

On Imaginary Content Analogies in Musico-Literary Imitation

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Volume 21 Issue 4 (June 2019) Article 3**Rodrigo Guijarro Lasheras,****"On Imaginary Content Analogies in Musico-Literary Imitation"**<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol21/iss4/3>>Contents of **CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture 21.4 (2019)**<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol21/iss3/>>

Abstract: In his article "On Imaginary Content Analogies in Musico-Literary Imitation," Rodrigo Guijarro Lasheras analyzes "imaginary content analogy," a term often used in musico-literary studies to describe a type of imitation of music in literature. His paper aims to examine and characterize this important concept, establishing several of its features that musico-literary criticism has not normally paid attention to, such as its static or dynamic character, its implicit or explicit musical correlate, and its relation to vocal music. He argues that all imaginary content analogies must have a correlate, and that, despite the fact that we normally think of them as dynamic, there is also a static version of this phenomenon. This may open up a set of questions eventually leading to a better understanding of many musical novels, including works by Huxley, Joyce, Proust, Mann and Forster.

Rodrigo GUIJARRO LASHERAS

On Imaginary Content Analogies in Musico-Literary Imitation

It is difficult to write about music. Perhaps due to music's lack of content, referentiality and denotative meaning, studies on the role and possibilities of imitating music in literature have only substantially developed during the last few decades. From Wolf (1999) to Albright (1999, 2014), Bucknell (2001), Arroyas (2001), Prieto (2002), Alder and Hauck (2005), Benson (2006), Dayan (2006, 2011), Smyth (2008), Shockley (2009), Sounac (2014), Petermann (2014) and Smith (2016), studies of music in literature have spread out in several directions, covered by a wide range of authors and in various languages. As a part of a broader phenomenon, this has also taken place under the shelter of intermediality studies. Rajewsky (2002), Emden and Rippl, eds. (2010), Elleström, ed. (2010), Schröter (2011), Herzogenrath, ed. (2012), Rippl, ed. (2015), to name only a few, are prominent examples of a sustained interest in intermediality in the last two decades. Given the particularly abstract character of music and the difficulties that such abstraction poses, attempts to understand it from a formal and semiotic point of view have been constant and concurrent with their application to different particular works and writers. On the one hand it is common to find theoretical and formal studies concerned about setting out the kind of links that may be established between music and literature —see Wolf (1999, 2015) for this approach; on the other hand, some studies aim to understand the role of music in particular literary works. These are, generally speaking, more prone to focus on its thematic or ideological implications, as Prieto (2002) or Benson (2006) clearly demonstrate.

Some fundamental questions that a formal and semiotic approach seeks to answer are the following: What mechanisms take part in musico-literary relationships? What different resources are utilized when music plays an important role in a novel? What general features does this phenomenon have and what are its different manifestations? By contrast, other approaches are more prone to questions such as: What role does music play in this specific novel? What insight into music does the text provide us with? How does a particular writer perceive music? How is music related to other issues inside and outside the text? Using a metaphor from the field of new technologies, it could be stated that the a formal and semiotic approach wants to know what programming principles underlie the configuration and installation of a specific software, whereas the others just want to start chatting.

Some studies are more interested in the "what is that" question while others focus on the meaning music has as a topic for a work's overall vision and consider the former a sort of reductionism. And it is indeed, but no more than any other approach. What I try to show is that this dichotomy is rather artificial, given that both approaches could (should?) be combined for mutual benefit. In any case, this paper will be primarily devoted to inquiring about the nature of a phenomenon that receives a technical term (imaginary content analogy), while pointing to several implications this may have in a group of specific novels.

"Imaginary content analogy" is a term first coined by Werner Wolf in 1999. It seeks to delimit a specific kind of imitation of music in literature. The concept was created as an attempt to replace Steven Paul Scher's previous (and problematic) category of *verbal music*. In short, an imaginary content analogy consists of the imitation of music by means of the narration's content, by means of the signifieds of words and sentences. This entails "a translation of a particular, real or fictitious piece of music into literary images or scenes" (Wolf 51). That is, imitation is carried out neither through a signifier (as when an accentual pattern is identified with a musical rhythm), nor literary structures and techniques (for instance, imitating counterpoint, fugue or sonata form), but by attributing an imaginary content to music, a musical work or a specific passage, and thus identifying the one with the unfolding of the other. Many of the greatest twentieth-century writers have used imaginary content analogies in their novels (for instance Proust, Mann, Huxley, Forster), which makes this a phenomenon especially apt for a comparative approach. This paper makes use of different examples sourced from different authors writing in various languages who identify with distinct national traditions: from Gert Jonke (Austria), Carlos Fuentes (Mexico), Juan Benet (Spain) and Nancy Huston (Canada) to British authors Anthony Burgess, Aldous Huxley and E. M. Forster.

