Stylistic Evolution in Mozart's Symphonic Slow Movements: The Discursive-Passionate Schema (A Narrative Approach)¹

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In this essay I present the results of an experiment conducted on selected symphonic movements in the music of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. These movements provide a body of musical works (a "macro-text") that allows us to link both his early works and those of the Paris-Mannheim years to one of his last symphonies, the "Prague." Thus, this experiment encompasses symphonic works written from 1771 (when Mozart was 15 years old) and 1777-78 (the Paris-Mannheim years), to 1786 (when Mozart was 30 years old).

My approach—according to stylistic terminology—attempts to be both deductive and inductive at the same time. I begin with an analysis of the 2nd movement of the Prague symphony, an exceptional work due to its strongly dramatic organization and one that heralds—along with the last three symphonies (K.543, K.550, and K.551)—the advent of the "pre-Romantic" style of the young Beethoven. In these final years of the classical style, I am especially interested in movements which, because of the strong contrast they present at the level of emotional semes [pathèmes] (topics, affects, and the signifieds), i.e., what happens to the form of the content, open up considerably the framework of sonata form.² This might be interpreted as a teleological evolution, resulting in the emergence of a new signification at the end of the movement, in spite of the prescribed rules of recapitulation in sonata form.

In this text, I intend to re-evaluate certain definitions of style and its categories (i.e., its components), in order to account for new terminology that I have developed in my research.

¹ Translated for *Intégral* from French text into English by John Koslovsky (with thanks to Peter Franck, Kelly Francis, and Ben Wadsworth for many helpful suggestions). All quotes are translated into English, but their citation is left in the original language.

² [The editors wish to thank Prof. Robert Hatten for the suggested translation of "pathème" as "emotional seme."]

According to Georges Molinié, "style is the determined grouping of stylèmes expressing or symbolizing content within terms of language (this content can only be, in their occurrence, the particulars of a world view within a particular culture)."

For Molinié, stylèmes "are functions or correlations that link together at least two linguistic elements of some nature." Further, "stylèmes link elements according to a dynamic relationship (i.e., a correlation), the two elements being a thematic object to describe on the one hand, and a finite number of linguistic modes to represent them on the other hand." The "literariness" [littérarité]/musicality is understood as the interaction of stylèmes with one another: thus, a concatenation of stylèmes and their possible hierarchical status defines a style.

If we try to establish a correspondence between the three classes of *stylème* of Moliné and the musical world, we can propose the following concordances:

- 1. The first class, *stylèmes* of *general literarity*, e.g., elements of the "romanesque" or "commercial." In music, this would be "classical" music, jazz, or contemporary music (in addition to different varieties).
- 2. The second class is *generic literarity*, linked to main genres of literature (narrative, lyrical, theatrical, etc.). In music, we could think of genres such as vocal music of the Renaissance (along with its sub-genres of motet and mass); opera and instrumental music from the Baroque to the 20th century; different solo genres; chamber music; electroacoutic and computer genres of music, etc.
- 3. The third class of stylèmes is singular literarity; or, the actual characteristics of literarity. In music, its definition would probably vary according to the musical period. Thus, in the classical style, the topic would have to correspond to the length of the musical phrase, (that is, to the themes). In terms of stylistic correlation, these stylèmes would correspond to that which proper musicology considers topics [topiques]. Their typology and classification is well

³ Molinié 1994, 205. ["Stylème is a more general instance of "topic." The latter will be used throughout this article only within specifically musical contexts—ed.]

⁴ Molinié 1995, 9.

⁵ Molinié 1994, 204.

⁶ Cf. Molinié 1995, 9 and 1994, 204.

established for the classical period in determining precise expressive functions arranged in typical melodic-rhythmic formula, often linked to a given tonality.

