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Linkage technique, or *Knüpftechnik*, describes a musical event where the beginning of a new phrase or formal section takes as its initial idea the conclusion of the immediately preceding one. I argue that the transformation of a concluding gesture into one of initiation offers analysts the opportunity for further research in musical narrative. Drawing from Robert Hatten's theory of musical meaning, I analyze two works by Brahms and construct an expressive interpretation around moments of linkage. In order to fully demonstrate the expressive ramifications of linkage as a transitional narrative device, I turn to an analogue in literary prose. Alain Robbe-Grillet's experimental fiction, a representative example of the *nouveau roman*, often features visual motifs that link disparate temporal locations in a narrative — similar to the graphic match cut technique found in the cinema. To demonstrate the unique expressive consequences of linkage technique in Robbe-Grillet's work, I provide analyses of selected passages from his 1955 novel *Le Voyeur*. The effects of confusion and disorientation created by Robbe-Grillet's prose add an expressive dimension to linkage events in Brahms's music that cause temporal disruption.

*KNÜPFTECHNIK*: CODING NARRATIVE IN THE MUSIC OF BRAHMS  
AND THE EXPERIMENTAL FICTION OF ROBBE-GRILLET

by

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*To Irna Priore*

## APPROVAL PAGE

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly what is thus palpitating in the depths of my being must be the image, the visual memory which, being linked to that taste, has tried to follow it into my conscious mind.

Marcel Proust, *Swann's Way*, in *In Search of Lost Time*<sup>1</sup>

The “magical effects of association,” a phrase used by Heinrich Schenker to describe certain motivic phenomena in tonal music,<sup>2</sup> aptly characterizes the event Marcel Proust’s narrator experiences in the introduction of *Swann's Way*. Memory, specifically the concept of involuntary memory, plays a central role throughout Proust’s monumental seven-volume novel *In Search of Lost Time*. The most famous passage that addresses this theme is the “madeleine episode,” a portion of which is quoted above. Prior to this moment, the narrator struggles to conjure memories of his family’s country home in Combray, but the taste of a madeleine cake dipped in tea one day floods his mind with nostalgic thoughts from his childhood. The tea-soaked cake reminds him of a snack he used to receive as a child from an old aunt. It serves as a trigger, which facilitates this

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<sup>1</sup>Marcel Proust, *Swann's Way*, vol. 1 of *In Search of Lost Time*, ed. William C. Carter, trans. C.K. Scott Moncrieff (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 52. The work has been previously translated as *Remembrance of Things Past*.

<sup>2</sup>Heinrich Schenker, *Harmony* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), 7, quoted in Peter Smith, “New Perspectives on Brahms’s Linkage Technique,” *Intégral: The Journal of Applied Musical Thought* 21 (January 2007): 109.

“felicitous moment” (*moment bienheureux*)<sup>3</sup> and subsequently prompts more memories of the narrator’s childhood. This critical incident thus forms the crux of the introduction to the novel.

The linkage effect that enables Proust’s narrator to subjectively experience a temporal shift through the power of association can similarly occur in music. Indeed, Michael Puri and Steven Rings have discussed Proust in connection with the work of Ravel and Debussy, respectively, more specifically how their music evokes the process of memory through formal and tonal schemes.<sup>4</sup> Fragmentation through quotation and collage, for example (in the case of Ravel), can be interpreted as musical excursions into the past. Rings’ and Puri’s “anachronous hearings”<sup>5</sup> of the pieces they discuss suggest temporal interpretations that encourage non-chronological narratives. Thus, through a hermeneutic approach, Rings and Puri lend significance to Debussy and Ravel’s evocation of memory by situating it within the narrative fabric of the composers’ respective works.

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<sup>3</sup>Michael J. Puri, “Memory, Pastiche, and Aestheticism in Ravel and Proust,” in *Ravel Studies*, ed. Deborah Mawer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 67. Puri describes the *moment bienheureux* as an experience that “results from a chance encounter with a sensation that seems to refer the present to a special moment in the narrator’s past, thereby triggering a ‘search for lost time.’” Puri references Roger Shattuck’s definition, which similarly characterizes the phenomenon as “a moment of pleasure and communion caused by involuntary memory” whereby one “recognizes the past inhabiting the present.” See Roger Shattuck, *Proust’s Binoculars* (New York: Random House, 1963), 27.

<sup>4</sup>Michael J. Puri, “Memory and Melancholy in the Épilogue of Ravel’s *Valses nobles et sentimentales*,” *Music Analysis* 29, nos. 2-3 (2011): 1-37; Steven Rings, “*Mystères limpides*: Time and Transformation in Debussy’s *Des pas sur la neige*,” *19th-Century Music* 32, no. 2 (Fall 2008): 178-208.

<sup>5</sup>Rings, “*Mystères limpides*: Time and Transformation in Debussy’s *Des pas sur la neige*,” 201.

Invocation of Proustian ideas of memory in the music of Debussy and Ravel seems appropriate given that the author was a French contemporary of the composers. Rings' and Puri's discussions, however, approach the role of memory in Debussy and Ravel's music from a more literal perspective than what I shall adopt. What interests me more, rather than the depiction of memory itself in music, is the more general aspect of association. I investigate how this concept can be more widely applied to music less idiosyncratic than that of Debussy and Ravel—or less self-conscious in its tendency toward pastiche—and how it can disturb linear narrativity. The music of Brahms, its relation to the work of Proustian literary descendant Alain Robbe-Grillet, and the question of how temporality is uniquely but similarly disrupted in both mediums will serve as the central topic of this study. While using Rings' and Puri's work as a conceptual springboard, this study will extend the musical discussion backward to the mid-to-late German Romantic era and the literary discussion forward to the twentieth-century French avant-garde.

According to an associative model proposed by J. Peter Burkholder, we make sense of music by recognizing and focusing on what is familiar: a melodic gesture, a rhythmic motive, a vertical sonority, the form, the genre, or any other characteristic.<sup>6</sup> We subsequently assign specific associations to any of these

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<sup>6</sup>J. Peter Burkholder, "A Simple Model for Associative Musical Meaning," in *Approaches to Meaning in Music*, ed. Byron Almén and Edward Pearsall (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), 78.

elements, which may help us derive meaning from a given work, depending on how these elements function and are manipulated within the larger whole. I will view the principle of association through a narrow lens by highlighting specific moments in music that feature the linkage effect – moments loosely analogous to the narrator’s experience in *Swann’s Way*.

I study instances in which association and linkage blur formal boundaries, thus creating a continuous stream of musical events. Returning to the Proustian parallel, temporal boundaries similarly become blurred within the narrator’s subjective experience through association. From this temporal blurredness there arises a paradox of sorts, which Michael Puri describes as manifesting “an inherent doubleness in memory, whereby a recollection is the offspring of both the recollected past and the recollecting present . . . we often conceive of memory as a liaison between two temporal perspectives, with the past as the content and memory as the faculty which retrieves it in and for the present.”<sup>7</sup> By way of the madeleine’s taste, Proust’s narrator paradoxically experiences the past while living in the present.

One of the presuppositions of temporality Robert Hatten describes in the music of Western composers is “that we subjectively experience a kind of temporal flow which in its unmarked form might be considered an ongoing

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<sup>7</sup>Puri, “Memory and Melancholy in the Épilogue of Ravel’s *Valses nobles et sentimentales*,” 10.

present.”<sup>8</sup> In his essay from *Approaches to Meaning in Music*, Hatten’s interest lies in exploring “the expressive effects created by disjunctions between the expected and actual locations of musical events”<sup>9</sup> and the meaning that arises from “creating a dramatically marked reordering as distinguished from a normative, and hence unmarked dramatic sequence.”<sup>10</sup> The unmarked ongoing present consists of “phenomenal and dramatic sequences [that] share essentially the same ordering – initiatory gestures occur in initial locations, closural gestures occur in terminal locations, anticipatory gestures prepare other events, and so on.”<sup>11</sup> The reordering of these musical events into an alternative phenomenal sequence, however, conflicts with Hatten’s concept of a normative dramatic narrative. According to Hatten, the shuffling of temporally coded musical events influences how the analyst interprets a given work because a new meaning emerges therein.

My approach extends upon the ideas presented in Hatten’s essay. The musical passages I examine undergo temporal shifts not because certain musical events with a stylistic temporal coding (anticipatory, retrospective, ongoing)<sup>12</sup> appear out of order, but because a gesture of conclusion within a musical passage, rather than seeming displaced, is *transformed into* a gesture of initiation.

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<sup>8</sup>Robert Hatten, “The Troping of Temporality in Music,” in *Approaches to Meaning in Music*, 62.

<sup>9</sup>Edward Pearsall and Byron Almén, “The Divining Rod: On Imagination, Interpretation, and Analysis,” in *Approaches to Meaning in Music*, 7.

<sup>10</sup>Hatten, “The Troping of Temporality in Music,” 62.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*

Past and present become united and the identity of the musical event's temporal code is thus brought into question.

### Linkage Technique

Schenker's concept of linkage technique, or *Knüpftechnik*, remains an underdiscussed topic in general, perhaps because the concept itself is seemingly straightforward. Oswald Jonas is broad yet brief in his presentation of the technique: "Another specific way of achieving musical cohesion . . . is also based on the principle of repetition. Linkage technique means that a new phrase takes as its initial idea the end of the immediately preceding one and then continues independently, either within the same formal unit or to initiate a new section."<sup>13</sup> Sylvan Kalib's understanding of linkage is similar: "A technique related to the connection of ensuing spans . . . it concerns the connection or linkage of phrases and/or sections."<sup>14</sup>

Brahms scholar Peter Smith, however, believes there is much more to explore with respect to linkage. In his 2007 article, dedicated solely to the technique, Smith focuses on multiple derivatives of the practice by exploring how linkage may operate in the realms of melody, harmony, and rhythm:

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<sup>13</sup>Oswald Jonas, *Introduction to the Theory of Heinrich Schenker*, ed. John Rothgeb (New York: Longman Inc., 1982), 7-8.

<sup>14</sup>Sylvan Kalib, "Thirteen Essays from the Three Yearbooks *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik* by Heinrich Schenker: An Annotated Translation" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1973), 89.

[T]he transformation of a gesture of conclusion into one of initiation often involves structural reinterpretation. What has not been well recognized . . . is the extent to which rhythmic or harmonic components may enhance the associative effect of linkage, even as these components also manifest their own forms of structural reinterpretation. In the rhythmic dimension, this enhancement may involve either a change in the hypermetric position of a linking motive or the migration of that motive in relation to the notated meter. In the harmonic dimension, the magical effect of association might engage continuity of a vertical sonority even as the verticality involved undergoes a shift in structural meaning. Such harmonic linkage may even arise between a structural harmony and an incidental or “apparent” version of the same sonority.<sup>15</sup>

Figure 1 below is taken from Smith’s 1997 article on Brahms’s motivic use of 6/3 chords.<sup>16</sup> While first featured in the earlier article, the excerpt from Brahms’s A-major Violin Sonata is discussed again in the 2007 article on linkage technique. In the transition from the refrain to the first episode of the second movement’s rondo form (mm. 15-16), the linking motive A-D bridges the two sections and is accompanied by linkage of the harmonic variety, as mentioned at the end of the above quotation.

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<sup>15</sup>Peter H. Smith, “New Perspectives on Brahms’s Linkage Technique,” *Intégral: The Journal of Applied Musical Thought* 21 (January 2007): 110-111.

<sup>16</sup>Peter H. Smith, “Brahms and Motivic 6/3 Chords,” *Music Analysis* 16, no. 2 (July 1997): 192.

Figure 1. Brahms, A-major Violin Sonata, Op. 100, II, mm. 14–19.

The musical score for measures 14–19 of Brahms' A-major Violin Sonata, Op. 100, II, is shown. The score is in 3/4 time and features a violin and piano. Measure 14 starts with a *dim.* marking. Measure 16 is marked *Vivace*. Measure 19 is marked *p* and *molto leggero*. The score includes a diagram of the harmonic progression: F: I (measures 14-15), (VI<sup>6</sup>) (measure 16), (VI<sup>6</sup>) (measure 17), D: i<sub>3</sub><sup>5</sup> (measures 18-19), III (measure 20), and V<sup>#</sup> (measure 21). A dashed line connects the F: I chord to the D: i<sub>3</sub><sup>5</sup> chord, indicating a functional relationship. A bracket labeled (6-5) spans measures 18 and 19, indicating a specific intervallic relationship.

Rather than conclude definitively in F major, the refrain ends with 5-6 motion in m. 15, anticipating the third-related key area of the next section. The gesture of conclusion thus becomes one of initiation and the formal boundary becomes blurred as a result. The D-minor structural tonic, however, does not arrive until m. 20 (not printed), after the onset of the B section's first dominant harmony in m. 19. During the formal overlap, the "contrapuntal 5-6 alternation articulated by the linking motive extends the refrain's F *Stufe* into the B section, even as the D and F sounds shift to local tonic and mediant function,



respectively.”<sup>17</sup> Apparent versions of the F-major and D-minor harmonies bleed into each other’s respective section, creating instability across the delay of the B section’s structural tonic and beyond: “Even as the F *Stufe* extends beyond the boundary of the refrain, the up-and-coming D *Stufe* begins to emerge. Similarly after D has taken control, F lingers in the episode as an echo of its former self.”<sup>18</sup> Like a memory, F remains, dim and hazy.

Smith makes the claim that Brahms is the composer most frequently associated with linkage, though the practice is by no means exclusive to him in the tonal realm.<sup>19</sup> Jonas, too, hints at Brahms’s fondness for the technique.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, I will focus solely on the music of Brahms in my analyses, highlighting instances where the phenomenon occurs.

Rather than simply tread ground Smith has already covered, the primary goal of this study is to highlight further opportunities linkage technique affords analysts, specifically its ramifications with regard to narrative interpretation. Michael Baker, who has authored an unpublished article on linkage technique, claims that the lack of substantial research on the topic may be partially attributed to the fact that linkage “usually occurs as a fleeting, surface motivic

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<sup>17</sup>Smith, “New Perspectives on Brahms’s Linkage Technique,” 130.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>20</sup>Jonas, *Introduction to the Theory of Heinrich Schenker*, 9.

connection between different formal sections.”<sup>21</sup> Such a local phenomenon may not appear to invite closer examination or to contain significant expressive qualities. As I acknowledged in my discussion of Hatten’s theory, however, a temporal sequence increases in complexity and new meaning may emerge when the ending of a musical phrase simultaneously functions as the beginning of the subsequent phrase. A facet to linkage that has yet to be explored, in conjunction with narrative, is the manner in which the technique can produce confusion and disorientation and the expressive implications therein. While composers often use linkage to achieve formal cohesiveness, the technique can also cause temporal disruption, as will be demonstrated later in this paper.

