

The Expressive Zone:

Frames, topics, attractors and expressive processes in 17th Century Hispanic Art Song

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1. In the beginning there was Rhetoric.

As with many semiotic concepts (and indeed the whole of life itself), this concept originates from the *topoi* concept of Aristotelian rhetoric. Rhetoric conceived of five different phases of discourse preparation: *inventio* (arriving at basic arguments), *dispositio* (how to distribute them into discourse), *elocutio* (choice of adequate words and rhetorical figures), *pronuntatio* (speech performance) and *memoria* (memorization).

Topoi belongs to the *inventio* section. It concerns itself with a system for obtaining arguments with a minimum of indispensable information. Orators understood memory as a conglomerate of small sites (*topoi*): the *topical network*. In each of them was found a question (who?, where?, when?, with the aid of?... etc.). By applying one of these questions to a specific subject, seminal information was obtained. Afterwards, this information was processed into complex mechanisms of rhetorical (non-logical) argumentation as the *exemplum* or the *entimema* or rhetorical syllogism. In such way very effective rhetorical arguments were obtained though of doubtful logical consistency.

Sometimes, during the *inventio* phase, orators employed pre-constructed or patent phrases, "ready-made" arguments, or rhetorical figures by means of which general ideas expand their argumentative power. In this way, a strong link between the *inventio* and *elocutio* phases was established¹ (see **figure 1**). This is also the reason why rhetoric practice confuse the method of obtaining arguments with its result: the same arguments were known as *common sites* called *topics*.² From antiquity, we have two meanings for topic: *topic-search*: strategic 'places' for searching ideas; and *topic-arguments*: a repertoire of general information accepted as unquestionable "truth" (cf. López Cano 2000, 73-81).

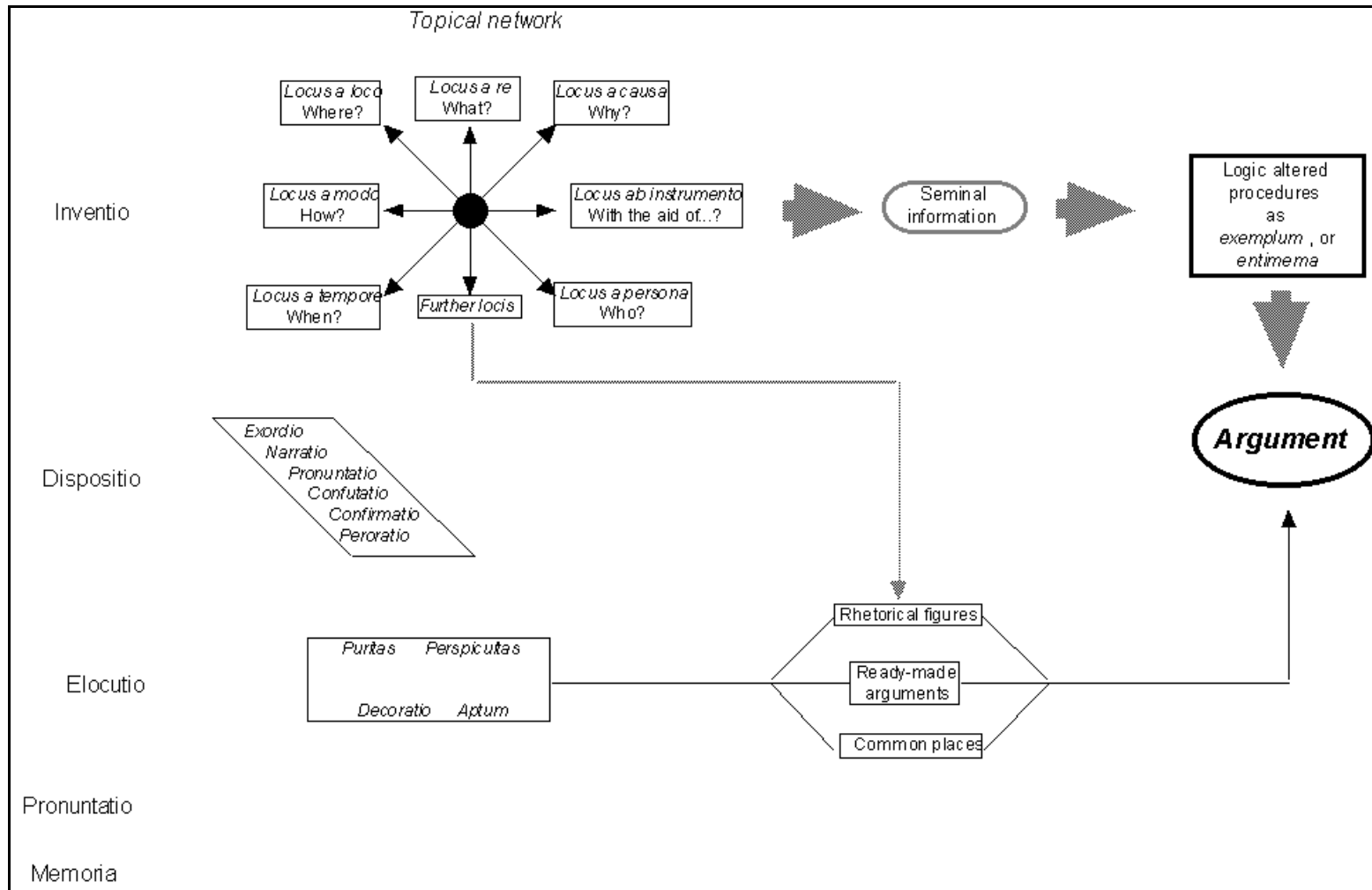


Figure 1. Topical network on ancient rhetoric

2. Topic on text semiotics and pragmatics.

Recently, textual semiotics and pragmatics have re-introduced the notion of topic for referring to the general or main subject of a text in relation to its levels of coherence. Umberto Eco (1979), in his theory of textual cooperation, defined topic as the abductive scheme proposed by the reader to discipline semiosis. It is the theme or thematic thread which we decide to follow during the reading process.³ To determine a topic, Eco revives the Aristotelian topic method, translating it to the realm of the receiver: "Topic can be formulated rudimentarily by means of a question: "Of whom are we speaking? The determination of a topic includes other more complex operations, activated by what Eco calls *topicalization*: a process by means of which we decide what textual properties will be actualised, and which others will be anaesthetised "in light of an hypothesis about the identity of textual *topics*" (1979: 124).

