The Liszt Paradox

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Abstract

By the mid-nineteenth century Franz Liszt had become a celebrated exponent of an innovative approach to writing music, which he called the Zukunftsmusik, the ‘Music of the Future’. In opposition to the traditionalists of the era who espoused the notion of ‘absolute music’, he became champion of the modernists’ position asserting the notion of ‘program music’. Combining his Catholic faith with these premises, he declared that not only is music a medium of narrative expression but subsequently it is also equivalent to God’s very nature. His convictions were challenged by a series of events that led him to the realisation that the orthodox doctrine of his faith posited that God’s nature is all-encompassing and accordingly has no distinguishing narrative or semantic program. Liszt was unable to resolve the paradox between the mereological structure of music and that of the divine. He explained the contradiction as a metaphysical mystery and sought to counter its significance by writing religious music characterised by narrative expression.
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Introduction to the Liszt Paradox

By the mid-nineteenth century Franz Liszt had become a celebrated exponent of an innovative approach to writing music, which he called the Zukunftsmusik, the ‘Music of the Future’. In opposition to the traditionalists of the era who espoused the notion of ‘absolute music’, he became champion of the modernists’ position asserting the notion of ‘program music’. Combining his Catholic faith with these premises, he declared that not only is music a medium of narrative expression but subsequently it is also equivalent to God’s very nature. His convictions were challenged by a series of events that led him to the realisation that the orthodox doctrine of his faith posited that God’s nature is all-encompassing and accordingly has no distinguishing narrative or semantic program. Liszt was unable to resolve the paradox between the mereological structure of music and that of the divine. He explained the contradiction as a mystery and sought to counter its significance by writing religious music characterised by narrative expression.

Chapter 1 describes the state of affairs as they existed during Liszt’s first decade in Weimar from 1848. It begins in section 1.1 by outlining how Liszt established himself as a composer with a radically new approach to creating music, using inventive approaches to form and structure that were best suited to an orientation around narrative and program content. It was an approach that asserted the semantics and aesthetics of music did not lie exclusively within formal aspects of music alone, in the notes, in the design and structure and other intrinsic parameters, but in other domains extending beyond the written music, not least of which, within the Romantic context of the era, was its extra-musical content. However Liszt’s valuing of narrative semantics was opposed by those espousing the intrinsic nature of musical meaning, whereby semantics and aesthetics were viewed as integral components of music. If there was such a thing as extra-musical content, then it had nothing to do with the music itself.

The Battle of the Romantics involved, on one side, Liszt and Wagner with the support of writers such as Brendel espousing an approach valuing innovation and originality, the ideas of which are summarised in section 1.2, and on the other side, Schumann and Brahms with the support of writers such as Hanslick espousing a traditionalist revering of the classical masters, the ideas of which are summarised in section 1.3.
Section 1.4 examines the crucial issues that were at the heart of the disagreements, including disparities in opinion about how to handle Sonata Form and other established structural conventions previously essential to the symphony, the modernists’ assertion of the shared properties and unity of the arts against the traditionalists’ affirmation of their uniqueness and separation from one another, and, as previously indicated, the modernists’ veneration of narrative content and semantic originality against the traditionalists’ respect for formal elements. These matters in turn pointed to notions of identity, of constituent relations, substance and referents, and of modality. Sections 1.5 and 1.6 explore these notions further by means of an examination of Identity Theory and of matters pertaining to equivalence, co-designation, and sortal criteria.

In the context of analysing the identity relation between form and semantics, section 1.7 examines the notion of equivalence as it is represented by higher-order logic. It reveals how Liszt and the modernists were arguing that an identity-relation between the set \{form, semantics\} implies there is a first-order function-entity ‘music’ whereby \{music (form), music (semantics)\}.

\[
(\forall \alpha, \beta)(\exists \mathcal{F})(\alpha, \beta) \rightarrow (\exists \mathcal{F})\alpha, \mathcal{F}\beta
\]

*Figure 1: Liszt’s first-order identity (explained further in figure 32)*

It then reveals the nature of Brahms’ and the traditionalists’ disputation of this approach. They were arguing that music formalism and music semantics are necessarily coincident (the same)/identical in music. It is an assertion that an identity-relation between the set \{form, semantics\} implies there is a first-order function-entity ‘music’ whereby \{music (form), music (semantics)\} is subject to a second-order identity relation.

\[
(\forall \alpha, \beta)(\exists \mathcal{F}, \mathcal{R})(\alpha, \beta) \rightarrow (\exists \mathcal{F}, \mathcal{R})(\mathcal{F}\alpha, \mathcal{F}\beta)
\]

*Figure 2: Brahms’ second-order identity (explained further in figure 33)*

Section 1.8 concludes the chapter by looking at a particular event that is speculated to have occurred in Weimar, namely the Statue Incident, whereby Liszt was led to apply his intuitive understanding of music identity to the realms of his Catholic faith.
Chapter 2 examines the nature of what is called here in this article, the Dynamic Event, the circumstances that lay behind a difficult time in Liszt’s life and his eventual departure from Weimar. Section 2.1 outlines how this period of deep frustration led him to a re-examination of priorities. In this context, section 2.2 examines Liszt’s ongoing commitment to the Catholic faith.

Section 2.3 examines the doctrine of the Holy Trinity in terms of identity theory, and section 2.4 describes how the Dynamic Event occurred at the time Liszt realised that identity relations could be seen as synonymous between that of music and that of religious doctrine. He understood intuitively that, according to orthodox Catholic doctrine, the persons of the Trinity are necessarily coincident (the same) and indiscernible in God. If there is an identity relation $\mathcal{I}$ between the members of the Trinity, then there is a particular first-order property function $\mathcal{G}$ that is employed by the members, and which is subject to a second-order identity-relation $\mathcal{R}$.

$$(\forall \alpha, \beta, \gamma)(\exists \mathcal{I})(\alpha, \beta, \gamma) \rightarrow (\exists \mathcal{R})(\mathcal{G}\alpha, \mathcal{G}\beta, \mathcal{G}\gamma)$$

*Figure 3: higher-order identity pertaining to the Trinity (explained further in figure 41)*

Liszt understood further that, according to non-orthodox and heretical doctrine, the persons of the Trinity may sometimes be coincident (the same) but they are not necessarily identical in God. If there is an identity relation $\mathcal{I}$ between the members of the Trinity, then there is a particular property function $\mathcal{G}$ that is employed by the members.

$$(\forall \alpha, \beta, \gamma)(\exists \mathcal{I})(\alpha, \beta, \gamma) \rightarrow (\exists \mathcal{G}\alpha, \mathcal{G}\beta, \mathcal{G}\gamma)$$

*Figure 4: qualitative equivalency pertaining to the Trinity (explained further in figure 39)*

Liszt realised that, given music is interpreted by all parties as equivalent to God’s nature, then it is significant that there is equivalency between the Brahms and Hanslick definition of music and orthodox Catholic doctrine, as shown below.

$$(\forall \alpha, \beta)(\exists \mathcal{F}, \mathcal{R})(\mathcal{F}\alpha, \mathcal{F}\beta) \leftrightarrow (\exists \mathcal{G}, \mathcal{R})(\mathcal{G}\alpha, \mathcal{G}\beta, \mathcal{G}\gamma)$$

*Figure 5: equivalency of traditionalists’ music formalism and orthodox Trinitarian doctrine (explained further in figure 44)*
Liszt realised further, in the context of his commitment to both ‘program music’ and the Catholic faith, it is significant that there is equivalency between his definition of music semantics as possessing contingent content and heretical doctrine, as shown below.

\[(\forall \alpha, \beta)(\exists \mathcal{F} \forall \alpha, \mathcal{F}\beta \leftrightarrow (\exists \mathcal{G}) \mathcal{G}\alpha, \mathcal{G}\beta, \mathcal{G}\gamma)\]

*Figure 6: equivalency of program music and heretical Trinitarian doctrine (explained further in figure 45)*

Chapter 3 describes how Liszt was unable to explain the paradox, the contradiction between the mereological structure of music and that of the divine. He explained the contradiction as a metaphysical mystery and sought to counter its significance by writing religious music characterised by narrative expression.
1. The State of Affairs

1.1 Liszt and the Battle of the Romantics

The Liszt House in Weimar sits on the perimeter of the Ilm Park. The building was the primary residence of Hungarian-born Franz Liszt from 1869 until his death in 1886 and today it is a museum of his work and livelihood.

![Figure 7: The Liszt House, Weimar. Image PMA.](image)

Previously, during the city’s Golden era, in the decades either side of the turn of the nineteenth century, when Goethe had lived on the opposite side of the park at the nearby Garden House, the Liszt House was allocated for use by Ducal Court gardeners. After also having been used as an art gallery, it was converted into a residence for Franz Liszt only when, at the invitation of Grand Duke Carl Alexander of Saxony-Weimar-Eisenach, the virtuoso pianist, composer, and conductor returned to live in Weimar for a second period. The decade and a half he had spent in Weimar previously had ended poorly; this is the subject of this article. But it is congenial to begin by acknowledging that matters became resolved to a sufficient degree for him to accept a reinstatement. Accordingly, in the museum today there is his original Bechstein concert grand in the Music Salon on the first floor,
and a portrait of Beethoven hung in the study above the writing desk, set with honor next to a portrait of the accommodating Grand Duke.

*Figure 8: The Goethe Garden House, Weimar. Image PMA.*

The Liszt House of today is a significant bequest to the Weimar inheritance. At the midpoint of the nineteenth century, more than any other individual, Liszt had stood in the pivotal position of representing the city’s heritage, which, by way of its political, literary and philosophical associations, was at the centre of national identity. This heritage, and Liszt’s place within it, represented the new and modern. Liszt had assumed leadership for the perpetuation of the forward-looking sentiments expressed previously by Wieland and Goethe, Herder and Schiller, and Fichte and Hegel.
As a young man, Liszt had entertained audiences all around Europe with his pianistic dexterity and exploration of new musical ideas. Thereafter he had established himself as a composer with a radically new approach to creating music, using inventive approaches to form and structure that were well-suited to its focus upon narrative and program content. It was an approach that asserted the aesthetics and semantics of music did not lie exclusively within the formal parameters of music technicalities alone, in the selection of pitches and structure and other intrinsic parameters made by the composer, but in other domains extending beyond the written notes, not least of which, within the Romantic context of the era, was its extra-musical content.

Liszt’s eleventh Symphonic Poem, *Die Hunnenschlacht*, The Battle of the Huns, written in 1857, is based on the large mural of the same name by Wilhelm von Kaulbach, which represents the allegorical contest between the spirits of those who fell in the hostilities and altercations before the walls of Rome in 451 AD, between those of the attacking Huns and those of the defending Romans. His twelfth Symphonic Poem, *Die Ideale*, The Ideals, written for the unveiling of the Goethe and Schiller monument in Weimar, also in 1857, is based on several passages from the poem of the same name by Friedrich Schiller.

