6h13. The Naked Pitch-class and Musical Fan-Dancing

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In Western culture, nakedness is often considered a state of perfect naturalness and peace. We read in the Bible that Adam and Eve were naked in the Garden of Eden and blissfully happy being so. Only after they ate the apple, and were about to be evicted from Paradise, did they know shame: "the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves clothes." This is a story that has mythic resonance for the Western psyche: the peaceful state of naturalness abruptly interrupted by an interfering consciousness.

Sigmund Freud believed the Garden of Eden narrative to be derived from a blissful memory of a childhood in which nakedness was socially acceptable. In the *Interpretation of Dreams*, he writes:

> Only in our childhood was there a time when we were seen by our relatives, as well as by strange nurses, servants and visitors, in a state of insufficient clothing, and at that time we were not ashamed of our nakedness...This age of childhood, in which the sense of shame is unknown, seems a paradise when we look back upon it later, and paradise itself is nothing but the mass-phantasy of the childhood of the individual. This is why in paradise men are naked and unashamed, until the moment arrives when shame and fear awaken; expulsion follows, and sexual life and cultural development begin.

Freud relates these thoughts within a discussion of an archetypal dream, common to many, in which one dreams of being naked in a public place. In this fantasy narrative, the "natural" state of nudity is cause for great anxiety because of the displacement of the naked self into an inappropriate context. Thus the blissful, peaceful state becomes its opposite: a tension-filled moment of anxiety.

Or does it? Freud notes that the archetypal naked-in-public dream has another interesting quality: although the dreamer may feel shame, the dream's witnesses to the event are usually not shocked at all. He writes:

> It never happens, in the typical dream, that one is reproved or even noticed on account of the lack of clothing which causes one such embarrassment. On the contrary, the people in the dream appear to be quite indifferent.

And thus Freud concludes that the dream is an exhibitionist one, despite the feelings of embarassment—in short, a wish fulfillment.

We now have a riddle: if nakedness is natural, why does it become shameful when acknowledged? But if we are in a situation where others' acknowledgment of our nakedness is likely, and should create shame, why is there no reproach, no expulsion from the dream paradise?

This seeming paradox has a counterpart in the analysis of dramatic (and other) musical works. Theorists traditionally hold that perfect consonances, especially unisons and octaves, are the most natural, peaceful and harmonious relationships between and among tones. Numeric ratios governed the assessment of consonance through comparison of their relative simplicity. As you can read in Example 1, Rameau put the connection he felt between consonance and Nature quite bluntly: "celle qui regarde la dissonance ne peut être tirée que de la consonance, qui

seule est naturelle." He felt, according to Christensen, that music contains two states—consonance and dissonance—that are akin to mechanical science: "consonance is like equilibrium in mechanics; it constitutes a state of perfect repose and stability, while dissonance is a displacing force and hence a disruption of this repose."

A few years later, in 1796, the Italian music theorist Francesco Galeazzi echoed these sentiments: "distinguere gl'intervalli in due Classi: abbraccia la prima quelli che sono grati, piacevoli, ed armoniosi all'orecchio, e che però diconsi *Consonanze*. La seconda quelli, che sono ad esso dispiacevoli, ed aspri, e che vengono detti *Dissonanze*." And Galeazzi included the unison to the list of consonant intervals, which Rameau had omitted: "Fra le Consonanze perfette si può schierare anche l'Unissono, quale a parlar propriamente non è consonanza, ma equissonanza; siccome però talvolta si fa di esso qualche uso in pratica e bene sapere a qual classe d'intervallo attribuirlo; è chiaro del resto, che se perfetta è l'8, molto più lo sarà l'Unissono da cui essa deriva."

Closer to our own times, Schoenberg agrees: "I will define consonances as the closer, simpler relations to the fundamental tone, dissonances as those that are more remote, more complicated...the sound of these overtones together with the fundamental is 'restful' and euphonious, needing no resolution." Kurth says, in essence, that repetition of a phrase behaves like the repetition of a single tone in that it stabilizes the music. And Salzer and Schachter write "Of all the intervals the unison is the most stable, the most absolutely consonant...the octave is second only to the unison in degree of consonance."

Yet, in the world of dramatic music (if not in other sorts of music as well) these unisons and octaves can appear at moments of greatest tension: the sudden appearance of a single pitch-

class, naked in an incongruous place. We know that music linked to drama often must break its rules (beautifully spelled out in Mozart's letter to his father regarding the depiction of Osmin's rage in *The Abduction from the Seraglio.*) But here we have a situation in which the drama creates the <u>opposite</u> effect from that which we have learned and probably have taught. This calls into question the assumptions of our Western theoretical tradition. These perfect consonances, in context, seem to do the opposite of what they should.