Examples are always important to understand any concept. A standard, often quoted case is Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* in *Howards End*, by E. M. Forster:

"No; look out for the part where you think you have done with the goblins and they come back", breathed Helen, as the music started with a goblin walking quietly over the universe, from end to end. Others followed him. They were not aggressive creatures; it was that that made them so terrible to Helen. They merely observed in passing that there was no such thing as splendour or heroism in the world. After the interlude of elephants dancing, they returned and made the observation for the second time. Helen could not contradict

them, for, once at all events, she had felt the same, and had seen the reliable walls of youth collapse. Panic and emptiness! Panic and emptiness! The goblins were right.
Her brother raised his finger: it was the transitional passage on the drum.
For, as if things were going too far, Beethoven took hold of the goblins and made them do what he wanted. He appeared in person. He gave them a little push, and they began to walk in a major key instead of in a minor, and then—he blew with his mouth and they were scattered! Gusts of splendour, gods and demigods contending with vast swords, colour and fragrance broadcast on the field of battle, magnificent victory, magnificent death! Oh, it all burst before the girl, and she even stretched out her gloved hands as if it was tangible. Any fate was titanic; any contest desirable; conqueror and conquered would alike be applauded by the angels of the utmost stars. (Forster 28)

What is happening in this passage? There is something totally different from a musicological or descriptive presentation of music. The progression of the narration (in this case identified with a character's musings, even if this is not something necessary) follows the own progression of music. The first acts as the second, and imitates its temporal unfolding by means of a series of contents, such as a goblin walking quietly, some elephants dancing, Beethoven himself taking control of the goblins, pushing them, and so on.

In this light, this article aims to revise and extend some constitutive features of this phenomenon (imaginary content analogies), showing certain aspects that have not received much attention, as well as their usefulness to provide an account of the evocation of music in many texts. Imaginary content analogy is a term that has been often used by different scholars, from its original formulation (Wolf 1999) to Schirrmacher (2016), moreover Tenngart (2002), Echstein (2006) or Petermann (2014), as well as other works that, perhaps reluctant to "academic jargon" or belonging to different critical traditions, make use of the concept without assigning this label to it—such as Sounac (2014), who proposed his own terminology. But it is useful to expand upon the notion's origin. Imaginary content analogy was a term that sought to concretize the non-specificity of so-called *verbal music*. According to Scher, verbal music is "any literary presentation (whether in poetry or prose) of existing or fictitious musical compositions: any poetic texture which has a piece of music as its "theme". [...] Its texture consists of artistically organized words which relate to music [...] inasmuch as they strive to suggest the experience or effects of music" (188).

The problem this definition poses is that it does not indicate any mode of imitation, but the possibility of recreating a specific musical piece, real or fictitious, by whatever means. The concept of verbal music validates any kind of literary presentation of a musical work, either by means of imaginary content representing it or by means of technical and structural analogies, or even by means of the acoustic dimension of language. The term "imaginary content analogy", on its own, indicates only a mode in which literature may imitate music, namely, by means of the referentiality of linguistic signs constituting it, regardless of what musical aspect is being imitated—any of the aspects listed by Petermann (2014) would work here. Consequently, Anthony Burgess' *Napoleon Symphony* in its entirety could be seen as "verbal music" in relation to Beethoven's *Eroica*, but not as an imaginary content analogy, as this is only one facet of Burgess's recreation of the aforementioned symphony.

As a result, Wolf concludes that verbal music is a category that cannot be considered as a kind of imitation of music in literature, given that it does not specify any particular way of doing it. Nevertheless, there is no reason to dismiss verbal music as a concept, as in fact many novels recreate musical pieces in a way that has nothing to do with a technical objective portrait and that evokes the audition, effect or content of this piece through a variety of procedures.

