions of isotopy 7. In contrast, catalysing isotopies can demonstrate a degree of tonal volatility, such as an increasing desire for tonal closure (isotopy 2), or movement away from, or towards a tonal centre (isotopies 3, 6 and 8). Tonal motion is often matched to other spatial features, such as register; the steadily increasing tessitura of isotopies 6 and 8 are obvious examples, but also the vast registral space encompassed by isotopy 7. Temporal flux is also a feature of

catalysing isotopies, at least in terms of the fluctuations in tempo in isotopies 2- 4 and 7-13. Increases in tempo are also often accompanied by progressive melodic fragmentation, such as in isotopy 6.

In terms of actoriality, the sonority of the flute presents a strong case for being considered a musical character in its own right, especially in relation to its expansion into a ‘meta-flute’ discussed below, eventually encompassing a virtual range of five octaves: such expansion could be viewed as a narrative trajectory in its own right. The flute is also significant for its apparent diegetic status; as the dancer performing *Daphnis* mimes the action of playing a flute onstage we hear the sound of a flute in the orchestra.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, the flute plays a role in articulating isotopic divisions, many of which match the actorial behaviour of the instrument: lyrical in isotopies 1-3, virtuosic in isotopies 4-9: indeed, one may hear the flute as articulating a pattern of ‘superisotopies’, larger narrative units that may be seen to contribute to the outline of a particular agential form (see Chapter 3, section 3.5).

Alternatively, rather than assigning actorial function to instrumental sonority, we may conceive of actoriality in terms of theme- and motive-actors. Usually an element of repetition is required to establish actorial identity: however, despite the shortage of obvious thematic recall here, it is possible to discern two basic gestural types: a) circling motives; b) motives that descend by step (figure 5.8).<sup>27</sup> These two

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<sup>26</sup> I use the word here in the sense employed in film studies, deriving originally from Gérard Genette’s theory of narrative levels ([1972] 1980, 227-231). Claudia Gorbman describes its application in film-music studies as ‘music that (apparently) issues from a source within the narrative’ (1987, 22). Although the concept’s use is widespread, it has recently been criticised by Ben Winters, who argues that the distinction between diegetic and non-diegetic fails to account for the way in which “‘background” music plays a constitutive role in shaping our construction of the diegesis’ (2010, 243).

<sup>27</sup> The ‘circling’ gesture could also be described as ‘arabesque’, as its revolving motion conforms to Gurminder Bhogal’s description of arabesque melodies that ‘begin and end on the same note, or a slightly lower note [...] it is the constant and largely step-wise departure from and return to the same melodic motif within this prolongation that parallels the meandering motion of arabesque lines’ (2013,

types might be understood as reflecting a distinction between the two principal themes associated with Daphnis and Chloe in the score, DC (which appears in truncated form in the dance) and VALSE TRISTE. Although the latter does not make a literal appearance in the dance, it is interesting to note that one of the motive-actors that shares its tendency towards step-wise descent is REJECTION, recently heard in the preceding pantomime (see figure 5.8, (b)2; also, see below, figure 5.16).<sup>28</sup> There are thus two distinct sets of motive-actors. To indicate that the link between motives is gestural, rather than motivic in a strict sense, I use the term ‘gesture-actors’ for the two groupings; this is to distinguish them from the motive-actors, which represent specific instances of each gestural type: thus, in figure 5.8, (a)1 is both an individual motive-actor and a specific instance of the circling gesture-actor. Furthermore, in certain instances a motive-actor on one side of the gesture-actor dichotomy can be affected by the opposing gestural type. This is the case with the repeating-note motive-actor (figure 5.8, (b)1), which becomes ‘trapped’ at RR182 and 183, taking on aspects of the circling gesture as a result (see below, figure 5.11).



Figure 5.8: examples of (a) circling, and (b) descending gesture-actors

103). For the present argument, I prefer the designation ‘circling’, as it better reflects the dichotomy in melodic motion between the two gestural types.

<sup>28</sup> Given the lack of agreement over the possible signification of VALSE TRISTE – Michael Puri views it as a secondary love theme, whereas other writers (e.g. Vladimir Jankélévitch and Deborah Mawer) associate it with Chloe – its association here with rejection may well provide a hermeneutic window on the theme’s significance (Puri 2011b, 88, Jankélévitch [1939] 1959, 50, Mawer 2000a, 146). See Chapter 3, section 3.2.2, and Chapter 6, section 6.6.

### 5.7.3 Modal trajectory

Returning to our initial isotopic segmentation we may now consider the ‘modal’ nature of each isotopy (see Chapter 2, sections 2.4.2 and 2.4.4.3). As can be seen in table 5.4, all pre-modal catalysing isotopies are surmodalized by *will*, whereas all post-modal catalysers are a form of negation, failing to achieve the modality willed by the pre-modal isotopies. Unsurprisingly, the dance is bookended by *being*, points of stability, whereas the inner cardinal isotopies represent contradictory aspects of *doing*, points of activity.

Isotopy	Rehearsal figure	Functional type	Narrative modality
1	176-177 <sup>+8</sup>	Cardinal	<i>Being</i>
2	177 <sup>+8</sup> -178	Catalysing (pre-modal)	<i>Will to be</i>
3	178-179	Catalysing (post-modal)	<i>Not-being</i>
4	179-180	Catalysing (pre-modal)	<i>Will to do</i>
5	180-182	Cardinal	<i>Can do</i>
6	182-184	Catalysing (pre-modal)	<i>Will to do</i>
7	184-185	Cardinal	<i>Not-doing</i>
8	185-187	Catalysing (pre-modal)	<i>Will to be</i>
9	187-188	Catalysing (post-modal)	<i>Not-being</i>
10	188-189	Catalysing (pre-modal)	<i>Will to be</i>
11	189-191	Catalysing (pre-modal)	<i>Will to be</i>
12	191-191 <sup>+3</sup>	Catalysing (post-modal)	<i>Not-being</i>
13	191 <sup>+4</sup> -192	Catalysing (pre-modal)	<i>Will to be</i>
14	192-193	Cardinal	<i>Being</i>

Table 5.4: isotopic segmentation of Chloe’s dance with narrative modes added

### 5.7.4 Analysis

Having established the isotopic articulation and modal narrative of the dance, it is time to flesh out the basic narrative structure with musical detail. The first isotopy

establishes a mechanistic ostinato accompaniment, the pizzicato bass outlining  $\hat{5}-\hat{1}$  in F# minor. The dissonant D and C $\flat$  in the upper strings are a characteristically pungent Ravelian sonority, in which a consonant note is ‘split’ into appoggiaturas either side.<sup>29</sup> Daphnis’s flute melody is then introduced, marked ‘expressive and flexible’, its sinuous arabesques a contrast to the robotic ostinato underneath. Indeed, the music of the flute evokes the stereotypical Oriental figure of the snake charmer, whose supple and twisting melody exerts total control over the dangerous creature.<sup>30</sup> The combination of mechanical ostinato and circling, arabesque melody is also a foretaste of a later ballet by Ravel, *Boléro* (a resonance that will be returned to in Chapter 6, section 6.10). However, unlike *Boléro*, whose undulating melody is circumscribed by the mechanistic ostinato, here Ravel indicates *suivez le solo*, placing the music, and thus the dancer performing Chloe, at the mercy of the solo flautist, the orchestral incarnation of Daphnis’s flute.<sup>31</sup>

The long, accented G# appoggiaturas lend a yearning, even keening air to the flute’s melody – this is, after all, supposed to be Pan’s *air mélancholique*. However, such emphatic melodic sighs only feature in the opening bars of the passage; from R176<sup>+6</sup> appoggiaturas no longer receive any metrical or agogic stress, the melody instead unfolding to a C# that initiates a slow descent to A#, as if the melody has discovered a sense of purpose. The contrast between static, circling motions and directed step-wise movement is the fundamental distinction between gesture-actors in the dance; here the gestural motion of one gesture-actor can be seen to inflect that of

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<sup>29</sup> In fact, this very same split – C# to D and C $\flat$  in the key of F# minor – occurs in ‘Scarbo’ from *Gaspard*. See Howat (2000, 85-86).

<sup>30</sup> Bhogal suggests that the melody here is ‘alluding to the erotic nature of his [Pan’s] desire through decorative surplus’ (2013, 203).

<sup>31</sup> Compare with the opposite situation at the start of Daphnis’s ‘Danse légère’ (see Chapter 3, section 3.4).

the other. Between the descending melody and static bass the inner voices chromatically ascend from  $\hat{5}$  to  $\hat{7}$  and  $\hat{2}$ , the whole passage thus prolonging an F# dominant ninth, strongly suggesting resolution to B. This desire for resolution initiates the new modality of *will to be*, and is intensified by the near simultaneous arrival of the A# in the flute melody and E in the horn inner voice, the tritone willing its resolution outwards to  $\hat{1}$  and  $\hat{3}$  of B (*will to be*). Resolution to B (shown by crossed note heads in figure 5.9) could thus be seen to function as an object of desire of the notional musical subject here. However, R178 sidesteps the anticipated resolution, the growing intensity of the dominant preparation suddenly evaporating, leaving behind a C minor chord, as well as a return of the lamenting flute appoggiaturas of the opening of the melody.<sup>32</sup> The affective qualities of the music between RR176 and 178, then, trace a course from melancholy to increasing desire, which, at the point of climax, dissipates into a return of dejection (*being* → *will to be* → *not-being*).

Figure 5.9: foreground reduction RR176-178

<sup>32</sup> It should be recalled that C is a key identified with Pan in both of his appearances (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.3).



R179 brings a radical change of atmosphere, with an increase in tempo and change of root to C# as V of F#, forcing the C# into the role of chromatic lower neighbour, symbolically undercutting the enervated effect of R178. This is matched by a spectacular increase in activity in the flute, with rapid changes in dynamic and tessitura (*will to do*):<sup>33</sup> indeed, so energetic is the transition from trill to precipitous arpeggio that the flute part has to be divided between two flautists (see figure 5.10), forming a sort of transcendent meta-flute, that will ultimately expand to encompass piccolo and alto flute, extending the range of the meta-flute from three to four and a half octaves. The virtuosity (*can*) takes flight in the next isotopy, in which the technical brilliance of the flute writing is mirrored by a marked increase in harmonic activity and textural and registral variety (*doing*, therefore *can do*). The strongly directional melodic and harmonic movement of this isotopy contrasts the neighbour-note figures of the previous catalysing isotopy. Both types of melodic motion are juxtaposed at R182, where the descending repeating-note figure from R181 is transformed into interlocking neighbour-note patterns, alternating with a rapidly ascending scale in the piccolo. R183 takes this a stage further, as the repeating-note figure becomes locked into place, before spinning itself out of control one bar before R184 (see figure 5.11).<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> It is V/F# harmony (*will*) that surmodalizes the increased melodic activity (*doing*).

<sup>34</sup> Bhogal hears this increased metrical activity as depicting “Pan’s” inability to control his desire for “Syrinx” (2013, 206). The section of Helbing’s spiral form that is perhaps closest to this passage is the ‘slipstream’ (*Sogeffekt*) that occurs just before the ‘clearing’ (see n36) (2008, 40-41).

Figure 5.10: 'meta-flute' at R179

Figure 5.11: transformations of repeating-note figure, RR181, 182, & 183

The listener is left momentarily balanced on a cliff edge at this point, the music having broken off just on the brink of an anticipated climax. It is not only the gradual rise in tessitura, increase in tempo and gradual restriction in movement of the repeated-note motive that creates the expectation of climax here, but also the harmonic sequence underpinning this passage, which rises through minor thirds (*will to do*). In fact, had the sequence not been broken off by the pause over the bar line at R184, the next harmony should have been B $\flat$ /A $\sharp$ : at this point, then, it is not that A $\sharp$  creates a sense of anticipation, as it did at R177<sup>+8</sup>, but rather that it is the object of desire itself, just out of reach (see figure 5.12). In a further nod to the earlier passage, it is once again C $\natural$  that provides the actual continuation, as the tempo returns to that of R180, but *avec*

*un peu plus de langueur*.<sup>35</sup> The flute has a further transformation of the repeating-note figure, now turned into languorous triplets, a contrast to the frenetic activity of the previous isotopy (*not doing*). However, the harmonic colouring creates a particularly uncanny effect here, nearly, but not quite, outlining V-I in F minor, this most domestic of root progressions made *unheimlich* through the chromatic alteration of  $\hat{5}$  in both chords. The uncanny effect is enhanced by the slightly robotic feel of the passage, which sounds like some sort of grotesque technical exercise, the flute dutifully practising its warped arpeggios (see figure 5.13).<sup>36</sup>

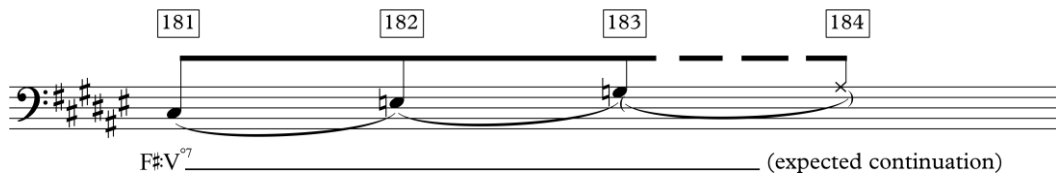


Figure 5.12: bass-line reduction, RR181-184

184

**Au 1er Mouvt. (Vif) avec un peu plus de langueur**

Figure 5.13: 'warped' arpeggios at R184

<sup>35</sup> Thus, Pan's key once again stands in the way of resolution, this time acting as V to Daphnis's key of F.

<sup>36</sup> From the perspective of Helbing's spiral form, the passage can be understood to correspond to the 'clearing' period (*Ausholung*) before the climax (2008, 41-44).

The uncanny calm does not last long, however, and the music yet again spins out of control, drifting first to G major, then to D#, at which point the meta-flute ascends chromatically to the dance's registral peak, A#7 (*will to be*), attaining the projected object of desire from R184, but failing to do anything with it: the pitch is not provided with harmonic support – it appears as a passing Lydian inflection to an E<sup>7</sup> arpeggiation – so it is unable to perform its originally assigned (and now much delayed) task of leading note resolving to B (see figure 5.14). Once again, the *will to be* is frustrated, and the meta-flute expands to encompass all members of the flute family present in the orchestra as it tumbles five octaves, just as the libretto states that Chloe falls into the arms of Daphnis.<sup>37</sup> If one attends solely to the over-emphatic musical 'fall', the mimetic nature of the music seems clear. However, taking a slightly longer view, it is crucial that the music has been projecting B major, reached via its leading note, A#, as a much-desired object of value throughout the dance: if there is a musical analogue to Daphnis's desire for Chloe, the music's 'desire' for B major might reasonably be it. (I will return to the viability of this interpretation below.) Two of the conditions for achieving the object of desire are indeed present at this moment in the score, A# and E; however, the tritone does not appear here as the third and seventh of an F#<sup>7</sup>, and therefore the pitches are unable to function as desired, the latest in a series of failed attempts to achieve B major (*not-being*).

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<sup>37</sup> This climactic moment can be seen neatly to exemplify Helbing's succinct description of spiral forms, which 'move in progressively shorter and more intense oscillations encompassing more and more registral space towards a climax' (2011, 180-181; see 2008, 19 for the original German version).

Figure 5.14: lydian-inflected arpeggiation at R187

The whole dance, then, is structured around three evaded climaxes, each more keenly anticipated than the last. In each case the listener desires the climax, in each case that desire is negated. Due to the fact that our desire for resolution has already been aroused and denied twice, this third instance comes across as the most frustrating; yet, crucially, this is the moment that the libretto tells us that Daphnis achieves his goal of Chloe. Although writing in a different context, Karol Berger has described the sensation created by this series of disappointed climaxes well: ‘what I actually experience when I experience the tonal tendency of a sound is the dynamics of my own desire, its arousal, its satisfaction, its frustration’ (2000, 33). Thus, for the listener, the blocked climaxes are not something observed externally, which would perhaps be the case if one were to view the dance without the benefit of the music, but something that is *felt* internally, making the frustration all the more powerful. Over the course of Chloe’s dance, the temperature of the music gradually increases, to the point that it appears constantly on the verge of spiraling out of control, as if Daphnis’s manipulation of Chloe’s dance is on the brink of giving in to a hyper-erotic fever: one is reminded perhaps of Nathaniel’s ravings in Hoffmann’s tale: ‘spin, puppet, spin’ ([1817] 1982, 120). It is perhaps even more reminiscent of Delibes’s *Coppélia*, which dramatically alters the trajectory of Hoffmann’s original story. In Delibes’s ballet the

heroine, Swanilda, disguises herself as Coppélius's mechanical daughter, Olympia, so that, rather than the compliant doll that Coppélius expects, he finds an unruly, assertive, real woman, who destroys his workshop full of automata.

The repeated failure to achieve B major is not to be the only lack experienced during the dance. A lonely alto flute presents a truncated version of DC at R188, still shorn of its upper fifth, associated with Chloe (Mawer 2006b, 94). This element, conspicuously absent when Daphnis and Chloe are separated during her abduction, returns once they're reunited during 'Daybreak'. Yet at the moment that the libretto's narrative places Daphnis and Chloe together, the hero having achieved conjunction with the object of desire, the music again removes that very element from the theme that the two protagonists share. For the first two presentations of the theme at R188 the missing component is replaced by harp glissandos – reminiscent of the 'great leap sideways' from Daphnis's dance – which lead to quivering tremolo harmonies, first C<sup>#</sup><sup>9</sup>, then a G<sup>7</sup> with a raised fifth. From R189 the third appearance of DC ups the ante, the truncated theme transformed into a fully-orchestrated sentimental waltz (an attempt to inflect *VALSE TRISTE*, and make amends for the *geste brusque*, perhaps?), the parallel-triad harmonisation giving a whiff of *Schlagobers* not out of place in one of Richard Strauss's more sticky confections.<sup>38</sup> The harp glissando again fails to produce the Chloe component of the theme, although it does at least achieve a B major chord, reached via V/V. However, its appearance here is rather arbitrary-sounding, and the lack of a strong sense of arrival fails to resolve any of the tensions set up by the previous failures to achieve the key; instead it rather limply detumesces into a *plus lent* diminuendo (see figure 5.15). The fourth presentation of DC, at R190, pushes

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<sup>38</sup> One might also take into account the traditional erotic associations with the waltz. See Chapter 3, section 3.2.2, and Chapter 6, sections 6.2 and 6.3.

harder, crescendoing to fortissimo, and even managing to secure an enharmonic A# (Bb) in the bass, although, rather than functioning as the leading-note of B, it acts as V of Eb. Throughout the passage, the thematic object of desire remains absent, while the harmonic goal of B major is tantalisingly close, but never achieved (*will to be*).