Today I will examine three examples of this phenomenon, from *La Boheme*, *Salome* and *Wozzeck*. Before we proceed further in the discussion let's listen to these moments now; you can follow along in your score. [a/v]

Analyzing text-related music is a tricky business, and there have been many and varied attempts, including my own. Some of the main trends are discussed in Kofi Agawu's article "Theory and practice in the Analysis of the Nineteenth-century Lied," *Music Analysis*, 11:1 (1992). There is also some new work on relating the conceptual metaphor theories of Lakoff and Johnson to film music, and the technique called "mickey mousing."

The essential problem with these and other approaches—yes including mine—is a tendency to create one-to-one mappings of some element or elements of the music onto some element or elements of the text. This is not the forum to rehash Kofi's work, but even his ultimate solution, after critiquing the others, was to "narrativize the analysis"— to create an explicit interpretation from analytically derived details. Again a one-to-one mapping, or a sort of metaphor. However, Kofi does note that "metaphors enshrine various, sometimes contradictory, meanings...For example, although cadences conventionally signify closure, various idiomatic presentations either enhance or undermine that sense of closure." One of his examples was the

imperfect cadence. The essential problem is to reconcile those musical elements that do not fit an easy mapping onto the text.

In my theory, I divided the musical elements into two categories, organizational and illustrative, with the caveat that the composer could choose an organizational technique like form, for illustrative purposes. I also set out a list of illustrative musical functions, which you can see in Example 2. These are the text-related tasks that music can accomplish in an opera. Again, the question is what do we do with the rest of it?

Carolyn Abbate has recently explored the related but distinct issues of "narrative" and "voice"; she writes, "To see how music might narrate, paradoxical as the formulation may seem, we must see how it does not enact actions from a nonmusical world, but is instead non-congruent with that world in retelling it." So is part of the music irrelevant to the drama? Or is it wrongly employed, inappropriate?

If we consider the situation of a unison, octave or other perfect consonance, which normally subtends peacefulness, rest and closure, then its consistent appearance at a non-peaceful, non-restful, non-final moment is not only irrelevant but in fact inappropriate—like being naked in public. Freud, who discovered this interesting dream to be archetypal, also can offer us a possible solution to the riddle of the anxiety-ridden naked pitch class. It involves his concept of primary and secondary process thinking. If you turn to Example 3, you can read the characteristics of primary process thinking, which is found in dreams, early childhood and psychotic states.

Primary process is the unconscious functions of wish fulfillment, although it embraces other qualities as well. Freud also saw it in jokes: An updated version of a joke Freud related

from Heine: "That old man is just like Michelangelo's David in many ways. He is extremely old, has no teeth and has spots on the yellow surface of his body." That is, the part stands for the whole.

And in wit, such as Benjamin Franklin's comment: "we must all hang together, or assuredly we shall hang separately." Here, we have the part [hang] against the whole meaning; yet there is also logic at work (a secondary process) because it still makes sense.

The qualities that most interest us at the moment are numbers 1 and 4. The part standing for the whole is primary process, the stuff of symbolism and metaphor, an opera analyst's home turf. But it is number 4—that opposites can exist simultaneously in the positive or negative sense—that is most pertinent to our naked pitch-class [pc]. Either the naked pc wishes it had clothes (that is other notes) on, or the larger group of notes want to be a single pc.

Psychoanalyst Silvano Arieti came up with the idea of <u>tertiary</u> process thinking regarding creativity. He writes that creativity is not just freedom, but restrictions too. Therefore, if poetry uses metaphor and symbol, but in a mode that can be logically interpreted, it is a combination of primary and secondary thinking. The examples of glitter/gold may clarify these ideas.

One main idea is that a primary process desire can be thwarted by a secondary process censorship, creating anxiety. In Freud's archetypal dreams, aside from being anxious, the dreamers cannot move, they are powerless. When we experience dramatic operatic moments, and what we expect does not arrive, then our desires are thwarted.

