

LACAN AND CRITICAL MUSICOLOGY

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Abstract — Résumé

In this paper an attempt is made to show the significance, for critical musicology, of the work of the psychoanalytical poststructuralist thinker, Jacques Lacan. To that end Lacan's registers of the imaginary and the symbolic are elucidated, especially in so far as the former represents the sphere of the imaginary identification and alienation of the subject as *moi*, ego or self, and the latter, in turn, instantiates the sphere of language, that is, of the subject as *'I'* or *je*. The imaginary also represents the realm where the subject, via primary misrecognition in the so-called 'mirror phase', finds (spurious) unity and wholeness in its 'image' — something that sets the pattern of all subsequent alienating identifications on its part. Lacan, it is argued, offers an understanding of those possibilities, available to the subject, of intermittent emancipation from

the potentially suffocating armour of the imaginary, which may also be understood in ideological terms. These possibilities involve both the symbolic realm as well as the unconscious as a 'third term' that not only destabilizes the subject as ego, but is also, as 'discourse of the Other', the locus of the subject's 'desire'. Brief attention is also given to the third of Lacan's registers, namely the 'real', and to its significance in the present context. To conclude, the potential fruitfulness of the Lacanian conception of the subject (as being precariously suspended among these three registers) for the hermeneutic or ideology-critical dimension of musicology is explored.

Key Words: Lacan; imaginary; symbolic; 'real'; identification; alienation; discourse of the Other; ideology-critique.

It seems to me that the poststructuralist, psychoanalytical theorist, Jacques Lacan, offers critical musicologists valuable concepts for purposes of ideology-critique. This struck me when I read Martina Viljoen's (2002) doctoral dissertation, a study where she reconstructs, evaluates and negotiates a variety of recent theories regarding 'musical meaning', ultimately with the purpose of outlining her

own, 'inclusive', depth-hermeneutical, ideology-critical model of musical meaning. In her dissertation Viljoen made excellent use of a variety of philosophical or 'critical-theoretical' models, including those provided by John Thompson, Ricoeur and Johann Visagie (with some attention being paid to Derrida and Foucault), and it occurred to me that musicologists in her position — that is, working in a country where there still seems to be considerable resistance to (critical-philosophical) theorization in musicological circles — might benefit from an acquaintance with Lacan's (or, for that matter, with another poststructuralist, Jean-François Lyotard's) multifaceted intellectual heritage, difficult as it may be. But then, one should never refrain from appropriating 'difficult' intellectual work — as Derrida (1998: 43, 45-46) has remarked concerning Lacan, one ought to 'love' it for, among other things, its difficulty, which resists the normalizing discourse of the easily accessible, even if — as Andrea Hurst judiciously reminded me — one should not 'love' Lacan 'unconditionally'. In fact, as with any thinker who has left behind a formidable and challenging oeuvre, the best manner of expressing one's appreciation is to engage critically (but responsibly) with it.

Lacan is an important thinker and discourse-theorist whose work could add significantly to the richness and analytical efficacy of a project of critical musicology. As I shall try to show, Lacan's registers of the imaginary (which is related to Althusser's 'imaginary' as the sphere of the ideological) and the symbolic are powerful resources for the understanding and unmasking of the covert functioning of ideology. To mention but one thing: the overlapping of these spheres enables a critical interpretation of the functioning of, among other things, popular music video texts like the ones Viljoen has analysed (e.g. 'Wrapped up'; 2002b: 18-50) regarding the mediation or construction of 'postmodern' identities, in so far as Lacan's imaginary pertains to the iconic or image-register, and the symbolic to the lyrics of these music videos. Needless to say, an analysis would be likely to uncover tensions between the significations of these two registers — something that should become clearer in the course of this article. (Similarly, in Lyotard's work one encounters numerous concepts of potential relevance for the arts, including music, and musicology understood as the 'disciplined' attempt to understand music as performance art. Among these one could pay particular attention to his concept of figure or figurality; see OLIVIER 2003b.)

The *imaginary* in Lacan's work is one of the three registers, or 'orders' in terms of which he theorizes the human subject, the other two being the symbolic and the 'real'. The imaginary marks the sphere of images, which is also, for Lacan, the sphere of identification which is basic to the development of the subject's sense of 'self' (Sheridan in LACAN 1981: 279). In 'The mirror stage' (1977b: 1-7),¹ a short

¹ A much lengthier treatment of the 'topic of the imaginary' is given in Lacan's first seminar (1991: 73-159). See in this regard also Benvenuto & Kennedy (1986: 47-62) for a lucid reconstruction and discussion of Lacan's 'The mirror stage'.

but seminal early text, he outlines the manner in which the subject's perception of its own mirror image, between the ages of 6 and 18 months, lays the foundation for its constitution in the register of the imaginary, from which its further development takes its course. This amounts to the following: the child, between 6 and 18 months of age, and still physically awkward and uncoordinated, perceives in her or his own mirror image² an apparently unified and whole *Gestalt* of itself in which it 'jubilantly' revels. For Lacan such 'recognition' of one's image as 'oneself' is a *misrecognition*; moreover, it is a *fictional* construct which — and this is of crucial importance — lays the foundation for the further development of the subject along a trajectory marked by identification and alienation. Why? In the first place, the subject's 'misrecognition' of itself represents an 'identification' in the sense of a transformation in the subject on the assumption of an image — an 'I am that'; or better: 'That is me (*moi*)'. But secondly, it also inaugurates the subject's (subsequently inescapable, albeit potentially mitigated) alienation. Before clarifying these concepts, it is worthwhile scrutinizing Lacan's text at this point (1977b: 2):

This jubilant assumption of his specular image by the child at the *infans* stage, still sunk in his motor incapacity and nursling dependence, would seem to exhibit in an exemplary situation the symbolic matrix in which the *I* is precipitated in a primordial form, before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other, and before language restores to it, in the universal, its function as subject...the important point is that this form situates the agency of the ego, before its social determination, in a fictional direction, which will always remain irreducible for the individual alone, or rather, which will only rejoin the coming-into-being...of the subject asymptotically...this *Gestalt*...symbolizes the mental permanence of the *I*, at the same time as it prefigures its alienating destination...

Further on in the same text Lacan adds (1977b: 4):

The *mirror stage* is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation — and which manufactures for the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality that I shall call orthopaedic — and, lastly, to the assumption of the armour of an alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject's entire mental development.

Here a quasi-digression is called for; one that concerns a certain correspondence between this text of Lacan and one by Freud. In the latter's *The interpretation of dreams* (1965: 179, 269-270, 637-650; see also SILVERMAN 1983: 66-76; OLIVIER

² The 'image' in question need not be a literal image in a mirror or reflective surface — it could simply be a 'self-image' in the sense of 'how one imagines oneself' as a result of someone's verbal appraisal of one's appearance, for instance. This should become clearer in the course of this essay.

