



MONASH University

**The Phenomenology of LIGHT:
an interpretation of Stockhausen's opera cycle drawing on Heidegger's
Fourfold and Lacanian psychoanalysis**

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Abstract

This thesis presents the outcomes of research into the possibilities of an interpretation of Karlheinz Stockhausen's seven-part opera cycle LICHT (1977-2003), drawing on theoretical constructs of both Heideggerian phenomenology and Lacanian psychoanalysis. It describes LICHT as a spiralling picture of a human condition that is always in a state of flux as its different elements interact with one another in a perpetual search to grasp the nature of something that is always beyond its grasp: to make tangible the intangible nature of being.

In this thesis I examine LICHT by connecting the Lacanian psychic registers of Symbolic, Imaginary and Real with the cycle's three core archetypal characters: Michael, Eve, and Lucifer respectively. In particular, I examine how these Lacanian concepts evolve through the development of the three musical formulas – the 'Superformula' – that represent these three characters. The formulas enable the characters' development and interactions to be charted through the ways in which the musical relationships within the Superformula are developed and applied musically, adopting a range of compositional, and especially serialist, devices throughout the entire cycle.

Through connecting the Lacanian registers to the formulas, I use the psychoanalytical concepts as tools for interpreting LICHT as commentary on fundamental philosophical questions about human nature. More particularly, I apply these tools in the context of the broader philosophical question that Heidegger sought to illustrate in his concept of the Fourfold, which describes the human search to understand the phenomenology of being as one that can be likened to earth-dwelling mortals looking towards sky-faring gods. The thesis therefore adopts an approach that interprets LICHT as a depiction of archetypal characters that reflect essentially three core aspects of the totality of human personality and that can, as such, offer rich commentary on how that totality functions and wrestles with its own questions and tensions.

My overall findings indicate an interpretation of LICHT that describes a human quest for an understanding of being that is never resolved, but rather is continuous and cyclic. I conclude, however, that this is not a pessimistic view of the human condition and instead demonstrate that the music of LICHT portrays the unending nature of that search as a positive opportunity for ongoing human learning and development.

In this way, the thesis departs from prior interpretations of LICHT as a work of predominantly mystical and theological symbolism and seeks to demonstrate a cross-disciplinary approach for innovative hermeneutic analysis of a major work of 20th- and 21st-century music.

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

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Music doesn't simply lift us above life, Micha, it doesn't want us to forget the Earth. Oh no, it leads us right into the middle of life. Just listen and you will become richer in desire and joy, strength and reverence of the great.¹

¹ Karlheinz Stockhausen, "It was like a Summons," (Kürten, Germany: Stockhausen-Verlag, 1948/2012)(trans. Jayne Obst)

The LICHT Superformula

Superformel für LICHT

Stockhausen

Monday

60 63.s 53.s 63.s

MICHAEL
EVA
LUZIFER

Tuesday

Wednesday

50.s 47.s 60 85

Thursday

Friday

60 45 60 56.s 71 75.s

Saturday

Sunday

80 63.s 67 60 rit.

24. III. - 4. IX. 1958

The LICHT Superformula, showing its three layers corresponding to Michael, Eve, and Lucifer and its seven limbs corresponding to the seven days of the week.

Chapter 1: Once upon a time ...

1.0 LICHT: The cosmic fairytale of humanity

Once upon a time there were three archetypes. Their names were Michael, Eve, and Lucifer. Their huge and remarkable story was told in a seven-part cycle of operas by German composer Karlheinz Stockhausen (1928-2007). It was called LICHT: Die Sieben Tage der Woche ('LIGHT: The Seven Days of the Week') and its composition commenced in 1977 and was completed in 2003.

Michael, Eve, and Lucifer lived in the Universe. Or at least that is where most people have assumed them to live. For me, however, there was a suspicion that they lived elsewhere too: not just in a large and often incomprehensible cosmos beyond the daily lives of humanity, but within those lives, within everyone, individually and collectively. This is, after all, what archetypes do. They wander from the big places to the small, always everywhere, like the choir of angels of the Thursday opera of Stockhausen's LICHT who, in Act Three, proclaim 'There is no home: even angels are always in transit.'

My interest, however, was not just in discovering whether or not Michael, Eve, and Lucifer live in the lives of humans, but also in what they do there. I had read and heard enough already – and I will point to this in my Literature Review later in this Chapter – about how their cosmic activity unfolded and how it could be interpreted as theology and mythology. My curiosity, though, was rather closer to home than this: what on Earth (literally as much as rhetorically) would three vast spirits, the cosmic-creator Michael, the eternal maternal life-force Eve, and the rebel anarchic angel Lucifer, possibly have to say and do in the heads of humans? How could these universal beings resonate with men and women who, confined in time and space to a mortal existence, can at best only look overwhelmed and uncomprehending at what, if anything, lies beyond?

Of course, all of this, like archetypes and fairytales, is just a metaphor for a more complex question. It is a question that I seek to ask, explain and, most importantly, answer in this thesis

through a bringing together of thinking from the perspectives of musicology, philosophy, and psychoanalysis. I want to know how LICHT can be interpreted and understood as a work that is relevant to some of the very core philosophical questions about what it means to be human rather than just as a work of fascinating though ultimately mystical symbolism.

1.1 LICHT: the basics

The seven operas of LICHT are each named after one day of the week.² Each opera focuses on one of the three central characters, Michael, Eve, and Lucifer, or on some combination of them. Stockhausen also ascribed a colour and a theme to each day, and therefore to each opera, the themes capturing Stockhausen's conception of the essence of the characters and character combinations with which that opera was concerned. These, together with their years of composition, are:

² Stockhausen's practice was to capitalise the titles of his pieces. I have followed this practice throughout this thesis. He also tended to capitalise the names of his main characters, and sometimes other names and words as well where he wished to give them prominence but, for the sake of simplicity, I have not extended my use of capitalisation beyond the titles of the music, other than in direct quotes, where I always replicate the capitalisation practices of the original author.

Opera	Character(s)	Colour	Theme	Composition
MONTAG (MONDAY) ³	Eve	Green	Birth, rebirth	1984-1988
DIENSTAG (TUESDAY)	Michael and Lucifer	Red	War	1977; 1988- 1991
MITTWOCH (WEDNESDAY)	Michael, Eve, and Lucifer	Yellow	Cosmic Solidarity	1995-1997
DONNERSTAG (THURSDAY)	Michael	Blue	Learning, progress, human-divine link	1977-1980
FREITAG (FRIDAY)	Eve and Lucifer	Orange	Seduction, temptation	1991-1994
SAMSTAG (SATURDAY)	Lucifer	Black	Death, resurrection	1981-1983
SONNTAG (SUNDAY)	Michael and Eve	Gold	Mystical union	1998-2003

The operas include both electronic and acoustic music, and some parts are performed over pre-recorded tapes that are sound-projected during the performances, often synchronous with live musicians.⁴ Each of the three central characters is represented on stage by any, or any combination of, a singer, an instrumentalist and a dancer (or mime). These are:

³ The full name of each opera is MONTAG aus LICHT (MONDAY from LIGHT), DIENSTAG aus LICHT, etc. For brevity, I use only the name of the day when referring to each opera unless in a quote from an author who does otherwise.

⁴ 'Sound projection' is the term usually used in the English sections of the scores for translating Stockhausen's German term 'Klangregie', which could perhaps be more literally translated as 'sound production'. It refers to the role of mixing

Michael:

- tenor
- trumpet
- dancer

Eve:

- soprano
- basset horn⁵
- dancer

Lucifer:

- bass
- trombone⁶
- dancer/mime

LICHT spans approximately 29 hours of music and the score stretches across 33 volumes.⁷ These scores notate most of the music, although the electronic parts are sometimes notated only in outline.⁸ The overall musical structure of LICHT is derived from a complex three-layered musical 'formula'. Stockhausen used this word to describe the core material upon which most of his work from 1970 onwards was built:

both pre-recorded and live sounds and then ensuring that these are appropriately balanced and spatialised through loudspeakers according the requirements of the score.

⁵ The basset horn is also often accompanied by the flute, which also plays a prominent role in LICHT and appears without the basset horn in a major part of SAMSTAG. The relationship of the flute to Eve has been a matter of some debate in the literature although Stockhausen never directly associated it with Eve in his own writing, or in interviews. I will discuss the role of the flute in LICHT and its relationship both to Eve and to Lucifer in Chapters 4 and 5.

⁶ The tuba sometimes plays a reinforcing role for the trombone and, at least in one scene, during the second act of DONNERSTAG, almost appears to stand in for it and to act as a manifestation of Lucifer in its own right. I will return to this in Chapter 3.

⁷ All of the LICHT scores are listed in the Bibliography.

⁸ At the time of writing, fully notated scores of the electronic music from FREITAG aus LICHT, from ORCHESTER-FINALISTEN (the second scene of MITTWOCH aus LICHT), and MITTWOCHS-ABSCHIED had not been published.

I use the idea of *formula* both in the sense of a mathematical *formula* from which a world of relationships can be deduced, as well as in the sense of a "magic *formula*" with which it is possible to evoke marvellous events.⁹

The three formula layers for LICHT correspond to the three central characters. Together, Stockhausen called this the 'Superformula' and its 19 bars are grouped into seven main sections or 'limbs', representing the seven days of the week. I will explain the Superformula in more detail later in this chapter.

There is no linear narrative to LICHT. The operas each deal with their respective themes and characters and while some of these do involve stories in the conventional sense, others are more conceptual and abstract. A brief outline of how this unfolds throughout each of the operas is provided in Appendix 1.

LICHT was commenced 26 years after what Stockhausen identified as the beginning of his work as a serious composer and was completed four years before his death. As such, it spanned almost half of his compositional life. It incorporates and elaborates many of the compositional ideas he had worked with in those first 26 years. This is seen, for example, in: its use of electronic music alongside acoustic instruments; its grounding in post-war integral serialism; its emphasis on spatialised music; its notion of music as a depiction of the structure and movement of time; its integration of aleatoric elements into composed structures; the use of form-schemes to demonstrate overall structural plans for the music; the placement of *Einschübe* (inserts), music that lies outside of the primary formal structure, into the work; idiosyncratic notation, including experimental ways of notating dynamics and the use of 'plus-minus-equal' signs to guide some aleatoric realisations of the score; and, of course, the core concept of formula composition. LICHT through these references to earlier compositional concepts and its adoption of new ones, can therefore be considered as something of a summation of his life-long approach to composition.

⁹ *The Art, to Listen: A Musical Analysis of the Composition IN FRIENDSHIP*, trans. John McGuire, 2nd ed. (Kürten, Germany: Stockhausen-Verlag, 2015), 2.

1.2 Research Problems and Questions

However huge LICHT's cosmic dramaturgy might appear to be, the human audience only ever hears it with human ears, sees it with human eyes; and the human musicologist only ever analyses it with a human brain. In seeking how these archetypal figures of LICHT might be able to be understood as commentators and energies that have a human relevance it was necessary to confront this basic tension from the outset: that is, the tension that is formed when human consciousness, with all its temporal and spatial confinement, attempts to contemplate that which lies beyond its own limitations. Is it ever possible to understand the human relevance of beings that are conceived and composed as divine energies, eternal and infinite, as are those of LICHT? This was my first research question as I began this project, but I answered it far too quickly: yes, of course it is. After all, Stockhausen himself was, his claims to alien origins in the Sirius star system notwithstanding, ultimately just a mortal human. Even more than this, however, is the simple albeit remarkable reality that all conceptions of gods and spirits and universes, of eternities and infinities, are conceived within the limitations of human consciousness, and its groundings in the here and now of limited space and time.

There is a connection here between two polarities. On the one hand, there is the human interest in the vastness of infinity and eternity, expressed across cultures and history in myths, religions, philosophy, astrophysics, string theory, quantum physics, political and humanist ideologies, and much else. On the other hand, there is the human grounding in place and time, living in the everydayness of life. The connection was described by Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) in his concept of 'the Fourfold'.¹⁰ It is a Fourfold in that it encompasses, as Heidegger poetically described it, 'earth and sky, divinities and mortals – belonging together in one'.¹¹ All of these

¹⁰ 'Fourfold' is the usual translation of Heidegger's original 'das Geviert', which would perhaps be more precisely translated as 'the quartered'. While I retain the conventional translation as 'the Fourfold', it is worth noting that the German original tends to give a better sense of the concept that the Fourfold's four elements of earth, sky, mortals, and gods as being divisions of a single whole, rather than four distinct, albeit connected, entities.

¹¹ Martin Heidegger, "Building, dwelling, thinking," in *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings* (London, UK: Harper Perennial Modern Thought, 1951/2008), 351.

aspects of the Fourfold can be understood somewhat metaphorically: the connection to environment and place (Earth-dwelling), the location in the nowness of everyday life (mortals); the concept of space beyond the human location in place (the sky); and the concept of time beyond the everyday, stretching ultimately to questions of eternity and universality (the immortal gods). For Heidegger, all points of the Fourfold are contained in and implied by each other. It is not possible to think of the confines of mortality without querying what lies beyond it, nor is it possible to imagine anything at all of eternity, other than from the perspective of contained time. So, too, with notions of infinite space and the immediacy of place: each contains the other. This translates into a concept of how humans understand the nature of who they are, manifesting itself in notions of purpose, of God, of the Beyond, whether these be conceived in the language of religion or science or political ideology or philosophy. They are all products of a limited human consciousness, which, because of those limitations, queries what if anything might lie beyond them. It does so, however, only from within those very limitations.

This Heideggerian concept of the Fourfold captured precisely my question about LICHT and its resonance with humanity. It captured my interest in interrogating LICHT as an expression of the human connection with the big themes of mythology, and the immortal gods and angels that populate the operas. In this way my research question had already developed into something more than just asking about the possibilities of LICHT's cosmic themes having a human resonance. It had developed into one that asked just what sort of resonance this would be: how, that is, can LICHT be interpreted as a commentary on a curiosity, shared across cultures, histories, and disciplines of thought, about the human place in a bigger picture?

Clearly, however, this was not precise enough as a research question. This 'bigger picture' needed to be defined, and I needed to describe the tools by which I would seek to explore how LICHT expressed a human resonance with it. The bigger picture that concerned me here is perhaps best described through reference to the concepts that Heidegger himself used when talking about it. It was, in essence, the concept of 'being' that occupied his entire life as a philosopher: being, in the sense, of what it actually means to 'to be', a notion that in Heidegger's writings from the 1930s

onwards was often expressed through his use of the term 'beyng'.¹² Beyng was, for Heidegger, a complex and ultimately ineffable notion but an important aspect of the human conception of it lay in this very tension of the Fourfold – that is, that human understanding of the concept of being is itself shaped by human understanding, and this human understanding is, in turn, characterised by the connections of the Fourfold.

The notion that understanding always comes via the filter of human perception and reason was by no means a new one. The interest in this as a philosophical question is what largely characterises philosophical idealism and especially phenomenology, a school of philosophy in which Heidegger is one of the major voices. What made him iconic as a phenomenologist was his fascination with this notion of being, and the ways in which humans conceptualise it. It always led to a conundrum, however, because as soon as attempts are made to understand what it means 'to be', the very notion of being has itself become a thing and, therefore, a being. The Fourfold therefore became a model for describing how this philosophical circle manifests itself: opposites containing each other in the impossible quest to understand what it means 'to be'. Because it is the human being who asks the question, however, it is also a question of what it means to be human, to exist. These philosophical puzzles are complex, but for the purposes of my own question it is enough to simply draw from Heidegger's concept of being, and his grounding in phenomenology, to note that this 'bigger picture' about which I was asking could be described as the 'phenomenology of being'. It can be described, that is, as the ways humans are able to understand the essential nature of their own existence. This is, to be clear, about understanding much more than what characteristics human beings do or do not have. It is about understanding the very essence of what it means to exist, to be, as human. In this way my question took more shape: 'How can LICHT be interpreted as a commentary on the phenomenology of being?' The extent to which that question can be

¹² This is the English version of Heidegger's use of 'Seyn', the archaic form of the German 'Sein' ('to be'). He used this throughout much of his writing in his attempt to distinguish the abstract and primal concept of being from that which emerges, or is conceptualised, as a being, a thing. This use of the term Seyn/Beyng is a particularly prominent feature of *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz and Daniela Vellega-Neu (Bloomington, USA: Indiana University Press, 2012). I use this term occasionally throughout this thesis when it helps clarify that I am referring particularly to Heidegger's use of this notion of being.

answered without falling into the same philosophical trap of turning the abstract concept of 'being' into the concrete notion of 'a being' will be part of what I seek to explore in this thesis.

For a research question as huge as this to have a clarity of purpose, however, some further specificity was called for. For this I sought out theoretical tools that would enable me to answer it with focus. I found these ultimately in some of the concepts of the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan (1901-1981). There were several reasons for this. First, psychoanalysis provides one framework for close study of how human consciousness and mind might function as it grapples with questions about itself. This was vital in answering a phenomenologically-driven question. Second, psychoanalysis can provide a rich source of conceptual tools for interrogating and interpreting material that is heavily characterised by mythological symbolism (a large component of LICHT). Third, Jacques Lacan's grounding in semiotics seemed to accord well with a methodology that was going to entail a large amount of hermeneutic work, interpreting the signs of musical scores and their realisations in performance. Fourth, I already saw in Jacques Lacan's triune model of psychic registers – The Symbolic, the Imaginary, and the Real – intriguing parallels with the characters of Michael, Eve, and Lucifer. I will explain these Lacanian concepts, and the synergies I draw between them and the characters of LICHT, in greater detail in the following Chapter. This was enough, however, for me to now have a precise primary research question which, through reference to the theoretical concepts from which I would draw, captured exactly what I wanted to know:

How can Lacanian psychoanalysis and Heidegger's Fourfold theory be used to interpret Stockhausen's LICHT as a commentary on the phenomenology of being?

My framing of this as my primary research question, and the ways in which I had already imagined applying it to my research, gave rise to a secondary research question:

What does the application of Lacan's registers of Symbolic, Imaginary, and Real to the characters of Michael, Eve, and Lucifer respectively suggest about the phenomenology of being?

As my research progressed, additional synergies with Lacanian psychoanalytic concepts began to emerge, giving rise to two further subsidiary research questions:

What does an application of Lacan's concept of the Master Signifier to the notion of 'light' in LICHT suggest about the phenomenology of being?

What does an application of Lacan's concept of the 'objet petit a' to the role of the Superformula in LICHT suggest about the phenomenology of being?

The ways in which these subsidiary questions developed as more specific avenues of inquiry from the primary research question will become clearer as I explain my theoretical framework in Chapter 2.

1.3 LICHT: The Superformula as genome and agent

The LICHT Superformula was composed in 1977 and provides the basic music genetic coding for most of the cycle. The proportions within its integral serialist structure, with its varying relationships of pitches, tempi, dynamics, timbres, and sounds, are employed throughout the seven operas of LICHT. They are used to inform the full range of parameters from macro structures, such as the durations, and transpositions of entire scenes and acts through to the micro level of the individual notes performed by the instrumentalists and singers throughout the operas. The considerable variety of ways in which this is done, including the use of the main serialist devices of inversion, retrograde and transposition, will become apparent as I examine individual scenes throughout the thesis.

The structure of the Superformula, and its many serialist properties, has already been well described by Jerome Kohl in his seminal article of 1990.¹³ Rather than repeat the detail of that article here, I will instead briefly focus on aspects of the Superformula that are especially relevant to my analysis. In addition to Kohl's article, I draw from interviews with the composer as well as my own observations.

First of these is the nuclear intervallic structure upon which the three layers of the Superformula are based, and which Stockhausen composed prior to the actual Superformula. Sometimes called the 'nuclear pitches' or the 'nuclear formula', these pitch rows are shown in Figure 1.1:



Figure 1.1: The nuclear notes that form the basis of the LICHT Superformula

As can be seen, there are already three rows, one for each character, and seven horizontal 'limbs', one for each day of the week. Each row contains all twelve notes of the dodecaphonic scale, except that a D has been relocated from the Lucifer row to that of Michael, giving the Michael row a total of thirteen notes, ending exactly one octave below where it began. Eve's row has twelve notes, and Lucifer's eleven. The markings of the double bar lines indicate groupings of twelve notes within two- or three-bar clusters of the seven limbs. In each of these clusters, each one of the twelve notes of the dodecaphonic scale are represented once, creating an overall Sudoku-like structure from the nuclear pitches.

Stockhausen then added to these nuclear pitches a range of musical gestures and parameters: ornamentation; echoes and pre-echoes; various types of sounds that he called *farbiges Rauschen*

¹³ Jerome Kohl, "Into the Middleground: Formula Syntax in Stockhausen's 'Licht'," *Perspectives of New Music* 28, no. 2 (1990): 262-91.

(coloured noise) and *gefärbte Pause* (coloured silence), such as wind-like whooshing noises, kissing sounds, tongue clicks, and whispered counting; modulation to allow pitches or dynamics to bend and vary on a single note; yodel-like sounds; timbral variations; a serial scale of tempi; dynamics; glissandi; microtonal pitching; and various modes of attack. Most of these reflect the overall principles of integral serialism as Richard Toop described them in the context formula composition: 'the systematic pursuit of variety'.¹⁴ The result in this case was the final LICHT Superformula which can be seen in Figure 1.2, to which I have added coloured markings corresponding with the seven days, showing the Superformula's seven limbs.¹⁵

¹⁴ Richard Toop, "MANTRA," in *Six Lectures from the Stockhausen Courses Kürten 2002* (Kürten, Germany: Stockhausen-Verlag, 2005), 76-77.

¹⁵ For ease of reference, I have also included this graphic at the beginning of this thesis, before Chapter 1.

Superformel für LICHT

Stockhausen

Monday **Tuesday**

Wednesday **Thursday**

Friday **Saturday**

Sunday

24. III. - 4. IX. 1978

Figure 1.2: The LICHT Superformula, with the seven limbs corresponding to the seven days of the weeks marked in the colours Stockhausen assigned to each day.

In 1997, in describing the three formulas, Stockhausen noted:

One I call the *Michael* formula, which is a descending melody and has mainly descending and ascending fourths. Second is the *Eve* formula which ascends – with a break in the middle – and then descends and is predominantly major thirds. The third formula is called the *Lucifer* formula. It starts very aggressively with an ascending major seventh, then descends, ascends and descends again with several tritones (dissonant intervals).¹⁶

The 'several tritones' to which he refers in the Lucifer formula, when at first there appears only to be one in each row (between notes 10 and 11 in both Michael's and Eve's row; and between notes 3 and 4 in Lucifer's row) is clarified partly in the earlier interview with Frisius, where he describes the tritone of the falling gesture between notes 8 and 11 of the Lucifer row, and also through reference to the final Superformula, where Lucifer's whispered counting in bar 7 spans a tritone and the shooting wind noises of bar 12 also span a tritone.

Along with this dissonance that Stockhausen specifically attached to the tritones of the Lucifer formula, the choir in Act Three of MONTAG ascribe other characteristics to the intervals that Stockhausen identified in the Michael and Eve formulas. They describe Eve's instrument, the basset horn, as healing the world 'through the union of Eve's body-thirds and Michael's soul-fourths'.¹⁷ Together, these provide some basic characteristics and traits that Stockhausen ascribed to the three formulas – Michael as soul, Eve as body, and Lucifer as dissonance.

Also of note in the Superformula, as in the nuclear pitches, is the way in which only the Eve formula has a pitch compass that moves into those of the other two. There is no overlap in the pitches of Michael and Lucifer. In this way there are three key ways in which all three formulas, despite their different pitch trajectories and intervallic characteristics as Stockhausen described,

¹⁶ Karlheinz Stockhausen and Malcolm Ball, "Whenever we hear sounds we are changed," in *TEXTE zur MUSIK Band 11 1991-1998*, ed. Imke Misch (Kürten, Germany: Stockhausen-Verlag, 1997), 285.

¹⁷ Stockhausen, "EVAs ZAUBER," XVII.

are interconnected: the Sudoku-like dodecaphonic structures of the layers and limbs; the relocation of one note from the Lucifer row into the Michael row; and the reaching of the Eve formula into the pitch compasses of the other two. This interconnectedness of the three formulas will be a vital component in my interpretation of LICHT, and in answering my research questions.

These, and other characteristics of the formulas that I will note in Chapter 2, become critically important in interpreting LICHT because, for Stockhausen, the formulas were much more than just abstract musical material. They were the very essence of the characters, whose appearances on stage as singers, instrumentalists, and dancers were always merely manifestations of their true form, their formulas:

And I find that it is a new aspect of music in general, the aspect that the real theatrical figures are the elements of the formula. An element of the formula, an interval with a particular sound shape can be materialised in manifold ways. I can interpret the same element of the formula in very different visual or scenic realisations.¹⁸

This, too, will be of profound importance in my study of LICHT. It represents a radically different notion of characterisation in opera, where stage presence is only a secondary manifestation of the primary characters that are composed in the music. It also gives rise to a very important notion of the music as having a kind of agency. Insofar as Michael, Eve, and Lucifer are not static concepts, but archetypal energies that shift and change, and that become the means by which other change is effected, they have agency. Where this happens musically, the music also therefore has agency. The formulas interact with one another, their formal characteristics define how the music develops. In this sense, they reflect the notion of agency that is dependent on form rather than ontology, as proposed by anthropologist Gregory Bateson.¹⁹ It was a concept that Till Jansen developed into a notion of non-human agency, where the agent, regardless of its substance, is that which, by virtue

¹⁸ "Das Theater ist das Ergebnis der Musik," in *TEXTE zur MUSIK Band 16 1998-2007* (Kürten, Germany: Stockhausen Verlag, 2014), 5.

¹⁹ Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (Chicago, USA: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 271-72.

of its form, can bring about change in something else.²⁰ It is in this sense that I will ascribe agency to the Superformula throughout my interpretation of LICHT.

1.4 Delimitations

The large scale of LICHT as a composition, coupled with the broad nature of the philosophical aspects of my research question and the complexities of the Lacanian psychoanalytic tools that I adopt in my theoretical framework, necessitate the drawing of boundaries to contain my study within reasonable proportions for a PhD thesis. There are also some caveats to my aims, and I wish to ensure that these are clear from the beginning. All of these are noted in this section where I outline my research's delimitations.

First, this study is not a Lacanian analysis of LICHT and certainly not of its composer. Rather it is a musicological and philosophical interpretation of the cycle and its symbolism, which draws from Lacan's theoretical concepts as tools to enable its research question to be answered with focus. Related to this, I use these tools in quite specific ways, which I clarify in my theoretical framework in Chapter 2. Lacan's theoretical concepts are complex and they evolved over time. Commentary on Lacan's work often focuses on different aspects of these and sometimes they are described in quite different ways. I do not claim that my own use of these Lacanian concepts is in any sense definitive, but I do claim that they are consistent with Lacan's own descriptions and uses of his terms and with those of some of the Lacanian scholars, which I cite throughout this study. I acknowledge that some of the ways in which I draw from Lacan are necessarily simplified and ignore the long and complex body of literature about how Lacan should be understood and applied. My limited and specific use of Lacan's ideas is, I argue, justified by the fact that the Lacanian references in this research are no more than one of many possible means to a broad end – enabling LICHT to be interpreted as a commentary on the phenomenology of being – rather than the central focus of the research itself.

²⁰ This relates to the concept of non-human agency as 'difference-making' in the sense of a thing, not necessarily human, having the capacity to be an agent of change in something else, as proposed, for example in Till Jansen, "Who is Talking? Some Remarks on Non-Human Agency in Communication," *Communication Theory*, no. 26 (2016): 255-72.

Second, I acknowledge that the philosophical traditions into which I delve in my research question – phenomenology in general, and Heidegger's perspective on it in particular – are rich, complex, and constantly debated both by philosophers and by scholars of philosophy. I do not attempt to explain that history or to take part in those debates. My reference to Heidegger as a means of conceptualising a fundamental question of what it means to be human is no more than that: a means of conceptualisation. I acknowledge that scholars of philosophy will take issue with some of Heidegger's concepts. I assert, however, that they are sufficiently well-established in the traditions of Western philosophy to justify my use of them as this means of conceptualising my research question and, therefore, enabling a new, and more humanly grounded perspective on LICHT as an alternative to the more mystical and theologically leaning focuses of other interpretations of its symbolism.

The scale of LICHT is such that I am unable within the limits of this study to explore in detail every scene of the seven operas. Instead, I have chosen to focus on a few major scenes that are particularly relevant to the points I wish to make, and then I look in more general terms at most of the remaining scenes. As such, I cannot claim that this is an exhaustive study of the whole of LICHT, but rather the first indicators of how LICHT can be understood as a commentary on the core questions of human being to which my research question refers.

Last, and of particular importance to Stockhausen scholarship, I do not claim my interpretation to be definitive. I do not in any sense wish to suggest that this is what LICHT is 'really about', nor even do I wish to suggest that Stockhausen would agree with my interpretation. It is simply one of many possible new interpretations and one that I hope I will demonstrate is both consistent with the music and internally coherent. While noting this caveat I also, however, draw attention to Stockhausen's own belief that his music was greater than himself, and therefore his openness to new perspectives on it, and to the possibility that these might reveal ideas and meanings of which even he was unaware:

I don't ultimately know what my music has to do in this world and what it means. Because it must be filled with new meanings, with other people, other spirits. I'm commissioned, so to speak, by a supernatural power to do what I do. I think the spirit, as a personal spirit, will be the music itself, so I don't have to take care of it anymore: it begins to have its own life, and sometimes when I meet it again, I hardly recognize it.²¹

1.5 Chapter outline

This study is in seven Chapters. After this introductory Chapter, Chapter 2 positions my study in the current environment of Stockhausen scholarship through a review of related literature, outlines my methodology, and then explains my theoretical framework and sets out the major theoretical terms and tools I adopt and how I use them.

Chapters 3 to 5 focus on the three Lacanian registers of Symbolic, Imaginary, and Real and what can be gleaned from their connection to the characters of Michael, Eve, and Lucifer respectively. Each of these chapters gives more detailed attention to a specific scene that both depicts the character with a concentrated focus and demonstrates the interpretative connections with hermeneutic richness. These are, respectively: MICHAELs REISE UM DIE ERDE ('MICHAEL'S JOURNEY AROUND THE EARTH'), the Second Act of DONNERSTAG; EVAs LIED ('EVE's SONG'), the second half of Act Two of MONTAG; and LUZIFERs TANZ ('LUCIFER'S DANCE'), the Third Scene of SAMSTAG. Each Chapter also comments upon other scenes and Acts that involve those characters and draws further, and sometimes more general, observations about what can be found by applying the Lacanian registers to them and to their development, and interactions with one another. These observations will generally lead into some formative conclusions about how those observations relate to the broader research questions concerning the phenomenology of being.

²¹ Jonathan Cott and Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Stockhausen : conversations with the composer* (London: Robson Books Ltd, 1974), 51.

Chapter 6 focuses on two additional Lacanian concepts: the Master Signifier, and the *objet petit a*, likening the first of these to the concept of 'light' from which Stockhausen's cycle derives its name; and the second to the Superformula itself which, in that chapter, I argue, completes the chain of connections by drawing my interpretation back to Heidegger's concept of 'beyng'. The chapter will focus particularly on MITTWOCH, which, in its focus on collaboration and balance, I interpret as a metaphor for resolving the tensions inherent in Heidegger's Fourfold and in the human quest to understand beyng. All these connections, through the search for reconciliation with the points of the Fourfold and the focus on Master-Signifying light as a manifestation of this, are explained and explored in this Chapter.

The final Chapter returns to the primary research question and consolidates the findings that the previous chapters have generated. It will also describe the overall significance of the research in the broader contexts of Stockhausen scholarship, musicological hermeneutics, and cross-disciplinary application of theoretical tools. Finally, it will point to other research possibilities that might emerge from the current study.

Chapter 2: Literature review, methodology, and theoretical framework

In this chapter I undertake three major tasks to provide the scholarly context of my research: I provide an overview of the key literature relevant to my topic in order to demonstrate how this study is placed in the broader context of Stockhausen scholarship; I explain the methodology I have adopted in answering the research questions set out in Chapter 1; and finally I explain the key theoretical concepts from which I draw in answering the research questions, the sense in which I use them, and lastly how I apply them specifically to the musical material of LICHT.

2.1 Literature review

Despite a long history of the interpretation of mythological material from the perspective of psychology, psychoanalysis, and philosophy, particularly in the sense of viewing the symbolism of those works as providing insights into the functioning of human consciousness and personality, I have been able to locate no literature that takes such an approach to LICHT. Certainly, I have found no hint of an approach that uses that which ultimately unfolds throughout this thesis: that is, of seeing the three core characters of LICHT as representations of different aspects of a single psychic whole. This literature review therefore provides an overview of the perspectives that the current literature does take on LICHT and to some degree on Stockhausen's music more broadly.

2.1.1 Formal and structural analysis of the music of LICHT

Arguably, the most extensive scholarly commentary on the formal and structural aspects of Stockhausen's music, beyond that written by the composer, is Rudolf Frisius's three volume analysis of Stockhausen's compositional ideas and works. The third volume is devoted to his two large cycles that occupied the last thirty years of the composer's life: LICHT and KLANG²². Frisius' commentary complements the composer's own extensive analyses of his music provided in the

²² Rudolf Frisius, *Stockhausen: Die Werkzyklen 1977-2007* (Mainz, Germany: Schott, 2013).

prefaces to the scores²³, as well as in his collected texts.²⁴ Typically Frisius's writings provide detailed descriptions of each work and of how it unfolds musically and dramatically in performance. Stockhausen's own writings also explain these points, and sometimes give further historical perspectives on the works' compositional processes, including the musical and broader artistic aims he had in his work. Stockhausen also addresses issues about his operas' symbolism, which I will discuss in the next section.

There is considerable scholarly literature focusing on particular formal and structural aspects of LICHT. These works usually involve explorations of how the Superformula is used throughout the cycle. The emphases of these commentaries vary considerably. Kohl, for example, focuses on the details of the Superformula's syntactical structure.²⁵ Others focus on its application to a particular scene, such as Richard Toop's analysis of KATHINKAs GESANG als LUZIFERs REQUIEM,²⁶ or Oscar Bianchi's examination of the Superformula's generative functions in LICHTER-WASSER,²⁷ through to Bandur's observations about coherence and creativity in 20th-century music through his analysis of SAMSTAGS-GRUSS.²⁸ Musicologist Dettloff Schwerdtfeger provides a particularly detailed analysis of the musical structure, and its unfolding dramatically, in a book that focuses particularly on DONNERSTAG as the first-composed opera of the LICHT cycle, setting out its significance as the first indicators of Stockhausen's overall compositional methods for LICHT.²⁹ All of these are examples of scholars whose analyses of LICHT are essentially focused on how the music is structured, how its elements are developed, and how they work alongside one another throughout particular scenes in the operas.

²³ The LICHT scores comprise 33 volumes and were published by the Stockhausen-Verlag from 1978 to 2003.

²⁴ Stockhausen, Karlheinz, *TEXTE zur MUZIK*, Volumes V-VI DuMont Buchverlag, Cologne (1989); Volumes VII-XVII, Stockhausen-Verlag, Kürten (1998-2014)

²⁵ Kohl, "Middleground," 262-91.

²⁶ Toop, "KATHINKAs GESANG," 99-128.

²⁷ Oscar Bianchi, "Generative Processes in Stockhausen's *Lichter-Wasser*" (Columbia University, 2013).

²⁸ Markus Bandur, "The Composition of Meaning: Construction and Semantics in Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Luzifer-Gruss vom Samstag aus Licht*," *Perspectives of New Music* 37, no. 1 (1999): 157-78.

²⁹ Dettloff Schwerdtfeger, *DONNERSTAG aus LICHT: Ziel und Anfang einer Kompositorischen Entwicklung* (Kürten, Germany: Stockhausen-Verlag, 2000).

2.1.2 Analysis of the symbolism of LICHT

Stockhausen's own commentary on the symbolism of LICHT tended to be spread out through various interviews from the earliest years of the work's composition, through until his death, rather than captured in any single text. Invariably, however, that commentary referred to the spiritual dimensions of LICHT, to the angelic personas of Michael and Lucifer and to the spiritual motherhood and femininity of Eva. In the smallest nutshell, Stockhausen described LICHT as being 'about God as Light in music'.³⁰

In a work as rich with symbolism as LICHT is, it is unsurprising that commentators have taken an interest in how that symbolism works and what it means. What is perhaps more surprising, however, is the extent to which those commentaries have continued to operate largely within this interpretative framework, and its references to the spiritual and religious themes to which Stockhausen himself primarily referred. Thomas Ulrich, for example, explores the theological dimensions of LICHT,³¹ as well as a more comprehensive analysis of the dramaturgy of the cycle, but also with a strong emphasis on its theology.³² Günter Peters investigates its spiritual and mythological symbolism and their connection with humour.³³ Gregg Wager explore its mythological and religious roots especially through reference to texts such as the Bible and *The Urantia Book*, as part of a broader analysis of Stockhausen's use of symbolism.³⁴ Joseph Drew takes up a similar theme in a more detailed analysis of LICHT's narrative, particularly in relation to the character of Michael.³⁵ Robin Hartwell looks specifically at Stockhausen's relationship with the Christian Hell as

³⁰ Karlheinz Stockhausen, "Music is the most spiritual of all the arts," in *TEXTE zur MUSIK Band 17 1998-2007* ed. Imke Misch (Kürten, Germany: Stockhausen-Verlag, 2014), 328.

³¹ Thomas Ulrich, *Stockhausen: A Theological Interpretation*, trans. Jayne Obst (Kürten, Germany: Stockhausen-Verlag, 2012), 93-116.

³² *Stockhausens Zyklus LICHT: Ein Opernführer* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2017).

³³ Günter Peters, *Holy Seriousness in the Play: Essays on the Music of Karlheinz Stockhausen* (Kürten, Germany: Stockhausen-Verlag, 2003), 233-64.

³⁴ Gregg Wager, "Symbolism as a Compositional Method in the Works of Karlheinz Stockhausen" (Free University, Berlin, 1998), 191-228.

³⁵ Joseph Drew, "Michael from Licht: A character study of Karlheinz Stockhausen's hero" (Ph.D., New York University, 2014).

manifest in his abandoned plan to create a work, LUZIFERIUM, in which Lucifer would sit imprisoned, to coincide with a performance of SONNTAG.³⁶

Some authors have made some attempts to venture into other territory in their commentary on LICHT's symbolism, such as the meaning of humour in the cycle as discussed by Henkel.³⁷

Bulgarian musicologist Ivanka Stoïanova has described LICHT as a work that captures, and invites its audience to experience, the essence of existence, as expressed in Martin Heidegger's concept of *Dasein*. She presents the symbolism of LICHT as one that therefore offers a diversity of creative interpretations and understandings for both performers and audiences.³⁸

2.1.3 Other commentary on LICHT

There is other scholarly literature on LICHT that does not fall neatly into the categories of formal and structural analysis of its music, nor the interpretation of its symbolism. Most of them, however, touch on these issues to some extent. Peter Schnur, for example, looks at the connection between LICHT and Stockhausen's earlier compositional output, noting the adoption, and continuous development, of serialist techniques across much of Stockhausen's oeuvre.³⁹ Pascal Bruno focuses on the ways in which LICHT connects with and emulates older mythology.⁴⁰ Katarina Grohmann turns her attention to the ways in which Stockhausen achieves musical and scenic synthesis through MITTWOCH.⁴¹ Robin Maconie provides a more varied commentary on LICHT in the final eight chapters of his book about Stockhausen's music, delivering a critique of, amongst other things, the cycle's musical, philosophical, technological and dramatic features.⁴² His more

³⁶ Robin Hartwell, "Threats and Promises: Lucifer, Hell, and Stockhausen's Sunday from Light " *Perspectives of New Music* 50 (2012): 393-424.

³⁷ Georg Henkel, *Kosmisches Lachen: SYNTHI-FOU und der närrische Humor in Karlheinz Stockhausens Openzyklus LICHT* (Hamburg, Germany: Tredition, 2012).

³⁸ Ivanka Stoïanova, "And Dasein Becomes Music: Some Glimpses of Light," *Perspectives of New Music* 37, no. 1 (1999): 179-212.

³⁹ Peter Schnur, *Karlheinz Stockhausens LICHT-Zyklus: Die Idee des Gesamtkunstwerks* (Hamburg, Germany: Diplomica Verlag, 2014).

⁴⁰ Pascal Bruno, "Donnerstag aus Licht: A New Myth, or Simply an Updating of a Knowledge?," *Perspectives of New Music* 37, no. 1 (1999): 133-56.

⁴¹ Katerina Grohmann, *Karlheinz Stockhausen: Oper MITTWOCH aus LICHT* (Kassel, Germany: Gustav Bosse Verlag, 2010).

⁴² Robin Maconie, *Other planets : the music of Karlheinz Stockhausen* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2005).

recent article on the spiritual elements of LICHT focuses on notions of suffering and resolution as they are symbolically represented in Stockhausen's music.⁴³

2.2 Methodology

The methodology that I have adopted in the study is principally one that is grounded in the interpretative domain of hermeneutics, particularly through semiotics. I have approached the scores of LICHT as my primary source material, seeing them as a musical text, with musical signifiers, which I then decipher through the applications of the main theoretical concepts that I outline below. In this way I seek to generate new interpretative possibilities for LICHT.

This methodology has involved close analysis of how the Superformula is played out throughout the scores. I have explained the structural significance of the Superformula in the previous chapter and later in this chapter I explain how and why I have applied the key theoretical concepts to it, which then inform the interpretative analysis for the remainder of the study. In this approach to studying the Superformula and interpreting the many ways in which it is deployed throughout the scores of LICHT, I look for both syntagmatic and systematic relationships between the Superformula's various layers and limbs. I use these terms 'syntagm' and 'system' in the sense that Roland Barthes used these concepts in his own writings on semiotics. In Barthes's work, 'syntagm' refers to the linear relationship of a sequence of linguistic units and 'system' to the linguistic units that can occupy the same place in the linear narrative of the syntagm.⁴⁴ Using this model, I view the relationships within each formula as syntagmatic, forming as they do a kind of narrative of the days of the week from the perspective of each character, while I view the relationships between the formulas as systematic, forming contemporaneous possibilities of that narrative between the three characters. This leads, then, to many observations of how the formulas, and the units within them as marked out by the bars and limbs, play out both vertically and horizontally throughout the operas.

⁴³ "Saving Faith: Stockhausen and Spirituality," *Tempo* 72, no. 283 (2017).

⁴⁴ Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*, trans. Annette Lavers and Colin Smith (New York, USA: Hill and Wang, 1977), 58-59.

I also draw on other aspects of the work, particularly the libretto and stage directions. All of this is then related to the Lacanian theoretical concepts that I adopt in generating this new interpretation of LICHT. This analysis is also complemented by a considerable body of other sources, including Stockhausen's own writings about his works, in both the scores' prefaces and throughout the many volumes of TEXTE zur MUSIK where references to LICHT are made. I have also spent many weeks throughout the years of this study at the Stockhausen Archives in Kürten where I have been able to access Stockhausen's sketches for the operas, along with his own copies of many articles, texts, and newspaper clippings that were of interest to him while he composed the operas. These often include his comments in his own handwriting in the margins, providing useful insights into his compositional process, as well as ideas he considered and later rejected. They also provide a rich source of material outlining the ideas, particularly in relation to philosophy, mythology, and cosmology, that interested him at the time. This material was often noted by Stockhausen during, or even before, his composition of the Superformula, suggesting that his initial conceptions of the characters were rooted in these sources. The value of this material, along with what I glean from various musical characteristics of the formulas, will be particularly evident in my explanations of my associations of Lacanian concepts to Michael, Eve, and Lucifer in the theoretical framework sections of this chapter.

I have also had constant access to recordings of all the LICHT operas, as well as video footage of performances and rehearsals. This has provided further elucidation of the dramatic ideas behind the various scenes and of the connections between the characters, which I have then related back to what is happening musically in the scores. I have also been able to attend a number of live performances of DONNERSTAG, the only opera from the LICHT cycle to be staged during my study. Some of these performances were in Basel in 2016 and some were in Paris in 2018. I have also been able to attend many rehearsals of scenes from LICHT, particularly for the performances of approximately half of LICHT that are scheduled for Amsterdam in June 2019. These rehearsals were supervised by both Kathinka Pasveer and Suzanne Stephens, co-directors of the Stockhausen Foundation for Music in Kürten. Both Stephens and Pasveer lived and worked closely

with Stockhausen throughout the composition and first performances of the LICHT operas. The parts for basset horn and flute, both having major roles throughout the cycle, were composed for them.⁴⁵ The opportunities I have had to observe these rehearsals provided many useful insights into the detail of the music, as I saw musicians learning it and transforming it into performance.

This analysis of the scores, sketches, recordings and texts related to LICHT are occasionally complemented by reference to existing analyses and interpretations where this helps to illustrate or contrast my arguments. I also refer to other relevant theoretical material, particularly drawing from the disciplines of philosophy and psychoanalysis.

My methodology is, then, primarily an interpretative one. It offers a subjective perspective on LICHT, but one that is informed, I hope, by the rigorous and critical application of sound theoretical tools. It is, however, subjective in the sense that it is my own, and my aim in making such an interpretation is not only to show a consistent and coherent new perspective on the operas but also to open up others to do so as well, perhaps through applying totally different theoretical models from the ones I have used, or even using the same or similar models but generating different outcomes. The intent of my methodology is to be consistent and creative, rather than definitive and positivist.

2.3 Theoretical framework

In answering the research questions of this study, the theoretical framework from which I primarily draw is that of Jacques Lacan. In particular, I draw on his three registers of psychic function: the Symbolic, the Imaginary, and the Real. I also later draw on his concepts of Master Signifier and *object petit a*. I explain these concepts, the sense in which I apply them, and how I relate them to

⁴⁵ Of the seven LICHT operas, only five were staged during Stockhausen's lifetime. SONNTAG received its world premiere staging in Cologne in 2011 and MITTWOCH in Birmingham in 2012. The full cycle has not yet been staged with all seven operas performed in succession and, aside from DONNERSTAG, none of the operas have received more than one fully staged production.

LICHT, for the remainder of this chapter.⁴⁶ I do this in the order of Symbolic, Imaginary, and Real. My reason for presenting the concepts in this order is because this follows the order of Michael, Eve, and Lucifer, to whom I respectively connect each register, as they appear from the top to bottom layers of the Superformula.

It is important to note from the outset that I have found no evidence of Lacan, nor of Lacanian scholars, using the registers in this way – that is, of ascribing them to entire characters in a drama. I acknowledge that this is an unusual approach, but I believe it is justified in the sense that the characters of LICHT, as already noted, are not characters in the conventional sense but rather, through their primary manifestation in music, are more akin to abstract concepts or energies, and in my interpretation, to strands of human personality. In this sense, my approach is rather like that of, for example, Hildegard of Bingen in *Ordo Virtutum*, where human and ethical qualities are personified musically and on stage, or Emilio de Cavalieri's *Rappresentazione di Aninma et di Corpo*, in which abstract qualities such as the soul, time, pleasure and counsel are portrayed as characters. This becomes, then, a device for viewing those concepts and qualities in dynamic, interactive ways, as they might play out in life and personality. I make no claim that Lacan would have approved of such an approach, only that it is a valid means of drawing on his theories and connecting them to a work of musical art that operates very much in the domain of the universal and human principles of archetypes.

In her introduction to the Lacanian registers, Andrea Hurst describes them as emerging initially from the primacy of the Real, which in her analysis is 'that sacred "core" of the self that just "is"'.⁴⁷ Her explanation is one that posits that the notions of identity and connection are formed as private, unnamed images in the domain of the Imaginary when she says that 'the Imaginary names a knowable aspect of the self: personal identity or "self image"'. We build up a personal identity by trying to make sense of the Real in ourselves. As the words "build" and "make" suggest, a

⁴⁶ My theoretical framework is also outlined in Parsons, Ian. "The Light Within: A psychoanalytic Interpretation of Karlheinz Stockhausen's LICHT." *Context: Journal of Music Research* 44 (2019): Forthcoming.

⁴⁷ Andrea Hurst, "'Know Thyself!' a Lacanian model for understanding subjective complexity," *South African Journal of Psychology* 39, no. 3 (2009): 276.

coherent identity is always a fabrication (it is man made).¹⁴⁸ She then goes on to explain how these are formed into shared codes and conventions in the domain of the Symbolic, which she says 'names the collective dimension of the self. It consists of often unconsciously absorbed understandings, codes for behaviour, cultural rules, and stereotypes', and she points to their social dimensions when she adds that these 'are largely, but not exclusively, carried along in natural languages. The codes that habitually condition our self understanding and behaviour become apparent when contact with people from other cultures renders our own habits questionable.'¹⁴⁹

For Lacan, these three registers of Symbolic, Imaginary, and Real are intimately and inextricably entwined with one another. He describes them as forming a Borromean Knot – the three linked rings where it is impossible to remove one without all of them unravelling.⁵⁰ In the Borromean Knot, the function of each becomes enlivened by the connections they make, and these connections imply the existence of all. As Danish psychology academic Judy Gammelgaard puts it,

Transferred to Lacan's three orders this [the interlinking rings of the Borromean knot] means that although the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real must be considered entirely discrete and autonomous, they nevertheless acquire their consistency through the way in which they interrelate. One cannot, in other words, think of the interrelationship between two of them without implying the existence of a third term that implies their relation.⁵¹

I will now expand on this very broad description of Lacan's three registers in more detail.

2.3.1 The Symbolic

Lacan's Symbolic is about the systems by which humans can interact and order themselves socially. It refers to systems of signs – mutually understood relationships between signifiers and

⁴⁸ Ibid. I return to this fabricated nature of the images of the Imaginary later.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Jacques Lacan, *The seminar of Jacques Lacan. Book XXII: R.S.I., (1974-1975)*, <http://hdl.handle.net/10788/179>. 5.

⁵¹ Judy Gammelgaard, "Like a pebble in your shoe: A psychoanalytical reading of Lars von Trier's *Breaking the Waves* and *Antichrist*," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 94, no. 6 (2013): 1222-23.

signifieds. These are at the basis of how Ferdinand de Saussure describes 'language', as 'a system of signs in which the only essential thing is the union of meanings and sound-images, and in which both parts of the sign are psychological'.⁵² As Lacan develops this concept in his descriptions of the developing personality, he describes how this psychological component of language involves a connection between the subject and the external world. These interactions with the outside world develop continually throughout life and manifest in the many ways in which those interactions are defined and limited. This happens in the realm of language: but not just language in the sense of spoken language, but also in the ways in which language enables laws to be developed, conventions and codes of behaviour to develop, and values and standards of communal morality to emerge. These all emerge through systems of signs, but not necessarily in the sense of words that are written down in statutes or in texts of religious dogma. They also emerge in the ways in which societies express signs through their rituals and practices, including through the ways in which people might collectively admonish those who act outside a community's expectations or reward those who act within them, or even through the way in which a parent might express their displeasure with their child by a stern look, or their pleasure by a loving smile. These are all examples of the systems of signs to which Saussure referred. In this way language is both psychological and social. This can be as much the case in small collections of individuals – a family, for example – or larger collections of people, such as a nation or even an international community. This all occurs in Lacan's register of the Symbolic.⁵³ It includes this

⁵² Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Wade Baskin (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2011), 15-16. This is by no means the only way in which language is understood throughout both linguistic and broader philosophical theory. Saussure's recognition of the psychological element in the signification of language, for example, has been reflected and quite radically developed in many post-structuralist explanations of language from theorists such as Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault. Ludwig Wittgenstein, particularly in his later years, developed notions of language forming through what he described as 'language games' whereby words come to be associated with meanings through the manner in which they are used, rather than through a simple signifier-signified relationship that exists independently of its use. See, especially, Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, P.M.S. Hacker, and Joachim Schulte (West Sussex, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2009). These ideas demonstrate a development from the picture-theory of language that Wittgenstein had espoused earlier. See *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus: Bilingual Edition*, trans. Daniel Deleanu (Toronto, Canada: LogoStar Press, 2012). This development from the semiotically-oriented picture-theory of language to the later context-oriented theory does not necessarily reflect a departure from the fundamental theories of Saussure, but it does indicate a deeper interest in the anthropological and social aspects of language beyond that of Saussure and thereby also suggesting a closer alignment with the more socially-driven operations of language in Lacan's Symbolic register.

⁵³ See, for example, Jacques Lacan, 'The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis', in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: Norton and Company, 2006), 237-322 at 272, where

broader dimension of language as the system of signs that prescribe how an individual is expected to behave, and it is this aspect of the Symbolic that Lacan calls 'the Big Other', which points to the human awareness not just of the exchange of signifiers with another individual, an equal, but with a collection of others who represent a more global authority.⁵⁴

Lacan notes the connection between the Big Other and human perceptions of God when he refers to Descartes' *cogito*, and specifically to the Cartesian notion of truth. For Descartes, human cognition is possible only by virtue of a benevolent god who would not deceive humans by creating perceptions that do not accord with how the world really is and that therefore would not be 'true'. Lacan refers to this as 'the handing back of truth into the hands of the [Big] Other, in this instance the perfect God, whose truth is the nub of the matter'.⁵⁵ For the atheist Lacan, then, God is primarily a consequence of a human and largely social need to conceptualise, communicate, and universalise truth in the realm of the Symbolic.

Lacan's Symbolic should never be confused with a direct representation of how the world really is. This point goes beyond the simple and obvious one that a word is not the actual object it refers to (but rather a signifier of it), but also in the sense that there can be profound disparities in the signification process. As Slavoj Žižek has noted, for example, a judge might be treated with respect while wearing judge's robes even if people know that the individual human being wearing the robes is corrupt and weak. In relating this to the Lacanian Symbolic, Žižek draws attention to another Lacanian observation regarding the human engagement with the Big Other: that is, that the

Lacan describes the process of laws emerging along with language through symbolic pacts, typified in legendary stories of the sharing of gifts and what those gifts were understood by the giver and the receiver to signify.

⁵⁴ For a more detailed analysis of the roles that the Symbolic in general and the Big Other in particular play in the law see Lorraine Schroeder, *The Four Lacanian Discourses: Or Turning Law Inside Out* (Oxon: UK: Birkbeck Law Press, 2008).. This text concentrates on work largely from the midpoint of Lacan's career where his concepts about different forms of discourse, including authoritarian discourse (Lacan's 'discourse of the master') and discourse for the purpose of accumulating knowledge for its own sake (his 'university discourse') were emerging and, therefore, Schroeder examines the implications of this for how law is studied and practiced. Her analysis of the 'discourse of the master' in relation to the law is the aspect of her work that is particularly relevant to the notion of the law (and more broadly to social conventions and codes of behavior) and its relation to the Big Other.

⁵⁵ Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York, USA: Norton, 1981), 36. In this passage, Lacan connects the 'I am' of Descartes' *cogito* with the Real, but argues that this lies so outside of what can be understood that Descartes 'has to reassure himself – of what, if not of an Other that is not deceptive.'

individual must, to some extent, give in to this disparity and accept the Symbolic no matter how much at odds it might be with how the person knows the world to be. As Žižek puts it in the context of the corrupt and weak judge, 'those who do not let themselves be caught in symbolic deception/fiction, and continue to believe their eyes [in the sense of knowing that the judge they are looking at is a corrupt and weak person], are the ones who err most.'⁵⁶ In this way, then, the Symbolic is not the truth it might seem to represent, to refer back to the Cartesian exploration of the human *cogito*. Even the knowledge that it does not do so, however, must be suspended in order to function within the constraints of social order. In this sense, the notion of truth suggested by the Big Other can be a fictional truth, but one in which everyone agrees to believe for the sake of retaining social order and to avoid falling into the narcissistic self-obsession of the Imaginary or the incomprehensible chaos of the Real, two processes that I will demonstrate from LICHT in Chapters 4 and 5 respectively.

Throughout my interpretation of LICHT, my application of Lacan's Symbolic will be made primarily in two senses: that of the Symbolic as the realm in which communication through language is enabled, and that of the Big Other.

2.3.2 Michael as the Symbolic

The Symbolic's manifestation as Big Other is especially important to the character of Michael as a representative, or bodily incarnation of, the divine – a role that is particularly the focus of the opera that concentrates on his character: DONNERSTAG. The most frequently cited of the various theological and mythological texts from which Stockhausen drew in his conceptualisation of Michael is *The Urantia Book*.⁵⁷ There Michael is the ruler of our local universe and incarnates himself in various forms in the religions of different planets, including as the Jesus of the Bible.⁵⁸ *The Urantia Book* designates him as the '611,121st universal concept of divinity and infinity'.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Slavoj Žižek, *The Parallax View* (Cambridge, UK: MIT Press, 2009), 347.

⁵⁷ *The Urantia Book*, (Chicago: Urantia Foundation, 1955).

⁵⁸ *The Urantia Book* proposes that our universe is one of many universes, which themselves form into one of many superuniverses.

⁵⁹ *The Urantia Book*, 33:1.

These notions of Michael as the signifier of an intangible divinity are also reflected in the broad range of mythological and even historical figures with whom Stockhausen linked him. Two of these are noted on an early sketch, dated 26 May 1977, where Stockhausen notes some preliminary ideas for both for the overall pitch trajectories of the formulas, and some mythological associations with Michael: Herkules and Roland.⁶⁰ Hercules, to adopt the anglicised version of his name, was the son of the Roman Zeus, and a brave adventurer who, amongst other exploits, slew the nine-headed dragon-like Hydra. This association clearly links with Michael as the dragon-slayer, also noted in the 26 May sketch where the word 'Drachentöter' is written beneath 'Herkules'. It is an image drawn from the Bible's *Revelation of St John* (12:7), and to a role in which Michael appears in the third Act of *DONNERSTAG*, where he fights and defeats Lucifer, who appears there in the guise of a dragon. Similar qualities of bravery are captured in Roland, an historical figure who fought under King Charlemagne and since became fabled in epic poems and other heroic literature of medieval Europe. Roland was a brave warrior, who slew, amongst others, the giant Ferracutus, a descendant of Goliath whose task was to fight the advance of Christianity. This association of Michael with Roland, via Hercules, suggests that there is something of the keeper of the faith about him, the one who defends the established social order and the law from the barbarous and supernaturally threatening force of the giant.

A note written beneath a prayer Stockhausen wrote in March 1979 places Michael's name alongside a number of other mythological and historical names: Osiris, Apollon Loxias, Dionysos, Pythagoras, Christos and Apollonius.⁶¹ Each of these names lends insight into how Stockhausen conceptualised the character of Michael, each involving a sense of earthly manifestation of the Divine. Loxias is one of Apollo's epithets, the one that points to him as the speaker, the interpreter, for the divine Jupiter. Osiris is the Egyptian deity associated with transition between life, death, and the after-life, while the Greek god Dionysus is connected more with earthly, and sometimes

⁶⁰ Karlheinz Stockhausen, *TEXTE zur MUSIK Band 5 1977-1984* (DuMont 1989), 150.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 207.

frenzied, celebrations and the excesses of wine.⁶² Apollonius presumably refers to Apollonius of Tyana, a contemporary of Jesus and, in his time, something of a rival, with many parallels in the stories that are told about the birth, life, death and return of the two figures.

Pythagoras is of course the great Greek mathematician who, as Jonathan Harvey explains, became something of a cult figure in late 19th- and early 20th-century theosophy.⁶³ Harvey quotes French esoteric writer Edouard Schuré, who described the mathematics of Pythagoras, and the concept of a number as:

[...] not regarded as an abstract quantity but as the intrinsic and active virtue of the supreme One, of God the source of universal harmony. The science of *numbers* was that of the living forces, of the *divine faculties* in action in the universe and in man, in the macrocosm and the microcosm.⁶⁴

This provides an intriguing perspective on Michael-as-Pythagoras in connection with numbers which are, in LICHT, associated more obviously with Lucifer for whom counting is a prominent component of his formula. Michael, however, does not count – instead, he creates music, and his music has none of the whispered, spoken elements of the Lucifer formula. They are connected, however, in the number 13: the number to which Lucifer overtly counts at the end of his formula, and the number of notes in Michael's nuclear formula. In this way, Lucifer's unmusical counting is translated into a musical nucleus in Michael. For Stockhausen, for whom music was the more elevated language, Michael's music therefore becomes aligned with these loftier concepts of numbers which Schuré had found in Pythagoras: the 'intrinsic and active virtue of the supreme One', and with realising the 'science of numbers' as that of 'the divine faculties in action in the

⁶² This is an unexpected association of Michael, suggesting an element of darkness and chaos about him. This is perhaps by virtue of the covert Luciferian presence in Michael as seen in the relocation of the D, noted in my description of the three formulas above. I have not been able to locate any other references to this darker aspect of Michael in the literature.

⁶³ Jonathan Harvey, *The Music of Stockhausen : an Introduction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 118.

⁶⁴ Edouard Schuré, *Pythagoras and Delphic Mysteries* (London, UK: Wm Rider and Son, 1910), 84., as quoted in Harvey, *Stockhausen*, 118.

universe and in man'. All of this then stands in contrast to the whispered unmusical counting of Lucifer, designated in the Superformula only as 'coloured silence'.⁶⁵ In this way, Michael becomes the musical, and therefore for Stockhausen more expressive, embodiment of Lucifer's abstract numbers.

Other mythological and spiritual references are associated with Michael in Stockhausen's sketches, and in the opera's libretto. A photocopied article about Donar/Thor is included in the Archive's volume of sketches for the Third Act, to which Stockhausen has added in his own hand references to Jupiter and Zeus.⁶⁶ Michael is referred to as Jupiter several times throughout the opera, the king of the Roman gods and the one who negotiated earthly religion with the Roman kings. Zeus was Jupiter's equivalent in Greek mythology, also king of the gods, but the Romans seem to have given Jupiter a greater role in negotiating with the world of humans, and especially of earthly government, than the Greeks gave Zeus. This could be why Michael, the divine connection to the human world, is referred to in the libretto as Jupiter rather than as Zeus, despite this reference to Zeus in Stockhausen's handwritten notes.

This picture of a divine and ineffable essence making itself knowable in the character of Michael, and shown as such in his formula, has already been commented on by others.⁶⁷ But from the perspective of human personality, where human agency is active, a different interpretation emerges: one where signification is not so much delivered from above, but created from within.

⁶⁵ This connection between the numbers counted in the Lucifer formula and number of notes in the Michael nuclear formula is perhaps an extension of a connection drawn in Stockhausen's earlier piece for solo clarinet, *HARLEKIN* (1975) where the clarinettist plays, both musically and through dance, several aspects of the character Harlequin, the crafty servant from Italian *Commedia dell'arte*. In one part of that piece, where Stockhausen presents Harlekin as 'the roguish joker', the character uses his fingers to 'count' the notes in between segments of the formula being played on the clarinet. It is noteworthy that this link between abstract counting and numbers of musical notes is made here in relation to this 'roguish' aspect of Harlekin, the closest that character comes to sharing traits with Lucifer who often exhibits similarly impish behaviour, such as his appearance as a polyp in Act One of *MONTAG*, or his disruptive and noisy rush through the church in *LUZIFERs ABSCHIED*.

⁶⁶ Karlheinz Stockhausen, "MICHAELs HEIMKEHR Skizzen," (Kürten, Germany: Stockhausen-Archiv, undated), #40.1-#40.2.

⁶⁷ See, for example, Drew, "Michael from Licht," 59-61., which notes the overall downwards trajectory of the Michael formula, closed as an octave as symbolic of Michael's divinity; or Ulrich, *LICHT*, 36., who also notes this downward trajectory and sees in its return to its opening D, an octave lower, an indication that the human Michael is, essentially, the same as the divine Michael.