In order to fully demonstrate the potential expressive consequences of linkage as a narrative device and to help account for the confusion and disorientation that can result from musical linkage, I will turn to an explicit analogue in literary narrative. Visual motifs link disparate temporal locations in the fiction of novelist, filmmaker, and literary theorist Alain Robbe-Grillet. In his novels, disorienting temporal shifts occur as a result of the idiosyncratic aesthetic program through which Robbe-Grillet harnesses written language. I argue that linkage in Robbe-Grillet’s fiction functions similarly to the formal technique found in Brahms’s music. Because of the dramatic role linkage technique plays

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<sup>21</sup>Heinrich Schenker, *Free Composition (Der freie Satz)*, translated and edited by Ernst Oster (New York: Longman, 1979), 26-27, quoted in Michael R. Baker, “A Framework for Describing Linkage Technique in Tonal Music,” 8.

in Robbe-Grillet's narratives, perhaps music analysts should reassess the significance of linkage technique as an expressive device in music.

### **Robbe-Grillet and Shifting Temporality**

Robbe-Grillet's radical treatment of memory in his novels can be traced back to Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*, which is widely recognized as a major novel of the twentieth-century. The novel is also generally regarded as a precursor to the nouveau roman, a twentieth-century literary movement that inspired fiction featuring experimental French prose. The bellwether of the nouveau roman is widely regarded to have been Robbe-Grillet.

An avant-gardist of the 1950s, Robbe-Grillet became hugely influential on his generation of writers and "changed the face of literature for better or for worse."<sup>22</sup> While also having made an impact on the world of cinema and psychology, he is regarded as "one of the great prose stylists of the French language . . . and one of the most influential figures on the intellectual landscape since . . . Sartre and Camus . . ."<sup>23</sup> Robbe-Grillet jettisoned traditional ideas of plot and character in favor of a style that supported "a treatment of human time which respects chronological leaps of the imagination and temporal distortions of memory or feeling."<sup>24</sup> His writing style has been described as

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<sup>22</sup>John Fletcher, *Alain Robbe-Grillet* (New York: Methuen, 1983), 13.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, 73.

phenomenological in that the formal structures of his prose resemble the structures of consciousness and experience. Timelines in Robbe-Grillet's novels are fractured, often leaving the reader in a state of bafflement due to the rendering of such dramatic temporal shifts. Robbe-Grillet's imagery is characterized by an unusual focus on seemingly "arid, interminable descriptions of such unremarkable objects such as coffee pots, erasers, and pieces of string."<sup>25</sup>

These objects often function as visual motifs, forming recursive links to other temporal locations in a narrative; their descriptions are exhaustively repeated at specific junctures via similar if not exact phrasing. The sudden shifts in the narrative thread thus result from different textual associations, triggers, or *générateurs*.<sup>26</sup> John Updike described Robbe-Grillet's prose as "not so much written as scripted" with its "splicing, blurring, stop-action, enlargement, panning, and fade-out."<sup>27</sup> Here, Updike aptly references cinematic techniques, probably the most immediate analogue, as he goes on to say that Robbe-Grillet's work "lacks only camera tracks and a union member operating the dolly."<sup>28</sup> As in the cinema, Robbe-Grillet uses images, in addition to words and phrases, as triggers of association to link nonadjacent moments in time. An appropriate cinematic parallel to this narrative device can be found in the famous graphic match cut at the end of the dawn-of-man sequence in Stanley Kubrick's 1968 film

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<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>27</sup>Rachel Donadio, "He Was Nouveau When It Was New," *The New York Times*, February 24, 2008.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*

*2001: A Space Odyssey*. Here, a primitive hominid tosses a bone into the air and the shot cuts abruptly to a similarly shaped space station in orbit above the earth, pulling the viewer forward in time millions of years.<sup>29</sup> Two vastly disparate objects in time are thus joined by way of two shots with similar compositional elements. In the case of Robbe-Grillet's novels, these elements may take the form of the same kind of object or a similarly shaped item, as in the film. The linkage thus occurs largely through a visual apparatus.

Robbe-Grillet's radical formal tools are an extension of the principles of association and memory found in Proust and it is precisely the radicalness of Robbe-Grillet's style of prose that invites the analogy to music. Proust's traditional narrative prose, in contrast, makes us aware that the narrator experiences memories of the past by telling us explicitly:

And suddenly the memory appears before me. The taste was that of the little morsel of madeleine that on Sunday mornings at Combray (because on those mornings I did not go out before the time for mass), when I went to say good morning to her in her bedroom, my Aunt Léonie used to give me, dipping it first in her own cup of real or of lime-blossom tea. The sight of the little madeleine had recalled nothing to my mind before I tasted it.<sup>30</sup>

The temporal shift is consciously wrought through the first-person narrative so that the reader can follow the trajectory of the narrator's thoughts. Even the verb

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<sup>29</sup>I will refer to the cinematic graphic match cut later in this paper as a shorthand analogy for Robbe-Grillet's linkage technique, so I include this example as an illustrative point of reference for the reader.

<sup>30</sup>Proust, *Swann's Way*, 53.

tense changes from present to past between the first and second sentence. The jump in time calls attention to itself because of the clear demarcation in the traditional prose. In Robbe-Grillet's nontraditional prose, however, a reversal occurs in which the *language* calls attention to itself, tricking the reader with its syntax. The jumps in time are seamless, abrupt, and highly disorienting, prompting the reader to rethink the flow of words.

The excerpt from Proust's novel features two separate madeleines: one in the temporal past and the other in the present. The narrator is reminded of the past by way of the madeleine in the present. In certain moments of musical linkage, however, a musical work's persona may not be remembering a temporally distant event. The musical syntax may instead assign a new event as the juncture at which two separate temporal zones overlap (the ending of one formal structure and the beginning of another), leaving only *one* "madeleine." In this sense, Robbe-Grillet's prose provides a more apt syntactical analogy than Proust's.

Like certain events in Brahms's music where linkage appears mid-phrase, the temporal shifts in Robbe-Grillet's prose frequently take place mid-sentence. Taken as an independent unit, a sentence may be coherently structured, but different elements in the sentence may belong to disparate temporal locations within the chronology of the novel's narrative. The reader must orient herself to the jarring shifts in time, make sense of how Robbe-Grillet's associative triggers

(linking objects) fit within the larger whole, and piece together the different narrative strands.

Robbe-Grillet's aesthetic program, which John Updike has called the most ambitious since surrealism, is fully realized in Robbe-Grillet's most acclaimed novel *Le Voyeur*, first published in 1955, the work I will focus on in this study.

The story follows a reclusive traveling salesman, Mathias, as suspicion begins to surround him after a young girl is found drowned and mutilated. At the beginning of the following excerpt, Mathias is walking early in the morning to catch a boat that will be leaving from the harbor. He takes a shortcut through an alleyway but stops when he thinks he hears a faint moaning coming from the ground-floor window of a house. Mathias's view is obstructed by curtains as he searches unsuccessfully for the source of the noise by peering through the window into a dimly lit bedroom:

Mathias had no time to wait for what was going to happen next – supposing that anything was going to happen next. He was not even certain the moans came from this house; he had guessed they came from a source still closer, less muffled than they would have been by a closed window. In thinking it over he wondered if he had heard only moans, inarticulate sounds; had there been identifiable words? In any case it was impossible for him to remember what they were. Judging from the quality of her voice – which was pleasant, and not at all sad – the victim must have been a very young woman, or a child. She was standing against one of the iron pillars that supported the deck above; her hands were clasped behind the small of her back, her legs braced and slightly spread, her head leaning against the column. Her huge eyes inordinately wide (whereas all the other passengers were squinting because the sun had begun to break through), she continued to look straight ahead of her,

with the same calmness with which she had just now looked into his own eyes.<sup>31</sup>

The passage abruptly shifts to a different point in time by changing the physical setting to the deck of the boat where Mathias eventually arrives. The associative link here is the visual image of a child who stands near Mathias while on the boat. The voice Mathias hears at the window resembles that of a young woman or child, the image of which redirects the narrative to an alternate temporal location. The transition is jarring, but the details of the new setting help the reader adapt: the iron pillars that support the deck and the mention of other passengers. Prior to this passage, Robbe-Grillet sets up the scene on the boat using conventional narrative devices, so the reader is already familiar with this setting. The reader subsequently realizes that the scene in the alleyway by the window is a flashback.

While the novel never states it explicitly, later passages strongly suggest that Mathias is indeed the murderer, which retroactively lends the above excerpt disturbing significance. The description of the girl on the boat is unusually lewd and conjures unsettling imagery of submissive action on the part of the victim. In effect, Mathias's psychosexual consciousness is evoked through Robbe-Grillet's prose, where characteristics of the murder victim bleed into Mathias's perception of other, physically similar people who trigger the same impulses.

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<sup>31</sup>Alain Robbe-Grillet, *The Voyeur*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 20.



The process of memory through association, as it occurs from the perspective of a disturbed psychological state, is thus revealed.

Robbe-Grillet's linkage technique immerses the reader in the psychology of his characters and defines his narratives, just as Brahms's linkage technique codes narrative in its potential expressive ramifications. Indeed, Robbe-Grillet's work has previously been discussed in conjunction with music. Robbe-Grillet scholar Bruce Morrisette discusses how composers, like Robbe-Grillet, have engaged in what he calls intertextual assemblage. Morrisette references Bach's B-minor Mass, for example, and describes briefly how the work is an assemblage of seven cantatas written during the two previous decades.<sup>32</sup> Rather than function to evoke memories of earlier works, however, this practice allowed for compositional expediency. More expansively, Michael Klein's book marks a significant contribution to research on intertextuality in music.<sup>33</sup> Borrowing from Julia Kristeva and Roland Barthes, Klein explores the interaction of instrumental texts from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (works by Beethoven, Schubert, and Lutoslawski, among others) with musical topics and the implications that arise from those interactions.

In Chapter 2 of the thesis, I explicate a philosophical justification for Robbe-Grillet's linkage technique to provide a suitable context for his aesthetic

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<sup>32</sup>Bruce Morrisette, *Intertextual Assemblage in Robbe-Grillet: From Topology to the Golden Triangle* (Fredericton: York Press, 1979), 13.

<sup>33</sup>Michael L. Klein, *Intertextuality in Western Art Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).

program and how it represents the ideals of the nouveau roman. Chapter 3 examines specific passages from Robbe-Grillet's novel *Le Voyeur*. Chapter 4 examines specific examples of *Knüpftechnik* as it appears in passages from Brahms's music and highlights the parallels to linkage technique in Robbe-Grillet's prose. The works by Brahms that I analyze include "Liebesglut," from a collection of five Lieder, op. 47, no. 2 and the first movement from the Piano Quartet No. 2 in A Major, op. 26. In Chapter 5, I conclude by emphasizing how Robbe-Grillet's linkage, through its disorienting effects, adds an expressive dimension to Brahms's linkage and points to the technique's significance in musical narrative.

**CHAPTER II**  
**ALAIN ROBBE-GRILLET AND THE NOUVEAU ROMAN:**  
**A PHILOSOPHY OF NARRATIVE**

Before examining how various instances of linkage can influence one's expressive interpretation of Brahms's music, I shall begin with the literary analogue in my discussion of linkage as a transitional narrative device. While I concede that the influence of linkage in narrative deserves to be recognized for its uniqueness in both mediums (by virtue of the singularity of each medium), I hope to, in this chapter, strengthen the connection between the two case studies by defining the philosophical basis of the nouveau roman genre and its link to phenomenology. In this chapter, I will discuss a significant component of Robbe-Grillet's theoretical foundation, which is closely tied to his approach to writing fiction, in order to provide a suitable context for his aesthetic program. In doing so, I hope to provide a philosophical framework for Robbe-Grillet's own linkage technique in his narratives. I will not only highlight how his worldview developed through his writing, but also how Robbe-Grillet's approach may be used to describe the thinking behind the nouveau roman genre. While the genre itself consists of a "disparate group of novelists,"<sup>34</sup> a broader philosophy unites

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<sup>34</sup>Fletcher, *Alain Robbe-Grillet*, 20

them. Robbe-Grillet himself attests to this sentiment, as will be evident in quotations from the author's essays that attempt to explain his work to critics and readers. His outspoken authorial persona led him to become "the leading voice of a 'school' to which none of its 'members' – including Robbe-Grillet – lay claim."<sup>35</sup>

Before proceeding, I again wish to acknowledge that the reader may find the pairing of these case studies to be unorthodox. Indeed, I am attempting to illustrate a phenomenon that occurs, on the one hand, in music of the late Romantic era and, on the other, in experimental literature that has garnered both labels of modern and postmodern. The assumption that the techniques of twentieth-century music are a more apt analogue to Robbe-Grillet's fiction is one with which I am hesitant to concur. Ilona Leki, for one, declares that the twentieth-century novel was "amazingly closer to the nineteenth-century novel than twentieth-century music and painting were to nineteenth-century music and painting."<sup>36</sup> The chronological proximity of the works I discuss has little relevance because phenomenology is a generalizable style of thought that was explored and theorized in the twentieth century, but latent in the nineteenth century.

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<sup>35</sup>Roch C. Smith, *Understanding Alain Robbe-Grillet* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 2000), 3.

<sup>36</sup>Ilona Leki, *Alain Robbe-Grillet* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1983), 2.

When the nouveau roman emerged in the 1950s, the critical debates that arose in response began to suggest that a precise definition of fiction, as a genre, demanded revision. While an updated formalization would supersede previously established but inadequate traditional models, it would not be designed simply to account for the nouveau roman's own idiosyncrasies. All preexisting fiction would have to be reevaluated in a new light as a result of these altered parameters.<sup>37</sup> Dovetailing with the emergence of the nouveau roman was an increasing preoccupation with realism in novels among writers and theorists. Flaubert, widely regarded as the paragon of modern realism, derived his artistic practice from "profound faith in the truth of language, responsibly, candidly, and carefully employed." He believed that "the truth of the phenomenal world is also revealed in linguistic expression."<sup>38</sup> Literary critic and scholar Erich Auerbach thought of the phenomenal world as the real world. He understood that in order to represent the world truthfully in fiction, it must be "observed very closely" and "observation is done by a particular self and that self is unique."<sup>39</sup>

Novelists in the twentieth century sought to accomplish this realist objective by shifting the focus from content to form. The capstone to the shift

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<sup>37</sup> Ann Jefferson, *The Nouveau Roman and the Poetics of Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 1-2.

<sup>38</sup> Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 486, quoted in Marjorie H. Hellerstein, *Inventing the Real World: The Art of Alain Robbe-Grillet* (London: Associated University Presses, 1998), 9.

<sup>39</sup> Hellerstein, *Inventing the Real World*, 9.

was the arrival of the nouveau roman. According to Ann Jefferson, there are two interpretations regarding the nature of the procedures directed toward this formal realism. The first view holds that the “formal organization of the novel mirrors the organization of the society in which it is produced” and the other “assumes that it mirrors the structure and patterns of human consciousness.”<sup>40</sup> Because the former does not account for the nouveau roman’s more peculiar aspects, the latter phenomenological interpretation is the more widely accepted one.

Critic John Sturrock claims that the entire nouveau roman genre is a concrete expression of the philosophy of phenomenology:

It is reflective and interrogative and exposes the process of composition in response to the way our image of the world has changed; it does not attempt to imitate reality but takes place in the consciousness of the novelist and thus continues the narrative tradition of the interior monologue; in it, time is used to portray the succession of mental experiences of the self; *things* are emphasized because there is a consciousness to see them.<sup>41</sup>

The reader identifies with the process of living as a result of writers’ attempts to put this philosophy into artistic practice. To enable readers to grasp what the nouveau roman aims to capture, Marjorie Hellerstein explains phenomenology as it relates to the genre:

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<sup>40</sup>Jefferson, *The Nouveau Roman*, 3.

