

Framing Till Eulenspiegel

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STRAUSS, NIETZSCHE, AND *DIE MODERNE*

Strauss's fourth tone poem, *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche*, received its premiere in Cologne on 5 November 1895. With its renewed embrace of a vivid, post-Lisztian programmaticism, coupled with a hypertechnically sensational orchestration, *Till Eulenspiegel* marked the onset of a "second cycle" of the composer's symphonic works. Producing the earlier tone-poem cycle, *Macbeth*, *Don Juan*, and *Tod und Verklärung*, had occupied the years 1886–89 (with a revision of *Macbeth* extending to 1891). These pieces had served as flamboyant procla-

mations of an emerging new age of symphonic composition. In the interim Strauss had produced several other pieces, including Lieder and, most notably, the opera *Guntram* (1887–93). More to the point, around 1893–94 he had clarified his own aesthetic position with regard to the expected reverential posture vis à vis Wagnerian adaptations of Schopenhauerian musical metaphysics. Even while still admiring and building upon technical features of Lisztian and Wagnerian musical practice, he had largely cast aside the spiritual posture and claims of transcendental content that that practice typically believed itself to exemplify. As urged particularly in the counselings of his former mentor, Alexander Ritter, some tenets of this musical faith—at least in certain devout strains familiar to the post-Wagnerian 1880s and 1890s in Germany—had also included reflexive, verbal asseverations of spiritual asceticism and the Schopenhauerian denial of the Will, *Willensverneinung*.

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The details of Strauss's deflationary transformation have been laid out in recent work by Charles Youmans.¹ The spell-breaking process—individually pursued, needless to say, within a broader, richly complex cultural and philosophical-aesthetic context—occurred over several months. Not surprisingly, it seems to have been personally convulsive. These newly elaborated considerations are of signal importance to the way that we construct the history (or subhistories) of this period. They ought not to be marginalized as merely anecdotal or biographical. At the most telling levels they are profoundly engaged with the main lines of Austro-Germanic early modernism at the turn of the century. In them we may discern the initial declarations from a major figure—ringing pronouncements delivered from within the system (one brimming over with its own self-granted authority)—that the imposing metaphysical claims of art music not only were no longer sustainable but had also been based on illusion from the start. To the extent that we, too, grasp the larger implications of Strauss's antimetaphysical turn (waking up from the dream), we might conclude that many of our own often-heroic narratives of Austro-Germanic modernism are also threadbare: reductionist products of twentieth-century historical and aesthetic ideologies in need of serious rethinking.

By the mid-1890s Strauss's belief in any such metaphysical assertions had collapsed. In their place had rushed the individualistic declarations of Max Stirner and, especially, Friedrich Nietzsche: *Beyond Good and Evil*, *Human, All Too Human*, and, in all probability, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (since he would base a tone poem on it in 1896). As Youmans put it, "The wholesale appropriation of Nietzschean buzzwords—'affirmation,' 'optimism,' 'becoming,' and the like—strongly suggests that [by 1893] Strauss believed that he had found his critical response

to *Willensverneinung*."² Radical as the conversion was, it may not have been total or adhered to without inner struggle. Again Youmans: "In spite of the corroboration that he pulled from Nietzsche's writings, Strauss remained plagued by doubts about his emerging antimetaphysical aesthetic—which of course placed him on a collision course with the reigning axioms of Austro-Germanic music."³ Nonetheless, as Youmans also pointed out, in 1896 Strauss's friend and former university classmate in Munich, Arthur Seidl (to whom the composer dedicated *Till Eulenspiegel*),⁴ concluded in an essay, "Richard Strauss: A Character-Sketch," that the composer's philosophical turnabout had already been evident in the "transition-point" occupied by the 1893 *Guntram*:

Inssofar as he here more broadly develops within himself, so to speak, [the move from] *Schopenhauer* to *Nietzsche*, advances further from world denial to self-affirmation, converts from the democratic principle to a rigorously aristocratic one, and makes a decision in favor of the individualism of the subject-

²Youmans, "The Private Intellectual Context," p. 110. See also the more expansive discussion in Youmans, *Richard Strauss's Orchestral Music*, pp. 83–113 ("Strauss's Nietzsche"), especially—with regard to buzzwords—pp. 95–99. Potentially relevant by way of additional background is Walter Frisch, *German Modernism: Music and the Arts* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), pp. 7–35 ("Ambivalent Modernism: Perspectives from the 1870s and 1880s") and 36–62 (from the chapter "German Naturalism").

³Youmans, "The Private Intellectual Context," p. 112.

⁴The mere fact of Strauss's dedication of *Till Eulenspiegel* to Seidl may be read as connoting a Nietzschean subtext to that work. Seidl (1863–1928) was a writer and critic with a background in literary and cultural history, philosophy, aesthetics, and music. He received a doctorate from Leipzig in 1887 with the thesis, "On the Musical Sublime: Prolegomena to an Aesthetics of Music." In the mid-1890s Seidl—while also part of the Strauss circle—worked as a journalist and critic in Dresden, Hamburg, and elsewhere, and in 1898–99 he held a position at the Nietzsche Archive in Weimar, then working on the publication of vols. 1–8 of the edition of Nietzsche's works and letters. See, e.g., *Hugo Riemanns Musik-Lexikon*, ed. Alfred Einstein, 11th edn. (Berlin: Max Hesses, 1929), p. 1684. See also the information about Seidl in Youmans, "The Private Intellectual Context" and *Richard Strauss's Orchestral Music*, pp. 21–23; in Gilliam, *The Life of Richard Strauss*, pp. 19, 36, 61, and 64; and in Morten Kristiansen, *Richard Strauss's Feuersnot in Its Aesthetic and Cultural Context: A Modernist Critique of Musical Idealism* (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2000), pp. 80–94 (also cited in Youmans, *Richard Strauss's Orchestral Music*, pp. 259–60, n. 28).

¹Charles Youmans, *Richard Strauss's Orchestral Music and the German Intellectual Tradition* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2005); "The Private Intellectual Context of Richard Strauss's *Also sprach Zarathustra*," this journal 22 (1998), 101–26; "Ten Letters from Alexander Ritter to Richard Strauss, 1887–1894," *Richard-Strauss Blätter* 35 (June 1996), 3–22. Compare the summary in Bryan Gilliam, *The Life of Richard Strauss* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 50–66.

tive personality, his work in this [ca. 1893] phase of development appears as a transitional stage. It reveals his work as a *transition-point* on the way to further, more purified transformations.⁵

The ramifications of such a conversion by Austro-Germanic music's leading young modernist were as complex as they were enormous. On the one hand, in the mid-1890s Strauss was brandishing the external signs that had been the identifiers of an ideologically stable musical faction for decades: grandiose assertions of "progress" (*der Fortschritt*) and the "music of the future" (*die Musik der Zukunft*); the deployment of a massive, quasi-technological orchestral apparatus; the recourse to symbolic or leitmotivic organization; the advocacy of a "poetic logic" of program music prepared to stretch or violate the guidelines of tradition and any officially sanctioned "musical logic"; the reverential nod given to music drama; the delight in chromatic harmony and "progressive" dissonances; the exploration of poetically driven structural deformations; and the promulgation of a self-important seriousness through the act of presenting colossal works with colossal claims to the orchestra and the audience. On the other hand, he was now pressing these external signs into the service of quite different internal or aesthetic aims: a quasi-Nietzschean or Stirnerian individualism, perhaps, or a brazen self-promotion that no longer approached

the orchestra as a sacramental or metaphysical vessel but came to regard it more palpably—more "of this earth"—as the bearer of a worldly material *Klang* operating unashamedly within a sometimes-cynical and vigorously competitive marketplace of art. For both traditionalist partisans and ardent Wagnerians this was an unpardonable act of *lèse-majesté*. Strauss's orchestra was becoming a machine for manufacturing technological astonishment, and part of its musical "progress" lay in its ability to produce a calculated exactitude of nuance.

All of this was in dialogue with an ongoing tradition, but it was also detaching itself from that tradition in decisive ways. Thus Ritter's dismayed conclusion regarding act III of *Guntram* that Strauss had swerved willfully into apostasy vis à vis Wagner's "world-view" and that all that remained of the master's influence were "the mechanics of his art"—empty *Klang*-signifiers bereft of the supposedly spiritual content that they had been initially devised to convey.⁶ Thus the ever-sharpening Strauss debate of the late 1890s and early twentieth century, in which scandalized musical believers, both inside and out of the academies and universities, continued to frame the issue along old-world moralistic lines, charging the composer with cynically betraying the highest of arts for personal or commercial purposes.⁷ Thus Adorno's essentially conservative diatribes against Strauss well into the mid-twentieth century, reaching again and again to find words of contempt sufficient to describe what he regarded as unforgivable:

He compromised himself as an artist. . . . His non-committal *peinture* denounces . . . all absorption as

⁵Arthur Seidl, "Richard Strauß—eine Charakter-Skizze (1896)," in Seidl, *Straußiana: Aufsätze zur Richard Strauß-Frage aus drei Jahrzehnten* (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse, [1913]), p. 46. This passage was also cited and partially translated in Youmans, "The Private Intellectual Context," pp. 110–11 (n. 58): "Indem er hier *Schopenhauer* zu *Nietzsche* in sich selbst gleichsam weiter entwickelt, Weltverneinung zu Selbstbejahung fortbildet, vom demokratischen Prinzip ab zum streng aristokratischen sich bekehrt und für den Individualismus der Eigenpersönlichkeit sich entscheidet, erscheint sein Schaffen in dieser Entwicklungsphase als Übergangstufe, gibt sein Werk als *Durchgangspunkt* zu ferneren, geläuterten Umbildungen zu erkennen." Portions of Seidl's Strauss essay are also paraphrased in Youmans, *Richard Strauss's Orchestral Music*, e.g., p. 85, which additionally notes that the philosophical transformation toward an enhanced individualism apparent in *Guntram* was also mentioned by Gustav Brecher and Ernst Otto Nodnagel. (Translations from the German in this article are mine, unless indicated to the contrary. I thank Leon Plantinga for looking over my translations and making some helpful suggestions, although any infelicities that remain are of course my own.)

⁶Ritter's letter to Strauss, 17 January 1893, published in Youmans, "Ten Letters from Alexander Ritter," pp. 13–16: "Von Wagners Weltanschauung steckt also gar nichts mehr in Ihnen. Was ist Ihnen von Wagner einzig noch geblieben? Die Mechanik seiner Kunst" (p. 16). My own sentence here is adapted from the similar wording in Gilliam, *The Life of Richard Strauss*, p. 53.

⁷Compare, e.g., Richard Wattenbarger, "A 'Very German Process': The Contexts of Adorno's Strauss Critique," this journal 25 (2001–02), 313–36; and, more extensively, Wattenbarger, *Richard Strauss, Modernism, and the University: A Study of German-Language and American Academic Reception of Richard Strauss from 1900 to 1990* (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 2000).

boredom. . . . Its ametaphysical character has often been observed. . . . But unlike his mentor Nietzsche, Strauss, the antimetaphysician, does not challenge metaphysics as ideology, nor does his tone include the slightest trace of sorrow at its futility. His sounds frolic in the merely existent like glistening fish in water. . . . His scores in general possess the character of a display. . . . World's Fair music. The treasuries of images are plundered, the booty transformed into objects of "viewing enjoyment." . . . His refusal to listen critically to his innovations deprived them of their own consequence. . . . His antitraditional impulse thumbs its nose at its own class but never really means it.⁸

Coming to terms with the largely postmetaphysical Strauss from the mid-1890s onward is no easy matter. In part this is because the composer's own convictions about the new philosophy retained residues of affection for a lost idealism—streaks of prelapsarian sentimentality that show up here and there, occasionally as overt nostalgia. In part it is also because Strauss's bracing modernism has been so consistently misunderstood, even sidelined, by twentieth-century historians, who have usually also been partisans of the more traditional art-music aesthetics and concerns offered by the Wagner-Brahms-Mahler-Schoenberg lines. But the European modernisms of the 1890s and early 1900s were splintering rapidly into sometimes conflicting subspheres, as was the modernizing urban world that nourished them. It is by no means self-evident that Strauss's technification of symphonic composition in the mid-1890s is any less resonant (less "authentic") vis à vis the correlative challenges in European social, cultural, and economic life than were the "alternative-world" (or world-critical) approaches of early Debussy or early Mahler—or in the next century, of Schoenberg and his school. A more adequate set of histories of the competing early modernist movements remains to be written.

The point, though, is that *Till Eulenspiegel* was the first major orchestral work that Strauss composed on the other side of this conversion.

⁸Theodor W. Adorno, "Richard Strauss: Born June 11, 1864," trans. Samuel Weber and Shierry Weber, *Perspectives of New Music* 4 (1965), 22–24.

Offering *Till* to the public at this moment, late 1895, invited the thoughtful listener or critic to *frame* the piece along certain lines. The composition's historical situatedness at this time and place, nested into this particular cultural moment within Germany, was an integral part of its content. Indeed, the musical and aesthetic concerns of that moment were precisely what enabled any such content to be perceived in the first place—an extensive, enveloping network of implications that provided the capability of such a work to extend outward beyond the printed page or sonic surface into multiple fields of potential meanings.⁹ This was a reentry into the program-music arena, although now on fresh terms. In his new frame of mind, the composer must have regarded it as the first of several successive tone-poem manifestos.¹⁰ (What would follow on the heels of *Till* was the more explicit *Also sprach Zarathustra* in 1896.) And yet the manifesto-aspect was cleverly concealed by an acoustic surface of boisterous wit. This made the seemingly "nonserious" work easy to misconstrue as virtuosic, harmless entertainment. Not far below the surface, though, was a semiprivate, more threatening message with implications legible to those in the know: a throwing-down of the gauntlet to earlier orthodoxies, a proclamation of an old order being overturned—laughed away—by a new one.

For the most culturally informed of Strauss's public, such musical challenges represented one

⁹The underlying principle here is basic, for instance, to speech-act theory (Austin, Searle, Cavell, and others). In the summary provided by Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), pp. 54–62: "The speech act, as a unit of communication, must not only organize the signs but also condition the way in which these signs are to be received. Speech acts are not just sentences. They are linguistic utterances in a given situation or context, and it is through this context that they take on their meaning. . . . The written utterance continually transcends the margins of the printed page, in order to bring the addressee into contact with nontextual realities" (p. 55).

¹⁰Here I concur with Youmans's assessment in *Richard Strauss's Orchestral Music*, p. 184, "*Till* acted as a kind of manifesto," and p. 273, n. 15 (quoting Youmans's earlier dissertation on the subject), "Already in *Till Eulenspiegel* we find a work with the character of a manifesto." Compare also my original 1995 and 2000 title to the present article (see the preliminary note), "The Framing of *Till Eulenspiegel*: Strauss's Credo of Musical Modernism?"

current of a broader stream of self-proclaimed modernism among a new generation of writers and artists in a rapidly changing world, one that was scouring away older values with disarming alacrity. With its idealized aura of a wondrous separateness fused with arcane music-technical knowledge casually assumed to be inspiration, the tradition of Austro-Germanic art music found itself especially exposed to corrosion from the “real world” outside of it. Now greeting the emerging world were *die Moderne* (as they often identified themselves in German-speaking regions), the rising “breakaway” generation determined to construct artistic languages adequate to the new urban realities and technologically energized tensions of a world far different from that of their parents.¹¹

Confronting the musical generation of the early modernists poses problems, especially because their work invites the simultaneous study of musical, aesthetic, political, and cultural concerns.¹² One issue for Strauss and other composers is the contradiction between their posture of friction with the liberal-humanist institution of art music and yet their utter depen-

dence on that institution—indeed, their more fundamental affirmation of it by means of their eager participation within it. Another is the problem of finding ways of uncovering a historical content in the musical processes themselves, as opposed merely to overlaying a supposed content onto them from outside. As a point of departure our understandings of pieces might be advised to begin with observations that would have made sense—as recognizable possibilities—within the period of the piece in question. In the case of *Till Eulenspiegel* these include Strauss’s own program for the work and the circumstances of its dissemination, along with the piece’s early reception history, insofar as it can be restored; and its musical abstract shape, considered in dialogue with its relevant generic traditions.

TILL EULENSPIEGEL:
PROGRAM AND METAPHOR

The general program that underlies *Till Eulenspiegel* could hardly be more familiar: the legendary rogue’s mocking of and uproarious romp through society’s formal conventions, one after another. Several program-sources for *Till* are traceable to the composer. The earliest comprises the traces of evidence that remain from the process of composition. This material has been summarized by Walter Werbeck in his 1996 monograph on Strauss’s tone poems.¹³ It has long been noticed, for instance, that not all of the adventures in the tone poem—however much they might have been modified—have their sources in the German *Volksbuch* tale of Till.¹⁴ The episode of Till’s death by hanging

¹¹Compare Carl Dahlhaus on *die Moderne* and the “breakaway mood of the 1890s (a mood symbolized musically by the opening bars of Strauss’s *Don Juan*),” *Nineteenth-Century Music*, trans. J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), p. 334. Many of the relevant documents and manifestos charting the rise of the term *die Moderne* within German literature are collected in *Literarische Manifeste des Naturalismus: 1880–1892*, ed. Erich Ruprecht (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1962). Another useful discussion and summary of some relevant twentieth-century issues—along with more recent interpretations of them—may be found in Astradur Eysteinnsson, *The Concept of Modernism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).

¹²See, e.g., Hepokoski, “Beethoven Reception,” in *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 424–59 (esp. pp. 454–58 on the two generational waves of composers after 1870); “Elgar” and “Sibelius,” in *The Nineteenth-Century Symphony*, ed. D. Kern Holoman (New York: G. Schirmer, 1997), pp. 327–44 and 417–49; *Sibelius: Symphony No. 5* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), esp. pp. 1–9 (“Introduction: Sibelius and the Problem of ‘Modernism’”). On Strauss, *Die Moderne*, stylistic pluralism, and modernism, see also Kristiansen, “Richard Strauss’s *Feuersnot*.” See also n. 11 above. Within Europe the “early modernist” composers were those born in the years around 1860, “the generation of the 1860s”: Strauss, Mahler, Wolf, Debussy, Puccini, Sibelius, Elgar, Nielsen, Busoni, Glazunov, and others.

¹³Walter Werbeck, *Die Tondichtungen von Richard Strauss* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1996), pp. 125–32. Much of the remainder of this and the following paragraph is drawn from Werbeck. Hepokoski, review of Werbeck, *Die Tondichtungen*, in *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 51 (1998), 603–25, summarizes the contents of Werbeck’s book more generally.