Liszt’s orientation upon narrative content was condemned by those espousing the notion of ‘absolute’ music and the premise that aesthetics and semantics are to be treated as components intrinsic to formal elements in music. In contrast to Liszt, they asserted that if there was such a thing
as extra-musical content, then it had nothing to do with the music itself. It was surplus, if not superfluous. Hector Berlioz, with his dramatic symphonies, had been an important source of inspiration to the modernists, but it was Felix Mendelssohn, who had died in 1847, who now grew large as a figure of inspiration to the traditionalists. Ironically his grandfather, the philosopher Moses Mendelssohn, had been identified with an enlightened quest for a plurality of truth, but the grandson had become associated above all else with his conservative musical tastes.

During Liszt’s first period in Weimar from 1848, the Battle of the Romantics, between Liszt and the modernists on the one side and the Mendelssohn-doting traditionalists on the other, engulfed all. Both parties looked to Beethoven as a spiritual foundation, but while the traditionalists argued the Viennese master was champion of ‘absolute’ music, the modernists stressed the efficacy of program music with its blending of music with narrative and extra-musical ideas. The traditionalists looked to Beethoven’s fifth symphony with its focus upon motivic development within the structural context of its use of Sonata Form, while the modernists looked to Beethoven’s sixth symphony with its focus upon describing natural landscapes.

Liszt’s long-time assertion of the distinct nature of formal and semantic elements grew in significance at the very time he settled in Weimar for the first time. It was in 1848, the very year that he moved into the nearby Villa Altenburg, a larger residence sufficient both for the family he intended to accompany him and for the entertainment of his many reputable visitors, that there was a decisive split between the modernist and traditionalist schools. There was an increase in tension both in personal relationships and in the political context. After the Dresden opera house was burnt down by democrats and other revolutionaries in the May Uprising of 1849, with Richard Wagner as conductor of the Royal Saxon Court standing and demonstrating vociferously among them, there was an immediate suppression of dissent, and a reassertion of the political status quo and the will of the conservatives. Liszt had become representative of the liberal and forward-thinking in the small town of Weimar, with the support of the Duke Carl Alexander continuing the family tradition of supporting the arts and progressive culture, but it was the narrow-mindedness of the traditionalists that held sway over the larger conurbations at Dresden, Leipzig and Frankfurt.

However Liszt was not isolated in Weimar. The music periodical *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* had been co-founded by Robert Schumann and associated originally with cultural activities in Leipzig, but in 1844, shortly before the divisions between the modernists and traditionalists became bitter, editorial responsibility passed to Franz Brendel. He had no compunctions about acting as
ambassador for the new and innovative. Even after the demise of the revolutions and the flight of Wagner and other liberal intellectuals to Switzerland and beyond, the periodical produced an ongoing stream of acclamations of Liszt and the modernists of the neudeutsche Schule centred around Weimar, while denigrating the likes of Robert and Clara Schumann and the other Leipzig traditionalists.

Brendel wrote a *Geschichte Der Musik* in 1852 arguing his case in detail, using Hegelian historicist notions to show how the ‘Music of the Future’ articulated by Liszt and others was an inevitable consequence of the entire scope of historical precedent. His writing did not address the issue of aesthetics as advanced by Georg Wilhelm Hegel when he too resided in the Duchy of Saxe-Weimar, a Professor of Philosophy at the University of Jena, but instead centered around a notion of historical consciousness whereby music knowledge, including both that of its intrinsic nature and of its sensibilities, is a part of the unity of knowledge, which in turn is subject to collective history and the dialectic development of mind towards ever more profound levels of understanding of universal being.

Brendel argued that Liszt’s symphonic poems and Wagnerian opera in particular - the Dresden version of *Tannhäuser* received its first post-Uprising performance in Weimar conducted by Liszt in 1849 - signified a new era in music history in which artistic creation would be placed in the context of a universal consciousness of mind and thought.

The respective parties, Liszt and Wagner on one side, and the Schumanns and thereafter Brahms on the other, were not discordant to each other in all respects. There was much cordiality and amiability shown, at least in public. Liszt used his influence at the Ducal Theater to organise performances of Robert Schumann’s work in Weimar, even after the Leipzig composer’s suicide attempt and commitment to a mental asylum, and he also made the effort to enter into correspondence with Clara Schumann. In many cases, the geniality was equally reciprocated. Mendelsohn conducted the first performance of Wagner’s *Tannhäuser* (Venusberg) overture with the Leipzig Gwandhaus Orchestra in 1846. In terms of more erudite matters, both camps shared the religious conviction that music is, in some mystical and mysterious manner, equivalent to God’s nature.
Liszt in particular was an affable and courteous individual, and relations were not at all uncivil when the twenty-year-old Johannes Brahms was invited to make an introductory visit to meet Liszt in Weimar in 1853. His household had been genial and welcoming, and Liszt had played several of the young man’s works on the piano. Nevertheless the rancour between the camps was already in full swing and, in this case, the good-humoured pleasantries were not reciprocated. Afterwards Brahms confided to his friends he was not inspired by Liszt’s music at all. He saw the validity in the objections being raised to the Neue Zeitschrift, which was increasingly fanatical about Liszt’s championing of radical new ideas. Brahms reiterated the arguments that the Weimar school was encouraging theories that were contrary to the most profound life-force of music, and that were to be abhorred and condemned. In contrast, he would write music - symphonies and concertos - endowed only with grace and virtue, not defiance and factiousness, and with scholarly and erudite integrity, not foolish nepotism. Thereafter the two men kept apart.
1.2 The Place of Wagner

The Battle of the Romantics was to continue for many decades longer and to reach far beyond Weimar. The traditionalists eventually adopted Brahms as their hero and declared him the true descendent of Beethoven, not only because of his enmity towards Liszt and his co-signing of a 1860 manifesto condemning the aesthetic and semantic values of the so-called ‘New German School’, but also because (eventually) he wrote his first symphony in a manner that venerated the ‘genuine’ Beethoven inheritance. This is how he did it.

Figure 12: Brahms First Symphony, 1855 - 76. Handwriting and image PMA.

In the opposing camp, it was Wagner who stepped forwards as spokesperson for the modernists. He acknowledged soon after completing Tannhäuser that he could no longer shape dramatic material to fit with conventional operatic forms. His texts, his mythological tales and all they entailed, demanded he seek new approaches to formal matters that were responsive above all else to the extra-formal semantics.

Figure 13: Wagner’s Ride of the Valkyries (1852-56), recreated by PMA

Thereafter, just as much as Liszt, he had courted recognition from other progressive thinkers, to the extent of envisaging the two of them as the equivalent of Goethe and Schiller in a new golden age of music at the Weimar Court (Walker 65). After the Dresden Uprising, events had not transpired as he planned but, even in exile, he could contribute much to the debate.
On many occasions, Wagner wrote publically in favour of Liszt and the new approach to musical creativity, including in 1856 a long letter specifically about Liszt’s symphonic poems.

He examined the enigmatic association between form and content, and the historical associations that link the notion of a symphonic poem with that of the classical symphony. He argued that while the efforts of all of those Mendelssohn-descendants were contemptuous to the core, in contrast, Liszt’s notion of the symphonic poem was the most substantial development in the history of instrumental music since the innovations introduced by Beethoven. Thereafter he linked his own music-dramas with the symphonic poem.

Wagner addressed the letter to Marie Wittgenstein, daughter of Princess Caroline of Sayn-Wittgenstein-Berleburg-Ludwigsburg by her first marriage and now step-daughter to Liszt. Caroline had been married at the tender age of only seventeen and born a daughter just nine months later, but the marriage had not lasted. Marie was ten years old and living alone with her mother when Liszt met them on a tour of southern Ukraine and thereafter proclaimed his desire to invite them to live with him. Eventually, in 1849, Liszt brought the family to his new residence in Weimar and encouraged the young Princess to become engaged in the music and art scene, entertaining the various guests that visited them. Liszt wrote to Clara Schumann on 11 Sept 1852 that the fifteen-year-old Princess Marie had since "become a tall and charming young girl" (Liszt v1 139). Not only did he love the Princess Caroline dearly, he treasured her daughter as much as he cared for his own children.
The girl was just sixteen years old in 1853 when Wagner first met her on the occasion that Liszt took his new family to visit him in Switzerland, and an unmarried nineteen-year-old when in November 1856 he addressed his Open Letter to her. He wanted to author a public letter - it was published in the April 1857 issue of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* - but decided to frame his words in the context of his fondness for the young woman.

Wagner declared, in support of Liszt, “The champions of an absolute music are clearly a muddle-headed bunch.” (Wagner 77) He pointed out to her that although Brahms and company insisted that meaning is intrinsic to form, actually, they would never be able to support their claim by naming any music independent of forms such as those derived of corporeal motion or of narrative action, or of poetic verse. Wagner identified the root of the new tradition to which he subscribed, and which included the ‘program music’ of Berlioz and Liszt, in the principle of dramatic development found in the central section of Beethoven’s overtures, and the Sonata movements of his symphonies. However he asserted that the roots could be seen to go deeper than this.

Wagner insisted to her that instrumental music derives its form not independently, as if from nothing, but directly from the traditions of dance or the march. The movements of a symphony are founded upon those of the suite, which in turn is a collection of movements for court dance. Wagner argued that the minuet and trio in particular capture a dramatic idea whereby the content and form
act as symmetrical confluence upon each other. He argued further that if music can represent dance, then why not Orpheus and the beautiful Eurydice? Why not Odysseus?

In the dining room of the Liszt House, there are two paintings from the Odysseus cycle produced by Weimar Ducal Court painter Friedrich Preller the Elder, who had used the house as an atelier at the time Wagner wrote his letter to Princess Maria, before Liszt moved into the building. An unclad Odysseus on his ship is tantalized by the song and the overwhelming loveliness of the three beautiful Sirens. They too are without dress, in the Romantic style, and joined by a serpent. Together they tempt Odysseus; they seek his compliance. He hears them and is tantalized by their song, and he gazes at their nakedness adoringly, at the magnificence of their forms, yet he is in control of his destiny, his vision of the future. He has secured himself to the mast and will not be prevailed upon.

Thus Wagner justified Liszt’s symphonic poem project, including the forthcoming *Die Hunnenschlacht* and *Die Ideale*. He insisted to the Princess Marie that these works reveal that musical semantics are not supervenient upon musical form, and not essentially intrinsic to music, as the traditionalists believed, but constituted in terms of extrinsic content. He argued that Liszt’s music more than any other composer reveals how form develops naturally in response to a poetic narrative.