Within one and the same text we can find several levels and hierarchies of topics: sentence topics, discursive topics, narrative topics, topics of macroproposition of fable, and the *macrotopic*, the topical field which includes all (cf. Eco 1979, 123-131).

Eco's notion of topic is associated with the greimasian concept of *isotopy* (cf. Greimas 1970). For Greimas, isotopy is a level of sense produced by a series of semantic amalgams realised by virtue of the recognition of a topic (1979: 131). However, he distinguishes them, pointing out that while isotopy is a semantic phenomena, topic is a pragmatic resource.

In this way, the search of arguments of old rhetoric tradition has been transformed by textual semiotic studies to the search of the main theme of the narration. The *topic-search* becomes the *topicalization process*. And the *topic-argument* becomes the *topic-subject*.

3. The hidden past of musical topic history.

Musical topic concept was introduced by musical rhetorical theories from the Baroque. In the 18th century, it was designated as the pleonastic formula *loci-topici*. It was a stock of compositional strategies to produce musical ideas. The most developed *loci-topici* system was that of Johann Mattheson (*Der Volkommene Capellmeister*, Hamburgo, 1739). For Mattheson, when a composer is unable to receive natural inspiration, he may search for ideas in different *loci-topici* as the follows:⁴

- *Locus notationis* (the notational site): playing with notation; transforming note values, subject inversion, retrogradation, retrogradation of inversión, repetitions, imitations, etc.
- *Locus descriptionis* (the depiction site): the most important for Mattheson; it concerns itself with how to produce affects with music. It is very complex to be treated here.
- *Locus causae materialis* (the site of prime material): it considers the affective and symbolic potential of instruments, players or singers.
- *Locus causae finalis* (the site of the final objective): for which class of audience (public) are we composing?
- *Locus effectorum* (the site of the effect): for which place is the composition being written: a church, a chamber, a theatre, an open square?
- *Locus adjunctorum* o (adjunctive site): for musical representation of characters, it takes into account such qualities as their soul, body and destiny (*adjunta animi, corporis and fortunae*).
- *Locus exemplorum* (the model site): citing from works of others composers.
- *Locus testimoniorum* (the testimonial site): quote fragments from well-known melodies such as church hymns, *cantus firmi*, popular tunes, etc.

Mattheson's whole *loci* system includes fifteen topical dispositives (see figure 2).

