

FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN:
GENDER AS A FACTOR IN RECEPTION

by

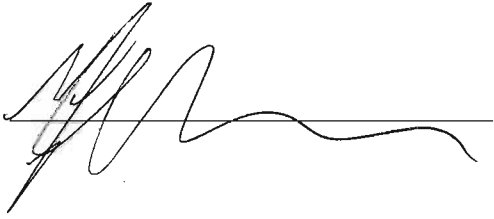
Frederick De Jager

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal

All work for this thesis was completed at the former
University of Natal

2004

I Frederick De Jager declare that *Frédéric Chopin: Gender as a Factor in Reception* is my own work and that all the sources I have used and quoted from have been acknowledged.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'F. De Jager', written over a horizontal line.

I have approved the submission of this work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Beverly Lewis Parker', written over a horizontal line.

Beverly Lewis Parker, Supervisor.

ABSTRACT

Frédéric Chopin's contemporaries took note of his preference for a piano with a light escapement. They commented that his method of playing was light in touch, and that his demeanor on stage contrasted strongly with that of other performers who were outwardly expressive. Although his performances enjoyed support from some members of his society, most contemporary commentators viewed his performances negatively. His performances were seen as deficient when they were contrasted with those of others, and especially those of Franz Liszt. Some of Chopin's contemporaries saw his playing as feminine and contrasted his works with those of Beethoven, whose works seemed to them to express masculinity. Negative assessments of Chopin's works also appear in later critical and musicological literature. In 1889, the music critic Henry T. Finck suggested that the desire of French, Polish, German and Viennese audiences for what he called "aesthetic jumboism" was detrimental to Chopin's popularity.

It is my thesis that smallness has been, and often still is, associated with femininity and that those pianists and authors who advocated largeness – however defined (be it 'grand,' 'healthy,' *forte*, or 'masculine') – were afraid that Chopin's refined pianism and the "small" aspects of his compositions might be used as evidence that Chopin was not strictly heterosexual. Largeness seems to have been linked in a number of ways to heroism, and it seems that smallness was seen consequently as lacking in heroism. Thus, musicians and musicologists have criticized his works for their lack of complexity and length and for the nature of their melodies, characteristics that I show to have been

associated with both size and masculinity. For example, in 1986, Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger analyzed Chopin's compositions in a way that seems to me to reveal Eigeldinger's own search for complex underlying forms. This search appears to be an attempt to illustrate that Chopin was intellectually 'heroic' because he could match the organic unification that some musicologists find in the works of other great composers. While the nineteenth-century development of the piano into a powerful concert instrument undoubtedly reflected the changing nature of concert venues and audiences, since recitals moved from the salon to the concert hall, the changes in design could also be seen as reflecting an ever-increasing desire for largeness. The forcefulness and consequent loudness with which Chopin's music was played on these larger pianos might well have caused (and could still be causing) some pianists' physical problems. Jeffrey Kallberg has analyzed an array of gender-oriented metaphors in relation to Chopin's possible gender-ambiguity, wishing to remove the veil of suspicion that surrounds smallness. It is my argument that a veil of suspicion is indispensable when analyzing the language that people have used to describe their experiences with music, because they have used language to express their preferences for certain kinds of experiences.

Thus I attempt to show that during the hundred and fifty years since Chopin's death, both pianists' performance practices and musicological discourse have attempted to cleanse Chopin's music from its associations with smallness and, consequently, with femininity.

What is our investment in the “safe place” of art, of these privileged objects we have come to love? There is a good deal at stake here. Cultural artifacts and practices, works of art, are perhaps the most valuable belongings of a civilization, treasures to possess, share, and preserve. It matters to whom they belong and who is empowered to speak about them. It matters about whom *they* speak, and what they say.

Ruth Solie, *Musicology and Difference* 1993, p 20

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | iii |
| LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS | iv |
| Chapter | |
| 1. INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.1 The Theme of the Miniature in Relation to Chopin (p. 9) | |
| 1.1.1. Relations between Largeness and Nationalism (p. 12) | |
| 1.1.2. Largeness in Relation to Nature and Organicism (p. 22) | |
| 1.1.3. The ‘Heroic’ Currency of Largeness (p. 28) | |
| 1.1.4. “Aesthetic Jumboism” and Gender (p. 39) | |
| 1.2 This Study in Relation to Other Studies (p. 47) | |
| 1.2.1. Scores (p. 47) | |
| 1.2.2. Performances (p. 53) | |
| 1.2.3. What Words Imply about Music (p. 56) | |
| 1.3 Sources (p. 72) | |
| 2. PERSPECTIVES ON LARGENESS AND SMALLNESS IN RELATION TO PERFORMANCES, PIANOS, PIANISTS’ PROBLEMS, AND THEORETICAL COMPLEXITY | 90 |
| 2.1 Chopin’s Playing and Playing Chopin (p. 94) | |
| 2.1.1. ‘Literal’ Descriptions (p. 96) | |
| 2.1.2. Metaphorical Descriptions (p. 114) | |
| 2.1.3. Beyond Words: “Connotation, Tone, and Intent” (p. 149) | |
| 2.2 Chopin’s Piano and Progress in Piano Design (p. 167) | |
| 2.3 Pianists’ Problems (p. 182) | |
| 2.3.1. An Interdisciplinary Approach (p. 183) | |
| 2.3.2. A Consideration of Period Instruments (p. 186) | |
| 2.3.3. Method- and Medical-Related Complaints (p. 187) | |
| 2.3.4. Scientific Experiments (p. 200) | |
| 2.3.5. The Link between Period Instruments and Pianists’ Problems (p. 202) | |
| 2.3.6. Chopin in Relation to Physical Problems (p. 203) | |
| 2.4 The Dimension of Theoretical Complexity: Concerto versus Prelude (p. 222) | |

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| 3. MUSICAL RHETORIC AND MUSICAL SPHERES | 267 |
| 3.1. Musical Rhetoric and the Salons (p. 267) | |
| 3.2. Chopin's Music in Relation to the Human Voice (p. 289) | |
| 3.3. The Human Voice and the "Rhetoric of Genre": The Nocturne Contrasted with the Polonaise (p. 322) | |
| 3.3.1. The Gendering of Genres (p. 323) | |
| 3.3.2. The Nocturne (p. 330) | |
| 3.3.3. The Polonaise in Contrast with the Nocturne (p. 343) | |
| 3.3.4. The Contradictions (p. 347) | |
| 4. CONCLUSION | 355 |
| 4.1. Pianos and Pianists' Problems (p. 358) | |
| 4.2. Two Dimensions of Musical Experience (p. 360) | |
| 4.2.1. Piano Performance (p. 362) | |
| 4.2.2. Theoretical Complexity (p. 364) | |
| 4.3. Music and Musical Spheres (p. 370) | |
| 4.4. The Double Discourse and Performance (p. 376) | |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 384 |

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to my promoter Beverly Lewis Parker for her intensive guidance and unfailing support. Thanks to Margaret Lenta, Maureen Michau, Penelope Forrest, Dosia Reichardt and Gregory Kratzmann. Thanks to librarian Heather Gale and to the librarians of the University of Pretoria for allowing me to use their data bases for purposes of research. Thanks to my family, Sonya, Juanita, and Frederick, and to my gardening partner Gill Gifford, for their encouragement.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

| Figure | Page |
|--|------|
| 1. Charles Brazin, <u>Wojciech Grzymala, 1832, lithograph by Francious de Villain,</u> . . . | 115 |
| 2. Gerard Hoffnung, <u>Liszt, 1963,</u> | 120 |
| 3. <u>“Liszt as seen by an artist of <i>La Vie Parisienne</i> in 1886. The Sword of Honour presented by the Hungarian nation figures prominently, but ‘he has ceased to use it as he finds he can hurt the piano more with his hands alone.’ [His] style was essentially the ‘grand’ style – for large halls,”</u> | 124 |
| 4. Frédéric Chopin, <u>“Three Canon Shots”: Prelude Op. 28 No. 24,</u> | 134 |
| 5. Frédéric Chopin, <u>Etude Op. 25 No. 11,</u> | 136 |
| 6. Frédéric Chopin, <u>Nocturne Op. 15 No. 2,</u> | 140 |
| 7.1 <u>Single Escapement,</u> | 173 |
| 7.2 <u>The Action of the Modern Grand Piano,</u> | 173 |
| 8.1 <u>Design of Hammers: English Broadwood (1823),</u> | 174 |
| 8.2 <u>Steinway (1970),</u> | 175 |
| 9. Badura-Skoda, <u>Perspectives on Dynamics,</u> | 177 |
| 10. <u>Physiology: Big and Small – Chopin and Rubinstein,</u> | 195 |
| 11. <u>Largeness in Relation to Technique,</u> | 207 |
| 12. Frédéric Chopin, <u>Etude Op. 10 No. 2,</u> | 212 |
| 13.1 Frédéric Chopin, <u>Etude Op. 25 No. 6,</u> | 216 |
| 13.2 Frédéric Chopin, <u>Etude Op. 25 No. 6,</u> | 216 |
| 14.1 <u>Perspectives on Fingering: Leopold Godowsky,</u> | 218 |
| 14.2 <u>Karol Mikuli,</u> | 218 |
| 14.3 <u>Johann Hummel,</u> | 218 |
| 14.4 <u>Hugo Riemann,</u> | 219 |

| Figure | Page |
|---|------|
| 15. Frédéric Chopin, <u>Prelude in A Major Op. 28 No. 7</u> , | 223 |
| 16. Frédéric Chopin, <u>Rondeau Op. 1</u> , | 250 |
| 17. Frédéric Chopin, <u>Rondeau Op. 16</u> , | 250 |
| 18. Frédéric Chopin, <u>Polonaise Fantasie Op. 61</u> , | 251 |
| 19. Frédéric Chopin, <u>Concerto in E Minor Op. 11: Rondo</u> , | 251 |
| 20. Frédéric Chopin, <u>Mazurka Op. 24 no. 4</u> , | 252 |
| 21. Frédéric Chopin, <u>Concerto in E Minor: Rondo</u> , | 252 |
| 22. Frédéric Chopin, <u>Concerto in E Minor: First Movement</u> , | 255 |
| 23. <u>Nocturne Op. 9 No. 2</u> , | 308 |
| 24. Robert Schumann, <u>Carnaval Op 9: “Chopin”</u> , | 312 |
| 25. Frédéric Chopin, <u>Nocturne Op. 9 No. 3: <i>Agitato</i></u> , | 312 |
| 26. Frédéric Chopin, <u>Nocturne Op. 9. No. 3: ‘Hysteria’</u> , | 314 |
| 27. Eugene Delacroix, <u>An Illustration by Delacroix of Goethe’s <i>Faust</i>: From a Collection of Lithographs (1828)</u> , | 333 |
| 28. Felix Dobrzyński, <u>Three Nocturnes for Piano</u> , | 334 |
| 29. Frédéric Chopin, <u>Nocturne Op. 9 No. 3: Cadenza</u> , | 336 |
| 30.1. Frédéric Chopin, <u>Nocturne Op. 9 No. 3: Measures 1 through 4</u> , | 337 |
| 30.2. <u>First Return of Measures 1 through 4</u> , | 338 |
| 30.3. <u>Another Return of the Opening Motif</u> , | 338 |
| 30.4. <u>Opening Theme: Measures 5 through 8</u> , | 339 |
| 30.5. <u>A Repeat of Measures 5 through 8</u> , | 339 |
| 30.6. <u>Nocturne Op. 9 No. 3: Measures 45 through 48</u> , | 340 |

| Figure | Page |
|---|------|
| 30.7. <u>Nocturne Op. 9 No. 3: Measures 69 through 72,</u> | 340 |
| 30.8. <u>Nocturne Op. 9 No. 3: Measures 51 through 56,</u> | 341 |
| 30.9. <u>Nocturne Op. 9 No. 3: Measures 75 through 80,</u> | 341 |
| 30.10. <u>Nocturne Op. 9 No. 3: Measures 13 through 20,</u> | 342 |
| 31.1. Frédéric Chopin, <u>Polonaise Op. 40 No. 2,</u> | 343 |
| 31.2. <u>Polonaise Op. 40 No. 2: Measures 40 through 43,</u> | 344 |
| 31.3. <u>Polonaise Op. 40 No. 2: Measures 101 through 104,</u> | 344 |
| 32. Frédéric Chopin, <u>Nocturne Op. 62 No. 1,</u> | 346 |
| 33. Frédéric Chopin, <u>Polonaise Op. 40 No. 1,</u> | 346 |
| 34. Frédéric Chopin, <u>Nocturne Op. 15 No. 1,</u> | 348 |
| 35. Frédéric Chopin, <u>Polonaise Op. 71 No. 3: “Trio Section”,</u> | 349 |
| 36. Frédéric Chopin, <u>Concerto in E Minor: Romance,</u> | 351 |

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to show how a desire for mammoth proportions in relation to experiences with music has had a considerable effect on the evaluation of Frédéric Chopin's performances and his compositions, as well as on the construction of pianos and the venues for performances. This preference for 'largeness' in all its forms, whether it be the *fortissimo*, the grand, the heroic, or largeness in another sense, appears to stem from a conscious or unconscious linking of the concept with attributes of 'masculinity' and a tacit acceptance that the qualities customarily linked with that gender are superior to 'feminine' attributes. The element of power as experienced through intense sensory saturation appears to be a factor influencing this preference. A desire for largeness in the musical sphere has led to the marginalisation of 'smallness' and whatever is associated with it, particularly concepts such as 'femininity,' lightness and a lack of power: 'feminine' music in the nineteenth century (and still to an extent today) was typically perceived as being lesser in volume and in intellectual content, as compared to 'masculine' music.

Language is the primary means of describing our experiences with music and it therefore plays a major role in the construction of meaning. It is used spontaneously in order to relay a musical experience, but it may also be used by those intending to convince others of what they see as the correct interpretation of that music. Those musicians and musicologists who have an innate preference for smallness, but who may well have been

influenced by others to perform or analyze a score so as to emphasize largeness, experience a sense of conflict between what they would rather express and what they have been influenced into expressing. Performers of Chopin's music have been particularly susceptible to influences that seek to cleanse him and his music of qualities that are associated with smallness, 'femininity,' and lack of power. I maintain that the desire for mammoth dimensions has influenced the development of piano design since the invention of the instrument in 1709. The quest to produce a concert instrument of unparalleled strength and durability has created problems in the performance of some of Chopin's music and may also be the cause of some pianists' tension-related or injury-related problems. In my view, authors who talk, think, or write negatively about smallness and performers who perform in a style that marginalizes the 'miniaturesque' are engaged in a gendered form of politics, in that they defend their interpretations as 'better' than those of people who value 'smallness' in music.

The selection of my field of study was determined by a consideration surrounding pianists' problems, piano design, and the context of performance surrounding Chopin. I have suspected for some time that whilst some pianists' physical problems appear to stem from the immediate problem of *how* they use their body to create sound, these problems may be the result of their desire for sensory saturation. That is, their desire to play with force and outward display and to produce loud music could be the underlying cause of their physical problems. The problem concerns not *how* they use their hands and arms (etc), but lies with the reasons *why* they use their hands and arms in order to play in a forceful manner. I have also been fascinated by people's love of the concert grand piano.

I question, therefore, why the grand piano so impresses people. Possibly, it is the eponymous size and sound produced. If people enjoy music most when it saturates their senses, this will have physical implications for musicians who feel obliged to fulfill their audiences' desire for mammoth dimensions of sight, sound, and touch. Moreover, if musicians choose not to communicate musical meaning through a performance that satisfies their listeners' senses, it is questionable whether such artists will be well-liked by the general public. Chopin, for example, gave "only about thirty public [large-scale] performances throughout his life," but performed regularly for small gatherings within salon society.¹ This may be because his style of playing did not suit the musical tastes of the general public.

This present study which focuses on discussions of Chopin's performances and music, may throw light on the links that I maintain exist between meaning in music, pianos and pianists' problems, and the desire for largeness.

As Nicholas Cook states, in the nineteenth century, and up until the early twentieth century, the practice of describing music metaphorically – a "hermeneutic" method of analyzing music – was the prevailing method people used for trying to understand the musical meaning.² The trend to use metaphoric terminology was therefore prevalent during Chopin's life and remained fashionable for a long time, even after his death in 1849. Two sources typifying the hermeneutic approach to musical meaning are Franz

¹ Arnold Whittall, *Romantic Music: A Concise History From Schubert to Sibelius* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987), 73; Oscar Bie, *A History of the Pianoforte and Pianoforte Players*, trans. by E. E. Kellett and E. W. Naylor (New York: Da Capo Press, 1966), 256.

² Nicholas Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 71.

Liszt's book *Frédéric Chopin* (1852) and James Huneker's book *Chopin: The Man and His Music* (1900).³ The true authorship of Liszt's book has come into question and one needs to examine its contents with caution. In his foreword to the book *Frédéric Chopin*, Edward Waters suggests that because of its excessive wordiness, the book was more likely to be the work of Liszt's "strange companion," Carolyne Wittgenstein. Waters writes that "page after page after page is devoted to fanciful improvisation, and the reader (far from being entertained) wonders when he will again encounter the composer hidden behind all this verbiage." In this book, the aesthetic qualities of Chopin's music and his piano performance are described in lengthy metaphorical terms and in gender-oriented terminology. Fifty years after the death of Chopin, literature on Chopin's music continued to employ this type of descriptive terminology when describing the sensory implications of Chopin's music texts. For example, two thirds of Huneker's book *Chopin: The Man and His Music* are devoted to metaphorical descriptions of various genres of music. Herbert Weinstock writes, in the introduction to the 1966 paperback edition, Huneker "is not above giving out as gospel the inventions of his own teeming, word-dazzled imagination." These very "inventions" demonstrate Huneker's interpretation of Chopin's music.⁴

In both of these sources, it appears that the authors are concerned primarily with their own interpretations of musical meaning. Either they draw on first-hand experience with Chopin, or they discuss his texts. They do not consider another factor that has influenced

³ Franz Liszt, *Frédéric Chopin*, with a foreword and trans. by Edward N. Waters (Escudier, 1852; New York: Vienna House, 1973); James Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music* (Charles Scribner's and Sons, 1900; New York: Dover Publications, 1966).

⁴ Herbert Weinstock, in Huneker, Introduction to *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, ix.

their experience of music – that their own sensory orientations and perspectives might have been influenced by what they have learnt from their teachers, from literature, or from their experience of performance. Their interpretation of musical meaning has been relayed largely through metaphorical terminology. Our understanding of how they experienced musical meaning, in other words, depends on our ability to understand the descriptive terminology they used to relay their sensory experience, as well as an acceptance that they might have a preference for certain sensory experiences – a bias that might, in itself, have been influenced by others’ perspectives on Chopin.

Literature on piano design reflects in technical terms on the history of design and the sight, sound, or touch of the instruments. Literature that proposes a contextual study of piano design and piano methods does so only in relation to the history of technological inventions and pianistic method and not in relation to the sensory orientations of composers, who may have used particular pianos because of their unique qualities of sound. For example, Cyril Ehrlich’s *The Piano: A History* (1976), Sandra Rosenblum’s *Performance Practices in Classic Piano: A History* (1988), and Dieter Hildebrandt’s *Pianoforte: A Social History* (1988), are not based on theoretical frameworks that attempt to explain the relations between musical meaning, the volume of sound produced by a piano, and the nature of the audience.⁵ Sensory preference for a dimension of largeness or smallness is not considered in relation to progress in piano design.

⁵ Sandra Rosenblum, *Performance Practices in Classic Piano Music* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988); Dieter Hildebrandt, *Pianoforte: A Social History of the Piano*, trans. Harriet Goodman with an introduction by Anthony Burgess (London: Century Hutchinson, 1988); Cyril Ehrlich, *The Piano: A History* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1976).

As regards literature on pianists' problems, Robert Strangeland and Alexandra and Roger Pierce, in their articles "Dimensions to Piano Technique: Part 4" (1980) and "Pain and Healing: For Pianists [Part One, Two and Three]" (1982-84), do not question what might be the possible root causes for the problems with which they deal.⁶ One study that has questioned the cause of pianists' problems is Robert Silverman's "Physicians' Views of Physical Problems" (1982-83).⁷ In an interview with two medical doctors from the Massachusetts General Hospital, he poses the question as to whether hand difficulties experienced by pianists may result from the newer, large concert grands built for larger concert halls, which require great physical strength. Silverman, in other words, suggests possible links between physical problems (the dimension of touch) and the history of society's trend toward larger audiences and bigger concert halls. Unfortunately, the articles are short and Silverman's discussion is not detailed. He never defines fully the sensory orientations of audiences, performers, or composers; nor does he offer solutions to pianists suffering from problems such as tendonitis.

More recently, studies are being published in which there is an attempt to find a correlation between sensory perception and society's method of assigning meaning to varying qualities of sound. For instance, in "Properties of Expressive Variability Patterns in Music Performances" (2000), Guy Madison conducted extensive experiments in order to determine people's emotional responses to variations of tempo, articulation, and

⁶ Robert Strangeland, "Dimensions to Piano Technique: Part 4," *The Piano Quarterly* (Summer, 1980), 39 – 40; Alexandra and Roger Pierce, "Pain and Healing: For Pianists," *The Piano Quarterly* (Summer, 1982), 43 – 45; Alexandra and Roger Pierce, "Pain and Healing: Part Two," *The Piano Quarterly*, Vol. 31 (1983), 38 – 39; Alexandra and Roger Pierce, "Pain and Healing: Part Three," *The Piano Quarterly*, Vol. 32 (1984), 45 – 49.

⁷ Robert Silverman, "Physicians' Views of Physical Problems," *The Piano Quarterly* (Winter, 1982 – 83), 42 – 47.

loudness in music.⁸ The aim was to determine how variations in these areas affect people's anger, fear, happiness and sadness. Additionally, it is clear that some recent literature, such as Jeffrey Kallberg's book *Chopin at the Boundaries: Sex, History, and Musical Genre* (1998), contextualises formal music analysis, the embedded aesthetic rhetoric of a composition, and the performance practices of piano music, within Chopin's gendered society.⁹

At the outset of this chapter, I suggested that the linking of largeness with 'masculinity' is related to developments in piano design and to method- and injury-related problems. I also maintained that the recorded reactions of the auditors of the sensory experience – as relayed through language, and especially through text – is likely to affect later performances and appreciation of Chopin's music. During the course of this study, I will investigate these links, which I see as embedded as a social construction within nineteenth- and twentieth-century western societies.

Both David Howes and John Rink support the belief that the previous research on the interpretation of sensory data has been unsatisfactory. Howes writes that the study of the senses is lacking, and that "dialogical anthropology is itself lacking in at least one dimension – namely, what Ohnuki-Tierney (1981) has called the sensory dimension." He continues: "the sensory dimension cannot be comprehended within the framework of either interpretive or dialogical anthropology because both remain, in effect,

⁸ Guy Madison, "Properties of Expressive Variability Patterns in Music Performances," *Journal of New Music Research*, Vol. 29 No. 4 (2000), 335 – 356.

⁹ Jeffrey Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries: Sex, History, and Musical Genre* (London: Harvard University Press, 1998).

‘verbocentric’ (text-centered in the first case, and speech-centered in the second).”¹⁰ Rink’s “Translating Musical Meaning: The Nineteenth-Century Performer as Narrator” (1999) refers to Richard Taruskin’s perspective that music researchers often concentrate on past musical practices at the expense of present performing possibilities. Rink agrees that “past forays” into nineteenth century music have “concentrated on ‘factual’ matters like editions and instruments, virtually ignoring such issues as how composers conveyed ‘meaning’ (defined in any number of ways) in the score and how contemporary performers translated it into sound.”¹¹ Furthermore, when musical meaning was dealt with, it was “itself defined [largely] via the sensory experience, just as the codes devised by the composer to represent it in the score are themselves conceived in sound.”¹²

As part of their conceptualization of qualitative research (2000), Egon Guba and Yvonna Lincoln state that if theories and facts are not treated independently, then objectivity will be “undermined.”¹³ I ask, however, what if one’s theoretical framework is constructed on the basis of opinions presented as facts? In answer to my own question, I acknowledge that my act of choosing this subject might be coloured by my personal views and that, according to Guba and Lincoln, the following theoretical framework, drawing on opinions presented as facts, might be coloured by subjectivity. However, by presenting a number of perspectives, I attempt to increase the objectivity of my work.

¹⁰ David Howes, *Varieties of Sensory Experience: A Sourcebook in the Anthropology of the Senses* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 7.

¹¹ John Rink, “Translating Musical Meanings: The Nineteenth-Century Performer as Narrator,” in *Rethinking Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 219.

¹² *Ibid.*, 218.

¹³ Egon Guba and Yvonna Lincoln, “Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research,” in *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (California: Sage, 2000), 106, 107.

1.1. The Theme of the Miniature in Relation to Chopin

Henry T. Finck, an American music critic who graduated from Harvard in 1876 “with highest honours” in philosophy, uses an uncomplicated metaphor of a circus elephant to explain that audiences expect art to saturate their senses.¹⁴ His theory is that audiences want their sensory satisfaction to be ‘big.’ Finck arrives at this metaphor after his own contemplation of the nature of audiences contemporaneous with Chopin. In his book *Chopin and Other Musical Essays* (1889), he proposes that French, Polish, German and Viennese audiences did not fully appreciate Chopin’s performances, owing to the aesthetic miniaturism of his music.

The chief reason however, why musical authorities have so long hesitated to acknowledge that Chopin is one of the very greatest explorers, and pioneers in the domain of their art, is to be found in what, for want of a better term, may be called aesthetic Jumboism. When the late lamented Jumbo was in New York he attracted so much attention that his colleagues, although but little inferior in size, had ‘no show’ whatever. Everybody crowded around Jumbo, stuffing him with bushels of oranges and apples, while the other elephants were entirely ignored. As elephants are intelligent animals, is it not provable that Pilot, the next in size to Jumbo, went mad and had to be shot because he was jealous of the exclusive attentions bestowed on his rival? In aesthetics, this Jumboism, this exaggerated desire for mammoth dimensions, seems to be a trait of the human mind that is difficult to eradicate. It is a suggestive fact that the morbid, sham aestheticism which prevailed in England a few years ago chose for its symbol the uncouth sunflower.¹⁵

There are four aspects of Chopin’s composition and performance that could be considered to be small and that therefore support Finck’s hypothesis. Most of his compositions are short in length and are written for solo piano. Although Alfred Einstein

¹⁴ Margerie Morgan Lowens, “Henry T. Finck,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrell (London: Macmillan, 1980), 562. Lowens’s entry on Finck is unchanged in the 2001 edition of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.

¹⁵ Henry T. Finck, *Chopin and Other Musical Essays: Chopin*, (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1889), 6.

says that Friedrich Nietzsche “recognized” Richard Wagner as one of the “greatest masters of the miniature,” it was Chopin who became known primarily for his miniature piano compositions. Therefore, because, as Einstein says, Wagner could only “speak out fully” in opera (because he “required a public which, never too large for him, played the part of a *mass* to be coerced, as a people, or a nation, or the world”),¹⁶ Chopin seems to be the foremost representative of the piano miniature, having never expressed the desire “to speak out fully” through opera: as stated by William Lovelock in the mid-twentieth century, and echoed in the late twentieth century by Kallberg, Chopin was an “unexcelled miniaturist” and the “champion of the miniature at a time when many around him gravitated towards ever grander musical colossi.”¹⁷ Secondly, Chopin preferred the single-escapement Pleyel piano (which he referred to as “*non plus ultra*”) as opposed to the “heavy action” of the double-escapement Érard piano – the “enhanced, seven-octave” piano on which Liszt performed in public concert halls.¹⁸ Thirdly, the method in which Chopin played is said to have involved no pyrotechnical or virtuosic trends. After a concert given by Chopin, Sigismond Thalberg (who was one of the greatest crowd-pleasers of the day) remarked to Ferdinand Hiller “slyly” that he “needs” a “*forte*” for he has heard nothing but “*pianissimo*” the entire evening.¹⁹ Chopin himself claimed that “simplicity” in piano performance “is everything” – a view that is relayed unchanged by Jessica Duchen in the late twentieth century. In her article “The Legacy of Chopin” (1999), she quotes Camille Saint-Saëns as having said that Chopin’s playing “was very

¹⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, interpreted by Alfred Einstein, in *Music in the Romantic Era* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1947), 5.

¹⁷ William Lovelock, *A Concise History of Music* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1953; 1966), 188; Kallberg, preface to *Chopin at the Boundaries: Sex, History, and Musical Genre*.

¹⁸ *Chopin’s Letters*, collected and edited by E. L. Voynich and Henryk Opieński (New York: Vienna House, 1973), 158; James Methuen-Campbell, “Chopin in Performance,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 197.

¹⁹ Thalberg, quoted in Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, 26.

much simpler than what is generally imagined.”²⁰ And finally, if Chopin did perform, it was invariably within the intimate surroundings of the French salons.²¹ In regard to the latter, it has even been suggested that the Parisian public at large could not appreciate the “delicate nuances” of Chopin’s music, and that Chopin, understanding audiences’ desire for largeness, “withdrew himself from the arena.”²² The theme of the miniature in relation to Chopin’s music has been of such interest that one French authority on Chopin, Alfred Cortot, even went as far as correlating Chopin’s small body size to his miniature compositions – an almost forgivable assumption since George Sand and Liszt had referred to Chopin as a “Chopinet” and “Mazurka” respectively.²³

Fink might not have been incorrect when he said that various nations are innately disposed towards largeness, but there may exist, also, the possibility that, for some societies, largeness itself had particular kinds of value in the nineteenth century. It is possible, therefore, that if Chopin did not write or perform music in a way that represented these ‘values,’ then he would not be popular with these nations. Therefore on a macro level the issue of smallness and largeness, which I relate to Chopin’s performance practice, might be better understood in light of the aesthetic ideals of the

²⁰ Chopin stated further, that “after having played immense quantities of notes, and more notes, then simplicity emerges with all its charm, like art’s final seal.” It is notable that Chopin offered this perspective after his student Mme Streicher verbalized some of her observations concerning the musical characteristics of Liszt’s piano performance. Chopin, in Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher: As Seen by His Pupils*, trans. by Naomi Shohet and ed. by Roy Howat (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 54; Saint-Saëns, in Jessica Duchon, “The Legacy of Chopin,” *BBC Music Magazine* (October, 1999): 45, 46.

²¹ Bie writes, “if Chopin was heard in Paris, it was at very select matinees at the Pleyel salon.” Bie, *A History of the Pianoforte and Pianoforte Players*, 256.

²² Arthur Hedley, *The Master Musician’s Chopin* (London: J M Dent and Sons Ltd., 1974), 53.

²³ Alfred Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, trans. and ed. Cyril and Rena Clarke (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1952; 1975), 7; Pierre Azoury, *Chopin Through His Contemporaries: Friends, Lovers, and Rivals* (London: Greenwood Press, 1999), 31; George Marek and Maria Gordon-Smith, *Chopin: A Biography* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979), 168.

Romantics – ideals that other musicologists have explored. In the course of exploring some of these aesthetic ideals, it may seem that there is sufficient evidence to suggest that there exists an antithesis to Finck's possibly simplistic theory. After considering other ways in which to explore the values that have been placed on largeness, I will, however, return to Finck's theory, elaborating on it in order to illustrate its connections with sexual politics (which have, to my knowledge, not been customarily linked with any of the Romantic 'isms' in music).

1.1.1. Relations between Largeness and Nationalism

Nationalism will probably go unchallenged as being one of those 'isms' that has been frequently associated with Chopin, because he lived half of his life in Poland and the other half as an émigré in France, and many of his compositions reflect Polish-derived folksongs. Whilst Finck claims that the Polish were amongst several nations that were unable to appreciate Chopin fully, his inclusion of the Polish nation in his generalization might seem unjustified, because the national character of Poland has itself been linked with 'smallness' in a number of ways.

Poland has been looked upon as though it were less 'heroic' than several neighboring countries. We must ask ourselves, therefore, whether Poland, if it embraced ideologies that were different from the conquering spirit of its neighbours, would have been more receptive of Chopin's music – had he not, of course, emigrated to France. A

consideration of some characterizations of Poland and the customs and ways of her people supports the idea that Poland may have been increasingly appreciative of Chopin's music had he not left for France.

Poland, as the "nobile Republic," had "the 'structure of small neighborhoods,'" and even "when Poland was already erased from the map of Europe," it remained "a nation of families." The nation itself, therefore, has been viewed as a closely-knit society – we might even say an 'intimate' society.²⁴ The home, above all, within this nation of neighborhoods, was characterized especially by its intimacy. For example, it can be said of Polish society, at the time of the November uprising (1831), that even though it was a subjected nation, it found a special form of life, a "home existence" of a "being-in-the-family," and that this type of existence helped the Poles counter "despotism." Further, this "inner way of being" is said to have "conditioned the survival of the nation, and became a source of its capacity for renewal."²⁵ Therefore, patriotic sentiments were expressed – as a result of relocating the "main focus of national life" into the home – within the family, which was thought to be "the main pillar of Polish identity."²⁶ The Pole's "strength and patience" might be linked, at least in part, to the role that women have played in the history of the social fabric within the country.²⁷ In favour of those who

²⁴ Andrzej Zajęczkowski and Zofia Jabłonowska, in Leon Dyczewski and Barbara Jedynek, "Family, Family Values and Home," *Values in the Polish Cultural Tradition: Polish Philosophical Studies III*, ed. Leon Dyczewski (Washington: Cardinal Station, 2002), 45.

²⁵ Maurycy Mochnacki, as quoted by Andrzej Zajęczkowski and Zofia Jabłonowska, in Leon Dyczewski and Barbara Jedynek, "Family, Family Values and Home," *Values in the Polish Cultural Tradition: Polish Philosophical Studies III*, ed. Leon Dyczewski (Washington: Cardinal Station, 2002), 48.

²⁶ Ewa Jabłońska-Deptuła, "Patriotism and Sovereignty," in Leon Dyczewski and Barbara Jedynek, *Values in the Polish Cultural Tradition: Polish Philosophical Studies III*, ed. Leon Dyczewski (Washington: Cardinal Station, 2002), 130, 131.

²⁷ Jabłońska-Deptuła, in Raymond Leslie Buell, *Poland: Key to Europe* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1939), 27.

are tempted to draw the conclusion that Chopin's talents and sensitivities were inherited from his mother,²⁸ it may be argued justifiably that Polish women were in a sense the 'parents' of the patriotic sentiment. Teresa Kukołowicz provides us with a convincing argument (referring to a number of contemporaneous documents) that the nationalistic face of Poland was formed in the home, by women who transmitted religious and moral truths to their children, whilst their husbands were engaged in an "heroic struggle," defending their country against timeless and "tragic crossroads" – the Russians, the Prussians, and the Austrians.²⁹

Even in the religious sphere, we are told of the gentle nature of the Polish people: "sensitivity to transcendent values and detachment proper to the *sacrum*, by individuals and whole social groups, best expresses their religiosity."³⁰ Adam Mickiewicz, drawing on the religious faith of his compatriots, is said to have thought that the very nature and destiny of the captured and sacrificed Christ was analogous to the nature of Poland (which was also 'captured' repeatedly, and whose customs were 'sacrificed' unto her rulers).³¹

²⁸ In Chapter Two, "Chopin's Playing and Playing Chopin," we shall see that there has indeed been some suggestion of this sort by Pierre Azoury.

²⁹ Teresa Kukołowicz, in Leon Dyczewski and Barbara Jedynek, *Values in the Polish Cultural Tradition: Polish Philosophical Studies III*, ed. Leon Dyczewski (Washington: Cardinal Station, 2002), 241 – 252; Feliks Gross, "The Working Class in Poland," in *Polish Civilization: Essays and Studies*, ed. Mieczysław Giergielewicz (New York: New York University Press, 1979), 235.

³⁰ Czesław Bartnik, "Basic Elements of Polish Religiosity," in Leon Dyczewski and Barbara Jedynek, *Values in the Polish Cultural Tradition: Polish Philosophical Studies III*, ed. Leon Dyczewski (Washington: Cardinal Station, 2002), 69.

³¹ Adam Mickiewicz, in Stanisław Cieślak, "Religiosity and Polish Literature," in Leon Dyczewski and Barbara Jedynek, *Values in the Polish Cultural Tradition: Polish Philosophical Studies III*, ed. Leon Dyczewski (Washington: Cardinal Station, 2002), 98.

It was not, however, as though the Polish lacked all forms of ‘strength’ with which to pursue their own idea of a ‘successful’ nation – indeed, tax evasion was met with the death sentence in the 1820s, and H. Sutherland Edwards has written over six-hundred pages about the Polish “insurrection” of 1863 alone, which illustrates, in my view, the magnitude of the uprising.³² Neither did the Polish lack their own “sagas” that were “full of heroism and knightly deeds.” They also used patriotic slogans, such as “Blood, Honor, Fatherland,” but, for all their ‘heroic’ insurrections, they nevertheless seemed to lack “a clear, positive plan of what to do ‘afterwards’” – they might not have been able to free themselves from their oppressors, simply because they lacked the foresight, which has been associated with the ‘heroic’ French revolutionaries, required to develop their nation further.³³ By comparison with Francophiles, then, there is a sense in which Poles seemed to lack both the physical and mental strength required in order to determine the fate of their country.

E. J. Hobsbawm says that one of the three criteria required “in practice” that allowed people firmly to be classed as a nation, was that these people had to be able to prove their capacity for ‘conquest’: “there is nothing like being an imperial people to make a population conscious of its collective existence.”³⁴ Thus he considers the middle class of France, by comparison with Poland (for example), a powerful force, backed by the ‘imperial’ strength of Napoleon. This ‘strength,’ he considers to be necessary in order to

³² Norman Davies, “Kongresówka: The Congress Kingdom (1815-1846),” *God’s Playing Ground: A History of Poland Volume II – 1795 to the Present* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 311; H. Sutherland Edwards, *The Private History of A Polish Insurrection* (London: Saunders, Otley, And Co., 1865).

³³ Jabłońska-Deptuła and Henryk Frankel, in Henryk Frankel, *Poland: The Struggle for Power* (London: Lindsay Drummond Ltd., 1946), 36.

³⁴ E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Program, Myth, and Reality* (Wiltshire: Redwood Press Ltd., 1990), 38.

shape and give direction to the ideals of the masses. What exactly constituted the ‘French nation,’ however, requires discussion. On the one hand, we are of course told that, “before 1880,” there was “no cultural homogeneity in the state called France,” although “the Revolution of 1789...was the beginning of a story of filling the state with national content.”³⁵ In defense of this notion, we might even say that the émigrés themselves (who included Chopin) contributed to this heterogeneity; as Mickiewicz said in his lecture at the Collège de France (in 1840) – “I am a foreigner.”³⁶ On the other hand:

Nations as a natural, God-given way of classifying men, as an inherent though long-delayed political destiny, are a myth; nationalism, which sometimes takes pre-existing cultures and turns them into nations, sometimes invents them, and often obliterates pre-existing cultures: *that* is a reality, for better or worse, and in general an inescapable one.³⁷

If nationalism is an unstoppable force, which “obliterates” pre-existing cultures, we must ask ourselves: where do Chopin and the other exiles fit in with French nationalism? If Chopin did identify with the Polish (even though his father was a Frenchman), then Polish culture, as represented by him, was itself at the mercy of the heroism current in France. Hobsbawm, for instance, speaking of the French Revolution, raises a vital question that might influence the way in which we define Chopin’s presence within the Parisian community:

³⁵ Ernst B. Haas, *Nationalism, Liberalism, and Progress Volume I: The Rise and Decline of Nationalism* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1997), 179.

³⁶ Adam Mickiewicz, in Waclaw Lednicki, “Mickiewicz at the Collège de France,” in *Polish Civilization: Essays and Studies*, ed. Mieczysław Giergielewicz (New York: New York University Press, 1979), 182, 183.

³⁷ Ernest Gellner, “Nationalism and High Cultures,” in *Nationalism*, eds. John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 63, 64.

But if the only historically justifiable nationalism was that which fitted in with progress, i.e. which enlarged rather than restricted the scale on which human economics, societies and culture operated, what could the defence of small peoples, small languages, small traditions be, in the overwhelming majority of cases, but an expression of conservative resistance to the inevitable advance of history?³⁸

Hobsbawm's question might not require an answer in relation to the Revolution (as the question appears to be rhetorical), but, in relation to Chopin, we should consider the question more closely. After Napoleon was defeated, the upper class had some of their power restored to them, but certainly not to the same degree as prior to the Revolution. What are we to make of Chopin's place within post-revolutionary society, when the strong impression given, in many sources, was that the Polish could be characterized as a "small" people, and an even 'smaller' people when abroad and representatives of their country as émigrés? Chopin might well have adopted an attitude of "conservative resistance" to the heroic masses that evolved as a result of the French Revolution. However, we have to add at the same time that he might also have sympathized, in some sense, with the Napoleonic image, because the younger generation of Poles, to which he himself belonged, enlisted "eagerly" under Napoleon's "banner," hoping to "redeem their country's freedom" with their own blood.³⁹ He may have been partisan at some levels, and uncommitted at others.

Chopin's music does appear to be linked to the folk idiom of Polish culture, and as piano literature it may represent some sort of nationalistic feelings. Alina Kowalczykova tells

³⁸ Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Program, Myth, and Reality*, 41.

³⁹ Ludwik Erhardt, *Music in Poland*, trans. Andrzej Aleksandrowicz (Warsaw: Interpress Publishers, 1975), 30.

us that because “Polish Romanticism” “developed in an enslaved country, in literary activity a stronger accent fell on problems of consolidating the sense of national identity, for instance on the folk and on the folklore.”⁴⁰ She explains, further, that because most of the intellectual elite were living in exile, they were nonetheless the heroes of Poland in that they kept Polish identity alive. It might be said of Chopin, consequently, that, if he resisted being “obliterated,” refusing to be drowned out by the voices of the masses, then he was truly ‘Polish,’ because his own insurrection (that may be manifest in his music) echoed the spirit of the Poles, who were equally determined to defend their rites.

A particular example in support of the idea that a certain nationalism may be present in Chopin’s music can be drawn from some general descriptions of his music and his compatriots’ poetry. Whilst ‘charm,’ ‘refinement,’ or ‘melancholy’ do not belong exclusively to a debate on Polish nationalism (because they also, perhaps, describe Gabriel Fauré’s (French) music),⁴¹ these terms have been used to describe the poetry of Chopin’s compatriots, Malczewski, Mickiewicz, and Słowacki. Jerzy Peterkiewicz and Burns Singer inform us that the “tragic generation” “had to witness the slow murder of their country by Russia, Prussia and Austria. Apparently, by 1825 (only a few years before Chopin left Poland), the Romantic style was given “full expression in Malczewski’s narrative poem *Maria*.” This poem is thus described as being “cinematic in sequence of its scenes,” as it “unfolds against the melancholy landscape...” We see,

⁴⁰ Alina Kowalczykowska, “Respect for Women and the Elderly and Love of Children,” in Leon Dyczewski and Barbara Jędynak, *Values in the Polish Cultural Tradition: Polish Philosophical Studies III*, ed. Leon Dyczewski (Washington: Cardinal Station, 2002), 183.

⁴¹ Anthony Blunt and Edward Lockspeare, “Nationalist Ideals,” in *French Art and Music Since 1500*, ed. D. G. Charlton (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1972; 1974), 82.

further, how certain sentiments were thought to be common to the general Polish population; Mickiewicz and Słowacki, for example, are said to be

the embodiment of national Romanticism, which can still appeal to the communal feelings of most Poles. Mickiewicz, in particular, exercises this possessive power over them, and no matter how strongly one may resist the bardic claims, there is so much familiar charm...that one's memory warms up and dissolves criticism.⁴²

It is certainly not the case that other poets could not be charming or melancholic, but these kinds of references (to melancholy, for example) are important when referring to Chopin and nationalism because both Chopin and Mickiewicz were in exile. We must ask ourselves if it is possible that their respective compositions share some of the same thoughts and feelings, simply because they themselves 'shared' remorse over the fate of their country. It could be assumed defensibly that the main link between their melancholic poems and poetry-like music relates to nationalism, because they have both been lionized at times for their heroic efforts to keep at bay the grief that took hold of their homeland, which suffered many defeats.⁴³

Naturally, we should be wary of formulating a 'primordial' perspective on Chopin. Saying that he carried with him "through life 'attachments' derived from place of birth, kinship relationships, religion, language, and social practices that" were natural for him,⁴⁴ would be to overlook that even his "place of birth and kinship connections" might have

⁴² Jerzy Peterkiewicz and Burns Singer, "Introduction" *Five Centuries of Polish Poetry: 1450 - 1950*, Translated in collaboration with Jon Stallworthy (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1979), xiii.

⁴³ Erhardt, *Music in Poland*, 30 – 41.

⁴⁴ Clifford Geertz, quoted in Paul R. Brass, "Élite Competition and Nation-Formation," in *Nationalism*, eds. John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 83.

lost their “emotional significance” for him, or that he might have viewed them negatively.⁴⁵ However, this does not seem true of Chopin, who was vocal about his connections with Poland. It is possible that his continual devaluing of Germans and their culture, for instance, was, in itself, a reflection of his own subscription to the idea that he was inextricably linked with Poland. He may even have been wishfully naïve to the fact that both French and German cultures had long-since influenced the Polish folksong.⁴⁶ He seems to have loathed Germans and their music, and this might have been due to his own awareness that the failure of Poland to free itself from “two Powers which had dismembered” it (Prussia and Austria), resulted in the King of Prussia helping Nicholas I of Russia to crush them and then follow on with an active course of “Germanization.”⁴⁷ To this end, we see him speaking out more strongly (although in the privacy of his letters) about his own Polish identity – “my piano has heard nothing but mazurkas.”⁴⁸ Chopin’s determination to support Poland was also noted by Liszt, who said that Chopin’s music was aimed especially at his compatriots.⁴⁹ It is interesting to note, further, that at least one late twentieth-century musicologist continues to accept Liszt’s claim that Chopin’s pianism reflected the character of the Polish people, saying that Chopin’s ‘melancholy’ was seen within Poland as a reflection of the national characteristic.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Paul R. Brass, “Élite Competition and Nation-Formation,” in *Nationalism*, eds. John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 84.

⁴⁶ Anna Czekanowska, *Polish Folk Music: Slavonic Heritage – Polish Tradition Contemporary Trends* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 41.

⁴⁷ O. Halecki, *A History of Poland* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), 235.

⁴⁸ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 88.

⁴⁹ Liszt, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 51.

⁵⁰ Zofia Chechlińska, “Chopin Reception in Nineteenth-Century Poland,” *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

It might be argued that Chopin, with his ‘delicate’ and ‘melancholic’ customs and ways was singularly out of place in France, and that the people did not understand him fully because of ethnic differences. We should, however, not be quick to accept the notion that the French – on the whole – were unable to relate to Chopin because of his national identity. For instance, Anthony Blunt and Edward Lockspeare, in discussing the Société Nationale, show that Fauré himself acknowledged the intimacy of his own musical style, and they continue to say how this style was “quiet,” “monochrome,” “hushed,” “suave,” and “civilized.”⁵¹ It is not difficult to see the similarities between Chopin’s ‘aristocratic’ refinement and Fauré’s ‘civilized’ music. This sort of comparison does, in part, validate the questioning of the nationalistic divisions that some people might make between Poles and Francophiles, for example.

Nationalism, therefore, might indeed be linked not only to the polonaises and the mazurkas (in that they were Polish dances), but also to the nocturnes, because they seem to reflect the melancholy that some people attribute to the Polish spirit itself. Chopin might, therefore, have merely been preserving – as Mickiewicz claimed was possible – “the national memory” by alluding, through his music, to the “living or spoken language” of his homeland.⁵² Moreover, Chopin might also be seen as exceedingly patriotic, at times, composing, as he did, more than fifty mazurkas. His continued use of the genre throughout his life, in other words, could suggest not only that he was skilled in the form, but that he knew, as R. F. Leslie says, “the arts flourished” outside Poland, only because

⁵¹ Anthony Blunt and Edward Lockspeare, “Nationalist Ideals,” in *French Art and Music Since 1500*. ed. D. G. Charlton (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1972; 1974), 82.

⁵² Adam Mickiewicz, in Leon Dyczewski and Barbara Jedynak, “Family, Family Values and Home,” *Values in the Polish Cultural Tradition: Polish Philosophical Studies III*, ed. Leon Dyczewski (Washington: Cardinal Station, 2002), 49.

it was “beyond the reach” of the “censorship imposed at home” – “the truth is that the émigrés were articulate when the Poles at home were compelled to silence.”⁵³ In support of this argument, we need only to refer to the “stirring” mazurka that became the national anthem of Poland, written outside Poland (in Italy) by Józef Wybicki in 1797. It became a “unifying symbol” that began with the lines “Poland is not yet lost.”⁵⁴ However, we are cautioned, by both Sidney Finkelstein and Taruskin, that, on the one hand, treating music in a “nationalist” way necessarily excludes other nationalities from that music, and, on the other hand, that nationalism itself lost its impact nearly everywhere in the world by 1930.⁵⁵ We must question, therefore, whether problematizing smallness and largeness according to ethnic differences is better than more universal differences – that is, divisions that might apply to every culture, such as gender.

1.1.2. Largeness in Relation to Nature and Organicism

Another topic that we should not eschew is that of nature and natural phenomena and their relation to intellect and emotion. There exists much documentation to which we might refer in order to demonstrate that the self – the soul, the heart, the inner being, in some sense – was thought to reflect the world (a philosophical position that was

⁵³ R. F. Leslie, *Polish Politics and the Revolution of November 1830* (London: Athlone Press, 1956), 259.

⁵⁴ George Sanford, *Poland: The Conquest of History* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1999), 6.

⁵⁵ Sidney Finkelstein, *Composer and Nation: The Folk Heritage in Music* (New York: International Publishers, 1960; 1989), 10; Richard Taruskin concludes that “one of the principal achievements of recent musical scholarship has been to discredit” the usual definition of nationalism “and all its corollaries,” because they are themselves the product of a nationalist agenda.” Richard Taruskin, “Nationalism,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2001.

“established by [Immanuel] Kant”⁵⁶). The human ‘heart’ was a mirror of anything that was thought to be related to nature, and both the preternatural and the supernatural, as well as the then uncharted ‘mystical’ regions of what is now the natural world, such as the universe.

Thus the nineteenth-century human being in occidental society became phenomenally important, and was afforded liberties that were previously unknown. A person’s right to be individualistic was viewed by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, for instance, with what appears to be the utmost respect. This respect appears to have stemmed from the perception that to undervalue a woman’s ‘taste’, for example, was to undervalue nature itself, because her ‘taste’ is a reflection of nature. Rousseau seems to muse democratically on the varying musical tastes of individuals predominating within his (or perhaps ‘all’) society:

One is more touched with pathetic pieces; the other prefers a gay air. A sweet and flexible voice will fill its tunes with agreeable ornaments; a sensible and strong voice will animate them with the accents of passion. The one will seek simplicity in melody, the other will value elaborate expression, and each will call that an elegance of taste, which he has preferred.⁵⁷

Within his attempt to accommodate everyone, however, it does seem as though he makes a few generalizations, saying that varying tastes stem from the dispositions “of the organs which taste teaches us to make use of; sometimes from the particular character of each

⁵⁶ Jim Samson, “Romanticism,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2001.

⁵⁷ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in Peter le Huray and James Day, *Music and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth and Early-Nineteenth Centuries*, eds. John Stevens and Peter Le Huray (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 113.

man...sometimes from the diversity of age or sex, which turns the desire towards different objects.”⁵⁸

It might be said of Arthur Schopenhauer’s *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* that it epitomizes the sort of debate that surrounded the question as to whether the desires of the self were the ‘world’ itself. In the nineteenth century, then, there is a sense in which the individual *is* nature, the world, and the universe, and when this individual was a composer, for example, then his compositions were viewed, consequently, as representations of nature, the world, and the universe. Of course, in a society where neither the ‘death of the author’ nor the ‘death of the subject’ was yet a concept, the Romantic composers were thought to reflect all these nature-oriented phenomena by imparting themselves into their works. It would not be incorrect to assume that whilst the philosophies about music developed continually, and whilst we might even agree with James Webster who says that Romantic ideologies took hold only by 1815 or 1830,⁵⁹ the Romantics’ emphasis on nature was in many ways itself a continuation of the emphasis that was already placed on nature in the late eighteenth century.

There appear for example to be only a few people who questioned whether painting, poetry, and music imitated nature or natural emotions adequately, and whether this sort of imitation actually served music appropriately; whilst Johann Georg Sulzer (1720-1779),

⁵⁸ Rousseau, in Peter le Huray and James Day, *Music and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth and Early-Nineteenth Centuries*, eds. John Stevens and Peter Le Huray (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 113.

⁵⁹ James Webster, “Between Enlightenment and Romanticism in Music History: ‘First Viennese Modernism’ and the Delayed Nineteenth Century,” in *19th Century Music* Vol. 25 No. 2-3 (Fall/Spring 2001-02), 108 – 126.

Sir William Jones (1746-1794), James Beattie (1735-1803), Sir John Hawkins (1719-1789), Johann Nicolaus Forkel (1749-1818), Karl Philipp Moritz (1757-1793), Archibald Alison (1757-1839), Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), Pierre Simon Ballanche (1776-1847), Victor Cousin (1792-1867), and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831), all appear to draw the conclusion that music imitates nature as well as our emotions, Friedrich Wilhelm Josef von Schelling (1775-1854) seems to look down upon those who might relate to the bleating sheep in Josef Haydn's *Creation*, and Friedrich von Schlegel (1772-1829) seems puzzled that many people think music is merely an imitation of our emotions and not also a vessel with which to express ideas.⁶⁰ However, by 1885 we have the counter argument surging, again (this time offered by Friedrich von Hausegger (1837-1899)), that the conclusion that music can relay ideas may be drawn too quickly: Hausegger writes, "The mistake of those who believe that music is able to communicate concrete ideas lies, therefore, not in the fact that the arousing of such ideas has nothing to do with the essence of music, but in the belief that it is the task of music to communicate unambiguously to the listener a deliberate imaginative content."⁶¹

Whether music was thought to communicate emotions or ideas, or whether the expressive powers of music were balanced precariously, as Jim Samson suggests, between sensory perception and intellectuality,⁶² the fact is that both the emotion and the intellect, as well

⁶⁰ Johann Georg Sulzer, Sir William Jones, James Beattie, Sir John Hawkins, Johann Nicolaus Forkel, Karl Philipp Moritz, Archibald Alison, Immanuel Kant, Pierre Simon Ballanche, Victor Cousin, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Friedrich Wilhelm Josef Von Schelling, in Peter le Huray and James Day, *Music and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth and Early-Nineteenth Centuries*, eds. John Stevens and Peter Le Huray (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 122-123, 158-159, 176-177, 185, 210, 226-227, 246-247, 260-261, 278-279, 312-313, 322-323, 344-345.

⁶¹ Friedrich Von Hausegger, in Bojan Bujić, *Music in European Thought 1851 – 1912* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 109.

⁶² Samson, "Romanticism," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2001.

as the fulcrum on which some of us balance these concepts *a posteriori*, all coexist in humans. It was the human being that had the freedom to be, or create, his own world. Ludwig von Beethoven might have created his universe especially well, because instrumental music, such as Beethoven's symphonies, was itself a transcendental genre in which the absence of words were thought to impose no limitations on the expressive powers.⁶³ Referring to Kant, Beethoven himself spoke, on behalf of all who were democratically minded, of the link between self and nature.⁶⁴

It would, however, be incorrect to assume that everyone would have thought Beethoven was the only composer who was empowered adequately to reflect his 'Romantic' world or his mystical universe through music. Clara Schumann wrote in her diary that whilst delirious Robert Schumann spoke of angels that brought him music. He spoke also of demons as well as various exotic animals from Africa. Whilst in Robert Schumann's case his interest in the supernatural and the preternatural may be seen as related to the insanity of his final years, we cannot assume that it was solely his mental and physical condition that gave rise to these mystical metaphors. George Sand, for example, although possibly in love with Chopin at the time, was not insane when she wrote about "the spirit of the lyre," describing how the harmony of only seven strings created a universe.⁶⁵

As regards Chopin, in particular, Blunt and Lockspear state:

⁶³ Joscelyn Goodwin, *Music, Mysticism and Magic: A Source Book* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987), 212 – 215.

⁶⁴ Lawrence Kramer, *Music as Cultural Practice: 1800 – 1900* (California: University of California Press, 1990), 26, 27.

⁶⁵ Goodwin, *Music, Mysticism and Magic: A Source Book*, 226 – 230, 233 – 236.

The main demand we make of an artist, according to the Romantic philosophy is, 'Does he create a world?' Ideas of harmony and colour in Berlioz and Bizet, for instance, are wholly dissimilar, despite a national resemblance, and these composers created worlds each unique and complete in itself. Rousseau's 'I may not be better but I am at least different' was the guiding principle of each of the Romantic composers, and of Chopin (1810-49) above all. Some critics maintain that Chopin, in his discovery of the evocative nature of the piano, produced a sense of poetry and illusion in music reaching depths of sensibility unknown to Berlioz and Beethoven.⁶⁶

Although the world which Chopin is reported to have created was 'deep' with emotion, it was his sense of *sound* that was held in high regard. The underlying structure of these sounds, however, might have lacked organic unification; in other words, there might have been a greater value placed on a composer's ability to unify a work through the use of a musical motif than on his ability to merely sound evocative. If Chopin failed to achieve this sort of unification in his works, we might assume that his music represented a lesser universe than Beethoven's or Hector Berlioz's music, for example. (Chopin, choosing to write almost exclusively for the piano and not for a full orchestra could himself have contributed to the belief that his music is less unified than other's lengthy, orchestral compositions.)

Cheryl Welch states that both Pierre Cabanis and Destutt de Tracy considered that the human body as an organism in which sensations coexist was itself linked to the will.⁶⁷ In light of this, it might be said that an organically-unified way of viewing the world was the same way in which some Romantic composers might have viewed their compositions.

⁶⁶ Blunt and Lockspear, "The Cult of the Individual" in *French Art and Music Since 1500*, 73.

⁶⁷ Both these men belonged to a group of thinkers known as the 'Idéologues,' which was formed in the latter stages of the French Revolution, and which continued to exist for a number of years into the nineteenth century. Cheryl Welch, "Ideology and Social Science," in *Liberty and Utility: The French Idéologues and the Transformation of Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 44 – 69.

Wagner, for instance, was said to have seen a “brother” in Beethoven.⁶⁸ This brotherhood might have been formed by the link between Wagner’s own intentions to unify his lengthy works with a single musical idea and his perception that Beethoven did the same with his compositions. Wagner wrote of Beethoven, for example: “at every point in the score he would have to look both before and after, seeing the whole in each part contributing to the whole.”⁶⁹ It is because of this interrelationship of all things – within the score as well as between the score and the world – that Wagner saw Beethoven as the ideal composer.

In short, the composer who took nature as his model and offered in his music a unified representation of her component elements was considered to have produced ‘beauty’: the more unified, then, the more beautiful.⁷⁰ Analyzing that beauty would result in an undesirable dissection of nature’s beauty, because dissecting an artefact, for organicists, would defeat their aim, which is to view things as a ‘whole’.⁷¹ We see nevertheless in the late nineteenth- and twentieth centuries, that when musicians saw Chopin’s preludes, for example, as being unified, they were performed and analyzed in a way that seems to establish their ‘beauty’ in terms of theoretical unification. Viewing Chopin’s music in relation to nature might provide an alternative way of looking at the alleged ‘smallness’ of Chopin’s music.

⁶⁸ Goodwin, *Music, Mysticism and Magic: A Source Book*, 237.

⁶⁹ Wagner, quoted by Samson, “Romanticism,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2001.

⁷⁰ Hegel, as interpreted by Ruth Solie, “Organicism and Musical Analysis,” in *19th Century Music* Vol. IV No. 2 (Fall, 1980), 149.

⁷¹ Ruth Solie, “Organicism and Musical Analysis,” in *19th Century Music* Vol. IV No. 2 (Fall, 1980), 150.

1.1.3. The 'Heroic' Currency of Largeness

In post-revolutionary society, tastes were heavily influenced by what was perceived as the needs and preferences of the masses. Largeness of scale appears to be linked with the 'heroic', because it was largeness of scale that enabled the masses to triumph over the elite. Some composers, such as Beethoven and Berlioz, have been viewed as though they were representatives of this 'largeness of scale'; their music appears to be 'heroic' in the sense that it was not intended for the cultural elite, but for the general public. There are a number of factors that seem to influence the extent to which a composer can be considered 'heroic' – for example, his music had to be accessible to the masses, even though his music was composed in isolation of it. In the discussion that follows, I consider the way in which a number of issues, including musical style and a composer's place within society, are related to the 'heroic' currency of largeness.

In 1947, Einstein claimed that we “seek in vain an unequivocal idea of the nature of ‘musical Romanticism.’”⁷² In 2001, we seem to be no closer to defining Romanticism. Samson points out that many scholars actually find themselves referring to the contradictions residing within the discourse of the Romantic age in an attempt to define Romanticism itself.⁷³ One such contradiction, as I have suggested above, is that Beethoven withdrew himself from society, yet his music was seen as representative of the masses.

⁷² Einstein, *Music in the Romantic Era*, 4.

⁷³ Samson, “Romanticism,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2001.

A “precise definition” of ‘Romanticism’ might elude us,⁷⁴ especially when we discuss instrumental music, because instrumental music enabled the Romantics to express “something deeper than the *word* had been able to express.” Einstein’s awareness of the indefinable nature of Romanticism echoes Charles Baudelaire’s definition given in 1846 (as quoted by James H. Johnson): “‘a manner of feeling’ [...] rather than a concern for subject or a search for eternal verities.”⁷⁵ It is perhaps unsurprising, therefore, that Einstein connects the Romantics’ idolization of instrumental music to Beethoven, a composer who wrote much instrumental music and only one opera, *Fidelio*. The Romantics are said to have idealized his music because they did “not quite understand him.” Thus Einstein concludes that Beethoven’s “withdrawal” from society can be heard in the “mystical,” and therefore indefinable, nature of his instrumental music – such as the “beginning of the Adagio of the *Hammerklavier* Sonata, Op. 106.” Einstein, thinking that the Romantics idealized Beethoven’s withdrawal from society, stated further that “all the Romantic musicians felt the contradiction, felt their isolation,” adding, however, that it was Berlioz and Wagner who felt this “most passionately.” In short, because instrumental music had a ‘mystical’ quality about it, it was thought to lack a particular meaning. This lack of a particular meaning seems in accord with the masses; each individual was entitled to his or her own interpretation of Beethoven’s music.

⁷⁴ Blunt and Lockspear, “Romantic Ideals,” in *French Art and Music Since 1500*, ed. D. G. Charlton (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1972; 1974), 70.

⁷⁵ James H. Johnson, “Beethoven and the Birth of Romantic Musical Experience in France,” in *19th Century Music* Vol. XV no. I (Summer, 1991), 26.

Einstein sums up Berlioz's style saying he "wrote no – or almost no – intimate works," and that "the more colossal the means that he set in motion, the better he felt." Similarly, Einstein writes of Wagner's operas as though they could cure the "Romantic virus" (needing to be transported out of their earthly existence), because they were exciting and intoxicating.⁷⁶ Einstein then relates this to the pianistic community by quoting Robert Schumann, who criticized Henri Herz's Second Piano Concerto in the mid-nineteenth century, saying that the apparent lack of strength in the performance of the piece sounded like a lack of courage: "The public will at last become weary even of its plaything and throw it idly into the corner." Schumann continues: "a younger generation has arisen with strength in its arms, and the courage to use it."⁷⁷ According to Einstein, both symphonic and operatic works (especially those of Berlioz and Wagner) were large in order not to be "intimate," on the one hand, and, on the other, to overwhelm listeners. Einstein reasons, therefore, that Berlioz, in particular, dissociated himself from the general public by composing works that were not intimate. Einstein's view again echoes the contradictions that we might find ourselves referring to in our discussions of the Romantics.

If the only demand the masses made of their Romantic 'heroes' was that they withdrew themselves from the general public, then Chopin is in a sense comparable to Berlioz and Beethoven – all three composers are reported to have withdrawn themselves from the general public. This demand, however, does not appear to be the only expectation that the Romantic artist had to meet in order to be considered a 'hero.' The Romantic hero had to represent the masses (even though he might have been isolated from it), and uphold the

⁷⁶ Einstein, *Music in the Romantic Era*, 32, 33, 39, 42.

⁷⁷ Robert Schumann, in Einstein, *Music in the Romantic Era*, 203.

ideologies to which they themselves subscribed. Chopin, not seeing himself as part of the masses, cannot, in this sense, be viewed as a Romantic hero.

Einstein wrote that “Goethe had given the Romantics a fictional model with his *Wilhelm Meister*; now it came about that when the heroes of novels were not specifically musicians, they were usually at least artists, mostly unfit for life.” He continued that “one can see how closely the figure of Beethoven must have corresponded to these Romantic ideas.”⁷⁸ Conrad L. Donakowski argues that “the systematic manipulation of mass feelings became one of the most expedient methods of social engineering,” and that music, more than other forms of art-as-communication, lent itself – in the form of tunes and arrangements – to the comprehension of the semiliterate and the illiterate masses. The limited musical comprehension of the “semiliterate and the illiterate masses” had been characterized by Rousseau, who asked rhetorically: “have the French good musical taste? Yes, as far as the great world of high society is concerned; but, as far as ordinary people are concerned, no, a thousand times, no!...As for most Parisians, they are essentially barbarians...They only praise an opera if it contains songs similar to the ones that they like.”⁷⁹ Donakowski, building on the idea of “mass feeling,” makes a more sympathetic assessment of the masses, saying that the new aesthetic ideals of the masses were determined by the democracy that followed the revolution, and that these aesthetic ideals stemmed from the belief in the incorruptible hero.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Einstein, *Music in the Romantic Era*, 345.

⁷⁹ Rousseau, in Peter le Huray and James Day, *Music and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth and Early-Nineteenth Centuries*, 114.

⁸⁰ Conrad L. Donakowski, *A Muse for the Masses: Ritual and Music in an Age of Democratic Revolution 1770 – 1870* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 34, 75.

Beethoven seems to stand out as one of these incorruptible heroes. It was not, of course, that Beethoven did not compose any ‘intimate’ music, but that even his ‘intimate’ piano music – following the “conclusive defeat” of Napoleon in 1815 – is somehow connected to the deep regret that a hero might feel when a ‘Holy Alliance,’ which was for the moment more powerful than the newly-liberated forces of democracy, seemed to be “stamping” out national liberalism.⁸¹ Although the Parisian public, as Johnson argues, might have taken its time in accepting Beethoven as their “soul mate” only by 1830, his music was popular with Parisians.⁸² Beethoven the ‘hero’ – and his ‘heroic’ symphonies – saved, in a sense, the middle class, by giving it its own aesthetic ideals to ‘worship,’ even though class restrictions appear to have been restored to their society.

The hero-worship surrounding Beethoven is linked, certainly, to his wordless music – as Baudelaire, and Einstein have stated, as well as, more recently, Cook (in “Back to Beethoven”).⁸³ However, as Cook points out, in “The Other Beethoven: Heroism, the Canon, and the Works of 1813 – 1814” (2003), Beethoven also wrote a number of politically-oriented pieces, which no longer stand out as being particularly heroic. They appear to pose challenges for postmodern thinkers, because they remain trapped in time by their musical message, which seems difficult to separate from the context in which they were composed and for which they were intended.⁸⁴ The ‘heroic’ Beethoven is seen today as the source of “many themes” that can be seen as evidence, as Allan Keiler

⁸¹ Finkelstein, *Composer and Nation: The Folk Heritage in Music* (New York: International Publishers, 1960; 1989), 87.

⁸² Johnson “Beethoven and the Birth of Romantic Musical Experience in France,” *19th Century Music*, 23.

⁸³ Cook, “Back to Beethoven,” in *Music: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

⁸⁴ Cook, “The Other Beethoven: Heroism, the Canon, and the Works of 1813 0 1814,” in *19th Century Music* Vol. XXVII No. 1 (Summer, 2003), 3 – 24.

argues, of a complex relationship with Liszt.⁸⁵ He may, however, also be viewed as one of those imposing models (to which Ruth Solie seems to refer) that make it necessary to “contrive both analytical systems and critical methods” that can deal with different musics without devaluing their differences.⁸⁶ These references to Keiler and Solie in particular illustrate that heroism, which is a concept attached to Beethoven in the Romantic era and which continues to be elaborated (via the ‘influence’ he had over Liszt), is questioned by some. As Cook claims Scott Burnham argued, “the dominance of the ‘Beethoven Hero’ paradigm has not only constrained our ability to make sense of composers whose music is not dominated by the same teleological drive (he cites [Franz] Schubert), but also marginalized such [sic] of Beethoven’s music that does not conform to it.”⁸⁷

Almost fifty years after Einstein’s assessment of the Romantics’ aesthetic ideal, Charles Rosen approaches the subject of Beethoven somewhat differently. In *The Romantic Generation* (1997), we learn that “the death of Beethoven in 1827 must have given a sense of freedom to the composers born almost two decades earlier: Chopin and [Robert] Schumann in 1810, [Felix] Mendelssohn the year before, and Liszt the year after.”⁸⁸ Rather than concentrate on the aesthetic ideals that are linked to the heroic artist who sets himself apart from society late twentieth-century scholars seem to draw on divergent sources in order to characterize the ideals of the Romantics. For example, Rosen states that the music of the “1830s” was “explicitly entangled with art, literature, politics, and

⁸⁵ Allan Keiler, “Liszt and Beethoven: The Creation of a Myth,” in *19th Century Music* Vol. XX No. 2 (Fall, 1988), 116.

⁸⁶ Solie, “Changing the Subject,” in *Current Musicology* No. 53 (1993), 58.

⁸⁷ Scott Burnham, quoted by Cook, “The Other Beethoven,” *19th Century Music*, 14.

⁸⁸ Charles Rosen, Preface to *The Romantic Generation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), ix.

personal life in ways that were less straightforward, more ambivalent than the music of the decades just preceding.”⁸⁹ Ralph P. Locke elaborates on this “personal life” in relation to art, literature, music, and politics, saying that following the French Revolution, art, literature, and music became the province of the masses, moving away from the aristocracy. He also notes, however, that it was not only the Revolution that brought on this shift, but that the Enlightenment also played a role in shaping the ideals of the Romantics.⁹⁰ James Harding states, particularly in regard to literature, that Victor Hugo “was its leader” and he “was pouring out verse and gigantic novels.”⁹¹ Speaking of music in particular, Locke states that “on a purely aesthetic level,” none of the operas by Jean-Philippe Rameau, Christoph Willibald Gluck, or the symphonies by Franz Joseph Haydn, Johann Stamitz, and François-Joseph Gossec “fitted the needs of a society in which mass action, rather than aristocratic privilege and connoisseurship, was now the guiding criterion.”⁹² In my opinion, Locke links largeness, which is in this instance synonymous with ‘the masses,’ with the emerging musical tastes in France. Harding, also connecting largeness with the tastes of post-revolutionary France on a practical level, stated that the “grandiose” buildings, which Louis-Napoleon encouraged “his lieutenant Haussmann” to erect, were “practical as much as aesthetic” and have remained with us for nearly two centuries.⁹³

⁸⁹ Rosen, Preface to *The Romantic Generation*, x.

⁹⁰ Ralph P. Locke, “Paris: Centre of Intellectual Ferment,” in *The Early Romantic Era*, ed. Alexander Ringer (London: Macmillan, 1990), 32 – 52.

⁹¹ James Harding, “Paris: Opera Reigns Supreme,” in *The Late Romantic Era*, ed. Jim Samson (London: Macmillan, 1991), 101.

⁹² Locke, “Paris: Centre of Intellectual Ferment,” in *The Early Romantic Era*, 33.

⁹³ Harding, *The Late Romantic*, 101.

Locke links politics to certain genres of music, and also claims that there was a particular type of voice that met with the expectations of the newly-powerful middle-class. He writes that the “elegant *passaggi* of Rossini’s youth” gave way to “strenuous melodic lines.” “Much singing,” according to Locke, could be heard “over a loud orchestra.” An example that Locke cites in order to demonstrate the deleterious effects of the middle-class’s musical tastes, concerns the singer Nourrit.⁹⁴ Nourrit “took the highest notes in falsetto,” whilst “the tenor Gilbert Duprez,” after returning to Paris from Italy, was able to sing “C from the chest.” Duprez “was engaged to perform Nourrit’s roles at certain performances,” and two years after resigning, Nourrit “threw himself out of a window.” It might be correct to say, as Locke himself seems to conclude, that “the practice of singing with the full voice throughout the range (as is usually done today, even in the eighteenth-century repertory) arose in Italy in the mid-1830s.” Further, this practice was “no doubt a manifestation of the ‘heroic’ side of Romanticism, as well as of a bourgeois public’s taste for startling and impressive, if crude, feats of skill.”⁹⁵

What seems to remain unchanged in the thinking of both Einstein, in the mid-twentieth century, and Harding, in the late twentieth century, is that Berlioz, although he was the composer most influenced by Romantic ideas, was a “lone voice in musical Paris – too original, too inventive for his time.” Therefore, it appears that Harding thinks the ‘largeness’ of Berlioz’s music made him a precursor. I draw this conclusion because immediately following his statement, Harding writes that by the “1860s” Baudelaire considered the “majesty and grandeur” (which certainly connotes a sense of largeness) of

⁹⁴ Rossini and Nourrit, as well as “elegant *passaggi*” will be discussed in detail in “Chopin’s Music in Relation to the Human Voice.”

⁹⁵ Locke, “Paris: Centre of Intellectual Ferment,” in *The Early Romantic Era*, 48.

Wagner's music to be "the greatest musical enjoyment."⁹⁶ Blunt and Lockspear claim that "the French, ignorant and blasé...have unjustly neglected the greatest of their Romantic composers," Berlioz. They continue saying that "in England, no superlative could do justice to this mighty figure," adding, "a race of gloriously intemperate Berlioz fanatics declared that Berlioz was a genius of the stature of Beethoven, of Wagner, greater than Wagner." Blunt and Lockspear add, however, that "contemporary critics rightly called his works *operas de concert*," because, although suited for a large stage, his "temperament" inclined towards picturesque, instrumental works rather than operas.⁹⁷ Apart from the contradictions that Einstein, Locke, and Harding take note of, in regard to Berlioz's role within Romantic society, they all agree that Berlioz and Wagner, even though they may have appeared to be at "logger heads" at one time,⁹⁸ came to represent the culmination of the aesthetic ideals of the Romantics.⁹⁹

There is reason therefore to suggest that what Finck calls "aesthetic Jumboism" might not be defined simply as a senseless desire for largeness, but that it is connected to the Romantics' aesthetic ideals. Immanuel Wallerstein states that "in the mythology of the modern world, the quintessential protagonist is the bourgeois. Hero for some, villain for

⁹⁶ Baudelaire, in Harding, *The Late Romantic Era*, 102.

⁹⁷ Blunt and Lockspear, "Romantic Ideals," in *French Art and Music Since 1500*, 71.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁹⁹ In his "Conclusion," however, Einstein writes, "it was unavoidable that poets, painters, sculptors, and especially the musicians themselves should react against the idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*." He continues that the "homogen[eity]" created by the coming together of the masses could not continue in the vein of Wagnerian-like aesthetic, because artists did not want to "give up something of their own" works, in "order to create a higher unity." Einstein, *Music in the Romantic Era*, 356.

others, the inspiration or lure for most, he has been the shaper of the present and the destroyer of the past.”¹⁰⁰

We are, of course, warned by William Weber, in “The Muddle of the Middle Classes” (1979), that there is a “terminological thicket” surrounding the middle class of Europe, not only because it was common for aristocrats and the bourgeoisie to work side by side, but, also, because “many aristocratic families supported Louis-Philippe and the regime that was later dubbed the ‘bourgeois monarchy.’”¹⁰¹ Weber’s premise is supported by Wallerstein, who refers to Weber’s “thicket,” saying “Labrousse tells us that we shall not agree on a definition [of bourgeois].”¹⁰² If historians are, as Weber argues, becoming increasingly aware of the blurred boundaries between the groups that make up what we know today as the Romantic society, then it follows that we are also becoming increasingly aware that the aesthetic ideals of these groups are, in turn, not all that distinct from one another. However, although people of varying classes were often intimate, Chopin himself differentiated between the aesthetic ideals of (what he saw as) the upper and lower classes of his society, and, even though he was not an aristocrat himself, he seems to have identified with the nobility more than with the bourgeoisie.

¹⁰⁰ Immanuel Wallerstein, “The Bourgeois(ie) as Concept and Reality,” in Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (London: Verso, 1991), 135.

¹⁰¹ William Weber, “The Muddle of the Middle Classes,” in *19th Century Music* Vol. III No. 2 (November, 1979), 179, 180.

¹⁰² Immanuel Wallerstein, “The Bourgeois(ie) as Concept and Reality,” in Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, 137.

1.1.4. “Aesthetic Jumboism” and Gender

An in-depth study of the Romantics’ aesthetic ideals might provide an entirely different perspective on Finck’s theory that French, Polish, German, and Viennese audiences did not fully appreciate Chopin because of their desire for largeness. I do, however, suggest that his view can be supported by theories concerning the ways in which aspects of his music have been interpreted as lacking in heroism and, therefore, lacking in ‘masculinity.’¹⁰³ It is true that, within the ‘muddle of the middle class,’ there was a tendency to adopt a simplistic approach to gender; Cabanis, as an “ambivalent” naturalist who made “troubled” attempts to “find a certain standard for social science,” said “man must be strong, bold, enterprising; woman must be weak, timid, dissembling...such is the law of nature.”¹⁰⁴

Further, Finck’s theory of man’s desire for gigantic proportions (what Finck called “jumboism”) may be related to Jennifer Post’s argument that ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ musical practices have been formally separated into “public spheres” and “private spheres” respectively because public concerts were for large audiences, whilst the soirees of the salons were intended for small gatherings.¹⁰⁵ Thus, the space within large buildings

¹⁰³ Finck groups together several ethnic groups to whom he attributes similar dispositions towards Chopin’s music: French, Polish, German and Viennese. For the reason that Chopin’s public audiences cannot be divided into aesthetically ‘mammoth’- or ‘miniature’-oriented ethnic groups, I have had to look for theories that divide a general public into those orientated towards the ‘mammoth’ or the ‘miniature.’ In this regard, gender theories, which are based on the communicative nature of music’s contexts and rhetoric, have been helpful.

¹⁰⁴ Welch, *Liberty and Utility: The French Idéologues and the Transformation of Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 44, 49.

¹⁰⁵ Jennifer Post, “Erasing the Boundaries between Public and Private in Women’s Performance Traditions,” *Cecelia Reclaimed*, ed. by Susan C. Cook and Judy Tsou (Chicago: Illinois University Press, 1994).

has been linked with ‘masculinity.’ Within this social context of ‘masculine’ versus ‘feminine,’ the music text itself has also been viewed as being able to communicate a gendered voice. Susan McClary uses Baldesar Castiglione’s sixteenth-century teachings on gender and rhetoric to substantiate a European tradition in which musical rhetoric was gendered. Castiglione advocated that male children should be taught “powerful” rhetoric while female children, should be taught “charming” rhetoric.¹⁰⁶ The entire “Book III” of *The Courtier* encourages the educational system to teach alternative rhetoric for the different sexes.¹⁰⁷ Nor does it appear that such teachings are specific to the sixteenth century. The history of ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ rhetoric stretches back for many centuries. Peter Blair writes of the seventh-century teachings of Saint Bede in “Reading and Psalmody”:

The voice of the lector must be clear and virile, avoiding extremes of humility and exaltation and not sounding like the voice of a woman. It was the duty of the lector to appeal to the ears and heart, rather than to the eye, and he must take care lest those who heard him became spectators rather than listeners.¹⁰⁸

To illustrate how Liszt, in the nineteenth century, used gender-oriented terminology in relation to the varying qualities and quantities of sound, I refer to his book *Chopin*. Liszt writes, “Chopin’s Mazurkas are notably different from his Polonaises. Their character is totally dissimilar. They constitute another world wherein delicate, nebulous, and shifting nuances replace a colour that is rich and strong [and] the feminine (and effeminate)

¹⁰⁶ Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender and Sexuality* (Minnesota: Minnesota University Press, 1991), 38.

¹⁰⁷ Baldesar Castiglione, *The Book of The Courtier*, trans. with an introduction by George Bull (First published 1528; Suffolk: Chaucer Press Ltd, 1976), 207 – 278.

¹⁰⁸ Peter Hunter Blair, *The World of Bede* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 254.

element becomes clearly conspicuous.”¹⁰⁹ Moreover, gender-oriented terminology is linked not only to people’s experiences with sound but also to the link that people make between sound and the physical technique used in the production of sound. For example, in the year 1856, the music critic Edward Hanslick (1825-1904) criticized Clara Schumann’s piano performance by saying that owing to her sex she did not have the physical strength to play loudly.¹¹⁰

It is possible that Hanslick’s assessment of the aesthetics of his time adds to our insight as to why he looks down upon the tenderness of Clara Schumann’s playing. In his *Von Musikalisch-Schönen* (1854), he writes:

Up to now the treatment of musical aesthetics has suffered from a subtle misconception of its true concern, which has been represented as being with describing the feelings aroused by music rather than with scrutinizing the nature of what we mean by ‘beauty’ in music. Such enquiries correspond exactly with those earlier systems of aesthetics which considered beauty only in relation to the feelings that it arouses in us; and that of course gave the philosophy of beauty its name as a daughter of feelings (*aithesis*).

Not only are such theories of aesthetics essentially unphilosophical, but when applied to the most ethereal of the arts they introduce a downright sentimental note, that may well be found comforting by tender hearts but provides the enquiring mind with very little illumination. Those who wish to understand the nature of music want precisely to escape from the dark realm of feeling and not constantly to be referred back to it, as happens in most reference works.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Liszt, *Frédéric Chopin*, 64.

¹¹⁰ Edward Hanslick, “Clara Schumann,” *Hanslick’s Music Criticisms*, ed. Henry Pleasants (New York: Dover Publications, 1978).

¹¹¹ Hanslick, in Bojan Bujčić, *Music in European Thought 1851 – 1912* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 12.

To this end, it would seem that Hanslick thinks an exact science for studying music could be reached if both the philosophical and the spiritual aspects of music are explored without tender attachments to ‘beauty’ because the “sentimental note” (as he put it) prevents one from being intellectual.¹¹² Of course, we are talking metaphorically here. Nonetheless, it is Hanslick who introduced this metaphor – with his reference to a certain kind of “note” – and, in my view, seeing that we are talking metaphorically of the tone of both piano playing and philosophies about Romantic aesthetics, it is necessary that we also ‘take note’ of the consistencies in Hanslick’s thinking. He is against what he sees as the kind of tone that does not quite come across as ‘successful’; that is, he advocates what is loud and powerful in both performance and philosophy.

The words ‘loudness’ and ‘strength,’ although they may not have been thought to replace the word ‘masculine,’ nevertheless were thought to connote ‘masculinity.’ It is therefore ‘masculinity’ that is considered, by Hanslick, to be more effective than ‘femininity’ in regard to piano performance. Today musicians still make a connection between a lack of physical strength and ‘femininity.’ Both Vladimir Ashkenazy and Cécile Ousset claim that Sergei Rachmaninov’s Third Piano Concerto is simply too physically demanding for women and suggest that this is a possible reason why women do not often play it. Additionally, Ousset makes no attempt to hide her view that piano performance is sensitive to interpretations of gender: “for a woman artist, the difficulty is that tendency to play without power.”¹¹³

¹¹² Hanslick, in Bojan Bujić, *Music in European Thought 1851 – 1912*, 25.