From this perspective, Michael does not come down to humanity as a representative of an otherwise unknowable God, but rather is created by humans, a product of a human trait that seeks knowable, tangible ways of explaining the unknowable. In this way, Michael connects with the notions of universal truth I described earlier in relation to Lacan's comments on Descartes. In either case, Michael relates to Heidegger's notion of 'the bridge': that which '*gathers* to itself in *its own way* earth and sky, divinities and mortals'.⁶⁸

This notion of Michael as a signifier of the intangible can also be found within his formula: not least in the very note that is taken from the Lucifer formula – the D – and used to round off Michael's an octave below where it began. Typically, this shift of the D from the Lucifer formula to Michael's has been described as an indicator of Michael's superiority over Lucifer, such as when Drew refers to it as evidence that 'Michael is pluperfect'.⁶⁹ An alternative approach, however, is one that sees the note as an insertion of some of Lucifer's essence – his formula – into Michael, that Michael has his identity, and appears as he does, at least partly because of Lucifer. Lucifer, as I will elaborate below, is in LICHT the champion of chaos, of the ineffable; but his presence in Michael, through the relocation of this one note, underscores the concept of Michael as a tangible signifier of the otherwise elusive Lucifer. It is also a pointer to the human need to tie up loose ends, to give shape to the nebulous. It suggests that there is something lacking in Michael, and that the answer to that lack, or the capacity to give it a sense of completion, lies in Lucifer. This is already a novel perspective on Lacan's Symbolic, suggesting that its pretences to order are in fact at least partly chaotic and that the order of the Symbolic contains part of the chaos of the Real. This is a tension that plays out throughout LICHT in the relationship between Michael and Lucifer, most obviously in the opera that is devoted to that relationship: DIENSTAG, the day of war.

⁶⁸ Heidegger, "Building, dwelling, thinking."

⁶⁹ Drew, "Michael from Licht," 61. The extent to which the number of notes in Michael's formula can be interpreted in this way can, however, be questioned. There also 13 pitches in the formulas of two of Stockhausen's earlier works (MANTRA (1970) and INORI (1974)). There are 17 pitches in the formula of IN FREUNDSCHAFT (1977) and 11 in that of HARLEKIN (1975). Across Stockhausen's formula works, then, there does not appear to be any consistent meaning or value that can be attributed to the number of pitches a formula might contain.

The other striking element of Michael's formula is the overall consonance of its intervallic structure and even a sense of tonality with which those intervals tend to imbue it, particularly in its nuclear form. There its opening interval of a falling Perfect 4th between the first and second notes, inverted a semitone lower as a rising Perfect 4th between the fourth and fifth notes, leads to an overall sequence in which other intervals from simple diatonic harmony predominate: the Major 3rd, minor 3rd and minor 6th.⁷⁰ This sense of tonality is also manifest in its final incarnation in the Superformula, giving Michael's layer a remarkable sense of singability, at least within the context of the Western harmonic traditions with which Stockhausen's audiences would have been so familiar. None of this conventional singability is evident in either the Eve or the Lucifer layers. This underscores this notion of Michael as something conventionally tangible, something graspable. That this is particularly evident in his formula, the primary form of his character, makes these aspects of Michael's identity even more critical in understanding him as the embodiment of socially accepted signifiers that expression shared notions of truth.

It is telling that this aspect of the Symbolic is underscored in Michael's formula by what was for Stockhausen at the time he began composing LICHT an uncharacteristic lyricism, indicated in this consonant intervallic structure and sense of tonality. With Stockhausen having devoted almost half of his whole compositional life to LICHT, it can be easy to forget how unusual it was, before he started composing it, to write music as lyrical and as tonal as this. Although there are many moments of lyricism throughout LICHT associated with the Eve formula as much as with the Michael formula (there are virtually no moments of lyricism associated with the Lucifer formula), the origins of that lyricism within the Superformula are much more weighted towards Michael by virtue of its intervallic structure. This tends to suggest that he is the most conventional of the three characters in the sense of having the musical structure that is likely to be the most benignly familiar to at least its Western audience. The Eve formula contains much more fluidity and formless 'coloured noise' and 'coloured silence' than the lyrical tonality of Michael, even though Eve's

⁷⁰ See both Karlheinz Stockhausen and Rudolf Frisius, "Die Tonhöhen der Superformel für LICHT," in *TEXTE zur MUSIK Band 9 1984-1991*, ed. Christoph von Blumröder (Kürten, Germany: Stockhausen Verlag, 1998), 13-28. and Stockhausen and Ball, "Whenever we hear sounds," 285. I quoted from the latter in Chapter 1. But in the former Stockhausen gives a much lengthier explanation of the intervallic structures of the formulas.

nuclear pitches, if not her final formula, share with Michael a predominance of intervals associated with tonal harmony. Stockhausen described Michael as 'the main figure ... who I worship as the driver [Lenker] of our universe'.⁷¹ That such an important character, a vanguard of Stockhausen's triad, would be composed with such relatively conventional musical attributes by one of the 20th century's most prominent champions of atonality only goes to further reinforce the associations I draw between Stockhausen's Michael and the socially, conventionally, structured territory of Lacan's Symbolic.⁷²

2.3.3 The Imaginary

Lacan's Imaginary is primarily the register of identity, where images are formed and consolidated into a sense of a unified self. Lacan described the Imaginary as a register of the human psyche that forms a few months after birth and continues to be active all throughout life. It is the register in which a person assembles their many parts into a single whole, a subject. In Lacanian theory this begins, or is at very least most markedly first typified, when a child is very young and first notices its image in a mirror, or even in the reflection in its mother's eyes. The child begins to get a sense that their hands, and arms, and head, are all part of a unified self, even before the child can name itself as the 'I', whose identity is nonetheless formed in the images of this stage of its development – which Lacan calls the 'Mirror Stage'.⁷³ This process then continues to develop throughout life as the growing person sees or constructs different connections between the many aspects of their

⁷¹ Karlheinz Stockhausen, "7 x LICHT im Rundfunk (2001-2007): 4. Teil: DONNERSTAG aus LICHT," in *TEXTE zur MUSIK Band 16 1998-2007*, ed. Imke Misch (Kürten, Germany: Stockhausen-Verlag, 2004/2014), 93. (trans. Ian Parsons)

⁷² There is perhaps, however, some foreshadowing of the lyricism and sense of tonality in *SIRIUS* (1975-77), the major work that Stockhausen composed before *LICHT*, particularly in the part of *ARIES*, the astrological sign that is associated with spring in that work. Because of this association with spring, the part of *ARIES* might suggest a closeness with the birth imagery of Eve, but the part in all other respects seems to show a closer connection with Michael, not least because it is played by the trumpet, reflects the boldness of Michael's character, and has, at the centre of its melody, a repeated and prominent falling major 4th. It is difficult to hear *SIRIUS* and not hear in three of its four soloists – *ARIES* (trumpet), *LIBRA* (autumn – bass clarinet) and *CAPRICORN* (winter – bass) – forerunners of Michael, Eve, and Lucifer respectively. These connections are perhaps even more evident in the standalone works that Stockhausen lifted from *SIRIUS* for these soloists performing alone with the corresponding electronic layer from the original work. The fourth part, *CANCER* (summer – soprano) is the only one not to have been later converted into a standalone work.

⁷³ See Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience" in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English* (New York, USA: W W Norton & Company, 1949/2006).

personality, of their sense of self, and of their experiences, and form all of this into a sense of identity, a 'gestalt' that is 'an ideal unity, a salutary imago'.⁷⁴ These parts are very primal: they are pre-social, pre-moral, the basic physical and emotional roots of who a person is. They are formed, initially, in raw images, rather than in articulated words or the complete signs that are formed when signifieds attach to signifiers in the socially engaged domain of the Symbolic. Lacan has suggested that animals experience life almost totally in the Imaginary. But for the human person it is only a beginning.⁷⁵

There are some subtle nuances in conceptualising the Imaginary, particularly in terms of the extent to which it is illusory. When Lacan described the images of the Imaginary, and especially when he used the metaphor of the mirror, he was not suggesting that the 'ideal unity' of the Imaginary was an illusion in the sense of being a pathological hallucination, but his descriptions do point to a degree of illusion. This is important to the sense in which I refer to the Imaginary throughout this thesis. The illusion of the Imaginary is not in the perception of the parts but in the conception of them as connected, and particularly as connected in a way that forms into a unified, integrated image. It is to an extent a creative illusion that the subject creates these connections so as to make sense of themselves as a single identity. This is not to say, of course, that those connections do not also exist independently of the person's perception of them. Human hands really are connected to arms, and arms to the trunk, for example. The role of the Imaginary, however, is in creating a particular significance from those connections and in forming what becomes for the person a meaningful image out of them: the image of a person, of a self. In doing so, however, the person has already begun to perceive themselves as 'other': already in the Imaginary the 'I' has become 'me', the subject has become an object.

⁷⁴ "Aggressiveness in Psychoanalysis," in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English* (New York, USA: W W Norton and Company, 1948/2006), 92.

⁷⁵ *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book III: The psychoses*, trans. Russell Grigg, The Seminar of Jacques Lacan (New York, NY: Norton, 1993), 9.

As Bruce Fink points out, Lacan's Imaginary does not only relate to a person's images of themselves but also to their images of others.⁷⁶ In my application of the Imaginary to LICHT, however, I will primarily draw upon it as a tool for a person's understanding, and formation of identity, of themselves although, as will be clear in many of the instances where I use it, this is not confined to a total *gestalt* image of a complete person (if such a thing is ever possible), but to the many different formations of images, and therefore of identities, that people construct of themselves. This can range from the very specific (a person's self-identity as a particular type of professional, for example, built through connecting images and concepts such as job responsibilities and the education necessary for this), to the much more general (such as a person identify as a collection of many separate identities, such as their gender, age, sexuality, racial and cultural backgrounds, socio-economic class). It will be in all these senses of identity as a constructed image of self that I will apply Lacan's Imaginary to my interpretation of LICHT and specifically to the character of Eve.⁷⁷

The formations of the images of identity into their coherent 'ideal unity', to return to Lacan's words quoted above, are not single events but rather processes that continue to be reinforced or not reinforced as the person grows and encounters new experiences, new people. In this sense, they are nurtured through a person's experiences throughout life. Any of these experiences can challenge the connections made in the realm of the Imaginary and, in this way, the Imaginary plays an ongoing role in continually trying to assimilate those challenges into the connections it has formed. This might result in a person's sense of themselves becoming more refined, shifting slightly here, developing a little there, or, sometimes, in major personal crises where everything must be reconnected anew. In this way the Imaginary does not just form a sense of self, but constantly reforms it and sometimes even radically revises it.

⁷⁶ Bruce Fink, *Lacan on Love: An Exploration of Lacan's Seminar VIII, Transference* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2016), 5.

⁷⁷ My reasons for linking the Imaginary to Eve, and especially to Eve's formula, as well as to the various mythological and theological sources from which Stockhausen drew her character, are outlined in the following chapter. These connections are then further developed in Chapter 5, which focuses particularly on Eve and the Imaginary.

It is in the domain of the Imaginary that Lacan's version of Freud's Oedipus complex begins – when, as Debra Begroffen puts it, 'the infant's desire to be the object of her [the mother's] desire [...] inaugurates the reign of the Imaginary'.⁷⁸ It is in the early years of life that the child begins to perceive a threat to that status as object of the mother's desire, and this perception is placed onto the father, as the rival, the other who also demands the attention of the mother. The father becomes identified with the phallus – not in the literal sense of a penis, but more in the sense of that which has authority and, initially, this is seen as that which places limits on the child's ability to be the unlimited object of the mother's desire. Ultimately this authority emerges and is represented in many different forms, through authority and law and ultimately language itself which, through defining things, and through communicating its definitions in a world of commonly recognised signifiers, also limits them. The child is no longer a fluid and omnipresent image, but a limited individual who must behave and live within the limits that an outside world places upon it. In this way, the Imaginary becomes the domain in which a person first becomes aware of itself as someone who lacks something, through its inability to be the sole object of its mother's desire, and therefore is itself always desiring: desiring to fill what is lacking.

In this sense, sexuality and more specifically, sexual libido, can, in Lacan's work, be understood to be manifestations of broad concepts such as desire and attachment. In particular, it is a form of desire that is always in surplus, because it is always desiring, insofar as it 'renders vain any satisfaction of need wherever libido is situated. And if need be [...] libido refuses the satisfaction of need to preserve the function of desire'.⁷⁹ The human traits of sexual behaviour are, ultimately, particularised expressions of this broader notion of desire and libido. It will be this element of the sexuality of the Imaginary that will become particularly significant as I study these aspects of Eve in LICHT and especially in MONTAG and FREITAG where her music and stage presence is highly sexualised. I will therefore explore the sexuality of Eve as a representation of that aspect of human

⁷⁸ Debra B Begroffen, "Phallic Queerings," *Philosophy Today* 40, no. 1 (1996): 206. I further develop these connections with Lacan's Oedipal theories in Chapter 4.

⁷⁹ Jacques Lacan, *Transference: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book VIII*, trans. Bruce Fink (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1991/2015), 202.

personality that experiences desire and the need for attachment as part of its subjective sense of identity.

Lacan's Imaginary was the first of the three registers that he articulated and, for that reason, it is the one that he tended to speak about the most. This meant that different aspects of the Imaginary are emphasised in different periods of his writing, not least through the need to explain its relationships to the other registers of the Symbolic and finally the Real as these also entered Lacan's lexicon. My own application of this register, focusing principally on its reference to identity, and to human sexuality in its broad sense of desire and attachment, draws on what was a generally consistent thread throughout Lacan's huge body of work on the Imaginary.

2.3.4 Eve as the Imaginary

For Eve, her features are perhaps the most remarkable in the Superformula version of her music, although much is also already evident in its nuclear form, which is in three fragments – the Monday-Tuesday fragment, the Wednesday-Friday fragment, and the Saturday-Sunday fragment (see Figure 1.1 in Chapter 1). Each of these fragments features either a major 3rd or a minor 3rd as a prominent feature of its intervallic character. This might appear initially to replicate some of the conventionality of Michael's formula but when it is elaborated into the Superformula quite a different picture emerges. There the tangible, formed notes with their seemingly diatonic harmonic bases from the nuclear formula are joined together by more unformulated noises: sounds that imitate kissing (fifth bar), tongue-clicks (seventh bar), whooshing glissandi (ninth bar), wind (twelfth bar), breath (also twelfth bar) and yodelling (thirteenth bar). All of these sounds lie outside of the conventional canon of musical sound, as they do also of common speech. Rather, they tend to point to more formative sounds such as those that a child might make, or that a parent might make, as they learn to bond before the child has learned to speak.⁸⁰ These sounds in the Eve formula therefore can be related to the concept of connection and, as such, connect the pitched musical

⁸⁰ Except for the yodelling – a form of singing believed to initially have been used to enable Alpine communities to communicate across large distances.

fragments of the nuclear formula. In this way the somewhat nebulous noises and sounds bring together the more tangible but fragmented musical figures to create the totality of the formula and therefore also of Eve.

It is important, in drawing my links between Stockhausen's Eve and Lacan's Imaginary that these connections are, as I have described them, nebulous. This is exactly how the Imaginary works: the connections it makes between different fragments of identity are always tenuous and, as such, do not create a solid and unshifting image of unification but, rather, the semblance of this. It is a fanciful, indeed imaginary, connection that exists for the person imagining it and is, in that sense, profoundly subjective. These wind-like connections within the Eve formula replicate this by containing within them a strong sense of incorporeality, of a fluidity that could easily shift and form different connections. This is further reinforced by the ways the notes themselves are elaborated within the Superformula. Many of the original intervals are connected by glissandi, giving the music a greater melodic fluidity. Stockhausen's indication of 'modulation' in the fifth bar of Eve's formula invites the musician to shift pitches microtonally, rendering the notes themselves less determinate than they were in the nuclear formula.

From the Thursday to the Friday limbs of the nuclear formula there is a fall from B flat to B natural – a diminished octave and an enharmonic inversion of the Major 7th with which Lucifer's formula begins. Thomas Ulrich sees this as a representation of the fall of Eve, as she gives in to Lucifer's temptation in FREITAG.⁸¹ This seems a perfectly plausible interpretation of the appearance of this falling interval here in the Friday bar of Eve's nuclear formula.⁸² It is also, however, reasonable to consider the implications of this interval as an inversion of the Lucifer interval – that is, as a mirror image of it, as if Eve is creating a reflection of Lucifer. Indeed, the notion of Eve as a mirror will be very important in the opera devoted to her in particular – MONTAG – and I will discuss this in more detail in chapter 4. From this perspective, another vital element of the Lacanian Imaginary is

⁸¹ Ulrich, *Stockhausen Theology*, 85-86.

⁸² The falling diminished octave is less apparent as a falling interval in its Superformula form, in bars 12-13, where there is almost an entire bar of 'coloured silence', as Stockhausen calls the rhythmic in-and-out breathing, between the high B flat and the eventual appearance of the B natural below it

represented in Eve's formula: the Imaginary's role in attempting to present the primal and ineffable Real through the formation of its domain of imagery, but it can only do so in the way that a mirror reflects the thing before it. The child can only see itself, and thereby perceive itself as a whole person, in the form, the image, of a reversal of its true self. This is an intriguing contrast, then, to Lucifer's presence in the Michael formula through the actual relocation of one of his notes. In the Eve formula it is an implied presence through the device of the mirror. The Symbolic Michael relies on part of Lucifer in order to give its appearance of completion, while the Imaginary Eve mirrors something of Lucifer in her construction of unified identity. Ultimately, however, Lucifer is present in them both. The importance of this will become more apparent as I discuss the ubiquitous and often covert nature of the Real, and of Lucifer, throughout this chapter and beyond.

The continuous nature of the formation and reformation of a person's sense of identity is also contained in Eve's formula through the overall trajectory of its pitches. This is most easily seen in its nuclear form, where it ascends from C to B flat from the Monday to Thursday limbs and then again from A to G sharp in the Saturday to Sunday limbs, with the fall of the diminished octave interrupting the two. It suggests that the birth and rebirth that characterises Eve (and is explicitly portrayed in MONTAG) is a cycle that is ignited by an Imaginary encounter with the Real and it is, indeed, Lucifer's appearance at the end of Act One of MONTAG that sends the 14 children born in that Act back into the womb, demanding that it all be done over again. The Imaginary, and therefore Eve, involves a continued cycle of growth and regrowth, spurred on by the continued intervention of the Real which, reflected in the mirror of the Imaginary, requires a personality to reset itself and continually revise the images of unified, but subjective and tenuous, identity it produces.

The character of Eve is, like the character of Michael, drawn from many sources. Indeed the same scribbled note where Stockhausen equates Michael with Osiris, Apollo, Dionysus, Pythagoras, Christus and Apollonius, he equates Eve with Io (the mortal and secret lover of Zeus), Melite (the highly sexualised lover of Zeus and Hercules), Astarte (associated with sexuality, fertility and war in both Egyptian and Greek mythologies), Isis (the wife of Osiris, who reassembled his

dismembered body after his death), Demeter (the Greek goddess of agriculture and the earth's fertility) and Maria (the Christian Virgin mother of Christ).⁸³ More references are then made within the opera itself where, in the opening scene, three solo sopranos and a female choir exchange many names and references about and amongst each other: Agni, Sarakka, Jusakka, Ukasakka, Asura, Dhisanas, and many other names from Greek, Roman, Scandinavian and Indian mythologies. These are, says Stockhausen, all different manifestations of womanhood and motherhood for these singers who, as individuals, have no names at all.⁸⁴ As such, they are further instantiations of the maternal, nurturing life force that is Eve.

As with the associations Stockhausen drew for Michael, those drawn for Eve share both commonalities (allusions to sexuality and fertility) and apparent contradictions (the promiscuity of Melite, and the virginity of Maria). The parallels with the biblical Eve are also obvious, especially in FREITAG, which focuses on her temptation by Lucifer. These characters, especially those who were identified before the operas were composed seem to create an overall theme of sexuality (including in the broader sense to which I have referred), fertility, and the formation of identity from separate parts. These especially complement the Eve formula's sense of growth (in its nuclear state) and of bringing together disparate, elementary parts (in its Superformula state). The apparent contradictions between some of these mythological associations really just underscore that Stockhausen created characters that embrace the diversity of the concepts they represent, be it the Apollo/Dionysus duality within Michael, or Eve's capacity to encompass both virginity and promiscuity as part of her expression of the broad human experience of sexuality.⁸⁵

All of these factors are vital components of the Lacanian Imaginary as a formative, and reformative, part of human personality. It is manifest through its association with the identity that is

⁸³ Karlheinz Stockhausen, "LICHT Allgemeine Skizzen," (Kürten, Germany: Stockhausen-Archiv), #36.(page dated 26 May 1979)

⁸⁴This is my own English paraphrase of Stockhausen's original German. See "Geistig-Geistliche Musik," in *TEXTE zur MUSIK Band 9 1988-1991* (Kürten, Germany: Stockhausen-Verlag, 1998), 123. The one exception to this is the first name to be sung: Agni, who is the Hindu male god of fire perhaps a foreshadow of a degree of gender ambiguity in Eve that I discuss further in Chapter 4 on the Imaginary, and also to some extent in Chapter 5, on the Real.

⁸⁵ I elaborate on this aspect of Eve in Chapter 4.

first assembled in the mirror stage of an infant's development and then continues as development is constantly reignited by the persistence of the Real and its reminder of what the images of the Imaginary have failed to capture. These elements of the Imaginary will be visited continuously throughout LICHT as its relationship with both the Real and the Symbolic, between which it constantly mediates, is reflected in Eve's formula. As noted in Chapter 1, Eve's formula is significantly placed in the Superformula between those of Lucifer and Michael, and its pitch range is the only one that ventures into those of the other two. Eve's integral role in initiating the collaboration of all three is further indicated where her formula is the sole voice in the nuclear formula's Wednesday limb, corresponding to LICHT's day of collaboration.⁸⁶

2.3.5 The Real

Lacan's register of the Real was, according to one-time Lacanian analyst turned renegade, François Roustang, never clearly developed in any of Lacan's texts but rather 'appears here and there as if its meaning were obvious'.⁸⁷ In quoting this remark of Roustang, Babette Babich acknowledges that the scholarly commentary on the Real is 'uneven' and attributes the challenges of understanding the Real as 'belonging in essence to its impossible nature'.⁸⁸ This 'impossible nature' to which Babich refers lies primarily in the Real's resistance to signification, as 'an impossible kernel at the heart of symbolic reality'.⁸⁹ Lacan himself referred to it as something that lies beyond our capacity to shift it and, while a person might be unable or unwilling to confront it, it is always there: 'For the real, whatever upheaval we may subject it to, is always and in every case in its place, it carries its place, stuck to the sole of its shoe, there being nothing that can exile it from it'.⁹⁰ This description of the Real points to its location somewhere beneath, and prior to, what humans experience as 'reality' but is not itself the reality that is experienced. Rather it is that

⁸⁶ The role of Eve and the Imaginary as the mediator between Michael and Lucifer is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, elaborating the theoretical notion of the Imaginary as mediator between the Symbolic and the Real. Her role in instigating the collaboration of all three characters is discussed in Chapter 6.

⁸⁷ François Roustang, *The Lacanian Delusion* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1990), 59.

⁸⁸ Babette Babich, "On the Order of the Real: Nietzsche and Lacan," in *Disseminating Lacan*, ed. David Pettigrew and François Raffoul (Albany, USA: SUNY Press, 1996), 45.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁹⁰ Jacques Lacan, "Seminar on "The Purloined Letter", " in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English* (New York, USA: W W Norton and Co, 2006), 17.

aspect of the human experience of reality that cannot be expressed or signified. This is unproblematic in a theological context – religions often acknowledge the existence of the unknowable – but in the human context it creates a contradiction, or at least a tension, particularly within the phenomenological notions of the world. There, the human perception of reality is located solely within human consciousness, and yet the Lacanian Real is 'always in its place' outside that of which a person can be conscious: stuck to the sole, rather than in the line of vision.

This sense of tension and contradiction, however, does not make Lacan's psychoanalysis and Heidegger's phenomenology incompatible, however. Rather it is part of what allows me to bring them together in my study of LICHT. Already some sense of connection between the Lacanian registers and the Heideggerian Fourfold are beginning to emerge. Heidegger's earth-dwelling mortals are able to begin their constructive building process through the mechanisms of the Imaginary. The search for understanding that is manifest in the gaze towards Heidegger's sky-faring immortal gods is realised and shared in the domain of the Symbolic. The Real, however, does not exactly lie beyond these connections of the Fourfold, but is rather hidden within them, like an ungraspable reminder, always covertly present, of the limits of what humanity can imagine and know. The notion that reality might be experienced only through the filter of human consciousness, but human consciousness itself encompasses a dimension that lies beyond what it can experience, is a vital aspect of the Real..

Coincidentally using the same term five years before Lacan began using it, Theodor Adorno expressed the impossible nature of the real when he concluded his 1931 lecture, *The Actuality of Philosophy*, by noting, 'the mind is not capable of producing or grasping the totality of the real, but it may be possible to penetrate the detail, to explode in miniature the mass of merely existing reality.'⁹¹ This foreshadows Lacan's own concept of the Real as that which cannot be grasped in its totality, but which might reveal elements of itself albeit in disguised forms, such as mistakes of speech or psychiatric symptoms. This further develops the notion of miniature explosions of

⁹¹ Theodor W Adorno, "The Actuality of Philosophy," *Telos: Critical Theory of the Contemporary* 1977, no. 31 (1977): 133.

Adorno's 'mass of merely existing reality'.⁹² For both Lacan and Adorno, nonetheless, the tangible world of human understanding, and the signs through which it grasps and communicates these, fractures the Real through its attempts to represent that which is unrepresentable.

It was not typically Lacan's style to give clear-cut, easily grasped definitions of his concepts. Rather, he tends to talk around them in ways that show how they operate in the context of psychoanalytic practice. His explanations of the Real are no exception and, perhaps because it was the register which he developed last throughout his life, there are less references to it in his seminars and writings than there are to the Symbolic and the Imaginary. Nonetheless, he does sometimes provide helpful insights into how he conceptualised it. In *Écrits* he refers to the Real as

[...] the domain of that which subsists outside of symbolization. [...] For the Real does not wait, especially not for the subject, since it expects nothing from speech. But it is there, identical to his existence, a noise in which one can hear anything and everything, ready to submerge with its roar what the "reality principle" constructs there that goes by the name of the "outside world".⁹³

This resistance to symbolisation is in part what makes the Real difficult to define, and in part what leads to this 'uneven commentary, to which Babich refers. It is, however, important not to confuse the ontology of the Real, which cannot be symbolised, with the possibility of describing it as a concept. It is perhaps this confusion that at times leads commentators to make remarks such as that of Roustang's quoted above: unfairly reading into the 'impossible nature' of the Real an inability on Lacan's part to describe or define it.

Slavoj Žižek made much of this resistance of the Real to signification when he described the relationship that both the Real and the Symbolic have to ideology:

⁹² Adorno's reference to 'merely existing reality' is also somewhat aligned with the Real of Lacan, in the sense that both simply exist, raw and in themselves, prior to, and independently of, any attempts to describe or signify them.

⁹³ Jacques Lacan, "Response to Jean Hyppolite's Commentary on Freud's "Verneinung", " in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English* (New York, USA: W. W. Norton & Company, 1966/2006), 324.

The whole point of Lacan is in order for social reality to establish itself – by social reality I mean the social order, social symbolic reality – something must be primordially repressed. Something cannot be symbolized, and the spectral apparition emerges to fill up the gap of what cannot be symbolized. [...] So I think the Lacanian notion of the Real as that rock which resists symbolization is extremely useful for a non-naïve notion of ideology. By non-naïve ideology I mean a notion of ideology which avoids the usual traps of, if you say ideology [...] that you automatically imply some kind of natural direct approach to what reality truly is, etc. You don't need this. What you need is precisely the notion that reality is never fully constituted, and that this is what spectral ideological fantasies try to mask.⁹⁴

In Žižek's analysis, then, it is in the Symbolic domain that naïve ideology gives the false perception of fully constituted reality. As I will note shortly, this accords closely with Lucifer's denial of the existence of God who, for Lucifer, is a fictitious construct to make apparent sense of the chaos of the universe. This is a parallel to what Žižek is saying about the Real and its relationship to the naïve ideologies that emerge, and attempt to explain reality, in the domain of the Symbolic.⁹⁵

Another sense in which the Real is placed prior to signification is suggested by Andrea Hurst, when she describes it as 'that sacred "core" of the self that just "is"'.⁹⁶ That is, the Real is in place before a person attempts to make sense of it, not unlike Adorno's 'merely existing reality' noted above. People's attempts to make sense of the Real within themselves might be through the ways in which they try to conceptualise themselves in the form of their sense of personal identity, or express and present themselves in the social world through the things they say and do in their relationships with others. These are not representations of the Real, however – they are only

⁹⁴ Slavoj Žižek, *Interrogating the Real* (London, UK: Bloombury, 2005), 64.

⁹⁵ Ultimately, as will also be discussed in the next chapter and again in Chapter X, those all-encompassing signifiers constitute an aspect emerging from within the Symbolic, called Master-Signifiers. Master-signifiers can represent attempts to signify that which cannot signified (such as some beliefs in the supernatural might do); or to create cohesive narratives to complex chains of many signifieds and signifiers when there is none (such as blaming a particular race or sector of the community for a complex array of social problems); or to create misleading or deceptive signification in an attempt to mask signifieds that are difficult for a person to confront (such as a person who describes a broken relationship as 'complicated').

⁹⁶ Hurst, "Know Thyself!", 276.

attempts to represent it in the other registers of the human psyche: the Imaginary and the Symbolic. The essence of the Real, however, is its resistance to representation.

With the Real located in a space that not only resists signification but in fact precedes it, it becomes an ideal location for those aspects of human experience that cannot, and could not, be clearly conveyed through the internal images people have of themselves or through the language of social discourse. It suggests a place not only where things can be repressed, but also a place where the very essence that leads to the need to repress them rests. In this way, the Real can be understood not just as a place in which, for example, trauma might be located but where the very possibility of trauma, the very essence of it, is also based. At the opposite end of the scale, it is also the place where unspeakable, unbearable ecstasy would be based, as well as the possibility for it. This is the sort of ecstasy that is beyond experience and ultimately nihilating in the sense of the 'unbewußt, höchste Lust!' ('unconscious, highest bliss!') with which Isolde 'sinks, as if transfigured', according to the composer's stage directions, at the end of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. This combined notion of a primal human capacity for trauma and ecstasy, both equally unbearable and unsignifiable, becomes manifest in what Lacan calls *jouissance* and locates in the Real. In *jouissance*, according to Lacan, the pain of trauma can be expressed through this unbearable ecstasy, thereby providing an inextricable link between the two, even though *jouissance* itself is more the expression of the latter.⁹⁷ There will be many instances throughout my interpretation of LICHT in which I refer to both of these aspects of the Real – its primal resistance to signification and its place as the location of *jouissance* – in my links between it and Stockhausen's Lucifer.

In addition to these concepts of the Real as the fundamental unsignifiable core of human being, and of the location of *jouissance*, is also the sense of the Real as pure 'stuff', in the sense of

⁹⁷ See, for example, Žižek's references to Lacan's *jouissance* as 'an empty, traumatic, place ... [which is] the "sacred" place of impossible *jouissance*' (Žižek, *Interrogating the Real*, 28.). This is not to say that *jouissance* is the experience of this trauma, but rather that the ecstasy of *jouissance* becomes an expression of it. Bruce Fink describes this in terms of his references to Lacan's notions of the pleasure/pain of *jouissance* that has its roots in a person's 'subjectification' of trauma. See particularly Bruce Fink, *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance* (Princeton, USA: Princeton University Press, 1996), 63.

Aristotelian *hyle*.⁹⁸ It is a notion that Laura Harris describes as 'that indistinct, sensuous materiality that exceeds and eludes signification that Lacan calls the Real'.⁹⁹ These concepts of both indistinctiveness and sensuality are equally important because they suggest something that is both felt and not felt, observed or perceived through the senses but unable to be defined by them. The trauma of the Real, Harris suggests in her reading of Lacan, is activated at birth when the egg is broken and a conflict between the perceived selfhood (located in the Lacanian Imaginary) and the 'indistinct materiality that is the Real' commences.¹⁰⁰

These contradictions and tensions that are within the Real, and that arise from it, will be significant aspects of the equations I draw between it and Lucifer throughout my interpretation of LICHT, who constantly appears in forms that are perceived but are defiantly indistinct. The contradiction that is inherent in the notion of perceiving the unperceivable is also a vital aspect of the Real in the sense in which I use it. It is a contradiction borne of its fundamental incoherence and chaos, a concept also fundamental to the Aristotelian *hyle*. The notion of *hyle* is one with which Stockhausen was clearly familiar when, in 1972, he composed YLEM, a work in which he attempted to depict the continual course of the universe expanding and contracting, from the initial density of pure matter. In the score's preface, Stockhausen refers to the notion of the universe having begun (according to some theories of the time) as a formless, chaotic mass of free neutrons, protons, and electrons, represented in the terms 'ylem' and 'hyle'.¹⁰¹

2.3.6 Lucifer as the Real

Lucifer's formula is, in its Superformula form, the most melodically unpredictable of the three and even in its nuclear form it is distinctive by the unstable trajectory of its pitches, which has no regular pattern like those of Michael and Eve. Its nuclear pitch intervals are similarly divergent,

⁹⁸ Aristotle discusses this concept most notably in his *Metaphysics*, Book VII, where he distinguishes matter from form. It is to this concept of unformed matter, matter in its rawest and purest sense, that the term *hyle* refers. See *Metaphysics* VII, 8 1033a24-1034a8

⁹⁹ Laura Harris, "At the egg's edge: Lygia Clark's indiscretions," *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory* 24, no. 2-3 (2014): 169.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Karlheinz Stockhausen, "YLEM," (Kürten, Germany: Stockhausen-Verlag, 1977), 6.

moving between wild leaps and small incremental climbs or falls, as if the music, and the Lucifer it portrays, is defying all the norms of order and expectation. It has an overall pitch tendency that, as noted in Chapter 1, Stockhausen himself described as dissonant. His opening interval is notated as a diminished octave in the Superformula but as Major 7th in the original nuclear pitches (Figures 1.2 and 1.1 respectively) and this will become the distinctive interval that identifies Lucifer throughout the operas¹⁰², just as the Perfect 4th does for Michael and the Major 3rd does for Eve.

It is rarely noted in the literature that Stockhausen had a genuine affinity with Lucifer and with the rebellious nature that is so critical to them both, composer and character. This is how Stockhausen described it in a documentary about the 1984 La Scala premiere of SAMSTAG aus LICHT:

It is an age-old tradition that the law stands on one side and is designated as "good" by those who keep the laws (whether churches, religions or lawyers) – and the one who destroys the law or any forms is designated as "evil". But that is actually the question, because I have constantly experienced moments during the course of this work [SAMSTAG aus LICHT] when I say to myself: "Yes, Lucifer is actually right; it is really miserable the way people work." Simply yielding to a stiff form until it no longer moves leads to a crystallisation that keeps life from continuing to develop.¹⁰³

There has been a tendency in the literature to describe Lucifer's formula as one that represents inferiority and deficiency. Aside from previously noted references to his having apparently forfeited a twelfth note to Michael, other descriptions of Lucifer's formula tend to describe it as representing

¹⁰² While the issue of enharmonic notation is a complex one, there seems to be no significant reference in the literature to Stockhausen's use of it, nor have I found any consistency myself in why he chooses one notation over another at different point in the music. His choices for notating a pitch as a G flat in one place and an F sharp in another, as in the opening interval of the Lucifer formula in its Superformula and nuclear forms respectively, may relate to the context of the notes as being either melodically or harmonically connected (again respectively), or might have no reason at all, while others in the performance scores may be more explicable in terms of which notation seemed the more readable for performers. Even this, however, can only be conjecture, as Stockhausen himself did not comment on the issue.

¹⁰³ Anette Kanzler, "LICHT - Das Welttheater des Karlheinz Stockhausen (SAMSTAG aus LICHT, Produktion La Scala, Mailand 1984)," (Kürten, Germany 2008). (original in German: translation Suzanne Stephens), also quoted in Karlheinz Stockhausen, *JAHRESKREIS - CIRCLE OF THE YEAR*, trans. Suzanne Stephens, et al. (Kürten, Germany: Stockhausen-Verlag, 2012), 39.

some kind of negativity. Thomas Ulrich describes it as 'sharp and ragged in its course; it rears up twice only to cower down again.'¹⁰⁴ Joseph Drew describes it as having 'a Sisyphean nature [...] as he repeatedly attempts to scale the octave that Michael appears to effortlessly navigate.'¹⁰⁵ These deficit-driven views are not, however, the only way to think about Lucifer's formula and his signature interval, nor the overall trajectory of the pitches. Firstly, it is worth noting that Michael's octave descends rather than ascends in the way that Lucifer's diminished octave/Major 7th ascends. Lucifer could be attempting a more difficult feat here – rising from the abyss, as it were, his formula starting on a low G, the lowest note of the entire Superformula. And there is no reason, other than via a reference to conventional tonality, to consider Michael's octave as the successful goal, or Lucifer's diminished octave, as the failed attempt to reach it. In the atonal world of Stockhausen, just like in the unshaped depths of human personality, an interval such as a diminished octave may well be how things really are – and it is Michael who feels the need to tidy it up, turning it into the more consonant octave.

Lucifer's erratic shifts of large to small intervals, and the unpredictable trajectories up and down, may indeed be described as 'sharp and ragged', as Ulrich does, but this, too, need not be interpreted as indicating anything other than the reality of both the physical and psychic world in which humans live, where things are shaped and move impulsively, despite our best efforts to give them order and predictability. In any case, Lucifer's formula is for these reasons a more complex one than that of either Michael or Eva and it would, therefore, be simplistic to dismiss it as an expression of his spiritual, or psychic, inferiority. Indeed, such a characterisation would be at odds with the serialist embrace of diversity – the systematic pursuit of variety, to return to Richard Toop's characterisation from Chapter 1 – which Stockhausen held in such high regard and that is arguably more potent in Lucifer's formula than in either of the other two.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Ulrich, *Stockhausen Theology*, 85.

¹⁰⁵ Drew, "Michael from Licht," 205.

¹⁰⁶ The systematic nature of that variety, it should be remembered, lies in the overall organisation of the nuclear pitches of all three formulas, in the Sudoku-like structure noted in Chapter 1. In this way, Stockhausen was able to include both ordered and erratic systems in the overall form of the LICHT's intervallic core. The erratic trajectories of Lucifer become part of what enables the overall order of the total nuclear structure.

In this way then Lucifer can be understood as a character who is difficult to grasp, difficult to define, and one who arises uneasily but markedly, from the depths, as is heard in the repeated eleventuplet low Gs that precede the leap to G flat at the beginning of his layer of the Superformula. His whispered counting in bars 7, 14 and 18 of the Superformula (and therefore in the Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday limbs) at times almost give a sense of an Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, but they could equally be indicative of the exactitude of numbers, or their nature as abstract quantities prior to their Pythagorean signification embodied in Michael.¹⁰⁷ His rhythmic and intervallic irregularities give him a sense of turbulence and yet, as the bass layer of the Superformula, he is also its foundation – indecipherable perhaps, but fundamental nonetheless. His formula, like Eve's includes sections of 'coloured silence', not only in the form of the whispered counting but also in bar 12 where the music asks for accented bursts of pitchless wind ("Wind" (tonlos)), which, because of their accents and rapid fire, sound harsh and threatening, unlike the fluidity heard in Eve's formula. His is surely the most difficult formula to sing, and yet its characteristic counting also make it especially recognisable whenever those parts of his formula appear throughout the operas. Whispered, rather than vocalised or sung, these coloured silences have a sinister sense about them and it is difficult to hear Lucifer's counting in LICHT without asking the unanswerable question, 'what does it mean?'. It is an unanswerable question because this, like all his formula, resists being captured in the defined ways of Michael's Perfect 4ths or being formed into the image of a unified whole, like in the unifying of parts in the glissandi between Eva's major and minor 3rds and the coloured noise and coloured silences that connect the fragments of her melody. Lucifer remains ungraspable, undefinable, contradictory.

There is rather less on background sources to Lucifer's character in the LICHT sketches than that which is apparent for Michael and Eve, but the characterisation of him in both Helena Blavatsky's theosophical texts and in *the Urantia Book* give some indications of the character Stockhausen had in mind. Blavatsky described him thus: '... *Lucifer*, or "Light-Bearer," is in us: it is our *Mind* – our

¹⁰⁷ Refer to my quote from Edouard Schuré above.

tempter and Redeemer, our intelligent liberator and Saviour from pure animalism.¹⁰⁸ Blavatsky goes on to describe him as 'the universal soul and Pleroma, the *vehicle of Light* and the receptacle of all forms, a force spread throughout the whole Universe, with its direct and indirect effects' and one who 'the Latin scholastics have succeeded in transforming ... into Satan and his works'.¹⁰⁹ She describes him also as 'divine and terrestrial light, the "Holy Spirit" and "Satan," at one and the same time'.¹¹⁰

He is depicted in *The Urantia Book* as 'a brilliant primary Lanonandek Son of Nebadon ... distinguished for wisdom, sagacity, and efficiency ... designated as one of the one hundred most able and brilliant personalities in more than seven hundred thousand of his kind', but who fell from this lofty status because he 'succumbed to the urge of self and surrendered to the sophistry of spurious personal liberty – rejection of universe allegiance and disregard for fraternal obligations, blindness to cosmic relationships'.¹¹¹ It goes on to present 'The Lucifer Manifesto' which espouses a denial of an omnipresent and omnipotent being of God the Father as a being who controls the universe which is instead held together by its own forces. 'The Lucifer Manifesto' also denies the authority of Michael and instead contends that local systems should be autonomous as well as contending that too much time is spent trying to train mortals in universal principles.¹¹²

These characteristics ascribed to Lucifer in *The Urantia Book*, and particularly their relationship to the book's concepts of God and Michael closely reflects the role of the Real in the human psyche, especially in relation to Master Signifiers and to the Symbolic domain. The Real cannot be expressed in the domain of signification and would, as such, resist all attempts that the human

¹⁰⁸ H P Blavatsky, "Anthropogenesis," in *The Secret Doctrine: The Synthesis of Science, Religion, and Philosophy. Volumes 1 and 2. A Facsimile of the Original Edition of 1888* (Los Angeles, USA: The Theosophy Company, 1888/2004), 513. These and other similar associations with Lucifer are made through Stockhausen connecting him with the Third Ray of Alice Bailey's *Treatise of the Seven Rays*. Many of those associations become particularly relevant to the ways in which Lucifer is depicted in SAMSTAG. I return to these in Chapter 6.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 511.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 513.

¹¹¹ *The Urantia Book*, 601.

¹¹² Ibid., 603-04. Lucifer's denial of God the Father, and his assertion of the primacy of chaos, relates also with various mythologies and religions that also recognise that primacy, although then go on to resolve it in through the notions of order that are created by gods. Chaos was the origin of the universe both in Greek mythology and in the Bible's account of the formless void out of which God created everything (Genesis, 1:1).

psyche might make to give overall coherence to signifiers through the creation of what Lacan called 'Master Signifiers'. Master Signifiers are Lacan's construct for signifiers that attempt to give a cohesive signifying narrative to signifieds that otherwise make no sense, or whose sense might be unpalatable, or even absent altogether. From a Luciferian perspective, the notion of an all-encompassing god giving sense and meaning to an inherently chaotic and meaningless cosmos would be an example of a Master Signifier.¹¹³

Blavatsky's notion of Lucifer as containing the ultimate contradictions of 'Holy Spirit' and 'Satan' at the same time is encapsulated in Lacan's notion of *jouissance* and its simultaneous embrace of both unfathomable trauma and unbearable ecstasy, located in the Real. This further reinforces the connection between Lucifer and the Real that I will explore in more detail in Chapter 5, where my study of Lucifer looks specifically at this issue of contradiction and how essential it is to his character and, of course, his music.

All of this is captured in his formula through the constant and unsettled mix of contradictory elements to which I have already referred, and their ultimate rejection of the more conventional devices of musical signification, such as diatonic intervals and lyrical melodic gestures, which are contained in Michael's and Eve's formulas, and emphatically negated by the prominence of dissonant tritones that Stockhausen noted. Lucifer's placement at the bottom of the three layers of the Superformula, the only one of the three to be notated in the bass clef, gives it a more fundamental positioning in relation to the other two. It does not exactly provide a basis upon which harmonies are built, and its relationship with the other two formulas is indeed far from one of concord and agreement – in fact there is always rhythmic and harmonic divergence and disparity between the three formulas throughout the entire Superformula – but Lucifer's position at the base of Superformula nevertheless gives it a foundational role of sorts. It is a role that disrupts beneath the surface, rumbling, erratic, restless. That this happens beneath the higher-pitched formulas of Eve and Michael is analogous with the Real's subversive role in human personality. It is therefore

¹¹³ I explore this aspect of Master-signifiers, in more detail both in Chapter 3, where I discuss their relationship with Michael and the Symbolic, and in chapter 6 where I discuss their relationship with 'light' and God.

both foundational and subversive just as there is a primacy to the Real which is situated in the human psyche prior to the formation of the images and language that arise out of it. While the formulas of Eve and Michael do not arise from Lucifer's formula in precisely this way, this foundational function of Lucifer's formula in relation to the entire Superformula is nevertheless especially driven home in HOCH-ZEITEN, the final scene of SONNTAG. This is the final opera of LICHT that Stockhausen composed, and it is in this scene that the final notes of Lucifer's formula, their durations augmented, provide a pedal-like base for the layers above it. As with the presence of the Real in the human psyche, Lucifer's presence there is a subversive and curious one, which Stockhausen himself seemed hesitant to acknowledge.¹¹⁴

All of these factors combine to depict a Lucifer who, like the Real, is ineffable, ungraspable. He is built out of contradiction and unpredictability and yet subversively fundamental beneath everything else. Ultimately, through his rebellious and disruptive nature, he, like the Real, a vital part of safeguarding the totality of personality from the 'crystallisation that keeps life from continuing to develop' to return to Stockhausen's own words on the importance of Lucifer's role in enabling progress.

2.3.7 Additional Lacanian concepts: Master Signifier and *objet petit a*

The uses of Lacan's Symbolic, Imaginary, and Real that I have outlined in the above sections form the basis of the theoretical tools that I apply to the characters of Michael, Eve, and Lucifer throughout my interpretation of LICHT. From this application, other Lacanian concepts emerged and become similarly helpful in considering what such an approach to LICHT suggests as answers to my primary research question. Specifically, these concepts are the Master Signifier and the *objet petit a*. As explained in my introductory Chapter, the emergence of these as useful tools in my research gave rise to further questions. Because they arose out of the initial application of the theoretical concepts outlined in this chapter, I have chosen to explain them later in this thesis

¹¹⁴ I discuss this aspect of HOCH-ZEITEN in chapter 6, especially in relation to the appearance of the Lucifer formula in this foundational role in the music's harmonic structure, despite Stockhausen's remarks that he intended to exclude Lucifer's formula from the entire opera.

rather than here, and to thereby reflect how their relevance arose within the context of my application of my primary theoretical framework.

In the briefest terms, however, the Master Signifier can be understood as that which stands as a signifier for a range of signifieds and gives them the appearance of a cohesive meaning. It typically entails a detachment of the signifier from the signified, where the signifier takes on a life of its own, while appearing still to be attached to a specific signified. It is, in a sense, a signifier without a signified. Conversely, the *objet petit a* can almost be understood as a signified without a signifier: characterised as that which causes and drives desire but is never able to be properly signified in the objects that the person thinks they want. It is that which lies beneath the desired signifier and, unable to be satisfied, perpetuates the desire it seeks to fulfil.

The Master Signifier, which arises first in relation to my consideration of the application of Lacan's Symbolic to the character of Michael, is discussed initially in Chapter 3 and then in more detail in Chapter 6, where I explore the Master Signifier and its relationship to the concept of light, which gives Stockhausen's cycle its name, more fully. The *objet petit a* is also primarily discussed in that chapter, where I connect it with the Superformula as the essential driving force of LICHT's musical development. I make this connection in the context of its representation of the unification of Michael, Eve, and Lucifer and therefore of the three Lacanian registers at their point of intersection, which ultimately point to the elusive Heideggerian notion of being/Beyng, and its phenomenology that lies at the core of my research questions.¹¹⁵ These associations will become clear as I explore and develop them in those chapters.

¹¹⁵ The equation of the *objet petit a* with the intersection of the three registers is noted in, for example, Lionel Bailly, *Lacan* (Oxford, UK: OneWorld Publications, 2009), 111.

Chapter 3: Michael and the Symbolic

It is language that tells us about the essence of a thing, provided that we respect language's own essence.¹¹⁶

Language, in the sense that linguist Ferdinand de Saussure described it and as I noted in Chapter 2, is a system that unites meanings and sound-images.¹¹⁷ As such, it straddles both the domains of the Lacanian Imaginary, where meaning is formed, and the Symbolic, where it is expressed in sound-images. It is this latter aspect on which I shall focus in this chapter, particularly through examining the way in which Michael carries out his role as the sound-image of language, and his relationship with the concept of meaning. This will mean examining not only his relationship with Eve, with whom I associate the Imaginary, but also with Lucifer and the Real, where that which cannot be signified through language continues to reside. I will also posit ways in which the system of sound-images to which Saussure refers develops, in the character of Michael, into systems that form connections beyond the personal domain of the Imaginary and onto the broader domain of social values and laws, as captured in Lacan's concept of the Big Other.

Michael describes his function himself towards the end of DONNERSTAG:

*Man have I become,
To see myself and GOD the Father
As a human VISION
to bring celestial music to humans
and human music to the celestial beings,
so that Man may listen to GOD
and GOD may hear his children.*¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Heidegger, "Building, dwelling, thinking," 348.

¹¹⁷ Saussure, *General Linguistics*, 15.

¹¹⁸ Stockhausen, "MICHAELS HEIMKEHR," Vis 22-23.

These words capture much of Michael's role as intermediary between divinity and humanity, a role already apparent in the many mythological sources to which Stockhausen referred in forming him, as I noted in Chapter 2. As I also noted in that chapter, that intermediary role is apparent in his formula, as it repeatedly navigates a passage from high to low.

The current chapter will focus on the ways in which that role of mediator is played out in Michael's musical and dramatic character. After first discussing Michael's character in general, I then turn to examine more closely Stockhausen's most focused depiction of the mature Michael in MICHAELS REISE UM DIE ERDE ('Michael's Journey Around the Earth'), the Second Act of DONNERSTAG. As I do this, I offer an interpretation that provides a perspective on the Lacanian Symbolic as reflected in Michael's role in this part of the opera. I then explore the interactions of the Symbolic first with the Imaginary and then with the Real as depicted in Michael's relationships with Eve and with Lucifer respectively. This involves some references to the operas SONNTAG and DIENSTAG, the operas in which those relationships are highlighted. Finally, I explore the Symbolic's relationship with the Lacanian Master Signifier as expressed through Michael's return to his celestial home in the opera's final Act. The first scene of DONNERSTAG focuses on Michael's childhood. It is the only scene in LICHT where all three characters – Michael, Eve, and Lucifer – are depicted together in any depth as characters on stage. I therefore deal with that scene in Chapter 6, alongside the final moments of MITTWOCH where, once again, the three characters come together, albeit there in the more abstract, though fundamental, form of their formulas.

3.1 Michael and the Symbolic: some general observations

The words Michael sings at the end of this, his opera, give an important insight into how he executes this role of intermediary. It represents a development of the conceptualisation of language from the heterogenous collection of sounds that Saussure had referred to as *parole* to

the system of signs that he called *langue*.¹¹⁹ This distinction is an especially important one to understand in relation to LICHT generally, and to Michael in particular. Stockhausen often spoke about music in a manner that reflected the Saussurean concept of *parole*, in terms of the ways in which its sounds are collected and organised, particularly through the many serialist techniques he applied to his compositions.¹²⁰ It is, however, in the more systematic sense of language as *langue* that Michael operates and to which Stockhausen refers in Michael's words quoted above. That is, music here transcends its component sounds and operates as a system by which connections are made and meanings are represented, thereby enabling communication between disparate entities. In Michael's case, those entities are Stockhausen's heavenly and earthly beings. In this sense, Michael, communicating in Saussurean *langue* and engaging with the Lacanian Symbolic, represents something of a shift in how Stockhausen conceptualised music as language from the greater emphasis on heterogenous *parole* in his earlier compositions.¹²¹

It is precisely through this role as an intermediary between gods and humanity that Michael becomes invested with the Lacanian Symbolic – a representation of that element of *langue* that seeks to give shared, comprehensible signification to the space between Heideggerian gods and mortals. Michael's trajectory, however, is from the gods to the mortals, not the other way around. This is what is represented in the downwards shape of his formula. My interpretation therefore suggests that Stockhausen presents, in Michael, a Symbolic that has already formed its connection with the Big Other, and that he then shows, especially in DONNERSTAG, how that connects with the daily lives of ordinary humans. This notion of the gods reaching down to the mortals is

¹¹⁹ This concept of language as *langue*, and its contrast to language as *parole*, the individual occurrences of language in speech and writing, is outlined in Saussure's classic text, *Cours de linguistique générale* ('Course in General Linguistics'). There, his definition of language as *langue* refers to 'a system of signs in which the only essential thing is the union of meanings and sound-images and in which both parts of the sign are psychological' (Saussure, *General Linguistics*, 15.).

¹²⁰ For a particularly comprehensive example of these in English, see Stockhausen's seven lectures delivered in 1972 at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (13th-15th February), Oxford Union (6th May), Essex University (7th May), and in 1972 at the Imperial College London, all released on DVD by the Stockhausen-Verlag, Kürten.

¹²¹ Nonetheless, there were indicators of this shift already in some of his earlier compositions, particularly the formula compositions from 1970 onwards, where musical formulas provided some degree of representation of character and narrative (see, for a particularly striking example of this, HARLEKIN (1975), for solo clarinet, in which a sophisticated presentation of character is developed over a 45-minute work, based on a single melodic formula). This perspective on music as the language of *langue* is, however, made more explicit in the character of Michael.

especially pronounced in the Thursday limb of Michael's layer of the Superformula, with its pronounced reach downwards from C to E \flat , most articulately detailed in the descending scale-like gesture of the second bar, which corresponds to the Second Act of the opera (Figure 3.1):

Figure 3.1: A segment of the Superformula, showing the Thursday limb of the Michael layer.

This role for Michael emerges slowly, seen in the way his formula develops in the actual opera. Although DONNERSTAG is Michael's opera in LICHT, his formula emerges in it gradually, and it is not until the beginning of the Second Act that it is heard in full.¹²² There it is played by the solo trumpet, Michael's instrument, but everywhere else in the opera, it is heard fragmented and often intermingled with the formulas of Eve and Lucifer. It is not surprising that this would be so, given their interconnectedness both musically in the Superformula and psychically in the Borromean Knot of Lacan's three registers. Indeed, Michael's formula is the only one that is ever heard so

plainly and in full, without interruption or embellishment from either of the other two, throughout all of LICHT and, even for Michael, it is only heard in this way once. This may simply reflect a particular affection that Stockhausen had for Michael, the character who is surely the closest of all three to being Stockhausen's 'hero'.¹²³ It is also, however, very much in accord with the outward prominence of the Symbolic in human life, and especially in people's attempts to understand their own place in the broader sphere of life and being. There, the Symbolic has special prominence as the system through which humans can express themselves to one another and develop narratives that seem to explain the questions humans have about their own existence. And yet this gives rise to a question about why it is not heard in this way until so far into the opera which focuses so intensely on Michael's character.

The answer to that question is the point of the opera's opening Act, MICHAELs JUGEND ('Michael's Youth'), itself divided into three scenes of KINDHEIT ('Childhood'), MONDEVA ('Moon-Eve') and EXAMEN ('Examinations'). It depicts Michael's growth from little boy to young man and the complex interactions he must first learn to negotiate before he can become the mature Michael of Act Two who journeys around the earth and expresses its cultures through his music.¹²⁴ The third Act provides a view of Michael, and therefore also of the Symbolic, where this core role of communication and translation slips into the role of Lacan's Master Signifier, where the signifiers become detached from their signifieds, and grand narratives take on an elevated, though removed, life of their own. I will return to this at the end of this chapter.

It is noteworthy that MICHAELs REISE UM DIE ERDE ('Michael's Journey around the Earth') was the first part of LICHT that Stockhausen composed.¹²⁵ This adds to the sense the music gives us

¹²³ Michael is indeed described as such in the title of Joseph Drew's doctoral dissertation. See Drew, "Michael from Licht." That Stockhausen chose to have the Michael-sign inscribed on his grave beneath the LICHT Superformula also indicates the prominence this character had for him.

¹²⁴ I discuss the second Act in detail later in this chapter.

¹²⁵ That is, the first part of LICHT to be composed after the notion of a seven-part opera cycle, representing the seven days of the week, had properly formed and after the Superformula had been composed. Stockhausen's work DER JAHRESLAUF ('The Course of the Years') was composed before this and does not draw on the Superformula at all nor does it include any of the LICHT characters of Michael, Eve and Lucifer. Nonetheless, Stockhausen later decided to place this work as the first Act of DIENSTAG aus LICHT, adding the characters of Michael and Lucifer to it as commentators before and after the main action and interspersing a few parts from their formulas into the music he

that this piece is capturing the essence of Michael's identity as if Stockhausen first had to compose the fully developed Michael before he could describe the development itself. I will therefore deal with Michael's character and what it depicts about the function of the Symbolic in a similar order, focusing first, and more extensively, on the opera's middle Act, before moving on to explore his relationships in the other Acts of the opera, as well as in the other operas of the cycle.¹²⁶

3.2 Michael and the Symbolic in focus: MICHAELS REISE UM DIE ERDE

MICHAELS REISE UM DIE ERDE is essentially a trumpet concerto. There is no vocal part and, although Stockhausen had at one stage envisaged Michael-as-dancer also playing a prominent part in the journey, this idea was ultimately abandoned.¹²⁷ It suggests that the trumpet, the loudest and most assertive of Michael's three incarnations of tenor, trumpeter and dancer, was enough for what Stockhausen wanted to express about him in this part of the opera that focuses on the mature Michael and his connection with the world's cultures.

The piece is in 16 sections: Entrance; Formula; Departure; 1st Station (Cologne, Germany); 2nd Station (New York, America); 3rd Station (Japan); 4th Station (Bali); 5th Station (India); 6th Station (Central Africa); Turning Back; 7th Station (Jerusalem); HALT; MISSION; MOCKERY; CRUCIFIXION; ASCENSION. It depicts, as its title suggests, Michael traveling around the world, and the Stations are Michael's visits to some of its major cities and countries. The score's stage directions call for a huge earth-globe to dominate the stage, with members of the orchestra spread beneath it and the Michael-trumpeter appearing out of little doors in the globe, positioned according to the city or country he is visiting at the time.¹²⁸

had already composed. It was not however embellished in this way, turning it into the scene that would then simply be called JAHRESLAUF, as it is called when it appears in DIENSTAG, until after Stockhausen had composed not only DONNERSTAG but also SAMSTAG and MONTAG.

¹²⁶ As I will suggest in the following two chapters, a similar focus on the core of the characters can be found in analogous scenes in the operas for Lucifer and Eve. In the first case it is LUZIFER's TANZ ('Lucifer's Dance') the third scene of SAMSTAG and in the second it is EVAs LIED (Eve's Song), the second act of MONTAG.

¹²⁷ References to the prominence of the dancer in MICHAELS REISE UM DIE ERDE can be found in a few places throughout the sketches in the Kürten Archives, including a part for the Eve dancer to be enacted in the background, while that of Michael is in the foreground. See, for example, Karlheinz Stockhausen, "MICHAELS REISE UM DIE ERDE Skizzen," (Kürten, Germany: Stockhausen-Archiv), #60 and #68.1.

¹²⁸ "MICHAELS REISE," R XXI.

In each of these first six stations, we hear the flavour of the country or city depicted in the orchestral colours underscoring Stockhausen's note that 'the orchestra is "the world"'.¹²⁹ It is an equation of music with the world, reflecting a little sketch that Stockhausen drew on a piece of note paper at a hotel in Kyoto in October 1977, when his first ideas for the piece were forming. There he drew a small globe of the world, with a large treble clef beside it on the left, out of which a musical stave merges into the globe as five horizontal latitude lines.¹³⁰ Although Stockhausen's music is often associated with the cosmic and the spiritual, we have here a reminder that it is also about the here and now, about this planet. If the orchestra, and the huge globe on the stage, is "the world", then the audience becomes rather like extra-terrestrial beings, observing and hearing it from a distance in what is ultimately another instantiation of Stockhausen's conceptualisation of music as capturing the universal, and self-reflexive nature, of the cosmic and the spiritual.¹³¹ But it is the human, temporally and spatially limited world of the planet Earth that the audience is primarily scrutinising here, as if in this piece there is something of an intersection of the universality of the gods and the immediacy of the mortals as represented by the divine Michael travelling around the human world.

That immediacy, however, is given a very social dimension in this piece, by the mere fact that it depicts the world's nations and cultures. It is not then, just the introspective experiences and perspectives of a single individual contemplating his or her own existence, but also the notion of cultural identity and signification. Indeed, this accords with Heidegger's own belief that human awareness of its own existence, essentially captured in his notion of *Dasein*, is a largely social

¹²⁹ Ibid. However, the overall picture developed on the stage is that the orchestra together with the globe constitute the world: a perception reinforced by Stockhausen's direction, immediately following this description of the orchestra as 'the world', that the players be dressed as penguins (presumably a play on the traditional concert dress of orchestra musicians), 'seated around the globe at the South Pole'.

¹³⁰ "MICHAELS REISE Skizzen," #28.1 (page dated 31 October, 1977)

¹³¹ See, for example, Stockhausen's 2005 interview with Teresa Castenheira, where he remarked 'The content of music will become increasingly spiritual: clear relationships between music and the cosmic discoveries and religious insights.' ("Expansion") 350. See also his 1998 interview with Robert Baumann where he referred to the lessons he believed he had learned at the school of music within the Sirius star system, which he described as teaching him that music is the art of listening to the vibrations of the cosmos, from those of atoms to those of galaxies, in "Die Essenz des Alls," in *TEXTE zur MUSIK Band 14 1991-1998* ed. Imke Misch (Kürten, Germany: Stockhausen-Verlag, 2014), 321-22.

phenomenon, in the sense that both it, and the world, are possible only through each other.¹³² In this way it aligns also with Lacan's Big Other, that aspect of the Symbolic that represents what Andrea Hurst describes as the 'collective dimension of self ... [which] consists of often unconsciously absorbed understandings, codes for behaviour, cultural rules, and stereotypes'.¹³³

All of this goes to suggest that the Michael who is being depicted in MICHAELs REISE UM DIE ERDE is a social being. He is a being who relates to and is even defined by society. This will become important in considering his role in connecting the gods and mortals implying, as it does, that where the Symbolic engages in negotiating that connection, it does so in a way that is intrinsically social. In other words, the Symbolic connections humans make between the confines of everyday life in time and place and the sense of an inscrutable Beyond – the stories they tell and the narratives they forge to make the two perspectives mutually comprehensible – have resonance at least partly because they develop socially. This begins to equate less with Stockhausen's own deeply-held spiritual beliefs and more with Feuerbach's of gods created in the image of humans who, as societies, find supernatural explanations of their own ungraspable being (in the Heideggerian sense of *beyng*).¹³⁴ As such Michael represents something of an expression of a collective humanity that, together, seeks to answer those fundamental questions about itself and to shape those answers into forms that that can guide people, together, in understanding who they are and how they should live. His descent from heaven in this way becomes a feature that is ascribed to him socially in order to give appropriate status to the meanings and answers he appears to provide to mortal curiosity about the gods.