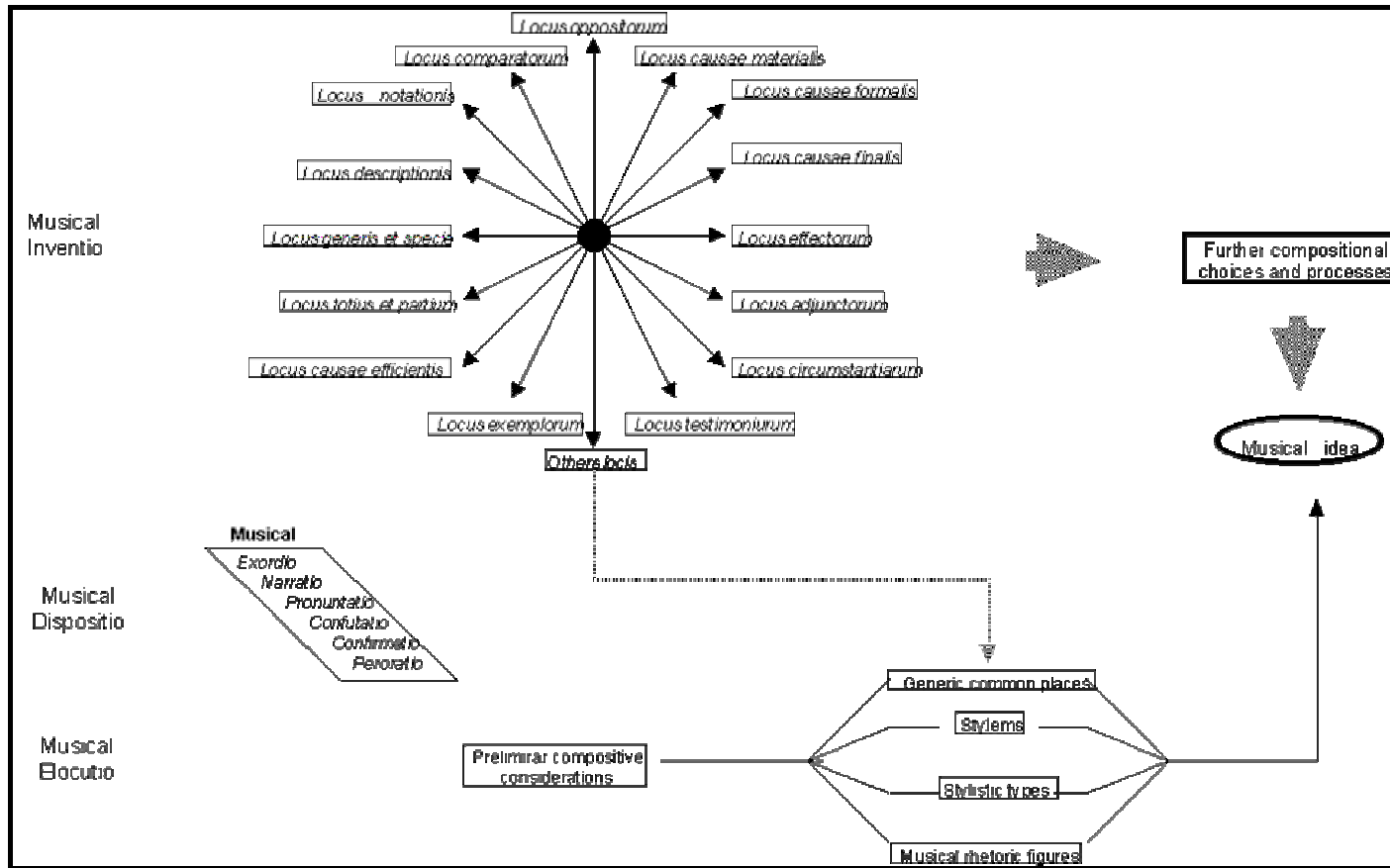


Figure 2. Topic network on musical rhetoric

We find an important application of the topic system in the field of text setting within vocal music. Athanasius Kircher's *Musurgia universalis* (1650)⁵ was one of the first works developed treating this kind of musical *inventio*. For the correct text setting, he proposes the following steps:⁶ 1) isolate the main theme or argument of the poem (*topicalization* or *topic-search* that produces a *macrotopic-subject*); 2) identification of the dominant effect (most often these are presented as *topic-arguments* or partial *topics-subject* of the main *macrotopic-subject*), and 3) choose key, meter, rhythm and musical rhetorical figures for the correct expression of passion and text contents: the *hipotiposis* musical rhetoric figures. One question: Are these musical artifices always *topic-arguments* or, at this moment must we begin to speak about one *topic-sign*? Another consideration: Do Kircher's Steps One and Two belong to the *inventio* section, Step Three to *elocutio*? Again, topic system links both phases in preparing discourse.

Let's take an example. It comes from Johann David Heinichen's *Der General-Bass in der Composition* (1728).⁷ It is cited in the most recent book by Prof. Raymond Monelle, *The Musical Sense* (2000). This work, undoubtedly, includes the most accurate and comprehensive musical topic theory developed to date. (Monelle 2000, 20-1).

Following is my reconstruction of Heinichen's topical process for composing an *Italian style aria* from a given text:

*Non lo dirò col labro,
Che tanto ardir no há.
Forse con le faville dell'avide pupille
Per dirche gia tutt'ardo,
Lo sguardo
Parlerá*

1. *Inventio* phase.

1.1. The *topicalization process* where *topics-search* find helpful information on key words such as "faville, pupille, l'ardore, lo sguardo".

1.2. Identification of *macrotopic-subject*: "fire of love"

2. Link *Inventio* -*Elocutio* phase

2.1. A new *Topicalization process* where new *topics-search*, based on composer's encyclopaedic competence, seeks "ready made" musical expressions useful for representing *fire*.

2.2. Finding musical *topic-signs* for fire in musical *types* that, as Monelle remarks, were already active from 16th century madrigalistic tradition. These are "rushing violin figures, a fanfare-like bass part, a rapid triple-time" etc. (p. 20).

3. *Elocutio* phase (separate from topical work).

The composer develops original *tokens* of common *types* regarding the context: *piano* dynamic marks, unison of flutes and violins, special variants on the most common patterns of rushing and fanfare, etc. (p. 21) (see **figure 3**).

Non lo diró col labro de Johann David Heinichen

Flauti unis con 1. violin sempre piano

Figure 3. Setting of *Non lo dire col labro* by Heinichen after Monelle (2000).

4. Topic's renaissance.

Two centuries after, Leonard Ratner reintroduces the musical topic concept in his *Classic Music: Expression, Form and Style* (1980). For Ratner, topics are "subjects of musical discourse". They appear as a form of thesaurus of *characteristic figures* developed by music contact with "worship, poetry, drama, entertainment, dance, ceremony, the military, the hunt, and the life of lower classes". "Topics appear as fully worked-out pieces i.e. *types*; or as figures and progressions within a piece, i.e., *styles*" (p. 9).

Ratner's topic definition contains both, *topic-subject* and *topic-sign* distinctions. He does not consider *topic-search* nor *topic-argument*.⁸ However, in analytical practice, the signical functions of topics were prioritised. In such way, David Lidov (1994, x), stresses Ratner topic's potential for a work as the "basis for musical allusion". And Eero Tarasti (1994, 26) considers topics as typified structures of communication at the level of the surface narrative program. Tarasti's example of use of topics on Mozart's Fantasy in C minor, shows the tendency of seeing them as musical figures, but not as processes (see **figure 4**).

Tópicos en la *Fantasia en Do menor K. 936* de W. A. Mozart

The image displays a musical score for the piece 'Tópicos en la Fantasia en Do menor K. 936' by W. A. Mozart. The score is written for piano and includes several annotations and markings:

- Tempo and Meter:** The piece is marked **Adagio** with a tempo of $\text{♩} = 76$ and is in common time (C).
- Stylistic Annotations:** Brackets above the score identify different sections: **Sturm und Drang** (covering the first two measures), **French Overture** (covering the next two measures), **Empfindsamkeit** (covering the next two measures), **Galant** (covering the next two measures), and **Learned Style** (covering the final two measures).
- Performance Markings:** The score includes dynamic markings such as **f** (forte) and **p** (piano), and articulation instructions like **sempre legato** and **red.** (ritardando).
- Technical Features:** The score contains several triplet markings (indicated by a '3' in a bracket) and a **ped.** (pedal) marking in the bass line.
- Structural Elements:** The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 1-10, and the second system covers measures 11-20. The **Learned Style** annotation spans across both systems.

Figure 4. Topics on K. 639 after Tarasti (1994)

The principal classic music topics proposed by Ratner are the following (see figure 5).⁹

<p>1. Tipos Normalmente regulan piezas enteras. son danzas como:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. minueto y tipos relacionados 1.2. polonesa 1.3. bourré 1.4. contradanza 1.5. gavota 1.6. giga 1.7. siciliano 1.8. marcha <p>2. Estilos Se presentan normalmente como figuras y progresiones que forman parte de una pieza</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1. militar, caza 2.2. estilo cantabile 2.3. estilo brillante 2.4. Obertura francesa 2.5. <i>museffe</i>, pastoral 2.6. música turca 2.7. <i>Sturm und Drang</i> 2.8. sensible, <i>Empfindsamkeit</i> 2.9. estricto, estilo culto 2.10. estilo de fantasía <p>3. Descriptivismo, <i>word painting</i></p>

Figure 5. Musical topics for classical music alter Ratner (1980, 9-29)

5. Musical topic and musical semiotics.

In a natural way, *topic-sign* notion was incorporated into the musical semiotics research program. In an special way on musical semiotics studies of 18th and 19th century music.¹⁰ Let us examine some definitions of the concept.

