

IN TUNE or Colonized ART? - Cultural colonization in a semiotic perspective

By Per Dahl

When performing Western classical music, there is a common understanding of what it means to be in tune. The expression is also used allegorically in other contexts.

Establishing friendship is more accessible when people find each other in tune with some essential topics. Successful politicians manage to present political reforms in tune with their society. You tune in your radio receiver/television to a frequency of the preferred station.

Taken from the arts domain, the expression 'in tune' is understood as a reference to some objective criteria but also to have some symbolic, conceptual meaning. This combination of objective criteria and conceptual meaning blurs the relationship between communication and the artefacts, i.e., the combination of ontological and epistemological knowledge in developing literary expressions and concepts. In the narrative of in tune, the objective criteria are taken as an ahistorical fact, eliminating the structures of social power that contribute to its conceptual meaning. I will use the expression 'colonized art' concerning the hierarchies of power that govern the development of art expressions and artefacts in different cultures and, by that, draw some parallels to colonization, defined as a process of establishing foreign control over target territories or peoples for the purpose of cultivation, often by establishing colonies and possibly by settling them. In classical music, the development of different musical scale systems,¹ styles,² and narratives of music history³ parallels establishing colonies and determining the discourse of music communication.

In this paper, I will present an analysis of communication that can unveil the background and the diverse logics for establishing concepts like 'in tune' in the discourse of classical music. The three main concepts in this communication model are Intention, Identification, and Interpretation.

¹ Modal and tonal scales and unique scales in folk music traditions.

² Some musical styles are strongly connected to special segments of the social hierarchy like the operetta for the new rich upcoming bourgeois society.

³ The gender bias in the presentation of western music history, focusing on male composers and artists, a tendency that was dominant from the Romantic era and where today musicologists acquainted with feminist theory has just began rewriting the history.

I will apply a perspective on this process, raising the questions like: What is colonized art? Can art be colonized? My preliminary answer is that it is in the process of identification of artefacts and cultural expressions that colonization is made. Therefore, any decolonization must start by analysing the background for the communicative identification mode.

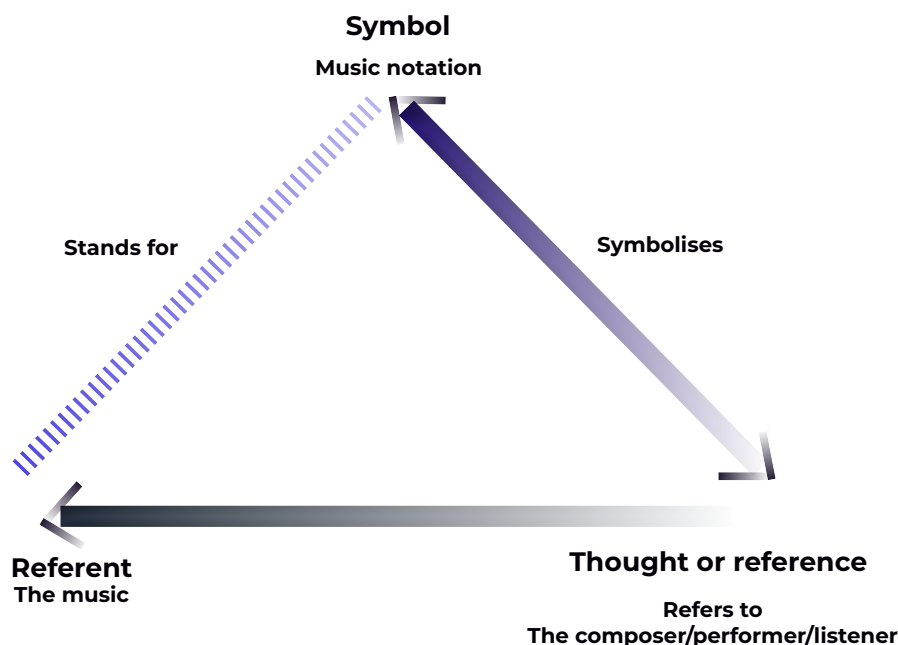
A multi-layered model of communication

The goal will be to search for possibilities and procedures to establish and develop meaning in interpreting artefacts and cultural expressions like classical music. My model can be seen as a tilted version of Charles Key Ogden's triangle (Ogden, 1974/1923)

As in Ogden's model, my triangle's essential element is the arbitrary connection between the symbol and referent. Even in classical music having the most developed notation system, the performance (the music) has a somewhat random reference to the music notation.