2000: 167-173) he distinguished between two kinds of semiotic processes (that is, processes that produce meaning), namely, the *primary* process of the unconscious, which functions by means of *images*, and the *secondary* process of the preconscious and conscious, which operates in terms of *thought, language and purposive motor movement*. In Freud's early theory of the mind both of these processes served the pleasure principle in so far as each, in its own way, served to remove psychic tension or excitation in order to restore a state of homeostasis or psychic equilibrium. The correspondence between Freud and Lacan becomes apparent where Freud suggests that the manner in which the primary process satisfies the demands of the pleasure principle is *hallucinatory* (for example in dreams, when delectable images of sumptuous meals tantalize and apparently, i.e. hallucinatorily, satisfy the dreamer's hunger), while that of the secondary process proceeds in accordance with the 'reality principle' — that is, the processes of thought, language and motor movement aim at resolving tension (e.g. that caused by hunger) by means of 'real' solutions (such as finding and eating food). Isn't it striking that what, for Freud, is the 'hallucinatory' — that is, not 'real', but imaginary — function of images, resonates with Lacan's claim that the image with which the child identifies, and which forms the basis of all further identifications throughout the subject's life, is *fictional*? To be sure, Lacan adds the important insight into the function that the mirror-image serves for the subject, namely to impart to him or her a (spurious, but indispensable) sense of unity and wholeness — one that tends ultimately to be alienating, were it not for language's countervailing function to free one as subject from the 'rigid armour' of what might otherwise be the suffocating effect of imaginary identification.

This explains Lacan's remark concerning language 'restoring' to the 'I' its 'function as subject in the universal'. But why should it be the case that the subject only attains 'full' subjectivity by means of the 'universal' aspect of language — doesn't that clash with his contention (LACAN 1977b: 1, 6), that grasping the fictionalising aspect of the mirror stage, which lays the basis for the subject eventually acquiring language, teaches one to oppose any universalistic philosophy based on the *Cogito*, that is, any philosophy which claims *actual* unity and transparency for the subject? The point is that such a claim would itself be a product of imaginary misrecognition or delusion. It is precisely the signifying function of language or the symbolic order which enables the subject to be a subject, that is, to surpass the muteness and inertia of the 'real' — for instance the body in its *pure* ('unintelligible', 'unsymbolizable') organic state³ — but also, significantly, to symbolize itself in language as someone with a personal, open-ended narrative in time and space.

³ It should be kept in mind, though, that it is language, through which the subject becomes a subject, which simultaneously robs the individual of her or his *inexpressible* uniqueness and power as vested in the singular body. By entering the symbolic realm of language, the repository of societal laws and values, the individual is 'castrated' in the sense of being 'subjected' to it. This is what it means to be a subject.

This has to do with the structure of language as signifying medium, that is, as comprising a system of signs, themselves exhibiting the dyadic structure of signifier and signified, where the former may be any signifying unit, for example a spoken or written word, and the latter (signified) the concept or conceptual meaning of the signifier. What makes language, for Lacan, different from other kinds of 'symbolic objects', by way of a kind of 'completion', is precisely the functioning, in language, of concepts. For the symbolic object to become the word, '...the difference resides not in its material quality as sound, but in its evanescent being in which the symbol finds the permanence of the concept' (LACAN 1977a: 65).⁴

Such symbolization 'partly' overcomes the constraints of the imaginary as (taken by itself) the register of identification (and potentially of alienating imprisonment), but because the imaginary overlaps the symbolic register (think of the operation of metaphor or metonymy in language), such 'liberation' is never complete — which is why Lacan states, in the passage quoted above, that the image is the form that '...situates the agency of the ego, before its social determination, in a fictional direction, which will always remain irreducible for the individual alone, or rather, which will only rejoin the coming-into-being...of the subject asymptotically'. In other words, the subject as ego (or what Lacan terms the *moi*), which has its provenance in the register of the imaginary as instantiated by the mirror phase, and the subject as 'I' (or what Lacan calls the *je*), which emerges in the register of the symbolic (language), never coincide. No matter how hard one tries, the ego will always approach the emergent subject 'asymptotically' (and vice versa), that is, the two aspects of the subject will always approximate each other without actually coinciding — the 'healthy' subject is a 'lacking' subject (while, in the case of the psychotic, there is 'lack of lack').

We have here, I believe, an instance in Lacan of a genuine 'quasi-transcendental', that is, of a mode of poststructuralist thinking that marks a development of the tradition of (Kantian) transcendental philosophy. As is well-known, something functions 'transcendentally' when, like Kant's categories of the understanding, it is the condition of the possibility of something else — in the case of the categories, conceptual meaning regarding spatiotemporal phenomena. When something is taken as performing a 'quasi-transcendental' function, however, an important shift has taken place in (the understanding of) 'transcendental' thinking: instead of merely being the 'condition of the possibility' of something else, it may then be said to be *simultaneously* the 'condition of the possibility *and* the impossibility' of something else. So, for example, Jacques Derrida's (BENNINGTON 1993:276-277)

⁴ In a surprising manner, one rediscovers here the full implications of Kant's (1952: 221-223) contention that beauty is the symbol of the morally good. As such, it is the sensible appearance of what is 'supersensible' (albeit not exactly in Kant's metaphysical sense): if beauty functions as a sensible symbol of something else, it is a presence of an absence; similarly, if words as sensible signifiers constitute the 'symbolic' order, they fleetingly instantiate what remains absent or 'supersensible', namely, the entire system of signifieds or concepts (themselves, again, functioning as signifiers), which constitute the system of language.

notion of (the 'process' of) *différance* is at one and the same time the condition of the possibility *and* impossibility of meaning; which is a somewhat confusing way of saying that it makes both meaning and non-meaning, sense and nonsense, possible. Similarly, the 'mirror phase' (or mirror-image) in the life of every subject performs a quasi-transcendental function: it is the very ('fictional', but indispensable) condition for having a sense of 'self' or, in conjunction with the operation of language once the subject has entered it, of a series of variations ('selves') on the initial *Gestalt*, but simultaneously *also* the condition for being alienated from this genuine capacity of fictionalization or fantasy in so far as the subject tends to construct a kind of (no less fictional) straitjacket or carapace to 'contain' or limit its generation of images of the self. The order of the imaginary, in so far as it is inscribed or operates in language, may therefore deprive the subject of precisely what language offers, namely the enduring possibility of revising and re-describing its own 'identity' as ego, *moi* or self. Such a process of rearticulating one's subject-position as *moi* is never arbitrary, however, but occurs in so far as the uniqueness or irreducibility of the subject at the level of the imaginary has to be negotiated in relation to the inscription of the subject conceptually as *je* in the symbolic register. A consideration of the structuralist background to Lacan's thought may help to clarify this.

Commenting on the child's acquisition of language according to Lacan, Jonathan Lee (1991: 20) says:

Here the *moi* becomes a *je*: the essentially individual identity constructed through the child's image-constituted relations to others is transcended by a universal identity created by and sustained within that broad range of cultural forces that goes by the name of language. The imaginary product of a particular history of visual identifications becomes a genuine human subject, able to use the first person pronoun and to identify herself as the child of a particular family: 'I am Joanna Smith.'

