

PATTERN AND MEANING IN FRANÇOIS COUPERIN'S

*PIÈCES DE CLAVECIN*

by

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A DISSERTATION

Presented to the School of Music and Dance  
and the Graduate School of the University of Oregon  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

June 2010

**University of Oregon Graduate School**

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Two questions motivate this investigation: Why the virtual absence of François Couperin from modern theoretical discourse? How does musical meaning arise with Couperin's musical portraits? After describing my analytic method, I illustrate its application with several short examples. I then offer two in-depth case studies of different formal structures: an extended theme and variations and an independent binary piece.

My findings relate pattern to musical "vocabularies", to context and expressive meaning, and to the theory and practice of music analysis. The focus on pattern illuminates the interaction of vocabularies in Couperin's music — including those of the seventeenth-century French keyboard tradition, the emerging Italian galant style, and the increasingly tonal "high styles" of eighteenth-century church, chamber, and court music. It illustrates how patterns contribute to expression and affect — as well as how they interact with ideas, concepts, or images associated with Couperin's evocative titles. Pattern-based analyses demonstrate that different contexts can give the same pattern different meanings — supporting (rather than contradicting, as others have suggested) the argument that music can have meaning; instead of a single meaning, we encounter a plurality of possibilities. The synthetic analytic approach of this dissertation is ideal for Couperin's music in particular but also for the galant style in general. Moreover, the combination of methods itself illuminates the power and meaning of each individual contributing element, and exemplifies the advantages of (and flexibility inherent to) an analytic method consonant with Lakoff and Johnson's cognitive metaphor theory, suggesting the analytic potential of a synthetic approach for an even broader set of styles.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am most grateful to the members of my committee for their thoughtful comments and support of this dissertation. Their knowledge and expertise have inspired me to expand this project in new directions. In particular, special thanks go to my adviser Steve Larson, whose insights, enthusiasm, extraordinary editing skills (lightening-fast turn-around!), and support kept me motivated throughout this project and made me a better writer. Thanks both to Lori Kruckenberg for joining my committee, and to Stephen Rodgers for serving as co-chair, in support of my defense this spring. In addition, I would like to thank the University of Oregon Graduate School, which supported my last year of doctoral studies by with the University of Oregon Doctoral Research Fellowship.

It goes without saying that friends and family support so many aspects of our lives, and that has been especially true for me during my time as a graduate student. My mother and father fostered a love of learning and of music that ultimately led me to where I am today — for that I am eternally grateful. I am thankful for my sister Kara, who constantly kept me laughing and reminded me not to take things too seriously. A heartfelt thanks goes to my employer and friend Paul Katz, whose unwavering support of education, grace, and humor allowed me to complete my degree while maintaining my job. A special thanks to my writing buddies — especially to Alison Altstatt for her excellent editing skills, clarity, and most importantly, for her friendship, all of which kept me motivated and supported throughout my entire doctoral program. And finally, to my husband Mike, and to my boys, Nick and Cobi (who grew up before my very eyes during my graduate program) — I thank

you all for your love, your laughter, and for feeding me when I didn't have time to cook.

Mike always reminded me, "It's a finite set of steps." He was right.

For Mike, with love and many, many thanks

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## CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

*The paucity of our analytical vocabulary in music is nowhere more evident than in an attempt to deal adequately with the four books of Pièces de clavecin by François Couperin.<sup>1</sup>*

James Anthony

**Two Questions: Couperin and Musical Pattern**

This is a study of meaning — more specifically, how pattern contributes to musical meaning. Even more specifically still, this is a study of pattern and its contribution to expression and meaning in François Couperin’s *Pièces de Clavecin*. As with all significant research endeavors, my dissertation is shaped and guided by questions — two questions in particular.

The first question concerns Couperin’s music. Why, when commonly acknowledged as one of the most important and influential French composers of the early eighteenth century, is François Couperin “Le Grand” (1668–1733) virtually absent from modern theoretical discourse? The second question pertains to pattern and meaning. How can knowledge of musical pattern — which has been studied by several authors as a contributor to “musical meaning making” in some way — help us to understand meaning,

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<sup>1</sup> James R. Anthony, *French Baroque Music from Beaujoyeux to Rameau* (Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1994), 258.

or meanings in Couperin's harpsichord collection (and how can analysis of Couperin's music help us better understand the relationships between pattern and meaning)?<sup>2</sup>

I will address the question concerning Couperin first. To a large degree, the lacuna in analytical literature, as illustrated by the survey of existing scholarship, seems to reflect perception. Despite Couperin's reputation as a composer during his own lifetime (achieving a high degree of renown, which J.S. Bach, a German contemporary, never did), skill as a performer, and level of productivity, our contemporary analytical reverence for all things complex has relegated much of the dialogue about Couperin's music to the realm of descriptors such as "lovely" and "bewitching" associated with products of the *style galant*. Even Daniel Hertz in his thoroughgoing investigation of the pervasiveness of the galant style throughout the eighteenth century, *Music in European Capitals: The Galant Style 1720–1780*, engages in such descriptions: "Couperin's pieces depicting natural phenomena or sounds from everyday life (e.g. "*Le réveil-matin*" [The alarm clock]) are charming."<sup>3</sup>

This tendency is understandable because, in truth, the analytic vocabulary available to discuss music of the galant is lacking. I doubt this kind of description would surface when discussing, for example, Beethoven's "Pastoral" symphony, which is also said to depict natural phenomena and sounds of everyday life. The intricate sequences, tightly wrought contrapuntal passages, and complex harmonic suspensions in the strict or

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<sup>2</sup> I use the idiom 'musical meaning making' after Steve Larson in *Musical Forces: Motion, Metaphor, and Meaning in Music* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, forthcoming).

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Hertz, *Music in European Capitals: The Galant Style 1720–1780* (New York: Norton, 2003), 22.

learned styles of the high Baroque, tend to encourage the analyst to “dig in”, but their absence seems to lead to reliance on descriptive terms like “charming”.

Before proceeding, it is important to clarify what is meant by “galant”. The term, as it refers to music of the eighteenth century, has had many different connotations and definitions. In the simplest terms it represents music written in a “modern” style (as opposed to the dense contrapuntal textures of the strict style). More specific definitions include descriptions of decorated and sometimes disparate melodic passages, combined within periodic structures supported by an easy, harmonically uncomplicated accompaniment.<sup>4</sup> Later eighteenth-century accounts discuss music of the galant in opposition to the strict style with respect to dissonance treatment, and some also include opinions related to quality of composition and skill as a composer. For example, Daniel Gottlob Türk, in his treatise *Anweisung zum Generalbassspielen* (published 1791) writes:

In the free galant style the composer does not always follow the grammatical rules so strictly. He allows, for example, certain dissonances to enter unprepared; he transfers their resolutions to other voices, or omits the resolutions altogether. He gives to dissonances a longer duration than to the following consonances, something which does not take place in the strict style. Moreover, he modulates excessively, allows various kinds of embellishments, and adds diverse passing tones. In short, he composes more for the ear, and if I might say so, appears less as a learned composer.<sup>5</sup>

This late eighteenth-century (slightly pejorative) German account is an opinion that still appears to hold sway in many modern circles. For example, a friend of Louis Crowder, while in conversation about the composer, made this reference to Couperin’s

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 18–19.

<sup>5</sup> Daniel Gottlob Türk, as quoted by Ibid., 20.

compositions: “The ornaments are so bothersome, and afterward what have you got?”<sup>6</sup>

This thinking is not limited to Couperin. Music of the galant style, especially that from the earlier part of the century, is often described as light, accessible, or uncomplicated.

The music is considered part of the middle style, while composers such as Bach and Handel are representative of the high, or learned style, of composition. Channan Willner offers the following definition of the various styles.

At the top, at least in terms of moment-to-moment harmonic complexity and artifice, we find the high style, the familiar contrapuntal web of Bach’s and Handel’s major instrumental works. At a lower level of tonal expression—incorporating simpler harmonies, and readily accessible thematic work—we have both the more casual and relatively informal middle style of Telemann’s *Musique de table*, and the increasingly popular galant style. Finally, at a minimal level of complexity, we encounter the low style, whose sparing tonal vocabulary, bare textures, and roughly turned thematic outlines underline its characteristic repetition of short and blunt motives. This is the kind explicitly programmatic and insistently repetitive writing that marks the Biblical Sonatas of Kuhnau and those pieces in which François Couperin depicts theatrical or military events or evokes the rugged contours of folk music.<sup>7</sup>

While in Willner’s definition some of Couperin’s output resides as part of the low style (every composer can produce in different styles), Couperin’s overall compositional output is recognized as being emblematic of the galant or middle style, and as such “incorporat[es] simpler harmonies, and readily accessible thematic work.”<sup>8</sup> It possesses

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<sup>6</sup> In a 1968 tribute to the composer in *Clavier* magazine, Louis Crowder reflected on the state of scholarship about François Couperin. A friend made this statement when in conversation with Crowder about the French composer’s keyboard music. See Louis Crowder, “Master of the French ‘Baroque’: François Couperin,” in *François Couperin: A Tercentennial Tribute*, reprint from *Clavier Magazine*, April 1968, 17.

<sup>7</sup> Channan Willner, “Baroque Styles and the Analysis of Baroque Music,” in *Structure and Meaning in Tonal Music: Festschrift in Honor of Carl Schachter, Harmonologia Series No. 12*, eds. L. Poundie Burstein and David Gagné (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2006), 150–151. See also Ratner, *Classic Music*, 9–30 for more discussion on style. For additional information on rhetoric in music of this period, see *Ibid.*, 31–206.

<sup>8</sup> Willner, “Baroque Styles,” 150.

an accessible vocabulary, which contributes to what Danuta Mirka considers as the “conversant ideal” — an important philosophical backdrop to music of the galant.

[T]he eighteenth-century composer had to take into account the distinction between amateurs (*Liebhaber*) and connoisseurs (*Kenner*). The category of listeners represented by *Kenner* reflected the growth of musical literacy not only in performing but also in composing music. Theoretical knowledge of *Kenner* allowed the composer to consider them not as passive receivers but as active partners in the process of communication, and thus to engage them in a game played upon the technical rules of composition. The wit (*Witz*) of this game suggests that, within the metaphor of language, the ancient model of oration gradually gave way to a more modern ideal of conversation.<sup>9</sup>

While the music participates in the discourse, *our* vocabulary to talk about *their* conversation is limited at best — especially when it comes to the repertoire from the naissiance of the galant style in the first quarter of the century. But the accessible vocabulary and “conversant ideal” are precisely why it is important to develop some way to understand potential meanings for what is actually being said.

For Couperin this is necessary; his music clearly and quintessentially represents one common voice to which much eighteenth-century music refers.<sup>10</sup> When we consider *Les Pièces de Clavecin* in particular — a corpus of more than 240 pieces published in four volumes between the years of 1713/1716 and 1734 — the need is even more palpable. The pieces themselves are musical portraits, the vast majority of which bear evocative titles (unusual prior to the composer’s contributions), intended to express and evoke particular ideas, concepts, people, emotions, or moods to an audience through

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<sup>9</sup> Danuta Mirka, “Introduction,” in *Communication in Eighteenth-Century Music*, eds. Danuta Mirka and Kofi Agawu, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 2.

<sup>10</sup> Willner, “Baroque Styles,” 145.

musical material.<sup>11</sup> Even for the performer, expression is important as Couperin conveys ideas through performance markings, articulations, and other methods (such as *Augenmusik* or “eye music”, including the use of archaic void or white notation in particular settings that represent, for example, old-fashioned ideals, dark moods, tension, or weariness). In every manner available, Couperin communicates to both the performer and the audience. And we, as the performers and the listeners, may experience the music in some way — certain images and ideas may come to mind, we may associate types of movement with each piece, or we may have a specific emotional response related to Couperin’s titles. In the words of the composer himself, “I have always had an object in composing all these pieces: different occasions have furnished them to me. Thus the titles correspond to the ideas that I have had...the pieces that bear them are portraits of a kind, which have sometimes been found [to be] good likenesses under my fingers.”<sup>12</sup> It is clear that Couperin is communicating something, but we have yet to determine a mechanism to find out what that “something” is.

If Couperin’s output is representative of a common musical vocabulary popular with, and accessible to, his audience, how can we derive a way of looking at the music for what it is doing rather than what it is missing? In other words, how do we become conversant in the musical language and structure of Couperin’s music, to discover what gives it meaning (or meanings) within the broader context of the time?

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<sup>11</sup> For a detailed discussion regarding Couperin’s pieces as musical equivalents to literary portraits, see David Fuller, “Of Portraits, ‘Sapho’ and Couperin: Titles and Characters in French Instrumental Music of the High Baroque,” *Music & Letters*, Vol. 78, No. 2 (May, 1997); 149–174.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

This brings me to the second question that frames my investigation: How are pattern and meaning related in Couperin's *Pièces de Clavecin* (and how can analysis of Couperin's music help us better understand those relationships)? As Steve Larson states, the word pattern is often used to describe concepts related to repetition.

We tend to use the word "pattern" to describe at least three sorts of things — and they all seem related to repetition. First, we may use the word "pattern" to describe a design or shape (such as a dress pattern used in sewing) that could serve as a model. Such a pattern is something we can imagine repeating. Second, we speak of a pattern when a single thing (such as a cross or a mandala) has some kind of internal symmetry or logic. Such a pattern may be said to contain repetition (of a shape or of a rule) within it. Third, we speak of a pattern (such as the rhythm of an engine or a pattern of behavior) when we notice something being repeated.<sup>13</sup>

Pattern is an organizing principle that contributes to meaning. We are better at comprehending information when that information is "grouped into meaningful units — patterns — that we can understand."<sup>14</sup> Chapter II will say more about how this dissertation uses the terms "pattern" and "meaning".

Much has been written about this connection, as I take it, on two primary points: how the meaningful units (patterns) are derived, and how those units contribute to meaning itself. Some authors, such as Leonard Meyer and Robert Gjerdingen, describe the development of "meaningful units" as culturally and stylistically derived. For Meyer, the meaning of pattern is tied directly to expectation. Those meaningful units create

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<sup>13</sup> Larson, *Musical Forces: Motion, Metaphor, and Meaning in Music*, 2.6.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

norms of behavior, and meaning arises from deviation from those norms.<sup>15</sup> Robert Gjerdingen, whose theory will be treated in detail in Chapter II as part of my synthesized methodology, defines a series of style-based schema or models, in some ways as an alternative to Schenkerian theory. For Gjerdingen, understanding the types and functions of these patterns as part of compositional procedure is what contributes meaning in music of the galant style.<sup>16</sup> Authors such as Leonard Ratner and V. Kofi Agawu have discussed topics and rhetorical figures as stylistically significant patterns (meaningful units) that evoke particular ideas and themes as hallmarks of the classical style.<sup>17</sup>

Other treatments of pattern, but within a broader vocabulary of tonal music as a whole, are found in the writings of Larson and Deryck Cooke. For Larson, as with Meyer, meaning and expectation (established norms) are closely connected in terms of pattern-based activity. However, looking at the particular manner in which music moves, whether aligning or misaligning with expectation, through analogy with physical movement (Larson's theory of musical forces is also discussed in Chapter II), can provide additional meaning for pattern behavior.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, Cooke has discussed how

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<sup>15</sup> Leonard Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), Chapter 2.

<sup>16</sup> See Robert O. Gjerdingen, *Music in the Galant Style* (New York: Oxford, 2007), and *A Classic Turn of Phrase: Music and the Psychology of Conventions* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988).

<sup>17</sup> In line with this topical thinking, David Fuller states that Couperin's musical portraits are early embodiments possessing many of the figures we associate with the later classical style. "Moreover, the innovations devised by Couperin to meet his descriptive needs took root, developed and became an essential element of what we call the Classical style; and the character piece itself, given a life of its own by Couperin and a name by Marais, flourished again richly in the music of Schumann." See, Fuller, "Of Portraits, 'Sapho' and Couperin," 174.

<sup>18</sup> Larson, *Musical Forces: Motion, Metaphor, and Meaning in Music*, 1.5.

particular melodic patterns (meaningful units) and figures have very specific emotional representations.<sup>19</sup> For example, the use of a descending tetrachord in the minor mode from  $\hat{8}$  to  $\hat{5}$  “is clearly to express an incoming painful emotion, an acceptance of, or yielding to grief; passive suffering; and the despair connected with death.”<sup>20</sup> At the same time, Cooke notes how context can alter the meanings of specific patterns.

For the purpose of this study, patterns represent recurring meaningful units that are stylistically defined, defined by a broader tonal vocabulary, or both. Meaning for pattern behavior is derived by expectation and by context: context that is culturally informed (i.e., Western Europe), stylistically informed (i.e., galant), informed by comparison to a larger body of similar types of pieces (i.e., similar tonal language), informed by analogy with other pieces within a more localized narrative framework (i.e., a small collection), or informed by context within an individual piece (i.e., repetition of a passage or particular meaningful unit). In this purview, the same pattern can mean different things in different situations depending upon use in a single piece, across several pieces, and/or a narrative context. How then does this kind of thinking contribute to a theory of pattern-based meaning for Couperin’s musical portraits?

As representative of the emerging *style galant* in France, François Couperin’s collection is a hybrid of styles and aesthetics. In many ways, he is operating under the compositional influence of past masters from the seventeenth century. This influence is most evident in the earlier volumes of *Les Pièces de Clavecin* with the weighty

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<sup>19</sup> See Deryck Cooke, *The Language of Music* (New York: Oxford, 1959).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 162-163.

allemandes and sarabandes, as well as his inclusion of other traditional dance forms interspersed among the more evocatively named pieces. Even within the early pieces, however, elements of style characteristic to the emerging galant ideals of simpler harmonies, simpler phrase structures, and simpler melodies are clearly present. In fact Couperin, considered the paragon of *les gout réunis*, included compositional building blocks and other stylistic traits of the Italian galant even within these early volumes. That tendency increased in the later pieces, though early influences never completely disappeared.<sup>21</sup>

For Couperin, musical pattern is rooted in a variety of “vocabularies” — including the seventeenth-century French keyboard tradition, the emerging behaviors of the Italian *stile galante*, and the increasingly tonal vocabulary of eighteenth-century composition. These traditions, as part of the eighteenth-century “conversant ideal”, create the accessible vocabulary Couperin uses to “paint” his musical portraits.

Given the multiplicity of influences on Couperin’s compositions, I suggest that a combination of tools (each illustrating different and complementary features) — those that are stylistically sensitive along with those that engage a broader vocabulary — can reveal a variety of meanings in Couperin’s pieces. Patterns and their associated behaviors — what patterns, how they are used (ordered, timed, altered, or withheld), and how they are contextualized — can contribute to musical expression and affect. This behavior can be seen as metaphorically representing Couperin’s titles, connecting pattern (meaningful units) to metaphorical associations (meaningful representations). While some authors

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<sup>21</sup> Hertz, *Music in European Capitals*, 20.

have discussed pattern and meaning, no published study draws this connection within some of the earliest, and most historically significant character pieces of the early eighteenth-century keyboard tradition. This dissertation is a first step in that direction.

### **Current Scholarship on Couperin's *Pièces de Clavecin***

Deeper theoretical or analytical engagement with Couperin's *Pièces de Clavecin* prior to the mid twentieth century is virtually non-existent — discussions of the composer are limited to brief biographical references in survey textbooks and dictionaries.<sup>22</sup> It was not until 1947 that one of the first studies dedicated to Couperin's monumental collection surfaced in English: Flora Harper's master's thesis surveys the composer's massive keyboard output, and inventories elements of the collection such as the organization of the *ordres* and their programmatic titles, key schemes, meter, form, and performance techniques.

Harper's thesis is by no means comprehensive. However, additional and more descriptive discussions about the collection appear later in the century either as part of larger studies on French keyboard music, or as monographs about the composer and his life. Chapters focusing on Couperin or French harpsichord music appear as entries in collections such as *The New Grove: French Baroque Masters, Eighteenth-Century Keyboard Music*, James Anthony's *French Baroque Music from Beaujoyeux to Rameau*, and Margarete Reimann's *Untersuchungen zur Formgeschichte der französischen*

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<sup>22</sup> Flora Harper, "François Couperin Le Grand and his Harpsichord Pieces" (M.A. thesis, University of Washington, 1947), 1.

*Klavier-Suite* to name a few.<sup>23</sup> These collections offer only brief surveys of François Couperin within the context of many other composers and traditions. Discussions focus on the keyboard tradition in France before Couperin flourished, as well as the legacy he left after his death, elements of stylistic influence, the number of *ordres* and organization of the collection, key structures, programmatic titles, ornamentation, form pertaining specifically to French dance structures, and Couperin's theoretical writings about execution and technique. Additionally, Daniel Hertz's recent study *Music in European Capitals* (previously mentioned in connection with descriptions of Couperin's music), dedicates a small portion of his chapter "The Galant Style" to the composer's *Pièces de Clavecin* within the broader discussion of defining features of the style as a whole.<sup>24</sup>

Early monographs concentrate on the systematic grouping and organization of the keyboard suites. The most significant sources are Shlomo Hofman, *L'Oeuvre de clavecin de François le Grand*, Wilfrid Mellers, *François Couperin and the French Classical Tradition*, and Philippe Beaussant, *François Couperin*.

Hofman's dedicated study catalogues various aspects of the suites such as programmatic titles, genres, opening rhythmic figurations, meter signatures, and tonal organization. In addition, he surveys suites from various points of view: the use of themes (providing a thematic catalogue as a final appendix), the form of each piece, the use of

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<sup>23</sup> See James R. Anthony et al, *The New Grove French Baroque Masters: Lully, Charpentier, Lalande, Couperin, Rameau* (New York: Norton, 1986), 151–204; Mark Kroll, "French Masters" in *Eighteenth-Century Keyboard Music*, ed. Robert Lewis Marshall (New York: Schirmer, 1994), 124–153; Anthony, *French Baroque Music*, 244–269.

<sup>24</sup> Hertz, *Music in European Capitals*, 16–23.

different compositional techniques (such as chaconne and passacaille), and elements of rhythm (duple versus triple meters, syncopation, anacrusis, and dance rhythms).

Mellers' study situates Couperin's harpsichord collection within the broader French keyboard tradition, and then offers an appendix with a step-by-step account of each *ordre* in numerical order, describing features associated with the programmatic titles. Adjectives such as "witty", "pastoral", and "lovely" pervade his descriptions, yet Mellers does include some discussions of style, form, texture, and harmony on occasion: "*La Couperin*, a large-scale allemande, is one of the most magnificent of all Couperin's Bach-like pieces, with superbly devised keyboard polyphony in three parts...Lute figurations and internal chromaticisms give to *La Harpé* and *La Petite Pince-sans-rire* a surprising harmonic piquancy."<sup>25</sup>

Beaussant's monograph proceeds in much the same manner as Mellers', though it focuses more on the biographical aspects of Couperin's life within the body of the study. Fairly extensive descriptions of the harpsichord collection appear as well, discussing narrative themes, dedications, and titles, while observations about the pieces themselves remain general.

David Tunley's 2004 monograph on Couperin, *François Couperin and The Perfection of Music*, as with the other authors discussed, includes chapters dedicated to *Les Pièces de Clavecin* among the rest of his output. Tunley touches on the requisite topics of background of the keyboard tradition in France, publication order of the volumes, execution of ornaments, style (Italian influence and *style brisé*), and the

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<sup>25</sup> Wilfrid Mellers, *François Couperin and the French Classical Tradition* (London: Faber and Faber, 1950/1987), 204.

programmatic titles. However, he also focuses a good deal on form, paying careful attention to the chaconne and passacaille movements of the collection, as well as metric shifts in otherwise typical dance patterns. “*La Favorite (3<sup>rd</sup> Ordre)* is a ‘rondeau chaconne’, but this piece departs from tradition by being in quadruple instead of triple meter, linked to the dance by virtue only of its grave and stately movement, and of course by its cyclic structure.”<sup>26</sup> All of these accounts are summary-driven overviews with some descriptive observations integrated into the catalogues of pieces, but for which deeper analysis does not appear to be the objective. As Anthony states it:

The music of these four books has been classified and codified by dance types and structural organization, by melodic and harmonic analysis and by a systematic review of each Ordre...The meaning of the often ambiguous and enigmatic titles has been ferreted out when possible by Mellers...Couperin’s musical language has been compared to the verse of Racine and the brushstrokes of Watteau. All of this has value, but, unfortunately, it gives us little of the essence of the music and tells us almost nothing of the mysterious alchemy that makes Couperin’s harpsichord pieces so elusive yet so compelling.<sup>27</sup>

Several other strands of scholarship surface from these survey approaches: source studies,<sup>28</sup> thorough investigation of the subjects for the piece’s programmatic titles, Couperin’s compositional influence, and performance practice. In the field of performance practice (historical or otherwise), studies addressing articulation, rhythm

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<sup>26</sup> David Tunley, *François Couperin and ‘The Perfection of Music’* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 113. Tunley also published an earlier monograph on Couperin. See *Couperin* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1982).

<sup>27</sup> Anthony, 259.

<sup>28</sup> For example, see Ilton Wjuniski, “Les Règles pour l’accompagnement de François Couperin,” in *François Couperin: Nouveaux Regards, Les recontres de Villecroze III*, ed. Orhan Memed (Paris: Klincksieck, 1998), 105–133. For a discussion of notation, see Thurston Dart, “On some details of the notation used by François Couperin in his four books of Pièces de Clavecin,” *L’Interprétation de la musique française aux XVIIème et XVIIIème siècles* (October, 1969); 20–26.

(*notes inégales*), tempo, and ornamentation prevail, drawing conclusions from either contemporary source study or modern performance experience.<sup>29</sup>

Jane Clark and Derek Connon provide the most comprehensive study on the programmatic titles of Couperin's collection and serve as an important resource throughout my own analysis. The scholars situate Couperin's compositions within the context of the social, cultural, and literary environment of the time, paying close attention to influences of court culture, religion, the Italian style, and theater, to provide a catalogue of definitions, representations, characters, and/or people as subjects for each of the pieces from the *ordres*.<sup>30</sup>

To situate Couperin's *Pièces de Clavecin* within other compositional traditions, David Fuller, while not defining each of the titles, discusses the collection in terms of the traditions of literary portraiture popular during the reign of Louis XIV. Couperin himself

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<sup>29</sup> Many sources engage the topic of performance practice. Representative examples follow, however a more complete list appears in my bibliography. See Randall Wilkens, "Articulation in the Keyboard Music of François Couperin" (D.M.A. Thesis, University of Kansas, 1990). For a source study citing Couperin, among others, as historical references to tempo, see Judith Caswell, "Rhythmic Inequality and Tempo in French Music Between 1650 and 1740" (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1973). Richard Troeger offers another brief study on the metric interpretation of the unmeasured preludes with a reference to the execution of the preludes from *L'Art de Toucher le Clavecin*; see "Meter in unmeasured preludes," *Early Music* 11/3 (July 1983); 340–345. For a comparison of the French and Italian styles as they pertain to notation versus performance, see Sven Hansell, "François Couperin's comparison of French and Italian Music," *Analytica: Studies in the description and analysis of music* (1985); 149–162. For a discussion on sound effects, arpeggiation, execution of scalar passages, hand-crossings, leaps and other virtuoso techniques in both Couperin's and Domenico Scarlatti's keyboard compositions, see Mary Wolff, "Keyboard Techniques and Devices in the Compositions of François Couperin and Domenico Scarlatti" (M.A. thesis, Wayne State University, 1973). For a performance analysis of *Les Jeunes Seigneurs* described within the context of contemporary practice, providing solutions to problems a modern performer might encounter, see Laura Caperton, "An Analysis of Les jeunes seigneurs from François Couperin's ordre 24 in Pièces de Clavecin" (M.A. thesis, Northwest State University of Louisiana, 1991).

<sup>30</sup> Jane Clark and Derek Connon, *The Mirror of Human Life: Reflections on François Couperin's Pièces de Clavecin* (Cambridge: King's Music, 2002). See also Françoise Escal, "Les 'portraits' dans les quatre 'Livres de clavecin' de Couperin," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 11/1 (June 1980); 5–23.

is known to have said that his pieces — or musical portraits — are inextricably tied to external ideas. According to Fuller, this is significant. Couperin’s use of the subject of his piece to drive his creative process so fully and completely in producing a musical representation of that subject was new. “Here, finally, is a composer for whom the person named in the title is the generating idea of the piece: Couperin declares that he has painted portraits in music, and we have no reason not to believe him.”<sup>31</sup>

With the exception of the strand of scholarship dealing with performance practice issues, the majority of these discussions of Couperin’s keyboard suites remain predominantly descriptive and engage very little with the music itself. The more analytically focused publications on the topic of Couperin are relatively few in number. Norbert Dufourcq offers a focused discussion of a single piece from the collection — *Les Barricades mystérieuses*. The four-voice composition in strict contrapuntal texture incorporates canonic techniques, syncopation, a walking bass line, and elements of lute style. After touching on aspects of form, Dufourcq analyzes the structure and melodic content of each voice. This piece is more in the “learned” style, which is perhaps why he describes it as above the need for ornamentation.<sup>32</sup>

Other analytical studies incorporate isolated investigations of particular dance types, either from the keyboard collections specifically, or across Couperin’s overall output. Misung Park shares observations about the three chaconnes and passacailles

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<sup>31</sup> Fuller, “Of Portraits, ‘Sapho’ and Couperin,” 167.

<sup>32</sup> Norbert Dufourcq, “Les Barricades Mystérieuses de François Couperin,” *Recherches sur la Musique Française Classique XIII* (1973); 23–34.

within *Les Pièces de Clavecin*.<sup>33</sup> She focuses on elements such as formal design, tonal structure, phrase structure, tempo, meter, motive, imitation, and rhythm. Park maintains that through the narrow lens of these three compositions, we can observe a microcosm of Couperin's compositional development. "Couperin's extensive use of the rondo form, descending tetrachord pattern, and extension of the second beat in his passacaille and chaconne is in line with contemporary musical trends."<sup>34</sup>

Walter Corten contributes two significant studies on the courantes from Couperin's entire body of compositions.<sup>35</sup> These studies focus primarily on metric considerations of the courante such as phrase structure, periodicity, grouping dissonances (metric shifts between 3/2 and 6/4 meters), and how elements of the piece contribute to metric ambiguity (for example, a purely instrumental selection might involve more metric uncertainty than a selection meant for actual dance).

David Neumeyer uses examples from Couperin's keyboard compositions to illustrate arguments surrounding voice-leading structures in Schenkerian *Urlinien*. In one study, Neumeyer proposes that the 8-line *Urlinie*, being the least common of the three possible background musical structures because of the number of dissonances present in its structural, remains in the middleground.<sup>36</sup> And in his study "The Ascending Urlinie",

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<sup>33</sup> Misung Park, "Chaconnes and Passacaglias in the Keyboard Music of François Couperin (1668-1733) and Johann Caspar Ferdinand Fischer (1665-1746)" (D.M.A. Thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 2003).

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>35</sup> See Walter Corten, "Anatomie de la courante chez Couperin (et en particulier, de ses structures proportionnées)," *Revue Belge de Musicologie* 54 (2000); 247–299 and "Courantes et métrique binaire: Le témoignage de l'oeuvre de Couperin" *Musurgia* 8/2 (2001); 61–80.

<sup>36</sup> See David Neumeyer, "The Urlinie from  $\hat{8}$  as a middleground phenomenon," *In Theory Only* IX/5-6 (January 1987); 3–25.

Neumeyer argues for an overall ascending structural line as opposed to a falling, inertia- and gravity-driven structure.<sup>37</sup> In both of these articles, he surveys several composers, Couperin among them, and in both articles, he uses the same piece from the *huitième ordre*, the famous chromatic ascending passacaille, to demonstrate the logic of the chromatic ascending line from  $\hat{5}$  to  $\hat{8}$ , as well as problems with an interruption from  $\hat{8}$ .<sup>38</sup>

To date, Channan Willner offers some of the more compelling theoretical studies of music from the Baroque era. Though much of his research centers on the compositions of Handel, Willner argues that even in Bach's music, which in modern eyes is the epitome of compositional complexity, there exist characteristics of "tonal periodicity" that we would normally associate with music of the middle or galant style in some of his compositions. Willner illustrates this with a variety of rhythmic analyses that he calls "pace" reductions and describes "Bach's fusion of dense counterpoint and 'progressive' periodicity"<sup>39</sup> as a combination of high and middle styles. He continues with similar discussions of François Couperin and Vivaldi — composers that are considered iconic representations of the galant style — demonstrating that elements of different styles exist in their compositions as well.

Viewing music through a stylistic lens is key to what Willner proposes as way to approach music of the *style galant* period. This music is often ignored and Willner "calls theorists to action" to analyze this repertoire.

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<sup>37</sup> David Neumeyer, "The ascending Urlinie," *Journal of Music Theory* XXXI/2 (Fall 1987); 275–303.

<sup>38</sup> Neumeyer, "The Urlinie from  $\hat{8}$ ," 14–15.

<sup>39</sup> Willner, "Baroque styles," 150.

It is not often that Schenkerians take out the time to study the kind of Baroque music most often played on the radio—the concertos of Vivaldi, the suites of Telemann, the recorder sonatas of Loeilliet, and all the other works of the supposedly lesser Baroque composers. Openly or tacitly we believe that it shows only lopsided tonal and durational structures, that it treats basic issues incompletely, and that it just doesn't measure up to the music of Bach, Handel, or Domenico Scarlatti. I take this opportunity to dispel such misguided beliefs by rerouting our apprehensive approach to this repertoire in an altogether different direction... Whether the music of Rameau and Couperin is as integral, as coherent, or as structured as that of Bach and Handel need not concern us at the moment. If we want to learn something about this repertoire — and about the stylistic environment in which Bach and Handel worked and from which they both borrowed heavily — we must be willing to suspend our preconceptions and to study this music on its own merits.<sup>40</sup>

Willner acknowledges Couperin as a master of the middle style in his investigation, but Willner is not the only one to do so. Other composers — those contemporary with Couperin and those who flourished after his death — recognized Couperin's skill and were influenced by his music, reaffirming the disjuncture between current opinions and, albeit improving, current scholarship.

### Overview of Dissertation

With this stylistic lens in mind, this dissertation will propose and apply a methodology that supports a historically sensitive assessment of pattern and meaning in François Couperin's *Pièces de Clavecin*. By doing so, my investigation will not only illustrate that patterns and associated behaviors can contribute to musical expression and affect, but also show how pattern behavior engenders expressive meaning for Couperin's

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<sup>40</sup> Willner, "Baroque styles," 145. See also pp. 160–166 for further discussions regarding the melodic borrowing and recasting of Couperin's themes from *Les Pièces de Clavecin* in the compositions of Handel and Bach, as well as by Haydn, Beethoven, and Brahms. See also Mark Kroll, "French Masters," in *18<sup>th</sup>-Century Keyboard Music*, ed. Robert Marshall (New York: Schirmer, 1994); 140–141.

evocative musical portraits. This study will also expand the analytic vocabulary available for music of the *style galant* to include Couperin who, to date, has been drastically overlooked in music theoretical discourse.

Chapter II will describe each component of my synthetic methodology. The synthesis unites four typically separate tools: Schenkerian analysis, Gjerdingen's style-based schema theory, Larson's voice-leading patterns and musical forces, and Lakoff and Johnson's cognitive metaphor theory. The first three tools are pattern-based and each helps to identify and describe patterns and associated behaviors. The fourth tool is interpretation-based and illuminates ways in which we can connect the concrete (musical material) with the abstract (ideas, emotions, or concepts) through metaphoric mappings that can give meaning, or meanings, to pattern behavior. Each tool contributes to the analytic process in a different way to offer different insights into a given piece. Chapter II will also touch on definitions and limitations for the study.

Chapter III applies this synthetic approach to four short examples from *Les Pièces de Clavecin* in three analytical scenarios to reveal connections between pattern behavior and meaning. Scenarios one and two are individual analyses of different musical patterns from different pieces. The third scenario is a comparative analysis of the same musical pattern from two different pieces. The results from these short analyses suggest two significant findings: first, that use and manipulation of recognizable patterns — either stylistic schema, or voice-leading building blocks or both — may give rise to expressive responses and affects that can be heard metaphorically as reflecting Couperin's evocative titles; and second, that the same pattern can give rise to different meanings in different

contexts — no one pattern necessarily means the same thing in every application.

Chapters IV and V offer in-depth case studies of pattern behavior within two different formal structures: an extended theme and variations form (Chapter IV) and an individual binary piece (Chapter V). In both of these situations, context plays a significant — and different — role in our metaphorical mappings for pattern behavior. With respect to the theme and variations, that contextual relationship is based upon analogies with the theme and the narrative trajectory of the variation collection. With respect to the single piece, that contextual relationship is based upon analogy with other pieces from the *ordre* and the narrative trajectory of the group as a whole. Stylistic traits inherent to the piece itself, however, contribute to the distinct affect and expression as well. Because of context, we find that many different meanings can apply to the same pattern. But it is the manner with which that pattern behaves, is manipulated, or even withheld, that gives rise to different meanings and different metaphorical mappings. As we will see, this also exemplifies the advantages of, and flexibility inherent to, Lakoff and Johnson's cognitive metaphor theory.

Chapter VI concludes the study and reflects upon the benefits of a synthetic methodology involving pattern-based analysis and metaphor theory as an approach to describe meaning (or meanings) in Couperin's musical portraits. We can imagine this type of stylistically sensitive combinative methodology applying to a variety of different music. The approach includes modern analytical tools (Schenkerian analysis and Larson's musical forces) that, on the one hand, are broadly applicable in that they are designed to accommodate a broad base of musical repertoire from a variety of cultural

traditions, styles, and practices over a large span of history. On the other hand, that repertoire is connected via a similar tonal language. Second, the approach incorporates a modern, yet *historically sensitive* tool (Gjerdingen's style-based schema) that offers insight about a music stemming from a particular tradition, style, and practice. Finally, it includes a philosophical and scientific basis (Cognitive metaphor theory), which grounds our personal descriptions in an understanding of embodied experience and expands our discourse of the possible meanings for pattern behavior within the music. Through this process we learn that patterns are pervasive to the collective musical language, and as such, the use and behavior of those patterns can communicate different things to the listener, performer, and/or analyst depending upon context.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY: A SYNTHETIC APPROACH TO IDENTIFY AND ASSESS  
MEANING OF PATTERN BEHAVIOR

*In a work of art, an abstract pattern organizes the visual matter in such a way that the intended expression is directly conveyed to the eyes.<sup>1</sup>*

Rudolf Arnheim

Rudolf Arnheim's statement, in many ways, underscores the views and perspectives behind this dissertation. He suggests that pattern provides a framework to comprehend artistic expression, and that the dynamic qualities associated with those patterns engender expressive meaning. The synthetic methodology proposed in this chapter illustrates how musical patterns, and the behaviors and context associated with those patterns (for example, how they are structured, ordered, and timed) contribute to the expressive meaning of Couperin's musical portraits from *Les Pièces de clavecin*.

By using modern tools that can be applied to a variety of styles, balanced with an understanding of what composers and theorists of the time said about the music, we can expand existing (and develop new) ways to describe our experiences of a repertoire that is not of our own time and place. Any separation of time, even in a culture stemming from similar traditions, creates a divide that must be considered when engaging in analysis and interpretation of a product of that culture. In light of this perspective, my

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<sup>1</sup> Rudolf Arnheim, *Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye*, new version, expanded and rev. ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), 151.

synthetic methodology combines four normally separate analytical approaches to assess the structural components of Couperin's character pieces — and to consider how that structure contributes to musical meaning and expressiveness. The methodology can be grouped into two primary categories of tools: those that help to identify, define, and describe patterns and associated behaviors, and those that help to describe possible meanings for that behavior. The tools as part of the first category treat what I consider concrete information — musical data. The tools as part of the second category engage abstract information — ideas, emotions, or concepts.

To identify patterns (meaningful units), describe the behaviors associated with them, and to give meaning to that behavior, I rely on the combination of four tools. First, I engage Schenkerian analysis — a well-known method developed by Heinrich Schenker (1868–1935) used primarily to describe pattern-based activities of tonal music at a variety of hierarchical levels (tonal music is defined as music from the common practice period of music history, ranging from ca. 1650–1880, represented by composers from Arcangelo Corelli to Johannes Brahms).<sup>2</sup> Second, in combination with this method of analysis, I draw on definitions and descriptions of common musical patterns specific to eighteenth-

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<sup>2</sup> While Couperin's music is not necessarily considered "tonal" in Rameauian terms (as a good portion of his output was published before Rameau's treatise on harmony) his compositions do appear at the cusp of what we would consider conventional tonality. It is clear that composers of the period were operating in an understanding of a key: there was an acknowledged sense of "home" (what we would call "tonic") and other strong scale-degree relationships (for example what we would call "dominant" and "subdominant"). My use of Schenkerian analysis is to illustrate pattern relationships at the foreground and middleground levels, and not those aspects of the theory that are more controversial, such as claims of mono-tonality and those of exclusively goal-directed processes consisting of purely tonic and dominant relationships. See for example Chapter V of this dissertation discussing different compositional aesthetics that underscore much seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century French harpsichord music. The musical terrain of Couperin's music is rich and the manner in which I engage Schenkerian theory is an effective means to identify patterns that might not necessarily be "classified" as a Gjerdingen stylistic schema.

century galant music, as defined and compiled by Robert Gjerdingen in his publication *Music in the Galant Style*. Gjerdingen's process not only defines and catalogs galant stylistic patterns, but also helps to describe pattern function within phrases and larger formal units in a historical context. I call this method "Gjerdingen's style-based schema theory". Third, I engage Steve Larson's theory of musical forces. Larson argues that combinations of identifiable patterns arise from tonal music because of the directed tendencies — or "forces" they lead us to experience — that are based upon the tonal and rhythmic constructs of music. He also notes that these forces shape pattern in music in ways analogous to those that shape combinations of physical gestures. Thus patterns and their behavior as described by three musical forces (gravity, magnetism, and inertia), can contribute to expressive meaning in music. And fourth, I rely on the cognitive theory of metaphor as described by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, as a method to describe and interpret the various potential meanings of pattern behavior and expression by mapping between concrete (musical material) and abstract (emotions, ideas, or images) constructs. A description of each of these approaches follows.

### **Pattern Identification and Behavior**

#### *Schenkerian Analysis*

Schenkerian analysis is one of the principal analytic tools used to illuminate elements of musical structure — those of hierarchy and pattern — for music grounded in tonal vocabulary. We can equate hierarchical relationships in music to narrative components in a story. The main idea, or plot, is the thread that exists throughout a

narrative. It is embellished with interesting developments, such as the addition of new characters or events, to guide the listener or reader through its telling. The main idea, then, could be considered as fundamental to the structure of the story, while the embellishments would be elaborations that enhance those structural components. Both, however, are required for a compelling tale.

There are parallels to these narrative components in music. When approaching tonal repertoire using the Schenkerian tool, the main idea, or musical plot, is considered the fundamental structure (*Ursatz*), a combination of a pattern in the melody line with a pattern in a bass line.<sup>3</sup> In essence, it is the narrative thread that exists throughout a piece of music, and is considered the highest level of musical hierarchy in tonal repertoire. This *Ursatz* is embellished with additional musical patterns that lead the listener and performer along its path, from the beginning to the end of the piece. According to Schenker's theories, then, we hear music as comprised of multiple levels — the surface of the music being the most elaborate. Each level closer to the background structure (*Ursatz*) represents a less elaborate version of a pattern. For example, **Example 2.1e** is a short three-measure melody, which represents the surface of the music. It can be heard as a more elaborate version of the pattern in **Example 2.1d**. **Example 2.1d**, then, can be heard as a more elaborate version of the pattern illustrated in **Example 2.1c**.<sup>4</sup> A Schenkerian voice-leading graph and summary appear as **Examples 2.1b** and **a**. In **Example 2.1b**, the

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<sup>3</sup> Allen Cadwallader and David Gagne, *Analysis of Tonal Music: A Schenkerian Approach* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 118.

<sup>4</sup> The manner in which I model the presentation and discussion of this series of elaborated patterns is based upon Steve Larson's discussion in his forthcoming study *Musical Forces: Motion, Metaphor, and Meaning*

notation of stems and slurs reflects how we hear the less elaborate pattern at level **2.1d**. We hear the primary melodic note (structural soprano) as B, which is elaborated by an ascending third pattern. It is marked with an upward stem, indicating its structural

**Example 2.1a–e.** Pattern Hierarchy and Voice-Leading Graph

importance to the melody. The other ascending notes — C# and D — as stepwise elaborations of the B, appear without stems and beneath a slur to show their relationship to structural melody. This ascending third pattern appears in the next measure as well, embellishing the next structural melody note — the C#. Within these ascending thirds, the melody leaps down to an F# pedal tone, emphasizing the third eighth-note of each beat in **Example 2.1e**. While not part of the structural melody, its presence is important to the contour and rhythm of the figuration. As such, its stem faces down to indicate a

structural inner voice at the middleground level. If we were to sing or play only the notes with stems in **Example 2.1b**, it would match our hearing of the less elaborate pattern at **Example 2.1d**. Overall, however, this three-measure passage is a simpler pattern of an ascending third — B–C#–D — as reflected by our hearing in **Example 2.1c**. In fact, the measure-to-measure ascending third is the same pattern as the ascending-third elaboration at the surface of the music in the first measure. The surface-level repetition of the third can be heard as a confirmation — or repetition — of the deeper level of structure represented in **Example 2.1a**. The Schenkerian notation in **Example 2.1a** supports our more background hearing of **Example 2.1b**. In this reading we hear the D as our destination. As such, it receives a stem to indicate its status as the structural soprano, while the B and C# appear without stems beneath a slur to indicate their relationship to the structural D — they are elaborations themselves, or steps, to the first structural note of the melody in, what we would expect to be, a longer piece.

The embellishments, or elaborations, while considered less structural than the *Ursatz* in musical hierarchy, are no less important in terms of understanding the organization of, and pattern behavior within, the piece as a whole. In fact, those embellishments, or elaborations, in combination with the fundamental structure, are the music itself — it is part of what we experience as musical meaning when we listen to, or what we see when we look at, a musical composition.<sup>5</sup>

Schenkerian analysis provides us a means to identify patterns within music. The *Ursatz* itself is a musical pattern, as are the elaborations of it. One of the benefits of the

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<sup>5</sup> For another discussion on pattern and elaboration as part of Schenker's theories, see *Ibid.*

tool is not only to recognize patterns within a piece, but also to recognize that those same patterns exist within a larger body of pieces. This allows us to find pattern-based relationships among larger groups of repertoire from either the same or dissimilar cultural contexts, and as such, Schenkerian analysis is an excellent companion to Gjerdingen's style-based schema — the second of my pattern-based tools described in more detail in the next section of this chapter. The identification of Gjerdingen's schemata is often dependent upon a tacit understanding of Schenkerian theory — to recognize that the compositional building blocks of music of the galant style exist within more elaborate patterns on the surface level of the music, is to acknowledge hierarchical levels of music.

It is my belief that the Schenkerian analysis will offer insight into understanding elements of Couperin's musical terrain, illustrating structural relationships connected to a broader repertoire, as well as those idiomatic to the pattern-based language of his character pieces. And yet, the majority of Couperin's musical output occupies a period in history that precedes what current scholarship would consider as exclusively common-practice tonal music. In fact, more than half of Couperin's keyboard compositions precede Rameau's first treatise on harmony. This raises a question: Is using Schenkerian analysis appropriate for this repertoire?

Composers of the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries were not slaves to what we could call functional harmony. Robert Gjerdingen states:

The relationship between local and global meanings of chords and keys was fluid in galant music. Many of the methods of musical analysis in vogue today often overstate the degree to which one can clearly distinguish between local and global significance. Indeed, the craft of the galant composer depends heavily on the ability to modulate between perceived certainty and uncertainty, between, on the one hand, giving the courtly audience a sense of security and groundedness and,

on the other hand, taking listeners down dark alleys of strange chords and keys where they may feel utterly lost. The lodestar of galant music was not a tonic chord but rather a listener's experience, which the masters of this art modulated with consummate skill.<sup>6</sup>

Although finding the background structure — or *global* harmonic scaffold — is often distilled as the defining characteristic of Schenkerian analysis, the tool's capacity to uncover relationships on a much more local (middleground) level — the individual, rich movements between certainty and uncertainty — is what makes it valuable in its application to Couperin's musical portraits. It is these relationships, which exist closer to the surface of the music, that are relevant to this dissertation.