<sup>41</sup>John Sturrock, *The French New Novel* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 5, quoted in Hellerstein, *Inventing the Real World*, 11-12.

In phenomenological thinking, the self sees, experiences, and organizes the world in its own way; the self is always idiosyncratic in its seeing and organizing because it cannot help but do its own work through its own body. In the practice of fictional realism, representation becomes a matter of presentation of the self's unique perceptions; as an artist, the self expresses its environment by structuring it in a particular way.<sup>42</sup>

The abandonment of plot and decreased attention to character, common criticisms leveled against the nouveau roman, were "necessitated by changes in the way people structure their experiences."<sup>43</sup> Linear narratives seemed antiquated because they were deemed an inaccurate representation of our experience of time. The disorganized chronological structures found within many nouveau romans can be read as a formal equivalent to what Sturrock calls "the play of the mind," where humans "rearrange the images or memories of the past without reference to perceived reality."<sup>44</sup> According to Jefferson, this view closely ties into Sartre's, who believed that a "novelistic technique always reflects the novelist's metaphysics."<sup>45</sup> The rejection of the omniscient author as a false rendering of the human experience can be traced back to Proust, Joyce, Kafka, and Faulkner. In addition, phenomenology at the time was becoming more of a pervasive philosophical endeavor throughout investigations in the physical

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<sup>42</sup>Hellerstein, *Inventing the Real World*, 10.

<sup>43</sup>Jefferson, *The Nouveau Roman*, 3.

<sup>44</sup>John Sturrock, *The French New Novel* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 22, quoted in Jefferson, *The Nouveau Roman*, 4.

<sup>45</sup>Jean-Paul Sartre, *Situations I*, in *Literary and Philosophical Essays* (London: Hutchinson, 1955), 71, quoted in Jefferson, *The Nouveau Roman*, 4.

sciences. The field of psychology too was undergoing, in parallel fashion, a major transformation.<sup>46</sup>

Robbe-Grillet's provisional definition of the New Novel grows out of his aggressive support for situating the narrative of a novel in the subjective experience of human reality:

[It] is closer to what we know today about man and his world, carefully describing discontinuous and fragile fragments, the misleading combinations of which seem always to be searching for possible meaning, which then sketches itself out, but at the same time escapes, crumbles, and soon takes a new shape, again provisional.<sup>47</sup>

Elsewhere, Robbe-Grillet writes: "In our books, it is *a man* who sees, feels, imagines, a man located in space and time, conditioned by his passions, a man like you and me. And the book tells us only about his limited, uncertain experience."<sup>48</sup> To Robbe-Grillet, modern fiction features a new kind of narrator: "he is no longer just a man describing the things he sees, but he is also the person who invents the things around him and who sees the things he invents."<sup>49</sup>

Rather than dispense with narrative altogether, Robbe-Grillet, as will be demonstrated, merely urges readers and critics to modify their perception of narrative by challenging the system with which we read novels and make sense

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<sup>46</sup>Smith, *Understanding Alain Robbe-Grillet*, 5.

<sup>47</sup>Alain Robbe-Grillet, "The French New Novel," trans. Anna Otten, *Antioch Review* 47 (Summer: 1987): 202, quoted in Hellerstein, *Inventing the Real World*, 13.

<sup>48</sup>Alain Robbe-Grillet, *Towards a New Novel* (London: John Calder, 1970), 118, quoted in Jefferson, *The Nouveau Roman*, 116.

<sup>49</sup>Robbe-Grillet, *Towards a New Novel*, 140, quoted in Jefferson, *The Nouveau Roman*, 113.



of them. One of the many misunderstandings that arose among readers and critics as a result of Robbe-Grillet's outspoken persona was that he was perceived to be attacking literature of the past in the manner of an iconoclast. On the contrary, rather than arguing that works of the past are obsolete, Robbe-Grillet states that we must write *now* as our predecessors wrote the new novel *then*: "Far from making a clean sweep of the past . . . our only ambition is to continue where they left off: not to do better, which doesn't make sense, but to follow after them, now, in our day."<sup>50</sup> He supports a novel that respects chronological leaps of the imagination in its treatment of time and the temporal disjunctions that result from jolts of memory and/or feeling. However, Robbe-Grillet "insists that these are not prescriptive statements, but merely indications of a way forward."<sup>51</sup>

Robbe-Grillet bemoaned how the novel had become primarily defined by "story." To him, the traditional story is constructed through artifice and projects a sense of contrived naturalness to a novel. This naturalness is deceptive because the very coherence and linear structure of the narrative feigns a real view of the world:

All the technical elements of narrative — the systematic use of the preterite and the third person, the unconditional adoption of chronological development, linear plots, a regular graph of the emotions, the structuring of each episode towards an end, etc.; everything was designed to impose

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<sup>50</sup>Alain Robbe-Grillet, *Snapshots and Towards a New Novel* (London: Calder & Boyars, 1965), 137, quoted in Fletcher, *Alain Robbe-Grillet*, 70.

<sup>51</sup>Fletcher, *Alain Robbe-Grillet*, 73.

an image of a stable, coherent, continuous, unambiguous, entirely decipherable universe.<sup>52</sup>

Tzvetan Todorov also comments on the arbitrary structure of story: “No narrative is natural, choice and construction will always direct its appearance; it is a discourse and not a series of events . . . There is only the myth of proper narrative.”<sup>53</sup>

Robbe-Grillet’s approach to the novel seeks to expose how fabrication and invention lie at the center of traditional narrative. He does this not only through formal procedures that affect the chronology of the narrative, but the content of the narrative itself. *Les Gommages* (1953), Robbe-Grillet’s first published novel and one of the earliest of the nouveau romans, is a detective story that neither reveals nor resolves anything. Instead of appearing at the beginning, as in a traditional detective novel, the murder occurs at the end and several other mysteries that arise along the way are not solved. The archetypal detective story usually features a final revelation or explanation, but the reader is left with more questions than answers at the end of *Les Gommages*.

Bruce Morrisette, a prominent critic of Robbe-Grillet’s work, stresses the responsibility of the reader in identifying and adapting to the author’s formal procedures: “[T]he reader or spectator must ‘decondition’ himself, become free to

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<sup>52</sup>Alain Robbe-Grillet, *Towards a New Novel*, 31, quoted in Jefferson, *The Nouveau Roman*, 15.

<sup>53</sup>Tzvetan Todorov, *Poetics of Prose* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978), 68, quoted in Jefferson, *The Nouveau Roman*, 14.

see things with a fresh vision.”<sup>54</sup> According to Ben Stoltzfus, Robbe-Grillet’s formal procedures are best understood as a representation of the “inner film of the mind’s eye.”<sup>55</sup> This description seems apt given Robbe-Grillet’s work as a filmmaker, though he had not yet entered into filmmaking during the process of writing his early novels, *Le Voyeur* among them. Nevertheless, *Le Voyeur* is “highly cinematic because of its heavy reliance on sight and sound, especially on the framing, detail, and movement of the visual descriptions,”<sup>56</sup> as will become evident in my analysis of the novel in the next chapter.

The point-of-view “eye” (or the camera eye) in Robbe-Grillet’s novels “records outlines and contexts of places and people by means of intense contemplation, by *looking* as a form of *thinking*.”<sup>57</sup> As a result, the look of an object being seen may either change because of an emotional association or the object may provoke the imagination of the character to conjure other illusory images. The repetition of motives (descriptions of objects and events) replaces cause-and-effect narrative construction. The structure of Robbe-Grillet’s works develops from these motives, which are more similar to those found in music than metaphorical motifs in literature.

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<sup>54</sup>Bruce Morrisette, *The Novels of Robbe-Grillet* (London: Cornell University Press, 1975), 37.

<sup>55</sup>Ben F. Stoltzfus, *Alain Robbe-Grillet and the New French Novel* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1964), 43.

<sup>56</sup>Smith, *Understanding Alain Robbe-Grillet*, 30.

<sup>57</sup>Hellerstein, *Inventing the Real World*, 25-26.

For Robbe-Grillet, metaphors function in an entirely different manner than motives and are realized through a different process altogether. According to the author, these motives, unlike traditional metaphors, do not give internal meaning to his stories.<sup>58</sup> Morrisette, on the other hand, claims that the obsessively repeated objects often do carry meaning, since what is repeated is considered to possess meaning. The figure-eight motive in *Le Voyeur*, for instance, can be viewed as representative of Mathias's psychological obsessions. Instead of referring to them as symbols or metaphors, however, Morrisette prefers to characterize these objects as supports (or objective correlatives) for sensations, emotions, and memories.<sup>59</sup>

Metonymy, according to Hellerstein, is an alternative form of metaphor and an essential component of Robbe-Grillet's formal techniques. Metonyms are "movements and variations on an original image, the variations connected by parallelism, contradiction, or expansion. The original description may be transformed beyond recognition, but it remains linked to each of its transformations."<sup>60</sup> This definition bears a striking resemblance to the manner in

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<sup>58</sup>Robbe-Grillet vehemently rejects anthropomorphizing objects through metaphor for the sake of emotional provocation. According to Robbe-Grillet, objects in his novels possess no meaning outside of human perception: "Man looks at the world, and the world does not look back at him." Alain Robbe-Grillet, *Towards a New Novel*, 53, quoted in Jefferson, *The Nouveau Roman*, 134. Explicating a musical narrative, however, often necessitates the anthropomorphization of musical units, a practice in which I engage in Chapter 4. Analysts that endeavor to uncover musical meaning often treat these units as *musical agents* within the unfolding temporal process of a narrative trajectory. See Byron Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 5.

<sup>59</sup>Morrisette, *The Novels of Robbe-Grillet*, 14.

<sup>60</sup>Hellerstein, *Inventing the Real World*, 25.

which some composers handle motives in music. A musical motive may undergo various transformations throughout a given work: transposition, augmentation, diminution, and inversion, among others. My analyses of two works by Brahms will show how a motive (either altered or unaltered) can link two sections, phrases, or phrase segments, appearing at the end of one and the beginning of the other. Similarly, Robbe-Grillet utilizes objects and shapes as visual motifs to link temporally disparate pieces of a narrative.

Descriptions of specific objects, moments, and events are repeated at various junctures through the use of what Hellerstein calls “contamination shots.”<sup>61</sup> As in the cinema, Robbe-Grillet’s novels feature abrupt “cuts” and “edits” that often scatter progressively longer segments of future scenes among earlier ones without warning. Later, the same descriptions appear in more logical, chronological contexts, making their earlier appearances seem like preparatory suggestions. These contamination shots or passages may also act as moments of remembrance or hallucinations (arising from unconscious impulses) that create the impression of a subjective state of mind. Hellerstein makes a distinction between these subjective descriptions and stream-of-consciousness writing because Robbe-Grillet’s observations are carefully and systematically assembled.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*

Robbe-Grillet's novel *La jalousie* (1957), Morrisette claims, contains more repetitions of scenes and fragments of scenes than any other work in the history of the novel.<sup>63</sup> Like many nouveau romans, distinctions between what actually occurred, what was a memory, or what was simply invented are often blurred to the point where the reader is never certain of whether the text has a narrator. This effect occurs in part as a result of the "ubiquitous use of the present tense."<sup>64</sup> By choosing present tense, Robbe-Grillet deliberately confuses general statements, descriptions, and text intended to propel the narrative. Each of these differently functioning story elements are "normally quite easily distinguishable by their different tenses (in the French tense system), the present being reserved for general, atemporal statements, the imperfect for descriptions and habitual actions, and the past historic for narrative proper."<sup>65</sup> In Robbe-Grillet's works, confusion arises because "[t]here is no syntax to subordinate narrative to description, or vice versa."<sup>66</sup> Combined with the lack of confirmation of the first person in the narration, the reader can never be certain whether the repetitions take place in the character's mind (as a representation of his obsessive impulses) or if they are part of the external reality, which may unfold within the framework of routine events and whose visual palette is adorned with interchangeable objects.

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<sup>63</sup>Morrisette, *The Novels of Robbe-Grillet*, 144.

<sup>64</sup>Jefferson, *The Nouveau Roman*, 41.

<sup>65</sup>*Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>66</sup>*Ibid.*

The repeated descriptions of objects and events, through which the resulting structure of Robbe-Grillet's novels evolves, "provide the inspiration, and, in all senses, the motives and controlling ideas for the movement and *linkage* [emphasis added] of the parts of each work."<sup>67</sup> In my introduction, I referred to the objects and passages of text, whose recursive appearance achieves this linkage effect, as *générateurs*. Transitions from the protagonist's inner vision to external reality may occur in passages from one sentence to another through "an intermediary, bridging sentence applicable because of verbal ambiguity to either of the other two."<sup>68</sup> Morrisette calls this an example of "scene linking"<sup>69</sup> while Roch C. Smith simply refers to it as a "transit."<sup>70</sup> Transits are distinct from transitions (the manner in which traditional prose shifts focus) in that they are much more immediate and attempt to paint mental activity directly. A transit—the process of scene linking through a bridging sentence—recalls the manner in which a single musical gesture can connect two distinct musical structures within a piece. In music, the linking gesture most often creates formal cohesion. Temporal disruption, however, can also arise (causing confusion and disorientation), as will become evident later in this paper.

The resemblance of Robbe-Grillet's formal processes in his novels to cinematic techniques should not be downplayed. Hellerstein states that the

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<sup>67</sup>Hellerstein, *Inventing the Real World*, 26-27.

<sup>68</sup>Morrisette, *The Novels of Robbe-Grillet*, 92.

<sup>69</sup>*Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>70</sup>Smith, *Understanding Alain Robbe-Grillet*, 34.

experience of film watching is “phenomenological and direct; the spectator is *there*.”<sup>71</sup> Novels that do not engage in similar procedures treat the reader as an outsider looking in on the action, a distant observer. The narrator in Robbe-Grillet’s works functions as the camera’s eye, which does not inform the observer when a change in temporal setting or narrative perspective is taking place. Hellerstein states that the camera is a more persuasive medium than words.<sup>72</sup> As a narrative form, music might be described similarly. The act of experiencing music is also phenomenological and direct. Just as passages in Robbe-Grillet’s *Le Voyeur* are a rigorous expression of Mathias’s “*contenu mental*,”<sup>73</sup> all formal machinations in a work of music are arguably an expression of the composer’s subjective processes.

Nouveau roman writers abandoned traditional formal approaches to narrative out of increasing necessity for a kind of realism that favored the unique mental experiences of the self and subjective consciousness. Robbe-Grillet, widely considered to have been the movement’s herald, believed the nouveau roman to be an appropriate way forward for the medium. After explicating Robbe-Grillet’s philosophical justification for his aesthetic program, I broadly highlighted how the author’s linkage technique serves as a significant formal tool in expressing a phenomenological narrative perspective. In the next chapter, I

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<sup>71</sup>Hellerstein, *Inventing the Real World*, 33.

<sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup>Morrisette, *The Novels of Robbe-Grillet*, 84.



will expand upon the groundwork laid here by examining specific passages in Robbe-Grillet's *Le Voyeur* to demonstrate his linkage technique and its effects on a particular narrative.