However, the concept of a classical 'musical work' makes strong alliances between the music notation (the score) and the music (the sound). The concept is a cognitive structure that changes in the communicative chain from the composer via the performer to the listener. The composer's idea of the musical work, the performer's interpretation of the musical work, and the listener's experience of the musical work have different horizons of knowledge attributed to the concept. In addition, three objective references to the musical work can be detected: The composer's notation is much "thinner" (to use Stephen Davies' expression) than the idea. To develop an interpretation, the performer reading the notation needs to add his knowledge about notation conventions (with references outside the actual notation). However, a performance seldom matches the performer's idea of interpreting the musical work, so the listeners must add their understanding of the music to the sounding musical work establishing a musical experience. When the listener

Figure 1. Ogden's triangle tilted and adjusted to music.



(analyst) speaks about the incident, we have a third object of the musical work; the discourse of the musical work (Dahl, 2019).

This concept of a musical work has its historical background in developing the bourgeois society in the late eighteenth century (Goehr, 2007).⁴ As such, it is connected to modernity, the social and cultural developments arising with the Enlightenment and the new concept of art.⁵ In addition to the internal consequences of what became 'classical music', the musical work concept contributed to differentiating the musical practice into different genres (classical music versus folk music, entertainment music, jazz, pop, etc.).⁶ In that way, the concept of 'musical work' has contributed to a hierarchy of genres, with a canon of musical works having aesthetical expressions of universal and ahistorical values.⁷ Being institutionalized in music conservatories (from 1840ies) and in music analysis and musicology (from 1880ies), the concept of 'musical work' became a reference

to be used in the hierarchies of power that govern the development of art expressions and artefacts and by that there are some parallels to colonization (in the way I use 'colonization' in this article).

The arrows between Symbol and Thought or Reference indicate that humans create and interpret symbols. This double function underlines that to understand/identify a symbol, we must create it in our minds. The object or artefact might be physically out there in the world, but only when we accept it as a symbol, it becomes a symbol. The intersubjective dimension is crucial in establishing a symbol, and it must be a 'we' here, even though there might be different impressions and interpretations of the symbol. I will elaborate on the difference between identification and interpretation further down. It is essential to accept that understanding a symbol can be something other than a linguistic discourse; you can identify musical/artistic elements without naming them.

⁴ However, Davies, S. (2001). Musical works and performances: a philosophical exploration. Clarendon Press. finds that "the work concept as a recent invention does not provide the most plausible narrative for music's history. My own emphasis on the thinness or thickness of pieces better captures the differences between musical periods and styles while respecting the continuities that unify them." See also Bonds, M. E. (2006). Music as thought : listening to the symphony in the age of Beethoven. Princeton University Press.

⁵ Modernism, in contrast, is primarily an artistic phenomenon, a sharpening of modernity that sometimes in music challenge the understanding of the 'musical work' concept. See also Agawu, V. K. (2009). Music as discourse : semiotic adventures in romantic music. Oxford University Press. , Bonds, M. E. (2014). Absolute music: the history of an idea. Oxford University Press. ; Chua, D. K. L. (2017). Beethoven & freedom. Oxford University Press. , Clayton, M., Herbert, T., & Middleton, R. (2012). The cultural study of music : a critical introduction. Routledge. , Sterne, J. (2003). The Audible past : cultural origins of sound reproduction. Duke University Press.

In general, a misunderstanding is caused by the need for more understanding by the receiver. The consequence should be that communication is only fulfilled once the receiver has understood the message (Luhmann, 1995, p. 143).⁸ Usually, communication theories focus on the sender and the design of the message and medium to establish communication.⁹ However, a robust logical deduction from the reality of misunderstanding should make communication depend on the addressee. A skewed power balance between sender and receiver has often overshadowed this simple fact and facilitated a kind of colonialism that we can find in education, master classes, and art critique.