While it is incorrect to call Couperin and other composers from this period as purely “post-modal” or “proto-tonal”— they were clearly working in an established vocabulary of their own — their output incorporated techniques from past traditions as well as those that anticipated things to come. A *de facto* component of the tool is the use of Roman numerals. Although this labeling system was not in use during Couperin's lifetime I will use this system as needed and if my point is enhanced in some way.

#### *Gjerdingen's Style-Based Schema Theory*

While Schenkerian analysis applies to a broader repertoire than Couperin's harpsichord miniatures, Robert Gjerdingen's style-sensitive schemata apply specifically to galant music. Gjerdingen's schema will both be companion to the Schenkerian method,

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<sup>6</sup> Robert O. Gjerdingen, *Music in the Galant Style* (New York: Oxford, 2007), 21.

and also stand alone as a separate system to approach the pattern-driven activity in the keyboard repertoire that forms the core of this research.

Gjerdingen's *Music in the Galant Style* deepens our understanding of the musical world of galant composers — composers having lived and produced music as early as the first decade of the eighteenth century, and ending with great historical figures such as Franz Joseph Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and Ludwig Van Beethoven. “My position...is that a hallmark of the galant style was a particular repertory of stock musical phrases employed in conventional sequences.”<sup>7</sup> Gjerdingen bases his work on contemporary sources — musical repertoire, theoretical writings, and pedagogical methods used to train composers and musicians of the galant period — as well as his awareness of, and sensitivity to, the cultural context of the time.

One of the principal objectives of Gjerdingen's study is to define these “stock musical phrases”, or what he calls schemata, found primarily in Italian and German repertoire of the last three-quarters of the eighteenth century, and to provide the musical framework in which these phrases appeared.

The overriding theory behind my presentation of these schemata is that they formed one of the cores of a galant musician's *zibaldone*, his well-learned repertory of musical business, and that in the social setting of a galant court, these schemata formed an aural medium of exchange between aristocratic patrons and their musical artisans.<sup>8</sup>

These patterns were part of the every-day vocabulary — in other words the “bread and butter” — of a galant musician, and were the building blocks of compositional

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 15.

practice. These well-established schemata appeared in typical places within larger formal structures, and contributed in the communication process between composer and listener. Gjerdingen states that the patterns presented in his text are by no means the only formulae in existence. However, they do represent some of the most commonly occurring patterns and are characteristic of the galant style in general.

Gjerdingen's study is encyclopedic. In his thirty chapters, twelve describe individual schema — or in some cases schema groups — while the remaining eighteen contain full-scale analyses applying the schemata in context. In the schema chapters, Gjerdingen begins by providing a background or framework for the pattern under discussion, the names for which are generated either by Gjerdingen himself or come directly from contemporary compositional and theoretical sources — predominantly books of Italian *partimenti* and the writings of Joseph Riepel. To illustrate each schema, Gjerdingen provides a “no frills” or base example and describes its fundamental features using a system of labeling that includes scale degrees as well as solfège syllables.<sup>9</sup> He continues with additional variants and more elaborate scenarios, and then concludes with examples of the pattern within larger musical structures to demonstrate preferred placement of the pattern in a broader context.

The schemata are presented from the least to the most complex. However, within this arc, Gjerdingen also considers the popularity of the particular schema within the galant tradition as a whole, as well as where it would typically appear within a musical

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<sup>9</sup> Gjerdingen uses solfège based in a hexachord system, though he prefers Do to Ut. In certain settings, especially within his chapter on cadences and other closing formulae (*clausulae*), he defers to a modern solfège system in order to incorporate a name for the leading tone. With his use of scale degrees, or steps within a scalar collection, Gjerdingen uses the full set of scale-degree labels  $\hat{1} - \hat{7}$ .

unit. With this model the reader can very quickly experience a complete analysis of a short binary dance piece after reading about, listening to, and playing examples from only a few initial schemata.

For example, Gjerdingen identifies and describes a particular type of rising-third figure he calls the “Do–Re–Mi” schema. The Do–Re–Mi is ubiquitous in the repertoire of the galant style, and one of Couperin’s favorite patterns in much of his keyboard collection. While there are several variants to this schema, I have recreated Gjerdingen’s basic type to illustrate the concept, preserving his annotation style, in **Example 2.2**.

The image shows a musical score for a short binary dance piece. It is in 2/4 time and G major. The score consists of three measures. The upper voice (treble clef) features an ascending third (Do-Re-Mi) in each measure, with trills (tr) on the Re and Mi notes. The lower voice (bass clef) features a voice-leading pattern of 1-7-1 in the bass. The first and third measures have a tonic chord (1), while the second measure has a dominant chord (7). The notation is annotated with numbers 1, 2, and 3 in black boxes above the notes, and 1, 7, and 1 in white boxes below the notes. A bracket above the first three notes is labeled "Do-Re-Mi".

**Example 2.2.** Gjerdingen’s Base Example of the Do–Re–Mi Schema from Opus 1, no. 3, mvt. 2, m. 1–3 (1723), Leclair

Here the ascending third — Do–Re–Mi, or  $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\hat{3}$  — appears in the upper voice over a voice-leading pattern  $\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}$  in the bass. Gjerdingen states, “as the example implies, the schema’s first and last stages feature stable tonic chords, while the middle stage, with a *mi*-degree [or half step relationship with notes both before and after it] of  $\hat{7}$  in the bass,

sounds a less stable 6/3 or 6/5/3.”<sup>10</sup> The schema label of Do–Re–Mi would still apply to music in the minor mode as well — the name is meant to evoke reference to the ascending third figure as one of the defining characteristics of the pattern.

The Do–Re–Mi represents only one of many such patterns offered by Gjerdingen as fundamental to the musical language of the galant style. Gjerdingen does not engage Couperin’s music or many French composers in his study — the vast majority of the composers he surveys are of the Italian and German schools of composition. Yet as part of galant (*rococo*) tradition in France with increasingly more Italian influence on compositional style, Gjerdingen’s stylistic schema theory has significant relevance to Couperin’s music.<sup>11</sup> Even some of Couperin’s earliest pieces from his harpsichord collections incorporate pattern behavior that can be clearly identified as being part of Gjerdingen’s compendium of popular schema.<sup>12</sup> As Gjerdingen states:

In learning to recognize the schemata of galant music, one becomes better able to appreciate the art of the galant composer. And in learning to judge the manner in

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<sup>10</sup> Gjerdingen, *Music in the Galant Style*, 77.

<sup>11</sup> Several authors have commented on the Italian *stile galante* having increasing influence over the French schools of composition, court life, and theatrical traditions. For a sampling of discussions about this influence in general terms, as well as in terms related specifically to Couperin’s music, see David Tunley, *François Couperin and ‘The Perfection of Music’* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004); Wilfrid Mellers, *François Couperin and the French Classical Tradition* (London: Faber and Faber, 1987); Jane Clark and Derek Connon, *The Mirror of Human Life: Reflections on François Couperin’s Pièces de Clavecin* (Huntingdon, England: King’s Music, 2002); David Fuller, “Of Portraits, ‘Sapho’ and Couperin: Titles and Characters in French Instrumental Music of the High Baroque,” *Music & Letters* Vol. 78, No. 2 (May, 1997): 149–174; Daniel Hertz, *Music in European Capitals: The Galant Style 1720–1780* (New York: Norton, 2003); and Philippe Beaussant, *François Couperin* (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1990).

<sup>12</sup> In his brief comments about Couperin’s four-volume harpsichord collection, Daniel Hertz states that the third book “marks a decisive turn to simpler, easier pieces, with somewhat less ornamentation and more sensuous and amorous content.” See Hertz, *Music in European Capitals*, 20. For Hertz, these qualities are hallmarks of the galant style. There are, however, examples from earlier volumes in Couperin’s collection that fit Hertz’s ‘lighter style’, suggesting that Couperin may have been influenced by, and experimenting with, Italian and German approaches as part of his musical portraiture. See *La Babet*, 2<sup>nd</sup> *ordre* and *La Gabriële*, 10<sup>th</sup> *ordre* for just two examples of the use of galant patterns and simpler textures.

which the schemata are presented in a particular composition, one becomes better able to understand the equally important art of the galant listener and patron. As the Earl of Chesterfield remarked, ‘every ear can and does judge...style.’<sup>13</sup>

For Couperin’s *Pièces de Clavecin*, it follows that familiarity and understanding of stylistic schema will help to define elements of the composer’s musical vocabulary, as well as to describe pattern behavior and expectation.

*Larson’s Voice-Leading Patterns and Theory of Musical Forces*

As part of my synthetic analytic approach, I have situated the description of Larson’s voice-leading patterns and theory of musical forces between pattern-based tools and cognitive metaphor theory, as it combines elements of pattern identification with metaphors of physical motion to derive its thesis. Building on the theories of Rudolf Arnheim, as well as those of Mark Johnson, and Douglas Hofstadter, Larson suggests that, in tonal music, musical motion is shaped by musical “forces” much in the same manner that physical motion is shaped by physical forces.<sup>14</sup> Identifiable voice-leading patterns arise, and can be heard as behaving in particular ways because of the musical forces that direct — or act upon — them, which in turn can shape musical experience and musical meaning.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>14</sup> Steve Larson, “Musical Gestures and Musical Forces: Evidence from Music-Theoretical Misunderstandings,” in *Music and Gesture*, edited by Anthony Gritten and Elaine King, (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 61.

Larson identifies three forces — musical gravity, musical magnetism, and musical inertia — the definitions for which are taken directly from his forthcoming study,

*Musical Forces: Motion, Metaphor, and Meaning in Music*.<sup>15</sup>

- “musical gravity” is the tendency of notes above a reference platform to descend;
- “musical magnetism” is the tendency of unstable notes to move to the closest stable pitch, a tendency that grows stronger as the goal pitch is closer; and
- “musical inertia” is the tendency of melodic motion to continue in the pattern perceived.

In music operating within a tonal construct, Larson suggests that three- and four-note voice-leading patterns can be heard as responding to these forces. **Table 2.1** below recreates his table taken from an earlier study.<sup>16</sup> He states that these patterns “meet the following conditions: (1) each pattern begins on a stable note, (2) each pattern moves by step, and (3) each pattern ends on a stable note.”<sup>17</sup> The table lists the scale degree function of the pattern in column one and what the letter names of those notes would be if in the key of C in column two. In column three, Larson calls-out the force, or forces, that can be heard as predicting the final (resolving) note of the pattern. Multiple forces can be acting simultaneously. Emphasis by exclamation point (!) indicates that magnetic pull is the strongest if the resolving motion is a half step. Some instances of magnetism acting — or not acting — as the force that predicts the final note of the pattern, appear with a

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<sup>15</sup> Larson, *Musical Forces: Motion, Metaphor, and Meaning in Music*, 1.2.

<sup>16</sup> Steve Larson, “Scale-Degree Function: A Theory of Expressive Meaning and Its Application to Aural-Skills Pedagogy,” *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy* 7 (1993): 75.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

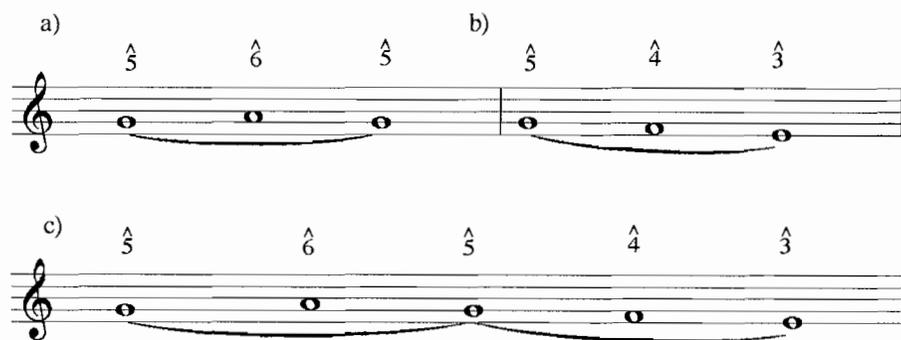
**Table 2.1.** Three- and Four-note Voce Leading Patterns and Forces That Predict Final Note

Scale Degrees	Letter Names in C	Forces That Predict Final Note		
<i>Three-note patterns</i>				
$\hat{5}-\hat{6}-\hat{5}$	GAG	Gravity	Magnetism	
$\hat{5}-\hat{b6}-\hat{5}$	GAbG	Gravity	Magnetism!	
$\hat{5}-\hat{\#4}-\hat{5}$	GF#G		Magnetism!	
$\hat{5}-\hat{\#4}-\hat{3}$	GF#E	Gravity		Inertia
$\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{5}$	GFG			
$\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}$	GFE	Gravity	Magnetism!	Inertia
$\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{b3}$	GFEb	Gravity	Magnetism	Inertia
$\hat{3}-\hat{\#4}-\hat{5}$	EF#G		Magnetism	Inertia
$\hat{3}-\hat{\#4}-\hat{3}$	EF#E	Gravity		
$\hat{3}-\hat{4}-\hat{5}$	EFG			Inertia
$\hat{3}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}$	EFE	Gravity	Magnetism!	
$\hat{3}-\hat{\#2}-\hat{3}$	ED#E		Magnetism!	
$\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{3}$	EDE		Magnetism ?	
$\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$	EDC	Gravity	Magnetism?	Inertia
$\hat{b3}-\hat{4}-\hat{5}$	EbFG		Magnetism?	Inertia
$\hat{b3}-\hat{4}-\hat{b3}$	EbFEB	Gravity	Magnetism?	
$\hat{b3}-\hat{2}-\hat{b3}$	EbDEb		Magnetism!	
$\hat{b3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$	EbDC	Gravity		Inertia
$\hat{b3}-\hat{b2}-\hat{b3}$	EbDbEb			
$\hat{b3}-\hat{b2}-\hat{1}$	EbDbC	Gravity	Magnetism!	Inertia
$\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\hat{3}$	CDE		Magnetism?	Inertia
$\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\hat{b3}$	CDEb		Magnetism!	Inertia
$\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$	CDC	Gravity	Magnetism?	
$\hat{1}-\hat{b2}-\hat{b3}$	CDbEb			Inertia
$\hat{1}-\hat{b2}-\hat{1}$	CDbC	Gravity	Magnetism!	
$\hat{8}-\hat{7}-\hat{8}$	CBC		Magnetism!	
$\hat{8}-\hat{b7}-\hat{8}$	CBbC		Magnetism	
<i>Four-note patterns</i>				
$\hat{5}-\hat{6}-\hat{7}-\hat{8}$	GABC		Magnetism!	Inertia
$\hat{5}-\hat{6}-\hat{b7}-\hat{8}$	GABbC		Magnetism	Inertia
$\hat{5}-\hat{b6}-\hat{b7}-\hat{8}$	GAbBbC		Magnetism	Inertia
$\hat{8}-\hat{7}-\hat{6}-\hat{5}$	CBAG	Gravity	Magnetism	Inertia
$\hat{8}-\hat{b7}-\hat{6}-\hat{5}$	CBbAG	Gravity	Magnetism	Inertia
$\hat{8}-\hat{b7}-\hat{b6}-\hat{5}$	CBbAbG	Gravity	Magnetism!	Inertia

question mark (?) in the column to indicate the ambiguity of the situation. These occur in patterns with stable notes a whole step both above and below the unstable part of the pattern.

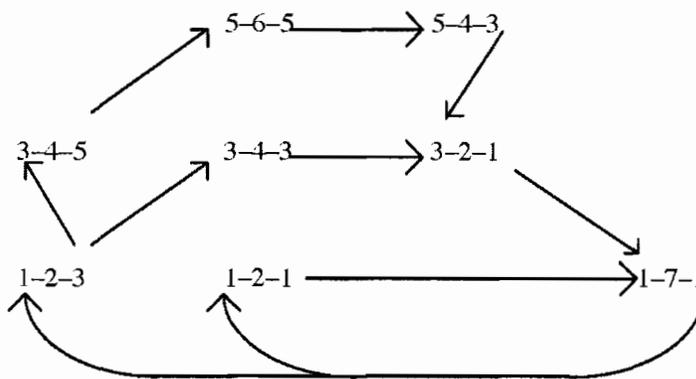
To illustrate, take for example the three-note pattern  $\hat{5}-b\hat{6}-\hat{5}$  in **Table 2.1**. The third — or resolving — note in this pattern can be heard as being predicted by the force of gravity (moving down), and strongly by magnetism (resolution to the closest stable note) because of the half-step resolution. Hearing patterns as responding to these forces can guide expectation. For example, if a pattern begins with  $\hat{5}$  and steps up to  $b\hat{6}$ , based on the forces of magnetism and gravity — and of course the tonal context that leads us to predict the final note in the first place — then we strongly expect that it will resolve back down to  $\hat{5}$ . If this does not occur, then our experience is different than expected, which in turn, can affect meaning.

These three- and four-note patterns can combine successively to create larger series of patterns. Combination occurs most typically by elision. Consider the two successive patterns in **Example 2.3** below. **Example 2.3a** is a single three-note pattern ( $\hat{5}-\hat{6}-\hat{5}$ ), as is **Example 2.3b** ( $\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}$ ). These two patterns have a note in common — the last note of the first pattern is the same as the first note of the next pattern. The successive combination of these two patterns elides that common note, resulting in the five-note pattern ( $\hat{5}-\hat{6}-\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}$ ) shown in **Example 2.3c**. Patterns combine in this manner to create larger extended melodies, and as with graceful physical gestures (imagine catching a ball and immediately returning the throw, as opposed to catching, pausing, and *then* returning the throw), inertia carries through the stable part of the pattern (point of elision) to change



**Example 2.3a-c.** Successive Pattern Combination

direction on the unstable part of the pattern. Successive patterns produce melodies that follow paths found in Larson's pattern map in **Figure 2.1**.



**Figure 2.1.** Larson's Pattern Map

Larger melodic patterns, comprised of smaller three- and four-note voice-leading patterns, are constantly interacting with musical forces. Within a tonal construct, this interaction between pattern and force can help to account for — and even predict — a variety of musical behaviors. With prediction comes expectation; and expectation can provide meaning. Larson’s patterns and musical forces will serve as an additional tool for pattern identification. But it will also serve as a means to account for pattern behavior as part of the expressive qualities and affect of Couperin’s pieces.

### **Interpreting Meaning for Pattern Behavior and Expression**

#### *Cognitive Metaphor Theory*

The fourth and final aspect of my combined analytic method examines how metaphor gives meaning to the pattern behavior and affect in Couperin’s character pieces. Metaphor shapes every aspect of our communication. It is fundamental to our understanding of particular events, emotions, or abstract concepts. As Lakoff and Johnson suggest, metaphoric constructs are the means with which we organize and communicate even our most basic activities and behaviors.

Metaphor is for most people a device of the poetic imagination and the rhetorical flourish — a matter of extraordinary rather than ordinary language. Moreover, metaphor is typically viewed as characteristic of language alone, a matter of words rather than thought or action. For this reason, most people think they can get along perfectly well without metaphor. We have found, on the contrary, that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 3.

The authors claim that all abstract conceptual thought is based on metaphor, which they define as mapping our understanding of one type of thing onto another type of thing. As an example, they describe the metaphor TIME IS MONEY, which illustrates that we think about time as being a commodity — it has value.

#### TIME IS MONEY

You're *wasting* my time.  
 How do you *spend* your time these days? That flat tire *cost* me an hour.  
 I've *invested* a lot of time in her.  
 You need to *budget* your time.  
 Is that *worth* your while?  
 He's living on *borrowed* time.  
 You don't use your time *profitably*.  
 I *lost* a lot of time when I got sick.<sup>19</sup>

Based on this conceptual metaphor, time is equivalent to money, and we actually talk about it in those terms with keywords such as “waste”, “spend”, “budget”, “loss”, “borrow”, and “invest”. Therefore we map the concept of time (target domain) onto our constructs related to money (source domain) in order to give meaning to the abstract idea.

According to Lakoff and Johnson, there are two categories of metaphor — primary and complex. Primary metaphors are those that are rooted in physical experience and our physical interaction with the world. Examples of a primary metaphors include AFFECTION IS WARMTH: “They greeted me *warmly*”, TIME IS MOTION: “Time *flies*”, or KNOWING IS SEEING: “I *see* what you mean.”<sup>20</sup> In all of these examples, understandings of primary physical experience guide conceptual mapping. “*Warmly*” is based upon a

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<sup>19</sup> Select list from Ibid., 7–8.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 50–54.

physical experience established at an early age — warmth as representing comfort and affection when being held or hugged; “*flies*” is based upon perception of time passing as being either the observer of time moving or the one that moves within time; and “*sees*” is based upon gaining knowledge through the sense of vision.<sup>21</sup>

It follows that the more abstract the concept, the more types of metaphoric descriptors, or packets of knowledge we use to understand it. These packets include multiple primary metaphors, but also what Lakoff and Johnson call metaphorical idioms. “Each metaphorical idiom comes with a conventional mental image and knowledge about that image. A conventional metaphorical mapping maps that source-domain knowledge onto target-domain knowledge.”<sup>22</sup> Metaphors, then, can combine to create complex metaphors that include multiple primary metaphors, other complex metaphors, and metaphorical idioms with their own stock images and information.

Take, for example, the complex metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY, comprised of several other metaphors.<sup>23</sup>

Love Is A Journey  
 The Lovers are Travelers  
 Their Common Life Goals Are Destinations  
 The Relationship Is A Vehicle  
 Difficulties Are Impediments To Motion

According to Lakoff and Johnson, in our culture “this is a well-entrenched, stable, conventionalized understanding of a love relationship and the difficulties involved in

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 64.

setting and achieving joint purposes,<sup>24</sup> as evidenced by the ways in which we talk about love and relationships. Conceptual descriptors include, “look how *far* we’ve *come*”, “our relationship is *off the track*”, or “we’re *spinning our wheels*.”<sup>25</sup> With expressions such as these, we map our knowledge about a journey (travel, vehicles, and distance) onto love in order to infer meaning.

However, these expressions are also metaphorical idioms themselves, in that they evoke very specific images associated with the statement. If we take, for example, “*spinning one’s wheels*”, there is a particular image, and information about that image, that come to mind.

The wheels are the wheels of a car. The wheels are spinning, but the car is not moving. The car is stuck...the travelers want the car to be moving so that they can make progress on their journey. They are not happy that it is stuck. They are putting a lot of energy into getting the car unstuck, and they feel frustrated.<sup>26</sup>

This packet of knowledge and associated image represents a relationship that, like the car, is stuck and going nowhere, and there is a level of frustration felt by the couple because of lack of movement toward reaching goals. This entire set of conceptual mappings arise with the statement “*spinning one’s wheels*” in the context of LOVE AS A JOURNEY. It is a metaphorical idiom that includes other metaphors as well as particular images associated with the concept. The more complex the abstract concept, the more complex the mappings, and the more mappings we use to create meaning. Multiplicity, then, is inherent to the theory, and yet because of the similarities with which primary

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 68.

metaphors are developed — even across cultures — the potential mappings for more complex metaphors are not limitless. While culture does have an impact on, for example, conventional images, there is often overlap in general metaphorical conceptualizations.

Metaphor is also prevalent in the way we think about and describe music.<sup>27</sup> It is through metaphor that we “breathe life” into music by discussing it in terms of having behaviors. Those behaviors relate to movement, and most frequently, to physical motion.<sup>28</sup> For example, consider the MOVING MUSIC metaphor:

The melody *leaps* up and then *steps* down.  
 The bass line is a *walking* bass.  
 The first section was *faster* than the second section.  
 The top voices *reaches* its high point at the beginning of part two.  
 The second note *passes* between the first and third notes.

Through the conceptual metaphor MOVING MUSIC, we describe musical behaviors in terms of physical actions — or embodied meaning — with terminology such as “leap”, “step”, “walk”, “fast”, “reach”, or “pass”. Therefore we are “mapping” musical activity onto embodied (embodied meaning related to physical or bodily experience) ideas of physical motion to describe and give meaning to the behavior. These concepts of physical motion can extend to include what I consider “states” or “qualities” of motion that relate to musical behavior. As part of musical expression, they can map onto a variety of conceptualizations that often include complex metaphors and metaphorical idioms.

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<sup>27</sup> See Marion Guck, “Metaphors in Musical Discourse: The Contribution of Imagery to Analysis” (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1981).

<sup>28</sup> See Mark Johnson and Steve Larson, “Something in the Way She Moves — Metaphors of Musical Motion,” *Metaphor and Symbol* 18/2 (2003): 63–84.

While mappings of musical motion onto physical motion — which engages Larson’s theory of musical forces described above in context of his voice-leading patterns — are important to this study, other mappings are relevant throughout this dissertation as well.<sup>29</sup> In Couperin’s character pieces, musical activity may evoke distinct affects and expression. As the interpretive component of my synthetic approach, the mapping capabilities of Lakoff and Johnson’s cognitive theory of metaphor helps explain how we give meaning to the various musical affects created by Couperin’s manipulation of patterns identified by Schenkerian analysis, Gjerdingen’s style-sensitive schema, and Larson’s voice-leading patterns. The last section of this chapter will provide a synopsis of key definitions, limitations, as well as a summary and visual representation of the combined analytic method suggested here.

### **Definitions, Assumptions, Limitations, and Summary of Approach**

In this study, I suggest that musical patterns (and the ways in which those patterns are structured, combined, organized, and timed) contribute to musical expression. It is important to be clear about what I mean by “expression”. Couperin himself describes his pieces as “expressions” of ideas, sentiments, people, places, or states-of-being. “Our music, whether it be for violin, harpsichord, viol or any other instrument, always seems to want to express some sentiment.”<sup>30</sup> Even more specific, take his statement about his titles:

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<sup>29</sup> Larson’s Theory of musical forces can be considered built upon, or consonant with, Lakoff and Johnson’s Cognitive metaphor theory.

<sup>30</sup> François Couperin, quoted by David Tunley, *François Couperin and ‘The Perfection of Music’* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 109.

“I have always had an object [in mind] in composing all these pieces: different occasions have furnished them to me. Thus the titles correspond to the ideas that I have had...the pieces that bear them are portraits of a kind, which have sometimes been found [to be] good likenesses under my fingers.”<sup>31</sup> But As Roger Scruton states:

Many critics of Couperin’s music, for example, would prefer to speak of the relation between his keyboard pieces and their ostensible ‘subjects’ as one of expression and not one of representation. The borderline between expression and representation is a hazy one, and it is often impossible to say of a piece by Rameau or Couperin on which side of the borderline it might lie.<sup>32</sup>

It is not my intent to devise a new theory of expression or representation. While it is clear that musical expression can obviously occur independent of a subject, the musical material in Couperin’s settings is meant to evoke, or “express” his subjects. Couperin’s music, then, can be both expressive, and also expressive *of* something. I take the composer’s own words as a guide in this dissertation.

I also suggest in this study that a synthesis of analytic tools can be particularly effective in illuminating that expressive meaning in Couperin’s musical portraits. The tools of Schenkerian analysis, Gjerdingen’s style-based schema, and Larson’s voice-leading patterns and theory of musical forces, help in both the identification of patterns, and also the assessment of pattern behavior within a particular piece or group of pieces. Lakoff & Johnson’s Cognitive metaphor theory explains how we can so effectively ascribe a variety of meanings to pattern behavior, by mapping affect and expression onto

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<sup>31</sup> François Couperin as quoted by David Fuller, “Of Portraits, ‘Sapho’ and Couperin: Titles and Characters in French Instrumental Music of the High Baroque,” *Music & Letters*, Vol. 78, No. 2 (May, 1997); 167.

<sup>32</sup> Roger Scruton, “Programme Music,” in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/22394> (accessed May 31, 2010).

different emotions, ideas, or images. Those mappings can be enhanced and often made more precise when the broader context is considered — for example, a narrative trajectory — or especially when incorporating the ideas and concepts associated with the meanings of Couperin’s evocative titles. Before moving to the application of this synthetic approach in the next chapter, a summary of definitions and assumptions, as well as a synopsis of what I will not be doing or claiming in this dissertation appears below.

### *Pattern*

The term pattern encompasses several meanings in this study. First, it is used to reference various types of recurring, marked behaviors — both pitch- and rhythm-based — common to tonal music that surface as part of the analytical process (for example patterns that are discovered through a Schenkerian voice-leading analysis). Second, pattern is also used when referencing Larson’s three- and four-note voice-leading patterns as part of his theory of musical forces. There is often overlap between the first and second applications of the term, as Larson’s patterns are commonly recurring ideas in tonal music, but not all commonly recurring ideas in tonal music are a Larson voice-leading pattern. Finally, the word pattern is used interchangeably with Gjerdingen’s labels “schema” or “gambit”, for in this context all these terms refer to “models”. I do, however, attempt to remain consistent by using his terminology when discussing schemata and engaging his style-based system of analysis.

Other general terms such as “gesture” and “figure” refer to melodic (pitch-based) or rhythmic ideas that may not necessarily be voice-leading or model-based patterns as

defined above, but may be recurring as part of, for example, the general melodic contour at the surface level of the music. In short, the word pattern in this study is reserved for recurring pitch- and rhythm-based structures that are rooted in behaviors common to tonal music.

### *Context*

When in the service of discussing the larger point of musical affect, other musical features in addition to pattern behavior will inevitably enter into analytical discussions as appropriate. Characteristics such as texture, ornamentation, contour, and formal organization have influence on expression and affect and it would be impossible to remove them completely from discourse. I will engage these other features as complementary to pattern-based behavior in the final case study in this dissertation found in Chapter V.

### *Limitations*

Within this dissertation that investigates pattern behavior and its relevance to expression in Couperin's pieces, I do not claim that patterns are the only contributors to musical meaning, nor the only source for emotions. I will not defend theories that emotion comes from this type of mapping, nor do I define other people's theories of pattern behavior. I do at times, however, engage some additional interpretations of pattern (or gesture, figure, topic) in the service of my own analysis, as other authors'

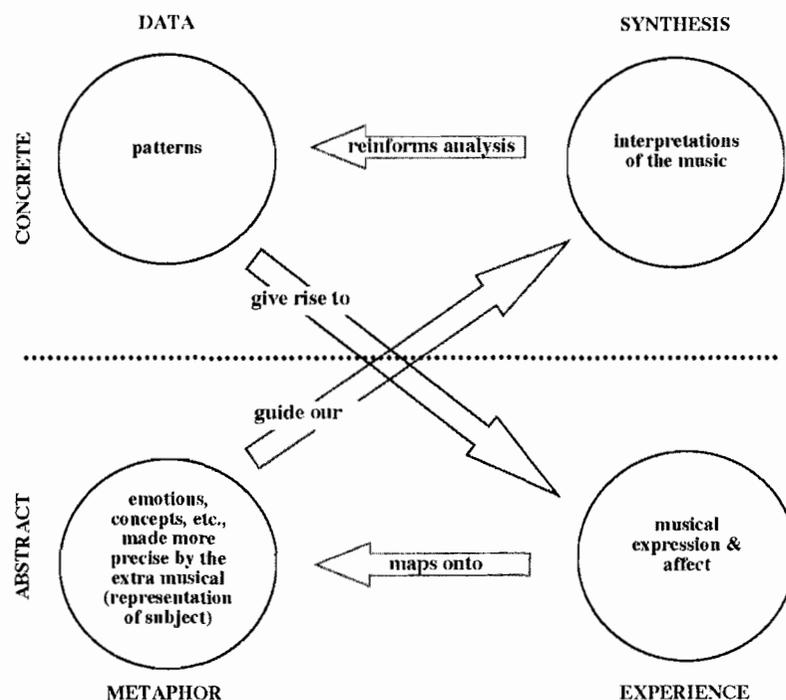
ideas have some effect on my own analytical thinking.<sup>33</sup> These uses are, of course, appropriately cited. I do not claim that particular patterns and pattern behaviors map on to only one type of idea, concept, or emotional response — different mappings than those I propose are obviously possible, and even expected given the flexibility inherent to cognitive metaphor theory. I neither define nor defend other theories of metaphor in general, nor metaphor and music in particular.<sup>34</sup> I do not treat questions pertaining to compositional intent, those related to types or theories of expression and meaning, nor those of patterns as concrete versus abstract constructs.

Instead, I will limit my discussion to how pattern can contribute to musical expression and meaning — and ultimately interpretation — through analysis and metaphorical mapping. This synthetic approach is best represented by **Figure 2.2** below. The depiction of the analytic method in **Figure 2.2** is shaped like an X, with two

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<sup>33</sup> For example, see Deryck Cooke, *The Language of Music* (New York: Oxford, 1959) for ideas relating to melodic figures and tonal areas having particular emotional meanings and definitions; see Leonard Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York: Schirmer, 1980) for discussions of rhetorical figures, topics, ornamentation, texture, style, and expression (among other ideas) in music written the 'Classic' style; Other related writings that are influential in this study include V. Kofi Agawu, *Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classic Music* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); Leonard Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956); Danuta Mirka and V. Kofi Agawu eds., *Communication in Eighteenth-Century Music* (New York, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Robert O. Gjerdingen, *A Classic Turn of Phrase: Music and the Psychology of Conventions* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988).

<sup>34</sup> Several analysts have shown how metaphor can elucidate affective experience when musical patterns imply qualities of motion that shape emotional responses. For example, see Lawrence M. Zbikowski, *Conceptualizing Music: Cognitive Structure, Theory, and Analysis*, AMS Studies in Music (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Larson, *Musical Forces: Motion, Metaphor, and Meaning in Music*; Guck, "Metaphors in Musical Discourse"; and Ibid., "Two Types of Metaphoric Transference," in *Music and Meaning*, ed. Jenefer Robinson (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1997), 201–212. For another example of connections between schema and metaphor, see Michael Spitzer, *Metaphor and Musical Thought* (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 2004).



**Figure 2.2.** Summary Diagram of Synthetic Analytical Approach

horizontal rows and two vertical columns (a total of four quadrants). A dotted horizontal line divides the middle of the X, to separate components of the method that I consider as “concrete” above the line, such as musical material (observations about pattern, behavior, and context), and components of the method that I consider as “abstract” below the line, such as the responses we have (affects) to the music.

To “move” through the method, we begin in the upper left corner with observations about the music. As concrete analytical information, musical patterns (meaningful units) and their behavior and context, contribute — or give rise — to musical affect and expression. This relationship is illustrated by the arrow moving

between the upper left corner of the figure to the lower right corner of the figure. This data are the cues that can be heard as triggering particular responses — the things we experience when we engage with music either as listeners, performers, analysts, or all three. Experiences may include qualities of motion, mood of the piece, or reactions that are often difficult to put into words. As such, they reside as abstract elements in the lower right corner of the figure. Elements of affect and expression can, in turn, metaphorically map onto complexes of emotions, images, or ideas (lower left corner), which can become even more refined in the case of Couperin's music, as many of his musical portraits are named with an evocative title representing a subject, emotion, or state-of-being. This mapping relationship is represented by the arrow moving between the lower right corner of the figure to the lower left corner of the figure. These mappings serve as conceptual representations to give interpretive meaning to pattern behavior, as represented by the arrow moving between metaphor and interpretation/synthesis in the upper right corner of the figure. Finally, this synthesis of pattern behavior and mapping re-informs how we view, hear, and experience the music, as indicated by the arrow moving between interpretation in the upper right corner of the figure, back to the first stage of the process in the upper left. How we interpret the potential meanings can enrich and support our next round of analysis and observation. Therefore, we can connect musical patterns to musical meaning in terms of metaphorical representations.

Through this approach multiple different mappings inevitably occur, as often the same things can have different meanings for different people. Multiplicity is one of the strengths of this synthetic approach. The more complex the idea, the more metaphors we

use to describe it. In fact, the application of this method throughout this dissertation reveals that the same pattern can have different meanings depending upon the given intra-musical context and extra-musical associations. However, mappings are not limitless — most complex metaphors are comprised of multiple other basic metaphors that relate to bodily experience. They possess “embodied meaning”. Larson states:

Thus, the answer appears to be that metaphors are understood in terms of more basic metaphors, and that basic metaphors are ‘grounded’ in our physical experience. That is, our most basic concepts — the simplest things we learn at the earliest ages — come from our experience of moving about in the world...although some of our conceptual metaphors are culturally shaped, their meaning is anything but arbitrary.<sup>35</sup>

Just as the foundation of basic metaphors guides our conceptualizations for the more complex, the similarity in the manner we formulate metaphors for musical experience guides our mapping possibilities for Couperin’s portraits. Yet, his evocative titles simultaneously enhance our metaphoric conceptualizations and sharpen possible meanings for pattern behavior. The next chapter of this study will apply this synthetic approach to a variety of short excerpts from Couperin’s *Pièces de Clavecin*, while Chapters IV and V will provide in-depth analyses of two longer pieces — the former, a set of theme and variations; the latter, a single dance movement.

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<sup>35</sup> Larson, *Musical Forces: Motion, Metaphor, and Meaning in Music*, 2.22-2.23.

CHAPTER III  
 PATTERN AND EXPRESSION:  
 CHARACTERIZING MUSICAL MEANING — SMALL-SCALE EXAMPLES

*I have always had an object [in mind] in composing all these pieces: different occasions have furnished them to me. Thus the titles correspond to the ideas that I have had...the pieces that bear them are portraits of a kind, which have sometimes been found [to be] good likenesses under my fingers.<sup>1</sup>*  
 François Couperin

The previous chapter outlined the four tools and/or theories that take part in, and support, my synthesized methodology to connect musical pattern and meaning in Couperin's portraits. That synthesis includes several methods to identify patterns and associated behaviors (Schenkerian analysis, Gjerdingen's style-based schema, and Larson's voice-leading patterns), and two ways (Lakoff and Johnson Cognitive metaphor theory, and Larson's theory of musical forces) to support the metaphorical mappings of pattern behavior and affect onto generalized responses such as states of mind, emotions, or ideas, or — more specifically — onto subjects related to evocative titles.

This chapter will identify and illuminate meaningful relationships between pattern behavior and meaning in Couperin's collection by applying this synthetic method to four individual examples. The first two examples show how different *patterns* can give rise to

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<sup>1</sup> François Couperin as quoted by David Fuller, "Of Portraits, 'Sapho' and Couperin: Titles and Characters in French Instrumental Music of the High Baroque," *Music & Letters*, Vol. 78, No. 2 (May, 1997); 167.

different affects and meanings. The second two examples show how different *contexts* can give rise to different affects and meanings even or the same pattern. Chapters IV and V further illustrate my method by presenting in-depth analytic case studies. Before proceeding, it is important to clarify some points about pattern, method, mappings, and intent.

*Pattern.* As mentioned in Chapter I, Couperin's vocabulary stems from a variety of influences — seventeenth-century keyboard practice, the increasing influence of the Italian *stile galante*, and the broader tonal vocabulary of the eighteenth-century classical style. Thus, his musical language is diverse and not every pattern is neatly categorized into, for example, a model schema as representative of the galant vocabulary. Additionally, many of Couperin's gambits are rooted in earlier traditions that persist well into the eighteenth century and remain as important compositional building blocks in the galant style. While some of these are stylistically significant patterns, I do not claim that they signify that Couperin was consciously writing in the *style galant*. I do claim, however, that galant schema or no, these patterns were well understood, part of the style, and important to the "conversant" ideal between composer and audience. As such, the use and manipulation of the patterns can be heard as contributing to the meaning of the piece.

*Method.* Not every aspect of this approach is necessarily applied equally. This is not a sequential application, but rather a synthetic one, meaning that I apply the method to reveal salient aspects of pattern and pattern behavior as appropriate — each tool and theory brings a different type of information to the discussion depending upon context. Individual components of the synthetic model may or may not be actively involved in

every situation, with the exception of the claims of cognitive metaphor theory. As a theory that describes how we are so effectively able to map concepts of one idea onto another in order to make sense of that idea, it supports the application of the other three tools at all times (and it is explicitly acknowledged as informing and supporting Larson's theory of musical forces). By providing metaphorical descriptions to give meaning to pattern behavior and affect, the claims of the theory are always in force — even when its presence is only implicit.

*Mappings.* The metaphorical associations I propose in this chapter and the following case studies are, of course, not the only possibilities. Responses to music are personal, and culture does play a role in formulating meaningful associations. However, personal and cultural influences are not the only factors — there seem to be some intersubjective responses to given musical events that may be a result of the way their use of material reflects aspects of embodied knowledge of movement in the world, rather than purely learned conventions of a particular musical style.<sup>2</sup>

*Intent.* Although we may infer additional meaning for a piece through Couperin's evocative, I do not suggest that the proposed mappings reproduce Couperin's intended "sentiments". Though he states that subjects drive his composition, it is impossible to know if our interpretations of those subjects are consonant with his intent — but this is not the purpose of the analysis. My objective is to better understand what happens when we connect our observations of musical activity to various meanings for that behavior.

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<sup>2</sup> On associations in music and their relationship to convention and culture, see Steve Larson, *Musical Forces: Motion, Metaphor, and Meaning in Music* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, forthcoming), Chapter 1.

### Different Patterns, Different Meanings

Analyses of the opening passages of two different pieces (Couperin's *La Florentine* and *La Muse-Plantine*), demonstrate the synthetic approach developed in Chapter II, as well as illustrate how pattern use within a piece can give rise to different meanings for its behavior. The first example (*La Florentine*) is analyzed in stages, first describing general qualities of expression, then progressing into more detailed conversations regarding the structure of the opening and the patterns that participate in its organization. This analysis reveals that galant patterns are an important part of Couperin's musical vocabulary, and also demonstrates how context can contribute to the different expressions, states of motion, and affect for a piece. These affects can be heard metaphorically in different ways, based both on general concepts and ideas, as well as on those more specifically related to Couperin's titles. This mapping is demonstrated by a series of figures to visually represent that process. The second analysis (*La Muse-Plantine*) progresses in the same way, but explores the well-established lamento tetrachord, a part of the musical vocabulary that preceded — but persisted well into — the specifically galant idiom. This analysis reveals that the more typical associations of sadness and grief for the tetrachord are not necessarily the only meanings tied to its use — well-established patterns can be contextualized in such a way to engender different meanings.

*La Florentine: The Blathering Italian*

One common opening pattern in Couperin’s collection is the schema Gjerdingen calls the ascending Do–Re–Mi gambit. This pattern will become the basis for focused analysis in the Chapter IV case study of *Les Folies françoises ou les Dominos*. However, an introduction to its use here will both familiarize us with the central features of the pattern, and also demonstrate how — as a regularly occurring pattern — its context can so effectively participate in different affects and meanings for different pieces.

Gjerdingen’s Do–Re–Mi schema was discussed in Chapter II. Another model example is reproduced below as **Example 3.1**.

Do–Re–Mi

**Example 3.1.** Another Gjerdingen Example of the Do–Re–Mi Schema from Sonata C48, Allegro, m. 1 (ca. 1780s), Cimarosa

The ascending third ( $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\hat{3}$ ) appears in the melody over a lower neighbor ( $\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}$ ) in the bass. Gjerdingen labels this schema Do–Re–Mi for pieces in both the major and minor modes. (Although one could argue that the schema should be called “Do–Re–Me” in minor, where “mi” is the raised third in major and “me” is the lowered third in minor, the

pattern is essentially the same, regardless of mode.) Stage one of the gambit establishes stability, then moves to an unstable position at stage two, which resolves to another point of stability at stage three. While this schema is embellished at the surface of the music, musical forces can be heard as participating in the motion of the larger measure-to-measure pattern. Musical magnetism (the tendency of an unstable note to resolve to the closest stable pitch) can be heard as driving the half-step resolution to the third stage in the bass, while both inertia (the tendency for a pattern to continue) and magnetism participate in the resolution of the melodic gesture. Each stage of the pattern occurs on a strong beat within the measure and is evenly paced across the unit. The motion is easy, relaxed, and relatively unadorned. The Do–Re–Mi is the basis of the opening measures of one of Couperin’s early compositions, *La Florentine, deuxième* (2<sup>nd</sup>) *ordre* from the first volume of the collection. Measures one–four appear as **Example 3.2c** below.<sup>3</sup>

*La Florentine* (The Florentine) is a quickly paced binary dance form in compound meter. Signs of ornamentation within this excerpt (as well as throughout the rest of the piece) are minimal, appearing over the notes at the downbeats of measures one and two, and on beat three in measure three. The bass moves in the rhythmic figure eighth–plus–sixteenth until measure two, combining mostly stepwise motion with very few small leaps. The melody moves predominantly in sixteenth notes, alternating between a

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<sup>3</sup> Measures zero (anacrusis) to the downbeat of measure two are the focus on my discussion, though I have quoted the piece up until the double bar of the first reprise of the dance form for context and for the reader to observe the continuation of certain figurations as part of the texture of the piece.

compound melodic figure (e.g., measure zero), and stepwise and neighbor figures (e.g., measure one).

The opening phrase of *La Florentine* (anacrusis, and measures one and two) can be heard as an elaboration of two compositional building blocks — or schema — of the galant style: the ascending Do–Re–Mi (anacrusis and measure one) and the descending Phrygian tetrachord (measure one to measure two), as illustrated in **Example 3.2a**.

The musical score is divided into three systems:

- System a:** Shows the vocal line. The first measure contains the ascending figure "Do-Re-Mi" with fingerings 1, 2, 3. The second measure contains the descending "Phrygian Tetrachord" with fingerings 2, 1, 7. A bracket labeled "(follows)" spans the second measure, and a bracket labeled "(leads)" spans the first measure.
- System b:** Shows the piano accompaniment for the first two measures, with fingerings 1, 7, 1, b7, b6, 5.
- System c:** Shows the keyboard part. The tempo/style instruction is "D'une légèreté tendre". The score includes four measures of keyboard accompaniment with ornaments and fingerings 1, 2, 3, 4.

**Example 3.2a–c.** *La Florentine*, m. 1–4, 2<sup>nd</sup> ordre (1713/16), F. Couperin

Yet the types of patterns used, as well as the way in which they are presented, contribute specifically to the motion and affect of the piece. This, in turn, can map onto emotional responses or images based on that expression as well as onto more specific concepts associated with Couperin's subject, connecting pattern behavior and musical meaning in *La Florentine*.

The manner in which Couperin presents the opening Do–Re–Mi can be heard as reflecting a combination of insistence and hesitation. As in the model example, every stage of this opening gambit is equally paced (however, the events occur within a shorter temporal span equivalent to one measure, rather than three). The first stage of the Do–Re–Mi occupies the entire anacrusis of *La Florentine*. Beginning on beat three, the bass ascends by step, D–E–F ( $\hat{1}$ – $\hat{2}$ – $b\hat{3}$ ) and then skips back to D ( $\hat{1}$ ) outlining the chord of the home (or tonic) key in the equivalent of a dotted rhythm. The stepwise ascent in the bass can be said to confirm the larger ascent of the measure-to-measure Do–Re–Mi gambit in the melody, as indicated by the bracket in **Example 3.2b**.

The melody also outlines chord tones of the tonic key by alternating between A ( $\hat{5}$ ) and D ( $\hat{1}$ ) to produce a repeating melodic gesture that moves as follows: A–D **D**–A–D **D**–A–D ( $\hat{5}$ – $\hat{1}$   **$\hat{1}$** – $\hat{5}$ – $\hat{1}$   **$\hat{1}$** – $\hat{5}$ – $\hat{1}$ ). The notes and scale degrees in bold represent the accented parts of the beats. The A below can be heard as decorating the structural note of the gambit — the D above. This technique of bouncing from a pedal tone to another melodic tone is something that Couperin does in the opening anacrusis, in measure two, and throughout the remainder of the piece. In the context of the opening Do–Re–Mi however, the alternating between a pedal tone on the fifth degree and the structural note of the

ascending third pattern, is a common variant of the gambit. Gjerdingen calls this the “Adeste Fideles”, shown in **Example 3.3**, because of its similarity to the popular hymn with the same name.



**Example 3.3.** “Adeste Fideles” Variant of the Do–Re–Mi

This variant will be discussed in more detail in Chapter IV’s case study, but in *La Florentine* the “Adeste Fideles” variant occurs during stage one of the schema only, rather than throughout the larger pattern. The repetition of notes is a feature common to the first stages of both of these examples. We can compare what effect the repetition has on the sense of motion in **Example 3.3** and **Example 3.2c**, *La Florentine*. The short long durational pattern of the repeated structural note in **Example 3.3** smoothly highlights the first stage of the three-stage unit with an agogic and metric accent. The motion and emphasis are easy and natural. In **Example 3.2c**, the repeated notes — like all the melody notes of the anacrusis — are the same duration, and are part of a fast moving sixteenth-note figuration. Instead of the repetition being easy and natural, its movement is more insistent, forced, or even chafed.