### CHAPTER III

#### LINKAGE TECHNIQUE IN ROBBE-GRILLET'S *LE VOYEUR*

In this chapter, I will analyze Robbe-Grillet's linkage technique in *Le Voyeur*, but I must first provide a partial summary of the novel so that the reader can fully grasp the context of certain pivotal scenes. Mathias, the protagonist of the novel, is a traveling salesman who arrives by boat to an island to sell wristwatches. One way in which Robbe-Grillet attempts to actualize Mathias's perspective is through descriptions of the character's mental calculations. He has six hours to sell ninety wristwatches and tries to work out the most efficient way to approach his clients by averaging the time he can allow for each sale. Hypothetical scenes of failed sales attempts appear as variations of real scenes that are presented later in the text. The reader experiences Mathias's hallucinatory mental state first as a disoriented observer and then, after becoming attuned to Robbe-Grillet's aesthetic trickery, later as a participant.<sup>74</sup>

Arriving at the island town's central square, Mathias walks by a movie poster showing a violent scene of a man strangling a young girl. On the boat previously, Mathias had remembered witnessing a similar scene through the

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<sup>74</sup>Morrisette, *The Novels of Robbe-Grillet*, 77.

window in the alley shortly before boarding the boat at dawn. On the island, he rents a bicycle and enters a café. Losing his way in a dark corridor, Mathias stumbles upon a room containing a disheveled bed, a black and white tile floor, and picture of a young girl kneeling, all of which create a disturbing aura. Later, Mathias rides his bicycle to the edge of a cliff to look at the sea. The sound of the waves slapping the rocks conjures a montage of violent images featuring a young girl sprawled on a disheveled bed and the details of a crime reported in a newspaper clipping Mathias carries in his wallet.

When Mathias finally arrives at a client's house, the scene of which he initially imagined to be an unsuccessful sales pitch, he spots another photograph on a mantelpiece—a young girl leaning against a tree. Mathias's dormant erotic impulses are awakened while talking with the client about her daughter Jacqueline, whose name he suddenly alters to Violet. He instead visualizes a girl *tied* to a tree. The newly introduced name may belong to the victim from the newspaper clipping, but this is never made clear (significantly, the word *viol* translates to “rape” in French). Jacqueline's mother tells Mathias that her daughter is out watching sheep by the cliff. Mathias says that he will not see her because he intends to continue on to the lighthouse. Shortly after he leaves, however, Mathias comes to a crossroads and turns his bicycle onto the path leading to the cliff.

Much has been written about the “missing page” that separates the first and second parts of the novel. After an abrupt leap in time, Mathias arrives back at the crossroads, where he had just been, and leans down to examine a crushed toad. Upon encountering a prospective client, Madame Marek, Mathias begins to verbally fabricate an alibi to account for the lost hour between his departure from and arrival back at the same spot. He methodically tries to construct a coherent series of events (in a vein similar to his sales calculations) leading to the present moment. The reader, of course, cannot verify his testimony because of the deliberate “hole” Robbe-Grillet has left in the narrative.

Arriving at a café, Mathias hears that Jacqueline has been reported missing. Once again, he attempts to formulate his alibi, the first version having unfolded fairly continuously and plausibly. Now, however, contradictions arise and the protagonist seems to be hiding an unknown guilt. The next day, Jacqueline’s body washes up on shore and most of the townsfolk assume that she died accidentally while playing on the cliff. Whispers of murder, however, begin to arise among sailors and people with whom Mathias crosses paths later on. Individual accusations are leveled at a couple of residents on the island, one of whom is the Mareks’ stepson Julien.

Mathias later encounters Julien back at the cliff and is overcome with fear as the boy claims, during their conversation, to have “seen everything.” Nothing more comes of this confrontation and Mathias eventually leaves the island by

another boat. The question of Mathias's guilt regarding Jacqueline's death is never explicitly answered. Despite this omission, the reader perceives an escalation to a criminal act through the erotic, violent hallucinations in the scenes presented above. According to John Fletcher, Jacqueline's murder – if that is indeed what took place – arises intertextually, growing out of the account of the similar crime in the newspaper clipping Mathias guiltily conceals in his wallet.<sup>75</sup>

Robbe-Grillet depicts Mathias's hallucinatory mental state by employing a style that Morrisette describes as "moving freely between a traditional third-person mode and one 'shifted' toward a virtual first person."<sup>76</sup> During the boat ride passage, discussed in my introduction, Mathias observes a young girl standing next to him and the description of her posture is unusually lewd. This specific moment told from Mathias's point of view is undoubtedly a product of his feelings and observations carried over from what he imagines to be happening on the other side of the bedroom window in the alley – the flashback – combined with his recollection of the murder victim's state. Small physical characteristics of past observations, kernels of visual memory, bleed into his present-day perception as a result of his disturbed psychological disposition.

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<sup>75</sup>Fletcher, *Alain Robbe-Grillet*, 34-35.

<sup>76</sup>Morrisette, *The Novels of Robbe-Grillet*, 93.

According to Morrisette, every major aspect of *Le Voyeur* illustrates the psychology of a classic schizophrenic with the compulsions of an erotic sadist.<sup>77</sup>

The passage below appears shortly after the moment featuring the young girl on the boat. The motivic linkage here occurs as a result of a banal instance of visual association and not from Mathias's perverse, psychological machinations. While still conveyed to the reader from Mathias's perspective, the process of association in this passage resonates as more of a universal, phenomenological moment that any seeing person may experience:

Judging from the sound of his knock, there could be no doubt that under this deceptive layer the door was really a wooden one. On a level with his face there were two round knots painted side by side: they looked like two big eyes---or more precisely like a pair of glasses. They were represented with an attention to detail not generally accorded to this type of decoration . . . If the paint were scratched away at this very point, two real knots might have been discovered in the wood, knots cut exactly in this shape---or in any case presenting a very similar formation. The fibers formed two dark circles, thicker at the top and bottom and provided, at their highest points, with a little excrescence pointing upward. More than like a pair of glasses, they looked like two rings painted in *trompe-l'oeil*, with the shadows they cast on the wood panel and the two nails on which they hung. Their position was certainly surprising, and their modest size seemed out of all proportion to the thickness of the ropes usually used: nothing much heavier than thin cords could have been attached to them.<sup>78</sup>

While the young girl on the boat ride functioned as the associative link that allowed for seamless transition from the window in the alleyway setting, the

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<sup>77</sup>*Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>78</sup>Robbe-Grillet, *The Voyeur*, 27.

visual motif in this excerpt is the eye-glass-shaped knots on the door of a potential customer's house. The passage abruptly shifts to a different point in time by changing the physical setting back to the boat. In sum, Robbe-Grillet first links the boat ride (the initial present) to the scene in the alley (the past) and then links it to the sales attempt (the future). To be clear, in the transition from the customer's house back to the boat, the reader does not return to the literal temporal present (because the boat scene is part of the temporal past), but rather the boat ride becomes the reader's present experience.

The figure-eight design initially associated with the knots on the door bridges the leap back in time through the cinematic equivalent of a graphic match cut. The knots *become* rings on the embankment close to the boat. They are similarly shaped, supported by nails, and used to hold rope. Out of context, the return to the boat does not seem immediately clear, but Robbe-Grillet previously describes the embankment in great detail earlier in the novel. This prior description enables the reader to recognize the return to this setting after the temporal departure:

Another design shaped like a figure eight – two circles incised side by side, and between them the same reddish excrescence that seemed to be the remains of a piece of iron. There must have been two rings fixed into the embankment. The one nearer the landing slip immediately disappeared, submerged by a wave. Then the other one was engulfed in its turn.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup>Robbe-Grillet, *The Voyeur*, 13.

In the later passage, Robbe-Grillet once again uses the word “excrecence” in his description in order to trigger the memory of the reader. The figure-eight motif recurs throughout the novel in various guises that help link disparate points in the narrative. In other guises, it takes on the form of a piece of cord that Mathias keeps in his pocket (after finding it on the boat) and a piece of string kept in a shoebox during his childhood. Because of this motivic association, leaps in time not only occur across hours within the same day, but across years as well.

During the boat ride, Mathias bends down to retrieve the piece of cord and immediately imagines the young girl seeming to stare at him. Robbe-Grillet scholar Ilona Leki acknowledges the disturbing implications of Mathias’s image of the young girl and the motivic significance of the cord: “Her posture is suggestive of a person tied to a post, feet apart, hands behind her back. The cord, a potential accoutrement of torture wrapped into a figure 8, is now syntagmatically linked to the little girl.”<sup>80</sup> This cord is later revealed to be the object used to tie up the murder victim. As the narrative expands, the reader becomes more aware of the complex web of psychological associations.

At least twenty other variants of the figure-eight motif can be found throughout the novel, including adjacent barrel covers, the movements of a searchlight beam, loops of smoke from Mathias’s cigarette, doodles in Mathias’s notebook, the flight patterns of seagulls, handcuffs that Mathias imagines, the

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<sup>80</sup>Leki, *Alain Robbe-Grillet*, 39.



arrangement of the stakes used to bind the victim, adjacent circular impressions left by wet glasses on a counter, Mathias's bicycle, and the shape of the path around the island. Thematically, the figure-eight motif complements the title of the novel in that it may represent the eyes of a *voyeur*. Finally, Morrisette claims that the action of the novel makes a figure eight in time:

Mathias completes the first loop when, on the afternoon of the first day, he misses his boat; during the following days, he repeats his itinerary and thus executes the second loop in the pattern. And it is at the point where the two loops of the actual road round the island touch, at the "crossroads," that Mathias, escaping as it were from the tyranny of the figure-of-eight form, evades his predetermined schedule to enter the "hole in time" created by the missing hour of the crime on the cliff.<sup>81</sup>

Like the cord in *Le Voyeur*, objects in Robbe-Grillet's other novels are reintroduced with variations on their context or visual orientation. The gum eraser in *Les Gomme*s and the centipede in *La Jalousie*, for instance, also imply a criminal or sexual act.

The means by which Robbe-Grillet generates moments of linkage do not always take the form of repeated objects. While objects often serve as visual supports for sensations and emotions, as Morrisette claims, a specific feeling or sensation may act alone in linking temporally distant pieces of the narrative, as in the following passage:

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<sup>81</sup>Morrisette, *The Novels of Robbe-Grillet*, 96.

Having reached the top of the inclined plane, he continued to make his way along the jetty at the top of the pier extending straight toward the quay. But the crowd of passengers moved very slowly among the nets and traps, and Mathias could not walk as rapidly as he wanted to. To jostle past his neighbors served no purpose, in view of the narrowness and complexity of the passage. He would have to advance at their pace. Nevertheless he felt a slight impatience rising within him. They were taking too long to answer the door. Lifting his hand on a level with his face this time, he knocked again – between the two eyes painted on the wood. The door, which must have been extremely thick, sent back a dull sound which would be barely audible inside. He was about to knock again, this time with his ring, when he heard a noise in the vestibule.<sup>82</sup>

The first half of the passage takes place shortly after Mathias leaves the boat that had just arrived at the island. Passengers still surround him as each of them makes their way along the pier. Rather than an image or object, the feeling of “a slight impatience rising within him” functions as the associative link to a future episode: the scene at the client’s door, discussed previously. Even while “the two eyes painted on the wood” do not again serve as the linking device in this instance, Robbe-Grillet includes this detail in the description to remind the reader of the familiar setting and to maintain Mathias’s obsessive preoccupation with certain visual stimuli. The transition from the client’s house back to the pier is effected similarly to the first, via sensation alone:

“Good morning, madame,” he said. “How are you?” The door slammed in his face.

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<sup>82</sup>Robbe-Grillet, *The Voyeur*, 28.

The door had not slammed, but it was still closed. Mathias felt as if he were going to be dizzy.

He noticed that he was walking too near the edge, on the side where the pier had no railing. He stopped to let a group of people pass him; a narrowing of the path, caused by the accumulation of empty boxes and baskets, dangerously choked the line of passengers ahead of him.<sup>83</sup>

Mathias's impatience provokes the transition from the quay to the potential customer's house by virtue of the two associations attached to the feeling (the slowness of the boat passengers and the client's response time). The retransition, contrastingly, occurs as a result of the dazed feeling Mathias experiences from imagining the slamming door and walking too close to the edge of the pier. While these linking sensations may not provide a direct window into Mathias's disturbed psychology, they contribute to the protagonist's pervasive state of anxiety and restlessness, which intensifies once the character begins to focus on creating a plausible alibi for the "missing hour" of his time on the island.

Temporal shifts in the novel not only occur from sentence to sentence, but occasionally in mid-sentence as well. This potentially more disorienting maneuver is demonstrated in the passage below. Here, Mathias enters a client's house and prepares to display his merchandise:

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<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

He managed to reach the kitchen and its oval table, and set his suitcase on it while continuing the conversation. Then there was the oilcloth and the little flowers of its pattern. Things were going almost too quickly. There was the pressure of his fingers on the clasp of the suitcase, the cover opening wide, the memorandum book lying on the pile of cardboard strips, the dolls printed on the lining, the memorandum book inside the open cover, the piece of cord rolled into a figure eight on top of the pile of cardboard strips, the vertical side of the pier extending straight toward the quay. Mathias stepped back from the water, toward the parapet.

Among the passengers lined up in front of him he looked for the little girl who had been staring into space; he did not see her any more – unless he was looking at her without recognizing her. He turned around as he was walking, thinking he might catch sight of her behind him. He was surprised to discover that he was the last passenger on the pier.<sup>84</sup>

Robbe-Grillet chooses to begin a new paragraph, perhaps mischievously, only after the temporal leap has already been established. The flashback to the pier takes place as part of Mathias's mental process of registering (in list form) his actions and the objects in his immediate field of vision. Once again, the figure-eight motif (the piece of cord) triggers the abrupt transition. Unlike the moment of linkage that occurred between the embankment of the island and the knots on the door, however, the figure-eight motif here does not allow the unfolding narrative to participate in the cinematic equivalent of a graphic match cut. The shape of the cord itself does not bridge the gap between temporal zones, but a more complex associative concatenation occurs instead. While the cord indeed triggers the jump in time, its corresponding object (the rings on the embankment)

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<sup>84</sup>Robbe-Grillet, *The Voyeur*, 31-32.

is not present in the reader's visual frame when the scene at the pier returns. We are only told of the "vertical side of the pier extending straight toward the quay" and of Mathias stepping back from the water. While the reader does not "see" the figure-eight shape in the form of the rings on the embankment, the reader infers the association attached to the pier in the mind of Mathias. In a broader sense, the shape of the cord becomes connected to a place in addition to a visually analogous object. Similarly, the cord is inextricably linked to the little girl, as Ilona Leki notes. As the above passage demonstrates, Mathias's thoughts indeed return to the young girl.