I consider that this allows for an important remark: imaginary content analogies are defined with respect to the procedure that literary texts carry out, not to the musical aspect that is being imitated. Indeed, many different aspects can be imitated through content: in the aforementioned Burgess novel, these aspects include *Eroica*'s first theme (that Napoleon represents), a perfect cadence (when he looks at his watch and sees that it is 4:51) or the two initial strokes in fortissimo (the two kisses he gives to Josephine). Although the concept of the imaginary content analogy is somewhat reasonably determined, the reading praxis shows that there are many cases that require further commentary.

The singularity of imaginary content analogy, as already noticed by Wolf, consists of the fact that it has to do with content, but not necessarily with an actual thematization of the imitated music: when one of the characters in Gert Jonke's *Homage to Czerny: Studies in Virtuoso Technique* writes a short story, reproduced in italics and titled "The Singing Lakes" (Jonke 91-92), about the music (a fictional piece) that has just been performed at a party, we have an intradiegetic imaginary content analogy in which there is not a single element giving the reader an objective description of this music. Imitated music is not thematized in "The Singing Lakes", even if it tells a story where music is present. Despite this, the context and place where it appears indicate that it is a literary mimicry of the music that the

character has just listened to. It is indisputable that imitation takes place through content, but this does not mean that music appears as a topic or is even mentioned in the passage in question.

This detachment of imaginary content analogy and music from the thematization of music is vital when inspecting cases where doubts are likely to arise. Reflections on music, on particular pieces, descriptions of moods generated by them, and so on, do not constitute any imitation by themselves. They do not try to mimic the same sensations or character they identify; they do not function as if they were that musical piece nor try to be identified with it. In other words, commentaries on impressions generated by music are something very different from imitation by means of an imaginary content attributed to music. For this second thing to happen, the text has to be figuratively the music itself, trying to be its double, acting *like* it.

Far from being a purely formal question, the presence or absence of imaginary content analogies may change the interpretation of a novel. This is essential in Nancy Huston's *Goldberg Variations*, structured in an initial aria followed by thirty-two variations and ending in a recapitulation of the first aria (following the structure of Bach's piece). If we consider each chapter as an imaginary content analogy, then each character and their circumstance should be understood in relation to the features and specific character of each variation. We could have a musical explanation of them. If not, as it seems more plausible to me, this pattern is then not relevant in order to analyze the succession of different characters narrating each chapter, and we should find a reason outside the relationships between music and literature.

This approach leads to another problem: what happens when vocal music (opera or lied for example) is imitated? This kind of music has a content attached to it derived from the corresponding text. Reproducing these contents, then, does not entail any kind of imaginary content analogy nor imitation of music. It rather entails an intertextual allusion or just a quote. It will certainly evoke the music linked to the text, but the phenomenon is in essence an intertextual reference. For imitation to exist, the text has to address music and pretend to represent it.

Carlos Fuentes's *Inez* is a good example, as opera (a multimedial genre including music and text among other things) performs an essential role in it. The novel revolves around three representations of Berlioz's *La damnation de Faust*, overseen by Gabriel Atlan-Ferrara, the main character and orchestra conductor. The relevant aspect for this analysis occurs in the passages where Gabriel reflects on the piece he is conducting. At the beginning of the second chapter, during a rehearsal, Gabriel gives instructions to the choir on how to interpret a certain moment: "Cry out, cry out with terror, howl like a hurricane, moan like the deepest forest, let rocks crash down and torrents roar, cry out with fear because in this instant you see black horses racing through the skies, bells fall silent, the sun is obscured, dogs are baying, the devil has taken over the world, skeletons have come out of their tombs to hail the passing of the inky steeds of damnation" (Fuentes 20).

This is the first sentence of a scene lasting for several pages. The scene recalls a poem that Berlioz himself wrote seeking inspiration to compose the piece, as he recorded on his *Memoirs* (chapter 54). Inasmuch as the content refers to what Berlioz's piece represents or means (according to the narrator), an imaginary content is being projected on it. It is, hence, an imaginary content analogy. Here, content is an imitation of the progression of the music, of the acoustic events that constitute the piece—and of the effect it generates on the listener. Now, to the extent that this content is a reproduction of the plot or a paraphrase of the text (of which there are also some elements in this passage), it is not a case of musical imitation. For this to occur, it would be necessary that the content, whatever it is, be attributed to the music itself, transcending somehow the accompanying text. I find that it is an interesting example because it blends both aspects together. On the one hand, the descent to hell and the triumph of the devil are what actually happen on stage. On the other hand, the description of this "instant", with rocks crashing down, torrents roaring, and black horses racing is an imaginary projection of a content imitating the effect and character of the music. At the same time, we have a presentation of the text (the plot developed in the text) and an imaginary content analogy of the confluent music. Apart from distinguishing qualitatively different phenomena, this is an important nuance, as it is likely to have implications for understanding the novel's interpretation of the musical piece it presents. Imaginary content analogies usually become more actively involved than quotes or paraphrasing in the interpretation of a given music, building up a sort of recreation of it. Had Fuentes limited himself to reproducing the opera's plot, the main character's relation to the piece would not have been the same; this kind of engagement, besides its expressivity, is a sign of the main character's Faustian pact.