This halting effect is heightened as the first stage of the Do–Re–Mi concludes at the end of the anacrusis. The melody steps up to E ( $\hat{2}$ ) at the downbeat of measure one as the bass moves down to C# ( $\hat{7}$ ) to outline the second stage of the gambit. After the arrival of the second stage, both voices rest — Couperin punctuates the texture with a sudden break in motion and sound. Only after this break do the voices return at beat two to move toward the final stage of the gambit. The melody enters and ascends D–E–F ( $\hat{1}$ – $\hat{2}$ – $b\hat{3}$ ) — the last note of which is the third stage of the pattern that arrives on beat three of the measure. This ascent in the melody confirms the larger measure-to-measure Do–Re–Mi just as the ascent does in the bass in the anacrusis. The confirmation appears with a bracket above the notes in **Example 3.2b** measure one. The bass completes its part of the gambit with a leap from A ( $\hat{5}$ ) below to D ( $\hat{1}$ ) above on beat three of the measure, which recalls the melodic figure from the anacrusis — the two voices exchange gestures as the larger gambit comes to a close.

This moment marks a point of elision between the end of the opening Do–Re–Mi gambit and the beginning of the second pattern — the Phrygian tetrachord to close the phrase unit, as illustrated in **Example 3.2a**. The descending Phrygian tetrachord is a pattern that frequently balances the ascending Do–Re–Mi opening in Couperin’s pieces. The tetrachord moves in parallel tenths — labeled as a “leads” and “follows” progression in **Example 3.2a** — to complete the gesture on a half cadence. The successive combination of these two patterns is what Larson would describe as elided patterns that move gracefully, changing direction on the unstable part of the pattern to create a seamless single gesture. Although the Phrygian descent in **Example 3.2a** elides smoothly

with the end of the previous pattern, the rhythm in the bass at the surface of the music (**Example 3.2c**) contributes to the piece's halting or stuttering motion by continuing in its eighth-plus-sixteenth figuration. The melody begins its descent with an upper-neighbor pattern on beat three — F–G–F or  $\hat{b}3-\hat{4}-\hat{b}3$  — that then descends by step to E on beat four, which can be heard as responding to musical gravity. If we consider this upper-neighbor figure on beat three as responding to musical inertia as well as to gravity, then we expect the figuration to continue once it reaches E to produce another upper-neighbor figure, E–F–E or  $\hat{2}-\hat{b}3-\hat{2}$ . This, however, does not take place. The melody begins moving E to F, but then skips down to D ( $\hat{2}-\hat{b}3-\hat{1}$ ), introducing a leap, or gap — or stumble, in order to provide the D of the structural melody of the tetrachord pattern. This leap introduces another disruption into the texture, enhancing the halting, stuttering sense of motion established from the beginning of the piece.

These affects of insistence, hesitation, chafing, and haltingness can map onto qualities of physical motion, such as skipping, faltering, or stumbling — or all of these. When we incorporate Couperin's title into the meanings we attribute to the piece, our mappings of pattern behavior and expression may take on greater specificity and added dimensions. The subject of the piece is *The Florentine* — a person from Florence. First, the pattern types themselves contribute to the meaning of the piece. To “paint” a portrait of a Florentine, it does not seem unreasonable that Couperin might choose to create portions of his piece using compositional building blocks that are related to the Italian galant style — the Do–Re–Mi and balancing Phrygian tetrachord. *La Florentine*, then, could be considered a mild jab at the increasing compositional influence of the Italian

style in general, depicting perhaps a perceived lack of grace and constant motion. This connects the types of patterns to the subject. But, what is it about the way in which the patterns appear in the composition that give rise to the evocation of a *particular* Florentine? That brings us to the second point — a deeper understanding of the subject.

According to Wildrid Mellers, “Lully was known as *le Florentin* because he was one.”<sup>4</sup> As Lully’s posthumous influence was waning within court circles, one possibility is that Couperin was satirically depicting Lully and his dancing abilities — which of course were known to be excellent. Mellers suggests, however, that this is unlikely. “But this unassuming Italianate jig can hardly be a portrait of so self-consciously grand a character. On the other hand, Couperin is unlikely to have tossed off a portrait of an average Florentine, male or female.”<sup>5</sup> Both Mellers and Jane Clark point to Florent Dancourt as another possible subject — a friend of Couperin’s involved in the theater and known for his fluency of speech and elegant, polished manner.

A civilized and charming man, his company was sought by the most important people of the court and the city. The ease with which he spoke and the natural eloquence that enlivened all his speeches, have made his comrades bestow on him the honour of speaking on all special occasions, the public always cheers him.<sup>6</sup>

Later in life, however, this reputation became marred — Dancourt was censured for only taking the roles of characters with dubious principles in his stage productions. How then

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<sup>4</sup> Wilfrid Mellers, *François Couperin and the French Classical Tradition* (London: Faber and Faber, 1987), 389.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Titon du Tillet, as quoted by Jane Clark and Derek Connon, *The Mirror of Human Life: Reflections on François Couperin’s Pièces de Clavecin* (Huntingdon, England: King’s Music, 2002), 54.

can Couperin's *La Florentine* evoke Dancourt — first renowned for eloquence in speech, but later for a tarnished reputation?

Couperin's *Florentine* can be considered a satirical evocation of Dancourt. The figurations that embellish the structural patterns in the melody and bass produce awkward states of motion that can be heard as being in opposition to eloquence and grace. *La Florentine* expresses affects more in keeping with a person stammering or sputtering, or even being clumsy. We can imagine Couperin's subject, having once captured attention through his prowess as orator, becoming a man who now stutters awkwardly or whose reputation has "faltered". Couperin's performance marking provides additional information. *D'une légèreté tendre* can take on different meanings. In one sense, *tendre* = tender and *légèreté* = light, can mean an interpretation of a light touch. However, light as a definition for *légèreté* means being "light on one's feet". In another sense *légèreté*, when connected to a physical action, means thoughtless.<sup>7</sup> It is possible that Couperin's performance direction itself is a reference to "thoughtless chatter", which is supported by an observation from Mellers. *La Florentine*, he states, "babbles politely."<sup>8</sup> These two interpretations for the piece — "babbling politely" and "moving hesitantly" — create two fairly different kinds of motion or affect. Both, however, are consistent with the patterns we find, and each (whether babbling or hesitating) is given its particular flavor in part by the particular content of Couperin's music.

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<sup>7</sup> "Légèreté," Collins English French Electronic Dictionary © HarperCollins Publishers 2005, [http://dictionary.reverso.net/french/légèreté#translate\\_box](http://dictionary.reverso.net/french/légèreté#translate_box) (accessed: April 01, 2010).

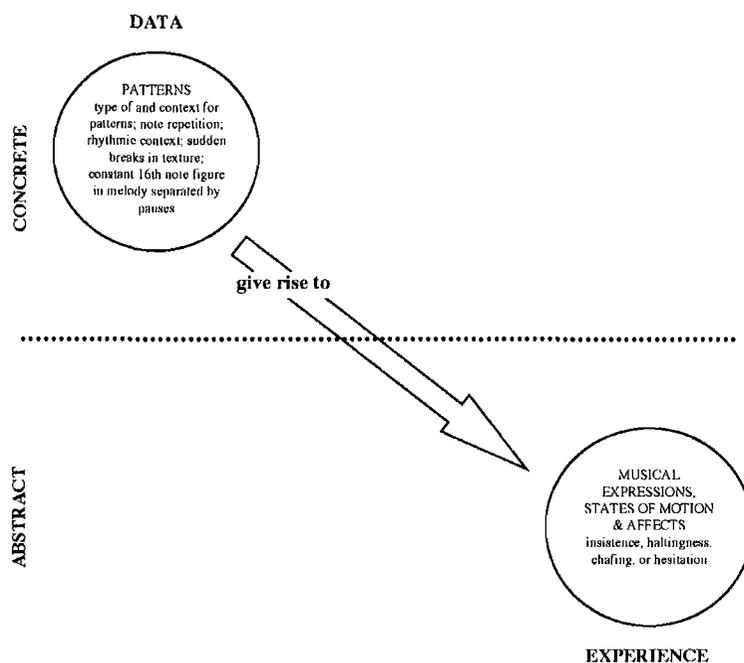
<sup>8</sup> Mellers, *François Couperin*, 389.

The extended meaning of “florentine” helps to enhance mapping possibilities of pattern behavior as well. Florentine, as an adjective, refers to something having a dull finish, such as gold having lost a bit of its shine — a little rubbed, a little tarnished.<sup>9</sup> The chafing note repetition in the melodic figurations of *La Florentine* can be heard as representing the action of rubbing. Dancourt’s, who had once been eloquent and graceful in speech, the glow of his reputation now a little dull and tarnished, prattles on saying nothing of consequence, and stammering as he speaks. The metaphorical mappings that give meaning(s) to pattern activity and associated affective responses in *La Florentine* become more precise.

This first example analysis illustrates the connection between pattern behavior and the potential meanings for that behavior. Elements of the musical material itself (identified through the variety of pattern-based tools of this methodology) — the patterns, the melodic and rhythmic figurations associated with those patterns, as well as an overall quick tempo of the piece — express particular qualities that contribute to our experience, which give rise to responses and affects. In **Figure 3.1a**, connections between pattern and affect are represented by diagonal movement between musical material in the upper left (the concrete realm), and responses in the lower right (the abstract realm). In *La Florentine*, we can describe some of these behaviors as possessing qualities such as insistence, haltingness, chafing, or hesitation.

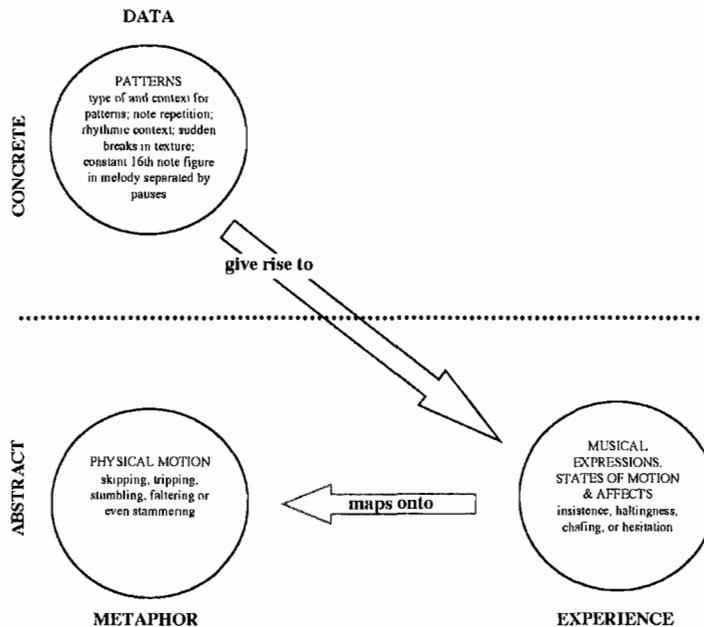
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<sup>9</sup> Dictionary.com, “Florentine,” The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/Florentine> (accessed: April 01, 2010).



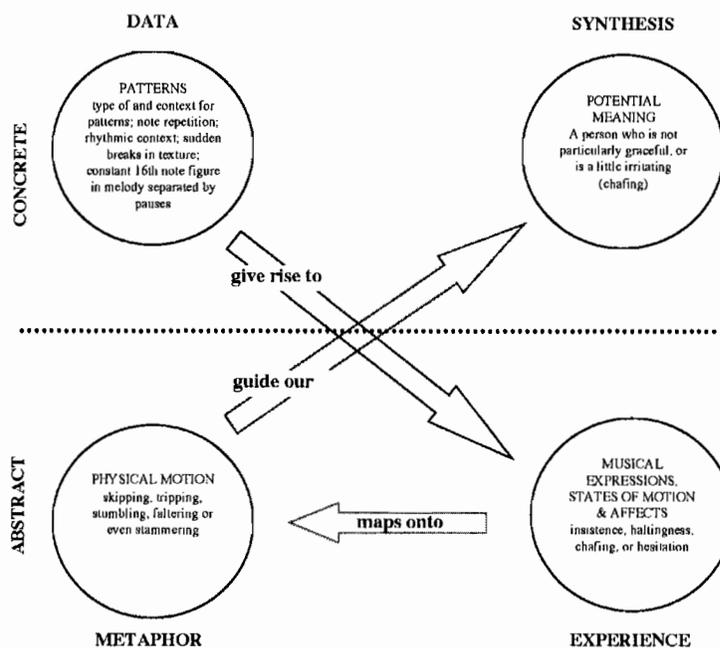
**Figure 3.1a.** Diagram of Method for *La Florentine*:  
Patterns Give Rise to Experience

We can also metaphorically map these behaviors onto physical actions like skipping, tripping, stumbling, faltering or even stammering, as illustrated by the movement from right to left in **Figure 3.1b**. The patterns — and how those patterns are contextualized — in *La Florentine* could then represent a person who lacks grace or is irritating (chafing) in some way, as illustrated by **Figure 3.1c**. The metaphorical mappings we make guide our interpretations for patterns and give meaning to their behavior, as represented by movement from metaphor in the lower left corner of the is



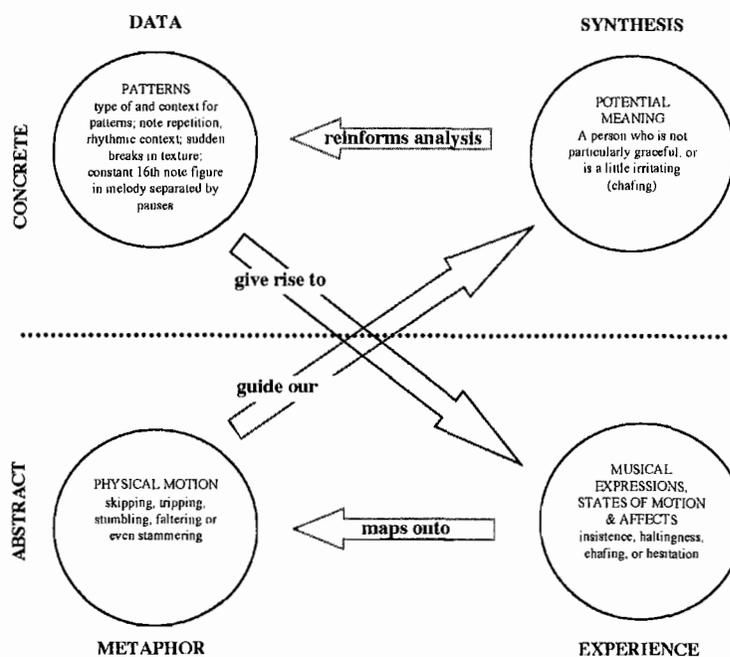
**Figure 3.1b.** Diagram of Method for *La Florentine*:  
Experience and Affects Map onto Physical Gestures and Motion

figure to interpretation and synthesis in the upper right. However, as Mellers points out it unlikely — given the care and specificity with which Couperin names his pieces and likelihood that he had a particular person in mind — that this musical portrait is unrelated to the title. This gives reason to reflect upon — or re-inform how we look at — what it is about the patterns and musical behavior that give rise to certain affects that can map onto metaphors tied to the evocative title, as represented by the move from right to left in the upper part of the diagram in **Figure 3.1d**.



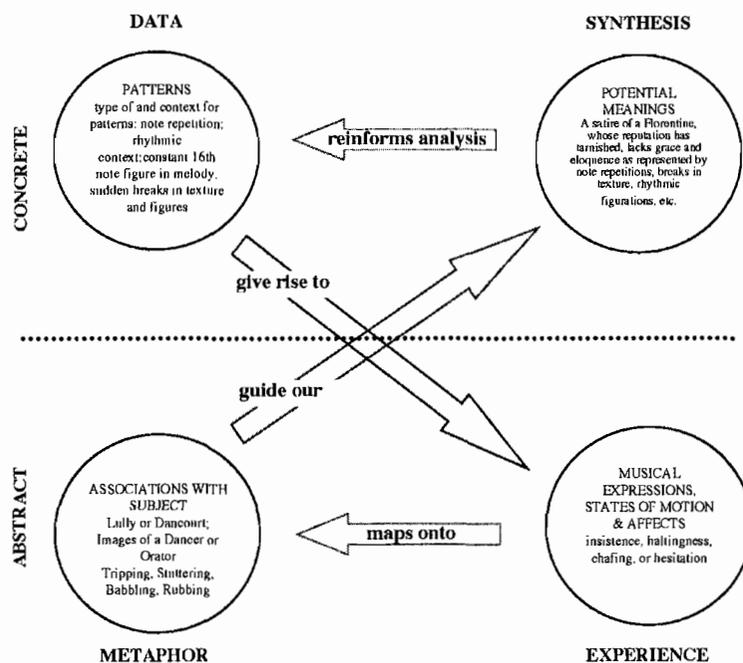
**Figure 3.1c.** Diagram of Method for *La Florentine*: Mappings Guide our Interpretations for Meanings of Patterns and Behaviors

We can propose an enhanced interpretation of pattern and meaning for *La Florentine* in light of associations with the subject — for example, the Florentines in general, a particular Florentine such as Lully, or Dancourt, or all three of these ideas as reflected in **Figure 3.2**. Given this potentially satirical context, the pattern activity can be heard as representing ideas that “poke fun” at otherwise graceful characters whose reputations may have become tarnished (a “Florentine” finish), or diminished in some way because of time passing, or because of public opinion.



**Figure 3.1d.** Diagram of Method for *La Florentine*: Interpretations Reinforce What We See, Hear, and Experience

In other words, our pattern activity can now be heard as faltering dance steps, stuttering speech, or even constant blathering — repeating oneself and saying nothing of consequence. Through the application of this approach, it becomes clear that multiple mappings are possible — and even expected — in order to give meaning to musical pattern in these settings. While meaning can certainly be found without context or a title, these elements contribute to refining our interpretations based upon associations with the subject. Incorporating those ideas (whether they are Couperin’s or not) helps to tie our observations more meaningfully to the musical portraits themselves.



**Figure 3.2.** Diagram of Method for *La Florentine* with Subject and Title as Part of Mappings

We have just seen how different patterns (including the lamento tetrachord and the ascending Do–Re–Mi schema) can give rise to different meanings (that reflect the differences between the patterns). In the next sections, we will see how the same pattern can give rise to different meanings (that reflect differences between their contexts).

*Meaning through Analogy: La Muse-Plantine — Is a Lamento Descent Always an Expression of Sadness?*

The lamento tetrachord is one of the most enduring compositional techniques for pieces expressing grief, sadness, or mourning. Typically presented as an ostinato bass, the pattern predates Couperin by approximately two centuries and remained part of the common musical vocabulary well into, and beyond, the period of the galant style. A model example of this tetrachord for three voices in D minor, both with and without suspensions, appears in **Example 3.4**.

**Example 3.4a–b.** Model Lamento Tetrachord Patterns Without and With Suspensions

A common presentation for the lamento descent is in a slow triple meter, as depicted in both of these model progressions. In **Example 3.4a** the bass begins its descent on  $\hat{8}$ , and continues moving by step through  $\hat{b7}$  and  $\hat{b6}$  to resolve on  $\hat{5}$  to conclude the pattern. The motion of this four-note figure can be heard as responding to all three of Larson's musical forces: gravity — as it is a descending figure and moving toward a stable platform below; inertia — as the pattern continues to move by step in the same direction; and magnetism — as the pattern resolves by half-step at its conclusion. The other two

voices of the pattern create intervals of a third and fifth over the bass in the first measure, which then change to intervals of a third and sixth in measures two and three, and then resolve to an octave and a third as the pattern comes to a close. **Example 3.4b** behaves similarly with the exception of a series of 7–6 suspensions between the melody and bass voices.

This descending tetrachord plays an important role in many of Couperin’s minor-mode character pieces. Some examples include *Les Folies françaises ou les Dominos*, the subject of the in-depth analysis of Chapter IV, *L’Âme-en peine*, the subject of Chapter V — both from the thirteenth *ordre*, as well as some earlier pieces from the first *ordre* such as *Allemande L’Auguste*, and the *Gavote*, and the first *Courante* from the second *ordre*. The other examples from this chapter also use some version of a Phrygian descent. As illustrated in the previous piece, *La Florentine* (**Example 3.2a–c**) Couperin uses it as a descending pattern to balance the ascending Do–Re–Mi opening gambit. In this particular application, the tetrachord is not necessarily behaving in a “traditional” lament manner by repeating as an ostinato bass. As such, the meanings associated with the pattern are not necessarily tied to representations of sadness and grief. The context of the pattern provides a different “take” on its interpretation. The structural components, however, are essentially the same — the bass descends in the characteristic pattern while the melody follows its descent in parallel tenths (or thirds), taking over the inner line of the three-voice model progressions, to conclude in a Phrygian half-cadence. Gjerdingen calls this the Phrygian tetrachord pattern.

Often reserved for even more pronounced moments of sadness and grief, a chromatic version of the lamento tetrachord can be heard as being particularly evocative. A model example of this chromatic tetrachord for three voices, in a slow triple meter in D minor, appears as **Example 3.5**.

**Example 3.5.** Model Chromatic Lamento Tetrachord Pattern

In this model, the bass moves in a manner similar to **Example 3.4b** but with added chromatic half steps on the downbeats of each measure, separating each stage of the original bass pattern  $\hat{8}-\hat{b}7-\hat{b}6-\hat{5}$ . The upper two voices are virtually identical to the model **Example 3.4b**, emphasizing the 7—6 suspension chain in the melody line while the inner voice maintains a stable third above each tone in the bass voice. One difference, however, is in the rhythm of the descent. The added chromatic steps provide an opportunity to emphasize each of the three beats per measure by staggering the durations in the melody and bass voices. A quintessential representation of the chromatic lamento ostinato used as an evocation of sorrow is Dido’s Lament “When I am Laid in Earth” from Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas*. In this well-known example, there is little debate about the expressions of grief and melancholy associated with Dido’s Lament — the text, and overall mournful

(and breathtakingly beautiful) melodious qualities help to guide our affective responses. The chromatic descent enhances this expression by stressing the dissonant and poignant qualities of the tonal landscape, which can be heard as evoking the tortured, stepwise descent to the grave as Dido laments her fate. And the ceaseless repetition of the bass further underscores that evocation and can be heard as representing Dido's physical movement itself — her walk toward death.

Couperin's *La Muse-Plantine*, a rondeau from the *dix-neuvième* (19<sup>th</sup>) *ordre*, *troisième livre*, also uses a repeating lamento tetrachord as its fundamental compositional pattern for the opening eight measures of the piece. In fact, *La Muse* features the chromatic version of our model. However, the affect and expression of the piece is not sorrowful, but rather wistful or contemplative. The opening nine measures are recreated as **Example 3.6**. While not a traditional repeating ostinato bass used to organize the entire piece, as a rondeau these opening measures would repeat between every couplet of the form — the piece would constantly return to this passage. In itself, measures one to the downbeat of nine contain two repetitions of the chromatic descent: the first in measures one–four, and the second in measures five–eight.

Couperin sets this piece in a brisk 6/8 meter — a setting more appropriate to a dance than a lament, and a marked difference between the pacing of the piece and that of the model, or even that of a more typical slow triple meter. The three voices combine to create a constant eighth-note pulse. Never is there a pause in the movement, almost as

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled 'RONDEAU'. It consists of two systems of music. The first system starts at measure 1 and ends at measure 5. The second system starts at measure 6 and ends at measure 9. The music is written for a single melodic line (treble clef) and a bass line (bass clef). The time signature is 8/8. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The melody in the first system begins with a rest on the downbeat, followed by an arpeggiated figure. The bass line enters on the downbeat with a dotted quarter note. The piece concludes with a 'Fin' marking.

**Example 3.6.** *La Muse-Plantine*, m. 1–9, 19<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

though the three voices are really acting as one — the result of which engenders a swaying quality as the figurations in the melody and alto move us gently back and forth in continual motion.

However, there is a harmonic instability and mobility that become instantly apparent at the downbeat of measure one. The bass enters at this moment on  $\hat{1}$ . The melody begins on the second eighth note and arpeggiates the third and fifth scale degrees (F and A) of the chord of the tonic. It then continues its ascent to Bb ( $\hat{b}6$ ) to initiate a chain of 7–6 suspensions with the bass that continue until the resolution of the tetrachord on the downbeat of measure four. With the exception of the dance-like meter and the arpeggiation of additional chord tones of the implied diminished sonority in the melody prior to the resolution of each suspension, the intervallic relationship between the

outer voices in the first four measures is typical. Moreover, it is virtually identical to the model progression in **Example 3.5**. The structural relationship of the outer voices for the first four measures of *La Muse-Plantine*, appear as a durational reduction in **Example 3.7**.

**Example 3.7.** *La Muse-Plantine*, m. 1–4, 19<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin  
Durational Reduction of Outer Voices

Despite this typical activity in these opening measures, there remains constant mobility that undermines any real sense of solid “footing” throughout this passage. The staggered entrance of the bass and melody has a little to do with it, as we do not necessarily experience a clear stable beginning prior to the melody’s immediate ascent to  $\hat{b}6$  to begin its chain of suspensions over the bass. But this is not the only contributing factor.

Not only are the intervals between the outer voices typical, the entire progression of chords (and intervals) is typical as well. Consider the durational reduction of the first four measures of *La Muse-Plantine* in **Example 3.8**.



**Example 3.8.** *La Muse-Plantine*, m. 1–4, 19<sup>th</sup> *ordre* (1722), F. Couperin  
 Durational Reduction of All Voices

After the initial preparation in measure one, at every subsequent measure, a  $7/5/3$  chord occurs on the downbeat, which then resolves to a  $6/3$  chord on beat two. If we were to move directly from downbeat to downbeat, a series of planning  $7/5/3$  chords would result — as would a series of parallel fifths in the alto voice. The device Couperin uses to “narrowly” avoid this contrapuntal problem in the inner voice contributes particularly to the expression of constant mobility and ambiguity in *La Muse-Plantine*.

As the piece begins, the F that enters acts as both the first note of the melody and the first note of the alto, as shown in measure one of **Example 3.9**. As the melody ascends to A and then to B $\flat$ , the alto sustains the F. At the moment the alto voice steps up to G on the last eighth note of the measure, the voice splits into two separate voices: one that remains on the F (labeled alto 2) and one that steps up to the G (labeled alto 1) in anticipation of the chord that follows on the downbeat of the next measure. The F (alto 2) moves then to the E (alto 2) on the second eighth note of measure two. The G (alto 1)

**Example 3.9.** *La Muse-Plantine*, m. 1–4, 19<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin  
Division and Resolution of Alto Voices

is reiterated as part of melody as it arpeggiates chord tones on its way toward the resolution of its suspension on the second beat of the measure (Bb to A). The E (alto 2) then splits again on the last eighth note of measure two to step up to F — becoming alto 1 — again as an anticipation of the chord that arrives on the downbeat of the next measure. Alto 1 (the G in measure one and then the F that follows in measure two) is the voice that moves in parallel fifths with the bass. Couperin avoids the “experience” of planing parallels by always approaching alto 1 by the movement of alto 2 from below. However, the simultaneous combination of anticipations and suspensions (constantly shifting our sense of harmonic “footing” in different directions) contributes to the overall harmonic ambiguity of this passage. This relationship continues throughout both rounds of suspension figures in these opening nine measures of *La Muse-Plantine*.

The mobility and instability of the opening lamento tetrachord is further enhanced in the second iteration starting in measure five, **Example 3.6**. The alto voice begins as it does in

measure one, splitting at the anticipation that enters on the last eighth note of the measure, while the bass leaps down an octave for the lower second round of the descending tetrachord. The melody also begins in the same manner but, beginning in measure six, the passage introduces chromatic inflections as part of the arpeggiating figure. These additions do two things: first, they increase the mobility and instability already experienced in the first four measures of the piece; and second, they introduce an ascending chromatic half step as part of the movement toward resolution in the melodic suspension on the second beat of every measure. For example, in measure six of **Example 3.6**, the B $\flat$  suspended from the previous measure creates a dissonant seventh with the bass that we hear as resolving to the A on beat two of the measure. Simultaneously, the melody leaps away from the B $\flat$  to G $\sharp$  on the third eighth note, while alto 2 sustains the G natural and alto 1 sounds the E. Both the B $\flat$  and the G $\sharp$  emphasize the resolution of the suspension by half step from above and below. This can be understood durationally as **Example 3.10**.

**Example 3.10.** *La Muse-Plantine*, m. 5–8, 19<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin  
 Durational Reduction of All Voices with Chromatic Inflections

The G# in particular increases the harmonic vagueness and piquancy by changing how we hear the chord of the larger beat unit. These inflections continue in measure seven as well with the F#.

All of these factors — suspensions, anticipations, and resolutions occurring in multiple voices to avoid parallel perfect intervals within the context of continuously moving eighth-note figuration — in combination with the departures from analogous model progressions of lamento descents contribute not to expressions of sadness, but to those that can be heard as fluidity, instability, and constant mobility. This instability and mobility is not presented in a frenzied or turbulent manner. Instead, the motion is fluid, with a relaxed and almost dreamy easiness. These ideas can metaphorically map onto physical motions such as swaying back and forth, rocking, or floating gently down, or perhaps even circling around and retracing steps.

As in our analysis of *La Florentine*, a closer look to Couperin's title and subject can enrich possible metaphorical mappings. According to both Clark and Mellers, *La Muse-Plantine* — within an *ordre* that is otherwise focused on theatrical themes — is a dedication to a prominent harpsichordist and composer Mademoiselle de la Plante.

Although the piece concerns a professional musician, [there] is [no] hint of virtuoso showmanship. Mme de la Plante was described by Titon du Tillet as a harpsichordist who 'combined brilliance and delicacy with a perfect knowledge of composition'; her playing 'astonished the best organists and harpsichordist of Paris' — including Couperin, presumably.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Mellers, *François Couperin*, 424–425.

In this interpretation, the piece is a dedication to Couperin's "muse" Mademoiselle de la Plante. As is the situation for so many of Couperin's character pieces, the titles do tend to have some association with the music that supports them.

Mellers looks to the word *plantine* from the title as one avenue of interpretation. "Perhaps Couperin also regards *plantine* as an adjective fabricated from *plante*, for the piece slowly unfolds like a flower. This again would be a musical pun on the lady's character."<sup>11</sup> According to Clark and Connon's in-depth study of the titles, as well as others such as David Fuller, Couperin regularly built his titles as wordplays (typical to the wit and art of arranging words that characterize the galant style) so that multiple meanings — literal, satirical, or metaphorical — can underscore the activity of the music.<sup>12</sup> The reciprocal relationship is also possible. Meller's view of the word *plantine*, then, is certainly a viable interpretation. The motion of the figuration in the melody and inner voices, which alternates gestures in a rhythmic canon, can be heard as an aural representation similar to that of a flower unfolding as it blooms. Perhaps Couperin knew his muse and watched her "blossom" into a fine performer and composer. There is another piece from Couperin's collection that is named specifically for a flower blooming — *Les Lis naissans* — The Birth of or the Budding Lilies from the thirteenth *ordre*. Though there are other connotations associated with the title *Les Lis* than purely a budding flower (discussed at greater length in Chapter V of this dissertation), aspects of the piece such as the figuration, pacing, and register, are quite different than in *La Muse*—

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 425.

<sup>12</sup> My thanks to Marc Vanscheeuwijck for his insights on this topic of "wit" as an important part of the galant style and court culture in France.

*Plantine*. As such, the affect and sense of motion are as well. However, Meller's reading is one to consider.

*Plantine* could also relate to "plaint[e]" — a lament or complaint. This play-on-words connects Couperin's use of the lamento tetrachord pattern that forms the basic structure of the opening passage to the plaintive or wistful qualities of this piece. The lamento pattern, in a non-characteristic setting, evokes not a representation of death or sorrow for the loss of someone, as with a posthumous homage, but rather something with a bit more satire associated with it. Perhaps de la Plante herself was one to protest or complain and the pattern represents that quality of her personality.

Another avenue for interpretation would be to look to the word "muse". As a noun, muse refers to a subject or idea that serves as artistic inspiration. Following Mellers' lead of considering different forms of words as a method to connect the title with the subject that inspired the musical portrait, muse as verb can offer additional associations and meanings for pattern behavior in the piece. The verb *muser* means to idle or to dawdle along. The expressions of ambiguity and constant motion (or movement to a fro) we experience can be mapped onto ideas such as somebody wasting time — spinning their wheels and getting nowhere (activity with no results) — or laziness, inactivity, or even procrastination. This is possibly a character assessment of Mademoiselle de la Plante: Couperin could have been unimpressed with her skills. In fact, a synonymous verb, *musarder*, incorporates the meaning to waste one's time.

The expression of *La Muse-Plantine*, however, is not one that is necessarily negative — there is a relaxed sense of motion associated with the piece. Other mappings

could relate to more positive connotations such as somebody strolling along, ambling down a path as represented by the predictable descent of the tetrachord with no sense of urgency in their step. To “muse” can also mean to meditate on something, or to focus — which can enhance our mappings as well. The affect of constant motion could represent the mulling over of ideas or contemplation. Additionally, the form of the piece itself is a *rondeau*, meaning that we always return to the same passage — we reflect upon, contemplate, and mull over the material again and again. The form itself, then, can be heard as a metaphor for reflection as well.

By application of the synthetic methodology presented in the previous chapter, the first two analyses in this chapter demonstrate how different patterns can give rise to multiple possible meanings in Couperin’s pieces, which can be heard as metaphorically representing his evocative titles. A comparative analysis of two short opening passages from different pieces will serve as the final portion of this chapter. This comparison will illustrate how the same pattern vocabulary in two different pieces and contexts can engender different affects and meanings that are further supported by association with the titles and subjects.

### **Same Patterns, Different Contexts, Different Meanings: The Lord and The Butterfly**

The opening measures of Couperin’s *La Milordine* (1<sup>st</sup> *ordre*) and of *Les Papillons* (2<sup>nd</sup> *ordre*) are reproduced below as **Examples 3.11a** and **b**. The harmonic rhythm at the measure-to-measure level is the same in both of these pieces. Each begins on the chord of the home key (I), moves to the chord of the fifth (V), and then resolves (I)

Gracieusement et légèrement



The musical score for Example 3.11a is written in 12/8 time. The treble staff begins with a quarter note G4, followed by eighth notes A4, B4, and C5, then a quarter note B4, eighth notes A4 and G4, and finally a quarter note F4. The bass staff starts with a quarter rest, followed by eighth notes G3, F3, and E3, then a quarter note D3, eighth notes C3 and B2, and finally a quarter note A2. The piece concludes with a quarter note G4 in the treble and a quarter note F3 in the bass.

**Example 3.11a.** *La Milordine*, m. 0–2, 1<sup>st</sup> ordre (1713/16), F. Couperin

Tres légèrement



The musical score for Example 3.11b is written in 6/16 time. The treble staff begins with a quarter note G4, followed by eighth notes A4, B4, and C5, then a quarter note B4, eighth notes A4 and G4, and finally a quarter note F4. The bass staff starts with a quarter rest, followed by eighth notes G3, F3, and E3, then a quarter note D3, eighth notes C3 and B2, and finally a quarter note A2. The piece concludes with a quarter note G4 in the treble and a quarter note F3 in the bass.

**Example 3.11b.** *Les Papillons*, m. 1–3, 2<sup>nd</sup> ordre (1713/16), F. Couperin

at the next downbeat to complete the gesture. This type of motion within a phrase opening is common in this repertoire. However, closer inspection reveals further similarities that may not be immediately apparent — these two openings use the same pattern vocabulary. But they are not, however, identical in every way, and yet their similarities and their differences can illuminate the role of pattern and meaning. Their similarities involve overlapping pattern vocabulary at the varying levels of structure. Their differences involve differences in patterns, and also to the contexts in which the overlapping pattern vocabulary appears. Those differences contribute to the expression of distinct qualities of motion, and with that, the expression of different metaphorical meanings.

*La Milordine: General Observations and Pattern*

*La Milordine*, a brisk piece in 12/8, can be heard as expressing a graceful and light sense of motion, with a distinct “dance-like” quality. As shown in **Example 3.12d**, the bass line begins on G ( $\hat{1}$ ), and, with the exception of the initial skip of a third between the first and second beats of the opening measure, it descends in stepwise motion through these opening measures to conclude on G an octave below at the downbeat of measure three. A tenor voice, acting as a compound melody with the bass line, begins on  $\hat{5}$  and descends in syncopation, and in many cases in 7—6 suspensions with the bass. This relationship is illustrated in **Example 3.12c**. The melody, beginning with a pick-up on  $\hat{5}$  (D) that then leaps to  $\hat{1}$  (G), is predominantly a combination of upper- and lower-neighbor figures, and figures that move by step. There are two instances, however, where

the melody includes leaps in figurations — in measure zero, second beat and measure one, fourth beat — and one situation in which two otherwise conjunct figures are combined by small leaps — measure one between beats two and three.

The image displays a musical score for Example 3.12a-d, consisting of four systems (a, b, c, d) of notation. System a shows a treble and bass staff with the annotation "Meyer Melody 1-7-4-3 over 1-5-1 Bass". System b shows treble and bass staves with annotations: "Embedded Do-Re-Mi (in Bold)", "Embedded Sol-Fa-Mi", and "Embedded Jupiter 1-2-4-3 over 1-5-1 (in Bold)". System c shows treble and bass staves with annotations: "Elided Pattern", "Repeated Elided Pattern", "Phrygian Riposte", and "Phrygian Resolution Between Stage 1 and 2". System d shows a single staff with the tempo marking "Gracieusement et légèrement". The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and fingerings.

**Example 3.12a–d.** *La Milordine*, m. 0–2, 1<sup>st</sup> ordre (1713/16), F. Couperin

As with the bass and tenor voices, the general contour and direction of the melody descends over the course of these opening measures and concludes on  $\hat{b}3$ . The overriding

sense of motion for this piece is smooth, with a bit of punctuation (particularly between the bass and tenor) that definitely can be heard as dance-like — graceful and easy, but with some added liveliness often associated with pieces in compound meter. There is also a consistent, downward direction among the three voices, emphasized particularly by the drive for resolution of the suspensions between the bass and tenor voices. In fact, the outer voices themselves, close to the surface of the music, have a first-species underlying structure that descends in dotted-quarter durations — almost in an exact canon — as shown in **Example 3.12c**. The bass descends G–Eb–D–C–Bb–A–G, while the melody descends G–G–F#–(Eb)–D–C–Bb. The three voices gently lilt along a descending path that begins on  $\hat{1}$  in both the melody and bass, and ends on  $\hat{1}$  in the bass supporting  $\hat{3}$  in the melody to conclude the larger gesture.

These general qualities of motion associated with this piece appear appropriate to a dance. According to Mellers, *La Milordine* “is in the style of a Corellian, English-style gigue.”<sup>13</sup> Mellers, Clark, David Tunley, and Philippe Beaussant all point to the exiled English court as having inspired this composition along with several others within Couperin’s *Pièces de Clavecin*.<sup>14</sup> Apparently, Couperin had significant exposure to the exiled Stuart court of James II, which Louis XIV housed in his own palace of Saint-Germain-en-Laye.<sup>15</sup> *La Milordine* is likely a “tip of the hat” to Couperin’s association

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<sup>13</sup> Mellers, *François Couperin*, 383.

<sup>14</sup> See *Ibid.*; Clark and Connon, *Mirror*, 48–49; Philippe Beaussant, *François Couperin* (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1990), 226; and David Tunley, *François Couperin and ‘The Perfection of Music’* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 42.

<sup>15</sup> Couperin’s contact with the Stuart court is well documented. See *Ibid.*

with this group of English royals and nobles. Perhaps *La Milordine* is a reference to the generic title of an English nobleman — “Milord” — and he uses a gigue in the English style to depict this association. The rhythmic interaction between the bass and tenor lines contribute specifically to a motion that could be heard metaphorically as skipping or prancing — a physical motion that is in keeping with a dance, but when considering the title “Milord”, we can extend those associations to a bowing or nodding gesture: a physical gesture performed to acknowledge a gentleman or a person of higher rank.

Consider again the first few measures of *La Milordine* in **Example 3.12d**.

At the deepest level of structure in **Example 3.12a**, a single, larger measure-to-measure pattern — Gjerdingen’s Meyer schema — is organized by other smaller patterns to accommodate the motion between individual stages at the surface of the music. The Meyer schema is one of several “turn-like” patterns within Gjerdingen’s collection, and is typically constructed of two stages. The first moves  $\hat{1}-\hat{7}$  in the melody over  $\hat{1}-\hat{2}$  in the bass, followed by a second stage that moves  $\hat{4}-\hat{3}$  in the melody over  $\hat{7}-\hat{1}$  in the bass. A variant of the pattern substitutes  $\hat{5}$  in the bass for either  $\hat{2}$ , or  $\hat{7}$ , or both, to represent the move to the dominant.

While the Meyer can be heard as organizing the larger phrase unit, these opening measures can be heard as a set of embedded patterns at a variety of different levels that progress through the measure-to-measure structure. One pattern occurs at virtually the surface of the music, and is the canon between the outer voices previously described, and appears in **Example 3.12c**. A second moves from the opening chord, with  $\hat{1}$  in both the bass and melody lines, to the second stage of the larger organizing pattern at the

downbeat of measure two that takes us to  $\hat{5}$ , also appearing at **3.12c**. This pattern is a non-standard version of the familiar Phrygian tetrachord descent. It begins on  $\hat{1}$  in the bass, skips down to  $b\hat{6}$ , which supports the  $\hat{1}$  in the melody, and then resolves at the downbeat of measure one, sounding  $\hat{5}$  and  $\hat{7}$  in the bass and melody respectively. Another pattern connects the chord of the fifth at the downbeat of measure one with its resolution on the downbeat of the following measure via a pattern that Gjerdingen calls a Prinner Riposte schema, ending on  $\hat{1}$  in the bass and  $b\hat{3}$  in the melody. This Prinner is bracketed at level **3.12c**, but also acts as an elaboration of another pattern that appears at level **3.12b** — the embedded Sol–Fa–Mi descending third that concludes the larger gesture. A related turn figure called the Jupiter — the salient melodic features include  $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\hat{4}-b\hat{3}$  can be heard at level **3.12b**, which highlights the presence of  $\hat{2}$  as part of another series of patterns that are related to the Do–Re–Mi ( $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-b\hat{3}$ ) schema that can be heard at level **3.12c** as part of the melodic elaboration. All of these patterns participate within the larger organizing unit of the Meyer in the opening of *La Milordine*, and contribute to the qualities of motion for a gigue that can be heard as evoking meanings associated with an English “Milord”.

The bass line at the measure-to-measure level moves  $\hat{1}-\hat{5}-\hat{1}$  in *La Milordine*: what Gjerdingen considers a variant to the bass motion of the Meyer. At times  $\hat{7}$  or  $\hat{2}$  is replaced by  $\hat{5}$  in the central stage of the pattern to support the melody. This bass movement in *La Milordine* is quite clear. However, the melodic motion of this gambit in *La Milordine* requires explanation as it participates in the hearing of a variety of different embedded melodic patterns over the course of these measures. The first stage of the

Meyer begins in measure “zero” on beat two (a fully participating anacrusis, not acting as a pick-up but as a fundamental component of the piece) with scale degree  $\hat{1}$  in both voices as illustrated in **Example 3.12c**. After the pick-up on  $\hat{5}$ , the melody proceeds in two elided three-note patterns that cross beats two and three of the measure: a lower-neighbor figure  $G-F\#-G$  ( $\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}$ ) followed by an ascending third  $G-A-Bb$  ( $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-b\hat{3}$ ), as illustrated in **Example 3.12c**. These patterns do two things: first, they clearly and stably establish the first stage of the structural Meyer gambit; and second; with their smooth contour and elided succession, they clearly establish a graceful musical motion analogous to a graceful physical motion in keeping with the dance-like quality of this piece.

Musical forces can be heard as acting on this pair of elided patterns. The leap up between the pick-up and the first structural melodic voice ( $\hat{5}-\hat{1}$ ) is followed by a step in the opposite direction from  $\hat{1}$  to  $\hat{7}$  in the melody — a response analogous to a physical gesture of leaping and then stepping back after that leap is complete. Musical magnetism guides the resolution of this half step back up to the closest stable scale degree  $\hat{1}$  to complete the three-note pattern, as shown in **Example 3.12c**. Inertia, then, can be heard as guiding the continued ascent up to  $b\hat{3}$ , which then breaks off from  $Bb$  ( $b\hat{3}$ ) to skip down to the  $G$  ( $\hat{1}$ ) on the last eighth note of the measure to confirm the first stage of the larger measure-to-measure pattern and to prepare for the second stage that occurs on the downbeat of the first full measure.

The melody continues moving down to  $F\#$  ( $\hat{7}$ ), which represents the second melodic stage of the Meyer. What follows in the melody is an ascent from  $F\#$ , to  $G$ , and

then to A, which then breaks from the A to leap down to D ( $\hat{5}$ ) After the break in figuration, the A is the note we can hear as “hanging” throughout the entire measure until it is re-articulated an octave below on the last eighth note of measure one. The A, then, can be heard in two ways. The first way is to hear the A as participating in a repetition of the series of the elided three-note patterns that begin *La Milordine* ( $\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}-\hat{2}-b\hat{3}$ ) in measure zero. In this hearing, the first measure serves as  $\hat{1}$ . The second measure moves down to  $\hat{7}$  on the downbeat that resolves back up to  $\hat{1}$  to continue its ascent to  $\hat{2}$ . The melody completes its ascent to  $b\hat{3}$  through a *descending* Prinner Riposte. This set of patterns occurs over the course of the three measures to conclude in measure three, labeled as “Repeated Elided Pattern” (with circles around melodic pitches) in **Example 3.12c**. The second way to hear the A is as participating at a deeper level of structure in an embedded Jupiter figure, labeled as “Embedded Jupiter  $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}$ ” in **Example 3.12b**. The Jupiter is also a “relation” in the family of “turn figures” described by Gjerdingen, of which the Meyer is a part. Underneath this “hanging” A, another melodic pattern descends beginning on  $\hat{5}$  — a pattern I will touch on shortly.

In **Example 3.12c**, the bass pattern that supports the melodic motion over these two stages is a non-traditional presentation of a familiar Phrygian descent. The bass begins on  $\hat{1}$  but bypasses the lowered seventh scale degree  $b\hat{7}$ , skips directly to  $b\hat{6}$ , and then resolves down by half step to  $\hat{5}$  — which can be heard as responding strongly to musical magnetism and inertia — at the downbeat of measure two. We can imagine that Couperin might have chosen to omit the  $b\hat{7}$  because of the lower-neighbor leading tone in

the melody above it, to avoid highlighting a cross-relation between the two scale degrees. This skip between  $\hat{1}$  and  $b\hat{6}$  in the bass solves this. The  $b\hat{6}$  supports the  $\hat{1}$  in the melody, which then resolves down to  $\hat{5}$  in the bass at the downbeat of the first full measure and supports the  $\hat{7}$  in the melody at the surface of the music. These parallel thirds emphasize the hearing that this motion is a modified Phrygian descent that moves from the chord of the tonic, passes through the “imagined” lowered seventh degree, the articulated lowered sixth degree, to resolve by half step down on scale degree five to complete the gesture. At a deeper level of structure (**Example 3.12a**) the bass, moving  $\hat{1}$  to  $\hat{5}$ , supports the melody, moving  $\hat{1}$  to  $\hat{2}$ .

While the second stage of the larger gambit is prolonged in **Example 3.12c**, another pattern connects this second stage to that of the third by descending in both the melody and bass voices. In measure one, the bass moves from scale degree  $\hat{5}$  to scale degree  $\hat{1}$  by step. The melody, as the structural A remains “hanging”, leaps down to D to begin its descent with an upper-neighbor pattern ( $\hat{5}-b\hat{6}-\hat{5}$ ). The melody then continues to move by step to C ( $\hat{4}$ ) and back up to D ( $\hat{5}$ ) creating an expectation (via musical inertia) that the same figuration will continue as  $\hat{4}-\hat{5}-\hat{4}$ . However, this is not what occurs. Rather than concluding an upper-neighbor figure on  $\hat{4}$ , the melody breaks once again on D ( $\hat{5}$ ) and leaps down to the A ( $\hat{2}$ ), an octave below the “hanging” A from earlier in the measure. This A then resolves up by step to  $b\hat{3}$  at the downbeat of the following measure. At a deeper level of structure, the descent in the melody starting on  $\hat{5}$  after the leap down

from A — can be heard as two elided patterns:  $\hat{5}-\hat{b6}-\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{b3}$ , as shown in **Example 3.12c**. At an even deeper level of structure, this five-note group can be heard as a three-note pattern:  $\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{b3}$ , or D–C–Bb, as show in **Example 3.12b** labeled as Sol–Fa–Mi. As this three-note pattern in the melody descends, the bass supports it by moving in parallel tenths —  $\hat{b3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$  or Bb–A–G — to its resolution on the downbeat of measure two.