¹¹³ Vladimir Ashkenazy and Cécile Ousset, in Mach, *Great Contemporary Pianists Speak for Themselves* (New York: Dover Publications, Vol. 1 1980; Vol. 2 1988), 16, 205, 206.

Chopin's style of performance, and the rhetoric of his miniaturesque music, may be associated with the rhetoric that has been formally associated with 'femininity.' Chopin "shunned" the public 'male' stage, and confined his playing to the private salons.¹¹⁴ Or, as Cortot interpreted this state of affairs: "one might, perhaps, describe the moment when Chopin definitely deserted the concert hall as being the 'royal moment' in his life as an artist."¹¹⁵ Within the salons, his preferred instrument was the light-escapement Pleyel piano, on which he rendered miniature piano compositions that did not require that he play with great force. There is a vast amount of documentation that records the above miniaturesque aspects of Chopin's pianism. Some authors, not having experienced Chopin's playing first-hand, embrace this vast amount of documentation on Chopin's performance as a truthful reflection of his style: Gerald Abraham writes that "everyone admits Chopin's charm."¹¹⁶

Can it be proven that sensory perception is gendered? Do men and women experience music differently, or do they hear, see or touch in the same way, but value different characteristics? In an interview with Ashkenazy, I posed the question, "Do you think men and women hear or experience music differently?"¹¹⁷ Ashkenazy replied, "I haven't actually thought about it...naturally there is a difference between men and women, but I wish to think that on a higher human level our experiences are the same." However, as is evident in the commentaries of Bede, Castiglione, Liszt and Hanslick,¹¹⁸ and Ousset,

¹¹⁴ Hedley, *The Master Musicians Chopin*, 130.

¹¹⁵ Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, 122.

¹¹⁶ Gerald Abraham, *Chopin's Musical Style* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), vii.

¹¹⁷ Ashkenazy. Interviewed by Frederick De Jager, on the 29th January 2001. Durban City Hall. Rehearsal intermission.

¹¹⁸ Both Liszt and Hanslick were contemporaneous with Chopin, and both lived late into the nineteenth century.

some members of various western societies have constructed formally unrecognized yet operational models of ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ aesthetics, which allow them to differentiate between ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ interpretations of sounds and tactile methods of playing the piano. This ‘male’- and ‘female’-oriented terminology is the framework through which some people have chosen to describe their experience of the musical signs of Chopin’s music.

Kallberg writes that while there have been “several” pianists who have avoided the performance of Chopin’s music and still attained greatness,¹¹⁹ there are “many” great musicians who do perform Chopin’s music. Kallberg uses reports of interviews with Murray Perahia and Hélène Grimaud, printed in the *New York Times*, to make clear that it is the ‘miniature’ and ‘feminine’ in Chopin that is shunned by so-called great performers, and it is by ‘masculinizing’ the ‘miniature’ and the ‘feminine’ aesthetics of Chopin’s music that pianists have gained recognition since they have met the expectations of the concert-going public.¹²⁰

The four ‘miniature’ aspects that have been converted into largeness in order to popularize Chopin’s music are easily identifiable. Firstly, the social context of private performances within salons has given way to public performances that are commercially viable. Secondly, the instrument that Chopin performed on in the salons has evolved into the colossal grand piano. Thirdly, piano techniques required for the small salons had to be

¹¹⁹ Kallberg lists in the preface to his book, *Chopin at the Boundaries*, the following artists who have avoided performing Chopin and who are still regarded as great musicians: Rudolf Serkin, Glen Gould and Alfred Brendel.

¹²⁰ Kallberg, Preface to *Chopin at the Boundaries*.

altered in accordance with the new instrument and the large public concert halls. The fourth miniature aspect of Chopin's works – the brevity of his music texts – cannot be altered. However, by attempting to alter perceptions of the aesthetic dimensions of the composer's music texts, authors sometimes attempt to give the impression that a composition is 'large.' An example of this is Huneker's use of the word "titanic" in his chapter entitled "Titanic Experiments." Thus, Chopin's music texts can be made to give the impression of 'largeness' and 'masculinity,' depending on how pianists themselves interpret his scores, and on how analysts describe his music.

Finally, I wish to show that a direct consequence of the attempt to negate the 'feminine' has led to some pianists experiencing physical problems as a result of their style of playing. These problems include an array of conditions arising from their adaptation of the texts to modern concert grands in order to entertain the public within large public halls. Kallberg writes in the preface to *Chopin at the Boundaries*:

Hélène Grimaud directly spelled out in the *Times* the gendered terms of her anxiety about performing Chopin (*New York Times*, 29 May 1994, Arts and Leisure section, pp. 22, 36). Grimaud (whose discographical focus on Rachmaninoff and Brahms the author of the interview, John Rockwell, termed "odd not only for a French pianist but also for a female one") mentioned that she had moved away from playing Chopin and Debussy, "feeling she was typecast there in her teens." She described her resistance to Chopin as part of a rebellion against performing in ways that might be "expected" of a female pianist: "At the conservatory I was always told that Chopin was my thing. Maybe I was not ready, physically, to play Brahms, but I haven't changed that much since." Instead of focusing on Chopin (and Debussy), Grimaud would rather "play like a man": "people always say to me now that I play like a man. I never felt feminine at all...I'm not gay, but I always thought I should have been a man."¹²¹

¹²¹ Kallberg, Preface to *Chopin at the Boundaries*.

Kallberg argues further that the fear of ‘femininity’ instilled in artists by society can even cause pianists to adopt hazardous methods in order not to be associated with the miniature and ‘feminine.’ He writes that Murray Perahia, “speaking recently to the *New York Times*” (3 April, 1994, Arts and Leisure section, p. 25), reports that he has injured himself while trying to steer away from the “miniature.” Perahia says that he thought “loudness” in playing would give a less miniature effect as “one instinctively doesn’t want to be thought of as a miniaturist.”¹²² The point which must be made here is that Perahia’s injuries were sustained in the service of what he believed his audience desired.

Therefore, we can see that physical problems experienced by some pianists are not an isolated issue but born from their adaptations of piano technique – adaptations they make because they are troubled by the miniature and its assumed link with ‘femininity.’ This excerpt on Perahia, however, is the only connection Kallberg makes between Chopin’s music and piano technique. I shall expand on this problem, discussing not only injuries induced by a desire for largeness, but also the method-related problems of adapting Chopin’s texts to changes in instrument design.

¹²² Ibid.

1.2. This Study in Relation to Other Studies

My research, partly inspired by Rink's comment that there is an insufficiency of performance-based studies of music, differs from other research on Chopin's music because I emphasize performance. I also examine critically the confidence of commentators that their language can accurately reveal their views on scores, and on performance as the act which transforms the notation into musical experience. This is necessary because both scores and performances will be discussed in this thesis.

1.2.1 Scores

Traditionally we have analyzed music texts so as to understand a composer's style and musical choices and to apply that knowledge to the interpretation of his scores. One purpose of commentary on music, then, appears to be the uncovering of musical meanings.

Robert Schumann analyzed Chopin's Variations Op. 2 (to Chopin's dismay), claiming that the composer embedded various characters in the piece (such as Don Juan and Zerlina).¹²³ Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger analyzed Chopin's preludes (in 1988) in order to expose a hidden structure that Chopin apparently used in order to unify his twenty-four preludes. On the one hand, Eigeldinger's analysis might be valid, because he sees the preludes in a Romantic-like context. He uses each prelude, and the 'smaller' parts of each prelude, to reflect on a larger whole, which is in line, as Ruth Solie points out, with the

¹²³ Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, 59; *Chopin's Letters*, 155.

“incarnation” of “organism” in music, which took place in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹²⁴ On the other hand, Eigeldinger’s analysis might also be invalid. His contemporary, Kevin Korsyn, was amazed at his work because he had to go to “lengths” to uncover a motivic cell that he claimed Chopin embedded in his preludes.¹²⁵ We do not know whether Chopin was aware of this motivic cell, and we do not know if anyone other than Eigeldinger hears the preludes as unified as a result of the presence of the cell.

In 1958, Beardsley maintained that artefacts do not mean particular thoughts or feelings; it is rather the case that artefacts are given meanings by people who attribute their thoughts and feelings to those artefacts.¹²⁶ In 1983, Terry Eagleton agreed, referring to Roland Barthes, saying that “the ‘death of the author’ is a slogan that modern criticism is now confidently able to proclaim.”¹²⁷ If we subscribe to this argument, then when Rosen says (in 1990) that “the opening four bars [, of Chopin’s Sonata Op. 35,] have a double function: a dramatic beginning, and a transition from the end of the exposition back to the tonic,” we must conclude that it may be Rosen who hears these four bars as performing a

¹²⁴ Solie, “The Living Work: Organicism and Musical Analysis,” in *19th Century Music*, 147.

¹²⁵ Eigeldinger, “Twenty-Four Preludes Op. 28: Genre, Structure, Significance,” *Chopin Studies*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Kevin Korsyn, “Beyond Privileged Contexts: Intertextuality, Influence, and Dialogue,” *Rethinking Music*, eds. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 69, 70.

¹²⁶ Monroe C. Beardsley, *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1958), 36, 37. In light of Beardsley’s argument against intentionality, however, I maintain that an attempt to throw light on Chopin’s performances of his own texts might be valuable for some pianists. I state this, particularly, because of the possibility that the performance of some of Chopin’s music might be problematized by developments in piano design – a ‘progress’ in design that the composer might have resisted openly, because of the negative effects such developed instruments have on performance. Failure to bear in mind the relationship that I propose exists between Chopin’s performance of his own music and pianists’ physical problems would be to overlook one of the major themes of this thesis.

¹²⁷ Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), 138.

“double function” and not necessarily Chopin not anyone else.¹²⁸ It might also be said, therefore, that in any critical literature in which an author claims that Chopin’s music is coquettish, or heroic, for example, it is the author himself who attributes that meaning to the music. In support of this argument, it has indeed been said in musicological literature that “language constructs reality rather than merely reflecting it.”¹²⁹

Whilst scores will be consulted in this thesis, they are not included in an attempt to decipher composer intention but to serve, in part, as references in support of my argument that people use language to describe gender-oriented interpretations of Chopin’s music. There is, of course, the argument that a composer himself might tell us what he thinks his music means – as Chopin does, although infrequently, in his letters (which will be consulted in this thesis), and via his students and colleagues. The problem of how we interpret his statements, however, is similar to the problem outlined above in relation to music texts – we might project ourselves and our emotions into the composer’s words differently. We may consult the composer’s works in order to establish whether we can find evidence supporting the meanings that he says are embedded in his works. However, here too, as Beardsley explains, contradictions may be rife, between what we experience via our senses in relation to the artefact and what we think the composer wishes us to experience through that artefact.¹³⁰ As listeners in the twenty-first century for the most part we would be listening to performers and instruments of the present day – performers

¹²⁸ Rosen, “The First Movement of Chopin’s Sonata in B [flat] Minor, Op. 35,” in *19th Century Music* Vol. XIV No. 1 (Summer, 1990), 62.

¹²⁹ Nicholas Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 14.

¹³⁰ Beardsley, *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism*, 20.

and instruments that produce sounds significantly different from those of Chopin's time. (This issue will be discussed more fully in Chapter Two).

If it is listeners who attribute meanings to musical artefacts, including Chopin's compositions, then it follows that when the conditions in which they experienced an artefact change the meanings which they perceive may also change. A contemporary perspective on 'reality' in relation to time and place is made clear in Michael Jackson's *Paths Toward A Clearing: Radical Empiricism and Ethnographic Inquiry* (1989). Jackson states, "meanings are given anew in the context of each consultation and in relation to the concerns of each consulter." Furthermore, he maintains that "our endeavor to enlarge the field of empiricism is a little like wanting to take all the African masks from their glass cases in European museums and return them to where they are worn and charged with life," and, "even if we succeed in getting the masks back to Africa, the villages where they were originally made may no longer exist and new masks may have supplanted the old."¹³¹ It might be argued, therefore, that being objective in regard to Chopin's music, by giving it an 'original' meaning, is as pointless as returning a mask to its time and place of origin because its original value has long-since expired. For this reason, we might consider the perspective of Kay Kaufman Shelemay (1999), who reminds us that we must study music within both historic and current contexts rather than conducting some studies that are synchronic and others that are diachronic. She claims that making sharp, "traditional," divisions, between synchronic and diachronic studies

¹³¹ Michael Jackson, *Paths Toward A Clearing: Radical Empiricism and Ethnographic Inquiry* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1989), 16, 17.

has been to the detriment of understanding “broader” social contexts of music.¹³² Therefore, in addition to the argument that it may be people who construct the meanings of Chopin’s music, there is an added complication, which concerns how to study the comments and analyses of those who have commented on Chopin’s music over time. In this regard, all the secondary literature (see “Sources”) consulted in this paper relates to the issue of ‘meaning’ in Chopin’s music, as interpreted by many commentators in the mid-nineteenth century, and in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Analyses of music texts and of performances are often conducted in a way that applies theories by philosophers and literary theorists, or reflects the tenets of their disciplines, and, therefore, these theories require consideration. For example, Winton Dean, in his review (1978) of Frits Noske’s *The Signifier and the Signified: Studies in the Operas of Mozart and Verdi*, does not actually question whether Noske’s application of the terms “signifier” and “signified” (which are linked with structuralism and Ferdinand de Saussure) is a legitimate endeavour within the context of Classical and Romantic music. This suggests that the influence of literary theory over music is at times taken for granted.¹³³ An example of the same kind of assumption can be seen in Robert Fink’s article “Going Flat: Post-Hierarchical Music Theory and the Musical Surface,” in which the words “surface” and “depth” are discussed in relation to compositions stemming from the age of Impressionism to the Second Viennese School, and then to the minimalist movement in postmodern society. Fink uses the binary opposition, of surface and depth,

¹³² Kay Kaufman Shelemay, “The Impact and Ethics of Musical Scholarship,” in *Rethinking Music*, eds. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 533.

¹³³ Winton Dean, review of *The Signifier and the Signified: Studies in the Operas of Mozart and Verdi*, by Frits Noske, in *19th Century Music* Vol. II No. 2 (November, 1978), 173 – 178.

to argue that the “self-deconstructing” surface was a premonition of the postmodern: that “in the postmodern era...the image...represents only itself [and that] the surface...floats free of any reality ‘underneath.’”¹³⁴ His article, which draws on theories by Jean Baudrillard, demonstrates that the ‘deep’ meaning – the deconstruction of the meanings of the musical signs – is on the surface. Fink’s “all surface” interpretation of musical compositions also reflects Hayden White’s discussion of Michel Foucault’s views on discourse – namely that Foucault’s denunciation of structuralism is apparent in his writing, which lacks the “centre” associated with structuralism.¹³⁵

The obvious dissimilarity between these two examples is that Fink’s might seem more legitimate than Noske’s, simply because the theories that Fink applies to those compositions relates to the eras in which those compositions were conceived. He adopts a similar approach in his own teaching of musical analysis; he demonstrates, for example, that Claude Debussy’s satire on one of Wagner’s musical signs – the Tristan Chord – in *L’après-midi d’un Faune* is linked to Mallarmé’s questioning of the meaning of literary signs.¹³⁶ This is not to say, however, that Romantic music should not be conceptualized in terms of postmodern thinking. An example in support of such conceptualizing might be found in Lawrence Kramer’s analysis of Chopin’s Prelude in A Minor. Although he refers readily to postmodern thinkers, it is his own vocabulary that suggests his analysis

¹³⁴ Robert Fink, “Going Flat: Post-Hierarchical Music Theory and the Musical Surface,” in *Rethinking Music*, eds. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 121.

¹³⁵ Hayden White, *The Content of Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1987; 1990), 105.

¹³⁶ Claude Debussy’s distortion of the Tristan chord is especially linked, as Fink argues, to Mallarmé’s concept that texts have meanings which change depending on their positioning within the “white space [the colour of the space between texts]” of a page. Derek Attridge, “Mallarmé,” *Jacques Derrida: Acts of Literature* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 110; Robert Fink, “20th Century Music,” *A Listening Guide for Post-Graduate Students*, 1996. “Sibley Music Library, Eastman School of Music,” Rochester, New York.

of the above prelude has been influenced by well-known theories that are unrelated to the age of Romanticism: for instance, he says he conducts an analysis of the A Minor Prelude “not” to discover “what deep structure holds it together, but rather what motivates it to keep breaking apart.”¹³⁷

1.2.2. `Performances

The subject of performances and scores might lend itself to the application of postmodern theories that are related to discussion of orality and written discourse. Performances of Chopin’s music have continued since the death of the composer, and they have therefore enjoyed a ‘presence’ within the last two centuries, and will probably continue to be present in the twenty-first century. We might say that one of the main characteristics of performances is that they are ‘live’, and that they lend themselves, therefore, to the postmodern debate about ‘reality’ being relative to ‘presence.’ To illustrate this, it is necessary to refer to the arguments of Saussure, and Jacques Derrida, amongst others.

Saussure’s theory, as stated by himself and as described by both Eagleton and Ann Jefferson, allowed one to “exclude” the author, by looking at language as a system of signs that should be studied synchronically – “that is to say, studied as a complete system at a given point in time – rather than ‘diachronically,’ in its historical development.” Within the context of a synchronic study of signs, Saussure claimed that there was an “interdependen[cy]” of speech and written language, but privileged the former, claiming

¹³⁷ Lawrence Kramer, *Music as Cultural Practice: 1800 – 1900* (California: University of California Press, 1990), 72.

it influenced the latter.¹³⁸ Derrida's poststructuralism deconstructed the unequal relationship between spoken and written language, saying that the one only gained meaning because of the other. Because Derrida does not challenge the outer structure of binary oppositions except for merely wanting to remove the 'centre' in structuralism, J. G. Merquior has even suggested that Derrida's theory is not radical when compared to structuralism, and it might be more appropriate to think of Derrida as a "neo-structuralist."¹³⁹ The belief in the opposition of speech and writing has indeed influenced recent musicological approaches to performances and music texts, which seem comparable to spoken and written language. For instance, both Nicholas Cook and José A. Bowen tell us that our understanding of musical meanings should be influenced by methods of inquiry into both performances and music texts.¹⁴⁰

Attempts to know whether analyzing performances contribute more to our understanding of musical meaning than analyzing music texts seems to stem from the ongoing debate surrounding 'truth.' For instance, the poststructuralist (or neo-structuralist) Derrida, making the "Heideggerian connections explicit," conveyed the notion that "truth – cut off from [...] knowledge – is constantly determined as revelation, non-veiling, that is:

¹³⁸ Ann Jefferson, "Structuralism and Post-Structuralism," in *Modern Literary Theory: A Comparative Introduction*, eds. Ann Jefferson and David Robey (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1986), 92; Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), 96; Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, ed. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye and translated with an introduction by Wade Baskin (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969), 19.

¹³⁹ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravoty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 30, 31; J. G. Merquior, *From Prague to Paris: A Critique of Structuralist and Post-Structuralist Thought* (London: Verso, 1986), 195.

¹⁴⁰ Nicholas Cook, "Analysing Performance and Performing Analysis," in *Rethinking Music*, eds. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 239 – 261; José A. Bowen, "Finding the Music in Musicology," in *Rethinking Music*, eds. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 424 – 451.

necessarily as presence, presentation of the present.”¹⁴¹ His notion that truth is a “presentation” of the “present” is complex when seen in relation to performance. For instance, although later pianists’ performances of Chopin’s music might be considered no less authentic than Chopin’s performances of his own music, we do need to acknowledge that they differ from Chopin’s performances – that Chopin is not physically present and that only a percentage of what is heard is attributable to Chopin rather than to the later pianists.

I have problematized the issue of the authenticity of performance because of the criticism that surrounds historically-informed performance practice. For instance, Cook, on the one hand, in discussing medieval chant, claims that the “notation” does not tell us how the music was performed and received by the society of monks who sang the chants, and, therefore, “nobody knows.”¹⁴² On the other hand, Rink, urges us, if not to strive for a “putative authenticity” to our performance practices of Romantic music, to at least strive for a “meaningful” interpretation – one that is based on a reference point.¹⁴³ The obvious dissimilarity between the context of the medieval chant and that of Chopin’s music is that there is a considerable amount of documentation recording others’ perceptions of Chopin’s playing. Of course these perceptions represent their own constructions of the meaning. However, since their statements are overwhelmingly congruent with each other, it might be argued that it would be futile to attempt to disprove their accuracy. It is precisely this considerable amount of documentation to which Rink refers, in his book

¹⁴¹ Heidegger, quoted by Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, lxiii.

¹⁴² Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction*, 54.

¹⁴³ Rink, “Translating Music Meaning: The Nineteenth-Century Performer as Narrator,” in *Rethinking Music*, 219.

Chopin: The Piano Concertos (1997), in order to demonstrate that Chopin's sense of sound, which he applied in his performance of the concertos, can be viewed as the salvation of the concertos (because these works are thought to be failures in terms of their structure).¹⁴⁴

1.2.3 What Words Imply about Music

The conclusion that "Chopin playing Chopin" is in a sense more authentic than others' performances of his music (which I myself reach somewhat hastily in "The Incredible Lightness of Fortepiano" after analyzing the binarism of presence and absence¹⁴⁵), simply because Chopin was physically present at a certain place and time, is also problematic. This conclusion can be challenged in light of Eagleton's argument about presence, reality, and language – that "we can never quite close our fists over meaning, which arises from the fact that language is a temporal process."¹⁴⁶ He writes:

Nothing is ever fully present in signs: it is an illusion for me to believe that I can ever be fully present to you in what I say or write, because to use signs at all entails that my meaning is always somehow dispersed, divided and never quite at one with itself. Not only my meaning, indeed, but *me*: since language is something I am made out of, rather than merely a convenient tool I use, the whole idea that I am a stable unified entity must also be a fiction. Not only can I never be fully present to you, but I can never be fully present to myself either. I still need to use signs when I look into my mind or search my soul... My spoken words seem immediately present to my consciousness, and my voice becomes their intimate, spontaneous medium. In writing, by contrast, my meanings threaten to escape from my control: I commit my thoughts to the impersonal medium of print, and since a printed text has a durable, material existence it can always be circulated, reproduced, cited, used in ways which I did not foresee or intend. Writing seems to rob me of my being... it is for this reason that the Western philosophical tradition, all the way from Plato to Lévi-Strauss, has consistently vilified writing as a mere lifeless, alienated form of expression, and consistently celebrated the living voice. Behind this prejudice lies a particular of 'man': man is able spontaneously to create and express his own meanings, to be in full possession

¹⁴⁴ Rink, *Chopin: The Piano Concertos* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

¹⁴⁵ Frederick De Jaeger (sic), "The Incredible Lightness of Fortepiano," *Literature in Northern Queensland*, Vol. 31 No. 1 (2004).

¹⁴⁶ Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, 128.

of himself, and to dominate language as a transparent medium of his inmost being. What this theory fails to see is that the 'living voice' is in fact quite as material as print; and that since spoken signs, like written ones, work only by a process of difference and division, speaking could be just as much said to be a form of writing as writing is said to be a second-hand form of speaking.¹⁴⁷

Because Chopin was born into a society that used language to describe experiences of musical performances, it can also be said that he, in turn, existed only in the sense that he himself was 'made up' of language – he thought, spoke, and breathed (etc), language. What he thought of his own music, then, was also dependent on the language he had at his disposal – the meanings that he attributed to his own works were conditioned by the linguistic signs that he used (such as 'masculine' or 'feminine,' for example), both to speak and think about his own compositions. The questioning of who Chopin is, on the basis of the way in which he is discussed in texts, as well as the ways in which his works are interpreted in texts, is a concern today (and, certainly, it is also a major concern in this thesis), but it is probably not a valid question within the context of Chopin's own understanding of language and reality. The Romantics believed that language was more-or-less capable of depicting the real world through "rational judgment," which is in contrast with what we are now encouraged to ask ourselves – that is, "could we any longer share the confident rationalist or empiricist trust of the mid-nineteenth century middle class that language did indeed hook itself on to the world?"¹⁴⁸

However, as Eagleton points out, "words like 'truth', reality', 'knowledge' and 'certainty' have something restored to them, when we think of language rather as

¹⁴⁷ Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, 130.

¹⁴⁸ Eagleton, *The Function of Criticism: From the Spectator to Post-Structuralism* (London: Verso, 1984), 9; Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, 140.

something we *do*, as indissociably interwoven with our practical forms of life.”¹⁴⁹ Keeping this in mind, I use what has been written about Chopin, his performances, and his compositions as important sources about Chopin as well as about the way he has been received.

If actions – such as the act of thinking about a musical performance – do ‘speak louder than words’, then, apart from the adage showing how we seem to attribute a greater (or, metaphorically, a ‘louder’) meaning to what we “do” than what we say, we might argue that the ‘reality’ of a piano performance is connected to the act of performing and *not* to the language that we use to describe (and, therefore, “construct”) that performance. Eagleton’s arguments suggest that an action has the possibility of greater authenticity than a speech act, since the latter may be distorted by the relatively fixed meanings of words. Similarly, a performance may be ‘distorted’ in discussion by these same fixed qualities of the words. The artist is not fully present to his or her audience because we have compared his or her musical ‘speech’ to speech. Treating performance as an action and eschewing the construction of the experience through the use of language might be the only way to restore ‘authentic’ meanings to the music to which we listen, but doing this means eschewing both internal thought about performances and the possibility of discussing them with others. As Cook points out, “if music needs to be explained through words, then it must stand in need of explanation.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Eagleton, *Literary Theory*, 147.

¹⁵⁰ Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 39.

It is not my aim to capture the ‘reality’ of performances by somehow conveying how Chopin and others performed his music. Rather, taking a step back conceptually and avoiding what is obviously a practical impossibility (because to relay the reality of what one *does* would require of me, nevertheless, to use language), I will analyze the views of commentators with the understanding that these commentators influenced musical meaning by the language they used.¹⁵¹

People refer to Chopin as the poet of the piano, and this tradition has undoubtedly stemmed, in part, from the vast number of reports by his contemporaries claiming that he himself was especially fond of using the *bel canto* voice as a metaphor for his music, and that his own performances were characterized by poetry-like sounds.¹⁵² Not only did Chopin describe his music metaphorically as a human voice, but, at times, he even characterized that metaphorical voice: for example, he wrote of his B Flat Minor Sonata that, after the funeral march, the “right hands” of the finale “gossip in unison.”¹⁵³ (The concept that the sound of a piano might be comparable to the qualities of the human voice will be elaborated on within the section entitled “Chopin’s Music in Relation to the Human Voice.”) Currently, however, there are musicologists who argue that the analogy between music and language is popular merely because it gives scholars a framework within which to understand their subject.

¹⁵¹ It is necessary to mention, however, that, in “Chopin’s Playing and Playing Chopin,” some members of Chopin’s own audience realized that language failed them when attempting to describe their experience with Chopin’s performance. This, of course, might not mean that they thought language was incapable of capturing the ‘meanings’ of music, but that the vocabulary they had at their disposal did not do justice to what might be called the mystical nature of the sounds he created.

¹⁵² Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 42.

¹⁵³ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 180 – 182.

In “The Challenge of Semiotics” (1999), Kofi Agawu is critical of Deryck Cooke’s book *The Language of Music* (1959). He summarizes Cooke’s claims: “some composers and listeners invest certain intervals and scale patterns (mainly diatonic) with certain emotions: major thirds and sixths express pleasure, minor thirds grief, minor sixths pain, and so on.”¹⁵⁴ Agawu argues that the claims made in this book, almost four decades ago, should not continue to go unchallenged and should be subjected to further analysis. He posits that because “we are, after all, dealing with an impossible translation from the world of notes to the world of feeling, we need to acknowledge a certain imprecision or suggestiveness in the transfers reported by Cooke.”¹⁵⁵

I acknowledge Agawu’s critique of Cooke’s book, and, like Agawu, I also support Cooke’s arguments concerning the extent to which music texts can be interpreted in terms of an “investment” of emotion. The reservations I have about Cooke’s argument are not against his drawing correlations between “major and minor” intervals (or a series of pitches which form a “theme”) and emotions, but his belief that “feeling” is the only phenomenon that he considers music capable of expressing.¹⁵⁶ He argues against the opinion Igor Stravinsky held at a particular time, that “music is, by its very nature, powerless to express anything at all, whether a feeling, an attitude of mind, a psychological mood, a phenomenon of nature, etc...If, as is nearly always the case, music

¹⁵⁴ Kofi Agawu, “The Challenge of Semiotics,” *Rethinking Music*, eds. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 154.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 155.

¹⁵⁶ Deryck Cooke writes, for example: “...rather, since music can only express feelings, it is thought that they will probably be in the nature of interpretations of emotional attitudes, somewhat akin to the type of analyses perfected by Wilson Knight for the elucidation of the ‘content’ of literary works – an examination of the ‘images’ used, and an interpretation of their emotional and psychological connotations.” Deryck Cooke, *The Language of Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959; 1964), Preface xii, 50 – 90, 211 – 274.

appears to express something, this is only an illusion, and not a reality.”¹⁵⁷ Cooke seems to claim, rather, that music is a language capable of capturing nothing *but* feelings. He overlooks the possibility that composers could use these same musical qualities in a way that pokes fun at the belief that they represent particular emotions. He fails in his main hypothesis, to notice that one of the qualities of language is to say something that on a superficial level means one thing, yet below the surface means something completely contrary. This leads me to the argument that music does not necessarily have to represent an emotion so much as a composer’s understanding of it. In this regard, I tend to agree with Friedrich von Schlegel; “a certain element of philosophical speculation is not at all foreign to the spirit of pure instrumental music.”¹⁵⁸

Agawu explores the relations between music and language so as to see how semiotics might be useful within music research. At the same time he exposes differences between music and language and says that music is not a language. He believes that, because there is no dictionary-like system of defining musical sounds, practitioners have been unable to agree on the way in which to analyze the semiotic nature of music. To this end he “want[s] to emphasize the instability” of the practice of treating music as a system of

¹⁵⁷ Deryck Cooke, *The Language of Music*, 11. I state “at a particular time,” because Stravinsky conceded later in life (at the age of eighty-four), that music could in fact relay meaning – a meaning, which might even be superior to words: “I talk too much, as you see, which is an irony, because I do not believe in words, not, at least, as I believe in music, and would erase all of my own if I had the power. [Words] are not so much inexact as metaphorical; not so much another form of notation as an irrelevant and unedifying form. [In regard to my latest composition, for instance], the music says what it is and the music is self-contained.” Stravinsky, in Robert Craft, *Dialogues and a Diary* (London: Billing and Sons Ltd., 1968), 61 – 63.

¹⁵⁸ Friedrich Von Schlegel, in Peter le Huray and James Day, *Music and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth and Early-Nineteenth Centuries*, 247.

semiotics.¹⁵⁹ He states that there are a number of ways of comparing music to language and that his explorations of these comparisons have provided support for his belief that music is not a language, but that the metaphor of music-as-a-language can be of some use. For instance, he states that while spoken language has an “ordinary function” – mere communication – music “exists” primarily for “artistic expression.”¹⁶⁰ Agawu also considers that music should be differentiated from language because its “capacity” for “communication” is not comparable to the latter. Agawu does conclude, however, that the metaphor is useful: the metaphor of “music-as-language” is useful, because it provides a “more secure basis for framing certain kinds of musical knowledge as semiotic.”¹⁶¹

While the breaking down of the link between the musical signs and particular meanings did occur within twentieth-century music and visual arts, the underlying theory – the questioning of the relationship between the signified and signifier – owed much of its existence, nonetheless, to twentieth-century literary theorists.¹⁶² Applying this theory whole-heartedly to the study of music from the nineteenth century – and indeed to discussions of all other music as well – means abandoning the use of words to explain music. That is, it means abandoning musicology. Therefore, I am adopting the metaphor music-as-language while at the same time recognizing that Chopin, other pianists and

¹⁵⁹ Kofi Agawu, “The Challenge of Semiotics,” in *Rethinking Music*, 138 – 160.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 142.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 146.

¹⁶² René Magritte’s *This is not a Pipe*, and his *Key of Dreams*, is an especially well-known example that illustrates the cross-disciplinary links to which I refer. His concept – a horse and a tree, for instance – echoes Saussure’s *Course in General Linguistics*, where the illustrations of a horse and a tree can also be found. Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, 65.

those who listen to Chopin's music construct the meanings that they attribute to his music.

Any critical discourse adopted directly from the criticism of language-based works is likely to neglect or de-emphasize the sensory aspects of music. Thus, it is perhaps in light of this recognition – how language is used both as a metaphor to analyze music and to describe our experiences with music – that my own theoretical position is best understood. I do not intend to adopt a deconstructionist viewpoint on the issue of Chopin's performances and the contemporaneous reports of those performances, but, rather, view the reports on his music 'in context' – a context in which people responded 'rationally.' Neither will I attempt to show how later pianists deconstructed the link between the musical signs of Chopin's music and the emotion or thought they were believed to signify. On the contrary, my thesis demonstrates that some musicians and musicologists believed that what they had heard could be defined satisfactorily in words, and, therefore, subscribed tacitly to the idea that musical signs and the 'meanings' they signified were identical. To this end, concentrating on the study of Chopin's and others' performances of his music poses unusual challenges. This is partly because of the lack of a model for sensory research, but also because an understanding of the sensory dimension – especially when discussing reports on music of older cultures – depends on one's ability to reconstruct for oneself a variety of sensory experiences. We need not so much to weigh words against each other, as to measure what words imply about music.

Paul Stoller encourages us to involve ourselves in the domain of the senses in order to know better the otherness of other cultures.¹⁶³ As we cannot involve ourselves in the “domain” of the Romantic era, we are left only with the reports of how people experienced musical performances: we can only rely on our imaginations, with the help of surviving documentation, to reconstruct the various experiences people had with Chopin’s playing. Additionally, however, even if we were able to sit down with Chopin’s audience and attempt to experience its reception of his playing, there is no way of knowing if we will experience, or interpret that experience, precisely in the same way. It may be helpful, therefore, to view the study conducted here, in part, as a probe into the role that language and the senses of sight, sound, and touch, play in the construction of musical meaning. The emphasis I place on the link between language, the experience of the senses, and the meanings of Chopin’s music, necessitates a consideration of others’ perspectives on language and sensory experience.

Saussure demonstrates that external factors are less important than internal factors when attempting to understand the sensory system to which I wish to draw attention. He uses the game of chess, demonstrating that history and geography do not have an impact on how loan-words function:

¹⁶³ Paul Stoller claimed to be a radical empiricist. He believed one had to experience other cultures personally in order to understand their understanding of their society. The experiencing of older cultures in relation to their sensory perception will be discussed in more detail in this chapter. Stoller, *The Taste of Ethnographic Things: The Senses in Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989).

In chess, what is external can be separated relatively easily from what is internal. The fact that the game passed from Persia to Europe is external; against that, everything having to do with its system and rules is internal. If I use ivory chessmen instead of wooden ones, the change has no effect on the system, but if I decrease or increase the number of the chessmen, this change has a profound effect on the “grammar” of the game. One must always distinguish between what is internal and what is external.¹⁶⁴

In other words, the geographical movement of the game from “Persia to Europe” has no effect on play. The history of the game also demonstrates that there was a movement in a time frame: although chess originated in Persia, it moved, later, to Europe. These are external factors. The internal factors, however, regardless of this change in time and place, seem to have remained constant. Relating this to this study of Chopin it may be claimed that although there is a wide selection of literature (from contemporaneous reports on Chopin to recent publications on piano pedagogy, for instance), the internal factors – our hearing and the phenomenon of frequency, amongst others – have been constant.

Terminology has changed from a descriptive Romantic style to a more straight-forward approach in recent years, but according to Saussure’s argument (by pointing out that playing with wooden or ivory pieces would not affect play), whether we call a small dimension of sound “*pianissimo*,” “soft,” or “feminine,” the words do not physically affect the reception of that sound. Guy Madison does, of course, conclude that we seem to experience music similarly, because we relay our experiences similarly, but, I argue,

¹⁶⁴ De Saussure, *Course*, 22 – 23, 87 – 88.

we may well relay our experiences similarly only because we are limited by our own linguistic systems.¹⁶⁵

We need to use words to explain what we think about our sensory perceptions (our “subjective manifestations,” as Alfred North Whitehead calls them¹⁶⁶) and because we use them to describe our sensory experiences, they are implicated in the construction of musical meaning. Musical meaning, in turn, must be understood, necessarily, via the subjective way we use language.¹⁶⁷ Words become inseparable from subjectivity and our experience of musical performances because they are the signs we use to relay our sensory experiences.

Stephen Handel claims that a “surface” level of music exists – a level that, without access to theoretical knowledge that helps one construct the “grammar” of what one hears, relates to nothing but sound.¹⁶⁸ If such an experience exists, then there is support for my argument that our hearing and the phenomenon of frequency are two of the constants in our experience of music. However, Ruth Solie reminds us that “linguists have been telling us for some time” that language is not “merely reflective but actually constitutive of our awareness,” and it can be argued therefore that our perception of reality, in short,

¹⁶⁵ Madison, “Properties of Expressive Variability Patterns in Music Performances,” *Journal of New Music Research*, 336 – 356.

¹⁶⁶ Alfred North Whitehead, *The Concept of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971).

¹⁶⁷ Celia Britton, in referring to Jacques Lacan, stated that language is itself constitutive of subjectivity. This link between language and subjectivity is confirmed easily when we consider that, as Malcolm Bowie says, “Lacan’s language itself constantly reminds us of the daily return journey that the analyst must be prepared to make from the pure logic of subjectivity to the gaps, redundancies and confusions of ordinary speech.” Jacques Lacan, in Celia Britton, “Structuralist and Post-Structuralist Psychoanalytic and Marxist Theories,” *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: From Formalism to Poststructuralism*, ed. Raman Selden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 198.

¹⁶⁸ Stephen Handel, *Listening: An Introduction to the Perception of Auditory Events* (Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1989), 324.

is influenced by a number of factors that relate to the issue of language itself.¹⁶⁹ This line of thought, indeed, is in opposition to my claim above: that “our hearing and the phenomenon of frequency” are internal factors, which have remained constant. There may be nothing absolute about our sensory experience of Chopin’s music in performance, because the moment we relay the experience in words, something – some meaning, apart from the physical experience – may be lost, or gained. Due to this complex relationship between our sensory perception of music in performance and the way in which we explain that perception, I argue that the words we use to describe our experiences of performances become an ‘internal factor’ in the system that seems to govern musical meanings (in which the relationships between listening and subjectivity, for example, also play a role), simply because we involve words when relaying our experiences with music.

However, it must be reiterated here that the Romantics are said to have trusted their language when describing their world. Naturally, there were some aspects of society that were difficult to define, and, perhaps, better off left undefined – such as Christian mysticism or Mickiewicz’s poetic “activity,” which has been compared to the “experiencing” of the “mysteries of faith.”¹⁷⁰ The implication in terms of ordinary language,¹⁷¹ however, is, if words were believed to capture, more-or-less, the phenomenon of sound, or to relay one’s likes or dislikes of sounds, they also captured

¹⁶⁹ Ruth Solie, “The Living Work: Organicism and Musical Analysis,” in *19th Century Music*, 147. This perspective, as discussed above, is adopted by Cook, who claims that language “constructs reality rather than merely reflecting it.” Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction*, 14.

¹⁷⁰ Stanisław Cieślak, “Religiosity in Polish Literature,” in Leon Dyczewski and Barbara Jedynek, *Values in the Polish Cultural Tradition: Polish Philosophical Studies III*, 98.

¹⁷¹ My use of the term ‘ordinary language’ is not to overlook the argument that there might be no such thing as ‘ordinary language’ – that all our linguistic signs are simply metaphors for other signs (Terry Eagleton’s discussion on Structuralism and Poststructuralism (see *Literary Theory: An Introduction*)).

perceptible facts about the sounds that these words represented. The imprecision of relaying the sensory experience through language was not as much of an issue then as it is today. For example, Hanslick's understanding of Clara Schumann's performance was that her small tone was a result of the physical limitations of her sex. He would also have more-or-less trusted his use of words to reflect his partiality in respect of the various kinds of sounds. In this regard, he refers in a derogatory manner to Clara Schumann's 'feminine' and physical 'limitations,' which, supposedly, is the cause of her small tone. In this regard, we might also accept, then, that the vast amount of contemporaneous reports on Chopin's playing, such as those in Eigeldinger's book *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, represent Chopin's contemporaries' subjective, yet valuable, thoughts and feelings about what his pianistic sounds meant (to them). To remedy this additional complication of studying people's perception of music in performance, where subjectivity appears to be paramount, I found it useful to apply the advice of John Ellis. He theorized that if language is scrutinized for "connotation, tone, and intent," the speaker's subjectivity becomes apparent.¹⁷² This theory, in other words, might be helpful in answering a question, which Stoller believed to be of great importance: "how can they [anthropologists] ignore how their own sensual biases affect the information they produce?" Substituting 'musicians' in place of 'anthropologists,' we can profit from Stoller's comments: "this study demonstrates why [musicians] should open their senses to the worlds of their others."¹⁷³

¹⁷² John Ellis, *The Theory of Literary Criticism* (California: University of California, 1974)

¹⁷³ Stoller, *The Taste of Ethnographic Things: The Senses in Anthropology*, 7.

Considering the role that language plays in the representation (or misrepresentation) of the experience of music performance, and that musical meaning, as Rink suggests, is defined largely via sensory experience, it is necessary that I clarify my position on ‘authenticity’ and musical meaning. Subscribing partially to the idea that we should not measure whether or not a first-hand perspective is more correct than a present perspective that is drawn from contemporaneous reports on Chopin’s playing, or whether or not it is even possible to measure people’s experiences of performance against one another, part of my thesis concerns perspectives that are linked to pianists’ physical problems. If some pianists’ physical problems result from their perspective that sensory saturation is paradigmatic of Chopin’s music, I respond by questioning whether the experiencing of methodologically (or medically, as I shall show below) related problems is essential to the experience of playing the piano or playing Chopin’s music. In other words, to observe largeness and smallness in an historical context, and in relation to Chopin’s performances, might be beneficial on a practical level, if not at a philosophical level. In this regard, my sections “Chopin’s Piano and Progress in Piano Design,” and “Pianists’ Problems,” will develop this argument more fully. As regards the ‘philosophical’ approach to the semiotic meanings that people perceive to be embedded in Chopin’s music, however, I acknowledge that an attempt to interpret his music hermeneutically would be susceptible to criticism, because, as Cook stated, ‘explaining’ musical meaning entirely in terms of composer intention had been discredited by the mid-twentieth century.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁴ Nicholas Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction*, 71.

Concluding this section, I do not mean to suggest that I shall succeed in unearthing the authentic, or the ‘correct’ Chopin, or the ‘correct’ way in which to analyze or define musical meaning in relation to scores or performances. Rather, I assume the meanings that people attach to musical signs change from time to time and from place to place, as well as from person to person. It is these changes, which are accompanied by other changes in the connotations of words and phrases that I view in relation to gender as a factor of reception.

These various meanings – for tonal music – might be influenced and made traceable, however, by taking the following issues into consideration: people’s innate, sense-related responses may be relatively unaffected by the scholarly approach to music, which tends to analyze in detail what is heard. If these respondents are not familiar with the discourse about that music, their sensory perception is relatively unaffected. The desires of these listeners may be fulfilled by something as simple as varying the proportions of the sensory experience – by the miniature, or the mammoth, for instance. Because I consider the possibility that the predominately sense-related experience of music exists, I imply also that there exists a scholarly and analytical sensory experience, which *is* influenced by external factors, and especially by the discourse which in a particular time surrounds music; language plays an important role in regard to both of the above-mentioned ways of experiencing musical performances, and because it is used to describe texts and contexts. The importance I attribute to people’s use of language has resulted from my understanding of Solie’s perspective that “it matters” who relays the musical message and

who is “empowered” to speak about it;¹⁷⁵ musical meaning might be, in part, determined by the way in which performers are not only in two frames of mind, but two frames of sensory perception.¹⁷⁶ Finally, that it matters where pianists perform, and on what instrument they choose to perform.

My approach, in this study of music, is original in that various types of musicological literature, such as historical commentary, literature on piano design, and articles on pianistic methods, are viewed interactively, rather than as unrelated topics within the field of musicology. Whilst the aim of my study is largely to show that people’s continual desire for largeness in relation to Chopin has had the effect of decreasing our appreciation of smallness, it is also to demonstrate that this preference for largeness appears to exist because people trust that the language they use to describe their experiences with music actually embraces the ‘truth’ about those musical experiences.

My thesis itself is also original, to my knowledge, in that it is the first attempt to use Chopin as a paradigm in order to expose what appears to be a continuing subscription (and sometimes overly-emotional commitment) to the idea that language is actually able to capture the meanings of sounds – as ‘manly,’ ‘heroic,’ ‘*fortissimo*,’ or ‘intellectual’. In this regard, there is a sense in which my aim is to question interpretations to which we seem to subscribe when discussing the music of Chopin. In a sense, then, I go further than constructing or deconstructing the binary pairs – especially ‘masculinity’ and

¹⁷⁵ Solie, “Introduction,” in *Musicology and Difference*, 20.

¹⁷⁶ I adapt Bakhtin’s “double discourse” theory, as interpreted by Kevin Korsyn and Jeffrey Kallberg. Korsyn, “Beyond Privileged Context: Intertextuality, Influence, and Dialogue,” Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist ed. *Rethinking Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries* (London: Harvard University Press, 1998).

'femininity' – that some people use in the interpretation of Chopin and his music, because it is not a balance between these two concepts that I wish to achieve, nor an erasure of a central position where they are reconciled, and it is also not an attempt to locate a position somewhere between these gendered extremes in which to place Chopin and his music. I intend to go beyond the limitations of the gender-oriented terms, and to illuminate the extent to which we tend to use language in order to endorse these endeavors.

1.3. Sources

The sources on which all discussion within this thesis will draw, which are related directly to Chopin, Pianos, and Pianists' Problems, can be divided into five types. Literary sources are the most numerous, with music texts, recordings, interviews and instruments making a lesser contribution.

I use Arthur Hedley's *Selected Correspondence of Fryderyk Chopin* and E. L. Voynich's *Chopin's Letters* as cross references for each other in order to ensure that subtleties of meaning from Chopin's letters in French and Polish have not been lost in translation. Where there are slight differences in translation I include the differing interpretations.¹⁷⁷ Additionally, I also attempted to acquire original documents so that I might examine

¹⁷⁷ For example, the words "brilliant" instead of "glitter," or "little" instead of "salon." Arthur Hedley, trans. and ed. *Selected Correspondence of Fryderyk Chopin* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1979), 36, 37; *Chopin's Letters*, collected by Henryk Opieński and ed. by E. L. Voynich (New York: Vienna House, 1973), 74; Alfred Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, trans. by Cyril and Rena Clarke (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1975), 52.

Chopin's words myself, but several of the most important texts have either "disappeared" or have been "destroyed." For instance, the Foreign Correspondent of the Chopin Society in Warsaw, Anna Ryszka-Komarnicka, indicated to me that "all Chopin's letters to Tytus Woyciechowski disappeared [and] it is highly probable that they were burnt...in the manor house of Woyciechowski descendents in Poland."¹⁷⁸ All the existing letters written to Tytus are therefore copies of originals. She continued in her subsequent email:

There are many mysteries as the first biographers, especially those from the beginning of the 20th century did not mention while citing the originals where they could be found, so now sometimes there are even problems how to look for them as we do not know in whose hands some originals were before the war. Of course, you had no luck choosing those particular letters as there are in fact autographed letters.¹⁷⁹

As Ryszka-Komarnicka points out, it was "unlucky" that after reading the letters translated by Hedley and Voynich, those which I considered to be most reflective of Chopin's personal stance on the issue of sound and gender no longer exist. These letters included those written to his family, Tytus Woyciechowski and Ferdinand Hiller. In light of the lack of original documentary evidence, of necessity, I relied on the publications available as being faithful reproductions or interpretations of the originals.

Contemporaneous perspectives on Chopin's playing and compositions can also be sourced from Liszt's book *Frédéric Chopin*, Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger's book *Chopin as*

¹⁷⁸ Anna Ryszka-Komarnicka, Warsaw, email message to Frederick De Jager, Pietermaritzburg, 20th March 2003.

¹⁷⁹ Anna Ryszka-Komarnicka, Warsaw, email message to Frederick De Jager, Pietermaritzburg, 25th March 2003.

Pianist and Teacher: As Seen by His Pupils (1986), and Reginald Gerig's book *Famous Pianists and Their Technique* (1974).¹⁸⁰

Liszt's book was first published as a series of articles (1852). From Waters' foreword, we learn that the book first appeared serially, in the journal *La France Musicale*, near the end of 1851 (almost two years after the death of Chopin). These articles were compiled into a book in 1852 and published by Escudier. The book is little known, either in its original French or its translated versions. Waters claims that the book only received attention when Breitkopf & Härtel reprinted it, and not in the original 206-page form, but in an enlarged 312-page version. There is some doubt as to the authors/editors of this enlarged version. According to Waters the enlarged essay "seemed to be only a continuation of the worst features of the parent essay."¹⁸¹ Waters suspects that Liszt's companion Princess Wittgenstein contributed substantially to the augmented biography. He bases this on the fact that she was a writer with a reputation of being something of a "pseudo-philosopher." Furthermore, an admirer of hers was quoted as saying "she corrected her proofs rapidly, always adding and hardly ever subtracting."¹⁸² It was not until 1948 that Alfred Cortot wrote a foreword to a restored original version issued by Corr ea of Paris. This present Vienna House edition of 1963 is a translation of the shorter, more trustworthy biographical version. Shortly after Chopin's death, Liszt submitted a questionnaire to Chopin's sister Louise Iedrzejewicz. The English translation of this

¹⁸⁰ Franz Liszt, *Fr d ric Chopin*, with a foreword and translated by Edward N. Waters (New York: Vienna House, 1963); Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher: As Seen by His Pupils*, translated by Shohet, Naomi and edited by Roy Howat (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Reginald R. Gerig, *Famous Pianists and Their Technique* (New York: Robert B. Luce Inc., 1974).

¹⁸¹ Waters, in Liszt, *Chopin*, 5.

¹⁸² *Ibid.* 5.

questionnaire is included in Waters' foreword.¹⁸³ Iedrzeiewicz did not comment on Liszt's questions, but, instead, entrusted the document to Chopin's pupil, Jane Stirling. The questions often deal with rudimentary biographical facts. For instance, "what is Chopin's date and place of birth?" Many authors, according to Waters, have regarded Liszt's ignorance of Chopin's biographical details as proof that he and Chopin were not particularly intimate friends. Waters points out however that young men in their twenties are not prone to dwell on such issues.

There are eight parts to Liszt's book: "Music and Innovation," "The Polonaises and Their Social Background," "The Mazurkas and Their Social Background," "In Concert and at Home," "Integrity and Individuality – Classicism and Romanticism," "Youth – Nationalism – and Musical Sympathies," "George Sand and Idealism," and "Illness and Death."¹⁸⁴

Eigeldinger's book, translated by Naomi Shohet, is a compilation of observations on Chopin made by more than twenty of his students, several colleagues, and a few critics. Gerig includes his own translations of observations made by critics contemporaneous with Chopin. These observations are taken from the following journals: the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, *Wiener Theatrezeitung*, *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, *Correspondent's Gazette*, *Revue Musicale*, and the *Musical World*.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 18 – 25.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 29 – 41, 42 – 63, 64 – 81, 82 – 99, 100 – 128, 129 – 149, 150 – 165, 166 – 184.

Eigeldinger compiled these observations because he felt that the authentic performance practices for Romantic music should be considered as equally important as those for Gregorian chant. He maintains that the loss of interest in historically informed performance practice has been instrumental in “breaking” our “epoch away” from that of the nineteenth century. He has therefore collected observations of people who were close to Chopin in an attempt to capture “Chopin’s pianistic and stylistic practices.” In addition, he attempts to gain further understanding of Chopin’s views on “piano playing and teaching” as well as of his “musical and aesthetic surroundings.”¹⁸⁵

Eigeldinger supplements the compilation of people’s observations by including a short biography of each student.¹⁸⁶ Using the recollections of more than twenty of these students, He discusses Chopin’s technique, his musical style, and his interpretation of compositions, and he considers several “annotated scores” of Chopin’s students and associates. He includes Chopin’s “Sketch for a Method” and an appendix entitled “Chopin’s Playing Described by His Contemporaries.” These main sections are in turn divided into subsections. For example, the section “Basic Technique” includes headings such as “General Suppleness,” “Position at the Piano and Hand Position,” and the section “Musical Style” includes headings such as “Bel Canto – a Model for Pianistic Declamation” and “Rubato and Ornamentation.” Following the subheadings, Eigeldinger then lists all observations that focus on that topic. For instance, after the “Bel Canto” subheading, the next page and a half includes eleven entries of observations made by students and one by Chopin himself. This type of layout is very similar to a dictionary,

¹⁸⁵ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 1, 2.

¹⁸⁶ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 161 – 189.

showing that Eigeldinger has gone to great lengths in comparing observations of the entire studio of Chopin, and other members of Chopin's society, attempting to include details of every possible aspect of Chopin's music and musical practices.

I consider Eigeldinger's book to be a primary source because he has adopted a "didactic approach," letting the "texts speak for themselves" rather than using them as "pretexts."¹⁸⁷ For the most part, the book is a mere compilation of what Chopin's students have reported concerning the sights, sounds, and tactile method of Chopin's playing. Eigeldinger explains that this book is not a historical essay; the diversified nature of the sources allows them to retain their "own life" independent of the accompanying editorial notes. Therefore, while the main part of the book deals with the translated but unedited perspectives on Chopin's students, Eigeldinger's "Introduction" and his endnotes relay his own interpretations of discourse on Chopin.¹⁸⁸

Secondary literature on Chopin begins in the late nineteenth century, and continues up to, and including, literature of the late twentieth century. This secondary literature includes Huneker's *Chopin: The Man and His Music* (1900), Hedley's *The Master Musicians Chopin* (1947), Cortot's *In Search of Chopin* (1952), and George Marek and Maria Gordon-Smith's *Chopin: A Biography* (1979).¹⁸⁹ Because Huneker's and Hedley's views will feature in my discussions, it is worth taking a closer look at these sources.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 1 – 21.

¹⁸⁹ James Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music* (Charles Scribner's and Sons, 1900; New York: Dover Publications, 1966); Arthur Hedley, *The Master Musicians Chopin* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1947; 1974); Alfred Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, trans. by Cyril and Rena Clarke (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1952; 1975); George Marek and Maria Gordon Smith, *Chopin: A Biography* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979).

In the chapter “The Artist,” Huneker’s observations are especially useful. Here, Huneker interprets older sources that record others’ first-hand experiences of Chopin’s performances in order to present his own perspectives on Chopin’s sense of sound. The issues that he contemplates include: Chopin’s character, his teaching and students, his pianism in relation to other pianists, his hands, his pianos and modern pianos, portraits of Chopin, Chopin and the influence of the human voice and the violin, and the relationship between his piano and the quality of sound related to his music. I also find the entire “Part II: His Music” helpful. In “Part II,” Huneker discusses a wide variety of Chopin’s compositions: etudes, preludes, impromptus and waltzes, nocturnes, ballades, polonaises, sonatas, mazurkas and scherzos.

At this point, it is worth making a comparison between Huneker’s book (republished in 1966) and Hedley’s book, *The Master Musicians Chopin* (republished in 1974). The first part of Hedley’s book focuses on Chopin’s biographical details, and the subsequent sections discuss his music. Hedley speaks about practically all the genres Huneker discusses, and most of the genres Chopin used in his compositions. His discussions are very similar to Huneker’s. Even though Hedley’s book was last revised in 1974, it contains similar types of interpretations of Chopin’s music. In other words, since 1947 (first publication date), the style of writing and the subjects dealt with, even in the 1974 edition, remain similar to those of Huneker’s much older work.

Several books either written or edited by Jim Samson have been helpful. These books include *The Music of Chopin* (1985), *Chopin Studies* (1988), and *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin* (1992).¹⁹⁰ An added advantage of more recent contextual studies is that authors not only try to determine the ways in which composers respond to the tastes of audiences, which in part influence their music, but to discover the significance of the music as audiences experience it. Recent interpretations reveal not only how a composer might have understood the communicative nature of his music, but also how a contemporaneous audience might have received and understood the communicated ‘sensory’ message. *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, edited by Samson, includes essays titled “Piano Music and the Public Concert, 1800-1850,” and “Chopin in Performance.”¹⁹¹

In the first of these chapters, “Piano Music and the Public Concert, 1800-1850,” Janet Ritterman compares observations about Chopin’s performances as opposed to other contemporary leading pianists. She writes “to a large extent, these early judgments remained true throughout his life: Chopin continued to stand apart from most pianist-composers of his time. This is evident in his approach to concert performance.” Ritterman continues with a discussion of the shift in piano performance: from the pianist as a composer, to the pianist as interpreter. She shows how the all-piano public recital (which evolved in the 1850s), and the popularity of the piano itself, was a result of a thirst for more spectacular and more frequent sensory entertainment. Ritterman then

¹⁹⁰ Jim Samson, *The Music of Chopin* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985); Jim Samson, ed. *Chopin Studies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Jim Samson, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

¹⁹¹ Written by Janet Ritterman and James Methuen-Campbell respectively.

considers the evolution of “concert societies and audiences,” contemporary “pianists and concerts” in relation to Chopin, the development of “pianos and playing styles,” and a variety of piano genres and the art of improvisation in relation to concert programming during Chopin’s era.¹⁹² All of these issues are discussed in an attempt to better understand the nature of Chopin’s audiences.

In the second article, concerning Chopin’s performance and audience, James Methuen-Campbell confronts the problems of how to research Chopin’s own playing of the piano in relation to other people’s performances of his music. This is a question that cannot really be answered. He writes: “no recordings exist” even of Chopin’s pupils. Methuen-Campbell surmises that the closest one can get to an understanding of Chopin’s piano playing is through written accounts of those who heard him play and through studying “critical editions” prepared by contemporaneous performers.¹⁹³ He considers Chopin’s preference in pianos, the sounds inherent in those instruments, and the opinions of some contemporary pianists concerning the manner in which Chopin played these instruments. Methuen-Campbell then considers the evolution of societies’ perceptions of Chopin’s music in performance. Where possible, he also consults the recordings of artists in order to substantiate his views. He begins with Liszt’s observations and then continues with a chronological discussion of Chopin interpreters: Rubinstein, Tausig, Paderewski, Pachman, Cortot, Rachmaninov and Horowitz. This compilation of commentary on other

¹⁹² Janet Ritterman, “Piano Music and the Public Concert 1800-1850,” *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 16, 17, 18, 20 – 30.

¹⁹³ James Methuen-Campbell, “Chopin in Performance,” *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 191.

performers' interpretations of Chopin is helpful in showing changes in the performance practices of Chopin's music.

Kallberg's book, *Chopin at the Boundaries: Sex, History and Musical Genre* (1998), has also made a valuable contribution.¹⁹⁴ Kallberg is the author whom I consider to sway most effectively people's understandings of the sensory, gendered political struggle, towards an acceptance of the miniaturesque aspects of Chopin's music. I present the idea of Kallberg's 'swaying' people with reserve, for the arguments he poses in his book *Chopin at the Boundaries*, are, to my understanding, so concretely substantiated through his research in historiography, I find it difficult to associate him with any type of bias. His responses to writers who appear to fear smallness is dealt with, not through impulsive arguments, but with insights that consider the history, and other people's study of history, with regard to composers, audiences, and the communicative nature of music. Similarly, I do not disagree with his essay on Chopin's mazurkas written in 1988, or his article "Chopin's March, Chopin's Death" written in 2001.¹⁹⁵ His book *Chopin at the Boundaries* deals predominantly with the communicative nature of music, concepts of gendered metaphors, multidimensional consciousnesses, and the gendering of music genres and music rhetoric.

Whilst authors of analytical literature may reveal their own attitude in regard to the music that they analyze, because they tend not to place their findings within any sort of social

¹⁹⁴ Jeffrey Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries: Sex, History and Musical Genre* (London: Harvard University Press, 1998).

¹⁹⁵ Kallberg, "The Problem of Repetition and Return in Chopin's Mazurkas," in Jim Samson, ed. *Chopin Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Kallberg, "Chopin's March, Chopin's Death," in *19th Century Music* Vol. 25 No. 1 (2001), 3 – 26.

context, I consider them to be redundant for my particular purposes, as I am conducting a study in the human science of music interpretation. Articles that are solely concerned with phrase, fore-phrase, after-phrase, phrase overlap, antecedent, consequent, hypermeter, hypermeasure, linearity, 3-2-1 and Schenker, serve a purpose in 20th century music analysis, but not in the understanding of societies' responses to these abstract theoretical concepts.

For example, although there might exist words denoting smallness in this literature (used by the analyzer), such as William Rothstein's use of the word "refinement" in his essay "Phrase Rhythm in Chopin's Nocturnes and Mazurkas," such discourse does not contribute any more potency to the arguments that can be built from literature that records people's perceptions of musical characteristics.¹⁹⁶ In my view, non-societal analysis of music that is conducted without considering the society for which it was intended contributes less to my study than analyses such as Kallberg's, which considers the role of the audience. I aim to lessen the emphasis on analysis, or at least to place it within a social context. One example of my contextual approach to analysis is my discussion of the concerto and the prelude. Whilst I discuss the length and theoretical nature of Chopin's preludes, I also compare them to several other composers' preludes, as well as considering commentators perspectives on these theoretical issues.

In the matter of literature on pianists' problems, I compare several authorities. The books include Tobias Matthay's *Pianoforte: Tone-Production* (1916), Otto Ortmann's *Mechanics of Piano Technique* (1929), Heinrich Neuhaus' *The Art of Piano Playing*

¹⁹⁶ William Rothstein, "Phrase Rhythm in Chopin's Nocturnes and Mazurkas," *Chopin Studies*, 125.

(1973), Reginald Gerig's *Famous Pianists and Their Technique* (1974), and William Newman's *The Pianist's Problems* (1974).¹⁹⁷ I shall consider articles in this area concerned with problems encountered when playing on early instruments, how to use our physiology in the production of sound, and physiological problems. These types of discussions are represented by the authors Christopher Kite, Angeline Newport, and Blanche Abram, respectively.¹⁹⁸

It may appear that the main thrust of discussion of pianists' problems should be to find sources that offer medical or tactile solutions to the problems posed by Chopin's music. I wish to use Sang-Hie Lee's rebuttal (written in defense of her Ph.D., and in response to Saffle's criticism of her thesis) to illustrate the implications of such optimistic approaches. Saffle criticized her thesis, *A Psychophysiological Approach to the Technical Problems Found in the Piano Studies of Chopin and Liszt and a Compendium of the Solutions*, claiming it demonstrated her poor grasp of anatomy and keyboard. Lee responds by writing that in relation to the etudes of Chopin and Liszt, "[she had] no intention or pretention of going into musicological research on this subject" (1982).¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁷ Otto Ortmann, *Mechanics of Piano Technique* (London: Trubner and Co., 1929); Tobias Matthay, *Pianoforte: Tone-Production* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1916); Reginald Gerig, *Famous Pianists and Their Technique* (New York: Robert B. Luce Inc., 1974); Heinrich Neuhaus, *The Art of Piano Playing* (London: Barrie Jenkins Ltd., 1973); William S. Newman, *The Pianist's Problems*, preface by Arthur Loesser (New York: Harper and Row, 1974).

¹⁹⁸ Christopher Kite, "The day has still to come when Mozart on a Steinway will be regarded ...as necessarily a kind of Transcription," *Early Music* (February, 1985), 57 – 58; Angeline Newport, "Painless Piano Technique," *Clavier* (April, 1982), 32 – 33; Blanche Abram, "Musical Tension and Muscular Ease," *Clavier* (August, 1984), 28 – 29.

¹⁹⁹ Lee, "A Psychophysiological Approach to the Technical Problems Found in the Piano Studies of Chopin and Liszt and a Compendium of the Solutions," *Council for Research Education Bulletin*, No. 71 (Summer, 1982), 89.

Her theoretical applications are based entirely on Ortmann's *The Physiological Mechanics of Piano Technique* (1929), because she views his findings as the "most scientific and accurate."²⁰⁰ However, Ortmann's scientific approach has been criticized by Silverman (1982-1983), who says it is out of date. Silverman reports on his interview with two doctors, revealing the medical problems that truly need to be solved.²⁰¹ He sees Ortmann's study as limited in its usefulness, since the problems Ortmann dealt with are only technical. It appears therefore as though reliance on Ortmann's theories undermine the validity of Lee's thesis. She assumes she can solve 'problems,' as the title of her dissertation indicates: "...and a Compendium of the Solutions," but what she has actually done is only to apply Ortmann's theory of piano technique to about fifty piano etudes that are all very similar in their level of difficulty. My selection of technique-related literature, on the other hand, was primarily based on the need to unite the seemingly unrelated issues of physicality with those of different keyboards, differing approaches to piano technique, specific types of piano music, and, particularly, the desire for a 'powerful' technique.

The most helpful source in regard to the development of the piano is the anthology *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments: The Piano* (1988).²⁰² However, I also consider my personal experience with pianos to be significant, especially in light of the harsh criticism that some authors have experienced. For instance, Robert Winter berates Rosamond Harding's "20-page chapter on the tone of the piano," simply because she

²⁰⁰ Otto Ortmann, *Mechanics of Piano Technique* (London: Trubner and Co., 1929).

²⁰¹ Silverman "Physicians' Views of Physical Problems," *The Piano Quarterly*, 42.

²⁰² Stanley Sadie, ed. *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments: The Piano* (New York W. W. Norton and Company, 1988).

does not acknowledge that she “heard the results of any of the technological innovations.”²⁰³ Because Harding neglected to link specific inventions of the mechanisms of pianos with qualities of sound, and because she failed to acknowledge that this was her primary concern, Winter dismisses her discussions as fundamentally weak.

In regard to this present study, a detailed account of “innovations” will be of little help since mine is a study of people’s understanding of Chopin’s performance on a specific instrument and for a particular audience. Winter remarks, “virtually every isolated observation (or full study, for that matter) on the Romantic piano to date is...made without the benefit of first-hand experience with concert-ready instruments from the period.”²⁰⁴ While this criticism may be valid for histories of piano design that focus on the technological, it is redundant here, for the issue at hand is not the scientific discussion of tone production of pianos, but the variety of people’s interpretations of Chopin’s music, his playing, his piano, and his audience.

Winter’s notion that people should not write about the history of piano design if they lack first-hand experience with “concert-ready” instruments implies that I should be equally discouraged from writing about the sensory aspects of Chopin’s performance. I have not had first-hand experiences with the particular “concert-ready” instruments used by Chopin, nor with him and his salon environment. In my opinion, it does not take many first-hand experiences with early pianos to become aware immediately of the ‘mammoth’ nature of the pianos used in our present society.

²⁰³ Robert Winter, “The most unwitting foes of the Romantic piano may be those well-intentioned curators who lend their instruments for recording sessions,” *Early Music* (February, 1984), 21.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

My experience with early pianos, mainly with university collections (such as the early keyboards at Eastman School of Music, New York) and individual instruments (such as the single escapement 1820 Broadwood in Orford Cathedral, England), has led me to the same conclusions as those which I record in the section concerning the literature on pianos. The keys were smaller, the actions light and fast, the pianos ‘spoke’ very quickly, not only because of the swift action of the keys, but because force was not needed, and the fingers did not need to descend a great distance in order to reach the key beds. Whilst the finer sensory perceptions of the acoustical nuances of different instruments may not be completely definable through the medium of literature, I consider the views of Chopin’s contemporaneous audiences’ sufficient to bridge this gap in the understanding of the sensory dimensions of piano playing and pianos of that time.

People I have interviewed include: Regina Bodnya, Dimitri Kosmatchev (winner of the award for the best Russian performance in the Tchaikovsky Competition of 1994), Marina Lomazov (Silver Medallist in the Cleveland Competition), Barry Snyder (Silver Medallist in the Van Cliburn International Competition), Zanta Hofmeyer, Margarita Schevchenko (prize winner in the Leeds and Chopin International Competitions), and most notably Vladimir Ashkenazy.²⁰⁵

Several of these artists have contributed useful perspectives to this study via a variety of encounters which were, strictly speaking, not conducted as formal interviews. Over an

²⁰⁵ Zanta Hofmeyer. Interviewed by Frederick De Jager, on the 29th January 2001, Durban; Margarita Schevchenko. Interviewed by Frederick De Jager, on the 15th March 2001, Durban, Royal Hotel; Vladimir Ashkenazy. Interviewed by Frederick De Jager, on the 29th January 2001, Durban.

extended period of time, my contact with many of these musicians has resulted in useful contributions to the discussions that follow. For a number of years (1989 – 1994), Bodnya, a Moscow Conservatory Graduate, oversaw my progress in piano performance during my residence in Johannesburg, South Africa; I spent two weeks in Moscow (August, 1994), where Kosmatchev accompanied me on my visits to the conservatory and introduced me to a senior lecturer in piano (Anatoli Petrov); my contact with Lomazov and Snyder occurred during my enrolment at the Eastman School of Music (1995 – 1997); Lomazov was a doctoral candidate and Snyder was my piano teacher. Structured discussions which occurred with these artists and teachers on a variety of issues relate to one of the main issues of this thesis: differences of perspectives in relation to gender and the sensory experience, pianos, and pianists' problems.

Some interviews were not conducted in such a formal question and answer fashion. For instance, I have noticed that on modern upright pianos, instead of there being a *una corda* pedal that shifts all the hammers over so that they strike only one string, the soft pedal simply brings the hammers closer to the strings, reducing the space between the hammers and the strings and softening up the action of the keys. The reduced distance does not allow the hammers to gain much momentum: the keys are closer to the key bed and do not allow for a great striking distance. The resultant sound is therefore dampened and has a diminished volume of tone. Knowing this technological aspect of modern piano design, I played Chopin's E minor Concerto for an audition with a South African conductor, David Tidbold.

On entering the room, I noticed Tidbold's perplexedness as I made my way purposefully toward the upright Bechstein instead of the Steinway-Grand. The utterance that followed defined clearly the perspective of this conductor that largeness is better than smallness. "You can't possibly play on that?" was his remark. "Its sound is so small and thin!"²⁰⁶ In other words, I have even submitted myself as a guinea pig, for want of a better term, in an exercise where the one who assumed to conduct the interview was in fact the one under observation.²⁰⁷

Recordings which I consider include the DVD *The Art of Piano* (1999), two BBC documentaries (produced in 2000 and 2001), the film *The Piano* (1992), and sound recordings by Alfred Cortot and Andrei Gavrilov (1933 and 1988).²⁰⁸ The DVD documentary includes archival recordings of Arrau, Backhaus, Cortot, Cziffra, Fischer, Fisher, Gilels, Gould, Hess, Hoffmann, Horowitz, Michelangeli, Moiseiwitsch, Paderewski, Planté, Rachmaninov, Richter and Rubinstein. The recordings discussed here, although seemingly eclectic, do concern a central issue: qualities of sound. I use the sound recordings of Cortot and Gavrilov for their renditions of a particular Chopin etude (Op. 10 No. 2).

²⁰⁶ David Tidbold, in conversation with Frederick de Jager, Playhouse, 2000.

²⁰⁷ Such a response from those conducting auditions appears not to be unusual. Dimitri Paperno, after failing to impress the Russian ministers of the department of culture (and therefore failing in his audition to gain entrance to the 1955 Chopin International Competition), heard that the deputy minister had said "one cannot play so softly in Warsaw." Paperno adds, "it sounds like a joke but I was in no mood for laughter then." See Dimitri Paperno, *Notes of a Moscow Pianist* (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1998), 82.

²⁰⁸ Clive Sugar, Prod. *The Art of Piano Playing: Great Pianists of the 20th Century*, written by Christian Labrande and Donald Sturrock (Germany: Warner Music Manufacturing Europe, 1999); *National Geographic Special 2000*, SABC 3 (Broadcast on Sunday, 5th August 2001); Ron Trickett, *The Unspeakable Murray Walker: Part Three*, (2001); Alan Depardieu and Jan Chapman, executive producer and producer, *The Piano* (Mirimax Films, 1992); Frederick Chopin, *Etudes*, Andrei Gavrilov, EMI CDC 7474522 (1988); Frederick Chopin, *The Great Art of Alfred Cortot: Etudes Op. 10 & 25 and 4 Impromptus*, Alfred Cortot, Dante HPC 003 (1933; 1991).

The purpose of observing and analyzing specific music texts is to show the extent to which people have used these texts to mount arguments concerning gendered propensities as they understand them, and the link made between gender and the proportions of sound and theoretical complexity. The music editions that will be used in the following discussions include: *Chopin's Etudes for Piano*, *Chopin Konzert Nr. 1: E minor*, *Chopin Complete Works: Vol. VII Nocturnes*, *Chopin Complete Works: Vol. XII Rondos*, *Chopin: Polonaises*, *F Chopin: Preludes*, and *S. Rachmaninov: Preludes for Piano*.²⁰⁹

In sum, by observing music texts, historical commentary on Chopin, and literature on pianos and pianists' problems, I aim to investigate the links that I suggest people construct between forms of 'largeness and smallness' and 'masculinity and femininity.' In order to illustrate some of the ways in which my study can be compared with other studies, I have also taken into consideration the following issues: the role that language plays in the construction of musical meaning, the problems that might be associated with intentionality, and the possibility that people's biases, in regard to their sensory experience, could be transposed into language.

²⁰⁹ Chopin, *Etudes for Piano*, edited by Gábor Csàlog (Budapest: Kőnemann Music Kossuth Printing House Co., 1995); Chopin, *Konzert Nr. 1: E Minor*, arranged for 2 pianos by Bronislaw Von Pozniak (London: Peters); Chopin, *Complete Works: Vol. VII Nocturnes*, edited by Paderewski (Cracow: National Printing Works, 1985); Chopin, *Complete Works: Vol. XII Rondos*, edited by Paderewski (Cracow: National Printing Works, 1985); Chopin, *Polonaises*, edited by Raoul Pugno (Wien: Universal Edition); Chopin, *Complete Works: Preludes*, revised by C Klindworth and X Scharwenka (London: Augener); Sergei Rachmaninov, *Preludes for Piano*, with an introduction and performance notes by Peter Donohoe (London: Boosey and Hawkes, 1985).

CHAPTER TWO

PERSPECTIVES ON LARGENESS AND SMALLNESS IN RELATION TO PERFORMANCES, PIANOS, PIANISTS' PROBLEMS, AND THEORETICAL COMPLEXITY

Michael Jackson states that Marshall McLuhan and David Riesman considered “print” to isolate the reader from whichever subject is under discussion. Jackson throws light on the difficulties that readers may experience when trying to relate to the “lived” experience of other cultures. He writes: “eschewing the supervisory perspective of traditional empiricism (which, as Foucault observes, privileges gaze as an instrument of both knowledge and control), the radical empiricist tries to avoid viewpoints by dispersing authorship, working through all five senses, and reflecting inwardly as well as observing outwardly.”¹ The following approach to perceptions of Chopin’s playing – particularly those of the nineteenth century – might not be considered “radical” because not all five senses are involved, and because it is simply not possible to experience Chopin’s playing at first-hand. However, sight, sound, touch, and taste, as well as two extra-sensory perceptions relating to pianists’ problems will be discussed. My approach might not be considered “traditionalist” either, because the “gaze” is not the only method of inquiry.

Jackson wrote of Paul Stoller’s “eschewing” of objectivity, that Stoller rejected the notion of an unbiased perspective in favour of actually experiencing the ‘other’ culture. He quoted Stoller as having stated: “you must learn the meaning of the Songhay adage

¹ Michael Jackson, *Paths Toward a Clearing Radical Empiricism and Ethnographic Inquiry* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1989), 8.

‘One kills something thin in appearance only to discover that inside it is fat.’² The “killing” of what is “thin in appearance” is not practically possible for me in relation to Chopin’s culture; it is not possible to sit down with Chopin’s audience and hear first-hand whether my own “inside” experience of Chopin’s performances contradicts the outer appearance (what others might say of his performance). This issue of experience, however, has not prevented Jeffrey Kallberg from studying metaphors of the preternatural and supernatural, in *Chopin at the Boundaries*, in relation to the gendered meanings that Chopin’s society attributed to these metaphors. In the discussion that follows, emphasis will be given to metaphorical description, not to argue the possibility of gender-ambiguity, but to show how metaphors – be they gender-oriented, preternatural, or supernatural – stem from people’s perception of the variations of qualities and quantities related to the performance of music.

I wish to draw attention to simple (or what we might call ‘literal’³) words of description, such as *piano*, which seem to have a transparent meaning, to more clearly metaphorical words that have connotative meanings, such as “velvet,” and to words used to describe both music and sensory experiences unrelated to music, such as Chopin’s use of the word “quiet” to describe his preferred quality of wallpaper. By analyzing Chopin’s discussion and others’ perspectives on Chopin, I attempt to reconstruct the sensory orientations of various individuals and groups, and also to demonstrate the tendency of people, particularly in the nineteenth century, to seek out the “meaning behind the music”

² Paul Stoller, in Jackson, *Paths Toward a Clearing*, 10.

³ The word ‘literal’ is in parenthesis because, as mentioned in my “Introduction: This Study in Relation to Other Studies,” argument has been put forward that ‘ordinary’ language does not actually exist – if one looks up the word *piano* in the dictionary, for example, one will only find another signifier. All words used to describe music are in a sense ‘metaphorical’.

hermeneutically.⁴ Nicholas Cook, in his discussion on metaphorical descriptions of music, questions whether a composition can have a “texture,” such as “velvet,” when we cannot actually touch sound. He does not maintain that metaphor is out of place in discussions of music, but urges researchers to be aware that metaphors are not literal descriptions of sound. Uvedale Price made a similar, and logical, explanation of metaphor in the discussion of music in 1794. He wrote, “should any person, simply and without qualifying expressions, call a capricious movement of Domino [sic] Scarlatti, or Haydn, picturesque, he would, with great reason, be laughed at; for it is not a term applied to sounds.”⁵

Although Kallberg discusses a range of preternatural and supernatural metaphors used by Chopin’s society in relation to Chopin’s possible gender-ambiguity, I concern myself with descriptive terminology and metaphors for a different reason. I consider descriptive terminology in order to cast light on how it relates to variations of sound, and to demonstrate how authors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were especially focused in their efforts to rid Chopin’s music and performance of the label ‘small,’ either through promoting largeness in their propaganda-like rhetoric or in their performances of Chopin’s music. I maintain, however, that their attempts to break the link between the miniaturesque aspects of his performances and texts may have been the result of their linking gender-orientation to the words used by members of Chopin’s society. Kallberg’s study of the Romantics’ use of gender-oriented metaphors in relation to homosexuality, for example, challenges the belief that the Romantics did not link

⁴ Nicholas Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 71.

⁵ Uvedale Price, in Bennett Zon, *Music and Metaphor in Nineteenth-Century British Musicology* (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2000), 27.

gender-oriented terminology to allegations concerning Chopin's gender-orientation. I question whether the belief that gender orientation cannot in any sense be an influence on Chopin's music might verge on attributing to it an inhuman isolation from influences related to sexuality.

If we claim that the word "heroic" or "masculine," for instance, is unrelated to the word "loud" then we are in effect discounting the biological connection that some Romantics themselves claimed between sound and gender.⁶ And, although we may not wish to oversimplify the ideologies surrounding Romantic music, we should remind ourselves that within the sphere of dance, men were not attracted to the types of dances that lacked energy.⁷

It might not be implausible to suggest that the 'masculine'- and 'feminine'-oriented terminology of the nineteenth century stems from the simplistic differences that some people thought existed between the biological, the emotional, and the intellectual orientations of men and women. As shown in my "Introduction," even philosophers made 'naturalistic' divisions between men and women. Of course Price and Cook both caution us to remember that metaphors – such as 'heroic' or 'masculine' – are not literal descriptions, but when the musical text is realized in sound it appears as though some

⁶ As viewed in my "Introduction," for instance, the critic Edward Hanslick associated 'femininity' with a certain quality of music on a fundamental level. This Romantic critic believed that Clara Schumann's quality of sound communicated not only the musical meanings embedded in the score, but also her biological sex.

⁷ Maribeth Clark, "The Quadrille as Embodied Musical Experience in 19th-Century Paris," in *Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 19 No. 4 (Summer, 2002).

people connected the variations of sound to the sexes, and it is this link on which I wish to throw new light.

2.1 Chopin's Playing and Playing Chopin

Alfred Cortot made particular mention of Chopin's reserved nature when expressing his personal sensory orientation.

If the reader expects to find any opinions or statements which throw light on the composer's aesthetic outlook or on the interpretation of his work in the collection of Chopin's letters made by the industrious Opienski, he will be disappointed. In spite of their number (there are 337 in the collection) addressed to a small group of friends, relatives, and compatriots, not a single significant spark appears that can compare with the depth of feeling to be found in the music of the Polish master.⁸

Cortot's comments seem unreasonable at first, for in Chopin's letters, there are references to a wide variety of piano genres. Cortot uses these references in his chapter "Chopin's Works in Light of His Correspondence" to support his discussions on popular folk music, national music, symphonic music, salon music and chamber music.⁹ Further, Cortot's collection of references include a wide variety of piano genres, for instance: the preludes, etudes, waltzes, nocturnes, mazurkas, scherzos, ballades, the barcarolle, sonatas, rondos, polonaises, concertos and improvisations on popular Polish songs. It would appear that the information he thinks is lacking from Chopin's letters is not passing comments, but

⁸ Alfred Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, trans. by Cyril and Rena Clarke (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1952; 1975), 47.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 47 – 74.

information on how the compositions should be interpreted. In this sense, Cortot's view is justifiable, because, after my own survey of Chopin's letters, I agree that he does not say much about the way in which one is to interpret his compositions.¹⁰

Although Chopin does not write extensively about his ideas on how pieces should be played, even a single descriptive word pertaining to a particular sense can help to construct his sensory profile. To present an example in support of this notion, I refer to a letter written by Chopin after he had performed in Germany: he writes to his family that the audience was surprised by his "light touch."¹¹ Moreover, because sounds created on the piano are a direct result of a type of tactile method, Chopin is describing not only a sense of touch, but also a quality of sound – a sound that is also "light." Finally, the audiences for which he was playing had clearly been conditioned by pianistic methods that produce 'heavy' sounds, or they would not have been "surprised" by Chopin's delicate method. While I do take Cortot's perspective concerning Chopin's reserve into consideration, it is still possible to gain a significant understanding of Chopin's sensory orientation and the orientations of his audiences from his letters and correspondence, in addition to others' perspectives on his playing.

¹⁰ Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger is also not able to refrain from mentioning Chopin's reserved rhetoric in regard to musical meaning and interpretation of specific music texts. Eigeldinger writes in the editorial notes of his book: "Chopin's letters very rarely comment on the emotional side of his works." Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher: As Seen by His Pupils*, trans. by Naomi Shohet and ed. by Roy Howatt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 143.

¹¹ Arthur Hedley, trans. and ed. *Selected Correspondence of Fryderyk Chopin* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1979), 62.

2.1.1. 'Literal' Descriptions

Some respected musicians singled out Chopin's *piano* for commentary. Hector Berlioz commented that Chopin's "softness" was "*piano* to the extreme." Ignaz Moscheles said Chopin's "*piano* is breathed forth so softly that he needs no vigorous *forte* to produce the desired contrasts." Franz Liszt claimed Chopin's tone to be "perfect" in spite of the fact that it was a "small tone."¹² Even though Ferdinand Hiller, Liszt, Wilhelm von Lenz, and an anonymous Scottish woman referred to Chopin's playing as "perfect," and "precise," there remained qualities intrinsic to his performance, which, according to some members of his society, needed further explanation.¹³ For example, both Moscheles and Liszt excuse Chopin's 'limited' dynamic range. Moscheles stated that even though Chopin did not play loudly, loudness was "not needed" because he was able to create contrasts within a lesser dynamic range. Liszt stated that Chopin's tone was "perfect" and, therefore, he did not have to play loudly. They defended Chopin's supposed inability to play loudly because of other qualities of his playing.

