

Session 11 (2002) — Iser 2

① Mottos on board (intro.)

p. 1. * ② Ch. 5 — wandering-shifting — protusion/retention ^{incl. alien assoc.}
We occupy diff. areas in a musical text → not always linear
(p. 1a → Multimovement — Trittico)

p. 1 bis ③ Problems in Iser? (Two of them)

p. 3 ④ Blanks + connectability (diagram)
— IL file problem
— Ratner, Allambroste, Haydn op 64 no. 3/i
(photocopies — CD's)

p. 3^v * ⑤ Time axis + retention again (theme-horizon / vacancy)
p. 4 ← listener occupies many sites simultaneously

⑥ Minus function

⑦ Negations

Iser
To use: [opening remarks of 2nd session?]

BOARD
p. 10 → "Techniques of interpretation can no longer be practiced without due consideration of the presuppositions underlying them" [Motto for Seminar?]

BOARD
p. 207! → "As Sartre has rightly pointed out, texts always take place on the level of their reader's abilities" [a sobering thought if there ever was one!] (cf. JH → theory of professional chess-ratings + commentaries on games)

* JH → NB! Sartre
In essence, Iser argue that a composer provides you with a structure and set of relationships that means nothing until you plug into it and light it up, illuminate it, with your own interactivity. You create the aesthetic objects or the aesthetic effect. In effect, it is YOU WHO CREATE MOZART with your reading of his works! (An enormous responsibility!) He gives you the materials with which you may work, but you create him!
But caution!! What level of Mozart are you creating by writing of him, by teaching him, etc.? With what care and sense of responsibility are you creating him? To what ends are you creating him?
- p. 21

p. 107 → These are the two poles in the act of communication, whose success will depend on the degree in which the text establishes itself as a correlative in the reader's consciousness"

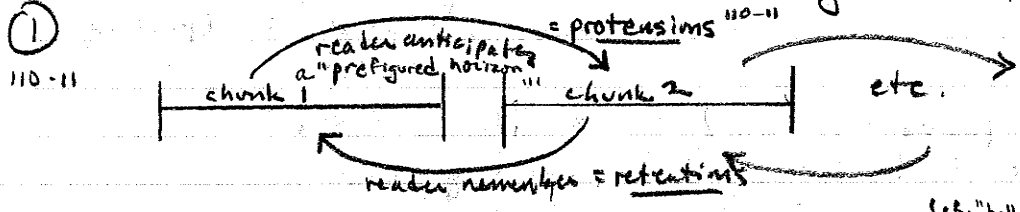
"artistic pole" what Mozart gives us to work with
"aesthetic pole" - our "realization" or illumination = the virtual work (21), a collaboration that, acc. to Iser, "removes the subject-object division" [155] because "consciousness is therefore the point at which author and reader converge" [154]

IMPORTANT

Iser Ch. 5 "Grasping a Text" [lays out Iser's whole system in nuce.] (1)

also → multiple analytical perspectives? Schenker, transformation, Rammen, Rosen, Duplin... etc?

Reader/Listener Keeps Shifting Perspectives (Actively) → processing the piece forward + backward in CHUNKS (110)(119) because the whole can never be viewed (108) = WANDERING VIEWPOINT 108 (= wandering, shifting perspective)



"a continual interplay between modified expectations + transformed memories" (111, bottom)

(cf. "hollow section" of mobility, p. 112)

* = "DIALECTIC of PROTENSION + RETENTION" (112) + we expect surprises (112) twists + turns; discontinuities

(2) WANDERING VIEWPOINT → how "the reader is present in the text" (118) consciously shifts among the perspectives provided in the text (114) ... and the varying perspectives condition one another, throw one another into relief. [how do we wander in music? not all time is forward!]

(3) Result → "a network of ¹¹⁸ possible [inter]connections..." that never encompasses a whole text... Goal of many diff. readings of many different people: "TO OPTIMIZE THE SAME STRUCTURE" (118)

(4) What does WAND. VIEWPOINT DO? ¹¹⁹ CONSISTENCY-BUILDING within a gapped text producing a [reading/conception] or GESTALT (= "consistent interpretation", 119) Starts by dividing "the text up into interacting structures" (119) - "Grouping Activity" GESTALT → s.t. like one's crystallized understanding of an idea/image en route during the making process / listening process. ["gestalt groupings" p. 120]

Iser then goes to great lengths to propose how a gestalt comes about in literature.

