

On the Trajectory of Leitmotif in Gotterdammerung

*An application of Schenkerian Philosophy to the Leitmotifs in Wagner's Gotterdammerung
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Abstract

Before any in-depth analysis can occur, one must define in good measure the purpose of the analysis. Accordingly, it is the author's intention to develop a novel technique for analysis of large scale works that utilize leitmotifs as their currency of musical economy. In the way small scale lieder is easily approached on a note-by-note basis, especially in a Schenkerian scheme, it is put-forth here that the same style of analysis can be used, albeit slightly altered. Instead of a note-by-note approach, which is completely unreasonable for a work on the scale of Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, a leitmotif-by-leitmotif approach will be employed. The result will be an analysis similar in appearance to a normal Schenkerian exercise, but will illuminate trajectories on a much larger scale, and hopefully in a way that is more revealing of both the music and the narrative progression.

Introduction

Schenkerian Analysis and Philosophy

One important aim of a Schenkerian analysis is to map out some meaningful large-scale voice-leading in a piece of music. This voice-leading may not be perceptible to the listener in any conscious sense; however, acknowledgement of this large-scale voice leading will often provide insights into the form, structure, and compositional process of the piece. This hypothesis is derived from Schenker's desire to understand the musical cognition of the 'great' composers of the common practice era (Mozart, Beethoven, etc...). Schenker believed that, through a thorough analysis in his method, one

could understand the way in which these great composers composed in both a conscious and subconscious way.¹

The method with which a Schenkerian analysis proceeds involves the reduction of superfluous material relative to the subsequent step of hierarchical analysis in a piece so that the final result is a series of graphs converging on only the *most* important pitches in the piece. Rhythm, meter, and repetitions are the first parts of the music to be thrown away, and only bare pitches, along with their relative temporal spacing are left. From this, an analysis begins to discover meaningful relationships between pitches over the temporal dimension, and ultimately arrives at a far-ground skeleton of the original piece. This reductive method has its drawbacks, as much of the valuable music is lost in the transition from reality to far-ground. After a Schenkerian analysis, Schubert and Mozart may appear to have composed identical pieces because the analysis has stripped away the Schubert-ness and Mozart-ness of their pieces. This result supports the hypothesis Schenker presents, and is meant to reveal the deeper characteristics of tonal compositions. The analysis presented here will be Schenkerian in philosophy and process, but with a different system of reduction criteria.

Leitmotif

A leitmotif is some coherent musical idea that is used to symbolize an extra-musical idea.² For instance, Siegfried's Horn Call, which occurs throughout *Siegfried*, always accompanies the young hero's presence on the stage. The term was introduced in the 1870's by music historians such as Ambrose and Wolzogen. Wolzogen published a thematic guide for *Der Ring des Nibelungen* where he used the term. Wagner and Liszt were the first prominent composers to utilize leitmotif as a keystone to their compositional practice. Liszt used motivic transformation throughout a piece to give the music unity and narrative. Wagner uses leitmotif in nearly all of his operas, and especially throughout the *Ring*, to give a

¹ (Snarrenberg n.d.)

² (Whittall n.d.)

strong structural, unifying, and narrative cohesion to the expansive time frame in which his operas occur. However, Wagner himself did not see the use of these leitmotifs as a strictly narrative exercise, saying "...one of my younger friends [presumably Wolzogen] ... has devoted some attention to the characteristics of "leitmotifs", as he calls them, but has treated them more from the point of view of their dramatic import and effect than as elements of the musical structure."³ From Wagner's own conception of leitmotif as a musical structure first, narrative assistant second, an analysis based on the trajectory of leitmotif is justified.