He wrote of his experience of hearing one particular incident of Liszt’s dramatic creativity,

> “Naturally this was no longer the object such as the poet had depicted it in words; it had assumed an entirely different, indescribable character, so subtle and unapproachably ethereal that one can hardly imagine how it could at the same time present itself to our feeling in such a uniquely clear, distinct, palpable and unmistakable manner.” (Wagner 79)

Wagner argued that music is not at all diminished by the use of novel structures, by developing form from content, whatever the traditionalists might say. He conceded that music is a medium unto itself and cannot be translated into words, that the composer is removed of processes of daily life and extracts only emotional content for reproduction in music. However, the poetry liberates music from the constraints and empty tantalisations of ‘absolute music’. (Wagner 68) He concluded to the Princess Maria,
“Hear my credo: music will never, in any union into which it may enter, cease to be the highest, the most redeeming art. It is the nature of music to realise in and through itself, unmistakably and immediately, certain truths that the other arts can only hint at or suggest.” (Wagner 76)

In addition to expressing his views as narrative, Wagner also integrated them into his own music, most notably in his opera Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg, written over the course of a fifteen-year period that covered the most virulent years of the Battle of the Romantics, and eventually completed and given its first performance in 1868, incidentally conducted by Hans von Bülow, the estranged husband of Liszt’s daughter Cosima who had since had two children with Wagner.

Family tensions set aside, the opera is a comedy, and the only music theatre ever written by Wagner that avoids altogether the mythic and an attentiveness to supernatural powers. It is set in sixteenth century Nuremberg among a guild of master-singers, master craftsman of various trades who are also amateur singers and poets, and who utilise a craftsman-like code for their singing practises.

Wagner sets the character of Beckmesser, the town clerk, as the prime guardian of the master-singers’ conventions and rules, and as indicative of traditionalists such as Schumann and Brahms. When a master-singer sings something new or inventive, then it is Beckmesser who assesses the performance according to the established protocols.

The opera tells the story of a new arrival to the group who seeks to be accepted as a master-singer, in large part so that he can win the hand of marriage of his beautiful beloved. He sings at the end of the first act a music that is innovative and visionary, flouting all the rules with its free approach to form. Accordingly it is condemned by Beckmesser who chalks up on a slate all of its many infractions, just as Brahms had chalked up the transgression in Liszt’s symphonic poems.

In the end there is a final contest where Beckmesser sings juxtaposed to the new arrival. Presented with a novel text for the occasion of charming the beloved, Beckmesser cannot sing meritoriously. He is revealed as a man unable to fashion beauty himself, beyond the strictures of his conventions. He can only resort to mocking those who can, finding defects in their efforts, judging the new in terms of the old. At the conclusion of the opera, the master-singers make a final declaration that ground-breaking art not only sustains cultural traditions but also acts to enhance it.
Actually, Beckmesser was not specifically an allusion to Schumann or Brahms, but of the infamous music critic, Eduard Hanslick. In an earlier draft of the opera, Wagner had unashamedly named the guardian of conventions ‘Veit Hanslick’, in an obvious reference, and only later abstracted the reference. Indeed, it was not these other composers who were most guilty of narrow-mindedness; Brahms had since matured to be a decent and likeable fellow. It was Hanslick who, above all else, deserved contempt.

1.3 Hanslick and The Beautiful in Music

In contrast to Wagner, Liszt had tried to remain more affable and good-natured in his relationships with others. Writing on 26 March 1857 to his cousin Eduard Liszt, who was Royal County Councillor of Justice in Vienna and Franz’s most valued confidante, Liszt wrote,

“As I had previously said to you, the doctrinaire Hanslick could not be favourable to me; his article is perfidious, but on the whole seemly. Moreover it would be an easy matter for me to reduce his arguments to nil, and I think he is sharp enough to know that.” (Liszt v1 327-8)

On the other side, the arguments set forth were designed to be cogent and persuasive. Hanslick responded to Brendel’s idealism assiduously,

“Hegel, too, by his dissertation on music, has been the cause of misconceptions, for he quite unconsciously confounded the point of view of art-history, which was pre-eminently his own, with that of pure aesthetics, and attributed an explicitness to music which, as such, it never possessed.” (Hanslick 88)

Hanslick did not have any sympathy for Liszt either.

“The composer of instrumental music never thinks of representing a definite subject; otherwise he would be placed in a false positon, rather outside than within the domain of music. His composition in such as case would be programme music, unintelligible without the programme. If this brings the name of Berlioz to our mind, we do not hereby call into question or underrate his brilliant talent. In his step followed Liszt, with his much weaker Symphonic Poems.” (Hanslick 80)
Hanslick’s 1854 book, The Beautiful in Music, summed up the position of the traditionalists arguing that music could not represent anything other than itself. There is no ideal Platonic realm to which its formal elements appeal. Moreover, there is no extra-musical content extending to the realm of the universal. He argued against any kind of Aristotelian method to reach general principles from the analysis of realms beyond the music itself.

Hanslick suggested,

“We ought to endeavor to penetrate deeply into the spirit of the works themselves, and to explain their effects by the laws of their inherent nature.” (Hanslick 24)

If there is a distinction to be made between the phenomenal and aesthetic experience of music on the one side and the emotive responses to those experiences on the other, then Hanslick declared the former as a valid apparatus for understanding music and the latter as proscribed. He refuted the cogency of emotional expressiveness in music. He argued that descriptions of music set in affective terms are mere metaphors and always reducible to the basic dynamic features of music. He argued it is not individual feelings, but the human imagination which determines the content of music. Accordingly music has no extra-musical content. Any sequence of, for instance, musical pitches is independent of all limitations other than those determined by the respective technical scope and by the intrinsic laws of music. He wrote,

“The ideas which a composer expresses are mainly and primarily of a purely music nature. His imagination conceives a definite and graceful melody aiming at nothing beyond itself.” (Hanslick 36)
Further asserting the intrinsic nature of semantics and aesthetics, he wrote,

“Our opinion regarding the seat of the intellectual and emotional elements of a musical composition stands in the same relation to the popular way of thinking as the idea of immanence does to that of transcendence.” (Hanslick 73)

Music is immanent in the world, and in itself. Its indwelling within its own pitches and rhythms and harmonies is integral to the classical tradition. Accordingly he affirmed the aesthetic supremacy of the absolute music of Beethoven, Robert Schumann and Brahms, and condemned the melodramatic graft introduced by Liszt and Wagner. He wrote,

“It is often alleged that Beethoven, when making the rough sketch of a composition, had before him certain incidents or states of mind. Whenever Beethoven (or any other composer) adopted this method, he did so to smooth his task; to render the achievement of musical unity easier by keeping in view the connecting links of certain objective phenomenon. If Berlioz, Liszt, and others fancied that a poem, a title, or an event yielded them something more than that, they were laboring under a delusion.” (Hanslick 84)

Hanslick’s anti-expressivist formalism was an assertion that music semantics and aesthetics must not be confused with any type of subjective impressions. He argued that music understanding must be treated as an objective undertaking understood exclusively by way of the intellect, not a subjective experience understood by way of perspicacity. Understanding and judging music looks only to the aesthetic object, and not to the perceiving subject. He wrote,

“There is no causal nexus between a musical composition and the feelings it may excite, as the latter vary with our experience and impressibility.” (Hanslick 25)

Hanslick asserted it is essentially meaningless to claim the existence in music of sentimental feelings such as adoration, rather than pure aesthetic entities such as beauty. He decried that music
expression is said supposedly to represent affective states such as love, courage and delight, and he criticized Wagner in particular for arguing that ‘the organ of the emotions is sound.’ (Hanslick 31)

Hanslick wrote,

“Music has a subject - i.e., a musical subject, which is no less a vital spark of the divine fire than the beautiful of any other art. Yet, only by steadfastly denying the existence of any other ‘subject’ in music, is it possible to save its ‘true subject’.” (Hanslick 174)

Hanslick argued that a musical fragment from a work of high regard, in additional to being an object with intrinsic aesthetic sense, must be treated as an end in itself. It is not merely a vehicle for conveying thoughts and feelings.

Hanslick declared war on Liszt’s symphonic poems in the preface of the second edition of The Beautiful in Music, published in 1858. At this time he had heard only one of them, Les Preludes, (Walker 363) but that was not important. He chose to contend with Liszt not in terms of music but in theoretical terms. For Hanslick, the term ‘symphonic poem’ was a contradiction in terms. A symphony was a piece of music and not a poem. Thus he refuted Liszt’s idea that other arts subject to contemplation can be transformed into musical expressivity, given music is entirely unable to express anything at all.

1.4 The Key Issues

The Battle of the Romantics involved strained human relationships between its respective camps, but, beneath the personal quarrels, the debate involved fundamentally different positions on a number of crucial issues.

i. Identity: in the context of determining the nature of the identity relationship between music formalism and music semantics, the modernists’ veneration of semantic originality was set against the traditionalists’ respect for formal conventions;

ii. Ontological relations: in the context of determining the nature of constituent composition, there was debate about whether music is defined by its formal matters alone or if it is constituted of additional content;
iii. Metaphysical substance: as regards ontological commitment to frameworks of construction, the shared properties and unity of the arts was pitted against their uniqueness and separation from one another;

iv. Metaphysical referents: in the context of determining the nature of abstract entities made reference to by the music, the traditionalists’ explanation of psychological subjectivity and non-cognitivism was set against the modernists’ assertion of cognitivist bivalency;

v. Modality: in the context of determining the modality of semantics, the indiscernibility and Actuality of elements associated with ‘absolute’ music was set against the qualitative identity and Possibility of those associated with ‘programme’ music.

1.4i Identity

Identity: in the context of determining the nature of the identity relationship between music formalism and music semantics, the modernists’ veneration of semantic originality was set against the traditionalists’ respect for formal conventions.

If there was one particular area above all others where the antagonists debated the issue of modernism against traditionalism, it was in how to treat Sonata Form, the structure employed for the first movement of the classical symphony. The traditionalists position defended by Schumann and then Brahms argued that composers should remain true to the basic formulation passed down to them by the Viennese masters, by Mozart and Beethoven in particular, while innovators such as Liszt and Wagner argued that they should subject these formulations to renewal to match the new circumstances of their era, to re-invent the classical symphony in terms of the symphonic poem or the music drama.

However Liszt recognised intuitively that the debate about Sonata Form was a symptom of something more significant. Writing on 2 December 1852 to his friend Wilhelm von Lenz, the Baltic official who was also a writer and Beethoven biographer, Liszt despaired at the traditionalists’ ideology of form as it was applied more generally. He quipped,

"How far is traditional or recognised form a necessary determinant for the organism of thought?“ (Liszt v1 152)
Liszt was addressing the nature of the relationship existing within music between its formal elements and its meaning to listeners, between its syntax and semantics. He was ridiculing the notion that music form and music semantics are necessarily the same thing, indiscernible from one another. He was outlining the dire implications of treating music as an exclusive medium unto itself, of the traditionalists’ argument that it is not possible to move beyond intrinsic constraints. In the same letter to von Lenz, Liszt characterised the two opposing positions as follows:

“The first, that in which traditional and recognised form contains and governs the thought of the master; and the second, that in which the thought stretched, breaks, recreates, and fashions the form and style according to its needs and inspirations. Doubtless in proceeding thus we arrive in a direct line at those incessant problems of authority and liberty. In the domain of the beautiful, Genius alone is the authority, and hence, Dualism disappearing, the notions of authority and liberty are brought back to their original identity.” (Liszt v1 152)

Liszt was arguing that Brahms’ and Hanslick’s approach, that music formalism and music semantics are necessarily coincident (the same) and therefore identical in music, is a straightjacket not only for semantic originality but for the very nature of thought itself. Not only does such an approach entirely ignore the fact that music formalism and music semantics are discernible abductively, it implies further that form is a foundational primitive and accordingly irreducible, unchangeable for all time. In contrast, while he could concede that music formalism and music semantics may sometimes be coincident (the same), even in the context of a Beethoven symphony, he refuted the notion they are inescapably identical in music. The formal is set in the material realm but the semantics are contingent and changeable, and thus capable of liberating thought.

