

THE LEITMOTIF

Personal Path for Evaluation and Self Evaluation

LEITMOTIF

**A RECURRENT THEME THROUGHOUT A
MUSICAL OR LITERARY COMPOSITION.**

WHY DID I DECIDE TO EXAMINE IN DEPTH THIS TOPIC?

- ☐ **I STUDY MUSIC SO I WOULD LIKE TO GO IN DEPTH IS SOMETHING CONCERNING THIS FIELD**
- ☐ **I WAS INTRIGUED IN LISTENING ABOUT THE LEITMOTIF IN LITERATURE (I HEARD ABOUT IT ONLY IN MUSIC)**



I WANTED TO UNDERSTAND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LEITMOTIF IN MUSIC AND THE LEITMOTIF IN LITERATURE, ITS FUNCTION AND MEANING.

HOW DID I START?

- ☐ WHAT IS LEITMOTIF IN MUSIC? WHAT IS ITS FUNCTION IN A COMPOSITION?
- ☐ WHO IS RICHARD WAGNER AND WHY IS HE IMPORTANT SPEAKING ABOUT THE LEITMOTIF?
- ☐ WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE LEITMOTIF IN LITERATURE? WHY IS IT USED?
- ☐ WHICH ARE THE ANALOGIES AND THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ITS USE IN LITERATURE AND MUSIC?
- ☐ WHY DO J. JOYCE AND V. WOOLF USE THE LEITMOTIF?

WHAT IS LEITMOTIF IN MUSIC?

- ❑ ETYMOLOGY: IT MEANS “LEADING MOTIF” OR “GUIDING MOTIF”.
- ❑ RECURRING MUSICAL PHRASE ASSOCIATED WITH A PARTICULAR PERSON, PLACE OR IDEA
- ❑ IT IS THE SMALLEST STRUCTURAL UNIT POSSESSING THEMATIC IDENTITY --> NOT NECESSARY A MELODY: IT COULD BE A RHYTHM OR A CHORD PROGRESSION.



leitmotif

noun

a motif or theme associated throughout a music drama with a particular person, situation, or idea.

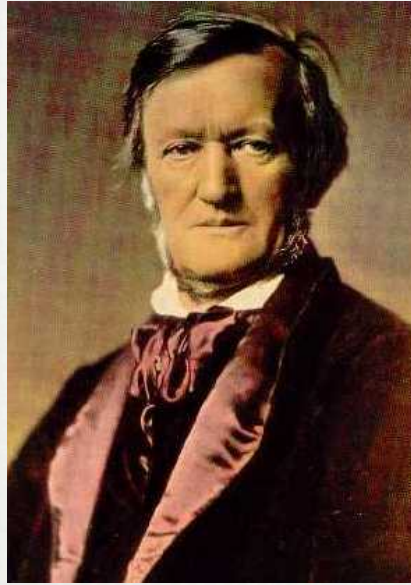
WHAT IS ITS FUNCTION IN A COMPOSITION?

- TO LINK A WORK TOGETHER INTO A COHERENT WHOLE
- TO NARRATE A STORY WITHOUT THE USE OF WORDS
- TO ADD ANOTHER LEVEL TO AN ALREADY PRESENT STORY.



An example of leitmotif: Siegfried

WHO IS RICHARD WAGNER AND WHY IS HE IMPORTANT SPEAKING ABOUT THE LEITMOTIF?

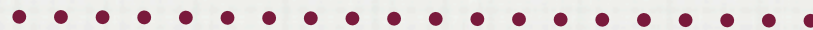


- ☐ THE TECHNIQUE IS SPECIFICALLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE OPERAS OF RICHARD WAGNER (DER RING DES NIBELUNGEN)
- ☐ HE WANTED TO FIND A WAY TO CONNECT DISPARATE ELEMENTS TO REPRESENT THE COMPLEXITY OF HIS OPERAS
- ☐ THE MOTIF AROUSES TO THE OBJECT THAT MUST BE RECALLED.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE LEITMOTIF IN LITERATURE? WHY IS IT USED?

INTERIOR MONOLOGUE ↔ MUSICAL TECHNIQUE USED BY WAGNER

→ DEVELOPS, INTENSIFIES AND ESTABLISHES INTER-RELATIONSHIPS.



- ❑ IT GIVES RHYTHM: IT CREATES *CRESCENDO*, *DIMINUENDO*, *ACCELERANDO* AND *RALLENTANDO* OF DIFFERENT FIGURES OF SPEECH (THE PHONETICAL LEVEL)
- ❑ IT DECREASES THE TENSION CREATED BY THE UNINTERRUPTED FLOW OF THOUGHT
- ❑ IT CREATES ALLUSION, REINFORCES A CONCEPTUAL MEANING

THE LEITMOTIF IS:

- **THE TRANSLATION OF THE INNER THEMES OF THE SOUL: INCLUDE DIFFERENT AND DEEP MEANINGS**
- **THE LINKING MOTIVES (GUIDE TO THE ESSENTIAL)**
- **BASED ON REMINISCENCE: THEMES OPPOSED, COMPLETED, TRANSFORMED, SEPARATED AND BROUGHT BACK TOGETHER AGAIN EACH OTHER**
- **FUNCTIONAL TO ESTABLISHES CONNECTIONS AND REFERENCES DURING DIFFERENT RECURRING SYMBOLIC MOMENTS AND OF PLUMB THE DEPTHS OF THE ABSENCE OF A LOGICAL SENSE**
- **USUALLY IRREGULAR, FREQUENTLY HAVING NO MEANING OUT OF CONTEXT.**
- **EASILY RECALLED TO THE MIND OF THE READER**

JAMES JOYCE

*...he asked me would I **yes** to say **yes** my mountain flower and first I put my arms around him **yes** and drew him down Jo me so he could feel my breasts all perfume **yes** and his heart was going like mad and **yes** I said **yes** I will **Yes**.*

- ❑ HE USES REPEATED PHRASES TO INDICATE PARTICULAR CHARACTERS OR PLOT ISSUES
- ❑ JOYCE SAID THAT THE CHAPTER “SIRENS” WAS INSPIRED BY DIE MEISTERSINGER VON NÜRNBERG.
- ❑ THE LEITMOTIF IS STRICTLY CONNECTED TO THE EPIPHANY
- ❑ IT REPRESENTS A WAY TO THE INNER PART OF THE PERSON
- ❑ IT SHOWS A TRANSFORMATION, A MANIFESTATION IN THE CHARACTER AND THE SUDDEN SPIRITUAL REVELATION

VIRGINIA WOOLF



- CONTRADICTIONS LIVE TOGETHER WITH HARMONY, STRUCTURALLY NEAR EACH OTHER AND LINKED BY NARRATION: GOOD AND EVIL, LOVE AND DEATH, PURIFICATION AND INJUSTICE.
- THE REPETITION OF THE STATEMENT EMPHASIZES ITS SIGNIFICANCE TO THE THEMATIC PROGRESSION OF THE NOVEL.
- THE LEITMOTIF CREATES A CONTINUITY AMONG TIME AND SPACE THAT ARE NOT LINEAR (THE TOLLING OF THE BIG BEN FOR EXAMPLE)