The image shows two systems of musical notation for a sentimental waltz. The first system, starting at measure 189, is in 3/4 time with a tempo of quarter note = 80. It features a treble and bass clef. The treble clef contains a melody with lyrics: "Cédez très peu" (measures 189-190), "Pressez" (measure 191), and "Plus lent." (measures 192-193). The bass clef contains a bass line. Dynamics include *pp* and *f*. A "gliss." marking is present in measure 191. Harmonic annotations below the staff include "B:V/V" under measure 189, "I" under measure 191, and "V" under measure 193. The second system, starting at measure 190, continues the melody and bass line. It includes the instruction "au Mouvt." above measure 190. Dynamics include *pp* and *ff*. A "gliss." marking is present in measure 191. Harmonic annotations below the staff include "V/V" under measure 190 and "Eb:V" under measure 192. Both systems are marked "Plus lent." at the beginning of their respective sections.

Figure 5.15: sentimental waltz at R189

At R191 DC finally achieves some sort of continuation, breaking it out of its increasingly eager repetitions; however, it is not the missing Chloe component, but another theme, heard just before the beginning of the dance, during the ‘Pantomime’ itself, Syrinx’s REJECTION (*not-being*). The REJECTION motive is a component of the descending gesture actor (another version of the actor is presented in the horn counterpoint, which outlines the melody of VALSE TRISTE, indicated by the box in figure 5.16). It is REJECTION, then, that ultimately provides the catalyst for tonal resolution, as it inverts its contour over V/B to reach A#, over an inner-voice E, replicating the tritone with its powerful impulse to resolve outwards (*will to be*) heard

initially in isotopy 2. (In fact, as indicated in figure 5.16, the violin melody also unfolds the interval.) B major is finally achieved at R192, a moment of *jouissance* in which the music luxuriates for five bars of shimmering, gently oscillating textures.

Figure 5.16: R191

These textures mark a return of the nature-music of ‘Daybreak’, suggesting the close of a larger-scale structural unit. In fact, as figure 5.17 shows, R192 is the culmination of tonal and voice-leading processes set in motion in ‘Daybreak’, throughout which the pitch B is a persistent inner-voice component, even though it is not integral to any of the structural harmonies.<sup>39</sup> The note is then brought to the surface of the texture with the unfolding from F# to B at the end of ‘Daybreak’. From the onset

<sup>39</sup> Jankélévitch describes ‘Daybreak’ as ‘a wonderful melody, sustained by B behind the scenes’ ([1939] 1959, 50). For an analysis of ‘Daybreak’ that elucidates ‘Ravel’s metric wizardry at its most refined’, see Bhogal (2008; citation is on page 12).



of the ‘Pantomime’, however, the pitch is ‘lost’, only appearing as part of a passing motion that unfolds C# to G#. This unfolding returns the melody to a larger-scale passing motion from E to A#, which projects the  $\frac{7}{4} \rightarrow \frac{1}{3}$  resolution across a larger timescale (figure 5.17): this is, of course, the exact voice-leading motion that had been interrupted at R178, was denied harmonic support at R187, and finally resolves at R192 (figure 5.16). Thinking on the larger scale, then, it is possible to describe a loose narrative trajectory from ‘Daybreak’ to the end of Chloe’s ‘Syrinx Dance’: something ‘other’ is internalised, then brought to the surface, only for it to be lost. The quest to recover the Other – or, conversely, for the Other to establish its own tonal environment – becomes the motivating factor behind the plot, the telos of which is finally achieved at R192.

Figure 5.17: reduction of RR156-192

### 5.7.5 Transvaluation and hermeneutic considerations

In Greimasian terms, the above analysis outlines a ‘narrative programme’ (NP), a sequence of narrative units representing a change of state, or, in Liszka’s terminology, a transvaluation (see Chapter 2, Section 2.4.4.4): figure 5.18 outlines the three

narrative states between ‘Daybreak’ and the end of Chloe’s ‘Syrinx Dance’, using the symbolic notation introduced in Chapter 2 (section 2.4.1). Each stage in the programme involves conjunction ( $\cap$ ) or disjunction ( $\cup$ ) between two actants, a notional musical subject (S) and an object (O) of value (principally, the pitch/key B, but also the Chloe component of DC).

- 1)  $S \cap O$  (‘Daybreak’)
- 2)  $S \cup O$  (‘Pantomime’ and ‘Syrinx Dance’)
- 3)  $S \cap O$  (R192)

$$\therefore \text{NP} = (S \cap O) \rightarrow (S \cup O) \rightarrow (S \cap O)$$

*Figure 5.18: simple narrative programme RR156-192*

This simple programme represents the abstract structure of the musical narrative, and is similar to the transvaluative course of Northrop Frye’s romance and comic archetypes, which exhibit ‘a ternary movement, in which an original, harmonious hierarchy is blocked by the obsessions or irrationalities of a powerful social hierarchy; but, by story’s end, this hierarchy is defeated by the [...] hero’s society’ (Liszka 1989, 133; see also above, section 5.1): the tripartite movement between euphoric and dysphoric states is common to both narrative programmes. It will be recalled that the abstract plot functions represented by the actants in Greimas’s system are concretized at the surface level of the narrative by ‘actors’. As was suggested above (section 5.7.2), there are at least two musical elements in the dance that recommend themselves as musical actors – specific instances of actantial functions – the ‘instrumental-actor’ (the flute) and the two ‘gesture-actors’. To this we may add the pitch/key B, which serves

as a concretisation of the Object. (I will leave the actorial ascription of the Subject open for the time being.)

The next stage of our narratological analysis needs to move beyond a heuristic reading to interpret the significance of the musical narrative, to provide a *hermeneutic reading* (Riffaterre 1978; see also Chapter 2, section 2.4.4.5). The few libretto cues provided for the dance are as follows:

- [R175: In despair, Pan (Daphnis) picks several stalks to form a flute and plays a melancholy air.]
- R176: Chloe reappears and interprets in her dance the accents of the flute.
- R186-187: The dance becomes more and more animated and, in a mad whirling, Chloe falls into Daphnis's arms.

The narrative programme of these cues appears to outline an identical programme to that of stages 2 and 3 above:  $(S \cup O) \rightarrow (S \cap O)$ , where  $S = \text{Daphnis}$  and  $O = \text{Chloe}$ . This in turn allows for a coordination of the musical and literary programmes by linking actorial roles: for example, Object = Chloe *and* the pitch/key B (which also suggests a symbolism for the missing component of DC, which in this model would also function as an Object). Returning then to the open question of the designation of a musical actor for the Subject, the obvious candidate would seem to be the instrumental-actor, the flute: Daphnis holds an instrument to his lips for all to see on stage and, just as is the case when we see a sound-source in a film, we naturally assume a connection between what we see and what we hear. Even if we 'know' that

it is not possible, or unlikely, that the two are actually linked – for example, when we have good reason to suspect it unlikely that an actor playing a musical instrument in a film really is as able an instrumentalist as the soundtrack suggests – the effect relies on our willingness to go along with the idea that sound and image exist in the one reality, that what we hear denotes what we see.

However, if we accept that the sound source is diegetic – that is, it exists within the ‘reality’ of the narrative – does it follow that what we hear is equivalent to what the characters within the narrative hear, that we hear the same music that ‘Chloe’ hears while she dances?<sup>40</sup> If Daphnis is ‘really’ playing the flute we hear during the dance, what might we make of the two gesture-actors, one static, the other mobile? In particular, their relationship with two of the principal themes of the ballet, DC and VALSE TRISTE, points up a contradiction between the putative diegetic function of the flute sonority and the *music* the flute plays, which connects to the ‘non-diegetic’ ballet score and thus outside the ‘reality’ of the drama.

In fact, the whole concept of non-diegetic music has been called into question by a number of recent scholars, hence the scare-quotes in the previous sentence. Ben Winters suggests that ‘branding music with the label “non-diegetic” threatens to separate it from the space of the narrative, denying it an active role in shaping the course of [...] events’ (2010, 224). Winters goes on to argue that ““background” music plays a constitutive role in shaping our construction of the diegesis, but also [...] has the] potential to play an active role in the diegesis while still appearing to remain “unheard” by its characters’ (ibid., 243). Matt BaileyShea’s analysis of the ‘Forest

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<sup>40</sup> Unlike Cone’s description of a dancer that ‘does not “hear” the music, nor is he “conscious” of dancing’ (1974, 141), this would be to suggest that ‘Chloe’ both hears what we hear and is conscious of dancing.

Murmurs' from Wagner's *Seigfried* is even more pertinent to the question at hand, describing 'a radical orchestral split into two dimensions, both of which we, as audience members, can hear: the forest murmurs represent an "outer," sounding reality, while the clarinet melody represents an "inner" psychological state' (2007, 7). In order to deal with such situations Winters recommends removing the distinction between diegetic and non-diegetic, replacing it with a three-fold division into diegetic (music that is heard as music by the characters), intra-diegetic (music that exists within the narrative space), and extra-diegetic music ('whose logic is not dictated by events within the narrative space') (2010, 237).

Following Winters, I would like to suggest is the possibility that the *sound* of the flute is diegetic – i.e. 'heard' by the characters – while the *music* we hear is in fact extra-diegetic. This allows for actorial function to exist on two levels, one diegetic (i.e. within the 'reality' of the drama) and one 'lyric', in the sense employed by Karol Berger, who proposes that 'narrative and drama are modes of representation of human action, while lyric does not represent actions at all, but rather mental states, thoughts, emotions, situations' (2000, 191). The situation described here is similar to the manner in which music may glide between ontological states or modes of representation in a film, through the use of studio editing techniques to mix smoothly from diegetic music to underscore, the difference being that the diegetic and extra-diegetic modes are presented simultaneously.<sup>41</sup> Thus, although 'Chloe' 'hears' a flute, to which she dances, it is not the same flute, nor the same music heard by the audience.

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<sup>41</sup> Jeff Smith describes a situation in which 'music can also move from a condition in which it is marked by the echo, resonance, and acoustic profile of the space in which it is played to one in which music exists within the idealized space of the studio where those diegetic marks are gradually effaced' (2009, 6).

So, what is represented by this extra-diegetic ‘lyric’ component, that is, the music that the audience hears? Following Berger, an obvious response is that it represents the ‘mental states, thoughts, emotions’ of one of the characters. In such a reading, the two gesture-actors could be understood as representing two aspects of one character, which is a possibility acknowledged by Greimas: ‘[one actor might be] responsible for all of the necessary actants and actantial roles (giving rise to absolute interior dramatization)’ (Greimas 1987, 112-13; we have also encountered a similar situation in Daphnis’s ‘Danse légère’: see Chapter 3, section 3.4). Given that the flute sonority is readily associated with Daphnis, his character represents an obvious candidate for the ‘mental states, thoughts, emotions’ that we may perceive in the flute’s music, and thus the actor who represents the Subject in the model above. Such an interpretation would seek to identify the mental states embodied by the circling and descending gesture-actors, constructing a psychological or affective narrative isomorphic to that of the music. For example, the yearning appoggiaturas of the initial version of the circling gesture-actor might suggest that it represents Daphnis’s desire for Chloe. On the other hand, the directional nature of the descending gesture-actor – in conjunction with its first appearance during the excitable fifth isotopy – could be understood as representing Daphnis actively seeking to fulfil his desire, thus creating a dichotomy between the passive experience of desire and the activity necessary to seek its satisfaction: this reading would resonate with the passive/active dichotomy discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.4.1. To employ Greimasian terminology, we could understand the two actors as expressing modalities of *being* and *willing to be*.

However, such an interpretation poses problems:

1. Why is the catalyst for the much-delayed resolution to B major REJECTION? After all, *pace* Puri, this is not a formally required moment of thematic recall, suggesting that its value is connotative, rather than structural.
2. How might one account for the persisting missing component of DC? The quest for the theme's continuation and completion would appear to present a clear case of the desire for disjunction ( $S \cup O$ ) to be replaced by conjunction ( $S \cap O$ ), isomorphic to Daphnis's (Subject) desire for Chloe (Object).
3. Why is conjunction ( $S \cap O$ ) achieved in the libretto at R187 ('Chloe falls into Daphnis's arms'), but the music has to wait until R192 (PAC in B major)? The dislocation between sites of actantial union would appear to undermine the whole notion of conjunction.

Following Puri's argument that the end of the pantomime 'atones for Pan's crimes towards Syrinx' (2011b, 197), one might argue that the significance of REJECTION is transformed at the point of Chloe's acceptance of Daphnis's advances, in 'atonement'. This is problematic, as it would appear to suggest that it is Chloe's sexual acceptance that undoes the harm of Pan's brutal response to Syrinx's rejection, as if

culpability rests with the feminine, making Syrinx responsible for Pan's violent attack: this surely amounts to a type of victim blaming?<sup>42</sup>

I am unconvinced by Puri's suggestion, as I am by his interpretation of the dance as part of a ternary form, and the reappearance of REJECTION as Daphnis's 'resuscitation' of Chloe (2011b, 193). I therefore propose another way in which one may interpret the dance, one which takes into account the interaction between the gesture-actors in the dance and their relations elsewhere in the score, and suggests answers to the three questions posed above. I also suggest a connotative function for the flute, alongside its denotative use: one need not be a fully paid-up Freudian to see something symbolic in Daphnis wielding the phallic instrument of his 'precursor', Pan, as an instrument of sexual control. Furthermore, Pan fashioning such an instrument out of the reified body of Syrinx – his desire to possess her resulting in her violent death – makes the symbolism hard to avoid, firmly placing the violent act that led to the instrument's creation at the centre of our consciousness.

To return to the question of actantial ascription, I argue that, rather than representing two aspects of the Subject, the two gesture-actors actually represent the Subject and another actantial function: that of the Antisubject ( $\bar{S}$ ), an actant that 'has aims that are at cross-purposes with those of the Subject' (Prince 2003, 6-7; see also Chapter 3, section 3.6). In musical terms, these conflicting aims can be understood as the contradiction between circular and directed motion. The dance opens with circular motion (isotopy 1); following this, an attempt is made to shift towards directed motion (isotopy 2), which is thwarted (isotopy 3). Isotopies 5 and 6 make a more radical and energetic attempt to impose directed motion, but the melody becomes trapped and

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<sup>42</sup> One may recall Bram Dijkstra's comment that fin-de-siècle men 'looked around for someone to take the blame. And, as always, woman was conveniently available' (1986, 354).



forced back into circularity in isotopy 6. A form of circular motion returns in the uncanny isotopy 7, but it is an uneasy type: the internal intervals of the circling melody are wider than before, and the music soon spins out of control (isotopy 8). The next two isotopies consist entirely of the circling gesture-actor (DC), but it is the return of the directional gesture-actor (REJECTION) that finally achieves its object: resolution (directed motion) to B (Object). So, the narrative programme is actually more complicated than outlined at the start of this section. Rather than a straightforward quest of the Subject for its Object ( $S \rightarrow O$ ), there is another quest occurring simultaneously: the quest of the Antisubject (Daphnis) for its Object, which in this case is the Subject (Chloe), or  $(\bar{S} \rightarrow O:S)$ .<sup>43</sup> This requires a revision of the simple narrative programme outlined in figure 5.18 (see figure 5.19).

- 1)  $\bar{S} (\bar{S} \cap O:S)$  ('Daybreak')
- 2)  $S (S \cup O)$  ('Pantomime' and 'Syrinx Dance')
- 3)  $\bar{S} (\bar{S} \cup O:S) / S (S \cap O)$  (R192)

$\therefore$  NP:  $\bar{S} = (\bar{S} \cap O) \rightarrow (\bar{S} \cup O)$

NP:S =  $(S \cap O) \rightarrow (S \cup O) \rightarrow (S \cap O)$

*Figure 5.19: complex narrative programme RR156-192*

As figure 5.19 shows, the Antisubject's ( $\bar{S}$ ) narrative programme involves a movement from conjunction to disjunction, mirroring the Subject's movement in the opposite

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<sup>43</sup> See Chapter 6, section 6.5 for further argument on the appropriateness of Chloe as narrative subject. It is also worth noting that Järvinen argues that 'many of Nijinsky's roles were in works that had strong female characters that allowed for a reading that did not focus on the male as a subject of the ballet' (2014, 135).

direction: given the opposing aims of the Subject and Antisubject, any move in one direction by the Subject will result in movement in the opposite direction by the Antisubject.

In order to understand the manner in which these competing narrative programmes are manifested in the music, I return to Matt BaileyShea's article mentioned above, in which he proposes an agential model for understanding the manner in which characters in Wagner's *Ring* are able to exert influence on the musical narrative. BaileyShea describes Wagner's orchestra as

a mythical element, like air or water, a medium through which the characters of the cycle continually move, speak, sing, and act. The orchestra, then, is an invisible, but permanent presence.

(2007, 8)

BaileyShea goes on to describe how the orchestra is 'an energy that can be harnessed and controlled' and that, 'Since characters live within this continuous tissue of sound [...] it is a medium through which they can exert their will' (ibid., 8).<sup>44</sup> Later in his article he lists some of the ways in which a character can exhibit orchestral control, including 'Eliciting or altering a familiar Leitmotiv', 'Imposing tonal closure', and 'changing tempo/meter' (ibid., 15), three categories that coordinate closely with Tarasti's articulations of actorality, spatiality, and temporality. They are also three

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<sup>44</sup> Note the similarity with the diegetic model proposed by Ben Winters: BaileyShea's description of Wagner's orchestra is an example of intra-diegetic music (Winters 2010).

ways in which Chloe exhibits ‘orchestral control’, and achieves her object. On the other hand, it is Daphnis’s task to thwart these manoeuvres, seeking control.

It is appropriate then that the flute becomes the site for the conflicting quests, representing Daphnis’s masculine authority, which Chloe is attempting to subvert, in the same way that Swanilda subverts Coppélius’s attempt to control the feminine. The subversion of masculinity represented by Chloe’s control of the flute’s music also recalls the inversion of the Faun’s autoerotic gaze in Lyceion’s dance: in both instances, the violent masculinity represented by Pan is overthrown; both dances represent a disruption of an existing hierarchy, that is, the transvaluation of a patriarchy by feminine autonomy.<sup>45</sup> Thus, having ascribed actors to the Subject and Antisubject – and to the Object in the Antisubject’s quest (i.e.  $\bar{S} \rightarrow O:S$ , where  $S =$  Chloe), we can now suggest an Object actor for the Subject’s quest. Similar to Salome, Carmen, Coppélia, and the *femmes nouvelles* of the fin-de-siècle, the object of Chloe’s quest in this reading is freedom from masculine control, a control that has been asserted with increasing force as the ballet’s narrative has progressed.