For example, if someone is murdered onstage, we might expect a loud dissonant chord. If it does not arrive, but what we get instead is a single pc, it is as if the aural curtain were suddenly drawn, like a veil. And we, sitting in in the audience, are just as immobilized as the dreamer,

helpless, and more anxious than before. We want to hear the equivalent of what we see but are prevented; in effect we are aurally blinded. So there is a conflict of knowledge and ignorance, expectation and frustration. **W**e know, but we do not know, we want to know but we cannot. In short, the composer has created for us a musical fan dance: what you might see is not what you will get. And how redolent is this situation of the issue of knowledge in the Garden of Eden, where consciousness (a secondary process) destroys natural pleasure (primary process)?

La bohème

The first example today is from Puccini's *La Bohème*. Please turn to Example 4, my graph of the opera's conclusion. As you can see, the pc A is not necessary to underlying tonal structure; and it occurs after Mimi's death. Before we watch the video, notice that Mimi's last words at the bottom of page 279 are set on a single note, a hopeful Ab, which becomes ultimately revealed as a tragic G#, the dominant of the final C# minor tonic. At the beginning of the third system, the false nature of the Ab is revealed clearly, as Puccini has Mimi's G# literally turn into Ab, preceded by the accompaniment, which gets there first. [video]

There are several reasons that Puccini might have chosen to place the naked pc A at this point. A, as flat 6 of C# minor, hints at possible happiness: through a 5-6 motion C# minor could become A major. But this does not explain why the A is presented as a naked pc.

It could possibly be metaphoric, perhaps the single pc represents the dead, and therefore presumably peaceful, body. But this would not explain our anxiety at this moment. I believe, instead, that the A represents a sort of ignorance. Rodolfo does not see that Mimi is dead, and we see him not see. That tension, that knowledge of his lack of knowledge, is a tease that creates, through the conflict of primary and secondary thought processes, great anxiety.

Salome

My second example, *Salome*, is all about revealing and hiding. Salome's famous dance of the seven veils under Herod's gaze would seem be a one-to-one metaphor for this very discussion of nakedness in the wrong place. Herod's scopophilia (the pleasure of looking) was the19th-century version of safe sex (or so says Lawrence Kramer). Salome's dance challenges boundaries of opera; who should look? Should the audience?

But the scene we will examine now is the execution of John the Baptist, accompanied by a naked Eb that eventually becomes more and more clothed. It is the opposite of the dance of the seven veils, placing veils before our ears as it continues. There are those analysts who would make much of the symbolism of Eb. If you look at Example 5, you will see a list of most occurrences of this pc in dramatic context. These moments seem to suggest a connection between Eb and John the Baptist, but it is not entirely convincing. After all, most of the opera is about John the Baptist!

But even if we accept this hypothesis, why would Eb be presented as naked at that particular moment? *Salome* was composed on a play by Oscar Wilde, originally written in French for Sarah Bernhardt. Wilde wrote that he was consciously trying to make original play "musical" although he knew little about music. He wrote that "recurring phrases of Salome...bind it together like a piece of music with recurring motifs." (letters 590)

And Salome herself makes a voice/music connection: "Speak again, Iokanaan. Thy voice is as music to mine ear./ Thy voice was a censer that scattered strange perfumes, and when I looked on thee I heard a strange music." But alarmed by new silence, she laments, 'There is no sound, I hear nothing."

In the spoken play, to which music had she been listening? Which music had stopped? This is the moment we will examine in the opera, where Strauss sets this line to a naked pc. [video]

David Thomas believes that the play *Salome* suggests musicality in the elaborately artificial, highly mannered patterning of dialogue, but that it is a "carnival of inverted imaging and shaky introspections." In other words, one-to-one mappings will be difficult to find. Henry James seemed to agree when he said: "Everything Oscar does is a deliberate trap for the literalist." In many respects, this parallels Strauss' use of tonality, which often seems perverse at best.

In this scene, Salome hears the silence as nothing. But is the Eb simply a representation of silence, of nothing? If so, why not use an actual nothing and use rests? It is more, I believe, that nothing is happening, we are waiting for something with impatience, which increases our desire, and Salome is inflamed by it along with us. She says, at the second system of page 178: "There is such a terrible silence!" This powerful anxiety reaches across proscenium in both directions, as Salome has been given agency to express our reactions.

Strauss wrote that "Music must have is own autonomous unity, which is best achieved by symphonic means. Yet in a dramatic work—an even in a non-dramatic work, if we accept that the expression of 'great poetic ideas' is paramount—music is only a means, not an end. "Symphonic unity" is of no interest in itself." So much for keeping to the musical rules.

Wozzeck

There is much to say about our next opera, *Wozzeck*. Berg himself admitted: "so much has been written that I can hardly say anything without plagiarizing my critics." The scene we

are looking at is also called "Invention on a note" and that note would be the B that undergoes a huge crescendo after the murder of Marie. In this case, we hear the B first as an ostinato beneath the rest of the music. So it moves from being clothed to being naked.

