

Genres and Theatres: Wolfgang Rihm's Opera-Fantasy *Dionysos*

Introduction

Dionysos: Szenen und Dithyramben – eine Opernphantasie is a multi-layered opera: it draws on Nietzsche's biography, his poetry, his philological interest in Greek mythology, musical references, and Rihm's own preoccupations. Rihm assembled the libretto, in a mosaic-like fashion, mainly from Nietzsche's *Dithyrambs of Dionysus*. In the score, the full title is given as follows: '*Dionysos: Szenen und Dithyramben – Eine Opernphantasie nach Texten von Friedrich Nietzsche, Libretto vom Komponisten*'. This description is accurate, but Rihm has also coined the more witty formulation, 'Words by Friedrich Nietzsche. Text by Wolfgang Rihm'; and this is the one that appears on the title page of the programme book for the Berlin Staatsoper run of performances (Staatsoper Berlin, 2012). For the composer, the opera starts from four basic situations: 'a lake, mountains, an intimate space, and a public square.' (Erhardt, 2012b.) Despite this earnest dimension, the 'opera fantasy' aspect has provided Rihm (2012b, p. 9) with a degree of freedom in relation to factual biography and classical mythology, in keeping with his preference for the make-believe drama of *The Magic Flute* over verismo opera.

The principal characters are N. (baritone), Ein Gast (tenor) and Ariadne (high soprano). There is also a prominent group of four female vocalists, which takes on a variety of roles, and a choir which is a frequent stage presence. Although the orchestra is not excessively large, it contains a substantial array of percussion. Commissioned by the Salzburg Festival, *Dionysos* received its premiere in July 2010 (the commercially available DVD is taken from the Salzburg performances); the same production was subsequently staged in Amsterdam, in the summer of 2011; and in Berlin, in the summer of 2012. The present author attended *Dionysos* in Amsterdam, where the performance inside a cavernous former gas storage facility was sold out and enthusiastically received.

The first run in Salzburg received generally positive reviews, particularly in relation to the production, music and performance. The review in *Die Zeit*, though, notes that the distance from the conventional narrative structures of the operatic art form creates a 'mountain to climb' for the main figures (Spahn, 2010). The review in the *New York Times* comments more directly on the matter (Tommasini, 2010): 'In this work he tries to transcend the typical constraints of operatic storytelling. And that may be the problem.'

Although critic Anthony Tommasini is positive about the 'Wagnerian sweep, Straussian lushness and astringently alluring harmony', his remark about storytelling is part

of a more general frustration with what he calls ‘music-dramatic pacing’. Certainly, the tapestry of Nietzsche’s poems lacks narrative continuity and is not easy to navigate. However, *Dionysos* does offer expressive directness for the listener who is prepared to experience it more as a sequence of situations than as a connected chain of dramatic events and, of course, different productions can change perceptions of continuity.

Nietzsche

The dramaturgy of *Dionysos* is loosely based around episodes from Nietzsche’s life, even though the character ‘N.’ is not intended to be Nietzsche in a direct sense. Nietzsche, who was working in Basel at the time, paid his first visit to Wagner’s villa, ‘Tribtschen’, on Lake Lucerne in 1869, and his last in 1872. This time in his life is evoked by the lake setting of Scene 1, in which the stage character Ariadne doubles as Cosima Wagner: she was only seven years older than the philosopher, and it appears that Nietzsche harboured affections for her that were linked to his eventual desire to detach himself from her overbearing husband. After his breakdown in January 1889, Nietzsche wrote a series of epistles, including one to Cosima which reads: ‘Ariadne, I love you. Dionysus.’ (Fuss and Shapiro, 1971, p. 142.)

The other figure in the opera who reflects Nietzsche’s biography is the character Ein Gast. The composer Peter Gast was Nietzsche’s most consistent and loyal friend and was one of the few people who held the philosopher’s work in high regard during the latter’s working life. Ein Gast is present, in some guise, in all four of the opera’s scenes, with a particular role in Scene II, where he and N. are in the mountains; a setting that no doubt reflects the time that Nietzsche spent writing in Sils-Maria, a village in the Engadine district of Switzerland.¹ In general, though, Ein Gast is more of a foil for the Nietzsche-character – a shape-shifting *Doppelgänger* – than a biographical presence.²

Scene III invokes Nietzsche’s apparent visit to a brothel while a student in Bonn: according to Paul Deussen, a friend from school days, Nietzsche confided that a Cologne taxi driver had driven him to a bordello instead of a restaurant. As recounted, Nietzsche said: ‘I stood for a moment speechless. Then I instinctively made for a piano in the room as to the only living thing in that company and struck several chords. They broke the spell and I hurried away.’ (Hollingdale, 1990, p. 30.) The poem ‘The Desert Grows’, from the *Dithyrambs of Dionysus*, offers some support for Deussen’s account, since it alludes to a comparable experience. It was widely believed that Nietzsche had contracted syphilis from visiting a brothel, and this view is vigorously defended in R.J. Hollingdale’s (1990, pp. 30–31) biography. However, it has been argued recently that a brain tumour diagnosis is more in

keeping with what is known about Nietzsche: that he survived for over a decade after his breakdown, that he had symptoms of visual disturbance and migraines, and that the doctors who assessed him in Jena noted traits that were not consistent with a diagnosis of progressive syphilis (Sax, 2013).

The syphilis conjecture may be inaccurate, yet it certainly engages with a particular reception history of Nietzsche – not least that found in Thomas Mann’s novel *Doctor Faustus*, in which the syphilitic composer Adrian Leverkühn was partly modelled on Nietzsche. The four prostitutes in Scene III, part two, of *Dionysos* are all called Esmeralda – the name of the character visited by Mann’s fictional composer.³ Furthermore, Mann (1968, p. 139) called the heterae of his novel ‘daughters of the desert’ in a clear reference to the section of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* entitled ‘Among Daughters of the Desert’.⁴ Leverkühn first arrives at the brothel because, in a direct allusion to Nietzsche’s account, he is led there instead of to a restaurant, and he also responds to the situation by playing the piano before rapidly leaving. His second encounter with Esmeralda, after attending a performance of Strauss’s decadent *Salome*, is fateful, despite her warning him that she is carrying syphilis (Mann, 1968, pp. 149–151).

The third part of Scene III is evocative of a crucifixion, a concept that has biographical relevance, for among the flurry of letters Nietzsche sent out following his mental breakdown, in some he referred to himself as ‘the crucified one’.⁵ The moment of Nietzsche’s disintegration in Turin, Italy, is the topic of Scene IV. In a possibly apocryphal story, he witnessed a cabman beating his horse, and was moved to try to protect the animal by throwing his arms around its neck; he then collapsed and lay unconscious on the ground, and when he regained consciousness he was no longer in control of his faculties.⁶

Nietzsche’s *Dithyrambs of Dionysus* is a collection of nine poems that the philosopher brought together in the summer of 1888, making it one of his last publications; of these, only ‘Last Will’ is not used in *Dionysos*. Three of these poems had appeared previously in chapters from part four of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883–85): ‘Only a Fool! Only a Poet!’ was placed in ‘The Song of Melancholy’; ‘The Desert Grows’ in ‘Among the Daughters of the Desert’; and ‘Ariadne’s Lament’ in ‘The Sorcerer’. In the last of these, the sorcerer who is beaten by the prophet Zarathustra and who is generally considered to be a representation of Wagner (in the guise of Klingsor), delivers ‘Ariadne’s Lament’. In the *Dithyrambs of Dionysos*, by stark contrast, Ariadne possesses the lines and addresses them to Dionysus.

In addition to extracting poems from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the *Dithyrambs of Dionysus* refer to this famous text in others ways: ‘The Fire-Signal’ mentions the character

Zarathustra by name and evokes his elemental environment while, as Hollingdale suggests, its ‘seventh solitude’ may refer to the years between the completion of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and the assembling of the Dionysus poems (Nietzsche, 1984, 89). Furthermore, ‘The Poverty of the Rich’ parallels the visionary opening of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, where the prophet comes down from the mountains after ten years of solitude. Thus, as Hollingdale maintains, ‘it is probably not far-fetched to conclude that the “Zarathustras” of the *Dithyrambs of Dionysus* are not so much repetitions of the grand central figure of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* as alternatives to him.’ (Nietzsche, 1984, p. 95.)

Along with the *Dithyrambs of Dionysus*, Rihm included two other poems by Nietzsche in *Dionysos*, both of which tackle the thoroughly Nietzschean topic of wandering. ‘The Wanderer and his Shadow’, which is little more than a fragment, and ‘The Wanderer’ both date from 1884 and appeared in the *Nachlass* (papers that were unpublished at the time of Nietzsche’s mental collapse).⁷ ‘The Wanderer and his Shadow’, which shares its title with *Human all too Human*, volume II, part two, carries in its title an idea that is evocative of the whole *Doppelgänger* obsession in this score (Nietzsche, 1986), a topic that is explored further in the section of this article entitled ‘double exposure’.

