

**Investigations of Pain from the Point of View of Musical  
Hermeneutics**

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**Abstract**

The study analyzes from an aesthetic and a hermeneutical point of view three music pieces expressing sorrow and pain. The first is the memorable passage of J. S. Bach's *St. John Passion* reproducing Christ's last sorrowful words – *es ist vollbracht*, the second, the *Andante doloroso* of Beethoven's *Piano Sonata No. 31. in A-flat major, Op. 110*, and the third the final movement of Tchaikovsky's sixth and last symphony, the *Symphony Pathétique*.

In all three the intercategory reflections place us into states of our emotionally experienced existence such as the forms of *sorrow*, *loss*, *trials* sometimes heightened to the extent of paroxysm. In the aesthetic approach of these compositions we find the numerous versions of fear, anxiety, fright, and in these always resounds the Aristotelian memento of *fear and pity*.

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**Aesthetics of pain**

By analyzing the hermeneutics of pain we actually undertake to understand the life of the psyche as a whole. The well-known psychological algorithm (preparation – tension – resolution), which extends over the soul's entire mode of existence, also determines the changes in the structure of pain. But then this algorithm has a similar, or moreover the same role in the composition, performance and reception of musical works. All this is based upon the similarity between emotion and music, to be more precise, the similarity between the progression of emotional reflexes and the movement of musical rhythm. This fact was already recognized and used by the classical, traditional aesthetics. The algorithm is always organized around the feeling of pain as a centre. Pain is a psychological answer, emotional reaction, which needs a solution, and

sooner or later, willy-nilly is solved satisfactorily or changes into another tense situation.

Music often, maybe in most of the cases, chooses for the centre of its rhythmical movements the tensions of pain. And the inner order of the other arts is more or less structured in this way as well. Adorno's maxim, according to which music always promises a life without fear,<sup>1</sup> *mutatis mutandis* holds true for the musical experiencing of pain too.

As the concept of each emotion, the notion of pain is also a relational concept. This characteristic manifests itself on several levels. The pain experiences of recent or more distant ages converge when evoked. Pain is not in the first place the direct way of existence of the psychical attitude developed over the causing phenomenon, but the spiritual comprehension of that emotional depth which submerges the painful soul into the deepest pits of sorrow beyond the causing phenomenon. Erich Kästner put it well in the foreword of one of his children's novel: "Finally I took out a children's book of mine sent to me by its author and I started to read it, but soon I put it down. I was so upset by it! I tell you why. That gentleman wants to make the children who read the book believe that they are always merry and they simply do not know what to do in their great happiness! This insincere gentleman pretends that childhood consists only of honey-cake.

How a grown-up man can so utterly forget his youth that some day he does not remember at all how sad and miserable children can be sometimes! (On this occasion I beg you with all my heart: never forget your childhood! Do you promise me? On your word?)

It is of no importance whether one cries because a broken doll or some time later because he has lost a friend. In life does not matter why one is sad, what matters only is how deep one's sorrow is. A child's tears, by God, are not smaller and often they are heavier than an adult's tears. Let us not misunderstand one another, gentlemen! No useless sentimentality! I only think that one should be honest even if this is painful. Honest to the core."<sup>2</sup>

It is no accident that emotionally we react in the same manner when experiencing through music a child's or an adult's pain – irrespective of age or object. Maybe the programme applied to the composition prompts us perhaps to make distinctions. Because of this the programme title of R. Schumann's miniature from the series 43

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Theodor W. Adorno, *Wagner*, Budapest: Európa Könyvkiadó, 1985, p. 216.

<sup>2</sup> Erich Kästner, *A repülő osztály* (The Flying Classroom), Budapest: Móra Ferenc Könyvkiadó, 1960, pp. 12–13.

*Clavierstücke für die Jugend* is a fitting one – *Erster Verlust* (First Loss). For the music is not about a broken doll, a lost friend or a “bigger” misfortune, but the first – never too early – appearance of the feeling of pain in the heart, in all probability in childhood. But this could happen in any other time as well. Always, when the sorrow is the first or particular in its palpability. For example the poet’s sorrow who has buried his mother; the paradigm for this is Lőrinc Szabó’s poem entitled *A miskolci deszkateplomban* (In the Wooden Church in Miskolc) from the cycle *Tücsökzene* (Cricket Music).

The musical projections of the rhythmical permanence of pain mediate intimately between ages and memories and make the past specifically actual. Putting an end to the finitude of their former present they specifically include the passing of past sorrows and grief into our-experienced-existence.

### **Changes of horizon**

For “every finite present has its limitations” – Gadamer stated. And he expounded the semantic layers of the notions of situation and horizon from this statement. He continued in this way: “We define the concept of ‘situation’ exactly by saying that it represents a standpoint that limits the possibilities of vision. Hence essential to the concept of situation is the concept of ‘horizon.’ The horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point.”<sup>1</sup>

If we investigate the musical expression of pain in the history of music, we cannot disregard the hermeneutical importance of the notion of ‘horizon’. “Therefore, to understand a tradition a historical horizon is needed undoubtedly.” But with reference to the application of this horizon to comprehension present day theories have not reached a reassuringly uniform conception. This can be especially seen in Gadamer’s and Jauss’ differing views. The former reasons in this way: “But it is not true that we acquire this horizon by placing ourselves into a historical situation. On the contrary, we must first have a horizon in order to place thus ourselves into a situation. For what does situating oneself mean? Obviously, not simply that we disregard ourselves. There is of course a need for this to the measure that we really have to evoke the other situation. But into this other situation we must bring, precisely, ourselves. Only this is the full meaning of ‘transposing ourselves’. If we

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<sup>1</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Igazság és módszer*, Budapest: Gondolat, 1984, p. 214.

place ourselves into another man's situation, we understand and consequently become aware of the other person's otherness, and moreover of his indestructible individuality by transposing ourselves in his place. (...) *The horizon of the present cannot be formed without the past. There is no more an isolated horizon of the present than there are historical horizons. Understanding, rather, is always the fusion of these horizons which we imagine to exist by themselves.*"<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, Jauss' standpoint related to this question is the following: "The concept of horizon, as a *historical delimitation* and as the possibility-condition of experience, is the basis of any creation in the course of human activity and of the primary understanding of the world. The level of understanding to be achieved in order to bridge the historical distance between the otherness of the text and the interpreter's own horizon was not a problem, until the German idealism's concept of spirit or later the positivism's ideal of exactitude seemed to guarantee that the interpretation can grasp its object directly."<sup>2</sup>

We believe that the passages we have highlighted make palpable the importance of the mentioned differences in the analysis. This difference becomes especially pronounced in the alternatives of fusion of horizons *against* reflections of horizons.