This pair of descending voices participates in what Gjerdingen calls a Prinner Riposte at the surface of the music (labeled at level **c** of **Example 3.12**), and acts as an elaboration to the Sol–Fa–Mi that occurs at deeper level. By definition, a Prinner schema descends  $\hat{6}-\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}$  in the melody over  $\hat{4}-\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$  in the bass. According to Gjerdingen, the Prinner “was often used as the riposte or answer to an opening gambit...the presence of a Prinner riposte is one of the best indications of a musical style grounded in the Italian galant.”<sup>16</sup> One of its functions is to close a phrase unit in response to an opening gesture of some sort. In Couperin’s setting, the  $\hat{6}$  in the melody does not align specifically with the  $\hat{4}$  in the bass, however, melodically the descent from  $\hat{6}$  is present at the surface of the music as an elaboration of a voice-leading descent of  $\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{b3}$  — or Sol–Fa–Mi (me) — that is present at a deeper level of structure.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, the surrounding events — the hallmark close of  $\hat{3}$  in the melody and  $\hat{1}$  in the bass (having approached by step) are

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<sup>16</sup> Robert O. Gjerdingen, *Music in the Galant Style* (New York: Oxford, 2007), 455.

<sup>17</sup> Gjerdingen illustrates examples that he calls “Prinners” where the melodic portion is the only part of the schema present. At times the melody can appear over a cadential bass, or as a hexachord descent in the melody over different bass lines as part of an embedded pattern or as part of a tonic pedal. These examples suggest that the melodic contour is a defining feature of the schema. For examples, see *Ibid.*, Chapter 3, 43 (Ex. 3.5: Castrucci, Opus 2, no. 4, mvt. 1, Andante); Chapter 9, 121 (Ex. 9.14: Insanguine, sofeggio nos. 10-12); Chapter 9, 123 (Ex. 9.15: Aprile, solfeggio, MS fol. 40v, Larghetto, m. 1 [ca. 1780s?]).

present. In his description of the schema, Gjerdingen mentions that often a “high  $\hat{2}$ ” is inserted in the melody, leaping up between the  $\hat{4}$  and the  $\hat{3}$ , to emphasize the close. In Couperin’s *La Milordine*, there is no “high  $\hat{2}$ ”. Rather there is a “low  $\hat{2}$ ” that functions in much the same way, and structurally, it is a register transfer of the second stage of an embedded melodic Do–Re–Mi gambit that is prolonged over the course of this measure, as illustrated by the circles in the melody of **Example 3.12c**. Although the conclusion of the pattern in measure three is an octave lower than our “hanging” A, we hear the move to Bb, or  $b\hat{3}$ , as the resolution of our structural pattern. The structural resolution of the Meyer, however, comes from the “Fa”, or  $\hat{4}$ , in Sol–Fa–Mi embedded within the Prinner Riposte at the end of measure one. This resolution completes both the smaller embedded patterns of the middleground levels as well as the larger unit of the Meyer schema, as shown in deeper level of structure in **Example 3.12a**. The descending pattern acts as a transfer of register.

The breaks in the surface of the melody of *La Milordine* underscore and complement the “skipping” motion in which the bass and tenor voices interact as they descend through the opening gambit. In fact, the structural Meyer pattern itself is a “skip”, moving from  $\hat{1}$  to  $\hat{7}$  but then leaping up to  $\hat{4}$  to resolve on  $\hat{3}$ , skipping over scale degree  $\hat{2}$  completely. These motions can metaphorically map onto the associations we have established with the title: an English lord, perhaps skilled in dance (hence the gigue and the overall dance like quality of motion) skips about and bows his way around France. As Clark states, “when Couperin’s carefully marked fingering is observed this

proud young man struts along in his new Parisian finery.’<sup>18</sup> Not only does Couperin’s fingering underscore this image, but the pattern usage does as well.

*Les Papillons: General Observations and Patterns*

While *La Milordine* dances gracefully, *Les Papillons*, in **Example 3.13d**, flutters breathlessly. *Les Papillons*, or Butterflies, like *La Milordine*, is in a compound meter, but

The musical score for *Les Papillons*, measures 1-3, 2<sup>nd</sup> order, by F. Couperin, is presented in four systems (a, b, c, d). The piece is in 6/8 time. System a shows a vocal line with notes labeled 'Sol-Fa-Mi' and fingerings 5, 4, 3. System b shows a piano accompaniment with complex fingering and a '5 4 5' pattern. System c shows a piano accompaniment with an 'Embedded Meyer Melody with 5 Substituted for 4' and a 'Phrygian Resolution Between Stage 1 and 2'. System d shows a piano accompaniment with the instruction 'Tres légèrement' and fingerings 1, 2, 3.

**Example 3.13a–d.** *Les Papillons*, m. 1–3, 2<sup>nd</sup> ordre (1713/16), F. Couperin

<sup>18</sup> Clark and Connon, *Mirror*, 48.

in a very fast 6/16 rather than 12/8. It can be heard as expressing a state of motion that can be described as breathless or fluttering. With the exception of the momentary stepwise ascent in the bass in measure two, both the bass and melody move almost exclusively by leap. The voices follow a general contour of a leap down, followed by a step or half step up. In the melody, that step up is followed by another a leap up, while in the bass that step up is followed by a leap down. The motion is overwhelmingly disjunct. A result of this motion is a compound melodic structure in both voices.

Leaps create multiple voice-leading strands that can be heard as operating simultaneously. The bass line, for example, which begins on D ( $\hat{1}$ ), leaps down a fourth to the A below ( $\hat{5}$ ) and then steps up to Bb ( $b\hat{6}$ ). The leaps split the voices: one voice line begins on D ( $\hat{1}$ ) and another begins on A ( $\hat{5}$ ). The next leap between Bb ( $b\hat{6}$ ) and a third below on G ( $\hat{4}$ ) continues these two voice strands. These leaps in the bass are analogous to the leaps between the bass and tenor voices in the opening measure of *La Milordine*. In “Milord”, the bass articulates G ( $\hat{1}$ ) and the tenor articulates D ( $\hat{5}$ ) a fifth above. In *Les Papillons*, one voice-leading strand of the bass articulates D ( $\hat{1}$ ) while the second articulates the A ( $\hat{5}$ ) a fourth below. The next beat does the something similar: *Les Papillons* — Bb ( $b\hat{6}$ ) down a third to G ( $\hat{4}$ ); *La Milordine* — Eb ( $b\hat{6}$ ) up a sixth to C ( $\hat{4}$ ). The intervallic relationship of these gestures between the two pieces is inverted.

In *Les Papillons*, a compound melodic structure in the bass creates two voice strands — a bass and a tenor. The same observation can be made about the melody. Its constant leaps create several voices as well: one, for example begins on the high A ( $\hat{5}$ ),

hovers above the other voices, and moves A–G–A ( $\hat{5}$ – $\hat{4}$ – $\hat{5}$ ) in measures one and two. The general contour of this entire passage is shaped similarly to a “butterfly”. Looking from left to right at **Example 3.13d**, both the melody and the bass begin “up” in measure one. Through leaps down and steps back up, both voices settle at the lower point of their contour in measure two. The voices then begin to move “up” again to complete the three-measure opening. In fact, the individual melodic figuration (leap down/step up), as well as the melodic contour of the opening passage, can be seen in this light as well, as illustrated by **Figure 3.3** below.

The figure consists of two parts. The upper part is a line diagram representing a melodic contour. It starts with a downward-sloping line, followed by a horizontal line, and then an upward-sloping line. A small V-shaped dip is shown below the first downward slope. The lower part is a musical score for a piano piece in 6/16 time, marked 'Tres légèrement'. The score shows the first three measures of the piece, with a dashed box indicating the first three measures. The melody is in the treble clef and the bass is in the bass clef. The melody starts with a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note D4. The bass starts with a quarter note G2, followed by a quarter note F2, a quarter note E2, and a quarter note D2. The melody and bass move in parallel motion, with the melody always a fourth above the bass.

**Figure 3.3.** “Butterfly” Melodic Contour of *Les Papillons*, m. 1–3, 2<sup>nd</sup> ordre (1713/16), F. Couperin

The prominent sense of motion in *Les Papillons* is irregular, unsteady, and fitful. While there is symmetry in the overall contour of these three measures, the voices dart about, bolting from one figure to the next and we experience little, if any, stability as the

passage progresses from its first pick up on  $\hat{5}$  and  $\hat{2}$  in the melody, to its last event on  $\hat{3}$  over  $\hat{1}$  in the bass to conclude the three-measure gesture.

The states of motion associated with *Les Papillons*, again, appear appropriate for a piece named the Butterflies. However, according to Clark *Les Papillons* is another title with a double meaning for Couperin. “These *papillons* are no more real butterflies than Couperin’s *rossignol* is a real bird or his *moucheron* a real gnat...*papillons* are the diamonds at the ends of pins, which, shaking and throwing out a thousand flames, appear to fly about in our hair.”<sup>19</sup> The energy of this piece is not easy and light — there is an undercurrent of playful tension. With either potential subject, the qualities associated with *Les Papillons* are in keeping with the image of a butterfly flitting about, or the flickering of diamonds in the candlelight, or even, perhaps, the idea of a moth getting too close to the flame. While the two meanings for *papillons* are different — diamond hairpins and butterflies — the qualities and ideas associated with these subjects are similar enough that the word (*papillons*) can be understood as polysemic: a single word that is representative of different ideas.

The absolutely breathless, flitting, constantly moving, and unstable qualities of motion expressed by *Les Papillons*, are rooted in the same overlapping pattern vocabulary as that of the easy, graceful, prancing, and bowing motions expressed by *La Milordine*. This pattern vocabulary can be heard as the descending Sol–Fa–Mi(me) pattern with other embedded patterns to organize its structure. The Sol–Fa–Mi is that pattern that is embedded in *La Milordine*. In *Les Papillons*, it is the larger measure-to-

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<sup>19</sup> Clark and Connon, *Mirror*, 57.

measure pattern. And, while the Meyer is the larger organizing pattern of *La Milordine*, here in *Les Papillons*, a modified version of the Meyer is embedded within the Sol–Fa–Mi. The contextual relationships of the patterns are reversed.

There are also explicit similarities between *La Milordine* and *Les Papillons* with respect to how the piece moves between the first and second stages of the larger structural patterns. Consider the opening measures of *Les Papillons* in **Example 3.13d**. As in *La Milordine*, the bass in *Les Papillons* begins on  $\hat{1}$  (D) at the first stage of the structural gambit. In fact, the bass within the entire first measure to the second stage of the pattern is the same as *La Milordine*. On beat one of the first measure, the bass moves from  $\hat{1}$  to  $\hat{5}$ , though a fourth below instead of a fifth above in the tenor voice as in *Milord*. It then steps up to  $b\hat{6}$  and then skips down to  $\hat{4}$  — again, inverting the relationship between the bass and tenor voices from “*Milord*”. The bass then approaches the second stage of the gambit at the downbeat of measure two on  $\hat{5}$ . This bass pattern possesses the same qualities of the modified Phrygian tetrachord descent from *La Milordine*. The voice “skips over” the lowered seventh scale degree — again, possibly because of the potential cross relation with the melody above it — to sound the lowered sixth degree, which then resolves down to  $\hat{5}$  as the second stage of the gambit. The move between the second stage and the third stage of the pattern is different. *Les Papillons* does not feature an extended Prinner Riposte, but rather, arpeggiates the chord of the fifth degree, ascending by step from  $\hat{5}$  to leap up to  $\hat{1}$  for the third and final stage of the pattern in the bass.

The progression between each of the three stages of the structural Sol–Fa–Mi(me) in the bass is clear, and, as reflected by **Example 3.13b**, is the same as our experience in *La Milordine*, even to the point of identical motion at the surface of the music between the first and second stages of the larger structural pattern (**Example 3.13d and c**), emphasizing a Phrygian resolution to the downbeat of measure two. While these stages are metrically clear in *Les Papillons*, any sense of stability is compromised as the melody is added to the gambit. The constant leaps in the melodic figuration create multiple strands of voices that at any given time can be heard as structurally significant. From the very opening pick up of the descending dyad starting on  $\hat{5}$  and leaping down to  $\hat{2}$ , there is no clear sense of stability in this passage of *Les Papillons*. Both the melody and the bass begin on the downbeat with structurally “stable” notes of  $\hat{3}$  in the melody and  $\hat{1}$  in the bass, but the immediate leap up to  $\hat{5}$  and then down to  $\#\hat{7}$  as the bass then leaps down to  $\hat{5}$ , causes us to question if we have experienced a stable first stage of the opening gambit. The re-articulation of the A ( $\hat{5}$ ) in the melody, starting on the anacrusis and constantly emphasized throughout the passage, can be heard as the first structural melodic note of the overall descending third figure, as illustrated in **Example 3.13c**, while the F participates as an inner voice for this downbeat event.

The first beat of measure one can be heard as representing multiple chords — the initial D chord, and then the A chord as the bass and melody leap away to articulate the fifth and the raised seventh scale degrees. In *La Milordine*, the first stage of the opening schema incorporated a leading tone as well, however it was part of a lower-neighbor figure, which resolved back to  $\hat{1}$  as the tenor highlighted  $\hat{5}$ . At no point did we experience

“leaving” the stable first stage of the pattern. In *Les Papillons*, the D articulated over the Bb in the bass on the second beat of measure one — although part of the G minor chord — is the first moment we experience a momentary “sense of Do”. It is approached by — after a series of leaps — the leading tone below, emphasizing that hearing. At a middleground level that D can be heard as the first note of an embedded Meyer, as illustrated in level **3.13c**. The delay of that arrival enhances our experience of instability (as does the chromatic inflection of B natural within beat two of measure one) and contributes to the overall mobility, flitting, and flickering quality of *Les Papillons*. This is also the beginning second structural stage of the Sol–Fa–Mi(me) descend, as the melodic figure leaps up, not to A, but to G, which serves as the Fa or  $\hat{4}$  in the measure-to-measure descending third schema. This Fa “hanging” above the beginning of the embedded Meyer, sounds throughout the entire measure and persists as the pattern’s second melodic stage.

The second stage of *Les Papillons* is arguably the most stable of the three. The entire second measure prolongs the chord of the fifth and features the one moment in this excerpt where we have stepwise motion as opposed to constant leaps. Melodically, the second stage arrives on  $\hat{7}$  just as in *La Milordine*, to complement the Phrygian approach to stage two in the bass. At this moment, it can be heard as representing the second stage of the embedded Meyer (**Example 3.13c**). In this measure, we would expect a re-articulation of the Fa, or  $\hat{4}$  to resolve to  $b\hat{3}$  to complete the pattern. In *Les Papillons*, however, that  $\hat{4}$  is replaced by a  $\hat{5}$  — a more erratic solution that is in keeping with the expression of the subjects and associated meanings. The embedded Meyer, then, is

modified, but still an important middleground pattern to the larger structural Sol–Fa–Mi(me). The final resolution to the third stage occurs on the downbeat of the third measure on F to conclude both the larger measure-to-measure pattern, as well as the middleground Meyer pattern at the structural alto level.

The expression of *La Milordine* and *Les Papillons* is very different, yet the pieces share structural qualities that are contextualized in different ways to give rise to different qualities of motion and affect. In *La Milordine*, the structural Meyer is constructed of a variety of other embedded patterns, one of which is the Sol–Fa–Mi. In *Les Papillons*, the structural Sol–Fa–Mi is constructed of an embedded Meyer. In addition, these two pieces share surface level similarities in the manner they move between the first and second stages of their individual organizing schema. These pieces are both similar and different. Their similarities relate to overlapping pattern vocabulary. Their differences relate to both different patterns as well as to the context in which their overlapping pattern vocabulary appears. It is the context of that pattern, the figurations in the voices (the conjunct versus disjunct motion in the melody and bass lines at the surface of the music), as well as the timing of the arrival of structural elements that contribute specifically to the different expressions of motion in these pieces. In turn, these different expressions metaphorically map onto different ideas related to the subjects and titles. The same pattern, then, can be contextualized to represent — and to *mean* — different things. The analyses presented in this chapter, then, respect and explain the similarities as well as the differences between these two pieces.

### Summary: Multiple Mappings, Multiple Meanings

The analysis of these four examples using the synthetic methodology developed in Chapter II illuminates various connections between pattern and meaning in Couperin's musical portraits. In the first two analyses, *La Florentine* and *La Muse-Plantine*, it is clear that multiple metaphorical mappings for the different qualities of motion, affect, and expression are possible. The opening of each piece is constructed from a different familiar pattern: *La Florentine*, constructed from Gjerdingen's Do-Re-Mi, perhaps summons associations with its Italian roots and stutters along constantly, evoking associations that can be heard as blathering speech or physical clumsiness; *La Muse-Plantine* constructed from the chromatic lamento tetrachord, summons not the affect of sadness and grief typically associated with the lamento bass, but rather meandering and idling qualities of motion that seem more contemplative and "musing". In each of these pieces, it is the manner in which the patterns are situated and manipulated that gives rise to different metaphorical meanings. The more we learn about the title and subject of each piece, the richer these mappings become.

Rooted in the same pattern language of embedded and structural schema, both *La Milordine* — the bowing, prancing, preening, or graceful English Lord, and *Les Papillons* — the breathless flickering of diamond hairpins (or butterflies), express different qualities of motion and associated meanings. A single pattern vocabulary can express different meanings in different contexts, suggesting that no single pattern gives rise to the same meaning in every application. In the case studies that follow, the connection between musical pattern and meaning will be further developed, positively reinforcing

the claims that the same pattern can have multiple meanings within a single context.

Additionally, analyses will reveal that the same and/or related pattern vocabulary among a body of pieces can engender different meanings based upon both the different contextual settings of that same pattern, and also the pattern's relationship to a larger narrative structure.

## CHAPTER IV

CASE STUDY I: *LES FOLIES FRANÇOISES OU LES DOMINOS*

*Our music, whether it be for violin, harpsichord, viol or any other instrument, always seems to want to express some sentiment.<sup>1</sup>*

François Couperin

One of the most persuasive and clear expressions of a subject or a sentiment in Couperin's harpsichord piece is his collection of musical portraits *Les Folies françaises, ou les Dominos* (13<sup>th</sup> ordre). The French Follies (Delights), or the Dominoes (Cloaks or Robes) from Book Three of his harpsichord collection (1722), is a set of theme and variations based upon a sixteen-bar ground bass similar to the popular *La Folia* (*La Follia*) pattern.<sup>2</sup> The multi-movement structure of *Les Folies* — each of which is named for an emotion or state-of-being — is one of only a handful in Couperin's entire output for harpsichord. Its format provides an ideal context for the comparison and investigation of pattern-based behavior and musical expression within a single unfolding narrative. Moreover, the richness of Couperin's subjects exemplifies how a network of metaphorical mappings is possible — and even necessary — for relating musical activity to a variety of complex emotions, ideas, meanings, and experiences.

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<sup>1</sup> François Couperin, quoted by David Tunley, *François Couperin and 'The Perfection of Music'* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 109.

<sup>2</sup> Here I acknowledge both spellings for the name of the pattern as well as for the tradition in general. *La Folia* is appropriate in Spanish and Portuguese, while *La Follia* is the Italian spelling. Regardless of the different influences from different traditions on Couperin's collection, from here forward I will use the commonly accepted spelling 'La Folia' without italics, and either with or without the definite article as appropriate to refer to the tradition and pattern.

To examine this evolving musical language and associated affect, this chapter will first briefly summarize the background of the folia genre — a compositional idiom that yielded countless examples from composers starting as early as the fifteenth century. This will situate Couperin's setting within the context of the folia's early Portuguese heritage, as well as the later tradition common to Italy and France. It is not the purpose of this chapter to compare Couperin's *Les Folies françoises* with any one version of La Folia, or to draw conclusions of musical influence on his setting. Rather, I wish to illustrate connections between his setting and the essence of earlier traditions, which will lead to a detailed discussion of *Les Folies* — its narrative context and associated titles. This demonstrates that Couperin's iteration of the folia deftly engages the theatrical spirit of earlier traditions along with the singularly French *fêtes galantes* — and quite possibly the Italian *commedia dell'arte* — to underscore the potential meanings of his collection. A comparative examination of musical pattern and gesture in the theme and select variations follows, suggesting that patterns — and how they persist, change, are ordered, and timed — can inform our understanding of musical expression and affect. Cognitive metaphor theory, then, provides the method by which we can explain how pattern behavior can so effectively map onto a variety of ideas and concepts that give meaning, or meanings, to Couperin's pieces. This analysis reveals that, within the framework of a theme and variation structure, similar — or even the same — patterns can take on different meanings in different settings. Additionally, these patterns and their associated expressions can take on more specific metaphoric representations when the context of the narrative whole is considered, and more particularly, when they are related to Couperin's

evocative titles. Further relating pattern behavior to external ideas induced by the subjects suggests more revealing interpretations for some of the most engaging musical portraits within Couperin's entire harpsichord collection.

According to Philippe Beaussant, Couperin, by composing *Les Folies*, consciously engaged in a particularly well-established and respected compositional practice. In fact, Beaussant states that the composer's setting from book three of *Les Pièces de Clavecin* (1722) is the composer's French response to the long-standing Spanish and Italian tradition that dates back to the fifteenth century.

Thus, through a curious process of evolution, the *folia* became, to the public, the most popular and yet the most hackneyed type of air, and to the musician, the symbol of a work in which a master composer set forth...his *message*, that is to say, what he believed to be his most unique and valuable contribution. At precisely this moment, Couperin entered the fray with that half-smile of his, pretending he had not changed the *folia* in the slightest and saying, "After all these *Folies d'Espagne*, here are the *Folies françaises*..." It took its place at a precise point in the history of music alongside and in opposition to other works.<sup>3</sup>

This collection of variations is one of Couperin's most well-known harpsichord compositions. Moreover, the above comments suggest that Couperin thought of this small collection as an opportunity, or vehicle, to demonstrate his originality and skill as a composer and portraitist, by exploiting a familiar genre that is based upon a somewhat defined compositional framework.

As such fertile ground for investigating Couperin's expressive abilities, surprisingly few writers have discussed *Les Folies françaises*. Those who have make only cursory mention of the variations either during broader discussions of Couperin, or

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<sup>3</sup> Philippe Beaussant, *François Couperin* (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1990), 291–292.

of eighteenth-century keyboard music in general. David Tunley comments on the variations purely in terms of formal structure and the ostinato bass cycle, with some allusion to the programmatic titles and associated translations.<sup>4</sup> In their comprehensive study investigating the potential subjects and dedicatees for all of Couperin's harpsichord miniatures, Jane Clark and Derek Connon discuss *Les Folies* within the setting of the entire thirteenth *ordre*. They suggest that *Les Folies* is a part of a political commentary on the Regent, and that the *ordre* as a whole criticizes him for his supposed licentious reputation. Clark and Connon, however, do not discuss any of the variations specifically other than to provide translations for the evocative titles.<sup>5</sup> Wilfrid Mellers and Beussant share more in-depth assessments, providing context and background for the collection, lists of titles and translations, and somewhat poetic descriptions of the individual pieces within the set. These descriptions include statements such as, "variation 4, *Affecteusement*: a long phrase that peacefully unfurls"<sup>6</sup> or "the old, ancient galants and superannuated whores, limp and stomp behind their *Dominos pourpres et feuilles mortes* in a farcical pretence of grandeur."<sup>7</sup>

Observations such as these — both the perfunctory and the more vivid — do contribute to a general understanding of the collection. Yet they do not engage directly with the music itself, with questions pertaining to how Couperin creates his musical

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<sup>4</sup> Tunley, *Perfection of Music*, 109–112.

<sup>5</sup> Jane Clark, *François Couperin Pièces de Clavecin: The Background* (Oxford: University of Oxford, 1992), 14.

<sup>6</sup> Beussant, *François Couperin*, 292.

<sup>7</sup> Mellers, *François Couperin and the French Classical Tradition* (London: Faber and Faber, 1987), 413.

portraits, or more specifically, with how musical material contributes to expression and affect. As variations, each piece of *Les Folies françoises* is based upon the same ostinato bass, melodic framework, and overriding harmonic structure. The pieces combine to create a larger narrative trajectory over which to compare a changing musical expression and affect. As the variations progress, so do the associated affect and expression. Couperin's setting is one of emotional development, and to some extent, disintegration. Each variation is named for a character that symbolically represents a virtue, a vice, or a trait. Beginning with qualities representing innocence and expectation, the characters progress through the narrative and eventually descend into turmoil, embodying the darkest corners of our emotional experiences. What starts as Virginity, Modesty, and Hope, finally deteriorates into Jealousy and Despair. These subjects represent complex ideas and emotions, and, according to Lakoff and Johnson, the more complicated the concept, the more mappings are possible — or even required — to engage the idea. “For a rich and important domain of experience like love, a single conceptual mapping does not do the job of allowing us to reason and talk about the experience of love as a whole. More than one metaphorical mapping is needed.”<sup>8</sup> Understanding the behavior of musical material for each piece over the framework of the variation structure can illuminate how content can metaphorically map onto a variety of meanings. This variety can be both within a single variation, and also across variations; it is possible to interpret similar — if not the same — musical material and patterns as having different meaning or meanings

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<sup>8</sup> George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 71.

depending upon the context of the narrative. How that material is presented, where it occurs over the course of the story, and how it relates to the surrounding pieces, contributes to the individual expression — or as Couperin puts it, the sentiment — of each character as the trajectory unfolds.

### Brief Background of La Folia Tradition

The folia is “a musical framework used during the Baroque period for songs, dances, and sets of variations.”<sup>9</sup> This definition refers to the most well known version of the framework — or pattern — called the “late” folia or *La Folia d’Espagne*, which evolved — and became incredibly popular — during the second half of the seventeenth century. It consists of a sixteen-bar melodic pattern in triple meter with an ostinato bass.

**Example 4.1a**<sup>10</sup> depicts the basic scheme of the melody and bass, along with implied harmonies labeled with modern Roman Numerals below each measure, in the key of G minor — one of the most common keys used for composition. I have also included a version in B minor, **Example 4.1b**, for comparison to Couperin’s chosen key for his setting of *Les Folies*. Its minor mode, moderate tempo, and dotted rhythms were the basis for numerous sensuous and stylized compositions over a cyclic bass, most notably by Corelli, Handel, Vivaldi — and in France — Marais and Lully. Although very refined in this iteration, the folia had a colorful history that has direct bearing on the meaning of Couperin’s setting. Referring specifically to *Les Folies françoises*, Beaussant writes,

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<sup>9</sup> Giuseppe Gerbino and Alexander Silbiger, “Folia,” in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online* <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/09929> (accessed October 20, 2009).

<sup>10</sup> Example 4.1 is based upon ‘late’ folia schema and recreated from Ibid.

“[h]ere the title is intelligible only if one understands the implications of the word folies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.”<sup>11</sup>

The musical score consists of four systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is G minor (two flats) and the time signature is 3/4. Measure numbers 1, 5, 9, and 13 are indicated at the start of each system. Roman numerals for chords are placed below the bass staff of each system.

- System 1 (measures 1-4): i, V, i, VII
- System 2 (measures 5-8): III, VII, i, V
- System 3 (measures 9-12): i, V, i, VII
- System 4 (measures 13-16): III, VII, i, V, i

**Example 4.1a.** Prototypical ‘Late’ Folia Schema in G minor

As a tradition, the folia likely originated from a Portuguese dance, popular in the late-fifteenth century as a theatrical display for special festivals or court activities, which

<sup>11</sup> Beussant, *Couperin* 291.

is relevant to contextualizing Couperin's setting.<sup>12</sup> Early manuscript sources capture texts only for the folia and no music, however several mention the theatrical components of the tradition — performers would both dance and sing as an ensemble, and were “properly dressed”<sup>13</sup> for a performance on stage. The first musical sources did not surface until the

The image displays a musical score for a piece in B minor, 3/4 time, consisting of four systems of music. Each system is written for a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and includes figured bass notation below the notes. The first system (measures 1-4) has figures i, V, i, VII. The second system (measures 5-8) has figures III, VII, i, V. The third system (measures 9-12) has figures i, V, i, VII. The fourth system (measures 13-16) has figures III, VII, i, V, i.

**Example 4.1b.** Prototypical ‘Late’ Folia Schema in B minor

<sup>12</sup> Gerbino and Silbiger, “Folia.”

<sup>13</sup> Vicente in *Triunfo do Inverno* as quoted by Ibid.

late sixteenth century. Though labeled as “folia”, the melodies vary from the more familiar version, the “late” folia as shown in **Example 4.1a–b**. Examples of two different early versions of the melody are recreated as **Examples 4.2a–b** and **4.3a–b**. Again,

The image contains two musical examples, 4.2a and 4.2b, each consisting of a piano accompaniment with a treble and bass clef. The music is in 6/8 time and G minor. Example 4.2a shows a melody with implied harmonies V, i, VII, i, V. Example 4.2b shows a melody with implied harmonies V, i, VII, i, iv, V, i.

**Example 4.2a.** An Early Folia Melody (in tenor) from Salinas, *De musica libri septem* (1577) with Implied Harmonies Realized in G minor

examples appear both in the keys of G minor and B minor and incorporate modern Roman numerals to indicate how the sonorities would potentially have been realized. **Example 4.2** is taken from Francisco de Salinas’s *De musica libre septem* of 1577 (the melody appears in the tenor); and the second, **Example 4.3**, is a typical schema known as

The image displays two staves of musical notation in G minor, 6/8 time. The top staff shows a melody with implied harmonies V, i, VII, i, V. The bottom staff shows the same melody with realized harmonies V, i, VII, i, iv, V, i.

**Example 4.2b.** An Early Folia Melody (in tenor) from Salinas, *De musica libri septem* (1577) with Implied Harmonies Realized in B minor

the “early” folia, popular throughout the first part of the seventeenth century to the early eighteenth century, particularly in Spanish and Portuguese sources.<sup>14</sup>

Though most often in G minor, the [early] folia may be cast in other keys or, rarely, in the major mode; sometimes both major and minor modes alternate within a single statement of the scheme. The structural chords of the folia formula may be reached by way of intermediary chords. Examples of this practice abound in guitar books of the first half of the 17th century.<sup>15</sup>

While it appears there was some flexibility in melodic content, rhythmatization, and inclusion of text for the early folia, the act of varying a theme within a repeating schematic construct remained a central feature of the genre.

<sup>14</sup> Both examples 5.2 and 5.3 are recreated based upon schema from Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

1  
i(I) V i(I) VII

5  
i(I) V

9  
i(I) VII

13  
i(I) V i(I)

17  
ritornelli  
iv(IV) V i(I)

**Example 4.3a.** Schema for the ‘Early’ Folia Melody with Bass and Implied Harmonies in G minor

It was not until the early seventeenth century that commentary appeared to more fully describe the dance’s theatrical underpinnings, and to provide us with a glimpse of another important part of the tradition — the wild nature of the dance.

The few descriptions of the folia dance containing specific references to its performance manner date from the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In 1611 Sebastián de Covarrubias (*Tesoro de la lengua castellana*) described the folia as a

Portuguese dance, very noisy, performed with tambourines and other instruments by disguised street-porters carrying young men in women's clothing on their shoulder. He also explained that the name, which means 'mad' or 'empty-headed', was appropriate because the dance was so fast and noisy that the dancers seemed out of their minds.<sup>16</sup>

This account is not dissimilar to an English masque, Italian intermedio, or even an excerpt from a *commedia dell'arte*, where costumed characters perform a dance and/or drama and behave, at times, in a riotous way.

1  
i (I) v i (I) VII

5  
i (I) v

9  
i (I) VII

13  
i (I) v i (I)

17  
ritornello  
iv (IV) v i (I)

**Example 4.3b.** Schema for the 'Early' Folia Melody with Bass and Implied Harmonies in B minor

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

However, the quality of madness so important to the character of the early folia was not something that persisted as the tradition became more popular and traversed Western Europe — the unrestrained energy became less a factor in its performance. “Like the passacaglia and the sarabande, the folia crossed the Pyrenees and made its way into Baroque Europe, and...as it spread, it became tamer, calmer, more formal, until its only madness was that retained in its title.”<sup>17</sup>

As a more modest interpretation of the dance surfaced in the courts of France, Italy, and England during the seventeenth century, so did a transformed — or alternative — version of the melody, rhythmic patterns, and implied sonorities, as previously shown in **Example 4.1**. It is quite possible that Lully played a significant role in the formalization and dissemination of this new structure in France; one of the earliest examples of the “late” folia schema is one of his airs for oboe dated 1672.<sup>18</sup> Lully, however, likely did not devise this schema independently as a French idiom. Although well beyond the focus of this chapter, the increasing influence and integration of — and perhaps even preference for — Italian styles among French audiences and courtiers (in both music and theater) cannot be overstated. At a minimum, there are clear connections between the guitar compositions of Italian Francesco Corbetta and hallmarks of the “late” folia framework. His emigration to France in 1648 no doubt had some influence on further developments of the schema, and indicates that changes to the framework began

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<sup>17</sup> Beaussant, *Couperin*, 291.

<sup>18</sup> Gerbino and Silbiger, “Folia.”

before Lully's output.<sup>19</sup> However, Lully's enormous political and musical influence undoubtedly helped to perpetuate the "late" folia in France. Though clearly influenced by Italian compositional practice and style, in France, the "late" folia became known as *Folies d'Espagne*.

It would be naïve to suggest that Lully was the single transmitter of this version of the folia schema. For Couperin at least, it is clear that other Italian masters, such as Corelli and Vivaldi — both of whom composed in this genre — held sway over Couperin's stylistic output.<sup>20</sup> But it is this version of the melody that became known to the French master and his contemporaries, which underscored numerous compositions throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. And, it is this stylized, courtly, and somewhat more formalized tradition that serves as the compositional backdrop — and spiritual contrast — to Couperin's setting, *Les Folies françaises ou les Dominos*.

### **Couperin's *Les Folies françaises ou les Dominos***

Couperin's twelve variations follow an emotional and moral narrative. Each piece bears a name for a state-of-being, quality, or virtue, and is enrobed in a cloak — a

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Several authors have commented about the Italian influences on Couperin's music, particularly in regard to his connections with the exiled English court housed at *Saint-Germain-en-Laye*, where Italian music dominated. Couperin named some of his harpsichord pieces as such that his connections with *Saint-Germain* are clear (e.g., *Les Plaisirs de Saint-Germain-en-Laye*, 1<sup>st</sup> ordre). At this court, the young Couperin was exposed to the music of composers such as Vivaldi, Corelli, and Scarlatti. For discussions, see Tunley, *Perfection of Music*; Mellers *François Couperin*; Jane Clark and Derek Connon, *The Mirror of Human Life: Reflections on François Couperin's Pièces de Clavecin* (Huntingdon, England: King's Music, 2002); David Fuller, "Of Portraits, 'Sapho' and Couperin: Titles and Characters in French Instrumental Music of the High Baroque," *Music & Letters* Vol. 78, No. 2 (May, 1997): 149–174; Daniel Hertz, *Music in European Capitals: The Galant Style 1720–1780* (New York: Norton, 2003); and Beaussant, *Couperin*.

domino — of a color that is emblematic of that quality. **Table 4.1** provides the titles and translations for the complete set of variations. The first, Virginité, wears an invisible

**Table 4.1.** Titles and Translations of  
*Les Folies françaises ou les Dominos, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre, Troisième Livre (1722)*  
The French Follies or Dominos (Cloaks)\*\*\*, F. Couperin

<i>La Virginité sous le Domino couleur d'invisible</i>	Virginité wears an invisible cloak*
<i>La Pudeur sous le Domino couleur de Roze</i>	Modesty wears a blushing pink cloak
<i>L'Ardeur sous le Domino incarnat</i>	Ardor wears a flesh-colored cloak
<i>L'Espérance sous le Domino Vert</i>	Hope wears a green cloak
<i>La Fidélité sous le Domino Bleu</i>	Fidelity wears a blue cloak
<i>La Persévérance sous le Domino Gris de lin</i>	Perseverance wears a cloak of flaxen grey (silver)
<i>La Langueur sous le Domino Violet</i>	Languor wears a violet cloak
<i>La Coquetterie sous différents Dominos</i>	Coquetry wears different cloaks
<i>Les Vieux galans et les Trésorières Surannées sous les Dominos Pourpres, et feuilles mortes</i>	The Old Galants and Pensioned-Off Courtesans wear Reddish Purple (crimson) Cloaks and dead leaves (verdigris)
<i>Les Coucous Bénévoles sous des Dominos jaunes</i>	The Benevolent Cuckolds wear yellow cloaks
<i>La Jalousie Taciturne sous le Domino gris de maure</i>	Taciturn Jealousy wears a dark (Moorish) grey cloak**
<i>La Frénésie ou le Désespoir sous le Domino noir</i>	Frenzy or Despair wears a Black cloak

\*Clark's interpretation of invisible differs from mine. She maintains that, "invisible implied someone who was undressing and was unwilling to be seen." See Jane Clark and Derek Connon, *The Mirror of Human Life: Reflections on François Couperin's Pièces de Clavecin* (Huntingdon, England: King's Music, 2002), 82. For Clark, the invisible cloak obscures the wearer. I suggest, however, that, as each of the characters is enrobed in a color that symbolizes their virtue, the robe is essentially the variation on the original theme. It follows that Virginité, as the theme, wears a cloak that is invisible in order to completely expose, in its most clear, and simple form, the musical patterns upon which the rest of the collection is based.

\*\*According to Clark, Moorish grey is "doubtless a reference to the legendary jealousy of Moorish captors of European maidens." See Clark and Connon, *Mirror*, 82.

\*\*\*All translations taken from Jane Clark, *François Couperin Pièces de Clavecin: The Background* (Oxford: University of Oxford, 1992), 14–15, and Clark and Connon, *Mirror*, 82. Words in parentheses represent different and/or more elaborated translations between Clark's two studies.

cloak. Others follow, such as Modesty in blushing pink and Ardor in the color of flesh. Hope wearing green and Fidelity in blue make an appearance, as do the Old Galants and Pensioned-off Courtesans wearing cloaks of crimson and slightly tarnished verdigris. To end the collection, Frenzy and Despair appear in black. Each character represents a point along a trajectory of experience that becomes increasingly tortured and desolate as it progresses. As those virtues move from a state of innocence to that of emotional complexity and disintegration, so do the colors of the cloaks progress from transparency to increased opaqueness.

*Les Folies françoises*, then, with its progression of rich and evocative titles that travel along a path of emotional development, can be thought of as a character-based narrative or musical drama, not unlike the theatrical settings of the earlier folia traditions but without the actual trappings of a stage production. *Les Folies* represents layers of metaphoric association. Each piece is a metaphor for an emotion or virtue, and the collection as a whole is a metaphor for a larger dramatic unit not unlike a play. According to Jane Clark, the complete *treizième ordre*, of which *Les Folies* is part, alludes to the Duke d'Orléans who became Regent after Louis XIV's death. Apparently, his overindulgent ways of living became infamous: "disappointment at being refused the command of an army and the governorships and other offices he had been promised finally led him into dissolute living which he carried to extremes in order to show a contempt for his wife and the King's displeasure."<sup>21</sup> Clark states that *Les Folies* makes

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<sup>21</sup> Saint Simon as quoted by Clark in *François Couperin*, 14.

reference to the Regent's masked balls that took place at the Opera, and that these masques "caused such a scandal they had to be banned."<sup>22</sup>

In one respect, the idea of using the Regent as the subject for pieces that depict the protagonist as having a questionable moral character could be construed as somewhat of a risk. Depending upon the context of the portraiture — for example, if it were deliberately insulting — this might be the case. However, according to Clark, it is clear that, not only was satire in the arts accepted as part of court culture (especially in poetry of the time) it was also expected and considered the norm. "The royal family is not spared by the satirists."<sup>23</sup> She continues, though, by stating that Couperin was more compassionate in his settings. "But Couperin, apart from veiled digs at Madame de Maintenon, is tactful with the members he had to take care with and sympathetic to those whose lives were ruined by the establishment."<sup>24</sup> Perhaps the Regent — who otherwise was well-liked by friends and family — was a person that Couperin viewed as having been victimized in some way, or led down the path of ruin. This adds another dimension to the significance of the variation set. It is not necessarily an insult, but perhaps a sympathetic portrayal. "He [the Regent] is the subject of the whole of the thirteenth *ordre*, one of the most compassionate portraits of human frailty ever created."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Clark, *François Couperin*, 15.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, 17.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

The morally directed characters of Couperin's narrative, symbolically clothed in different colored cloaks and masks, suggest that the composer may have been thinking about this collection as more than a set of stylized dances within a popular variation schema. Perhaps he was calling upon the spirit of the early *folia* — its costumed players dancing with reckless abandon — to make reference to the lasciviousness of current court culture. Regardless, the connections of the early *folia* to theater are clear, and it appears that Couperin was recalling that older meaning — or at a minimum *his* dramatic connections — for his contemporary setting. For example, the composer's associations with the Italian *commedia dell'arte* are well documented.<sup>26</sup> Before their banishment from Louis XIV's court — and even well after — the Italian players had profound influence over Couperin, as evidenced by the names and subjects of several pieces within his *Pièces de Clavecin*.<sup>27</sup> Additionally, the French court at this time was preoccupied with the idle distraction of the *fêtes galantes* — a theatrical endeavor in its own right during which members of the court would enact small *divertissements* in costume.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> During the reign of Louis XIV, and when Couperin was a young man, a troupe of Italian players known as *commedia dell'arte* were at the center of theater life in Paris, until, because of some arguments within the establishment, the Italian troupe was banned. They took refuge at smaller courts such as *Saint-Laurent* and *Saint-Germain*. Couperin had clear connections to the latter, as reflected by the titles of many of his harpsichord pieces (see n.21). After Louis' reign ended, the Italian troupe came out of exile and again influenced theatrical circles. For one of several discussions about Italian theater and its influence on French culture, see Clark and Connon, *Mirror*, 9–46.

<sup>27</sup> Several of Couperin's pieces are named for stage performers or theatrical settings. For some examples besides *Les Folies*, see *Le Tic-Toc-Choc ou les Maillotins*, 18<sup>e</sup> *ordre*, named for a family of rope dancers; *L'Arlequine*, 23<sup>e</sup> *ordre*, named for the Harlequin character in *commedia dell'arte*; or *La Pantomime*, 26<sup>e</sup> *ordre*, named for a scene of *commedia dell'arte* that includes the characters Scaramouche and Pasquariel. See Clark and Connon, *Mirror* and Mellers, *François Couperin* for additional descriptions of pieces.

<sup>28</sup> It was a common practice for members of the court to participate in theatrical productions, small plays, or wear costumes to dress a part as a means of entertainment, usually in country settings, known as the *fêtes galantes*. Antoine Watteau famously captured these activities in many of his eighteenth-century paintings,

Beaussant states, “[T]his music has become more a dramatic work than a mere series of images — or rather, a genre midway between dance or theater and real life.”<sup>29</sup> Whether *Les Folies françaises* reflects a political commentary as suggested by Clark or is a theatrical invocation of earlier dramatic traditions associated with the folia (or perhaps even both), the more immediate symbolism of the individual virtues — and how they are represented musically — is relevant to this discussion. Each variation possesses a distinct musical personality and quality of motion to accommodate its associated virtue. As the virtues change so does the expression, and for every listener, this expression can invoke several possible meanings. Yet, as a character-based narrative, we are provided with a framework to help contextualize these meanings both at the individual piece level, and also comparatively over the narrative arc. Over the next sections of this chapter, I will explore how musical pattern contributes to the changing expression of each variation. Understanding pattern-based behavior within the context of the narrative whole can guide our potential metaphorical mappings onto Couperin’s evocative titles. This type of investigation can, in turn, provide a method for analysts and performers alike to arrive at persuasive interpretations of the composer’s musical portraits, which — according to the composer himself — are clearly meant to express some idea, an image, or a feeling.

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for example *L’Embarquement pour Cythere*. For discussions about these court activities and their connections to Couperin’s musical portraits, see Fuller, “Of Portraits, ‘Sapho,’ and Couperin.”

<sup>29</sup> Beaussant, *Couperin*, 293.

Couperin's Theme: *La Virginité sous le Domino couleur d'invisible*

*La Virginité*, provided in its entirety as Example 4.4, possesses a clarity and directness appropriate to its function as the first character in this narrative. The periodic

Gracieusement

1

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9

13

**Example 4.4.** *La Virginité sous le Domino couleur d'invisible* from *Les Folies françaises, ou les Dominos*, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

structure, based upon the repeating 16-bar ostinato-bass pattern, is clearly defined, though the implied harmonies resulting from this pattern vary to some degree from that of the typical “late” folia schema. These differences appear most notably at the conclusion of phrase one (measure four), which rests on the chord of the fifth degree (V) instead of the lowered seventh (VII), and the entirety of phrase two (measures five through eight). Couperin concludes the first half of the piece in measure eight not on the chord of the fifth — or dominant — but rather with an authentic cadence. Additionally, in this model theme, he begins measure five with a major tonic chord that can be heard as tonicizing the harmony that follows in measure six (the IV chord), rather than beginning this phrase on the chord of the third degree (III), as found in the “late” folia schema.

Regardless of these differences, the overall simplicity of *La Virginité* echoes the title’s meaning. The texture is spare and, despite melodic ornaments, its line is unencumbered. The bass and melody move mostly by step in rhythmically simple figurations, emphasizing a regular pulse that is simple and comfortable, but also compelling. Yet the combination, progression, and timing of pattern and gesture contribute to an overall sense of motion and perceived musical expression of *La Virginité*. An examination of the opening measures will help make clear these relationships, which in turn, can map onto emotional responses and associations with Couperin’s external subject, Virginité wearing an invisible cloak.

Measures one through three are reproduced as **Example 4.5c**. At first glance, the melody appears particularly ornamented within the context of an otherwise sparse texture. In the first bar, these ornaments appear over an almost cliché opening rhythmic

pattern, which is also a hallmark of the opening measure of *La Folia*. And yet we can hear this short three-measure excerpt as a very clear, single gesture of an ascending third, moving from one point of stability (the B in measure one) to another point of stability in measure three (ending on D). Gjerdingen calls this the Do–Re–Mi schema, “one of the most frequent opening gambits in galant music. It was used in every decade and in every genre.”<sup>30</sup> This larger gesture as shown in **Example 4.5a** establishes a regularity of

The image displays three systems of musical notation, labeled 'a', 'b', and 'c', for the first three measures of a piece in 3/4 time and the key of D major (two sharps).  
 System 'a' consists of two staves (treble and bass clef). A large slur spans across all three measures. Measure 1 is labeled 'Stable' and contains a whole note B in the treble and a whole note B in the bass. Measure 2 is labeled 'Unstable' and contains a half note G in the treble and a half note F# in the bass. Measure 3 is labeled 'Stable' and contains a half note D in the treble and a half note D in the bass. Fingerings are indicated as 1 for the B in measure 1, 7 for the F# in measure 2, and 1 for the D in measure 3.  
 System 'b' also consists of two staves. The treble staff has a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including fingerings (1, 7, 1, 2, 1, 1, 7, 1, 2, 3) and accents. The bass staff has a simple harmonic accompaniment.  
 System 'c' consists of two staves. The treble staff features a melodic line with tremolos and accents. The bass staff has a simple harmonic accompaniment.

