

Project 2: Introduction to Musicological Analysis 2  
First draft, due April 15

Using your in-class brainstorming, write a 3-page essay in which you explore what Wagner's piece means and the broader implications of the music. Your essay will describe specific musical features, analyze the meaning you take away from them, and tie the implications of the musical sounds to the ideas of other authors. **Do not do research for this assignment.** Everything you need to complete it is in your head. Your essay should be typed (12-point font, double spaced, and 1-inch margins) and will have three main sections:

- 1) Introduction
- 2) Body
- 3) Conclusion

The **introduction** is the opening paragraph of your essay, but you should write it last. Instead start with the **body** of your essay. The body of your essay will have three paragraphs:

- 1) Describe and analyze (from prewriting steps 1-4)
- 2) Apply (from prewriting step 5)
- 3) Argue (from prewriting step 6)

In the first body paragraph, describe and analyze the music. What musical features do you hear as being the most important in this piece, and why do they lead you to interpret it as meaning what you do? Discuss at least three musical features in this paragraph, citing at least three specific musical details from the assigned piece of music.

In the second body paragraph, describe about how you can apply the meaning of this piece to Wagner's society and world more broadly. If, as Magee argues, an artist's work tells us something about the world in which he/she lived, then what does Wagner's music tell us about his world? This paragraph answers the "so what" question implied by your first body paragraph: why does it matter what this old piece of music means, anyway?

In the third body paragraph, argue what other implications there are for listening to Wagner's music, the role he and his music played in society, the way that artists influence society, or the ways in which Magee's premise was (in)correct. Remember to link your ideas explicitly to musical features you described in body paragraph #1. Your thesis statement (from prewriting step 6 should appear in this paragraph).

When you refer to ideas from Magee's writing, use short quotations that *illustrate* an idea that you're arguing in a sentence of your own writing. Just as you do with the musical examples, find short, evocative details in the text that have captured your imagination and create the gut feeling interpretation that you have.

- Example: Thus, I believe that the heroic optimism that I find in Wagner's Prelude to *Lohengrin*, Act 3, illustrates what Magee deems the deep, unconscious "thousand roots" of his cultural identity.

In the final version of this essay, this third body paragraph will also incorporate ideas from another author, Bernard Williams. You will receive this text in class on April 15.

The **conclusion** of your essay should tie together any ideas from the previous paragraphs that relate to each other but weren't explicitly linked. Your conclusion also broadens the scope of your argument by offering ways for your reader to keep thinking about what you've said. You should do this by applying the argument you've made applicable to other situations. Examples of the kinds of questions you could answer in your conclusion:

- How are the observations you've made about this piece true in other examples of music?
- How can you apply your analysis to other works of music?
- What did you learn over the course of writing this essay?
- Why might someone else interpret the same musical features differently?
- Could the piece of music mean something other than what you've argued in this essay?

Once you've written the body and conclusion, go back and re-read your essay, editing it as necessary. Then, write your **introduction**, which should state the piece you'll be talking about (composer and title). It should also give context for the essay to follow by either telling how you became interested in this topic or sharing any background information that the reader should know about your thought process, other ideas that informed your essay, or an important fact that is directly connected to the content of your essay. In this kind of analytical essay, you do not need to include your thesis in the introduction, because this will come later in the essay.

Finally, come up with a title for your essay. This should be engaging and make a reader want to know more about the topic.

Use the provided rubric as a guide to make sure you've addressed all the requirements of this assignment.