However, this is not a slow, seductive striptease but a sudden revelation of its nakedness. This B, though, is not exactly naked. As Perle notes: "The Interlude summarizes the formal basis of each of the three middle sections of Act III: the *ostinato* pitch-class of Scene 2...the *ostinato* rhythm of Scene 3 in the bass drum...and in the succession of attacks in the winds and, a beat later, in the strings...and the *ostinato* chord of Scene 4."

As Berg himself wrote, "A point to notice about these entries is that they are not at regular distances but follow a particular rhythmic principle in which the rhythmically ordered entries of the wind and strings, following one another in canon at the distance of a crotchet, produce a distinct rhythm. The irregularities that result from this—and of which the listener is as little aware as he is of the regular ordering of entries—seem to give the crescendoing note a particularly strong feeling of life.

Feeling of life? At the moment of death? He seems to be employing primary process thinking here. *Wozzeck* is the *ne plus ultra* of opera analysis because of Berg's simultaneous use of instrumental forms and dramatic forms. His outline is in Example 6.

Why did Berg use these forms? Why link mental instability and disintegration with rational organizations? Some think the answer is a practical one, because the original play was reconstructed in self-standing scenes. This might be a partial answer. Others feel the forms lend stability in an atonal environment—but surely there are other ways to do that.

Or, the forms might be simply irrelevant. Maybe they are, because Berg weighs in by stating: “The appearance of these forms in opera was to some degree unusual, even new. Nevertheless novelty, path-breaking, was not my conscious intention.....What I do consider my particular accomplishment is this. No one in the audience, no matter how aware he may be of the musical forms contained in the framework of the opera, of the precision and logic with which it has been worked out, no one, from the moment the curtain parts until it closes for the last time, pays any attention to the various fugues.... about which so much has been written. No one gives heed to anything but the vast social implications of the work which by far transcend the personal destiny of Wozzeck. This, I believe, is my achievement.”

Finally, some believe that the choice of forms is a social message. Perle writes: “The musical coherence of the opera, independent of the staged events, reflects an objective order whose irrelevance to the subjective fate of Wozzeck poignantly emphasizes his total isolation in an indifferent universe.”

But then Perle goes on to say that the choice of the forms is determined by a dominant dramatic idea, (for example, the *ostinato* that corresponds to Wozzeck’s *idée fixe* in the murder scene), in other instances... by the existence of traditional musical forms and styles identified with certain types of social activity depicted in the drama (the Military March, the dance music..., the “folk songs”), and in at least one instance by the symbolic meaning that may be associated with a given musical form (the Passcaglia to which the scene in the Doctor’s study is set.)

Here, Perle is showing how Berg has chosen a form in order for the music to fulfill what I call the Illustrative Musical functions, numbers 2 and 6.

Our immediate concern, however, is: why the naked B? Berg says: "the music of the following short interlude brings the B to the fore once more. This time it appears as a unison, as the only note of the entire scale common to almost all the instruments of a full orchestra, and beginning with the softest imaginable sound (a muted horn) and increasing through successively louder entries until it finally bursts out in full force on the whole orchestra, except percussion."

There is, of course, an accepted symbolism for the pc B. **I**t is said to represent Wozzeck's *idee fixe* about murdering Marie, diagnosed by the doctor as an "aberatio mentalis partialis, second species." And B is part of what has become known as the "fate dyad" of F and B. Perle: "BF functions as a tone center in the context of *both* the largest and the smallest dimensions of the work...By means of the dyadic tone center BF, a referential pitch level is established for some of the principal Leitmotive whose intervallic content includes a tritone. ...The priority of BF or FB is established in the first number...The tones B and F frequently mark the outer limits of salient simultaneities...The priority of BF is asserted again and again throughout the work, often as a means of reaffirming the dramatic, as well as the musical, "keynote" of the opera.....The primary dyad FB is frequently associated with the rise of fall of the curtain."

This is all quite logical, but why must B appear as a unison in this scene? Adorno writes about *Wozzeck*, "what has not been written attests to as great a creative power as what has been written." In effect, we are being blinded here, along with Wozzeck, by his insanity. This creates some empathy with Wozzeck, and has the potential of carrying a political message about his social condition.