¹⁴This was also noted, e.g., in Norman Del Mar, *Richard Strauss: A Critical Commentary on His Life and Works*, vol. I (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1962), p. 130. According to Willi Schuh, Strauss learned the tale in the 1878 version produced by “Carl Simrock” (“in der 1878 erscheinenden Erneuerung von Carl Simrock”); see Schuh, *Richard Strauss: Jugend und frühe Meisterjahre: Lebenschronik 1864–1898* (Zurich: Atlantis, 1976), p. 402; Wer-

was new to Strauss (Till had narrowly escaped this fate in the original tale), and Werbeck also proposed that Till's madcap ride through the marketplace, scattering the marketwives (mm. 134–ca. 154, beginning ca. six measures after Rehearsal No. 9), stems from an incident in the Brothers Grimm's "King Thrushbeard" (*König Drosselbart*).¹⁵

beck, *Die Tondichtungen*, p. 83, n. 18, noted that this statement, while perhaps correct, could not currently be checked.

The ninety-six-chapter *Volksbuch* in question was originally written by Hermann Bote and published in 1510—immediately followed by additional printings in subsequent years—under the low-German title *Ein kurzweilig Lesen von Dil Uelenspiegel geboren uß dem Land zu Brunßwick, wie er sein leben volbracht hat*. (A modern edition of the full text, provided by Projekt Gutenberg-DE under the title *Ein kurzweiliges Buch von Till Eulenspiegel aus dem Lande Braunschweig*, is available at <http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/bote/eulenspg/eulenspg.htm>.) Strauss and his generation, however, were unaware of the Bote authorship. The relevant source of the Till *Volksbuch* at that time—and the source subsequently quoted in these footnotes—was to be found in volume 10 of the fifteen-volume set of *Die deutschen Volksbücher gesammelt und in ihrer ursprünglichen Echtheit wiederhergestellt*, ed. Karl Simrock [sic] (Frankfurt am Main: Christian Winter, [1876–80]), pp. 327–499. While the table of contents lists the tale merely as "Till Eulenspiegel," its full title, provided on p. 327, is "Ein kurzweilig Lesen von Till Eulenspiegel, geboren aus dem Lande Braunschweig. Was er seltsamer Possen betrieben hat seine Tage, lustig zu lesen." To which is added: "Nach der Ausgabe von 1519." The content of this extensive tale-collection comprises Bote's 96 Till-stories or anecdotes ("Historien"), ranging from his birth and early youth, through his extensive travels from town to town—upsetting one official or stable community after another with his roguish pranks, "getting even" with presumed insulters, and the like—to his death in bed from the plague. One might also note that in the low German of the sixteenth century, "Eulenspiegel" did not connote the benign "Owl-Glass," but rather, reinforcing the often scatological details of the Till narrative, something on the order of "wipe [or lick] my arse." (See the explanation, e.g., found at http://www.eulenspiegel.de/interessantes_eulenspiegel.htm: "Der Name Eulenspiegel kommt übrigens ursprünglich nicht von der Eule. Im plattdeutschen 'Uelenspiegel' bedeutet der Name 'ulen' = fegen, reinigen und 'spiegel' = Spiegel in der Jägersprache, also Hinterteil. 'Ul'n spegel' bedeutet daher nichts anderes als 'Wisich' mir den Hintern' oder einfach 'Leck mich am Arsch!'")

¹⁵In the Grimms' tale, a haughty princess refuses all suitors—including the misshapen King Thrushbeard—to the point where her father vows that she must marry the first beggar that comes to the door. That turns out to be a fiddler, to whom the princess is immediately given in marriage, much against her will. The fiddler takes her away into his modest home, totally reversing her circumstances, and proceeds to order her to undertake a series of menial tasks—lessons in humility, none of which she comprehends at first. In one of these tasks she is obliged to sell

The earliest available sketches probably date from late 1894. (Some of them may also have been planned for a one-act opera on the same general topic but with a different plot line, one that was soon aborted, *Till Eulenspiegel bei den Schildbürgern*.) These center around the Till themes near the opening and those of his madcap encounter with the academic "Philistines" (narrow-minded professors or pedantic examiners), corresponding to, in Werbeck's report, mm. 319–43, 295ff. ("Mystification of the Philistines"; m. 319 is No. 22), mm. 307–11 ("he dances about on the heads of the Philistines"), and after m. 318 ("Lesson").¹⁶ Strauss then developed these two thematic areas further in sketches, to which he appended musical ideas for the death sentence and execution of Till. Werbeck concluded, doubtless correctly, that the Till-Philistine encounter (m. 293, No. 20) was the "central conflict" of the work, to which other episodic material was added to flesh out the tone poem into a broader series of symphonic episodes. Beyond exemplifying the roguishness of Till while also articulating a suitable symphonic structure, the role of these additional episodes was to lead into and out of that central scene—ultimately to arrive at the third primary element: the trial and death scene at the end.

Apparently at the beginning of his work on the tone poem *Till Eulenspiegel* Strauss did not yet have in mind . . . all of those adventures that Mauke, Specht, and other exegetes later, after the completion of the work, reported in such pictorial terms, supported by

crockery in the corner of the town marketplace. One day, after she had spent many others in this occupation, a drunken hussar rides through the marketplace, shattering all of her pots, much to her dismay. As the story turns out, Thrushbeard himself was both the fiddler and the hussar. Was this moralizing narrative in fact the only source for the marketwives scene—if it was a source at all? Compare nn. 41–42 below (concerning a passage from the Prologue to *Thus spoke Zarathustra*) and the text that accompanies them.

¹⁶Werbeck, *Die Tondichtungen*, p. 128, n. 111: "Mystifikation der Philister"; "er tanzt den Philistern auf den Köpfen herum"; "Lektion". Some of the verbal labels that Strauss wrote into the *Till* sketches had also been published in Franz Trenner, *Die Skizzenbücher von Richard Strauss aus dem Richard-Strauss-Archiv in Garmisch, Veröffentlichungen der Richard-Strauss-Gesellschaft München*, vol. I (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1977), pp. 5–6.

information from the composer. It was only gradually that Strauss moved away from his first plan, surely, setting the material of the opera-to-be symphonically, and only then would the *Till-Philister* conflict be enriched with further adventures. (That that conflict nevertheless formed the core of the program all the way up to the end can hardly be disputed.)¹⁷

The second source of primary information about the program is to be found in Strauss's often-cited letter from 20 October 1895 to Franz Wüllner, the conductor of the Cologne premiere that would take place about a month later. At this point the program had apparently not yet been revealed, and Wüllner had asked for some clarifying details. Even though the now-completed work was richly furnished with programmatic incidents in Strauss's mind, the composer hesitated at the thought of laying them all out before the premiere. "It is impossible to give *Eulenspiegel* a program," he wrote. "Put into words, what I was thinking as I composed the individual parts would appear damned funny [*verflucht komisch*] and would give much offense [*viel Anstoß erregen*]." How is one to take such a disclaimer? Strauss's remark could have been uttered coyly, with tongue in cheek. Or he might have been unwilling to divulge too much, for whatever reason, to Wüllner. Alternatively, he might have wished the piece to be packaged for his first audience as an amusing mystery, from which an obviously vivid program had been teasingly, if only temporarily, held back. On another reading, though, Strauss's pre-premiere reticence could have resulted from an underlying impudence in the program—beyond Till's superficially humorous pranks—an aesthetic challenge that could be regarded as

¹⁷Werbeck, *Die Tondichtungen*, pp. 129 ("den zentralen Konflikt") and 131: "Allem Anschein nach standen Strauss zu Beginn der Arbeit an der Tondichtung *Till Eulenspiegel* keineswegs alle diejenigen Abenteuer des Helden 'vor dem geistigen Auge' (um nochmals Specht zu zitieren), die Mauke, Specht und andere Exegeten nach der Vollendung des Werkes, gestützt auf Informationen des Komponisten, bilderreich erzählten. Erst allmählich wohl löste Strauss sich von seinem vermutlichen ersten Plan, den Opernstoff symphonisch zu vertonen, wurde der Konflikt Till-Philister um weitere Abenteuer bereichert (daß er gleichwohl bis zuletzt den Kern des Programms bildete, dürfte kaum zu bestreiten sein)."

crossing a line of propriety, were it known (*viel Anstoß erregen*), one that cut more deeply into the music-historical situation of 1895. That the work was programmatically grounded was clear, but Strauss seems to have believed, at least at this snapshot-moment in the emerging *Till*-discourse, that there would be something disadvantageous (to his career or reputation? to the lift-off success of the work itself?) were he to provide a blow-by-blow description of the program to Wüllner prior to the Cologne premiere.

As a result, he told the conductor that solving the work's implications should be left as a puzzle: "This time let's let these folks themselves crack the nuts that the rogue delivers to them." And yet he could not resist providing at least the central clues, centering around Till, the professorial Philistines, and the death sentence, precisely the defining images that had given rise to the tone poem in the earliest sketches:

In order to facilitate an understanding, though, it will perhaps be sufficient to note the two *Eulenspiegel* themes:



and



. . . which proceed through the whole work in the most different clothing and moods, as situations, all the way up to the catastrophe, where he is hanged, following the verdict spoken over him:



The A-minor episode [m. 293, Reh. No. 20] is his graduation [exam] in front of the pedantic [*philiströsen*] Professors—in Prague, I think—where Till arouses a downright Babylonian confusion of languages (the so-called fugato) with his monstrous propositions [*monströsen Thesen*], following which, having much enjoyed himself on this account, he

departs frivolously [A♭ Major, $\frac{2}{4}$ ("leichtfertig"), m. 375, No. 26].¹⁸

But even this much was to be kept a secret, at least in the weeks leading up to the first performance. Immediately following the disclosure about the "Prague" pedants, Strauss added, "But please regard this only as a private message" (*Privatmitteilung*).¹⁹ As it happened, Wüllner

¹⁸Strauss to Wüllner, 20 October 1895, in Willi Schuh, *Richard Strauss: Jugend und frühe Meisterjahre*, pp. 402, 405. "Es ist mir unmöglich, ein Programm zu Eulenspiegel zu geben: in Worte gekleidet, was ich mir bei den einzelnen Teilen gedacht habe, würde sich oft verflucht komisch ausnehmen und viel Anstoß erregen. —Wollen wir diesmal die Leutchen selber die Nüsse aufknacken lassen, die der Schalk ihnen verabreicht. Um überhaupt ein Verständniß zu ermöglichen, genügt es vielleicht, auf das Programm die beiden Eulenspiegelthemen zu notieren: . . . die das Ganze in den verschiedensten Verkleidungen und Stimmungen, wie Situationen durchziehen bis zur Katastrophe, wo er aufgeknüpft wird, nachdem das Urteil . . . der Tod! über ihn gesprochen würde.

"Die Amollepisode ist seine Promotion bei den philiströsen Professoren, ich glaube in Prag, wo Till durch seine monströsen Thesen eine förmliche babylonische Sprachenverwirrung (das sog. Fugato) anrichtet und sich, nachdem er sich weidlich darüber verlustiert hat, höchst 'leichtfertig' entfernt (As-dur 2/4).

"Das aber bitte als Privatmitteilung zu betrachten" (my translation). Compare also the translation in Schuh, *Richard Strauss: A Chronicle of the Early Years: 1864-1898*, trans. Mary Whittall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 397.

¹⁹Original German in n. 18 above. As it happens, Strauss was incorrect that the Philistine-incident (at least as he related it) occurred during a visit of Till to Prague. (This might suggest that the composer's familiarity with the details of the *Volksbuch* was either casual—a product of memory or general impression—or at least not strongly determinative for the tone poem's program.) Till's meeting with the Prague pedants is recounted in "Historie" No. 27 of Simrock, "Till Eulenspiegel," *Die deutschen Volksbücher*, vol. 10, pp. 372–74 ("Die siebenund-zwanzigste Historie sagt, wie Eulenspiegel zu Prag in Böhmen auf der hohen Schule mit den Studenten disputierte und wohl bestand"). As also noted by Del Mar (*Richard Strauss*, I, 130), in that account it is Till who is examined by the academics, not vice-versa. Less noticed, though, is that Strauss's remembered version is much closer to the events of the complementary "Historie" No. 89, toward the end of the tale, where Till does pose unanswerable questions to the *Doctores* of Paris, pp. 488–89 ("Die neunundachtzigste Historie sagt, wie Eulenspiegel gen Paris auf die hohe Schule zog"). Till's questions to the Parisian academics were: "Which is better? Is it better that a person does what he knows or that he first learns what he doesn't know? Or do the *Doctores* make the books, or the books the *Doctores*?" (p. 488: "Welches ist beßer? Ist beßer, daß ein Mensch das thue was er weiß, oder daß einer erst lerne, was er nicht weiß? Oder machen die Doctoren die Bücher, oder machen die Bücher Doctores?") These ques-

did summarize Strauss's letter (surely by this time with the composer's approval)—now also including a reference to the marketwives incident—in the program booklet that accompanied the 5 November premiere. It was followed three days later by a similar "elucidation" by Wilhelm Klatte in the *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung*.²⁰

To judge from these sources, as with the earlier sketch evidence, the various episodes and adventures of Till were subdividable into two categories. One encompassed those that conveyed the three most central images of the work—the character of Till, especially as laid out musically in the initial pages of the score; his brazen encounter with the narrow-minded Philistines (subverting the stiffly formal examining committee); and society's death sentence on him, along with the subsequent hanging. The other category encompassed a handful of supplementary adventures musically enacting the protagonist's gleeful lawlessness and social uncontainability. This secondary set of successive images enabled the composition of the tone poem as a symphonic work extending in time and setting itself into a dialogue with past works within the genre.

When all of the tone poem's images are laid out one after another, however—without the foreknowledge of the sketch materials and the letter to Wüllner—they can impress the listener as a merely sequential string of events. This leads us to the principal source of information regarding the program. Both more familiar and more publicly definitive, this program-tradition springs from twenty-three labels that Strauss wrote not long after the premiere into Wilhelm Mauke's copy of the printed score.²¹ Mauke immediately published them in

tions upset the learned Parisians, who looked puzzlingly at each other, "and there arose many *Opiniones* among them; one thought this, the other, that" ("Die Doctoren sehen einander an und entstanden mancherlei *Opiniones* unter ihnen; einer meinte das, der andere jenes" [pp. 488–89]).

²⁰The Wüllner letter, the program-booklet at the premiere, and Klatte's November *Erläuterung* are also treated in Werbeck, *Die Tondichtungen*, pp. 245–49.

²¹As reported in Werbeck, *Die Tondichtungen*, pp. 248–49, "on 30 November 1895, one day after the Munich premiere [of *Till*], Wilhelm Mauke informed Strauss in a letter [*brieflich*] about his intention to write analyses of *Don*

an authorized "Musikführer" (guide) in 1896, and they were also reprinted in 1908 as one of several chapters in the Schlesinger guide to Strauss's tone poems.²² Under these circumstances the well-known Strauss-Mauke labels were offered to the public as an "official" leitmotif or episode-adventure guide to the piece: an authorized decoding for the interested listener.

Mauke's often-reproduced labels are given in Table 1, along with score-locations.²³ Slightly complicating the matter, however, is an additional printed score that still exists in the Richard-Strauss-Archiv in Garmisch (RSA) with yet another set of composer-labeled entries, which, although similar to those reported by Mauke, also display some interesting additions to and deviations from it.²⁴ The principal events

outlined in both of these sources are well known and need not be elaborated further here: the uproarious marketwives incident, Till's hiding in a mousehole and subsequent escape in seven-league boots, Till disguised as a pastor and proceeding to scorn religion, the unsuccessful love-scene, the mystification of the academic Philistines, the trial and execution, and so on. It should be noted, though, that the Strauss-Mauke descriptions drop out completely after Till's *Gassenhauer*-whistling departure from the Philistines (mm. 375–86; No. 26) and would not be resumed until the beginning of the trial scene (m. 577; No. 38). This long stretch of unlabeled music includes, most prominently, the entire "recapitulation" (beginning at m. 429; twelve measures after No. 28): nearly 150 measures of what is surely the most musically complex passage of the tone poem. This span of programmatic absence is a feature of the work to which I shall return.

So much is clear, but if we restrict ourselves only to the literal program, we can close our eyes to its broader implications—the tone poem as a metaphor for larger aesthetic and social concerns, a musical process that stages an ironized exposé of in-place, hegemonic power-genres and cultural interests through a subversive invasion and undermining from within. Such, at least, was the view of Arthur Seidl—as mentioned earlier, the work's dedicatee and longtime friend of Strauss—who promulgated the metaphor only a few months following the premiere. In the 1896 essay already cited, "Richard Strauss: A Character-Sketch," Seidl championed the now-controversial composer and his career to date.²⁵ When the discussion finally turned to *Till*, Strauss's most recent composi-

Juan, Tod und Verklärung, and *Till Eulenspiegel*," requesting support and material from Strauss in order to be able to provide "the authentic names of the motives" (die authentische Benennung der Motive). Mauke's guide was apparently available by mid- or late February 1896.

²²Mauke, *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche*, op. 28. *Erläutert von W.M.*, printed in the series *Der Musikführer* (Stuttgart, 1896); rpt. in *Richard Strauss: Symphonien und Tondichtungen*, ed. Herwath Walden, Meisterführer No. 6 (Berlin: Schlesinger, 1908), pp. 92–108. The list has been often reproduced and translated, though sometimes with errors.

²³Translations of the labels are provided by Mary Whittall in Schuh, *Richard Strauss: A Chronicle of the Early Years*, p. 397 (which transmits Schuh's inadvertent omission of No. 13 below, which I have supplied). Whittall's translations are: (1) "Once upon a time there was a knavish fool"; (2) "named Till Eulenspiegel"; (3) "He was a wicked goblin"; (4) "Up to new tricks"; (5) "Just wait, you faint-hearts!"; (6) "Hop! On horseback through the market-women"; (7) "He runs away in seven-league boots"; (8) "Hidden in a mouse's hole"; (9) "Disguised as a parson, he oozes unction and morality"; (10) "but the knave peeps out at his big toe"; (11) "But, because of his mockery of religion, he feels a sudden horror of his end"; (12) "Till as gallant, exchanging dainty courtesies with pretty girls"; (13) "They've been really smitten"; (14) "He woos them"; (15) "However fine, a basket still signifies refusal" (alternatively, "However fine it may be, a basket is still nothing more than a basket"); (17) "Vows revenge on the whole human race"; (18) "Philistines' motive"; (19) "After imposing a few whopping theses on the Philistines, he abandons them, baffled, to their fate"; (20) "Grimace from a distance"; (21) "Till's street ditty"; (24) "The trial"; (25) "He whistles nonchalantly"; (26) "Up the ladder! There he swings, the air is squeezed out of him, a last jerk. Till's mortal part has come to an end."