Orig. one finds SIGNS which in some way could relate to one another = "autocorrelation" 120

Reader: groups + builds on these signs, projecting coherency, equivalences, repetitive - contexts 121

result: [CLOSED] GESTALT

(i.e., they are linked in some way to be correlatable)

via PERCEPTUAL NOEMA [useful concept??] or "gestalt coherency"

often via "gapped continuation" principle in reality and "illusion" 124-25

Often one finds an OPEN GESTALT (underdetermined) that one will seek to modify into a CLOSED GESTALT via "subjective preferences"

"The Text as an Event" p. 125

⑤ Mechanisms, etc. of Consistency - Building

→ integration of elements into a gestalt
by means of a necessary "SELECTION" (p. 125)

But to do this is to suppress aspects of the text that don't fit —

— This — carried in the WAKE of formulated gestalten are:

ALIEN ASSOCIATIONS (126), which accumulate + challenge our earlier gestalten... we drag along with us things we don't use.

∴ Each gestalt (temporary conclusion) carries with it (in its wake)¹²⁶ "the seeds of its own modification or even destruction" (127)

— DIALECTIC of ILLUSION-FORMING + ILLUSION-BREAKING (127)
progressively throughout a text

Involvement — surprises, frustrations, disappointments (128)

¹²⁸⁻⁹ and sometimes, in modern texts, insoluble ambiguities (130) [ALSO IN MUSIC?] "As we read, we react to what we ourselves have produced, and it is this mode of reception... → text as actual event"

All this causes our ENTANGLEMENT/INVOLVEMENT with a text + makes the text PRESENT to us (131)

131 — 10 up

NB As we become involved in a text our present recedes (into the text's present) and becomes the past... we are thus distanced from ourselves, can watch ourselves becoming involved (132-4)
(Our temporal "reality" + "time" etc or yield into mere background)

The reader activates this whole process in response to the text... guided by its signals —

JH

NB → The "Bildung" aspect of literature/art? Step outside of oneself — observe (+ hence correct?) oneself "in a strange, halfway position" 134.

JH

1 bis

Two Problems/Inadequacies with Iser's Concept of the Reader
(e.g. in Chs. 5-8)

[THE GLARING ABSENCE IN THE TEXT?]

Iser assumes — a "good-faith" reader informed by a hermeneutic of recovery (of sorts) — Verstehen
(or implies)

— one relatively unconcerned with rival-partisan claims of how such texts are to be read

' (i.e., a reader/listener remarkably free from all tugs from the available hermeneutic genres or ideological modes of interpretation common to his/her discipline)

NB! But our opening premise, 11 weeks ago → (JH → Listener/Analyst caught in a network of possibilities accepted and/or rejected — the 5 cards of the 52 that one has chosen to pick -)
— uninfluenced by prestige-networks

which is why Bourdieu's concerns and Iser's do not intersect!

— i.e. we are taught what to look for, what to ignore, and how to interpret what we find. There are rewards for finding some kinds of things & not others.

Iser's (implied) reader is untethered to self-improvement or the community — interests of the discipline to which she or he is connected. Sole goal → to "produce"/"actualize" a text.

(return to p. 5 of last set of notes — perspective in the text)

THE OTHER MAIN PROBLEM

— Iser's old-fashioned view of "self-improvement" [Bildung] via reading (the opportunity of a "transcendental viewpoint")

As in "Repertoire" (Ch. 3) → p. 74 "readings of external reality"

+ pp. 132-34 → one's present becomes a "past" or "bgd." in the text (p. 134 — one observes oneself!)

+ p. 230 on "negation" — lessons about the real world.

(old-fashioned)

NB
p. 202 - 11 dur

p. 216, middle!

1/2
2002

Issue of Retention (via memory, "vacancy," retained background, etc.)
is VERY provocative. — Dragging the memory of what has completed
itself into the interpretation of what is now present.

I.e. ROTATION THEORY (referential layout) — Mahler's Recaps?

MULTIMOVEMENT COHERENCE (in, say, Classical works)

To what extent is the first movement of a qt. or symphony still present
as the lens through which we should interpret the second? Especially,

Elenuh Subdominant slow mvt.

Trifl'co —

— ostensibly 3 "separate" works to be put. together —
Tobacco / Suor Angelica / Grianni Schicchi
ostensibly "realistic" / positive?
cruel, negative

(cf. Dmsky's "multi-piece"?)

Ch. 6 = Passive Synthesis (images in lit... in music? → pre-reflective "musical sense"? coherence?)