As explained above, prior to Chloe’s dance as Syrinx two attempts have been made to transvalue the domain of gender roles, whereby female characters take the sexual initiative: the dance of the girls and Lyceion’s dance. These result in a counterstrike by the prevailing hierarchy, which seeks to exert increasing control. In this context, we might understand the three solo dances by women as analogous to the three interpolated mythological narratives in Longus’s novel, of which R. L. Hunter

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<sup>45</sup> Recall also the ‘attack’ staged on the ‘feminine’ flute music in the ‘War Dance’ (see Chapter 4, sections 4.1.4.3 and 4.1.4.4).

has observed ‘the violence and menace of these stories increases’ (1983, 53): one of these stories is, of course, the myth of Pan and Syrinx.<sup>46</sup> Hunter goes onto explain that

It is perhaps obvious that the increasing savagery of the three stories foreshadows the loss of Chloe’s virginity, which draws ever closer [...emphasising] that although first sex will be, as Lycaenion describes it, ‘bloody’, a refusal to yield would have even more disastrous consequences.

(1983, 54)

Despite the sinister warning, the Chloe of the ballet, and under the guise of compliance, essays a further transvaluative gambit, which is this time successful: it is *rejection* that leads to resolution, not submission.

By understanding this conflicted relationship between musical and literary narratives we may make a further, generic distinction between the two. Employing Northrop Frye’s archetypes and narrative phases discussed elsewhere in this thesis (see Chapter 2, section 2.2.3, and above, section 5.1), it is clear the *libretto* outlines a classic romantic quest narrative, in which a series of obstacles are placed between two lovers, who ultimately overcome everything to live happily ever after. However, the *music* may be understood as an example of an ironic-comic narrative, one which features ‘a strong emphasis on the initial hierarchy, with the transgressive elements effecting a transvaluation only after great difficulty, or as if out of the blue’ (Almén

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<sup>46</sup> There is perhaps a subtle nod towards one of the other stories in the crown that Daphnis find Chloe wearing when they are reunited in the ballet: the first of the interpolated narratives in the novel is that of Pitys, who wore a crown of pine twigs. Her fate is similar to that of Syrinx, in that she undergoes metamorphosis in order to escape violence (Longus 1989, 37-38, I.27).

2008, 168). This description neatly sums up the situation outlined in this chapter, in which Chloe's apparently submissive dance suddenly reveals itself to be an act of autonomy, just as the dancing Olympia is revealed to be the assertive Swanilda in Delibes's *Coppélia*.

The status of the ballet as an ironic-comic narrative will be taken up again in the next chapter, but for the time being it is important to emphasise that the music undermines the moment of narrative resolution in the libretto, finding its own solution in REJECTION. The musical narrative thus effects a transvaluation by outlining a narrative trajectory that calls into question the values inscribed in the libretto. Byron Almén's suggestion that irony 'tends to sneak up on the listener', the narrative apparently unfolding an innocent discourse 'based on our conventional expectations' (ibid., 170) offers a good description of the manner in which the musical narrative of *Daphnis et Chloé* unfolds in a different narrative mode to that of the established plot of the ballet's source novel. Despite all signs pointing towards a conventional conclusion to the story, in which the hero Daphnis is rewarded with Chloe as prize, at the crucial moment – the moment of expected and longed-for resolution – the music sets out a different path, one which fundamentally undermines the assumptions and cultural values of the libretto. Thus, one may perceive a tension at the heart of Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé*, one that can be understood both as a function of its dichotomous narratives and as a reflection of contemporary social concerns.

Given that the ballet was composed during the closing stages of France's *belle époque*, it is worth bearing in mind James H. McMillan's observation that this was

an era characterised by a heightening of tensions in relations between the sexes: new Eve aroused fear, not to say panic, in the breast of old Adam. Perhaps most troubling of all to the male sense of sexual identity was the image of a masculinised woman [...] Masculinity, it seemed, could be threatened with redundancy.

(2000, 141-142)

McMillan goes on to describe an 1893 cartoon in *Gil Blas Illustré* showing ‘a seduction scene with a difference, it is the woman who is shown to have picked up the man and to have paid him for sexual favours’ (2000, 143-144). As Bram Dijkstra argues,

to the men of the later nineteenth century the sight of women refusing to continue to play the role of the ever-submissive victim of man’s desire for mastery was evidence of a fundamental betrayal of trust. No longer able to lord it securely over the women in their lives, many men had, as we have seen, become rapidly conscious of their own removal from the centers of social and economic power. Obviously the wild women, the gynander, the viraginous man-woman, was trying to usurp the male’s place as the executioner’s trusty assistant. Given the mathematics of sexual completion so popular at the time, this meant that the men who consorted with the virago, the feminist, were by their very nature effeminate.

(1986, 393-394)

The resonances with Lyceion’s subversive dance are obvious, and place the increasingly forceful attempts to control the female characters of the ballet into a broader social context. Such resonances may also encourage us to read the dissonance between literary and musical narratives in *Daphnis et Chloé* as enacting the debates surrounding the *femme nouvelle* in *fin de siècle* France, with the process of

transvaluation effecting a passage from one side of the argument to the other. This is analogous to the manner in which the transvaluation of the libretto's narrative transfers its *mythos* from romance towards its polar opposite, irony. In other words, Chloe's act of rejection – equating to the transvaluation of the libretto by the music's narrative – is effectively analogous to Dijkstra's description of the 'removal from the centers of social and economic power' experienced by the fin-de-siècle male. This is, of course, the same social context that motivates an emasculated José to plunge his knife into Carmen; as Susan McClary has observed, the 'paranoiac hallucination of the victimized middle-class male could stand as a plot summary of *Carmen*' (1992, 42).

Yet the consequences of feminine subversion in Ravel's ballet are very different to those in Bizet's opera, and the character of Chloe is no Carmen, Salome, or, indeed, Lyceion. Although their subversive acts are analogous, they are not identical. Not once is Chloe portrayed as a vamp or femme fatale: Mawer's dichotomy between chastity and promiscuity holds true for Chloe and Lyceion (see above, section 5.4). In fact, the removal of any opportunity for consummation or marriage leaves Chloe essentially chaste at the end of the ballet, despite Daphnis's entreaties at the end of her 'Syrinx Dance' and the physical threats of Byraxis in her 'Danse suppliante'. And unlike Lyceion's eager usurpation of the stereotypically phallic construction of musical orgasm at the climax of her dance (see above, section 5.6), Chloe appears to reject such a climax: her dance as Syrinx instead culminates in an extended moment of gentle bliss, a *jouissance* long delayed and all the more satisfying once it is finally achieved. The ramifications of Chloe's rejection and its significance to the structure of the ballet's narrative will be explored in the following chapter, in which the genre of the waltz will be explored

in relation to the construction of gender in the ballet, alongside a consideration of Chloe's earlier solo dance, her 'Danse suppliante'.



## 6 Finale: Gendered Discourse/Counter-Discourse

Having established the potential for reading *Daphnis et Chloé* as an ironic-comic narrative in Chapter 5, this concluding chapter examines in more detail the final, underlying relationship between the orthodox comic-romantic ‘marriage plot’ proposed both by the ballet’s libretto and the novel on which it is based, and the oppositional counter-narrative suggested by a reading of the music. Given the ‘symbolic resistance’ offered by the counter-narrative in the face of the divergent narrative trajectory of the libretto, it seems appropriate to set up the discussion of counter-discourses by an examination of Chloe’s first scene of ‘resistance’, the ‘Danse suppliante’ she performs at the behest of the Pirate Chief, Bryaxis, Puri’s ‘surrogate Daphnis’ (2011b, 128).

### 6.1 Waltzing *chez Ravel*

A notable aspect of Chloe’s ‘Danse suppliante’ is the fact her supplication comes in the form of a waltz, a type of dance for which Ravel had clear affection, and one that is often understood by Ravel scholars as ‘the dance that most authentically represents Ravel’s different musical faces and masks’ (Kotevska 1974, 37; my translation).<sup>1</sup> In his essay on the composer’s waltzes, Jean-Christophe Branger finds the dance in a large number of Ravel’s compositions, from unpublished juvenilia to works of the

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to the works cited elsewhere in this section, see also Steele (1976), Fischer (2005), Epstein and Mawer (2010), Whitesell (2010), Helbing (2008, 2011), Puri (2011a).

composer's maturity: the opera *L'heure espagnole*, 'Les Entretiens de la Belle et de la Bête' from *Ma mère l'Oye*, the eight waltzes of the *Valses nobles et sentimentales*, the piano miniature *À la manière de... Borodine*, and two of the surpassing products of his later years, *La Valse* and *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, as well as the ballet arrangements *Chopin, Les Sylphides* and Schumann, *Carnaval* (2005, 145).<sup>2</sup> Not included in Branger's list are the numerous waltz allusions we have already encountered in *Daphnis*.<sup>3</sup> These include the various appearances of the melancholic VALSE TRISTE motif, as well as the sentimental-waltz transformation of the first half of DC that features towards the end of Chloe's 'Syrinx Dance', just before the final return of REJECTION (a motif that shares a contour with VALSE TRISTE; see below, section 6.6). In addition to these waltz allusions, Michael Puri hears Lyceion's dance in Part I as a type of waltz (Puri 2011b, 229 n1). The similarity between Lyceion's dance for Daphnis and Chloe's for Bryaxis – both dances involving a woman performing for the visual pleasure of a male character – has already been noted (see Chapter 5, section 5.7), and the potential for a further link via the connotationally rich topic of the waltz suggests further hermeneutic possibilities, to be explored later in this chapter (sections 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5).

Branger suggests that there is a great degree of nostalgic sentiment in Ravel's waltzes: 'the composer [...] takes nostalgic leave of a universe – his youth – but also of an idealised and happy epoch that underpins the rhythm of the waltz [...] This feeling of farewell undoubtedly predominated in the choreographic waltzes' (2005,

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<sup>2</sup> *Chopin, Les Sylphides* contains arrangements of Chopin's waltzes Op. 18, Op. 64, no 2 and Op. 70, no 1, alongside orchestrations of other works by the Polish composer.

<sup>3</sup> Branger's list also excludes the waltz from *Myrrha*, a cantata that was composed for the 1901 *Prix de Rome* (Fischer 2005, 105), as well as a 'Mouv. de valse' from a ballet sketch from the 1890s (see Orenstein 1975, 22, Mawer 2006b, 256-257).

150-151; my translation). The sentimental associations of the waltz are certainly a crucial aspect of the dance's cultural meaning by the time of the twentieth century, but it is also worth emphasising – as Branger does elsewhere in his essay – the clear satirical intent behind waltzes such as that of Don Inigo in *L'heure espagnole*.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, despite Ravel's insistence that in *La Valse* 'one should only see in it what the music expresses: an ascending progression of sonority, to which the stage comes along to add light and movement' (letter to Maurice Emmanuel, 14 October 1922, in Orenstein 2003, 228), the work's apparently entropic narrative structure – Ravel described it as 'a dancing, whirling, almost hallucinatory ecstasy, an increasingly passionate and exhausting whirlwind of dancers, who are overcome and exhilarated by nothing but "the waltz"' (interview with Ravel, *De Telegraaf*, September 30 1922, in Orenstein 2003, 423) – continues to suggest to audiences something of rather more expressive import than Ravel's comment to his pupil Emmanuel implies: as Jessie Fillerup notes, '[Ravel's] rejection of a programmatic narrative shaped by conflict is at odds with the experience of scholars and listeners' (2009, 290).

That said, it is significant that Ravel's description of *La Valse* in the *Telegraaf* interview expresses an ecstatic *danced* experience, suggesting a deeper connection with the waltz as a *dance*, over and above its use for sentimental or satirical purposes.<sup>5</sup> As both Sevin Yaraman and Eric McKee note in their recent studies of the dance, the waltz was originally perceived as an implicitly dangerous license to physical and erotic

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<sup>4</sup> See Huebner (2006, 241-242), Puri (2011b, 88-89), and Kilpatrick (2015, 151-153) for recent commentaries on Don Inigo's waltz.

<sup>5</sup> Of course, as is well known, *La Valse* was conceived as a ballet, rather than as an orchestral work. The story of Diaghilev's rejection of the work – 'it's not a ballet . . . It's the portrait of a ballet' – is related by Poulenc, who was present at the meeting (in Nichols 1987, 117-118). Indeed, it may be that Diaghilev was partly right, in the sense that Ravel's portrayal of the 'dancing, whirling, almost hallucinatory ecstasy' of the waltz is indeed vivid. That said, as a number of successful danced interpretations of *La Valse* attest, this does not stand in the way of it being effective as both a 'portrait of a ballet' as well as an actual ballet (see Mawer 2006b, 160-181, and 2006a).

intemperance: Ravel himself is said to have referred to it as ‘a rhythm that haunts humanity, because it is the “dance of the devil”’ (Rosenthal 1995, 170). Quoting the nineteenth-century author Donald Walker, Yaraman notes that women were urged to

‘abandon waltzing, on account of its causing too violent emotions or an agitation which produces vertigo and nervous symptoms.’ The specific character of the waltz, wrote Walker – ‘its rapid turnings, the clasping of the dancers, their exciting contact, and too quick and too long continued succession of lively and agreeable emotions’ – was particularly damaging to ‘women of an irritable constitution’, whose waltzing exposed them to ‘syncopes, spasms, and other accidents which should induce them to renounce it.

(Yaraman 2002, 7)

Fillerup suggests that a sense of vertigo has been long associated with *La Valse*, and it is striking how similar the language used by some of the commentators cited by Fillerup is to that of Donald Walker: ‘Critics repeatedly evoked *vertige* in the 1930 reviews: Adolphe Piriou described the “vertiginous vision” of *La Valse*, while Capdevielle sketched its “vertiginous round dance where, at the paroxysm, languor and voluptuousness tragically seem to unite in a final whirling”’ (2009, 291).<sup>6</sup> Thus, rather than its particular musical shape requiring us to hear a narrative of destruction in *La Valse*,<sup>7</sup> it would seem reasonable instead to hear it exactly as Ravel suggests, as the progressive, ecstatic physical abandon felt by waltzing dancers, the music placing

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<sup>6</sup> Fischer (2005, 127-137) also picks up on the notion of ‘*vertige*’, in a reading of the score that closely follows Ravel’s slight libretto.

<sup>7</sup> David Epstein argues that ‘Like ancient Greek drama, *La Valse* carries within it the seeds of its own destruction’ (2010, 152)

the listener in the dancing shoes of the ‘increasingly passionate and exhausting whirlwind of dancers’.<sup>8</sup> One should therefore keep in mind the potential for the waltz *chez Ravel* to retain a trace of its visceral, embodied experience, alongside its possible function as an aesthetic object with the capacity for carrying sentimental or ironic cultural meaning: as Deborah Mawer notes, ‘Ravel seems at times – in a Symbolist spirit – to have experienced dance movement through the domain of music’ (2006b, 30).<sup>9</sup>

## 6.2 Gendering the waltz

One of the important somatic features of the waltz as danced, of course, is the fact that it is experienced by two dancers in close physical contact; significantly, the steps performed by these two dancers are reciprocal: as Yaraman notes in her monograph on the dance, ‘while the man and woman both perform the same six steps and move to the same one-two-three rhythm, they alternate sets: the woman begins with steps 1-3, the man with steps 4-6’ (2002, 18). The complementary nature of the steps performed reinforces the close connection between the two dancers in a waltz, a terpsichorean mirror of the bodily closeness required of the dance, wherein the ‘constant circling motion creates a physical bond uniting the two dancers as one self-enclosed body of motion – as a spinning orb’ (McKee 2012, 97). Indeed, as Yaraman notes, it was this combination of close physical proximity and fast spinning that led to

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<sup>8</sup> Puri’s description of *La Valse* as a bacchanal is compatible with this (2011b, 178-182). See also Mawer (2000a, 2006b) and Helbing (2011).

<sup>9</sup> Mawer also refers to the ‘fascinating ink doodles of spiralling whirls’ at the end of the manuscript of the original piano version, which ‘suggest both a visual and physical dimension to *La Valse* in Ravel’s mind’. Moreover, ‘With its leapings, swayings, fancy footwork and rhythmic drive through to cadential points, the music of *La Valse* offers a kind of commentary on, or critique of, physical movement.’ See Mawer (2006b, 150, 153).

‘dire warnings’ from conservative writers in the nineteenth century, quoting, among others, Ernst Moritz Arndt’s description of the manner in which ‘the whirling continues in the most indecent positions, [the] supporting hand lay[s] firmly on the breast, at each movement making little lustful pressures’ (cited in Yaraman 2002, 8).

In his much-cited examination of the waltz – contained in *Die Lehre von der musikalischen Komposition* – A.B. Marx recommends a close correspondence between music and dance (see Yaraman 2002, 144-146 for a complete quotation of the relevant sections in the original German). One of the features of the temporal organisation of the waltz that Marx understands as fundamental to this connection is the two-bar hypermetre characteristic of the waltz, which he views as analogous to the six-step dance pattern (ibid., 22-23). On this point, Yaraman makes a striking observation:

there is, therefore, a parallel relationship between the first set of three steps and the first three-beat measure, on the one hand, and the second set of steps and the second measure, on the other: both have the quality of call-and-response, or echo, the first being more emphatic and *seeming to dominate the other*.

(ibid., 23; my emphasis)

Given that the most characteristic physical gesture of the waltz – the vigorous ‘twirl’ – is performed at the start of the two-bar group by the man, the ‘dominating’ musical emphasis given to this gesture is suggestive of a certain inequality between the two dancers, the music appearing to underline this with its strong-weak hypermetre.

This gendered pairing of bars in the waltz is powerfully suggested in Chloe’s ‘Danse suppliante’ by the emphatic impulse at the start of every odd-numbered (‘masculine’) bar provided by the ascending minor third in the upper strings, which is contrasted in even-numbered (‘feminine’) bars by the drawn-out, apathetic-sounding descending fourth in the lower strings. The contrast is heightened by the consistent tempo change in every bar, the masculine bars’  $\text{♩}=100$  lending an eager forward propulsion that is counteracted by the dispirited reduction in tempo to  $\text{♩}=70$  for every ‘feminine’ bar.<sup>10</sup> Not only does this emphasise the contrast between the ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ bars – ‘the first being more emphatic and seeming to dominate the other’ (ibid.) – but it also suggests a masculine enthusiasm for the dance that is lacking on the other side of the normative gender divide (figure 6.1; this reading of the hypermetrical structure will be developed below).