Leitmotif as the Musical Unit

As is aimed at above, the process and goals of this analysis is to reduce Wagner's music using a Schenkerian process, but with a focus on leitmotif as the fundamental unit of musical composition. What this means is that instead of reducing compositions in a pitch-by-pitch fashion as one might do with a Schubert or Mozart sonata, we will reduce the score to pitch approximations of the leitmotifs that occur, and then treat these reduced leitmotifs as the pitches we reduce. The results of this analytical technique prove to be very intriguing and revealing. For instance, this approach goes a long way to showing the pitch thread which connects the relationships between leitmotifs. Additionally, this method provides the basis for performance interpretations that produce a larger-scale phrasing structure and similarly, inform the relative weight of one leitmotif to another in the musical context. Importantly, the results of this style of analysis can easily be translated into a narrative analysis, and approaching either perspective with both in mind illuminates the complex relationship between tonal, formal, and narrative structure. This analysis focuses strictly on a particular and well-defined scene from *Gotterdammerung*, and in doing so, allows a deep analysis of a very significant portion of the opera and specifically allows a simultaneous analysis of the narrative.

³ (Richard Wagner 1988)

The Immolation Scene

Gotterdammerung is the final opera in the set of four that comprise the *Ring Cycle*. The final scene of this opera finds Brunhilde, the most powerful of the Valkyries, ordering the construction of a funeral pyre for Siegfried, her murdered husband. This scene, often referred to as the Immolation Scene, then sees Brunhilde mount her horse, throw a torch into the pyre, and then ride into the flames. At this point, the flames overcome Valhalla, the palace of the Gods. The Rhine river then overruns its banks, extinguishes the flames, and the world is renewed and redeemed.

This act of self-immolation is central to the plot of the entire Ring, as it signifies the philosophical goal of Wagner in writing the tetralogy.⁴ The world as a whole, by this act of self-sacrifice, is redeemed through love. The leitmotifs representing redemption, love, Siegfried, the magic fire, and Valhalla are of particular importance as the cycle comes to an end. Their trajectories in pitch, as well as time will be examined.

Analysis of the Immolation Scene from *Gotterdammerung*

Goals and Methods for the Immolation Scene

The goal of this analysis is to illuminate the way in which Wagner distributes the leitmotifs in the final scene, both in a pitch sense and along the temporal axis. First, the leitmotifs that occur in the final scene will be identified. Once identified, they will be categorized into their representations. For instance, the Redemption motif will fall into the category of Transcendental Themes, while the Valkyrie Call will fall into the category of people. Next, a sub-set of the leitmotifs (Transcendental, People, Nature, etc...) will be graphed on a grand-staff where the starting and ending (in most cases) of each leitmotif will be demarcated. Finally, any voice-leading connections between the leitmotifs will be identified and a musical interpretation of the evident relationships will be attempted.

⁴ (Donington 1963)

After this initial fore-ground graph is produced, and the important connections drawn, another round of reduction will take place. This reduction will leave only the barest forms of leitmotif shape, and many repeated leitmotifs (particularly Loge's Magic Fire) will be dropped entirely. From this scale, a connection between the narrative form and the voice-leading can be made, and this connection will help inform any further choices in reduction.

Identification and Categorization of Leitmotifs

Throughout the entire course of the *Ring Cycle*, there are well over 100 identifiable leitmotifs.⁵ During the Immolation Scene, twenty different leitmotifs occur, with Loge's Magic Fire occurring most often and the Curse of the Ring occurring only once (when Hagen steals the ring off of Brunhilde's burnt finger from the pyre, and is then drowned by the Rhinemaidens). The majority of the leitmotifs can be easily identified and labeled using sources such as Donnington's *Wagner's Ring*. In Appendix A, there is a list with all of the leitmotifs that appear, and their names. Here, the Transcendental Themes will be outlined and discussed.

The leitmotifs that fall into the category of Transcendental Themes are leitmotifs that symbolize things that aren't necessary people or objects. These leitmotifs are listed in Table 1 – List of Leitmotifs included in the reduced analysis of the Transcendental Themes Table 1 along with the reasons for their inclusion on the list.