1.4ii Ontological Relations

Ontological relations: in the context of determining the nature of constituent composition, there was debate about whether music is defined by its formal matters alone or if it is constituted of additional content.

Liszt argued that the narrative content derived of other narrative media such as poetry could enhance music. He refuted the notion that extra-musical content trivialised the music, or ignored the essential substance of music. His letter to Peter Cornelius on 19 February 1858 expressed his
thoughts on the matter.

“The three songs [by Cornelius] (dedicated to Princess Marie) are charming and excellent. There is in them such a refined and true proportion in union with such fervent and ardent mood that other people besides the author must love them. (360)

Music has mood as a constituent! Liszt did not argue that music can portray the words and the particular cognitive content of a poem, or the narrative context of a painting, or the political intent associated with a statue. Its depictions are less specific. He argued that it is the sentiment or disposition induced by a poem or picture or statue that is represented. Music expressivity is part of a process able to convert such sentiments into musical knowledge, which is thereafter a form of cognition perceived in terms of overlapping formal and semantic constituents.

When his opponents ridiculed him for naivety, again Liszt intuitively recognised the deeper meaning of the debate. He realised that if music is defined exclusively by formal matters, whereby semantics are identical with the form, as proposed by the traditionalists, then there can be nothing to music other than form. However if music is constituted by elements other than formal matters, such as those perceived by expressive content, then not only is music constituted of more than just form, it can be reduced to entities other than form.

Wagner took this further by arguing that music’s expressivity and its capacity to extend beyond its formal elements make it the supreme art. His reading of the neo-Kantian metaphysics of Schopenhauer’s *The World as Will and Representation* (1818/19) and then Nietzsche’s *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music* (1872), and their positioning of aesthetics and art as an escape from and resolution to the sufferings of the world, confirmed his affirmation of the principle that music does not involve form alone. Music conveys non-formal content, which is abstract in its characterisation of the ontological relation of being to the world, and which accordingly is constituted of an expressivity that can communicate emotion without words.

1.4iii Metaphysical Substance

Metaphysical substance: as regards ontological commitment to frameworks of construction, the shared properties and unity of the arts was pitted against their uniqueness and separation from one another;
Writing about Wagner’s *Die Meistersinger* on 10 August 1862 to Franz Brendel, Liszt wrote,

"Its phantasy is found in gaiety and drollery, and it has called up the Nuremberg of the Middle Ages, with its guilds, its poet-artisans, its pedants, its cavaliers, to draw forth the most fresh laughter in the midst of the highest, the most ideal, poetry." (23)

Liszt continued to argue there could be no better place to locate ideas worthy of expression through music than in the other arts, which exist in comparable affective domains. It is an assertion that the ontological relations revealed by musical content constitute not only the mereological structures of parthood and overlap, but also the extrinsicality of properties, including those pertaining to form. This in turn implies it is possible to determine shared characteristics between the arts, and accordingly their essential unity. Liszt wrote to the Venetian music professor and part-time composer Ugo Bassani on 4 June 1880,

"Dear Friend, your 'Studio sinfonico' is fine poetry in music. It reminds me of Venice when I was twenty. The solemn, sad motive (5/4) corresponds to the lagoons and to the gloomy stroke of their waves round the Bridge of Sighs: the other subject soars on high accompanied by the gentle sound of the belfries, announcing, as it were, from a distance the joyfulness of divine hopes." (363)

Throughout his life, these convictions motivated Liszt to strive for a revitalization of the classical music heritage by way of its close associations with poetry, painting and sculpture. He believed that music could find renewal through a synthesis with all these other arts. His concept of ‘programme music’ was an attempt to fuse the domain of music with the contiguous domains of the other realms of expression, which share the same extrinsic properties.

Liszt’s assertion of the unity of the arts was taken up by Wagner who, according to Walker’s Liszt biography, was one of only a very few musicians to actually grasp in full what was being contended. (Walker 358) Subsequently Wagner was equally unique in his ability to take matters further, to the extent of transforming opera in terms of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the total work of art.
1.4iv Metaphysical Referents

Metaphysical referents: in the context of determining the nature of abstract entities made reference to by the music, the traditionalists’ explanation of psychological subjectivity and non-cognitivism was set against the modernists’ assertion of cognitivist bivalency.

When Hanslick wrote, “An aesthetic analysis can take no note of circumstances which lie outside the work itself,” (Hanslick 103) he was refuting Liszt’s affirmation of what amounts to the principle of Cognitivism, the assertion that aesthetic or semantic statements are expressions of belief, which accordingly, in the context of their epistemics, are objectively either true or false. It is an approach that does not argue for any particular semantic claim being true, but that it is truth-apt. Its descriptivist propositions are not mere emotivism; they have the potential to be factual, to be just as ‘real’ in epistemic terms as formalist elements. It is an assertion that denies the non-cognitivist position of the traditionalists, which argues that aesthetic or semantic statements are expressions of non-belief states of mind, such as affective sentiments. Hanslick was arguing that the subjectivity of musical experience implies that extra-musical content is abstract and therefore of a different kind to the formal elements of music, which are determinate and concrete. But Liszt retorted the content in question possesses a bivalent condition; it is an epistemologically objective phenomenon linked mereologically to the music.

Liszt continued to insist to his dying days that music expressivity is not merely a human response to music but is inseparable from the music itself. It is an argument that, at a deeper level, asserts that if music has extrinsic properties, then, even if they are abstract entities, they are most suitably characterised in terms of de re quantifiable referents.

1.4v Modality

Modality: in the context of determining the modality of semantics, the indiscernibility and actuality of elements associated with ‘absolute’ music was set against the qualitative identity and possibility of those associated with ‘programme’ music.

Hanslick wrote, “There is nothing beautiful in Nature as far as music is concerned.” (Hanslick 154) He was arguing that the aesthetic content of music should not be grounded in any realm beyond the music itself, whether that is in emotional response or elsewhere. He wrote further,
“The most essential condition to the aesthetic enjoyment of music is that of listening to a composition for its own sake, no matter what it is or what construction it may bear. The moment music is used as a means to induce certain states of mind, as accessory or ornamental, it ceases to be an art in a purely musical sense.” (Hanslick 139)

Liszt conceded that elements extrinsic to the formal elements of music were variable, and subject to the circumstances of individual listeners’ perspectives, yet that did not imply they ever failed to exist as components of the music. Liszt intuited that if abstract entities are cognitivist truth-apt referents, then the nature of their existence is not something that can have a beginning or end. As regards music semantics, unlike that of the divine, in cases where abstract entities are not actualised in the world, such as in the realms of Hanslick’s aesthetic perceptivity, still they possess the possibility of actualisation. Accordingly, their being in the world is best described as four-dimensional and in terms of both Possibilism and Perdurantism.

1.5 Introduction to Identity Theory

At the core of all the crucial issues involved in the Battle of the Romantics is the notion of identity, of the coinciding (sameness) of entities. What would it take for a proponent of absolute music to establish that one thing, for instance a particular music melody, is the same thing as another thing, namely the meaning of that music melody? Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz had described the notion of sameness in his Discourse on Metaphysics (1686) as an equivalency relation based on the principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles. If there are two things that are indistinguishable from one another, then they are the same thing. If every property or predicate possessed by one entity is also possessed by another, then the two are identical.

\[ \alpha = \alpha \]

Figure 17: indiscernibility/numerical identity

Leibniz’s definition involved an ontological principle arguing that identity must have a numerical type of basis, something akin to two numbers on a number line. There cannot exist objects or any kind of entities that are both distinct and that also share all of their properties in common, that are akin to
different numbers occupying the same position on a number line. The principle can be written in symbolic form in the following way:

\[(\forall \alpha)(\alpha, \alpha)\]  
(for all $\alpha$) there is an identity relation $R$ that exists between $\alpha$ and $\alpha$

*Figure 18: the identity relation*

This relation can also be described in terms of reflexivity. Entity $\alpha$ is logically reflexive in any case where it has the property of being related to itself.

*Figure 19: logic reflexivity*

Using this analysis, it can be said that the form of a statue is identical to the form of a statue, or that music form is identical to the lexical notion of music form. These entities confirm to the principle of being the same relative to themselves. However this is not in itself particularly cogent. Indeed, music formalists (and perhaps statue formalists too) are typically concerned with something quite different.

- The music form is identical to the semantics of the music
- The statue form is identical to the semantics of the statue

In both cases the entities involved are not exactly the same as one another; they are not numerically indiscernible. The identity relation existing between them does not involve reflexivity alone. These music (and statue) formalists are arguing for the following:

\[\alpha = \beta\]

*Figure 20: equivalency version 1*
If any equivalence between music formalism and music semantics cannot be established on a numerical basis according to the standards of indiscernibility, then still it is reasonable to assert that Hanslick and Brahms and their fellow formalists might have intuited it in a non-numerical qualitative manner. The two entities are judged to be identical in terms of some particular feature even if overall they are numerically discrete.

Qualitative equivalency can be examined in greater detail by way of some further examples. For example, seen from above, the square stone pedestal constructed to support the memorial statue of Goethe and Schiller unveiled in 1857 outside the theater as the center of Weimar could have been a different size.

In this case, the relation between the possible different pedestals will possess the property of sameness by way of the pedestal’s shape and yet be distinct from one another in terms of their size. They will possess the property of sameness by way of the equivalency of having four sides of equivalent length and four interior right angles, thus being a square, but distinct in terms of the length of the equal sides, as shown below.

Figure 21: the pedestal constructed to support Goethe and Schiller. Image PMA.

Figure 22: three pedestals of congruent shape sharing the identical property of being a square
This model of identity involves sharing some (but not all) properties, whereby $\alpha$, $\beta$, and $\gamma$ represent three distinct side lengths and Function $\mathcal{F}$ represents the property of being square with equal sides and interior right angles:

$$\mathcal{F}_\alpha = \mathcal{F}_\beta = \mathcal{F}_\gamma$$

*Figure 23: equivalency version 2*

This example reveals how equivalence as a form of identity relation can reveal features not associated with indiscernibility. The criterion for equivalence includes the primitive axiomatic property of reflexivity, as with numerical identity, but in this case it also bears symmetry and transitivity.