Fuentes' passage entails another problematic question. What is the minimum extension that an imaginary content analogy must have? This is problematic because scholars tend to focus only on long cases, but the phenomenon as such might occur in longer or shorter dimensions. Imaginary content analogies may only consist of a few words and be located in paragraphs where several techniques are

intertwined (a poetic description of music, a depiction of the feelings of a character or their musical thoughts), in such a way that detecting them becomes a hard task. What is, then, their minimum and most basic component? Fuentes's and Forster's examples may provide us with a key remark: the syntagm "black horses" or "the heroes and shipwrecks of the first movement" (in their respective contexts) are essentially the same phenomena that Huxley uses at the end of his *Point Counter Point* or that set up the basis for Napoleon's identification with *Eroica*'s first theme in Burgess' novel. A content (expressed in a few words in this case) is matched with a musical piece or fragment; black horses are the end of Berlioz's work just as the more than 300 pages written by Burgess are Beethoven's *Eroica*.

This allows for wider comprehension of how imaginary content analogies developed in twentieth-century fiction acquired extended deployments for the first time (Huxley, Forster, Burgess). Of course, this is something that may be traced back to authors such as E.T.A Hoffmann or Berlioz, who used to write long imaginary content analogies to show what he had intended to express in his compositions. However, we should bear in mind that this very same qualitative phenomenon can appear in shorter forms, perhaps less attractive from this point of view. But let's go a step further. It is easy to notice that a syntagm such as "the heroes and shipwrecks of the first movement" comprises two different parts that should not be equated: "the heroes and shipwrecks" and "the first movement". The latter is what I call the imaginary content analogy's correlate.

Imaginary content analogies have correlates. By "correlate" I mean a certain passage or piece of music that is being imitated. It is an interesting notion insofar as it enables a distinction between imaginary content analogies with explicit and implicit correlates. Firstly, there always must be a correlate, because otherwise we could not bind what we read together with music and, therefore, there would not be any imaginary content analogy.

An explicit correlate occurs when imitated music is also described in the text (as in "the heroes of the first movement"). Normally, this happens by means of a linguistic description of the parts, passages, effects or resources that a literary passage imitates. Marcel Proust does this on several occasions with Vinteuil's Sonata, and Aldous Huxley does so with Beethoven's *String Quartet No. 15* at the end of *Point Counter Point*. A brief explanation could be made based on this passage: "Thirty slow bars had built up heaven, when the character of the music suddenly changed. From being remotely archaic, it became modern. The Lydian harmonies were replaced by those of corresponding major key. The time quickened. A new melody leapt and bounded, but over earthly mountains, not among those of paradise" (Huxley 428).

The imaginary content analogy goes on for several pages, and also continues when several characters start talking about the piece. Thus, the shift from heaven to earthly mountains is assignable to an imaginary content analogy, whereas the "thirty slow bars", "Lydian harmonies", or "new melody" are the explicit correlate, since they are more or less precise elements that objectively describe Beethoven's piece. They are not a part of the imitation, but surround it and act as its markers, pointing to what is actually being imitated.

Explicit correlates often bring to light the musical bound that writers seek to establish and generate an aesthetic effect identifying each musical aspect with its literary equivalent. The more weight a correlate has, the more precise the imitation will be, but the more difficult it is to sustain it for a long period. Many works, therefore, opt for what may be called an implicit correlate. Implicit correlates occur when there is no introductory pattern that objectively describes music and that helps us to figure out the connection that each element has with the musical piece inspiring it. *Napoleon Symphony* follows this strategy, given that the only guide that readers have is knowing what piece and what movement within the piece are being imitated. This allows the narration greater freedom and fluency, a narration whose interest would be hardly sustainable for more than 300 pages if it constantly included an explicit musical correlate.