"The historically experienced consciousness is that – Gadamer says – which gives up the phantom of perfect enlightenment, and precisely through this it is open to the experience of history. Its way of functioning we have described as the fusion of the comprehension-horizons, fusion which mediates between the text and the interpreter." Then he adds: "Therefore, what a text says cannot be compared to some kind of firmly and obstinately defended viewpoint, which would only urge the person who strives for comprehension to the sole question, how it is possible for the other to have such an absurd opinion. It is absolutely certain that understanding in this sense is not 'historical understanding', which would reconstruct the genesis of the text. On the contrary: we want to understand the text itself. And this means that *the revival of the text's meaning always contains ab ovo the interpreter's own thoughts too*. So far the interpreter's own horizon is determinative, but not as some personal viewpoint which we preserve or assert, but rather as some

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 216, 217.

<sup>2</sup> Hans Robert Jauss, Horizontszerkesztés és dialogicitás (Horizon Structure and Dialogicity), in: Hans Robert Jauss, *Recepcióelmélet – Esztétikai tapasztalat – Irodalmi hermeneutika* (Reception Theory – Aesthetic Experience – Literary Hermeneutics), Budapest, Osiris Kiadó, 1999, p. 271.

opinion or possibility which we bring into play and hazard, and which helps us to really acquire that which is said in the text. Above we described this as the *fusion of horizons*. Now we realize that this is the way in which conversation is carried out, conversation in which a matter is expressed, which is neither mine nor the author's, but a common matter."<sup>1</sup>

The contrasting of *strangeness* – *otherness* with tradition fixes the difference between the two viewpoints in its entirety. Gadamer's argumentation, in total contrast with Jauss', asserts: "In any case, in our relationship to the past, which is constantly active, *our aim is not to keep a distance from and be free of tradition*. On the contrary: we always stand in the tradition, and this standing-in is not an objectifying relationship, as if we imagined all that tradition says as something other, alien – on the contrary: it is our own *ab ovo*, a model or a deterrent example, a new self-recognition in which our historical judgement can hardly be cognition, but it is rather the completely unbiased conformation of tradition to ourselves."<sup>2</sup>

Finally: "Because of this each historical hermeneutics must first of all dissolve the abstract antagonism of tradition and historical knowledge, history and knowledge of history. The effect of the surviving tradition and the effect of historical research form a unit of effects. Analysing this one can only find the web of interactions."<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, Jauss reasons like this while analyzing a biblical text: "What literary hermeneutics can add to the activity of the so perfectly elaborated theological exegesis is the access to aesthetical understanding. *It does not take as a starting point that which we already know historically or theologically, but that which proves to be alien during the reading*. Aesthetical understanding tries thus to avoid the appearance that the text is directly accessible for a naive reading."<sup>4</sup> And here we find the notion of horizon mediation, which will later lead to the Jaussian proposition about the reflection of horizons. "The aesthetic experience is not *ab ovo* in contrast with religious experience. It can build for the latter the first bridge to the text of a faith system which has

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<sup>1</sup> Gadamer, *op. cit.*, pp. 264, 272.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 201.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 202.

<sup>4</sup> Hans Robert Jauss, Jónás könyve, az „idegenség hermeneutikájának” egy paradigmája (The Book of Jonas, a paradigm of the “hermeneutics of strangeness”), in: Hans Robert Jauss, *Recepcióelmélet – Esztétikai tapasztalat – Irodalmi hermeneutika*, Budapest, Osiris Kiadó, 1999, p. 373.

already become alien to us, and through this it introduces the process of horizon-mediation.”<sup>1</sup>

Returning to Gadamer’s theory we encounter a new category – the consciousness of the history of effects<sup>2</sup> –, which might as well be the conclusion of the comparisons made so far. “Now then the dialectic of question and answer, which we discovered in the structure of the hermeneutical experience, makes possible for us to define more closely: what kind of consciousness the consciousness of the history of effects is. For the dialectic of question and answer, which we have revealed, presents the relationship of understanding as a conversation-like mutual relationship. *It is true that the texts do not speak to us as a You. We, who try to understand them, have to make them speak first. But we have seen that making them speak understandingly is not an arbitrary initiative presenting itself wantonly, but it refers to the answer expected in the text as a question too. Already the fact that we expect an answer postulates that tradition reaches the inquirer and calls upon him.* This is the truth of the consciousness of the history of effects. The historically experienced consciousness is that which gives up the phantom of perfect enlightenment, and precisely through this it is open to the experience of history. Its way of functioning we have described as the fusion of the comprehension-horizons, fusion which mediates between the text and the interpreter.”<sup>3</sup>

Jauss also summarizes: “The naive access to an archaic text – in this respect I agree with H. G. Gadamer – *nolens volens* ends in the illusion of directness. The reader’s later horizon in the act of understanding *ab ovo* surpasses the further horizon of the text. In order to make visible its strangeness and temporal distance, one must consciously involve the experiences of the present, and in order that – and in this respect my view probably differs from Gadamer’s – *the spontaneous fusion of horizons* might be contrasted to a *deliberate fusion of horizon*.”<sup>4</sup>

Anticipating the understanding of pain by means of the hermeneutics of music, we start our investigations within the semantic confines of the fusion of horizons, and we undertake – over-determining

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 373.

<sup>2</sup> In the German original of this notion is *wirkungsgeschichtliche Bewußtsein*. The English translation of *Truth and Method* rendered it as “historically effected consciousness”, a quite unfortunate choice. (Translator’s note)

<sup>3</sup> Gadamer, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

<sup>4</sup> Jauss, *op. cit.*, pp. 388–389.

strangeness into otherness – the application of Jauss’ reflective approach only *within* of the horizon of the stages we have already been through.

Gadamer himself thinks of understanding not as the action of subjectivity, but rather as involvement in the happening of a tradition, “in which there is a ceaseless mediation between past and present”. (...) “It is enough to say that we understand otherwise when we understand at all”<sup>1</sup> – he adds.

Hence derives his definition of the true place of hermeneutics between horizons: “The polarity of familiarity and strangeness, on which the task of hermeneutics is based, indeed exists, but one must not interpret this – as Schleiermacher did – psychologically, as the span hidden in the secret of individuality, but it must really be perceived hermeneutically, that is one must look at that which is said, at language, on which tradition speaks to us and at that which it says to us. Here there is a tension. A placement between strangeness and familiarity exists between the historically intended, distanced objectivity of the heritage and our belongingness to a tradition. *In this ‘between’ is the true place of hermeneutics.*”<sup>2</sup>

The Gadamerian approach to music is made difficult by the German hermeneutist’s view regarding language as a universal medium. “Language – as he defines it – is the universal medium in which understanding itself occurs. The mode of realization of understanding is interpretation.”<sup>3</sup> But the metaphorical meaning of the musical language cannot play a direct interpretative role in the analysis. As neither can the concretizing language of painting have such a role. For both are undetermined languages the first focusing on objectivism, the second on conceptualization. The first mediates in its continuous course, but only as an imaginary language whose grammatical syntactical rules function perfectly, but whose vocabulary has been lost in the turmoil of history.<sup>4</sup> The second represents in its formal immediacy, but it does not communicate, it only urges to communication, more precisely to dialogue.