V. Conclusion

In conclusion, I believe our theoretical tradition is valid but limited. Our understanding of how these consonances are used is limited to simplistic one-to-one mappings. They could be explored, in context, on a deeper level. In the case of the phenomena examined today, the effect to reflect upon is this: the audience wants X to match with Y (primary process), but the composer frustrates this desire (secondary process). Like a veil, the purpose of this move is to titillate, like a fan dance, to increase desire, to make us wait. And there is the issue of powerlessness, of the composer's control over the passive listener, and sometimes over the characters. Rodolfo will not be able to help Mimi, Salome is helpless in Jokaanan's power even in death, Wozzeck is helpless in the power of his madness. And the pitch classes that we hear show them trapped naked in the wrong place.

But there must be some pleasure in it for us, or else we wouldn't return repeatedly to the theater. In sum, if we look only to surface similarities, and look for metaphor, we will miss the depth and complexity of the human mind and its creation, music. And our analyses will be like the Emperor with new clothes—all flaws ultimately revealed.

The Naked Pitch-class and Musical Fan-Dancing

Examples

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Example 1: Quotes from theorists regarding the characteristics of perfect consonances

Rameau: "celle qui regarde la dissonance ne peut être tirée que de la consonance, qui seule est naturelle" [that which regards dissonance can only be drawn from consonance, which alone is natural]

Galeazzi: "distinguere gl'intervalli in due Classi: abbraccia la prima quelli che sono grati, piacevoli, ed armoniosi all'orecchio, e che però diconsi *Consonanze*. La seconda quelli, che sono ad esso dispiacevoli, ed aspri, e che vengono detti *Dissonanze*." [to distinguish the intervals in two classes: the first embraces those that are welcome, pleasing and harmonious to the ear, and are thus called *Consonances*. The second are those that are displeasing and harsh to it and that are called *Dissonances*.]

"Fra le Consonanze perfette si può schierare anche l'Unissono, quale a parlar propriamente non è consonanza, ma equissonanza; siccome però talvolta si fa di esso qualche uso in pratica e bene sapere a qual classe d'intervallo attribuirlo; è chiaro del resto, che se perfetta è l'8, molto più lo sarà l'Unissono da cui essa deriva." [Among the perfect consonances one can include also the unison, which properly speaking is not a consonance but an 'equi-sonance'; however, since sometimes it is used in practice, it is good to know to which class of interval it belongs; it is clear from the rest [of the discussion] that if the octave is perfect, much more so will be the unison, from which it derives.]

Schoenberg: "I will define consonances as the closer, simpler relations to the fundamental tone, dissonances as those that are more remote, more complicated...the sound of these overtones together with the fundamental is 'restful' and euphonious, needing no resolution."

Kurth: "through repetition an entire melodic unit becomes stable, in spite of its own movement..That is, it acts in principle no differently from one repeated tone."

Salzer and Schachter: "Of all the intervals the unison is the most stable, the most absolutely consonant...the octave is second only to the unison in degree of consonance."

Example 2: Illustrative Musical Functions:

1. presentation of atmosphere or mood
2. presentation of local or historical color
3. presentation of emotional content and character
4. presentation of physical stage action
5. presentation of verbal and textual content (including stage directions)
6. presentation and/or identification of characters, objects, events or thematic ideas.

Example 3: Freud's categories of the mind's processes

Primary Process [unconscious functions in dreams, early childhood, psychosis]

1. The "part" stands for the "whole" [mother's hand or voice means all of mother to the infant.]
2. Two perceptions can condense into one. [e.g., putting on a coat and saying "good-bye" can be one thought to a child. Mother reaches for her coat and the child wails.]
3. The wish-pressure cannot be reasoned with or modulated. [A child in the doctor's office, being afraid, says "Bye-bye" over and over again because her wish to leave overrides all else.]
4. An idea can exist simultaneously in the positive or negative sense. [Wish fulfillment: the feeling of being alone may be expressed by dreaming of multitudes.]
5. A person's own idea or feeling can be displaced, that is experienced as though it came from someone else. [ex. hearing messages from inanimate objects]
6. Opposite ideas or perceptions can co-exist. [A person can hate a group or class of people, and love one of them.]

Ex. "All that glitters <u>is</u> gold"

Secondary Process [preconscious functions as censor, filter, reality check]

Ex. "all that glitters is <u>not</u> gold"

Tertiary Process [from Arieti not Freud] [combines above processes to create symbolism, metaphor]

Ex. "glittery things may or may not be gold, but can symbolize gold"

Example 4: graph of *La bohème*, conclusion

$\hat{3}$ 28 $\hat{2}$ $\hat{1}$

Mimi gets muff = = "Qui amor" =

c#: I VI V 8/6/4 - 7/5/3 I IN

$(\hat{\#3})$ $\hat{2}$ 29 30 31 $\hat{1}$

N

Musetta's prayer Mimi is dead Rodolfo notices

diss. ped.