These topical levels receive different designations according to the aesthetic of musicological schools that utilize them. Leonard Ratner and his American colleagues call them topics [topiques] or common links [lieux communs] of the history of Western music. 7 E. Tarasti and the musicological schools of Eastern and Central Europe (J. Ujfalussy, J. Jirnánek, V. Karbusicky, etc.) call them intonations: that is, elements of a collective memoranda (following Asafiev). Bence Szabolcsi, a well-known Hungarian musicologist who described typical melodic formulas from European musical history, simply called them elements of communal musical language. 8 Johann Mattheson (18th century) linked them to the affects described by Descartes, while Robert Hatten calls them expressive genres.9 Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven therefore drew from predetermined formulas by their predecessors and contemporaries and, at the same time, brought their own personal marks to a common ground.

In terms of the construction and realized succession of the topics, the framework is more or less equally predetermined by the generic stylèmes that arrange the syntactic and the tonal organization of the musical units [syntagmes]. On the other hand, no pre-defined rule exists in terms of the organization of affects, of emotional semes ("intonations," "topics") inside of a particular type of musical movement. The tonal architecture is prescribed but the choice of energetic [energetique] dynamics of expression is left to the composer, a choice conditioned by a dramatic and conflicted process or by a simple rhetorical gesture (i.e., phrases in the form of "question-response" or others such as exclamatory, optative [optative], or imperative) made up of musical ideas associated together within an expressive topic.

⁷ For the definition of topics, see for example Robert Hatten's glossary in Hatten 1994, 295; see also Ratner 1980, 9; Monelle 2000, 80 and 2006.

⁸ Szabolcsi 1965 and 1975.

⁹ Mattheson 1739; Hatten 1994.

At least two different domains will provide precision in the stylistic examination of classical style:

- 1. The level of topics as musical singularity, by confronting themes in Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven with a discernible common heritage originating in J. S. Bach's sons and other lesser-known composers of the time (Clementi, Alcan, etc.), and from the first works of Haydn and Mozart.
- 2. The second domain of research considers the mode of succession of topics in defining the recurrent strategies of a composer. The personal strategies of the great composers would correspond to that which Georges Molinié calls "stylèmeconstellations" [stylèmes-constellations], by which "one may attempt to conceive, to think of the character the most contingent, the most substantial, the most individual-the most brilliant-of a style."10 In 1961, József Ujfalussy took the first step in examining certain types of "intonations" (topics) and their grouping structure in different works of Mozart (using themes found in his operas, symphonies, quartets and quintets). American musicologists—such as Kofi Agawu in 1991 and W. J. Allanbrook in 1992—found important results in the area of comparative studies of certain Mozart works, studies conducted on the configuration of topics in particular movements. Robert Hatten has clarified—with the help of Michael Shapiro's theory of markedness—the strategies of style in the final works for piano and the last quartets of Beethoven. 11

In his "Réflections sur la sémiotique musicale à l'écoute de Georges Molinié," Nicholas Meeùs proposes a concept of style as "a confrontation with an abstract structure of which the work is considered an empirical instance. What is in play here is the link from speech [parole] to language [langues], or, in Hjelmslev's terminology, from the usage to schema, to the norm...The linguistic edifice is founded on a fundamental conceptual leap that transforms the collective experience into an immanent system." 12

¹⁰ Molinié 1994, 205.

¹¹ Shapiro 1983; Hatten 1994.

¹² Meeùs 1995, 18.

This immanent system¹³ comprises two plans: "a grammatical plan that governs the internal logic of the language—its tonal syntactic construction for the classical style—and a semantic plan that governs the relation to the world. Style thus seems like a transversal dimension [dimension transversal], distinguished from each of its two plans...Style is...every grammatic or semantic supplement derived at a basic level."¹⁴

In the following analysis, I will examine these two plans according to two different grammars: the grammar of obligatory construction of slow symphonic movements (i.e., syntactic analysis or traditional structural analysis), and the grammar of topics, affects, and emotional semes, if present. The plan of the content (that is, the plan of musical expression) coincides with the analysis of topics and affects in the classical style.

I present a corpus ("macro-text"), a body of works consisting entirely of slow symphonic movements or concertos of Mozart, all in the key of G major. A previous analysis of select symphonic movements by Mozart in C major gave me the idea to verify the eventual use of the same types of topics with the same framework, orchestration, and tonality. The results of the analyses in G major allowed me to discover the existence of a similar type of principal theme¹⁵ and many complementary thematic elements, ¹⁶ equally close to one another in the five works examined. The works presently under consideration are: 1) the Symphony in D major, K.111, 1771–the slow movement Andante grazioso in 3/8 (flute,

¹³ The "immanent system"-following Meeùs- corresponds to the system of "language" in opposition to the activity of "speech." It is "immanent" in the sense that it transforms the collective experience, necessarily contingent, in a system independent of the users (Notes supplied by Meeùs himself, at the request of the author).