To be able to articulate one's name in speech or *parole* means, in terms of structuralist linguistics (one of the major sources of influence on Lacan), to be able to draw on the (largely unconscious, assimilated) social value- and grammatical rule-system labelled *langue* by Saussure. To the extent that *langue* embodies the 'social bond' — something also implicit in Freud's concept of the Oedipus complex that the child has to negotiate to find a place in the social order of kinship relations — it is therefore understandable that, prior to acquiring the use of language, one can hardly be called a subject in the sense of being able to position oneself⁵ in the social

⁵ This ability to 'position oneself' within the symbolic order may be understood in a structuralist or in a poststructuralist manner, depending on whether one means by this that the subject 'is (exclusively) spoken' by language (structuralist), or that the subject is alternatively both 'spoken by', and 'speaks' language or discourse (poststructuralist). In his later work, Lacan maintains a poststructuralist position. See in this regard Olivier 2001 and 2003a, where I address this thorny issue (largely) in relation to the heuristic value of Foucault's concept of discourse.

and cultural world (represented by the symbolic order) through language in spoken or written form. In an important sense, one 'becomes *subject* to the laws of society' by entering the symbolic order of language.⁶

The importance of Lacan's claim, that the mirror-image marks the 'fictional' provenance of the subject's (alienating) 'identity' can nevertheless not be overestimated. It explains his opposition to both traditional, Cartesian conceptions⁷ of the subject as autonomous and self-transparent⁸, and Anglo-American ego-psychology, which was predicated on the assumption that the ego or self was that 'part' of the psyche responsible for establishing a healthy relationship with 'reality'. In fact, as Lee (1990: 24) reminds one, Lacan here challenges Freud's own claims about the ego as arising from the psyche's conscious 'contact' with reality — if the ego or *moi* is the result of 'misrecognizing' the mirror-image as one's self, it is the product of fantasy and as such is quite divorced from 'reality'.

One of the most interesting and disconcerting implications of Lacan's theory of the ego or *moi* is that the structure of human knowledge is 'paranoiac' (LACAN 1977b: 3). If one considers the etymological meaning of paranoia, namely (treating something as if it is) 'beside, beyond mind' (that is, that it enjoys an independent existence) as well as his remark, that in its 'most general structure' human knowledge⁹ endows 'the ego and its objects with attributes of permanence, identity, [and]

⁶ This goes a long way towards explaining Lacan's (1977e: 234) dictum, that the unconscious is structured like a language. For an insightful discussion of Lacan's 'turn toward structuralism', see Lee (1990: 34-38). This is not to say that Lacan remained attached to structuralist principles throughout his intellectual career. Already in his work on the 'mirror stage' he displays distinct poststructuralist traits as I show with reference to the 'quasi-transcendental' logic of the mirror-image. In his late(r) work this poststructuralist bent becomes more conspicuous.

⁷ Small wonder that Lacan (1977: 166) modifies or reverses Descartes's famous 'Cogito ergo sum' as follows: 'I think where I am not, therefore I am where I do not think.' Needless to say, this is a reference to the unconscious.

⁸ This also manifests itself in Lacan's attack on Sartrean existentialism's glorification of the subject's putative absolute freedom or autonomy, which Lacan (1977b: 6) regards as an illusion.

⁹ Interestingly, Lacan's later theory of the 'four discourses' (FINK 1995: 129-137; BRACHER 1994: 107-128) deviates somewhat from his early stance concerning (scientific) knowledge. Here he provides a model with the aid of which one can traverse complex configurations of cultural practices, including science, music and musicology. Succinctly put, he distinguishes among the discourses of 'the master', of 'the university' (or of 'knowledge'), of 'the hysteric' and of 'the analyst', and — contrary to what one might expect — shows that (authentic) science is an example, not of the 'discourse of knowledge (the university)', but of that of 'the hysteric', given the manner in which hysterics constantly challenged Freud's evolving theories by their behaviour. Similarly, true science is characterized by the repeated challenging of every theoretical position that may be reached. Another way of putting this is to say that, for Lacan, genuine science is marked by 'structural indeterminacy', as exemplified by the principle of indeterminacy in quantum mechanics. Perhaps it is more accurate to say, then, that it is the discourse of 'the hysteric' and that of 'the analyst' which, together, comprise the structural dynamic of science, where the discourse of 'the analyst' mediates between the destabilizing discourse of the hysteric and the hyper-stabilizing or rigidifying function of those of the 'university' and (hidden behind it) of 'the master'. It should be added that Lacan's discourse-theory also enables one to understand his model of the subject as being thoroughly poststructuralist (that is, as one that transcends the either/or logic of traditional western thinking) in so far as the subject is theorized as occupying successive posi-

substantiality' (1977d: 17), he seems to mean that there is a contrast, conflict, or at least a tension, between the fluctuating field of human experience and humanity's tendency to substantialize this 'punctuated flow'¹⁰ into things, entities or objects marked by an independent and enduring being¹¹ rather than by becoming. This same tendency is responsible for the 'alienating' identification with various imaginary constructs on the part of subjects. In this regard, for example, Kaja Silverman (1992: 15-16) has referred to patriarchy (or patriarchal identification) in Lacanian vein as 'the dominant fiction'. This means that adherence to an ideology — whether it is patriarchal, religious, political or economic, such as capitalism — invariably amounts to a kind of 'paranoiac' identification with an image that promises (an illusory) plenum or fullness to the 'believing' subject. In so far as ideology functions in music through musical motifs that invite listener-identification, this could be demonstrated as well as critiqued in Lacanian terms.

An important implication of Lacan's work on the 'inscription' of human identity in the register of the 'imaginary' via 'misrecognition' or identification with the mirror image by the subject, is a denial of any adequate conceptualization of the subject exclusively in terms of flux or becoming. The subject's being is forever caught in the tension-field between what Lacan (1977c: 298) calls the *je* (the 'I', the subject of the saying or the enunciation) and the *moi* (the 'me', self, ego or subject of the statement, the 'said' or the enunciated).¹² While the latter or ego provides the admittedly alienating, but nevertheless indispensable moment of relative or intermittent stability, the former always, in the non-psychotic subject, transcends the strictures and constraints of the ego or *moi*, so that one can speak, following Joan Copjec (1996: xvi), of an 'excessive subject' — one that is never reducible to

tions within the discourse of the master, each of which is subverted by the subject intermittently positioning itself in the discourse of the hysteric. This enables the subject to maintain a condition of *relative* stability coupled with a certain dynamism. This is made possible by the discourse of the analyst, which mediates between the imaginary identifications of the subject in the register of the master's discourse, on the one hand, and the functioning of the discourse of the hysteric (which erodes these imaginary identifications), on the other. Needless to say, of course, this applies to a 'healthy' (note the scare quotes!) subject, as opposed to those subjects who 'get stuck' in a master's discourse (e.g. patriarchy, religious fanaticism, etc.), or, on the other hand, become the mere playthings of the unmitigated flux of the hysteric's discourse. In both cases, the subject would tend towards psychosis, which is recognizable by its 'lack of lack'. In other words, the 'lacking' subject is a 'healthy' subject.

¹⁰ This reminds one of Schopenhauer's (admittedly metaphysical) belief that what he called the irrational 'world will' is best instantiated among all the arts by the fleeting forms of music as its immediate embodiment, and that the human ability to 'represent' reality in terms of concepts or (in the other arts) as ideas, is essentially a falsification of this reality (OLIVIER 1998). Bergson, too, regarded 'true' reality or *élan vital* as something that eludes the human faculty of intellect with its tendency to substantialize, and as being accessible only by intuition.

¹¹ Not in the Heideggerian sense, which construes being in an 'active' or processual sense. See Heidegger 1978.

¹² In this regard the formula, namely: subject = self or ego / (over) unconscious (as discourse of the Other), may serve as shorthand for Lacan's model of the human subject.

any set of imaginary or, for that matter, historical indicators. For this to be possible the registers of the symbolic, and ultimately of the 'real', are indispensable.