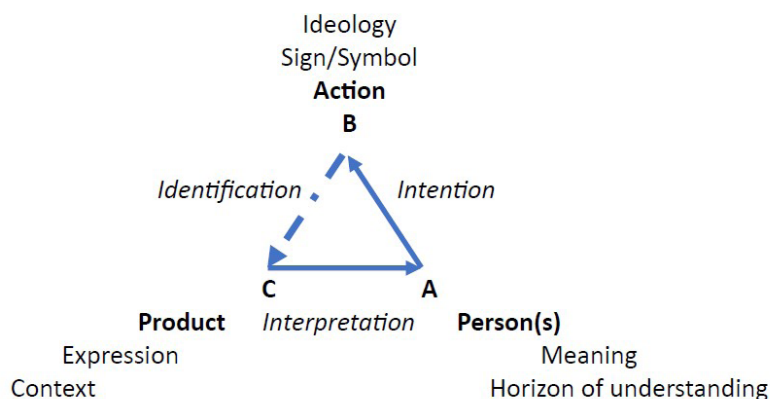
Niklas Luhmann's analysis of communication in social systems underlines that "The distinction between determinacy and indeterminacy is an internal variable of the communication system and not a quality of the external world." (Luhmann, 2000, p. 12). That makes the interpretation of artefacts and cultural expressions linked to our epistemological understanding of the world. Furthermore, he continues: "Perception is ready to scan a familiar world for information without requiring a special decision on our part to do so." (Luhmann, 2000, p. 14).¹⁰ This kind of directness is prominent in Stravinsky's and Ravel's plea for their music to be played (identifying the imperatives in the music notation), not interpreted (Long, 1973; Stravinsky, 1936/1990). However, Luhmann makes a critical distinction: "Works of art, by contrast, employ perceptions exclusively for the purpose of letting the observer participate in the communication of the invented forms." (Luhmann, 2000, p. 14).¹¹ A work of art employs perceptions that make it different from entertainment, though not necessarily exclusively. In that perspective, entertainment supports existing attitudes in the receiver, while art challenges those attitudes. Nevertheless, a work of art can contain elements that are not exclusively invented to communicate artistic expression.

The situation is most apparent in the music. The concept of (classical)

¹⁰ This is in line with System I in Kahneman, D. (2012). Thinking, fast and slow. Penguin Books.

¹¹ This is a dimension not commented on by Kahneman.

Figure 2. Basic elements of a triadic communicative model



music, having a double ontological status as physical actions and cognitive phenomena, makes several modes of communication necessary in structuring our perception during a musical experience. In general, interpretation is more than identification; it is the receiver's adapting the contextual identification to their horizon of understanding. The consequence is, as Luhmann maintains, that when "art communicates by using perceptions contrary to their primary purpose," (Luhmann, 2000, p. 14) there is a need for the receiver to see possible contexts and the sign's potential for meaning in the situation. That kind of structuring of the impressions is not bound to the perceptions of the artwork but includes the receiver's horizon of understanding. In that process, we can discern the colonization of experiences as the identification of the perceptions is connected to the receiver's repertoire of possible contexts. These contexts are those social constructions and discourses that can be affiliated with the here-and-now situation and the dominating ideology (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Being aware of any colonized dimensions in the situation or ideology is therefore crucial in identifying the impressions and not only in interpreting the impressions.

The arbitrary connection between symbol and referent illustrates the difficulties of identifying ontological entities in symbolic discourses.

Nevertheless, humans do make connections, but it is not direct; it is a culturally bound understanding, an intersubjective understanding, where we can separate the sign from its expression and let the actual context be part of a logic founded in the existing culture. The essential elements of the multi-layered model of communication can be illustrated like this: (Figure 2.)

Here is an example: Arne, walking and waving his arms, suddenly recognizes Anne coming in the other direction and with whom he intends to handshake. Arne prepares the greeting ritual, and at some point, Anne will identify Arne's sign/action as part of a greeting ritual and prepare her right hand in position. They share a common understanding of these signs belonging to the same ideological concept of greeting ritual using the right hand for handshaking, which is a highly culturally conditioned interpretation. This shared understanding makes them in tune regarding the greeting situation. However, it is Anne's decision to respond to Arne's signs. She can identify the situation, but it is her interpretation of the consequences that makes her react. The situation illustrates the critical difference between identification and interpretation.¹²

I will illustrate different modes of communication by developing this triangular model and adding several

layers of concepts in each position. By that, the model becomes more helpful in detecting the variety of elements in communication and liberated from the linguistic perspective in Ogden's model.

The first extension is related to classical music, where Skills, Performance, and Literacy are three concepts relevant in an artistic context. Skills are seen as part of a person's potential for action and, as such, only indirectly observable. Artists, Performers, and Listeners have different skills and might have skills on different levels. Musical skills are highly culture-specific and share essential characteristics with skills in other areas of human behaviour, such as games, science, and sports. Several theories on skills describe a hierarchy of five skill levels (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1991, pp. 229-250).¹³ They have in common an understanding of skills as a way of acting based on a combination of habitual gestures and cognitive responses.

In awareness of music, performance is a necessary condition. Only through performance can we make an ontological identification of music independent of style, genre, or culture. You might hear many different sounds that you do not identify as music in everyday life. The same sounds can be part of a musical work, but you need to identify the context as relevant for musical performance. The sounds of a ballet dancer's steps and jumps are usually not seen as part of the ballet's music. However, sometimes (like in Riverdance), those kinds of sounds are part of the artistic expression. In the identification process, classification will depend on the receiver's references to style, genre, and the logic of the culture. The connection between Skills and Performance is well-accepted among musicians and listeners. Anyone who has tried to make a musical performance knows that many different skills must be combined and mastered to perform in a musical context (music reading skills in classical music, control of the instrument-body relation, timing in coordination with other musicians, and so on).