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Modéré  $\text{♩} = 100$  pour la 1<sup>er</sup> mesure,  $\text{♩} = 72$  pour la 2<sup>me</sup>, et ainsi durant toute la danse.

Figure 6.1: opening of ‘Danse suppliante’, R133

<sup>10</sup> Deborah Mawer describes the ‘unusual built-in *tempo rubato*’ as ‘a classic instance of “music as an emotional metaphor”’ (2006b, 105).

However, despite Yaraman's observation that the more common hypermetric ordering of traditional waltzes apparently favours one gender over the other, Eric McKee suggests that Chopin often emphasises the second bar of each pair in his waltzes, noting that 'There is, in fact, a general tendency in Chopin's waltzes to highlight, through a variety of means, the bar of the woman's twirl' (2012, 161; see 161-171 for a discussion of Chopin's 'variety of means').<sup>11</sup> McKee goes on to argue that 'since the man and the woman do not perform the same steps simultaneously [in a waltz], it is entirely possible for a composer to focus on the rhythmic pattern of one or the other and thereby musically portray gender' (ibid., 165). Indeed, although there is a clear emphasis given to the 'masculine' bars in the 'Danse suppliante', as example 6.1 shows, there are also dynamic swells onto the *second* of each pair of bars; although the stress is weaker than the highlighting of the odd-numbered bars, it does suggest a partial attempt to resist the domination of the 'masculine' hypermetre, a Chloe who is perhaps not only reluctant but *resisting*.<sup>12</sup>

### 6.2.1 'La Bête tombe'

Further evidence for McKee's thesis that a focus on one or other bar of the two-bar hypermetre can 'musically portray gender' is provided by 'the first of several balletic waltzes across Ravel's career' (Mawer 2006b, 40), 'Les Entretiens de la Belle et de la Bête' from *Ma mère l'Oye*: here the gendered significance of hypermetrical

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<sup>11</sup> Although it might be argued that Chopin's waltzes were not intended for dancing, and therefore naturally contain elements foreign to ballroom waltzes, McKee emphasises Chopin's experience as a dancer of waltzes, and thus the deep understanding the composer would have had of the physical nature of the dance and the gendered implications of its hypermetre (2012, 159).

<sup>12</sup> Bhogal hears the 'feminine' metrical stress in both the 'Danse suppliante' and VALSE TRISTE as 'riddled with a level of metric instability' (2013, 200-201), but this is to ignore the regularity with which the second bar is stressed in both instances.



organisation in a waltz can be seen to support the representation of the characters, with a ‘feminine’ metrical emphasis for Beauty, and a ‘masculine’ organisation for the Beast. As Peter Kaminsky observes in a penetrating article on the movement, ‘Les Entretiens’ ‘divides into two large parts [...] rotations 1 and 2. Rotation 1 also divides into two parts, signaled [*sic.*] by the introduction of Beauty’s and the Beast’s respective leitmotifs’ (2008, 36).<sup>13</sup> After an eight-bar introductory phrase (labelled Phrase 1 in Kaminsky’s analysis), which serves to establish the tonality and metre of the dance, Beauty’s waltz melody starts in bar 9. Not only does the contour of the tune serve to highlight the ‘feminine’ second bar of each pairing, placing the highest pitch at the start of every other bar, but the emphasis is underlined by the dynamic hairpins; moreover, the start of each ‘masculine’ bar is de-emphasised with a rest (figure 6.2).<sup>14</sup> (It is worth noting that the ‘masculine’ de-emphasis here is identical to *VALSE TRISTE*, although its descending contour is very different to the circling shape of Beauty’s waltz.)<sup>15</sup>

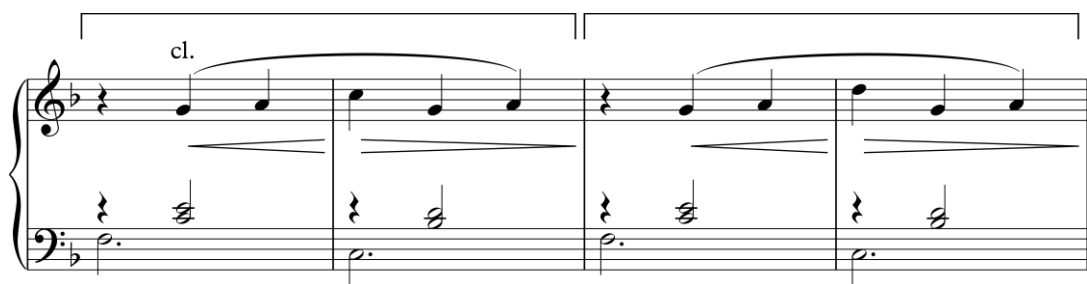


Figure 6.2: *Ma mère l'Oye, 'Les Entretiens de la Belle et de la Bête', R0+9*

<sup>13</sup> See Fischer (2005, 111-114) for an analysis of the movement that focuses on its orchestral detail.

<sup>14</sup> As the waltz progresses, the hypermetre is disrupted from time to time by extension, e.g. bars 13-16, where the music shifts from a 1+1 to a 2+2 hypermetre. However, the emphasis is still given to the *second* of the groups, shifting the even-numbered accentuation onto a different hypermetrical level. This remains true when the themes of Beauty and the Beast are combined at R4 (see below).

<sup>15</sup> See above, n12.

In contrast, when the Beast enters (R2 of the orchestral score) the hypermetre changes emphatically to a strong-weak pattern, with the initial E $\flat$  given durational emphasis,<sup>16</sup> the start of the second ‘masculine’ bar highlighted by the rapid descent to its B $\sharp$ , and the final E $\sharp$  underlined accentually and durationally, as well as by the interval of a diminished octave (figure 6.3).<sup>17</sup>



Figure 6.3: *Ma mère l'Oye*, 'Les Entretiens', R2

Interestingly, at the commencement of Kaminsky's second rotation (R4 in the orchestral score), when the two waltz themes are united for the first time – which Deborah Mawer suggests symbolises the ‘developing intensity of their relationship’ (2006b, 43) – the Beast's theme reorganises itself to fit the hypermetrical organisation of Beauty's waltz, by removing its first bar, shifting the already-established points of emphasis in line with those of Beauty's melody (figure 6.4).<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> In the original four-hand piano version, the first note of the Beast's phrase is also provided with a printed accent. The accent is also present in Jacques Charlot's two-hand piano transcriptions of both the original and the ballet score, but not in Ravel's published orchestral version.

<sup>17</sup> The contrast between Beauty's music and that of the Beast is matched by a dichotomy between diatonicism and chromaticism; as Kaminsky puts it, 'Ravel follows late 19th-early 20th century convention in his assignment of asymmetrical diatonic tonality to the human Beauty and symmetrical atonality, with its connotations of darkness, magic and the supernatural, to the Beast' (2008, 37). Additionally, as Deborah Mawer observes, 'the dialogue of "Les Entretiens" [...] is enhanced by instrumental characterization on clarinet and contrabassoon respectively' (2006b, 43).

<sup>18</sup> There are some striking similarities between the musical portrayal of the Beast and that of Pan in *Daphnis*: the contours of both musical motifs are extremely similar (Beast:  $\downarrow 4-\uparrow 4-\downarrow 11$ ; Pan:  $\downarrow 3-\uparrow 6-\downarrow 11$ ) and both characters are associated with a chromatically saturated key of C: of course, both figures are part-man, part-beast (see Chapter 4, section 4.3).



Figure 6.4: *Ma mère l'Oye, 'Les Entretiens', R4+7*

Although an accent is placed at the beginning of the Beast's melody here, the fact that it is heard in concert with Beauty's theme, alongside the melody's already-established orientation within a hypermetrical context (i.e. with points of emphasis on its two lower pitches) means that it appears to be carried along by Beauty's 'feminine' metrical organisation.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, the accent at the start of the Beast's truncated theme might tempt one to hear this passage as his unsuccessful attempt to assert metrical dominance, the reverse of the situation in the 'Danse suppliante' (see above, section 6.2): when one considers that this is a passage in which the libretto states that 'Beauty trifles with him coquettishly', and which is bookended by the Beast first 'falling to his knees, sobbing', and then falling down, 'faint with despair', the failure of the Beast's theme to maintain its 'masculine' metrical organisation here is suggestive of a certain gender imbalance in favour of the feminine (translations of the libretto are from Mawer 2006b, 46).

Indeed, although Kaminsky is persuasive in hearing the transfer of the Beast's theme to violin harmonics at R6 as 'shedding all signs of bass-register beastliness' (2008, 42), and thus emblematic of his transformation into 'a prince more handsome than Love' (libretto, translated in Mawer 2006b, 46), one might also view it as the

<sup>19</sup> It should also be pointed out that the Beast's motif is now in Beauty's key of F major, rather than his own (C).

final stage of a gradual re-gendering of the Beast's music, one that began at R4 with his theme's hypermetrical 'feminisation'. Furthermore, the end of the narrative in 'Les Entretiens' – in which Beauty 'sees at her feet none other than a prince more handsome than Love' (ibid.) – suggests a reversal of the archetypal male gaze, similar to that observed between Daphnis and Lyceion (see Chapter 5, section 5.6). Finally, it should be noted that the sheer familiarity of the tale on which 'Les Entretiens' is based perhaps blinds us to the fact that it represents an inversion of the usual gender roles that are encountered in such contexts: it is *Beauty* who acts as the hero who saves the Prince from his curse, who in turn 'thanks her for having ended his spell' (ibid.).<sup>20</sup>

### 6.3 Waltzing alone (Chloe)

'Les Entretiens' serves as a useful case study in exploring McKee's gendered conception of the waltz's characteristic two-bar hypermetre, as it contains two characters who are given clear musical definition, one female, and one male. However, in *Daphnis*, Chloe dances the waltz of her 'Danse suppliante' alone, on the orders of Bryaxis, which is an unusual situation for a dance that is so powerfully symbolic of romantic coupling. Of Eric McKee's list of four cultural associations of the waltz, the first three – 'vertigo', 'romance', and 'immorality' – all rest on the assumption that the waltz is performed by a pair of dancers (McKee 2014, 176-179). As McKee points out, the vertiginously spinning nature of waltz steps required 'that couples *maintained* their embrace throughout the entire dance' (ibid., 176; original emphasis); moreover, 'the constant spinning motion visually blurred the couple's perception of the world

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<sup>20</sup> Such an interrogation of traditional hero roles might be seen to resonate with the equivocal nature of Daphnis's heroism in *Daphnis* (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.4).

around them [...] thus waltzing couples were able to construct an intimate and private world within an often-crowded public space' (ibid., 177). Thanks to the intimate space created by the dance, the waltz 'became the choreographic emblem of romance and – for many worried mothers and fathers – a thinly veiled sexual act' (ibid.). Despite the anxiety produced by the tight embrace required of the dance (Yaraman 2002, 6), the waltz 'was quickly appropriated as a vehicle for validating the romantic status of a couple' (McKee 2014, 178), meaning that, connotatively, the dance was finely balanced between romantic fantasy and erotic peril: crucially, as Yaraman observes, 'although men and women waltzed – and significantly, did so together – it was to women that the “dangers” of the dance posed the greatest threat' (2002, 7).

So, what to make of Chloe's solo waltz during her 'Dance suppliante'? For one, the absence of a partner for Chloe during this sequence functions to emphasise her situation: rather than experiencing the euphoria of 'love, joy, and seduction' with a romantic partner (ibid., 45), Chloe's situation is profoundly dysphoric, having been taken captive by Bryaxis, who threatens her with violence if she does not accede to his desires. At the same time, the fact that it is Bryaxis who causes Chloe to dance – the 'surrogate Daphnis who does not sublimate his desire but rather takes pleasure in subjecting Chloe to his will instead of courting her' (Puri 2011b, 128; see also Chapter 4) – emphasises the cruelty and one-sidedness of Daphnis's fantasy, as it is the absent waltzing partner who causes Chloe to dance, whilst making her the focus of his aggressive, male gaze. Indeed, given that it was advised that waltzing partners maintain their gaze on each other, to counteract the vertiginous effects of the dance (McKee 2014, 177), the fact that Daphnis/Bryaxis makes Chloe the object of the gaze whilst removing himself from the equation – thus denying the possibility of the gaze being returned – seems especially cruel, and particularly undermining of any romantic

connotations the dance holds. Rather than ‘tightly embraced and staring into each other’s eyes’ (Yaraman 2002, 6), Chloe dances alone, with the gaze directed squarely at her, with no chance of returning the gesture (recall that the waltz’s ‘constant spinning motion visually blurred the couple’s perception of the world around them’).<sup>21</sup>

However, as McKee notes, one of the reasons for the waltz’s popularity was its very scopophilic potential:<sup>22</sup>

people attended balls not only to dance but also to watch dancers dance; and the focus of the spectator rested on the waltzing women, who provided the viewer a swirling concert of colors, perfumes, textures, and feminine forms all wedded to music that both reflected and motivated the dancers’ beauty.

(2012, 103)

Although McKee suggests that, ‘while women drew visual attention to themselves by their constructed appearance, those gazes generally remained beyond the field of their perception’ (ibid., 102), there can be no doubting Chloe’s awareness of the focus on her in the ‘Danse suppliante’, given the dominating presence of Bryaxis, and his command for her to dance. Indeed, the issue of spectatorship here recalls the previous dance in which a female character dances for the gaze of a man: Lyceion’s dance in

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<sup>21</sup> From a psychological perspective, one might understand this as an attempt by Daphnis/Bryaxis to deny or suppress the ‘shame’ of the ‘gaze that sees itself’ (Lacan [1973] 1977, 84). See Chapter 5, section 5.6.

<sup>22</sup> Contrary to McKee’s emphasis on the waltz as spectator sport, Ruth Katz argues that ‘there are no onlookers or audience in the waltz. The emphasis is on the participation of all, and on the equality of all’ (Katz [1973] 1983, 524). Although Katz’s viewpoint runs aground when faced with the iconographic and literary evidence McKee provides in support of his point (see, for example, the images reproduced in McKee 2012, 97-99), she is right to emphasise that, unlike the minuet, the waltz was a dance that encouraged participation, which reinforces the marked quality of Chloe’s solo dance.

Part I (see Chapter 5, sections 5.4 and 5.6). Similar to Chloe, Lyceion is expressly aware of the gaze directed at her, but unlike Chloe, Lyceion actively *invites* it, seeking to entice Daphnis with her seductive dance. In an illustration of a ballroom waltz by Robert Cruickshank from 1825, McKee notes the depiction of a woman who ‘appears to invite knowingly the male gaze not only through her low-cut gown but also by her arching posture’ (ibid., 105). Just as in Lyceion’s dance – and just as in the case of a professional dancer, such as those who perform the roles of Lyceion and Chloe – the agency demonstrated in inviting the gaze complicates its politics, suggesting at least the possibility of a rebalancing of power away from the *passive* spectator and towards the *active* dancer. As was suggested in the previous chapter regarding those women who employed the figure of Salome as a symbol of feminine emancipation (see Chapter 5, section 5.5), Lyceion’s engaging of the male gaze carries with it the potential for undermining the inequality between object of the gaze and subjective spectator, turning the gaze back on the viewer, at least metaphorically so (see below, section 6.10, for a related discussion of Nijinska’s choreography of *Boléro*).<sup>23</sup>

However, the assumption that the decision to perform in front of a spectator *necessarily* carries with it the activation of agency on the part of the performer is challenged by the reality of the dancing profession in nineteenth-century France. The majority of female ballet dancers employed by the Paris Opéra at this time were of a working-class background, and would have joined the company ‘between the ages of six and eight to help support their families and worked six-day weeks like factory workers’ (Coons 2014, 143). Indeed, as Coons explains, the labour laws that restricted

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<sup>23</sup> Although Lacan observes that ‘When, in love, I solicit a look, what is profoundly unsatisfying and always missing is that – *You never look at me from the place from which I see you*’ ([1973] 1977, 103; original emphasis), Lyceion’s agency is not only demonstrated through her invitation, but also the fact that she *returns* the gaze (see Chapter 5, section 5.6).

child labour elsewhere did not apply to the Opéra, meaning that ‘parents could continue to rely on their young daughters earning a few extra sous to contribute to the family economy’ (ibid. , 144).<sup>24</sup> Such dancers were referred to as ‘*petits rats*’, and were viewed by many as little more than prostitutes, especially once the director of the Opéra, Louis Véron began to grant ‘select male patrons access to the ballerinas in the *foyer de la danse*, calculatingly catering to their “erotic daydreaming” in a fantasy world created by men for men’ (Fauser 2005, 101).<sup>25</sup> As Marion Smith describes,

Flirtations in this setting [...] sometimes played themselves out in more private venues under a system of ‘prostitution légère’ which dancers found tempting because, without outside income, many of them were too destitute to pay for food, fuel, and lodging. (So inadequate were the *corps* dancers’ salaries, in fact, that many of them suffered from malnutrition.) Thus were some of the Opéra’s dancers subjected not only to the male gaze, but to the male touch.

(2000, 70)

Under such conditions, however, it is hard to see how dancing – to subject oneself to the male gaze – can truly be understood as a ‘choice’: the low social status of the ballet’s *corps* suggests rather a desperation to earn ‘a few extra sous’ by submitting oneself to appalling working conditions, pitiable salary, and, ultimately, ‘to the male touch’. In this context, it is worth noting Smith’s comment that ballet plots at this time

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<sup>24</sup> As Coons notes, Eunice Lipton has questioned the background of such dancers, querying the extent to which impoverished families would be likely to allow their children to enter into a profession that paid no wage at the apprenticeship stage (Lipton 1986, 89). However, Coons points out that the enhanced pay available to dancers as they were promoted through the ranks at the Opéra would likely have provided ‘enough of an incentive for the family to invest the time and energy necessary to develop their daughter’s skills so that she would, in time, become their principal breadwinner’ (2014, 143).

<sup>25</sup> This situation is completely ignored in the sentimentalised presentation of the conditions of dancers at the fin-de-siècle Paris Opéra in the recent animated film, *Ballerina* (2016), directed by Eric Summer and Èric Warin (although, in its defence, the film is aimed at children...).



‘tended to mirror this backstage relationship [between dancers and patrons] by promoting in no uncertain terms a particular set of values that upheld the notions of masculine power and feminine submissiveness’ (ibid.). This suggests a situation closer to that of Chloe – dancing under duress – than that of Lyceion, who, as was noted in the previous chapter, is perhaps more analogous to dancers such as Colette and Ida Rubinstein, both of whom appear to have understood their dances as symbolic of their emancipation (see Chapter 5, section 5.5, and below, section 6.10).