(2)

End of Ch. 7

Are we "thinking someone else's thoughts"? [Podet, 153-55]

Blanks + Gaps in the Text (167 ff)

166 - no "face-to-face situation"

Caused by an asymmetry between text + reader/listener (167) ... where reader must adapt himself/herself to an unchanging, incomplete set of signs in the text: (167)(166)¹⁶⁷
- Balance¹⁶⁷ achieved only by projections that fill in the blanks (consistency-building) ... done via a process of "continual connection" (167)

BLANKS stimulate the listener/reader (168, etc.) ... draw him/her in → they are the "PIVOT"¹⁶⁹ on which the whole text-reader relationship revolves -- BLANKS are "propellants" (174, 182, 195 = propellant) "for initiating communication" [195]

[Differ from Ingarden's "spots of indeterminacy" → more subtle + complex than Ingarden implies ... "a two-way relationship" ... Ingarden too simplistic, cannot account for modern art's ambiguities, etc ... too much emphasis on "adequates" + clear concretizations; too bound to the wholeness + harmony of classical aesthetics ... not really interactive enough]

Chapter 8, "How Acts of Constitution Are Stimulated"

[Return to certain features of Ch. 5 "Grasping a Text" to provide more details, now informed by BLANKS → the first of "two basic structures of indeterminacy in the text" [182] - (The other are negations)]

Crucial for listener → Connecting the different parts/perspectives of a text — making the blanks disappear. (183)

∴ important → Principles of CONNECTABILITY that fill in the blanks (183)

184. No. of blanks varies → old lit. and obvious propaganda + roman a clef (189-90) = fewer blanks
- modern literature = many (∴ many demands on reader) (184 (Joyce))

Note → One assumes that each reader/listener will be supplied with a sense of GOOD CONTINUATION¹⁸⁵ of an idea (PROTENSION, ... EXPECTATION)
But! → Aesthetic literature typically SUSPENDS or DISRUPTS GOOD CONTINUATION (186) in order to produce surprises, challenges. [TRUE?! Bath Chaja Potok?]]

one expects ... 187
↓
"1st-degree images"
[normal expectations]

disruption —
"hindrance of image-building" (188)
"impeded ideation" (189)
["the impeded text"]

∴ one must form
"2nd-degree images"
187

superior to conception of Russian Formalists 187

to make sense of the problematic 1st-degree images

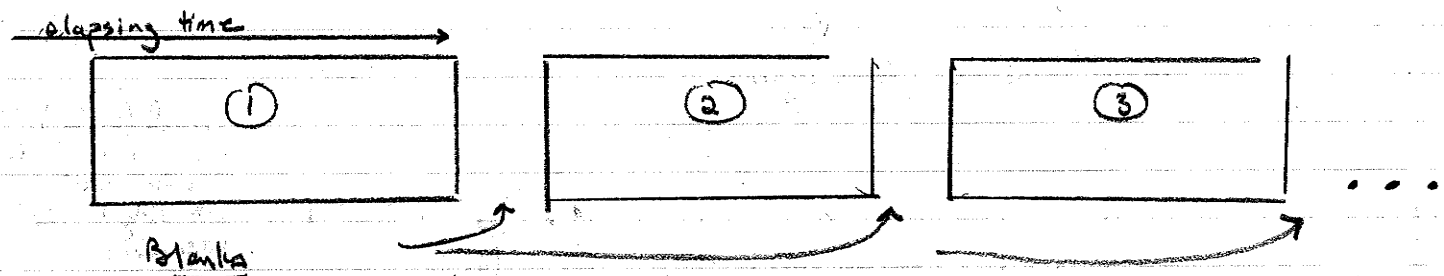
THE FUNCTIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE BLANK (195) Blank as "propellant" or a space of activation ¹⁹⁵

Addresses the issue of projecting coherence (consistency-building) in a temporal succession of different images/pictures ("abrupt juxtaposition of segments" ¹⁹⁵) separated by conceptual blanks, = the q. of IL FILO in music. ("segments and cuts" ¹⁹⁶) (w/ blanks in between)

Summer 1778 Leopold to Wolfgang
guter Satz, Ordnung [il filo]

⇒ Read ^{Isen} pp. 196-97, "The threads of the plot are suddenly broken off... switching of segments 'in the time-flow of reading'"

cf. Rationerian TOPICS ... i.e., a succession of different ones [Ratner, Sisman, on intro to Prague] [Sisman much more sophisticated]