With the title *Dithyrambs of Dionysus*, Nietzsche evokes the chorus of Greek tragedy, which he argues had its origins in the intoxicated worship of the god Dionysus. That said, some of the poems are written from a first-person perspective, rather than from the collective viewpoint of a chorus. As is well known, *The Birth of Tragedy* asserts that tragedy is a product of an intersection of the protean energies associated with the wine god Dionysus and the cool, restrained properties of the moon god Apollo. The forces associated with Dionysus became increasingly important in Nietzsche’s work – to the extent that he started to identify himself with the god of wine and the associated ‘excess of energy’ (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 119). One of the forms that the Dionysian takes in *The Birth of Tragedy* is that of the satyr, who for Nietzsche ‘was the archetype of man, the embodiment of his highest and most intense emotions.’ (Nietzsche, 1967a, p. 61.) Nietzsche’s evocation of the satyr as a Dionysian being provides a context for why N. takes this form in the third part of Scene III of *Dionysos*, where the stage action conveys dramatically the meeting of the opposing forces represented by the characters Dionysus and Apollo.

Before describing the scenes in the score, it would be helpful to mention a few key mythological references:⁸ some reveal the philological background of Nietzsche the philosopher, while others show Rihm adapting the material to his own purposes. The wine god Dionysus was accompanied by maenads and satyrs, and one of the manifestations of the

choir in *Dionysos* is as maenads, most notably in the two sections marked ‘dithyramb’. In an episode from his life, Dionysus forced pirates to jump overboard at which point they became dolphins, which is potentially the origin (along with Wagner’s Rhine maidens) of the dolphins in Scene 1. In another fable Dionysus landed on Naxos, where he met Ariadne, who lamented because she was abandoned on the island by Theseus. Apollo is in the score not only because of *The Birth of Tragedy*, but also because one of his deeds was to have flayed the satyr Marsyas, after a music contest. Finally, the moment in which a puppet of Ein Gast is torn apart on stage is suggestive of the story of Orpheus, who is likewise dismembered by maenads on the orders of Dionysus.

Scenes

The synopsis for the original production of *Dionysos* by its dramatist, Klaus Bertisch (2012), needs to be read alongside the comment by its producer, Pierre Audi, that Rihm’s operas provide situations (he has also produced *Jakob Lenz*), which is a way of saying that they leave plenty for the producer to do (Audi and Bertisch, 2012, p. 22). What Bertisch has made of these situations is, by necessity, rather neater than the polyvalent poems, which do not easily fit a dramatic structure. For this reason, the outline below places more emphasis than Bertisch on the underlying poetic sources, which are summarized in Figure 1. What is more, Rihm actively countenances the prospect of dramatic scenarios other than the ones that he has indicated in the score:

Ideas for staging I have placed throughout in square brackets: in part to indicate that this is not self-proclaimed ‘Urtext’ crying out for slavish compliance, but rather that the invention of images and the theatrical imagination are not precluded – are indeed welcome (Rihm, 2012b, p. 6).

Despite this invitation, Audi’s production stays close to the instructions found in the score, notwithstanding the imaginative use of scrims and video projection. Although this approach is justifiable for a first production, more could be made of the aspect of the work, particularly in Act 3, that is about the creative process.

Table: scenes and text sources

Scene 1: A Lake	Ariadne’s Lament The Fire-Signal
Scene II: In the Mountains	The Fire-Signal

	(The Wanderer and his Shadow) Amid Bird of Prey The Sun Sinks Fame and Eternity
Scene III: Interior 1 Interior 2	Of the Poverty of the Richest Man Only a Fool! Only a Poet! On the Poverty of the Richest Man Fame and Eternity (The Wanderer) Of the Poverty of the Richest Man Ariadne's Lament Among the Daughters of the Desert/The Desert Grows: Woe to Him Who Harbours Deserts
Interior 3	The Sun Sinks Ariadne's Lament
Scene IV: A Square	Only a Fool! Only a Poet! The Desert Grows: Woe to Him Who Harbours Deserts Of the Poverty of the Richest Man

In a setting of 'Ariadne's Lament', Scene 1 opens with N. chasing elusive nymphs – the situation is dramatically reminiscent of Alberich and the Rhine maidens (their music is quoted later) – who introduce the line, 'Mich willst du?', that is heard regularly throughout the drama. One of the nymphs changes into Ariadne, who joins N. in a rowing boat, her lyrical abundance contrasting strongly with the sparse utterances of N., who after several spluttering attempts, declares: 'Ich bin dein Labyrinth!' The word 'Labyrinth' is taken up by Ein Gast, who is able to communicate more effectively with Ariadne in an entertaining alpine echo duet. Following this point, the music changes so dramatically for a setting of 'The Fire-Signal' that the moment feels like the start of a new scene: the tempo picks up and there is rhythmic chanting from the chorus, in a Dionysian 'Sprechstimme'.

Scene II, which is set in the mountains, fades into the 'final solitude' from 'The Fire-Signal', as a link to the short poem 'The Wanderer and his Shadow', which itself functions as a transition to the reflective mood of 'Amid Birds of Prey'. The following setting of 'The Sun Sinks' includes a short interlude from 'Fame and Eternity' (which offers a contrast between

what can be bought and a spiritual eternity of being), and the scene finishes with the alpine glow of the line ‘Day of my Life’ from ‘The Sun Sinks’.

Scene III is split into three parts, which are designated as ‘interior spaces’. Interior 1 is based on ‘The Poverty of the Rich’, with its echo of Zarathustra’s descent from the mountains, offering a transition from the lonely space of Scene II to the social space of Scene III. The interactions between N. and Ein Gast are a continuation of the previous scene, except they now take place in the crowded reception area of a bordello. Interior 2 is the most diffuse section of *Dionysos*, dramatically and musically, splicing cinematically between different poems and musical styles. It opens with ‘Only a Fool! Only a Poet!’, with its idea that poetry is a form of deception, which is sung by four hetaerae (to use Rihm’s word). A section from ‘The Poverty of the Rich’ then leads to ‘The Wanderer’, which is envisaged as a staged performance, and to a short passage from ‘Ariadne’s Lament’ in which the prostitutes turn to the ‘Mich willst du?’ phrase that was sung by Ariadne in Scene I. The libretto then moves to ‘The Desert Grows’ which is framed by an inelegant waltz, and which is preceded by the same words that introduce the poem in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.⁹ The hetaerae (as Rihm dubs them) bind N. (an inversion of the action in Scene I where N. ties up Ariadne) and they waltz with a Gast-puppet before tearing it apart. Austere reflection from N. leads to the final stanza of ‘The Desert Grows’, set in the style of a Bach chorale and sung by Maenads. Interior 3 starts with ‘The Sun Sinks’ but quickly leads to ‘Ariadne’s Lament’. N. manages to untie himself, while four primeval mothers sing of promises to come, and he dresses in an animal skin (as the satyr Marsyas) for his music competition with Apollo, following which he is flayed by the moon god.

Although Interior 3 makes uncomfortable viewing, the horror of it is not fully evoked musically until the big bass drum moment at the opening of Scene IV, a scene that manages to be simultaneously grotesque and unrealistic, because N.’s skin features in it as a stage presence. The sparse libretto turns again to ‘Only a Fool! Only a Poet’, the poem in which Nietzsche contemplates the contrivance and necessity of art. It is followed by the final two lines, about stone, desert, death, of ‘The Desert Grows’ which are sung by Ariadne. They are answered by N. deploying the last line of ‘The Poverty of the Rich’, ‘Ich bin dein Wahrheit’ (‘truth’, as opposed to labyrinth), while the skin adopts a Pietà (a Michelangelo sculpture) position, held in Ariadne’s arms, at the end.

Rihm

Dionysos engages with a number of scores by Rihm that were written during the first decade of the new millennium. With regard to the opening scene, *Aria/Ariadne* (2001), subtitled ‘Szenarie’, is a notable precursor because it also sets ‘Ariadne’s Lament’. *Das Gehege*, Eine nächtliche Szene (2004–2005), which is derived from Botho Strauß’s *Schlusschor* (and which was conceived as a companion piece to Strauss’s *Salome* for the Bavarian State Opera), is also relevant since it describes an eagle who, like John the Baptist of *Salome*, fails to respond to female desire, with fatal consequences. Along with *Penthesilea Monolog* (2005), which uses text by Heinrich von Kleist, these works are all monodramas scored for solo soprano and orchestra; they were combined in 2009, linked together by two specially composed interludes, to form a stage work entitled *Drei Frauen*, which was premiered in Basel, Switzerland. The interlude that extends *Aria/Ariadne* is important, because it adds the previously omitted end of ‘Ariadne’s Lament’, where a radiant Dionysus suddenly appears, and by doing so turns the lyrical sentiment of the pre-existing score into something more dramatic.¹⁰

It is reasonable to locate these pieces within the milieu of *Dionysos*, because Rihm, who writes with such facility, spent so long mulling over the project. Ingo Metzmacher (2009, p. 207), who conducted the premiere, indicates that Rihm had been toying with the proposal from as far back as 1995, and Bettina Erhardt (2012a: p. 9) mentions that three world premieres were postponed. The two scores *Verwandlung* III and IV, which are symphonic in character, are of direct relevance to *Dionysos* as well since they are incorporated into the opera, as described in a later section of this article.

In addition to drawing on Rihm’s preoccupations in the first decade of the twenty-first century, *Dionysos* is the product of a longer fascination with Nietzsche’s late poetry on the part of the composer. His *umsungen*, for baritone and eight instruments (1984), includes sections from a couple of the *Dionysus Dithyrambs*, ‘Amid Birds of Prey’ and ‘Fame and Eternity’, where Rihm seizes on the ‘Selbsthenker’ (‘self-hanger’) idea. In the programme note for this score Rihm (1997c: p. 335) writes about working in the ‘Umkreis’ (vicinity) of the *Dithyrambs of Dionysus*, by which he means setting poems and fragments that also date from late in Nietzsche’s career, one of which is the already mentioned ‘The Wanderer and his Shadow’.