Finally, we could agree on the reciprocity of these two focuses. For both yearn for otherness, more precisely for each other. Music longs

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<sup>1</sup> Gadamer, *op. cit.*, pp. 207, 211.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 210.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 272.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Roman Jakobson, *Zenetudomány és nyelvészet* (Musicology and Linguistics), in: Roman Jakobson, *Hang – jel – vers* (Sound – Sign – Poem), Budapest, Gondolat, 1969, pp. 383–386.

for plasticity in its desire for the picturesque, painting for expressivity bewitched by the yearning for musicality. From this mutual longing we may construct the linguistic means required by the Gadamerian analysis of the dialogues which aim at understanding.

And this instrument is the rhetorical charm of possible comparisons, fusions. Less poetically speaking, the language of that special generalization which has been elaborated by the system of metaphors, comparisons, metamorphoses, epithets or personification. (Of course, this enumeration of further poetical devices might be continued.) In short, our universal medium is born from the system of music-rhetorical devices, which from the perspective of musical analysis fill with a sufficient degree of comprehension the dialogical sphere in which the musical possibilities of understanding can be realized.

### **Pain as a concomitant sentiment of aesthetic values**

Pain, as an aesthetic sentiment, concomitant to values, usually accompanies the categories of the heroic and tragic; and it is especially characterized in the field by the mediating-organizing middle function, which generally originates from the dynamics, relative independence, direction and the relativity of the direct-indirect stages of sentiments. Of course, besides the value categories of the strictly speaking dying hero, or the hero's death, and the tragic, especially the tragedy of the untimely novelty, as well as the tragically dying old, the reactions of pain make sensuous several intercategory forms within the values of *beautiful-ugly*, *sublime-mean*, *grotesque-absurd*. Thus we often encounter – first of all in the alternation of the 'befores' and 'afters' – the presentiment of future suffering, the premonition of the fear of misery, the instinctive waiting, readiness for pain...

### **The musical paradigm of the finished**

Our paradigm is about such an intermediate state. The pain of the 'it is finished', during the alternating time intervals, accompanies the repeated occurrences of this emotional state in the fusing horizons of the serial musical reflections. We have chosen three moments from among them. The first is the memorable passage of J. S. Bach's *St. John Passion* reproducing Christ's last sorrowful words – *es ist vollbracht*. The second, which passes the first on from the age of the Baroque to that of Classicism, is the breathtakingly beautiful *Andante doloroso* of Beethoven's *Piano Sonata No. 31. in A-flat major, Op. 110*, to which the Song of Thanksgiving corresponds also from among his last works, the



third movement of the *String Quartet Op. 132*. And, as the third, we are going to recall Tchaikovsky's romantic echo from the final movement of his sixth and last symphony, the *Symphony Pathétique*.

In all three the intercategorical reflections place us into states of our emotionally experienced existence such as the forms of *sorrow*, *loss*, *trials* sometimes heightened to the extent of paroxysm. In the aesthetic approach of these compositions we find the numerous versions of fear, anxiety, fright, and in these always resounds the Aristotelian memento of *fear and pity*. About the changes of horizons taking place in the case of this latter Gadamer wrote: "Aristotle tells us that the presentation of the tragic action always has a specific effect on the spectator. The presentation makes an effect by means of the *eleos* and *phobos*. These feelings are traditionally translated as Mitleid [pity] and Furcht [fear], and this sounds too subjective. What Aristotle spoke of was not pity at all, and even less the attitude towards pity, which changed over the centuries. And, at the same time, one must not interpret fear simply as a state of mind. These are much rather external powers [Widerfahrnisse] which possess and captivate us. The *eleos* is the lament overcoming us when we see that which we call lamentable. Thus are we overcome by lament for example beholding Oedipus' fate (Aristotle has always this example before his eyes). The German word 'Jammer' [lament] fits here, because it does not refer only to the inner state, but also to its expression (the 'lamentation'). Similarly, the *phobos* is not only a state of mind, but – as Aristotle says – shivers, such which makes our blood run cold, it makes us shudder. When Aristotle, while characterizing tragedy, speaks about the *phobos*, in a peculiar way, related to the *elos*, then the *phobos* refers to the shudder of anxiety, which we feel because of the person who is heading for disaster before our very eyes, and we are worried about him. Lament and anxiety are the modes of ecstasy, of being-beside-ourselves, which attest the captivating power of the event happening before us."<sup>1</sup>

We shall try to make palpable the musical experience of our examples by highlighting and understanding the rhetorical analogies that can be found in and between them. Adrian Marino's thoughts regarding the critical understanding of the literary work, *mutatis mutandis*, are relevant also in the reception of the semantic content of our musical subject. As he wrote, "However, we can take as a starting point the definition of understanding as a modality of meeting and interiorizing the

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<sup>1</sup> Gadamer, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

literary work and some kind of complicity with it to the limit of complete assimilation and coincidence. The psychological process has the same character as participation, consent, *Mitgefühl*, spiritual fusion, which helps the critic to identify himself with the sense of the work, with all its significations and values. To understand the work means to transpose yourself to its universe. To decipher and assimilate its intentions. To discover its structural system, its way of existence. But, in order to participate in and descend to the intrinsic horizon of the work, the critic must abandon himself to it and to embrace it; to transport himself into its intimate core. He must give evidence of maximal consonance and receptivity through a real interpenetration and 'sympathy'. That this supple capacity is a rare privilege, a great vocation, almost a 'gift' cannot be sufficiently underlined."<sup>1</sup>

### **First stage: J. S. Bach**

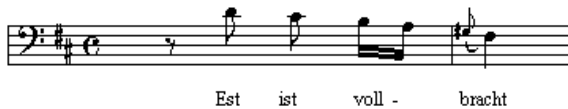
The text of the passage from Bach's *St. John Passion* is one of the most important thoughts of the Little Hours of the office. Each of the *Little Hours* has a moral value of its own in the Schillerian sense of the word. The *Prime* (6 a.m.), the *Terce* (9 a.m.), the *Sext* (the noon hour) and the *None* (the early afternoon hour) in spite of their similarity have their particular devotional charm. The *Prime* asking for blessing, the *Terce* praying to the Holy Spirit, the *Sext* and the *Consummatum est* (It is finished, John, 19:30) reflecting the sorrow and weariness of the crucified Christ, the *None* carrying the mystery of death and resurrection become separately in their relative independence what they ought to be: the prayers of the cross-sections shining at the crucial points of the liturgy of hours. "While the *Laudes* is the praise sung by the entire creation at the dawn of a new day of this same created world, in the *Prime* the labouring man and the labouring community sanctify the work day. He asks for God's blessing upon all his thoughts, words and deeds on that day, he reminds himself with the psalm of the Law of the measure of this labour, and prays for strength to observe the law. The role of the *other little hours* is first of all to make the man aware of God's presence amid his activity imprinting on our mind again and again that 'Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it'. Whatever we do, we must do it to the honour of God, and this can be accomplished only if

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<sup>1</sup> Adrian Marino, *Bevezetés az irodalomkritikába* (Introduction to Literary Criticism), Bucharest, *Kriterion*, 1979, p. 297. (The translation was made from the original Romanian edition: Adrian Marino, *Introducere în critica literară*, Bucharest, Editura Tineretului, 1968, p. 313.)