²⁴A concordance between the printed Mauke labels and Strauss's handwritten labels in the Richard-Strauss-Archiv (RSA) score is provided in Werbeck, *Die Tondichtungen*, pp. 540–41. Most of the Mauke labels are also present in

the RSA score, although sometimes with slight alterations of wording. Instead of "Namens 'Till Eulenspiegel'" for m. 6, Strauss wrote in "Entrata." The additional descriptive labels—or informatively differing labels—found in the Strauss score and not in Mauke are: mm. 141–44, "und richtet einen furchtbaren Wirrwarr an"; m. 253, "[after 'wütend'] fährt er ab"; mm. 293ff., "u. es kamen die Philister an!"; mm. 299–303, "halt! denen wollen wir einmal einige Nüsse zu knacken geben!"; m. 308, "u. ihnen auf den Köpfen herum" (this entry is cut off; Werbeck suggests that the word "tanzen" probably followed); mm. 319–22, "u. siehe da, sie fingen in 5 Sprachen zu reden an u. keiner verstand den andern."

²⁵Seidl, "Richard Strauß," pp. 11–66.

Table 1
The Strauss-Mauke Program
(labels written by Strauss into Wilhelm Mauke's copy
of the printed score, late 1895 or early 1896).

Originally published in Mauke, *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche*, op. 28. *Erläutert von W.M.*, Der Musikführer (Stuttgart, 1896); rpt. in *Richard Strauss: Symphonien und Tondichtungen*, ed. Herwath Walden, Meisterführer No. 6 (Berlin: Schlesinger, 1908), pp. 92–108. The list below is aligned with the report provided in Walter Werbeck, *Die Tondichtungen von Richard Strauss*, pp. 540–41. Compare the English translations in n. 23 of the present article. Compare also Strauss's slightly differing annotations in a second printed score ("RSA") cited in n. 24. Table 1's measure numbers are from Werbeck. (Citations in the present article will sometimes differ slightly.) The numberings of the comments are Mauke's. Musical motives cited by Mauke but provided with only a textual description, not with an official, "boldprint" label (as with No. 16), are given here in brackets.

	LOCATION (REHEARSAL No.)	MEASURE
1. Prolog. "Es war einmal" ein Schalksnarr		1ff.
2. Namens "Till Eulenspiegel"		6ff.
3. Das war ein arger "Kobold"	5 mm. before No. 3	46ff.
4. Auf zu neuen Streichen	6 mm. before No. 6	75ff.
5. Wartet nur ihr Duckmäuser!	9 mm. after No. 8	113–16
6. Hop! zu Pferde mitten durch die Marktweiber!	7 mm. after No. 9	135ff.
7. Mit Siebenmeilenstiefeln kneift er aus	4 mm. before No. 11	151ff.
8. In einem Mausloch versteckt!	6 mm. after No. 11	160ff.
9. Als Pastor verkleidet trieft er von Salbung und Moral	8 mm. before No. 13	179–82
10. Doch aus der grossen Zehe guckt der Schelm hervor!	5 mm. after No. 13	191ff.
11. Fasst ihn ob des Spottes mit der Religion doch ein heimliches Grauen an vor dem Ende	No. 14	196–99
12. Till als Kavalier zarte Höflichkeiten mit schönen Mädchen tauschend	10 mm. before No. 15	209–12
13. Sie hats ihm wirklich angethan	3 mm. before No. 16	222ff.
14. Er wirbt um sie	5 mm. after No. 16	229–32
15. Ein feiner Korb ist auch ein Korb!	1 m. before No. 17	244ff.
16. ["wütend Till abfährt"]	[4 mm. before No. 18]	[253]
17. Schwört Rache zu nehmen an der ganzen Menschheit	7 mm. after No. 18	263ff.
18. Philisternmotiv	No. 20	293–99
19. Nachdem er den Philistern ein paar ungeheuerliche Thesen aufgestellt, überlasst er die Verblüfften ihrem Schicksal	4 mm. before No. 22	315ff.
20. Grosse Grimasse von weitem	1 m. after No. 24	345ff.
21. Till's Gassenhauer	No. 26	375–82
[extracts 22–23, recalling prior motives (Nos. 3 and 9), are not provided with new labels in Mauke]		
24. Das Gericht	No. 38	577ff.
25. Er pfeift noch gleichgiltig [<i>sic</i>] vor sich hin	6 mm. after No. 38	582ff. (?)
26. Hinauf auf die Leiter! da baumelt er, die Luft geht ihm aus, eine letzte Zuckung. Till's Sterbliches hat geendet	No. 40	615–19

[There is no extract No. 27 in Mauke's list. Nos. 28 and 29 cite the epilogue without specific labels, mm. 647–69 and 650–55 ("die eigentliche 'Apotheose des unsterblichen Humors'"), thus omitting the final two measures of the piece.]

tion, the dedicatee noted how it “technically” explored a “completely new, unfamiliar ground . . . the expressive territory of musical irony.” (At this point Seidl still hoped that the tone poem was only an anticipatory study for the eagerly awaited opera on the same topic.) While Berlioz and Liszt had brought “caricature” and “the bizarre” to the elevated spheres of art music, and while mere “humor” had also long been recognized within certain kinds of music, Strauss had now taken a decisive step further: “This master of characteristic expression has brought it about that we must also believe in *irony* as the content and object of musical art—however much this might make the hair of abstract aestheticians stand on end.”²⁶

In the essay he insisted that more was at stake than charming an audience with the tale of the lovable rogue from German folklore. Seidl strove to go beyond the readings of those other commentators, such as Wilhelm Klatte in the *Erläuterung* that had appeared directly after the premiere,²⁷ whose “all too objective” readings of the work as only “illustrative tone-painting” or “a naturalistic portrayal” had stopped short once the basic tale underneath had been identified and correlated with specific musical passages. As opposed to such “exoteric” readings, Seidl argued that the real content of the piece lay in its “‘esoteric’ meaning.” The figure of Till was to be taken neither as a mere individual nor as a “concrete, locally situated folk-hero” but rather as a “type” (*Typus*)—one, moreover, that was to be identified with the new spirit of an establishment-debunking modernism.²⁸ Seidl set forth his declarations in early-modernist, new-generation tones—the liberating revolt against the past and its stuffy codifications—

²⁶Seidl, “Richard Strauß,” p. 53: “technisch,” “völlig neuer, ungewohnter Boden erst versuchsweise zu prüfen,” “Karikatur,” “Humor,” p. 53. Also on p. 53: “Dieser Meister des charakteristischen Ausdrucks hat es aber fertig gebracht, daß wir nun auch an die *Ironie* als Inhalt und Gegenstand der Tonkunst glauben müssen, so sehr den abstrakten Aesthetikern darob die Haare sich sträuben mögen.”

²⁷On Klatte, see the Werbeck citation in n. 20 above.

²⁸Seidl, “Richard Strauß,” p. 57: “*exoterischen*”; “die ‘esoterische’ Bedeutung des Werkes”; “allzu gegenständlich als ‘tonmalerische Illustrierung’ . . . oder wie eine naturalistische Schilderung”; “eines konkreten, lokal bestimmten Volks-Helden”; “von diesem *Individualfall* der Sage zum *Typus* selbst fort zu schreiben.”

and from time to time he described the situation in terms of a principle of eternal recurrence and social renewal, in this context, one might suppose, to be understood as alluding to a quasi-Nietzschean subtext. Some extracts:

[Strauss] said to himself: What lived and operated in this mockingbird, in this medieval “scarlet prince of all arrogant bravado,” was something that returns again and again on this earth when a superior spirit interacts with the external world. In any case, hidden inside [this comic story] is the theme of spiritual triumph over confining surroundings that rob one of air and take away one’s breath. And so he doesn’t [only] “portray,” merely setting this or that into music . . . but rather he unfolds the *expressive antitheses* [*Ausdrucksgegensätze*] of these two things—[two] worlds that nature made into antipodes—by thematic groupings and purely musical formations into their eternal conflict with one another, a conflict that is binding everywhere. A motto for the whole [enterprise] could express it directly: “Épater le bourgeois!” War against all apostles of moderation, against the old guild of the merely virtuous and comfortable, against all good middle-class folk [*Spießher*] and secure “schools of abstinence.”²⁹

Seidl was here placing Till, and by extension Strauss, into the elect circle of similarly heroic outsiders (embodiments of the “exceptional man”)³⁰ who had challenged the pedantic power brokers of their day or who had to appear before an official tribunal. This circle included

²⁹Seidl, “Richard Strauß,” p. 58. “Er sagte sich: In diesem Spottvogel und ‘scharlachenen Prinzen jeden Über-Mutes’ des Mittelalters lebte und wirkte etwas, das *immerdar* wieder kehrt auf dieser Erden in dem Verkehr eines überlegenen Geistes mit der Außenwelt—das Thema des geistigen Triumphes über die einengende, Luft raubende und Atem benehmende Umgebung steckt jedenfalls darinnen. Und nun ‘schildert’ er nicht, dies und das lediglich vertonend . . . sondern er entwickelt die *Ausdrucksgegensätze* dieser beiden, von Natur antipodischen Welten durch thematische Gruppierungen und rein musikalische Gestaltungen in ihrem ewigen, allenthalben giltigen Widerstreite zu einander. ‘Épater le bourgeois!’—Krieg gegen alle Mäßigkeits-Apostel, wider die alte Zunft der nur Tugendhaften und Behäglichchen, alle guten Spießher und sicheren ‘Enthaltamschulen!’—könnte das Motto zum Ganzen geradezu schon lauten.”

³⁰The term “Ausnahmemenschen” appears in Seidl’s recycling of much of the above passage—with slight variants—in an essay, “Also sang Zarathustra” published in his *Moderner Geist in der deutschen Tonkunst* (Berlin: “Harmonie” Verlagsgesellschaft für Literatur und Kunst, [1901]), p. 88.

Socrates (who, “as is well known, was in the habit of setting himself up as apparently unwise against his opponents so that, in this disguise, he might display an even deeper wisdom”)³¹ and, by implication, Walther von Stolzing in *Die Meistersinger*. On this view, humor was both a mask of defense and a weapon wielded against the stiffness and incomprehension of institutional spokespersons. Such figures can never die; their influence and impact can only be reborn, if only in others, in new times and new places. Till’s execution at the end should not be taken literally:

Take both light and air from the genius . . . trip him up . . . threaten him with death—and yet you cannot kill him. He mocks your “absurdly punctilious” court. His wit soars far above you. He remains the “rogue,” and his spirit ultimately lives on in the consciousness of the folk, far longer and more lasting than all of your simple “*Schildbürgerei*!”³²

Seidl proceeded to locate the work’s audacity also in the specifics of its musical material and how it was treated. Till’s characteristic motives—such as that first sounded by the horn—were “felt through and through in the modern manner,” and the short, laughing idea first heard in the clarinet early into the piece (mm. 46–47) was another musical sign of *Eulenspiegelei*. He noted the parallels between the prologue and the epilogue, the latter of which he regarded as a sign that the telling of the tale was now over but secured for further retellings. He called attention to the multiplic-

ity of dynamic and expression marks in the score; to the “rhythmic madness” that pervades the work; to its “harmonic strangeness”; to its “completely light-hearted polyphonic play”; and, above all, to its dazzling orchestration—the capstone of its embrace of the modern:³³

And instrumental wit makes the fellow; here open, there with mute; there timpani with wooden mallets, there with sponge-mallets; contrabasses *divisi a 4* [in the Judgment Scene] . . . [etc.] Harp and tubas [*sic*] are indeed lacking, as accused, but otherwise [Strauss] uses here the modern “large” orchestra with all of the percussion in addition to winds in threes or fours and strings often playing in several parts *divisi*—all in a genuinely Straussian, grandly audacious, and yet refined treatment. In fact, this score provides a *non plus ultra* [*sic*], of present-day orchestral technique, unheard of until now. Anyone will confirm this who has ever studied it attentively and compared it more precisely with its predecessors. . . . In short, this is the peculiar thing in it, the remarkable thing: the up-to-date [*neuezeitlich*] empirical progress in the analysis of the soul, from the differentiation of the emotions up to the laying bare of the nerves, something of the “division of the tones” of modern [*modernen*] painting—this, too, is present in this totally new orchestral technique. Here Strauss, in truth, shows himself to be a more promising star for the future [*verheißungsvoller Zukunftstern*] of German music, indeed, beyond Berlioz, Liszt, and Wagner himself.³⁴

³³Seidl, “Richard Strauß,” p. 59, “durch und durch modern empfundenen”; and p. 60: “bald mit rhythmischer Tollheit, bald mit harmonischer Wunderlichkeit, und dann wieder in leichtlebigster polyphoner Spielerei.”

³⁴Seidl, “Richard Strauß,” p. 61: “Und Instrumental-Witze macht ker Kerl: hier offen, dort gestopft, da Pauken mit Holz-, da mit Schwammschlägeln, vierfache Kontrabässe. . . . Harfe und Tuben fehlen zwar, dem Vorwurf entsprechend; sonst aber ist das moderne ‘große’ Orchester mit allen Schlaginstrumenten, zudem in drei- und bis vierfacher Bläserbesetzung mit oft mehrfachen Streicher-teilungen in echt Strauß’scher, großzügig kühner, ja raffinierter Handhabung verwendet. Und daß diese Partitur tatsächlich ein bis dahin unerhörtes Non plus ultra heutiger Orchestertechnik bildet, das wird jeder bestätigen, der sie einmal aufmerksam studiert und mit ihren Vorgängern genauer verglichen hat. . . . Endlich ist dies noch das Eigenartige, Sonderliche daran: der neuzeitliche empirische Fortschritt in der Analyse des Seelenlebens von der Differenzierung des Gefühls bis zur Bloßlegung der Nerven hin, etwas von der ‘Teilung der Töne’ der modernen Malerei, steckt auch in dieser ganz neuen Orchestertechnik, in welcher Strauß als verheißungsvoller *Zukunftstern* der deutschen Musik in Wahrheit *über Berlioz, Liszt, und Wagner selbst noch hinaus* weist.”

³¹Seidl, “Richard Strauß,” p. 54: “Schon der alte *Sokrates* pflegte sich bekanntlich scheinbar unklug seinem Gegner gegenüber zu stellen, um in dieser Verkappung dann desto tiefere Weisheiten auszukramen.”

³²Seidl, “Richard Strauß,” pp. 58–59. “Nehmt ihr dem Genie gleich Luft und Licht . . . ja, wollt ihr ihm gelegentlich sogar ‘den Strick drehen’ . . . mit dem Tode bedrohen—ihr könnt es gar nicht umbringen, es spottet selbst eurer ‘hochnotpeinlichen’ Gerichte; sein Witz schwingt sich über euch hinaus: *es* bleibt der ‘Strick,’ und *sein* Geist lebt schließlich in Bewußtsein des Volkes fort, weit länger und dauernder als all’ euer einfältige ‘Schildbürgerei!’” The last word refers of course to Strauss’s once-planned Till-opera, *Till Eulenspiegel bei den Schildbürgern* (i.e., Till among the townspeople of Schilda). Compare Gilliam, *The Life of Richard Strauss*, p. 62: “In this mythical town of Schilda (a thinly disguised Munich) the hapless, empty-headed townspeople at first sentence Till Eulenspiegel to death, then ultimately make him their mayor.”

Seidl tied his 1896 promotion of Strauss as the quintessential modernist on whom the future of German music was likely to pivot both to the “esoteric” or metaphorical content of the program of *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche* and to the mocking spirit and technical audacity of its musical materials. (Had he been prompted along these lines by the composer himself?) As the metaphors start multiplying, the next step beyond the mere interpreting of Till—and his music—as a general “type” of counter-authority figure (Seidl’s *Typus*) would be to read the tone poem as a manifesto marketing Strauss’s position as a progressive modernist—a gleefully defiant self-caricature, an ironized *Heldenleben avant la lettre*.³⁵ Although Seidl never set up the parallels so explicitly, the point was too close at hand to ignore: as the legendary character of Till, in this musical retelling, exposed the superficiality of his surroundings—most notably, of the professorial pedants—so too was Strauss furthering his claim to embody a new-generational *élan* by subverting the encrusted traditions and moralistic-metaphysical sobriety maintained by the old guard—including especially the Wagnerian guard—of the Austro-Germanic institution of art music. (Youmans’s recent reading of the tone poem also underscored this: “*Till* is not so much a comedy as a series of parodies. . . . Every instance of the comic has a satirical or critical target, usually not far beneath the surface.”³⁶) *Till Eulenspiegel* claimed to be “about” the story of Till; superficially, it claimed to be a musically virtuosic third-person narrative. But for those in the know (the “esoteric” meaning, the secret handshake, the wink among initiates) it could be read as an exercise in self-promotion.

³⁵Obviously (I am not the first to assert this) Strauss’s subsequent tone poems—*Also sprach Zarathustra*, *Don Quixote*, *Ein Heldenleben*, *Symphonia domestica*—are cleverly recast, more “progressive” variants of the same underlying, self-referential theme, some with pointed links to philosophy and literature, others (the later ones) with self-constructed programs.

³⁶Youmans, *Richard Strauss’s Orchestral Music*, p. 183. Compare p. 186: “One of the ways in which *Till* is defined for us, then, is through a kind of demystification that treats parody as *more* faithful to reality, not less.”

Paradoxically, it was the sheer literalism and vivid pictorialism of this program, interpreted “esoterically”—Seidl’s interpretive move—that can encourage us today to approach the work, on another level, as an 1895-specific historical statement, as (*Program*)*musik über Musik*, or at least as a piece of music “about” the historical situation of Germanic concert music writ large, now under the challenge of the progressive Strauss. *Till Eulenspiegel* may be grasped as a tone poem about itself. On this stratum of interpretation, it is about its own relationship with a cultural world that it simultaneously constructed as blinkered, backward, enthralled by its own metaphysical deceptions and self-importance, and mired in an outdated tradition. *Till* is therefore also a work about the prestige-claims of its composer, self-situated polemically within a contested field of art music. And it is about its own sensationistically displayed, overtly “progressive” musical content and technique. As any turn-of-the-century performance of *Till* unfolded in time, it drew attention to itself in a materially specific concert-program context—to its own spectacularly dished-up eccentricities and musical impudence. By doing so, it illuminated its own self-presence as framed within a conservatively restricted routine of concert expectations.

All of this suggests that *Till Eulenspiegel* is far more than a musical joke, far more than the endearing elevation of the legend of a lovable rogue. Here Strauss confronted his audience with unstoppable laughter, with the carnivalesque ridicule of the rituals of social containment, with unfettered joy in the insouciant life-impulse released in the very act of its sonic presentation. As a whole, the tone poem presents its listeners with a paradox, a tense contradiction. On the one hand, through its virtuosic technique and high-polish dazzle, it celebrates and affirms the orchestral institution that is the precondition of its existence. One can hardly deny it: this is the work’s conservative or complacent aspect, often detected by critics. On the other hand, one cannot overlook the contradiction: its pointedly mocking, transgressive stance—the socially destructive power of its laughter—defies the criteria for aesthetic legitimacy that had founded and sustained that institution in the first place.