Previous scores in which Rihm has worked within the vicinity of the *Dithyrambs of Dionysus* include the expansive Third Symphony (1977), the *Abgesangszenen* (1980) and *umhergetrieben, aufgewirbelt* (Wandering, Swirled Up), for choir and soloists (1981). Scores that set Nietzsche dating from after *umsungen* include *Klangbeschreibung* II (1986) and

Sechs Gedichte von Friedrich Nietzsche, for baritone and piano (2001). ‘The Loneliest One’ and ‘The Brazen Silence’ feature prominently in several of these scores, both of them poems which express, in aphoristic form, a desire for respite and acceptance.¹¹ The former is also to be found in the *Sechs Gedichte von Friedrich Nietzsche*, a collection from which Rihm extracted settings of ‘The Wanderer and his Shadow’ and ‘The Wanderer’ for re-use in *Dionysos*. The brief ‘The Wanderer and his Shadow’ is particularly ubiquitous: not only does it appear in *umsungen* and the *Sechs Gedichte*, Rihm has also used it in the fourth *Abgesangsszene* and in the middle movement of *Klangbeschreibung II*, subtitled ‘Innere Grenze’.

Within Rihm’s output in general, the biography of Nietzsche fits a preoccupation with isolated, sometimes insane, artists who are unable to adapt to social norms. The *Hölderlin-Fragmente* song cycle (1977) is important in this regard, setting fragments written by another writer who went mad, with frequent tonal references along the way. Among the stage works, *Dionysos* harks back to Rihm’s first major success in the genre: the chamber opera *Jakob Lenz* (1978), in which the eponymous poet and playwright functions as a symbol for an individual who cannot find social acceptance and who eventually deteriorates into a state of psychosis.¹² Rihm’s fascination with music-as-sign is in keeping with his interest in figures such Nietzsche and Hölderlin who are so attuned to the multi-valency of meanings. In *Jakob Lenz* he uses older tonal meanings partly to converse with dominant modernist codes and partly to dislocate them.

The scores described above provide precedents for the lyrical and expressionist aspects of *Dionysos*, but the ritualistic element has predecessors as well, notably Rihm’s Artaudian *Tutuguri* (1980), which provides a model for the rhythmic and gestural characteristics of the opera. The other stage work with which *Dionysos* has much in common, as discussed later in the article, is *Die Eroberung von Mexico* (1991), which tackles directly the collapse of sign systems, through the theatrical medium of Artaud.¹³

Opera and Genre

Dionysos moves between operatic or expressionist emotion, on the one hand, and a more collective mode of theatrical representation, on the other. This is a tension that has run throughout modernism. Heightened expression of the individual is characteristic of Schoenberg’s *Erwartung*, Peter Maxwell Davies’s *Eight Songs for a Mad King* (influenced

by *Pierrot Lunaire*), from the 1960s, and Rihm's own *Jakob Lenz*, from the 1970s, though Berg is a stronger influence in this case.

Ritualistic portrayal of the collective can be found in Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* and Harrison Birtwistle's *Down by the Greenwood Side*, a 'dramatic pastoral' from the 1960s. A little later (1983) Birtwistle's *Mask of Orpheus* offers a model of music theatre on an operatic scale that is concerned with human emotion at an archetypal level rather than at a subjective one. Moreover, Act II, scene 2 of *Orpheus*, in which the eponymous character returns from the underworld, is primarily Dionysian, as are 'the wild choral dances of the satyrs – the dithyramb – of the same composer's earlier *Tragoedia* (literally, "goat dance")' (Cross, 2000, p. 110).

Although Rihm's neo-expressionism is aligned with the Schoenbergian side of modernism, there is, as mentioned earlier, also a strand of his œuvre that is influenced by Artaudian theatre and which shares some of the ritualized preoccupations of Stravinsky. This element jettisons linear narrative as well as the association of event, character and emotion in favour of something that is experienced at a gestural rather than individual level. Rihm's programme note to *Tutuguri*, which conveys an approach that is close to the music theatre mind-set of *The Mask of Orpheus*, writes of the work 'leaving behind subject-action theatre (related individual characters) for a ritual theatre that is itself subject (sifted collective).' (Rihm, 1997b, p. 326.) The danger that offsets the attractions of such a stance, however, is that instead of producing something deeper than the everyday, it might just offer a manifestation of modern, mechanized indifference to the fate of the individual.

Hans Werner Henze sought a type of social critique that is of less interest to Rihm,¹⁴ but he also tackled the problem of combining operatic expression with modern theatre. Stephen Downes (2013, p. 237) describes Henze's *Tristan* – Preludes for piano, tape and orchestra (1973), as 'part symphony and part musical "theatre"', thus considering it to be a hybrid that brings theatre into the concert hall but also makes musical demands on it. Downes further notes that '*The Bassarids* (1966) offers a reverse precedent through its placing of symphonic structures in the opera house': for, on the one hand, this is a conventional number opera, yet, on the other, it is organized in four movements, following a symphonic model, and therefore attempts to move beyond the confines of conventional models of music and theatre. The idea of genres and forms, whether dramatic or musical, exerting pressure on each other is of cardinal importance to *Dionysos*.

The Bassarids, with a libretto adapted from Euripides' *Bacchae*, is pertinent to *Dionysos* in terms of its subject matter as well, for it uses the opposite poles of the Dionysian

and the Apollonian to musico-dramatic effect through the characters of Dionysus and Pentheus. Because the latter is unwilling to acknowledge his own instincts, he is unable to resist Dionysus and his sound world, with dire consequences, notably in the frenzied writing for the chorus of maenads which hunts-down Pentheus, in the second part of the Third Movement. With the exception of spiccato violins, Henze dispensed with the standard orchestra at this point in favour of pianos, harps and a range of percussion, including prominent bongos. There is parallel in this atavistic music with *Dionysos*, at least in the first of its Dithyrambs. Moreover this score also stages the principles of the Apollonian and Dionysian in the final part of Bild III, though importantly the primary contrast is not between cool order (rationality) and explosive rapture (creativity), but between individual expression and ritualistic abandon.

Downes (2013, p. 235) observes that ‘In Henze’s plural systems of structure and signification, old materials sometimes appear to defy integration. Part/whole relationships become contingent and scrutinized.’ Much the same could be said of Rihm, except that the younger composer is able to add to this diversity by turning more readily than Henze to the sounds and techniques of the post-war avant gardes, since they are for him an historical resource instead of representing the institutional expectations that irritated Henze. One such area, for which György Ligeti’s music theatre score *Aventures* or Helmut Lachenman’s trio *temA* stand as examples, is the exploration of pre-linguistic articulation that is reflected in N’s initial utterances from *Dionysos*, which confound expectations of an operatic duet. In this way, Rihm has moved beyond the opposition between continuing and neutralizing established expressive conventions that was so hotly debated by Henze and Lachenmann.¹⁵

Plural systems of structure and signification are of broader significance as well, because Rihm does not attempt to combine the expressive and ritualistic sides of the drama, but instead uses them as strong contrasts. Furthermore, his non-narrative approach to theatre pervades the whole score, including its most operatic moments, with the result that the lyrical writing retains its force but, because it is not dramatically rooted, it is experienced partly as an element in a sign system and partly as an intensity in its own right. Because the character N. tends to sing through other voices rather than having one of his own (with a few exceptions, notably the two *Lieder*), he is able to traverse both the expressive and collective qualities of the score, whether they are in conflict with each other or form unstable alliances.

Dithyrambs and Interpolations

The subtitle of the whole score, ‘Scenes and Dithyrambs’, provides a strong clue that the dithyrambic sections evoke the mythical stratum of the work as opposed to its biographical element. When Rihm writes ‘Verwandlung/Dithyramb’ after the alpine duet of Scene 1 and at the heading to the third part of Scene III, he is indicating not just a scene change, but a transformation to a Dionysian stratum. The word ‘Verwandlung’ is suggestive as well, since it hints at the four pre-existing pieces that take it as a title, so it is no great surprise that *Verwandlung* III and *Verwandlung* IV feature substantially in *Dionysos*. It is unlikely that either of these scores was written specifically for the purpose, given that Rihm has stated that he changed his plans for the opera substantially in December 2009 (Erhardt, 2012b). Nevertheless, *Verwandlung* III (2007/8) and *Verwandlung* IV (2008) were composed at a time when the project would have been on his mind; and he was actively working on *Dionysos* in 2010, when *Verwandlung* III was revised. The other pre-existing scores that are used in *Dionysos* are the two previously mentioned songs from *Sechs Gedichte von Friedrich Nietzsche*. The re-use of pre-existing music by Rihm is a variant on the double exposure idea, which is the topic of the next section, since the pre-existing music takes on a different meaning in its new guise.