If the equivalence relationship is characterised in terms of the relations between the congruent squares shown in Figure xxxxx, then the relation is reflexive in that the property characteristic of its shape applies to itself, it is symmetrical in that the equality exists in two or more directions, such as the relation of $\alpha$ (square 1) to $\beta$ (square 2), and of $\beta$ to $\alpha$, and it is transitive in that it applies between members taken in order, such as the relation between $\alpha$ and $\beta$, $\beta$ and $\gamma$, and also between $\alpha$ and $\gamma$ (and, given the symmetry, vice versa).

*Figure 24: equivalence relation with reflexivity, symmetry, and transitivity*

In this case there is reflexivity in terms of a certain property, the shape, and there is symmetry and transitivity in terms of another property, the size. The music traditionalists of Liszt’s era could have potentially used this criterion to argue that music formalism and music semantics are equivalent in this way given that the more important (or essential) elements shared by the two terms are the same, even if some of the properties associated with them, such as their names and the common usage of these names, are different.
But on the other hand, Liszt and the modernists could have equally well used this same form of equivalency to support their own case. It’s the differences that are essential above anything else.

### 1.6 Equivalence and Co-designation

The criteria for identity and equivalency can be established in many different ways. In addition to the examples introduced earlier, additionally they can be linked with the use of a substitutivity principle whereby $\alpha$ and $\beta$ act as co-designators; they are different expressions associated with their respective circumstances but they possess the same referent.

![Novalis](image1.png) ![von Hardenberg](image2.png)

*Figure 25: equivalence. Image public domain.*

Figure 25 is an example of co-designation. The names ‘Novalis’ and ‘von Hardenberg’ are equivalent in designation, referring to the Early Romantic poet/philosopher and friend of Goethe and Schiller who lived from 1772 – 1801, yet each of the two terms has a range of additional referents which is indeterminate and consequently creates a distinct sense of meaning. ‘Novalis’ is the pseudonym for the poet/philosopher pointing to the referents associable with the writer’s work, and ‘von Hardenberg’ is the inherited family name pointing to the referents associable with his background.

It might be claimed that Brahms and his traditionalist colleagues justified the identity of formalist and semantic elements in a similar manner by way of co-designation. If so, then even though the terms are not numerically indiscernible according to the standard established by Leibniz, still they are equivalent in that they conform to the substitutivity principle.
However it is important to recognise that this is an altogether different application of equivalency compared to that used in the example of the size of the pedestal where all the factors involved were quantifiable. In contrast, in this new case epistemic factors are being introduced.

Linguists today will assert caution when it comes to the application of exact measures such as numerical identity to lexical domains. They will insist that natural language is adaptable to context and able to treat terms such as music, formalism and semantics as ambiguous. This matter will be examined in greater detail in chapter 4. However, for the current stage of inquiry, it is still important to recognise that explorations of language ambiguity and the notion of a criterion of identity was introduced into philosophical terminology only after the era of Brahms and Liszt, incidentally by another Weimar resident, Gottlob Frege, who analysed these issues in both his *The Foundations of Arithmetic* of 1884 and his *On Sense and Reference* of 1892 (*Über Sinn und Bedeutung*). This article makes the assumption that it seems reasonable to assume the mid-nineteenth century ‘Battle of the Romantics’ debates anticipated Frege’s writing, albeit in an intuitive manner.

In the case of the stone pedestal, the parameters involved - the shape and size - were all empirically measurable, quantifiable; they were physical referents pertaining to the object itself. There was no reference to additional lexical or knowledge factors associated with the object such as its hardness or its purpose of being a pedestal. Frege called these criteria the ‘sense’ of a term. But in the case of Novalis and van Hardenberg, there is reference to additional lexical or epistemic factors, the sense, in the establishment of the equivalent terms.

The pertinence of Frege’s *On Sense and Reference* to the current discussion can be summarised by way of the following models. The Identity of Indiscernibles is shown as an equivalence relation that requires both the extension associated with the objective/empirical referent and the intension associated with the subjective/epistemic sense to be the same. In this case α and β are the same in terms of all their properties:

![Figure 26: numerical identity (indiscernibility)](image)

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The Liszt Paradox
In contrast the principle of co-designation is shown as requiring only that the extension associated with the objective/empirical referent is the same. In this case \( \alpha \) and \( \beta \) refer to the same object but possess a different sense. If \( \alpha \) is the pedestal viewed from the front and \( \beta \) is the pedestal viewed from the rear, then both \( \alpha \) and \( \beta \) refer to the same object but the appearance is different.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Extensional referent} \\
\alpha \\
\text{Intensional sense} \\
\end{array}
\quad \equiv 
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Extensional referent} \\
\beta \\
\text{Intensional sense} \\
\end{array}
\]

*Figure 27: qualitative equivalency (extensional identity only)*

This approach to qualitative identity shares a commonality with the equivalency introduced in the previous section pertaining to the square pedestal to the extent that in both cases one parameter exhibits sameness by way of reflexivity while another does not. In the case of the pedestal viewed from the front and the rear, as in the case of the terms ‘Novalis’ and ‘von Hardenberg’, \( \alpha \) and \( \beta \) each have the same extensional referent, the pedestal, or the man who resided in Weimar and lived from 1772 – 1801, but they also possess as additional properties or predicates a respective intensional meaning, or sense, that is not the same, and which is not transitive or symmetrical.

The principle of co-designation as applied to qualitative identity can be written in symbolic form in the following way:

\[(\forall \alpha, \beta)(\exists J)(\alpha, \beta) \rightarrow (\exists F) F\alpha, F\beta\quad \text{(for all } \alpha \text{ and } \beta \text{) if there is an identity relation } J\text{ between } \alpha \text{ and } \beta, \text{ then there is a particular property function } F \text{ that is employed by } \alpha \text{ and } \beta.\]

*Figure 28: qualitative equivalency*

The difference between this qualitative approach to equivalency of identity and Leibniz’s numerical identity can be expressed using symbolic form. In the latter case, the function component is quantified not in terms of a particular property function \( (\exists F) \) as shown in figure xxxxxx but all such functions, including epistemic functions \( (\forall F) \).
The difference between the Leibnizian numerical and the co-designating qualitative is thus reduced
to a mere quantification symbol. However it has enormous significance. In practical terms it is
informative to know that the referent of the name Novalis is identical to that of the name von
Hardenberg, even if the sense of the term is different and ambiguous. Conversely the reflexive
knowledge that Novalis is identical to Novalis or that a pedestal is equivalent to a pedestal has little
efficacy.

This is the reason the music formalists might be drawn to this justification too. They could use
Frege’s analysis to argue that music formalism and music semantics are equivalent terms because
they share an essential extension referent, which is the music itself, even though there may be
different senses of the terms involved.

But again, Liszt and the modernists could have equally well used this same form of equivalency to
support their own case. In this case, it’s the epistemic differences that are essential rather than the
referents.

1.7 Equivalence and Higher-Order Logic

In considering the legitimacy of an application of qualitative identity to the music formalists’ case,
whereby music formalism and music semantics are determined to be equivalent in terms of some
parameters and not others, it is important to recognise the implications of a sortal approach to the
selection of parameters. Taken to its inevitable conclusion, qualitative equivalency can select any
criteria as a basis for identity while disregarding others. If equivalency is established by a primary
parameter, then any subsidiary parameter, whether it be characterised by axioms as in the example of the pedestals, or by epistemic sense as in Novalis, is irrelevant. It does not need to be characterised by anything at all.

For instance, if Liszt and Brahms were to be summoned by the Grand Duke of Weimar to take a test in aural music proficiency, to examine for instance whether they can identity pitches relative to others, and both score 10 out of 10, then, in terms of their test scores, they will be indistinguishable from one another.

![Figure 31: Liszt and Brahms taking the aural music proficiency test. Images public domain.](image)

It will be possible to assert that the expression ‘having the same aural music proficiency test score’ is a predicate-relation in a theorem in which subjects with the same aural music proficiency test score are indistinguishable, and that excludes all other parameters. The fact that they are distinguishable as respectively a composer of program music and a composer of absolute music will be considered as irrelevant by the theorem, which is interested only in a single parameter, their aural music proficiency test scores.

An example such as this, using a binary identity relation with a single sortal parameter ($\exists F$) and ignoring all other parameters, is generally associated with a theorem represented in terms of first-order language. Only if it were to aspire to the capture of additional properties, or the Fregean sense of a term, or to enable quantification over all properties ($\forall F$) would it extend to the resources of a second-order language.
Liszt conceded that music formalism and music semantics have some parameters that are coincident (the same). It is an assertion that an identity-relation between \{form, semantics\} implies there is a first-order function-entity ‘music’ whereby \{music (form), music (semantics)\}. Applied to the case of the Weimar resident and poet who lived from 1772 – 1801, it is an assertion that an identity-relation between \{Novalis, van Hardenberg\} implies there is a first-order function-entity music whereby \{the Weimar resident and poet who lived from 1772 – 1801 (Novalis), the Weimar resident and poet who lived from 1772 – 1801 (van Hardenberg)\}.

\[(\forall \alpha, \beta)(\exists \mathcal{I})(\alpha, \beta) \rightarrow (\exists \mathcal{F})\mathcal{F}\alpha, \mathcal{F}\beta\] (for all \(\alpha\) and \(\beta\)) if there is an identity relation \(\mathcal{I}\) between \(\alpha\) and \(\beta\), then there is a particular first-order property function \(\mathcal{F}\) that is employed by \(\alpha\) and \(\beta\).

*Figure 32: Liszt’s first-order identity*

In contrast to Liszt, Brahms contended that music formalism and music semantics are necessarily coincident (the same)/identical in music. It is an assertion that an identity-relation between (form, semantics) implies there is a first-order function-entity ‘music’ whereby \{music (form), music (semantics)\} is subject to a second-order identity relation. Applied to the case of the Weimar resident and poet who lived from 1772 – 1801, it is an assertion that an identity-relation between \{Novalis, van Hardenberg\} implies there is a first-order function-entity whereby \{the Weimar resident and poet who lived from 1772 – 1801 (Novalis), the Weimar resident and poet who lived from 1772 – 1801 (van Hardenberg)\} is subject to a second-order identity relation.

\[(\forall \alpha, \beta)(\exists \mathcal{I})(\alpha, \beta) \rightarrow (\exists \mathcal{F}, \mathcal{R})(\mathcal{F}\alpha, \mathcal{F}\beta)\] (for all \(\alpha\) and \(\beta\)) if there is an identity relation \(\mathcal{I}\) between \(\alpha\) and \(\beta\), then there is a particular first-order property function that is employed by \(\alpha\) and \(\beta\), and which is subject to a second-order identity-relation \(\mathcal{R}\).

*Figure 33: Brahms’ second-order identity*
Thus the difference between the two approaches is expressed in terms of the difference between first-order logic, which quantifies over only individual variables, and higher-order logic, which possesses the efficacy to quantity also over relations, and consequently has a greater expressive power.