Kofi Agawu's *Playing with signs*, (1990) defines topic in terms of a saussurean sign: topic is a *signifier* correlated with a *signified*. The signifier is a certain disposition of musical dimension of melody, harmony, metre, rhythm, and the like; the signified is a "conventional stylistic unit (fanfare, *Sturm und*

Drang, etc.), often, but not always referential in quality".¹¹ Agawu identifies these topics among other possibles (see figure 6.).

1. <i>alla breve</i>	15. <i>Mannheim rocket</i>
2. <i>alla zoppa</i>	16. <i>marcha</i>
3. <i>amoroso</i>	17. <i>minuet</i>
4. <i>aria</i>	18. <i>musette</i>
5. <i>bourrée</i>	19. <i>ombra</i>
6. <i>estilo brillante</i>	20. <i>opera buffa</i>
7. <i>cadenza</i>	21. <i>pastoral</i>
8. <i>empfindsamkeit</i>	22. <i>recitativo</i>
9. <i>fanfarria</i>	23. <i>sarabanda</i>
10. <i>fantasía</i>	24. <i>motivo de suspiro</i>
11. <i>Obertura francesa</i>	25. <i>estilo cantabile</i>
12. <i>gavota</i>	26. <i>Sturm und Drang</i>
13. <i>estilo de caza</i>	27. <i>música turca</i>
14. <i>estilo estricto (learned style)</i>	

Figure 6. Tópicos para la música clásica según Agawu (1990, 30)

Agawu's book makes only one mention of old rhetorical notions of musical *topic-subject*. He remarks that although a work can theoretically sustain any number of topics, there are "practical or stylistic constraints on the number of topics that a work can meaningfully sustain": as a "subject to be discussed", each topic needs its own time to develop its signical functioning.¹²

In his important work on the emotional meaning on Beethoven's late style, Robert Hatten (*Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, 1994) describes musical topics as "broad expressive states" defined by oppositional relations (p. 67). The articulation and interactions of topics within musical works allow for the production of different expressive processes designated as *expressive genres*.¹³ For Hatten, a topic is a musical sign fulfilling two conditions: 1) it must produce a "complex musical correlation" and 2) this must be originated in a kind of music (fanfare, march, various dances, learned style, etc.). Against Agawu's semiotic timidity, Hatten claims: "the topic may acquire expressive correlations in the Classical Style, and they may be further interpreted expressively" (Hatten 1994: 294-5). His inventory of topics tries to arrange them in an hierarchical way

not developed by previous topics theories. Notice that Hatten includes expressive elements originally not considered as proper topics by Ratner (see **figure 7**).

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|--|
| <p>1. Códigos de sentimientos y pasiones vinculados con:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. paz, movimiento, tempo 1.2. intervalos 1.3. motivos empleados para simbolizar afectos <p>2. Estilos basados en:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1. lugar/ocasión/situación <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1.1. eclesiástico/estilo litúrgico 2.1.2. estilo de cámara (galanterie) 2.1.3. Teatral/estilo operístico (relativo al estilo camerístico) 2.2. grado de dignidad <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.2.1. estilo alto 2.2.2. estilo medio 2.2.3. estilo bajo <p>3. Tópicos, ya sean:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1. Tipos musicales (en piezas enteras) como danzas (minueto, contradanza, etc.) en estilos alto, medio o bajo o 3.2. Estilos (figuras y progresiones que forman parte de una pieza) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.2.1. militar, caza 3.2.2. estilo cantabile* 3.2.3. Obertura francesa 3.2.4. <i>musette</i>, pastoral 3.2.5. música turca 3.2.6. <i>Sturm und Drang</i> 3.2.7. sensible, <i>Empfindsamer</i> 3.2.8. estricto, estilo culto (en oposición a galante o estilo libre) 3.2.9. estilo de fantasía <p>4. Descriptivismo, <i>word painting</i> e imitación de sonidos de la naturaleza</p> <p>* Hatten omite el tópico "estilo brillante" originalmente considerado por Ratner.</p> |
|--|

Figure 7. Topics for classical music after Hatten (1994).

The deepest discussion on *topics-signs* comes from Raymond Monelle's recent book (2000). For Monelle, musical topic is a special sign characterised by the semiotization of his object by an indexical mechanism: *the indexicality of its content* (p. 17).¹⁴ Monelle distinguishes two main kinds of topics. I shall call them the *icon-indexical* and the *index-indexical* topics.¹⁵

1. The *icon-indexical* topic.

The musical sign refers to its object by iconic means. But, the object also refers to other meaning by an indexical process. Monelle quotes Vladimir Karbusicky's example (*Grundriss der musikalischen Semantik* 1986): musical imitation of the cu-cu sound is an icon of the bird singing. But this, the bird itself, works as the indexical announcement of the "arriving spring" (p. 15). With these meanings it is used in the first movement of Gustav Mahler's First Symphony.

2. The *index-indexical* topic.

A musical sign works as a *token* of a stylistic *type* which refers to a broader stylistic area by indexical means (specifically by a synecdoche *pars pro toto* process). Once again style, as object of the signical function, evokes through indexicality a new object. For example, in a 17th century Spanish song, analysed by Ms. Aktories and me for this Congress, we detect in the setting the reproduction of the musical features of the canario dance-type (first index relation). But canario dance-genre itself is related to lascivious body movements, energetic and virtuoso skips and a noisy stamping. It was considered has an exotic and bizarre dance, with the assigned social value of "vulgar", "ruffianesque" and "picaresque". These connotations, indexically linked with the canario style, are in semiotic correspondence with the content of the words of the song.

Monelle's topic theory is trans-historical and trans-stylistic. For Monelle, the topic could be formed by dance genres or other musical types of Classical music, as Ratner's has defined. At the same time, he considers as topics some Wagnerian *leitmotives*, some rhetorical figures developed from the 16th Century onward as *passus duriusculus*, and others symbols originating in literature as some form of the equestrian topic, etc.