While the live presence of an anonymous girl provoked Mathias's mental flashback to the alley during the boat ride, similar episodes later on unfold with a static image as the generator. As described earlier, Mathias, while in town, comes across a movie poster featuring a violent scene of a man strangling a young girl. In the excerpt below, however, Mathias has wandered down a corridor after entering a café and the image he encounters is not nearly as explicit and direct in its association. He stumbles upon a bedroom containing an oil painting of a girl praying beside a bed, which prompts another temporal leap. The bedroom itself reinforces Mathias's association, as it emanates a strange aura of familiarity. The room "surprised Mathias by its resemblance to something he

could not later identify.”<sup>85</sup> As this quotation demonstrates, Mathias seems unable to consciously interpret some of the associations his mind makes, perhaps as a form of denial of his own perverse compulsions. Supporting the psychology of a disturbed character, Mathias’s thoughts can be interpreted as uncontrollable even while he visualizes the most subtle of physical parallels between people or locations. While these thoughts may eventually provide a convincing portrait of a guilty perpetrator to the reader, the protagonist himself refuses to acknowledge their implications. During the following episode, the painting of the young girl, bolstered by the surrounding context of the bedroom setting, stimulates Mathias’s mental imagery:

The tiling alone could not account for the rather unusual character of the room; its colors were quite ordinary and its presence in a bedroom was easily explained: for instance, as a result of a modification of the entire apartment which had caused the functions of certain rooms to be exchanged. The bed, the night table, the little rectangular rug, the dressing table with its mirror were all popular styles, as was the wallpaper of tiny, many-colored bouquets printed on a cream-colored background. Over the bed, an oil painting (or a vulgar reproduction framed as if it were a masterpiece) showed the corner of a room just like the one in which it hung: a low bed, a night table, a lambskin. Kneeling on the lambskin and facing the bed, a little girl in a nightgown is about to say her prayers, bending her head over her clasped hands. It is evening. The lamp illuminates, from a forty-five-degree angle, the child’s neck and right shoulder.

On the night table, the bed lamp had been turned on — forgotten; the daylight, barely obscured by a simple voile curtain, had prevented Mathias from noticing it right away, but the conical lamp shade was

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<sup>85</sup>Robbe-Grillet, *The Voyeur*, 53.

unmistakably illuminated from within. Just beneath it shone a small blue rectangular object – which must have been a pack of cigarettes.

Although the rest of the room seemed orderly enough, the bed looked as if it had been the scene of a struggle, or were in the process of being changed. The dark red bedspread had been rumpled and trailed along the tiles on one side of the bed.<sup>86</sup>

Mathias's strange initial feeling of familiarity with the room finds concrete representation in the oil painting above the bed, which shows "the corner of a room just like the one in which it hung." With the girl as its centerpiece, the painting serves as a window that affords the reader a glimpse into the past while in the present. Rendered through Robbe-Grillet's subjective prose, however, the past and present become intertwined and inseparable.

While the image of the kneeling girl strongly contributes to Mathias's flashback, it does not ultimately create the linkage effect in this passage. Like the piece of cord triggering the shift from the interior of the client's house to the pier, the image of the girl in the painting is not transformed into a similar likeness. Unlike the passage containing the shift from the house to the pier, however, this scene contains another object that allows for the graphic match cut to occur: the lamp. Beginning with descriptions of the "voile curtain" and the "conical lamp shade," the scene evolves into a varied repetition of the passage in the alley – under the bedroom window – before the boat ride. The lamp in the café

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<sup>86</sup>Robbe-Grillet, *The Voyeur*, 54-55.

bedroom was not previously described as conical, nor was there any mention of a curtain earlier in the passage. Thus, the shift occurs at the beginning of the second paragraph, after the description of the lamp illuminating the child's neck and shoulder. The pack of cigarettes and the description of the bed as being unmade – also absent from earlier in the excerpt – secure the jump in time. Details such as the conical lamp shade, the voile curtain, the disheveled bed, and the blue pack of cigarettes are all featured in the alley scene before the boat ride.<sup>87</sup>

While most of the transitions that arise from Robbe-Grillet's linkage technique aim for seamless melding of disparate temporal zones, the following excerpt contains a transformation of Mathias's mental imagery that is seismic in the way it calls attention to itself. In my previous examples, words and sentences flow continuously after one other in a way that resembles traditional narrative syntax, despite the abrupt temporal leaps. Even while lacking signposts for shifts in narrative location, these passages comprise sentences that possess self-contained logic and retain a sense of coherence. Here, Mathias enters a café and his mental process undergoes a seizure-like episode. The nonsensical structure of Robbe-Grillet's prose in the excerpt reflects this incident:

The arrangement inside was like that of all such establishments in the country or even in the suburbs of big cities – or on the quays of little

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<sup>87</sup>Robbe-Grillet, *The Voyeur*, 19-20.



fishing ports. The girl behind the bar had a timorous face and the ill-assured manners of a dog that had been ill-assured manners of a dog that had been ill-assured manners of a girl who served behind the . . . Behind the bar, a fat woman with a satisfied, jovial face beneath her abundant gray hair was pouring drinks for two workmen in blue overalls.<sup>88</sup>

The bartender whom Mathias initially perceives to be a girl with a “timorous face” is a memory fragment from his visit to a café featured earlier in the novel:

The next shop was the café “A l’Espérance.” He walked in. The first thing to do in a café is to buy a drink. He went to the bar, set his suitcase on the floor between his feet, and asked for an absinthe.

The girl working behind the bar had a timorous face and the ill-assured manner of a dog that had been whipped. When she ventured to raise her eyelids her large eyes could be seen – dark and lovely – but only for an instant; she lowered them immediately, leaving only her long doll’s lashes to be admired. Their delicate outlines emphasized her vulnerable expression.<sup>89</sup>

The first passage begins in the present, but shifts to the past by the second sentence. Robbe-Grillet subsequently reorients the reader to the present scene through Mathias’s seizure-like episode. Like the scene in the café bedroom, linkage arises largely as a result of the setting (in this case, a bar), which reminds Mathias of his experience earlier in the novel. Adding another layer of complexity to the associative texture is the use of the word “timorous.” Elsewhere in the novel, Mathias uses the word to describe Violet, Jacqueline’s

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<sup>88</sup>*Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>89</sup>Robbe-Grillet, *The Voyeur*, 44.

doppelgänger, the murder victim featured in Mathias's newspaper clipping. The focus on the first bartender's "dark and lovely" eyes, "doll's lashes," and "vulnerable expression" enhances the reader's impression of Mathias's associative infatuation.

The linkage effect in the following excerpt illustrates Mathias's frequent confusion of Jacqueline and Violet: "Little Jacqueline was walking along the path on top of the cliff, showing off her delicate, scandalous silhouette. In the hollows, sheltered from the wind, in the long meadow grass, under the hedges, against the trunk of a pine, she stopped and slowly ran her fingertips over her hair, her neck, her shoulders . . ." <sup>90</sup> This fragment begins with Jacqueline on the cliff (possibly drawn from the "missing page"), but the physical description of being "against the trunk of a pine" belongs to Mathias's recollection of Violet. A more detailed account appears earlier in the novel during Mathias's visit to Jacqueline's mother's house. He confuses Jacqueline and Violet, once again, while studying a photo of the former and imagining the latter: "Violet, on the contrary, was standing against the rectilinear trunk of a pine tree, her head leaning against the bark, her legs braced and slightly spread, her hands clasped behind the small of her back. Her posture, an ambiguous mixture of surrender and constraint, made it look as if she might have been bound to the tree." <sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup>*Ibid.*, 146.

<sup>91</sup>Robbe-Grillet, *The Voyeur*, 68.

The end of the first excerpt shifts immediately back to Jacqueline with her stopping and “slowly [running] her fingertips over her hair, her neck, [and] her shoulders.” The reader becomes aware of the retransition following the contamination shot of Violet being “bound to the tree” with her hands “clasped behind the small of her back,” which makes her incapable of performing the action that Jacqueline can do more feasibly. The detail pertaining to clasped hands behind the small of one’s back, along with the mention of “braced” and “slightly spread” legs, appears verbatim in the description of the girl from the boat. A reference to “clasped” hands also appears during the passage in which Mathias enters the café bedroom with the oil painting of a praying girl. The account of Violet against the tree therefore serves as an apotheosis of these descriptive elements by which Mathias has experienced temporal leaps.

By explicating selected excerpts from *Le Voyeur*, I have shown how Robbe-Grillet crafts a “virtual” first-person, non-linear narrative and connects temporally disparate settings using various types of linkage technique. These excerpts demonstrate how linkage in Robbe-Grillet’s work may occur at the beginning of a sentence/paragraph or even mid-sentence, resulting in a potentially disorienting effect on the reader. In *Le Voyeur*, linkage may arise from an object/shape, the image of a person, or a sensation/feeling that Mathias experiences. Woven into a complex web of psychological associations and often

repeated obsessively, these linking motives help communicate the troubled mental state of the protagonist.

CHAPTER IV  
LINKAGE TECHNIQUE IN BRAHMS AND ITS  
NARRATIVE REPERCUSSIONS

“Liebesglut,” Op. 47, No. 2

Having examined passages from Robbe-Grillet’s *Le Voyeur*, I will show how the disorienting effects of linkage technique in the novel help explain temporally disruptive linkage events in Brahms’s song and how they inform agency in the musical narrative. In this chapter, I juxtapose linkage events in Brahms’s music and Robbe-Grillet’s novel. The works on which Peter Smith focuses his discussions of Brahms’s linkage technique are primarily instrumental. “Liebesglut” comes from a collection of five lieder and will demonstrate how contrasting instances of linkage within a work may collectively influence a narrative communicated through both music and text.

In his 2007 article, Peter Smith describes how various musical components may enhance the associative effect of linkage: “In the rhythmic dimension, this enhancement may involve . . . a change in the hypermetric position of a linking motive.”<sup>92</sup> In this song, a familiar rhythmic motive must be reinterpreted because the hypermetrical downbeat shifts within a phrase, resulting in temporal

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<sup>92</sup>Smith, “New Perspectives on Brahms’s Linkage Technique,” 110.

disruption and an elision. While my reading of the musical narrative partially derives from Brahms's treatment of hypermeter throughout the work, the interaction of linkage with the harmonic fabric also plays a significant role. By engaging with the text's themes, I argue that the song's second half progresses through a tragically ironic denouement and rejects the earlier expressive implications defined by the moments of linkage. Rather than resolution, defeat and resignation characterize the conclusion of the work.

“Liebesglut” translates to “Embers of Love” and the text of the song is written by Georg Friedrich Daumer, from *Hafis – Eine Sammlung persischer Gedichte* (1846):

Die Flamme hier, die wilde, zu verhehlen,  
Die Schmerzen alle, welche mich zerquälen,  
Vermag ich es, da alle Winde ringsum  
Die Gründe meiner Traurigkeit erzählen?

Daß ich ein Stäubchen deines Weges stäube,  
Wie magst du doch, o sprich, wie darfst du schmählen?  
Verklage dich, verklage das Verhängnis,  
Das waltet über alle Menschenseelen!

Da selbiges verordnete, das ewige,  
Wie alle sollten ihre Wege wählen,  
Da wurde deinem Lockenhaar der Auftrag,  
Mir Ehre, Glauben und Vernunft zu stehlen.

English translation:

How can I hope for long to keep in hiding,  
the flames that scorch my heart without subsiding,  
when all the winds around about me gliding,  
to all the world my sorrows are confiding?

If I to you am but a speck of dust, am  
I then to blame? Ah nay, for I am blameless.  
To you the blame, to you and those three Sisters  
who spin the thread that rules the souls of mortals!

The ways of all mankind are at their bidding,  
and all that mortals do by their commanding.  
Twas they who bade your curly locks to rob me  
of honor, reason, faith, and understanding.<sup>93</sup>

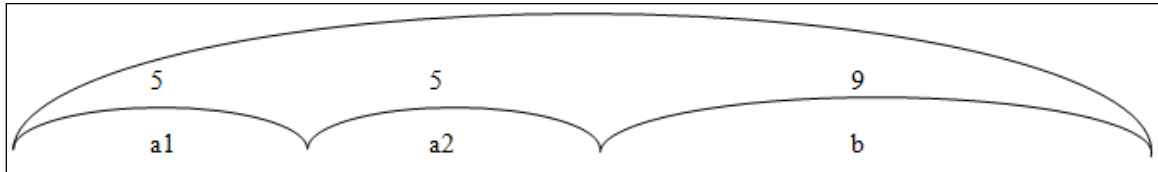
The song describes a man spurned by a female lover. She has unjustly wronged the man and he harbors feelings of resentment. The narrator is still plagued by amorous feelings and cannot reconcile them with his bitter thoughts. The speaker concludes cynically that his path crossing with the woman's (and the result) was preordained. The poem's fatalistic turn ends with the speaker asserting that his corrupted sense of self was predetermined, a product of his succumbing to the woman's allure. In my analysis, I will demonstrate how the narrator's shift in philosophical perspective (a newfound belief in predestination and inevitability) correlates with a shift from irregular hypermeter to regular hypermeter.

The first stanza is set to a sentence structure, as illustrated in Figure 2: the first two phrases (mm. 5-9 and 10-14) are parallel – the melody transposed up a third in mm. 10-14 – and the third phrase (mm. 15-23) is nearly twice the length of the first two.

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<sup>93</sup>Henry S. Drinker, *Texts of the Vocal Works of Johannes Brahms in English Translation* (New York: Printed privately and distributed by the Association of American Colleges, Arts Program, 1946), 64-65.

Figure 2. Sentence Structure Setting of the First Stanza in “Liebesglut,” Op. 47, No. 2, mm. 5–23.



Given the agitated tone of the text, the music supporting it has an appropriately tumultuous rhythmic texture: the piano features a two-against-three metrical grouping dissonance at the outset. The music temporarily follows an irregular hypermeter of 5/4, beginning in m. 5. The right hand’s echo of the voice’s F-A  $\flat$  cell (mm. 8-9) adds an extra beat to the hypermeasure. Rather than adopt the “extra measure” reading (4 + 1) of a first hearing, I prefer to interpret the 5/4 hypermeasure retrospectively as a fusion of three-beat and two-beat hypermeasures, thereby shifting the location of the second strong measure earlier. In this retrospective hearing, shown in Figure 3, I argue that m. 8 is a strong hyperbeat. The relatively long quarter notes that follow the descending eighth notes create an agogic accent on the downbeat of the measure. The A-flat major plagal half cadence<sup>94</sup> in mm. 7-8 adds further weight to m. 8, whose harmony extends into m. 9.

<sup>94</sup>Daniel Harrison refers to a phrase-ending harmonic motion I–IV as the model for the descending-fifth half cadence. See Daniel Harrison, *Harmonic Function in Chromatic Music* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 29.



Figure 3. Hypermetric Interpretation of the Vocal Line in “Liebesglut,” mm. 5-14.

The image displays two staves of musical notation for the vocal line of "Liebesglut," measures 5 through 14. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 2/4. The notation is presented in two systems. The first system, measures 5-9, is marked with a '8' at the beginning. The second system, measures 10-14, is marked with a '10' at the beginning. Below the notes, hypermetric groupings are indicated by numbers 1, 2, and 3. In the first system, the groupings are 1 (measures 5-6), 2 (measures 7-8), 3 (measures 9-10), 1 (measures 11-12), and 2 (measures 13-14). In the second system, the groupings are 1 (measures 10-11), 2 (measures 12-13), 3 (measures 14-15), 1 (measures 16-17), and 2 (measures 18-19).

The third phrase of the sentence, shown in Figure 4, departs from the template and hypermeter that the piece has established up until this point.

Figure 4. First Instance of Linkage in “Liebesglut,” Piano Reduction, mm. 15–23.