In this regard one should note that in what has become known as 'The Rome discourse' (see BENVENUTO & KENNEDY 1986: 77-90), or (more accurately) 'The function and field of speech and language in psychoanalysis' (1977a) Lacan showed that the psychoanalytic subject comes to grasp that, what had always been experienced as his or her 'desire', really belongs to an imaginary construct, the *moi* (as theorized in 'The mirror stage') (p. 42), and that his or her speech had therefore been 'empty' — in Lee's (1990:40) words, '...it has been emptied of the subject by being filled with his alienating *moi* identity'. Far from indulging the subject as analyst's need for some measure of (spurious) security supposedly attainable by strengthening the ego or *moi*, Lacan here pursues — in the spirit of the Socratic goal of bringing about a 'wholesome unrest' in the soul of the philosophical interlocutor — the cultivation of *uncertainty* on the subject's part by 'suspending' her or his 'certainties until their last mirages have been consumed' (LACAN 1977a: 42).

If one wonders what he hopes to achieve along this trajectory of demolishing the subject's imaginary identifications at the level of (psychoanalytical) discourse, the answer is firstly to be sought in the significance of the discontinuity or 'gap' between these identifications or the *moi* and the subject as *je* (from the 'perspective' of which any discourse 'about' the *moi* is conducted), in so far as this gap represents the function of repression (LEE 1990: 40-41). This would help explain Lacan's puzzling reversal of Descartes's paradigmatically 'modern' dictum, '*Cogito ergo sum*' ('I think, therefore I am'), namely 'I think where I am not, therefore I am where I do not think', or — in amplified form — 'I am not wherever I am the plaything of my thought; I think of what I am where I do not think to think' (LACAN 1977: 166). The subject as *je* or 'I'¹³ is located where it exceeds the domain of conscious deliberation and control, that is, at the level of the unconscious — it is not the same as the rational ego or *moi* of the Cartesian tradition, with its (illusory) attributes of autonomy and self-transparency. It also clarifies Lacan's (1981: 34) contention that the status of the unconscious is ethical, which is another way of saying that it is the locus of the subject's desire in an ethical sense — what we 'truly' want, is hidden from us via repression.¹⁴ But importantly, this also means

¹³ It should be noted, however, that Kant already recognized these various possibilities of 'locating' the subject. In his *Critique of pure reason* Kant (1964:236) remarks on what he calls the 'subject of transcendental apperception' (which corresponds to Lacan's *je* or 'I'):

By this I, or He, or It, who or which thinks, nothing more is represented than a transcendental subject of thought = X, which is cognized only by means of the thoughts that are its predicates, and of which, apart from these, we cannot form the least conception.

¹⁴ Žižek's (1993: 206-208) discussion of the object *a* (or *objet petit a*) is helpful here in so far as he adduces a very telling example from Freud's clinical practice of how the so-called object *a* functions as the 'knot' or concentrated point from the perspective of which one's repressed, hidden desire becomes apparent.

that, in so far as it is ethical, it cannot simply be arbitrary — it is subject to all those social values which are embedded in the unconscious as the ‘discourse of the Other’ (LACAN 1977a: 55).

Importantly, by highlighting the indispensable role of language as discourse here, Lacan (1977a: 46) is suggesting a way of transforming the ‘empty’ speech of the subject as *moi* into the ‘full’ speech of the ‘psychoanalytically realized subject’. One cannot avoid noticing the irony, that ‘empty’ speech corresponds with the (spurious) ‘fullness’ of the ego, while ‘full’ speech corresponds with the ‘lack’ or mercurial mobility of the subject as *je* or ‘I’. In other words, one has to achieve a ‘symbolic interpretation’ of what occurs in the course of ‘free association’, a process that enables the subject to reconstruct an ‘intelligible narrative’ or life story (LEE 1990: 41-42). It is important here, to keep in mind that the ‘narrative’ of the analysand, as it emerges in the course of the dialogue between her or him and the psychoanalyst (however minimal the latter’s participation in it), is a product of this dialogue, where the analyst’s art consists in timely (and well-timed) interventions in the speech of the subject with the purpose of utilizing the gaps, hesitations, signs of aggression, and so forth, to give the associative discourse a specific interpretation, direction, punctuation or emphasis. And if one gets the impression that there seems to be far too much ‘coherence’ here (as one is inclined to, given Lacan’s conception of the subject as ‘interrupted’ or ‘split’ — the so-called ‘barred’ subject \$) — so much so that it bears a resemblance to the approach which Lacan explicitly eschews, namely ego-psychology, his contention that there is a ‘third term’ (the unconscious) at work in the analytical situation, quickly negates this impression (LACAN 1977a: 49):

The unconscious is that part of the concrete discourse, in so far as it is transindividual, that is not at the disposal of the subject in re-establishing the continuity of his conscious discourse.

According to Lacan (1977a: 50), the unconscious is that ‘chapter’ of the subject’s history which has been ‘censored’ — it is ‘marked by a blank’, but can be ‘rediscovered’ through the interpretive ‘cooperation’ between the analyst and the free-associative discourse of the subject, despite resistance on her or his part. The ‘language’ of the unconscious manifests itself in the subject’s bodily symptoms, the memories of her or his childhood and in the very specific, ‘idiosyncratic’ diction or verbal expressions he or she uses (LACAN 1977a: 50; LEE 1990: 44). This makes the emergence of ‘full speech’ possible. It is along this trajectory that Lacan arrives at one of his most startling insights, made possible by reading Freud through (among others) the lenses of structural linguistics, that ‘...the unconscious is structured in the most radical way like a language...’ (LACAN 1977e: 234; LEE 1990: 46). This seems more intelligible if one reflects on his assertion that the subject’s unconscious ‘...is the discourse of the other...’ (LACAN 1977a: 55) — this insight

follows from the (for Lacan clinically demonstrable claim), that the subject's 'full speech' (remember the irony referred to earlier) emerges from the interaction between the subject's discourse, analyst's discourse, and the 'third term' or 'discourse' of the unconscious as manifested in memories, parapraxes or slips of the tongue, and so on. Why is the unconscious, which resembles a language, the discourse of the other/Other? Because language, with all the societal values, behavioural norms and taboos embedded in it, pre-exists the individual subject's entry into it (LACAN 1977: 148; LEE 1990: 46; see note 3 in this regard). As pointed out earlier, this entry implies that one becomes 'subject to' the laws of society (and of the moral law in the Kantian sense) through this entry into the symbolic realm.

Bowie (1991: 66-67) highlights what is at stake here, and simultaneously draws an analogy between Lacan's psychoanalytical procedure of eliciting 'full speech' from the analysand, and the 'musician's' objective:

...the imperious system of 'the signifier' [i.e. the linguistic system or *langue*] and the embeddings and intrications that are to be observed within it, are the speaker's unchosen and unavoidable home terrain. The analysand's quest for the 'full' or 'true' speech that psychoanalysis fosters strictly resembles the poet's or the musician's search for originality and expressive plenitude within the structural constraints that his chosen medium relentlessly exerts.