we sometimes stop and consecrate to him that what we are doing. Besides this the *Terce* asks for the stimulus, energy of the Holy Spirit and the disposition of love upon all our deeds. The *Sext* unites the man, who is toiling under the burdens of the day, almost succumbing to exhaustion, worries and the physical and intellectual heat, who is tempted by anger and grumbling, with the Crucified. In the *None*, at the moment of the “It is fulfilled”, when Christ died on the cross, we raise our eyes to the fulfilment and the fulfiller of the day and life so that by burying all our tasks and our entire selves in his death we might participate in his resurrection.”<sup>1</sup>

The passage we have been speaking of is conveyed by the Bachian motif in Christ’s words



This motif is a paradigm for the deep, intimate understanding of the suffering of Christ. However, it highlights firstly the biblical historical fact according to which Christ endured and offered his suffering in his mission of salvation by reciting aloud psalms. Secondly, it underlines that the psalms have already been performed by singing since the remotest times. We can read in the *Epistle of James* “Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.”<sup>2</sup> And in the *Acts* it reads: “And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.”<sup>3</sup> Both these sources are regarded by Benjámin Rajeczky as the ancient forms of psalmody.<sup>4</sup> In this form the personal and collective manifestation of the song

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<sup>1</sup> J. Török – B. Barsi – L. Dobszay, *Katolikus liturgika, III. A zsolozsma* (Catholic Liturgics, III. The Liturgy of Hours), Budapest, Department of Church History of the Ferenc Liszt Music Academy and the Hungarian Church Music Society, 1999, p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> *Epistle of James*, 5:13, in: The Bible, King James version, <http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext05/bib5910h.htm>

<sup>3</sup> *Acts*, 16:25, in: The Bible, King James version, <http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext05/bib4410h.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Rajeczky, *Mi a gregorián?* (What is the Gregorian?) Budapest, Zeneműkiadó, 1981, p. 16.

constitutes a primeval syncretical unity. And if it is so, then it can be hoped that this unity has been preserved to these days.

The representation of pain related to intonation and/or declamation is very expressively formulated by Anton Pann in the metaphor ‘plânsocuvântare’<sup>1</sup> (weep-talk). Enescu’s observation, that the peasant if suffering does not speak but moans in his pain, is also a historical data of the Romanian aesthetic of music.<sup>2</sup>

The intonation of this in Bach’s music, as the example illustrates it, is the descending series of metonymically coordinated notes. Schweitzer counts a tune structured in this way among the pain-motifs. He characterizes them thus: “Bach knows two modalities for expressing pain. For rendering noble complaint he uses a series of paired notes. And he represents torturing pain by a chromatic motif consisting of five or six notes.”<sup>3</sup>

The Baroque musical rhetoric mentions such descending melodies among the figures of the *passus duriusculus*. In our opinion the expression *passus duriusculus* does not only mean a “slightly harder step”,<sup>4</sup> but, beyond the technical indications, the expression of *pain* too.<sup>5</sup> In the *Crucifixus* of Bach’s Mass in B-minor the musical pattern of the passacaglia-theme depicts the pain-metaphor of the *passus duriusculus* like picture-writing:

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted by: George Breazul, in: *Pagini din istoria muzicii românești, I.* (Pages from the History of Romanian Music, I), Bucharest, Editura Muzicală, 1966, p. 274.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ștefan Niculescu, George Enescu despre principiile sale de creație (George Enescu on His Creative Principles), in: Ștefan Niculescu, *Reflecții despre muzică* (Musical Reflections), Bucharest, Editura Muzicală, 1980, p. 160.

<sup>3</sup> See *Szó és hang viszonya Bachnál* (The Relationship between Word and Sound in Bach’s Work). Excerpt from Schweitzer’s Bach-monograph. In: Albert Schweitzer, *Életem és gondolataim* (My Life and My Thoughts), Budapest, Gondolat, 1974, p. 462.

<sup>4</sup> R-Br. Lexikon

<sup>5</sup> From the numerous meanings of the attribute *durus* we mention: hard, cold, depressing, heavy, rough.



The ascending octave step is followed by a chromatically descending scale till the keynote and from there on it is repeated in every second measure, for fourteen times altogether. This is the symbolical musical representation of the 14 Stations of the Cross, which begin when the cross is lifted, then in continuation it is slowly dragged, until Christ collapses under the unbearable burden, afterwards resuming his road to the Golgotha...

The motif of the *es ist vollbracht*, as a pain-episteme gives birth to the maybe most beautiful melody of the *St. John Passion*, the song of the Sorrowful Mother, the *doloroso* alto aria, which has been considered by music history one of the most wonderful pieces of the genre. The aria itself is in fact a duo, in the union of the two viola d'amores and the lute, which accompany the song like a canon. The pain of the Mater Dolorosa embedded in a polyphonic structure resounds in the musical memory of Christ's last word preserved as a *cantus firmus*, and, recalling it over and over again, makes us all participate both in the irreversible understanding of the "it is finished" and the compassion felt for it. This compassion is not cathartic, however, but anagogic, elevatingly purifying. Let us quote Dante's hermeneutical explanation of the anagogic sense related to the allegorical content of his masterpiece, the *Divine Comedy*: "For the elucidation, therefore, of what we have to say, it must be understood that the meaning of this work is not of one kind only; rather the work may be described as 'polysemous', that is, having several meanings; for the first meaning is that which is conveyed by the letter, and the next is that which is conveyed by what the letter signifies; the former of which is called literal, while the latter is called allegorical, or mystical [or moral, or anagogical]. And for the better illustration of this method of exposition we may apply it to the following verses: 'When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language; Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion'. For if we consider the letter alone, the thing signified to us is the going out of the children of

Israel from Egypt in the time of Moses; if the allegory, our redemption through Christ is signified; if the moral sense, the conversion of the soul from the sorrow and misery of sin to a state of grace is signified; if the anagogical, the passing of the sanctified soul from the bondage of the corruption of this world to the liberty of everlasting glory is signified. And although these mystical meanings are called by various names, they may one and all in a general sense be termed allegorical, inasmuch as they are different (*diversi*) from the literal or historical; for the word ‘allegory’ is so called from the Greek *alleon*, which in Latin is *alienum* (strange) or *diversum* (different).”<sup>1</sup>

Placing our investigative thoughts into Dante’s horizon we discover the first concentrations of the pain-experience present in the *St. John Passion* in the horizon of the passion-experiences of the age,<sup>2</sup> which – as Gadamer would say – encompass everything that is visible from the biblical pedestal of pain in the Baroque milieu.

### **The second horizon**

Now we are going to change the horizon of our analyses. Opening a dialogue with the classical music we shall try to find out what role played the musical memory of the pain-experience pearled from the spiritual existence of the Baroque world in the spirit of the classical age.