This is not how Stockhausen saw Michael. For him, Michael was a very real spiritual being to whom he prayed every day.¹³⁵ He by no means saw his hero as a fictional creation born out of the

¹³² Martin Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time Prolegomena*, trans. Kisiel T Bloomington (Indianapolis, USA: Indiana University Press, 1985), 202. The notion of Dasein it itself extensively developed and discussed most famously in *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany, USA: State University of New York Press, 2010).

¹³³ Hurst, "Know Thyself!," 276.

¹³⁴ For a comprehensive and seminal overview of these theories of Feuerbach see, in particular, Ludwig Feuerbach, *Lectures on the Essence of Religion*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York, USA: Harper and Row, 1967).

¹³⁵ Stockhausen, "Pressegespräch," 230.

human need for socially-shared explanations. The different possibilities that emerge in my interpretation, however, do not need to negate those of the composer. Rather they reinforce a point that Stockhausen himself made in his ongoing notion of the self-similarity of the universe that Jerome Kohl has noted as a central feature of Stockhausen's world-view, and of his music.¹³⁶ It is a view that can accommodate both the notion of man being created in the image of God, as Genesis asserts, and of God being created in the image of man, as Feuerbach asserts. MICHAELs REISE UM DIE ERDE allows Stockhausen's audiences to approach it from either perspective. In this way, the appreciation of, and even meaningful connection with, Stockhausen's music need not be predicated on sharing his spiritual beliefs.¹³⁷

The Michael of MICHAELs REISE UM DIE ERDE suggests, then, the possibility of a Michael that is more essentially social and his divinity is rather ascribed to him by the signifiers that are attached to him.¹³⁸ In this way he becomes reflective of the human tendency, in this case particularly of the humans who form into societies and cultures, to ascribe divine explanations for the things that are incomprehensible.¹³⁹ In another sense, however, this is not so much at odds with how Stockhausen's spiritual beliefs evolved over time absorbing, as they did, more and more of the world's religious doctrines, the more he learned about them.¹⁴⁰ While Stockhausen would never have gone so far as to say that god was created in the image of humans, his own religious eclecticism nonetheless reflects an acceptance of diverse cultural notions of god and therefore of the diverse ways in which humans understand the Beyond.

¹³⁶ Jerome Kohl, *Karlheinz Stockhausen: 'Zeitmaße'* (New York, USA: Routledge, 2017), 4.

¹³⁷ A more detailed exploration of this issue is given in my article, Ian Parsons, "Mathematics and Magic: Theist and Atheist Identification with the Spiritual Music of Karlheinz Stockhausen," *Tempo* 73, no. 288 (2019). (in press)

¹³⁸ These signifiers are evident throughout both the first and third Acts of the opera, where he is given many names borrowed from religion and mythology: 'Heaven's Child', Jupiter, 'Michael from Nebadon', Son of God, Hermes, Christos, Thor, Donar. I discuss the mythological and theological significance of these names in Chapter 3.

¹³⁹ This notion that Michael's divinity is more ascribed than intrinsic was a prominent, though very controversial, aspect of the Lydia Steier's 2016 staging of DONNERSTAG at the Basel Opera. There, particularly in the third act of the opera, Michael was portrayed as a cult figure, worshiped and invested with a divine status by an hysterical crowd of followers.

¹⁴⁰ This is especially apparent in INORI (1974) for orchestra and one or two soloists, where a complex system of physical gestures is notated in the score and performed by one or two dancer-mimes. These gestures are derived from the prayer gestures of diverse world cultures, and integrated into a single formula-based system that evolves over the whole work.

This social aspect of Michael is heard in the way his music develops in the first six stations of the piece. At each station, some aspect of that nation's culture, or at least of Stockhausen's perceptions of it, is integrated into how Michael's formula is played throughout the Station. This becomes evident from the outset, in Germany, and specifically Cologne, which is characterised by sustained violin chords and harmonics on the harp. It gives a bright hue, embellished with the genial formula of Eve (the Imaginary and the figure of birth) played on the alto flute, to this place where Stockhausen's own musical genesis began to form and which, for him, was the launching-pad of new music's journey into the wider world. Stockhausen's perceptions of these cultural tropes are evident in all the stations. New York is loud and brash, the trumpet blasting out loudly over the orchestra, which often swells to fortissimo, especially when the trombones hammer out the Lucifer formula. Japan is coloured with harmonium, harp, bongo, Geisha-bell, keisu and tam-tam. Piano, vibraphone, gongs, and tam-tam lend what Stockhausen describes in the score's preface as a 'fiery, scintillating, festive hue' to Bali.¹⁴¹ Stockhausen portrays India with 'slowly cascading harp glissandos mixed with the hissing, whooshing coloured noises made by the trumpets, horns and oboes', and Central Africa with 'muffled signal-rhythms and rolls of the tom-toms and tam-tam'.¹⁴²

In each station, Michael's trumpet converses and integrates with these places, his musical voice taking on something of their character. But it is not only the Michael formula that is heard – fragments of all three formulas are part of the conversation between trumpet and orchestra, and the trumpet often plays very sizeable parts of the Lucifer and Eve formulas. So, while this is primarily Michael's journey and therefore the journey of the Symbolic, the whole psyche is involved, and all its domains – its Symbolic, its Imaginary, and its Real – are engaging with the world's peoples and cultures. Those engagements are lively and in themselves instructive of how the Symbolic plays out as a social being, engaged in a world invested with diverse and competing narratives, as it consolidates these into the commanding authority of the Big Other. The world's different narratives, of course, are often competing ways of conceptualising the nature of human being, in the form of different religions, different mythologies, different political ideologies. As the

¹⁴¹ Stockhausen, "MICHAELs REISE," R XXII.

¹⁴² Ibid.

trumpet plays the three formulas so assertively as Michael travels the globe, the suggestion emerges that the Symbolic – in particular, the systems of language and law and social codes – attempts to capture in itself, and in the narratives it tells, all of the dimensions of the human psyche, to give expression not only to itself but also to the Imaginary and the Real. Put more simply, the socialised Symbolic of laws and social codes must present not merely as laws and social codes, divorced from the people with whom they seek to connect and engage, but rather as reflecting the totality of who they are. The Symbolic Big Other, says Michael's trumpet when it plays parts of the Eve and Lucifer formulas, must be able to somehow acknowledge and accommodate the need for a personal sense of self and identity, as formed in the Imaginary, as well as the inexplicability of the Real. This is partly why Lacan describes his registers through the reference to the Borromean Knot: all three are linked, and each involves and includes something of the other two, reinforced by the interconnectedness of the Superformula.

There are some specific instances of this that are especially worth noting. We hear, for example, the trumpet violently playing the notes of the Lucifer formula in New York, while the trombones play the Michael Formula (see Figure 3.2 below). The trumpet again plays the Lucifer formula in Japan, where the Eve and Michael formulas dominate the orchestra (see Figure 3.3 below), and later in the piece, which I shall address shortly, it learns the Eve formula as well.

But why Lucifer? And why specifically here in New York and Japan? As was noted in the previous chapter, the principle characters in LICHT are, from Stockhausen's perspective, the formulas. Michael is his formula first, and his incarnations of tenor, trumpeter and dancer are secondary. When we hear the trumpet blaring out with the notes of the Lucifer formula, the trumpet has, at least in one sense, become Lucifer. But it is clearly a fraught and complex change of personality: the trumpet is too closely associated with Michael – and nowhere more so than in this piece where it is the dominant voice on stage.¹⁴⁵ Can the trumpet in these passages be both Michael and Lucifer simultaneously? Stockhausen never shied away from these sorts of apparent paradoxes and certainly not in his characterisation of Michael who, as already noted, encapsulates both Apollo and Dionysus.¹⁴⁶

The answer to this paradox lies in the co-dependent nature of Michael and Lucifer, through the connections of their formulas, and of the Symbolic and the Real in Lacan's Borromean Knot. In this way, it becomes possible to understand both the characters and the Lacanian registers not as separate identities, but as different strands of a broader totality. This opens up the possibility of those registers shifting into each other's territory, dominating the space in the human psyche that would normally be the province of the other. It becomes important in instances such as this (and there are many of them throughout LICHT where formulas combine and cross) to revisit the observation made in Chapter 1 that the characters of LICHT are essentially abstract energies rather than characters in the conventional sense. They are, in their truest essence, never contained in the way that their stage presences might at times seem to suggest.

¹⁴⁵ Indeed, just as Stockhausen designates the orchestra as 'the world' in the score's preface, he also stipulates, 'MICHAEL'S instrument is the trumpet' (ibid., R XXI.). He never suggests that it becomes Lucifer's instrument.

¹⁴⁶ See, for example, the ambiguous portrayal of Lucifer through the chants of 39 Franciscan monks in LUZIFERS ABSCHIED from SAMSTAG aus LICHT; or the ways in which both Michael's and Eve's formulas are constantly swapped between their usual instrumental and vocal manifestations throughout much of SONNTAG or Stockhausen's enigmatic remark that the character of Luzikamel performed by Luzifer's trombone and bass, in the final scene of MITTWOCH 'in fact is the disguised Michael' (see "7 x LICHT im Rundfunk (2001-2007): 3. Teil: MITTWOCH aus LICHT," in *TEXTE zur MUSIK Band 16 1998-2007* ed. Imke Misch (Kürten, Germany: Stockhausen-Verlag, 2003/2014), 90 (trans. Ian Parsons)).

From the Lacanian perspective, when the Real takes over the territory of the Symbolic – that is, when the Real enters the territory that would normally be curtailed and ordered through language, without the usual tempering constraints of the Symbolic and its connection with social restraint and comprehensibility – madness ensues.¹⁴⁷ In this sense, then, it is telling that Stockhausen chose to present precisely that takeover, the Real of Lucifer dominating the trumpet of Michael, first in New York, which was one of the major antagonists of the Second World War and, during many of Stockhausen's formative years also the major participant in the Vietnam war, and then in Japan, also a major antagonist in the Second World War. Perhaps this is a representation of something of the madness of war, of nations clashing because of their conflicting political ideologies, and of the brutal impact of this on the psyches of those who live through it, transforming the order of the Symbolic back into the chaos of the Real. This is, of course, what Stockhausen lived through in his own childhood and youth, and it is also depicted in the opera's first Act where the adolescent Michael is sandwiched, centre stage, between his mother's madness and eventual killing by lethal injection on one side, and his father Lucifer's war-like battle cries and rifle shots on the other.¹⁴⁸ Here, in this warring station of MICHAELs REISE UM DIE ERDE, the same message returns more brazenly, in these moments of madness as the Symbolic is itself sabotaged by the Real. Stockhausen presents us, quite literally, with a world gone mad. In Japan, however, the presence of Michael's and Eve's formulas in the orchestra is more prominent which also suggests perhaps some of the notions of conciliation as a backdrop to the madness of war implied in the trumpet's focus on the Lucifer formula. Stockhausen's fondness for Japan, and his associations with it as an expression of cooperative multiculturalism, is captured in TELEMUSIK (1966), where musics from a range of world cultures are electronically intermodulated. Stockhausen dedicated the piece to the people of Japan. In this way, the Japan station seems to represent both possibilities together, each part of Japan's history and cultural narrative.

¹⁴⁷ See, for example, Louis Sass, "Madness and the Ineffable: Hegel, Kierkegaard, and Lacan," *Philosophy, Psychiatry, and Psychology* 16, no. 4 (2009): 321.

¹⁴⁸ This is the beginning of MONDEVA ('Moon Eve'), the second scene of Act One.

Beyond Japan the Luciferian Real no longer dominates the solo trumpet, which instead. Bali, India and Central Africa take on more the mood and colours of the countries Michael is visiting, integrating them into his own formula. In this way, the trumpet reverts back to its own voice, the voice of the Symbolic Michael, no longer dominated by the Luciferian madness of war and instead more a celebration of social diversity. But whether it be that psychotic world of conflicted and conflicting world-views, or the brighter, happier world of the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Stations, the trumpet resounds with 'understandings, codes for behaviour, cultural rules, and stereotypes' of these nations, to refer back to Hurst's quote above – that is, to the Big Other communicating via the signifiers of the Symbolic. It is, then, a depiction of the different ways in which the Symbolic can manifest itself as it translates concepts into tangible signs. Sabotaged by the Real, as it to some extent was in New York and Japan, that translation may have become compromised and lost some of its connection with the identity-forming Imaginary that the Symbolic seeks to signify, but it is a translator nonetheless. The madness of war is perhaps where those traditions and doctrines are most apt to become their most preposterous. It is there that the chaotic darkness of the Real, like a collective repository for a society's trauma and for its desires and drives that would otherwise be inexpressible, is let loose and begins to itself appear as the very thing it can never be: a coherent narrative.¹⁴⁹

It is at the 6th Station, Central Africa, that Michael engages in another battle with Lucifer. The Lucifer formula plays out in aggressive bursts in the trombones and tuba but Michael seems now to be more secure in his Symbolic identity and less vulnerable to giving way to the chaos of the Real. From a social perspective, this might suggest a world becoming clearer and less troubled by its own diversity, by the different ways in which its various cultures translate the messages of gods

¹⁴⁹ The notion of war as place in which the normally unexpressed power of the Real becomes a social narrative was, perhaps more obviously than anywhere else, evident in the political messaging of Nazi Germany. It is perhaps telling, and presumably not in the least bit conscious, that Stockhausen, himself so traumatised by those events, did not choose to represent Germany with the Lucifer formula in this piece but instead to focus on the newer Germany, and especially to the Germany of new music, that he saw himself as helping to build. Nonetheless, the Luciferian connections with Nazi Germany are indeed very explicit in Act One where Michael's Father is Lucifer and, like Stockhausen's own father, a soldier fighting for the Nazi army in the war.

into the narratives of mortals. This was, indeed, what Stockhausen believed music could enable: the shared understanding of human diversity.¹⁵⁰

But this growing security of the Symbolic, this growing charisma and confidence with which its signifiers are asserted, and its growing capacity to cope with diversity without lapsing into the chaos and madness of the Real, is unexpectedly interrupted in Central Africa. Michael hears the basset horn, the fortissimo rising third of Eve's formula, the voice of the Imaginary that, until now, had been only playing away, unnoticed by him, in the background. He stops, listens, and does something extraordinary. He calls for the world to turn backwards. In a few minutes, he will call for it to stop altogether.

Just how extraordinary this is for Michael is perhaps most evident not so much in this opera but in JAHRESLAUF ('Course of the Years'), the first Act of DIENSTAG. As noted in the Introduction, JAHRESLAUF was originally a separate piece. It was composed in Japan before Stockhausen had composed the Superformula, but at a time when the concept of LICHT was already forming for him. It was composed as a contest between the progress of time and attempts to stop it. When it was then placed into LICHT as the first Act of DIENSTAG, the day of conflict and war between Michael and Lucifer, Michael became the champion of the progress of time, and Lucifer the force for holding it back. The contest became a battleground for Lucifer to halt the passage of time and the subsequent evolution of humanity that he despises so much. But here, in the second Act of DONNERSTAG, it is Michael, not Lucifer, who is trying to hold back the progress of time. Why would he need to do this?

¹⁵⁰ I have already noted how this was expressed in TELEMUSIK, and this was further developed in HYMNEN (1966-67), where world anthems are intermodulated on an even larger scale than the more folk-oriented music that formed the basis of TELEMUSIK. This concept then became more explicitly linked with diverse religious practices in INORI (1974) through its integration of cross-cultural prayer gestures. Not only does INORI incorporate the prayer gestures of diverse cultures into the piece but, as the piece progresses, those gestures become more mixed with each other where, for example, one hand might present a gesture from one culture and another hand that of another culture. This becomes most complex in the fifth and last limb of the work, POLYPHONIE, where both a musical and a gestural polyphony is realised.

Stockhausen's answer to that question seems straightforward: Michael, in his spectacular journey around the Earth, and his musical expression of its cultures and diverse values, is reminded of his need for love, which Eve had represented for him in Act One, first as his Mother in *KINDHEIT* and then as his seducer and fledgling lover in *MONDEVA*.¹⁵¹ And he needed only to hear her signature Major Third for that reminder to stop him in his tracks. At a superficial level, it is like a story of a powerful voice of the people – a charismatic leader, perhaps, or an artist who captures in their work the sentiment of the masses – who is still lonely and incomplete without love. But the music, and Lacan, allow a deeper investigation.

At that first call of "ZURÜCK!" ("Back!"), the globe rotates counter-clockwise (against the course of time and progress) and Michael is in the scene's 7th Station, Jerusalem. For the first time, he plays an elaborate combination of his own and Eve's formula. This response to the predicament has now become typical of Michael: just as he tried to assimilate the world's languages and cultures into his own – that is, to give expression to otherness through symbols – he now attempts to do the same with Eve and her formula. But Eve is not simply another culture or language for him to learn and translate into the system of symbols that is the language of his formula. She stands for the Imaginary, the formation of identity and, while the Symbolic might attempt to imitate that – as Michael does here – it cannot really capture it, let alone own it. And so in this place, in Jerusalem, with all its religious associations, the Symbolic, despite its growing pride and confidence, is forced to recognise its own dislocation from the Imaginary. The Symbolic may have developed to the stage where it has become a vibrant, charismatic expression of the values of diverse cultures, an expression of a universal body politic, as it were, but it has missed something in the process. It has become separated from the Imaginary's assembled image of identity, from that imagined sense of self, fictitious and illusory though it may be, that gives people a sense of being who they are, as individuals. For all of Michael's, and the Symbolic's, deftness in assuming the rhetoric of diverse cultures, it has missed the one thing it needs the most: a connection with what humans imagine themselves to be. This is perhaps the challenge of governments, religions, ideologies, dogmas,

¹⁵¹ This blurring of roles of mother and lover in Eve raises obvious Oedipal connections, which I discuss in the next chapter.

everywhere: despite appearances, be it in political propaganda or in religious ceremonial pomp, there is something deeply, personally human that is not captured. There is something in the public celebration of 'us' that has missed the private intimacy of 'me'.

As Jerome Kohl points out, this merging with the Eve formula does not involve a retrograde version of the Michael formula, even though he called for the world to turn backwards to reconnect with Eve.¹⁵² It is therefore not Michael who is reversed, but rather his progress. It is, as such, a recognition that the Symbolic's integration of the Imaginary has been missed in the spectacle of the Symbolic's own growth. It is a repositioning, rather than a reversal, of the Symbolic. This is why the jubilant tone of the 7th Station, celebratory though it seems with this merging of the Michael and Eve formulas, is ultimately not enough. It is an attempt to be what it has not yet become: an integration of the Symbolic and the Imaginary. But Eve, playing her basset horn, is still in the distance, off stage and separate. And so it is only an appearance of this integration. Not only has Eve not appeared on stage, but (and more importantly) her full formula has not yet even had a chance to be heard.

Despite Stockhausen's deeply spiritual beliefs, he had little interest in the established institutions of religion because of their focus on hierarchy and organisation rather than with a knowledge of life ('Lebenswissen').¹⁵³ This seems to some extent reflected in the location of this superficial appearance of integration in Jerusalem. The centre of three of the world's major religions – Judaism, Islam and Christianity – is the place where Michael is confronted with his own failure to make that vital connection between himself and Eve: to effect, that is, the full embrace of the Imaginary's human identity with the Symbolic's social codes.

And so Michael calls for the world to stop as he musically ponders this lack in a little piece called 'HALT' for solo trumpet and solo pizzicato double bass. In Stockhausen's instructions in the score,

¹⁵² Jerome Kohl, "Time and Light," *Contemporary Music Review* 7, no. 2 (1993): 211.

¹⁵³ Karlheinz Stockhausen, "Vor und nach SAMSTAG aus LICHT," in *Texte zur Musik Band 6 1977-1984*, ed. Christoph von Blumröder (Cologne, Germany: DuMont Buchverlag, 1989), 296.

the trumpet seeks consolation from the double bass: the trumpeter walks slowly to the double bass player, sits down and the two of them play together.¹⁵⁴ This is not so much a duet, however, because they are both playing Michael's formula and so, as such, it is really a soliloquy for the now not-so-brazen Symbolic, now aware of its own vacuity.¹⁵⁵

This recognition of something lacking in the Symbolic is an important part of Lacanian theory, referring to that aspect of the human self that is not fully captured in the domain of the Symbolic.

Often a large part of the analyst's role in Lacanian psychotherapy is to probe that lack.

Psychoanalysis in that sense becomes the exploration of alienation: of the gap between what is said openly and overtly, what is expressed in the public sphere of signifiers, and what is lived and experienced more covertly. For Lacan, that more covert world is also a world expressed through signs – the language of the unconscious – but the signs are not always immediately apparent and might not signify what we conventionally think them to be saying. It is the analyst's task to unravel this through interrogating both the speech in which the subject engages, and the deeper, more hidden systems of language that might lie behind this.¹⁵⁶

This exploration can take many paths, because the gap may be attributable to many things. Part of it explores the disjuncture between the unified image humans build of themselves in the domain of the Imaginary, and that which is expressed in the domain of the Symbolic, where that image is described in words and behaviours, and collectivised in society into the values and belief systems that people believe in a try to live by.¹⁵⁷ Lacan says that forging the attachment of the Imaginary to

¹⁵⁴"MICHAEL'S REISE," R 74-76.

¹⁵⁵ Despite HALT's emphasis on the Michael formula, there are a few times within that the trumpet quotes part of the Eve formula. These a sad, even mournful, quotes however which to be an expression of a longing for Eve. There is certainly no sense of her presence.

¹⁵⁶ See, for example, Jacques Lacan, "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis," in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English* (New York, USA: Norton and Company, 2006).

¹⁵⁷ Žižek describes this lack, and this process of alienation, in many ways throughout his writings such as when he refers to our belief in our own inadequacy because of a corresponding belief in the all-encompassing knowledge of the Big Other in Slavoj Žižek, *Absolute Recoil: Towards a New Foundation of Dialectical Materialism* (London, UK: Verso, 2014), 346-47; or to his notion of 'a barred Other, incomplete, 'not-all', an Other articulated against a void, an Other which carries with it an ex-timate, non-symbolizable kernel' in *Interrogating the Real*, 13; or his simpler example of giving in to social rituals that we know to be no more than appearances, such as our tendency to say "Nice to see you!" when neither we, nor the person to whom we are speaking, believes it to be true, in *Less Than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism* (London, UK: Verso, 2013), 45. All of these share a recognition of a

the Symbolic (or rejoining it if they have become separated) is an important component of psychoanalysis and analysts, especially when they focus on the 'here and now' of the subject's experience and discourse, need to be careful not to lose sight of it: 'It [focusing on the here and now] may indeed be useful provided the analyst does not detach the imaginary intention he uncovers in it from the symbolic relation in which it is expressed'.¹⁵⁸ 'Imaginary intention' here refers to the sense of self and of the world as it relates to the self that forms in the domain of the Imaginary. That is, it is the 'object' of the outside world within the context of the 'subject' that has developed its sense of identity and self-hood in the Imaginary. It is a projection or orientation of self out into the world, and an understanding of the world from that perspective. In simple terms, we always see the world through our own eyes. This is where the notion of 'meaning' is formed by the constructions that we make of the images that we encounter in the Imaginary. But we give them a voice, as it were, in the domain of the Symbolic. This voice is in the 'sound-images' that constitute the other half of Saussurean *langue*. Sometimes those sound-images might dignify different things for the people who hear them than for the people who speak them. Exploring the symbolic relations with imaginary intention can, then, be understood, in its simplest sense, as seeking to find the real meanings behind the words a person speaks.

From this perspective, then, we can see HALT, this short scene within MICHAEL's REISE UM DIE ERDE, as a kind of psychoanalytic session: an interrogation of the Symbolic as it attempts to re-attach to the Imaginary. Musically, the scene involves fragments of the Michael formula being played on the trumpet – sad and lonely, with mournful glissandi and sobbing vibratos – that are then played back and elaborated by the double bass, pizzicato, unemotional, and yet still somehow comforting and reassuring, perhaps precisely because of its emotional detachment. This continues for a few moments until, at last, the bass horn is again heard in the distance, playing the opening sextuplet gesture of the Eve-formula.

disjuncture between the subjective experience of life, and what is expressed in the outward social domain of language and social norms.

¹⁵⁸ Lacan, "Function and Field of Speech," 208.

Another way to understand this scene can be derived from the work of the sociologist Nicos Mouzelis. He describes psychoanalysis as a process of 'bring[ing] to the surface the chain of signifiers which are linked to the analysand's various symptoms'.¹⁵⁹ But he then goes on to suggest that this engagement with language will always be limited because of language's inherent inability to express the inexpressible. Psychoanalysis will help identify where those limits are, but the limits will always be there. There will always be something that cannot be said. Through the suspension of language, however, Mouzelis argues that we can engage with these unsymbolisable aspects of ourselves in other ways, and therefore be less limited. This is what is achieved, Mouzelis says, through meditation, whether it be in the spiritual context of various religions and the 'mystic's union with the divine' or through the growing practice of meditation outside of religious contexts, particularly in Anglo-Saxon countries.¹⁶⁰ He argues that this enables a state to emerge where the 'the subject feels less divided, less alienated, more open and compassionate towards the self and the other'.¹⁶¹ From this perspective, HALT becomes not so much a session of psychoanalysis, with the double bass filling out and expanding the symptomatic signs of the disconsolate trumpet as an analyst might do, but rather the trumpet suspending or bracketing itself as its language sinks into the more nebulous meditative world of the double bass.

At a public, rather than private, level it suggests a society seeking to come to terms with its own identity, as if it is mulling over the many signifiers that might seem to capture it but which, ultimately, do not. This is where Lacan's warning against the analyst detaching the imaginary intention from the Symbolic relation in which it is expressed can be seen to have particular resonance beyond the analyst's rooms. It resonates for many modern cultures where such a focused absorption in the Symbolic domain of the laws and social rules of the 'here and now' can easily happen at the expense of the 'imaginary intention', the underlying sense of identity and purpose, which those laws and rules were initially intended to represent. This can be seen in the legal system that loses itself in legal technicality, rather than in a connection to the identity and

¹⁵⁹ Nicos Mouzelis, "Lacan and meditation: From the symbolic to the postsymbolic?," *Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society* 19, no. 2 (2014): 129.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 130-33.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 134.

meaning of justice, or of what is good for its people, in order to make legal determinations. It can be seen in the political system that focuses too much on maintaining appearance of political authority and too little on policies that reflect the needs of the electorate. It can be seen in the preservation of the appearances of authority and ritual in religious institutions rather than in more profound engagement with spirituality and spiritual identity. All of these are problems of societies where the Symbolic has turned too much in on itself, too focused on the shapes and forms of its symbols and has lost sense of how to connect with its Imaginary. To apply Lacan's comment quoted above to this social rather than the personal context, this all means that the benefit of a society looking at how it operates in the 'here and now' through its symbols and signs, can only be realised if, in doing so, it does not detach the 'imaginary intention', the subjective meanings, that can be uncovered in that process. Social rituals, codes, and conventions can be valuable, but only if a society does not lose sight of why they are there and what they were originally intended to signify.

In all these senses – the psychoanalytic, the meditative, the social – HALT portrays the potential sadness of introspection but also its potential to deliver new hope by uncovering what is missing in the Symbolic, and which Michael eventually hears in the call of the basset horn. Mondeva, the bird-woman hybrid that had seduced Michael in Act One, appears on stage as a 'Star-Maiden' as Stockhausen now describes her in the score.¹⁶² The introspective qualities of HALT, the recognition of his own limits despite his confident expression of diverse cultures, have enabled Michael the Symbolic to at last re-engage with the formative identity of the Imaginary. This was why the progressive Michael had to call for the world to stop – the capacity to progress will always be hampered if the alienation from Imaginary identity with which the Symbolic must engage is not confronted and, at least to some degree, resolved.

The remaining scenes of MICHAELS REISE UM DIE ERDE take on an overtly religious – indeed Christian – flavour in the names Stockhausen gives them: MISSION, VERSPOTTUNG ('Mockery'),

¹⁶² Stockhausen, "MICHAELS REISE," R 80.

KREUZIGUNG ('Crucifixion'), and HIMMELFAHRT ('Ascension'). This seems to be something Michael has acquired in Jerusalem and while it might be simply a forerunner to the association Stockhausen draws between Michael and 'Christos' in the Third Act, it can also be seen beyond these immediate Christian connotations and as an attempt to invest Michael's story with a more spiritual significance in the broader sense. It is not at all unusual for Stockhausen to do this, as many of his works have religious or quasi-religious references in their titles and in the ideas to which those titles refer.¹⁶³ The extent to which these works overtly convey religious messages varies considerably but certainly suggests Stockhausen was motivated by, and attempted to convey, a more holistic spirituality.¹⁶⁴ Indeed, Stockhausen often simply drew from the stories with which he was most familiar without necessarily wishing to elevate those stories into something more significant. He did this in the first Act of *DONNERSTAG* where he draws on the story of his own childhood in the telling of Michael's story, not because he intended the opera to be autobiographical but simply because his own childhood was the one with which he was most familiar.¹⁶⁵

This can be seen to be the case here, too, where Stockhausen seems to be drawing on these references to the Christ story simply because they were references with which he was familiar, even though the point they make is a broader one. They invest the Symbolic with an elevated status, as Michael moves beyond the stations of a human world and onto a more god-like plane. This accords with the Lacanian concept of the signifier that comes to stand for a whole chain of signifieds: the Master Signifier that attempts to provide all-encompassing meaning, a single signifier that appears to explain a whole range of signifieds that might, in fact, have little or no connection with each other at all. I will return to the concept of the Master Signifier in *LICHT* in more detail later in this chapter and then more comprehensively in Chapter 6. Its relevance here is

¹⁶³ For example, *GESANG DER JÜNGLIGE* and its references to the song the damned youths sang from the burning furnace to which Nebuchadnezzar had condemned them, told in the Old Testament Book of Daniel; the religious connotations of *MANTRA*, with its dual references to the mantra-style of that work's musical formula and to the religious notion of a Mantra as a form of meditative prayer; *INORI*, the Japanese word for 'prayer' or 'adoration'; and the series of references to places named in *The Urantia Book* in the last eight pieces of *KLANG*.

¹⁶⁴ Holistic in the sense of not being confined to the narratives or dogma of any particular religion.

¹⁶⁵ Stockhausen, "7 x LICHT im Rundfunk: *DONNERSTAG*," 95.

that the religious imagery of these final sections of MICHAELs REISE UM DIE ERDE seem to be moving Michael into that direction: the god-like figure who can somehow signify everything and everyone, even beyond the separate cultures of the world that he signified in the seven stations. This god-like, master-signifying status of Michael will become even more apparent in third and final Act, and in its ABSCHIED. At this point, however, it is telling that this apparent morphism into the Master Signifier has happened just as Michael has reunited with Mondeva – just, that is, as the Symbolic has re-attached itself to the Imaginary.

With this reattachment of the Symbolic to the Imaginary, one might think from all of this that this should be enough to get the Symbolic to function healthily. It is, after all, part of the aim of the psychoanalytic process to enable that reconnection. Why, then, is the Symbolic unravelling in this way, slipping down the signifying chain to the Master Signifier, with its pretences to all-embracing meaning that are, nonetheless, no more than pretence?

This is a complex problem that is perhaps not answered until the opera MITTWOCH, which Stockhausen was not to compose until almost twenty years later. Indeed, if LICHT was being performed in full, and following the days of the week in their order in the Superformula, then it would already have been answered the day before. However, true to Stockhausen's notion of life as a spiral, the same questions must be asked and answered repeatedly as human consciousness grows and learns its lessons in more sophisticated ways.¹⁶⁶ In this way, in the ongoing cycle of LICHT, which is without beginning or end, the question must be confronted again here in DONNERSTAG. In Chapter 6, I focus on the synthesis of the Symbolic, the Imaginary, and the Real and this issue will be discussed more fully there. But suffice it to say at this stage that it is, at least in part, this lack of synthesis, and a failure to engage with the Real, that is the issue here. There may be a reconnection with the Imaginary, but the third part of the nexus has not yet been included. The Real, as that domain of personality, or indeed of social structures, that resists signification, is vital in keeping the Symbolic in check. Giving it naked expression might lead to

¹⁶⁶ Cott and Stockhausen, *Conversations*, 108-09.

madness, but ignoring it altogether creates a fantasy world, disconnected from the 'realness' of reality – disconnected, that is, from these hidden but core parts of the human experience that are nevertheless part of the whole. Attempts to ignore the Real, however, are rarely fully successful anyway. The Real typically breaks through in other ways, such as through symptoms of psychopathology, or through 'Freudian slips', and humour¹⁶⁷

These hints of the Real breaking through the surface begin to be heard towards the end of MICHAELs REISE UM DIE ERDE in the music of two clarinettists who have been playing impishly and somewhat comically from time to time throughout the piece. The score describes them as a 'Clownesque Swallow-Pair', two clarinettists (the second of which also plays the basset horn) dressed as a 'cross between swallow and penguin' who 'whizz through the orchestra several times while playing'.¹⁶⁸ They often mock the music that the trumpet, basset horn, or the instruments of the orchestra play and their iteration as clarinet and basset horn certainly implies a link with Eve, as if this humour and mockery is happening in the image-laden domain of the Imaginary. The Imaginary is to some extent the domain of dreams. But it is also sometimes in dreams that the Real can reside and, indeed, Lucifer's formula is often woven throughout the music of the clown-clarinettists as if, hidden from the world, the Real is now peeking through the images of the Imaginary, part dream-like, part joke-like. It is towards the end, in KREUZIGUNG, where Michael and the Star Maiden Eve have become so absorbed in one another that they have begun to play

¹⁶⁷ The role of humour as a way of expressing or confronting the Real is discussed in Chapter 6.

¹⁶⁸ Stockhausen, "MICHAELs REISE," R XXI. These two clownesque swallows are presumably references to the two clarinets that are heard in sections 20 – 23 of UNSICHTBARE CHÖRE (INVISIBLE CHOIRS), a pre-recorded multi-track choral part that is projected octophonically throughout sections of both the first and the third Acts of the opera. In both Greek and Roman mythology, swallows were typically associated with the flight of the soul after death and, as such, had connections with both death and resurrection. Death and resurrection is very much the domain of Lucifer in LICHT, and most especially in the opera that focuses on him particularly, SAMSTAG. It is, therefore, likely that Stockhausen considered the two clarinets to be to some degree associated with Lucifer, and yet the clarinet (and the basset horn, which one of the clownesque-swallows later plays) is more associated with Eve. Combined, this therefore suggests something of Lucifer emerging into the domain of Eve or, in my interpretation, of the Real inserting itself into the images of the Imaginary. In Chapter 4, I discuss the role of the Eve, and the Imaginary, as expressions of feminine side – the Jungian *anima* – of Michael and Lucifer, the latter of which I associate with the flute, and the former with the basset horn. In that sense, it would seem more appropriate that these passages are played by flutes rather than clarinets but, at the time of composing DONNERSTAG, Stockhausen had not yet met the Dutch flautist Kathinka Pasveer, who was his inspiration to include the flute as a prominent instrument in LICHT. Whether he would have composed these passages for flutes rather than clarinets, had he met her before composing DONNERSTAG, is an intriguing question that can never be answered.

each other's formulas, but the playfulness of the clarinetists is thunderously pushed aside by the orchestral trombones, Lucifer's instrument. The trombones, underscored by the tuba, blast out the nuclear notes of the Lucifer formula while Eve's and Michael's nuclear notes are split in into shrill fragments on the clarinet and basset horn. This little joke of the clown-clarinetists has been torn to shreds and the Real that lay beneath its surface, is let loose with incredible force through these trombones that should, according to the score, sound like 'an entire choir of trombones'.¹⁶⁹

Despite this rupturing of the Real into the domain of the Symbolic and the Imaginary, crucifying them as it were, both Michael and Eve seem to be ultimately unharmed. The two formulas of Michael and Eve continue to ascend into the sky, ignoring the Real, absorbed in their own fantasy world. This is like the fantasy worlds of Utopian societies, of happy families from American mid-20th-century sitcoms, or of the seemingly perfect human being for whom nothing is unresolved nor unexplained. Maybe here, however, Stockhausen and Lacan would have different perspective on just how happy this ending to MICHAEL'S REISE UM DIE ERDE really is. Lacan never suggests that the distinction between the Imaginary and the Symbolic should, or even could become so attached that they lose their separate characteristics. But for Stockhausen, this union of Michael and Eve seems to be a celebratory one. It will, however, ultimately be an ambiguous celebration. This ambiguity will be demonstrated even more potently when it is continued in SONNTAG, as I discuss later in this chapter.

Insofar as the Real is the domain of trauma, of unresolvable contradiction, of base chaos, of raw and unnameable Aristotelian *hyle*: the formless 'stuff' of being, it is an essential part of existence.¹⁷⁰ Without it, there is nothing for the Imaginary to form into images and nothing for the Symbolic to symbolise other than fantasies and imagined constructions. The Real might resist the signification of the Symbolic, but it is nevertheless the primal essence from which the Symbolic is able to symbolise anything at all, and the fact that it exists is always a reminder of the limits of the Symbolic. It is the starting point of human being, insofar as it is the nebulousness out of which the

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., R 91.

¹⁷⁰ See Chapter 2, and my discussion of Lacan Real, for further explanations of Aristotle's concept of *hyle*.

Imaginary creates illusions of identity, which the Symbolic then goes on to form into the signifiers of language and law. Perhaps this is why the brutal, ferocious sounds of Lucifer's trombones blast out so threateningly in KREUZIGUNG, protesting this sham, and a reminder that these mere glimpses of the Real, through the humour of the clown clarinets, is not enough to really express the inexpressible Real. The humour through which people might give hints of what cannot be said in socially acceptable language and discourse will, this music suggests, sometimes only stir those unsayable depths all the more.

It is an ineffective protest, however, because by now Michael and Eve are far away, headed towards their fantastical paradise in the sky. The stage has darkened, and we hear their entwined formulas rotating, and quietly sound-projected around the loudspeakers that surround the auditorium. They are making their way to a more elevated place – headed towards the Master Signifying Light in which the audience will encounter them more brilliantly in the next Act and then, most of all, in SONNTAG – the opera devoted particularly to their union and to Lucifer's absence. In that sense, then, both the Third Act of DONNERSTAG and the whole of SONNTAG provide some insights into this passage towards the Master Signifier, as much as into this absorption of the Symbolic and the Imaginary into each other.¹⁷¹

As an endpoint to a chain of signifiers, or a signifier that has lost the clarity and specificity of its relationship with the signified, the Master Signifier grows primarily out of the domain of the Symbolic. Before exploring that process, however, it is important to further decipher the nature of the Symbolic in terms of its relationship with both the Imaginary and the Real, as it will be the loss of that relationship that ultimately enables the move to the Master Signifier. I will now turn particularly to the first of these: the Symbolic's relationship with the Imaginary, as this has been the

¹⁷¹ It is worth noting at this point that Lacanian theory does not appear to suggest any significant link between, on the one hand, the denial of the Real and, on the other hand, the blurring of the Symbolic and the Imaginary. The suggestion that one is to some extent implied in the other is not something that I have located in my research of the literature. It is rather an implication that is drawn from my application of the Lacanian registers to LICHT and, in particular, to these parts of the cycle where Michael and Eve become so entwined with one another that they lose something of their separate identities. It is, as such, one of the many consequences of my approach to interpreting LICHT that opens up new perspectives on both Stockhausen's symbolism and Lacan's psychoanalytic concepts.

relationship that the end of MICHAELS REISE UM DIE ERDE has brought most directly into the music. This is the relationship between Heidegger's sky-faring gods which Michael represents and the earth-dwelling mortals who Eve nurtures.

3.3 The Symbolic and the Imaginary: Michael and Eve and SONNTAG aus LICHT

This perspective on the Symbolic's relationship to the Imaginary as a relationship in which the definition of the Symbolic's role can become blurred, has already been foreshadowed in those last moments of MICHAELS REISE UM DIE ERDE, where both Michael's trumpet and Eve's basset horn began to play fragments of one another's formulas. When their music is sound-projected around the auditorium at the end, it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish one from the other. In the distance and in the rotating spatialisation, their timbres and their notes seem to blend into each other. It might be a step too far to say that they have become each other, but there is certainly a sense in which their characters have become merged. With the formulas being, as they are for Stockhausen, the essence of the characters, it is reasonable to assume that the merging and loss of distinction that is happening in their formulas is in some sense happening to their characters as well. This fusion is highlighted again in SONNTAG, the opera that is devoted to the union of Michael and Eve – and therefore of the Symbolic and the Imaginary – and so I will now turn my attention to that opera.

Literary critic and political theorist Fredric Jameson draws a connection between the Lacanian domains of Imaginary and Symbolic when he describes the 'incommensurability between the particular and the universal'.¹⁷² This becomes, he suggests, especially evident when a person attempts to describe their dreams to someone else. The uniqueness of the dream (which takes place in the domain of the Imaginary) can never be captured in the sound-images of language (which takes place in the domain of the Symbolic) where the private is made public. It is this sense of the public nature of language that makes it universal in Jameson's analysis: a universality which

¹⁷² Fredric Jameson, "Imaginary and Symbolic in Lacan: Marxism, Psychoanalytic Criticism, and the Problem of the Subject," *Yale French Studies* 55/56 (1977): 339.

ultimately, I would suggest, can move beyond the Symbolic's domain of social interactions through language and into the more all-encompassing narratives of Master Signifiers. That is, the public language of the Symbolic becomes increasingly universalised in its attempts to communicate the private experience of the Imaginary, and the Imaginary's attempts to create unifying cohesion, eventually slipping into the universality of the Master Signifier, where ultimately the connection to the private self of the Imaginary is lost in this increasing public universalisation. This means that parallels between the Imaginary-Symbolic gap in human consciousness and the broader tension with which I am associating LICHT more generally, and particularly the tensions of the Heideggerian Fourfold, can be derived from Jameson's analysis also. Bringing the two domains of Imaginary and Symbolic together, as Stockhausen does when Eve and Michael merge, and seeing the resultant slippage of the Symbolic into the Master Signifier, represents an attempt, then, to find a hopeful resolution of the tension of the Fourfold. The connection that is forged in this process, however, have become ambiguous. This is underscored through the very natures of Eve and Michael, and particularly of their formulas: Eve, the upward rising figure of fertility and growth (an aspect of her that is especially prominent in her opera MONTAG, where she is represented by, amongst other things, the green grass growing from a fertile earth), and Michael, the descending messenger from the gods. In this way the union of Michael and Eve becomes a representation of an increasingly fluid, even blurred, relationship between the private, the public, and the universal.

This blurring is perhaps most remarkable in the SONNTAG's Third Scene, LICHT-BILDER ('Light Pictures'). There, the formulas of Michael and Eve are, throughout the scene, shared more or less equally between the tenor-trumpet duo on the one hand and the basset horn-flute duo on the other, breaking down the usual associations of these pairings with Michael and Eve respectively, just as they did at the end of MICHAELs REISE UM DIE ERDE. But here their fusion, and the breakdown of their separate identities as Michael and Eve is taken even further. The formulas here become highly fractured and disoriented within these demarcated performative iterations. The formulas themselves are turned into a quasi-retrograde form. This is achieved by dividing each formula into

53 fragments and then playing these fragments in reverse, from the last fragment to the first.¹⁷³ As the two duos play these retrograde versions of the fragmented formulas, the fragments are then increasingly delayed between each performer within each respective pair. So as the tenor might sing one fragment of one of the formulas, the trumpet will repeat the fragment, at first in unison and then, the next time a fragment is sung by the tenor, the trumpet will repeat it after a small delay. These delay periods slowly expand and contract throughout the scene. The same delay system is used in the basset horn and flute part. The formulas, and therefore the depictions of Symbolic-Michael and Imaginary-Eve, become disoriented (by using the formulas in retrograde) and displaced, (by using delay), throughout the scene. The sounds are further veiled through the use of ring-modulation on both the trumpet and flute parts, adding to the sense that the music is being transformed, its identity obscured, as the two formulas entwine throughout the piece. It is beautiful, but the recognisability of either Michael or Eve in their formulas is all but gone.

It is worth noting at this stage that neither Michael nor Eve appear in SONNTAG as named characters. Their presence is in their formulas, and their names are often sung, but neither of them is ever clearly delineated on stage. This to some extent adds to a sense that their identities have, in their union, become less defined. Indeed, there is often an ambiguity about which character the audience is hearing and watching: an ambiguity that is reinforced through several compositional devices. Beyond the changing associations of the formulas with tenor, trumpet, basset horn and flute that I have noted in LICHT-BILDER, other examples are also worth mentioning. We hear, for example, the Eve formula being sung by the tenor and the Michael formula by the soprano (in the first scene, LICHTER-WASSER ('Lights-Water')). At the beginning of LICHT-BILDER, we hear their instruments swapped where the basset horn is introduced playing notes from the Michael formula and the trumpet playing notes from the Eve formula. Their locations are inverted, with the Eve formula in the upper register and the Michael formula below it (in the second scene)¹⁷⁴. In the fourth scene, DÜFTE-ZEICHEN ('Scents-Signs'), the formulas tend to be distributed more broadly, as the days of the week are described by a mix of soprano, tenor, baritone and bass. These voices

¹⁷³ The number 53 comes from adding the first seven numbers of the Fibonacci series (1 + 2 + 3 + 5 + 8 + 13 + 21)

¹⁷⁴ ENGEL-PROZESSIONEN ('Angel Processions')

each align with the chief characters in each of the respective operas for the day being described.¹⁷⁵ Different segments of the formulas are heard throughout the scene as each day is described, and the formulas of the characters associated with that day are heard. The references to Eve and Michael specifically, however, occur in a different way in this scene: through the presentation of scents and signs for each day of the week. The scents connect with the fluid imagery of Eve and the signs with the signifying symbols of Michael. As each day is introduced, first a scent for the day is described while incense for that scent is lit by the singers, which then wafts through the auditorium. Then singers unfurl the sign for the day and describe it. In this way, the characters of Eve and Michael may seem less blurred in this scene than in the others I have already described, but their connection and unity is nevertheless central: it is only through the joining of the Imaginary and the Symbolic that the days of the week, so important as the sequential components of LICHT, and the overall syntagm of the cycle, can be properly accounted for.¹⁷⁶ Each day has a sense (a fragrance) and a signification (a sign). In this way, the days themselves represent the integration of the two. That the delineation of the Imaginary and the Symbolic through this association with scents and signs does not in this scene imply a blurring of the two is indeed a moment of unity of both rather than the loss of clarity of each. It may seem to be a healthy integration of the two psychic domains, without loss of their separate functions, and maybe it is no coincidence that there is at least a sense of Lucifer in this scene, where his formula appears in the descriptions of the days that include him. It is maybe this small presence of the Real, excluded from Michael's and Eve's union both at the of MICHAEL'S REISE UM DIE ERDE and in the earlier scenes of SONNTAG, that enables the former blurring of the identities of Michael and Eve to disentangle somewhat. This need to confront the Real, still only hinted at through small appearances of the

¹⁷⁵ The baritone, an unusual role in LICHT, appears in FREITAG as the voice for Caino, the son of Ludon. Ludon is one of the many forms in which Lucifer appears throughout LICHT and, in this sense, Caino is another representation of Lucifer, another step removed.

¹⁷⁶ I mean 'syntagm' here in the sense of a linear relationship, forming a coherent narrative, as Roland Barthes describes it when he contrasts the notion of 'syntagm' with that of 'system', the latter referring to linguistic units that can occupy the same place in the linear narrative of the syntagm. See Barthes, *Semiology*, 58-59. This is not to say, however, that LICHT has a narrative in the traditional sense of a 'story', but rather that its sequence of units – the days of the week – form an overall narrative of the human psyche and the various permutations and combinations of its component parts. I return to the syntagm of LICHT in Chapter 4, in relation to the forming of the days in Act Two of MONTAG.

Lucifer formula in DÜFTE-ZEICHEN, is somewhat curiously and ambiguously further addressed in the scene that follows: HOCH-ZEITEN.¹⁷⁷

The notion of the Symbolic being integrated with the Imaginary is, as I have already noted, not one that appears to be the focus of the Lacanian literature, which instead is more concerned with the ways in which the two domains interact. But in focusing on the concepts of private individual identity, that reside in the images of the Imaginary, and collective social edicts, that reside in the language of the Symbolic, the possibility of their integration begins to emerge. It is indeed an almost ubiquitous challenge from the perspective of either domain: from the individual who seeks to be integrated into society without losing his or her sense of self and unique identity, to the society that tries to represent and express the diverse personalities and identities of its members without losing its integral sense of being a society. In the Heideggerian terms, it is like trying to be able to see in the skies something that makes sense on Earth, and the gods who dwell there as having some relevance to the mortals who look to them. The human understanding of its own nature will always be muddled and blurred if these dimensions of reckoning are not compatible.

These contrasts between the individual and the universal, including the manifestation of the universal at the level of society, are at the core of conflicting political ideologies, from the individualism of capitalist and liberalist models to the collectivism of socialist and communal systems. This becomes a constant challenge for people both individually and globally: how to reconcile dichotomous views of private and public, and of how the two should coexist. Often views on how this can be done are diverse, sometimes so much so that they lead to wars. These different views can, through this connection of the private and the public to the Imaginary and the Symbolic, and from there to Heidegger's Fourfold, therefore become something even more profound than different views about how to run the world. They become different notions of the fundamental nature of being human.

¹⁷⁷ I return to HOCH-ZEITEN later in this chapter.

The possibility of the coexistence of these apparently dichotomous notions of being is to some extent enabled in the writings of German philosopher and social theorist Peter Sloterdijk who, in positing his notion of 'spheres', suggests that humans create spaces of coexistence where new hybrids – connections of difference – are made possible and which, as such, redefine humans' perceptions of the world. In this sense, he develops a radically new version of Heidegger's *Dasein*, suggesting that the space from which the world is perceived and understood is one that is changing dynamically as forms of human connection break apart – that is, as spheres shatter – and new connections, new spheres, are formed in their place. For Sloterdijk, the possibilities of these new connections are constantly growing, as technology allows more sophisticated integrations of humans and machines, especially through computers. But the model is also one that applies as easily to different models of social connection and, presumably, also of intra-personal connection. Indeed, the notion of spheres operating at all levels, from the microsphere of the foetus in the womb to the macrosphere of societies and nations, is a recurring theme in Sloterdijk's work.¹⁷⁸ From this perspective, then, the possibility of the merging of the Symbolic and the Imaginary emerges: the coexistence of difference that can create new spheres, new ways of understanding the world. This is where a model from a non-Lacanian theorist seems to accord better with what happens in *SONNTAG* than the ways in which the notion of coexistence of opposites is conceptualised, by way of contrast, by Lacanian philosopher Slavoj Žižek. In his book *The Parallax View*, Žižek describes such coexistence as the domain of the Lacanian Real and uses the metaphor of a parallax to describe it: an opposition that can be neither parted nor resolved, rather like the opposing sides of a Moebius strip.¹⁷⁹ In relation to the attempt to resolve the tension between Jameson's private and public through the integration of the Imaginary and the Symbolic, it is Sloterdijk's model that seems, at least initially, to offer particularly intriguing possibilities, beyond those that a solely Lacanian analysis might afford, although Žižek's parallax metaphor is, as I argue below, also relevant in the final scene of *SONNTAG*.

¹⁷⁸ Peter Sloterdijk's theory of spherology is set out in his three-volume *magnum opus* on the issue: Peter Sloterdijk, *Bubbles (Spheres Volume I: Microspherology)*, trans. Wieland Hoban (California, USA: Semiotext(e), 2011); *Globes (Spheres Volume II: Macrospherology)*, trans. Wieland Hoban (California, USA: Semiotext(e), 2014); *Foams (Spheres Volume III: Plural Spherology)*, trans. Wieland Hoban (California, USA: Semiotext(e), 2016).

¹⁷⁹ Žižek, *Parallax*, 4.

The merging of Michael's Symbolic and Eve's Imaginary in these different ways throughout SONNTAG all point to the notion of 'plural spherology', upon which Sloterdijk focuses in the third of his three-volume study. For this, Sloterdijk develops his sphere metaphor into the notion of 'foam', the continuous shattering and reforming of spheres as their multiplicity and diversity comes into constant contact. It enables dichotomous views of reality to continue to form and reform as different perspectives, and the spaces (psychological spaces, social spaces, ontological spaces) in which those perspectives are contained, come into contact with one another. Sloterdijk notes how this 'emancipation of the concept of reality from the immemorial dogmatism of the serious, the weighty and the necessary [...] which have always reflected an inadequate, traditional understanding of "being" within the framework of binary thought' accords with the non-Aristotelian logic espoused by Gotthard Günther.¹⁸⁰ Günther's rejection of a binary conception of the world was one with which Stockhausen had considerable sympathy.¹⁸¹

There is, then, no reason to think that this merging of the personalities of Michael and Eve, and therefore the loss of what had, until now, demarcated them from each other, was thought by Stockhausen to be a deficit. His embrace of non-Aristotelian logic in fact suggests that such a merging of disparate domains was an important one to foster. Indeed, the music throughout SONNTAG is celebratory, as are the ritualistic stagings of each scene. This suggests something elevated and glorious, quite unlike the fatalistic union and loss of self in Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* where, in Act Two, Tristan sings that he has become Isolde, and Isolde that she has become Tristan.¹⁸² There this total merging of the one into the other results only in the annihilation of both, which is not surprising for a composer who identified so deeply with the nihilism of Schopenhauer and the futility of the human will and, of the world it perceives and desires. But

¹⁸⁰ Sloterdijk, *Foams*, 647.

¹⁸¹ See, for example, Jonathan Cott, *Stockhausen: Conversations with the Composer*, Picador, London (1974), 74, where Stockhausen makes reference to Günther particularly in relation to a move away from the subject-object binary: a binary that is, of course, also reflected in the distinction between the subject-identity of the Imaginary and the object-Other of the Symbolic.

¹⁸² Tristan's words to Isolde are 'Tristan you, I Isolde, no more Tristan!', while hers to him are 'Isolde you, I Tristan, no more Tristan.' In Chapter 6, I further discuss the union of Tristan and Isolde and compare it to that of Eve and Caino in FREITAG.

Stockhausen's philosophy was one of optimism and the belief that life is a progression towards a higher existence. In SONNTAG, the celebratory nature of the music suggests that Michael and Eve are made greater by their union, no longer bound by their demarcated selves. The private-public unity, and the many ways it can be achieved, to some extent reflected in the different compositional devices I have already described for Stockhausen integrating Michael and Eve throughout SONNTAG, is a celebration of Sloterdijk's notion of foam, which might be paraphrased as the constantly changing splash of a bubbling, fluid reality that can be continually reformed as it comes into contact with new types of difference.¹⁸³

In the fifth and final scene, there is an even more extraordinary outcome that introduces another perspective on such a dissolution of difference however: Lucifer appears in a much more subliminal way. The fifth scene, HOCH-ZEITEN ('High Times' and also, without the hyphen, would make the German word for 'Weddings') is in two versions, one for five orchestral groups and the other for five choral groups, both of which are performed simultaneously in neighbouring auditoriums, with sections of one being fed via loudspeakers into the other at specified moments in the score. Both parts are performed twice, with either the performers or the audiences swapping auditoriums in between, so the piece can be experienced from both perspectives. In both the orchestral version and the choral version, the formulas of Michael and Eve move slowly towards one another in pitch. They appear in different voices and instruments but are also coupled in the sense that, in the choral version, for example, the first sopranos sing the Eve formula and the second sopranos the Michael formula, with a similar distribution between the altos and tenors. There, both formulas appear in the upper voice register and both in the middle voice. This gives an overall sense of the two being blended despite the separation of their formulas into the different voices, and the gradual merging of the pitch separations between them only intensifies this sense as the piece progresses. A similar distribution and gradual merging of the formulas occurs in the different pitches of the instruments in the orchestral version. Therefore, in each auditorium, the

¹⁸³ The extent to which Sloterdijk would concur with these notions and their application to different cultural views of how the world can be, and of how the public and private can connect, is another matter. His public views on issues concerning multiculturalism, for example, at times do not seem to reflect this plural shperology as I have described it here.

audience experiences a different merging of Michael and Eve as if this blended personality has itself now split into two versions of itself. It might seem difficult to know what to make of this. Has this unity between the Symbolic and the Imaginary, between the social, universal world of language and law, and the individual, particular world of private identity, itself now taking on a kind of universality by moving even beyond the space in which the audience sits so that it appears bigger and beyond them? Or is it a more pathological split, where the appearance of a resolved duality is in fact only the generation of a new duality, manifest in the synchronous performances in separate auditoriums, writ large? This is a question that seems to lie beyond the capacity of Sloterdijk's plural spheres to answer, but perhaps some insights can be found by returning to Lacan and to the music where, in the bass lines of both the choral and the orchestral versions, something unexpected is happening: the final notes of the Lucifer formula are heard (see Figure 3.4).

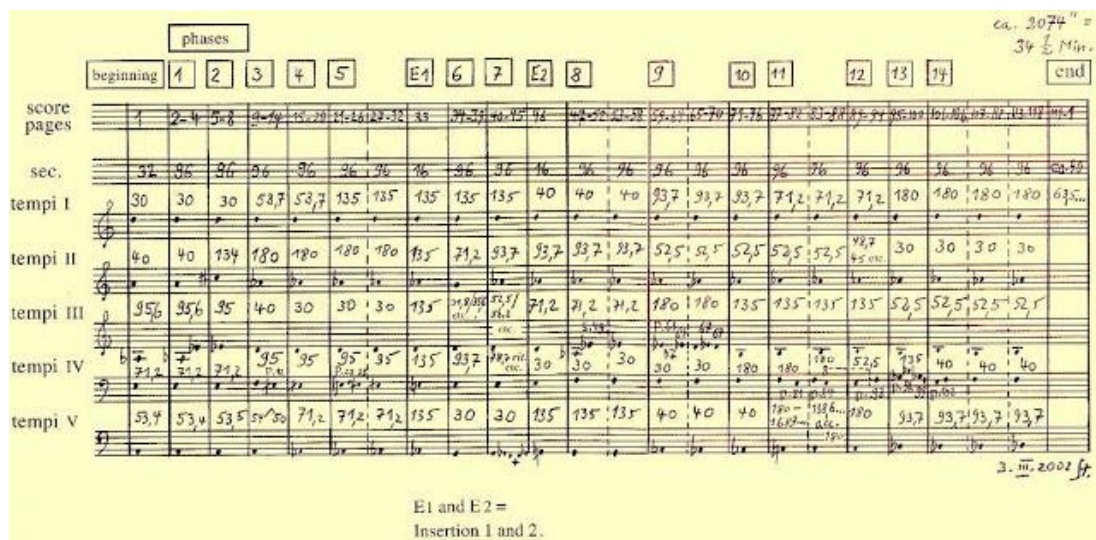


Figure 3.4: Stockhausen's form scheme for both versions of *HOCH-ZEITEN*, with the last notes of the Lucifer formula in the bass line.¹⁸⁴

This is unexpected in that Lucifer's presence in *SONNTAG* is a matter of some uncertainty, even to some extent for the composer:

¹⁸⁴ Stockhausen, "HOCH-ZEITEN für Chor," XXIX.

I tried not only to leave out the *Lucifer* formula from the *Superformula* in SUNDAY from LIGHT, but also to not allow LUCIFER's spirit, this very sceptical and often negative spirit, to appear. Whether I was successful or not will be judged by others.¹⁸⁵

This may seem a slightly odd remark for the composer to have made, implying that he will leave it for others to decide if there are traces of Lucifer's formula or spirit still to be found in the opera, and it would suggest that even Stockhausen was not entirely sure if Lucifer could be totally expunged from Michael's and Eve's union, no matter how much he might have intended to have done so. Stockhausen's original plan was to compose LUZIFERIUM, a separate work that would be performed synchronously with SONNTAG in a different location, where Lucifer sits imprisoned, excluded from the SONNTAG festivities, but listening. His plans for LUZIFERIUM appear never to have developed beyond some early scribbled notes on the Form-schemes he drew up for SONNTAG. There he noted that it would be drawn from the Lucifer layer of the Superformula, as would be expected, and scored for bass, three tam-tams, trombones (the number is unspecified), and a rotating table of percussion.¹⁸⁶ Very little else is known about what Stockhausen envisaged for the piece, as it was never realised, perhaps simply because he never received a commission to compose it, or perhaps, as musicologist Robin Hartwell suggests, because it implied the existence of Hell, which Stockhausen ultimately preferred to depict, be it consciously or unconsciously, only 'as a concept; there is no one there, it is empty and silent.'¹⁸⁷

As it turns out, however, Lucifer's presence is instead in this bass line of the final scene, a matter that seems to be largely ignored in the scholarly literature. It provides an unexpected perspective on Michael's and Eve's union. It brings in the notion of Luciferian contradiction, and the thought that this union might not be as simple as it appears – that it might be a disjunction as much as a

¹⁸⁵ "7 x LICHT im Rundfunk (2001-2007): 7 Teil: SONNTAG aus LICHT," in *TEXTE zur MUSIK Band 16 1998-2007* ed. Imke Misch (Kürten, Germany: Stockhausen-Verlag, 2007/2014), 163. Translation as printed in *SONNTAG aus LICHT: Oper Köln Uraufführung*, trans. Suzanne Stephens and Jayne Obst (Kürten: Stockhausen-Verlag, 2011), Program Booklet, 190.

¹⁸⁶ See *Kompositions-Kurs LICHT-BILDER vom SONNTAG aus LICHT* [Composition Course on LIGHT PICTURES (3rd Scene of SUNDAY from LIGHT)], trans. Karlheinz Stockhausen (Kürten, Germany: Stockhausen-Verlag, 2005), 6-7.

¹⁸⁷ Hartwell, "Threats and Promises," 416.

conjunction. This is a notion that seems to fit well with this device of the simultaneous performance in two locations. In other words, its message is that the Symbolic's unity with the Imaginary, the merging of the social dimension of law and language with the personal dimension of identity and imagery, will inevitably involve an underlying contradiction. Such a contradiction can easily be accommodated in the domain of the Real, the domain that is in part the essence of contradiction. In this way, Žižek's parallax comes into play, which he had used, as well as in other senses, as a metaphor for the Real.¹⁸⁸ And so here, unexpectedly though it may be, the coexistence of opposites is brought into accord with the Lacanian theorist's model after all, through this appearance of the formula of the contradictory Lucifer. But Stockhausen's stated intent was to shut Lucifer out of this opera and therefore the acknowledgement of contradiction is perhaps the result of a teasing challenge from the composer for those who hear and study his music to find it, or maybe even an indication of the subliminal nature of its presence. It may be hard to believe that Stockhausen could really have composed the last limb of the Lucifer formula into the scene's form-scheme, and ultimately into the scene itself, without knowing that he was doing so. His reluctance to openly acknowledge its presence is, for whatever reason, nevertheless entirely consistent with the human reluctance to confront the Real which, as already noted can never be fully repressed.