It will be nothing new to composers and musicologists to learn that they, too, have to work — constructively and interpretively — within strict tonal (or atonal), melodic or harmonic limits (whichever of these interlinked terrains they wish to work in), and that their 'originality' of 'composition' depends on the manner in which they are able to combine and recombine, weave and interweave the musical and/or linguistic elements that comprise these terrains. For purposes of ideology-critique it is imperative to realize that, just as the analysand's speech is 'empty' in so far as it exhibits an alienating attachment to illusory images of unity, coherence or fullness, the musicologist who believes that she or he perceives in a musical composition (or in a musicological methodological model of analysis) an example of perfect, fully transparent unity, marked by self-sufficient closure — without any connection with or embeddedness in what is the underlying musical equivalent of the unconscious as 'discourse of the Other' (although I'm not sure what this would be called¹⁵) — would be deluding her- or himself, and runs the risk of being ideologically trapped in the apparently unified, but in fact 'empty' realm of Lacan's imaginary order. One could be rescued from such entrapment by following a procedure analogous to the psychoanalytical one of adopting a 'je'-position in relation

¹⁵ In an earlier paper, 'Musiek en stilte' ('Music and silence'; OLIVIER 1983), I argued along Heideggerian lines, compatible with what I am suggesting here, that one could conceive of an encompassing 'music', paradoxically characterized by a (life-giving) *silence*, as indispensable presupposition for musical composition. Perhaps that claim could be reformulated in Lacanian terms.

to the encompassing, transindividual 'system' of musical and linguistic possibilities (the 'discourse of the musical Other', perhaps), in this way resurrecting latent possibilities of freeing one's musicological practice from potential suffocation by constricting models. This implies, however, that *absolute* originality of composition or musicological interpretation is out of the question, in so far as both composers and musicologists unavoidably have to work within pre-existing systems, discourses or contexts, but that originality *relative to* what has historically preceded the work of individual composers or musicologists is possible. Just as the analysand discovers, with the help of the interpretive interventions of the analyst, her or his uniquely individual or 'original' (note the scare quotes) narrative at the level of the subject (*je*) of the symbolic register, so the musicologist too, can uncover what is ideological *and* what is distinctive about music (compositions or performances) by 'reading' it from perspectives opened up by ideology-critical interpretive interventions.

One should keep in mind that the narrative that the subject is able to construct from the perspective of the *je* or subject of the symbolic register, working through her or his free-associating discourse with the analyst,¹⁶ is not synonymous with what ego-psychologists or phenomenologists would regard as 'subjective experience' of the ego or *moi*. For Lacan (1977a: 55) the notion of the 'subject' goes well beyond what can thus be 'subjectively' experienced, as one may expect from the insight concerning the transindividual status of the unconscious as the 'discourse of the Other'. Hence, the life story of the psychoanalytically actualised subject is equally to be understood as being transindividual, in so far as the 'third term' or unconscious, as manifested in all the telling 'signs' with which his or her discourse is peppered, enables the analyst to fill in the 'gaps', in this way facilitating a 'coherent' narrative. I have already tried to indicate a possible manner of articulating an equivalent musicological practice (and will return to this at a later stage).

Regarding Lacan's achievement in 'The Rome discourse' Lee (1990: 47) observes:

Once again, just as he had in 'The Mirror Stage', Lacan is standing up to any view of the human subject based on the Cartesian *cogito*. The difference in 'Function and Field' is that Lacan has now enriched the *je/moi* distinction, understanding the *je* in terms of symbolic narrative and the *moi* in terms of imaginary identification. That the human subject is essentially a place of conflict between the *je* and the *moi*, between the symbolic and the imaginary, will remain one of Lacan's central theses throughout his career.

¹⁶ It does not have to be an analyst who occupies this position, of course. It could be a friend or acquaintance who listens to the subject and 'punctuates' her or his speech at apposite intervals, thus 'filling in the gaps' the way the analyst does. It could also be the person who laughs at one's jokes who plays this role (LACAN 1977a: 60).

This remark concerns the conflictual character of the subject which is important for the analysis of literature, artworks, or for musicology as the critical understanding of musical works, given the differences between manifestations of *je-* as opposed to *moi-*positions in such works — where *moi-*positions would signify moments of imaginary (and therefore of ideological) identification, and *je-*positions would indicate where gaps or divisions are introduced into the subject as *moi* or imaginary construct. Moreover, as Lacan indicates in the following excerpt where he explains his resistance to any conception of (*moi-*) totality in the subject — in Cartesian philosophy or in related ego-psychologies — this is not only true of the individual subject, but of the ‘collective subject’ (e.g. a cultural community as supposed ‘totality’) as well (LACAN 1977A: 80; LEE 1990: 74):

...this is what leads me to object to any reference to totality in the individual [i.e. the ego or *moi*], since it is the subject who introduces division into the individual, as well as into the collectivity that is his equivalent. Psychoanalysis is properly that which reveals both the one and the other to be no more than mirages.

Lacan here opens the way for a social theory — or, for that matter, a critical musicology — aimed at unmasking ideological blindnesses at work behind illusory claims to different kinds of coherence, such as the (complete) structural coherence of a musical composition, supposedly unmarred by *any* significant destabilizing tensions, ambivalences, ambiguities or ‘tonal indeterminacies’ (for example what Schoenberg christened the ‘vagrant chord’, so astutely pointed to by Nathne Denis as functioning in western music; DENIS 1998: 122-125). These claims and appeals could also pertain to ‘patriotic unity’ in music, film or literature (typical of what Kurt Vonnegut, in *Cat’s Cradle* [1965], calls the [illusory] unity of a ‘granfalloon’ like a school, a family, a college, a nation; all of which are putatively totalities that provide the individual subject with a context of identification where all alienation may [ironically] be overcome).

But for Lacan this is not all there is to be said about the subject, that is, we cannot understand her or him exhaustively by means of the tension between the subject as *moi* at the level of the imaginary and as *je* at the level of the symbolic — there is another register (probably the most decisive of them all as a kind of *primus inter pares*), namely, the ‘real’, which has to be invoked to grasp how the human subject is precariously ‘stretched’ among the imaginary, the symbolic and the ‘real’ in a manner that disallows any reduction to either of them (a reduction of which the varieties of ego-psychology are guilty in different ways). It is not necessary, for purposes of ideology-critique (and impossible in a mere paper, anyway) to give an exhaustive account of what is at stake here for Lacan, so a mere sketch will have to suffice. Lee captures it well (1990: 82):

The Lacanian subject is the uneasy coexistence of three distinct moments. There is, first of all, the real 'presence that is speaking to you', the speaking body [reminiscent of Kant's 'thing that thinks'], the subject of the actual act of enunciation. Secondly, there is the symbolic subject indicated by the *je* of the speaking body's discourse, the subject of the statement actually uttered. The third moment of the subject, distinct from both the speaking body and the *je*, is the imaginary *moi* constructed...early in childhood to give the subject an identity that it really lacks.