Chopin acknowledged that his playing, characterized generally as *piano*, did not satisfy concert audiences.¹⁴ For instance, after a series of concerts at the theatre in Warsaw (March, 1830), Chopin's teacher (Józef Elsner) complained of Chopin's "faintness."¹⁵ Chopin wrote to his family in 1829, saying:

¹² Berlioz, Moscheles, and Liszt, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 272, 272, 274.

¹³ Hiller, Liszt, Von Lenz, and an anonymous Scottish woman, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 270, 274, 277, 278.

¹⁴ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence of Fryderyk Chopin*, 25.

¹⁵ Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, 96.

The general opinion is that I play too quietly, or rather too delicately for those accustomed to the banging of the Viennese pianists. I expected to find such a reproach in the newspaper in view of the fact that the editor's daughter bangs the piano frightfully...but...I should prefer it to be that one, rather than have it said that I play too loudly.¹⁶

Cortot writes of Chopin's experience in Vienna – giving a subtler nuance to the same course of events:

Chopin gives a completely honest account...“too feeble, or rather too delicate, for those who are accustomed not only to hear, but also to see the artists who play here, almost bang their pianos to bits”... “I foresee that I shall be accused of the same fault in the press – especially as the daughter of one of the leading critics herself hammers away furiously at her instrument”.¹⁷

He argues that Chopin's remark – that he claimed to prefer the criticism “too soft” rather than “too loud” – was not uttered to defend himself against negative criticism.¹⁸ Cortot conjectures: “the question of volume of tone seemed to him to be of secondary importance compared to the subtle expressiveness of his rendering.”¹⁹ Cortot's perspective seems defensible, because Chopin admitted that his “tone” did not make a good impression on his audience. After his second concert in Warsaw, he wrote to his close friend Tytus Woyciechowski, in what appears to be a frank manner, that someone in the audience shouted to him, “and now in the Town Hall.” Chopin continued in the same letter: “what concerns me most is the fact that at the Town Hall I should have just the same difficulties [and therefore], not make [a] better impression.”²⁰ In light of responses from the audience, that he “look[ed] so unimpressive,” and from critics, that he

¹⁶ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 25.

¹⁷ Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, 91.

¹⁸ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 25.

¹⁹ Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, 97.

²⁰ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 40.

should play with “more energy,” it should be noted that Chopin made concessions only up to a point to satisfy audiences’ desires for sensory fulfillment.²¹

The only suggestion that Chopin ever considered changing his approach to piano playing appears in a letter he wrote during the penultimate year of his life. He asks himself if he had to live his youth over again, whether or not he would adopt a “machine”-like approach to piano playing and concert touring: whether he would “give audiences” what they want.²² He explains further that his contemplation of the mechanical side to art, as opposed to his more refined pianism, was brought on by the thought of the possibility of receiving greater material success by winning over a larger public.

Chopin’s self-confessed fondness for smallness was not confined to music. For instance, he wrote to Julian Fontana: “Choose a wall paper like the one I used to have, dove grey but glossy and shiny...I prefer something smooth, very quiet and neat rather than commonplace vulgar.”²³ Of the interior to his own salon, he stressed that the décor should not be glaring.²⁴ Of salons themselves, Chopin most admired those which were small – he called them “charming.”²⁵ Comparisons between Chopin’s general responses, in other words, throw new light on the same words that were used to describe his performance.

²¹ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 24; Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, 96.

²² *Chopin’s Letters*, collected by Henryk Opieński and translated with a preface and editorial notes by E. L. Voynich (New York: Dover Publications, 1973), 378.

²³ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 184.

²⁴ George R. Marek and Maria Gordan-Smith, *Chopin: A Biography* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979), 94.

²⁵ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 93, 183.

Consider, for example, the word “velvet,” which carries a connotation of texture, and which can be associated not only with music.²⁶

Chopin commented on a choice he thought he had to make, and writes: “I could not play to suit everyone and should have to choose between the aristocracy and the townsfolk.”²⁷

He acted on this option. Princess Marcelina Czartoryska, arguably his best pupil, “in her advanced years,” “played a few mazurkas” for Adam Michalowski. He wrote of the performance:

I was struck by the way she interpreted its main theme. At first she played it in a brash, forthright way, with no subtlety of nuance. It was only towards the end of the piece, at the theme’s second appearance that she played it with a soft, caressing touch, utterly subtle and refined. When I asked her about this contrasting treatment, she replied that Chopin had taught it to her that way: in this piece he wanted to present the contrast between the ‘tavern’ and the ‘salon’.²⁸

Even in Chopin’s teaching, in other words, he is reported to have distinguished between audiences according to his perception of their sensory orientation. His divisions, however, were not to stop there. He believed, also, that some cultures were predisposed towards ‘uncultured’ qualities of sound. Chopin perceived the German ‘school’ of music was uniquely predisposed toward loudness. For instance, A. J. Hipkins reported that Chopin remarked in a derogatory manner that “to play with great strength was German.”²⁹ When Moscheles wrote about the soft and singing tone of Chopin’s playing, he too contrasted these qualities of sound with what he believed to be a German school. Moscheles wrote: “one does not miss the orchestral effects which the German school

²⁶ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 269.

²⁷ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 40.

²⁸ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 75.

²⁹ Chopin, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 57.

demands from a pianist.”³⁰ Chopin’s words, penned in his own hand, show that he thought Germans were insensitive people. Additionally, the following quotation shows how he equated nobility with sensitivity. He writes: “the German does not care who lived in that house; he treats the whole wall as Princess Czartoryska would not treat a single brick.”³¹ In turn, he received similar complimentary remarks in regard to his appearances within the salons: contemporary journals stated he was “the most delightful pianist...of the drawing-rooms,” and “the fine flower of the aristocracy.”³²

Jane Stirling, his pupil, maintained that he was able to make chords sound “more celestial than of this earth.”³³ Although the word “celestial” suggests a lack of earthly presence and therefore does not seem associable with largeness, it has appeared in a context that makes its connection to largeness apparent. In her book *De l’Allemagne* (1810), Mme. de Staël conveyed “to the French people the first conception of German Romanticism,” and, in Alfred Einstein’s opinion, her words sound like “an echo of [August Wilhelm] Schlegel’s ideas about music.”³⁴ Mme. de Staël wrote: “To conceive of the true grandeur of lyric poetry, one must wander in ethereal regions, forget the sound of earth while hearing celestial harmony, and consider the whole earth as a symbol of the emotions of

³⁰ Chopin, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 273.

³¹ *Chopin’s Letters*, 12. What is considered to be ‘German’ today, however, is different from what Chopin stated was German. In 1981, John Browning commented: “a good pianist doesn’t just play a melody...somehow they have to be made to understand the importance of thinking in orchestral terms at the keyboard” (Browning, in Elyse Mach, *Great Contemporary Pianists Speak for Themselves Vol. 1 and 2*, p. 37). Additionally, when Joseph Banowitz reviewed Claudio Arrau’s recording of Chopin’s nocturnes, he equated the nuances of Arrau’s playing with his German, “philosophical” disposition (Banowitz, “The Chopin Nocturnes: Played By Arrau and Ohlsson,” *The Piano Quarterly*, No. 110, pp 44 – 47). In other words, contrary to Chopin’s and others’ comments that the German school was characterized by loudness, critics of today are making new assumptions regarding what characteristics of music represent German culture. Banowitz chooses, rather, to draw a comparison between German culture, Beethoven, and intellectuality.

³² Reginald Gerig, *Famous Pianists and Their Technique* (New York: Robert B. Luce Inc., 1974), 155, 156.

³³ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 83.

³⁴ Alfred Einstein, *Music in the Romantic Era* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1947), 345.

the soul.”³⁵ If artifacts, such as lyric poetry or poetry-like piano music, were viewed as a reflection of the natural world in the Romantic era, then we must question whether the sense in which Stirling referred to Chopin’s “celestial” music is the same sense in which De Staël spoke about “celestial” poetry. If it is the same sense, then Chopin’s music – though comparatively ‘small,’ in relation to Beethoven, Liszt, Berlioz, or Wagner (for example) – was, in a way, ‘grand’, because it had been said of his music that it mirrored something ‘out of this world.’ Einstein, however, speaking in the mid-twentieth century, links De Staël’s words on grandeur to Beethoven, and implies that “celestial” and “grand” do not begin to describe the greatness of Beethoven. He adds: “What revelations she would have had to make for her fellow country men if she had had any connections with music! In the years when she visited Germany and Austria, the *Eroica* and the *Appassionata* had long since been written.”³⁶ Thus, although Chopin’s music was described as “celestial,” Einstein elevates Beethoven’s music beyond the realm of music that is “celestial.” We must conclude, also, then that he elevates Beethoven beyond the somewhat smaller world of Chopin.

Chopin remarked that the softness of his playing would not suit the large Town Hall. He also said that the “nuances” of the singer Gladkowska (who “leaves little to be desired”) are not suited for the large “concert hall,” but for the smaller “stage.”³⁷ He made the distinction, therefore, between smaller and larger environments, which required variations in quality and quantity of sound. From this example, it is clear that “nuance” is one of those aspects of a performance that Chopin equated with the smaller stage, and

³⁵ Mme. De Staël, in Einstein, *Music in the Romantic Era*, 345.

³⁶ Einstein, *Music in the Romantic Era*, 345.

³⁷ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 49.

with the performance of a female singer. Just as Chopin equated ‘nuance’ with a small environment, so did those who heard his playing. When Berlioz wrote that Chopin was “entirely different” from Liszt, he singled out the “thousand nuances” of Chopin’s playing in order to substantiate his perspective that Chopin had “to be heard from close by, in the salon rather than in the concert hall.”³⁸

Words and phrases such as “delicacy,” “delicacy of tone,” “delicately over the keys,” “extraordinary delicacy,” and “exquisite delicacy,” were used to describe either the smallness of Chopin’s sound and the unobtrusive movements of his playing.³⁹ Cortot also believed that Chopin’s delicate style of playing was suited to his preferred venue. Cortot writes: “it is music of a kind that seeks no other contact than that of a delicate receptivity; it needs no other atmosphere than that of a refined sensitivity.”⁴⁰ Eigeldinger notes that “delicacy” was used by both Moscheles and Liszt to describe Chopin’s fingers, and the pencil with which he composed, in attempts to capture not only the essence of his playing but also the inherent meaning of his compositions.⁴¹ Neither did specific aspects of Chopin’s music, such as his embellished melodic lines, escape the comparison made between smallness and delicacy. For example, Baron de Trémont described Chopin’s “finesse of touch” as being comparable “only to a spider’s web.” Other items of the natural world were also viewed as being able to capture some aspects of Chopin’s music texts (the Berceuse and Mazurkas) and performance. The words “gems,” “diamonds,” and “pearls and rubies,” for example, were used to describe his compositions and

³⁸ Berlioz, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 272.

³⁹ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 277, 278, 295, 284, 277, 294.

⁴⁰ Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, 122.

⁴¹ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 272; Liszt, *Frédéric Chopin*, with a foreword and trans. by Edward N. Waters (New York: Vienna House, 1852; 1963), 32.

particularly the more ornate aspects of those compositions.⁴² The natural world also inspired publishers to convey their interpretations of Chopin's performance and music. It was his characteristic "lightness in performance" and the associations made between his nocturne music texts and the salon which led publishers to subtitle his works as they did. The titles in turn, presumably, reflect what the publishers thought of Chopin's performance of his music. For example, the Nocturnes (Op. 9) were published as "Murmures de la Seine,"⁴³ a description by which the publisher equates these nocturnes to the quieter, more subdued sounds of the river Seine. One publisher even went so far as to subtitle Chopin's Nocturnes Op. 15 "les Zephirs." By giving this work such a name, what is implied is that if someone was to play these works, they should interpret the inherent characteristics like a sigh – or a "gentle breeze."⁴⁴

Although there was much attention paid to the 'small' qualities of Chopin's playing, he was nonetheless considered a virtuoso. Paradoxically, it was an aspect associated with the lightness of his touch and tone that was viewed as virtuosic – his ability to play in extraordinarily quick tempi. For instance, when Léon Escudier (founder of the weekly *La France Musicale*) critiqued Chopin's playing, he made a correlation between a technique that astonishes, and a light, fast touch. He wrote: "Do not ask Chopin to simulate grand orchestral effects on the piano. This type of playing suits neither his constitution nor his ideas. He wishes rather to astonish you with his light swiftness."⁴⁵

⁴² Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 295; Liszt, "The Mazurkas and Their Social Background," *Chopin*, 64 – 81; Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 282.

⁴³ James Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and his Music* (New York: Dover Publications, 1900; 1966), 58.

⁴⁴ Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, 58.

⁴⁵ Escudier, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 294.

Chopin's avoidance of an exhibitionist style of playing was commented on by Johann Baptist Cramer, his colleague, who relayed the following interpretation of the composer's playing to Lenz: "I don't understand him [Chopin], but he plays beautifully and correctly. Oh! Very correctly; he doesn't let fly like other young people."⁴⁶ Hiller made a similar metaphorical description of the visual display of Chopin's performance. He remarked that Chopin's playing was "like the flight of the swallow."⁴⁷ In view of all those birds which he, as a member of a society that was influenced by exoticism,⁴⁸ might have used as an analogy, such as the ostrich of Africa, the emu of Australia, or the moa of New Zealand, what sets the swallow apart is its extreme smallness and its swift and economic movements in flight. George Hogarth maintained, however, that because Chopin's virtuosity was accomplished so quietly and with such ease, the audience did not appreciate fully the difficulties of his music. Hogarth wrote in the *Daily News* that "[Chopin] accomplishes enormous difficulties, but so quietly, so smoothly and with such constant delicacy and refinement that the listener is not sensible of their real magnitude."⁴⁹

Chopin's nimble playing was called 'brilliant.' Whilst his own words have shown that he was not impressed by loudness, he was impressed with the speed at which a musician might play. For instance, he wrote to Jan Matuszynski: "I have just returned from seeing Slavik, the famous violinist whom I have made friends with; I've heard nothing like him

⁴⁶ Lenz, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 107.

⁴⁷ Hiller, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 270.

⁴⁸ Clara Schumann, for example, wrote in her diary (1854) that her husband, in his delirious condition, had spoken of hyenas attacking him. Joscelyn Goodwin, *Music, Mysticism and Magic: A Source Book* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987), 234.

⁴⁹ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 294.

since Paganini – he can play ninety-six notes staccato with one stroke of the bow, and other such things: incredible!”⁵⁰ Chopin did not single out the strength of attack and its resultant loud tone, but the fastness of the violinist’s playing. Although the critic Schindler claimed that “fiery brilliance” was “lacking” from Chopin’s playing, he had made this remark in regard to Chopin’s lack of “big gestures” and the “strength of attack,” “gestures” which “others [used] to secure the crowd’s applause.”⁵¹ The use of the word ‘brilliance’ was also used in this sense by an anonymous critic writing for *Wiener Theaterzeitung*: “his touch, though clean and secure, has little of the brilliance by which virtuosi proclaim themselves from the first bars...[Chopin] avoids the rhetorical aplomb considered indispensable amongst virtuosos...he plays very calmly, without the fiery ardor.” Frederick Niecks, in his book *Frederick Chopin as a Man and Musician* (pp 99 – 100), used the word “brilliant” but did not say “[brilliance] of tone.” Thus it may be that the former anonymous critic’s comment refers to the lack of a spectacle more than a lack of tone.⁵²

Both critics described a fiery brilliance as a type of strong attack with which the virtuosos of that day entertained their public. The word “brilliance” was used similarly in the mid-twentieth century. William Lovelock stated that Liszt was “not the only purveyor of “brilliant,” “pianistic fireworks,” but that “Herz, Hunten and Thalberg,” were also performers of “fireworks.” Lovelock stated, further, that these pianists were not “gallery

⁵⁰ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 73 – 77.

⁵¹ Schindler, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 293.

⁵² Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 288; Niecks, in Gerig, *Famous Pianists and Their Technique*, 148.

[salon]” pianists, because of their bravura playing.⁵³ This type of brilliance, therefore, relates to the public piano recital: the type of performance that Liszt is said to have ‘fathered’ by introducing to it “bravura” and “operatic paraphrases.”⁵⁴ “Brilliance” also appears in the literature of the late twentieth century. For instance, when Pierre Azoury interpreted Liszt’s performance as “brilliant,” he used the word in the sense that the “bravura” of Liszt and Thalberg was something of a spectacle.⁵⁵ The same can be said of Arrau who described Carl Czerny and Liszt’s techniques as “brilliant.”⁵⁶ In other words, he correlated “strength” and “big” movements with “brilliance.”

The word ‘brilliance,’ however, had a different connotation when used by other writers contemporaneous with Chopin. Both Francois-Joseph Fétis and an anonymous critic described Chopin’s performance of his so-called “graceful runs” as “brilliant.”⁵⁷ In other words, not all spectators made a correlation between display, strength and brilliance. “Brilliance” was used to describe different musical characteristics. Listeners’ perceptions concerning Chopin’s lack of big gestures, however, do not contradict each other. Not only did Liszt claim that Chopin “didn’t please” the public, but several other anonymous critics, Émile Gaillard, Schindler, and Chopin himself, noticed that his playing was not comparable to the deliberate, large-scale display that concert pianists of his day used to dazzle their spectators. Moreover, Liszt claimed that Chopin had himself expressed the

⁵³ William Lovelock, *A Concise History of Music* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1953; 1966), 187, 188.

⁵⁴ George Kehler, “A Brief History of The Piano Concert-Recital,” compiled and annotated *The Piano in Concert, vol. 1* (London: Scarecrow Press, 1982), xxxii.

⁵⁵ Azoury, *Chopin Through his Contemporaries: Friends, Lovers, and Rivals* (London: Greenwood Press, 1999), 137, 139.

⁵⁶ Mach, *Great Contemporary Pianists Speak for Themselves: Volume One* (London: Robson Books Ltd., 1981), 2.

⁵⁷ Fétis, and an anonymous critic, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 290, 291.

desire not to be a spectacle.⁵⁸ The following quotes, according to Reginald Gerig and Eigeldinger, show that Chopin's students, his colleagues, and the critics of Chopin's society maintained that the visual aspects, and the qualities of sound, intrinsic to his piano performance relayed no trace of a desire for sensory saturation.

“Senza aplomb”

“Thumping is not playing...Chopin never flattened his piano”

“brilliancy without tawdriness, energy without flying fists”

“devoid of display, his playing is not for the crowd, which wants to be dazzled because it is itself blind...[Chopin's playing is] far from any hint of ostentation”

“nothing can equal the delicacy of his tone, or rival the lightness of his passages. They fall most deliciously on the ear accustomed to the ‘hammer and tongs’ of the modern school”

“one was less dazzled than moved”

“his inspiration is all of tender and naïve poetry; do not ask him for big gestures or diabolic variations; he wishes to speak to the heart, not to the eyes”⁵⁹

Chopin's condemnation of his own students' excessive gestures (recorded by Lenz and Antoni Wodziński) adds potency to these listeners' observations. Wodziński writes: “we would then imitate this or that famous artist...hitting the keyboard with sweeping gestures of the hands and arms, in a wild, dishevelled manner which he called ‘going on a pigeon hunt.’”⁶⁰ Chopin's comment in relation to Wojciech Sowiński's style of performance also supports this view: “[he] bangs and pounds without any meaning, throws himself about, crosses his hands.” In the penultimate year of his life, Chopin

⁵⁸ Liszt, *Chopin*, 87.

⁵⁹ Gerig, *Famous Pianists and Their Technique*, 149; Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 276, 291-292, 293, 295, 276, 294.

⁶⁰ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 32, 104.

noted once again that social class could divide audiences. He wrote: “for the bourgeois class one must do something startling, mechanical.”⁶¹

This mechanical display had gendered undertones. Carl Filtsch pointed out in a letter to his parents that Chopin lacked the “muscles” of the “modern school.”⁶² Chopin acknowledged his own ‘unmanly’ build. He wrote in his album that he would be of little use as a soldier in the Polish army: “I have neither strong legs nor a brazen face.”⁶³ Moreover, of his concert tour in England, he commented that he simply was not able to play in the style that the public wished to hear.⁶⁴ Solange Sand, whom Chopin kept in his social circle until his death, even after his break with George Sand, indicated clearly what the word “muscles” implied when used in relation to Chopin’s playing.

The women, and the children (young Filtsch who died so young!) brought a finer sense than the masculine talents did to this celestial music, even when their fingers did not compare in strength... with the more practiced and robust hands of the latter. For it was not a matter of hitting hard, of tough... performance. Liszt played these melodies badly. He botched them.⁶⁵

Two incidents, involving Clara Schumann and Chopin’s student Princess Marcelina Czartoryska, support Solange Sand’s belief that women gave more meaning to Chopin’s music than the “masculine talents.” Firstly, although Robert Silverman enlightens us to the fact that Robert Schumann might have been inconsiderate of his wife’s career as a

⁶¹ *Chopin’s Letters*, 357.

⁶² Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 216.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁶⁴ *Chopin’s Letters*, 357.

⁶⁵ Solange Sand, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 280, 281.

concert pianist,⁶⁶ Schumann is known to have complimented his wife: he said she gave more meaning to Chopin's scores.⁶⁷ And, secondly, Czartoryska (née Radziwill) seems to have given more meaning to Chopin's music, because she was "unanimously acclaimed" ("from Liszt and Delacroix to the critics of the *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris*") as "the most faithful reflection of her teacher's" playing.⁶⁸ To this end, here is a recount by Adam Mickiewicz's cousin:⁶⁹

Fontana played some pieces by Chopin which were published posthumously. Adam listened, standing by the door. But the execution did not satisfy him and he showed his displeasure; every strongly hammered note annoyed him. He asked Marcelina Czartoryska to go to the piano. She played. He exclaimed, "That is Chopin..."⁷⁰

Solange Sand's opinion that "masculine" strength did not suit Chopin's music was also supported by Henriette Voigt's comment: "what delighted me was the childlike...manner which showed in his...playing."⁷¹ Similar to Solange Sand, who spoke of the tenderness of a child to capture what she believed to be the nature of Chopin's music, Voigt used the image of a playful child to represent Chopin's playing.⁷² Solange's positive reinforcement of "women" as better interpreters, however, appears to be one of the fewer positive perspectives associated with that gender. The "finer sense," which was

⁶⁶ Robert Silverman, "Fanny and Clara: What Women!," *Piano and Keyboard* (November/December, 1996), 30 – 31.

⁶⁷ This is a compliment, of course, only if we accept that Robert Schumann was not poking fun at Chopin vicariously through sarcasm aimed at his wife – he had, after all, poked fun at Chopin in his *Carnaval* (This will be discussed more fully in "Chopin's Music in Relation to the Human Voice").

⁶⁸ Robert Schumann and Eigeldinger, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 163.

⁶⁹ Adam Mickiewicz was a Polish poet who is known to have belonged to the same salon environment as Chopin. The two men were on friendly terms and there is some suggestion that Mickiewicz's poetry in some way influenced Chopin's composing of the ballades. Hedley, *The Master Musicians Chopin*, 172.

⁷⁰ Marek and Gordon-Smith, *Chopin: A Biography*, 84, 85.

⁷¹ Voigt, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 269.

⁷² "The most remarkable of ...[Chopin's students] was Charles Filtsch, who died at Verrières in 1845, aged fifteen." Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, 25.

associated with women was the one thing Liszt claimed was generally beyond the appreciative ability of audiences. Liszt wrote of Chopin's tenderness: "we find our sensitivity too blunted to follow."⁷³ Although Liszt spoke on behalf of audiences, and therefore showed the extent to which the society was swamped with pianists whose skills blunted the sensitivities of people, his statement also implies that he regarded his own, manly, senses as 'blunt.' A similar kind of bluntness is to be found amongst the men of the 1830s, who are reported to have found the refinement of the quadrille, a popular dance, boring.⁷⁴ Cortot is one of the few scholars who continued to support Solange Sand's perspective on refinement into the twentieth century: "Chopin's reputation as a composer owed more to the contagious enthusiasm of this band of elegant young women than to the advertisement it received at the hands of professional virtuosi."⁷⁵

Berlioz said that the salon environment suited the nuanced style of Chopin's playing and his preferred piano. He also urged people, however, to put aside "all [their] preconceived notions [about the salons] as these would be inapplicable to both him [Chopin] and his music."⁷⁶ Through Berlioz's attempt to disassociate Chopin, as a man and musician, from the "preconceived" reputation of the salons, he dissociates, concomitantly, the "thousands" of "nuances" (to which he himself referred) from people's "preconceived notions." We must question, then, whether his comment was partly in response to others'

⁷³ Liszt, *Chopin*, 82.

⁷⁴ Maribeth Clark, "The Quadrille as Embodied Musical Experience in 19th-Century Paris," in *Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 19 No. 3 (Summer, 2002).

⁷⁵ Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, 27.

⁷⁶ Berlioz, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 272.

linking smallness to ‘femininity’ – as Lenz and Solange Sand did in the nineteenth century (and Cortot in the mid-twentieth century).⁷⁷

Critics commented that Chopin was “unconcerned with impressive effects.”⁷⁸ Terminology that corresponds to “[un]impressive effects” also resembles closely the virtues that were perceived to characterize the hostesses of the nineteenth-century drawing rooms. For instance, according to Peter Quennell, the words “delicacy,” “refinement,” “charm,” “elegance,” and “grace,” were used frequently to describe the nature of the atmosphere in the salons. According to Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, these words were also used to describe Chopin’s playing.⁷⁹ Quennell maintains that a hostess could discourage forceful verbal rhetoric in the salons.⁸⁰ Liszt writes of Chopin’s musical rhetoric: “his [Chopin] execution was not forcible, nor by any means fitted for the concert room.”⁸¹ In other words, Liszt claims that Chopin is suited to the salons because he lacks force in his playing. This terminology, in other words, was used to describe both Chopin’s musical rhetoric and the rhetoric presiding in the salons. In a sense, it appears as though the words Quennell lists were interchangeable, because they were used to describe characteristics of the hostesses of the salons and the characteristics of the music which they preferred. It might be argued that the flexibility of meaning of these words has encouraged the association of the various qualities of Chopin’s performance with ‘femininity’ and the salons.

⁷⁷ Lenz and Solange Sand, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 278, 280, 281.

⁷⁸ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 288.

⁷⁹ Liszt, Sand, Berlioz, Hallé, Hiller, Lenz, Antoine-Francois Marmontel, and Sophie Leo, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 270, 271, 272, 274, 278, 279; Peter Quennell, *Genius in the Drawing-Room: The Literary Salons of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson), 1980.

⁸⁰ Peter Quennell, *Genius in the Drawing-Room*, 10.

⁸¹ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 274

Lenz remarked after Chopin's performance of Beethoven's Sonata Op. 26 that "Beethoven is a *man*, and never ceases to be so!" and that Chopin's performance of this sonata did not appear to reflect the 'manliness' of this German composer. Lenz claimed that Chopin played with a "beautiful" tone, and that he was "elegant" and "graceful," and therefore his playing was "feminine!"⁸² Some members of Chopin's society complimented him when they thought there was an element of grandeur to his performance. For example, an "anonymous Scottish lady" wrote of Chopin's performance of Beethoven's *Marche Funèbre* that he created "grand orchestral effects." Even in this, however, she perceived "a sort of restrained emotion." De Trémont made a more obvious attempt to convince people of Chopin's strength. He wrote that Chopin had the "most imposing strength," the only catch being that "he cannot show his range in public."⁸³ Charles Hallé and Chopin's students, Karol Mikuli and Georges Mathias, denied that Chopin's playing was characterized exclusively by a restrained pianism. Hallé wrote that when Chopin's playing was not like that of "a man" it was nevertheless not like that of a "woman," but rather like that of an "angel."⁸⁴ Mikuli wrote:

He gave a noble, manly energy to appropriate passages with overpowering effect – energy without roughness – just as, on the other hand, he could captivate the listener through the delicacy of his soulful rendering – delicacy without affectation.⁸⁵

⁸² Lenz, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 278.

⁸³ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 286, 287.

⁸⁴ Hallé, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 271. I consider, however, that the word "angel" may nonetheless connote 'femininity.' For instance, Jeffrey Kallberg, in his book *Chopin at the Boundaries*, argues that such metaphors were used in order to refer tacitly to Chopin's gender-ambiguity.

⁸⁵ Mikuli, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 275.

Mikuli acknowledges that he is speaking of wide-ranging musical characteristics: he writes “on the other hand,” implying, therefore, that there are two extremes that he is signaling in his words, and contrasts “manly energy” with “delicacy without affectation.” Mathias was even more determined to draw attention to his perception that Chopin’s playing had an apparent strength. His determination can be appreciated by observing his forceful and self-proving rhetoric: “what virtuosity!, what power!, yes, what power!”⁸⁶ Late nineteenth-century composers, performers and critics such as Richard Wagner, Anton Rubinstein, and Heinrich Pudor, openly viewed Chopin’s ‘feminine’ texts negatively. Wagner admitted that he did not like the “salon” music that Chopin wrote for the “ladies,” Rubinstein said he was going to take Chopin’s music out of the salon, and Pudor made an even more general comment that Chopin’s “weak” and “sickly” music was too “womanly” and “womanish.”⁸⁷ Huneker, however, denied that Chopin’s ‘sickness’ could be linked to his style of playing. He responded to Liszt’s argument – that Chopin’s ill-health would have prevented him from playing on modern pianos – saying it was a “nice fable,” and that Chopin would have been able to create many more effects on the modern instrument.⁸⁸

If delicacy were a reflection of Chopin’s character, it would follow, therefore, that he, himself, could be associated with ‘femininity’ – just as Solange Sand had suggested. When Chopin’s friendship with Liszt came under strain, Chopin’s father wrote a letter

⁸⁶ Mathias, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 277.

⁸⁷ Wagner and Pudor, in Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, 62; Rubinstein, in Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries: Sex, History, and Musical Genre* (London: Harvard, 1998), 44.

⁸⁸ Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, 56.

giving him advice on how to handle the situation. The letter shows what Nicholas Chopin thought of his son's nature: "you should act with your usual...delicacy."⁸⁹

2.1.2. Metaphorical Descriptions

The accuracy of the descriptive terminology which people use to convey their sensory experiences is questionable, for, as Alfred North Whitehead points out, sensory experiences are simply not transferable from one person to another.⁹⁰ Ironically, numerous observers of Chopin's performances seem to reflect Whitehead's claim and yet use language, nonetheless, in an attempt to articulate their experiences. For instance, Hallé, Sophie Leo, Solange Sand, Trémont, and Schindler respectively, claimed that if one has not personally heard Chopin perform, it is simply not possible to understand the extent of his uniqueness.

"Nobody has ever been able to reproduce [his works] as they sounded under his magical fingers"

"No one who has not known Chopin will ever be able to imagine a being like him"

"Who has not heard him, or, lacking that, one of his favourite pupils, such as the Princess Marcelline Czartoryska...cannot know even what his music is about. Certainly the printed edition does not adequately convey all the originality and charm his adepts were able to draw from it"

"He is too much *himself* to have had imitators...the most exact performance of his compositions cannot convey what they became under his hands."

⁸⁹ Pierre Azoury, *Chopin Through His Contemporaries: Friends, Lovers, and Rivals* (London: Greenwood Press, 1999), 148.

⁹⁰ Alfred North Whitehead, *The Concept of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 10 – 20.

“It is easy to capture and describe the way in which the so-called tyrant of the piano – [Franz] Liszt – interprets a work of [Ludwig von] Beethoven, or whips through his ‘Mazeppa’ and the ‘Galop chromatique’; but Chopin’s playing must be heard for its uniqueness to be grasped.”⁹¹

Metaphors were used to relay further information, and cast a different light on the characteristics of Chopin’s playing.

Chopin himself used metaphors, which cast the nature of his subjects in a second and figurative light. For example, when he used the words lice, hounds, swine, and sharks to describe publishers he was relating them to their effect on a number of the senses.⁹²

These metaphors are not literal descriptions. If they were, one might expect that when he called his friend Wojciech Grzymala (Figure 1) a “bird” and he called himself a “mushroom,” his friend actually had feathers and could fly and that Chopin grew on a substrate and was edible.⁹³



Figure 1. Wojciech Grzymala: by Francois de Villain “after a drawing by Charles Brazin, 1832.”⁹⁴

⁹¹ Hallé, Leo, Sand, de Trémont, and Schindler, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 271, 279, 280, 287, 292.

⁹² Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 165, 176.

⁹³ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 179, 171.

⁹⁴ Azoury, *Chopin Through His Contemporaries*, 108.

Chopin's full statement, in regard to Grzymala, reads, "the countryside is beautiful: nightingales, larks – you are the only bird we lack."⁹⁵ In other words, unless he was poking fun at Grzymala (by pointing out his obvious dissimilarity to most birds), Chopin's metaphor should be interpreted rather as an attempt to reflect upon some aspect of Grzymala's character. Perhaps he was pointing out Grzymala's verbosity, his ability to sing, his "colourful" carefree nature, or some other characteristic of birds.⁹⁶ In regard to Chopin's calling himself a mushroom, while the size of a mushroom may compare to Chopin's small build, this would certainly only be a minor aspect of the comparison.⁹⁷

To understand the meaning of a metaphor in a particular use especially where it does not seem well-suited for the matter in question is far from easy. Chopin said he was like a "mushroom," and continued by saying, "which seems edible but which poisons you if you pick it and taste it, taking it to be something else."⁹⁸ The subject in question is 'Chopin,' and in this instance the sensory experience of mistaking, visually, an edible mushroom for a poisonous one, picking, and then eating the poisonous mushroom, metaphorically describes Chopin's understanding of his own character. His own words show how the senses of sight, touch and taste that are connected to a poisonous mushroom can be linked with the characteristics of the person being metaphorically described. Similarly, he described other people's characters figuratively. For example, he wrote to Fontana, after a particularly moving violin concert, that it was enough to make

⁹⁵ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 179.

⁹⁶ Azoury, *Chopin Through His Contemporaries*, 109.

⁹⁷ Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, 7.

⁹⁸ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 171.

“tigers cry.”⁹⁹ The ‘tiger’ that he was referring to was Prince Antoni Radziwill. Chopin is in this instance comparing the nature of a tiger to that of Radziwill’s. Moreover, ‘powerful’ characters (animals or people) are not expected to cry, for this is a sign of weakness. By metaphorically describing Prince Radziwill as a tiger, it appears that Chopin is also emphasizing the ‘strength’ of the music. This music was ‘powerful’ enough to move a character that is characteristically (or perceived to be) strong.

The idea that music can “make” a “tiger cry” suggests that music has a type of ‘strength.’ I would suggest, however, that this ‘strength’ is not simply a matter of loudness that can be associated with a forceful method of playing. The strength that I suggest Chopin is referring to is the semiotic nature of music: just as words have meanings that are not necessarily dependent on how loudly or forcefully they are uttered, so too can music have a powerful meaning without being relayed loudly.

Hiller commented on the strength of Chopin’s music. He wrote: “all material considerations vanished – it was like the light of a wonderful meteor, bewitching us all the more with its unfathomable mystery.” Hiller was not implying that Chopin was a “meteor” as such. In his book, *Briefe an eine Ungenannte*, Hiller wrote a passage that clarifies my statement that he did not think Chopin’s playing overwhelmed the listener with loudness: “even the lack of that imposing sonorous strength familiar from Liszt, Sigismond Thalberg and others, appeared as an element of charm.”¹⁰⁰ This remark shows that Hiller dissociated Chopin from grand sonorities. Hiller’s metaphor might rather be

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 175.

¹⁰⁰ Hiller, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 270.

interpreted in a way that does not reflect mammoth sensory proportions. A meteor is a very large object that travels through space at a high speed. The light, however, which is cast on earth, is perceived as small. The light of this falling star is experienced via the sense of sight, which in comparison to the sun, for example, suggests that on a superficial level, there is no greatness in what is being observed. However, underlying the sensory experience of seeing a small light in the night sky, there lies “unfathomable” greatness. It appears indisputable that Hiller was comparing Chopin’s performance to the *light* of a falling star, and the underlying semiotic nature of Chopin’s music text to the size of the meteor. While Chopin’s performance seems ‘little’ and “charming” (as Hiller points out), beneath this ‘small’ display, there is great meaning to Chopin’s music. There is an expression for this in the English language: Hiller is referring to the tip of the iceberg.

While the description of some sensory experiences and their link to the underlying characteristics of the matter under discussion are difficult to understand, as in the example of Grzymala and the bird, there remain metaphors that are easily translatable owing to the clarity of their presentation. Other metaphors, which compare publishers to “lice,” Chopin to a “mushroom,” and a powerful noble to a “tiger,” show how the visual image encourages the imagination to construct not only the visual tableaux, but also the sensory implications, and the characteristics of the imaginary character.

Chopin also depicted imaginary characters when he wrote that his *Impromptu* (Op. 36) was “perhaps a stupid thing” for it is “too much in the style of Orda, Zimmerman, Koński, or Sowiński.” He used the name Sowiński to construct a metaphor. He wrote that

his *Impromptu* was possibly a “stupid” composition because it was in the style of a “Swine-ski or any other beast-ski.”¹⁰¹ It is not difficult to appreciate Chopin’s understanding of the ‘pig-like’ or ‘beast-like’ musical characteristics of his *Impromptu*. Nor is it difficult to see how the musical character of the piece is dependent on an image that in turn can be associated with underlying characteristics of an uncouth persona. Descriptive words that encourage the mental construction of an image can employ the sense of sound as well as that of sight. In this instance, the link between the visual and the sound can be better understood by observing the performance style of Sowiński and his character as Chopin perceived it to be:

Some person in whiskers, huge, tall, superb, - comes in, sits down to the piano and improvises he doesn’t know what, bangs and pounds without any meaning, throws himself about, crosses his hands, clatters on one key for five minutes with an enormous thumb that once belonged in the Ukraine, holding the reins or wielding a bailiff’s cudgel. Here you have a portrait of Sowiński.¹⁰²

Eigeldinger interprets the same course of events somewhat differently, recording, with “amusement,” Chopin’s “dislike of noisy undisciplined playing.” He quotes from the same letter, written by Chopin in December 1831:

‘If I’m in the middle of a letter I can’t bear it when the bell rings and in strides a huge, fully-grown, powerful, bewhiskered creature who sits down at the piano, improvises God knows what, storms, bangs like a madman, writhes about, crosses his hands and hammers on one note for fully five minutes with one enormous finger which Heaven intended for holding the whip and reins of some farm-steward away in the Ukraine – such is the portrait of Sowiński [1805 – 1880] who has no other merits than a good appearance and a kind heart. Never could I have a better opportunity of conceiving what is meant by charlatanism or stupidity in art than just now ... I blush to the ears.’¹⁰³

¹⁰¹Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 188.

¹⁰²*Chopin’s Letters*, 165.

¹⁰³Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 127.

It appears as though Chopin believes that Sowiński's uncouth style of playing is a reflection of his character: hence "a portrait of Sowiński." Linking images with sounds is a practice which continues in the twentieth century. Gerard Hoffnung's comics are entirely dependent on people's interpretive abilities in regard to the visual relaying of musical characteristics. For example, Figure 2 illustrates his understanding of Liszt's music.

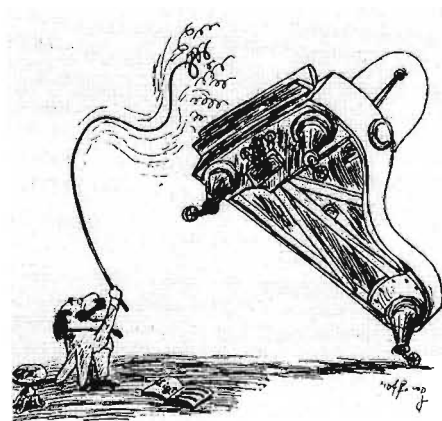


Figure 2. Liszt.¹⁰⁴

The musical characteristics intrinsic to the performance of Liszt's music are, in Hoffnung's opinion, visually comparable to that of an animal trainer. The characteristics implied in this picture include: Liszt as a master of technique (in that the 'untamed' piano needs to be controlled), Liszt's music as vicious (an aggressive, wild beast), and his performance as visual spectacle (as a result of the untamable nature of the large creature, the sounds inherent to Liszt's music seem to 'fight back'). Additionally, metaphors may also reflect the nature of the audience. For instance, when Chopin wrote in a derogatory

¹⁰⁴ Gerard Hoffnung, "Liszt," *The Penguin Hoffnung* (Aylesbury: Hazells Offset Ltd., 1965).

manner of his ‘beastly’ *Impromptu* (Op. 36), he added that he would despise it if it were not likely to bring in “as much as 800 francs.” His “beast” metaphor describes, therefore, not only the barbaric musical characteristics of other composers’ *impromptus* (which in this instance he thinks compare well to his own composition), but also the barbaric taste of the audience. The publisher who is prepared to pay a high price for the work represents this audience. Similarly, Hoffnung’s cartoon sketch of Liszt not only offers one interpretation of Liszt’s music, but also says something of the critic’s perspective. Stated simply, criticism says as much about the critic as it does about the music in question. We may assume that Hoffnung believes that Liszt’s music is very entertaining.

Liszt, however, metaphorically described his own music in a way that correlates to others’ perspectives (in this instance, with that of Hoffnung). Here follows an example of how Hoffnung’s metaphor parallels Liszt’s, as interpreted by Robert Winter many years later. Liszt “lavished considerable care upon” arranging “Reminiscences from [Wolfgang Amadeus] Mozart’s *Don Juan*.” In this arrangement, according to Winter, “he [Liszt] left behind a graphic representation of technique as sexual conquest.”¹⁰⁵ Liszt based his “reminiscences” on the ‘masculine’ figure – namely, Don Juan. The underlying characteristic of Don Juan is that of a heartless seducer. Winter claims, in other words, that Liszt believed he created the impression of ‘masculinity’ by writing music that requires technical mastery. Whilst Hoffnung’s metaphor does not relate to sexuality, there remains, however, a comparison to be made with Liszt’s ‘metaphorical’ description

¹⁰⁵ Robert Winter, *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments: The Piano*, ed. Stanley Sadie (New York: W.W. Norton), 131.

of ‘masculinity.’¹⁰⁶ “Conquest” – of trainer over beast and of Don Juan over women – suggests that a strong technique is needed in order to subdue the ‘individual.’ Metaphors, therefore, are indispensable in the discussion of people’s sensory experience and how they relay this form of perception through words. From this analysis of Liszt’s own use of music as metaphor, what arises is that the senses of sight, sound, and touch have been used to relay a sense of sexuality.

The analogy between music and art has also been made in an attempt to capture a fuller meaning of Chopin’s music. Antoine-Francois Marmontel, an anonymous critic, and Escudier, for instance, referred to painting in an attempt to define Chopin’s “subtle” shading.¹⁰⁷ It is clear, also, that Chopin’s style of playing was perceived to be different and opposed to Liszt’s. Honoré de Balzac wrote: Chopin has “Raphaelesque perfection” and Liszt has “Dantesque fire.”¹⁰⁸ In “Pessimism and Progress,” George Pattison quotes from P. T. Forsythe’s *Christ as Parnassus* (1911), that the “qualities which singly, perhaps, were as strong in others, co-exist in his [Raphael’s] in a fusion and harmony so entire, in such admirable proportion and exquisite balance, that he becomes the apex and epitome both of his age and of his art.” Pattison continues, “in Raphael’s Madonnas, we have the triumph of the weak things of the world over the things which are mighty.”¹⁰⁹ Whilst Chopin’s subtle shading might be described as “weak,” there is nevertheless a

¹⁰⁶ I inset ‘metaphorical’ in parenthesis for it is Liszt’s music which becomes the metaphor – not Liszt’s verbal relaying of a metaphor.

¹⁰⁷ Marmontel and Escudier, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 274, 277, 293.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 285.

¹⁰⁹ P. T. Forsythe, in George Pattison, *Art, Modernity, and Faith: Restoring the Image* (London: Macmillan, 1991), 86.

sense in which he is thought to triumph – that is, the “perfection” of his music makes him appear to be a conqueror.

In contrast to this characterization of Chopin’s and Liszt’s pianism, Leo compared Chopin’s performance of his own music to “the wings of the spirit.” Not only did the softness and swiftness of Chopin’s playing appear to be equal to the flight of a swallow, but the association of air, combined with spirituality, was also used in an attempt to explain the uniqueness of Chopin’s style of playing. In relation to spirituality, both the critic for the *Gazette Review* and Schumann referred to Chopin’s performances as being like a “séance.” Moreover, they designated him as “clairvoyant.”¹¹⁰ The smallness of the group of participants in the séance was a reflection of Chopin’s performances to his personal “[salon] society” (as Liszt wrote in the *Gazette Musicale*),¹¹¹ and also on his ability to interpret the small, and hidden, qualities of his own music texts – a technical ability that was considered comparable to the spiritual ability of a clairvoyant. The spiritual world was used to distinguish not only different audiences, but to differentiate Liszt and Chopin from one another. For example, when Balzac compared Liszt and Chopin to beings of a spiritual nature, he wrote that “the Hungarian is a demon; the Pole is an angel.”¹¹²

If Liszt was the demon and Chopin the angel, as De Balzac claimed, we must ask ourselves why there is a halo over Liszt’s head (Figure 3). The presence of a halo is especially curious since the title of the picture tells of Liszt’s intent to “hurt” –

¹¹⁰ Gerig, *Famous Pianists and Their Techniques*, 158; Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 269.

¹¹¹ Liszt, in Azoury, *Chopin Through His Contemporaries*, 147.

¹¹² Balzac, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 285.

presumably, angelic pianists should not intend to “hurt” their listeners. It is possible, in my view, that there is an element of irony at work here. In the cartoon, Liszt is depicted as a spider who seems to be wearing a soutane – to associate him, presumably, with the priesthood. The arachnid’s eight legs are devastating the piano. The soutane suggests that the artist was aware, in an anti-clerical society, of the large number of religious works Liszt wrote during the 1860s, as well as his choice not to become a priest, and was drawing on what might have been common knowledge in order to poke fun at the performer.¹¹³



Figure 3. “Liszt as seen by an artist of *La Vie Parisienne* in 1886. The Sword of Honour presented by the Hungarian nation figures prominently, but ‘he has ceased to use it as he finds he can hurt the piano more with his hands alone.’ [His] style was essentially the ‘grand’ style – for large halls.”¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Cook, “Liszt’s Second Thoughts: *Liebestraum* No. 2 and Its Relatives,” in *19th Century Music* Vol. XII No 2 (Fall, 1988), 172; Allan Keiler “Liszt and Beethoven: The Creation of a Personal Myth,” in *19th Century Music* Vol. XII No. 2 (Fall, 1988), 118.

¹¹⁴ Reproduced in *The Oxford Companion to Music*, 8th ed., Plate 131, p. 726.

Liszt thought of himself as having the “strong arm” required to “overwhelm” an audience,¹¹⁵ and this member of his audience responded by depicting him visually as having an overwhelming pianistic style, capable of slaying listeners. Liszt is portrayed often as a “flashing, scintillating, [and] powerful” performer: a technical wizard who hoped to win his listeners over by conquering the piano.¹¹⁶ The word “hurt,” used by the contemporary artist quoted above, suggests that he did not view Liszt’s ‘diabolical’ performance as seductive, since it was simply painful to the ear. Liszt fails in this regard to arouse the interest of the artist because the largeness of his playing distanced this artist’s emotions from his sensory experience.

Bennett Zon wrote that the “divine-oriented metaphor,” by the late nineteenth century, was not intended to advance any “particular religious cause or viewpoint,” but to find “God in the experience of music and, conversely, locat[e] music in God.”¹¹⁷ Zon’s conclusion might be valid, but after considering Balzac’s “spiritual, or mystical [according to Bennett]” metaphor – of an “angel[ic] Chopin” and a “demon[ic] Liszt” – it might also be possible to see these spiritual metaphors as over-simple. Balzac might not have used spiritual-oriented metaphors to “find” God, as such, but to explain his perception that Liszt’s and Chopin’s performances communicated radically different thoughts and feelings.

The perspective that Liszt’s and Chopin’s pianistic styles were completely dissimilar was also carried forward into the twentieth century by authors such as Sacheverell Sitwell.

¹¹⁵ Liszt, *Chopin*, 84.

¹¹⁶ Gerig, *Famous Pianists and Their Technique*, 177.

¹¹⁷ Bennett Zon, *Music and Metaphor in Nineteenth-Century Musicology*, 105.

Sitwell uses an analogy of night and day to contrast Chopin's music rhetoric and his performance of his own music with Liszt's music rhetoric and his performance of his own music. For example, Gerig records Sitwell's perspective on this issue as follows:

Such marvels of executive skill and power I could never have imagined. He was a giant, and Rubinstein spoke the truth when, at a time when his own triumphs were greatest, he said that in comparison with Liszt all other pianists were children. Chopin carried you with him into a dreamland, in which you would have liked to dwell forever; Liszt was all sunshine and dazzling splendor, subjugating his hearers with power that none could withstand.¹¹⁸

Sitwell generalizes that Chopin's performance of his own music is to be associated with a type of mystery that people associate with "dreamland" – or 'night.' Liszt's music lacks mystery. It is sunny and "dazzling," which seems to echo Balzac's "Dantesque fire."

Michel Foucault has stated that when people avoid open discussion and speak only a little about sexuality, the discourse is "mysterious."¹¹⁹ Similarly, Carl Jung wrote: "the woman, like the man, becomes wrapped in a veil of illusion."¹²⁰ Where a "veil" hides the presence of the person's identity (however defined), Jung considers "illusion" to exist. Eigeldinger also assumed there exists a link between mystery and a lack of presence. In his article on Chopin's "Twenty-Four Preludes Op. 28: Genre, Structure, Significance," he argues that the preludes are like a "sphinx proposing a riddle," because the complexity of their structure is entirely hidden, lying silently in the score.¹²¹ Therefore, even late twentieth-century commentary contains metaphors to describe what the observers believe

¹¹⁸ Sitwell, in Gerig, *Famous Pianists and Their Technique*, 175.

¹¹⁹ Michael Foucault, *Introduction: History of Sexuality vol. 1*, trans. Robert Hurley (London: Allen Lane, 1979), 35.

¹²⁰ Carl Jung, "The Syzygy: Anima and Animus," *Avon: Research into the Phenomenology of the Self: Vol. 9 Part One*, trans. by R. F. C. Hull (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978), 16.

¹²¹ Eigeldinger, "Twenty-Four Preludes Op. 28: Genre, Structure, Significance," *Chopin Studies*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 167.

to be the intrinsic greatness of Chopin's music. It would appear that he was himself under the general impression that a sensory experience that lacked presence conveyed a feeling of mystery. For instance, he wrote of the "haunting" "echoes" of the soldiers singing on the banks of the Danube.¹²² In more specific terms, in an attempt to describe the soft rhetoric of the second movement of his E Minor Concerto, he used the word "murmur" in order to convey his perception that the movement was "mysterious."¹²³

Others who seemed to link a sound that lacks presence with mystery were an anonymous critic for the *Gazette Musicale*, Clara Schumann, Rellstab, Hiller and Sand respectively: "his touch has mysteries not known to our terrestrial earth," "ethereal whispers," "like a meteor...unfathomable mysteries," "mysterious whisper."¹²⁴ There were other aspects of Chopin's technique that also attracted attention. For instance, Stephen Heller remarked: "it was a wonderful sight to see one of those small hands...cover...the keyboard...like the opening of the mouth of a serpent which is going to swallow a rabbit whole."¹²⁵ Chopin's hands baffled the onlooker – especially when they appeared to accomplish pianistic difficulties.

In the analogy drawn between Chopin's music and "whispers," the metaphor also signals a 'voice.' The softness of his playing came to be referred to as though it were an aspect of speech. Marmontel, Mikuli, and Lenz wrote:

¹²² Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 73.

¹²³ Chopin, in Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, 171.

¹²⁴ Gerig, *Famous Pianists and Their Technique*, 157, 199; Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 270; *New Grove Musical Instruments Series: Piano*, 79.

¹²⁵ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 101.

“melodic whispers...A wonderful poet of the piano”

“Chopin’s piano didn’t envy neither the violin for its [sic] bow nor wind instruments for their living breath. The tones melted into one another, as wonderfully as in the most beautiful singing”

“his mezzo voice was whispered”; “he emphasized but little, like one conversing in a company of clever people.”¹²⁶

The “voice,” as Lucy Green suggests, is immediately able to betray the sex of the speaker.¹²⁷ While these particular metaphorical descriptions, of a ‘whispering’ pianist, do not appear to have any overt connotations of gender, and therefore do not betray the sex of the pianist, this same ‘voice’ which also appeared to be “small” “poetic” and “beautiful,” was, due to its strangeness, also to be associated with the spirit world. It was this spirit world, wherein beings were, at the time, seen as gendered, that invited the issue of gender to enter. A multitude of beings (and their instruments) was used in an attempt to describe adequately Chopin’s style of performance: “aerial,” “Aeolian harp,” “sylph-like,” “nymph,” “elf,” “fairy voices under silver bells.”¹²⁸ The association with mystery remained: “aerial,” “Aeolian,” and “sylph-like” for example, are words used to refer to the characteristics of preternatural or supernatural creatures and to the quietness of air. Moreover, the very associations with otherworldly beings, which lack an earthly presence, also conveyed a sense of mystery. In short, the small aspects of his performance continued to be evident in this terminology (“elves” and “fairies” are small,

¹²⁶ Marmontel, Mikuli, and Lenz, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 274, 275, 278; Gerig, *Famous Pianists and Their Technique*, 148.

¹²⁷ Lucy Green, *Music, Gender, Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 30.

¹²⁸ Gerig, *Famous Pianists and Their Technique*, 157; Liszt, *Chopin*, 92; Hedley, *The Master Musicians Chopin* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1947; 1974), 121; Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 68; Gerig, *Famous Pianists and Their Technique*, 157; Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 272; Liszt, *Chopin*, 91; Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music* (New York: Dover Publications, 1900; 1966), 55, 120; Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 294.

and not without sex),¹²⁹ and connotations of gender were included in these descriptions (for instance, “sylph-like” refers to a woman who is graceful and slender). The miniature qualities of the performance, implied by the size of the supernatural and preternatural figures, gave the impression of mystery and ‘femininity.’ For instance, when Liszt noted all the small aspects of Chopin’s performance, he also suggested that one’s curiosity was aroused because of the ‘smallness’ of his playing. Liszt also maintained that because the listener was lured into “the spider’s web” through the allure of Chopin’s unique playing, his music and his performance were perceived as being uniquely “seductive.”¹³⁰ The ‘seductiveness,’ however, as defined through all contemporaneous views, was opposite to that of Liszt’s performance and compositions. Liszt’s performance may have lacked this alluring quality and it is therefore unsurprising that he perceived his own technical mastery (as captured in his musical metaphor of Don Juan) as ‘masculine’ ‘conquering’ and not ‘feminine’ or ‘seductive.’ The difference between how Liszt perceived his own playing and how he perceived Chopin’s playing raises the question as to whether Chopin’s music and playing, very different from that of Liszt’s, would have been equated with ‘feminine’ seduction.¹³¹

Although there were reports on Chopin’s playing that claimed there was at times a certain strength in it, the majority of the reports collected here suggest that this strength was not

¹²⁹ Chopin choosing to perform on pianos with extremely light actions also set him apart from the concert pianists of his day. While the critic for *La France Musicale*, Léon Escudier, claimed the sound of Chopin’s playing to be like “fairies sighing under silver bells” (Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 294), Chopin had also referred to his choice of instrument as sounding like silver bells. Chopin wrote: “an immense pantalon which, of course, Kalkbrenner will have, and the other [piano, which I shall perform on], is a monochord piano which is tiny, but its tone carries, like little bells on a giraffe.” Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 290; Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 98, 99.

¹³⁰ Liszt, *Chopin*, 33.

¹³¹ This question will be answered in detail, and with reference to specific texts, in “The Human Voice and ‘The Rhetoric of Genre’: The Nocturne Contrasted with the Polonaise.”

seen as an overriding feature of his playing. Musicologists and performers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries appear to challenge earlier reports on Chopin's performances. Whereas his performance of the fast passages in his music was described by Escudier as a "rain" of "pearls" and his slower (yet equally soft) nocturnes were published as "murmurs [of the river] Seine," James Huneker turned the smallness of this image of water into a large image. He metaphorically described Chopin's B Minor Scherzo as the river "Styx."¹³² He stated outright that the text was imbued with "largeness and...massiveness."¹³³ Paradoxically, he accepted, earlier in his book *Chopin: Man and His Music*, that contemporaneous reports on Chopin's playing were truthful – that Chopin's scales were like "pearls." In other words, Huneker was aware at the same time of the reported smallness of Chopin's scale passages.

The converting of earlier metaphors – from the "murmurs" of the river Seine to the river "Styx," for instance – is also evident in reviews of recordings of the twenty-first century. Arthur Houle, for instance, stated that Evgeny Kissin's interpretation of Chopin's fast passagework was not like "murmurs," or a "raining" of "pearls," but like "torrential" falling of water.¹³⁴

Similarly, the metaphors that gave a sense of 'human' air and 'otherworldly' air (such as "living breath" and "aerial") were replaced by Huneker's image of a "tornado" and

¹³² Escudier, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 294; Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and Musician*, 58, 212.

¹³³ Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and Musician*, 212.

¹³⁴ Arthur Houle, review of "Evgeny Kissin: Chopin: Twenty-Four Preludes," *Piano and Keyboard* (January/February, 2001), 57.

“hurricane.” Huneker also theorized that the voice which so often appears to be ‘feminine’ in Chopin’s music is really the “confessions” of a *man*. He writes:

With musical ideas he was ever gravid but their intensity is parent to their brevity...All artists are androgynous; in Chopin the feminine often prevails, but it must be noted that this quality is a distinguishing sign of masculine lyric genius, for when he unbends, coquets and makes graceful confessions or whimpers in lyric loveliness at fate, then his mother’s sex peeps out, a picture of the capricious, beautiful tyrannical Polish woman.¹³⁵

Huneker excuses on Chopin’s behalf what he thinks appears to be the psychologically ‘feminine’ in Chopin’s music, because he links all the small proportions (described in terms such as “coquet-like,” “graceful,” and “wimper[ing]”) with ‘feminine’-sounding qualities. Huneker continues: “how is one to reconcile ‘the want of manliness, moral and intellectual,’ which Hadow asserts is ‘the one great limitation of Chopin’s province,’ with the power, splendour and courage of the Polonaises?” Hence, Huneker uses his perception of the sensory qualities of Chopin’s polonaises in order to assert his own desire for ‘manliness.’ One need only advance the title of Huneker’s chapter on the polonaises in order to substantiate this argument: “The Polonaises: Heroic Hymns of Battle.”

It might be arguable that Huneker had to make this excuse because he had earlier in his book linked Chopin’s frail constitution with his character. Huneker wrote: “Chopin disliked democracies, in fact, mankind in the bulk stunned him. This is one reason, combined with a frail physique, for his inability to conquer the larger public.”¹³⁶ The fear that sickliness could be linked with sexual orientation seems to have been threatening to

¹³⁵ Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, 72.

¹³⁶ Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, 23.

Huneker. In the late nineteenth century Huneker claimed that the “sex” of Chopin’s mother “peeps out” – an Oedipus-oriented psychoanalysis of Chopin’s music to explain the ‘feminine’ in Chopin. Hedley echoes this sort of psychoanalytic approach by attributing ‘manliness’ to Chopin’s character via his music. Hedley wrote, in his book of 1947, that people have misunderstood most of Chopin’s music because it is performed all too often in a “pretty” style. He stated, further:

[because of] such misunderstandings, which have inevitably led to false interpretations of his music, it becomes necessary to assert that as a musician and an artist no one was ever ‘healthier’ than Frederick Chopin. Those who examine his works with the object of detecting pathological symptoms, reflections of the composer’s admittedly deplorable physical state, are only deceiving themselves when they claim to discover in one of the ballades the sad effects of consumption or traces of neurotic hysteria in one of the Scherzos. From first to last Chopin’s musical imagination was as healthy as any man’s.¹³⁷

A few years later, in 1952, the first publication of Cortot’s book adds to the discourse on Chopin and psychoanalysis. Cortot did not lack courage when it came to comparing Chopin’s ‘orientation’ to that of the ‘feminine’ gender; hence the section titled “He Was Not Like Other Men” in his book *In Search of Chopin*. Cortot admits, however, that he is limited in “pathological deductions,” “Freudian psychoanalysis,” and “medical” expertise. He does not say definitively what “Chopin was,” but characterizes him according to “facts of a social behaviour, which, as [Chopin’s student] Jane Stirling said, was not normal.”¹³⁸ Rather than make an in-depth exploration of Chopin’s sexuality, Cortot adds that “curiosity and research have added little to our knowledge of his artistic message, and the objection can justly be made that the important thing is what he created

¹³⁷ Hedley, *The Master Musicians Chopin*, 132.

¹³⁸ Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, 152, 153.

and not what he was.”¹³⁹ In my view, although Cortot cautions us about psychoanalysis, it appears as though it is resurfacing in some literature of the late twentieth century. For instance, Azoury writes, in his chapter “The First Contemporaries: Chopin’s Family in His Formative Years” (1999), that people contemporaneous with Chopin’s family described Chopin’s mother as having the greatest charm and sweetness. Azoury seems to imply that she was responsible for Chopin’s musical charm and sweetness.¹⁴⁰

Another association that Huneker made, between strength and ‘manliness,’ which can be traced into the twentieth century, concerns Liszt’s transcendental etude *Wilde Jagd*. For example, Huneker called the coda of Chopin’s B Minor Scherzo a “wilde jagd.”¹⁴¹ This metaphor is especially contradictory to the meanings Chopin’s music was given by his audience. The ‘wild hunt,’ as Huneker referred to it, compares unfavourably with Wodziński’s report on Chopin’s teaching. He stated that Chopin scolded his students when they went “pigeon hunt[ing]”: flaying the air with their hands and bashing the piano unconcernedly.¹⁴² “Chopin the Conqueror,” is the title of the chapter in which Huneker states that some of Chopin’s music is tantamount to a ‘wild hunt.’ It appears, therefore, as though Huneker equates the grand sounds of the B Minor Scherzo with the impulse to conquer.

I suggest that Huneker is so intent on interpreting Chopin as an heroic conqueror that he is even prepared to equate Chopin’s B Minor Scherzo with one of Liszt’s compositions.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 152.

¹⁴⁰ Azoury, “The First Contemporaries: Chopin’s Family in His Formative Years,” in *Chopin through His Contemporaries*.

¹⁴¹ Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, 212.

¹⁴² Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 32, 104.

Berlioz stated that Liszt should be considered to be “opposite” to Chopin in three ways: in regard to music, style of performance, and performance environments (which were public and private respectively).¹⁴³ Huneker’s metaphor, however, contradicts Berlioz’s construction of the binary opposition Chopin/Liszt: Berlioz did not attempt to reduce difference to sameness, yet Huneker attempts to make the music of Chopin appear similar to Liszt’s. Huneker states Chopin’s music *texts* depict the ‘wild hunt,’ and that the appropriate *performance* of this text would then be in the style of a ‘wild hunt.’

Huneker also used Chopin’s preludes to argue that Chopin was a virile man. In response to the possibility that the preludes will become examples promoting the miniature as a ‘feminine’ genre, Huneker attempts to dissociate the preludes from “sickliness” and “weakness.”¹⁴⁴ Huneker writes, “what is there to say concerning the other preludes, full of good humour and gaiety – No. 18, in E Flat; No. 21, in B Flat; No. 23, in F, or the last (Figure 4), in D minor? Is it not strong and energetic, concluding, as it does, with three cannon shots?”¹⁴⁵



Figure 4. “Three Cannon Shots” (Prelude Op. 28 No. 24)¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 272.

¹⁴⁴ Kleczyński, in Huneker, “Moods in Miniature,” *Chopin: The Man and His Music*.

¹⁴⁵ Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, 121.

¹⁴⁶ Chopin, *Preludes*, 670.

It is possible that artists have continued to be influenced by Huneker's promoting of the imagery of machinery in Chopin's music. Kissin, for example, was criticized by Houle for interpreting this prelude as "nuclear over-kill."¹⁴⁷ In view of the many opinions that I have presented earlier, which claim that Chopin's performance contrasted strongly with that of Liszt, Huneker appears to be challenging conventionally accepted views. Moreover, he promotes the muscular performance of this work even though he himself subscribes to an earlier report that Chopin did not have "muscles."¹⁴⁸

Huneker locates what he believes to represent the 'muscular' elements in Chopin's texts in order to differentiate the way Chopin was reported to have played from the way Huneker himself interprets Chopin's texts. In place of trying to understand the correlations between Chopin's physique, his playing, and his environment, Hedley argues that musicians have been misreading Chopin's intention, and he uses Chopin's Etude Op. 25 No. 11 (in A minor) to demonstrate that Chopin is 'manly' because "the work is virile" and "energetic" (Figure 5).¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Arthur Houle, review of "Evgeny Kissin: Chopin: Twenty-Four Preludes," *Piano and Keyboard* (January/February, 2001), 57.

¹⁴⁸ Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and Musician*, 167.

¹⁴⁹ Hedley, *The Master Musicians Chopin*, 145.

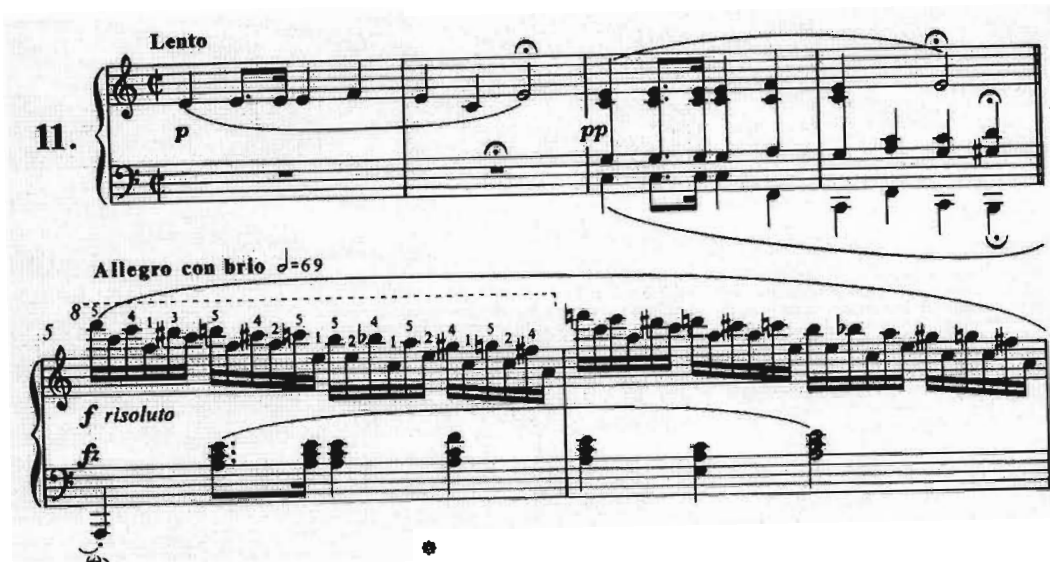


Figure 5. Chopin Etude Op. 25 no. 11.¹⁵⁰

Starting in measure five, this text is characterized by a fast tempo, and the indications *forte*, *risoluto*, *con brio*, and *sforzando*. Also, there is an extreme range of register, and there is an accentuated rhythm in the bass clef. The indication *sforzando* – which, meaning “force” or “forced,” calls on the pianist to use an amount of physical strength.¹⁵¹

In accord with Huneker’s claims that Chopin’s texts portray the “Styx,” and Houle’s description of Kissin’s “torrential” performance, Hedley uses the image of “torrent[s]” in order to give Chopin’s music a sense of massiveness. Chopin had himself remarked that he had never met a woman who neglected to say that the smoothness of his playing was “like water.” Because of this comparison between water and his smooth touch scholars and musicians in the twenty-first century continue to draw upon the imagery of water.¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ Chopin, *Etudes*, 112.

¹⁵¹ Percy Scholes ed., *The Oxford Companion to Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950), 861.

¹⁵² Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, 149.

The possibility that Chopin's performance was a reflection of a "hypersensitive nature" (thought to be a "likely" result of the "feminine atmosphere" of his childhood),¹⁵³ seems to have influenced some contemporaneous and later observers to such an extent that their metaphors appear to have ironic force. For example, when Blaze de Bury criticized Chopin's playing, he went beyond 'smallness,' and referred to his performance as "microscopic."¹⁵⁴ The association with the science laboratory might have implied – much like Houle's perception of Kissin's "nuclear overkill" – that Chopin was in this instance a 'great' technological master. However, in this instance, what is being viewed – Chopin's playing – is far from that of the 'great' technical masters: his playing is microscopic by comparison. Moreover, this criticism, which accompanies criticism of Sand's writings, was also an attempt to tarnish Chopin's reputation within the drawing rooms. As late as 1973, Chopin could not escape criticism, this time from Heinrich Neuhaus. Neuhaus criticizes the "venerable ancestors" [Chopin being one] who were apparently "unaware of the beautiful consonances of CDEFG": "the exasperated piano bares its decaying teeth at the poor neophyte and emits a barking sound!"¹⁵⁵ Although Neuhaus has not indicated that he speaks of Chopin, the reference to 'barking' and 'consonances,' in my view, can only refer to Chopin. Neuhaus singles out one of the most salient aspects of Chopin's music, chromatic melodic lines, and makes it look as though this 'strong point,' is, in

¹⁵³ Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, 200, 159.

¹⁵⁴ De Bury, in Azoury, *Chopin Through His Contemporaries*, 156.

¹⁵⁵ Heinrich Neuhaus, *The Art of Piano Playing* (Barrie and Jenkins Ltd., 1973), 85; Huneker also makes a reference to "neophyte." Similar to Neuhaus's interpretation of Chopin's response to harsh sounds, is Huneker's suggestion that a quality of sound (not related to dynamic levels) intrinsic to modulating from one key to another is what Chopin experiences as "harsh." Huneker suggests that Chopin's students, attempting to master his unusual modulations, hurt his ears with their amateur pianism. Huneker does state however, that Chopin's pianos were capable of much more subtle nuances than the modern piano. Apart from this perspective, though, it is ironic that Huneker mistakenly argues that the quality of sound (such as consonant or dissonant) hurt Chopin's ears, because earlier in his book he had interpreted the phrase – "a dog barking" – correctly. Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, 52, 82.

fact, in need of sympathy. Moreover, his metaphor can only be appreciated with an understanding of a metaphor Chopin used to describe ‘harsh’ sounds when he metaphorically described an aggressive attack on the piano as a “dog barking.”¹⁵⁶

“CDEFG” are consonances that are most easily ascribed to the key of C major. In other words, Neuhaus implies that we should consider the “venerable ancestor,” Chopin, in need of sympathy because his “apparent” disposition for chromatic lines meant that he was unable to appreciate the “beauty” of major scales. Additionally, Neuhaus is signaling Chopin’s fragility: he compares his chromaticism with weakness. Neuhaus thinks that Chopin would be hurt by harshness – which he associates with consonances, and not an aggressive attack on the keyboard. He associates consonances, in other words, with strength. Moreover, this ‘strength’ is most evident in the compositions of the First Viennese School: Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. Their music is characterized by melodies derived from scale progressions or triadic intervals (such as CEG).

Further, this ‘strength’ can also be ascribed to schools of piano technique, like those of Czerny (Liszt’s teacher) whose exercises for beginners are often based on the ‘c position’ (CDEFG). Berlioz’s perspective concerning Chopin’s chromaticism, however, suggests that Chopin’s contemporaneous society did not consider him to be in need of sympathy. Berlioz wrote in *Le Rénovateur*, “he has created a kind of chromatic embroidery...whose

¹⁵⁶ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 103, 114.

effect is so strange and piquant as to be impossible to describe...Chopin is the *Trilby* [heroine of George Du Maurier's novel of that name¹⁵⁷] of pianists."¹⁵⁸

In case the first part of Neuhaus's statement (which ridicules the chromaticism of Chopin's music) went unappreciated, he ventures, also, into the province of performance. Not only did he depreciate an inherent aspect of Chopin's music, but he created an image that suggests Chopin would be hurt by the nature of the sound of whole tones. In other words, the constitution of Chopin's character would not be able to handle the harshness of consonances, even when teaching. The so-called weakness of Chopin's music and playing – chromaticism – can also be related to his piano. Some members of Chopin's society stated that his piano was more suited than other pianos for the performances of chromatic music. For instance, when Jean Kleczyński singled out the "charm" of Chopin's performances, he made a correlation between Chopin's Pleyel piano and its effectiveness in the presentation of "beautiful graces," such as those found in the Nocturne Op. 15 No. 2.¹⁵⁹ Eigeldinger states that these notes belong to measure 51 (Figure 6). The qualities of Chopin's piano, in other words, shed light on Chopin's sensory perception of harsh sounds.

¹⁵⁷ Sarah Gracombe, "Converting Trilby: Du Maurier on Englishness, Jewishness, and Culture," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* Vol. 58 No. 1 (June, 2003), 75 – 108.

¹⁵⁸ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 272.

¹⁵⁹ Kleczyński, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 58.



Figure 6. Nocturne Op. 15 No. 2.¹⁶⁰

Chopin's students, being novices, were turned into vicarious targets for critics. On the basis of their performance abilities, the beauty of Chopin's music (especially his chromaticism) is targeted for criticism; Neuhaus seems to imply that Chopin should be sympathized with but not revered. Neuhaus, ironically, has been viewed (by Ashkenazy) as being only capable of playing "small Chopin pieces." Moreover, as Ashkenazy sees the matter, this 'limitation' was due to the fact that "his whole body as well as his hands were too small to generate power."¹⁶¹

Late twentieth-century studies of Chopin's music and his performances seem to steer away from a style of writing that is descriptive. Most evident is the lack of detailed metaphors depicting the supernatural and preternatural.

In his introduction to *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, Eigeldinger writes of "the intimacy of the salons." He correlates Chopin's "refined" compositions and piano playing not only to this environment, but also to his underlying personality: "it was not his nature to

¹⁶⁰ Chopin, *Nocturnes*, 32.

¹⁶¹ Ashkenazy, in Mach, *Great Contemporary Pianists Speak for Themselves*, 18.

impose his personality on his pupils.”¹⁶² Eigeldinger views Chopin’s well-known sensitivity as being evident in his compositions, in his playing, and in his unassertive nature. Jim Samson also correlates Chopin’s music to his personality. In *The Music of Chopin*, Samson wrote of Chopin’s wanting to be a part of the Polish uprising, and then continued to read Chopin’s feelings about the war into the pieces of that period. He writes that they are “tragic,” and “passionate,” and that they “reflect” a “new commitment to express Poland’s tragedy in his music.”¹⁶³ In short, Samson has linked context with text in order to argue his interpretation of the musical meaning of Chopin’s compositions. James Methuen-Campbell, who discusses, in his article “Chopin in Performance,” the evolution of pianistic styles, also takes up Samson’s notion that qualities of sound are a reflection of character.

“Brilliance” is another word that recurs in recent literature and that continues to have ambiguous meanings. For example, Methuen-Campbell calls Clara Schumann’s pianism “brilliant.”¹⁶⁴ But he subscribes to the idea that Chopin’s and Schumann’s playing were very similar. The assumption is that if Clara Schumann’s playing was “brilliant” then Chopin’s playing was also “brilliant.” Methuen-Campbell also claimed, however, that Liszt’s performances on the seven-octave Érard grand, a piano which he acknowledged as very different from Chopin’s preferred piano, was done with “enhanced brilliance.”¹⁶⁵ The problem with his use of the word “brilliance” is partially due to the fact that Clara Schumann had herself described Liszt’s playing as unnecessarily forceful: a type of

¹⁶² Eigeldinger, Introduction to *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 4.

¹⁶³ Jim Samson, *The Music of Chopin* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), 12, 13.

¹⁶⁴ James Methuen-Campbell, “Chopin in Performance,” *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, ed. Jim Samson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 197.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 197.

playing that epitomized what was then considered to be the ‘muscular’ modern school.¹⁶⁶ Moreover, Liszt’s playing was considered to be a spectacle – a “brilliant” spectacle. In other words, I question how Methuen-Campbell can state that Clara Schumann’s, Chopin’s, and Liszt’s playing was all “brilliant”? Both in Chopin’s time and in the late twentieth century, the word ‘brilliance’ seems not to have a fixed currency, but can be used to imply a range of musical qualities. Methuen-Campbell makes a distinction between different types of ‘brilliant’ performers. To this end, he makes a comparison between greater and lesser performers of ‘brilliance.’ Liszt is the “enhanced,” “brilliant” performer, who plays Chopin’s music on the bigger, ‘brighter,’ pianos. This greater brilliance refers to the strength of attack and brightness of tone. He is not referring to brilliantly fast scale-like passages – something for which Chopin was admired. However, some modern performers continue to use “brilliant” to define fast, intricate passages. Moreover, this “brilliance” continues to be viewed as a reflection of ‘femininity.’ For instance, Zanta Hofmeyer articulated that “brilliance” referred to the “champagne” or “sparkling” rapid notes, which, as she believed, are best suited for women.¹⁶⁷ In short, ‘masculine’ brilliance continues to be used to refer to the strength of attack and the powerful spectacle while a ‘feminine’ brilliance appears to refer to the ‘flashiness’ of the speed at which the musician can perform in a quick tempo.

Methuen-Campbell’s tracing of pianists’ styles of interpreting Chopin demonstrates his acceptance of the social construction that differing sounds can be associated with different genders. Moreover, Methuen-Campbell’s use of ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’

¹⁶⁶ Clara Schumann, in Dee Booth, “The Teaching Style of Clara Schumann,” *Clavier* (December, 1996), 23.

¹⁶⁷ Zanta Hofmeyer, interviewed by Frederick De Jager, on the 29th January 2001. Durban (South Africa).

terminology also shows how Rubinstein's negative perspective of the "feminine" salons has been passed on to later generations of musicologists, because he refers to Rubinstein's intent to take the "feminine" Chopin out of the salons; Methuen-Campbell considers Rubinstein's playing of Chopin's music to be without any trace of "effeminacy" due to his "elemental force." Methuen-Campbell states further that Rubinstein's most "outstanding" pupil "of the century," Joseph Hoffmann, "embodied many aspects of his teacher's style," including "explosive fortissimos."¹⁶⁸ Thus Methuen-Campbell accepts without caveats that 'big' sounds are 'masculine' and "more diluted sounds" are 'feminine.'¹⁶⁹ Methuen-Campbell's approval of Hoffmann's "explosive" playing increases the divide between largeness, which is considered 'desirable,' and smallness, which is consequently described in words that lack appeal – like the watered-down effect of the word "diluted."

Methuen-Campbell states that Cortot brings a "graceful rubato" to Chopin's music whilst Vladimir Horowitz's playing has "rhythmic bite" in its "rapid passage work," and this brings a kind of Prokofiev-like "angularity" to Chopin's music.¹⁷⁰ According to contemporaneous reports on Chopin's teaching, Chopin disliked piano playing that sounded like the "bark of a dog" and his dislike of harshness was clearly dissimilar to a "Prokofiev"-like interpretation, which would make Chopin's music sound "angular." Methuen-Campbell ends his discussion on Chopin interpreters with the "technological" age, an age that Methuen-Campbell considers responsible for the lack of "improvisatory"

¹⁶⁸ Methuen-Campbell, "Chopin in Performance," *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 203.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 202.

¹⁷⁰ Methuen-Campbell, "Chopin in Performance," *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 204.

and “poetic” interpretations of Chopin’s music because of “the demand for playing of the highest technical finish.”¹⁷¹

Zofia Chechlińska claims that one of the earliest observations of Chopin’s music and his performances – made before his emigration from Poland in 1831 – described his “melancholic” and “delicate” orientation.¹⁷² Chechlińska interpreted these traits as representing the Polish nation, part of the “national character” – “poetic” and “emotional.” As Chopin began to perform outside his homeland, this “melancholic” and “delicate” nature was soon to be interpreted differently: not as a national trait, nor as an aristocratic influence from the noble families Chopin played for, but as a ‘feminine’ element. This difference in interpretation emphasizes Chechlińska’s belief that cultural differences played a role in the reception of Chopin’s music. Liszt also took note of the “delicate, picturesque customs” and “ways” intrinsic to Chopin’s music and performance, as well as his Polish identity, but he compared the sensory implications of the words describing these customs – “delicate,” for instance – with “femininity.”¹⁷³ The so-called ‘feminine’ sights and sounds of Chopin’s piano playing were not expected from a male composer-performer, and as Derek Carew stated recently, Chopin’s “delicateness” was “subsequently viewed negatively.”¹⁷⁴ Whilst Chechlińska does not ‘gender’ the Polish

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 205.

¹⁷² Zofia Chechlińska, “Chopin Reception in Nineteenth-Century Poland,” *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 208.

¹⁷³ Liszt, *Frédéric Chopin*, 90.

¹⁷⁴ Derek Carew, “Victorian Attitudes to Chopin,” *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 227.

character as inevitably ‘feminine,’ she does, however, state that the larger forms of the Romantic age were not popular with women.¹⁷⁵

In regard to small compositions, Kallberg’s choice of word compares well with words used during Chopin’s time. In his “Defense of the Prelude,” Kallberg writes of the inherent sounds of the preludes as “smooth,” a description that echoes Mikuli who wrote of Chopin’s “tones” “melting” into one another.¹⁷⁶ The implication in the dimension of touch and sound, in other words, is that Chopin’s playing was not harsh, and, according to Kallberg, this is also evident from Chopin’s scores. Balzac compared Liszt and Chopin to Dante’s and Raphael’s works of art, and, therefore, Kallberg’s reference to the “colours” of Chopin’s texts demonstrates that in his opinion the metaphor of pictorial art can still be applied to Chopin’s scores.¹⁷⁷

One of the most popular words to remain in use in the twentieth century is ‘voice.’ Music is often treated as a multi-vocal text that expresses what more than one person thinks. However, Chopin’s references to ‘voice’ are linked to his own fascination with the sensory quality of the human voice. Various sections of “Musical Style,” in Eigeldinger’s book *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher* demonstrate the link that Chopin made between sound and voice: “Musical prosody and declamation,” “*bel canto* – a model for pianistic

¹⁷⁵ Chechlińska, “Chopin Reception in Nineteenth-Century Poland,” *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 206, 212.

¹⁷⁶ Kallberg, “Small ‘Forms’: in Defense of the Prelude,” *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 14; Mikuli, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 275.

¹⁷⁷ Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries*, 141.

declamation,” “cantabile,” “rubato,” and “improvised ornamentation [which also deals with the rubato of *bel canto*].”¹⁷⁸

In *Ballades Without Words* (Chapter Three: “Chopin’s Ballade Form”), James Parakilas seems to suggest that there is more to Chopin’s music than an aesthetic link between quality of sound and the human voice. Not only do the titles of some of Chopin’s compositions (such as the *Ballades*) suggest an influence from the ‘voice’ of his Polish literary counterpart, Adam Mickiewicz,¹⁷⁹ but those who observed his style of performance also claimed that his pianistic declamation resembled poetry. For example, Heinrich Heine and De Balzac claimed a Chopin performance was the equivalent of hearing a poem being recited.¹⁸⁰ Even though Parakilas relates Chopin’s *Ballades* to the human voice, because of the voice being embedded within the literary ballade, he does not, however, suggest that this voice is gendered.¹⁸¹ Similarly, when Chechlińska claims that Chopin was essentially a “lyricist,” she does not consider the possibility that varying qualities of his lyrical voice relate to different propensities of gender.¹⁸² Lenz, who had heard Chopin play, and Eigeldinger, writing in the late twentieth century, both claim that Chopin’s melodies can be compared to male and female singers. The link between quality of sound and gender, then, was made during the Romantic era as well as in the twentieth century.¹⁸³ Eigeldinger’s linking of gender to a quality of sound, as well as Methuen-Campbell’s references to ‘masculinity,’ ‘femininity,’ and ‘effeminacy,’ in particular,

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 42 – 53.