To put literacy into the C-position

in this multi-layered model might be a surprise. However, especially in classical music, the listener's impression of a performance is highly influenced by our abilities in literacy.¹⁴ The aural impressions from the performance are in the listener's mind, combined with a context full of literary references like the name of the composer and or performer, the title of the work, the printed concert program, music critics, history of music and style, in vocal music an understanding of the text used in work. This knowledge can be activated ahead of or during the concert/performance. It is a mental grid adapting the impressions from the performance. It can also be linked to Gadamer's concept of pre-judgment as it is not the conscious act of an individual but belongs to her way of being (Gadamer, 1960). This mental grid is often taken as objective criteria that are ahistorical. As I will show, these criteria are not ahistorical and result from cultural processes. In my perspective, a mental grid can sometimes be seen as a colonized horizon in understanding artistic expressions.

All layers are relevant from a sender (composer/performer) and a receiver (listener). Having two references/persons with different characteristics in the same position in a model might be confusing. However, it is vital to have a model that is an alternative to linearity in stimulus-response theories found in the backyard of many communication theories. The layers Person-Skills-Meaning-Horizon of understanding point towards Subjectivity. Action, Performance, and Sign/Symbol are all observable to others, this dimension calls attention to Objectivity. I will keep Ideology in this dimension to illustrate its distance to the horizon of understanding (Subjectivity) and Context (Intersubjectivity). The whole dimension of Product – Literacy – Expression – Context – Intersubjectivity results from the arbitrariness of the connection between B and C in the triad. While point B represents the ontological entities, point C will be the first step in the epistemological dimension of our knowledge acquisition. We must organize the impressions of ontological entities

(from all layers of B) in our mind in a way that makes sense, i.e., adapt the impression to our mind/horizon of understanding (either by assimilation or accommodation of the impressions (Piaget, 1971). Connecting the observable action level to the ideological and philosophical dimensions makes possible an analysis of the power structures in colonialism.

Different angles of the corners can give the triangulation dynamic flexibility. A situation where the BC line is shortened (much overlap between Ideology and Context) can enhance understanding of the content of expression in the Sign/Symbol. Opposite an extended BC line, as when you meet sign/symbols where you as a receiver have no clue about their connection to any expressions, as in meeting music from a totally foreign culture.

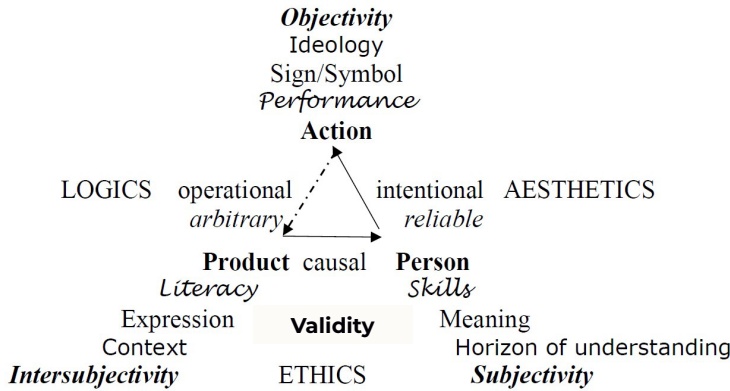
Shortening the AB line does not necessarily reduce the arbitrariness of BC. Composers performing their compositions (as Stravinsky did) are not always seen as the best interpretations, even if the composer says so (Stravinsky, 1972).¹⁵

As an outer circle in this model, I indicate three essential superior themes: Aesthetics, Logics, and Ethics.¹⁶ They might not be expressed in discussions on colonization, but they are often used to develop arguments on a lower, more concrete level. It is crucial, then, to remember in what relation they belong. An aesthetic layer/dimension is about the connection between a person's meaning and the use of sign/symbols in action (performance), not about the relation between the action and its product, and not at all about a product's relation to a person/listener (which is an ethical issue). Quite often, however, aesthetic statements are scaffolded by the logic: of the relation between the sign/symbol and its expression. That kind of utterance does not respect BC's arbitrariness and acts merging the Context and the Horizon of understanding.¹⁷ It is necessary to be conscious of all three superior themes to work in agreement with musical style and genre. Traditionally, the focus has been on aesthetics, which is of great consequence to the reliability and validity of performance. So strong

¹² The example is taken from Dahl, P. (2008). Anvendt musikkestetikk: en innføring. Unipub.