Reading Monelle's book, we can imagine that two main orientations could be undertaken as future study relative to topics from the point view of semiotics:

- 1) research on signical proprieties and qualities of topic-sign, and

2) research on social and cultural practices that originate topical codification in music.

But, on this point, one might ask: What happens to the other implications of the topic concept? What about *topic-search*, *topic-argument* or *topic-subject*? Has not musical semiotics a duty to study them? Can we really understand signical functions of musical topic without studying these other implications?

As the cognitive orientation of text semiotic and pragmatic studies text has shown through the topicalization concept, *topic-search* strategies, in association with their products as *topic-argument* or *topic-subject*, are very important tools for studying the understanding processes.¹⁶

Very often, semiotics studies tend to establish close typologies of signical phenomena. But we forget the rich cognitive operations hidden beneath them. And this is nothing more than another heritage of ancient rhetoric. We want to postulate the universal mechanism of signification, but we forget particular operations for specific text understanding under defined circumstantial and contextual conditions.

6. A topic notion for study of Spanish *Golden Age* secular songs.

In my doctoral research, I study intersemiotical functions between words and music in 17th century Spanish art song. My main purpose is to reconstruct those specific areas of musical competence, by means of which we may understand these complex intresemiotical interactions. Given the objectives of my research and the historical background of the musical style I am studying, I need to return to topical notions from the musical rhetoric era.

I agree with Prof. Monelle when he asserts the unfruitfulness of Baroque Musical Rhetorical theories. I, myself, have written much about their epistemological limitations. Also I have criticised the inappropriate use of these theories by modern musicologists. However, if we want to know something

about how this historical competence works, we should consider the other rhetorical dimensions of the topic concept.

Moreover, as I have already pointed out, perhaps now is time to develop a modern musical *neo-rhetorics* based on a solid semiotic theory. Rhetorical mechanisms are intrinsic to semiosis, and we must begin by distinguishing between basic semiotic functions and auxiliary rhetorical strategies. This work has already begun. (Cf. the troping concept in Robert Hatten's theory (1994).

In my study, topic functions are much more than signical. They are the basis of semiosis, the guarantee of musical understanding. These functions include the four modes of topic existence: *topic-sign*, *topic-subject*, *topic-argument* and *topic-search*. From this point of view, topic is a musical sign that must adhere to the following requirements:

- It must produce *complex correlations* as Hatten has remarked. These could be explained as *indexicality of object*, as Monelle, or perhaps through other theoretical mechanisms.
- It must be a tool for *searching sense*, a cognitive support for musical understanding.
- It must represent a *forceful argument* that attracts us into a well established *state of things*: an instant (and perhaps ephemeral) ontological hold.
- It must work as a *subject indicator*, a kind of emblem by means of which basic proprieties of the perceived *possible world* are convened.

In this sense, the musical topic I am proposing here has these three elements:

1. A *topic marker*: musical features that are able to activate a topic complex. It is a *token*, an occurrence that refers to an abstract *type* (and, sometimes, it is sufficient to establish a signical function).

2. A *genre, kind or type* of music of reference, identified as such by musical competence.

3. A *topical network*: the topic assumes part of musical competence functions such as framing semiosis, constraining cognitive processes and guiding the listener's activity by broader temporal space. These mechanisms could be depicted by means of an articulated complex network of cognitive *frames* and *scripts*. In these chains of *schemata*, we find cognitive elements and processes such as:

- fragments of *cognitive types* and their nuclear and molar contents (as in Eco's terminology, 1997);
- *instructions* to identify: i) other stylistics *types*, ii) unclear *type-token* relations or iii) pertinent processes of codifying-decodifying, to apply to hypo or hyper-codified expressions
- *interpretational models* as different kinds of inferences prescribed by stylistic principles, the particular work itself being listened to, or by emergent-rhetorical auxiliary strategies;
- *affordances*: what we can do with the musical object;
- negotiation processes between *intentio actoris*, *intentio lectoris* and *intentio operis*.
- intertextual dispositives;
- different categorisation processes (wild, prototypical, scientific or taxonomical categorisation, etc.);
- potential *interpretant chains* (emotive, kinetic and logical);
- previously formed contents that topic could activate by means of: i) stylistic *types* detected in *praesentia*, ii) inferred by exclusion in *absentia* or iii) by particular disposition of *tokens* in a work.

Only signs which fulfil these conditions could produce complex correlations and could be considered as proper topics. Others must consider other kinds of musical signs as musical rhetorical figures, and other types of musical signs.

7. *Lamento* topics, rhetorical agents.

Below, I will illustrate my own concept of musical topics. Again I will use an example by Professor Monelle; as the most recent, comprehensive and profound study on musical topics, professor Monelle's book is a necessary starting point.

In his study on relations between topics and Wagnerian *leitmotives*, Monelle pauses to consider the "crying" topic: the descendent semitone. He points out its use from the renaissance madrigal tradition, where it appears in association with words such as "*lacrime*" or "*pianto*". Then, he brings to our attention *Dido's lament* from Henry Purcell's *Dido and Eneas*. In effect, all lament is built over a ground bass ostinato resting on a descendent chromatic tetrachord. However, Monelle notices that Dido's lament "makes no mention of tears or weeping, but the general sentiment of grief is enough to yield the *pianto* motive within the very first gesture" (p. 68). Monelle identifies this descendent fourth as a *passus duriusculus*, musical figure introduced by Christoph Bernhard in his *Tractatus compositionis augmentatus* (1648-9).¹⁷ Bernhard was a pupil and assistant of Heinrich Schutz. In his theoretical writings, he devotes great deal to the study of dissonances imported by his master from Italy. Bernhard tries to explain them as an atypical use of classic counterpoint rules. Strange dissonances are, for him, a kind of *rhetorical figure*, that is, special expressions which alter the normal rules of counterpoint. Bernhard states:

By *Figuram*, I understand a special art of employing dissonances in a such way that they are not repugnant sounds, but rather they

become pleasant and realise the composer's art.
(Jacobson,1980:60).

Bernhard is considered as one of the most representative theoreticians of the *Musica poetica* tradition. Monelle fails to find in Bernhard's definition of *passus duriusculus* a clear specification regarding his semantic qualities. However, he considers that there is sufficient evidence to relate it to *pianto* motive. He includes an example by Bernhard himself where the figure musicalizes the word *lacryma* ¹⁸ (p. 73-5).