**Example 4.5a–c.** *La Virginité*, m. 1–3, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

<sup>30</sup> Robert Gjerdingen, *Music in the Galant Style: Being an Essay on Various Schemata Characteristic of Eighteenth-Century Music* (New York: Oxford, 2007), 457.

motion, momentum, and a sense of direction that is enhanced by the smaller patterns of the ornaments. These patterns appear as smaller note heads in the analysis in

**Example 4.5b.**

The piece begins with a short mordent in the melody that creates a small, three-note pattern of  $\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}$ . Engaging Larson's theory of musical forces, the resolution of A# to B can be heard as the result of musical magnetism — the tendency of an unstable note, scale degree  $\hat{7}$ , to resolve to the closest stable pitch, scale degree  $\hat{1}$ .<sup>31</sup> The following trill creates elided repetitions of  $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ , which gives into musical gravity and steps down to the B they embellish. The trill then leads into the notated sixteenth-note figure A# – B at the end of the measure to create a final  $\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}$  group. These ornaments produce a series of elided three-note patterns:  $\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}$ ,  $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ , and then  $\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}$  again at the end of the measure. At the point of each elision, inertia carries through the elided, stable pitch so that, as in gracefully joined physical motions, changes in direction on the unstable part of the gesture produce one of the paths indicated on Larson's pattern map illustrated in **Figure 2.1** (see Chapter II). Additionally, the inertia at the end of the final  $\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}$  can be heard as the catalyst for the melody to move from the structural B in measure one, to the structural C# at the downbeat of measure two, as illustrated in **Example 4.5b**. The lower-neighbor

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<sup>31</sup> I have previously described Larson's theory of musical forces and related three- and four-note patterns in Chapter 2. For more details, see Steve Larson, "Musical Gestures and Musical Forces: Evidence from Music-Theoretical Misunderstandings," in *Music and Gesture*, edited by Anthony Gritten and Elaine King, (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 61–74; "Musical Forces and Melodic Patterns," *Theory and Practice* 22-23 (1997/98): 55-71; "Scale-Degree Function: A Theory of Expressive Meaning and Its Application to Aural-Skills Pedagogy," *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy* 7 (1993): 69-84; and *Musical Forces: Motion, Metaphor, and Meaning in Music* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, forthcoming).

pattern  $\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}$  first established by the short mordent in the melody also appears at different levels of structure: it is the bass pattern within the larger three-measure opening gesture apparent at all levels of this analysis.

All of these patterns, including Gjerdingen's Do–Re–Mi schema, begin on a point of stability, move to an unstable dissonance, and return to stability with a resolution to tonic, generating a sense of musical momentum and expectation. The Do–Re–Mi pattern is exposed in such a way that its basic notes occur right on the downbeats at the surface level of the music. The sense of emotional fulfillment produced by a textbook version of this opening gambit underscores the affect of comfort and regularity as expressed by *La Virginité*. Expectation is immediately satisfied — there is no longing or lust for resolution, only innocence and purity. The pattern is clearly exposed, just like Virginité in an invisible cloak.

The use of one of the most popular opening gambits in galant music, along with a cliché rhythmic figure, projects innocence and simplicity as well. In fact, this entire piece is based upon stock compositional patterns. **Example 4.6** provides a durational reduction of the first half of the piece with Gjerdingen's stylistic schemata superimposed. All the patterns that we see here — the Do–Re–Mi, followed by the Phrygian tetrachord, and the Prinner Riposte over a cadential bass — are common in the galant style. Gjerdingen states, “[t]he presence of a Prinner riposte is one of the best indications of a musical style grounded in the Italian galant.”<sup>32</sup> The patterns appear in a very typical sequence and

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<sup>32</sup> Gjerdingen, *Music in the Galant Style*, 455.

The image shows a musical score for Example 4.6, *La Virginité*, measures 1-8, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722) by F. Couperin. The score is in 3/4 time, key of D major. It features two systems of music. The first system (measures 1-4) is labeled "DO-RE-MI" and "PHRYGIAN TETRACHORD". The second system (measures 5-8) is labeled "PRINNER" and "CADENCE". Fingerings are indicated by numbers in boxes above or below notes.

**Example 4.6.** *La Virginité*, m. 1–8, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin  
 Durational reduction with Gjerdingen Stylistic Schema

regular metric placement — there are only modest differences between this durational reduction and that of the surface of the music.

We expect Couperin's patterns to reflect the larger vocabulary of compositional practice. As an advocate of *les gout reunis* — uniting French and Italian styles — Couperin's language naturally reflects an *Italian* lexicon as well as that of his French predecessors. In a variation set influenced by *La Folia d'Espagne*, the stylistic schemata rooted in Italian practice are even more apparent. My point, however, is not merely to

label these patterns, nor to demonstrate their existence on several structural levels. My goal is to demonstrate that patterns, and their disposition and timing, can contribute to musical expression and reflect the piece's deeper meaning. As the theme of a theme and variations set, *La Virginité* provides the basis for comparison of all subsequent pieces in the collection. Perhaps Couperin is suggesting virginity or innocence as a means to compare the virtues he portrays. It follows that assessing pattern behavior across examples within the narrative can help illuminate expression and affect within individual pieces and across the trajectory as it unfolds. The next several examples illustrate this.

#### **Variation 6 Yearning: *La Langueur sous le Domino violet***

**Example 4.7b** reflects how languor wearing a violet cloak might have started if it replicated the opening structural pattern from *La Virginité*. We can hear the short excerpt as a single unit of three stages shown in **Example 4.7a** — downbeats of stability, instability, and stability. However, the actual opening gambit of *La Langueur* appears in **Example 4.7d**. Instead of moving as  $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\hat{b}\hat{3}$  and continuing its melodic figuration in an upward direction, the piece's pattern moves as shown in **Example 4.7c** with scale degrees  $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ . The ascending pattern from *La Virginité*, which exhibited modest but clear momentum, has changed here to a pattern that first fights against, and then gives into, musical gravity at the last stage of the gesture, as illustrated in **Examples 4.7c and d**. And it is the within-measure figuration of a leap up of a third followed by a stepwise descent in both the melody and tenor voices that contributes to this sensibility, and ultimately to the musical meaning of the piece. This figuration may be heard in two ways:

The image displays a musical score for three measures, organized into four systems (a, b, c, d). Each system consists of two staves. System 'a' features a melodic line in the upper staff with notes labeled 1, 2, and 3, and stability labels 'Stable', 'Unstable', and 'Stable' below. The lower staff shows a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes and slurs. System 'b' is similar to 'a' but with different note values. System 'c' has a melodic line with notes 1, 2, 1 and stability labels 'Stable', 'Unstable', 'Stable'. System 'd' has a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes and slurs, labeled 'Egalement'. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#) and the time signature is 1/2.

**Example 4.7a–d.** *La Langueur*, m. 1–3, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

one that is generated by the perceived force and direction of each passing note, and the other that is based upon the broader motion within a measure, as well as over the expected direction of the larger three-phase unit.

First, at the note-to-note level, the within-measure gesture could be heard as a downward directed figure, concluding with the notes of the stepwise descent. In this hearing, the perceived inertia and gravity would work together, forcing the figuration to



With this interpretation, we might then revise our initial hearing after the completion of the larger unit in measure three.

In this short three-measure passage of *La Langueur* (Example 4.7d), Couperin provides us with both possible scenarios, which ultimately affects our interpretation of the variation's meaning. The piece begins in a way that trains us to hear the gesture as the ascending circling figure. In measure one, the melody begins on B — the first note of the structural Do–Re–Mi. It then leaps up a third to D, descends by step (D, C#, B), and then completes the circling figure by stepping up to C# at the downbeat of measure two. This downbeat event provides the second stage of the structural ascent. The figuration continues in measure two, leaping from C# to E, and then descending by step again back to C# (E, D, C#). We expect the circling gesture to conclude up at the downbeat of measure three on D to provide the third and final stage of the measure-to-measure Do–Re–Mi. Instead, the figure falls. Couperin closes with the descending version of the figure, stepping down to scale degree  $\hat{1}$  (B) at the downbeat of measure three, giving in to musical gravity and concluding in a way contrary to how we have been initially trained to hear the figure.

Beginning with the figuration first as an *ascending* gesture, and then concluding as a *descending* gesture, is significant to the musical expression of this variation. There is a perceived quality of tension between the surface figuration and the structural pattern. Because of how the three-measure unit concludes, the expression of the within-measure figuration in measures one and two takes on a more in-depth meaning — it is not merely a circling gesture. It is as though, in these first two measures, that as the surface figure

ascends it fights against the natural tendencies of inertia and gravity to descend, and favors the ascending inertia of the measure-to-measure Do–Re–Mi. But then, rather than continuing to fight at the conclusion of the pattern, the Do–Re–Mi relents becoming Do–Re–Do. The final resolution down can be interpreted as expressing apathy, laziness, or even surrender.

The tensions created by fighting gravity, but then eventually giving in to it as a means of expressing surrender or exhaustion, continues throughout the piece particularly in the melody, but between the voices as well. A brief return to *La Virginité* and the content of its second phrase will help to make this point. The beginning of this phrase in Couperin's theme moves from a major 6/3 sonority in measure five, and resolves to a minor 5/3 in measure six as depicted in **Example 4.8b**. The resolution up from F# ( $\hat{5}$ ) to G ( $\hat{b6}$ ) in the melody, over D# ( $\hat{\#3}$ ) to E ( $\hat{4}$ ) in the bass, introduces the sixth scale degree, which begins the Prinner Riposte pattern over a cadential bass to conclude the first half of the piece as shown in **Example 4.8a**. The chord-of-the-moment in measure five, and its subsequent resolution in the following measure, can be heard as responding to musical magnetism. The D# in the bass at the downbeat of measure five, borrowed from the major mode, pulls toward its closest stable neighbor — the E a half-step away on the downbeat of measure six. The introduction of  $\hat{\#3}$  can be heard in two different ways that affect the musical forces surrounding this half-step relationship. First, the D# can be heard as a modal borrowing — a major tonic instead of a minor — introducing what is essentially a chromatic inflection to the bass line. Second, the D# can be heard as resolving to the E at the downbeat of the next measure — in modern terms a V/iv

**Example 4.8a–b.** *La Virginité*, m. 5–9, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

**Example 4.8c–d.** *La Langueur*, m. 5–9, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

resolving to iv. This hearing heightens our expectation for resolution from  $\hat{\#3}$  to  $\hat{4}$ , and creates an increase in musical magnetism for the half step relationship in the bass when compared to that of the first hearing. This resolution occurs just as predicted in the next

measure. Melodically, the rhythmic structure and pattern of ornamentations in measure five of *La Virginité* are an exact replication of those found in measure one of the same piece, and can be heard as responding to similar musical forces and melodic expectations.<sup>33</sup> We expect, and get, a resolution upward from F# ( $\hat{5}$ ) to G ( $\hat{b6}$ ) to begin the melodic descent toward the end of the phrase.

The melody and bass lines in *La Langueur*, however, behave differently than the analogous passage in *La Virginité*, and in ways that express a lack of energy, or at a minimum, a diminished impulse to ascend. As shown in **Example 4.8d**, Couperin begins phrase two with a suspended F# in the melody ( $\hat{5}$ ), but instead of the borrowed D# in the bass, he uses the D natural as part of the minor scale collection in this variation. Additionally, Couperin adjusts the quality of the second chord in measure six, raising the sixth scale degree to G# as shown in **Example 4.8d**. The alteration of D# to D natural softens the drive to move toward the E in the next measure of the bass. The move to E does still occur, but the magnetism of the half-step resolution between downbeats in the bass is no longer as strong, as though the energy from the original deflated somewhat in this example. In addition, the suspended F# in the melody creates a dissonant ninth on the downbeat of measure six that must resolve down to E, which it does on beat two of the measure, resulting in a 9–8 suspension figure. The downward drive of the melody from F# to E in measures five and six of *La Langueur*, replaces the ascent from F# to G that initiates the Prinner riposte in *La Virginité* at this same location. The shifts in pattern

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<sup>33</sup> See Example 4.5 for an analysis of measures one–three of *La Virginité*, as well as the discussion earlier in this chapter for details about musical forces and pattern behavior applicable to this passage.

structure in bass and melody combine to produce expressions not unlike those experienced at beginning of the *La Langueur* — those of apathy or laziness, or at a minimum, a lack of vigor.

While the melody responds to gravity and inertia by descending in its series of suspensions in measures five and six, and the magnetic pull upward in the bass diminishes from a half- to a whole-step ascent, the activity in the tenor increases tension between the voices. It first modifies the within-measure figuration from earlier in the piece. Instead of a leap up by third between the first and second notes followed by a stepwise descent, the tenor expands the leap to a fourth and shifts its position to the second and third notes of the gesture, as shown in measure five **Example 4.8d**. The leap between F# and B represents this change. The three-note stepwise descent follows starting on B, passes through A, and stops on G# — the raised sixth degree. This descent — B, A, G# — incorporates a semitone that had once appeared in the bass line between the downbeats of measures five and six. This half-step relationship can be heard as a leading tone, heightening the expectation for a resolution up to A, which occurs on the downbeat of measure six and increasing the musical magnetism between these two measures. With the change in metric position of the leap, the descent concludes at the downbeat of the measure six rather than within measure five. We can hear the tenor voice as reaching over the bar line, achieving its point of arrival at the downbeat of the next measure and continuing to rise over the four-measure unit.

The tenor sustains the pressure to ascend by repeating the expanded within-measure figuration in measure six. The gesture G#–C#–B concludes on the raised seventh

degree (A#) at the downbeat of measure seven, introducing another half-step relationship between these two measures in the tenor voice. The net result of the modifications to the figure and qualities of harmonies in this passage, appear in the durational reduction in **Example 4.8c**. Over this four-measure passage, the tenor voice includes an ascending four-note pattern from scale degree five, starting in measure five, and moves up by step to scale degree one, in measure eight, through the raised sixth and seventh degrees. The pattern  $\hat{5}-\hat{6}-\hat{7}-\hat{8}$  can be heard as strongly responding to magnetism and inertia to continue moving — and ultimately resolving — up, impacting the overall motion and direction of these measures.

Where the initial version of the within-measure turn figure in the opening measures of *La Langueur* could have been heard as either descending — continuing to fall subject to gravity, or as ascending — circling the next structural pitch in the measure-to-measure Do–Re–Mi, the expanded figure is clearly ascending. By shifting the position of the leap, changing the three-note descent so that it reaches over the bar line, and raising sixth and seventh scale degrees, the tenor voice insists upon upward movement. This motion is contrary to the natural forces of inertia, gravity, and magnetism in the melody, which would otherwise continue its descent through suspension figures. As the tenor figure persists it continues to build tension, and its progression from measure to measure increases our expectation and anticipation for resolution. It is as though the tenor is pulling along the bass, drawing it up much like a rope and giving it the energy it needs to ascend, while ultimately keeping the melody from descending. The result is a line that

appears to put forth a great deal of effort to keep the other voices from simply listing along or, in the case of the melody, falling in a series of suspensions.

The upward pressure of the tenor reaches its acme in measure seven, **Example 4.8d**. With its expanded leap to the chordal seventh from the leading tone, the tension becomes so strong that the melody responds by leaping up from the suspended E in measure six, to G in the next measure, subsequently descending by step to the downbeat of measure eight. The resultant Prinner riposte in **Example 4.8c**, delayed a measure from its analogous metric occurrence in *La Virginité*, is harmonized by tenths in the tenor as part of its final expanded figuration and three-note descent. The leap of a third in the melody followed by a stepwise descent in measure eight, reintroduces the within-measure gesture from the beginning of the piece. This leap can be heard as a reaction to the downward-driving suspensions from earlier in the phrase — almost like a reluctant ascent to provide the delayed Prinner riposte. But as with the conclusion of measure three, the close of this second phrase once again gives into the musical gravity. In the final measures of **Example 4.8d**, the melody falls until it arrives on A#, behaving as if the effort required for the leap in measure seven was almost too much and responds accordingly, tumbling with a lust for giving in and spilling over beyond the phrase end. It plummets until it reaches the leading tone at the end of measure eight, which — acted upon by musical magnetism — serves as a melodic pivot point, and resolves up to B in measure nine for the return of the A section.

These expressions of resignation, reluctant effort, and qualities of tension and release can map onto what we associate with the title of the piece. *Languor* implies

inertia, oppressiveness, tiredness, or stillness. The pattern behavior and resulting affect described could certainly map onto these associations. Yet languor's extended meaning of self-indulgent romantic yearning could also have some currency here. Couperin chooses a duple meter of 1/2 for *La Langueur* — the only variation within the collection to depart from the norm of three beats per measure. The variation's performance marking of *égatement*, along with the duple meter and archaic “white” notation, evokes a visual mood of time passing, moving slowly, or languorously. The hallmark melodic figure of a minor third leap followed by a stepwise descent expresses a certain flavor as well. As Cooke states, “the minor third ‘looks on the darker side of things’ [and] may function as tragedy, as stoic acceptance, as sternness; or to a lesser degree, as gravity, soberness, seriousness. No one would deny that it is possible to experience a grave, sober, or serious pleasure.”<sup>34</sup> While the particular expressions of sternness and tragedy may not apply in Couperin's setting, Cooke's statement captures the bittersweet essence of the minor third that is present here — the figure unarguably possesses a certain longing or unsettling quality.

In addition, Languor wears a violet cloak — a hue that balances the tensions of heat in red and the coolness of blue. Traditionally, the color refers to rank and kingship but it also represents martyrdom. We could imagine the musical expression mapping onto the idea of suffering that represents the martyr either in the historical or the ironic sense. The placement of *La Langueur* between the virtue of perseverance and the character of

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<sup>34</sup> Deryck Cooke, *The Language of Music* (New York: Oxford, 1959), 90–91.

the coquette along this trajectory, underscores a meaning that can be viewed as boredom, but perhaps really represents a yearning for something or someone that is absent.

### Variation 7 The Tease: *La Coquéterie sous différents Dominos*

*La Coquéterie sous différents Dominos* — coquetry wearing different cloaks — begins in such a way that we would expect the melody to unfold in a manner similar to the melody depicted in **Example 4.9b**. Its compound meter and dance-like melody are engaging, and present the ascending three-stage Do–Re–Mi pattern adorned with leaps to and from scale degree five, with a regularity that is comfortable and satisfying. Bouncing off of the fifth scale degree is a frequently occurring method of enhancing the Do–Re–Mi pattern, emphasizing the ascending motion of the upper line of the compound melodic structure. Gjerdingen provides a special name for this embellished pattern — he calls this the “Adeste Fideles” variant due to its similarities with the opening gambit of the popular eighteenth-century hymn. The variant, as shown in **Example 4.9e**, “features melodic leaps down to, and up from,  $\hat{5}$ .”<sup>35</sup>

The opening of *La Coquéterie*, however, progresses as shown in **Example 4.9d**. The Do–Re–Mi pattern is still the basis for this opening gambit, as are some of the embellishing leaps to scale degree five. And, as we experienced with the previous example of the first measure of **Example 4.9b**, its repeated melodic figure establishes the expectation that the second phase of the pattern would appear at the downbeat of measure two. As it turns out, our expectation is not fulfilled. Instead, the arrival of phase two is

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<sup>35</sup> Gjerdingen, *Music in the Galant Style*, 85.

withheld until the third beat of a measure that bears a new meter signature. This ultimately shortens the duration of the second stage and accelerates the arrival of the final stage of the pattern that occurs at measure three. The timing of the pattern has been

The image displays a musical score for Example 4.9a-d, consisting of four systems of staves (a, b, c, d) in G major (one sharp).  
 System a: Treble and bass clefs. Treble staff has notes G4, A4, B4 with fingerings 1, 2, 3. Bass staff has notes G3, F#3, G3 with fingerings 1, 7, 1.  
 System b: Treble and bass clefs. Treble staff has a sixteenth-note pattern. Bass staff has a similar pattern.  
 System c: Treble and bass clefs. Treble staff has notes G4, A4, B4, C5 with fingerings 1, 2, 3, 2, 1, 7, 2, 5, 6, 5, 4, 3. Bass staff has notes G3, F#3, G3, A3 with fingerings 1, b7, b6, 5, #3, 4, 5, 1. A bracket labeled "Phrygian Tetrachord" spans the first four notes of the bass staff. A bracket labeled "Prinner Riposte" spans the last four notes of the treble staff.  
 System d: Treble and bass clefs. Treble staff has notes G4, A4, B4, C5 with fingerings 1, 7, 1, b7, b6, 5, #3, 4, 5, 1. Bass staff has notes G3, F#3, G3, A3 with fingerings 1, 7, 1, b7, b6, 5, #3, 4, 5, 1. Tempo markings "Gayement", "Modéré", and "Légèrement" are placed above the treble staff. The meter signature changes from 6/8 to 3/8 to 2/4.

Example 4.9a–d. *La Coquéterie*, m. 1–8, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin



**Example 4.9e.** “Adeste Fideles” Variant of the Do–Re–Mi

altered as shown in **Example 4.9c**. At the level of structure shown in **Example 4.9c**, the timing of the Re event is delayed. It is not until a deeper level of structure illustrated in **Example 4.9f** that the event shifts to the downbeat of measure two. The implication of the shift is that, at this deeper level, we would actually perceive the arrival of the second degree earlier than it occurs on the surface of the music.



**Example 4.9f.** *La Coquéterie*, m. 1–3, 13<sup>th</sup> *ordre* (1722), F. Couperin  
Perception of Second Event of Do–Re–Mi Pattern at a Deeper Level of Structure

*La Coquéterie* continues to behave in a similar manner — both surprising us, and also simultaneously capturing our attention. At the third stage of the Do–Re–Mi pattern in measure three of **Example 4.9d**, the melody changes direction and descends in quick triplet figures while the tempo accelerates, reducing the stage’s duration and sense of arrival to a brief sixteenth-note triplet. As **Example 4.9c** illustrates, this point is both the end of the first pattern and the beginning of the second — eliding the Do–Re–Mi ascent with the Phrygian tetrachord descent — to conclude the phrase squarely on the downbeat of measure four. This moment features another new meter signature in **Example 4.9d**, a fast moving 2/4 marked *légèrement* (lightly) by Couperin, which persists through measure eight, to the end of the first half of the piece. The left hand initiates the transition to the second phrase and faster tempo with a descending line of sixteenth notes in measure four, which, after the more moderate tempo through the Phrygian tetrachord, sounds as though it is fleeing. The rest of the phrase follows in a similar spirit. A melodic gesture in measure five, with leaps between scale degree five down to scale degree one — not unlike the *Adeste Fideles* leaps found at the beginning of the piece — leads into rapid-firing strings of sixteenth notes in the melody. The melody of these last four measures concludes with a hurried, but clear and confident portrayal of the Prinner riposte over a cadential bass.

Philippe Beaussant describes *La Coquéterie* as a series of stitched-together segments, improvisatory in nature with no real connection to each other. “Variation 7, *Gayement, moderé, légèrement*: A fantasia in which short episodes in different tempos

and rhythms follow one another in no apparent order.”<sup>36</sup> While it is true that *The Coquette*, because of its frequent meter and tempo changes as well as its different melodic styles, does possess an improvisatory flavor, it does not follow that the order of episodes has no meaning. First, at a structural level, the sequence of these episodes is based upon the same style-based patterns as presented in the theme to the collection, *La Virginité*. We would expect the structural pitches of the melody and the bass to align with the anticipated style-based schemata. While the timing and disposition of those patterns are different — which are some of the primary contributors to the expression of the piece’s title — they are present in *La Coquetterie*, and dictate the arrangement of episodes, as illustrated by **Example 4.9c**.

Second, the order of the episodes is further confirmed by the inclusion of what Schenker calls “hidden repetitions” as part of the melodic structure within these eight measures. Hidden repetitions, in essence, are musical material — or patterns — that exist at two or more levels of structure (for example, at the surface of the music and the middleground level). At times, these repetitions are not obvious to the listener; however, they are important aspects of musical structure and listener experience. Larson states that repetitions “exploit our pleasure in the retrospection of anticipation”<sup>37</sup> in that repetitions confirm both what we hear, as well as what we heard after-the-fact. As experienced listeners, we often realize after-the-fact that a piece of music moves in the way we thought it would. At some musical point of arrival, we persuade ourselves that the event

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<sup>36</sup> Beaussant, *Couperin*, 292.

<sup>37</sup> Larson, *Musical Forces: Motion, Metaphor, and Meaning in Music*, 5.23.

we heard is what we expected, even though other possible events were just as likely. This retroactive confirmation of expectation is retrospection of anticipation.<sup>38</sup> A hidden repetition, then, “exploits our pleasure” and to some extent, guides listener expectation. The existence of hidden repetitions within *La Coquetterie* challenges Beussant’s claim that this variation is purely an unordered series of short episodes with no meaning. Moreover, their presence makes Couperin’s manipulation of the timing of common patterns even more palpable and germane to the musical expression of this variation.

Two hidden repetitions central to the structure and expectation of *The Coquette* appear with brackets above the notes in **Examples 4.9c–d**. The first of these repetitions occurs right in measure one in the melody. The ascending B–C#–D melodic figure is a repetition of the structural Do–Re–Mi pattern that occurs over the opening three measures of the piece.<sup>39</sup> At the surface of the music, this three-note ascent is part of the measure that I consider as luring us into a false sense of comfort. The timing of each note of the surface gesture is evenly divided within the beat, and occurs just as we expect it would. In fact this figure is repeated to enhance that sense of comfort, and in retrospect, to confirm our expectation that the ascending structural Do–Re–Mi pattern will follow the same type of regularity. Of course, the pattern does occur, and when reduced to the deepest level of structure, its metric regularity would match that of the melodic gesture in measure one. However, at the middleground level, as shown in **Example 4.9c**, the timing of the second stage of the pattern is altered, making the expression of playfulness even

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<sup>38</sup> For an expanded discussion of ‘retrospection of anticipation,’ see *Ibid*, Chapter 5.

<sup>39</sup> Larson calls this type of surface-level repetition a confirmation because the repetition is not necessarily ‘hidden’, but it does confirm the structural ascent. See *Ibid.*, 5.23.

more apparent when compared to the surface repetition that establishes such comfort, regularity, and expectation.

The second hidden repetition takes place at the end of the phrase in **Example 4.9d**. The F#–G–F#–E–D in the melody framed by brackets in measures seven and eight is a repetition of the structural melody spanning the last four measures in **Example 4.9c**. Both the foreground figure in **4.9d** and the middleground figure in **4.9c** end simultaneously on the downbeat of measure eight. Larson calls this a confirmation, which is “a hidden repetition in which two versions of a single melodic idea, on two different levels of musical structure, are completed at the same time.”<sup>40</sup> The final D in both levels of the melody completes the two patterns, confirming, or summarizing, the melodic path of the second phrase. These two framing repetitions — the opening Do–Re–Mi repetition and the closing  $\hat{5}-b\hat{6}-\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}$  confirmation — trace the entire melodic path of the complete eight measures of *The Coquette*. Larson states that repetitions, or confirmations particularly, “encourage the listener to retrospectively attribute to the long version(s) the same predictability experienced in the shorter version.”<sup>41</sup> Couperin’s seemingly disparate order of episodes suddenly becomes understandable, as their disposition aligns with (and sometimes manipulates) our expectations, thus underscoring the variation’s narrative.

Finally, the playful association implied by the title of this piece (the *Coquette* wearing different cloaks) suggests an additional rationale for the particular order of meter signatures, tempos, and melodic gesture. The first measure, with its fluid melody in

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 5.24.

compound meter that confirms the ascending third of the structural Do–Re–Mi pattern, gently lures us into to a false sense of comfort. The second measure changes meters and teases us by withholding our desire for the second stage of the Do–Re–Mi. As David Huron suggests, unfulfilled expectation does not always engender a negative emotional response — our surprise can also illicit a sense of amusement, which corresponds to the mischievous nature of the subject.<sup>42</sup> The melody takes on a mischievous personality, appearing to flirt with us before moving to the final stage of the pattern.

The downbeat of measure three provides us with our expected third stage, but only for a moment before, once again, progressing in a way that expresses the nature of the subject. At its arrival, the melody quickly changes direction and rapidly descends to the Phrygian half cadence in a series of three-note upper-neighbor figures (D–E–D; C#–D–C#; B–C#–B). Most upper neighbor groups can be heard as strongly responding to the forces of musical gravity and inertia, which downwardly directs the melody so effectively. This part of the phrase suggests the “escape” of the melody. With its rapid descent and change of direction — a physical necessity when fleeing from something — the behavior of the melody can map onto the subject: a tease that first bewitches us, then taunts, and finally runs away. Moreover, the melodic — or *Adeste Fideles* — leaps in measure one and similarly in measure five, relate to the primary melodic gesture of the following variation, *Les Coucous bénévoles*, which I will discuss below in detail. Perhaps the melodic figures in *La Coquetterie* foreshadow the adultery implied by the subject of the next variation. And finally, the frequent meter changes in the *Coquette* could even be

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<sup>42</sup> See David Huron, *Sweet Anticipation: Music and the Psychology of Expectation* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006).

viewed as the character's different cloaks, representing capricious flirtation. With each meter change comes a change of cloak color, and, as with all variations in the collection, it provides an added layer of musical association and metaphorical meaning.

**Variation 9 Denial and Resignation: *Les Coucous bénévoles sous des Dominos jaunes***

A brisk setting in 3/8 meter, *Les Coucous bénévoles sous des Dominos jaunes* (The Benevolent Cuckolds wearing cloaks of yellow<sup>43</sup>) replicates the opening Do–Re–Mi gambit in its first three measures with a certain clarity much like *La Virginité*. **Example 4.10b** provides measures one through three of the piece, with scale degrees above and below the melody and bass voices to indicate the structural tones of the pattern. Both the melodic ( $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-b\hat{3}$ ) and bass ( $\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}$ ) components of the three-part pattern appear at the surface of the music. When reduced to one event per measure, the timing of the pattern in *Les Coucous* is normalized to reflect each event of the Do–Re–Mi occurring simultaneously on the downbeat of every measure, as shown in **Example 4.10a**. The transparency of the opening gambit is in keeping with the theme of this collection. Yet nuances associated with the disposition of the pattern at the surface of the music, its metric interaction with the bass, along with a comparison to its return in the second half of the piece, provide additional insight into its role in the affect and expression of The Benevolent Cuckolds.

Consider the rhythmic interaction of the bass and melody, as well as the visual impact of the surface of the music, illustrated in **Example 4.10b**. Each stage of the bass

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<sup>43</sup> In French, *le coucou* translates as either the bird (cuckoo), or the cuckold.

**Example 4.10a–b.** *Les Coucous bénévoles*, m. 1–3, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

( $\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}$ ), harmonized in thirds by the tenor voice, occurs on the downbeat of every measure. The downbeat event is answered by the melody on the “and” of beat one with a repeating broken figure that involves the structural note of the melodic pattern ( $\hat{1}$  in measure one,  $\hat{2}$  in two, and  $\hat{b}3$  in three), embellished by a pedal tone below on scale degree  $\hat{5}$  (F#). These leaps recall the *Adeste Fideles* variant discussed earlier in *La Coquetterie*, **Example 4.9e**. This variant, with leaps to and from scale degree five, creates two voice-leading strands, or a compound melody: an upper line that follows the large-scale gesture of the Do–Re–Mi ascent, and an inner line that remains on scale degree five. The emphasis in *Adeste Fideles* is on the upper line, as the figure concludes on the Mi

(b<sup>3</sup>) of the Do–Re–Mi pattern. In *Les Coucous*, however, the melody completes its gesture with a downward leap to the inner voice-leading strand. In these opening measures, that strand rests on the fifth scale, focusing listener attention on the line that does not “go” anywhere, rather than the ascent of the structural pattern. As the melody completes its gesture, the bass/tenor dyad is rearticulated on the “and” of beat three to complete the measure.

Every measure, then, is a gesturally self-contained unit. Rather than a rhythmic figuration that reaches over the barline — such as, for example, the elided  $\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}$  ornamental patterns do between stages one and two of the opening gambit in *La Virginité* — each complete unit in *Les Coucous* begins and ends at the barline, creating a within-measure isolation of gesture quite unlike other variations from the collection. The barlines act as boundaries, restricting the figuration and preventing the spilling over of the gesture from one measure to the next. Visually, this rhythmic disposition gives the impression of confinement, or perhaps one of unidirectional focus. It is as if the barlines prevent the figure from paying any attention to what is happening beyond its borders — much like blinders on a horse — keeping it oblivious to the activities in surrounding measures (the periphery), and forcing the focus downward as suggested by the contour of the melodic line.

It is not just the within-measure isolation of the figure that gives meaning to the piece. The overarching rhythmic interaction between the melody and bass/tenor parts, as well as how those parts articulate the opening Do–Re–Mi pattern, also contribute to the

expression. Measures one through three of *The Benevolent Cuckolds* are summarized in **Figure 4.1a**.

(a) m. 1–3

	1 + 2 + 3 +	1 + 2 + 3 +	1 + 2 + 3 +
Melody	• (•) • (•)	• (•) • (•)	• (•) • (•)
	1 1	2 2	3 3
Bass	•	• •	• •
	1	1 7	7 1

(b) m. 9–11

	1 + 2 + 3 +	1 + 2 + 3 +	1 + 2 + 3 +
Melody	(•) • (•) •	(•) • (•) •	(•) • (•) •
	1 1	2 2	1 1
Bass	•	• •	• •
	1	1 7	7 1

**Figure 4.1.** Summary of Attack Points for Structural Events in the Do–Re–Mi Pattern *Les Coucous bénévoles*, m. 1–3 and 9–11, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

In this figure, vertical strokes indicate bar lines. The numbers in the upper portion of these bars count the beats in each measure (*Les Coucous bénévoles* is in 3/8 meter). Each • (dot) represents an attack point in the melody or bass. Dots appearing in grey indicate a structural note of the Do–Re–Mi pattern, either in the melody or bass, and include the associated scales degrees below, also in grey. Dots in the melody within parentheses (•) represent the rearticulated pedal of scale degree  $\hat{5}$  as part of the melodic figure.

**Figure 4.1a** clearly illustrates a rhythmic interplay between voices: the bass begins on beat one, drops out while the melody responds, and then returns with a re-articulation of its dyad on the “and” of beat three as the melody is silent. The

conversational relationship persists throughout the entire piece — only at cadence points do both voices sound simultaneously (see Appendix A for full score of *Les Coucous bénévoles*). The net result of the obstinate rhythmic interaction is a bass pattern that states its structural note twice in every measure ( $\hat{1}-\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}-\hat{1}$ ), with each attack occurring as the melody is tacit. The melody also repeats its structural part of the pattern ( $\hat{1}-\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\hat{2}-\hat{b3}-\hat{b3}$ ), but within the broken melodic figure (e.g.,  $\hat{1}-\hat{5}-\hat{1}-\hat{5}$ ) these statements are syncopated — they attack on the “and” of each beat rather than directly on the beat itself. The melodic figure ends on the pedal tone scale degree  $\hat{5}$  (F#), focusing our aural and visual attention in a downward direction. While the interval and pitch content of the broken gesture changes to match the overriding harmony at a given moment, it is the fundamental melodic figure throughout the entire variation. This, in combination with the rhythmic give-and-take between the bass and melody, contributes to an overwhelmingly persistent — or insistent — quality of motion and expression in this variation.

**Figure 4.1b** depicts the rhythmic interaction of the voices in measures nine to eleven, the return of the A section, where it is typical in these variations for Couperin to replicate the opening three measures exactly. As a composite rhythm between the two parts, the return is identical, as is the bass portion of the structural Do–Re–Mi pattern (reiterated  $\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}$ ). However, there are important differences both in the metric placement and in the pitch content of the structural Do–Re–Mi in the melody.

When we first experience the within-measure melodic figure of measures one–three, the pedal tone on scale degree five appears below the structural notes of the pattern, sounding in second and fourth positions within this four-note figure. The

structural pitch appears in first and third positions in the upper line of the compound melodic structure. The result is a syncopated timing of the melodic Do–Re–Mi across the three measures, as well as an emphasis on the inner voice of the figure — the static pedal tone of the fifth degree — as the gesture always finishes in a downward direction. This underscores the insistent expression between the melodic and bass line interaction, as well as one of “going nowhere” over the variation as a whole.

The melodic figure in measures nine through eleven is the same shape as in measures one through three — it is a broken gesture of a pedal tone and a structural tone that creates two voice-leading strands of an upper and inner line. However, there are two critical changes that contribute to the expression of *Les Coucoucs*, as illustrated in the following example, **Example 4.11b**. In the figure’s return in A' of this variation, Couperin places the pedal tone *above* the structural note, and, shifts its attack to first and third positions in the four-note gesture. This shift influences the expression of the variation in two ways. First, **Figure 4.1b** illustrates the rhythmic ramifications. No longer are the structural tones of the melodic gambit syncopated — they now are placed squarely on beats two and three of each measure, and in the inner voice of the figure. Additionally, the figure still concludes in a downward direction — the emphasis on the final pitch of the gesture persists in the second half of the variation. In this iteration, however, the pitch content of the melodic Do–Re–Mi pattern has changed. What was  $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\hat{b}3$  (B–C#–D) in the upper line of the melody, is now  $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$  (B–C#–B) in the inner voice, as shown in **Example 4.11a**.

**Example 4.11a–b.** *Les Coucous bénévoles*, m. 9–11, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

Finishing each figure on the structural tone versus that of scale degree five, contributes to a sense of finality in the figure. Moreover, its pitch content shifting from  $\hat{1}$ – $\hat{2}$ – $\hat{b}3$  to  $\hat{1}$ – $\hat{2}$ – $\hat{1}$  — at the point when listener-focus is once again on the inner line of the pattern — contributes to an expression of “going nowhere” over the three-measure unit. It is as though the pattern — now metrically regular and emphasized by the inner voice of the gesture — rather than moving upward, loses any inclination to rise and instead, deflates. It allows gravity to act upon it and resolves down — resigned to its state of existence of metric regularity, and even perhaps, denial.

The variation’s title, *Les Coucous bénévoles*, provides several metaphoric associations to guide the ways in which we can describe the meanings of pattern and

gesture within this piece. In French, *coucou* can refer to either the bird (a cuckoo) or to the husband of an adulteress (a cuckold). Cuckold is etymologically derived from the word cuckoo because of its habit of laying eggs in the nests of other birds. The persistent interaction between voices and the broken melodic figure in *Les Coucous*, suggest that Couperin's title reflects this connection between the meanings of the word. With the alternation of pedal and structural tones, the melodic gestures are "bird-like" in their structure and can easily map onto topical references to birdcalls or allude to a bird pecking, especially with the downward conclusion of the figure and the within-measure isolation of the figure.<sup>44</sup> Additionally, the rhythmic interplay between melody and bass behaves as though it is the chirping itself.

However, the characters in this variation are also the *benevolent* cuckolds — the wronged husbands who are complacent and oblivious about their situation. The melodic gesture, with its downward directing completion, focuses our attentions on the line of the inner voice of the compound-melodic structure. In the first instance, the inner voice is the pedal tone — an indicator that the pattern is static and perhaps blind to its surroundings of the opening gambit. The syncopated timing of the ascending Do–Re–Mi at the opening of the variation shifts to an on-the-beat iteration of a Do–Re–Do pattern in its return, and becomes the inner voice of the gesture. This trajectory of pattern change and focus — in timing, pitch content, and voice-leading strand — can be mapped onto the cuckolds first

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<sup>44</sup> Other selections from Couperin's harpsichord pieces feature melodic birdcalls, particularly the 14<sup>th</sup> *ordre*. Within this set, *Le Petit Rien* is most similar to *Les Coucous Bénévoles* in its figuration, and includes the pedal fifth scale degree as an elaboration of the opening Do–Re–Mi gambit. However, its light, pastoral mood and upward direction of the figure is very different from that of the persistence and deference expressed in *Les Coucous*.

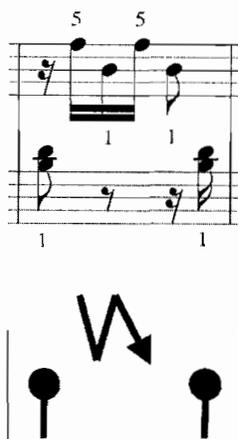
resisting the situation of other men laying eggs in their nests, but then giving in to the situation. They become resigned to, or remain in denial of, their circumstance.

Additionally, the persistent exchange of voices has an insistent quality to it. Perhaps its purpose is to adamantly convince others, and themselves, that the circumstance is acceptable. They will continue to bury their heads in the sand, as implied by the downward-turn of each melodic gesture, as well as by the isolated, and restricted, within-measure figuration framed by barlines, which blind the husbands to the activities taking place immediately around them.

As in *La Langueur*, Couperin's engagement of *mise-en-page* as part of the affect of the piece, in combination with further symbolism of the cloak's color, might also have some currency in *Les Coucous*. The cuckolds wear yellow cloaks — a hallmark of a coward. These characters are passive and almost subservient in spirit, or at least, they become so as the piece progresses. Coward, in Old French *couard*, derives from the Latin *cauda* meaning tail, possibly because of the associations with a frightened animal having its tail hang between its legs. In heraldry the image of a lion with its tail in such a position, was used to represent cowardice.<sup>45</sup> Couperin rhythmically and figurally arranges almost every measure so that the visual impression could be interpreted as evoking this image, as depicted in **Figure 4.2**. The bass attacks on the first and last parts of the measure acting as the legs. It frames the melody — a broken figure that always concludes in a downward position and focuses our attentions on the inner voice of the gesture. The

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<sup>45</sup> See definition for coward in *The New Oxford American Dictionary*, Second Edition, ed. Erin McKean (New York: Oxford, 2005).



**Figure 4.2.** Visual Representation of Downward Figuration in  
*Les Coucous bénévoles*, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

melody tucks itself between the legs of the bass as it sounds while the bass is silent. Alternatively, the melodic gesture and rhythmic disposition of each measure could be viewed as a bird's pecking motion, keeping its head down and in denial of its surroundings. Of course, the downward direction of the figure, flanked by the "legs" of the bass and tenor dyad, could symbolically represent the sexual dysfunction as well. The focus on the inner voice-leading strand that "goes nowhere" can be interpreted as the impotent state of the protagonist. As a Benevolent Cuckold, the concept of impotence has meaning literally — as representing the physical state of the character, or sexual impotence, and also figuratively — representing the impotent state of the character's

personality as a husband who passively tolerates his state as the cuckold.

All of these descriptions — and likely others — are possible mappings for the pattern behavior and the within-measure rhythmic disposition in *Les Coucous*. It is expected that different meanings can arise from the same material. The options, however, are not limitless. While Cognitive Metaphor Theory elegantly explains how multiple mappings work to bring meaning to the same abstract concepts, it also demonstrates that commonalities surface and general mappings overlap simply because of similarities in human development (primary metaphors). In the case of Couperin's pieces, where the titles guide our thinking more specifically, we can refine potential metaphoric associations for the musical material. Regardless of different interpretations, the deferential downward turn of the melody's figure cannot be argued and contributes to the submissive, "head-in-the-sand", or even stubbornly immobile qualities that map onto the title of this variation.

**Variation 10 Silent Strain: *La Jalousie taciturne sous le Domino gris de maure***

*La Jalousie taciturne sous le Domino gris de maure* (Taciturn Jealousy in a cloak of Moorish Grey) appears as **Example 4.12**. It is immediately apparent that the mood evoked in the penultimate variation of the collection is very different from the innocence expressed by the theme *La Virginité*. Couperin sets this piece almost exclusively in a low register — with relatively close voicing between the parts — rising up from bass to treble clef for only four measures in the first half of the piece. Register contributes to the piece's brooding character — a character that is appropriate to the expression of a

Lentement, et mesuré

1

5

9

13

**Example 4.12.** *La Jalousie taciturne sous le Domino gris de maure* from *Les Folies françaises, ou les Dominos*, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

negative and resentful emotion (jealousy), and to the nature of that emotion being constrained or held secret (taciturn), residing just below the surface of recognition. In

addition, Couperin uses open note heads — not unlike archaic “white” notation — to help set the tone. This is a technique found in other pieces, such as *La Langeur* discussed earlier in this chapter, suggesting that Couperin reserves this type of graphic reference for pieces with a particular emotional association and/or desired affect.<sup>46</sup>

Though important to the overall tenor of *La Jalousie taciturne*, elements of voicing, register, and *mise-en-page* are not the only contributors to the piece’s expression. The style-based patterns first presented in measures one through four of *La Virginité* also contribute. They have changed and taken on a new tension enhanced by the activity between voices. For example, if *La Jalousie* had begun in a way similar to our theme, it might have looked something like **Example 4.13b**. This version of the opening gesture clearly outlines the ascending third of the Do–Re–Mi, as shown in **Example 4.13a**. This leads to the half cadence to complete the phrase by leaping down in the melody to a lower neighbor,  $\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{5}$ , over the Phrygian tetrachord descent in the bass. The pitch content of the bass line of this version of *La Jalousie* is virtually identical to the structure of the opening measures of *La Virginité* (cf. **Example 4.4**). Additionally, the melody in the first half of this sample opening preserves the basic structure of the theme, highlighting the relationship between the structural Do–Re–Mi and the fifth of the key. In both of these examples there is a clear sense of upward momentum, as well as movement between the stable and unstable points of the two patterns (Do–Re–Mi and Phrygian Tetrachord).

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<sup>46</sup> White notation also appears in *La Fidélité*, the fourth variation, which is not discussed in this chapter.

The image displays a musical score for four systems (a, b, c, d) in bass clef with a key signature of two sharps (D major). System a features a melodic line with a 'Do-Re-Mi Pattern' spanning across measures, with labels 'Stable', 'Unstable', and 'Phrygian Tetrachord Descent'. System b shows a bass line with a '3rd progression' and 'Phrygian Tetrachord Descent'. System c includes a bass line with 'Stable?' and 'Phrygian Tetrachord Descent'. System d is marked 'Lentement et mesuré' and shows a bass line with 'Phrygian Tetrachord Descent'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

**Example 4.13a–d.** *La Jalousie taciturne*, m. 1–4, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

In contrast, the actual opening four measures of *La Jalousie* appear as **Example 4.13d**. While the bass line still projects the textbook content for both the Do–Re–Mi ( $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\hat{3}$ ) and Phrygian tetrachord ( $\hat{1}-\hat{b}\hat{2}-\hat{b}\hat{3}-\hat{4}$ ) patterns from previous examples, it is the melodic content of *La Jalousie*, along with a more chromatic role in the tenor voice, that differs. These differences contribute to an expression of tension that is fundamentally oppressive and almost menacing in this variation. No longer does Couperin use the ascending third in the melody to project a delicate sense of forward momentum; rather, there is an overwhelming drive to descend. The opening melodic figure in the first

measure in **Example 4.13d** is a tetrachord that begins on  $\hat{1}$  and moves down to  $\hat{5}$  through  $\hat{7}$  and  $\hat{6}$  on beats one and two. In combination with the bass, this can be heard as strongly responding to all three musical forces: gravity (moving down); inertia (continuing with its downward direction); and magnetism (resolving to the closest stable note, a half step between  $\hat{6}$  [G] and  $\hat{5}$  [F#]). The downward tendency of this melodic pattern is powerful, as is the pull from  $\hat{1}$  to  $\hat{5}$  as the temporary point of stability. This attention to descent is made more palpable when compared to the mostly ascending nature of the analogous passage in the previous variation, *Les Coucous bénévoles*. Additionally, its higher tessitura is in stark contrast to the lower, darker mood evoked here in *La Jalousie*.

The emphasis on the fifth degree in *La Jalousie* can also be related to its disposition in the previous variations — *La Coquetterie* and *Les Coucous bénévoles*. In *The Coquette*, the fifth scale degree provides a leaping playfulness and bouncy flirtation around the structural melodic patterns of the opening Do–Re–Mi gambit (**Example 4.9d**, measures one–three). It then becomes the structural melodic note in the measure that precedes the Prinner Riposte and leaps playfully to and from scale degree one below (**Example 4.9d**, measure five). Additionally, *The Coquette* foreshadows the significance of 5 as a voice-leading strand of denial and ignorance in *The Benevolent Cuckolds*, by mimicking the essential components of *The Cuckolds*' primary melodic gesture: the rearticulated pedal tone below the structural note of the ascending opening gambit (**Example 4.10b**). In *La Jalousie taciturne*, however, the fifth degree acts not as compound-melodic element to the larger structural pattern, but rather as the lowest point

of a long and drawn-out — even torturous — descent. The result of that process contributes to the tenebrous mood appropriate to a variation whose subject is Jealousy. The use of scale degree  $\hat{5}$  in these three variations follows a trajectory of behavior. In *La Coquetterie*, it is an obvious embellishment to the structural Do–Re–Mi; in *Les Coucous*, it is our focus, diverting attention from the ascending three-part pattern; in *La Jalousie*, as the structural Do–Re–Mi is gone completely, scale degree  $\hat{5}$  is solitary, and all that is left — it is the center of the structural descent.