In Scene I, *Verwandlung* IV, marked ‘Molto vivace, feroce, deciso’, breaks in abruptly, in a setting of ‘The Fire-Signal’ (see Example 1). As a score in its own right, it sets out its preoccupations clearly from the beginning: clipped, rhythmic chordal bursts are followed by openly lyrical string textures, both of which are reminiscent of Sibelius; and the rest of the piece is about interactions between these gestures: the singing textures fill the rhythmic patterns and the articulated figures cut into the singing lines. That said, the big Mahlerian climaxes in the second half feel more like interventions than the culminations of an ongoing process. Rihm modified the pre-existing score in its *Dionysos* incarnation most obviously by adding a piano, a further percussionist (who plays a lion’s roar at the opening) and a choir which articulates an assertive ‘Sprechstimme’ in the spaces between the initial block chords.¹⁶

Example 1: Opening of Verwandlung/Dithyramb, Scene I (bars 1–10)

Verwandlung / Dithyrambe

molto vivace, feroce, deciso

CHOR S A T B

hoch *) tutti un. *fff* äußerst scharf artikuliert!
 mittel-
 tief .. Wo zwi - schen Mee - ren die

hoch *) tutti un. *fff* äußerst scharf artikuliert!
 mittel-
 tief ... Wo zwi - schen Mee - ren die

fffz *Red.* Lion's roar *fff* *fffz*

6

CHOR S A T B

In - sel wuchs ... *fffz* ... ein Op -
 In - sel wuchs ... *fffz* ... ein Op -

fffz *fff* *fffz*

*) Sprechstimmlagen UE 35 192

The moment is indeed a Dionysian jolt away from the singing (operatic) lyricism of Ariadne, in which there is a fusion of emotion and character, to something more akin to a mode of collective consciousness. The change from one mood to another fits the poetry as well: 'Ariadne's Lament' is an outpouring of emotion that is written in first person, while

‘The Fire-Signal’ is more elemental (it opens with the image of a sacrificial stone) and is written in the third person, with an emphasis on action over reflection – at least initially. Even when the orchestral texture becomes thicker and more flowing, the bulk of the poem about Zarathustra lighting his fire on an island mountain continues in an agitated, articulated manner which overrides the more lush scoring. Indeed the fixed state of the vocal chanting is sufficiently direct to transform the first half of *Verwandlung* IV from developmental symphonic writing into something closer to ritual theatre.

Broadly speaking, the first 250 bars of *Verwandlung* IV extend to shortly before the song insertion and are associated with the ‘Sprechstimme’ mode of choral delivery. The agitated choral chanting is only briefly interrupted by a duet between Ein Gast and N. for the sixth and seventh solitudes of ‘The Fire-Signal’ before flowing seamlessly into the mountain scenery of Scene II, making space for merely brief interjections from Ein Gast and N. By way of a transition to ‘The Wanderer and his Shadow’, the gestural music of ‘The Fire-Signal’ dissolves into solo voices for a return to the ‘letzte Einsamkeit’ (‘final solitude’) line, which serves to create a more reflective mood.

‘The Wanderer and his Shadow’ is sufficiently brief to quote in full.

Not to go back? Not to ascend?

No path for the chamois?

So here I wait and hold fast,

Where eye and hand holds onto me!

At dawn, the earth is five feet wide,

And under me – world, man and death! (Luchte, 2010, pp. 139–140).

Unlike the ‘The Wanderer’, which appears in the next scene, this interpolation is fully orchestrated and unannounced, so it does not immediately stand out. Nevertheless, it still registers as a song in its own right and as a different type of genre – one that is neither aria, ritual or symphony. The restrained, sustained utterances of the song match the suspended state depicted in the poem, in a blend of sentiment and nature. This is the first point in the opera at which N.’s own voice emerges, and one of the few moments in which he finds himself at one with the surrounding environment.

The song has an affinity with *Jakob Lenz*, in which the mountain scenes draw on the Schubertian concept of nature as a mirror of the self and on the topos of wandering as a form of social alterity. In the face of increased social mechanization, the human-subject seeks self-expression by turning to areas that are hidden, or resistant, to the impersonal mechanisms of

social and economic systems. Writing of this capacity in relation to Schubert, Lawrence Kramer (1998, p. 37) argues that the composer's songs incorporate 'the effects of resistance and insistence through which the subject's core of negativity makes itself known', often by means of characters who are outsiders in terms of the dominant social norms, and who thereby turn the tonal conventions of the time away from projections of the centred bourgeois self. Following Jacques Derrida, Kramer (1998, p. 178) refers to this as 'revoicing', which he explains as follows: 'One can speak the words of the same *but in another voice*, a voice that emerges within language to spread throughout the whole system, fissuring it in every direction.' Like Derrida himself, Kramer refers this principle back to Nietzsche's practice of stylistic heterogeneity as a way of resisting dominant meanings.

The song is followed by 'Amid Birds of Prey' which initially continues the vertiginous atmosphere of the preceding verse, speaking of the solitude of the abyss, and maintains a contemplative atmosphere. As with 'The Fire-Signal', it mentions Zarathustra by name and it certainly contains a philosophical dimension: it asks 'Why did you trap yourself in wisdom?' and encapsulates the sentiment more bluntly in the outburst 'self-knower! self-hanger!' As the setting becomes more mechanized Rihm makes great play of the self-knower/self-hanger idea, with Ein Gast stuck on 'Selbstkenner' and N. on 'Selbsthenker', thereby making an appropriately obsessive link between self-knowledge and self-destruction (see Example 2). Although these repeated patterns do not have the austerity of the more ritualistic moments in the score, their mechanical features (reminiscent of tape loops) clearly identify the characters as robotic and trapped in their pursuit of knowledge.

Example 2: Selbstkenner/Selbtshenker from 'Amid Birds of Prey', Scene II (bars 475–7)

riten. — — —

471

„Gast“

... ein Fra - ge-zei-chen Selbst -

N.

Nicht-se ein - ge - krümmt. — ein mü-des Rät(h) - sel —

8 (sul pont.) (ord.)

VI. *fffz-fff poss.* *pp* (Streicher) *pp*

Windmaschine *pp*

accel. (über die Wiederholung) — — — — —

475 *f* *pp* *f* *p* zu einer Art „Sprechgesang“ übergehen

„Gast“

- - ken-ner! Selbst - kenner! Selbst-kenner! Selbst-kenner! Selbst -

N.

Selbst-henker! Selbst-henker! Selbst-henker! Selbst-henker!

(legno batt.) *pp* *poco* *Gr. Trom.* *mf* *pp* *pp sempre* *(etc.)*

*) Diese beiden Takte mehrmals wiederholen, dabei immer schneller werden ...

UE 35 192

Verwandlung IV does not feature much in the soloistic writing of ‘Amid Birds of Prey’, but its second half remains present for most of Scene II, until the final Adagio, albeit intermittently due to deletions and newly-composed insertions. Its climaxes are deployed dramatically to convey the mountain storm that serves as a transition from the abyss of ‘Amid

Birds of Prey’ to the calm of the section based on ‘The Sun Sinks’, in which it remains prominent. Rihm pays particular attention to the two verses of ‘The Sun Sinks’ that open with the line ‘Day of my Life’ and offer a blissful description of nature. As in the dithyramb, the choir adds to the texture, yet it now offers an enrichment of the orchestral fabric instead of rendering it more gestural, with the mighty interjections on ‘Tag meines Lebens’ serving to project N.’s expansive mood. In an evocation of the Romantic sublime worthy of David Caspar Friedrich, N. finds a continuum between thought and environment which contrasts starkly with the pitiful figure he becomes in Scene IV. *Verwandlung* IV undergoes, therefore, a journey from ritual to self-expression: the opening block chords are suited to the rhythmic choral articulation, yet as it continues in Scene II, without the chorus, its more symphonic, continuous qualities emerge in a transformation from a dithyramb to the symphonic climax of ‘Tag meines Lebens’. Thus a symphonic movement acquires programmatic meaning, on the one hand, and collective theatre encounters a symphonic flow, on the other.

When the music finally parts company from *Verwandlung* IV in the final Adagio of the Scene, where N. and Gast survey a grand panorama from an alpine summit, a short section of ‘Fame and Eternity’ continues the lofty evocation of nature. With the imagery of the lines ‘o Nacht, o Schweigen, o totenstillen Lärm’ (‘oh night, oh silence, oh deathly silent uproar!’), N. reaches the intensity of a soaring operatic aria that he fails to muster in the company of Ariadne (see Example 3). Scene II then concludes with a unison (mainly) duet between N. and Ein Gast on the final verse of ‘The Sun Sinks’. In one sense, N. and Ein Gast find an equanimity that merges the two characters, in contrast to the automated loops of Selbstkenner/Selbsthenker, in another sense the duet with its catchy melody has a light aspect to it that is reminiscent of the kitschy exchanges between Ein Gast and Ariadne in Scene I. Either way, the concluding Adagio of Scene II is certainly a moment of repose and it terminates lavishly the natural environment of the first half of the opera, before the crueller social spaces of the last two scenes.

Example 3: 'oh night' from 'Fame and Eternity', Scene II (bars 848–53)

126
848

N.

850

N.

852

N.

UE 35 192

Like Scene II, Scene III, which is potentially the most incoherent part of the opera, contains an inserted song and a pre-existing ‘Verwandlung’. The typeset song ‘The Wanderer’, which occurs in Interior 2, was simply pasted into the hand-written full score. It

stands out dramatically too, because N. announces ‘Der Wanderer’ diagetically on stage, in a scenario that invokes the apparent occasion on which Nietzsche turned to the piano when he realized he was in a brothel. The Lied occupies its own dramatic space in the middle part of the scene: it is performed by N., who is accompanied (in a mime) by Ein Gast, and it receives weary applause from the hetaerae. The poem concerns a nocturnal wanderer who is brought to a restful halt by the singing of a bird, in an echo of Wagner’s *Siegfried*, where Wotan appears in the guise of The Wanderer and Siegfried is guided by the song of a wood bird.¹⁷

Example 4: ‘The Wanderer’, Interior 2, Scene III (bars 1–8)

254 („zärtlich“)

S 1 ... du bist der Ü - ber - flüs - sig - ste!