1.8 The Statue Incident

1857 was the centenary of the birth of Carl August, Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, who, along with his mother the Duchess Anna Amalia, had brought Wieland, Herder, Goethe, Schiller and other intellectuals to Weimar in the latter years of the eighteenth century. Together they had transformed the dukedom and the small town of Weimar into a central hub of culture and creative artistry.

Grand Duke Carl Alexander sought to pay tribute to his eminent grandfather. Liszt’s biographer Alan Walker wrote,

“Historic buildings were refurbished, new monuments were commissioned, concerts and plays were put into rehearsal; Goethe’s house, which had remained shuttered since the poet’s death in 1832, was opened to the public, furnished exactly as it was twenty-five years earlier. Weimar, which had been the home of many festivals in the past, would see nothing to compare with the Goethe-Schiller celebrations of 1857. Liszt was heavily involved with them from the start.” (480)
On 5 September Liszt conducted the Weimar Ducal Orchestra in a performance of various representative pieces of ZukunftsMusik, Music of the Future, including the first complete performance of his own Faust Symphony, with its newly-added setting for male voices of the Chorus Mystics, and his latest symphonic poem, Die Ideale, based on Schiller’s poem of the same title, expressing the sentiment of the verse and its classical ideal in music.

However it was the day preceding that was the most significant. On 4 September a large throng of locals and visitors gathered at the Theaterplatz and, to celebrate the occasion, to view for the first time the aforementioned memorial bronze double-statue of Goethe and Liszt that had been commissioned from Ernst Rietschel. It was to be unveiled on its stone pedestal by the Grand Duke here at the very centre of Weimar, here at the centre of contemporary culture, right in front of the Ducal Theatre where the two literacy figures had produced their plays.

Even as the royal family took their seats on the podium, Liszt had reflected on the continuing opposition levelled by traditionalists to the notion of setting significant heritage in a new context, outside the original form of its expression. He recollected the words of Hanslick.

“The function of the composer is a constructive one within its own sphere, analogous to that of the sculptor. Like him, the composer must not allow his hands to be tied by anything alien to his material, since he, too, aims at giving an objective existence to his (musical) ideal, and at casting it into a pure form.” (Hanslick 100-101)

So much for being tied down by Faustian betrayals.
But then, according to the principles of Possibilism revealed by Liszt's progressivism and that will be explored further in chapter 8, right in the middle of the ceremony, as the Grand Duke moved towards the draped monument, preparing to cut the cords and reveal the splendid new monument, Liszt had been approached by a visitor who seemed entirely uninformed about the nature of the event and not a little drunk. What was all of this nonsense with the Grand Duke? She mumbled to him that she had received a preliminary viewing of the statues the day before but, if she was to be entirely honest with this finely dressed fellow, she hadn’t been entirely sure what or who they were supposed to be. Liszt had rolled his eyes in contempt at the visitor’s great ignorance.

She said to him, “Well, tell me young sir. What’s so special anyhow about a couple of bronze statues?”

Lisz turned to her and said, “My lady, the statues are a depiction of Goethe and Schiller, the great literary figures at the very heart of our city and our national identity.”

The visitor was surprised. “Oh really? Goethe and Schiller? Well, now that I know who they are supposed to be, I can see how splendid and worthwhile they both are in appearance. Gosh, what a handsome pair!”

Liszt sniggered under his breath just at the moment the Grand Duke cut the cord to reveal the monument in its full glory and everybody gasped in amazement.
The visitor reached to touch the wooden cross hung on a chain at her neck and added, “Silly me! Imagine if I got muddled about Christ our saviour in a likewise manner. The Lord help me!” At which she headed on her way and disappeared from view.

Figure 37: Liszt’s encounter with an unknown visitor at the grand memorial unveiling.

Reflecting on the incident afterward, most likely after drinking not a few mugs of best local ale himself, Liszt considered that the statue had held a different meaning for the visitor before and after he spoke with her.

Before, at time $t_1$, the meaning of the memorial to her lay entirely in its form, in its status of being a couple of bronze statues. Accordingly, the semantics were intrinsic to the memorial, and the form and semantics were identical to one another in higher-order terms. This was the approach of Hanslick who argued that this was always the case for semantic and aesthetic matters whatever the circumstances.

However, after he had spoken to her, at time $t_2$, the meaning of the memorial shifted away from the form to the statue referents, and it was these that revealed the qualitative sense of the semantics and aesthetics. In this case they were extrinsic to the form, to the actual shape of the statues. The bronze figures were a ‘handsome pair’ because they represented the illustrious Goethe and Schiller, not because they were statues of a particular shape and size. In this case, the form and semantics could only be said to establish sortal equivalency between individual variables of a first-order theorem. The meaning and form shared the same bronze object as referent, but the meaning also possessed criteria that existed beyond the form, and accordingly the two were not subject to an additional identity relation.

It occurred to Liszt that matters would be no different in the case of a musical depiction of Faust or a Faustian betrayal. The semantics and aesthetics would not be revealed exclusively by the musical notes, by the imagination inherent to the musical form alone. They would be revealed in terms of parameters located beyond the sortal equivalency.

Turning his thoughts back to the arguments made by Hanslick, Liszt recognised that the formalist did not argue against defining the purpose of sculpture as the representation of some concrete image, or against reducing the referent of a statue to propositional thought. Hanslick would not have
objected to associations being made between the form of the statues and their semantic referents. However he did insist that such associations, while applicable to sculpture and to most other arts, could not be applied to music, which he asserted is not concerned in the slightest with such things as referents in the world. A sculpture can represent Goethe and Schiller, or anything the sculptor wants it to represent, but music cannot represent Faust and certainly not the Weimar intellectual tradition of metaphysical idealism. According to Hanslick, music is explicitly abstract; it is entirely a play of the intellectual imagination. There cannot be meaning above and beyond the form.

Yet Liszt believed the statue incident revealed Hanslick’s error. He recognized intuitively that the equivalency of any two objects, of any two entities such as form and semantics, requires them to be the same in some way of another, whether in terms of referents or other sortal and qualitative criteria, but the second-order equivalency requires something extra. It demands that the equivalency exists intrinsically and therefore necessarily. However in the case of the statue incident, the form and semantics were not necessarily coincident. They were the same at time $t_1$ but not at time $t_2$.

![Figure 38: the mereological structure of Liszt’s encounter with an unknown visitor at the memorial unveiling.](image)

Liszt concluded that equivalency between form and semantics, whether pertaining to the domain of sculpture or music, is accordingly not a permanent sameness; it cannot be established in second-order terms if the identity relation holding between the two associated variable functions is contingent. Subsequently the properties that make it contingent cannot be said to be intrinsic. They
are changeable for the very reason they are extrinsic to the respective domain. Liszt’s encounter with the unknown visitor at the memorial unveiling revealed that sculpture and music share the same ability to locate semantics and aesthetics both extrinsically to music and independently of its form.

However he intuited there was still more to be gleaned from the incident. As he drank more and more of his ale that evening, it was not matters of mereological structures that captivated Liszt’s attention. Neither was it the impending concert scheduled for the following day, the conducting of the Faust symphony and the symphonic poem *Die Ideale*. In fact, it was the visitor’s last throwaway words. Christ the saviour could never be treated in a likewise manner.

Liszt considered that if the memorial took on the qualities of being ‘splendid and worthwhile’ as a consequence of referring to Goethe and Schiller, then, in contrast, the Son of God did not take on the qualities of being ‘divine’ merely as a result of any reference to the Trinity. In contrast to music, the Son of God possesses His properties, the qualities of being ‘divine’, both intrinsically and eternally. Contrary to the domains of music and sculpture and all of the other arts, the members of the Godhead are said to be necessarily indiscernible from one another in terms of both substance and their divine properties.
2. The Dynamic Event

2.1 Introduction: A Change in Direction

For most of the 1850s, Liszt had great belief and confidence in the notion of a ‘Music of the Future’ and of the position of his work and the music scene at Weimar at the centre of this phenomenon. If music critics such as Hanslick and the music performance culture of other cities revelled in the old, then the Weimar heritage was committed to an exploration of the new. This sense of assurance and belief reached its apotheosis in 1857 at the time of the centenary celebrations. All of those involved were the descendants and the renewers of a great heritage of art and culture.

However, many things changed in the years thereafter. At the moment of its culmination, the vision was challenged and undermined to the extent that Liszt felt impelled to leave Weimar in 1861. There is nothing in Liszt’s writing to suggest that he actually realised what is called here the Dynamic Event, except perhaps in an intuitive sense. Nevertheless, after the pinnacle and crowning moments of 1857, Liszt’s correspondence with others betrayed a change in tone from that of amiability and the jocular to one of deep frustration.

There were three main reasons behind this change, the first of which was his increasing irritation with the ducal court theatre at Weimar. The new intendant had an entirely different agenda and it was not the same as that of Liszt. The Music of the Future was side-lined, and the composer who was its major exponent was made to feel unwelcome in the city.

Liszt wrote frequently of his problems in letters to friends and other acquaintances during the next couple of years. In January 1859, he wrote of the “local miseries and crass improprieties under Dingelstedt, the intendant in Weimar.” (Liszt v1 379) In March of the same year, he wrote of “the many attacks on me.” (Liszt v1 381)

As a result of these difficulties, Liszt gave up most of his conducting in Weimar. This had been a major commitment in his life throughout the previous decade and beyond, and was hard for him to bear.
The second source of frustration came most likely as a result of having more time to focus on what was happening elsewhere. He realised that the reception being granted to his music in different cities around Europe - his symphonic poems in particular - was frequently hostile. Liszt was consistently named as the prime target for the theoretical proclamations of the traditionalists who bemoaned the ruin and destitution of music stripped of its identification with and the methods of the classical heritage.

Again Liszt recorded his distress in various letters to others. On 15 January 1860, he wrote to Wilkoszewski, secretary of concerts at the Hofcapelle in Munich,

> “Time levels all things, and I can quietly wait until people are more occupied in learning to know and to hear my scores than in condemning and hissing at them. Mean-spirited, blackguard tricks, even when played in concert-rooms and newspaper reports, are no arguments worthy of a lasting import.” (Liszt v1 419)

Thereafter Liszt wrote to Franz Brendel in February 1860, considering what a suitable response might be to the continuous attacks being made against his music by Hanslick.

> “It is necessary to get at the exact truth before inveighing against them - for Hanslick is no easy opponent, and if one once attacks him it must be with suitable weapons and without giving quarter. The words ‘denunciation proceedings,’ ‘Gessler caps the party of the future,’ and especially the concluding sentence, ‘A long as Herr Brendel,’ etc., are a challenge, which deserves more than a faint-hearted reproof.” (Liszt v1 428)

The third reason for change came as a result if his engagement with the Catholic faith.

