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## Lewin's Figure 0.1, Freud's Analysis Interminable, and Their Implications for Music Analysis

### ABSTRACT

#### Background

The process of analysis leads to an interpretation of a piece of music and ultimately some type of communication of that interpretation to another person, either through a performance of the piece, or through instruction of that interpretation to a student, or through the writing of that interpretation in a scholarly journal or conference presentation. We can imagine a continuum on which one travels from the act of analysis to the act of communicating their analytic interpretation in some manner. Music theorist David Lewin has provided just such a continuum in his famous Figure 0.1 from his seminal work, *Generalized Musical Intervals and Transformations*. In that figure, point  $s$  becomes point  $t$  by the transformation  $i$ . Rather than simply identifying  $s$  and  $t$  as separate musical entities, Lewin's focus is on the transformation  $i$ , the process by which  $s$  becomes  $t$ . Rather than representing  $s$  and  $t$  as musical phenomena with  $i$  as the process by which they are transformed, this paper views  $s$  and  $t$  as different analytic interpretations and  $i$  as the transformation by which analysis  $s$  becomes analysis  $t$ . It uses Lewin's Figure 0.1 as the basis for a dialogic model between various analytic interpretations. In doing so, it proposes an additional directional arrow to Lewin's original diagram, allowing not just the traversal from  $s$  toward  $t$ , but also  $t$  returning to  $s$ . Such an addition broaches the idea that two different analyses enter into a dialogue in which each informs the other.

In revising Lewin's figure, this paper draws on the work of other analysts as well as the psychoanalytic literature. In music analysis, Adele Katz notes that a *synthesis* of different perspectives is more important than simply an *analysis*. Katz's perspective reveals not a reductive analysis commonly attributed to Schenker, but rather a dialogic synthesis between different analytic observations and structural levels. That is what is truly sought in music analysis—not just an *analytic* gathering of observations, but also a *synthesis* of those gathered observations. On some level, analysis implies a taking apart, a dissection of the various parts to see how they work. Synthesis implies a more constructive assimilation of those various parts, a reconstruction of how they work and how they are all connected. As opposed to the frequent finality found at the termination of an analysis, a synthesis, or an analysis that seeks such a synthesis, initiates an open-ended discussion that leads to a dialogue between different analyses that strengthens each perspective.

A strikingly similar analytic dialogue has been described by Sigmund Freud and British psychoanalyst, Adam Phillips. In Freud's description of the analytic process, the analyst and analysand are in dialogue, essentially co-creating an analytic interpretation of the analysand's unconscious content.

Freud used the term “construction” [*Konstruktion*] to describe the task of the psychoanalyst. Psychoanalysis does not just involve the act of deciphering various independent free associations observed during a therapy session. Rather, the analyst's task, going beyond mere interpretation, is to recreate a narrative that synthesizes these phenomena and integrates them into the larger context of their unconscious origins. These syntheses and constructions are discussed and related to the dialogic process between different music analyses, showing that Lewin's transformation process is a critical component to our analytic practices. Indeed, Freud's idea that analysis is interminable is also applicable to this revision of Lewin's famous diagram. The additional direction in Lewin's figure creates a type of infinite loop between analysis and performance that represents an unending relationship that endures for the life of the composition and performer alike. This is a curious question: when exactly are we *done* with an analysis? In music, when have we analyzed a piece to reach a level of understanding adequate for a knowledgeable and well-formed interpretation and performance? In psychoanalysis, when can we deem an analytic treatment as having reached an acceptably therapeutic outcome?

As a case study, this paper uses a recent dialogue on Rimsky-Korsakov between Richard Taruskin and other music analysts in *Music Theory Spectrum* (2011). While this 2011 dialogue was particularly charged emotionally, it did not begin with this issue of *Spectrum*. It involves print dialogues between Taruskin and many of the respondents as well as between many of the respondents, such as the 2003 discussion between Pieter Van Den Toorn and Dmitri Tymoczko in the same journal. The tone of Taruskin's 2011 diatribe against many perspectives on Rimsky-Korsakov is unfortunate in that it seeks a termination of any synthesis or analytic dialogue between alternative perspectives. The editors of *Spectrum* are to be commended for the many rebuttals published along with Taruskin's critique, for they represent the start of an analytic dialogue quite like that proposed in this paper. An examination of these essays provides a demonstration of the importance of the added directions and analytic dialogue in my revision and application of Lewin's Figure 0.1 Finally, this paper closes with a discussion of the interminable loop that is created in such an analytic dialogue. It draws from Freud's essay, “Analysis Terminable and Interminable,” in which he describes the goal of a successful analysis as not necessarily to “figure it out” once and for all, but rather for the patient simply to have a better understanding of themselves and their surroundings, just as happens in music analysis. Indeed, Freud admits that in some sense an analysis is never truly complete, just as shown in my revision of Lewin's famous diagram. This constant potentiality for more, the never-ending dialogue between analyst and piece as well as between analyst and analyst is the true joy of music analysis. The fact that, like Freud's acknowledgement that psychoanalysis may never truly be terminable, music analysis and all facets of music study

really are a constantly changing perspective in which new information and newly acquired skills continuously influence our interpretations of our favorite pieces.

### Keywords

analytical theory, musical hermeneutics, musical epistemology, musical praxis

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