For such an analysis Beethoven’s *Piano Sonata in A flat major, Op. 110*, which quotes the mentioned Bach-motif, seems a most suitable object. By way of introduction: there are surprisingly few references to the occurrence of this quotation in this sonata. Thus Romain Rolland did not comment on the presence of Bach’s *es ist vollbracht*-motif in the Beethoven sonata, though in his analyses he connected the still, simple and mysterious occurrence of pain in the structure of the work to the

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<sup>1</sup> Dante, Tizenharmadik levél (Thirteenth Letter), in: Dante, *Összes művei* (Complete Works), Budapest, Magyar Helikon, 1962, pp. 508–509.

English translation from: Dante, Epistle to Cangrande, in: *Testo critico della Società Dantesca Italiana*, edited by Ermenegildo Pistelli, Florence: Società Dantesca Italiana, 1960. Translated by Paget Toynbee. <http://etcweb.princeton.edu/dante/pdp/>

<sup>2</sup> Cf. István Angi, Csúcspontok esztétikuma Bach passióiban (The Aesthetic of the Summits in Bach’s Passions), in: István Angi, *A zenei szépség modelljei* (The Models of the Musical Beauty), Kolozsvár, Polis, 2003, pp. 93–117.

figure of Jesus, and compared the fugue inserted into swelling pain-motif to the redemptive apparition of Christ before his disciples in Emmaus.<sup>1</sup>

Bence Szabolcsi spoke about the dramatic presence of the pain-experience only in general in his monograph and did not connect it to the evocation of the mentioned musical episteme.<sup>2</sup> Although Alšvang analyzed in detail the central part of the sonata and in it the affective content of the *Arioso dolente*, we cannot find in his work the smallest reference to the *St. John Passion*.<sup>3</sup>

I came upon a concrete reference only in Marianne Pándi's writing. She wrote: "The concluding movement of the sonata is a very complex form, introduced by an *Adagio ma non troppo* section broken by repeated tempo changes. Its musical material is freely shaped: now it takes the form of a harmonized rhythmical declamation, then it is dissolved into an entirely free cry of pain, afterwards, in the longer *Arioso dolente* section of 12/16 meter the agonizing melody of complaint, which has already been immortalized by Bach in the *St. John Passion* (the "Es ist vollbracht" alto aria), resounds fitted into a regular rhythm. This passage recurs between the two sections of the *Fugue*, bridging the contrapuntal elaboration made by the original and inverted form of the fugue theme. The meter of the fugue is 6/8, its theme is formed from three, gradually ascending fourth intervals and a short conclusion. This pattern is used by Beethoven in a form contracted-diminished in the code of the movement as the counterpoint of the original theme."<sup>4</sup>

Here the motif appears in the form of an instrumental recitative, its pattering metre is the metaphor of falling tears.

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<sup>1</sup> Romain Rolland, *Marile epoci createoare, Cântecul învierii* (The Great Creative Epochs, The Song of Resurrection), Bucharest, Editura Muzicală, 196, pp. 331–342.

<sup>2</sup> Bence Szabolcsi, *Beethoven. Művész és műalkotás. Két korszak határán* (Beethoven. Artist and Artistic Creation. On the Border of Two Ages), Budapest, Zeneműkiadó, 1976, pp. 349–351.

<sup>3</sup> A. Alšvang, *Beethoven*, Bucharest, Editura Muzicală, 1961, pp. 303–305.

<sup>4</sup> Marianne Pándi, *Hangversenykalauz IV. Zongoraművek* (Concert Guide IV. Piano Works), Budapest, Zeneműkiadó, 1980, pp. 157–158.

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Its metonymic beginning with the succession of identical sounds does not change into the evocation of Jesus' last words, but it quotes immediately Bach's arioso in its instrumental version sounded by the viola d'amore.



(Bach)



(Beethoven)

The montage technique with an alternative construction, the alternation of the pain-motif and the fugue moves the listener to the cathartic participation in the pain. The three-part fugue with its pregnant theme, which appears inverted for the second time in its alternating existence,



gives the listener the liberating experience of regained strength: it elevates us from the valley of sorrows to sky, echoing its eternal motto, *per aspera ad astra*. Since, though the sound of pain is uplifting here as well, nevertheless its sublimity does not elevate us to the sky, but above the vicissitudes of this world. Because of this the algorithm of *preparation – tension – resolution* here is not accompanied by the experience of anagogical purification, but evokes the antique catharsis of fear and compassion. And this is natural, for, if we imagine Beethoven's figure and work situated in his own tradition, then situatedness – paraphrasing Gadamer – would not be an objectifying approach, but *ab ovo* his own, a model, the recognition of himself in it. Truly, the surpassing of the Beethovenian pain experience becomes comprehension for us too first of all in Beethoven's monologue of *his otherness*. In the emotional content of the sonata written in 1821 emerges the tragic message of the *Heiligenstadt Will* written 20 years before, speaking about the greatest loss a composer may possibly suffer, the irretrievable loss of his hearing and through this his self-exclusion from his world. Nevertheless, this message also contains the acceptance of the tragic fate: "But what a humiliation for me when someone standing next to me heard a flute in the distance and I heard nothing, or someone standing next to me heard a shepherd singing and again I heard nothing."<sup>1</sup> Such incidents drove me almost to despair; a little more of that and I would have ended my life – it was only my art that held me back. Ah, it seemed to me impossible to leave the world until I had brought forth all that I felt was within me. So I endured this wretched existence – truly wretched for so susceptible a body, which can be thrown by a sudden change from the best condition to the very worst. – Patience, they say, is what I must now choose for my guide, and I have done so – I hope my determination will remain firm to endure until it pleases the inexorable Parcae to break the

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<sup>1</sup> Roman Roland's note: "I would venture an observation related to this sorrowful complaint. It is well known that at the end of the second movement of the *Pastoral Symphony* the orchestra imitates the song of the nightingale, the cuckoo and the quail, but we can generally say that the symphony is completely interwoven by the song and rustle of nature. The aestheticians had much discussed whether it is right or wrong to experiment with such imitative music. It has not occurred to anyone that Beethoven imitated nothing, because he heard nothing, he recreated in his soul a world which had died for him. This is why the song of the birds is so touching. He had only one way to hear these sounds again: he made the birds sing *in himself*." In: Romain Roland, *Beethoven*, Budapest, Bibliotheca, 1958, pp. 134–135.