8  
(ver) - mag ich es, da al - le Win - de rings - um die

1 2 3 4

19  
Gründe mei - ner Trau - rig - keit er - zäh - - len?

5 1 1 2 2 3 3 4 4 5

f: VI—

D-flat *Stufe* and new line of the poem in m. 19

Registral and agogic accents in m. 20

The listener initially carries over the hypermetric interpretation of mm. 5-9 and mm. 10-14 in expectation of repetition, but must later adjust her reading. M. 18 contains an agogic accent in the voice (like m. 8 and m. 13), but the harmonic rhythm is faster. In m. 19, a new line of the poem begins along with the D-flat *Stufe*, both of which carry significant weight. This moment implies a seemingly

early arrival of a hypermetrical downbeat, thwarting listener expectations. The eighth notes in the vocal line, however, recall prior metrically weak measures (the third hypermetrical beats of the first two phrases). These occur at the end of what the listener expected to be another 5/4 hypermeasure.

The four eighth notes in m. 19, while coinciding with the arrival of VI, also function as an anacrusis into m. 20, the climax of the third phrase and where hypermetrical ambiguity intensifies. Here, the vocal line's registral high point coincides with the end of a crescendo and the piano's registral low point, demanding stress. M. 19 is therefore a point of subphrase elision, resulting in hypermetric reinterpretation. The measure functions as both a strong measure and a weak measure, causing temporal disruption. While the new line of the poem and the onset of the D-flat *Stufe* in m. 19 create an accent, the subsequent agogic and registral accents in m. 20 force a retroactive adjustment of the hypermeter. The previous four eighth notes in the voice are, in this competing interpretation, reassigned to the status of an anacrusis. The rhythmic fragment's position in the ambiguous measure thus links two five-measure subphrases – superimposing the end of the first and the beginning of the second onto one another – creating unequal hypermeasures on the surface. The linkage in m. 19, a byproduct of subphrase elision and hypermetric reinterpretation in this case, offers the listener two possible interpretations of how to group the measures in the third phrase.

The phrase is nine measures long instead of the expected ten, one measure short of creating a symmetrical sentence structure. Awareness of a “missing measure” should lead the listener either to a  $5/4 + 4/4$  reading of the two hypermeasures or a  $4/4 + 5/4$  interpretation. In light of m. 19’s proposed strength, m. 18 becomes a retrospectively weak measure. M. 17’s strength emerges from being a compressed iteration of m. 15, despite the four eighth notes in the voice (first associated with metrical weakness). Therefore, both hypermetric interpretations require m. 17 to be treated as strong. In the first reading, the  $5/4$  hypermeasure would be divided into  $2 + 3$ . This retrospective hearing is my preferred interpretation. Adopting the second reading, however, would entail a division of the alternative  $5/4$  hypermeasure into  $3 + 2$ , with the cadential  $6/4$  in m. 22 emphasized. The latter interpretation also preserves the  $3 + 2$  division of the  $5/4$  hypermeasures from the first two phrases.

The temporal disruption that arises during the first moment of linkage technique is comparable to what I explored in Robbe-Grillet’s fiction: narrative disjunction that results from a similar but uniquely rendered linkage effect. The particular instance of musical linkage just discussed finds its analogue in two passages I examined in *Le Voyeur*. In these excerpts, Robbe-Grillet links temporally distant sections of the narrative by way of a specific feeling or sensation (impatience and dizziness) rather than through a visual apparatus. Robbe-Grillet preserves the essence of the linking device across the transitions.

The internal experiences of impatience and dizziness manifest themselves in both passages without becoming altered (only the surrounding context changes), unlike in other excerpts where an object's image is transformed into a slightly altered version or a similarly shaped object.

In "Liebesglut," Brahms connects the two halves of the third phrase via *one* occurrence of a linking device, a rhythmic cell of four eighth notes. He does not alter its essence, nor does he immediately repeat the rhythmic cell, as in other instances of linkage technique. Like Robbe-Grillet's sole references to the terms "impatience" and "dizziness" in their respective prose passages, Brahms's linking gesture exists singularly while bridging two separate temporal zones.

The first instance of linkage technique in "Liebesglut" occurs in the midst of a musical phrase, not unlike moments in *Le Voyeur* in which Robbe-Grillet's linkage technique takes place mid-sentence. The event blurs the boundary between two metrical units in the third phrase and corresponds to Peter Smith's description of how the hypermetrical position of a linking motive may be altered. The next instance of linkage technique, shown in Figure 5, connects the first and second stanzas of the piece to achieve formal cohesiveness.

Figure 5. Second Instance of Linkage in “Liebesglut,” mm. 22–32.

The image displays a musical score for the song "Liebesglut" by Johannes Brahms, specifically measures 22 through 32. The score is written for voice and piano. The first system (mm. 22-23) shows the vocal line with the lyrics "zäh - - len?" and "Daß". The piano accompaniment features a half cadence in F major. A circle highlights a specific chord in the piano part, and a bracket connects it to the beginning of the second system (mm. 24-32). The second system shows the vocal line with the lyrics "ich, ein Stäubchendei - nes We - - ges stäu - be, wie magst du". The piano accompaniment features a descending cell F-E, rhythmically compressed in the upper line of the piano relative to mm. 22-23. The score is marked with a forte (f) dynamic and a tempo marking of 28.

The motion from 6/4 to 5/3 at the end of the first stanza (mm. 22-23) is not followed by a resolution to tonic in m. 24, nor is there an immediate fourth phrase. The vocal line contains the melodic fragment F-E in mm. 22-23 as part of the half cadence that concludes the third phrase. M. 24, a repetition of the song's opening measure, also features the descending cell F-E, rhythmically compressed in the upper line of the piano relative to mm. 22-23. Here, Brahms creates a linkage effect across a transition between verses instead of resolving the resounding dominant harmony and beginning the second stanza immediately.

The descending half-step motive F-E appears twice adjacently, albeit in different registers and of distinct rhythmic character. The reappearance of the F-E motive in the piano in m. 27, as part of an inner-voice 4-3 suspension figure, seals the linkage effect immediately prior to the next stanza. Brahms's linkage technique thus enables the listener to hear these four measures as not only a return to material from the beginning, but also an extension of the dominant harmony of the previous phrase.

While the first instance of linkage invited comparison to specialized moments of linkage in Robbe-Grillet's *Le Voyeur*, this second event resembles the more common manifestations of the technique in the novel: temporally distant sections of the narrative connected through visual cues. Numerous passages in *Le Voyeur* feature transitions that transform objects into slightly altered versions of themselves or similarly shaped items. The figure-eight motif, for example, appears in the form of a cord, adjacent knots on a door, and rings on an embankment, among many other incarnations.

The second moment of linkage in "Liebesglut" involves a motive that is rhythmically altered and placed in a different register upon repetition. The melodic contour and pitch content, however, remain the same. Like the figure-eight motif in *Le Voyeur*, the F-E cell can still be recognized under a slightly different guise. The linking devices in both mediums are stated twice adjacently, unlike the first instance in the song. While the goal of formal cohesion rather

than disruption governs the function of the second linkage event in “Liebesglut,” the associative properties of this moment still recall the narrative mechanics of Robbe-Grillet’s novel. Just as the cord is inextricably linked to the little girl in *Le Voyeur*, for example, the F-E motive is associated with the piano introduction. While Mathias’s psyche conjures the image of the girl through a literal leap backwards in time, the piano introduction returns (following the moment of linkage) as if through a leap backwards in time.

In the first stanza, the piano introduction leads into the first phrase with an authentic cadence (mm. 4-5) and the first two phrases also end with cadences containing root motion by descending fifth: mm. 5-9 a plagal half cadence in A-flat major, and mm. 10-14 an authentic cadence in F minor. This series of cadences creates the expectation of another authentic cadence on F in m. 24, immediately after the end of the first stanza, but Brahms’s linkage technique suppresses the event. Mm. 24-27 also imply a return to the song’s tonic and opening material, but the music that follows belies those expectations. The second instance of linkage not only blurs the boundary between the first and second stanzas, but also initiates a passage of prolonged harmonic instability by replacing an expected arrival of tonic.

The F-minor tonic does not return in mm. 28-47 (the second stanza), which can be interpreted as four 5/4 hypermeasures. While mm. 28-31 continue to imply F minor, the tonic sonority itself proves elusive. The shift to a sparser



texture in the piano obscures the clarity of the harmonic support, but the downbeat articulations of C and E in the bass continue to prolong the dominant.

A third example of linkage, shown in Figure 6, can be found in mm. 37-38 during the transition between two phrases. Here, Brahms sends the conclusion of the second stanza veering in unexpected directions harmonically.

Figure 6. Third Instance of Linkage in “Liebesglut,” mm. 33–46.

The image displays a musical score for the third instance of linkage in "Liebesglut," measures 33–46. The score is written for voice and piano. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is 6/4. The tempo is marked "cresc." (crescendo). The score is divided into three systems. The first system (mm. 33–36) shows the voice part with the lyrics "doch, o sprich, wie darfst du schmä - - len? Ver -". The piano part features a complex rhythmic pattern. The second system (mm. 37–42) shows the voice part with the lyrics "kla - - ge dich, ver - kla - ge das Ver - häng - nis, das". The piano part continues with a similar rhythmic pattern. The third system (mm. 43–46) shows the voice part with the lyrics "wal - - tet ü - - ber al - le Men - schen - see - len!". The piano part concludes with a final chord. Annotations include: "ME RE" above the voice part in the first system; "ME RE DO" above the voice part in the second system; "Complete sequence model" in a box above the piano part in the second system; "Evasion of the C-minor tonic" in a box above the piano part in the third system; and "Sequence copy (transposed down a half-step)" in a box below the piano part in the third system. A bracket above the piano part in the second system indicates a sequence of notes.

The 6/4-5/3 motion in mm. 36-37 implies C minor, a closely-related key to F minor. Rather than resolve to a C-minor triad, Brahms shifts the music down a half-step in m. 38. The local ME-RE figure in the voice is left incomplete, with an

arrival to the C-minor DO averted. The D in the voice, initially the chordal fifth of the G-major triad (V in C minor), is reinterpreted as part of a cadential 6/4 in B minor: what was once RE is now ME. Mm. 38-39 complete the unfulfilled ME-RE-DO descent in a transposed and rhythmically compressed form. Resolution to the “wrong” tonic (B minor) appears in m. 39, albeit in a weak metric position, after the cadential 6/4 moves to V<sup>7</sup>. This event affirms not only a new distantly-related key area, but also a new phrase that rhythmically parallels mm. 5-9. In retrospect, the vocal line’s ME-RE figure and the 6/4-5/3 motion in mm. 36-37 create the expectation of a C-minor resolution, for which Brahms substitutes a B-minor arrival. The ME-RE cell additionally functions as reinterpretation of the F-E motive from the second moment of linkage.<sup>95</sup>

The music shifts down yet another half-step to B-flat minor in mm. 43-47, creating a sequence. The linkage effect in mm. 37-38 initiates this detour by derailing the harmonic trajectory away from the expected arrival of a C-minor tonic. Brahms patches together small, semitonally displaced segments of music that lack definitive tonic cadences in their conclusions. Again, the disruption that results here recalls the narrative disjunction created through Robbe-Grillet’s own linkage technique.

In my analysis of *Le Voyeur*, I discuss a passage that contains a particularly jarring linkage event—one in which Robbe-Grillet depicts a seizure-like episode

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<sup>95</sup>The F-E cell occurs as a 4-3 figure above the bass, whereas the ME-RE cell occurs as a 6-5 figure.

through Mathias's point of view. To reflect a violent psychological incident, Robbe-Grillet employs a nonsensical sentence structure. In doing so, he jettisons the self-contained logic and coherence of the sentences in previous passages that featured temporal leaps:

The arrangement inside was like that of all such establishments in the country or even in the suburbs of big cities—or on the quays of little fishing ports. The girl behind the bar had a timorous face and the ill-assured manners of a dog that had been ill-assured manners of a dog that had been ill-assured manners of a girl who served behind the . . . Behind the bar, a fat woman with a satisfied, jovial face beneath her abundant gray hair was pouring drinks for two workmen in blue overalls.<sup>96</sup>

As discussed in my analysis, the girl described as having a “timorous face” is a memory fragment from an earlier occasion in which Mathias enters a café. The excerpt begins in the present, transitions to the temporal past, and then reorients the reader to the present once again. The passage trails off near the end of the seismic flashback, following the disorienting phrase repetition, and restarts with the “correct” imagery of the present.

Similarly, the third moment of linkage in “Liebesglut” begins with the ME-RE melodic cell, but the gesture does not complete its descent to DO. Instead, the music “restarts” with a new phrase, the complete gesture transposed down a half-step. Just as the memory fragment of the girl with the timorous face is eventually replaced with the real woman at the bar, the melodic fragment (a

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<sup>96</sup>Robbe-Grillet, *The Voyeur*, 89.

memory of the F-E motive) is later replaced with a rhythmically altered version at a different pitch level.

The translated text featured in mm. 37-46 reads, "To you the blame, to you and those three Sisters who spin the thread that rules the souls of mortals!" The narrator speaks indignantly of destiny – which he blames for his crossing paths with the spurning object of his desire – and of its universality. Destiny describes inevitability, which can be musically represented by the eventual return to the tonic key area in a given section of music. C minor, B minor, and B-flat minor are the three key areas hinted at in mm. 36-46. While the latter two segments contain their respective tonic sonorities in their interiors (on the weak beat of their respective second measures), none resolve strongly to them before veering into the next key area. All three segments conclude with a V chord, in mm. 36-37, 41, and 46, respectively. The ironic effect that this pairing of text and music creates foreshadows the cynical conclusion to the work.

This last instance of linkage represents the moment immediately before the narrator's inner turmoil begins to give way to resignation. At the end of the second stanza, the speaker blames fate for his crossing paths with the source of his torment, yet the music, through harmonic indecision, communicates the narrator's persistent desire to reject destiny. While the process of philosophical surrender begins musically to take shape in m. 50, the music preceding it suggests the narrator's lingering commitment to choice and agency as the

determinant of circumstance. The first two moments of linkage also embody more existentialist expressive ambitions.

Regular hypermeter correlates with the predestination and inevitability that characterizes the second half of the work (beginning in m. 47). After the introductory quadruple hypermeasure of mm. 1-4, the song follows an irregular 5/4 hypermeter; however, after two hypermeasures, a hypermetric elision produces the first instance of linkage, disrupting the temporal flow. In effect, this event prevents the irregular hypermeter from becoming “regular” in its frequency. The song’s first two stanzas thus signify rejection of a preordained path through erratic hypermeter and elision of an explicit return to the F-minor tonic during the second moment of linkage in mm. 22-27. Here, Brahms extends the dominant from the first section into the second section.

In “The Troping of Temporality in Music,” Robert Hatten describes a musical trope in which “a presumably continuous idea is broken off, or its clearly projected goal is evaded” in which case “there is also a sense of shift in temporality.”<sup>97</sup> From such discontinuity, according to Hatten, an expressive meaning emerges. All three of the presented moments of linkage technique illustrate the trope’s principle in some fashion: the interruption of a continuous 5/4 hypermeter, the evaded F-minor tonic closure at the end of the first section, and the harmonic red herrings at the end of the second section.