S 2 ... du bist der Ü - ber - flüs - sig - ste!

MS. ... du bist der Ü - ber - flüs - sig - ste!

A

Der Wanderer
Gehend („Tempo giusto“)

Va. *pp*

Klav. *) *f* *p* *sim.*

Vc., Kb. *poco* *ppp* (Vc.)

258 *poco* *ppp*

260 *p*

N. Es geht ein Wan - drer durch die Nacht mit gu - tem Schritt;

(pizz.) *pp dolce*

*) Klavier im Orchester

UE 35 192

For the most part, the song is performed with piano accompaniment, which is sometimes instrumentally enhanced. The main intervention from the orchestra is a substantial thud at the point marked by the dash in the excerpt below:

And shower me with sweet refrains

To my ear, that I must

Stand and listen –

You *tempt* me with tone and greeting? (Luchte, 2010, p. 103).

In the poem, the dash marks the shift where listening turns to temptation; a shift that acquires increased potency dramatically when N. performs the song in a brothel, as the orchestral contribution indicates. The other obvious addition is that the singing bird is conveyed by a solo flute, as suggested by the poem, an instrument that also features in the brutal encounter between Apollo and Marsyas of Interior 3.

In common with some of Schubert's chosen texts, the poem contains several voices, to which Rihm is attentive: the narrator, the wanderer and the bird. Musically, the song also bears specific resemblances to 'Gute Nacht', the opening number of *Die Winterreise*: it conveys a wandering motion through a regular gait, often in stepwise movement in the accompaniment (though Rihm has created metric displacement between the crotchet patterns in the two hands), and the vocal part contains falling patterns that are reminiscent of Schubert's famous melody (see Example 4). Poetically, Nietzsche used the wanderer as outsider idea that is so central to the associations of recollection and landscape that characterize *Die Winterreise*. The effect of all these Schubertian features is to isolate the song within marginal social space in which it is actually performed, partly because the staging of the singer and accompanist suggests the security of a Schubertian salon.

The song offers N. the voice that he had struggled to find in response to Ariadne, as did the previous 'The Wanderer and his Shadow'. This time, however, instead of blending subjectivity and environment, it insulates him from the surroundings he finds so threatening. The moment is marked out as a Lied within an opera, as if the Lied is itself a character who walks on to the stage, as a presence that stands at the other end of the spectrum to the impersonal ritual element of the drama, and yet one that offers more individual sentiments than those of an operatic aria. The sleazy waltz that follows it, by contrast, represents an external social space, indeed one that is ruptured by the harsh mythical stratum.

Verwandlung III possesses the melodic and harmonic abundance of Franz Schreker's opera *Der ferne Klang*, and features solos for violin (Rihm added a few more of these in *Dionysos*), clarinet and flute (Peters, 2008, pp. 6–7). It is deployed, in Interior 3, in a more straightforward manner than the earlier adaptation of *Verwandlung* IV, since the pre-existing score runs continuously, with the exception of an additional 23 bars that provide the now skinless N. with a solo passage. Rihm did not need to modify substantially the underlying fabric because existing textural contrasts enabled him to add solo writing to existing music;

but he did ‘over-paint’ the score with choral and vocal parts, along with supporting instrumentation. Like *Verwandlung* IV, *Verwandlung* III is initially heard with a ritualistic chorus, except that this time the singers are already on stage as maenads from the second part of Scene II, having concluded it with an intense Bach-like chorale. This four-part harmony continues in the new scene, and its richness fits the abundance of the poetic rain-bearing clouds (from ‘The Sun Sinks’), yet the combined force of the vocal writing and the additional percussion parts is more ritualistic than compassionate.

The inhuman music competition between Apollo and Marsyas dramatizes the flute (the instrument that is symbolically associated with Dionysus) and clarinet solos that pre-exist in the score, thereby adding a semantic layer to the instrumental theatre that is already present. The moment when Apollo flays N. (as Marsyas) corresponds to a passage, to which Rihm added a chorus of maenads, where the melodic writing gives way to more elemental gestures. Nevertheless, this ritualized violence is experienced more as a dream sequence than as outright cruelty, because it is not in keeping with the predominantly tuneful character of *Verwandlung* III.

This mismatch is continued when, after the flaying, N. reaches an alarming state of bliss on the line ‘du Hanger-Gott’ (‘you hangman god’) – shortly before his skin slowly starts to move – in the passage that Rihm added to *Verwandlung* III (see Example 5a). The gesture parallels Ariadne’s appeals to her ‘unbekannter Gott’ in Scene 1, the most sensual of which occurs before the first entrance of Ein Gast, using a scalic gesture like N.’s utterance (see Example 5b). Rihm generally reserves overtly tonal writing for moments of particular emotional intensity, yet in this case the effect is disconcerting due to the incompatibility of expressive idea and the brutal stage action.

Example 5a: ‘du Henker Gott’ from ‘Ariadne’s Lament’, Scene III, Interior 3 (bars 488–97)

236
933

(mit „schöner“ Stimme)

N. Scham - lo - ser! Un - be - kann - ter! ... du - Hen - ker -

Fg. *p*
Kl. (*pp*)
Hf. *pp*
Hf. *mf*
(+ Pk.)
Bkl.

938

(nachtsichtiges Lachen)

N. Gott! Ha ha ha ... Und mar - terst mich, Narr, der du

VI. Va.
Vc. *poco sfz*
Klav. *pp*
Fg. *f*
Hr. *sfz*
(Kl.)
(Bkl.)
Hf. *poco sfz*
Kb. (*pp*)
Pk.

[Langsam erhebt sich N.'s Haut (: ein Tänzer). Die „Mänaden“ weichen – ebenfalls langsam – zurück. „Die Haut“ taumelt haltlos umher. Selbst Apollon ist entsetzt –]

poco a poco string. – — — — —

942

N. bist, Gib Lie - be mir – wer wärmt mich (...)?

(Streicher)
Hr. *dolce*
VI. *pp*
Vibr. (mit Bogen)
Kl. *pp*
Vibr. (mit Bogen)
Hr. *poco*
(Pk.) →
(Kb.) *pp*
Kb. (*pp*)
Kl. *mp*
Kb. *pp*
(sul pont.)
Hr. *ff*
Kb. *mp*
Kl. *pp*
Hr. *mf*
Kb. *sfz-p*

UE 35 192

Example 5b: ‘mein unbekannter Gott!’ from ‘Ariadne’s Lament’, Scene I (bars 933–39)

42 **adagio**
488

S 1 Oh komm zu - rück, mein un - be - kann - ter Gott! mein Schmerz! mein

(*pp sempre*)

sfz

493

S 1 letz - tes Glück! Oh komm zu - rück —

poco

pp *f*

Ob.

Hf. *poco f*

[„Ariadne“ windet sich glücklich auf ihrem Felsen —]

poco a poco più mosso

498 (*quasi string.*)

p *f* *p* (trem.) *f*

sfz-pp *poco sfz-pp*

con moto

501

subito meno mosso

ffz-p *ff*

Ob., Eh.

sfz *pp*

Vc.

ffz-ff *pp*

UE 35 192

Interior 3 is a parenthetical story that is not central to the trajectory of the opera, one that for Rihm is a staging of the Nietzschean principles of the Dionysian and the Apollonian in relation to the creative process: as he puts it, ‘the jealousy by measuring Apollo of the

eruptive powers. And on the other hand, the eruptive fear of measurement.’ (Erhardt, 2012b.) Moreover, he has tried to evoke this parallel, or doubling, by placing in the score the, initially puzzling, instruction that the bound N. should be positioned at a ‘writing desk’ or an ‘artistic work space’ during the transition from Interior 2 to 3. This layering of ideas poses challenges for production of the opera, due to the sheer abundance of meanings. Indeed it also presents interpretive difficulties, because the dramatic and musical presence of the maenads relates more strongly to domain of collective ritual than to the idea of an artistic process. However, this dimension conveys the indifference of social forces more than the first dithyramb, which is more closely linked to the Nietzschean idea of a life force.

Double exposure

In his programme note for *Dionysos*, Rihm (2012a, p. 6) speaks of an ‘unablässige Spiel der Doppel-Belichtungen’ (‘ceaseless play of double exposure’), as a way of denoting the multiple levels of signification in the score. The reference to the superimposition of two or more photographic images, which is reminiscent of the Romantic *Doppelgänger* idea, signifies in *Dionysos* the layering of myth and biography, which is often played out by the character doubles, as just described in the superimpositions of Interior 3. Rihm (2012a: p. 7) writes of: ‘N. who is a man, Dionysus, the crucified one, Marsyas, an artist...’.¹⁸ Clearly, N. is Marsyas in the third part of Scene 3 and ‘the crucified’ in Scene IV, but beyond these specific locations the representations of him are too mobile and too multi-dimensional to be assigned to particular places. More generally, though, once the connection with *Doctor Faustus* is in place, Schoenberg, the template for Leverkühn, becomes a shadowy presence, along with the discourses of modernism.