¹⁴ Meeùs 1995, 18-19.

¹⁵ This theme always corresponds to the pastoral topic.

¹⁶ Such that the motive portrays either the march, the descending melodic gesture from the fifth to the tonic (followed by the sixth), or the topic of the "style gallant" (see their presentation with the help of the examples later in the text).

oboe, horn); 2) the "Paris" symphony, K.297 in D major (1778)—Andante in 6/8; 3) Concerto for Oboe and Orchestra, K.314 (1777)—Adagio ma non troppo in 3/4; 4) Symphony or Ouverture K.318 (1779)—Andante in 3/8; 5) the "Prague" Symphony K. 504 (1786)—Andante in 6/8. The presence of flutes, oboes, and horns is ubiquitous in virtually all the Andante movements analyzed here (with the exception of K.314).

Topic 1: Principal Themes ("Pastoral")

Example 1a. Symphony in D major, K.111 (1771), 2nd movement.



Example 1b. Symphony in D major ("Paris"), K.297 (1778), 2nd movement.



Example 1c. Concerto for oboe (or flute) in D major, K.314 (1777), 2nd movement.



Example 1d. Symphony in G major, K.318 (1779), 2nd movement.



Example 1e. Symphony in D major ("Prague"), K.504 (1786), 2nd movement.



Perhaps the greatest surprise is the correlation between the principal themes: this is characterized in each of the movements by 1) a simple melodic line that articulates the third, fifth, and root of the triad (always parallel thirds in the major key); 2) the use of flutes, oboes and horns in this same melody; 3) the pedal point in the bass, in the horns, or in the penultimate phrase; and 4) the dance rhythm due to the triple meter. All these elements evoke the music of bagpipes. We could therefore say that we are dealing with a simple or elementary pastoral topic in all cases.

Topic 2: The 'March' Motive

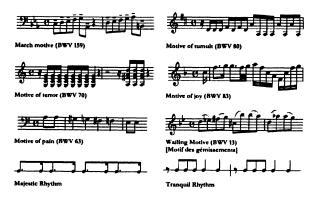
Example 2a. Symphony K.297, 2nd movement, 2nd theme, mm. 23-29.

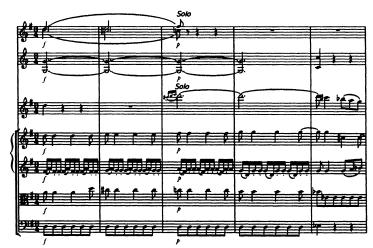


Example 2b. Symphony K.318, 2nd movement, transition from the recapitulation, mm. 172-177.



Example 2c. Examples of motives and rhythms taken from the cantatas of Bach, as quoted by Schweitzer.





Example 2d. Concerto K.314, 2nd movement cadence, mm. 40-44.

Example 2e. Symphony K.504, 2nd movement, Cadence of 1st theme, mm. 9-12.



Many elements in these examples seem obligatory in accompanying this first simple theme: that is, the motives called "the march" are connected to the rhetorical-musical figure representing the march in Baroque music.¹⁷ Example 2c shows a series of motives and descriptive rhythms derived, following Albert Schweizer,¹⁸ from the cantatas of Bach, illustrating the march (BWV 159), terror (BWV 70), pain (BWV 63), solemn rhythm, tumult (BWV 80), joy (BWV 83), wailing (BWV 13), and rhythm of tranquility. André Pirro, in his book L'ethétique de J. S. Bach, also identifies many citations taken from the cantatas, motives corresponding to the ideas of the ascension and advancement [progression] ("auffahren," "gehen" in German).¹⁹ H. Eggebrecht also presents this figure in his article in Riemann's Musiklexicon.²⁰ This motive therefore uses a rising scale, and is transposed once or twice to the subsequent degree(s) of the scale in question.