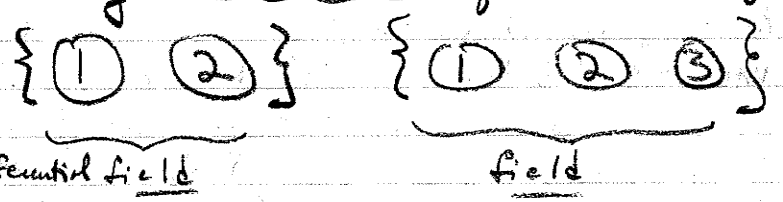


a "determinates relationship" (p. 198)

between them "enables them to be joined together" (197) conceptually by projecting gestalten (coherent interpretations) into the blanks, thus filling them by means of a wandering viewpoint (197) (cf. "mobilized spontaneity"; p. 157) [process → "making viewpoint shift between perspective segments" 198]

Note: listener will group these segments into an interacting REFERENTIAL FIELD (ref. field → ¹⁹⁷ at least two segments related to each other + influencing one another) -- "grouping of segments" (198) -- (cf. "chunks", pp. 110-11 [context]) ¹⁹⁷

∴ FRAMEWORK = FIELD ... produced by CONNECTABILITY of the diverse segments through their BLANKS,

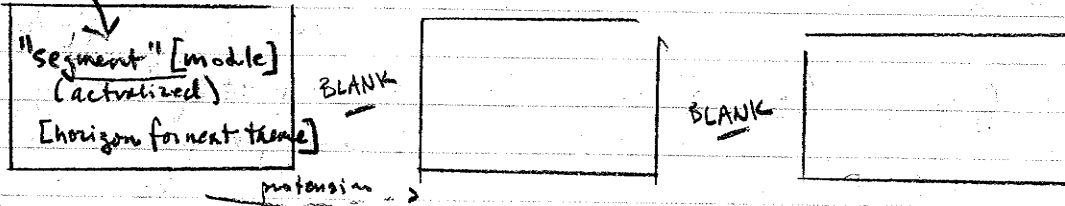


minimal contents: two positions related to + influencing one another [197]

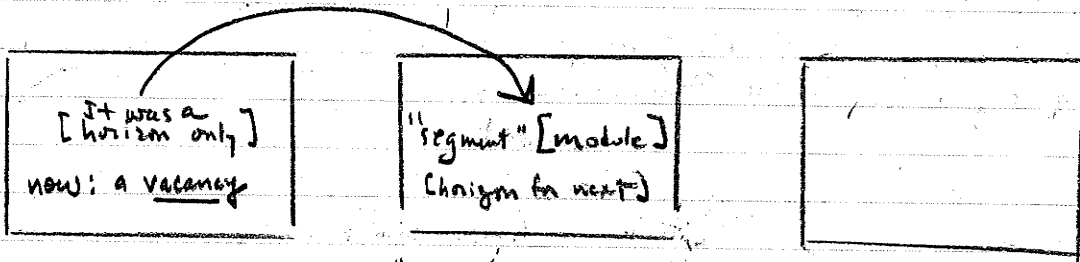
linear time (time axis)

P. 197; ⁹⁸ important (cf. time-axis, pp. 148-49)

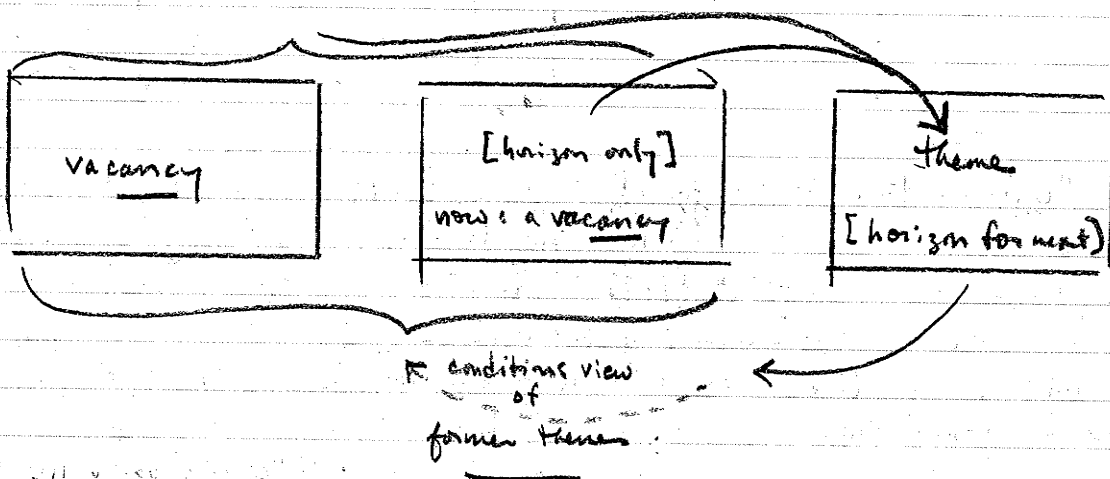
one attends to this → One's initial act is to move through time, thus (esp. p. 198!!)