#### **6.4 ‘Dancing in chains’**

As has already been suggested, one can observe Chloe’s reluctance to dance in the fact that the tempo of every second bar of the ‘Danse suppliante’ slows from  $\text{♩}=100$  to  $\text{♩}=72$ . One might also hear the descending contour of the plaintive cor anglais melody as symbolic of Chloe’s hopeless situation, especially if one recalls the association of reed instruments with female figures (Caddy 2012, 76; see also Chapter 5, section 5.6). There is also a link, of course, with the descending contours of both *VALSE TRISTE* and *REJECTION* (see Chapter 5, section 5.3). Not only that, the melody is highly reminiscent of the pentatonic flourish at the start of the main theme of the first of Debussy’s *Deux arabesques* (initially heard in bars 6-7): there will be more to say on this connection below (see section 6.4.1), but for the time being, it is worth noting that any latent memory of the sublimely relaxed atmosphere of Debussy’s work likely throws the very different expressive context of Chloe’s dance into relief.

However, despite the generally downbeat atmosphere at the start of the ‘Danse suppliante’, the melody’s second phrase – starting at R134 – not only transfers itself

up a perfect fourth into a higher, brighter register, but also increases in dynamic – from *piano* to *mezzo forte* – immediately sounding more confident. This effect is enhanced by addition of flute, alto flute, and oboe to the lonely cor anglais, as well as the supplement of a rapidly ascending tail to the melody, which leads to a *forte* restatement, with the addition of piccolo, a further flute and oboe, two clarinets, and, for the last two bars, bass clarinet. In its three initial statements, the melody has become progressively more assertive in nature (see figure 6.5).

Figure 6.5: 'Danse suppliante', R133<sup>+4</sup>

Alongside this increasing self-confidence comes a tonicisation of the relative major, B, at R134<sup>+4</sup>. As was outlined in the penultimate chapter, B will later function as an object of value within the musical narrative, one which motivates much of the musical argument of Part III, leading up to the final bacchanal (see Chapter 5, section 5.7). Here it is heard to function in a similar manner, in the sense that the music appears to grow in confidence as it moves towards the key, although it is notable that the melody abandons the pitch B just as the harmony arrives in the corresponding tonal

area: the third presentation of the melody carefully avoids B after its third note, by altering the second, third, fourth and fifth of its pitches – had the final presentation retained the more diatonic, less chromatic contour of the second presentation there would have been a greater confluence between melody and harmony: figure 6.6 shows the melody as composed by Ravel with a recomposed diatonic version in the middle, and the bass line and underlying harmony at the bottom.

The figure displays three staves of music in G major. The top staff, labeled 'Ravel's version', shows a melodic line starting on G4, moving to A4, then B4, and then a chromatic descent: A#4, G#4, F#4, E4, D4, C4. The second staff, labeled 'Recomposed version', shows a diatonic version of the same melody: G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The bottom staff shows the bass line with underlying harmony: Bii7, V, I, V. The Ravel version includes triplets and a fermata over the first two notes.

Figure 6.6: original and recomposed versions of R134<sup>+4</sup>

Significantly, the recomposed diatonic version creates a strong sense of arrival at the completion of the ii-V-I cadence in B, which happens to coincide with a ‘masculine’ bar. Ravel’s version undercuts this, as if deliberately avoiding where the harmony appears to be heading. In fact, as figure 6.7 shows, the voice leading in the passage leading up to this point strongly suggests a melodic B will arrive at the apex of the phrase, with the expectation that the line will rise from G# in R134<sup>+1</sup>, via A# (over V of B), to an anticipated B in R134<sup>+6</sup>. The avoidance of the pitch at this point detracts somewhat from the medium-term significance of the relative major, given that the A# that replaces the expected B functions as an anticipation of the dominant that is reached at R135, making that the goal of the passage, rather than the tonicisation of

B. Indeed, one can reimagine the section remaining in the relative major following a strong arrival in B at R134<sup>+6</sup>, with the leading note (supported by V/B at R134<sup>+7</sup>) steering the passage to a further, confirmatory PAC in R134<sup>+8</sup> (figure 6.7).

Figure 6.7: voice-leading reduction of R133-135, including reduction of recomposed RR134-134<sup>+8</sup>

Moreover, as the boxes in figure 6.2 show, there are four attempts in all to resolve A# to B between RR135 and 136, but B is never given harmonic support, always being heard as an upper-neighbour to the A#. Following the final bid – at R135<sup>+1</sup>, where Chloe makes her first attempt at an escape – a return of the violent, stomping principal motif of the ‘War Dance’ (WD1) undergirds a melody that forces the B down to a D# via a whole-tone scale, which not only encompasses the tritone between B and E# – the interval that strongly characterised WD1 – but also alters the A# to an A#, as if crushing any possibility of it functioning as a leading-note.

In fact, a focus on A $\sharp$  – alongside an emphasis on B-E $\sharp$  and D $\sharp$ -A $\flat$  tritones – can be observed before the ‘Danse suppliante’ begins. At R131 a new theme is heard in low woodwinds and strings, representing Bryaxis (BRYAXIS), that rises in whole tones from the D $\sharp$  that closes the ‘War Dance’ to an A $\flat$  a tritone away (underneath this, a B-E $\sharp$  is aggressively stamped out in the bass, a truncated version of WD1; shades of R135<sup>+1</sup>). As ‘Chloe, her hands tied, is led in by two pirates’ (libretto), VALSE TRISTE is heard in muted strings, descending from C $\sharp$  (following on from the initial D $\sharp$ ) to its goal of A $\sharp$  (figure 6.8). The contrast in characterisation here is as stark as that of Beauty and the Beast discussed above (section 6.2.1).

131  
**Très rude** ♩ = 132  
**BRYAXIS** **Très ralenti** **Au mouvt.** **VALSE TRISTE** **Ralenti**  
*f* *mf* *p* *p expressif*  
**WD1**  
 BI  
 g $\sharp$ III  $v^7/V$   $v^7$

Figure 6.8: R131, with reduction

Furthermore, the situation presented in figure 6.3 is reversed from R134<sup>+8</sup>: the pentatonic melody is converted into a descending chromatic minor third – essentially a reduction of the version of VALSE TRISTE heard at R131<sup>+2</sup>, with the compound-melodic E pedal and incomplete lower-neighbour A $\flat$  removed – which twice lands on

a harmonically supported A $\sharp$ ; following this, as observed above, WD1 returns in the bass, supporting a descent via a whole-tone scale from B to D $\sharp$ , a gesture that contains a retrograde of the D $\sharp$ -A whole-tone scale heard at R131 (figure 6.9).



Figure 6.9: comparison of voice-leading RR131 and 134<sup>+8</sup>

The manner in which versions of VALSE TRISTE are hemmed in by ascending and descending whole-tone tetrachords – which coordinate with (1) Bryaxis’s command that she be brought to him (R131), and (2) her recapture and return to the Pirate Chief following an initial attempt at escape (R135) – is an apposite metaphor for the hopelessness of Chole’s situation. Furthermore, the A $\sharp$  sits a perfect fifth higher than the D $\sharp$  to which the melody is forced to return, precisely the interval that is so prominent in DC, the theme that Chloe shares with Daphnis. Finally, it should be noted that D $\sharp$  is in fact the key in which Daphnis and Chloe kiss in Part I (R53):<sup>26</sup> whether or not one is sold on the idea of Bryaxis as a proxy Daphnis (see Chapter 4, sections 4.14, 4.2.4 and 4.3), the link here at least points up the contrast between the two Chloe-male interactions so far: one romantic (Daphnis), the other violently repressive

<sup>26</sup> See Puri (2011b, 70-72) for a discussion of the kiss scene. Puri perceives the importance of the kiss to be underlined by its role within a rotational thematic structure, but the moment is fleeting, and forms part of a descending passing motion between the terminal F major of the ‘Dance Contest’ and the D $\flat$  of the ‘Dance of the Nymphs’.

(Byraxis). By linking the two scenes, this contrast can be understood to function in a similar way to how John J. Winkler understands the significance of the tale of Pan and Syrinx in the original novel, as a demonstration that ‘sexual violence is not merely an unhappy accident that might be avoided, but is a destiny written into the very premises of socially constructed reality’ (1991, 22).

In this context it is perhaps also significant that both scenes – the kiss and the ‘Danse suppliante’ – occur a tritone away from the main key of the ballet, A, an interval that is associated specifically with the Pirates’ violence in the ‘War Dance’, as if the Pirates’ brutality is somehow the necessary and unavoidable flipside of romance, at least in the society constructed in the ballet’s narrative. It should also be recalled that Lyceion’s dance, and its attempted subversion of masculine roles, throws the previously symmetrical long-range tonal plan of Part I of the ballet off its axis, transferring to an asymmetrical, fifth-based system (see Chapter 5, section 5.6). It is possible, therefore, to read tritones in the ballet – emblematic of tonal symmetry – as connotative of normative, patriarchal gender relations (which are thus partially embodied by the Pirates’ violence), and fifth-based tonal relations as emblematic of Lyceion’s feminine attempt to subvert the masculine norm. Given the additional connotations of ‘modern’ and ‘old-fashioned’ with symmetrical and asymmetrical tonal systems, respectively, one might see a further link with notions of ‘progressive’ masculinity and ‘conservative’ femininity that took hold in the wake of the French Revolution (see McMillan 2000, especially 22, 145).

#### 6.4.1 *Arabesque triste*

Before we leave the opening section of the ‘Dance suppliante’, it is worth considering the significance of the melodic allusions in this passage, both internal and external. As was noted above, the version of VALSE TRISTE presented at R131<sup>+2</sup> contains a compound-melodic pedal on E. This internal pedal-point is characteristic of the theme, but, unlike the first presentation of VALSE TRISTE, is here a dissonant minor ninth from the root of its supporting harmony (D $\sharp$ ). When the motif is first heard (R29<sup>+3</sup>) it is harmonised with a B $\flat$  chord, and its internal pedal on F functions as a dominant. However, the next appearance of the theme (R30) – which, as was noted in Chapter 3 (section 3.2.3), is an intensification of the dysphoric aspects of the theme – the pedal is, like the version heard at R131<sup>+2</sup>, a minor ninth against the root of the harmony. At its third appearance – following Daphnis’s successful performance in the dance contest (R51) – the internal pedal in VALSE TRISTE has returned to its dominant function, harmonised by an F chord (the key associated with Daphnis, through his dance), and thus the increased sense of despair that accompanies its second presentation is watered down.

Put succinctly, the theme moves in and out of harmonic focus; the more dissonant the relationship with its harmonic context, the more intense its negative expression. Given the interpretation that was proposed for VALSE TRISTE in Chapter 3 (section 3.2) – where it was argued that the theme is emblematic of Chloe’s saddened response to Daphnis’s display of violence towards Dorcon, effectively a sort of melancholic counterpart to DC – this intensification suggests an increase in the theme’s original sentiment. Seeing as it has already been established that Bryaxis conceivably functions as a ‘surrogate Daphnis’ during Part II (Puri 2011b, 128; see



also Chapter 4, sections 4.14, 4.2.4, and 4.3), the intensification of VALSE TRISTE's dysphoric qualities here is entirely appropriate: after all, Part II represents the zenith of the male violence first introduced by Daphnis with his *geste brusque*. In addition, there is perhaps an implication that the melody – and thus Chloe – does not belong, or does not wish to remain in this context, just as the internal pedal of VALSE TRISTE does not belong to the underlying harmony.

I propose that a similar affective mechanism is at play with the Debussy allusion contained in the cor anglais melody at R133<sup>+4</sup>. What is unfortunately obscured by the various voice-leading reductions above is the fact that the melody line is largely dissonant with the underlying harmony; in fact, the G# that is shown in figure 6.5 as the principal pitch in the middleground between RR133-134 is actually heard only fleetingly at the foreground, as is clear if one compares figures 6.5 and 6.7: just as was the case with VALSE TRISTE at R131<sup>+2</sup>, it is as if the melody is trying to avoid existing in the same tonal space as its accompaniment. Additionally, just as there was a less-dissonant, less negative-sounding model for the presentation of VALSE TRISTE, the dissonant melody here has a paradigmatic relation in Debussy's 'Première arabesque' (figure 6.10). There are a number of similarities between the two melodies, aside from their pentatonic construction: both descend by an interval greater than an octave over a tonic pedal, feature prominent triplet-quaver motion which slows towards the end of the descent, include motion to an inner-voice  $\hat{5}$ , and rest on an extended expressive dissonance just before they end.

Figure 6.10: comparison between Debussy 'Première Arabesque', bars 6-7 and Ravel *Daphnis et Chloé*, RR133+5-133+9

However, these similarities throw into relief a number of differences between the two melodies. Whereas Debussy's descending E-pentatonic figure arpeggiates a clear E-major triad, with  $\hat{1}$  given metrical and registral emphasis, the similar figure at the start of the 'Danse suppliante' instead features  $\hat{7}$  in an analogous position, with  $\hat{1}$  appearing fleetingly, and only towards the end of the descent, as if reluctant to spend any time on the pitch. Moreover, rather than the gently cascading regular triplets found in the Debussy, Ravel's melody only gradually – and briefly – falls into triplet motion, creating a much more hesitant, less fluent rhythmic effect. Similarly, rather than the easy-going *Andantino con moto* of Debussy's 'Arabesque', the constant slowing- and speeding-up of the Ravel detracts from the sense of flow achieved in Debussy's piano piece. The motion to an inner-voice  $\hat{5}$  in the Ravel is obscured by a sudden return to a registrally transferred soprano  $\hat{2}$ , as a distended upper neighbour that barely manages to resolve, before returning to the dissonant A $\sharp$  (not shown in figure 6.10; see figure 6.5 above). Finally, the 'masculine' 'thrust' at the beginning of every odd-numbered bar in the 'Danse suppliante' threatens to distract from the melody, unlike Debussy's gently rocking left-hand arpeggios: as suggested above (section 6.4), the evocation of Debussy's 'Première arabesque' here – and the notable contrasts between the cor

anglais melody and its model – serves to throw the unsettled, uncomfortable and unwilling expression of Chloe’s dance into relief (a similar effect is achieved by the fact that this is a dysphoric solo waltz). Equally significant is the fact that arabesque melodies were coded ‘feminine’ in the period (Bhogal 2013, 64; see also Chapter 4, section 4.12); furthermore, as a piece of domestic music,<sup>27</sup> Debussy’s ‘Arabesque’ is arguably redolent of what Citron refers to as ‘the pervasive twentieth-century association of women with the *salon*’ (1993, 108), making the allusion to Debussy’s work doubly feminised. Another interpretative possibility, then, is that the uncomfortable distortion of Debussy’s ‘feminine’ melody could be seen as analogous to what Chloe is experiencing at the hands of Bryaxis and the Pirates. Indeed, Citron’s suggestion ‘that around 1900 male society began to fear the *salon* as a site of female power’ (ibid.) may feed into the power discourses – the need to control the feminine – examined in Chapters 4 and 5.<sup>28</sup>

However, the allusion to Debussy here may have a further, less obvious significance. Given the ballet’s pastoral setting, the frequent evocation of Pan throughout the work, and the fact that *Daphnis* was premiered just after the Ballets Russes had enjoyed a *succès du scandale* with Nijinsky’s choreography of Debussy’s *Prélude à L’après-midi d’un faune*, it seems possible that a reference to Debussy’s music – even to an unconnected work – might help reinforce the similarity of subject matter between Debussy’s famous orchestral work and Ravel’s ballet (see Chapter 5, section 5.6 and 5.7.5 for more on the similarities between the two works). This is especially significant if one bears in mind that Chloe will again dance at the behest of

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<sup>27</sup> See, for example, Casella’s comment on ‘the young women who with all too faulty fingers were wont to essay the first *Arabesque*’ (cited in McQuinn 2002, 119)

<sup>28</sup> For an account of the French salon in this period – including commentary on its significance for women musicians – see Ross (2006).

a male character in the ballet's final part, her dance as Syrinx to Daphnis's Pan-ic flute. As was suggested in the previous chapter (see Chapter 5, section 5.2), the acting out of the tale of Pan and Syrinx in Part III is problematic, given the fate Syrinx suffers at the hands of Pan. It does not take much of a leap of the imagination to see the similarity between the actions of Pan and Byraxis's designs for Chloe at the culmination of her dance, and the allusion to Debussy here perhaps acts subliminally to reinforce this notion. Granted, it is *not* a quotation from the relevant work, but the fact that *Faune* opens with what is probably the most famous arabesque in the repertoire, coupled with the detail that the reference here is to a piece that is actually titled 'arabesque', is potentially enough to insinuate the link.<sup>29</sup>

### 6.5 '*Désespérée, elle reprend sa danse*'

Although the desperate state in which Chloe finds herself during the dance is abundantly obvious, it should also be noted that the Chloe depicted by the music is not exactly in a state of supplication, whatever the title of the dance might be: a better adjective might be 'reluctant', with even an element of defiance, perhaps, given the manner in which the dynamic swells give the impression of an attempt to usurp the domination of the masculine-focused strong-weak hypermeter (see above, section 6.2). Indeed, one might even hear the way that Chloe's melody avoids the sort of metrical and rhythmic regularity of its Debussyian model as an attempt to break the bonds of the waltz that she is being forced to dance, as if seeking to disrupt the very musical element so crucial to any dance music, time.

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<sup>29</sup> Michael Puri proposes a more euphoric connection between Debussy's *Faune* and Ravel's *Daphnis* (2011b, 185-201), one more in tune with Symbolist aesthetics, but perhaps less alive to the ethical problems latent within Pan-ic references.

That said, once Chloe resumes her dance at R136, the time-distending arabesque melody has vanished, to be replaced with a new waltz melody that takes inspiration from the accompaniment to the previous section. This is not immediately apparent, however, as the return of the cor anglais for a brief two-bar linking passage initially suggests a resumption of the previous melody. The link itself is just the one note, D#, repeated in diminishing note values: given the significance of D# as both the key of Chloe's kiss with Daphnis, and the key to which the music turns as she is brought before Bryaxis – and when she is forcibly returned to him after her attempted escape – the dwelling on this pitch here appears to underline its importance in linking Daphnis's kiss to Bryaxis's violence.