Although Seidl did not pursue such connotations further, Till's laughter suggested even more disturbing Nietzschean resonances.³⁷ The topic pointed also, and more specifically, to the consummate disdain with which the philosopher, in the prior decade, had claimed to overcome misplaced metaphysical hopes: "God is dead" ("Gott ist tot"), first proclaimed in *The Gay Science* (*Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*) of 1882 and reaffirmed multiply, refrainlike, in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the first part of which had appeared in 1883.³⁸ Ultimately, the goal was to overcome what he had famously identified in *Zarathustra* as the Spirit of Gravity (*der Geist der Schwere*): "One does not kill by anger but by laughter. Come, let us kill the Spirit of Gravity"³⁹—a smug, self-satisfied seriousness retarding human progress—and to usher in the transvaluation of all values (*die Umwertung*

aller Werte),⁴⁰ through a nihilistic embrace of the materiality of the earth coupled with the hearty, derisive, self-affirming laughter of a position of superiority.

Additionally, while Seidl chose not to mention it, we might recall that in Sections 6–8 of the Prologue of Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* the first image proclaiming the attainability of *Übermensch*-status was that of a laughable yet terrifying buffoon ("the buffoon of the tower," *der Possenreißer vom Turme*) springing forth into the town square and leaping onto a tightrope (strung between two towers) being perilously crossed by a street performer (*ein Seiltänzer*) before a gazing crowd. (A few pages earlier, in Section 4, Zarathustra, observing the scene, had famously instructed the people that "Man is a rope, fastened between animal and Superman—a rope over an abyss.")

³⁷This was also independently noted in 2005 by Youmans, *Richard Strauss's Orchestral Music*, e.g., pp. 85, 111, 113, 125, and 182–92. What follows here—and indeed for the remainder of the article—is the core of my earlier treatment of the subject (1995, rev. 2000), which at present could also be read as extending Youmans's discussion with additional observations and several more work-specific details.

³⁸Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, Section 108 ("New Struggles"), Beginning of Book 3, p. 167: "God is dead; but given the way of men, there may still be caves for thousands of years in which his shadow will be shown. —And we—we still have to vanquish his shadow, too" (Kaufmann noted, p. 167, n. 1, that "this is the first occurrence of this famous formulation in Nietzsche's books"). More famously, the line is shouted out in the famous parable of the madman crying out the death of God in the market place, "God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him" (*The Gay Science*, Book 3 ["The Madman"], Section 125, p. 181). Kaufmann, p. 167, n. 1, also provided several references to the "God is dead" line in *Zarathustra*.

³⁹Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin Books, 1961, rpt. 1969), p. 68 (from the section of Zarathustra's initial discourses, "Of Reading and Writing"). Part 3 of *Zarathustra* contains a full section "Of the Spirit of Gravity," pp. 210–14: "I am enemy to the Spirit of Gravity: and truly, mortal enemy, arch-enemy, born enemy! . . . He who will one day teach men to fly will have moved all boundary-stones. . . . He will baptize the earth anew—as 'the weightless'. . . . He calls earth and life heavy: and so will the Spirit of Gravity have it! But he who wants to become light and a bird must love himself—thus do I teach. . . . He who wants to learn to fly one day must first learn to stand and to walk and to run and to climb and to dance. . . . Not good taste, not bad taste, but my taste, which I no longer conceal and of which I am no longer ashamed. . . . Thus spoke Zarathustra."

[6] A brightly-dressed fellow like a buffoon sprang out and followed the [tightrope walker] with rapid steps. "Forward, lame-foot!" cried his fearsome voice, "forward sluggard, intruder, pallid-face! Lest I tickle you with my heels! What are you doing here between towers? You belong in the tower, you should be locked up, you are blocking the way of a better man than you!" And with each word he came nearer and nearer to him: but when he was only a single pace behind him, there occurred the dreadful thing that silenced every mouth and fixed every eye: he emitted a cry like a devil and sprang over the man standing in his path. But the latter, when he saw his rival thus triumph, lost his head and the rope; he threw away his pole and fell, faster even than it, like a vortex of legs and arms. The market square and the people were like a sea in a storm: they flew apart in disorder, especially where the body would come crashing down. . . .

[7] In the meanwhile, evening had come and the market square was hidden in darkness: then the

⁴⁰Compare *Zarathustra*, Prologue, Section 9 (p. 51): "Behold the good and the just! Whom do they hate most? Him who smashes their tables of values, the breaker, the lawbreaker—but he is the creator." And, e.g., the first of "Zarathustra's Discourses," "Of the Three Metamorphoses," *Zarathustra*, p. 55: "To create new values—even the lion is incapable of that: but to create itself freedom for new creation—that the might of the lion can do. . . . To seize the right to new values—that is the most terrible proceeding for a weight-bearing and reverential spirit. Truly, to this spirit it is a theft and a work for an animal of prey."

people dispersed, for even curiosity and terror grow tired. . . . But Zarathustra sat on the ground beside the dead man and was sunk in thought. . . . Uncanny is human existence and still without meaning: a buffoon can be fatal to it. I want to teach men the meaning of their existence: which is the Superman, the lightning from the dark cloud man.⁴¹

Even while the mailed fist and heaven-storming bravado of Nietzsche's prose is more strongly in evidence here than in anything we find in the more tepid Straussian *Till* program, the topical relationships between them seem unlikely to be coincidental. Even more curiously, a "merely amusing" predecessor to Nietzsche's tightrope-and-buffoon vignette may be found in Tales 3 and 4—the first "real" adventure of many more to follow—from the 1870s *Volksbuch* version of "Till Eulenspiegel."⁴² Once we recall also Werbeck's claim that a passage from the otherwise completely unrelated Grimms' tale "König Drosselbart" was probably the main source of the marketwives incident in *Till* (mm. 134, six measures after No. 9), one might suggest that—if the Grimms' incident was a source at all—it might have been tacitly conflated with these sudden-mayhem passages from the *Volksbuch* and from *Zarathustra*.⁴³ Along the same lines, one wonders whether Nietzsche's buffoon, introduced in the book's prologue, might have been another stimulus toward Strauss's *Till* project, which might be construed as its own prologue to the representation of Nietzsche's work more broadly in the tone poem *Also sprach Zarathustra* from 1896.

Nor should one overlook the central motive of death and inevitable rebirth in Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*. This is the idea of "the eternal return"—*die ewige Wiederkehr*—introduced only by implication at the end of the "Of Great Events" section of Part 2 but turned into an *idée fixe* of the book thereafter, climaxing in the "Second Dance Song" from Part 3 and explicated line-by-line near the end of the book in "The Drunken Song" from Part 4.⁴⁴ To be sure, Till's mocking, jeering resuscitation in Strauss's epilogue at the end of the piece may not be unproblematically assimilable into Nietzsche's more bone-rattling doctrine, but that there are parallels between them can hardly be contested. From this perspective, the epilogue of *Till Eulenspiegel*, beyond functioning as a connotatively charged framing, can also be understood as suggesting at its outset a return to the music of the piece's beginning, that is, as a type of *Wiederkehr*.⁴⁵

These are all reasons why Till's laughter of 1895—as Seidl kept insisting—is not appropriately reducible only to the harmlessly witty or the winsomely *gemütlich* in the German bourgeois sense of the term (which, however, is precisely the way that most commentators have sought to domesticate it). Rather, derisive laughter, the dismissive laughter of incoming power, was the linchpin of one realization of the modern spirit, informed by Nietzsche and others, to overcome religious, scientific, and artistic institutions. The promise of an iconoclastic overturning of these institutions is no less present in *Till* than it would be in *Also sprach Zarathustra*. And all of it is tied up with one of

⁴¹*Zarathustra*, pp. 47–49. For Section 4's "rope over an abyss," see p. 43.

⁴²"Till Eulenspiegel," in Simrock, *Die deutschen Volksbücher*, pp. 331–34, "Historie" Nos. 3 and 4 (see n. 14 above). There young Till, as a boy (and after his father's death), learns how to exercise and prance about (*tummeln*) on a stretched-out tightrope (*Seil*) attached to his home. In the first story (No. 3) his mother cuts the rope and Till plunges into the water, where he is laughed at by townspeople. In the second (No. 4) he revenges himself on those that mocked him by setting up the rope again, wheedling several dozen shoes from a crowd of townspeople, and, having once again ascended the rope's heights, cutting the rope to let the shoes suddenly fall in a clattering, unsorted heap in street—resulting in an instant bedlam of confusion.

⁴³Compare nn. 14–15 above.

⁴⁴This is the text, of course, that Mahler also presented as an inset song in his Third Symphony.

⁴⁵None of this is to suggest that this piece (or indeed any piece) harbors a single or unitary meaning as a real, existing entity to be uncovered through research and analysis—one that has been finally approached and plucked out for display here. The reverse is more likely: *Till's* strata of potential meanings are underdetermined, multiple. They are available on different levels and respond differently to differing angles of approach. The text-adequate status—encompassing such things as its suitability and robustness—of any proposed reading to the text at hand depends preponderantly on the exterior framing and set of larger questions (along with the historical and musical acuity) that the listener or inquiring interpreter brings to it.

the most central, most unsettling threats of the modern: the threat of a high-tech social and aesthetic decentering and dissolution into brilliant surface sensation and cleverness—material sensation—with the whole driven by the antimetaphysical languages of modern talent and unabashed commercial appeal. Till Eulenspiegel's (or Strauss's) perhaps not so completely *lustige Streiche* not only look back parodistically to the musical revolution launched a half-decade earlier with *Don Juan*; they also lead with frictionless fluidity into the modern nihilism celebrated immediately afterward in *Also sprach Zarathustra*.⁴⁶

MUSIC AND METAPHOR:
FURTHER "ESOTERIC" CONNOTATIONS

Seidl's flagging of our attention to substrata of implication below the programmatic surface may be buttressed through a consideration of the music representing the individual "scenes" of the score. Toward that end, I turn now to aspects of the music's more local effects by looking at three sections of the tone poem: (1) the initial Till-complex; (2) the Pastor episode; and (3) the Philistine episode.

1. Following five measures of "once-upon-a-time" introduction, the opening complex of Till-material stretches from m. 6 to m. 111, beginning and ending in F major. This unfolds in three subsections: mm. 6–49, an introductory passage as Till enters and is defined as a musical character; mm. 50–81 (beginning one measure before No. 3), a complementary section presumably sketching out the Till-character further, though using much of the same musical material; and mm. 81–111 (beginning at No. 6), what may be a brief, first adventure, again preoccupied with the Till-material. If this last section is to be taken as an adventure, as opposed to a third sketch of Till, it is an abstract one: it is not described by any existent program, although the Strauss-Mauke labeling does indicate at the end of the preceding sec-

tion, m. 75, that Till is "up to new pranks" (Auf zu neuen Streichen). (The first descriptively illustrative adventure will occur only after this initial Till-complex, beginning with feigned innocence, ca. m. 113, nine measures after No. 8—"Wartet nur ihr Duckmäuser!"—but soon bolting into the marketwives uproar.)

In the first subsection, mm. 6–49, Till is identified by two musical modules: in the Mauke score Strauss labeled them as "Namens 'Till Eulenspiegel'" and "Das war ein arger 'Kobold'" (or German household sprite). The first of these, "the name 'Till Eulenspiegel'" (or, in a different score that Strauss also labeled, the "Entrata")⁴⁷ is the famous horn-call entrance-theme announcing itself under a pointedly "opened," upper-register $\frac{6}{4}$ chord over the dominant—a musical "open door" at which the protagonist appears (ex. 1). Its nonconforming aspects are so self-evident as hardly to require comment. As all horn players and examiners of the score realize, the characteristic first five notes (c¹, f¹, g¹, g^{#1}, a¹), which are then twice repeated, begin *piano* on an unanticipated offbeat. (Listeners without score may not realize this; it does not "sound like" what it is.) Considered by themselves, they seem to imply a quick string of two elliptical $\frac{8}{8}$ measures (with "wrong" downbeats) followed by, in effect, a $\frac{9}{8}$ measure (upbeat to m. 9 and all of m. 9) within the formally notated $\frac{6}{8}$ measures before settling into $\frac{6}{8}$ proper at m. 10. This is an image of witty metrical noncontainability. Rhythmic tricks and confusions tweak the norm of metrical regularity expected at the outset of a piece.

Beyond this, though, it is surely no coincidence that the five defining notes of the triply repeated incipit could be triply underlaid with his name ("Namens 'Till Eulenspiegel'"), as if Till were presenting a stutteringly impish calling card upon his appearance at the m. 6 doorway—the $\frac{6}{4}$ doorway that he might be interpreted as trying to close with the ironically polite imperfect authentic cadence-effect in F (I:IAC) at m. 13 (unless, contrarily, and perhaps more likely, an unspecified someone else, in response to his uninvited appearance, were clos-

⁴⁶Compare Youmans, *Richard Strauss's Orchestral Music*, pp. 183–200 ("Eulenspiegel and Zarathustra as Alter Egos").

⁴⁷See. n. 24 above.

Example 1: Richard Strauss, *Till Eulenspiegel*, mm. 6–23.

ing it in an attempt to shut him out).⁴⁸ Amusingly, that not fully closed doorway reopens at once: the $\frac{6}{4}$ shimmer returns in the violins, m. 13, and Till's repetitive calling card is presented once again, more insistently, *mezzo forte* (m. 14). This time, instead of the F:IAC-effect at the end, the prolonged F chord shifts onto its submediant, D minor (m. 20), the onset of a broader progression within F.

Considered as a whole subsection, Till's arrival in mm. 6–49 is shaped into a traditional, easily recognized thematic format, albeit one that appears here in inflated proportions. This

is a moderately large-scale (or grand) sentence, one of several kinds of expansive sentential structures available to the later nineteenth century.⁴⁹ In general, a sentence format is recognizable as two relatively brief, self-contained, complementary impulses (the *presentation modules*, aa or aa') followed by a longer, sometimes more discursive *continuation* or set of *continuation* => *cadential modules* (b, of variable length), often featuring fragmentation, accumulation, acceleration of harmonic or rhythmic activity, and the like, on the way to a promised cadence at its end (which in the nineteenth century may be subverted via a decep-

⁴⁸Needless to say, Till's horn-call proper concludes with an emphatic 8–5–1 gesture (mm. 11–12) that, considered on its own terms, is obviously a sign of implied-cadential closure. Just as obviously, though, the shimmering F $\frac{6}{4}$ sonority above it remains frozen, immobile, refusing to support Till's decisive melodic conclusion with complementary harmonic closure. Thus when coupled also with the shift to the *piano*, tutti orchestration in mm. 12–13, the V–I motion producing the local I:IAC-effect seems as much a response "after-the-fact" as it does a conclusion to the phrase that had begun in m. 6. As might also be expected, this I:IAC-effect at m. 13 is no sign of genuine closure but only a light gesture, particularly with regard to the larger structure of the ensuing passage as a whole. More strictly considered, mm. 1–13 (or mm. 6–13) sustain a tonic prolongation rounded with a mild quasi-cadential effect at its end.

⁴⁹For a recent, influential discussion of traditional sentence structure ca. 1800, see William E. Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 35–48. A few modifications to the theory have been proposed in Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types and Deformations in the Late-Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 84, n. 14 and 106, n. 8. See also the discussion of the expansion of the classical sentence into significantly modified nineteenth-century formats in Matthew BaileyShea, *The Wagnerian Satz: The Rhetoric of the Sentence in Wagner's Post-Lohengrin Operas* (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2003), esp. pp. 47–90.

Example 2: *Till Eulenspiegel*, mm. 30–51.

tive cadence, dissolved away from, or left unattained through some similar procedure).⁵⁰ The gestural feel of any such aa'b sentence (its more basic effect, beyond any definition of the "typical") is anapestic: short-short-long (~ ~ —), two briefer bounces on the diving-board before the third, longer plunge forward.⁵¹

⁵⁰Some of these descriptions of a sentence's continuation are indebted to the discussion in Caplin, *Classical Form*, pp. 40–45. Caplin's descriptions are overly restrictive in their implications, however, and the outlines for the sentence provided in the text above are more flexible, even as they also slightly modify some of Caplin's terminology. For subverted or evaded cadences within nineteenth-century sentences, see BaileyShea, *The Wagnerian Satz*, e.g., pp. 52, 98, 166–88, 236–44. The sentence, *qua* standard thematic format in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (often on a small, eight-measure scale), is not to be identified or conflated with German bar form, which (while the latter also displays a broader AAB outline) is a vocal-music and poetic structure associated with specific kinds of texts (Minnesinger, Meistersinger, polyphonic Lied, chorale). The twentieth-century analytical tradition of interpreting any and/or all Germanic AAB or aab melodic formats as bar forms (Lorenz, etc.) is misleading. Again, on bar form and the sentence, see BaileyShea, *The Wagnerian Satz*, pp. 83–91.

⁵¹BaileyShea, *The Wagnerian Satz*, p. 48: In order to grasp the sentence-concept more flexibly within the confines of a simple definition, one needs "to separate the basic *hyper-rhythmic* gesture of the sentence from the various pitch-

In this case the sentence's continuation, mm. 21–49, displays that part's characteristic fragmentation and sequential accumulation, with the calling-card idea—Till's persistent presence (here to stay)—rippling through the orchestra (passing from the oboes, mm. 21–25, to the clarinets, mm. 26–30, to the bassoons and lower strings, mm. 31ff., and so on, as if the Till-idea were creating the orchestra that it needs to pursue its subversions). As Werbeck pointed out, all of this produces a local intensification (*Steigerung*)⁵² that pushes toward an anticipated perfect authentic cadence. The proper dominant is reached in the second half of m. 29 and is prolonged in a cumulative crescendo, suggesting a Till-scrambling toward that apparently momentous cadence (ex. 2). The drama-

based options that bring it to life. . . . Each of [the parts of the aa'b sentence] is expressed according to a basic, three-part rhythmic pattern, generally articulated with the proportion *short: long*. Characteristics such as liquidation, sequential repetition, acceleration of harmonic rhythm, and cadence are indispensable to our understanding of the sentence, but it is the [*short: short: long*] gesture . . . that is most central; it is the backbone of the sentence, the essence of the form."

⁵²On the varied *Steigerung* shapes in *Till* as a whole, see Werbeck, *Die Tondichtungen*, pp. 343–55.

tized *forte* and *fortissimo* interruptions and restarts of the V7 in mm. 39–45, ending with a fermata-paused dominant-pitch in octaves (“Well?! Come on!”) only heighten the expectation for a promised cadential conclusion that, for whatever reason, is reluctant to show up. Immediately thereafter—responding to the frustration-gap—Till’s second motivic identifier, the “Kobold” idea, *immer sehr lebhaft*, mm. 46–49, led off by the relatively shrill D clarinet, instantly deflates the local impression of self-importance.

Till’s Kobold motive at m. 46 pricks the bubble of the preceding measures’ cadential promise, which in turn had been falsely inflated to grandiloquent levels by the *Steigerung* of the calling-card continuation: “Till” creates the high-flown cadential expectation, then pulls the rug out from under it. The impact of mm. 46–49 lies in the sudden sonorous deflation, effected by the instant shift of timbre, the unexpected isolation of a single, squeaky voice, *mezzo forte*, and the chuckling, *lustig* impudence of the motive itself. Hurlled out once the prank is underway or completed, the Kobold idea typically suggests Till’s eagerness to sound forth with a finger-pointing jeer, ridiculing those that he has just taken in: “Gotcha!”