So, while Sloterdijk's plural spherology allows for difference to be dissolved, it is the Lacanian Real that still best captures the ongoing presence of the contradictions to which such dissolution inevitably gives rise, as it does here in the last scene of the Symbolic's union with the Imaginary in *SONNTAG*. The presence of the Lucifer formula here is not only an acknowledgement of contradiction but is in fact the active presence of it. The Lucifer formula, and therefore Lucifer's presence, might be subliminal and, as such, point to a partial sublimation of the Real, but it is nevertheless present throughout the whole scene, which it has not been in any other part of the opera. The binary is therefore turned into a trinary, where contradiction becomes a third element in the closure of duality that has been taking place throughout the opera. But its presence is concealed as it is hardly apparent to the audience and not even really acknowledged by the

¹⁸⁸ Žižek, *Parallax*, 7.

composer. This, too, is part of what makes the resolution in SONNTAG ultimately incomplete and ambiguous, despite the pretences to the contrary implied by the celebratory nature of the music. That subliminal presence of Lucifer is a reminder that the contradiction for which he stands has not yet been properly embraced or understood. In the Lacanian sense, the absorption of the Imaginary and the Symbolic (that is, of personal identity and social expression) into each other brings the Real into the picture, but SONNTAG seems to suggest that the immediate inclination is for the Real to be introduced beneath the surface, unobtrusively and unnoticed.

Whether it be at the level of the human psyche or of society, the Symbolic cannot, then, be integrated into the Imaginary without introducing a contradiction. We must look to MITTWOCH, the day of collaboration and synthesis, which I discuss in Chapter 6, to see how that contradiction can be more explicitly acknowledged and, ultimately, included. In negotiating *Dasein's* search to find balance between the axes of the Fourfold, then, SONNTAG suggests that it will not be enough to simply create a Symbolic meta-narrative that better integrates within itself the Imaginary domain of human individuality and identity. The contradictory essence of the Real must also be there. The unspoken challenge, which is implied in the absence of an overt acknowledgment of its presence, but with the composer's cryptic taunt to find it anyway, is how to elevate it beyond the subconscious nadir of the bass line.

3.4 The Symbolic and the Real: Michael and Lucifer and DIENSTAG aus LICHT

The dissolution of difference that is heard throughout SONNTAG's integration of the Symbolic and the Imaginary is not so easily enabled when it comes to the Symbolic's connection with the Real, however. That friction between the two has been evident throughout most of DONNERSTAG – not only in the overt battles between Michael and Lucifer in MICHAEL's REISE UM DIE ERDE to which I have already referred, but even more explicitly in their exchange at the end of FESTIVAL, the first scene of the third Act, in a little sub-scene called 'ARGUMENT'. There, Lucifer appears at the back of the theatre, after a huge and spectacular festival has unfolded on stage, welcoming Michael back to his celestial home in the stars after his journey to Earth. The Luciferian Real had

already interrupted that pageantry in the form of a little devil-gremlin that emerges from a terrestrial globe which Eve had just given to Michael in honour of his time on Earth. The gremlin changes to a dragon, accompanied by a toreador playing the trombone, and again a battle with Michael ensues.¹⁸⁹ The fight is played out physically between the Michael and Lucifer dancers and musically between the trumpet and trombone. The trombone's blasts of the Lucifer formula into the music are harsh as are Michael's retaliations with bursts of his own formula on the trumpet. But then something odd happens. The trumpet starts to play the Lucifer formula, in sync with the trombone. It is almost a recollection of Michael's teetering on the edge of madness in New York and Japan in the previous Act. It seems that even at this stage of the Symbolic's assertion and strength, venerated as it is throughout the ritualistic pomp of FESTIVAL, the power of the Real is terrifying and full of psychic risk. The fight itself is undoubtedly comical, and Stockhausen calls for comical movements of his dancers, but that only reinforces the concept of the Real's traumatic dimensions, sublimated as they so often are into humour. Indeed, Stockhausen was acutely aware of the terrifying side of humour. In reference to its use in relation to Lucifer, Stockhausen noted that humour is 'always connected with something that frightens you, and yet you laugh, because laughing is a liberation in this context.'¹⁹⁰ This humorous but threatening emergence of the Real here therefore allows that it might be possible for humans to honour the social codes of laws, religious doctrine, and political ideology, all made tangible through the Symbolic, and to be swept up in their promise of order and sense of a greater purpose. But it also suggests there will continue to be something else, rumbling disruptively beneath the surface, as a reminder of what that Symbolic domain has failed to express. In this sense, then, the appearance of the Luciferian devil-gremlin that morphs into a dragon, and its accompanying trombonist, plays a similar role, but more overt and brazen to the subliminal Lucifer formula in the bass line in HOCH-ZEITEN. They are both reminders of the inescapable presence and power of the Real.

¹⁸⁹ Obviously, a reference to Michael as the 'dragon slayer', to which I referred in Chapter 3 and again reinforcing the religious symbolism associated with Michael.

¹⁹⁰ Karlheinz Stockhausen and Jerome Kohl, "Stockhausen on Opera," *Perspectives of New Music* 32, no. 2 (1985): 26. This also connects with Freud's extensive writings about humour and jokes as a means of expressing the darker realms of the unconscious that would otherwise be repressed because of the traumas or taboos that lie there. This is most thoroughly and famously explored in Sigmund Freud, *The Joke and its Relation to the Unconscious*, trans. J Crick (London, UK: Penguin, 2002).

Michael wins the fight, but a few minutes later Lucifer himself appears at the back of the theatre and engages in an argument with Michael, where the essence of his conflict with Michael – and of the Real's conflict with the Symbolic – is exposed. The argument with Michael is Lucifer's revulsion at the bastardisation of the uncompromised realm of pure spirit through the advent of humanity. Even though *DONNERSTAG* is Michael's opera, he has little to say to contradict what Lucifer puts to him. He dismisses Lucifer for his malice, his deception, his destructiveness but, despite all the eloquence of the Symbolic, he does not argue the actual point and instead just bemoans this unwanted, uninvited intrusion: 'Can't you just once let us celebrate a Festival in peace?' They each mostly sing only the notes of their own formulas, their standpoints entrenched and unshifting. But the Real's issue with the Symbolic is made clear: the Symbolic cannot truly represent the ineffable world for which Lucifer stands, because, in seeking to make it signifiable to the human constraints of the knowable, the Symbolic will always compromise it.

In the argument, Lucifer describes humans as the 'hideous bastards of beasts and angels'. It invokes the hybrid imagery to which I have already referred in relation to Peter Sloterdijk's concepts of spherology and the coexistence of difference. I will discuss this notion of the coexistence of difference further in Chapter 5, where I look more closely at this from the perspective of Lucifer and the Real, but from the perspective of the Symbolic it is, at this stage, enough to note that this concept of a hybrid reality, a reality that involves a mix of two opposing domains, seems unavoidable. If the Symbolic attempts to bring together the ineffable and the tangible – be it through laws on the statute books of governments that are the tangible manifestations of intangible justice, through the doctrines of religious institutions that attempt to make an unknowable deity knowable, through the manifestos of political movements that attempt embody and prescribe abstract notions of social good, or even simply through the codes of behaviour by which humans live their lives in their attempts to be good people, a hybrid of the two will be the result. From the perspective of the Symbolic, that result might appear to be one worth celebrating, but from the perspective of the Real, it is hideous.

It is an argument where nothing is advanced other than to reinforce the entrenched disparity of their respective positions: the ordered and eventually Master-Signifying narrative of the Symbolic that seeks to invest the hugeness of everything with the knowability of tangible signifiers, and the resistance to this from the Real that instead is always there pointing to the irreconcilable contradiction of the two domains that the Symbolic seeks to bring together through its eloquence.¹⁹¹ Ultimately Lucifer leaves, calling Michael a naïve fool.

Their argument is taken up more vigorously in DIENSTAG where, in the first Act, it is manifested as a battle about the progress of time – Lucifer seeks to stop it, while Michael seeks to maintain its momentum – and, in the second Act, as a huge war between the armies of each. Michael wins the first battle, Lucifer wins the second. What do these two different outcomes suggest in terms of Michael's connection with the Symbolic? A simple answer to that question could be just that sometimes Michael wins and sometimes Lucifer wins. Sometimes the ordered, social domain of the Symbolic dominates, and sometimes the contradictions and incomprehensibility of the Real is at the fore.

But another perhaps more interesting answer emerges when the music of these two Acts is considered. The first Act, JAHRESLAUF ('Course of the Years'), was, as I have already mentioned, composed before Stockhausen composed the Superformula. Initially a separate piece, it was then inserted into LICHT as the first Act of DIENSTAG with only a few modifications. These included some references to the Superformula in the commentary on the action in which Michael and Lucifer engage from the sidelines at the beginning and end of the Act, as well as some musical additions inserted within the Act where various 'temptations' and 'incitements', as Stockhausen calls them, are played out in attempts to respectively halt and continue the course of time. The bulk of the Act, however, is devoid of the Superformula. Insofar as the Superformula can be understood to be a representation of the totality of human psyche, Act One therefore takes something of a step outside of the psyche, as if the human mind, present in those few small occurrences of the

¹⁹¹ I return to the transformation of Michael into the Master-Signifier, which is realised throughout this Act, later in this chapter.

Superformula on the fringes of the music, is commenting on something independent of itself. It is in this abstract, detached sense that the Symbolic seems to be victorious.

The essence of JAHRESLAUF is a battle of wits about the progress of time: Lucifer seeks to stop time by tempting the athletes who progress it to cease its passage, while Michael incites them to continue.¹⁹² Each time Lucifer stops the course of time, Michael sets it going again. In this detached, abstract sense that I have just described, this is indeed how things go: from the outside, it seems that the course of time is unstoppable as society, its rituals and laws, continue on and on despite the unanswerable questions, the traumas, the inherent incomprehensibility of it all, that resides in the Real. Whatever the innermost turmoils of the human psyche might throw at it, the world and its societies and its history will keep on turning is what JAHRESLAUF seems to tell us.

In the Second Act, however, the musical structure is very different. There the music of the Lucifer and Michael formulas dominate and shape every corner of the sonic space, through OKTOPHONIE. This is the Act's electronic layer projected from, and moving between, every corner above and below the audience through eight speaker systems: four above, and four below, ear level. Not only is the audience engulfed by the Superformula, expanded out as it is in these huge and powerful electronic sounds that drone and fire, missile-like, throughout the piece, but so too is the action and so too are the musicians and singers performing it. They move throughout the audience and up onto the stage, with trumpets and trombones, a tenor and a bass, small synthesiser keyboards that are carried around and projected through speakers that are carried on the backs of their players, and drums. These are the armies of Michael and Lucifer, but their music is always located at their specific points in space, utterly dwarfed by the hugeness of the electronic layers of Michael and Lucifer that form the basis of OKTOPHONIE.

¹⁹² Lucifer also sings of the annihilation of time in LUZIFERs TRAUM (LUCIFER'S DREAM), the first scene of SAMSTAG. (See Stockhausen, "LUZIFERs TRAUM," 31-32. This represents, from the Lacanian perspective, the Real's rejection of the subjective construct of time through which, as Kant has posited and as already noted in Chapter 2, human reason is able to order its perception of reality.

In this way, the audience in Act Two is trapped, as it were, within the music. And it is here that the Real is victorious. It might make sense, in thinking about our place in the world in the detached and rational way of the Superformula's commentary on JAHRESLAUF, that our experiences are built on progress and on a concept of moving forwards through time. But within the depths of human experience, as the audience is in the Second Act, traumas take hold, arising from the fundamental 'starting-point of all production', as Aristotle describes the raw *hyle*, to which I referred earlier, and which is at the profound core of Lacan's Real.¹⁹³ When humans experience this surge of the Real things are no longer as simple as when the issues of the progress of human history were being considered in a more removed way. From the position of internal human experience, the progressive development of the Symbolic does not have such an easy path, and thus it is that a member of Michael's troops falls in the war being fought in Act Two. The Symbolic has, as it were, been struck and thwarted by the surge of the Real.

The implications of this for the Symbolic are weighty. They suggest that the Symbolic can only ever, at best, *appear* to be in control. They suggest that we can discuss or analyse the world, and indeed our own sense of our existence, the phenomenology of our being, in ways that give it order and coherence: that we can, through law, religion, ideology, the stories of history, and even through philosophy itself, create narrative systems that appear to drive human progress forwards. This might be it in our personal lives, or in our lives as societies and nations, but the submersion of the audience in OKTOPHONIE suggests that ultimately this is only a sham because, within us, the primal contradiction and ineffability of the Real will continue to resurge and dominate, destroying the symbols of the Symbolic in its surge.

3.5 The Symbolic and the Master Signifier: the veneration of Michael in the Third Act of DONNERSTAG

Last in this chapter's exploration of Michael and the Symbolic, I consider Michael's connection with the development of the Master Signifier – the signifier that stands at the end of the signifying chain,

¹⁹³ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book VII, 9: 1034a31

representing all of the signifiers and all of their signifieds and, in its attempt to represent everything in fact represents nothing at all.¹⁹⁴ This connection has already been hinted at in the Christian religious symbols attached to the final sections of MICHAELs REISE UM DIE ERDE, to the extent that religious symbols, and particularly their notions of God, can operate as Master Signifiers. But it comes more into focus in VISION. This is the second and final scene of Act Three, where Michael is left alone on stage as tenor, trumpeter, and dancer, dislocated now from both Eve and Lucifer and, at the end, with only his own formula to perform. Here the Symbolic Michael takes over everything. The tenor sings the Michael formula stretched over the entire scene while the trumpet begins with the Lucifer formula in staccato. But this is gradually taken over by an extra note of the Michael formula, long and sustained, with each new note sung by the tenor. Eve's formula has gone altogether. This is the territory now of only the Symbolic, with the Real dispelled. But it is a Symbolic linked now neither to the Real nor to the Imaginary: a signifier with nothing to signify. A Master Signifier. It is, indeed, now scarcely recognisable as Michael's formula, nothing like its unmasked appearance on the solo trumpet near the beginning of MICHAELs REISE UM DIE ERDE. Now it is soft and almost nebulous, its limbs disconnected from one another, no longer forming the clear syntagm of its earlier complete form. The music is almost inaudibly quiet in places – the tenor and trumpeter often both just whispering words from the libretto. Master Signifiers, for all their pretence at providing cohesive signifiers for everything, rarely do. They might seem to explain a plethora of complexity, as Michael tries to do here as he sings about the meaning of the opera, but the music, like Master Signifiers typically are, is thin and fragile. As such, it has lost its connection with meaning, like an inversion of what its initial function was meant to be.

Michael reflects upon his time on Earth, which is replayed in a series of upside-down shadow-plays – another indicator of the inverted space he now inhabits.¹⁹⁵ Words light up on the stage giving a

¹⁹⁴ Chapter 6 includes a more thorough exploration of the Master-Signifier, particularly in terms of its connection with the concept of 'light', from which the opera cycle gets its name.

¹⁹⁵ This sense of being now in an inverted realm was also indicated in the previous scene, FESTIVAL, where the spatialisation of the choir tape that plays in surround sound around the auditorium throughout Act One and the first scene of Act Three is inverted – that is, the tape tracks are, in Act Three, now being transmitted through the opposite speakers from those through which they were transmitted in Act One. This reinforced the point that the celestial realm of Act Three is the inverse of the earthly realm of Act One.

celestial, master-signifying meaning to each letter of his name, which Michael as tenor sings and describes:

Melodien (Melodies of childhood)

Intensität (Intensity of love)

Chromatik (Chromaticism of souls)

Harmonik (Harmony of languages)

Audiogrammatik (Audiogrammar of the emotions)

Ekstase (Ecstasy of polyphony)

Licht (Light of the Resurrection)

He is left at the end, singing of God's eternal love for humanity in spite of everything else, in spite even of Lucifer, holding out his arms in invitation to the audience that is about to leave him.¹⁹⁶

Despite the elevated spirituality and hope of the words, the music is now thin and sparse, even lonely. As the final notes are being sung on the stage, the faint sound of the ABSCHIED ('Farewell') can be heard coming from outside the theatre where five trumpeters stand on the balconies or roofs of buildings around the theatre, each playing a portion of the Michael nuclear formula, slowly, over and over, and with long pauses *ad lib*, and out of sync with each other, for about 30 minutes. Here Stockhausen presents us with what can be described as the flight of the Michael formula, a flight that had moved from the formula's assuredness near the beginning of MICHAELs REISE UM DIE ERDE, through its merging with that of Eve at the end of that Act and then its fragility and fracturing in VISION, and is complete in these disparate, dislocated, portions heard in the ABSCHIED. As such, the flight of the formula echoes Heidegger's notions of the 'flight of the gods', where the mortal human connection with its sense of being is severed and the ability

¹⁹⁶ Stockhausen, "MICHAELs HEIMKEHR," Vis 25. The stage directions then go into extraordinary detail about how the three Michaels should stand, and gesture, during the curtain calls, with the Michael dancer bringing in the other performers from directions, and in an order, specified in the score. The words Michael sings here are: 'I have fallen eternally in love with humanity, with this Earth and her children – despite LUCIFER – despite Satan – despite everything ... '.

to grasp the elusive nature of beyng is lost.¹⁹⁷ It is a poignant mixture of nobility and loneliness, these statuesque figures (they should be spotlit like tower statues, says Stockhausen's note in the score),¹⁹⁸ high above the masses, playing the bare bones of the music of this noble voice of the gods, but now with not a trace of the mortals to give it grounding.

From the argument with Lucifer and then following through this scene where Michael seems to be approaching God, Stockhausen presents a rather fascinating alternative to Zarathustra's encounter with the ascetic hermit saint in the forest in Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. That hermit sits alone in the forest singing, crying, laughing, and humming in praise of God. But Zarathustra, after parting from the hermit saint, asks himself the famous question, 'Could it be possible? This old saint in the forest has not yet heard anything of this, that *God is dead!*'¹⁹⁹ The thinness and emptiness of the music at the end of DONNERSTAG might not precisely suggest the death of God but it certainly seems to convey an absence, despite the Master-Signifying claims to divinity, and despite the path towards that divinity that Michael, singing to God, fancies he is taking. If there is a living God, a Beyond that contains everything and makes it unified and meaningful, the music seems to suggest that it is not discovered through the sole, hermetic journey into the sky by the Symbolic Michael who, as this universal signifier of the gods, ends up signifying nothing of humanity.

There is an ambiguity in Michael's elevation here – in this case between nobility and omniscience on the one hand and loneliness and meaninglessness on the other: between a living god and one

¹⁹⁷ Heidegger's notion of the flight of the gods is a complex one that has been interpreted in many ways, appearing as it does in his later writings where the conundrum of explaining the nature of beyng, without beyng becoming a being (a distinction noted in Chapter 1) found its resolution of sorts in more abstract writing. Despite, then, the variety of ways in which some of those writings can be, and have been, understood, the notion of a dislocation from beyng, previously found, seems a common thread in Heidegger's references to the flight of the gods. As Günter Fligal notes when he discusses this aspect of Heidegger's writing, 'It is not the case that something ungraspable or anonymous occurs as when anxiety arises and no reason can be found for it. Instead, in the occurrence of the flight of the gods one is related towards something: something previously addressed in itself that now withdraws into silence.' (Günter Fligal, "Concerning the Center of Heidegger's Contributions to Philosophy," in *Companion to Heidegger's 'Contributions to Philosophy'*, ed. Charles E. Scott, et al. (Bloomington, USA: Indiana University Press, 2001), 204.) The flight of the gods is a continual thread throughout Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)*.

¹⁹⁸ Stockhausen, "DONNERSTAGS-ABSCHIED," III.

¹⁹⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (London, UK: Penguin, 1961/2003), 41.

that is dead and absent: as silent and empty as the Hell Robin Hartwell had described in relation to LUZIFERIUM. Ambiguity will be a feature of the ending of every opera in LICHT, one of the many reasons why the cycle has no definitive beginning or end. Always there is something further to query and explore, something left unclear or unresolved. The importance of that, and its relation to the fundamental focus of my research, LICHT's exploration of the connections of the Heideggerian Fourfold, will be addressed in the final chapter of this thesis.

Chapter 4: Eve and the Imaginary

The way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans *are* on earth, is *buan*, dwelling.²⁰⁰

In Chapter 2, I proposed that Eve can be understood primarily in connection with Lacan's concept of the Imaginary, particularly in the domain of human personality within which a person forms, and throughout life reforms, the disparate aspects of themselves into a cohesive identity. In this Chapter I intend to demonstrate how that role emerges and functions in Eve's music and in the behaviour of her character, with a particular emphasis on the opera that focuses on her: MONTAG.

The Eve of MONTAG is both maternal and sexual, a character of nurturing and growth, a cultivator of new and developing life. This is very close to the concept of 'dwelling' that Martin Heidegger associates, through exploring the German origins of the word, with the very essence of being, where words from Old English and High German, including *buan*, *bauen*, *bhu*, *beo*, and *bin* connect the concepts of dwelling, building, and being.²⁰¹ These ideas are indeed captured in Eve: the character who not only gives birth, but nurtures her children and fosters their growth. She, like Heidegger's notion of 'dwelling', is rooted in the Earth. In MONTAG, she enables newly emerging personalities to form a sense of who they are, which culminates in Act Two with seven boys learning to express themselves in terms of one of the defining concepts of LICHT: the days of the week.²⁰² She therefore not only gives birth to the children, but brings the disparate identities of the days into a coherent narrative of the week – the syntagm, to recall Roland Barthes's term. This enabling of new personality, and its formation into a coherent whole is the domain of the Imaginary and this chapter will explore how its nuances unfold in Eve's character. After this, the chapter will

²⁰⁰ Heidegger, "Building, dwelling, thinking," 349.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² This scene is WOCHENKREIS ('Cycle of the Week'), where Eve as Cœur de Baset, the basset horn player who emerges from the heart of the huge Eve statue that represents Eve's presence on stage, teaches the seven children the days of the week and their various significations. It is the first part of EVAs LIED ('Eve's Song') to which I will return later in this chapter.

describe the destructive consequences of too exclusive an absorption in this aspect of the human psyche, as seen in my interpretation of the opera's third Act.

Before Stockhausen composed MONTAG, however, he had already composed DONNERSTAG and SAMSTAG, offering some intriguing perspectives on Eve that also connect with psychoanalytic theory. In these cases, however, those connections are not so much to that of Lacan as to one of his post-Freudian rivals, Carl Jung, whose notions of anima, animus, and shadow all provide perspectives on some complexities that arise in relation to Eve's character and music which I was not able to find in the Lacanian framework I have been using. Some of these complexities particularly arise in the role of the flute in LICHT, and its relationship to Eve. This will be the first major issue that I address in this chapter.

4.1 Eve as anima: and her relationship with basset horn and flute

The development of Eve's character is described in Stockhausen's sketches for MONTAG over many pages of ideas, drawing from a huge variety of mythological sources.²⁰³ Before he had turned his mind to these sources, however, it is possible to posit that Stockhausen's conception of the richness and uniqueness of Eve's character had already been to some degree shaped, or at least complemented, by his relationship with Dutch flautist Kathinka Pasveer, who he had met in late 1982 after completing DONNERSTAG and commencing work on SAMSTAG.

Before composing DONNERSTAG, Stockhausen had chosen the basset horn as Eve's instrument. The idea had been put to him by American clarinetist Suzanne Stephens, who he had met in the mid-1970s and for whom he had already composed several significant works, including LAUB UND REGEN for clarinet and viola (1974), HARLEKIN and DER KLEINE HARLEKIN for solo clarinet (1975), the bass clarinet part of SIRIUS for four soloists and electronic music (1975-1977), and the first version of IN FREUNDSCHAFT (1977).

²⁰³ The bulk of this material can be found in the volume of sketches: Karlheinz Stockhausen, "MONTAG aus LICHT: Allgemeine Skizzen," (Kürten, Germany: Stockhausen-Archiv), #6-#73. I refer to much of this in Chapter 2.

While the basset horn is Eve's instrument in *DONNERSTAG*, after meeting Pasveer in 1982 the composer also wanted to include the flute into the fabric of *LICHT*. The first piece in which he did this was the second scene of *SAMSTAG aus LICHT*, which he was already working on as a commission for percussion sextet to be titled *LUZIFERs REQUIEM*. However, after meeting Pasveer, Stockhausen decided to feature a prominent part for solo flute into the piece and to retitle it *KATHINKAs GESANG als LUZIFERs REQUIEM* ('Kathinka's Chant as Lucifer's Requiem'). Many of the ideas for the piece, and particularly the ways in which the flute would be featured, were developed through a series of letters exchanged between Stockhausen and Pasveer in early 1983, when he was in Kenya and she was in The Netherlands.²⁰⁴

The extent to which the flute is another instrumental incarnation of Eve is not commented on frequently in the literature, but it was suggested in an documentary about *SAMSTAG* issued by the Stockhausen Foundation, and then later it is also proposed by Richard Toop in his essay on *KATHINKAs GESANG als LUZIFERs REQUIEM*.²⁰⁵ There does not appear to be any comment by Stockhausen on the public record where he describes the flute as another incarnation of Eve, nor have I been able to locate any references to him repudiating those who did, of which he must surely have been aware. In any event, the flute becomes closely entwined with the basset horn in all the remaining operas where Eve's character is represented instrumentally on stage. It plays a major role echoing the basset horn in the Third Act of *MONTAG* and the two instruments perform in the intimately entwined music of the 'Friday-Nucleus formula' in *FREITAG*.²⁰⁶ It also features in

²⁰⁴ Because of the personal nature of these letters, they are not available as part of the Stockhausen Archive material normally accessible to the public. Kathinka Pasveer has, however, given me private access to these letters during my various visits to Kürten. The reference I make to those letters here are made with her permission.

²⁰⁵ See Kanzler, "Welttheater *SAMSTAG*." In a transcript of the interview in Suzanne Stephens' English translation, the documentary's narrator refers to Eve as 'the spirit who always cares for the improvement of the physical conditions of the living beings on the planet. She is sung, danced or played (usually on the basset horn, or here in a transformation on the flute)'. Full transcript at: http://www.stockhausen.org/stockhausens_world_theatre.pdf. See also Toop, "KATHINKAs GESANG," 126.

²⁰⁶ The Friday-Nucleus formula is a two-layered formula, constructed out of the notes of the Eve and Lucifer nuclear formulas alternating in the basset horn, and their inversions alternating in the flute. It forms the basis of much of the music of *FREITAG aus LICHT*, the day that focuses on the relationship between Eve and Lucifer, where the basset horn and flute are designated as Eve's companions, Elu and Lufa respectively. See Stockhausen, "FREITAG-VERSUCHUNG," A VI and XXXV. I discuss its part in *FREITAG* in more detail in Chapter 5

an elaborate time-delayed polyphony in LICHT-BILDER ('Light Pictures'), the third scene of SONNTAG,²⁰⁷ as well as an especially ambiguous connection with the flute in the second Act of MONTAG where Eve multiplies into the three highly sexualised characters of Busi, Busa and Muschi.²⁰⁸ The first two of these parts are played on the basset horn, while the third, composed specifically for the flautist Pasveer, requires her to sing into the basset horn. I discuss these roles later in this chapter.

Whether the flute is an emanation of Eve or not is in some ways a moot point when Stockhausen's notion of character, as already discussed, is taken into account. Eve, like Michael and Lucifer, is not a character limited to any particular instrument or voice or stage presence, but rather one whose energy, spirit, and conceptual essence appears in many places. The basset horn is indisputably the primary instrumental means for this, while the flute also plays a significant role in the expression of Eve's spirit or energy. Whether this makes the flute another emanation of Eve or not perhaps becomes somewhat unimportant in this more fluid conceptualising of character, which is maybe why Stockhausen never seemed to have taken particular issue with those who claimed that it was.

The flute's connection to Eve, however, particularly in the context of SAMSTAG where the basset horn does not appear, and in contrast to DONNERSTAG where the flute does not appear, gives rise to the notion that these two different instrumental expressions of Eve form their own separate connections with Michael and Lucifer. That is, in Michael's opera, Eve is expressed through the basset horn but in Lucifer's opera, it is through the flute.²⁰⁹ The Jungian notion of anima – the female component of the male psyche – provides a helpful perspective on this, giving rise to the possibility of viewing Eve as the anima. In this way, the basset horn becomes Michael's anima, and the flute becomes Lucifer's. Jung himself associated the anima with the mythological figure of Eve,

²⁰⁷ See Section 3.3 of Chapter 3 for my discussion of this.

²⁰⁸ Busi and Busa are both colloquial names for female breasts, perhaps somewhat akin to 'boobies' in English; while the closest English equivalent for 'Muschi' would be 'pussy'.

²⁰⁹ Or, in the case of SAMSTAG's third scene, LUZIFERs TANZ ('Lucifer's Dance'), it is the piccolo flute, just as Michael also appears in that scene playing the piccolo trumpet. I discuss the significance of these smaller versions of the instruments in Chapter 5.

who is the first of his four stages of anima development, followed by Helen, Mary, and Sophia. In this succession, Eve represents woman as an object of desire, Helen represents woman as a figure capable of success and self-reliance, Mary as a symbol of virtue, and Sophia as one of wisdom.²¹⁰

S J McGrath draws some synergies between Jung's concepts of the human experience of gender and Lacanian theory when he suggests that Jung's anima (and its counterpart, the animus, the male component of the female psyche) as 'nothing but mythologized images of object *a* and phallus ... as traces of the lost androgyny'.²¹¹ This identifies both anima and animus as a component of self that is both lost and sought after, although never named as such. It is beyond the scope of my research to interrogate these differences between Jung's and Lacan's concepts of how the human psyche deals with these issues of gender identification and sexuality, but what is of relevance here is that the femininity that Stockhausen clearly builds into the character of Eve is already depicted as complex and multi-faceted, in terms of how this relates to the characters of Michael and Lucifer.²¹² The basset horn of Eve in *DONNERSTAG* is most prominently associated with Mondeva, Michael's bird-woman-moon hybrid lover, while the flute of *SAMSTAG* is associated with the cat-like figure that guides Lucifer's soul after his apparent death in the first scene.²¹³

This gives rise to some intriguing consequences when this notion of anima as object of desire – the Eve stage of the anima's development for Jung - is brought into the Lacanian associations I am

²¹⁰ M. L von Franz, "The Process of Individuation," in *Man and his Symbols*, ed. Carl G. Jung (USA: Dell, 1964), 195.

²¹¹ S J McGrath, "Sexuation in Jung and Lacan," *International Journal of Jungian Studies* 2, no. 1 (2010): 13. It is important to reiterate here the point I made in Chapter 2 - that the phallus for Lacan is not the penis but more akin to a symbol of power to attract and influence. I return to this point in the context of Oedipal imagery in Michael's relationships with Eve later in this chapter.

²¹² This is not to diminish the complexities of the masculinity of Michael and Lucifer, nor to suggest a male-centric interpretation of the Eve-Michael and Eve-Lucifer connections. Those complexities could be equally explored from the other perspective, where Michael and Lucifer are each interpreted as an animus (the male component of the female psyche) of Eve. My emphasis here on Eve as anima, rather than on Michael and Lucifer as animus, only arises out of the need to explore the basset horn's and flute's connections to Eve.

²¹³ Stockhausen describes the passage through which he came to his conceptualisation of the figure who would play the flute in the second scene of the opera, which from the outset was to appear as a cat. First he considered describing the part as 'Kathinka in the form of a Cat', then 'Kathinka as Cat with the voice of a flute mourns Lucifer's apparent death'; and then rejects both of these ideas and settles on the notion that Lucifer's Requiem should not be a lament, but rather a guide, a help, and an encouragement. (Karlheinz Stockhausen, letter to Kathinka Pasveer, 26 February 1983 (Kenya) (Kathinka Pasveer, private collection))

proposing for Michael and Lucifer. The object of desire for Michael, the socialised Symbolic, is both mother and magical lover and eventually, in the Third Act of *DONNERSTAG*, she is attendant to his own glorification, the celebration of his charisma – a celebration, that is, of the dominance of the Symbolic. For Lucifer as the contradictory and disruptive Real, the object of desire appears as the shamanistic, elusive cat: the thinker, the Alpha, infused with laughter and virtuosic technique, all of which will be captured in the character of Kathinka, the feline flautist.²¹⁴ The Symbolic, through this lens, is therefore a domain that desires validation, delivered here through the guises of mother, lover, and celestial handmaiden, while the Real is drawn to something more abstract and refined: thought, virtuosity, dominance, and feline slickness, and expressed through the deceptive voice of laughter. It is deceptive in the sense that it appears to signify happiness but often disguises something more unsettling. This particularly relates to the notion of humour, which Stockhausen, as I noted in the previous chapter, and particularly in relation to Lucifer, connects with notions of fear and the liberation of laughter.²¹⁵

Desire here relates back to the sense in which I described it in chapter 2 – a broad concept that is realised into the driving force of life and growth. This connects closely with the notion of Eve herself as a life energy and therefore as that which enables desire to be realised. In relating these concepts to the more abstract qualities of Symbolic and Real – that is, to strands of human personality – this notion of desire takes on a slightly different, though analogous, hue. It becomes the notion of something which enables the other to grow and flourish. Here the Eve of Jung's anima might be different to that of the Lacanian Imaginary that I connect with Stockhausen's Eve, but the two concepts are by no means incompatible. Stockhausen's Eve can be seen to contain something of both the Lacanian and the Jungian concepts within it. This not only adds to the richness of the interpretative opportunities for the character of Eve, but also opens up possibilities for occasionally bringing disparate theoretical concepts together.

²¹⁴ The concept of this cat-like figure grew out of Kathinka's own name and is described in the score's preface as 'KATHINKA: KAT (Cat – the animal figure of SATURDAY), THINK, A (Alif – Alpha, the Beginning, Origin)'. See Stockhausen, "KATHINKAs GESANG," K XI.

²¹⁵ Stockhausen and Kohl, "Stockhausen on Opera," 26. This is of course particularly developed in Freud's work on humour. See Freud, *The Joke and its Relation to the Unconscious*.

The music of KATHINKAs GESANG als LUZIFERs REQUIEM, from the time Stockhausen first had the idea of turning the original percussion piece into one in which the solo flute would dominate, was conceived as a virtuosic set of exercises for the flute. It would be based on successive portions of the Lucifer formula, which are set out like figures on a clock on two large circular boards that dominate the stage, and around which the flautist moves, as if replicating the hands of the clock and, as such, the passage of time (see Figure 4.1). This Requiem for Lucifer, then, is also about the projection of the Real through time, against which Lucifer revolts in the first scene of DIENSTAG.²¹⁶ It is, therefore, not about the death of the Real, but rather its endurance, despite itself, in the human construct of time.

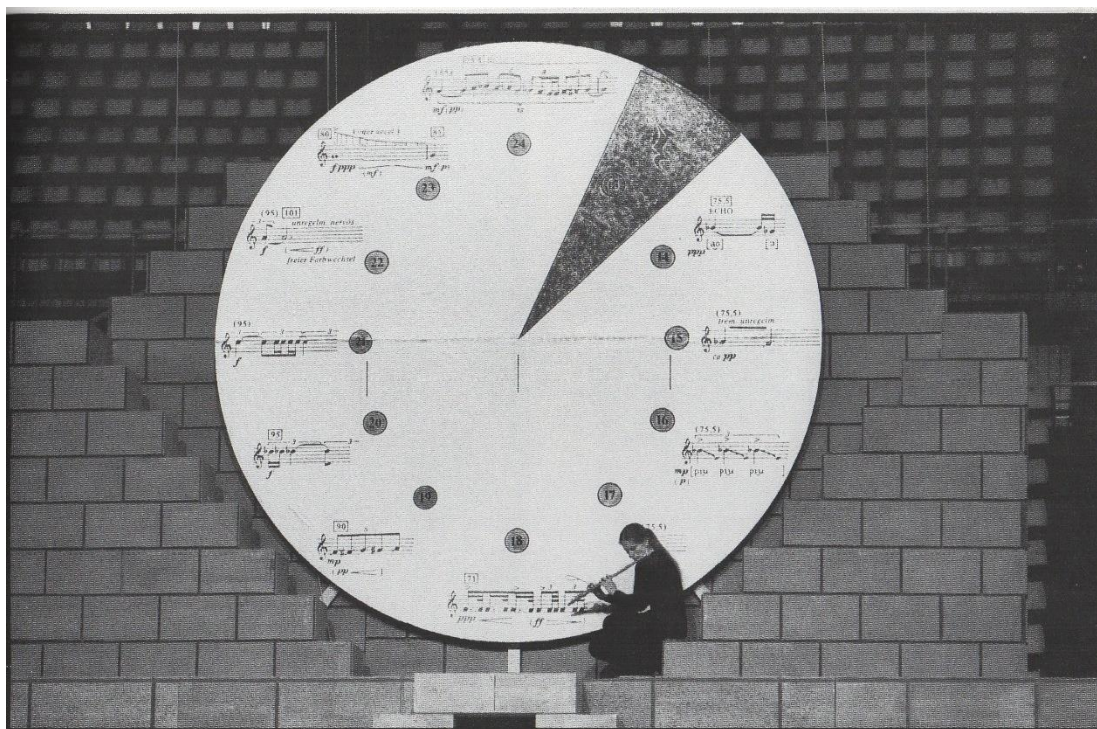


Figure 4.1: Kathinka Pasveer plays the flute alongside one of the two mandala boards in rehearsal of KATHINKAs GESANG als LUZIFERs REQUIEM for the world premiere of SAMSTAG aus LICHT in Milan, Italy, 1984.²¹⁷

The exercises certainly call for great technical prowess from the player, but their musical character was developed not only in response to Pasveer's skills as a flautist but also to Stockhausen's perception of her personality: as he worked on the piece he was determined to infuse it with her laughter.²¹⁸ The figure who plays the flute at Lucifer's grave was, clearly, nothing to do with a figure

²¹⁶ As described in the previous Chapter.

²¹⁷ Stockhausen, "KATHINKAs GESANG." Photograph 60

²¹⁸ Karlheinz Stockhausen, letter to Kathinka Pasveer, 26 February 1983 (Kenya) (Kathinka Pasveer, private collection)

of lament or mourning.²¹⁹ At the end of the piece, the flute's connection with Lucifer through these exercises based on his formula, is further underscored when the flute plays the eleven 'trombone tones'. These are the notes of the Lucifer nuclear formula (see Figure 4.2). It yet again reinforces the idea that the flute is also at least in part about, and certainly connected with, the male figure with which it is coupled, as the anima always is.

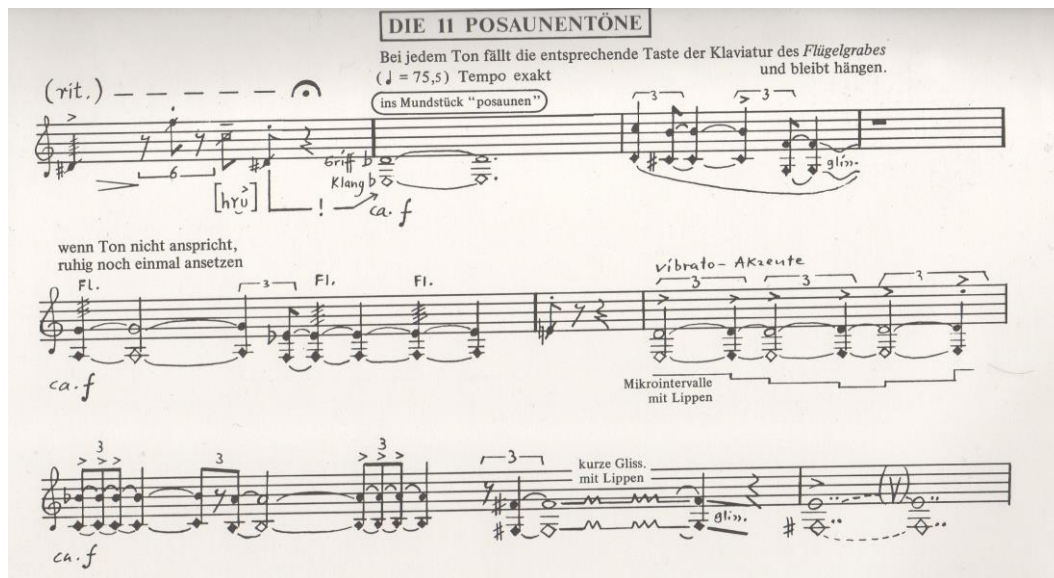


Figure 4.2: the '11 Trombone tones' played on the flute towards the end of KATHINKAs GESANG als LUZIFERs REQUIEM, the second scene of SAMSTAG aus LICHT.²²⁰ This calls for a very unique form of blowing to produce breathy sounds, an octave beneath the flute's usual register.

So, while Lacan did not conceive of his registers of Symbolic and Real having a 'feminine' side, an anima, the exploration of these feminine and masculine figures in Stockhausen's work invites, in turn, an exploration of how these two sets of theories might come together: that is, it invites a characterisation of the Symbolic and Real as archotypically male components of the human psyche, each with its own very different archotypically female objects of desire that are ultimately collected into the identity-forming register of the Imaginary. That Lacan did not personalise his

²¹⁹ This can be contrasted with PIETÀ, in Act Two of DIENSTAG, where Eve as soprano laments the fall of an anonymous member of Michael's army, eventually recognised as Michael himself, in the war against Lucifer. There the sense of lament and mourning is more overt even though, there too, the death only represents a passage onwards, as the soprano sings of the transition to the Beyond. In PIETÀ, however, the Symbolic Michael's death is achieved through the victory of the Luciferian Real and so there, Eve is confronted with its consequences: the death of Michael. Here, in Lucifer's Requiem, there is no actual death at all. For the time being, then, Eve as anima can facilitate the passage of the Real which she later laments in PIETÀ. But, as will become apparent when I discuss the following scene of SAMSTAG, LUZIFERs TANZ, in Chapter 6, the consequences of doing so have crippling repercussions for the development and functioning of the psyche.

²²⁰ Stockhausen, "KATHINKAs GESANG," K 19.

registers in this way and never talked of either the Symbolic or the Real as gendered, much less of having 'objects of desire', does not preclude considering them in this way. This is particularly so when theoretical tools are applied to rich and complex works of art, such as Stockhausen's LICHT, because such an application yields its own new perspectives, not only on the work to which the tools are applied but also on the uses and potentials of the tools themselves. The confluence of Jungian and Lacanian models that I explore here makes this more complex characterisation of Eve, at least in a highly figurative sense, even more possible. In simpler, more prosaic terms, it suggests that the component of human personality that operates within the Symbolic domains of language, law and social codes, longs for maternal protection, for fantasy, and for adoration; while the more ineffable core of personality, the repository for both trauma and ecstasy, longs for feline elegance, the rationality of thought, and for the primacy of the Alpha. These disparate longings, through being located in the Imaginary that is the life-nurturing force of Eve, then go on to form part of the consolidated image that gives each person their own sense of selfhood and identity. These are, indeed, unique perspectives on both Lacan's and Jung's theoretical concepts, enabled by the applications that can be insinuated from the ways in which Stockhausen develops Eve's character, not least through the ambiguities of the instrumental forms through which Eve's energy is incarnated. This confluence of disparate theoretical models, then, becomes a tool for multidimensional analysis growing from the rich source of both mythological and musical material out of which he built his characters.

These observations do not have to imply a synthesis between these aspects of Lacanian and Jungian theory: they merely suggest that an application of the Jungian notion of anima adds an extra dimension to an understanding of the character of Eve as Stockhausen develops her in DONNERSTAG and SAMSTAG in preparation for the third opera he was to compose, and the one in which her character is the primary emphasis: MONTAG. In any event, the Eve that develops in MONTAG is a complex and rounded character, who takes the representation of femininity in LICHT far beyond these earlier examples that seem, at least initially, to explore the female primarily in the context of the male.

4.2 Multiple Eves – the complexity of sexuality, and the formation of identity

This whole notion of Eve as a fluid, protean expression of femininity is very much at the core of her character as it emerges in MONTAG, which is where her association with the Lacanian Imaginary becomes more evident and yields richer insights into how the Imaginary functions within the human psyche. It is in the context of the composition of MONTAG that Stockhausen's sketches reveal his interest in the theosophical concepts of the hermaphroditic beginnings of an originally androgynous race, drawn largely, it seems, from references to Blavatsky and *The Secret Doctrine*.²²¹

Eve as a sexual figure is a strong aspect of her character in MONTAG, although initially that sexuality is expressed through a gender that is unambiguously female rather than hermaphroditic or androgynous. Not only does she go through two pregnancies and, as a huge female statue dominating the stage throughout the entire opera, give birth to a total of 21 beings (14 in her first 'birth-giving' in Act One, and seven in Act Two). In Act Two, in EVAs LIED ('Eve's Song') she also multiplies herself into the characters of Busi, Busa, and Muschi, whose sexual connotation I have already noted and who seduce the seven boys to whom the Eve statue had just given birth. The appearance of Busi, Busa, and Muschi follows that of the initial bodily appearance of Eve in EVAs LIED as Cœur de Basset, playing the basset horn. It suggests here a trajectory not unlike that of Eve in DONNERSTAG where, in Act One, she appeared first as Michael's mother and then as his seducer, Mondeva. Here, too, the move from maternal love to sexual seduction is implied by Eve's transition from birth-giving statue to the more generalised love of Cœur, the heart, to the more overt sexuality of Busi, Busa, and Muschi. I'll return to these connections between maternity and sexuality shortly but will first continue with my discussion of Eve and gender, and her role in the consolidation of diversity.

A hint of a more fluid gender can perhaps be read into the words of the male choir when she plays seductively to them on the basset horn in Act Three, and they describe her as a 'sorceress' who

²²¹ These references are found especially in "MONTAG Allgemeine," #30.1 and #30.2. Here the precise sources from which Stockhausen is drawing is not always clear, however he does make direct references to, and quotes from, the chapter 'The Divine Hermaphrodite' (Blavatsky, "Anthropogenesis," 124-30.)

'binds women and men'.²²² This accords very much with Lacan's concept of the Imaginary, which for him is the realm in which sexuality and gender are primarily formed and developed into a sense of identity with which the human subject can feel a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction.²²³ The sense of identity, formed in the realm of the Imaginary, is therefore imbued with a sexual nature, in all its many senses, and, as this plays out throughout MONTAG, the complexity and multiplicity of that sexual nature becomes apparent. Not only do we see Eve multiply into the three characters of Busi, Busa and Muschi, but she also appears in a range of mirrored and echoed formats, particularly in the Third Act. There a kind of re-imagining of the story of Narcissus and Echo plays out both musically and on stage, and where Eve's counterpart, Ave (the reverse spelling of Eve's German name, Eva), playing the alto flute to Eve's basset horn, also becomes part of the ever-increasingly tangled web of images and reflections through which Eve's character is conveyed.²²⁴ The Eve of MONTAG is, then, a character of many parts: those into which she multiplies, those in which she is reflected or echoed, and in the flute part in which she first appeared as Lucifer's anima in SAMSTAG and now reappears playing both the alto flute and the piccolo. This, like the overall sexualised characterisation of her, is also an important aspect of the Imaginary: the formation of identity, or at least of the image of identity, out of disparate parts. It is described by the male choir, again in the opening scene of Act Three, as the 'guardian of mysterious forces, which unite the separated'.²²⁵

²²² Stockhausen, "EVAs ZAUBER," Bo 9.

²²³ See, for example, Jacques Lacan and Wladimir Granoff, "Fetishism: the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real," in *Perversions, Psychodynamics and Therapy*, ed. Sándor Lorand (New York, USA: Gramercy Books, 1956), 265-76.

²²⁴ As I note, and expand upon, later in this chapter, Ave was conceived as a young man, who would be played by Kathinka Pasveer. This is where hints of some gender ambiguity arise about Ave, who may indeed be considered to be something of an animus to Eve just as Kathinka the cat flautist was an anima to Lucifer in SAMSTAG. This, too, I discuss further below. These complex gender associations with Eve give rise to the sorts of considerations of 'gender as performance' raised most famously by Judith Butler. In simple terms, this notion of gender sees it as something socially constructed and then acted out according to social norms and expectations and this could to some extent be ascribed to the different roles that Eve carries out, and the gender associations the opera's staging assigns to them, from the birth-giving statue, through the overt female sexual seductiveness of Busi, Busa, and Muschi, to the more ambiguous male figure of Ave who, eventually, becomes the Kinderfänger, the male Pied Piper of German legend. It is not the within scope of this study to delve deeply into the ways in which different theories of gender can be applied to the characters of LICHT, but such an analysis is certainly called for, given these fluid performative roles of Eve. Butler's performative theory of gender is most thoroughly explored in Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York USA: Routledge, 1990).

²²⁵ The scene is called SUSANI, and is the third of four subscenes that, together constitute the opening scene of Act Three. Each of these scenes has its own name. Act Three itself is titled 'EVAs ZAUBER' ('Eve's Magic'), the opening scene of which is 'BOTSCHAFT' ('Message'). The four subscenes of BOTSCHAFT are 'EVAs SPIEGEL' (Eve's Mirror'), 'NACHRICHT' ('News'), SUSANI, and AVE.

While Eve is embodied in many parts, those parts are themselves largely replete with illusion and mirage: they are magical and therefore both alluring and deceptive. In this way, both multiplicity and illusion are a vital part of who she is. Her multiplicity is heard from the moment the audience enters the theatre foyer, with the multiple basset horns of MONTAGS-GRUSS played over four sets of loudspeakers from a four-channel tape before the First Act, which itself begins with the vocal representation of Eve by not one but three sopranos. Much of her music comes to the audience in some sort of illusory form. This includes: reflection (such as when Eve's formula is heard predominantly in inversion in BOTSCHAFT); echo (such as in the music of the alto flute that echoes what has been played by the basset horn or, later, what is played in pre-recorded 'sound scenes'); or in some other apparent illusion (such as in the character of Muschi, to whom I have already referred, who appears to play the basset horn, but in fact sings through the instrument)²²⁶. This too is part of the nature of the Imaginary: it creates an image of a unified identity, of multiple parts connected to each other, but its image is illusory or constructed, as it were, in the reflected imagery of Lacan's Mirror Stage, which I described in Chapter 2. So, while that notion is most obvious in EVAs SPIEGEL ('Eve's Mirror'), where Eve as basset horn player becomes obsessed with her own mirror image, it is clearly not limited only to that scene. It is part of the very essence of Eve's character in MONTAG, including in the very core of her sexual identity: the female genitalia of the basset horn bearing, singing, flautist, Muschi who, in Stockhausen's directions for the staging of this scene, is placed between the two breasts of Busi and Busa and therefore connects them.

²²⁶ The part of Muschi was created for Kathinka Pasveer, who is a flautist and singer, rather than a clarinettist. Early sketches suggested that the part be played by Kathinka on the trumpet, another instrument she cannot, in fact, play. This idea is mentioned briefly in the sketches with a short note that reads, 'Kathinka mit Trompete für Beziehung mit DONNERSTAG, SAMSTAG zwischen 2 Bassetthornistin(innen)' ('Kathinka with trumpet for connection with THURSDAY, SATURDAY between two basset horn players (teases)') (Stockhausen, "MONTAG Allgemeine," #11.1.). He did not, however, want to use the flute at this stage and so ultimately settled on having Kathinka sing into the basset horn. This seems to therefore emphasise the mirage of multiplicity, rather than the earlier notion of connection with the operas of DONNERSTAG and SAMSTAG – but the very notion that the character representing the vagina, the "pussy", would have originally been conceived as playing the trumpet, Michael's instrument. This is maybe another hint of the hermaphrodite connections that Stockhausen had drawn with Eve in his sketches, and which later becomes apparent in the character of sexually ambiguous AVE.

Coupled with this notion of Eve as a repository of multiple and diverse parts, often conspicuously sexualised in its imagery, are many other emphases on disparity and diversity throughout the opera. While many of these are evident in the completed opera, many more are also noted in the early sketches, not all of which made their way into the final work. These include a vast diversity of characters, races, objects, sounds, that all seem to emanate from, or to somehow be associated with, the central figure of Eve in Stockhausen's formation of the character.

Even in the very early sketches, Eve is depicted most notably as a huge statue on stage, giving birth. The beings to which the statue gives birth are themselves like a huge array of disparate parts.²²⁷ Eve is constantly herding these parts together, first in various 'formations' into which the hybrids and *Heinzelmännchen* are brought in Act One and then, rather differently in *EVAs LIED*, first through *Cœur* then through *Busi*, *Busa* and *Muschi*, bringing the seven children together and teaching and nurturing them in the songs of the seven days of the week. The whole opera is like a huge celebratory gathering of diversity, out of which an image of unity and connection is created and acted out on the plane of sexuality. That plane itself is formed out of, and comprises, the many parts as seen in its tripartite, multifarious instantiation in *Busi*, *Busa*, and *Muschi*.

4.3 The Imaginary and its role in bringing together the Real and the Symbolic:

MONTAGs GRUSS and KLAVIERSTÜCK XIV

This place of the Symbolic and the Real in the Imaginary's formation of identity, and the hidden nature of all three, is a theme that weaves its way throughout all of *MONTAG* and is certainly underscored in the ways in which all three formulas alternate and combine, both in their original forms and in inversion, in the three synthesisers that play throughout the opera.²²⁸ That connection

²²⁷ In Act One, she gives birth to seven animal-child hybrids and seven '*Heinzelmännchen*', and then in Act Two to seven boys, each named after a day of the week. *Heinzelmännchen* are characters from Cologne folklore. See, for example, Thomas Keightley, *The Fairy Mythology: Illustrative of the Romance and Superstition of Various Countries*, (London: George Bell and Sons, 1892/2012), <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/41006/41006-h/41006-h.htm>. 257-58.

²²⁸ The form-schemes and sketches which show these appearances of the formulas in the synthesisers can be seen, and are further explained in Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Kompositions-Kurs über DER KINDERFÄNGER (vom MONTAG aus LICHT)* [Composition Course on *DER KINDERFÄNGER* (of *MONDAY* from *LIGHT*)], trans. Suzanne Stephens (Kürten, Germany: Stockhausen-Verlag, 2002), 14-16. I include an excerpt from these sketches later in this chapter,

is first present, although hardly apparent to the listener, before the opera on stage has commenced – in the GRUSS played in the foyer while the audience arrives. MONTAGS-GRUSS (1988) is itself an expansion of an earlier work 'Xi' (1986). 'Xi' is the anglicised writing of the Greek letter Ξ (lower case ξ), which Stockhausen describes as representing 'unknown quantity'.²²⁹ In its original form, 'Xi', composed in 1986, is written for any melodic instrument that is able to play microtones, and the earliest realisations of it were by Kathinka Pasveer on flute and Suzanne Stephens on basset horn, in 1987 and 1988 respectively.²³⁰ The music involves moving between the notes of the Eve, Lucifer and Michael formulas from the Monday limb of the Superformula, with glissando-like transitions from note to note, where the performer is required to navigate as many microtones as possible between each of the notes. It begins on the Middle C with which the Eva Formula begins, followed by the G of the Lucifer formula before returning to Eve's C. This sequence is repeated and then moves to the high D of Michael. Rudolf Frisius provides a graphic explanation of how the notes of the three formulas are woven together in the first bars of MONTAGS-GRUSS:

where I draw particular attention to the eventual inclusion of the Michael formula in the part of the alto-flute in the scene, KINDERFÄNGER.

²²⁹ "MONTAGS-GRUSS (EVA-GRUSS) " in *TEXTE zur MUSIK Band 7 1984-1991*, ed. Christoph von Blumröder (Kürten, Germany: Stockhausen-Verlag, 1998), 335.

²³⁰ The flute version was premiered by Kathinka Pasveer at the Metropolitan Auditorium in Siena Italy on 3rd August 1987, and the basset horn version by Suzanne Stephens at the Opéra Comique in Paris, France, on 29th September 1989. Recordings of these realisations have been released by the Stockhausen Foundation on CD 28 (1992) and CD 32 (1994) of the Stockhausen Complete Edition respectively.

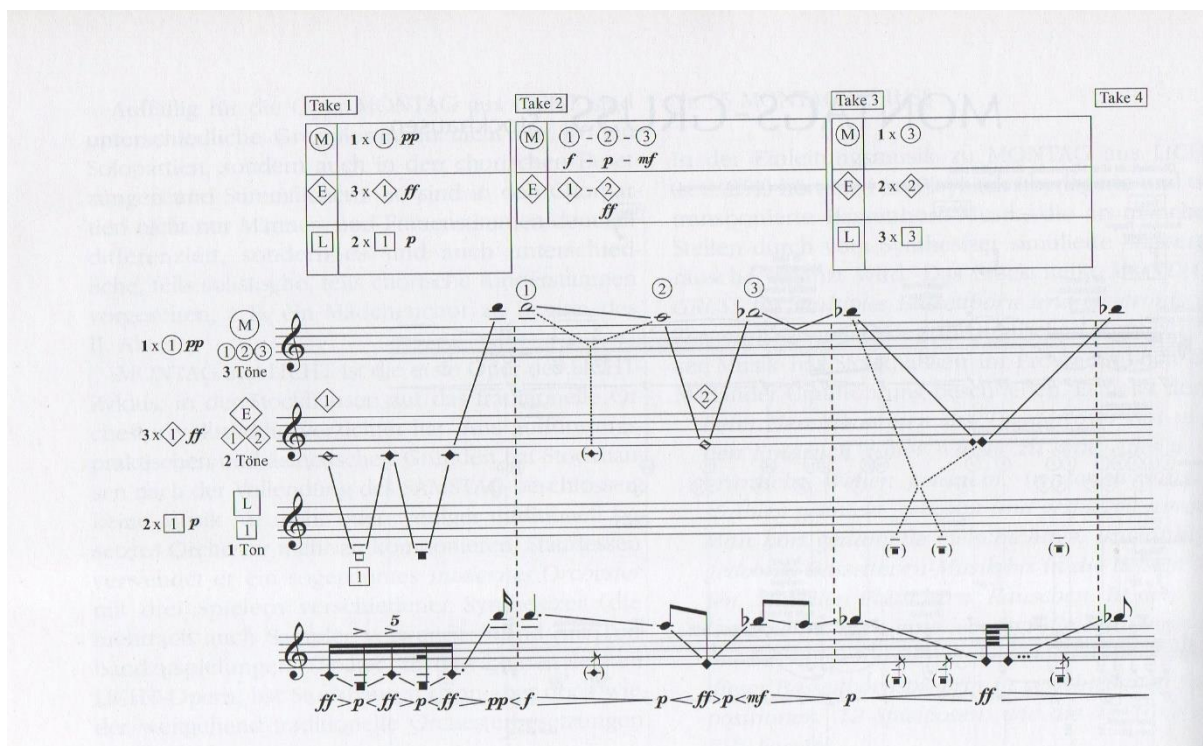


Figure 4.3: Rudolf Frisius's graphic depiction of the opening bars of MONTAGS's GRUSS showing how the basset horn music (on the bottom system) is derived from the three layers of the Superformula's Monday limb. The table at the top shows which note of each formula is being used in each bar of the final melody played by the basset horn and how many times it is played in that bar.²³¹

Different instruments, and different musicians, will be able to produce different numbers of microtones which will alter the duration of the work. The alto flute version includes up to seven microtones within an interval of a minor 2nd and lasts for about 6 minutes, while the basset horn version includes up to 12 microtones within the same interval and lasts about 8.5 minutes.

In MONTAGS-GRUSS, the basset horn version of 'Xi' was recorded three times at different speeds, and these were then slowed down and electronically re-pitched, ultimately resulting in four slowed-down tracks of the same music, each in temporal sync with the others but separated in pitch by a minor 6th.²³² The minor 6th is the inversion of Eve's signature interval of a Major 3rd, and the inversion is appropriate here because it is Stockhausen's intention that the audience experiences the piece as if underwater; the reflections of water are represented by these

²³¹ Frisius, *Die Werkzyklen*, 252.

²³² The process is explained in detail in the score's Preface. See Stockhausen, "MONTAGS-GRUSS (EVA-GRUSS) (Score)," VII-VIII.

inversions of the signature Eve interval. It is to be played over loudspeakers in the theatre foyer as the audience arrives for a performance of the opera:

Upon entering the theatre foyer in a staged performance, one has the impression of being under water. Everything is bathed in greenish waves, in which rays of sunshine are broken, bent and mirrored. Subdued, multi-layered basset horn music incredibly expanded and reaching into the lowest depths – is heard, with occasional splashing, rushing noises.²³³

The music, then, is encapsulating the interwoven characters of Eve, Lucifer, and Michael but very much through the voice of Eve: her instrument, her inverted interval, and her day, all submerged in the water that is her central symbol. The emphasis on water is explained in the preface to the score for MONTAGS-GRUSS:

MONDAY is a musical ceremony in honour of the Mother, a celebration of the birth and the rebirth of mankind. The MONDAY music is therefore also connected with the element water: ocean – rain – hail – ice – steam – distilled water – soaked earth – green grass – water sculptured in glass – clouds.²³⁴

It is as if the audience is submerged in the formation of all three characters, all three of them together, unformed, undifferentiated within the pre-birth water world of Eve and the emerging Imaginary. In some ways, it is a parallel to the beginning of Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, where, in the Prelude to *Das Rheingold*, the music is also immersed in watery depths in a slowly forming E flat major arpeggio, out of which everything else ultimately grows. Robert Donington, in his approach to the symbolism of the *Ring* through the lens of Jungian interpretative analysis, sees that prelude as a depiction of the emergence of the human psyche from the undefined world of the unconscious.²³⁵ In a similar vein, I suggest that my Lacanian analysis of LICHT offers something

²³³ Ibid., VII.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Robert Donington, *Wagner's Ring and its Symbols: The Music and the Myth* (London, UK: Faber and Faber, 1974), 35-44. The connections between the opening of *Das Rheingold* and that of MONTAG aus LICHT are, perhaps

analogous for an interpretation of MONTAGS-GRUSS: the emergence of Lacan's Borromean Knot of human personality, already embedded and imagined, but not yet shaped or defined, in the birth-giving domain of Eve. It is an emergence of personality that already acknowledges, indeed contains, its complexity; but it is a complexity that is always somewhat hidden. This hidden nature of the Symbolic and the Real within the fluidic space of Eve's multiple basset horns seems to suggest that as personality forms, it seeks to lose itself in all the freedom and innocence that the pure world of the Imaginary seems to imply. The emerging personality is like the child unaware of the complexities and obligations that lie beyond the idealised image of the mother that it has during infancy.

It does not, however, have to be an innocence confined to infancy, nor an innocence in quite that same sense. It can also be the innocent, unquestioning ways in which people can always keep themselves from confronting the complexities of which they, and their perception of reality, are really constituted. This is an innocence that is by no means only the province of the young and naïve. It took Martin Heidegger until the later part of his long and prolific career as a philosopher to grasp something of the nuances of the same issue when he identified the four points of the Fourfold. As I have noted, these do not align precisely with Lacan's registers, but they reflect some similar notions and identify the same nexus between the different dimensions of reality that a person experiences. Mostly, that complexity, and the parts that constitute it, remain meshed with one another in the human experience of life, where little Imaginary, Symbolic, and Real, and mortals, earth, gods, and skies are indistinct from the subjective experience of life. Most of us, one might say, spend much our lives in the comfort of MONTAGS-GRUSS.

The human personality cannot totally lose itself in this way, however, or at least not for long, because the image is not what it seems to be: the Symbolic and the Real are there, albeit hidden from view, seemingly seamlessly integrated into the illusion of the Imaginary. As is seen time and

coincidentally, further reinforced in the vocal music that follows each of these preludes: Wagner's three Rhinemaidens, and Stockhausen's trio of sopranos singing from a glass platform within the transparent throat of the large Eve statue on stage.

again throughout LICHT, where the formulas always and eventually find ways of reasserting themselves even after they have been temporarily silenced, neither the Real, nor the Imaginary, nor the Symbolic can be totally repressed, at least not without cost and, even then, not permanently. It is in the Third Act of MONTAG that the dangers of too great an absorption in the Imaginary will become apparent.