2.2 Catholicism

In the bedroom of the Liszt House, hung above the bed now as it was when Liszt lived in the building, there is an oil print of *The Wedding of Ludwig IV, Landgrave of Thuringia, to Saint Elizabeth of Hungary*, by Liszt’s contemporary, Viennese painter Moritz von Schwind. It shows the thirteenth century priest blessing the matrimonial couple and, behind, a depiction of Christ upon the cross.
Liszt had been as enchanted and engrossed with medieval mythology as his kindred spirit, Wagner, with its orientation towards salvation and redemption. Timothy McFarland’s article on *Tannhäuser* describes Wagner’s lead character, himself enamoured by the Saint Elisabeth, as “a hero torn between carnal love and spiritual fervour, between pagan sensibility and Christian penance - a hero who appeals to the Virgin Mary to save him.” (McFarland 25)

The legendary Minnesinger is obsessed with the nature of life and love beyond death, but he is also a committed Christian.

It is reasonable to speculate that Liszt saw himself in something of the same guise. He was tormented by affliction and vexation in the world, yet he possessed an abiding faith. Indeed, the one exception to the hostility being shown towards him came in the reception to his religious music. He had written a Missa Solemnis, the Gran Mass, during a period of extensive work between 1855 and 1857, originally to commemorate the consecration of the basilica at Gran, now Esztergom in Hungary, and immediately the work had been well received. Writing from Pest, Liszt shared his excitement with Eduard Liszt on 5 September 1856.

"Yesterday’s performance of my Mass was quite according to my intentions ... the very numerous audience, as well as the performers, had raised themselves, body and soul, into my contemplation of the sacred mysteries of the Mass ... and everything as but a humble prayer to the Almighty and to the Redeemer!” (Liszt v1 288)

In 1859, as his grievances with all else increased, Liszt sent a copy of the published score to Pope Pius IX in Rome to ascertain whether the work might be performed at St Peters' Basilica. It turned out that orchestral performances were not permitted but Liszt was surely delighted when an organ reduction was used soon afterwards for a performance. The Mass was just as sensuous and theatrical and characterised by lush chromaticism as his symphonic poems, but by this time it was receiving far better reviews than his other works in many places. Liszt wrote to Franz Brendel about the matter on 6 December 1859,

“..."In consequence of the performance of my Mass in Munich (on the King’s birthday, at the end of November), which, as I am told on many sides, was well given and - which seems wonderful - was acknowledged by many musicians there to be a work of importance - so
Liszt had written religious music as the supreme manifestation of music expression. If music could reveal poetic meaning then it could also reveal the divine. Indeed, this was no compromise position for Liszt. He had no qualms about the idea that his symphonic poems and other secular works were equally religiously motivated. All of his efforts were to the glory of God. Writing to Heinrich Porges on 30 October 1859, Liszt reflected that all his work of the past

"has proceeded both from man's need of freedom as well as of love and which, by and with the grace of God, has been impelled to raise itself toward the Divine.” (Liszt v1 404)

Furthermore Liszt was betrothed to the Princess Caroline, who was also a committed Catholic. When Liszt had moved to Weimar in 1848, determined to finish with the constant touring and piano recitals and to take up the long-standing invitation of Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna to settle down in the city, immediately he had invited Princess Caroline and her young daughter to join him at his new residence at the Altenburg, which was large enough for a family.

Church doctrine was at the centre of their relationship from the start, and not only for reasons of faith. Caroline’s first marriage at the age of seventeen had been a covenant of the church. It was only possible to annul such a sacrament between two baptised individuals with the permission of Church authorities. Accordingly their mutual desire for matrimony was deferential to their shared faith.

Liszt was raised as a Catholic in Pest and his religious principles had always been important to him. His faith was as much a centre of his convictions as was music. However, at the time that the frustrations in his life arose, it became an even more a stable component of his values.

During his visit to Pest in 1858 Liszt organised his admission as a member of the confraternity to the Order of St. Francis, sharing in its prayers and restrictive vows. He had known of the Franciscan monastery since his youth and he knew it was a community that could help him through dark days. Indeed his membership this was a culmination of his beliefs and values.
Then, in 1859, to add to the misery of his worldly existence, Liszt’s beloved son by his first marriage, Daniel, died. If his grief was unbearable, then his assent to Catholic doctrine was further confirmed. He wrote again to his cherished cousin Eduard in the last days of December 1859,

“You are, and will ever be to me, a support and a courage-giving comforter in the battles and straits of my life. God grant me grace to go through them without wavering, as a faithful servant of the truth in Christ!” (Liszt v1 416)

On 14 September 1860, during one of his frequent trips away, Liszt wrote to Princess Caroline of his faith, resolute in times of great distress.

“Yes, ‘Jesus Christ on the Cross,’ a yearning longing after the Cross and the raising of the Cross, - this was ever my true inner calling; I have felt it in my innermost heart ever since my seventeenth year, in which I implored to enter the Paris Seminary; at that time I hoped it would be granted to me to live the life of the saints and perhaps even to die a martyr’s death. This, alas! has not happened - yet, in spite of the transgressions and errors which I have committed, and for which I feel sincere repentance and contrition, the holy light of the Cross has never been entirely withdrawn from me. At times, indeed, the refugence of this Divine light has overflowed my entire soul, - I thank God for this, and shall die with my soul fixed upon the Cross, our redemption, our highest bliss; and in acknowledgement of my belief, I wish before my death to receive the holy sacraments of the Catholic, Apostolic, and Romish Church, and thereby to attain the forgiveness and remission of all my sins. Amen.” (Liszt v1 439)

2.3 The Holy Trinity

Catholic doctrine asserts that God exists as a Trinity. God is one entity of a singular substance, of one essence, but also of three distinct co-eternal persons, or members. The relationship among the members of the Trinity is described by the Latin term circumincessio, by the notion of ‘going around’ or ‘enveloping’. The members are understood to reciprocally contain one another, in the sense that one permanently envelops and is permanently enveloped by the others, who are in turn enveloped. Thus God has no distinct components but is a primitive, foundational entity.
Michael Rea, writing in The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology, described the central tenet of God’s oneness as follows,

“Monotheism is thus secured by the fact that the Persons are part of a single fully divine being.” (Rea 414)

The notion of the Trinity was formulated by early Christians to describe the relationship between the different members of God outlined in doctrine. But at that time there were different interpretations of this relationship.

The Nicene Creed was adopted by the First Council of Nicea in the year 325 CE using the terms hypostases to describe the individual members of the Godhead, which at this stage was concerned only with two persons, the Father and the Son, and homoousios (of one substance) to define the relationship existing between them. This became the standard position and thereafter developed into the orthodox doctrine of three persons, one being, co-equal and co-eternal, one essence in nature and in will. All members are taken to be uncreated and eternal without beginning. The members are not the names of different parts of God, but three persons existing in God as a single entity with an identical nature. They are intrinsic to the primitive and foundational nature of God.

Rea summarised the relationship between the members of the Godhead as follows,

“To say that two divine beings are consubstantial, then, would be to say that the two beings in question are identical with respect to their divinity; neither is subordinate to the other; they are not divine in different ways; and if one is a God, then the other one is too.” (Rea 405)

However there were other approaches devised to describe the nature and structure of the Trinity during the early era of Christology. Arianism, attributed to the Libyan ascetic and contemporary of the First Council, Arius, posited that the Father existed prior to the Son, and that the latter was not the same being as God but a subordinate and changeable entity granted the dignity of becoming the Son of God. Adoptionism, attributed in its earliest form to epistles which predate the gospels, posited that the Son of God became the Son of God only at a particular moment in time, which according to different interpretations came either at the moment of His baptism or at His
resurrection and ascension into heaven. Both approaches were determined as contrary to orthodox doctrine by the early church and eventually condemned as heresy.

Subsequently, as a part of establishing an orthodox interpretation for adherents of the faith, the Church Fathers were able to establish collectively that there were three main forms of heresy associated with interpretations of Trinitarian doctrine:

- **Subordination**, which posits that some members are subordinate and accordingly not fully divine; the Son and Spirit are not as divine as the Father;
- **Modalism**, which posits that members are different modes/aspects of appearance/manifestation; this is the equivalent of the distinctions made in chapter 1 between the terms Novalis and von Hardenberg.
- **Polytheism**, which posits there are three divine beings which are not one intrinsic unity; the members of the Trinity are extrinsic to the Godhead.

By the time Augustine of Hippo wrote his ‘On the Trinity’ at the turn of the fifth century, heretical voices had largely been excommunicated or, in Arius’s case, first exiled, then recalled to Constantinople, and then poisoned. (Kirsch...PAGE NUMBER?) The orthodox interpretation of the Trinity was a required norm, and remained so for many of the ensuing centuries. In the thirteenth century, the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 reaffirmed this orthodoxy, asserting there is a distinction of persons existing in God, but that the persons are of one divine substance. No other interpretations of divine equivalence were compatible with the faith.

Later in the same century, Thomas Aquinas argued in the second volume of his Summa Theologica, entitled On the Blessed Trinity, that the hierarchical relationship expressed in terms of the names, Father, Son, and Spirit does not indicate that one is supervening upon the other, other than in the context of the physical domain. In the divine realm, all members are consubstantial and their mode of application is the same. Individual sentiments and properties such as beauty and ugliness, or happiness and grief distinguish human nature alone; they do not characterise and subdivide the divine nature of the three persons. The commandment placed upon the Son of God to suffer at the hands of his oppressors pertained only to His human nature.

By the turn of the modern era, a millennium and a half of quarrelsome controversy had finally subsided to some degree. The Lutheran Reformation and thereafter Evangelical Weimar had not
been particularly interested in theoretical approaches to the abstract notion of the Trinity. Luther’s theology was oriented upon the efficacy of Christ and upon divine providence and forgiveness. Trinitarian doctrine was considered to be mere metaphysical speculation and not particularly relevant to the more important matter of God’s grace (Luther ADD 1525). If there was to be a theological doctrine, then it was not going to be worked out and formulated by anyone; it was subject only to revelation by his grace. Indeed, the Lutherans argued that given Trinitarian mereology was only speculation, any doctrine seeking to explain it was acting in defiance of God’s order to avoid becoming pre-occupied with trivial matters. If more recently, modern scholars may have found evidence that Luther did view the Trinity as a significant aspect of Christian doctrine, and that he had been just as interested as his forebears in matters of theological speculation, (REFERENCE?) then this was not the position outlined by nineteenth century Lutheran theologians at the time of the Battle of the Romantics. Above all else, it was the notion of ‘Christ the Saviour’ that preoccupied their attention.

Similarly Liszt had no compunctions about combining matters of theology with other modes of thought, just as he had no reservations about mixing music with poetry and art. His symphonic poem *Die Ideale*, in celebrating the focus of the Weimar Heritage on idealism, had not been intended as a contradiction of Catholic values at all. If the early Christians had viewed Neo-Platonism and its polytheism as the antithesis of their theological monism, then Liszt, like Schiller before, had placed the focus elsewhere and come up with a celebration of the Neo-Platonist underpinnings of Catholic doctrine, including the monism of the Trinity. This was equally true of his other 1857 symphonic poem *Hamlet*, which focused on the good juxtaposed against the bad, the just against the unjust, whereby all the Platonic forms are made manifest in musical terms.