It therefore seems to me that to the subject of the imaginary or the *moi*, and the subject of the symbolic or the *je*, has to be added the subject of the 'real' as (speaking) body, to be able to understand the Lacanian subject as a subject who (implicitly) asks the question: 'Who or what am I?' (LEE 1990: 78). Crucially, and related to this, what is at stake for the subject to assume her or his role as a responsible, ethical human being, is her or his 'desire' in the peculiarly Lacanian sense (reminiscent of Kant's use of the concept in the second *Critique* and also of Hegel's in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*). 'Desire' here does not mean what is usually meant by it in the vernacular, which denotes something conscious. The subject's 'desire' in the psychoanalytical sense is hidden from him or her in so far as it has always been repressed, and only manifests itself in those discursive-linguistic peculiarities such as certain intonations, mumblings, gaps, slips,¹⁷ and so on, that provide the analyst (or another kind of interlocutor) with the means to fill in these gaps and allow a 'coherent' narrative to emerge. But more than that: in so far as speech, discourse or language enables the subject to articulate her or his desire — a desire that is *particular* or unique to the subject, although it has to be expressed in the '*universal*' medium of (conceptual) language — an unavoidable gap or chasm becomes apparent between the subject's 'need' and the linguistic form that it ineluctably assumes as a 'demand'. What one witnesses here is Lacan's account of the dynamics of desire, in which the subject's immersion (through her or his embodiment) in the 'real' is of paramount importance. He formulates the place of desire as follows (LACAN 1977e: 263):

Desire is that which is manifested in the interval that demand hollows within itself, in as much as the subject, in articulating the signifying chain, brings to light the want-to-

¹⁷ A graphic demonstration of the revealing operation of such 'parapraxes' was provided by an ex-South African actress, now living in London, when she was interviewed in South Africa on a return visit to act in one of the principal roles in a production of Shakespeare's *MacBeth*. After elaborating on the reasons for emigrating from South Africa — mainly centred around family ties in Britain — the interviewer asked her what had persuaded her to return for the production in question. The actress replied that she could not resist the opportunity to return for the sake of playing the part of 'Lady MacDeath' — a slip that she promptly corrected, of course. What the lapse of the tongue on her part revealed so starkly, was the true (but repressed) reason for her emigration, namely the ubiquitous, violent crime in South Africa, concentrated in the word 'MacDeath'. Bruce Fink (1995: 3) explains this phenomenon of linguistic 'blunders' well in terms of the Other as one of the 'places' from which 'different kinds of talk' come.

be [*manque à être*], together with the appeal to receive the complement from the Other, if the Other, the locus of speech, is also the locus of this want, or lack... It is also what is evoked by any demand beyond the need that is articulated in it, and it is certainly that of which the subject remains all the more deprived to the extent that the need articulated in the demand is satisfied.

This means that the Other (or the unconscious as discourse of the Other) as locus of the subject's lack, from which the subject draws when he or she speaks, cannot ever fill the void signified by demand in so far as it represents the subject's repeated, but always futile, attempt to articulate its desire (LACAN 1977e: 263):

That which is thus given to the Other to fill, and which is strictly that which it does not have, since it, too, lacks being, is what is called love, but it is also hate and ignorance.

One may ask why desire can't be expressed or *embodied* in language. If I understand Lacan correctly here, it is because language, or the unconscious structured like a language, the 'discourse of the Other', lacks being in the same sense that the subject, as soon as he or she enters language, lacks being. For the subject to acquire language is tantamount to losing the fullness of its being as (ineffable, 'organic' body), which is why Lacan refers to this entry into the symbolic as 'fading' or *aphanisis* (LEE 1990: 82). Language, as symbolic — as making fleetingly present in speech (string of signifiers) an absence in abstract, conceptual form (chain of signifieds), is removed from the 'real' of the mute body or from 'nature' — language is self-referential. But for that very reason the subject's *particular* desire as an *embodied* being in space and time cannot be adequately captured in her best attempts to articulate it in the form of a demand: 'Love me, recognize me as someone unique!' — there is always a gap between need and demand, and this gap constitutes desire. This is also why Lacan is in the final analysis not a structuralist (despite many claims that he cannot escape it), but a poststructuralist. If he finally claimed that we were/are exhaustively determined or 'spoken' by discourse or language, he would not escape a deterministic linguistic structuralism. But because desire marks for him the locus of an unbridgeable chasm between 'need' (for example thirst or hunger, or the craving for another person's bodily warmth and the enigmatic comfort it brings), located at the level of the 'real', and the expression of this need in symbolic form as 'demand', his position is a poststructuralist one (in the sense of providing the philosophical means to theorize the subject in an illuminating manner, but resisting the temptation of claiming, through these, that the subject can be adequately, that is, conclusively, 'totally' theorized or understood in this way).

Small wonder then, that he (LACAN 1977e: 259) describes desire as *metonymy* (the substitution of one word for another in the signifying chain), specifically as 'the metonymy of the want-to-be', that is, the 'connection' in a 'word-to-word'

fashion (LEE 1990: 55), of the subject's essential lack of being — no word adequately captures this lack because of its being removed, as symbol, from the fullness craved by the subject. Lee reminds one (1990: 59; LACAN 1977e: 274) that the *moi* may thus be understood as 'the metonymy of desire', by which Lacan seems to mean that the spurious, false 'wholeness' and 'unity' of every image with which the subject identifies stands as 'part' to the 'whole' of its repeated, futile attempts — that is, its desire — to close the distance that separates it from the 'real' of its (bodily) being, or from that of the other.

Is it at all difficult, therefore, to see in the never-ending series of alienating, ideological (and ideologizing, given their false promises of fulfilment) identifications in the order of the imaginary the endless substitution of one questing image for and by another, of which it is a metonymic 'counterpart'? So, for example, Michael Jackson's popular song, 'Black or White', especially in its music-video format, instantiates precisely what Lacan's claim implies: every successive image of a racially or ethnically different face is a point of captation or identification for any viewer who is receptive to the imaginary/ideological claim that 'it doesn't matter if you're black or white' (which one knows is untrue in extant society; at best, it *ought* not to matter). As such it represents the 'metonymy of desire' of the *moi* in so far as the ego comes into being at the moment of identification, which, as demonstrated by the video-images, (symbolic) lyrics and music in question, is metonymically actualised regardless of the question, which of the rapidly alternating images one identifies with — by metonymic implication, they are all equivalent.

Perhaps the implications of Lacan's work for a critical musicology may emerge further (to what has already been said in this regard) here. After all, in music as in the other arts — literary as well as visual, not to mention multimedia artforms such as music videos — imaginary positions are intermittently or even more or less continuously projected for the listening, reading or viewing subject to appropriate, or to identify with. Needless to say, these opportunities of identification, which are located at the level of Lacan's imaginary register,¹⁸ are intimately related to opportunities of (ideological) identification, and Lacan's conceptual apparatus therefore enables the critical musicologist or literary critic to analyse musical performances, literary, film and video-texts with a view to uncovering the operation of ideology in the guise of imaginary identifications. This could occur with or without the alternating occurrence, in the text or performance in question, of demolishing or subverting instances of 'static' or exclusive ideological positioning (that is, subversions which enable the actualisation of alternating identity posi-

¹⁸ Jacqueline Rose (LEE 1990: 204, note 8) has argued that Lacan's imaginary register as explained in his account of the 'mirror stage' should not be taken as being applicable *only* to the 'field of the visible'. I agree with her — music is one of the instances where the imaginary register functions powerfully.

tions), consonant with the idea of a 'life-narrative' on the part of the subject as *je*, and appropriated at the level of the symbolic register. And perhaps nowhere more clearly manifested than in music, there is the inalienable moment of rhythm or beat,¹⁹ which I would argue represents or corresponds to Lacan's 'speaking body' or what I have called the 'subject of the real'. Who can deny the manner in which music²⁰ moves the body with its rhythms²¹? In addition to the concepts of the imaginary *moi* and the *je* or subject of symbolic narrative, this is a powerful tool available to the musicologist to be able to unmask interpretive claims to unity (putatively in the name of a 'scientific' musicology) as (ideological) delusions, in so far as rhythm marks the locus of inarticulable desire interrupting symbolic utterances as demands (for patriotic unity, e.g.) no less than musically inscribed *moi*-identities required by these demands.