The sense that things have changed in this central portion of the dance is reinforced by the modulation to Bb minor, enharmonically the same as the A# that appeared to form the goal of her first attempt at escape. There is also a growing sense of confidence in this passage, almost an intensification of the similar pattern observed in the first part of the dance, as the melody is repeated at progressively higher pitch levels, each time the dynamic and orchestration and dynamic level increasing to match. Additionally, the stronger dance feel that is apparent now that the arabesque melody has been abandoned in favour of a more metrically robust melody – one that strongly articulates the two-bar waltz hypermetre, aided by a clear and regular ii-V-i-V pattern in the bass – gives the impression of a waltz that is perhaps danced somewhat less reluctantly than before. Indeed, a rather cartoon-like, tumescent chromatic line in the horns between RR136<sup>+4</sup> and 137 appears to suggest that Chloe's *audience* is certainly getting a little more out of the dance than previously.

In fact, there is more than a hint of Lyceion's dance from Part I to this section, beyond the fact that this is again a woman dancing for the gaze of a man: at R137, following the comedic erotics of the swelling horns (pun intended), the dance moves into D $\flat$ , enharmonically equivalent to the C $\sharp$  in which Lyceion first appeared (and, indeed, the same key as the 'Dances of the Youths' in Part I, the first time that eroticism is specifically awakened in the ballet, leading to feelings of jealousy, Daphnis's *geste brusque*, the dance contest, and, arguably, the present situation). Additional Lyceion-like features in this passage are the dotted-quaver hemiolas that first appear in R137<sup>+3</sup>, reminiscent of the frequent hemiolas in Lyceion's dance. In fact, the whole passage between RR137 and 139 replicates in miniature the harmonic structure of Part I, following Lyceion's entrance, moving from D $\flat$  (C $\sharp$ ) to C via G major at R138: as has been previously explored (section 6.4; see also Chapter 5, section 5.6), Lyceion's attempt at seduction appears to throw the symmetrical tonal plan present in the first section of Part I off its axis, leading to the initial evocation of Pan – associated with the key of C – and therefore the bestial side of masculinity discussed in Chapter 4 (see section 4.3).

We have already explored in brief the manner in which the contrasting portrayals of Lyceion and Chloe can be understood to function as a dichotomy embodying something similar to the familiar 'virgin and vamp' pairing (see Chapter 5, section 5.4). Furthermore, Deborah Mawer implies a connection between Lyceion and Chloe in this sense with her 'Quasi-symbolist contrasted pairing' of 'promiscuity/chastity' (2006b, 104). Such binaries had long been common in ballets, at least from Théophile Gautier's contrast between the 'pagan' Fanny Essler and 'Christian' Marie Taglioni (see Foster 1996c, 207; see also Chapter 1, section 1.4). Although the links in the middle section of Chloe's 'Danse suppliante' to Lyceion's

dance of seduction might appear to undermine this binary distinction – suggesting that Chloe’s sexuality is of a similar order to that of Lyceion’s – the very different contexts of the two dances must be taken into account. Whereas Lyceion’s dance ‘troubles’ Daphnis with its display of free sexuality, any suggestion that Chloe is beginning to acknowledge the erotic undertones of her ‘Danse suppliante’ would appear to be more suggestive of what Bram Dijkstra terms ‘the aggressive “invitation to rape” fantasy’ (1986, 109), wherein normative sexual relations are conceived as masculine domination and feminine submission. Indeed, as Dijkstra notes, such gender relations were written into Article 1124 of the Napoleonic Code, which ‘declared [...] that “woman was given to man so that she could give him children. She is therefore his property, just as a fruit tree is the property of the gardener”’ (ibid., 111).

In other words, this middle portion of the ‘Danse suppliante’ points up the contrast between the liberated sexuality of Lyceion – which causes a ‘troubled’ reaction in its male audience (Daphnis) – and the submissive eroticism demanded by Bryaxis of Chloe. In fact, if Lyceion can be conceived as representative of an uninhibited Chloe, then the case for Bryaxis figuring an unrestrained Daphnis is surely the stronger, given the obvious symmetry between the two scenes. Indeed, if one recalls Mawer’s idea that the descending fifth of DC represents Daphnis and the ascending fifth Chloe (2006b, 94), one might read the inversion of the ascending masculine-bar ‘thrust’ into a descending fifth to begin the melody at R136 as another link between Bryaxis and Daphnis. Moreover, the manner in which Chloe’s arabesque melody is replaced by a new melody based on the thrusting accompaniment suggests a suppression of the feminine voice by the masculine – reinforcing the domination-submission relationship noted above – akin to the manner in which the ‘feminine’,

‘Oriental’ WD5 is gradually constrained and ‘deoctatonicised’ in the ‘War Dance’ (see Chapter 4, section 4.1.4.3).

However, although the music of the B section of Chloe’s ‘Danse suppliante’ suggests that the dominating Bryaxis/Daphnis has achieved his goal of Chloe’s submission with the exultant arrival in the Pan-ic key of C at R138<sup>+2</sup>, the phrase suddenly detumesces in a descending figure strikingly similar to the later REJECTION, a pre-echo of the motif’s repeated  $\downarrow 2\downarrow 5$ -semitone pattern (figure 6.6). Following this is a return of Chloe’s upwards-rushing ‘escape’ music at R139 (first heard at R135), indicating a further attempt at escape. Any submission that there might have been has only been momentary: indeed, the similarity between the short-range tonal plan of this central portion of the ‘Danse suppliante’ and the end of Part II, following Lyceion’s subversion, might suggest that Chloe’s apparent submission has been a ploy, to buy time before another attempt at flight can be made. Among the various links between Chloe and Lyceion’s dances, it is worth also noting the manner in which each dancer interrupts her dance in a bid to achieve their goals – Lyceion removing her veils and Chloe attempting escape.

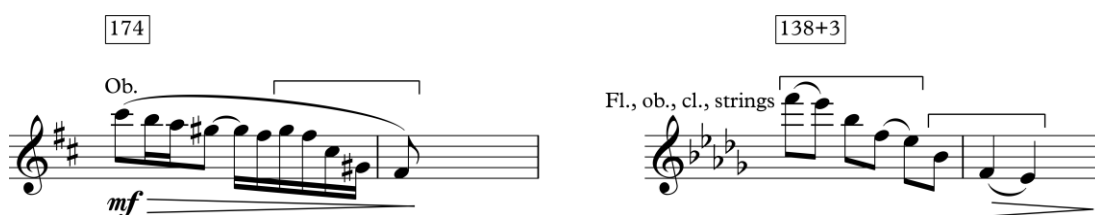


Figure 6.11: REJECTION at R174 and its pre-echo at R138<sup>+3</sup>

However, what is perhaps most significant about the connections between these two dances is the distinction they draw between Daphnis and Chloe: the fact is



that any ‘threat’ felt by Daphnis is entirely in his head – Lyceion clearly does no more than attempt to seduce him with her veil dance – whereas the danger to Chloe is very real and physical. In fact, if one considers that the heroes of romantic quest narratives routinely experience – and overcome – physical hazards, the suggestion would appear to be that Daphnis is only a hero in his imagination, whereas Chloe’s dance – and her repeated and defiant attempts at resisting Bryaxis – implicate her in the role of the romantic-heroic protagonist. The similarity between the male-female/Subject-Object inversion in ‘Les Entretiens’ – wherein Beauty turns out to be the heroic Subject who saves the Beast (Object) – and the situation here is plain: the fact that both inversions of the normative status are presented via the means of a waltz only serves to point up the marked quality of each, just as the feminine-emphasising hypermetre of ‘Les Entretiens’ and the dysphoric solo waltz of the ‘Danse suppliante’ are marked within the context of waltz conventions.

It should be noted in this context that VALSE TRISTE combines both marked aspects, emphasising the ‘feminine’ second bar of each hypermetre as well as manifesting a dysphoric expression, and it is to VALSE TRISTE that Chloe returns towards the end of her dance. Before this, the cor anglais returns with the melancholy arabesque, heard in a lonely version devoid of accompaniment. Moreover, its ending is now transformed into the first, ‘Chloe-less’ half of DC (RR139<sup>+3-6</sup>), a motif that is immediately repeated by a dejected chalumeau-register clarinet at R140, all over an A# functioning as ii of G#, rather than the projected  $\hat{7}$  of R134<sup>+5</sup> (see above, section 6.4). The presence of the ‘Daphnis’ portion of DC at this point tallies exactly with the libretto’s direction that ‘She abandons herself to despair, thinking of Daphnis’: however, the presence of a bleak, dismembered VALSTE TRISTE following her ‘thoughts of Daphnis’ (R140<sup>+2</sup>) suggests the tenor of her reflections represents a return

of her dismayed response to Daphnis's first demonstration of violence, his *geste brusque*. This is only to be expected given the behaviour of his 'surrogate', Bryaxis, who acts as an intensification and extension of the relatively brief aggression of Daphnis's earlier jealous response; but, if *VALSE TRISTE* is representative of the disappointment Chloe feels in Bryaxis/Daphnis's belligerent behaviour, its link with *REJECTION* is also significant, particularly for the unfolding of the narrative as a whole, and the role it plays in suggesting a counterpoint to the libretto's 'marriage plot'.

## 6.6 Refusing to yield

Discussing the intercalated Pan-ic narratives in Longus's novel, R.L. Hunter observes that

It is perhaps obvious that the increasing savagery of the three stories foreshadows the loss of Chloe's virginity, which draws ever closer, and that the story of Echo in particular emphasises that although first sex will be, as Lycaenion describes it, 'bloody', a refusal to yield would have even more disastrous consequences.

(1983, 54)

We have been observing a similar pattern in Chloe's interactions with male characters in Ravel's ballet, each of which represents an intensification of the previous contact, from the 'chaste' offering of her cheek to Dorcon, to a more passionate embrace with Daphnis, and from her capture by the Pirates to the threat of sexual violence that

Bryaxis represents: the trajectory appears clear. It is remarkably similar to that perceived by both Hunter and Winkler in the original Greek novel, a narrative course that appears to suggest that ‘sexual violence is not merely an unhappy accident that might be avoided, but is a destiny written into the very premises of socially constructed reality’ (Winkler 1991, 22). However, although Chloe is ‘rewarded’ in the novel for submitting herself to male desire with marriage to Daphnis – a classic ‘marriage plot’ (see below, section 6.8) – as was suggested in the previous chapter, the ballet poses a challenge to this, seemingly denying the novel’s conclusion in favour of ‘rejection’ (see Chapter 5, section 5.7.5).

In fact, against the trajectory that can be traced in Ravel’s ballet from innocent romance (Chloe offering her cheek to Dorcon), via something more passionate (her kiss with Daphnis), to Bryaxis’s physical threat, another course can be outlined by focusing on the gradual emergence of the fully-fledged REJECTION motif. It has already been noted that a pre-echo of the  $\downarrow 2\downarrow 5$ -semitone tail of REJECTION can be heard at R138<sup>+3</sup> in Chloe’s ‘Danse suppliante’ (see above, figure 6.11), but this gesture itself is foreshadowed at two earlier points. The first of these follows on from the climax of Lyceion’s dance, the moment that Lyceion’s musical autoeroticism appears to suggest that Daphnis is not a physically necessary component in her erotic games (see Chapter 5, section 5.6; the second foreshadowing, at R63<sup>+3</sup>, will be discussed below).<sup>30</sup> However, the  $\downarrow 2\downarrow 5$ -semitone pattern (labelled y in figure 6.12) is only one

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<sup>30</sup> Indeed, given the prominence of falling perfect fourths in the arabesque theme of the ‘Danse suppliante’, one might go so far as to connect this motif to REJECTION: there is certainly no contradiction in terms of the dramatic situation, and it further links Chloe’s dance for Bryaxis to her dance for Daphnis, and, by extension, the myth of Pan and Syrinx.

component of REJECTION: the motif begins with a descending scalar contour (labelled *x* in figure 6.12), one which it shares with VALSE TRISTE.<sup>31</sup>

Of course, it should be noted that the descending contours of *x* encompass both chromatic and diatonic versions. During the initial analysis of VALSE TRISTE in Chapter 3 (section 3.2), it was suggested that there is an echo of the lament to its chromatic descent. Although the chromatically descending version is the most characteristic form of lament (the so-called *passus duriusculus*), it can also appear in a diatonic version. Caplin notes ‘the expressive quality of lament is made more manifest when the tetrachord is chromaticized’ (2014, 417), and I would suggest a similar effect is at play here, with the chromatic version of *x* sounding appreciably more dejected than its diatonic manifestation. This effect is enhanced by the fact that its chromatic form is characteristically accompanied by its own internal pedal (i.e. VALSE TRISTE), which slows the descent, in contrast to the later diatonic version, which progresses downwards with more purpose, demonstrating a greater sense of agency. The transformation from chromatic to diatonic descents thus potentially maps an affective trajectory from sadness to determination.

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<sup>31</sup> Although VALSE TRISTE is derived from Daphnis’s *geste brusque*, in the first instance, the earlier gesture is too brief to give much of a sense of downward motion, and is thus better representative of the circling gesture actor.

Figure 6.12: emergence of REJECTION a)  $R29^{+3}$ , b)  $R59^{+4}$ ,  $R63^{+3}$ ,  $R138^{+3}$  and  $R174$

The potential significance of the gradual emergence of REJECTION is complicated by the third stage of its development. Whereas all the other stages can be understood as negative reactions by female characters to male behaviour, the appearance of a preliminary stage of the motif at  $R63^{+3}$  occurs alongside the libretto's indication that 'Daphnis thinks of Chloe, perhaps in danger, and runs off to save her'. Moreover, the *y* component of REJECTION appears here as a consequent to a *très expressif* rendition of DC, essentially an extension of the neighbour-note figure that ornaments the inversion of Chloe's ascending fifth in the theme's original presentation (see below, figure 6.13).

However, the development of REJECTION's *y* component from Chloe's portion of DC is the significant feature here: the presentation of DC under discussion begins at  $R63$ , at the point that the libretto describes that 'women run across the stage, pursued by Pirates'. Whether or not one chooses to follow Puri in viewing the Pirates and Bryaxis as psychic projections of Daphnis's desires – and there is plenty of

evidence to support such a view (see Chapter 4, section 4.1.4.2) – it is striking, at the very least, that the first sign of male-on-female aggression leads Chloe’s portion of DC to develop an extension that ultimately leads to the fully-developed REJECTION motif: indeed, the pitches of the version of *y* at R63<sup>+3</sup> are replicated exactly (although with a different harmonisation) at the end of the Chloe’s ‘Syrinx Dance’, creating an even more specific link between Daphnis and Chloe’s ‘love’ theme, the events of Part II of the ballet, and Chloe’s seeming rejection of Daphnis at R191. Additionally, the chromatic transposition of *y* at the end of this final presentation of REJECTION effects the harmonic manoeuvre that leads to the resolution of the long-delayed perfect cadence in B, with the transformation of the earlier extension of DC providing both harmonic and localised narrative resolution (figure 6.13; see also Chapter 5, sections 5.7.4 and 5.7.5).

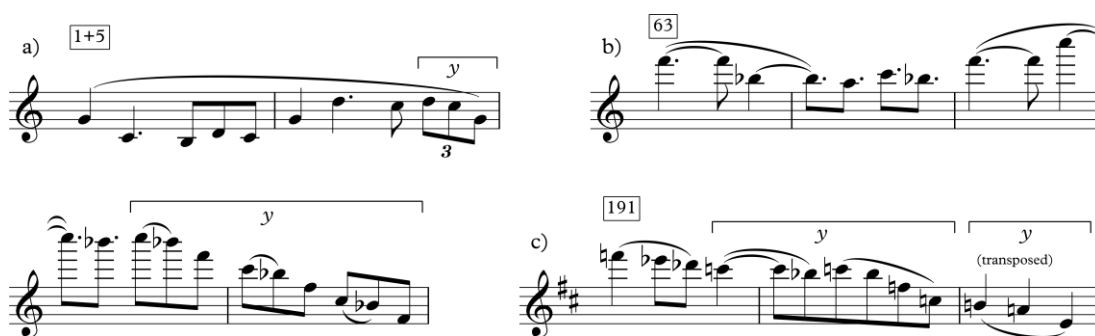


Figure 6.13: a) first presentation of DC, b) development of *y* from DC at R63<sup>+3</sup>, c) transformation of R63<sup>+3</sup> at R191

The process described above can be neatly encapsulated as a process whereby Chloe’s portion of DC develops independently of its parent theme into a new motif. However, there is another observation to be made of the transformation from DC to REJECTION: DC is a member of the class of ‘circling’ gesture actors, a group to which DAPHNIS also belongs, whereas REJECTION belongs to the set of

‘descending’ gesture actors (see Chapter 1, section 1.6, and Chapter 5, section 5.7.2). Thus, not only does the Chloe component of DC develop into a new theme (REJECTION), but into a different gesture actor, one whose contour contradicts the motion around a fixed point of DC: not only this, but the prominent fourths and falling motion of REJECTION invert (might one say *subvert*?) both the interval *and* the direction of Chloe’s ascending fifth to become a descending fourth. It is as if REJECTION seeks to negate every melodic feature that characterises DC: given the link with Chloe-Syrinx’s rejection of Daphnis-Pan’s advances established by REJECTION’s first full-fledged presentation (R174; see Chapter 5, section 5.3), the symbolic import of REJECTION’s repudiation of DC appears clear.

## 6.7 Symbolic resistance

The ‘refusal to yield’ described in the previous section could equally be described as a ‘transvaluation’, wherein the patriarchal values inscribed in the plot outlined by Hunter and Winkler are exchanged for a different set of cultural principles (see Chapter 2, section 2.4.4.4 and Chapter 5, section 5.7.5). Another way of stating this would be to suggest that Chloe’s apparent rejection represents a ‘counter-discourse’, a term developed by Richard Terdiman in his book *Discourse/Counter-Discourse* (1985), in which he delineates a ‘theory and practice of symbolic resistance’ to dominant discourses, specifically in the context of nineteenth-century French literature.<sup>32</sup> As such, Terdiman’s book is not only conceptually linked to the present discussion, but topically connected, given both *Daphnis et Chloé*’s gestation at the end

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<sup>32</sup> Terdiman’s model is similar to Barthes’s concept of *doxa* and *para-doxa*: see Allen (2011, 86-91) for a clear and succinct outline.

of the French ‘long’ nineteenth century and the importance of writers such as Baudelaire and Mallarmé to Ravel (see Puri 2011b, 8-14), who are both important figures for Terdiman’s thesis.