Wagner's E flat Major arpeggio does not do teach us anything of this. His world, and the psyche that Donington describes as represented by it, appears to grow from something fundamentally simple: a single chord. Donington demonstrates in his book how every leitmotif in *The Ring* can be traced back to that chord, implying a fundamental simplicity to the foundations of human consciousness.²³⁶ But Lacan's view of human consciousness and personality is grounded in a more complex interaction of the realms of the Imaginary, the Real and the Symbolic. These disparate domains are musically intermingled here into a mirage of unity through the combined notes of the three formulas in the original 'Xi' composition, and the blurring of their boundaries through the simultaneous layering of this music at different pitch registers and the slowing down of the microtonal glissandi between the notes. The 'broken, bent and mirrored' light to which Stockhausen refers, further reinforces the Imaginary's illusion of an autonomous, cohesive, identity forming despite the other elements that are already stirring within and beneath it. It is 'a "shimmer" or "foam" riding atop the real events', as Louis Sass describes the appearance of subjectivity.²³⁷

Another example of how the nexus of Imaginary, Symbolic, and Real can be seen in MONTAG as playing a critical, though obscured, role in the formation of personality is found early in Act Two. It is in the scene BEFRUCHTUNG mit KLAVIERSTÜCK ('Conception with Piano Piece'), where the seven boys, who will later be seduced by Busi, Busa, and Muschi, are conceived. Act Two is itself titled EVAs ZWEITGEBURT ('Eve's Second Birth-Giving').

²³⁶ See *ibid.*, 275-307. for this analysis of the *Ring's* leitmotifs, and their connection to the opening E flat Major arpeggio.

²³⁷ Louis Sass, "Lacan, Foucault, and the 'Crisis of the Subject': Revisionist Reflections on Phenomenology and Post-Structuralism," *Philosophy, Psychiatry, and Psychology* 21, no. 4 (2014): 328.

The first two Acts of MONTAG depict a progressive perfection of the birth and rebirth of mankind of which, as I have already noted, Stockhausen describes the opera as a celebration. The fantastical and hybrid creatures born in Act One are like a step towards the more perfect children who will be born in Act Two, an idea suggested by one of the three Eve sopranos in Act One, who sings of the progress from 'mis-birth to new-birth' and from 'deafness to musicality'.²³⁸ This progression to the children of Act Two can be understood at many levels: a depiction of the human race progressing through evolution and towards spiritual enlightenment, or from a psychoanalytic perspective, as the growth of the human psyche. From that perspective it is an ongoing, cyclic process: people do not simply learn and grow in a linear fashion but are always returning to new formations, and reformations, of identity. Those formations in Act One are rough and comical as our early attempt to understand and imagine ourselves often are. Lucifer, despite the often crude and hybrid forms in which he himself often appears, is so disgusted at this first birth that he orders all the creatures back into the womb and demands that the whole process to be done again. It is only in Act One that Lucifer appears on stage and, in the following two Acts, his presence is more embedded musically, especially through his presence in the synthesiser parts, his formula alternating with those of Michael and Eve. This 'disgusting' birth, however, brings him overtly onto stage to express his revulsion. Maybe part of the basis for that revulsion lies in the way these creatures seem to have been formed. The means by which Eve became pregnant in Act One is never explained but, given Stockhausen's cyclic conception of LICHT, one possibility is that, in following on from SONNTAG, these hybrid children and Heinzelmännchen are the product of Michael and Eve's union: that is, a union that sought to exclude the Real and yet nevertheless results, in its progeny, with the Real resurfacing anyway, both in the comic grotesquery of these hybrid children and in Lucifer's revolt against it.

A very different role for the Real is revealed in the second birth of Act Two. The means by which Eve becomes pregnant are very explicit in Act Two. BEFRUCHTUNG mit KLAVIERSTÜCK ('Conception with Piano Piece') follows, where the Eva statue is impregnated by an extended

²³⁸ Stockhausen, "EVAs ERSTGEBURT," 42-45.

grand piano, wheeled onto the stage and into the statue's crotch, and played by a pianist dressed as a budgerigar.²³⁹ The piano appears only three times throughout LICHT: accompanying Michael during the EXAMEN scene in Act One of DONNERSTAG, accompanying LUZIFERs TRAUM in the first Scene of SAMSTAG and now, accompanying – or, more precisely, facilitating – Eve's conception. In later operas, keyboard solos will be taken over by the synthesiser. but the fact that the piano is only used in the operas that focus on each of the three individual characters , considering Stockhausen was already using synthesisers in his music elsewhere, suggests that he specifically wanted the piano rather than the synthesiser here. Joseph Drew, in his analysis of the narrative of LICHT, and of Michael in particular, suggests that the piano is Lucifer's instrument.²⁴⁰ However, this does not accord with the piano's presence in EXAMEN nor really with its presence here. There is no reason to think that this is specifically Lucifer impregnating Eve, especially when the music gives equal weight to all three formulas. From this perspective, then, I would suggest that the piano becomes more a means of underscoring developments within whichever character the particular opera focuses (Michael in the case of DONNERSTAG, Lucifer in the case of SAMSTAG and Eve in MONTAG). It reinforces Michael's development in DONNERSTAG by contributing formula layers to his performance in EXAMEN to complement and complete the music being performed by the various Michael soloists (tenor, trumpeter, and dancer) in that scene. It performs a similar function in the opening scene of SAMSTAG aus LICHT, which I examine in the following chapter. Here it introduces the totality of the Superformula into Eve's second conception.

The piano part is KLAVIERSTÜCK XIV ('Piano Piece XIV'), which, at just 20 bars, is by far the shortest of the three piano pieces composed for LICHT. While it is built out of the three layers of the Superformula, it does not quote those layers literally. The placement of the Eve and Michael formulas are swapped from their original Superformula relationship to one another with the Eve formula now in the upper register and the Michael formula in the middle. This placing of Eve in the

²³⁹ This piano-playing budgerigar was in fact one of the hybrid children born in Act One, and who managed to escape the return to the womb order by Lucifer at the end of that Act. This suggests some sort of aftermath, something left over from that failed attempt to form new personality while excluding the Real, something that then returns here to facilitate the second birth which, as I explain below, now includes Lucifer.

²⁴⁰ Drew, "Michael from Licht," 236.

uppermost position perhaps reinforces Sass's description of the Imaginary 'floating atop the real events'. At very least it reflects the prominence of Eve in this opera and, more particularly, in this scene of conception. Further to this, and particularly in the Eve and Lucifer layers, the music often reverses the order of neighbouring notes within each formula, creating what Stockhausen refers to as *Schein-Spiegelung* (apparent mirroring), the technique also used with the basset horn later in the opera in the scene SUSANI.²⁴¹ *Schein-Spiegelung* creates an appearance of inversion because the intervallic directions between notes are inverted by altering the order of the pitches. For example, changing the opening Major 7th ascent from G to F sharp in the Lucifer formula to a descent from F sharp to G creates this effect (see figure 4.4).

Figure 4.4: The opening of KLAVERSTÜCK XIV in Act Two of MONTAG aus LICHT, with the *Schein-Spiegelung* in the bass line, where the opening two notes of the Luzifer formula are reversed, giving an appearance of an intervallic inversion.²⁴²

Stockhausen had already foreshadowed the idea of mirroring the formulas in MONTAG in the very early stages of his planning. He noted in conversation with Jerome Kohl: 'Most probably the formulas will be upside-down, will be mirrored: like The Woman is in respect to the men'.²⁴³

In this treatment of the Eve and Lucifer formulas in this scene, then, another example of the obscuring nature of the Imaginary's illusions is suggested. However, this is somewhat complicated by the fact that in this scene the Michael formula is not subject to this *Schein-Spiegelung* process and is in fact not only played in its original form in the piano's middle register but is further

²⁴¹Stockhausen, "SUSANI (Texte)," 746-7.

²⁴² "EVAs ZWEITGEBURT," Mä 37.

²⁴³Stockhausen and Kohl, "Stockhausen on Opera," 33.

reinforced by wordless singing in the girls' choir. This suggests a novel concept, the implications of which are not particularly addressed in the Lacanian literature: that the Symbolic is not so vulnerable to the trickery of *Schein-Spiegelung* that is applied to the formulas of Eve and Lucifer. The Symbolic is, of course, the realm of signifiers and, in my analysis, most particularly of those signifiers of social values and law: the Big Other. The music here suggests that such signifiers, even if they might sometimes be difficult to read, as is Michael's formula here, buried as it is in between the *Schein-Spiegelung* of Eve and Lucifer, tend to be relatively stable even in the face of the fanciful ways in which the Imaginary might seek to view things through the images of its mirrors. Social values, in the sense of collective notions of how people should live their lives and their manifestations in laws and conventions, tend, however, to be relatively durable. They do not change quickly, although the ways in which they become meaningful in the lives of individual people might be more malleable. For example, notions of justice, morality, or social obligation might all be maintained in a more or less stable way for years and years in a society's laws and conventions (the realm of the Symbolic's Big Other), but the ways in which they are experienced and have personal meaning at the more subjective level (the Imaginary) are more unpredictable. Two people might both follow the same laws and codes of behaviour, but still have very different notions of what the laws and behaviours they are each observing mean to them personally, and of what they value within them. Insofar as the Real is also part of the human personality and its subjective experience of the world, it too is caught up in this process: it is a personal domain, not one that replicates an objective world. This distortion within the subjective experience, then, is what is can be seen in the *Schein-Spiegelung* of the Eve and Lucifer formulas in this 'Conception Piece', driving home the deceptive essence of the formation of human subjectivity. The Symbolic might be embroiled in this in the sense that the human perception of objective society is a subjective perception (hence the Michael formula being buried in between those of Eve and Lucifer), but that which happens in the realm of the objective Symbolic is not changed.

This provides an explanation for what is happening in the piano, the music that is impregnating the Eve statue, and the different treatments of the Eve and Lucifer formulas to that of the Michael formula. It does not, however, account for the reinforcement of the Michael formula in the singing

from the girls' choir. That is occurring outside of the conception process and, indeed, when KLAVIERSTÜCK XIV is performed as a separate piece, the Michael formula is much more difficult to decipher. In this sense, the girls' choir appears to act as something of an external commentator: an indicator, as it were, of the fact that even though this conception and emergence of personality is happening within the illusive world of the Imaginary, hiding as it does the presence of the Symbolic and the Real, there is nevertheless a social world outside of this, prominent and obvious, however much a person's inner world might seek to ignore it. It is, then, yet another example of the Imaginary creating an illusion.

This is just another reminder that the deceptive nature of illusion is a part of how the Imaginary works. When a child begins to develop a sense of self by seeing an arm, hand, trunk and head as all connected to the one thing that it identifies as itself, it is not experiencing a delusion. Rather it is forming, out of the literally countless possible connections of objects in its field of vision, a particular configuration of objects into a particular single subject. The child is picking out of its field of vision the things it needs to pick out and is connecting them in ways it needs to connect them in order to be able to function as a person in the world. Similar processes happen as humans form their sense of identity out of non-physical aspects of themselves. A person's interests, desires, skills, actions, fears, and loves: they are all formed out of the countless components of the person's life. They do not constitute a delusion, but the idea that this is who the person is, and that this is how they are defined as an individual being, is an illusion. It is, rather, just one of the infinite possible configurations of the person, and of the experiential and physical world out of which they are constructed. It just happens to be the configuration they form in order to function in a particular way. Nonetheless, this illusory aspect of the Imaginary has the potential to be dangerous for the stability and functionality of human personality and the Third Act of MONTAG provides some glimpses of this. That the piano includes the mirrored Lucifer formula in this way adds another dimension to it: that the ineffable core of the real is also captured in that illusion, but only as an illusion. The naked expression of the Real would be too much for the formative personality to accommodate, with its links to madness to which I have already referred. So it, too, must appear only in the deceptive mirror. I am unaware of Lacan ever describing the appearance of the Real in

the mirror of the Imaginary but here, through this application of the Lacanian model to the Superformula, such an implication arises. It is only the Symbolic that remains unchanged, hidden within, and reinforced from without.

4.4 The Imaginary tells a story: EVAs LIED – syntagm and seduction

The roles that Cœur, Busi, Busa, and Muschi play in herding together the seven children born from the impregnation of KLAVIERSTÜCK XIV is played out repeatedly in Act Two during EVAs LIED, itself divided into three sub-scenes: WOCHENKREIS, BASSETTINEN and INITATION. At first Cœur teaches each boy a song to represent one day of the week, and then this sequence of the songs are repeated as Busi, Busa, and Muschi seduce the boys. Increasingly, each of the seven boys begins to sing the not just their own individual song, but the songs of all the days so, by the end of the Act, all seven boys are singing all seven songs together. Each song captures the central signification of each day, including the various combinations of Michael, Eve, and Lucifer, the colours, and the instruments, that Stockhausen had associated with each day of the week. The statue, heart, and sexualised body of Eve have all fed the growth of new life into a unified whole that now, through its consolidated singing of the days of the week, is giving expression to the syntagm of the psyche. This is a syntagm expressed through the passage of the days, telling its own narrative of sorts. While LICHT does not have a simple linear narrative, a coherent succession of themes can nevertheless be deciphered where then days, and the meanings that Stockhausen ascribed to each of them, are considered in the Monday-to-Sunday order of the Superformula, and the order in which they are taught to the seven boys throughout EVAs LIED. It becomes a narrative in which:

- birth (Monday) leads to
- conflict (Tuesday), which leads to
- resolution through collaboration and unity (Wednesday), which enables
- learning and progress (Thursday) which gives rise to
- temptation and fall (Friday) leading to
- death but also then to revival through resurrection (Saturday) finally enabling

- new and higher unions (Sunday).

These unions then instigate the whole process anew. This certainly reflects Stockhausen notions of a spiral universe that reflects, and is reflected in, the spiral growth of the human spirit.²⁴⁴ It is an overarching theme in much of Stockhausen's music and writings, and this is therefore unsurprisingly the message that the children learn in EVAs LIED. It might not be a philosophical discourse on the nature of the phenomenology of being, but it is certainly Stockhausen's own concept of what life and reality are ultimately all about – told in the syntagmatic structure of the seven days of the week. It is, in any event, the Imaginary enabling connection and assemblage to form the basis of meaning.

After Cœur had appeared from the statue's heart and taught the songs of the days to the seven boys, Busi, Busa, and Muschi emerge from the Eve statue, dressed in costumes that resemble the body parts of right breast, left breast, and vagina respectively. While the instrumental connections I have already noted with Muschi are diverse (basset horn, flute, and voice), they are less so with Busi and Busa, who both play the basset horn. This connects the breasts more clearly with the Eve of DONNERSTAG who, as I have already noted, progressed from mother to lover to celebratory handmaiden, all roles she played in relation to Michael. Indeed, they are the breasts with which the youthful Michael plays in the second scene of that opera's first Act, MONDEVA. In BASSETTINEN, however, the three of them seduce the boys and, in so doing, build an intricate web of maternal and sexual imagery. Where different manifestations of Eve as birth-giver, loving teacher, and sexual seducer, all come together in developing the emerging childhood psyche, it becomes necessary to consider the Oedipal connotations to which this gives rise.

The temptation to imbue this connection of maternal and sexual imagery with Freud's oedipal connotations is hard to resist but Lacan's notion of the Oedipus complex provides even richer

²⁴⁴ Stockhausen referred to the week of LICHT as 'a spiral without end' when asked about where it starts. See Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Towards a Cosmic Music: Texts by Karlheinz Stockhausen*, trans. Tim Nevill (Longmead, UK: Element Books, 1989), 87.

prospects for the interpretation of these scenes where Eve's roles as mother and lover become blurred. Lacan developed Freud's classic concept of the Oedipus complex and, in doing so, focused less on the child's repressed desire for the mother than on a growing recognition of the power of the father. As the child develops, this power becomes associated with the domain of the Symbolic, and particularly with the Symbolic's relationship to the Big Other. Lacan describes this power as the 'phallus', but it indicates the penis only in the most figurative sense: that is, it does not represent the penis literally, but more what the penis signifies. In Lacan's reckoning, that is the power to attract the mother and thereby dominate and curtail the child's sense of self, originally developed in the domain of the Imaginary as encountered in its (the child's) relationship with the mother. In other words, the child realises that it no longer has the full attention of the mother, who will also spend time with the father. The child's unfettered growth of identity is brought into check by the intervention of the father, and his connection with the social mores and conventions of the Symbolic and, particularly, the Big Other.²⁴⁵ The power of the Symbolic, the phallus, is present in this scene only as a hint in the form of its anima: the basset horn multiplying into Busa and Busi. It is a link that is further reinforced when we recall that the breasts were objects of Michael's sexual play in MONDEVA. From this perspective, it is especially telling that Stockhausen's original plan was, as noted above, for Kathinka to play the trumpet, Michael's instrument and the instrument of the Symbolic.²⁴⁶ So, while the seven boys of the scene are developing their identity through their interactions with Eve (the Imaginary), the links to Michael (the Symbolic) are not too far beneath the surface. The fact that Stockhausen replaced the trumpet with another basset horn makes the reference back to Michael (and therefore to the Symbolic) less obvious, but it seems reasonable to make the reference nonetheless, especially knowing that it was in Stockhausen's mind in the early stages of the piece's conception.

²⁴⁵ Jacques Lacan, *The other side of psychoanalysis*, trans. Russell Grigg, The seminar of Jacques Lacan (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2007), 87-140. Lacan sometimes refer to this power of the father, which then goes on to be exercised through the Big Other of society, as 'the name-of-the-father', giving it a degree of distance from the actual father and associating it more clearly with what the father symbolises.

²⁴⁶ Presumably, given that Kathinka Pasveer is a flautist, she would have "played" the trumpet in the same way that she "plays" the basset horn – that is, through holding the instrument but singing into it.

With a Lacanian perspective on the scene, its sexual connotations are therefore more intricately nuanced than those of the Freudian Oedipus complex: they suggest rather the beginnings of an engagement with the Symbolic and, ultimately, with the Big Other. The sexual references point, that is, to the nurturing and seduction in which the maternal Imaginary engages the developing personality, the place where the image of identity is formed, and that this is also a passage into the Symbolic. It is in this domain of the Symbolic that those images of identity are curtailed and contained through the power of social values and laws as captured in the Big Other.

Muschi's links to the flute, through the part having been created for a flautist, creates yet another strand within this web of connection: a connection to the Real of Lucifer, recalling the role of the flute as Lucifer's anima in KATHINKA's GESANG als LUZIFER's REQUIEM, from SAMSTAG, complementing that of the basset horn as Michael's anima. This all creates at least a hint that the Symbolic and Real will ultimately need to be engaged with because they are, after all, embedded in the Imaginary. This inference can be made even without this reference to Jung's concept of the anima: Lacan's Borromean Knot drives home the point that the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real all contain something of each other within themselves, which is, of course, reinforced in the structure of the Superformula and particularly in the way in which Eve's formula alone encompasses the pitch registers of the other two. The notion of anima simply provides another means of understanding that connection. The point that is made across both theoretical perspectives, however, is that both the Symbolic and the Real must be part of how the human personality is formed, despite the initial stages of that formation happening predominantly in the realm of the Imaginary. This is reinforced by these buried references to Michael and Lucifer in this scene of the multiple basset horns. It is, as such, an opening up of the message already contained in the fluid beginnings of the opera in MONTAGS-GRUSS.

In the emerging personality, or even in its ongoing innocence, however, the presence of the Symbolic and the Real is often covert. EVA's LIED gives a fancified image of this, where human personality can continue to develop its sense of meaning playfully, and where the curtailing influences of the Big Other, and the unsettling influences of the Real, are hidden behind the more

benign imagery of the Symbolic and Real animas. Once again, such an interpretation is only possible through drawing on both Lacanian and Jungian concepts, which Stockhausen's complex confluence of imagery enables.

4.5 Self-absorption and pathology: EVAs ZAUBER

The illusory nature of the Imaginary becomes the basis for its ambiguity. When the image that emerges from the Imaginary is only an illusion, it raises the question of the extent to which it really is possible to engage in this as the 'celebration of the birth and the rebirth of mankind' to which Stockhausen referred.²⁴⁷ This issue is brought to the fore in the opera's Third Act, where the illusions, and especially the absorption in them, becomes most intense, particularly by driving home what Bruce Fink describes as the 'dangers of Imaginary-based love'.²⁴⁸ This 'imaginary-based love', essentially a love of an idealised version of oneself, is depicted in the opening scenes of the Act.

The Act opens with a little scene that is obviously derived from the famous story of Narcissus, the beautiful hunter of Greek mythology who died, unable to tear himself away from his entrancement with his own reflection. In Stockhausen's re-imagining, the scene opens with Eve as basset horn player wandering, lost in thought, across a spacious green lawn amongst glass sculptures filled with water. Then, '[p]ausing for a moment, she sees the reflection of her own figure in one of the glass sculptures, falls in love with her own mirror-image and plays – absorbed in the sight of herself – the following solo'.²⁴⁹ She plays her formula in inversion (See Figure 4.5):

²⁴⁷ Stockhausen, "MONTAGS-GRUSS (EVA-GRUSS) (Score)," VII.

²⁴⁸ Fink, *Lacan on Love*, 87-88. Fink describes this as a love that so much projects the image of self onto the other that the distinction between self and other is lost. This will indeed play out throughout the third Act of MONTAG, and its consequences will be dire for the formation of a healthy and socially functional personality.

²⁴⁹ Stockhausen, "EVAs ZAUBER," Bo 1.

Stockhausen

1. Szene: BOTSCHAFT

CD 36D

1 EVAS SPIEGEL

EVA erscheint — wie abwesend — als Bassethornspielerin in hellgrün-silbrigem, sehr erotischem Gewand. Sie bewegt sich — das Instrument in Spielposition — in die Mitte einer weiten, grünen Rasenfläche, die von fremdartigen, wassergefüllten Glaskulpturen umgeben ist, hält einen Moment still, sieht in einer der Glaskulpturen ihre eigene Gestalt gespiegelt, verliebt sich in ihr Spiegelbild und spielt — in den Anblick ihrer selbst versunken — das folgende Solo. Während der ersten 10 Takte kommen nach und nach zwischen den Skulpturen Profile und Körperschnitte von Männern hervor. Die Männer sind dunkel, elegant gekleidet. Alle starren EVA an (Tenöre und Bässe gemischt). Sie machen vereinzelt leichte Dirigierbewegungen beim Singen, bleiben sonst stief (der Chordring ist einer der Männer).

1 AUF

4 $\square = 53,5$ 6

Bassetthorn
(klingt wie notiert)

Altflöte
(klingt wie notiert)

Tenöre und Bässe
sind in linke und rechte Hälfte geteilt
(vom Hörer aus gesehen).

Schlagzeuger
tacet
bis Takt 43

1 AUF

2 2x5

Lippen-gloss

Gloss chrom. und mit Lippen zwischen

langsame Griffwechsel

Klappentritter

IRR slaccato Kudergeräusche

Lippen gloss.

Tenöre rechte Hälfte

Spieg-lein Spieg-lein

[n] betonen

Auch alle Geräusche klingen wie notiert.
In den Stimmen stehen immer die entsprechenden Griffe.

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Figure 4.5: The opening of Act Three, with the basset horn solo, playing the opening of the Eva Formula inverted, while the male choir sings the notes of the Eva nuclear formula.²⁵⁰

The image that Eve sees of herself is very easily understood in terms of the Lacanian mirror stage.

Eve's absorption in that image is an indicator that it has now become the psychoanalytic 'ideal ego', the image of which, says Lacan, determines 'the conception of the phenomenon of passionate love'.²⁵¹ The music here is being played by Eve in her form as Cœur de Basset. Now that capacity for passionate love is turned in on itself: it is manifest in an absorbed love of self. It is also a recognition and affirmation of self that Lacan, in his later (post-1960) writings saw as needing an external agent in order for it to be realised: that is, it does not develop naturally of its own accord. Rather, says Lacan, it emerges through the approving nod that an adult gives to a child, when the adult sees the child reacting to its own image in a mirror.²⁵² Here, in the opening scene of Act Three, that approval is provided by the men of the chorus, who softly accompany the basset horn with the notes (not inverted) of the Eve nuclear formula and the words, 'Spieglein Spieglein and der Wand, wer ist die Schönste im ganzen Land?' ('Mirror Mirror on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?').

250 Ibid.

²⁵¹ Lacan, "Variations," 344.

²⁵² *Transference*, 353.

Stockhausen's reference to Eve falling in love with her own reflection, and the connections to Narcissus to which this gives rise, raises the notion not just of affirmation of self, but also of pathological absorption in self, and the consequent break-down of awareness of a distinction between self and other, to which Fink referred. This would all be a rather straightforward depiction of the story of Narcissus were it not for a surprising event that Stockhausen throws in: the mirror glass sculpture breaks. This never happened in the original story from Greek mythology, where it was Narcissus, rather than his mirror image, that was ultimately destroyed. But here this destruction of the mirror, and the fractured image of self that this might seem to suggest, turns out not to be so decisive as it at first seems. Throughout all of this, an alto flute has been playing in the background and soon emerges on stage as Ave, a female flautist dressed as a young man. Her/his name is the mirror of the German form of Eve: Eva. Together, the basset horn and alto flute play fragments of the Eve formula, sometimes inverted, sometimes in its original form, interplaying these with one another throughout SUSANI, the small subscene that now follows.²⁵³ It suggests that the reflection in the water sculpture with which Eve falls in love has not disintegrated, but has developed a life of its own in the figure of Ave. As Eve and Ave join in this duet, featuring both the formula and its inversion, the distinction between the two (Eve as ego and Ave as its ideal image) becomes increasingly blurred, just as it had (albeit through slightly different musical means) in the sharing of formulas between Eve and Michael in the second act of DONNERSTAG. It is yet another example of the Imaginary's fluidity and therefore capacity to merge different components of personality. Here, it is a beautiful and indeed seductive musical depiction of images, illusions and echoes interacting, rather like a hall of mirrors, where it becomes almost impossible to know which images are reflecting what. The absorption in the illusion of self, now separated from the anchors of the socially connected world of the Symbolic, has become so intense that it is now impossible to decipher the real world.²⁵⁴

²⁵³ The name is from Suzanne Stephens, the basset horn player for whom the basset horn part throughout all of LICHT was written.

²⁵⁴ There are some hints of Michael's formula here, and therefore of the presence of the Symbolic, but they are always in *Schein-Spiegelung*, (for example, bar 45, where the basset horn plays a *Schein-Spiegelung* version of the quintuplet figure that opens the second bar of Michael's formula, or bar 53 where it plays the descending figure from Bar 9 of his

The alto-flute part of this scene can also be performed as a solo work independently of the opera, in which case it is known as 'SUSANIs ECHO', to which it is also referred by the choir within the opera.²⁵⁵ It is worth exploring the implications of this name given the associations already drawn with Narcissus in the basset horn part. Echo, in the story of Narcissus as told by Ovid in *Metamorphoses*, was a nymph who Jupiter's wife, Juno, had condemned to only ever be able to repeat the last few words that had been spoken to her. The love Echo felt for Narcissus was therefore left undeclared as she watched him become absorbed in his own image.

Maryanne Hannan provides an insightful, and perhaps unconventional, interpretation of the story of Narcissus and Echo. She closely examines Ovid's story in the original Latin, which she suggests is replete with nuances that are often lost in English translation.²⁵⁶ Before Narcissus and Echo had met, Hannan argues, Narcissus had lived a relatively normal life. He shunned sexual advances from both women and men, but was otherwise connected with people in a socially healthy way. When he becomes separated from his friends on a hunt, he calls out asking if anyone is there. Echo replies with the same words but, for her, they are infused with the sexual longing for him that has been growing in her while she has been secretly following him through the woods. It is a sexual longing that isn't deterred by Narcissus's refusal of her advances. She is oblivious to everyone's needs but her own, says Hannan, and so in that sense it is she, rather than Narcissus, who is the first to exhibit what would today qualify as the clinical indicators of narcissistic personality disorder. Those indicators only become apparent in Narcissus when he sees his own image in a nearby lake and, not realising that it is only a reflection of himself, falls inescapably in love with it. For the first time he feels the passionate attraction that others had felt towards him. But it is an attraction only to an image and, by time Narcissus realises this, it is too late: he realises that he has fallen in love with himself and is driven mad with despair that this a love that cannot be

formula in retrograde). Here, then, the Symbolic becomes subject, via the Imaginary absorption in self, to the fragmentation and change that it had resisted in Act Two in BEFRUCHTUNG mit KLAVIERSTÜCK.

²⁵⁵ Stockhausen, "EVAs ZAUBER," Bo 23.

²⁵⁶ Maryanne Hannan, "A Psychoanalytic Interpretation of Ovid's Myth of Narcissus and Echo," *Psychoanalytic Review* 79, no. 4 (1992): 555-75.

returned. In this way, he has come to experience the same rejection that Echo had felt, and now he too is drawn into the same personality disorders that she had shown: an inability to extricate himself from the thing that cannot love him back. She stands by, echoing his words, sharing in his death, while he watches his image disintegrate into oblivion.

In terms of the Lacanian model of Imaginary-Symbolic-Real, it is important to note here, to avoid confusion that, even though Echo uses words, it would be wrong to deduce from this that she is in the realm of the Symbolic, the realm with which words as signifying and socially constructed language is often associated. Her words are not language, but images of what others have said.²⁵⁷ She destroys their language and turns her reflection of it into her own imagery. It is no longer a system for communication, because it means nothing to anyone but herself. Echo's domain is very much that of the Imaginary. And so, for this reason, her relationship with Narcissus, who also moves out of the realm of the Symbolic, away from the socially normal life of his childhood, and into a realm that is exclusively Imaginary, can be understood as a study of the Imaginary: the Imaginary that has sought to dislocate itself from the Symbolic. In this way, the Symbolic affirmation of self, which as I noted earlier is necessary for the healthy development of the 'ideal ego', has here become pathologically distorted because it now comes from within the Imaginary itself. It is the self affirming the self, substituting the Symbolic's external and objective affirmation with the internal, subjective, and illusory voice of the Imaginary. Perhaps in simpler human terms, it is the recluse who withdraws from society and becomes absorbed only in themselves. In the more pathological sense, it is the person who loses all capacity to relate to or even acknowledge the social dimension of life: the sociopath. It is the personality that has declined to engage with those other aspects of itself: the Symbolic and the Real. Those parts might be hidden in the 'broken, bent and mirrored' light of the fluid Imaginary, to recall Stockhausen's description of the GRUSS, but the opera shows us that they are there nonetheless. The remainder of the Third Act of the opera provides a glimpse of how the process of declining to engage with them unfolds.

²⁵⁷ I use 'language' here again in the sense of Saussure's *langue*, an organised system of signs whereby signifiers are attached in socially meaningful ways to signifieds.

Just as the fates of Narcissus and Echo become entwined in one another in Ovid's story, so too do those of Eve and Ave in this scene of the opera: as they play their duet, each reflecting one another and playing fragments of both the original and inverted versions of the Eve formula, occasionally almost, but never quite, in sync with one another. As I noted earlier, there are hints here and there of Michael's formula in the basset horn but now subject to the Imaginary distortion they resisted earlier. This seems to indicate a now pathological relationship with the Symbolic, although even this is only hinted at and Ave does not play the Michael fragments on the alto-flute at all. Every skerrick of a social connection is slowly vanishing. It is here just as it was with Narcissus: a lost ability to connect with the social world. The Imaginary has become absorbed in itself, and sociopathology is emerging.

'A female alto flute player, dressed as a young man, arrives playing' is how Ave's appearance is described in the score.²⁵⁸ The person performing the part is required to sing as well as play the alto flute and the registers in which those notes are composed seem to further indicate that Stockhausen intended that woman play the part. Were it not for this gender ambiguity created in the part, it might be tempting to borrow again from Jung in understanding the role by referencing his concept of 'the shadow'. The shadow is the destructive side of consciousness. This includes the repressed tendencies that are always present, but rarely expressed and often emerging in somewhat sinister forms, such as dark characters in dreams or demons and the like in mythology.²⁵⁹ This is to some extent the role that Ave plays in MONTAG, particularly in the following scene, DER KINDERFÄNGER ('The Pied Piper'), where he abducts Eve's children. But the gender ambiguity of female alto flute player dressed as a young man introduces an element that is explained neither by the Jungian shadow nor in the original story of Narcissus and Echo. For that, a return to the Jungian concept of anima and animus may provide at least some perspective on it. The part of Ave, as well as being able to be understood as the echo of Eva, can also be seen as an animus to Eve: the male component of the female psyche. In this way, the flute finds its own counterpart here as Lucifer's anima from SAMSTAG now appears as Eve's animus in MONTAG.

²⁵⁸ Stockhausen, "EVAs ZAUBER," Bo 22.

²⁵⁹ Carl G. Jung, "Approaching the Unconscious," in *Man and his Symbols*, ed. Carl G. Jung (USA: Dell, 1964), 83.

This may all be no more than an indication of Stockhausen's faith in the versatility in Pasveer's performance capabilities. She has, so far, been required to play the flute, sing into the flute, create trombone notes through the flute, and sing into the basset horn. At one stage, as I have mentioned already, Stockhausen considered asking her to "play" the trumpet as well. Regardless of Stockhausen's reasons for requiring such a diversity of performance capabilities from Pasveer, the result is a part that is constantly linked, in changing ways, to other characters.

There is no single concept in psychoanalytic theory that captures this sort of diversity and so, in that sense, I cannot in my interpretation provide one to interpret the flute part in LICHT in any singular way. It is, rather, a shifting part that seems to constantly provide another side to these other characters with which it is linked. Another instantiation of this becomes apparent in FREITAG where both the basset horn and the flute combine as companions to the soprano singing the part of Eve. These additional facets of the characters, especially through the shifting connections of the flute, always add a richness of perspective on the complex and elusive ways in which the core Lacanian registers of Symbolic, Imaginary, and Real operate within the human psyche. Here, Ave's flute seems to suggest both the darker side of the Imaginary in the Jungian shadow, as well as the male component of this archetypal figure of maternity and femininity. It is this latter role of Ave that links Eve to the hermaphroditic mother of androgynous races which Stockhausen noted from theosophic sources in his early sketches for the opera. But it is the role of the shadow that seems most potent in Ave for the remainder of the opera in which the darker side of the Imaginary's formation of identity takes over.

This is the dangerous, destructive side of Echo's personality that Hannan had noted and had even described as 'parasitic'.²⁶⁰ It is the side that seeks to capture and take possession of others, to absorb them into itself and eventually to own them. This is the side of Ave that takes the lead in DER KINDERFÄNGER. Here, the children who have been gathering around and watching everything become increasingly enchanted by Ave's flute. They begin to imitate everything he

²⁶⁰ 'Echo's very nature is parasitic: she must form her speech from the words of others', Hannan, "Narcissus " 563.

does, as the story seems to convert from the tale of Narcissus and Echo to that of the Pied Piper of Hamelin. Ave is no longer echoing the Eve of Cœur de Basset, who has now retreated 'confused and disappointed' into the heart of the Eve statue, while the children learn from Ave, now referred to in the score only as 'the Pied Piper', 'the craziest figures of tones, noises, sounds, syllables and gestures'.²⁶¹ Insofar as the children represent the newly formed personalities that the opera has been all about (Stockhausen's birth and rebirth of mankind) then this scene is one of those emerging personalities being captured by the pathological, self-obsessed personality that the socially dislocated Imaginary has now enabled.

The 'craziest figures' to which the score refers are, however, and perhaps somewhat surprisingly, connected with the Michael Formula. The scene follows a pattern whereby a series of pre-recorded 'sound scenes' is spatialised through the auditorium. Stockhausen describes them in the score's Preface as 'Sound scenes from the whole world fleetingly come and go'.²⁶² They are the usual Stockhausen mix of noises, including animals, things breaking, sirens, engines, laughter, explosions, with each lasting for just a second or two. The flautist then 'plays as if she were magically producing the *Tonszene* [sound scene] herself'.²⁶³ But the notes she plays are from the Michael Formula, either in its original form or its inversion, while the synthesisers accompany her with extended notes from the Eva and Lucifer formulas. Stockhausen explains the process in his Composition Course booklet at the 2002 Courses in Kürten, where the piece was performed on its own, and where he asked his students to follow just these notes from the alto flute and synthesisers:

²⁶¹ Stockhausen, "EVAs ZAUBER," XVIII.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ *DER KINDERFÄNGER* (Composition Course booklet), 10.

Formulas in KINDERFÄNGER

In KINDERFÄNGER, synthesizer I B plays the EVE formula starting on G, synthesizer II B the segment of the EVE formula on G which is projected over the entire MONDAY from LIGHT. The numbers are bar numbers of the score. Together with the long notes of the EVE formula, one hears in this 24-channel mix also the bass notes of the LUCIFER scale (see Form Scheme on page 14).

example 25 (channels 3-4 / 11-12) [0'00"-17'40.4"], $\Sigma + 6$ dB

(neglect the bass notes and the voices, follow the score)

MICHAEL formula and mirror on B \flat in the alto flute / example 26 (channels 23-24 plus Tonszenen 17-20) [0'15"-5'54"]

MICHAEL formula on F \sharp / example 27 [6'13.1"-11'47"]

MICHAEL mirror on F / example 28 [11'47"-17'40.4"]

MICHAEL mirror on D / example 29 [18'50.3"-19'18.7"]

EVE on A \flat

The image displays a page from a musical score for 'DER KINDERFÄNGER'. It features several staves of music, primarily for the alto flute (Afl.) and piccolo (Pic.). The score is annotated with various musical formulas and their corresponding time signatures. Key examples include: Example 25 (channels 3-4 / 11-12) [0'00"-17'40.4"], Example 26 (channels 23-24 plus Tonszenen 17-20) [0'15"-5'54"], Example 27 [6'13.1"-11'47"], Example 28 [11'47"-17'40.4"], and Example 29 [18'50.3"-19'18.7"]. The formulas are labeled as 'MICHAEL formula and mirror on B \flat ', 'MICHAEL formula on F \sharp ', 'MICHAEL mirror on F', and 'MICHAEL mirror on D'. The score also includes a section for 'EVE on A \flat '. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'mf' and 'f'.

Figure 4.6: Stockhausen's explanation of the use of formulas in DER KINDERFÄNGER, showing the Michael formula in the alto-flute part.²⁶⁴

It may seem odd that the Michael formula appears here, given how increasingly introspective Eve (the Imaginary) has become throughout the Act so far. But recalling the story of Narcissus and Echo, and looking at what Ave as the Pied Piper is doing now, it is not odd at all. There Echo appeared at first to be speaking to Narcissus and answering his questions, appearing to be engaging in conversation through the social discourse of language. In fact, she was only communicating in the images of the Imaginary and thereby enabling and ultimately reinforcing his absorption in himself. The Pied Piper takes a similar path here. He appears to be engaging in language by replicating through music the noises of the world as expressed in the sound scenes as if teaching them to the children. But in reality he is just ensnaring the children and drawing them into himself. He is not developing any connection with the world as the Symbolic would do, and as Michael did in his journey around the world. After each phrase on the alto-flute, the children copy him, increasingly enchanted. Once he has enchanted them, the Pied Piper moves more and more into the nuclear notes of the Eva formula and, with these, 'abducts' the children into the clouds in the opera's final scene, ENTFÜHRUNG ('Abduction'). Even the world of the Symbolic has appeared only as an illusion, seducing with the belief that its self-absorbed world is real.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 15.

Meanwhile, the Eve statue grows old and slowly transforms into a mountain. The opera ends as the audience leaves for MONTAGS-ABSCHIED ('Monday's Farewell'), played back over four sets of loudspeakers in the foyer, which is 'immersed in slowly moving clouds as the audience departs'.²⁶⁵ It is in those clouds that the ambiguity – and, indeed, the imagery – becomes especially manifest. The metaphor of having one's heads in the clouds is hard to resist here: there may be a sense of delight in being carried away into the sky, but it is not the real world, nor a place where one can function and interact with anyone. It might appear to be a magical connection between the earth-dwelling mortals and the sky-faring gods, but it is one in which only a single, unengaged self looks to the skies, building only their own imagined images of what the skies and gods beckon them to do and to be.

Throughout the ABSCHIED, the nuclear notes of the Eve formula move higher and higher in pitch. The sounds of the piccolo and voice, both performed by Kathinka Pasveer are now electronically transposed into these higher registers until they are barely audible to human ears at all. The actual transpositions, however, follow the pitch progressions of the Lucifer layer of the third bar of the Superformula. It is Lucifer again asserting the presence and influence of the Real in this covert way. The transpositions might not be noticeable to the audience, but it is a presence of the Real that, its covert nature, is nevertheless very determinative: shaping the passage of the Imaginary into this absorption in itself. It is perhaps because of the now total absence of Michael's formula, and therefore of the steadying influence of the Symbolic, that the otherwise inaccessible core of being, the Real, is able to reassert itself in how the pathology of the Imaginary progresses.

The ABSCHIED depicts an ambiguity not unlike that at the end of DONNERSTAG, where the isolated Symbolic appeared grand and noble, but also alone and statuesque. Here, it is the isolated Imaginary: fantastic and joyous within itself but dislocated from everyone and everything. It is as Bruce Fink describes Lacan's theories on the dangers of love that is based too much in the

²⁶⁵ "MONTAGS-ABSCHIED," IX.

Imaginary: love, that is, that seeks the ideal ego, the idealisation of oneself, and then seeks to possess it. This sort of love, according to Fink, is in the Lacanian context a love that, rooted solely in the Imaginary, 'aims at the annihilation of difference'.²⁶⁶ As such, it loses the capacity to generate anything new. It stagnates into itself. And so it is here too: the embodiment of Eve on stage as the statue has grown old, frigid, and fertile: at the very end of the opera the stage directions require that it 'gradually becomes wrinkled and shrivelled and transforms into an old mountain'.²⁶⁷ And yet, even out of this image of decay, hope and regeneration emerges: while the Pied Piper is abducting the children into the sky, the old mountain begins to sprout shrubs, flowers, brooks, and animals. The Imaginary, and its capacity to form and to reform, is not destroyed even by the pathologies that can and do arise from it. For Stockhausen, however, who had none of these Lacanian connections in mind as he composed the scene, this is all presumably just another indicator of the perennial nature of birth and rebirth, no matter what happens to creatures that are born and reborn. Layered onto the concept of a cyclic nature of the human psyche, it becomes an ultimately optimistic view of the human capacity to regenerate, even when psychopathology appears to take over and threaten this regenerative potential.

Alongside this depiction of both decay and rebirth is also a sense of ambiguity in how MONTAGS-ABSCHIED appears to celebrate the abduction or at least to see it as a progression into something higher. Towards the end of ABSCHIED and when the piccolo and voice have become almost totally inaudible, Kathinka's suddenly emerges again at a more decipherable pitch. She sings:

*The Eva -
children – children
are
abducted
by music
into higher worlds
with*

²⁶⁶ Fink, *Lacan on Love*, 87.

²⁶⁷ Stockhausen, "EVAs ZAUBER," XVIII

with green clouds

green clouds

This may seem a hopeful message, but a shadow has already been cast upon it by some curious words from one of the children who, near the end of the abduction scene, comes back onto the stage to collect his shoes that he, like all the children, had left behind. He notices the audience still in their seats, looks at them, and then shouts out in French, 'Oh – are you still there? It is very dirty outside!'.

This is a little touch of the humour that Stockhausen loves to throw into his work, and often the humour in LICHT has a dark edge to it. The child's statement reminds us all that there is something disturbing that has, in all the raucous celebrations and self-absorption, gone unnoticed. Something 'dirty'. This more darkly edged humour in LICHT is almost invariably associated with Lucifer. There may be no overt signs of Lucifer here now but the transpositions of the ABSCHIED tell us that he is there anyway. And, as I shall suggest in the next chapter, it is in the voice of that little child picking up his shoes that we hear the cry of the Real.

Chapter 5: Lucifer and the Real

The proper dwelling plight lies in this, that mortals ever search anew for the essence of dwelling, that they *must ever learn to dwell*. What if man's homelessness consisted in this, that man still does not even think of the *proper* plight of dwelling as *the* plight?²⁶⁸

The little boy who returns to collect his shoes at the end of MONTAG and turns to the audience to tell them that it's 'very dirty outside' is, according to Stockhausen's directions in the score, the 7th Boy of Eve's Song. In that opera, he sang the SONNTAGS-LIED (SUNDAY SONG) in WOCHENKREIS (Die 7 LIEDER DER TAGE) (CIRCLE OF THE WEEK (The 7 SONGS OF THE DAYS)). The Sunday Song, like the Sunday opera of LICHT, celebrates the mystical union of Michael and Eve and is constructed out of a fusion of the Sunday segments of the Michael and Eve formulas. It is a union from which Lucifer is excluded and yet, just as the last notes of the Lucifer formula crept into SONNTAG, Lucifer's presence creeps in here too. It does so through the hint of humour, and its oblique references to something dark, lying beyond, in this little boy who, already having sung the Sunday Song in Act Two of MONTAG, reappears at the very end of Act Three to tell the audience how dirty it is outside.

Stockhausen, presumably, meant the scene with the boy and his shoes to contain an element of humour. Humour, however, and as has already been seen several times throughout the operas, as indeed it is continually seen throughout psychoanalysis, is often little more than a veil for something more difficult to confront. It is for this reason not surprising that in LICHT it is often associated with Lucifer and, as my interpretation would therefore suggest, also with the Real. In this Chapter I look at the ways in which the Real is conveyed in the character of Lucifer.

²⁶⁸ Heidegger, "Building, dwelling, thinking," 363.

Lucifer is a character who many commentators see as destructive and antagonistic but always as one who eventually must give way to a more divine redemptive power.²⁶⁹ My own interpretation also sees him as a destructive and antagonistic force, but also as a creative and necessary one. This is part of his contradiction and part of his necessity in the growth and development of the human mind and its ability to grasp the phenomenology of being.

Being, for Heidegger, ultimately finds its basic character in his concept of dwelling – a concept that, he says, humans often re-conceptualise as building. They particularise the expanse of dwelling, which is neither localised nor particularised, into the tangible notions of building 'things'. For Heidegger, the mortal beings of the Fourfold think in terms of location in the here and the now but are always looking to the vaster space of the skies that they cannot grasp. Dwelling encompasses both the earth and the sky, both mortals and gods, he says,²⁷⁰ and by building things the ungraspable nature of dwelling is made graspable. Heidegger uses the metaphor of the bridge to illustrate this. It is a tangible thing that connects, that 'allows a space into which earth and sky, divinities and mortals are admitted.'²⁷¹ It is a metaphor that accords well with Michael's role as the connector between the divine and the human. There is always an aspect of dwelling that building does not capture, just as there is always something left over that Lacan's Symbolic cannot signify. Rather poetically, Heidegger then likens the problem of homelessness to that of this focus on building rather than dwelling. He suggests that it is not just about building things, nor finding tangible or graspable ways to understand the nature of being, but about understanding the essence of dwelling. Just like the angels of DONNERSTAG that are 'always in transit', Heidegger's notion of dwelling is also one that allows for the notion of never being settled in the tangibility of location. This, I suggest, is what constitutes the plight of dwelling that Heidegger describes as *the* plight of humanity. It is a plight of seeking to grasp the ungraspable. It is, in short, the plight that resides in the Real, where buildings are built not just in the nurturing earth of Eve, but in the dirt as well.

²⁶⁹ See particularly Drew, "Michael from Licht.", Peters, *Holy Seriousness.*, Ulrich, *Stockhausen Theology*. and *LICHT*.

²⁷⁰ Heidegger, "Building, dwelling, thinking," 354.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 355.

5.1 Lucifer as the Real in LUZIFERs TANZ

Lucifer certainly saw the world, along with all the planets, as a dirty place, just as the child at the end of MONTAG warns the audience. "Stinkende Zuchtstätten" ("stinking breeding grounds") is how he describes them in the Third Act of DONNERSTAG.²⁷² In this sense, then, it is perhaps his voice that seeps through the humour of the 7th Boy picking up his shoes and so is, beneath that humour, the voice of the Real.

The Real, however, does not have a voice in any tangible or audible sense, and as such it presented for Lacan something of a challenge: as soon as an attempt is made to describe it, it ceases to be what it most essentially is – indescribable, ineffable. Stockhausen was faced with a similar challenge in presenting Lucifer, especially in presenting him as a character on stage. It is of Lucifer's essence that he despises the compromised world of the bodily creatures of humanity. It is perhaps for this reason that Lucifer, certainly more than Michael and even more than Eve with her multiple forms in MONTAG, so often appears in such bewildering, even bizarre, forms on stage: like the polyp of Act One of MONTAG, the tap-dancing toreador and gremlin-dragon of Act Three of DONNERSTAG, or the planet-defecating camel of Scene 4 of MITTWOCH. In FREITAG, in order to seduce Eve, he appears as the more palatable Ludon to initiate the seduction and then as his own son Caino to carry it out.²⁷³ Lucifer, like the Real, is similar to the unviewable abyss that lies behind the window in H P Lovecraft's *The Music of Erich Zann*, expressing itself only in the 'unutterable' viol music of a speechless old man.²⁷⁴

Nowhere is the disguised appearance of Lucifer more potent than in the opera devoted to his character, SAMSTAG, and most especially in its third scene, LUZIFERs TANZ ('LUCIFER'S DANCE'), a scene where Lucifer's appearance in the form of an approximately 80-piece wind

²⁷² Stockhausen, "MICHAELs HEIMKEHR," F 104.

²⁷³ I discuss Lucifer's, and the Real's, role in FREITAG later in this chapter.

²⁷⁴ H. P. Lovecraft, "The Music of Erich Zann," in *The Complete Fiction of H P Lovecraft* (China: Race Point Publishing, 2014), 153.

orchestra with percussion, assembled vertically on stage in the shape of huge human face. This face has been likened by Stockhausen musicologist Robin Maconie to the projected face of the Wizard of Oz.²⁷⁵ Like The Wizard's face, Lucifer's is not what it appears to be, but while the Wizard's projection hides something much more corporeal and banal, the face of Lucifer conceals something far stranger.

That scene follows directly from KATHINKA's GESANG als LUZIFERs REQUIEM ('KATHINKA'S SONG as LUCIFER'S REQUIEM'), in which Lucifer did not really appear at all, but whose 'apparent death', as Stockhausen's describes it in his stage directions, is mourned by Lucifer's anima: through the shadowy incarnation of the cat-like flautist, and its possible associations with Eve.²⁷⁶ In that scene, the flute dissected and elaborated the Lucifer formula in its series of 24 exercises through the voice of Jung's first stage of anima development: Eve, the object of desire, in the form of the rational thinking, Alpha cat.²⁷⁷ That cat will make another appearance in LUZIFERs TANZ, playing the piccolo, just after Michael appears playing the piccolo trumpet. In this scene, both Eve and Michael are overshadowed by the enormity of Lucifer in the form of this gigantic face through which he seems to appear. But he is Lucifer, and he is the Real, and so his appearance will always be a disguise. It is of his very nature that he cannot and does not appear, at least not on the earthly and perceptible stage of humans.

It is ironic that even the disguise that Stockhausen had devised for Lucifer in this scene never quite worked on stage, as if Lucifer was somewhere behind the scenes, resisting this attempt to depict him. This is how Stockhausen imagined the wind orchestra would be set out on stage, set out on five levels, one above the other, to give the appearance of a human face (See figure 5.1):

²⁷⁵ Robin Maconie, "Facing the Music: Stockhausen's Wizard of Oz," *Tempo* 64, no. 251 (2010): 2-7.

²⁷⁶ I described this scene, and the notion of the flute as an emanation of Eve as Lucifer's anima, in the previous chapter.

²⁷⁷ Again, see the previous chapter for an explanation of these references.

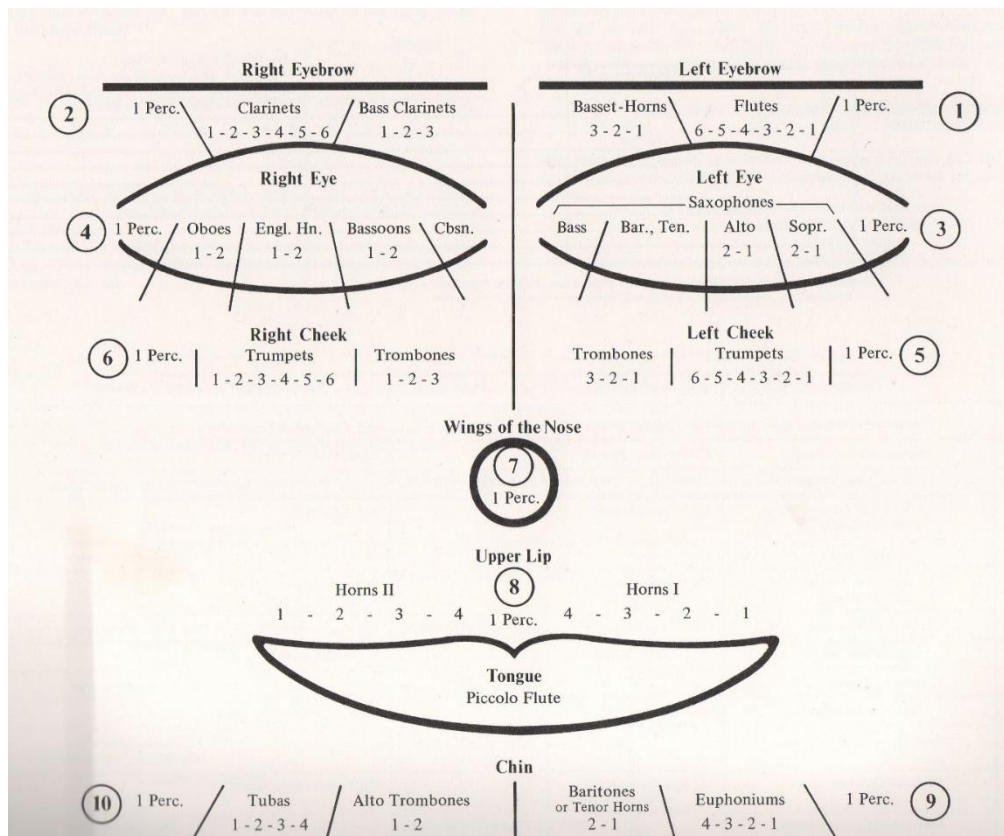


Figure 5.1: Stockhausen's sketch for the placement of the wind and percussion band into ten groups forming a human face in LUZIFERs TANZ, as shown in the preface to the score.²⁷⁸

Stockhausen's concept was that, as the players played the music, the parts of the face they

occupied would appear to twitch and move, an effect he sought to emphasise by notating movements for the musicians in the score. Essentially, these movements involve the players jerking their heads in various directions as they played. These movements are always synchronous within a given orchestral sub-group, but never between them. Always, the parts of the face are moving against each other, chaotic and at odds.

The opera had its world premiere at the *Palazzo dello Sport*, Milan, staged by La Scala, on 25 May 1984. Describing this production in the score's preface, Stockhausen notes 'the realistic representation of a ten-part giant human face was discarded after the first rehearsals.'²⁷⁹ While the vertical tiering of the orchestra was retained, it no longer resembled a face, although Stockhausen

²⁷⁸ Stockhausen, "LUZIFERs TANZ," Ta XXII.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.(note to photos 23 and 24: no page number)

maintained the movements of the players' heads that he had notated in the score, and presumably continued to hope that one day it would be staged as he imagined it (see Figure 5.2):²⁸⁰

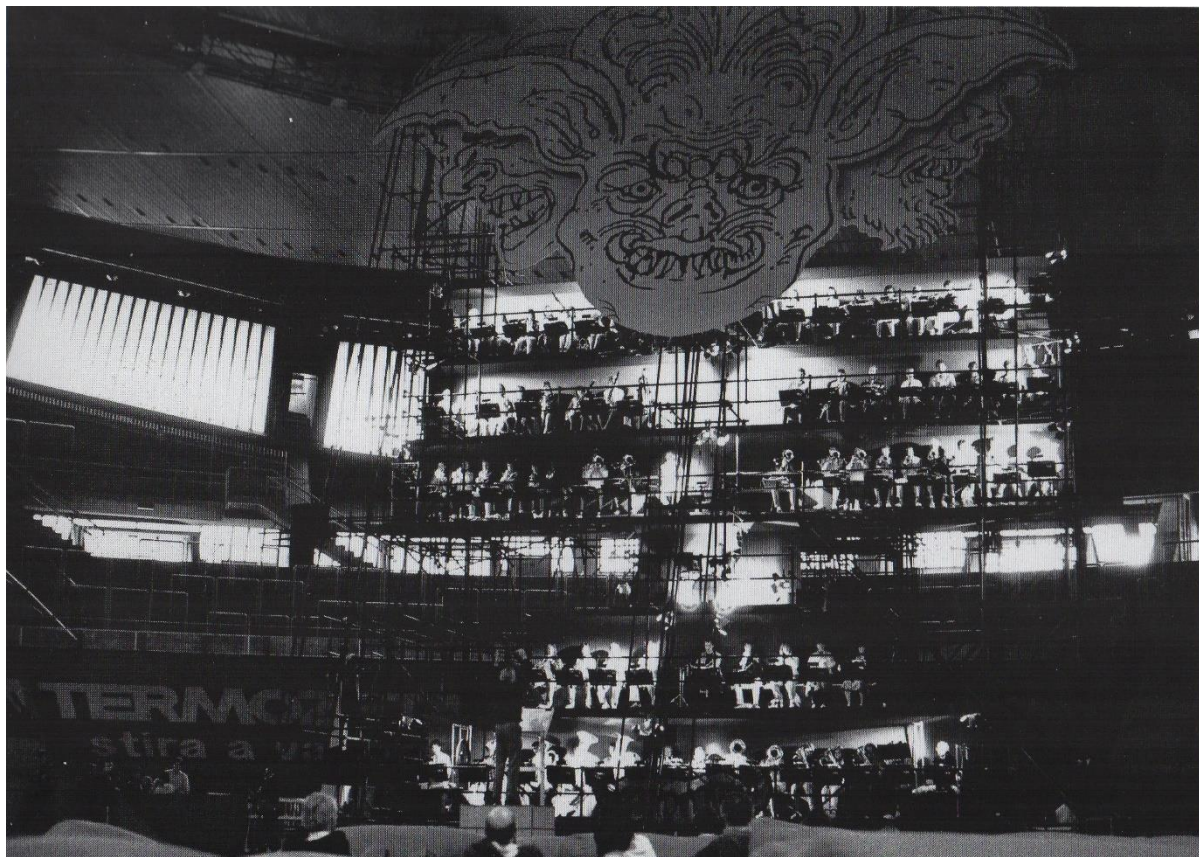


Figure 5.2: The wind orchestra as assembled for LUZIFERs TANZ at the La Scala Milan world premiere of SAMSTAG aus LICHT, staged at the *Palazzo dello Sport*.²⁸¹

The elusive, ungraspable nature of Lucifer is further underscored by how he is presented vocally and bodily throughout most of the scene: in the form of a stilt-dancer (invoking something of the grotesque humour of the circus) who appears to sing through a megaphone. The voice, however, comes from a bass singer off stage, amplified through a microphone and giving the impression of coming from the direction of the stilt-dancer, according to Stockhausen's instructions in the score. Both aurally and visually, then, the audience only ever perceives a projection of Lucifer. The real source of Lucifer's voice remains hidden until near the very end when the actual bass singer emerges from the forehead of the face, leading to the scene's chaotic conclusion of the orchestra going on strike. I will return to this part of the scene shortly.

²⁸⁰ At the time of writing, SAMSTAG aus LICHT has still not been fully staged other than at its La Scala world premiere, although a new production is planned for to be performed in Paris in June 2019.

²⁸¹ Stockhausen, "LUZIFERs TANZ," Photo 22.(no page number)

Despite these veiled appearances throughout most of the scene, Lucifer's presence and influence is palpable everywhere through his formula. The scene is musically built on the segments of the Michael, Eve, and Lucifer formulas that begin in the second half of bar 15 of the Superformula (the Superformula segment associated with this scene) and the opening of the Lucifer nuclear formula, transposed to begin on G sharp, the note on which Lucifer's layer of the Saturday limb of the full Superformula commences. This is the basis of what Stockhausen called the 'form skeleton' of the piece which, as I shall explain shortly, is then deployed in the full form scheme (see Figure 5.3):

Figure 5.3: Stockhausen's 'form skeleton' for LUZIFER's TANZ, with the Michael, Eve and Lucifer layers of second half of bar 15 of the Superformula, and the first notes of the Lucifer nuclear formula transposed to commence on G sharp²⁸²

The four notes that begin this segment comprise the chord that opens the scene (with the G sharp enharmonically notated as A flat), building up gradually over 65 pulsations throughout the whole orchestra. The tempo changes with every few pulsations of the chord, the tempi markings following the basic order of those in the original Superformula, but transposed up to begin at $J = 75.5$ (the tempo for the 15th bar of the Superformula, with which this scene is associated) instead of the original $J = 60$, with the remaining tempi transposed up proportionally (see Figure 5.4). The chord itself (A flat, E flat, A, and F) has a dark harmony that imbues the music with a sense of the sinister but, more importantly from the perspective of how this relates to the human psyche, is the shifting

²⁸² Ibid., Ta XVII.

restlessness of the constantly changing tempi. The pulse of the music, like the Real, is ungraspable, like an arrhythmic heartbeat that is disruptive and destabilising and follows no easily discernible pattern or order. But of course a crucial and significant pattern and order do exist: that of the Superformula, temporally transposed, as if the totality of being that the Superformula captures has had its fundamental pulse taken over by the Luciferian Real (see Figure 5.4):

Stockhausen

Figure 5.4: The opening page of LUZIFER's TANZ, showing the changing tempi over 65 pulsating chords. The tempi follow the same order as the original tempi of the Superformula, now transposed up to begin at $\text{♩} = 75.5$ instead of the original 60^{283}

²⁸³ Ibid., Ta 1.

The Lucifer formula continues to dominate the music, not so much in the sense of it being the formula that is heard most prominently, but more in terms of how it continues to dictate the structure of the piece. Throughout the scene, Stockhausen draws from the total Superformula – transposed, as already suggested by the tempi of the opening chords, to begin according to the pitch and tempo parameters of the 15th bar of the Superformula, but with a number of important changes. First, the order of the layers has been changed so that the Lucifer layer is now uppermost, in the treble, and the Michael layer in the bass. The pitch of the whole Superformula is also transposed up a tone, presumably because the Lucifer layer at bar 15 of the original Superformula begins on E, which is one tone higher than the original first note of the upper layer (originally Michael's, now Lucifer's) of the Superformula. This is typical for how Stockhausen determines the pitches of the form schemes for individual scenes, but here it is rather more subtle than usual, with the transpositions being somewhat more hidden. Typically, in form schemes the transpositions are informed by the direct relationship between the pitches of a particular limb and that of the beginning of the Superformula. Here however, the relationship is gleaned via the shifting of the layers and, from there, to the character who originally located that layer: that is, the transposition is a step removed from its usual process. This is like Lucifer trying to disguise himself as Michael: or at least situating himself in Michael's place and, from that place, determining the pitch transpositions as if he were in fact Michael. It is the Real coming into the domain of the Symbolic, and as such already heralds the possibility of madness.²⁸⁴ In this way, Lucifer's presence is dominating the new Superformula in three ways: pitch (redefined in this unusually covert way), tempi, and the placement of its layers. Then the form skeleton for LUZIFER's TANZ (see Figure 5.3 above) is temporally stretched out across the whole of this newly transposed Superformula (its four layers placed above, below and between the three new Superformula layers), resulting ultimately in the scene's seven-layered form scheme (see Figure 5.5):

²⁸⁴ I noted in Chapter 3 the connections between madness and the Real entering into the domain of the Symbolic. See Sass, "Madness."