thread. Perhaps I shall get better, perhaps not; I am ready. – Forced to become a philosopher already in my twenty-eighth year, – oh it is not easy, and for the artist much more difficult than for anyone else. – Divine One, thou seest my inmost soul thou knowest that therein dwells the love of mankind and the desire to do good. – Oh fellow men, when at some point you read this, consider then that you have done me an injustice; someone who has had misfortune man console himself to find a similar case to his, who despite all the limitations of Nature nevertheless did everything within his powers to become accepted among worthy artists and men. (...) So be it. – With joy I hasten towards death. – If it comes before I have had the chance to develop all my artistic capacities, it will still be coming too soon despite my harsh fate, and I should probably wish it later – yet even so I should be happy, for would it not free me from a state of endless suffering? – Come when thou wilt, I shall meet thee bravely.” (Heiligenstadt, October 6<sup>th</sup>, 1802)<sup>1</sup> The catharsis of this acceptance becomes stronger in the message of the *Piano Sonata Op. 110*. Beethoven was seriously ill in the meantime. First he complained of rheumatism (1820), then he developed jaundice (1821). But he continued to work during his illness too. After his recovery, in 1824–25 he wrote his *String Quartet in A minor* and in it his song of thanksgiving. The acceptance of his fate, the feeling of the recovery of his strength, the joy-sorrow felt over the continued creative work here is completed with the feeling of gratitude directed toward the transcendental. Marianne Pándi characterizes the mentioned movement of the string quartet in the following way: “Beethoven attached the following programme to the third movement: *The Song of Thanksgiving by a Convalescent to the Divinity, in the Lydian Mode*. The slow music, monumental in its simplicity, is the combination of false polyphony and the homophonic orchestration of chorale-like harmonization: the crotchet steps which open the theme follow one another with a semitone difference on the instruments of the string quartet in a descending order. The second section of the melody, which moves in second steps in semitones, is a chorale-like harmonization. We hear five melody lines of the thanksgiving song elaborated in this way, in different combinations (melody inversion and inverted entrance), then a new material follows, an *Andante* in 3/8 metre, introduced by the long held trill of the first violin and marked by the following inscription: *With renewed force*. In

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Romain Roland, *op. cit.*, pp. 69–73. English translation from [http://w3.rz-berlin.mpg.de/cmp/beethoven\\_heiligenstadt.html](http://w3.rz-berlin.mpg.de/cmp/beethoven_heiligenstadt.html)

what follows the movement is built on the different forms of the two sections. When the Lydian thanksgiving song recurs for the first time, the two parts of the melody separate: the dynamic first section is intoned by the second violin, the viola and the violoncello join in forming an imitation compared to it, while the first violin plays only the chorale-like minims. After this the *Andante* returns with the more differentiated formulas of the shorter rhythms, then the thanksgiving song can be heard again. This time the composer tries to render it ‘*with the most intimate sentiment*’. The polyphonic elaboration of the chorale-melody in minims and the novelty of the initial small crochet steps give a new diversity. Since this slow movement is missing from the original drafts of the string quartet, it is possible that the ‘thanksgiving song for recovery’ was inspired by the illness which afflicted Beethoven in the meantime. After all, Beethoven had already planned a thanksgiving song in the manner of ecclesiastical music before, as it is revealed by his symphony drafts from 1818.”<sup>1</sup>

The change of horizon means at the same time the widening of the horizon. The initial understanding of pain was connected to Jesus’ suffering. The superhuman agony of the son of man – Jesus always called himself so –, which he had to experience and experienced in his redemptive mission to the last drop of the cup of sorrow, is rich in motifs in the musical hermeneutics of Bach’s passions. But in the later fusion of horizons it always receives new meanings. For example, Geiringer, in his analysis related to this subject, said this about the origin and present meaning of the message with respect to the structural changes of the *St. John Passion*: “The gentle chorale adaptation from the beginning of the *St. John Passion* has been replaced by the monumental choir, which reveals the basic idea of the passion captivately: the celestial power and the force opposed to the earthly suffering alike. Bach also eliminated the *Ach, windet euch nicht so gepaklete Seelen* (BWV 245c) aria and replaced it by one of the most outstanding pieces of the score, the arioso no. 31. and the aria which follows. In the accompaniment of the already mentioned arioso the smooth sounds of two viola d’amores and the lute help the composer to evoke the vision of heavenly bliss soaring from the pain of the body.”<sup>2</sup> Then he continued: “In accordance with the Gospel the Christ of the *St. John Passion* was characterized by majestic tranquillity and distance from the human sphere. The Gospel of Matthew,

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<sup>1</sup> Marianne Pándi, *Hangversenykalauz III. Kamaraművek* (Concert Guide IV. Chamber Music Works), Budapest, Zeneműkiadó, 1975, pp. 185–186.

<sup>2</sup> Geiringer, *Bach*, (154)

on the other hand, enabled Bach to express his fervent *Jesusminne*, his devoted love for Jesus. There is no unbridgeable chasm here between the human and the divine; the Son of God approaches man in his suffering, and all humankind suffers with him.”<sup>1</sup>

In contrast with Geiringer’s statements Péter Várnai considered that: “The most solemn sound is represented by the ‘It is finished’ alto aria, which is perhaps the most beautiful of all the solo pieces of the passion.”<sup>2</sup> Then he continued: “Opposite – but not in contrast! – to the world of Bach’s great works of sacred music, the *St. Matthew Passion*, the *Mass in B minor* and the cantatas, the *St. John Passion* is highlighted among other things by the fact that this composition represents rather the suffering man-Christ, than the unearthly, transcendental divine figure; this characteristics connects, spanning the ages, the *St. John Passion* to Beethoven’s *Missa Solemnis*, which shows Christ as a struggling hero.”<sup>3</sup>

To these alternating points of view was connected the style-mutation of the Beethovenian episteme of pain, the acceptance of a fate related to the suffering of the tragic hero, the fought struggle in the “being-in-fate”, and finally, through a peculiar reference back, a new orientation towards the transcendental in the church musical mood of the thanksgiving song.

### **The third horizon**

In our last stage we take a look into the world of Romanticism, and we continue our dialogue about pain with Tchaikovsky’s *Symphony «Pathétique»*, evoking again the Bach-motif. But in the spirit of the negation of negation here we encounter the former Baroque experience indirectly in the last movement, in the sense of the Beethovenian enriched, discontinued continuation.

The beginning of the symphony already evokes Beethoven. The first notes of the slow introductory movement of the ‘*Pathétique*’ *Piano Sonata in C minor*, op. 13 are echoed here. First with slow majesty, then with tumultuous drama here as well:

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>2</sup> Várnai Péter, *Oratóriumok könyve* (The Book of Oratorios), Budapest, Zeneműkiadó, 1972, p. 62.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.



(Beethoven)



(Tchaikovsky 1)



(Tchaikovsky 2)

The structure of the symphony is programmatic according to the composer. But he did not disclose the concrete content of this programme even to his friends. His letters and some contemporary records reveal, however, he evoked a memory of his youth, he had hidden in it the poem entitled *Requiem* written by his former friend, Apukhtin. Here are a few extracts from the relevant letter:

“You know I destroyed a symphony I had been composing and just partly orchestrated in the autumn.<sup>1</sup> And it was a good job too, for it had little that was any good – just an empty playing with sounds – without genuine inspiration. During my journey I had the idea for another symphony, this time with a programme, but with a programme that will be an enigma to all – let them guess; the symphony will be entitled *A Programme Symphony* (No. 6)...<sup>2</sup> The programme itself will be suffused with subjectivity, and not infrequently during my travels, while composing it in my head, I wept a great deal. Upon my return I sat down to write the sketches, and the work went so furiously and quickly that in less than four days the first movement was completely ready, and the remaining movements already clearly outlined in my head. The third movement is already half-done. The form of this symphony will have much that is new, and by the way, the finale will not be a noisy allegro, but on the contrary, a long drawn-out *adagio*.