As has been pointed out by others, the Kobold idea may be understood as a derisive distortion of some of the most “serious” moments in Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde*. Not only does the non-normative augmented-sixth chord associated with Strauss’s motive (mm. 47–48) invite us to recall the “half-diminished” quality of the “Tristan chord”—as if the music were sticking its tongue out at it, *sforzando*—but the opening four Kobold-pitches ($\hat{3}-\hat{1}-\hat{\#4}-\hat{5}$, which Strauss had also presented, in augmentation, in the first measure of the piece) may be heard, along with Bribitzer-Stull and Gauldin, as alluding to a familiar motive of newly attained peace, tranquillity, or repose in the act II Love Duet from *Tristan* (ex. 3).⁵³ Equally to the

point, Strauss’s jamming of the *Till* augmented sixth into this context (ex. 2, mm. 47–48) makes it impossible to produce the much-anticipated, stable F_3^5 chord of closure anticipated so eagerly by the preceding buildup. As such, it is not so much a concluding idea proper as a carnivalesque deformation of the cadential principle. Locally it resolves instead to a deflationarily inconclusive F_3^6 (m. 49), whereupon, seeking to correct the matter at hand, the orchestra leaps in with an exclamation-point, *fortissimo* F_3^5 , albeit one that falls short of satisfactory closure, since its topmost voice is the ringing, undescended $\hat{5}$ (c^3). While these procedures and allusions may be more purely musical than programmatic, they produce effects congruent with the spirit of the verbal program that is soon to unfold. They illustrate its leading principles in the abstract.

The remaining subsections of the initial Till-complex, mm. 6–111, may be treated more briefly. Strauss laid out subsection 2, mm. 50–81, as another grand sentence, one that starts with a sudden, though temporary, shift onto A minor-major and somewhat “new” musical material. Here the presentation modules, mm. 51–54 (No. 3) and 55–58 (with a shift at the end onto a C#-major chord), are occupied by hyperbanal, foursquare modules: a mock-horse’s bony gait, perhaps, or some other sort of preposterously antiserious, ape-armed reentry. Beginning at m. 59, the continuation, another *Steigerung*-crescendo toward an anticipated cadence, filters in ever-brighter flashes of the mischievous Kobold idea—now in this subsection growing

other potential allusions to Wagner’s works in individual moments of *Till*. Thus for Bribitzer-Stull and Gauldin, Till’s opening horn call might comment upon that of Siegfried. Particularly crucial are the allusive connotations of the leaning appoggiaturas, $\hat{2}-\hat{\#3}$, $\hat{\#4}-\hat{5}$, and the like, which pervade Strauss’s work as one of its defining stamps. I thank Professor Bribitzer-Stull for providing me with a copy of this paper. The similarity of the “Till chord” to the “Tristan chord” had also been pointed out and developed as a topic (as Bribitzer-Stull and Gauldin also note) by William Austin, *Music in the 20th Century* (New York: Norton, 1966), p. 140, and—perhaps derivatively from Austin—by Milton Babbitt, *Words about Music* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), p. 149. Compare also the *Tristan*-chord remarks in Youmans, *Richard Strauss’s Orchestral Music*, p. 186 (“In conjunction with the shift from romanticism to realism in our perception of Till, the chord loses its dignity and its metaphysical power”).

⁵³The same connection is made in Matthew Bribitzer-Stull and Robert Gauldin, “#2/b3, Wagner, and Strauss’s Merry Pranks: *Till Eulenspiegel* Reconsidered,” unpublished paper, p. 9. (A shorter version was presented by Bribitzer-Stull at the annual meeting of the Society for Music Theory, Seattle, 11 November 2004.) This paper suggests several

Immer sehr ruhig

pp

ISOLDA

Lausch', Ge - lieb - ter!

TRISTAN

Lass mich ster - ben!

pp

cresc.

f dim.

p

Example 3: Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde*, act II (Schirmer vocal score, 172/2/4–172/4/6).

invasively from its merely punctuating role at the end of subsection 1. Before long the Kobold motive gathers its resources together to produce, in a *fortissimo* module of emphatic octaves (mm. 71–73; m. 71 is No. 5), the quasi-cadential pouncing onto the governing tonic pitch, F (m. 73, although the downbeat is an F⁶ chord: full closure is not yet complete). This attainment is at once celebrated with an indiscreet roar of histrionic triumph, sustaining the “cadential” arrival and pushing the upper line (whose tonic-pounce had landed on f¹, m. 73) first up a tenth to $\hat{3}$ (a², m. 75: “Auf zu neuen Streichen” in Mauke’s score), and finally up another third to a sustained, ringing $\hat{5}$ (c³, m. 79, with c⁴ above in the piccolo).

The third subsection, mm. 81–111—possibly an abstract prank or adventure—brings us a third sentential structure, although this one begins more normatively. Here the complementary presentation modules are shrunk back to two-measure units (mm. 81–82, 83–84), based now on a more restrained variant of the ever-encroaching Kobold idea in the tonic, though beginning over an implied pedal dominant. With its sinking onto the subdominant chord, m. 85,

we fall into the sentence’s continuation, again dominated by the starting pitches (only) of the Kobold motive, here in a more subdued, less *Steigerung*-oriented dynamic,⁵⁴ though one with some metrically dizzying complications around mm. 97–102 (No. 7). Two disarmingly coy statements of a quieter Kobold variant (B \flat clarinet, mm. 102–03; violin, mm. 103–05) trigger a suddenly *fortissimo*, compressed version of the quasi-cadential pounce from subsection 2 (No. 8, mm. 105–07; cf. mm. 71–73), setting up a parallel between the two moments. This time the earlier “triumph” is recomposed into a raffish jeer from the oboes and English horn (mm. 108–09) before settling back onto the tonic via (finally!) a clear perfect authentic cadence (I:PAC, m. 111). That cadence seals off the large opening section and ushers in a string of programmatically labeled episodes: “Wartet nur, ihr Duckmäuser!” at m. 113 (nine measures after No. 8), and from there into the market-wives clamor around twenty measures later.

⁵⁴As also noted in Werbeck, *Die Tondichtungen*, p. 353.

2. Following the marketwives incident and its aftermath, the second explicitly programmatic episode finds Till undermining religious sanctimony by taking on the disguise of a pastor who “oozes unction and morality” (Als Pastor verkleidet trieft er von Salbung und Moral). This brief episode stretches from m. 179 (thirteen measures after No. 12) to ca. m. 207, where it is broken off in order to turn to the Wooing episode, “Till as Cavalier.” The Pastor episode centers around a snugly secure B \flat major (IV of the piece’s tonic, F), which dissolves away only at the end. Among analysts who have sought to understand *Till Eulenspiegel* as, at least in part, a modified sonata form or sonata deformation—these stretch from Reinhold Muschler in 1924 and Alfred Lorenz in 1924–25 to Walter Werbeck in 1996—this section is usually called upon to play the role of the secondary theme.⁵⁵ Under this interpretation Till could be understood as subverting the conventional expositional move to the dominant by proceeding in the opposite direction, into the subdominant.⁵⁶

The musical content of the passage is also suggestive. Till may be parodying the hymnic piety of churchmen,⁵⁷ but within its Austro-Germanic 1895 context the *gemächlich* identifying theme (ex. 4) also suggests the *topos* of university songs of the sort incorporated, for instance, into Brahms’s *Academic Festival Overture* (1880). From this perspective, it is one side of the Brahmsian style that Strauss satirized here: middle-register sonorities and doublings; hymnic piety; “quotation-mark” traditional harmony and phrase-formatting; the cozily rich ii $_5^6$ –V $_5^6$ /V–V progression in m. 182,

⁵⁵Reinhold C. Muschler, *Richard Strauss* (Hildesheim: Franz Borgmayer, [1924]), p. 319 (the Pastor episode as “das erste Seitenthema”); Alfred Lorenz, “Der formale Schwung in Richard Strauss’ ‘Till Eulenspiegel,’” *Die Musik* 17 (1924–25), 658–69 (see esp. the structural table on p. 668); Werbeck, *Die Tondichtungen*, pp. 354, 409, 448 (n. 234). The rondo/sonata formal question is treated more thoroughly toward the end of the present article.

⁵⁶Compare, however, such unusual precedents as the finale of Schubert’s Piano Quintet in A, D. 667, “Trout,” with its expositional move to IV. Youmans dismissed this interpretive option too hastily: see n. 83 below.

⁵⁷Youmans, *Richard Strauss’s Orchestral Music*, pp. 111 and 261–62, n. 77, mentions (following Gilliam) that the parson’s religious flock in *Till* are relatable to Nietzsche’s (and Strauss’s) religiously deluded *Hinterweltler* (“backworldsmen”) in *Also sprach Zarathustra*.

bringing a self-satisfied antecedent phrase to its end; the securely confident ascents in the melody; the institutionally stabilized, honorific glow of the whole. This suggests that it is not solely the clergy who are being mocked here but also the priestly “professoriate” of Germanic art-music traditionalists—the dignified Brahmsians in full academic regalia. (In this respect the Pastor episode, nominally about religious orthodoxy, foreshadows the more explicit, later episode in which Till taunts the professorial Philistines.) In other words, as Till, *inside* the workings of the piece, masquerades as the sober pastor, so Strauss, *outside* of the piece, has been donning traditionalist garb (the symphony orchestra, the ritual of the public concert, and so on) in order to play this prank, this *Streich* (using in part the *Streichorchester*, the string orchestra). The larger metaphor seems evident, and it is important to observe that later on, when the orchestra seizes Till before his execution, he is called to justice with the return of this “Pastor” music (mm. 567–73, beginning ten measures before No. 38): he is judged, that is, by the musical conservatives. (“How dare you pretend to be one of us?”)

Another aspect of the parody lies in the regularized binary patterning of the theme. The opening eight measures (mm. 179–86, the first part of the B \flat -major binary) invite us to construe them—again, considered in the progressive-Straussian context of 1895—as a “far-too-well-behaved” parallel period, 4 + 4 measures, with the second group of four lightly tonicizing B \flat ’s dominant, F (V of IV:PAC, m. 186), a wearily shopworn phrase-format (that “oozes unction and morality”) apparently still pleasing only to reverends. The second part of the binary, occupying another orthodox grouping of eight measures (though disposed as 5 + 3), can strike us as similarly well mannered—particularly the closing module, mm. 192–94, with its uncommonly polite and trouble-free close into the B \flat tonic (IV:PAC, m. 194),⁵⁸ followed by

⁵⁸From the standpoint of any potential sonata deformation that might be perceptible in this tone poem, this IV:PAC at m. 194—interpreted through the lens of Sonata Theory (Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*; see n. 49 above)—would be the point of essential expositional closure (EEC): the attainment of the first satisfactory per-

Example 4: *Till Eulenspiegel*, mm. 179–94.

further pacifying attempts to lay down a complacent codetta of elementary closing figures, resecuring the cadence through multiple reiterations (mm. 195–ca. 207).

The *musical* subversion undermining all of this—confirming the already inescapable thought that we are to frame what we are hearing as a wicked satire—emerges most obviously with the appearance, as incongruous as it is famous, of an augmentation of the first six notes of Till’s Kobold motive in the lowest instruments, mm. 187–89 (No. 13), resonantly charged to greet us in high relief through its orchestral doubling: contrabasses, bass clarinet, contrabassoons, low horns, tuba. This is Strauss’s musical image of “the knave’s big toe” peeking out from under his clerical robes (“Doch aus der grossen Zehe guckt der Schelm

hervor!”), in effect a broad musical wink at us, his bemused audience-accomplices. (We understand what this bass line signifies, even if the wide-eyed believers of Till’s naive flock do not.) The one-measure *schelmisch* (“roguish”) figure in the D clarinet, m. 191, also Kobold-based, further reinforces the general impression, and it is this figure that will blossom into the codetta-appendix at m. 195. In that appendix Strauss interpolated a short muted-triplet and string-tremolo passage, mm. 196–201, to suggest that Till momentarily shudders at the thought that his playful mockery of religion is likely to bring him to a bad end (“Fasst ihn ob des Spottes mit der Religion doch ein heimliches Grauen an vor dem Ende”), but the music shakes this off at once to return to the trouble-free Kobold-appendix music (m. 203, though we should note the brief, now neutralized [?] appearance of the triplet-figure in m. 204) before dissolving (mm. 206–09) into the Cavalier episode that follows.

fect authentic cadence in the secondary key that goes on to differing material.

In 1895 the image of a religion-mocker, even in this “merely amusing” Pastor-caricature, was easily transferrable to Nietzsche, who within the Germanic philosophical and aesthetic world had been the most thunderous assailant in this regard for some time. More to the point, especially in such works as *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche had famously parodied biblical language (“als Pastor verkleidet”?) in order to hurl forth his contemptuous accusations and radical reorientation of values. The explicit taking-up of a tradition primarily to hold it up to a critique or to expose it as inadequate was a dominant feature of the early modernism that was stepping forth ever more boldly at this time. Along these lines we may recall, with Eysteinnsson and his treatment of (often later) modernism more generally, the significance of “modernism’s ‘negative’ power in the face of traditional discourse”: “the self-conscious break with tradition must . . . be seen as the hallmark of modernism, the one feature that seems capable of lending the concept a critical coherence that most of us can agree on, however we may choose to approach and interpret it.”⁵⁹ On this view, one aspect of Strauss’s emerging modernism is its providing—for instance, in *Till Eulenspiegel*—of a negative impulse *contra* the tradition that makes its own utterance possible, that sets up the conditions for the awareness of the content of the utterance in the first place: here, the concert-symphonic tradition. Adopting the classical (Pastor-) language in this episode in order to (re)frame it as ludicrously out-of-date, and thereby to submit it to a trenchant critique, is just this sort of gesture.

3. As noted earlier, the A-minor (iii of the tonic, F) “Philister” episode, mm. 294–ca. 374 (No. 20 = m. 293), lies at the center of Strauss’s conception of his protagonist and was among the first passages of the work that he sketched. Here the composer depicted Till as taking on the academy by posing conundrums—*ungeheuerliche Thesen* (“monstrous propositions”), impossible questions to solve—to weighty and professorial pedants, upholders of the scholarly tradition. Strauss’s program annotations in both

⁵⁹Eysteinnsson, *The Concept of Modernism*, pp. 101, 52.

the Mauke score and the separately labeled one now at the Richard-Strauss-Archiv (RSA)⁶⁰ specify the details step-by-step.

Strauss shaped those details loosely into his characteristic grand-sentence format: two quasi-parallel presentation statements that are subsequently released into a freer, expanded continuation in search of a cadence. In this case he enlarged the first presentation portion (ex. 5) to incorporate two dialogic modules: the bass-register, A-minor gravity of the professors (mm. 294–99, at first *piano*, puffed out ploddingly by three reedy bassoons, contrabassoon, and bass clarinet); and the situation-stopping “nuts to crack” that Till gives to them (RSA: “halt! denen wollen wir einmal einige Nüsse zu knacken geben!”, mm. 300–03 and 304–07, a calling-card-based idea, first on A minor, mostly in the strings, then sequenced up a major sixth with enriched orchestration). The second statement of the presentation sets forth a more outlandish, enhanced version of the first. Measures 308–13 return us to the dour, A-minor Philistines (more intensely, *mezzo forte*, with divisi cellos and basses added), while Till “dances about on their heads” (RSA: “u. ihnen auf den Köpfen herum [tanzen?]”)—that is, while Till’s preposterous questions ring out cheekily above them as quick shots (*forte* and *lustig*, in the high strings and winds).⁶¹ The imitative mm. 313–18 recompose mm. 300–07, Till’s calling-card-based riddles, in a much-compressed, aggressively imitative variant, throwing down the gauntlet to the academics and ending with the question mark of an incomplete, implied active V of A minor in m. 318.

Following the self-enclosed parallelisms of the sentence’s presentation portion, the continuation (No. 22, mm. 319–ca. 374) is given over to the professors’ bafflement. (The opening of this continuation is shown in ex. 6.) Strauss revealed the particulars most precisely in the RSA score, employing pseudobiblical prose: “and behold: they started to speak in five languages, and none of them understood any other one” (u. siehe da, sie fingen in 5

⁶⁰On the RSA score (the labels of which are transcribed in Werbeck, *Die Tondichtungen*, pp. 540–41), see n. 24 above.

⁶¹On the possible content of Till’s questions, see n. 19 above.

293
pp *p*

300
sfz

307
sfz *mf* *f* *(lustig)*

Example 5: *Till Eulenspiegel*, mm. 293–313.

319
p

324
p *f* *sf*

329
f *mf*

Example 6: *Till Eulenspiegel*, mm. 319–32.

Sprachen zu reden an u. keiner verstand den andern).⁶² The composer depicted this shattering of academic agreement into babble through what he referred to in the 20 October 1895 letter to Wüllner as a “so-called fugato,” a set of overlapping, stretto-close imitative entrances, one after another, but each implying a different tonal center. This is one of the work’s most harmonically radical passages. It is not “polytonal” in the later sense of that term, but it does unravel the concept of a tonal center in a way that the fleeting tonal strands splay out on contrasting levels. Moreover, the tonal levels tend to appear in ascending sequences, in crescendo, and in a too-close imitation, as though each entering voice were seeking to top all of the preceding ones in a mounting confusion.

To illustrate with the music of ex. 6 (and assuming that each entering voice implies $\hat{5}-\hat{5}-\hat{5}$, $\hat{5}-\hat{5}-\hat{3}$ of its tonal center), we find: A minor (upbeat to m. 319, lower cello and low horn); B \flat minor (downbeat of m. 319, upper cello and low horn); B minor (downbeat of m. 322, viola and horn); C \sharp minor (upbeat to m. 323, second violin and horn); C \sharp minor again (downbeat of m. 324, bassoons and trumpet); D minor (upbeat to m. 325, first violin and horns);⁶³ D \flat major (an exception to the otherwise steady ascent, downbeat of m. 327, clarinet and English horn); E \flat major (upbeat to m. 328, oboes); and so on. The centrifugal forces of tonal confusion proliferate further as the sentence’s continuation proceeds, and the mischievously ecstatic Till repeatedly mocks the professors with his Kobold “grand grimace,” mm. 345–47, 349–51, and 366–70, ironically, each time bringing them back to an A minor that they no longer recognize. (The second half of m. 351, an A-major chord, incorporates an ironic Picardy third.) Till concludes the scene with a characteristic Kobold insult (mm. 371–74; cf. the trilled jeer at mm. 107–09) and exits insouciantly, taking the chromatic-lower-neighbor penultimate pitch of the Kobold module, g \sharp^2 , as a new, enharmonic tonic (!) in order to stroll away whistling his carefree, A \flat -major “street-

song” (*Gassenhauer*) music, m. 375 (No. 26).