Also implicit is the correlate we find in the aforementioned Gert Jonke's "The Singing Lakes". Besides being implicit, it is also fictional, and these are two features that make it impossible to link the story with any specific device, melody or musical element. In fact, the great absurdity of the story, which is about a little pond that one day starts singing, enhances the sense of defamiliarization and the satirical component with which Jonke permeates his work. Imaginary content analogies of fictional music pieces are likely to have an explicit correlate, describing melodies, successions of chords, tempi and rhythms along with the imaginary content representing them. It is a way of embodying and giving sense to a composition that would otherwise be inaccessible, making it seem real and *audible* to readers. However, an excessively long explicit correlate may wreck the imitative illusion, burying the story and giving place instead to a commentary or description in a musicological fashion. Occasionally, explicit correlate may be formed by non-linguistic signs incorporated in to the novel. Andrés Ibáñez (160-73), for example, includes score fragments from Anton Bruckner's *Eighth Symphony* to indicate which musical excerpts

correspond to which element in the story. Cases of this nature are particularly useful in order to show how imaginary content analogies work, given the simultaneity of two codes that they presuppose and the fact that each has a different role in the imitation.

Yet, apart from correlates, Forster's "the heroes and shipwrecks of the first movement" brings up another key question that I would like to introduce with a distinction between the static-descriptive and dynamic-narrative natures of imaginary content analogies. When we consider the recreation of a musical work by means of an imaginary content analogy, it is common to think that there is a story whose parts progressively correspond to the temporal unfolding of music, to musical events that are ongoing through time. However, this does not always happen. What narration or temporal dimension is implied in "the heroes and shipwrecks of the first movement" or in "black horses"? What unfolding of events is presented here? None, indeed. Rather than being a succession or a chain of events, these cases are closer to the idea of a fixed image or a static picture. This is applicable even if a certain dynamic aspect might be latent, as long as any given picture could be said to presuppose a series of previous or subsequent events. For this reason, it may be argued that the opposition between static-descriptive and dynamic-narrative contents is rather a question of degree than a clean and polar split. In any case, this is important to note in order to point out that many imaginary content analogies are predominantly static, and this does not affect the kind of phenomenon that the reader is encountering. The bare idea of "black horses" is static in the sense that it is presented in an essentially fixed and motionless way, even if horses normally trot and move. Likewise, "the heroes and shipwrecks" may easily imply a story (what caused the shipwreck? what was the plight of the passengers?). However, no story is told in these imaginary content analogies, even if we may presuppose one when we see a picture.

Given this, the static/dynamic opposition or, in other words, the descriptive/narrative dichotomy contributes to a better analysis. Extensive imaginary content analogies included in canonical musical novels (Burgess, Huxley) are usually narrative: readers encounter some contents subject to a temporal dimension. And this dimension evolves together with the musical piece. That is to say, they are dynamic imaginary content analogies.

But imaginary content analogies may also be descriptive and static whenever they are made by a single image. This is what Spanish novelist Juan Benet was pointing to in his essay "Op. posth" when he writes:

I remember that once a friend of mine (Luis Martín-Santos), in the light of a recording of Schubert's C major Symphony that I had given to him, told me that its second movement recalled to him the image of a defeated cavalry squadron in retreat under the rain. Despite that we then discussed it and I tried to persuade him of not being carried away by the vice of listening to music making constant references to visual images—as doing this he could not extract a much more intense pleasure. Every time that since that moment, I listen to the second movement and I see the withdrawal of this squadron, turning their back on me, with their capes fallen off to the stirrups, dribbling water (Benet 98-99; the translation is mine).

Martín Santos's vice is precisely a static imaginary content analogy. The image of an army, presented in any novel, would be a canonical case. If, on the contrary, it were an army that fights a battle, is defeated, launches retreat, suffers several casualties, goes through a forest and, eventually, is annihilated, each of these images corresponding (in a precise or vague way, with an explicit or implicit correlate) to the temporal progression of a given musical piece, then we would be reading a narrative-dynamic imaginary content analogy. Again, an army in retreat may also imply the idea of movement and of a narrative (there was a battle, now they are running from one place to another, and so on), but what we have here is a single frozen, fixed image, not a sequence of events. It is an important distinction since, as explained earlier, it helps to understand many different manifestations of what is actually a single phenomenon: a narration more than 300 pages long about Napoleon's life and a single syntagm such as "black horses" are two different version of the same procedure. It is true that stasis may seem disconcerting, as music necessarily occurs in time. But a temporal dimension is not necessarily what must be imitated. Stasis, in turn, is connected to "an enhancement of the visual" (Schirrmacher 103), as it can only present a single image, a sole shot. In any case, it is clear that imaginary content analogies may involve other aspects besides temporal unfolding, as the following will show.