At times, we try to find in musical figures by Bernhard (or other musical rhetoric theoreticians) a kind of closed code, where musical structures achieve correlations with semantic units in an univocal way. And we must admit, together with Monelle, that *passus duriusculus* meaning could be established in a broader generic área: the disphoric. But in Peircian terms, this must be considered as *quaila*, belonging to *firstness*, not a musical correlation (*secondeness*). And also, we must not forget that Bernhard gave his *passus duriusculus* the theoretical status of rhetorical figure. A rhetorical figure is an alteration to one rule; it is a special way of expressing something. A rhetorical figure, in music as well, is an agent that potentiates or re-orientates a pre-established or ready-made, habitual meaning. Rhetorics is communicative operation, it is persuasion, it is process: it is not a closed code.

For a musical semantics conceived as a *rigid designator* system, the search for systemic unities within established meanings could be fruitful. But it is not the main object for musical semiotics understood as an *instruccional-inferential* cognitive dispositive, where pragmatic elements interact with semantic ones continually.

Let us return to Dido's lament. Let us also consider its chromatic character as a rhetorical resource which acts over a descendent tetrachord *ostinato*. Historical musicological studies have already established that, from 1640, a descendent tetrachord *ostinato* is one of the main emblematic features of the lament genre. Is one of its strongest *stylistic types*. We can find it in several examples, with different kinds of variations or alterations. It could

appear with chromatic alterations (as Dido's lament). But it can also be inverted, decorated by suspensions, by harmonic, melodic or rhythmic dissonances, or altered by overlapping voices on bass lines or without *ostinato* repetitions (Rosand 1980, 413). Chromatic tetrachord is a particular *token* of a stylistic *type*. And topical functions, in the sense I defend here, are activated by a descendent tetrachord *ostinato*. It works as the *topic marker*.

For one engaged in competent listening, this *topic marker* induces one to hypothesise that the piece being heard could be a lament. That means, one begins a topicalization process based in an encyclopaedic competence of a lament. Then, a larger network of *frames* and *scripts* come to mind. Based on types and other elements, processes and instructions contained in this network, the listener searches for new *tokens* in the piece and tries to understand parts of the composition and the composition as a whole, based on framed stylistic constrictions. In this way, the *topic marker* gives rise to the *topic-search* process. It is guided by an hypothesis relative to the main subject or argument we have to understand: the *topic-subject* hypothesis.

If these *topic-search* mechanisms are successful, the listener confirms the *topic-subject* hypothesis. If not, it must be changed.¹⁹

As a dramatic genre (*genere rappresentativo*), lamento's stylistic principles include several affective-expressive registers. Each lament moves into these expressive zones. A lament could achieve one or more of these expressive registers, following an exclusive program. A schematic diagram (and in extreme circumstances, a reduced diagram) of these zones may be seen in figure 8.