¹⁷⁹ Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, 156.

¹⁸⁰ Heine and De Balzac, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 284, 285.

¹⁸¹ James Parakilas, *Ballades without Words* (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1992), 49 – 87.

¹⁸² Chechlińska, “Chopin Reception in Nineteenth-Century Poland,” *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 209, 210.

¹⁸³ Lenz, in John Rink, *Chopin: The Piano Concertos* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 24; Eigeldinger, introduction to *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*.

demonstrate that, although Parakilas and Chechlińska echo Edward T. Cone's "unspecified subconscious" (which he links to instrumental transcriptions of vocal music), other scholars discuss Chopin's scores in a Romantic vein – accepting the assumptions the Romantics made concerning sound and gender.¹⁸⁴

In conclusion, Chopin's society used a range of descriptive terminology to relay their sensory experience of Chopin's playing. Some individuals stated that Chopin's playing was "microscopic," while others, though far fewer, seemed to respond, "what power!" When smallness was experienced in the sensory dimension it was either categorized outright as "feminine" or it was compared to preternatural beings who were not gendered as strictly 'masculine.' Other words, such as "nuance" (and even "sickly"), also implying a sense of smallness, were associated with the salons, with the aristocracy, and with 'femininity.' However, Berlioz argued against the perceived notions that he thought people had of the salons. Late nineteenth- and mid-twentieth-century musicologists and performers challenged earlier reports. Even though they could not measure their understanding of Chopin's musical meaning against his performances, they considered nonetheless that viewing his scores would reveal a 'true' meaning. This truth, as stated by Huneker and Hedley, for example, was that Chopin *was* a virile man. They claimed that even though Chopin was not a healthy or strong man, he was, nevertheless, not psychologically 'feminine.' Huneker and Hedley seem to have disregarded Chopin's personal style of playing, because most of the reports on his performances documented his small sound. They focused, therefore, on his scores, which they interpreted in terms of largeness. Huneker and Hedley used the imagery of the "Styx," and a "tornado," in

¹⁸⁴ Edward T. Cone, *The Composer's Voice* (California: University of California Press, 1974), 79.

opposition to earlier reports. In response to artists, such as Wagner and Rubinstein, who openly associated Chopin's performance of his own texts with the salons and women, Hedley and Huneker transformed the metaphors that described the smallness of Chopin's playing so as to remove their connotations of 'femininity.' This transformation of earlier metaphors, in turn, seems to have had an effect on late nineteenth-century, twentieth-century, as well as twenty-first century renditions of Chopin's music. Rubinstein, Hoffmann, and Kissin, for example, have been noted for their overwhelmingly loud performances of Chopin's music: descriptions of their playing of Chopin's music included, "elemental force," "grotesque," "explosive," "torrential," and "nuclear overkill,"¹⁸⁵ amongst others. Methuen-Campbell correlates these words of description with 'masculinity' as though the relationship was a matter of fact, and assumes that "more diluted" performances are 'feminine.' In his defence, however, he might simply be attempting to keep Chopin 'alive' by trying to maintain some sort of balance between 'masculinity' and 'femininity'. It may also be, of course, that Methuen-Campbell's drawing relations between these mammoth sensory signs and 'masculinity' as well as equating smallness with 'femininity' is due to his attempt to "add nothing to the content of the representation." He may wish, in fact, to create a "simulacrum of the structure and processes of real events."¹⁸⁶ If, however, he is not treating historical records in a way that allows them to speak for themselves, but actually believes sounds can be described in gendered terminology, then what seems unchanged since the composer's death is that

¹⁸⁵ Methuen-Campbell, "Chopin in Performance," *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 203; Chopin's playing was in fact described by an associate of Chopin as being "not grotesque" – the opposite of what Hoffmann's playing is thought to relay. Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 280; Methuen-Campbell, "Chopin in Performance," *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 203; Houle, review of "Evgeny Kissin: RCA CD 63535," *Piano and Keyboard*, 57.

¹⁸⁶ Hayden White, *The Content of Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1987; 1990), 27.

miniature and mammoth proportions in the sensory dimension continue to be interpreted, rationally, as a reflection of ‘femininity’ and ‘masculinity.’

2.1.3. Beyond Words: “Connotation, Tone, and Intent”

Part of the aim of my study is to consider how some people may have used language to advocate largeness or to coax others into desiring largeness. I intend to apply the advice of John Ellis to search for “connotation, tone, and intent.” I will apply this advice to Kallberg’s interpretation of statements uttered by Rubinstein, and to comments emanating from the mid-nineteenth century, late nineteenth century, and mid-twentieth century – Liszt’s and Chopin’s, Huneker’s, and Hedley’s, respectively.¹⁸⁷ This application is meant to illustrate the way in which language becomes a tool of coercion. I consider it necessary to question the belief that terminology can relay sensory experiences accurately and completely. Rather, I consider it necessary to evaluate people’s spontaneous and subjective sensory experiences by utilizing theories that encourage researchers to go beyond the literal meaning of words. To this end, I have considered several studies – Whitehead’s and Jacques Lacan’s, amongst others – that caution researchers about the unfixed quality of language and that also focus on the way in which people’s inevitable subjectivity influences their interpretation of their sensory experiences.

¹⁸⁷ John Ellis, *The Theory of Literary Criticism* (California: University of California Press, 1974).

A useful guide to understanding and overcoming the fundamental problems that one faces when researching people's sensory experiences is to be found in the anthology *Varieties of Sensory Experience*, edited by David Howes.¹⁸⁸ One such problem is that through time, a culture's "sensory order" can "shift."¹⁸⁹ In other words, the hierarchical relationship between the five senses can change over time. This problem can be seen by comparing the study of "wild" or "feral" children (who have not been exposed to, and conditioned by, the sensory orientation of a human society) with studies on sensory orientations of some ancient Greek philosophers. For example, "the wild boy of Aveyron [captured in 1799]" was thought to have an unrefined sense of touch. Because he seemed to lack "intellectual" capacity, those who studied his "elementary responses" to stimuli such as hot and cold consequently equated a refined sense of touch with intellect.¹⁹⁰ Aristotle however thought "touch" was the "lowest" of the senses. He arrived at such a conclusion after deciding that "lust" was wrong, and because lust implies an appetite for inappropriate kinds of physical contact, so too was the sense of "touch" ranked the lowest of the senses.¹⁹¹

The fact that sensory orders can shift reveals that care must be taken when analyzing records of sensory perceptions. Views on sensory orientation change, and literatures of

¹⁸⁸David Howes, ed., *Varieties of Sensory Experience: A Sourcebook in the Anthropology of the Senses* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991). An informed approach to researching sensory experiences, Howes' anthology includes a simple yet practical guide for researchers embarking on studies of the sensory dimension. There are three sections of particular importance that have proved influential to this present study: "Doing Field Research," "Doing Library Research," and "A Model for Sensory Experience." These are step-by-step guides to the study of the senses and they have been helpful to my study of the sensory perceptions of Chopin's music.

¹⁸⁹Ibid., 259.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 49. Local villagers observed the "Wild Boy" in the woods of Aveyron, France. After two failed attempts at capture, he was eventually reintroduced into society in 1800; Douglas Keith Candland, *Feral Children and Clever Animals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 18.

¹⁹¹ Howes, *Varieties of Sensory Experience*, 63.

particular eras will record different attitudes. David Howes draws up a model to help a researcher decipher the sensory orientation of a particular society. The usefulness of his model for this thesis is limited, since hierarchical orders of the senses are unimportant to it, but differences in aesthetic preferences proceeding from interpretations of the various senses are in some cases linked to my argument. The shifts identified by Howes point to the many other shifts that occur in the different ways people experience sight, sound, and touch in relation to music, and their interpretation of their experiences in terms of largeness and gender. For example, for each of the different ways of touching the keys of the piano, there exist descriptions, however partial and inadequate, of that touch and of the sound it produces. It is these gradations of touch as well as other aspects of a music performance that are interpreted as being more or less ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine,’ and large or small. The senses of sound and touch are not in themselves gendered, but within each sensory experience, people have created different gendered terms for differing qualities.¹⁹²

Taking this into account, I have used Howes’ concept of “shifting sensory orders” to develop a related theoretical concept of a ‘shifting sense-quality,’ which can be applied to the study of music and the senses. I aim to show that sensory qualities that were not regarded as small and ‘feminine’ by Chopin and some of his contemporaries were interpreted in this way by others. To this end, I wish to review the influence Howes, Ellis,

¹⁹² Recently, Green wrote, “the most normal development of gender-roles within the relationship of display in the west involves an explicitly or implicitly sexual display in which the display is coded as ‘feminine’ and the spectator as ‘masculine.’” This statement suggests that in conceptual metaphors, such as “the feminine mask” and “display,” the physical act of display has been conceived of as ‘feminine’ and the spectator’s ‘act’ of sight as ‘masculine.’ Display and sight, however, need not be gendered exclusively in these ways, nor is it my intention to adopt this simple conceptual dichotomy of display/feminine versus seeing/masculine. Lucy Green, *Music, Gender, Education*, 25.

and Whitehead, amongst others, have had on my own approach to literary and 'sensory' sources.

The article "Doing Field Research," by Howes and Constance Classen draws attention to practical methods (such as surveys and interviews) of researching societies' sensory orientations.¹⁹³ They present one fundamental question that encapsulates the reasons for doing field research: "*Which senses are emphasized or repressed, and by what means and to which ends?*" They then break down this question into particular and general sub-questions. For example, a general question reads, "does the repression of a particular sense or sensory expression correspond to the repression of a particular group within society?" This question is of particular importance, considering that the identification of certain aspects of music rhetoric as 'feminine' has only recently been problematized as an important field within musicology. It can be posited that until recently a dominantly masculine musical society has marginalized the study of the 'feminine' in music. It is further possible to suggest that the marginalized study of 'feminine' music, through society's focus on 'masculine' music, has had undesirable consequences for any study of the senses. For instance, all aspects of sensory experience that might be associated with 'feminine' music rhetoric have tended to be undervalued.

Howes's section "Library Research" is relevant for its caveats: he points out the importance of careful reading and consideration of the sensory bias that authors may exhibit in the presentation of their own perspectives. Literary theorists such as Ellis have also presented the notion that a researcher should be aware of the subjective in literature.

¹⁹³ Howes and Classen, "Doing Field Research," in *Varieties of Sensory Experience*, 259.

His articles “The Aims of the Study of Literature,” and “The Relevant Context of a Literary Text,” in his book *The Theory of Literary Criticism*, encourage the critic to go beyond the literal meanings of words and search for “connotation,” “tone” and “intent.”¹⁹⁴ When discussing people’s hidden bias in music research, whether it is interpreting the bias of their ‘words’ or the biased interpretations of their sensory experiences, there exists an even greater dilemma for the student of music literature: ‘thought’ is not completely able to convey a sensory experience. Whitehead presents this perspective in his book *The Concept of Nature*. He weighs senses against thought saying that the main difference between these two natural phenomena is that our senses are a group of “subjective manifestations” of how we perceive the world around us.¹⁹⁵ The reason why Whitehead defines these “manifestations” as “subjective” is because he thinks that there is no way of knowing, with certainty, whether we experience our senses similarly. ‘Thought’ however, is transferable through literature; it is possible to explain one’s thoughts, or even one’s sensory experiences to another person through the use of language, but it is not possible for that person to actually experience one’s own sensory experiences. In short, the translating of one’s sensory experience (which is linked to subjectivity) into thought and then into language may not capture fully the essence of a sensory experience. When interpreting literature that records people’s perspectives on piano performance, bias might have to be considered not only in terms of a writer’s choice of words, but also because of the possibility that his perception is unique.

¹⁹⁴ John Ellis, *The Theory of Literary Criticism*.

¹⁹⁵ Alfred North Whitehead, *The Concept of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971).

In order to remedy the problems created by assuming that each person has a unique sensory experience, I considered Howes' section, "A Paradigm for Sensing," which encourages the empathetic understanding of sensory ideals within different societies. He lists ten possible areas that need to be considered by researchers who are attempting to understand the sensory ideals of particular cultures. Each of these areas is accompanied by questions that should be asked. For example, his section on language, which is the most relevant to my work, poses the questions: "What words exist for the different senses?" "Which sensory perceptions have the greatest vocabulary allotted them (sounds, colours, odours)?" "How are the senses used in metaphors and expressions?" He explains that they are important because metaphors provide "further information" on how senses are perceived and valued.

To help the reader appreciate fully the history of interpretation of Chopin's music and playing, in light of these warnings against literary bias, differing sensory interpretations, and the shifting of sense-qualities, I now present a brief argument that relates the ideas of Ellis and Howes to the music of Chopin. I use Kallberg's research to illuminate sensory bias and then use this analysis as a paradigm to apply to other commentators, illustrating how this bias has been transposed into language in order to promote largeness.

Kallberg points out that by the late nineteenth century some of the 'greatest' musical authorities were making every effort to redefine Chopin's music and rid it of 'femininity.' Niecks, Huneker, and Rubinstein each played a hand in steering Chopin's music towards a 'manly' ideal. Furthermore, they coaxed society toward their concept of a 'manly' ideal

by undervaluing the ‘feminine’ element, in the context within which he performed (the salons), and the length of his compositions, or the delicate sounds that his own performance was reported to have exhibited.¹⁹⁶ Kallberg brings our attention to a type of response that is not spontaneous, but that has been conditioned by what these men know about the discourse surrounding Chopin. These perspectives are posited with the ulterior motive of steering others’ perspectives toward a ‘manly’ ideal. In fact, Rubinstein used the word “salon” in a derogatory fashion to describe Chopin’s music.¹⁹⁷ (In my opinion, he might have even used the word “salon” to emphasize that in his opinion it was the venue that ‘feminized’ Chopin’s works and that they were not intrinsically ‘feminine.’) These performers and musicologists appear to be unaware, or do not care, that their discourse can be interpreted as being biased toward what they see as ‘manliness.’ The hazards of the ‘masculine’ bias of these musicologists and musicians are not immediately obvious. Audiences hearing late nineteenth-century attempts to make Chopin appear manly may have responded enthusiastically to Rubinstein’s ‘masculine’ performances of Chopin’s music. Obviously, Rubinstein’s audiences formulated their perspectives as a result of experiencing the sensory ‘output’ of Rubinstein and not Chopin’s own performances. Therefore, in my view, should they have heard sounds that were aesthetically massive instead of miniature their sensory perception would then tell them that “Yes, Chopin is ‘large.’” Moreover, according to their understanding of what is ‘masculine’ (which would probably be a reflection of their society’s indoctrinating

¹⁹⁶ Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries: Sex, History, and Musical Genre*, 38 – 45.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 44.

discourse), they may themselves have made the analogy between strength, or loudness, and ‘masculinity’ (just as Hanslick had done in 1856).¹⁹⁸

If twentieth- or twenty-first century musicians choose to voice their own desire for a meaning in ‘Chopin’ that is fundamentally louder and stronger rather than what is reported in the witness-reports from Chopin’s society, they are likely to influence those listeners who lack other access to Chopin or who do not feel confident enough to rely on their own understanding of their sensory experience. If an uneducated ear hears for the first time a *cantilena* played brashly and in a forthright way, there is no precedent against which to gauge the experience. The lack of subtle inflections in the *cantilena* will go unnoticed and the musical meaning that the listener associates with it will be the one against which future listening experiences of the same *cantilena* will be measured.

The application of the concept of a ‘shifting sense-quality’ highlights the possibility that new meaning can be given to Chopin’s music, depending on one’s familiarity with the subject. At the same time, however, Kallberg’s measures to locate unfounded sensory bias and the “connotation, tone, and intent” of Rubinstein’s words show that Rubinstein’s perspectives are politically based, for Rubinstein does not tolerate or attempt to understand the well-documented nature of the salons, Chopin’s miniaturesque style of playing, or the Pleyel pianos on which he played.

¹⁹⁸ Hanslick, “Clara Schumann,” *Hanslick’s Music Criticisms*, ed. Henry Pleasants (New York: Dover Publications, 1978).

Kallberg's sensory and analytical approach relates to Howes's and Ellis's warnings of bias in the following ways: he writes that Rubinstein disliked the "sentimental" sounds of the salon performances and he hoped to take Chopin's music "out of the salons." Rubinstein's attempts to change people's perspectives concerning Chopin's music, tacitly imply that the 'salon' quality of Chopin's music is not to be desired. Rubinstein is promoting a 'strengthening' of Chopin's 'salon' music in order to "take it out of the salons," which he hopes will change people's belief that Chopin is a miniaturist. The sensory bias is that Rubinstein did not like smallness. He interpreted Chopin's associations with the intimate salons as a "sentimental" or "feminine" aesthetic. Moreover, this example also reveals how Kallberg's analytical approach to literature about music is in accordance with Ellis's warnings concerning literary criticism – that a researcher should not merely accept the literal meanings of words but search for "connotation, tone, and intent." For example, Kallberg notices that Rubinstein has made a link between the salons and 'femininity'. He also notices the "tone" in which the statement was uttered – Rubinstein undervalues the salons. Finally, the "intent" of which Kallberg takes account is that Rubinstein wanted to "steer" Chopin's music away from the associations with the 'feminine' salons. In short, Kallberg has acknowledged there exists not only a sensory bias for 'masculine' sounds, but that the way in which this sensory bias was presented was through Rubinstein's choice of words, which lend themselves to interpretations of connotation, tone, and intent.

It appears as though Rubinstein actually did take Chopin out of the salons, and gave Chopin's texts his own meaning. Although Huneker claimed that Rubinstein played Chopin accurately, Chopin's students appear to have disagreed:

While he [Chopin] never had the pupils to mould as had Liszt, Chopin made some excellent piano artists. They all had, or have – the old guard dies bravely – his tradition, but exactly what the Chopin tradition is no man may dare to say. Anton Rubinstein, when I last heard him, played Chopin inimitably. Never shall I forget the Ballades, the two Polonaises in F Sharp minor and A Flat major, the studies, and the F minor Fantasie...Rubinstein did all sorts of wonderful things with the coda of the Barcarolle – such a page! – but Sir Charles Hallé said that it was “clever but not Chopinesque.” Yet Hallé heard Chopin at his last Paris concert, February, 1848, play the two forte passages in the Barcarolle “pianissimo and with all sorts of dynamic finesse.” This is precisely what Rubinstein did, and his pianissimo was a whisper... Yet the Chopin pupils, assembled in judgment at Paris when he gave his Historical Recitals, refused to accept him as an interpreter. His touch was too rich and full, his tone too big.¹⁹⁹

Huneker, born in 1860, did not hear Chopin perform, but after having cast doubt on what the Chopin tradition really is, he created an empty space in which he could fit his own perspective: that Rubinstein played Chopin “inimitably.” Huneker considers that because no one really knows what the ‘Chopin style’ is, he can consider Rubinstein Chopin's heir. To him, Rubinstein's interpretation of Chopin's scores appears to be correct.

In “Chopin in Performance” (1992), Methuen-Campbell's words reflect Rubinstein's success in that Methuen-Campbell is himself convinced that Chopin's music is no longer in the salon and that all “undertones of effeminacy” are eradicated in Rubinstein's playing. Methuen-Campbell writes:

¹⁹⁹ Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, 54.

Anton Rubinstein's temperament was one of violent contrasts and he used this to great effect in his playing. At one moment there would be a climax of elemental force, at another a gentle, limpidly vocal approach to the instrument. These conflicting moods were applied to works such as the polonaises, ballades, scherzos and sonatas with devastating results – audiences were stunned. This was a new Chopin they were hearing and one that was now wholly dissociated from the salon; it was a Chopin fitted for the concert hall.²⁰⁰

I now present and analyze some other views where my own application of this cautionary advice exposes how language may be used to relay one's sensory bias for largeness and 'masculinity.'

Liszt writes of Chopin: "the artist could not avenge the man! Too feeble in health to betray this impatience through the vehemence of his own playing, he sought compensation by writing pages that he loved to hear performed with the vigor that he lacked."²⁰¹ The "connotation" of Liszt's remark is that he equates "vigor" to 'healthy manliness.' The "tone" of Liszt's words reflect negatively on Chopin. Liszt writes as though Chopin was 'deficient' in 'masculinity': Chopin "lacked" "vigor," which Liszt sees as a masculine necessity. Liszt is "intent" on two things: to convince the reader that Chopin's "texts" are intrinsically "vigorous," and because he loved to "hear" "vigorous" music, he too would have played these texts with "vigor" (if only he were a "healthy" "man"). Moreover, if Liszt is able to convey his subjective perspective as 'fact,' then he has legitimate grounds for performing Chopin's music texts with 'masculine' "vigor." It is not surprising that in the section on Chopin's polonaises, Liszt writes several pages that claim a "masculine" aesthetic was transposed from Polish national dance and embedded in Chopin's compositions.²⁰² Nor is it surprising when Liszt writes that the public

²⁰⁰ Methuen-Campbell, "Chopin in Performance," *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 199.

²⁰¹ Liszt, *Chopin*, 40.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 42 – 63.

audience (the “masses”) is a “sea of lead” and consequently, can only be “molded” by “the strong arm of the stalwart labourer” (again asserting the ‘masculine’ aesthetic).²⁰³ Liszt further justifies his perspective that Chopin, lacking “the strong arm of the stalwart laborer,” could not draw the general public. He claims that Chopin said to an “artist friend”: “I am not fitted to give concerts; when you [Liszt] do not win the public [over,] you are able to overwhelm it.”²⁰⁴ Liszt’s claim, which was intended to reflect negatively on Chopin and his so-called inability to “mold” the larger public, is more significant in stressing Liszt’s desire largeness and the concomitant association he makes with ‘masculine’ strength.

Even Chopin’s own words have been interpreted in a way that promotes largeness and ‘masculinity.’ Liszt, Chopin, and Auguste Franchomme each had a hand in writing a letter from Chopin to Hiller, but while Chopin was writing his part, Liszt was playing Chopin’s etudes in the background. At this moment, Chopin writes: “I write to you without knowing what my pen is scribbling because at this moment Liszt is playing my studies and putting honest thoughts out of my head: I should like to rob him of the way to play my own studies!”²⁰⁵ This statement at first implies that Chopin would like to ‘steal’ Liszt’s way of playing, and it is often thought that Chopin wanted to play like Liszt. For example, in the mid-twentieth century, both Hedley and Lovelock interpret this phrase as revealing envy on Chopin’s part: Chopin thought Liszt played these etudes “in incomparable” style.²⁰⁶ Even though Hedley claims that Liszt played Chopin’s studies in

²⁰³ Ibid., 83.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 84.

²⁰⁵ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence of Fryderyk Chopin*, 117.

²⁰⁶ Lovelock, *A Concise History of Music*, 188; Hedley, *The Master Musicians Chopin*, 51.

a manner that every pianist should aspire to – an “incomparable” manner – in my view, Chopin’s phrase “putting honest thoughts out of my head,” makes this debatable.

Hedley believes that Chopin wanted to be more ‘masculine,’ and it would be possible to argue in defense of this position by asking, “why else would Chopin have dedicated his first set of etudes to Liszt?”²⁰⁷ In answer to my own question, I think that Chopin’s dedication of the ‘technical’ etudes to Liszt reflects his understanding that Liszt was predisposed towards a grand technique. Janet Ritterman writes that Chopin owes much of his popularity to “early interpreters” such as Liszt who included Chopin’s works in their concert programmes. By dedicating these works to Liszt, Chopin may have hoped to achieve greater popularity than if they were dedicated to a pianist who was not in favour with the masses. Chopin may well have considered success and financial security, gained through the popularity of his works, to be of greater importance than his own musical intentions. This does not necessarily mean that Chopin would have played these same works entirely differently. The relationship between Chopin and Liszt was a complex one, and, as Hedley points out, although Chopin held Liszt’s piano playing in high regard, Chopin’s letters to his Polish friends and their letters to him show that Chopin “could not bear Liszt’s showmanship.”²⁰⁸ Hedley raises the issue of how the friendship between Chopin and Liszt began to disintegrate largely as a result of vastly different musical tastes. More recently, Azoury writes that Chopin’s reference to “robbing” Liszt’s way of playing shows his “enthusiasm” for Liszt, but that this enthusiasm seems to have been short-lived. Chopin soon became disenchanted with Liszt’s artistic talent, because,

²⁰⁷ Ritterman, “Piano Music and the Public Concert, 1800 – 1850,” *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 30.

²⁰⁸ Hedley, *The Master Musicians Chopin*, 49.

according to Azoury, Chopin thought that Liszt's pianistic ability "was being wasted away and not used as a means to an end but as an end to a means."²⁰⁹

Liszt also said of Chopin that "never was there a nature more imbued with whims" and "caprices."²¹⁰ Hedley and E. L. Voynich, in their compilations of Chopin's letters and other correspondence, comment on Chopin's talent for avoiding "literal" meanings of words and his "wittiness."²¹¹ Azoury's more recent perspective, which reveals Chopin's fast-changing attitude (from 'pro-Liszt' to 'anti-Liszt'), concomitant with Hedley's and Voynich's awareness that Chopin often used words that had double meanings, suggests that Chopin may not have meant the word "rob" literally. If one searches for "connotation, tone, and intent," one may well come up with the answer that the "connotation" of the word "rob" is that something will be 'taken away' from Liszt; Chopin's "tone" is 'delicate' yet ironic. By using a euphemism such as "rob" he does not have to challenge directly Liszt's meddling with composer-intention, but can make Liszt aware of his disapproval. This seems to strengthen the viewpoint that Chopin possessed great subtlety and depth and understood nuances of meaning – he could, after all, just as well have said that he wanted to be able to play like Liszt. This example might also illustrate the extent to which Chopin understood, and subscribed to, the duplicity of ordinary language.

I should like to cite one last significant anecdote that concerns Chopin's pupil Adolf Gutmann, which has been used by Hedley and Huneker in order to encourage 'manly'

²⁰⁹ Azoury, *Chopin Through His Contemporaries: Friends, Lovers, and Rivals*, 139.

²¹⁰ Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, 184.

²¹¹ Hedley, Introduction to *Selected Correspondence*, x; *Chopin's Letters*, Preface.

renditions of Chopin's works. Huneker writes that Lenz considered Chopin's dedication of the C# Minor Scherzo to Gutmann, to owe its existence to Chopin's awe of the "prize fighter's fist" and his ability to "knock a hole in the table." Huneker then writes that even though Lenz says "nothing more was ever heard of this Gutmann," Gutmann "was in evidence until his death as a 'favourite pupil.'"²¹² These remarks emanate from a once-off occasion, in 1839, when Chopin was supposedly too unwell to play the piano and therefore asked Gutmann to play his C# Minor Scherzo to Moscheles. This 'once-off' occasion, which involves a single work, has been used by Hedley to make a generalization that reflects negatively on Chopin's 'frail' constitution and encourages performers to play louder, healthier, and more 'manly.' He writes:

It is to be feared that the notion of Chopin's playing being invariably characterized by excessive delicacy and effeminacy has been prejudicial to the comprehension of a considerable portion of his work. Many have hesitated to accept as the manifestations of a virile and enthusiastic spirit compositions which, it has been thought, should properly be performed with feminine charm and simpering prettiness. On occasions Chopin strove to avoid such misunderstanding by having his new works played by his pupils when he felt too weak to do them justice. Thus in 1839 his pupil Gutmann was called upon to play the C# Minor Scherzo to Moscheles, so that the latter might not get a wrong idea of the work.²¹³

Azoury has characterized Chopin's relationship with Gutmann as "friendly."²¹⁴ Gutmann has been described by Solange Sand, Azoury, and Huneker, as Chopin's "favourite pupil."²¹⁵ George Marek and Maria Gordon-Smith only go so far as to say that Gutmann was "one of his favourite pupils."²¹⁶ Azoury also observes that Chopin addressed

²¹² Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, 214.

²¹³ Hedley, *The Master Musicians Chopin*, 120.

²¹⁴ Azoury, *Chopin Through His Contemporaries: Friends, Lovers, and Rivals*, 88.

²¹⁵ Sand, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 172, 88; Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, 214.

²¹⁶ Marek and Gordon-Smith, *Chopin: A Biography*, 104.

Gutmann affectionately as “tu” and therefore considers him to have been a “*confessari* and *confidante*.”²¹⁷ However, Cortot considers the relationship to be primarily based on “deep affection” from Gutmann’s part,²¹⁸ whilst Eigeldinger describes the relationship as “intimate.”²¹⁹

This relationship seems to have stirred some controversy: there are many differing accounts concerning whether or not Gutmann was present at Chopin’s deathbed. Marek and Gordon-Smith write “Gutmann tried to relieve” the pain of Chopin’s limbs by “vigorously massaging his wrists and ankles.” They then add, however, “(whether Gutmann was there [at the actual deathbed] remains uncertain).”²²⁰ Azoury writes that Hedley does not include Gutmann’s name in a list of those present when Chopin died. Further, he writes that the painting commissioned from Kwiatkowski by Jane Stirling is not a “factual” representation of the death-chamber for it does not portray Gutmann’s presence. Azoury notes that Zelinska specifically recorded Gutmann’s presence.²²¹ Eigeldinger writes that Chopin’s niece, Ludwika Ciechomska-Jedrzejewicz, “categorically denied” Gutmann’s “presence,” yet “contemporary documents” of Grzymala, Pauline Viardot and Charles Gavard “record Gutmann’s presence.”²²² Huneker, without discussing any discrepancy of those present, declares “Chopin died [in]

²¹⁷ Azoury, *Chopin Through His Contemporaries: Friends, Lovers, and Rivals*, 88.

²¹⁸ Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, 191.

²¹⁹ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 166.

²²⁰ Marek and Gordon-Smith, *Chopin: A Biography*, 228.

²²¹ Azoury, *Chopin Through His Contemporaries: Friends, Lovers, and Rivals*, 125.

²²² Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 167.

Gutmann's arms."²²³ If Gutmann was actually present, or if he was only present in spirit, it is without question that he was part of the procession at Chopin's funeral.²²⁴

Whatever the relationship was between Chopin and Gutmann, his pianistic abilities have nevertheless been seriously questioned. Eigeldinger, whilst acknowledging that people have considered Gutmann to be Chopin's favourite pupil, adds: "if hardly his best one!" He quotes Lenz as saying that Filtsch and he "made fun" of Gutmann. Further, that "Gutmann...never took account of his teacher's tastes, slashing and thumping the piano unconcernedly. Such liberties provoked the indignation of other students."²²⁵ Marek and Gordon-Smith also note Lenz's words that "Chopin tried to carve a toothpick out of this log."²²⁶ Cortot and Huneker refer to him as a "giant." Eigeldinger quotes Lenz as saying that Gutmann was notorious for his "muscular" and "athletic" playing. Further, that Chopin's "blindness" about Gutmann's abilities and temperament were because of his admiration for Gutmann's "healthy manliness" and "Herculean constitution."²²⁷

Chopin's own words contradict the connotation, tone, and intent of Hedley's generalization that Chopin has been characterized incorrectly as 'feminine.' Chopin writes after hearing Clara Wieck play the piano: "you were right; she plays – no one

²²³ Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, 214.

²²⁴ Marek and Gordon-Smith, *Chopin: A Biography*, 233.

²²⁵ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 167.

²²⁶ Marek and Gordon-Smith, *Chopin: A Biography*, 162.

²²⁷ Lenz, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 126, 127. This assessment of Gutmann's characteristics is especially interesting, since Gutmann himself recognized that his teacher's pianistic style was not 'large.' For instance, Niecks recorded Gutmann as saying, "Chopin played generally very quietly, and rarely, indeed hardly ever, *fortissimo*." Gutmann, quoted by Niecks, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 56.

better.”²²⁸ Wieck’s piano playing has been described as “unpercussive.” Furthermore, the nature of her sound was what “set her apart” from her “contemporary virtuosos.” Wieck’s own words, concerning Liszt and Rubinstein are the best reflection of her sensory orientation: “Liszt at the piano, when he is animated, is a pleasant sight, but it was only a sight. There is no longer any music, nothing but diabolical buzzing and banging” and “Rubinstein’s works and his playing lack grace. The first note he struck startled me by the violence of its attack.”²²⁹ In other words, because Chopin held Clara Wieck’s playing in high regard, it is more likely that Hedley’s view is biased. I am not denying that Chopin might have been too unwell, on a particular occasion, to play the piano and that Gutmann was therefore called upon, but I am saying that the connotation, tone, and intent of Hedley’s words reveal his intention of persuading people to share his views. By using the words “simpering” and “weak” (which connote sickliness) and the words “delicate” and “prettiness” (which he openly associates with “femininity” and “effeminacy”) he makes it sound as though anyone who plays Chopin’s music in this manner is equally ‘sick’ and ‘feminine.’

The discussion of how people used language to reflect negatively on the miniature aspects of Chopin’s performance and texts has revealed that Liszt, in the mid-nineteenth century, used language to steer others’ judgments towards what he saw as a ‘manly’ ideal. About one hundred years later, Hedley also used language in order to purge Chopin’s music of those qualities that he linked to ‘femininity.’ Possibly, the responses of these composers, performers, and musicologists merely reflect the aesthetic ideals of

²²⁸ *Chopin’s Letters*, 193.

²²⁹ Dee Booth, “The Teaching Style of Clara Schumann,” *Clavier* (December, 1996), 23.

what Einstein called the “*heroic*” age.²³⁰ However, in defining what they felt was needed in order to perform Chopin’s music successfully (namely, healthy ‘manliness’), they criticized that element which appeared to be the furthest removed from their ‘heroic’ ideal – the miniaturesque and the ‘feminine.’

2.2. Chopin’s Piano and Progress in Piano Design

The way in which writers have portrayed the history of the piano has produced a fair amount of critical response. Chris Nobbs writes of Edwin Good’s book *Giraffes, Black Dragons, and other Pianos: A Technological History from Cristofori to the Modern Concert Grand*, that “it only lives up to its subtitle.”²³¹ That is, that it is a history without “evolutionary and progressive assumptions,” and the technical descriptions seem like “milestones” on a “journey,” which in turn do not support broader arguments.²³² The converse of this approach to the study of pianos may be that the “broader arguments” may not be supported by the “technical descriptions.” For example, the title of Oscar Bie’s book, *A History of the Pianoforte and Pianoforte Players* (1898, and reprinted in 1966), implies that he will make a correlation between the history of the pianoforte (which, in my view, implies a study of varying designs, and mechanisms of those designs) and the history of how pianists used those pianofortes.²³³ Although Bie’s book is

²³⁰ Einstein, *Music in the Romantic Era*, 362.

²³¹ Chriss Nobbs, review of *Giraffes, Black Dragons, and other Pianos: A Technological History from Cristofori to the Modern Concert Grand*, by Edwin M. Good, in *Early Music* (February, 1985), 81.

²³² *Ibid.*, 81.

²³³ Oscar Bie, *A History of the Pianoforte and Pianoforte Players*, trans. by E.E. Kellett and E.W. Naylor (New York: Da Capo press, 1898; 1966).

lengthy, and he discusses a range of topics (such as private and public music practices, and music from “Medieval Church Music” to “Liszt and the Present Time”), he only skims through pianistic practices.²³⁴ He does not discuss how changes in piano design have affected performance and reception.²³⁵ In general, there is a shortage of literature in which the technical development of the piano is viewed in relation to its social context.

Thomas Fritz claims that a lateral approach is lacking in the “Piano” entry in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1980). He writes:

It is regrettable that the authors, having begun their history with a blank page, chose to exclude detailed explanations of the roles played by various forces, musical or otherwise, on the piano’s development. For example, it is likely that Christofori’s amazing mechanism was invented primarily to satisfy the need for a stringed keyboard instrument that could duplicate the crescendos and decrescendos of Italian instrumental and vocal ensembles. The small upright piano, preferred overwhelmingly in Europe throughout most of the nineteenth century, was designed to fit into the limited space of European living quarters and to allow young ladies to be seen as well as heard while playing it.²³⁶

Fritz excuses the authors, who must have had “limited” space for discussion. Because of the concise nature of a dictionary entry, I have reviewed not only *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, but also the independently published *The New Grove Musical Instruments Series: The Piano*. The contributions (and their respective authors) that Fritz criticizes in *The New Grove Dictionary* are in fact reproduced in *The New Grove Musical Instruments Series: The Piano* (1988). The book is nearly two hundred

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 7, 271 – 327.

²³⁵ Oscar Bie was born in 1864. About a decade after his birth, Liszt was described as “reigning as the master supreme” (as described in Amy Fay’s letters (May 1, 1873); Gerig, *Famous Pianists and Their Technique*, 191). The first publication date of Bie’s book is 1898 – partly explaining why he thinks Liszt is a “modern” performer, and a ‘link’ to the “present time.”

²³⁶ Thomas Fritz, “New Grove and the Piano,” *The Piano Quarterly*, No. 120 (Winter 1982-83), 37.

pages in length, and, in my view, is not entirely without broader discussions on certain issues.

The social prestige of the piano – particularly in the nineteenth century – is evident both in the private and public domain. Both Kallberg and Carew discuss, in *Chopin at the Boundaries* and “Victorian Attitudes to Chopin,” respectively, how the piano industry was boosted by the recreational practices and social aspirations of middle-class Europeans.²³⁷ Derek Adlam and William J. Connor claim that it was the “social and commercial [demands], as well as music needs of the 18th-century,” that promoted inventions in piano design.²³⁸ Whilst entertainment for the home required of the hostess that she accompany her male soloist (as in Sebastian Gutzwiller’s painting, *Family Concert in Valse* (1849)), or, perhaps, perform “mood pieces” by Chopin, public entertainment was a more serious enterprise.²³⁹ Some developments in piano design, such as an increase in its range of pitches, may have been in part a response to the “growing popularity of duets” for the home. Other developments, however, were influenced directly by concert stage requirements to accommodate, after the French Revolution (see Chapter One: 1.1), increased audience size, the larger concert halls, and the performers’ desire for a platform to display their techniques.²⁴⁰

²³⁷ Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries*; Carew, “Victorian Attitudes to Chopin,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 226.

²³⁸ Derek Adlam and William J. Connor, “England and France to 1800,” *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments: The Piano*, ed. Stanley Sadie (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1988), 21.

²³⁹ Maribel Meisel and Philip R. Belt, “The Viennese Piano From 1800,” *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments: The Piano*, 30 (Figure 14); Carew, *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 226.

²⁴⁰ Sandra P. Rosenblum, *Performance Practices in Classic Piano Music* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), 133; Gerig, *Famous Pianists and Their Technique*, 45.

Reginald Gerig compares Mozart's Walter piano with the modern Steinway and reveals that the latter is seven times heavier than the former.²⁴¹ Dieter Hildebrandt calls the piano "the most athletic instrument," and says that it is both a "sports field" and a "shooting range."²⁴² This analogy – that pianos are the grounds for athletes – is supported by Connor, who states that the modern grand piano is well-suited for "athletic virtuoso onslaughts."²⁴³ Twentieth-century authors generally say that the focus on a greater volume of tone in piano design, since its origin in 1709, has resulted in a suitable concert instrument: "Viennese makers tried to meet requests for instruments with a heavier action, which would provide a bigger tone"; "Cristofori's principle no longer provid[ed]...a satisfactory piano action"; "in the quest for greater volume heavier hammers were a natural corollary to the heavier strings which the iron frame could now support"; "heavier stringing, thicker and stronger case-structure, and heavier hammers and dampers...[were due to] listener's desire for more volume and a stronger fundamental tone."²⁴⁴

Maribel Meisel and Philip Belt write that a juror, Joseph Fischhof, present at the Great Exhibition of 1851, "complained bitterly about the other judges' emphasis on volume alone" thus illustrating the prevailing preference at that stage.²⁴⁵ The entire movement toward an instrument, in all respects more powerful, has been viewed positively in the late twentieth century. In *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments: The Piano*,

²⁴¹ Gerig, *Famous Pianists and Their Technique*, 34.

²⁴² Dieter Hildebrandt, *Pianoforte: A Social History of the Piano*, trans. Harriet Goodman with an introduction by Anthony Burgess (London: Century Hutchinson, 1988), 16.

²⁴³ Connor, *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments: The Piano*, 56.

²⁴⁴ Rosenblum, *Performance Practices in Classical Piano Music*, 47; Edwin Ripin, Rosamond Harding, and Meisel and Belt, in *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments: The Piano*, 3, 34, 41.

²⁴⁵ Meisel and Belt, *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments: The Piano*, 34.

Winter, who begins his article emphasizing the positive effects Liszt had on the evolution of concert pianism, has criticized those who resisted ‘progress.’ Previously, in his article in the journal *Early Music*, he said that “the Romantic piano is sure to remain the darling of the [Cyril] Ehrlich ‘minority-cult.’” Ehrlich was reported, by Winter, to have claimed that pianos before the 1860’s were “singularly lacking in strength and brilliance [and that is why] strings broke frequently.”²⁴⁶ Ritterman also concludes that ‘progress’ in piano design is an “improvement” in piano design.²⁴⁷

Most present-day authors discuss developments in piano design as though the desire for largeness can be supported by a rationale. For instance, Edwin Ripin writes: “logically, the ideal form of the piano is the ‘grand,’ the wing-shape of which is determined by the fact that the strings gradually lengthen from the treble at the right to the bass at the left.” He says that the only benefit in owning an upright piano is that “it takes up less room.”²⁴⁸ He summarizes what he identifies as the major elements of the modern Steinway, whose inventions were “endorsed” continually by Liszt, as follows.²⁴⁹

Three [strings] for each note down to B or B flat, then two for each note, except for the extreme bass, with just one; the massive metal frame that supports the enormous tension that the strings impose (approximately 18 tons or 16, 400 kg); the soundboard and the bridges which communicate the vibrations of the strings to the soundboard which, in turn, enables these vibrations to be efficiently converted into sound waves, thereby making the sound of the instrument audible; the action, consisting of the keys, the hammers, and the mechanisms...²⁵⁰

²⁴⁶ Robert Winter, *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments*, 78 – 85; Winter, “The Most Unwitting Foes of the Romantic Piano May be Those Well-Intentioned Curators Who Lend Their Instruments for Recording Sessions,” *Early Music* (February, 1984), 21, 24.

²⁴⁷ Ritterman, “Piano Music and the Public Concert 1800-1850,” *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 25.

²⁴⁸ Edwin Ripin, *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments: The Piano*, 2, 3.

²⁴⁹ *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments: The Piano*, 131.

²⁵⁰ Ripin, “History of Piano: Introduction,” *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments: The Piano*, 2.

According to the entry on “Pleyel,” in “Appendix Two: Index of Piano Makers” *The New Grove Series*, Chopin owned “a grand of 1839.”²⁵¹ What this entry fails to mention, is that this piano of 1839 – “No. 7267” – had a “single escapement,” a fact that set Chopin’s piano apart from Liszt’s. Liszt endorsed inventions that made the action of the keys considerably heavier, such as the invention of double escapement (incorporated routinely in Érard’s pianos after 1820).²⁵² Chopin, on the other hand, “resisted progress,” as Winter puts it.²⁵³ Chopin himself wrote: “Pleyel’s pianos are *non plus ultra*,” a statement that is modified only slightly in the *New Grove Series* where Chopin’s music is said to be well-suited for the “French Érard,” even though “Chopin usually preferred the instruments of Pleyel.”²⁵⁴ In Figure 7. 1 and Figure 7. 2 the difference between the single escapement of Chopin’s piano and the modern concert grand piano is represented visually.

²⁵¹ “Appendix Two: Index of Piano Makers,” *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments*, 168.

²⁵² Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 91.

²⁵³ Winter, *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments*, 126.

²⁵⁴ *Chopin’s Letters*, 158; Harding, *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments*, 41.

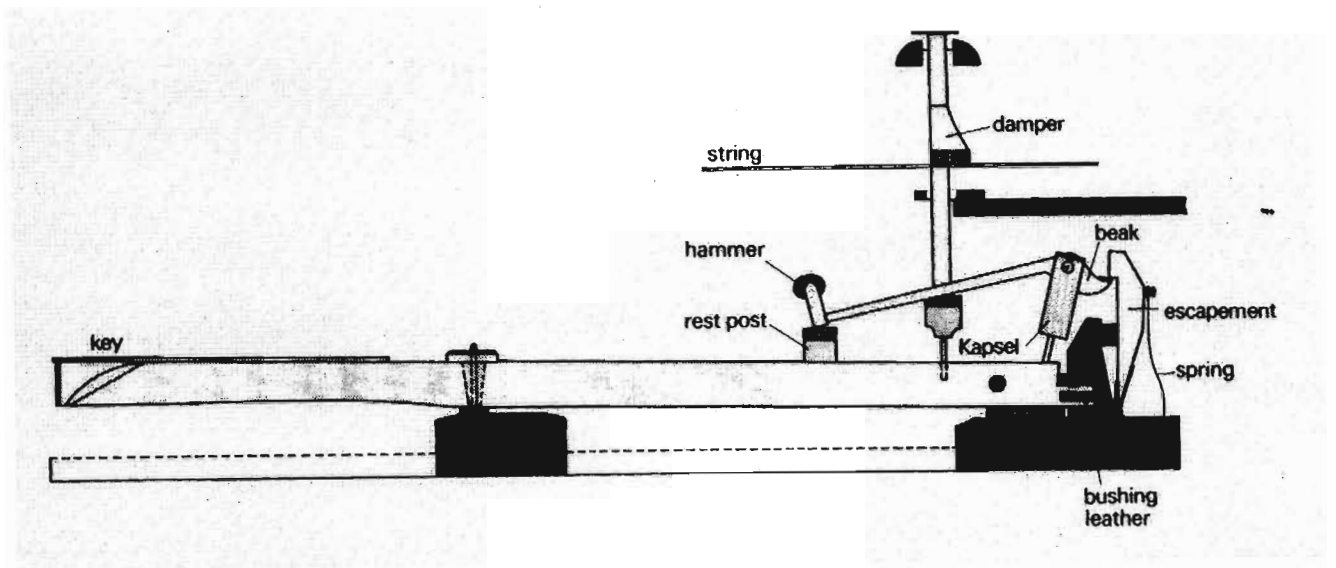


Figure 7. 1. Single Escapement.²⁵⁵

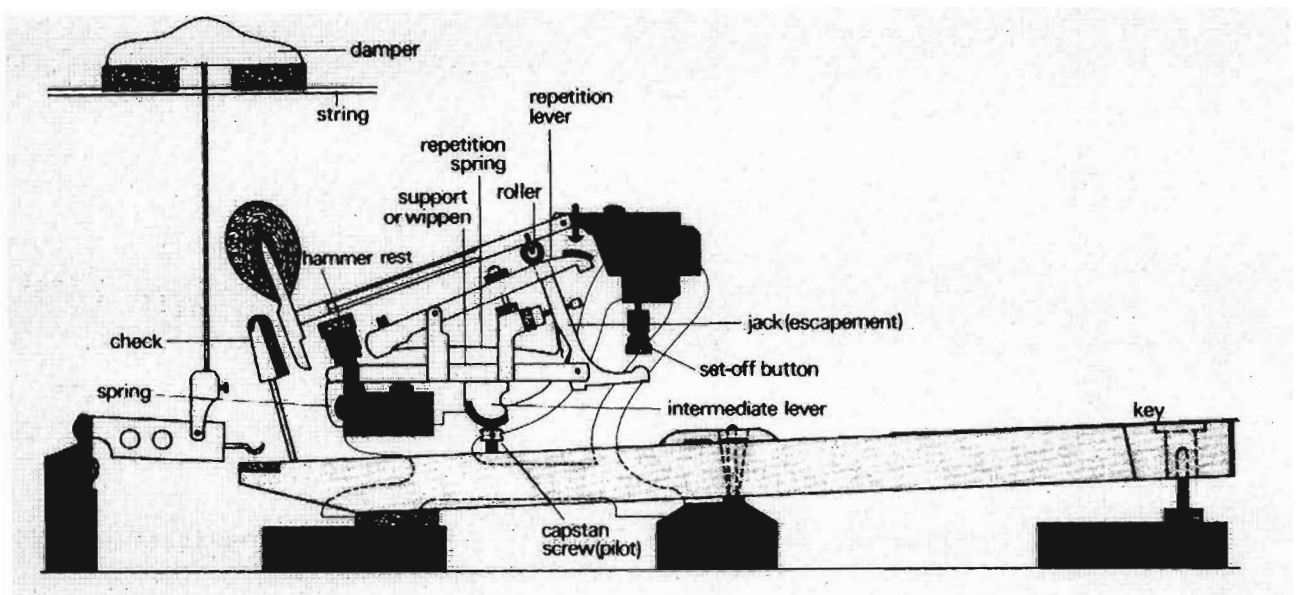


Figure 7. 2. The Action of the Modern Grand Piano.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁵ Belt, "Germany and Austria, 1750 – 1800" *The New Grove Musical Instruments Series: The Piano*, 14.

²⁵⁶ Ehrlich, "From 1915," *The New Grove Musical Instruments Series: The Piano*, 64.

The doubling of the escapement was also accompanied by an increase in the size of the hammers. Connor explains that the trend for a standardized and durable piano (a “low maintenance” instrument, in other words),²⁵⁷ means, necessarily, that the hammers must be covered with “thick felt” (not “soft skin”)²⁵⁸ and by a “machine.”²⁵⁹ Figure 8.1 and 8.2 below relay visually what Chopin might have played on as opposed to what is used as standard practice today.

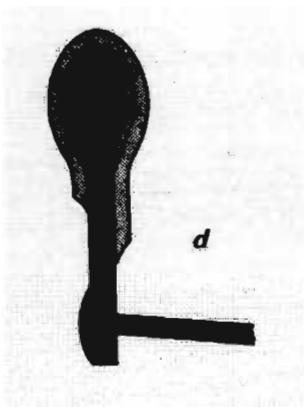


Figure 8. 1. Design of Hammers: English Broadwood (1823).²⁶⁰

²⁵⁷ Walden Hughes, “The Horowitz Piano: Like None Other,” *Clavier* (May/June, 1996), 32.

²⁵⁸ Chopin, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 91.

²⁵⁹ Connor, *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments*, 56.

²⁶⁰ There is no photograph of the hammers belonging to Pleyel in *The New Grove Series of Instrumental Instruments: The Piano*. This Broadwood hammer, however, being the prototype on which Pleyel modeled his own hammers, is an appropriate comparison. According to Alfred Hipkins, the cottage-piano of Broadwood (1848) was especially liked by Chopin. Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 26.

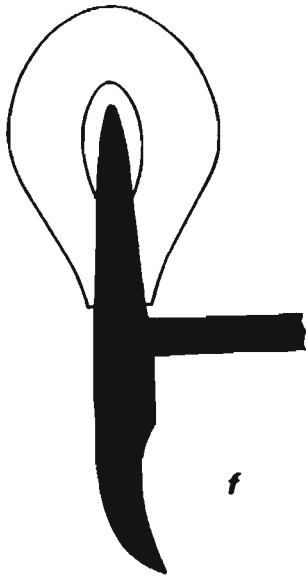


Figure 8. 2. Steinway (1970).²⁶¹

The implications of the iron frames, thicker strings, heavier hammers, and the drastic differences in the action of the keys, between Chopin's pianos and modern instruments are that the quality and quantity of the sound of the instruments differ radically. Harding, writing in technical terms of the causes and effects in piano design, identifies a technical glitch arising from the "heavier," "repetitive action," of the piano, saying that a direct result of Érard's newly invented repetition action was its "sluggishness."²⁶² While the problem of "sluggishness" may be viewed as a technical problem of piano design, the weight and touch of the standard grand has been praised by Mitsuko Uchida recently, who said that the modern grand piano is superior to earlier pianos because of its "playability."²⁶³ According to Rosamond Harding, double escapement, in particular, was

²⁶¹ Meisel, "History of The Piano," *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments: The Piano*, 37.

²⁶² Harding, *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments*, 41.

²⁶³ Mitsuko Uchida, in Justin Humfrey, "My Chopin," in *BBC Music Magazine* (October, 1999), 47.

“exploited” by the virtuosos of the nineteenth century – Friederick Kalkbrenner, and Sigismond Thalberg, amongst them.²⁶⁴ Liszt has been recorded, repeatedly, as having played Chopin’s music on the “enhanced Érard,” a “seven-octave” instrument with double escapement that allowed him to display his “enhanced brilliance.”²⁶⁵

Chopin confessed that his piano, with its light touch, posed challenges to him, saying that when he was “out of sorts,” he could not play on the Pleyel piano because the light action of the keys resulted in abrupt sounds. Under the same physical condition, however, he said he could still manage to play on the Érard piano, because it had a “ready-made tone.”²⁶⁶ In 1982, Charles Fisk claimed that the action of the Érard was light in comparison with the Steinway, and added that this lightness was difficult to control.²⁶⁷ Several students who were exposed to Horowitz’s piano (known for its light regulation of the keys) said that the keys were so light, and spoke so quickly, that the sounds they created tended to be harsh.²⁶⁸ According to Chopin’s and subsequent reports, the difficulty of playing on a very light piano is that the keys respond quickly and easily. Presuming that pianists of today do not wish to make the strings vibrate both longitudinally and laterally (thus creating a harsh “jingl[ing]” sound), it is imperative that when playing on a light keyboard that they develop a more sensitive, and more controlled sense of touch.²⁶⁹ In this sense, a ‘strong’ technique, when seen in relation to Chopin’s

²⁶⁴ Harding, *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments*, 44.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 131; Methuen-Campbell, *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 197.

²⁶⁶ Chopin, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 91.

²⁶⁷ Fisk, in William and Phillippa Kiraly, “Érard versus Steinway,” *The Piano Quarterly* No. 117 (Spring, 1982), 45.

²⁶⁸ Hughes, “The Horowitz Piano,” *Clavier*, 32.

²⁶⁹ Prabhudas Ivanson, “Piano Terminology: Under the Hammer,” *Music Teacher* (November, 1999), 18 – 19.

ability to play on extremely light keyboards, does not refer to brute strength, but to the amount of restraint a pianist is able to apply.

Two twentieth-century suggestions on how to remedy the issue of an over-weighted modern keyboard when performing Chopin’s music are (1) that pianists should somehow acquire “double” the “strength” to play on the modern instruments, and (2) that we should rethink our dynamic scale (according to Paul and Eva Badura-Skoda, Figure 9). The Badura-Skodas base this new system both on Chopin’s reported physical limitations and on the fact that the uniqueness of his instrument might have played a role in his understanding of musical meaning.

| “For Chopin” | “For Us” |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| <i>ff</i> | <i>Mf</i> |
| <i>f</i> | <i>Mp</i> |
| <i>p</i> | <i>Pp – ppp</i> |
| <i>pp</i> | <i>almost inaudible</i> |

Figure 9. Badura-Skoda: Perspectives on Dynamics.²⁷⁰

Presumably, the question of readjusting one’s sense of sound in order to get some sort of idea of Chopin’s sense of sound (and possibly his sense of musical meaning), will only be

²⁷⁰ Paul and Eva Badura-Skoda, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 126.

taken seriously by those who are concerned with historically-informed performance practice. John Rink warns us that knowing the original contexts, which provide “essential terms of reference for ‘meaningful’ modern-day performances,” should not promote “putative authenticity.”²⁷¹ These “terms of reference” have been considered at length recently. For instance, Methuen-Campbell points out that Chopin marked “*fff*” at least twice in his polonaises, even though he stated categorically, and in metaphorical terms (“a dog barking,” for instance), that he detested harsh sounds.²⁷² (“With as much fire as possible,” marked at the coda of Etude Op. 10 No. 4, is another indication where Chopin seems to be contradicting what he usually advocated – refined playing.²⁷³). According to Methuen-Campbell, the changes in the “Chopin tradition” were probably due to Chopin’s students’ Mathias and Mikuli who adapted his music to the ongoing changes in instrument design. I maintain, however, that a break with the Chopin tradition might also have been influenced by these own men’s sensory bias; it was Mathias and Mikuli who expressed their approval for Chopin’s playing when it displayed an apparent “vigor” and “power!”²⁷⁴ Whatever reason these students might have had to break with tradition, what is clear, according to Eigeldinger, is that the new kind of playing would have resulted in a “disagreeable sound” if performed on Chopin’s piano, while the modern grand would always provide a “round sonority” and a “remarkable substance.”²⁷⁵

²⁷¹ John Rink, “Translating Musical Meaning: The Nineteenth-Century Performer as Narrator,” *Rethinking Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 219.

²⁷² Methuen-Campbell, *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 192; Chopin, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 103, 114.

²⁷³ The set of Etudes Op. 10 is dedicated to Franz Liszt and almost all of the polonaises are dedicated to men.

²⁷⁴ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 56.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 75.

Some members of Chopin's society were clearly enchanted by the "peculiar" nature of his Pleyel piano. Marmontel suggested that the pedals of the Pleyel piano were suited to Chopin, because of the unique chromaticism and modulations of his music.²⁷⁶ The 'voice' also entered into discussions on Chopin's piano. Claude Montal, the piano technician, recorded that Chopin's piano "speaks" and "sings."²⁷⁷ Leo and Trémont, however, chose, on the one hand, to deny that Chopin's piano had the amount of presence that a voice has, and, on the other, to suggest that "one might have thought an instrument superfluous," because "what one hears is no piano; it is a succession of fresh, touching thoughts, often melancholic."²⁷⁸ Comments were also made on the texture of the sound of the Pleyel. For example, Montal recorded that the veneered sound boards – "mahogany across the grain of pine" – did "not augment" the sound "in volume," but gave a "satisfy[ing] quality"; "[the] upper register becoming bright and silvery, the middle one accentuated and penetrating, and the lower clear and vigorous."²⁷⁹

It was probably because Chopin's melodies tended to be in the register of a "coloratura" (the "upper" register that Montal describes as "silvery") that his piano was described, either literally or figuratively, as being silvery.²⁸⁰ The descriptions "tiny bells on a giraffes back," "fairies under silver bells," and "silvery [with a] veiled sonority," were recorded by Liszt, amongst others.²⁸¹ When the word "silver" was not used, a sense of

²⁷⁶ Marmontel, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 57, 58.

²⁷⁷ Claude Montal, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 91, 92.

²⁷⁸ Sophie Leo, and Baron de Trémont, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 279, 286.

²⁷⁹ Montal, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 57, 58.

²⁸⁰ Samson, *The Music of Chopin*, 81.

²⁸¹ Liszt, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 25, 290, 294.

shimmer was conveyed by the word “velvet,” which was also used to describe Chopin’s playing.²⁸²

Descriptions of the twentieth-century piano, when compared with these words, for example, tend to be less metaphoric – “resilient,” “ringing,” brilliant, stronger, and so on.²⁸³ Alfred Brendel, for instance, said to Elyse Mach that “the piano sound is not terribly interesting or individual compared with the human voice, for example, or with a stringed instrument. It does not have their direct sensuous appeal.”²⁸⁴

Brendel claims that the sound of the piano (presumably the modern piano) is not sensual, but he has not, however, considered that piano design in the past was not as standardized as it is today. Chopin lived in a time when there existed French, English, and Viennese instruments. Brendel’s judgment, in other words, does not seem to relate to Montal’s description of Chopin’s piano; all of Montal’s words convey a sense of sight, sound, and touch – “penetrating,” “vigorous,” “silvery,” and “velvet.” Brendel compared the modern piano with the violin and the voice, and, in this regard, his observations may be correct: a piano’s keys prevent the pianist from having direct contact with the strings. Chopin’s own words concerning his single-escapement Pleyel piano (as opposed to Érard’s pianos), show that developments in piano design might have contributed to the lack of sensual appeal to which Brendel referred: “the enunciation of my inmost thoughts and feelings [are] more direct, more personal. My fingers feel in more immediate contact with

²⁸² Montal, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 91.

²⁸³ Connor, *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments*, 56.

²⁸⁴ Alfred Brendel, in Elyse Mach, *Great Contemporary Pianists Speak for Themselves*, with an introduction by Sir George Solti (London: Robson Books, 1981), 26.

the hammers, which then translate precisely and faithfully the feeling I want to produce.”²⁸⁵

In 1982, the “Frederick Collection” of pianos was drawn upon for the “Érard versus Steinway” symposium held at Kenyon College. Andrew Porter commented that its purpose was “comparison, not confrontation.” William and Phillippa Kiraly considered the symposium to be more than a “comparison” due to the “revelations” that came to them after hearing the instruments played one after the other. The sound of the Érard was reported as being “quite loud” and capable of filling up the 600-seat hall. Both Kiralys reported further that when the Steinway was played, the impression was “shocking”: it was like using an “earth-mover to fill a sandbox.”²⁸⁶

As different as the Steinway was perceived to be from the Érard in the twentieth century, so too was the Érard perceived to be different from the Pleyel in the nineteenth century. A critique of Chopin’s playing appeared in the journal *Les Pianiste*, stating that Chopin’s taste was in “perfect harmony” with his instrument, and that Chopin, needing to “sing,” had to be “given” a “Pleyel,” whilst Liszt required an “Érard.”²⁸⁷

When the *Courier Polonais* asked for “more energy” in Chopin’s playing, he wrote to Tytus Woyciechowski: “I guessed where this energy lies, so at the next concert I played on a Viennese piano instead of on my own” thus indicating that he used a louder

²⁸⁵ Chopin, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 91.

²⁸⁶ William and Phillippa Kiraly, “Érard versus Steinway: A Symposium on the Sounds of Various Pianos,” *The Piano Quarterly* No. 117 (Spring, 1982), 44 – 45.

²⁸⁷ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 92.

instrument. It would appear that Chopin's tactic paid off. He noted in a letter that Elsner, Grzymala (a critic for the "*Polish Courier*"), and the audience considered the second concert a greater success than the first owing to the increase in "loudness."²⁸⁸

In sum, the pianos on which Liszt and Rubinstein performed and the pianos on which Mathias and Mikuli taught were significantly different to Chopin's preferred instrument. Whether or not they intended purposely to change the meanings of Chopin's music, the very tool that they used to relay Chopin's musical rhetoric had changed drastically and has continued to follow a course of dynamic change.

2.3. Pianists' Problems

Aside from the role that piano development plays in the performance and appreciation of Chopin's music, I suggest, also, that the developments in piano design impact on pianism in two ways. On the one hand, the newer instruments problematize the performance of Chopin's music, and, on the other hand, they may invite strain or injury, because of the aforementioned problem of methodological adaptations to the 'improvements' in instrument design – improvements that are linked to Liszt's preferred piano, and which have therefore resulted in a keyboard that Chopin himself would not have approved.

²⁸⁸ *Chopin's Letters*, 77.

2.3.1. An Interdisciplinary Approach

In general, those researching pianists' physical problems have been criticized for a lack of "interdisciplinary consultation and collaboration."²⁸⁹ Robert Dawley criticizes S. Harman's medical study on the "occupational diseases" of instrumentalists as being "*in vacuo*."²⁹⁰ Harman had himself criticized music educators as being "ignorant of physiology" and, therefore, teaching "harmful techniques," "postures" and "synergies which actually cause medical problems." Further, Harman claimed that there exists a "wasteland devoid of empirical or case studies." In other words, the teaching of the mechanics of piano playing has been based largely on hearsay and opinion.²⁹¹ Dawley says that music educators should be "cognizant of medical research," so that "teaching practice checks medical theory." After pointing out that some assumptions, made by medical researchers and musicians, may be incorrect due to a lack of consultation, Dawley suggests that "enlightened medical opinion" would be the "most appropriate" way of "developing effective pedagogic strategies" that can prevent possible physical damage due to harmful techniques.²⁹²

There is an abundance of articles on pianists' physiological problems in piano playing. Robert Silverman's interview with two medical doctors, recorded in *The Piano Quarterly*, deals with problems relevant to my argument that the roots of the problems

²⁸⁹ Robert M. Dawley, "Medical Research in Music: Foundation for a Theory of Music Instruction," *Council For Research In Music Education Bulletin*, no. 85 (Fall, 1985), 39.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 38 – 55.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 39.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 43.

relate to human nature, and not to the physical mechanics of piano technique.²⁹³ The works of Charles Reddie, Tobias Matthay, Otto Ortmann, Abbey Whiteside, Sang-Hie Lee, and William Newman are concerned with the physical aspects of how to play the piano in general or how to play certain pieces or technically difficult passages (such as double notes, octaves, or *presto* passages): *Pianoforte: Its Technical and Aesthetic Sides*, *Pianoforte: Tone-Production, Mechanics of Piano Technique*, *On Piano Playing*, *A Psychophysiological Approach to the Technical Problems Found in the Piano Studies of Chopin and Liszt and a Compendium of the Solutions*, *The Pianist's Problems*.

The issues raised by Silverman concern: playing the wrong kind of music (in other words, music with unusual technical difficulties which is therefore harmful); excessive practicing; an excess of tension; medical problems such as tendonitis and inflammation; the history of virtuosic repertoire that does not seem to “fit the hand;” the development of the piano; the evolution of larger audiences; and psychological stress. The discussion also includes references to a specific sufferer from physical problems – namely Leon Fleisher. In my view, Silverman mentions piano development and the evolution of larger audiences in order to imply that either or both may provide reasons for the influx of problems. However, he does not present these possible root causes within a framework that defines a bias towards largeness, nor does he consider a concomitant theory of ‘masculine’ performance spheres and practices – although he does, of course, point toward the public stage. By considering the existence of a link between developments in society (such as the larger pianos for larger halls) and pianists’ physical problems,

²⁹³ Robert Silverman, “Physicians’ Views of Physical Problems,” *The Piano Quarterly*, No. 120 (Winter, 1982-1983), 42 – 47.

Silverman implies that a problem exists owing to the physical adaptations that pianists have to make when performing on a modern instrument. Often, however, physical problems are defined merely as medical issues: problems of excess strain and tension, and the injuries that are related to these physical conditions – such as tendonitis or inflammation. The medical problems that are applicable to my study include “nerve compression syndromes” and “muscular joint cramps and paresis,” since these sorts of conditions epitomize the complaints of pianists who overstrain their fingers, hands, arms, and shoulders.²⁹⁴

I agree that isolating medicine from music is not desirable. Medical as well as musical research must be aware of the inherent physiological difficulties of a music text, of the instrument being played, and of the physiological methods employed to play that text in order to ascertain and validate the prognosis of a physical problem. However, I also suggest that if we adopted an “interdisciplinary consultation” between medicine and music, we would also have to take account of period instruments, since, for instance, the keyboard literature of the baroque, classical, and a substantial amount of the Romantic period was not written for the modern grand pianos upon which we now practise and perform this music.

²⁹⁴ Dawley, “Medical Research in Music: Foundation for a Theory of Music Instruction,” *Council For Research In Music Education Bulletin*, 43. Dawley points out that the relationship between these two problems of hypertension are sometimes so close that differentiating between them is a difficult task

2.3.2. A Consideration of Period Instruments

Christopher Kite, Melvyn Tan and Linda Nicholson write of the physiological adaptations required when playing period instruments. Kite's title summarizes his perspective: "The Day Has Still to Come When Mozart on a Steinway Will Be Regarded ...as Necessarily a Kind of Transcription."²⁹⁵ He examines not only the differences of sound but also the differences in techniques required for differing instruments. Similarly, Tan's article "The Technique of Playing Music Authentically Does Not Mean Simply Using the Appropriate Instruments"²⁹⁶ and Nicholson's article "The Musician...Needs to Play Not One But Many Instruments, to Develop Not One Technique But Many"²⁹⁷ articulate differences in physiological approaches to period instruments. For example, Tan discusses the use of arm weight and "finger action" in relation to the "sounding limitations" of period instruments.²⁹⁸ In other words, he is referring to a manner in which one may play period instruments so that the resultant sound is not harsh. Moreover, he writes of a harsh sound as denoting an undue amount of force. Similarly, Tan and Nicholson also discuss the sensory nature of period instruments and techniques relative to those instruments. For example, Nicholson, in writing about Haydn's music, says "the extreme lightness of the Schantz action" is most effective for expressing "detailed

²⁹⁵ Christopher Kite, "The Day Has Still to Come When Mozart on a Steinway Will Be Regarded ...as Necessarily a Kind of Transcription," *Early Music* (February, 1985), 54 – 56.

²⁹⁶ Melvyn Tan, "The Technique of Playing Music Authentically Does Not Mean Simply Using the Appropriate Instruments," *Early Music* (February, 1985), 57 – 58.

²⁹⁷ Linda Nicholson, "The Musician...Needs to Play Not One But Many Instruments, to Develop Not One Technique But Many," *Early Music* (February, 1985), 52 – 53.

²⁹⁸ Tan, "The Technique of Playing Music Authentically does not Mean Simply Using the Appropriate Instruments," *Early Music*, 58.

articulation.”²⁹⁹ She describes a physiological style of playing which suits the instrument and the music text.

Writers whose perspectives contribute to the further discussion of pianists’ problems include: Diane Palacious, Blanche Abram, Frank R. Wilson, Robert Strangeland, Arnold Schultz, Harriet Prevatt, Victoria McArthur, Thomas Mastroianni, James McKeever, Charles Jay Stein, and Glenna Batson. Their arguments, unlike those of the above articles, are not restricted to issues concerning techniques used on older instruments. The arguments they formulate articulate problems of adaptation to present instruments and performing practices. All these authors are primarily concerned with the physiological ‘apparatus’ and related stresses or injuries that the human body may incur during the act of playing an instrument.

2.3.3. Method- and Medical-Related Complaints

In the first part of their three-part article, Alexandra and Roger Pierce respond to a letter written by a person who is suffering from “soreness” in the right shoulder and an arm that feels “unusually tired and heavy.”³⁰⁰ Moreover, the pain experienced is said to have originated from the act of “playing.” They then attempt to solve the problems by referring to the “human skeleton,” the “bones” and the “spaces” in between the bones, and the

²⁹⁹ Nicholson, “The Musician...Needs to Play not One but Many Instruments, to Develop not One Technique but Many,” *Early Music* (February, 1985), 53.

³⁰⁰ Alexandra and Roger Pierce, “Pain and Healing: For Pianists,” *The Piano Quarterly* (Summer, 1982), 43 – 44.

factors that contribute to human movement: muscles, bones, and the joints. They summarize that “pain” most often results from “chronic overdoing on the part of the muscular component of this three-way cooperative.” The words of advice they offer on how to heal oneself are: “Stop! Something is wrong. Rest.”³⁰¹ They would have readers believe that what is “wrong” is simply a result of poor technical methods and modes of practice. In the second part of their article, there is a more detailed discussion of the “openness of joints” and the “responsiveness of muscles.” In their attempt to show how stiffness is prejudicial to musical performance, they suggest a small experiment where the people are to “jump” and “brace” themselves so that they feel the effects of a ‘hard’ landing. Through this example, they illustrate that “reverberation” (which is the “rebounding” of an action) is the “shimmering” of “release-through” movement, and they discuss the reverberation of the hand, wrist, arm, and shoulder.³⁰² In the third part of their article, they bring our attention to the fact that sound can only be created by the “body’s action.” In order to show how the human body can be used to influence a pianist’s touch and sound without incurring pain, they include sketches of the human body which correlate to the subsections of the article, namely: “Experience Your Sitting,” “Pelvic Support,” and “Moving into the Keys.”³⁰³ It would seem that these exercises are not only aimed at helping to cure or ease the physical problems of pianists, but that they expect that pianists using their methods will ‘touch’ the keys better and therefore also sound better. They write within the section on “Moving into the Keys”: “you can see even in the drawings that this (which refers to the “forward” movement of the “whole trunk”) brings

³⁰¹ Ibid. 43 – 44.

³⁰² Pierce, “Pain and Healing: For Pianists, Part 2,” *The Piano Quarterly*, 38.

³⁰³ Pierce, “Pain and Healing: for Pianists, Part 3,” *The Piano Quarterly*, 46, 47, 48.

the potentiality for more weight and tone into the contact of the fingers with the keys.”³⁰⁴

In my view it is somewhat ironic that the Pierces are able to identify piano techniques and methods of piano-practice that over-strain the pianists’ body yet they assume one should strive for “more tone.” Their belief that pianists should avoid overstrain, is countered by their advocating of a big piano-tone.

Brenda Wristen explains how “fitness and form,” which can be reached only through exercising the components of the human body, can lower the chances of “injury.” Being consumptive for much of his life (and therefore hardly ever “fit”), Chopin subscribed to the view that practice should be kept to a minimum (at the most three hours a day).³⁰⁵ A pianist may over-practise in an attempt to make quick progress with his or her piano-technique. There is no suggestion in the sources I have examined that Chopin ever suffered from an injury or that his method was indicative of a problematic technique, yet he has been invariably characterized as an unfit individual. By comparison, Wristen’s comments seem to be inappropriate in the context of Chopin’s pianism.

Wristen begins by summarizing the importance of relaxation methods such as the Alexander Technique, Yoga and Tai Chi. Her consideration of these methods results from her belief that it is neither “informative” nor “helpful” to “simply” tell a student to “relax,” but considers that with the help of such methods, the student is often able to “recognize the optimum level of muscle stress.”³⁰⁶ Wristen writes that many factors contribute to injuries. She says that it is a mistake to believe that “poor pedagogy” is to

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 48.

³⁰⁵ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 23.

³⁰⁶ Brenda Wristen, “Fitness and Form to Reduce Injuries,” *Clavier* (July/August, 1996), 27.

blame. Injury is rather a result of “inefficient technique, poor practice habits, and a pianist’s physical traits.” Wristen then continues to discuss the one thing that students should never do: “never play through any pain.” Together with her discussions on the “natural hand position,” “nerves,” “tendons” and some empirical methods of easing the playing of the piano, she also relays the advice of Alice Brandfonbrener, the Director of Medical Program for Performing Artists, who is based in Chicago:

...Swimming is the ideal exercise for musicians because it offers overall cardiovascular conditioning and strengthens the muscles of the back, neck, and shoulders without placing undue stress on these muscles.³⁰⁷

Angeline Newport similarly identifies the causes of pain as “poor posture,” “incorrect hand position,” “excessive tension,” “excessive movement,” “poor reading” ability, “inefficient practice,” or “incorrect vertical-horizontal hand movements.”³⁰⁸ In her introduction, she writes that many bad habits of “freshmen” piano majors have to be “undone.” She writes that it is possible to learn the works of Bach, Beethoven and Chopin, with “minimum effort,” and without “pain,” or “exhaustion,” but that the “technical proficiency” required for the mastering of these works “does not develop by mere chance.” Similarly, Wilson reports on the “teaching of hands.” He summarizes two case studies of physical problems in relation to the hands and discusses “writers’ cramp” in relation to music practices.³⁰⁹ After reviewing the findings of five medical researchers, he determines that there exist several types of “underlying” causes for physical “disorders”:

³⁰⁷ Ibid., 26.

³⁰⁸ Angeline Newport, “Painless Piano Technique: Avoiding Common Problems,” *Clavier* (April, 1982), 32, 33.

³⁰⁹ Wilson, “Teaching Hands, Treating Hands” *The Piano Quarterly*, 38.

- biomechanical overload of muscles, tendons, ligaments and joints, as the result of excessive use of the instrument, faulty technique, or both;
- similar tissue stress or injury due to unintended or unavoidable adverse conditions (such as instrument malfunction or inherently bad design, or poorly designed seating for players), or from accidents or medical conditions whose occurrence is unrelated to use of the instrument;
- compression or other injury or disease of nerves supplying muscles of the involved limb or limbs, leading to faulty muscular control and coordination;
- defective control of movement due to primary brain, spinal cord or muscular disorders;
- psychological causes ³¹⁰

Palacious, Abram, Mastroianni, McKeever, Prevatt, and Schultz all refer to the tensions and stresses related to the physiology of the performing artist, and do not overly concern themselves with medical problems. Palacious defines five types of tensions that can be related to the musician: “demands” of the music, “audience,” “life as an artist,” “life as a human being,” and “society” as a whole.³¹¹ Her discussion unfolds as though she were telling a story. For example, she writes that after the performer has chosen a piece to perform, tension follows expectedly, for in “his” attempt to render a performance that reflects the composer’s intention, the “muscular system,” which has been conditioned during the process of learning that piece takes over and reflects more of the performer’s interpretation. Following the so-called tension between ‘composer intention’ and ‘performer rendition,’ she then discusses tension related to stage fright. She relates this tension to the muscular control needed in the performance of virtuosic music, and the need – as a human being and artist – to be acknowledged by society as a competent virtuoso. Abram’s article also mentions the existence of a ‘relationship’ between “physical stress” and the “psychological tension” of performing. She does however focus

³¹⁰ Ibid., 34.

³¹¹ Diane Palacious, “Tension and the Performing Artist,” *The Piano Quarterly* (1980), 37- 40.

on the specific tensions of the body that are detrimental to good piano playing.³¹² The areas that she believes require understanding in order to alleviate tension and help a musical performance are “posture at the keyboard,” the use of the arm, wrist, hand and fingers, “gestures,” and fingertip support.

The title of Mastroianni’s article, “Born Free,” suggests that a freeness of technique is the pianist’s goal.³¹³ He includes sketches of “high, stiff wrists,” and accompanying arguments by Liszt who thought that “octave playing” was the “basis” for a good technique.³¹⁴ Mastroianni also includes sketches of hand positions, and discusses the tension of muscles during incorrect “hand alignment.”³¹⁵ He also includes some anatomical diagrams of the internal muscles and ligaments of the hand and arm, showing how he believes stiffness, tension, fatigue and pain can occur during the process of adduction, fast passages, and an over-use of the extensor muscles.³¹⁶ McKeever focuses on the “correct” movements of the wrist.³¹⁷ He includes several photographs in which he depicts incorrect wrist positions and motions of the wrist. He claims that there are five motions of which the wrist should be capable: “down-up” motion, “rotation,” “side motion,” “circular motion,” and “staccato.” In between his explanations of these movements, he also discusses the use of “arm weight,” the “strengthening” and

³¹² Blanche Abram, “Musical Tension and Muscular Ease,” *Clavier* (August, 1984), 28 – 29.

³¹³ Thomas Mastroianni, “Born Free,” *The Piano Quarterly*, no. 134 (1980), 56 – 58.

³¹⁴ Mastroianni’s emphasis on Liszt and octaves, and Rosen’s ‘history’ on Liszt’s association with octaves, suggest that there exists a modern perspective that the inherent difficulties of Liszt’s music are due to wide stretches.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 57.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 59.

³¹⁷ James McKeever, “The Wrist from a Technical Perspective,” *Clavier* (December, 1982), 34 – 35.

“independence” of various muscles, and proposes a definition that states ‘good playing’ requires a “balance” between tension and relaxation.³¹⁸

Prevatt’s article includes a photograph that illustrates the way in which a wrist rotates.³¹⁹ She discusses several technical problems concerning the ‘correct’ motions of the fingers, arms and wrists. She writes that her article is aimed at solving “problems,” for she feels her own teacher was incompetent and should have “pointed out” her excessive “weight” in her fingers and “tightness” in the forearm and shoulders. Prevatt writes that even though she had “good fingers” and “strong arms” from playing Hanon and Czerny, she continued to struggle with the more difficult piano literature. She also discusses a number of well-known books on piano method, including Whiteside and Matthay, and includes a picture of a baseball player’s “swing.”³²⁰ In other words, she too makes a correlation between the musician and the athlete.

Schultz writes that his motivation for writing his article is that in spite of “everyone’s” argument that great pianists know “nothing about the scientific nature of their movements,” the piano teacher should be educated in order to help the “inept” student.³²¹ To this end, he summarises and simplifies the discussions on physiology of Matthay, Ortmann and Giesking, and writes succinctly of the physiological movements that were advocated by these famous pedagogues.

³¹⁸ Ibid., 34.

³¹⁹ Harriet Prevatt, “If I Knew Then...,” *Piano and Keyboard* (September/October, 1996), 48 – 50.

³²⁰ Ibid., 50.

³²¹ Schultz, “The Physiological Mechanics of Piano Teaching,” *American Music Teacher*, 32 – 35.

Strangeland, Wilson, McArthur, Stein and Batson refer to the ‘problems’ of physiology in more general terms than the above authors. Strangeland questions whether or not some people should “aspire” to becoming pianists.³²² To this end, he refers to some of the most renowned books on the subject. He summarizes Joseph Gat’s “favourable hand structure,” Ortmann’s study of the relationship between physique and piano playing, Kovchevitsky’s “modern perspective” that mental determinedness is required for proper use and practice of the “skeletal” and “muscular” systems (defects in which are detrimental to a pianists’ “strength” and “endurance”), and Leschetizky’s views.

Of the views summarized, I consider Leschetizky’s perspective to be the most open-minded, since he thought that different teaching methods should be used for people whose physical conformations differ. (Notice how much slender Chopin’s hand is than Rubinstein’s in Figure 10).

³²² Robert Strangeland, “Dimensions in Piano Technique Part Four: Physique and Technique,” *The Piano Quarterly* (1980-), 39 – 41.

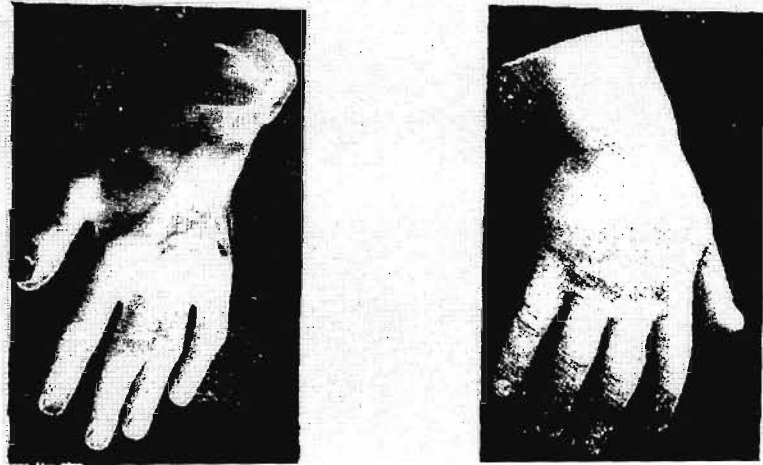


Figure 10. Physiology: Big and Small – Chopin (left) and Rubinstein (right).³²³

Strangeland observes that Leschetizky recognizes the importance of the correlation between physique and method. He does not add, however, that specific types of instruments would be more appropriate for specific physiques and techniques, a matter which, when seen in the light of the reports on Chopin's allegedly frail constitution and his hand-size, is clearly relevant to pianists who attempt to emulate Chopin's piano method. There is no questioning of whether particular types of music require particular modes of technique, or varying types of instrument. In my view, the apparent links that lie between varying physiques, methods, and pianos, warrant questions as to why pianists at present tend to perform only on the standardized modern grand.

Strangeland comments that we must get along with the physical equipment that was given to us:

³²³ *The Oxford Companion to Music*, 8th edition, edited by Percy Scholes, plate no. 131.

Gat suggests that deficiencies of hand structure may be compensated for by developing the respective muscle groups. Here he is in agreement with Ortmann who earlier expounded the need for individual muscle-settings in relation to arm sizes and weights. It is George Kochevitsky, however, who points to the true rectification of given limitations of physique. Referring again to his statement that arm, hand, fingers will obey, adjust and produce exactly what the mind dictates...even with the knowledge about physical adjustment and its application, the inner musical conception reigns as the motivator and initiator of physical technique.³²⁴

I question the relevance of such modern perspectives and their conceptual understanding of critical analysis concerning previous studies in physiology. Is it appropriate to consider the ‘mind’ capable of making the pianists’ physical apparatus do whatever the music text calls for ‘technically,’ if the modern piano has been substituted for the instrument on which the technique and sounds were conceived? In answer to my own question, I suggest that the ‘modern’ views should be influenced by a consideration of the limited structural space of the salon environment, for which some music was specifically composed.