Although the overall direction of the melodic line is down, the ascending chromatic line in the tenor in this same measure — moving from  $\hat{3}$ – $\#3$ – $\hat{4}$  — creates a level of tension with the melody that affects the way in which it behaves. The tenor's three-note pattern can be heard as responding to musical magnetism, resolving up to  $\hat{4}$  from  $\#3$ . The addition of this voice alters the perceived point of stability and arrival in the melody, from the F# as part of the tetrachord descent, to the G on beat three. While the F# is felt as the momentary resolution of a 6–5 appoggiatura over the B in the bass on beat two, the inclusion of the D# in the tenor guides our expectation for resolution to beat three of the measure. The ascending tenor, then, can be seen as fighting against the descending melodic line. Instead of allowing the melody to rest comfortably on  $\hat{5}$  (F#), the tenor pattern forces it to resolve back up to  $\hat{6}$  (G) from  $\hat{5}$  (F#), ultimately delaying what will be the final point of arrival on scale degree  $\hat{5}$  at the end of the phrase. Based on the expectations established by *La Virginité*, the overriding expression of this measure of

*La Jalousie taciturne* is an immediate move away from — or a lack of — the stability of the opening measure as the first stage of the pattern.

At a deeper level of structure, the opening four-note pattern in the melody, along with the resolution upward on beat three, becomes a descending three-note pattern of  $\hat{1}-\hat{b7}-\hat{b6}$  ending on G, as illustrated in **Example 4.13c**. This coincides with the ascending pattern of  $\hat{3}-\hat{\#3}-\hat{4}$  in the tenor, all over B ( $\hat{1}$ ) in the bass, the combination of which contributes to a sense of harmonic mobility or ambiguity unusual for the first stage of an opening gambit. In **Example 4.13d**, the G in the melody and E in the tenor tie over to beat one of the next measure, while the bass moves down to  $\hat{7}$  — the second stage of its three-part  $\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}$  pattern. This move creates a dissonance with both the melody and tenor. The melody resolves down from its dissonant interval of a seventh with the bass to scale degree five on beat two (F#). However, we do not experience this moment as a resolution, as the tenor simultaneously moves from the seventh of the chord, E ( $\hat{4}$ ) — the dissonant diminished fifth with the bass — to D ( $\hat{3}$ ). We expect the chordal seventh in the tenor to resolve down by step to D, but in this instance, the D does not satisfy our need, as it is itself a dissonant passing tone that conflicts with the overriding chord of the measure. This passing tone does continue moving to C# on beat three, which we experience as the temporary — and delayed — moment of arrival and harmonic agreement for both the tenor and melody.

The tenor's unfolding third moving E–D–C# in measure two, labeled as a third (3<sup>rd</sup>) progression in **Example 4.13c**, essentially splits the tenor line at this moment into

two separate voice-leading strands, creating a prolonged sense of tension over the measure. The lower of the two tenor lines begins with D in measure one and moves to C# in measure two — the point of temporary harmonic agreement described above — as illustrated below in **Example 4.13e**. The C# in the tenor then resolves down to B at

**Example 4.13e.** Reduction of Tenor's Two Voice-Leading Strands in  
*La Jalousie taciturne*, m. 1–3, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

measure three, doubling the B in the bass that completes the pattern of the traditional opening gambit. The result is a descending third D–C#–B over a lower-neighbor figure in the bass, B–A#–B. The resolution we still require, however, comes from the second voice-leading strand depicted in **Example 4.13e**. This second line begins with D in measure one and then moves up to E — the chordal seventh — at the downbeat of measure two. The resolution of this seventh (to D) occurs at the downbeat of measure three while the bass completes its resolution from A# to B. After the arrival and resolution at the downbeat of measure three, the bass descends through the Phrygian tetrachord to conclude on a half cadence with the tenor moving above it in thirds. The

melody completes the phrase with another three-note pattern,  $\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{5}$  as shown in

**Example 4.13c.**

These opening measures of *La Jalousie* are quite different from a more normalized approach of descending over the Phrygian tetrachord — or a lamento bass — as shown in **Example 4.13f**. In this example, illustrated both with and without suspension

**Example 4.13f.** More Normalized Descending Tetrachord Pattern  
Durational Reduction

figures, each measure of the four-measure passage reflects one part of the tetrachord descent. Scale degrees  $\hat{1}-\hat{b}7-\hat{b}6-\hat{5}$  appear in the bass, while the tenor harmonizes a third above moving from scale degree  $\hat{b}3$  to  $\hat{7}$ . The melody begins a fifth above the bass, and in the top example, steps up to initiate a chain of 7–6 suspensions that resolves at the downbeat of measure four. The result is two elided patterns in the melody of  $\hat{5}-\hat{b}6-\hat{5}$ , an upper neighbor, and  $\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{5}$ , a lower neighbor. The melody in the lower example,

however, is an extended single lower-neighbor pattern of  $\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{5}$ . It begins a fifth above the bass on F#, sustains it in measure two, steps down to E in measure three, resolving up to F# in measure four.

Both of the model variants shown in **Example 4.13f** are typical pattern-based skeletons for a three-voice, descending tetrachord in the lamento style. In its own right, a lamento descent engenders a particular expression that, in general terms, can be described as sad or mournful. In Couperin's *La Jalousie*, where the process of descent is different, more prolonged, and rife with tension between the voices, the expression takes on a particular negativity and heightened strain. The durational reduction in **Example 4.13g** illustrates the basic progression of the opening of *La Jalousie*, and clearly demonstrates a

**Example 4.13g.** *La Jalousie taciturne*, m. 1–4, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin  
Durational Reduction

significant symmetry of pattern between the bass and melody lines within this passage. The melody of the opening four measures of *La Jalousie taciturne* is a long, drawn-out descending tetrachord from  $\hat{1}$  to  $\hat{5}$  combining two elided patterns: a four-note pattern ( $\hat{1}-\hat{b}7-\hat{b}6-\hat{5}$ ) followed by a three-note lower-neighbor pattern ( $\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{5}$ ). The descent can be

heard as giving into musical gravity and magnetism as it moves from stable scale degree  $\hat{1}$ , passing through  $b\hat{7}$  and  $b\hat{6}$ , to arrive on  $\hat{5}$ , initially in measure two, but finally in measure four after a dip down to a lower neighbor. The bass line is *also* a long, drawn-out descending tetrachord from  $\hat{1}$  to  $\hat{5}$  combining two patterns, however it begins first with a three-note lower-neighbor figure ( $\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}$ ), followed by the same four-note pattern ( $\hat{1}-b\hat{7}-b\hat{6}-\hat{5}$ ) that begins the melody. It is the activity in, and the chromatic nature of, the tenor that confounds the progression's efforts to descend easily (**Example 4.13d**). It either forces an upward resolution in the melody, as in measure one, or delays the sense of arrival as in measure two. The tenor finally gives in to gravity, and the pressures exerted by the melody, as it descends in parallel thirds over the bass to finish the phrase and conclude on a Phrygian half cadence in measure four. The result of this passage is a sense of delay and harmonic instability, which extends in a particularly long-suffering way over the entire opening four measures.

At a deeper level of structure, the opening progression of *La Jalousie* is similar to the basic normalized skeletons depicted in **Example 4.13f**. The opening pattern in the melody could be considered an initial descent from B to the first structural note of F#, as shown in **Example 4.13h and i**. This F# would sustain for two measures before producing the lower neighbor figure as the bass completes its descent to the F#. However, it is at the middleground level that the duplication of the lamento tetrachord pattern in

**Example 4.13h–i.** *La Jalousie taciturne*, m. 1–4, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin  
Deeper Levels of Structure

both the melody and the bass lines enhances the expression of *La Jalousie taciturne*.

According to Cooke, the expression of the tetrachord descent from  $\hat{1}$  to  $\hat{5}$  in minor is particularly torturous. “To fall from the tonic to the dominant, taking in the ‘mournful’ minor seventh and ‘anguished’ minor sixth, is clearly to express an incoming painful emotion, an acceptance of, or yielding to grief; passive suffering; and the despair connected with death.”<sup>47</sup> Cooke’s definition is, simultaneously, rather broad and quite narrow. He relates the descending tetrachord to a general set of emotions — pain, grief, suffering, and despair — however he *limits* the expressive meaning of this descent to these ideas. A melodic opening that embodies these dark associations seems well suited to the tenth variation out of eleven that span a trajectory of increasing distress and jaded emotional states. And yet, when we consider its use as the opening pattern in Couperin’s

<sup>47</sup> Cooke, *The Language of Music*, 162–163.

piece specifically — not in just one voice, but in two — the evocative title can guide our mapping process for a more refined expressive meaning. The interaction, or strain, between voices throughout the descent, which is prolonged, unstable, and tension-filled, can map onto the bitterness of jealousy. Moreover the emotion, and its associations of suspicion, spite, envy, and resentment, is suppressed — or taciturn — in this setting. It silently lurks below the surface of composure or maybe even awareness. The tension between the voices can be viewed as the struggle to suppress that jealousy, which threatens to arise via the chromatic line of the tenor.<sup>48</sup> We can almost imagine a character embodying this negativity by quietly seething, yet working to contain the jealousy that threatens to emerge.

Additionally, Taciturn Jealousy wears a cloak of “Moorish” Grey, which offers another layer of meaning for the pattern-based behavior in this variation. Clark states that the color is “doubtless a reference to the legendary jealousy of Moorish captors of European maidens.”<sup>49</sup> Mellers, on the other hand, says that, “[i]f the *Domino gris de Maure* is a reference to Shakespeare’s *Othello*, as is not impossible, this gives an additional twist to the theme of appearance and reality. “Noble” Othello is a blackamoor, and blackness is associated with evil and sin.” Outside of these meanings and more

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<sup>48</sup> In these opening four measures, the struggle for containment is fruitful, as the melody ultimately completes its descent to  $\hat{5}$  from  $\hat{1}$  at the close of the first phrase. However, this is temporary. The chromatic nature of the tenor persists throughout the entire variation and continually creates tension with the melody. It is almost as if these two voices are at odds: one is jealousy that threatens to surface while the other actively works to suppress it. In the end, jealousy does surface. The variation concludes with an ascending melody in the final four measures after reacting to the constant chromaticism in tenor and pressure to resolve up — the only variation within the entire set to end in such a manner. All others conclude in descending pattern. For a full score of *La Jalousie taciturne*, see **Example 4.12**.

<sup>49</sup> Clark and Cannon, *Mirror*, 82.

generally speaking, grey is a color between black and white — it is neither one nor the other. It carries with it a sense of expectation, uncertainty, and foreboding. Grey skies, for example, represent the tension that builds before the storm breaks.

With any of these meanings — the general or the more specific — the grey cloak symbolizes darkness. Relating the color more particularly to Couperin's piece, the grey cloak can represent the strain associated with jealousy being taciturn and ready to explode, and perhaps with that comes a sense of impending tragedy. In combination with the thick texture and low tessitura of this variation, it is possible to imagine that the musical expression of tension in *La Jalousie taciturne* maps onto the imminent emotional turmoil, and dark, suspicious nature of the character just prior to the explosion of the last stage of the narrative, Frenzy or Despair.

**Variation 11 Disintegration and Hysteria:**  
*La Frénésie, ou le Désespoir sous le Domino noir*

We now reach the final point of Couperin's narrative within *Les Folies — La Frénésie, ou le Désespoir sous le Domino noir*. His character(s), Frenzy or Despair are wrapped in black, a color that signifies — among many things — sorrow, evil, and mourning. The piece appears as **Example 4.14**. Beussant writes about this last movement, "Variation 11, *Très Vite*: Florid passages in sixteenth-notes." This statement is true — the surface of the music is filled with rapidly moving sixteenth-notes, tightly wrought gestures, repeated figures, and chromatic embellishments — all of which are important to the piece's expression. It is, though, a limited assessment given the significance of this piece as the last act of such an expressive narrative. We are far from

1 Très Vite

4

7

10

13

**Example 4.14.** *La Frénésie, ou le Désespoir sous le Domino noir* from *Les Folies françaises, ou les Dominos, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre* (1722), F. Couperin

the grace and clarity of *La Virginité*, or even the brooding, tense, and drawn-out torture of *La Jalousie taciturne*. In fact the flurry of activity — embodied by intricate figures moving predominantly by step, an accelerated tempo, and rapid shifts between high and low register — is in stark contrast to the overall agonizing gloom of the previous variation, represented by constrained tension and consistently low register. Given the context of the larger trajectory of *Les Folies*, which begins with the innocence and tentativeness of *Virginité*, the musical features in Couperin's final variation described above express a frantic state of motion befitting *Frenzy* or *Despair* — subjects that represent the ultimate descent into emotional turmoil.

The general musical qualities described above can metaphorically map onto Couperin's evocative title, guiding potential meanings for the piece. Yet, other attributes pertaining to pattern-based activity contribute particularly to the piece's expression, expanding — while simultaneously refining — possible mappings to include loss of control, instability, obsession, and utter emotional chaos. For example, consider **Example 4.15**. Couperin could have started the piece in a way similar to this musical passage. This example is stylistically comparable to the actual opening measures of *Frenzy* or *Despair* depicted in **Example 4.14**, and includes many of the same musical qualities previously described as contributing to the frantic motion of the piece, such as tightly wrought passages of sixteenth notes, repetition of figures, and a rapid tempo. There are, however, important differences between the two examples.

The image shows three systems of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time.   
**System a:** A vocal line with the lyrics "Do-Re-Mi" repeated three times. The first measure contains the notes B4, A#4, B4, C#5. Fingerings are indicated as 1, 2 3, 4 5, 4 3. The second measure contains the notes C#5, B4, A#4, B4. The third measure contains the notes B4, A#4, B4.   
**System b:** A piano accompaniment line. The first measure contains the notes G3, A3, B3, C#4. The second measure contains the notes C#4, B3, A3, B3. The third measure contains the notes B3, A3, B3.   
**System c:** A section marked "Très Vite" in 3/4 time. The first measure contains a rapid sixteenth-note pattern: B4, A#4, B4, C#5, B4, A#4, B4, C#5. The second measure contains a similar pattern: C#5, B4, A#4, B4, C#5, B4, A#4, B4. The third measure contains a similar pattern: B4, A#4, B4, C#5, B4, A#4, B4, C#5.

**Example 4.15a–c.** Stylistic Model Progression for Opening Three Measures of *La Frénésie, ou le Désespoir sous le Domino noir*

In measure one of **Example 4.15c**, both the melody and bass voices enter on a downbeat octave, move in parallel sixteenth notes over the course of the measure, and clearly establish the stable tonic harmony and the first stage of the expected Do–Re–Mi opening gambit. This stability is a central feature of the traditional presentation of the pattern as an opening schema. On the first beat, each voice completes a four-note figure. The melody begins on B, steps down to the lower neighbor A#, resolves back up to B, and then continues its ascending motion by stepping up to C#. We do not necessarily

experience this four-note figure — B–A#–B–C#, or  $\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}-\hat{2}$  — as being complete. The musical inertia of the stepwise ascent (to C#) after the lower neighbor figure (B–A#–B) establishes an expectation that the ascent will continue, completing the figuration on the D that follows on beat two. The D then initiates a repetition of the lower-neighbor figure followed by a stepwise ascent (D–C#–D–E), fulfilling our expectation a second time by ending on F# on beat three. We have then a series of four-note patterns, each one leading into the next: B–A#–B–C#; D–C#–D–E; F#. Because of the sense of arrival on the D and F# respectively, these can be heard as five-note gestures, each of which is comprised of two elided three-note patterns: B–A#–B ( $\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}$ ) + B–C#–D ( $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-b\hat{3}$ ); D–C#–D ( $b\hat{3}-\hat{2}-b\hat{3}$ ) + D–E–F# ( $b\hat{3}-\hat{4}-\hat{5}$ ). This series can be heard as a sequence responding to musical inertia, which first establishes a pattern and then repeats it, leading the melody upward and prolonging the tonic harmony in this first measure.

The bass progresses in a similar fashion in **Example 4.15c**, following the melody and establishing a point of harmonic stability to initiate the opening of the Do–Re–Mi pattern of the larger three-measure unit. It begins on B, leaps down to F# to follow the melodic ascent in parallel tenths, resulting in another series of four-note gestures that concludes on the D on beat three: B–F#–G#–A#; B–A#–B–C#; D. The second of these four-note gestures can be heard similarly to what occurred in the melody — the combination of two elided three-note patterns: B–A#–B ( $\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}$ ) + B–C#–D ( $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-b\hat{3}$ ) to create a larger five-note unit that concludes on the D. However, the opening gesture (B–F#–G#–A#) is different. The first B acts as an initial attack, but the pattern we hear and attend to — and expect a resolution of — is a four-note pattern that begins on the F# and

ascends to the B on beat two (B [ $\hat{8}$ ]; F#–G#–A#–B [ $\hat{5}$ – $\hat{6}$ – $\hat{7}$ – $\hat{8}$ ]). This pattern can be heard as responding strongly to both musical magnetism and inertia as it ascends through the raised sixth and seventh scale degrees to resolve to B. The bass line in beats one, two, and to the first note of beat three is comprised of a four-note pattern that elides with the three-note patterns, which follow. In both the melody and bass voices at beat three of this measure, the figuration changes to accommodate the arrival of the second stage of the larger Do–Re–Mi, which begins on the downbeat of measure two. As illustrated in **Example 4.15a**, the shift in figuration results in a smooth stepwise descent from F# in the melody and D in the bass to C# and A# in the melody and bass respectively.

As the patterns ascend in sequence at the start of measure one in this model progression, each completes its gesture with the note we anticipate hearing and fulfills our expectations of recurrence of motive. The combination of ascending progressions in the melody and the bass, as shown in **Example 4.15b**, clearly outlines the chord of the tonic for the duration of the measure. Additionally, the measure establishes a stable first stage of the opening three-part Do–Re–Mi and provides a hidden repetition of the gambit between beats one and two, as indicated by the smaller bracket in **Example 4.15a**, confirming the pattern’s stability over the rapidly moving surface level of the music. As the first stage of the Do–Re–Mi comes to a close, it moves smoothly into stage two in the second measure (**Example 4.15c**). The measure sustains this stage with a repeating figure in the melody, while the bass slows to eighth notes and combines two familiar patterns — the lower neighbor (A#–G#–A#) and an augmentation of the ascending fourth from the opening melody (F#–G#–A#–B) — to complete the measure. The second of these bass

patterns concludes on the B: the arrival point of the third portion of the larger three-measure unit, while the melody concludes on its expected D after a slightly altered figuration on beat three of measure two, as reflected by **Example 4.15a**.

The first three measures of the model passage (proposed as a stylistic alternative for the opening of *Frenzy*) clearly establish each stage of the expected opening gambit within a texture that maintains many of the frantic qualities of motion associated with the title of the piece. Comparing **Example 4.15c** to the actual opening of *La Frénésie, ou le Désespoir*, reproduced in **Example 4.16d**, illuminates its character. The first measure of *Frenzy* (as written) erodes the stability of the opening Do–Re–Mi demonstrated in the model progression immediately upon initiating its first beat. Instead of beginning both voices simultaneously, Couperin begins in imitation — the only variation within the collection to start in this manner. The melody enters as the leading voice (*dux*) on F# and attacks on the unstable second note of the sixteenth-note group, rather than on the downbeat of the measure. The F# initiates a four-note ascent: F#–G#–A#–B ( $\hat{5}$ – $\hat{6}$ – $\hat{7}$ – $\hat{8}$ ) in the melody, labeled as “a” and with a bracket in measure one of **Example 4.16d**. This ascent is familiar: it is comprised of the same four-note pattern that appeared in the bass in the model progression, and maintains many similar qualities as it did in that example. Beginning on scale degree five and ascending through the raised sixth and seventh degrees to resolve on B ( $\hat{8}$ ) can be heard as strongly responding to musical magnetism and inertia, driving the half-step resolution between the leading tone and the note of the home key. We experience this as a single gesture that creates an expectation for resolution, which does occur, but not until beat two of the measure.

The musical score is divided into four systems, labeled a, b, c, and d. System a shows the vocal line with lyrics "Do-Re-Mi" and fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4) for the first measure, and (1, 2) for the second measure. System b shows the keyboard accompaniment with dynamics "dux" and "comes". System c is marked "Très Vite" and shows a rapid keyboard part with patterns labeled "a", "b", "c", and "c...?". System d is marked "Tres Vite" and shows another rapid keyboard part with patterns labeled "a" and "a...?".

**Example 4.16a–d.** *La Frénésie, ou le Désespoir*, m. 1–3, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

The pattern's conclusion on B at beat two serves as the first stage of the structural melody in the larger three-stage Do–Re–Mi unit. The bass then enters one beat later with this same four-note pattern in imitation, also labeled as “a” with a bracket in **Example**

**4.16d**, finally arriving on its first structural portion of the gambit on beat three of the measure (**Example 4.16a**). A central feature to the traditional presentation of the Do–Re–Mi is an established sense of stability during its first stage by outlining the chord of the tonic. Rather than establishing this stability on the downbeat, as found in all other variations from the collection that use this opening gambit, as well as in our stylistic model, the first stage of the Do–Re–Mi in Frenzy does not occur until the second beat of the measure after an unstable beginning on a weak part of the beat — and that event is restricted to the melody alone. The bass does not declare its first stage until beat three, as reflected in **Example 4.16a**. Even by starting the voices in imitation, the first measure of *La Frénésie* could have established its stability and first stage of the Do–Re–Mi much sooner by beginning the figuration on the downbeat with a B in the melody, as illustrated in **Example 4.16e**. This pattern would then repeat a beat later in the bass.

**Example 4.16e.** Alternate Opening for *La Frénésie, ou le Désespoir*  
Figure Beginning on B

When voices enter in imitation, the presence of a downbeat event on tonic provides an immediate tonal and metric anchor. In **Example 4.16d**, Couperin eliminates the B in both voices in favor of beginning on the unstable part of the beat on F#, delaying any sense of stability until beats two and three of the measure. Combined with the rapid tempo and constant sixteenth-note figuration, the result of the fragmented opening is a breathless tonal and metric ambiguity. Within the context of the variation set this technique, reserved specifically for the final piece of the narrative, expresses a state of unbalance, unsteadiness, and lack of solid footing — either emotional, mental, or both.

In the opening of *Frenzy or Despair*, stability is compromised. This is a feature that continues well beyond beats one and two of the piece. After the melody begins with the four-note pattern ascent on F# in **Example 4.16d**, it continues its ascending figuration just as it did in both the stylistic model (**Example 4.15c**), as well as in the alternate opening from **Example 4.16e**. The melody steps down to the lower-neighbor A# after the arrival on the structural B on beat two, and is followed by three steps up to create another four-note unit (A#–B–C#–D). The bass follows accordingly with its entrance on F#. The difference between the alternate (**Example 4.16e**) and actual (**Example 4.16d**) openings of the piece is the omission of the B on the downbeat of the melody. This exclusion emphasizes the “four-ness” of the pattern, which leads us to hear the melody, and subsequently the bass, as series of four-note ascending gestures. These gestures appear with brackets and are labeled as “a” in **Example 4.16d**. However, we know from the description of the stylistic model of **Example 4.15c** that, aside from the initial four-note pattern in both the melody and the bass, the remaining figures (e.g., B; A#–B–C#–D) are

a series of elided three-note patterns (e.g., B–A#–B; B–C#–D). Measure one of **Example 4.16c** illustrates this pattern grouping: the four note pattern remains labeled as “a”, while the lower-neighbor figure is labeled as “b” and the ascending third as “c”. Patterns “b” and “a” carry into the figuration of the bass in measure two.

In measure one of **Examples 4.16c** and **d**, musical inertia can be heard as perpetuating the gesture’s repetition in both the melody and the bass, which then guides our expectation for the final, resolving note of each pattern as in **Example 4.16f**. In the melody, the first four-note gesture, F#–G#–A#–B, is followed by the second four-note

**Example 4.16f.** Inertia Continuing the Four-Note Gestures to F# and D

gesture, A#–B–C#–D, and finally the third four-note gesture, C#–D–E–F#, which concludes on the downbeat of measure two. The B, D, and F# serve as points of arrival, completing each ascending figure and fulfilling our expectations for resolution. The bass then follows in the same manner with the first four-note gesture, F#–G#–A#–B, followed by the second four-note gesture, A#–B–C#–D. The pattern’s concluding D on the downbeat of measure two clashes with the expected harmony of the measure: the chord

of the fifth degree. The adjustment in the bass to A#, breaking the ascending-fourth gesture as illustrated in **Example 4.16g**, solves this and supports the melody as it continues to respond to musical inertia as it ascends to F#, fulfilling our expectation for resolution at the close of the pattern. The repeating melodic figure in measure two — F#–E–F#–C# — alternates between a lower neighbor and a pedal on C#.

**Example 4.16g.** Adjustment of Gesture in the Bass to A#

melody and the adjustment to A# in the bass serve as the second stage of the larger Do–Re–Mi pattern. The pattern concludes smoothly at the downbeat of measure three.

Couperin’s treatment, however, is different. In **Example 4.16c**, the bass leaps down to A# in measure two as it did in the **Example 4.16g**, adjusting its pattern and breaking the ascent. However, rather than fulfilling expectation and ascending to F#, Couperin also breaks the ascending pattern in the melody, leaping down to C# on the downbeat of measure two for the second stage of the measure-to-measure Do–Re–Mi. After the series of ascending figures in the first measure, providing a rapid — almost

manic — drive upward, the break in figuration in both voices is startlingly abrupt, even if it emphasizes the second structural stage of the opening gambit in measure two of the melody. **Example 4.16a** illustrates how this break leaves incomplete upper neighbors in both the melody and bass lines, which are not resolved until the downbeat of measure three. As **Example 4.16g** illustrates, the opening measure and its transition to measure two could have been something more fluid, especially in the melody. Yet, it is these abrupt breaks that are significant to the various meanings for the piece. Broken figurations and lack of harmonic footing can be heard as expressing meanings such as instability, and with that, a possible mapping of uncertainty or even an unsound state of mind associated with the descent into emotional turmoil.

Ironically, it is this second stage — the typically unstable part of the gambit — that provides a stronger sense of stability, or rather, less harmonic mobility to the piece. Just as in the stylistic model progression, at measure two the piece hovers at one of the higher parts of the range in this variation to clearly outline the chord of the fifth degree. The bass line relaxes its pacing by slowing to eighth notes from sixteenth notes, as the melody obsessively repeats the melodic figuration of a C# pedal followed by a neighbor figure of F#–E–F#. However, after the rapid ascent and free mobility of measure one, the resulting expression is one of tense stasis, which dissipates as the pattern resolves to the third stage at the downbeat of measure three. It is significant that the most “relaxed” and harmonically stable portion of the Do–Re–Mi is the typically unstable part of pattern. The piece opens in imitation with a series of ascending patterns that drive the voices upward in rapid figurations, which expresses mobility and unsteadiness as opposed to the

expected stability of stage one. The melody and bass then prolong the unstable phase of the opening gambit with repeating gestures while suspended at the high point — or manic portion — of the piece's range. While Couperin's final piece in the narrative does maintain the three-stage opening gambit of the Do–Re–Mi, in this setting it possesses an erratic, almost volatile quality appropriate to the character's state of mind. The imitative entrances of structural points in both the melody and bass portions of the pattern possess an inherent harmonic mobility and contribute to an expression of unsteadiness. In the analogous passage of the previous variation *Taciturn Jealousy*, the stability is somewhat uncertain as well by comparison to the openings of other variations in this chapter. However, what was tense instability in *Taciturn Jealousy* is now feverish instability in *Frenzy and Despair*, which can represent the emotional fragility and unsound state of mind of the subject in this final stage of the narrative.

This expression of feverish instability continues well beyond the material of the opening measures. If *La Frénésie* followed the same sequence of style-based patterns first presented in the theme *La Virginité*, we would expect the ascending opening Do–Re–Mi gambit to be followed by a balancing Phrygian tetrachord descent that concludes with the first half cadence of the piece. A continuation of our stylistic model depicted as **Example 4.17c** clearly illustrates this expected order of patterns. The downbeat of measure three of this example marks the end of the ascending Do–Re–Mi gambit and the beginning of the descending tetrachord pattern. After the tense stasis of measure two, the melody in measure three begins with a stepwise descending third (D–C#–B) followed by a skip up to the initial note of the figure (D), which then steps down to C# on beat two to

The musical score is divided into three systems labeled a, b, and c. System a shows a vocal line with lyrics "Do-Re-Mi" and "Phrygian Tetrachord". System b shows a piano accompaniment. System c is marked "Très Vite" and features rapid sixteenth-note patterns. The score includes various musical notations such as clefs, key signatures, time signatures, and dynamic markings.

**Example 4.17a–c.** Stylistic Model Progression for m. 1–4 of  
*La Frénésie, ou le Désespoir sous le Domino noir*

finish the gesture. The gesture, responding to musical inertia, repeats starting on C# (C#–B–A–C#), and then a third time on B (B–A–G–B) to conclude on A# at the downbeat of measure four. The result is a turning figure that surrounds each structural note of the melodic portion of the tetrachord schema as the figuration descends. The structural notes of the melody appear as stemmed notes in **Example 4.17b**. The bass begins first with an eighth-note B on the downbeat, but gradually increases its motion with each passing beat to eventually follow the melodic figuration on beat three of the measure (G–F#–E–G). The bass concludes on F# at the downbeat of measure four. Combined, the two voices clearly outline the expected descending Phrygian tetrachord, shown in **Example 4.17a**.

The treatment of this analogous passage in *La Frénésie* is very different. Consider **Example 4.18c**. The descending tetrachord, which balanced the opening Do–Re–Mi in

The image shows a musical score for three systems, labeled a, b, and c. System a is a vocal line with lyrics "Do-Re-Mi" and "Mi-Re-(Do)". System b is a keyboard accompaniment with markings "dux" and "comes". System c is a keyboard accompaniment with markings "Très Vite", "a", and "inv". The score includes various musical notations such as clefs, key signatures, time signatures, and dynamic markings.

**Example 4.18a–c.** *La Frénésie, ou le Désespoir*, m. 1–5, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

the stylistic model, is gone. The resolution on D in the melody at the downbeat of measure three remains only for a moment, and instead of beginning a figuration that would descend through the tetrachord to a half cadence, the melody quickly leaps away from the D to the F# below to repeat familiar material — the unstable first stage of the Do–Re–Mi that begins the piece. The bass then follows with its ascent from F#. In fact, measure three to the downbeat of four is an exact replica of measure one to the downbeat of two.

At this point, and as the stylistic model illustrates, we would expect an easy, balancing gesture to conclude the phrase after the opening gambit. Instead, we get a modified version of material we have already heard, which still expresses the same qualities of unsteadiness and instability. Moreover, by returning to opening material, there is a frequent repetition of the ascending four-note pattern — F#–G#–A#–B. In measures one through three, the four note F# to B appears a total of five times. These repetitions are marked with brackets and the letter “a” in **Example 4.18c**. This four-note ascent can be heard as strongly responding to musical magnetism — as the pattern ascends, the drive to resolve to B increases, especially as it approaches A#. However, the pattern also emphasizes F# — the fifth degree of the collection. According to Cooke, the fifth degree is “emotionally neutral, but does express a context of flux, intermediacy.”<sup>50</sup> Flux — changeability, instability, or unsteadiness — is a hallmark of this variation’s behavior and its expression. Yet we can infer additional facets of meaning to the repetition of this material specifically. Rather than stressing upward motion and momentum, as the pattern repeats it takes on qualities that express compulsive redundancy: a winding up — so to speak — or perhaps a preoccupation with the same material without reaching any real conclusion. This pattern behavior can metaphorically map onto our emotionally distraught character, obsessing over the same thoughts — never gaining peace of mind.

As the Do–Re–Mi pattern returns in measures three–four of **Example 4.18c**, it is identical to the initial presentation at the opening of the piece, but the remainder of the

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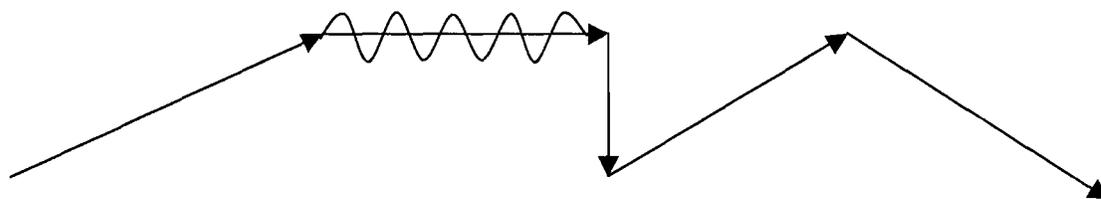
<sup>50</sup> Cooke, *The Language of Music*, 90.

pattern is modified to conclude the phrase, given its new position within the formal structure of the piece. Given the repetition of the gambit, we would expect a resolution to the third stage at the downbeat of measure five. That, however, does not take place. As we arrive at stage two, measure four, the melody leaps from C# up to F#, just as it does in measure two. Instead of using that leap from C# to F# to initiate a repeating figure in the melody (C#–F#–E–F#), the leap begins a rapid descent from the F# above, cascading through the register to the F# below at the downbeat of measure five through a series of inverted four-note melodic gestures to conclude the phrase. The bass follows this inverted descent beginning on B, beat two of measure four, until it completes its plummet to D at the downbeat of measure five.

Nowhere in this passage do we experience an overt resolution to the expected third stage of the Do–Re–Mi gambit, with  $\hat{b}3$  in the melody and  $\hat{1}$  in the bass. There is one moment in measure four where these two degrees occur simultaneously. However, the overriding function of this measure is to prolong the chord of the fifth degree and we hear this moment of  $\hat{b}3$  in the melody and  $\hat{1}$  in the bass as part of an embellishing neighbor rather than a structural resolution, as indicated by the slurs above and below in **Example 4.18b**. The real arrival, or conclusion of this gesture, does not occur until the downbeat of measure five, which — at a deeper structural level — we do experience as a resolution, but not of an ascending Do–Re–Mi pattern, but rather of its inversion — Mi–Re–Do — as indicated in **Example 4.18a**. Those resolving notes appear in parentheses in **Example 4.18a**, measure five. This resolution is after a frantic descent to conclude the phrase. It is as though the voices, so consumed by going over the same material, realize

that an exact replication of a Do–Re–Mi gambit as we had the beginning of the piece, will not work given its position in the phrase. The voices quickly make the necessary modifications to ultimately conclude the phrase in the proper way in preparation for the next portion of the piece. They do so by changing direction and descending rapidly in a register transfer, as shown in **Example 4.18a**, and by providing a token descending tetrachord gesture along the way in the middle of measure four — albeit a major tetrachord — followed by the bass pattern  $\hat{5}-\hat{4}-b\hat{3}$  to remind us of a more typical type of phrase end from other variations.

The overall affect of the activity of the voices is one of extremely erratic motion, as illustrated by **Figure 4.3**. In measure one, the voices rapidly ascend starting on the F#,



**Figure 4.3.** Voice Contour Diagram of Melody, m. 1–5, in *La Frénésie, ou le Désespoir*, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

and rise up to the F# in measure two, but only after abruptly breaking the figuration established in measure one. Measure represents tense stasis, where both the melody and bass lines float along the chord of the fifth ( $\hat{5}$ ). Finally resolving on D in measure three, the melody again abruptly breaks off and jumps to the F# below to begin another ascent, repeating the opening Do–Re–Mi schema. The melody again reaches the high F# in measure four after a break in the ascending figuration. Instead of floating at the top part of the range to complete the larger measure-to-measure Do–Re–Mi, both the melody and the bass alter course by plummeting down over the measure to conclude at the downbeat of measure five. In the melody, this descent is a frenetic register transfer of an octave.

These opening four measures certainly express frenzied motion, but within the context of the narrative as a whole, the possible meanings for Frenzy or Despair can become more specific. The persistent and repeated drives upward can be interpreted as hysteria, especially as the ascents reach a tense stasis, as in measure two of the piece. After hysteria reaches its peak, it abruptly breaks off and drops to begin another ascent, obsessing over the same material as it does so to (e.g., the four-note pattern F#–G#–A#–B), only to once again plummet down an octave to the downbeat of measure five. All along the way, patterns break abruptly and change directions, defying expectation for resolution and expressing an unstable, unbalanced, and potentially disturbed state of mind.

We can further relate these meanings to the color of Frenzy and Despair's cloak. Our characters wear black, which traditionally embodies a variety of meanings, such as death and mourning, fear, darkness, and evil. Black also represents the absence of light

and even the absence of color altogether. When we consider the meaning of the title — Despair — and its direct antonym — Hope — it offers an additional layer of interpretation for the meaning of the color for this final variation. Hope is also a variation in this collection, though not discussed in this chapter. In that variation, Hope wears green, which is traditionally associated with spring or budding promise, and maybe even youthful enthusiasm. In contrast black, as the absence of color, can also be considered as the lack of hope in the context of this variation. We can metaphorically map this idea onto a character, perhaps aging or at least jaded by life's disappointments, wrapped in a black robe and utterly lost in a maze of mental and emotional distress, with no glimmer of hope for salvation.

For Couperin's final stage in the emotional narrative of *Les Folies*, the focus is on instability. Rapid figurations, erratic motion, broken gestures, abrupt register shifts, and repetition of material express a distinct sense of uncertainty, hysteria, and obsession. These meanings metaphorically map onto our character that not only embodies the fevered state of emotional despair, but also the mental fragmentation associated with becoming slowly deranged and disturbed over the course of the narrative. As the black cloak suggests, all hope is lost. The composure of the protagonist in *Les Folies* slowly unwinds, and ultimately, completely unravels as the emotional trajectory of collection concludes with *La Frénésie, ou le Désespoir*.

### Summary

Each of Couperin's twelve pieces is part of a narrative structure — the composite

of which represents a trajectory of emotional and moral descent. The collection progresses from innocence and purity of the virgin state, to discomfort and wretchedness of despair. It is possible that Couperin's variations, as Jane Clark suggests, served as a moral commentary on the political climate of the day. Or, he might simply have wished to represent the beauty and bitterness of love and loss common to everyday life experience. Or, perhaps even both. What is clear, however, is that Couperin chose the well-trod path of the *folia* tradition as the platform for his chronicle. While there are similarities between Couperin's theme and the schema of the so-called "late" *folia* — indeed the variation set is operating within a repeating framework — it is the spirit of the early *folia*, with its theatrical trappings of costumes and masks, and wild, unrestrained nature, that provides the soul of Couperin's French Follies.

Knowing definitively Couperin's purpose is not required to appreciate how the moods and emotions expressed in *Les Folies françaises* effectively evoke the imagery associated with the subjects. Each piece is distinct in its spirit. The purity and innocence of *La Virginité* wearing an invisible cloak are depicted through the piece's transparent quality, as well as its virtually unadorned structure of some of the most popular stylistic schemata in galant vocabulary. Virginité, with its clear presentation of the theme, provides the means to compare the other pieces within the collection. The uncomplicated opening gambit of the Do–Re–Mi that begins the piece changes to Do–Re–Do in *La Langueur* robed in a cloak of purple. The resolution down to scale degree one at the third stage of the pattern evokes laziness — or perhaps even surrender — because of the tensions implicit to the within-measure figuration of the opening three bars. Couperin's

use of open note heads and ceaseless rhythmic figuration enhance the possible mappings onto associations with languor, such as stillness, oppressiveness, or listlessness.

In *La Coquétérie* wearing different cloaks, the ascending Do–Re–Mi returns. However the timing is adjusted — the second stage is delayed, dashing our expectations of arrival to elicit a sense of playfulness associated with the title. The variation’s frequent meter changes, perhaps signifying the different cloaks, enhance the flirtatious expression and chameleon-like personality of the subject. We first experience a luring-in to a false sense of security, then a withholding of expectation, and finally a momentary satisfaction followed by a chase. Additionally, the structural ascending pattern bounces from a pedal fifth scale degree below, heralding the significance of  $\hat{5}$  within the primary melodic gesture of the next variation, *Les Coucous bénévoles* wearing yellow.

The opening Do–Re–Mi pattern in the Benevolent Cuckolds shifts to Do–Re–Do upon its return at A', a deflated or defeated pattern by comparison. The broken figure, embellished with leaps to and from scale degree five, visually and aurally echoes the pecking motion of a bird — a musical pun on the two possible meanings of the word *coucous* in French (cuckold or cuckoo). The melodic gesture’s downward conclusion emphasizes the inner voice of the figure as opposed to the upper line. The inner voice in both cases “goes nowhere”. It first rests on scale degree five in measures one through three — a static pedal. The pattern then flips upon its return in measures nine through eleven, altering our focus to the structural portion of the pattern as the inner voice, however in this instance, the pattern changes to Do–Re–Do, which still “goes nowhere”. This calls forth several possible metaphors: one of a bird with its head down, somewhat

oblivious to its surroundings, one of a coward with its tail between its legs, and also one of impotence — either sexual or in terms of a passive personality. In the case of the Benevolent Cuckolds, the imagery expresses a state of denial, inadequacy, and even passive acceptance.

As the variation set approaches its end, and the emotional states become more distressed, the opening Do–Re–Mi pattern progressively dissolves. In Taciturn Jealousy wearing grey, the melodic portion of the gambit is completely removed. Instead, Couperin — again returning to void (white) notation of earlier variations — favors a long tortured descent in close voicing and low register, from scale degree one to scale degree five over the typical bass of  $\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}$ , to invoke the darkness and negativity of jealousy. However, the struggling, chromatic tenor endeavors to force the melody in an upward direction, while the melody, in turn, strives to suppress the tenor. The tension between these two voices represents the torment of jealousy, concealed just below the surface, which remains relatively stifled until the final variation, where all attempts to disguise bitterness and resentment are gone.

Frenzy and Despair enrobed in black, give in to their wretchedness and devolve into madness. These emotions and conditions are called forth by techniques such as frenetic sixteenth-note figures, a blazing tempo, the displaced imitative opening between voices — the single variation from the set to begin in this manner — and broken patterns. The familiar opening gambit of the Do–Re–Mi returns, however, instead of establishing a clear sense of tonic stability and comfort typical to the first stage of the pattern, the imitation and rapid movement instead express constant harmonic mobility and frantic

discomfort. It is the second stage of the pattern — the typically *unstable* portion of the three-stage unit — that provides the perceived temporary relaxation of motion. The left-hand figure slows its durations to eighth notes, and both voices combine to clearly outline the dominant sonority for the entire length of the second measure. Other familiar patterns break down as well — the Phrygian descent is gone. Instead, Couperin repeats opening motives (in measures three–five) and incorporates chromatic descents as a means for rapid register transfers. In this variation, the emphasis is on *instability*, erratic motion, and obsessive repetition in order to summon the manic nature of mental disintegration associated with frenzy and despair, and ultimately, the emotional descent over the narrative as a whole.

The multi-movement format of *Les Folies françaises* allows us the opportunity to observe how the narrative structure evolves, and how the associated moods change as the trajectory unfolds. The analyses in this chapter demonstrate that a combination of tools is helpful to assess these changes. Schenkerian analysis, Gjerdingen's style-based schema theory, and Larson's theory of musical forces provide information about the structure, timing, and combination of musical patterns, as well as the forces that act upon them in a given setting. We saw, for example, that the use of stock musical phrases can produce either more or less predictable results depending upon their context and timing, which in turn, give rise to different responses. This suggests that pattern behaviors contribute to musical affect and expression, and as Larson states, “[T]he larger theory of expressive meaning...is built on the idea that higher-level musical meanings can emerge from

patterns of lower-level interactions of musical materials and musical forces.”<sup>51</sup> The patterns discussed throughout this chapter come out of Couperin’s musical material and, combined with other elements such as meter, performance markings, and aspects of *Augenmusik*, are fundamental components to the expression of his music.

How, then, do we interpret that expression and give voice to the meaning — or meanings — we experience? Cognitive metaphor theory is the system of ideas that helps to explain why we can associate, interpret — or map — elements of musical expression not only onto one meaning, but also onto several. Metaphor shapes virtually every aspect of our thought and communication processes. It provides a means to understand more abstract concepts (target domain) based upon relationship to, or analogy with, the more familiar, concrete, and often, physical aspects of our world (source domain). Because each person might choose a different source domain as a frame of reference, the very nature of the theory allows for — and supports — multiple associations or cross-domain mappings. The more complex the domain of experience, the more mappings we need to engage the abstract concept. Its richness provides us with a powerful tool for interpretation of musical experience.

Where the capabilities of metaphor theory become most apparent in terms of pattern-based behavior within the *Les Folies* variations set, is that the same pattern can have different meanings in the context of different pieces. For example, Couperin’s use of a structural Do–Re–Do pattern in lieu of the expected Do–Re–Mi in *Les Coucous bénévoles* and *La Langueur*, derives distinctly different meanings for the two variations.

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<sup>51</sup> Larson, *Musical Forces: Motion, Metaphor, and Meaning in Music*, 1.12.

In *La Langueur*, the Do–Re–Do pattern can represent laziness and surrender. When presented as part of the melodic figure that incorporates the tensions between musical gravity and inertia — and in light of the meaning of the title — the broader representation of romantic yearning can also apply. In *Les Coucous bénévoles* the same Do–Re–Do pattern, incorporated as part of the downward-turning broken melodic figure, can represent a bird’s pecking motion, denial (head-in-the-sand), and even sexual impotence — all of which are meanings suggested by the title.

In both cases the structural components of the pattern are the same. However, the manner in which the pattern is presented, combined with knowledge of the title and the broader narrative context, provides a framework for our metaphoric mappings. It does not follow that multiple meanings engender limitless types of associations. In terms of human development and learning, we formulate and acquire a wealth of primary metaphors that are firmly rooted in bodily experience. These later serve as the foundations for making sense of more abstract, subjective ideas, and can be remarkably universal. Of course, culture and historical context can affect the metaphors we develop. However, the basic human condition fosters some overlap in the way we conceptualize metaphors for certain abstract ideas or emotions. The more complex the abstract idea, the more metaphors we tend to develop. Similarity in conceptualization guides the mapping possibilities for Couperin’s pieces, but it is his titles that direct our thinking more specifically, and refine the potential meanings of pattern behavior within each piece. Several different meanings can still be inferred, however they are reasonable mappings based upon theme, as well as upon a common understanding of musical schema — both the type and the use — within

eighteenth-century galant style.

Couperin's *Les Folies françaises* is filled with layers of association upon which to map our analytical observations and the resultant expressions from the musical material. Each individual piece of the multi-movement structure is named for an emotion or state-of-being with which we can equate certain characteristics and qualities. Together, the movements create a trajectory of experience, the context of which provides additional means of comparison and insight to each individual piece. Finally, each character wears a cloak of some color that symbolizes the related emotion or state-of-being. Colors, historically, are rich in meaning and associations of their own and add a final dimension to possible avenues of interpretation. By relating our analytical observations from the music to qualities and emotions associated with the characters, a fertile terrain of possible musical meanings surface. In each situation, we map an entire complex of elements (such as musical material and the piece's title) onto an entire complex of potential meanings and mental images — no one meaning and interpretation will be identical. Engaging metaphor theory then re-informs how we experience the music: what we hear, what we see, and how we interpret.

Like the cloaks that, in essence, are the variations representing different shades of the theme in *Les Folies françaises*, these pieces are each tied to a subject within the context of a larger narrative structure. These subjects represent qualities that are “rich and important domain[s] of experience.”<sup>52</sup> It is through the evocative titles that we can metaphorically map onto another level of representation for the purposes of

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<sup>52</sup> Lakoff and Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh*, 71.

comprehension and evaluation. This synthetic approach forges a connection between the concrete (elements of musical structure) and the abstract (metaphoric association), in order to provide further insight into musical meaning and to enhance analytical interpretations of Couperin's musical portraits.

## CHAPTER V

CASE STUDY II: *L'ÂME-EN PEINE* — A LAMENTATION  
 FOR THE DEATH OF INNOCENCE

*Couperin has revealed the blackest terrors behind the masking dominos and ball's frivolous façade, and appends as epilogue his most concentratedly tragic utterance — L'âme-en peine.<sup>1</sup>*

Wilfrid Mellers

The concluding musical portrait of the *treizième ordre*, *L'Âme-en peine* (The Lost Soul or The Soul in Torment), will serve as a final example for investigating how musical pattern can contribute to musical expression, which in turn, metaphorically maps onto a variety of emotions, sentiments, and connotations to give meaning to musical behavior. While this process of analysis encourages multiple interpretations, Couperin's evocative subjects and titles can guide our mapping choices, both to further refine the meanings of the piece, as well as to constantly re-inform how we analyze, how we hear, and how we perform these selections from *Les Pièces de Clavecin*.