Table 1 – List of Leitmotifs included in the reduced analysis of the Transcendental Themes

Leitmotif	Justification for Inclusion
Loge's Magic Fire	Fire is seen, throughout the entire <i>Ring Cycle</i> and especially in the Immolation Scene as the grand destroyer of everything. Although this leitmotif is also associated with Loge himself, it is most generally a symbol of destruction.
Downfall of the Gods	An inversion of the Erda leitmotif, a full-cycle return to Mother Nature.
Erda (Mother Earth)	Although this is a particular character, at this point in the <i>Ring</i> , she is not present in a personified way. Instead, this symbolizes the ancestral wisdom of nature.
Destiny	(Self evident)

⁵ (Donnington 1963)

Ring	The single thing that has led to the current situation. An object that represents complete power, evil, and greed.
Redemption	(Self evident)
Siegfried the Hero	This leitmotif transcends the literal meaning of Siegfried. It represents the intrinsic goodness of Siegfried, as well as the sincerity of his love for Brunhilde.
Brunhilde's Love	(Self evident)
Curse of the Ring	Direct enactment of the Ring's evil power. It consumes Hagen into the depths of the Rhine river.
Valhalla	Although this is a real place in the <i>Ring</i> , it is also a symbol of the Gods as a whole.
Power of the Gods	This, like Valhalla, is a symbol of the Gods as a whole. However, this is the intrusive form of their power, while Valhalla is the passive form of their power.

The choice to include or eliminate certain leitmotifs from this reduced analysis fits well within the framework of a Schenkerian analysis. This is not to say that the leitmotifs that are not included are superfluous, but instead, they do not deal with the subject matter that the ones included deal with. The excluded themes are: Wotan's Spear, Loge's Agitation, Siegfried's Death, Valkyrie Call, Valkyrie Ride, Rhine River Murmur, Forest Murmurs, Rhine River (full), and the Rhinemaiden's Song.

A few reasons exist as to why this analysis is concerned mainly with the Transcendental Themes, and not with the leitmotifs associated with nature, or people, or places. Firstly, it is appropriate to consider the ideas of Redemption, Love, and the destruction of World as themes that exist throughout the entire cycle. As opposed to Forest Murmurs, which come and go as the scenes change, but are not inherent to the continuity and meaning of the story (although, Loge's Magic Fire is integral to the story). Secondly, not only do these ideas stream throughout the work, they also associate strongly with Wagner's intentions in writing the *Ring*. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper, it is widely known that Wagner's original intention in writing the *Ring* was that it communicates his interpretation of Schopenhauer's philosophy of love being the only value and meaning in the world.⁶ Lastly, the very end of the Immolation Scene concludes with the Love and Redemption leitmotifs occurring simultaneously into the very last chord. As a result, they are the final cadential leitmotifs of the entire *Ring Cycle*, and to

⁶ (Magee 2001)

not include then, the Transcendental Themes, in the context of the finale would be a disservice to the Schenkerian philosophy.

Shape, Contour, and Trajectory

Thus far, the choice of particular leitmotifs to analyze has been justified; however, the actual method of analysis is still vaguely defined. To demonstrate the way in which the reductive Schenkerian

Figure 1 - Reductive method for the Siegfried the Hero leitmotif

1. *Siegfried the Hero*

2.

3.

approach is generalized to handle

leitmotifs instead of individual pitches, an example is required.

Consider the leitmotif Siegfried

the Hero, shown in Figure 1. The

first staff is the unadulterated

leitmotif, and below it is a first reduction. This first reduction is designed to capture the contour of the leitmotif and also maintain its identity. The third line is a further reduction, which shows just the most important pitches. The final note (the E in parenthesis) is important, because it is the final note, and the pitch on which the leitmotif cadences. However, it is ignored in the graphical analysis because many times the entire phrase is not stated. For much of the Immolation Scene, Wagner avoids a full statement of this leitmotif, and instead only uses the first two bars. These two bars are more than enough to identify the leitmotif though, as the rhythm, orchestration, and pitch intervals are almost always conserved.