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<sup>97</sup>Hatten, “The Troping of Temporality in Music,” 68.

Hatten continues:

This shift [in temporality] may involve a *troping of temporalities*, very much the way a stream of consciousness may shift from present to past event or imagined future. By interrupting the unmarked expected flow of events, especially in such dramatic or rhetorical fashion, time is problematized as neither strictly sequential nor smoothly continuous.<sup>98</sup>

Hatten's second sentence describing the disrupted flow of time indeed relates to the song's philosophical implications in the first two stanzas. Embracing choice and agency necessarily entails the interruption of continuity and/or circumvention of an expected goal: the resignation to one's fate, which in the case of the song's narrator is a fate dictated by outside forces. To clarify, the 5/4 hypermeasures of the first two stanzas are irregular because of their asymmetrical divisions, but a continuous hypermeter of this kind still creates a sense of regularity on a larger scale. The first linkage event interrupts this higher-level continuity, resulting in disorientation. In Robbe-Grillet's *Le Voyeur*, the reader's experience of confusion and disorientation, created by the author's own linkage technique, arises from the depiction of Mathias's mental activity. The interruption of temporal continuity in the novel's prose serves to paint a subjective consciousness. Likewise, agency emerges from the disruptive linkage events in Brahms's "Liebesglut."

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<sup>98</sup>*Ibid.*

A shift of philosophical perspective occurs, however, from m. 47 until the end of the song, which articulates consistent quadruple hypermeter.

Accompanying the newfound higher-level regularity and internal symmetry is the notable lack of metrical grouping dissonance from m. 59 onward. Combined with the slower harmonic rhythm and 4/4 meter change at m. 71, the music emanates a feeling of being stretched as the song draws to a close. The speaker has now accepted notions of predestination and inevitability as unassailable.

The motion to metrical consonance and regularity could be described as a resolution of the metrical grouping dissonance that had previously occurred throughout the work. In addition, the song closes in the parallel major of the opening key, contrasting with the brooding tone of the text. The concluding major key, combined with the final section's regular metrical scheme and lack of metrical dissonance, creates a strong sense of irony regarding the text-music relationship. The narrator speaks of destiny and has become cynical in his view that the woman he loves was fated to cause him pain and torment. The final line of the poem translates as, "Twas they who bade your curly locks to rob me of honor, reason, faith, and understanding." Brahms subverts the listener's notion of what constitutes a resolution by ending the work with a melancholy act of surrender. He proposes that it may not necessarily be characterized by triumph, but rather subjugation, bitter acceptance, and resignation.



### **The Piano Quartet No. 2 in A Major, Op. 26, I**

Having discussed the expressive effects of linkage in a musical work supported by text, I now focus my attention on one of Brahms's instrumental works. In the following analysis, I shall further demonstrate the variety of ways in which moments of linkage may interact with musical narrative.

Like "Liebesglut," on the broadest archetypal level, I interpret the first movement of the A-major piano quartet to be a self-contained example of tragic irony. Peter Smith, the most recent writer on linkage in Brahms's instrumental music, similarly characterizes the Piano Quartet No. 3 in C minor, op. 60 as tragically ironic – but does not address the topic of linkage – in his expressive interpretation of the work.<sup>99</sup> Like Smith, I adopt the basic components of Robert Hatten's theory of narrative in my analysis of the A-major piano quartet, namely his concepts of stylistic correlation and strategic interpretation. My analysis is not intended to be an exhaustive, thoroughgoing interpretation, but rather a means to illuminate the potential expressive ramifications of linkage.

Brahms scholar Malcolm MacDonald describes the A-major piano quartet, a work less often heard in the concert hall than the other quartets, as "more obviously 'Classical' in conception, perhaps the 'Apollonian' response to its

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<sup>99</sup>Peter H. Smith, "Toward an Expressive Interpretation: Correlations for Suicidal Despair," in *Expressive Forms in Brahms's Instrumental Music* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005), 183-233.

‘Dionysian’ G minor cousin.”<sup>100</sup> I will reconceptualize and expand upon this broad characterization. I argue that the first thirty measures introduce an expressive state that represents reason and logical thinking – the Apollonian half of the philosophical dichotomy. The generic mapping of an expressive state onto a musical structure, a part of Hatten’s process of stylistic correlation, provides a starting point for more nuanced and specific insights, or what Hatten would call strategic interpretation.

To set the stage for this interpretation, I return to MacDonald’s profile of the work. He goes further in his description of the piece, claiming that its opening idea, with its rhythmically distinct halves, achieves “a statuesque balance of force.”<sup>101</sup> Figure 7 shows the opening idea as it appears in the piano part.

Figure 7. Piano Quartet No. 2 in A major, Op. 26, I: Piano Part, mm. 1–5.



<sup>100</sup>Malcolm MacDonald, *Brahms* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1990), 163.

<sup>101</sup>*Ibid.*

The two-measure figure's downbeat quarter notes carry a particular weight, their accents arising agogically. Appearing twice in the piano in mm. 1-4, the figure undergoes its third and fourth iterations in the strings in mm. 9-12. Together with the crescendo in m. 8, the thickened texture on the downbeats of mm. 9 and 11 lends further emphasis to the figure's first quarter note. Because the movement is marked *Allegro non troppo*, the pairing of these ponderous downbeats with the anticipatory triplets suggests a stately, dignified character, giving the impression of majestic striding. The short, spaced, and rolled piano chords and lyrical cello line in mm. 5-8—along with the slurred, *legato* eighth notes that precede each repetition of the opening rhythmic figure—create an image of grace and elegance. The piano later claims the cello's melodic line in m. 13. All of these descriptive elements contribute to feelings of comfort and assurance in the primary key area and to the rational, Apollonian expressive state.

Up until this point, my reading of the quartet's expressive state concurs with MacDonald's passing classification of the work's overall sensibility. I will amplify his characterization by addressing how the initial expressive state is subject to opposition throughout the first movement. I will highlight the Apollonian-Dionysian conflict at the center of the work and its consequences—thereby relocating MacDonald's conceptualization of the dichotomy from between different works to within the self-contained movement—and further

demonstrate how the initial expressive state does not convincingly conclude the work. While the opening musical idea “has the last word as it has the first,”<sup>102</sup> the punctuation is unearned and the return to the opening material feels disingenuous.

My explication of the quartet’s core philosophical struggle employs Hatten’s previously mentioned concept of stylistic correlation, or the process of “mapping oppositionally defined stylistic characteristics onto oppositions of expressive state.”<sup>103</sup> With specific regard to sonata-form expositions, onto which this method may easily be projected, Peter Smith admonishes:

This dichotomy, however, doesn’t just emerge from the conventional key scheme and pattern of thematic contrast . . . Otherwise the expressive progression would be indistinguishable from . . . countless other sonata form expositions . . . As Hatten would have it, the expressive progression takes on a more particular profile as a consequence of idiosyncrasies specific to the quartet. These idiosyncrasies need to be addressed through strategic interpretation, which in counterpoint with stylistic correlations will form the beginnings of a more particularized expressive interpretation.<sup>104</sup>

The notion of expressive states in opposition raises questions of agency and how to classify such an opposition. My reading of the quartet’s narrative conforms to the concept of the *work-persona*. Seth Monahan describes this agential conceit as “a single, unbroken consciousness, unique to a movement and

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<sup>102</sup>MacDonald, *Brahms*, 163.

<sup>103</sup>Smith, “Toward an Expressive Interpretation,” 191.

<sup>104</sup>*Ibid.*, 194.

extending throughout its duration . . . the work-persona is the work itself, personified.”<sup>105</sup> The music serves as a representation of a fictional protagonist’s psychological development. Any musical event regarded as agential at a more local level can also be construed as an intentional action of the higher-ranking work-persona agent class.<sup>106</sup>

Monahan qualifies this point with a crucial caveat, however. Although the work-persona’s consciousness always spans a movement’s entire duration, he argues that not everything that happens within the work needs to be understood as its direct or voluntary action. In some instances, musical events interpreted as opposing elements, rather than occurring within a single psyche, may be understood to be external to and/or distinct from the dominant agency. In this case, the work-persona becomes more of an abstract sentience, one that continues to exist but recedes into the “background” when external elements intrude or intervene.<sup>107</sup> This particular classification aligns with my reading of the quartet, whose work-persona can be located in the initial Apollonian expressive state. As the opposing Dionysian state enters into the music, the work-persona withdraws from view but remains an abstract entity present throughout.

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<sup>105</sup>Seth Monahan, “Action and Agency Revisited,” *Journal of Music Theory* 57, no. 2 (2013): 328.

<sup>106</sup>*Ibid.*, 333.

<sup>107</sup>*Ibid.*, 329.

I argue that the quartet's first thirty measures convey an expressive state defined by reason and dignity that is marred by a tinge of doubt, an emotional shading imparted by a brief shift to the relative minor key in mm. 22-26. In m. 27, however, the A-major opening material returns at the fortissimo dynamic level, almost as if dismissing the thought with a renewed sense of assurance. Anticipation builds in mm. 29-36 as a result of the driving triplet figure, a fragmented version of the opening rhythmic figure. Here, unlike the opening, the triplets occur in every measure instead of every other measure. Brahms repeatedly transposes this truncated motive up by step in mm. 29-32, the strings metrically displaced from the piano by one beat in rhythmic imitation. Brahms compresses the rhythmic gesture even more in m. 33, where an incessant stream of triplets creates metric grouping dissonance with the viola part. In the same measure, the viola creates metric displacement dissonance in the form of syncopation and is joined by the piano one measure later. In all, the material in mm. 29-36 unfolds as if laboring in preparation for something yet to come.

The music nearly grinds to a halt in m. 37 with descending quarter notes spanning the interval of a diminished seventh. This gesture is penetrating and surprising, as well as invasive to the established expressive state. The interval is highly dissonant and serves as a harbinger of an opposing expressive state. I interpret the sixteenths and rising eighth notes in the strings in mm. 39-40 to be striving upward in an attempt to escape or deny the incoming threat. The

piano's descending quarter notes, however, suggest that the attempt is possibly futile.<sup>108</sup> Indeed, the strings repeat the descending quarter notes spanning a diminished seventh in the same registral position immediately following their pitch climax, as if stopped in their path. Responding to the strings' failure, the piano imitates their endeavor in m. 41, climbing in earnest, only to suffer the same fate two bars later. As the piano descends an octave from the local chord tone D#6 to D#5 via stepwise eighth notes in mm. 43-45, the strings undertake a second attempt, stubbornly resistant to the temptation of surrendering. The effort does not succeed in overcoming the intruding expressive state, represented by the secondary material in the key of the dominant.

Brahms facilitates the gradual shift in character during the transitional material (mm. 37-52) through the first instance of linkage. While formal boundaries are not blurred here (the secondary material arrives unmistakably in m. 53), linkage forecasts the shift in character and connects the transition's two halves, each of which span eight measures. The transitional material centers on B major, retroactively functioning as the dominant of the secondary key area, and exhibits the struggle and eventual surrender to the opposing Dionysian expressive state—characterized by pathos and the irrational. Rather than claim power in an oppressive or sudden manner, the incoming expressive state takes

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<sup>108</sup>Byron Almén discusses an ascending/descending opposition of motives in his 2008 book. He refers to an ascending gesture as “striving upward” and a descending gesture as “yielding” in Chopin's Prelude in G major, op. 28, no. 3. See Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative*, 4.

control imperceptibly during the linkage event as if unexpectedly seducing the previous expressive state into submission.

Figure 8 shows how the descending stepwise figure in the piano from mm. 44-45(b.1), spanning a diminished fifth, is rhythmically stretched in mm. 45(b.2)-47, omitting the F $\sharp$ .<sup>109</sup> This gesture connects the two halves of the transition and signifies the moment in which a shift from resistance to resignation takes place.

Figure 8. First Instance of Linkage in the A-major Piano Quartet, I: Piano Part, mm. 44-47.



Above the expanded motive in mm. 45-47, the strings become more *legato* and lyrical immediately after their second escape attempt beginning in m. 43. The strings' C $\sharp$  in m. 45 not only represents the local climax, but also the highest registral point for the strings thus far. Contrasting with m. 41, the end of the first

<sup>109</sup>This moment recalls the motivic relationship during the second linkage event in "Liebesglut," albeit through a reverse transformation. In "Liebesglut," the F-E motive is rhythmically compressed instead of augmented. Like "Liebesglut," the motivic transformation in the piano quartet recalls moments of linkage in Robbe-Grillet's *Le Voyeur* in which the figure-eight motif bridges two different temporal settings by taking on the form of two similarly shaped objects.



escape attempt, m. 45 features the strings' passing through the C-natural, which is reinterpreted as a B#. The quality of the descending-seventh intervals is transformed from diminished to minor, imbuing the process of resignation with a sense of tentative optimism. The strings continue to fall, however, confirming the submission to the Dionysian expressive state. Narratively, linkage coincides with the moment in which the previously undesirable expressive state coerces the initial expressive state into yielding.

Michael Baker states that "composers often draw upon changes in dynamics, articulation, and instrumental timbre, which can either support or work against the linkage technique."<sup>110</sup> In the transition from the quartet's primary key area to the secondary key area, the shift in mood – an expressive juncture at which linkage often occurs, according to Baker – occurs gradually. The expressive parameters, as Baker calls them (dynamics, articulation, etc.), support the shift in this instance. The change in articulation in the strings to an uninterrupted *legato* initiates the change in character and the diminuendo continues the transition.

The *legato* articulation, combined with the *espressivo* marking and rolled chords in the piano, contributes to the newly impassioned expressive state beginning in m. 53. The rhythmic figure from the opening returns, but is relegated to a subdued position in the cello. The cello's soft dynamic and light

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<sup>110</sup>Baker, "A Framework for Describing Linkage Technique in Tonal Music," 2.

articulation recontextualize the gesture, once the image of assurance and dignity, and support the notion of subjugation to the new expressive state. Metric grouping dissonance, while present in m. 53, becomes more conspicuous in m. 56 as a result of the violin's triplets and the underlying duple eighth notes. Under the violin's *legato* articulation, the triplets are more pronounced within the instrumental texture than they were under the cello's light, *staccato* articulation in m. 53. Combined with this rhythmic interplay, two incomplete neighbor notes (the second of which is chromatic and shared by the violin) decorate the piano's arpeggiation, supplying the new expressive state with additional ardor.

A shift to B major occurs in m. 57, recalling the transition's harmonic area, which was defined by struggle and resistance to change. In mm. 57-60, the piano features the motive shown in Figure 9 below.

Figure 9. Triumph Motive in the A-major Piano Quartet, I: Piano Upper Line, mm. 57-59.



This figure recalls militaristic dotted rhythms and projects an underlying sense of vigor and authority underneath the wafting, imitating strings in mm. 57-59.

Melodically, the piano strives to a high register on the tied-over quarter notes.

Brahms transposes the highest pitch of the figure up a half-step during each iteration—prompting the other pitches in the figure to follow suit—creating a large-scale chromatic ascent. I interpret the rhythmic motive to suggest, in combination with the contour of its melodic line, an undercurrent of hope for triumph or victory.