In summary, the *march motive* presents itself as either a cadential (K.314, K.504), transitional (K.318), or thematic element (K.297) in almost all of the works alluded to.

¹⁷ See Eggebrecht 1967, 286-288; Buelow 2000, 263-269; see also Michaels 1988, 114.

¹⁸ Schweitzer 1905.

¹⁹ Pirro 1973, 21-28.

²⁰ Eggebrecht 1967, 268-88.

Topic 3: "Descending Gesture"

Example 3a. Symphony K.297, 2nd movement, 3rd theme, mm. 35-42.



Example 3b. Concerto K.314, 2nd movement, transition, mm. 18-22.





Example 3c. Symphony K.504, 2nd movement, transition, mm. 19-24.

The other constant element is a figure (or a gesture) that outlines a descending pentachord from the fifth to the tonic. In general, this gesture is one of "declaration" that affirms the new tonality of the dominant or the beginning of the transition. In the typology of melodies established by J. Ujfalussy, the "minor" version of the dominant-tonic descent (completed by the sixth and by the leading tone) corresponds—in opera arias—to an expression of sadness. ²¹ The first musical examples that Ujfalussy cites are: Pamina's aria (no. 17: "Ach ich fühl's, es ist verschwunden, ewig hin der Liebe Glück!"); Idomeneo's aria (Idomeneo, no. 7: "m'uccide il dolor"); the Queen of the Night aria (no. 4 from Die Zauberflöte: "Zum Leiden bin ich auserkoren"). These examples correspond to the expression of pain, suffering, and sadness as a witness to the key words of the text. (See Examples 3 a, b, and c.)

²¹ Ujfalussy 1961.

Topic 4: "Style Galant"

Example 4a. Concerto K.314, 2nd movement, mm. 23-27.



Example 4b. Symphony K.297, 2nd movement, mm. 19-23.





Example 4c. Symphony K.318, 2nd movment, mm. 131-138.

Other recurring elements and those related to the first subject are:

- 1. "Galant" formulas: chromatic motives organized in question-response format.
- 2. Turns of phrase called the "sensible style" (*Empfindsamkeit*): the subtle alternation between major and minor tonality (or viceversa) from the same segment.
- 3. Another motive that accompanies this last element in almost an obligatory manner is the cadence of chromatic inflections, often presented in minor (i.e., a formula of lamentation that always pauses on 7 or 5, leaving the phrase open for anticipating a response or release).

In terms of the organization of these elements, their function varies in thematic, cadential, or transitional propositions. The only function that remains ubiquitous is the alteration of major-minor mode in the same motive. This can be found in the transition sections in K.314 and K.318, and at the cadence in the transition of K.504. It also plays an important role in K.297, in the consequent of the 2nd theme (maggiore-minore in the exposition and minore-maggiore in the recapitulation). Unlike the local organization of each

work, the principle of global organization seems to coincide equally in each of the movements. Virtually all these forms correspond to an Andante without a development (i.e., containing only the exposition and the recapitulation), in following the rules of sonata form. The principle of concealed rondo [principe de rondo caché] is equally a common structural trait (with the exception of K.504), as the principal theme is re-iterated at the end of each movement. K.318 is almost a rondo, since what would be the development uses the first theme. K.111 is a simple ABA form with a single theme and a modulation to the dominant in the middle (B). K.314 and K.297 are both true expositions and recapitulations without developments.

To conclude: the first four works (according to chronological order) never reveal anything exceptional, "shocking," or personal concerning the internal organization of the topics alluded to, as if it were only a game of the "sensible style," with the diversion in the "minor" key and the underlying willingness to confirm the "pastoral" principal theme at the end of the movement. Aside from these two characteristics, the concatenation of juxtaposition of topics seems accidental and incidental; their succession seems governed only by rules of tonal relations and the alternation of tonic and dominant.