Other leitmotifs, such as Loge's Magic Fire, are fairly static in their pitch language, almost always ending on the pitch they began. Therefore, their depiction in the analysis is only that single pitch upon which the leitmotif is stated. In particular, Loge's Magic Fire leitmotif is a two bar motif, where each bar is strikingly different, and where both bars can independently identify the leitmotif. In fact, after Brunhilde dies, Loge's Magic Fire begins to only occur in one-bar phrases that take only part of the

whole leitmotif. However, the analysis can clearly identify these bars as being in every way *the* Loge's Magic Fire leitmotif (2.' in the graphs).

Transcendental Themes – Analysis of the Redemption Motif

The trajectory of these leitmotifs is both interesting and illuminating. On first appearance, the key-areas used by Wagner seem, at best, continuously varied to avoid temporal pauses via cadence. However, through the mire of mediant and tri-tone relations, a system of voice-leading through leitmotifs appears. Figure 2 shows the large scale trajectory the Redemption leitmotif takes throughout the entire Immolation Scene. The interaction between the Redemption, Siegfried the Hero, and Brunhilde's Love leitmotifs is very interesting. The general contour of the Redemption leitmotif is an elaboration around a pitch, and then a drop of a 7th. This drop of a 7th allows the leitmotif to easily sequence, as the final pitch is a step higher than the originating pitch. However, the Redemption leitmotif sequences chromatically, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 2 – Redemption (12.), Siegfried the Hero (13.), Brunhilde's Love (15.), and Valhalla (19.)

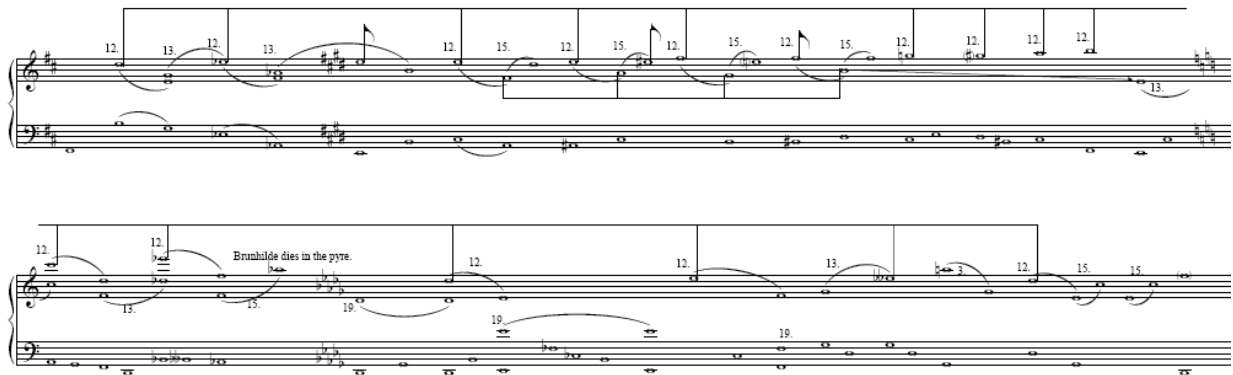


Figure 3 - Chromatic Starting Pitches of the Redemption Leitmotif



This sequence begins in measure 52 of the Immolation Scene and concludes in measure 178, illustrating the large-scale voice-leading Wagner was utilizing. The notes that are in parenthesis in Figure 3

correspond to the final notes of their associated leitmotifs (15. – Brunhilde’s Love and 13. – Siegfried the Hero) and are included because they each play an integral part in the sequencing of the Redemption leitmotif. The shape of this voice-leading is very characteristic (especially if the last four pitches are raised an octave) of a climbing line that then falls into its cadence. It begins on D, which ultimately (through the Ebb) resolves down to the Db. Similarly, the highest pitches in Figure 3 (C and Eb) surround in a very tonal way, Db. Wagner seems to chromatically ascend to the 7th scale degree (C), then by jumping to the 2nd scale degree (Eb), Wagner is effectively creating a half-cadence to Db. This half-cadence is resolved further along when the Redemption motif is heard over the song of the Rhinemaidens as they celebrate the return of their gold.