One could also use musical performance as a model for this relationship of intermittent identification and emancipation, where the distinguishable, audible notes or successive sounds are perceivable only fleetingly, as each note makes room for those which follow in its wake, but always in so far as the listener's memory of what is past and anticipation of what is to come provide a kind of perceptual 'matrix' for meaningful listening (in a manner analogous to Husserl's phenomenology of internal time-consciousness; see STATEN 1985: 51). Taken together, therefore,

¹⁹ At the Symposium on Critical Theory and Musicology, held at the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa, in October 2003, Stephanus Muller reminded me that one could make use of Roland Barthes's notion of the 'grain' of music to encapsulate more effectively what I have in mind here, because 'grain' in Barthes's sense would include not only rhythm and beat, but also tonality, volume, intensity and all manner of aural 'textures'. It would also be fruitful, I believe, to explore the consonance between the manner in which the 'grain' of music affects people, and Heidegger's concept of 'attunement' or 'moodness', as interpreted in musical (or music-reception) terms. See in this regard OLIVIER 1998a.

²⁰ Music was regarded by Schopenhauer as the embodiment of the blindly self-asserting 'world-will', the source of endless suffering from which art, including music, offered temporary relief (see OLIVIER 1998; 190-191; especially regarding the significance of the 'da capo' convention in music and in Beckett's Schopenhauerian dramas). Nietzsche accepted this characterization, but without Schopenhauer's pessimistic 'negation of life'. Instead, Nietzsche affirmed life, despite the will's restless striving. In *The birth of tragedy* (1967) Nietzsche identified two principles at work in tragedy, namely the Dionysian and the Apollonian, of which the former is linked to music, intoxication and excess, and the latter to reason, proportion and order. Tragedy was, according to him, a combination of the two: the tragic hero or heroine's destruction represented the individualizing Apollonian principle, while the singing, dancing chorus of satyrs represented the indestructible Dionysian will, that continues unabated in all living beings despite the death of individuals. The fact that for Nietzsche, music was the Dionysian art *par excellence*, is important in so far as he thus recognized that music addresses humans directly at the level of the body or the Lacanian 'real'. It is also telling in this regard that the original title chosen by Nietzsche for *The birth of tragedy* in 1872 was *The birth of tragedy from the spirit of music* — a title that was later changed (in 1886) as indicated in the list of references.

²¹ One has to agree with Andrea Hurst's perceptive observation, at the symposium on critical theory and musicology, UFS, in October 2003, that rhythm — in so far as it affects the human body directly — has massive potential for ideological identification via, for example, movement (or 'feeling') in unison, whether in dance or in marching. Essentially, this would amount to imaginary identification by way of a fantasy-union with a series of sound-images.

these notes comprise a melody or symphonic development that may be likened to the 'narrative' of a person's life-history, while the individual notes represent the positions of successive, imaginary ego-identifications of the subject. Modifying the metaphor somewhat, to the extent that certain musical motifs may function as auditory loci of identification for listeners — think of Sibelius's *Finlandia* for 'patriotic' identifications of this sort — they may tempt one to adopt a position which is alienating in so far as it effectively precludes further, or subsequent, positions of identification with different (perhaps liberating) 'sound-images'. To be 'caught' in the web of an identification of this kind at the level of the imaginary is tantamount to what Lacan describes as being enclosed in the rigid 'armour of an alienating identity'. It seems to me that in the case of music videos the potential of such 'alienating' identification is significantly increased, given the added dimension of visual images which provide, if anything, an easier locus for such identification. Needless to say, here Lacan's work enables the critical musicologist with the means, at the universalizing level of language, to conduct (emancipatory) analyses of the ideology-critical sort, perhaps in conjunction with other models such as those of John Thompson, Habermas, Lyotard (especially by means of his notion of the 'figural'; see OLIVIER 2003a), Johann Visagie or the one specifically devised for musicology by Martina Viljoen (2002: 32-50).²²

Viljoen (2002b) has demonstrated the efficacy of her model in her analysis of the gospel rap music video, *Wrapped up* ('rapped up'), using the theoretical- and

²² In her own, 'inclusive' — depth-hermeneutical, ideology-critical — model or theory of musical meaning, Viljoen insists on the need to do justice to both the narrower (intrinsic) sense of meaning and the broader sense, which involves the social, cultural and linguistic aspects of meaning — that is, the broad 'context' of production and reception — which cannot be neglected in the course of interpreting the musical 'text'. The crucial role she attributes to metaphor as heuristic key in both cases is noteworthy. Especially striking is Viljoen's keen awareness of the ease with which ideological commitments seep into either of these spheres of meaning, and her determination to use all available resources (pre-eminently Johann Visagie's neo-structuralist 'ideological topography of modernity', especially that part which deals with figurative meaning) to unmask these, even if they disguise themselves as 'pure structure' or form. She covers a truly amazing spectrum of relevant research (although unfortunately omitting some pertinent figures, or paying them scant attention), with a view to demonstrating that '...there can be no structure without signifying, and...no signifying without structure' (VILJOEN 2002a: 42) — a formulation that neatly captures the tension on which most theories of meaning (not only regarding music) usually founder. It is therefore no accident that she focuses on ways to overcome the problematical inside/outside, or text/context divide, and that she points to Derrida's notion of the *parergon* as being particularly useful in this regard. It is well-known that, as a poststructuralist, Derrida has worked for more than 30 years to overcome invidious, hierarchical binary oppositions, and his demonstration that one has to think the *ergon* (work) and the *parergon* (supplement or remainder) together, so that, in the analysis of a text or work one cannot absolutely distinguish between what is outside and what is inside (i.e. it is 'undecidable'), is no exception. Significantly, Viljoen infers from this that, regarding the emergence of musical meaning, human interaction should be located precisely here, in the dynamic tension-field created by the *par-ergon*. Add to this that what she gleans from Visagie's model (itself indebted to Thompson's), namely the analytical and critical means to address figurative elements of meaning as well as ideology at *both* levels (text and context), is given her own modifying twist, and it should be clear that one has here a significant contribution to international scholarship in a vibrant area of research.

figurative-hermeneutic, ideology-critical arsenal at her disposal, showing convincingly that it represents a highly complex musical text where, through the combination of music and image-sequences a host of institutional, ideological, religious and commercial meanings intersect, creating a site where the production of the video in question, in its turn, 'produces' a specific type of subjectivity on the part of its recipients/audience/spectators. Particularly striking — given the traditional formalist emphasis of musicology (its own type of positivism) — is Viljoen's unapologetic highlighting of (ideological) 'relations of domination' operating in *Wrapped up*, in addition to which she does not neglect formal musical analysis in relation to other analytical levels either. The domination that she uncovers in the multimedia text, namely that of the so-called 'star text' over the Biblical narrative, does not really come as a surprise — after all, the rap 'stars' in question are heir to what Adorno identified decades ago as the 'star principle', which is inseparable from capitalism in its latest, globalising phase. Her two subsequent meditations (VILJOEN 2002c & 2002d) on the gospel group GRITS's *They all fall down* focus on the figural meaning of the rap lyrics and the symbolic-existential implications of 'archetypal' visual postures in the video text, respectively — both of these being susceptible to the kind of Lacanian analysis I have proposed here. Here she shows that, far from being irrelevant popular/mass art, rap music as instantiated in these music videos fulfils the important function of 'mediation' regarding urban social roles.²³ By adding a Lacanian vocabulary to her present model of analysis, she could disclose the 'imaginary' status of the dominant image-clusters or -sequences (of 'archetypal' postures, e.g.), regardless of whether these represent commercial/economic or religious- ideological interests. Ascertaining the *je*-positions at the level of the symbolic or linguistic register as far as the lyrics are concerned would also yield interesting insights — do these postmodern subjects remain imprisoned in the 'alienating armour' of their iconic identifications (with all that this implies for the subjectivities of listeners/viewers), or are there signs that they are ready to impart to 'consumers' subject-positions reflecting the assumption of responsibility for their own personal 'narratives'? Moreover — as far as the 'real' is implicated through all those movements, gestures, sounds, gaps, intonations, and so on, that are inseparable from their embodiment as human subjects, the perceptive critical-hermeneutic musicologist may discover telling suggestions of the (ethical) desire of these rap artists.