Once again, both the musical processes and the program give rise to metaphorical possibilities. As will be dealt with in the following section of this article, the puzzling structure of *Till* as an entire work has given rise to conflicting interpretations over the past century (rondo? sonata? sonata-rondo? a hybrid? free or *ad hoc* form?). From this perspective, the tone poem as a whole may be regarded as a set of monstrous propositions, *ungeheuerliche Thesen*, directed at potential analysts or academic *Musikwissenschaftler*.⁶⁴ To the extent that we try to wring sense out of its formal deformations, seeking to accommodate this paratactically licentious structure with any standard formal practice, it is we who are composed into *Till* in this episode. Toward the end of this adventure, Till’s Kobold motive explodes in full derision (“Gotcha!”), juxtaposed with the huffing and puffing of the pedagogues: that is, with *our* huffing and puffing. If this reading is viable, then “extramusical” things (the program’s academic pedants) are converging with purely “musical” things (larger issues of professionalized inquiries into the work’s deformational formal practice in search of a master “explanation”). At this point in the work, poetic content (*ungeheuerliche Thesen*) is becoming synonymous with musical structure. The form-content chasm is beginning to be bridged: Till is becoming more clearly identified with Strauss, and the piece’s deformational challenge, its puzzling structure, with one of his pranks.

TILL EULENSPIEGEL AS
SONATA-RONDO DEFORMATION

Strauss famously indicated on the title page that *Till Eulenspiegel* was “composed after the

⁶²Compare, of course, Genesis 11: 1–9.

⁶³With regard to the motive on this pitch level, cf. the opening pitches of Wagner’s Prelude to act I of *Tristan und Isolde*.

⁶⁴Recall also that the phrase found in Strauss’s RSA-score description of Till’s monstrous propositions within the Philistine episode, giving them “some nuts to crack” (“einige Nüsse zu knacken geben,” n. 24 above), turns up with a different meaning in his 20 October 1895 letter to Wüllner (n. 18 above). There it refers to the plan to mystify the initial public through a withheld program: “This time let’s let the people themselves crack the nuts that the rogue delivers to them.” All of this provides further evidence that Till’s riddles are interpretable on more than one level.

old roguish manner—in *rondeau* form.⁶⁵ Decades later he also described it in his diary as an “expansion of rondo form through poetic content,” adding somewhat elliptically that such an expansion was also “anticipated [*vorgebildet*] in the finale of Beethoven’s 8th, where, suddenly in D minor, a tragicomic Carnival procession begins.”⁶⁶ However one chooses to confront it, *Till*’s large-scale form is anything but self-evident. Given the in-place prestige-traditions of Strauss’s time, however, it is naïve in the extreme to consider *Till*—or any analogous piece of that period—to be an essentially self-generating or *ad hoc* structure that has by and large wrested free from the gravitational force-fields of past architectonic norms.⁶⁷ Such questions are complex and demand a historically informed and nuanced understanding. When one composes explicitly within—or even against—a cultural tradition, the still-rushing currents of institutional expectations, coupled

with the repertorial persistence of canonic examples of earlier normative and deformational models (backdrops of experience and context against which any new work is invited to be read), are inescapable. This remains the case even when any individual piece (such as *Till*) might also be capable, from certain angles of perception, of giving the (mis)impression of arising as a purely “generative” object, crafted inexorably out of only the inherent properties of its own musical material and idiosyncratic premises, a readily analyzable feature that was one of the prized compositional fictions (through overstatement) of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁶⁸ In addition, structural genres (such as rondo-oriented forms) are never merely abstract patterns that a composer might appropriate as a content-neutral scaffolding. All of the available musical formats, even when treated freely, came packed with a history, freighted with the connotations of tradition and institutional memory. Nor can there be any doubt that the guardians of the Austro-Germanic art-music enterprise registered these connotation-residues with particular gravity.

From this angle, one aspect of *Till*’s “rondo problem” is that a text-adequate listener or musical insider of 1895 would not normally have expected a rondo-grounded structure to predominate in a “serious” or “idealized” symphonic poem continuing the self-consciously elevated tradition of Liszt and Wagner. (Historically, within rapid-tempo formats, the rondo concept *tout court*, even in its sonata-rondo hybrid, was more normally associated with such lighter structures as virtuosic, relaxant, playful, or charming finales to multimovement works, most notably to nineteenth-century concertos.⁶⁹) On the contrary, the most common

⁶⁵Franz Trenner, *Richard Strauss: Werkverzeichnis* (Vienna: Doblinger, 1985), p. 38: “op. 28: Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche. Nach alter Schelmenweise in Rondeauform für großes Orchester gesetzt.”

⁶⁶Quoted, e.g., in Werbeck, *Die Tondichtungen*, p. 348, n. 77: “Erweiterung der Rondoform durch poetischen Inhalt (Eulenspiegel) im Finale von Beethovens VIII. vorgebildet, wo plötzlich in D-moll ein tragikomischer Carnevalszug anhebt.” Compare also Schuh, *Richard Strauss*, p. 409. With regard to Beethoven’s F-Major Symphony No. 8/iv—a sonata-form deformation, not a rondo (though it plays wittily on the possibilities of a rondo throughout)—Strauss was apparently referring to the refractory, “wrong-key” shifts throughout that finale, and particularly to the quasi-cumulative passage following the “first recapitulation” in which the developmental space is revisited and recomposed, beginning in D minor (mm. 280, and especially mm. 283ff.); a varied “second recapitulation” follows in m. 356. (This deformation and some relatable examples are dealt with in Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, pp. 279–80.) It is easy to imagine why Strauss considered the sudden, amusing lurches of Beethoven’s finale to anticipate *Till*-behavior in a general sense. But there are no useful formal parallels to be drawn between these two works.

⁶⁷Thus I consider Youmans’s assertion regarding the structure of *Till* in *Richard Strauss’s Orchestral Music*, pp. 188–89, to be misleading: “The absence of a strong engagement with sonata form in *Till*, even one overtly critical in nature, means that the entire burden of structural organization falls to the series of programmatic encounters. That is essentially to say that Strauss abandoned traditional demands of large-scale orchestral structure entirely, leaving the program to shape the music in a manner very much like what was to come in *Don Quixote*. . . . The work’s self-centeredness is a by-product of this absolute dissociation from the safe haven of tradition.”

⁶⁸Note 73 discusses this point more expansively.

⁶⁹Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, pp. 333–36, 388–89, and 413–27, which also provide bibliographical references on this topic. Compare Michael Talbot, *The Finale in Western Instrumental Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 2 (“The rondo is the form par excellence used for final movements”); pp. 57–62. See also, e.g., only one of many such overviews, Malcolm S. Cole, “Rondo,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2001), vol. 21, pp. 649–56, esp. pp.

expectation would be that a Straussian tone poem would ask its listeners to place the work into a cleverly charged dialogue with the by-then highly developed and flexible constellation of normative options available within sonata form proper.⁷⁰ Seeking to come to terms with *Till* through many of the expectations of at least the most consistently encountered elements of the sonata-form *concept* would have been appropriate not only in light of the several crucially placed signals of it provided in the work but also because the normative format of the single-movement symphonic poem or tone

650–51 on the well-known traditional character of the late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century rondo-oriented composition and rondo theme proper.

⁷⁰Here we enter controversial, though unavoidable, waters of “musical form,” some of which I shall try to steer through in this and subsequent footnotes. My claim about sonata-form options, here and in the remainder of this article, should not be misread as a restrictive appeal to a reductively static or once-and-for-all, transhistorical conception of sonata form—some sort of single, absolute definition of that format. Quite the opposite: as I have proposed elsewhere and repeatedly underscored, at no point in its history should we regard sonata form as a simple or unitary “thing” or fixed grid, regardless of how it might have been reified or grossly simplified in the popular mind as a result of this or that textbook, this or that description. Rather, it is most profitably considered as a slowly shifting, sometimes enlarging (but still recognizable) constellation of flexible norms and options, a network of culturally agreed-upon conceptual forces (*Elements of Sonata Theory*, pp. 605–08) that make possible both compositional choices and our own interpretations of those choices. In other words, in the actual compositional practice of 1895 the normative options in question included a host of once-deformational strategies or exceptional exemplars that through the powers of cultural prestige or subsequent re-deployment had by the end of the century attained a de facto normative status. (Thus the seeming paradox: once-*non-normative* sonata deformations were by midcentury and beyond becoming *normative* deviation-options from a classically established constellation of traditional guidelines. Depending on which perspective we attend to, such sonata-deformational structures may be construed as either non-normative or normative.) Recognizable options within the generic family of available sonata-form procedures were continuing to expand both before and after the era of A. B. Marx’s textbook explications of the 1840s in an unbroken chain of enlarged possibilities, a process of accretion within the still-viable sonata-form concept that led directly to Strauss and his generation. Apart from the broad discussion of the early stages of all of this in *Elements in Sonata Theory*, see, e.g., Hepokoski, *Sibelius Symphony No. 5* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 1–9; and “Beethoven Reception,” pp. 447–54 (an updated discussion of the concept of late-nineteenth-century structural deformation). See also nn. 72–73 below.

poem had derived historically from the opera and concert overture and because symphonic poems, *qua* genre, had been on offer for decades to the European institution of art music as the progressive alternative to the obsolete abstract symphony—itsself grounded most fundamentally in manipulated deformations of sonata form.⁷¹ It is futile to pretend that sonata-form conceptual categories had been largely swept away by later nineteenth-century composers and their formal “freedoms.” On the contrary, the structural power of any such freer forms lay precisely in their high-friction, dialogic relationships with preexisting conceptual categories. There can be no question that Strauss regarded “sonata form,” broadly construed, as a still-potent field of conceptual organization, graspable in a moderately stable and sufficiently codified manner (with its historically venerable earmarks even subject to being simplistically abstracted, conservatory fashion, in rule-of-thumb formulas, conveniently well known to composers and audiences alike) even while he distorted many of its most traditional conventions in his own works.⁷²

For *Till*, one might have initially expected, then, some sort of sophisticated sonata defor-

⁷¹The opera and concert overtures that had led to Liszt’s concept of the symphonic poem most commonly laid out a sonata form or a deformation thereof (often more freely or dramatically treated). Sonata-form or sonata-deformational overtures also always featured nonrepeated expositions. On the idea of “deformation,” see nn. 70 and 73.

⁷²In a letter to von Bülow from 24 August 1888, Strauss referred to the traditional structure as a self-evident concept, the “ternary sonata form that has come down to us from the classical composers.” *Hans von Bülow and Richard Strauss: Correspondence*, ed. Willi Schuh and Franz Trenner, trans. Anthony Gishford (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1955), pp. 82–83. See also the discussion of this letter and the general issue of the conceptual persistence of lingering sonata-form models into the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Hepokoski, “Fiery-Pulsed Libertine or Domestic Hero? Strauss’s *Don Juan* Reinvestigated,” in *Richard Strauss: New Perspectives on the Composer and His Work*, ed. Bryan Gilliam (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1992), p. 139; and cf. the broader framing of this issue in Hepokoski, “Beethoven Reception,” pp. 424–25, 447–54. Also relevant is Appendix 2 (“Terminology: Rotation and Deformation”) of Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, pp. 611–21, as well as the general concept of sonata form (as *dialogic* form, neither “conformational” nor “generative”) laid out in the main body of that volume.

mation,⁷³ as in *Macbeth*, *Don Juan*,⁷⁴ and *Tod und Verklärung*, and, to be sure, a clever dia-

⁷³As I have proposed in the writings mentioned in the preceding note and elsewhere, the point is to approach sonata deformations as non-normative works set self-consciously into dialogue with traditional, if complex, conceptual models, which, in turn, provide the guidelines for interpreting what does and does not happen in the individual work. (Complicating the issue for the later nineteenth century—as mentioned also in n. 70—is that oncedeformational procedures, or touchstone exemplars of them, could come to attain, through later imitation and adaptation, a normative status.) Such a position is easy to misconstrue, especially if one adheres to the shopworn, high-modernist ideological position that “content” alone is capable of generating the large-scale structure of a piece. However familiar such a “generative” view might be, it ignores the persisting power of genre and tradition and believes—or pretends to believe—that a “great composer,” *qua* isolated genius, approaches the material of a symphonic work in what is primarily a historically neutralized, nonideological space. Such a view is insupportable. To enter into the composition of a sonata-form-oriented work is to step into a socially precharged field of formal expectations and tensions that enable and constrain compositional choices at every step along the way. The oncedogmatic position continues to persist, however, as in Julian Horton, “Recent Developments in Bruckner Scholarship,” *Music & Letters* 85 (2004), 83–94. “[As opposed to a sonata-deformational approach to analysis, which Horton criticizes,] Richter, like Marx and then Schoenberg, perceived form in precisely the opposite sense: as a structural expression of the initial material and its periodic organization; in short, as a product of content” (p. 85). But there is no “opposite sense” at hand, unless one is willing to dismiss entirely the continuing prestige and impact of historical models, the canonical models with which any individual work, as an act of self-precipitation, seeks to set up a network of relations. A more sophisticated position—regardless of what Richter, Marx, Schoenberg, or others might have averred for their own purposes—would acknowledge the likelihood of certain composers seeking to create the *impression* of spontaneous, content-generated forms (or formal deformations) still housed *within* a large-scale format that is also recognizably in dialogue, in varying degrees of freedom and implication, with preexisting conceptual models. This is nothing more than what it means to write within a tradition. *Pace* Horton and others, there is no binary opposition to pry open here. Horton pursued his critique of the sonata-deformational concept—or rather, of his own misunderstanding of it—at greater length in *Bruckner’s Symphonies, Analysis: Reception and Cultural Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), e.g., pp. 152–56.

⁷⁴In the case of *Don Juan*, I suggested over a decade ago (“Fiery-Pulsed Libertine or Domestic Hero?”) that what may be heard as an initial “rondo-deformation” dominates the first two-thirds of the piece—a series of episodes. This rondo-potential (within an otherwise structurally ambiguous series of episodes) may be understood as a linear representation of the protagonist’s heedless licentiousness within a genre that would normally be expected to present us with a sonata-deformation format. With *Don Juan*’s “snap” decision to mend his ways toward the end, the formerly paratactic, potentially rondolike structure is sud-

denly converted—into a sonata deformation. Ultimately, the rondo impact of the work is perceptible primarily as an ongoing possibility until the piece defines itself with more clarity; the sonata deformation proves to be the governing factor. Also to the point: Strauss did not identify *Don Juan* explicitly as a rondo, as he would do as a framing condition for the perception of *Till Eulenspiegel*. However we might decide to read *Don Juan*, the rondo-concept is a *sine qua non* for *Till*. (Compare n. 85 below.)

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But thoughts along these lines hardly solve the problem of what actually happens, formally, in this piece. In a traditional rondo one expects to find a sectionalized structure in which an initial musical idea or refrain stated at the outset is returned to, in the tonic, following each of a series of intervening, typically contrasting episodes, often in different keys. While the pattern may be adapted in a number of ways, the normal result is a set of juxtapositions of a recurrent rondo-theme (or partial theme-referent in later appearances) and more or less self-contained alternatives to it. The traditional sonata-rondo hybrid, with its superimposed suggestions of an expository pattern and complementary full recapitulation, still retains the idea

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⁷⁵On the now-heuristic distinction between the simpler, sectional eighteenth-century rondeau and the slightly more expanded rondo proper, see Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, pp. 390–403 (much of which is grounded in an only slight reinterpretation of Cole, “Rondo”). It goes without saying that the textual and musical structure of the late-medieval *rondeau* is irrelevant to the discussion at hand.

of a recurrent refrain (cropping up, for example, following the exposition and the recapitulation) prepared by a retransition.⁷⁶

But not much of what we find in *Till* corresponds to either the rondo or the sonata-rondo as historically conceived. For the most part, aside from an overall spirit of rondolike playfulness and surprise, what we find is a string of illustrative adventures, one tableau after another. The piece's most notable deviation from the defining principle of a rondo is the absence of clearly articulated returns to a separable refrain first heard at the outset. For this reason the tone poem can seem like a succession of narrative episodes, each of which, especially in the first two-thirds of the piece, fails to recycle back to a recurrent refrain.⁷⁷ This feature lies at the heart of the piece's formal problem, particularly if we wish to construe it, as Strauss bade us to do, under the rubric of a rondo. As a result, differing twentieth-century analysts have come up with glaringly different explanations of the work. These range from attempts to understand it as a "free" or "modern" rondo of some usually unspecified sort—assumptions along these lines were especially characteristic of the first decades following the premiere (Seidl 1895; Mauke 1896 [rpt. 1908]; Klauwell 1910; Steinitzer 1911); as a sonata-rondo blend tipping toward the sonata proper (Lorenz 1924–25); as a new and *ad hoc* form with its own

logic (Specht 1921); as a multimovement form within a single movement (first movement, slow movement, scherzo, and finale; Gerlach 1966); as a "formal experiment" combining several formal categories—fusing rondo, sonata, and *Steigerung* principles—and thereby initiating for Strauss a new stage of radical structural experimentation (Werbeck 1996); and so on.⁷⁸

The idea of *Till* as a flexible hybrid combining features of different formal genres is surely appealing and has much to commend it. On the other hand, Strauss's repeated mention of the rondo as the guiding formal idea (at least the *primus inter pares*?) suggests that we ought to take that statement as a starting-point. Moreover, the *Till*-identifying themes heard at the beginning do thread their ways through all of the episodes. As a leitmotif-defined "character," *Till* is the leading figure in each of the contrasting adventures. His musical signifiers pervade, control, and ultimately upset each episode. Architectonically, the whole work may be construed as an opening refrain-complex introducing *Till* and fixing his leitmotivic signifiers in our ears (mm. 1–111), followed by an extended series of contrasting episodes with the rondo theme mixed into and undermining them all. In other words, the tone poem initially sets out as an extreme *rondo deforma-*

⁷⁶Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, chap. 18 ("Rondos and the Type 4 Sonata"), pp. 388–429.

⁷⁷Such a problem would also be an inevitable consequence of producing, within a sonata-form-oriented work, an exposition with a highly contrasting transition and/or secondary theme, followed by a developmental space occupied principally by two (or more) relatively independent and contrasting episodes (as in, e.g., that of Wagner's *Siegfried Idyll*). The result would be another string of four to six successive, contrasting tableaux. This was a sonata-deformation pattern deployed by Strauss in several of his other tone poems, and it results in a similar problem of formal definition all the way up to the point of recapitulation, the point at which the governing form is typically declared. I have dealt with this deformation in portions of several other essays: "Fiery-Pulsed Libertine or Domestic Hero?" pp. 147–52; "Structure and Program in *Macbeth*: A Proposed Reading of Strauss's First Symphonic Poem," in *Richard Strauss and His World*, ed. Bryan Gilliam (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 78–80; *Sibelius: Symphony No. 5*, pp. 6–7; review of Werbeck, *Die Tondichtungen* (see n. 13 above), pp. 618–23; "Beethoven Reception," p. 451.