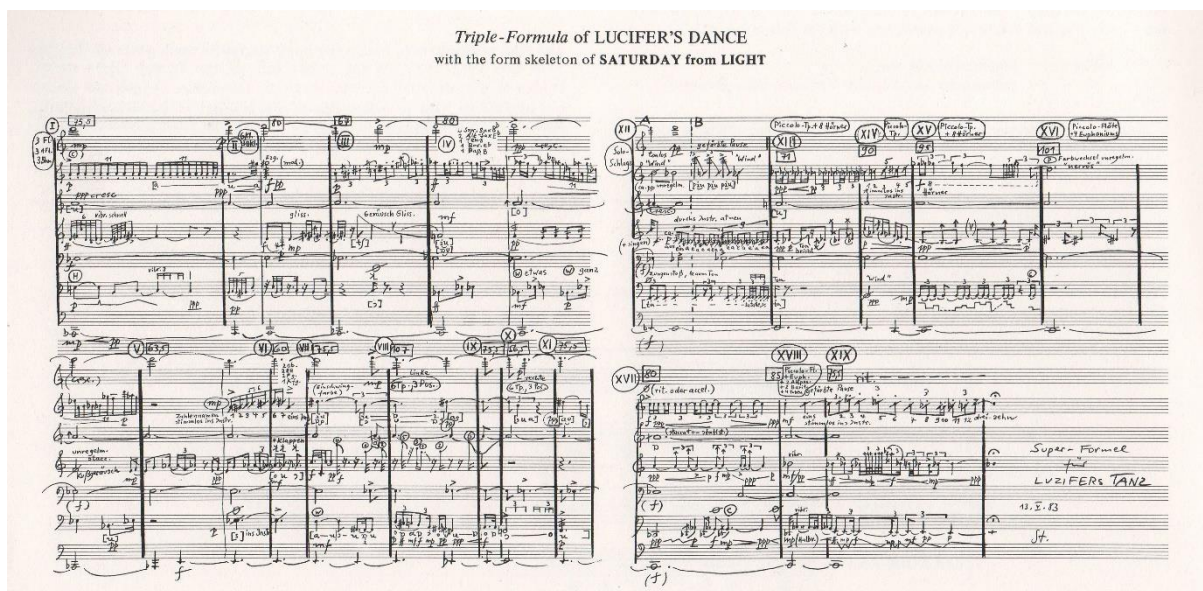


Figure 5.5: The form scheme for LUZIFERs TANZ, with the three layers of the original Superformula, rearranged with Lucifer's formula uppermost (line 2 in the form scheme) and Michael's at the bottom (line 6) and Eve's still in the middle (line 4), and the pitches transposed up a tone and the tempi transposed to begin on $J = 75.5$. The four lines of the form skeleton for LUZIFERs TANZ are stretched out on lines 1, 3, 5 and 7.²⁸⁵

This form scheme is then used as the basis for the material of the scene, including the melodic fragments of the various layers assigned to the various instrumental groupings that constitute the face. But, as is usual for Stockhausen, none of this is done through literal transcription, and the fragments are typically elaborated upon, their placement sometimes changed, and everything is subject to a broader rhythmic system that sees a steady decrease in the pulse of the dances. This decrease progresses from the early fast-paced dances that are played by the higher-pitched instruments of the upper layers in the orchestra's vertical structure, to the slower later dances played by the lower-pitched ones of the lower layers (although often there is so much extra music composed into the dances, that their fundamental pulses, including their slowing down, are not overtly noticeable).²⁸⁶ All of this goes to give a sense of the extent to which Lucifer dominates this scene, even though the formulas of Michael and Eve are still part of the musical fabric. But their presence is on Lucifer's terms, subtly re-pitched according to his layer, and paced according to his limb, of the Superformula.

²⁸⁵ Stockhausen, "LUZIFERs TANZ," Ta XVIII.

²⁸⁶ As usual, Rudolf Frisius provides a very thorough analysis of the musical structure. See Frisius, *Die Werkzyklen*, 218-32.

The music is full of Luciferian chaos and disruption, as the rhythms of the different instrumental groups contradict each other; and it is Lucifer's voice, disembodied through the megaphone of the stilt-dancer, that tells us what each new dance is about. That message is difficult to grasp, as it is stretched out over the entire scene:

*If you, Man, have never learned from LUCIFER how the spirit of contradiction and independence
distorts the expression of the face ...*

... how brow can dance against brow ...

... eye against brow ...

... eye against eye ...

... cheek against eye ...

*... cheek against cheek ...
(and against eyes and brows)*

*... nose against cheek ...
(and against eye and brow)*

... lips against nose ...

... tongue against lip ...

*... and chin against tongue
can dance ...*

... you cannot – in harmony – turn your countenance towards the LIGHT.

*If you have tried out your ten-part face
in all dissonances, grimace rhythms,
it will decay, empty and hollow,
before it resurrects on SUNDAY in the realm of souls
invisible to human eyes.²⁸⁷*

Each description of the parts of the face dancing against each other introduces a dance for that section of the orchestra, hence Stockhausen's initial intention that the orchestra on stage would give the appearance of a distorted, grimacing face that is constantly at odds with itself.

The depiction of contradiction and distortion is not, however, to be found only within the face. The scene itself implies a contradiction: that Lucifer, who despises humanity so much, would seek to teach it the way to the light, as the text of the scene indicates he is to do. This is perhaps where the ambiguities and apparent contradictions, so essential to Lucifer's character as Stockhausen conceived of him, become most apparent. A closer examination of Lucifer's character enables a better understanding not just of this scene, but also of Lucifer and especially Lucifer as the Real.

As noted in Chapter 2, Stockhausen's Lucifer is not the evil Judeo-Christian devil: he is far more complex. Drawn particularly from the theosophy of Helena Blavatsky and the Lucifer Manifesto of *The Urantia Book*, he is the essence of contradiction at its most extreme, not at all unlike the intensity of Lacan's *jouissance*, where unbearable ecstasy and unfathomable trauma are co-located in the domain of the Real.

This inherently contradictory essence of Lucifer reflects a thread that is found elsewhere in the literary and philosophical works with which Stockhausen would undoubtedly have been familiar at

²⁸⁷ Stockhausen, "LUZIFERs TANZ," Ta XXI.

the time, including the Mephistopheles of Goethe's *Faust*, who, while appearing to embody evil is nevertheless the agent for Faust's redemption. Lucifer is perhaps something of this here, too, (or at least seems to be) when he teaches humanity the path to light. More broadly connected to Lucifer are the notions of non-Aristotelian logic promulgated by Gotthard Günther, the German philosopher to whom the composer enthusiastically refers in his discussions with Jonathon Cott in 1971.²⁸⁸ For Günther, the binary true and false of conventional Western logic is insufficient to explain paradoxes, such as that of the Indian logician who describes a Maharajah who, in order to protect his animals, decrees the death penalty for anyone who tries to poach them. When a poacher is condemned, he or she will always be invited to make one statement. If the statement is true, the condemned person will be beheaded, if it is false they will be burned alive. One poacher is caught and, when invited to make the determinative statement, he says 'I will be burned alive'. Thus a paradox arises that cannot be solved through the simple binarity of Aristotelian logic: if the statement is true that he is to be burned alive, then the condemned poacher should be beheaded for telling the truth, rather than burned alive for lying, thus making his statement false. But, if the poacher is not burned alive, and the statement is therefore a lie, it would mean that he would be burned alive for making a false statement, thus making the statement true.²⁸⁹ This is the kind of seemingly irresolvable contradiction in which Lucifer, from whom humans must learn the 'spirit of contradiction' ('Kontrageist' in Stockhausen's libretto), revels. It is also the contradiction that is brought into the human dimension in this scene. Lucifer knows that humans cannot cope with what they think they want to know. This suggests something inherently contradictory and unresolvable in human nature: a longing to find an all-encompassing meaning but an inability to bear the naked encounter with the Real that this requires. We cannot know truth unless we have first faced our own inherent contradictions, Lucifer seems to say, and yet those contradictions flout the very notion of what we understand truth to be. My interpretation of the ending of the scene later in this chapter will demonstrate how LUZIFERs TANZ ultimately shows the human reluctance to face this paradox.

²⁸⁸ Cott and Stockhausen, *Conversations*, 74.

²⁸⁹ Gotthard Günther, "Aristotelian and Non-Aristotelian Logic," Vordenker, http://www.vordenker.de/gunther_web/aristotelian.htm. (accessed 20 January 2019)

It is perhaps this capturing of contradiction, then, which becomes the very reason that Lucifer is able to present his lesson about the passage to light to the humans he despises so much – he knows that they do not want, nor are they able, to hear it. As I have already shown, in Michael, and especially in Michael's formula, Stockhausen presented us with the sense of roundedness, encapsulated most of all in the way in which the Michael formula returns to the D, an octave lower, on which it began. Michael, who is the passage between heaven and earth, the one who brings the music of angels and humans to each other, is like the bridges that Heidegger says we build in our attempt to realise our own dwelling: he is the embodiment of tangible connection and, as such, is able to be grasped and comprehended by humans. His world is one that they can understand because it is, after all, the world of the Symbolic, a world crafted out of the signifiers of humans' connectedness to each other. But the world of Lucifer, and of the Real, is of an entirely different nature. Replete with irresolvable, incomprehensible contradiction, it makes no sense to humans for whom it represents an impassable obstacle, not just in the sense of a wall instead of a bridge, but in the absence even of the possibility of a bridge at all. Lacan pointed to this aspect of the Real when he described it as 'radically distinguished from the symbolic and the imaginary – the real is the impossible. Not in the name of a simple obstacle, we hit our heads up against, but in the name of the logical obstacle of what, in the symbolic, declares itself to be impossible.'²⁹⁰ This is the impossible logic of Gotthard Günther, and that impossibility shows itself twice throughout the scene: first when Michael appears with his piccolo trumpet to play the 'protest piece', OBERLIPPENTANZ ('UPPER-LIP DANCE') and second, at the very end of the piece, when the whole scene breaks up in the chaos of an orchestra strike.

5.2 Confronting the Real: OBERLIPPENTANZ and the Orchestra Strike

Around the middle of the piece, an offstage piccolo trumpet gradually, more persistently, interrupts the music and eventually Michael enters and plays an extended solo.²⁹¹ This is the

²⁹⁰ Lacan, *The other side of psychoanalysis*, 123.

²⁹¹ I examine the music of this solo, in which portions of the Lucifer formula play a strikingly prominent role, in more detail later in this chapter.

OBERLIPPENTANZ, which Lucifer himself heralds as a protest ('Protest! Haha-ha!' the bass sings at Michael's arrival). The trumpeter and stilt-dancer battle each other, until the stilt-dancer kicks Michael to the floor and eventually pushes and shoves him away altogether. It is a very different battle from the those that had been fought between Michael and Lucifer in DONNERSTAG, where in both their encounter in the second Act and the dragon fight in the third Act, it was Lucifer who was defeated. But this is now Lucifer's territory. In this scene the music, as demonstrated in the analysis of form scheme above, is shaped by the Lucifer formula, and so here the encounter has the opposite outcome.

In terms of the human psyche, the outcomes of these various confrontations between the Symbolic and the Real suggest neither has an incontestable claim to dominance. It does however suggest that the two of them may often be in conflict, and that those conflicts may resolve differently from time to time. Insofar as one stands for that part of ourselves that orders our own world and connects it with that of others through systems of linguistic and social signifiers, while the other stands for that which resists any such signification, it is hardly surprising that they are constantly in conflict with one another, a point that is driven home by the fact that Tuesday, the day jointly devoted to Michael and Lucifer, is the day of war. This reinforces an essential conflict between what each represents. But even in DIENSTAG the dominance of the one over the other is ambiguous and shifting, where Michael is the victor in their battle of wits over time played out in that opera's first Act, and Lucifer the apparent victor in the war that is played out in the second. When Michael and Lucifer locked horns in DONNERSTAG, first in their confrontation in Act Two and then in the re-enactment of that confrontation in the DRACHENKAMPF (DRAGON FIGHT) of Act Three, Michael was the victor. Lucifer's victory here over Michael, as the stilt-dancer kicks the piccolo trumpeter to the floor, however, shows that another outcome is possible. But the victory is inevitable from another perspective too. Being Lucifer's territory, and therefore the domain of the Real, it is, as suggested by Lacan's reference to the impossibility of the logical obstacle that the Real poses for the Symbolic, unavoidable that the Real will dominate the Symbolic here. It is an obstacle that the Symbolic cannot overcome other than by itself becoming a signifier for the Real. This is what is manifested in psychosis, in the sense of language becoming the descriptor of that

which cannot be described. This impossibility led Louis Sass not only to describe psychosis as that which 'involves a direct and often traumatic confrontation with [...] the Real' but then further to describe James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, because of its use of language in ways that 'elude normal forms of logic and linguistic description', as an example of something 'which in a strict Lacanian sense could be described as "psychotic"'.²⁹² In these terms, if Michael was to truly enter Lucifer's territory, to become another instrument in the giant face of the wind band, and to himself become part of the voice of Lucifer, then another instance of what Sass categorises as psychosis would surely be the result. If it is Michael's aim to actually defeat Lucifer here, he is clearly too small to do it. The scene presents us with a human personality dominated by the Real. This might be a personality overtaken by traumas it cannot articulate, dealing with ecstatic drives it cannot bear to name, or simply trying but unable to give expression to its inexpressible core. Neither the signifiers of language nor the codes of society that are represented by Lacan's Big Other are in such circumstances ever enough to resolve the unease of these experiences. The dominance of the Real is further reinforced when towards the end of the scene the stilt-dancer retreats off-stage and instead Lucifer appears as the bass singer, in person, 'from the forehead of the giant face in a cloud' to sing the last lines of his narrative, 'you cannot in harmony turn your countenance towards the light ...'.²⁹³ It is now a more overt encounter with the Real, which has been slowly but irrevocably building throughout the piece.

The music of OBERLIPPENTANZ reinforces much of the nature of this conflict with the signifiers of the Symbolic attempting to take on a personality dominated by the Real. There, the music of Michael's piccolo trumpet is largely built from Lucifer's formula, which Joseph Drew describes as Michael parodying Lucifer:

Michael not only parodies Lucifer's protests, he parodies his formula as well. Most of Michael's *Oberlippentanz* [...] consists of quotations and transformations of Lucifer's formula. [...] Michael pieces the formula together through the additive process, one note at

²⁹² Sass, "Madness," 322

²⁹³ Stockhausen, "LUZIFERs TANZ," Ta XX.

a time. Eventually, *Oberlippentanz* arrives at a cadenza, where the entire orchestra stops to listen to him play.

Michael gets on his knees, as Lucifer's formula makes him languish. [...] Michael tries to shake himself out of his stupor by playing his heroic fourths. He succumbs nevertheless and ends up lying on his back as he plays the descending motive from his formula's Thursday limb.²⁹⁴ He descends into total silence, a virtual death like Lucifer's.

Michael resurrects himself by generating a perfect fourth, and then an octave, his archetypal interval. He arises, repeating the octave. He expands it into a major triad, the most anti-Luciferian sonority he can think of.²⁹⁵

I am less inclined to describe Michael's appearance here as a parody of Lucifer, but rather as a genuine attempt of the Symbolic to take on the Real – take on, in the sense of conquer it, by bringing it into the domain of signifiers. This is why the trumpet attempts to learn the formula, note by note as Drew points out, just as Michael as a human child had done with his own formula in *DONNERSTAG*.²⁹⁶ As the trumpet attempts to signify the unsignifiable Real, however, it is to be expected that Lucifer, the Real, see this as the protest that it is: a protest against the Real's resistance to signification. But it is an inconsequential protest because the enormity of the Real (immeasurable in any tangible sense, driven home here by the boundlessness of Lucifer's presence in the scene, including the huge disembodied face and his voice projected through a megaphone) turns the signifiers into the tiny sounds of a piccolo trumpet. Indeed, Michael's attempts to learn the Lucifer formula turn the piccolo trumpet hoarse, as the cadenza begins with a long passage of 'rushing noise', as Stockhausen describes notes that are pitched on the instrument but with sounds 'like wind', as opposed to more traditional playing techniques. The notes are drawn from the rising semitone gesture of 'gefärbte Pause' (coloured silence) in bar 14 from the Saturday

²⁹⁴ That is, bar 9 of the Superformula.

²⁹⁵ Drew, "Michael from Licht," 210.

²⁹⁶ This develops slowly at the beginning of *DONNERSTAG*'s opening scene, *KINDHEIT*, where Michael slowly inserts notes of his own formula into the musical dialogue he is having with his mother.

limb of the Lucifer formula, in which Lucifer counts to five. Michael, however, does not count here, nor does he produce the usual formed sounds from his trumpet.²⁹⁷ He is neither Lucifer's voice, nor his own. Not only can he not signify the Real, but in his attempts to do so he can no longer fully be the Symbolic either. The Symbolic will always lose what it is meant to be if it attempts to signify the Real, because the psychosis into which it then plunges personality becomes detached from the social engagement that the Symbolic is ultimately meant to enable.

The transition from Lucifer's formula to Michael's happens as Drew describes and there is undoubtedly a sense of defeat and even sorrow as he slowly and tentatively plays the second bar of the Thursday limb of the Michael formula, lying on his back. The generation of a Perfect 4th, then of an octave, expanded then to a major triad, to which Drew refers is in the form of a sequence of rapid 8th and 16th notes which suggests to me not so much an attempt to develop 'the most anti-Luciferian sonority he can think of' but rather to reinvigorate himself with the core of the Eve formula, which, with its opening major and minor 3rds. That is, it is not just that this is an anti-Luciferian sonority, but one that has its roots in Eve and, therefore, the Imaginary. Michael, unable to confront Lucifer as he had intended, momentarily retreats to maternal comfort for reassurance. Through the Lacanian prism, the Symbolic, unable to overcome the resistance of the Real, must briefly regroup in the realm that it can signify: the Imaginary. This is what gives both the Symbolic and Michael's piccolo trumpet the energy to move forward again. Even so, Michael, now playing mostly intervals and fragments of the Michael formula, constantly interspersed with the major and minor 3rds of Eve, is nevertheless still kicked offstage by Lucifer's stilt dancer. He may have become somewhat reinvigorated by this retreat of the Symbolic into the Imaginary, but not enough to enable the encounter with the dominant Real that he originally sought. The scene becomes like a representation of the demoralisation that we might feel when we are confronted with our own inability to give expression, in the domain of language systems, the Saussurean *langue*, to the things that are buried most deeply within us. We may be able to regenerate ourselves from this demoralisation by reconnecting the signifying Symbolic to the signified

²⁹⁷ Stockhausen, "LUZIFERs TANZ," Ta 83-84.

Imaginary, redefining ourselves, as it were, but the Real's resistance of both remains large and potent. Our innermost demons that is, persist in resisting, indeed actively rejecting, both the social domain of language and the personal domain of identity.

The piccolo trumpet finally leaves the scene playing a combination of both the Michael and Lucifer formulas, as Rudolf Frisius has demonstrated (Figure 5.6), suggesting perhaps that Michael is attempting to somehow hold onto his hopes of capturing something of Lucifer in his own music (or maybe it is just a reflection that Lucifer will always be there, embedded but hidden, just as Lucifer's missing D has always been part of Michael's formula). But the Symbolic's confrontation is ineffective and Michael continues to be actively rejected, and is eventually kicked off-stage by the more powerful Lucifer.

SAMSTAG aus LICHT, 3. Szene LUZIFERs TANZ:
Piccolo-Trompeten-Solo, Kadenz:
Melodiebildung aus zwei ineinander verschachtelten Tonreihen
(MICHAEL, LUZIFER)

Figure 5.6: Rudolf Frisius demonstrates the combining of the Michael and Lucifer formulas in the final sections of OBERLIPPENTANZ.²⁹⁸

This leads to the second impossible obstacle of the Real in the form of another protest, which appears when the musicians playing in the wind orchestra break up in the disarray of the 'strike scene' with which LUZIFERs TANZ ends. The 'strike scene' is another of Stockhausen's jokes. Towards the end of the piece, the orchestra suddenly stops playing and protests that they have gone overtime, for which they are not being paid. It is described, rather than precisely scripted, in the score. A chaotic hubbub ensues, with members of the orchestra and conductor shouting at

²⁹⁸ Frisius, *Die Werkzyklen*, 210.

each other, and ultimately a representative of the theatre administration enters, but is unable to settle the dispute. Gradually the musicians leave and the scene 'ends in a palaver', as Stockhausen's preface indicates.²⁹⁹

The orchestra strike ends in chaos. All yell in confusion. Gradually the musicians leave at the rear, slamming the doors. At each place where a musician has been seated, a purulent red pore remains in the rear wall of the giant face.

As the only remaining musicians, a flute plays a few extremely high single pitches, and a tuba plays a few extremely low pitches in confusion, and then they also disappear. The conductor takes his score and runs out.³⁰⁰

The high notes of the flute and the low notes of the tuba are not just reminiscent of the contradictory spirit that has permeated the scene (contradiction in the sense of confluence of opposites), but also of Lucifer himself. He is still disguised in the anima of the flute, and in the tuba which so often throughout LICHT, and certainly throughout this scene, partners Lucifer's own instrument, the trombone, in the orchestra. The tuba even seems to stand in for Lucifer at times as in the fight with the trumpet in Act Two of DONNERSTAG. But the musicians' protest, strike, and exit from the stage altogether, is not, as some might be tempted to read it, an indicator of Lucifer's failure but rather, I would suggest, of his victory. I see it not so much that the shambles with which the piece ends is a representation of Lucifer's on shambolic endeavours, as Joseph Drew suggests, but rather as a sign that Lucifer has done exactly what he intended to do: he has shown humans that the passage to light is one that they can neither understand nor are prepared to take.³⁰¹ The whole scene has been the embodiment of contradiction and distortion and humans

²⁹⁹ While I have been unable to find any formal references to confirm this, I have been told by people who attended the world premiere, or who knew people who did, that there were some in the audience who actually did believe at the time that the orchestra had gone on strike, until, as the scene progresses a little, the theatre's administrator appears who was, in the premiere performance, played by Piero Mazzarella, a well-known Italian actor of the time.

³⁰⁰ Stockhausen, "LUZIFERs TANZ," Ta XX.

³⁰¹ Drew, "Michael from Licht," 215.

cannot deal with it. They protest and ultimately walk out, leaving only the barest skeletal reminder of Lucifer in the flute and tuba that remain at the end.

LUZIFERs TANZ is, then, a scene in which Lucifer's presence, sated with contradiction, is constantly present, potent, while still disguised. It represents the Real as the Real might be perceived by the conscious human mind, but it does so, closely and nakedly enough, that it becomes unbearable in its potency and persistence. It is the Real on the verge of taking over through its sheer ferocity; the Real, the confrontation with which, Sass described as 'a kind of unknowable and unattainable beyond that refuses to leave us alone' and that 'is concerned with the *phenomenon* of the *noumenon* – not with the in-itself *in itself*, but with the in-itself in-itself *for us*'.³⁰² This notion of the Real as that which 'refuses to leave us alone' is certainly an element of Lucifer, too, seen in his continual reappearances, after seeming defeat or death, to which I have already referred.

In describing this 'in-itself in-itself *for us*', Sass points to another aspect of the Real: that which cannot help but connect with the human subject. It is part of the human experience of the world, albeit one that comes to us filtered, as it were, through the signifiers of the Symbolic and the images of the Imaginary. This is similar to what Marcel Proust seems to suggest towards the beginning of *À la recherche du temps perdu*, where he describes the role of fiction through the voice of his narrator. Proust coincidentally draws on Lacan's own descriptor for the unreachable, unknowable, essence of being, which comes to us only through the veil of our own perceptions and emotions, captured in the language of the novelist:

... none of the feelings which the joys or misfortunes of a "real" person arouse in us can be awakened except through a mental picture of those joys or misfortunes; and the ingenuity of the first novelist lay in his understanding that, as the image was the one essential element in the complicated structure of our emotions, so that simplification of it which consisted in the suppression, pure and simple, of "real" people would be a decided

³⁰² Sass, "Crisis of the Subject," 335.(author's emphasis)

improvement. A "real" person, profoundly as we may sympathise with him, is in a great measure perceptible only through our senses, that is to say, remains opaque, presents a dead weight which our sensibilities have not the strength to lift.³⁰³

This passage might seem to accord more with the phenomenologist's view of the world, and especially that of Merleau-Ponty, presenting as it does the notion that our knowledge of the world is only ever through our own sensory perceptions of it. However, it gives each of Lacan's three registers a place in that process of perception: the images of the Imaginary, described through the words of the Symbolic, creating its filtered perception of the imperceptible Real. With this metaphor of the novel in mind, then, it becomes clearer why Michael and his piccolo trumpet must appear so small in *LUZIFERs TANZ*: he is, from the perspective of Lucifer-the-Real, a puny and impotent representation of the enormity of what Lucifer really is. To be a match for Lucifer, Michael's trumpet would need to blast out not the rounded balance of the Michael formula, but the trumpet equivalent of the psychosis of *Finnegans Wake*. Maybe he would have to take up the trombone. Michael could never do this, because he would then cease to be who he is, just as the Symbolic can never truly symbolise the Real. In doing so, it ceases to be the socially-enabling Symbolic and instead becomes the socially-alienating signifier of psychosis.

5.3 The growth of the psyche's relationship with the Real: from *LUZIFERs TANZ* to *LUZIFERs ABSCHIED*

The third scene of *SAMSTAG* is the sixth Act or Scene that Stockhausen has composed for Lucifer.³⁰⁴ His development as a character, however, has not seemed at all like the ways in which the character of Michael developed in the three Acts of his opera *DONNERSTAG*, or in which that of Eve will develop in the three Acts of her opera *MONTAG*. In each of those operas the characters follow a trajectory from uncertain, naïve, beginnings (Michael through his childhood

³⁰³ Marcel Proust, *Swann's Way*, trans. C K Scott Moncrieff and Terrence Kilmartin, 3 vols., vol. 1, Remembrance of Things Past (Middlesex, UK: Penguin Books, 1954/1981), 91.

³⁰⁴ There does not appear to be any particular pattern to Stockhausen's decisions to divide his operas into 'Acts' (as is the case for *MONTAG*, *DIENSTAG*, *DONNERSTAG* and *FREITAG*), or 'Scenes' (*MITTWOCH*, *SAMSTAG* and *SONNTAG*).

discoveries of family, love, and music; and Eve through refining her capacity to produce a more perfect progeny) into deeper, more exclusive absorptions in themselves. In SAMSTAG there is a narrative of sorts to Lucifer's passage through the opera, but it is a story that is no more than skeletal in nature. At the end of the first scene LUZIFERs TRAUM ('LUCIFER'S DREAM'), after Lucifer falls asleep in a chair and the dies what Stockhausen describes in the score as an 'apparent death',³⁰⁵ the pianist slams shut the lid of the piano, which then appears in the following scene, KATHINKAs GESANG als LUZIFERs REQUIEM, upturned into a vertical position, representing the grave of the 'apparently dead' Lucifer. Stockhausen describes the transition from that scene into LUZIFERs TANZ: 'four dark figures put the flag over the tomb. And then, all of a sudden from below there is this pushing, and pushing and pushing, and finally the flag rips open and Lucifer comes as a stilt-dancer out of the dark'.³⁰⁶ There is a hint of a story here: the apparent death, the requiem, the rising from the grave – but it does not seem to reflect the development of character for Lucifer that was depicted for Michael and Eve. Lucifer does not appear to change, just as he didn't appear to change in his various appearances throughout DONNERSTAG – as Michael's soldier father in Act One, and as his antagonist in Acts Two and Three (indeed the dragon fight between Lucifer and Michael in Act Three is essentially just a re-enactment of the fight between the trumpet and trombones and tuba in Act Two).

This eschewing of growth and development in Lucifer provides a helpful model for thinking about the intransigence of the Real within the human psyche. It suggests that this ineffable, untouchable core of human personality is not something that grows in the ways in which our images of identity do within the Imaginary, or that it learns in the ways in which we do as we engage with the outside world through the Symbolic. Rather, being ineffable and untouchable, it resists these sorts of dynamics. It may become the repository of new traumas, just as Lucifer in a sense expands musically from the piano of the first scene, through the six percussionists and flute of the second, to the large wind orchestra of the third, but he is still the same character (insofar as he has a character at all) throughout. What instead becomes open to change are the reactions others have

³⁰⁵ Stockhausen, "LUZIFERs TRAUM," VII.

³⁰⁶ Stockhausen and Kohl, "Stockhausen on Opera," 26.

to it. That capacity for change is reflected all throughout SAMSTAG, as the audience witnesses the different relationships between the other characters on stage and Lucifer: first in the pianist in Scene One who accompanies Lucifer's dream; then in Kathinka the cat-flautist in Scene Two who meditates on him, lying apparently dormant in the grave; and then in the third scene in the human musicians who break up in chaos when confronted too closely with him.

That confrontation is heralded by the flag ripping open at the beginning of the scene. This is what Filip Kovacevic describes when he discusses the human attempt to confront the Real, something which he says we sometimes attempt to do in dreams, but it is something at which we always fail because, even in dreams, we awaken 'before the veil is rent, the veil that hides the realm of the absolute master, the realm of the Real from which we came and to which we will return.'³⁰⁷

LUZIFERs TANZ, however, shows what happens when the veil is indeed rent and the Real is confronted: it ends in the chaos and immobilisation of the orchestra strike. Thus, SAMSTAG is not a depiction of the development of Lucifer, but rather of the progress of others' attempts to deal with him, and therefore of the human attempt to confront the Real. The immediacy of that large face, grimacing into the audience as it does, and of Lucifer's direct address via the megaphone, bring the audience very much into that Luciferian confrontation.

The ABSCHIED for SAMSTAG, like those for DONNERSTAG and MONTAG, crystallises the consequences of the opera's themes and development. Given that this opera ultimately confronts the audience in this way in LUZIFERs TANZ it is rather apt that the following scene, the ABSCHIED, requires the audience to move to an entirely different venue: the ABSCHIED takes place in a church located near the theatre in which the rest of the opera has been performed. The scene involves elaborate staging, with 39 monks (26 basses, divided into two groups, and 13 tenors) surrounding the audience, and then moving in the latter part of the scene outside the church where they enact a ceremony that involves each of them smashing a coconut and making a

³⁰⁷ Filip Kovacevic, "A Lacanian Approach to Dream Interpretation," *Dreaming* 23, no. 1 (2013): 85.

wish.³⁰⁸ Throughout the scene, seven trombones blast out thirteen dense chords from the church's bell tower (or, as the score suggests, somewhere else high above the audience), built on the notes of the Lucifer nuclear formula.³⁰⁹ The scene finishes with the release of a caged wild black bird as the church bells are rung.

It is a scene that, having taken its audience away from the theatre and to a new venue, is perplexing, ambiguous, and paradoxical. It engulfs the audience in the chaos and contradiction that had overwhelmed the musicians of LUZIFERs TANZ. Even though it is set in a church, and its text quotes from St Francis of Assisi's *Hymn to the Virtues* (one of the rare times in LICHT where Stockhausen uses a text written by someone other than himself) there is an undeniable sense of paganism, even demonism, throughout the piece. It is a sense that derives not just from the 13 Luciferian chords sounding from the heights rather than from the hellish depths. Nor is it derived just from the appearance, midway through the scene, of a *Teufelbläser* (a 'diabolical wind-player'), as Stockhausen refers to him in the score, who runs and jumps across the space, dressed in black and with red eyes, repeatedly playing Lucifer's Major 7th. It derives also, and most potently, from the way in which Stockhausen works with the musical basis of the work in the Superformula. This is despite, or maybe even because of, the extreme sparseness of the segment of the Superformula that corresponds to this scene of SAMSTAG, bar 16, in which there is a whole-bar rest in the Michael layer, swaying glissandi around a single D flat in the Eve layer, and single dotted half-note C in the Lucifer layer (figure 5.7):

³⁰⁸ The coconut ritual is adapted from one that Stockhausen saw in Kataragama in 1970, then part of Ceylon. It is a ritual in which, according to Stockhausen, Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims all participated, although it had different significance for each of them (Cott and Stockhausen, *Conversations*, 161.).

³⁰⁹ Each chord plays one of its notes louder than the others, and these are the notes that follow the order of the Lucifer nuclear formula, but with the penultimate C repeated three times at the end instead of moving onto the final B flat. Stockhausen describes this in the score's preface, where he says that the Lucifer melody 'like the last segment of the *formula* of SATURDAY from LIGHT gets stuck on C' (Stockhausen, "LUZIFERs ABSCHIED," A X.).



Figure 5.7: Bar 16 of the Superformula: the segment corresponding to LUZIFERs ABSCHIED

This dotted half note in the bass line is stretched out temporally throughout much of the scene, translating into music on the organ, sometimes reinforced or interrupted with other notes and chordal clusters, that is for the most part drone-like, giving a sense of dark solemnity. The glissandi around the D flat, first heard only as the descending glissando, repeated many times, sung slowly by the tenors at the beginning, sounds haunted and chilling in the cavernous acoustic of the church. The slow, ostinato low Cs in the second basses sound almost like throat-singing on the published recording, performed by the choir that sang the part at the world premiere in Milan.³¹⁰ From this eerie chant-like opening, the scene moves very slowly. Towards the middle, this is broken by two extended moments of wild chaos as the two groups of basses run first all counter clockwise, and then in opposite directions to one another, around the walls. They shout, sing, and jump as they proclaim the lines from St Francis's hymn that refer to confounding Satan and his temptations.

The piece was commissioned by the Associazione Sagra Musicale Umbra to celebrate the 800th Anniversary of St Francis and there is no indication that Stockhausen intended this whole scene to be anything but one that praised the God of Roman Catholicism. The fact that the music and strange rituals that are played out throughout it (running monks, the smashing coconuts, the caged bird) imbues the scene with a greater and darker mystery is surely most reasonably explained by

³¹⁰ The recording is released, as part of the 4 CD complete opera, by the Stockhausen-Verlag, Kürten, Germany, as volume 34 of the Stockhausen Complete Edition.

the artistic intuition that drove Stockhausen to create even this piece, sacred though its setting and commission might be, as one that would be loyal to the character who is at its core: Lucifer.

It is worth once again reinforcing here that for Stockhausen, this Lucifer is not the one-dimensional devil of Christianity, but rather the Lucifer of Blavatsky's theosophy who, as I noted in chapter 2, is the Holy Spirit and Satan at once. It is this intense confluence of opposites that is, of course, essential not only to Lucifer, and not only to the non-Aristotelian logic that interested Stockhausen so deeply, but also to the Real. This is why this scene must leave such a disordered, abstruse, but deeply indelible mark on its audience: it thrusts upon the audience the contradictions of Lucifer and the ineffable excesses of both trauma and ecstasy that is the *jouissance* of the Real.

There has been, of course, something of an ambiguity left also in the Farewells that end both DONNERSTAG and MONTAG, but the Farewell for Lucifer and SAMSTAG seems somehow more disturbing and more profound, perhaps because the music itself is so haunted and eerie, but perhaps also because it is the longest and most dramatically immersive Farewell of the three. Indeed, it will retain this distinction amongst all of the LICHT Farewells. This Farewell and that of DIENSTAG (the day of war between Michael and Lucifer, and one where, in the Farewell, Lucifer is the more dominant) are the only two that play out with the audience still sitting in their seats.³¹¹ It is as if the presence of Lucifer, and therefore of the Real, holds its subjects captive, and thus the ambiguity that that presence encapsulates is unsettling. Those who experience it are forced to confront its contradictions – something which, as LUZIFERs TANZ showed with its orchestra strike, they prefer not to do.

The final event of the ABSCHIED is the release of the caged bird. It seems to add a hint of optimism to the contradictions and difficulties that characterised the opera and the ever-more-intense confrontations with Lucifer. In a letter to Michele Corradi at the *Associazione Sagra*

³¹¹ Notwithstanding, of course, that the audience is required to physically move to the venue for LUZIFERs ABSCHIED

Musicale Umbra in Perugia, Italy, who initially commissioned LUZIFERs ABSCHIED, Stockhausen makes the following comment about arrangements for the cage and the bird:

We need a fairly large bird cage with a live wild bird (preferably black). It should NOT be a tamed bird, but a rather noisy one. At the end the monks let him free outside the church, and we should be sure that the bird flies away.³¹²

It can be assumed, then, that the bird will be squawking throughout much of the scene, resonating alongside all the others, and no doubt distracting somewhat from the already strange mix of sounds and moods. When that noisy large black bird is set free at the end of the opera, however, Stockhausen was adamant that it had to fly away. This seems like a message of hope and is perhaps Stockhausen's strongest indicator of the theme of resurrection that he had attached, alongside death, to the opera. It gives a sense of recovery, of revival. The confrontation with the Real may have been overwhelming and replete with contradictions and craziness and may have led ultimately to confusion and chaos in a muddle of trauma and humour, but watching that rowdy, wild bird fly into the sky outside the church seems to assure the audience that they are not trapped after all.

5.4 The impact of the Real dominating the Imaginary: Lucifer in FREITAG

Lucifer in SAMSTAG, like Michael in DONNERSTAG and Eve in MONTAG, shows that the registers of the human psyche can never really operate in total isolation from one another. It is in the operas other than SAMSTAG, however, that the Real's relationships with the other registers may be explored most fully. Some of these have already been discussed in earlier chapters – particularly that of the Real and its relationship with the Symbolic, which is depicted throughout DIENSTAG and which I discussed in Chapter 3. Some of the relationship of the Real to the Imaginary is depicted in the scattered appearances of Lucifer, both on stage and in his formula, in

³¹² Karlheinz Stockhausen, "LUZIFERs ABSCHIED Auftragskorrespondenz," (Kürten, Germany: Stockhausen Archives, 1982).

MONTAG, which I discussed in Chapter 4. A much more intense study of the impact of the Real on the Imaginary can be found, however, in FREITAG, the opera devoted to Lucifer and Eve and, just as importantly, to the absence of Michael. The opera's story is devoted particularly, as Stockhausen characterises it, to Lucifer's temptation of Eve. The two Acts of FREITAG are titled FREITAG-VERSUCHUNG ('FRIDAY TEMPTATION').³¹³

In a sense, the temptation had happened (or will happen, depending on the order in which the operas are performed) the other way around in SAMSTAG in its first scene, LUZIFERs TRAUM, although there it is not so much a temptation of Lucifer by Eve as a seemingly fatal enchantment. This is in the form of what Stockhausen calls a 'simple melody'.³¹⁴ It is essentially built from the Eve formula played on the piano towards the end of the scene, enchanting Lucifer and leading to the 'apparent death' that I have already noted. The notion that the subjective images of the Imaginary can appear so irresistible that the ineffable psychic core of the Real can seem to be totally quashed does not appear to be an issue to which Lacan turned, but it is an insightful perspective on the relationship of these two registers nonetheless. Indeed, the lure of the simple coherence of the Imaginary might at first seem enough to dispose of the ungraspable chaos of the Real but, as both SAMSTAG and MONTAG ultimately showed, the Real always survives. FREITAG now explores the consequences of the relationship when the balance of power tilts the other way.

FREITAG is the opera in which the Real comes through most assertively and potently into the domain of the Imaginary, rather like Slavoj Žižek's description of the black emptiness in the middle of René Magritte's painting, *La l'unette d'approche* (see Figure 5.8): 'the frame of the windowpane is the fantasy frame that constitutes reality, whereas through the crack we get an insight into the "impossible" Real'.³¹⁵ That fantasy frame of reality is, of course, the domain of the Imaginary, the

³¹³ The complete opera FREITAG aus LICHT comprises the two staged Acts that together form FREITAG-VERSUCHUNG, with the first and second halves of the electronic layer of music from FREITAG-VERSUCHUNG projected in the auditorium before and after the performance as FREITAGS-GRUSS and FREITAGS-ABSCHIED respectively.

³¹⁴ Stockhausen, "LUZIFERs TRAUM," VII.

³¹⁵ Žižek, *Interrogating the Real*, 135.

bringing together of images into something that has for us a graspable identity – represented by the cloud-dappled blue sky of the painting:



Figure 5.8: *La lunette d'approche* (1963) by René Magritte, with its black emptiness on the other side of the images of sky and clouds on the window pane. Žižek equates this blackness with the Lacanian Real.

The impact of the Real, through Lucifer's temptation of Eve, is more aggressive in FREITAG than a mere crack in the image. In Magritte's painting that crack is seen because the window pane has been opened to it, as if the Imaginary has actively made way for this insight into the Real. In FREITAG, Lucifer's presence is more assertive and alters the very nature of Eve, by transforming her music. AS the story of the opera unfolds, Eve indeed consents to Lucifer's advances, but his presence in her music is there long before that moment, and in this sense his intrusion into her has perhaps in some senses already happened even before she is aware of it. This presence manifests in the form of the 'Friday Nucleus formula': its notes are derived from a combination of those of both Eve and Lucifer. As Rudolf Frisius demonstrates, the two-layered Friday Nucleus formula in the upper layer is formed by alternating the notes of the inversions Eve and Lucifer nuclear formulas and, in the lower layer, alternating the notes of the original Eve and Lucifer

nuclear formulas. Figure 5.8 shows Frisius's illustration of this process in the first few bars of the formula:³¹⁶

1. Glied (MONTAGs- Glied)	2. Glied (DIENSTAGs- Glied)	3. Glied (MITTWOCHs- Glied)
Hohe Lage (Flöte)		
Umkehrungen: EVA-Formel		Töne $\diamond I - \diamond VI$
LUZIFER-Formel		Töne $\square I - \square IV$
<p><i>ppp</i></p> <p>$\diamond I \quad \diamond II$</p> <p>$\square I$</p> <p><i>mf</i></p>	<p><i>p</i></p> <p>$\diamond III$</p> <p>$\square II \quad \square III \quad \square IV$</p> <p><i>ppp</i></p>	<p><i>mp</i></p> <p>$\diamond IV \quad \diamond V \quad \diamond VI$</p>
Tiefe Lage (Bassklarinette)		
Grundreihen: EVA-Formel		Töne $\diamond 1 - \diamond 6$
LUZIFER-Formel		Töne $\square 1 - \square 4$
<p><i>ff</i></p> <p>$\diamond 1 \quad \diamond 2$</p> <p>$\square 1$</p> <p><i>p</i></p>	<p><i>mf</i></p> <p>$\diamond 3$</p> <p>$\square 2 \quad \square 3 \quad \square 4$</p> <p><i>ff</i></p>	<p><i>mp</i></p> <p>$\diamond 4 \quad \diamond 5 \quad \diamond 6$</p>

Figure 5.8: Rudolf Frisius's illustration of the Friday nucleus formula, showing the alternating nuclear Eve and Lucifer notes, in inversion, in the upper part for flute, and their original forms alternating in the lower part for basset horn.

It is heard throughout the opera in the music of the instrumentalists and singers on stage and most prominently and elaborately by the instrumental duet Elu the basset horn player (playing the lower layer), and Lufa the flautist (playing the upper layer). These are described in the score's preface as Eve's companions, but their music aligns them just as closely with Lucifer. Although they are Eve's companions, Lucifer has infiltrated and changed them through the presence of his nuclear formula that is so intricately entwined within their music. This is hardly surprising for the flute, given the connections with Lucifer that have been well established in SAMSTAG, and here the flute also continues its role as mirroring the basset horn, like its role echoing it in MONTAG. But what is

³¹⁶ Frisius, *Die Werkzyklen*, 372.

perhaps more surprising is that the Lucifer formula is now in the basset horn part, the instrument that, as Michael's anima, had not until now been so closely entwined with Lucifer.³¹⁷ The Friday Nucleus formula then represents again, rather like it did in LUZIFERs TANZ, the Real dominating throughout the totality of the Borromean Knot of Lacan's registers: it dominates the Imaginary, through its place in the music of Eve's primary instrument (the basset horn), and by extension, it dominates the Symbolic through the basset horn's role as an expression of Michael's anima. The Luciferian Real has now entered into the music of the basset horn just as it had already entered into that of the flute in SAMSTAG.

Lucifer, however, dominates even more emphatically than this in the opera's stage action. He appears in FREITAG as the character Ludon, a bass singer, and suggests to Eve that his son Caino should mate with her. She hesitatingly agrees. The results are catastrophic and play out across the three musical layers upon which the opera is constructed: the 'real scenes', as Stockhausen calls the action played out by singers and instrumentalists on stage, the electronic music that is pre-recorded and played back in 8-channel spatial projection throughout the entire opera, and a series of 13 'sound scenes' that are interspersed throughout.

These 'sound scenes' involve *musique concrète* and vocoder-transformed voices that accompany the appearance of various 'couples' in different places on and near the stage. They always appear for only a few seconds, and always involve highly sexualised activity between what Stockhausen describes as 'a female and male partner'.³¹⁸ These couples consist of people, animals, and machines, but in each case one partner is given female designation and the other male designation. Sometimes these are obvious, such as couple 1, which is a woman and a man, while others less so, such as couple 3, where the female partner is a photocopy machine and the male partner a typewriter. Others lie somewhere in between, incorporating imagery that suggests female and male sexual organs, such as couple 9, where the female partner is an electric pencil sharpener, and the male partner a pencil. Stockhausen's sexualisation of the couples is, however,

³¹⁷ See Chapter 4 for my explanation of the basset horn as an expression of Michael's anima.

³¹⁸ Stockhausen, "FREITAG-VERSUCHUNG," XXXIII.

always unambiguous, as is obvious in his own sketch of what some of them might look like (Figure 5.9):

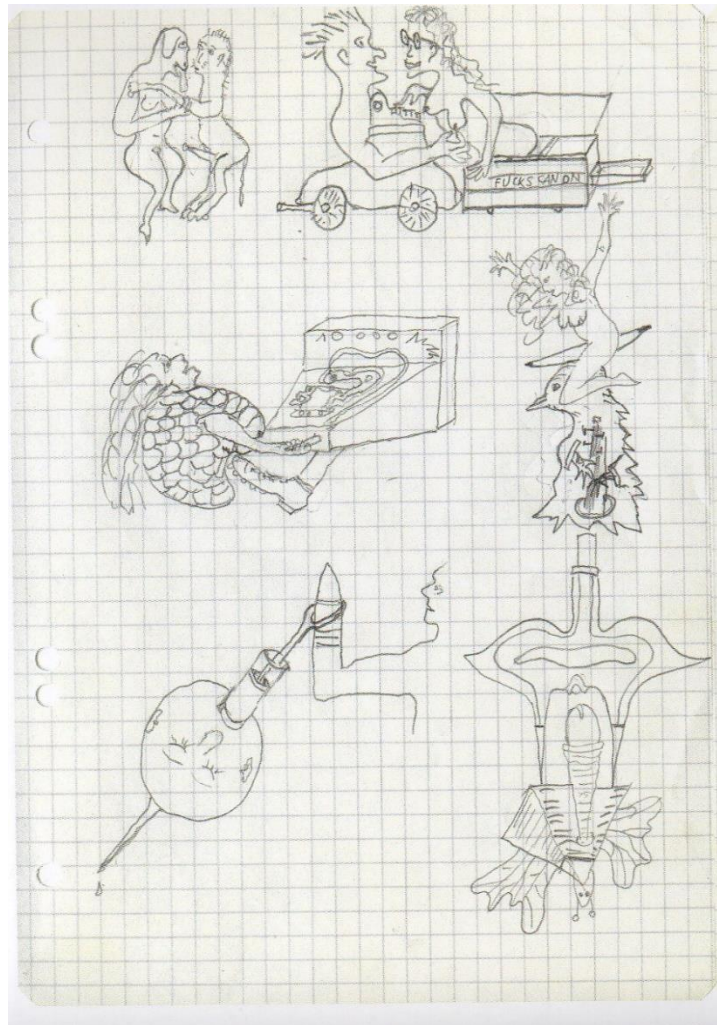


Figure 5.9: Stockhausen's own sketches for some of the 'sound scenes' from FREITAG aus LICHT.³¹⁹

These sexual partnerships unravel, however, when Eve consents to mate with Caino. Within the real scenes on stage, a war breaks out amongst the children who, as a children's orchestra led by Eve and a children's choir led by Ludon, had previously happily played and sung music together. In the electronic music, which had until this point of Eve's mating with Caino, involved mainly long drones built out of the Eve and Lucifer formulas, the sound becomes ruptured with a long passage of restless electronic music intruding upon the apparent stability of the drones.³²⁰ In the sound

³¹⁹ *TEXTE zur MUSIK Band 14 1991-1998* (Kürten, Germany: Stockhausen-Verlag, 2014), 116.

³²⁰ This more restless music in the electronic layer is not notated in the score but was rather worked out with Stockhausen and his son Simon during the preparation and recording of the music's electronic layer. This segment of the opera can be played without the stage action as an independent piece called KOMET ('COMET'), in which the parts of the children's music, sung during the KINDER-KRIEG ('CHILDREN'S WAR') real scene in the opera, are sung by

scenes, the couples swap their partners and produce a series of hybrid offspring that also form into couples.³²¹ such as a naked woman with a dog's head whose partner is a man with a cat's body, a car with a typewriter breast partnered with a racing car driver in a photocopy machine; and so on.

All of these disruptions are the consequence of Eve's giving in to temptation and agreeing to mate with Ludon's son Caino.³²² Imbued with a psychoanalytic, rather than a religious or moral, interpretation, it suggests that when the Imaginary, including in its function as anima, is corrupted by the dominance of the Real, the images it forms now become senseless and confused. This is what appears in the hybrid pairs of the sound-scenes. Or it can be chaotic and dangerous, like the warring children of KINDER-KRIEG where children act, as they can so often be seen to do in LICHT, as indicators of what the future might be, given whatever permutations of the Michael, Eve, and Lucifer triunity are at play at the time. This dread of the dominance of the Real is likewise voiced at the very end of FALL, the scene in which Eve mates with Caino, when an offstage tenor voice cries out "EVA – unsere Kinder!" ("EVE – our children!") Although the voice is not named in the score, it is presumably the voice of Michael, the Symbolic, violated by this assertion of the Real over the Imaginary.

It is a violation of what Freud describes as the 'dominance of a civilised sexual morality', a dominance which can by no means be seen as an unambiguously desirable one because 'the health and fitness of individuals will be subject to certain impairments, and the harms they suffer from sacrifices imposed on them [by civilised sexual morality] will eventually reach such a pitch as to put the ultimate cultural aim indirectly at risk.'³²³ Michael, as the Symbolic Big Other, represents

Kathinka Pasveer as part of the taped electronic music. This title of KOMET reinforces the unsettled, rupturing nature of the music.

³²¹ The couples formed in this way are: naked woman with dog's head and man with cat's body; woman care with typewriter as breast and racing car driver in photocopier machine; woman pin-ball machine with kicking leg as lower part of her body and pin-ball machine player with soccer ball as lower part of his body; woman moon with drug syringe piercing her body and man rocket with woman's arm as lower part of his body; woman's mouth with pencil and ice-cream cone bee; woman next with violin bow crotch and man raven with cello as lower part of his body.

³²² This recasting of the biblical story of the temptation of Eve, and the place of Caino in it, is adapted from *The Urantia Book*. (Paper 75, 'The Default of Adam and Eve')

³²³ Sigmund Freud, "'Civilized' Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness," in *Civilization and its Discontents* (Melbourne, Australia: Penguin Books, 1908/2010), 85.

this civilised dominance and Freud's message suggests that, even if he were here in charge, things would ultimately be disrupted anyway.³²⁴ Stockhausen does not show us what would have happened to these strange sexual couples if Michael had been in charge but perhaps it is their very strangeness that has repelled Michael in the first place: a world in which machines don't just serve humans but have sex with each other seems already to be defiant of the order and nobility that Michael celebrates in humanity and seeks to promote on Earth. It is worth remembering at this point that LICHT is not a simple seven-day linear story that starts and finishes. It is a cycle that goes on and on and so the couples of FREITAG, even before FALL, may already represent something of what was left over when Michael's civilised morality had been, to recall Freud's phrase, put at risk in the past journey through the seven-day cycle. It might, alternatively, represent the absence of Michael (that is, of the Symbolic) that had been facilitated by its retreat into itself, and its total detachment from the Imaginary and the Real, at the end of the preceding opera, DONNERSTAG.

Freud's view of the inevitability of putting the 'cultural aim [...] at risk' whenever civilisation dominates sexual morality suggests that Michael, who as the representative of Lacan's Big Other, and therefore also of that cultural aim, would eventually have been threatened in any society where individual morality is dominated by those collective codes and laws. In other words, absolute dominance by the Symbolic of the morality of individuals leads to the Symbolic's own demise and, therefore, also to that of the former social cohesion. Michael's absence here, and the ensuing dominance of Lucifer and the Real, is one that results in unbridled disruption, and a total breakdown in cohesion. Stockhausen, in his stage directions, leaves no doubt about the magnitude of Eve's sexual union with Caino: 'At this, a bright red streak gushes from the sky and across the middle of the lake towards us humans. Shoots through the entire space and out the back – and remains forever.'³²⁵ In this way the Imaginary, the register that forms identity and that, as anima, acts 'as guide to the inner world' as Jungian collaborator Marie-Louise von Franz describes it,

³²⁴ That Michael represents this dominance is indeed underscored later in the opera, in the scene REUE ('REPENTANCE'), where Eve refers to him as her master.

³²⁵ Stockhausen, "FREITAG-VERSUCHUNG," 72.

becomes dominated by the darkness of the Real that had until now been only a slither in Magritte's painting.³²⁶ The Imaginary should always be connected to the Real, and to a degree will always form its images out of what lies within the domain of the Real, but here, in FREITAG, the Real is dominating and incomprehensibility and chaos are the results.

In some senses, Eve giving in to the seduction of Caino can be compared with the fatal drinking of the love potion in Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, at least in terms of the psychological, and particularly the Lacanian, implications of what is happening. Both scenes portray a discarding of the social obligations and vows of the 'Big Other' of the Symbolic, an observation that Slavoj Žižek has already noted in relation to the Tristan scene. There he describes how, with the Symbolic thus excluded, the 'Real (pure life drive) can emerge in all its force, although in the form of its opposite, the death drive'³²⁷, referring, of course, to the fatalistic consequences of the love potion for Tristan and Isolde and to the fact that the lovers indeed believe that it is the death potion they are drinking. Žižek also refers in the same breath to this as the invalidation of the 'Imaginary identification' and perhaps this holds the key to what is happening here as Caino mates with Eve. Examining the scene FALL will explain this more clearly.

The mating scene is FALL, and it opens the second Act of the opera. It is a quartet for Eve as soprano, Caino as baritone, and the basset horn and flute solos of 'Elu' and 'Lufa'. It is a beautiful scene, and overtly erotic, as Eve sits on the stage, embracing Caino's hips with her legs. The demarcation between the jagged, erratic music of Lucifer and the flowing, affirming music of Eve has been broken down by their combination in the Friday Nucleus formula and here, physically on stage as well as musically, the two have very much become one. The flowing shifts of pitch, often hovering around Major and minor thirds, perhaps gives the impression more of Eve than of Lucifer: but this only underscores the insidiousness of Lucifer's presence: it is disguised here, as the

³²⁶ Franz, "Individuation," 195. In describing what this 'guide to the inner world' means in practical terms, Franz goes on to say 'This positive function occurs when a man takes seriously the feelings, moods, expectations, and fantasies sent by his anima and when he fixes them in some form – for example, in writing, painting, sculpture, musical composition, or dancing.' In other words, it acts in a way not at all at odds with that of Lacan's Imaginary – forming creative images out of that which had been unformed.

³²⁷ Žižek, *Interrogating the Real*, 145.

presence of the Real so often is. In the Friday Nucleus formula Lucifer's notes are always infiltrating. The vocal lines of FALL, for example, open with Caino singing the opening notes of the Eve line of the EVE-LUCIFER double-formula³²⁸ (her signature Major 3rd, moving from B flat to D) but she immediately answers it with the opening note of *his* line of the same double formula, the A, which he then also follows (see Figure 5.10). As these two formulas combine into the Friday Nucleus formula, his notes are constantly insinuating themselves into the fluidity of her music, and here in FALL, this becomes especially sexualised as the music reflects, or more precisely shapes, the stylised mating scene happening on stage.

3 VEREINIGUNG

FALL 10 4/4 $\text{♩} = 60$ freudvoll - freundlich (niemals traurig oder schwermütig)

Sopran (EVA) mp 5 3 mp 3 pp N

Bariton (KAINO) mf [tsi tsi tsi tsi tsi] a mp a ve a

Flöte (LUFA) [e fa] (-8va) 1 v b... don k

Basshorn (ELU) ca. p Die Lautstärke muß am Ort bestimmt werden. Man soll die beiden Instrumente immer leise im Hintergrund hören. pp

Transp. ca. mp p

Figure 5.10: the opening vocal bars of FALL, where the formulas of Eve and Lucifer are exchanged between soprano and baritone, and Lucifer's notes become increasingly inserted into those sung by Eve.³²⁹

FALL is also core to the opera in terms both of its location in the opera (roughly the midpoint of the opera's overall duration) and also musically, as Richard Toop points out.³³⁰ When the EVE-LUCIFER double-formula (that is, the Eve and Lucifer layers of the Superformula, each transposed to begin on the notes on which their Friday limbs of the original Superformula begin) is temporally stretched out across the whole opera, as it is in the electronic music layer, the segment that corresponds to the Friday limb (that is, the original bars 12 and 13) turns out to be located at the

³²⁸ The Eve-Lucifer double-formula is Stockhausen's term and refers to the entire Eve and Lucifer layers of the Superformula, where the Eve layer is transposed down a tone so it begins on B flat, to coincide with the first note of her layer in the Friday limb of the Superformula, and his layer is transposed up a tone to begin on A, for the same reasons (Stockhausen, "FREITAG-VERSUCHUNG," XXXVII.)

³²⁹ Ibid., 65.

³³⁰ Toop, "Eletronische Musik," 133.

FALL scene.³³¹ In this way FALL becomes something of the kernel for the entire opera: it is from here, where Eve gives in to Lucifer, that everything else grows. It is from here that the Real takes over and begins to wreak the havoc that then spreads throughout the remainder of the opera, as I have described, in the drones of the electronic layer, in the sound-scenes and in the real scenes. By dominating Eve, and the Imaginary, it is as if the sky and clouds of Magritte's painting are themselves tinged with the blackness that they appear to mask. It is in this sense that the opera demonstrates the invalidation of imaginary identification to which Žižek had referred.

The music of the Friday Nucleus formula, and hence the expression of the Real's infiltration of the Imaginary, is most crystallised in the flute and basset horn duet ELUFA towards the end of the opera. It is a playful scene, in which the flute and basset horn play elaborated versions of the Friday Nucleus formula and, says Stockhausen in the score's preface, 'converse with each other about what has happened [in the opera so far]'.³³² What has happened has, of course, been far from playful: it has been an expression of the dominance of the Real over human identity, enabled by its fundamental infiltration of the Imaginary. In other words, the opera has presented us with a human personality turned incomprehensible and destructive by its ineffable and traumatic core, its repository for *jouissance* and the death-drive to which Žižek referred, and taken hold of its own sense of identity. How can this be presented playfully?

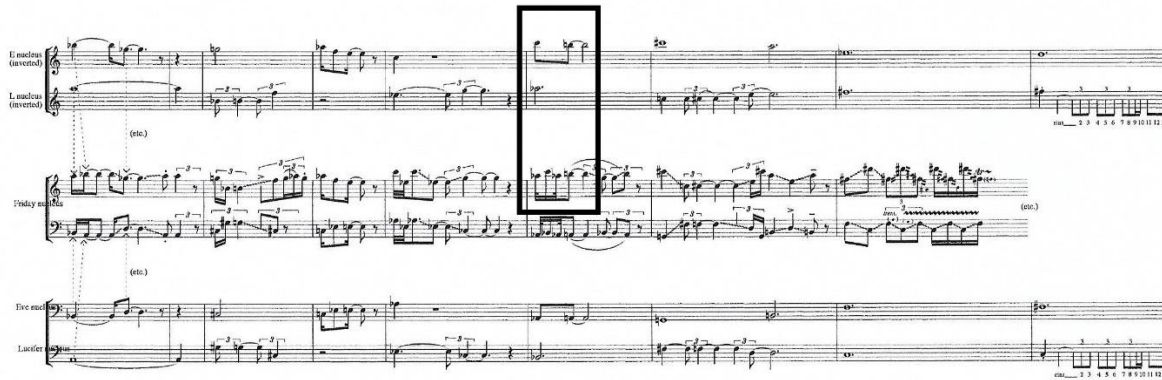
This playfulness might to some extent reflect what I have already noted in Chapter 4 as Stockhausen's thoughts on humour as 'always connected with something that frightens you' and its role in liberating us from this through laughter, a role of humour that is closely aligned to that of Freud.³³³ Playfulness, however, is not the same as humour and so this connection can go only part of the way to explaining the light-hearted joy of the scene. At another level, that playfulness surely

³³¹ These two bars of the Friday limb of the Superformula, of course comprise three layers of formula (Michael, Eve, and Lucifer) and these two bars are also stretched temporally across the whole opera in the electronic music, thereby making five layers of electronic music altogether (that is, the three layers of the Superformula's Friday limb plus the two layers of Eve's and Lucifer's entire formulas). There is then some doubling of these layers, ultimately bringing the number of layers in the electronic music to eight.

³³² Stockhausen, "FREITAG-VERSUCHUNG," XXXVI.

³³³ Stockhausen and Kohl, "Stockhausen on Opera," 26. See also Freud, *The Joke and its Relation to the Unconscious*.

reflects a degree of relief, insofar as it follows the scene REUE ('REPENTANCE'), where Eve, as soprano, has repented that she 'ging ohne Adam' ('went without Adam'), and where she sings, over and over, the phrase 'Dunkel wird Licht' ('Darkness becomes light'), initially to a sequence of notes that have recurred throughout the opera, almost as a leitmotif. This motif comes from the flute layer of the fifth bar Friday Nucleus formula (and therefore its Friday segment) (Figure 5.11):



Figure

5.9: The 'Dunkel wird Licht' notes marked in the upper (flute) layer of the Friday-nucleus formula, indicating their derivation from the alternating and inverted nuclear notes of Eve and Lucifer.³³⁴

Whenever this short four-note motif is sung throughout the opera, it is always (with one exception and I describe blow) to these same words – 'Dunkel wird Licht' – and whenever it is heard only instrumentally, as it is, for example, during KINDER-ORCHESTER ('CHILDREN'S ORCHESTRA'), where Eve's instrumental children play for Ludon's choral children, or in the electronic layer and sound scene, shortly after FALL, it typically blasts out over the rest of the music. Its move from major 3rd to augmented 2nd (enharmonically a minor 3rd) belies its optimistic words of 'darkness becomes light' and gives a more ominous, foreboding feel to the music. It is like a cry, a plea, from the darkness, seeking to escape from the death-driven image painted by the Real.