Wilson is a medical doctor who writes from the perspective of a “neurologist” who is interested in the “acquisition of musical skill.”³²⁵ His primary concern is the hand. He considers this part of the pianist’s anatomy as being a “machine of muscles, nerves, bones, ligaments, and joints.” Wilson makes the comparison between the “muscle building” of the musician and that of the athlete. He considers the effects of “age” in relation to the careers of the musician and the athlete, as well as the function of “the brain,” “ballistic movement,” “establishing patterns”, and “mental preparation.” It

³²⁴ Strangeland, “Dimensions in Piano Technique Part Four: Physique and Technique,” *The Piano Quarterly*, 41.

³²⁵ Wilson, “Mind, Muscle, and Music,” *The American Music Teacher* (September/October, 1982), 12 – 15.

appears that his stance is oppositional to that of Batson in her recent article. Wilson writes:

...the conscious attention of the musician shifts from the mechanical details of performance to the esthetics. As it turns out, this is a good thing, because although the cerebellum may be just a dumb slave to the conscious brain, it is infinitely better at running the muscular system when speed and smoothness are essential. If you don't believe that's true, just ask any musician what happens during a performance when he starts thinking about the details of what he is doing physically.³²⁶

It is necessary to consider the title of Batson's article in *Medical Problems of Performing Artists*: "Conscious Use of the Human Body in Movement: The Peripheral Neuroanatomic basis of the Alexander Technique."³²⁷ This provides insight into her perspective. Her words "conscious use of the Human Body" challenge Wilson's older view. Although, Wilson considers there is a conscious attention to the mechanical, he presumes that this consciousness cannot be maintained while the musician gets deeply involved with the aesthetics of a piece.³²⁸

The Alexander Technique, however, seems to be based on the idea that people may possibly have a "seventh sense," which may also be "convincingly" related to "kinesthesia" – suggesting that it goes even beyond extra sensory perception (a sixth sense of which the properties are difficult to analyse).³²⁹ The term used to describe this sensory perception was coined in 1906 as "proprioception." Batson begins by differentiating between the common misuses of the term, in that while kinesthesia relates

³²⁶ Ibid., 14.

³²⁷ Glenna Batson, "Conscious Use of the Human Body in Movement: The Peripheral Neuroanatomic Basis of the Alexander Technique," *Medical Problems of Performing Artists* (March, 1996), 3 – 11.

³²⁸ The Pierces also refer to the pianist's ability for "conscious movement" while playing the piano. Pierces, "Pain and Healing: for Pianists" (part two and three).

³²⁹ Thomas Mastroianni, review of *How To Learn the Alexander Technique*, by Barbara and William Conable, *American Music Teacher* (October/November, 1996), 52.

to a “sense of movement,” proprioception relates to “body in relation to space.” She focuses on the performing artist who is aware of problems with “sensory input,” and claims that some artists are aware that “poor” or “inadequate” use of the physiology of the body can result in injury or encourage disease. Not only does she discuss Alexander’s ideas concerning the “muscles,” “posture” and the “freeness of the neck,” but she also discusses some of the conscious uses of the human body in relation to kinesthesia in “The History behind Scientific Discoveries in Kinesthesia.”³³⁰ In regard to the “environmental system,” she further explains that people should be able to “perceive in action, to experience sensing, feeling, and doing simultaneously,” which is now called “perception-action coupling.” “Perception-action coupling,” she adds, should be thought of as a “linking together of body and environment and [a] regulating [of] movement ‘on line.’”³³¹

Stein’s article “To Schlep or not to Schlep” simplifies the technical jargon which Batson uses to relay her perspectives on human physiology in relation to spaces.³³² He defines the Yiddish word “schlep” as being a “getting around with great effort.”³³³ This “great effort,” which is the result of so-called inefficient habits, is often the cause of “stress, fatigue and pain.” He then goes on to explain how a student who is “just not getting it” may also cause the teacher to feel stressed. He continues to explain that by imagining the central function of the spine (the “true place of physical power”), lessons can be

³³⁰ Batson, “Conscious Use of the Human Body in Movement: The Peripheral Neuroanatomic Basis of the Alexander Technique,” *Medical Problems of Performing Artists*, 7, 8.

³³¹ *Ibid.* 10.

³³² Charles Jay Stein, “To Schlep or Not to Schlep,” *American Music Teacher* (April/May, 1996), 18 – 21, 98 – 99.

³³³ *Ibid.*, 18.

“powerful.”³³⁴ He then lists a number of ways in which the Alexander Technique is applicable to musicians.

The importance of the Alexander Technique in relation to the music performance and the physiology of the performer is that the effectiveness of the teaching method is measured via sensory perception. It is this measurement of successful performance against the perceptions of the senses which I suggest illuminates an aspect of largeness. For example, Stein writes that after his training of students in the Alexander Technique, their playing sounded “richer.”³³⁵ Would one have described the sensory qualities of the student’s orientation of touch and sound prior to the ‘spatial’ help of the Alexander technique as ‘poor’? In answer to my own question, for all these abstract concepts of the motionless body in relation to “space” (proprioception) and the moving “body” in relation to “space” (kinesthesia), and the simplifications of those observations of tactile movement and audible results of the workings within those spaces (as seen in Stein’s article), there remains the ultimate test of the success of their teachings – to create sounds that do not lack volume. The effectiveness of this modern method therefore, as demonstrated by Stein, is measured by using his understanding of “rich” and “poor” tones. Richness of tone implies substance – fullness of sound – which when translated into practice would of necessity require strength. His sensory orientation may be biased in favour of bigger tones over smaller tones, and, therefore, I maintain that any discussion on the size of tone should also incorporate a consideration of composers in relation to their compositions,

³³⁴ Ibid. 18.

³³⁵ Ibid. 18.

the varying piano designs, piano methods, and musical spheres, which might result in a different, but perhaps appropriate, understanding of “rich” sounds.

2.3.4. Scientific Experiments

In contrast to these unscientific perceptions of the human body, I also acknowledge that there have been some scientific attempts at making sense of the root causes for physical problems of musicians. For example, McArthur writes that studies of the “biomechanical” in relation to musicians are largely due to work in the field of “biomedical” and “sport applications.” She reflects on the “lack” of scientific data in the works of Kochevitsky (1967), Matthay (1932) and Whiteside (1955), and reaffirms the idea that although Ortmann’s study (1925) is the oldest on the topic of the physiological mechanics of piano playing, his research into the relationship between piano technique and physiology is the most scientific. Further, she says that because of the “philosophical and theoretical tone” and “content” of these studies, there is a growing need for a scientific analysis of the pianists’ movements: “some music investigators have sought to portray pianists’ movements via keypress-derived data,” even though this data is “not visually apparent as anatomical movement.”³³⁶

McArthur sympathizes with researchers who are concerned with the link between physiology and technique, but she argues that “although thousands of pages have been

³³⁶ McArthur, “The Use of Computers to Analyze Performance Motions of Musicians,” *Psychomusicology*, Vol. 8, No. 2. (1989), 136.

written about the subject of ‘correct’ piano technique, no systematic efforts investigating pianists’ movements have been widely published.” She considers that a “rationale” exists for research into the physical problems of musicians and provides several reasons. “Pianists spend a large” amount of time on technical problems; there exist “wide discrepancies” concerning piano pedagogy; piano teachers cannot always “see and correctly diagnose technical problems,” and, most importantly, “medicine is currently dealing with many injured and disabled pianists whose problems are caused at least in part by incorrect movements.”³³⁷

McArthur’s computer-based study is scientific, but due to the findings being in the form of computerized data, they cannot easily be applied further in this study. This is a limitation which she also takes note of – the nature of computer generated statistics does not make them easily assimilable into the field of human science. Furthermore, she writes that the findings of this study are at an “elementary phase” and she acknowledges that future “research applications” may overcome these limitations.³³⁸ However, her perspective that human movement is only “in part” to blame for physical problems, leads to a questioning of what constitutes the ‘other parts.’ I would suggest here that while a study in the field of musicians’ practices may not provide scientifically provable solutions for modern performers’ questions concerning how to play the ‘big grand’ piano, at least it may be able to answer many of the questions as to why pianists frequently experience physical problems.

³³⁷ Ibid., 136.

³³⁸ Ibid., 138.

2.3.5. The Link between Period Instruments and Pianists' Problems

Catherine Baird suggests that it is valid to compare musicians with athletes, saying that swimming can help with physical problems.³³⁹ Baird does not once mention Chopin and her discussions concentrate solely on the physiological aspects of keyboard playing, such as the “suppleness of the wrist and upper arm,” large and small muscle groups, or the “gracefulness of lateral motion.”³⁴⁰ She even writes of a “loud, overly articulated” sensory approach as being “assertive” and says of a “less loud” sound that it is “bland.” I would at this point be inclined to say, negatively, that she desires ‘largeness,’ if it were not for the important element she contributes to this study, which is her method of rehabilitation.

Baird writes of her retirement from the concert stage due to “a potentially devastating organic neurologic disease of the peripheral nervous system.” The article she puts together here tells of the method she used to rehabilitate herself to the concert piano and stage. The most important aspect of her method is that she resorted to the use of a clavichord for the process of rehabilitation, “the principle reasons being its light and even action, key depth of three-eighths inches, its delicate, expressive tonal qualities and dynamic range and, most importantly, the direct relationship between finger, key, tangent and string.”³⁴¹ The simple design of the mechanism in the clavichord in relation to the

³³⁹ Catherine Merena Baird, “A Pianist’s Techniques of Rehabilitation,” *Medical Problems of Performing Artists*, vol. 1 no. 4 (January, 1988), 16, 17.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 47, 17.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

ease with which it plays is a crucial link between early keyboards, technique, and physical problems. I suggest that some piano designs and their mechanisms lend themselves naturally to those physiological methods that are not forceful. Baird's article suggests that the cause and solution to physical problems are simple. Unfortunately, pianists are not satisfied to perform early music on small-sounding keyboards even though early instruments seem to lend themselves naturally to a more relaxed way of playing.

2.3.6. Chopin in Relation to Physical Problems

Collating the differing perspectives concerning pianists' problems with Chopin's ideas on these problems is hindered by the fact that he left only a rough draught outlining what he thought was the correct method of practice. He himself was not taught according to any traditional piano school, such as the German or French school. Ironically, it has been written of him that he belonged to the French tradition simply because of his "long residence there."³⁴² The German school is defined as "avoiding superficial prettiness in favour of stringent musicianship." Moreover, Schonberg writes of the German school: "it is hard to think of any German pianist who has been recognized as a great Chopin player."³⁴³ Schonberg on the other hand describes the French school as having derived from the salon practices of "shallow technique...and to this day French pianists play

³⁴² Schonberg, *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments: The Piano*, 98. Chopin spent the first half of his life in Poland. Therefore, I battle with the notion that Chopin's pianistic prowess was molded only because of his stay in France. I suggest that Chopin would have had a considerable technique before reaching France – especially in the light of the fact that he had already completed the Etudes Op. 10.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 97.

elegantly ‘on top of the keys.’”³⁴⁴ It would be ironic to treat Chopin as belonging to a specific piano school, because his teacher, Woyciech Zywny, was not a pianist but a violinist. The French author, Cortot, stressed that Chopin belonged to “no school.”³⁴⁵

Eigeldinger sums up Chopin’s technical training:

Chopin, on the contrary, self-taught (his only piano teacher, Zywny, was a violinist) and an outsider to all schools, with no taste for transcribing, offered in place of the narrowly mechanistic views a new, artistic conception of technical work. In place of the mental numbness caused by mechanical repetition of exercises, he advocated an intense listening concentration, an element reflected in the work, and playing, of Leimar and Gieseking. In this concentration reside the two complementary factors indispensable to a good sonority: refinement of the ear, and muscular control and relaxation. One can hardly overstress that in Chopin’s definition of technique, sound production, or the art of touch, comes before the acquisition of virtuosity.³⁴⁶

In his discussion of Chopin’s etudes, Charles Rosen claims that “the public” does not realize “the amount of pain” connected to “sport like tennis,” and that “physical awkwardness” is inseparable from Chopin’s etudes, yet, as seen above, both Eigeldinger and Cortot regard Chopin’s approach to piano playing as completely natural – which suggests a lack of “physical awkwardness.”³⁴⁷ Both Eigeldinger’s and Cortot’s opinions are supported by the observations of people contemporaneous with Chopin. For instance, although Marmontel, who heard Chopin perform, claimed that Chopin belonged to the “school of Clementi,” he was merely referring to “evenness of fingers” and “delicacy.” In my view, however, Marmontel compared Chopin to Clementi only out of a lack of a more suitable pianism with which to compare Chopin’s playing. I hold this view in light

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 98.

³⁴⁵ Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, 163.

³⁴⁶ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 16.

³⁴⁷ Charles Rosen, *The Romantic Generation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 382.

of Marmontel's continuation: "he [Chopin] had a completely individual manner of touching the keyboard...a supple, mellow touch."³⁴⁸

Kalkbrenner also compared Chopin's technique to that of other pianists. Chopin recorded (in a letter) Kalkbrenner as having said to him "he [Chopin] has Cramer's method" and "Field's touch." Like Marmontel, however, Kalkbrenner ultimately admitted that Chopin's way of playing was unique. Chopin continues in his letter: "after closer examination he told me that I have 'no school.'"³⁴⁹ His natural approach to the keyboard can, in my view, be best appreciated after consideration of his father's words on this matter. Nicholas Chopin writes to Chopin advising him on whether or not it was in his best interest to study the piano with Kalkbrenner: "you know the mechanics of piano-playing occupied little of your time and that your mind was busier than your fingers."³⁵⁰

Let us consider Chopin's own teaching on how to practise the piano. Both Camille Dubois and Gretsch claimed that Chopin got "angry" at students who over-practised. Chopin discouraged his students from spending too much time on the technical and repetitive practice methods and suggested rather that they break up hours of practise with "a good book," by "looking at masterpieces of art," or by "an invigorating walk."³⁵¹ Mathias explained that such an approach to the physical requirement of piano playing was completely in accord with Chopin's own method: "a completely new method of

³⁴⁸ Marmontel, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 274.

³⁴⁹ *Chopin's Letters*, 154, 155.

³⁵⁰ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 94.

³⁵¹ Chopin, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 27.

piano playing that permitted him to reduce technical exercise to a minimum.”³⁵² Today however piano technique is not left entirely to the individual to develop. In the preface to Newman’s book, *The Pianist’s Problems*, Arthur Loesser conveys the idea that technique must be taught and not left up to “instinct.”³⁵³

In his book, *Famous Pianists and Their Technique*, Gerig also implies that technique is an aspect of piano playing which can and must be taught. In this regard, it is in my view ironic that Gerig can write over five hundred pages in an attempt to teach technique, since he claims that “naturalness is without doubt, the final determinant of valid piano technique.”³⁵⁴ Can something that should be natural be taught? The problem I have with many of the ‘schooled’ approaches is that there is a striving for an education in piano technique that, self-admittedly, should appear as natural as possible. Chopin did not leave anything more than a sketch of a piano method, and it might therefore be arguable that categorizing and forming a definitive school of technique did not appeal to him. Moreover, I conjecture that the pianist’s striving for ‘technique’ along fixed guidelines is also in part at the root of physical problems. For instance, when it is believed that technique is taught and is something that a pianist should strive for, piano-practice becomes the most important aspect of piano playing.

As a young man, Ashkenazy questioned the purpose having to practice for hours on end. He asked rhetorically, “one keeps it polished, polished, polished, and then you die! [he

³⁵² Mathias, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 27.

³⁵³ Newman, Preface to *The Pianist’s Problems*, ix.

³⁵⁴ Gerig, *Famous Pianists and Their Technique*, 3.

continues] – And what’s it all for?”³⁵⁵ Ashkenazy, however, has recently thrown doubt on the value of this “immature” remark and has placed his youthful comment in a more meaningful context: that technique, no matter how great, should be used in the service of what music might say (Figure 11).³⁵⁶

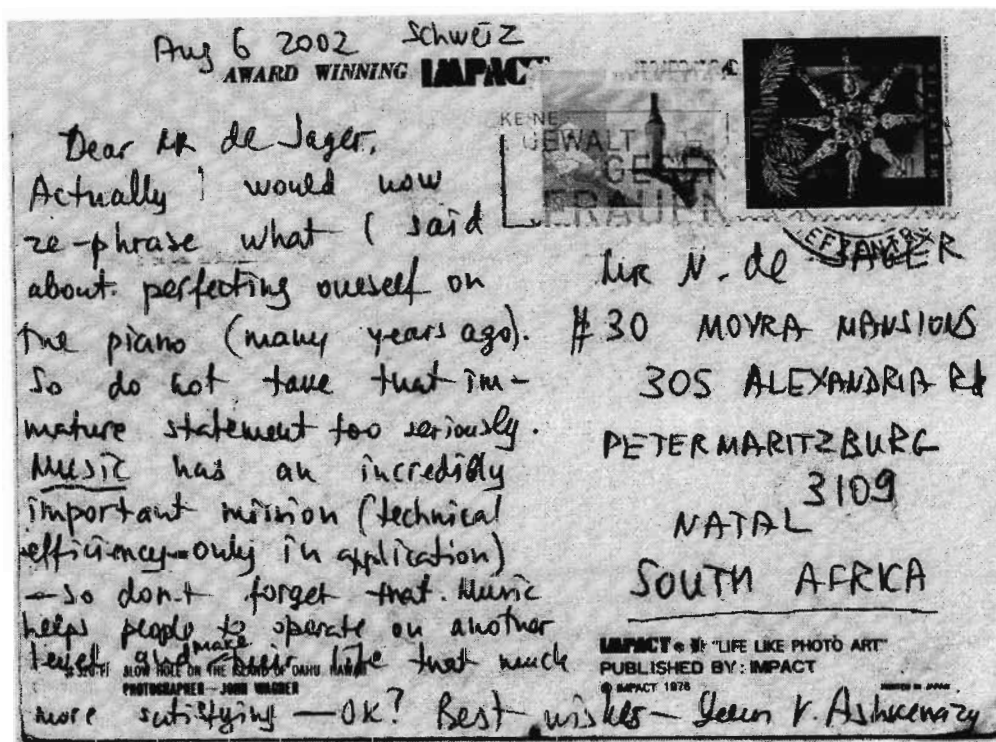


Figure 11. Largeness in Relation to Technique.³⁵⁷

In my view, technique is often associated with endurance and strength. It is as though the modern piano, because it is both durable and capable of colossal sounds, has filled the demands of a breed of pianists who associate a strong technique with exhausting methods of practice and lengthy practice sessions. Observing the differences (noted by Chopin’s

³⁵⁵ Ashkenazy in *The Vital Juices are Russian*, directed by Christopher Nupen (Documentary for BBC, 1997).

³⁵⁶ Arrau, in Sugars, *The Art of Piano*.

³⁵⁷ Vladimir Ashkenazy, Schweiz, to N. De Jager, Pietermaritzburg South Africa, 6th August 2002, Postcard in the hand of N. De Jager.

student Mikuli) between Chopin's and Liszt's approach to technique substantiates this view.

In complete opposition to Chopin, Liszt maintains that the fingers should be strengthened by working on an instrument with a heavy, resistant, tough [mechanism], continually repeating the required exercises until one is completely exhausted and incapable of going on. Chopin wanted absolutely nothing to do with such gymnastic treatment of the piano.³⁵⁸

Firstly, the type of piano which is used by pianists of today suits Liszt's description of the goal to be achieved through practice: our pianos of today are heavy and therefore can be best used, as Liszt intended, in the repetitive act of exercises aimed at strengthening and "exhausting" the pianist.

Moreover, where the stiff piano failed to generate strength in the human body, some pianists invented contraptions which they believed would increase their technical ability. Kalkbrenner "perfected" Logier's invention, the "chiroplaste," which although intended to "alleviate all possible tension," was also meant to create independence for the fingers.³⁵⁹ Robert Schumann's desire for finger strength is perhaps the most renowned case in point. Schumann had "foolishly" "devised" an apparatus "intended to strengthen and help gain independence of the fourth finger of his right hand." However, "instead of benefit, serious injury resulted." Schumann hoped the finger would heal, trying "electric treatment and homeopathy," but as indicated in a letter (December 29, 1838), his hand did not recover from the damage caused by his invention.³⁶⁰

³⁵⁸ Mikuli, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 27.

³⁵⁹ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 96.

³⁶⁰ Gerig, *Famous Pianists and Their Technique*, 203.

In short, both Kalkbrenner and Schumann tried to achieve strength by unnatural means. Even Liszt, with his ideas of practising on stiff pianos until exhaustion sets in, is, in my view, advocating unnatural means by which to gain a suitable technique. Chopin's comments on the matter of technique and practice are incompatible with these pianist-composers' attempts to acquire technique based on the development of strength. Chopin writes in his sketch for piano method:

To those who are studying the art of playing the piano I suggest some practical and simple ideas which I know from experience to be really useful. As art is infinite within the limits of its means, so its teaching should be governed by the same limits in order to give it boundless potential...So we are not dealing with more or less ingenious theories, but with whatever goes straight to the point and smoothes the technical side of the art...People have tried out all kinds of methods of learning to play the piano, methods that are tedious and useless and have nothing to do with the study of this instrument. It's like learning, for example, to walk on one's hands in order to go for a stroll. Eventually one is no longer able to walk properly on one's feet, and not very well on one's hands neither. It doesn't teach us how to play the music itself – and the type of difficulty we are practising is not the difficulty encountered in good music, the music of the great masters. It's an abstract difficulty, a new genre of acrobatics.³⁶¹

Chopin identifies methods of practice that he believes are illogical; do not use your hands for a task for which your feet were intended. At the heart of his statement is an emphasis on counter-productivity: avoid over-exertion and the incorrect use of your arms, and hands, for instance. His comments suggest his approach to piano method was prescient. In his article, "Medical Research on Music," Dawley stressed the point that musicians are ignorant of physiology, therefore implying that they do not know how to use their bodies correctly. Moreover, as can be seen in all the articles I have consulted with regard to physical problems, overuse or exertion is directly linked to pain and injury. To this end, where artists such as Kalkbrenner, Schumann, and Liszt seem short-sighted in their

³⁶¹ Chopin, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 23.

attempt to be great virtuosos, Chopin is seen as possessing an approach to piano technique which is not determined by an innate desire for largeness.

It should be noticed that Chopin's simple way of addressing the topic of technique is governed by his sense of sound – a sound which was neither large nor rooted in a 'strong' technique. He wrote: "one needs only to study a certain positioning of the hand in relation to the keys to obtain with ease the most beautiful quality of sound, to know how to play long notes and short notes, and [to attain] unlimited dexterity."³⁶² In other words, a "beautiful sound" and "dexterity" were his aims in regard to technique. To this end, he was specific concerning what hand position he believed to be the most natural. Chopin claimed the "right" hand position could be found by "placing your fingers on the keys, E, F sharp, G sharp, A sharp, and B: the long fingers will occupy the high [black] keys, and the short fingers the low [white] keys."³⁶³

In regard to "dexterity," Chopin's student, Mikuli, relayed how important this goal was to Chopin: "Chopin's main concern was to do away with every stiffness and convulsive or cramped movement of the hand, in order to obtain the primary requisite of good playing."³⁶⁴ In support of Mikuli's views on Chopin's detestation of stiffness in the pianist, Chopin's students and colleagues – an anonymous Scottish woman, Princess Czartoryska, and Kleczynski – all stressed his desire for "flexibility" of the wrist and

³⁶² Ibid. 23.

³⁶³ Ibid., 29.

³⁶⁴ Mikuli, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 29.

hand, and freedom of the fingers.³⁶⁵ In my view, the stress on relaxation suggests not only that Chopin was aware of a pianist's tendency to be tense while playing, but that he believed tension inhibited good tone and dexterity: it is as if stiff biological mechanisms relay harsh sounds which are essentially undesirable. To add to Chopin's views on piano technique, here follow his words on the "independence" of the fingers.

For a long time we have been acting against nature by training our fingers to be all equally powerful. As each finger is differently formed, it's better not to attempt to destroy the particular charm of each one's touch but on the contrary to develop it. Each finger's power is determined by its shape: the thumb having the most power, being the broadest, shortest and freest; the fifth [finger] as the other extremity of the hand; the third as the middle and the pivot; then the second ...and then the fourth, the weakest one, the Siamese twin of the third, bound to it by a common ligament, and which people insist on trying to separate from the third – which is impossible, and, fortunately, unnecessary. As many different sounds as there are fingers.³⁶⁶

In short, Chopin was fully aware of pianists' desire for powerful sounds. But with more creative ends in mind, Chopin encouraged "different sounds" rather than merely wanting as much volume as possible. He claimed that pianists focused excessively on 'powerful' fingers.

Hedley claimed that Chopin was very clear as to the fingering of Etude Op. 10, No. 2, noting that "[he] marked the fingering of almost every note for the right hand."³⁶⁷ Hedley has probably based his observation on the annotated score of the "original French edition."³⁶⁸ This generally accepted original fingering is also used in the Urtext edition.

³⁶⁵ Anonymous Scottish woman, Czartoryska, and Kleczynski, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 29, 30.

³⁶⁶ Chopin, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 32, 33.

³⁶⁷ Hedley, *The Master Musicians Chopin*, 122.

³⁶⁸ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 199.

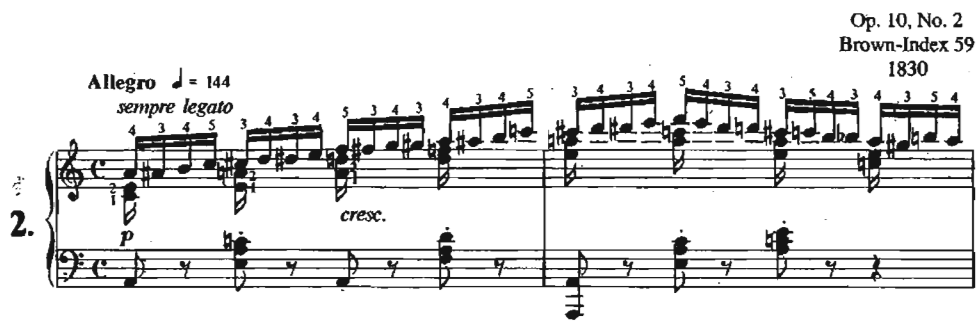


Figure 12. Etude Op. 10 No. 2.³⁶⁹

Ashkenazy indicated to me by a gesture that the peculiarity of the finger-crossing of this etude was at this point, because of his “age,” beyond his ability. Even though I believe Ashkenazy to be over-modest in his response to my questions, he nonetheless points out that “strength” (which in this instance he equates with youth) seems to be a prerequisite for a piece that concentrates on the “weaker” fingers of the right hand.³⁷⁰ Rosen, in *The Romantic Generation*, states plainly that this etude “is an exercise in playing the chromatic scale with only the three weakest fingers.”³⁷¹

Regina Bodnya, on the other hand, claimed that this etude, while requiring “the light” and “dexterous” touch also required an understanding of “champagne.”³⁷² A pianist noted for winning over a dozen international piano competitions, Andrei Gavrilov, performs this etude using the *una corda* throughout. Since his use of this pedal on grand pianos does not alter the heaviness (the hammers merely moving to one side, striking one string instead of two or three), his use of the soft pedal could have been solely to obtain a softer

³⁶⁹ Chopin, *Etudes*, 10.

³⁷⁰ Ashkenazy, interviewed by Frederick De Jager, on the 29th January 2001, Durban (South Africa).

³⁷¹ Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, 365.

³⁷² Regina Bodnya, instructed Frederick De Jager, 1989 – 1994, Johannesburg (South Africa).

quality of sound, which might not have been easy to achieve otherwise.³⁷³ Considering that Chopin made a derogatory remark about a pianist who adopted a similar approach to the keyboard, Gavrilov's rendition of the Etude Op. 10 No. 2 should be viewed as not conforming to Chopin's ideas on technique. Chopin writes:

Thalberg plays famously but he is not my man...he writes pot-pourris on themes from Masaniello, produces *piano* with the pedal instead of with the hand, takes tenths as easily as I do octaves and wears diamond shirt-studs. Moscheles does not impress him so it's not surprising that he liked only the *tutti*s of my concertos.³⁷⁴

Chopin is conveying Thalberg's preference for largeness. Because he only liked the 'big' *tutti* sections of Chopin's concerto, Thalberg is viewed here as having a "jumbo"-orientation. In regard to piano technique, Chopin believes there is a link between Thalberg's innate desire for largeness and his lack of the technical ability to play softly from the fingers. In short, technique is seen here as being equated with strength – so much so, that Thalberg cannot play without it. He relies on the use of the soft pedal to diminish the strength of his fingers. Therefore, assuming Gavrilov is, as Thalberg and Liszt were in the nineteenth century, a pianist who best represents the tastes of a large public, his status as a great pianist is diminished in light of Chopin's expectation that the fingers alone should be capable of playing *piano*. An added complication of the comparison between Chopin's perspective on Thalberg and my perspective on Gavrilov is that although there seems to be a continued use of the *una corda*, the piano on which Thalberg played probably had a lighter action than the one on which Gavrilov recorded Chopin's etudes. The expectation that the fingers be in complete control might have to be

³⁷³ Chopin, *Etudes*, Andrew Gavrilov.

³⁷⁴ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 76.

reviewed in relation to the ongoing changes in piano design. Margarita Schevchenko presents a contemporary perspective, suggesting that aspects of the modern piano render the instrument unsuited to the performance of Chopin's music. She indicates that one of her performances of Chopin's music was "dead before it started" because the piano on which she performed was overly stiff. She found it exhausting both to play and control the keys over the duration of her recital.³⁷⁵

Cortot's recording of Chopin's etudes (1933) does not carry a foreword with any mention of the smallness of Chopin's own playing.³⁷⁶ The cover of Gavrilov's more recent CD of Chopin's etudes, however, includes an introduction in which Joan Chissell states that "while admired for its poetic finesse, his [Chopin's] playing was often enough criticized for insufficient strength of projection."³⁷⁷ Such a comment seems to suggest its author's believe that Gavrilov is correcting a shortcoming in Chopin's playing. In terms of Chopin's own words on technique, the "strength" which seems so prized by these late twentieth-century recording artists and producers, does not reflect his values or his practice as described by his contemporaries. Cortot's renditions, in other words, unlike Gavrilov's, need no excuse to explain the apparent dissimilarities between the records on Chopin's playing with that of his own playing.

Just as *bel canto* singing is considered to have died out because of the increase in the "area of the opera houses and concert halls," the early piano (and in particular, Chopin's

³⁷⁵ Schevchenko. Interviewed by Frederick De Jager, on the 15th March 2001. Durban, South Africa.

³⁷⁶ Chopin, *The Great Art of Alfred Cortot: Etudes Op. 10 & 25 and 4 Impromptus*, Cortot.

³⁷⁷ Joan Chissell, CD cover booklet: *Frederick Chopin, Etudes*, performed by Andrei Gavrilov, page 3.

piano), which was often considered to mimic *bel canto* singing, was equally unsuited to the larger concert halls.³⁷⁸ In other words, if *bel canto* singing was considered small in regard to tone and unsuited to the large concert halls, the piano that Chopin used in the imitation of the vocal style of *bel canto* should be viewed as being equally unsuited. To this end, methods of playing the grand piano, which may result in physical harm to players, have to be employed in order to produce sufficient sound within these large halls. However, as seen in the example of Gavrilov, it appears that “strength” is only up to a point an advantage: there are times when the composer’s directions – in regard, here, to the use of the *una corda* pedal – cannot be followed, simply because of the differences in technique, and, possibly, due to piano design as well.

In my view, Baird, having to rehabilitate herself to piano playing by using a light, easy-to-play instrument, adds to the evidence that the development of pianos into instruments which demand forceful pianism not only contravenes Chopin’s concept of how this piano should be played, but is also potentially hazardous and invites an array of physical problems. Schevchenko, however, is convinced that there is no connection between Chopin’s pianism and development in piano design, modern performance practices and physical problems. She maintains that if there is any root cause of physical problems, it lies solely with the pianist’s approach.

I asked Schevchenko, “Do you think Chopin’s piano was more user-friendly than pianos of today?” This question was posed during the course of our discussion on the

³⁷⁸ Owen Jander, “Bel Canto,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 420.

development of piano-design, piano methods, and their possible link to physical problems. To clarify the implied meaning of my question, I followed with, “Don’t you think there was a unique relationship between Chopin’s way of playing (which was to an extent self-taught, since he did not study under a pianist but a violinist) with that of his preferred Pleyel instrument?” “Moreover, would consideration of a possible link between a piano with a light-action and problem-free technique not be helpful for pianists of today who appear to be prone to hypertension, and medically-related problems?” Schevchenko responded to my questioning of the link between piano design and pianists’ problems by referring to Chopin’s Etude Op. 25 No. 6, which in my view, poses the same difficulties as the Etude Op. 10 No. 2 because the top melodic line (Figure 13.1 and 13.2) involves the same finger-crossings (both the 3rd and 4th fingers cross over each other as well as the 5th finger, as seen in Figure 11).



Figure 13. 1. Chopin Etude Op. 25 No. 6.



Figure 13. 2. Chopin Etude Op. 25 No. 6.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁹ Chopin, *Etudes*, 88, 89.

Shevchenko claimed she uses the original fingerings intended by Chopin, in the lower melodic line of the right hand, but she admitted to using the fingering 2-2 from the F sharp to the F natural, and from the C sharp to the C natural on the chromatic descents. She uses this fingering in order to avoid using the thumb in succession on the consecutive white keys F to E and C to B, which, as she pointed out, is difficult at a fast tempo. In her view, her fingering was true to Chopin's intention. Moreover, in relation to the development of piano-design, she agreed that sliding one's second finger from a black note to a white note must have been "much easier" on Chopin's pianos because of the shallow key-bed and light action: Schevchenko claimed this would facilitate the "sliding of the fingers from black key to white key and retain a good legato."³⁸⁰ My observations of the Urtext edition of these etudes do not support her finger-sliding theory: Chopin intended the use of the thumb on the adjacent white keys, and, therefore, F-E and C-B cannot be preceded by the fingering 2-2.³⁸¹ As Huneker points out, because Chopin preferred to use a Pleyel, "before [the piano manufacturer] adopted the double échappement [double escapement]," Chopin invented ground-breaking fingerings that were suited specifically to his piano which had "the most pliable touch."³⁸² After studying the annotated scores of Leopold Godowsky, Czerny, Klindworth, and Hummel (Figures 14.1 through 14. 4 below), Huneker does, however, question what Chopin's "so-called" original fingering was, but seems ultimately to agree with the Urtext fingerings. Huneker repeats Von Bülow's words in order to add potency to his argument in regard to the original fingering of this etude: "as the peculiar fingering adopted by Chopin for chromatic scales in thirds appears to us to render their performance in *legatissimo* utterly

³⁸⁰ Schevchenko, interviewed by Frederick De Jager, on the 15th March 2001. Durban (South Africa).

³⁸¹ Chopin, *Etudes*, 88 – 93.

³⁸² Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, 107.

unattainable on our modern instruments, we have exchanged it, where necessary, for the older method of Hummel.³⁸³

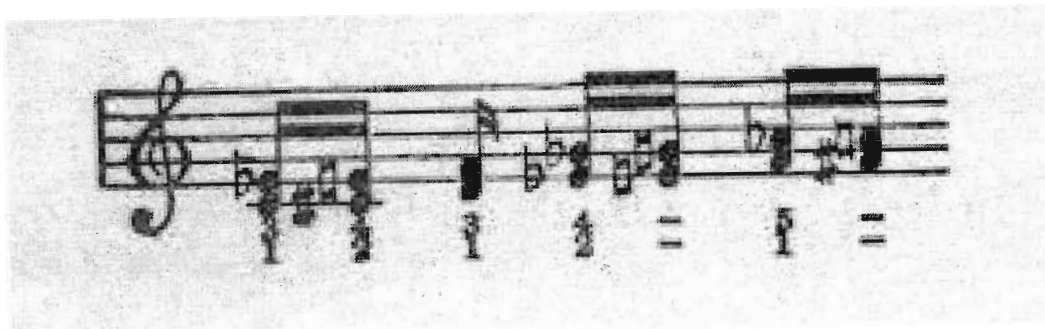


Figure 14. 1. Perspectives on Fingering: Leopold Godowsky.

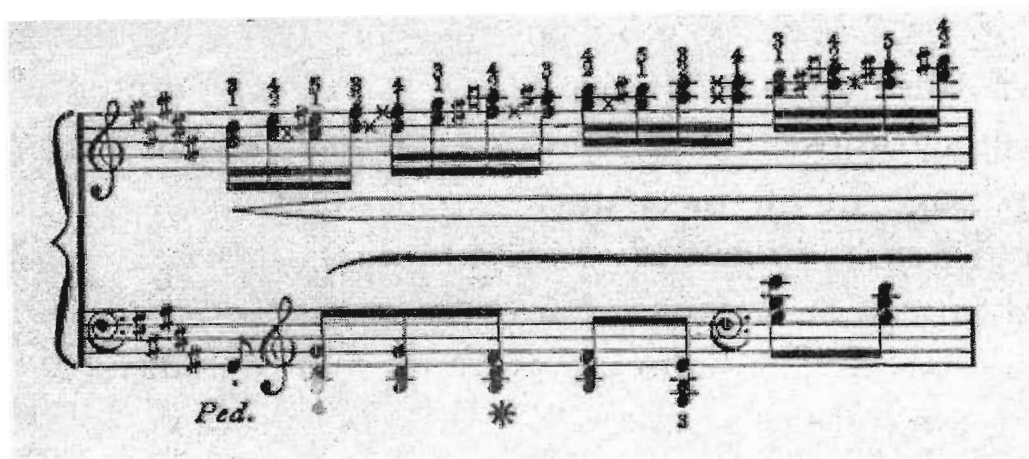


Figure 14. 2. Karl Mikuli.

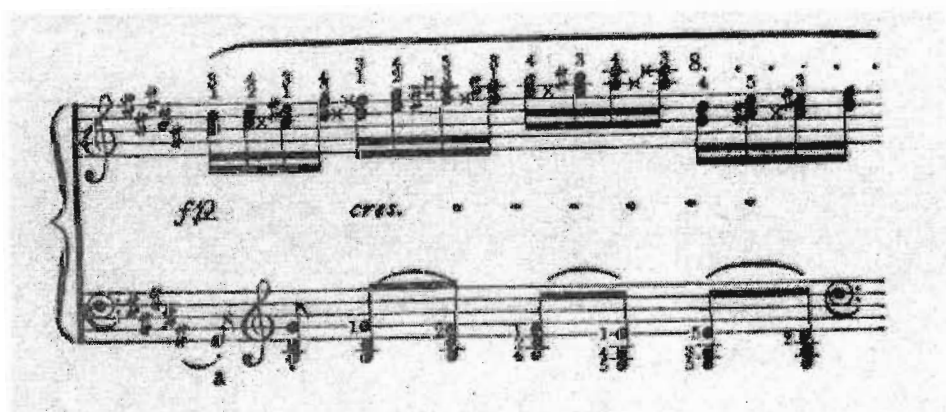


Figure 14. 3. Johann Hummel.

³⁸³ Von Bülow, as quoted by Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, 106.

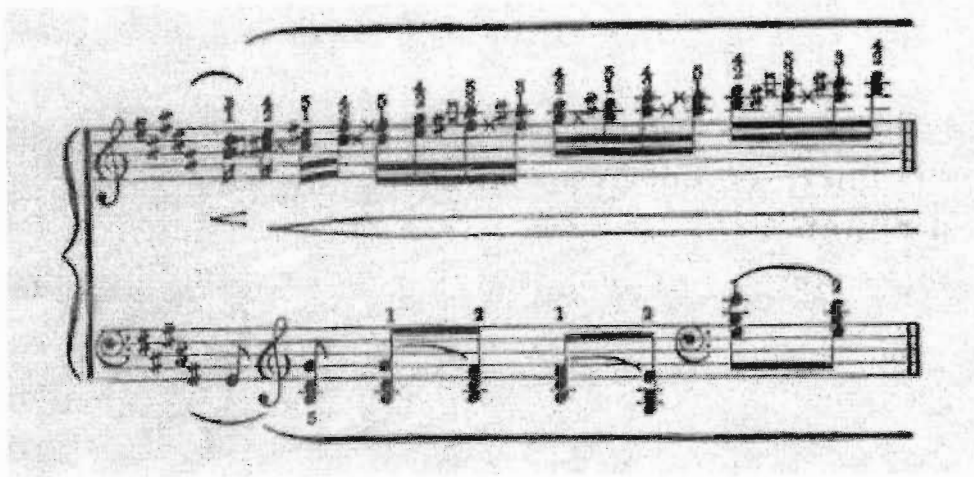


Figure 14. 4. Hugo Riemann.³⁸⁴

In regard to this etude, it is most likely that Schevchenko, without knowing it, subscribes to the “piano school” of Leopold Godowsky, Mikuli and Hummel, or Riemann, where a re-invention of the fingering was believed to be necessary and more suitable for the newer, more developed keyboards. Ironically, in response to my suggestion that pianists’ problems are as a result of pianos which do not lend themselves to “natural techniques” (like Chopin’s pianism), Schevchenko responded, “No”: physical problems resulted from incorrect or problematic approaches to playing the piano; the problems lie with the pianist and not with the link between society’s desire for dazzling effects, piano development and design, and piano method. To this end, Schevchenko indicated that she had a “touch on wood” approach to piano technique, which is comparable to Chopin’s approach because he also had an “unlearnt” approach to playing the piano. In my opinion, Schevchenko’s “touch on wood” attitude is like saying, “hopefully, nothing will go wrong.” Her opinion seems in accord with Dawley’s argument that musicians are often

³⁸⁴ Godowsky, Mikuli, Hummel, and Riemann, as reproduced by Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, 106, 107.

“ignorant” of the relationship between physiology, methods, and changes in piano design, as well as medical problems.³⁸⁵

A present day school of thought, however, believes the experience of pain is actually essential in feeling the emotional content of Chopin’s music. Rosen says that “in the etudes of Chopin, the moment of greatest emotional tension is generally the one that stretches the hand most painfully, so that the muscular sensation becomes – even without the sound – a mimesis of passion.” He continues:

Perhaps this is what lies behind Rachmaninoff’s reported reaction to Alfred Cortot’s recording of the etudes, almost the cruellest observation ever made by one pianist about another: “whenever it gets difficult, he adds a little sentiment.” There is no question that the gradual increase of difficulty in a Chopin etude generally corresponds to the degree of emotional tension – although this does not mean that slowing down is invariably the most satisfactory way of interpreting such passages. It does imply an intimate relationship between virtuosity and emotional force in the mature works of Chopin. The hand of the performer literally feels the sentiment.³⁸⁶

Rosen does not consider, however, whether this experiencing of “pain” would also have been felt on Chopin’s single-escapement Pleyel.

It appears to be highly probable that Rosen himself, encouraging pianists to view pain as part of the musical meaning of Chopin’s etudes, might be playing a role in regard to pianists’ problems. The vast number of articles that have been examined here concerning physical problems shows that there is much to be said for intuitive insights, but also that we need to question the heavy emphasis on these self-confessedly unscientific methods which focus exclusively on the physiological. Even though they emphasize physical

³⁸⁵ Dawley, “Medical Research in Music: Foundation for a Theory of Music Instruction,” *Council for Research in Music Education Bulletin*, 39.

³⁸⁶ Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, 383.

relaxation (as well as the extra-sensory perceptions, kinesthesia and proprioception), the fact is that performance is the test of their teachings. Because there is an increase in concern in the area of relaxation in fields other than music, such as Richard Brennan's *Alexander Technique: Natural Poise for Health* and Glen Park's *The Art of Changing: An Introduction to the Alexander Technique*, which emphasize the conscious act of utilizing the body more effectively for general purposes, musicians can be commended on their eagerness to apply the latest research to music.³⁸⁷ Alexandrians take note of the symptoms of tension on the performer's body, but there appears to be (as appears in these recent articles) a failure to contextualize these symptoms: such as, an historical perspective that might focus on the aesthetic 'tastes' of changing societies, which is a perspective drawn from a consideration of the difficulties inherent in different music texts, and, especially, from a consideration of performance practice on early instruments (such as a Chopin's Pleyel). At this point, it can be said defensibly that it appears as though a measuring of present-day piano practice against that of the past – that is, a consideration of the structural differences between the parlour, the salon, and the concert hall, and the differences between 'salon' music and 'concert-hall' music, as well the differences between period instruments and the modern piano – will provide advocates of relaxation with adequate reasons as to why relaxation techniques exist in the first place. Dawley comes across as insightful, then, when he recommends that more interdisciplinary approaches between music and medical science are needed to add knowledge-based understanding to musicians' intuitions about tension.

³⁸⁷ Richard Brennan, *Alexander Technique: Natural Poise for Health* (Dorset: Element, 1991); Glen Park, *The Art of Changing: An Introduction to the Alexander Technique* (Bath: Ashgrove Press, 1991).

2. 4. The Dimension of Theoretical Complexity: Concerto versus Prelude

Thus far, sensory perception has been discussed in relation to smallness and largeness as perceived through sight, touch, and sound. Another way in which musical works are often considered as small or large is in relation to their length and degree of complexity: works that are short and are considered simple are seen as smaller than those that are long and considered complex. These distinctions are used to distinguish what musicologists and music theorists call small forms from what they call large forms. One way of approaching this distinction is to contrast Chopin's preludes with his concertos.

Cortot translates Liszt's perspective on the preludes (recorded in the *Gazette Musicale*) as follows:

'Chopin's Preludes are in a category by themselves. They are not solely, as their title would lead one to suppose, items intended to be played by way of introduction to other items, they are poetic preludes, similar to those of the great poet Lamartine, which bathe the soul in golden dreams and lift it to the realms of the ideal. Admirable in their variety, the work and skill that has gone into their composition is not obvious until after a careful examination. Every note seems to be utterly spontaneous and inspired. They have the great attractiveness which is to be found in all works of genius. And what is to be said of the Mazurkas, those little masterpieces so full of caprice and yet so polished?'³⁸⁸

While Chopin's preludes are short works, his concertos are long. For instance, the A Major (Op. 28 No. 7) and C Minor (Op. 28 No. 20) preludes are only sixteen and thirteen measures respectively. Even the longest prelude is only a few minutes in duration. The performance of each concerto on the other hand would take approximately half an hour.

³⁸⁸ Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, 131.

The A Major Prelude can be divided into a mere two eight-measure phrases (Figure 15). Although the sub-phrasing suggests that every two measures form a musical idea, the cadence at measure seven through eight, which is immediately followed by a reintroduction of the opening motive (measure nine), shows that the sub-phrases only serve to give direction (melodic, rhythmic and harmonic) to an eight-measure phrase. The sub-phrases might be compared with the written phrases found between commas, dashes, semicolons and colons. The eight-measure phrase, however, ending with a perfect cadence which sounds much like a musical full stop (or a semicolon, because the tonic is in the second inversion), suggests that it constitutes a full 'sentence'.

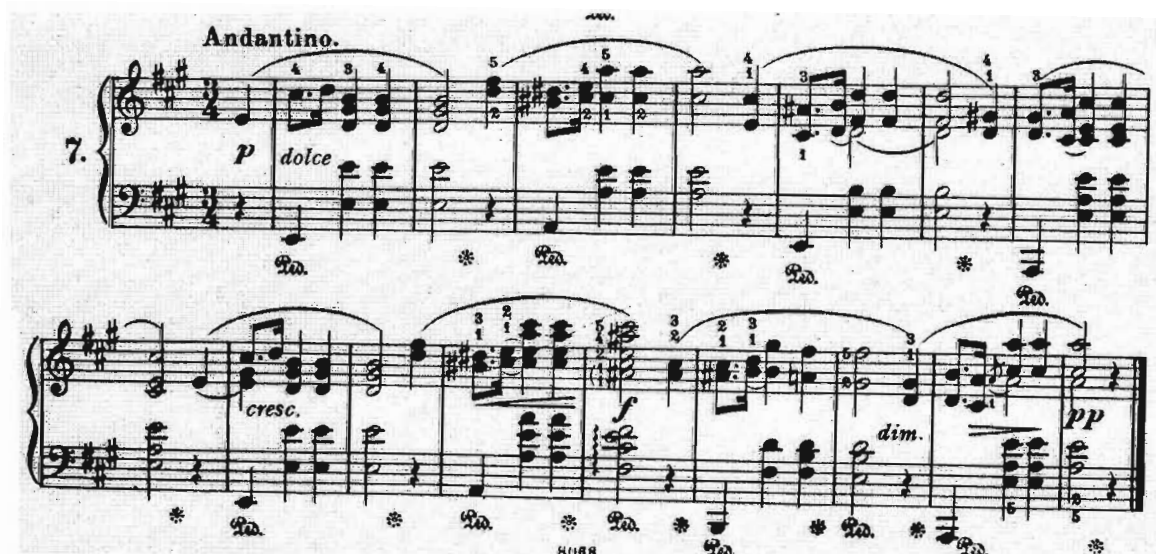


Figure 15. Prelude in A Major (Op. 28 No. 7)³⁸⁹

Thus, the literary equivalent of this prelude would be two sentences or a single one with two grammatically independent clauses (measures one through eight and nine through

³⁸⁹ Chopin, *Preludes*, 639.

sixteen).³⁹⁰ However, while Chopin's single preludes are extraordinarily short, all twenty-four *Preludes* performed as a set will give the illusion of a much larger work. The smallness of the preludes has led Kevin Korsyn, Kallberg, Eigeldinger, Roy Howat and others to question their purpose: are they to be performed singly or must they be performed as a cycle? Is it possible that one or two musical sentences constitute an entire composition?

The meaning of the word prelude (introduction) perhaps connotes a sense of shortness, for introductions are generally short-lived encounters. William Wordsworth's *The Prelude*, however, is not short. There is a sense in which the thematic transformations which occur in Wordsworth's *The Prelude* are – as Lawrence Kramer maintains³⁹¹ – comparable to Beethoven's music, which is often viewed as epitomizing thematic unification. In this regard, it is worth considering how Wordsworth's *The Prelude* might be compared with Chopin's preludes.

Wordsworth himself said that his poem was lengthy: “at present I am engaged in a Poem on my own earlier life which will take five parts or books to complete...”³⁹² The singular denotation of the title *The Prelude* is not to say that the epic poem is made up of one section (or of a mere two sentences as in Chopin's A Major prelude). In fact, the editors of the “Norton Critical Edition” – Jonathan Wordsworth, M. H. Abrams, and Stephen

³⁹⁰ It might be an even more daring analogy to say that this entire prelude falls short of a complete sentence, because the piece begins on the dominant – as though we only begin to listen to someone speak halfway through their sentence.

³⁹¹ Lawrence Kramer, “Beethoven's Two-Movement Piano Sonatas and The Utopia of Romantic Esthetics,” in *Music as Cultural Practice* (California: University of California Press, 1990).

³⁹² William Wordsworth, *The Prelude: 1799, 1805, 1850*, ed. Jonathan Wordsworth, M. H. Abrams, Stephen Gill (New York: W. W. Norton and Company), 530.

Gill – comment on the “preludes” within the “*Prelude*.”³⁹³ Although the work may have been conceived as being an introduction to *The Recluse*, an even larger autobiographical work, the work stands independent from other texts.³⁹⁴ Rather, the title gains meaning in an examination of the content of the text. The stanzas that make up *The Prelude* are all united by a common theme: Wordsworth’s relaying of the introductory years of his life.

A theme – such as “Wordsworth’s formative years” – that might unify a long work has received much praise in other Romantic genres. Berlioz’s *Symphony Fantastique* and Wagner’s *Ring* are often considered great works, because they are unified by an *idée fixe* and *leitmotiv* respectively. In order for Chopin’s *Preludes* to be classified as (a) great work(s), which can be ranked amongst the works of the great Romantic composers, people tend to believe, consequently, that there needs to be an inherent theoretical concept or theme which could prove that Chopin was able to unify a large, complex structure.

Even though the title of Chopin’s preludes (which was of Chopin’s own choice)³⁹⁵ denotes plurality, Korsyn, Kallberg, Eigeldinger, and Howat have wondered whether Op. 28 should be considered as a single work consisting of twenty-four sections, united by an underlying motivic cell, or as twenty-four individual pieces. The solution to such a problem is not as evident as in the literary genre, because the theme that unites all the preludes within Wordsworth’s *Prelude* is transparent because of the meaning in his

³⁹³ Ibid., preface, ix.

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 529.

³⁹⁵ Chopin writes to Camille Pleyel in Paris (January, 1839): “I am sending you the Preludes. I finished them on your cottage piano which arrived in perfect condition.” Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 168.

words. Chopin's twenty-four preludes, on the other hand, are not supported by a literary text, and it is therefore not easy to determine if they are bound by a single theme. Because each prelude is based on a different melody, none of which return, it would be a difficult task to find in piano literature the existence of twenty-four (or more) radically different melodies bound together to form a single composition – in fact, this would be a significant departure from his contemporaries' practice of unifying their works with the smallest musical motive possible. Hedley argued that the preludes did not form a unit, saying: "each of them, with few exceptions, is concerned with the exposition of a single musical idea."³⁹⁶ Why does there exist a questioning of their individuality when they sound very different? Moreover, can they be so different and yet be taken as parts of a coherent whole? The questions outlined here concern the relationship between theoretical complexity and the issues of singular versus plural, as well as separation and difference versus unity.

Eigeldinger argues that the prelude can be defined in two ways: it is linked to "improvisation," and it has certain "functions."³⁹⁷ After examining some of the various ways in which the prelude was used, up to the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, he surmises that Johann Sebastian Bach's preludes are "not a break with the past," but a "summing up of every viewpoint." In terms of Eigeldinger's reference to improvisation and functionality it is clear that Bach's preludes possess both these sets of characteristics. For example, a few have embellished lines that appear to mimic

³⁹⁶ Hedley, *The Master Musicians Chopin*, 145.

³⁹⁷ Eigeldinger, "Twenty-four Preludes Op. 28: Genre, Structure, Significance," *Chopin Studies*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 170.

improvisation, and all of them serve as introductions to fugues.³⁹⁸ Eigeldinger observes that Bach and his successors recreated, if not the “function” of introducing another work, the improvisatory qualities of the prelude (which Eigeldinger likens to the “cadenza” and “instrumental recitativo”). However, the examples with which Eigeldinger compares Chopin’s preludes do appear to be introductions – but not in the usual sense of the word. These compositions are not used as introductions to other pieces but introduce the pianist to certain characteristics that Chopin had attributed to the twenty-four major and minor keys. If we compare Chopin’s preludes to Cramer’s, we notice that Cramer titles his preludes “Twenty-Six Preludes or Short Introductions in the Principal Major and Minor Keys” (1818). This title articulates clearly that the “function” of these preludes is to help (or introduce) the pianist orient himself to the nature of different keys. One would think the simple fact that each prelude is written in one of the twenty-four major and minor keys could have been used as evidence that the preludes are, in some way, parts of a whole. However, this is not to say that they are to be studied as a whole, or performed as a cycle. If this were the case, each book of Bach’s forty-eight *Preludes and Fugues*, and also Dimitri Shostakovitch’s *Twenty-Four Preludes and Fugues*, should also be performed at one sitting, for they are also in each of the twenty-four major and minor keys.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁸ For example, preludes 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 11 from *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier* (book one) include (either as an opening or as an ending [coda]) florid ornamentation that is not inherent to the melody.

³⁹⁹ It may be argued that these composers’ preludes are separated by fugues and therefore are clearly not to be performed in one recital. There remain, however, collections of preludes by Debussy, Rachmaninov, and Scriabin, for example, which are not separated by fugues, but are, in my opinion, seldom performed as cycles.

Eigeldinger claims to have located a motivic cell upon which all Chopin's preludes are based, thus implying that they are to be considered as one large work: he says that each prelude introduces the next and therefore they are all connected to each other. By arguing that Chopin unified the twenty-four preludes with a common thread, Eigeldinger is also claiming that Chopin was competent in the handling of large theoretical structures.

In his analysis of Claude Debussy's prelude, *Feux d'artifice*, Howat claims to have found the motivic cell that Eigeldinger located in Chopin's preludes, and he suggests that this motivic cell may have been "intuitively carried over."⁴⁰⁰ Korsyn, however, says that there has been too much attention bestowed on musical characteristics that are the "same" and not enough on the characteristics that make pieces "different." He berates Howat for acknowledging "without irony" that "Eigeldinger's motive is 'virtually unstated' in Chopin's Preludes," and yet Howat focuses on the motivic cell after merely assuming that it *may* have influenced Debussy's writing. Korsyn makes his own assessment of Eigeldinger's motivic cell theory and deduces that "Eigeldinger has to go to extraordinary lengths to isolate the notes that gratify his desire for unity."⁴⁰¹ In sum, Korsyn's criticism of Eigeldinger's and Howat's studies of the preludes is that these authors appear to be discomfited by a history that can not be proven to be "continuous." They link "Chopin and Debussy through a unified narrative, assuring us that beneath the obvious discontinuities in their music lies a common tradition."⁴⁰² Finally, in relation to

⁴⁰⁰ Roy Howat, "Chopin's Influence on the *Fin-de-Siècle* and Beyond," *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 268.

⁴⁰¹ Kevin Korsyn, "Beyond Privileged Contexts: Intertextuality, Influence, and Dialogue," *Rethinking Music*, 69, 70.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.* 70.

Kallberg's study of the preludes, I present what Korsyn believes to be a summary of Kallberg's perspective:

Kallberg insists that we remember the generic qualities of the prelude: performers often improvised preludes to larger works, and many nineteenth-century composers wrote preludes to substitute for such improvisations. Chopin himself may have used his preludes to introduce larger pieces; and Kallberg presents suggestive evidence that Chopin may have coupled the F sharp minor Prelude to the F sharp major Impromptu at a concert in 1848. Certainly Chopin did not respect the integrity of his alleged 'cycle', since he often performed the preludes outside their published sequence. Kallberg cites a typical Chopin concert programme, which refers to a 'Suite de Nocturnes, Préludes, et Études'.⁴⁰³

What Korsyn has failed to explain is that Kallberg wrote his chapter, "Small 'Forms': In Defence of the Prelude," in order to establish Chopin's status as a miniaturist.⁴⁰⁴ In the preface to his book, Kallberg had written that Chopin was a "champion of the miniature." Separately, the preludes are short works, but performed as a whole, or considered as theoretically unified by a hidden motif, they would no longer constitute small works but might form one large composition. In other words, not only would the performance of the entire work be similar in length to one of Beethoven's sonatas or concertos, but also it would establish Chopin's ability to compose a large structure and would make it appear, theoretically, as if he were not a miniaturist. The most appropriate summary of Kallberg's discussion on the preludes should rather have been taken from his introduction to the section titled "Smallness: The Status of The Miniature." Through a comparison with other arts, Kallberg shows how the reception of Chopin's music was influenced by the critics of his day. Words that the Romantics linked to gender, such as "coquettish," "finery," and "small design," were considered by Romantic critics to "corrupt the meaning" of miniatures. In other words, Kallberg argues that well-known critics such as

⁴⁰³ Ibid. 70.

⁴⁰⁴ Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries*, 137, 138.

“Robert Schumann and Kahlert, both devalued small forms in part because they were perceived as being ‘feminine’ music.”⁴⁰⁵

It is as though Korsyn does not read any connotations of gender or sensory politics into the fact that Chopin was often criticized as unable to master large forms. In other words, Korsyn does not take note of any underlying associations people have made between gender and the size of genres, their musical characteristics, and their inherent structures. Kallberg, on the other hand, noted that Chopin had been mocked by late nineteenth-century music critics on account of his ‘poor’ attempts at handling so-called theoretically complex forms.⁴⁰⁶ Kallberg explains how the gendered political struggle is ‘played out’ by some of the greatest pianists. Both Niecks and Huneker “longed for ‘masculine vigor’ to conquer ‘feminine’ qualities in Chopin.”⁴⁰⁷ These sensory qualities are direct references to the particular act of performing Chopin’s music. Furthermore, Rubinstein “frequently gave himself credit for steering interpretations of Chopin away from the ‘salon style,’” which covered not just the audible or the implied tactile nature of Chopin’s own performances, but even his creative ability in mastering “inherent” meanings.⁴⁰⁸

Even Chopin’s “larger” works were criticized as being inadequate. As Kallberg explains, attitudes like Rubinstein’s were to “work against Chopin in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in the commonplace derogation of his efforts in larger genres like the

⁴⁰⁵ Kallberg, “Small ‘forms’: In Defense of the Prelude,” *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 131, 132.

⁴⁰⁶ Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries*, 43.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.* 44.

concerto and sonata.”⁴⁰⁹ Kallberg, defending Chopin’s skill at composing miniatures, uses Chopin’s preludes to show how present society still feels threatened by smallness. He demonstrates that Chopin’s preludes “challenged” his own society, a “challenge” that Kallberg thinks has not yet “been met.”⁴¹⁰ It appears that Kallberg is correct in saying that these attitudes persist in the twentieth century. Hedley says that Chopin “had neither the gift for creating music in any other setting [than the salon] nor the inclination to master the art of writing for orchestra.”⁴¹¹ He gives the excuse, on Chopin’s behalf, that since Beethoven’s concertos were “practically unknown” when Chopin was still a student, he had no good model on which to base his own style. What he is ultimately saying (a view stemming from the mid-twentieth century) is that Chopin could not master large forms (concertos, symphonies or sonatas) because of his lack of exposure to Beethoven’s compositions. Beethoven, however, might have been Chopin’s last choice as a model simply because Poland was being Germanized. It is interesting that Korsyn sees Howat’s and Eigeldinger’s analyses in terms of a “continuous” history of musical style⁴¹² – that is, in terms of the influence that Chopin might have had over Debussy – and that Kallberg’s arguments are short-sighted attempts to establish the individuality of the *Preludes*. Eigeldinger’s, Howat’s, and Kallberg’s discussions on the preludes are concerned primarily with the issues of smallness, largeness, and ‘greatness,’ issues which are linked to connotations of ‘femininity’ and ‘masculinity.’ Korsyn, however, has overlooked the factor of gender in relation to size and theoretical complexity.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid., 43.

⁴¹⁰ Kallberg, *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 143.

⁴¹¹ Hedley, “Concertos, Studies, Preludes,” *The Master Musicians Chopin*, 139, 140.

⁴¹² Korsyn, “Beyond Privileged Contexts: Intertextuality, Influence, and Dialogue,” *Rethinking Music*, 70.

Whether Chopin thought of the preludes as a set, or whether he had himself performed some of them independently from the rest, there is some evidence to suggest that he did not view this same issue as a dilemma. He referred to the “pot-pourri”⁴¹³ concerts of his day, where even movements of concertos did not follow one another, and his views suggest that, in relation to his preludes, arguments concerning singular versus plural or separation and difference versus unity are unwarranted.⁴¹⁴ On the other hand, I consider people’s motives for arguing about this issue are relevant to the politics that surround the issue of gender. What would a change in perspective in regard to the preludes do for Chopin’s reputation? Whichever way the argument sways, whether in favour of those who wish to see the preludes as a unified whole or those who wish to see them as unrelated miniatures, what is at stake is not so much a theory about the discontinuities of musical style (as Korsyn believes),⁴¹⁵ but that people are presenting vastly different views as they attempt to answer the sensitive question as to whether Chopin was a great composer. If he was a great composer, then he would be expected to be capable of handling the difficulties of unifying large works. (Of course, this measurement of

⁴¹³ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence of Fryderyk Chopin*, 76.

⁴¹⁴ Chopin reports on a concert (writing to Tytus, 1830) where “Mlle Wolkow” performed an aria before he was to play the second and third movements of his E Minor concerto (opus 11) Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 59, 60; Cortot lists the items of the evening: symphony, Chopin’s concerto first movement, Mlle Wolkow’s aria, second and third movements of Chopin’s E minor concerto. Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, 99.

⁴¹⁵ Korsyn’s apparent need of theoretical frameworks that illuminate discontinuous histories owes much to his interpretation of Harold Bloom’s *The Breaking of Form* (1979) and Frederic Jameson’s *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Art* (1981). Whilst I acknowledge his challenge – that musicologists should concentrate more on the dissimilarities between works instead of similarities (which suggest ‘influence’) – I also note that he has himself noted the difficulty of this task. Korsyn relays Jameson’s words to explain that analyzing elements of works that are not ‘influenced’ or ‘traceable’ through history is like studying the “dark matter of the universe.” The analysis that Korsyn believes we should follow, that of studying “negative intertextuality” (which is in brief: the study of musical characteristics that are not taken from prior models and inserted into newer compositions) is in my view verging on an autonomist study. I say this, for I question how one is to know what the “dark matter” is without first knowing the visible matter. To this end, I have discovered that there are also those literary theorists who do not accept the challenge that Korsyn is promoting: John Lyons writes “I took a broader view of the subject matter...continuity rather than discontinuity.” John Lyons, Preface to *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

greatness stems from the assumption that composers such as Beethoven and Wagner were great, and they were great because of their intellectual ability to unify their lengthy works with organic motives).

In my view, Chopin is not the only composer whom musicologists have tried to reconstruct as 'great.' It is as though Chopin's unusual use of the prelude genre has initiated a chain of events related to the length of works. Serge Rachmaninov's preludes have also been subjected to the questioning as to whether they form sets or are to be viewed as individual works. Although Peter Donohoe writes of the ten year "gulf" between Rachmaninov's *C Sharp Minor Prelude* (Op. 3 No. 2) and his "set of Preludes Op. 23," he claims that the Op. 23 preludes "seem to follow on from the final bars of Op. 3 No. 2."⁴¹⁶ Thus, although Chopin's and Rachmaninov's preludes are separated by a century, they have received the same critical treatment: they must be made to appear large. Methuen-Campbell explains why he thinks there exists a tendency to favour long works:

Nor does the preoccupation with programming complete sets of Chopin's works, whether these be the four ballades, the four scherzos or either book of etudes, act in sympathy with the composer's mind. There can be little musical rationale for grouping together works that have nothing in common excepting genre title and general form and structure. The trend is symptomatic of our time in which everything has to carry intellectual weight: thus the move towards favouring large-scale forms. One seldom hears Chopin's smaller pieces played by the better-known pianists, except as encores.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁶ Peter Donohoe, introduction to *Preludes for Piano by Serge Rachmaninoff* (London: Boosey and Hawkes, 1985).

⁴¹⁷ Methuen-Campbell, "Chopin in Performance," *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 205.

In contrast to the preludes are the sonatas and the concertos, the titles of which suggest inherently complex structures. It is evident, however, that although Methuen-Campbell says that pianists of “our time” favour the works that appear to have “intellectual” weight, Chopin’s “large” works have been criticized for their lack of complexity.

Even though Chopin had himself drawn attention to the first movement of his *E Minor Concerto* (Op. 11) by remarking that it was “impressive,”⁴¹⁸ the concertos have received less scholarly attention than Chopin’s other works. This lack of attention is also curious, seeing that Chopin performed them at several of his public concerts, and international competitions today consider them as standard repertoire for their final rounds. Although Rink has re-evaluated them recently, authors contemporaneous with Chopin and those following him – including Liszt, Cortot, Huneker and Hedley – refer to the concertos only in passing.⁴¹⁹ The entire *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin* has only a few references to the concertos.

Chopin, aged eight, wrote a short note to his father on his “name-day,” saying that the “big concerto is inadequate” to express the “greatness of his tender love for his father.”⁴²⁰ In light of the documentation that records Chopin’s own perception of the pros and cons of small forms and big forms, it is surprising that the preludes and the concertos should be implicated in discussions that, at the one end, devalue his small forms and analyze their theoretical design in order to unify them organically as though they were a Beethovenian-like symphony, and, at the other end, give little attention to the large forms

⁴¹⁸ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 56, 57.

⁴¹⁹ Rink, *Chopin: The Piano Concertos* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁴²⁰ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 1.

in order to avoid having to discuss their so-called weaknesses, such as their alleged lack of organic unity. “Greatness” of feeling is in this instance a feeling of “tenderness.” Chopin may have purposely made it his task to impart simplicity – and tenderness – into the form that was most associated with great pianists and composers. Ironically, it was precisely Chopin’s youth, at the time when the concertos were composed, that was thought to have produced a lack of coherence in them.

Fétis writes in the *Revue Musicale* after a performance given by Chopin:

[The concerto (Op. 11) gave] pleasure to its audience, [because of the] modulations and general form of the movements. There is a soul in the melodies, fantasy in the passage work and originality in the whole. The modulations are too rich, and there is some disorder in the sequence of phrases, so that sometimes the music seems more improvisatory than planned: these are the defects accompanying the qualities. But such flaws go with the composer’s youth; they will vanish with experience.⁴²¹

Thus, Fétis claims that it is because of Chopin’s youthful ‘impromptu’ style of composition that the work fails in terms of theoretical complexity. Today, of course, we find that with hindsight it is perhaps implausible to associate Chopin with amateurish flippancy, and, to this end, we are told that his apparently spontaneous music could well be a reflection of Bach’s influence.⁴²² However, this ‘modern’ perspective is countered, again, by another modern view, because piano playing that seems to be *ad libitum* is still today seen as childlike. For example, Daniel Barenboim comments that Edwin Fischer’s

⁴²¹ Fétis, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 290.

⁴²² Robert W. Wason, “Two Bach Preludes/Two Chopin Etudes,” in *Music Theory Spectrum*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Spring, 2002), 103 – 120.

improvisatory style of piano playing sounds “childish.”⁴²³ Perhaps unsurprisingly, this supposed immaturity is still in evidence in Chopin’s late works. For instance, his Nocturne Op. 62 No. 2 (composed in 1845 and 1846) is full of improvisatory lines. Should such characteristics, extending over his entire oeuvre, be explained as the result of “childishness” or “inexperience”? In answer to my own question, I argue that we should put aside our usual vocabulary, such as ‘childlike’ and ‘immature,’ as well as ‘feminine’ music, when attempting to understand music. The associations that we might be tempted to make between these metaphorical terms and undesired, negative judgments on music such as ‘over-simple,’ or ‘lacking required skills,’ could influence the way in which we evaluate a composer’s music.⁴²⁴ Consider, for example, the comparison made in Chopin’s own time between a child’s and a woman’s style of playing. Princess Marcelina Czartoryska was reported to be the greatest interpreter of Chopin’s music and Solange Sand said that children and women gave more meaning to Chopin’s music.⁴²⁵ The link Sand made between children and women, concomitant with Chopin’s perspective that his improvisatory “series of brilliant effects” (or “glitter”)⁴²⁶ were “for the ladies,” demonstrates that in a simplistic way, Fétis might just as well have equated Chopin’s youthful, and improvisatory-like ‘failures’ with ‘femininity.’⁴²⁷ Of course, if Chopin’s reference to “brilliant effects” was not based on his own assumption but one that stemmed from a general opinion of his day, then it is credible that Fétis was alluding directly to ‘femininity’ and not merely equating it to childish shortcomings.

⁴²³ Sugars, *The Art of Piano Playing*.

⁴²⁴ Peter Pecis also argues that Chopin’s contemporaries noted his child-like qualities, and that later writers felt this diminished his seriousness. He attempts to demonstrate that Mozart’s playfulness is actually exceedingly serious. See Peter Pecis, “The Child and the Daemon: Mozart and Deep Play,” in *19th-Century Music* (Fall/Spring, 2001-2002), 91-107.

⁴²⁵ Eigeldinger and Solange Sand, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 163, 280 – 281.

⁴²⁶ Voynich translates “glitter” instead of “brilliant.” *Chopin’s Letters*, 74.

⁴²⁷ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 36, 37.

Chopin's concertos are based on "the sonata principle," and people have considered the many related sections and internal contrasts as a reflection of the complexity inherent to the form.⁴²⁸ In 1992, Anatole Leikin summarizes the stigma surrounding Chopin's explorations of "large" forms. In his essay, "The Sonatas,"⁴²⁹ he writes that because of the "prestigious" associations people make with sonata form (which are most probably a result of the great success Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven had with the genre), the Romantics were motivated to "prove their ability" at handling "complex structures." He notes that the late Romantics' criticisms surrounding Chopin's attempts at sonata form continued late into the twentieth century. Leikin's perspective is echoed in 1997 by Rink, who says that Chopin's large forms have "suffered some of the harshest scholarly criticism."⁴³⁰ Leikin therefore defends Chopin's innovations in the genre, saying that "only in recent commentaries has the air of structural inferiority about the Sonata begun to dissipate." This type of defence, in turn, is echoed by Rink who says that the scores must be viewed in relation to Chopin's unique sense of sound: "it is possible to overcome any conceivable weakness simply by activating the expressive plans inscribed within the music."⁴³¹ Rink is convinced that it was Chopin's unique pianism that justified Chopin's challenge to the traditional sonata form, saying:

it is certain that Chopin would have been troubled and perplexed by the interpretive responses to both concertos after they left his hands. Once divorced from the unique performance aesthetic that had guided their creation,

⁴²⁸ Rink, "Tonal Architecture in the Early Music," *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 80.

⁴²⁹ Anatole Leikin, "The Sonatas," *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 160 – 187.

⁴³⁰ Rink, Preface to *Chopin: The Piano Concertos*, ix.

⁴³¹ R Anatole Leikin, "The Sonatas," *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 160 – 187; Rink, *Chopin: The Piano Concertos*, 87.

the concertos no longer communicated the expressive message that Chopin himself had brought to life as composer, performer and teacher.⁴³²

Rink, therefore, admitted to an ‘intentionalist’ approach to studying the concertos; to “reinterpret and re-evaluate” the concertos, “in so far as possible, ‘in the spirit of the composer.’”⁴³³ In short, this approach to the study of the concertos was made in an attempt to demonstrate that they might not be successful when “dissected on paper,” but are nevertheless successful in sound. Chopin intended them to sound a certain way, and it is this Chopinesque sound that ‘saves’ the underlying ‘weakness’ in form.⁴³⁴ (His approach, which focuses on Chopin’s particular sense of sound, may well be one of those methods of inquiry, to which Solie refers often, that establishes ‘difference’ respectfully, without making unfavourable comparisons to the usual Beethovenian models). Toward the end of Rink’s reinterpretation and re-evaluation of the concertos, however, he concedes that although his “interpretation” is, possibly, a “legitimate” one, it is “sure to be surpassed in due course.”⁴³⁵

The negative judgments on Chopin, to which Leikin and Rink draw our attention, can be viewed in a number of contexts, because the presence of the heroic figure of Beethoven, for example, appears to have contributed to the belief that Chopin lacked the sense of logic thought to be required in order to develop sonatas appropriately. This is reflected in the following comment by Hedley.

⁴³² Rink, *Chopin: The Concertos*, 24.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*, Preface, ix.

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*, 100.

We may take it, therefore, that he intended to write the sonatas in the way that he realized best suited him, as a composer whose gifts lay in the direction of long lyrical or dramatic periods rather than the closely reasoned development of short pregnant themes.⁴³⁶

Whilst Hedley notices that Chopin was gifted at writing long melodies, he nonetheless dissociates these melodies from the intellectual prowess that has been traditionally associated with Haydn's, Mozart's, and Beethoven's treatment of short melodies within the development sections of sonatas and sonata-form movements. These composers were skilled at using motivic cells within the complex framework of a sonata. In Hedley's opinion musical motifs in the hands of the members of the First Viennese School were used to transform their sonatas thematically, whilst Chopin's sonatas, on the other hand, lacking in "reason," should be appreciated for their dramatic "arias." When, of course, the introductions to some of Beethoven's sonatas and symphonies appear to be 'spontaneous' he is not belittled for his improvisatory style, but hailed as an original creator, whose works seem to unfold from a single inspiration that came to him instinctively.⁴³⁷ In short, differentiating between 'irrational' and 'intellectual' music echoes a differentiation that was "commonly found in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries" – an "unthinking prejudice," as Ellen Kennedy and Susan Mendus argue, that excluded women (themselves judged as irrational) from social, political, and philosophical discourses.⁴³⁸ However, when a composer, who is thought to be

⁴³⁶ Hedley, *The Master Musicians Chopin*, 157.

⁴³⁷ Reti, in Ruth Solie, "The Living Work: Organicism and Musical Analysis," in *19th Century Music* Vol. IV no. 2 (Fall, 1980), 154.

⁴³⁸ Ellen Kennedy and Susan Mendus, Introduction to *Women in Western Political Philosophy* (Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books Ltd., 1987), 11.

'intellectual,' like Beethoven, composes in a way that differs from his approved style, we use the difference to demonstrate, all the more, his greatness.

Beethoven's capacity for deep, intellectual thought, accepted as a fact by Western musicians, seems to underlie Brendel's understanding of classical music:

Anybody who has ever tried to live with masterpieces of music for several years and becomes aware of what they are about, how they are constructed, how themes, motives hang together in a movement, and how movements hang together in a sonata will discover that a Beethoven sonata is a tremendous intellectual feat and that the intellectuality of the sonata is an integral part of the whole.⁴³⁹

Rosen suggested that Chopin made mistakes with sonata form that Mozart would not have made, even while still a child. Even though Huneker says that Chopin's first sonata (in C minor, Op. 4) received positive criticism at the time of its first performances, this same sonata, with its "classical complexion," "demonstrates" to later musicologists that "the composer [Chopin] had no sympathy with the form."⁴⁴⁰ Huneker also writes that Chopin's sonata for cello and piano is a sonata only because the title says so: "robbed of its title of sonata" it is merely an "aping of this form."⁴⁴¹ His overall opinion is that Chopin "tried so hard and failed so dismally."⁴⁴²

In contrast with Rosen's criticism that Chopin made amateurish mistakes (and perhaps in response to other criticisms of Chopin's compositions based on sonata form), Rink points out that Chopin's composition teacher, Elsner, had wide experience with extended forms.

⁴³⁹ Mach, *Great Contemporary Pianists Speak for Themselves*, 27.

⁴⁴⁰ Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, 166.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 170.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, 166.

In other words, Rink implies it is improbable that Chopin was unaware of how to compose a ‘conventional’ sonata. Rather, Rink argues that Chopin’s “mistakes” should be considered as “openly” reversing the classical “procedures.”⁴⁴³ We might now extend Rink’s comment, adding that Chopin might also have been reversing “openly” the ‘intellectual’-sounding, organically-unified, German procedures.

In my view, authors avoid detailed critical discussions of Chopin’s concertos, and do not report others’ perspectives on the concertos, not only because of Chopin’s supposed lack of skill in regard to complex theoretical concepts but also because his orchestration did not correspond to the style of the First Viennese School. While Chopin is thought to have written beautiful solo piano music, he is often derided for his attempts at orchestration. Extended forms, therefore, are related to largeness not simply because they are thought to be complex, but because orchestration is seen as a complex task. Hedley states that because of the original “weak” orchestration of Chopin’s concertos, orchestras usually play “[Karl] Klindworth’s or [Carl] Tausig’s...or someone else’s ‘improved’ orchestration.”⁴⁴⁴ It is perhaps unsurprising that Chopin, supposedly lacking the ability to orchestrate his concertos, was, again, contrasted with Liszt, whose piano music itself has been said to have an “orchestral basis.”⁴⁴⁵ Of course, Liszt’s skill at orchestration was linked, both by himself and by others, to Beethoven.

Liszt’s musical style can be traced back to Beethoven, who tutored Liszt’s teacher, Czerny, and musicologists attribute Liszt’s success with orchestration in part to this

⁴⁴³ Rink quoted in Leikin, “The Sonatas,” *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 166.

⁴⁴⁴ Hedley, *The Master Musicians Chopin*, 140.

⁴⁴⁵ Robert Winter, “The Age of Virtuosity,” *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments: The Piano*, 130.

connection with Beethoven, as well as to Liszt's inheritance of the symphonic style of Beethoven.⁴⁴⁶ Even Liszt's solo piano music has at times been treated as though it resembled a symphony. For example, whereas Liszt's *B Minor Sonata* is the "most impressive display of thematic transformation," and has been praised for being several movements unified into one, Chopin's sonatas have been condemned for their supposed lack of unity.⁴⁴⁷ As Chechlińska writes, "even after this date [1866], the sonatas – in their entirety or as individual movements – were performed only sporadically until the turn of the century."⁴⁴⁸ By the mid-twentieth century, although they were still thought to be lacking in 'unity,' the sonatas began to be assessed in a discourse which made them appear large. Hedley argues that beyond the "technical question of form [in the sonatas]," there is unity created through sound: "the total artistic impression."⁴⁴⁹ However, whereas the piano sonatas were solo works, an orchestra accompanied the concertos. This same phrase, therefore, cannot be used to counter the argument that Chopin's concertos are flawed because the sound, especially the orchestral timbre, itself received criticism. Thus, not only his supposed ineptness in complex sonata structure, but also his sense of sound (which was considered to be most applicable to the piano, and not to a large group of orchestral players)⁴⁵⁰ appears to have deterred musicians from discussing seriously, and in analytical terms, the inherent characteristics of his concertos.

⁴⁴⁶ Alexander Rehding, "Liszt's Musical Monuments," *19th Century Music* (Summer, 2002).

⁴⁴⁷ Winter, "The Age of Virtuosity," *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments: The Piano*, 130.

⁴⁴⁸ Chechlińska, "Chopin Reception in Nineteenth-Century Poland," *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 213.

⁴⁴⁹ Hedley, *The Master Musicians Chopin*, 158.

⁴⁵⁰ Huneker writes that Chopin was "weak" "when writing for any instrument but his own." Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, 171.

Cortot defends Chopin against criticisms of his orchestration. He uses Chopin's own words, writing "Chopin seems unsurprised at his own audacity in marking the bowing *col legno* in the Finale of the Concerto in F. He [Chopin] writes, 'Perhaps it is bad, but why be ashamed to write without conforming to the rules?'" In order to show that even those most successful in large forms and orchestration have themselves always been averse to conforming, Cortot notes that Beethoven uttered words similar to those of Chopin and yet he was not condemned.⁴⁵¹

Even though based on "the sonata principle," Chopin's *E Minor* (Op. 11) and *F Minor* (Op. 21) concertos rely on other forms to give them shape, and it appears that these other forms have contributed to the claim that Chopin's large forms are 'weak' in theoretical design. Adrian Thomas writes of the *F Minor Concerto* that whilst the "mazurka provides the main impetus," there is also a "hover[ing]" between the style of the mazurka and the waltz.⁴⁵² It is from the musical characteristics of the dance forms that Thomas is able to determine in turn, that the melodies, rhythms and meters of the concertos correspond to these genres. Chopin has also signified the intertextuality of his *E Minor Concerto* by entitling the second and third movements "Romance" and "Rondo." It appears, therefore, that any discussion on the concertos would require a consideration of the romance, the mazurka, the waltz, the rondo, and the nocturne.

In his early years, Chopin composed a rondo, a mazurka, a waltz, and a nocturne. He composed the Mazurka in D Major in 1820, the Rondo in C minor in 1825, the waltz

⁴⁵¹ Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, 51.

⁴⁵² Adrian Thomas, "Beyond the Dance," *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 150.

(which is lost) in C major in 1826, and the nocturne in E Minor (Op. 72 No. 1) in 1827.