¹³ The Dreyfus brothers use Novice – Advanced beginner – Competence – Proficiency – Expert, while Kokcharov has this pared hierarchy: Student/Know – Apprentice/Play – Specialist/Work – Expert/Solve – Craftsman/Invent. (<http://www.slideshare.net/igorkokcharov/kokcharov-skillpyramid2015>) (30.04.2023)

Figure 3. The multi-layered communication model



has this emphasis been that the argumentation often includes the relation between the sign/symbol and the expression. Used on historical artefacts, this kind of discourse combined with a power hierarchy can move from being authoritative to becoming authoritarian. Nevertheless, that approach could be called (in philosophy) a category mistake as it mixes the modes of communication. The complete multi-layered model of communication will then be like this: (Figure 3).

The point of departure in an aesthetic argument would be the idea of meaning in the actual piece of music. Aesthetic views may support the intentionality of the interpretation. However, the performance must be operationalized within a chosen functional system between the sign/symbol and the expression. There might be some terminological resemblance between the actual logic and aesthetics. Still, that resemblance would be on the linguistic level and not necessarily relevant to the performer and the performed music. The difference between aesthetics and logics in our context contributes to making room for individual interpretations presented to an audience's intersubjective context. To foresee the logic dimension - the relation between the sign/

symbol and expression in the actual style/music - is essential in developing a personal interpretation. As the logic dimension can use different operational/functional systems, one must be aware of the multitude of operational links between sign/symbol and expression. A consequence of this argumentation is that music, like language, is an arbitrary system dependent on the intersubjective dimension of knowledge: communication is a fundamental element in music. Therefore, a definition of music without a reference to the human experience will reduce music to an object that can be studied as an ahistorical entity.

The ethical dimension has been very prominent in the public debate on colonization/decolonization.¹⁸ In the inner circle of classical music lovers, the ethical issues concern only other music genres (like heavy metal, rock, and pop). Nevertheless, the earthquake at The Rite's premiere also affected ethical issues. Usually, the audience could expect a ballet permitting a playful relationship to reasonable consensus or dissent questions. Moreover, at least after The Firebird and Petrushka, they were prepared to search for adequate observations. Their mental grid was attuned to this new Russian composer's world of

orchestral effects. However, the measure for adequacy is not consensus determined by a shared symbolic system. Still, as Luhmann writes: it "resides instead in the question of whether the viewer can follow the directives for adequate observation embedded in the work's own formal decisions." (Luhmann, 2000, p. 76). That the audience at the premiere could not follow the directives in the work's own formal decision seems well documented. Nevertheless, it took a few performances before the audience accepted the work. It indicates that the ethical dimension is not so tight to the Product and Person-connection, but at the other end of concepts: Context/Intersubjectivity and Horizon of understanding/Subjectivity. It also demonstrates that accepting artistic expressions is a social construction that develops, making a colonized mindset flexible.

'In tune' colonized

I will now present some examples where this communication model can contribute to understanding historical artefacts in the context of colonization. I said in the introduction that, at least in classical music, there is a common understanding of what it means to be in tune. However, this understanding is founded on a particular practice of classical mu-

¹⁴ In other genres, there are fewer linguistic references, but that does not reduce the relevance of literacy as a reference to any kind of written/printed (and today digitalized) material. (UNESCO, 2004)
¹⁵ See also Cook, N. (2003). Stravinsky conducts Stravinsky. In J. Cross (Ed.), The Cambridge Companion to Stravinsky (pp. 176-191). Cambridge University Press. (Reprinted from 2005)
¹⁶ I use plurals to underline the many different perspectives possible in each dimension.

sis. There was a significant change in the 16th and 17th centuries from modality to a tonal scale system applying the tempered scale. This practice established a new reference when judging whether performances were in tune. As this understanding was connected to certain social groups, their institutions, and hierarchical thinking/ideology, we could call this a paradigmatic change that soon became the most robust understanding of 'in tune,' and this part of the society used a discourse in a way that colonized the concept.¹⁹ This change became evident when trained classical music scholars started collecting folk tunes at the end of the 19th century. The notation system, developed following the ideas from *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier*, could not indicate the tuning of folk melodies.

Nevertheless, music scholars like the Norwegian composer Catharinus Elling (1858-1942), educated in Germany, blamed the folk musicians for being unable to sing/play in tune (Vollsnæs, 2000, pp. 303-304).²⁰ The tonal system disciplined his hearing through his education and position in the (music) society. He compared his impression with the tonal scale system, and for him, that system was the objective truth about music scales. Only by adjusting the melodies into the notation system could these melodies be used in new artistic expressions/compositions. Then he could present these melodies in piano transcriptions and, by that, establish foreign control over target territories or peoples for the purpose of cultivation. That is an example where the identification logic is restricted to one system and preferred by a particular (powerful) group of music scholars and their ideological basis. This understanding of being 'in tune' became relatively common among listeners and amateur musicians. As such, we have what I in this article have called an example of the colonization of musical artefacts.