A Narrative Context

The existence of the Siegfried the Hero and Brunhilde’s Love leitmotifs as being central to the over-arching chromatic scale that the Redemption leitmotif follows is important symbolically. Brunhilde’s Love literally pushes the Redemption leitmotif along (the E#). This surging chromaticism illuminates the essence of Brunhilde’s behavior. Her love for Siegfried is so strong that it is pushing her towards the flames. Once Brunhilde reaches the flames, the final work of the redemption has not yet taken place, and the trajectory of the scale is left as a half cadence (C to Eb). This half-cadence is resolved after Hagen is drowned by the Rhinemaidens trying to recover the ring. In doing this, the evil power of the ring is destroyed and the Rhinemaidens have at least recovered their gold, thus redeeming the world. Once the world is redeemed through this action, a resolved (on Db) statement of the Redemption leitmotif is heard.

Similarly, the final statement of the Siegfried the Hero leitmotif (ending on the Ebb) represents that through Brunhilde’s self-immolation, Siegfried has forgiven her, and thus she is redeemed (the final Db). Also, the falling gesture of Eb to Ebb to Db that ends the piece is, symbolically, an affirming recognition that Redemption through Love is a way to heal the corruption of the world (a la

Schopenhauer). In fact, the entire *Ring Cycle* ultimately steps down from Eb to Db, as the Vorspiel to *Das Rheingold* begins in Eb and the finale of *Gotterdammerung* ends in Db.

A comment about the final movement from Ebb to Db seems to be required at this point. Beyond the use of Siegfried the Hero's leitmotif leading to Redemption's, there is a moment of interruption by a third leitmotif. The moment, upon which the Ebb sounds, the Downfall of the Gods leitmotif is heard. This statement of the Downfall of the Gods occurs in the key of D-major (albeit it is a very chromatically embellished statement of the leitmotif). The symbolism of this key is not necessarily large-scale, however, at this moment; the Downfall of the Gods is caused by Siegfried's acceptance of Brunhilde's act of redemption through love (her self-immolation). Alas, the Downfall of the Gods occurs in Siegfried's concluding key (D), whereas the final redemption occurs in has become Love and Redemption's concluding key (Db).

Transcendental Themes – Analysis of the Valhalla and Loge's Magic Fire

A similar reductive analysis of the Valhalla and Loge's Magic Fire leitmotifs yields a similarly interesting result. Again, the trajectories of these two themes were traced over the span of the Immolation Scene, and like the relationship between the Redemption, Brunhilde's Love, and Siegfried the Hero's leitmotifs, a strong contrapuntal and narrative relationship is uncovered.

The contrapuntal relationship is strong between the Valhalla and Loge's Magic Fire leitmotifs. However, this counterpoint is not at all apparent on the micro-scale that would be explored through a text-book analysis of the music. However, the large-scale trajectories of the two themes interact in contrapuntal ways. Before a full analysis is presented, it is important to discuss the way in which each leitmotif is being reduced. Firstly, the Valhalla leitmotif is shown in a reduction scheme in Figure 4.

Figure 4 - Reductive Method for the Valhalla Leitmotif. In the graph, 3. or just the whole note in 3. is used.

Valhalla (19.)

The image shows a musical score for 'Valhalla (19.)' in 3/4 time. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The score is divided into three sections, labeled 1., 2., and 3. Section 1. (measures 1-4) shows a full statement of the leitmotif with complex chords and moving lines in both hands. Section 2. (measures 5-6) shows a reduced version where the treble staff has a whole note on Ab and the bass staff has a whole note on Db. Section 3. (measures 7-8) shows a further reduction where the treble staff has a whole note on Ab and the bass staff has a whole note on Db. The key signature has one flat (Bb).