While the term mazurka refers unequivocally to folk dance melodies, some of the rondos and waltzes also allude to folk melodies: take, for example, the *Rondeau a la Mazurka* and the *Nocturne Op. 15 No. 3*, which also imitate the mazurka.⁴⁵³

While Chopin ceased to write rondos after his early thirties, he continued to write mazurkas, waltzes and nocturnes until the end of his life. In other words, there are fewer rondos (five for piano and three for piano and orchestra, including the rondos belonging to both the *F Minor* and *E Minor Concertos*) than there are etudes, nocturnes, polonaises, or preludes, for example. Of the rondos, few have been considered successful works by critics. This criticism however does not appear to be well founded in terms of Chopin's own day, since between 1828 and 1830 he often recorded the audience's excitement over his rondos.⁴⁵⁴

In the late nineteenth century, Huneker defines Chopin's "youthful expansiveness" by his "efforts" in rondo form. He writes of Op. 12 that it is "Chopin and water": "the weakest of Chopin's muse."⁴⁵⁵ In the mid-twentieth century, Hedley relates three of Chopin's rondos (Op. 1, the *Rondo á la Mazur*, and the *Krakowiak*) to his "immature" style, and claims therefore that they "remain the province of the musicologist."⁴⁵⁶ Samson, in the late twentieth century, discusses Chopin's rondos in a section entitled

⁴⁵³ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 153; Kallberg, "Rhetoric of Genre," *Chopin at the Boundaries*.

⁴⁵⁴ *Chopin's Letters*.

⁴⁵⁵ Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, 175.

⁴⁵⁶ Hedley, *The Master Musicians Chopin*, 139.

“Apprenticeship.”⁴⁵⁷ He suggests that Chopin’s lack of ability with “extended forms” (such as the rondo) is a possible explanation for his gravitating towards the forms of “simple dance miniatures,” such as the mazurka and polonaise. In other words, sonata form aside, rondo form has also been considered to be foreign to Chopin’s artistic style. Chopin’s own words acknowledge that the form may be a debatable issue, because he wrote of the Rondo in C Major (for two pianos) that it was an “orphaned” composition and that it had “found a father in [Julian] Fontana.” What could he have meant, other than that no one except Fontana wanted to play it? What conclusion are we meant to reach concerning this work when Chopin had on two occasions, referred to it in deprecating terms?⁴⁵⁸ In a letter dated August 1829, he also referred to the *Krakowiak* as though it was a partial success, writing that he had “won” over all the “professional musicians” by the “beauty” of his rondo, but that there was an “uproar” from the orchestral players because of the number of “mistakes” in the score.⁴⁵⁹

I have shown that Chopin is regarded as incompetent at handling the “large” sonata form, and equally incompetent at ‘large’ orchestration. Similarly, there is a link between rondo form and the qualities of sounds associated with the form. In the late nineteenth century, Niecks alludes to a “bravura” element in Chopin’s rondos by calling the *Concert Rondo in F (Kracowiak)* a “modified polonaise.”⁴⁶⁰ The polonaise, as Liszt pointed out, highlights a ‘masculine’ aesthetic and therefore the *Kracowiak* for piano and orchestra has been ‘strengthened’ by the comparison Niecks makes between the *Kracowiak* and the

⁴⁵⁷ Samson, *The Music of Chopin*, 34.

⁴⁵⁸ Letter dated 9th September 1828. *Chopin’s Letters*, 37 – 40; Letter dated 27th December 1828. *Chopin’s Letters*, 46 – 48.

⁴⁵⁹ Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, 90.

⁴⁶⁰ Niecks, quoted by Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, 174.

polonaise. In the late twentieth century, Samson echoes Niecks' view that the rondos can be conceptualized as "bravura" pieces by saying that rondos (of the early nineteenth century) are clearly derived from *opera buffa*. Samson summarizes the "extended" nature of rondos: "the term carried clear connotations for the general mood of a piece as well as for its formal organization," and continues by saying the rondos sound "lively," "tuneful," "buoyant," and "bravura." He then qualifies the link he made between form and sound by correlating these qualities to Chopin's "precocious compositional command" and his "virtuoso" "hands."⁴⁶¹ Samson's opinion, that "bravura" is a quality of rondos in general, is in my view a defensible conclusion, because three of Chopin's eight rondos are for piano and orchestra, and of these three, two are the Finales to his concertos – a form that evolved during Mozart's and Beethoven's lives as means for soloists to show off their skills. The Rondo in C Major, in particular, might even relay a trace of largeness in that, although it was originally written for solo piano, Chopin had also transcribed it for two pianos.⁴⁶²

In short, Samson has noted that the "lively," "buoyant," and "bravura" moods of *opera buffa*, correspond to Chopin's "precocious compositional command." It is evident that Samson, like Huneker and Hedley, believed Chopin's precocity did not suit the extended form of the rondo. Put another way, Chopin, still an amateur – wanting to use extended forms to show off his 'masculine' "bravura" as a pianist and composer – failed in this attempt, just as people thought he had failed in his attempts at the complex sonata form.

⁴⁶¹ Samson, *The Music of Chopin*, 31.

⁴⁶² *Chopin's Letters*, 39.

A surviving valedictory address that was written in honour of Chopin's graduation from Elsner's conservatory and music classes reads: "let there ever be heard in your music, according to the good old Polish custom, those tunes which delight us here: the Mazurka and the dear *Krakowiak*."⁴⁶³ Chopin wrote his first mazurka at the age of ten, and the last one in the year of his death. In the intervening twenty-nine years he composed more than fifty mazurkas.⁴⁶⁴ In his observations of Chopin's musical talent, Elsner identifies the mazurka and the rondo-like *Krakowiak* as genres to which Chopin showed an affinity. The relevance of Elsner's comment, in relation to Chopin's sensory orientation, is most vivid when the mazurka and rondo are themselves analyzed in relation to their particular musical aesthetic.

Chopin called the efforts of his sister (Ludwika) in the genre of the mazurka as "non plus ultra." Further, he claimed her mazurka was great owing to its "bouncing, charming" character, and because it could be "dance[ed] to."⁴⁶⁵ The "bounce" that Chopin is referring to is of the dotted rhythms intrinsic to the folk melody. The "charming" aspect of the mazurka, on the other hand, implies a general aesthetic, which includes a melody and rhythm (as seen in the rondo of the E Minor Concerto) that is not overburdened with notes or polyrhythms – it is a simple melody and rhythm with a touch of ornamentation. Chopin comments about his own mazurkas, reflecting in even more open terms on the nature of the form. He wrote of the mazurka Op. 17 that it was "a little Jew."⁴⁶⁶ Besides the fact that Chopin had sworn at the Jews, and, therefore, pokes fun at his own

⁴⁶³ Elsner, in Azoury, *Chopin Through His Contemporaries: Friends, Lovers, and Rivals*, 56.

⁴⁶⁴ These figures are according to Arthur Hedley's catalogue of Chopin's works (appendix B) in his book *The Master Musicians Chopin* (pages 187 – 193).

⁴⁶⁵ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 4.

⁴⁶⁶ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 2.

composition, there is no questioning of the size of the genre – it is ‘small.’⁴⁶⁷ Of the four mazurkas (Op. 33), he wrote “Oh, and I have four new Mazurkas...They seem pretty to me.”⁴⁶⁸ From this it is possible to suggest further that Chopin associated smallness with prettiness. Berlioz, who commented on Chopin’s performance of his own mazurkas, supplies an apt summary of the genre:

There are unbelievable details in his Mazurkas; and he has found how to render them doubly interesting by playing them with the utmost degree of softness [...] the hammers merely brushing the strings, so much so that one is tempted to go close to the instrument and put one’s ear to it as if to a concert of sylphs⁴⁶⁹

From Berlioz’s comment, it is clear that his understanding of the musical characteristics intrinsic to the mazurka correspond to Liszt’s gendering of the genre as “feminine” and “effeminate.” Berlioz has used the gendered metaphor: “sylph-like.” When Liszt wrote of the dance-form being associated with ‘femininity,’ he made the same association with Chopin’s piano version of the mazurka (even though Chopin had remarked that his mazurkas are not intended for dancing).⁴⁷⁰ Because of the inherent smallness of the music text (the scarcity of notes, short ornate melodies, thin texture and dotted rhythms), so too did these nuances of the text invite Liszt’s gendering of them as ‘feminine.’⁴⁷¹

Rondos themselves relied on the polonaise and mazurka to contribute toward their character, both of which have been called “simple dance miniatures” by Samson.⁴⁷²

While there is only one rondo that is modeled after what Liszt called the ‘masculine’

⁴⁶⁷ *Chopin’s Letters*, 124.

⁴⁶⁸ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 2.

⁴⁶⁹ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 71

⁴⁷⁰ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 70 – 72.

⁴⁷¹ Liszt, *Chopin*, 64 – 81.

⁴⁷² Samson, *The Music of Chopin*, 34.

polonaise, several rondos are considered to be based on the mazurka – the genre that Liszt called ‘feminine’ and ‘effeminate.’ The very title of Chopin’s *Rondo á la Mazur* signals the simpler miniature embedded within the rondo. Thomas, Eigeldinger and Huneker claim that a mazurka is also embedded in the *F Minor Concerto*.⁴⁷³ Moreover, Huneker considers traces of this concerto to be found in the C Minor Rondo (Op. 1),⁴⁷⁴ and because Thomas claimed the “main impetus” of this concerto was determined by the waltz and the mazurka, the C Minor Rondo should, theoretically, reflect the characteristics of the mazurka. The A Flat section of the C Minor Rondo (which is the section that Huneker believes mimics the *F Minor Concerto*) does not sound like a waltz or a mazurka, because it is in duple meter whereas Chopin’s waltzes and mazurkas are invariably in triple meter (Figure 16). In fact, Chopin is recorded as having argued against Hallé and Giacomo Meyerbeer, who both said that Chopin’s mazurkas sounded as though they ought to be written in duple meter.⁴⁷⁵

An added peculiarity that is seldom found in the constant three-crotchet per bar accompaniments of the waltz and the mazurka is that some parts of the rondos incorporate undulating bass lines (Figure 16 and 17), a feature that is often prominent in the nocturnes.

⁴⁷³ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 121; Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, 171.

⁴⁷⁴ Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, 173.

⁴⁷⁵ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 73, 147.



Figure 16. Rondeau Op. 1.

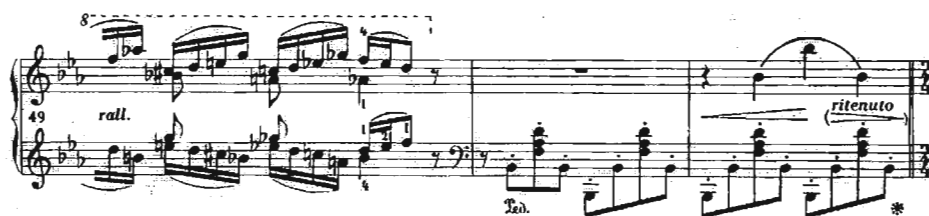


Figure 17. Rondeau Op. 16.⁴⁷⁶

There appear to be other, more distinct features: dotted rhythms and accentuations of the weak beats echo the character of the mazurka. In short, Samson's notion that Chopin's rondos rely on the polonaise and the mazurka for sustenance is, perhaps, not entirely true. After closer consideration of the 'masculine' polonaise and 'feminine' mazurka, we find that they are not equally represented in the rondos: the musical aesthetic of the mazurka appears more frequently in the rondos than the musical aesthetic of the polonaises. For example, one of the main characteristic rhythms of the polonaises (a quaver followed by two semiquavers: Figure 18) that can be observed in the bass register of every polonaise (save one) is not to be found in the *Rondo* (finale) of the *E Minor Concerto* (Figure 19).

⁴⁷⁶ Chopin, *Rondos*, 13, 43.



Figure 18. Polonaise Fantasic (Op. 61)⁴⁷⁷

There is only one motive that resembles this rhythm: measures 297 – 332, and its return in measures 541 through 576 (Figure 19).

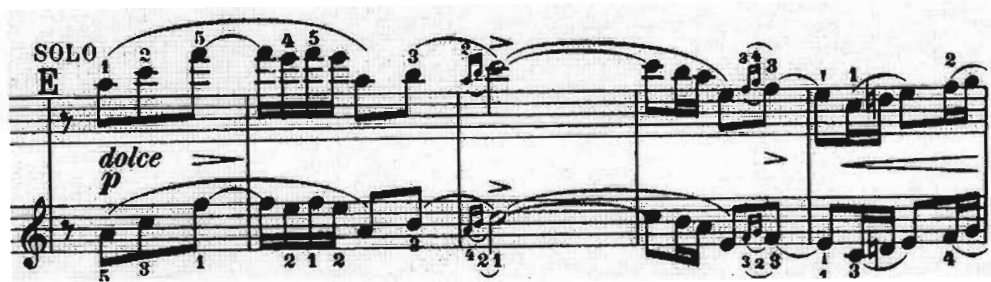


Figure 19. Concerto in E Minor (Op. 11): Rondo⁴⁷⁸

This rhythm, however, which usually drives the bass in the polonaises, is, in this instance, merely part of the melodic line – octaves in unison in the soprano register. This unusual voicing has lent itself to an interpretation of gender, because Chopin advised Lenz to associate the octave unison (Figure 20) in the Mazurka in B Flat Minor (Op. 24 No. 4) with “women’s voices.”

⁴⁷⁷ Chopin, *Polonaises*, 59.

⁴⁷⁸ Chopin, *Konzert Nr. 1*, 60.



Figure 20. Mazurka (Op. 24 No. 4)⁴⁷⁹

In addition to those rondos that might be associated with the ‘feminine’ mazurkas (Op. 1, Op. 5, rondo of Op. 21), there are only glimpses of the ‘masculine’ polonaise rhythm in the Rondos Op. 16 and Op. 73, and it would appear that the inherent characteristics of the mazurkas are more evident in Chopin’s *E Minor Concerto* (Figure 21) than those of the polonaises. Chopin’s own words substantiate this observation: he wrote of his performance to Tytus (1830), “as soon as they heard the first bars of the Mazurka in the Finale, they burst into applause.”⁴⁸⁰



Figure 21. Concerto in E Minor: Rondo (Introductory Measures)⁴⁸¹

It is also clear that the introductory measures of this rondo, which Chopin acknowledged was based on a mazurka, is in fact in duple meter. Chopin is seen here to contradict his own argument that his mazurkas are, and should be, in triple meter. The musical characteristics of this folk melody are perhaps best analyzed with a focus on melodic and

⁴⁷⁹ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 75; Chopin, *Oeuvres Complètes: Mazurkas*, ed. Charles Klindworth (Berlin: Bote & G. Bock, ?), 182.

⁴⁸⁰ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 59, 60.

⁴⁸¹ Chopin, *Konzert Nr. 1*, 53.

rhythmic characteristics. This mazurka is “bouncy” owing to a bass register that drives forward with an ‘um-pa’ figuration, and the melodic line is “bouncy” because of its articulation – *staccatissimo* markings. The “charming” aspect of the example is due to a combination of the *pianissimo*, which corresponds to Berlioz’s notion of delicacy, and the declamatory nuances that might be likened to ‘detail.’⁴⁸²

Because Thomas claimed that Chopin’s F Minor concerto echoes the waltz, it is relevant to the issue of theoretical complexity. Although Chopin thought of his waltzes as being ‘private’ compositions, he had commented on the general public’s enthusiasm for Strauss’s. Chopin writes:

[B]est known among the many Viennese entertainments are those evening in the beer halls where Strauss and Lanner (who correspond to the Swieszewskis in Warsaw) play waltzes during supper. After each waltz the applause is terrific: but if they play a “quodlibet”, i.e. a pot-pourri of opera-tunes, songs and dances, the audience are so delighted that they can scarcely contain themselves. It just shows you how corrupted the taste of the Viennese public is.⁴⁸³

Of his own waltzes, he has written: “as for the little Waltz which I have had the pleasure of writing for you, please, I beg you, keep it for yourself: I should not like it to be made public.”⁴⁸⁴ As Eigeldinger points out, this appeared to be Chopin’s way of keeping his waltzes the province of the ‘elite’. Chopin also sent Mme Peruzzi a waltz (Op. 69 No. 1)

⁴⁸² According to Lenz, Chopin had gone as far as saying that the Mazurka Op. 33 No. 4 was “a ballade in all but name.” Chopin “stressed” the “highly developed,” “narrative character” of this work. Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 75.

⁴⁸³ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 70 – 72.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 225.

and asked her to keep it private for “they would play it.” Chopin apparently mimicked the way “they” would play it, in a style that was, as Peruzzi claims, “very funny.”⁴⁸⁵

At first, the waltz might seem unimportant to Chopin’s Polish identity, because when he was in Vienna, he made a point of writing (with a sense of pride) to his parents (1831), claiming that he had not “picked up” anything “essentially Viennese.” He wrote that he “can’t dance a waltz properly – that speaks for itself!” and he continued, saying that his “piano has heard nothing but mazurkas.”⁴⁸⁶ The irony of his statement is that he did write waltzes, and that his own “little” waltzes have been, and are regarded as ‘Polish’ and not Viennese. The Waltz in A Minor (Op. 34 No. 2) is noted as being “one of the richest in Polish folkloric elements,” and the Waltz in F Major (Op. 34 No. 3) includes melodic figures that “derive directly” from the “Oberek” (a form of mazur).⁴⁸⁷ Here, again, characteristics associated with mazurkas are observed to be embedded within Chopin’s waltzes. Similarly, Huneker has also viewed the rhythm of the mazurka as being evident in the waltzes.⁴⁸⁸ In other words, because the waltz takes on the flavour of the mazurka, there is an explanation for Thomas’ observation of a “hovering” between the waltz and the mazurka in the F Minor Concerto. Though Chopin referred to his waltzes as “little,” he also titled some as “*brillante*.” “Brilliance” might best be understood through the words of Kleczyński who compared brilliance to “cascades of pearly notes.”⁴⁸⁹ Such a metaphor is acceptable considering that Chopin had himself described *Alla Pollaca* (Op.

⁴⁸⁵ Peruzzi, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 159.

⁴⁸⁶ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 88.

⁴⁸⁷ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 158.

⁴⁸⁸ Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, 136.

⁴⁸⁹ Kleczyński, in Huneker, *The Man and His Music*, 175.

3) as a “series of brilliant effects,” and had singled out scale-passages as those effects.⁴⁹⁰ Of these brilliant pieces that had pearls for notes, all were dedicated to woman pianists. It is to be feared, at least by those who are threatened by the correlation between brilliant (“pearly”) notes and ‘femininity,’ that they outweigh any other texture in both concerti. For instance, the main theme of the E Minor Concerto is the only section of the piano part that does not include florid melodic lines (Figure 22) and the return of the theme in the climaxes in measures 329 and 667. Of course this theme is commonly referred to in the analysis of sonata form as the ‘masculine’ first theme.

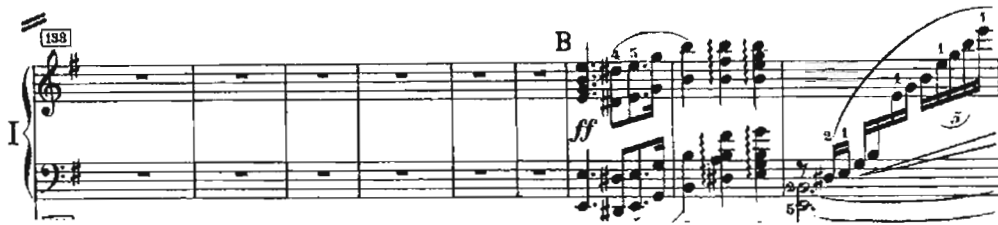


Figure 22. E Minor Concerto: First Movement (Piano Entry)⁴⁹¹

In short, mazurka-like qualities, which contribute invariably to the aesthetic character of Chopin’s rondos and the rondo movements within his concertos, as well as the waltz-like qualities of the concertos, undermine any attempt to see the concertos as complex, large-scale forms. In other words, Chopin relies on these miniatures to give character to his large forms. Adding to the simplicity, and ‘femininity,’ of the concertos, is the fact that the second movements of both concertos resemble nocturnes, because they are “Romances” – a miniature form that has been considered ‘simple,’ ‘feminine,’ and

⁴⁹⁰ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 36, 37.

⁴⁹¹ Chopin, *Konzert Nr. 1*, 8.

“effeminate.”⁴⁹² Musicologists and performers, however, may still be able to create the impression of largeness. Lovelock, for example, makes Chopin’s miniatures seem ‘heroic’ by saying that they owe their origins to Beethoven’s “mood-pictures,” and performers might simply render Chopin’s works in a style that suggests they are massive;⁴⁹³ similar to the way Huneker makes Chopin’s etudes (which are short works) appear large by titling his discussion on the etudes, “Titanic Experiments.”

Chopin’s early works, especially the so-called ambitious rondos intended for public appearances and based on extended forms, are viewed as reflecting his inexperience. Inexperience, therefore, can be viewed as an alternative explanation to the suggestion that he was simply unable to work with complex structures. This view can be best appreciated when we examine the opinions people hold in relation to his three successful sonatas (Op. 35, Op. 58 and Op. 65, composed between 1839 and 1846). These sonatas have not been accepted as true reflections of traditional sonata form. Chopin’s immaturity, however, cannot be used as an excuse for his lack of conformity. Put another way, inexperience is not considered to be a reasonable excuse for his continued ‘misuse’ of complex forms. Leikin questions what “structural inferiority” really means, and it is perhaps sensible that researchers should cease to equate the traditional use of large forms with the so-called greatness of the classical composers.

⁴⁹² Niecks, in Rink, “Enlightened Darkness,” *BBC Music Magazine*, 48. The link that some people have made between ‘femininity’ and the nocturnes, as well as the romances, will be discussed in detail in “The Human Voice and the ‘Rhetoric of Genre’: The Nocturne Contrasted with the Polonaise,” Chapter Three (3.3).

⁴⁹³ Lovelock, “The Romantics and Their Music,” *A Concise History of Music*, 187.

In music, then, a work is viewed as a success when all the components that contribute to the form of that piece appear to fit together, fulfilling a master plan – a ‘master plan’ of which, presumably, the composer was the creator. We see the same interpretation of ‘success’ in literary criticism. In 1957, Northrop Frye produced, as Terry Eagleton argues, a “mighty ‘totalization’ of all literary genres, *Anatomy of Criticism*.”⁴⁹⁴ If we accept that Eagleton is correct in stating that Frye completed this mighty task because he believed that criticism was “in a sorry unscientific mess,” then it follows that Frye believed a successful work was one in which there are no loose ends – that it is theoretically sound and, therefore, ‘scientific’.⁴⁹⁵ We can ask ourselves, rhetorically, whether Wagner’s works have ever been seen as anything other than a mighty ‘totalization’ of musical, as well as other artistically-related, ideas.

The opposite of a “mighty ‘totalization’” must then be one which is not ‘scientific.’ In literature on Chopin, we see how the opposite of a “mighty ‘totalization’” is viewed negatively, and we are also told what contributes towards an ‘unscientific’ approach. For example, when Edward Waters criticized Liszt’s book for its excessive “verbiage,” he claimed that the excessive “detail” appears to be more like the work of Carolyne Wittgenstein.⁴⁹⁶ It is the excessive amount of “detail,” then, that he views negatively in 1963, thinking that too much detail results in an unfocussed discussion, and is therefore a reflection of “pseudo-philosophy.” Waters’s analysis of *Frédéric Chopin* not only gives us a clue about what might be called ‘opposite’ to Frye’s ‘scientific’ work, but it also

⁴⁹⁴ Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publisher Limited, 1983), 91.

⁴⁹⁵ Eagleton, *Literary Theory*, 91.

⁴⁹⁶ Waters, in Franz Liszt, foreword to *Frédéric Chopin*, with a foreword and trans. by Edward N. Waters (New York: Vienna House, 1852; 1963).

echoes the belief of Kant and Rousseau that a lack of rationality is linked to excessive detail, and can also be linked to ‘femininity.’

For instance, in *Women in Western Political Philosophy*, Ellen Kennedy and Susan Mendus write that philosophers have traditionally connected women to “childrearer”-like love and that “this inherent psychological trait” was thought to render them “incapable” of “rationality.”⁴⁹⁷ At the end of the eighteenth century, Kant thought that women lacked the ability to reason, and, therefore, “den[ie]d] that there can be ‘scholarly women.’” Mendus concludes that Kant “took an extremely dim view of woman’s nature and abilities.”⁴⁹⁸ In “Rousseau’s Two Concepts of Citizenship,” Margaret Canovan writes that Rousseau thought women were “less intellectual than men, and their reason” was “not strong.” Canovan adds further that he thought they had “ready tongues and good heads for practical detail,” but were not able to “reason.”⁴⁹⁹ Ursula Vogel claims, however, that negative judgments on women lessened as the Romantic era progressed. After opening her article “Humboldt and the Romantics: Neither *Hausfrau* nor *Citoyenne* – The Idea of ‘Self-Reliant Femininity’ in German Romanticism,” with Friedrich Schlegel’s belief that extreme femininity and masculinity are both undesirable, she demonstrates that the Romantics indeed aspired toward equality of the sexes. She adds: “the most important feature...is the participation of women in its literary and philosophical projects.”⁵⁰⁰ Despite this apparent progress in the Romantic age, Waters, in the mid-twentieth century,

⁴⁹⁷ Ellen Kennedy and Susan Mendus, ed. *Women in Western Political Philosophy* (Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books, 1987), 14.

⁴⁹⁸ Kant, quoted by Susan Mendus, “Kant: ‘An Honest but Narrow-Minded Bourgeois.’” in *Women in Western Political Philosophy*, 36, 37.

⁴⁹⁹ Rousseau, quoted by Margaret Canovan, “Rousseau’s Two Concepts of Citizenship,” in *Women in Western Political Philosophy*, 87.

⁵⁰⁰ Ursula Vogel, “Humboldt and the Romantics: Neither *Hausfrau* nor *Citoyenne* – The Idea of ‘Self-Reliant Femininity’ in German Romanticism,” in *Women in Western Political Philosophy*, 106, 108.

undervalues what he sees as ‘feminine’, and is dismissive of it, implying that the total effect of Liszt’s book is weakened by what he sees as a lack of focus.

I have conjectured that a “thousand nuances,” a phrase which was thought to describe Chopin’s performance of his own music, might be comparable to ‘a thousand details,’ which Romantic philosophers and some *littérateurs* of the mid-twentieth century called ‘feminine,’ and therefore the antithesis of rationality. If I am correct, it is for this reason that a number of musicians and musicologists have viewed the link between nuances and ‘femininity’ negatively. It is not difficult to appreciate that Beethoven’s image as a composer who is able to create ‘organically-unified’ works, which are without senseless or unfocussed detail, poses a great challenge to musicologists who wish to show that Chopin is also a great composer. It would seem, therefore, that in order for them to prove that Chopin is ‘great,’ they would have to dismantle the belief that an object or process which seems ‘unscientific’ is unmanly and consequently not intellectual, or they would have to produce a convincing argument against the double standards which we seem to use when discussing some of Beethoven’s improvisatory-like moments, which might also be described as ‘unfocussed.’⁵⁰¹ Alternatively, not dismantling the belief, and not challenging the image of Beethoven as a “hero,”⁵⁰² but still wishing to acknowledge Chopin’s status as a composer with different qualities, would mean that an alternative approach to studying Chopin’s music – not based on comparisons between the lives of

⁵⁰¹ Reti, in Ruth A. Solie, “The Living Work: Organicism and Musical Analysis,” *19th Century Music*, 154.

⁵⁰² Scott Burnham, quoted in Nicholas Cook, “The Other Beethoven: Heroism, the Canon, and the Works of 1813-1814,” *19th Century Music* Vol. xxvii No. 1 (Summer, 2003), 14.

composers and the theoretical complexities of their compositions in order to uncover “greatness”⁵⁰³ – has yet to be undertaken.

In short, I maintain that interpretations of Chopin’s concertos are influenced by politics concerning the gendering of the other genres alluded to in the concertos and to the musical characteristics associated with these other forms. The sonata form of the first movements of these concertos, which is associated with great musicians (who are capable of working with complex theoretical constructs), are in these instances actually determined by the musical characteristics of other genres. While some of Chopin’s rondos are considered to require “bravura” playing, which may deter people from making associations with ‘femininity,’ these same pieces lack complexity. Therefore, even though the early “bravura” rondos appear not to be associable with ‘femininity,’ they nonetheless can also not be equated with ‘masculinity’ because their construction is ‘weak,’ and dependent on simple dance forms – forms that have not been associated with Beethovenian greatness. On the contrary, most of these other forms, which are defined by their “brevity and formal simplicity,”⁵⁰⁴ have been called “little,” “refined,” “delicate,” “sylphlike,” “effeminate,” and “feminine.”⁵⁰⁵ It is no coincidence that Liszt uses the preludes to introduce his questioning of the “little [mazurka] masterpieces” – the detail of which we know him to have equated with ‘femininity.’⁵⁰⁶ If scholars were to discuss the form and musical style of these large forms, they might have to support their arguments

⁵⁰³ Ruth Solie challenges current musicology not to measure greatness according to the familiar masterpieces. Ruth A. Solie, “Changing the Subject,” in *Current Musicology* No. 53 (1993), 58.

⁵⁰⁴ William Rothstein, “Phrase Rhythm in Chopin’s Nocturnes and Mazurkas,” *Chopin Studies*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 115.

⁵⁰⁵ These words of Liszt, Berlioz, Czartoryska and Chopin have been discussed earlier in this section but are also discussed at length in “Chopin’s Playing and Playing Chopin.”

⁵⁰⁶ Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, 131.

by referring to other genres, which have themselves suffered not only due to Chopin's alleged inexperience, but also as a result of the threat of smallness and its supposed correlation to 'femininity.' Whilst we could argue therefore that Chopin's large works are, in a sense, 'in style' with his contemporaries' works (because he unifies his large works through the use of 'small' forms), we seem to have focused on demonstrating, rather, that they are a break with tradition.

In regard to people's use of Chopin's music texts in order to unearth both the intellect of the composer and the physical strength of healthy men, Monroe Beardsley, arguing against intentionality's being the "final court of appeal," demonstrates why observations are sometimes contradictory. In order to fully appreciate his premise, it is worth quoting his argument at length.

In the case of the aesthetic object and intention, we have direct evidence of each: we discover the nature of the object by looking, listening, reading, etc., and we discover the intention by biographical inquiry, through letters, diaries, workbooks – or, if the artist is alive, by asking him. But also what we learn about the nature of the object itself is indirect evidence of what the artist intended it to be, and what we learn about the artist's intention is indirect evidence of what the object became. Thus, when we are concerned with the object itself, we should distinguish between internal and external evidence of its nature. Internal evidence is evidence from direct inspection of the object: external evidence is evidence from the psychological and social background of the object, from which we may infer something about the object itself.

Where internal and external evidence go hand in hand – for example, the painter writes in an exhibition catalogue that his painting is balanced in a precise and complicated way, and we go to the painting and see that it *is* so balanced – there is no problem. But where internal and external evidence conflict, as when a painter tells us one thing and our eyes tell us another, there *is* a problem, for we must decide between them. The problem is how to make this decision. If we consider the "real" painting to be that which the painter projected in his mind, we shall go at it one way: if we consider the "real" painting to be the one that is before us, open to public observation, we shall go at it another way. We generally do not hesitate between these alternatives. As long as we stick to the simplest descriptive level, we are in no doubt: if a sculptor tells us that his statue was intended to be smooth and blue, but our senses tell us it rough and pink we go by our senses. We might, however, be puzzled by more subtle qualities of the statue. Suppose the sculptor tells us his statue was intended to be graceful and airy. We might look at it carefully and long, and not find it so. If the sculptor insists, we will give it a second look. But if we still

cannot see those qualities, we conclude that they are not there; it would not occur to us to say they must be there, merely because the sculptor is convinced that he has put them there. Yet it is well known that our perceptions can be influenced by what we expect or hope to see, and especially by what we may be socially stigmatized for not seeing.⁵⁰⁷

In conclusion, it is possible that due to the “extraordinary debate” on “purity” and “authenticity,” which subsided only by the mid-twentieth century,⁵⁰⁸ the emphasis on the “masculine” (by late nineteenth- and early-to-mid twentieth-century musicians and musicologists), was, on the one hand, the result of people “going by [their] senses” in search of the meaning to Chopin’s music.⁵⁰⁹ The external evidence, such as reports on Chopin’s rhetorically-refined salon performances, however, seem to contradict the internal evidence. Markings such as the two *fff* in Chopin’s polonaises and information that suggests Chopin would have performed these preludes singly form part of this ‘internal’ evidence. Because these musicians and musicologists perceived a contradiction between the reports on Chopin and what their senses told them when looking solely at his scores, they allowed their sensory perception – the “level” at which there can be “no doubt” – to have the final say. To this end, some people have seen both an intellectual Chopin, whose theoretical ability is so tremendous that the complexities of his works elude our senses because we tend not to look deep into the structure of his preludes, and a Chopin who is, in spirit, a strong and healthy man – a Chopin who marked *fortissimo* (and other similar indications connoting ‘largeness’) in his works.

In this chapter, Chopin’s words and those of his contemporaries concerning his playing, his piano, and his texts were viewed in order to throw light on the way in which they

⁵⁰⁷ Beardsley, *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism*, 20.

⁵⁰⁸ Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction*, 38.

⁵⁰⁹ Beardsley, *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism*, 20.

were used to promote largeness. While it is irrefutable that the development of the concert piano has resulted in a colossal instrument (with a resilient tone and heavy key-action), the reasons why it developed in the way that it did can not be determined easily. There is reason to suggest, however, that the concert grand developed, at least in part, because of piano-builders' emphasis on volume alone. Possibly, the desire for a large tone, on the one hand, is simply a matter of some musicians' desire for largeness, but, on the other, is also as a result of the link that exists between people's desire for largeness and 'masculinity.' There is also reason to suggest that the development in piano design has been to some extent productive of pianists' problems. Both Kalkbrenner and Schumann invented 'contraptions' in order to strengthen their fingers. Schumann might of course have been aware of a contradiction between his goals as an artist and his goal to be a dazzling public pianist,⁵¹⁰ but he injured himself due to his desire to satisfy the latter. Injury, however, has continued to be a problem in the pianistic community. Further, judging by the amount of literature dealing with the issue of physical problems it appears that this desire for 'largeness' continues unabated into the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Additionally, apart from injury, the very developments in piano design appear to have invited a range of perspectives concerning whether or not Chopin's original fingerings are to be applied to the modern instrument – for example, the strange finger-crossings of Op. 10 No. 2 and Op. 25 No. 6. Chopin's students defined clearly, however, what the concert piano, the concert stage, and the concert style of playing, did for Chopin's music. They stated that Rubinstein's playing was simply "too big" and "rich" to be called 'Chopin.' What has been discussed here is the link between a variety of musical

⁵¹⁰ Claudia MacDonald, "Schumann's Piano Practice: Technical Mastery and Artistic Ideal," in *Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 19 No. 4 (Fall, 2002), 527 – 563.

sounds and a variety of concepts (thoughts and feelings), which have been attributed to these sounds. A range of metaphors have been used to describe small or large quantities – or subtle or forthright qualities – of sight, sound, and touch: “flying fists” (Chopin commenting on Sowiński’s playing) and “flight of a swallow” (Hiller commenting on Chopin’s); “small,” “feminine,” and “effeminate” (Liszt commenting on Chopin’s tone and his miniatures); and, “weak,” “sickly,” and “womanly” (Pudor commenting on Chopin’s texts), and “velvet” and “singing” (Montal commenting on Chopin’s piano). Nineteenth-century performers, composers, and musicologists (Rubinstein, Wagner, and Niecks, among others) expressed their dislike for the “effeminate” Chopin – the “ladies” Chopin for the “salon.” Authors such as Huneker and Hedley, in what seems to be a reaction to this negative press, found mammoth proportions in Chopin’s music: they state often that Chopin was “virile,” and they back up their arguments by ‘proving’ that Chopin’s texts reflect ‘manliness.’ Moreover, where Chopin’s miniatures possess qualities apparently incompatible with ‘manliness,’ Huneker demonstrates – by way of psychoanalysis – that something of Chopin’s mother is evident in his music. Huneker continues by saying that these moments are nothing more than the “confessions” of a “man.” Because of such attempts to persuade readers that Chopin was strictly ‘masculine,’ I argue that late nineteenth-century composers, performers, and authors were especially afraid that the contemporaneous reports on Chopin’s refined style of playing were also a reflection of possible gender ambiguity. Both Huneker and Hedley praised Chopin for his ‘heroic’ miniatures. In short, in the hundred-and-fifty years following Chopin’s death, language has been used in order to promote performances of Chopin’s music that are perceived to be characteristically ‘strong.’ The upholding of the belief that

'more' is more desirable than 'less' – in whatever respect – was not without consequence: all the words that can be associated with a sensory experience of small proportions, such as “weak,” “sickly,” “feminine,” and “effeminate,” were used negatively. Late nineteenth-century musicologists also brought to light Chopin’s “inability” to work with theoretically complex forms. Although they did not openly connect his supposed lack of skill at composing complex music with ‘femininity,’ they nevertheless associated this supposed lack of intellectuality with youthfulness, and several philosophers of that era associated a lack of intellectuality with ‘femininity’ – there was certainly a link made in the musical sphere between the young student Filtsch’s pubescent frame and the physique of a women. Solange Sand, as we have seen, believed that the absence of ‘muscular’ strength in the pianist allowed him or her to perform Chopin’s music in a manner which was close to the composer’s intentions and very meaningful. In the late nineteenth and well into the late twentieth centuries, people, on the one hand, criticized Chopin’s ‘weak’ sonata structures, and, on the other hand, made his miniatures appear large. In the late nineteenth century, Friedheim performed Chopin’s twenty-four preludes as a set, turning them into a single lengthy ‘composition.’ Since Friedheim’s performance, it has become standard practice to perform the preludes as a set. I have confirmed that this is so by examining an indeterminable number of brochures on international piano competitions: whilst they are not necessarily required as a set of twenty-four, they are definitely not required singly but in groups of about six. Eigeldinger has demonstrated, theoretically, that a motivic cell unifies the twenty-four miniatures – that they *are* theoretically complex. There seems to be a continued desire, in other words, for ‘more’ rather than ‘less,’ and a wish to boost Chopin’s image by comparing him with great composers on

Beethovenian terms. This desire relates to a sense of dimension: a composition is considered successful depending on the amount of theoretical complexity used by the composer in order to determine and unify the form.

CHAPTER THREE

MUSICAL RHETORIC AND MUSICAL SPHERES

Many commentators describe the sensory nature of Frédéric Chopin's music with the help of gender-oriented terminology, which has been adopted, in part, to explain their experiences with largeness and smallness.

3.1. Musical Rhetoric and the Salons

Although Alfred Einstein argues that the concept of rhetoric is not suited to the categorization of music, he nevertheless resorts to using it when he attempts to assess the virtuosity of Frédéric Chopin's music as compared to that of Franz Liszt. I do not wish to draw attention to Einstein's perspective that rhetoric as a "musical category" is a "sham," but to the context in which he uses the word "rhetoric."

Rhetoric, too, can be genuine, and it is more suitable for tempting the public than simple expression; but for a musical category it is inadequate; and in the long run it becomes impossible, because it is so easily discovered to be a sham. However, genuine expression is not incompatible with virtuosity. Chopin's music has great virtuoso qualities, but it is rarely rhetorical - only when he wanted it to be. Liszt was rhetorical because he could not be otherwise.¹

Einstein does not deny that Chopin's music is virtuosic, but the sensory quality of the virtuosity is unlike that of Liszt's bravura, and therefore he does not call the music

¹ Alfred Einstein, *Greatness in Music*, translated by César Searchinger (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972), 75.

rhetorical. We see a similar sort of distinction made between private and public music in relation to Gabriel Fauré (1845 – 1924). Fauré is said to have “felt himself singularly unfitted” to write music for the “stage and the opera”² – “his life’s ideal, as he put it, was his [*musique de chambre*].” His art, in Anthony Blunt and Edward Lockspeare’s opinion, “has not only the quiet intimacy of a conversation between musicians; it is deliberately conceived as a sort of monochrome, hushed suave, and excluding in its civilized manner any hint of rhetoric or romantic violence of expression.”³ Not only, then, does Fauré’s “conversation between musicians” music echo the same kind of intimate (musical) conversations that Chopin is reported to have had with his audience (by critics, Schumann, and Liszt, for example), but we see, most importantly, that when Romantic expression became “violent” it was said to be “rhetorical” and consequently unsuited, ideally, for intimate surroundings.⁴

Three other twentieth-century perspectives that support Einstein’s, Blunt’s, and Lockspeare’s linkage of “rhetoric” to large halls that are more suited for powerful music than small venues are those of Roger Kamien, Daniel Politoske, and Jim Samson. Kamien claims that “even in [Chopin’s] virtuoso” compositions, the musical rhetoric is “melodic” and therefore Chopin’s music was not intended for “display.” Politoske elaborated on Chopin’s “melodic” approach to piano playing, saying that his lack of

² Gabriel Fauré was not alone in feeling “unfitted” to write an opera. We see in Chopin’s letters that he appears to have been encouraged by his teacher, Elsner, to write an opera, but he does not take the advice of his composition teacher.

³ Anthony Blunt and Edward Lockspeare, “The Cult of the Individual” in *French Art and Music Since 1500* (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1972; 1974), 82.

⁴ Reginald Gerig, *Famous Pianists and Their Techniques* (New York: Robert B. Luce Inc., 1974), 158; Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher: As Seen by His Pupils*, translated by Naomi Shohet and edited by Roy Howat (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 269; Franz Liszt, *Frédéric Chopin*, with a foreword and translated by Edward N. Waters (New York: Vienna House, 1852; 1963), 147.

physical strength was, “in part,” responsible for his lack of forceful playing. Further, because Chopin’s playing was characterized by delicacy and nuance, his playing was ideal for the salons.⁵ In 1985, Jim Samson writes that the “introductory” chords of Chopin’s C # Minor Scherzo are “rhetorical” and “Lisztian,” and therefore associates music rhetoric with strength.⁶

If Liszt was the heir to Beethoven’s ‘heroic’ legacy, then it is worth taking a closer look at what might not be called ‘heroic’ rhetoric. Piano performance is founded in sights, sounds and the implied sense of touch, and the ‘feminine’ music discourse that Lucy Green expounds philosophically is potentially able to define what she believes to be the ‘feminine’ sensory orientation. Green writes in *Music, Gender, Education* (1997): “it may be that the discourse on women musicians produces certain characteristics about which it is difficult to separate out the biological from the historical: for example their ‘touch’ on their instruments.” She continues that some performance practices or sensory qualities of music discourse do not allow the audience to perceive ‘femininity,’ because there is a ‘masculine’ element that suppresses the ‘feminine’ element. Her theory of the interruption of the ‘feminine’ can be summarized as follows:

Just as the voice represents the least interruption to patriarchal constructions of femininity, so the biggest, loudest and most technologically advanced instruments represent the greatest interruption, and the history of women’s roles in musical patriarchy reveals the fact that unwieldiness, high volume or technological complexity tend to characterize those very instruments from which women were originally, or have been most vehemently discouraged or banned.⁷

⁵ Roger Kamien, *Music: An Appreciation* (New York: McGraw Hill Inc., 1976), 288, 289; Daniel Politoske, *Music* (London: John Calmann and King Ltd., 1988), 84, 85.

⁶ Jim Samson, *The Music of Chopin* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), 168.

⁷ Lucy Green, *Music, Gender, Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 58.

It stands to reason, that if “big,” “loud,” “technological” (or synonymously ‘jumbo,’ ‘mammoth,’ and ‘rational’) is thought to be a ‘masculine’ interruption of ‘femininity,’ then an ‘uninterrupted’ feminine music rhetoric can henceforth be listed as ‘small’ and ‘soft.’ Further, in regard to the “technological,” which has a direct relation to science, the absence of technology implies an association with the ‘pure,’ and ‘simple’ and the ‘body’: in other words, the association opposite to that traditionally made between the ‘mind’ and ‘masculinity.’ It should be noted at this point that the associations made between ‘masculinity’ and ‘technology’ are not confined to music but seem to be general and pervasive in society. As recently as 2001, people have been recorded as drawing correlations between technology and the ‘masculine’ sensory orientation. For example, in “Part Three” of the BBC documentary *The Unspeakable Murray Walker* (2001), Walker’s voice was described as “harsh” and “aggressive.” This vocal quality was thought to be well-suited for the “technological sport” of Formula One. Further, it was suggested that these vocal prerequisites contributed substantially to his successful career as a commentator for Formula One.

A “feminine” interruption seems to take place in the film *The Piano*. Holly Hunter portrays a mute pianist, who, while still married, is obliged to provide her neighbour (portrayed by Harvey Keitel) with sexual favours in order to ‘buy’ back her piano – which her husband sold to the neighbour against her wishes. The context of her performance is as follows: she performs a single Chopin prelude twice (No. 7, in A Major). Her first performance seems to convey Chopin’s ‘intentions,’ as they might appear in the score, because she plays the prelude “*piano*” and “*dolce*” – she allows the

score to ‘speak.’ Her second rendition is characterized by a loud, mechanical style. She over-emphasizes the vertical movements of her arms as she descends upon the keyboard; she ‘uses’ the sense of sight, sound, and touch, to distort all the miniature aspects that characterized her first performance. In other words, the *piano* and *dolce* markings are forced to lie unheeded in the score, and she overrides the instructions which, presumably, reflected a large part of the composer’s intention. In both these performances, however, she does not alter the melody, rhythm, harmony, or phrasing. She does not distort the inherent characteristics of the music text. Her neighbour, however, responds differently to the two performances because he associates the varying qualities of sounds with two, very dissimilar, musical messages. When the woman played softly and sweetly, he stepped closer – as though she were inviting him to seduce her. When she began to play harshly, however, the neighbor ceased to make advances – interpreting the perversion of the original performance as a sign that she no longer wanted to encourage him to seduce her.

Stephen Handel’s discussion of language and music can be adapted to this discussion in order to summarize this state of affairs. Keitel portrays someone whose appreciation of musical meaning is limited by his exposure to western classical music. His understanding of the “internal structures and grammars” of music is influenced by the “surface level” of music, which is characterized by a certain quality and quantity of sound.⁸ Considering that the film was made in the late twentieth century, it is noteworthy that (some) ideas – the producers’, in this instance – on how variations of sight, sound, and touch, affect our

⁸ Stephen Handel, “Linguistic and Music Theory,” *Listening: An Introduction to the Perception of Auditory Events* (Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1989), 324.

understanding of musical meaning have not changed since the Romantic age. Their idea is that simply varying the ‘miniature’ or the ‘mammoth’ aspects of the performance changes the musical meaning. We must ask ourselves whether some performers’ simplistic changes in dynamics have influenced the way later audiences have interpreted the musical meanings of Chopin’s music.

Another important element influencing the way in which people attribute ‘meaning’ to Chopin’s music is his relationship to the salons. Chopin’s performances in the salons greatly outnumber his public appearances, and therefore I consider a twentieth-century perspective on the nature of the salon environments and the reasons contributing to their existence.

It was in Paris, however, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, that the salon, as we understand the word today, first became a social influence. Catherine de Vivonne, Marquise de Rambouillet, had been married at the age of twelve to Henri IV’s Grand Master of the Royal Wardrobe and obediently followed him to court; but the boisterousness of court life offended her sensitive nature; and she gradually withdrew. Then in 1618 – the year of Raleigh’s death – she inherited a Parisian town house, the Hotel de Pisani near the Louvre, and rebuilt it as the Hotel de Rambouillet according to her personal design. For large lofty apartments she substituted a series of cabinets, little rooms that suited small gatherings and quite private conversations.⁹

In his book *Genius in the Drawing-Room* (1980), Peter Quennell discusses the conduct within several of the more famous salons of the Romantic era, including those of Rahel Levin,¹⁰ Lady Blessington, Madame Récamier, Madame Girardin and Fanny von

⁹ Peter Quennell, ed., *Genius in the Drawing-Room: The Literary Salon in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980), 9.

¹⁰ Levin was even known to entertain royalty such as Louis Ferdinand of Prussia and his sister Princess Radziwill. The Radziwill family had in fact much contact with Chopin, especially Princess Czartoryska (née Radziwill). Quennell, *Genius in the Drawing Room*, 16.

Arnstein.¹¹ The discussions of the various salons in turn define the hostesses' characteristics. The descriptive terms for the women's rhetoric and nature include: talented, sensitive, graceful, charming, elegant, radiant, tactful, attentive listeners, without pretentious intellectuality, delightful, happy, passionate, and affectionate. Furthermore, women's dispositions governed the discourse within the intimate surroundings to the extent that, in their persuasive manners, they could even prevent a member from expressing views that were put forward too forcefully. Quennell writes that "perhaps the most 'appealing,' and therefore the best paradigm of this society should be taken from Madame Geoffrin...she had in her company learned men, but didn't pretend to be an intellectual...and if a talker threatened to exceed the prescribed limit, she would cut his speech short." The rhetoric associated with excessive vehemence was taken to imply masculine insubordination.¹²

It becomes clear when we examine conduct within the salons and the 'outside world,' that the discourse within the female sphere of the salon is unsuited for the 'bravura' of 'masculine' rhetoric, and it was expected that male visitors would accommodate themselves to this 'feminine' discourse. Moreover, the sensory qualities of 'feminine' discourse can be defined with words such as 'elegant' or 'charming.' The nature of the salons has been used in order to define the music rhetoric of some of Chopin's compositions. Richard Wagner, for example, said: "I do not care for the Ladies' Chopin; there is too much of the Parisian salon in that."¹³ Therefore, according to Wagner,

¹¹ The last of these, Fanny von Arnstein, was a close relative of Felix Mendelssohn's mother.

¹² Quennell, *Genius in the Drawing-Room*, 10.

¹³ Richard Wagner, in James Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music* (New York: Dover Publications, 1900; 1966), 62.

Chopin's pieces written purposefully for the "ladies" have connotations of their social environment, which includes, necessarily, the rhetoric of the salons.

There have been a number of people who have associated the salons with Chopin's music, and Jennifer Post's article "Erasing the Boundaries between Public and Private in Women's Performance Traditions" (1994) helps us to understand the links people have tended to make between gender-oriented contexts and texts. Post tests the generally accepted belief that men's musical sphere is the public one while women's musical sphere is the private one. She writes:

During the last decade, though, research has appeared that presents descriptive data on women's musical activities in specific cultures and identifies some of women's musical contributions to community life. These new studies provide data that allow us to test some of the gender constructs developed during the last twenty years.¹⁴

Post reflects upon musical practices from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in order to show that the simple dichotomy of male and female spheres can be broken down. She argues that scholars have been legitimizing their studies of male and female dichotomies with a fundamentalist approach. They considered that because public and private social groups exist there must exist within them boundaries that separate the sexes. This barrier between the 'public-male' and 'private' or 'domestic-female' spheres is lessened as she focuses on numerous women who have lived largely in the public sphere. She shows that men's and women's cross-gender experiences replace the cultural barrier with a "continuum." The "continuum" that Post perceives, although it avoids stereotyping men's

¹⁴ Jennifer Post, "Erasing the Boundaries between Public and Private in Women's Performance Traditions," in Susan Cook and Judy Tsou, eds., *Cecelia Reclaimed: Feminist Perspectives on Gender and Music* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 35.

and women's musical activities, is problematic as it does not allow for easy theoretical application. Post herself points out that this problem is "the greatest challenge for scholars."¹⁵ This is perhaps the reason why she continues to imply dichotomies below the surface in her discussion of 'public/private' practices in relation to professional and nonprofessional women.¹⁶

The first issue presented in Post's article is a summary of the generally accepted male and female spheres. As a result of looking at studies of the musical practices of the natives of Malaysia, Thailand, India, Greece and Albania (to mention only a few of the various groups), she defines the female musical sphere as music that is performed inside a home, while working, for the family, or in small groups. She defines the male musical sphere as being outside the home, performances during times of leisure, with limited family orientation and for large groups of people. The results of this dichotomy, as interpreted by Post, is that male musicians can appreciate "musical freedom," "dominance" and "integration" within the society, while female musicians have been restricted and "subordinate," limited in "musical opportunities," "growth," and "diversity."¹⁷

In order to break these commonly accepted boundaries, Post highlights some of the exceptions in various societies that suggest not all women have been private performers. For example, she writes of Indian women, who have since the fourth century B.C. enjoyed some social freedom in their public dances. Similarly, European women experienced marginal public freedom during the nineteenth century, and more so from

¹⁵ Ibid., 36.

¹⁶ Ibid., 35.

¹⁷ Ibid., 38.

the turn of the twentieth century. It is notable, that women's musical practices, which are not strictly domestic, and that break through boundaries, end up having an added restriction on "context," "media" and "style." Post writes that the public performances of Maltese women were vastly different from the performances they conducted in private. Similarly, post-Renaissance society allowed European women to play instruments, but only those instruments that did not require them to alter their facial expressions or physical demeanor (such as the keyboard, guitar or harp).

Through such examples it is possible to accept that some women have crossed gender-defined boundaries as a result of their performances within 'male' spheres. However, the issue of male and female 'cultural spheres' and the crossing of the boundaries can only be appreciated in an historical context. Today there are many male and female artists, both classical and popular, on the public 'male' stage.¹⁸ The 'architecturally defined' spheres of the gender groups have by and large disintegrated due to social change. However, while the boundaries between the physical spheres have fallen due to the commercial opportunities of the twentieth century, the male/female divide is still an issue within society. There is not only a physical sphere but within each sphere, because the musicians' voices have been labeled 'male' or 'female,' these boundaries continue to be an issue today.

Both Joan Chissell and Samson, for example, linked certain of Chopin's compositions with particular spheres in the mid-twentieth and late twentieth centuries, respectively. At

¹⁸ The public stage has become so dominant that it is plausible to suggest that private and intimate 'feminine' performances within the home (such as the performances within the salons) have been choked out of existence.

the end of Chissell's chapter, "Young Days in Poland," she attaches the scores of Chopin's earliest works: the Polonaise in G Minor, *Lá ci Darem* Op. 2 and his first-published mazurka (B flat). She writes of these early works: "even when he was still a teenager Chopin's polonaises and mazurkas were far too personal and poetic for the ballroom or barn."¹⁹ The use of the words "personal" and "poetic" indicates that she thinks there is a certain intimacy to Chopin's music. Chissell's point of view has not developed through first-hand experience with Chopin's performances, yet she describes, nonetheless, Chopin's music as being not for the masses (to dance to in a ballroom), or for the lower class (to dance to in a barn). She does not say for whom Chopin's music was intended, but an answer might be formulated from Samson's perspective on the above genres: "apart from the polonaise and the mazurka, the one dance piece which attracted Chopin repeatedly was the waltz."²⁰ At first this does not appear to be any sort of answer, especially when Samson continues to analyze the structure and forms of the waltz genre. However, he entitles his discussion "Salons." In other words, Samson echoes Chissell's perspective that Chopin's intimate and "personal" music is not for the public sphere.

Susan McClary, in her article "Sexual Politics in Classical Music" (1991), presents the idea that in classical music competing images of 'masculine' and 'feminine' still persist.²¹ She writes that while pop music addresses the issue of sexuality, people tend to think that classical music is concerned only with "loftier" matters, and it is precisely this

¹⁹ Joan Chissell, *The Great Composers: Chopin* (London: Faber and Faber, 1965), 22.

²⁰ Samson, *The Music of Chopin* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), 120.

²¹ Susan McClary, "Sexual Politics in Classical Music," *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota, 1991).

difference that is pointed out by the “morally superior” classic devotees. McClary argues that classical music is no less predisposed toward “gender construction” and “channeling desire.” Further, she writes that classical music critics should be no less motivated than popular music critics to ascertain “*how* mere pitches can be made to ‘represent’ gender or ‘channel desire.’”²² In order to prove that society’s constructions of gender and libidinal desire can also be found in classical music, McClary analyzes Georges Bizet’s opera *Carmen* (1875) and P. Ilyitch Tchaikovsky’s *Fourth Symphony* (1877) in terms of ‘voice.’ The analysis of these two compositions is in a sense conventional, as she relies on traditional resources and terminology: melody, rhythm, form, orchestration and literary text. However, she also takes into account the sexual orientations of the composers, the history of the libretto of *Carmen* and the “Beethovenian norms” traditionally expected of symphonic music. For example, McClary writes: “[Carl] Dahlhaus assumed that *Carmen* was incapable of José’s ‘lyric urgency,’ [and] he dismisses Tchaikovsky as incapable of measuring up to ‘Beethovenian standards’ with respect to abstract formal conventions.”²³ She is pointing out that Dahlhaus understands José’s ‘lyric urgency’ as ‘male’ and *Carmen*’s carefree immorality as ‘female.’ Following an analytical discussion of the structure of Tchaikovsky’s symphonic sonata form, she is able to comment on the issue of his sexuality, because she has a heterosexual ‘Beethovenian norm’ (as stated by Dahlhaus) against which to compare it.

This ‘heterosexual norm’ is relevant to the ‘feminine’ context surrounding Chopin, because it seems possible that some people’s interpretation of Chopin would be

²² *Ibid.*, 54.

²³ *Ibid.*, 76.

influenced by whether or not Chopin was gay – in other words, the context surrounding Chopin’s music might effect the reception of that music. The gendered aspects discussed thus far necessitate a consideration of what a study of ‘otherness’ can contribute to current discourse on Chopin. McClary states:

There is scant information concerning composers and homosexuality, although there is a rich tradition of speculating in music biographies about dubious liaisons with women. This part of the historical record needs to be corrected – though not for the sake of sensationalism. Rather the acknowledgement of Western musical culture’s debt to homosexual artists might help to counter the homophobia still so prevalent; it would offer an illustrious history for gay individuals today – a source of deserved pride rather than shame; it would end the silly charade of filling biographies with bogus girlfriends.²⁴

Chopin wrote to Julian Fontana in August of 1839: “thank you for that letter addressed to *Mr Chopine*.”²⁵ Was this ‘e’ nothing more than a play on the ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ of the French language or was Fontana making a subtle remark regarding Chopin’s gender orientation? Such questions remain unanswered even though some musicologists, such as Jeffrey Kallberg and Kitsukijinja, question Chopin’s “gender ambiguity as a person.”²⁶ Additionally, modern piano authorities such as Murray Perahia seem to recognize the ‘feminine’ in Chopin’s music,²⁷ Liszt also implies a ‘feminine’ side to Chopin in his discussion of the “Mazurkas,”²⁸ and even Chopin’s cross-dressing lover,

²⁴ McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality*, 78.

²⁵ Arthur Hedley, *Selected Correspondence of Fryderyk Chopin*, trans. and ed. by Arthur Hedley (New York: Da Capo Press, 1979), 180.

²⁶ Kitsukijinja, review of Jeffrey Kallberg’s *Chopin at the Boundaries*, www.amazon.com/customer-reviews (May 17th, 2000).

²⁷ See “Introduction”; Kallberg, Preface to *Chopin at the Boundaries: Sex, History and Musical Genre* (London: Harvard University Press, 1998).

²⁸ Franz Liszt, *Frédéric Chopin*, with a foreword and translated by Edward N. Waters (New York: Vienna House, 1852; 1963).

George Sand, called him a “sad woman” in her novel *Lucrezia Floriani*.²⁹ These suggestions seem to impact on the way in which some of us discuss Chopin’s gender-orientation. For example, literature that records Chopin’s enjoyment when kissing his best friend (who was a man) is tossed aside as the “spirit of romanticism” and nothing more.³⁰ It is not possible today to declare conclusively that Chopin was homosexual (or oriented some other way), that his delicate musical rhetoric betrayed his gender-orientation, or that he identified with women. The biographical evidence is simply lacking (and, of course, his orientation may never be established, seeing that all his original letters to his closest friend, Tytus, were destroyed³¹). I do not suggest that gender orientation corresponds to sexual orientation: rather, the issue of gender-orientation surrounding Chopin should be explored in order to raise questions about people’s opinions of (what might not be called) ‘heroic’ music rhetoric – because it is people, after all, who attribute meaning to Chopin’s music.

Green undertakes an extensive theoretical analysis of women’s music discourse. Her focus on music rhetoric is in part due to her acknowledgement that the architectural differences between male and female spheres have now evolved into a “metaphysical fissure” rather than existing as a realistic modern practice of separating the sexes within ‘private’ and ‘public’ buildings.³² She confronts the history of male and female spheres, including the influence of the ‘feminine’ salons on male performers in the nineteenth

²⁹ Alfred Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, translated by Cyril and Rena Clarke (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1952; 1975), 7.

³⁰ Frederick De Jager observes this homophobia in George Marek and Maria Gordon-Smith’s book *Chopin* (1979). Frederick De Jager, review of *Chopin Through His Contemporaries: Friends, Lovers, and Rivals*, by Pierre Azoury, *South African Journal of Musicology* Vol. 21 (2001), 67 – 68.

³¹ See “Chapter One: Sources.”

³² Green, *Music, Gender, Education*, 13.

century.³³ But her discussions have a central aim that is not restricted to the role of male and female musicians in history. Her aim is to understand female members of societies in terms of their discourses. Her use of the term ‘discourse’ extends her discussions far beyond music and her discussions of body language suggest that she uses the term as an all-encompassing concept that includes any communication that can be derived from a performance.

She surmises that what are sometimes accepted as the “inherent meanings” of texts are in fact “artificial, historical and learnt,” and that listeners’ responses and understanding are dependent on their “competence and subject-position in relation to the style of the music.”³⁴ For example, contemporary pop artist Madonna has recently released a pop video *Like a Virgin*. In this video, her dress emphasizes her sexuality and she acts out a sexual experience on her bed while she sings “touched for the very first time.” No matter where one is, even if it is a shopping mall and this song is played over the loudspeaker, the associations of this song are those of female sexual experience. However, if some listeners in the same shopping mall are not familiar with the single and its music video, or the context which surrounds the single – Madonna’s image as a sexually explicit pop star – it is questionable whether they would make the same associations. Moreover, what if they are listening to those sections of this song not accompanied by a literary text? What meanings would they assign to this music? They might enjoy the music, its phrases, rhythms and melody, but it would be rather unlikely that they would associate the song with its primary delineations. They would be more likely to assign meanings to it that are

³³ Ibid., 54.

³⁴ Ibid., 6 – 14.

related to their listening experience in that shopping mall. “In sum, inherent meanings arise through the learnt syntactic processes of musical materials: delineated meanings consist of connotations or associations, which derive from the position and use of the music in a social context.”³⁵

Green then presents a problem that she experiences when trying to separate the “inherent meanings” of music from associations of ‘male’ or ‘female’:

When we listen to a woman sing or play, and when we listen to music which she has composed or improvised, we do not just listen to the inherent meanings of the music, but we are also aware of her discursive position in a nexus of gender and sexuality. From this position, her femininity becomes a part of the music’s delineations. Clearly, by my definition of inherent musical meaning as a virtual category which is purely to do with musical materials, inherent meaning itself can have nothing to do with gender. But the gendered delineation of music does in fact not stop at delineation: it continues from this delineated position to become a part of the discourse on music, and from that position to affect listeners’ responses to and perceptions of inherent meaning, and thus our very musical experiences themselves. When music delineates femininity through a female performer or composer, we are liable to also judge the handling of inherent meanings by that performer or composer, in terms of our idea of her femininity.³⁶

To paraphrase – the act of performance or the context of performance is itself able to influence our understanding of “inherent meanings.” It is the performance that introduces the element of gender. So ultimately, with the inclusion of an audience, we no longer have purely inherent meaning.

Meaning in music, therefore, seems to stem from mutual influences between texts and their contexts. Relating this to the context surrounding Chopin’s musical rhetoric and his

³⁵ Ibid. 6 – 14.

³⁶ Green, *Music, Gender, Education*, 16.

musical sphere suggests that both the manner and venue in which he played underlies the ‘feminine’ meanings that his listeners attributed to his music.

For example, he wrote to Camille Pleyel in Paris (from Valldemosa on the 22nd of January 1839) saying that he had “finished” the “preludes” on a “cottage piano.”³⁷ Taking his letters into consideration, there is evidence to suggest that he, taking part in the “pot pourri” concerts of his day, would not have been above performing the preludes singly. When Arthur Friedheim, the Russian pianist, began performing them – in the late nineteenth century – as a set of twenty-four, he gave them a kind of ‘intellectual’ weight. Several late twentieth-century scholars (as discussed in “The Dimension of Theoretical Complexity: Concerto versus Prelude”) began questioning the inherent meanings of the score, and some of them then believed that this intellectuality was in the score. Similarly, Liszt’s gendering of Chopin’s mazurkas, in the nineteenth century, reflects the way in which the historical context of a genre can influence a person’s interpretation, because he surmised (as seen in “Chopin’s Playing and Playing Chopin”) that Chopin’s mazurkas were “feminine” and “effeminate” because the dance itself focused originally on women.³⁸

Because the possibility exists that one performer can communicate opposite messages in different performances of a single score, as seen in *The Piano*, and that the context of performance affects the reception of that performance, it is necessary to consider Mikhail

³⁷ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 168.

³⁸ Liszt, *Chopin*, 64 – 81.

Bakhtin's concept of "double discourse" as interpreted by Kallberg (amongst others) who conceptualizes the concept within the context of the salons.

Kevin Korsyn interprets the "double discourse" theory in his article "Beyond Privileged Contexts: Intertextuality, Influence, and Dialogue" (1999).³⁹ He writes that "Thomas Fats Waller's utterance, 'One never know, do one?' compresses into five words the type of double voiced discourse Bakhtin found in the novel."⁴⁰ Korsyn explains the theory as follows: even though Waller's statement is made by one speaker in one language and constitutes one "utterance," there exist "multiple consciousnesses" that are "irreducibly heterogeneous." Irreducible heterogeneity exists because "the two voices in Waller's utterance represent two social languages. One voice speaks from a dominant social position, and we could reconstruct it: 'one never knows, does one?'" and "the second voice, speaking from a marginal social position (in black dialect) distorts the first and mocks it, substituting 'know' for 'knows', and 'do' for 'does.'" Korsyn summarizes by saying, "a person has no internal sovereign territory, he is wholly and always on the boundary; looking into himself, he looks into the eyes of another or with the eyes of another."

Kallberg adapts this theory to the nocturne genre: he investigates the communicative nature of the nocturne and arrives at the conclusion that the genre embraces dual discourses. The genre derived from the serenade, and the essential function of the serenade was originally that of a man singing at night "before the dwelling of an

³⁹ Kevin Korsyn, "Beyond Privileged Contexts: Intertextuality, Influence, and Dialogue," *Rethinking Music*, eds. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everest (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 55-72.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 62.

esteemed individual.”⁴¹ In other words, a man sang the serenade beneath a woman’s window. It should follow that the serenade, which developed into the form of the piano nocturne, should be equally ‘masculine’ in terms of musical meaning, yet the nocturne became known as a ‘feminine’ genre because of its popularity within the ‘feminine’ salons.

In my view, Kallberg’s application of the concept of double discourse, which explains the problem of the nocturne, its history, and the gender ascribed to the genre, is best understood if one hypothesizes as follows: consider a woman composer who writes nocturne music. The genre originated from male rhetoric: therefore she is looking into herself with the eyes of another – she is at her boundary. The converse of this hypothesis is equally true. For example, consider Kallberg’s summary of the nocturne’s rhetoric: “on the one hand, the nocturne found its embodiment in the actions of a man: on the other hand, it expressed the soul of a woman.”⁴² Kallberg discusses the gendering of the serenade in terms of masculine actions and the persuasive ‘feminine’ content of the wooer’s music. Because the nocturne evolved from the serenade, he has a substantial framework enabling him to gender the nocturne. In other words, the emotional content to which he refers is the expressive content of the nocturne, and like the ‘charming’ rhetoric of the serenade, the expressive content of the nocturne denotes ‘feminine’ rhetoric. Should a male composer such as Chopin write or perform music in which the rhetoric is perceived as ‘female,’ he too is looking inside himself with the “eyes of another.” In sum, the concept of double discourse is equally as applicable in music as in written and verbal

⁴¹ Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries*, 45.

⁴² *Ibid.* 45.

language. 'Music as a language' relies on the premise that music genres are communicative concepts; and in this instance, the nocturne genre can be conceived as having dual discourses. What emerges from Kallberg's historiography of the nocturne genre are his ideas on the way in which he thinks people have gendered the embedded music rhetoric, and how he views music rhetoric in terms of multiple consciousnesses.

It is unfortunate that Korsyn is not able to appreciate Kallberg's application of Bakhtin's theory in his book: *Chopin at the Boundaries: Sex, History, and Musical Genre*. Korsyn writes that Kallberg "seems unfamiliar with Bakhtin's richly imagined typology of discourse, in which the difference between a single-voiced and double-voiced discourse functions not as a binary opposition, but as a continuum with almost infinite degrees."⁴³ In other words, he sees Kallberg's 'simple' discussion of the 'male' and 'female' rhetoric of the piano nocturne as falsely representative of the concept "double discourse." Though Korsyn points out this problem of binarism, he has himself explained the theory in terms of 'black dialect' and 'white language.'

Unlike Kallberg who applies the double discourse to the history of the nocturne and the consciousness of performers, I apply the concept to the dimension of sensory perception. His application of Bakhtin's theory embraces the consciousnesses of the individuals represented in the history of the genre (men who wooed women with song) together with the consciousnesses of the performers of the later versions of the genre – the women who performed nocturnes in the salons. Thus, history becomes a form of rhetoric: hence the title of one of his chapters in *Chopin at the Boundaries*, "The Rhetoric of Genre."

⁴³ Korsyn, "Beyond Privileged Contexts: Intertextuality, Influence, and Dialogue," *Rethinking Music*, 63.

Kallberg theorizes that when a woman performs a nocturne, this performance captures both her interpretation of the work and what the genre has traditionally communicated. In light of the performances of Chopin's preludes in *The Piano*, however, I argue that performers themselves might experience a sense of duality: what they would rather express, as opposed to what they feel they must express for one reason or another. It might be argued that 'history' also plays a hand in my consideration of the film producers' tacit subscription to the double discourse, because I refer to two performances by the character whom Hunter portrays – emphasizing, therefore, a course of events. The context under discussion here, however, differs drastically from the context of Kallberg's discussion of the serenade and nocturne: the male character that Keitel portrays only listens, whereas the serenade was traditionally performed by a man; and, the setting of the mute's performance does not change, whereas the 'outdoor' serenade evolved into the 'feminine,' 'indoor' nocturne. The only changes in the context of the mute's performances have to do with her interpretation of the work – all other associations that might be made, between, for example, the characteristics of the music and the characteristics of the venue, have remained constant. Considering that the two performances might be likened to two performers' interpretations of the same work, my application of the double discourse demonstrates that the second performer marginalizes the sensory orientation of the first performer: the character Keitel portrays realizes that two sensory orientations are competing with one another. It is this war between the varying qualities of sight, sound, and touch, that enable him to give meaning to the changes in the mute's musical rhetoric, facial expression, and bodily movements, and to determine her thoughts and feelings on the matter of sexual relations. In short, whilst a

person's interpretation of a genre might be influenced by the historical context that surrounds that genre, it appears that two musical meanings of the same composition can be completely contrary simply due to changes in the dynamics of *forte* and *piano*, changes that are also accompanied by concomitant changes in the visual and tactile aspects of performance. Thus, pianists who perform Chopin's music, and who base their interpretations on radically different dynamic scales, can have a strong influence on the meanings that listeners attribute to that music.

I have discussed the issue of architectural spaces that have been classified conventionally as 'feminine-private' and 'masculine-public.' The salon of Chopin's romantic era is one such 'feminine' venue, where women's presence determined the type of discourse. I have presented numerous mid-nineteenth and twentieth-century perspectives that place Chopin and his music in the salons because of his unforced musical rhetoric. The structural barrier is not a simple dichotomy, therefore, for men (like Chopin) have played instruments within the salon, and, throughout history, some women have engaged in similar kinds of gender-transgressive performance. The gendered spaces are better understood in terms of rhetoric. In this regard, however, barriers still seem to exist despite the fact that composers continue to attempt to dissolve them. The musical rhetoric of a woman, or her voice, along with her act of display, is one of the greatest metaphors for the concept of 'femininity.' In musical terms, her 'femininity' has been characterized by characteristics that veer away from so-called powerful or rational musics that might be traditionally associated with Beethoven. Green surmised that the quality and quantity of sound and of what is seen can "interrupt" a feminine performance with loudness, bigness,

or technology. Above, the theory of “feminine interruption” was applied to *The Piano* in a way that took cognizance of Bakhtin’s theory of the double discourse. This application demonstrated that the producers of *The Piano* expect their audience to believe that a woman’s performance that is ‘soft’ and ‘sweet’ is seductive whilst a loud and harsh performance of that same piece is the opposite of seductive. These producers (and, possibly, everyone who has seen the film) show that variations of sound can play a greater role in the construction of musical meaning than the context surrounding those sounds. In this example, one performer gendered ‘female,’ in a single venue, playing a single composition, signifies two radically difference musical messages. Thus there is a possibility that (performed) musical rhetoric itself plays a greater role in the construction of musical meaning than the associations we might make between genres of music and the structures of buildings, or varying types of piano (for example), and this possibility necessitates that we consider Chopin’s music in relation to, what might be called, the most accessible concept of rhetoric – the human voice.

3.2. Chopin’s Music in Relation to the Human Voice

The treatment of the human voice in relation to Chopin’s music, in the following discussion, will be limited to variations in the quality and quantity of sound. The aesthetic qualities of the voice will be considered through a collection of Chopin’s and others’ views on voice. “Voice” could be used to refer to variations in sound, either of the speaking voice, or the singing voice or a combination of these variations in some form. The singing voice can be manifest in music in a number of styles, such as recitatives and

arias, or it can embrace styles related to bygone eras and different cultures. Both spoken and singing voices may be engaged in the act of relaying a literary text. The singing voice can also be employed in the absence of words, as in the *Vocalises* of Serge Rachmaninov and Maurice Ravel. In other words, the voice can be seen as a tool through which consciousness can be expressed. The word “voice” is also often used to refer to an individual’s, a group’s, or a nation’s point of view. It is not my intention, however, to focus on the uncovering of Chopin’s “voice” in relation to his national identity, as this type of exploration seems, in my view, to be tantamount to the uncovering of his relationship to Polish nationalism. Rather, it is my aim to demonstrate how Chopin projected himself into various types of voices, and how other commentators have done the same with his pianistic ‘voice.’

Chopin is known to have heard the “eminent” Italian soprano Angelica Catalani in Warsaw at the age of ten. Pierre Azoury considers this experience to have opened up “the world of opera” for Chopin and “paved the way to the composition of his various songs and to the use of vocalism in his piano music.”⁴⁴ Azoury’s claims are supported by Chopin’s letters:

[20th September 1828] – tomorrow *Freischütz!*...that’s what I need. I shall be able to compare the women singers with ours.

[27th September 1828] – yesterday I did *das unterbrochene opferfest* and some of the chromatic scales performed by Mlle Schätzel carried me straight back to your bosoms.

[10th April 1830] – Mme Sowan sang charmingly a duet from *Semiramide* and I had to accompany a comic duet from (Rossini’s) *Il Turco* sung by Soliva and Gresser.

⁴⁴ Pierre Azoury, *Chopin Through His Contemporaries: Friends, Lovers, and Rivals* (London: Greenwood Press, 1999), 10.

[15th May 1830] – Gladkowska sang an aria which Soliva had expressly composed for her and inserted into the opera; this aria is to be her show piece and there are in fact some lovely things in it. He has managed to suit her voice perfectly. In *Turco* Wolkow will also sing an aria suitable for displaying her voice; it is by Rossini and was written for one of the famous singers who appeared in that opera.

[5th June 1830] – Mlle Sontag is not beautiful but she is attractive in the highest degree. She charms everyone by her voice which has not a very great range, for we usually only hear it between these notes:



but it is extraordinarily cultivated. Her *diminuendi* are the *non plus ultra*, her *portamenti* wonderful and her scales, particularly the chromatic scales, are unsurpassable. She sang us an aria of *Mercadante* very, very, very charmingly.

[21st August 1830] – Gladkowska leaves little to be desired – she is better on the stage than in the concert hall...you would be enchanted by her phrasing, and her nuances are splendid...Soliva's aria in the second act is very effective: I knew it might be so but I did not expect the effect to be quite so great. Last time she sang very charmingly the Romance which she has to sing with her harp in the second act...I don't deny that the Italian (Soliva) might have chosen something more suitable for Gladkowska – perhaps *La Vestale* might have been a luckier choice for her, but the other is pretty and has many rare beauties and virtuoso moments which the young singer brought off marvelously. [5th October 1830] She is admirable when she sings:



She does not clip it short like Mme Mayer, but gives the notes their full value.



In other words, not rapid *gruppetti*, but every one of the eight notes fully sung'

[12th October 1830] – Mlle Wolkow sang charmingly, dressed in blue like an angle.

[14th November 1830] – another important reason which induced me to go was that the best local singer, Mme Palazzesi, of Italian extraction, would be singing. So dressed up in all my best, I ordered a sedan-chair and climbing into this funny sort of box I had myself carried to Kreissig's where the soiree was to be held ... then the Italian sang – not at all badly.

[25th June 1831] – Mechetti had prepared a surprise for him (Malfatti): Wild, Cicimara, Mlle Emmering and Lutzer, together with your humble servant, gave him an unusual musical treat. I have never heard the quartet from Rossini's Moses better performed; but 'O quante lagrime' was incomparably better sung by Mlle Gladkowska at my farewell concert in Warsaw. Wild was in good voice and I performed the duties of conductor. Cicimara declared that there is no one in Vienna who accompanies like me. I thought to myself: I am perfectly well aware of it (Hush!).

[12 December 1831] – Thanks to Paer who is Court Conductor I got to know Rossini...never have I heard the *Barber* as last week with Lablache, Rubini and Malibran (Garcia), nor *Otello* as with as with Rubini, Pasta and Lablache; or again, *Italiana in Algeri* as with Rubini, Lablache and Mme Raimbeaux...you cannot conceive what Lablache is like! They say that Pasta has gone off, but I say, never anything more sublime. Malibran impresses you merely by her marvelous voice, but no one sings like her. Miraculous! Marvelous! Rubini is an excellent tenor. He sings true notes, never falsetto and sometimes his ornamental runs go on for hours (but sometimes his decorative passages are too long and he deliberately uses a tremolo effect, besides trilling endlessly – which, however, brings him the greatest applause).

[14th December 1831] – Today, unquestionably, it is not Pasta but [Maria] Malibran (Garcia) who is the leading European prima donna – she is fabulous!⁴⁵

The singing voice remained a presence in Chopin's life until he was on his deathbed where Countess Delfina Potocka (to whom the Concerto Op. 21 and the Waltz Op. 64 No. 1 are dedicated), who was trained in "the purest *bel canto* tradition," sang an aria by the composer's request.⁴⁶ (Whilst Arthur Hedley claims the item to have been "Stradella's *Hymn to the Virgin*, which he [Chopin] had often heard from Pauline Viardot [née Garcia]," Eigeldinger suggests, rather, that it was the "B Minor Largo, *Dignare Domine*, from George Frederick Handel's *Dettingen Te Deum*."⁴⁷)

There seems to be a reciprocal relationship between Chopin's projection of himself into the 'feminine' voice and the women to whom these voices belong. For instance, Viardot

⁴⁵ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 18, 41, 44, 46, 47, 48, 49, 58, 59, 60, 63, 64, 83, 98, 102.

⁴⁶ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher: As Seen by His Pupils*, 143.

⁴⁷ Hedley, *The Master Musicians Chopin* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1947; 1974), 116; Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 143.

sang some of her own transcriptions of Chopin's music at Covent Garden.⁴⁸ Additionally, when Chopin performed in England for Queen Victoria and "all the local notabilities," his excitement was most aroused when the opera star Jenny Lind made an appearance. Chopin wrote: "Miss Lind came to my concert!!! Which meant a lot for the fools; she cannot show herself anywhere without people turning their opera glasses on her. But she never sings anywhere except in the opera, not even at great functions."⁴⁹ In other words, singers who are in these cases female had as much respect for Chopin's music as he had for the qualities of their voices.

In regard to Chopin's performance of his own music, it appears that the undeniable existence of vocal influences on his music and his piano playing has evoked a mixed response from scholars. Beyond the differences Chopin and his society thought existed between the sensory orientations of nationalities (German and Polish, for instance), and between the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy, there were differences they saw as related to gender. Chopin was aware that women in particular liked his style of playing.

Beethoven's patron, offered me his piano for the concert – a great favour – as it appeared to him that the tone of mine was too thin; but it's my way of playing, which once again the ladies found so attractive, particularly Mlle Blahetka, the leading Viennese woman pianist.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ *Chopin's Letters*, collected, trans. and ed. by Henryk Opieński and E. L. Voynich (New York: Vienna House, 1973), 354.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 373.

⁵⁰ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 32,33. In regard to this extract, which is taken from a letter Chopin wrote to Tytus Woyciechowski on the 12th September 1829, Chopin claimed to have found the playing easy because of the "superb Graff" piano [translated in *Chopin's Letters* (page 66) and Cortot's *In Search of Chopin* (page 93) as "magnificent" and "marvelous," respectively]. Chopin wrote to Jan Bialoblocki (8th September, 1825) that "Pleyel" was "lying waiting" for him (*Chopin's Letters*, page 14), indicating that he had not yet become intimately acquainted with the family or the firm, and, by 1829, he had still not reached Paris, yet already shows his preference for instruments with a small tone. Chopin's words also show how the German pianist-composer Beethoven, was thought to have a more appropriate instrument for the public's ears – one with an added loudness that would compensate for Chopin's "weak tone" (*Chopin's*

Ignaz Moscheles confirms that Chopin's general "way of playing," characterized by delicacy, was apparently thought of by the ladies, as "attractive."

He [Chopin] played to me at my request, and only now do I understand his music, as well as the enthusiasm of the ladies. His *ad libitum* playing, which with other interpreters of his music tends to degenerate into a mere lack of rhythm, in his hands is the most graceful and original feature of the discourse; the harsh amateurish modulations which I stumble over when playing his compositions no longer shock me, because his delicate fingers glide over them.⁵¹

Moscheles's words provide further insight into what it is that the "ladies" liked: he singles out "*ad libitum*" playing. Fétis criticized Chopin's concertos because they were too "improvisatory," and therefore, not as great as they could have been.⁵² Moscheles's view, however, although it does not contradict Fétis' view that this musical characteristic is evident in Chopin's music and performance, shows that he is not threatened by the possibility that *ad libitum* music is conceptually weaker than strictly formal structures. Moreover, this style of Chopin's performance of his music, that seems to be equated with so-called immaturity and women's likes, is in this instance seen as being not a failure but an impressive musical characteristic. Unlike Moscheles, Fétis believes that if Chopin applied himself more to composing within the boundaries of a theoretical framework, the concertos would have been more successful. In addition, it is not only the freedom of Chopin's *ad libitum* playing which is known to have been liked by the ladies but also the

Letters, page 66). Chopin's taste in instruments that are less massive, than the Érard used by Liszt, for example, can also be viewed as unwavering considering that the "sonorous qualities" of "the Pleyels" were "closer to some Viennese instruments (Graf) than to the Érard" (Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, page 92).

⁵¹ Moscheles, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 272.

⁵² Fétis, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 290.

pianistic style: Chopin's hands "glide" over the keys "gracefully" and "delicately."

Chopin confirms that "the ladies" liked brilliant effects:

When I was there [at the home of Prince Antonin Radziwill] I wrote an Alla Pollaca for piano and cello [published Op. 3]. It is merely a series of brilliant effects ['glitter'⁵³], a ['little'⁵⁴] salon piece for the ladies; you see I wanted something for Princess Wanda to learn.⁵⁵

The argument that improvisation can be linked to quality of sound and "brilliant" passagework is substantiated by this last quotation: scales and arpeggios are abundant in the composition to which Chopin refers – "Introduction and Polonaise Brilliante Op. 3."⁵⁶

Brilliancy, grace, delicacy, and improvisation, however, do not immediately signal a resemblance to a 'voice.' While Chopin has said that music must be used just as words are used to make a language, and while Eigeldinger categorizes most of the differing aspects of Chopin's music into corresponding aspects of the voice, for all the correlations made in these extracts between women and qualities of music, there is no reason to suggest that a voice is in evidence.⁵⁷ Moreover, if a voice is not signaled in these statements, there is no licence to suggest a gendered voice can be represented by these musical characteristics except by way of analogy. Samson writes:

⁵³ *Chopin's Letters*, 74.