on theme + horizon
See also the earlier discussion pp. 96-99 (terms of Alfred Schütz)



"retention"
new theme also [re-]conditions view of former segment



And (p. 198) one can "wander" back into this field, shifting visio, activating theme, and vacancies, etc.

Now: to Ratner pp. 104-06 for "Prague" analysis

- BLANKS GUIDE THE LISTENER'S ACTIVITY (202) - Guided by blanks + segments.
- Reader groups the distinct segments, creating a REFERENTIAL FIELD (202)
- VACANCIES (themes that have been occupied) exist as retentions in memory, conditioning + influencing all to come. (202) → helping to form an "open gestalt"
- Likewise, new segments (themes) alter our views of the "field" of what is past.
- Theme-horizon structure fills in the blanks (203)
- Reader's standpoint fills the vacancies
- In effect, the position of the blanks shift (SHIFTING BLANKS - p. 203)
- Reader "makes" the segments act upon each other.
- ∴ Blank is there to "initiate structured operations in the reader"

PAGE 202-03 SUMMARY IS CRUCIAL (READ)

For comparison —

BACK TO DISCUSSION OF TIME-AXIS (à la Husserl)
— Chapter 6 ("Passive Syntheses"), pp. 148-50

Main point → Past events in a time sequence condition our perception of present events... And, reciprocally, present events condition our understanding of what we have experienced so far in the sequence.

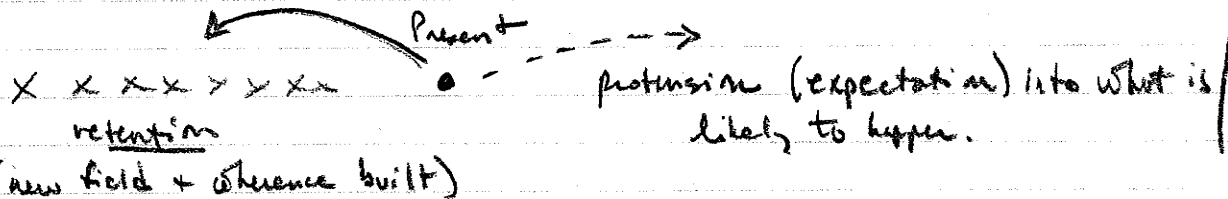
* "All images there, in the reader's mind by a constant accumulation of references... the snowball effect" [148]

ie. — Mind

- ① Experiences the present
- ② "synthesizes"¹⁴⁹ what is past in the sequence [on pp. 195-203 this will be the theme-horizon structure, the creating of the gestalt that is the grouping of the referential field].
- ③ Anticipates via protensions (III) what is yet to come — typically by the principle of good continuation (187), which in fact is likely to be shattered or disrupted in real act (186-87)

But what is this part? Say we know Beethoven's 1st symphony and are starting out on the 2nd (more like "negation" on paradigmatic axis) (p. 141)

Thus (JH) → Listener occupies many sites of the text simultaneously



And thus every present is made into an aesthetic event (as opposed to a mere "event") only by integration into the whole field by means of interpretation.
[Which is why mere Ratterian labeling is insufficient —
Draw into a larger plan of discursive coherence!]

Note → Iser (rightly) distinguishes between first listnings (readings) and subsequent listnings → p. 149, 6 up.
Having heard the piece [many times] before matters!

Allanbrook, if file
and K. 332

cf. Hayden's MM
sequents, op. 64 no. 3

Iser: MINUS FUNCTIONS (pp. 207-09) [From Lotman!]

Generic things that don't happen

presence of absence

(Cf. Sonata Theory)

NEGATIONS p. 212 ff. — the other (second) type of "basic structures of indeterminacy in the text" (182) — The first = blanks.

NB → a work exists along a syntagmatic axis (the work's system of internal arrangements and relationships ... the local work itself as you interact with it). Iser's discussions of blanks deal only with how you experience the mechanics of the work itself [alone] along a time-axis, with shifting perspective, wandering viewpoint, etc.