A ‘counter-discourse’ is succinctly described by Terdiman as ‘a series of techniques and practices by which nineteenth-century intellectuals and artists contested the dominant habits of mind and expression of their contemporaries’ (1985, 12). Given that a counter-discourse seeks to resist a dominant discourse by posing a counterpoint to the normative, there is a strong link between Terdiman’s concept and Bakhtin’s now famous development of a dialogic conception of discourse, in which ‘utterances depend on or call to other utterances; no utterance itself is singular; all utterances are shot through with other, competing and conflicting voices’ (Allen 2011, 26). Bakhtin’s model for the dialogic is the tradition of the carnival, which ‘celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order [and] marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions’ (Bakhtin [1965] 1984, in Morris 1994, 199).

Terdiman understands such ‘carnavalesque’ counter-discourses as a sort of ‘Hegelian dialectical opposition’, one that ‘produces a “reading” of the discursive system as a whole in its possibilities and operations – a kind of *état present* of the residual and emergent tendencies within it’ (1985, 69). However, ‘although norms can be violated in a number of ways, this number is not infinite [...] in relation to the norm, its violation strives for the greatest possible distance, but *without* disconnection’ (ibid.; original emphasis). Thus, any discourse implies its counter-discourse, and vice versa; Terdiman goes as far as to ‘posit something like a Newton’s Third Law in the discursive realm: for every dominant discourse, a contrary and transgressive counter-



discourse’ (ibid., 65). However, the relationship between discourse and its carnivalesque ‘Other’ is not one of equality, since ‘The dominant is the discourse whose presence is defined by *the social impossibility of its absence*’ (ibid., 61). Thus, within any given cultural context, a dominant discourse is unmarked (see Chapter 2, section 2.4.4.4).

## **6.8 The ‘marriage plot’**

The dominant discourse in *Daphnis et Chloé* can be defined as that of the ‘marriage plot’, a term that Sally Banes uses to refer to both ‘a narrative and a bourgeois social imperative’ (1998, 5; see also Chapter 1, section 1.3). The social requirement that a woman marry remained strong during the Third Republic, during which time it ‘continued to be depicted as women’s “natural” goal’ (McMillan 2000, 155). This ‘goal’ reinforced the ‘ideology of separate spheres [which] remained as pervasive at the beginning of the twentieth century as it had been at any point in the nineteenth century. A gender order based on sexual difference rather than on sex equality was still widely considered to be fundamental to the well-being of society’ (ibid., 154). However, the marriage plot is not implicated in *Daphnis et Chloé* solely through the social norms contemporary with its creation, but by the fact that the ballet’s widely read source novel (see Roland-Manuel 1928, 97) finds its telos in Daphnis and Chloe’s marriage and retreat to domestic bliss in the countryside (see Chapter 5, section 5.1). Thus, the dominant discourse of Ravel’s ballet is underlined by the mutually reinforcing background presence of contemporary bourgeois norms and the pre-existing plot of Longus’s novel.

However, *Daphnis et Chloé* equally belongs to a ballet tradition that was deeply implicated in the marriage plot. As Banes points out,

Ballet's origins lie in danced entertainments at royal weddings in Renaissance Europe. As theatrical dancing became public and professional in the seventeenth century, representations of weddings and marriages – or, tragically, of broken nuptials, by the nineteenth century – became obligatory *in* the ballet, rather than as the social context of its performance. That is, where dances were first embedded in weddings, weddings came to be embedded in dances.

(1998, 5; original emphasis)

However, as Banes argues, the ballets examined in her book – including Romantic-era classics, such as *La Sylphide*, *Giselle* and *Coppélia*, as well as the ballets of Tchaikovsky and Stravinsky – ‘seem to participate in the growing anxiety [...] toward marriage as it is peculiarly associated with women's destiny’ (ibid.). Thus, although it is clear that for the general historical context of Ravel's ballet the dominant discourse remains that of the marriage plot, the balletic context of *Daphnis* contains elements of the carnivalesque that strengthen the impulse to read its narrative ‘against the grain’, so to speak (see Chapter 1, section 1.4 for a discussion of *Daphnis* in the context of Romantic-era ballets).

That said, as Banes accepts, marriage overwhelmingly forms the telos for the majority of ballets from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, for ‘the final wedding was a standard ballet convention’ (ibid., 48), even in a work as seemingly unrelated to bourgeois marital concerns such as Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*. Banes suggests that the sacrifice in Stravinsky's ballet functions symbolically: ‘Marriage, the

ballet tells us in no uncertain terms, equals death’ (ibid., 107). Moreover, for Banes, Stravinsky’s next ballet, *Les Noces* functions as a ‘companion piece to *The Rite of Spring*’ (ibid., 108), or rather, an ‘answer’ to the earlier ballet, ‘by interpolating resistance to the ritual. To be sure, the bride in *Les Noces* is compliant [...] But her recalcitrant consciousness, already implied in the tradition itself, is heightened in the ballet and brought to center stage’ (ibid., 120).

So even within a balletic tradition that reflected a certain ambivalence to the marriage plot, *Daphnis et Chloé* is unusual in repudiating the ample opportunity for marriage to form its narrative end-state, an element whose seemingly radical nature has gone relatively unremarked in the literature. In fact, Fokine’s original scenario for the ballet had contained two acts, the first of which contains ‘the essential plot details of the ballet as it is known today’ (Morrison 2004, 55), and a second act that was to culminate in Daphnis and Chloe’s marriage. It is unclear at what point the second act was abandoned, or for what reason, although Simon Morrison suggests that ‘owing to its repetitiveness, it had little likely chance of being staged’ (ibid.).<sup>33</sup>

## 6.9 Bacchanalia

Whatever the reason might have been, the lack of a marriage scene in *Daphnis* does leave an unusual feel to the end of the ballet’s narrative. It is not even as if the ballet appears to end too soon for the marriage to take place, with the wedding taking place

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<sup>33</sup> It should be noted that Ravel’s apparent aversion to romantic entanglements may be advanced as a poetic motivation for the lack of consummation in *Daphnis*. See, for example, Deborah Mawer’s observation that, ‘On this complex issue of sexuality’, Ravel ‘hung on to vestiges of childhood and found developing adult sexual relations challenging’ (2006, 38). A further biographical reference to the lack of consummation in the ballet is provided by Ravel’s brother’s rabbits, named Daphnis and Chloé, whom Ravel describes as ‘resolutely sterile’ (letter to Madame Fernand Dreyfus, 10 September 1918, in Orenstein 2003, 182).

in a ‘virtual’ space outside the ballet itself: the ‘Bacchanal’ that forms the finale to *Daphnis* literally interrupts the scene, not once but twice, the second time barging in during the penultimate presentation of DC, the interjection preventing the theme from progressing beyond Daphnis’s descending fifth, and therefore excluding Chloe’s ascending interval (figure 6.14; also, see above, section 6.6). Puri interprets this moment as ‘love at last sight’, which is consistent with his theoretical concern with memory in Ravel’s work (2011b, 11-12). That said, his evocation of Baudelaire’s ‘A une passante’, ‘a classic account of glimpsing a beautiful woman within a quickly moving crowd’ (ibid., 11) is not necessarily irreconcilable with my interpretation, suggesting, as it does, a missed romantic opportunity, similar to the ‘missed opportunity’ for a wedding scene in Ravel’s ballet.

Figure 6.14: interruption of DC at R195

In fact, the ‘Bacchanal’ seems especially disruptive, given that, following the ‘Pantomime’ and Chloe’s ‘Syrinx Dance’, the ballet appears to be returning to its opening moments. This is suggestive of a restoration of the idealised society that exits at the opening of the narrative, a condition of Northrop Frye’s romance archetype (1957, 198-203; see also Chapter 5, section 5.1): following the long-delayed resolution to B at the end of Chloe’s ‘Syrinx Dance’ (R192), the music returns (R193) to the

ballet's tonic, A, for the first time since Dorcon's 'Danse grotesque' in Part I (although the key does appear in the interim, as dominant to 'Daybreak's D major). This coincides with the first presentation of NYMPHES since the Nymphs' 'Nocturne' (R75), in a reorchestrated version of its initial appearance, accompanied by APPEL, as it is at R1. Following the first bacchanalian interruption at R194 – 'a group of girls enters dressed as bacchantes, shaking tambourines' (libretto; see below for an exploration of the significance of bacchantes) – we have the beginning of a reorchestrated version of the first appearance of DC from R1<sup>+5</sup> (discussed above). Indeed, the two reinterpretations of the score's opening can be stitched together by the removal of the first interruption to mimic almost exactly RR1-2, enhancing the sense that the 'Bacchanal' in some way seeks to negate the attempted recapitulation (figure 6.15).

Figure 6.15: comparison of RR1-2 and 193/195, with interruptions removed

The allusion to and denial of recapitulation here seems also to point towards the missing wedding scene, given the importance of 'restoration' in romance plots. Indeed, as was outlined in Chapter 5 (section 5.1), such a restoration does occur in the

original novel, for, although they have discovered they are of noble birth, Daphnis and Chloe choose to return to the countryside for their wedding, after which they live out their days in bucolic happiness. It seems particularly appropriate, then, that the dismissal of restoration comes in the form of a bacchanal, given the carnivalesque nature of the original bacchanalian festivals, which were ‘typified by scenes of drunken revelry and celebration’ (*Oxford Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, s.v. ‘Bacchanalia’). The most prominent among the worshippers of Dionysus (Bacchus) were the bacchantes – who, according to the libretto, are also the first to enter the scene and interrupt the attempted restoration in the ‘Bacchanal’(R194) – ‘Women inspired to ecstasy by the Greek god’, who were ‘depicted wearing the skins of fauns’ (*Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*, s.v. ‘Bacchantes’). Furthermore,

Freed from the conventions of normal behaviour they roamed the mountains with music and dancing and, according to myth, inspired by the god performed supernatural feats of strength, uprooting trees, catching and tearing apart wild animals, and sometimes eating the flesh raw.

(ibid.)

Given the significance of Pan in both Longus’s novel and Ravel’s ballet – and his association with both Daphnis and a virile, ‘bestial’ form of masculinity (see Chapter 4, section 4.3) – the wearing of faun skins, the feats of strength, and the consuming of raw flesh by bacchantes is suggestive of a carnivalesque inversion of traits that have been thus far associated specifically with male characters, and therefore a symbolic usurpation of patriarchal authority. In other words, not only is the potential wedding denied, but its negation appears to be explicitly gendered, in transferring connotations

of masculinity within the ballet to a mass of unruly women, who lead the bacchanalian revels that replace marriage as the plot's telos.<sup>34</sup>

Michael Puri discusses the importance of an 'idyll/bacchanal dialectic' (2011b, 121) for Ravel's music in a chapter that implicitly links the 'Dance of the Youths', the 'War Dance', and the 'Bacchanal' as examples of the bacchanalian impulse in *Daphnis* (ibid., 121-139).<sup>35</sup> This is an important observation, for it links the first usurping of patriarchal authority – 'The girls entice Daphnis and dance round him' (libretto) – the aggressive response it engenders ('War Dance') – and a final inversion of the gender order in the 'Bacchanal', which, it should be observed, is the only 'actual' bacchanal, danced by bacchantes. Having provided a list of bacchanalian features of both the 'War Dance' and the 'Bacchanal', Puri astutely observes that,

In Ravel's music [...] a bacchanal is just as important for what it is not: an idyll. Ravel does not simply juxtapose the two genres but rather sets them into a dialectic, which means that one cannot be understood without the other and that the one implies the presence of the other whether or not the other is actually present.

(2011b, 138)

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<sup>34</sup> Given the concern with dominant and counter-discourses in this chapter, it is worth mentioning that the Bacchic mysteries were suppressed by the Romans in 186 BCE (*Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*, s.v. 'Bacchanalia').

<sup>35</sup> Puri also examines the original 1910 version of the ballet's finale, noting its shorter length and suggesting a more 'idyllic' conception (2011b, 129-137). A further alteration – the shift from triple to quintuple metre – will be discussed below. Further information on the two versions of the finale can be found in Orenstein (1975, 215-216) and Mawer (2006b, 89-91).

Puri's observation is strikingly like Terdiman's argument that 'for every dominant discourse, a contrary and transgressive counter-discourse' (1985, 65), in that the one is always implied by the other.

In a later chapter, Puri examines *La Valse* from a bacchanalian perspective, even suggesting that 'The finale of *Daphnis* resembles *La Valse* so strongly that we can reasonably consider the former to have been the model for the latter' (2011b, 178).<sup>36</sup> In support of his idea, Puri refers to two comments by the composer – one in an interview and another in a private letter – that *La Valse* should be considered tragic 'in the Greek sense', as well as Ravel's description cited above concerning the work's 'dancing, whirling, almost hallucinatory ecstasy' (ibid.; also, see above, section 6.1). Such a description also fits the finale to *Daphnis* rather well, especially the description of 'whirling', which perfectly expresses the numerous 'spinning' figures found in the dance.<sup>37</sup> In fact, as both Sevin Yaraman and Eric McKee note, rotating melodic gestures are commonly found in waltzes, where they function as melodic analogues to the movement of the dancers (Yaraman 2002, 33-36, McKee 2012, 148-159). Citing A.B. Marx, McKee explains that 'waltz composers must "at the very least [...] bring into prominence this basic motion [of the circle]"' (2012, 148). Given this, it is perhaps not surprising to learn that the original version of the finale was in triple time, almost as if it were a brisk waltz, similar to works such as Chopin's Op. 34, no. 3 or Op. 64, no. 1, both of which contain rapid melodic rotations. It seems appropriate, given the various waltz deformations found in *Daphnis* – and their association with female

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<sup>36</sup> The 'War Dance', 'Bacchanal', and 'La Valse' are all analysed by Helbing as examples of his spiral-form concept (2008, 18-52, 283-351, and 2011).

<sup>37</sup> Helbing views such 'circular movement' (*Kreisbewegung*) as fundamental to spiral form (2008, 23), but also notes that 'circular figures' (*Kreisfiguren*) are characteristic of the fundamentally choreographic conception of Ravel's music as a whole (ibid, 12).



characters, especially Chloe<sup>38</sup> – to hear the ‘Bacchanal’ as a sort of distorted waltz, one that expresses vividly ‘an increasingly passionate and exhausting whirlwind of dancers, who are overcome and exhilarated by nothing but “the waltz”’ (see above, section 6.1).<sup>39</sup>

## 6.10 Heuristic and retroactive readings

The notion of parallel dominant and counter-discourses in *Daphnis et Chloé* arguably shares some features of Michael Riffaterre’s theory of ‘heuristic’ and ‘retroactive’ reading (see Chapter 2, section 2.4.4). The heuristic reading – a ‘first interpretation’, following ‘the syntagmatic unfolding’ (Riffaterre 1978, 5) – can be seen to correspond to a mimetic reading of *Daphnis*, paralleling the ‘marriage plot’. This heuristic reading is therefore consistent with the narrative connotations of the libretto: even though there is no actual marriage scene in the libretto, the indication that ‘Before the altar of the Nymphs, he [Daphnis] pledges his love, offering two sheep’ implies a similarly romantic form of narrative closure, one that Puri reads as equivalent to a ‘betrothal’ (2011b, 131). At the very least, it is a scene that implies that the ‘proper’ narrative resolution involves pairing off the two principal characters. Against this, a retroactive reading can be understood to allow the apperception of a musically articulated counter-discourse to emerge. As was described in Chapter 2, aspects of the musical narrative that appear contradictory when compared to the libretto’s narrative – what Kaminsky describes as ‘meaning gaps’ (2008, 31) – can thus be understood as examples of the Riffaterrian ‘ungrammaticality’, an ‘obstacle that threatens meaning when seen in

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<sup>38</sup> McKee suggests that waltz music can act ‘as a type of surrogate’ for women (2012, 119).

<sup>39</sup> It should be noted that Etienne Rousseau-Plotto hears the finale as a type of Basque fandango (2004, 273-274), rather than a distorted waltz.

isolation at first reading’, but one that is also ‘the guideline to semiosis, the key to significance in the higher system, where the reader perceives it as part of a complex network’ (Riffaterre 1978, 6).<sup>40</sup>

However, as is probably clear from my evocation of the Bakhtinian carnivalesque throughout the discussion of counter-discourses, my concept of the ungrammaticality is a little different from that of Riffaterre. Rather than the ungrammatical signalling a specific meaning beneath a mimetic reading of the text (implied by Riffaterre’s description of ‘the key to significance in the *higher* system’), I view it as pointing to the possible *emergence* of a reading at odds with – or, rather, in addition to, if one is to be explicitly dialogic in formulating the concept – the mimetic reading of the danced libretto. It would be reckless to argue that ungrammatical moments – such as the replacement of a *pas de deux* with Chloe’s solo ‘Syrinx Dance’, or the presentation of a gradually assembled REJECTION motif at the moment of apparent resolution of the marriage plot – represent signposts to a specific, intended meaning in a ‘higher system’, one that has been ‘decoded’ over the course of this thesis. However, it is the position taken here that such ungrammaticalities are invitations to read hermeneutically, and in broader contexts – cultural and intertextual – within which new, non-mimetic readings may emerge. In other words, ungrammaticalities suggest that we are in the presence of Barthesian ‘scriptible’ or ‘writerly’ texts ‘that force readers to “write” the text as they go along: texts that resist conventional encoding and refuse to locate and fix its meaning’, texts

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<sup>40</sup> I am not suggesting here an equivalency between a retroactive reading and the counter-discourse (i.e. that they are different terms for the same thing), but rather that the emergent counter-discourse is in some ways dependent upon the principle of a retroactive reading. Put another way, it is the discernment of the ungrammatical that suggests the possibility of a retroactive reading, at which point the counter-discourse can be understood to develop as distinct from the mimetic account of the narrative.

in which ‘readers “write” for themselves all sorts of associative and nonlinear connections’ (McCreless 1988, 8).

Beyond the concept of the ungrammaticality, there is another aspect of Riffaterre’s theory that can be brought to bear on the analysis of *Daphnis* presented in this thesis. For Riffaterre, a text’s structure rests on a ‘matrix’, a ‘word, phrase or sentence unit’ that ‘represents the kernel upon which the text’s semiotic system is based’ (Allen 2000, 115). The ‘matrix’ suggested by the argument of this thesis is similar with that implicit in Winkler (1991), in that the twin ungrammaticalities experienced in the ‘Pantomime’ can be understood to direct our attention towards ‘the inherent violence of the cultural system discovered by Daphnis and Chloe’ (ibid., 17). However, by contextualising Ravel’s ballet within the gender politics of its time and place, a less fixed, less monologic conception of gender relations is suggested, especially when compared to Winkler’s understanding of the novel’s ‘lesson [...] that nature itself (which is just a glorified name for those cultural imparities that are usually regarded as unquestionable) seems to endorse the painful conventions of male-prominent, phallogentric society’ (ibid., 22). For, as was outlined in Chapters 3 and 4, masculinity in fin-de-siècle France was undergoing a period of crisis (although, following Connell, it would perhaps be more accurate to state that the ‘gender order as a whole’ was demonstrating ‘crisis tendencies’, given that masculinity is ‘a configuration within a system of gender relations’ (Connell 2001, 84)).