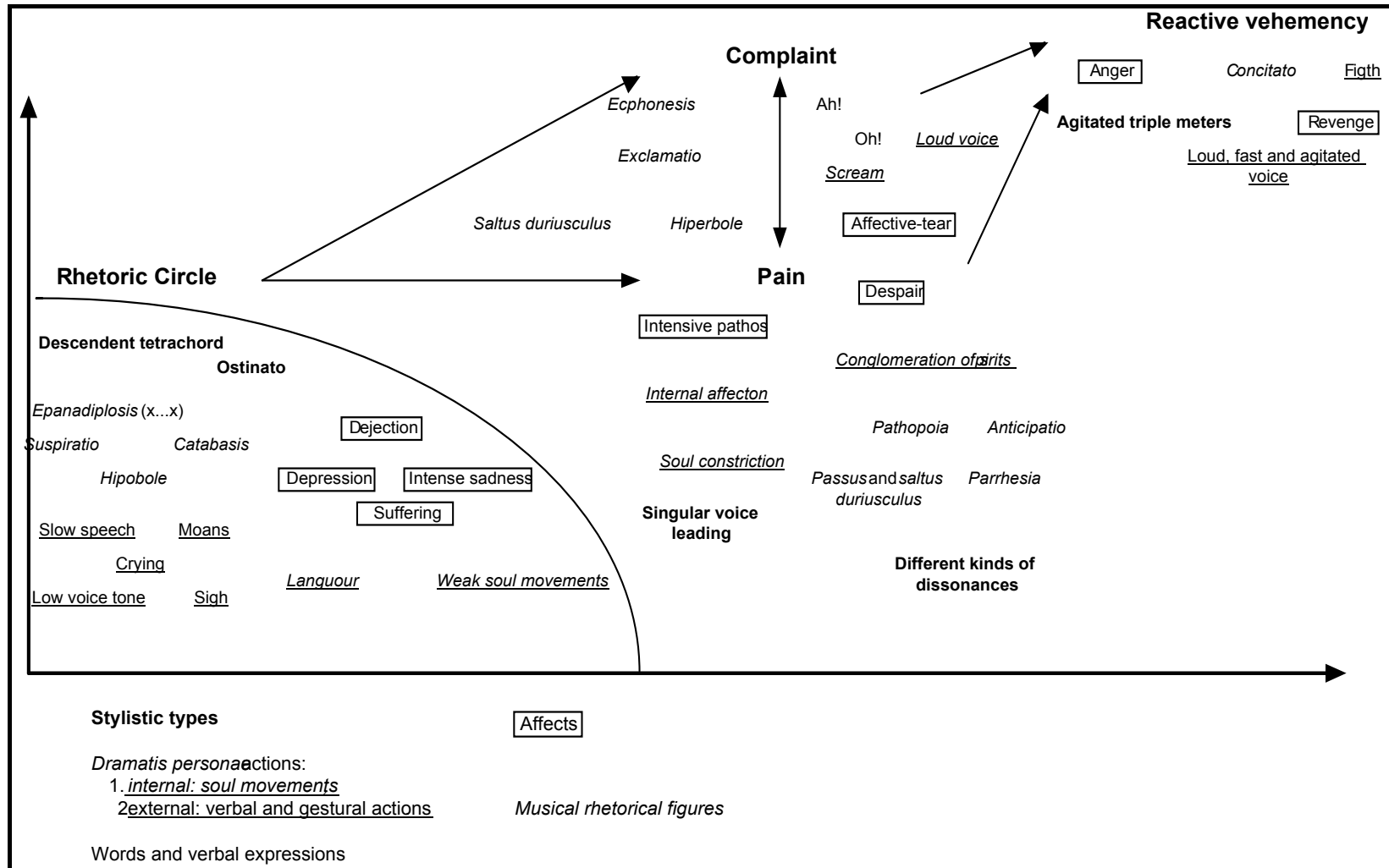


Figure 8. Expressive zones on lamento genre competence

This little cognitive map is divided into four expressive zones closely interrelated. In each of these zones, we find diverse cognitive content such as stylistic types, dominant affects, internal or external actions carried out by *dramatis personae* (movements of the soul or verbal and gestural actions), theatrical and stereotyped situations, dramatic scripts, phrases, words or verbal expressions proper to each affective register, rhetorical-musical figures, etc. In the most disphoric section of the lament, we find what I call *rhetoric circle*. Here, we find stylistic types such as the descendent tretachord ostinato or rhetorical-formal schemata such as *epanadiplosis* structures in which the same information is repeated both at the beginning and end of the same unit (x...x).²⁰ We can find also other rhetorical figures such as *catabasis* (melodic descendent lines), *hipobole* (fragments sung on voice lower register), *suspitratio* (sigh) etc. In terms of expression, it is the most profoundly introspective part of the lament: the state of total "suffering" in which obsessive thoughts, stressed by ostinato movement, poison the mind. Sobbing, complaints and lamentation characterise this zone.²¹

But internal scenic dramatisation of lament includes other expressive zones. One lament could present states of pain, anguish, or desperation. These are generally achieved by means of dissonances. They are closely related with the *rhetoric circle*. But the intensive *pathos* of the latter contrast with the lifeless dejected state of the former. Another possibility to express pain is through ephemeral complaint such as *exclamatio* o *ecphonesis*: screams as "O, dolore" "oimé", etc., set by *saltus duriusculus* and hiperboles (tones raised to the limits of the voice register).

But a lament can also arise from a depressive and painful state. In these *excursus* or *disgressio* moments, it is possible to find some reflections regarding the sufferer. Most often, there are violent reactions of anger against the *traditore infidele*. We recall immediately Monteverdi's *Lamento de Ariadna*. Vehement reactions usually present hyperbolic melodies, *saltus duriusculus*, fast and triple meters as monteverdian concitato style, etc.

All of these expressive areas are evoked in an implicit way when the listener detects a lament *topic marker*. But they are realised in a particular way

depending on each composition and each type of cognitive process carried out by the listener: the manner in which he organises his topicalization process.

Of course in Dido's lament, *pasuus duriusculus* could have local immediate signical function, and these could be oriented by pianto tradition. But crying is a semantic content already present in *frames* linked to the lament genre which could be activated by others means. *Lagime mie* from *Diporti di Euterpe* (1658) of Barbara Strozzi is an spectacular lament which contains most parts of the expressive zones I have mentioned. In this song, the action of crying is very important. But, when it appears, it is set only by descendent tetrachord *ostinati*. There are no *passus duriuscus*, nor *chromatisms*.

In my opinion, the *pasus duriusculus* formula of Dido's lament is a rhetorical agent which acts over the descendent tetrachord *ostinati*. This latter functions as topic. The rhetorical action of *pasus duriusculus* allows for activating simultaneously affective zones beyond the rhetoric circle but prescribed by the lament genre. The *dramatis personae* actions can be dominated by sobbing, but as well by other actions, affects and content. Everything depends on the expressive zones which are activated through listening. *Topic-sign* offers us a closed-code musical resource. But the *topic-search* assures us sense creation allowing us to move about the environs of that affective space which is unfolded upon detecting *the topic-subject*.

The idea of topic defined here has come to be very useful in the study of intersemiotic competences of 17th century hispanic art song. The complex idea of musical topic has allowed me to propose powerful hypotheses regarding the stylistic identity of songs and song fragments not well-known. Let us observe the following example. *Ojos, pues me desdeñáis* de Jose Marín (1618-1690). The introduction of the musical text "Ojos, pues me desdeñáis" ("Eyes, you disdain my love"), is as follows (see figure 9):

- Descendent melodic line by steps: *catabasis* (cf. López Cano 2000, 152).
- Melodic line broken by rests: *suspiratio*.
- In the second phrase, the voice descends to a bass 'd'; the lowest pitch of the song. It is an *hypobole*, an hyperbolic exaggeration in low sense.
- The bass line has descendent steps and chords stressing the *suspiratio* sense.
- The melodic sequence of the voice goes through an entire octave. The initial and final note is a "d" (measure 1 y measure 8). The repetition of this same element at the beginning and end of a small unit is referred to in rhetorical music as *epanalepsis*. The word "eyes" as well is repeated at the beginning and end of each phrase (measures 1 and 4).
- The melodic movement of the voice is structured in two descendent tetrachords. The first part goes from a "d" to an "a" (movements 1-4), and the second goes from a "g" to a "d" (movements 5-8).
- The continued repetition of descendent tetrachords by voice gives an ostinato (o pseudo-ostinato) sensation to the fragment.

In effect, it involves a strange token of descendent tetrachord ostinati lament type. It could be interpreted locally as a direct sign of some of the elements pointed out. According to the musical theory of the time, music could produce certain passions imitating internal actions of animal spirits (in cartesian terms), or external symptoms of passion (cf. Marconi, 1995).²² Thus, the descendent melodic lines which reach levels of extreme gravity in slow time could be understood as voice imitations which speak as prisoners of a very depressed state. And this kind of interpretation could be correct.

But the exercise of topicalization based on my concept of topic becomes more productive. Through it, I hypothesise that this song belongs to a complex genre of lament. Then, I alert a chain of *frames* and *scripts*. From them, I go on a search of more types, and at the same time, realise an expressive trip which the work allows me in light of the main topic I have selected.