Another outcome of this understanding of 'in tune' became observable in the late 1970s.

In France, composers started to develop harmonic clusters based on the upper part of the overtone series, especially those who did not fit the

tempered scale. First in electronic music, but soon adapted to orchestral music where the musicians had to find quartertones and other pitches between the ordinary half-tone scales. Even when they succeeded, the audience accused them of not playing in tune. Orchestra musicians are supposed to be able to play the notated music, and for most people /audiences, the notation system was in tune with the well-tempered scale system. The audience in classical music has had the tempered scale as the objective criteria for evaluating the pitches used in the performance for more than 300 years. As the accusation was against the performer, the ethical dimension became fundamental in their interpretation of the performance. This strong connection between

person's actions and products; it is a willingness to search for (positive) intentions beyond identifying signs and interpreting products. This aesthetic dimension connects the use of signs and symbols to an ideology that liberates communication from the boundary of language and other fixed sign systems governing the actual logic. It allows us to use the rest of our knowledge and experience, bodily and practical, in a heuristic structure where we do not need to know the reason for connecting different entities to a worldview. You can then describe your relationship as being 'in tune.' Only when the actual logic is suppressing one of the parts with a foreign cultural ideology, we have a structure of power that can resemble colonization.

In awareness of music, performance is a necessary condition

the actual context and the person's horizon of understanding can only be challenged from the opposite side in the multi-layered model, Ideology. It is necessary to release the concept 'in tune' from classical music's paradigmatic worldview to grasp the possibilities and relevance of other scale systems. Only then can quartertones and micro-tonality be identified as valuable music expressions and not reduced to being played out of tune.

In music, intentions are often the starting point in any creative process, either by the composer or the improvisator.²¹ I have pointed out that there is no tabula rasa from which the intentions can develop. There is always a horizon of understanding active in creative processes; therefore, some concepts are taken for granted (ahistorical). To be in tune is such a concept that has a history that has some parallel to colonization.

I will now elaborate on the examples in the introduction where the intentions behind the expression 'in tune' are essential. Deep personal relations are more than the sum of interpretations of the other

The communication challenge in political propaganda is to present a political reform or issue in a way that the public grasp as something they really want. The politician's intentions matter less than the public's identification with the message. Suppose the politician manages to keep the focus on Ideology and use simple examples from context, avoiding ethical questions. There is an excellent chance of being 'in tune' with their political congregation in that case. In some instances, ethical questions are made the turning point, though (Vadén, 2005).²² Nevertheless, building a unified rhetoric creates a 'coherent communicativity'²³ among you and your supporters. Related to the communication model, this identifies signs and symbols within a coherent logic. That is, by making the distance between Ideology and Context small, you reduce the variety of logics (different ways of expressing human experiences). However, there is a short way from being authoritative to becoming authoritarian.

Decolonization

In this article, I will define Decolonization as the change in communication

¹⁷ I situation that Francis Bacon called Idols of the Cave in his *Novum Organum*. Bacon, F. e. a. (1990). *Advancement of learning* ; *Novum Organum* ; New Atlantis (2nd ed. ed.). Encyclopædia Britannica.

modes used to colonize the artefacts and cultural expressions. All three basic processes in the multi-layered model, intention, identification, and interpretation, can be approached from a decolonial perspective. I started this article by saying that classical music has a shared understanding of what it means to play 'in tune.' However, historical processes made it clear that this understanding was an understanding developed in a segment of society that had the power to change the cultural discourse. As the multi-layered model indicates, these basic processes can be linked to three overall concepts: Aesthetics, Logics and Ethics. In the debate on decolonized art, it is crucial to search for all modes of communication in colonizing artefacts and cultural expressions. The analysis must present a choice among logics that reduces the arbitrariness between the sign and its expression. That would be a way of securing a common identification of the sign. A sign, as an intended artistic expression, can only become a symbol when the receivers identify it as a symbol. The symbol might be an (ontological) artefact, an object in the world. Still, only when someone identifies it as a symbol does the artefact become a symbol of artistic expression.²⁴ As such, this aligns with Niels Bohr's idea of objectivity as something that establishes a coherent communicativity. Bohr explains "that all experience, whether in science, philosophy or art, which may be helpful to mankind, must be capable of being communicated by human means of expression." (Bohr, 1987, p. 14), rather than arbitrary repeatability, non-subjectivity, or objectivity lacking a viewpoint. It is essential to remember that the connection between sign and expression cannot be an ahistorical/context-free relation. Bohr's important observation is that objectivity is a communicative phenomenon among humans and, therefore, always connected to Ideology and Context. A straight line from B to C would only reduce the world's descriptions to one paradigm. Then the Sign and its Expression or the Action and its Product would only be interpreted within the paradigm. We would then have a simple Stimulus-Response model with intentions and interpretations and no identifi-

cation of the logic in use. It would be what I earlier called an authoritarian process of knowledge development.