As can be seen from this reduction, much of the truly Valhalla-specific identifying material is quickly discarded. It is important at this point to again mention that the reduction of the leitmotif itself is not a judgment of the music, or even a useful tool in drawing large-scale conclusions. It is simply a process utilized to make easier the work of organizing and recognizing patterns between the different themes and themselves. Accordingly, for the purpose of the following analysis, the Valhalla leitmotif is essentially the Db whole note that occurs in Figure 4 (3.). The Ab that precedes this is maintained because the Valhalla leitmotif functions in two different ways harmonically throughout the Immolation Scene. The full statement of the Valhalla leitmotif, like Figure 4 (1.) is heard intermixed with a reduced version more along the lines of Figure 4 (3.). However, in this reduced version, the first chord (here the pitches falling with the Ab) is not a tonic chord of the theme, but instead a dominant chord resolving to the tonic (Ab -> Db). Both forms of the Valhalla leitmotif are sequenced through during the Immolation Scene.

In a similar way, Loge's Magic Fire leitmotif is reduced, yielding simply a single pitch that represents the main key area implied by the pitch set represented in each statement of the theme. This becomes an especially important consideration when the leitmotif is transformed into a disjunct string of 16th notes that skip around. In this case, the reduction's pitch representation of the theme is always the key-center of the pitch set unless the highest note of the pitch set keeps reoccurring in a way that implies its superiority to the perceived key-center.

With these two reductions in mind, we can now sketch a map of the occurrences of the leitmotifs. This map, represented in Figure 5, shows a number of strong voice-leading trajectories. First, the unmistakable trajectory of the Valhalla leitmotif is, like the Redemption leitmotif, a chromatic scale. This scale starts on an F# (Gb) and climbs through an octave to another Gb. The black note heads appearing in the map in Figure 5 show where the Valhalla leitmotif is transformed from a single, non-functioning harmonic gesture to a strong V-I gesture. The use of a tonicized dominant chord here allows the theme to maintain a chromatic trajectory while also sequencing in a more traditional way. The way in which the theme transforms is shown in Figure 6.

Figure 5 - Valhalla and Loge's Magic Fire in counterpoint through the immolation scene.



Figure 6 - - Valhalla Leitmotif Transformation. The bracketed section is the transformed version with a basic harmonic analysis showing how the first chord is used as a dominant tonicizing the next step in the sequence. A second iteration of the sequence is show.



Ultimately, the effect of this transformation of the Valhalla leitmotif is a seemingly inevitable building of tension and a large-scale tonization centered on Gb. This is in many ways a very similar approach to the way Wagner presents the Redemption leitmotif. The important voice-leading trajectories apparent in Figure 5 show a clear large-scale cadential motion in a plagal sense. Loge's

Magic Fire leitmotif moves through an Ab major triad, and ultimately resolves as a C to Db as a leading tone function. Meanwhile, the Valhalla leitmotif follows the resolution of the Loge's Magic Fire leitmotif with a resolution to Gb major.