²³ It should be added that, with the help of Ricoeur Viljoen (2002c: 4-14) also points to the transformative potential for 're-figuring' the human/divine relationship. It is a pity that, in addition to using Ricoeur's work on 'narrative identity' — especially given the crucial role he attributes to the imagination — she has not utilized Lacan's rich conceptual repertoire here, specifically the tension between the registers of the imaginary and the symbolic, to come to terms with the functioning of these popular music video texts regarding the mediation or construction of 'postmodern' identities. Nevertheless, Viljoen's theoretical resources do enable her to demonstrate that *They all fall down* is a complex music *cum* video text in which various musical elements (from a Mozart quotation to 'Adornian' dissonance) combine to render a postmodern sense of urbanist spatio-temporality — one that signals hope (of a postmodern religious variety?) where a scholar like Bauman finds none.

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Sažetak

LACAN I KRITIČKA MUZIKOLOGIJA

Poststrukturalistički psihoanalitički mislilac Jacques Lacan nudi kritičkim muzikolozima vrijedne ideje za ideologiju-kritiku. Lacanovi aspekti *imaginarnog* i *simboličkog* snažna su teorijska sredstva za razumijevanje i demaskiranje skrivenog funkcioniranja ideologije. Preklapanje ovih sfera omogućuje kritičku interpretaciju funkcioniranja, na primjer, popularnih glazbenih video uradaka utoliko što se Lacanovo *imaginarno* odnosi na ikoničko ili na slikovni aspekt, a 'simboličko' na stihove tih glazbenih videa. Analiza tih dvaju aspekata i njihove međusobne ovisnosti omogućuje otkrivanje napetosti između njihovih odgovarajućih značenja što se mogu koristiti u svrhe ideologije-kritike. *Imaginarno* u Lacanovu djelu jedan je od triju aspekata ili 'poredaka' u okvirima kojih on shvaća ljudski subjekt, dok su druga dva *simboličko* i *stvarno*. Za Lacana je imaginarno ili sfera slika područje identifikacije koje je u temeljima razvitka subjektova osjećaja 'sebe'. Mlado, fizički još nekoordinirano dijete shvaća u vlastitoj zrcalnoj slici prividno jedinstven i cjelovit *gestalt* samoga sebe. Za Lacana je takvo 'prepoznavanje' vlastite slike kao 'sama sebe' *krivo prepoznavanje*. To je također *fikcionalni* konstrukt koji tvori temelj za daljnji razvitak subjekta u okvirima identifikacije i otuđenja. Identificirajući se sa slikom koja obećaje puninu i jedinstvo, subjekt riskira zatvorenost u 'kruti oklop', funkcioniranje kojeg nagovještava i u toj ranoj fazi funkcioniranje ideoloških ograničenja kao kasnije faze. Jezik je ono što spašava subjekt od takve otuđujuće zatočenosti u imaginarnom utoliko što za subjekt 'ponovno uspostavlja' njegovu istinsku funkciju kao 'subjekta' u univerzalizirajućem mediju simboličkog. Razlog za to leži u tome što — u činu ulaženja u simboličko (na primjer, biti u stanju izreći vlastito ime) što je, kao 'diskurs Drugoga' ili nesvjesno, pričuvište aksiološki (vrijednosno) strukturiranog kulturnog sustava — subjekt dolazi na svoje kao netko s mjestom u ljudskome društvu. Štoviše, simboličko područje je aspekt subjekta kao 'ja' (*je*), pripovjedač vlastite priče, kao suprotstavljenog sebi, ego (*moi*), ili subjekt zamišljenih identifikacija. Međutim, istodobno to znači da je u drukčijem smislu subjekt simboličkog otuđen od fiktivne jedinstvenosti koju predstavlja njegova vlastita zrcalna slika. Za Lacana ljudsko biće do kraja života nesigurno lebdi između međusobno neobjašnjivog imaginarnog i simboličkog, čemu on dodaje treći aspekt — naime, ono 'stvarno', područje onog što se ne može izraziti ni simbolizirati kao što je, na primjer, tijelo u svojem čistom organskom stanju i kojem se *kao takvome* ne može prići putem imaginarnog ili simboličkog. Drugim riječima, svaki pokušaj da ga se predstavi je promašen. No ipak, 'stvarno' se ne može ignorirati. Za Lacana ono je zapleteno u razmaku ili jazu koji odvaja nuždu koju osjećamo i simboličku ili lingvističku potrebu, a nikakva artikulacija potrebe ne može zatvoriti taj jaz koji, prema Lacanu, tvori želju. Ja ili ego (*moi*) kao subjekt imaginarnog može se tako razumjeti kao 'metonimija želje', pod čime Lacan čini se podrazumijeva da lažna, kriva 'cjelina' i 'jedinstvo' svake slike, s kojom se subjekt identificira, stoji kao 'dio' 'cjeline' njezinih ponovljenih, uzaludnih pokušaja — tj. želje — da sklopi razmak što ga odvaja od 'stvarnog' u njegovu (tjelesnom) biću, ili od nekog drugog bića. Tako, na primjer, popularna pjesma *Black and White* (*Crno i bijelo*) Michaela Jacksona, osobito u obliku glazbenog videa, točno oprimjeruje ono što implicira Lacanova tvrdnja: svaka sljedeća slika rasno ili etnički drukčijeg lica točka je identifikacije za svakog gledatelja koji je prijemčiv za imaginarno, odnosno za ideološku

tvrdnju da »nije važno jesi li crn ili bijel«. Implikacije Lacanova djela za kritičku muzikologiju mogu se ovdje i dalje pojavljivati. U glazbi, kao i u drugim umjetnostima, osobito multimedijalnim umjetničkim formama kao što su glazbeni videi, pozicije imaginarnog neizostavno su ili čak manje-više trajno projicirane u subjektovo slušanje, čitanje ili gledanje kako bi se s njime identificirao. Nije ni potrebno isticati da su te prilike za identifikaciju, koje su smještene na razinu Lacanova imaginarnog aspekta, usko povezane s prilikama za (ideološku) identifikaciju, pa stoga Lacanov pojmovni aparat omogućuje kritičkom muzikologu ili književnom kritičaru analizirati glazbene izvedbe, te književne, filmske i video tekstove s perspektivom otkrivanja ideološkog djelovanja pod krinkom imaginarnih identifikacija.