Until the statue incident at the unveiling of the Goethe and Schiller memorial, and thereafter the Dynamic Event, it is likely that Liszt had paid virtually no attention to the doctrine of the Trinity whatsoever. Not until he was confronted by the words of that unknown visitor.

### 2.4 The Dynamic Event

The first chapter of this article explored the principle of equivalency as it can be applied to the Goethe-and-Schiller statue unveiled in Weimar for the 1857 centenary celebrations of the birth of Duke Carl August, and thereafter to the more abstract case of music formalism and music semantics as contested by the different parties active in the Battle of the Romantics. The Dynamic Event
beginning in the late 1850s involved an intuitive application of the same principle to the equally abstract case of Catholic doctrine. Using the approach of analytic theology, and accordingly drawing upon analytic methodologies associated with epistemology, logic, and metaphysics, which enable an articulation of theological notions in more precise terms, the doctrine of the Trinity can be modelled in a similar manner to that of Goethe-and-Schiller statues and of program music to reveal the premises underpinning Liszt’s thinking, and the seemingly unresolvable paradox he encountered.

Whether the doctrine of the Trinity is characterised by way of an orthodox or a modal interpretation, in both cases there is the claim of equivalency pertaining to at least some criteria fulfilled by descriptions that are coincident (the same). Even in the case of Adoptionism, whereby the Father is considered to be eternally actualised as a member of the Godhead but the Son is not, still the persons of the Trinity can be said to be equivalent by way of sortal criteria, by way of their coincident membership of the Godhead.

If the three persons of the Trinity are represented as \( \alpha, \beta \) and \( \gamma \), then the function \( \mathcal{F} \) can be used to represent their equivalency, their ‘enveloping’ of one another, and their shared substance within the Godhead, as shown below.

\[
(\forall \alpha, \beta, \gamma)(\exists \mathcal{G})(\alpha, \beta, \gamma) \rightarrow (\exists \mathcal{G})\alpha, \mathcal{G}\beta, \mathcal{G}\gamma \quad \text{(for all } \alpha, \beta \text{ and } \gamma) \text{ if there is an identity relation } \mathcal{I} \text{ between } \alpha, \beta \text{ and } \gamma, \text{ then there is a particular property function } \mathcal{G} \text{ that is employed by } \alpha, \beta \text{ and } \gamma.
\]

*Figure 39: qualitative equivalency pertaining to the Trinity*

The expression outlined in figure 39 is an assertion that if there is an identity relation between the members of the Trinity, then there is a particular property function *hypostases* that is employed by the members. An identity-relation between members of the set \{Father, Son, Spirit\} implies there is a first-order function-entity ‘God’ of divine substance and unity whereby \{God (Father), God (Son), God (Spirit)\}. Accordingly, given the members retain their individual characteristics, it is an assertion that the ontological relation between the members is one of content rather than form.

The orthodox account of the Trinity goes further than the assertion outlined above by adding an additional component. It contends that the property function \( \mathcal{G} \) applies to all criteria. It asserts that the three persons are necessarily coincident (the same) and thus indiscernible in God. Rather than
claiming that the property characteristics describing a person of the Trinity existing in God is a first-order function, this account contends that the property of ‘unity’ is itself applicable to the property function $g$, and is thus second-order.

The function component is quantified not in terms of a particular property function ($\exists g$) as shown in figure 39 above but all such functions ($\forall g$).

$$(\forall \alpha, \beta, \gamma)(\exists g)I(\alpha, \beta, \gamma) \rightarrow (\forall g)(g\alpha, g\beta, g\gamma)$$

(for all $\alpha, \beta$ and $\gamma$) if there is an identity relation $I$ between $\alpha, \beta$ and $\gamma$, then for all property functions $g, g$ is employed by $\alpha, \beta$ and $\gamma$.

**Figure 40: Indiscernibility of Identicals**

More precisely, the assertion in this case of the Indiscernibility of Identicals is a further assertion that an identity-relation between members of the set {$\alpha, \beta, \gamma$} implies that the first-order function-entity ‘God’ of divine substance and unity whereby {$g\alpha, g\beta, g\gamma$} is subject to a second-order identity-relation $R$.

$$(\forall \alpha, \beta, \gamma)(\exists g)I(\alpha, \beta, \gamma) \rightarrow (\exists g, R)(Rg\alpha, Rg\beta, Rg\gamma)$$

(for all $\alpha, \beta$ and $\gamma$) if there is an identity relation $I$ between $\alpha, \beta$ and $\gamma$, then there is a particular first-order property function $g$ that is employed by $\alpha, \beta$ and $\gamma$, and which is subject to a second-order identity-relation $R$.

**Figure 41: higher-order identity pertaining to the Trinity**

The expression outlined in figure 41 is an assertion that if there is an identity relation between the members of the Trinity, then there is a particular first-order property function *hypostases* that is employed by the members, and which is subject to a second-order identity-relation *homoousias*. In this case, it is an assertion that the ontological relation between the members is one of form rather than content.

The Dynamic Event occurred when Liszt intuitively compared the first-order modelling of the modal and heretical account of the Trinity with his own approach to ‘program music’ and found them to be
the same, and when he compared the second-order modelling of the orthodox account of the Trinity when the traditionalists’ approach to ‘absolute music’ and found them to be the same.

Liszt realised that, given music is interpreted by all parties as equivalent to God’s nature, then it is significant that his assertion of music semantics existing as extrinsic to music uses the same mereological modelling of identity as that of Arianism and Adoptionism, whereby the members of the Trinity are considered as extrinsic to the Godhead. Liszt realised further it is significant that arguing for the semantics of a piece of music as temporary or contingent is akin to arguing for the members of the Godhead as similarly temporary or contingent.

This intuitive analysis did not sit well with his convictions, given that his approach to music semantics was revealed as in contradiction with his doctrinal beliefs. He professed a faith that asserted the members of the Godhead as eternal and necessary, but this was at variance with his approach to music semantics and its focus upon possibility and creativity. Accordingly, he perceived a paradox in his interpretation of identity and its respective application to music and to the Godhead.
3. The Consequences

In the summer of 1860 Liszt wrote to his cousin Eduard that he was composing again.

“In these latter weeks I have been completely absorbed in my composing. If I mistake not, my power of production has materially increased, while some things in me are made clear and others are more concentrated. By the end of October the last two of the Symphonic Poems will be out (Hamlet and Battle of the Huns). Then come the Psalms, which you do not yet know, and which I much want you to know - and also a new number of songs which will please you. I shall then work at the Oratorio St. Elisabeth, exclusive of all else, and get it completely finished before the end of the year. May God in his grace accept my endeavours!” (Liszt v1 433)

As indicated in chapter 2, since the statue incident of 1857 he had been through a challenging period of his life. He had struggled with the practical difficulties that arose while working with the new Intendant at the theatre, and then with the death of his son. He had to abide the marriage and departure from home of the now twenty-two-year-old Princess Maria, and the disappointments of Princess Caroline who continued to have difficulties gaining permission for her divorce and their subsequent marriage. But at least he was finding resolution in a renewed orientation around the Catholic tradition. He was to become an ordained abbé in the church. Furthermore he was committed to writing primarily religious choral music, which embraced the conservative ideals of the Catholic Church, not least of which was Der Legende von der Heiligen Elisabeth, written in 1857-62, concerning the saintly Elisabeth of Tannhäuser, the Landgrave's niece and the beloved of the wandering Minnesinger.

Most of all he had struggled during this period with his inability to reconcile his justifications of the efficacy of program music with his faith. The Dynamic Event, beginning with the statue incident, occurred at the time Liszt realised that identity relations could be seen as synonymous between that of music and that of religious doctrine. He understood intuitively that, according to orthodox Catholic doctrine, the persons of the Trinity are necessarily coincident (the same) and indiscernible in God.
The expression outlined in figure 42 is an assertion that if there is an identity relation between the
members of the Trinity, then there is a particular first-order property function hypostases that is
employed by the members, and which is subject to a second-order identity-relation homoousios.

He understood further that, according to heretical Arian and Adoptionist doctrine, the persons of
the Trinity may sometimes be coincident (the same) but they are not necessarily identical in God.

The expression outlined in figure 43 is an assertion that if there is an identity relation between the
members of the Trinity, then there is a particular property function hypostases that is employed by
the members.

Liszt realised that, given music is interpreted by all parties as equivalent to God’s nature, then it is
significant that there is equivalency between the Brahms and Hanslick definition of music and
orthodox Catholic doctrine, as shown below.

Liszt realised further it is significant that there is equivalency between his definition of music
semantics as possessing contingent content and that of heretical Arian and Adoptionist doctrine, as
shown below.
In the context of the Dynamic Event, Liszt was unable to explain the paradox at the heart of his values, the contradiction between the identity structure outlined in his Music of the Future and that outlined in his religious faith. Accordingly he was unable to explain how abstract notions in general might be determined in terms of identity, of constituents, and of the alethic modalities of necessity and contingency.

Liszt could not answer any of these questions. His only option was to explain the paradox as an unresolvable riddle of the world and of Catholic doctrine, to resort to the principles of Mysterianism and an assertion that the Trinity is an enigma to be adored rather than a problem to be solved. Liszt had no option other than to follow Aquinas and the mystical tradition of ontology outlined in the Fourth Lateran Council, to assert it is not possible to know what God is, only what God is not, and to resort to a meta-theory which argues that any interpretation of the Trinity must inevitably, due to epistemic restrictions, lack satisfactory or intelligible content. It is a concealed truth made inscrutable by God. It is quite reasonable to have no solution given that the notion of a revealed mystery is an oxymoron in itself; it is a contradiction in terms.

If the celebrated philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, he who had come up with the notion of the Identity of Indiscernibles in the first place, writing thereafter in his *Theodicy* of 1710, could declare himself a ‘Mysterian’, then surely Liszt could do the same. In his case, he could do far more than that. Even if the paradox lay at the core of his beliefs and values unresolved, still he could write his program music emulating the very metaphysical mystery of God that eluded him, thus asserting both his faith and his refusal to be defeated by its unfathomable truths.

Writing from the Liszt House in Weimar to his cousin on 3 July 1877, he had the following to say.

"Dearest Eduard, For some weeks I have been much on the go and disturbed in many ways. Several musical performances occasioned me to go about in the neighbourhood. On the 17th June some portions of the *Christus Oratorio* were splendidly sung in the Thomaskirche (Leipzig) by the Riedel Verein. Last Friday *Elizabeth* came brilliantly to the fore again in Eisenach, and yesterday Gille, my untiring friend of many years' standing, arranged a large concert of sacred music (with several items of mine), at which I was present." (Liszt v2 314)
References