A Narrative Context of the Valhalla and Loge's Magic Fire Leitmotifs

The way in which the Immolation Scene unfolds requires a number of narrative elements to come to a conclusion. Wagner supplies these conclusions via melodic cadences for each of the transcendental themes. However, these cadences, as observed for the Redemption leitmotif, are not always authentic. In analysis of the Valhalla and Loge's Magic Fire leitmotifs, one cadence is plagal (Valhalla), while the other is authentic (Loge's Magic Fire). This fits very well with the symbolic meaning of each of these leitmotifs. As the scene ends, Loge's Magic Fire consumes Valhalla, and in so doing is completed fully (C->Db melodic cadence). Additionally, the destruction of Valhalla, and the gods within it, is the penultimate step for the redemption of the world. The melodic cadence for Valhalla is on Gb, which behaves as a plagal-like tone within the context of the entire scene, but within its own context, is full resolved. The full destruction of Valhalla is therefore stated as a full and immediate resolution of the chromatic Gb scale that accompanies the statements of the leitmotif, which differs from the way in which the Redemption leitmotif first stalls on a half-cadence and only resolves later. The Gb resolution of the Valhalla leitmotif while Loge's Magic Fire leitmotif resolves to Db provides the tonal structure with which the drama of the Magic Fire consuming Valhalla and destroying the gods is based.

Narration through Counterpoint

As discussed in the previous two sections, the voice leading of the leitmotifs plays a strong role in the evolution of the Immolation scene's narrative. A combination of these leitmotifs can be created and through this combination, a complete narration of the Immolation scene, along with sources of contextual background, can be derived. In Figure 7, a map of each of the Transcendental motifs is

provided, along with indicators of connection and trajectory. From this map a few facts become evident. Firstly, Loge's Magic Fire theme is stated on an Eb many times. This reoccurrence of the Eb reminds the plot that Loge's Magic Fire has a constant presence on stage. Similarly, the symbolic meaning of Loge's Magic fire is no longer developing. Instead, its consistency is a way to inform the narrative that the Magic Fire that Loge processes is more eternal than the gods themselves. The implication of this fact is that the gods can be destroyed by the Magic Fire. The moment upon which Loge's Magic Fire does claim its supremacy over the gods, is clearly represented by its resolution, melodically, from C->Db.

The relationship between the Redemption leitmotif and Loge's Magic Fire is also fascinating. Wagner allows the Redemption leitmotif to be framed by the pitches of Loge's Magic Fire leitmotif. Between Box-1 and Box-4 in Figure 7, the Eb of Loge's Magic Fire passes straight into and then out of the Redemption leitmotif's statement. This linear sharing of trajectory demonstrates the way in which the existence, and persistence, of Loge's Magic Fire is the key tool in Brunhilde's plan for redemption. As Brunhilde builds the funeral pyre and eventually lunges herself into it, the music between the fire that consumes her and the music of her goal through immolation is mixed contrapuntally. During the full resolution of the Redemption leitmotif, Box-4 of Figure 7, Loge's Magic Fire leitmotif is hanging on an Ab, although it is not actually heard at this point. Upon the completion of the Redemption leitmotif's resolved statement, Loge's Magic Fire reappears on Ab to consume Valhalla. The insight supplied here speaks to the entire dramatic arch of the Immolation scene. The resolution of the Redemption leitmotif is in many ways the true conclusion of the piece. However, the persistence of Loge's Magic Fire leitmotif on an Ab reminds the narrative that Valhalla must also be destroyed before the full redemption, which is stated appropriately in turn, may take place.

As interesting as the interconnections and melody sharing between Loge's Magic Fire and Brunhilde's Love leitmotifs is the rare overlap between the Valhalla and Redemption leitmotifs. These leitmotifs only overlap in Box-4 of Figure 7, and even there, they hardly overlap. This represents

Brunhilde's complete separation from the life associated with the gods and Valhalla that she once knew. The redemption she seeks is directly connected to the emancipation from Valhalla, and here, Wagner acknowledges this and relates the temporal placement of the themes very wisely. He does this by allowing the statement of the Redemption leitmotif to occur as the begging of a new phrase ended by the strings.

Figure 7 A composite graph of Loge's Magic Fire, Redemption, and Valhalla leitmotifs. Connections between important notes and narrative cues are also indicated.