In this way, I can understand the second part of the song as a violent reaction against the person who is the cause of the suffering: "no me miréis/ pues no quiero que logréis/ el ver como me matáis" (Look not on me/ for I am loath that thou should see how thou killest me). This furious reactive vehemence is reached, among other means, through an intense ascendant progression *gradatio* by V/I (dominant-tonic) functions (see figure 9 mm. 27-34). But, the *gradatio* voice is out of time with the accompaniment: it goes ahead by one beat. This produces the rhetorical figure of *anticipatio notae*. It involves another lament stylistic type. A similar resource appears in the first measure of the lament of Ariadna in Monteverdi. In this, the strong dissonance "a - b flat" is nothing but an *anticipation* of the third of the following chord. Once more we can interpret this sign as an imitation of the precipitance of the anguished soul. In the same way that the notes themselves leave their place and move ahead, the soul of the sufferer is out of control and tends toward precipitance and impulsive acts. But a topic is more than a mere sign; it produces, effectively, an immediate and complex correlation. But it does more; it draws a series of cognitive maps that allow one to understand and give meaning to the work drawing on successive hypotheses.

Imatra, June 2001

Notes

1. In fact, some scholars have asserted that we are not dealing with successive stages but simultaneous operations. The distinction is used merely as a didactic resource to make possible a systematic study.

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2. But, for the specialized *retor*, there was no doubt: topics were the places where he could find information.

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3. As Robert Hatten remarks (personal communication), Eco's concept of topic is not necessarily the same as Ratner's. However, since musical topical fields on *tonos humanos* research are not yet segmented adequately, I have decided to work, at least at this stage of the investigation, on the pragmatic dimensions of topic and topicalization processes. Looking for musical topics working inside these songs is an undertaking regulated by a mechanism quite similar to those which Eco calls *topicalization*. As I will show, the return to the pragmatic dimension of musical and literary topics (the topicalization processes) is a fruitful step in discovering a wide range of intersemiotic functions regarding words/music dispositives. I am grateful to Prof. Hatten for his critical remarks and suggestions on this paper.

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4. For a complete listing of all topics or *locis* as proposed by Mattheson, cf. Lennenberg (1958, 71-84). A summary of the same may be found in López Cano (2000, 76-81).

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5. Kircher does not mention explicitly the concept of topic..

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6. For a modern source of Kircher's inventio ideas cf. Bartel (1997, 77).

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7. Heinichen *loci topici* theory introduces three kinds of *topic-search*: 1) *antecedentia*: What should have happened prior to the events or the state of things as described in the text? 2) *concomitantia*: Which complementary events could take place simultaneously? and, 3) *consequentia*: What will happen in the future? Actually, it is Mattheson's *locus circumstantiarum* (cf. Buelow 1966 y Bartel 1997, 78-80).

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8. Since both *topic-argument* and *topic-subject* are produced by the *topic-search* process, often we can see them as equivalentes or closely-linked.

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9. One note: although Ratner asserts that he bases his theory on the topics found in treatises of the 18th century, his thesis does not propose recovering the baroque rhetoric tradition. Rather, his topics appear as *ex-novo* categories destined for a newer use.

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10. Among other things, the notion of topic has replaced the complex and ambiguous notion of isotopy arising from the narratological structure of Greimas (cf. Greimás 1970 y Greimás y Courtès 1979). This has been introduced in music primarily in the work of Tarasti (1989 y 1994) y Grabocz (1987).

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11. This gives an extramusical content such as affects, places, descriptions, etc.

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12. For a critique of Agawu's semiotic limitations cf. Hatten (1992 y s.f.) and Dougerhty (1994).

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13. It is notion equivalent to what we have come to call in this paper *expressive process*.

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14. Perhaps this is the complex correlation to which Hatten refers.

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15. The denominations are mine.

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16. And, on the other hand, Can we really distinguish between simple musical signs and complex topic-signs? Musical semiosis is very complex, and musical signs are always unstable, flexible and ambiguous. They change from one meaning to another very easily. Prof. Monelle shows some examples of simple musical signs, but they may be nothing more than the initial moment in the in the historical process of social music semiosis.

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17. In rhetorics, *passus duriusculus* is understood to be the succession of minor and augmented seconds. Benhard defines it as follows "The *passus duriusculus* within one voice occurs when a voice rises or falls a minor semitone. These progressions some have held as chromatic ones, the reasons for which they can fight out amongst themselves. It can also occur when the step to a second is augmented, to a third diminished, or to a fourth or fifth is augmented or diminished" (translation by Bartel 1997, 358).

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18. Monelle cites Peter Williams' book *The Chromatic Four during Four Centuries of Music* (1997). Who would doubt the semantics of the figure. He points out that it can be found in instrumental pieces such as fantasias and fugues, and that their painful evocation can in no manner be seen as universal in vocal music. Although Williams argues that on occasions this motive could signify "strangeness", "sweetness", or merely music, according to Monelle it is nothing more than a case of homophony and that in practice, it always has a disphoric meaning. (p. 74).

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19. Notice: descendent tetrachord ostinato is not the only stylistic type of lament; neither is it enough to determine lament. It could appear as a type of other genres such as chaconnas or passacaglia schemes. The listener has to put together a great deal of perceptual data to decide the correct *topic-subject* that must be chosen.

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20. See the first part of the *Lamento de Ariadna* of Claudio Monteverdi.

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21. We find one example of this in Monteverdi's *Lamento della Ninfa*. Here, external male choir voices describe the situation in an extradiegetic way: an unloved lady is crying out to heaven her suffering. Then, we hear the young lady's voice itself singing her lamento over a descendent tetrachord ostinato.

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22. Among the treatises studied by Marconi are found: VICENTINO, Nicola (1555) *L'antica musica ridota alla moderna prattica*; Roma; ZARLINO, Gioseffo (1558) *Institutioni Harmoniche*, Venecia; GALILEI, Vincenzo (1581) *Dialogo della musica antica e della moderna*; Roma; MEI, Girolamo (1602) *Discorso sopra la musica antica et moderna*; Venecia; DONI, G. B. (1635) *Compendio del trattato de'generi e de'modi della musica*; Roma; MERSENNE, Marin (1636-7) *Harmonie Universelle*; Paris.

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