As the last episode of the *ordre*, The Lost Soul follows *Les Folies ou les Dominos* — the collection of variations analyzed in the previous chapter. In that chapter, the structural organization of the variation set allowed for analysis across pieces related by the same formal schema, calling for an assessment of changing pattern behavior within a single narrative context. That context affected possible interpretations of the meaning, or

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<sup>1</sup> Wilfrid Mellers, *François Couperin and the French Classical Tradition* (London: Faber and Faber, 1987), 413.

meanings, for the music. The approach for examining how patterns contribute to meaning in *L'Âme-en peine* will necessarily be different, as the piece is a single through-composed composition as opposed to a series related by a single theme and unifying schema. And yet *The Lost Soul* acts as the closing chapter of an *ordre*, which can have some bearing on the broader context for expression.

To examine how musical patterns contribute to the expression of a piece that both stands alone and acts as part of a larger contextual unit, this chapter will first briefly outline and describe the pieces of the entire *treizième ordre*, and discuss the potential thematic contexts for the group as a whole. This will show that *L'Âme-en peine* holds a distinguished position as the final portrait within a singularly tragic collection of pieces. A summary of other authors' observations of the mood of *L'Âme-en peine* follows, which makes clear that little connection has been made between the piece's actual musical content and its expression. I will expand upon these observations to show that general compositional properties — such as structure, style, texture, ornamentation, and articulation — have significant impact on the expression of *L'Âme-en peine*, and, in many ways, are distinct from both the variations that precede it and also the other pieces within the *ordre*. Rather than embodying a style that is dance-like, *L'Âme-en peine* possesses qualities that are vocal in character shifting the dramatic perspective of the piece to become more personal, or first-person in nature. While many of the compositional characteristics of this piece are in keeping with traditions such as the *tombeau* and the *plainte*, it is not the intention of this chapter to categorize *L'Âme-en peine* into a specific compositional genre. It is my goal, however, to demonstrate that the

style of *L'Âme-en peine* is distinct from its counterparts within the *ordre* and as such, its expression — and what I consider the *perspective* of that expression — is distinct as well.

The final part of this chapter will examine formal structure, as well as musical pattern and its relevance to the expressive properties of *L'Âme-en peine*. This assessment will illustrate that the peculiar metric placement of the patterns, as well as their particular disposition, combination, and order within a form that slowly progresses from each preceding phrase or gesture — particularly within the first eight measures — contribute to the disjunct awkwardness of the piece, and at times, to an apparent *lack* of motion altogether. The odd formal structure and grouping of patterns suggests that *L'Âme-en peine* represents a different aesthetic rooted in principles of an earlier compositional ideal. This aesthetic is concerned more with focusing our attention on what is sounding in the moment — creating a sense of ambiguity, uncertainty, absorption, and at times absence of expectation — and less with thematic development and directed motion. This aesthetic supports the expression of The Lost Soul by producing a perception of aimless stasis. Combined with pattern behavior, these expressions can metaphorically map onto a representation of a troubled, fractured soul having lost its way and staggering under the weight of its turmoil. But within the context of the *ordre* as whole, this mapping can extend even further onto death, sorrow, and loss, and, in view of the strong vocal qualities of the piece, *L'Âme-en peine* can even be considered an elegy — or lament — for the damned soul and the death of innocence.

**Thematic Context and *L'Âme-en peine*: Comparison to *Les Folies françoises*  
and the Framework of the *Treizième Ordre***

As a collection of pieces, the variation structure of *Les Folies* provided a relatively unique, and somewhat advantageous opportunity within Couperin's keyboard output to compare how pattern-based behavior contributed to the changing musical expression across several pieces related by the same formal organization. This organization is rooted in a dance schema, consisting of a repeating bass and melodic framework constructed of typical galant stylistic patterns, and a balanced — or in modern terms antecedent–consequent — phrase structure. Within this formal structure and through comparison with the theme, we discovered that similar, and at times identical, patterns could have different meanings in different variations depending upon the context of the piece. The expression of those patterns metaphorically mapped onto a variety of potential ideas and associations, which were enhanced by taking into account the title of the piece and where that piece fell within the collection. We were fortunate — the context of the variation set provided a means for comparison and interpretation of musical meaning both within a single piece, and also over the narrative trajectory as a whole.

The historical background of the “folia” tradition that underscores Couperin's variations provided further information for interpreting the meaning musical behavior and for guiding our process of metaphoric association. The folia's theatrical heritage, and Couperin's use of evocative titles — each of which represented some type of virtue, state-of-being, or emotion — allowed us to hear the variations as evoking a character, which in our minds eye we could see as embodying and acting-out that associated quality. The music was almost an invocation — or third-person narrative or description

— of the character, the physical incarnation of which wore a cloak emblematic of its nature and personality.

As an individual piece (part of neither a variation structure rooted in a theatrical tradition nor another type of multi-movement series) the idea of “context” does not exist in the same way for *L'Âme-en peine* as it does for *Les Folies*. On the one hand, when heard or played — and perhaps even at sight — the dolorous and tragic mood of *L'Âme-en peine* is immediately accessible and can be experienced independent of any context or external ideas. On the other hand, this expression can take on additional dimensions and become more precise in meaning when considered in relationship to the surrounding pieces within the same *ordre*.

Couperin's *ordres* are thought of as units, organized primarily by key scheme, to be performed — and heard — as a group.

In place of the word *suite* Couperin described the twenty-seven groupings of works as being in ‘*ordres*.’ The French term *suite*, meaning a group or pairing of dances in the same key, has been traced back to the mid-sixteenth century and was gradually adopted in other countries...It may well have been that François Couperin envisaged right from the start that his collection of harpsichord pieces would go well beyond the mere sequence of dance forms implied by the term *suite*, preferring instead the term *ordre* with its more widely embracing connotation of an ‘ordered arrangement’ of pieces...Such an ‘ordered arrangement’ is achieved largely through the unity imposed by the key-schemes, each *ordre* being in one particular key — both in its major and minor versions.<sup>2</sup>

At times, these units are organized by more than key relationship — each individual piece can participate in a larger narrative process of the *ordre* as a whole. It is not, however, as rigid an interpretative context as the variation structure we encountered in

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<sup>2</sup> David Tunley, *François Couperin and 'The Perfection of Music'* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 105.

the previous chapter. Therefore, we can then think about a single piece as either one that stands alone in its expression, or as one that relates in some way to the other members of the *ordre* — or perhaps even both — thereby enhancing the modes of interpreting expressive meaning. When assessing pattern behavior and how that behavior contributes to the expression of a piece in this collection, musical meaning can become richer and more specific because of our understanding of the contextual unit.

The significance of *L'Âme-en peine* as the final piece of the *treizième ordre*, the titles and translations of which appear as **Table 5.1**, becomes more apparent when considering the thematic relationship of the group. The *ordre* opens with *Les Linaissans* (The Budding or Birth of Lilies) and is followed by *Les Rozeaux* (The Reeds). If we considered these first two examples as thematically representative, our metaphoric associations would naturally drift toward ideas and images of nature for the collection. However, the *ordre* continues with *L'Engageante* (The Engaging One) — a title that possesses no apparent reference to nature. The next group of pieces is *Les Folies françoises ou les Dominos* (The French Follies or the Dominos/Cloaks). As discussed in detail in the previous chapter *Les Folies*, having no apparent association with images of nature, is a set of twelve variations, each of which is named for a virtue or a state-of-being as well as for a particular color. The set itself follows a narrative trajectory from innocence to madness, and the corresponding hues progress from transparent to the completely obscured. The *ordre* comes to a close with *L'Âme-en peine* (The Lost Soul or the Soul in Torment). If these pieces can be considered a loosely related thematic unit, the connection is still unclear.

**Table 5.1. Titles and Translations of  
Trezisième (13<sup>eme</sup>) ordre, Troisième Livre (1722), F. Couperin**

<i>Les Lis naissans</i>	<b>The Birth (or Budding) of the Lilies</b>
<i>Les Rozeaux</i>	<b>The Reeds</b>
<i>L'engageante</i>	<b>The Engaging One (or That Which Engages)</b>
<i>Les Folies françoises ou les Dominos</i>	<b>The French Follies, or the Dominos (Cloaks)</b>
<i>La Virginité sous le Domino couleur d'invisible</i>	Virginité wears an invisible cloak
<i>La Pudeur sous le Domino couleur de Roze</i>	Modesty wears a blushing pink cloak
<i>L'Ardeur sous le Domino incarnat</i>	Ardor wears a flesh-colored cloak
<i>L'Espérance sous le Domino Vert</i>	Hope wears a green cloak
<i>La Fidélité sous le Domino Bleu</i>	Fidelity wears a blue cloak
<i>La Persévérance sous le Domino Gris de lin</i>	Perseverance wears a cloak of flaxen grey (silver)
<i>La Langueur sous le Domino Violet</i>	Languor wears a violet cloak
<i>La Coquetterie sous diférens Dominos</i>	Coquetry wears different cloaks
<i>Les Vieux galans et les Trésorières Surannées sous les Dominos Pourpres, et feuilles mortes</i>	The Old Galants and Pensioned-Off Courtesans wear Reddish Purple (crimson) Cloaks and dead leaves (verdigris)
<i>Les Coucous Bénévoles sous des Dominos jaunes</i>	The Benevolent Cuckolds wear yellow cloaks
<i>La Jalousie Taciturne sous le Domino gris de maure</i>	Taciturn Jealousy wears a dark (Moorish) grey cloak
<i>La Frénésie ou le Désespoir sous le Domino noir</i>	Frenzy or Despair wears a Black cloak
<i>L'âme-en peine</i>	<b>The Lost Soul or The Soul in Torment</b>

Jane Clark provides a compelling argument for the relationship of the *ordre* as a political commentary, and loosely traces the coming-to-power of the regent, and his eventual moral deterioration.

The whole of this *ordre* refers to Philippe of Orléans who became Regent of France on the death of his uncle, Louis XIV. This complex man has come down in history as a thoroughly bad lot, but this is not by any means the whole truth. In the same unfortunate position as the Prince de Conti...he had his wings clipped. The highly critical Saint Simon writes of the Duke in sadly sympathetic terms, “When his ambitions were thwarted he took pride in licentiousness. The rakes of Paris gained a hold over him. Resentment at being forced into an unsuitable marriage drove him to seek consolation elsewhere.”<sup>3</sup>

Wilfrid Mellers counters with a slightly different interpretation (invoking ideas of his associate Michael Moran) based upon the meanings inherent to the title of the first piece in the group — *Les Lis naissans* (The Birth or Budding of the Lilies). The lily, for both Mellers and Clark, refers to the *Fleur de lis*, which is the symbol and emblem of French royalty. According to Mellers, the *Fleur de lis* would have never been associated with a Regent. He writes, “An interpretation more in keeping with the literary spirit of the time would...be to regard the *ordre* as a “moral lecture” to the young Dauphin, later Louis XV.”<sup>4</sup> Mellers continues by quoting Moran.

Certainly the Regent’s lascivious life may have inspired Couperin to examine the nature of a tormented soul, but surely as a warning to one whose life was before him rather than as a tribute to one whose life was drawing to its close. This is the only *ordre* that concludes on a note of deepest pessimism. To the Dauphin it would have meant that such a dark fate as is contained in *L’âme-en peine* is inescapable if the passions are allowed to rule reason. If offered to the Regent its unassuaged gloom would have offered no consolation at all, scarcely a helpful gesture from Couperin who was his friend.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Jane Clark, *François Couperin Pièces de Clavecin: The Background* (Oxford: University of Oxford, 1992), 14.

<sup>4</sup> Mellers, *François Couperin*, 413.

<sup>5</sup> Mellers, *François Couperin*, 413–414.

Whether the thematic connection of the whole is a criticism of the Regent himself, or a morality lesson about the tragedies and torment that ensue from bad behavior — with perhaps the Regent as the object — the themes of wavering virtue, and the progressive unfurling of a spiritual and mental state over the course of the *ordre* are common to both interpretations.

The set begins with The Birth or Budding of Lilies. Flowers in bud are traditionally a hallmark of spring and the changing of the seasons. Considering the emblem of the *Fleur de lis* — appropriately or inappropriately ascribed to the Regent or the Dauphin — can symbolize the changing tides of the political climate, although this *ordre* was published in 1722, seven years after the death of Louis XIV. Alternatively, and all royal associations aside, budding flowers can be viewed as representing the beginning — or the *naissance* — of life. The lilies are unopened and filled with promise, symbolizing hope or potential, and the expectation of beauty prior the inevitable wilting that takes place as part of the life cycle. There is beauty, but with it comes sadness, as it is definite that it eventually fades away and ultimately dies. Philippe Beaussant writes:

*Les Lis naissants* trembles with life being born and, at the same time, with the overwhelming sight of *beauty* being born, with the emotional blossoming of a young girl into a woman in full flower... From this contradiction is born a delicate voluptuousness and, at the same time, a tender melancholy.<sup>6</sup>

*Les Rozeaux* (The Reeds) appears next in the *ordre*, which Clark states are “emblems of human frailty.”<sup>7</sup> She continues by quoting seventeenth-century scholars

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<sup>6</sup> Philippe Beaussant, *François Couperin* (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1990), 290.

<sup>7</sup> Jane Clark and Derek Canon, *The Mirror of Human Life: Reflections on François Couperin's Pièces de Clavecin* (Huntingdon, England: King's Music, 2002), 81.

Blaise Pascal and Antoine Furetière to provide further context for her thematic association. “As Pascal said: ‘Man is only a reed, the weakest thing in nature.’ Furetière: ‘*Un esprit faible qui plit comme un Roseau.*’ (A weak spirit that bends like a reed).”<sup>8</sup> Mellers shares Clark’s interpretation, but adds specifically that the piece is a reference to the Regent and his bendable will. In second position, we can think of this as representing the beginning of moral decline — folding under the temptations of life.

Next is *L’Engageante* (The Engaging One or That which Engages), a piece that is named — oddly enough — for items of clothing. In one meaning, an *engageante* is a flounced sleeve made of several layers of lace, which was pinned to an outer sleeve to adorn outfits, popular with women’s fashion beginning in the seventeenth century. “Elegant sleeves which allow beautiful arms to be seen have the name *engageantes*.”<sup>9</sup> Alternatively, an *engageante* refers to “A bow of yellow ribbon that young ladies wear on their breast.”<sup>10</sup> An *engageante*, then, is meant to be alluring — meant to catch the eye of men and pique their interest. Within the narrative of the *ordre*, the piece can be viewed as representing the morally weak man, easily enticed, persuaded, and drawn-in by frivolous things of beauty.

*Les Folies françoises ou les Dominos* follow, which — in one sense — can be considered a microcosm of the *ordre* as whole. The variations move over a trajectory that begins with innocence and purity and ends in the tragedy of madness and turmoil. The

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Antoine Furetière, quoted by Ibid., 81.

pieces that frame the *ordre* — The Budding Lilies and The Lost Soul/Soul in Torment — can be considered as thematically analogous to the pieces that frame the variation set — Virginity and to Frenzy and Despair. Alternatively *Les Folies*, as it is situated within the *ordre*, could thematically represent the cycle of a romantic conquest, which begins after the wavering will of the male (*Les Rozeaux*) bends to the temptations of beauty (*L'Engageante*). The cycle traverses the sweet emotions of innocence, passion, and hope, to the more tumultuous ones of betrayal, jealousy, and despair.

As *Les Folies françoises* concludes, the mood is demented and desperate. *L'Âme-en peine* follows to act as the nadir of this tragic *ordre* — an *ordre* that begins with the fledgling tentativeness of birth and concludes by reeling under the strain of life's sufferings, and mourning the loss of integrity and innocence. As the piece in final position, its expression can be heard in relationship to the spirit of those that came before it. And, as the most wretched of the collection, *L'Âme-en peine* must successfully distinguish itself after the expressive *tour de force* of *Les Folies*. The role of the tragic ending to a tragic story is a significant one, and according to the authors who discuss the piece, *L'Âme-en peine* succeeds well in filling this function. What remains unanswered is how the communication of such pain and loneliness is accomplished musically.

### **The Mood of *L'Âme-en peine*: General Observations from Others**

The few writers who have commented on *L'Âme-en peine*, reproduced in **Example 5.1**, agree that the expression of the piece is singularly dark. However, their

Languissement

5

10

16

21

27

REPRISE

Petite Reprise

Fin

Example 5.1. *L'Âme-en peine*, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

assessments are more descriptive in nature, and unfortunately somewhat perfunctory, and none fully engage the musical material to explore how it contributes to this expression. Clark remains silent about the piece altogether and does not provide any thematic reference at all for *L'Âme-en peine* — a rare omission in her comprehensive discussion about the titles of *Les Pièces de Clavecin*.<sup>11</sup> David Tunley also excludes the piece from his chapter on Couperin's harpsichord compositions.<sup>12</sup> Mellers discusses the tragic state of *L'Âme-en peine* in general and in predominantly symbolic terms:

*L'âme-en peine*, a piece as violent as the *Passacaille*, yet covering only one page. Again Couperin's irony and his melancholy are interdependent, and that *Les Folies Françaises* is riddled with witty japes only makes this epilogue the more agonizing. This is indeed an apotheosis to the disaster of the Regent's life; a soul in purgatory is redeemed by the tragic grace of Couperin's music.<sup>13</sup>

He does, however, share some insight about the music itself. Using measures nine through twelve and fifteen through eighteen as his representative excerpts, Mellers states that the piece “is composed of almost continuously dissonant drooping suspensions, including a high proportion of strained augmented intervals.”<sup>14</sup> Beaussant, citing virtually the same measures, elaborates on the mood of the piece a bit more than Mellers and states that the key of B minor for *L'Âme-en peine*, and for the *ordre* in general, lends itself to a particularly sorrowful setting. “Remember that Marc-Antoine Charpentier described the key of B minor as ‘solitary and melancholy.’ It imparts a faint, almost imperceptible tinge

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<sup>11</sup> Clark and Connon, *Mirror*, 82.

<sup>12</sup> See Tunley, *Perfection of Music*, Chapter 6.

<sup>13</sup> Mellers, *François Couperin*, 413.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

of veiled melancholy to the *Treizième Ordre*.<sup>15</sup> Beussant does add that the piece is filled with suspensions and ornaments, “which are less ornamental than ever”<sup>16</sup> which contributes to what he considers the “sorrowful”<sup>17</sup> emotion of the piece.

These observations are correct and certainly contribute to the piece’s expression. Given that each piece from the *ordre* is in the same key, and includes some type of ornamentation and/or suspension figures, they cannot be *the only* features that distinguish *L’Âme-en peine* as singularly tragic within the group — or at least tragic enough to qualify it as appropriately sorrowful to serve as the concluding narrative to this tragic *ordre*. In the next sections of this chapter, I will expand upon these general observations, as well as reframe them in relationship to other constructs such as form, texture, style, and more specifically, pattern behavior — both individually and in comparison to other pieces in the collection — to illustrate that *The Lost Soul* includes features rooted in a different aesthetic — as aesthetic that affects what I will call the “orientation” of its expression. Investigating how these elements can contribute to the expression of *L’Âme-en peine* will expand our understanding of the piece, and enrich — as well as refine — the parameters for our metaphoric mappings onto the title of a portrait that Mellers considers as “perhaps his [Couperin’s] most impassioned utterance.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Beussant, *François Couperin*, 294.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Mellers, *François Couperin*, 201.

## Additional Thoughts on Mood: Texture, Style, and Emphasis

### *General Observations on Texture and Style*

*L'Âme-en peine* appears directly after *La Frénésie, ou le Désespoir sous le Domino noir* from *Les Folies françaises*. By simply glancing at **Example 5.1**, it is immediately evident that the quality of expression for The Lost or Tormented Soul is in stark contrast to the frantic madness communicated by of Frenzy or Despair. Couperin assigns a performance marking of *languissement* — an archaic form of *languissant* (languishingly) and the direct opposite of frenzy in its meaning and its affect. Rather than tightly wrought, sixteenth-note figures in constant and frenetic motion within a contrapuntal texture as found in Frenzy, block chords — sometimes arpeggiated — dominate the texture of the upper staff of The Lost Soul, particularly in the first eight measures, and move along in an awkward, labored gait throughout the piece. Accompanied by a single line in the bass that moves almost exclusively by step with some octave re-articulations, we hear this combination of parts much like a chorale — a melody accompanied by multiple voices in closed spacing.

Although a homophonic texture is prevalent, contrapuntal devices, as Mellers and Beussant have discussed, are not completely abandoned. Suspensions, both overt and implied, appear throughout the second section of the piece. **Example 5.2a** illustrates a series of overt 7—6 suspensions between the melody and the bass lines in measures fifteen and sixteen of The Lost Soul. This set of suspensions is a result of a canon between the voices. **Example 5.2b–e** reproduces a series of implied suspensions

punctuated by rests, which occurs in the four measures that begin the second reprise.

**Example 5.2e** is the music itself, while **Examples 5.2d, c, and b** represent deeper levels of structure. These three levels illustrate how implied suspensions at the surface of the

**Example 5.2a.** Overt Suspension in *L'Âme-en peine*,  
m. 14–16, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

music also exist at deeper levels of structure between multiple voices. Measures eight through twelve are a sequence. The series of events that takes place in measures eight–ten is reproduced down a step in measures ten–twelve. For example, the implied 6–5 suspension in measure nine, a result of the bass articulating a G while the E in the melody “hangs over” from the measure before, repeats in measure eleven as the D “hangs over” while the bass articulates F#. The suspensions are shown in both cases at levels **c** and **d** of **Example 5.2**. Additional overt and implied suspensions of these types appear in measures eighteen through twenty-two, as well as in parts of the Petite Reprise (again, as a result of a canon between the voices), the presence of which creates a recurring sense of tension over prolonged resolutions.

The contrapuntal and homophonic textures of *L'Âme-en peine* (in different ways) underscore a vocal quality to this piece. The first eight measures are composed in a chorale style with several voices supporting a single melodic line that occupies a narrow range, in a precise — though markedly awkward — rhythmic framework. The second

**Example 5.2b–e.** Implied Suspensions in *L'Âme-en peine*,  
m. 8–12, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

part of the piece, alternating between the tension-filled suspensions and accompanied melodic passages, is more in keeping with a recitative or arioso style of composition,

where a vocal line and accompanying basso continuo interact over the course of the narrative by moving between declamatory (*recitativo secco*) and melodically directed passages. According to David Tunley, this style of composition is not unusual in French vocal writing: “in the Lullian-style recitatives declamation and air often merge imperceptibly”<sup>19</sup> the result of which is a combination of different styles and motion within a single piece in the service of expression. While there is no overt evidence that *L’Âme-en peine* is imitating a vocal recitative in the style of Lully, the piece does incorporate opposing qualities of motion that are suitable to a dramatic vocal style, alternating between more measured, accompanied vocal gestures, and those that are less measured but more interactive with the accompanying voice.

These textural features in *L’Âme-en peine* vary markedly from the variations that precede it. In fact, the compositional style in *The Lost Soul* is set apart from the rest of the pieces within the whole of the *treizième ordre* as well. Take for comparison the opening measures from the three other pieces in the *ordre* — *Les Lis naissans* (The Birth or Budding Lilies), *Les Rozeaux* (The Reeds), and *L’Engageante* (The Engaging One), recreated in **Example 5.3a–c** below. Each of these examples embodies a clear style *brisé* articulation in keeping with the lute tradition inherited by the French clavecin style. In this style the texture is filled with broken chords rather than vertical chorale-like textures.

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<sup>19</sup> Tunley, *Perfection of Music*, 33.

Modérément et uniment

3

**Example 5.3a.** *Les Lis naissans*, m. 1–4, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

Tendrement, sans lenteur

3

**Example 5.3b.** *Les Rozeaux*, m. 1–4, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin



**Example 5.3c.** *L'Engageante*, m. 1–2, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

The musical surface of *Les Lis naissans*, **Example 5.3a**, is exposed and delicate. In narrow voicing in a high register, these opening measures gently and tentatively arpeggiate a single harmony at every half note. The left hand initiates the arpeggiation by articulating a single eighth note, while the right takes over and enters on the second eighth note to complete the ascending arpeggiation one note at a time. *Les Rozeaux* (The Reeds), **Example 5.3b**, also proceeds in *style brisé* in a high register. However, instead of the effect of essentially one note at a time, here the ostinato figure in the left hand is much like an accompanying Alberti bass to the single melody line in the right. The texture, like *Les Lis naissans*, is detached and light. *L'Engageante* (The Engaging One), **Example 5.3c**, progresses in a detached, fluid style. However, the vocal lines are more independent and recall earlier contrapuntal styles, such as in the fourth-species cadential pattern outlining 7–6 suspensions between the soprano and alto lines in measure one. The right hand in *L'Engageante* clearly projects the melody while the left moves much like a walking bass, emphasizing primary notes of the overriding harmony. Together, they

progress in a typical galant chord progression — in modern terms  $i-iv-V-i$ , which moves at one chord per dotted-quarter note. The texture of the somber, thick block chords in the opening of *L'Âme-en peine*, **Example 5.1**, is very different from these other pieces, and even from the ever-changing *Les Folies* variations, which altered textures as appropriate to underscore the expression for each character. As a result, the mood in *The Lost Soul* is decidedly heavy by comparison. Where the pieces in **Example 5.3** are tentative, light, fluid, and engaging, *The Lost Soul* is dense and grave, lurching along from chord to chord. As the last piece of the *ordre*, representing the final stage in this long-suffering descent, this distinct awkward texture seems appropriate.

*Emphasis: Ornamentation and Articulation*

Ornamentation and signs of performance articulation are pervasive in *The Lost Soul*'s texture and contribute to its expression as well as to the vocal quality of the piece. As Beaussant indicates, ornaments in this piece are “less ornamental than ever.”<sup>20</sup> While he does not expand upon what is meant by this statement, it is possible that in this setting, Beaussant considers ornaments as structural to the piece rather than purely decorative. Couperin, however, did not think of ornaments or other signs of articulation as anything but essential. He considered it vital that they be performed exactly as indicated, as they were crucial to compositional affect.

I am always surprised (after the care I have taken to indicate the ornaments appropriate to my pieces, about which I have given, separately, a sufficiently clear explanation in a Method under the title *The Art of Playing the Harpsichord*) to hear people who have learned them without following the correct method. It is an

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<sup>20</sup> Beaussant, *François Couperin*, 294.

unpardonable negligence, especially since it is not at the discretion of the players to place such ornaments where they want them. I declare, therefore, that my pieces must be played according to how I have marked them, and that they will never make a true impression on people of real taste unless played exactly as I have marked them, neither more nor less.<sup>21</sup>

Ornamentation, then, is not to be left to the decision of the performer. Rather, for Couperin, ornaments are deliberately applied to compositions and serve a certain function — whether that function is structural, embellishing, or in the service of articulation — to properly communicate the right affective “impression” to the listener. In short, “ornaments serve a practical purpose: to provide shape and character to the melody.”<sup>22</sup>

Leonard Ratner describes the rhetorical importance of ornamentation in *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style*. After providing a list of different melodic figures in his section on melody and rhetoric, Ratner states:

Most of the figures illustrated above represent what Quantz, 1752, designated as “arbitrary” elaborations, in which a simple melody or interval is ornamented. These elaborations were distinguished from “essential” elaborations, or *agréments*, in which an appoggiatura, trill, or turn was required at a certain point in a melodic line, with or without a sign to indicate the elaboration. Arbitrary elaborations formed part of the continuity of the melodic line; essential elaborations were used principally for accentual nuance.<sup>23</sup>

In *L'Art de Toucher le Clavecin* Couperin calls his list of ornaments and signs *agréments*. Granted, this labeling is not likely to be a direct influence of Quantz, and *agrément* has a generalized meaning of “ornament” or “embellishment”. Yet it is clear that elaborations

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<sup>21</sup> François Couperin, quoted by Tunley, *Perfection of Music*, 106.

<sup>22</sup> Kenneth Kreitner, et al, “Ornaments,” in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/49928pg7> (accessed March 10, 2010).

<sup>23</sup> Leonard Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style*. (New York: Macmillan, 1985), 85.

for Couperin were more “essential” than “arbitrary” because of their ability to help create musical impressions and nuance, and more specifically, because Couperin held certain types of ornaments in reserve depending upon the setting. This suggests that the expressive potential of *agréments* was of particular importance to the composer. For example, in *L'Art de Toucher le Clavecin*, Couperin states:

I have already explained in note values and rests, in the Table of Ornaments which is at the end of my first book, the aspiration and suspension; but I hope that the ideas that I am going to give (although succinct) will not be useless to those who are susceptible of feeling... Concerning the suspension! It is hardly used except in slow and tender pieces.<sup>24</sup>

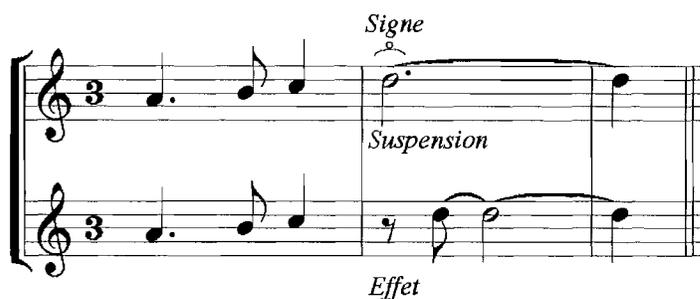
By definition, Couperin’s suspension, recreated from his table of ornaments as **Example 5.4**<sup>25</sup>, is the delay of the arrival of a note by inserting a rest or pause before playing, as opposed to a suspension in a typical contrapuntal setting — a delay created by tying a note across the bar line.<sup>26</sup> With the exception of a more punctuated silence, when compared to a traditional suspension, the overall effect of Couperin’s performance articulation is similar in character — both postpone the arrival of a resolution to create expectancy as well as dissonance with the note that currently sounds. While this particular performance articulation is not notated in *L’Âme-en peine*, the result of traditional contrapuntal suspensions is essentially the same. Those suspensions are a prominent part of the piece’s reprise and contribute to a state of constant tension characterized by the delayed resolution of suspension figures.

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<sup>24</sup> François Couperin, *L'Art de Toucher le Clavecin*, ed. and trans. Margery Halford (Port Washington, NY: Alfred Publishing, 1974), 33–34.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, 13.

<sup>26</sup> Tunley, *Perfection of Music*, 107.



**Example 5.4.** Couperin’s *Agrément* for Suspension, Recreated from *L’Art de Toucher Le Clavecin*, (1716), F. Couperin

There are other ornaments and signs of articulation that, as David Tunley suggests, act more particularly in the service “of ‘expression’ rather than ‘ornamentation’”<sup>27</sup> in Couperin’s pieces. These include the aspiration — the shortening of a note’s duration by inserting a rest after it, essentially the opposite of the suspension; the use of bracket-shaped lines over multiple notes specifying legato (*lié*) articulation; and, new to the third volume of pieces, a comma-like sign meant to indicate that the performer, when concluding a phrase or gesture, should introduce a small silence — much like an audible breath — to punctuate the texture of the piece. While the result of this comma is similar to that of an aspiration, the comma appears to be reserved for breaks between larger units of music, whereas an aspiration can appear as an affective articulation over any given note at any given time within the piece.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

While Couperin's aspiration is not a notated part of *The Lost Soul*, the other two exclusively expressive markings described above are part of the piece and, like suspensions and appoggiaturas, are important elements of its associated mood. The comma marking, to indicate the expression of a breath, articulates and defines the first phrase of the piece, as shown in measures one–four in **Example 5.5**. This comma is one

Languissement

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled "Languissement". It is written in 3/4 time and G major. The score consists of four measures. The first measure contains a half note chord (G4, B4, D5) followed by a quarter rest. The second measure contains a half note chord (G4, B4, D5) followed by a quarter note G4. The third measure contains a half note chord (G4, B4, D5) followed by a quarter note G4. The fourth measure contains a half note chord (G4, B4, D5) followed by a quarter note G4 with a comma marking above it. The comma is circled in red. The score is written on a grand staff with a treble and bass clef.

**Example 5.5.** Expressive Silence in *L'Âme-en peine*,  
m. 4, 13<sup>th</sup> *ordre* (1722), F. Couperin

of several types of silences that pepper the texture of the piece. As will be discussed more in detail in the next section of this chapter, silences contribute in defining the formal structure of *The Lost Soul* by breaking the piece into phrases, gestures, or larger musical ideas, each of which comes from what came before without any real sense of directed melodic development. The comma that appears in **Example 5.5** illustrates one of these formal breaks, arriving at the end of the first phrase, which concludes on a half cadence and indicates that the performer should break — or breathe — by stopping sound completely before progressing onto the next section of music. It is a brief silence, not unlike a marking to indicate a breath in a vocal piece, but important enough to the

expression of the piece that Couperin introduce a marking to signify where and when it should occur.

The other expressive *agrément* in *L'Âme-en peine* is the legato or slur articulation, or what Couperin calls *lié*, and is specifically relevant in terms of motion and musical emphasis in *L'Âme-en peine*. In one respect, a legato marking is not necessarily remarkable — many pieces within musical literature share this articulation as part of the interpretative process. However, according to Ratner, legato was not a standard technique in performance until the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Legato — which became a norm for *declamation* in the nineteenth century — represented a *nuance* in the eighteenth. It was indicated by slurs or by the term *legato*, when it applied to the entire piece...Even the most extended roulades should be articulated often enough to maintain the clarity of declamation and crispness of rhythm.<sup>28</sup>

Clarity, or *detaché*, was the tradition in galant styles and legato more the anomaly. For France specifically, it was the *style brisé*, or broken-chord articulation, that prevailed in music for the harpsichord.

The French clavecin style, best known from the suites of François Couperin and Rameau, was distinguished by elaborate ornamentation...and by the *style brisé*, the “broken” style adapted from French lute music, in which notes of a chord were played in succession instead of simultaneously.<sup>29</sup>

It follows that the atypical presence of legato markings in music of the galant style suggests that a particular mood or specific affect is to be communicated by the piece.

Based on Ratner’s statement, Couperin’s *The Lost Soul* is exceptional in two respects. First, a significant portion of the piece’s texture is comprised of vertical

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<sup>28</sup> Ratner, *Classic Music*, 192-193.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 231.

sonorities rather than the more typical *style brisé*. Some chords are to be arpeggiated, as specified by an appropriate *agrément*, but that marking is infrequent. For the most part all members of the chord are to sound simultaneously (unless another *agrément* appears, such as a mordent or a trill, altering the arrival point of certain chord members), which contributes to the dense and heavy character of the piece. Second, *L'Âme-en peine* includes multiple legato (*lié*) markings. Considered a nuance rather than a norm, the presence of *lié* suggests that they play a particular affective role in the piece, emphasizing and connecting different notes and figures to produce various sentiments. Ratner calls upon the *Klavierschule* (1789) of Daniel Gottlob Türk to discuss how emphasis in performance affects expression.

The *heavy* or *light* performance adds profoundly to the expression of the ruling sentiment...it is not possible to determine in each case the degree of lightness or heaviness. The effect depends on the ways in which *staccato*, *connection* [*Tragen*, *appoggiato*, *portamento di voce*], *slurring* and *sustaining* [*Schleifen*] are properly used.<sup>30</sup>

He continues, “on the other hand, sorrowful and similar affects call for *slurring* and *sustaining* of tones. This latter type of composition carries such indications as: *con afflizione*, *con amarezza*, *lagrimoso*, *languido*, *mesto*, etc.”<sup>31</sup>

While Türk flourished later in the eighteenth century, his treatise not only engages concepts of expression, it also reflects knowledge of the French musical vocabulary. In fact, Ratner states that many composers of the German and Austrian school were influenced by the French clavecin style. “German composers made use of the French

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<sup>30</sup> Daniel Gottlob Türk, quoted by Ratner, *Classic Music*, 193.

<sup>31</sup> Ratner, *Classic Music*, 193.

clavecin style frequently: the treatises of Marpurg, 1755, C.P.E. Bach, 1753, and Türk, 1789, show a strong French orientation; Kirnberger's *Recueil*, circa 1783, is largely made up of French dances for clavecin."<sup>32</sup> Türk's ideas can have a broader application and inform our understanding of repertoire from earlier in the century, especially that which involves execution of ornamentation — a hallmark of the French style — as well as general ideas such as emphasis in performance and its influence on expression in music.

Couperin's *L'Âme-en peine* — with its thick texture, frequently occurring legato articulations, and a general performance marking of *languissement* (similar in meaning Türk's Italian *languido* mentioned above) — can be considered a *heavy* piece, sorrowful in character. And as such, the presence of legato slurs, other ornaments that affect articulation, and the "essential" *agrément* of the appoggiatura, communicates something particular about emphasis in the piece — what is emphasized, such as a dissonance, can contribute significantly to expression.

On the one hand, the *lié* in *L'Âme-en peine* act to connect gestures that might otherwise be interpreted as detached, such as between two notes that outline a skip or leap, as illustrated in **Examples 5.6a** and **b**. The leaps in both the alto voice at the downbeat of measure four, as well as the bass of measure fifteen appear with legato slurs. Within a contour that already moves predominantly by step within a narrow range, connecting the few skips that do exist in the piece with legato markings contributes further to the heaviness we experience as part of the motion. The Lost Soul staggers along as the legato markings bear down on the leaps to perpetuate an expression of

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 351.

a) m. 4



b) m. 15



**Example 5.6a–b.** Legato *lié* in *L'Âme-en peine*, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

dragging or stickiness — almost like moving through molasses or attempting to walk but being restrained by something — impeding motion yet not stopping it completely. This kind of expression is also achieved through the *coulé*, or slide, which occurs between melodic skips of a third as shown in **Example 5.7**. Found mostly in the upper stave of this piece, the *coulé* fills in either ascending or descending thirds by adding in the passing

tone. Instead of connecting exclusively by articulation, Couperin also connects by adding in missing notes, which contributes to the heaviness and overwhelming gravity of the piece.

The image shows two musical staves for a piece in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The top staff is labeled 'Coulé as written' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Coulé as played'. Both staves show a sequence of notes with slurs and accents. In the 'Coulé as written' version, a slur covers a group of notes, and a circle highlights a specific note. In the 'Coulé as played' version, the slur is extended to include additional notes, and a circle highlights a different note, illustrating the difference in articulation and phrasing.

**Example 5.7.** *Coulé Agrément* Written and Played in *L'Âme-en peine*, m. 14, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

Legato slurs also appear over ascending and descending stepwise figures, as illustrated in the bass line of measure one below in **Example 5.8**. In this example, the legato marking appears over a two-note stepwise figure, the D and the C#, in the bass line of measure one of *L'Âme-en peine*. The figure, however, is part of a larger three-note descending pattern of D, C#, and B, or  $\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ , that completes its gesture on the downbeat of measure two. In this stepwise configuration, the *lié* appearing over the first two notes of a three-note pattern allows us to interpret the articulation in a certain way: the articulation emphasizes, or leans into, the second *dissonant* note of the gesture — the C#. This effect is enhanced by the presence of another embellishment above this dissonant

note: the long mordent. In fact, in almost every situation where legato markings appear over stepwise gestures in *L'Âme-en peine*, connecting two notes within a three-note



**Example 5.8.** Legato *lié* in *L'Âme-en peine*, m. 1–2, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

gesture, the note emphasized is the dissonant portion of the pattern, and is further enhanced by the presence of a trill. Combined, these two *agréments* form either a *tremblement appuyé et lié* (a tied stressed trill) or a *tremblement lié sans être appuyé* (a tied trill that is not stressed). Stressed versus not stressed has to do with the length of the trill in relation to the durational value of the first note, as illustrated in **Example 5.9a** and **b**.<sup>33</sup> In either of these examples, recreated from *L'Art de Toucher le Clavecin*, the note with the trill is highlighted with the added ornament. This is the case, for example, in measures three, five, and seven of the first part of the piece, and in measures nine, eleven, thirteen, twenty-six, and thirty in the second. In this application, the legato markings not

<sup>33</sup> Example 5.9a and b is based upon the interpretation of a *tremblement appuyé et lié* and a *tremblement lié sans être appuyé* from Couperin's Table of Ornaments. Reproduced from Couperin, *L'Art de Toucher le Clavecin*, 17.

only underscore the gravity and heaviness of voice motion, but also emphasize dissonance within the overall harmonic contour of the gesture.

**Example 5.9a–b.** Couperin’s *Agrément* for Stressed and Unstressed Trill with *Legato lié*, recreated from *L’Art de Toucher Le Clavecin*, (1716), F. Couperin

The third application of the legato marking in *The Lost Soul* is in combination with the appoggiatura. The marking connects the embellishment and its resolving structural note of the chord that follows, as illustrated in **Example 5.10** at the cadence of the first half of the piece in measure eight.

**Example 5.10.** Cadential Appoggiatura with *Legato lié* in *L’Âme-en peine*, m. 7–8, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

In the previous example of *lié* connecting two notes moving by step the emphasis is on the second note of the two-note unit. Although still binding the two notes in a legato articulation in the above example, the emphasis is on the first note of the two-note unit, the embellishing and dissonant appoggiatura, rather than on the second note that resolves the dissonance.

The appoggiatura, or *port de voix*, is an essential embellishment in Quantz's classifications and one that, according to Ratner, is one of the primary expressive dissonances in the galant vocabulary in both instrumental and vocal genres.

For the classic style, the most striking dissonance is the *appoggiatura*, an unprepared accented dissonance. The appoggiatura is an arresting sound that creates an intense expressive nuance, and a grateful release as it resolves by step into the chord. It is the chief dissonance of the free, or galant, style.<sup>34</sup>

Ratner states that the appoggiatura permeates, for example, Mozart's instrumental music. "They [appoggiaturas] constitute one of the chief ingredients of his musical speech and show specifically the degree of Italian influence in his music."<sup>35</sup> They also appear in his vocal music to lend what Ratner considers a rhetorical "poignancy" to passages.<sup>36</sup> Beyond Mozart, appoggiaturas were commonly found in eighteenth-century opera. "One convention observed consistently in eighteenth-century opera was the addition of an appoggiatura at the end of a line in a recitative when the phrase closed...the singer took

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<sup>34</sup> Ratner, *Classic Music*, 62.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 63.

the appoggiatura upon the first tone, as an expressive nuance.<sup>37</sup> **Example 5.10** from The Lost Soul illustrates this vocal nuance — an appoggiatura appears at the end of the phrase upon the close of a Phrygian half cadence.

Appoggiaturas, then, serve an expressive purpose, communicating particular moods and emotions as needed, which, as an accented dissonance, tend to be more plaintive. As the most frequently occurring embellishment in *L'Âme-en peine*, the appoggiaturas increase the expression of mournfulness and sorrow in an already weighty piece. The combined effect of an appoggiatura with a legato articulation is another example of ornamentation affecting expression: The emphasis is on dissonance as well as on the articulation between notes.

Couperin clearly states that *agréments* must be interpreted properly as they are essential to communicating the appropriate sentiment of a piece, indicating that ornaments are much more than arbitrary flourishes. His use of *lié* in these various situations, as well as other embellishments described above, suggests that these markings play a necessary role in the expression and mood of *L'Âme-en peine*. An articulation of legato slurs and *coulé* over skips contributes to the constant connection between notes, which expresses heaviness or a burdened, oppressive state of motion in this piece. A legato slur over a two-note stepwise gesture, or between an appoggiatura and its resolving note, not only enhances this expression but also affects emphasis, which in this setting is on the dissonant moment of the gesture. Calling out a stepwise gesture with a slur, which already implies a more legato interpretation than a leap would, allows us to consider

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 197.

these embellishments as having special meaning in the piece. These markings, then, can affect what is emphasized and, in turn, what is expressed.

The gravity of mood expressed by the dense vertical sonorities and drooping suspensions in the texture of *The Lost Soul* is clearly supported by Couperin's articulations and essential embellishments. These markings underscore an emphasis on dissonance as well as heaviness, which in turn express a burdened and almost unbearably troubled state of mind for the subject of this piece. Any opportunity for lightness is eliminated — the application of *lié* removes moments of silence that would otherwise occur through leaps or through a detached articulation more typical to the French clavécin style. When silence does occur, it punctuates the texture and is in the service of defining gestures within the formal structure of the piece. The next section of this chapter will discuss how form (generated by the combination of seemingly disparate gestures that suggest a different compositional aesthetic) and pattern behavior combine with elements of texture and ornamentation to underscore the expression of sorrow and grief in *The Lost Soul*.

### **Expression: Form, Aesthetic, and Pattern**

#### *Form and Aesthetic*

For this final tragic episode of the *treizième ordre*, Couperin reverts to a binary dance structure characteristic to many of the movements throughout his keyboard compositions. However, the ways in which the musical units are organized contribute both to the piece's wandering quality of motion, and also to its perseverant expression.

The phrase units in *L'Âme-en peine* are defined by cadences — or *clausulae* (closing formulae) — and also by silence, which punctuates the piece's texture in an apparently intentional way and contributes to how gestures are grouped within the piece. Couperin's use of silence occurs in three primary ways. First, it occurs in both voices simultaneously — a rare occasion in *The Lost Soul* — as indicated by the expressive *agrément* of the comma-like breath at the close of the first phrase in measure four. Second, silence occurs in one voice, particularly in the bass to begin an imitative gesture, such as in measures fourteen and fifteen, twenty-four and twenty-five, and in the *Petite reprise*. And finally, it occurs by alternating rests between the two voices in a more hocket-like style, as found in measures eight–twelve. These three types of silences are circled in **Example 5.11** below.

While punctuating the texture, these silences coordinate either with the beginnings of gestures or with the ends of phrases at cadence points (or *clausulae*). The gestures appear to be grouped as depicted by the brackets in **Example 5.12** below. The first section of the piece up to the double bar includes eight measures that divide into two four-measure phrases, each of which ends in a cadence. The first phrase, labeled “A” in **Example 5.12**, begins in B minor and concludes at the downbeat of measure four at the expressive “breath” and first half cadence. The second phrase labeled “A” begins immediately after this breath, with a modified version of the opening gesture in measure one, and ends with a Phrygian half cadence in measure eight. These two phrases, in turn, break into two two-measure gestures each. Because of the similarity of opening material in each of these two phrases, these smaller gestures are labeled as “a” and “a” in phrases

Langouissement

5

10

16

21

27

Petite Reprise

Fin

**Example 5.11.** Use of Silence to Define Gesture in  
*L'Âme-en peine*, m. 7–8, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

The musical score is for a 13th-order piece in 3/4 time, D major. It begins with a *Languissement* marking. The formal diagram consists of the following sections:

- A:** Measures 1-5.
- A':** Measures 6-7.
- B:** Measures 8-15. A section labeled **REPRISE** begins at measure 12.
- B':** Measures 16-20.
- Petite Reprise:** Measures 21-26.
- Fin:** Measures 27-30.

Measure numbers 5, 10, 16, 21, and 27 are indicated at the start of their respective staves. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Example 5.12. Formal Diagram for *L'Âme-en peine*, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

“A” and “A” respectively in **Example 5.12**. Smaller gestures “b” and “c” represent the different closing material in these phrases.

Given the discomfort and awkwardness expressed by this piece, the first section of *L'Âme-en peine* is remarkably symmetrical in its phrase structure and length. In fact, with the similar opening material between the two phrases, it could be considered as a parallel period, with the exception of the second half cadence to end the section, leaving the phrase open. As expected, the second reprise is different in its formal organization. However, instead of developing a melodic theme or motive over the course of the second section of the binary form — a common process in much galant dance music from the period — the phrase units appear to involve new and different material, which progresses over the course of the piece in a series of repeating gestures that move one into the next.

As in this first section of the piece, these repeating gestures or phrase units are still defined by silence and cadence. Immediately after the double bar, the first four-bar gesture, labeled as “d” in **Example 5.12**, includes the implied suspensions and hocket-like rests between the voices discussed earlier in this chapter. This four-bar unit is comprised of a single two-measure event — measures nine and ten briefly touching on the key of E minor — followed by the same event repeated down a step in measures eleven and twelve. This second two-measure event closes on a type of evaded cadence in the tonic key — or what Gjerdingen would call a *clausula altizan* — at the downbeat of measure twelve.<sup>38</sup> Back in B minor, the next phrase unit begins in measure twelve,

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<sup>38</sup> The *clausula altizan*, or what is often called an evaded cadence in modern terminology, progresses with the bass moving  $\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}$  to end the phrase. According to Gjerdingen, this is called *altizan* because the bass takes on a voice-leading pattern more commonly found in the alto line in polyphonic structures. See Robert

labeled as “e” in **Example 5.12**, and continues until to the downbeat measure fourteen, which ends on another open half cadence along with a coordinated silence. Finally, the next phrase unit, labeled as “f” in **Example 5.12**, features a canon between the melody and bass starting in measure fourteen, and continues through a series of overt 7–6 suspensions previously described in this chapter. The canon breaks at the end of measure sixteen to prepare for a cadence in F# in measure eighteen — the first authentic cadence in the piece. This authentic cadence on F# marks the symmetrical middle point of the second half (second reprise) of the piece, and as such measures nine through eighteen can be considered as a larger phrase group, which is labeled as “B” in **Example 5.12**.