Most of the time, the character N. occupies more than one role, so he is axiomatic for double exposure idea as the interplay of biography and myth, not least because the choice of the term ‘artist’ indicates that Rihm has approached Nietzsche more as a literary figure than as a philosopher, a term that invites comparison with Henze’s artist opera *Elegy for Young Lovers* (1961). In Henze’s (1982, p. 111) words: ‘an ingredient of this concept is the catastrophic notion that the artist is has to live in isolation for the sake of his creativity, and that he has to be an outcast, an outsider’. It is the writer who destroys lives for the sake of his art, so ‘that the old idea that reality is an illusion and that the truth is to be found in art alone is unmasked.’ (Henze, 1982, p. 113.) In *Dionysos*, by contrast, it is the creative figure who is destroyed by society. If Rihm (through the medium of Nietzsche) is less inclined than Henze

to puncture the idea of the artist-genius, it remains the case (as Henze well knew) that social conventions can crush artistic inspiration.

Ein Gast is another major candidate for the double exposure concept which for Rihm (2012a, p. 6) extends to the double-act as represented, he suggests as an example, by Laurel and Hardy, ‘on a high-rise roof, gripped by the fear of falling’. Ein Gast is a rival lover in Scene I; a companion in the mountainous Scene II, which is the most likely location for the Laurel and Hardy role, where he even sings in unison with N.; a victim in Interior II where, as a puppet, he is torn apart; a violent aggressor in Interior III, where stage directions establish that Apollo is to be played by Ein Gast; and a faceless tyrant with a whip in Scene IV. Ariadne is also intrinsic to the double exposure trend: in Scene I she is a mythical character who morphs into Cosima Wagner in Scene I; in Interior III, her words are sung by N., and in Scene IV the two characters join each other in a duet in which they start to lose separate identities. This criss-crossing is an effective way to ensure that biography does not become realism and that myth does not become essentialism.

The ‘words by Nietzsche, text by Rihm’ formulation is integral as well to the double exposure aspect, because it conveys the idea of Rihm speaking through a range of voices. Rihm (1997a, p. 333) addresses a similar topic when, discussing the playwright Heiner Müller in a note on the second of his *Fremde Szenen* (a set of Schumann-influenced piano trios), he comments to the effect that the past can take on new meanings when spoken through a different voice. Furthermore, in the context of *Dionysos* he remarks that myths are never unquestioned in his works, and turns to his opera *Oedipus* as an example, indicating that in it the Oedipus myth is encountered in commentaries by Müller, Nietzsche and Derrida, with his own music is a further stratum of commentary (Rihm, 2012b, p. 10). For Rihm, therefore, myth is not a timeless truth but an intertextual construct (even though one of the guises it takes in *Dionysos* is that of the collective), as demonstrated by the way the labyrinth concept plays out in *Dionysos* as a way of charting a course through multiple semantic layers, even though it is not staged as a dramatic topic.¹⁹ An important voice through which it heard in *Dionysos*, of course, is that of the Nietzsche’s poetry. It is this notion of myth as voice that ensures it does not become subservient to the ritualistic moments in the score.

Musical intertextuality is also central to the double exposure idea. The presence of Cosima Wagner in Scene I invites associations with the music of her domineering husband, so it is half-expected when the three dolphins that mock N. in the rowing boat for his ‘Labyrinth’ response quote the Rhine maidens’ motif. In addition, the music that mingles with the sound of a lively crowd at the beginning of Scene III sounds Wagnerian, even if it is

not a direct allusion, and accordingly evokes the idea of a psychological music drama that is resisted in the more ritualistic parts of the score. Richard Strauss is in evidence too, since the humorous alpine echo duet between Ariadne and Ein Gast in Scene I quotes directly from his *Alpensinfonie* ('Auf der Alm').²⁰ Less overtly, Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos* provides a precedent for the high lyrical singing of Rihm's Ariadne in Scene I, and the waltz in the second part of Scene III is in the milieu of the same composer's *Rosenkavalier* waltzes – at least before it becomes something more grotesque and Mahlerian.

The interplay between biography and myth relates to Rihm's perception that *Dionysos* is about the difficulties in articulating the permutations of desiring and being desired, and about how music can contribute to these dynamics as the language of desire.

One person wants to, the other one doesn't. Another wants to be wanted, another wants to want. All of that. And ultimately never getting through with words. It's all about people's linguistic skills. For me, music is the invitation to people to communicate and acquire these linguistic skills. That's what it's all about (Erhardt, 2012b).

In Scene I, Ariadne's lyrical expression of abandonment is addressed to the N. figure who instead of appearing in a blaze of emerald beauty, as the poem indicates Dionysus should, struggles to speak and only after great difficulty manages to gasp 'Ich bin dein Labyrinth'.

Ariadne is lamenting a gap not just between characters but also between genres of opera and music theatre, in an outpouring that is, at least partly, borrowed from expressionist traditions. N. struggles to respond to her desire, because he does not inhabit the same voice as her, unlike Ein Gast (in the Alpine duet) who converses with superficial ease. When N. eventually replies to Ariadne, he does so with a pre-linguistic noise of the kind that singers are trained to eliminate and thus fails to enter the conventions of opera. Moreover, when Ariadne and N. do eventually manage to communicate in Bild IV, they do so in a medium in which the scope for passion is greatly reduced. What is being staged in Scene I is a failure of communication between the torn halves of avant garde practices and the lyrical conventions of opera. Thus one of the most significant achievements of *Dionysos* is that it brings avant gardism into the same intertextual space as traditions from the nineteenth century, thereby indicating that the two practices need not be entirely separate from each other. In doing, it stages a fault line that has run through Western art music since 1945.

The pivotal failure of understanding between N. and Ariadne also has some affinities with Alberich's renunciation of love and theft of the gold, in a strategic attempt to control his instincts, after being humiliated by the Rhine maidens in *Das Rheingold*. If Alberich's

problem is that his desire is not reciprocated, N.'s difficulty is that he is not able to articulate his desire. Ariadne's song is reminiscent of Homer's sirens or of the Lorelei on her rock, voices which equate music with dangerous female desire. Likewise, the nymphs of Scene I clearly evoke the mermaid fantasies that were so prevalent in the nineteenth century, in which aquatic women serve as a symbols of the fluidity of desire (Kramer, 1998, pp. 75–92). In contrast to the alternatives presented by Homer's model, N. neither ignores the song in the purposeful manner that would allow him to conquer his own impulses, nor succumbs to it and risks self-destruction (at least, not until Scene III).²¹

The situation is congruent with Rihm's larger musico-dramatic preoccupation with male characters who find themselves not only outside standard social expectations, but also alienated from what is portrayed as a more natural, female realm, which is often denoted by high, lyrical soprano lines (especially in *Die Eroberung von Mexico*). The result is that these men disintegrate as social subjects who control signifying regimes. So there are two conflicting forces at play. On the one hand, the notion that the opera is about the artist in various situations rather assumes that N. is the artist, and that the female roles are projections of his feelings; an assumption that is strengthened by women in *Dionysos* being depicted through the traditional, nineteenth-century characteristics of being desirable, predatory or nurturing. On the other hand, N. falls short of the more active male behaviour that such an interpretation requires, and he increasingly identifies with Ariadne.

Nietzsche's poem 'The Desert Grows' (which enacts a familiar orientalist trope by locating its lascivious women in a desert region) evokes the flower maidens from the second act of Wagner's *Parsifal*, and this link is maintained in Scene III of *Dionysos*. For Adorno (1981, pp. 93–4), Wagner's flower maidens evoke 'a dreamland brothel', and he notes that 'sex and sexual disease become identical' in Wagner's moral code. It is likely that this opinion was influenced by Nietzsche's (1967b, p. 184) view of *Parsifal*, notably his comment on 'the cunning in his [Wagner's] alliance of beauty and sickness'; and the judgment of both men takes on a specific tone if it is accepted that Amfortas's symptoms are closely related to those of syphilis (L. Hutcheon and M. Hutcheon, 1995). With that connection in place, the suffering brought about by syphilis is related to the torture of crucifixion in *Parsifal*. This is a correlation that makes its way into *Dionysos* as a way of conveying N.'s exit from social conventions and expectations. It is a correlation that also extends to the idea of compassion, yet it does so without the consistent preoccupations with redemption and transcendence and the framework of art-religion.

The idea of multiple levels of signification is one that is in keeping with the view that meaning is something that is more semiotic than intrinsic. Thus there is a clash between this perspective and the more direct mode of expression that is represented by the character of Ariadne, who is simultaneously a thoroughly intertextual character and one with a strong inner voice. The ritualistic dimension of the opera leans in both directions: in one way it offers the directness of the collective, so it does not sit easily with double exposure, but in another, it too is dependent on the idea of layered meanings. Nevertheless, the score makes less use of the intertextual possibilities of collective consciousness idea, despite its associations with a Stravinskian legacy, than those of the expressive dimension. Thus the double exposure idea is not one that is sufficient to break down the significant tension between individual and collective, yet it is strong enough to indicate that both are dependent on signs and histories.