Having said all this, we are back to the starting question: what is an imaginary content analogy? In light of what has already been argued, rather than presenting some music bearing some imaginary content, an imaginary content analogy imitates music by means of a content that acts as an imitating element. In other words, the key point is not that music has some sort of content that literature imitates, but that any given aspects of a musical piece are likely to be imitated through certain content in the novel. In the end, what content could be imitated, given that music is not a referential system of signs? Following Petermann's terms (25), we could resort to context, by which we can identify a given musical

fragment with, for instance, the Great Gate of Kiev (as in Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*). Thus, a novel could imitate Mussorgsky's music by means of the content associated with it. Nevertheless, this is not the phenomenon that I have presented as an imaginary content analogy.

As has been said, imaginary content analogies imply an imitation of any musical aspect by means of content in the literary work. In fact, it is possible to imitate many diverse musical features. Some possibilities were mentioned some pages ago with respect to Burgess's *Napoleon Symphony*, which is one of the most interesting and studied cases. Literary content may imitate a technique, such as when a perfect cadence corresponds to the time on Napoleon's watch (4:51), or when the land represents E flat major. An effect or character can also be represented, for instance when the heroic character of the first theme corresponds to Napoleon. Structures as well, as it happens that every time the first theme sounds in the symphony there is a focalization on Napoleon, generating therefore a structural pattern. Even surface may be imitated, which is illustrated when the two initial strokes in fortissimo are represented by two resounding kisses ("two excruciating love-pinches, one on each lobe", Burgess, 1974: vii) that Napoleon gives to Josephine. I find that Shockley's (2008) discussion contains some of the most accurate insights to these aspects of the novel. See also Wolf (1999), Phillips (2010) and, of course, Burgess himself (1982). As a result, it is a mistake to presuppose that the content of a narrative has to be bound to the "content" of music. On the contrary, many of its different aspects may be imitated.

The preceding pages have tried to set up a formal characterization of imaginary content analogies delineating some aspects not previously discussed in depth. This has had literary praxis as a point of departure, modeling the analysis after them, not vice versa. These points may be summarized as follows. To start with, I have tried to remark on some questions already involved in the original definition of the phenomenon: 1) Imitated music (and music in general) does not have to be thematized at all. 2) Imaginary content analogies must be clearly distinguished from the thematization of music, and also from general reflection or evocation of subjective responses to music. Imaginary content analogies lay on subjective impressions, but not every depiction of impressions or feelings generated by music is an imaginary content analogy.

Moreover, concerning the procedure implied in imaginary content analogies, it is worth noting that: 3) It does not entail content imitation, but an imitation from and by means of content. Imitation through content does not imply, hence, reproducing a content that preexists in music. 4) Imaginary content analogies are able to imitate any kind of musical features: content, structure, techniques, etc.

Finally, I have proposed further remarks that seem relevant in order to detect and understand this phenomenon in many literary works: 5) Imaginary content analogies do not necessarily go on for several pages. They may be constituted by a single sentence or even syntagm. 6) In vocal music, they cannot be identified with lyrics or their content. 7) They are either static-descriptive or dynamic-narrative. 8) They have either an explicit or an implicit correlate. Correlates are not a part of the imitation by themselves, but they are nevertheless necessary to link it to specific passages or music that are the subject of the imitation.

All this allows for a broader characterization of imaginary content analogies and explains the variety with which they can be found in literary texts, adding important nuances to an often used musico-literary concept. In so doing, a new set of questions become pertinent: How do different works, authors or styles engage with imaginary content analogies? Why do some authors and novels tend to highlight correlates and others totally disregard them? Does dynamism imply a concern with temporality as a literary theme? Imaginary content analogies are an idiosyncratic device in many musical novels. Given their huge range of possibilities and mutations, they are worth exploring. Paraphrasing the cover designer Peter Mendelsund (263), it can be stated that their richness resides in a feature common to music and literature that makes reading and listening a similar activity at heart: we can superimpose and project images over musical and literary works, but none of them requires any in particular.

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