To complete the final stages of *The Lost Soul*, the same series of phrases that comprised the larger phrase group “B” above, begins again in the middle of measure eighteen and continues until the downbeat of measure twenty-eight. The first two phrases are exactly the same as before and are labeled as such (“d” and “e”) in **Example 5.12**. As would be expected, the material in the third phrase is different to accommodate the harmonic shift for an authentic cadence in the home key of B minor in measure twenty-eight, rather than in the key of F# as found in measure eighteen. Because of this difference, the third phrase is labeled as “f” in **Example 5.12**. Together, they form the second larger phrase group of “C” in this piece. Couperin appends a four-measure *Petite Reprise* to close the piece — a feature common to many of the binary forms in his harpsichord collection, which often serves as a confirmation of material that has come immediately before it. In the case of *The Lost Soul*’s *Petite Reprise*, the musical material

is very similar to phrases “f”, which comes immediately before it, as well as to “f” from earlier in the piece. It is labeled as “f” in **Example 5.12**, and confirms the key of B minor with another authentic cadence in the last measure of the piece.

This string of phrases combines to generate the binary form of *L'Âme-en peine*. As they are combined there is a peculiar sense of motion, and yet there is a remarkable symmetry to the organization of the form. Each phrase exists as a unit, and when material is repeated the phrase repeats in its entirety — there is no development of a theme or motive, or the sequencing of ideas to act as connectives between sections. Melodic contour, for the most part, is incredibly linear moving mostly by step with the exception of a shift in register that occurs in measure six as the first half of the piece comes to a close, and range is narrow.<sup>39</sup> Harmonic vocabulary is fairly conservative — key areas never go far from B minor — and all internal cadences are open half cadences with the exception of one authentic resolution in F# at measure eighteen.

The Lost Soul is relatively “simple” in its organization and harmonic range, yet it is still compelling and effective in producing an expression of suffering, pain, and discomfort. In a piece that is not complicated, what is it that projects this sort of affect? In terms of form and aesthetics, the type of phrase arrangement and organization in *L'Âme-en peine* is similar to ideas Tunley suggests as being hallmarks of French lyricism. When discussing the various ways in which melodies can be organized following principles of French styles, he states that at times, melodies can be decidedly “un-Italian” in their formal configurations.

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<sup>39</sup> This shift can be heard as being significant to the expression and meaning of the piece, which will be discussed in the section of this chapter dedicated to pattern behavior.

...the overall structure [of melodies] consists of one phrase simply complementing what has gone before, producing an effect of ordered symmetry, which stands in striking contrast to the way Italian composers more usually generated their melodies through the process of motivic development. The result was that, at their most characteristic, Italian structures give the impression of organic growth through the tendency to develop the short rhythmic/melodic motives into longer sequential patterns...What are we to make of a melodic style in which the landmarks so familiar in Italian Baroque music are missing in the French? The first thing is to cast off any preconceived ideas about the importance of ‘thematic development’ or ‘thematic conciseness’ and to recognize that there is a vast amount of music in which this plays no part at all. What does seem to be universal is melodic *shape* upon which at certain times and in certain schools the notion of thematicism has been imposed. Thus one needs to see beyond the familiar processes of the baroque and classical periods to the wider concept of musical lyricism...What is generally found in fine melodic writing is a flight of notes grouped into different spans, each span complementing the others to produce an overall satisfying shape. One of the most satisfying musical shapes is the arch...Combined with the absence of melodic angularity and lengthy sequential passages the resultant style is similar in many ways to features of the French lyrical tradition inherited by Couperin, whether in sacred, secular, vocal or instrumental music. Through retaining much of the *prima prattica* of the sixteenth century long after it had given way to *seconda prattica* in seventeenth century Italy, French composers found roots of that *douceur* which lies at the heart of the French style. It was thus not only respect for the text that led composers in France to avoid sequential patterning and short repetitions, but also deference to past practice, which to a certain extent can be recognized also in the harmony. One has the feeling that, as in Renaissance practice, it is the melody that creates the harmony rather than the other way around.<sup>40</sup>

Tunley is quoted here at length in order illustrate that, as part of the French lyric style, there are different sets of compositional qualities and priorities to consider when assessing music of Couperin and his contemporaries. Many of these are arguably part of *L'Âme-en peine*: for example, melodic ideas are not thematically developed in the piece, and phrases that move from one to the next, “complementing” each other and creating an overall symmetry to the piece. A symmetrical organization with regularly repeating units can engender a sense of familiarity with the material and a level of expectation for the

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<sup>40</sup> Tunley, *Perfection of Music*, 34–35.

listener. When things repeat we can anticipate what is about to come next. The symmetry, then, allows us to hear the punctuations in the texture as delays, contributing to the strained motion expressed by this piece

Tunley's statements give some meaning to a suggested philosophy behind the formal organization of pieces with these qualities. Susan McClary suggests that this kind of compositional process underscores an aesthetic of stasis or timelessness common to seventeenth-century thought, and consequently, to the music of Couperin's predecessors.

As it happens, this sense of timelessness was valued not only by the centers of power in France, but also by many of those disenfranchised by Absolutism. In his classic study *The Hidden God*, Lucien Goldmann argues that the Port Royal philosophers advocated withdrawal from the world in part as a way of coping with an eroded sense of political agency; he shows how they aspired to an ideal of attentive motionlessness while discouraging future-oriented thought and beliefs in progress.<sup>41</sup>

To demonstrate this ideal of timelessness in music, McClary provides a detailed analysis of a *tombeau* by D'Anglebert. Acknowledging the dangers of selecting only one piece for assessment — and a genre that is melancholy by nature — she first itemizes what the piece “lacks” stylistically: for example sequences, motivic development, imitative counterpoint, adventuresome key relationships, and an overall sense of a goal — qualities similar to what both Tunley and McClary describe as Italian characteristics that pervade how we approach analysis. However, it is this perception that music from the seventeenth-century is *lacking* something that prevents deeper understanding of what the music *does* have.

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<sup>41</sup> Susan McClary, “Temporality and Ideology: Qualities of Motion in Seventeenth-Century French Music,” *ECHO: a Music-Centered Journal* 2/2 (Fall 2000) [http://www.humnet\\_ucl.edu/echo](http://www.humnet_ucl.edu/echo) (accessed July 27, 2008): 36.

It is this element of multi-leveled goal orientation, I would argue, that people unaccustomed to French seventeenth-century music miss the most: to the extent that progressive tonality counts as ‘how music is supposed to work,’ its absence spells pure and simple incompetence. Yet if we take seriously the choices made by D’Anglebert and his colleagues, we can glean insights into a society quite alien from the one that gave our own dominant tradition not only its compositional techniques, but also its sense of being. For D’Anglebert worked within a culture that for a wide variety of reasons wished to promote sensibilities of timelessness.<sup>42</sup>

For a composer, creating this type of affect is difficult because, as McClary states, “music by its very nature unfolds through time; of all media it would seem the most resistant to the project of conveying immobility.”<sup>43</sup> For McClary, the concept of stasis is achieved by producing “an experience of time in which the listener is absorbed by each present instant.”<sup>44</sup> D’Anglebert accomplishes this by providing events in the piece that focus our attention on the moment at hand, allowing the listener to relish dissonances, suspensions, extended ornaments, anticipations, and appoggiaturas. These features take hold, prolonging the moment, balancing “two different conceptions of rhythmic activity: what the French referred to as *Mesure* and *Mouvement*.”<sup>45</sup> Even for Couperin, these ideas are relevant. He states, “*mesure* defines the number and equality of the beats. *Cadence* or *mouvement* is properly the spirit and soul that it is necessary to add.”<sup>46</sup>

Arguably, McClary’s list of devices is present in myriad other pieces, and whether or not they produce qualities equivalent to timelessness remains a question. However, it

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>46</sup> François Couperin as quoted by Ibid.

is undeniable that these techniques are critical to expression, and in particular settings that expression can represent many things such as despair, sadness, yearning, or contemplation. McClary's devices are also defining features of the structure of the piece, which should not be considered faulty for lacking other qualities. D'Anglebert's *tombeau* is expected to be mournful, and as such, compositional devices that focus attention and provide opportunities for reflection are appropriate.

McClary's thoughts are specific to music from the seventeenth century, and yet, as Tunley points out, traditions can continue and have influence on later generations. While there is no direct evidence that Couperin composed *L'Âme-en peine* with an aesthetic of timelessness or absorption in mind, it is clear that the compositional features of the piece (use of ornamentation, articulation, emphasis, style, and texture) and how the form is structured (complementary phrase units and symmetrical grouping) can be seen as contributing to a contemplative — and even mournful — aesthetic, as well as to the qualities of motion in *The Lost Soul*. These features and formal elements, expressing general qualities such as sorrow or sadness, can map appropriately onto ideas related to death — the loss of a soul. However, in the final section of this chapter, I will discuss how pattern behavior within the first eight measures of *L'Âme-en peine*, not only underscores the mournful expression of the piece and associated mapping onto death, but also enhances and refines this meaning to include metaphors for being adrift — wandering aimlessly — and for having fallen — the damnation of the soul.

*Pattern Behavior*

All pieces from the *treizième ordre*, with the exception of *L'Engageante*, begin with a Do–Re–Mi opening schema. *L'Engageante*, however, does include an ascending third ( $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\hat{b}3$ ) as part of the opening bass line. The opening measures of *Les Lis naissans*, *Les Rozeaux*, and the theme from *Les Folies françoises ou les Dominos, La Virginité*, appear as **Example 5.13a–c**. Each of these examples clearly projects the ascending third

Moderement et uniment

**Example 5.13a.** *Les Lis naissans*, m. 0–1, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

Tendrement, sans lenteur

**Example 5.13b.** *Les Rozeaux*, m. 0–1, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

Gracieusement

**Example 5.13c.** *La Virginité*, m. 1–3, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

(B–C#–D or  $\hat{1}$ – $\hat{2}$ – $\hat{b}3$ ) in the melody line, and the lower-neighbor figure (B–A#–B or  $\hat{1}$ – $\hat{7}$ – $\hat{1}$ ) in the bass. All begin in metrically stable locations and establish a stable first stage of the pattern. If *L'Âme-en peine* had started in a way similar to its counterparts in **Example 5.13**, it would look something like **Example 5.14**.

**Example 5.14.** Alternate Opening for *L'Âme-en peine*  
Beginning on Downbeat; Ascending Third in Melody

The first stage of the Do–Re–Mi pattern begins on the downbeat of measure one with scale degree  $\hat{1}$ , B, in both the melody and the bass voices. This sustains until beat three of the measure for the second stage of the pattern outlining the chord of the fifth (the melody stepping up to C# and the bass stepping down to A#), which resolves on the downbeat of measure two for the third and final stage of the gambit, finishing the ascent to D in the melody and B in the bass.

The actual opening of *L'Âme-en peine*, however, appears in **Example 5.15b** and is distinct from the other members of the thirteenth *ordre*. The piece does not open with

**Example 5.15a–b.** *L'Âme-en peine*, m. 0–1, 13<sup>th</sup> *ordre* (1722), F. Couperin

the ascending third of the Do–Re–Mi gambit (B–C#–D) of in the melody and accompanying B–A#–B in the bass on metrically stable location. Rather, the voices are inverted: Do–Re–Mi — or  $\hat{1}$ – $\hat{2}$ – $\hat{b}\hat{3}$  — appears in the bass, while the lower neighbor —  $\hat{1}$ –

$\hat{7}-\hat{1}$  — is in the melody as shown in **Example 5.15a**. In one way, this opening can be heard as an anacrusis. In this hearing, the inverted Do–Re–Mi acts as a pick-up to a melodic Do–Re–Mi over a bass that moves Mi–Re–Do starting in measure one. However, in many other pieces that begin with an anacrusis, such as *Les Lis naissans* and *Les Rozeaux* (ref. **Example 5.3b**), the anacrusis incorporates the first (and sometimes second) structural stages of the opening gambit for the piece, underscoring the importance of the anacrusis from time to time at the surface level of the music in terms of pattern behavior. In this hearing, the anacrusis of *L'Âme-en peine* can be considered as the opening gambit to the piece.

According to Gjerdingen, the inverted gambit featured as the opening to *The Lost Soul* is a typical variant to the Do–Re–Mi schema.<sup>47</sup> But what is not typical is the metric irregularity of the pattern's disposition. As with the opening of *La Frénésie*, the final variation in *Les Folies françoises*, the inaugural stage of the gambit is unstable. In *L'Âme-en peine* the pattern begins on the weak “and” of beat two of an anacrusis with an eighth-note duration. The second unstable part of the gambit — A# in the melody and C# in the bass — is emphasized on beat three of the same anacrusis with a quarter-note duration. The gambit reaches its third stage on the downbeat of measure one. Even in this inverted configuration, the opening pattern could have been positioned more stably by starting on the downbeat, as illustrated in **Example 5.16a** and **b**.

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<sup>47</sup> See Chapter 6 in Gjerdingen, *Music in the Galant Style*.

Not only is *The Lost Soul* the only piece from the *ordre* to present the inverted form of the opening Do–Re–Mi, it is also the only piece to fill out the second stage with a



**Example 5.16a–b.** Alternate Opening for *L'Âme-en Peine*  
Beginning on Downbeat; Ascending Third in Bass

diminished sonority, as illustrated in **Example 5.15b**. The second unstable stage is emphasized both by metric placement and by a dissonance, the latter feature being significant to the final part of the gambit as well. As the pattern moves to its third stage, an appoggiatura is added to the alto voice, delaying resolution and emphasizing dissonance in a stage typically associated with harmonic consonance. The combined effect of the opening two durations (short—long) and the dissonant second stage of this pattern is a lurch forward, much like taking a staggering first step the landing spot of which is insecure or unknown.

As with *Frenzy* and *Despair*, instability is important to *The Lost Soul*'s expression. In *Frenzy*, that instability represents hysteria, lack of calm, and constant motion without purpose to underscore the emotional state of the character. In *L'Âme-en*

*peine*, instability can be seen as having different meanings related to, for example, suffering and sorrow — appropriate to the title of the piece — particularly in the second reprise. However, the pattern behavior within the remaining measures of the first reprise, suggests that these unstable dissonant moments have an expanded meaning — one that represents the discomfort associated with having lost one's way.

If *L'Âme-en peine* were to continue in a manner complementary to what appears in **Example 5.14**, we would expect the progression of patterns to look something like the material in **Examples 5.17a** and **b**. In **Example 5.17a**, the Do–Re–Mi gambit with the

**Example 5.17a.** Alternate Continuation for *L'Âme-en Peine*  
Ascending Do–Re–Mi Followed by a Phrygian Descent

**Example 5.17b.** Alternate Continuation for *L'Âme-en Peine*  
Flipped Do–Re–Mi Followed by a Prinner Riposte over Cadence

ascending third on top is balanced by a descending, elided tetrachord pattern much like examples from *Les Folies* variations. **Example 5.17b** reflects another possible combination of stylistic schemata — the inverted Do–Re–Mi gambit is followed by a Prinner riposte to finish the phrase unit.

The actual continuation of the *L'Âme-en peine* appears as **Example 5.18b**.

**Example 5.18a–b.** *L'Âme-en peine*, m. 0–2, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

The inverted Do–Re–Mi gambit that concludes in measure one is followed by an ascending third in the melody ( $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-b\hat{3}$ ) over a descending third in the bass ( $b\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ ). It begins on the “and” of beat two of the same measure and concludes on the downbeat of measure three, possessing the same qualities of rhythmic awkwardness — or lurching motion — as the opening gambit. The combination of these two patterns results in stepwise motion in both the melody and the bass voices. The melody moves  $\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}$  and

then ascends  $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-b\hat{3}$ . The bass also moves by step:  $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-b\hat{3}$  with an octave re-articulation on  $b\hat{3}$ , beat two, and then back down again to scale degree  $\hat{1}$  from  $b\hat{3}$  ( $b\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ ). In this gesture, the bass line retraces its steps while the melody continues its ascent.

With such conjunct lines in both the melody and bass voices, the awkwardness of motion and general discomfort is surprising. The metric placement of these two patterns contributes to the affect. As illustrated in **Example 5.18a**, the first pattern starts on the “and” of the anacrusis, while the second pattern does the same and begins after a rest on the “and” of measure one. The combining of these patterns also contributes to these sensibilities. The two patterns:  $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$  and  $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-b\hat{3}$  in the melody, and  $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-b\hat{3}$  and  $b\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$  in the bass, are non-elided patterns. According to Larson’s theory of musical forces, elided patterns are like gracefully fused physical motions. Taking the pitch content from the opening melodic patterns as an example ( $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$  and  $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-b\hat{3}$ ), when the two patterns elide, musical inertia carries through the elided and stable pitch to change direction on the unstable part of the gesture.<sup>48</sup> When this occurs, the two three-note patterns:  $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$  and  $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-b\hat{3}$  become one seamless gesture of  $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}-\hat{2}-b\hat{3}$ .

One could think of these similar patterns in *L’Âme-en peine* as elided at a deeper level of structure. But the rests interrupt this elision. In *L’Âme-en peine*, the interrupted succession of the patterns in both voices of **Example 5.18a** affects the flow — or lack of it — in the opening measures of the piece. The music constantly starts and stops

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<sup>48</sup> See Steve Larson, “Musical Gestures and Musical Forces: Evidence from Music-Theoretical Misunderstandings,” in *Music and Gesture*, edited by Anthony Gritten and Elaine King, (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 61–74.

alternating between tonic and diminished chords, expressing uneasy movement and discomfort. In keeping with the view that the “interrupted” patterns are elided at a deeper level, suggests that the underlying structure of these combined patterns is predictable. The divergent timing of these patterns is experienced as divergent in part because of the typicality of, and expectation for, the thing that is interrupted

Extending these observations to the next part of the phrase to the cadence in measure four will help to solidify how the pattern behavior in these opening measures can be viewed as representing a soul or person being physically lost, and having gone off course, wandering and trying to find its way. The continuation of the first phrase of the *Lost Soul* (measures three–five) appears as **Example 5.19b**. The melody begins in a

The musical score consists of three systems. The first system shows the vocal line (treble clef) and bass line (bass clef) for measures 0-4. The vocal line starts with a 'Do-Re-Mi' pattern (D4-E4-F#4) in measure 0, followed by an 'Interrupted' pattern (G4-A4-B4) in measure 1, and an 'Elided' pattern (C5-B4-A4) in measure 2. The bass line provides accompaniment with patterns like 1-2-3 and 3-2-1. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-7 above or below notes. The second system shows the piano accompaniment (treble and bass clefs) for measures 0-4. The piano part features chords and arpeggiated figures. The third system shows the continuation of the piano accompaniment for measures 0-4.

**Example 5.19a–b.** Succession of Three-Note Patterns (Interrupted and Elided) in *L’Âme-en peine*, m. 0–4, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

descending three-note pattern  $\hat{b}3-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ , which combines with a lower neighbor pattern  $\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}$  that then leaps down to  $F\# (\hat{5})$ . The bass completes the passage and arrives on  $\hat{7}$  but

then continues its motion to  $\hat{5}$  on beat two of the measure. This moment can be heard as the conclusion of the first phrase, which ends in a “half close” on  $\hat{7}$  rather than in a half cadence on  $\hat{5}$  in the bass. In the second phrase, the bass proceeds similarly to its motion in the first phrase with two “interrupted” three-note patterns —  $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-b\hat{3}$  and  $b\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ . It continues its descent by step to close on the first half cadence of the piece on  $\hat{7}$ . The patterns in this section of the phrase are elided, which we would expect to give rise to a smoother sense of motion in the piece. However, there remains an overriding lurching effect and lack of fluidity to the movement.

Contrary to this perceived lack of fluidity is the symmetry of the composite voice-leading strands in both the melody and bass lines in this passage. From the anacrusis to the first half cadence in measure four, both the melody and bass move almost exclusively by step. The melody proceeds as follows: two “interrupted” (non-elided) three-note patterns ( $\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}$ ) and ( $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-b\hat{3}$ ) followed by two elided three-note patterns ( $b\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}-\hat{7}-\hat{1}$ ), to create a completely symmetrical melodic contour. The bass does this as well by alternating between ascending and descending thirds with octave re-articulations between the “interrupted” patterns: ( $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-b\hat{3}$ ) followed by ( $b\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ ), which repeats but as an elided pair ( $\hat{1}-\hat{2}-b\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ ). The symmetry inherent to the structure of these two voices appears to be in opposition to the disjunct quality of motion we experience in this piece. However, just as the symmetry of the form contributes to hearing the surface punctuations of the texture as delays throughout the piece, so too does the symmetry of the voice leading in these opening eight measures. The voices retrace their steps, repeating the same material.

This repetition allows us to create some level of expectation and anticipation of the material that follows. The punctuations of the texture can be heard as interrupting that symmetry, which in turn, allows us to hear them as delays or disruptions. These disruptions affect the perceived quality of motion for the piece, which can be heard as strained and lurching. The combination of this symmetry and awkward motion can metaphorically map onto one possible meaning for the piece — a person who is lost (moving back and forth) and directionless or disoriented (stopping and starting). The octave re-articulations in the bass could be heard as changes in direction — a musical change of direction that is analogous to a physical change of direction representing, perhaps, what a lost person might do in an attempt to find their way.

The pattern behavior in phrase two, recreated as **Example 5.20** below, allows us to expand these potential mappings. The phrase starting in measure four is a modification

The image displays two systems of musical notation, labeled 'a' and 'b'. System 'a' consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff, both in 3/4 time and D major. The treble staff shows a sequence of notes: G4 (finger 1), A4 (finger 7), B4 (finger 1), C5 (finger 2), and D5 (finger 3). The bass staff shows a sequence of notes: G3 (finger 3), F3 (finger 2), G3 (finger 3), G3 (finger 3), F3 (finger 2), and E3 (finger 1). System 'b' shows a continuation of the piece with various chordal textures and melodic lines in both staves, including some tremolos and dynamic markings like 'p'.

**Example 5.20a–b.** Continuation of Three-Note Patterns, Phrase 2, in *L'Âme-en peine*, m. 4–8, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

of the opening phrase of the piece. Measures four–five repeat measures one–two, but in measure six, the melody turns another way. The bass alters its pattern by combining two “interrupted” three-note patterns ( $b\hat{3}-\hat{2}-b\hat{3}$ ) and ( $b\hat{3}-\hat{2}-b\hat{1}$ ) separated by a change in register: the first pattern is in the lower octave in measures four and five, and the second appears an octave above in measures five and six. The repetition and symmetry of material in this part of the phrase sets up our expectations, as they did in the first phrase of the piece, that another repetition of these patterns would continue in the second part of the phrase. However, this does not take place. At this point of the phrase in measure six, both voices drop dramatically and abruptly by an octave, changing register to slowly descend through a prolonged lamento tetrachord to conclude in a Phrygian half cadence. The jarring shift, followed by a long and torturous descent through a four-note pattern that (recalling discussions from previous chapters) can represent emotions particular to sorrow and misery, is in keeping with the “lamenting” aesthetic of *The Lost Soul*. But this striking moment also underscores a different expressive quality than do the repeating symmetrical gestures from the opening measures that precede it, and as such, can enhance our metaphoric associations for the meaning of “lost” in the title *The Lost Soul*.

Additionally, the timing and disposition of the Phrygian descent is particularly strained. A model structure for this descent could look something like **Example 5.21**. In this model progression, presented with and without suspensions, each bar represents an individual chord. Each step of this progression draws us down through the descent from  $\hat{1}$  to  $\hat{5}$  in a regularized series of typical intervallic relationships, even pacing, and overall predictable fashion. As a regularly occurring part of the pattern-based vocabulary, we

with sus

w/out sus

**Example 5.21.** Model Descending Tetrachord Pattern  
Durational Reduction

know where we are headed and each stage occurs just as we expect it would. In *L'Âme-en-peine*, **Example 5.22a–b**, the progression is different. In measure six of **Example 5.22b**,

a

b

**Example 5.22a–b.** *L'Âme-en-peine*, m. 6–8, 13<sup>th</sup> ordre (1722), F. Couperin

the bass is the first voice to drop an octave, which articulates the first stage  $\hat{1}$  of the descending fourth pattern  $\hat{1}-b\hat{7}-b\hat{6}-\hat{5}$  on beat two of this measure. The melody and alto voices follow and drop an octave on the “and” of beat two. At this point, we are no longer guided by the symmetry from the earlier measures, which provided some level of expectation for pattern repetition — we are not yet clear what our direction is after the register transfer. After the melody and alto voices drop, sounding  $b\hat{3}$  and  $\hat{1}$  respectively, they ascend by step to form the intervals 4/2 over the bass as shown in **Example 5.22a**. The bass rearticulates  $\hat{1}$  at the end of the measure and then steps down to the A  $b\hat{7}$  at the downbeat of measure seven.

The abrupt leap down, then followed by step in the same direction, continuing the descent, is unusual. Typically, if a voice leaps, the usual response is for that voice to move by step in the opposite direction of the leap, balancing the gesture and fulfilling rules of “good voice leading”. However, the true oddity of this musical gesture can be illuminated by comparison to the analogous physical gesture of leaping. For example, if a person is to make a significant jump, the usual physical preparation is either to take a step (or several) back or to bend knees in order to “build up steam” for that leap. After the leap, and once we land, the natural physical response is to take a step back to catch our balance, not to keep stepping in the same direction in which we took our leap. That physical motion is awkward and unsteady, as is the analogous musical motion. This awkwardness is significant to the jarring expression of this moment, both in terms of the leap and in terms of the continued descent.

While it is awkward, this downbeat is the moment at which we begin to anticipate our eventual stepwise descent to  $\hat{5}$  in the bass. With that anticipation comes a set of expectations about how we get there. Instead of the melody and alto forming the more typical intervallic relationships of 6 and 3 respectively over the A at the downbeat of measure seven in **Example 5.22a**, the pair of voices continues its ascent in thirds to form the intervals 6 and 4 over the bass. The appoggiatura fills in the note we want — the C# — on beat two of this measure. Finally, at the close of this descent, the relationship between the voices becomes familiar and is similar to the model progressions in **Example 5.21**.

As the descent and type of pattern become clear, we experience the manner in which the progression takes place as surprising, awkward, and jarring. We anticipate certain relationships and those relationships are delayed or even omitted and contribute the expression of disjointed, lurching, and staggering motion. The dramatic drop in register followed by the fractured descending Phrygian (or lamento) tetrachord in the second phrase contributes to the sense of a person, or soul, being physically lost and off-course to include another complementary perspectives of spiritual loss or the death of morality — a fallen soul, condemned and beyond redemption.

These representations of death, remorse, sorrow, and loss continue throughout the remainder of the piece (ref. **Example 5.12**). The second reprise can be heard as a series of fragmented and repeating gestures (again, representing the idea of being lost) that attempt to descend to their final resting place of the piece — the only closed, authentic cadence in the key of B minor in measure twenty-eight. The Petite Reprise confirms that

descent by repeating a transposed version of the canon from the preceding measures (beginning in measure twenty-four) but in a lower register. The descent — death of innocence and damnation of the soul — at the close of the reprise is final.

### **Summary: Perspective of Expression and Expanded Meaning**

The symmetrical structure and accompanying contemplative and weighty aesthetic of *L'Âme-en peine* described above are consistent with the expression of lamentation in this piece. Within the context of the *ordre*, it is clear that the compositional texture and style Couperin used for *The Lost Soul* are in contrast to the rest of collection. The vocal qualities, such as the recitative-like style and expressive appoggiaturas, affect the perspective of expression for *L'Âme-en peine* and are more in keeping with a personal evocation of sorrow and loss rather than a third-person evocation of an emotion or state-of-being through dance and metaphors of theater, as found, for example, in *Les Folies françaises*. These expressions of grief and sorrow can metaphorically map with ease onto ideas such as death and can even extend, when considering the title of the piece, to include a soul in purgatory.

If we consider the special position of *L'Âme-en peine* as the conclusion — or nadir — to a particularly tragic *ordre*, the larger narrative context can further enhance our mappings for pattern behavior. The initial opening pattern for the piece — whether heard as an anacrusis to an ascending melodic Do–Re–Mi or as an anacrusis that is its own structural and inverted Do–Re–Mi gambit — is a defining moment for the expression of *The Lost Soul*. Over the course of the *ordre*, and in particular over the trajectory of *Les*

*Folies françaises*, the behavior of the opening Do–Re–Mi gambit has been critical in metaphorically mapping various meanings for these musical portraits. In context of the narrative whole of the *ordre*, the Do–Re–Mi pattern — as an ontological entity — can be considered as the metaphoric representation of innocence itself. The first iteration of the pattern appears in *Les Lis naissans*. Its presentation is tentative, gently unfolding in arpeggiated chords. At the end of the collection, after the tragic progression through *Les Folies*, innocence is lost, wandering awkwardly in the first measures of the piece and suppressed in the bass voice. The delicate articulation of one note at a time from the beginning of the *ordre* is replaced by a collapse of voices into dense and heavy vertical structures. Innocence is dying or already dead — the Do–Re–Mi is suppressed in the bass voice and awkwardly presented in lurching, fragmented rhythmic patterns. It finally collapses and falls at the end of the first reprise to begin its long descent to death that occurs over the course of the second reprise, which is confirmed by the lower register of the Petite Reprise that concludes the piece. The expressions of *L'Âme-en peine* embody both a lost soul that has lost its way on a physical path, as well as a lost soul that has fallen. What has fallen, or become lost, is innocence. The piece, perhaps innocence itself, sings a lament for its own death and damnation.

## CHAPTER VI

## CONCLUSION

*These portraits in tone are related to the vogue for literary portraits that swept society in France during the reign of the Sun King...galant portraits in music aside, Couperin showed how it was possible to continue the great tradition while speaking a simpler language.*  
Daniel Hertz<sup>1</sup>

### Reflections on a Synthetic Methodology: Pattern and Meaning

The drive to understand music and to answer *why* we are moved by it has preoccupied philosophers and music theorists since the time of Plato and Aristotle.<sup>2</sup> In this same vein this dissertation asks *how* music communicates, *what* are the factors contributing to its effective communication, and *how* our emotional responses and affects give meaning to our experiences of the music. Musical pattern plays a significant role in this idea of “musical meaning making” and communication. A musical pattern can be recognized as meaningful because of the regularity with which it occurs within and across styles, because it is part of an established, recognized, and known compositional vocabulary, or both. Because they are meaningful, patterns exist as part of a common musical vocabulary through which communication with an audience — whether that audience is listening, performing, analyzing, or all three — is possible. Therefore we can

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Hertz, *Music in European Capitals: The Galant Style 1720–1780* (New York: Norton, 2003), 22.

<sup>2</sup> Frank Burch Brown, “Music,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Emotion*, ed. John Corrigan (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 200-222.

look to patterns and their behaviors within a musical context as one way to better understand musical meaning.

In this study, questions pertaining to pattern and meaning are put to *Les Pièces de Clavecin* of François Couperin, a composer who achieved a significant level of fame during his lifetime for his skill and cleverness at “musical repartee” and wit, but whose music is marginalized in modern theoretical discourse for its perceived lack of complexity. To engage in witty conversations with his audience, and to have that audience understand, suggests that Couperin is operating within a vocabulary that translates from the instrument and the score, to the performer and to the listener. An important part of that vocabulary is musical pattern — understanding how pattern participates in the dialogue of his musical portraits is a way to help connect musical material with musical meaning and expression.

The synthetic methodology developed in Chapter II (which combines tools of pattern-based analysis with those of metaphor theory) reveals that patterns and their behaviors within a musical setting contribute to musical expression and underscore particular affects. These, in turn, can be heard as metaphorically representing Couperin’s evocative titles, which represent characters, ideas, or emotions and often supply a narrative context for the piece that supports our interpretations of meaning for pattern behavior. From these findings three observations connecting pattern and meaning can be made: first, that some of the meaningful mappings that arise from a given pattern may be reasonably stable (that is, listeners may find similar, albeit not identical, meanings from similar patterns in different contexts — intersubjective meanings that may be attributed to

the patterns themselves); second, that different meaningful mappings can arise from a given pattern (and its associated behaviors) in a given piece (on different hearings or with different listeners) — but that such differences can be seen as supportive of the theory of musical meaning proposed in this dissertation; and third, that different meaningful mappings can arise when the same pattern appears in different contexts — differences that listeners may nevertheless have some agreement about (that is, intersubjective meanings that may be attributed to the contexts themselves). While no one pattern necessarily means the same thing in every application, intersubjective meanings seem related to similarities in patterns, treatments, and/or contexts, and different meanings seem related to differences in patterns, treatments, or contexts.

For example, the analysis of *La Muse-Plantine* in Chapter III illustrates that Couperin's manipulation of the well-known lamento bass tetrachord — a chromatic version that becomes increasingly chromatic in its subsequent descents and is traditionally associated with affects such as sorrow, grief, and sadness — produces a different affect than it does in the quintessential exemplars (such as Dido's Lament). The difference arises both from the way in which the pattern is treated, and also the context in which the pattern appears. Rather than setting the repeating tetrachord in the expected slow triple meter for his rondeau, Couperin chooses a brisk 6/8 meter more in keeping with a dance, such as a gigue. From the very beginning of the piece, the auditor's sense of stability is put off balance by a constant stream of suspensions and chromatic inflections. The qualities of motion and affect of this passage — constant mobility, elasticity, fluidity but somewhat ambiguous in its direction — can be heard as representing physical

motions like rocking, swaying, spinning, or even floating. The pattern does, however, retain some of the affect associated with the lamento bass, such as regret or painful acceptance of inevitability. This retention is retained because of what is common to lamento basses. *La Muse-Plantine* is likely a dedication to Mademoiselle de la Plante, an admired harpsichordist and composer contemporary to Couperin. The Mademoiselle could be considered Couperin's "muse" — his artistic inspiration for the creation of this particular portrait. But it is possible that Couperin delighted in the ambiguities of words and wordplay for their significance to the characters he chose as his subjects. On the one hand, the verb *muser* means to dawdle or idle along, and thus it expands the possibilities for our mappings of pattern and affect onto other representations, such as somebody idling along, moving with no urgency, or meandering along a path. On the other hand, the related verb *musarder* incorporates a less flattering association of "wasting one's time" (perhaps a character assessment of the Mademoiselle's skill by Couperin). The constant movement can be heard as representing motion with no result (getting nowhere). A standard pattern from the musical vocabulary, used in a different musical context, can give rise to different meanings for its behavior. These mappings, based on associations with the title, become metaphorically richer. While previous writers have pointed to such differences as evidence that music lacks meaning, I hope to have shown that such differences (as well as important similarities) are central to musical meaning and that they arise through the metaphorical attributions of motion and affect to pattern and pattern treatment.

The potential of multiple meanings for the same pattern across different pieces becomes most apparent in the in-depth case study of Chapter IV: Couperin's theme and variations *Les Folies françaises ou les Dominos*. In this setting, we are able to trace the behavior of the same pattern structures across a body of small pieces within a narrative trajectory. For example, by changing the opening Do–Re–Mi gambit of the theme to Do–Re–Do in both *La Langueur* and *Les Coucous bénévoles*, different meanings arise for the change in pattern behavior because of the context of the set. In *Langueur*, this “deflated” Do–Re–Do instead of the upward directed Do–Re–Mi can be heard as lethargy or lack of energy, among many other options. In *The Benevolent Cuckolds*, however, the downward direction of the figure can be heard as representing the oblivious husband with his head in the sand, unaware of his circumstance as the cuckold, or even impotence — both in passive personality and sexual inadequacy. Variation structure, then, provides a context through which we can find meaning in stylistic pattern behavior through analogy with the theme. And through that process, we discover that the same pattern had different meanings in different contexts both because of the way in which Couperin manipulated the pattern, and also because of metaphorical mappings onto the symbolic meanings, images, or ideas associated with title of each piece, as well as where that piece appears in the narrative.

And finally, in Chapter V's case study *L'Âme-en peine* (The Lost Soul), multiple meanings for “lost” arise from the distinct qualities of motion between familiar patterns, their order and successive combination, their commonalities with, and differences from, other pieces within the *ordre* (e.g. similar opening passages), and by the contextual

meaning of the *ordre* as a whole. For example, the repetition of the same (or similar) non-elided patterns separated by rests punctuating the texture in the first six measures suggests a state of awkwardness. Upon closer examination, the smooth voice leading in both the melody and bass offsets this awkwardness. Thus because the voices retrace their steps, going over the same material repeatedly, an expectation for, or anticipation of, what is about to come next is established. This predictability allows us to hear the punctuations in the texture as delays, contributing to the strained motion expressed by this piece. The combination of symmetry and resulting state of motion metaphorically map onto one possible meaning for the piece — a person who is lost (moving back and forth) and directionless or disoriented (stopping and starting). However, the abrupt register transfer down and continued descent starting in measure six, in combination with the broader context of the *ordre* as a whole, provides another dimension to the possible meaning of loss for the piece. As the last piece of an *ordre* related to birth and death (in some way), love and loss, innocence and condemnation, or all of these, *L'Âme-en peine* can represent the fallen or lost soul, damned and beyond redemption. Other elements (such as style, voice texture, phrase structure, and articulations) combine with pattern behavior to support the expressive aesthetic of *L'Âme-en peine* — an aesthetic similar to, for example, a vocal lament. In this context, *L'Âme-en peine* can be heard as a lament for the loss, or death, of innocence. In both of these case studies, context plays a significant role in our metaphorical mappings for pattern behavior. But it is the manner with which patterns behave, are manipulated, or even eliminated, that gives rise to different meanings

and different metaphorical mappings, which exemplifies the advantages of, and flexibility inherent to, an analytic method consonant with Lakoff and Johnson's cognitive metaphor theory.

Through this process we find that discovering musical patterns within a piece, which then can be applied to a broader body of pieces, helps us to understand how those patterns make up a fundamental component of the common musical vocabulary used by a particular composer or group of composers. Understanding the usage of those patterns within a particular context, which contributes to expectation surrounding that use, can then help us to understand how they integrate into the larger narrative picture of the piece itself. Metaphor adds the final component, both to enhance analysis-based findings, and also to explain how we can so effectively interpret the distinct types of expression and musical affect generated in part by the manipulation of patterns to give meaning to Couperin's musical portraits. His pieces may not be considered "complex", but they are compelling nonetheless.

This dissertation introduces a model for analysis, the specifics of which appear ideal for Couperin's music but also for the galant style in general. The combination of methods itself illuminates the power and meaning of each individual contributing element as well, supporting the analytic potential of a synthetic approach for a broader set of styles. Finding meaning through analogy and metaphor is almost a universal method of understanding concepts and ideas. By offering a more flexible, more inclusive approach to music analysis that draws on multiple modern and complementary analytical tools, those that are historically and contextually sensitive, and those that expand our

descriptive mechanisms, this dissertation suggests similar approaches for other musical repertoire regardless of geographic and historic origin.

APPENDIX A

*LES FOLIES FRANÇOISES OU LES DOMINOS*

13<sup>TH</sup> *ORDRE, TROISIÈME LIVRE* (1722) (FULL SCORE)

FRANÇOIS COUPERIN

**Les Folies françaises, ou les Dominos**

Gracieusement

**La Virginité**1 *sous le Domino couleur d'invisible*

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The piece is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The right hand features a melodic line with grace notes and trills, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes.

Musical notation for measures 5-8. The right hand continues the melodic theme with grace notes and trills, and the left hand maintains the accompaniment.

Musical notation for measures 9-12. The right hand continues the melodic theme with grace notes and trills, and the left hand maintains the accompaniment.

Musical notation for measures 13-16. The right hand continues the melodic theme with grace notes and trills, and the left hand maintains the accompaniment. The piece concludes with a final chord in the right hand and a sustained note in the left hand.

Les Folies françoises, ou les Dominos  
La Pudeur

Tendrement

1

*sous le Domino couleur de roze*

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The piece is in 3/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (D major). The melody in the right hand features a series of eighth notes with trills and grace notes. The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes.

5

Musical notation for measures 5-8. The melody continues with eighth notes and trills. The left hand accompaniment includes chords and moving lines.

9

Musical notation for measures 9-12. The melody features a trill and grace notes. The left hand accompaniment includes chords and moving lines.

13

Musical notation for measures 13-16. The melody features a trill and grace notes. The left hand accompaniment includes chords and moving lines. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

**Les Folies françaises, ou les Dominos**

Anime

**L'Ardeur**

1

*sous le Domino incarnat*

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The piece is in 3/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The right hand features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment of quarter notes.

Musical notation for measures 5-8. The right hand continues with eighth-note patterns, including some beamed sixteenth notes. The left hand maintains its accompaniment, with some chords in the right hand appearing in the bass clef.

Musical notation for measures 9-12. The right hand shows more complex rhythmic figures with accents. The left hand continues with quarter-note accompaniment, and the right hand has some chords in the bass clef.

Musical notation for measures 13-16. The right hand features a melodic line with accents and some chords. The left hand continues with quarter-note accompaniment, and the piece concludes with a final chord in the right hand.

## Les Folies françaises, ou les Dominos

L'Espérance  
*sous le Domino vert*

.Gayement

1

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The piece is in 9/8 time and D major. The right hand features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and quarter notes, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment of eighth notes. Trills are indicated above several notes in both hands.

5

Musical notation for measures 5-8. The right hand continues with eighth-note patterns, and the left hand features a mix of eighth and quarter notes. Trills are present above notes in both staves.

9

Musical notation for measures 9-12. The right hand maintains the eighth-note rhythmic motif, and the left hand continues with eighth-note accompaniment. Trills are marked above notes in both hands.

13

Musical notation for measures 13-16. The right hand features eighth-note patterns, and the left hand continues with eighth-note accompaniment. Trills are marked above notes in both hands. The piece concludes with a final chord in the right hand.

## Les Folies françaises, ou les Dominos

## La Fidélité

*sous le Domino bleu*

Affectueusement

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The piece is in G major (one sharp) and 3/2 time. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with quarter and eighth notes. Trills and accents are indicated above several notes.

Musical notation for measures 5-8. The right hand continues the melodic development with more complex rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth-note runs. The left hand maintains a steady accompaniment. Trills and accents are present.

Musical notation for measures 9-12. The right hand features a series of sixteenth-note passages. The left hand accompaniment includes some longer note values. Trills and accents are used for ornamentation.

Musical notation for measures 13-16. The right hand has a more active melodic line with frequent sixteenth notes. The left hand accompaniment is rhythmic. The piece concludes with a final cadence in the right hand and a sustained bass note in the left hand.

**Les Folies françaises, ou les Dominos**

Tendrement, sans lenteur

**La Persévérance***sous le Domino gris de lin*

1

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The piece is in 3/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The right hand features a melodic line with trills and grace notes, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes.

5

Musical notation for measures 5-8. The right hand continues the melodic theme with trills, and the left hand maintains the accompaniment pattern.

9

Musical notation for measures 9-12. This section repeats the melodic and accompaniment patterns from measures 1-4.

13

Musical notation for measures 13-16. The right hand has a more active melodic line with trills, and the left hand continues the accompaniment. The piece concludes with a final chord in the right hand.

**Les Folies françaises, ou les Dominos**

Egalement

**La Langueur***sous le Domino violet*

1

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The piece is in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation is for a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The melody in the treble clef consists of quarter and eighth notes, often with trills. The bass clef provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines.

5

Musical notation for measures 5-8. Measures 5 and 6 feature a long melodic line in the treble clef with a slur and trills. The bass clef continues with accompaniment. Measures 7 and 8 show a continuation of the melodic and harmonic patterns.

9

Musical notation for measures 9-12. Measures 9 and 10 continue the melodic and harmonic development. Measures 11 and 12 show a change in the bass clef accompaniment, with a more active line.

13

Musical notation for measures 13-16. Measures 13 and 14 feature a long melodic line in the treble clef with a slur. Measures 15 and 16 conclude the section with a final cadence in the treble clef and a sustained bass line.

## Les Folies françaises, ou les Dominos

## La Coquetterie

*sous differens Dominos*

Gayement Modéré Légèrement

The first system of the musical score consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It is divided into three measures. The first measure is in 6/8 time and marked 'Gayement'. The second measure is in 3/8 time and marked 'Modéré', featuring a triplet of eighth notes in the treble staff. The third measure is in 2/4 time and marked 'Légèrement', featuring a triplet of eighth notes in the treble staff. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

5

The second system of the musical score consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a key signature of two sharps. It contains four measures. The first three measures are in 6/8 time, and the fourth measure is in 6/8 time. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

9 Gayement Modéré Légèrement

The third system of the musical score consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a key signature of two sharps. It is divided into three measures. The first measure is in 6/8 time and marked 'Gayement'. The second measure is in 3/8 time and marked 'Modéré', featuring a triplet of eighth notes in the treble staff. The third measure is in 2/4 time and marked 'Légèrement', featuring a triplet of eighth notes in the treble staff. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

13

The fourth system of the musical score consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a key signature of two sharps. It contains four measures. The first three measures are in 6/8 time, and the fourth measure is in 6/8 time. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Les Folies françoises, ou les Dominos  
Les Vieux Galans et les Trésorieres Suranées

*sous des Dominos pourpres, et feuilles mortes*

Gravement

First system of musical notation, measures 1-3. The piece is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation is for a grand piano, with a treble and bass clef. The music features a mix of chords and moving lines in both hands.

4

Second system of musical notation, measures 4-7. The music continues with similar rhythmic patterns and chordal textures.

8

Third system of musical notation, measures 8-13. Measure 10 contains a bracketed trill ornament [trill].

14

Fourth system of musical notation, measures 14-17. The piece concludes with a final cadence.

Les Folies françaises, ou les Dominos  
Les Coucoucs bénévoles

*sous des Dominos jaunes*

1 *Coucou coucou*

Musical notation for measures 1-4. Treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), 3/8 time signature. The melody consists of eighth notes with a rhythmic pattern of quarter, eighth, eighth, quarter. The bass line features chords with eighth notes.

5

Musical notation for measures 5-8. Treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), 3/8 time signature. The melody continues with eighth notes and includes a trill on the final note of measure 8. The bass line continues with chords and eighth notes.

9

Musical notation for measures 9-12. Treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), 3/8 time signature. The melody continues with eighth notes. The bass line continues with chords and eighth notes.

13

Musical notation for measures 13-16. Treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), 3/8 time signature. The melody continues with eighth notes and ends with a double bar line. The bass line continues with chords and eighth notes.

**Les Folies françaises, ou les Dominos**

Lentement, et mesuré

**La Jalousie taciturne***sous le Domino gris de maure*

1

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 3/2 time. The right hand (treble clef) features a melodic line with slurs and trills. The left hand (bass clef) provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes.

5

Musical notation for measures 5-8. The right hand continues the melodic development with slurs and trills. The left hand accompaniment includes chords and moving lines.

9

Musical notation for measures 9-12. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and trills. The left hand accompaniment includes chords and moving lines.

13

Musical notation for measures 13-16. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and trills. The left hand accompaniment includes chords and moving lines. The piece concludes with a final cadence in the right hand.

Les Folies françaises, ou les Dominos  
La Frénésie, ou le Désespoir

1 *Tres Vite*

*sous le Domino noir*

Measures 1-3 of the piece. The music is in 3/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The right hand features a complex, rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment of eighth notes.

Measures 4-6. The right hand continues with intricate sixteenth-note patterns, and the left hand maintains a consistent eighth-note accompaniment.

Measures 7-9. The right hand's melodic line becomes more active, incorporating some slurs and accents, while the left hand's accompaniment remains steady.

Measures 10-12. The right hand features a series of slurs and accents, creating a sense of urgency. The left hand continues with its eighth-note accompaniment.

Measures 13-15. The piece concludes with a final flourish in the right hand and a cadence in the left hand. The right hand ends with a series of slurs and accents, while the left hand ends with a final chord.

## APPENDIX B

*L'ÂME-EN PEINE*, 13<sup>TH</sup> ORDRE, TROISIÈME LIVRE (1722) (FULL SCORE)

FRANÇOIS COUPERIN

## L'Âme-en peine

Languissement

5

10

16

21

27

REPRISE

Petite Reprise

Fin

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