While the potential for reconciliation of the two opposing expressive states lies on the horizon, doubt persists. The B-major dominant passage returns to its E tonic in m. 70, but in the minor mode, indicating uncertainty and ambivalence towards the reigning expressive state. While the excursion to E minor is brief, the alteration of mode from the beginning of the secondary material signifies a darker shading of the initial impassioned state. This material suggests a reluctance to acquiesce completely to the Dionysian state, a sense of apprehension that foreshadows the turbulence to come in the development section. The rhythmic figure that had suggested hope for triumph and victory returns in the violin in mm. 73-75, but its alteration to minor (with changes in intervallic content) comes across ironically—an effect that will eventually conclude the movement as a whole. The artificial sense of reconciliation during the final measures, which I will discuss shortly, first appears in m. 84 where the music moves suddenly to E major, the parallel key, burying any previous shred of doubt.

The music settles in mm. 86-94 at a low dynamic level with oscillating eighth notes. The imitative dialogue between the strings and piano segues into a passage (mm. 95-105) that suggests light playfulness and comfort. Still in E major, the cello's leaping *pizzicato* line (later *arco*), the descending, *legato* chromatic line in the upper strings (appearing later in the piano), and the buoyant triplets all create a sense of whimsy. This new emotional tone and E major being firmly established point to a possible reconciliation of the previously opposed expressive states, confirmed by the prominence of the triumphant rhythmic figure in mm. 106-119. Reset within a major key (contrasting with its last appearance), the figure is repeated more times here than in previous iterations, assigning a sense of seeming sincerity and finality to its expressive association. The figure's location in the instrumental texture changes from strings to piano in concurrent fashion, further supporting the notion of reconciliation. The driving energy of the cello's triplets in mm. 106-113 and sixteenth notes in mm. 114-119 aids in propelling the triumphant figure.

The second moment of linkage, shown in Figure 10, occurs at the beginning of the development section. The arrival of C major, a foreign key area, denotes an unexpected dramatic shift in m. 124. Retained from the piano's upper line at the end of the exposition (mm. 120-123 of the second ending), the rhythmic fragment repeated in imitation, beginning in m. 124, bridges the transition into the development. The linking motive is derived from mm. 112-

113, which contain a metrically shifted, rhythmically altered, and extended version of the original triumph motive. While the end of the exposition maintains the impression of triumph and victory, the motive's meaning is transformed after the C-major arrival.

Figure 10. Second Instance of Linkage in the A-major Piano Quartet, I, mm. 120–126.

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system (mm. 120-123) shows the Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), Cello (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.) parts. The Violin and Cello have a melodic line starting in m. 120, marked *p*, and ending in m. 123, marked *f*. The Piano provides a harmonic accompaniment. The second system (mm. 124-126) shows the same instruments. The Violin and Cello have a repeated transposition of the motive, marked *p*, and ending in m. 126, marked *f*. The Piano continues its accompaniment.

The motive's repeated transposition up a step within the violin and cello lines in mm. 124-128 and eventual transposition up a third in mm. 129-131 gives

the impression of restlessness. This activity suggests a persistent attempt to escape an unwanted digression (represented by the new, distantly-related key area), a digression initiated by what now appears to have been a naïve sense of reconciliation that had ended the exposition. The motive asserts itself more violently in mm. 132-139, indicating more vehement agitation within the present state as C major has now become the dominant of F, an implied key area even more remote. The sustained dominant pedal, causing harmonic stasis, further provokes the motive's restlessness.

Rather than confirm the F tonic, Brahms reintroduces the opening material of the movement in the key of C minor in m. 140. In the parallel minor key area of the passage immediately following the end of the exposition, the tainted image of the Apollonian opening represents a darker expressive state. This arrival perhaps marks the true beginning of the development, since transposing opening material to a minor key at the onset of the development section was a common practice among composers. The C-minor return of the movement's opening suggests that the former state of supposed reconciliation has now been transformed into one of distress. In m. 140, realization sets in that the former state of assurance has now slipped away, for the corrupted opening material recalls what is now gone. Brahms's linkage, in addition to blurring the exposition/development boundary, thus facilitates the gradual awakening to the decaying present state, which had been masked by a false sense of reconciliation.

The emotional turmoil of the development section leads to a third significant instance of linkage in mm. 199-201, shown in Figure 11. The passage leading up to this moment unfolds in A minor in an attempt to recall the beginning expressive state by way of its associated tonic, if not its mode. The desire to start over and return to the distant past (through recycling of material from the exposition) is shrouded in the darkness of the minor key and comes across as a wish unfulfilled.

Figure 11. Third Instance of Linkage in the A-major Piano Quartet, I, mm. 198-202.



The passage spanning m. 193 to the downbeat of m. 209 constitutes one phrase that divides into two overlapping segments. The overlap takes place in mm. 200-201, where a tonic cadence occurs in the piano above a dominant pedal. In mm. 199-200, the piano's upper line contains the rhythmic figure that links the



exposition and development. The same motive, appearing next in the strings, initiates the beginning of the second phrase segment in the second half of m. 200, linking the two phrase segments. The D $\sharp$ -E-E-F $\natural$  pitch pattern, which ends the first segment, is altered to D $\sharp$ -E-E $\sharp$ -F $\sharp$  at the beginning of the second segment.<sup>111</sup> The motivic alteration occurs in the midst of an unexpected shift from A minor to A major. This shift comes across as disingenuous and connotes ironic detachment from the ongoing tumultuous present: the mode mixture in m. 202 (F-natural) and m. 204 (C-natural) adds a dark undercurrent to the A-major passage. The beginning of the second phrase segment articulates itself at a louder dynamic level, responding to the end of the first with the same rhythmic motive as if in dialogue.

The shift to A major portends the arrival of the recapitulation in m. 209. The initiating rhythmic figure is now slurred, suggesting a weaker and less defined gesture, the piano in a lower register than before. The viola and cello continue this *legato* articulation in m. 217, obscuring the clarity of the opening gesture as if viewing past events through tinted windows. Remembering what is lost distorts events, the memories of which are now tainted with possible

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<sup>111</sup>The second and third moments of linkage feature the same linking motive, which is either transposed or altered in its pitch-class content upon repetition. The motive's rhythm and contour, however, remain preserved in both instances. Similarly, Robbe-Grillet's *Le Voyeur* features multiple moments of linkage that recycle specific linking images. On more than one occasion, Mathias confuses the character of Jacqueline with her doppelgänger Violet, creating a temporal leap in the narrative. One such instance occurs mid-phrase (cited in Chapter 3)—analogous to the third moment of linkage in the piano quartet. Mathias retains the image of a girl (albeit a different one) during the temporal leap. In a comparable manner, the musical motive's rhythmic structure remains the same, despite changes in pitch-class content.

jadedness, undermined dignity, and a sense of bygone assurance. The new *legato* articulation lacks the conviction that was once present in the Apollonian expressive state. The diluted return to this state represents an expression of failure to overcome opposition.

The A-minor shading of material in the primary key area in m. 224 signifies a deformation of material from the exposition, an injury sustained during the central upheaval in the development. The harmonically unstable territory in mm. 235-245, featuring the opening rhythmic figure aggressively fragmented, indicates that the severe distress during the development has not yet been ameliorated. The corresponding passage in the exposition (mm. 26-36) extends the triplet segment of the opening rhythmic figure into a continuous stream instead of truncating it. In the recapitulation, Brahms only begins to transpose the motive<sup>112</sup> during truncation. In the earlier passage, contrastingly, the motive undergoes transpositions early on and then the stream of triplets remains at the same pitch level. The harmonic content in the earlier section also remains mostly diatonic and is relatively static compared to the erratic harmonic shifts in mm. 235-245. In Figure 12, I show the violin line from both sections.

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<sup>112</sup>In mm. 29-32, Brahms repeatedly transposes the motive, in its complete form, up by step. During mm. 242-245, he repeatedly transposes the motive, in truncated and inverted form, in both directions by second, third, and fourth.

Figure 12. Violin Part of the A-major Piano Quartet, I, mm. 29–33 (Exposition) and mm. 241–245 (Recapitulation).

The figure displays two musical staves in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The first staff, labeled 'mm. 29–33', shows a sequence of eighth notes with triplet markings. A bracket above the first three notes indicates a triplet. A text box below the staff states: 'Repeated transposition of the complete motive up by step'. The second staff, labeled 'mm. 241–245', shows a sequence of eighth notes with triplet markings. A bracket above the first three notes indicates a triplet. A text box below the staff states: 'Repeated transposition of the truncated and inverted motive in both directions by second, third, and fourth'.

When the A-major tonic occurs at the onset of the closing section in m. 340, the arrival lacks credibility and vitality. The anticipatory dominant pedal in mm. 330–335 creates the expectation of a climactic tonic, but the music fizzles out by way of a diminuendo, abandoning the prospect of a triumphant arrival and settling wearily into the home key. The material following m. 340, derived from the opening rhythmic gesture, feels lethargic and establishes a melancholic tone at a low dynamic level via *legato* articulation. Resignation characterizes the closing section of the movement, an acceptance of things past. Reconciliation has proven to be a futile endeavor.

The strings' chromatic descent in mm. 351-353 and chromatic oscillation in mm. 354-356, aimless and lacking direction, exposes the fragility of the ineffectual tonic arrival in m. 340. The B $\flat$ -A-A $\sharp$ -B $\natural$  line involves enharmonic reinterpretation of a diminished-seventh chord that tonicizes both D major and B minor sonorities. The piano's prolonged, broken diminished-seventh chord in mm. 364-366 suggests unresolved anguish and tension during the quiet final moments of the movement. The F-natural discolours the A-major tonic in mm. 369-372, destabilizing the major mode and reaffirming the sense of emotional insecurity. The late return of F $\sharp$  in mm. 372-373 is not enough to put to rest the sense of underlying darkness and insecurity during the conclusion, compounded by the low dynamic level. Failure of the Apollonian expressive state to reconcile with the imposing Dionysian expressive state in the exposition, which ended with naïve optimism, has further led to a failure to overcome the resulting turmoil. Thus, the *forte* final cadence feels neither earned nor genuine. Instead, the first movement of the quartet ends on a tragically ironic note.

The above analysis demonstrates how linkage, in addition to facilitating formal cohesion, can code musical narrative through specific and various means. I have highlighted moments of linkage that arise at the juncture between phrase segments (in the recapitulation), transitions between key areas within a formal section (in the exposition), and between formal sections themselves (at the

exposition/development boundary). Narratively, I have shown how these instances of linkage interact with my expressive interpretation overall. The tragic irony of the quartet's conclusion can be traced back to these moments, which may be viewed as portending the inevitable denouement. The first instance of linkage enabled the initial Apollonian expressive state – defined by reason and discipline – to succumb to the temptation of the Dionysian expressive state – characterized by pathos and reckless lack of inhibition. The second moment illustrates an escalating sense of restlessness, which follows the false reconciliation at the exposition's end. Finally, the third example of linkage denotes ironic detachment, an expressive state that finishes the movement. The disingenuous shift in character signifies a failure to overcome past distress – an act of resignation echoed in the jaded, marred recapitulation. Together, these elements shape a tragically ironic, yet logical conclusion.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Composers use linkage technique as a tool to connect the conclusion of a phrase/section to the beginning of a new one by way of a common gesture or motive. In my analyses of Brahms's "Liebesglut," op. 47, no. 2 and the first movement of Brahms's A-major piano quartet, I expand the definition to include moments in which composers join symmetrical phrase *segments* in a similar manner. I also call attention to moments in which linkage causes disruption instead of achieving formal cohesion. The linkage technique found in Robbe-Grillet's narrative fiction – with its disorienting effect on the reader – presents a viable solution to the problem of confusion and disorientation that arises during the disruptive linkage events in Brahms's music.

To extend the literary analogy further, I discussed musical instances of linkage that encompass both large and small formal units in tandem with the varying degrees of linkage technique found in Robbe-Grillet's experimental fiction. Just as linkage within a musical passage can occur mid-phrase, it can occur mid-sentence as in Robbe-Grillet's 1955 novel *Le Voyeur*. Likewise, linkage

that manifests itself *between* musical phrases or large formal sections finds its analogue between sentences and paragraphs in Robbe-Grillet's work.

In my analysis of selected excerpts from *Le Voyeur*, I explored how Robbe-Grillet bridges temporally distant locations in the narrative using various objects/shapes, images, and sensations that the protagonist experiences. These creative methods not only help establish an intricate tapestry of psychological associations within the mind of the protagonist, but also demonstrate a nuanced palette of techniques with which the author can employ linkage. During my introduction, I addressed Peter Smith's work, which identifies nuances found in Brahms's linkage technique. Brahms often enhances the associative effect of linkage with harmonic or rhythmic elements, which may result in structural reinterpretation across a formal boundary. In "Liebesglut," for instance, a linking motive must be hypermetrically reinterpreted because the hypermetrical downbeat shifts somewhere within a particular phrase, causing temporal disruption.

Directly juxtaposing musical examples with excerpts from *Le Voyeur* in Chapter 4, I highlighted similarities in the treatment of motives during moments of linkage. Linking motives may be repeated with their essence left intact or they may be substantially altered yet remain recognizable. The motives I identify in Brahms's music undergo transposition, augmentation, diminution, or a combination of these transformations. Likewise, Robbe-Grillet's visual linking

devices are transformed into slightly different images or similarly shaped items. In one particular comparison, a linking device in both mediums is *not* repeated, but exists singularly in two separate temporal zones. Moreover, specific linking motives may also be associated with a certain musical passage or a locale/person in Robbe-Grillet's work.

I examine the presence of linkage technique in music and literature not to illuminate parallels merely for the sake of comparison, but primarily to explore its effects on narrative. Robert Hatten writes about the expressive ramifications of temporally coded musical events appearing out of order in the ongoing present. If new meaning can emerge, as Hatten argues, as a result of a "dramatically marked reordering as distinguished from a normative, and hence unmarked dramatic sequence,"<sup>113</sup> then a similar claim can be made about an event in which a terminating gesture is transformed into an initiatory gesture. The musical event is not temporally displaced, but rather the identity of the musical event's temporal code is ambiguous.

I invoke the work of Robbe-Grillet in order to bolster the proposed significance of linkage with regard to musical narrative. The radical expressive consequences of Robbe-Grillet's linkage technique, which help render a phenomenological narrative in literature, point to the potential expressive importance of linkage technique in music. Divorced from its literary analogue,

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<sup>113</sup>Hatten, "The Troping of Temporality in Music," 62.



musical linkage may initially appear to occupy a minor position within the fabric of a musical narrative, given the often transient quality of the phenomenon. As illustrated in my analyses, some of the expressive effects of linkage technique include restlessness, ironic detachment, and a narrator's initial commitment to choice and agency.

By importing Robert Hatten's theory of temporality and narrative, I wish to bring more attention to linkage technique as an area of research and its relevance in the conversation about musical narrative. With my discussion of Robbe-Grillet's work, I also attempt to address the problem of confusion and disorientation—a problem that arises as a result of linkage causing disruption in music. Just as the temporally disorienting moments in *Le Voyeur* are intended to paint the mental activity of the novel's protagonist, thereby depicting a subjective consciousness, certain linkage events in Brahms's music establish agency in their disruption of the temporal flow. Peter Smith and Michael Baker claim that there is much more to explore with respect to linkage technique. I propose the integration of the phenomenon with narrative and musical meaning as an area for further research.

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