In *On Decoloniality*, Walter D. Mignolo (Mignolo, 2011, 2020) explore the hidden forces of the colonial matrix of power, its origination, transformation, and current presence while asking the crucial questions of decoloniality's how, what, why, with whom, and what for. Interweaving theory-praxis with local histories and perspectives of struggle, they illustrate the conceptual and analytic dynamism of decolonial ways of living and thinking and the creative force of resistance and re-existence. They encourage a delinking from the colonial matrix of power and its "universals" of Western modernity and global capitalism. In our case, that would be accepting the existence of several scale systems in the world of music and that there is no objective true scale system.²⁵ A hundred years of sound recordings distributed by actors of global capitalism²⁶ have contributed to the common understanding of 'in tune' among classical music lovers.

The easy adoption of decolonizing discourse by educational advocacy and scholarship, evidenced by the increasing number of calls to "decolonize our schools," use "decolonizing methods," or "decolonize student thinking", might turn decolonization into a metaphor (Tuck, 2012). Focusing on the expression 'in tune' might be seen as a decolonization of a metaphor (or 'in tune' is more an allegory indicating a resemblance in the logic between sign and expression). However, I pointed to one social group's (Western classical musicians) powerful identification of the artefacts (melodies) as a colonization of music listening in the rest of the (Western) society. Using the multi-layered communication model, I wanted to analyse 'in tune' as a concept that colonized the reference to one scale system in music. Decolonization is possible by being aware of the multi-layered triangulation in knowledge and the hierarchies of power in all communication.

The exclusion of diverse knowledge systems is prominent in my examples from classical music society.

Higher education institutions today exclude many of the various knowledge systems in the world, including those of indigenous peoples and excluded racial groups and those based on gender, class, or sexuality. Budd L. Hall and Rajesh Tandon refer to such situations of the colonial matrix of power as 'epistemicide,' pointing to eliminating knowledge systems due to authoritarian communication (Budd & Rajesh, 2017). My model is primarily epistemological without excluding the matrix of power or any social groups. The main idea was to underline the necessity of analysing the process where communicative modes generated universals (the colonial matrix of the West) as a background for actions of decolonization.

The intention in the creative moment is usually unavailable, even if the creator explains the process, as this will be an ex post facto utterance.²⁷ We have access to a network of ideas, statements, and artworks that can give some information about the artist's intentions. Still, the arguments will be based on our understanding of the aesthetics at the time of the creation of the artwork. The artist's use of signs and symbols is part of the artist's Ideology which we can describe. However, that discourse does not need to be coherent with the artist's intentions. Therefore, a decolonization based only on a critique of the artist's intentions will be too narrow and easy to contradict.

The folk musician had no intention of singing out of tune, but the classical music scholar operationalized the melodies to the classical notation system, taking that as the proper melody. The scholar's intentions and aesthetic preferences made him accuse the musicians of being unable to sing in tune. The notated music became an artefact that could be used without directly referencing the sources, and a new understanding of the melody's character and its intentions and expressions could emerge. Decolonizing this kind of artefact must accept the plurality of scale systems in music practice in different cultures. That can be seen in many sectors of the music society, but to complete decolonization, it is also necessary to unveil the power structures in these cultures.

¹⁸ <https://keynotespeakerscanada.ca/speaker/nikki-sanchez/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/24/us/confederate-statues-photos.html> (30.04.2023)

¹⁹ Examples are the development of music criticism as part of the Enlightenment and the bourgeois revolutions, the professionalisation of music education and the performances in conservatories and concert life.

²⁰ Other Norwegian music scholars like Ole Mørk Sandvik (1875-1976) had a much more nuanced understanding of tonality and performing practice, making the context of the performance guiding the notation elements.

Then the most crucial process in our understanding of the world is identifying a sign belonging to a context. Identification can only happen when there is a coherence between the sign's ideological affiliation and the possibility of connecting the sign to a product (a way of organizing the impressions) in a familiar context. When the audience heard the spectral harmonies as not in tune, they did identify the sonic elements. Still, they needed to be prepared to accept either the ideological affiliation or to connect the sounds to a product (harmonies) in a familiar context. The audience needs to address both parts of human communication to start decolonizing their listening habits. As such, using micro-tonality in classical music decolonizes the Western tonal system. Two different strategies can be tried: Present the music theory about the natural overtones, making skewed harmonies not so unnatural and open for an adjustment of their music ideology. Or present sounding examples from other contexts (film, games, natural sound) where they already had accepted this kind of harmonies.