⁷⁸Seidl, "Richard Strauß," pp. 59–60; Mauke, *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche*, rpt. *Richard Strauss: Symphonien und Tondichtungen*, ed. Walden, p. 93; Otto Klauwell, *Geschichte der Programmmusik von ihren Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1910), p. 241; Max Steinitzer, *Richard Strauss* (Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler, 1911), pp. 232–34; Richard Specht, *Richard Strauss und sein Werk*, vol. I (Leipzig: E. P. Tal, 1921), pp. 217–28 (though ultimately bizarre, the most unique and curious of all of the formal analyses at hand); Lorenz, "Der formale Schwung in Richard Strauss' 'Till Eulenspiegel,'" pp. 658–69; Reinhard Gerlach, *Don Juan und Rosenkavalier*, Publikationen der Schweizerischen Musikforschenden Gesellschaft II, 13 (Bern: Paul Haupt, 1966), p. 67 (cited in Werbeck, p. 406, n. 72); Werbeck, *Die Tondichtungen*, pp. 343–55 (*Steigerung* complexes) and 405–11 ("formal experiments": "In *Till Eulenspiegel* and *Zarathustra* the traditional formal categories are weakened more than ever before, whether that be because Strauss mixed different formal models with each other in an extreme way (as in *Till Eulenspiegel*) or because he concealed sonata-categories through certain procedures almost to the point of unrecognizability (in *Zarathustra*)" [p. 405].) Werbeck (*Die Tondichtungen*, pp. 406–07) also provides a helpful overview of different analyses of *Till Eulenspiegel*, several of which are not mentioned here.

tion governed by the idea of interpolating the initially separate rondo ideas into each of the episodes for programmatic reasons. Till, whose very presence within his society is a rondolike “refrain”—an omnipresent threat of destabilization from within—successively enters one tableau-space after another. Roguish and subversive, his identity is kept constant throughout. What we have is the projection of a single musical identity (a cluster of attributes held together in the listener’s mind) through a series of different environments, with which that motivically defined identity is made to interact.⁷⁹

Consequently, what might at first seem to be a structurally mischievous parataxis, a squanderingly reckless “one-tableau-after-another,” is actually controlled conceptually by this underlying rondo-deformational idea. Instead of separating refrain and episode, as decreed by the formal tradition, the “modernist” Strauss mixes them together. The basic idea is simple, and of course no informed listener has any trouble grasping it: the “irresponsibly” loose string of coloristic episodes may be rendered coherent by attending to the presence of the rondo-figure interacting incessantly with each of them.⁸⁰ Refrains and episodes are fused into

simultaneously unfolded events; the potential redundancy of literal refrain-returns (perhaps considered problematic by the 1890s in some circles) is avoided. Simultaneously, the episode-adventures suggest a pattern of musical recycling and renewal, an aspect of the piece that may also be grasped under the more general category of *rotational form*, albeit one wittily linked here with the “old-manner” rondo concept.⁸¹

But there are more surprises to come. In m. 429 (twelve measures after No. 28) the primary Till theme (the calling card) returns in the horn in a manner parallel with its opening statement in m. 6. Such an occurrence is a characteristic sign of reprise or recapitulation: the touching of a defining structural station of a sonata-based format (the tonic return of the opening expositional module). With the m. 429 onset of what is readily identified as a varied reprise, the music suggests an eleventh-hour attempt to convert the whole into a garish *sonata deformation* or, given the rondo implications that have preceded, a *sonata-rondo deformation*.⁸² Under the traditional paradigm, this tonic-key horn-return, a generic signal of order, can be read as Till’s (the music’s) momentary promise of future “good behavior,” a more reconciliatory assimilation into the elevated

⁷⁹This is not the normative way of characterizing either traditional sonata or traditional rondo practice. It would, however, become a staple of the Straussian tone poems—the linear adventures of a [masculine] hero—finding its initial realization in *Don Juan* (sonata deformation) and proceeding through *Till Eulenspiegel* (sonata-rondo deformation), *Don Quixote* (theme and variations), and the sonata deformations of *Ein Heldenleben* and *Symphonia Domestica*. The far-flung (and astonishing) sonata deformation only barely perceptible in *Also sprach Zarathustra* is perhaps a related case as well, although there the masculine protagonist is something on the order of “the course of the world,” or the transformation of humanity, though stages, on the way to the Superman. Compare n. 81 below.

⁸⁰This position was anticipated by some earlier writers, e.g., by Klauwell, *Geschichte der Programmusik*, p. 241: “The expression in the title, ‘rondo form,’ is not to be taken literally. The piece is much more a kaleidoscopic sequence of individual scenes, brought together into a whole through the bonds [das Band] of two Eulenspiegel motives” (Der Ausdruck Rondoform im Titel ist nicht wörtlich zu nehmen, das Stück ist vielmehr eine kaleidoskopische Aneinanderreihung einzelner Szenen, die durch das Band zweier Eulenspiegel-Motive zum Ganzen zusammengefaßt werden.) Compare also Seidl, “Richard Strauß,” pp. 59–60; Mauke, *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche*, p. 93.

⁸¹Considered from this perspective, the constant presence of the Till-music through the episode-adventures suggests a series of quasi-cyclical adventures encountered by the “same” recurring idea. The musical protagonist returns—and returns again—and again—but always under new expressive circumstances. This aspect of renewal and recurrence suggests an intermixing with the idea of what I have called structural *rotations*, or *rotational form*: the varied, recomposed recycling of an initial modular array or pattern (here reconceived as a musical protagonist) as the governing premise of an entire composition. The same might be said of Strauss’s paratactic tone poem from two years later, *Don Quixote*. While “programmatically” *Till* waggishly leans its rotational implications in the direction of a rondo or sonata-rondo, those in *Don Quixote* ask us to ally them with the presumably stiff and sober (pre-sonata, pre-rondo) historical format of “theme and variations.” In this respect both *Till* and *Don Quixote* would serve as obvious models for such works, for instance, as Elgar’s “symphonic study” *Falstaff* from 1913, whose overall conception seems inconceivable without the Straussian precedent. For a rotational study of this last work, see J. P. E. Harper-Scott, “Elgar’s Invention of the Human: *Falstaff*, Opus 68,” this journal 28 (2005), 230–53.

⁸²Again, on some of the connotations of the term “sonata deformation,” see nn. 70–74 above.

sonata tradition, or, in this case, sonata-rondo tradition, within which recapitulations are reassuringly normative.

But what could be perceived as normative within the framework of this already disruptive, paratactic tone poem? At the very least, what is suggested here is the onset of some sort of varied *recapitulatory rotation*, one that recycles through (or at least touches upon) the successive events of an expositional model (or expositional rotation) of musical materials. Within the tradition this recapitulatory signal promises the furnishing of a complementary space (a recapitulatory space), quasi-symmetrical to whatever we might now retroactively seek to construe as having furnished an expositional model. This involves a reconceptualizing of the string of episodes that we have been hearing up to this point. It is here, at the “recapitulatory” m. 429, that we are encouraged to grasp mm. 1–ca. 207 as an expositional rotation that launches a deformational sonata or sonata-rondo. Under such a construction, mm. 1–111 (the opening Till-complex) may be imaginatively refigured as a primary-thematic zone (P), closed in F major; mm. 111–77 (“Duckmäuser”; marketwives; seven-league boots; mousehole) as an episodic transition-space (TR), leading from the tonic F to V of B \flat V 7 /IV, at the end; the gap at mm. 177–78 as a medial caesura; and mm. 179–ca. 207 (Pastor, including Till’s premonition of his own death) as a secondary-thematic zone (S) in B \flat , the unorthodox IV.⁸³ Such a reconceptualization relegates the succeeding two scenes—the “Till-as-Cavalier” love scene that ends with his curse on all humankind (mm. 208–88) and the academic Philistine episode and *Gassenhauer* conclusion (mm. 293–386)—to the status of filling a developmental space with two contrasting

⁸³On the tradition of regarding the Pastor episode as the secondary theme, see nn. 55 and 56 above, along with the text to which they refer. Youmans’s single-sentence declaration regarding this, in *Richard Strauss’s Orchestral Music*, p. 188 (where it is cited as one of a handful of features that supposedly set *Till* apart from any possibility of a sonata-form dialogue), is oblivious to significant, prior traditions of *Till* analysis—as well as to a more flexible concept of potential sonata deformation: “The only plausible second key area [in any presumed exposition] is the Pastor scene, where the use of the subdominant rules out a sonata-form interpretation.”

episodes, a not uncommon structural deformation of the late nineteenth century, particularly in programmatic works.⁸⁴ Measures 386–429 serve as a retransition. This understanding of the structure—and the formal readjustment invited at the point of the recapitulation—aligns it closely with that of *Don Juan*. The two pieces share formal and episodic similarities, and it may be that Strauss composed *Till Eulenspiegel* as a parody of *Don Juan*.⁸⁵

Coming to terms with the recapitulatory space of *Till Eulenspiegel*—the sonata aspect of the sonata-rondo deformation—is crucial to our conception of the piece as a whole. We might begin by putting that reprise gesture into broader contexts. First, it is significant that, immediately following Till’s cheeky *Gassenhauer* (No. 26, mm. 375–86), Strauss’s previously verbal program-explanations drop out for some time. As in *Don Juan*, the composer’s program-cues disappear about two-thirds to three-quarters of the way through, coinciding at first with an unlabeled special-effects, retransition-corridor (mm. 386–429),⁸⁶ marking the point of the abandonment of the labeled episode-chain and the conversion into the sonata-rondo deformation

⁸⁴See n. 77 above.

⁸⁵As pointed also out earlier in the 1995 and 2000 versions of this paper, beginning as a loose set of paratactic episodes and subsequently attempting a retroactive transformation into the more symmetrically ordered sonata pattern, *Till* seems clearly modeled on Strauss’s earlier *Don Juan*. It is not difficult to map the sections of the one onto the other as rough structural equivalences: The *Don Juan* theme (m. 1) becomes the two *Till* themes (m. 6, 49); *Don Juan*’s Mistress 1 (m. 44) is rewritten as the marketwives incident (the whole episode beginning ca. m. 111); Mistress 2 (m. 90) becomes Till disguised as a pastor (m. 179); Mistress 3 (m. 197) corresponds to Till’s love-scene as cavalier (ca. mm. 208–09); the decadent confusion of *Don Juan*’s masked ball (m. 351) is turned into the confusion of the academic Philistines (m. 293); and so on, all leading (through a crucial special-effects corridor, ca. mm. 424–57 in *Don Juan*, ca. mm. 386–429 in *Till*) to a “pulling-of-oneself-together,” a generic shift and the subsequent recapitulation attempt (mm. 474 and 429). The similarities could hardly be coincidental, although in *Till* Strauss pushed the rondo- and sonata-rondo-deformation principle to the point at which the background generic models are obscured or equivocal on the acoustic surface of the music. See also n. 74 above. Some of the programmatic correspondences between the two works (“obvious and extensive”) were also mentioned in Youmans, *Richard Strauss’s Orchestral Music*, pp. 186–88.

⁸⁶On the special-effects corridor, see the preceding footnote.

with the onset of the recapitulatory horn-call signal at m. 429.

The jettisoning of programmatic labels at this point bears on the classic poetic-structural problem in sonata-deformational symphonic poems: how to present a quasi-symmetrical reprise that continues to advance the narrative—or even, in the strongest cases, that manages to raise the narrative to a higher level. (In theory, at least—according especially to the critics of the genre—such a reprise would appear to stop the progressive action in its tracks “for purely musical reasons,” thus abandoning the unfolding program and creating a significant rift in the very concept of program music.⁸⁷) In his first four tone poems, including *Till* (the fourth), Strauss’s solutions drove to the heart of what he termed the piece’s “poetic logic.” In *Macbeth* the usurper’s descent into an abyss of guilt and crime had been suggested by an “anti-recapitulation”—one whose normative resolution function is continually thwarted. In *Don Juan* the metamorphosis into a sonata deformation at the recapitulation-point had bolstered a supposed conversion within the hero’s psyche, an abandonment of rondo-libertinism. In *Death and Transfiguration* the recapitulation had provided the long-awaited grasping and unfurling of a secondary theme—the redemptive *Verklärung* apotheosis—that had been smothered off and suppressed in the exposition.⁸⁸

Here at the recapitulatory space of *Till Eulenspiegel*, Strauss’s solution to this poetic-structural problem is similarly appropriate. As the programmatic labels fall away, we find that Till’s climactic prank is an essentially musical one, involving, among other things, a marked increase in rhythmic and contrapuntal complexity and a ratcheting up of the sheer difficulty of performance. Till’s motives run riot throughout most of its expanse, even as they also refer here and there—and in order—to ear-

lier “expositional” measures as they lay out an extended series of freely accumulating intensification-waves (*Steigerungen*) over several pages of score.⁸⁹ Thus the initial Till-complex, mm. 1–111 (P), with its three subsections, is freely recast in the recapitulatory space’s mm. 429–500. That this is the case may be observed by locating traces of the exposition’s P-complex in the recapitulation: mm. 429–35 = 6–12; 436–42 = 14–20, transposed down a third; 443–44 = 85–86 [cf. also 209–10]; 449–50 = 21–22 (and initiating a similar, sequential *Steigerung*); mm. 465–84 = mm. 63–80, now merging to a point midway through the P-complex’s original second subsection, with some expansions and variants, and ending with Till’s cry of triumph at the end); and 485–86 (No. 31) = 81–82, providing at least the incipit of the P-complex’s third subsection, only now much intensified, *fortissimo*, but also ending with a clear I:PAC at m. 500 (= m. 111).

To be sure, all of this is treated freely by Strauss, but one should notice that the rotational ordering of materials also continues beyond this P-complex.⁹⁰ Measures 500–73 correspond, very roughly, to the exposition’s transition episode. The now-madcap Till-idea launched at m. 500 (No. 32), for example, might be correlated with the far tamer “Duckmäuser” material at mm. 113–15 (nine to eleven measures after No. 8). And amid the uproarious confusion that ensues (expressively parallel with the confusion of the exposition’s marketwives incident?), Till once again seeks to escape via his seven-league boots (the flute motive in mm. 514–30 = 151–53, four measures before No. 11)—although this time the escape attempt is unsuccessful. Till is apprehended by the next module in the rotational order, the S-theme (the Pastor theme), mm. 567–73 = 179–82, and what was his original, shivering premonition of an untimely end returns to complete the rotation, mm. 604–13 = 196–207—a completion that, of course, literally marks that end with the vivid, musical hanging, mm. 613–14 (two measures

⁸⁷See, e.g., the discussion of formal problems associated generally with sonata-form-based program music in Hepokoski, review of Werbeck, *Die Tondichtungen*, pp. 612–25.

⁸⁸For discussions of these recapitulations from this point of view, see Hepokoski, “Structure and Program in *Macbeth*,” pp. 80–82; “Fiery-Pulsed Libertine or Domestic Hero?,” pp. 147–52, 160–62; and the brief comments in the review of Werbeck, *Die Tondichtungen*, pp. 620–21.

⁸⁹Werbeck, *Die Tondichtungen*, pp. 344, 354–55.

⁹⁰This important feature remained unobserved by Youmans, who erroneously insisted that “the recapitulation focuses exclusively on one theme, the second Till theme” (*Richard Strauss’s Orchestral Music*, p. 188).

before No. 40). In sum, at least in terms of its thematic-module ordering, Strauss provided us with a perceptible recapitulatory rotation in *Till Eulenspiegel*, making it possible to construe the piece as a *sonata-rondo* deformation.

While the above description suggests an ordered regularity in the overall successive procedures, that impression is countered by the freedom and sensationalistic virtuosity of the music at hand. One might regard the recapitulatory rotation as a charged dialectic between the principle of an expected structural recognizability and the manic Till-drive toward subversion and disorder seeking now to undermine the entire enterprise in a final, fully unleashed romp. As “the law” of traditional form proceeds in its own maximum strength—the inescapable hand of recapitulatory tradition moving through the rotational succession—“Till” seeks to disrupt it, to subvert it, to submit it to near-anarchy, to tear it to shreds in mounting waves of locally sonorous intensification. The recapitulatory rotation is the final site of battle, the showdown between competing forces. Paradoxically, this is the employment of a traditional formal requirement (a recapitulation) to demonstrate just how endangered and under attack that principle is in modern times—along with all that that principle represents, socially and culturally.

It is in this charged encounter of formal containment (“the law”) with its opposite—the “modern” wish for an enhanced materiality of sonic virtuosity that seeks to liberate itself to the point of becoming its own norm—that the larger structure and content of the tone poem make their ultimate impact. Through that dialectic, the formal structure and expressive content become fused, one and the same. It is in their combative interaction, especially in the recapitulation, that we may perceive a musical playing-out of the generational struggle of the traditionalists and the modernists. As the recapitulatory space proceeds, the dialectic becomes increasingly tense, threatening a successful unpinning of the structure and a victory for the modernist imperative. Before long, Till’s *Streiche* invade even the performability of the sonic surface. Beginning especially with m. 500 (No. 32), seeming downbeats come unglued, cross-accents are sprung free, and the

challenge of sheer performance is thrown down to any orchestra, and certainly to one of the 1890s. In 1921 Richard Specht, too, noted this “measure-500” spot as the farthest-flung moment and even reproduced its manuscript pages in facsimile: “And now everything is torn apart in the maddest swirl; now in limitless exuberance, the themes leap up and crisscross in double and triple counterpoint—at first irresistibly comically in a reciprocal dance of the [Till] themes, which are behaving as if they were tippy.”⁹¹

How many ensembles, one wonders, have come undone at just this point, as Till bedevils the very instrumentalists who are bringing him to life? The parallels here with Berlioz’s Witches’ Sabbath music are clear, and we might recall Seidl’s 1896 term for Strauss, “*der deutschen Berlioz*”—an allusion to the modernist conviction that Berlioz was the progenitor of Romantic program music.⁹² In any event, from the standpoint of practical performance, this is the “infernal” offense—the invasive, strictly musical attack on the orchestra—that has finally gone too far, that cannot go unpunished. And so (though without programmatic labels) it is the orchestra itself that now chases after Till, particularly, it would seem, after the last-straw, *fortissimo* “breaking-point” of m. 553 (a G⁹ chord, five measures before No. 37), following which the scramble to apprehend the rogue is represented *immer ausgelassener und lebhafter* (mm. 554–73), concluding with Till being seized by the “Pastor” motive, *fortissimo*, mm. 567–73.