This is perhaps the most important difference between the gendered significance of Longus’s novel and Ravel’s ballet: although the ballet appears to focus specifically on male-on-female violence – removing the scenes in which Daphnis and Dorcon suffer physical threats (see Chapter 5, section 5.2) – the specific cultural

context in which the work was created allows us to perceive an alternative to the fate to which Longus's novel appears to condemn Chloe. Even if women in France were not to be given the vote until 1944, figures such as Colette and Ida Rubinstein were increasingly questioning the roles allotted to women in contemporary society in ways startlingly close to both Lyceion and (in my reading) Chloe, demonstrating a powerful agency and cultural authority through their dances, questioning and undermining the scopophilic indulgence of the male gaze.

In this context, it is worthwhile considering Rubinstein's famous collaboration with Ravel, commissioning and starring in *Boléro*, whose choreography – by Bronislava Nijinska – has provoked contradictory responses. Comparing it to 'the Bacchanales of both *Daphnis* and *La valse*' (Puri 2011b, 199), Michael Puri reasonably describes 'Rubinstein dancing alone on a table surrounded by men overcome by their lust for her' as 'the classic scenario of heterosexual desire' (ibid., 199-200). However, providing an alternative view, Deborah Mawer cites Willi Reich's recollections of a 1929 performance in the Vienna Opera House, in which, 'With an almost demonic indifference, Ida Rubinstein rotated ceaselessly [...] on an immense round tavern table, whilst at her feet the men, expressing an unleashed passion, beat themselves until the blood came' (cited in Mawer 2006b, 228-229).<sup>41</sup>

Mawer explains that

Reich's emphasis is upon the obsessive circularity inherent in the music, but apparent too in Rubinstein's almost robotic movements. Such haughty detachment was doubtless well suited to

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<sup>41</sup> The mention of 'an almost demonic indifference' may call to mind the third movement of Ravel's song cycle, *Shéhérazade*, 'L'indifférent', a song whose text has provided material for those seeking to uncover the 'mystery' of the composer's sexual orientation (see Larner 1996, 75-76).

Rubinstein's considerable skills as a mime artist-cum-actress. Noting a practice slightly divergent from the programme scenario as theory, Reich's review endorses what he sees as a limited 'uncoupling' between music and solo dance, whereby, as the dynamic intensity of the music and onlookers increases, Rubinstein's presence unsettles because of her seemingly indifferent repetition. [...] In Reich's reading, it is the woman who directs the proceedings, winding the score of male onlookers around her fingers and ultimately driving them to a physically painful state of ecstasy.

(ibid., 229)

Reich's interpretation of *Boléro* – picking up on the musical and visual ungrammaticality of 'seemingly indifferent repetition' – draws in many of the strands that have come up in this thesis: a 'robotic', dancing woman who nonetheless demonstrates agency; an 'uncoupling' of music and dance; the inversion of patriarchal gender order, in which the power rests with the female character. Although Reich's reading may appear to run counter to the 'Rubinstein/Nijinska scenario [which] indicates that the men take the initiative' (ibid.), it represents an entirely valid retroactive reading of the ballet by shifting the focus from a male to a female subject; appropriately so, for, as Mawer observes, 'The image of a dominant female presence offers an apt metaphor for Rubinstein in real life' (ibid.).<sup>42</sup> Moreover, as Reich's interpretation indicates, contained within the dominant discourse – 'the classic scenario of heterosexual desire' – is its counter-discourse: 'it is the woman who directs the proceedings'. Given the fact that, for so much of its history, ballet had centred around the female body mastered by male choreographer and composer, and object of

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<sup>42</sup> Järvinen notes that the iconography of Rubinstein emphasised her apparently dominant position when juxtaposed with male dancers (2014, 132-133).

male gaze, the possibility of inverting the situation offered by readings such as Reich's seems especially piquant.<sup>43</sup>

Just as has been the case in the discussions of narrative in *Daphnis et Chloé* in previous chapters, depending on who is identified as the narrative Subject, the plots that can be outlined can be both contradictory and complementary.<sup>44</sup> For example, a reading of the work that emphasises 'the classic scenario of heterosexual desire' is aligned with the male spectators in the scenario, the work's gradual crescendo to its *fortissimo* ending likely figured as symbolic of mounting desire and orgasmic release, what might be understood as a 'goal-directed' reading of the work. However, if one inverts the Subject-Object relationship in this scenario – as does Reich – the ending of the work can appear not as a satisfied yearning, but *frustrated* desire. Such a reading may note the ungrammatical nature of the shift to E at R18 within the repetitive context, as well as the brevity of the return to C – only four bars long – before the piece finishes somewhat abruptly with a plagal cadence: a much weaker cadence than the perfect cadences that have been heard outlined in the bass throughout the work. In this reading, the dominant music discourse – that musical works should reach some kind of satisfying closure – is undermined by a counter-discourse that forces the opposite condition. Alongside this, the female narrative Subject demonstrates 'an almost demonic indifference' to the erotic requirements of her male spectators, to

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<sup>43</sup> Deborah Mawer notes *Boléro*'s choreographer, Nijinska's desire to 'maximize the autonomy of dance' (2006b, 11): given the strong cultural links between 'dance' and 'woman' (see, for example, Foster 1996a), one might see Reich's 'feminist' reading of the work as establishing an analogue between the autonomy of dance and the autonomy of women.

<sup>44</sup> Although, given its reputation for extreme repetitiveness, *Boléro* might seem an unusual piece to bring up in the context of a thesis that has been concerned with theories of narrative, it appears Ravel did in fact have a narrative in mind, depicting a bullfighting-themed love triangle, 'Bizet's *Carmen* "with bells on"' (see Mawer 2006b, 220-221). Moreover, the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss provides a quasi-narrative (if occasionally musically suspect) analysis of the work in the final volume of his *Introduction to a Science of Mythology* ([1971] 1981, 658-667).

whose frustrated desire the repetitive nature of the music and weakened sense of closure direct the audience's attention, making *the male dancers* the object of an unsympathetic gaze.<sup>45</sup> It should also be recalled that this is yet another triple-time dance, performed by a solo woman, similar to those discussed above: might we hear in *Boléro* yet another distorted, ironic waltz?

## 6.11 Irony and Ravel

The mention of irony at the end of the previous section – along with the suggestion in Chapter 5 (section 5.7.5) that *Daphnis* articulates an ironic-comic narrative – brings up a topic that is frequently touched upon in Ravel studies, the composer's supposedly ironic nature. The earliest association between the composer and the term in print appears to have been in Louis Laloy's 1907 review of *Histoires naturelles*, which describes a 'tender', but 'fearful' 'irony, which is present almost throughout, enveloping every emotion so that it can only be foreshadowed or guessed at, and stopping it at the point where in revealing itself it would lose its subtlety' (in Laloy and Priest 1999, 247). More recently, Peter Kaminsky has suggested Ravel's comment that 'I consider sincerity to be the greatest defect in art' (interview, *ABC de Madrid*, 1 May 1924, in Orenstein 2003, 433) 'came as close as he ever did to articulating an aesthetic credo' (Kaminsky 2000, 186).

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<sup>45</sup> Indeed, of the work's two themes, it is the second that 'achieves' the ungrammatical shift to E at R18. Given that one of the principal contrasts between the two themes is that between diatonic and chromatic pitch content, respectively – and bearing in mind the cultural associations between chromaticism, the exotic, and the feminine (see, for example, McClary 1991, 16: 'chromaticism [...] takes on the cultural cast of "femininity"') – it becomes clear that it is the 'feminine' second theme that is responsible for the ungrammaticality, demonstrating an enhanced agency, when compared to the rather passive, diatonic first theme.

The most extensive examination of irony in Ravel's music to date is Stephen Zank's study, *Irony and Sound* (2009), which relates the subject to more general contemporary aesthetic concerns, observing 'that the increasing interest with which irony was treated as a literary device throughout the nineteenth century in France [...] found a compelling realization [...] in Ravel's music' (ibid., 17). This comment resonates with Richard Terdiman's suggestion that 'As deployed in the counter-discourses of the nineteenth century, irony can be understood as the rhetorical figure of the *dialogic*' (1985, 76; original emphasis). This suggests the possibility of conceiving of the ironic approach taken to romantic narrative conventions in *Daphnis* as part of a broader modernist aesthetics; this supports Zank's contention that irony bestows 'a discrete and distinguished modernity upon Ravel, since irony has perpetually been received as "modern"' (2009, 269; also, see below, section 6.12).

The notion of *Daphnis* as an ironic work within the composer's presumed ironic aesthetic risks broaching the hoary and vexed issue of compositional intention. To be clear, my focus in this thesis has been on the meaning that can be understood to emerge from a retroactive narrative reading of the work within a specific cultural context: I mean to imply *no* suggestion of authorial intent whatsoever. However, it is nonetheless worthwhile to consider how the reading of *Daphnis* proposed here sits within current academic discourses concerning the composer. Sexuality is a topic that frequently comes up in Ravel literature, principally due to the lack of firm data concerning the composer's sexual orientation. I do not wish to rehearse the various arguments here, for, as Lloyd Whitesell observes, 'All in all the facts are too inconclusive to establish a clear hetero- or homosexual identity' (2010, 74). However, this is not to deny the possibility of discussing sexuality in connection with the composer's music: one of the great benefits of Michael Puri's subtle development of



an aesthetics of dandyism in Ravel's music is that it permits the examination of the composer as a 'queer' figure without 'deliver[ing] a verdict on Ravel's sexuality' (Puri 2011b, 86).

Building on this, Lloyd Whitesell notes how 'queer forms of cultural expression may have their roots in social phenomena as experienced by a queer subject' (2010, 78), linking to specific aesthetic strategies employed by Ravel in his music. Particularly significant for our discussion of *Daphnis*, Whitesell observes that, in *Shéhérazade*, 'desire is conceived ironically throughout the cycle', by avoiding poems that feature 'explicit nudity or sexual encounters', instead focusing on 'scenarios of disappointment' (ibid., 79). This Whitesell connects with 'an aesthetic posture of irony, teasing, and evasion, traceable to the phenomenal experience ('tuning') of queer incongruity' (ibid., 81). Equally relevant, given the focus on the waltz that formed the first part of this final chapter, is Whitesell's discussion of *Valses nobles et sentimentales*, in which 'Ravel invokes the erotic connotations of this dance, with its closed position and gliding rotation [...] Yet Ravel's waltzes are notorious for their acerbic tone; one might even say that the whole collection is governed by the metaphor of the mocking smile' (ibid., 87).

Whitesell's discussion of the dandy's indifference – particularly as applied to the erotic – provides one context within one might read the ungrammaticalities of *Daphnis*, especially the significance of REJECTION and the negation of the marriage plot.<sup>46</sup> However, it also suggests a framework for the implied critique of normative masculinity in the ballet, in which the heterosexual, domineering, physically vigorous male is subjected to a number of strategies that undermine its claims to hierarchical

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<sup>46</sup> It also suggests an alternative to Puri's reading of *Daphnis* as a self-portrait of the composer, with Chloe acting as a surrogate instead (see Puri 2011b, 120).

priority (see Chapters 3 and 4, especially sections 3.7 and 4.3.3). Remaining with the gendered perspective put forward in this thesis, the feminist interpretation advanced in the reading of the characters of Lyceion and Chloe could be seen to connect to Ravel's Leftist politics, or what Barbara Kelly has recently described as the composer's 'attitude towards injustice' (2013, 132, see also Nichols 2011, 27, 32, 274, 356). Although Ravel's youthful comment about his more successful fellow student, Marie Juliette Toutain – 'I have always considered a woman who writes fugues as something of a hermaphrodite' (letter to Florent Schmitt, Monday 8 April, 1901; in Orenstein 2003, 59) – might suggest a rather misogynistic outlook, at least in his youth, his general concern for social justice certainly does not contradict any potential feminist reading of his work, nor would his collaborative friendship with figures such as Colette and Ida Rubinstein.

In fact, Richard Terdiman's theory of counter-discourse suggests a way in which Ravel's 'queer forms of cultural expression' (Whitesell 2010, 78) can be explicitly linked with feminism, given that 'In the intensely phallogocentric universe of the nineteenth-century middle class, the complex of signifiers signifying "female" became available – indeed, in the constitutive oppositions of social life, it more or less imposed itself – as a crucial figure of social difference' (Terdiman 1985, 72). In other words, there is the potential for a direct correlation between counter-discursive strategies in one realm of meaning and another: a deliberate evasion of erotic fulfilment can stand in for a feminist inversion of patriarchal structures, and vice versa.

## 6.12 Disnarrating *Daphnis*

Although the foregoing discussion demonstrates that it is possible to link the reading of *Daphnis* as an ironic-comic narrative to an ‘assumed author’ version of Ravel, it is important to stress that this is not the basis on which such a reading has been made in this thesis: apart from anything else, it should be recalled that, in a work such as a ballet, issues of authorship are complex, to say the least (even if I have, for simplicity’s sake, referred to *Daphnis* throughout as ‘Ravel’s ballet’). Rather, the impetus for the hermeneutic endeavour of this thesis has been to explore the interpretative possibilities that emerge when the focus is shifted from a mimetic reading of the relationship between danced libretto and music, to instead ‘locate the topic of analysis precisely in the divergence between the two’ (Cook 1998, 135).<sup>47</sup> While this final chapter has dealt less with explicitly narratological matters, and has been more concerned with securing certain topical and intertextual features, along with their gendered connotations, it is the analysis of narrative structure that informs the overall understanding of the ballet’s significance, and the context from which the focus on contemporary cultural politics emerges.

However, a narrative focus can also emphasise qualities of the score that suggest the possibility of a more explicitly modernist take on the ballet than has perhaps been the case in the past, an attitude demonstrated by Cocteau’s comment that ‘*Daphnis* is the archetype of those works which belong to no school’ (in Nichols 2011, 147). When compared to contemporary works such as *The Rite of Spring*, *Daphnis*’s musical language naturally appears less ‘modern’ and ‘progressive’ than some of its historical neighbours. Indeed, its clear narrative focus – as a ballet that ‘tells a story’

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<sup>47</sup> Mawer refers to aesthetic ‘fissures’ emerging in such situations, in which ‘New meanings, especially ironic ones, may be revealed’ (2006b, 31).

– also supposedly brands it as ‘old fashioned’ in an age where dance was seeking to move away from straightforward narratives: as Stephanie Jordan puts it, ‘the focus on story had diminished’ (2000, 18). Yet, recent scholars have sought to extend narratological theory to embrace the more equivocally narrative music of the twentieth century, a repertory that has been sometimes been ‘defined through the assertion of a notable absence: the desire (of composer) or ability (of post-tonal instrumental music) to represent narrative’ (Reyland 2013, 29).

Relating four types of twentieth-century narrative possibility (narrative, ‘non-narrative’, ‘neo-narrative’ and ‘anti-narrative’) to Northrop Frye’s four *mythoi*, Michael Klein argues for a link between ironic narratives and ‘anti-narratives’, which he defines as ‘music that serves as the critique of nineteenth-century narrative discourse’ (Klein 2013, 5). In another essay from the same collection as Klein’s (in Klein and Reyland 2013, 29-56), Nicholas Reyland offers four further modernist narrative strategies, including ‘disnarration’, which describes ‘The elements in a narrative that explicitly consider and refer to what does *not* take place (“X didn’t happen”; “Y could have happened but didn’t”)’ (Prince 2003, 22). The complex referencing and negation of the marriage plot at the end of *Daphnis* strongly suggests a disnarration, in the manner in which it points towards, not ‘what might have been’, but ‘what *should* have been.’ By denying a conventional romantic resolution/restoration, which is instead replaced with that exemplar of carnivalesque inversion, a bacchanal, the disnarrating elements of the ballet serve as an ironic critique of the conventions of romantic plots, which equally serves to problematise the work’s relationship with its source material.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Deborah Mawer suggests a similar subversion of ‘what was for him was the falsehood of this heterosexual ideal’ in *La Valse* (2006a, 106).

Although the case can certainly be made that specific portions of *Daphnis et Chloé* present a mimetic reading of the romantic plot of Longus's novel – 'a notable literalism or close correspondence in projecting the scenario through musical narrative' (Mawer 2006b, 94-95) – it is clear that the various 'meaning gaps' between the musical and danced narratives open up the possibility for the emergence of new or alternative meanings. Given the problematic subject matter of Longus's original and its 'notion that female sexuality is constituted as a kind of vulnerability' (Winkler 1991, 18), it seems fitting that its most famous dramatic presentation should exist in a form that can be understood to critique or problematise the premise of Longus's novel. The appeal of *Daphnis et Chloé* has been argued to be, in part, that of 'an elusive period piece' (Mawer 2006b, 123). Nevertheless, the stories it can be heard to tell about the 'crisis tendencies' in gender relations contemporary with its creation offer more than purely an insight into its period: they also have striking resonances today.

There are also other stories, in other works, that the methodology employed in this thesis could help us to hear. As was noted in the Introduction, there has as yet been no thoroughgoing examination of Ravel's operas from the perspective of their narrative structures, and the situation is the same for his ballets, save for Peter Kaminsky's employment of some narratological concepts in his study of 'Les Entretiens de la Belle et de la Bête' from *Ma mère l'Oye* (2008). A similar approach could also yield results with other texted music by Ravel, for example, the paratexts of *Gaspard de la nuit*, or some of the composer's more narrative songs, such as 'Ballade de la reine morte d'aimer'. Beyond the music of Ravel, the methodology could help develop a better understanding of the signifying potential of the relationship between the various aesthetic elements in ballet, which could lead to a re-evaluation of works that have attracted very little scholarly interest, such as Delibes's *Coppélia*.

Indeed, there is also the promise of rehearing ballets such as *The Rite of Spring* as narrative works, perhaps revising our understanding of the cultural work undertaken by such central products of modernity, especially as regards gender. Finally, welcoming the notion of the ungrammatical into the analysis of programme music could help us to enrich our understanding of the relationship between textual programme and musical narrative, conceptualising the music of such works as less a direct expression of the text, and instead a critical reading of it. The potential for examining music and narrative from within the same theoretical framework suggests new ways of exploring a variety of musical genres, and it is hoped that this thesis might stimulate others to look for new stories to tell.

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