In REUE, however, the phrase takes on a different course. As Eve sings both the words and the music of 'Dunkel wird Licht' there is an unmistakeable quietude that descends upon the motif. She first sings the words 'Eva's Reue' ('Eve's repentance') to the four-note motif, the only time words other than 'Dunkel wird Licht' are sung to it, while the flute and basset horn are silent; and then whispers the motif to its signature 'Dunkel wird Licht', inhaling through 'Dunkel wird' and exhaling

³³⁴ Provided courtesy of Jerome Kohl. This excerpt is from Dr Kohl's unpublished private notes.

through 'Licht', while the basset horn accompanies with *piano* tremolos. The soprano soon repeats the words but, for the first time, to different music. This does not correspond exactly to any part of the Friday Nucleus formula, as if this act or 'repentance' has liberated Eve from her bond with the Real, and that this includes a release of sorts, expressed through the inhaling-exhaling breaths with which she sing the motif. These inhaling-exhaling breaths are themselves from the Friday limb (in particular, bar 12) of the original Superformula: one of the 'coloured silence' sections of the Eve formula that are so vital in facilitating the connections between the intervallic segments of her original nuclear tones, as I discussed in my analysis of her formula in Chapters 1 and 2.

Presumably Stockhausen intends this repentance in a religious sense, reflecting the sorrow and remorse that Eve expresses in *The Urantia Book* version of the story.³³⁵ From the perspective of the human psyche and how it might deal with the dominance of the Real of the Imaginary, however, the repentance expressed in the scene can be understood more as one of self-awareness, where a person recognises this imbalance within themselves and seeks to correct it. It is, however, a recognition which in this instance takes place within the Imaginary – that is, it is acknowledged by Eve, not by the signifiers and language of Michael and the Symbolic, who never answers the cries of remorse that she expresses, through REUE, to her 'master' Michael. It is, as such, more like an intuitive awareness rather than an articulated one that finds a voice in the Symbolic. It is an awareness that has, however, at least seemed to loosen the grip of the Real.

The loosening of the Imaginary from the grip of the Real should not be overstated, however. A hint of it might be able to be read into the way the 'Dunkel wird Licht' mantra seems to stray from the Friday Nucleus formula, and therefore from the entangled connection of Eve and Lucifer, but it is only a temporary thing and, by the time the 'real scene' ELUFA begins just a few minutes later, the entwined formula is again intact. The playfulness of this scene, with laughter and teasing swaying of buttocks between the Elu and Lufa as they play their instruments, has perhaps been enabled because of this moment of self-awareness, and its sense of release, occurring in the image-laden

³³⁵ *The Urantia Book*, 75:5.

domain of the Imaginary. That was captured in REUE, leading to this piece, where the connection of the Imaginary with the Real can be experienced more happily. This happiness and balance of the connection is nicely driven home by the fact that the scene is now at last named after the entwined Eve and Lucifer, rather than after different aspects of the process of Lucifer and the Real taking control of Eve and the Imaginary, as it was in the other real scenes that described their relationship.³³⁶ There is an equality and balance between them now.

The absence of the Symbolic again becomes apparent in FREITAG's final 'real scene', CHOR-SPIRALE ('CHOIR SPIRAL') with which the opera ends. Even here there is no actual sign of a reconciliation with Michael, who remains absent. In this final scene, the Friday Nucleus formula is distributed between six women, who sing the upper layer, and six men who sing the lower layer. The six hybrid pairs, borne of the swapped couples from the sound scenes after FALL, form into the shape of huge flame and, within it, gradually start to glow as the flame itself 'rises up in a slow spiral movement and vanishes into the Beyond'.³³⁷ Clearly, Stockhausen intends this to be a purification and this is how theologian Thomas Ulrich also describes it: 'In the warm candle flame the couples, in spiral form, will be drawn, glowing and united in beauty; the impure bastard couples will be purified and renewed'.³³⁸ Joseph Drew describes it as a holocaust, a term that would presumably have horrified Stockhausen given his own mother's fate through the Nazi regime's 'euthanasia' program after developing a mental illness during the 1930s.³³⁹ Purification or holocaust, the music's focus is on the symbolism of the spiral, which Stockhausen had described as the movement of the choral flame. The two layers move further and further apart from one another, as the sopranos make their way up to D6, the basses down to F#2, musically representing a spiral where the concentric circles slowly move outwards as they rise higher. The spiral, as I noted in chapter 3, captured Stockhausen's concept of humans' eternal passage through life and

³³⁶ These scenes were: ANTRAG (Proposal); ZUSTIMMUNG (Consent); FALL; and REUE (Repentance)

³³⁷ Stockhausen, "FREITAG-VERSUCHUNG," XXXVI.

³³⁸ Ulrich, *LICHT*, 316.

³³⁹ See Drew, "Michael from Licht," 310-11. for his description of CHOR-SPIRALE as a holocaust. It should be noted, however, that Drew does not directly equate this with the Nazi holocaust of World War 2.

the universe, where they will always return to where they started, but at a different level, advancing towards greater heights of consciousness.

What is particularly noteworthy here, however, is how thin the music becomes as it ascends. This was also the case in the Farewells at the end of DONNERSTAG and MONTAG and here, as there, this can perhaps best be explained by the absence of the totality of the Borromean Knot's registers. Eve may have made her peace with Lucifer, and with herself, through the self-awareness of REUE, just as any person might do when they make the sort of creative and intuitive connections and resolutions that are enabled by engagement with the Jungian anima. This may have enabled the happy and playful resolution between the Imaginary and the Real of ELUFA, but in the absence of the Symbolic, the two ultimately become separated from one another. Without the signifiers of the Symbolic to ultimately explain what has been resolved in the images of the Imaginary, those images become detached from the Real out of which they initially grew. The individual's sense of identity, within the Imaginary, may provide to some extent a sense of reconciliation with the more ineffable aspects of their self, their psyche, but they will still need to find a way to connect this with the objective world of the Symbolic. This is what Eve, in REUE, did not manage to do. And this is why, at the end of FREITAG, the audience is left in a place of ambiguity, just as it was at the end of DONNERSTAG and MONTAG. But this time, the sopranos sing the name of Friday's planet, Venus, way up in the stratosphere, while the basses sing the name of Lucifer's planet, Saturn, in the depths below.³⁴⁰ The Friday Temptation may be resolved and ascending, but the resolution is detached and, like the detached Symbolic of DONNERSTAG and the detached Imaginary of MONTAG, it is, in the end, nebulous and empty. Michael is absent, and Lucifer is now separated. This is what makes the purification ultimately a questionable one. This suggests an important aspect of Stockhausen's spiral: even when it ascends, sometimes the things it leaves behind mean that its progress is somewhat equivocal. The progress has often been at the expense of something that still needs to be integrated. In this sense, the progress that can be found through experiencing all the operas of LICHT, and continuing to experience them, offers

³⁴⁰ These associations with the planets are from Alice Bailey. See Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology: Volume 1 of Treatise on the Seven Rays* (New York, USA: Lucis Publishing, 1962), 419.

an approach to doing this. The operas, through being conceptualised as a recurring cycle rather than as a series with a beginning and an end, allow the issues to be revisited. Each opera will always take on new hues of resonance and connection with the psyche when it is viewed within the context of having experienced it, and the other operas of the cycle, already.

This is not necessarily how Stockhausen himself saw the ends of his operas, including this ending of FREITAG, but it does accord with notions of human development through reincarnation, where unlearned lessons can be confronted anew, and which was part of the spiralling universe he believed the human spirit to inhabit. Yet this might not be the point he is consciously seeking to make here. He describes the formation of the six hybrid couples at the end as one where 'their 6 candle flames [in which they have been located since they were formed at the end of FALL] unite into a beautiful new form as a towering candle flame as they sing the *Choir Spiral*.³⁴¹ His images of these couples glowing and rising in this 'beautiful new form' are clearly meant to be a sign of their redemption. Thomas Ulrich reinforces this when he suggests that 'the fire [in which the hybrid pairs ascend] frees the soul from all wrongs that had been part of their earthly lives, and that had left its imprint upon it – it is only then that they can dare to step before God.'³⁴²

It is in the music, however, that a lack is found – a lack that becomes palpable not only as the music thins out, but also through the absence of the totality of the Superformula: the Superformula that represents not only the totality of the music, but also, as my interpretation implies, the completeness of the psyche. Wherever part of the Superformula is absent, part of the totality of personality is also missing. This is, of course, the case throughout almost all of LICHT and it is in this way that LICHT can be seen as a constant search for this totality, the totality of being. This totality of being, idealised in the integral totality of the Superformula, is always hanging, like a beacon, drawing the music towards it and driving it to continue.³⁴³ This lack of totality is often particularly driven home at the ends of the operas, where often a kind of apothecotic stillness

³⁴¹ Stockhausen, "FREITAG-VERSUCHUNG," XXXVI.

³⁴² Ulrich, *LICHT*, 316.

³⁴³ I discuss this further, and posit its connections with Lacan's *objet petit a*, in the next chapter.

descends and where the music is often stripped to its barest, as in the nuclear notes that become the focus of the final moments here, as they did also at the end of both MONTAG and DONNERSTAG. It is during these moments, where the music is unelaborated, that the absence of the richness of the three layers of the Superformula, and the musical completeness they encompass, becomes most obvious.

That Stockhausen's operas almost always finish with some sort of ambiguity, something left out or unresolved, and some part of the Superformula missing, suggests that, even where he saw his endings as redemptive, he knew at least at some level that the progress to redemption, in whatever sense he or his audiences understood this to be, is a continual one, and that there is always something new to face, as indeed his own fascination with the metaphor of the spiral indicates. The exception to this is the end of MITTWOCH, where the full Superformula is heard for the only time in the whole of LICHT. But there a different puzzle and ambiguity arises, where the sense of completeness that is lacking elsewhere is momentarily found, but falls apart just as quickly. I will return to this in the following chapter.

Chapter 6: Michael, Eve, and Lucifer together: Light and Superformula as Lacan's Master Signifier and *objet petit a*

By a *primal* oneness the four – earth and sky, divinities and mortals – belong together in one.³⁴⁴

This chapter focuses on three core concepts: first, the ways in which Stockhausen conceptualises and presents the collaboration of Michael, Eve, and Lucifer, in the final moments of MITTWOCH, and how this connects with their appearance together in the first scene of DONNERSTAG; second, the way that the concept of 'light' functions in a manner analogous to Lacan's Master Signifier; and third, the ways in which the totality of the Superformula, as a representation of the totality of being through its integral formation of Michael, Eve, and Lucifer, leads to the Superformula functioning in a manner analogous to Lacan's *objet petit a*. I bring these three topics together in a single chapter as they relate to a single theme: the drive towards an understanding of the one in which Heidegger characterises the four quarters of the Fourfold as belonging together. It is a belonging that he says constantly eludes people. Despite their awareness, at some level or other, of all four, and that in thinking of one they think of the other three, he says they 'give no thought to the simple oneness of the four'.³⁴⁵ It is a oneness that reflects both the 'I' and the 'am' of the Cartesian *cogito*: both the core personhood and the core beingness: fused together in the oneness of the Fourfold. While Heidegger describes that oneness as simple, the music of LICHT suggests that it is nevertheless constantly elusive, and in this way the human search to understand its own nature is never finally, decisively, resolved. In examining this concept, and how it plays out in the operas, I return therefore to the fundamental theme of this research – an understanding, through the theoretical tools I have applied throughout this thesis, of LICHT's commentary on the phenomenology of being.

³⁴⁴ Heidegger, "Building, dwelling, thinking," 351.

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 351-52.

6.1 The end of MITTWOCH and the beginning of DONNERSTAG: two versions of Michael, Eve, and Lucifer together.

Despite the ubiquitous presence of Michael, Eve, and Lucifer throughout LICHT in the form of their formulas, there is surprisingly little focus on their three-way relationships throughout the cycle. Even where the three formulas are present, the stage focus usually emphasises one or two of the characters, bringing some specific aspect of their constantly entwined presence to the fore. The two main exceptions to this are KINDHEIT, the opening scene of DONNERSTAG, where all three characters are active together on stage with Michael as a child, and Eve and Lucifer as his mother and father. The other is the entirety of MITTWOCH, where all three are present not as defined or named characters but through the prominence given to their formulas. Indeed, in both MITTWOCH and SONNTAG, the characters of LICHT become more abstract, moving away from their more bodily incarnations in the other five operas.

The theme of MITTWOCH is 'cosmic solidarity' and collaboration between Michael, Eve, and Lucifer.³⁴⁶ It is a solidarity which, as musicologist Katerina Grohmann has argued, plays out in a multi-level mediation throughout the opera. She describes how this includes a universal mediation captured in the collaboration of its three diverse protagonists, a bringing together of diverse spaces by the ways in which the opera's space opens outwards,³⁴⁷ a combining of acoustic and electronic sounds, and by a unification of musical and scenic characteristics in an opera in which the barriers between the two are often even more blurred than in other parts of LICHT.³⁴⁸ This is especially potent in the very final piece in the opera's last scene: the RAUM-SEXTETT ('Space-Sextet') of

³⁴⁶ The phrase 'cosmic solidarity' is used to describe the theme of MITTWOCH in the libretto of its final scene. MICHAELION, where a bass solo sings, in English, 'Leo lion galaxies ask MICHAEL if GOD wants MICHAEL EVE LUCIFER to work together for cosmic solidarity according to Stockhausen's WEDNESDAY from LIGHT' (Stockhausen, "MICHAELION," 85-87.)

³⁴⁷ An opening of space that goes so far as to take the performance high into the sky, in the famous HELICOPTER STRING QUARTET of the third scene, where the four players of a string quartet each perform in their own helicopter, flying thousands of metres above the theatre (See "HELICOPTER STRING QUARTET.")

³⁴⁸ Grohmann, *Oper MITTWOCH*, 11-12. This fusion of musical and scenic characteristics, and the ways in which Stockhausen develops his own version of music-scenic synthesis in MITTWOCH aus LICHT is the primary focus of Grohmann's book.

MICHAELION, a scene where delegates from various galaxies throughout the universe come together to elect a new intergalactic President. It is here, over the droning sounds of the synthesiser, that a vocal sextet sings the full Superformula – transposed up a tone, slightly elaborated, and with words attached to it now expressing the unifying power of music and love – as it rotates around the audience and then disperses outside the auditorium. The upwards transposition of a tone reflects the relationship of the D at the beginning of the Wednesday limb of the Superformula to the C with which her full formula begins. This underscores the notion that this collaborative unity of Michael, Eve, and Lucifer is at her instigation, a point reinforced by the sign Stockhausen designed for MITTWOCH, which shows the heart of Eve sign embracing both the Michael and Lucifer signs and holding them together (Figure 6.1):

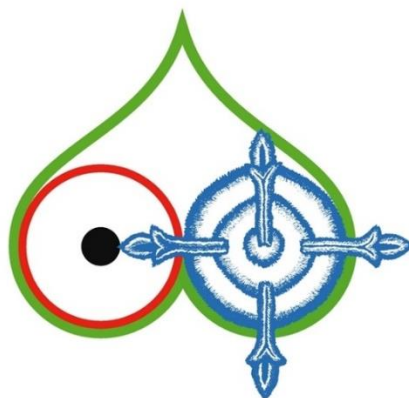


Figure 6.1: The Wednesday sign from LICHT, showing the Michael and Lucifer signs embraced by the heart of the Eve sign.

This unity of Michael, Eve, and Lucifer in the music of the Superformula is the only time in the whole of LICHT where the full Superformula is performed, with all its ornamentation in place and without any distortion, such as through the *Schein-Spiegelung* that I had described in KLAVIERSTÜCK XIV in Chapter 4. I will return to the significance of this shortly, but to understand that it is first necessary to also return to DONNERSTAG, and the appearance of Michael, Eve, and Lucifer there in its opening scene, KINDHEIT. Together, the two scenes reveal two sides of this triunity of Michael, Eve, and Lucifer in the tangible world of the one and the idealised world of the

other.³⁴⁹ In this sense, KINDHEIT can be seen as representation of the tensions of the triune registers of Symbolic, Imaginary, and Real in the here and now of daily life, while the RAUM-SEXTETT presents the ideal for which it strives. The two are quite different from each other, but the relationship between them provides some valuable insights into the passage from the earth-dwelling world of KINDHEIT's mortals to the sky-faring journey into space of the RAUM-SEXTETT's immortals.

KINDHEIT represents the childhood of Michael on earth and its story draws heavily from Stockhausen's own childhood. Both Michael's and Stockhausen's childhoods were set in a poor family with many children, with a father who is a teacher, a hunter, and ultimately a soldier who dies in battle, and a mother who is loving and nurturing but who becomes mentally ill, is admitted to a psychiatric hospital, where she is killed.³⁵⁰ It portrays the entangled relationships of all three, at times loving and playful, and other times combative and anguished. Although all three are together, the Superformula is never heard in its complete form, although a skeletal version does appear in the latter part of the scene, after Michael's mother has become delusional and suicidal. Michael is distraught at her anguish, and his father is becoming almost incoherent with panic as he tries to calm her, while waiting for a doctor to take her away, and deriding the gawking neighbours (See Figure 6.2):

³⁴⁹ In an intriguing bit of serendipity, the order in which the operas of LICHT received their world premieres reflected exactly this ordering: starting with the world premiere of DONNERSTAG in Milan in 1981 and finishing with the of MITTWOCH in Birmingham in 2012.

³⁵⁰ Lisa Quernes, a German high-school student, undertook some research into the death of Stockhausen's mother, and her work has now become the authoritative text on the ultimate fate of Gertrud Stockhausen who died by carbon monoxide poisoning at NS-Tötungsanstalt in Hadamar on 27 May 1941, as part of the Nazi 'euthanasia' programme. See Lisa Quernes, "Ein Stolperstein für Gertrud Stockhausen in Bärbroich," <https://in-gl.de/2014/01/29/ein-stolperstein-fuer-gertrud-stockhausen-in-baerbroich/>.

cosmic incarnations of Michael, Eve, and Lucifer that eventually seek how to resolve their tensions within the collaborative framework of MITTWOCH. In the realm of the earth-dwelling mortals, then, the tangled relationships between the Symbolic, Imaginary, and Real can be stressed, but the trajectory that Stockhausen then takes them on throughout LICHT is one that explores those tangles and ultimately seeks to unravel them and to view them in the more elevated, developed space of the RAUM-SEXTETT's full Superformula, where everything is beautiful and balanced and yet still itself.

There are two additional points worth noting here – first this skeletal version of the Superformula comes in KINDHEIT at the very point where madness is taking hold of Michael's Mother. This is madness playing out in the domain of the Imaginary – the very core of the human perception of identity and self. As Lacanian musicologist Michael Klein argues, madness or death are what ensues when the human subject nears the elusive *objet petit a*, that unnameable 'something' that lies beneath and triggers the drives of desire.³⁵² As I will argue below, in LICHT that underlying and elusive cause of this drive is none other than the Superformula itself, always elusive, always driving the music forwards and propelling it to seek the totality it contains – elusive, indeed, just like the very concept of the totality of being it represents. Although I will further clarify this point below, the significance here is that already, in KINDHEIT, as the strands of personality form in the earth-dwelling space of mortals, the link between madness and the elusiveness of the Superformula's totality, is being indicated, even if only through the hint of the Superformula's skeleton. That elusiveness will also be manifest in the RAUM-SEXTETT where the synchronicity that it expresses falls apart within a bare moment of it being touched. I will return to that shortly as well.

The second point to make before this, however, is that this synchronicity that is achieved in the RAUM-SEXTETT is the last of four different attempts to achieve collaboration between the forces of Michael, Eve, and Lucifer in MITTWOCH. Each of them broke down in a different way. In the first scene, WELT-PARLAMENT ('World Parliament') the moment of collaboration is expressed in a

³⁵² Michael L Klein, *Music and the Crisis of the Modern Subject* (Bloomington, USA: Indiana University Press, 2015), 13.

startling chord that appears magically out of the complex polyphony of that piece's writing for a *capella* choir, a chord that is built out of the signature intervals, and their inversions, of the three formulas.³⁵³ The chord is beautiful but it is interrupted in the most banal way, a janitor rushing in and shouting that someone's car is about to be towed away, which turns out to be the car of the Parliament's President. In the second scene, ORCHESTER-FINALISTEN ('Orchestra Finalists'), finalists play solos, apparently for entry to an orchestra. Each solo culminates in a moment of tutti chords, where all play together until, at the end of the scene, all soloists play their solo parts on top of each other in a togetherness that is nevertheless cacophonous and seems to really contain no hint of collaboration at all. The solos are themselves constructed from the Tuesday and Wednesday sections of the Superformula, with each successive instrument building their piece on correspondingly successive parts of those limbs. But the results of this passage from the war of Tuesday to the collaboration of Wednesday remains inconclusive: they simply leave without ever creating a sense that they have become an orchestra. The third scene is the HELIKOPTER-STREICHQUARTETT ('Helicopter String Quartet') in which the four members of a string quartet each play in their own helicopter, the four of which circle in the sky above the theatre. Their music, their images, and the sounds of the helicopter engines and rotor blades, are transmitted back into the auditorium via four systems of video screens and loudspeakers. The music they play involves an erratic jumble of the formulas, as the notes from each formula bounce around from player to player, from helicopter to helicopter, in furious tremolos and at a pace and level of freneticism that renders all the formulas indecipherable. It is as if, in this attempt at collaboration, Lacan's Borromean Knot has become nothing but a tangle. The only way it can be resolved is for the signature counting of Lucifer, which normally goes to thirteen, to extend outside itself when a unison 'Vierzehn' is shouted by all players and the helicopters land, and the piece ends. Each attempt at collaboration, then, demonstrates different ways of breaking up, or changing, elements of the Superformula in an attempt to make them fit together.

³⁵³ The chord, at bar 211 in the score, is: B flat (basses) – G flat (tenors) – F (altos) – C (3rd sopranos) – E (2nd sopranos) – A flat (1st sopranos). The intervals created here are minor 6th (the inversion of Eve's Major 3rd), Major 7th (Lucifer), Perfect 5th (inversion of Michael's Perfect 4th), Major 3rd (Eve) and diminished 4th (enharmonically Eve's Major 3rd, and the form in which her interval is notated in the Wednesday limb of her formula) (Stockhausen, "WELT-PARLAMENT," 68.

It is against this background of different, but always failed, attempts to reach and hold onto collaboration that the final scene of MICHAELION seeks yet another approach – the synchronous singing of the full Superformula. In the RAUM-SEXTETT, the Superformula slowly emerges to its complete form from the bare bones of its structure. Through four separate rounds, its three layers are rotated each time between the sopranos, the altos and tenors, and the basses. In the first round, only the barest of its notes, in each layer, are sung. In each subsequent round, more ornamentation and elaboration is added until, in its fourth and final round, the full Superformula is heard, with Michael in the upper layer, Eve in the middle, and Lucifer in the bass. The final cooperation is achieved by the simplest of devices: the singing of the original Superformula.

The Space Sextet is itself preceded by another indicator that cooperation is in the offing: the BASSETSU-TRIO in which the instrumental incarnations of Michael, Eve, and Lucifer (trumpet, basset horn, and trombone) come together in a trio. Composed in 1997, this is only the second time Stockhausen has composed all three instruments playing together. The first was almost 20 years earlier, when they provided the quiet chordal harmony on tape in the background during KINDHEIT, creating another link between the idealised end of MITTWOCH and the worldly beginning of DONNERSTAG. In the BASSETSU-TRIO, their music is built out of each of them sharing elements of their three formulas, rotating these between each other and thereby giving the trio its subtitle of 'KARUSSELL' (Carousel). Here those fragments of the formulas are more extensive than the single notes that are thrown around so rapidly in the HELIKOPTER-STREICHQUARTETT, but it nevertheless blurs the identity of each and, as such, still 'symbolises the interpenetration of the figures', both musically and as protagonists, as Katerina Grohmann describes it.³⁵⁴ Nonetheless, the fragments of the formulas are now more recognisable than in the earlier scenes and, as such, it represents a step away from the total entanglement of the previous scene, and towards what will slowly emerge as completed appearances of Michael, Eve, and Lucifer, synchronised in the full Superformula of the RAUM-SEXTETT. It is, in this singing of the

³⁵⁴ Grohmann, *Oper MITTWOCH*, 159. (trans. Ian Parsons)

full Superformula, that for the first time collaboration has been achieved without fracturing the integrity of the Superformula, without dismantling the identities of each of its layers.

It would be tempting to read this as a happy end – a final attainment of the consolidation of totality, as if not only have Michael, Eve, and Lucifer found that the way to cooperate lay in the simple solution of each being themselves, but so, too, has everything they represent found a similarly simple solution to the tensions and conflicts that arise between them. From the perspective of the human psyche, it would suggest that a balanced personality is found in a recognition of the unique and different, but mutually dependant, roles of the registers of Symbolic, Imaginary, and Real. Here it is the totality of each formula, embracing not only the three layers of Michael, Eve, and Lucifer, but also the seven limbs, or days, that formed the syntagm so crucial in the development of new and coherent personality in the Second Act of MONTAG.³⁵⁵ Therefore each psychic register comes together in the order and cohesion that Stockhausen originally composed into the Superformula when he first conceived it as a piece of both horizontal and vertical serialism in the form of the Sudoku-like structure to which I referred in Chapter 1. It represents an elevation of what had been associated with the onset of madness in *KINDHEIT* as if here now, in the realm of skies and immortals, the tangles of earth-dwelling mortals, and the craze that ensues as they attempt to come to grips with their own inscrutable being, are able to be resolved. Looking up to skies and to the gods, the music seems to suggest, becomes transformative when the human mind is able to perceive within those skies and gods the essence of its own being. It is, in short, a representation of coming to understand the true nature of dwelling that Heidegger suggests is so often diminished and contained in the tangible world of building 'things'.

Any sense of resolution that is expressed in this moment, as the singers celebrate their unity and sing of the love that has made it possible is, however, short-lived. Its transience is reinforced in the score in the chords that follow each round of the developing Superformula. After the first three rounds, the three syllables of MI-CHA-EL are progressively sung, each held for approximately 30

³⁵⁵ I discuss this formation of the seven days in Chapter 4

seconds. The final round is followed with 'HU', but this time held only for 7 seconds, after which the singers begin their move, no longer synchronised, out beyond the audience and the auditorium, into space and, presumably, back to the various galaxies from which they came. Their moment of unity, extraordinary though it is, formed through the simple momentary grasp of the Superformula, falls apart even more quickly than it was formed. This again points to the elusive nature of the *objet petit a*, which I discuss below.

Before leaving this scene of MITTWOCH, however, it is worth noting one other aspect of it – the role of language as part of the process towards the collaboration that is ultimately expressed in the RAUM-SEXTETT. The comprehensibility of multiple languages is a key issue in MICHAELION. The President who the delegates from various galaxies have assembled to elect must be someone who can translate 'universal messages, which nobody understands'.³⁵⁶ Already this hints at the relationship of the Symbolic can sometimes have with the Real when it attempts to give expression, through the shared signifiers of language, to the incomprehensibility of the Real. This notion of incomprehensible language dominates through much of MICHAELION, mostly demonstrated in the through the character of the 'Operator'. He is a man, named Luca, dressed as Zen-monk who emerges from within a camel costume, with a short-wave radio from which he translates signals to the assembled intergalactic delegates. The camel is named Luzikamel (Lucicamel), and is accompanied by a trombone, and the part of Luca is sung by a bass. All of these clearly point to Lucifer, not to mention the grotesquery of its humour when it defecates seven planets in the middle of the scene, and yet Stockhausen himself once commented that 'somehow the camel actually turns out to be Michael in disguise'. Nowhere in the sketches for LICHT, nor in the vast published materials of Stockhausen's own commentary of it, have I been able to find anywhere else where he has made this, or any similar, remark about Lucifer turning out to be 'Michael in disguise'. Nor have I found others who have drawn attention to it in their own commentaries other than Joseph Drew who, in his analysis of the character of Michael, describes

³⁵⁶ Stockhausen, "MICHAELION," XV.

the comment as 'a revisionist take on the scene', an 'interpretative insert', that Drew likens to the musical inserts that Stockhausen often places within the formal serialised structure of his works.³⁵⁷

It is indeed a curious remark for Stockhausen to have made and one that is particularly difficult to reconcile either with the characters of Lucifer and Michael as Stockhausen has developed them, or with the connections with the Lacanian Real and Symbolic that I am making in my interpretation. The notion that something as pure and primal as the Real, rather like the primal nature of the Freudian Id, could turn out to be a disguised version of something as socially and culturally nuanced as the Symbolic, somewhat akin to the conscience-driven superego of Freud, is extremely difficult to fathom. The notion of disguise itself, however, is not. It sounds much less implausible that the human psyche might from time to time seek to disguise its innermost drives, its primal essence that defies tangible representation, in the form of socially acceptable systems of cultural, legal, ideological, and religious edicts. That is to say, the human psyche seeks to create worlds in which its most primal and untamed core are endorsed and authorised. The Real appears disguised as the Symbolic. At the broader social level, this might not happen often, because of the tempering effect of large numbers of people whose safety and stability would be threatened by an untamed release of individual drives, creating an irresolvable tension between the individual and society, as Freud has famously postulated.³⁵⁸ Nonetheless, such societies do emerge from time to time, perhaps most notoriously in various religious cults where the personal and sexual fantasies of a single charismatic leader become the cultural norm for the society. It also happens in people's smaller interactions with one another where within private relationships they create codes of behaviour, rituals, maybe even private languages, that might represent some attempt to express, in tangible terms, what is buried deeply within them and which would be unable to be expressed more openly. These might be manifest in sexual fantasies acted out between couples, or, in a more disturbing context, in family violence where intergenerational trauma is acted out violently within the walls of a home within a family that presents a respectable façade outside. All of this,

³⁵⁷ Drew, "Michael from Licht," 353.

³⁵⁸ See, in particular, Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, trans. David McLintock (Melbourne, Australia: Penguin Books, 1930/2010).

however, is the Real appearing disguised as the Symbolic. This is the opposite of what Stockhausen has described who, when he suggested that Luzikamel turns out to be Michael in disguise is, in effect, saying that the Symbolic was disguised as the Real.

Despite this seeming disjuncture between Stockhausen's words and the ways in which the Real and the Symbolic operate, the remark does at least point to the complexity of the relationship between the two domains. This is particularly manifest in the role that the Symbolic can play, through its systems of comprehensible signifiers, in bridging the gap between itself and the Real and in bringing the Real closer to its own tangible and socially-sanctioned domain. Stockhausen's somewhat baffling remark points only to the ambiguities that arise when such efforts are made, leading as they do to a confusion between which domain is dictating the terms of how a person connects to the world outside. It should be remembered that there is nothing in the music that supports this remark of Stockhausen – Lucikamel does not play Michael's formula, and the part continues to be performed by Lucifer's voice, the bass, and his instrument, the trombone. In this way, while I suggest that Drew's dismissal of Stockhausen's remark as mere revisionism is too simplistic, an observation of the music, and an exploration of the implications of the Lacanian model I am drawing from, would suggest that Stockhausen has expressed a genuine ambiguity in a misleading way.

MICHAELION, especially in its early sketches but also in the final published work, is replete with these explorations of ambiguous language. As early as 1979, almost 20 years before the actual composition of the scene, Stockhausen had noted down the idea of MITTWOCH having 'Versöhnung' (reconciliation) as its theme, and then notes down the idea of 'Ganzes Sprachsystem bilden aus Elementen der Formel(n)' ('form an entire language system out of elements of the formula(s)'), which he then proceeds to illustrate with some examples of what he has in mind: '1 Art Bindewort (und, mit); 2 Arten Hauptwörter; 3 Arten Tätigkeitswörter; 4 Arten Vorwörter' (1 type of conjunction (and, with), 2 types of noun, 3 types of verb, 4 types of prefixes) and so on, listing nine

different types of word.³⁵⁹ The idea is not developed further but it suggests that from the outset Stockhausen saw the domain of language as crucial to achieving reconciliation and unity.

It is in later sketches that this develops into more detailed ideas that encompass both decipherable and indecipherable language interacting, particularly in MICHAELION. In a sketch dated January 1997, by which time the composition of the scene was underway, Stockhausen notes ideas for different, presumably humorous, moments where the Operator's speech, and the speech of members of the chorus, becomes garbled and unintelligible in different ways. A cloth is stuck in the Operator's mouth, while other singers attempt to imitate the muffled noises he then makes; there is a 'dental exercise' (as Stockhausen describes it in English, in the sketch), where members of the choir tilt their heads back as if in a dental chair and others poke fingers into their mouths and ask them questions ('Does it hurt here or there? How does it feel if I do this?'), which the 'dental patients' can now only answer with indecipherable speech.³⁶⁰

A sketch from the year before lists a number of languages and dialects in which the choir members of MICHAELION should sing, which again suggest an incomprehensibility and further hints of humour: 'Niesssprache' (sneezing speech), 'Weinsprache' (wine speech), 'Kölsch' (a Cologne dialect and also the name of a German beer originating from Cologne), 'Konsonanten-Stottern' (consonant stuttering), and so on.³⁶¹ Once again the ambiguous use of language, oscillating between the incomprehensibility of the Real and the comprehensibility of the Symbolic, seems to be a feature of this scene that strives to generate intergalactic harmony, even though many of these ideas were not finally realised in the finished scene. MICHAELION nevertheless still captures the same concept through the role it gives the Operator with his short-wave radio receiver who must translate universal messages, which nobody understands.

³⁵⁹ Karlheinz Stockhausen, "MITTWOCH aus LICHT: Allgemeine Skizzen," (Kürten, Germany: Stockhausen-Archiv), #45.(page dated 6 March 1979)

³⁶⁰ Ibid., #30.(page dated 2 January 1997)

³⁶¹ Ibid., #33.(page dated 27 January 1996)

Ultimately, however, the sense of unity and cooperation does not come through the Operator, whatever hope the intergalactic delegates might have put in him, or at least the music does not place it there. It is, as already noted, instead placed in the Space Sextet that is sung at the end of the scene, while the Operator, newly elected as President of the MICHAELION, is engaging in his role as translator of the cosmic messages that are delivered via his short-wave radio. This is where the notion emerges that the key to balance is found not in Michael and the Symbolic forming some sort of truce with Lucifer and the Real – a truce that is achieved through one disguising itself as the other – but through the totality of the Superformula itself. Michael might in some senses be seen to be the hero of LICHT – indeed Drew describes him as such in the subtitle to his dissertation – and it is indeed Michael's sign, not that of the mediating Eve or the rebel Lucifer, and not even that of their unity in the Wednesday sign, that Stockhausen chose to have on his grave (Figure 6.3):



Figure 6.3: Stockhausen's grave in Kürten, on which the final full Superformula round of the RAUM-SEXTETT from MICHAELION is engraved, with the Michael sign below. A larger version of the Michael sign is also on the reverse side of the gravestone. Stockhausen designed the gravestone himself. (Photo: Ian Parsons, 2017)

Stockhausen's veneration of Michael, this saint to whom he prayed every day, might also to some degree explain his intent to describe him as the true force behind the Luciferian operator of

MICHAELION. The composer's artistic and creative intuition seems to have painted a more complex picture, however, where Lucifer remains a vital, if still indistinct, part of the bringing together of all three.

It is, however, the transience of this union which leaves us with the thought that ultimately there is no final hero at all – just a different array of energies and forces that facilitate the spiralling progress of the human search for meaning. The fact that it is transient and ultimately ungraspable could easily lead those who search for it to abandon that search altogether, and to break the connections of the Fourfold that Heidegger has described as so essential to the human condition and, without which, humanity would cease to be what it is. There is, however, one way to avoid such a catastrophe, to give a sense of substance to this elusive search, and that is to give this ungraspable, unnameable thing a name.

6.2 Light as Master Signifier

'Light' is the name that Stockhausen gives to that which, in LICHT, is ultimately unnameable. 'Light' is constantly mentioned but never overtly present. Its status in the libretto is clearly a venerated one and its equation with God, implied throughout the operas, has been noted explicitly by the composer.³⁶²

Although 'light' is never clearly presented on stage, other than of course through normal uses of stage lighting, and although it is not explicitly represented in the music, in the very early stages of composing LICHT Stockhausen did devise a scene that would make its presence indisputable and, indeed, overwhelming. The scene, which was originally intended for SONNTAG, was to involve Michael and Eve floating into the sun that gradually becomes so dazzlingly bright that no one can look at it directly, and even the audience must shield or close their eyes. After a while the light

³⁶² See, for example, Stockhausen's e-mail interview with Tim Stein from August-October 2005: "Music the most spiritual of the arts," 328. where the composer suggests that 'LICHT is about GOD as *Light* in music.'

fades back to a normal brightness and, in its aftermath, Lucifer, who had been standing at the front of the stage, has been burned by the brightness of the light and is now a smouldering rock in a glowing crater.³⁶³ The scene was never realised and, while Stockhausen's reasons for not including any explicit depiction of light as a distinct event or appearance in LICHT, either scenically or musically, will never be known, it is noteworthy that so central a concept remained ultimately absent, despite the composer having had an early, and quite visually spectacular, idea for depicting it.

Even though Stockhausen did not make an overt representation of 'light' in his final scores or stage directions for LICHT, its lure seems to have proven too great for the producers of the world premiere of SONNTAG at the Cologne Opera 2011 when it appears decisively at the very end of that opera's central scene, LICHT-BILDER (Light-Pictures). Even though 'light' is not one of the 440 items sung by the tenor in the scene's extraordinary chronicling of the minerals, geographical features, plants, animals, elements, saints, deities, expressions of love, bell sounds, astrological features, and religious activities that praise God, its appearance at the end of the scene is unmistakable (See Figure 6.4):



Figure 6.4: The end of LICHT-BILDER in the 2011 world premiere of SONNTAG at the Cologne opera, showing the (non-scripted) decisive appearance of light on stage.

³⁶³ "SONNTAG aus LICHT: Allgemeine Skizzen," (Kürten, Germany: Stockhausen-Archiv), #5.1.(page dated 24 March 1979)

Light is, of course, a prominent feature in many religious stories and belief systems. It is the first thing created in the Judeo-Christian biblical story of creation. Perhaps more importantly for Stockhausen, however, it is central to the theosophical writings of Alice Bailey, whose five-volume *Treatise of the Seven Rays* was of major interest to him as he was developing his ideas for the symbolic and spiritual concepts of LICHT.³⁶⁴

This all-embracing signifier that appears to offer a unified sense of meaning to everything, or that in some way represents a huge chain of signifiers and is seen to bring them together in a single, cohesive narrative, is what Lacan calls the Master Signifier. The Master Signifier is that which comes to stand for something beyond what it really is, taking on a life – and, in both the common and semiotic sense of the word, a significance – beyond the simpler signified-signifier connections of day-to-day language. Master Signifiers arise as the signifying chain continues, as signifiers themselves become signifieds and need new signifiers through which they are expressed. Words develop new meanings beyond that to which their original signification pointed, and so another word is needed to capture this added signification. And so the chain can continue until the Master Signifier is reached, a signifier that attempts to capture a whole chain of signifiers but, as such, spreads its signifying net too widely to have any signifying clarity at all. Signifiers such as God, revered political or monarchical leaders, money, or even the rise of anti-Semitism in 1920s Germany, which provided a single signifier (the Jew) as a symbol to explain a multitude of social, economic, and political difficulties, have been described in various Lacanian-influenced writings as examples of Master Signifiers.³⁶⁵

³⁶⁴ Although the *Urantia Book* is often noted in the literature for its significant influence on Stockhausen, the actual sketches comprise much more material from Bailey's work than from the *Urantia Book*.

³⁶⁵ Slavoj Žižek has written widely about the role of Master Signifier in modern culture. See, for example, Žižek, *Interrogating the Real*, 228-29, where the role of Master Signifier is articulated in relation to a judge's robes that signify law and justice regardless of who is wearing them; or *Less Than Nothing*, 846., which equates the concept of 'Our Nation' with the Master-Signifier's inherent lack of a meaning; or *Absolute Recoil*, 122., which sees in religious edicts, and their proclamation for faith rather than reason in determining what is good and evil, as examples of the Master Signifier at work, or "What can Lenin tell us about freedom today?," *Rethinking Marxism* 13, no. 2 (2001): 6. which suggests that the political narrative of liberalism is in fact an empty, Master-Signifying, term to cover up a lack of personal human autonomy, in a kind of hypnosis that has power simply by its own enunciation.

At the more personal level, Master Signifiers can appear as single terms or phrases or narratives that are used to make sense of what might otherwise seem senseless, or difficult to fathom. A person who has challenging issues in their personal life, such as in their relationships, might attempt to explain away the need to more precisely name, let alone confront, those difficulties by saying that 'it's complicated', a trait that is also commonly seen in the discussion of difficult political issues, such as refugee policy. Master Signifiers in this sense become ways of avoiding deeper interrogation of what might be many issues connected by a vast network of signifiers.

In his introduction to Lacanian theory, Lionel Bailly suggests that Master Signifiers 'usually mask their opposites' and that they are those signifiers that 'have become quite detached from their signifieds, but carry out the function of changing the meaning of the signifying chain into one that supports the ego', a trait that, he says, might become apparent when patients talk about their life and particular phrases constantly appear.³⁶⁶

From this perspective, Michael's narrative in *VISION*, the final scene of *DONNERSTAG*, where he has left the earth and is merging into his oneness with God, illustrate exactly this point. As he associates himself with the 'sons of light' and reflects on his journey to earth, and his life as a human being, the actual pictures of that life are seen on stage as shadows. The Master Signifier 'light', and its associations with God, become a way of explaining what is in fact a life that has held shadows and darkness. Insofar as the childhood of Michael in *DONNERSTAG* reflects the childhood of Stockhausen, a picture begins to emerge of 'light', and with it the notions of a benevolent, powerful, and resplendent God, providing a master-signifying narrative for what has in fact been a troubled start to life. Talking about the goodness and radiance of God becomes a means of, to refer back to Lionel Bailly, 'changing the meaning of the signifying chain'.

³⁶⁶ Bailly, *Lacan*, 62-3. His explanation of the Master-Signifier includes examples of a traumatised girl who continually uses the phrase 'I'm so lucky', or another patient who talks constantly about the demands placed on her by others, using the phrase 'they're really too much', as a way of diverting her own attention away from her own sense of inadequacy (61-2).

Even outside of the Lacanian psychoanalytic framework, this idea that all-encompassing answers are created as a means of disguising a lack of answers is far from novel. It has long been proposed, particularly by atheist scholars and philosophers, including the atheist existentialists, and in a sense by the whole of the post-modern school, that we create global answers to life's unanswerable questions, because we find it so hard to face the possibility that there are in fact no such answers at all. Nietzsche to some extent pre-empted some of this as early as 1887 when, as part of his famous proclamation of the death of God, noted that the acknowledgment of that death places one in a position of contradiction – for him, a contradiction between the past and the future – from which a vast sea, both exciting and terrifying, opens up. For Nietzsche, this is the sea of possibilities to find new knowledge and, within it, to face the dangers that such an exploration entails.³⁶⁷ This could, of course, ultimately mean that old Master Signifiers are simply replaced with new ones, precisely because, to continue with Nietzsche's metaphor, the sea is so vast and it is only human to want to seek a beacon somewhere on its horizon. Indeed, Nietzsche almost anticipates this when he talks about that newly-opened horizon: 'At last the horizon appears free again to us, even granted that it is not bright; at last our ships may venture out again, venture out to face any danger ...'.³⁶⁸ This lack of brightness of the new horizon, opened up by the death of the master-signifying God, and by therefore being 'stretched in the contradiction between today and tomorrow',³⁶⁹ is what, in Lucifer's words, in the third scene of SAMSTAG, enables humans to 'turn [their] countenance towards the light'. That is, the recognition of the lack of a single unifying signifier – a recognition of contradiction, to use Lucifer's words – is what opens the way to create new ones, to turn countenance towards the light.

In my discussion of the Real and Lucifer in Chapter 5, I noted how contradiction is essential to both. When the light is seen as a Master Signifier, however, the implication of Lucifer's words is that the need for such explanations arises from an awareness of the contradictions that lie within the domain of the Real, and an inability to confront these. They cannot be named as they are.

³⁶⁷ See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, 2nd (1887) ed. (London, UK: Penguin Books, 1887/1974), Book V, Section 343.

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

³⁶⁹ Ibid.

Lucifer hinted at the consequences of a naked confrontation with the contradictions inherent in the Real when, in the same scene, he says,

If you have tried out your ten-part face
in all dissonances, grimace rhythms,
it will decay, empty and hollow,
before it resurrects on SUNDAY in the realm of souls
invisible to human eyes.³⁷⁰

In other words, the consequences of that confrontation are devastating – the façade by which the self had been able to prop itself up falls apart. It re-emerges, however, with new Master Signifiers – Sunday is, after all, the day of Symbolic-Michael's and Imaginary-Eve's union, the day which attempts (although fails) to exclude the Real of Lucifer, and the day in which 'light' and 'God' are most celebrated in the entire cycle.³⁷¹

In this sense, then, 'light' as a Master Signifier becomes part of the generation of the ongoing nature of the cycle that is LICHT. Lucifer's words in SAMSTAG suggest that humans must face contradiction in order to be able to turn their attention to Master Signifiers, but in doing so, the pretence of their lives falls away and new Master Signifiers emerge that attempt to disguise or suppress the presence of that contradiction. But just as Lucifer's formula could not be entirely suppressed from SONNTAG, and just as Lucifer still glows faintly on the stage as molten rock in the early idea Stockhausen had for the opera, the contradiction will still always be there, and will always reassert itself and demand to be confronted again, setting the pattern, the spiral, once more, and perpetually, in motion.

This Luciferian caution notwithstanding, the diversity of ways in which 'light' appears throughout the text of LICHT, brings it squarely into the domain of discourse. It is there that it acquires its power

³⁷⁰ Stockhausen, "LUZIFERs TANZ," Ta XXI.

³⁷¹ Stockhausen actually dedicated his opera SONNTAG to God.

as a Master Signifier, because discourse, as Lacan has said, is central to the formation and function of societies. In his Seminar, *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*, he describes the 'Discourse of the Master' as the first of four discourses. The Discourse of the Master is essentially the means by which Master Signifiers exert their power, and are passed on, between people or, more precisely, within a social context. They are socially constructed through the roles people play in relation to one another – a person in authority who speaks, not as themselves but as the authority they signify, to a person who is spoken to, again not as themselves, but as an agent able to carry out or realise what the person in authority has said. That authority, by which the communication is able to exert such power, is the authority of the Master Signifier: the signification of one person or one message, be it as company boss, religious leader, dominant male or patriotic slogan, that redefines other people as functions of the first. In this way, then, the humble worker on the factory floor, the simple member of a church congregation, the oppressed female, or the obedient citizen, cease to be simply their individual selves, but rather become agents of the company, church, gender dynamics, and the nation. Master Signifiers, then, through the Discourse of the Master, redefine how people are identified within the context of their social positioning.³⁷²

This is, indeed, what anthropological historian Yuval Noah Harari is speaking of when he describes the ways in which the *homo sapiens* species has been able to organise in large numbers, giving it an advantage over the other human species that had existed alongside one another for thousands and thousands of years until, from around 30,000 years ago until around 13,000 years ago all those species, other than *homo sapiens*, were extinguished. Harari argues that this is because *homo sapiens* were able to communicate in collective fictions – especially those of religion, money, nationhood, the law, human rights – none of which actually exist, he argues, other than as fictional stories to which people attach themselves, believe in, and organise around.³⁷³ That is (although Harari does not use the Lacanian term to describe what he is referring to) the Discourse of the Master adopts the Master Signifiers to enable people to come together with a common identity such as faith in an unseeable god or commerce with money that in itself is nothing other than

³⁷² Lacan, *The other side of psychoanalysis*, 11-28.

³⁷³ Yuval Noah Harari, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* (London, UK: Vintage Books, 2011).

pieces of paper (or, indeed in a modern and increasingly virtual world, mostly computer digits) or notions of justice and nationhood: 'Yet none of these things exists outside the stories that people invent and tell one another. There are no gods in the universe, no nations, no money, no human rights, no laws and no justice outside the common imagination of human beings.'³⁷⁴

In LICHT, this Discourse of the Master is realised constantly through the characters of Michael, Eve, and Lucifer, characterised and expressed through the ubiquitous references to light in the libretto and through the fact that even the complete names of each of the operas refer to it – MONTAG aus LICHT, DIENSTAG aus LICHT, and so on – as if the days that characterise each opera themselves have their identity only by virtue, and as derivatives, of 'light'. It never, however, appears and, as noted, it does not even have an individual musical representation. Like Harari's gods and nations and money, it exists only as a construct. It is developed only through the signification that the characters create for it. Each of its characters, at some stage or other, have something to say about it. As such, it suggests that Master Signifiers interact with all the domains of personality, even though, as signifiers, they might be thought to relate only to the register in which signifiers are located, the Symbolic. The fact that all of LICHT's characters refer to light, however, suggests that the Discourse of the Master, however, is a discourse with which the entire psyche is engaged. I have already discussed how a confrontation with the naked and contradictory Real generates the need for new Master Signifiers, but in LICHT the Imaginary of Eve connects with it as well. Eve's role in helping to generate an understanding of the Master Signifier is suggested in the lines the male choir sing to her when, as Cœur de Basset, she seductively plays the basset horn in the third Act of MONTAG: 'You collect the formula's limbs, distribute anew, heal the world through the unification of EVE's body-thirds and MICHAEL's soul-fourths, help the proper understanding of LIGHT'.³⁷⁵ Here, the implication is that the unifying and identifying domain of the Imaginary enables a person to make sense of the Discourse of the Master, and to integrate it meaningfully into their image of themselves.

³⁷⁴ Ibid., 31.

³⁷⁵ Stockhausen, "EVAs ZAUBER," XVII.

In this way, through the Imaginary taking on the role of enabling an understanding of the Master Signifier, it makes it possible for this signifier to have the appearance of a connection to a signified. It is, however, a false sense as Slavoj Žižek has suggested when he writes of the Master Signifier as the signifier that has become 'that tiny, senseless scrap of the real, [which] is the signified.'³⁷⁶ The Master Signifier becomes, as such, a fusion of the signifier and the signified. Insofar as there is a signifier-signified relationship between the Symbolic and the Imaginary, it is therefore not surprising that the veneration of light-God is so strong in SONNTAG, the day of Symbolic-Michael's and Imaginary-Eve's union and where the boundaries between them have broken down the most, and where the temptation to depict 'light' visually on stage appeared almost too hard to resist, both to the producers of the world premiere in Cologne, and to Stockhausen himself with his initial, but ultimately abandoned, idea to blind his audience with light.³⁷⁷

The light that gives LICHT its name is, then, at the same time both an illusion of the Imaginary and an ultimate, but empty, manifestation of the Symbolic. It has no presence and no music. It is an intrinsically deceptive lure, but a necessary one that, just like the *objet petit a* of the Superformula, is nevertheless a vital part of propelling the perpetual motion of the spiral that for Stockhausen characterised not only the cycle of LICHT, but the universe itself.

The notion of that spiral being reflected in human personality, and therefore of applying the concepts that Stockhausen created in his music and saw as reflections of his perception of God and the universe, is in keeping with the principle of 'self-similarity' to which I referred in Chapter 3. There I noted Jerome Kohl's references to it as very central to Stockhausen thinking and music.³⁷⁸ These self-similar patterns, structures, and interactions appear across many planes. They are evident in the relationships and reflections between the music, the symbolism of its staging, the

³⁷⁶ Slavoj Žižek, *The Most Sublime Hysteric: Hegel with Lacan* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2014), 32. Some of the examples that Žižek gives in making this point is that ways in which the arbitrary person of Napoleon becomes 'spirit of the world' or that Christ 'that unfortunate individual, crucified between two criminals, is God.' In other words, an otherwise insignificant signifier becomes fused with a much more all-encompassing signified.

³⁷⁷ See Chapter 3 for my more detailed analysis of SONNTAG and of how the fused relationship of Michael and Eve is expressed musically. I initially discuss the signifier-signified associations of Michael as Symbolic and Eve as Imaginary in Chapter 2.

³⁷⁸ Kohl, *Zeitmaße*, 4.

religious and theosophical texts and concepts that informed these, and the cosmos as Stockhausen understood it to operate. In all these domains the forces of Michael, Eve, and Lucifer are constantly alive and interacting in their drive towards consolidating their relationships ultimately into Heideggerian oneness and Stockhausenian light. So too do these same forces replicate themselves in human personality. Stockhausen suggested such a link between the individual, the spiritual, and the universal in a letter to his daughter Suja in 1969 where, in describing the reflection of the spiritual in the human he said, 'God is simply the I [das ICH] of the entire universe.'³⁷⁹ The Lacanian concept of Master Signifier helps explain the nature of the role of the light of LICHT, within this 'I' of the universe, at its level of human personality, and the part that it plays in propelling the drive understanding the nature of being. Light gives a name to the unnameable thing that is searched for and in that way enables people to believe that it is there and that the search is worthy. The real purpose of the search so is more buried than this – not in the name of the Master Signifier, but in the namelessness that lies deep beneath it. This is *objet petit a*

6.3 The Superformula as Lacanian *objet petit a*

Insofar as the totality of the Superformula represents the totality of the human psyche it therefore contains the key to the phenomenology of being which, by definition, is located within human consciousness: returning to the point made at the very beginning of this thesis about the inescapable nature of reality being perceived only and totally from within the confines of human consciousness. The paradox that this creates, as the search to understand the essential nature of human being is itself thwarted by the constraints of that very being will mean that the full understanding of the nature of being will always be rendered elusive by its own phenomenology. The curiosity that drives that search, though, seems an inexorable part of being human, insofar as the questions to which it gives rise are asked across cultures, throughout millennia – only, it seems, by humans and ubiquitously so, whatever answers, religious, philosophical, ideological,

³⁷⁹ Karlheinz Stockhausen, "An Suja," in *Texte zur Musik Band 3 1963-1970* ed. Dieter Schnebel (Cologne, Germany: DuMont, 1971), 296 (trans. Ian Parsons)

political, that curiosity might generate. It leads to an unescapable bind: it is of human nature to seek to understand its own being, but the nature of that being is such that it can never be understood. This search for understanding the phenomenology of being is, I suggest, so fundamental a drive in the human condition that it can be described through reference to the Lacanian *objet petit a*.

In his book *Music and the Crises of the Modern Subject*, Michael Klein describes the *objet petit a* as that for which a person fruitlessly searches. He says it is 'like the ring in Wagner's tetralogy', the desire for which drives people but which 'cannot fulfil the promise of power, satisfaction, and wholeness' that they seek within or from it.³⁸⁰ He goes on to suggest that approaching the *objet petit a*, or 'closing the circuit of desire' as he describes it, rather than leading to fulfillment, in fact leads to madness or death.

While Klein draws a parallel with Wagner's ring, Lacanian analyst, translator and editor Bruce Fink rather equates the *objet petit a* with 'that shiny, glittering, quintessentially fascinating thing Alcibiades saw in Socrates that raised the latter to a position of dignity above all other potential partners (it might be understood, in one sense, as desirousness itself).'³⁸¹ It is the 'thingness', in the sense of being a 'special something', of the *objet petit a* that especially distinguishes it – that is, that it is something that can't quite be named, a signified without a signifier. It is something that can be perceived by the drive or desire to which it gives rise but cannot in itself be realised or grasped.

In this sense, Klein's equation of the *objet petit a* with the ring of Wagner's tetralogy is to some extent misleading. It is not so much the ring itself that is the cause of desire, but that which lies beneath it: the drive for power and, more deeply, whatever it is within the psyches of the characters that craves power so much. The untouchability of the *objet petit a* is perhaps even more apparent in the ring of J R R Tolkien's trilogy, *The Lord of the Rings*, where there the ring is craved by everyone but the reasons it is craved are never clearly articulated. It is craved not only by the

³⁸⁰ Klein, *Crisis of the Modern Subject*, 13.

³⁸¹ Fink, *Lacan on Love*, 47.

powerful spirit Sauron as his means of controlling the world, but by the lowly hobbit Sméagol, who becomes the wasted and pathetic Gollum whose lust for the ring destroys him even though what he seeks from it is never clear to the reader or, seemingly, to him.

Within the context of LICHT, the Superformula operates in a similar way. The Superformula is not so much the equivalent of Wagner's or Tolkien's rings but more of that which lies beneath them. The reasons for its importance, the reasons why the music is always drawn to it, are never explicitly explained in the operas, nor is it ever named. It is a compositional device rather than a character, although this would by no means be reason not to name it in the operas' libretti in which self-referential phrases appear very often. When Michael sings about his reasons for coming to Earth, and about the connections of angels and humans, at the end of DONNERSTAG, he sings 'that is the meaning of DONNERSTAG aus LICHT'. The libretto of the third scene of SONNTAG opens with the tenor simply singing the name of the piece 'LICHT-BILDER dritte Szene vom SONNTAG aus LICHT' ('LICHT-PICTURES from SUNDAY from LIGHT'). Parts of the musical structure are referred to openly in the text, as in LICHTER-WASSER, the opening scene of SONNTAG, where, after the 'fourth bridge' (musical interludes connecting the various 'waves', as Stockhausen calls them, of the Michael and Eve formulas that play throughout the piece) is played and applause, written into the score, is heard, the soprano sings (in German): 'After such rousing applause we will respond appropriately and – at no extra cost – will play this fourth bridge of LIGHTS-WATERS one more time. Ready?'³⁸² In his later cycle, KLANG (SOUND) (2004-2007) Stockhausen goes even further with self-referential texts where, in the final work of the cycle to be composed, PARADIES (2007) for flute and electronic music, the electronic layer of music includes the voice of Kathinka Pasveer singing a text that simply describes the musical structure of the piece, including details of the structure of its pitches and their relationship to the 24-note tone row on which all of KLANG is based. It would therefore in no way be odd for Stockhausen to have named the Superformula in LICHT, given how central it is to the work in every sense, shaping the

³⁸² Stockhausen, "LICHTER-WASSER," XL.

musical dimensions of the operas, capturing the essence of its three characters, and providing the means by which the themes of the operas are conveyed and developed.

The Superformula is not only central to LICHT, it is its genesis and it represents its ultimate cohesion through the totality of its structure. It is in the Superformula that the overall serial completeness of the work is expressed from the initial distribution of the three twelve-tone rows that formed the Sudoku-like square of its structure.³⁸³ The completeness that is consolidated in the Superformula can be gleaned from Stockhausen's own relationship with it, particularly in terms of its place in the overall history of his oeuvre. It represents an integration of many of his stylistic outputs as a composer. On the one hand, the structure and stricture of integral serialism is contained in its stringent (though diverse) ordering of a range of musical parameters (pitch, duration, dynamics, tempi, attack/decay, etc) both within and between its three layers and its seven limbs. On the other hand, it also includes the freedom enabled by the ornamentation and various 'modulations', 'coloured noises', and 'coloured silences', as Stockhausen called those parts of the Superformula that generate music where greater flexibility of interpretation is possible. It is as if this is what he was looking for right from those very early experiments with electronic sound, in the Etude and Studies of the early 1950s, where he was constantly seeking to bring a kind of organic vitality into serial composition – he wanted his sounds to be alive and, in being so, to be capable of behaving in unexpected ways: not so much despite, as within, the overall formality of serialism.

This combination of form and freedom reflects Stockhausen's entire approach to serialism, which he saw not as something that provided him with a rigid compositional recipe, but with a basic structure which he then had to work with creatively. As Robin Maconie puts it, 'For Stockhausen [...] the art of composing consists in working the products of serial inspiration into shape, not just accepting the outcome of a game of serial roulette.'³⁸⁴ Maconie contrasts this to the more determinative aspects of John Cage's music, who used chance operations that nevertheless, once formed (usually through a system of coin tosses), would then determine precisely the content of a

³⁸³ See Chapter 1 for my explanation of this.

³⁸⁴ Maconie, "Saving Faith," 13.

musical work. Of all Stockhausen's formula-based compositions, the Superformula of LICHT is the supreme example of this integration of the serial and the spontaneously creative. It contains many more elements of spontaneity than do the formulas of earlier works.³⁸⁵ These elements are found not only its modulations, coloured noises, and coloured silences, but also in the Superformula's use of echoes, pre-echoes, ornamentation, and various other elaborations of the music that lie outside the initial serial structure but are incorporated into the formulas and so, by that means, ultimately become a part of the serial process.

The scores of LICHT are constant explorations of these and other possibilities of the Superformula, always through pulling its components parts apart in different ways, developing them in different directions, offering different degrees of freedom and choice to the performers, and always in the process creating the various tensions and ambiguities that I have described throughout this study. The serial totality of the original Superformula, and of the nuclear notes from which it is formed, is always lacking other than in this one brief moment at the end of MITTWOCH.³⁸⁶ In this way it represents a resolution, a consolidation, that always drives the music but is never clearly identified. It is the cause of the music's momentum, its formal energy, music that retains those tensions and generates those ambiguities that are only ultimately resolved in the Superformula and are themselves generated by the Superformula. It is in this sense of the Superformula as the unnamed element that lies beneath the music's drive for resolution that I liken it to the Lacanian concept of the *objet petit a*.

In the context of the human psyche this has the most profound of implications. In the realm of the Fourfold as a construct that describes the human search to understand the nature of its own being, this totality of the Superformula, that can never be named, is ultimately analogous to the elusive

³⁸⁵ See, for example, MANTRA (1970), INORI (1974), HARLEKIN and DER KLEINE HARLEKIN (1975), SIRIUS (1977), and IN FREUNDSCHAFT (1977).

³⁸⁶ It is in this setting of the full Superformula at the end of MITTWOCH, that the libretto comes closest to naming the Superformula, where the words, 'Formeln für Töne Geräusche aus LICHT' ('formulas for tones noises from LIGHT') and 'Liebe auf ewig zu singen in sorgfältiger Formel-Musik' ('to sing love forever in meticulous formula music') are set as part of the Space Sextet's final round (Stockhausen, "MICHAELION," VII.). This is not precisely a naming of the Superformula (or 'Superformel' as Stockhausen named it in German), but it is certainly a quite explicit description of it.

nature of being itself – the concept that even Heidegger who had devoted his life to understanding it could still only name by inventing a new word for it: Seyn in German, or Beyng in English. It is, then, that nameless thing that lies beneath and propels all the drives of human desire – the search to keep looking for that thing which, though it might seem to be defined in anything from the red sports car that a man facing a mid-life crisis might think he desires, or the Master-signifying promises of religion and political ideology, is ultimately always out of grasp, precisely because it has nothing to signify it. In this sense, even though the Superformula obviously is a 'thing' (it is a page of clearly notated music, after all) its function, and its concept, in LICHT very much accords with that of the *objet petit a*, which in this case equates to that unnameable concept of Heideggerian beyng. This, I suggest, is why even in the RAUM-SEXTETT it cannot ultimately be grasped – we hear a transposed version of it, and we seem to be very close to it, but we are not quite there and, in any event, it is gone before we have scarcely had a chance to hear it.

Klein's image of closing a circuit is to some extent invoked by the way in which the final Superformula is arrived at through the 'rotations' of the six singers that the score requires of them between each round of the formulas – that is, they move in a circular motion on the perimeter of the audience, as with each successive iteration of the Superformula, the formulas are transferred from voice to voice as the formula elaborates. This might not sound like an approach to madness, but the link to death is not too far away when that is the music that Stockhausen chose for his gravestone.

To understand why the Superformula exerts such power throughout LICHT, driving the music as it does, reference has to be made to Stockhausen's own development as a composer, his roots in the serialism of 1950s Darmstadt, and his own drive for the totality, balance and organic vitality within the structures of serialism, to which I have already referred.