Theatres

It is only in the mountains that N. achieves a fully expressive subjectivity and a sense of well-being, before his disintegration in the last two scenes. When the Gast-puppet is torn apart, in the second part of Scene III, the music freezes, endowing the moment with the feel of film still, with extensive side drum rolls, sustained strings, and horns moving between open and stopped hand positions. The effect of the static orchestration is enhanced, because this music follows an opulent, if somewhat grotesque waltz, so the moment is experienced as a shift away from opera to an axial moment at which the mythological stratum breaks through. As a representation of sex, the moment is coldly in keeping with the view that Nietzsche contracted syphilis. It pertains as well to Orpheus, who was also dismembered,²² in a reference that is enhanced by N. playing a fake harp on stage, supported by harp glissandi in the orchestra, at the end of the preceding waltz.

Following the destruction of the Gast-puppet, the bound N. stands upright and listens to the chorus singing a generously orchestrated Bach-style chorale. Although this choral writing has the intensity of the first dithyramb, it primarily performs another role at this point, since as well as observing the stage action, it empathizes with it (as happens in Bach's Passions and Greek tragedy), though not without a moralistic mixture of forgiveness and reproach (contrary to Nietzsche's own sentiments). More generally, the drama turns from the austerity of a collective rite to the compassion of social involvement.

The third part of Scene III is a second ritualistic death for N. yet it is not until Scene IV that the full horror of N.'s exit from the social order is acknowledged, in a tattoo of drums

that constitutes the most visceral moment in *Dionysos*. The writing is reminiscent of Rihm's earlier Artaudian *Tutuguri*, and the score at this point even contains the comment, 'the scene is extremely ritualistic.' The moment is experienced dramatically as shocked recognition of N.'s depleted state, though it is not without layered meanings. In a further remark on the latent theme of an artist opera Rihm comments: 'Losing one's skin as an artist does, or putting it on the market, or whatever...People are always being skinned because there's always a principle that proves that whatever we're doing artistically just wasn't right' (Erhardt, 2012b).²³ Thus viewed from this bleak perspective, the scene represents the situation of the creative figure in a public arena.

In keeping with the double exposure idea, Rihm mixes pagan and Christian topics as the thunderous percussion subsides, and he does not hesitate to stage Nietzsche's identification of himself with 'the crucified one' (as mentioned earlier), despite the philosopher's fierce antipathy to Christianity which he regarded as 'a vengeful antipathy to life itself' (Nietzsche 1967a, p. 23).²⁴ Since Nietzsche was not in possession of his mental faculties when he wrote the letters in which he associated himself with crucifixion, it is difficult to say what this self-description might mean, though it appears to align him with redemption from life as opposed to a Dionysian return to life. Although portrayals of madness are an enduring preoccupation for Rihm, this scene depicts not so much a collapsing sign system as being removed from the social conventions that Nietzsche so consistently challenged.

As the skin adopts the Pietà position in Ariadne's arms, N. (the voice) sings 'Ich bin deine Wahrheit', in a variant of the words ('Ich bin dein Labyrinth') he struggled to articulate in Scene I. In contrast to the earlier failure of communication, the two figures become reconciled to the extent of almost becoming aspects of the same character, thus the end of *Dionysos* creates an unstable constellation of N., the labyrinth, truth and Ariadne, by which N. gains access to Ariadne's lyricism and is thereby able to interact with her. The tragedy, though, is that N. can only achieve this acceptance in a completely broken state. So at this point the troubled expression of desire and the double exposure topics map onto each other, as N. and Ariadne become two aspects of a larger entity, in a variant on the *Liebestod* idea, minus the surging eroticism of Wagner's model, with Ariadne holding the formless skin of N. in an expression of grief on a human scale.

In Scene IV the role of N. is reduced to that of a mute dancer, as 'the skin', until his final vocal utterance, so he is split in the most brutal manner between the remnants of a socialized human-subject and the subject as a thing-like material object. In a grotesque form

of nakedness, N. is deprived of the body armour that would allow him to function as a representative of any social convention; and at the same time the depletion of his voice deprives him of the inner subjectivity that might be articulated in a song. For these reasons, the scene is more in line with the ritualistic strand of the score than its expressive-historical (operatic) dimension. However, the final exchange between Ariadne and N. is neither one nor the other: it has the austerity of music theatre, and the high writing constrains the voices, but it also offers broadly imitative rising lines that are more in keeping with lyrical utterance (see Example 6), so it remains suspended between the two dimensions.

Example 6: The final exchange between N. and Ariadne from 'The Desert Grows', Scene IV (bars 86–95).

exchanges between N. and Ariadne: in both cases the two characters become a single entity and address the theme of eternity. Furthermore, the opening to Scene IV, with its massive bass drum strokes, is an evocation of something raw and atavistic which suggests parallels between the flayed N. and the Artaudian screaming man that Cortez at one stage becomes.

Ariadne's singing (her melodic thread) in Scene I is highly lyrical, in the manner of Schoenbergian expressionism and Straussian operatic writing, and conveys an emotional state that N. is unable to emulate. However, her vocality is determined by a situation instead of arising from a series of events, as the conventions of nineteenth-century opera demand. Without the apparatus of the bourgeois subject, her song is characterized partly by the semiotics of inwardness and partly by a more direct inner need. Consequently, Ariadne conveys the loss of, or desire for, a communicative musical language, though her outpouring is not a lament in the formal sense of the genre.²⁵

Ariadne offers N. a melodic thread, but because he is unable to grasp it he is unable to escape from his own psychological labyrinth. Even though the subsequent communication between Ein Gast and Ariadne is easier, it is mannered, synthetic and humorous in comparison with the intensity of Ariadne's impassioned attempts to make N. speak. It is not until the end of Scene II that N. is able to achieve a level of intensity to match that of Ariadne. So the opera is something of an arch: in the first two scenes N. moves from a state of pre-symbolic noises to an expressive peak; in the second two scenes he is reduced from articulating an inner subjectivity to being a thing-like object outside the realm of language and meaning, and it is his disembodied voice alone that is able finally to communicate with Ariadne.

Rihm made his mark on the operatic stage with the expressionist *Jakob Lenz*, in which he combines his penchant for historical reflection with depictions of raw insanity, while his later encounters with Artaud have explored more extensively the potential for a gestural level of articulation. *Dionysos* combines the historically-inflected music-as-sign idea with the theatrical music-as-prelinguistic utterance concept without trying to force their reconciliation. To some extent, this meeting point is anticipated by the influence of Müller on Rihm, though Rihm's solutions are different since Müller absorbed ideas through Artaud but always spoke through another voice. It may well be the case that the price paid for this switching between sign and gesture is the absence of traditional operatic storytelling, to which Tommasini draws attention. What is gained, however, is a medium in which established conventions of opera and the gestural aspects of music theatre are able to exert a critical force on each other instead of remaining completely separate or merging artificially. *Dionysos* can be interpreted as a

fusion of *Jakob Lenz* and *Die Eroberung von Mexico*, because it combines exploration of the isolated, romantic artist with a search for pre-symbolic expression.

On one side of the equation, the operatic quotations and allusions expand the cultural-biographical dimension through the medium of historical memory (the two imported songs are special cases, especially the second one since it is diegetically marked out as an event in which subject-positions are being performed). On the other side, the mythical moments, namely the end of Scene I, the lynching of Ein Gast and the opening of Scene IV, are aligned with the Artaudian aspect of Rihm's work. They shift the score from a network of signs to something more immediate and embodied, though this dimension is itself not without a semiotic aspect. Thus, beyond the specifics of the drama, *Dionysos* explores the capacity for musical subjectivity to function both as a sign system and as something more somatic,

Nietzsche's famous formulation of the Apollonian and Dionysian, or more loosely of structure and expression, is one that has found echoes in Freud, Adorno and Lacan. However, in *Dionysos* this binary is less significant than articulations of the individual and collective, both of which aim to be direct forms of expression. Of course, the topic of the individual and the collective is of central importance to Adorno's *Philosophy of New Music*, despite the emphasis that the author places on his dialectic of rationality and mimesis. What saves Rihm's *Verwandlung IV* dithyramb from Adorno's judgment of the collective in Stravinsky is its Nietzschean sense of energized action.

The opera combines expressionism, aria, ritual, the chorale, symphonic development, the public genre of the waltz and the intimate genre of the Lied. *Verwandlung IV* breaks in as ritual energy but it also participates in a transformation from the collective to individual feeling later on, as well as bringing symphonic writing into an opera. The domestic medium of the Lied is presented as a different space, for although it is an inherently dramatic genre, it contrasts with the expansive operatic moments and is associated here with the outsider voice of the wanderer. In Scene II it is a parenthesis within the public genre of the symphony, while in Scene III it offers time away from the more threatening public genre of the waltz. Another crucial contrast is the one between ritualistic or social indifference and the empathetic chorale singing that is heard after the mutilation of the Gast-puppet. These genres and the theatrical roles they perform are an intrinsic part of the drama, and they contribute to the interplay of individual expression and collective emotion that is such a feature of *Dionysos*.