26

Leaving today 11 Febr[uary]. On returning the first thing to compose is the ending, i.e. the march in G major on the theme... in a solemnly triumphant manner.

27

I positively consider this [new symphony] the best and, above all, the truest of all my doings. And I like it as I have liked none of my other compositions.

28

I can honestly say that never in my life have I been so pleased with myself, so proud, or felt so fortunate to have created something as good as this.

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<sup>1</sup> Here Tchaikovsky speaks about the thematic material of the *Symphony in E-flat major*, which he used for his *Piano Concerto No. 3* already in 1893, but which remained in draft and was finished after the composer's death by S. I. Taneev.

<sup>2</sup> Tchaikovsky acknowledged that he had rejected the thought to call *Symphony No. 6* a programme symphony. (“What is it a programme symphony, when I do not intend to give a programme!”) The variant “Tragic Symphony” suggested by his brother was not to Pyotr Ilyich's liking, he accepted the “Pathétique”, but he rejected it too in the last moment. It is interesting Rimsky-Korsakov's statement: “During the break, after the performance of the symphony (October 16, 1893) I asked him [Tchaikovsky] whether this composition had some kind of programme. He answered that it naturally had, but he did not wish to disclose it.”

I have just finished my last symphony, ... it is full of feelings which are close to the tone of the *Requiem*.<sup>1</sup> It seems to me that this symphony turned out well, but I fear that I might have repeated myself by beginning a composition, which in its spirit is close to the previous one.

30

The general mood of this piece [poem] can of course be transformed into music, and my symphony (especially the *Finale*) is quite impregnated with it. But we go into details, we find out that Apukhtin's poem on the whole, no matter how beautiful its metrical composition, does not correspond to the music, moreover, it is in contrast with its essence. There are for example such verses as: «I wasn't told in this moment: choose freely, – to live or not to live», «Since my childhood it was repeated to me every hour» and so on. This flow of words is full of pessimism regarding life, such questions: «Why was I born and why have I grown up» and so on. All this excellently expresses the feebleness of the human mind before the unanswerable questions of existence, but they are not the direct expressions of feelings, but purely mental processes, which can hardly be subordinated to music.»<sup>2</sup>

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The conclusions drawn from the footnotes are of special import. The musical metaphors of pain hyperbolize here the profound sorrow for the eternal loss of the anxiously guarded, the sorrow of death. In this emotional accumulation the paraphrase of the evoked Bach-motif participates only in the last moment:

... the continuation of the pre-pointillist melody falling into the depth, melody “passed on” in ever different parts, takes the more and more independent steps of the abandoned instrument towards descending sevenths, the intonation of which encompasses sob-like the melody line of the pain straying in a relay-movement. The rhetoric of previous ages was that of tears, here that of sobbing.

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<sup>1</sup> Poem written by A. N. Apukhtin (1841–1893), Tchaikovsky's schoolmate and close friend in their youth.

<sup>2</sup> P. I. Tchaikovsky, *O programmnoj muzike*, Moscow, Gosudarstvennoe muzikalnoe izdatelctvo, 1952, pp. 49–51. The English translation was made on the basis of István Fehér M.'s Hungarian translation with the exception of the letter-fragments 25, 26, 28, which are to be found in the following page: <http://www.tchaikovsky-research.net/en/Works/Symphonies/TH030/index.html#note01> (Translator's note)



Tchaikovsky had already prepared the beginning of the end with strict logic when composing the first movement. He resorted to giant metaphors for understanding the sorrow felt over *the unchangeable, the irreversible, the forever lost*. Based on the technique of techniques he presented to us the metaphors of metaphors in his music.

In his previous creative period, in opuses no. 30 to 40 the effect of the giant metaphors always redoubled the expected sentiments. They gave twice as much emotional satisfaction to the listener than he had expected. A characteristic example is the fulfilment of the giant metaphor spanning over the beginning and the finale of the *First Piano Concerto in B-flat minor*: the transition from the initial triumphant mood almost into an apotheosis in the finale by substituting the expected initial theme



with a more beautiful and majestic variant:

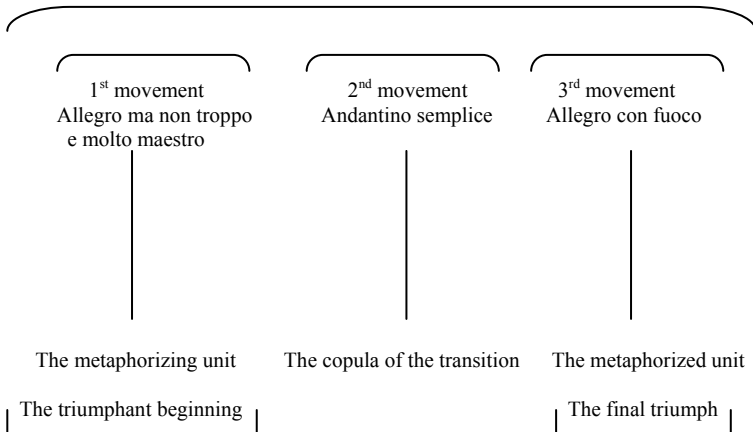




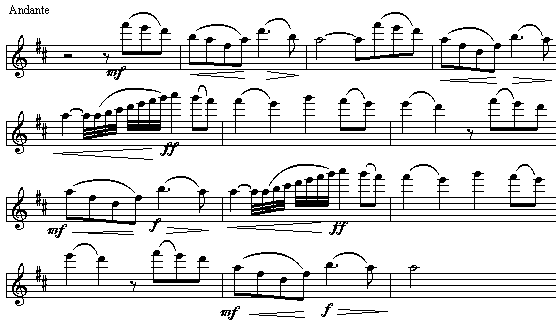
There, in the rhetoric of the piano concerto, the transition of the two melodies over the 2<sup>nd</sup> movement created a giant metaphor:

**Tchaikovsky, Piano Concerto in B-flat minor, op. 23**

**The giant metaphor of the fulfilment**



Here however, in the *Symphony Pathétique*, the giant metaphor becomes the metaphor of absence: it lacks the much expected return. The passionate initial theme of the first movement is followed by an extremely beautiful second theme full of nostalgia and unceasing longing for beauty:



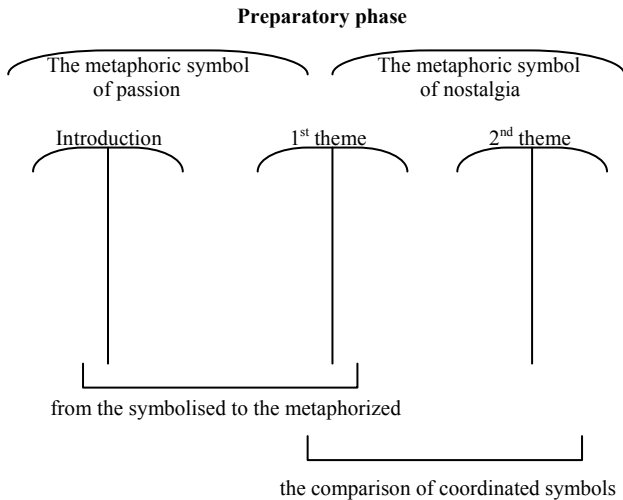
After the playful second and the tumultuous third movement the nostalgia-motif would have to reappear in the descending line of the metaphor. We could say, that the paraphrase of the *es ist vollbracht* prepares this reappearance. Nevertheless, the descending melody is not followed by the nostalgic passage of the first movement, instead the atmosphere of the *Lamento* is intensified gradually. Sigismund Toduța said describing the atmosphere of the *Pathétique-finale* during a course of composition that this closely resembles the infinite sorrow of the mourner who is sitting besides a newly covered grave and is crying...