Conclusion

Decolonization is the undoing of colonialism. Originally colonialism was when imperial nations established and dominated foreign territories. The question of power is prominent in decolonization theories focusing mainly on independence movements in the colonies and the

collapse of global colonial empires. In the last decades, the meaning has been extended to include economic, cultural, and psychological aspects of the colonial experience. In this context, the decolonization of art is an exciting issue. The territories are no longer geographical but mental and involve our understanding of artistic expressions. Then the question of social identity, class, and cognitive hierarchies becomes part of the identification of (de-)colonialism. In that perspective, 'in tune' can be seen as a discourse representing a colonized art. As the multi-layered model unveils, a description of the different matrices of power governing a society must be balanced with an understanding of the elements in the communicative modes creating artistic expressions.

What makes some artistic expressions more artistic? I have shown that applying a decolonization perspective as a critique of Western art culture is possible. By focusing on the epistemological and cognitive processes making art expressions something special, it becomes clear that to reduce the question of decolonization to ethics will be to exclude fundamental elements in our understanding of artistic expressions. My examples show that the balance of power exists in a battle between our impressions and experience, and those different communicative modes generate unique solutions for each person. Decolonization is today often applied in a discourse

of ethical standards to historical artefacts. The critique should not be restricted to the interpretation of the product or the intentions behind the aesthetics. The decolonization of art should be more of a search for the logics connecting the Ideology and the Context in the identification process. Especially artistic research should make the identification of artistic expression the primary target. For now, too much of the discourse in aesthetics (intentions) and ethics (interpretations) has generated knowledge and expressions in an ahistorical context.

An epistemological perspective makes the decolonization of art more focused on the communicative elements in the logics and ethics than on the aesthetics of the artefacts. The Western knowledge system in music that emerged in Europe during Renaissance and Enlightenment was deployed and used to legitimize Europe's colonial endeavour. It was believed that the knowledge produced by the Western system was superior to that produced by other methods. As they thought this system had a universal quality, it seemed objective and ahistorical without any bound to the actual context. The notation system and the preference for a well-tempered scale system were part of this colonialism. It changed notation and the instruments' production, making the piano the overall reference. **Music had to be in tune to be art.**

21 Wallas divides the creative process into five stages. Wallas, G. (1926). *The art of thought*. London. Lehmann, Sloboda and Woody add a trial-and-effort phase as part of the creative processes. Lehmann, A. C., Sloboda, J. A., & Woody, R. H. (2007). *Psychology for musicians: understanding and acquiring the skills*. Oxford University Press. 22 Like the protests against statues of generals who organised slavery, minstrel shows and other blackface entertainment. 23 In Vadén Hannula uses the term 'coherent communicativity' with reference to Bohr, N. (1987). *The philosophical writings of Niels Bohr: 3: Essays 1958-1962 on atomic physics and human knowledge* (Vol. 3). Ox Bow Press. (Bohr, 1963/1987, p. 7) cited in Mignolo, W. D. (2011). *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options*. Cambridge: Duke University Press., Plotnitsky, A. (2002). *The knowable and the unknowable: modern science, nonclassical thought, and the "two cultures"*. University of Michigan Press. (Plotnitsky, 2002, p. 23), but Bohr does not use that term in his essay. However, it sums up his ideas in a good way. Bohr: 3: *Essays 1958-1962 on atomic physics and human knowledge* (Vol. 3). Ox Bow Press. (Bohr, 1963/1987, p. 7) cited in Mignolo, W. D. (2011). *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options*. Cambridge: Duke University Press., Plotnitsky, A. (2002). *The knowable and the unknowable: modern science, nonclassical thought, and the "two cultures"*. University of Michigan Press. (Plotnitsky, 2002, p. 23), but Bohr does not use that term in his essay. However, it sums up his ideas in a good way.

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24 Like Picasso's Bull's Head (created in 1942 from the seat and handlebars of a bicycle)

25 Such acceptance has been well established among musicologists, but they have not succeeded in convincing the classical audience.

26 Typically, the gramophone companies prioritized financial, marketing, and technical competence rather than the artistic and cultural heritage.

27 Stravinsky on Octet referred in The Composer Works White, E. W. (1979). *Stravinsky : the composer and his works* (2nd ed.). Faber and Faber. (White, 1979 pp.574-577). See also Dahl, P. (2022). *Modes of communication in Stravinsky's works : sign and expression*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.