IN P pc A

V 8/6/4 - 7/5/3 IV6 I (VI)

Example 5: Appearances in *Salome* of Eb/ eb

[adapted from Edward Murphy, "Tonality and Form in *Salome*" *The Music Review*, 50/3-4 (1989)]

scene 1:

- John's voice:13+4

scene 2:

- John's voice: 31-6
- Salome says he speaks of her mother: 34
- Salome looks into cistern: 45+5 [Eb tremolo with A and C: "how black it is down below"]
- Herod is afraid of him: 51
- John gets out: 61-3, 65

scene 3:

- John speaking: 67+4
- Salome: what should I do?: 86
- Let me kiss it/ Narraboth's suicide: 127 [unresolved Bb7]
- John "go seek him": 135-7 [unresolved Bb7]
- John goes back to cistern: 143+5 [unresolved Bb7], 145, 153-1 [tremolo on pc then Bb, Ab, Gb, A]

scene 4:

- John's voice: 186 [tremolo with Eb Major; "the time is come now"]
- You will give me anything? : 227+4 [unresolved Bb7, trill]
- Salome prepares to dance: 246 [unresolved Bb7]
- Salome asks for John's head: 257 [the oath], 267-2 ["do not ask this thing"]
- Herod relents: 298-3 [unresolved Bb7]
- the execution: 304+3 [pc Eb] , 307 (the blow?) [tremolo+Gb, B, other pcs]

Example 6: Outline of *Wozzeck*

[by Berg's pupil Fritz Mahler, "Szenische und musikalische Übersicht der Opera 'Wozzeck' von Alban Berg"; a facsimile of Mahler's handwritten outline was included in the original edition of the vocal score, published privately in 1922]

Wozzeck: Dramatic and musical structure

Drama		Music
Act I		
Exposition		*Five character pieces*
Wozzeck in relation to his environment		
Wozzeck and the Captain	scene 1	Suite
Wozzeck and Andres	scene 2	Rhapsody
Wozzeck and Marie	scene 3	Military March and Lullaby
Wozzeck and the Doctor	scene 4	Passacaglia
Marie and the Drum Major	scene 5	Andante affettuoso (quasi Rondo)
Act II		
Dramatic Development		*Symphony in Five Movements*
Marie and her child, later Wozzeck	scene 1	Sonata Movement
The Captain and the Doctor, later Wozzeck	scene 2	Fantasia and Fugue
Marie and Wozzeck	scene 3	Largo
Garden of a tavern	scene 4	Scherzo
Guard room in the barracks	scene 5	Rondo con introduzione
Act III		
Catastrophe and Epilogue		*Six Inventions*
Marie and her child	scene 1	Invention on a Theme
Marie and Wozzeck	scene 2	Invention on a Note
A low bar	scene 3	Invention on a Rhythm
Death of Wozzeck	scene 4	Invention on a Hexachord
Orchestral interlude		Invention on a key
Children playing	scene 5	Invention on a regular quaver movement

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The Naked Pitch-class and Musical Fan-Dancing

Abstract

Nakedness is often considered a state of naturalness and peace. Freud believed the Eden narrative to be derived from a memory of a childhood in which nakedness was socially acceptable. He discusses this within a discussion of an archetypal dream of being naked in a public place; here, however, although the dreamer may feel shame, the dream's witnesses to the event are usually not shocked. But if nakedness is natural, why does it become shameful when acknowledged? And if we are in a situation where others' acknowledgment of nudity is likely, and should create shame, why is there no reproach?

This seeming paradox has a counterpart in the analysis of dramatic musical works. In music theory we are taught that perfect consonances are the most natural, and peaceful relationships between tones. Yet, in the world of dramatic music, these perfect consonances can appear at moments of greatest tension.

The paper will discuss three examples of this phenomenon from the operatic repertoire: pc A after Mimi's death in Puccini's *La Bohème*; pc B after Marie's murder in Berg's *Wozzeck*; and pc Eb in *Salome* when Jokaanan is murdered. In each of these, a unison or octave is used incongruously to express the highest degree of tension. After discussing analyses of these moments, a proposed solution to the riddle will be offered in regard to Freud's theory of primary process thinking.