Together, these points help determine the fashion in which the narrative unfolds. We first hear Loge's Magic Fire on Eb, which ultimately resolves along the path; Eb, Ab, C, Db. The Redemption leitmotif is invited to half cadence, and left there until the Ring is returned to the depths of the Rhine River. Once the gold is returned, the Rheinmadiens' song is heard, and the Redemption Leitmotif is finally resolved. However, the Valhalla music is heard again as a dovetail from the resolution of the Redemption leitmotif. Once Loge's Magic Fire resolves, the Valhalla leitmotif is forced to follow the implied trajectory of its Gb scale, which immediately resolves fully. The causality of these two simultaneous voice leading events represents the effective completion of the opera's penultimate

chord. The implied harmonies associated with the convergence of these two leitmotifs give a Gb chord, which means that the destruction of Valhalla by Loge's Magic Fire is concluded. Now that Valhalla is destroyed, the end goal of Brunhilde's self-immolation is complete. As a result, the Gb chord is resolved to a Db chord where the Redemption and Brunhilde's Love leitmotifs are restated in the tonic. Thus, with the return of the Rheingold to the Rheinmaidens and the destruction of Valhalla, the story ends and the world has become redeemed through love.

Conclusions

The application of a Schenkerian style analysis, altered to handle the leitmotif as a musical unit as in Wagner's operas, can lead to interesting and enlightening results. The examples shown, outlining the method of reduction and the resulting voice-leading not only demonstrate the level of craft Wagner used to compose *Gotterdammerung*, but also the way in which the utilization of trajectory of leitmotifs can add symbolic identity to the music. The fact that both the Siegfried the Hero and Brunhilde's Love leitmotifs urge forth the Redemption leitmotif leads to a clear sub-narrative. In essence, Brunhilde's self-immolation is caused by her love for him, and ultimately, her act is redeemed by his final statement of acceptance.

A larger-scale application of this analytic technique to the entire act, or perhaps the entire *Ring*, could lead to a much deeper understand of the way in which Wagner used leitmotifs. Indeed, as Wagner himself implied, they are not simply calling cards of the action on stage, but instead, there is a much deeper connection built into their relationships.

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Appendix A – Leitmotifs shown and labeled.

Motives	#
Wotan's Spear	1
Loge Magic Fire	2
Down Fall of the Gods	3
Erda the Earth Mother	4
Destiny	5
Ring	6
Loge Agitation (variation)	7
Siegfried's Death (variation)	8
Valkyrie Call	9
Valkyrie Ride	10
Rhine River Murmur	11
Redemption	12
Siegfried the Hero	13
Forest Murmurs	14
Brunhilde's Love	15
Rhine River Full	16
Curse of the Ring	17
Rhinemaiden's Song	18
Valhalla	19
Spear Inversions (Power of Gods)	20

Figure 8A - All of the Leitmotifs found in the Immolation Scene

The image displays a musical score for Figure 8A, titled "All of the Leitmotifs found in the Immolation Scene". The score is organized into six systems, each containing two staves (treble and bass clef). The leitmotifs are numbered 1 through 20. Motif 1 is a simple melodic line in the bass staff. Motif 2 is a complex, multi-measure rest in the treble staff with a "or." alternative in the bass staff. Motif 3 is a melodic line in the bass staff. Motif 4 is a melodic line in the treble staff. Motif 5 is a multi-measure rest in the treble staff. Motif 6 is a multi-measure rest in the bass staff. Motif 7 is a melodic line in the bass staff. Motif 8 is a melodic line in the bass staff. Motif 9 is a melodic line in the treble staff. Motif 10 is a melodic line in the treble staff. Motif 11 is a melodic line in the treble staff. Motif 12 is a melodic line in the treble staff. Motif 13 is a melodic line in the treble staff. Motif 14 is a complex, multi-measure rest in the treble staff. Motif 15 is a melodic line in the treble staff. Motif 16 is a melodic line in the bass staff. Motif 17 is a melodic line in the bass staff. Motif 18 is a melodic line in the treble staff. Motif 19 is a melodic line in the bass staff. Motif 20 is a melodic line in the bass staff.