References

- Adlington, Robert (2000). *The Music of Harrison Birtwistle*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Adorno, Theodor W. and Horkheimer, Max (1979). *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (trans. John Cumming). London, Verso Edition.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (1981). *In Search of Wagner* (trans. Rodney Livingstone). London: NLB.
- Adorno, Theodor W. (2006). *Philosophy of New Music* (trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Audi, Pierre and Bertisch, Klaus (2012). 'Ein Wilder Garten'. In Staatsoper Berlin (2012), 22–25.
- Balik, Jessica (2009). 'Romantic Subjectivity and West German Politics in Wolfgang Rihm's *Jakob Lenz*'. *Perspectives of New Music*, 47/2, 228–48.
- Berry, Mark (2014). *After Wagner: Histories of Modernist Music Drama from Parsifal to Nono*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press
- Bertisch, Klaus (2012). 'Handlung'. In Staatsoper Berlin (2012), 68–9.
- Cross, Jonathan (2000). *Harrison Birtwistle: Man, Mind, Music*. London: Faber and Faber Limited.
- Cross, Jonathan (2009). *Harrison Birtwistle: The Mask of Orpheus*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing.
- Downes, Stephen (2013). *After Mahler: Britten, Weill, Henze, and Romantic Redemption*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ehrhardt, Bettina (2012a). 'Documenting an Opera – Director's Note' (trans. Donald Arthur). In liner notes to Erhardt (2012b).
- Erhardt, Bettina (director) (2012b). *Ich bin dein Labyrinth* is a film that is included on Rihm (2012DVD). *Ich bin dein Labyrinth* includes comments by the composer.
- Fuss, Peter and Shapiro, Henry (eds.) (1971). *Nietzsche: A Self-Portrait from His Letters* (trans. Fuss and Shapiro). Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Graves, Robert (1960). *The Greek Myths* (2 vols. 2nd edn.). London: Penguin, vol. 1.
- Henze, Hans Werner (1982). 'Elegy for Young Lovers: (2) The Artist as Bourgeois Hero'. In Henze, *Music and Politics: Collected Writings 1953–81* (trans. Peter Labanyi). Faber: London.
- Hollingdale, R.J. (1999). *Nietzsche: The Man and his Philosophy* (2nd edn). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Hutcheon, Linda and Hutcheon, Michael (1995). 'Syphilis, Sin and the Social Order'. *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 7/3, 261–75.
- Kramer, Lawrence (1998). *Franz Schubert: Sexuality, Subjectivity, Song*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Luchte, James (ed.) (2010). *The Peacock and the Buffalo: the Poetry of Nietzsche* (trans. James Luchte) London: Continuum.
- Mann, Thomas (1968). *Doctor Faustus* (trans. H. T. Lowe-Porter) London: Penguin Books.
- Metzmacher, Ingo (2009). 'Dionysos: Wolfgang Rihm'. In Metzmacher, *Vorhang auf!, Oper entdecken und erleben*. Berlin: Rowohlt Verlag, 207–15.
- Mosch, Ulrich (2012). 'Unablässiges Spiel der Doppel-Belichtungen. Wolfgang Rihms Opernphantasie, *Dionysos* nach Friedrich Nietzsches *Dionysos-Dithyramben*'. In Good, Paul (ed.). *Nietzsche in Ragaz: Wandern im Verboten. Über Sinne und Sinn in Nietzsches Philosophie*. Lachen: Agon Press, 125–58.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich (1961). *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (trans. R.J. Hollingdale). London: Penguin.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich (1967a). *The Birth of Tragedy* (trans. W. Kaufmann). New York: Vintage Books.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich (1967b). *The Case of Wagner* (trans. Walter Kaufmann). New York: Vintage Books.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich (1968). *Twilight of the Idols* (trans. R.J. Hollingdale). London: Penguin.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich (1984). *Dithyrambs of Dionysus* (trans. R.J. Hollingdale). London: Anvil Press.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich (1986). *Human, All Too Human: A book for Free Spirits* (trans. R.J. Hollingdale). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Peters, Rainer (2008). Liner notes to Rihm, *Verwandlungen*. hänssler CLASSIC CD 93.263, 5–7.
- Rihm, Wolfgang (1997a). 'Fremde Szenen I–III, Versuche für Klaviertrio, erste Folge'. In *Ausgesprochen*, vol. 2, 333.
- Rihm, Wolfgang (1997b). 'Notizen zur Tutuguri-Musik'. In *Ausgesprochen: Schriften und Gespräche*, vol. 2, 326–7.
- Rihm, Wolfgang (1997c). 'Umsungen für Bariton und acht Instrumente'. In Rihm, *Ausgesprochen: Schriften und Gespräche*, 2 vols. (ed. Ulrich Mosch). Mainz: Schott, vol. 2, 335–8.

- Rihm, Wolfgang (2010). *Dionysos: Szenen und Dithyramben – eine Opernphantasie*, nach Texten von Friedrich Nietzsche, Libretto vom Komponisten, Studienpartitur UE 34 958. Vienna: Universal Edition.
- Rihm, Wolfgang (2012a). ‘*Dionysos Notes*’ (trans. Richard Evidon). In liner notes to Rihm (2012DVD), 6–7.
- Rihm, Wolfgang (2012b). ‘Musik is wohl nur in der Form der Hingabe Erfahrbar: Wolfgang Rihm im Gespräch mit Max Nyfeller’. In Staatsoper Berlin programme booklet for Rihm, *Dionysos: Szenen und Dithyramben – Eine Opernphantasie*, 6–11.
- Rihm, Wolfgang (2012DVD). *Dionysos: Eine Opernphantasie*. Unitel Classica: DVD 2072604. Conducted by Ingo Metzmacher, with Germany symphony Orchestra, Berlin and Vienna State Opera Chorus. Martin Kränzle, Mojca Erdmann and Matthias Klink, soloists. Production by Pierre Audi and sets by Jonathan Meese.
- Sax, Leonard (2003). ‘What Was the Cause of Nietzsche’s Dementia?’ *Journal of Medical Biography*, 11, 47–54.
- Spahn, Claus (2010). ‘So schnell schluckt uns die Tiefe!’. In *Die Zeit*, August 5.
- Staatsoper Berlin (2012). Programme booklet for Rihm, *Dionysos: Szenen und Dithyramben – eine Opernphantasie*.
- Tommasini, Anthony (2010). ‘A Nietzschean Plunge into Sensual Labyrinths’. In *New York Times*, August 2.
- Tunbridge, Laura (2010). *The Song Cycle*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Williams, Alastair (2013). *Music in Germany since 1968*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹ In a letter to Peter Gast, dated August 1881, from Sils-Maria, Nietzsche wrote: ‘The August sun is overhead, the year is slipping away, the mountains and forests are becoming more hushed and peaceful. Thoughts have emerged on my horizon the likes of which I have never seen – I won’t even hint at what they are, but shall maintain my own unshakable calm.’ (Fuss and Shapiro, 1971, 57).

² Peter Gast was the pseudonym adopted by Heinrich Köselitz when he became known as a composer. Rihm (2012a, 6) writes: ‘Ein Gast – for heaven’s sake – doesn’t strut about like a sketch of Nietzsche’s friend Heinrich Köselitz’. Rihm’s point is that the role of Ein Gast is not intended as a realistic portrait of the actual person.

³ This point is made by Mosch (2012, 143).

⁴ Translation modified.

⁵ Letters to Peter Gast and Georg Brandes, both dated 4 January 1889, are signed ‘the crucified one’ (Fuss and Shapiro, 1971, 141–2).

⁶ The standard account of this incident is found in Hollingdale (1999, 237). Sax (2003, 47) refers to an essay that casts doubt on the veracity of this story.

⁷ These poems are to be found, in German and English, in Luchte (2010).

⁸ Information about these figures and their deeds can be found in Graves (1960).

⁹ The words are from a section entitled ‘Among the Daughters of the Desert’ (Nietzsche, 1961, 314–19).

¹⁰ This point is made by Mosch (2012, 138).

¹¹ Both poems are included in Luchte (2010).

¹² For a discussion of *Jakob Lenz* in relation to the ‘New Subjectivity’, see Balik (2009).

¹³ For a larger study of Rihm, see Williams (2013).

¹⁴ As Mark Berry (2014, 192) has put it, ‘to bear witness to one’s times was, according to Henze, ultimately more important than to extend the grammar of music’.

¹⁵ For an account of this debate, see Williams (2013, 63–5).

¹⁶ The starting point for Rihm's 'symphonie fleuve' cycle, from the 1990s, was a score comprising block textures, which was 'over-painted' to create flowing lines. See Williams (2013: 155–60).

¹⁷ Notable predecessors for this wanderer theme include Schubert's 'Der Wanderer', his 'Das Wandern' (the opening song of *Die schöne Müllerin*), and the cycle *Die Winterreise*, in which wandering is a preoccupation. For more on 'Wanderlieder', see Tunbridge (2010, 32–9).

¹⁸ Translation modified.

¹⁹ The idea is used in a less structural sense than that adopted by Birtwistle, for whom the labyrinth is a metaphor for combining linear and cyclic forms (Adlington, 2000, 115–19).

²⁰ This quotation is noted by Mosch (2012, 151).

²¹ Adorno and Horkheimer (1979, 57–60) argue that Odysseus represses his own internal nature in order to dominate the external nature represented by the sirens.

²² In Birtwistle's *Mask of Orpheus* the ritualized dismembering of Orpheus is repeated several; see Cross (2009).

²³ It is likely that Rihm is referring to criticism of his use of tonal gestures and historical references, particularly during the 'new simplicity' debate in the 1970s.

²⁴ The essay 'Attempt at Self-Criticism' was added to later editions of *The Birth of Tragedy* (Nietzsche 1967a) and is included in Kaufmann's translation of this volume.

²⁵ I have translated 'Klage' ('Klage der Ariadne') as 'lament' instead of as 'complaint' in order to convey a general sense of loss.