We have already noted the programmatic significance of the Pastor music being called upon at this point. Still another aspect, though, is that if we—along with other commentators—have regarded the B \flat -major Pastor music of mm. 179–ca. 207 as having stood for a secondary theme (in IV), then that is the theme we could

⁹¹Specht, *Richard Strauss und sein Werk*, p. 225, facsimile between pp. 226–27: “Und jetzt wird alles in den tollsten Wirbel gerissen; im doppelten und dreifachen Kontrapunkt springen und durchkreuzen sich die Themen in grenzenloser Ausgelassenheit—zunächst unwiderstehlich possierlich im Gegeneinandertanz der sich wie ‘beschwipst’ geberdenden Hauptthemen 2 und 3.”

⁹²Seidl, “Richard Strauß,” p. 61.

expect to return in the recapitulation as the final, confirming agent of recapitulatory symmetry. In this respect, too, Till's mounting anarchy is seized by "the law"—not only by the clerical traditionalists but also by "the law" of recapitulatory form within a sonata-rondo deformation: the normative obligation of a return of the secondary theme. Even so, that return is subjected to a radical deformation. One might have expected this secondary theme to return in the F-major tonic in the recapitulatory space, perhaps even proceeding to a resolving tonic cadence at its end. But the Pastor-theme incipit returns not in the tonic but with a sudden and unprepared, *tutti* blaze of D-major color, mm. 567–72 (ten measures before No. 38, for the most part, an unforeseen, sustained V_4^6 of D). This high-strain, "wrong-key" effect on the major submediant of the tonic, F, is violently snapped off with the blunt, triple-*fortissimo* hammer-blow at m. 573 (a common-tone diminished-seventh chord), elided instantly with the *fortissimo* drumroll announcing Till's trial.

Considered from the point of view of orthodox sonata form—or even a highly flexible sonata-deformation theory—the trial scene, beginning at m. 577 (No. 38), is a purposely heavy-handed, programmatic interpolation within secondary-theme space. Tonally, its accusatory, *fortissimo* F minor is intent on reversing the fortunes of Till's F major. The social prosecution seizes control of the "sonata-rondo" at this point, seeking to condemn it to an F-minor judgment in five rounds of thunderously intimidating accusation, during which Till's squeaky Kobold-motive is ground away, finally, to silence. But as yet no tonal resolution, no perfect authentic cadence in F minor (or major), has been achieved. That potential "S-space" is still in play is confirmed with Till's F-minor quailing in terror (mm. 604–08) and shivering tremolos (mm. 608–13), both of which recall the parallel passage at the end of the "exposition's" Pastor episode, mm. 196–202—the very passage in which the irreligious Till had experienced a premonition of his end. But the verdict is final, and the hanging commences: the famous, *fortissimo*, "Der Tod!" drop in the low winds, f–G \flat , mm. 613–14 (two measures before No. 40), the fluttering upward of Till's spirit, and so on. The recapitulatory space proper com-

pletes itself by fading away with six separated F-major impulses, *pizzicato* and *piano* (then *pianissimo*), mm. 624–31, the functional equivalent of essential structural closure to this sonata-rondo deformation.⁹³ "The law," it would appear, has succeeded.

FRAMING TILL EULENSPIEGEL:
"EIN SOHN IST DA"

I shall conclude by turning to one final matter: the way that this anti-parable of the social punishing of nonconforming elements is musically framed—for the narrative proper is led into with a slow introduction, and it concludes with a slow *Epilog*, as Strauss called it in the score. This longer epilogue (mm. 632–57) returns to and completes the fragmentary introduction (mm. 1–6).⁹⁴ One function of elaborate and separate introductions and codas—particularly when they are based on similar material—is to subordinate a piece's inner contents to the implications of its surrounding frame. That to which the frame calls attention—the main sonata-action—is set off as a subordinate or secondary reality. The interior of the piece is merely the thing told, the nonreal set forth "as if in quotations marks," as opposed to the more primary reality of the frame (the teller of the tale—the

⁹³Compare the famous death-conclusion of Strauss's *Don Juan*, to which this "conclusion" probably alludes. The system laid out in Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, would regard a satisfactory tonic cadence of the secondary theme or its equivalent in the recapitulatory space to mark the most important structural moment of the sonata proper, the point of *essential structural closure* (ESC). The gradual settling on F major in mm. 624–31 is Strauss's "modern" substitute for that traditional effect.

⁹⁴As is well known, Strauss's originally sketched opening for the work did not begin with the five measures of slow introduction but rather with the fast-tempo, impish Kobold theme and Eulenspiegel chord (as currently in mm. 46–49), followed by rushing contrary-motion scales toward a $\frac{6}{4}$ chord, *tremolo*, in m. 6—all leading to the current horn theme. (Werbeck, *Die Tondichtungen*, p. 128, interprets the faster opening in the sketch as Till's sudden leap into the imaginary scene. I thank David Larkin for calling this aspect of the opening to my attention once again.) The engaging compositional history of the opening, however (and the degree to which the eventual introduction may have been suggested by an already composed epilogue), is not a factor in the present reading, which is concerned with the implications of the final, completed version of the tone poem as presented to the public in 1895.

Example 7: *Till Eulenspiegel*, mm. 1–8.

narrator—more materially situated in the here and now).⁹⁵

This is just the situation in *Till*. The Strauss-Mauke score labels tell us that the introduction represents the words of a narrator, “Es war einmal ein Schalksnarr” (“Once upon a time there was a rascally fool”; musically, of course, these are the Kobold pitches in slow motion). But no sooner is this prologue underway than it breaks off or dissolves—almost cinematically—into the piece proper: *Till*’s adventures (ex. 7). After the adventures are over, we return in the “epilogue” to the opening music, “Es war einmal . . .”—as if to remind us that we have been hearing only a fictitious tale, “told in quotation marks” (ex. 8). But the epilogue-music does not break off, as had the introduction: it continues for several more measures.

Before proceeding, we might reflect on the concept of musical frames and notice that, from a larger standpoint, the inside narrative of *Till* is not singly but doubly framed. This pivotal observation enables us to link the tone poem to the material-culture world (or “real world”) of 1890s European modernism. So far we have been concerned only with the artificial frame: the musical prologue and epilogue, which function as rhetorical devices enclosing the interior narrative. Needless to say, that frame (“Es war einmal”) is not “real.” We cannot say that it “is” Strauss himself, nor that it “is” anyone, for that matter. It exists only as an artificial device in Strauss’s arrangement of the musical events. By asking us to imagine the presence of a fictional narrator, Strauss’s artificial frame

can serve as a corridor into and out of the piece, a corridor connecting our own “real world” to the aesthetic world of this purely imaginary discourse.

But this artificial frame (“introduction-coda”) is surrounded by a larger one. This is the real frame, and (as Edward T. Cone once emphasized) it consists of the silence on either side of the composition.⁹⁶ But although we may describe these spaces as silences—audio black-outs—by no means are they mute. On the contrary, these silences resound with social and aesthetic implications, ones that permit us to come to grips with this imaginary discourse in the first place. The surrounding silence is fraught with the noisy constellation of context, especially that context engineered by the technologies of the institution of art music in the 1890s (or, hearing it today, by those of that institution as it currently exists). Charged with tacit implication, the surrounding silence situates the piece within a clearly defined context of unfolding. It grounds the condition of the possibility of this piece being created, performed, or perceived at all.

This real frame, the enveloping silence, may be filled conceptually in a number of ways. It could invite us, for instance, to consider Strauss’s creative “intentions,” his declared or seeming creative purposes. One could thus elect to understand the silence as standing for the composer, the mind that sets the artificial discourse into motion. Such structural considerations have been much investigated in the wide-ranging fields of narratological theory and film theory, but to explore the ramifications of any

⁹⁵On the history and potentially narrative implications of the introduction-coda frame, see Hepokoski, *Sibelius: Symphony No. 5*, p. 6, and Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, pp. 304–05.

⁹⁶Cone, *Musical Form and Musical Performance* (New York: Norton, 1968), e.g., pp. 14–18.

Epilog

Doppelt so langsam (im Zeitmass des Anfangs)

JAMES
HEPOKOSKI
Framing Till
Eulenspiegel

632

639

645 *dim.*

650 *f* *ff*

656 *fff*

Example 8: *Till Eulenspiegel*, mm. 632–57.

such implied narrator or *grand imagier* behind-the-scenes would take us far afield.⁹⁷ Sidestep-

ping those problematic issues for the present, we need only suggest that if the silence in some way or another is taken to stand (properly or improperly) for Strauss himself, then

⁹⁷Several of these issues have been recently explored and related to music in Matthew McDonald, "Silent Narration? Elements of Narrative in Ives's *The Unanswered Question*," this journal 27 (2004), 263–86, which also furnishes through its footnotes a starting-point for further reflection on this topic. See especially pp. 276–77, a discussion of theories of an implicit filmic narrator or *grand*

imagier—or his or her absence—in the late-twentieth-century critical work of Christan Metz, Sarah Kozloff, André Gaudreault, Albert Laffay, David Bordwell, Seymour Chatman, and Jakob Lothe.

the composer, as the supposedly “true narrator,” begins by conjuring up a fictive narrator (the musical prologue) who then, we are encouraged to believe, recounts an even more fictional story “in quotation marks”—the sonata-rondo-deformational body of the piece. From this angle, in the real frame’s surrounding silence, to which all else is subordinated, the composer is made present by a palpable absence.

But there are other angles from which to consider this problem, and we might turn now from production to reception. For any audience—including Strauss’s early audiences—the silence is shot through with the preconditions of the immediate performance. Audiences “go into” the piece knowing that they are attending a concert of canonic “classics”; that such a concert is a presentation format that certain social groups have designed to support specific cultural interests; that Strauss is being inset into a definable tradition (*Till* is being juxtaposed with works of, say, Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schumann, or Wagner); that concert pieces were then claiming to be lasting musical statements that are also to be written about, studied, and trained for in academies, universities, and conservatories; that (in the 1890s) the liberal-humanist tradition was under threat by the new generation of modernists; and so on. From the reception side, too, this silence brims over with the social terms of understanding for what is being sonically staged.

It would seem that the more exterior the frame, the higher the material-reality-claim. In *Till Eulenspiegel* we have at least three discursive levels: the story itself, which is subordinated to the artificial frame (the prologue and epilogue), which is in turn subordinated to the real frame, the cultural implications charging through the silence that envelops the whole composition. Once we have arrived at this conceptual point, demonstrating one of the social functions of the multiple frames in *Till* not only becomes possible but may also be done quickly.

The easiest way is to proceed through the epilogue—the closing artificial frame after the narrated event of *Till*’s execution (ex. 8). The epilogue is much longer than the introduction: it cycles back to restate, then complete, what

that prologue had only begun. In the epilogue the initial single module (“*Es war einmal*”) continues, and it is only with this continuation that Strauss provides the most telling clues about who this *Till* might be, thus inviting us into at least one historically defensible reading of the tone poem. Immediately after bringing the “*Es war einmal*” module to a gentle perfect authentic cadence in F (I:PAC, m. 636), the music proceeds to what appears to be an astonishing musical allusion. Measures 637ff.—the continuation that we did *not* hear in the introduction, mm. 1–6—may be understood as alluding to a widely known piece in the symphonic-poem tradition, Richard Wagner’s domestic *Siegfried Idyll*, from twenty-five years earlier, 1870.⁹⁸ Tellingly, Wagner had preceded the music of that score with a two-stanza, sixteen-line introductory poem extolling the “exalted, sacrificial will” of Cosima and centered around the recent birth of their own son, Siegfried. The relevant line is the exuberant birth announcement that ends the first stanza: “‘Ein Sohn ist da!’—der musste Siegfried heissen” (“‘It’s a son!’ and he must be called Siegfried”). As is well known, Wagner adapted the themes of *Siegfried Idyll* from the third act of *Siegfried*, but in the *Idyll*, one of these themes, introduced as an insistently repeated and sequenced episode within the developmental space (*leicht bewegt*, mm. 148–258), seems to represent either the conception or the birth of this child (“‘Ein Sohn ist da!’—der musste Siegfried heissen”). It is to this infant-Siegfried theme from the 1870 *Idyll*, including even its many augmented sonorities, that Strauss seems to allude at this moment in his 1895 *Till*. Wagner himself, of course, had extracted the theme—as a quotation—from *Siegfried*, at that time still an ongoing project. Example 9 shows its emergence in the music drama, act III, where as the “World’s Treasure” theme it had been connected to the hero with the words “O Siegfried, Herrlicher! Hort der Welt.”

⁹⁸The *Siegfried-Idyll* allusion was also independently noticed by Youmans, *Richard Strauss’s Orchestral Music*, p. 184, who, apparently puzzled, assessed its significance as “enigmatic, if not impenetrable.”

(fourig, doch mart)

BRÜNNHILDE

O Sieg - fried, Herr - li - cher! Hort — der Welt! Le - ben der Er - de,
la - chen - der Held! — Lass', ach, lass'! — Las - se von mir! — Na - he mir nicht — mit der wü - then - den

Example 9: Wagner, *Siegfried*, act III (Schirmer vocal score, 319/2–4).

The most vivid parallel of the *Siegfried Idyll* with the *Till Eulenspiegel* epilogue occurs in the lullaby-like, mother-and-child coda of the *Siegfried Idyll* (ex. 10), marked *Bedeutend langsamer*, that seems to be the source-passage for Strauss's "Es war einmal" coda in *Till*, marked *Doppelt so langsam*. To be sure, in Strauss's epilogue (ex. 8) the motive's melodic intervals are metrically displaced—but impudent metrical displacement has been a feature of *Till* throughout the work. (Because of this *Gestalt* effect the *Siegfried Idyll* allusion is more apparent if one does not follow the score while listening to the music.) Nonetheless, the correspondence between the two themes is obvious. One might observe the way that Strauss turns the augmented-triad appoggiatura chord of the *Idyll* into other appoggiatura chords with $\sharp 2$ in their highest voice, most normally the *Tristan*-chord version of the augmented sixth (ex. 8, mm. 637, 639), although the augmented triad itself as fleeting appoggiatura chord is also found, as in mm. 645 and 646, and implied in 647 and 648. And one might compare these sonorities with the first chord of the epilogue,

the augmented-dominant-seventh chord at the end of m. 633, an applied dominant of IV.

And so on. In this reading, within the music of this artificial-frame epilogue to *Till Eulenspiegel*, the fictive narrator unmasks the merely fictional Till of the inner narrative to suggest a link with Wagnerism and, more specifically, to the advent of the post-Wagnerian "modern" generation. The point would seem to be that the infant Siegfried from the *Idyll* has grown in the 1890s to become the spirit of brash modernism embodied in *Till*: Strauss as the new Siegfried, Wagner's musical heir. "Ein Sohn ist da!—der musste Siegfried heissen." The several other parody-allusions to Wagner's works strewn throughout *Till Eulenspiegel* also help to bolster such a conclusion.⁹⁹ This multiplicity of parallels may not be individually convincing to all listeners, but to insist on total


⁹⁹As mentioned earlier (n. 53), a treasure-house of at least potential allusions (including this important one from *Siegfried* and *Siegfried Idyll*) are collected and analyzed in Bribitzer-Stull and Gauldin, " $\sharp 2/b3$, Wagner, and Strauss's Merry Pranks," unpublished paper.

Example 10: Wagner, *Siegfried Idyll*, conclusion (mm. 379–405).

agreement or empirical proof would be to miss the hermeneutic point. Part of the *Eulenspiegel* enterprise lies in its openness to a multiplicity of allusive possibilities without insisting on any of them as objective fact.

To return to the main point of the epilogue: Here Till Eulenspiegel, *qua* fictional Till, is pulled out of the inner narrative (the preceding narrative) and memorialized in the artificial frame. In the inner narrative Till had lost the game: he had been captured, tried, and hanged—ostensibly disciplined by the orchestra, that is, by a traditional apparatus of order within the institution of art music. But as we all know, Till does not lose. Following the epilogue's valedictory identification of Till with Wagnerism, modernism, and Strauss himself, the derisive Till-music rises up one last time with the loudest and most impudent of Kobold-jeers (ex. 8, mm. 650–57). This concluding *éclat* suggests that Till's death in the inner narrative was only another of his *lustige Streiche*.

If so, then Till's uproarious Kobold-cry at the end stands for the more real-world Till (Strauss masquerading as Till), revealing that

the final prank has been played on the orchestra and the audience. Here Strauss brandished the claim that this flippantly heterodox “modernism,” once let out of the bottle, cannot be put back in—and certainly not by traditional disciplinary actions. In these final measures “Till” (or the spirit of antimetaphysical modernism) escapes out of the piece, out of artifice, and into “real life.” Art (*Moderne Kunst*) leaps out of the pseudocontainment of the musical work and into the audience's real-life laps, reverberating provocatively into the contextual silence—the real frame of 1890s life—either to delight or to challenge. Art jumps out into life, reverberating into the charged silence that was the precondition of its context in 1895, that was its real, material situation in life. 

Abstract.

Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche* (1895) may be read as the composer's credo of a new, antimetaphysical musical modernism that resonated with aspects of Nietzschean philosophy. In the immediately preceding years Strauss had taken a decisive philosophical-aesthetic turn away from the meta-

physical assertions of Schopenhauer and Wagner and toward a more individualistic, palpably material conception of music. As was recognized by some writers of that period, the provocations and unstoppable laughter apparent in the tone poem could be understood as brash dismissals of one "sacred" tenet of the institution of art music after another. The seemingly *gemütlich* wit represented by Till (a metaphorical stand-in for Strauss himself) masked a more subversive agenda: on the one hand, a mocking of the metaphysical pretensions that then underpinned the art-music enterprise; on the other, the proclaiming of a new aesthetic staging itself as exhilaratingly emancipated from the overly inflated "Spirit of Gravity" still dominating that cultural sector of the musical world. These subversions are perceptible not only in the piece's program but also in its local musical details and overall formal construction.

Several larger issues are at stake in such considerations. Strauss's personal move away from the metaphysics of music provides one of the earliest, most urgent alarms from within the high-prestige cultural system that its fundamental axioms were now corroding away, no longer sustainable by authoritarian *fiat*, in a rapidly modernizing and secularizing world.

In turn, this suggests that such a reframing of Strauss's (and others') projects could encourage historians to approach the separate subhistories of musical modernism with a more problematized complexity and nuance. Finally—as all commentators on *Till Eulenspiegel* have noted—a significant part of the piece's impact resides in its flamboyant, high-technical compositional display (a leading sign of its "modernism"). From this perspective the requisite framing is grounded in our recognition of its brazenly confrontational dialogue with established musical styles and practices. Non-normative formal patterning and architectonic layout are substantial components of Strauss's (Till's) musical subversion. In the reading proposed here, *Till Eulenspiegel* is processed as a radicalized sonata-rondo deformation with telling hermeneutic and social connotations, some of whose essential clues are located in the piece's prologue and epilogue. I interweave this analytical interpretation with remarks about the concept of sonata (and sonata-rondo) deformations as applied to music of the late nineteenth century.

Key words: German early modernism, *Till Eulenspiegel*, Nietzsche, sonata deformation, antimetaphysical aesthetics.

JAMES
HEPOKOSKI
Framing Till
Eulenspiegel

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