By contrast, the "Prague" Symphony presents a structure that far surpasses the other movements in two fields (by using the same topics):

- 1. The exposition and recapitulation both present a clear equilibrium and a concise measurement between the pastoral topic (i.e., the "pastoral" theme, a topic unmarked due to its typical classical nature), and sections in the minor mode, invoking melancholy and pain—affects in opposition to the pastoral. See for example mm. 19-34 in the transition, formed around a musical idea—the topic of suffering—which begins in E minor and moves to Bb major (an augmented 6th chord in D minor), and prepares the 2nd theme with a long and mournful cadence in D minor. For the other minor passages, see the end of the cadence in theme 2 (mm. 50-54).
- 2. This opposition prepares and anticipates the drama and tension that will explode in the development section. Everything seems to direct itself towards the knot formed in the middle of the

mediant section, conforming to the rules of the "discursive passionate schema" [schéma discursif passionnel] described by Greimas and Fontanille in Sémiotique des passions.²² In modern parlance, the discursive canonic schemas "organize the logical stages of the action or the passionate journeys in discourse."²³ In music, we use this term to designate the "pathemic" narrative journey which passes from an initial situation (S1) to its negation (not S1), then by introducing a new term (S2) that passes through its negation (not S2). After this journey through the contradictorily coupled terms, we return to a modified version of the initial situation (S1 modified; in our case, a modified recapitulation).²⁴

In speaking about the "discursive program" of the passionate subject, ²⁵ Greimas and Fontanille affirm that "the passionate syntax does not behave differently from the pragmatic or cognitive syntax; it takes the form of a narrative program where a pathemic operator transforms the pathemic states." "The elementary structures of signification succeed in reconciling a principle of evolution, thanks to a dialectical syntax and a categorical form of totality." "The mode of generating elementary structures of signification remains equally valid for the description of an affected subject by passion. A category can be examined through the composition of contradictions, contrarieties (oppositions), and implications, all in setting the category in multiple terms…"²⁸

One detects the presence of an elementary model of signification and of transformation in the development section of the 2nd movement of K.504.

As I have suggested, each structural element in this Andante carries a signified according to the idea of producing binary oppositions (contrasting signified elements) in order to prepare the climax, the magisterial dramatic moment in the center of the

²² Greimas and Fontanille 1991.

²³ Fontanille 2003, 82.

²⁴ For an explanation of the function in music of the elementary structure of signification (i.e., the semiotic square), see Grabócz 1994, 122-42 and 1996, 73-84.

²⁵ Greimas and Fontanille 1991, 85.

²⁶ Ibid., 54.

²⁷ Ibid., 42.

²⁸ Ibid., 42.

movement. Thus the exposition offers the following terms of contrariety:

S1: The Principal Theme and Second Theme (along with their cadences) are connected to the "pastoral" topic (or "pastoral" complemented by the "style galant," the second theme being derived from the first theme).

S2: Two united melodic-rhythmic elements of the transition offer, on the one hand, the topic of sadness (the "accompanied melody" accentuating the descending dominant to the tonic, then from ô in the key of E minor: mm. 19-22), and, on the other hand, the cry of pain well-known in Mozart's operas (an arpeggiation of a major triad with a dotted rhythm, representing deeds and exclamations).²⁹

The development exacerbates the conflict of topics by creating the terms of opposition ("contradiction"), then contrariness, and finally the return to an "evolved" variant of the initial situation.

S1: Theme/1 pastoral in C major at the beginning of the development;

Not S1: Negation of the "pastoral" topic of the first theme, with the help of its minor version: topic of *lament* and *sadness* (mm. 74-82: theme/1 in D minor, then E minor);

S2 (variant): Contrapuntal section created by the accumulation of march motives (modulating to minor keys), introduced by theme/1 in E minor (topic of crying, despair, indeed, this is the point where the tragedy culminates, mm. 83-89);

Not S2: Return of calm before the recapitulation (four repetitive and cadential measures between mm. 90-93).