⁵⁴ Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, 52.

⁵⁵ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 36, 37.

⁵⁶ Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, 52.

⁵⁷ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 42, 42 – 53.

We may mention... further associations with the salon. One is the cult of the feminine, the image of a composer 'for the ladies', reinforced not just in critical writing but in portraits, drawings and pictorial representations on nineteenth century editions. Again this image was transferred to the music itself, especially the nocturnes, composed for 'a woman's sensitiveness of finger'. The reality was very different. Chopin enjoyed elegant feminine company, but he had harsh views on the fawning of his 'adoring women'. He himself used the phrase 'music for the ladies', but unhappily he meant it disparagingly.⁵⁸

From Schumann onwards it has become customary for commentators to ascribe much of the character of Chopin's lyricism to his love and knowledge of early nineteenth-century Italian opera. Certainly he had ample opportunity to steep himself in this music during his formative years in Warsaw and during his visits to Berlin and Vienna. In this respect the generous operatic repertory of Paris in the 1830's only served to consolidate an enthusiasm already well established. In broad stylistic terms his ornamental melody does indeed display a close affinity to the coloratura aria of Italian opera (Rossini in particular) and doubtless some of this was a direct result with singers, Sontag, Viardot and Lablache among them, and commented frequently on the special qualities of their performances. But in this he was merely subscribing to a general enthusiasm of the virtuoso pianist: there is scarcely a method which does not recommend using the voice as the principal model for legato piano style. Moreover the influence of operatic *bel canto* on late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century keyboard cantilena was so widespread that Chopin's response was certainly mediated through earlier piano music.⁵⁹

In "*Stile Brillante*," Samson refers to Chopin's style of playing in relation to the tactile requirements that he believes are embedded in his music. For instance, Samson compares scores by Johann N. Hummel, John Field, and Chopin in order to prove that not only are the music texts very similar, with their *fioriture* over the undulating sounds of a steady left hand, but that the influence of Hummel's and Field's music on Chopin also implies that their methods of playing shared similarities.⁶⁰ Samson maintains, further, that this type of music and "brilliant" performing was largely due to the trend of improvising. Similarly, in the section "*Bel Canto*," he defines clearly a vocal influence that stems from operatic composers. The excerpts that Samson uses in this regard are by Gioachino

⁵⁸ Samson, "A Biographical Introduction," *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 3.

⁵⁹ Samson, *The Music of Chopin*, 81.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 48.

Rossini (famous for his operatic compositions which allowed for *bel canto* singing) and Field (whose cantilena melodies have been viewed as a transferal from Italian opera⁶¹).

Samson reveals similarities between these composers' works and Chopin's nocturnes. It is not as though other composers did not write *bel canto* melodies, but the nature of Chopin's melodic lines are considered to be excessively 'feminine' when they appear to be like a coloratura voice. Samson stresses the existence of other associations, which, presumably, he believes are more pertinent to Chopin's music than the issue of gender. For instance, Samson emphasizes singers as the "principal model" for *all* instrumentalists, implying that Chopin was not special in this regard, and continues that other piano music was also based on the *bel canto* style of singing, and that Chopin was "merely subscribing to a general enthusiasm of the virtuosic pianist." Moreover, when Chopin wrote that the *Alla Pollaca* (Op. 3) was "merely a series of brilliant effects," Samson interprets the tone of his writing as "disparaging." In other words, Samson believes Chopin undervalued this work. Chopin may not have thought this work was great, but I question whether Chopin would have continued to include "brilliant" effects in his late compositions (as in fact he did)⁶² if he viewed these musical characteristics negatively.

John Rink also looks away from the issue of gender when he explains why there appear to be excessive amounts of decoration in some of Chopin's melodies. Rink wrote that the nocturnes "remain among Chopin's most admired, played and listened-to pieces – despite

⁶¹ Robin Langley, "Field, John," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Stanley Sadie and John Tyrell (London: Macmillan, 2001).

⁶² For example, the Nocturnes Op. 62.

the apologies issued on their behalf by the likes of Frederick Niecks, [who condemned them in his monograph of 1888].”⁶³ Rink continued, in his article “Enlightened Darkness” (1999), that Chopin was embarrassed by the similarity of his Nocturne Op. 9. No. 2 to “two Field nocturnes in the same key,” and that this ‘embarrassment’ explains the “incredible number of ornamental variants pencilled by Chopin in student copies and elsewhere.”⁶⁴ It is interesting that Rink assumes Chopin was embarrassed. Rink acknowledged that the musical characteristics of the nocturne were “likened” by the society of Chopin’s time to the “poetic” and “vocal” serenade, yet he did not consider that Chopin’s love for the poetic and voice-like cantilenas might have been the primary reason for the “ornamental variants.” *Bel canto* singing was itself based on “delicate *fioriture*” and “*stile brillante*” and it was this vocal style that most affected the piano writing of Chopin. Samson, however, considered that the influence of *bel canto* resulted in Chopin’s melodies being “embellished,” “ornamented,” and “improvised.”⁶⁵ The “variants,” in other words, which Rink claims suggest Chopin’s embarrassment at the similarities between his music and Field’s, are more likely to be inspired by the ornamental style of *bel canto*. Naturally, we must consider that both Samson and Rink, in their effort not to involve gender when discussing Chopin’s ‘feminine’ works might have been attempting to look at Chopin’s music in isolation. If this is the case, however, we might pose argument against this approach by considering how easily Chopin was affected emotionally by extra-musical occurrences.

⁶³ John Rink, “Enlightened Darkness,” *BBC Music Magazine* (October, 1999), 48.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* 48.

⁶⁵ Samson, *The Music of Chopin*, 47.

There are numerous occasions, as seen in Chapter Two, where Chopin can be viewed as being irritably hypercritical. In addition to these “occasions,” he also said “everything that is not boring is not English,” and he even reported with “amazement” that the French can be “so stupid!”⁶⁶ The triviality of Chopin’s many utterances does not justify, in my view, the discounting of the link between them and their contexts simply because the conclusions we might reach will reflect negatively on the composer. For example, his country was being ‘Germanized,’ which must certainly contribute to our understanding of why he spoke harshly about Germans. In this regard, exploring Chopin’s “disparaging” remarks, and relating these remarks to the context within which they were uttered, should be our primary concern – to understand, or, at the very least, acknowledge, first the link between them, before we choose to detract from this link.

Just as Hector Berlioz attempted to break the associations that Wagner, Rubinstein, and Liszt made between the salons and ‘femininity,’ Samson attempts to break the link between women (and the ‘feminine’ salons) and Chopin’s confession that he wrote some music purposely for women and for the salons. Because he admitted that the ‘feminine’ salon influenced his style of writing in the *Alla Pollaca*, it might be considered unimportant to discredit the link between the ‘feminine’ salons and Chopin’s music, compared to discovering the nature of the relationship between the text and context. The link, therefore, will only be understood by accepting that gender may be at the heart of all those associations Berlioz and Samson attempt to break. The following example illustrates my contention that people’s motivation for wanting to break the link between text and context needs to be questioned.

⁶⁶ *Chopin’s Letters*, 165, 362.

On his return home from the Warsaw Lyceum (aged thirteen) Chopin wrote to his family: “the sun is shining beautifully, the birds are twittering; there isn’t any brook or it would murmur, but there is a pond and the frogs are piping delightfully! But the very best of all is a blackbird that is performing all kinds of virtuosity under our windows.”⁶⁷ The blackbird might be an appropriate extra-musical element against which to compare Chopin’s music for it fulfils the criteria of the musical characteristics presently under discussion. Of the four categories of bird communication – “calls,” “short repetitive song patterns,” “varying declamatory or melodic song patterns,” and “rapid, chattering songs” – the blackbird belongs to the third category.⁶⁸ An added feature of the melodic call of the blackbird is that there is “no characteristic” blackbird melody: no two blackbirds sing the same melody because they are improvisers.⁶⁹ Moreover, Chopin’s observation that the bird is “virtuosic,” is substantiated by recent scientific studies. Scientists claim that the brain of the male bird “doubles in size” over the mating season which “doubles” the vocal ability of the bird. This phenomenon is presumed to allow the male blackbird to seduce its mate with a “serenade,” thereby securing copulation and procreation.⁷⁰

The virtuosic and improvised melodies of the blackbird seem to reaffirm Chopin’s inclination towards certain qualities of music. This is not, however, to suggest that Chopin transcribed bird communication in his works. It is ironic that Samson explains in detail that it would be incorrect to link the extra-musical associations of the coloratura

⁶⁷ *Chopin’s Letters*, 11.

⁶⁸ Johnson, Robert Sherlaw, *Messiaen* (London: JM Dent and Sons Ltd, 1975), 132.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* 132. Olivier Messiaen’s *Les Merle Noir*, for flute and piano, also depicts an improvisatory-like freedom to the blackbird’s call.

⁷⁰ *National Geographic Special 2000*, SABC Three (Broadcast Sunday 5th August, 2001).

with Chopin's melodies, because on other occasions he boldly made comparisons between extra-musical influence and texts. Samson interprets Chopin's compositions during the Polish uprising, for example, as revealing "tragedy" and Chopin's "passion" for his country.⁷¹ In other words, Samson has linked context with text: he acknowledges that the extra-musical influence of the Polish war had an affect on Chopin's music. It is likely that this blackbird did not influence Chopin's emotional state to the same degree as did the Polish uprisings, but in my view, this example does legitimize the question: why are some contexts acknowledged and others not? In regard to Samson's denial of the influence that women might have had over Chopin's music, my discussion will focus on the characteristics of music texts and contexts that appear to trouble some musicians to the extent that they attempt to steer people away from the link between sound and gender.

Eigeldinger writes that Chopin's "own taste for *bel canto*" can be seen as a result of his "frequent[ing] the Warsaw National Theatre, where Italianism dominated as much through Rossini as through the operas of Kamiński and Kurpiński."⁷² In a letter to Jan Bialoblocki (June 1826), Chopin articulates clearly that he has been exposed to Rossini's "light" operas. He writes of German taste and Carl von Weber's *Freischütz*:

Considering that aim that Weber had in mind in his *Freischütz*, its Germanic substance, its queer Romanticism, its extraordinarily *recherché* harmony (which particularly suits the German taste) one may reckon that the Warsaw public, accustomed to Rossini's light melodies, will begin by praising it not from conviction, but rather in imitation of the connoisseurs, and because Weber is highly thought of everywhere.⁷³

⁷¹ Samson, *The Music of Chopin*, 12, 13.

⁷² Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 119.

⁷³ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 6.

It is believed that even from an early age Chopin found *bel canto* a source of inspiration when composing. It is therefore necessary to assume this type of voice may not have remained within the boundaries of opera, but filtered into his piano music.

The fugues from Johann Sebastian Bach's *Forty-Eight Preludes and Fugues* each include three to five voices, three to five independent melodic lines forming rhythmic and melodic counterpoint, the stamp of his music. The opening aria to his *Goldberg Variations* is an imitation of a singer's voice: this voice in turn captures the essence of the vocal model, the aria. Similarly Cesar Frank's *Aria and Chorale* is to be viewed as a representation of the voice. Perhaps the boldest representation of the human voice in piano music is Felix Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words*. The influence of one over the other, however, is not solely that of voice over instrument. Both Maurice Ravel and Sergei Rachmaninov, for example, have written a *Vocalise*. In other words, the voice has also been treated as an instrument. Romantic pianists relied on people's belief that there was a reciprocal relationship between instrument and voice. Where a production of an opera was not possible (or even in the absence of a vocalist), instrumentalists were able to entertain by transcribing or improvising on operatic themes. For example, Liszt transcribed many songs by Franz Schubert and Robert Schumann, and even though Chopin had poked fun at the more barbaric folk-tunes and transcriptions of operatic tunes he had himself on several occasions obliged his audience with such entertainment. He improvised at a concert on the "orgiastic drinking" peasant-song *Chmiel*, and on themes from *La Dame Blanche* -- the "comic opera by Boïeldieu."⁷⁴ Furthermore, the belief that

⁷⁴ *Chopin's Letters*, 53 – 55.

voice and instrument are inextricably linked is substantiated by the fact that transcriptions of vocal music had found their way into publication. Chopin admits to belonging to the buyers' market: "I have bought the music...a collection of *airs* and other pieces written by Rossini, arranged, very well for the piano."⁷⁵

The above examples support my contention that the voice is transferable into different performing contexts. Moreover, Samson's singling out of Rossini as being an influence over Chopin is also supported. Chopin wrote to his family (26th August 1829) that "based on a theme from Rossini's *Moses*," and from the "request" by "three charming princesses," he improvised on "a good *Graff*" while they were "knitting, embroidering, and weaving."⁷⁶ Apart from his improvisations on themes from Rossini's *Moses*, he also incorporated into his compositions themes from Rossini's operas *La Cenerentola* and *The Barber of Seville*: Variations for Flute and Piano and the Polonaise in B Flat Minor.⁷⁷ Chopin wrote these works at the ages of fourteen and sixteen, and it might have been argued that he grew out of Rossini's influence if it were not for a letter written in 1841 in which he continues to acknowledge his respect for the operatic composer. He writes: "I send you the Tarantella. Be kind and copy it; but first go to Schlesinger, or to Troupenas, and look at the *Recueil* of Rossini's songs, or rather songs edited by him, in which there is a Tarantella (in *la*); I don't know whether it is written in $\frac{6}{8}$ or in $\frac{12}{8}$. People write both ways; but I should like it to be the way Rossini has it."⁷⁸

⁷⁵ *Chopin's Letters*, 54, 53, 22.

⁷⁶ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 30.

⁷⁷ Hedley, *The Master Musicians Chopin*, 187; Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 4.

⁷⁸ *Chopin's Letters*, 136.

In short, the themes and meters of Rossini's music affected Chopin's style of composing. Moreover, it was necessary that Chopin would at first replicate existing vocal works. He used this experience as a basis for expanding his own style, which was, in turn, based on the *bel canto* vocal school. For example, Jean-Jacque Eigeldinger points out that Chopin wrote that the *gruppetti* Gladkowska had sung in Rossini's *La Gazza Ladra* were "fully sung" and not clipped short. Eigeldinger adds that Chopin would himself use *gruppetti* in his own compositions, and that he preferred to write out these notes in full instead of using the "customary sign such as '~,'" which suggests that they should not be clipped short by the pianist.⁷⁹

In Liszt's view, vocal characteristics came across in Chopin's music. Liszt wrote:

All his [Chopin] compositions must be played with that kind of speech-like, accentuated lilt, that softness, the secret of which it was difficult to grasp if one had not heard him play in person...he seemed to want to teach this style of playing...especially [to his] compatriots to whom...he wanted to communicate the breath of his inspiration.⁸⁰

Moreover, the style of Chopin's playing was also compared to singing. For example, Bohdan Zaleski wrote "[Chopin improvised and] evoked all the sweet and sorrowful voices of the past. He sang the tears of the dumkas and finished with the national anthem, 'Poland is not (yet) dead' (*Jeszcze Polska nie zginęła*), in a whole gamut of different

⁷⁹ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 133.

⁸⁰ Liszt, quoted by Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 51.

forms and voices, from that of the warrior to those of children and angels.”⁸¹ But perhaps Emile Gretsch draws the closest link between Chopin’s piano playing and singing in that not only did Chopin intend the sound of the piano to imitate the voice, but that the technique he used to play the piano was as a result of imitating a singing voice.

Today Chopin shows me another new, simple way of obtaining a marvelous result. I had felt in what respect my playing was lacking, but without knowing the solution. True to his principle of imitating great singers in one’s playing, Chopin drew from the instrument the secret of how to express breathing. At every point where a singer would take a breath, the accomplished pianist...should take care to raise the wrist so as to let it fall again on the singing note with the greatest suppleness imaginable.⁸²

This example shows how piano technique was also influenced by the sound of a singer who needs to breathe between phrases. The possibility that *bel canto* technique may cross the boundary between voice and piano requires a closer look at people’s perspectives on the voice-like qualities of Chopin’s music and a consideration of Chopin’s songs, in order to determine whether there is a link between his vocal music and voice-like piano music.

Samson’s belief, that a comparison should not be drawn between the voice of a singer and Chopin’s melodies, is echoed in other musicological writing. Azoury, like Samson, asserts that the voice-like qualities of Chopin’s piano are only a reflection of the human voice: “despite his nineteen (largely unremarkable) Polish songs, did he perhaps feel that vocalism through the piano was more effective than the human voice?”⁸³ This is perhaps

⁸¹ Bohdan Zaleski, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 283, 284.

⁸² Emile Gretsch, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 45.

⁸³ Azoury, *Chopin Through His Contemporaries*, 210.

a valid assertion, because Chopin often referred to the human voice,⁸⁴ yet the melodic characteristics of his songs are dissimilar to the *bel canto* melodies in his piano music.

Because of the dissimilarity between Chopin's piano music and his songs, Samson and Azoury do not consider Chopin's melodies to be simply songs without words, but mimicry of the voice – a mimicry that parallels the musical characteristics of the human voice, but, according to them, does not replace the human voice. Samson stresses, rather, that the virtuoso pianist is the overriding element behind the many florid and technically difficult melodic lines in Chopin's music. I maintain, however, that separating the human voice from the piano, even in regard to technique, is objectionable.

For example, although the technique of Chopin's "unremarkable" songs does not appear to have any bearing on piano playing, Italian vocalism does, as Samson suggests, have an influence on piano technique. According to Gretsche, and according to Chopin's own sketch of a piano method, Chopin taught technique according to vocal techniques. He claimed the "wrist" was the "respiration" of the voice and must therefore be used in a fashion that mimics how a singer breathes between phrases.⁸⁵ There is further reason to suggest that Chopin's piano technique cannot be separated from vocal techniques. Charles Rosen sums up this relationship by using Johannes Brahms' *Intermezzo in A Major* as an example.

⁸⁴ For example, Chopin's students, Jean Kleczyński, Karol Mikuli, Moritz Karasowski, Georges Mathias, Wilhelm von Lenz, and Vera Rubio, as quoted by Eigeldinger, all referred to the "prosody," "declamation" or "*bel canto*" style of Chopin's playing. See Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 42 – 45.

⁸⁵ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 45.

Composers will frequently write in a detail that sounds difficult but is actually easy to play in order to add sentiment: this is particularly interesting when the difficulty is a mimicry of vocal difficulty – and most of the expression of Western instrumental music is an imitation of vocal technique. Perhaps the most obvious device is the imitation of a singer trying to reach a high note, always an expressive effect.



This mimics the difficulty a singer would have reaching a high note.⁸⁶

Liszt wrote of Chopin’s *fioritura* that they “go beyond” what the voice “can do.”⁸⁷ Such a statement seems plausible considering that Chopin’s Nocturne Op. 9 No. 2 has one soprano voice throughout the work (Figure 23). Yet, when the *fioritura* leads to a climax toward the end, not only does the ‘singer’ have to reach for the octave higher, but Chopin introduces a second voice an octave lower. It is not possible for a singer to sing two notes simultaneously nor is it likely that any singer could sing that high. Therefore, even if it was Chopin’s intention to produce a climactic effect by doubling the voice at the octave in order to give the impression of a single passionate singer, the link between piano technique and voice remains transparent: the singer reaches the most difficult and climactic moment, and ‘her’ virtuosic skill affects, also, the style of piano technique.

⁸⁶ Charles Rosen, “On Piano Playing,” *The New York Review* (October, 1999), 50.

⁸⁷ Liszt, *Chopin*, 34.



Figure 23. Nocturne Op. 9 No. 2.⁸⁸

There does appear to be a superhuman element to Chopin’s song-like compositions, but I would argue that the singer who “go[es] beyond” what is humanly possible cannot serve as an excuse for dissociating Chopin’s music from gender. On the contrary, it is plausible that Liszt, thinking in accordance with the belief of his day that differing music qualities can be described through the use of gender-oriented terminology, would have described these vocal abilities as either ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine.’

Moscheles also supports the link that I make between vocal techniques and piano techniques. He not only brought attention to Chopin’s *rubato* (which was a vocal technique transposed into instrumental music⁸⁹), his pianistic style, and his *ad libitum* playing, but he equated this “discourse” with male and female singers: “one feels drawn as by a singer who, unpreoccupied with the accompaniment, completely follows his or her feelings.”⁹⁰ Whilst Moscheles continued to explain how the “discourse” of *bel canto*

⁸⁸ Chopin, *Complete Works: Volume VII*, ed. Ignaz Paderewski (Cracow: National Printing Works, 1985), 15. This sort of ‘spectacular’ doubling is also apparent at the close of Clara Schumann’s *Nuttorno*, and in the middle section of Liszt’s *Liebestraume* in A Flat, which has also been published at times as a *Nuttorno*.

⁸⁹ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 121.

⁹⁰ Moscheles, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 120.

was suited for either male or female singers, he had, however, as discussed earlier in this section, claimed Chopin's modest *rubato*, *ad libitum*, and "delicate" playing, as what the "ladies like." In other words, while men and women may practice the "discourse" of *rubato* and *ad libitum*, he seems to believe that it is women who are able to appreciate this freedom of speech the most. Moreover, it is the combination of "delicacy" with the *ad libitum* passages that is liked by the ladies: quality of tone therefore appears to be an overriding factor.⁹¹ Samson also promotes the link between vocal technique and piano technique, in the sections entitled "*Stile Brillante*" and "*Bel Canto*," yet he prefers to believe that technique is an issue in itself and not linked to gender.⁹²

The singer's voice, transferred into Chopin's scores, into his performances, and his teaching and his piano methodology, has also been ascribed to the cottage piano he used when composing the twenty-four preludes. Claude Montal described Chopin's Pleyel pianino as follows:

These small instruments, no wider than their keyboard, with a proportionate height and depth, consequently occupy little space and so are very convenient in small rooms. The bass is single strung and the rest of the keyboard double strung, all vertically... These small pianos are distinguished by a pure, mellow and singing sound; their keyboard speaks easily, [and] repeats well.⁹³

In short, there does not appear to be an area of Chopin's life as a musician where the 'voice' cannot be located.

⁹¹ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 290; Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 98, 99; Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 294.

⁹² Samson, *The Music of Chopin*.

⁹³ Claude Montal, as quoted by Eigeldinger, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 93.

Bel canto, which is not gender specific, gave way by the middle of the nineteenth century to “a weightier vocal tone.”⁹⁴ Rossini described (in 1858) the *bel canto* singing style as “a naturally beautiful voice, even in tone throughout its range; careful training that encouraged effortless delivery of highly florid music; and a mastery of style that could not be taught but only assimilated from listening to the best Italian exponents.”⁹⁵ While the *bel canto* style of singing does not (by Rossini’s definition) lend itself to gendering, certain qualities of a voice may suggest gender, and Chopin was aware that each ‘voice’ is unique and that it has its own character. For example, he claimed that Soliva had written an aria for Gladkowska where he (Soliva) had “suited her voice perfectly.”⁹⁶ In other words, Soliva had written a melody that suited the qualities of this particular female voice. Moreover, Chopin listed Gladkowska’s vocal qualities. He was impressed by Gladkowska’s phrasing, virtuosic moments (such as the quick turns of phrase: the ornamental *gruppetto*), and nuances of inflection, all of which are qualities that are not mammoth in proportion. Perhaps the vocal quality that invites gendered interpretations most is that of the differing registers. In other words, within the province of ‘song,’ the register of a voice is a deciding factor when it comes to gender.

It may not be incorrect to conjecture that even society of today in general draws meaning merely from the register of a voice and the quality of that voice; musical meaning may be related to our everyday experiences of what quality and quantity of sound resembles the

⁹⁴ Owen Jander, “*Bel Canto*,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera: Volume One*, 1992.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 44, 45.

voices of men or women. The numerous fans of Murray Walker's Formula One commentaries described the quality of his voice as being "strong," "harsh" and "aggressive," thereby, linking a male voice with qualities believed to be 'masculine.'⁹⁷ Walker's fans respond spontaneously to the aesthetic quality of his voice and draw correlations between its quality, register, and gender, and the context of its reception – the 'manly,' hi-tech sport of Formula One. In sum, it is not simply that voices are associated with different contexts (such as music notation, improvisation, or concert), but that particular qualities of a voice also appear to suit particular contexts.

Further, it appears that the general public in Chopin's time as well as ours believes the variations of this 'context' suit the differing sexes. Robert Schumann thought that Clara Schumann's piano playing, which was characterized as 'feminine' owing to her unforced touch,⁹⁸ gave "almost more meaning" to Chopin's music.⁹⁹ In other words, Robert Schumann acknowledges that Chopin's music was – as Solange Sand stated – particularly suited to women pianists. Robert Schumann was to evoke Chopin in his composition for piano (Op. 9): *Carnaval* (see Figure 24). Although Chopin's pupil Mathias and Stephen Heller claimed Chopin did not hold the *Carnaval* in high regard, saying it was not music "at all," he did have a copy of the score.¹⁰⁰ While "there is no knowing what Chopin thought of the evocative portrait of him etched by Schumann," Schumann's caricature does fit his generalization of Chopin's music aesthetic. A so-called cantilena is relegated to the treble clef, whilst the bass clef is characterized by strong, accented *f* markings, and

⁹⁷ Tricket, *The Unspeakable Murray Walker: Part Three* (2001).

⁹⁸ Hanslick, "Clara Schumann," *Hanslick's Music Criticisms*.

⁹⁹ Robert Schumann, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 269.

¹⁰⁰ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 138, 139; Frederick Niecks, *Frederick Chopin as a Man and Musician*, vol. 2 (London: Novello, 1902), 112, 113.

surging crescendos up to *sf* markings. Schumann is in this instance not offering the most favourable critique of Chopin's music.

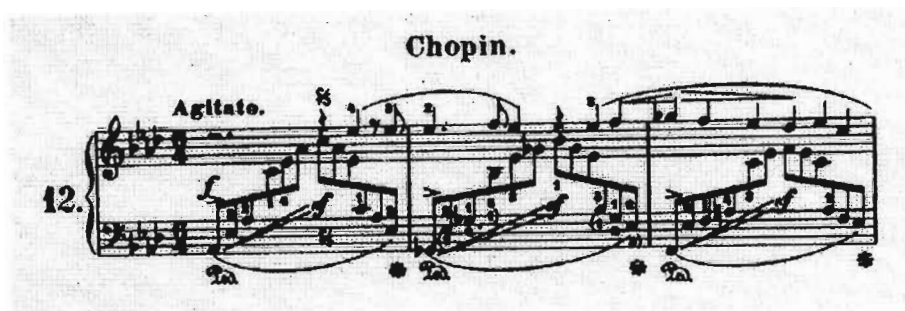


Figure 24. Robert Schumann's *Carnaval* (Op. 9): "Chopin"¹⁰¹

The "agitato" marking, in my view, suggests that Schumann is poking fun at Chopin's 'melodramatic' voices, for whilst they may be strong and melodic, they nonetheless verge on what he sees as 'hysteria.' Schumann's parody of Chopin might also have been partly responsible for the excuses that late nineteenth- and mid twentieth-century scholars offered in regard to the 'feminine' sounds of Chopin's works.¹⁰² Figure 25 supports, visually, Schumann's 'observation' that there are moments marked *agitato* in Chopin's scores.



Figure 25. Nocturne Op. 9 No. 3: *Agitato*¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Robert Schumann, *Carnaval* (London: Augener, 1913), 18.

¹⁰² Huneker and Hedley, for example, made such excuses on Chopin's behalf.

¹⁰³ Chopin, *Nocturnes*, 20.

The musical effect lives up to the indication *agitato*: a frustrated melody is driven forward by an *ostinato* rhythm. The overall pulse however, is challenged by the inner voices which are in syncopation with the overall meter. In this ‘B’ section of Nocturne Op. 9 No. 3, the tension mounts to a climax. The dynamic markings encourage the pianist to get louder as he or she heads towards a climactic moment. In my view, it is traditionally expected of a composition that the highest moment of excitement is the point at which it resolves – as with the perfect cadence for example.¹⁰⁴ However, when this dominant chord does arrive, Chopin reduces the dynamics from *fortissimo* to *piano* – insidiously undermining the potentially climactic effect that the dominant key could provide. The opening theme reappears; it is *piano*, and it is in the home-key of B minor (the return of the ‘A’ section). Due to the change in the dynamic range (Figure 26), the listener listens disbelievingly and arguably ‘agitatedly,’ as the ‘heroic’ *fortissimo* does not triumph by the return of the tonic.

¹⁰⁴ This perspective complies with Christopher Small’s discussion on “The Perfect Cadence and the Concert Hall,” and Robert Fink’s harmonic analysis of Wagner’s opera *Tristan und Isolde*. In regard to Fink’s discussion of *Tristan und Isolde*, he argues that the perfect cadence is withheld until the final bars of the opera, thereby creating a sense of longing and fulfillment once the dominant is resolved. The ‘Tristan chord’ is commonly thought of as that harmony which creates a sense of continual longing due to the difficulties posed in regard to the resolution of its chromatic components. Robert Fink, *Music in the 20th Century: A Listening Guide for Postgraduate History MHS 426*, Eastman School of Music, (Fall 1996), 3; Christopher Small, “The Perfect Cadence and the Concert Hall,” *Music – Society – Education* (London: John Calder, 1977).

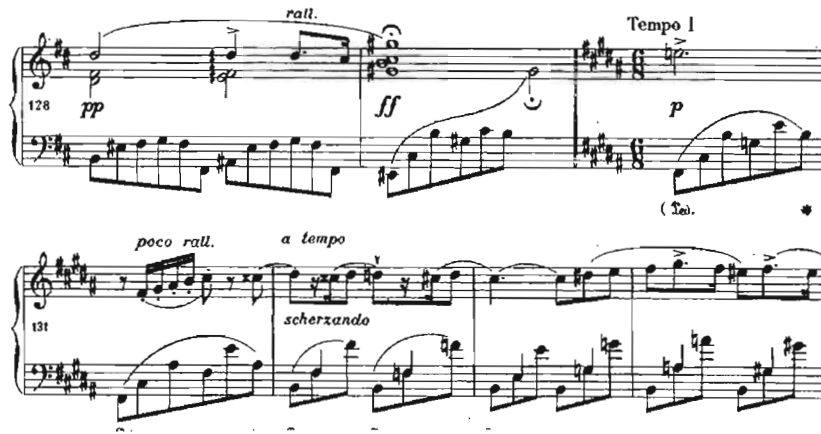


Figure 26 Nocturne Op. 9 No. 3: ‘Hysteria’

We might refer to a view held by James Huneker to support not only my view that the voices in the nocturnes were seen as being hysterical and melodramatic, but that these characteristics in Chopin’s music were seen as a reflection of Chopin’s character – a character which is “at times” ‘feminine.’ Huneker writes: “the poetic side of men of genius is feminine and in Chopin the feminine note was over emphasized – at times it was almost hysterical – particularly in these nocturnes.”¹⁰⁵

Another example that throws light on the interplay between register, quality of sound and gender concerns a “German scholar” who analyzed Chopin’s Variations Op. 2 “measure by measure.”¹⁰⁶ On the 12th December (1831) Chopin wrote to Tytus Woyciechowski that a German scholar had made a “ten page” analysis of his Variations Op. 2, which said

¹⁰⁵ Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, 142.

¹⁰⁶ Cortot claims this “German scholar” was Robert Schumann. Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, 59; Chopin remarked that the analysis was ridiculous because it involved a program “measure by measure.” *Chopin’s Letters*, 155.

that they are not variations in the usual sense, but some kind of fantastic *tableaux*. About the 2nd variation he says that Don Juan is running with Leporello: that in the 3rd he is embracing Zerlina and Mazetto raging in the left hand; that in the 5th measure of the adagio, Don Juan is kissing Zerlina in D flat major.¹⁰⁷

The German scholar intended to publish this ‘masculine’- and ‘feminine’-oriented analysis in a journal but was discouraged by Chopin’s friend Ferdinand Hiller. Chopin writes:

One can die of the imagination of this German, who insists that his brother-in-law should send it to Fétis, for the *Revue Musicale*; from this the good Hiller rescued me with difficulty, by telling the brother-in-law that the thing is not clever at all but very stupid.¹⁰⁸

Chopin thought this German’s ideas so amusing that he had from then on used “d flat as a code word for sex.”¹⁰⁹ Although he mocked this over-enthusiastic analysis, he had himself, on more than one occasion, hinted at hidden meaning in his music. Probably, it was the intensiveness and literalness of the German’s analysis that provoked Chopin’s indignation. On the other hand, perhaps Chopin was scornful because this scholar was a German. Moreover, as Cortot points out, this German was his fellow composer Robert Schumann who had poked fun at Chopin (and others) in his *Carnaval* (Op. 9).¹¹⁰ In other words, professional jealousy may also have had a hand in this incident.

Chopin may not have believed that his own music was above the rules and conventions of his day, but he certainly knew that it was not programmatic in the way that Schumann’s

¹⁰⁷ *Chopin’s Letters*, 155.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 156.

¹⁰⁹ George Marek and Maria Gordon-Smith, *Chopin: A Biography*, 22.

¹¹⁰ Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, 59.

reading of it implied. Chopin “decided at the last minute, not to put a literary epigraph at the head of his Nocturne Op. 15 No. 3, saying ‘let them guess for themselves.’”¹¹¹ This comment seems to suggest that hidden meanings were at the heart of the Nocturne Op. 15 No. 3. The only difference between Schumann’s and Chopin’s observations on texts is that Schumann uses a detailed story to draw attention to those phrases rich in emotion, whereas Chopin refers to phrases loaded with emotion without identifying the particular emotion.

Liszt characterized the mazurkas as ‘feminine’ and Lenz said that the treble clef octaves of a particular mazurka were meant to evoke women singing in unison.¹¹² An additional circumstance which suggests the mazurkas might have been written in order to reflect the ‘feminine’ is that they have been transcribed for voice: Viardot’s voice. Viardot is considered to be the most “extraordinary woman” Chopin “came to know.” “She was to become not only one of the great singing actresses in operatic history, but also a remarkable pianist, teacher, intellectual, and prodigious linguist.” She was the “inspiration” behind Giacomo Meyerbeer’s *Fidés* in his opera *Les Prophètes*, Charles Gounod’s *Sapho*, Saint-Saëns’ *Samson et Dalila*, and Brahms’ *Alto Rhapsody*.¹¹³ Viardot was the sister of Maria Malibran, who, like Viardot, was famous for her Rossini.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 148.

¹¹² Liszt, “Mazurkas and Their Social Background” *Chopin*; Lenz, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 75.

¹¹³ Azoury, *Chopin Through His Contemporaries*, 151.

¹¹⁴ Elizabeth Forbes, “Maria (-Felecia) Malibran,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2001.

Malibran was one of the experts in *bel canto* singing whom Chopin wrote of in his letters as being “the leading European *prima donna*” – he added, “she is *fabulous*.”¹¹⁵

Chopin’s transcribed mazurkas were performed by Viardot with great success in 1848.¹¹⁶ Chopin writes from London (Saturday, 13th May): “yesterday at a Covent Garden concert Mme Viardot sang my mazurkas and had to repeat them.”¹¹⁷ Such a transcription establishes to a certain degree that the ‘feminine’ associations Liszt made between this Polish song and dance form and Chopin’s interpretation of the genre can be carried forward into the province of vocal performance. The extreme softness and the nuances of Chopin’s performance in this genre and the registers of the melodies, which Liszt interpreted as ‘feminine,’ are now those musical characteristics which are on display via the female vocal artiste. Features of the music (such as ornate melodies and rhythms) that were believed to be ‘feminine,’ correlated both in the salon and Covent Garden: they were seen as ‘feminine’ in the salons even though a man, Chopin, performed them, and they remained ‘feminine’ in the public hall because the female singer, Viardot, sang them.

The classification of ‘male’ and ‘female’ voices, however, does not always appear to be a simple task, especially considering that Chopin did not hesitate to suggest that songs composed for women might be transposed for a tenor. He writes to Jan Bialoblocki: “I have bought you (for nothing) two airs from *Freischütz*, with which you ought to be

¹¹⁵ Azoury, *Chopin Through His Contemporaries*, 151.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 210.

¹¹⁷ *Chopin’s Letters*, 354.

pleased. It is true that they are for a female voice; they are sung by Kupińska and Aszpergerosa; but as I know, or at least can imagine, how squeakily you must sing, my dear life, when your leg hurts you...they are just the thing for you. Transpose the voice part an octave lower, and it will be for a tenor voice.”¹¹⁸ In other words, whilst the melodies, the rhythms, or the harmonies, for example, were originally intended for a woman’s voice, and they remain unchanged even in the transcription of these “airs,” it is nevertheless the transposition of the notes that allows for a new kind of musical meaning, which can be associated with a man’s voice instead of a woman’s voice. The gendered associations we make with the voice, then, might be legitimately ascribed to an instrumental transcription of that gendered voice. This notion can be supported by Edward T. Cone’s views on transcriptions. He writes about Berlioz’s *Fantastic Symphony* and *Harold in Italy*: “because, like transcriptions, they contain a ‘silent’ verbal component, they may help us shift our discussion from the vocal to the instrumental medium.”¹¹⁹

When Eigeldinger writes “singing constituted the alpha and omega” for Chopin, he acknowledged that singing is a human phenomenon which is prone to gendering: “and the more piano playing drew its inspiration from usual models, the more convincing it became. Hence Chopin’s art of transforming the piano into a leading tenor or a *prima donna*.” Eigeldinger also notes that the desired qualities of the human voice, which Chopin is thought to have embedded in his works, were the “intense legato,” “inimitable sense of line and phrasing,” “that fullness of sound, and that cello-like quality.” He states:

¹¹⁸ *Chopin’s Letters*, 33.

¹¹⁹ Edward T. Cone, *The Composer’s Voice* (California: University of California Press, 1974), 83.

“his [Chopin’s] conception of *rubato* is vocal and baroque in essence, in that it seeks, wherever apt, to release the melodic part from all metrical fetters and let it expand with the perfect freedom of inflection found in singing.”¹²⁰ In other words, the “leading tenor” has “fullness of sound,” and “cello-like” qualities, whilst the “*prima donna*,” although not signaled as clearly as the ‘masculine’ voice, possesses the quality of musical freedom implied by Eigeldinger when he praises the *ad libitum* of Chopin’s music.

The concept of double discourse – the idea that dual consciousnesses can be expressed simultaneously, or that conflicting sensory orientations might be felt by a single performer¹²¹ – also applies here. George Marek and Maria Gordon-Smith recount an incident that involved Chopin and Potocka:

One evening when Chopin was imitating the voice and gestures of acquaintances, as he often did, she [Delphina Potocka] said to him: ‘Now it is my turn. Show me your impression of myself.’ Instead, he went to the piano and improvised in a melancholy vein, demonstrating that he knew and understood her to the very core of her being.¹²²

Potocka was described by Sowiński as an “excellent soprano voice” who was trained “in the purest *bel canto*.”¹²³ In accordance with earlier discussions, improvisation (which is in this instance inseparable from her *bel canto* training) is once more used in order to reflect ‘femininity.’ Further, Chopin used the ‘voice’ of the piano to convey that she was not only a singer, but that she was a “melancholic” person. Through the use of

¹²⁰ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 14, 15.

¹²¹ Both the double discourse and my application of this theory have been discussed in the previous section, “Musical Rhetoric and Musical Spheres.”

¹²² Marek and Gordon-Smith, and Delphina Potocka, as quoted by Marek and Gordon-Smith, in Marek and Gordon-Smith, *Chopin: A Biography*, 113.

¹²³ Sowiński, as quoted by Marek and Gordon-Smith, in *Chopin: A Biography*, 143.

improvised sounds that are also “melancholic,” Chopin showed that he is able to look into her being. Further, he achieved this by imitating the musical characteristics that were considered characteristic of Potocka’s voice.

Potocka was also the singer who sang to Chopin on his deathbed, and she is the singer to whom the Concerto in F Minor (Op. 21) was dedicated. It is also reported by Eugene Delacroix that she sang (with a “wonderful” voice) Chopin’s nocturnes during soirées.¹²⁴ Therefore, it is perhaps possible to associate her “melancholic” personality not only with Chopin’s imitation of her voice, but it is also a possibility that there is a link between improvisation and melancholy within specific genres, such as the nocturne. The link between voice and character may explain why Chopin reflected on the adagio of the concerto, which he dedicated to Potocka, in melancholic terms: “but I, perhaps unfortunately, already have my own ideal, which I have served faithfully, though silently, for half a year; of which I dream, to thoughts of which the adagio of the concerto belongs, and which this morning inspired the little waltz I am sending you.”¹²⁵ The adagio of the F Minor concerto is in the style of a nocturne – suggesting that the “melancholic” voice of Potocka is suited for that genre.

Chopin claimed that Sontag’s voice, even when naturally limited by range, could nonetheless be “charming” because of its “cultivated tone.”¹²⁶ It is certainly the case that where a singing voice is well phrased, full of nuance, modestly ornamented and has moments of virtuosity, the general effect is one of charm. Although Chopin does not

¹²⁴ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 101.

¹²⁵ *Chopin’s Letters*, 69.

¹²⁶ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 46.

specify his meaning in the use of the word “charm,” he uses it in conjunction with characteristics that I have suggested are ‘small.’ On the other hand, when he writes of Rubini’s tenor voice, which he admired, the word ‘charm’ is lacking: he praises Rubini as “excellent,” not charming.¹²⁷

Gendered terminology is often used in relation to sensory experience of the human voice. The analysis of concepts within this thesis, and the theoretical frameworks established in other musicological writings seem to suggest that on a superficial level, this system of labeling the sensory experience in gendered-oriented terminology has an element of reason. Chopin apparently subscribed to this reasoning, because he claimed that some of his music was written for women. We tend to ascribe gender to different qualities of the human voice, particularly when those qualities are apparent in the singing voice: an ornate and spectacular melody in the high register signals ‘coloratura’ for some, whilst a low, gruff melody signals a ‘male’ voice to others. We do not claim that these sounds represent men or women metonymically, but we tend to use varying forms of gender-sensitive terminology in order to attribute gender-oriented meanings to those sounds. There are however some instances where musicians and musicologists are aware of the associations people are prone to make between sound and gender: Berlioz and Samson attempt to loosen this link. Perhaps our biggest challenge should be derived from De Trémont’s opinion that Chopin’s playing was like “touching thoughts.”¹²⁸ The connotation of ‘manly strength’ is lacking in his description of Chopin’s playing, because he refers to a “touching” quality of sound – not a forceful type of musical rhetoric. At the

¹²⁷ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 98.

¹²⁸ De Trémont, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 286.

same time, however, the connotation of ‘feminine’ emotionality is equally absent, because the “touching” quality to which De Trémont refers has to do with ‘thought’ – not pure emotion. It might be said, then, that he brings to our attention the compatibility between finely tuned sensory perception (“touching”) and our ability to think – we might even say our ‘intellect.’ A context from which the human voice is absent, therefore, shows clearly the extent to which our gendering of musical voices is problematic. Can consciousness be gendered? Does the semiotic nature of music demand in each case a vehicle (the human voice, for example) which genders it as male or female? Or, are we meant to discover the meanings of music by transcending the sensory dimension and focusing on a phenomenon that, in its un-relayed state, cannot be related physically to men or women? To transcend the sensory in this way, however, may involve the transcendence of those very associations Chopin himself made between qualities of music and gender, and to transcend all those associations that derive from the way in which he himself experienced musical meaning – via his sensory experience.

3.3. The Human Voice and the “Rhetoric of Genre”: Nocturne Contrasted with the Polonaise

In “The Dimension of Theoretical Complexity: Concerto versus Prelude” (Chapter Two, pp 244-254), I referred to the polonaise and the nocturne briefly in relation to my argument that sexual politics surrounding the topic of the ‘male’ intellectual is sometimes mentioned in discussions of large and small forms. In this section, however, the polonaise and the nocturne will be explored in light of the preceding argument: that people tend to

interpret melodies according to gender, similarly to the way in which they link the varying sensory qualities of the human voice itself to the gender that they think suits those qualities.

Both Ruth Solie and Kallberg have maintained that titles of works – such as ‘Nocturne’ or ‘Polonaise’ – are more communicative than we have traditionally thought.¹²⁹ The titles ‘Nocturne’ and ‘Polonaise’ might not have been chosen arbitrarily by Chopin in order to classify his works: his act of choosing these titles could be thought of as a form of communication, instead of classification. However, even if he did not intend to communicate with his audience through his choice of titles, people have themselves interpreted the above genres in ways that suggest they have been nevertheless influenced by the titles of his works. In the following discussion, I shall demonstrate how some people have interpreted the musical rhetoric of the nocturne and polonaise in light of the communicative nature of their titles, and I shall consider whether Chopin might have chosen specific titles purposefully.

3.3.1. The Gendering of Genres

The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians state that the polonaise is “a stately Polish processional dance” and the nocturne “a piece suggesting night, usually quiet and meditative in character.”¹³⁰ The qualities of music outlined here appear to be very

¹²⁹ Kallberg, “Rhetoric of Genre,” *Chopin at the Boundaries*; Ruth Solie, “Gender, Genre, and the Parlor Piano,” in *The Wordsworth Circle*, Vol. 25 No. 1 (1994), 53 – 57.

¹³⁰ The entries under “Polonaise” and “Nocturne” are largely unchanged in both the 1980 edition and the 2001 edition. Jozef Reiss and Maurice Brown, “Polonaise,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and*

different from each other: “stately” music has a public quality which is far removed from “quiet” and “meditative.” Maurice Brown calls attention to similarities between the nocturne and the romance. John Field is considered to be the “father” of the “French form,” and of Field’s eighteen nocturnes, two were titled “Romance.” Moreover, the cantilenas of these works were viewed as direct transpositions from Italian opera. Chopin is hailed as the composer responsible for improving the form and enhancing its expressive content, which ranges from “melancholic” to “scherzo.”¹³¹ The words used to describe the polonaise and nocturne appear to be gender-neutral. However, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, both have been treated as gender-sensitive genres, and this treatment stems from the history, and musical characteristics, of these genres.

The gendering of the polonaise as ‘male’ is evident in Liszt’s *Frédéric Chopin*, where he writes that Chopin’s polonaises have “manly firmness,” that they are “noble to the verge of pompousness,” and that they are Chopin’s “happiest inspirations.” The list of adjectives used to reflect this ‘masculinity’ does not end here. Liszt says the polonaises are “chivalric,” “haughty,” “valiant,” and “bold;” that they are war-like and therefore that they sound like the “determined tread of men.”¹³²

On the other hand, the late nineteenth-century biographer Niecks claimed the nocturnes were “dulcet, effeminate compositions.” Assuming, then, that “dulcet” in this sense does not carry any connotations of ‘grandeur,’ but rather ‘prettiness,’ Niecks is undervaluing

Musicians, 1980; Stephen Downes, “Nocturne,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2001; Maurice Brown, “Nocturne,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 1980; Maurice Brown and Kenneth Hamilton, “Nocturne,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2001.

¹³¹ Downes, “Nocturne,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 1980.

¹³² Liszt, *Chopin*, 44.

what he sees as the reverse of ‘grand.’ When Niecks claimed the nocturnes were “effeminate,” he continued by adding that they “illuminate only one side of the master’s character, and by no means the best or most interesting.”¹³³

Niecks’ late nineteenth-century devaluing of ‘femininity,’ which he links to Chopin’s *bel canto* nocturnes, may also explain at least in part why *bel canto* music became unpopular with the general public. “Among the reasons” for the decline in popularity of a light vocal tone, and singing style, were “an increase in the size” of orchestras, “expansions of the interior area of opera houses,” and the emergence of large “concert halls.”¹³⁴ The weightier tone prized by singers in the late nineteenth-century was detrimental to the popularity of *bel canto*, and because *bel canto* distinguished by those “feminine” and “effeminate” qualities that Niecks deplores in the nocturnes, the desire for ‘weight’ appears, in turn, to be the cause for the decline in popularity of ‘women’s’ piano music. A decline in the popularity of certain musical qualities that I claim have been associated with women is supported by Ritterman, who writes that “contemporary comments,” in regard to improvisation, “reflect changing views of the skills expected of the professional pianist.” She says that “as concerts became more frequent, displays of this kind [became] more predictable,” and people became “more ambivalent towards the inclusion of improvised items.”¹³⁵

¹³³ Niecks, in Rink, “Enlightened Darkness,” *BBC Music Magazine*, 48.

¹³⁴ Owen Jander, “Bel Canto,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, 1992; Jander, “Bel Canto,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 1980.

¹³⁵ Ritterman, “Piano Music and the Public Concert,” *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 26.

Niecks and Liszt, however, were by no means alone in their gendering of the polonaise and nocturne. Hedley and Huneker have also claimed that the polonaise and nocturne were ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ genres. Huneker claimed that calling the nocturnes “feminine” was “psychologically false,” even though “the feminine note [is] overemphasized.”¹³⁶ He admits that they do *sound* “feminine” to him, but this sound, he wishes to believe, is merely a reflection of a ‘masculine’ genius. The words that he uses to describe these compositions, include: “hysterical,” “sensuous,” “dramatic,” “melancholic,” “melodramatic,” “lovely,” “charming,” “passionate,” “gracious,” “coquettish,” and “delicate.” Moreover, when he subscribes to Henry Finck’s notion that in “four pages” Nocturne Op. 27 No. 1 “embodies a greater variety of emotion...[and]dramatic spirit” than a “four hundred” page opera, he is in essence comparing the nocturnes to a work featuring singing voices, as well as making the Nocturne appear as large as an opera – a genre in which Chopin never composed.¹³⁷ The words which he uses to describe the sounds of the nocturnes should therefore be interpreted in light of the comparison he draws between the musical characteristics of the nocturne and the human voice. The voice which epitomizes the ‘feminine’ side of the composer is consequently describable in terms that correspond with the words the Romantics used to signify what they believed to be ‘feminine’ musical qualities.

Huneker, on the other hand, claims the polonaises “bear witness to [Chopin’s] masculine side.”¹³⁸ He argues that the “mould” of the polonaises is “essentially masculine” even though the title is ‘feminine’ and that the polonaise was originally called “polonais.”

¹³⁶ Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, 142.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 145.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 181.

Liszt also noticed the same linguistic anomaly and discussed the issue of ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ in regard to the spelling of polonaise, writing: “in the original form the very name of the dance is of masculine gender, and only through an obvious misunderstanding was it transferred to the feminine.”¹³⁹ The ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ of the French language, however, was only a starting point for musicians who sought out the ‘masculine’ in Chopin’s music. It was the musical quality of the polonaises that gave potency to the argument that the genre was ‘gendered’ incorrectly. For example, Huneker described the polonaises, in general, as “violent,” “energetic,” and “fiery.”

Hedley also comments on the “vocal” effects of the nocturnes.¹⁴⁰ He describes them as being “agitated,” “delicate,” “divine,” “detailed,” and “beautiful.”¹⁴¹ He attempts, however, to portray these ‘miniature’ aspects in a positive light. For instance, he writes: “at their best these compositions can hold their own with his [Chopin’s] other works: even at their weakest they are not without a certain ‘period’ charm.”¹⁴² Hedley has measured “charm” in terms of largeness and smallness. In my view, even though Hedley claims they are charming, he believes these compositions are generally undervalued. When he claimed that some of the nocturnes – the “best” ones – held their own against acknowledged great works of Chopin, it was the tremendous amount of “charm” embedded in them that rendered them on a par with these ‘great’ compositions. The nocturnes that Hedley believes are less successful than the ‘charming’ ones are nonetheless valuable. Whilst Hedley does not call the nocturnes ‘feminine,’ when he

¹³⁹ Liszt, *Chopin*, 46.

¹⁴⁰ Hedley, *The Master Musician's Chopin*, 152.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 149 – 153.

¹⁴² *Ibid.* 149.

discusses the genre that is furthest removed from the nocturne – the polonaise – he does equate that genre with ‘masculinity.’

Hedley differentiates between the polonaises Chopin composed while still in Poland and those composed after he left for Paris. He describes these early polonaises (B Flat Major and F Minor) as “attractive” and “sentimental,” and claims that they are indicative of Chopin’s tendency to imbue his works with “colour,” “glitter,” and “brilliance.”¹⁴³ However, because they are said to be “show-off” pieces (and therefore “superficial”), he states that the early polonaises are less successful than the “heroic” polonaises, which, as Hedley claims, Chopin wrote outside of Poland in order to “enshrine the glory” of his country. He maintains, in other words, that the “direct,” “vigorous,” “uncomplicated,” and the “heroic” rhetoric of the polonaises (which are “stripped of all superfluity”), are better than those polonaises where the vocal effects of Chopin’s piano writing relay a sense of *ad libitum* and *sotto voce*.¹⁴⁴ He regards the ‘direct,’ and ‘masculine,’ polonaises as more successful than the “superficial” ones – one of which was written for Princess Wanda Radziwill. Hedley also emphasizes the strength of Nocturne, Op. 48 No. 1, saying that it has a “massive tune” which leads to a “thunderous octave” passage. This type of terminology appears to rid the genre of melancholy and “sentimentality.”¹⁴⁵ Hedley also attempted to reduce the ‘sentimentality’ of Nocturne Op. 27 No. 2, saying “it is serenely lyrical, not without a touch of sentimentality – the temptation of thirds and sixths is hard to resist – but not languishing...the performer is to blame if it becomes that.”¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Ibid., 161.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. 161.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 153.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. 153.

Nocturne Op. 15 No. 2 is full of musical characteristics that Emile Gaillard called “magnificent lacework.” Hedley claims this “piece rises to a certain degree of superficial passion – but we are still in the salon.”¹⁴⁷ It seems, then, that Hedley thinks ‘masculine’ is straight forward and powerful – and therefore deep and meaningful – whilst ‘feminine’ is virtuosically impressive but superficial. In regard to Chopin’s nocturnes, there is not one in which the ‘male’ register “casually unfolds” with “magnificent lacework”: by comparison, the left hand accompaniments are considerably more diatonic than the right hand melodies.¹⁴⁸

Samson’s recent article “The Spirit of Poland,” also hints at the gendered undertones of the polonaise and nocturne.¹⁴⁹ Samson writes that Chopin’s polonaises written after 1830 are a “potent symbol of Poland” and continues: “for many, the mature polonaises were viewed as a pianistic expression of Polish history, evoking glorious incidents from that history such as the battle of the Hussards of Subieski (Op. 40 no 1) or the battle of Grochow (Op. 44).” Samson, in other words, claims that these polonaises have been associated with battles – a ‘masculine’ image. Although Samson attempts to break the associations by writing “we need no such associations to see that the popular national dance has acquired quite a new status,” he nonetheless uses gendered imagery in order to convey his understanding of the music. He continues: the “expression” of the newer style of polonaise is “monumental,” “heroic,” and “thrusting.” He argues, further, that these

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 152.

¹⁴⁸ Emile Gaillard, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 276. Gaillard uttered these words after hearing Chopin’s performance of “a nocturne.” This nocturne is unnamed in Eigeldinger’s *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*.

¹⁴⁹ Samson, *The Music of Chopin*, 100 – 119.

musical characteristics of the polonaises are the result “of Chopin’s search for an increased strength and volume of piano sonority, a far cry from the gentle lyricism of the nocturnes. Full chordal textures in rhythmic unison alternate with powerful octave passages, while grace-notes...[are employed only] to unite metallic octaves at registral extremes with chordal writing in the middle register.”¹⁵⁰

In sum, Samson places the vocal lyricism of the nocturnes in opposition to the polonaises as a result of their vastly different musical characteristics. Curiously, although he uses the word “heroic” to describe Chopin’s ‘military’ polonaises, he does not suggest that any of Chopin’s works are “heroine-like” – in fact, as seen earlier in this chapter, Samson, like Huneker in the late nineteenth century, denies the existence of ‘femininity’ in Chopin’s ‘coloratura’ melodies.

3.3.2. The Nocturne

The titles ‘Nocturne,’ ‘Romance,’ and ‘Serenade,’ were at one time considered interchangeable. David Rowland, for example, writes that the dictionaries of Fétis, Czerny, and Larousse, all make a comparison between the nocturne and the romance respectively.

“The style of the nocturne is like that of the romance, soft and gentle.”

“The romance resembles the nocturnes”

“The nocturne is a musical composition that resembles the romance”¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 103, 104, 105.

¹⁵¹ Fétis, Czerny, and Larousse respectively, as quoted by David Rowland, in Samson, *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 35.

Not only is the nocturne related to the romance, but it is also thought to owe its meaning to the serenade. Liszt's teacher, Czerny, wrote that the musical qualities of the nocturne correspond to those of the serenade:

The Notturmo for the pianoforte is really an imitation of those vocal pieces which are termed Serenades, and the peculiar object of such works – that of being performed by night, before the dwelling place of an esteemed individual – must always exercise influence upon its character.¹⁵²

Rowland writes that the nocturne became a popular independent genre in the 1800s and that its terminology was “not entirely fixed.” Nocturnes were commonly seen as “slow movements attached to contrasting works” – such as the rondo.¹⁵³ The second *Divertissement* of Field, which was published separately from its *rondeau* as a romance, as a *pastorale*, and as a nocturne (and is now known as Field's eighth nocturne) illustrates the flexibility of the title of this miniature. Whatever title is used, the musical characteristics of all three genres are believed to be very similar, and it seems that it is these similarities that encourage us to compare the titles. Moreover, it is from the musical characteristics of the three genres that the imagery of night has stemmed. These genres are vocal, and it is the link between night and the voice, which suggests that the nocturnes are not simply night pieces but songs of the night.

Chopin's letters show his acknowledgement of the links perceived by his society between night, sung serenades, and romances. After Prince Radziwill showed him his musical

¹⁵² Czerny, in Kallberg, *Chopin at The Boundaries*, 45.

¹⁵³ Rowland, *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 33.

setting of Johann Wolfgang Goethe's *Faust* (in which the music that is associated with night is in fact a serenade), Chopin commented on the serenade, interpreting it as seductive. Chopin writes to Tytus (14th November, 1829):

[It is] an inspired work: among other things there is a scene in which Mephistopheles tempts Marguerite by playing his guitar and singing under her window, and at the same time one hears the chanting of the choir in a neighboring church. This contrast makes a great effect in performance; in the score you can see how artistically the song is written, and still more so the diabolic accompaniment under the solemn chant...he is a confirmed Gluckist. Dramatic music has no meaning for him except in so far as it depicts situations and emotions.¹⁵⁴

Chopin describes the voice of romance in one of his letters (12th December, 1831):

Nourrit, the French tenor, has wonderful feeling! And Cholet, at the *Opéra Comique*, where they give *Frau Diavolo*, *La Fiancée* and *Zampa* (a fine new opera by Herold), is the first amant here: *séducteur*, tantalizing, marvelous, a genius with the real voice of romance.¹⁵⁵

He also conjured up night imagery when writing about his own Romance (the second movement of the E Minor Concerto Op. 11).

It is not meant to create a powerful effect. [It is rather] calm and melancholy, giving the impression of someone looking gently towards a spot which calls to mind a thousand happy memories. It is a kind of reverie in the moonlight on a beautiful spring evening. Hence the accompaniment is muted: that is, the violins are stifled by a sort of comb which fits over the strings and gives them a nasal and silvery tone.¹⁵⁶

Thus, he was not only aware of the “calm” and “melancholic” associations made with night, but that night lends itself to specific aspects of romance – one of which is

¹⁵⁴ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 36, 37.

¹⁵⁵ *Chopin's Letters*, 157.

¹⁵⁶ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 45; Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 67.

seduction. It is certainly the case that Chopin was enchanted by Goethe's *Faust*. In 1829 he wrote, "I have just come back from *Faust*. I had to stand outside the theatre from half past 4; the show lasted from 6 to 11. Devrient, whom I saw in Berlin, played Faust. Today is Goethe's eightieth anniversary. It's a terrible phantasy, but a great one" (see Figure 27).¹⁵⁷



Figure 27. An Illustration by Delacroix of Goethe's *Faust*: From a Collection of Lithographs (1828)¹⁵⁸

Kallberg supplies an apt graphic representation of the seductiveness of nineteenth-century nocturnes by reproducing the title page of Felix Dobrzyński's nocturnes. In the foreground, a man is serenading a woman in order to seduce her and in the background, lovers are arm in arm and cupid is striking an arrow from the moon (Figure 28).

¹⁵⁷ *Chopin's Letters*, 63.

¹⁵⁸ Reproduced in Daniel Polotowski's *Music* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1988), 328.

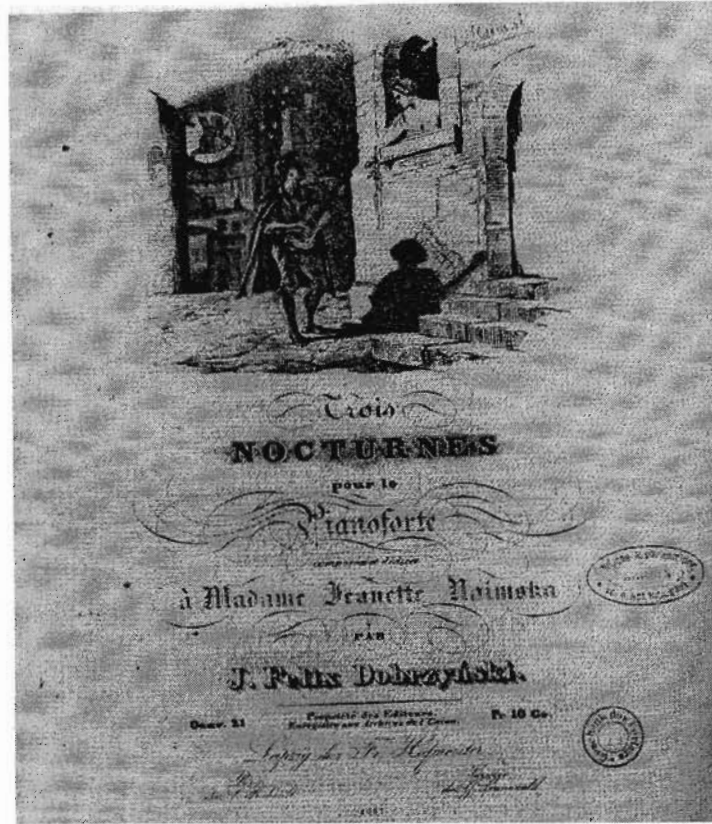


Figure 28. Felix Dobrzyński: Three Nocturnes for Piano¹⁵⁹

Lenz hears the seductive rhetoric of a male voice accompanied by guitars in Chopin's Nocturne Op. 9 No. 2. He writes:

Chopin wanted 'the bass...to sound like a chorus of guitars...maintaining an absolutely steady *allegretto* movement without the 12/8 lapsing into triplets...then the left hand can be trusted with the accompaniment played that way and the tenor invited to sing his part in the upper voice.'¹⁶⁰

The nocturne, like the serenade, was at times understood in terms of the human voice and its accompaniment. Liszt linked Nocturne Op. 37 No. 2 to seduction when he wrote that

¹⁵⁹ Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries*, 46.

¹⁶⁰ Lenz, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 77.

Chopin's "touch," in the performance of this work, was "entrancing" and "ravishing."¹⁶¹ Perhaps Liszt and others were encouraged to interpret Chopin's nocturnes and nocturne-like music as seductive, because Chopin relayed his own feelings of being 'seduced' by a singer in September 1828: "yesterday was: Das unterbrochene Operfest, in which one chromatic scale emitted by Miss Schatzel took me back to your arms."¹⁶² A chromatic line seduced Chopin, and, if Chopin knew what type of rhetoric had a seductive effect on him, he probably would have realized the communicative power of chromaticism.

There are chromatic scale-like descents in Chopin's music. For example, the last musical phrase of Nocturne Op. 9 No. 3 (Figure 29) frees itself from diatonicism and a static meter, exposing a brilliant cadenza. Of course, this cadenza is 'seductive' and 'feminine' only for those who, like Chopin, interpret chromaticism as 'seductive.'

¹⁶¹ Liszt, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 273

¹⁶² *Chopin's Letters*, 45.

The image shows a musical score for the Cadenza of Chopin's Nocturne Op. 9 No. 3, spanning measures 145 to 156. The score is written for piano and includes various performance instructions and ornaments. Measure 145 is marked with a fermata and the instruction *And. simile*. Measure 149 features a *f* dynamic, *risoluto* character, and *con forza* instruction, with a fermata and the instruction *(And. * And. * And. simile)*. Measure 153 is marked *rit.* and *senza tempo e legalissimo*. Measure 155 is marked *dim*. Measure 156 is marked *rall.*, *Adagio*, *pp smorz.*, and *legaliss.*, with a fermata and the instruction *fff*. The score includes various ornaments and fingerings throughout.

Figure 29. Nocturne Op. 9 No. 3: Cadenza¹⁶³

It is important that Chopin referred not to a complete melody, but to an aspect of a melody: the embellishment of a melody. In this regard, embellishments of melodies become supremely important when discussing music rhetoric because they are responsible for the feeling of abandonment to which Chopin has confessed.

¹⁶³ Chopin, *Nocturnes*, 24.

Eigeldinger characterized the rhetoric of the nocturne genre according to its characteristic repetitiveness and embellishments: “first the motif is heard in its simplicity; afterwards, surrounded with ornaments, richer and richer at each return.”¹⁶⁴ “Richer” in this sense, does not refer to strength of attack or a sense of loudness, but rather to the embellishments and the chromatic ornamentation of the original melody. A brief analysis of Chopin’s Nocturne Op. 9 No. 3, as illustrated below, shows that Eigeldinger’s description is sound.

Figure 30.1 is the first sub-phrase of an eight-measure phrase.

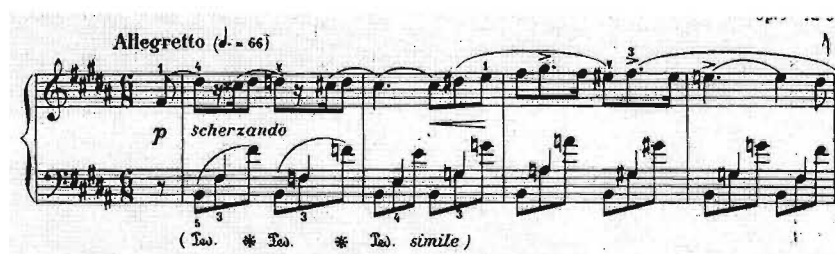


Figure 30. 1. Nocturne Op. 9 No. 3: Measures 1 through 4¹⁶⁵

On the first return of this opening motif (see Figure 30. 2), the melodic contour has already been manipulated. The same sub-phrase returns in measures nine to twelve, but with richer ornamentation. The added embellishments are not only florid lines that give movement to the music rhetoric, but they are based on the chromatic scale and a

¹⁶⁴ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 52 – 53.

¹⁶⁵ Chopin, *Nocturnes*, 16.

diminished arpeggio (which is itself the most chromatic arpeggio of traditional tonal music).



Figure 30.2. First Return of Measures 1 through 4¹⁶⁶

Of the half-a-dozen appearances of this motif, the third appearance (Figure 30.3) is not only chromatically richer than the first hearing, but incorporates wide intervallic leaps. In other words, there appear to be two types of virtuosity: florid chromatic lines and wide leaps.

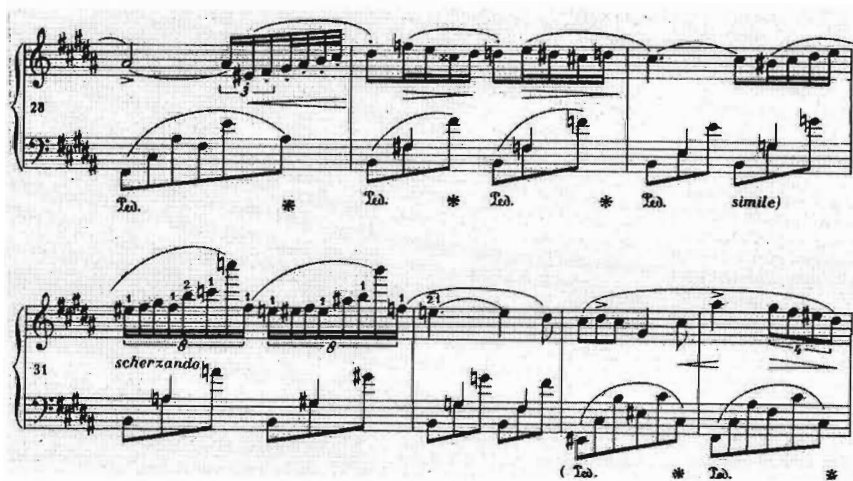


Figure 30.3. Another Return of the Opening Motif¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. 16.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 17.

The second part of the opening eight-measure melody (Figure 30. 4) is also enriched in its returns (Figure 30. 5). For example, when the following motif is heard in measures twenty-five through twenty-seven, it seems at first to repeat what has already been stated but then gives way to a florid *ad libitum* passage of twenty-one notes.



Figure 30. 4. Opening Theme: Measures 5 through 8

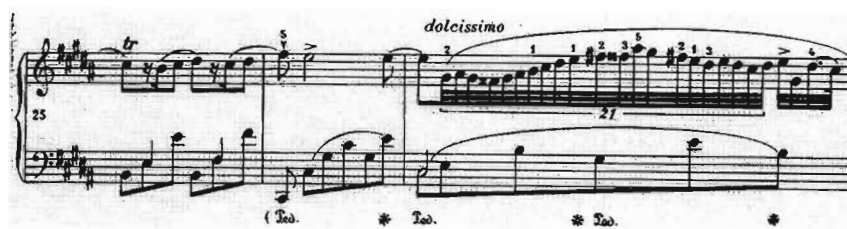


Figure 30. 5. A Repeat of Measures 5 through 8¹⁶⁸

A third motif that gives way to improvised chromaticism and florid scale-like passages can be viewed in measures forty-five through forty-eight, and on its return in measures sixty-nine through seventy-two (Figure 30. 6 and 30.7, respectively).

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 16, 17.

Figure 30.6. Nocturne Op. 9 No. 3: Measures 45 through 48

Figure 30.7. Nocturne Op. 9 No. 3: Measures 69 through 72¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 18, 19.

The following motif forms a chromatic ‘melody’ of its own accord – without the help of improvised chromaticism (Figure 30. 8). It demands another kind of virtuosity from the singer: there is a wide leap found in measure fifty-four. When this section returns in measures seventy-five through eighty (Figure 30. 9), there is yet again richer ornamentation – an embellishment of the first statement.



Figure 30. 8. Nocturne Op. 9 No. 3: Measures 51 through 56



Figure 30. 9. Nocturne Op. 9 No. 3: Measures 75 through 80¹⁷⁰

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 18, 19, 20.

It would seem that the only melodic phrase within the ‘A’ section of this composition that does not become embellished with ornamentation on its recurrences is that of measures thirteen through twenty (Figure 30. 10).¹⁷¹ Even though this motif itself appears five times within the Nocturne, it remains static.

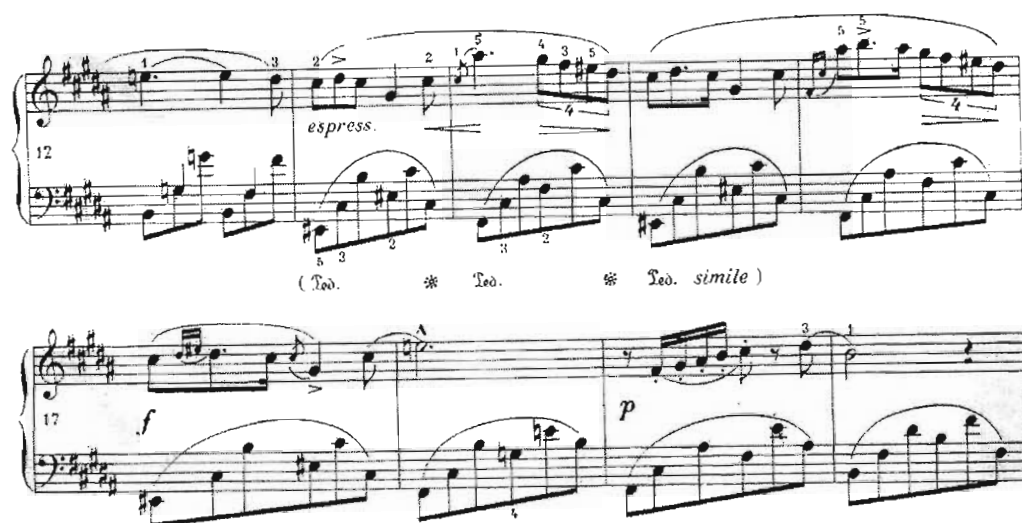


Figure 30. 10. Nocturne Op. 9 No. 3: Measures 13 through 20¹⁷²

Following the middle section (‘B’) of this Nocturne, all these phrases return, rounding off the ‘A’ section – and now, all of them, including the above theme, are “richer.” As seen in Figure 29, even the above theme, which appears five times in a relatively diatonic and static form, gives way to the most brilliant display of chromatic *ad libitum* on its final hearing.

¹⁷¹ Hedley writes that the nocturnes generally employ “a simple formula A-B-A.” In my view, this nocturne suits this generalization for there are two similar sections separated by a contrasting middle section: in other words, the work is in ternary form. Hedley, *The Master Musicians Chopin*, 152.

¹⁷² Chopin, *Nocturnes*, 16.

Eigeldinger's observation concerning the repetitiveness of the material within the nocturnes parallels Chopin's own observation concerning his rhetoric. Chopin wrote to Tytus (30th October, 1829), making jest of his own tendency to repeat himself: "you know my little habit of repeating for the tenth time, as a novelty, something I have already mentioned."¹⁷³ In other words, if any genre were to represent the voice of Chopin, it might be the nocturne genre, because it seems to mirror Chopin's analysis of his own character.

3.3.3. The Polonaise in Contrast with the Nocturne

In this regard, it should be appreciated that the melodies of polonaises do not return incessantly, nor are they embellished on the few occasions that they do. For example, the melody of Polonaise Op. 40 No. 2 returns practically unchanged (Figure 31. 1, 31. 2, and 31. 3).

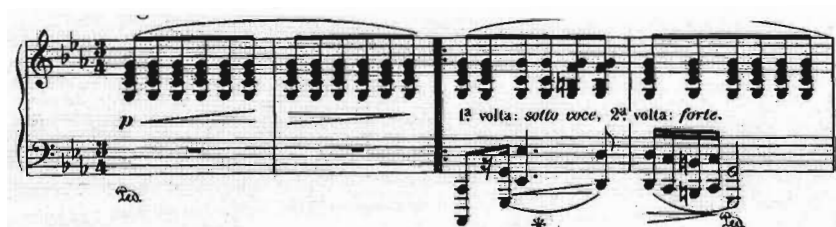


Figure 31. 1. Polonaise Op. 40 No. 2: Measures 1 through 4

¹⁷³ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 36.

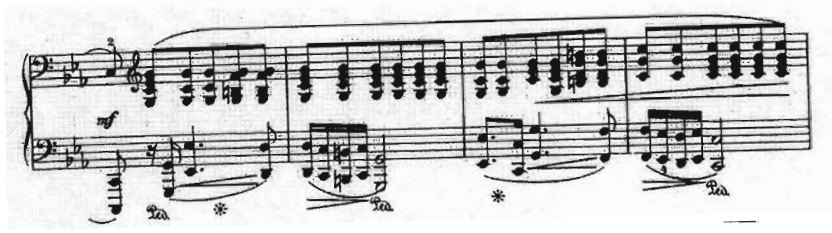


Figure 31. 2. Polonaise Op. 40 No. 2: Measures 40 through 43



Figure 31. 3. Polonaise Op. 40 No. 2: Measures 101 through 104¹⁷⁴

Because Chopin and Moscheles claimed that *ad libitum* music, formed by scales and arpeggios and played in a diminutive tone, was what women liked,¹⁷⁵ the opposite of these music characteristics might be what Chopin and Moscheles would have claimed that men liked; a type of music which is not *ad libitum*, not laced with brilliant scales and arpeggios, and which is not played using a refined tone. In my view, the opposite of *ad libitum* playing implies a lack of freedom in regard to melodic lines and rhythms: the music would be, in a sense, measured. Similarly, I view a chordal texture as different from one comprised of scales and arpeggios. The binary pairs to which we might refer in an attempt to demonstrate what women and men like are: *ad libitum* versus measured, a small tone versus a large tone, and florid scales and arpeggios versus static chordal writing. The polonaise and nocturne appear to be furthest removed from each other in

¹⁷⁴ Chopin, *Polonaises*, 24 – 29.

¹⁷⁵ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 32, 33, 36, 37; Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 272, *Chopin's Letters*, 74.

regard to musical characteristics, because they are, if not polar opposites, extremely different from each other.

Because Chopin's nocturnes include "highly florid" melodic lines, they appear to match Rossini's definition of *bel canto*.¹⁷⁶ The polonaises, on the other hand, do not emphasize characteristics belonging to *bel canto*. The following Nocturne (Op. 62 No. 1) exemplifies those qualities that characterize the nocturnes: a melodic line giving way to improvisation (Figure 32). The improvisation, in turn, is a florid scale passage and an arpeggio. The left-hand grounds the freedom of the right-hand figuration by outlining the harmony through a broken-chord accompaniment. Due to the steady quaver rhythm, the left-hand produces an effect that I describe as 'controlled': without this measured feeling, the runs of the right-hand might sound reckless. In a sense, the improvisation of the right-hand can be described only as improvisation because it contrasts with the steadiness of the simple left-hand. While the dynamic markings in the entire nocturne seldom call for more than a *forte*, the miniature tone is evident largely because the soprano, or coloratura, line is uncluttered with notes that are aligned vertically (as found in the large chordal figurations of the polonaises). Compare, for example, Figure 32 with Figure 33 below.

¹⁷⁶ *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed. 1992, s.v. "bel canto," pp 380, 381.

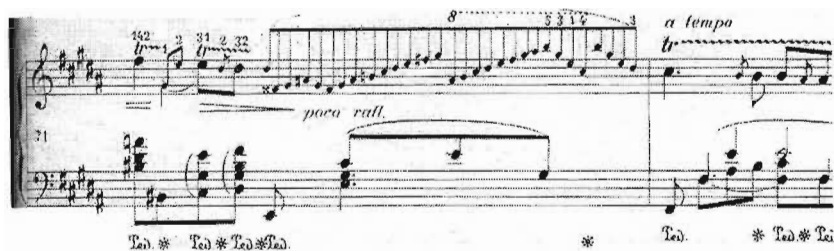


Figure 32. Nocturne Op. 62 No. 1.¹⁷⁷

The Polonaise Op. 40 No. 1, which is commonly referred to as ‘The Military,’ exemplifies those qualities that are most characteristic of the genre: no voices are free to follow their own scale-like or arpeggio-like inspirations, but all are bound to the meter of the static chordal accompaniments (Figure 33). In other words, the rubato of *bel canto* is clearly not evident. In the genre as a whole, the sound, apart from the frequent *forte*, and *fortissimo* (and the two *fff*) markings, is much ‘larger’ than in the nocturnes, simply because of the vertical alignment of the notes that create a sound that is thick in texture.

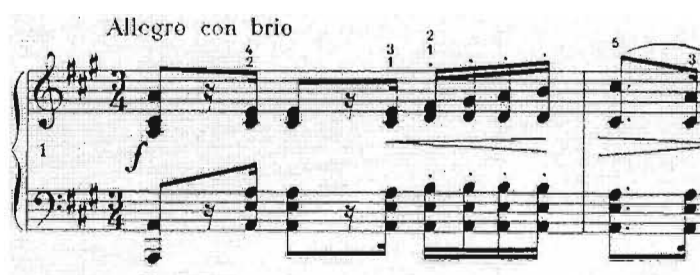


Figure 33. Polonaise Op. 40 No. 1.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ Chopin, *Nocturnes*, 95.

¹⁷⁸ Chopin, *Polonaises*, 18.

3.3.4. The Contradictions

Chopin's dedications could be seen as supportive of the associations that some people might be tempted to make between the nocturne and 'femininity' and the polonaise and 'masculinity.' However, whilst we may wish to accept that musical styles might actually have been seen as representative of different genders, we see also that the polonaises and nocturnes cannot be classified simply as 'masculine' or 'feminine.'

On the one hand, the nocturnes bear the names of seven dedicatees, with only Op. 15 dedicated to a man. Concerning the polonaises, on the other hand, men outnumber women as being dedicatees: five men versus two women. However, the two polonaises that are dedicated to women are not in the traditional style of polonaises, and it might be because of their unusual form that they have been dedicated to women.

Chopin writes of the Polonaise, Op. 44 that "it is a kind of a fantasia in the form of a polonaise," and of the Fantasia Polonaise Op. 61 as being "a sort of polonaise, but more of a fantasia," and "I haven't found a title."¹⁷⁹ Additionally, the only other fantasy-like piece that Chopin wrote, namely the Fantasy in F Minor, was also dedicated to a woman, Princess de Souzzo. In other words, the only two polonaises that Chopin had trouble in categorizing are the two polonaises that were not dedicated to men. I argue that it is due to the musical freedom of both the Polonaise Fantasia (Op. 61) and Polonaise Op. 44 that Chopin dedicated these works to women. The one nocturne opus that is dedicated to a

¹⁷⁹ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 200, 201, 258.

man – Ferdinand Hiller – has musical qualities that, in my view, set it apart from other nocturnes. There is a strong chordal tendency and the register of the melody in Op. 15 no 1 is evocative of a tenor – not of a soprano (Figure 34).

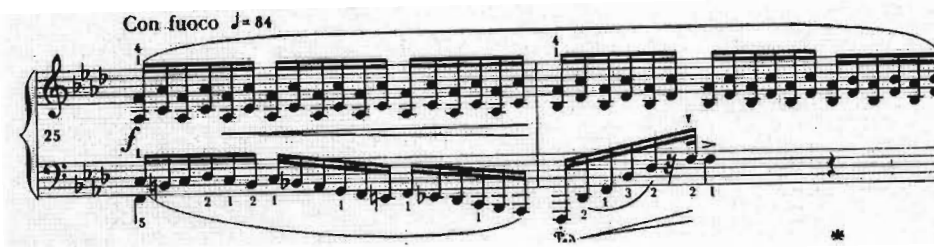


Figure 34. Nocturne Op. 15 No. 1.¹⁸⁰

It may be argued that the act of dedication is no more than a gesture – that musical meaning should not be interpreted from a composition based on the type of person to whom the piece is dedicated. There is however the counter argument that the act of dedicating a composition to someone is not done arbitrarily. Chopin was himself aware of the importance of dedications. The only sonata that he wrote with a classical structure (Sonata in C Minor Op. 4) was dedicated to his composition teacher, Józef Elsner.

Additionally, when Chopin began to gain status in the music world of Paris, one of the signs that led him to believe that his standing was improving was that other composers of eminence dedicated their works to him. When “people composed variations” on “themes” of his own music, for example, it appeared to Chopin as if the compositions were inscribed to him.¹⁸¹ Chopin assumed that part of the musical meaning of these works were dependent on the sources of their inspiration – his own musical ideas. He created a

¹⁸⁰ Chopin, *Nocturnes*, 26.