The following two structural schemes present the substitution of the giant metaphor for the metaphor of absence. The difference in the emotional effect produced by these two is based on the hidden mechanism of expectation originating from usage. The public expects the feelings of joy expressed in the op. 29 piano concerto composed in 1874–75 to return after a similar motivic preparation in the finale of the *Symphony Pathétique*, composed in 1893, almost twenty years later. But instead they share the tragic experience of *eternal postponement*. The first scheme outlines the metaphoric potential energy of the initial movement, the second sums up the entire rhetoric of the transitions made in the metaphor of absence.

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**Tchaikovsky, Sixth Symphony (Pathétique), op. 74,  
Introduction and the exposition of the first part**

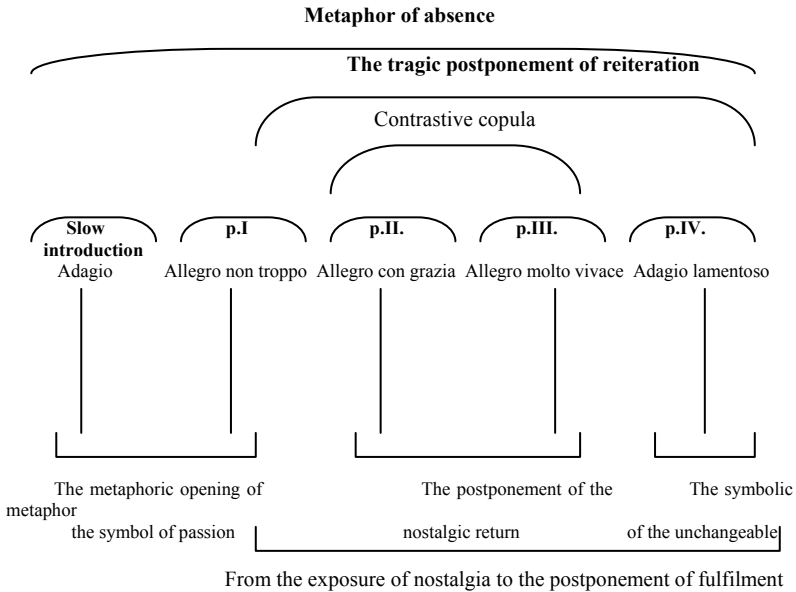
**The metaphor of the unfulfilled promise**



**Analogy:** between the Introduction + 1<sup>st</sup> theme

**Difference:** between passion ↔ nostalgia

Tchaikovsky, Sixth Symphony (Pathétique), op. 74



## Summary

1) In the spirit of Gadamer's view the triple mutation of the musical episteme of pain brought about the understanding of the *creation of horizon – change of horizon – fusion of horizon* in the dialogical playground, a continuous enrichment of the valuation-act. Because not the semantic content of the pain-concept grew richer, as such, but the similarities and dissimilarities of the valuations ensuing from the musical experiencing of the phenomenon.

Their similarity lies mainly in the quasi identical intensity of the pain-experience. In all the three cases our sympathy and compassion – according to our emotional affinity – manifested (could manifest) itself at the highest degree.

The differences in the experience and understanding have not originated from the object of pain. Since its is not the sacrifice of the cross, immeasurable in its silence, on the part of the Son of Man, not the almost superhuman deprivation from the most precious treasure, the joy

over the *created composition* on the part of Beethoven who lost his hearing and not the death-pain felt over *the unchangeable, the irreversible, the forever lost* on the part of Master Tchaikovsky foreboding his end is that which would reveal the world of differences during the inquiring dialogue. Because these are *ab ovo* incommensurable qualities. Their otherness, however, does not originate from their unfamiliarity, but from their horizons familiar to us, but having different centres. In the first the pain crying to the skies is of a transcendental character, in the second it is dramatically earthly in its self-tormenting resignation, while in the third the experience of being constrained to leave the earthly world causes pain. And in each case we are present in the different experiences of pain. Moreover, music as a performing art makes possible for us to partake in all three at the same time. For it is possible perform these compositions yesterday, today and tomorrow alike, and thus they (can) always become present. *Horribile dictu*, they can be listened to and interpreted. For example browsing in our own disk collection.

But the differences and similarities are not only perceivable, they can also be polarized, and even developed, increased. In the dialogue with the compositions during the inquiring dialogue our experiences depend on our concrete disposition too. And this is not directed only to the concrete everyday situation, but is also valid on the long run and even when applied to age. Our attitude towards the measure of pain is different in the morning, at noon or in the evening, and similarly on the long run, in our youth, maturity or old age. According to Goethe's famous saying the young man is a revolutionary and an atheist, the mature is a sceptic, the old, a mystic...

2) Taking into consideration the Jaussian nuance as well, the difference of listening to something different and listening differently may lead us from the fusion of horizons to reflect upon them. Only the syntagma of strangeness seems still «strange». For like the now gently charming, now menacingly frightening melopoeia of the antique *mousike*, music today and always surrounds-embraces its listeners, and either this or that way it vibrates together with the quiver of their soul. Of course, this joint vibration besides the complete awareness of being inside too makes possible, even requires the success of the reflective consciousness. For this reason it is true the hermeneutical fact that the true creations are always able to urge their interpreter partners to new dialogues.

3) "And with respect to determination of the meaning and the signification of a work – said Adrian Marino as a conclusion –, the role

of understanding is quite exceptional. Because the literary senses of the work is characterized by instability, concealment, as well as referentiality and contextuality, we need to become familiar with the work from the inside, in order that we may identify ourselves with its own living content, and in the course of its «realization» we may look deeper than the immediate level, towards the symbolic level.”<sup>1</sup>

As a conclusion, we quote Gadamer again, from the beginning of *Truth and Method*: “If a practical conclusion can be drawn from the investigations presented here, then it, by all means, does not urge us to unscientific ‘commitment’, but it calls us to the ‘scientific’ honesty to avow the commitment which influences any process of understanding.”<sup>2</sup>

Translated by Ágnes Korondi

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<sup>1</sup> Adrian Mrino, *op. cit.*, 303.

<sup>2</sup> Gadamer, *op. cit.*, p. 11.