* 212
BUT the work is also situated on a paradigmatic axis (its relationships to things external to it ... its place in diachronic history, its relation to the "real world" of context, etc. (WI esp. int. in relationship to external or familiar, taken-for-granted world ... That which was discussed at length in Chapter 3 as the REPERTOIRES of a text (bgd, etc.)
— In THIS context, WI does NOT use the term BLANK —
— Here the gaps/indeterminacies he's interested in are called NEGATIONS

In view → a work rearranges/depragmatizes "the world" (212)... Then we reflect on "normal" things in a way that we would not usually do ... calling them (4 "us") into question. ∴ a gap opens between our "normal" selves (vorhanden?) and this new depragmatized image (vorhanden?) ... our old norms are seen as lost, past ... This gap between old self + new awareness = NEGATION (p. 213) — and the reader, in real life, must fill this in.
(This all seems didactic + moralistic to me ... old-fashioned sense of "improvement" via art? jst)

NEGATIVITY

p. 225 ff.

— A summation of the grand concept

NB Throughout the book, from Ch. I "The Figure in the Carpet" onward, I see has insisted that the literal surfaces and images of text are actually propelled into meaning by gaps, indeterminacies, blanks, and negations. . . . What is either "not there" or "there" only, by implication, to be filled in by the reader.

i. Alongside the physical work that we see/hear, there is, in effect, a Doppelgänger work ^{p. 226, top} "A KIND OF UNFORMULATED DOUBLE" of absence/gap.

"This 'double' we shall call negativity" (p. 226, top.)

And it is only through the presence of negativity (gap, absence, blank) that the aesthetic work can come about,

- 1) Form (includes possible the reading process") p. 226
- 2) Content — Information etc. 227 ff
- 3)

Characterized regularly by the refrain words "the HOLLOW FORM" (e.g. 225) (p. 143, p. 213)

A phrase apparently coined by Sartre (see p. 213)

On the problem of "negation" in music

Repertoire — Theme + Horizon — with links to social systems in the outside world

Clear in lit. (novels) → but NOT music? (more abstract? less easy to connect up with the world?)

USE THIS AS CENTRAL QUOTATION, p. 212, 17 up: "The repertoire has the following function: it incorporates a specific external reality into the text and so offers the reader a definite frame of reference or invokes a ^{definite} range of past experience . . .

[These norms, everyday norms, detached from spontaneous "use"] become DEPRAGMATIZED (taken out of use) in a lit. work — + thus they can be "isolated" + examined in themselves"

212, bottom
Reader "has the chance to perceive consciously a system in which he had hitherto been unconsciously caught. . . . "Familiar appears to him as obsolescent [i.e., no longer operative automatically, . . .] etc"

Now, q. → NOT in Music? (Say, art music?)

- ① Start → Do we agree w/ Adorno that music is "durch und durch geschichtlich"?
→ Fundamentally conditioned by and responding to (or serving) some sort of specific cultural context → when it first appeared?
[political & social unconscious → with hooks back into its own cultural system?]
basic? → (Only, alternative → transhistorical or transcendental, beyond history?) (CD = "aesthetic presence" = permanent?)
TENABLE?

Say K. 332 — or "Prague" Symphony?

- ② If conditioned by + responding to context [systems], then some mode of external reality is present in a musical text? Right?
(Or at least in its generic aspects?)

- ③ If K. 332 had been composed by Igor Stravinsky as part of his R-K Studies, in the 1900s, note-for-note, would it be a different piece?
— If so, then there is something to Derrida's theme + horizon, repertoire of the text, social + historical systems beyond the notes.

④ How about such things as: social/cultural construction of a range of humanness (self-presentation; gesture; posture; containment; mood; emotion) appropriate to a given historical situation

K, 332 → illustrates a palette of moods + gestures (+ topics) appropriate for and limited by its time, subjected to a staged presentation of the same through a unilinear time-span, in a certain order + for a certain purpose?

But why these moods + gestures? Why this organization?

Why these topics? Why these forms + arrangements?

(Are genres + works NOT nuance/gesture/contour realizations of what it means to live in a world? Why would K, 332 be an inappropriate response for Kurt Weill in 1925?)

And are not these moods/topics/gestures depragmatized (taken out of life) + placed into conventionalized, stylized modes (where they can be either embraced or ironized?)

Hence one can perceive a mood/topic/gesture/structure system laid out in front of one, depragmatized, for performance, for perception, for analysis?

Still, one not need be as "therapeutic" about this as Jan is on p. 216, middle!