The characters of LICHT do not crave the Superformula, but the totality that is contained in the Superformula is always lacking in the music because of the absence of the complete Superformula throughout the operas, other than its near appearance in the RAUM-SEXTETT. Because of this

'special somethingness', its inability to be identified, and because the search for it is always elusive, the resolutions that each opera appears to arrive at are always incomplete and ambiguous. There is always something lacking: just as there is always something lacking when the person things that have found what they desire, but the actual *objet petit a* that drives that desire remains unfulfilled. The lack always remains. Stockhausen provides a glimpse of the answer to what that lack is when he brings that moment of unity at the end of MITTWOCH through composing this version of the full Superformula into the music for that one brief moment, but it is only a brief moment and, while the closure of the circuit of desire may have been able to find a final resting place on Stockhausen's gravestone, with the Superformula even closer there to its original form through being transposed back to its original pitch, in the opera it is gone in an instant and the perpetual spiral of LICHT continues its motion. Just as the nature of being appears almost within reach, it vanishes again.

Stockhausen's own ambivalence about the concept of true wholeness, where all the strands of being can be integrated and coexist, was something he expressed as early as 1961, where he notes his belief both in its necessity and in its impossibility:

Some people are called to spend their entire lives discovering and inventing the new. Other people stand up to preserve and protect what already exists. Both belong together and it is only together that they form the whole. It seems to me that it is impossible, for a person to balance both the creative and the preservative within themselves – just as it is impossible to be a man and a woman at the same time. [...] To bring the *revolutionary and the conservative powers of the spirit into balance* will always be the necessary duty. True Utopia is the balance.³⁸⁷

These are, of course, only Stockhausen's views regarding the relationship between revolutionary and conservative thinking, a relationship that he sees as an irreconcilable polarity. Nevertheless,

³⁸⁷ "Erfindung und Entdeckung: Ein Beitrag zur Form-Genese," in *Texte zur Musik Band 1 1952-1962*, ed. Dieter Schnebel (Cologne, Germany: DuMont Buchverlag, 1961/1963), 257-58 (trans. Ian Parsons)

and although written some 16 years before he began composing LICHT, and over 30 years before he composed MITTWOCH, these words express a sentiment that is in many ways captured in the work. It is a sentiment particularly evident as the competing forces of Michael and Lucifer, who themselves have been presented in the operas, especially in JAHRESLAUF, the first Act of DIENSTAG, as the respective champions of progress and preservation, seek resolution and balance.³⁸⁸ It reflects a view that sees the integration of difference into the oneness of the complete and ideal human that Stockhausen strived to inspire in his music. This, again, recalls his notion of the spiral, as a Utopian and unachievable goal and yet there is a duty to continue to strive for it, and in LICHT that duty, and the drive that it generates, comes from and is propelled by the Superformula itself and its profound connection with what it means to be human.

The yearning for an integration of the explicable and inexplicable, the imagined, the symbolised, and the resistant, strands of human nature, can, indeed, be seen as a natural outcome of Stockhausen's life more generally. It was a life that had begun so traumatically with the mental illness and ultimate death of his mother as a victim of the Nazi 'euthanasia' program, the death of his father in battle during the war, and then Stockhausen's own frequent exposure to death as a stretcher-bearer at a military hospital in his youth.³⁸⁹ Despite these traumas, however, Stockhausen was, from his childhood through until his death, deeply religious and, while the nature of his beliefs changed from the Catholicism of his early years to a more eclectic spiritualism that incorporated many religious and theosophical belief systems in his later years, his views were always extraordinarily optimistic, characterised by a conviction of the goodness of God and of the universe. Beyond this apparent disparity between the traumatic start to Stockhausen's life and his optimism about God and the cosmos were the unconventional mix of beliefs and lifestyles that characterised him personally. His life embraced not only this huge and deep spirituality, but also a

³⁸⁸ I discuss these respective roles of Michael and Lucifer as championing and resisting progress in Chapter 4, in my analysis of their relationship in DIENSTAG.

³⁸⁹ These experiences of Stockhausen's exposure to death as a young man during the war were often noted by Stockhausen in interviews, and recounted in some detail by his second wife, Mary Bauermeister, in her autobiographical account of their life together. See Mary Bauermeister, *Ich hänge im Triolenglitter: Mein Leben mit Karlheinz Stockhausen* (Aalen, Germany: Random House, 2011), 43.

very carnal existence as a man, with a lively sexuality that is expressed not only in the many sexual references in his music, but has also been sometimes described in accounts of his life.³⁹⁰

Stockhausen did not himself talk publicly about these aspects of his personal life as involving any conflict with his religious beliefs and so speculation on this matter is only that – speculation. Indeed, his frequent integration of spiritual and erotic imagery into his works suggests that perhaps for him it was not a tension so much as a union of different aspects of the same whole, and that whatever tensions may have arisen from his initial Catholicism were ultimately resolved as he developed a more expansive spirituality that embraced many aspects of eroticism and lively sexuality.³⁹¹ He did, however, voice some of the tension between the conservatism of his religious heritage as a Catholic and his own urge towards the new, along with his profound desire to solve that tension, when, in 1951, he wrote to his friend and fellow composer, Karel Goeyvaerts,

As Catholics, we are conservative beings. That comes from the hierarchic order. More and more, I feel how in my life the apparent contradiction between that conservatism and a longing for the future, the new or even primeval is to be solved. That will be the task. That is the Luther problem in our occidental world, the spiritual problem of the modern era altogether, and especially the artistic problem. I feel it very clearly all around me.³⁹²

All of this points to a drive, a desire, for integration of disparate and sometimes conflicting experiences and worldviews that were a central part of Stockhausen's life. It therefore follows that some of this search for integration would be apparent in his music, and certainly the Superformula, with its depiction of the noble stability of Michael, the formative sensuality of Eve, and the erratic

³⁹⁰ Many of the stories about Stockhausen's reportedly active libido are, to some extent, hearsay, albeit often relayed by people who knew him personally. In the absence of a rigorous and verifiably sourced biography of Stockhausen's life, these stories will remain so and for this reason I do not relay them in any detail here. However, some of these aspects of his life are included in Mary Bauermeister's autobiography where, for example, she recounts the tensions Stockhausen faced when, as an initially devout Catholic, he sought both divorce and a second marriage. See *ibid.*

³⁹¹ This aspect of his music is apparent through much of LICHT with its plethora of sexualised imagery, but is also presented in a more concentrated and focused form in his six-part vocal work, STIMMUNG (1967) in which holy names from world religions intermingle with Stockhausen's own erotic poetry, integrated and harmonised through a system of overtone singing based on a single B flat fundamental.

³⁹² Karlheinz Stockhausen, letter to Karel Goeyvaerts, Hamburg, 10 August 1951 in Karlheinz Stockhausen and Karel Goeyvaerts, *Karel Goeyvaerts - Karlheinz Stockhausen: Briefwechsel/Correspondence 1951-1958*, trans. Jayne Obst (Kürten, Germany: Stockhausen-Verlag, 2017), 217.

subversion of Lucifer, and capturing exactly that integration of those disparities through the integrated wholeness of its serial structure.

That Stockhausen ultimately found, or at least came closest to finding, a sense of resolution to these challenges through his work as a composer in some ways parallels Lacan's concept of the *sinthome*, which he explores particularly in his Seminar of 1975-76. There Lacan examines the writings of James Joyce, and especially of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. Lacan's analysis proposes that it was through his writing that Joyce was able to obtain an equilibrium between the registers of Symbolic, Imaginary, and Real in a personality that, according to Lacan, was probably on the edge of psychosis and therefore in danger of having those registers totally unravel.³⁹³ In this way, Lacan suggests that Joyce's writing functions as a *sinthome*, but in a way that is functional and, in that respect, healthy. *Sinthome* is simply the original French word for 'symptom', but in this later stage of his writings, Lacan saw these 'symptoms' serving a positive function in maintaining a degree of equilibrium within a psyche that might otherwise collapse in the dysfunctionality of psychosis. In the Seminar on the *sinthome*, Lacan goes so far as to describe it as a fourth ring in the Borromean Knot, helping to hold the others together when they might otherwise disconnect from each other. If this notion is applied to Stockhausen as a composer, it would suggest that not only the act of composing, but the actual music he composes, like the text that Joyce writes, act as the means of maintaining psychological health and internal cohesion. Stockhausen's composition of the Superformula may have provided this cohesion for him as a composer, but he must then constantly deploy it in ways that leave it fragmented and unresolved throughout the operas because there, where the strands of the Superformula and therefore the characters of the opera are the components of human personality that seek to understand and consolidate the nature of being, to resolve the irresolvable space between earth-dwelling mortals and sky-fairing gods, their resolution within LICHT must always be at least to some extent elusive or else there would be no more of it to write. Although Stockhausen ultimately completed composing LICHT, his notions of

³⁹³ This is a brief outline of an analysis of Joyce, and of the role of his writing, that Lacan delivers at some length in his 1975-76 Seminar (Jacques Lacan, *The Sinthome – The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XXIII*, trans. A R Price, Seminar of Jacques Lacan (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2016).

the work as an eternal spiral require that it never really finds, or at least is not able to hold onto, the resolution it seeks. This is where the role of the music, as opposed to the functionality of composing it, shifts from the *sinthome* that maintains psychic equilibrium to the *objet petit a* that constantly drives the desire to seek and to understand. In this way, a close relationship can be seen between Stockhausen's relationship with the Superformula and the Superformula's role throughout LICHT. A recognition of both helps understand how the Superformula is both a *sinthome* for Stockhausen and an *objet petit a* for LICHT.

This desire, and the drive in which it manifests, is not always overtly palpable, however, as the Superformula is deployed throughout the operas of LICHT. There is not necessarily a manifest sense of a lack in the music, or that it needs resolution. Even though the Superformula, other than at the end of MITTWOCH, always appears fragmented and incomplete, there is not a constant thread of unfulfilled drive weaving noticeably throughout the work. Nevertheless, it is there and sometimes it is precisely its covert nature that provides the key to understanding it. The discussions that are invariably had about where LICHT begins and ends, discussions that are never resolved and never silenced despite Stockhausen's own numerous claims that the work has neither beginning nor end, reflect a failure to see that thread of unfulfilled drive that is always present and that always propels the work onwards, leaving the end of one opera with the need for another to begin. This is because of the constant presence of the unobtained *objet petit a* of the Superformula, contrasted to the audience's fanciful hope that a resolution has been, or can be, found.

The sense that an audience member might have at the end of any of the operas is, of course, largely subjective. Audiences will leave the theatre after DONNERSTAG and hear things other than the loneliness enmeshed in nobility that I have described in the five trumpets playing the nuclear notes of the Michael formula from the rooftops of buildings around the theatre. They will experience things other than a sense of uncertainty about whether the abduction of the children into the sky at the end of MONTAG is a good thing or a bad thing. Many will be oblivious to the subliminal presence of Lucifer in the bass line beneath the final celebrations of Michael's and Eve's

union at the end of SONNTAG. None of this, however, lessens the ambiguity – it simply points to the varying degrees of consciousness that people might have of it. The ambiguity is not in the audience's perceptions but in the music itself and in its ubiquitous lack of the completed Superformula which drives its musical momentum, regardless of how apparent it is. This is indeed the nature of the *objet petit a*: because it is unnamed, because of its tendency to be 'that special something' that drives desire without being able to be clearly identified, its presence – or, more precisely, the constant presence of its absence -will always be covert. This constant covertness is partly what makes the search for fulfilling its drive always fruitless. This is why even the sextet's singing of their version of the Superformula ultimately dissipates, because it is the drive itself that is powerful, not the signifiers with which it appears to be invested. In this sense the version of the Superformula sung by the sextet, transposed and elongated, again becomes analogous to the rings of Wagner and Tolkien. None of them survive. The ring itself has to be destroyed in fire in both Wagner's and Tolkien's works, just as the sung version of the Superformula falls apart after it has barely formed in LICHT. And just as there is an endless cycle in LICHT, this is arguably so in *The Ring* too where, at the end of *Götterdämmerung* the only principle characters left alive are the ones with whom the cycle began at the beginning of *Das Rheingold*: the Rhinemaidens and Alberich. Both works, from this perspective, reinforce the perpetual force of the *objet petit a*. Even when that which appears to manifest it seems to be captured and conquered, it only reforms itself anew. It reflects what Robin Maconie sees as an insatiable link to 'the reality of suffering', and the constant part it plays in the creative cycle, in Stockhausen's music where,

In order to seek and experience the reality of harmony one has to start from presumptions of difference and separation which are liberating but also painful. Certainly it is not just about aesthetics. The constants of musical tone and rhythm, like the fixities of religious ritual, derive their absolute reality and substantive force in direct relation to opposing tendencies in nature to disorder and decay. Their message is: 'Whatever happens, these things continue'.³⁹⁴

³⁹⁴ Maconie, "Saving Faith," 18.

In other words, courses of destruction and construction are inevitable, and one cannot, in Stockhausen's spiritually-driven musical universe, exist with the other. Perhaps the polarities of conservatism and revolution of which he spoke in the quote above are not mutually exclusive, but in fact interdependent and therefore the tension between them is essential and ongoing. Lacan's *objet petit a* is itself a driver of that force by its constant reminder of a lack, and the constant but always unsatisfied desire that persistently orients its subject towards filling it. For Stockhausen's music, one might deduce from Maconie, that fulfillment might come in moments of serial completeness, but it will always fall apart again in this perpetual tendency to 'disorder and decay'.

In LICHT, however, the drive of the *objet petit a* is always subliminal, as the music always only hints at its own incompleteness: an incompleteness that consists in the lack of the full Superformula and of the integral totality that it alone entails. This is something that, rather than being overt as it is in Wagner's tetralogy and its constant references to the ring, in LICHT is only discovered through the study of the music – through, one might say, its analysis. In this sense, the musicological analysis of LICHT becomes something of a parallel to the psychoanalytic analysis of a human subject. In both cases, the drive that weaves its way through, that always leaves its subject incomplete but, because, of the incompleteness, also enables movement onwards, is only decipherable by looking beneath the surface and moving, through analysis, closer to understanding what the causes and objects of the drive really are.

In this way, and surprisingly given Stockhausen's lack of association with atheist French existentialism, LICHT's message of the pursuit of light ends up being almost identical to that of Albert Camus's account of myth of Sisyphus, condemned by the gods to forever push a huge boulder up a mountain, only for it to roll back down again each time it reaches the top:

I leave Sisyphus at the foot of the mountain! One always finds one's burden again. But Sisyphus reaches the higher fidelity that negates the gods and raises rocks. He, too, concludes, that all is well. This universe henceforth without a master seems to him neither

sterile nor futile. Each atom of that stone, each mineral flake of that night-filled mountain, in itself forms a world. The struggle itself towards the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy.³⁹⁵

The human search to understand the phenomenology of being can reach great heights, as it approaches the *objet petit a* of the RAUM-SEXTETT's fleeting touch of the Superformula, but it will always return again to the hard realities of KINDHEIT. It is, however a cycle, a spiral, that for Stockhausen, as for Camus, is a happy one because it generates again, and then again, the opportunity to rediscover what lies between the earth and the sky.

³⁹⁵ Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, trans. Justin O'Brien (London, UK: Penguin Books, 1975), 89.

Chapter 7: ... and in the end they lived happily ever after

Two forces rule the universe: light and gravity.³⁹⁶

If LICHT's point is that, in climbing towards the light of the skies, the gravity of the earth will always bring us back down again, its message is ultimately neither more nor less than that of the which philosopher Simone Weil ascribed to the universe itself. What, though, does this say of those three archetypes, Michael, Eve, and Lucifer, that lived once upon a time in that universe? Did they live happily ever after?

The aim of this research, in seeking to understand how LICHT can be interpreted as a commentary on the phenomenology of being has been mostly about understanding the nature of Michael, Eve, and Lucifer, and of the ways in which they live not only in the universe but also in the daily lives of human beings. But in answering that question, the question of happiness ever after – their happiness and human happiness more generally – has perhaps been answered too. This concluding chapter of the thesis will crystallise those answers, as well as suggesting where else they might lead in future research.

7.1 The complex elusiveness of the simple oneness

The relationships of Michael, Eve, and Lucifer throughout LICHT, constantly in a state of flux where their connections are continually formed and reformed, defined and redefined, where they come together and fall apart and reorient themselves anew, suggest that the core nature of the human mind, engaged with the earth and skies, with mortals and gods, is much more complex than the

³⁹⁶ Simone Weil, *Gravity and Grace*, trans. Emma Crawford and Mario von der Ruhr (New York, USA: Routledge, 1947/2002), 1.

simple oneness that Heidegger suggests ultimately constitutes the Fourfold. The changing nature of those relationships, exemplified in the huge variety of ways in which Stockhausen worked with the layers and limbs of the Superformula, and the plethora of compositional outcomes he was able to generate when he did so, paints an equally complex and dynamic portrait of the human condition, when those formulas are linked to strands of human personality, as I have done through my reference to Lacan's registers throughout this thesis.

The music of LICHT suggests that it is the complexity of these relationships that makes the search for simple oneness of Heidegger's Fourfold so elusive. It is a oneness which, precisely because it is elusive, remains unknown other than as a concept, but even the concept is elusive. Ultimately even Heidegger could only refer to it through allusions and metaphors – those of mortals dwelling on earth, building houses and bridges, looking towards skies and gods – just as in Stockhausen's opera cycle it could also only be alluded to through the Master Signifier of 'light': the unreachable thing which, like the mountain top was for Sisyphus, is never really attained. It is the drive for it, though, embedded in the depths of the unnamed and unfulfilled promise of the Superformula's integral oneness, that keeps the search going, vibrant, spiral, optimistic. It is a spiral that can to some extent be represented in the following graphic, where Stockhausen's themes, and those that have been layered onto them through the interpretation offered throughout this thesis, are shown in of the operas as they lead onto one another within the framework of Lacan's Borromean Knot (Figure 7.1):

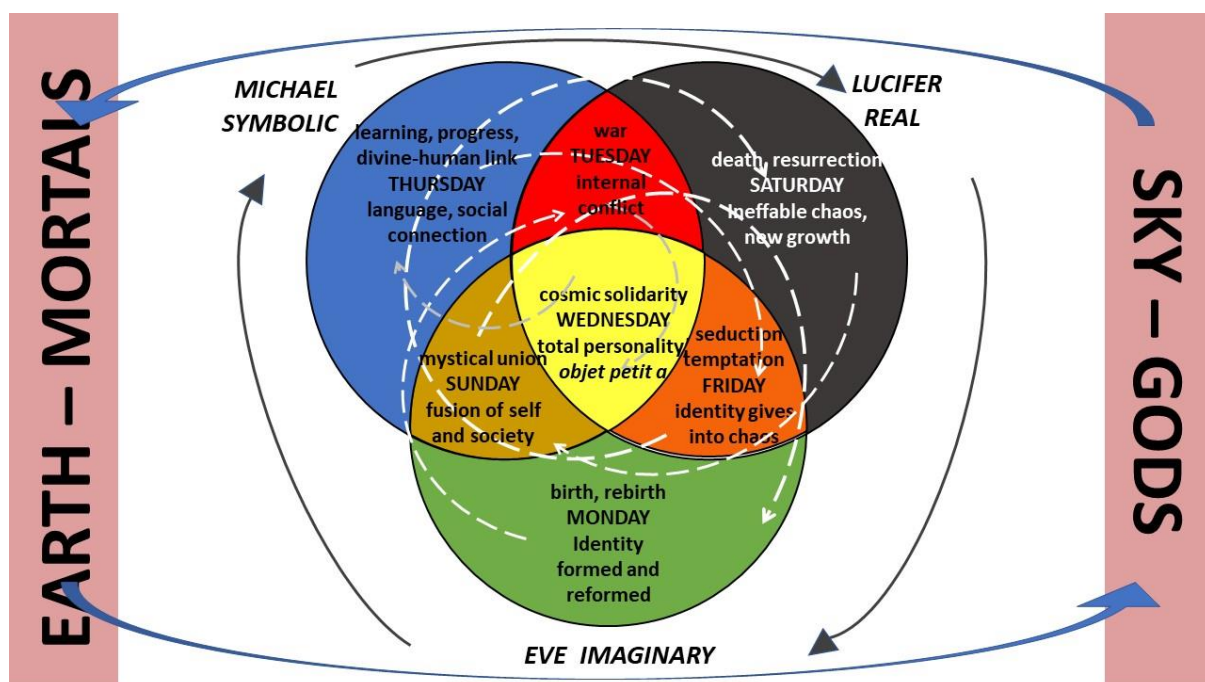


Figure 7.1: The LICHT spiral, showing the days of the week with Stockhausen's themes and those of Lacan, interconnected as each day flows onto the next.

7.2 The research questions and their answers

My primary research question was this:

How can Lacanian psychoanalysis and Heidegger's Fourfold theory be used to interpret Stockhausen's LICHT as commentary on the phenomenology of being?

Through the application of Lacan's three registers of Symbolic, Imaginary, and Real to LICHT's core characters Michael, Eve, and Lucifer, an interpretation of LICHT is enabled where those characters can be seen as three strands of a single, abstracted, human personality that is seeking to understand the nexus of being that Heidegger characterises in his notion of the Fourfold. That nexus is one that involves an essential human curiosity about the way in which the confinements in the space and time of everyday life relate to the nature of what it means 'to be', and therefore to concepts that are imagined to lie beyond the very confinement that seeks to define them and yet is always contained within them. It is a nexus that indicates a oneness in both the confinement and what lies beyond it: each made possible only by virtue of the other. The human mind cannot conceive of the beyond other than through an awareness of being grounded in the here and now, and yet an awareness of being grounded in the here and now is what we discover when we conceive of the beyond. Through the application of the Lacanian registers to Stockhausen's characters, I have shown that this nexus is one that is constantly navigated from three different, but

always connected, perspectives: the private domain of the self, and its image of a unified identity; the public domain of discourse and symbols; and an ineffable domain that resists both the imagery of the private and the symbols of the public but is nevertheless active everywhere, containing within it the inevitable contradictions of a reality that resists all attempts to understand or explain it. These three perspectives are essential strands of human personality, and their representation in the LICHT Superformula provides a view of how they might interact and influence one another, and the whole of their combinations, as they weave through the fabric of life, just as they do through the fabric of LICHT's music.

Some of the more specific conclusions arising from these broader observations lie in the answers this research has generated from my subsidiary research questions:

What does the application of Lacan's registers of Symbolic, Imaginary, and Real to the characters of Michael, Eve, and Lucifer respectively suggest about the phenomenology of being?

What does an application of Lacan's concept of the Master Signifier to the notion of 'light' in LICHT suggest about the phenomenology of being?

What does an application of Lacan's concept of the 'objet petit a' to the role of the Superformula in LICHT suggest about the phenomenology of being?

Together, these questions get to the essence of the focus of this research: by studying how the Superformula was developed and deployed throughout the scores, I looked for what insights this provided into the functioning of Lacan's three registers and then related this back to the central question of the human search to understand the phenomenology of being. The first and most obvious outcome of this pursuit was the reaffirmation of Lacan's own point: that these registers do not, and cannot, operate alone, and yet it is always possible that that one or two of them will come to the fore from time to time, and take over. The first three operas of LICHT that Stockhausen composed – DONNERSTAG (with its focus on Michael), SAMSTAG (Lucifer), and MONTAG (Eve) give a perspective on what the over-development of any one of those three registers might be.

In the case of DONNERSTAG it is the over-development of the Symbolic – the emphasis on the social and master discourse of the Big Other – where the system of language, law, religion, political ideology become so dominant in life that all sense of personal self is lost, along with an ability to deal with the contradictions that cannot be understood. Both are dismissed when the Symbolic takes too solitary a hold. Throughout this analysis, I likened both the Symbolic and Michael to the bridge that Heidegger used as a metaphor for the connections that are built between mortals and gods, between earth and sky. In the interpretation I have offered here, this gave rise to two problems for Michael. One arose through his elevation to the celestial heights at the end of DONNERSTAG, after his charismatic appropriation of the world's cultures into his own music as he journeyed around the world. The other arose through his attempts to integrate with the private domain of the self to such an extent that the two become so entwined with each other that the signifying Symbolic and the signified Imaginary become indistinguishable. The combination of the two led to his engagement with the world being lost. He slips towards the Master Signifier that signifies everything and nothing. He represents ultimately, as such, the meta-narratives of the meaning of being that become so separated from everything that they lose connection. They mean nothing other than themselves. The message it offers is that an understanding of the phenomenology of being will not be found in meta-narratives – not even in philosophy itself – because there the signifiers, the narratives, end up become the signified itself: the philosophy, the narrative, becomes – or is seen to be – the meaning it once sought to signify. Whether we kiss the Bible as the sacred word of God, or revere Marx's *Kapital* as the ultimate salvation of modern economy, or even bow down before Stockhausen's music as the incarnate vibrations of a living but ineffable cosmos, when we do these in our attempts to understand what it means to be, we have turned all hope of engagement with meaning into a circularity with meaninglessness.

In MONTAG, the same issue is seen from the other side: the growing absorption in self at the exclusion of the public and social sphere. There, while the Imaginary at first works healthily to initiate personality out of the combined domains of itself, the Symbolic, and the Real, it takes over. Those healthy beginnings are seen in its role as unifier and assembler of parts into a single identity: both through the systematic formation of a personality as the three layers of the

Superformula are brought together in KLAVIERSTÜCK XIV, and then as Eve teaches the children the syntagmatic connections of the days. It is a playful and energetic conception of the realities of life, the passage through beginnings to ends to rebeginnings. It becomes, however, a passage that leads to the self becoming absorbed only in itself – ignorant of the external world of the Symbolic and of the contradictory cores beneath, that made the formation of personality possible in the first place. The future possibilities of growth, originally captured in the seven children learning the songs of the week, is abducted by this Narcissistic self-absorption in self. The opera literally follows a trajectory from earth to skies but the loss of its children, and eventually of the music itself, into the skies suggests that this is not the way to understand the Fourfold. Its message is this: we do not learn to understand the phenomenology of being through too introspective an absorption in ourselves because there we eventually lose the connections with those aspects of the whole that make us who we are. The opera almost becomes a warning to phenomenology itself: the sole focus on subjective perception and understanding will take the very thing phenomenology seeks to make sense of away.

In between those two operas, Stockhausen composed SAMSTAG. Its message is the contradiction of the Real and of people's inability to confront it. Confronting that which cannot be understood is part of what must be done to understand – but this leads to the very paradox that I have suggested holds the Fourfold together, so the human search to understand the nature of being is always caught within it. The release of the caged bird at the end of the opera however seems to offer the promise that, caught though we may be, it is not an entrapment that holds us forever. Perhaps its message is that there is a degree of release in confronting the paradox, in recognising its huge elephant-in-the-room presence. In terms of its depiction of contradiction, SAMSTAG is perhaps the most perplexing opera of LICHT to understand as a commentary on the phenomenology of being – not so much because the opera does not afford such commentary, but because it leaves so many questions unanswered by the very act of attempting to answer them. The notion of a dominance of the Real, depicted as it is in this opera, raises the concept of madness, but the opera seems to suggest that it is a necessary madness and one that is ultimately functional because it is, in the syntagm of the seven days, the death and revival that makes the new connections of SONNTAG

possible. The functionality of madness in the phenomenology of being is not really raised elsewhere in LICHT, but it is an intriguing thought, and leads into a consideration of the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in their iconic *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*.³⁹⁷ This is a topic that begs for further exploration in future interpretative work on LICHT.

Beyond these more focused studies into the ways in which the three Lacanian registers function in facilitating an understanding of the phenomenology of being, and then in sabotaging it by becoming too dominant, this thesis has also explored the implications of their various combinations being considered in pairs. In LICHT those pairings are always somewhat equivocal. The relationship between the Symbolic and the Real, as depicted in my interpretation of DIENSTAG's focus on Michael and Lucifer suggests that two cannot function together in equilibrium without the mediating force of the Imaginary. It is a conflictual relationship where one must dominate the other, implying an inexorable dichotomy between the ordered signification of social order and discourse and the unbridled chaos of humanity's anarchic primal core. Conceptions of the nature of who we are, and of what it means 'to be', therefore cannot be reconciled if they attempt to consider only these two perspectives – there must be within them the uniting image of self and identity that is formed in the Imaginary. In simpler terms, it suggests that human understanding of itself becomes inherently conflicted when the subjective self is removed from the equation and is instead left to an attempt to reconcile fundamental contradictions with social order. The bridge of Heidegger's Fourfold will fall if it is not built from the Earth, and the human understanding of the phenomenology of being will fall in internal conflict if it seeks to use only the signifiers of public discourse to explain away fundamental chaos and contradictions.

³⁹⁷ *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* is comprised of two volumes. See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R Lane (London, UK: Bloomsbury, 1972/2004). and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (London, UK: Bloomsbury, 1980/2004). These are major works of contemporary French philosophy, semiotics, and political theory and it has been beyond the scope of this research to delve into their complex commentaries on the functionality of madness, but some of the issues raised by the approach taken in my thesis would suggest that this could be a matter for further investigation, particularly in relation to SAMSTAG.

FREITAG's message, however, is that excluding the public discourse, and the order and comprehensibility that it enables, is equally disastrous, because it results in a conception of self that is taken over by the chaos of the Real. It leads to a distorted, ruptured view of reality that makes no sense and so, while we might seek to connect with those primal and contradictory aspects of our inner selves, FREITAG's message is that that alone will only turn those contradictions into images that define us. The human grasp of the phenomenology of being will become as useless as it is senseless if it does not have the signifiers of the Symbolic to enable it to be expressed. This does not just mean that it has to be able to be described in words, because the language of the Symbolic is much more than that. It has to be able to be realised in the way people live together as societies, families, communities, nations, a planet.

SONNTAG might seem to be a day of celebration, with music that is almost unceasingly jubilant. It praises God, and Stockhausen even dedicated the opera to God. And yet, through leaving the contradictions of Lucifer out of its festive celebration of light, it turns away from the very lesson that was taught in SAMSTAG: the necessity of confronting the contradictions, and the resistance to the all-meaning signifiers of God and light. SONNTAG tells us that, as much and all as we might think that our understanding of who we are, the oneness of the Fourfold, can be grasped simply by bringing together the fullness of our subjective selves with the objective world of discourse and community, it cannot. It cannot because it leaves out that fundamental, ineffable base, the unformed *hyle* of ourselves and our being, that always hides beneath the Fourfold and out of which it initially arose. The contradictions and paradoxes of the human quest to understand what it is to be are not resolved by excluding them from what is found in the search. They will stay there, subliminal and eventually again disruptive, just as the Lucifer formula in the bass line of the final scene of SONNTAG again erupts as the Lucifer character who emerges from the sea in Act One of MONTAG.

It is in MITTWOCH that these are all brought together in what should be the resolution that the search for an understanding of the nature of being has not found in any of these fractured combinations of the strands of Lacan's three registers. In MITTWOCH the task of bringing them

together is tried four times, but each of them unravels. It is only in the final attempt that LICHT gives its most powerful indicator yet that a resolution, and an answer, can be found. In the RAUM-SEXTETT's performance of LICHT's musical genome, the Superformula, a moment of oneness seems to have been reached and it is indeed simple as Heidegger said it would be: the simple integral totality of the Superformula from which everything in the music had originally derived. The problem, though, is that that is achieved only for a moment and then it dissolves, just as Sisyphus's rock always returns to the bottom of the mountain the moment it reaches the peak.

When the Superformula is seen as the fundamental driving force of the music, the embodiment of the simple oneness of the Fourfold that Heidegger suggests no thought is given to, its function as the Lacanian *objet petit a* begins to emerge – it is that which drives the need to know, but is not itself the knowledge. Every time knowledge is found, every time the question of what it means to be seems to be answered, the answer again becomes elusive. It is, in short, the very nature of being that drives us to understand it, but that also refuses to deliver the understanding.

LICHT tells us that we need, despite never really reaching it or really being able to say exactly what it is, to always strive for the light. Through the interpretation I have developed here, however, it also tells us that the light is ultimately nothing at all, other than something to believe in so that insatiable drive to understand who we are seems to have a goal. For Stockhausen, though, this is not a pessimistic message. It is not a sorry tale of an endless self-deception, chasing a light that isn't there. It is rather, as it was for Camus and Sisyphus, a message of a real reason to live, because each time that spiral is traversed anew, it offers something rejuvenating and exciting. Each stage of travelling it brings dangers that need to be confronted, but that can always be conquered by moving onto the next stage. In the perpetual spiral of the days, each day brings another awareness of what is missing but, with it, another opportunity to seek it out. It is not only that it reaffirms the now somewhat glib adage that the journey is more important than the destination, but rather that it suggests that the journey *is* the destination. It is the whole reason for being anything at all. It is the only way to live happily ever after.

7.3 This research: contributions, limits, and future possibilities

This research has, I hope, provided more than just a new interpretation of LICHT, even though that was my first reason for undertaking it and, in so doing, to liberate this huge work of 20th- and 21st-century music theatre from the heavy focuses on mysticism and theology that have dominated its analyses so far, and that have tended to alienate at least some people from its broader artistic and philosophical merits. I hope, however, that it has also demonstrated a novel way of approaching and interpreting works that are rich in the possibilities of their symbolism, particularly where that symbolism is expressed through themes that are created in dynamic and complex structures, such as the musical formulas of LICHT, that allow diverse theoretical concepts to be applied to those structural elements. In this way, two things emerge: first, new and interesting interpretations of the work itself are generated and, second, the theoretical tools themselves can be understood in new ways or as generating new ideas. This has happened often throughout this thesis where my application of Lacanian tools has led to the consideration of ideas that have not necessarily been part of Lacanian writing. In this way, I hope to have, at the specific level, contributed to some new thinking both in relation to Stockhausen and Lacan but also, at the more general level, to have demonstrated a model for cross disciplinary hermeneutics that could be applied similarly to different theoretical tools and to different interpretative material.

This notion of interdisciplinary hermeneutics was, indeed, a key component of a work that deeply influenced the young Stockhausen with its notion of the interconnectedness of human thought: Herman Hesse's *Das Glasperlenspiel* ('The Glass Bead Game') which he read at 20 years of age in 1948 and, three years later, remarked, in a letter to his friend, the Belgian composer Karel Goeyvaerts, on its message of the 'disappearance of borders between disciplines'.³⁹⁸ Maybe it was this belief that stayed with Stockhausen and in part led him to remark, as I quoted in the first chapter of this thesis, that his music will develop new meanings into the future – meanings of which even he was not yet aware.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁸ Stockhausen and Goeyvaerts, *Correspondence*, 235.

³⁹⁹ Cott and Stockhausen, *Conversations*, 51.

I am aware that this research has had its limits – not only those that I outlined in the delimitations of the Introduction, but that the models and tools I chose to apply to my interpretation fitted more easily in some places than others. The clearest example of where I could not find a fit between the Lacanian tools I adopted and the material of the music was in explaining the role of the flute in LICHT. As a fourth major expression of character it did not seem to fit in with the triune model of Lacan's registers and, for this reason, I turned to Jungian concepts, acknowledging that Lacan and Jung are not necessarily compatible with one another in their overall psychoanalytic theories. I also acknowledge that I gave more attention to some scenes of the operas than to others and that I have not yet demonstrated that the methodological model I have used, nor its specific theoretical tools I have applied, can be sustained with equal rigour and detail throughout every Act and scene of LICHT's seven operas. My inclination is that it can, although the need to call upon other complementary theoretical tools from time to time might still arise. These limits, however, simply point to the need to continue with this work and develop an even more extensive interpretation of LICHT, not just through the application of Lacanian psychoanalysis, but through any of a whole range of theoretical frameworks that might enable future studies to reveal what to me is still one of its most persistently intriguing aspects: what it can tell us about ourselves. I hope that future research will explore those possibilities further.

In some ways, the very thing that bewilders people most about LICHT – its strange mix of angels, archetypes, helicopters, copulating office machines, a statue impregnated by a piano played by a budgerigar, its mothers who transform into the seducers of their own sons, its planet-defecating camel, its Luciferian monks smashing coconuts and then releasing a caged wild bird – all of this, bizarre though it may be, is also what begs for its symbolism to be studied. But even that would not be enough were it not for the one thing that gives it a deeper and more fascinating resonance, the one thing that invites its scholars, students, and audiences to continue seeking it out anew: the endless kaleidoscope of mathematical, magical light that is to be found in its music.

Appendix: The LICHT narrative

1. MONTAG aus LICHT

MONTAGS-GRUSS (Monday Greeting) (ca 34 minutes)

(for pre-recorded multiple basset horns)

The music is sound projected in the foyer while the audience arrives. The foyer is lit so as to give the impression of being underwater. In the centre of the foyer there is a large sculpture of a woman playing the basset horn, surrounded by twelve life-size photographs of her playing it in different positions, each indicating a different pitch of the twelve-note Eve nuclear formula in inversion.

Act One – EVAs ERSTGEBURT (Eve's First Birth-giving) (ca 93 minutes)

(for 3 sopranos, 3 tenors, bass, actor, choir (taped or live), 21 actor-women, 14-voice children's choir (7 sopranos and 7 altos), three synthesisers, percussion, tape, conductor, sound-projectionist)

Subscenes:

- IN HOFFNUNG (Expecting)
- HEINZELMÄNNCHEN
- GEBURTS-ARIEN (Erste und Zweite) (Birth Arias (First and Second))
- KNABEN-GESCHREI (Boys' Hullabaloo)
- LUZIFERs ZORN (Lucifer's Fury)
- DAS GROSSE GEWEINE (The Great Weeping)

The scene is by the sea. A huge statue of a naked woman squatting in a birthing position dominates the stage. Women prepare her for birth. She gives birth to seven Heinzelmännchen and seven animal-child hybrids. Lucifer appears and declares the children repulsive and then leaves. The women nurture the children, and a trio of sailors enter and distribute fruit to everyone, cutting

the fruit into shapes of a woman's breasts a vagina. They leave. The women put the children into prams and move them around in different formations. One of the Heinzelmännchen has to stop to urinate and a huge long penis is rolled out and chopped off with a gigantic pair of scissors. A remote-controlled red and white cat grabs the severed penis and runs away.

Lucifer reappears as a polyp-like double: Lucipolyp. As singer and actor, Lucipolyp crudely enacts the letters of the alphabet, taunting and deriding the women and the children. One of the hybrid children – a piano-playing boy-budgerigar flies away. The women bury Lucipolyp in the sand. There is a communal weeping amongst the women who hide the children under their skirts and umbrellas. There is rain and hail. Lucifer re-emerges from the sea and orders all the children back into the womb. They return one by one.

Act Two – EVAs ZWEITGEBURT (Eve's Second Birth-giving) (ca 65 minutes)

(for 7 solo boy singers, basset horn, 3 basset-teases (two basset horn players, and one singer singing into a basset horn, piano, choir (tape or live), 21 actor-women, girls' choir, synthesisers, percussion, tape, conductor (for live choir only), sound-projectionist)

Subscenes:

- MÄDCHENPROZESSION (Girls' Procession)
- BEFRUCHTUNG mit KLAVIERSTÜCK (Conception with Piano Piece)
- WIEDERGEBURT (Rebirth)
- EVAs LIED (Eve's Song)
 - CŒUR DE BASSET
 - WOCHENKREIS (DIE SIEBEN LIEDER DER TAGE) (Cycle of the Week – The Seven Songs of the Days)
 - BASSETTINEN (Basset-teases)
 - INITIATION (Initiation)

Women are breaking off blocks of ice from the shore. There is blackout in the theatre and a choir of girls enters with candles, praising Eve. An extended grand piano, played by a pianist dressed as a budgerigar, is rolled into the vagina of the Eve statue. Seven boys are born. Each is named with a day of the week.

Cœur de Basset, a woman playing the basset horn, emerges from the heart of the Eve statue. She teaches each of the boys their respective song of the day. Even then multiplies into three 'basset-teases': Busi and Busa, who play the basset horn and wear costumes that resemble a left and right woman's breast, and Muschi, a singer who sings into the basset horn and in a costume resembling a vagina. They tease and seduce the boys as all continue to sing the songs of the days. They eventually all disappear behind the Eve statue and one of the boys calls for the lights to be turned out.

Act Three – EVAs ZAUBER (Eve's Magic) (ca 57 minutes)

(for basset horn, alto-flute with piccolo, choir, children's choir, 3 synthesisers, percussion, tape, conductor (in the choir), sound-projectionist)

Subscenes:

- BOTSCHAFT (Message)
 - EVAs SPIEGEL (Eve's Mirror)
 - NACHRICHT (News)
 - SUSANI
 - AVE
- DER KINDERFÄNGER (The Pied Piper)
- ENTFÜHRUNG (Abduction)

Cœur de Basset wanders amongst glass water-filled sculptures, playing the basset horn. The men who watch are enchanted by her. She is lost in thought and falls in love with her own reflection in one the sculptures. There is news of a magical musician approaching, and already his music can

be heard in the distance on the alto flute. He appears as Ave, a female flautist dressed as a young man. Eve and Ave play a duet, charming and erotic. The children who are watching become curious about Ave and he ensnares them with his music, which imitates surrealist sound scenes that are sound-projected on tape. The children, singing, in turn imitate what he plays on the flute. He transforms into the Pied Piper, begins playing the piccolo and the children follow him as he ascends, playing, into the sky. The Eve statue grows old and transforms into a mountain. Grass and small bushes appear on the mountain as the voices of the children are heard far away in the sky.

MONTAGS-ABSCHIED (Monday Farewell) (ca 28 minutes)

(for pre-recorded piccolo flute, multiple soprano voice, electronic keyboards)

The music is sound projected in the foyer while the audience leaves. The sounds of the children singing with the piccolo flute continues from the end of Act Three, continually electronically transposed higher and higher. The instrumental sounds and singing mingle with bird sounds. The foyer should be immersed in slowly-floating clouds, with a sculpture of the Pied Piper playing piccolo to a boy and girl kneeling at his feet, in the middle of the foyer. Twelve life-size photographs of him playing the piccolo in different positions, each indicating a different pitch of the twelve-note Eve nuclear formula surrounds the sculpture.

2. DIENSTAG aus LICHT

DIENSTAGS-GRUSS (WILLKOMMEN mit FRIEDENS-GRUSS) (Tuesday Greeting (Welcome with Peace Greeting)) (ca 21 minutes)

(for soprano, 9 trumpets, 9 trombones, 2 synthesisers, choir, 2 conductors, sound-projectionist)

Two choral and instrumental ensembles – a Michael ensemble with trumpets and a Lucifer ensemble with trombones – are at the rear of the auditorium to the left and right and high above the audience. The Michael choir calls on Michael to assist them to fight for light. The Lucifer choir denies the existence of God and the beyond. Eve as soprano appears in various places between them, calling for them to come to peace.

Act One – JAHRESLAUF (Course of the Years) (ca 61 minutes)

(for tenor, bass, 4 dancer-mimes, actor-singer, 3 mimes, child actress, nudist, 14 musicians (gagaku or modern western), 4 musical assistants, tape, sound projectionist)

Michael and Lucifer have waged a game about time. Lucifer will seek to stop the course of time while Michael will attempt to keep it flowing. 4 dancer-mimes represent the years, the decades, the centuries, and the millennia, on stage, moving at different paces back and forwards within four large sculpted figures on the stage platform, indicating the year of the performance. At four times during their movements, Lucifer attempts to stop dancer-mimes with a 'temptation'. Each time Michael encourages them to continue with an 'incitement'. The first temptation is an offer of flowers to the dancer-mimes, while they are incited to continue by a little girl who calls upon the audience to applaud them. The second temptation is the offer of food, but a lion incites them to continue by roaring and biting each on their buttocks. The third temptation is a monkey who tries to distract the dancer-mimes, appearing honking a horn in a car, but they are incited to continue by an offer of money for the winner of race of the years. The fourth temptation is a naked woman who appears to jazz music, but her efforts to stop the dancer-mimes is interrupted by thunder. Lucifer acknowledges that Michael has won the battle but tells him to prepare for a much tougher one.

Act Two – INVASION-EXPLOSION mit ABSCHIED (Invasion – Explosion with Farewell) (ca 74 minutes)

(for solo soprano, tenor, and bass, 3 trumpets (1 also flugelhorn), 3 trombones, 2 synthesisers, 2 percussionists, 6 tutti-trumpets and 6 tutti-trombones, choir, 8 track octophonic tape, sound-projectionist)

In a long octophonic tape of electronic music projected around the audience in four cubes above them and four below, sonic missiles and bombs are sound-projected around the audience, moving up and down and around. A Lucifer army of 9 trombones and a bass, with synthesiser and percussion, and a Michael army of 9 trumpets and a tenor, also with synthesiser and percussion,

weave through the audience in two 'invasions' during the octophonic music. They engage in a huge musical war. There is a moment of apparent peace between the two invasions but, after the second, one of the Michael army is mortally wounded. The armies back away. He is recognised as Michael and his spirit rises, playing the flugelhorn while Eve appears as soprano to mourn his death. There is a third invasion. Lucifer appears victorious. A choir from the beyond appear, dressed in glass. Small glass-made replicas of war tanks move along a conveyer belt as the members of the choir push them off with croupier sticks. Synthi-Fou appears. He is a synthesiser player with a large nose, huge glasses, and elephant ears. He ecstatically plays multiple synthesisers on a revolving platform, counts from thirteen to one, and leaves as the scene fades into silence.

3. MITTWOCH aus LICHT

MITTWOCHS-GRUSS (Wednesday Greeting) (ca 53 minutes)

(for pre-recorded electronic music)

The music is sound projected in the foyer as the audience arrives. The foyer should be filled with images of wind, kites, flues, balloons, blowers, flying doves.

Scene 1 – WELT-PARLAMENT (Wold Parliament) (ca 40 minutes)

(for a capella choir)

A World Parliament is meeting at the top of a skyscraper, above the clouds. They are debating the meaning of love. As they appear to reach a moment of unity, a janitor rushes in, shouting the registration number of a car that is illegally parked and about to be towed away. It turns out to be the President's car. He rushes off to move it, and 'Coloratura Eve' is chosen as the replacement President. The debate continues and concludes. The members of the Parliament leave, except for a fat bass who remains behind and stammers to the audience that the next scene will now follow.

Scene 2 – ORCHESTER-FINALISTEN (Orchestra Finalists) (ca 46 minutes)

(for 12 orchestra soloists and electronic music, sound-projectionist)

An orchestra is floating high in the sky and its individual members fly down closer to Earth, one by one, to each play a solo. Each solo is accompanied by a vision of a space on Earth, with its sounds projected around it. In each solo there is moment where the other soloists join in five tutti chords. The last solo is the double bass. It is a stuttering, fidgety solo that seems unable to break free of itself until a mummified figure enters and strikes a Chinese gong. The double bass player falls down, rises up again, and conducts the five tutti chords with the double bass bow. A horn player has been inadvertently locked out of the performance and can be heard practising in the halls and foyer outside throughout the scene. Eventually the horn player finds a way in and enters just as the double bass solo finishes. The rest of the orchestra join, repeating their solos as they float into the sky.

Scene 3 – HELIKOPTER-STREICHQUARTETT (Helicopter String Quartet) (ca 32 minutes)

(for string quartet, 4 helicopters with pilots and sound technicians, 4 television transmitters and 4 x 3 sound transmitters, auditorium with 4 columns of televisions and 4 columns of loudspeakers, sound-projectionist, moderator (*ad lib*))

The four members of the string quartet enter four helicopters that fly above the theatre for the duration of the scene. The music they play is transmitted back to the audience via televisions and loudspeakers, and the sounds of their instruments, voices, and the rotor blades of the helicopters are mixed by the sound projectionist. The scene may be introduced by a moderator and followed by a Q&A session with the performers after the helicopters have landed and the players and pilots have returned to the auditorium.

Scene 4 – MICHAELION (ca 61 minutes)

(for choir, bass with shortwave radio, flute, basset horn, trumpet, trombone, synthesiser, tape, 2 dancers, sound-projectionist)

Subscenes:

- PRÄSIDIUM (Presidency)

- LUZIKAMEL (Lucicamel)
 - KAKABEL
 - SHOE-SHINE SERENADE
 - STIERKAMPF (Bullfight)
- OPERATOR (Operator)
 - BASSETSU-TRIO
 - RAUM-SEXTETT (Space Sextet)

The Michaelion is a cosmic headquarters where delegates from different galaxies meet. The delegates have assembled to elect a new President. The candidate named Luzikamel is favoured to win. The President must be able to translate messages from the universe that no one else can understand. A member of the audience, a bass singer, sits and listens to signals on his shortwave radio, sometimes copying their sounds. He leaves and a camel, Luzikamel, arrives on stage with a trombone player. He defecates seven planets. There is a play fight between the camel and the trombone player. The camel falls on the trombone player. The camel costume is unzipped and a Zen monk, Luca – a bass singer with a shortwave radio, appears from beneath it, with the now-transformed trombone player, Trombonut. Luca sits on a stool and, through consulting and translating the sounds of his short-wave radio, he answers questions put to him by the delegates. A basset horn player, trumpeter, and the trombone player rotate around him as he delivers instructions in different languages and dialects. Six delegates receive a globe and are dispatched out into the universe. They rotate around the audience, singing the Space-Sextet before they leave, and can then be heard in the distance, singing but no longer synchronised with each other.

MITTWOCHS-ABSCHIED (Wednesday Farewell) (ca 44 minutes)

(for pre-recorded electronic music)

The electronic layer of music, reflecting various sounds from human life, that was used in Scene 2 is projected octophonically in the foyer as the audience leaves. Video projections of the scenes surround them, and the music is intended to prepare them for the fantasy spaces of dreams.

4. DONNERSTAG aus LICHT

DONNERSTAGS-GRUSS (Thursday's Greeting) (ca 14 minutes)

(for 8 wind instruments, piano, 3 percussionists)

Live music is played in three movements in the foyer before the stage performance commences.

Act One – MICHAELs JUGEND (Michael's Youth) (ca 64 minutes)

(for soprano, tenor, bass, trumpet, basset horn, trombone, piano, three dancer-mimes, instrumental tape, choir tape, sound-projectionist)

Subscenes:

- KINDHEIT (Childhood)
- MONDEVA (Moon-Eve)
- EXAMEN (Examinations)

Michael as a boy learns lessons from both his father and mother: how to sing and laugh, how to pray and hunt, the names of days, planets, historical figures, and numbers. The family is poor. While Michael hunts with his father, he discovers empathy with death when a deer is shot. His mother has more children. She begins to hallucinate and attempts to kill herself. She is taken to a psychiatric hospital. Michael's father plays with one of the children too roughly, and the little boy dies. The father turns to drink.

Michael meets Mondeva, a strange moon-like bird-woman hybrid who plays the basset horn. In the background his mother is killed by lethal injection in the psychiatric hospital, and his father is killed fighting in the war. He falls in love with Mondeva, but she departs in a space ship.

Michael then performs at an entrance examination for a music academy. The jury is made up of the singers and dancers who had been his mother and father, but he no longer recognises them. He performs one exam as a singer, one as a trumpeter, and one as trumpeter, singer, and dancer

together. Each exam is accompanied on the piano. He tells the story of his childhood from the perspectives of his mother, his father, and himself. He is unanimously admitted to the academy.

Act Two – MICHAELs REISE UM DIE ERDE (Michael's Journey Around the Earth) (ca 48 minutes)

(for solo trumpet, basset horn, two solo clarinets (one with basset horn), orchestra, conductor, sound-projectionist)

Michael as trumpeter travels around the world. He engages with the music of world as he does so. Two clarinetists are dressed, clown-like, as penguin-swallow hybrids. They dance and play around the orchestra throughout the piece. Throughout his journeys, Michael as trumpeter battles with and defeats Lucifer as tuba. He hears the sound of the solo basset horn in the distance and calls for the world to turn back, and then to stop. He is lonely and seeks consolation in a duet with a double bass solo. Mondeva appears as a Star Maiden. The two unite in love and ascend into the sky, while the clownesque clarinet and basset horn are musically 'crucified' by the orchestra trombones and tuba.

Act Three – MICHAELs HEIMKEHR (Michael's Homecoming) (ca 80 minutes)

(for soprano, tenor, bass, trumpet, basset horn, trombone, 3 dancer-mimes, an old woman, two saxophones, choir, orchestra, choir tape, conductor, sound-projectionist)

Subscenes:

- FESTIVAL
- VISION

Michael has returned to his celestial home. He is welcomed by Eve and a choir of angels. They honour his return with gifts and plants and light-compositions. An old woman enters from the back of the auditorium, interrupting the festivities as she hobbles onto stage. The Eve dancer launches a toy tank engine up an inclined platform. It falls onto the floor. The old woman calls out to the audience to come home. She leaves and the choir sing that there is no home, that even angels are

always in transit. Michael is given a gift of a globe in honour of his journey to earth. A gremlin and trombone player emerge from the globe. The gremlin transforms into a dragon and fights with the Michael-dancer, while the trombone player tap-dances as a toreador and the trumpet fights with him musically. Michael defeats the dragon, and everyone is jubilant. Two angelic boys celebrate with a saxophone duet. Lucifer appears from the back of the auditorium to tell Michael that he is a naïve fool for believing in the capacity of humanity to be redeemed.

Only Michael, as tenor, trumpeter, and dancer remain. Michael reflects on his time on earth, as different scenes from the opera are played back and reflected as shadows. He declares his undying love for humanity 'despite Lucifer, despite Satan, despite everything', and reaches out to the audience with open arms.

DONNERSTAGS-ABSCHIED (Thursday's farewell) (ca 30 minutes)

(for 5 trumpets)

Five trumpeters stand, spotlit, like statues on the rooftops of buildings surrounding the theatre as the audience leaves. They each slowly play different portions of the nuclear row of the Michael formula, over and over until they each eventually stop playing, one after the other.

5. FREITAG aus LICHT

FREITAGS-GRUSS (Friday Greeting) (ca 69 minutes)

(for pre-recorded electronic music)

The electronic layer of the first half of the opera is sound projected in the foyer as the audience arrives. The foyer should be filled with orange candle-flames.

Act One – FREITAG-VERSUCHUNG (Friday Temptation) (Part One) (ca 69 minutes)

(for soprano, bass, flute, basset horn, 12 pairs of dancer-mimes, children's orchestra, children's choir, synthesiser, electronic music with sound scenes, sound-projectionist)

Subscenes:

- ANTRAG (Proposal)
- KINDER-ORCHESTER (Children's Orchestra)
- KINDER-CHOR (Children's Choir)
- KINDER-TUTTI (Children's Tutti)
- ZUSTIMMUNG (Consent)

Lucifer as Ludon suggests to Eve that his son, Caino, should mate with her. Eve is accompanied by a basset horn player (Elu) and a flautist (Lufa). Eve expresses doubt about Ludon's proposition, but they agree to meet again and introduce their children to each other. Eve's children play in an orchestra for Ludon's children, who sing as a choir. They applaud each other and then all make music together. The children leave, playfully, happily, together. Ludon approaches Eve again and she agrees to mate with Caino.

Throughout the action on stage, couples have been appearing in vignettes of sound scenes around the stage and auditorium. Each couple is comprised of a male- and female-designated partner, ranging from humans to animals to objects and machines. Each pair plays out sexual activity in their sound scenes.

Act Two – FREITAG-VERSUCHUNG (Friday Temptation) (Part Two) (ca 82 minutes)

(for soprano, baritone, flute, basset horn, 12 pairs of dancer-mimes, children's orchestra, children's choir, synthesiser, electronic music with sound scenes, sound-projectionist)

Subscenes:

- FALL (Fall)
 - BOOTFAHRT (Boat Passage)
 - VEREINIGUNG (Union)
- KINDER-KRIEG (Children's War)
- REUE (Repentance)
- ELUFA

- CHOR-SPIRALE (Choir Spiral)

Eve meets with Caino and they mate. A red streak of light brushes from the sky across the stage and to the back of the auditorium. The children from Act One reappear but are now engaged in a furious war against each other, using toy weapons and wearing play uniforms. Ludon's children trample Eve's children with a winged rhinoceros. They all retreat, fighting, into the distance. Meanwhile Eve expresses her sorrow for her union with Caino and repents. Her companions Elu and Lufa perform a playful duet together. Meanwhile, the couples of the sound-scenes have swapped partners and have bred hybrids of themselves. Lufa calls out in a cat-like voice for them all to repent. They agree. The hybrid offspring of the couples are consumed in a huge flame built by a choir formed into the shape of a spiral that slowly ascends into the sky as the children begin to glow within it.

FREITAGS-ABSCIED (Friday Farewell) (ca 79 minutes)

(for pre-recorded electronic music)

The electronic layer of the second half of the opera is sound projected in foyer as the audience leaves. The foyer should be filled with a dense orange mist.

6. SAMSTAG aus LICHT

SAMSTAGS-GRUSS (Saturday Greeting) (ca 8 minutes)

(for 26 brass players and two percussionists)

The music is played by four groups brass players, some with percussionists, who are placed at the four cardinal points of the theatre's auditorium.

Scene One – LUZIFERs TRAUM (Lucifer's Dream) (ca 36 minutes)

(for bass voice and piano)

Lucifer as bass singers summonses a pianist to play for him. He dreams as the music is played. They float eerily through the air. Pages of the score are projected from time to time throughout the piece. The pianist plays a simple melody that enchants Lucifer, who appears to die.

Scene Two – KATHINKAs GESANG als LUZIFERs REQUIEM (Kathinka's Chant as Lucifer's Requiem) (ca 33 minutes)

(for solo flute and percussion sextet)

The piano now appears in a vertical position as Lucifer's tomb. A flute player, dressed as a black cat, appears between two large mandala boards on which fragments of the Lucifer formula are notated. She plays exercises based on each fragment alongside their place on the two boards, moving around them like the hands of a clock. Six percussionists surround the audience, dressed in black and silver with odd instruments attached to their bodies – household items and toys – that they play as percussion instruments, alongside sound plates, representing the six mortal senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, thinking). At the end of the piece the senses are released, the flute plays eleven 'trombone tones', an octave below its normal compass, the cat screams, and disappears.

Scene Three – LUZIFERs TANZ (Lucifer's Dance) (ca 51 minutes)

(for bass, piccolo trumpet, piccolo flute, stilt dancer, ballet dancer (or mime), large wind orchestra (or symphonic band)).

An 80-piece orchestra is constructed vertically on stage in ten main sections, corresponding to different parts of a large face. Lucifer as bass seems to sing through the megaphone of a stilt-dancer. He begins by saying that if humanity cannot learn from Lucifer how contradiction and independence distort the face ... but does not finish the sentence. Instead a sequences of dances follow, where different sections of the orchestra play in rhythmic dissonance against each other. Michael appears playing the piccolo trumpet but is ultimately kicked off-stage by the stilt dancer. The cat-flautist appears out of the mouth of the huge face, on the tip of its tongue and playing the piccolo flute, while a dancer peels ribbons off his body. The cat-flautist calls out 'Salve Satanelli!' which the dancer has also spelt out on stage with the ribbons from his body. The bass singer then emerges from the forehead of the face and finishes the sentence he began at the start of the piece

'... then you cannot turn your countenance in harmony towards the light'. The orchestra continues but then suddenly stop. They begin to protest that they have been playing too long and are not being paid overtime. The theatre manager is called, but the dispute cannot be resolved, and the scene ends in a general hubbub.

Scene Four – LUZIFERs ABSCHIED (Lucifer's Farewell) (ca 60 minutes)

(for male choir, organ, and seven trombones)

The scene is to be played out in a church near the theatre. 39 monks enter and surround the audience, facing the walls of the church. They wear wooden shoes that are used percussively throughout the piece. They chant and sing the Italian text of St Francis of Assisi's *Hymn to the Virtues*, sometimes running chaotically around the walls of the church. At one point a 'diabolical wind player' runs in, leaping, playing part of the Lucifer formula. Seven trombones in the heights of the church, high above the audience, punctuate the music with eleven chords, each one accentuating a different note of the Lucifer nuclear formula. A sack of coconuts drops from above, and the monks take it, and a caged wild black bird outside. One by one, the monks each makes a wish and smashes a coconut. The bird is released as the bells of the church ring.

7. SONNTAG aus LICHT

Scene 1 – LICHTER-WASSER (SONNTAGS-GRUSS) (Lights-Waters (Sunday Greeting)) (ca 52 minutes)

(for soprano, tenor, and orchestra with synthesiser)

The orchestra is spaced through aisles in the auditorium, amongst the audience. As the musicians each arrive at their places, they light a candle. There are Michael instruments and Eve instruments, and the Michael and Eve formulas play note by note from instrument to instrument, within their respective instrument groups, in sequences of 'waves' throughout the piece while the tenor and soprano sing about the planets and their moons. At the end, the instruments each leave, taking a sip of water as they do so.

Scene 2 – ENGEL-PROZESSIONEN (Angel Processions) (ca 40 minutes)

(for a capella choir)

In the same space as the previous scene, seven groups of angel choirs move throughout the aisles singing the Michael and Eve formulas. A tutti choir surrounds the auditorium singing quiet drones throughout the piece. They sing about water, earth, life, music, light, heaven, and joy in a range of languages. They bring lilies and irises to the centre of the auditorium, forming a mountain of flowers there.

Scene 3 – LICHT-BILDER (Light Pictures) (ca 42 minutes)

(for basset horn, flute (with ring modulation), tenor, trumpet (with ring modulation), synthesiser, sound-projectionist, light pictures)

The tenor sings of a whole range of things that praise – a list of 440 names of rocks, minerals, plants, animals, senses, deities, planets, and so on. He is paired with the ring-modulated trumpet and alongside them a basset horn is paired with the ring-modulated flute. The Michael and Eve formulas are played in retrograde sections and in increasing and then decreasing periods of delay within each pair, as pictures are projected around them – possibly, but not necessarily, reflecting the images described by the tenor.

Scene 4 – DÜFTE-ZEICHEN (Scents Signs) (ca 57 minutes)

(for seven singers, boy singer, synthesiser)

The seven days of the week are described by a group the singers, each in succession, with each day described by the voices that represent whatever characters are key to the opera that had represented that particular day. As each day is described its sign is unfurled and an incense fragrance associated with it is spread throughout the auditorium. Both the scent and the sign are described in the singing. After each day has been described an alto is brought in from outside, on a bier carried by the six soloists. She calls for Michael to appear and a boy soprano emerges from the audience. He joins the alto in a duet and then a horse descends from the sky. They each

mount the horse which then flies away as the fragrances of the days continue to waft through the air.

Scene 5 – HOCH-ZEITEN (High-Times (Weddings)) (ca 2 x 35 minutes)

In two synchronous scenes:

- HOCH-ZEITEN für ORCHESTER
- HOCH-ZEITEN für CHOR

HOCH-ZEITEN has a double meaning in German – both 'high times' (as two words) and 'weddings' (as one word).

The scene is in two parts that are performed simultaneously in separate auditoriums. In each, the musicians are divided into five groups. Each group, in their own tempi, plays or sings music that celebrates different world cultures and their rituals of love and union. Throughout different points in the piece, indicated in the score, the sounds from auditorium are fed via loudspeakers, in real time, into the other. When the piece is complete, either the audiences or the musicians then swap halls and it is repeated so it is then heard from the opposite perspective.

SONNTAGS-ABSCHIED (Sunday Farewell) (ca 35 minutes)

(for five synthesisers)

The music is a five-synthesiser version of HOCH-ZEITEN für CHOR. It can be performed either live, or as a sound projected recording, in the foyer as the audience leaves. The synthesisers should be placed in a semicircle, with the sound spatialised from five suspended loudspeaker that reflect the positions of the synthesisers.

Bibliography

Because of the prominence of LICHT scores and recordings in my research, I have listed these separately in this bibliography.

(i) LICHT scores

NB: The LICHT Scores are listed here according to the order of the operas in the Superformula: that is, following the sequence from Monday to Sunday. The individual scores within each opera are then listed according to the order in which they would be performed.

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