¹⁸¹ *Chopin's Letters*, 169.

similar tie between *persona* and musical characteristics in his etudes, which he acknowledges as being “big” technical studies and which he dedicated to Liszt.¹⁸²

As seen in the above examples, Chopin’s use of the ‘male’ register in the ‘feminine’ nocturne genre (such as Op. 15 No. 1) also suggests that his music rhetoric resembles the gender of his dedicatee: he might even be challenging people’s belief that the nocturne was solely the province of women, or that compositions written for women (such as the nocturne) might also be suited to men. It may be reasonable to assume, as Kallberg suggests, that compositions may not simply be ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine.’ Even though a composition may have a general mammoth or miniature feel about it, contrasting sections within the work suggest that using gender-oriented terminology to differentiate between genres may be, at times, too much of a generalization. Chopin’s Polonaise in F Minor (published after his death, and bearing no dedication) has a trio section that is similar to the musical style of his nocturnes: there is a soprano cantilena supported by an undulating figure in the left-hand (Figure 35). Chopin says of this work: “I could not get out of sending them [the Radziwills] my Polonaise [Op. 71 No. 3] which intrigued Princess Eliza Radziwill...and nothing pleased her so much as its trio-section in A Flat.



Figure 35. Polonaise Op. 71 No. 3: “Trio Section”¹⁸³

¹⁸² *Chopin's Letters*, 171; Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 36.

¹⁸³ *Chopin, Polonaises*, 89.

Chopin's reference to a particular woman's bass-like voice supports my contention that particular qualities of musical sounds should be gendered, all the more, with caution:

Mrs. Grote is a very kind woman, though eccentric and a good deal of a radical. She receives a great many interesting visitors; dukes, and lords, and scholars; in a word, the celebrities of the great world. She talks in a bass voice, and does not wrap the truth in cotton wool. Someone who does not agree with her views, on being asked: "*Comment trouvez-vous Mme Grote?*" replied: - "*Je la trouve grotesque.*"¹⁸⁴

The concertos, as I suggested earlier, are often viewed as a 'masculine' genre, because of their social function (that of being performed for a large public), and their theoretical complexity, yet parts of them have also been associated with 'feminine' genres. Chopin wrote that the adagio of the E Minor Concerto (Op. 11) was a "Romance" by "moonlight"; he compared the work, therefore, to a nocturne. Berlioz, who also spoke about the imagery of "darkness" in relation this movement, supported Chopin's comparison.¹⁸⁵ Chopin stated openly that 'femininity' is associable with nocturne-like music. He wrote of the adagio of the F Minor Concerto (Figure 36) that it was written in "the memory" of a "young pretty girl" – a girl for whom Chopin also wrote a "little waltz."¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ *Chopin's Letters*, 373.

¹⁸⁵ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 67.

¹⁸⁶ *Chopin's Letters*, 34.

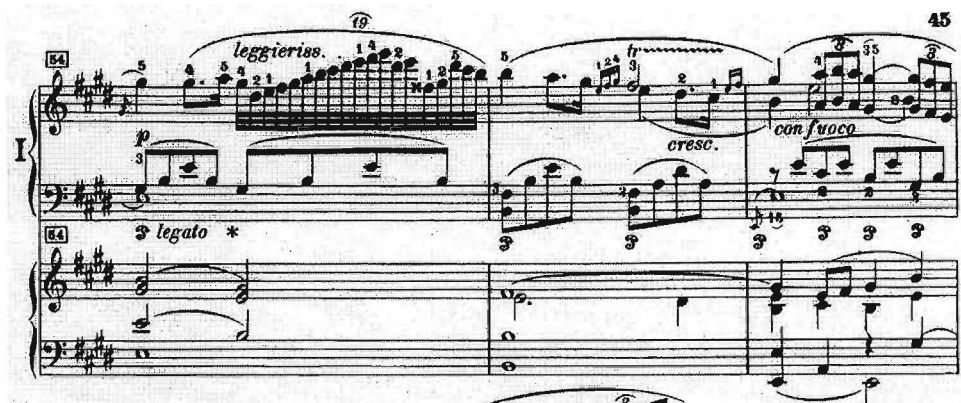


Figure 36. Concerto in E Minor (Op. 11): Romance¹⁸⁷

Whether or not Chopin intended to challenge his society's subscription to the ideas of 'masculine' and 'feminine' sounds, commentators should be wary of struggling to 'masculinize' or 'feminize' his compositions, since his texts do not fit into a large-is-masculine or small-is-feminine mould. One of the Radziwill princesses, who Chopin called "extraordinarily charming" and "sensitive," liked the trio section of Polonaise Op. 71 No. 3, and women, according to him, would have liked the florid lines of the G Minor Polonaise, because they possessed glitter and brilliancy.¹⁸⁸ Similarly, his use of the tenor register with added *forte* and bravura markings of Nocturne Op. 15 No. 1, concomitant with his dedication, suggests that he might not have used 'masculine' registers and tone qualities arbitrarily; we are, in short, flooded with contradictions.

Whatever his intentions were, in regard to the possible encoding of gender within his scores, Liszt generalized that the polonaises differed greatly from Chopin's 'smaller,' 'feminine' works. By the late nineteenth century, Niecks was dismissive of the nocturnes, and Huneker had made an excuse on Chopin's behalf, saying that although the "feminine

¹⁸⁷ Chopin, *Konzert Nr. 1*, 41.
¹⁸⁸ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 36, 37.

note” is overemphasized this “note” actually represents a man’s intellectuality. In the mid-twentieth century, Hedley re-evaluates the nocturnes, claiming that those that are not sentimental or superficial are comparable to Chopin’s better works. In the late twentieth century, Samson, like Hedley, treats the Nocturne as though it had always been a gender-neutral genre, yet he does not appear to use gender-neutral terminology when discussing the polonaises. The gender-oriented discussions surrounding the nocturnes are linked to the serenade and the romance. Even though these latter genres were generally associated with both ‘male’ and ‘female’ characters in the nineteenth century, such associations have not been made with Chopin’s nocturnes. The apparently ‘feminine’ characteristics of Chopin’s music were either devalued or seen as ‘masculine’ genius in the late nineteenth century, and they were viewed in terms of non-sexual virtuosity in the late twentieth century.

In this chapter, we see that some people associate Chopin’s performance style with his preferred venue, and that this association influences their interpretations of his scores. Because his style of performance sounded less “rhetorical” than Liszt’s, there appears to be an acceptance that his music must be interpreted in light of his associations with the salons. Because this private sphere is thought to carry various connotations of ‘femininity,’ Chopin’s music seemed to carry these same connotations. If the ambience of an environment felt ‘feminine,’ and Chopin’s music also felt ‘feminine,’ then it was assumed that Chopin was not ‘masculine.’ Green’s theory of the “feminine interruption,” applied to the context of Chopin’s music in performance, shows that some people link the different sexes with different qualities of sound depending on the context. The voice, in

particular, is a vessel that is thought to be a direct representation of gender. Chopin's polonaises and nocturnes are two genres that have enjoyed gender-oriented discussions due to their 'masculine'- and 'feminine'-oriented titles, as well as being treated as though their voice-like melodies ask us to associate them with different genders. Although they have been treated in the latest edition of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* as gender-neutral genres, some people in Chopin's society linked the musical aesthetic of the polonaises with men, and several scholars have debated whether the nocturnes are 'feminine.' Whilst there does seem to be a distinct difference between the polonaises that were dedicated to men and those that were dedicated to women (which can also be said of the nocturnes), there appear to be several works that cannot be classified easily according to our usual definitions of 'gender': the vocal qualities of some polonaises, nocturnes, and concertos contradict the gender that is supposedly suggested in the title. Whilst applying the concept of "double discourse" to Chopin's music might not capture his intention to compose music that is gender-ambiguous or gendered both 'male' and 'female,' it does show that that some late twentieth century musicologists wish to be neutral on the matter of sexual politics. Generally, this type of scholarship differs from scholarship of the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries, when scholars undervalued the 'feminine' associations that were made with Chopin's nocturnes. Although Chopin seems to remind us that words are inadequate tools when describing our listening experiences, many people seem to subscribe to the idea that 'femininity' is constructed accurately in definitions of the 'lesser' attributes of Chopin's music. Thus, the melancholic, and sentimental, as well as the repetitive nature of Chopin's melodies, which might have described the ornamental and improvisatory

freedom of the nocturnes positively, were seen by some people as superficial and melodramatic characteristics, when contrasted with the 'heroic' polonaises.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

In my “Introduction,” I presented Henry Finck’s view that French, Polish, German, and Viennese audiences did not fully appreciate Frédéric Chopin’s music because of their desire for ‘elephantine’ experiences. Whilst I have demonstrated that there are a number of ways in which we might conceptualize “aesthetic Jumboism” within the nineteenth century, not as a simplistic desire for largeness but in terms of socially constructed values that are linked to the aesthetic ideals of the Romantics, I have showed, also, that largeness is linked to gender as a factor in reception.

An example that demonstrated the existence of this link in the mid-nineteenth century was Edward Hanslick’s comment that after hearing a performance by Clara Schumann, he was left wanting, because the biological nature of her sex did not allow her the physical strength that he thought was needed in order to produce a larger tone. An example from the late twentieth century was that both Vladimir Ashkenazy and Cecile Ousset said to Elyse Mach that women pianists lack strength and therefore experience difficulty when performing physically demanding works. From these examples, it is also clear that ‘manliness,’ and its link with largeness, relates not only to the physical strength of a man, but that physical strength is associated with loudness. People assume that men have the strength needed to play loudly and that women do not. The majority of perspectives on Chopin – ranging from those of his closest friends to those of the critics of his day – were that his performances were characterized by smallness: the prevailing

thought was that he was “unimpressive” to look at, that he played with the lightest touch, and that his sounds were consequently like whispers.¹

It is these characteristics of Chopin’s music that have been interpreted in different ways and thus led to differences of opinion; as Jan Mukařovský said, “there is nothing...which possesses an aesthetic function regardless of place, time or the person evaluating it.”²

These “differences of opinion” seem to have appealed to the Romantics. Alfred Einstein, referring to some of the philosophical tenets of Arthur Schopenhauer, George Friedrich Hegel, and August Kahlert, supports this notion, saying that instrumental music lacks the “word” and therefore has no particular meaning, and it is this lack of a particular meaning that bears witness to the Romantics idealization of “Christian mysticism” instead of rationalism.³ The Romantics might have idolized mysticism, but we have also seen that they made several rational-like approaches to ‘reality’: some philosophers argued that we can differentiate between men and women because that was the law of nature, and Romantic performer-composers and critics echoed this belief, equating a man’s physical strength with loudness. Therefore, it is defensible to maintain, as Terry Eagleton says in the late twentieth century, that the bourgeoisie of the nineteenth century brought a rational philosophy to their society.⁴ A particular example illustrating that mysticism might itself have been linked to rationalism can be drawn from the context surrounding Liszt and Chopin. Both Liszt and Chopin were compared to preternatural and

¹ Arthur Hedley, *Selected Correspondence of Fryderyk Chopin*, translated and edited by Arthur Hedley (New York: Da Capo Press, 1979), 24; Alfred Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, trans. Cyril and Rena Clarke (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1952; 1975), 96.

² Jan Mukařovský, interpreted by Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), 100.

³ Alfred Einstein, *Music in the Romantic Era* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1947), 32, 340, 342, 344.

⁴ Terry Eagleton, *The Function of Criticism: From the Spectator to Poststructuralism* (London: Verso, 1984), 9.

supernatural figures, which certainly echoes the word ‘mysticism.’ Liszt’s symphonic-like piano music and his piano performances, however, were both characterized by grandeur and physical strength, and communicated heroic (or demonic) ‘masculinity’ whilst Chopin’s performances were characterized by a lack of ‘heroic’ physical strength, and communicated what could not be associated with ‘masculinity’ (angel- or sylph-like sounds, for example). Thus, mystical metaphors themselves stemmed from commentators’ rationalizations that Liszt’s and Chopin’s compositions and pianistic styles were different. I maintain therefore that whilst the words ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ can be seen as ‘metaphors,’ they were nonetheless rationally ascribed to Liszt’s and Chopin’s music and pianistic styles. In the nineteenth century, varying qualities of western tonal music was thought to convey meaning – ‘masculinity’ or ‘femininity,’ for instance – and not just the illusion of meaning simply because society has given them a variety of ‘rationalized’ meanings during the course of history.⁵

Piano technique, developments in piano design, music texts, and larger venues, have all been affected by a desire for mammoth sensory experiences, and this desire exists concomitantly with a desire for ‘masculinity,’ because of the way largeness has been linked with ‘manliness.’ This link had deleterious effects on evaluations of Chopin and his music and on the way it has been played by other pianists.

⁵ This is not to say, however, that a generation of twentieth-century performer-composer-musicologists may have argued against traditionally accepted meanings of music; however, any study of Romantic music should address this problem.

4. 1. Pianos and Pianists' Problems

One of the major areas of concern in this dissertation was to consider the undesirable consequences of some people's desire for largeness. There is an apparent link between changes in piano design and piano builders' desire for largeness. On a practical level, the desire for quantity of strength rather than quality of technique makes the performance of some of Chopin's music problematic for some pianists and thus invites physical problems. Therefore, the link between changes in piano design and piano builders' desire for largeness is also connected to pianists' methodologically and medically related problems.

While my discussion of "pianists' problems" might seem overly critical of methods involving relaxation techniques, it was not my intention to undervalue the contributions made by experts who rely heavily on intuition, but to avoid exploring at length issues which I consider to be of only minor significance to the issue in hand. It was not my intention to provide solutions to pianists' problems, but to cast light on what might be the possible cause for these physical problems. In this regard, what emerged from the discussion on pianists' problems was that all these authors addressed the problems of *how* pianists can change their techniques in order to be more effective musicians; none of them considered the reasons for our tendency to prefer 'big' tones (however defined, be it 'rich' or 'full') rather than small sounds. The authors dealing with method- or medical-related problems do not consider that people's mind-sets may have changed and that music does not only have to communicate sport-like loudness.

While a number of authors referred to the injuries sustained in sport, they tended to say not that pianists should be dissociated from athletic attempts to play more loudly but that they should be in good physical shape and that techniques should be adapted to the type of piano on which they were playing. However, Catherine Baird realized that using an early keyboard (which had a light-action) for purposes of rehabilitation had helped her reintroduce herself to the concert grand piano. As regards methodologically-related problems and their link with piano design, Chopin's Etude Op. 25 No. 6 was re-fingered, by the late nineteenth century, no fewer than four times: by Leopold Godowsky, Karl Mikuli, Johann Hummel, and Hugo Riemann. According to these pianists, the changes they made were necessary, because the action of the modern instruments was heavier than that of the Pleyel.

The desire for a grand piano with a 'grand' tone seems to be linked to a number of social changes that took place in the nineteenth century. For example, Robert Schumann referred to the "younger generation" of pianists that had the "courage" to use their newly found strength, and Liszt spoke of conquering the masses as though this was expected of him.⁶ The revolution, as transformed by Napoleon Bonaparte, led to the rise in respectability of the bourgeoisie. Einstein said that the "heroic" Romantic age had a difficult task before it,⁷ and the Romantic pianist certainly played a role in this enterprise. Currently, the piano is sometimes thought of as an athletic ground on which the musician can display his strength, and a similar attitude may have existed during the nineteenth

⁶ Robert Schumann, in Einstein, *Music in the Romantic Era*, 203; Franz Liszt, *Frédéric Chopin*, with a foreword and translated by Edward N. Waters (New York: Vienna House, 1852; 1963), 84.

⁷ Einstein, *Music in the Romantic Era*, 362.

century. In the Romantic period, however, piano performance within the public sphere seems to have been a symbolic representation of one artist's conquest of the masses. Liszt, then, more than any other composer, might be justifiably portrayed as the Romantic-pianist 'hero' who embodied the conquering spirit of Napoleon.⁸ Jim Samson states that Liszt's transcendental etudes (1851) "exhibited the virtuoso as Romantic hero, 'overcoming' his instrument in a powerful symbol of transcendence."⁹ Chopin, on the other hand, chose to perform and compose on a piano that was more suited to a salon than a concert hall, and he had little claim to be regarded as a Romantic 'hero.' Thus, he seems to have been marginalized in his own time, as well as in our history books, because of his reluctance to perform on concert instruments outside the private sphere.

4. 2. Two Dimensions of Musical Experience

Both Stephen Handel and Nicholas Cook conceptualize people's experience of music in terms of a "surface" level and an analytical level, and discuss both a "passive" and an active way of listening to music. When the 'surface' and 'deep' levels of tonal music were discussed above in "Beyond Words: 'Connotation, Tone, and Intent,'" the conclusion was reached that learning about the underlying "grammar" of music, or about others' perspectives on that music, appears to license listeners, as Cook argued, to

⁸ Of course, it was precisely Liszt's *grand seigneur* attitude that Chopin was said to have found unbearable. Arthur Hedley, *The Master Musicians Chopin* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1947; 1974), 49.

⁹ Jim Samson, "Romanticism," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2001.

“literally take music” into “their own hands.”¹⁰ People who are knowledgeable about the ‘gendered’ discourse surrounding Chopin’s music, in other words, might themselves play a major role in steering his music towards ‘manliness.’ It is their knowledge that empowers them to “literally” influence others’ views on Chopin’s music.

Our experiences with both the surface level and the underlying grammatical level of music, however, are communicated through the same medium: namely, language. If we all tend to experience music in the same way, as Guy Madison claimed,¹¹ it may be that we use language simply to demonstrate how we value different aspects of music. For example, although some people might have viewed Liszt as an heroic pianist in the nineteenth century because his style of pianism seemed to reflect the aesthetic ideals of the masses, Clara Schumann did not value his ‘heroic’ style of performance, saying it was diabolically loud.¹² It is because language is required in order to relay our listening experience, and, in some cases, to attempt to convince others into subscribing to what we think is an aesthetically ideal interpretation of that music, that communication about the experience of music becomes a complex phenomenon. Thus, while language has been used in an attempt to uncover the deep meanings of music during the mid-nineteenth century, it has also been used to attribute value to music – and to convince others that ‘great’ music can be defined according to the size of its sound or the amount of its theoretical complexity.

¹⁰ Stephen Handel, *Listening: An Introduction to the Perception of Auditory Events* (Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1989), 324; Nicholas Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 28.

¹¹ Guy Madison, “Properties of Expressive Variability Patterns in Music Performances,” *Journal of New Music Research*, Vol. 29 No. 4 (2000), 335 – 356

¹² Clara Schumann, in Dee Booth, “The Teaching Style of Clara Schumann,” *Clavier* (December, 1996), 23.

4.2.1 Piano Performance

Chopin was complimented when he produced a large tone. Georges Mathias exclaimed “yes, what power!”, and, presuming he was not being sarcastic, it may be assumed that Chopin’s performance could on occasions display an apparent strength.¹³ Justification of the mammoth’s superiority over the miniature was evident in Chopin’s society, as in Liszt’s rationalization that Chopin loved to hear his music played loudly because he was simply too ill to play with strength, and this sort of justification reappears in the late nineteenth, the mid-twentieth, and the late twentieth centuries. For example, in the late nineteenth century, Richard Wagner, Heinrich Pudor, and Anton Rubinstein claimed they did not like the “salon” music Chopin wrote for the “ladies,” spoke of Chopin as “sickly, womanly, and womanish,” and maintained that Chopin’s music was in need of being taken out of the salons. Therefore, they supported their dislike of Chopin’s ‘salon’ music by linking ‘femininity’ with what they viewed as an unhealthy quantity of sound.¹⁴ Huneker also used Chopin’s piano in an attempt to rationalize his desire for largeness. He challenged Liszt’s perception that Chopin’s frailty and sickliness prevented him from expressing his desire for manly strength, saying that this was a “nice fable,” and that

¹³ Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher: As Seen by His Pupils*, trans. by Naomi Shohet and edited by Roy Howat (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 277. I analyzed Chopin’s use of the word “rob” in “Connotation, Tone, and Intent,” to reveal how Chopin may have used euphemisms in order to get his message across. I consider the possibility that Georges Mathias may also have exclaimed in this way in order to imply a different meaning: to poke fun perhaps at Chopin’s well-documented lack of strength. If a double meaning is at the heart of this exclamation, however, this utterance merely substantiates further the general opinion that the ‘feminine’ in Chopin’s performance was viewed negatively.

¹⁴ Wagner and Pudor, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 62; Rubinstein, in Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries: Sex, History and Musical Genre* (London: Harvard University Press, 1998), 44.

there was nothing Chopin could not have achieved on the modern concert grand.¹⁵ Arthur Hedley took account of the dynamic markings, chordal figurations, bass registers and *sforzando* indications at registral extremes (as in his observations of the Etude op. 25 no. 11¹⁶) and analyzed them without considering the unique design of the Pleyel piano (well-suited for Chopin's chromatic subtleties¹⁷), the small space of the salon, and Chopin's consumptive state. Therefore, Hedley broke those associations that link Chopin to smallness in a practical way, in order to associate him with masculinity 'spiritually': he claimed that Chopin was in fact "virile" in spirit, and he 'proved' this by referring to some of the 'manly' dynamics and textures in Chopin's texts. By 1947, then, Hedley seems to have taken on the task finding this "virility" in Chopin's texts, thinking, at the same time, that he could dissociate Chopin from "simpering prettiness."¹⁸ In the late twentieth century, James Methuen-Campbell stated that Rubinstein and his student (Hoffman) were the greatest interpreters of Chopin's music, eliminating, with their "elemental force" and "explosive *fortissimos*," all "traces" of "effeminacy." Also in the late twentieth century, Jim Samson claimed that the coloratura, evident in many of Chopin's compositions, is only a reflection of Chopin's admiration of *bel canto*-like virtuosity.¹⁹

¹⁵ James Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music* (New York: Dover Publications, 1900; 1966), 56.

¹⁶ Hedley, *The Master Musicians Chopin*, 145.

¹⁷ Antoine-Francois Marmontal, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 57, 58.

¹⁸ Hedley, *The Master Musicians Chopin*, 120, 145.

¹⁹ James Methuen-Campbell, in Jim Samson, *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 202, 203; Jim Samson, *The Music of Chopin* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), 81.

4.2.2 Theoretical Complexity

Anatole Leikin claims that the Romantics felt the need to “prove” their ability to work with large forms, and that Chopin was criticized, late into the twentieth century, for his failure to prove himself in this regard.²⁰ Huneker, for example, brought to light Chopin’s so-called inability to apply complex theoretical frameworks to his compositions. While there did not seem to be much to criticize in Chopin’s miniatures – Huneker even considered them “titanic” in size – his larger compositions did not escape hotly contested debates. Huneker looked closely at Chopin’s compositions and discovered he did not use the traditional forms as expected. Consequently, he considered them to be “dismal” failures and “ape-like” attempts at complex theoretical thought.²¹ Only recent musicologists, such as John Rink, reason that, because Chopin was exposed to Josef Elsner’s masterly understanding of composition, it was unlikely that he did not know how to apply sonata form. Chopin should rather be viewed as challenging “openly” the theoretical complexities that were expected traditionally of the form.²²

Immanuel Kant stated that “the man judges feminine mistakes leniently, whereas the woman judges very severely (in public).”²³ It might be said that Kant’s view on men and women echo some of the ideologies marking the outset of the early Romantic era. By the end of the Romantic era, on the other hand, Wagner, Pudor, Rubinstein, Niecks, and Huneker portrayed Chopin’s miniaturesque works in a negative light or tried to make

²⁰ Anatole Leikin, “The Sonatas,” *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 160 – 187.

²¹ Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, 166, 170.

²² John Rink, quoted by Leikin, “The Sonatas,” *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 166.

²³ Immanuel Kant, quoted by Susan Mendus, in *Women in Western Political Philosophy*, eds. Ellen Kennedy and Susan Mendus (Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books Ltd., 1987), 35.

them appear large, and some of them found fault with the complexity of his large works. These men were not lenient and it is possible that they were censorious because they saw Chopin as a male composer-performer making so-called 'feminine' mistakes. Of course, at present we think that 'meaning' is established between the listener and his or her experience. Therefore, these 'mistakes' are 'feminine' only for those who interpret them as such. Ruth Solie says that Robert Schumann's *Frauenliebe* songs purport to express the sentiments of a woman in love, but she rightly continues that in fact they express male fantasies of desired female behavior.²⁴ Relating this to Chopin and his so-called mistakes, it is male authorities on music that seem to interpret salon music as less intellectual, and hence less worthwhile, than music meant for the public concert hall.

Yet, surprisingly, by the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, instead of showing what strengths might be embedded in Chopin's 'mistake-ridden' large works or his 'simplistic' miniatures, a number of 'defective' qualities were alleged in remarks that questioned his possible greatness. These qualities included his spontaneity and repetitiveness, as well as his presumed lack of organic unity. Ironically, when he does repeat himself (as he did in all of his nocturnes), it is said not that his works are organically unified but that their spontaneity is a reflection of hysteria, melodrama, or sentimentality, which was then linked to a lack of intellectuality, 'femininity' and, of course, childish incompetence.

It was not as though other men were not repetitive – they were. T. S. Eliot writes, "You say that I am repeating something I have said before. I shall say it again. Shall I say it

²⁴ Ruth Solie, "Whose Life? The Gendered Self in Schumann's *Frauenliebe* Songs," in *Music and Text: Critical Inquiries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

again?”²⁵ Nor do we view repetition, collectively, as though it were evidence of crassness; on the contrary, as Lawrence Kramer demonstrates, repetition can be found in the poetry of Wordsworth, Eliot, as well as in Beethoven’s *Appassionata* (and we can add to this list of composers Berlioz, and Wagner, amongst others).²⁶ However, it appears as though the repetitiveness of Chopin’s ‘feminine’ music, coupled with his improvisatory modulations and embellishments, were not said to unite his works organically, but to flaw his works with too much emotionality and too little intellectuality; an almost forgivable conclusion seeing that even today we tend to associate variation (which in my view is linked inextricably with ‘improvisation’) with emotionality.²⁷ Ironically, this lack of coherence within the field of music was consequently considered amateurish and womanly, unlike the discipline of dance (during the same time period), wherein the improvisatory style of male dancers – displaying a lack of control in their performances of *cancanneurs* – was seen as symbolic of political instability and the revolution.²⁸

We need only refer to the inconsistencies of judgment which labeled Beethoven’s repetitions as heroic and Chopin’s as ‘feminine’ to conclude that this irony influenced at least two musicians to the extent that they attempted not to extricate Chopin from what might be called outdated comparisons with Beethoven, but that they imposed

²⁵ T. S. Eliot, in Lawrence Kramer, “Romantic Reception,” *Music and Poetry: The Nineteenth Century and After* (California: University of California Press, 1984), 25.

²⁶ Lawrence Kramer, “Romantic Reception,” *Music and Poetry: The Nineteenth Century and After* (California: University of California Press, 1984); Kramer, “Beethoven’s Two-Movement Piano Sonatas and The Utopia of Romantic Esthetics,” in *Music as Cultural Practice* (California: California University Press, 1990), 21 – 71.

²⁷ John A. Sloboda, “Tracking Performance Correlates of Changes in Perceived Intensity of Emotion During Different Interpretations of a Chopin Piano Prelude,” in *Music Perception* Vol. 19 No. 1 (Fall, 2001), 87 – 120.

²⁸ Maribeth Clark, “The Quadrille as Embodied Musical Experience in 19th-Century Paris,” in *Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 19 No. 3 (Summer, 2002).

conventional criteria upon Chopin's scores in search of 'Beethovenian'-like unity and thematic transformations. Arthur Friedheim performed the preludes (Op. 28) as a single set in the late nineteenth century, and this incident influenced the way in which Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger analyzed them. He claimed that they are in fact a set of twenty-four and supported his analysis by demonstrating that a motivic cell, which occurred in varying forms throughout the 'set', unified them into a single composition. Whilst he might simply have been viewing the preludes in an organicist way, his use of organic-oriented theories themselves – which have been associated most notably with Beethoven's symphonies, Wordsworth's thematically-unified *The Prelude*,²⁹ and other nineteenth-century art – seems to be in an attempt to show that Chopin possessed the 'manly' intellect which has been associated with the underlying structures of other great men's compositions.³⁰

Largeness and smallness, then, continue to be an issue in the late twentieth century. Methuen-Campbell, on the one hand, connects 'effeminacy' with "more diluted" performances, and Eigeldinger, on the other, seeks out largeness in Chopin's scores. Although Eigeldinger does not make the analogy between 'masculinity' and Beethovenian-like theoretical complexity, his analysis does, in my opinion, stem from the ongoing discourse about 'masculinity as more' and 'femininity as less.' I consider that

²⁹ Lawrence Kramer also compares Wordsworth with Beethoven in relation to their organically-unified works. Kramer, "Beethoven's Two-Movement Piano Sonatas and the Utopia of Romantic Aesthetics," in *Music as Cultural Practice: 1800 – 1900* (California: University of California Press, 1990), 30; Jim Samson, "Romanticism," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2001.

³⁰ Experiments have proved that, even in society of today, we tend to respond to the surface level of music (see Alexandra Lamont's and Nicola Dibben's "Motivic Structure and the Perception of Similarity" *Music Perception* (Spring, 2001)), and it must be stated, then, that Eigeldinger might also have simply been trying to add 'depth' to Chopin's music. This 'deep' level, however, is a level at which a piece becomes organically unified, which is in turn a trait that has often been linked to intellectual genius.

this analysis is, if not a continuation in terms of Romantic terminology, a continuation of Romantic men's preoccupation with largeness, because it is from the comparisons Chopin's contemporaries made between Beethoven and Chopin that the quest for organic-like unity appears to have stemmed. After hearing Chopin perform, for example, Wilhelm von Lenz stated that Beethoven "never ceases to be" a "man" and that Chopin was "always feminine!"³¹

Due largely to the associations the Romantics made between gender and the varying qualities of sound (associations that until today remain unchallenged save by one critic – Jeffrey Kallberg), it seems as though nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century performers and musicologists promoted largeness and 'masculinity' purposefully, because they believed the associations the Romantics made were valid. Consequently, if Chopin's music was inherently small-sounding, or his texts were inherently simple in theoretical design, or if his performances were deliberately 'small,' then the presumption seems to have been made that he himself may not have been all that 'manly' – and may possibly even have been gay. Performers' and musicologists' conscious advocating of so-called 'manly' performances of Chopin's music and intellectually demanding analyses of his works, in other words, may have been meant not so much to save Chopin's music from the other-than 'manly' sphere as much as that it was to protect their own images from being labeled negatively as 'other.' Nor does the desire not to be stigmatized as 'other' relate only to what might be considered miniaturesque and its assumed link with

³¹ Lenz, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 278.

‘femininity’: when questioned about her ‘manly’ playing, Hélène Grimaud responded, “I’m not gay.”³²

In short, not only do people place different values on the varying qualities of sight, sound, and touch which can be associated with the act of performance or a music score, but also on the various sizes of the complexities inherent in musical structures – structures which can also be measured within a dimension of theoretical complexity. The inferences, in other words, which people draw from a musical experience, and the significance they attribute to it, are influenced strongly by the sensory and the intellectual space they inhabit – there is a sense, then, in which gender is a factor of reception in relation to both a dimension of the senses (performance), as well as a sense of dimension (length of a work and theoretical complexity). Thus, over a period of a hundred and fifty years, some people, drawing on Chopin’s ill-health, at the one extreme, and Chopin’s supposed inability to apply traditional theoretical frameworks to his large compositions, at the other, marginalized smallness. It appears as though these people considered strengthening Chopin’s image, or, possibly their own, by attributing largeness to Chopin’s music texts and valuing this largeness as ‘masculinity,’ or, by eliminating smallness from his texts, and undervaluing this smallness by calling it ‘feminine’ or ‘effeminate.’

The trend to measure Chopin against Beethoven, or other heroic and intellectual models, however, might indeed be diminishing in our time. As Charles Rosen states, Chopin was

³² Grimaud, in Kallberg, Preface to *Chopin at the Boundaries*

“perhaps” the only composer who “was not intimidated by the commanding figure of authority that Beethoven represented for generations to come.”³³

4.3. Music and Musical Spheres

I have also examined the relationship between Chopin’s music and the sphere in which that music was performed, and its connection with sexual politics, and thus to see the way in which his texts were affected by their association with salons.

Whilst societal boundaries have lost a great deal of their significance in society of today, and while some of us wish to erase them, these boundaries did divide the performance practices of Chopin’s society. During Chopin’s life, performance venues played a significant role in the way his music was received and interpreted. As Jennifer Post claims, men’s and women’s performance practices have been studied traditionally in terms of public and private spheres respectively. She attempts to loosen these boundaries by showing that some women, even in older cultures, performed in the so-called ‘masculine’ sphere.³⁴ Post might have added, however, that these women were the exceptions to the rule. Her contention that the study of performance practice should lessen the distinction between so-called gendered spheres suits the study of Chopin: he too was an exception to the rule. In terms of his sex, it was expected that he should have

³³ Charles Rosen, Preface to *The Romantic Generation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), ix, x.

³⁴ Jennifer Post, “Erasing the Boundaries between Public and Private in Women’s Performance Traditions,” in Susan Cook and Judy Tsou, eds. *Cecilia Reclaimed: Feminist Perspectives on Gender and Music* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 35 – 38.

also been active within the public ‘male’ sphere. In other words, he crossed the boundary of his day in defiance of the male concert-pianist performance traditions. This action in itself was regarded as deviant by people like Wagner, who remarked in a derogatory manner on Chopin’s associations with the salons, and Liszt, who drew attention to Chopin’s inability to penetrate the public sphere because of his lack of strength.³⁵ It was not as though other pianists, like Liszt, did not perform within the salons, but they also performed regularly in the public sphere. Thus, the stigma surrounding Chopin, his playing, and his venue does not appear to stem from his appearances in the salons, but from the fact that he did not cross over, sufficiently, into the public sphere – a boundary that others expected him to cross. Moreover, when he continued to perform within his preferred environment, especially after acknowledging that the “ladies” related to his way of playing and that his “brilliant [and] glittery” music texts were written purposefully for them, he crossed not only the physical boundaries but also the psychological.³⁶ Even though, as Post points out, there were added restrictions on women’s performance in the public sphere of older cultures, restrictions within Chopin’s ‘private’ sphere were not a problem for him because it is said that he wrote music that was suited more for the salon than the concert hall. Liszt claimed that Chopin’s unforced style of playing suited the salons, and we can assume that, even though Liszt might have performed his concert-hall pieces within these same salons, he is nevertheless alluding to the fact that the salon environment, because of its smallness, tended to be restrictive of certain types of music. According to Peter Quennell, who defines the prevailing discourse of the salons as cordial, Chopin’s performance rhetoric, as well as his own careful treatment of language

³⁵ Liszt, *Chopin*, 40; Hunker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, 62.

³⁶ Hedley, *Selected Correspondence*, 32, 33, 36, 37; *Chopin’s Letters*, collected, translated and edited by Henryk Opieński and E. L. Voynich (New York: Vienna House, 1973), 74.

(as seen in his subtle condemnation of Liszt's playing),³⁷ suggests that he complied naturally with the type of discourse associated with the salons.³⁸

Chopin himself might have constructed a new boundary when he claimed that his brilliant and glittery pieces were for the "ladies" of the "salons." Whether or not he meant consciously to construct a division according to gender and music written purposefully for gendered spheres, his construct was noted, and, from then on, was challenged and devalued. Although Berlioz said Chopin had to be heard in the salon, because of his nuanced playing, he nevertheless challenged people's views on the salons by saying that "preconceived" notions about what the salons meant in regard to Chopin and his music had to be put aside.³⁹

The possibility that Chopin crossed a psychological boundary, the moment he crossed the salon doorway, by purposefully writing music for women and playing in their sphere, elicited a response in the late nineteenth century. Huneker might be seen to be exposing his own anxiety concerning Chopin's crossing of the assumed psychological boundary when he explains that although Chopin's "mother peeps out" in his music, this "feminine" element is nothing more than the "confessions" of "a man." It seems to me that some men have felt that Chopin, having composed certain kinds of music for women, implied that men are not able to relate, or perhaps even understand, this music. Apart from the fear that Chopin was not strictly heterosexual, some men seem to fear that the

³⁷ His use of the word "rob," for instance. "Beyond Words: 'Connotation, Tone, and Intent.'"

³⁸ Peter Quennell, *Genius in the Drawing-Room: The Literary Salons of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980).

³⁹ Berlioz, in Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 272.

‘feminine’ gendered ‘psychological-orientation’ of some of Chopin’s music means that they are excluded, simply because they are men, and wish to believe that they think like men. In my view, this dilemma partly explains why Huneker, refusing to accept that he cannot understand some of Chopin’s music, adds: the “feminine” note in Chopin’s music should be seen as “masculine” genius.⁴⁰

The anomaly between Chopin’s music and his performance practice was also an issue of concern for late nineteenth-century composers and performers. Wagner stated he did not like ‘the ladies’ Chopin, and Rubinstein gave himself credit for removing the psychologically ‘feminine’ “note” from Chopin by taking his music out of the salons.⁴¹ Challenging or devaluing the links between context and text was replaced in the late twentieth century by an attempt to break associations between context and text – by attributing a certain kind of autonomy to Chopin’s texts. Jim Samson, for instance, justified his erasure of the link between the psychologically ‘feminine’ and Chopin’s melodies, by saying that the type of virtuosity evident in Chopin’s salon music is only a reflection of Chopin’s admiration for the technical ability of the female singers of his day. This ‘feminine’ element, in other words, is not inherent in Chopin’s texts, but it is the concept of *bel canto* virtuosity that makes them appear like the voice of a coloratura.⁴² If we accept that Lucy Green’s view that meaning in music stems from mutual influences between texts and their contexts, then Samson is attempting to discredit one aspect of this influence (the influence that the ‘feminine’ salons had over

⁴⁰ Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, 72.

⁴¹ Wagner, in Huneker, *Chopin: The Man and His Music*, 62; Rubinstein, in Kallberg, *Chopin at The Boundaries*, 44.

⁴² Samson, *The Music of Chopin*, 81.

Chopin), but to support it with respect to another aspect (the influence that the non-sexual concept of virtuosity had over Chopin).

Naturally, Samson might simply have been attempting to view Chopin's music as an autonomous artifact, which was, admittedly, a very fashionable approach to the study of music for a considerable portion of the twentieth century. This would constitute a sort of 'structuralist' approach, we might say, in which analysts were expected to exclude the composer and the influence of his contemporaries over him. However, in his attempt to view Chopin's coloratura-like pieces in isolation, Samson appears to have criticized needlessly the associations that Chopin himself made between women and his brilliant music.

Knowing that Chopin was often hypercritical of many echelons of society and especially of himself, and that he was exceedingly witty with words, we might not accept Samson's literal interpretation of Chopin's view about his 'feminine' music.⁴³ Rather, a more subtle interpretation about the connection between Chopin and women might read as follows. Within the discipline of queer theory, it has been claimed that closet gays 'worship' divas, because they identify with certain qualities in their performances.⁴⁴ It seems then that divas' performances 'save' some closet homosexuals, because the gay listener "gains both a voice and an authentic body."⁴⁵ Therefore, it might be said of divas that they promote the 'tastes' of marginalized men who do not identify with the 'normal' image of

⁴³ Chopin's subtle use of language has been discussed in Chapter Two 2.1.3: "Beyond Words: 'Connotation, Tone, and Intent.'"

⁴⁴ Mary Ann Smart, "Introduction," *Siren Songs: Representations of Gender and Sexuality in Opera*, ed. Mary Ann Smart (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), 10.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 10.

'masculinity.' Whilst we might never know if Chopin was homosexual, we know that he was in awe of the divas of his day and therefore there is a comparison to be made between current queer theory and the context surrounding Chopin and divas. His 'admiration' for divas may have stemmed from the fact that he was himself 'marginalized,' because his music and pianistic style had been characterized as 'feminine.' Thus, we might argue defensibly that Pauline Viardot and Jenny Lind responded to Chopin's apparent respect for 'feminine' music by singing his mazurkas in public (at Covent Garden) and by attending his concerts. Their supporting him, in his pianistic endeavors, suggests to me that they understood his refusal to be subjected to the 'masculine' norms of the public piano recital.

In order to determine what qualities of Chopin's melodies have elicited negative responses and analyses that deny the extra-musical influence that women might have had on Chopin, I have examined views on two genres that seem far removed from each other: the polonaise and the nocturne. Chopin's contemporaries suggest that these genres communicated drastically different thoughts and feelings. The polonaises were described as chivalrous and heroic, and other words that connoted largeness were applied to them, whilst the nocturnes were described as melancholic and superficial, amongst others. The polonaises that are dedicated to men are not improvisatory, whereas the nocturnes are invariably improvisatory: the melodies and rhythms of the nocturnes, for example, recur incessantly, and are seldom the same on each recurrence. Many authors have said that improvisation flaws Chopin's music, linking it with immaturity and inexperience. Chopin's late nocturnes, however, are improvisatory, and it seems implausible therefore

to continue the argument that music which returns incessantly and with subtle changes on each recurrence represents immaturity or inexperience.

If we argue that Chopin's 'improvisatory' nocturnes should be interpreted with a sense of spontaneity or that his 'measured' polonaises should be treated with austerity, then it might be said of performers who choose not to relay these musical characteristics that they marginalize the composer's 'intentions.' This marginalization of 'primary' meanings does not only apply to what the composer might have intended his music to say. If we accept the argument that live music affects our understanding of musical meanings as much as our analyses of scores, then we must add that performers who choose to interpret a work without imitating their original experience with that music performed live also marginalize what might be called the original performer's 'intention'. Naturally, we are often exposed to countless interpretations of specific works, and it can be said that many of these interpretations marginalize, in some way, others' interpretations in order to be considered a 'new' musical meaning. A performer's uniqueness might rest on having to marginalize not one interpretation but many.

4. 4. The Double Discourse and Performance

Chopin's playing was described by his colleagues as "*not* grotesque," yet Hoffmann is said to have brought a "grotesque[ness]" to Chopin's left-hand figurations, and it seems that Methuen-Campbell expected Hoffmann's interpretation of these left-hand figurations

to be considerably smoother.⁴⁶ This example illustrates the shifting nature of musical meaning: if someone's first experience with Chopin's music is 'grotesque,' they might be prone to giving a primary meaning to this. Later listening experiences of others' performances of the same composition, which might not be grotesque, might be heard as changing their musical meaning.

One of the aims of my thesis, therefore, was to explore how people interpret changes in interpretation as changes in meaning. Performers who are more acquainted with Chopin's music and the discourse on his music than others are empowered to influence less experienced performers' perceptions of musical meaning. Not only can language be used in a way that influences people's perspectives on Chopin, but performers' interpretations of Chopin's music also influence people's perspectives on Chopin. Whilst performers are usually expected to acquaint themselves with performance traditions, this does not mean that they should try to be wholly subservient to an 'authentic' performance tradition.⁴⁷ In this regard, I have explored the concept of double discourse to better understand how a performer's personal sensory orientation, which might not be compatible with the composer's, could marginalize the sensory orientation of that composer, as it might be represented in the score. Further, I explored how these dual sensory discourses work together or against each other, how this 'working together' and 'against each other' can convey polarized meanings, and how this duality of sensory experience influences the way in which the musical utterance is received and interpreted. For example, in the film *The Piano*, a woman's first interpretation of the A Major Prelude was strongly influenced

⁴⁶ Eigeldinger, *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher*, 280; Methuen-Campbell, "Chopin in Performance," *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, 203.

⁴⁷ Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction*, 25.

by the markings in the score (*dolce* and *piano*), but her second performance was grotesque, marginalizing her primary utterance. Her seducer was cast as an islander who was unexposed to western classical music, and it might be concluded that, because he was not exposed to discourse on Chopin, he attributed meaning to what he heard simply by gauging her second interpretation against her first. Because he broke off his advances to the woman, after realizing that her second utterance marginalized her first, it is inferable that he attributed an opposite meaning to the louder rendition. This suggests that Chopin's music can convey different musical meanings depending on how pianists choose to perform it.

In conclusion, researching the meanings that Chopin and his society ascribed to the various qualities of sound was made more complex because of the subjectivity that is linked both to sensory experiences and to language. As my research has shown, the beliefs to which Chopin's society subscribed included the acceptance that the mammoth and miniature qualities of music could be described in gender-oriented terminology. Consequently, an array of descriptive terminology that described bigger proportions in the sensory dimension was evolved to signify what was customarily associated with varying aspects of 'manliness,' as smaller proportions were accepted as signifying varying aspects of 'femininity.' With Ruth Solie's words, "it matters what they say," constantly in mind, I explored Chopin's musical rhetoric to find out what meanings people have attributed to the varying qualities of his performance and music texts. What emerged significantly from this study was that Solie's statement that "it matters who is empowered to speak about them," is insightful and accurate. There have been many

scholars and musicians who have used a public platform to promote their own sensory bias for largeness or ‘masculinity.’ In doing this they have influenced the discourse on Chopin.

As E. F. Schumacher points out, even “today, we suffer from an almost universal idolatry of gigantism.”⁴⁸ If we are not able to see above our desire for ‘more’ rather than ‘less,’ it is possible that we are not fulfilling our roles as thinkers. Many musicians have failed to consider that Chopin had the capacity for thought, and therefore the ability to decide not to make arbitrary associations between loud music and a man’s physical strength. Chopin’s volume of sound or degree of theoretical complexity might not have played an important role in Chopin’s understanding of what his music was, or might be capable of, saying. If we assume that the rhetoric of his music represents his transcendence of the desire of largeness, it is obvious that many pianists and musicologists have denied, and continue to deny, him the power to speak to us about the emotional, intellectual, or the philosophical values of smallness.

It is certain, however, that Chopin also admired greatness. For example, he seemed to believe that Goethe, Lord Byron, and Adam Mickiewicz were leaders of the so-called romantic spirit. Chopin wrote to Wojciech Grzymala that George Sand had “just finished a most admirable article on Goethe, Byron, and Mickiewicz” and that “it [was] all so true...without any distortion or endeavour to bestow praise.”⁴⁹ Chopin demonstrates here

⁴⁸ E. F. Schumacher, *small is beautiful* (London: Cox and Wyman Ltd., 1973; 1993), 49.

⁴⁹ Chopin, quoted by Hedley, *The Master Musicians Chopin*, 82. I state “it is certain,” because it is implausible, in my view, that Chopin would have aimed his ‘dark’ humour at all three men, especially since mention is made of Mickiewicz – his Polish compatriot.

the high regard in which he held the leaders of his era. He believed that these men were truly great and therefore needed no praise because they commanded respect naturally. I think that a contradiction exists between Chopin's admiration for these authors (who wrote enormous works) and what he is said to have expressed in performance and through his 'simplistic' music. Viewing him in relation to a broader social context reveals that he valued the ideals of the Romantics, and therefore his "little tone pictures," which allowed him to "express" himself in a "concentrated and intimate manner," might not be viewed as a challenge to his society, because he was – without having to compose an opera, or some other form of epic composition – able appreciate others' heroic works.⁵⁰

There may be such complexity in the interaction between our sensory experience of performance and our intellectual analyses of that performance, as well as the way in which we use language to describe the experience itself, that it may be difficult to determine which exerts the greater effect on the other as well as on our being. Viewing the sensory and the intellectual level separately from one another, or separate from language, may not be sufficient to determine adequately the process by which musical meaning derives from our experiences with music. For instance, Chopin's playing was thought to communicate "touching thoughts," and it was his delicate sense of *touch* that communicated these "touching thoughts." Undervaluing the sensory dimension, therefore, might be viewed as an undervaluing of the musical meanings that people have attributed to Chopin's music.

⁵⁰ William Lovelock, *A Concise History of Music* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1953; 1966), 187.

In short, the main explorations within this thesis concern the links between largeness and the physical strength of a man, progress in piano design and pianists' problems, the structural space and discourse within and surrounding the salons, "rhetorical" genres and the gendering of the human voice, and the 'size' of a man's intellect. Whilst my own texts have drawn upon binarisms – using such phrases as "on the other hand," and such concepts as "the double discourse" theory – my theoretical position implies, at least in regard to 'masculinity' and 'femininity,' that these binary concepts may falsify reality. It is also my aim to avoid the counter argument that if we take away the 'centre' that divides these two concepts we will have a 'universal' Chopin who sits comfortably somewhere on a 'masculine-feminine' continuum. The purpose of making my theoretical position clear, at this point, is that part of the politics which seem to surround the issue of gender as a factor in reception concerns our all-too-easy subscription to simplistic mathematical-like logic within what should, in my opinion, be viewed as infinitely and therefore indefinably subjective fields, such as sensory perception and language. If Chopin's music is 'emotional,' for instance, then we should be wary of resorting to our usual binary methods of deduction that leave us no alternative but to conclude that this music cannot possibly be simultaneously 'intellectual.' This simplistic logic has been detrimental to a fuller appreciation of Chopin's music: many people, both in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, conclude that if Chopin's music does not sound 'masculine' then it must be 'feminine,' and when these people are conscious of the connotations surrounding the concept of 'femininity' they are especially concentrated in their efforts either to turn that 'femininity' into 'masculinity,' or simply deny that that 'femininity' is even relevant to Chopin and his music.

This is not to say that more ‘emotion’ coexists with less ‘intellect,’ but that the entire ‘masculine-feminine’ binary and the continuum between the two extremes are problematic when measuring ‘greatness.’ All the trouble expended here, on distancing ourselves from the usual linguistic signs employed when trying to capture (or create) the meaning of the corresponding musical signifieds, might only be appreciated fully in light of the following conclusion:

Whilst we are reminded that “without the ‘feminization’ of human history, the world is unlikely to survive,”⁵¹ there can be little doubt that in relation to Chopin this ‘feminization’ is often met with affront, and it seems unlikely, therefore, that commentators on Chopin are conscious that these gender-oriented terms can be viewed metaphorically. Rather, the conclusion that should now be apparent is that the language of the Romantics might not construct adequately their meanings. We can argue this defensibly in light of the fact that even their metaphors have often been understood literally; the connotations of gender-oriented terminology appear to correspond, overwhelmingly, to the everyday assumptions that some of the Romantics themselves made when characterizing men and women. This is the reason why the reactions of some people to these metaphors appear to take on the form, at times, of an unjustified degree of ‘feminine’- or ‘effeminate’-gender cleansing in regard to Chopin and his music. It must of course be stated that part of the motivation of this thesis was meant to rescue Chopin from exclusively ‘large’ interpretations. However, this was not so much to ‘emasculate’ him or his music as that it was to illustrate some practical problems in relation to piano

⁵¹ Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, 150.

methodology, and to encourage musicians to attempt to understand what values they might be overlooking anachronistically in regard to ‘smallness’ – whether it is defined as a ‘lesser’ dynamic range or as a ‘lesser’ theoretically complex structure, both of which are often linked arbitrarily and traditionally (and, we must add, as well as archaically) with a lack of manly strength and intellectuality, respectively.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abraham, Gerald. *Chopin's Musical Style*. London: Oxford University Press, 1968.
- Abram, Blanche. "Musical Tension and Muscular Ease," *Clavier* Vol. 22 (July/August 1984), 28 – 29.
- Adlam, Derek, and Conner, J. William, "England and France to 1800," "North America." In *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments: The Piano*. Edited by Stanley Sadie. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1988.
- Agawu, Kofi. "The Challenge of Semiotics." In *Rethinking Music*. Edited by Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Ashkenazy, Vladimir. Postcard addressed to N. de Jager, Pietermaritzburg, Natal South Africa, 6 August 2002.
- Attridge, Derek. *Jacques Derrida: Acts of Literature*. Foreword by Derek Attridge. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Azoury, Pierre. *Chopin Through His Contemporaries: Friends, Lovers, and Rivals*. London: Greenwood Press, 1999.
- Baird, Catherine Merena. "A Pianists Techniques of Rehabilitation," *Medical Problems of Performing Artists* Vol. 1, No. 4 (January 1988), 16, 17, 47.
- Banowitz, Joseph. "The Chopin Nocturnes: Played by Arrau and Ohlsson," *The Piano Quarterly* Vol. 28 (Summer 1980), 44 – 47.
- Bartnik, Czesław. "Basic Elements of Polish Religiosity." In Leon Dyczewski and Barbara Jedynek. *Values in the Polish Cultural Tradition: Polish Philosophical Studies III*. Edited by Leon Dyczewski. Washington: Cardinal Station, 2002.
- Batson, Glenna. "Conscious Use of the Human Body in Movement: The Peripheral Neuro-Anatomic Basis of the Alexander Technique," *Medical Problems of Performing Artists* Vol. 11 (March 1966), 3 – 11.
- Beardsley, Monroe C. *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1958.

- Belt, Philip R., and Meisel, Maribel. "Germany and Austria, 1750 – 1800," "The Viennese Piano from 1800." In *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments: The Piano*. Edited by Stanley Sadie. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1988.
- Berry, Wallace. *Musical Structure and Performance*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989.
- Bie, Oscar. *A History of the Pianoforte Players*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1966.
- Blair, Peter Hunter. *The World of Bede*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Blunt, Anthony, and Lockspear, Edward. "Romantic Ideals." In *French Art and Music Since 1500*. Edited by D. G. Charlton. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1972; 1974.
- Booth, Dee. "The Teaching Style of Clara Schumann," *Clavier* Vol. 35 (December 1996), 23.
- Bowie, Malcolm. *Lacan*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991.
- Bradshaw, Susan. "The Growth of Pianism," "After World War II." In *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments: The Piano*. Edited by Stanley Sadie. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1988.
- Brass, Paul R. "Élite Competition and Nation-Formation." In *Nationalism*. Edited by John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Brennan, Richard. *Alexander Technique: Natural Poise for Health*. Dorset: Element, 1991.
- Britton, Celia. "Structuralist and Post-Structuralist Psychoanalytic and Marxist Theories." In *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: From Formalism to Poststructuralism*. Edited by Raman Selden. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Buell, Raymond Leslie. *Poland: Key to Europe*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1939.
- Bujić, Bojan. *Music in European Thought 1851 – 1912*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Candland, Douglas Keith. *Feral Children and Clever Animals*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

- Canovan, Margaret. "Rousseau's Two Concepts of Citizenship." In *Women in Western Political Philosophy*. Edited by Ellen Kenney and Susan Mendus. Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books Ltd., 1987.
- Carew, Derek. "Victorian Attitudes to Chopin." In *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*. Edited by Jim Samson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Castiglione, Baldesar. *The Book of the Courtier*. Introduction and translated by George Bull. First Published 1528; Suffolk: Chaucer Press Ltd., 1976.
- Chechlińska, Zofia. "Chopin Reception in Nineteenth-Century Poland." In *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*. Edited by Jim Samson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Chissell, Joan. *Chopin*. London: Faber and Faber, 1965.
- Chopin, Frédéric. *Chopin's Letters*. Collected, translated, and edited by Henryk Opieński and E. L. Voynich. New York: Vienna House, 1973.
- _____. *Complete Works: Nocturnes Vol. VII*. Edited by Ignace Paderewski. Cracow: National Printing Works, 1983.
- _____. *Complete Works: Preludes*. Revised by Klindworth C., and X. Scharwenka. London: Augener Ltd., 1939.
- _____. *Complete Works: Songs Vol. XVII*. Edited by Ignaz Paderewski. Cracow: National Printing Works, 1985.
- _____. *Etudes*. Edited by Gábor Csàlog. Budapest: Konemann Music Urtext, 1995.
- _____. *Etudes*. Performed by Andrei Gavrilov. Compact Disc 7474522. EMI, 1988.
- _____. *Konzert Nr. 1: E Minor*. Arranged for two pianos by Bronislaw Von Pozniak. London: Peters, 1948.
- _____. *Oeuvres Complètes: Mazurkas*. Edited by Charles Klindworth. Berlin: Bote & G. Bock.
- _____. *Polonaises*. Edited by Rauol Pugno. Zurich: Universal Edition.

- _____. *Selected Correspondence of Fryderyk Chopin*. Translated and Edited by Arthur Hedley. New York: Da Capo Press, 1979.
- _____. *The Great Art of Alfred Cortot: Etudes Op. 10 & 25 and 4 Impromptus*. Performed by Alfred Cortot. Compact Disc HPC 003. Dante, 1933; 1991.
- Cieślak, Stanisław. "Religiosity in Polish Literature." In Leon Dyczewski and Barbara Jedynak, *Values in the Polish Cultural Tradition: Polish Philosophical Studies III*. Ed. Leon Dyczewski. Washington: Cardinal Station, 2002.
- Clark, Maribeth. "The Quadrille as Embodied Musical Experience in 19th-Century Paris," *Journal of Musicology* Vol. 19, No. 3 (Summer 2002), 503 – 526.
- Cone, Edward T. *The Composer's Voice*. California: University of California Press, 1974.
- Cook, Nicholas, and Everist, Mark. Eds. *Rethinking Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Cook, Nicholas. "Analysing Performance and Performing Analysis." In *Rethinking Music*. Edited by Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- _____. *Music: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- _____. "The Other Beethoven: Heroism, the Canon, and the Works of 1813-1814," *19th Century Music* Vol. 27, No. 1 (Summer 2003), 3 – 24.
- _____. "Liszt's Second Thoughts: *Liebestraum* No. 2 and Its Relatives," *19th Century Music* Vol. 12, No. 2 (Fall 1988), 163 – 172.
- Cortot, Alfred. *In Search of Chopin*. Translated by Cyril and Rena Clarke. Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1952; 1975.
- Craft, Robert. *Dialogues and a Diary*. London: Billing and Sons, 1961; 1968.
- Crocker, Richard L. *A History of Musical Style*. California: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1966.
- Czekanowska, Anna. *Polish Folk Music: Slavonic Heritage – Polish Tradition Contemporary Trends*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

- Davies, Hugh. "Developments and Modifications." In *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments: The Piano*. Edited by Stanley Sadie. New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1988.
- Davies, Norman. "Kongresówka: The Congress Kingdom (1815-1846)." In *God's Playing Ground: A History of Poland Volume II – 1795 to the Present*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981.
- Dawley, Robert M. "Medical Research in Music: Foundations for a Theory of Music Instruction," *Council for Research in Music Education Bulletin*. No. 85 (Fall 1985), 38 – 55.
- Dean, Winton. Review of *The Signifier and the Signified: Studies in the Operas of Mozart and Verdi*, by Frits Noske. *19th Century Music*, Vol. II No. 2, November 1978, pp. 173 – 178.
- De Jager, Frederick. Review of *Chopin Through His Contemporaries: Friends, Lovers, and Rivals*, by Pierre Azoury. *South African Journal of Musicology* Vol. 21, 2001, pp. 66 – 67.
- De Jaeger [sic], Frederick. "The Incredible Lightness of Fortepiano," *Literature in Northern Queensland* Vol. 31, No. 1 (May 2004), 20 – 23.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology*. Translated by Gayatri Chakravoty Spivak. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1976.
- De Saussure, Ferdinand. *Course in General Linguistics*. Translated with an Introduction by Wade Baskin, and edited by Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966.
- Donakowski, Conrad L. *A Muse for the Masses: Ritual and Music in an Age of Democratic Revolution 1770 – 1870*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977.
- Donnington, Robert. "Monteverdi's First Opera." In *The Monteverdi Companion*. Edited by Denis Arnold and Nigel Fortune. London: Faber and Faber, 1968.
- Duchen, Jessica. "The Legacy of Frederyk Chopin: 'He Created a New Universe For Pianists,'" *BBC Music Magazine* Vol. 7 (October 1999), 45 – 46.
- Dyczewski, Leon and Barbara Jedynek. "Family, Family Values and Home." In *Values in the Polish Cultural Tradition: Polish Philosophical Studies III*. Edited by Leon Dyczewski. Washington: Cardinal Station, 2002.

- Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publisher Limited, 1983.
- _____. *The Function of Criticism: From the Spectator to Post-Structuralism*. London: Verso, 1984.
- Edwards, H. Sutherland. *The Private History of A Polish Insurrection*. London: Saunders, Otley, and Co., 1865.
- Ehrlich, Cyril. *The Piano: A History*. London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1976.
- _____. "1860 – 1915," "From 1915." In *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments: The Piano*. Edited by Stanley Sadie. New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1988.
- Eigeldinger, Jean-Jacques. *Chopin as Pianist and Teacher: As Seen by His Pupils*. Translated by Naomi Shohet and edited by Roy Howat. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Einstein, Alfred. *Greatness in Music*. Translated by César Searchinger. New York: Da Capo Press, 1972.
- _____. *Music in the Romantic Era*. London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1947.
- Ellis, John. *The Theory of Literary Criticism*. California: University of California Press, 1974.
- Erhardt, Ludwik. *Music in Poland*. Translated by Andrzej Aleksandrowicz. Warsaw: Interpress Publishers, 1975.
- Farnsworth, Paul R. *The Social Psychology of Music*. Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1969.
- Finck, Henry. *Chopin and Other Musical Essays*. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1889.
- Fink, Robert. "Going Flat: Post-Hierarchical Music Theory and the Musical Surface." In *Rethinking Music*. Edited by Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- _____. "A Listening Guide for Post-Graduate Students of Eastman School of Music." In *20th Century Music*. Rochester, New York, 1996.
- Finkelstein, Sidney. *Composer and Nation: The Folk Heritage in Music*. New York: International Publishers, 1960; 1989.

- Foucault, Michael. *Introduction: History of Sexuality Vol. 1*. Translated by Robert Hurley. London: Allen Lane, 1979.
- Frankel, Henryk. *Poland: The Struggle for Power*. London: Lindsay Drummond Ltd., 1946.
- Fritz, Thomas. "New Grove and The Piano," *The Piano Quarterly* Vol. 31 (Winter 1982-1983), 36 – 41.
- Gellner, Ernest. "Nationalism and High Cultures." In *Nationalism*. Edited by John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Gerig, Reginald R. *Famous Pianists and Their Technique*. New York: Robert B. Luce Inc., 1974.
- Goodwin, Joscelyn. *Music, Mysticism and Magic: A Source Book*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987.
- Gracombe, Sarah. "Converting Trilby: Du Maurier on Englishness, Jewishness, and Culture," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* Vol. 58, No. 1 (June 2000), 75 – 108.
- Green, Lucy. *Music, Gender, Education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Grenier, Yvon. "The Romantic Liberalism of Octavio Paz," *Mexican Studies* Vol. 17, No. 1 (Winter 2001), 171 – 191.
- Gross, Feliks. "The Working Class in Poland." In *Polish Civilization: Essays and Studies*. Edited by Mieczysław Giergielewicz. New York: New York University Press, 1979.
- Guba, Egon G., and Lincoln, A. Yvonna. "Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research." In *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln. California: Sage, 2000.
- Haas, Ernst B. *Nationalism, Liberalism, and Progress Volume I: The Rise and Decline of Nationalism*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1997.
- Halecki, O. *A History of Poland*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983.
- Handel, Stephen. *Listening: An Introduction to the Perception of Auditory Events*. Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1989.

- Hanslick, Edward. "Clara Schumann." In *Hanslick's Music Criticisms*. Edited by Henry Pleasants. New York: Dover Publications, 1978.
- Harasowski, Adam. *The Skein of Legends around Chopin*. Scotland: William Maclellan and Co., 1967.
- Harding, James. "Paris: Opera Reigns Supreme." In *The Late Romantic*. Edited by Jim Samson. London: Macmillan, 1991.
- Harding, Rosamond E. M. "England and France, 1800 – 1860." In *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments: The Piano*. Edited by Stanley Sadie. New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1988.
- Hedley, Arthur. *The Master Musicians Chopin*. London: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1947; 1974.
- Hildebrandt, Dieter. *Pianoforte: A Social History of the Piano*. Translated by Harriet Goodman, with an Introduction by Anthony Burgess. London: Century Hutchinson, 1988.
- Hobsbawm, E. J. *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Program, Myth, and Reality*. Wiltshire: Redwood Press Ltd., 1990.
- Hoffnung, Gerard. *Hoffnung*. Aylesbury: Hazells Offset Ltd., 1953.
- _____. *The Penguin Hoffnung*. Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1963.
- Hofmeyer, Zanta. Violinist and Lecturer at the University of Pretoria. Durban, Natal. Interview by Author, 29th January 2001.
- Houle, Arthur. Review of *Evgeny Kissin: Chopin: 24 Preludes; Sonata Op. 35; Polonaise Op. 53 RCA CD 63535*, pianist Evgeny Kissin. *Piano and Keyboard*, January/February 2001, p 57.
- Howat, Roy. "Chopin's Influence on the Fin-de-Siècle and Beyond." In *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*. Edited by Jim Samson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Howes, David. *Varieties of Sensory Experience: A Sourcebook in the Anthropology of the Senses*. Edited by David Howes. London: University of Toronto Press, 1991.
- Howes, David, and Classen, Constance. "Doing Field Research." In *Varieties of Sensory Experience*. Edited by David Howes. London: University of Toronto Press, 1991.

- Hughes, Walden. "The Horowitz Piano like None Other," *Clavier* Vol. 35 (May/June 1996), 32.
- Humfrey, Justin. "My Chopin: Mitsuko Uchida," *BBC Music Magazine* Vol. 7 (October 1999), 47.
- Huneker, James. *Chopin: The Man and His Music*. New York: Dover Publications, 1900; 1966.
- Hunter, Holly. *The Piano*. Produced by Alan Depardieu and Jan Chapman. 90 min, Mirimax Films, 1992.
- Ivanson, Prabhudas. "Piano Terminology: Under the Hammer," *Music Teacher* Vol. 78, No. 1 (November 1999), 18 – 19.
- Jabłońska-Deptuła, Ewa. "Patriotism and Sovereignty." In Leon Dyczewski and Barbara Jedynak, *Values in the Polish Cultural Tradition: Polish Philosophical Studies III*. Edited by Leon Dyczewski. Washington: Cardinal Station, 2002.
- Jackson, Michael. *Paths Toward A Clearing: Radical Empiricism and Ethnographic Inquiry*. Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1989.
- Jefferson, Ann. "Structuralism and Post-Structuralism." In *Modern Literary Theory: A Comparative Introduction*. Edited by Ann Jefferson and David Robey. London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1986.
- Jencks, Charles. "What is Post Modernism?" In Walter Truett Anderson, *The Fontana Post-Modernism Reader*. London: Fontana Press, 1996.
- Johnson, James H. "Beethoven and the Birth of Romantic Musical Experience in France," *19th Century Music* Vol. 15, No. 1 (Summer 1991), 23 – 35.
- Jung, Carl. "The Syzygy: Anima and Animus." In *Avon: Research into the Phenomenology of the Self: Vol. 9 Part One*. Translated by R. F. C. Hull. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978.
- Kallberg, Jeffrey. *Chopin at the Boundaries: Sex, History, and Musical Genre*. London: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- _____. "Chopin's March, Chopin's Death," *19th Century Music*. Vol. 25, No. 1 (2001), 3 – 26.

- _____. "The Problem of Repetition and Return in Chopin's Mazurkas." In *Chopin Studies*. Edited by Jim Samson. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Kamien, Roger. *Music: An Appreciation*. New York: McGraw Hill Inc., 1976.
- Kehler, George. *The Piano in Concert Vol. 1*. London: Scarecrow Press, 1982.
- Kennedy, Ellen, and Mendus, Susan. eds. *Women in Western Political Philosophy*. Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books Ltd., 1987.
- Kiraly, William and Phillippa. "Erard versus Steinway," *The Piano Quarterly* Vol. 30 (Spring 1982), 44 – 45.
- Kite, Christopher. "The Day Has Still to Come When Mozart on a Steinway Will Be Regarded...as Necessarily a Kind of Transcription," *Early Music* Vol. 13, No. 1 (February 1985), 54.
- Korsyn, Kevin. "Beyond Privileged Contexts: Intertextuality, Influence and Dialogue." In *Rethinking Music*. Edited by Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Kramer, Lawrence. *Music as Cultural Practice: 1800 – 1900*. California: University of California Press, 1990.
- _____. *Music and Poetry: The Nineteenth Century and After*. California: University of California Press, 1984.
- Kukołowicz, Teresa. "Respect for women and the Elderly and Love of Chopin." In Leon Dyczewski and Barbara Jedynek, *Values in the Polish Cultural Tradition: Polish Philosophical Studies III*. Edited by Leon Dyczewski. Washington: Cardinal Station, 2002.
- Lamont, Alexandra, and Dibben, Nicola. "Motivic Structure and the Perception of Similarity," *Music Perception* Vol. 18, No. 3 (Spring 2001), 245 – 274.
- Lednicki, Waclaw. "Mickiewicz at the Collège de France." In *Polish Civilization: Essays and Studies*. Edited by Mieczysław Giergielewicz. New York: New York University Press, 1979.
- Lee, Sang-Hie. "A Psychophysiological Approach to the Technical Problems Found in the Piano Studies of Chopin and Liszt, and a Compendium of their Solutions," *Council for Research in Music Education Bulletin*. No. 71 (Summer 1982), 89 –92.

- Le Huray, Peter, and Day, James. *Music and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth and Early-Nineteenth Centuries*. Edited by John Stevens and Peter Le Huray. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.
- Leikin, Anatole. "The Sonatas." In *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*. Edited by Jim Samson. Cambridge: The Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Leslie, R. F. *Polish Politics and the Revolution of November 1830*. London: Athlone Press, 1956.
- Liszt, Franz. *Frédéric Chopin*. With a Foreword and translated by Edward N. Waters. New York: Vienna House, 1852; 1963.
- Locke, Ralph R. "Musicology and/as Social Concern: Imagining the Relevant Contexts." In *Rethinking Music*. Edited by Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- _____. "Paris: Centre of Intellectual Ferment." In *The Early Romantic Era*. Edited by Alexander Ringer. London: Macmillan, 1990.
- Lovelock, William. *A Concise History of Music*. London: G. Bell and Sons, 1953; 1966.
- Lyons, John. *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics*. 13th ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- MacDonald, Claudia. "Schumann's Piano Practice: Technical Mastery and Artistic Ideal," *Journal of Musicology* Vol. 19, No. 4 (Fall 2002), 527 – 563
- Mach, Elyse. *Great Contemporary Pianists Speak for Themselves* Vol. 1 and 2. London: Robson Books Ltd., 1981.
- Madison, Guy. "Properties of Expressive Variability Patterns in Music Performances," *Journal of New Music Research* Vol. 29, No. 4 (2000), 335 – 356.
- Marek, George R., and Maria Gordan-Smith. *Chopin: A Biography*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979.
- Mastroianni, Thomas. Review of *How to Learn the Alexander Technique*, by Barbara and William Conable. *American Music Teacher*, October/November 1996, p. 52.
- _____. "Technique: Born Free," *The Piano Quarterly* Vol. 34 (Summer 1986), 56 - 59.

- Matthay, Tobias. *Pianoforte: Tone-Production*. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1916.
- McArthur, Victoria H. "The Use of Computers to Analyze Performance Motions of Musicians," *Psychomusicology* Vol. 8, No. 2 (1989), 135 – 141.
- McClary, Susan. *Feminine Endings: Music Gender and Sexuality*. Minnesota: Minnesota University Press, 1991.
- McKeever, James. "The Wrist from a Technical Perspective," *Clavier* Vol. 20 (December 1982), 34 – 35.
- Mendus, Susan. "Kant: 'An Honest but Narrow-Minded Bourgeois.'" In *Women in Western Political Philosophy*. Edited by Ellen Kennedy and Susan Mendus. Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books Ltd., 1987.
- Merquior, J. G. *From Prague to Paris: A Critique of Structuralist and Post-Structuralist Thought*. London: Verso, 1986.
- Messiaen, Olivier. *Les Merle Noir*. Paris: Leduc Publishers, 1952, pp 1 – 8.
- Methuen-Campbell, James. "Chopin in Performance." In *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*. Edited by Jim Samson. Cambridge: The Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Narmour, Eugene. "On the Relationship of Analytical Theory to Performance and Interpretation." In *Exploration in Music, the Arts, and Ideas: Essays in Honour of Leonard B. Meyer*. Edited by Eugene Narmour and Ruth A. Solie. New York: Stuyvesant, 1988.
- Neuhaus, Heinrich. *The Art of Piano Playing*. London: Barrie and Jenkins Ltd., 1973.
- Newman, William S. *The Pianist's Problems*. With a preface by Arthur Loesser. New York: Harper and Row, 1974.
- Newport, Angeline. "Painless Piano Technique: Avoiding common Problems," *Clavier* Vol. 20 (April 1982), 32 – 33.
- Nicholson, Linda. "The Musician...Needs to Play Not One But Many Instruments to Develop Not One Technique But Many," *Early Music* Vol. 13, No. 1 (February 1985), 52 – 54.
- Niecks, Frederick. *Frederick Chopin as a Man and Musician Vol. 2*. London: Novello, 1902.

- Ortmann, Otto. *The Physical Basis of Piano Touch and Tone*. New York: Dutton, 1925.
- _____. *Mechanics of Piano Technique*. London: Trubner and Co., 1929.
- Palacios, Diane. "Tension and the Performing Artist," *The Piano Quarterly* Vol. 28 (1980), 37 – 40.
- Paperno, Dimitri. *Notes of a Moscow Pianist*. Portland: Amadeus Press, 1998.
- Parakilas, James. *Ballades without Words*. Portland: Amadeus Press, 1992.
- Park, Glen. *The Art of Changing: An Introduction to the Alexander Technique*. Bath: Ashgrove Press, 1991.
- Pattison, George. *Art, Modernity, and Faith: Restoring the Image*. London: Macmillan, 1991.
- Pesic, Peter. "The Child and the Daemon: Mozart and Deep Play," *19th-Century Music* Vol. 25, No. 2-3 (Fall/Spring 2001-2002), 91 – 107.
- Peterkiewicz, Jerzy and Burns Singer. *Five Centuries of Polish Poetry: 1450 – 1970*. Translated in collaboration with Jon Stallworthy. Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1979.
- Pierce, Alexandra and Roger. "Pain and Healing: For Pianists," *The Piano Quarterly* Vol. 30 (Summer 1982), 43 – 45.
- _____. "Pain and Healing: For Pianists: Part Two," *The Piano Quarterly* Vol. 31 (1983), 38 – 39.
- _____. "Pain and Healing: For Pianists: Part Three." *The Piano Quarterly*. Vol. 32 (1984), 43 – 49.
- Politoske, Daniel. *Music*. London: John Calmann and King Ltd., 1988.
- Post, Jennifer. "Erasing the Boundaries between Public and Private in Women's Performance Traditions." In *Cecilia Reclaimed: Feminist Perspectives on Gender and Music*. Edited by Susan Cook and Judy Tsou. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994.
- Prevatt, Harriet. "If I Knew Then..." *Piano and Keyboard* No. 183 (September/October 1996), 48 – 50.
- Quennell, Peter. *Genius in the Drawing-Room: The Literary Salons of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980.

- Rachmaninoff, Serge. *Preludes for Piano*. Foreword by Peter Donohoe. London: Boosey and Hawkes Music Publisher Ltd., 1985.
- Reddie, Charles. *Pianoforte: Its Technical and Aesthetic Sides*. London: Joseph Williams Ltd., 1911.
- Rehding, Alexander. "Liszt's Musical Monuments," *19th Century Music* Vol. 26, No. 1 (Summer 2002), 52 – 72.
- Ringer, Alexander. ed. *The Early Romantic Era*. London: Macmillan Ltd., 1990.
- Rink, John. "Translating Musical Meanings: The Nineteenth-Century Performer as Narrator." In *Rethinking Music*. Edited by Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- _____. "Enlightened Darkness," *BBC Magazine* Vol. 7 (October 1999).
- _____. *Chopin: The Piano Concertos*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Ripin, Edwin M. "Introduction." In *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments: The Piano*. Edited by Stanley Sadie. New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1988.
- Ritterman, Janet. "Piano Music and the Public Concert 1800-1850." In *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*. Edited by Jim Samson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Rohmann, Chris. *The Dictionary of Important Ideas and Thinkers*. London: Hutchinson, 2001.
- Rosen, Charles. "On Playing the Piano," *The New York Review* (October 1999), 49 – 54.
- _____. "The First Movement of Chopin's Sonata in B [flat] Minor, Op. 35," *19th Century Music* Vol. 14, No 1 (Summer 1990), 60 – 66.
- _____. *The Romantic Generation*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995.
- Rosenblum, Sandra P. *Performance Practices in Classic Piano Music*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988.
- Rothstein, William. "Phrase rhythm in Chopin's Nocturnes." In *Chopin Studies*. Edited by Jim Samson. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

- Sadie, Stanley. Ed. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. London: Macmillan, 1980. S.v. "Bel canto," by Owen Jander.
- _____. *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*. London: Macmillan, 1992. S.v. "Bel canto," Owen Jander.
- _____. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. London: Macmillan, 1980. S.v. "Finck, Henry T," Margery Morgan Lowens.
- _____. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. London: Macmillan, 1980. S.v. "Nocturne," by Maurice Brown.
- _____. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. London: Macmillan, 1980. S.v. "Polonaise," Reiss, Jozef and Maurice Brown.
- Sadie, Stanley, and Tyrell, John. Ed. and executive ed. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. London: Macmillan, 2001. S.v. "Bel canto," by Jander, Owen and Ellen T. Harris.
- _____. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. London: Macmillan, 2001. S.v. "Field, John," Robin Langley.
- _____. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. London: Macmillan, 2001. S.v. "Finck, Henry T," Margery Morgan Lowens.
- _____. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. London: Macmillan, 2001. S.v. "Maria (-Felicia) Malibran," Elizabeth Forbes.
- _____. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. London: Macmillan, 2001. S.v. "Nationalism," Richard Taruskin.
- _____. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. London: Macmillan, 2001. S.v. "Nocturne," by Brown, Maurice and Kenneth Hamilton.
- _____. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. London: Macmillan, 2001. S.v. "Polonaise," Stephen Downes.
- _____. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. London: Macmillan, 2001. S.v. "Romanticism," Jim Samson.
- Samson, Jim. Ed. *Chopin Studies*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- _____. Ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- _____. *The Music of Chopin*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985.

- _____. Ed. *The Late Romantic Era*. London: Macmillan, 1991.
- Sanford, George. *Poland: The Conquest of History*. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1999.
- Schevchenko, Margarita. Durban, Natal. Interview by Author, 15th March 2001.
- Scholes, Percy. *The Oxford Companion to Music*. Edited by Percy Scholes. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950.
- Schonberg, Harold. "Chapter Three: Pianists." In *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments: The Piano*. Edited by Stanley Sadie. New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1988.
- Schultz, Arnold. "The Physiological Mechanics of Piano Teaching," *American Music Teacher* Vol. 45 (August/September 1996), 32 – 35.
- Schumacher, E. F. *small is beautiful*. London: Cox and Wyman Ltd., 1973; 1993.
- Schumann, Clara. *Nuttorno*. Munich: Henle Verlag, 1987, pp 27 – 30.
- Schumann, Robert. *Carnival*. London: Augener, 1913.
- Shelemay, Kay Kaufman. "The Impact and Ethics of Musical Scholarship." In *Rethinking Music*. Edited by Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Sherlaw, Johnson Robert. *Messiaen*. London: JM Dent and Sons Ltd., 1975.
- Silverman, Robert J. "Physicians' Views of Physical Problems," *The Piano Quarterly* Vol. 30 (Winter 1982-1983), 42 – 47.
- _____. "Fanny and Clara: What Women!," *Piano and Keyboard* No. 184 (November/December 1996), 30 – 31.
- Sloboda, John A. "Tracking Performance Correlates of Changes in Perceived Intensity of Emotion During Different Interpretations of a Chopin Piano Prelude," *Music Perception* Vol. 19, No. 1 (Fall 2001), 87 – 120.
- Small, Christopher. *Music – Society – Education*. London: John Calder, 1977.
- Smart, Mary Ann. Ed. *Siren Songs: Representation of Gender and Sexuality in Opera*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000.

- Solie, Ruth A. "The Living Work: Organicism and Music Analysis," *19th Century Music* Vol. 4, No. 2 (Fall 1980), 147 – 157.
- _____. "Changing the Subject," *Current Musicology* No 53 (1993), 55 – 65
- _____. "Gender, Genre, and the Parlor Piano," *The Wordsworth Circle*. Vol. 25, No. 1 (1994), 53 – 57.
- _____. "Whose Life? The Gendered Self in Schumann's Frauenliebe Songs." In *Music and Text: Critical Inquiries*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- _____. Ed. *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*. California: University of California Press, 1993.
- Stein, Charles Jay. "To Schlep or Not To schlep," *American Music Teacher* Vol. 45 (April/May 1996), 18 – 21, 98 – 99.
- Stoller, Paul. *The Taste of Ethnographic Things: The Senses in Anthropology*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1989.
- Strangeland, Robert. "Dimensions in Piano Technique: Part Four," *The Piano Quarterly* Vol. 28 (Summer 1980), 39 – 41.
- Sugars, Clive. *The Art of Piano Playing: Great Pianists of the 20th Century*. Written by Christian Labrande and Donald Sturrock. 108 min., Warner Music, 1999.
- Tan, Melvyn. "The Technique of Playing Music Authentically Does not Mean Simply Using the Appropriate Instruments," *Early Music* Vol. 13, No. 1 (February 1985), 57 – 58.
- Thomas, Adrian. "Beyond the Dance." In *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*. Edited by Jim Samson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Tricket, Ron. *The Unspeakable Murray Walker: Part Three*. Produced by Ron Tricket. 60 min. BBC, 2001.
- Uszler, Marienne. "The American Beginning Piano Method View and Viewpoint: Part One: Roots and Branches," *The Piano Quarterly* Vol. 30 (Winter 1982-1983), 12 – 19.
- Vogel, Ursula. "Humboldt and the Romantics: Neither *Hausfrau* nor *Citoyenne* – The Idea of 'Self-Reliant Femininity' in German Romanticism." In *Women in Western Political Philosophy*. Edited by Ellen Kennedy and Susan Mendus. Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books Ltd., 1987.

- Walker, Alan. *Frédéric Chopin: Profiles of the Man and Musician*. London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1966.
- Wallerstein, Immanuel and Etienne Balibar. *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*. London: Verso, 1991.
- Wason, Robert W. "Two Bach Preludes/Two Chopin Etudes," *Music Theory Spectrum* Vol. 24. No. 1 (Spring 2002), 103 – 120.
- Weber, William. "The Muddle of the Middle Classes," *19th Century Music* Vol. 3, No. 2 (November 1979), 175 – 185.
- Webster, James. "Between Enlightenment and Romanticism in Music History: 'First Viennese Modernism' and the Delayed Nineteenth Century," *19th Century Music* Vol. 25, No. 2-3 (Fall/Spring 2001-02), 108 – 126.
- Welch, Cheryl B. *Liberty and Utility: The French Idéologues and the Transformation of Liberalism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1984.
- White, Hayden. *The Content of Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1987; 1990.
- Whitehead, Alfred North. *The Concept of Nature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971.
- Whiteside, Abbey. *On Piano Playing*. Edited by Prostakoff Joseph and Sophia Rosoff. Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1997.
- Whittall, Arnold. *Romantic Music: A Concise History From Schubert to Sibelius*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1987.
- Wilson, Frank R. "Mind, Muscle and Music," *The American Music Teacher* Vol. 31 (September/October 1982), 12 – 15.
- Wilson, Frank R. "Teaching Hands, Treating Hands," *The Piano Quarterly* Vol. 36 (Spring 1988), 34 – 41.
- Winter, Robert. "The Most Unwitting Foes of the Romantic Piano May be Those Well Intentioned Curators Who Lend Their Instruments for Recording Sessions," *Early Music* Vol. 12, No. 1 (February 1984), 21 – 25.

- _____. "Piano Playing: Classical Period," "Piano Playing: Romantic Period," "Piano Playing: 20th Century," "Romanticism and the Miniature," and "The Age of Virtuosity." In *The New Grove Series of Musical Instruments: The Piano*. Edited by Stanley Sadie. New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1988.
- Wordsworth, William. *The Prelude 1799, 1805, 1850: Authoritative Texts, Contexts and Reception, Recent Critical Essays*. Edited by Jonathan Wordsworth, M. H. Abrams, and Stephen Gill. London: W. W. Norton And Company, 1979.
- Wristen, Brenda. "Fitness and Form to Reduce Injuries," *Clavier* Vol. 35 (July/August 1996), 26 – 28.
- Zon, Bennett. *Music and Metaphor in Nineteenth-Century British Musicology*. Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2000.