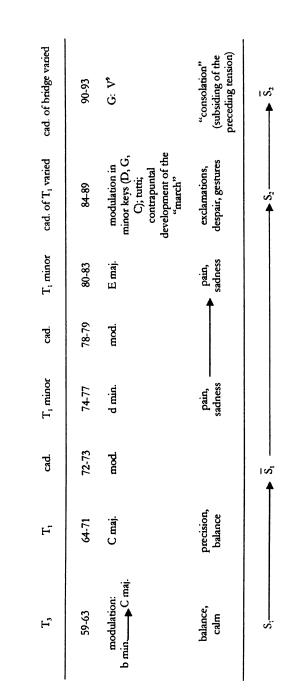
Although it renews the tension between S1 and S2, the recapitulation amplifies the dysphoric character with the help of the increased number of measures in minor, and adds a new closing—a coda—to the exposition. The last four measures of the movement anticipate a romantic style of composition by prolonging the march step in both the high and low registers, and create the image of vanishing into a distant space, an eventual association with a parting gesture.

²⁹ See the presentation of the typology of themes, principal "intonations" of Mozart in Uifalussy 1961.

Example 5. Symphony K.504, 2nd movement (Andante), exposition.

55-58	D maj.	oalance farewell estures]	4
45-54	D maj.	[rhetorically be neutral: [fe question-ganswer]	
35-44	D maj.	balance ("pastoral")	,
30-34	d: VII	→ [increased tension]	
26-29	d min.	fear, — trembling	
19-25	e min./ Bb maj. [!]	gesture: exclamation of pain, despair	,
9-18	G maj.	march step (neutral)	
1-8	G maj.	precision, balance ("pastoral")	,
	9-18 19-25 26-29 30-34 35-44 45-54	9-18 19-25 26-29 30-34 35-44 45-54 G maj. e min./ d min. d: VII D maj. D maj.	9-18 19-25 26-29 30-34 35-44 45-54 G maj. e min./ d min. d: VII D maj. D maj. Bh maj. [!] march step gesture: fear, p [increased balance [rhetorically lexchamation of trembling tension] ("pastoral") neutral: [increased balance guestion gasture]

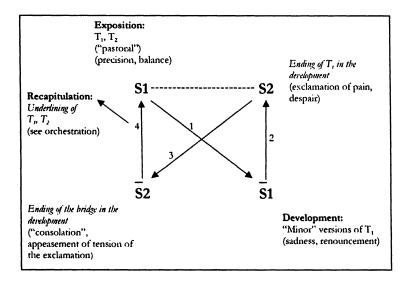
Example 6. Symphony K.504, 2nd movement (Andante), development.



Example 7. Symphony K504, 2nd movement (Andante), recapitulation.

codetta	146-148	G maj.	<u> </u>	coda: reinforcement of T3 (see orchestration)
T,	142-145	G maj.	balance – [farewell gestures]	reinforce (see on
cad.	132-141	G maj. min.	[thetorically neutral: question- answer]	
T ₂ (inversion of T ₁)	122-131	G maj.	balance ("pastoral")	S ₁ * tutti orchestration (=modified)
cad,	118-121	g min.: $\mathbf{V}^{\tilde{i}}$	increasing tension	
cad,	106-113 114-117 118-121	g min.: \mathbf{V}^7 g min.: \mathbf{V}^7	fear, trembling	
bridge	106-113	a min./Eb maj. [!]	despair, gesture	
ся d .	98-105	G maj. + mod.	march step	ements) ation
T,	94-97	G maj.	balance, precision ("pastoral")	S, * (new elements) tutti orchestration (=modified)

Example 8. Symphony K.504, 2nd movement (Andante), global schema of articulation of affects: elementary structure of signification or semiotic square.



The use of the elementary structural schema of signification (or, the canonic discursive schema) in the analysis of this sonata form is hardly gratuitous. The comparison between the preceding symphonic movements clearly shows the stylistic evolution of Mozart between K.111 (1771) and K.297 (1777) to ca. 1786. The same elements of the style previously linked in a loose manner (without any specific strategy) receive, in the "Prague" Symphony, their precise function at the heart of a focused narrative, which aims at a construction (followed by its "deconstruction") of an important and culminating dramatic point at the heart of the movement. Narrative analysis thus serves to clarify the differences and stylistic changes taking place within a particular musical genre. Put another way, the passionate discursive schema (with its elementary structure of signification) aids in seizing and distinguishing the specific constellation of topics in the late symphonic style of Mozart.

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